Number 12
*Prophets and Prophecy of the Ancient Near East*
by Martti Nissinen
Edited by Peter Machinist
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Writings from the Ancient World is designed to provide up-to-date, readable English translations of writings recovered from the ancient Near East.

The series is intended to serve the interests of general readers, students, and educators who wish to explore the ancient Near Eastern roots of Western civilization or to compare these earliest written expressions of human thought and activity with writings from other parts of the world. It should also be useful to scholars in the humanities or social sciences who need clear, reliable translations of ancient Near Eastern materials for comparative purposes. Specialists in particular areas of the ancient Near East who need access to texts in the scripts and languages of other areas will also find these translations helpful. Given the wide range of materials translated in the series, different volumes will appeal to different interests. However, these translations make available to all readers of English the world’s earliest traditions as well as valuable sources of information on daily life, history, religion, and the like in the preclassical world.

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Covering the period from the invention of writing (by 3000 B.C.E.) down to the conquests of Alexander the Great (ca. 330 B.C.E.), the ancient Near East comprised northeast Africa and southwest Asia. The cultures represented within these limits include especially Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Aramean, Phoenician, and Israelite. It is hoped that Writings from the Ancient World will eventually produce
translations of most of the many different genres attested in these cultures: letters (official and private), myths, diplomatic documents, hymns, law collections, monumental inscriptions, tales, and administrative records, to mention but a few.

Significant funding was made available by the Society of Biblical Literature for the preparation of this volume. In addition, those involved in preparing this volume have received financial and clerical assistance from their respective institutions. Were it not for these expressions of confidence in our work, the arduous tasks of preparation, translation, editing, and publication could not have been accomplished or even undertaken. It is the hope of all who have worked on these texts or supported this work that Writings from the Ancient World will open up new horizons and deepen the humanity of all who read these volumes.

Theodore J. Lewis  
Johns Hopkins University
Abbreviations

The abbreviations follow those of The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999). In addition, the following abbreviations are used:

A. Tablet signature of texts from Mari
ABG Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
AOTU Altorientalische Texte und Untersuchungen
ASJ Acta Sumerologica (Japan)
BCSMS Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies
BE Tablets in the Collections of the Staatliche Museen, Berlin
BM Tablets in the Collections of the British Museum
Bu Tablets in the Collections of the British Museum
CRRAI Comptes rendus de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
DMOA Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui
DT Tablets in the collections of the British Museum
FLP Tablets in the collections of the Free Library of Pennsylvania
IM Tablets in the collections of the Iraq Museum
JARG Jahrbuch für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte
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Explanation of Signs

[ ] Brackets enclose restorations.
< > Angle brackets enclose words omitted by the original scribe.
( ) Parentheses enclose additions in the English translation.
... A row of dots indicates gaps in the text or untranslatable words.
(?) A question mark in parentheses follows doubtful readings in the transcriptions and doubtful renderings in the translations.

*Italics* in the English translations indicate uncertain readings.
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<td>ca. 1850–1650</td>
<td>Ibalpiel I</td>
<td>Ipiq-Adad</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Yahdun-Lim</td>
<td>Sin-muballit</td>
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<td>ca. 1810–1795</td>
<td>Dadusha</td>
<td>1812–1793</td>
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<td>1795–1793</td>
<td>Sumu-Yamun</td>
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<td>1793–1775</td>
<td>Yasmah-Addu</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1792–1750</td>
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<td>ca. 1779–1765</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Hammurabi I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1783–1640</td>
<td>Abba-el</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1650</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15th Dynasty</td>
<td>(Hylkos)</td>
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<td>1640–1532</td>
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<td>1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Syria-Palestine</td>
<td>Mesopotamia</td>
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<td>Kings of Mitanni</td>
<td>Babylonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>18th Dynasty (New Kingdom)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ca. 1500–1200</td>
<td>Several kings</td>
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<td>1500</td>
<td>Thutmosis III</td>
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<td>Kings of Ugarit</td>
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<td>1400</td>
<td></td>
<td>Šuttarna II</td>
<td>1415–1154</td>
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<td>1300</td>
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<td>1307–1399</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ramesses II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1250–1244</td>
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<td>1200</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aššur-bel-kala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Syria</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>21st Dynasty</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Tigrath-pileser II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1070–945</td>
<td>22nd Dynasty</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>966–935</td>
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<td>946–712</td>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>Jeboam I</td>
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<td>945–712</td>
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<td>Jeroboam I</td>
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<td>Jeroam</td>
<td>Jehu</td>
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<td>840–801</td>
<td>Jehoash</td>
<td>Jehu</td>
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<td>750</td>
<td>747–727</td>
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<tr>
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<td>725–697</td>
<td>Jehoash</td>
<td>Jeroboam II</td>
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<tr>
<td>650</td>
<td>671–663</td>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>Sennacherib</td>
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<td>600</td>
<td>699–598</td>
<td>Jehoash</td>
<td>Assurbanipal</td>
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<td>550</td>
<td>599–589</td>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>Šamaš-sumu-ukin</td>
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Chronological Table 3: 1000–500 B.C.E.
The world of the Mari letters.
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xix
The Assyrian Empire in the late eighth century B.C.E.

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy

Ancient Near Eastern sources for prophecy have hitherto been scattered in various publications, often without an appropriate and up-to-date translation and, hence, virtually inaccessible to non-specialist readers. The purpose of this volume is to bring together a representative sample of written documents from a variety of times and places, translated from the newest editions in order to update the present knowledge of the distribution of prophecy in the ancient Near East as well as to provide the reader with a tool for the study of prophecy as an established institution in the ancient Near Eastern world.

Prophecy, as understood in this volume, is human transmission of allegedly divine messages. As a method of revealing the divine will to humans, prophecy is to be seen as another, yet distinctive branch of the consultation of the divine that is generally called “divination.” Among the forms of divination, prophecy clearly belongs to the noninductive kind. That is to say, prophets—like dreamers and unlike astrologers or haruspices—do not employ methods based on systematic observations and their scholarly interpretations, but act as direct mouthpieces of gods whose messages they communicate.

This understanding of the term concurs with those definitions of prophecy in which the transmissive or communicative aspect is emphasized as an overall feature that should be found in all phenomena and literary documents that are claimed to represent prophecy (e.g., Overholt 1989; Huffmon 1992; Barstad 1993a; Weippert 1997b; Petersen 2000). Other aspects, like religious and social conditions of the activity, personal qualities of the human beings involved, the possible prediction and other distinctive features of the messages and the means of obtaining them, are subordinate to the basic understanding of prophecy as a process of transmission.
The prophetic process of transmission consists of the divine sender of the message, the message itself, the human transmitter of the message and the recipient(s) of the message. These four components should be transparent in any written source to be identified as a specimen of prophecy.

As a phenomenon, prophecy is cross-cultural, being observable in various cultural environments throughout human history (Overholt 1986; Grabbe 2000). As a term, however, “prophecy,” together with its derivatives, has established itself primarily in the language of Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures. A significant part of the canon of the Hebrew Bible is called nēḇîʾîm, the prophets, and the prerequisite for the conceptualization of prophecy by Christians and even Muslims is the biblical idea of prophecy, as developed in early Judaism from the second temple period onwards. Because of the emphatically biblical background of the concept of prophecy, its adaptation to extra-biblical contexts has seldom happened independently from the biblical paradigm and without a comparative purpose. The ongoing debate about the degree of historicity of the Hebrew Scriptures and the quest for authentic prophetic words within the heavily edited prophetic oracles and narratives of the Hebrew Bible have made many scholars seek arguments from related phenomena in the surrounding cultures. On the other hand, the need to study the ancient Near Eastern documents in their own right, independently from the agenda of biblical studies, has been increasingly emphasized.

The Study of Prophecy in Transition

That prophecy as a phenomenon is not restricted to the early Jewish or Christian realm has never been a secret. It is recognized by the Hebrew Bible, in which the “prophets of Baal” make their appearance (1 Kgs 18). Even for Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, there were acknowledged precursors in pre-Islamic Arabia (Hämeen-Anttila 2000b). The existence of extra-biblical prophecy has long been an issue for modern scholars as well. Phenomena and written documents related to biblical prophecy were sought in different sources and milieux, ancient and modern, already in the first half of the twentieth century (e.g., Hölscher 1914; Lindblom 1934/1962; Haldar 1945). This quest provided important insights, but was largely impeded not only by definitional unclarity, but also by the uncertainty about the distribution and nature of ancient Near Eastern prophecy because of the lack of pertinent sources.

The situation changed when the first letters with quotations recognized as prophetic words were found in the excavations of the eighteenth-century B.C.E. archives of Mari, an important city-state in the middle Euphrates region. The first two letters were published by George Dossin in 1948 (no.
38) and 1950 (no. 1), and the subsequent volumes of *Archives royales de Mari* (ARM), especially the female correspondence (ARM 10) published by Dossin in 1967, brought more cognate letters to scholarly notice. These sources inspired a lively scholarly involvement that produced a considerable amount of literature (Heintz 1990–2000). For decades, the Mari letters formed the primary extrabiblical evidence for prophecy in scholarly literature, even though the prophetic aspect in them and especially their equivalence to biblical prophecy did not remain unchallenged (e.g., Noort 1977). Since the criteria for classifying texts as prophecy were largely based on the study of the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible, many would avoid the use of the word “prophecy” outside the biblical context altogether. Moreover, the chronological gap of one millennium and more between Mari and the Bible presented problems for comparison, especially because little material was found outside the two corpora to tie them historically and phenomenologically together. Nevertheless, a few long-known documents of prophecy in West Semitic milieus, like the Egyptian report of Wenamon (no. 142) and the Zakkur Inscription (no. 137), as well as the Balaam Inscription from Deir ‘Allâ (no. 138), which became public knowledge in the 1970s, were there to testify that the biblical band of the “prophets of Baal” was not quite without historical foundation.

To be sure, divine messages to the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal from the seventh century B.C.E. had already been excavated in the middle of the nineteenth century from the ruins of Nineveh, which by the time of these kings had become the central capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Cuneiform copies and translations of most of these texts, actually referred to as “prophecy” by some contemporary scholars (e.g., Delattre 1889), were published as early as the 1890s. The revival of the comparative study of prophecy generated by the study of Mari letters left the Neo-Assyrian sources at first virtually untouched. The preliminary work done in the 1960s by Karlheinz Deller and Simo Parpola on the Nineveh tablets, which were far from easy to read and interpret, resulted only in the 1970s in scholarly contributions in which they were again recognized as prophecy (Weippert 1972; Dietrich 1973; Huffmon 1976a/b; cf. Merlot 1972: 880–81).

Even in the new phase of study, with two corpora of ancient Near Eastern prophecy from different places and periods, the complicated state of publication was a challenge that could be faced only with a well-developed bibliographical sense and a good knowledge of cuneiform sources. Relief for this situation was brought first by Jean-Marie Durand with the edition of the prophetic letters from Mari as a part of the first collection of the Mari correspondence (ARM 26/1, 1988), and finally by Simo Parpola who met a long-felt need with his edition of the Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracles (SAA 9, 1997).
Hence, when it comes to the study of ancient Near Eastern prophecy, the third millennium of our present era begins propitiously with two authoritative editions of the principal text corpora at hand. However, these volumes do not include all evidence of ancient Near Eastern prophecy. Some Mari letters with prophetic content are published or forthcoming in volumes of the ARM series subsequent to the edition of Durand. In addition, there are several ritual and administrative texts from Mari in which prophets are mentioned. As for the Neo-Assyrian sources, the edition of Parpola includes the tablets that are prophetic oracles as such, whereas other texts which refer to prophets or quote prophecy are dealt with in other publications (e.g., Nissinen 1998b; 2000a/b). The two oracles from Ešnunna (nos. 66–67), contemporaneous to those of Mari and published by Maria de Jong Ellis (1987), deserve special attention, representing the genre of prophetic oracles outside Mari and Assyria. Finally, the presence of persons with prophetic titles is amply documented in sources from the twenty-first to the second centuries B.C.E. from different parts of the ancient Near East.

The Nature of the Sources

The existing evidence of prophecy comes from all over the Fertile Crescent, witnessing to the wide distribution of prophets and proving prophecy to be a common cultural legacy which cannot be traced back to any particular society or place of origin. However, the evidence is very fragmentary. Of the many places and periods of time, we can say only that prophets were there, but little can be learned of their activities. Some significant ancient Near Eastern cultures reveal even less: Ugarit leaves us entirely in the dark, the Hittite evidence is equivocal and the Egyptian texts conventionally called prophecies are to be taken as literary predictions rather than the result of a prophetic process of communication (see below). An overall picture of ancient Near Eastern prophecy can be drawn only by filling many gaps with circumstantial reasoning and with the help of comparative material. To use an archaeological metaphor, the sources collected in this volume constitute only the defective set of sherds, of which the badly broken vessel must be restored.

Given the circumstances, the ancient Near Eastern evidence of prophecy consists entirely of written sources, even though it is probable indeed that prophecy was oral communication in the first place. The relatively small number of documents and their haphazard state of preservation for posterity indicate that writing was only exceptionally part of the prophetic process of communication, and that when it was, the written document was not necessarily filed in the archives, at any rate not for
long-term preservation. It is certainly not by accident that the majority of the prophetic documents come from Mari and Nineveh, which are in general the two most abundant Mesopotamian archives found thus far. On the other hand, the huge process of collecting, editing, and interpreting prophecy that took place as a part of the formation of the Hebrew Bible is virtually without precedent in the rest of the ancient Near East. Only in Assyria do the collections of prophetic oracles to Esarhaddon document the reuse of prophecy in a new situation, thus bearing witness to the modest beginnings of such a process.

The written sources that comprise the available documentation of ancient Near Eastern prophecy divide into different types. Some of these basically consist of little more than the wording of prophetic utterances, while in others, the words of the prophets—quotations of a known personality or literary paraphrases—are part of the text of another writer, often as one issue among others. In both cases, the way from the spoken word to a written record may be long and twisting, often employing several intermediaries between the prophet and the addressee. The messages transmitted by the prophets are exposed to all the stylistic, ideological and material requirements active in the process of transmission, which may carry beyond the oral stage into the written. Hence, the so-called *ipsissima verba* of the prophets are beyond reach, which only stresses the need to pay attention to the socioreligious preconditions of the whole process instead of the personality of the prophet (Nissinen 2000a).

A great number of texts do not quote words of the prophets but mention them in different contexts and in association with people representing different kinds of professions and social roles. These texts not only give the only available evidence of prophecy in certain periods and places, but also let prophets appear in a variety of social, cultic and lexical contexts. Taken together, these sources yield important insights, however random and scanty, into the socio-religious profile of the prophets—all the more because there are no major discrepancies between the sources in this respect, even though they derive from a time-span of more than one and a half millennia. Many of those from the Mesopotamian or cuneiform realm present prophets in close connection to the goddess Ištar, often associated with persons of distinctive behavior or bodily appearance.

### The Prophets

Who, then, are identified as *prophets* in the written sources? There is no single word for a prophet in any language represented in this book, that is, Akkadian, Egyptian, Hebrew, and other West Semitic. The justification for translating certain appellatives with the English word *prophet* is taken
from what the sources inform us about the persons in question. We have already noted that, as a rule, people who transmit divine words that allegedly derive from direct communication with a deity are called by modern interpreters prophets, whatever the original designation may be. All visionaries and dreamers cannot be lumped together as “prophets,” though, but the line between prophets and other practitioners of non-inductive divination is difficult to draw and may be partly artificial. As a result, there is no infallible definition of who should be called a prophet in each time, society and situation.

Some designations, nevertheless, have established themselves as prophetic ones. The widest range of attestations belongs to muḫḫûtu(m) (Babylonian)/maḫḫû (Assyrian) and the respective feminines muḫḫûtu(m)/maḫḫûtu, known from Old Akkadian through Old and Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian to Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian. At Mari, muḫḫûtu is the commonest prophetic title, whereas in Neo-Assyrian documents, maḫḫû appears only in literary contexts and in lexical lists. The word is derived from the root maḫ[u “to become crazy, to go into a frenzy,” which refers to receiving and transmitting divine words in an altered state of mind. This verb is actually used of the condition in which divine words are uttered (e.g., in nos. 23, 24, 33, 51). Many of the occurrences of this word family reveal nothing of the prophetic capacity of the persons thus designated, but whenever their activities are discernible to some extent, they either assume a cultic role (nos. 51, 52, 103, 118, 122) or convey divine messages (nos. 10, 12, 16, 25, 31, 32, etc.). In Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, prophecies are called šipir maḫḫû, “messages of the maḫḫû” (nos. 97–99, 101).

At Mari, there is another designation for persons who are involved in prophetic activities. The word in question is āpîtu(m) (fem. āpîtûm), from the root āpû “to answer.” The etymology suggests a transmitter of divine answers to human inquiries, and the āpîtu(m) actually does convey divine messages in the very same manner as the muḫḫûtu (e.g., nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8). It is difficult to recognize any substantial difference between these two groups of prophets. Durand has suggested that the oracles of an āpîtu(m) may have been provoked, unlike those of the muḫḫûtu(m) which were spontaneous, but the evidence is not unambiguous. In general, the activity of both classes is described in a similar way, although it seems that an āpîtu(m) could travel from one place to another, whereas the activity of a muḫḫûtu(m) was more restricted to the temple to which he or she was affiliated (see Durand 1988: 386–90; 1995: 322–28). In the light of the preserved sources, both groups show themselves to belong to a prophetic institution which had an established position in the society of Mari, although it apparently had a different social and political status from other kinds of divination, above all extispicy. According to the available
documentation, the messages of the prophets were transferred to the king by go-betweens, who were often the royal ladies of Mari. This indicates that the relation of the prophets to the king was more indirect than that of the haruspices (bārû); nevertheless, even direct contacts are not excluded (see Charpin 2001: 34–41; 2002: 16–22).

Prophetic activity at Mari was not restricted to people called muḫḫùtu(m) or ʾāpīlūtu(m). In a number of documents, there are people belonging to neither of these two groups who act as mouthpieces of deities. One of them is called “the qammatum of Dagan of Terqa,” whose message is reported in two different letters (nos. 7, 9). The word qammatum is of unclear derivation—if not a proper name, it may refer to a person with a characteristic hairstyle (Durand 1995: 333–34)—but the role of the female person in question is clearly prophetic. Moreover, a group with the appellation nābū, which has been regarded as etymologically related to Hebrew nāḇî’ “prophet” (Fleming 1993a/b/c; but cf. Huehnergard 1999), is made to deliver an oracle to the king of Mari (no. 26). Even two persons called assinnu, a “man-woman” whose gender role is changed from man to a genderless person, appear in prophetic function (nos. 7, 8, 22, 23); this is significant with regard to the undefinable sex of some Assyrian prophets and the repeated appearance of prophets grouped with assinnu in lexical and administrative lists (nos. 123, 124, 126, 130).

In Neo-Assyrian sources, the standard word for a prophet is raggimu, (fem. raggintu), which has replaced the word maḥḥū in colloquial use as well as in formal writing. Accordingly, the verb ragāmu “to shout, to proclaim” is used of prophesying (nos. 91, 109, 111, 113). Insofar as raggimu/raggintu can be taken as a general title of a prophet even in cases when the word is not explicitly used, which is plausible indeed, it is evident that they were devotees of Ištar of Arbela, whose words they usually transmitted. However, their activity was not restricted to the city of Arbela, and they could act as the mouthpieces of other deities, too. In Neo-Assyrian society, prophets seem to have enjoyed a somewhat higher status than their colleagues at Mari, especially in the time of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, who not only deposited a selection of their oracles in the royal archives but also were the only Assyrian kings to recognize the significance of prophetic messages in their inscriptions. This was probably due to their personal attachment to the worship of Ištar of Arbela.

The sources documenting prophecy from the West Semitic world add a few items to the list of prophetic designations. The three letters from Lachish (nos. 139–141), which constitute the only extrabiblical evidence of prophets in preexilic Israel, use the standard biblical word nābî’, whereas the Zakkar Inscription (no. 137) and the Deir ʿAllâ inscription (no. 138) know another title well attested in the Hebrew Bible, namely, ḥzb “seer, visionary” (Heb. hōzê). In apposition with this word, the
Zakkur Inscription uses the word ‘ddn, which, on the other hand, may be related to the Egyptian ‘dd ‘i “great seer” or the like, in the Report of Wenamon (no. 142).

**Texts Included and Excluded**

It is not always easy to distinguish prophecy from other oracular or divinatory activity and identify a person as a prophet, and the same holds true for recognizing a text as a specimen of prophecy. To be acknowledged as such, a text should reveal the relevant components of the process of transmission. This means that the implied speaker of the words uttered or quoted should be a deity, the implied addressee, respectively, a human being, and the message should be communicated to the addressee or recipient by a human being, the prophet. If this process of communication is only partly or not at all identifiable in the text, its prophetic nature is at issue and often cannot be unequivocally confirmed or denied. This problem is interwoven with the question of the often indefinable and even artificial borderline among prophecy, dreams and other visionary activity. Therefore, an absolutely water-tight set of criteria is difficult to create and the selection of prophetic texts remains debatable.

The texts included in this volume can be divided into three groups:

1. Oracle reports and collections, that is, the Neo-Assyrian oracles to Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, which are clearly represented as divine words proclaimed by prophets (nos. 68–96), and the oracles to King Ibalpiel II of Ešnunna (nos. 66–67), in which the prophet is not mentioned but the form and content suggest a prophetic origin. The Balaam text from Deir ʿAllā (no. 138), which seems to combine oracles or visions from different sources, as well as the Amman Citadel Inscription (no. 136), may be taken as further representatives of this type.

2. Quotations of prophetic messages in letters and other kinds of literature. This is the main type at Mari (nos. 1–50), and is also represented by an Amarna letter (no. 121), a number of Neo-Assyrian documents (nos. 103, 106, 107, 109, 111–115), Late Babylonian chronographic texts (nos. 134–135), as well as by the Zakkur Inscription (no. 137) and the Report of Wenamon (no. 142). That we have to do with prophecy is in most cases confirmed by the title of the person who speaks. However, this is not always the case, and the prophetic nature of the quotation may then be deduced from the literary context, the comportment of the person in question and the contents of the message.

3. Texts with references to persons having a prophetic title; these make up the miscellaneous group of the remaining sources, comprised of inscriptions (nos. 97–101), literary and religious texts (nos. 51, 52, 64, 118,
letters (nos. 105, 108, 119, 139–141), administrative documents (nos. 53–63, 102, 104, 110, 123, 130–132), omen texts (nos. 127-129) and lexical lists (nos. 120, 124–126).

Some texts, more or less frequently presented by other scholars as further representatives of ancient Near Eastern prophecy, are excluded from this volume:

1. Texts that are not compatible with the definition of prophecy as primarily transmissive activity, such as the Egyptian predictive texts referred to as “prophecies” (Lichtheim 1973–80: 1:139–84; Devauchelle 1994), and the literary predictive texts also called “Akkadian Prophecies” or “Akkadian Apocalypses” (Talon 1994: 98–114; cf. Ellis 1989; Nissinen 2001b). These are literary creations that share many elements with prophecies but probably do not go back to actual prophetic activities. However, as a part of the rootage of later apocalypticism (Lambert 1978; Lucas 2000), these texts are not without relevance to the study of prophecy and its learned interpretation.

2. Texts, in which the reference to prophecy is yet to be substantiated. Among these are the texts from Emar mentioning persons with the title munabbû-tatu and the like (Fleming 1993a/b/c; Lion 2000). While it is not excluded that the word is etymologically related to Hebrew nābî’ and Akkadian nabû attested as a prophetic designation at Mari (see, however, the critique of Huehnergard 1999), the contexts of the attestations do not unequivocally speak for the prophetic interpretation of the word and leave the door open for other possible explanations. This also holds true for the Hittite prayers in which the king seeks relief from plagues with the help of different kinds of divination—eventually, but not certainly, including prophecy of some kind (Weippert 1988: 297–99; Lebrun 1994).

3. References to āpilu in three texts from Nuzi (HSS 13 152:16; 14 149:6 and 14 215:16; see Mayer 1978: 140–41; Lion 2000: 23-24) and in a Middle-Babylonian omen from Assur (KAR 460:16; see Lion 2000: 24). In CAD A/2 170, these occurrences of the word āpilu are—probably wrongly—separated from those in Mari texts and given a different meaning. In the absence of complete editions, these texts are excluded, even though their relevance to this volume is acknowledged.

In addition, there is an interesting, though enigmatic, document that deserves a special mention. The Aramaic text in Demotic script, Papyrus Amherst 63, still lacks a complete edition and is, therefore, not included in the collection at hand. A full translation of the text is provided by Richard C. Steiner (1997), according to whom the text derives from an Aramaic-speaking community that had been first deported to Samaria by Assurbanipal, and later colonized in Upper Egypt. This long composition of poetry of different kinds (e.g., poems that share a common tradition with the biblical Pss 20 and...
includes a passage that bears a close resemblance to biblical and extra-
biblical prophecies. It presents an oracle of salvation spoken by Mar
(“Lord”), the chief god of the community, upon a lament expressed in the
first person singular (col. vi, lines 12–18; translation from Steiner 1997: 313):

Mar speaks up and says to me: “[Be] strong, my servant, fear not, I will
save your…. To Marah, if you will …., to Mar from your shrine and Rash,
[I shall destroy your] en[emy in] your days and during your years [your]
advers[a]ry will be smitten. [Your foes] I shall destroy in front of you; your
foot on their necks [you will place. I shall suppoirt your right (hand), I
shall crown you with posterity; your house…."

The relevance of this passage to the study of ancient Near Eastern prophecy
is beyond doubt, and it can only be hoped that an edition of Papyrus
Amherst 63 will soon evoke scholarly interest in the whole composition.

Conventions of Transcription and Translation

The transcriptions and translations of Akkadian are my own; those of
West Semitic texts and Egyptian were prepared by Choon-Leong Seow and
Robert K. Ritner respectively. Since a detailed linguistic analysis is not in
place in an anthology like this one, we have purposefully avoided aiming
at originality. Therefore, the reader is not likely to find revolutionary new
readings and interpretations but will notice that they rarely deviate sub-
stantially from the interpretations of Durand (ARM 26/1), Parpola (SAA 9),
and other standard editions. Restorations of fragmentarily preserved texts
also mostly follow their suggestions.

The West Semitic and Egyptian texts are given in transliteration,
whereas the Akkadian texts, according to the policy of the SBLWAW series,
are given in transcription rather than in sign-for-sign transliteration of the
cuneiform script. This way of presentation is chosen to make the text look
like a language rather than a cryptogram, and to give the non-cuneiformist
reader, more or less familiar with Akkadian, a better impression of the
phonetic structure of the original text. I am fully aware of how hazardous
an enterprise this kind of normalization is. In many cases, for example, the
length of the vowel or the phonetic form of the plural nouns can only be
guessed, and the different conventions of transcription may clash. I have
tried to be consistent in following the principles of the Neo-Assyrian Text
Corpus Project in Neo-Assyrian texts and those of von Soden (GAG) else-
where. However, uncertain transcriptions and downright mistakes are
likely to occur and are all my responsibility.

For these reasons, I cannot stress enough that the transcriptions are
prepared for the purposes of this volume and are not the original text but
an interpretation. Any serious work on them requires consulting the authoritative editions which are always indicated. Two texts (nos. 130, 132), however, are transcribed and translated here for the first time; previously, they were published in cuneiform copies only. All the other texts are adequately edited in other volumes, and the transliterations, which give a more accurate rendering of the cuneiform script, can be found in them.

The translations are not literal reflections of the wording of the original language but strive for modern, idiomatic and readable English. Akkadian phrases are not necessarily translated word for word, and parentheses are generally avoided even though a word in the translation may not have an exact equivalent in the original.

Unfortunately, the transliterations and translations of the Mari prophetic texts by J. J. M. Roberts (The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 157–253) appeared too late to be taken into account in this book.
Mari Letters

The ancient city of Mari was the capital of a kingdom that in the second half of the third and the first half of the second millennium B.C.E. was a significant political and economic power in the Near East. The kingdom of Mari occupied large areas on the middle Euphrates and the river Habur and controlled the principal trade routes between Babylonia and Syria. Since 1933, the temples and palaces of Mari have been unearthed in excavations at Tell Ḥarāṭi in modern Syria, located on the western bank of the Euphrates river only a few kilometers from the Iraqi border. The royal palace of Mari soon turned out to be a treasure trove of written records: more than twenty thousand tablets have been brought to light so far, thousands of which are still unpublished. The overwhelming majority of the tablets date from the time of Yasmal-Addu (ca. 1792–1775) and Zimri-Lim (ca. 1774–1760), the last kings of Mari prior to its destruction by Hammurabi, king of Babylon (for chronology, see Birot 1978; Anbar 1991: 29–37). The texts, published in the series Archives royales de Mari (ARM), include administrative documents of different kinds (expense texts, gift texts, texts concerning provincial administration, etc.), letters, treaties, ritual and omen texts and literary texts (Durand 1992).

Among the hundreds of letters excavated from Mari, a substantial dossier deals with divination. Besides the correspondence between the diviners and the king, dreams, oracles and ominous events are reported to the king by several individuals, mostly by high officials or royal ladies. Even prophetic oracles are frequently reported in letters, which are the only available source of information about the contents of prophetic messages at Mari. For this reason, the prophetic messages from Mari that have more or less intentionally been preserved for posterity present the words of the prophets only to the extent the writers of the letters have considered them worth quoting and bringing to the addressee’s knowledge. It was apparently not the standard procedure to communicate prophecies in
report format, that is, in tablets containing only the wording of the oracle proper—or if it was, such tablets were thrown away immediately after the messages had come to the notice of the addressee.

The fifty texts collected in this chapter include all letters that have hitherto been identified as prophetic sources, as listed by Heintz (1997a: 214) and complemented in later publications (e.g., Huffman 1997 and 2000). The selection is, of course, debatable, especially when dreams and visions are concerned. The latter can be seen and reported by prophets, but it is not always easy to distinguish prophecies from dreams and visions seen by people other than prophets. Not every dreamer qualifies as a prophet in Mari society, where the prophets clearly assumed distinctive roles under the aegis of their patron deities. Attempts have been made to separate dreams from prophecies altogether (Nakata 1982), and Durand arranges prophecies and dreams as separate groups in his edition (1988). Since, however, some dream reports—including the first “prophetic” text ever published (no. 38)—are conventionally counted among prophecies, and some of them explicitly mention prophets (nos. 35, 42), the relevant letters are included in this collection, even though the dreamer cannot always be unequivocally called a prophet. Evidently, the writers of the letters were less concerned about the person or social class of the speaker than about the message itself, all the more so because there is no fundamental difference between prophecies and dreams with regard to the contents of the message.

The comparability of prophecy with other oracular utterances is also visible from the fact that there is no single word for “prophecy” in the Mari documents. Instead, prophecies are referred to using words such as wērtum (nos. 1, etc.) and egerrû (nos. 17, etc.), which are not exclusively prophetic vocabulary but are used of different kinds of oracles. The variety of designations of persons involved in prophetic activity, already dealt with in the general introduction to this volume, demonstrates that there are several words for “prophet” as well. However, muḫḫum/muḫḫûm and ṣaḫḫû/ṣaḫḫûm are clearly the most common titles, showing in the letters a distribution of eleven/three and twelve/one, respectively. The assinu, whose role in the light of other Mesopotamian sources is not primarily prophetic (Nissinen 1998c: 28–34), is reported to have transmitted divine messages in four letters that give account of two persons designated with this title, Šešbum (nos. 7, 8, 23) and Ili-ḫaznaya (no. 22). The qammatum appears in three letters (nos. 7, 9, 13), two of which quote the same proverb, probably referring to one and the same oracle by the qammatum of Dagan of Terqa (nos. 7, 9). Whether the qammatum mentioned in number 12 refers to the same person cannot be discerned. The nabû appear only once (no. 26); the interpretation of the word as a prophetic designation is suggested by the etymology and the context.
Almost all published letters that are of relevance here date from the time of King Zimri-Lim. Two of them derive, however, from the time of Yasmalḫ-Addu, the predecessor of Zimri-Lim (nos. 3 and 34; see Charpin 2002: 33–38). Furthermore, number 36 is dated to the time of King Yaḫdun-Lim on orthographical grounds (Durand 1988: 469). Most of them are also addressed to Zimri-Lim, with the exception of two letters that mention other persons as addressees (no. 33: Dariš-libur, no. 45: Addu-duri). Even these two pieces of evidence may indicate that it was more common to quote oracles, dreams, and visions in private letters than the preserved documents reveal; the epistolary corpus at our disposal consists mainly of the correspondence of the royal court, eclipsing the private communication outside the court. By the same token, the strong concentration of the royal correspondence on administrative, political and cultic issues overshadows prophecies concerning private matters, which, even though they without doubt were delivered, have left only few traces in the archives (cf. nos. 8, 45).

Most of the letters with divine messages are written in the city of Mari. However, a definite number of them are posted from elsewhere, documenting prophetic activity in different cities and cult centers within the kingdom of Mari. These include Terqa, the second-ranking city of the kingdom and a prominent cult center of Dagan, as well as important provincial cities such as Tuttul, Saggaratum, and Qaṭṭunan. Some letters are sent from abroad, such as from the city-state of Andarig (no. 48). Even Aleppo (nos. 1, 2) and Babylon (no. 47), capitals of the neighbouring kingdoms, appear among the places where prophecies have been received, the divine speakers being Adad of Kallassu/Aleppo and Marduk of Babylon respectively.

In sketching the significance of prophecy and the place of the prophets in the Mari society, we are totally dependent on the more or less distorted and insufficient picture given by the letters written by persons other than prophets (Parker 1993). Among the senders of letters, Queen Śibtu and the royal ladies Inib-šina and Addu-duri, high officials at Mari (Sammetar, etc.) and in provincial cities (Kibri-Dagan, etc.), as well as Zimri-Lim’s delegates abroad (Nur-Sin), assume an important role. This clearly restricts the choice of subjects dealt with in the letters, for the letters refer to prophecies only according to the discretion of the writers, who do not necessarily quote the message word by word but present their own interpretations of what they consider the essential point of the message. In one letter (no. 48) it is reported that a prophet, an āpilum of Šamaš, had himself asked for a scribe to write down a divine message to the king. In yet another letter (no. 4), an āpilum of Šamaš, presumably the same person, is presented as the sender of the letter, but the impersonal introductory formula—“Speak to Zimri-Lim: thus the āpilum of Šamaš” instead of “Speak to my lord: thus NN, your servant”—may suggest that the actual writer of the message is someone else.
On the basis of the existing documentation it is warranted to conclude that prophets formed an established, though not the highest-ranking part of the divinatory apparatus used by the king of Mari (J. M. Sasson 1998: 116–19). Even though prophets seem to have communicated with the king more indirectly than haruspices and some dreamers, prophecies were regarded as significant enough to be reported to the king by others, especially when they dealt with important political matters or presented cultic demands. Some high officials and members of court seem to have regularly lent the prophets an ear. However, the validity of the prophetic oracle was often controlled by extispicy. This did not mean any underrating of prophecy as a divinatory method as such, but was needed to check and exclude the possible misinterpretations and other faults resulting from the vulnerability of the intermediary and the often tangled process of communication. For this purpose, the senders of the letters attached the prophet's hair and garment fringe (šārtum u sissiktum) to be used as representing the prophet during the process of authenticating the prophecy by extispicy; the word sissiktum, often translated as “hem,” probably means just a thin fringe of a garment (Durand 1988: 40). Even dreams were checked in the same way, using different kinds of divinatory methods (cf. no. 36); many times the authors of the letters suggest the “countersignature” of another diviner (nos. 38, 44).

As mouthpieces of deities, prophets were primarily servants of the gods whose words they proclaimed. The Mari prophets tend to be associated with a specific deity. They are often referred to as “NN prophet of DN,” for example, Abiya, āpilum of Adad (no. 2) and Lupalyum, āpilum of Dagan (no. 9). This indicates the attachment of the prophets to particular deities and temples. In many cases the prophecy is said to have been uttered and dreams to have been seen in the temple of a goddess or god. Among the deities speaking in the prophecies, the god Dagan (thirteen letters) and the goddess Annunitum, a manifestation of Ištar (five letters), most often have the word. In addition, several other goddesses (e.g., Belet-ekallim, Diritum, Ninḫursag) and gods (e.g., Adad, Šamaš, Marduk) speak through the mouths of the prophets and dreamers.

The outstanding theme of the prophecies, as can be expected of oracles embedded in the royal correspondence, is the well-being and the warfare of the king. Especially in the letters sent by the royal ladies, the king is advised to protect himself, whether as a part of the prophecies delivered or as the writer’s personal message attached to them (nos. 7, 14, 23, etc.). Many prophecies proclaim the victory of the king over his enemies and adversaries in general terms. The enemies in question are often called by name, which connects the prophecies with specific political crises (see Durand 1988: 399–402; Charpin 1992).

The rebellion of the Yaminites, the nomadic groups living on the southern side of the Euphrates, in about the fourth year of Zimri-Lim’s
reign, is the theme of numbers 10 and 38, and the oracles against the Yaminites are mentioned as a precedent for Zimri-Lim's peace preliminaries with Ibalpiel II, king of Ešnunna, in the sixth year of his reign in number 9. The peace with Ešnunna is explicitly opposed also in number 7 and, implicitly, in numbers 12 and 13—obviously in vain, since Zimri-Lim, despite the prophetic warnings, indeed engaged himself in an alliance with Ešnunna! The enemies mentioned in the prophecies also include Hammurabi, king of Kurda (no. 4), and the Elamites (no. 18), against whom Zimri-Lim was at war in his eleventh year. Another enemy was Išme-Dagan, who was of Yaminite origin, son of Šamši-Adad, king of Assyria, and brother of Yasmah-Addu, the predecessor of Zimri-Lim on the throne of Mari. Išme-Dagan was appointed by his father the king of Ekallatum in Assyria. He is mentioned not only as an aggressor against Mari (no. 17; cf. no. 48), but also as a refugee under the protection of Hammurabi, king of Babylon (no. 47). Zimri-Lim's war against Hammurabi is referred to in a number of encouraging oracles (nos. 19, 20, 22), but the hopes inspired by these oracles were dashed, since this war led to the final destruction of Mari.

Besides political and military matters, instructions concerning the maintenance of temples and their cult are well represented in the prophetic oracles transmitted to the king of Mari (nos. 4, 28, 30, 31, etc.). In some cases the king is reproached with neglect or insufficient care of the worship of certain deities (nos. 13, 25, 27, 29). Furthermore, doing the divine will also includes righteousness and social justice, as emphasized in the letters of Nur-Sin from Aleppo (nos. 1 and 2).

Some prophecies concern individual projects, such as the building of the city gate (no. 32) or a house (nos. 39, 46). Even private affairs, such as the miseries of Šešebum the assinnu (no. 8) and the servant girl of Zunana (no. 37), are sometimes reported; a couple of letters deal with the death (no. 53) or the name-giving (no. 44) of a royal child.

1. Nur-Sin to Zimri-Lim

Text: A. 1121 + A. 2731.


Speak to my lord: Thus Nur-Sîn, your servant:

3Once, twice, even five times have I written to my lord about the delivery of the zukrum to Adad and about the estate that Adad, lord of Kallassu, demands from us. Concerning the delivery of the zukrum to Adad, Alpan said to me in the presence of Zu-ḫadnim,6 Abi-šaṭi and Zuḫan7 as follows:

“Sacrifice the zukrum with oxen9 and cows! My lord, in the presence of all the people,1 told me to sacrifice the zukrum, saying: ‘Never shall he break an agreement with me!’”10 I have imposed witnesses on him. My lord should know this.

12Through oracles,9 Adad, lord of Kallassu, would stand by, saying: “Am I not Adad, lord of Kallassu, who raised him (scil. the king) in my lap and restored him to his ancestral throne?11 Having restored him to his ancestral throne, I again gave him a residence. Now, since I restored him to his ancestral throne, I may take the estate away from his
śa addinū 25 atabbal šumma lā kianna 26 erištī inaddin kussām eli kussēm 25 bītim eli bītim eperi eli eperi 26 ālam el ālim anaddinšum 23 u mātām šitu šituša 26 an erbiša anaddinšu

29 annītam āpilū iqḫū u ina tērētim 50 itanazzaz iñama appunamma 51 āpilum ša Addi bēl Kallassu 52 maskanam ša Alaḫtim ana nilṭa-tim 54 inazzar bēl li ʿiddī

54 pānānum inūma ina Māri wašbāku 53 āpilum u āpilum mimma awātam 56 ša iqablālim ana bēliya utār 57 īnanna šīḥa mātim šanītim wašbāku 56 ša esemmi u iqábbūnum 56 ana bēliya ulašqapar 49 šumma urram šēram mimma šīḥīlam ittabši 56 bēl šīkm ul iqabbī ummmāmī 49 awātam ša āpilum iqabīkum u maskanka 53 inazzar anmmītim ana šērīya 53 lā ṭašqarlam anumma ana šēr bēliya 53 alšplu-ram bēl li ʿiddī

60 [šanītam āpilum ša Addi bēl Ḥalab 66 itti Abul-ḥalim iškākum kīam iqbēm 48 ummamī ana bēlika šupur 47 ummāmī Addu bēl Ḥalab ul anākū 50 ša ina suṣbāṭiya urrab-bākuma 51 ana kussēm bit abika uteṛūka] 52 [iškēma itṭikā ul errīšš 53 ḫumma ḫablum u ḫablīltum] 54 šissikkum izzima dī shinu din 55 anannītam ša itṭika errīšš 56 annītam ša aspurakkum teppešma 57 ana patrimony as well. Should he not deliver (the estate), I—the lord of the throne, territory and city—can take away what I have given! But if, on the contrary, he fulfils my desire, I shall give him throne upon throne, house upon house, territory upon territory, city upon city. I shall give him the land from the rising of the sun to its setting."

29 This is what the prophets said, and in the oracles he (scil. Adad) was standing by all the time. Another matter: a prophet of Adad, lord of Kallassu, demands the area of Alaḫtim to be the estate. My lord should know this.

34 Previously, when I was still residing in Mari, I would convey every word spoken by a prophet or a prophetess to my lord. Now, living in another land, would I not communicate to my lord what I hear and they tell me? Should anything ever not be in order, let not my lord say: “Why have you not communicated to me the word which the prophet spoke to you when he was demanding your area?” Herewith I communicate it to my lord. My lord should know this.

36 [Moreover, a prophet of Adad, lord of Aleppo, came [with] Abul-ḥalim and spoke to him as follows: “Write to your lord the following: ‘Am I not Adad, lord of Aleppo, who raised you in my lap and restored you to your ancestral throne? I do not demand anything from you, When a wronged man or woman cries out to you, be there and judge their case. This only I
awātiya taqālma 58 màtam īstu šittiša ana erbīša 59 u màtkka matṭam anaddinakkum

60 laannītām ăpīlum ša] Addi bēl Ḫalab 61 maḫar A[b]lu-[ḫalim iqbēm 62 annītām bēlī lū īdi

3 For the historical background of this and other letters of Nur-Sîn, see Durand 2002: 59–97. This letter possibly refers to the oracle of Adad (lines 46–59) that Nur-Sîn quotes in A. 1968 (no. 2) (J. M. Sasson 1994: 314–16).
4 The word zuκrum is otherwise unknown; CAD Z 153 translates it as “pasture-land (?)” and AHw 1536 as “männliches Gesinde”; cf. CDA 449: “male personnel”. Since the word seems to have a meaning parallel to that of liātum (line 9) “cow, cattle” (CAD L 218; AHw 557–58 sub lītu), it is usually translated as “(male) cattle” or “livestock” (Dossin 1966: 78; cf. Ellermeier 1968: 49, 52; Lafont 1984: 11; Dietrich 1986: 85; Malamat 1998: 108). On the basis of the use of the word at Emar, however, it is probable that zuκrum is a commemorative sacrificial ritual; see Durand 2000: 132–33; Fleming 2000: 120–24.
5 Dossin 1966: 78 understood the word niΔlatum as a name of a city (cf. Ellermeier 1968: 52), as the determinative kī following it on line 32 would suggest. The virtual consensus, however, follows the suggestion of Malamat 1958: 68, 70 (cf. 1962: 148–149; 1998: 109), according to which niΔlatum is better translated as “estate, inherited property” (cf. naβālum “inherit” in the Akkadian of Mari, Ug. Ṿ̃l and Heb. naḇāla; see AHw 712 and cf. CDA 253: “transferred property”), whereas the kī sign is explained as a scribal error (Lafont 1984: 12).
6 A high official of Zimri-Lim who acted as his emissary in the West (Briot, Kupper, and Rouault 1979: 244; Durand 2002: 96).
7 For the reading zu-uk-ra-lām GU₄.HĀ, see Durand 2002: 140.
8 For this reading, see Durand 2002: 140.
10 The word tērtum is used of divine messages, in association with both inductive divination (extispicy) and prophecy; see AHw 1350–51 and the discussion in Anbar 1981 and Durand 1982: 45–47; 1988: 46, 379; 1997a: 125 who reckon with a double act of divination, performed both by an ăpīlum and by a haruspex (bārīm). This assumption, however, is not compulsory, since the phrase ina tērtum izuzzum lit. “to stand in oracles”, obviously denotes the divine presence in the process of divine-human communication mediated by the diviner, whether a haruspex or a prophet. On the other hand, it would be against the normal hierarchy of divinatory techniques to verify the result of extispicy by prophecy or dreams; see Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 68.
1. Nur-Sîn to Zimri-Lim

Photograph: Durand 2002: 133.
Copy: B. Lion in Durand 1993a: 44.

1. Nur-Sîn to Zimri-Lim

Text:

Photograph: Durand 2002: 133.
Copy: B. Lion in Durand 1993a: 44.

ana bēliya qibīma ʾumma Nūr-Sīn waradkāma ʾAbiya āpīlam ša Addi bēl Ḫaladīl ʾillekāmma kām ʾibēm ʾummāmī Adduma mātam kalāša ʾana Yaḥdūn-Lim addin ʾu ina kakkēya

Speak to my lord: Thus Nur-Sîn, your servant:

”Abiya, prophet of Adad, the lord of Ḫaladīl, came to me and said: “Thus says Adad: I have given the whole country to Yaḥdūn-Lim.”
mâbiram ul irşi 8 yâtam iżibma mätam ša addinüšulm 9 Šamši-Addu ad(di)n Šamši-Addu

Thanks to my weapons, he did not meet his equal. He, however, abandoned my cause, so I glave to Šamši-Adad the land I had given to him. 4 Šamši-Adad [...] [break]

... let me restore you! I restored you to the throne of your father’s house, 5 and the weapons with which I fought with Sea 6 I handed you. 4 I anointed you with the oil of my luminosity, 6 nobody will offer resistance to you.

Now hear a single word of mine: If anyone cries out to <you> for judgment, saying: ‘I have been wronged,’ be there to decide his case; answer him fairly. This is what I desire from you.

12 Šamši-Adad [...]

