

AN APOCALYPTIC VISION FROM MARI ? :
SPECULATIONS ON ARM X:9

BY

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In Memory of my Father

ARM X:9 is one of many 'prophetic' documents from the Mari archives which Dossin has recently published in copies, transliterations and in translations. ⁽¹⁾ It reports the message that Qišti-Diritum transmitted to Šiptu, wife of Zimri-Lim and queen of Mari:

Tell my Lord: thus (speaks) Šiptu, your handmaid, the palace is in order. Two days ago Qišti-Diritum, the 'Answerer' of Diritum^a [came] to the palace's gate and sent to me [a message] as follows: "Will no one say before the throne of Mari (as follows)^b: 'Ala'itum^c is given to Zimri-Lim'. The lance of the 'man' of e-[??]^d is broken (?)." He had spoken [thus]. Further . . .

REMARKS. a. References to the goddess Diritum can be found in I Nakata's Columbia University dissertation, 1974, *Deities in the Mari Texts*. s.v. Discussion of

⁽¹⁾ *Archives royales de Mari X: La correspondance féminine* [TCL XXI], Paris, 1967. *Ibid.* Transcrite et traduite par Georges DOSSIN avec la collaboration de André FINET. Paris, 1978.

This text has been treated most fully by W. L. MORAN, "New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy," *Biblica* 50 (1969), 50-52, and partially by H. B. HUFFMON, "Prophecy in the Mari Letters", *Biblical Archaeologist* 31 (1968), 108. Annotations to various lines can be found in J.-G. HEINTZ,

"Langage prophétique et "style de cour", selon *archives royales de Mari X* et l'ancien Testament," *Semitica* 22 (1972), 9; "Prophétie in Mari und Israel," *Biblica* 52 (1971), 547; in W. H. RÖMER, *Frauenbriefe über Religion, Politik und Privatleben in Māri* [AOAT 12], Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1972, p. 98 (index); and in E. NOORT, *Untersuchungen zum Gottesbescheid in Mari* [AOAT 202], Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1977, 150.

the evidence is to be found in Birot's "Simahlane, roi de Kurda," *RA* 66 (1972), 134-136. Dirītum was worshipped in at least two localities: Dēr, a day's journey south of Mari, and at Zurubban (IX:77:3), north of Mari, on the way to Terqa. I think it doubtful that there existed a Dēr north of Mari (cf. Birot's comment on p. 136, n. 5), and the evidence of ARM XIV does not challenge that denial. *b.* Dossin restores *i-n[a-aḫ?-ḫā?-al?]* and translates by means of an idiom that is not attested. Heintz, *Semitica* 22 (1972), 9, uses Dossin's transliteration to propose that courtiers lowered their eyes before a ruler. [Perhaps a verb such as *izuzzum* is to be restored here.] However, I follow Moran's restoration, but think it more likely that a question may be at stake here, since an affirmative declaration would be quite odd in this context. *c.* Moran leaves *a-la-i-tum* untranslated. Huffmon, *BA*, 31 (1968), 108, relates to the Middle Assyrian word for "woman citizen [cf. CAD A/1, 391 (b)]", an occurrence which would be surprising at Mari. Dossin, on the same basis, translates: "tout ce qui relève de la ville [cf. AHW., *ālīum*, 36b]." One wonders, however, whether this 'prophetic' text should not be included in the impressive dossier documenting the growing hostilities between Mari and Yamḥad. To be sure, as pointed out long ago by Sidney Smith in an early, yet remarkable, article in *RSO*, 32 (1957), 155-184, Yamḥad's unhappiness with its erstwhile vassal never developed into outright clashes of weapons. Hammurabi of Yamḥad simply threw his influence behind his ambitious namesake at Babylon. The destruction of Mari resulted in benefits for both: Yamḥad was left to control all the territory, west of the Euphrates, which was once under Mari's influence, while Babylon's share ran along the eastern bank of the Euphrates, at least as far north as the town of Emar.

To come back to *a-la-i-tum*. It is not implausible to relate it to Alaḫtum, a town in Zimri-Lim's possession, which seems to have been claimed by Yamḥad (cf., already, UF 6 (1974), 390). In another prophetic text (cf. conveniently, *Supplement to ANET*, 625), Adad, the deity of Kallasu, a locality in Yamḥad if not in its capital, Aleppo (cf. Klengel, *JCS*, 19 (1965), 88), is said to have occupied the *maškanum* of Alaḫtum. The paucity of material concerning this GN does not ease the search for a possible location. ARM IX:9:4-6 mentions that Nūr-Sin, ambassador to Aleppo, was bringing oil from Alaḫtum. It is presumed that he would be returning to Mari taking the most likely route via the Euphrates [Hallo, *JCS* 18 (1964), 86, 84]. Acting partially on my suggestion, M. C. Astour has, *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 2/1 (1978), 4 connected *a-la-aḫ/i-tum* with [*x-l*]a-at-lu-um, a town which the Urbana Itinerary [Goetze, *JCS* 7 (1953), 60] places somewhere between Abattum on the way to Emar [this, despite Hallo, *JCS* 18 (1964), 82, 65]. Again tentatively, he would locate this town at Banat abu-Hureyra, approximately half-way between Tell Theddeyen and Meskene [now known to be the site of Emar] *d.* Cuneiform has a break after *e*[]. As of now, the Mari archive allows a choice among Elaḫut, Elam, Eriḫu, and Eraḫtum. Should one, however, read *kal*![-*la-su*]? AHW 1101-1102, sub *šillû(m)* II, prefers to render "the thorn of ...".

At this point, the text's obverse becomes fragmentary. The reverse does not fare much better. For this reason most of the following readings

should definitely be considered tentative. Nor is there much likelihood that additional Mari material would be forthcoming to clarify the difficulties since the nature of letters, unlike that of ritual, omen, even legal documents, generally excludes the discovery of duplicates on one site. ⁽¹⁾ ARM X:9 continues on the reverse side:

<p><i>um-ma</i> [<i>ke-em</i> x[<i>ni-i</i>[š <i>DINGIR</i> - <i>lim</i> ... <i>a-šar</i> [<i>mu-ū iba-aš-šu-ú^e</i>] 5' <i>ni-iš</i> <i>DINGIR-lim</i> <i>ni-n</i>[<i>u ni-za-ak-</i> <i>ka-ar^e</i>] ^d<i>a-su-me-e-em</i> <i>um?</i>-[^d<i>a-su-mu-um</i> <i>ar</i>[-<i>ḥi-iš il-li-ik-ma</i>] <i>a-wa-lam a-na</i> ^d<i>é-a</i> [<i>iq-bi^e</i>] <i>ša</i> ^d<i>a-su-mu-um</i> [<i>iq-bu-ú^e</i>] 10' <i>ú-ul eš-me it</i>-[<i>bé-ma ki-a-am</i>] <i>iq-bi um-ma-mi</i> [<i>ki-ma^f ni-iš</i> <i>DIN-</i> <i>GIR-lim</i>] <i>ni-za-ak-ka-ru ru</i>-[<i>ša-am^g</i>] <i>ù sí-ip-pa-am</i> <i>ša ba-ab</i> [<i>ma-ri(ki)</i>] <i>li-il-qú-nim-ma^h ni-iš</i> <i>DINGIR-lim</i> [<i>i ni-iz-ku-ú^r</i>] 15' <i>ru-ša-am</i> <i>ù sí-ip-pa-am</i> <i>ša ba</i>-[<i>ab</i>] <i>ma-ri(ki)</i> <i>il-qú-ni-im-ma i-na me-e im-ḥu</i>-[<i>ḥu</i>]- <i>ma^j</i> <i>DINGIR.MEŠ</i> <i>ù i-la-tum iš-te-e^k</i> <i>um-ma</i> ^d<i>é-a-ma a-na</i> <i>DINGIR</i>. <i>MEŠ</i> <i>ti-ma-a^e ša^l a-na li-bi-it-ti</i> 20' <i>ma-r</i>[<i>i(ki)</i>] <i>ù ra-bi-iš^m</i> [<i><ma-ri(ki)> la-a tu</i>]-<i>ga-al-la-</i> <i>lu^{e/n}</i> side [<i>DINGIR.MEŠ</i>] <i>ù i-la</i>-[<i>tum it-mu-</i> <i>ú</i>] [<i>um-ma</i>]-<i>mi a-na li-bi-it-ti</i></p>	<p>an oath [in the place [where there is water?] we [will take] an oath. Of (?) Asumûm ... Asumûm [went quickly] and spoke to Ea That which Asumûm spoke, I did not hear. He [(Ea?) arose and] said as [follows]: “[Since we are about to] swear, dust and a door-jamb from Mari’s gate let them take, and [let us swear]. » They took dust and a door-jamb from Mari’s gate and dissolved it in water. The gods and goddesses drank. Thus (did) Ea himself say: “Swear before the gods that (individually) you will do no harm to the brick-(work) of Mari and to the ‘(protective) genie’ of Mari.” The gods and goddesses swore as follows: “We shall not</p>
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(1) Sometimes, however, one gratefully finds copies of essentially the same letter addressed

to different parties. Compare, e.g. X:166 with 167; II:51 with II:52.

[*ma*]-*ri*(*ki*) ù *ra-bi-iš*
 25' *ma-ri* (*ki*)
 ú-*ul nu-ga-al-la-al*

do harm to the brick-(work) of Mari
 or to the (protective) genie of
 Mari."

REMARKS. *e.* Moran's readings and restorations. *f.* Moran restores *lāma*. The verb following is in the subjunctive. *g.* Dossin follows P. R. Berger, UF 1 (1969), 221 (cf. also UF 2 (1970), 335) in regarding *rūšum* as West Semitic *rō's*, 'head', thus contrasting with *sippum*. While defensible, it might yet be plausible, in view of the comparative material offered below, to retain the meaning 'dirt', attested to in OB texts (AHw, 997a [*rūšu(m)*, I]). CAD M/1 49[c], follows Moran in regarding *rušum* as 'dirt'. *h.* Berger, UF 1 (1969), 221 would read *li-id-ku-nim-ma* (also *id-ku-ni-im-ma* in 16'), "let them tear out, remove." This usage, however, does not seem to obtain in OB. Furthermore, the sign *il* is clearly at stake here. *i.* Moran and Dossin read thusly, with Dossin transposing the last sign from l. 13' to that of l. 14'. *j.* The third sign of the verb at stake is not clear, but it is difficult to conceive of a verb other than *maḥāhum* to be involved. Of those that begin with the consonants *mḥ*, the context does not permit resort to *maḥārum*, nor, because of the preterit vowel, to *maḥāšum* despite the fact that *ina mē maḥāšum* is a well known idiom (CAD M/1, 78 [3, e], 'to stir (powder) into a liquid'). Nor could I think of a verb which would assume that the first sign is *iḥ/aḥ*; *i'/a'*. CAD, M/1 49[c] follows Moran in translating our passage as follows: "They took dirt from (text: and) the jamb of the gate and softened it in water." *k.* The traces permit the following readings *uš/iš-te-e/din*. *l.* We follow Moran in regarding *timā ša* as a West Semitic equivalent to Hebrew *šāba* '... ' *ašer* (Gen. 24:3). Note also AHw, 1317b: [Ia, 4: "Imp(erativ) vor rel(ativsatz)"]. We shall discuss ARM X's understanding below but can now note that it would have been better supported, possibly had the text read **mamman ša* in 19' [cf. X:49:5'-7']. *m.* Moran translates 'commissioner'. See his note on p. 51. It seems more likely, however, that with Dossin (cf., already, *BiOr* 28 (1971), 22), *rābišu* is to be rendered here by 'protective demon, genie'. On the connection between the two meanings, see Oppenheim, *JAOS*, 88 (1968), 179-180. He notes that the Mesopotamians regarded some *rābišū* to be benevolent, others to be sinister. This is so, of course, because of the commonly held belief that he who can harm, can, by controlling his malevolent powers, allow an individual to reap benefits. *Rābišū*, protective no doubt, were known to flank the entrance of a gate (YOS 10:25:62). For additional information concerning this term, see Harris, *JCS* 9 (1955), 101. For connection with Gen. 4:7, see Oppenheim, *op. cit.*, 179; Speiser, *Genesis* (Anchor Bible, I), 32-33 [should *lappetaḥ* of this passage be understood, in view of the Mari passage, as a gate of a temple or palace? If so, then the discussion of Kapelrud, *JAOS*, 70 (1950), 151-156 might be found of interest. So would the comments of Dossin, *Syria*, 21 (1940), 167-168]. Finally, it is possible to consider *labittu/rābišu* as a merismus, implying that the gods are promising to refrain from damaging Mari either physically or 'spiritually'. *n.* ARMT X reads *ugallatu*, but 2nd p.m.s. (subjunctive) is preferable here [despite *timā*!] because it makes better sense in view of last line's *nugallal*. Cf. CAD L, 178b (2).