If you go [off] to the war, never do so [without consulting an oracle. [W]hen I become manifest in [my] oracle, go to the war. If it does [not] happen, do [not] go out of the city gate.”

17 This is what the prophet said to me. Now I have sent the hair of the prophet and a fringe of his garment to my lord].

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4 This refers to the ousting of Yaḫdun-Lim from kingship of Mari by Šamši-Adad who installed his son Yasmša-Addu at Mari in ca. 1793.
5 This, again, refers to Zimri-Lim’s rise to power in ca. 1775.
6 I.e., Tiamat, the mythical sea-monster. For parallels in ancient Near Eastern mythology, see Bordreuil and Pardee 1993a (Ugarit); Fronzaroli 1997 (Ebla); Heintz 1997b, 146–50 (Israel) and Wyatt 1998.
7 This should be understood literally, since such weapons were objects of veneration in Old Babylonian temples in general (van der Toorn 2000: 85), and A. 1858, a letter of Sumu-ila, shows that the very weapons of Adad of Aleppo were brought to the temple of Dagan at Terqa, the religious center of the kingdom of Mari (Durand 2002: 14–15).
8 This translation derives the word namrūtu from the root nurr; for the alternative translation “the oil of my victory”, see Durand 1993: 53–54; 2000: 84, who derives the word from the root mrr “to be bitter,” or in this case “to be superior.”
3. La’ûm to Yasmaḥ-Addu

Text: A. 3760.
Photograph: Charpin 2002: 35.
Transliteration and translation: Charpin 2002: 34.


14[mād M]ārī šalam 15[mātum šal]m[mat]

[Sp]eak [to my] lord: [Th]us La’ûm, your [servant]:

"Concerning the small ships of [Dagan], a prophet arose and, as he had repeatedly said to Binum and his servants, spoke as follows: "The small ships of Dagan..."

[break]

1 A servant of the temple ... as follows: "[...] and the silver of [...] . The big ship and small ship [...] must go to Tutul." My lord should know this.

Another matter: Today, on the twenty-seventh of the month of Ayyarum (VII),b I sent this tablet to my lord to Terqa. Byc the fifth of the month of Niggalum (VIII), the work in the temple [should be] completed up to the roof. The big ship and small ship [...] must go to Tutul. It is hard [work] to fill the terrace with earth [and] to carry [stones to the edge].

14 Mari is well [and the land is well].

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a Restoration by Charpin 2002: 34 on the basis of other letters of La’ûm (e.g., A. 4487+).

b The month names Ayyarum and Niggalum were used only in the time of Yasmaḥ-Addu; hence the dating of the letter to his time; see Charpin 2002: 38.

c The durative form of the verb nasāhum “to elapse” indicates here a future date, in contrast with line 7, where the preterite form refers to the date of the sending of the letter (hence the translation “today”).

d The word ruqhīm usually stands for “loft, roof-room”; the plural may in this case denote the roof itself. The unpublished letter A. 4487+5–7, quoted by Charpin 2002: 36, reports the covering of the temple of Dağan with ruqhīm: sipir bit Dağan qamīr ruqhīm[a]n anu sūllūnum nadē “The work at the temple of Dağan is completed; the roof is raised to shelter it.”
4. An ṣāpīlum of Šamaš to Zimri-Lim

**Text:** ARM 26 194 (= A. 4260).

**Photograph:** Durand 1988 (microfiche).

**Transliteration and translation:** Durand 1988: 417–19.


[an]la Šim[i]-L[i]m qa[lb̩]ma 2) umma ṣāpīlum liša [Šal]mašma
3) umma Šamašma bêl māṭim anāk(a) 4) kussêm rabēm ana [š]ubat la[ll]ya
5) u māratka ša ērisūka 6) arḫiš ana Sippa[r] [l]al halātim lisšāmitteru 7) [an]numma šarrī ša ana [pān]ika
8) i[izz]izānimkum u i[s]labḫuš[š]in[ika]
9) [al]na qa[l]tika iknušîl 10) [al]numma gurāntum il[a] māṭin
11) [al]numma gurāntum il[a] māṭin
12) [al]numma gurāntum il[a] māṭin

Speak to Zimri-Lim: Thus the prophet of Šamaš:

3) Thus says Šamaš: “[I am] the lord of the land! Send quickly to Sippar, the city of life, a great throne for my enjoyable dwelling, and your daughter b whom I desired from you! Now the kings who confronted you and regularly plundered you have submitted to your plowboy. Now the help (of the enemies' corpses?) d is given to you in the land!

13) Concerning the portion consecrated to Adad, about which I had written to you through Kanisanum before the defeat, gather all the consecrated portion and let it be taken to the temple of Adad in Aleppo. As to the present for Dagan [about which the prophet spoke to you], give it and may it bring you your life and your existence. h

24) Another matter: Ner[gal], king of Šub[š]alum stood at your and your army's side when you defeated (the enemy)! Have them produce whatever you have vowed, including the large sword of bronze. They should
be delivered for Nergal, king of Ḫubšalum.”

Another matter: thus says Šamaš: “Hammurabi, king of Kurdâ, has [talked deceptfully with you, and he is contriving a scheme]. Your hand will [capture him] and in [his] land you will promulgate an edict of restoration. Now, the land in [its entirety] is given to your hand. When you take control over the city and promulgate the edict of restoration, [it shows] that your kingship is eternal.

[An]other matter: let Zimri-Lim, governor of Šamaš and Adad, listen to what is written on this tablet and let him send my [adversary to Ḫimdiya].”

Reading [a-la-šim] with Durand 1988: 417. The mentioning of Sippar hardly means that the prophet speaks the words of Šamaš of Sippar (so Malamat 1998: 67–68), since he is to be identified with the āpilum who writes to Zimri-Lim from Andarig in ARM 26 414 (no. 48); cf. Charpin 2001: 31; 2002: 14–15.

The daughter in question is probably Erišti-Aya, who lived as a nad•tum in the temple of Šamaš (see Durand 2000: 390–91); her correspondence includes the letters ARM 10 36–43.

Reading a-[li]-qa-[ti]-ka ik-nu-ši] according to the collation of M. Guichard; see Charpin 2002: 30 n. 189.

The reading and translation can be only tentative. Durand 1988: 418–19 reads gūr-na-[tum] taking it as a variant of g/qurunnum “heap” (see AHw 930). For a similar idea, cf. ARM 26 217 (no. 27): 25.

Possibly identical with Kanisan, the sender of no. 12 (ARM 26 202).

I.e., the defeat (damdûm) of the enemies; cf. line 26.

The beginning of the sentence can also be read as referring to the personal name of the prophet: [ša Qilšī-Dagan] āpilum išbēkum “[As Qilšī-Dagan, the āpilum, spoke to you” (Durand 1988: 419).

Thus according to the restoration of Durand 2000: 88.

Lit. “his hand is busy elsewhere”; for this expression, cf. Durand 2000: 89.


Lines 44–46 according the new reading of Michael Guichard; see Durand 2000: 89; Charpin 2002: 31 n. 193. Ḫimdiya ruled as the king of Andarig after Atanrum.
5. Addu-duri to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 195 (= A. 3420 = ARM 10 53).


[S]peak [to] my lord: [Th]us Addu-duri, your [serv]ant:

⁴In the temple of Hišamîtim,⁴ a [p]rophe[t] called Iši-aḫu arose and said:


b Thus according to the collation of Durand 1988: 421.

6. Šamaš-našir to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 196 (= A. 3719).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

[a]n[a] bêliya ²[qibîma ³[um]ma Šamaš-našir ⁴[waradîkâma

Speak to my lord: Thus Šamaš-našir, your servant:
When my lord decided to undertake the campaign, he gave me the following instructions: “You reside in the city of God. Write to me whatever oracle is delivered in the temple of God and which you hear.” Since that day, I have not heard anything in the temple …

"Now, let them call [Tišpak] before me and I will pass judgment." So they called on Tišpak for me, and Dagan said to Tišpak as follows: ‘From Šinaḫ (?) you have ruled the land. Now your day has passed. You will confront your day like Ekallatum.’

This is what happened before Dagan, and Yakrub-El said: "Ḥanat says: ‘Be not neglectful of the judgment that you passed.’"

Another matter: the grain of the ploughs of the palace of the district of Terqa has been brought into Terqa.

Or: “Whatever I have heard in the temple of God” (without ul).

For this deity, see J. M. Sasson 1995a: 289–90. The point is that the “judgment” of Dagan, the principal god of Mari, over Tišpak, the god of Ešnunna, corresponds to Zimri-Lim’s hoped-for victory over Ibalpiel II of Ešnunna. For historical circumstances, see Charpin 1991; 1992: 22–25.


For this interpretation of the unique spelling i-ut/-ka, see Durand 1988: 423 and cf. the expression ummāšu qerbā ARM 26 212 (no. 22):8 (see Heintz 1971b).

Thus J. M. Sasson 1994: 309; 1995a: 288. If the verb iqbi refers to a human speaker of the divine words, possibly mentioned in the destroyed part of the letter, the speaker is a prophet (van der Toorn 1998a; Charpin 2002: 29 n. 177).

A goddess of the town on the Euphrates with the same name (see J. M. Sasson 1995a: 290–91).
7. Inib-šina to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 197 (= A. 1047 = ARM 10 80).
Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 35.

Speak to my star: Thus Inib-šina:

“Some time ago, Šebelum, the assinu, delivered to me an oracle and I communicated it to you. Now, a qammatum of Dagan of Terqa came and spoke to me. She said:

11The peacemaking of the man of Ešnunna is false: beneath straw water runs, I will gather him into the net that I knot. I will destroy his city and I will ruin his wealth, which comes from time immemorial.”

This is what she said to me. Now, protect yourself! Without consulting an oracle do not enter the city! I have heard people saying: “He is always distinguishing himself.” Do not try to distinguish yourself!

Pet name for Zimri-Lim, used by the ladies belonging to the most intimate family circle.
Sister (rather than daughter) of Zimri-Lim. According to Durand 2000: 402, she was the high priestess of Adad.
This proverb, quoted also in ARM 26 199 (no. 9) and 202 (no. 12), is usually understood in the meaning “things are not what they seem” (Ross 1970: 17–18; cf. Moran 1969a: 54; 1969b: 632); J. M. Sasson 1994: 306; 1995b: 607, however, remarks that above running water there can only be moving straw which makes the danger even more obvious to the beholder.

Rather than “he knots,” which is grammatically possible.

Thus Durand 1988: 424 (a-na li-ib-bi a-lim[i]),

The Gtin form of the root štar can be translated only tentatively. This translation follows the suggestion of Durand 1988: 424 (cf. Parker 1993, 63), according to whom štar means here “to shine brilliantly” (cf. štar “shine”).

8. NN to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 198 (= A. 3912).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

[beginning destroyed]

1′ u Zimri-Lim ana Māri [isakhturu šina im(merū liittū)]

3′ šanītam Šēlebu[m ilikamal]

7′ kīam iplina umma šūma šikāram idatat tam itti Annu[nitum ikimū]

9′ inīmua ana isātim gēham ašūbūl

12′ u ina muṣḥtim bab[assam] šīmah gēhim iddinūnīm

14′ ina[n ṣīmīsu ṣītu adh nakīrim] šakīdū ṣinnūn ș̱al[līššu] šibātim usba u anāku m[a][d][l][s] zē u šīnāni waṣḏāku ṣu[qa][n][m ț][l]minim?? akkal]

[break]

[beginning destroyed]

3′ [ina pi Šēlebu ilqāhēm aštur]

5′ [tt]anna anumma šārtam šu sissiktam ša Šēlebu[im…] [break]

[rest destroyed]
9. Sammetar to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 199 (= A. 925 + A. 2050).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

Speak to my lord: Thus Sammetar, your servant:

LupaΔum, prophet of Dagan, arrived here from Tuttul. The message that my lord entrusted him in Sagaratum: “To Dagan of Terqa entrust me!”—this message he transmitted and they answered him: “Wherever you go, joy will always find you! Battering ram and siege-tower will be given to you, and they will travel by your side; they will be your companions.” With this message they answered him in Tuttul.

On his arrival from Tuttul, I had him taken to Dir and he took my bolt to Diritum. Previously, he had brought a šernum saying (to Diritum): “The šernum is of no use; it is waterlogged. Reinforce the
Now he brought my bolt, and this was his message: “What if you (= Diritum) are negligent, trusting in the peacemaking of the man of Ešnunna? Your guard should be stronger than ever before!”

To me he spoke: “What if the king, without consulting God, will engage himself with the man of Ešnunna? As before, when the Yaminlîtes came to me and settled in Saggaratum, I was the one who spoke to the king; ‘Do not make a treaty’ with the Yaminites! I shall drive the shepherds of their clans away to Ūbur and the river will finish them off for you.” Now then, he should not pledge himself without consulting God.” This is the message LupaΔum spoke to me.

Afterwards, on the following day, a qammatum of Dagan of T[erqa] came and spoke to me: “Beneath straw water runs. They keep on sending to you messages of friendship, they even send their gods to you, but in their hearts they are planning something else. The king should not take an oath without consulting God.”

She demanded a laΔarûm-garment and a nose-ring, and I gave them to her. Then she delivered her instructions in the temple of Belet-ekallim to the high priestess Inîb-înî.

The report of the words that she spoke to me I have hereby sent to my lord. Let my lord consider the matter and act in accordance with his great majesty.

As regards Yašûb-Dagan, the beḫrum soldier from Dašran,
whose head my lord told me to cut off, I immediately sent Abi-Epu. They did not find this man, so he (scil. Abi-Epu) sold his household and his personnel to slavery. On the following day a tablet from Yasim-Dagan arrived with the following message: “The man has arrived.” Now, let my lord write to [me] some indication of whether or not I should release his personnel.

nakāsim bēli išpuram qātam \(^6\) ana qātim Abi-Epu ḫṣur awilum šati ulūmūma āssu u nīlīššišu \(^6\) ālīna waštātīm ṭaddā ina šānīm ūnīm ūppi Yasim-Dagan ikšūdānum \(^6\) ināmmāni awilum šu īkṣēdadām inanna annītam lá annītam bēli lišpuralm \(^6\) nīšēšu luwašser

\(^{a}\) For this person, see also M. 11436 (no. 62) and A. 3796 (no. 53). On the basis of M. 11436, this letter can be dated to Zimri-Lim’s fourth year.

\(^{b}\) In concrete terms, this probably means investigating oracles.

\(^{c}\) For this expression, see Beck 1993.

\(^{d}\) The exact meaning of šērum, a wooden object, can only be guessed. CAD M/2: 30 suggests “log”.

\(^{e}\) Lit.: “touch his throat,” designating a symbolic act of validating a treaty.

\(^{f}\) Lit.: “kill a donkey foal,” also referring to an act of treaty-making, for which see Charpin 1993; Lafont 2001: 262–71.

\(^{g}\) For this reading, see Charpin 2002: 25 n. 149, who reckons with a pun on the names of Ḩabur, a tributary of the Euphrates, and the underworld river Ḥabur. For the interpretation ūbburrē qinnātīšunu (“I shall send them away to their scattered haunts”) see Durand 1988: 428, who derives ūbburrē from Ḫabārū “to leave one’s domicile, to be exiled” and translates qinnu with “nest.” Cf. J. M. Sasson 1995b: 601 n. 7.

\(^{h}\) Or: “I will stop the river for you,” reading ḫ._DA as an accusative (nāram).

\(^{i}\) See no. 7 (ARM 26 197), note d.

\(^{j}\) The meaning of the expression šārum šānūm remains essentially the same, whether šārum should be literally translated as “wind” (J. M. Sasson 1995b: 601) or as “enemy” (AHw 1195: šārum III).

\(^{k}\) A hapax legomenon designating a piece of clothing of unknown kind. Durand 1994: 59 connects the name with the city of Laḫara in southeastern Mesopotamia.

\(^{l}\) For Yansib-Dağan from Dašran in the district of Terqa, see Durand 1988: 429. The same person is probably mentioned also in ARM 13 110 and, possibly, in A. 3796 (no. 53).

\(^{m}\) The word behrum can be derived from behārum “to choose” (AHw 117–18), thus designating an elite soldier, or it can be read as piḫrum, which means a conscript soldier (Durand 1998b: 362).
10. Āhum to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 200 (= M. 6188).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

[ana] bēliya 2qi̯ibīma 3[um]ma Āhum šangām ša [Annunitum
1waradkāma
2Ḫubatum muḫḫūtum 6tiṣratam
kišam iddin
4ummāmi šāru ana māṭīm] 8uebbēm
u kal[pīš[u] 9u šitta ta-ak-ka[...] 10aššūni[t][11][Zimri-Līm] 12u mār
gāl[ika] 15Zimrī-Līm] 16mā[tam kkalā-
ša lā tuṣāyi]

17u itūrma kīlām iqbi] 18ummāmi
mārī Yamī[n]a] 19amminim tupal-
[las] 20ašāka
21annītam muḫḫūtum ši [iqbi] 22u
anumma šārtam u 23sissīktam ša
simnītim šāli 24ana šēr bēliya
ūstābilam

[Speak] to my lord: [Thus Āhum, priest of [Annunitum], your [ser-
vant]:
Ḫubatum, the prophetess, deliv-
ered the following oracle:

“A wind will rise against the
land! I will test its wings and [its]
two . . .[.]—[let] Zimri-Līm and
the Sim[’]alite [do] the harvest[ing]!
Zimrī-Līm, do not let the land in
its entirety [slip] from [your]
hand!”

Again she [spoke]: “O Yami-
nites, why do you cause wor-
ry? I will put you to the proof!”d

This is what this prophetess
[said]. I have now sent the hair and a
fringe of the garment of this woman
[to] my lord.

---

a The verb šāluwn ‘to ask’ seems here to have the meaning “to find out,” “to put
to the test”; cf. line 20.

b An obscure word. Durand 1988: 429 restores takkāltūš[u] and translates “its two
necks”; another alternative would be takkālrūš[u] “its two holes.”

c “The Sim[’]alite,” whether referring to Zimri-Līm himself or to his tribal back-
ground (note that the conjunction u “and” seems to indicate a difference between
the two), marks the opposition of the two groups of Haneans, the Yaminites and
the Sim[’]alites; see Charpin and Durand 1986: 150–51 and cf. no. 38 (ARM 26
233), note c.

d See note a.
11. Ḫadi-Lim to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 201 (= A. 368 = ARM 6 45).
Copy: Kupper 1953: pl. 47.

Speak [to my lord: Thus Ḫadi-Lim, your servant:

The city of Mari, the palace and the district are well.

Another matter: Aḫum, the priest, has brought [me] the hair and the garment fringe [of a prophetess, and her complete report is written on the tablet that Aḫum has sent to [my lord]a

Herewith I have conveyed the tablet of Aḫum together with the [hair and a fringe of the garment of the prophetess [to] my lord.

a It is possible that Ḫadi-Lim refers here to no. 10.

12. Kanisan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 202 (= M. 11046).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

Speak [to my lord: Thus Kanisan, your servant:

Kibri-D[agan], my father, [wrote to me] in Mari. [This is what] he wrote:
12. Kanisan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 203 (= A. 963).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).


17[annûtam Kibî-Daglan iṣpurâ] 18[pêlî ana šûlimîšu têrêtim 19[sûpu- šim […]

[break of four lines]

13[bêlî] là ulla[patam nîgam liqę̂̄m- ma litta[ka]m]

7[‘I heard] the words [that] were uttered [ín the temple of Dagan. This is what [they] spoke to me: ‘Be[neath straw] water ru[ns].’ The god of my lord has come! He has delivered his enemies in his hands.’ Now, as before, the prophet broke out into constant declamation.”

17This is what Kibî-Daglan wrote [to me]. My lord [should not be negligent in] letting [oracle]s be delivered for his [own] goo[d…]

[break]

“Let my lord not tarry, let him perform a sacrifice and let him go!

8 See no. 7 (ARM 26 197), note d and cf. no. 9 (ARM 26 199). Note that the speaker of this expression is here a muḫḫûm, not a qammaṭum, as in the two other instances.

13. NN to Zimri-Lim
The restorations follow those of Durand and, because of the very poor state of preservation of the tablet, are by no means certain.

The word *sarabum* is probably an equivalent of *šar(ā)būm* “cold” (Durand 1988: 432).

Lit.: “kills.”

On the *uḫba*-garment, see Durand 1983a: 403–6.

14. Inib-šina to Zimri-Lim

**Text:** ARM 26 204 (= A. 2264 = ARM 10 81).

**Copy:** Dossin 1967: pl. 35.


—

*čanaka* /kakabš‘a/ /umma Inib-šināma
*Itnahāna āḏilītum /ṭībīma qām idhub
‘umma Zimri-Lim adi šarrāqēšu
*štu ḫayēbēšu ša itātśu /šab‘urē*

[three unreadable lines]

[lā asarīlak /lā /lā /śamma /lā /išakkan


*kakabš‘a /p-garšu liššur

Speak to my Star: Thus Inib-šina:

—

*Itnahāna, the prophetess, arose and spoke as follows:

“Zimri-Lim, as long as his thieves [and] enemies who are circling about his borders […]”

—

“[He is not to] go anywhere […] he is not to buy, he is not to store up.”

—

Now I give you my hair and a fringe of my garment. The purification should be performed. I have herewith also sent (another) hair and (another) garment fringe to my Star. My Star [should let] oracles be taken, and according to the oracles my Star should act.


—

The translation is conjectural because of the fragmentary context.
15. NN to Zimri-Lim

**Text:** ARM 26 205 (= ARM 25 816 = M. 7306).
**Photograph:** Durand 1988 (microfiche).
**Translation:** Durand 1994: 57–58.

[beginning destroyed]
1'[u ina id[i bi]lillikâ hizzizzû] 2'ina šalšim karâšîm] 3'kâsam lîhpû 4'anâ mâtîm šâpi(lîm] 5'du'ummatum iš(šakkan] 6'išāt an[a tillâtim tušâš-šerîš]


[rest destroyed]

---

[a] The reconstruction and interpretation of this text are extremely difficult; the interpretations of Durand are followed here.
[b] Or: “let them go” (lîlikû); the reconstruction is conjectural.
[c] According to Charpin 2002: 29 this may designate the kingdom of Larsa in Southern Babylonia.
[d] The interpretation of iš-â is unclear; Durand 1988: 433 reads it as a st. abs. form of eṣîtum “confusion.”
[e] On tillâtum, see Veenhof 1982: 128-33 and cf. ARM 26 207 (no. 17).
[f] Derived from lâpâtum (imp. sg.3.f.) “to touch”, following a suggestion of J. M. Sasson; this implies a female author of the letter. Durand 1988: 434 interprets the word as a precative form of petû “to open.”
[g] For this gesture (pûtam lâpâtum) in taking omens, see Durand 1988: 39.
16. [Yaqqim-Addu?] to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 206 (= A. 3893).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

Sp[eak] to my [lord]: Thus [Yaqqim-Addu, your] servant:

A prophet of Dagan came to me [and spoke as follows]. This is what he said:

"Verily, what shall I eat that belongs to Zimri-Lim? [Give me] one lamb and I shall eat it!"

I gave him a lamb and he devoured it raw [in front of the city gate. He assembled the elders in front of the gate of Saggaratum and said: "A devouring will take place. Give orders to the cities to return the taboo material. Whoever commits an act of violence shall be expelled from the city. And for the well-being of your lord Zimri-Lim, clothe me in a garment."

This is what he spoke to me. For sake of the well-being of [my] lord, I clothed [him] in a garment.
16. [Yaqqim-Addu?] to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 207 (= A. 996 = ARM 10 4).
Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 3.

\[\text{ana } bēliya \ qibīma } 2 \text{umma } Šīţtu \ \text{amatkāma} \]
\[\text{aššum } ūm } \text{gerrīm } 3 \text{sa } bēli \ \text{ilalā} \]  
\[\text{ittātim } 2\text{kāram } \text{u } \text{simništam } 6 \text{ašqi } \]
\[\text{ašṭlma } \text{igerrīm } 7 \text{ana } \text{bēliya mādiš } \]
\[\text{damiq } 8 \text{ana } \text{Bēme-Dagan } \text{gāmtamma } \]

Speak to my lord: Thus Šīţtu, your servant:

3Concerning the campaign my lord is planning, I gave drink to male and female persons to inquire about signs. The oracle is
On Śibtu, the queen of Mari, wife of Zimri-Lim and daughter of Yarim-Lim, king of Aleppo, and her extensive correspondence with her husband, see (Artzi and) Malamat 1998: 175–91; Ziegler 1999: 54–56.

extremely favorable to my lord. Likewise, I inquired of male and female about Išme-Dagan. The oracle is unfavorable to him. The report concerning him goes: “He will be placed under the feet of my lord.”

They said: “My lord has raised a ḫumāṣum!4 Raising the ḫumāṣum against Išme-Dagan he says: ‘I will beat you with the ḫumāṣum! Wrestle as much as you can, I shall win the match!’”

I said: “Will my lord come near to a conflict?” They answered: “There will be no armed conflict! For as soon as his (Zimri-Lim’s) auxiliaries arrive they will be scattered. The head of Išme-Dagan will be cut off and placed under the feet of my lord, saying: ‘The army of Išme-Dagan is large, but even if [his] army is large, his auxiliaries have scattered it. My auxiliaries are Dagan, Šamaš, Itur-Mer, Belet-ekallim, and Adad, the Lord of Decisions, who go beside my lord.’”

Perhaps my lord would say this: “She has [made them speak] by fraudulent means.” But I did not make them speak anything. They speak voluntarily — they could resist as well! They say: “The auxiliaries of Išme-Dagan are prisoners. When they fall into deceit and distress with him, they will not take heed of his [word]. Before my lord’s arrival, his army will be dissipated.”


umma šunūma bēli ḫumāšam iššīl 15. ana Išme-Dagan ḫumāšam iššīma 16. umma ina ḫumāšim ele’ika 17. šituṣum šituṣma 18. ina šituṣu ele’ika


35. assurri bēli kēm īlabbāši 36. ummāmī ina belāni uš prawēšsunītā 37. minnā ul nišālaḥbašsunītā 38. šunūma idabbedi šunūmā 39. inhabbaš sunūmā intaqātāšū 40. umma šunūma tillāt Išme-[Dagan] 41. asīru ina sarriṭimma 42. ul dišātum ittišu itanašā 43. awāšu uš ilqāqū 44. ina pāni bēliya šābūšu 45. [Isappah]
Lit. “The signs, male and female, I gave to drink, making an inquiry,” reading the beginning of line 6 as aš-qi with Durand 1982b: 43–44. The two verbs ašqi ašṭalaḫa constitute an asyndetic construction, indicating that the inquiry is made by giving drink to the persons in question (Wilcke 1983). The grammatical object of this hendiadys is somewhat unclear. While Durand 1982b: 1984b takes itîtim zikāram u sinništam as the object, thus interpreting the male and female persons as signs, J. M. Sasson 1994: 308 reckons with a double accusative: “I gave male and female the signs to drink,” thus assuming that the drink itself contains the signs to be rendered into understandable oracles by the ones who drink it (cf. ARM 26 208 [no. 18]:11’–25’). The divinatory technique, mentioned also in ARM 26 212 (no. 22):2’ (cf. M. 9717 [no. 65] r. 3’), remains obscure. Well imaginable as it would be, it is not certain whether the drink is alcoholic (so Durand) or otherwise intoxicating; in any case, the men and women in question are affected by it (or by the hospitality of Šībṭu; thus Wilcke) to the extent that they utter the inquired oracles. —Butler 1998: 153–54, following Finet 1982: 51–52, translates “I have asked for omens from the male and female ecstatic(s),” reading the beginning of line 6 as MAH, and interpreting it as an ideogram for μuḫḫûm.

The word egerrûm “speech omen” has been perceived as “chance-heard remark or sound which is perceived as portentous by its hearer” (Cryer 1994: 160; cf. Oppenheim 1954/56). According to Butler 1998: 152, an egerrûm “may derive from a wider spectrum of auditory experiences, which are deemed to be ominous, possibly by hindsight.” In this case, egerrûm is clearly an answer to an oracle query. The analysis of Durand 1988: 385 shows that, at least at Mari, it is one of the terms for prophetic discourse. Cf. also ARM 26 196 (no. 6).

d The meaning of the word ḫumāšum can only be guessed; for a survey of its occurrences, see von Soden 1955: 142. Since it is the object of the verb našû “to lift,” it probably means a conrete object (Moran 1969a: 47 n. 4). Dietrich 1986: 84 translates “Ringkampflammer” (= umāšum, see AHW 1412; cf. J. M. Sasson 1974), whereas Durand 1988: 436 (cf. 1984: 154; 2000: 323) interprets the word as “rod, cane.”

e On tillatum, see Veenhof 1982: 128–33.

i The word diṣṭum “distress” is derived from diṣum “to plague, harass.”
18. Šibtu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 208 (= A. 2233 = ARM 10 9).


Speak to my lord: Thus Šibtu, your servant:

The palace is well.

On the second day, Qiṣṭi-Dirītim, a prophet of Dirītim,[2] came to the gate of the palace and sent to me the following message: “Nobody will rise against the throne of Mari. It is Zimri-Lim to whom the Upper Country[5] is given. [He will break] the lance of the Elamite[9]. This is what [he spoke].

More[over, …]

This says [Ea: “…” the family […] let us mind] the oath[9]. Where [there is] water[9] we mind the oath.”

He called[ed] the god Ašumūm,[8] and Ašumūm [came] quickly, saying[ing] a word to Ea. What Ašumūm [said], I did not hear. [Ea] ro[se] and said: “[Because] we shall declare [an oath], let door-jamb dištir[5] from the gate of [Mari] be brought to us, and [we shall mind] the oath.”

Door-jamb dirt from the gate[5] of Mari was brought and dissolved in water. The gods and the
The goddess Diritum is the patron deity of the town called Dir, probably the local manifestation of Istar (as the sequence Istar–Istar Diritum–Annunitum in ARM 24 263 suggests; cf. Talon 1980). The goddess enjoyed in the time of Zimri-Lim an extensive veneration at Mari, but the location of Dir is disputed. It is hardly identifiable with the Transtigridian religious center with the same name, but should be sought in the vicinity of Mari. See the discussion in Birot 1972: 134–36; Nakata 1974: 152–160; J. M. Sasson 1979: 131; 1982: 151–52; Lambert 1985: 529; Oliva 1994.


This reading is based on the collation and reconstruction of Durand 1988: 437.

Only the remains of the determinative of a divine name is readable here; the reconstruction is based on the role of the god Ea in the following lines of this letter.

For the phrase *nīš ilīm ṣāsāsum*, used in ARM 14 89 and 106 besides *nīš ilīm zakārūm*, see Birot 1974: 237 and Heimpel 1999, who makes a distinction between “declaring” (*zakārūm*) and “minding” (*ṣāsāsum*) an oath.

Thus according the reconstruction of Moran 1969a: 50.

On this god, probably identical with Usumu, the Janus-faced vizier of Ea, see J. M. Sasson 1982: 155 n. 2 with further references.


Cf. ARM 26 207 (no. 17) and 212 (no. 22).

Thus according to the interpretation of J. M. Sasson 1995a: 286 n. 10, reading *ṭi-ha-a* and interpreting it as a contracted imperative 2. pl. of *ṭīḥām* (for *ṭīḥā") Durand 1988: 438 reads *ṭi-ha-a*, interpreting it as a stat. pl. 3. f. of *ṭiḥām* and connecting *ana ilī* with it, hence the translation “Est-il agréable aux dieux…?”
| 19. Mukannišum to Zimri-Lîm |

**Text:** ARM 26 209 (= A. 4996 = ARM 13 23).


Speak to my lord: Thus Mukannišum, your servant:

"I have made the offerings for Dagan for the sake of the life of my lord.

A prophet of Dagan of Tut[l]ul arose and spoke as follows: "Babylon, what are you constantly doing? I will gather you into a net and... The dwellings of the seven accomplices and all their wealth I give in the hand of Zimri-Lîm."

Also, a prophet of Belet-ekallim arose and spoke: "O Hamm[l]ura[bi [...]"

[rest broken away]

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a Mukannišum is well known from administrative documents, including ARM 22 326 (no. 58) and ARM 25 15 (no. 60) in which prophets are mentioned. On him and his activities, see Rouault 1977: 110–258; Laato 2002.

b A variant form apūlim (u-a-ap-lu-iti-um) of apūlim.

c A phonetic variant of the Gtn form uṭeŋepeš.

d The reading is based on the collation of Durand 1983b: 145; however, the translation of ša-ka-ri-im is unclear. Durand suggests a word šakarâ “couteau” ("spear") on the basis of šukurrum “lance” (cf. AHw 1139 sub šak/g/qarum). Alternatively, the word could be related to šikru/sakru II “handle, grip” (see AHw 1141, 1255).

e See note b.
20. Kibri-Dagan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 210 (= M. 13843 = ARM 13 113).


a I.e., by nightfall. For the expression tirik ¡adªm, see Kupper 1964: 111 n. 1; Durand 2000: 86.

b Or “I will precipitate ([aΔamm]u†) his complete undoing,” both suggested by Durand 1988: 440.

21. Šibtu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 211 (= A. 3178).

Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).


ana bêliya ²qibîma ³umma Šibtu ⁴amat[k]âlâm[a]
⁵[...] num ³The lady İشا(ra)…[?]
22. Šibtu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 212 (= A. 3217 = ARM 10 6).
Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 4.

Speak to my lord: Thus Šibtu, your servant:

"The palace is well. It is a well-known place. I inquired about the matter by giving signs to drink. This man unsuccessfully tries to determine many things against that country. My lord will see what God will do to this man. You will capture him and stand over him. His days are running short; he will not live long. My lord should know this."

[one unreadable line] [one unreadable line]

Text:

ana bêliya ²qîlîma ³umma Š[ibtu amatkâm[a]
'ekallûm šalim
'âllî-âlznâya aššinn[a] ⁵ša An-
[u[nûtitum îll[i]kâlu] ⁷îna îlîbi bît
Anûnitum ⁸...]-ma ⁹[išum Âššûr
Bâbîlî] ¹⁰[ana bêliya îššapâşu
îmmâçi Hammu-la[bî ¹²]...]-ku
[one-third of the tablet broken away]
¹³[âššûm ênu Bâbîlî] ²[i̇tātîm ašqi
aššâm[a] ³awîlûm šu maddûm ana
mâtîmt annûtim ⁴usûm ul ikašâd
⁵bêli immar ša îlîm awîlam šâti
⁶îppessu takašasû ⁷u elîšu tazzaz
⁸âmîšu qerbû ul iha[lît] ⁹bêli
annûtim li īlê
The annātu Illa-ıhaznāyā is attested also in M. 11299:13; see Durand 1988: 399.

Assuming that the suffix sg. 3. in išpurāṣšu refers to the king.

Possibly in response to the letter of Zimri-Lim to Šibuṭu ARM 26 185 bis (Charpin 2002: 22 n. 125).

 Cf. ARM 26 207 (no. 17): 6 with note b.

 For the phrase Ṣunūṣu qerēb, see Heintz 1971b; J. M. Sasson 1993.

23. Šibuṭu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 213 (= A. 100 = ARM 10 7).
Copy: Dossin 1967; pl. 5.


Sp[ak] to my lord: Thus Šibuṭu, your servant:

"The pala[cel] is well.

"In the temple of Annunitum, three days ago, Šelebum" went into trance and said:

"Thus says Annunitum: Zimri-Lim, you will be tested in a revolt! Protect yourself! Let your most favored servants whom you love—surround you, and make them stay there to protect you! Do not go around on your own! As regards the people who would test you: those pe[ople] I deliver up into your hands."
25. For Šelebum, assinnu of the temple of Annunitum, see Durand 1988: 399 and cf. ARM 26 197 (no. 7) and 198 (no. 8).

b Thus according to the emendation <li>-ib-bi-ka (cf. Ellermeier 1968: 58; Durand 1988: 442). Without emending the text, the word ebbie has been interpreted in a similar sense (cf. CAD E 4; Bottéro in Dossin et al. 1964: 160; Finet 1966: 21).

24. Šibu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 214 (= A. 671 = ARM 10 8).
Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 5.

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25. Now I am sending the hair and the fringe of the garment of the assinnu to [my lord].

Speak to my lord: Thus Šibu, your servant:

In the temple of Annunitum in the city, Ahātum, a servant girl of Dagan-Malik went into trance and spoke:

Zimri-Lim: Even though you are neglectful about me, I will massacre on your behalf. Your enemy I will deliver up into your hand. The people that steal from me I will catch, and I will gather them into the camp of Belet-ekallim.

On the day following, Ahūm the priest delivered to me this message together with the hair and the fringe of the garment. I have now written to my lord. I have sealed the hair and the fringe of the garment and sent them to my lord.
a Possibly the housekeeper belonging to the palace staff and mentioned in ARM 8 88:2 (Moran 1969a: 32).

b Thus according to the collation of Durand 1988: 443 (a-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-

4), even though the verb ḥabašu is difficult to combine with elīku, translated here as “on

your behalf.” Many have read a-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-ḥa-

ub, which is understood as a gesture of love (Ellermeier 1968: 60–61; Moran 1969a: 31; Dietrich 1986: 93 and cf. CAD U 2–3 sub ḥabābu B).

c For this translation, see Berger 1969: 209; Römer 1971: 55.

d Thus Dossin 1966: 82; Huffmon 1968: 115; Ellermeier 1968: 61; Durand 1988:

443. The alternative translations include “to the destruction of Belet-ekallim” (karāšu II; see AHw 448; thus Moran 1969a: 31; Dietrich 1986: 93); “im Bauch der


25. Lanasûm to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 215 (= A. 455).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).
Translation: Dossin 1966: 79–80 (lines 5–24); Huffmon 1968: 112–13
(lines 1–24); Ellermeier 1968: 53 (lines 5–24); Durand 1994: 53.

Speak to my lord: Thus Lanasûm, your servant:

My lord has written to me: “I have just consigned an offering for

Dagan. Bring one bull and six sheep!”

Now, the offering of my lord has arrived safely in the city and

was performed before Dagan. The land ate the sacrificial meal

and the whole city was overjoyed by the offering of my lord.

Also, a prophet arose before Dagan and spoke: “How much

longer will I not drink pure water? Write to your lord that he may pro-

vide me with pure water!”

Now I have sent a lock of his head

and his garment hem to my
The verb *patannée* may be used here elliptically for *naptanam patannée* "to eat a meal" (cf. ARM 6 32:23).

The word *etqom* is used here instead of the usual *sārtum*; cf. ARM 234 (no. 39): 13. According to Durand 1988: 444; 1997a: 124, the word, also used of the hirsute appearance of Enkidu in Gilgamesh I ii 37, designates the fur of an animal rather than human hair. This may be taken as a hint of the bizarre image of a *muΔΔûm*; cf. Gordon 1993, 68.

The word used here is neither *s•rum* I "plaster" nor *s•rum* II "roof of reed" (see AHw 1050; CAD S 319–20) but designates "taxe prélevée sur le croît des animaux et sur la récolte" (Durand 1990: 58–60; cf. Charpin 1993/94: 18).

Or "without me being there."

### 26. Tebi-gerišu to Zimri-Lim

**Text:** ARM 26 216 (= A. 2209).

**Photograph:** Durand 1988 (microfiche).

**Transliteration and translation:** Durand 1988: 444–45.


Speak to my lord: Thus Tebi-gerišu, your servant:  
"On the day following the day I arrived in Ašmad’s presence, I assembled the *nabûs* of the Haneans, and I had them deliver an oracle for the well-being of my lord. This is what I said: ‘Will my lord, when performing [his] ablution rite..."
26. Tebi-gerišu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 217 (= M. 8071).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

[ten lines from beginning destroyed]

11[ï]na lik[ði] biti[ya ...] 12iddinnamma dalu ša ...]-mi an[la šo[rya] 13supur ...] ...

and [staying seven days outside the city walls], [return] safely to the city [...]

[break]

1[ï]... On the day [my lord goes to] (the temple of) Annunitum outside the city walls, 4 let my lord protect himself! The troops should stand ready] to assist [my] lord, and the [city] watches should be strengthened. Let my lord not be negligent about protecting himself."

a On this person, see Birot 1993: 40.
b For this designation, etymologically comparable to the Hebrew nābª, see Durand 1988: 377–78; Fleming 1993a/b/c; Heintz 1997a: 198–202 and, for a more sceptical view, Huehnergard 1999.
d Cf. no. 36 (ARM 26 229), note c.

27. Itur-Asdu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 217 (= M. 8071).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

[beginning destroyed] 14Since your childhood I have taken care of you, I am constantly taking you where there is safety. However, if I desire something from you, you do not give it to me. Now send an ex-voto to Naður and give me [what I requested from you! [For what] I have bestowed on
The author of this letter has been identified by Michaël Guichard as Itur-Asdu on the basis of the handwriting (see Charpin 2002: 12 n. 51). Earlier suggestions include Başum, an official in Ida-mara (Durand 1988: 446), and Aknum, an officer functioning in NaΔur (J. M. Sasson 1994: 314).

2. Identified with Wadi Sarum, east of Ida-maraß.

3. For the word naßrum, see Charpin 1988: 133 ad ARM 26 357:7.

28. NN to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 218 (= M. 14836).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).
Transliteration and translation: Durand 1988: 446–47.

[Speak to my lord: Thus NN, your servant:]

[Speak to my lord: Thus NN, your fathers in the past, I will now bestow on you. Whatever enemies there may be, I will pile them up under your feet. I will return your [land] to prosperity and abundance.]

27This is what this woman said, and I have written her [worlds to my lord. I have herewith sent her hair and a fringe of her garment to my lord. My lord should let oracles be taken. Let my lord act according to what the god answers.

32Another matter, concerning the grain about which I have been writing to my lord: The grain has not been brought to me. Now Yapṭur has rebelled from Sarumb to Buṣṭan, making their hostility plain. A man secretly came to me [and told] me: [With four thousand or five thousand men [...] we approached [Naḥur [...] [rest destroyed]

¹ The author of this letter has been identified by Michaël Guichard as Itur-Asdu on the basis of the handwriting (see Charpin 2002: 12 n. 51). Earlier suggestions include Başum, an official in Ida-maraş (Durand 1988: 446), and Ṣaknum, an officer functioning in NaΔur (J. M. Sasson 1994: 314).

2. Identified with Wadi Sarum, east of Ida-maraş.

3. For the word naṣrum, see Charpin 1988: 135 ad ARM 26 357:7.
28. NN to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 219 (= M. 13496 + M. 15299).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

Translation:

„Before, the god DN spok[e as follows: “Let Zimri-Lim erect a commemorative monument in [...], and I will establish his name for ever.” However, the sacrifice for this commemorative monument has not been offered, and my lord has said to me as follows: “In Mari I shall deliver to you a saparrum. Place it in this commemorative monument!”

Now, my lord has arrived in Mari, but has not delivered the saparrum. [...]

Let my [lord] act according to his kingship [...]

[rest destroyed]

Reconstruction according to Durand 1988: 447.


A word of unknown meaning; Durand 1988: 447 gives “chariot” as the best, but not the only possible alternative.
30. Kibri-Dagan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 220 (= A. 4865 = ARM 2 90).

before Zimri-Lim, but he did not give [me anything ...] I said [...] [break]

Another matter: [He arose] a [...] that did not [...] you find.

Moreover, deliver to me a good [...] inscribed] under your name.

This is what the prophet said. I have now sent] the hair and a fringe of the garment] of the prophet to my lord. My lord may do what he deems best.

[Moreo]ver, Šura-hammu [...] keeps sending [ ...]

Rest destroyed

Speak to my lord: Thus Kibri-Dagan, your servant:

"Dagan and Ikrub-El are well, the city of Terqa as well as the district is safe."

Another matter: On the West Bank the flocks of the Yaminites [have come down] to the bank of the Euphrates and are pasturing with the flocks of the clans of the...
31. Kibri-Dagan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 221 (= A. 2030 = ARM 3 40).
Copy: Kupper 1948: pl. 44.

[la]nd bēliya 2[lgībama 3umma Kibri- Dagan 4waradkāma] 5

Haneans\u2014Nothing is [out of place, my lord has nothing to worry about."

"When I sent this tablet to my lord, a prophet of Dagan spoke the following words: "Dagan has sent me to deliver a message concerning the execution of the [pagrā’um] offerings: ‘Send to your lord the following message: The new month has now begun, and on the fourteenth day, the pagrā’um offerings should be executed. Not a single offering may be neglected.’"

This is what the man spoke to me. Now I have communicated it to my lord. Let my lord do what he deems appropriate according to his own deliberation.

11Maṣṣubam, the god of Kibri-Dagan, sent an oracle to Zimri-Lim: ‘Zimri-Lim, the king of Mari, let not the gods of the Hanaeans deceive you, for you have not seen the true god, Dagan. Thus Zimri-Lim: ‘Then may my lord Zimri-Lim be like you, O Dagan, to whom the gods of the Hanaeans dedicate offerings, and may my lord Zimri-Lim ascend the throne of my lord Dagan, the great lord of the gods, to whose altar the gods of the Hanaeans dedicate offerings.

14a Possibly a manifestation of the god Adad.
b In the Akkadian of Mari, aḫarātum means the west bank of Euphrates.
c Thus according to the restoration of Durand 2000: 123.
d Thus according to the conjecture of Durand 1988: 448–89, who considers “the Simălates” another possibility.
e For these offerings, see no. 38, note h.
This offering, for which see, e.g., J. M. Sasson 1979: 126–28; Birot 1980; Tsukimoto 1985; Charpin and Durand 1986: 163–70; Schmidt 1994: 28–39; Durand and Guichard 1997: 28, 63–70 and Jacquet 2002, is comparable to, though not identical with, the pagrà:\textless um offering in other letters (see no. 38, note h). In this instance, the kispum is dedicated to the late Ya\textgreater Δdun-Lim, the royal father of Zimri-Lim.

32. Kibri-Dagan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 221bis (= A. 4934 = ARM 3 78).
Copy: Kupper 1948: pl. 73–74.

\[\text{[ana] hēlī\textgreater iya} 2\text{[l]gābīmā} 3\text{[umma] Kibri-Dagan} 4\text{[warad\textless kāma} 5\text{[Di\textgreater agan u Ikrub-El salmū} 6\text{[āl\textgreater um Terq\textgreater a u ḫāṣ\textgreater um salīm}

7 ana ēm sa Ḫa\textgreater šē\textgreater ya esē\textgreater dim 8\text{[ul ana maṣ\textgreater kanā\textgreater tīm nas\textgreater akīm} 9\text{[al\textgreater am ul ñadē\textgreater ku 10\text{[sanī\textgreater am aṣṣūm abullim esē\textgreater tim 11\text{[epē\textgreater lim ina pānī\textgreater tim 12\text{[...}

\[\text{[Sp]eak [to] my l[ord]: [Thus] Kibri-Dagan, your [servant]: 13\text{[Di\textgreater agan and Yakrub-El are well, the city of Terq\textgreater a as well as the district is [s]afe. 14\text{[Another matter]: When I sent this tablet to my lord, a [p]rophet of [Di\textgreater agan came and [s]poke to [me]: The god has sent me, saying: 'Hurry up and deliver a message to the king that a kispum offering' be performed for the spirit of Ya\textgreater Ḫdun-Lim!" 15This is what the prophet spoke to me and I have herewith communicated it to my lord. Let my lord do what he deems appropriate.}

\[\text{[Sp]eak [to] my l[ord]: [Thus] Kibri-Dagan, your [servant]: 13\text{[Di\textgreater agan and Yakrub-El are well, the city of Terq\textgreater a as well as the district is [s]afe. 14\text{[Another matter]: When I sent this tablet to my lord, a [p]rophet of [Di\textgreater agan came and [s]poke to [me]: The god has sent me, saying: 'Hurry up and deliver a message to the king that a kispum offering' be performed for the spirit of Ya\textgreater Ḫdun-Lim!" 15This is what the prophet spoke to me and I have herewith communicated it to my lord. Let my lord do what he deems appropriate.}

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The expression aΔam nadûm (lit. “let the arm hang down”) means “to be idle, remiss”; see AHw 706 (sub nadû 12a).

Thus according to Durand 1988: 451, who interprets the broken word as a form of a¡å¡um “to be worried”; cf. ARM 26 350:18. The restored Gt form is otherwise attested only in Old Assyrian.

The remaining signs of the imperative verbal form indicate a 2.p.sg. form.

The prophet [NN cam]e to me some time ago [full of anxiety,] saying: “[You] shall begin [the building of] this city gate!”

When I sent this tablet [to] my lord, this [prophet] once more spoke to me [and] gave me [strict orders as follows: “[If] you do not build this city gate, there will be a [dis]aster and you will [not succeed.”

This is what the prophet [spoke] to me. I am now [involved in the harvest] and cannot [divert] my [servants]. [If] my lord could give an order for [help to come] here...

[rest destroyed]

33. Ušareš-hetil to Dariš-libur

Text: ARM 26 222 (= ARM 10 106 = A. 3724).

ana Dariš-libûr 2 qibîma 5 umma Ušareš-hetil [māk]kāma

Speak to Dariš-libûr: Thus Ušareš-hetil, your [son]:
34. Laûm (?) to Yasmaḫ-Addu (?)

**Text:** ARM 26 223 (= M. 9601).

**Photograph:** Durand 1988 (microfiche); Charpin 2002: 37.

**Transliteration:** Durand 1988, 452.

**Transliteration and translation:** Charpin 2002: 36-37.

[beginning destroyed]

1[in a [...]] 2[ina pâni[i]mma [...]]

3[isṭēn maturru ina ḫalāṣ [...] 4[u isṭēn maturru ina ū[i]t[i]tul [...]]

5[ū ṣāpi[tum šu ʾ[li]kam kīaṭ iqibēm]

6[ummāmi ana ṣele[pī [...] 7[qirsē [...]

[...] 8[annīخام iqibēm [...] 9[enītum mal i[ri[šaṇni addin] 10[iṭerētīm ša mā[lt [...] 11[u[l [...]

[break of at least three lines, one unreadable line]

2[in[a māmma a[limmuma] 3[ša ṣāpi[tum an[a Binim iqibū] 4[ummāmi

[beginning destroyed]

... in [...] before [...]

5[One small ship in the district of [...] and one small ship in ū[i]t[i]tul [...]

6[This prophet came and said as follows:] “For the ships [...] the qirṣūt of [...]”

7[This is what he spoke [...]. I shall give him] all the equipment he desires from me. Oracles of the land[...] not [...]”

[break]

8[Now, since the prophet [has spoken] to [Binum]: “Thus says
The word cannot be translated with certainty; the determinative GI designates a wooden object, e.g., in this case, the mast of a ship.

Binum is the recipient of prophetic words in the letter of La’ûm A. 3760 (no. 3). This restoration assumes that this letter belongs together with the present one as suggested by the common subject matters ship and temple (Charpin 2002: 38).

35. Addu-duri to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 227 (= M. 9576).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

[Speak to my lord: Thus] Addu-duri:

	(The woman) ...bilaru has had a dream. This is what she said: “[In my dream the prophets Hadnu-El and Iddin-Kubi were alive. They went in before the cows of Abbac and said: ‘Speak to your still-born calves, and let Zimri-Lim make a harvest of well-being. Zimri-Lim [...]’”

[rest destroyed]
36. Report of Ayala

Text: ARM 26 229 (= A. 222).
Photograph: Durand 1988 (microfiche).

Ayala in her dream, saw the following:

A woman from Sheṣrum and a woman from Mari had a quarrel at the gate of Annunitum-beyond-the-walls. The woman from Sheṣrum said to the woman from Mari: “Give me back my business!” Either you sit down or I will be the one who will sit down!”

By means of bird divination I inquired about her, and the dream was really seen. Now I send her hair and a fringe of her garment. Let my lord inquire about her.

---

* An otherwise unknown woman. The author and the addressee of the report are anonymous; according to the observation of Dossin, the orthography of the tablet dates it to the Yaḫḫu-Lim period.
* A locality close to the city of Mari; see Wilcke 1979: 48.
* This probably refers to the temple of Annunitum other than the one in the city proper referred to in ARM 26 214 (no. 24): 5; cf. J. M. Sasson 1983: 291 n. 41; Durand 1987b, 91.
* For ṣṣur ḫürüm, see Durand 1988: 38; 1997b.
37. Zunana to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 232 (= A. 907 = ARM 10 100).

Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 45.


Speak to my lord: Thus Zunana, your servant:

"When I was still living in Ganibatum, I sent Kittum-šimliya to Rubbân. On her way, she was kidnapped. Dagan, your lord, appeared to me in a dream, even though nobody had performed an incubation ritual on me. Dagan spoke to me:

10 "Are you heading up or down?" I answered: "Down! I went there but could not find my servant girl. When my lord had gone to Andarig, rumors concerning my servant girl came to me through Sammetar. I went to look for him and he answered me, ‘Yes!’ But then he changed his mind and took back his words, and he did not give me my servant girl."

22 Dagan answered me with the following words: “Until Zimri-Lim gets involved, he will not bring out your servant girl, and no one will release her to you.”

26 Now, according to the order of Dagan, my lord should not withhold my servant.

ana bēliya ʔiqbīma 4 umma Zunāna amatkāma
4 ināma ina Ganibātum usḥu 5 Kittum-šimliya ana Rubbēn āṣparmā
6 ina alākīša itbalīšī ʔu Dāgān bēlka uṣallī[l]lamma 8 mamman āl ilputanni 9 Dāgān kīm iqbēm umma sālmā

10 pānūki elīš šap[liš] 11 umma anākūma šap[liš]ma 12 allikamāma 13 amāli ul āmūr 14 inīma ana Andarig
15 bēli iliku 16 zimzimmu ša amtiya
17 itti Sammētar 18 ilēmma 19 allik-šumma annam ʔip[l]nnā 20 itūrma ibbkītimmāna 21 amāli ul ṭāddinam

22 Dagan kīam iqbēm umma šūma
25 adī itti Zimrī-Lim antakī 21 lā usēṣṣēm mamman 25 ul ul[w]aš-
26 šarākīšī

26 inanna kīma qibīt Dagan 27 amāli bēli lā ikulla
38. Itur-Asdu to Zimri-Lim

**Text:** ARM 26 233 (= A. 15).

**Photograph:** Durand 1988 (microfiche).

**Copy:** Dossin 1948: 128, 130.


> ana bēliya ʼqibīma ʾumma Itūr-Asdū ʾwaradkāma
> ʾūm ṭuppi annēm ana ʾṣēr ʾbēliya ʾuṣābilam ʾMalik-Dagan auwil ʾŠakkā ʾil-kāmmam kīam iqābīm ʾummāmi
> ina šuttīya anāku u istēn auwil ʾittiyya ʾiṣṭītu ʾḥalas Saggarātīm ʾinā ḫalāšīm elim ana Mārī ana alākīm ʾpāniyā saknū ʾinā pāniyā ana Terqa ʾerūmmā kīma erēbiyama

Speak to my lord: Thus Itur-Asdu, your servant:

When I sent this tablet to my lord, Malik-Dagan, a man from ʾŠakkā came to me and spoke to me as follows:

In my dream I, as well as another man with me, was planning a travel from the district of Saggaratum, through the upper district, to Mari.
Mari\(^9\) I entered Terqa. Having entered (the city), I went into the temple of Dagan and prostrated myself before Dagan. During my prostration, Dagan opened his mouth and spoke to me thus: 17‘Have the kings of the Yaminites\(^2\) and their troops made peace with the troop of Zimri-Lim who has gone up there?\(^2\)‘ I answered: ‘No, they have not made peace.’ 22Before I left, he spoke to me as follows: ‘Why do the messengers of Zimri-Lim not stay before me regularly, and why does he not provide me with a full account\(^e\) of his undertakings? Had it been otherwise, I would have delivered the kings of the [Yammites] into the hands of Zimri-Lim a long time ago!\(^2\)’ Now go, I have sent you to speak to Zimri-Lim as follows: Send your messengers to me and provide me with a full account of your undertakings, and I will make the kings of the Yaminites flounder\(^f\) in a fisherman’s chest and place them before you.’”

\(^14\)ana bit Dagan ērumma ana Da-
gan \(^15\)uškēn ina ūškēnīyā \(^6\)Dagan pišu ipēma kiam iqbēm \(^17\)ummāmi

\(^38\)Itur-Asdu to Zimri-Lim  63
The expression *ḥabūm elûm* designates an area upstream from Mari. It may mean the city of Saggaratum itself, situated on the lower course of the river Ḥabur (thus Dietrich 1986: 91), but, since it would hardly be necessary to explain the location of Saggaratum to the recipient of the letter, it more likely refers generally to the area on the way from Saggaratum to Terqa; cf. van der Toorn 1998b: 58 and the translation of Durand 1988: 474: “venant du district de Saggaratum, (et me trouvant) dans le district d’amont.”

*ina pântyâ* is an idiom for “before my doing something” (Durand 1988: 474–75); thus, it is not necessary to interpret it as a West Semitism, as Malamat 1956: 81 and Moran 1969b: 623 have done. Their translation “on my way”, however, renders essentially the same idea.


I.e., in the upper district, upstream from Mari. The Yaminites lived in the area toward the west and southwest from Mari and seem to be encountering with the troops of Zimri-Lim in that area.

*ṭēnum gamrum* is a written report that is compared with the so-called “letters to gods,” in which the kings give account of their military activities and which are placed (*ṣakâmum*) before the gods in the temple. In this case, however, it is clearly to be understood as an interim report, because the conflict with the Yaminites is still unresolved; see Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 204–7.


For *sussullum* “box, chest” see *AHw* 1063; *CAD* S 418; Heintz 1969: 133 n. 1; Salonen 1970: 79.

This offering belongs to the *pagrâ’um* ritual, probably associated with the cult of the dead, for which see J. M. Sasson 1979: 131; Durand 1982a: 160 n. 20; Birot 1993: 156; Schmidt 1994: 28–39; Durand and Guichard 1997: 35–36, and cf. the *pgr* offering in Ugarit (see Dietrich and Loretz 1980; Bordreuil and Pardee 1993b: 25–28).

39. Kibri-Dagan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 234 (= M. 13841 = ARM 13 112).


The word etqum is used here instead of the usual šārtum. See no. 25 (ARM 26 215) note b.

Or “the youth.”

Speak to my lord: Thus Kibri-Dagan, your servant:

D[agan] u Ikrub-El are well; the city of Terqa as well as the district is well. The task which my lord assigned to me [...]

This is what he saw: “Thus says God: You (pl.) may not build this ruined house again! If this house is rebuilt, I will make it fall into the river.” On the day he had this dream, he did not tell it to anybody.

The next day, he had the same dream again: “Thus says God: You may not rebuild this house! If you rebuild it, I will make it fall into the river.”

Now I have sent a fringe of his garment and a lock of his head to my lord. From that day on, the servant has been ill.
40. Kibri-Dagan to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 235 (= M. 13842 = ARM 13 113).


\[\text{anna bēlīyya}\]
\[\text{qambilāmu um[ma]}\]
\[\text{Kibri-Dagan Pearadkāma}\]
\[\text{Dalgon u Ik[rub]-El šalmū [ālum]}\]
\[\text{Terqa iši[šum šalīm]}\]

\[\text{šan[ī]tam istēn awūlum šu[tī]tam inūrma [il Aḥum usan[ni]}\]

\[\text{ummāli sābum [nakrum ina ālāni dannatim Mārī Terqa [u Salggarātim [erbu mûmima šṭāy}[h][u u ina] dannat bēlīya\textsuperscript{16} uṣībū\]

\[\text{Aḥum šuttašu annūtam [ušan-nīmmma arnam eṭīya [uṭērma ummāmi šupur anā sa[ārrī u aṣṣum k[īlam] ana bēlīya\textsuperscript{20}aṣpu[rdām]}

\text{Speak [to] my lord]: Thus Kibri-Dagan, your servant:

\[\text{Dalgon and Ik[rub]-El are well.}\]
\[\text{The city of Terqa [and] the district are well.}\]

\[\text{More}^{\text{over, a man [has selen a dream and]} Aḥum repeated it [to me as follow]s:}\]

\[\text{The [hostile] army [has entered] the fortified cities of [Malri, Terqa [and Salggaratum. They have taken plunder], and have [occupied the fortifications of [my lord].}\]

\[\text{Aḥum repeated to} me this dream of his and [sh]ifted the responsibility on me, saying: "Write to the king!" Therefore, I have written to my lord.}\]

\text{For the expression} arnam turrum, \text{see J. M. Sasson 1983: 285 n. 12; Durand 1988: 477.}

41. Śibtu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 236 (= A. 2437 = ARM 10 10).

Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 7.


[ana bēliya šibīl[m[a 3][u]mm[a Šibtu amatkāl[ma]

41. Šibtu to Zimri-Lim

41. šibīl [i]m[a 3][u]mm[a Šibtu amatkāl[ma]

4būtāt ili ekallām 5u nēparātum šalmā

šānušām Kakka-lidī 7ina bit īltūr-Mēr īmur 8umāmā šīna eleppū māllū 9rabbūtum nārām parkūmā

10sammū u avīlī redām 11ina lib-bišina rakāb ša īmītīm 12[an[la šumušām 13][i]šassū 14[um[ma šumū-

ma šarrātum 15][h][a][l][tum kussām

16pašum mātum īšītum u 17šapitum

18[ana Zimrī-Lim 19][na][l][n]at u avīlī redām 20kallāš[u iippal 21[ana Zimrī-

Limma 22nadānat 23eleppū m[l]llū šunu 24[ana [ḥab ekallām 25[raksū]-

ma 26[...]-šu

[Speak to my lord: Thus Šibtu, your servant:

"The temples, the palace, and the workhouses are in order.

"Another matter: Kakka-lidī had the following vision in the temple of Itur-Mer: "Two big cargo ships were crossways on the river (blocking it). The king, together with his entourage, was on board." The people on the right were shouting to those on the left and this is what they said: 'The kingship, the scepter, the throne, the dynasty, and the Upper and Lower land are given to Zimri-Lim!" And the whole entourage answered: 'It is given to Zimri-Lim!' Then, those cargo ships [docked] at the [gate of the palace [...]]"

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**42. Addu-duri to Zimri-Lim**

**Text:** ARM 26 237 (= A. 994 = ARM 10 50).

**Copy:** Dossin 1967: pl. 24.


There are two possibilities to interpret the word šulmu here: either in the meaning "peace, restoration" referring to the restoration of the dynasty of Zimri-Lim (Ellermeier 1968: 65; Moran 1969a: 38; Schart 1995: 78), or as "destruction" (Dietrich 1986: 89; Charpin and Durand 1985: 327 n. 51; Durand 1988: 392, 478), i.e., the defeat of YaΔdun-Lim in Šamši-Adad’s conquest. Both interpretations make sense, and the semantic ambiguity, whether or not intentional, remains (cf. J. M. Sasson 1983: 286; 1984: 111).

I.e., when Addu-duri, in her dream, returns from the temple; the oneiric experience is still going on in the following scene.
c Probably a manifestation of the goddess Ištar in Bišra (modern Jebel Bishri); see Durand 1983a: 18 n. 4; Lambert 1985: 527 n. 3. The name was previously read as “Ištar-pišra” (e.g., Moran 1969a: 38; Ellermeier 1968: 64) or “Ištar-Qabra” (von Soden 1969: 198).

d The “eerie voice” probably comes from the mouth of Dadâ. It is not quite clear whether he is presented as a living person or as a ghost of the already deceased priest, but the strangeness of his voice points to the latter alternative; cf. Isa 29:4 and see Hoffner 1967: 398.

e The Akkadian words have also been interpreted as a personal name Tura-Dagan; a king with this name ruled Mari a century before Zimri-Lim (Kupper 1971: 118 n. 3; Durand 1985). If he is mentioned here, the purpose is probably to remind Zimri-Lim of the fate of one of his predecessors. J. M. Sasson 1983: 289; 1984: 111 holds it for probable that the semantic dilemma of tūra Dagan was intentional and likely perplexed Zimri-Lim himself.

43. Addu-duri to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 238 (= A. 122 = ARM 10 51).

Speak to my lord: Thus Addu-duri:

Iddin-ili, the priest of Itur-Mer has had a dream. He says:

In my dream Belet-biri stood by me. She spoke to me as follows: ‘The kingdom is his brick mould and the dynasty is his wall! Why does he incessantly climb the watchtower? Let him protect himself!'”

Now, my lord should not fail to protect himself.

The name of the goddess is often translated “The Lady of Divination,” by analogy to Bel-biri “The Lord of Divination” used of Šamaš and Adad (cf. Nakata 1974:...

Thus according to the collation of Durand 1988: 479.

44. Šimatum to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 239 (= A. 2858 = ARM 10 94).
Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 42.

[Speak] to my lord: Thus Šimat[um, your servant]:

“Since I departed from Mari I have been running about a lot. I have seen all the cities, in which there are dwellings of my lord and the representatives of my lord have seen me.

“Now, if my lord is planning to go to [Ilan-šurâ] …

[break]

[lines 1–3’ unintelligible]

“As regards the daughter of Tepa[h]um, in my dream a man stood there, saying: “The little daughter of Tepa[h]um shall be called Tâgîd-nawûm.”

“This is what he said to me. Now, my lord should let a diviner check on this. If [this dream was really seen, let] my lord [give] the girl [the name] Tâgîd-nawûm, so she shall be called by this name, and may my lord enjoy permanent well-being.
44. Šimatum to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 240 (= A. 3424 = ARM 10 117).
Copy: Dossin 1967: pl. 53.

Speak to Addu-duri, my lady: Thus Timlû, your servant:

"It was certainly a sign that when Yar’ip-Abba sent [me] away from Kasapî [and] I came to you, I said to you the [following]: "I had a [d]ream in your behalf, [and in] my [d]ream Belet-ekallim [sent] me to say [as follows]: ‘[...]’" [break]

"[...] six men from Durum-labirum [who] carry [the tablets]. Trust [these] six men to her and send them downstream to her!"

Another matter: send me [one... and one] headgear of your own. I want to smell the scent of my lady to revive my dead heart.

45. Timlû to Addu-Duri

Ana Addu-dûrî bêltîya qibîma umma Timlû amatkîma liî itumma sa inûma ina libbi Kasapî Yar’îp-Abba _NB_ ašš[nî] u aîna šeRikî allikallimā kîaš aqbehêki ummâlmi šutîlam aµurrakkî[i][m]

Speak to Addu-duri, my lady: Thus Timlû, your servant:

"It was certainly a sign that when Yar’ip-Abba sent [me] away from Kasapî [and] I came to you, I said to you the [following]: "I had a [d]ream in your behalf, [and in] my [d]ream Belet-ekallim [sent] me to say [as follows]: ‘[...]’" [break]

"[...] six men from Durum-labirum [who] carry [the tablets]. Trust [these] six men to her and send them downstream to her!"

Another matter: send me [one... and one] headgear of your own. I want to smell the scent of my lady to revive my dead heart.

a Daughter of Zimri-Lim and, beside her sister Kirûm, wife of Ḫaya-Sumu, who was king of Ilan-ṣura and vassal of Zimri-Lim (see J. M. Sasson 1973b: 68–72; Durand 1984: 162–72; Charpin 1988, 44–45).
b Durand 1988: 481 reconstructs a Gtn form of the verb lasåmum “to run.”
c “My lord” probably refers here to Ḫaya-Sumu.
d Nothing is left from the destination of “my lord,” who can be either Ḫaya-Sumu or Zimri-Lim, but Ilan-ṣura is the best alternative (see Durand 1984: 127–29).

a An otherwise unknown female subject of Addu-duri.
b A town to the north of Mari.
46. NN to Zimri-Lim

**Text:** ARM 26 243 (= A. 4400).

**Photograph:** Durand 1988 (microfiche).

**Transliteration and translation:** Durand 1988: 499–500.


Speak to my lord: Thus NN, your servant:

Concerning the house of Sammetar that was for some time sagging, the prophets of D[agan] keep saying to me: “God has cursed the bricks of that house! Earth should be deposited within its inner room and on its brick foundation.”

This is what the prophets of D[agan] are saying to me. I have now written to my lord. Let my lord reflect upon it and, according to the discretion my lord will exercise, let him answer my letter. If my lord says so, I will have the bricks of that house carried away and [taken] to the city wall, and the earth [...] [rest largely destroyed]

The word *qiddatum* is a *bapax* probably to be derived from *qadādum* “to bend down” (Durand 1988: 500); cf. *qidātu*um (*AHw* 920). This may refer to the abandonment of the house after the death of Sammetar, a high official whose house could not be in such condition while he was alive. For the background of this letter, see van Koppen 2002.

Or “It should be demolished to the ground down to its innermost parts and foundation.”


Restorations according to Durand 2000: 283.
47. Yarim-Addu to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 371 (= A. 428).
Copy: Charpin et al 1988 (microfiche).

Speak to my lord: Thus Yarim-Addu, your servant:

Concerning the report of Isme-[Dagan]'s going up to Ekallatum, which my lord has heard repeatedly: he in no way went up to Ekallatum. It is a product of rumours about him that keep circulating around him.

A prophet of Marduk stood at the gate of the palace, proclaiming incessantly: “Isme-Dagan will not escape the hand of Marduk. That hand will tie together a sheaf and catch any person that step to Ekallatum.”

Directly he stood at the gate of Isme-Dagan, proclaiming incessantly in the midst of the whole citizenry as follows: “You went to the ruler of Elam to establish peaceful relations; but when there was a peaceful relationship, you had the treasures of Marduk and the city of Babylon delivered to the ruler of Elam. You exhausted my magazines and treasuries without returning my favors. And now you are going off to Ekallatum? He who dissipates my treasures must not demand from me more!”

[ana bēliya qibīma ʿumma] Yarim-Addu ʿwaradkāma

[Speak to my lord: Thus] Yarim-Addu, your servant:
3Concerning the report of Isme-[Dagan]'s going up to Ekallatum, which my lord has heard repeatedly: he in no way went up to Ekallatum. It is a product of rumours about him that keep circulating around him.

3A prophet of Marduk stood at the gate of the palace, proclaiming incessantly: “Isme-Dagan will not escape the hand of Marduk. That hand will tie together a sheaf and he will be caught in it.” This is what he kept proclaiming at the gate of the palace. Noboldly said anything to him.

4Directly he stood at the gate of Isme-Dagan, proclaiming incessantly in the midst of the whole citizenry as follows: “You went to the ruler of Elam to establish peaceful relations; but when there was a peaceful relationship, you had the treasures of Marduk and the city of Babylon delivered to the ruler of Elam. You exhausted my magazines and treasuries without returning my favors. And now you are going off to Ekallatum? He who dissipates my treasures must not demand from me more!”

[Ana bēliya qibīma ʿumma] Yarim-Addu ʿwaradkāma
me-Dagan, king of Ekallatum (in Assyria), was in asylum with Hammurabi, king of Babylon.
b i.e., the palace of Hammurabi, the king of Babylon.
c i.e., the lodging of Išme-Dagan in Babylon.
d The word sukallu is used of the Elamite rulers; cf. Charpin and Durand 1991.
e i.e., Išme-Dagan.

48. Yasim-El to Zimri-Lim

Text: ARM 26 414 (= ARM 2 108 = A. 431 + A. 4883).
Copy: Charpin et al 1988 (microfiche).

[Sp]eak [to] my lord: Thus Yasim-El, your servant:

Yaqqim-Lim, a servant of my lord who lives in Qaṭṭarā, wrote to me the following message: “The messengers of Ekallatum have resided in Qaṭṭarā for ten days, and they have been hidden [from] my lord until [...]”

After his message, on the third day, the [Ekallatan [...] to me [...]. This is the message that was conveyed to me: “The troops of
Nusar	extsuperscript{16} ḫuṭma alpi ḫ imerit itbal
jēmam sa ubarrānim ana bēliya
aṣpuram u anumma salāšawardā
rabūti
šalāša wardā ṣebri ʾstu
Andarig	extsuperscript{21} ana Māri iruddā
wardā ʾsunīti li ʾana ekāllīlim
iruddāʾsunīti ʾul ṭī ʾulūma ʾana (avīl)
wēdātim ʾpaqālim
ereddīsunīti ʾul ʾīde

25 aššum narēʾam ṣa gabāʾi napālim
ṣa bēli ʾṣpuram anumma
nuram šēti ʾappulamma ʾana šēr
bēliya
uṣābilam
29 šanīṭam Atamrum āpīṣum
ṣa Šamsī ḫilḵamma kiya ᵒḏēm
um-māmi ḫišān ṭar ʾṭūpi Ṿaṣram
ṭurmanma ḫanam ʾṣa Šamsī
ṣarri Ṧṣpuramni luṣaṭer
ʾannīṭam ᵒḏēm ʿṬu-kam ʾṣurduʾma
ṭūppam šētu ᵐṣṭur ᵒvīlīm šī ᵐwī ᵐiṣziḵamna
kiya ᵒḏēm ʾum-
mām[li ʾṭūppam annēm arḫlis]
šūmila ṣa pi Ṿṭūpi šī ᵐiṭuš
ʾannīṭam ᵒḏēm ʾanumma Ṿṭūppam
šētu ʿana šēr bēliya uṣābilam

Ekāllīlatum have plundered the city of Nusar	extsuperscript{5} and taken away cattle and sheep.” I have informed my lord about the matter that came to my knowledge. Now, thirty adult slaves and thirty young slaves are being transferred from Andarig to Mari. I do not know whether these slaves will be brought to the palace; I do not know either whether I should commit them to the keeping of the principal authorities.

25 As to the quarrying a stele from the cliffs about which my lord wrote to me, I have now quarried this stele and sent it to my lord.

29 Another matter: Atamrum, prophet of Šamaš, came to me and spoke to me as follows: “Send me a discreet scribe! I will have him write down the message which Šamaš has sent me for the king.” This is what he said to me. So I sent Utu-kam and he wrote this tablet. This man brought witnesses and said to me as follows: “Send this tablet quickly and let the king act according to its words.” This is what he said to me. I have herewith sent this tablet to my lord.

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	extsuperscript{16} Derived from samāšum II “to hide” (CAD S 114); cf. ARM 26 420:51 and simmāšum ARM 26 206 (no. 16):32; M. 9717 (no. 65):3.

	extsuperscript{5} For this locality, see Lafont 1988: 476 (cf. ARM 26 514: 515).

	extsuperscript{21} Translation of J. M. Sasson (private communication). For gabāʾu/gabʾu, see also Birot 1974: 239; Charpin 1988: 216 ad ARM 26 388:12.


	extsuperscript{3} It is not clear whether Atamrum or Utu-kam is meant here. The witnesses are not necessarily aware of the content of the letter; they are just there to certify that
the letter is written on the request of the prophet and forwarded to the king by Yasim-El, who, then, must take care of its transportation to the king. That letter—presumably ARM 26 194 (no. 4; cf. Charpin 2001: 31; 2002: 14–15)—probably accompanied the present one.

**49. Zakira-Ḥammû to Zimri-Lim**

**Text:** ARM 27 32 (= M. 13741).

**Copy:** Birot 1993: 89.

**Transliteration and translation:** Birot 1993, 88–90.

**Discussion:** Durand 1993b; Malamat 2000: 633–34.

[Speak to] my lord: Thus Zakira-Ḥammû, your servant:

"The city of Qaṭṭunān and the district are well.

"Four Yamutbaleans [...] The prophets of Amu of Ḥubšalûm, who have been coming to[o] my lord, have seized these men and [brought them] to Ibâl-El, the [...]"

[break]

[Another matter]: concerning the issue of [...] about which I wrote to my lord earlier, that is, the early and the late harvest, the locusts have devoured the grain of the district. The locusts have spread all over from Tebrân to Raḥbatim."

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3 The god Amu of Ḥubšalûm, a locality in Yamutbal, may be identifiable with Nergal of Ḥubšalûm in ARM 26 194 (no. 4) (Charpin and Durand 1985: 333).
49. Zakira-Ḥammû to Zimri-Lim

b For this locality, probably in the western part of Ida-maraṣ, see Birot 1993: 90. It seems that the muḫḫûms are represented as the elders of Gaššum, but this is not altogether clear because of the break at the end of line 6.
c Probably identical with Ibalpiel, the chief of the Haneans functioning in the western part of Ida-maraṣ; cf. Birot 1993: 16–17, 90; Durand 1988: 143.
d Or (less likely): “The four Yamuthaleans beat the elders of Gaššum.”
e The verb rakåbum means literally “to ride”; for the present translation, see Durand 1993b; Lion and Michel 1997: 711 n. 15.
f This expression means the whole area of the province of Qaṭṭunan (Birot 1993: 7–8).

50. Manatan to Zimri-Lim

Text: M. 9451.
Discussion: Huffmon 2000: 52.

Speak to my lord: Thus Manatan, your servant: ³Five prophets of Adad [...] [break]
¹The city of Mari, the palace, the temples, the workhouses and the guard² are well.

a Restoration by analogy of the other letters of Manatan.
Other Documents from Mari

While the letters are the only documents from Mari that give information about the contents of the prophetic oracles and other sayings of the prophets, there are scattered mentions of prophets in a number of other sources of different kinds. An assortment of such texts is represented in this chapter, but the selection is hardly exhaustive; most of them are referred to and quoted by Durand in his introduction to the prophetic letters (1988: 377–412). Forthcoming editions of yet unpublished documents are likely to contain more of such references.

Most of the texts other than letters in which prophets (muhšûm/muhšûtam or āpîlûm) make an appearance are administrative documents listing outlays delivered to different classes of people. The reason for the delivery is usually not indicated, but it is discernible from number 61 that prophets and other people who brought good news or otherwise weighty messages to the king were rewarded for their services with more or less precious gifts. The articles delivered to the prophets are often pieces of ordinary clothing (nos. 54–59), but some of them are granted even more valuable items such as lances (no. 60), silver (nos. 61–63) or a donkey (no. 53). It is conceivable from the extant letters, that the prophets could request these gifts themselves (nos. 9, 16).

With the exception of the anonymous muḫšûm of Adad in number 61, the prophets are always mentioned by name, expanding the prosopography of Mari prophets by six proper names: Annu-tabni muḫšûtam (no. 58), Ea-maši, muḫšûm of Itur-Mer (nos. 55, 59), Ea-mudammîq, muḫšûm of Ninšursag (nos. 56, 57), Ili-andulli, the āpîlûm (no. 54), Išḫi-Dagan, āpîlûm of Dagan of Šubûtim (no. 63) and Qîsûtam, āpîlûm of Dagan (no. 60). In addition, two prophets are known from the letters: Irra-gamîl, muḫšûm of Nergal, (nos. 55, 59, 65), who predicts the death of the royal child in no. 33, and Lupaḫûm, āpîlûm of Dagan (nos. 53, 62),
whose message upon his arrival from Tuttul—possibly the one he is rewarded for in number 61—is quoted in number 9. Moreover, Qisatum could be identical with the ápilum of Dagan referred to by Mukannišum in number 19.

A different kind of information is provided by the two cultic texts, which reveal some interesting features of the prophets’ involvement in the ritual of Ištar, the most important festival in the ritual calendar of Mari (Lafont 1999: 67). The prophets, together with the musicians, turn out to play an important role in this royal ceremony involving a great number of cult functionaries, as described in no. 51 (Durand and Guichard 1997). It appears that, after elaborate preparations described in the first column, the emblems of the goddesses are brought in and the king enters together with his courtiers. This is the moment when the chanter strikes up a canonical lamentation song—provided that the prophet acquires the condition that enables him to fulfill his task. If the prophet fails to get into a frenzy, the lamentation is not performed. The interplay of prophecy and music becomes apparent also in no. 52; this text indicates what the musicians sing in the case that the prophetesses are not able to prophesy. In both cases, the comportment of the prophets, interpreted as a sign of divine inspiration, is presented as a decisive part of the ceremony.

The only literary reference to prophets from Mari is to be found in the so-called Epic of Zimri-Lim (no. 64), a hitherto unpublished text, the relevant passage of which is quoted by Durand (1988: 393). In this text, an ápilum appears as a “sign” for Zimri-Lim. The words that follow, assuring the support of Adad and Erra for him, are best interpreted as a prophetic oracle of encouragement.

51. Ritual of Ištar, Text 2

**Text:** A. 3165.
**Photograph:** Durand and Guichard 1997: 72–73.
**Copy:** Dossin 1938: 2–3; Durand and Guichard 1997: 53, 56.
**Transliteration and translation:** Dossin 1938: 4–13; Durand and Guichard 1997: 52–58.
Lines ii 1’–27’

[beginning destroyed]

On the left side of [Ištar], Latarak and the standing gods sit down. The emblems of the goddesses are brought from their shrines and placed on the right and on the left in the temple of Ištar.

8When this position is taken, the king, dressed in the lullumtum-cloak, (walks) after the chanters and sits down on the shipper’s chair.

11One of the king’s servants of the king’s own choice sits down on the lower chair beside the king. The king may not be served by anyone.

17The gerseqqû-courtiers stand on his right and left side. The chanters strike up the “ú-ru am-ma-da-ru-bi” of the end of the month.

21If by the end of the month the prophet maintains his equilibrium and is not able to prophesy when it is time for [the chant] “mà-e ú-re-m[én],” the temple officials let the musicians go. If he prophesies, they strike up “mà-e ú-re-m[én].”

Lines s. ii 1–3:

[Col. s. i completely destroyed] 22muḥḫēm isṭaqādī̄lāma23al[a] μabhē’ī̄m24ul iḥreddī̄ 25isṭu mà.e ú.re.m[én šeram] 26iṣṭaṣṣū waklī n[ārī] 27uwassārīma im[maḥbīmā] mà.e ú.re.m[én isṣamarā] 28[beginning destroyed] 29 Water in a container and four meḥṣū-jars are installed; they are always at the disposal of the prophets.

For Latarak and the “standing gods” (dingirgubbû), see Durand and Guichard 1997: 48. This is the only occurrence of Latarak, possibly associated with Nergal and assisted by the “standing gods” who, judged from their position, play the role of servants.

A garment of unspecified quality; probably a cloak worn on specific ritual occasions (Durand and Guichard 1997: 27–28).
82 Other Documents from Mari

Civil 1974: 95 identifies this with the Sumerian canonical lamentation ú-ru àm-ma-i-ra-bi “The Plundered City”.

d For this reading and interpretation of saqātum Gt, see Durand 1988: 386–87.

c Thus according to the reading of Durand and Guichard 1997: 54 who suggest this song to be identical with another Sumerian canonical lamentation, me-e ur-re-mèn (p. 50). Note the substantial difference from the earlier reading of Durand 1988: 386.

e For nasappum “basket”, see AHw 758. Durand and Guichard 1997: 58 translate “sur le plat”.

f Probably jars provided with a lit (< ḫesū “to cover”).

52. Ritual of Ištar, Text 3

Text: A. 1249b + S. 142 75 + M. (unnumbered).

Lines iii 1–23’

[beginning destroyed]

lā iruru≤/ū […] ≤muḫḫû[ım […]

3 sa ûebbû […]

4 inîmû ana me[ḥertiša] 5 màru ituḥšû [ ] ≤muḫḫû[ım […]

6 inîmû[ma muḫḫû[ım] 7 ỉša[lqalû]

[beginning destroyed]

[do/does] not enter […] the prophet […] who arise(s) […]

“When the musicians[ have entered before her,” the prophetesses[ and the musicians[.d

“When the prophetresses maintain their equilibrium,” two musicians enter the […] They sing an er̄emakkû[am izammûrû]

“Where the prophetesses main-[tain their equilibrium],” two musicians enter the […] When it is time for the chant “ud-da-ab”, they go out […] The musicians sing and go out from the dwelling of the goddess.

Seven gābiṣ̄tum women do their service […] When they have finished, they turn and […] do their service […]

a DUMUMES probably refers to the “musicians” DUMUMES NAIIT (line 7); if that reading is correct, and may be understood as an abbreviation or haplography. The word màru (DUMU) “son” may refer to the age of the musicians (Durand and
Guichard 1997: 62: “petits-musiciens”) but does not necessarily do so, since the word is also used of representatives of a profession.

b I.e., Ištar.

c The word, written syllabically מִ-מְשֶׁי-טִי-מ, is probably a plural of מֹבּּשְׁי-טִי (cf. the Assyrian plural genitives מֹבּּשְׁי-טִי וְשְׁי-טִי VS 19 1 [no. 125]:38; מֹבּּשְׁי-טִי SAA 12 69 [no. 110]:29).

d Durand and Guichard 1997: 60 n. 212 suggest מֹבּּשְׁי (lupšum, a cult functionary) as an alternative reading.

e Cf. above, Ritual of Ištar, Text 2 (no. 51):22’.

f A lamentation song (Aṣu 1554; cf. 246).

8 Restoration according to Durand and Guichard 1997: 60.

b For this female functionary, see Durand and Giuchard 1997: 51–52. If the word גּוּבּשְׁי is related to קוּבּשְׁי-בבּשְׁי = TEG.TEG-bal, it refers to changing of cloths or appearance (cf. Heb. ḫps htrp.). Groneberg 1997: 147 translates accordingly “die Verkleiderinnen.”

53. Assignment of a Donkey

Text: A. 3796.


[imērum] 2ZI.GA 5ana Lupā′im
1[lātlim] 7[ša] Dagan 8ina imēri 7[ša]
sallat 12Ida-Maraš 7[ša] māt Šudē 10[ša]
gāt Yanšib-Dagan

11warah Ḫibirtum 12[šanat Zimri-Lim]

One [donkey], outlay to Lupāhum, [pr]o[phet [of] Dagan, (taken) from the donkeys of the booty from Ida-Maraš in the land of Sudâ, (carried out) under the authority of Yanšib-Dagan.

11Month of Ḫibirtum (V), the year of Zimri-Lim (11’) when the great throne is offered to [Dagan] of Terqa.

a Probably the same person as in ARM 26 199 (no. 9).

b Cf. ARM 26 199 (no. 9):58-63.

c Each regnal year of Zimri-Lim has a title; the numbers in brackets indicate the order of the years. On the year-counting of Mari, see J. M. Sasson 1984b: 249–50; Charpin and Durand 1985: 305-6; Anbar 1991: 30–37; Charpin and Ziegler 2002.
54. Outlay of Garment

Text: ARM 9 22.

Eighteen garments that were taken to Mari;

Five garments for clothing of five apprentices: one for Yantinum, one for Šamaš-rabû, one for Ilu-daiyan, one for Eḫlip-šarrī and for Kasap-Šamaš.

Four garments that were [taken] to [...] that were set on a boat and brought to Mari; supervision of Ili-tūra;

One garment for Ili-andûllī, the āpīrum, one garment for Ana-Šamaš-anaṭal, one garment for Šingina, one garment for Šamaš-dumqi.

Thirty-one garments total, work quota of Šamaš-mutaplī.

Month of Kinūnum (VII), twenty-eighth day, the year of Zimri-Lim (10') when he went to the aid of Babylon.

55. Outlay of Garment

Text: ARM 21 333.
Transliteration and translation: Durand 1983a: 442–49.
55. Outlay of Garment

lines 33’–44’

33’1 šubātum kitāṭ ḫusṣā ana Admu
34’1 šubātum išārum tardennum Irra-gāmil muḫḫu ša Nergal
35’1 šubātum Yamḥaddu rēṣumu Warad-ûlu-šu rab nārīm

37’2 patinnū uṭublū rēṣumu 38’2 kaballû 39’1 mešēn šuḫuppim rēṣ-tum 40’ ana Ḫāya-Sûmu

41’1 šubātum išārum tardennum Ḥabdu-Malik ša īṣtu Šubat-Enlil illišam 42’1 šubātum išārum Yadida līlatum 43’1 šubātum išārum Ea-maṣī muḫḫu Ûtur-Mûr 44’1 šubātum išārum Šarrum-dâri nārīm

35’One red cloth of linen for the god Admu; one ordinary garment of second quality for Irra-gamil prophet of Nergal; one Yamhadean garment of prime quality for Warad-ilu-šu the chief chanter;
37’two uṭublum belts of prime quality, two pairs of shoes, one pair of šuḫuppim sandals of prime quality for Ḫāya-Sumu;
39’one ordinary garment of second quality for Ḥabdu-Malik who has come from Šubat-Enlil; one ordinary garment for Yadida “the crazy woman”; one ordinary garment for Ea-maṣī prophet of Ûtur-Mûr; one ordinary garment for Šarrum-dâri the chanter.

This prophet predicted the death of the royal child in ARM 26 222 (no. 33) and is mentioned as a potential witness in a report of crimes committed in the house of Sammetar in M. 9717 (no. 65).

For uṭublum, see Durand 1983a: 403–6, according to whom the word designates the material (Durand 1983a: 445: “serge”) rather than the form of the clothing in question; cf. no. 58 (ARM 22 326).

For kaballum, see Durand 1983a: 423 (“chausson”); CAD K 2-3.

May or may not be identical with Ḫāya-Sumu, king of Ilan-šura, who was Zimri-Lim’s vassal and son-in-law. He is mentioned in ARM 25 15 (no. 60) 5; cf. no. 44 (ARM 26 239), note a.

The word līlātum means basically “crazy, idiot” (see Durand 1995: 458), but may also designate ecstatic behavior in the same sense as muḫḫu. Note that the lady is accompanied by a prophet and a chanter in this list.
56. Outlay of Garment

Text: ARM 22 167.

lines r. 2'–8'

Two ḫamdūm-turbans of second quality for [...]; one ordinary garment of second quality for Iddin-Yalkrub-ll; one pair of sandals of second quality for Šuḥalan a man1 from Qatnu; one ordinary garment of second quality for Yatahum; one ordinary garment for Ḥiddum—two Suteans; one ordinary garment for Ea-mudammiq, prophet of Ninḫursag.b

57. Extract from a Decree of Expenditures

Text: A. 4676.
Transliteration and translation: Durand 1988: 381.

Yatahum ḫiddum Sutū Ea-mudammiq muḫḫu ša Ninḫursagga Yatahum and Ḥiddum, two Suteans; "Ea-mudammiq, prophet of Ninḫursag."11Outlay to people who deliver messages.

a The names Yatahum, Ḥiddum, and Ea-mudammiq are identical with those mentioned on lines r. 6'–8' of the previous document (ARM 22 167), from which this text may have been extracted. For Ninḫursag, see no. 56 (ARM 22 167), note b.
58. Outlay of Garment

Text: ARM 22 326.

One *uṭublum* garment of second quality and one bow for Abd-Malik, a sheikh from Šakka; one *uṭublum* garment of second quality and two woven turbans for Annu-tabni, prophetess of Annu-nitum.

59. Outlay of Garment

Text: ARM 23 446 (= M. 5858 + ARM 22 171). (cf. ARM 21 333 = no. 55)

This section of a tablet summarizing various disbursements resumés no. 55 above, where a translation may be found; see Soubeyran in Bardet et al. 1984: 344–46.]
60. Donation of Lances

Transliteration and translation: Limet 1986: 5.

1 šukurrum kaspim 2(0?) šukurrû siparrim 32/3 manûm 4šābulûm 5anaḪāya-Sūmû 6šar Îlān-šûrûya 72 zamrûtû siparrim 8ana Qîšatîn 9āpîlim ša Dagan 10zi.GA ša qâtt Mukannišîm 11warâḫ Uraḫîm 12UD.28.KAM 13šanat Ŭam-rî-Limm 14kussâm rabûm ana Šāmûi 15ušellû

One lance of silver, ten silver lances of bronze, 2/3 of a mina each; gift for Ťaya-Sumu, king of Ilân-Šûra; 2 two lances of bronze, for Qîšatîm, prophet of Dagan. 3 Outlay, under the authority of Mukannišûm.

Thus according to the translation of Limet 1986: 5; the number is missing from the transliterated text.

b For this person, son-in-law and vassal of Zimri-Lim, possibly mentioned also in ARM 21 333 (no. 55):40', see Charpin 1988: 43–46.

c For zamrûtû, see Durand 1987a: 187.

d Note that Mukannišûm reports an appearance of an āpîlim of Dagan in ARM 26 209 (no. 19).

e See above, no. 53 (A. 3796), note c.

61. Donation of Silver Rings

Text: ARM 25 142 (= A. 4674).
61. Donation of Silver Rings

Text: M. 11436.
Discussion: Charpin 2002: 20

1/2 manâ kaspum ²ša Yaḥmusum ³ana ḫīṣēḥlī طقةlkhīlim ⁴ana Bābīlīm . . .] ⁵anâ 3 ḫullī kaspim ⁶ṣīpuṣim

⁷ina ḫibīṣu 1 ḫullu kaspim ⁸anâ mār Ubdašan
⁹1 ḫullu kaspím ¹⁰anâ mār Ḥāya-Sām[l]ā šal ¹¹bussurtam ubšam

¹²1 ḫullu kaspim ¹⁵anâ muḫḫim ša Adu ¹⁴inīma tētām anā šarrīm ¹⁵idēnīnu
¹⁶naḫar 1/2 manâ kaspum ¹⁷Zl.GA aṣīlī ša šēpri
¹⁸waraḫ Uraḫtim ¹⁵UD.25.KAM ¹⁷šanat Zimrī-Lim ²ṣalām Ḥatta uṣellā

= See above, no. 53 (A. 3796), note c.

Half a mina of silver belonging to Yaḥmusum for the use of the palace, [to be delivered] to Baby- lon, for making of three ḫullûm rings ⁵ of silver,
including one ḫullûm ring of silver for the servant of Ubdašan;
²one ḫullûm ring of silver for the servant of Ḥāya-Sam[l]ā who brought here good news;
³one ḫullûm ring of silver for the prophet of Adad, when he delivered an oracle to the king.
⁴Total: half a mina of silver, out-
lay to people who deliver messages.
⁵Month of Uraḫtim (I), twenty-
fifth day, the year of Zimrî-Lim (⁷) when he presented a statue to (the god) Ḥatta.