In the reverse side of ARM X:9 the following obtains: Ea, god of wisdom, lord of conjurations, oaths, and spells, assembles the gods, male and female, and has them swear to preserve and protect Mari. ⁽¹⁾ The role of Asumûm in this episode appears to be that of a divine assistant, perhaps in charge of summoning the gods to assembly (l. 6'-7'), and of proper administration of the oath. Otherwise, this deity is unknown outside of this text. ⁽²⁾

Some difficulties are encountered when we attempt to place this episode within literary and religious categories. It might be useful to entertain the following two-part agenda.

1. To try to establish a connection between the oath and the manner in which it is administered.

2. To try to form some opinion on the genre of literature to which belongs the 'mythological' fragment preserved on the reverse of ARM X:9.

⁽¹⁾ At Mari, Ea's presence occurs in a variety of documents, see Nakata, *Deities...*, s.v. The name is preceded by dingir only in our text in the sacrificial list published in *Studia Mariana*, 1950, 44; in the PNs and the bureaucratic archives [VII:15:2, 36:3], in the Hurrian incantation [THUREAU-DANGIN, *RA* 36 (1939), 5:3] as well as in the Yaḥdun-Lim inscription [DOSSIN, *Syria* 32 (1955), 17:23], it is not. It is interesting that one of the last mention of offerings presented before a deity that stem from Yasmaḥ-Adad's probable last year in office, datable to Liliātum/21/ *limu* Ṭāb-šilli-Aššur II, refers to Ea [VII:36]; cf. M. T. LARSEN, *RA* 68 (1974), 19-20.

It might be useful, for our purpose, to highlight Ea (Enki)'s role in enforcing the verdict of the gods when a king presented his case in the *bīt rimki* rituals. Conveniently, see J. M. SEUX, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*. Paris, 1976, 219 ff. A fuller treatment of one of these rituals is found in R. BORGER's "Das dritte "Haus" der Serie *bīt rimki*," *JCS* 21 (1967), 1-17. Note also the role of this deity in the *namburbi* ritual against evil incurred in the performance of

cultic acts, R. CAPLICE, "Namburbi Texts in the British Museum IV," *Orientalia* 39 (1970), 124-132; especially lines 32-34.

⁽²⁾ On Asumûm, MORAN, *Biblica* 50 (1969), 52, n. 1, tentatively connects with Us(u)mû, Ea's vizier. His suggestion is worth following especially since the cylinder seals often place this Janus-faced deity in proximity to overflowing vases. On this god, see the bibliography assembled by R. FRANKENA, *Tākkultu*, Leiden, 1954, p. 118, no. 239. On his iconographie, see M.-Th. BARRELET, "Études de glyptique akkadienne: l'imagination figurative et le cycle d'Ea," *Orientalia* 39 (1970), 226, n. 1. FINET's contention that the name of Asumûm is to be derived from elements associated with doors is plausible but cannot be proven, "Réflexions sur l'onomastique de Mari...," *Mélanges Armand Abel* (ed. by A. Destrée), 1978, 71, n. 21.

My suggestion for the role of Asumûm is derived from observing the function of the *manzaduḥlu* at Nuzi in administering the *huršan-ordeal* [see R. HAYDEN's, Brandeis University dissertation, *Court Procedure at Nuzi*, 1962, 13-15. Note also DRIVER and MILES, *Assyrian Laws*, 90, n. 6].

1. In approaching the first of our queries, we might follow the sequence of information as detailed in our text. We will, therefore, (a) focus on the ordeal as described in ll. 15'-17' and speculate on its implications. Thereafter, we shall (b) inspect the language of the oath itself.

a. Whatever meaning we accept for *rušum* and *sippum*, whether we conceive them as (merismatically rendered) opposites for parts of a city-gate (e.g. ARMT's *linteau/montants*) or as, in our judgement preferably, 'dirt' removed from one section of a city gate, it would nevertheless be difficult to avoid the implications of ll. 15'-17'. These record the fact that the gods drank a potion in which something was dissolved in water. ⁽¹⁾ There will be no need, at this point, to parade evidence from the human sphere of activities to prove that, in the Ancient Near East—and particularly in Mesopotamia—, the (promissory) oath was often coupled by acts which linked the last to threats of punishments in case of non-compliance, in other words which link the oath to an ordeal. ⁽²⁾ But what we have on

⁽¹⁾ I am encouraged to think of *rušum* with a meaning 'dirt, mud, dust' for a number of reasons. *Archaeology*. The city gate of Mari was set into mud posts (PARROT, MAM II/1 : *Le Palais*, 1958, 7ff.). *Analogy*. 1. I am reminded of the many examples in which dust from city gates is said to be collected for cultic and magical ceremonies; the term usually employed, however, is *eperum* (SAḪAR), cf. CAD E, 185 (1,b). In this context, the *namburbi* rituals cited p. 155, n. 1 may be of interest as it pertains to martial activities, cf. pp. 118-124. Note also that clods of earth play a role in the *tamītu* judgments, albeit that these are presided over by Shamash and Adad rather than our Ea, all too briefly described by W. LAMBERT, "The "Tamītu" Texts," *La Divination en Mésopotamie ancienne* [RAI XIV, Strasbourg: 1965], Paris, 1966, 119-123 (especially, p. 121). 2. For Biblical as well as other non-cuneiform parallels for the use of dust in 'poison' ordeal, see below. *Paronomas-*

tic. It should not be overlooked that the use of *rušum*, whose meaning differs depending on the Semitic family at stake, may have been purposely invoked in an Amorite society.

⁽²⁾ For a general survey of oaths, ordeals, and their interconnections, the old articles in the 9th volume of the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* should be consulted *sub voce*. The literature that focuses on Ancient Near Eastern river ordeal is very extensive. On this topic, see, most fully, G. CARDASCIA's, "L'ordalie par le fleuve dans les 'Lois assyriennes'," *Festschrift Wilhelm Eilers* (1967), 19-36. There, Cardascia also discusses the examples that come from Mari, on which see further, *JCS* 25 (1973), pp. 72-74. Recent discussions on the topic have also come from the pens of D. O. EDZARD [on the oath], *Festschrift Th. Jacobsen* (AS 20), 1975, 91-92, and of J. KLÍMA [On Elamite ordeal, but cf. H. HIRSCH, *RA* 67 (1973), 75-77], *RA* 66 (1972), 35-59. I have not had access to T. FRYMER (-KENSKI)'s 1976 Yale University

the reverse of X:9 is something that is rarely attested to in cuneiform literature, and, at that, limited to belletristic, if not to say, mythological writings. An example of such an attestation could be read in Sultantepe's version of *Enuma Elish's* Vith tablet: "When the great gods had assembled,/ They extolled the destiny of Marduk, they bowed down,/They pronounced among themselves a curse,/Swearing by water [sic] and oil to place life in jeopardy." (1)

This Sultantepe fragment, as well as the Mari text we are discussing, suggests that even among the gods dire consequences would follow perjury. While one would expect as much from a society with clear concepts of

Dissertation, *Studies on Trial by River Ordeal*; but note her article, "The Nungal-Hymn and the Ekur-Prison," *JESHO* 20 (1977), 78-79 and her entry, "Ordeal, Judicial," in the *Supplement to the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 639-640. P. KYLE McCARTER's, "The River ordeal in Israelite Literature," *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973), 403-412, understands many of the occurrences of Hebrew 'ēyd'/ēd to reflect river ordeals.

On the so-called 'poison-ordeals', that is ones in which a potion is drunk by those tested or placed under oath, see, in general, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, IX, 507-509, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, XIth ed., v. 20, p. 174, and T. H. GASTER, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament*, New York, 1969, 280-300. The sharpest example from the Bible has been discussed recently by me in "Numbers 5 and the 'Waters of Judgement'," *BZ* 16 (1972), 249-251. I allude to yet another possible instance [Exod 32] in my "The Worship of the Golden Calf," *Orient and Occident* [*Festschrift C. H. Gordon = AOAT 22*], 1973, 151, n. 4. Other possibilities include incidents reported in Gen 24, Numb 20:2-14, and Judges 7:4-7.

Both FRYMER (IDB, *Supplement*, 640) and M. WEINBERG, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, v. 12, 1449-50 (*sub*. 'ordeal of Jealousy') have noted

the connection of 'poison-ordeals' with the mythological fragment reported in X:9.

(1) Conveniently rendered thusly by A. K. GRAYSON, ANET³, 503. See also CAD's rendering [A/2, 234, *arāru*]: "The great gods, having assembled, elevated the position of Marduk and did obeisance, while they pronounced upon themselves an imprecation, swore by water and oil, touching (?) (their) throats." Thus, CAD is literal in its translation of *ulappitu napšāte* [cf. also sub L (4, a)]. But, as is commonly attested to in the G of *lapātu*, to 'touch the throat' is but an idiom drawn from the realm of symbolic gesturing which, in recalling the slaughtering of animals at oath taking ceremonies, placed the life of the oath-taker at the mercy of superior forces (human or divine). Note K. R. VEENHOF's understanding of this particular passage, *BiOr* 23 (1966), 313: "... by water and oil they swore, holding their throats (risking their life)." Further on this topic, see A. D. KILMER, "Symbolic Gestures in Akkadian Contracts from Alalakh," *JAOS* 94 (1974), 177-183; R. BORGER, *Asarhaddon* [*AfO*, Beih. 9], 54 (on i:51); *ZA* 54 (1961), 179 (on line 155), and the references collected in CAD M/2, 152 (l, c).