62. Outlay of Silver

Text: M. 11436.
Discussion: Charpin 2002: 20

1 šiqil kaspum ²ina aban maḫḫirim ³ana Lupaḥim ⁴āpilim ša Daḡan ⁵inīma anā Tuttuli ⁶illīku

⁷waraḫ Daḡan ⁵UD.7.KAM ⁸šanat Zimrī-Lim ⁹kussām raḇām anā Ṣamši ¹⁰uṣellā

= Lupaḥim's returning from Tuttul is mentioned in ARM 26 199 (no. 9).
= See above, no. 53 (A. 3796), note c.

One shekel of silver, according
to the market weights, to Lupaḥim, prophet of Daḡan, when he went to Tuttul.
¹Month of Daḡan (VIII), seventh
day, the year of Zimrî-Lim (⁴) when he offered a great throne to Šamaš.
63. Deed of Donation

**Text:** T. 82.

**Transliteration and translation:** Durand 1988: 380.

**Discussion:** Charpin 1992: 28.

**Lines ix 2–4:**

\[ \text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{2}} \text{šewerum kaspim } Išḫi-Dagan \quad \text{One silver ring: Išḫi-Dagan,} \\
\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{3}dāpili ša Dagan } \text{ša Šubātim} \quad \text{āpilum of Dagan of Šubatum.} \]

64. The Epic of Zimri-Lim

**unpublished\textsuperscript{a}**

**Transliteration and translation:** Durand 1988: 393 (lines 137–142).


**Lines 137–142**

\[ \text{\footnotesize 137} \text{Zimrî-Lim zikruš } Dagan eṭilma \quad \text{Zimri-Lim is heroic like an} \\
\text{\footnotesize 138} \text{tuklassu } Iṭur-Mēr uršānu \quad \text{image of Dagan.} \\
\text{\footnotesize 139} \text{āmruma itašu } āpīlam eṭel } māti\lbrack m\rbrack \quad \text{His protection is Itur-Mer, the} \\
\text{\footnotesize 140} \text{sarru libbastu } danānām uśḥam \quad \text{warrior.} \\
\text{\footnotesize 141} \text{illak Addum ina šumēlišu} \quad \text{The hero of the land\textsuperscript{b} saw his} \\
\text{\footnotesize 142} \text{Erra dapinumma ina imnišu} \quad \text{sign, the prophet:\textsuperscript{c}} \\
\]

\[ \text{\footnotesize 143} \text{Adad goes at his left side,} \\
\text{\footnotesize 144} \text{Erra, the mighty one, at his} \\
\text{\footnotesize 145} \text{right side.”} \]

\[ \text{\footnotesize a} \text{Only excerpts of this text, an edition of which is announced by Michaël} \\
\text{\footnotesize Guichard (\textit{NABU} 1994 § 105), have been quoted in transliteration and} \\
\text{\footnotesize translation, without museum numbers, in Charpin and Durand 1985: 325, 328, 333–34;} \\
\text{\footnotesize Durand 1988: 57, 393, 428; Guichard 1999.} \\
\text{\footnotesize b} \text{I.e., Zimri-Lim; cf. note c.} \\
\text{\footnotesize c} \text{Both } ītum \text{ “sign” and } āpīlum \text{ are objects of } īmuru \text{ “he saw.”} \\
\text{\footnotesize d} \text{Literally, “The heart of the king goes vigorously forth.”} \]

Text: M. 9717


5 šewirû 1 ḫullu ša kaspim 2šewirû qıştum u ḫullu 3ina simmî̂stîmma 1ina bit mayâli ša Summētar imḫur 1šewirû 1šubātu 10 šammu šaḫbu inûma pagrê ilqe 3šubātu ša ina bit Summētar[...] x x [imp]unu

He received secretly in the bedroom of Sammetar five rings and one ḫullum ring of silver; the rings, as well as the ḫullum ring, were a gift.

“He took one ring, one garment and ten (liters) of choice oil on the occasion of the pagrâ’um ritual.”

Three garments that he had received in the house of Sammetar[...]

[break of approximately ten lines]


a For the pagrâ’um ritual, see no. 38, note h.

b Giving drink to a person to obtain an oracle is mentioned in ARM 26 207 (no. 17).

c For the unique expression rabênum ša mātim, see van Koppen 2002: 357.

d According to van Koppen 2002: 317–18, this refers to necromancy, i.e., invocation of the spirit of Sammetar, the deceased majordomo of Mari; this text probably belongs to the same context as ARM 26 243 (no. 46). Irra-gamil is presented as a prophet of Nergal, the god of underworld, in ARM 21 333 (no. 55) and ARM 23 446 (no. 59).
The evidence of prophetic oracles from the Old Babylonian period, mostly coming from Mari, is amplified by two tablets in the Free Library of Pennsylvania, deriving from the Old Babylonian city and state of Ešnunna and published by Maria de Jong Ellis (1987). Each tablet, one of which is badly damaged, contains an oracle of the goddess Kitītum, a local manifestation of Ištar, to King Ibalpiel II of Ešnunna. He was a contemporary of King Zimri-Lim of Mari, reigning approximately 1779–1765, and is well known from Mari documents—including the quotations of prophecy, in which he is called “the man of Ešnunna,” with whom Zimri-Lim should not ally himself (nos. 7, 9).

The two Kitītum oracles show that the divine words Ibalpiel received were in many respects similar to those delivered to his contemporary Zimri-Lim and the later Assyrian kings. Even though the texts make no mention of human intermediaries, they are likely to be based on prophetic performances in the temple of Kitītum, in the archive of which they probably have been deposited. The plain style and the quality of the language suggest the involvement of a competent scribe recording an oral performance (Moran 1993: 257). As regards the form and content, the better-preserved text (no. 66) represents the type of a letter from a deity to the king called šiptu, which contains only divine words without further authorship indications (Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 204). Otherwise it is analogous to the Assyrian prophecy reports. It begins with indications of the divine speaker and the addressee, followed by the actual message written in highly polished style, with many reminiscences of literary works and divination texts.

The fully preserved oracle to Ibalpiel presents the type of the oracle of well-being—šulmu or Heilsorakel—well known from the Hebrew Bible as well as from the documents from Mari and Assyria. The goddess promises to reveal to the pious king the “secrets of the gods,” in other words,
the decisions of the divine council, by which the country is given to his
rule. The stability of the throne and the well-being of the country are guar-
anteed by this divine support. As such, the Kititum oracle is a purebred
specimen of ancient Near Eastern royal prophecy.

66. Oracle of Kititum to Ibalpiel

Text: FLP 1674.

O king Ibalpiel, thus says Kititum:

The secrets of the gods are placed before me. Because you constantly pronounce my name
with your mouth, a I constantly disclose the secrets of the gods to you.

On the advice of the gods and by the command of Anu, the coun-
try is given you to rule. You will ransom the upper and lower coun-
try, you will amass the riches of the upper and lower country. Your
commerce will not diminish; there will be a permanent food of peace for any country that your
hand keeps hold of.

I, Kititum, will strengthen the foundations of your throne; I have
established a protective spirit for you. May your ear be attentive to me!

a Literally, “Because you constantly have the memory of my name in your
mouth”; for the expression zikir šumim, see Kraus 1971.

b The reading (ši-in ... ta-ša-ša-ar) and translation of lines 14–15 according to
Ellis 1987: 261–63, who interprets the “loosening of the sandals” (šēnum paṭārum)
66. Oracle of Kititum to Ibalpiel

Text: FLP 2064.
Photograph: Ellis 1987: 239.
Copy: Ellis 1987: 239.

וָאֵלִי בַּעַל בּוֹתְמָה בִּלְתֵּשׁ בִּתְיָנִית קְדֻעַ אִישׁ נֵבֵר בִּקֻכַּנִּי.[
remaining eighteen lines very fragmentary]

O king Ibalpiel, Thus says Kititum:

וָאֵלִי בַּעַל בּוֹתְמָה בִּלְתֵּשׁ בִּתְיָנִית קְדֻעַ אִישׁ נֵבֵר בִּקֻכַּנִּי.[
remaining eighteen lines very fragmentary]

Thus according to the restoration of Ellis 1987: 264.

The expression אָכַל תָּנְכֶּפִּי is not attested elsewhere but can be compared with, e.g., עֲקַל תָּעוֹנַע and מֶה תָּאוֹנַע in the Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracle SAA 9 1.10 (no. 77) vi 22–23.
Nineveh Oracles

The second biggest corpus of ancient Near Eastern prophetic texts outside the Hebrew Bible comes from the royal archive of Nineveh, which is the main source of our knowledge of the Neo-Assyrian empire (see Parpola 1995). This archive, destroyed by the Babylonians and Medes in the year 612 B.C.E. and discovered by Sir Austen Henry Layard in 1848–1850, also functioned as the royal library. It is the most prolific repository of cuneiform documents found thus far: the Nineveh excavations unearthed almost 30,000 clay tablets now deposited in the British Museum. About 24,000 of them belong to the so-called Library of Assurbanipal, the remaining approximately 6,000 texts forming the archival corpus which, supplemented by the less numerous texts from other Neo-Assyrian archives, is being published in the series State Archives of Assyria (SAA) by the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project in Helsinki.

The Neo-Assyrian archival corpus consists of documents of different kinds: royal correspondence, administrative records (lists of persons, legal transactions, decrees and gifts etc.), treaties, religious and literary texts, divination texts like astrological reports and oracle queries—and prophetic oracles: words of deities to humans, transmitted by a human intermediary, the raggimu, or his female counterpart, the raggintu. These oracles, consisting of the eleven tablets published by Simo Parpola (1997), are included in this chapter. In addition to the actual oracles, there is further evidence of prophecy in other Neo-Assyrian sources collected in the next chapter.

The Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracles are written on two kinds of tablets. Some of them (nos. 90–96) are recorded individually each on its own tablet, while others (nos. 68–89) are collected on larger tablets composed of several oracles. This roughly corresponds to two basic tablet formats: the horizontal report format used for disposable documents which only occasionally were deposited in the archives, and the vertical format, often consisting of several columns and used for letters, lists, treaties and other
documents meant for long-term preservation (Parpola 1997: liii; cf. Radner 1995). The two tablet types give a clue to the transformation of oral prophetic communications into literature. The reports of individual oracles are the most immediate records of a prophetic performance. They may be taken as scribal formulations of the substance of the divine message spoken by the prophet. The reports are not written according to a strict formal standard, and they were probably composed only to preserve the message until it had reached its destination; only very few of them ended up in the archives. Sometimes, however, there was a need to make a selection of individual oracles and subsequently rewrite them in a collection edited by the scribes. In this phase, not only editorial selection and stylization of the oracles takes place, but prophecy is reused in a new situation and finally becomes a part of written tradition transcending specific historical situations and retaining its relevance in changing circumstances (van der Toorn 2000; Nissinen 2000a).

The fact that the extant documentation of Neo-Assyrian prophecy consists of no more than twenty-nine individual oracles, only seven of which have been preserved on their original tablets, gives reason to conclude that in Assyria, as at Mari, it was not the standard procedure to preserve prophetic messages for the posterity. The reports may have been produced on a much larger scale than the extant copies suggest; if so, they were probably disposed of soon after their use. To the best of our knowledge, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal were the only kings of Assyria who purposefully let prophecies be filed away, and all the preserved collections derive from Esarhaddon’s time. This, together with the fact that these two kings are the only ones to mention prophets in their inscriptions, makes it probable that they were more attentive to prophecy than any of their predecessors. Their special appreciation of prophecy is possibly due to their demonstrably close relationship with the cult of Istar of Arbela, the principal divine speaker of the prophetic oracles (Parpola 1997: xxxix–xl).

In general, the socioreligious status of the Assyrian prophets was bound to their fundamental and well documented affiliation with the temples of Istar. Their communication with the king was enabled by their position as servants of the goddess whose words they were believed and supposed to transmit. When delivering oracles, they, in fact, impersonated the deity speaking. Hence, the divine authority of their messages, guaranteed by the proper context of the proclamation, weighed more than their personalities. Functionally, the proclamation of the divine will by the prophets is comparable to the study of omens by the ancient scholars, and prophecy was indeed regarded as one branch of divination among the others in Assyria. However, the divinatory method, the education and the social position of the prophets were clearly different from those of the scholars. As successors of the antediluvian sages, the
astrologers, haruspices and exorcists were versed in traditional literature, whereas the prophets’ expertise was in becoming possessed by the god(dess) rather than literary skills. The communication of the prophets with the king was obviously less direct than that of the scholars who carried on a correspondence with him and belonged to his closest advisory board. To this should be added that the Assyrian prophets known to us are predominantly women, which cannot be said of the scholars, all of whom are male. While the prophets, hence, clearly represent a class different from the scholars, the function and purpose of prophecy was not regarded as different from that of divination in general. All divination was supposed to share the theological and ideological foundation of the Neo-Assyrian empire and to work for its goals.

The Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracles are most illustrative specimens of prophecy, as they almost without exception name the main components of the prophetic process of communication: the divine speaker, the human addressee and the prophet who mediates.

With regard to the socioreligious affiliation of the prophets to the temples of Ištar it is not surprising that this goddess in her various aspects appears more often than not as the divine speaker in prophetic oracles. Among the manifestations of the goddess, Ištar of Arbelu and Mullissu (who in the Neo-Assyrian era was equated with Ištar of Nineveh) most frequently have the word, but she may also appear in hypostases like Banitu (no. 78) and Urkittu (no. 83)—even as “the goddesses” (ištarāṭī) of Babylon (no. 78). However, Ištar is not the only divine speaker in Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracles, and nothing prevented the prophets from speaking on behalf of different deities. One oracle (no. 71) is presented as the word of three deities, Bel, Ištar and Nabû, and in numbers 84–88, the prophet La-dagil-ili proclaims the word of both Aššur and Ištar. This is probably due to an aspectual—rather than “polytheistic”—concept of the divine, that is, a concept according to which the individual deities represent different aspects of one universal divinity. This makes the prophecies an important source for the study of Assyrian religion (Parpola 1997: xviii–xxvi; cf. Parpola 2000).

The addressee of the Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracles is usually the king of Assyria, either Esarhaddon (681–669) or Assurbanipal (668–627), both of whom received prophecies already as crown princes. In a few oracles the deity speaks to Esarhaddon’s mother, Naqia (nos. 75, 78; probably also nos. 74, 83), and one is proclaimed to the people of Assyria as a whole (no. 85), but even these texts deal with matters concerning Esarhaddon. The strong concentration on the king and the royal family is not surprising, given that the texts derive from archives of the two kings who showed a special predilection for prophets and the worship of their patroness Ištar. Whether the same was also true for Assyrian prophecy during the reigns
of their predecessors, cannot be said because of the lack of evidence, even though there is no doubt that the kings in general were the most prominent addressees of prophetic oracles. However, the most immediate context of the prophets was the temple rather than the court, and some of the texts collected in the next chapter show that prophecies could be delivered to other persons as well, for example to temple officials and even to private persons.

With the exception of number 93, the sources—both reports and collections—are careful to mention the name and gender of the transmitter of each oracle, usually also the city in which the prophet is based. This indicates that the personalities of the prophets and prophetesses were not altogether indifferent, even though subordinate to the divine authority. The purpose of the colophons indicating the provenance of the oracles is probably to confirm that the oracle in question was really spoken in an appropriate context. For the study of Neo-Assyrian prophecy, again, they reveal many important features. First, the names of the prophets are highly theological, themselves carrying a message relevant to the worship of Ištar, such as, Ilūssā-āmur “I have seen her divinity”; Issār-bēlī-da₂₂₃ⁱ “Ištar, strengthen my lord!”, Issār-lā-tašiyat “Do not neglect Ištar”; Sinqišā-āmur “I have seen her distress.” Secondly, they show the predominance of women among the prophets: eight out of thirteen prophets whose personalia have been preserved in the oracles are women, and more prophetesses are known from other Neo-Assyrian documents (nos. 105, 109–111, 113–114). To be noted is that in two or three cases (nos. 71, 72 and possibly no. 68) the gender of the prophet is not clear due to incongruent personal details. It is possible that these persons assumed an undefinable gender role, comparable to that of the assinnus. Thirdly, Arbela appears as the most important base of the prophets (Nissinen 2001a). Seven prophets are located in that city, the Ištar temple of which was doubtless the cradle of Neo-Assyrian prophecy; even prophets that are indicated to come from elsewhere speak on behalf of Ištar of Arbela (nos. 70, 81). Other localities mentioned as domiciles of the prophets include Assur (nos. 72, 78), Calah (no. 81) and the otherwise unknown Dara-腹泻ya (no. 70). In addition, nonprophetic Neo-Assyrian sources document prophetic activities elsewhere in Mesopotamia, e.g., in Babylon (no. 103), Akkad (no. 109) and Harran (no. 115).

In accordance with the royal context of the extant prophetic oracles, their contents are entirely focused on the king, his rule and his relationship with the divine world. The prophecies delivered to Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal represent a very distinctive royal theology based on the idea of a close relationship of the king with the goddess, the king serving as her son and chosen one (Parpola 1997: xxxvi-xliv). Most of the prophecies can be characterized as oracles of well-being (šulmu), proclaiming the
reconciliation of the king with the gods. This reconciliation guarantees the equilibrium of heaven and earth, as demonstrated by the stable rule of the Assyrian king, his superiority over all enemies and adversaries and the legitimate succession. The divine reconciliation is effected by the intercession of Ištar who protects the king and fights for him; this is described by rich metaphorical language, that employs maternal images side by side with metaphors for destruction, often taken from nature (Weippert 1985).

Most of the prophecies are easily datable and can be more or less firmly associated with historical events. The ten oracles of the first collection (nos. 68–77) are proclaimed during Esarhaddon’s victorious war against his brothers before his rise to power in the year 681; this is the most probable historical background of number 90, too. The third collection (nos. 84–88) is composed of oracles and cultic commentaries attached to Esarhaddon’s enthronement ritual in Ešarra, the temple of Aššur in Assur, which took place in Adar (XII), 681. The prophecies collected in the second collection (nos. 78–83) deal with the stabilization of Esarhaddon’s rule and the reestablishment of the cult of the gods of Babylon; they are likely to have been uttered at the outset of his reign. Of the prophecies addressed to Assurbanipal, one presents him as the crown prince (no. 92); however, this part of the tablet may be a quotation from an earlier oracle. Tablet 93, which is formally somewhat different from the others, contains divine words concerning one of Assurbanipal’s Elamite campaigns, most probably that of the year 653. The latest datable prophecy (no. 94) is connected with Assurbanipal’s war against his elder brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin, the ruler of Babylonia; this can be verified by the date in the colophon (Nisan 18, 650).

As for the dates of the collections, it is important to note the temporal difference between the proclamation of the oracles and their subsequent compilation. This is especially noteworthy in the case of the first collection, which is probably drawn up at the same time and for the same purpose as Esarhaddon’s Nineveh A inscription (no. 97), dated to Adar (XII), 673 (see the introduction to the following chapter). The re-actualization of oracles delivered seven years earlier by rewriting and compiling them lifted them from specific historical situations and turned them into a part of written tradition that could be used and reinterpreted by posterity.

68–77. First Collection of Prophecies
Different Prophets to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 9 1 (= 4 R² 61 = K 4310).
Copy: Smith 1875: 68; Pinches in Rawlinson 1891: 61.


68. SAA 9 1.1 (lines i 4'-29’)
Issar-la-tašiyat to Esarhaddon


4[Aššur-aḫu-iddin] šar muṭatī 5[lā ]šapallāh 6[la]yyu šāru ša idibakkāni 7aqappasū lā aksurūni 8nakarūtēka 9ki šaḫšūri ša šimāni 10ina pān šēpēka ittangarūrū

11[Bēl]tu rabītu anāku 12 anāku Issār ša Arba[il] 13 ša nakarūtēka 14ina pān šēpēka akkarrūni 15ayyūte dibīya ša 16aqquakkanni 17ina muḫḫi lā tazzizūnī

18anāku Issār ša Arba[il] 19nakarūtēka ukāša 20addanakku anāku 21Issār ša Arba[il] 22ina pānā-tītka 23ina kutullka 24alāka lā tapallāh 25atta ina libbi muggi 26anāku ina libbi ū’a 27atabbī uššāb

4|Esar-ḥaddon, king of the lands, fear [not]! What is the wind that has attacked you, whose wings I have not broken? Like ripe apples your enemies will continually roll before your feet.

11|I am the great Lady, I am Ištar of Arbela who throw your enemies before your feet. Have I spoken to you any words that you could not rely upon?

18|I am Ištar of Arbela, I will flay your enemies and deliver them up to you. I am Ištar of Arbela, I go before you and behind you.

23|Fear not! You have got cramps, but I, in the midst of wailing, will get up and sit down."
28. SAA 9 1.1 (lines i 4'-29')

a The word *idihakkāni* is derived from *tabû* "to rise"; see Parpola 1997: 4 and Nissinen 1991: 120 n. 145.
b Literally, "like apples of Siman (III)," i.e., the month in which apples mellow in Assyria.
c Derived from the four-radical verb *nagarruru* "to roll." Cf. Fales and Lanfranchi 1997: 109, who derive the word from *q* *garâru* "to bend": "Your enemies bend at your feet like branches of the apple-tree in the spring."
e The "getting up" and "sitting down" is probably an expression for the whole action of the goddess, who rises to the king's rescue, fights for him, and finally returns to her place.
f The masculine determinative of the PN is written over an erased feminine determinative; this either indicates an error of the scribe or his uncertainty about the gender of the prophet; cf. no. 71, note f.

69. SAA 9 1.2 (lines i 30'–ii 10')

**Sinqiša-amur to Esarhaddon**


30. *Šar māt Aššur lā tapallāḇ* 31. *nakrû ša šar māt Aššûr 32. ana ūtabâ'bī adâdana* 33. *[ina nbē ŋēduēka* 34. [u]taqqā']lanka 35. ŋarabh'akka

36. [Beltu rab]lištu anâku 37. [anâku Issâr ūša Arbail 38. . . . is]su libbišu 39. [...]-šu

[break of about six lines]


8. utakkīlka lā ušbā'ku]

30. King of Assyria, fear not!
31. The enemy of the king of Assyria I will lead to the slaughter. [In] the Palace of Succession I protect you and [raise you.]
36. I am [the great Lady, I am] star of Arbela! [. . .] from it. [. . .]

[break]

1[. . .] w[h]at [. . .] I did not hear you [I will bring enemies] in necksto[cks, allies] with tribu[te]. I have defeated your enemy in a single [combat]!
35. I have inspired you with confidence, [I] do not sit idle.
When the crown prince of Assyria was chosen, he entered the Palace of Succession (beth redetti) in which he not only was prepared for his future kingship, but also took part in the administration of the empire. Note that Esarhaddon is already addressed as the king, even though he, at the time of the proclamation of the oracle, still seems to dwell in the Palace of Succession. This may seem contradictory (Weippert 2002: 40), but the oracle may have been proclaimed after the death of Sennacherib, reflecting the conviction of the prophetic circles that Esarhaddon was predestined to kingship.

70. SAA 9 1.3 (lines ii 11′–15′)
Remut-Allati to Esarhaddon


9'ša pī Sinqiša-āmur 10'marʾat Arbail

7′By the mouth of Sinqiša-amur, a woman from Arbela.

a When the crown prince of Assyria was chosen, he entered the Palace of Succession (beth redetti) in which he not only was prepared for his future kingship, but also took part in the administration of the empire. Note that Esarhaddon is already addressed as the king, even though he, at the time of the proclamation of the oracle, still seems to dwell in the Palace of Succession. This may seem contradictory (Weippert 2002: 40), but the oracle may have been proclaimed after the death of Sennacherib, reflecting the conviction of the prophetic circles that Esarhaddon was predestined to kingship.

71. SAA 9 1.4 (lines ii 16′–40′)
Bayā to Esarhaddon


11′rîšāk isī Aššūr-abi-iddina 12′šar-riya rīši Arbail

16′ša pī Rēmūt-Allati 17′ša Dāra-ābūya 18′ša birti šaddāni

15′By the mouth of the woman Remut-Allati from Dara-ābūya in the mountains.

a Even though there is no self-presentation formula, the speaker is certainly Ištar of Arbela (rather than the prophetess).

b Or, “Rejoice, Arbela!”

Fear not, Esarhaddon! I am Bel, I speak to you! I watch over the supporting beams of your heart. When your mother gave birth to you, sixty Great Gods stood there with me, protecting you. Sin stood at your right side, Šamaš at your left. Sixty Great Gods are still standing around you; they have girded your loins.

Do not trust in humans! Lift up your eyes and focus on me! I am Ištar of Arbela. I have reconciled Aššur to you. I protected you when you were a baby. Fear not; praise me!

Is there an enemy that has attacked you, while I have kept silent? The future shall be like the past. I am Nabû, the Lord of the Stylus. Praise me!

By the mouth of the woman Bayâ, a man from Arbela.

The past tenses of the following verbs imply that the particle kî should be understood here in its temporal rather than comparative meaning (“Like the mother”; thus Biggs 1969: 605; Hecker 1986: 57), referring to the very childhood of the king nursed in the temple of Ištar; see Parpola 1997: xxxix-xl and cf. Assurbanipal’s hymn to Ištar SAA 3 3 13:13-15: “I knew no father or mother, I grew up in the lap of my goddesses. As a child the great gods guided me, going with me on the right and the left.”

The word ititissû is G perf. sg.3. of uzuzzu; see Hämeen-Anttila 2000a: 99.

Unlike the other verbs on lines 19-26', the verb uzuzzu is in present form here. This indicates that from line 25' on, the oracle refers to the present (cf. the translation of Dietrich 1973: 41). Cf. the same expression by the same prophet in SAA 9 2.2 (no. 79) i 21.

Cf. SAA 9 2.2 (no. 79) i 17–18.

The epithet “Lord of the Stylus” refers to Nabû as the writer of the “tablet of destiny” of mankind.

The gender of the prophet is ambiguous: Bayâ is called a “son” (dumû) of Arbela, but the determinative before the PN is feminine: mî.ba-ia-a dumû urû.arba-il. Cf. the correction of the determinative before the name of Issar-la-tašiyaš (line i 28; see no. 68, note f). Bayâ possibly belonged to those with undefinable gender role, like the assinnus (see Nissinen 1998c: 28-34), among whom there were
prophets at Mari. It is noteworthy that the name Bayâ is used as male and female name alike (see PNA 1/II: 253), which makes it possible that the writing here reflects a lapse of the scribe (thus Weippert 2002: 34).

72. SAA 9.1.5 (lines iii 1’-6’)
Ilussa-amur to Esarhaddon

[beginning [about fourteen lines]
destroyed]

[three lines too fragmentary for translation]

\[2\] anāku […] \[3\] atta tal{ […] \[4\] anāku Mu[lissu …]

\[5\] ša pî mi. Ilussa-ām[ur] \[6\] Libbālā[yu]

[beginning destroyed]

\[2\] I […] you shall […] I am Mu[lissu …]

\[3\] By the mouth of the woman Ilussa-am[ur] of Assur.\[b\]

\[a\] This name, probably referring to the same person, appears also in the provisions list KAV 121.

\[b\] In the prophetic oracles, the city of Assur is always called Libbi-āli (Libbāli), “Inner City.” Note that in spite of the female determinative mî, the gentilic adjective Libbālāyu is masculine; the feminine equivalent would be Libbālītu (see PNA 2/II: 661). Cf. no. 71 note f.

73. SAA 9.1.6 (lines iii 7’–iv 35)
NN to Esarhaddon


\[7\] anāku Issār ša [Arbail] \[8\] Aššūr-aḫu-iddina šar māt A[ššūr]

\[9\] ina Libbi-āli Nin[u]la \[10\] Kalḥi Arba[īl] \[11\] ūmē arktū[le] \[12\] šanāte dārū[l]e \[13\] ana Aššūr-aḫu-iddina šarriya \[14\] addanna

\[7\] I am Ištar of [Arbela]! Esarhaddon, king of Assyria!

\[8\] In Assur, Nineveh, Calah and Arbela I will give endless days and everlasting years to Esarhaddon, my king.
For the meaning “amber” of the word ʾelmēšu (Heb. ʾḥāššāl Ez 1:4, 27; 8:2), see Bodi 1991: 82–94 and Heltzer 1999, who demonstrates its Baltic origin.

Lines 23–29 are reminiscent of the mystical commentary SAA 3 39:30–32: “The middle heaven of ʾsaggilmud stone is of the Igigi gods. Bel sits in a golden chamber in the middle of heaven, I let a lamp of amber shine in front of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, I guard him like the crown on my own head.”

Ishtar, great midwife, I am your excellent wet nurse. For endless days and everlasting years I have established your throne under the great heavens.

I keep watch in a golden chamber in the middle of heaven, I let a lamp of amber shine in front of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, I guard him like the crown on my own head.

I hope not, king! I have spoken to you, I have not slandered you! I have inspired you with confidence, I have not caused you to come to shame! I will lead you safely across the River.

Esarhaddon, legitimate heir, son of Mullissu! With a sharp dagger in my hand I will put an end to your enemies. Esarhaddon, king of Assyria—cup filled with lye, axe of two shekels!

Esarhaddon, in Assur I will give you endless days and everlasting years! Esarhaddon, in Arbel I will be your effective shield!

Esarhaddon, legitimate heir, son of Mullissu! [I] keep thinking of you, [I] have loved you greatly! I hold you by your curl in the great heavens.

I make smoke go up on your right, I light a fire on your left. The kingship upon […] [rest destroyed]
high temple on a dais of lapis lazuli and has made a lamp of amber (elmešu) shine there."

Besides mythical allusions, the “River” may have a concrete reference here, since the crossing of the river Tigris was the final effort before invading Nineveh and gaining the victory in the civil war against his brothers (Nin A i 84–86; cf. no. 97); see already Banks 1898: 273 and cf. Nissinen 1998b: 21.

d Because of the ambiguous meaning and etymology of the words šangaru akku, the translation is tentative. While šangaru can be derived from Syr. ṣangrā “dagger” (von Soden 1977: 18; Parpola 1997: 8), akku yields a twofold interpretation. The above translation takes it as a verbal adjective of akku ekēku “scratch,” while the translation “angry” (Parpola 1997: 8) equates it with aggu “angry” (cf. Syr. 'akketā, von Soden 1977: 184).

e The point of these curious metaphors may be that the cup and the “axe” of two shekels (only 32 gr!), harmless as they seem, contain destructive power.

f See no. 72, note b.

g The meaning of kizirtu is not altogether clear; the translation “curl” is based on kezēru and its derivatives, which refer to a characteristic hairdo. In ABL 1277:3 (pil- lurtu kizirtu ša Nabû ši “the cross is the kizirtu of Nabû”) the word seems to mean an emblem of the god.

74. SAA 9 1.7 (lines v 1–11)
Issar-beli-daʾini to the Queen Mother


[beginning destroyed] 1...issu pānišu 2lā imabhar 3kakkisāti 4pušāti 5ša idabbāšini 6ma pān šēpēšu 7ubattaššumu 8atti attima 9šarru šarrima

[beginning destroyed] 1[...] He will not receive […] from him! The conspiring polecats and rats 9 I will cut in pieces before his feet! You 5 are who you are, the king is my king!

10ša pā Issār-bēlī-daʾini 11šēlītu ša šarr

10By the mouth of Issar-beli-daʾini, a votaress of the king. 11

4 The words kakkisū (cf. Syr. karkuštā) and pušpu (equated with ḫulū “shrew” in STT 402 r. 20) are names of rodents, mustelids, or insectivores, here used for the adversaries of Esarhaddon. Kakkisū is used in a similar meaning in SAA 10 352 (no. 109) and, possibly, in SAA 9 4 (no. 89; see Nissinen 1998b: 74–75).

5 The feminine pronoun indicates that the queen mother Naqia (rather than the prophetess; cf. Hecker 1986: 59) is addressed; cf. the next oracle.

6 I.e., a person who has been donated by the king to the temple of Istar.
75. SAA 9 1.8 (lines v 12–25)
Aḫat-abīša to the Queen Mother


12 anāku Bēlet Arba’il
13 ana umni šarrī 14 kī taḫḫurininni
15 mā ša imitti 16 ša šumēlī 17 ina
sūniki tassaknu 18 mā šiū 19 šī lībīya
20 šērū tussarpidi

12 I am the Lady of Arbela!
13 To the king’s mother, since you implored me, saying: “The one on the right and the other on the left” you have placed in your lap. My own offspring you expelled to roam the steppe!

14a This refers to the rebelling brothers of Esarhaddon, who at the time of the proclamation of this oracle had the upper hand; see Parpola 1980: 175; Nissinen 1998b: 22. For later references to the position of the crown princes on the right and left side of the king, cf. SAA 10 185: 12–13: “You have placed the first on your right and the second on your left,” and the reliefs on the Zenciri stele of Esarhaddon, which has the two princes on each side of the monument (see, e.g., Parpola and Watanabe 1988, 20).
15b This not only alludes to Gilgamesh’s desperate roaming the steppe after the death of Enkidu (Gilg. ix 2–5; cf. Zimmern 1910), but also refers to the expatriation of Esarhaddon to the Western provinces during the rebellion of his brothers.

21 ūmā šarrū lā tapallāh
22 šarrūtu ikkū 25 danānu ikkūma

21 Now, king, fear not! Yours is the kingdom, yours is the power!

24 By the mouth of Aḫat-abīša, a woman from Arbela.

76. SAA 9 1.9 (lines v 26–36)
NN to Esarhaddon


26 Sulmu ana Aṣšūr-āḫu-iddina šar māt Aṣšūr
27 Issār ša Arba’il 28 ana šērī tattūṣi
29 Sulmu ana mūrīša 30 ana birtā 31i

26 Peace to Esarhaddon, king of Assyria!
27 Star of Arbela has left for the steppe. She has sent an oracle of
The word šalmu (like the Heb. šālôm) has the general meaning "peace, well-being" but may also designate a greeting of peace or an "oracle of salvation" (Heilsorakel); cf. line 29.

Ištar’s "going to the steppe" refers to the temporary sojourning of the goddess in the "Palace of the Steppe" in Milqiqa, outside the city of Arbela; cf., no. 90 (SAA 9 5) note d.

See above, note a.

A verbal equivalent to the iconographic "cow-and-calf" motif in which the goddess, represented as a cow, suckles her calf, the king; see Nissinen 1991: 290, 294; Parpola 1997: xxxvi–xxxviii.

Since Esarhaddon has entered the "city" (either Nineveh or Arbela) but the goddess is still in Milqiqa, the oracle must have been proclaimed after the conquest of Nineveh but before the triumphal return of the goddess and the enthronement of Esarhaddon.

77. SAA 9 1.10 (lines vi 1–32)

La-dagil-li to Esarhaddon

Perhaps an allusion to similar words in the first oracle in this collection (lines i 15–17).

Or “before me”; this refers to an unceasing worship of the goddess by day and by night.

The word family tuqunu indicates physical security, political stability as well as the equilibrium of heaven and earth (see Nissinen 1998b: 153); cf. SAA 9 2.5 (no. 82) iii 33–34.

For the god Ninurta, son of Marduk, as the “heavenly crown prince” and the paragon of the king, see Annu 2002; Parpola 1997: xli, ci nn. 196, 197. Lines vi 19–30 cf. the oracle spoken by the same prophet SAA 9 2.3 (no. 80) ii 11–14.

78–83. Second Collection of Prophecies
Different Prophets to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 9 2 (= TI pl. 2–3+ = K 12033 + 82-5-22, 527).
Photograph: Parpola 1997: pls. IV–V.
Copy: Langdon 1914: pls. 2–3 (K 12033 only).

78. SAA 9 2.1 (lines i 1’–14’)
[Nabû]-hussanni to Esarhaddon and to the Queen Mother

Translation and/or discussion: Nougayrol 1956, 159 (lines 10’–12’); Nissinen 2001a: 196–97; Weippert 2002: 42.

By the mouth of La-dagil-ili, a man from Arbel.

grandson will exercise kingship in
the lap of Ninurta.

51ša pê Lā-dāgil-ili 32 mār Arbail

51By the mouth of La-dagil-ili, a
man from Arbel.

32By the mouth of La-dagil-ili, a
man from Arbel.

51Perhaps an allusion to similar words in the first oracle in this collection (lines i 15–17).

52Or “before me”; this refers to an unceasing worship of the goddess by day and by night.

51The word family tuqunu indicates physical security, political stability as well as the equilibrium of heaven and earth (see Nissinen 1998b: 153); cf. SAA 9 2.5 (no. 82) iii 33–34.

52For the god Ninurta, son of Marduk, as the “heavenly crown prince” and the paragon of the king, see Annu 2002; Parpola 1997: xli, ci nn. 196, 197. Lines vi 19–30 cf. the oracle spoken by the same prophet SAA 9 2.3 (no. 80) ii 11–14.
a Banitu is a designation of the creation goddess Belet-ili (Deller 1983), here appearing as an aspect of Ištar (see Parpola 1997: xviii).

b It is noteworthy that the goddesses or “Ištars” (ištarāti) of Esaggil, the main temple of Marduk in Babylon, appear as speakers in an oracle spoken by a prophet from Assur, when Babylon still lay in ruins after its destruction by Sennacherib in 689.

c Or “his,” if the queen mother is addressed (Weippert 2002: 42).

d For the restoration of the name, see Parpola 1997, li.

79. SAA 9.9.2 (lines 15–35')
Bayā to Esarhaddon

Translation and/or discussion: Villard 2001: 73; Weippert 2002: 42.


10'[...] Esarhaddon, king of Assyria! I will catch [your] enemies and trample them [under my foot].

15’[Fe]lar [not], queen mother!

14’[By the mouth of Nabū-ḫussanni] of Assur.

15’[Fl]ear not, Esarhaddon! 16’[Like] a skilled [pilot] I will steer [the ship] for a good harbor. a [Let the future be like the past] b I will circle around you; I will stand guard for you.

20’The countries are [watched over] very closely. [Sixty gods are standing at] my [right], sixty gods at my left. c

22’Esarhaddon, king of Assyria! I will defeat [your] enemies. [...] I am their lord [...] I received [from] my [hand [...] gave me strength.

27’] Esarhaddon [...] of the heavens [...] old age [...] I will send him away [...] I will establish [...] I will let] shine [...] the well-being of [Esarhaddon [...] 30’By the mouth of the woman Bayā, a man d of Arbe. 31’Esarhaddon, king of Assyria! I will catch [your] enemies and trample them [under my foot]. 32’The countries are [watched over] very closely. [Sixty gods are standing at] my [right], sixty gods at my left. c 33’I will let shine the well-being of Esarhaddon. 34’By the mouth of the woman Bayā, a man d of Arbe.
For the occurrences of this metaphor in Mesopotamian and classical literature, see Parpola 1997: cvii n. 296, 14.

Cf. SAA 9 1.4 (no. 71) ii 37.

Cf. SAA 9 1.4 (no. 71) ii 22, 25.

For the ambiguous gender of Bayâ, see no. 71, note f.

80. SAA 9 2.3 (lines i 36’–ii 28’)

La-dagil-ili to Esarhaddon


80. [anâku Bêlet Arbail

la tapallaḫ ...]

[break of about six lines]

1 i nakaruṭēka mar šišūni ...]

2 ina libbi ekallīka li [kammūsāka

3 māt Aššūr issika utsallalm liša kal ūme kallamār[i maṣṣartaka] ša anassar aqūka ūlahmā[... akip akappi ina muṭḫu marššuš] 2 ina muṣḫuṣa aṣappur ina baṣappūrkā ša alabbi asaṣṭu ša murānī damqī ina ekallīka li adīīl nakaruṭēka ussionā

5 ina ekallīka utsallamm liša kal ūme kallamār[i maṣṣartaka] ša anassar aqūka ūlahmā[... akip akappi ina muṭḫu marššuš] 2 ina muṣḫuṣa aṣappur ina baṣappūrkā ša alabbi asaṣṭu ša murānī damqī ina ekallīka li adīīl nakaruṭēka ussionā

11 ina ekallīka utsallamm liša kal ūme kallamār[i maṣṣartaka] ša anassar aqūka ūlahmā[... akip akappi ina muṭḫu marššuš] 2 ina muṣḫuṣa aṣappur ina baṣappūrkā ša alabbi asaṣṭu ša murānī damqī ina ekallīka li adīīl nakaruṭēka ussionā

17 amēlītu ṭullumā ša anâku shqi qābūtu ēppisū šal marṭtu ḫubburtu anâku uṣṣāna ubâra addaṇnakā

80. [I am the Lady of Arbela! [Esarhaddon, king] of Assyria, [fear not! ...]

[break]

3 Your enemies, whatever [they are, I will defeat. You shall stay in your palace.

3 I will [reconcile] Assyria with you. Throughout the day and by dawn I will stand [guard over you]; I will [establish] your crown. Like a winged bird [over its fledgling] I will twitter above you, going around you, surrounding you. Like a faithful cub[... I will run around in your palace, sniffing out your enemies.

11 I will protect you in your palace, I will make you overcome fear and trembling. Your son and your grandson shall exercise kingship before Ninurta. I will do away with the boundaries of the countries and give them to you.

17 Mankind is treacherous, but I am the one whose words and deeds are reliable. I am the one who sniffs out and captures the riotous people and gives them to you.
The word *murânu* can be used of cubs of different animals. While some translations opt for a dog (e.g., Weippert 1985: 65) as a pet animal, Parpola 1997: 15 pays attention to the fact that the animal appears as a mortal danger to the king's enemies and suggests "lion," which also is an emblematic animal of Ištar.

Lines ii 11–14 cf. the oracle spoken by the same prophet SAA 9 1.10 (no. 77) vi 19–30.


Literally, "I am the one who says and does," i.e., who gives orders and puts them into effect. The emphasis here is on the contrast between the goddess and mankind.


This refers to the exile of the gods of Esaggil after the destruction of Babylon. According to the Babylon inscription of Esarhaddon (Borger 1956 § 11:11–29) it was Marduk himself who, together with the other gods, abandoned Babylon in his anger at the negligent and treacherous people.

Literal, "Let them go and pronounce your well-being," meaning those in the previous sentence who take the offerings to the gods. This meaning presumes that the three precative verbs in these sentences all have the same subject. If, on the other hand, *lillikôn* and *liqbiôn* refer to the gods of Esaggil, then the *šulmu* ("well-being") is to be understood as their oracle of salvation for Esarhaddon.

81. SAA 9 2.4 (lines ii 29’–iii 18’)

**Urkittu-šarrat to Esarhaddon**


This is how she answers⁴ to the disloyal ones:
30 The word of Ištar of Arbela, the word of Queen Mullissu:

31 I will watch, I will listen carefully! I will search out the disloyal ones and deliver them into the hands of my king.

34 I will speak to the multitude:
Listen carefully, [sunrise and sunset!] [...] I will create [...] .

38 The word of Ištar [of Arbela] to [...] .

[break]

31 Be on the alert [...] the augur[s]. I [...] I will roll lots [...] I will choose and catch [...] .

How, how (to respond) to those who [...] to many [people], saying: “When will the change in this country come about? Let us not stay in Calah and Nineveh!”

34 You, Esarhaddon, keep silent! I will select the emissaries of the Elamite king and the Mannean king; I will seal the messages of the Urartean king; I will cut off the heel of Mugallu.

16 Who is now lonely, who is now wronged? Fear not! Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, is in my protection.

38 From the mouth of the woman Urkittu-sarrat of Calah.

Or, “This is how you answer.” It is even possible that abî (= abê) is an interrogative particle “how?” (cf. line iii 7).

Ištar and Mullissu merge here into one and the same divine being, and Mullissu is equated with Ištar of Nineveh; cf., e.g., SAA 9 7 (no. 92) r. 6 and SAA 3 7:11: “The Lady of the Lands comes out, Queen Mullissu, who dwells in [...]. At the coming out of the Lady of Nineveh all the gods rejoice!”

Literally, “weigh out”; the idea is the same as in usûnu “to sniff out” in the previous oracle (lines ii 10, 20).
It is very atypical to refer another method of divination (i.e., to bird diviners) in a prophetic oracle; cf. no. 36 (ARM 26 229).

The word in question is difficult to read, and its meaning can only be guessed. A translation such as “tramp all around” would take it as ussanaš∪aškū, an otherwise unattested Dtn-form of ša’a “run” (cf. AHw 1205; CAD S/2 243–44 sub ša’a); this verb, however, is not attested in Neo-Assyrian. Another possibility would be ussannaš∪aškū (šana’u Dt “be obstructive”).

Literally, “When will there be a change in the country?”

The word is interpreted in the same meaning as eqbu “heel” (see AHw 231).

Lines iii 12–15 manifest the rule of Esarhaddon over the surrounding lands. “The Elamite,” “the Mannean,” and “the Urartian” mean the kings of the southeastern, eastern, and northern neighbors and potential enemies of Assyria. Mugallu is the king of Melid in Anatolia (cf. SAA 4 1–12).

Literally, “in the shadow.”

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82. SAA 9 2.5 (lines iii 19’–36’)
[Sinqiša-amur’] to Esarhaddon


19 Aššûr-aḫu-iddina là tapallaḫ mät Aššûr utaqqan šăškū šă našarrûtiška anassâb
dāme ša našarrûtiš ša šarrûya atabbak šârri anaššar našarrûtiš ina sigarrûti
dalmūti ina maddanâti ina pânu šēpēšu ubbâla

20 anâku abûka ummaka birti agappâya ewartibika némalka ammar

21 là tapallaḫ Aššûr-aḫu-iddina birti izirîya ammâšâya ašâk-
kanâka ina libbi ū’a našarrûtiš ša šarrûya akalâšalâd

22 mät Aššûr utaqqan šarrâtu ša šamē utaqqânu šal

23 [nâpâš šamši ... šara šamši [...]

[rest [about five lines] destroyed]

19 Esarhaddon, fear not! I will keep Assyria in order; I will reconcile the angry gods with Assyria.

21 I will pull the orchard of your enemies up by the roots; I will shed the blood of my king’s enemies. I will guard my king; the enemies I will bring in neckstocks and the allies with tribute before his feet.

26 I am your father and mother. I brought you up between my wings; I will see how you prosper.

29 Fear not, Esarhaddon! I will place you between my arm and forearm. In the midst of distress, I will vanquish the enemies of my king.

31 I will put Assyria in order; I will put the kingdom of heaven in order [...]

[break]
82. SAA 9 2.5 (lines iii 19'–36')

\[a\] The similarity with SAA 9 1.2 (no. 69) suggests that the prophet who uttered this oracle is Sinqi-amur.

\[b\] Thus the translation of van der Toorn 1987: 78, equating \(\text{sippatu}\) with \(\text{ippatu}\) “orchard”; for the destruction of orchards as a method of warfare, see Cole 1997.

\[c\] Cf. the translation of Parpola 1997: 17, who explains \(\text{sippatu}\) with the help of Syr. \(\text{ßipputu}\) “a mat” and rabbinic \(\text{ßippétå}\) “covering, mat”: “I will pull away the cover of your enemies.”

\[d\] For the goddess parenting the king, see no. 71, note a. For the double-gender role of Istar, see also Groneberg 1986 and Nissinen 1998c: 30–31.

83. SAA 9 2.6 (lines iv 1'–31')

NN to Esarhaddon

\[a\] Cf. no. 76, note d.

\[b\] The word \(\text{gattu}\) means “stature” (“Gestalt”); cf. Asb B v 71-72 (no. 101): \(\text{ina kirimniša ţabi taḫšinkama taḫšina gimir lānīka}\) “She (= Istar) sheltered you in her sweet embrace; she protected your entire body.”

\[c\] Cf. the previous oracle (lines iii 30–31).

\[d\] The person addressed is a female, most probably the mother of the king.
84–88. Third Collection of Oracles
La-dagil-ili to Esarhaddon


84. SAA 9 3.1 (lines i 1–26)

Translation and/or discussion: Nissinen 2001a: 189–90.

[four unintelligible lines]
‘[...] ūabi ‘[...] dinā ‘[...] ilttišin
"[...] sunlu usēlia

9[šulmu ana šamē kaqqiri] 10[šulmu
ana Ešarra] 11[šulmu ana Assur-
ābu-iddina sar māt Assur 12[šulmu
ša Assur-ābu-iddina] 13[iškuñi]nā
ina muḫḫī šēpe līlik

14[išmu ina] Ešarra Assur issaka
15[...] ša Libbi ali 16[... Assur-ābu-
iddina] 17[...] 18[... inlašši 19[...]]
mātāti
20[...] ina pān Assūr 21[...] issi
Assūr-ābu-iddina 22[...] illakāni
23[...] isarrupū 24[... ana garin-
ikšu] 25[...] šalušat timme 26[... 
ēnšu ušēqaq

28[...] before Assūr [...] with
Esarhaddon [...] they come [...] is
burnt [...] to his mother [...] three
pillars [...] he casts his [eye] over
[...]

3 Or, “covenant.”
4 Literally, “go on its feet” or “get on to its feet.”
Thus according to the restoration of Parpola 1997: 22. What follows is probably a description of a procession leading to Esarhaddon's enthronement festival in Ešarra, the Aššur temple of Assur.

85. SAA 9 3.2 (lines i 27–ii 9)


27[Listen carefully, O Assyrians! [The king] has vanquished his [enemy! [From] sunset to [sunrise, [from] sunrise to [sunset [you]r [king] has trod his enemy [underfoot! 28I will destroy [Melid, [... I will destroy. I will deliver the Cimmerians into his hands; the land of Ellipi I will set on fire. 29Aššur has given him the whole world. From the place where the sun rises to where it sets there is no king to set beside him. He is bright like sunshine! 30This is the oracle of peace placed before Bel-Tarbaṣi and before the (other) gods. 31

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84. SAA 9 3.1 (lines i 1–26) 119

27[Listen carefully, O Assyrians! [The king] has vanquished his [enemy! [From] sunset to [sunrise, [from] sunrise to [sunset [you]r [king] has trod his enemy [underfoot! 28I will destroy [Melid, [... I will destroy. I will deliver the Cimmerians into his hands; the land of Ellipi I will set on fire. 29Aššur has given him the whole world. From the place where the sun rises to where it sets there is no king to set beside him. He is bright like sunshine! 30This is the oracle of peace placed before Bel-Tarbaṣi and before the (other) gods. 31

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a ritual taking place at the courtyard of Ešarra, the placing of the oracle before Bel Tarbaši (“Lord of the Pen”) and other courtyard gods. This implies that the oracle was not only proclaimed by the prophet to the people, but it was also written down and placed before the statues of the gods.

86. SAA 9 3.3 (lines ii 10–32)


\[\text{annûrig sarsarrâni annûti}\]

\[\text{ussad-bibûka ussêûnîka}\]

\[\text{atita pîka}\]

\[\text{taptitia mà anîna Ašûr}\]

\[\text{annåku killaka asseme}\]

\[\text{issu libbi abul šamê}\]

\[\text{atqaallalla}\]

\[\text{takur išåtu lušakišunu}\]

\[\text{annåku killaka asseme}\]

\[\text{anåku killaka asseme}\]

\[\text{issu libbi abul šamê}\]

\[\text{atqaallalla}\]

\[\text{takur išåtu lušakišunu}\]

\[\text{anåku killaka asseme}\]

\[\text{issu libbi abul šamê}\]

\[\text{atqaallalla}\]

\[\text{takur išåtu lušakišunu}\]

\[\text{annûrig sarsarrâni annûti}\]

\[\text{ussad-bibûka ussêûnîka}\]

\[\text{atita pîka}\]

\[\text{taptitia mà anîna Ašûr}\]

\[\text{annûrig sarsarrâni annûti}\]

\[\text{ussad-bibûka ussêûnîka}\]

\[\text{atita pîka}\]

\[\text{taptitia mà anîna Ašûr}\]

\[\text{annûrig sarsarrâni annûti}\]

\[\text{ussad-bibûka ussêûnîka}\]

\[\text{atita pîka}\]

\[\text{taptitia mà anîna Ašûr}\]

\[\text{annûrig sarsarrâni annûti}\]

\[\text{ussad-bibûka ussêûnîka}\]

\[\text{atita pîka}\]

\[\text{taptitia mà anîna Ašûr}\]

\[\text{annûrig sarsarrâni annûti}\]

\[\text{ussad-bibûka ussêûnîka}\]

\[\text{atita pîka}\]

\[\text{taptitia mà anîna Ašûr}\]

Now these traitors conspired against you, expelled you and surrounded you. You, however, opened your mouth, crying: “Hear me, O Aššur!”

I heard your cry and appeared as a fiery glow from the gate of heaven, to throw down fire and have it devour them.

As you were standing in their midst, I removed them from your presence, drove them up the mountain and rained fire and brimstone upon them. I slaughtered your enemies and filled the River with their blood.

Let them see it and praise me, for I am Aššur, lord of the gods!

This is the oracle of peace placed before the statue. This covenant tablet of Aššur enters the king’s presence on a cushion. Fragrant oil is sprinkled, sacrifices are made, incense is burnt and (the tablet) is read out before the king.

The word sarsarrâni is interpreted as pl. of sarsarru, a pejorative paspass formation from sarru “criminal” (see Parpola 1997: 23; cf. Weippert 1972: 481; 2002:}
45–46: ‘Aufrührer, Rebell’). Other interpretations include the likewise disparaging šaršarrāni “would-be-kings” (AHw 1191; Weippert 1981: 94) and šar šarrāni “kings of kings” (Hecker 1986: 60).

a Derived from law/bā “surround” (Parpola 1997: 24).


c Lines ii 12–13 cf. Nin A (no. 97) i 32–37, 53–62. The word anînu is interpreted as an interjection similar to anîna or annû “behold” (cf. Hebrew binnê); cf. SAA 16 59 (no. 115 note a) and ABL 1250 r. 7.

d The four-radical verb naqallulu is a denominal formation, denoting the appearance of anqullu “glow,” which is used of sunset as a bad portent for the enemy in SAA 10 79:20; cf. next note.

e “The gate of heaven” means the two spots of the sunrise and the sunset in the horizon.

f The “fire and brimstone” is translated from abnâti aqqullu "stones of the fiery glow," which alludes to attaqallalla (line ii 16; cf. note e).

g The “fire and brimstone” is translated from abnâti aqqullu "stones of the fiery glow," which alludes to attaqallalla (line ii 16; cf. note e).

h Lines ii 19–21 cf. Nin A (no. 97) i 82–84.

i See above, no. 73 note c, and cf. Nin A (no. 97) i 86.

ej.e., the document of the covenant between the supreme god and the king (see Ellis 1989: 144; Lewis 1996: 406–8; Otto 1999: 81, n. 365).

k The exact meaning of Δa<¥tu is unclear; this translation connects it with Δawû “seat cover for thrones” (see CAD Ô 163). Judged from the context, the word is used of an object on which (ina muΔΔi) the tablet of the covenant is transported (Weippert 1981: 95 n. 54).

l Lines ii 26–32 are not part of the oracle but contain two ritual descriptions. The first one (line 26) is comparable to lines ii 8–9: the šulmu (i.e., the tablet on which the oracle is written) is now placed before the statue of Aššur in the throne room of the temple. The second one (lines 27–32) describes the ceremonial transport of tuppì adê “tablet of the covenant” (not necessarily identical with the previously mentioned tablet) and its recitation to the king.

87. SAA 9 3.4 (lines ii 33–iii 15)


³³ abat Issār ša Arba’il ³⁴ ana Aṣṣūr-ābu-iddina šar māt Aṣṣūr
³⁵ ibûn ahhēya abēya alkhâni ³⁶ ina libbi adê …
[break of two lines]
³³³ ina muḫḫi [tamûlê biršul …]
³³⁵ mē šaṣṣāri tassiqšitu ‘massilû ša issēn sūt \”mē šaṣṣāri tumtalli
³⁶ Word of Istar of Arbela to Esarhaddon, king of Assyria.
³⁵³ Come, gods, my fathers and brothers! [Enter] the covenantant’ …]
[break]
³³⁵³ On the terrace […] a slice of …]. She gave them water from a coolera to drink. She filled a pitcher
of one seah” with water from the cooler, gave it to them and said:

“Your say to yourself: ‘Istar—she is small beer!’ Then you go into your cities and your districts, eat your own bread and forget this covenant. But every time when you drink this water, you will remember me and keep this covenant which I have made on behalf of Esarhaddon.”

88. SAA 9 3.5 (lines iii 16–iv 35)


16 Word of Istar of Arbela to Esarhaddon, king of Assyria.
18 As if I had not done or given to you anything! Did I not bend and give to you the four doorjambs of Assyria?
enemy? Did I not gather your foes and adversaries [like] butterflies?

What have [you], in turn, given to me? The [food for the banquet is not] there, as if there were no temple at all! My food is withheld from me, my drink is withheld from me! I am longing for them, I have fixed my eyes upon them.

Verily, see to it that there is a bowl of one seah of food and a pitcher of one seah of best beer! Then I will take and put vegetables and soup in my mouth, fill the cup and drink from it. I want to restore my charms!

I set out [for Assyria to see your success], to tread the mountains [with my feet, to speak] about Esarhaddon.

Therefore, rejoice, Esarhaddon! [The four doorjamb]s of Assyria I have bent and given to you! I have vanquished your enemy! [The people that] stand by your side— [their] mind is completely changed! [From this] you see [that] I am [Istar of] Arbela.

When the conspirators have been hauled up, [those at the right] and those at the left will be there and suffer [the punishment]. [The courtiers and] servants of the palace, those who rebelled [against] you, I have surrounded and fixed them to the stake by their teeth.
89. Fragment of a Collection of Prophecies
NN to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 9 4 (= 83-1-18, 839).
Photograph: Parpola 1997: pl. VIII.

[beginning destroyed]

[...]

2[Assir-ahit-iddina šar mat Assir[...]

3[kakkišat u šabara ina pāni šēpēka akkarrar]

4[attā la tapalliha ...] 6[...]

urkitūta akšēsad ... 7[... kia tap-]

[...]

[beginning destroyed]

[...]

[... Esarhaddon, king of Assyria [...] I will [catch the poleclats, I will [cast them before your feet.

5[...] You fear not [...] I will va[nquish] the later [...] You will ... your [...] I will put ...

[rest destroyed]

[a For kakkištu, see no. 74 (SAA 9 1.7), note a and cf. SAA 10 352 (no. 109) r. 2–3.]
90. A Prophecy Report

NN to the Queen Mother

Text: SAA 9 5 (= TI pl. 4 = K 6259).
Photograph: Parpola 1997, pl. VIII.
Copy: Langdon 1914: pl. 4.
Transliteration and translation: Parpola 1997: 34.

abat Issâr ša Arbal [ana ummi šarrî]
2kînšâyâ kanšâ ana[la Aššûr-âḫu-iddina šarrîyal] 3Mullissu ana killi [ša mûrîša tassème]
4qablîki ruksî […] 5ša Aššûr-âḫu-iddîna šar mât Aššûr […] 6Inurta [ḫîmittu u šumélû ša šarrîya ilkak] [ayyâbîšu ina šapat šêpêšu ukabbhas]
8ina ekal sêrî ulšṣa […] 7tuqqum ana Aššûr-âḫu-iddîna šar mât Aššûr 8aiddan nákårûêšî 9îna libbi […] 10îna nakru ša […] 11nakru ša […] ina pân šêpêšu
12nikrur nîtîlik …]

Mullissu dulla […] 7šla Šamsî šîna adî abêâ aza[…]

"Word of Ištar of Arbela [to the king's mother]:"a

"My knees are bent for Esarhaddon, my king"b Mullissu has [heard] the cry [of her calf].

"Gird your loins! […] of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria […] Ninurta [goes] at the right and the left off my king. He treads his enemies under [his] foot.

"I will [go] to the Palace of the Steppe[d] […] I will give protection to [Esarhaddon, king of Assyria. His] enemies in […] The enemy of […] The enemy of […] we will cast [before his feet]; we will go …]

"Praise Mullissu! […] of Šamaš they are until my father […]"

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a The restoration is conjectural, but the addressee is most likely the queen mother; see note c.
b A likewise conjectural restoration, supported by the fact that the victory and kingship of Esarhaddon are the subject matter of the oracle. For the intercessory role of the goddess, see, e.g., SAA 9 9 (no. 94) 20–25 and cf. SAA 3 13.
c The feminine addressee of qablîki ruksî […] indicates that the oracle is spoken to the queen mother Naqīa. It certainly belongs historically to the same background as the other oracles addressed to her (SAA 9 1.7 and 1.8 [nos. 74 and 75]).
d The "Palace of the Steppe" is a shrine of Ištar in Milqia, a locality near Arbela, where she dwelled during the absence of the king, in anticipation of a triumph after his return from a victorious campaign (see Pongratz-Leisten 1994: 79–83; Nissinen 2001a: 183–86). Cf. SAA 9 1.9 (no. 76).

e Plural form.
91. A Prophecy Report
Tašmetu-ereš to Esarhaddon (?)

Text: SAA 9 6 (= Bu 91-5-9,106 + Bu 91-5-9,109).
Photograph: Parpola 1997: pl. VIII.

Issär ša Arbail [mā ...]
2mā ụtāqqa[n ...] ụtāqqa [ ...]
3[ ...] mā uru[ ...] ātar[ ...]
4[ ...] ša šarri[ ...] ụkkū [...] 5[ ...]
6[mīš lā [...] ụsu[ ...] 7asem[ ...] ụnakar[ ...] 8[ ...]
9Taṣmētu-ereš [raṃgimu annitu]
10[ina lībī Arbail irl][ugum]

Thus [says] Ištar of Arbela:
4 I will put in order [...]: I will put in order [...]. The city [...], they entered [...]. The king [...], they killed [...]. Do not [...], help [...].
5 I have heard [...], your enemies [...].
6 This [is how] [...], he/they prophesied [...]. In [...], he/they prophesied [...]. Before [...], until [...], your enemies [...].
7Tašmetu-ereš, the prophet, prophesied this in Arbela.¹

¹ Lines r. 11–12 are a colophon written on the upper edge of the tablet. The title rāggiimu is conjectural; only the determinative of professional titles (CLUD) is preserved. It is probable, however, in view of the multiple occurrence of the verb raḵāmu in this oracle.

92. A Report of Prophecies
Mullissu-kabtat to Assurbanipal

Text: SAA 9 7 (= ABRT I 26–27 = K 883).
Copy: Strong 1893: 645; Craig 1895: pls. 26–27.
Thus the prophetess Mullissu-kaštāt:

“This is the word of Queen Mullissu: Fear not, Assurbanipal! Until I have done and given to you what I promised, until you yourself exercise kingship over the descendants of the bearded courtiers and over the successors of the eunuchs, I will take care of you in the Palace of Succession; your father will gird the diadem.

The kings of the countries shall say to one another: “Come, let us go to Assurbanipal! The king has got witnesses. Whatever the gods decreed to our fathers and forefathers, now let him pass judgment between us!”

Mullissu has said: You shall reign over the kings of the countries! You shall show them their boundaries; you shall determine the roads they take.

Moreover, let me speak to you: Like Elam, I will finish off the land of the Cimmerians! I will hew down the thorn; I will pluck the bramble as a tuft of wool; the wasps I will turn into a mash.

You ask: “What means ḫallalatti enguratti?” ḫallalatti I will enter Egypt, enguratti I will go out!

You whose mother is Mullissu, fear not! You whose nurse is the Lady of Arbela, fear not!

Like a nurse I will carry you on my hip. I will put you, a pomegranate, between my breasts. At night I will be awake and guard you; throughout the day I will give you milk, at dawn I will hush you.

Thus the prophetess Mullissu-kaštāt:

“This is the word of Queen Mullissu: Fear not, Assurbanipal! Until I have done and given to you what I promised, until you yourself exercise kingship over the descendants of the bearded courtiers and over the successors of the eunuchs, I will take care of you in the Palace of Succession; your father will gird the diadem.

The kings of the countries shall say to one another: “Come, let us go to Assurbanipal! The king has got witnesses. Whatever the gods decreed to our fathers and forefathers, now let him pass judgment between us!”

Mullissu has said: You shall reign over the kings of the countries! You shall show them their boundaries; you shall determine the roads they take.

Moreover, let me speak to you: Like Elam, I will finish off the land of the Cimmerians! I will hew down the thorn; I will pluck the bramble as a tuft of wool; the wasps I will turn into a mash.

You ask: “What means ḫallalatti enguratti?” ḫallalatti I will enter Egypt, enguratti I will go out!

You whose mother is Mullissu, fear not! You whose nurse is the Lady of Arbela, fear not!

Like a nurse I will carry you on my hip. I will put you, a pomegranate, between my breasts. At night I will be awake and guard you; throughout the day I will give you milk, at dawn I will hush you.

Thus the prophetess Mullissu-kaštāt:

“This is the word of Queen Mullissu: Fear not, Assurbanipal! Until I have done and given to you what I promised, until you yourself exercise kingship over the descendants of the bearded courtiers and over the successors of the eunuchs, I will take care of you in the Palace of Succession; your father will gird the diadem.

The kings of the countries shall say to one another: “Come, let us go to Assurbanipal! The king has got witnesses. Whatever the gods decreed to our fathers and forefathers, now let him pass judgment between us!”

Mullissu has said: You shall reign over the kings of the countries! You shall show them their boundaries; you shall determine the roads they take.

Moreover, let me speak to you: Like Elam, I will finish off the land of the Cimmerians! I will hew down the thorn; I will pluck the bramble as a tuft of wool; the wasps I will turn into a mash.

You ask: “What means ḫallalatti enguratti?” ḫallalatti I will enter Egypt, enguratti I will go out!

You whose mother is Mullissu, fear not! You whose nurse is the Lady of Arbela, fear not!

Like a nurse I will carry you on my hip. I will put you, a pomegranate, between my breasts. At night I will be awake and guard you; throughout the day I will give you milk, at dawn I will hush you.
a The cuneiform sign here is LUGAL “king,” whence the translation “a word for the king” (a.o., Weippert 1981: 77 and Hecker 1986: 62). Since abat šarrī means a message sent by the king and not to him (e.g., SAA 1 1:1; 5:1; 10:1; 11:1), it is more probable that a-bat LUGAL ŠIN.LIL is a formula comparable to a-bat šarratu ŠIN.LIL “word of Queen Mullissu” in SAA 9 2:4 ii 30. If this is true, LUGAL stands here for šarratu “queen” (Parpola 1997: 38). Cf. also Weippert 2001: 39; 2002: 48–50, who has recently translated: “Eine Appellation der Mullissu ist dies,” taking abat šarrī as a technical term of juridical proceedings corresponding to the Roman appellatio.

b The bearded courtiers and the eunuchs designate the totality of the palace officials, and the descendants and followers (eunuchs could not have descendants) refer to the government of the future king.

c For the Palace of Succession, see no. 69 (SAA 9 1.2), note a.

d Cf. SAA 10 185: 7–9: “You (Esarhaddon) have girded a son of yours (Assurbanipal) with diadem and entrusted to him the kingship of Assyria.” This refers to the investiture of Assurbanipal as crown prince in the year 672.

e This may refer to the gods as the witnesses of the succession treaty (SAA 2 6) that was concluded on the occasion of the investiture of Assurbanipal.


g Elam was not actually “finished” by Esarhaddon. After the death of the Elamite king Ḫumban-ḫaltaš, who invaded Babylonia in 675, Esarhaddon concluded a treaty with his follower Urtaku in 674. For Cimmerians, see no. 85 (SAA 9 3.2), note b.

h Or, “I will make the wasps fall down like a shower [sarbu].”

i The words pillallatti enguratī may be names of insects, but they cannot be translated with any certainty and may be intentionally obscure; for possible explanations, see Parpola 1997: 39. The prophecy certainly concerns the conquest of Egypt which Esarhaddon tried in 674/3 and finally accomplished in 671. For a similar expression connected with peaceful intentions, see EA 23 (no. 123): 14–16: “I want to go to Egypt, the country that I love, and then return.”

j For the equation of Ištar and Mullissu, cf. no. 81 (SAA 9 2.4), note b.

k “Hush you” is not a direct translation but an attempt to express the more or less probable meaning of the words ummānīku uṣur uṣur uṣur uppaška, which may be understood as prattling to a baby or as singing a nursery rhyme (Ivantchik 1993b: 41). For another interpretation, see Weippert 1985: 62: “Jeden Morgen merke ich mir deine Gebete, merke (sic) mir und erfülle (sic) dir”; cf. Weippert 2001: 40; 2002: 51: “Jeden Morgen erfülle ich dir dein Flehen ‘merke dir! merke dir!’” The latter translation assumes that uṣur uṣur alludes to the appeals in prayers, e.g., [M]arduk uṣur tesliṭ “Marduk, take heed of my prayer!” KAR 26 r. 30.
93. A Report of Prophecies  
NN to Assurbanipal

Text: SAA 9 8 (= ABL 1280 = K 1545).
Photograph: Parpola 1997: pl. X, XIII.
Translation: Dietrich 1973: 40.

The plural indicates that the tablet is a compilation of quotations from several oracles, the historical context of which is most probably Assurbanipal’s campaign against Teumman, the king of Elam, in 653; cf. Prism B v 15–vi 16 (no. 101).

1Words [concerning the Elamites]:

2Thus says [the god]: “I have come, I have come!”
3Five, six times he said (this). Then he said: “I have come from the mace. The snake in it I have hauled out and cut in pieces.”
4And: “I have crushed the mace.”
5And: “I will crush Elam! Its army shall be levelled to the ground.”
6And: “This is how I will finish off Elam.”

---

dibbi [sa Elam]ävi
2ki an[ni ili] iqæbbi 3mä attalak attalaka
1bamuššu sissšu igtiḫbi iddārī 5mā
issu muḫḫi [nar’antu attalak] 6mā
šerru sa ina libbiša assadda
2abtataq
u mā nar’antu 8aḫşpi
u mā Elamtu 9aḫḫşpi aḫššu issi
kaqqir 11sappan
mā ki anni 12Elamtu agammar

---

1- Words [concerning the Elamites]:

2Thus says [the god]: “I have come, I have come!”
3Five, six times he said (this). Then he said: “I have come from the mace. The snake in it I have hauled out and cut in pieces.”
4And: “I have crushed the mace.”
5And: “I will crush Elam! Its army shall be levelled to the ground.”
6And: “This is how I will finish off Elam.”

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The restoration is conjectural, but there is no room for the determinative (da-na) and the divine name proper. Weippert 2002:51 restores [šu-šu] “he,” referring to the speaker (see note b).

The restoration is conjectural, but there is no room for the determinative (da-na) and the divine name proper. Weippert 2002:51 restores [šu-šu] “he,” referring to the speaker (see note b).

The metaphor is not quite intelligible, but the “mace,” being a weapon (or a cultic symbol), probably denotes a war, whereas the “snake” is obviously used of the Elamites. Snake is a prominent symbol in Elamite religion and art.
94. A Report of a Prophecy
Dunnaša-amur to Assurbanipal

Text: SAA 9 9 (= ZA 24 169+ = K 1292 + DT 130).
Photograph: Parpola 1997: pls. XI–XII.

[kidin]nu ša Mullissu [...] ša Bēlet Ar[š]u


[An oracle of protection] of Mullissu, a [...] of the Lady of Arbela!

[They] are strongest of all gods. They [lov]e and incessantly bestow their love [upon] Assurbanipal, the creation of their hands. For the sake of his life they [encourage] his heart.

"Desiring your [li]fe I roam the steppe, continually crossing rivers and oceans, ranging mountains and alps. Continually crossing all rivers, I am finished off by droughts and showers. My charming figure they ravage; my body is exhausted and troubled for your sake.

In the assembly of all the gods I have spoken for your life. My arms are strong and will not cast you off before the gods. My shoulders are always ready to carry you, you in particular. I keep desiring your life with my [lip]s [...] your life, you increase life.

In the assembly of all the gods I incessantly spe[l]ak for your good. [Desiring your life] I roam the steppe. [In the midst of wailin[g] I will rise and slay[ed] your enemy. [...] will return[n] to his country.
[one unintelligible line; break of about twelve lines]

94. A Report of a Prophecy

Dunna-a-amur to Assurbanipal (?)

**Text:** SAA 9 10 (= CT 53 946 = 83-1-18,726).

**Photograph:** Parpola 1997: pl. XIII.

**Transliteration and translation:** Parpola 1997: 42.

**Discussion:** Parpola 1997: il–l, lxi, lxxi.

[beginning destroyed; obv. seven unintelligible lines; break of an unknown number of lines]

[break]

[beginning destroyed]
96. Fragment of a Report of a Prophecy
NN to Assurbanipal

Photograph: Parpola 1997: pl. XIII.

[obv. destroyed]

[beginning destroyed]

[rest destroyed]

[a] The word sa'u is untranslatable.
Other Neo-Assyrian Documents

Apart from texts belonging to the genre of prophetic oracles, many other Neo-Assyrian sources mention prophets, refer to their activities or even quote prophetic words, thus amplifying substantially the evidence of prophecy from this period (Nissinen 1998a). The sources are both formally and thematically diverse, representing different genres and interests, and the references to prophets and prophecy in them are haphazard and entirely dependent on each writer's concerns and interpretations. While some texts give an account of an appearance of a prophet in a specific situation, only very few of them can be considered eye-witness reports (nos. 111, 113); indeed, some of them clearly indicate that this is not the case (nos. 109, 115). Some letter-writers are likely to quote from written sources, that is, from archival copies of prophetic oracles accessible to them (nos. 106, 107). This holds true for the inscriptions as well.

In spite of the fact that the non-prophetical texts only rarely present firsthand information of prophetic performances, they have the advantage of looking at prophecy from outside, thus demonstrating how prophecy was used and assessed by the prophets' contemporaries. Beside actual prophecies, these documents provide additional evidence of the socioreligious contexts of prophetic activity as well as of the position of the prophets within Neo-Assyrian society. Furthermore, they provide knowledge of themes and issues of prophetic concern not discernible in the actual oracles.

Within the huge corpus of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, only a few of those of Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal allude to prophecy, either as mere references to prophetic messages received by the king or as quotations of prophetic words. The historical contexts of these allusions are Esarhaddon's rise to power in the year 681 B.C.E. (nos. 97, 98) and Assurbanipal's wars against Mannea in approximately 660 (no. 100) and Elam in 653 (no. 101), as well as his restoration of the temple of Lady of Kidmuri (no. 99).
The technical term used for prophetic oracles in the inscriptions is šipir mahê (lit. “message of prophets”), which is analogous to the divinatory terms našparti ilâni u Ištar “message of the gods and Ištar” (no. 97, line ii 6) and šipir Ištar bêltiya ša lâ innennû “the unchanging message of Ištar, my lady” (no. 101, line v 79); the term thus reflects the role of the prophets as mediators of divine words. Noteworthy in this formulaic expression is the use of the word maΔΔû; in Neo-Assyrian, this word is otherwise used only in ritual texts and lexical lists, whereas the colloquial word for “prophet” is raggimu. The references to šipir mahê appear in both military and cultic contexts and are always juxtaposed with other kinds of divination, such as dreams and astrological omens.

The two prophetic quotations are to be found in the inscriptions of Assurbanipal:

Ištar, who dwells in Arbel, delivered Alšeri, who did not fear my lordship, up to his servants, according to the word that she had said in the very beginning: “I will, as I have said, take care of the execution of Alšeri, the king of Mannea.” (no. 100)

Ištar heard my desperate sighs and said to me: “Fear not!” She made my heart confident, saying: “Because of the prayer you said with your hand lifted up, your eyes being filled with tears, I have compassion for you.” (no. 101)

Considering the divine speaker and clear affinities with the prophetic oracles, there is no reasonable doubt that these words are presented as prophetic ones, even though this is not explicitly mentioned. Especially number 101, which tells about Assurbanipal’s participation in a festival of Ištar in Arbel and his prayer to the goddess, is more than any other passage in the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions concerned with divination, even alluding several times to prophecy.

That prophecy is mentioned in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal clearly coincides with the fact that the extant archival copies of prophecy were filed in the time of these two kings. This gave the craftsmen of the inscriptions the possibility of referring to prophecies in the same way as to other divinatory reports and even of quoting or paraphrasing their words. Especially the close parallelism of number 97 with the first and third collection of prophecies (nos. 68–77, 84–88), probably compiled by the same scribal circles who authored the inscription, provides clear evidence of the scribes’ use of prophetical sources, the ideological focus of which was in line with their own and thus made them suitable for their purposes.

Prophets are acknowledged also in an ideological document of another kind, namely the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon from the year
This treaty is historically related to number 97 and numbers 68–77, which were prepared for the same occasion, namely, the investiture of Assurbanipal as crown prince. One paragraph of the treaty deals with potential propagators of malevolence against Assurbanipal the crown prince designate (no. 102), among them prophets and other practitioners of divination of a noninductive kind, grouped together with terms *rag-gimu*, *maḫḫu*, and *šaʾili amat ili*, the last designation meaning “inquirer of divine words” and usually connected with dream interpretation. The paragraph reckons with the possibility that prophecy, in contradiction to the royal ideology, may be used against the king. Such a case is indeed reported by Nabû-reḫtu-ūšur, who in his letters (nos. 115–117) informs the king of a conspiracy, manifest in a (pseudo)prophecy proclaimed near the city of Harran, according to which the seed of Sennacherib will be destroyed and a certain Sasî proclaimed the king.

In the Neo-Assyrian royal correspondence, prophecy is a recurrent theme. Mar-Issar, Esarhaddon's agent in Babylonia, reports a prophecy proclaimed on occasion of the substitute king ritual in 671 in Akkad (no. 109). Bel-uṣezib, the only Babylonian scholar in Esarhaddon’s inner circle, writes to the king soon after his enthronement, complaining about the favor the newly enthroned king has bestowed upon prophets and prophetesses instead of himself (no. 105). A few years later, however, he readily quotes a prophetic oracle, which between the lines corroborates the restoration of Babylon and the reestablishment of the cult of her main temple, Esagil (no. 106). This quotation probably derives from a filed report of prophecy, and the same can be said of the prophetic quotation of Nabû-nadin-šumi, the chief exorcist also belonging to Esarhaddon’s nearest men, who recommends the banishment of a person on the basis of a word of Ištar of Arbela and Nineveh (no. 107). The reference to prophecy made by another exorcist, Urad-Gula, has a totally different tone and motivation. Having served Esarhaddon for years, he has lost favor in Assurbanipal’s eyes and describes his misery to him, trying to arouse his sympathy. As the last straw, he tells, he had even turned to a prophet, without avail (no. 108).

In addition to the correspondence of the king with his closest circle of scholars, there are a few relevant letters written by priests or temple officials. Two of them report an appearance of a prophetess. The first is by Nabû-reši-šši, who while giving account of sacrifices performed in a temple, most probably in that of Ištar in Arbela, cites the words of a prophetess, according to which some property belonging to the goddess has been given to Egyptians and should be returned (no. 113). In the second report (no. 111) Adad-ḫu-idilina writes to the king that a prophetess called Mullissu-abu-usri had proclaimed as a divine word that the royal throne should be transported to another place, probably to Akkad where it was needed on the occasion of the substitute king ritual mentioned in
number 109. The demand for the throne implies that the temple in question is Ešarra, the temple of the god Aššur in the city Assur where the coronation of the Assyrian king took place. As for other texts, there is the tiny fragment number 114; its preserved text implies that the destroyed part of it contained a šipirtu of Ištar of Arbela for the king. The word šipirtu means a divine message normally written without a reference to the transmitter (Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 226–27), but in this case it is said to be spoken or reported by a votaress (šēlūtu) of the goddess (cf. no. 74). Such a šipirtu seems to be reported also by the temple official Aššur-hamatu’a to Assurbanipal (no. 112). This letter begins with the divine self-representation without any introductory formula or greeting, and contains the word of Bel (Marduk) concerning his reconciliation with Mullissu and, through her intercession, with Assurbanipal. The language and the idea of the divine message fully concur with the extant prophecies, especially number 94.

The prophetic activities in temples are further documented by two ritual texts. The first is the so-called Marduk Ordeal, a commentary on a ritual in which Marduk is beaten and sent to prison (no. 103). This ritual is most probably to be associated with the return of the statue of Marduk to Babylon in the beginning of Assurbanipal’s reign. It commiserates with Marduk and reflects the ideology of those who promoted the rebuilding of Babylon. Even prophets appear in this text as sympathizers of Marduk and Babylon, consistently with the prophetic oracles which are concerned for the reestablishment of the cult of Babylonian gods (nos. 78, 80, 106, etc.). In the Tammuz and Ištar text (no. 118), the prophets have a role to play in a healing ritual, together with “the shepherd boy of Dumuzi” (a cult functionary who intercedes on behalf of the people) and the “frenzied” men and women (zabbu and zabbatu), who are associated with prophets also in lexical lists (nos. 120, 126, 127).

Two administrative texts supplement the evidence of prophecy in Assyria from the cultic and military directions. The presence of the prophets in Ešarra is confirmed by the oldest Neo-Assyrian text in this collection, a long decree for the maintenance of this temple from the year 809 (no. 110). The text includes an expenditure of barley “for the presence of prophetesses” (ša pān mahḥāte), who are placed under the paragraph concerning the divine council. This is compatible with the intercessory role of Ištar/Mullissu in the divine council reflected by prophecies (nos. 94, 112, etc.). The other text belonging to this category is a lodging list compiled on the occasion of some major event in Nineveh, originally consisting of about one hundred names (no. 104). One of the persons included in this document is Quqî, the prophet (raggimu), who is listed among high-ranking officials referred to as coming from Šadikanni.
97. Esarhaddon's Rise to Power


Property of Esarhaddon, the great king, the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, governor of Babylonia, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four regions, the rightful shepherd, the beloved of the great gods, whom Aššur, Šamaš, Bel, Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, and Ištar of Arbela called to the kingship of Assyria when he still was a baby.

Even though I was younger than my big brothers, my father who engendered me, justly elevated my head among my brothers, upon the command of Aššur, Sin, Šamaš, Bel, Nabû, and Marduk, the gods of Assyria, the gods who inhabit heaven and earth.

Respecting their solemn statement, he assembled the people of Assyria, young and old, as well as my brothers, the descendants of my father's house. To secure my succession, he made them swear a solemn oath before Aššur, Sin, Šamaš, Nabû, and Marduk, the gods of Assyria, the gods who inhabit heaven and earth.
In a favorable month, on an auspicious day, in accordance with their lofty command, I triumphantly entered the Palace of Succession, the formidable residence where the one to be appointed to kingship is located.

My brothers, though lavished with good education, forsook the gods and trusted in their own arrogant deeds, making devious schemes. They spoke evil of me and fabricated libellous rumors about me in a godless manner, they spread malevolent lies and hostility behind my back.

The gentle heart of my father they alienated from me against the will of the gods, though in his heart he secretly commiserated with me and his eyes were set upon my kingship.

I spoke with my heart and puzzled my head, asking myself: “Their deeds are haughty; they trust in their own decision. What will they bring about in their godlessness?” By means of prayers, lamentations and humble gestures I implored Aşur, the king of the gods, and the merciful Marduk, to whom treachery is an abomination, and they accepted my plea.

In accordance with the will of the great gods, my lords, they transferred me away and made me dwell in a secure place, safe from their evil deeds. Extending their sweet shade over me they preserved me for the kingship.

Afterwards my brothers went out of their senses doing everything that is displeasing to the gods and
mankind. They planned evil and godlessly rose up in arms in Nineveh, butting each other like young goats to take over the kingship. Aššur, Sin, Šamaš, Bel, Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, and Ištar of Arbela looked with displeasure upon the deeds of the rebels which were done against the will of the gods. They did not stand at their side, but turned their strength into weakness and made them bow under my feet. The people of Assyria, who had sworn the loyalty oath by the great gods with water and oil to secure my kingship, did not come to their assistance.

I am Esarhaddon who, trusting in the great gods, his lords, never turns around in the tumult of the battle! I soon heard about their evil deeds. I cried out “Woe!”; I rent my princely garment and burst into lamentation. I became enraged like a lion, my emotions were stirred up. I banged my hands together for the sake of exercising the kingship of my father’s house. With raised hands I prayed to Aššur, Sin, Šamaš, Bel, Nabû, Nergal, Ištar of Nineveh, and Ištar of Arbela, and they accepted my words. Giving me their firm positive answer they constantly sent me this oracle of encouragement: “Go ahead, do not hold back! We go constantly by your side; we annihilate your enemies.”

I did not wait even for the next day, nor did I wait for my army. I did not secure the rear, I did not inspect my yoked horses or my combat equipment, I did not even...
heap up provisions for my campaign. I was not afraid of the snow and the cold of the month of Shebat (IX), the fierce cold, but spread my wings like a flying eagle to repel my enemies and marched toward Nineveh quickly, despite the difficult obstacles along the way.

In the territory of Hanigalbat, their assembled elite troops blocked the advance of my troops and sharpened their weapons in front of me. However, fear of the great gods, my lords, befell them, and when they saw the attack of my strong battle array, they went out of their minds.

Istar, the Lady of warfare and battle who loves my priesthood, fell in beside me, broke their bows and disrupted their ranks. They said in their midst: “This is our king!” Upon her lofty command they came over to my side. Rising up after me and gamboling about like lambs they implored my sovereignty.

The people of Assyria who had sworn loyalty to me before the great gods, came before me and kissed my feet. But when those rebels, who made conspiracy and insurrection, heard the approach of my campaign, they deserted the troops who had trusted in them and fled to an unknown land.

I reached the embankment of the Tigris and, upon the command of Sin and Šamaš, the lords of the harbor, I let all my troops jump across the broad river Tigris as if it were nothing but a ditch. In the month of Adar (XII), a favorable month, on the eighth day, the day of
3iziqamma šitu mānūt Ėa šāru ša ana epēš šarrāti zāqqu šāba ʿukkhabānimma idāt dumqi ma šāmānē u qaqqari šipir maḥḥē našparti šāli ša Ištar kayyān usad-dīrūni usārbišūni libbu šābī bēl šittē ša ana epēš šarrāti māt Aššūr ʿana ṣāḥēya usākpidū lemattu puḥursūnu kīma išēn ḍāṭma annu kabū ēmissuniūma ʿaḥal-liqa zērsun

The Southwind, the breeze of Ea, was blowing—the wind whose blowing portends well for exercising the kingship. Favorable omens in the sky and on earth came to me. Oracles of prophets, messages of the gods and I, were constantly sent to me and they encouraged my heart. The transgressors who had induced my brothers to the evil plans for taking over the kingship of Assyria I searched out, each and everyone of them, imposed a heavy punishment upon them, and destroyed their seed.\(^a\)

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\(^a\) Cf. SAA 9 3.2 (no. 85) ii 3: “Aššur has given him the whole world [kippat erbettim].”

\(^b\) Cf. SAA 9 1.4 (no. 71) ii 20–24.

\(^c\) The father is Sennacherib, whereas one of the elder brothers is called Ardamullissi, who was ousted from his position as the crown prince. See Parpola 1980; Kwasman and Parpola 1991: xxvii–xxxiv.

\(^d\) For a similar query to āmaš, cf. SAA 4 149.

\(^e\) The succession treaty of Sennacherib is partly preserved in SAA 2 3.

\(^f\) The month in question is Nisan (I), 683. For the Palace of Succession, see no. 69 (SAA 9 1.2), n. 1. For šīkīn šarrāti, see AHw 1234 sub šiknu A 6.

\(^g\) Cf. SAA 9 3.3 (no. 86) ii 10–12.

\(^h\) Cf. SAA 9 1.8 (no. 75) v 15–20.

\(^i\) Cf. SAA 9 3.3 (no. 86) ii 13–14.

\(^j\) The “secure place” (lit. “secret place,” ašar niṣirti) refers to the expatriation of Esarhaddon to the Western provinces (the territory of Ḫanigalbat, line i 70).

\(^k\) The inscription does not mention that they even killed their father Sennacherib; see Parpola 1980.

\(^l\) Cf. SAA 9 3.3 (no. 86) ii 13–14.

\(^m\) Cf. ina libbi ṣa “in the midst of woe” SAA 9 1.1 (no. 68) i 26; 2.5 (above, no. 82) iii 31. Cf. also a similar passage in the Epic of Ninurta, or Lugale (van Dijk 1983: 61:70), in which Ninurta, upon hearing of Asakku’s evil deeds, cries “Woe!” (ā’a). For commonalities between Lugale and Esarhaddon’s inscription, see Parpola 2001: 185–86; Annus 2002: 100, and cf. the following notes.

\(^n\) Or, “I wrenched my wrists,” “I clenched my fists”; probably a gesture of exasperation. Cf. the Epic of Ninurta, which says that Ninurta “beat his thigh with his fist” (van Dijk 1983: 61:73).
Rather than a prophetic oracle, the “oracle of encouragement” (šîr takîlî) is the outcome of an extispicy; nevertheless, it is completely in line with the prophetic messages pertaining to the same situation. The wording of the oracle is reminiscent of the Epic of Ninurta (van Dijk 1983: 80:236): “Ninurta, warrior of Enlil: Go, do not hold back!” (alîk lâ kalâta).

I.e., Shebat (IX), 681.

Cf. the Epic of Ninurta (van Dijk 1983: 82:246), in which Ninurta spreads his wings towards the clouds to attack Assakku.

Cf. above, note j.

Cf. SAA 9 3.3 (no. 86) ii 20–21: “I drove them up to the mountain and let fire and brimstone rain upon them.” Evidently, Esarhaddon did not manage to capture his brothers, since this is not explicitly mentioned and they are never heard of again. According to the biblical tradition (2 Kings 19:37 = Isa 37:38) they fled to “the land of Ararat,” i.e., Urartu.

Cf. SAA 9 1.6 (no. 73) iv 3–4; 3.3 (no. 86) ii 20.

I.e., Adar (XII), 681. According to the chronicles of Esarhaddon (Grayson 1975: 82:38), the accession to the throne took place on the eighteenth or twenty-eighth, not on the eighth day.

Cf. SAA 9 3.5 (no. 88) iv 25–30.

98. Esarhaddon's Ascending the Throne


1 31 [Sîn Śamšaš ilâni maššatu 32 aššu dîn kîtti 33 u mišari 34 an[a mâtî] u nišê sarâku 35 arbiša[d] mana šarrân kîtti u 36 mišari šâbitima 37 UD.[x].KÁM UD.14.KÁM 38 ušladdirū tâmartu

59 Dilbat nabât kakkabâni 60 i-na amurri 61 i-na ṣarrân šût Éa 62 inam-mirma ša kunnu 63 mäte tâl sušum 64 ilâniša nišîruru 65 iššudammu tîbal 66 Šalbatûnu pâris 67 pursê mát Amurri 68 ina ṣarrân šût Éa 69 ib’il šindašu 70 ila danân malki u mätîšu

1 31 The twin gods [Sin and Šamšaš, in order] to bestow a righteous and just [judgement upon the land] and the people, kept from month to month to month the path of righteousness and justice, appearing regularly on the [xth] and fourteenth days.

39 Venus, the brightest of the stars, appeared in the west [in the path of] Ea and reached its hypsoma predicting the stabilization of the land and the reconciliation of its god; then it disappeared. Mars, who determines the decision for the
11. ukallim iskimbuš


Westland, shone brightly in the path of Ea, and by his sign announced his decree that gives strength to the king and to his land.a

8 12Prophetic oracles concerning the establishment of the foundation of my priestly throne until far-off days were conveyed to me incessantly and regularly. Good omens kept occurring to me in dreams and speech omensb concerning the establishment of my throne and the long life of my rule. When I saw these good signs, my heart turned confident and my mood became good.

99. Assurbanipal’s Establishment of the Cult of the Lady of Kidmuri

Text: Prism T ii 7-24 (= 1929-10-12, 2 and duplicates; see Borger 1996: 122–30) and Prism C i 53–66 (= Rm 3 and duplicates; see Borger 1996: 132–37).
Discussion: Nissinen 1998b: 35–42.

7. Emašmaša ʾegašankalamma kaṣpu ḫurāṣu ʾaza ina lūlē umalli ʾṣarrat Kidmuri ša ina uggat libbīša ʾatmanša ḳābu ʾiṣibā aṣar lā simāṭīša 12. ina palēya damqi ša Aṣšūr ʾšruka šarṣā salimu ša ʾṣurruṭu mūšša šīqārūti 16. ina ṣuttī šīpir maḫḫē

Westland, shone brightly in the path of Ea, and by his sign announced his decree that gives strength to the king and to his land.a

8 12Prophetic oracles concerning the establishment of the foundation of my priestly throne until far-off days were conveyed to me incessantly and regularly. Good omens kept occurring to me in dreams and speech omensb concerning the establishment of my throne and the long life of my rule. When I saw these good signs, my heart turned confident and my mood became good.
17 ištannappara kayyāna

18 Šamaš Adad aš’alma 19 ēpulū’inni annu kēnu 20 simat ilūtiša rabūti ušarrīṭ 21 ušēšibši ina parammābi 22 šubat darāṭī 23 pārsēša šūqrūti ukīnma 24 ušallima mīšēša

her majestic divinity and glorify her precious rites, constantly sent me orders through dreams and prophetic oracles.

18 I consulted Šamaš and Adad by means of extispicy and they gave me a firm positive answer. I made the insignia of her great godhead magnificent; I gave her an eternal seat in the inner sanctum. A conjectural translation; para(m)māḫu is used for cultic seats as well as for shrines (see AHw 829).

100. Assurbanipal’s Mannean War

Text: Prism A ii 126–iii 26 (= Rm 1 and duplicates; see Borger 1996: 1–14).