On the subject of oil and water in oath taking, see the comments of VEENHOF in the review of E. KUTSCH's, *Salbung als Rechtsakt* cited above, 308-313.

order and destiny which guide human as well as divine beings, ⁽¹⁾ cuneiform literature only occasionally delineates the punishment meted out to contemptuous deities. ⁽²⁾

b. The oath, as given by Ea, must next be discussed. Dossins's version of this account and the one offered in our treatment differ sharply. The following scenario obtains in ARMT's rendering:

⁽¹⁾ On the concept of order and destiny as it affected humans as well as deities, see G. FARBER-FLÜGGE, *Studia Pohl* 10, 1975, 97ff. Earlier assessments are available in Th. JACOBSEN, *Toward the Image of Tammuz*, 1970, 372-373 (n a m t a r), 359-360 (m e), S. N. KRAMER, *The Sumerians*, 1963, 115-117, and E. A. SPEISER in *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East*, 1955, 55-60. See now, A. CAVIGNEAUX, "L'Essence divine," *JCS* 30 (1978), 177-178.

Of interest to us is the manner in which another Mari Letter, I:3, links the concept of *me* to that of oath (verb: *qullulum*). There, Yasmah-Adad writing, apparently during a very stressful period, to a god says: "Since my ancestry [or: in my lineage], there has never been anyone who has transgressed a divine oath; everyone has respected the divine order (*ištu šitiya mamman ša ana ilim uqallilu ul ibašši kalušu mē ša ilimma ukāl.*)" (ll. 5-7).

⁽²⁾ The best examples for such punishments are found in the major myths: *Atrahasis* [fate of Wê-Ila], *Enuma Elish* [fate of Kengu], the various retellings of divine battles [e.g. Anzû vs Ninurta], *Adapa* [fate of an *apkallu*], and possibly *Erra* [fate of the *ummanu*]. Bibliographies on these texts are too wide for meaningful annotations here. On the subject of capture and imprisonment—even death in some cases—of the gods, see, conveniently RIA III (sub 'Gott,' § 8 [Schicksalsbestimmung]), 541; CAD D, *dingiruggû* 'dead god'; K, *kamû* B, 128 (a), 'referring to gods kept captive in the nether world'. Albeit damaged, the obverse of the Weidner Chronicle [TCS V (1975), 145ff] could be of interest here.

Rich information on evil (but not necessarily punishable) deities, demons, etc. can be found in B. LANDSBERGER's "Einige unerkant gebliebene oder verkannte Nomina des Akkadischen," *WZKM* 57 (1961), 1-21 (sub. 4. *anzû*=(mythischer) Riesenvogel (Adler). We cannot enter here into the problems surrounding the so-called 'Marduk ordeal' texts. For Bibliography, see R. BORGER's, *HKL*, II, 265 (sub. von Soden, *ZA*, 51 (1955)).

Other Ancient Near Eastern societies have been equally interested in dealing with this subject. Herewith is a brief bibliography on each of the following:

EGYPT: See A. GARDINER, *The Attitude of the Ancient Egyptians to Death and the Dead*, 1935, 39, n. 17; ANET³, 327 (b);

OLD TESTAMENT: See the commentaries on Psalm 82. In concluding a treaty with Abra(ha)m, Gen 15:17 notes that God, in the form of a flaming torch, passes between dismembered victims. In light of what we know of this procedure as it obtained in Israel and elsewhere [cf. D. HILLERS, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, 1964, 20, notes 26-27], this strongly suggests that God was placing himself under some limitations should the covenant with the patriarch break down on his account.

GREECE: Note Hesiod's, *Theogony*, lines 775-806 and the comments of M. L. WEST, *Hesiod, Theogony*, 1966, 374-375. Further, see *The Odyssey*, VIII:343-350, which suggests that Ares was to be punished for dallying with Aphrodite. A 'poison ordeal' may be at stake in PLATO's, *Critias* (XV: [120 AB]) when the mythical dwellers of Atlantis are to drink a libation.

1. ll. 18'-19'a. Ea, addressing *humans* (?), invites each of them either to 'satisfy (i.e. [?] give homage) to the gods' (verb: *tābum*, D imperat.) or to 'stand up' in their presence (verb: *tebûm*, G imperat. [cf. p. 254]).

2. ll. 11'b-24a'. Ea asks that the gods make each human (?) who plans to sin toward Mari take an oath as follows:

3. ll. 23'-26'. "We shall not sin either against the 'brick' or the 'guardian' of Mari."

Thus, in this reading, the oath, reserved to ll. 23'b-26', is to be invoked only when: 1. humans (?) have evil intents against Mari, and 2. deities learn of their evil intents. Notice how, according to this understanding of events, Ea is removed from the actual oath-taking. His function is limited to establishing the conditions in which it will be found necessary to back the imprecation with vindicating deeds. And, if I am not unfair in inferring that ARMT's rendering blurs any demarcation line between the divine and human realms, one also ought to note the singularity of such an occasion. For, while plastic and other artistic representations from Mesopotamia, especially those carved on cylinder seals, might allow us to interpret that this mingling between the two spheres occasionally occurred, the *literary* imagination confines these encounters to belletristic creations, to such moments as in the *epithalamia*, when the king, representing the divinely bestowed institution of kingship, mated with a goddess, in the *gestes* of those legendary ancestors Lugalbanda, Enmerkar, Gilgamesh, and in those of the various *apkallû*.

In the translation we have offered above, no human need be regarded as attending the divine council in session. Rather, the whole scene is to be considered as a *vision*, reported to the queen who, in turn, communicated it to her husband. By the time the last receives the report, he could be sure that the following had taken place: the gods, assembled and serving as witnesses to each other, have taken an oath to protect Mari (ll. 23'b-26'). That oath was formulated by Ea himself (ll. 18'-21'), who, perhaps following Asumûm's suggestion, also linked that oath with an act (ordeal) which threatened those who break covenant with an unspecified punishment (ll. 11'-14'). Rhetorically speaking, therefore, our reading of the reverse of X:9 might be deemed more persuasive in assuaging the fears and anxieties

of the message's ultimate receiver, the king, who, very likely, was about to undertake martial activities.