126 In my fourth campaign I mobilized my troops and took the straightest way against Aḫšeri, the king of Mannea. Upon the command of Aššur, Šīna, Šamaš, Adad, Bel, Nabû, Ištar of Mannea, the Lady of Kidmuri, Ištar of Arbela, Nišurta, Nergal, and Nusku I entered Mannea and triumphantly marched through it. I conquered, devastated, destroyed and burned with fire its fortified cities and its numberless small towns as far as Izirtu. The people, horses, donkeys, bulls and sheep I removed from these cities and counted them among the booty.
Δ¡∑ri alåk girr•ya 134 išmêma umaššir Izirtu al šarrūtšu 145 ana Išatti al tukulšu inahitma ḫuz 2margitu nagû šuatu akšud mälak esret ümê ẖansat ümê 3ušaḥribma šaqummatu atbuk

Δ¡∑ri lâ pälih bêlûtya ina amat Išîr 5ašbat Arbail ša uthu ṭešî taqûbû 6umma anûku mištu Δ¡∑ri šar mât Mannûya 7ki ša aqîbû epçu ina qâût ardânîšu tamûššaîma 8niše mâššu šîhu elîšu ušaḥšu ina suq âlîšu šalamaštšu 9iddû îndaššari pagaršu 10aḫbêšu qinnûšu zêr bit abîšu uṣamqitî ina kakkê

Δ¡∑ri, when he heard my troops coming, left Izîtu, his royal residence. He fled to Ištatti, his stronghold, and sought shelter there. I conquered this area, devastated a stretch of fifteen days' march and brought about a deathly silence.

Ištar, who dwells in Arbela, delivered Δ¡∑ri, who did not fear my lordship, up to his servants, according to the word that she had said in the very beginning: "I will, as I said, take care of the execution of Δ¡∑ri, the king of Mannea." The people of his country rose in rebellion against him, threw his corpse on the street of his city dragging his body to and fro. With weapons they beat his brothers, his family and his kinsmen down.

Afterward his son Ualli ascended his throne. He acknowledged the authority of Aššur, Sin, Šamaš, Adad, Bel, Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, the Queen of Kidmûri, Ištar of Arbela, Ninurta, Nergal, Nusku, the great gods, my lords, and submitted to my yoke. For the sake of his life he opened his hands and implored my lordship. His crown prince Erisinni he sent to Nineveh where he kissed my feet. I was merciful to him and sent to him an envoy of peace. He had a daughter of his own offspring brought to me to be my housekeeper. His former tribute that he had interrupted in the time of the kings, my fathers, was brought to me again. I added thirty horses to his former tribute and imposed them on him.

arkânu Ualli måršu ūšib ina kussâšu 12danân Aššur Šîn Šamaš Adad Bêl Nabû 13Išîr ša Ninua šarrat Kidmûri 14Išîr ša Arbail Ninurta Nergal Nusku 15îlânî rabûti bêlëya ūmursâ 16iknûsa ana niûiya 17ašshu balâq napisûtšu upnâšu īptâ ušallâ bêlûtî 18Erisinni mår ređûtšu 19ana Ninua îṣpurumma umaššiq ašpêya 20rêmu ariššumma 21mår šîpûya ša şulme uma 22ir šerûššu 22mârtu šî lîbûššu ušûbîla ana epêš abarakkûtî 25maddattasû maḥrîtû ša ina terşî šarrê abbêya 24ušaḥšîtu iššûni adî maḥrîya 25salâša šisê elî maddattisû maḥrîtî 26uraddîma ômîssu
101. Assurbanipal's War against Teumman, King of Elam

Text: Prism B v 15–vi 16 (= K 1775 + K 1847 + K 2732 + Sm 1712 and duplicates; see Borger 1996: 86-91).


v 15 ina Ābi arâh nanmurti kakkab qašši 16isinši šarratí kabitti màrat Illil 17 ana palâb ilûtša rabûti ašbâk
18 ina Arbail āl narâm libbiša 19 aššu tibût Elamê ša bału ilâni itbâ
20 ušannûni ūmu 21 umma Teumman kšum iqbi 22 ša Ištar usannû milik ūmenû 23 umma uš umaššar adi allaku 24 itlišu ēppušu mituššitu

15In Ab (V), the month of the appearance of the Bow Star and the festival of the Venerable Lady, the daughter of Enlil, when I was visiting Arbel, her beloved city, to worship her great divinity, an assault of the Elamites, which they made against the will of the gods was reported to me: “Thus spoke Teumman, whose power of discernment I star has confused: ‘I shall not give up until I can go and wage war against him!’”

26Because of this impudence uttered by Teumman, I approached Ištar, the most high. I placed myself before her, prostrated myself under her feet. My tears were flowing as I prayed to her divinity:

O Lady of Arbel! I am Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, creation of your hands, whom Aššur, the father who made you, desired and whom he called by name to renovate shrines, to carry out the rituals of the gods, to protect their secret lore and to delight their hearts. I am the one who visits regularly your dwellings, I come to worship you and take care of your rituals.
35 Now this Teumman, king of Elam, who does not respect the gods, has assembled all (his forces) to combat my troops. You are the lady of the ladies, the goddess of warfare, the lady of battle and the counsellor of the gods, your fathers! You spoke good words for me before Aššur, the father who made you, so that he, raising his pure eyes, wished me to be the king.

41 As to Teumman, king of Elam, he has become a burden for Aššur, the king of the gods, the father who created you! He has assembled his troops and armed himself in preparation for war in order to march into Assyria. You are the most warlike among the gods! Scatter him like a load in the tumult of battle; raise against him a destructive wind and storm!"

46 Ištar heard my desperate sighs and said to me: "Fear not!" She made my heart confident, saying: "Because of the prayer you said with your hand lifted up, your eyes being filled with tears, I have compassion for you."

49 The very same night as I implored her, a visionary lay down and had a dream. When he woke up, he reported to me the nocturnal vision shown to him by Ištar: "Ištar who dwells in Arbela entered, having quivers hanging from her right and left and holding a bow in her hand. She had drawn a sharp-pointed sword, ready for battle. You stood before her and she spoke to you like a mother who gave birth to you. Ištar, the highest of the gods, called to you and gave..."
tušannakka umma atta akanna 64 tāashāta ašar maškanika 65 akul akalu šiti kurumnu 66 ningātu šukin nu? in id ili 67 adi allaku šipru šuātu eppišu 68 usakišu šumnerāt lib-bika 69 pānūska ul urraq ul inarrūjā šēpēka 70 ul tašannātà zuška ina qabli tambara 71 ina kir-immiša ūṭi trēlibšišātma 72 tahtina gimir lānika 72 pānūša girru innapiš 73 samarī šattaša ana aḫāti 75 eli Tuumman šar māt Elamti 76 ša ugguqat pānūša taškūn

77 ina Elīlī šipir īštārāti isinni Aššūr šēri 78 aḫāt Sin nammar šamē u īṛetī ātkil ana parūsē 79 nammarī namri u šipir īštār belšya ša lā inennī 80 adki ummānāt tāḫāziya mun-daḫē ša ina qibli Aššūr 81 Sin u īštār ittanašrabbūtī ina qabli tambara 82 eli Tuumman šar māt Elamti urētu aḫbatma 83 uštešera ḫarrānu

ešši’a Tuumman šar māt Elamti 84 ina Bit-Imbi nāti madaktu erēb šarrāšiya 85 ša qereb Dēru inšūma inšāsū šattu 86 Tuumman inšāṣma ana arkišu ṭūt erēb qereb Šušān 87 kaspu ụrūšu ana šūzub napiššišu 88 uṣaṣiž ana nīṣe māṭišu 88 rešēšu alīk īdēšu pānūšu utirramma 90 ugdappiša ana māṭriya 91 Ulāya you the following order: ‘You are prepared for war, and I am ready to carry out my plans.’ 66 You said to her: ‘Wherever you go, I will go with you!’ But the Lady of Ladies answered you: ‘You stay here in your place! Eat food, drink beer, make merry and praise my godhead, until I go to accomplish that task, making you attain your heart’s desire. You shall not make a wry face, your feet shall not tremble, you shall not even wipe the sweat in the tumult of war!’ 71 She sheltered you in her sweet embrace; she protected your entire body. Fire flashed in her face, and she went raging away, directing her anger against Tuumman, king of Elam, who had made her furious.”

77 In the month of Elul (VI), the month of the messages of the goddesses and the feast of the exalted Aššur, the month of Sin, the light of heaven and earth, I trusted in the decision of the bright Luminary and in the unchanging message of Ištar, my lady. 80 I mobilized my combat forces, the fighters, who upon the command of Aššur, Sin, and Ištar dashed around into the heat of the fight. Against Tuumman, the king of Elam, I made my way, taking the straightest route.

83 Tuumman, the king of Elam, had encamped against me in Bit Imbi. When he heard that my kingship had entered Der, he became horror-stricken. Tuumman was afraid, turned around and withdrew to Susa. 87 To save his life he dispensed silver and gold to the people of his country. The henchmen who
The year in question is 653. The Bow Star is Canis Maior, the “arrow” of which is Sirius; cf. Lewy 1965; Parpola 1997: xci–xcii, n. 114.

101. Assurbanipal’s War against Teumman, King of Elam 149

v1 rēš Teumman šar māt Elamti ina qibīt Assūr u Marduk ilāni rabūti bēlēya akkis ina puḫur ummānēštu milammi Assūr u Ištār māt Elamti isḫupma ʾiskūnu anā nirīya

vi 1 On the command of Assur and Marduk, the great gods, my lords, I cut off the head of Teumman, the king of Elam, before his assembled troops. The splendor of Assur and Istar beat the land of Elam down and they submitted to my yoke.

v3 Ḫumban-nikaš, who had fled and grasped my feet, I seated upon his throne. Tammaritu, the third among his brothers, I placed in the kingship of Ḫidalu. Chariots, wagons, horses, mules, harnessed animals, trappings fit for war which my hands, trusting in Assur and Istar, the great gods, my lords, captured between Susa and the Ulaya (I carried off as a boot). Upon the command of Assur and Marduk, the great gods I joyfully left Elam. My entire army was well.

The year in question is 653. The Bow Star is Canis Maior, the “arrow” of which is Sirius; cf. Lewy 1965; Parpola 1997: xci–xcii, n. 114.

Literally, “their rituals,” which clearly refers to the gods; cf. “their secret lore” and “their hearts.”

3 Literally, “her.”

For similar prayers, cf., e.g., Esarhaddon Nin A (no. 97) i 53-62 and the inscription of Zakkur KAI 202 A (no. 136) 11–15; for the prophetic character of the divine answer, see Nissinen 1998b: 53.

The word for “visionary” is šabrû, which denotes a person whose divinatory expertise is near to that of a prophet; see Huffmon 1992: 480; Nissinen 1998b: 56.

Literally, “I am ready to go to where my face is directed.”

Literally, “her face.”

The “decision of the bright Luminary” and “the message of Btar” (nannari namri u šipir Btar) probably mean astrology and prophecy respectively; cf. “the messages of the goddesses” (šipir istārātī), line v 77.

The city of Der, located in the zone between Babylonia and Elam, had been under Assyrian control since the time of Sargon II, but was obviously invaded by Teumman.

“Return to the front” is an attempt to understand the phrase, which is literally, “returned to his face.”

If the river Ulaya corresponds to the modern river Karkheh, on which Susa is located (see Dietrich 2001: 313), Tell Tuba cannot be far from Susa.

According to Prism B vi 66–69 (cf. SAA 3 31 r. 8–9), Teumman’s head was put on display in Nineveh.

Humban-ikaš and Tammaritu were sons of Urtaku, the king of Elam who reigned before Teumman. They had escaped the usurpation of Teumman in 674 and sought shelter in Assyria. Ḥīdalu is an Elamite city east of Susa; its exact location is unknown.

The syntax of the original text is incomplete.

102. Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon

**Text:** SAA 2 6 (ND 4327 and duplicates).  
**Photograph:** Watanabe 1987: pls. 1, 8, 9 (ND 4327 etc.).  
**Copy:** Wiseman 1958: pls. 2–3, 17, 18, 22.  

§ 10, lines 108–22 (ND 4327; 4345A/E; 4346E/I; 4349R; 4355F/I; 1959-4-14, 75; 1959-4-14, 76)

If you hear an evil, ill, and ugly word that is mendacious and harmful to Assurbanipal, the great crown prince of the Palace of Assurbanipal,
102. Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon

Succession, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, may it come from the mouth of his enemy, from the mouth of his ally, from the mouth of his brothers, uncles, cousins, or his family, descendants of his father, or from the mouth of your brothers, sons, or daughters, or from the mouth of a raggimu, a maḫḫu, or an inquirer of divine words, or from the mouth of any human being at all, you must not conceal it but come and tell it to Assurbanipal, the great crown prince of the Palace of Succession, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria.

103. Marduk Ordeal (Assur and Nineveh Versions)

**Text:** SAA 3 34 (= VAT 9555, 9538 = KAR 143, 219); SAA 3 35 (= K 6333+ with duplicates).

**Photograph:** Livingstone 1989: pl. XII–XIV (SAA 3 35).


**Lines SAA 3 34:28–29 and SAA 3 35:31:**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Aṣšūr bēkunu} & \ lā tāsratūnī \ 111\ lā tābūtūnī \ lā \ ina \ pī \ nikrišu \ 112\ lū \ ina \ pī \ salmēšu \ 113\ lū \ ina \ pī \ aḫḫēšu \ 114\ aḫḫē \ aḫḫē \ mār \ aḫḫē \ aḫḫē \ 115\ qinnīšu \ zara' \ bēt \ aḫḫē \ lū \ ina \ pī \ aḫḫēkunu \ 116\ mar'ēkunu \ mar'ēkē-
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ku} \ lū \ ina \ pī \ raggīnu \ 117\ maḫḫē \ mār \ ša'ili \ amat \ ilī \ 118\ lū \ ina \ pī \ nāppar \ salmat \ kuqadī \ mal \ bašū \ 119\ tašammānī \ tūpazzarānī \ 120\ lā \ tā-
lakānīnī \ ana \ Aṣšūr-bānī-apli \ mār \ šarrī \ rābū \ 121\ ša \ bēt \ rēḏūtī \ mār \ Aṣšūr-āḫū-iddīnā \ šar \ māt \ Aṣšūr \ 112\ lū \ tāqabbānī
\end{align*}
\]

The prophet who goes before the Lady of Babylon is a bringer of news; weeping he goes toward her: “They are taking him to the Δursān!” She sends (the prophet) away, saying: “My brother, my brother!” [...]

\[\text{a I.e., Zarpanitu, the spouse of the god Marduk.}\]

\[\text{b I.e., Marduk.}\]

\[\text{c This word is interpreted as meaning the river ordeal, but Frymer-Kensky (1983: 138–39) shows that it rather means the cosmic location where Marduk is held captive.}\]
The implied object of the verb ūtarātu is without doubt the prophet.

104. List of Lodgings for Officials

Text: SAA 7 9 (= K 8143 + 80-7-19,105 = ADD 860).
Photograph: Fales and Postgate 1992: pl. II.
Copy: Johns 1901: nr. 860.

Lines r. i 20–24:

Nergal-mukin-aḫi bēl mugirri  
Nabû-šarru-ušur rāb kisīr mār šarrī
Wazāру ša-qurbūti ummi šarrī
Qūqî raggimu
[gūnul space of one line]
qīmir erbet mūšēbī (Ṣa)diqannāya

Nergal-mukin-aḫi,4 chariot owner;  
Nabû-šarru-ušur, cohort commander of the crown prince;  
Wazaru, bodyguard of the queen mother;  
Qūqī, prophet;  
in all, four: the “residences” of the Shašanneans.b

———

a Or, Nergal-kenu-ušur; see PNA 2/II: 949.
b The text has di-ka-ni-a-a; I follow the suggestion of Simo Parpola that this actually stands for people from Shaškannī, a city on the upper course of the River Ḫabar.

105. Bel-uṣezib to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 10 109 (= 82-5-22,105 = ABL 1216).
Photograph: Mattila (ed.) 1995: 133 (rev.).
It is Bel-ušežib, your servant, your dog and the one who fears you [...]. When I revealed the many words that I heard in Nineveh, why, then [did the king, my lord, summon] prophets and prophetesses, but until now has not summoned me? [It was I who] muzzled the exorcist with my words and [went to] greet the crown prince, my lord, whose murder along with your servants’ murder [was schemed] every day, who escaped from being killed only by [fleeing] to the tower; and who told the omen of kingship of the crown prince Esarhaddon, my lord, to the exorcist Dadâ and the queen mother, saying: “Esarhaddon will restore Babylon, reestablish Esaggil and [... me!” And when [...] went to the tower, this wonderful form, just as I had predicted it to the crown prince, my lord, was made and given to the king, my lord, and it looked like a (figure of) a musician in his hands. May the gods of the king of the lands, my lord, be witness to what I said to the king, my lord: “The king will rule all the countries and the great gods will give many years to [...].”

All the past twenty years since I gave [... three talents of silver and audience gifts, [... has not been given to me, in spite of the abundance of audience gifts. Let me resettle for the king the wasted lands [...], and by the king’s command [...].
Kalbi māršu ša Nabū-ētir ana tarṣi šarri abišu riksšu itti
1upšarrāni u bārāni ša lā ša šarri abiška ur(lakšisšu) 3umma kā ittu lā banātu tattalku ana šarri nīqabbi
2umma ittu esšī tattalka ūppi ana ūppi [...]
3gābbišunu idakkū kī ittu ša ina muḫḫišu lā banātu tal-lišu 4u ša mimma ša lā banā arkāniš alū kī illīkka umma ittu] 5ša ina muḫḫiša lā banātu tallikamma lā taqbingi [...]
5dibbi annūti ūppšarrāni bārāni ina qāīšunu kī inšarū [ilānā ša šarri] 6ū lā idū ša ittu mala ana tarṣi šarri abiška ta[llika lā iqtūma] 7šarru abiška lā baltišma u šarrūtu lā īpušūma

1Kalbi, son of Nabū-ētir, ganged up [with] the scribes and haruspices in the reign of the king, your father without his knowledge. He said: “If an inauspicious sign occurs, we just [say] to the king that an obscure sign has occurred.” Report for report he censored all of them [... when a sign [occurred] that was inauspicious to him. This was no good! Finally, then, when the demon appeared, (the king) said: “If there occurs a sign untoward to me and you do not report it to me, [...]!” These words were taken seriously indeed by the scribes and haruspices, and may [the gods of the king] witness that [they did report] every single sign that occurred during the reign of your royal father who stayed alive and exercised the kingship!

10Even no[w], during the reign of the king, my lord, [signs] concerning him have occurred. Whatever there is [...] they have disregarded. Where is now the auspicious sign they are waiting for? [... you keep to yourselves! May [...]

14[This was the sign] of the kingship: (If a planet comes close to another planet,⁦) the son of the king who lives in a city on the frontier (will rebel against his father, but will not seize the throne). [A son of nobody will go forth and seize [the throne], re[store] the temples of the great gods, (establish the sacrifices of the gods and provide jointly for all the temples).

19[Now, then, a sign] has occurred in the reign of the king,
The complicated sentence structure of the lines 8–16 is resolved in the translation by beginning the section with the crucial question, originally divided between the lines 9 and 16.

I.e., Esarhaddon; Bel-ušezib refers to the time before his accession to the throne.

The exact meaning of ašītu is not clear.

It is difficult to understand what is meant with the “form” (šiknu) that looked like a “musician” (Lū.NAR) in the king’s hands.

Parpola 1993: 87 restores: “[to the king, my lord]”; the sign UD remains obscure.

This probably means the restoration of Babylon, destroyed by Sennacherib in 689.

The clauses in parentheses are not part of the original but are taken from Enuma Anu Enlil 56, an astrological series quoted here by Bel-ušezib in an abridged form (see Labat 1959; Parpola 1980: 179–80). The broken part of the tablet cannot have included all the restored text.

106. Bel-ušezib to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 10 111 (= 83-1-18,1 = ABL 1237).

To the king of the lands, my lord:

your servant Bel-ušezib.

May Bel, Nabû and Šamaš bless the king, my lord!

If a star flashes like a torch from the east and sets in the west: the main army of the enemy will fall.

If a flash <in> the south appears and appears again, makes a circle and again makes a circle, then...
stands still and again stands still, flickers and flickers again and disperses: a ruler who goes forth on a campaign will plunder property and possessions.

As to what the king has written to his troops, saying: "Enter the Mannean territory; however, not the whole army should enter. Let only the cavalry and the professional troops make their entry. What the Cimmerians have said, ‘The Manneans are all yours; we shall keep aloof,’ may be a lie! They are barbarians who recognize no oath taken before god and no treaty. [The chariots and wagons should stand side by side in the pass, [...] let the cavalry and the professional troops enter and plunder the Mannean countryside; then let them come back and take up position in the pass. [...] only after they have repeatedly entered and plundered [the countryside], and the Cimmerians have not fallen upon them, the [whole] army may enter [and assault] the Mannean cities." — r. 4Bel has ordered the destruction of Mannea and is now delivering them once more into the hands of the king, my lord. If the moon [is seen] together with the sun on the fifteenth day of this month, it is on account of them, meaning that the Cimmerians will indeed keep aloof from them [...] will be conquered.

I have written to the king, my lord, without proper knowledge of the conditions in that country. The lord of kings should consult an
a Even though the name is almost completely broken, the identification is certain; see Dietrich 1970: 63 and Fales and Lanfranchi 1981: 9, 13.
b Following the suggestion of Fales and Lanfranchi 1981: 16–17, lines 9–r. 4 are interpreted here as a quotation from the king’s earlier letter. Alternatively, if the quotation comprises only the words “Enter the Mannean territory” (thus Parpola 1993: 89), the continuation is to be understood as a personal opinion of the writer.
c Literally, “on this fifteenth day.”
d Literally, “the exit and entry of that country.”
e The text speaks of the Cimmerians here as “Indareans.”
f Line 25 according to the collation of Manfried Dietrich (courtesy M. Dietrich): ina GI.GI.ZU.ZA-
ú lu-
ú a-ši-ib.
g King of Babylonia (1081–1069) who restored the fortifications of Babylon and made a treaty with Aššur-bel-kala, the contemporary king of Assyria.
h The end of the line 26 following to the collation of Manfried Dietrich (courtesy M. Dietrich): LUGAL be-li-[a...].

mušašpalqüti ina muḫḫi mun-
dalḫššu 15 ina nakri donnatu ina
libbi tumúlika 16 emiqa gabbi
liru bu gudûdānu 16 laššuma ša-
bīšunu ša šēri lušabbi’tma 17 liš’ilāli
ki Indarišša la pānišunu irīqū
16 emiqa liru ina muḫḫi álani
liddū

19 sar ilâni Marduk itti šarru bēliya
salim 20 minma mala šarru bēliya
iqaqqū īppuš 21 ina kussīka aššāta
nakritika 22 takammu ayyābika
akašad u māt nakrika 25 tašallal

Bēl iqaqqū uma akī 24 Marduk-
šapik-zēri Aššu-ādu-iddina sar
māt Aššur 25 ina kussīša lū ašīb u
mālāṭīti 20 gabbi ana qašṣu amānī
šarru bēliya ...] 26 ḫadīš šarru akī
ša išla [li] 28 īppuš

expert of the country and then write
to his army as he deems best. Your
advantage is, in any case, that there
are more deserters than fighting sol-
diers among the enemy. When the
whole army is entering, let patrols
go and capture their men in the
open country and then question
them. If the Cimmerians indeed
stay away from them, let the whole
army invade and assault the cities.

Marduk, the king of gods, is
reconciled with the king, my lord.
He does whatever the king, my
lord, says. Sitting on your throne,
you will vanquish your enemies,
conquer your foes and plunder the
land of your enemy.

Bel has said: “May Esarhaddon,
king of Assyria, be seated on his
throne like Marduk-šapik-zēri! I
will deliver all the countries into his
hands!” The king, [my] lord [ ...]. h
The king may happily do as he
deems best.
107. Nabû-nadin-šumi to Esarhaddon

**Text:** SAA 10 284 (= K 1033 = ABL 58 = LAS 213).

**Copy:** Harper 1892 (I): no. 58.


**Translation:** Talon 1994: 120.


To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-nadin-šumi.

"Good health to the king, my lord! May Nabû and Marduk abun-
dantly bless the king, my lord!

[break]

If he turns out to be troublesome, let the king, my lord, turn his gracious face away from him.

According to what I, a servant of Nineveh and I, a servant of Arbela have said to me: "Those who are disloyal to the king our lord, we shall extinguish from Assyria," he should indeed be banished from Assyria!

May Aššur, Šamaš, Bel, and Nabû take care of the well-being of the king, my lord!

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*a* Cf. SAA 9 2.4 (no. 81) ii 29–33.

108. Urad-Gula to Assurbanipal

**Text:** SAA 10 294 (= K 4267 = ABL 1285).

**Photograph:** Parpola 1987: 266–67.

**Copy:** Harper 1913 (XII): no. 1285.

**Transliteration and translation:** Waterman 1930 (II): 392–95; Parpola 1987: 258–65; 1993: 231–34.

[To the king, my lord: your servant Urad-Gula.]

[Very good health to the king, my lord!] May Marduk [and Zarpanitu, Nabû and Tašmetu, Ištar of Nineveh and Ištar] of Arbêla, Ninurta, Gula, Nergal and Laš bless [the king, my righteous lord] very, very much! May they grant the gift of [endless days and everlasting [years] to the king, my lord!

[May the great gods of heaven and earth] incessantly bless your kingship! [May they love the pure sacrifices you offer and show their desire for] your priesthood! May they watch the steps you take [and make your road straight!] May they repel your assailants and cause the fall of your enemies! [May] they [drive away] [your adversaries] and take their property! [May] they continually make your shepherdhood as favorable to all mankind as choicest oil; may they make the foundation of your royal throne steady as bedrock until far-off days! May Šamaš, the light of heaven and earth, lend an ear to your righteous judgment! May the king, my lord, heed the case of his servant; [may the king perceive his whole situation!]

[Originally, during the reign of the king’s father, I was but a poor man, and a son of a poor man. A dead dog was I, a [simple]tond of stunted ability. He lifted me from the dung heap! I received [audience gifts from him and my name was mentioned in high society.] What he abundantly left over, I would consume.] Now and then, he gave me a mule or an ox, and each year

[ana šarri bêliya urdakə Urd-Γula]

[ìu šulmu ana šarri bêliya addannis] Marduk [Zarpānitu ³Nabû Tašmētu ñisēr ñu Ninua ñisēr] ñu Arba˚l Inurta Gula ¹Nērīgal Lâş ana šarri bêliya kēlnu addannis addannis lišn[þu] ³šumē arkûti šanātī dârâtī ana šarri bêliya ana širikti lišrukû

[ìlînî rabûtî ša šamē kaqqiri lîktarrabû šarrûtka nadin zîbika ³ellâtî lirammâ lišũqîlû sangûtka kibis šèpêka lî[šurû] ³lišēšîrû ḫûlka] naka-rušêka liškipû lišamqîtû ayyâbîkû ⁵gârêka lišîrribû lišqîlû bašašûn ³râ’îtûka kîma âlu u šamnu eli nap̄bar kîšsat nišlê lištibbû ³îšdi kussi šarrûtka kîma šîpîk šaddê lišarsîdû ana ūmê šâti ³Šamās nûr šamē u kaqqiri ana dên kîtûka littaškan uznâšû ³šarru bêli ana dêni ša urdûšu liqûla dibî gabbu šarru lêmur
I earned a mina or two of silver. [When] my lord was crown prince, I received those leftovers together with his exorcists. Keeping watch I stood [at] the openings; every day that I spent in his service I kept to myself his private affairs. I never went to the house of a eunuch or of a bearded courtier without his permission. I was considered one who is given the lion’s share. I appeased your god.

Now the king, my lord, has made even better the good name his father had established before him. I, however, have not been treated in accordance with what I have done. Never before have I suffered like this, I have given up the ghost! Discrediting, whispering about and talebearing are hateful things! Discreet though I have been about the private affairs of the king, my lord, I have not found advocates. I endured words. My post [I made] my night’s lodging; I taught the servants, whether bearded or eunuchs, submission, toil and fear of the palace—but how was I rewarded for all this?

If it is fit to the most prominent and even lesser scholars to be granted mules, I should be given at least one donkey! Likewise, when oxes are distributed [in] Tebet (X), even I should be granted one ox. Within a month, two or three times [ ... ] three or four [ ... ] are given to [ ... ]. [Even an apprentice of an] exorcist [gets] two [ ... and] eats a [ ... ]. As for [me], however, [what is my reward? Or why am I working at all?] I cannot look at the
[...] ni ina libbi ukalati la sammi[ti] [...]

[...] libbi hiri mihr[ya]

[six fragmentary or unreadable lines]

4\textsuperscript{e} egertu ina qat Šarru-nūrī ša-reši ana šarri bēlīya 

[...]

\textsuperscript{a} asapra u murus libbiya uktammara ana šarri bēlīya aspur̄a 5\textsuperscript{...} nubat[ti] la bēdat egertu šarru ana urdišu issapra

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{[ma là ında kī akanni šamruša-kānī mā anāku [...]} -ad ātabakka abut[ti] ša šarri bēlīya kī šadē šal[šuqaṭ]} \textsuperscript{b} egertu i[ss] kussi ša Nabū ina libbi tukulti assakānši kī mar[‘i ēḍ][i] āltaštārši issu mašši sinā̄ya pāṭrūni šarru bēlī addan-

\textsuperscript{[n]iš} 10\textsuperscript{[li]b̄b̄āṣšu} lū tābšu urdušu lū ḫ̄̄ysa mā ina dagāl[ya] 11[li]b̄-

\textsuperscript{h}̄ura kīšādī


\textsuperscript{[sak-kul]} šarru iqaddī mā mār̄ mātī šu šarru liš[a][l] 21abūa šeṣṣet imār

[...] of the king, nor [...] Day and night I pray[ly] to the king in front of the lion’s den [...] are not finicky about the morsels [...] my heart amidst my colleagues [...] [break]

11There is also the saying: “The one who has been [stabb]ed in the back can still speak with his mouth, but the one who has been stab[bed] in the mouth, how can he speak?”

It is two years now since [my] two draught animals died. I have gone three times to Arbela and once to Assur on foot; but was there [any]body who would have been kind enough to grasp my hand and [lead] me in front of the king, my lord? Why did the king summon an exorcist from Ekallate, while I had to take the desert [road] to avoid the people who would have been asking me: “You are go[ing] on foot, eh?” People pass
my house, the nobles on palanquins, the lesser ones on carts and the low ones on mules — and I go on foot.\footnote{footnote symbol} the king will say: “He is a citizen!” Let the king find out that my father and his brother Nabû-zeru-lešir parceled out six homers of field, while I myself and my brother got three homers each plus two servants.\footnote{footnote symbol} With the consent of the king, my lord, I have purchased five or six servants.

\footnote{footnote symbol}I entered the temple of Kidmuri to arrange a banquet there, yet that wife of mine disappointed me.\footnote{footnote symbol} For five years she has been neither dead nor alive, and I still have no son. Three women have fallen to me this year, but I have no farmer, no tool shed, no farm.\footnote{footnote symbol} By Anu, Enlil and Ea, who constantly dwell in the head of the king, my lord: I cannot afford a pair of sandals, I cannot pay the tailor, I do not even have a change of clothes! I have run up a debt of almost the capital of six minas of silver.

\footnote{footnote symbol}I am advanced in years already, and it is said: “Once you have reached old age, who will be your support?” \footnote{footnote symbol} is not pleased with me; when I go to the palace, I am not good enough. [I consulted] a prophet without finding any \footnote{footnote symbol} hope. He was unresponsive, being unable to offer any vision. [O king, my lord], mere seeing you is happiness and your attention is a fortune! May \footnote{footnote symbol} the heart \footnote{footnote symbol} of the king soften so much that he will send me two draught animals, \footnote{footnote symbol}, and a spare suit of clothes. Guarding \footnote{footnote symbol} for the crown-princehood of
The name of the author of the letter is not preserved, but the identification with Urad-Gula, one of Esarhaddon’s chief exorcists and son of the exorcist Adad-šumu-šur, is certain; see Parpola 1987: 268–69. For the restorations of the rest of the letter, see Parpola 1987: 274–78.

b I.e., Assurbanipal.

c A clear allusion to the first lines of the Advice to a Prince, an admonitory work that the recipient of the letter was supposed to know: “If the king does not heed justice [ṣarru ana dīnī là iqāl], his people will be thrown to chaos, and his land will be devastated” (Lambert 1960: 112). The extant copy of this text belonged to Assurbanipal’s library.

d For saklu, see no. 109 (SAA 10 352), n. 8. In fact, Urad-Gula was anything but a “simpleton” or a “common man”; cf. note h.

e Literally, “fortunate people,” i.e., those belonging to the king’s entourage.

f The “leftovers” belong to the author’s hyperbolic language (cf. Mk 7:28; Lk 16:21), but they may also have a concrete point of reference in the surplus of the abundant cultic meals.

g The word ikkibu means things that are forbidden or taboo, in this case probably the king’s private affairs or things concerning him that are not generally known.

h For ukålåti as a diminutive of akålu “food”, see Parpola 1987: 275.

i For the translation, see Parpola 1987: 276.

j For the translation, see ibid.

k Lit.: “lion’s pit” (gah’u; cf. Aram. góh; Heb. gēh); there is a clear contrast with the “lion’s share” Urad-Gula used to enjoy earlier (line 22).

l For the translation, see van der Toorn 1998c: 632.

m Literally, “the small ones,” referring to the social class rather than age.

n The text is clear but unintelligible; the word issurri “perhaps” would make sense.

o Literally, “living souls,” referring to human beings.

p The point may be that the banquet was arranged in the temple of the Lady of Kidmuri (i.e., probably, the Istar temple of Calah; cf. above, no. 99) to “cure” the supposed infertility of the wife, but it was not successful.

q Literally, “plough house,” i.e., building for storing ploughs. Plough is a well-known euphemism for the male organ, and the context shows that the whole farming imagery refers to Urad-Gula’s impotence.
109. Mar-Issar to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 10 352 (= K 168 = ABL 437 = LAS 280).

[ana šarri bēliya urdaka [Mār-Issān]

[la šulmu] ana šarri bēliya [Nabû u Marduk 2 ana šarri bēliya likrubû [ūmē arkuû] 4 tūb šīrī u ḫūd libbi [ilāni rabûti] 5 ana šarri bēliya lišruku


13 kinaḫḫu nētabaš šû u sēgallīšu 14 dammuqû kanû taklitāšunu 15 kallumat qabrû baktû 16 šuruṭtu šarpata itṭâti kalîšina 17 pâssā nam- burbē ma’dûtu 18 āt rînî bêl šalâ 19 mē nēpēšū 20 ša āsipûtu ersabuntû 21 naqabāte ša tūšaarrûtu 22 23 ussal-limû ātapsû šarru bēli lû ūdi

24 [aššeme mā pānât nēpēšû annûti 25 ragginti tartuḫūmu 26 ana Dāmqi

[To the king], my [lord]: your servant [Mar-Issar].

2[Good health] to the king, my lord! May [Nabû and Marduk] bless [the king], my lord! May [the great gods] grant [long life], physical health and cheerful mood to the king, my lord!

3[Dāmqi], the son of the chief administrator 4 of Akkad, 5 who ruled Assyria, Babylonia [and] all the countries, [di]ed together with his queen on the night of the xth day as a substitute for the king, my lord, [and to spare the li]fe of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. 6 He met his fate for their redemption. 7

8We prepared the funerary chamber. He and his queen were made beautiful, treated with honor, displayed, buried and bewailed. The burnt-offering was made and all the omens were cancelled. A lot of apotropaic rituals, as well as ablation and purification rituals, 8 exorcisms, penitential psalms and scholarly litanies were completely performed. The king, my lord, should know this.

9[II] have heard that, before these rituals, a prophetess had prophesied,
mār šatamni taqtī[bī] 27[mūš šarrūtī tañašī 1[u] ṛaggintu ina puḥri 2ša māti taqtibāššu mā kakkīšu 3šarrīqtu ša bēliya uktallim 4ina qāti assakanka namburbē 5annūti ša ēpsūni issalmū 6addammīš libbu ša šarri bēliya lū tāšū

7 Akkadû’a iptalḫū libbu nus-saškiniṣunu 8ittūḫū u asseme mā šatam̄māni 9gēpānī ša māt Akkadi iptalḫūma

10 Bēl u Nabû ilāni kāššunu ūmē 11ša šarri bēliya ussāritū ina libbi diāri 12attalē ūn ṛēḫē ilāni ibašsī 13ana kaqqiri lū illak

šumma pān 14šarri bēliya māḥir kī ša pānīti 15šaklu ana šatam̄mūti lū 16paḫīdi ina pān parakki ginū luqarrib 17ina ūm essēši ina šalām bēti ina māḫḫī nīdakkī 18[ana] Bēlet Akkadi lisrūqu


saying to Damqī, the son of the chief administrator: “You will take over the kingship!” 24[More-over], the prophetess had spoken to him in the assembly of the country: “I have revealed the thieving polecat of my lord and placed it in your hands.”—Those apotropaic rituals which were performed were extremely successful. The king, my lord, can be satisfied.

7 The people of Akkad were frightened, but we cheered them up and they calmed down. I even heard that the chief administrators and delegates of Babylonia were frightened as well.

10 Bel and Nabû and all the gods have given a long life to the king, my lord. However, as long as the period of the eclipse of the moon and the approach of the gods lasts, he should not go out into the open country.

13 If the king, my lord, considers it appropriate, let a common man, h as before, be appointed to the office of the chief administrator. Let him perform the regular offerings before the dais, and let him burn incense [for] the Lady of Akkad on the censer on occasion of the essēšu festival and the “Greeting of the Temple” ceremony.

18 When [an eclipse] takes place and afflicts Babylonia, let [him] be the substitute for the king, my lord, [...] let him stand. Let [the ...s] of the king, my lord, be successful [...] let the people keep calm. Let the king, my lord, replace him with anyone [...] who is acceptable to the king, my lord [...] his [...]s, his brothers [and ...].
a The modern languages have no exact equivalent for the word ṣatammu; translations such as “bishop” (Landsberger 1965) attempt to render the high religious authority of this position in modern terms, but the office of ṣatammu was not necessarily restricted to the realm of temples.
b The ancient Sargonid capital where the cult of Ištar, the Lady of Akkad, and the other gods of Akkad was reestablished three years earlier (674).
c Šamaš-šumu-ukin is mentioned here because the eclipse of the moon, on account of which the substitute king was chosen, afflicted Babylon and, hence, him personally as the crown prince of Babylon.
d This sentence puts in a nutshell the ideology of the substitution, for which see Parpola 1983: xxiv–xxv.
e The purpose of the namburbi, bêl rimhû, and bêl šalâ’î mê rituals was to purify the actual king from his sins, which were taken upon the substitute king.
f Cf., e.g., SAA 9 1.8 (no. 75) v 22–23: “Yours is the kingdom; yours is the power.”
g For this reading and translation, see Nissinen 1998b: 74 and cf. SAA 9 1.7 (no. 74) and 9 4 (no. 89).
h The “common man” (sakhu) means a person without a noble lineage, in this case a person not belonging to the powerful families of Babylonia.

110. Decree of Expenditures for Ceremonies in the Aššur Temple in Assur

Text: SAA 12 69 (= VAT 8920+ = NARGD 42+).

Lines 27–31 (VAT 8920):

[blank space of one line with holes]

27 nadbâku ša puḫur ilâni 1 sēt dišpu 5 qa šammu 4 sēt [5 qa šamaššammi klarkadinnu inašši 28 10 emâr kurummutu ana kusāpi 5 emâr kibtu ana qa[dušü aḫiši inaššil] 29 1 emâr 5 sēt ša pān mabbarī širmē inaššil] 30 gimru 1 sēt 4 qa dišpu 5 qa šammu 4 sēt 5 qa šamaššammi [11 emâr 5 sēt kurummutu] 31 5 emâr kibtu minma

[blank space of one line with holes]

27 The expenditure for the divine council: [The confectioner takes] one seah of honey, five liters of oil, and four seahs of sesame. The bakers take ten homers of barley for bread and five homers of wheat for qalṭûtu]-bread. The brewers take one homer five seahs of barley for the prophetesses. 30 Total: one seah four
110. Decree of Expenditures for Ceremonies

anniu [nadbāku ša puḫur ilāni]

[blank space of one line with holes]

To the king, my lord: your servant Adad-aḫu-iddina.

To the king, my lord: your servant Adad-aḫu-iddina.

[break]

a There is no word for “barley” in the original, but this is what the context and the surrounding passages of the text suggest.

111. Adad-aḫu-iddina to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 13 37 (= K 540 = ABL 149 = LAS 317).
Copy: Harper 1893 (II): no. 149.

ana šarri bēliya 2 urdaka Adad-aḫu-iddina

[five unreadable lines]

To the king, my lord: your servant Adad-aḫu-iddina.

Good health to the king, my lord! May Aššur, Mullissu, Nabû, and Marduk bless the king, my lord!

Mullissu-abu-uṭri, the prophetess who conveyed the king’s clothes to the land of Akkad—a prophesied in the temple: “[The] throne from the temple…"

Let the throne go! I will catch the enemies of my king with it!”

Now, without the authorization of the king, my lord, I shall not give the throne. We shall act according to what the king, my lord, orders.

The land of Akkad designates Babylonia, as translated by Cole and Machinist 1998: 38. The destination of the king’s clothes was probably the city of Akkad, where the substitute kings were enthroned; cf. SAA 10 352 (no. 109).
b The throne, as well as the king’s clothes, were needed in the substitute king ritual; cf. SAA 10 189.

112. Aššur-ḥamatu’a to Assurbanipal

Text: 13 139 (= 83-1-18,361 = ABL 1249).

[anâku] Bēl ētarba 2 issi Mu[l]issu assilim
3Aššur-bāni-apli šar māt Aššur 4ša turabbīni 5l[t]ā tapallaḥ
6[anâku] Bēl artēanki 7Aššur-bāni-apli ina māti ša kēnu/kēni 8ša adi mātisšu 9 artēanki

10 ina šulmu šallimte 11 issu ālīki attūši 12 rēmu gimlu […]

[break]

r.1’ ana Bēl attaḫar 2 usarrirri
3Nabû-šarru-uṣur ṛādi kiḫsi 5 ša mūgiya assapar

5’ ana šarrī bēliya 6 urdaka Aššur-ḥamātiṭ’a 7 Aššur Issār ana šarrī 8 likrubbu

[Il am Bel.] I have entered and reconciled with Mullissu.
3Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, whom she raised: Fear not!
5I am Bel, I have had mercy on you. Assurbanipal is in a country which remains loyal to him. I have had mercy on you, together with his country.
10Safely and securely I departed from your city. Mercy and compassion […]"

[break]

r. 1’ I implored Bel and prayed to him.
3’ Then I sent Nabû-šarru-uṣur, a tracker of my contingent.
5’ To the king, my lord, your servant Aššur-ḥamatu’a. May Aššur and Ištar bless the king.

a The cuneiform script has only the sign EN, without the divine determinative, throughout the letter.

b The feminine suffix in artēanki indicates that Mullissu is addressed.

c “Contingent” is the conjectured translation of Cole and Machinist of the unclear word mūgi.
113. Nabû-reši-išši to Esarhaddon (?)

Text: SAA 13 144 (= Bu 91-5-9,145 = CT 53 969)
Copy: Parpola 1979: pl. 216.

113. Nabû-reši-išši to Esarhaddon (?)

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-reši-išši.

Good health to the king, my lord.

May Aššur, Ištar, Nabû, and Marduk let the king, my lord, live hundred years!

The king's sacrifices [...] have been performed on the [xth] day and the sixteenth, the [xth], the twentieth, [...]

[six lines too fragmentary for translation]
115. Nabû-rešṭu-usur to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 16 59 ( = ABL 1217 + GT 53 118 = 82-5-22,108 + K 13737).

To the king, my lord, your servant Nabû-rešṭu-usur. May Bel and Bešlet, Nabû and Tašmeštu, Ištar of Nineveh and Ištar of Arbela give you long days and everlasting years!  
Nikkal [has revealed] those who sinned against [your] father's goodness and your [father's] and your own treaty. Destroy their name and seed from your palace! [May] she cast [ ... ]! [May] the accomplices of Sasî [die quickly]. "Hear me," O king, my lord! I [know] the words of Nikkal. Let [the people] die! [Save] your life and the life of your family! Let [the gods ...] be your father and your mother, and let them lift up ...! Do not destroy your life, do not let the kingship [slip] from your hands! 12Hear me, O king, my lord! Do not disregard [these] words of Nikkal! ... a letter [ ... ]

[break]

[CT 53 118] 5 ina pānīšu izadū [ ... ]  
6 pīšītu šakin [ ... ] 7 kavyamānu ina muḫḫī Sā[i ... ] 8 ma ina pān šarrī dammiq mā ... 9 lēpuši issu Nabû-bel[ ... ] 9 issi Ubru-Nabû [ ... ] 10 issi rabiāni ša ...  

[break]

[CT 55 118] 4 ... are staying in his presence [ ... ] are making common cause [with ... ] [They are] constantly [ ... ] to Sāši [ ... ]: "Present yourselves in good light with the king! Let [ ... ] do [ ... ] with Nabû-belū-[ ... ] with Ubru-Nabû-[ ... ] with the magnates w[ho ...]
Nabû-reḫtu-usur to Esarhaddon

[break]

\[\text{AR} 1217\] 6 issurri ištši [\ldots] 7 liššulā mā amtu ša Bēl-aḫu-usur ina qan-ni ša Ḥarrān ina muḫḫi [\ldots] 5 mā issu libbi Simāni sarḫat mā dabāhu damqu ina muḫḫi 7 tadabbābu mā abat Nūṣku ši mā šarrūtu ana Sāši 9 mā šumu zar’u ša Sin-aḫḫē-riba uḫallāqa


[break]

\[\text{AR} 1217\] 1 Perhaps there is [\ldots] let them ask [\ldots]. “A slave girl of Bel-aḫu-usur [\ldots] upon [\ldots] on the outskirts of Ḥarrān; since Sivan (III) she has been enraptured and speaks a good word about him: ‘This is the word of Nūṣku: The kingship is for Sasi! I will destroy the name and seed of Sennacherib!’”

“Let your squadron commander question the household of Bel-aḫu-usur under the main gate of the Nabû-temple. Let the ša šēpī guards who brought the slave girl into the house of Sasi bring her here, and let the king [\ldots] perform an extispicy ritual on her (account).

6Let them bring Bel-aḫu-usur from Harran and [\ldots] Nūṣku. May the name and seed of Sasi, Bel-aḫu-usur and their accomplices perish. May Bel and Nabû establish the name and seed of the king, my lord, until far-off days!

11Let them speak with Ardâ as follows: “On the twenty-seventh, at night, [\ldots] the scribe Issar-nadin-apli at this particular moment went to [Sasi], the city overseer, [\ldots] did …] with the eunuch Awyanu? [Did] the scribe Issar-nadin-apli say that [\ldots] Nabû-eṭir [\ldots] this? What did Sasi [\ldots] concerning it on the twenty-eighth? Did Sasi speak with you and with the [\ldots] on the following day? Why have you [not reported] what you saw and heard?” [\ldots] Let the squadron commander [\ldots] men [\ldots] the scribe[\ldots] Issar-nadin-apli [\ldots] The people who conspire with them and with Sasi [should die! \ldots]. Let your [son]s and uncles guard
The word *anīnu* is interpreted as an interjection similar to *anīnu* or *annû* “behold” (cf. Heb. *hinnê*); cf. SAA 9 3.3 ii 13 (no. 86 n. 4) and ABL 1250 r. 7.

The word *sarðat* is interpreted as a G stat. of a verb corresponding to the Syriac *šar˙* “to rage,” the Aph el form of which has the meanings “to ravish, enrapture, fascinate, captivate.”

*Or, “from.”*

It is not clear whether the title “city overseer” (*ša-muḥḫi-ālī*) belongs to Sāṣî or to another person. For Sāṣî, see PNA 3/I: 1093–95.

116. Nabû-reḫtu-usur to Esarhaddon

**Text:** SAA 16 60 (= CT 53 17 + CT 53 107 = K 1034 + 7395 + 9204 + 9821 + 10541 + 11021).

**Copy:** Parpola 1979: pl. 7, 38.


To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-reḫtu-usur. May Bel and Belet, Nabû and Tašmu, Ištar of Ninneveh and Ištar of Arbela, your gods who [called] you by name [to kingship, keep] you alive! Those who sinned against [your father's goodness, your father’s and] your own treaty, and who plotted [against your life], they shall [place] in [your] hands, [and you shall delete] their name [from Assyria and from your palace]. This is the word of Mullissu; [the king, my lord,] should not be negligent about it.

10 On the sixth of [Marchesvan (VIII)] I had a vision: “[…] in the midst […]” [I am bound by the treaty of the king, my lord]; I cannot conceal the things that […]
116. Nabû-reḫtu-uṣur to Esarhaddon 173

Just as I saw, in [...] I have put, discreetly... The king, my lord, knows that where [...] as [it is written] as follows in the letter: "..." should have [...] [break]

[break]  
CT 53 107:1 [... the crown prince [...] to the crown prince [...] are in league with one another [...] he says: “These [...]" and: “The whole palace is with [...] anything; the daughter of Bambâ [...] and the men of Adad-šumu-uṣur and Ar[da...] have said to me: “They are making a rebellion [...].” He has become confident in (his) heart [and is saying:] “I have set [...].” He has rejected what Bel, Nabû, Ištar of Niniveh and Ištar of Arbela have...[ed], and [...] of his own. Ištar of Nineveh says: “[...] have done... from the palace...” [break]  
CT 53 107 r. 5 It was spoken as follows: “In Harran [...] What orders has he given [to you] about me? [...] The word of [...] has become very [...] You have turned the palace into a [...] My men [...] Sasi [...]” [break]  
CT 53 17 r. 9 [in the presence of the chief eunuch [...] Save your life! Quickly [...] Sasi to [...] Milki-nuri and Urad-Issar [...] with [him]. [Interrogate them! Let them tell you the [...] people who conspired with them, and let [these] people die! Have no fear; Bel, Nabû and Mullissu are standing with you. Let the people die quickly, and [save] your life! May this letter be a spell, it will [...] upon you! Let the
117. Nabû-reḫtu-uṣur to Esarhaddon

Text: SAA 16 61 (= CT 53 938 = 82-1-18,508).

[To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-reḫtu-uṣur. May Bel and Belet, Nabû and Tašmetum, Issar of Nineveh and Istar of Arbela, your gods who called you by name to kingship, keep you alive!]

[Those who sinned against] your father’s [goodness, your father’s and your own] treaty, and who plot against your life, they shall place in your hands, and you shall delete

people die [quickly] before they get ahead (of you).

Hear me, O king my lord! Save your life! [The men of] Saši have [set] an ambush, saying: “The moment (the king) will speak with us, we shall [kill] him [before he gets ahead (of us)].”

Hear me, O king [my lord]! Bel […] Let the […] constantly bring gold and precious stones to […] As for you, keep in safety, [pray to […] and let him prolong your life. Take care of yourself, ditto ditto (= let the people die quickly)! [Save] your life and [the life of] your family! Save your life [from the hands of the eunucho]s! Ditto ditto. Brace yourself! Let the […] stand [with you], they are loyal to you.

To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-reḫtu-uṣur. May Bel and Belet, Nabû and Tašmetum, Istar of Nineveh and Istar of Arbela, your gods who called you by name to kingship, keep you alive!

[Those who sinned against] your father’s [goodness, your father’s and your own] treaty, and who plot against your life, they shall place in your hands, and you shall delete

people die [quickly] before they get ahead (of you).

Hear me, O king my lord! Save your life! [The men of] Saši have [set] an ambush, saying: “The moment (the king) will speak with us, we shall [kill] him [before he gets ahead (of us)].”

Hear me, O king [my lord]! Bel […] Let the […] constantly bring gold and precious stones to […] As for you, keep in safety, [pray to […] and let him prolong your life. Take care of yourself, ditto ditto (= let the people die quickly)! [Save] your life and [the life of] your family! Save your life [from the hands of the eunuchos]! Ditto ditto. Brace yourself! Let the […] stand [with you], they are loyal to you.

To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-reḫtu-uṣur. May Bel and Belet, Nabû and Tašmetum, Istar of Nineveh and Istar of Arbela, your gods who called you by name to kingship, keep you alive!

[Those who sinned against] your father’s [goodness, your father’s and your own] treaty, and who plot against your life, they shall place in your hands, and you shall delete

people die [quickly] before they get ahead (of you).

Hear me, O king my lord! Save your life! [The men of] Saši have [set] an ambush, saying: “The moment (the king) will speak with us, we shall [kill] him [before he gets ahead (of us)].”

Hear me, O king [my lord]! Bel […] Let the […] constantly bring gold and precious stones to […] As for you, keep in safety, [pray to […] and let him prolong your life. Take care of yourself, ditto ditto (= let the people die quickly)! [Save] your life and [the life of] your family! Save your life [from the hands of the eunuchos]! Ditto ditto. Brace yourself! Let the […] stand [with you], they are loyal to you.

To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-reḫtu-uṣur. May Bel and Belet, Nabû and Tašmetum, Istar of Nineveh and Istar of Arbela, your gods who called you by name to kingship, keep you alive!

[Those who sinned against] your father’s [goodness, your father’s and your own] treaty, and who plot against your life, they shall place in your hands, and you shall delete

people die [quickly] before they get ahead (of you).

Hear me, O king my lord! Save your life! [The men of] Saši have [set] an ambush, saying: “The moment (the king) will speak with us, we shall [kill] him [before he gets ahead (of us)].”

Hear me, O king [my lord]! Bel […] Let the […] constantly bring gold and precious stones to […] As for you, keep in safety, [pray to […] and let him prolong your life. Take care of yourself, ditto ditto (= let the people die quickly)! [Save] your life and [the life of] your family! Save your life [from the hands of the eunuchos]! Ditto ditto. Brace yourself! Let the […] stand [with you], they are loyal to you.
118. Ritual of Istar and Dumuzi

**Text:** Farber 1977 A II a (= K 2001+ and duplicates; see Farber 1977: 127).

**Copy:** Farber 1977: pl. 7–14.


**Lines 1–33**

If a man is seized by a spirit of a dead or a sanḫulḫazu demon, or if any evil thing has seized him and afflicts him continually:

The ritual against it is the following: In the month of Tammuz, when Istar makes the people of the land wail over Dumuzi, her beloved, and the family of the man is gathered in a proper place, Istar is there to attend to the people's concerns. She may take the sickness away, but she may cause sickness as well.
UD.28.KAM 8 ūm tarbaṣi ūr uqaṭi kakkabti ṣuṣuṣi 9 ana ʾṣṭār taqāṣ šum marṣi tazakkar marṣa 10 sūzibī taqabbīma

šinšeret akālī miḥṭa 11 ana bit ṣṭār teleqgêma ana ʾṣṭār-reṣṭa 12 kaparri ša Dumuzi naṣrapta gubaṣṣa 13 taqāṣ ṣṭār-reṣṭa 14 ana Dumuzi 14 šabat abbiṭi annanna marṣi taqabbi

anna 15 ina ūm tarbaṣi ina bit ṣṭār teppuṣ

UD.29.KAM 8 ūm mayyālītu ana Dumuzi innaddi 17 iṣṭīn qa qēma ša zikaru ʾtiṣnu teleqgêma 18 ina rēš mayyālītu tumra tanāppaḥ kamāna ina iṣṭi tuṣališ 19 ina sīzbi damqi tamarras ina rēš mayyālītu taṣakkan 20 laṭan mē u šikari tuṭān

šappa sussula ebbūba šinnatu 21 sa ṣuṭraṣa aḫzzā takṣa nāda 21 ana Dumuzi taqāṣ riksana ana Dumuzi taṭakkas 22 nignak ballukku ina reṣṭišu nignak brāṣi ina šепitšišu taṣakkan 21 ina šepitšu riksana ana ṣṭār taṭakkas nignak brāṣi taṣakkan 20 šikara taṇaqqi šuluḫa tuṣallišu zidub-dubbā 23 tattanaddi ina imitti mayyālītu ana eṭem kimīti 26 ina šumēl mayyālītu ana Anunnakī kispa taḳassīp 29 mē kaṣṭi ti šikar laṭti taṇaqqi

“On the twenty-eighth day, the day of the pen, you shall give ʾṣṭār a vulva of lapis lazuli with a golden star. You shall utter the name of the sick person and then say: “Save the sick one!”

10You shall take twelve loaves and miḥṭu-beer to the temple of ṣṭār and give ʾṣṭār-reṣṭa, the shepherd boy of Dumuzi, 2 a crucible and a cord, saying: “ʾṣṭār-reṣṭa, plead with Dumuzi on behalf of so-and-so, the sick one!”

14This is what you shall do on the day of the pen in the temple of ʾṣṭār.

16On the twenty-ninth day, when the bed is prepared for Dumuzi, you shall take one liter of meal that a male person has ground up and place glowing embers at the head of the bed. Then you shall bake a kamānu-bread in the fire, baste it with good milk and place it at the head of the bed. You shall also place there a bowl with water and beer.

21You shall give Dumuzi a jug, a trough, a flute and a šinnatu pipe covered with gold, a carrying rack and a skin bottle. Then you shall prepare the collection of offerings for Dumuzi, place a censer with ballukku-herbs at his head and another censer with juniper at his feet, after which you shall prepare the collection of offerings for ʾṣṭār at his feet. You shall place there a censer with juniper, libate beer and perform the sprinkling of water. Then you shall scatter the meal and perform on the right side of the
bed an offering for the spirits of the ancestors of the family, and on the left side of the bed a funerary offering for the Anunnaki. You shall libate cold water and beer from oven-parched grain.

For the shepherd boys of Dumuzi you shall place a confection; for the frenzied men and women and for the prophets and prophetesses you shall place seven pieces of bread. Then let the sick person recite the following to Ištar:

O Ištar, shepherdess going before the cows (...)

---

30 mira lana klaparrāti ša Dumuzi tašakkan 31 sebe kuru mmātī ana zabbi zabbatī maḫḫē u maḫḫēti 32 tašakkan marša ana maḫar Ištar kīam tušadbahšu

33 rēʾitu Ištar ālikat pān bāši ...

a Or, “the family of each man.”

b According to another manuscript, the twenty-seventh day.

c Vulvas of lapis lazuli are emblems of Ištar frequently used in different kinds of rituals.

d A cult functionary who intercedes on behalf of the people.

e According to another manuscript, the twenty-eighth day.

f A wind instrument of unknown type.

g The gods of the underworld.

h CAD M 108: “a confection made of dates, oil, butter etc.”; cf. AHw 646: “Rührkuchen” (sub mesru).
Miscellaneous Cuneiform Sources

The choice of sources collected in this chapter comprises texts of various places, ages, and genres. The sixteen texts of this selection are but an assortment, far from being an exhaustive collection of sources in which prophets and prophetesses—that is, usually muḫḫûm/mahḫû or muḫḫûtu/mahḫûtu—are mentioned (for a more nearly complete, but not fully exhaustive list, see CAD M 90–91, 176–77). They are gathered together to demonstrate both the chronological distribution of prophecy and the diversity of text types that contribute to our knowledge of ancient Near Eastern prophecy. To make the sample representative enough, at least one text from each main chronological period and text genre has been chosen as an example.

The oldest reference to a prophet can probably be found in a letter from the Ur III period (i.e., twenty-first century B.C.E.) in which the king of Ur orders an enormous amount of barley (18,000 liters!) to be delivered to an anonymous maḫḫûm of a deity who is a local manifestation of Ištar (no. 119). The affiliation of the prophets to the cult of Ištar and to the community of devotees of the goddess is further documented by the Middle Assyrian provisions list (no. 123), in which a considerably lesser amount of barley (ca. 645 liters) is delivered to prophets, prophetesses, and asinnašu of the Ištar temple in Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta. These people are listed among Kassite deportees, probably those captured by Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207) during his victorious campaign against Kaštiliaš IV, the Kassite king of Babylonia. The institutional association between the prophets and the asinnašu and other gender-neutral persons such as the kurgarrû becomes clear also from the Neo-Babylonian list of regular offerings in Eanna, the Ištar temple of of Uruk (no. 130), which lists the portions of the king, the high priest, the scribe of Eanna, the temple administrator, maḫḫû, and kurgarrû in the same paragraph. The only literary text in this selection, the Middle Babylonian “Righteous Sufferer” from Ugarit (no. 122),
after mentioning various kinds of divination, compares people who “bathe in their blood” to prophets, thus alluding to ecstatic self-mutilation, which is part of the image of the gender-neutral people as well.

Further associations between prophets and other classes of people are provided by lexical lists which, without being the result of a classification of people in any taxonomical or administrative sense, collect words which are either phonetically similar or otherwise associated, e.g., in terms of physical appearance or social function. In these lists (nos. 120, 124–126) prophets—muḫḫûtu, muḫḫûtu, or raggimu—regularly appear together with the “men-women” assinnu and kurgarrû, as well as with other cult functionaries, whose appearance and conduct were different from those of the average citizen: the “frenzied” people, wailers, lamentation singers, temple women, and the like; in number 126, raggimu is straightforwardly equated with šabûru, the visionary. Furthermore, prophets and prophetesses are included in the long list of persons whose physical or mental condition is conspicuous in one way or another in the city omen series Šumma ātu (no. 129). All these scattered occurrences of prophets in different kinds of texts throw light on the behavior and social location of the Mesopotamian prophets.

The letter of the Hurrian king, Tušatta of Mitanni, to Amenophis III of Egypt (no. 121) is the only pertinent source within the El Amarna correspondence and one of the very few quotations of prophetic oracles outside Mari, Ešnunna, and Assyria. The letter is written just before the death of Amenophis III (1390–1352), to whom the statue of Ištar of Nineveh, believed to have curative power, had been sent even earlier during his illness as a sign of the goodwill of the Hurrian king. The oracle is presented as a word of Ištar/Suška of Nineveh; hence it can be taken as a continuation of the Assyrian-Babylonian tradition of prophecy among the Hurrians. Another quotation of words of a person who is best characterized as a prophet comes from the Seleucid Babylonia. Two chronographic texts concerning the month of Tishri, 133 B.C.E., report the appearance of a man called Boatman (mâr Malâḫi “descendant of Boatman”), who comes to Babylon and Borsippa, evoking a response among the people. Even though presenting himself as a messenger of the goddess Nanaya, he speaks on behalf of “the strong, hitting God, your God,” after which the temple council tries to silence him and warns the people against that madman and his words; it seems that this incident created a disturbance which may have caused the lives of some people (nos. 134–135).

The remaining texts, all Neo- or Late Babylonian, provide indirect references to prophets. The Late Babylonian akītu ritual from Hellenistic Uruk (no. 133) includes an oracle of Bel, which in every respect resembles the extant prophetic oracles, except that it is spoken by the high
priest, not by a prophet. This may be taken as an example of a subsequent liturgical reuse of a (written) prophetic word (van der Toorn 2000: 77). The two Neo-Babylonian decrees (nos. 131, 132) concern the affairs of people who are designated as “descendant of Prophet” (mār maḫḫē). This designation is an ancestral name (see Lambert 1957; Frame 1992: 34), used as a kind of surname like the previously mentioned “son of Boatman”, indicating that prophets could have descendants and/or inheritors who honored their anonymous prophetic ancestor by calling themselves “sons of Prophet.”

### 119. King of Ur to Ur-Lisi

**Text:** TCS 1 369.

**Copy:** Scheil 1927: 44.

**Transliteration and translation:** Sollberger 1966: 90; Michalowski 1993: 55.

**Discussion:** Sollberger 1966: 191.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{umma Šarrumma} &\quad ^2\text{ana Ur-Lisina} \\
\text{qibīma} &\quad \text{Thus the king.}^a \\
^6\text{ō kur ām} &\quad ^5\text{ana maḫḫēm} \\
^6\text{ša Inanna} &\quad ^7\text{ša Girsu} \\
^6\text{idin} &\quad ^{‘}\text{Give sixty kor barley to the prophet of Inanna of Girsu.}
\end{align*}
\]

^a The king in question is Amar-Šin (2046–2038), the third king of the third dynasty of Ur; see Sollberger 1966: 12.

^b Ur-Lisi was the governor of the city and district of Umma.

^c The text reads LÚ.MA ŠE.m, which could also be read as lumāḫḫēm, referring to a lumāḫḫē, a purification priest (see no. 124 note d). This is how Michalowski 1993: 55 translates it, but note his explanation of lumāḫḫēm in the glossary (p. 138): “A high-ranking priest, often translated ‘ecstatic.’”

### 120. An Old Babylonian Lexical List

*(Lú Recension A)*

**Text:** MSL 12 5.22 (= IM 58433+; see Civil et al. 1969: 157).

**Transliteration:** Civil et al. 1969: 158.

**Lines 20–32**

\[
\begin{align*}
^20\text{lú-šim} &\quad = \text{sirāšū} & \text{brewer} \\
^21\text{lú-kurun-na} &\quad = \text{sābū} & \text{innkeeper (man)} \\
^22\text{mi-lú-kurun-na} &\quad = \text{sābitum} & \text{innkeeper (woman)}
\end{align*}
\]
23lú-gub-ba = muḫḫûm prophet
24mí-lú-gub-ba = muḫḫû[m]um prophetess
25lú-tílla = wâšû one who goes out (man)4
26mí-lú-tílla = wâšûm one who goes out (woman)
27lú-giš-gi-sag-kēš = naqmu psoriatic (man)5
28mi-lú-giš-gi-sag-kēš = naqmutum psoriatic (woman)
29lú-ní-su-ub-ba = zabbû frenzied man
30mí-lú-ní-su-ub-ba = zabbûm frenzied woman
31lú-ur-e = zabbû frenzied man
32lú-al-e11-dē = maḫḫû prophet

4 When used of a human being, the word can mean any person going out; in this context it is noteworthy that it is sometimes used of a chanter (kûlû); see AHw 1480 and cf. note b.
5 The translation “psoriatic” comes from the commentary of Ludlul bēl nēmeqi (K 3291), line f (Lambert 1960: 54): kîma naqimtu šûsî ursâpîra šûparîya “He made my fingernails scratch like the rash of the one who has been sent away”; the word šûsî is explained as the one “whom Ištar has sent to the fire” (ša Ištar ana isâttu usâsû). This not only creates a link to the ones “who go out” (lines 25–26) but refers to people whose appearance, obviously affected by a skin disease, is interpreted as being the divine ordinance. In another tablet of the Old Babylonian Lû-Series, munaqqimum, a word from the same root, is listed together with musukkanum, a sexually unclean person. See Lambert 1960: 299–300.

121. Tušratta of Mitanni to Amenophis III of Egypt

Text: EA 23 (= BM 29793 = BB 10).
Photograph: Bezold and Budge 1892: pl. 23; Waterman 1930: pl. 4.
Copy: Bezold and Budge 1892: 10.

ana Nimmuriya šar Miṣri ḫataniya ša ara’amu ša șa ša ara’ta’umanni qibîma umma Tušratta šar Mitanni ša șa șa’umûma emûkûma

6 ana yâši šulmu ana kâša lû šulmu șa bitîka ša Tadu-Heba mârâiya șa aṣṣatîka ša tara’amu lû

Speak to Nimmuriya, the king of Egypt, my brother, my son-in-law whom I love and who loves me: Thus Tušratta, the king of Mitanni who loves you, your father-in-law:

I am well—may you be well, too! May all go well for your household and for Tadu-Heba, my
šulmu⁹ ana aššātika ana mārīka
anu rabātika¹⁰ ana narkabātika
ana šiška ana¹¹ šābika ana mātika
u ana¹² mimmuka danniš danniš
danniš li šulmu

Šauška is the main goddess of the Hurrians and the Hurrian equivalent to Ištar.

An inexplicable word denoting the goddess.

Or, “in all friendliness.”

Thus says Šauška of Nineveh, the Lady of all countries: “I want to go to Egypt, the country that I love, and then return.” Now I have sent her and she is on her way.

Now, during the reign of my father already, ... b went to that country. Just as she was honored when she dwelt there earlier, let my brother now honor her ten times more than before. Let my brother honor her and then joyfully let her go so that she may return.

May Šauška, the Lady of Heaven, protect my brother and me for 100,000 years! May our Lady bestow great joy on both of us! Let us act according to what is good.

Is Šauška goddess for me alone; is she not goddess for my brother, too?
122. The Righteous Sufferer from Ugarit

**Text:** *Ugaritica* 5 162 (= RS 25460).
**Copy:** Nougayrol 1968a: 435.
**Transliteration and translation:** Nougayrol 1968a: 267-69.

**Lines 2–12**

[beginning broken away]

2 šir{i}a ita’darå immå kîma […]
3 ul itarraš bârî purussåya itta ul inamnan dayyånu

5 dalṭâ têr̄etum šutâbulû širî muš-sâkku ša’îlu bârî puḥâdi igdamrû ummûnû šârshubâya ustammut ul iqθû adan mursiya

9 ṣûrat kimti ana quddudi <내> lam-madamnt
10 ḫerû salati ana tuukkanima izzaz

11 aṭṭu’a kîma mabhê [d]âmîsûnu ramkû aṣṣattî’u šamna giša raksa raṭâni

[beginning broken away]

[…] My liver oracles remain obscure; they become like […]. The haruspex cannot resolve my case; the judge does not give any sign. The messages are confused, the oracles discordant. The inquirer has run out of incense; the haruspex has no sheep left. The scholars who deliberate on tablets concerning my case do not tell me the time limit of my sickness. The heads of my family tell me to humble myself, the immediate circle of my kin tries to inspire me with confidence. My brothers bathe in their [bl]ood like prophets, my wives anoint my prepared (body) with choice oil.

---

\( ^a \) Despite the reservations of Nougayrol 1968a: 270, the word *dayyånu* most probably refers to the god Šamaš, whose signs are interpreted by the the haruspices. The word *inamnan* is interpreted as G prs. of *nadånu* “to give” (= *inaddin*) with a Middle Babylonian nazalization of the geminate (see Aro 1955: 35–37) and an Assyrian vocalization.


\( ^c \) Cf. *Ludlul bêt nêmeqi* ii 6–7 (Lambert 1960: 38): “The haruspex (bârî) with his inspection has not got to the root of the matter, the inquirer (sâ’îlu) with his incense (maṣṣakku) has not elucidated my case.”

\( ^d \) Written *ša-[ṣ]-ub-ba-(ša)-a-a*, where the last ša is probably erroneously added (cf. *AHw* 1191); Nougayrol 1968a: 270 suggests a contamination from *šârshubâ* (*mal*) baštā “(as many) tablets as there are”, but the ending -a-a is better explained as a suffix sg. 1.
6 Written a-da-mur-ši-ia; cf. *Ludlul bêl nêmeqi* ii 111 (Lambert 1960: 44): “The haruspex has not put a time limit on my illness.”

7 Written a-na-at-ku-li-im-ma.

8 Written ra-ḥa-ya-ni; interpreted as G pl. 3. fem. vent. with suff. 1. sg. of raḫû.

9 The two last lines probably describe mourning rites, as if the sufferer would already be dead; cf. *Ludlul bêl nêmeqi* ii 114–15 (Lambert 1960: 46): “My grave was waiting, and my funerary paraphernalia ready, Before I had died lamentation for me was finished.” For šammu gîšu (= ḫalṣu), see Nougayrol 1968a: 271.

123. Middle Assyrian Food Rations List from Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta

Text: VS 19 1 (= VAT 17999).


Lines i 37′–39′

———

10 emâr 4 sût 5 qa Aššûr-apla-iddina ina UD.2.Kâm

38 ana kurumat maḫḫuʾē maḫḫu-ʾâte u assinnē 39 sa bêt ḫtar ūppuṭušu lâ šabatat

———

Ten homers four seah five liters of barleya for Aššûr-apla-iddina on the second day,  for the food rations of the prophets, prophetesses and the assinnûsb of the Istar temple.

His tablet has not been deposited.

a The preceding paragraphs make it plain that the food to be delivered is barley.

b Freydank 1974: 60 has Lu₃.x.meš; however, the copy in Freydank 1976: pl. 1 shows a clear Lu₃ salonmeš.
124. Neo-Assyrian Lexical List
(Lú = ša, Tablet I, short recension I)

Text: MSL 12 4.212 (= 5 R 40 3 = K 4142 etc.; see Civil et al. 1969: 92).
Discussion: Nissinen 2000b: 93.

Lines 193–217

193 gašan = bēl[tu] lady
194 nin-dingir-ra = enl[tu] high priestess
195 nin-dingir-ra = ugbabtu priestess
196 nu-gig = qadištu tabooed woman
197 nu-bar = kulmaštu temple woman
198 gudu₇-abzu = kurgarrû man-woman
199 gudu₇-sig-bar-ra = šu²₈uru hairy one
200 gudu₇-tur-ra = lumakku purification priest
d
201 nu-“êš = nēšakkû cult functionary
c
202 susbu₉ = rumkû cult functionary
c
203 sānga-mah = šangammâḫu high priest/exorcist
204 mašš-maš = mašmašû exorcist
205 nar-balag = ašîpu exorcist
206 ka-pirig = MIN (the same)
207 muš-du₇-lu₉-abDU = muššalâḫû snake-charmer
d
208 lu₇-gâm-šu-du₇-la-bar = muššipû exorcist
c
209 gala-mah = kalû chanter
210 i-lu-di = kalamâḫu chief chanter
211 i-lu-a-li = munambû lamentation singer
212 ur-sal = lallaru wailer
213 lû₇-gub-ba = maḫḫû prophet
214 lû₇-nî-za-ub = zabbu frenzied one
c
215 kur-gar-ra = kurgarrû man-woman
d
216 ur-sal = assû man-woman
c
217 lû₇-dâala-šu-du₇, = nāš pilaqqî carrier of spindle

d The qadištu and the kulmaštu are female temple employees whose sacerdotal and sexual roles are disputed; they are involved, e.g., in childbirth, nursing and sorcery (see Leick 1994: 148–53, 229, 257–58). In the Epic of Gilgameš, ugbabtum, qadištum, and kulmaštum appear in sequence as “votaries of Gilgameš” (Gilg. iii 120–124).

c See note a.

c The role of the kurgarrû is analogous to that of the assû, who at Mari sometimes appears as prophet. Both groups have a permanent “third gender” role given by Istar, whose devotees they are; see Leick 1994: 157–69; Nissinen 1998c: 28–36.
The *lumakk[u/lumabh[u*, sometimes confused with *maḥḥu* (see Wohl 1970/71), is a priest of a high rank. Cf. no. 119 note c.

For this class of cult functionaries, see Reher 1969: 138–43.

The designation *nāš pilaḡt* is equal to *assinnu* and *kurgarrā*.

125. Neo-Assyrian Lexical List
(Lū = ša, Tablet IV)

**Text:** *MSL* 12 4.222 (= VAT 9558).

**Transliteration:** Meissner 1940: 40; Civil et al. 1969: 132.

**Lines 116–123**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>lú-ní-su-ub</td>
<td>maḥḥu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>lú-gub-ba</td>
<td>MIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>lú-al-ē-dē</td>
<td>MIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>mi-al-ē-dē</td>
<td>maḥḥūtu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>lú-ní-zu-ub</td>
<td>zabba[lu]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>mi-ní-zu-ub</td>
<td>zabba[lu]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>lú-al-ē-dē</td>
<td>ūl[il]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>lú-zag-gír-lá</td>
<td>ša kak-kl[a našil]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Cf. line 118. Restoration by Simo Parpola.
b Restoration by Simo Parpola. This word denotes a servant of IŞtar who is equipped with a sword and takes part in self-castration scenes (Parpola 1997: civ n. 232).

126. Neo-Assyrian Lexical List
(ḪAR-gud B)

**Text:** *MSL* 12 6.2. (= 2 R 51 2 = K 4344 etc.; see Civil et al. 1969: 225).

**Transliteration:** Civil et al. 1969: 225-26.


**Lines 129-149**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>lú-eme-[tuku]</td>
<td>ša šāšāni = […]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>lú-eme-nu-[tuku]</td>
<td>lāl šāšāni = ści[ […]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
131 [lú]-umu ≠ [dunna]-mû = sa[klu] one of lowly origin
132 [lú]-zilulu = (blank) ≠ sa[ši]-[uru] one who prowls around
133 [lú]-ur-sal ≠ [aššin]-nu ≠ sinnišâ[nu] man-woman
134 [lú]-šabra ≠ šabrû ≠ ra[gimu] dreamer-prophet²
135 [lú]-gub-ša ≠ al[pli]-lû = ašsa[... ] prophet⁶
136 [lú]-ú-bîl-la = upîlû ≠ kuttimmu craftsman³
137 [lú]-tîbîrâ ≠ gurgurru ≠ kapšarru metalworker/engraver⁴
138 [lú]-tûg-tag-ga ≠ ma[hî]-šu ≠ ša[sîkî] ≠ išpâru weaver
139 [lú]-pan-tag-ga = (blank) ≠ ma[hî]-šu weaver⁶
140 [lú]-kuš-tag-ga ≠ ṣpî [pi]-sî = paqqâyu maker of reed mats
141 [lú]-ni-nîi-tag-ga = ṣpî [tus]-sî = ṣûppû weaver⁷
142 [lú]-bâra-tag-ga ≠ ṣpî [ba]-[šâ]-[mu] = šabsû male midwife⁸
143 [lú]-nu-bânta-da = la-puttû ≠ ba-[za]-[mu] official
144 [lú]-šar-rab-šu-ú ≠ (blank) ≠ šur-ũtu young man¹
145 [lú]-ki-țu-ú ≠ ta[sî]-šu ≠ ūnag-batu chariot soldier¹
146 [lú]-ti-ru ≠ ţru ≠ manza[ţ]-pâni courtier
147 [lú]-an-še-bu-tu ≠ ešesbû ≠ ma[hî] prophet¹
148 [lú]-gi-dîm-ma ≠ ša [e]-[ţî]-[mu] ≠ ma[nz]-[ţ]-[mu] necromancer
149 [lú]-sa-gu-bulug-ga ≠ mušêlu [e]-[ţî]-[mu] ≠ ši [... ] necromancer

¹ For the difference between šabrû and ra[gimu], see Parpola 1997: xlvi–xlvii; Nissinen 1998b: 56.
² Note that apîlû is equated with [lú]-gub-ša, the usual ideogram for ma[hî]-šu; see below no. 129 note k.
³ The word upîlû means charcoal-burner, while kuttimmu is a designation of gold- or silversmith.
⁴ Both gurgurru and kapšarru are designations of craftsmen, the latter possibly working with stones.
⁵ Hence on the basis of the preceding line; other translations of ma[hî]-šu include “hunter,” military scout,” etc.; cf. CAD M/I 102–3.
⁶ The word ṣûppû is here in a meaning different from that in the Šumma âlu omen where it means “cult dancer, acrobat.”
⁷ Thus CAD S/I 16.
⁸ Thus AFu 1109–10 (< šê[bru] “young”).
¹ The word ta[sî]-šu is widely used for the third man in a chariot, whereas ūnag-batu relates to a special status in the Hurrian societies of the second millennium B.C.E., which involves the possession of a chariot; this appears to be more or less like the status of mariyannu in the same cultural milieu (Peter Machinist, private communication). Cf. von Weiher 1973.
¹ The word ešesbû designates ecstatic cult functionaries who appear together with, e.g., exorcists; cf. next line.
127. Birth Omens

(*Šumma izbu xi*)

**Text:** K 3998, K 4048, BE 36389 (see Leichty 1970: 130).

**Copy:** Wallis Budge 1910: pl. 37–38 (K 3998); 36 (K 4048); BE 36389 unpublished.

**Transliteration and translation:** Leichty 1970: 131.

**Lines 7–8**

7. *šumma izbu uzun imittīšu ḫazmat-ma šāra nāḥat māta māḥbiatum išabbatū*

8. *šumma izbu uzun šumēlīšu ḫazmatma šāra nāḥat māt nakri gabrū*

7. If an anomaly’s right ear is cropped and inflated with wind: prophetesses will seize the land.

8. If an anomaly’s left ear is cropped and inflated with wind: the same happens to the land of the enemy.

128. Commentary on the Birth Omens in Number 127

**Text:** K 1913.

**Copy:** Meek 1920: 120.


**Lines 365d–e**

365d. *māta māḥbiatum išabbatū* = *māḥbu* will seize the land = *māḥbu* will seize the land.

365e. *māta šēbu išabbat* = possessed people will seize the land.

129. City Omens

(*Šumma ālu i*)

**Text:** K 6097; K 1367; BM 35582; BM 55550; BM 121041; Sm 797 (see Freedman 1998: 25, 51–54).

**Copy:** Gadd 1925: pl. 3–5.


Lines 85–117

If there are many limping men in a city, [...]
   If there are many limping women in a city, there is well-being in the city.
   If there are many crazy men in a city, the city is well.
   If there are many crazy women in a city, there is [well-being] in the city.
   If there are many weak men\(^a\) in a city, there is hostility against the kings.

If there are many wise men\(^b\) in a city, the city will fall.
   If there are many pockmarked persons\(^c\) in a city, [the city] will be destroyed.
   If there are many red-skinned persons in a city, there is well-being in the city.
   If there are many psoriatics\(^d\) in a city, [the city] will be destroyed.
   If there are many deaf persons in a city, [the city] will be destroyed.

If there are many blind persons in a city, the city will fall.
   If there are many men-women in a city, [the city] will be destroyed.
   If there are many bleeding persons\(^e\) in a city, the city will fall.
   If there are many cripples in a city, [the city] will fall.
   If there are many disabled men\(^f\) in a city, [the city] will be destroyed.
a Freedman 1998: 33: “soft men” (cf. AHw 934). The word rabü is derived from rabābu “to become weak.”
b Or, “men with warts” (Freedman 1998: 33); cf. AHw 126; CAD ‹III 240–41.
c According to CAD B 246, the birdu has the same meaning as šullānu (line 91; cf. note b).
d Literally, “opener” (thus Freedman 1998: 33) or “opened” (< petû), interpreted here as persons with open wounds. AHw 861 suggests “wrestler” (“Klammer-Öffner”).
e For this reading and translation of AD4, see Leichty 1970: 176 n. 33.
Rather than to sportsmen, this may refer to people with a distinctive walk.

Thus CAD I/J 226; Freedman 1998: 33 translates “unrighteous men.”

Thus CAD E 238; Freedman 1998: 33 translates “mourners.”

An inexplicable word, probably meaning a class of temple servants; Freedman 1998: 35 translates “consecrated men.”

Thus CAD M/II 304 (< utₐlu); Freedman 1998: 35: “habitual liers-down, lazy-bones”; this could connote sexual behavior. Another alternative would be muttelu (< nₐ’elₐtu), referring, e.g., to people with compulsive movements; cf. A²H² 690.

This word, phonetically close to the preceding upillu, cannot be translated with certainty. A²H² 57 connects it with assinnu and kurgarru, and one is tempted to ask whether A.P. could stand for the prophetic designation āpilu; in a Neo-Assyrian lexical list (no. 126) apillu is equated with lú-gub₃, which usually stands for māḫḫu.

Thus CAD Z 7.

130. Neo-Babylonian List of Temple Offerings

Text: OECT 1 20-21 (= W-B 10).
Copy: Langdon 1923: pl. 20–21.
Discussion: Holma 1944: 223–33.

Lines r. 35–46

35[ša] qāti 3 bît ḫinêti 3 urṣē kurummat šarrī

36[...] aḫu rabû 37[...] ša qāṭi ūṭpšar Eannā

38[...] libbē māḫḫu 39[...] imittu qaqqadāti libbu kurgarrū

40[...] ginê kalêti ṭābiḫu

41[...] ša qāṭi sāḫirtu 3 parrāti 3 urṣēti ša šatāmi

42[...] aḫu rabû 43[...] libbē māḫḫu

44[...] širē qaqqadāti aḫē libbu kurgarrū

45[...] ginê kalêti ṭābiḫu

[For] disbursement: three butter containers and three young goats, the ration of the king.

[...] of the high priest. [...] portion of the scribe of Eanna.

[...] hearts (for) the prophet.

[...] right shoulder, heads, flanks, heart (for) the man-woman.

[...] of regular offerings, kidneys (for) the butcher.

[...] For disbursement: a heifer, three ewes and three she-goats, of the temple administrator.

[...] the high priest. [...] hearts (for) the prophet. [...] cuts of meat, heads, flanks, heart (for) the man-woman.

[...] of regular offerings, kidneys (for) the butcher.
Text: YOS 6 18.
Copy: Dougherty 1920: pl. VI.

[The house] of Šamaš-šuma-ukin, son of Nabû-zēra-ukin, descendant of Prophet, adjacent to the big house of Marduk-iṭir, adjacent to the house of Šulâ, son of Nergal-ušallim, son of a meter inspector, the house that Gimillu, son of Aplaya, son of Šumāti, bought from Šamaš-šuma-ukin, son of Nabû-zēra-ukin, descendant of Prophet, in the sixteenth year of Nebuchadnezar, king of Babylonia, for which Iltar-aΔa-iddina, son of Remut-Bel, descendant of Prophet, made a claim against Gimillu: Iltar-aΔa-iddina, son of Remut-Bel, descendant of Prophet, covered himself with a KUR.RA garment, and stands as a witness in the matter of the tablet of Gimillu, son of Aplaya, son of Šumati, to be witnessed.

Witnesses: Nabû-tabni-uṣur, son of Bel-ipuš, descendant of Sin-tabni; Šamaš-eriba, son of Nergal-iddina, descendant of Sin-tabni; Nabû-bēl-šumati, son of Zēru-Babili, descendant of Sin-tabni; Ilni-Iltar, son of Nergal-ipuš, descendant of Kurî; Iltar-ina-tēšē-iṭir, son of Aplaya, descendant of Kurî;
132. Neo-Babylonian Decree of Delivery of Dates

**Text**: YOS 7 135.
**Copy**: Tremayne 1925: pl. LIII.
**Discussion**: Cocquerillat 1968: 118.

[60] kur sluṭṭi imitti egli ²ša nār Aššuru ša Bulūṭa §makkūr Uḫur (ša) Uruk u Nānāya ³ša sītī ša Ardiya mâršu ša Nabû-bāni-âḫi ⁴mār Rēmût-Èa ina muḫḫi Bēlsunu mâršu ⁵ša Nûru mâr Šamaš-bāni-apli mâršu ša Damiq-Bēl mâr muḫḫē ⁶u Ûlu-dannu-âḫḫē-su-ibni mâršu ša Nabû-lešī
d

îna Du²ṭūzi ina ḫaṣṣāri ⁷îna maššu ša Bēlet Uruk ⁸îna muḫḫu ilēt ritti itti (1 kur) ¹⁰bitti tuḫḫu lišlibbi ¹¹mangāga sûtu 4.5 qū kišir esitti ¹²u balāṭî ana Bēl inamdinā

Sixty⁶ homers of dates, tax of the field of the Aššuritu canal⁷ of Bullūtu, property of Ištar of Uruk and Nānāya, which constitute the rent due to Ardiya, son of Nabû-bāni-âḫi, descendant of Remut-Èa, owed by Bēlsunu, son of Nûru, son of Šamaš-bāni-apli, son of Damiq-Bēl, descendant of Prophet, and Ûlu-dannu-âḫḫē-su-ibni, son of Nabû-lešī.

They will give it in the month of Tammuz (IV), in the place of delivery, applying the measure of the Lady of Uruk, in a single delivery, giving together with each kor⁶ (of dates) a talent (of spadices from date-palms), a basket, date-palm
"Fear not! [...] what Bel has said [...] Bel [has heard] your prayer [...] He has enlarged your rule
[...]. He will exalt your kingship [...]. On the day of the esšēšu festival, do [...]! Upon the opening
ālšu [...] 443ša Esaggil bīṣ[u ...]
444ša mārē Bābili sāb kidinšīnu [...] 445Bel ikarrabku [...] anla ēdi[š]
446uβallag nakarku ušamqat zā-
mānku

47enūma ighū šarru kabāt appi
ginūšu [lppus] 48baṭṭa kippata miṭṭa
agā ušēṣima ana šarri [inamda] 49lēt šarri imabhaṣ enūma læsu
[immaša] 50summa dimaṭsušu illik
Bēl sal[i] 51summa dimaṭsušu là
illakā Bēl ezz[il] 52nakru ṭeb-
bumma īsakkan miqissu

of the gate, purify [your] hands
 [...]! May [...] day and night!
42You, whose city Babylon is,
 [...] , whose temple Esaggil is,
 [...] , whose [...] the people of
Babylon, the privileged citizens,
are: 45Bel will bless you [...] for
ever! He will destroy your enemy,
he will annihilate your adversary!"
47When he b has spoken (this),
the king plerforms] his regular
offering in a dignified manner.c He
brings out the scepter, the ring, the
divine weapon and the crown and
gives] them to the king. 49He slaps
the face of the king. If, when he
[slaps] his face, his tears flow, Bel
is favor[able]; if his tears do not
flow, Bel is angr[y], and an enemy
will rise and cause his downfall.

134. Late Babylonian Chronographic Text (Tishri, 133 B.C.E., Version B)

Text: AD 3 -132 B (= BM 35070 + BM 45699).
Transliteration and translation: Sachs and Hunger 1996: 216–19; del

Lines B r. 25–u. e. 5

arḫu šuatu īṭēn mār Mallāḥi
ittaš[latamm][a 20tēnzu _tCṣina īṭēn
parakkū birūt bit Šin bit Egiš[nugal] u
abulli [...] 27nadā

In that month, a man belonging
to the Boatman familyb became
seized and went into a frenzy. 20
[...] A dais that lies between the
He placed a food offering upon it and delivered a good message to the people: “Bel has entered Babylon!” The [people], men and women alike, came and placed food offerings on that dais and, opposite to that dais, ate and drank, rejoiced and made merry. Two luxuriant crowns ... for that dais.

On the eleventh day, two high-ranking persons were brought ... and ... from the people of the land to [...] Boatman] delivered a message to these people: “Nanaya has entered Borsippa and Ezida!” Instantly, that Boatman and the people with him went to Borsippa. The citizens of Borsippa rejoiced and exulted in their presence and opened the doors of the city gate in front of them. Boatman and the people [...] They answered: “The god ... these crowns ... [ ... Nanaya [...]”

10 e [...] [...] x x x x ina narkabti iskunnu mār Mallāḫi šutātī x x x x x [...] x x x ina Bābili Bārsiḫ u x meš [...] [...] x [...] inanmāmmir u rēgiššu ina suqatī u beretī ismātī [...] x x x [...] x

i e [...] umma mār šipṭī ša Nanāya anāmakku ana múḫḫī īlu dammu māḫšu šikunnu šapāku kimššu bīši šutātī ana mār [Mallāḫi [...] 2iṣuštu iṣsā ša arkalikunu tārā ša ašānikunu ālu ša aḫabti šilat la tanamašī ša kīma ālu šilat ša tuṣṣāšī [...].

temple of Sin, Egišnugal, and the gate [of Marduk].

...
a The man in question is called mår MallåΔi, indicating that he belongs to a family of “descendants of Boatman;” cf. the descendants of Prophet in nos. 131-132. This by no means indicates that he himself is a boatman, since the ancestral names are often derived from an occupation (cf. Frame 1992: 34).

b Literally, “changed his consciousness.”

c The traces of the destroyed signs in Pinches’ copy exclude the reading dAMAR.UD (Marduk), but may indicate another name of the Marduk gate; see del Monte 1997: 125 n. 224 and cf. no. 135, line 26.

d Derived from hamû, as equivalent to hadû “to rejoice.”

Reading UN.ME.

Reading UN.ME.

e Possible reading: ḫi-ba-ṣi-ä-tu.

f Reading UN.ME.

g Cf. the note concerning the preceding month (VI) in the same text (line 29): “In that month, (this message) was in the mouth of people big and small: ‘Nanaya has entered Borsippa and Ezida!’”

h Cf. note d.

i Adopting the uncertain reading GIŠ.MEŠ KÂ.GAL; cf. del Monte1997: 124 n. 223.

j Possible reading: ri-gîm-šu.

k Reading [um-ma lU.DUMU] șīp-[rī šà na-na-a-a a-[nû-ku]; cf. line l.e. 3.

The epithet māḫišu “hitting” may refer to the arrow-shooting god common in Mesopotamian iconography and appearing, e.g., in the winged disc. The verb mabâšu means, among other things, “to strike,” i.e., with an arrow.

m The text has a plural “your gods;” i.e., “the totality of your gods”; cf. Hebrew ʾêlōhêkem.

n Or, “hothead.” The word šâhibannu is derived from šāhâbu “to glow.”
135. Late Babylonian Chronographic Text (Tishri, 133 B.C.E., Version C)

Text: AD 3 - 132 C (=BM 47748 + BM 47885).
Photograph: Sachs and Hunger 1996: pl. 221.

Lines 26–33

In that month, a man belonging to the Boatman family […] the daises between the gate of Marduk and […] women assembled in it and ate bread there.

On the eleventh day, […] high-ranking […]s from Babylon and from other cities and […] from Borsippa. That Boatman with the high-ranking people …

In Babylon and Borsippa […] they killed in their midst and […] in Babylon and Borsippa […] the message that [was to be sent] to […] [rest destroyed]
In comparison to the cuneiform sources, there are few West Semitic texts that contain prophecies or reference to prophets and their activities, and none of them is complete. Arguably the most important of these is the plaster inscription uncovered at Tell Deir ʿAllā in the eastern Jordan Valley. Despite its fragmentary nature, it is clear that the inscription (no. 138) describes the visionary experience of the “seer” (ḥōzēḥ, corresponding to Heb. ḫōzēḥ), Balaam son of Beor, who is also known in the Bible (Num 22–24). Like the biblical prophets, the seer is given access to deliberations in the divine council, where a decision is made to bring about an eschatological catastrophe, and one of their members is dispatched to carry out the plan. Also fragmentary is an Ammonite inscription (no. 136) that records a prophetic oracle delivered to the king in the name of Milcom, the patron god of the Ammonites. The oracle bears some semblance to the genre of “salvation oracles” known from the Bible and elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Elements of such “salvation oracles” are also evident in the Aramaic Stela of Zakkur, king of Hamath—oracles that were delivered by prophetic figures known as ḫyzn (the Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew ḫōzîm “seers”) and ṣddn “visionaries.” Two Hebrew letters from Lachish (nos. 139, 141) mention prophets and their activities, thus providing a glimpse into their influence in the Judahite sociopolitical arena on the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C.E. A third letter from the same group (no. 140) is included in this corpus because it is often thought to contain a reference to “the prophet” and, more importantly, because it gives some indication of the kinds of impact that prophetic utterances might have had in Judah. Apart from these six texts, there are no other West Semitic inscriptions that indisputably concern prophets and their activities.
This inscription, discovered in the Iron Age level of Jebel ed-Dala‘ah (ancient Rabbath-Ammon, the capital of the Ammonite kingdom), is dated on paleographic grounds to the ninth century B.C.E. It is fragmentary, being broken off at least on its left and right sides (and possibly also the bottom), so that it is unclear just how much of the original inscription has been lost. Nevertheless, it is evident from the extant portion that the inscription contains an oracle delivered in the name of Milcom, the patron deity of the Ammonites, presumably to the king who erected the commemorative monument of which the inscription is a part. The fragmentary text apparently records a word of divine assurance, no doubt delivered by a human intermediary, for the king’s victory over his enemies. Elements of the text are reminiscent of the ‘salvation oracles’ found in other ancient Near Eastern prophetic texts.