2. There is no doubt that the observe of X:9, with its mention of a medium (*āpilum*) sent by a goddess (Diritum), with its comforting message of restoration (?) of land, and of eventual victory over a foe, etc., is to be placed squarely within a large dossier of Mari prophetic literature. This category has been repeatedly studied, often with great elaboration and depth by a good number of scholars. ⁽¹⁾ But in turning to the second task on our agenda, we ought to ascertain the genre of literature to which the 'mythological' fragment contained on the reverse of X:9 belongs. In order to do so, however, the text has to be approached not necessarily or exclusively from the level of its meaning to those who composed it and were first to receive it, but from that of the literary historian, able to bring comparative literature to bear on the questions that are posed. We might try to find Biblical analogies for the type of vision which is described in X:9. Our task is simplified by a recent work that has established a typology for Biblical prophetic visions. ⁽²⁾ Long recognizes three types. In 'Oracle-visions', the prophet and God enter into a dialogue which ultimately produces a divine pronouncement. 'Revelatory-Mysteries-visions' introduce an intermediary (angel) who uses highly symbolic imageries and/or an esoteric vocabulary to communicate God's message to the prophet. Between these two types is one which Long labels 'Dramatic Word-vision'. "This type is a report which depicts a heavenly scene, or a dramatic action, a situation altogether supramundane taken as a portent presaging a future event in the mundane realm. The dramatic situation may be simple... or complex, with action and dialogue among visionary figures... Occasionally, the situation includes a divine address.» (p. 359). As examples for this last type, Long mentions Amos 7:1-6; Ezek. 9:1-10; Isa. 6; Zech. 1:8-7, and briefly discusses the story of Micayah, son of Imlah, as recorded in 1 Kings 22 and, with slight variations, in 1 Chron. 18. We shall linger slightly over this particular episode.

⁽¹⁾ See the bibliography collected by Noort whose volume has been cited p. 487 n. 1.

⁽²⁾ Burke O. LONG, "Reports of Visions Among the Prophets," *JBL* 95 (1976), 353-365.

It occurs at the tail end of a series of anecdotes which drive home the manifest wickedness of Ahab, king of Israel, and brood over the foolishness of Judah's dependence upon the latter. Because the account precedes an event that is regarded by the redactor of *Kings* as 'historical' (Ahab's defeat), the whole episode is meant to be taken as such. We need not pursue the matter of its 'authenticity' nor debate recent views on the development of its traditions.⁽¹⁾ Rather, we should only recall the background in which Ahab and his vassal Jehosaphat plan to retake Ramoth-Gilead from Aram. Relying on his '400' prophets, Ahab is encouraged to proceed with his plans. When Jehosaphat asks for one more testimony, that of Micayah, a man who has displeased Ahab frequently, is sought. At first Micayah agrees with the positive prognostications of the other prophets. When prodded, however, Micayah offers a twofold response, interrupted only by Ahab's bitter comments against the prophet. The first, recorded in v. 17, is a straightforward prophecy which is emphasized by a divine interpretation:

I saw Israel scattered upon the hills, like sheep
without a shepherd. And God said: "Since they have
no master, let each return home in peace."

Albeit presented as a vision, this prophecy can be compared with the one presented on the obverse of X:9. Each is concerned with martial activities, and their import on the fate of a ruler and his people. Each presents its arguments in metaphorical language, and each defends the ultimate meaning of its message by invoking divine proclamations. What is striking, however, is that both immediately turn to another form of prophetic presentation to deliver messages that are no longer merely

⁽¹⁾ The following discussions on this narrative might be consulted: E. WÜRTHWEIN, "Zur Komposition von I Reg 22 1-38," *Das Ferne und Nahe Wort* [*Festschrift L. Rost=Beiheft, ZAW* 105], 1967, 245-254 (on the development of the traditions and their redaction); F. L. HOSSFELD and I. MEYER, *Prophet gegen Prophet* [Bibl.

Beiträge 9], 1973, 27-36 (interesting comparison with Isaiah 6); J. L. CRENSHAW, *Prophetic Conflict* [Beiheft, *ZAW*, 124], 1971, 83-85 (issue of false versus true prophecy—note also his article 'Prophecy, False' on pp. 701-702 in *IDB, Supplement*). The commentaries to *Kings* might also be consulted with profit.

imminent in their application, but have become *immanent* in their perspective. 1 Kings 22:19-23:

I saw God sitting on his Throne, with all the Heavenly Hosts attending Him, to His right and left. When He asked: 'Who shall beguile Ahab so that he might go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?', some answered one way, and others differently. But when a spirit (*rûah*) presented himself before God to say: 'I shall', God interjected 'How?'. 'I will become a lying spirit in all his prophets' mouths', he responded. God said: 'Beguile and you are to succeed. Go ahead and do so'.

The Biblical account, unlike that from Mari, goes on to record Micayah's own comments on the heavenly drama and the human events that are soon to take place, and to elaborate on an amusing confrontation between Micayah and another prophet. For our part, we might note that the intent of these two accounts, stemming from succeeding millennia, can scarcely be more different. Mari's text was meant to be 'positive', while that of 1 Kings' 'negative', in attitude toward the respective states and leaders. Furthermore, the setting of each text promotes radically differing expectations. ARM X:9, a letter sent by the queen, does not dwell on anecdotal or on any other diversion. It proceeds directly to the issue at hand, and ends abruptly. 1 Kings 22 leisurely shapes a debate on the issue of 'false' versus 'true' prophecy. ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The heavenly debate over dispatching the 'lying' spirit to Ahab's 400 prophets might, at first glance, appear to afford the Biblical vision a dimension that does not obtain in Mari's letter, one which would permit the exegete to assume that the Hebrew God—unlike that of Mari's Ea—is capable of abusing the channels of communication, prophecy, visions (and potentially dreams), set up between gods and men. But even as we recognize the special limitations imposed upon the Hebrew by his belief in God's transcendental authority, the

role given to Micayah quickly redresses the balance and assures the audience that, in Israel as well as in Mari, these modes of communication were indeed trustworthy. For, the introduction of Micayah into the scene quickly and effectively converts an issue which might have stagnated upon the capriciousness of God, into one in which God's messages are constant and must be taken seriously; for, it is implied, these messages are but predictive of events that have been set generations before they ultimately come to pass.