1. mlkm.bnh.lk.mb’t sbb[l
2. ]gkl.msb .’lc’ .nt ymn[n
3. ]kh’d .’kh’d[ .]wk .m’re[ .]blb
4. ]wkl .sd[r ylnn sdqfm
5. dlV .tdk > bdl .hyn kbb .tkbb
6. ]h .tsf .bbn .’lm [n
7. ]wslub .wn
8. s[im .lk .us[
1. Milcom: “Build entrances round about [ 
2. for all who besiege you shall surely die [ 
3. I will utterly annihilate, and anyone who agitates against [ 
4. but among all the columns, the legitimate ones will lodge [ 
5. you shall indeed hang on the innermost door. You shall indeed [extinguish 
6. you shall be feared among the gods.” [ 
7. and security and ...[ 
8. peace to you and ...[ 

a What immediately precedes le is a matter of debate. There is a circle, which some take to be merely a chip in the stone. Fulco, who worked directly with the fragment, judges that it is “definitely” an ‘ayin (1978: 41), and I accept that view. The ‘ayin is here admittedly smaller than other ‘ayins in the inscription, yet there is no consistency in the sizes of letters in this inscription. In any case, ‘l is often used to indicate the object of the verb ssh (see Job 16:13; Judg 20:5; 2 Chr 18:31). 

b This reading essentially follows Cross (1969: 17). Horn in the editio princeps (1969: 10–11), however, reads m’rb, prompting Shea (1979: 24) to imagine troublesome Israelites coming “from the west.”

c One may presume that the deity’s name is cited in some formula introducing the oracle: “thus says Milcom,” “oracle of Milcom,” “word of Milcom,” or the like. 

d The sequence of letters—Ldtt bdtt—is universally seen to be erroneous in some way. I assume that the final letter in ldtt is extraneous and propose that the word in question here is a verb from the root dll (to dangle). 

e If the second-person subject is Milcom, the expression bbn ’lm must mean “among the gods.” If, however, the subject is the king, then one might interpret the bbn ’lm to refer to military rulers (compare Exod 15:5). 

137. Zakkur Stela 

This Aramaic inscription appears on three sides of the base of a stela that was found at Tell Afis (ancient Apish), some twenty-five miles southwest of Aleppo. A depiction of a god, presumably Iluwer (the patron deity of Apish), was originally set atop the base, but most of it has not survived. The inscription begins on the front face (A) and continues on the left side (B), which is, however, broken off so that about thirty lines of the inscription are missing. The right face (C) preserves only two lines, again with about thirty lines missing.

The monument was apparently commissioned by Zakkur, a usurper of the throne of the cities of Hamath and Luash in Syria. Ostensibly erected in honor of Iluwer, the stela celebrates Zakkur’s victory over a coalition of Aramean and Anatolian states led by Bir-Hadad III of Damascus in the early eighth century B.C.E. Apart from its value for the reconstruction of the
history of that region, this inscription provides a glimpse into the role of prophecy in ancient Syria. Threatened by hostile forces, Zakkur prayed to Baalshamayn (“the Lord of Heaven”), the patron deity of Hamath, and he claimed to have received a divine response through ḫzyn “seers” (A.12, biblical ƀōzîm) and divine intermediaries known as ‘ddn “visionaries” (A.12). The prophetic word includes elements reminiscent of the “salvation oracles” attested elsewhere in the ancient Near East.


A. Front

1. [nšb'. zy. šm. zkr. mlk.] h[m]l. wíš. l'lw[t. 'lb]
2. [l']nub. zkr. mlk[.] h[m]l. wíš. 's. 'nb. 'nb. w[bus']
3. [nl'. b'smany. wqm[.]'my. wbanl. b'lšm[yn. 'l]
4. [nl']zrk. wbnhd. 'ly. brbd. br. hz[l. mlk. 'rm. 's
5. [b'l'. 'sr. mlk[.] brbd. wnhntb. wbrgš. wnhntb. w[n]
6. [lk. ] qub. wnhntb. wnlk. 'mq. wnhntb. wnlk. gg[lm]
7. [wnh/lntb[.] wnlk. šm'l. wnlk[nltb. wnlk. mlz.] wnlk[nltb. wnlk]
8. [ . wnhltb. wnlk . wmlh[nltb ] usb'[t. 'sr ]
9. [bl']mw. wnhntb. bm. usmw. kl[.] mlky[.] 'l. mšr. 'l. hz[kl.]
11. [wš'. yly. 'l[.] b'lsmany. wy'ny[.] b'lsmany. wy[n]
12. [ll']. b'lšmyn[.] 'ly. blyd. hzn. wbrd. 'ddn[,] wy[m]
13. [r.] b'lšmyn. 'l[.] l'hll. ky. 'nb. bm[ltk. w'nb . ']
14. [qlm. 'nl[.] w'nb[.] yšlk. mn[.] kl. [mlky. 'l. zy.]
15. mš[w. 'lyk. mšr[.] wy'mr. [ly. b'lsmany.
16. [kl[.] mlky'. 'l. zy. mš[w[. 'lyk. mšr. ]
17. [ . usw'. zn[. zly. ]

B. Left

[Approximately thirty lines missing at the top.]

1. [ ] hzrk[.] ql
2. [lrb]. [wlpš].
3. lmlk. bgwb. ʾn
4. [b]. bnyt. hzk. wbusp
5. [t]. lb]. ʾyt. kl mlgt. [.]
6. [. ]? . us{mt[b].] mlklt]
7. [y]. [tb]. [.
8. [. hsn]. ′[.] bkl. gbl]
9. [y]. wbn]. ′yt. ′lbn. bkl]
10. [gbl]. ywbn]. ′yt. [.]
11. [. ]ryt]. ′pš. [.
12. [. ly]. byt]. [.]
13. [wktm]. qdl. [.]
14. (wr.) nṣb]{.} zn. wkt[bl]
15. [t]. b[bl]. ′yt{.} ′sr. ydy[.] wkl
16. [. ] mn. yḥg{.} ′yt{.} ′[sr.]
17. [ydy{.} zkr. mlk. hmlt. wkl]
18. ′s{.} mn. nṣb{.} zn. um[n].]
19. [yḥg{.} nṣb{.} zn. mn. [g]
20. [dl]. wwr. wyhnmnb. m
21. [n]. ′srbl. ′w. mn[.]. yšlk. b
22. [. ]bh[.]
23. [. b{.} lwn. wWL]
24. (wr.) w{.} wṣm{[wṣbr].}
25. [. w[bl]. ywn{.} šm[n].]
26. [w]lby{.} ′rq{.} wbl{.} ′[.
27. [. ]y{.} w[.] ′yt{.} [.]
28. [. ]š{.} šb .

C. Right

[Approximately thirty lines missing at the top.]

1. [.]
2. [. šm{[z][kr.]} uṣm{.} brb]

A. Front

1. The [st]ela that Zakkur, king of [Ha]m[th] and Luash, set up for Iluwer,
   [his god.]
2. [I] am Zakkur, king of Ha[mat]h and Luash. I am a humble man, but
3. Baalshamayn [gave] me [victory] and stood with me. Baalsham[ayn]
   made me king [over]
4. [Ha]zrak. b Then Bir-Hadad the son of Haza[el], the king of Aram, formed
   an alliance against me of
5. seventeen kings: Bir-Hadad and his army, Bir-Gush and his army,
6. [the king] of Kue and his army, the king of Umq and his army, the king
   of Gurgum
7. and his [army, the king of Sam’al and his army, the king of Miliz [and
   his army, the king of]
8. [. . . and his army, the king of . . . and his army—that is, seve[nteen]
9. of them with their armies. All these kings set up a siege against
   Hazr[ak].
10. They raised a wall higher than the wall of Hazr[ak]. They dug a moat
deeper than [its] moa[t].
11. But I lifted my hands to Baalshamayn, and Baalshamay[nn] answered
   me, [and]
12. Baalshamayn [spoke] to me [thr]ough seers and through visionaries,
   [and]
13. Baalshamayn [said], “F[e]ar not, for I have made [you] king, [and I who
   will
14. stand with [you], and I will deliver you from all [these kings who]
15. have forced a siege against you!” Then Baalshamayn said to me . . . “ .
16. [all these kings who have forced [a siege against you . . . ]
17. [. . .] and this wall which . . .

B. Left

[Approximately thirty lines missing.]
1. [ ] Hazrak . . . [ ]
2. [ ] for the chariotry [and] the cavalry
3. [ ] its king in its midst. I
4. [built] Hazrak, and [Il] added
5. [to it] the entire region of
6. [ ] and [Il] es[tablis]hed [my] reign
7. [. . . ] . . . [ ]
8. these strongholds throughout [my] territ[ory].
9. [Then I reb]uilt the temples of the gods in a[ll]
10. my [territory], and I rebuilt [ ]
11. Apish and [ ]
12. [. . . ] . . . the temple of [ ]
13. [And] I set up before Iluwer]
14. this stela, and [Il] ins[cribed]
15. [on] it the accomplishment of my hands. [Anyone at all]
16. who removes the accomplishment of
17. the hands of] Zakkur, king of Hamat h and Lu[ash,
18. from this stela, and whoe[v]er]
19. [re]moves this stela from
20. [before Iluwer and takes it away from]
21. its place, or whosoever sends ...
22. [ ] ... [ ]
23. [Baalshamayn and Iluwer ... ]
24. and Shamash and Shaahr
25. [ ] and the gods of heaven
26. [and the gods of the earth and Baal ... ]
27. [ ] the man and [ ]
28. [ ] ...

C. Right

[Approximately thirty lines missing at the top.]
1. [ ]
2. [ ] the name of Zakkur and the name of [his son ... ]

a The first of these terms corresponds with Biblical Hebrew ḫōzēb (pl. ḫōzîm), a term used of prophets as seers of visions (2 Kgs 17:13; Isa 28:15; Amos 7:12; etc.). The latter term is attested in Ugaritic (“herald”) but not in Hebrew, although it may be related to the noun ād “witness.” See Lemaire 2001: 95.

b Biblical “Hadrach” (Zech 9:1); Assyrian “Hatarika.”

138. Deir ‘Allā Plaster Texts

Found at Tell Deir ‘Allā, near the River Zerqa (biblical Jabbok) in the eastern Jordan Valley, these texts were apparently once displayed in a room of a building that is commonly believed to have been a sanctuary. Written in black and red ink on white plaster, fragments of the texts were found on the floor of that room when the building was destroyed by a violent earthquake—one of the many that plagued the region. As a result of that disaster, part of the plaster was burnt and the entire inscription fell to the ground, shattered in pieces, much of which was irretrievably lost. The fragments that remain were found in several groupings. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, who were responsible for the editio princeps published in 1976, treated the two largest groupings (which they called “combinations”) in considerable detail, but others have subsequently realigned the texts and succeeded in placing several other fragments, the most recent being the attempt of E. Lipiński in 1994. The texts have been dated to the eighth century B.C.E. on archaeological and paleographic grounds, as well as on the basis of radiocarbon testing. The inscription is clearly written in a Northwest Semitic language, but more precise classification of that language has
eluded scholars. All in all, it appears to be a local Transjordanian dialect, with some features akin to Aramaic but other features closer to Hebrew and other “Canaanite” dialects.

Combination I clearly concerns the vision of Balaam son of Beor, “a seer of the gods,” who is also known in the biblical tradition recorded in Num 22–24. Like the prophets of ancient Israel, Balaam in this account is privy to the deliberations of the divine council. The assembled deities—known in the account alternatively as “gods” and “Shaddayin” (a term related to the biblical divine epithet “Shaddai”)—have ordained a catastrophe, and they charge a certain celestial being to execute the destruction on their behalf. Unfortunately, only the first letter of her name has been preserved (line 6), so her identity can only be a matter of conjecture. Like the deceiving spirit sent forth from the divine council witnessed by the prophet Micaiah the son on Imlah (1 Kgs 22:5-18) and like the adversary in the divine council who was permitted by God to set forth to harm Job (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–8), she plays a destructive role. The impending doom that she is to bring about is in many ways reminiscent of end-of-the-world scenarios that are often found in the Bible, notably in the preaching of the prophets. Creation will apparently be undone as the cosmic floods will be released upon the earth ("the bolts of heaven" will be broken), the dark rain clouds will cover the skies, and there will be pitch darkness and terror on earth. The second half of Combination I is exceedingly difficult, in large part because of the fragmentary nature of the text. Still, the scene described seems consonant with other depictions of divinely ordained catastrophes. The world is turned upside down as creatures of the earth act contrary to their nature. The mention of a number of unsavory creatures also echoes the oracles of doom in biblical prophetic eschatology.

Combination II is even more difficult to interpret. Its relationship to Combination I is by no means clear. Some scholars maintain that Combination II is somehow sequential to Combination I, in particular, that the two combinations may have represented the beginning and the end of the text, whether originally in a single column or in two columns. But others have denied that the two are related to one another in content, arguing that Combination II has nothing at all to do with the vision of Balaam son of Beor. However, there are clues within Combination II itself that suggest it has to do with prophecy, specifically, the mention of a “vision” (line 16). The allusion to the failure of someone (perhaps the king?) to seek counsel and advice (line 9) is also tantalizing, as is the invitation in line 17: “Come, let us judge and give a verdict.”


Combination I

1. yrs[.]spr [bl|m . br b']r \. l . ḫzb . ḫbn[.] b'[.] wy’tw . ḥwb . ḫbn . blylb [ wydbwr . lb]
2. km[s]'. l . wy’mrw . lbl[[]m . br b'r . kb . yp'l[ . ḥr'b . ḥ . br['b [l
3. wṣym . blm mn . mhr . [rpb . yd . [ṣp]]. ymn . w[ṣm . ysm . ḥdrb . wylkl [. ḫṣ]n . wbk
4. b . ybkb . wy[l . ‘mb . ‘ḥwb . wyl'mrw .] lbl'm . br b'r . lm . ṭsm [. w]lm .
6. wnṣbw . ṣdy[n . mu'd . w'mrw .] ḫl[ . tpy . skry . ṣymn . b'ḥky . ṣm .
7. gb . ‘lm . w'l . smrk'y . tḥby . ḫt [. b']b . ḫṣk . w'lt[ .] thgy . ‘d . ‘lm . ky . ss ‘gr . ḫr
8. pt . nṣr . ṭq[ . rhmn . y'nb . h[ . bny . nḥs . Ṽṣrb . Ṯrhy . Ṯpḥb . drr . nṣrt .]
9. ywn. wspr[j yn w(bšr. yybl). mšb. bšr. ršn. yybl. hšr. wšm. hršn. mn rhq
10. [ ] hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn.
11. [ ] hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn.
12. [ ] hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn.
13. [ ] hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn.
14. [ ] hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn. hšn.

Combination II

1. [ ]
2. hšn. kšl
3. nım. nım. nım. nım. nım. nım. nım.
4. lmb. nw. ddn. kšl
5. lš. lm. nq. wmdr. kl. ršl
6. yrw. l. ybr. l. byt. lmn. byl
7. byt. lš. lš. lš. lš. byl
8. nwmb. mn. gdš. mn. phzy. bny. l. wmn. skq
9. lš. lm. lš. lš. lš. lš. lš. lš.
10. n. mnš. lšn. lšn. lšn. lšn. lšn. lšn.
11. nım. lšn. lšn. lšn. lšn. lšn. lšn.
12. bš lkšb. bš lkšb. bš lkšb. bš lkšb.
13. bt. smb. mlkn. yh(b)r. bš lkšb. bš lkšb. bš lkšb. bš lkšb.
14. lš. lm. nq. wmdr. kl. ršl
15. lš. lm. nq. wmdr. kl. ršl
16. lš. lm. nq. wmdr. kl. ršl
17. lš. lm. nq. wmdr. kl. ršl
18. nım. nım. nım. nım. nım. nım. nım. nım.

Combination I

1. The warning of the Book of [Balaam, son of Beor], who was a seer of
the gods. The gods came to him at night [and spoke to] him
2. according to the oracle of El. They said to Balaam, son of Beor,
"Thus will [ ] do hereafter. No one [has seen ] . . .
3. When Balaam arose on the morrow, (his) hand [was slack], (his) right
hand [hung] low. [He fasted continually] in his chamber, he could not [sleep], and he wept continually. Then his people came up to him and [they said] to Balaam, son of Beor: “Why do you fast [and why do you weep]?” He said to them: “Sit down and I shall tell you what the Shaddāyin have done; come, see the acts of the gods! The gods gathered together, the Shaddāyin took their places in the assembly. And they said to the ... ]": “May you break the bolts of heaven, with your rain-cloud bringing about darkness and not light, eerinessb and not your brightness.c May you bring terror [through the] dark [rain-cloud]. May you never again be aglow.d For the ss'gr(-bird) taunts the eagle and the voice of the vultures resounds. ... the young of the nhš(-bird) and one rips the young of cormorants. The swallow mangles the dove and the sparrow [ ] and [instead of ] it is the staff [that is led]; instead of ewes it is the rod that is led. The hares eat [the serf[s] are filled with] beer, the [ ] are drunk with wine. Hyenas heed instruction; the whelps of the fox [ ]. Multitudes go with [ ] laughs at the wise. The songstress mixes myrrh, while the priestess ... to the one who wears a tattered girdle. The one who is esteemed esteems, and the one who esteems is esteemed.e and the deaf hear from afar ... and the eye

Combination II

1. [ ]
2. ... [ ]
3. ... ate [ ]
4. his eternal [domicile], he fills with love like [ ]
5. to him/her, “Why are the sprout and the soil containing the moisture [ ]
6. El will be filled. Let him cross over to the eternal domicile, the house [ ]
7. the house where one who goes will not enter, and the bridegroom will not enter there, the house [ ]
8. and the vermin from the tomb, from the thighs of men and from the legs of [ ]
9. [     ] has he not sought counsel from you, or has he not sought the advice of one who sits [    ]

10. ....you will cover with a single garment. If you hate him, he will be weak, if you [    ]

11. I will put [         ] under your head. You will lie down on your eternal bed to be destroyed [   ]

12. ....[           ] in their heart. The scion sighs to himself, he sighs [   ]

13. ... his name. Our king will join with [    ] he will not bring them back. Death will take the suckling of the womb and the suckling of [  ]

14. [     ] suckling [     ] his mighty name [    ] the heart of the scion is weak, even though he has come to [    ]

15. at the end of the year [        ] and he who approaches[ the plastered wall [    ] the request of the king for his horse, and his request [    ]

16. [      ] a distant vision [      ] your [people]. Your request for ...[      ]

17. to know the account that he spoke to his people orally. Come let us judge and give verdict. Say [    ]

18. I have punished the king [    ]

a Only the first letter of the divine name is preserved. Scholars usually restore the name Shamash (corresponding to the sun-goddess Shapshu in Ugaritic) or Shagar (presumably a short form of Shagar-wa-Ashtar in line 14). Less plausibly, the city name Shomeron (Samaria) has been proposed.

b Assuming a relation to Akkadian etemmu.

c Cf. Arabic samaru (used of the radiance of the moon), but also Akkadian samaru, a term used of ornaments.

d Cf. Arabic wahaja (to glow, glisten).

e I am at a loss here and simply follow McCarter’s conjecture.

f Assuming the G participle form of the root zdtp, attested in Arabic with the meaning “to approach, draw near.”

139. Lachish Ostracon 3

Among the important finds discovered at Tell ed-Duweir (ancient Lachish) are a group of over thirty Hebrew inscriptions, twelve of which are letters written in ink on ostraca (potsherds) from the last days of Judah in the sixth century B.C.E. The fortress was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian army in 586, and these letters represent the desperate military communication around that strategic stronghold before its collapse.

Ostracon 3 originates from a certain Hoshaiah, a junior officer at an unknown outpost, to Yaush, the military commander at Lachish. The former wrote in response to an earlier communication from his superior, who, dissatisfied with Hoshaiah’s failure to comply satisfactorily with an order, apparently suggested that if Hoshaiah could not read, then he should get
a scribe to do so for him. After a fairly typical epistolary introduction, Hoshaiah indignantly protests the implication that he might be illiterate. Then he gets to the substance of his communiqué, namely, the transfer of a detachment under his command and the status of a report about an oracle by “the prophet” (bnh). Through the messengers who had come to effect the transfer, Hoshaiah learns that Coniah son of Elnathan, the commander of the army, had gone down to Egypt. Some scholars have read this mission to Egypt in light of the relations between the kingdom of Judah and Egypt at this time (see Jer 37:7; Ezek 17:15) and have occasionally cited the Aramaic papyrus of Saqqara as a parallel example of a message that might have been relayed to the pharaoh of Egypt by the group referred to in this letter. Moreover, it appears that Tobiah, a high official in the royal palace in Jerusalem, had issued a report of an oracle by the unnamed prophet that began—as many oracles recorded in the Bible do—with the word: “Beware!” The identity of this unnamed prophet has been the subject of a great deal of speculation. Jeremiah, who was active at the time, has often been suggested. However, there were many other prophets active in Jerusalem, some supportive of Jeremiah’s message (e.g., Uriah, Jer 26:20–24) and some in direct opposition to it (e.g., Hananiah, Jer 28:1). In any case, one may deduce that the identity of the prophet must have been known to Yaush, since Hoshaiah uses the definite article: “the prophet.” The allusion to the prophet’s message is frustratingly laconic. One knows nothing about its content beyond its first word. It is not even clear at whom the oracle was directed. Nevertheless, it is evident the message was of grave concern to the military establishment, perhaps because they feared that it might have a demoralizing effect on the citizenry.

Obverse

1. ‘bdk. buš’ybw. šlh. l
2. bg[d] ë[d] ny[y’ws]. yšm‘.
3. yhwb [‘] t *dny. šm‘t. šlm
4. w[s] m[‘] lb. w‘t. hpqḥ
5. n‘. t *zn[. ] ‘bdk. lspr. ‘sr
6. šḥtb[. ] l ‘bdk. ‘mš. ky. lb
7. [‘] bd[k. dwb]. m’z. šlk. ‘l. ‘bd
9. qr‘. spr. hywb. ‘m. nsb .
10. yš lqr‘. ly. spr lnṣḥ . wgm .
12. qr’ty‘. ‘t lb w[h]r ‘tmnbw
13. ‘l. m’um[b]‘. wbd. hgd .
14. ‘mr. yrd šr. bsb‘.
15. knyb w n lhṭn lb‘.
16. msrymb‘. w’t

Reverse

1. bwdybw bn ‘hybw w
2. ’nsw šlh. lqht. mzh .
3. uspr. bybw ‘bd. bmk. bb‘
4. ‘l. šlm. bn yd‘. m‘t. bnb‘. ‘m
5. r. bšmr. šlḥb. ‘b’d[k. ‘l. ‘dny .

1. Your servant, Hoshiaiah, has sent (this document)
2. to info[m] my lord, [Yaush.] May YHWH cause
3. my lord to hear tidings of peace
4. and tidings of good. Now, open
5. the ear of your servant regarding the letter that
6. you sent to your servant yesterday evening. For the heart of
7. your servant has been sick ever since you sent (it) to your servant,
8. and because my lord said: “You did not understand it!”
9. Call a scribe!” As YHWH lives, no one has ever tried
10. to read a letter for me! Moreover,
11. any letter that comes to me, if
12. I have read it, I can afterwards repeat it
13. to the last detail! Now it has been told to your servant,
14. saying, “The commander of the army,
15. Coniah the son of Elnathan, has gone down
16. to Egypt, and he has sent (orders)

Reverse

1. to take Hodaviah the son of Ahijah
2. and his men from here.”
3. As for the letter of Tobiah the servant of the king,\(^a\), which came
4. to Shallum the son of Jaddua from the prophet, saying,
5. “Beware!”—your servant has sent it to my lord.

\(^a\) The final b on ydth is ambiguous. Some construe it as a vowel marker. Given the general paucity in Epigraphic Hebrew of forms of the 2ms perfect that are unambiguously spelled with plene orthography, however, I prefer to take it as a 3ms suffix referring back to the “letter” mentioned in line 5.

\(^b\) It appears that Tobiah, a high official in the royal palace, had issued a report of an oracle by the unnamed prophet that began—as many oracles recorded in the Bible do—with the word: “Beware!” One can only presume that the rest of that oracle would have been spelled out in Tobiah’s report that somehow came into the hands of Shallum the son of Jaddua.

140. Lachish Ostracon 6

This letter echoes some of the issues touched upon in Ostracon 3. It is also written to Yaush, the commander of the fortress at Lachish, by an unnamed officer, possibly Hoshiaiah, who wrote the letter in Ostracon 3. It is included in this corpus because of the supposed reference to “the prophet” in line 5, which, if correctly restored, finds tantalizing echoes of the prophet Jeremiah (38:4). In any case, some scholars see evidence in this letter of the kinds of impact that prophetic utterances might have had in Judah.


1. ‘l ʿdny yʿwš . yr’. yhubb ʾ
2. ʾt ʿdny ṭ bʾt bzb . šlm my
3. ʾḥdl kḥl ky . šlh . ʾdny ʾ[lt sp]
4. r ḫmlk wʾt ʿspr ṣbrʾm ʾlmʾn]
5. r qtrʾ nʾ wbnb . ʿdbry . b[ ]
6. ʾl ṭbm ʾtrṯ ʿdyykʾ . ṣlbš]
7. qt ydkʾ bʾ/nsm . b[ydʾ][m b]
8. ṣm wʾnkʾy ʾydʾy bʾʾtʾk
9. ṭb ʾlmʾ lʾ[mrʾ/l ṭʾmʾ tʾśw
10. kzʾt ṭ(byrʾ)šlm bʾnlʾb l
11. mʾlk [wʾlḥ][ybyʾ][lʾ]/św bdʾbr]
12. bzlʾ ṣhyʾ . yhubʾ ṭb
13. yk ky [mlʾz qtrʾ ʾʾb
14. dk [ṭ bsprʾ nʾ] byb
15. ḫʾdkš ʾšlm]

1. To my lord, Yaush. May YHWH cause my lord to see
2. this period (in) peace. Who is
3. your servant, a mere dog, that my lord has sent [the letter]
4. of the king and the letters of the official[s, saying,]
5. “Read!”?a Now the words of the [            ] b
6. are not good, weakening your hands [and slackening]
7. the hands of the m[en] who [are in]form[ed about]
8. them. As for me . . . my lord, will you not write
9. tlo them], [aying,] “Why do you act
10. like this, even in Jerusalem? Now, against
11. the king [and] his [house you] are doing this thing.
12. By the life of YHWH, your God,
13. (I swear) that since your servant read
14. the letters there has been no
15. [peace for] your servant  l

a The writer of the letter had apparently been reprimanded earlier for failure to read (and obey) the commander’s written orders.
On the basis of the remarkable parallel in Jer 38:4, a number of scholars read here ḫහ[ימל] (the prophets) or ḫහ[יל] (the prophet). Albright (1938: 15–16) and de Vaux (1939: 198), however, read the letter s after b, thus bs[ימל] (the officials).

141. Lachish Ostracon 16

This ostracon, written on both sides, is fragmentary; only the middle of the letter it contained is preserved, and one cannot be certain how much of the original text has been lost. Still, there is a clear reference to a prophet ((bsb‘ in obv. line 5), whose name, even though only partially preserved, is clearly Yahwistic. Together with Ostracon 3 (and possibly Ostracon 6?) this letter indicates concerns in official circles with the popular impact of prophetic utterances as Judah faced mortal danger from without during her last days.a

Photograph: Torczyner 1938: 170.

Obverse

1. [ ] hmb[ ]
2. [ ] bby[ ]
3. [ ] šlb‘ [bdk ]
4. [ ] slpr bny[ ]
5. [ ] yљbw bnb‘[ ]
6. [ ] m[ ]

Reverse

1. [ ] ’t [ ]
2. [ ] ’[ ]
3. [ ] šlh ‘[ ]
4. [ ] dbr wh [ ]
Obverse

1. ] ... [ 
2. ] ... [ 
3. your servant sent it/him [ 
4. the letter of the sons ofb [ 
5. -yaḥu, the prophet [ 
6. ] ... [ 

Reverse

1. ] ... [ 
2. ] ... [ 
3. ] he has sent ...[ 
4. ] word and ...[ 


b The most obvious reading of bny is “the sons of,” but the possibility of a personal name here cannot be ruled out, namely, bnyḥw (Benatiah).

Transliteration and Translation: Ritner forthcoming.a

Composed in the nonliterary vernacular of genuine administrative reports, but with obvious rhetorical flourishes, the narrative of Wenamon is a disputed work of Egyptian literature and has been considered either a factual report or an unusually accurate historical romance. The tale and the surviving copy date to the final years of Ramses XI (ca. 1080–1070 B.C.E.),b the last ruler of Dynasty Twenty, during the de facto political division of Egypt that would characterize the succeeding dynasty. Dispatched by the theocratic state of Thebes to obtain timber for the sacred bark of Amon, the priest Wenamon is robbed, stranded, and arrives in Byblos on a stolen ship with only his portable image of the god Amon. After much delay and verbal abuse, Wenamon is successful in his mission only when his god possesses a medium at the court of Byblos and demands an audience.

The term for “medium” is written as the common Egyptian word for “youth,” further qualified as “big/great.” On the basis of context, it has been suggested that this term represents a Semitic word for “seer” (perhaps related to Aramaic ‘ddh; cf. no. 137).c Context need not exclude the literal Egyptian meaning, however. The use of child mediums is well-attested in Hellenistic Egyptian texts,d and the ecstatic of Wenamon may represent an antecedent of the later practice. The addition of “great” to terms for “youths” is not unusual in Egyptian.e
The prince of Byblos sent to me, saying: “Get [out of my] harbor!”

And I sent to him saying, “Where should [I go?] … I(?) go […] If [you can find a ship] to transport me, let me be taken back to Egypt.” I spent twenty-nine days in his harbor, even though he spent time sending to me daily, saying: “Get out of my harbor!”

Now when he offered to his gods, the god (Amon) seized a great seer from among his great seers, and he caused him to be in an ecstatic state, and he said to him:

“Bring up the god!
Bring the messenger who bears him!
It is Amon who has sent him.
He is the one who has caused that he come.”

But the ecstatic became ecstatic on that night only after I had found a ship heading for Egypt, and I had loaded all my belongings onto it, and I had watched for darkness to fall so that I might put the god on board in order to prevent another eye from seeing him.

And the harbor master came to me to say: “Stay until tomorrow; so says the prince.”

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\(^a\) The current translation is derived from Ritner forthcoming.

\(^b\) The date of the manuscript generally has been considered terminal Twentieth–early Twenty-First Dynasty; see Gardiner 1932: xi; J. A. Wilson 1969: 25; Lichtheim 1973–80: 2:224; and Caminos 1977: 3–4. A date in early Dynasty XXII, originally suggested by Möller 1909: 29, is accepted by Helck 1986: 1215–16.

\(^c\) For discussion and bibliography, see Hoch 1994: 86–87.

\(^d\) For examples, see Betz 1992: 196–99.

\(^e\) Cf. \(br\) “big/great boy” (Coptic \(\text{ⲝⲧⲧⲟ} \)).

\(^f\) The seer speaks to the prince of Byblos.
Concordances

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‘ddi ‘ā. A child-medium; literally a “great youth/seer.”

Adad (Addu). Weather god, especially worshiped in northern Babylonia and Syria; city god of Aleppo; one of his manifestations was called the Lord of Kallasu.

Adad-ahu-iddina. Assyrian temple official at the time of Esarhaddon.

Addu-duri. One of the most influential women of Mari; probably member of the royal family, possibly mother of Zimri-Lim.

Aḥšerī. King of Mannea at the time of Assurbanipal.

Aḥum. Priest of the temple of Annunitum at Mari.

Akkad. City in northern Babylonia, founded by Sargon I; capital of the kings of Agade in twenty-fourth to twenty-second centuries. “The land of Akkad” (māt Akkādī) is the traditional designation of all Babylonia.

Alalḥum. City in northern Syria, probably identical with Alalaḥ; mandate of Mari in the time of Zimri-Lim.

Aleppo (Ḥalab). Modern Ḥalab. City in northern Syria; capital of the kingdom Yamḥad and native city of Šibtu, queen of Mari.

Amenophis III. Pharaoh of Egypt (1391–1353); husband of Tadu-Ḫeba, daughter of the Hurrian king Tušratta.

Amon. The state god of Egypt and the chief of the Egyptian pantheon.

Andarig. City-state south of the Sinjar mountain and east of the River Habur.

Annunitum. A manifestation of Ištar at Mari and the most important female deity in prophetic oracles form Mari; also worshiped at Akkad and Sippar.

āpīlūm fem. āpīltūm. “Answerer,” i.e., transmitter of divine answers to human inquiries; besides mubbūm, the main designation of a person transmitting divine words at Mari.
Arbela. Modern Irbil. One of the principal cities in the Assyrian heartland; center of Ištar cult and prophecy in the Neo-Assyrian era.

assinnu. “Man-woman,” a person whose gender role, analogous to that of the kurgarrû, is permanently changed by Ištar and who lived as a devotee of the goddess.

Aššur. Initially the eponymous deity of the city of Assur, later the Assyrian supreme god and the totality of all gods, whose main priest the king of Assyria was; in the Neo-Assyrian era, Mullissu (equated with Ištar of Nineveh) appears as his wife. The rise of Aššur to his elevated position is analogous to the rise in the status of Marduk in Babylonia.

Assur. Modern Qal‘at aš-Širqāt. Political capital of Assyria from Assur-ubal-lit I (fourteenth century) through Assurnasirpal II (ninth century); after that religious capital of Assyria and center of worship of Aššur, the supreme god of Assyria. Also called Libbi-āli, “Inner City.”

Assurbanipal. King of Assyria (668–627), son of Esarhaddon.

Aššur-ḫamatu’a. Temple official in Arbela.

Baalshamayn. “The Lord of Heaven,” Syro-Palestinian supreme god, venerated throughout the Semitic cultural sphere during the first millennium B.C.E.

Babylon. Modern Bābil. Capital of Babylonia and cradle of Mesopotamian scholarship, site of the Esaggil temple for Marduk and seat of the Hammurabi dynasty; destroyed by Sennacherib in 689 and rebuilt by Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal in the 670s and 660s.

Baḥdi-Lim. Prefect of the royal palace at Mari.

Bel. See Marduk.


Belet-ekallim. “The Lady of the Palace,” the patroness of the royal family of Mari, whose temple occupied a large area in the royal palace of Mari; also worshiped in Babylonia.

Bel-ušezib. Babylonian astrologer in Esarhaddon’s court.


Byblos. Principal seaport on the coast of Lebanon, one of the most important Phoenician cities.

Calah (Kaḥṣu). Modern Tell Nimrud. Principal capital of Assyria from Assurnasirpal II through Sargon II (ca. 864–707), center of worship of Ninurta and Ištar.

Cimmerians. People of Caucasian or Central Asian origin who invaded large areas in Urartu and Asia Minor in the Neo-Assyrian era.

Dagan. One of the principal West Semitic deities, head of the pantheon of Ebla, main god of the Philistines, second in rank after El at Ugarit and member of the Sumerian pantheon; very prominent at Mari, where his temple, source of many prophecies, was located next to the royal palace.
Daşran. Locality in the district of Terqa.
Dir. Provincial town, not far away from Mari to the south; center of worship of Diritum.
Diritum. Goddess of Dir.
Egerrû (m). Portentous speech or otherwise ominous auditory experience; one of the terms for prophetic discourse at Mari and juxtaposed with dreams and prophecies in Assyria.
Elam. Kingdom in southwestern Iran.
Esaggil. Temple of Marduk at Babylon; one of the biggest sanctuaries in Mesopotamia and principal temple of Babylonia; incorporated the ziggurat Etemenanki (inspiration for “the tower of Babel”), which was regarded as the center of the universe.
Esarhaddon. King of Assyria (681–669), son of Sennacherib.
Ešarra. Temple of Aššur at Assur; housed the throne of the Assyrian kings who were enthroned and buried in this sanctuary.
esšēšu. A festival, the exact nature of which is still to be clarified. Behind the word there is the verb edēšu “to be, become new, rejuvenate” as well as the adjective ešu “new”; cf. ūmu ešu “new day.” This “rejuvenation festival” is mentioned in a variety of contexts and its placement in the cultic calendar is unclear.
Gaššum. Locality in the western part of Ida-maraş on the upper course of the River Ḫabur.
Hamath. Modern Ḥamā. City-state in Syria, on the middle course of the Orontes River.
Hammurabi. King of Babylonia (1792–1750).
Hammurabi. King of Kurdā at the time of Zimri-Lim of Mari.
Hanat. Goddess of the town Ḥanat on the Euphrates.
Haneans. The common designation of Simʾalites and Yaminites, nomadic population of the kingdom of Mari.
Ḥišamitum. Goddess of Ḥišamta, a town in the district of Terqa; she had a temple even at Mari.
Ḫubšalum. An oasis on the fringes of the desert south of the Sinjar mountain.
Ibalpiel II. King of Ešnunna at the time of Hammurabi of Babylonia and Zimri-Lim of Mari (ca. 1779–1765).
Ida-maraş. Area under the control of Zimri-Lim of Mari, west of the River Ḫabur.
Ikrub-El. See Yakrub-El.
Ilan-şura. Kingdom of Ḥaya-Sumu, vassal of Zimri-Lim.
Ili-ḫaznaya. assīnu of the temple of Annunitum at Mari.
Inib-šīna. Sister of Zimri-Lim, king of Mari; possibly high priestess of Adad.
Itur-Asdu. Governor of the district of Mari, later governor of Naḥur at the time of Zimri-Lim.
Itur-Mer. Protective god of Mari, hypostasis of the weather-god Mer.
Ištar (Inanna). The most important Mesopotamian goddess, embodiment of opposites as virgin, whore, and mother, involved in love and war and capable of transforming gender roles; worshiped in her various aspects all over ancient Near East, including Mari where her main manifestation was Annunitum. In Assyria, Ištar of Arbela was the principal speaker of prophetic words and patroness of the prophets, and Ištar of Nineveh was equated with Mullissu, the spouse of the supreme god Aššur.
Izirtu. Capital of Mannea, exact location unknown.
Kanisan. Son of Kibri-Dagan.
Kibri-Dagan. Governor of Terqa at the time of Zimri-Lim.
Kittim. Ištar of Ešnunna.
Kurdā. City and kingdom north of the Sinjar mountain between the upper courses of the Rivers Ḥabar and Tigris.
Lady of Akkad. Ištar of Akkad.
Lady of Babylon. Designation of Zarpanitu, the spouse of Marduk.
Lady of Kidmuri. Ištar of Calah.
Lanasûm. Representative of Mari at Tuttul at the time of Zimri-Lim.
Libbi-ali. See Assur.
maḫḫū, fem. maḫḫūtu. Assyrian literary equivalent of muḫḫûm/ muḫḫûtu.
Mannnea. Kingdom in northwestern Iran, east of the Zagros mountains and south of the lake Urmia.
Marduk. The patron deity of the city of Babylon who was elevated to the status of the Babylonian supreme god, absorbing functions of many other deities; also called Bel (“the Lord”). The center of the worship of Marduk was his temple Esaggil at Babylon.
Mari. Modern Tell Ḥarīrī. City and kingdom that in the second half of the third and first half of the second millennium occupied large areas on the middle Euphrates and the River Ḥabar; center of worship of Dagan and
Glossary

site of one of the biggest royal archives excavated in the ancient Near East.

**Mar-Issar.** Esarhaddon's agent in Babylonia.

**Milcom.** The state god of the Ammonites.

**Mitanni.** Empire of the Hurrians in the fifteenth/fourteenth century; the principal rival of Egypt controlling large areas in Assyria, Syria and Cilicia.

**muḫḫûm, fem. muḫḫûtûm.** The commonest designation of a prophet at Mari, where the muḫḫûm/muḫḫûtûm belonged to the personnel of temples of different deities. In other sources from the Ur III (late third millennium) to the Neo-Babylonian period (sixth century), people called muḫḫûm/muḫḫûtûm appear as prophets and cult functionaries, more often than not in the worship of Ištar.

**Mukannišum.** High official at Mari at the time of Zimri-Lim.

**Mullissu (Ninlil).** Initially the spouse of the god Enlil; in Assyria, wife of Aššur and a manifestation of Ištar, equated with Ištar of Nineveh. Speaks frequently in prophetic oracles, more often than not as united with Ištar of Arbela.

**Nabû.** Patron of Mesopotamian scribes, keeper of the tablet of destiny; son of Marduk in the Babylonian pantheon and patron god of the city of Borsippa; assumed a high status in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian era.

**Nabû-nadin-šumi.** Chief exorcist of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.

**Nabû-reḫtu-usur.** Assyrian citizen, possibly in the service of the queen mother.

**Nabû-reši-išši.** Temple official in Arbela.

**Naḫur.** City and religious center under the control of Mari on the upper course of the River Ḥabur.

**Nanaya.** Sumerian goddess, often appearing as another aspect of Inanna/Ištar, spouse of the god Nabû; worshiped especially at Uruk.

**Naqia.** Mother of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria.

**Nikkal (Ningal).** Sumerian goddess, mother of Šamaš and Inanna, later one of the manifestations of Ištar. Goddess of dream interpretation and spouse of the moon-god Sîn, worshiped especially at Harran.

**Nineveh.** Modern Tell Qūyunšiq. Principal capital of Assyria from the reign of Sennacherib until the collapse of the Assyrian Empire (704–612); site of the Emašmaš temple of Ištar and of royal palaces housing the most prolific royal archives known from the ancient Near East.

**Ninḫursag.** “Lady of the Mountain,” one of the Mesopotamian mother goddesses, mother of Ninurta; merges together with Mullissu.

**Ninurta.** Son of Enlil and Mullissu/Ninḫursag; the heavenly crown prince, warrior, and farmer. For the Assyrian kings, Ninurta's defeat of the demon Asakku was the prototype of their victory over their enemies. The center of his worship in Neo-Assyrian period was Calah.

**Nur-Sîn.** Zimri-Lim's representative in Alḫṭum.
Nusku. Initially son of Enlil, god of fire and light; in the Neo-Assyrian period, worshiped at Harran as the son of Sin; virtually equated with Nabû.

qammatum. A designation of unclear derivation of a female transmitter of divine words; the only preserved message of the qammatum of Dagan of Terqa is reported twice in the letters from Mari.

Qaṭṭunân. City under the control of Mari on the upper course of the River Ḥabar.


šabrû. Neo-Assyrian word for a visionary and dream interpreter.


Saggaratum. City in the kingdom of Mari, north of Terqa, near the confluence of the Rivers Euphrates and Ḥabar.

Šakkâ. Locality in the district of Mari.


Šamaš-naṣir. Zimri-Lim’s officer at Terqa.

Šamaš-šumu-uki. Son of Esarhaddon and the elder brother of Assurbanipal; crown prince of Babylonia until Esarhaddon defeated him in a civil war (672–648).

Šammēṭar. Majordomo of the palace of Mari and one of the most influential officers during the first years of Zimri-Lim’s reign.

Šamši-Adad. King of Assyria (ca. 1835/30–1777); seized control of Mari after Yaḥdun-Lim, installed his sons Yasmaḫ-Addu at Mari and Išme-Dagan at Ekallatum.

šûrtûnumu sissiktûnum. “Hair and garment fringe,” which, when attached to a letter, personalized the person, e.g., a prophet, whose message was reported; this was done for the purpose of authenticating the message by extispicy.

Šaṣi. A high official (major or city overseer) in Nineveh (c. 675–665).

Šauška. The main goddess of the Hurrians, also worshiped by the Hittites; the Hurrian equivalent of Istar of Nineveh.

Šešebum. assûnu of the temple of Annunitum at Mari.

Šibtu. Queen of Mari, wife of Zimri-Lim and daughter of Yarim-Lim, king of Aleppo.

Šîmatûnum. Daughter of Zimri-Lim and wife of Ḥaya-Sumu, king of Ilan-ṣura.

Šim’alîtes. A designation for tribal groups living on the left (i.e., northern) side of the Euphrates.


Susa. Capital of Elam.
**Tebi-gerišu.** High official at Mari in the beginning of Zimri-Lim’s reign.
**Terqa.** Modern Tell ʿAššara. Religious center and the most important city after Mari in Zimri-Lim’s kingdom.
**tērtum.** Oracle; result of different kinds of divination, including extispicy and prophecy.
**Teumman.** King of Elam (674–653).
**Tišpak.** Deity especially worshiped in Ešnunna.
**Tušratta.** King of Mitanni, the Hurrian Empire (1365–1335/22).
**Tuttu.** Modern Tell Bī’a. City on the upper course of the River Euphrates at the junction with the River Balīl; seat of a sanctuary of Dagan. Also identified with the modern Hit on the middle course of the River Euphrates between Mari and Sippar.
**Urad-Gula.** Exorcist in Esarhaddon’s court.
**Ur-lisi.** Governor of Umma, a major Sumerian city in the Ur III period.
**Yaḥdun-Lim.** King of Mari (ca. 1810–1795), father of Zimri-Lim.
**Yakrub-El.** Possibly a manifestation of the god Adad or a divinized ancestor worshiped at Terqa.
**Yaminites.** Designation for tribal groups living on the right (i.e., southern) side of the Euphrates.
**Yamutbal.** Area east of Tigris, probably south of Ešnunna.
**Yaqqim-Addu.** Governor of Saggaratum at the time of Zimri-Lim.
**Yasim-El.** Military commander at Andarig at the time of Zimri-Lim.
**Yasimaḥ-Addu.** King of Mari (ca. 1793–1775), son of Šamši-Adad, king of Assyria, and brother of Isme-Dagan, king of Ekallatum (Assyria).
**Zakira-Ḥammū.** Governor of Qaṭṭunan at the time of Zimri-Lim.
**Zakkur.** King of the Aramean city-states Hamath and Luash in the early eighth century.
**Zimri-Lim.** King of Mari (ca. 1775–1761), son of Yaḥdun-Lim.
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