Nevertheless, we can note that a number of presuppositions are held in common: *a.* that the fate of Mari as well as Israel is of interest to the immortals; *b.* that appropriate decisions are arrived at after discussions within divine circles (those of Ea and Yahweh, respectively); *c.* that the locus of responsibility for the success or failure of human endeavors can be attributed to a specific grouping among the gods (those pledged by oath to Mari's welfare, and those attending the enthroned God); *d.* that the effectiveness and execution of the divine decisions is ascertained by the choice of media with which to bridge the human and divine realms (Mari's (sacral) brick/'protective genie' (*rābišu*) vs. Israel's 'lying' spirit chosen to beguile Ahab); *e.* that humans become aware of the divine decision by prophecies (false and otherwise) and visions authorized by the gods; *f.* that, in the case of the biblical vision, the occasion for divine discussion is not located within a specific moment in time, since the 'fall' of Ahab is regarded by the Kings redactor as but one more retribution dispensed to a dynasty that had been doomed because of the sinful acts of its founder, Omri. We can say as much for the Mari vision. In this last account, we are confronted with a message which does not direct its immediate prognostications to Zimri-Lim's immediate vindication or to his imminent victories. We should note, rather, that while the oath, and its accompanying gesture (ordeal) as taken by the gods, clearly guarantees the well-being of Mari, it does not speak, necessarily of the well-being of *that king who was then reigning at Mari*. The pledge of protection, therefore, is neither exclusively nor categorically linked to one particular ruler, in this case Zimri-Lim, but solely to a particular city-state. Zimri-Lim and his advisors, even the prophet of Dirītum and Šiptu, may well have restricted this message to the narrowest of time-frames, and hence regarded it as particularly salutary to the future of the reigning monarch. We have no way of substantiating such an assessment since, as is too common in epistolary archives, we have no responses or analyses which develop on the issues drawn by the reverse of X:9. The fact that—broken lines in the *texte* notwithstanding—apparently neither fringes nor hair-parings from the prophet were sent to

the king would suggest that the message of X:9 was deemed by all to be comforting to the king. ⁽¹⁾

But from our perspective, it can be noted that the text is imprecise in its time-setting. The oath could easily have been taken before Zimri-Lim's reign; indeed it can be interpreted as having occurred at Mari's own foundings. More importantly, it can also be observed that this vision transcends the immediate present, moving the promise of protection well into an eternal future. Finally, it can be seen that, according to this vision, not only is the fate of the gods linked to the protection of Mari, but that the reverse condition could logically be expected to be at stake: the fate of Mari will affect that of the gods. Thus, we are permitted to believe that if, in a future generation, an earthly ruler succeeds in destroying Mari, the oath-takers among the gods will not fare well. If such a catastrophe was to occur to Mari,—even if permitted after extensive debates within divine councils (cf. the Sumerian Lamentations)—we are invited to consider that the resulting perjury will launch retribution which will lead, if not to a total *Götterdämmerung*, at least to destructive havoc deep within Ea's circles. Conversely, we are also led to imagine that such a catastrophe among the immortals would ultimately have its effect on earth, on a scale that might not be limited to Mari and its dependencies. ⁽²⁾

Again, while we cannot ever know whether Zimri-Lim's advisors conceived of these consequences as being at stake, we can note that this type of religious symbolism, in which the cosmos and the polis are linked in their fate, in which the past, present and future lack delineation, and in which, ultimately, the fate of total communities—if not mankind—becomes involved, belongs to particular manifestations of apocalypticizing literatures. Even as I use this terminology, I gingerly sidestep a debate within

⁽¹⁾ On this point, see J.-G. Heintz as cited in the *Supplement, Dictionnaire de la Bible* (sub. 'prophétisme', 889). On the symbolism and practical aspects of fringes and hair-parings, see A. FINET, "Les symboles du cheveu..." *Eschatologie et Cosmologie* [=Annales du centre d'étude des religions, Bruxelles 3], 1970, 101-130.

⁽²⁾ In his rich study of *The Problem of the "Curse" in the Hebrew Bible* [*JBL*, monograph 13], 1963, H. Ch. Brichto suggests that: "It is...far from inconceivable that acts of men might shake the foundations of heaven as well as those of earth." (p. 155).

assyriology which tries to ascertain whether a certain group of cuneiform texts, which 'predicts' dynastic events which have already occurred, ought to be labelled 'prophetic' (albeit *ex-post facto*) or 'apocalyptic'.⁽¹⁾ Rather, I should like to place our example, unusual in cuneiform literature, squarely within a category of documents that has, so far, been attested among the West Semites—the Hebrews in particular—and which becomes commonly available beginning with the second half of the first millennium B.C.

In categorizing the vision reported in X:9, we have allowed the Biblical passage to retain our attention not only because Micayah's twofold visions are useful to compare with those recorded in ARM[T] X:9, but because the second of his visions, along with nearly every other example from the 'Dramatic Word-vision' type cited by Long, has often been regarded as (proto-) apocalyptic in its impact and function. It must be obvious, however, that neither Micayah's second vision nor that reported in the reverse of X:9 can compare neatly with the examples of apocalypses that begin to appear during the second half of Israel's 1st millennium history: Daniel, Enoch, IV Ezra, II Baruch, Revelation, etc. But, as has been increasingly recognized by scholars, this literature is flexible enough to permit variations, permutations, even narrow selectivity, as it adapts itself to particularizing occasions. In some cases, what used to be considered as essential components of the genre—revelation of divine message, mediation by means of epiphanies, involvements of seers, otherworldly journeys, detailing future events—can be reshaped, reshuffled, de-emphasized, or simply ignored.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Latest discussion on this debate is available in A. K. GRAYSON, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 1975, chapters I and II. With regards to the conjectures made above, contrast Grayson's remark: "It must be emphasized that there is no suggestion in any Akkadian prophecy of a climactic end to world history (p. 21, n. 34)." A brief discussion of this debate is also available in H. HUNGER and S. A. KAUFMAN'S "A New Akkadian Prophecy

Text," *JAOS* 95 (1975), 371-375. See now W. LAMBERT, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic*, [The Ethel M. Wood, Lectures 1977], London, 1978 (ref. courtesy D. Charpin).

⁽²⁾ A handy introduction to the genre, together with attempts by specialists of various apocalypses to establish a morphology of the structures and themes encountered, see J. J. COLLINS, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* [Semeia 14], 1979.

Furthermore, recent discussions have advanced a terminology that is better attuned to the relationship between this type of literature and the society that produces it. ⁽¹⁾ Thus, while the term 'apocalypse' has been retained for the religious literature fostered in Judaeo-Christian and Gnostic milieus, attention has been given to the economic, political as well as religious factors which encourage communities, widely spaced in time and locale, to promote apocalypticizing ideologies. These ideologies are seen to be centered on newer theological perspectives which find it necessary to redefine 'traditional' understandings in order to face unhappy realities or to prepare for difficult prospects. Richly variegated in their manifestations, such religious reconstructions often include an apocalyptic eschatology which elaborates a coherent symmetry between the divine and the human spheres of activities and establishes a strict concordance between the future and the past, even as they are sensed by the present. ⁽²⁾

In the preceding pages, we have presented a fragmentary letter from Mari which can be restricted to the few years preceding the fall of Mari (ca. 1760 B.C.). Sent by the queen, this letter was addressed to a king who almost constantly was battling foreign foes and had thus much to fear from the rapaciousness of his contemporaries. Its message was given by a

⁽¹⁾ An incisive introduction, with bibliography, to the task of clarifying the terminology at stake is available in the *IDB Supplement*. See the articles, 'Apocalypse, Genre', and '*Apocalypticism', both written by P. D. HANSON.

⁽²⁾ In an article on "Wisdom and Apocalyptic," *Religious Syncretism in Antiquity* (ed. B. A. Pearson), 1975, J. Z. Smith amplifies on previous discussions which have collected and analyzed apocalyptic manifestations in the belletristic productions of Egypt and Mesopotamia, mostly from the Hellenistic period. His main thesis is given on p. 154:

"In this paper I have suggested that Wisdom and Apocalyptic are interrelated in that both are essentially scribal phenomena. They both depend on the relentless quest for paradigms, the problematics of applying these paradigms

to new situations and the *Listenwissenschaft* which are the characteristic activities of the Near Eastern scribe. When these are applied to historiographic materials one may frequently discern proto apocalyptic elements, though the genre apocalypse is lacking. When the historical patterns are correlated with cosmogonic and kingship traditions and when the attendant structures of woes and promises are directed towards a condition of foreign domination, there is an apocalyptic situation—though again lacking the literary form of the apocalypse. Both proto apocalyptic literature and apocalyptic situations were present in Babylonian materials from the Hellenistic period and these materials stand in close continuity with archaic scribal traditions and activities.'

prophet who was, most certainly, unalphabetic. Whether he was attuned to the theosophistications of belletristic tradents cannot be ascertained. One has the feeling, however, that his vision, communicated within a few days of its manifestation, did not benefit from contact and dialogue with learned scribes and priests. If the thesis presented above—even if supported by Biblical anecdotes of uncertain dating and origin—is found to be convincing, then we would suggest that the documentation for the study of apocalyptic eschatology is restricted neither to specific cultures (Judaeo-Christian) nor to specific periods (Post-exilic/Hellenistic), and that apocalypticizing ideologies need not be limited to the narrowest of elite circles. Rather, it could originate among obscure temple functionaries and could potentially be gleaned from any society whose leadership is experiencing political and social stress. ⁽¹⁾

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⁽¹⁾ I should like to tender thanks to M. L. Moran, J. van Seters, and Y. Gitay for useful criticism of this paper.

POST SCRIPTUM. Two publications by J.-G. Heintz came to my attention too late to permit full consideration: “Notes sur les origines de l’apocalyptique judaïque, à la lumière des ‘Prophéties akkadiennes,’” *L’Apocalyptique* (Paris, 1977), pp. 71-87; “De l’absence de la statue divine au ‘Dieu qui se cache’ (Ésaïe, 45/15): aux origines d’un thème biblique,” *Prophètes, poètes et sages d’Israël. Hommages à E. Jacob...* (= R.H.Ph.R., 59 (1979), pp. 427-437. The latter essay deals with ARM X:50.

In a letter dated the 26th of September 1981, D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand were kind enough to share with me the result of their collations of X:9. I can here only offer them without comments (Charpin’s text):

- l. 7’ *ar-h[i-iš]*
 14’ “le dernier signe est, de façon inattendue mais très claire]uz-
 Peut-être [*i ni-ih-sú-*]us, ce qui va bien pour la place (4 signes
 seulement dans la cassure).
 16’ *im-ḥu-ḥu-ma* est sûr.
 19’ *ti-ba-a*
 21’ devant -ga- les traces sont celles de *ú*, plutôt que *tu*.