Two Recent Works on Mari

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Within recent memory, a publication of syllabic cuneiform documents can scarcely be recalled which has evoked as much interest, comments, and interpretation as Georges Dossin's 1967 edition of ARM X. The handsomely copied letters, 179 in all, were unusual not only because they comprised the largest corpus of correspondence to and from females coming from any restricted period of ancient Near Eastern history, but because among them were a number of letters which practically doubled the body of Mari material dealing with "prophetic" themes. Normally, academic ethics would have encouraged the scholarly world to await the editor's own transcription and translation, if not his interpretation, of these texts before partaking of their riches. But ARM X proved to be too full of assyriological details that whetted the appetite of the linguist, too exciting in its promise for the historian of religion, too enticing for those who were assessing the role of women in ancient societies; in short ARM X attracted so powerfully that academic conventions were skirted. At least two volumes appeared, those of Römer, AOAT 12, 1971, and of Batto, 1974, together with about a dozen articles treating basically assyriological matters; another two monographs, those of Ellermeier and Huffman, both published in 1968, and scores of papers, investigated the Mari "prophecies" and their import for the development of Hebraic prophetic traditions. Noort's volume, treated below, is the third volume to be included in this last category. In this twofold review, we consider it first.

Noort has combed the primary literature and collected 28 examples from Mari which could loosely be termed prophetic either in form, substance or function. To be sure, these texts incorporate a wide variety of religious experiences, ranging from ecstatic revelations to dream visions. One text, A. 222, classified by Noort as "unpublished" had in fact already been presented in toto by Dossin in RA 69 (1975), 28–30. Moreover, Dossin dates that particular text to the Yahdun-Lim period, which, if proven correct, would make it the earliest of all other examples. Noort's files on Mari's religious life, a spot check reveals, are well nigh complete (add Annunitum in X: 8, p. 53). But his careful listing of the occasion in which deities, mostly associated with "prophetic" activities, appear in the Mari texts (pp. 53 ff.), is now superseded by the appearance of ARM XVI/1 (M. Birot, J.-R. Kupper, O. Rouault, Répertoire analytique (2e volume), première partie: Noms Propres. Paris, Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1979). Noort's assembling of secondary materials, up until the time of his book's publication, is so respectably complete that this review will try to lighten its own burden by citing completely only items which are not listed on pp. 111–132: Within that bibliography a couple of entries are either incompletely or inaccurately given (e. g. Heintz's 5th item, McDonald's only entry; Sasson's 1st) but these are easily corrected by checks and balances whenever any subject is pursued further. Noort's translations cannot be regarded as independently arrived at, but follow those of the most respected authorities (but cf., e. g. p. 78's III: 40: 16–18 and note CAD's reading, K, 198; read the DN in n. 1 of p. 62 as ma'ah (rather than BAH)). The volume contains very few typos (e. g. p. 105, n. 1 middle: byhr't), is pleasantly arranged, and, despite the smallish typeset, is easily readable. The indices are very useful, allowing the reader quick reference to items of interest. The price is tolerable.

Noort's study is densely packed, with footnotes rivaling the text in complexity of argu-
mentation and in richness of details. After an introduction, the author establishes criteria for pursuing his task of analysing those Mari texts commonly regarded as 'prophetic'. These criteria have been often recalled by previous researchers, and include: 1. queries concerning the (non)spontaneity of the divine message; 2. the place in the Mari pantheon of the deities involved in prophetic messages; 3. details of the message's contents; 4. the terminology associated with the recipients of the message; 5. the rank, sex, and place of the message carriers within Mari society (oddly enough scant attention is paid to prosopography, and (too) much to their title); and 6. the role, if any, that these played in the cult. A section (pp. 35-52) tries to deal with the archaeological setting whence came our texts and where worship of the various gods took place. Though commendable as an object of interest, it is really doubtful whether these pages contribute much to the topic at hand.

Utilizing the criteria he has established and his analyses of individual 'prophetic' texts, Noort asks whether a uniform type of prophecy could be found at Mari, and whether that which we do have could be compared with the prophetic experience in Israel. It is upon Noort's perspective and upon his scepticism over the vacuum can hardly be conceded nowadays. That ancient Hebrews lived in a cultural vacuum can hardly be conceded nowadays. Israel and Judah, as the OT testifies, constantly strove to be accepted among their neighbors. Even when they sought to retain the (religious) traditions which they regarded as characteristically theirs, they nevertheless adopted and adapted much from superior civilizations. Much better aware of the debt that Israel owes its neighbors, thanks to the wealth of epigraphic materials which the decipherments of the Mari texts commonly regarded as 'prophetic'. These criteria have been often recalled by previous researchers, and include: 1. queries concerning the (non)spontaneity of the divine message; 2. the place in the Mari pantheon of the deities involved in prophetic messages; 3. details of the message's contents; 4. the terminology associated with the recipients of the message; 5. the rank, sex, and place of the message carriers within Mari society (oddly enough scant attention is paid to prosopography, and (too) much to their title); and 6. the role, if any, that these played in the cult. A section (pp. 35-52) tries to deal with the archaeological setting whence came our texts and where worship of the various gods took place. Though commendable as an object of interest, it is really doubtful whether these pages contribute much to the topic at hand.

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Typically, these cycles/spirals find their beginning in an announcement or a rumor that a well stocked archive has been found in such-and-such a place and that its discoverers are wont to date it to the Bronze Age. Unverifiable statements are reported to the effect that personal, place, or divine names, closely resembling Biblical ones, occur among the documents. One or two OT scholars — characteristically Americans, since it is among them that historical (better: historicizing) consciousness seems most highly developed — clamor for publication of evidence. The cycle/spiral reaches its apogee when, with the publication of texts selected precisely because of their OT 'parallels', impressive and apparently firm evidence of interrelationship or dependence is drawn, to the satisfaction of a large number of Biblical scholars. The publication of a larger corpus of materials from that site, however, begins the swing toward the perigee of the spiral; for the availability of a larger number of such documents now permits not only the establishment of more precise contexts for the previously published selections, but it allows the assyriologists to begin shaping a civilization in all its uniqueness and to explore its characteristics which often are unmatched even among those cultures that are nearer in time and space. Moreover, the publication of a larger body of texts allows the philologist to develop meanings for a terminology that had been superficially linked to Biblical equivalents. In other words, what occurs at this stage is a recognition, articulated or otherwise, that, by virtue of narrow selectivity, the early evidence from a particular site had been bibli-cized and that, consequently, the conclusions thus derived had been severely distorted. While in some circles, either because of pietistic positions or because of time-lag in appreciating the assyriologists' contributions, the early, often sensational, propositions are maintained a bit longer, responsible Biblical scholarship ends up by assessing its gains in modest terminology.
Noort's book can be placed squarely within this last phase of the spiral. His conclusions will no doubt be accepted by a majority of Biblical scholars. But even as he wrote in 1975 and is now read, the focus of attention had shifted from Mari to places further northwest, and closer to Israel's borders. With the discovery of Ebla, the spiral had begun its steady climb to a new apogee ...

This gloomily — if not cynically — stated account of Biblical-Ancient Near East connections is given not to deride the enterprise, for — as noted above — some benefit is ultimately born by these transactions, but to urge that some goals be set up before plunging into comparative undertakings. In the matter of Mari prophecy, even at its earliest date when, during the forties, Jean and Dossin published an excellent study of Mukannišum, ARMT XVIII, and, in the matter of a particular 'prophet', the chancellery and scribal schools seem to yield documentation which could be construed as relevant to the Biblical materials of the same genre, a number of questions could have been posed which would have alerted scholarship to the complexity of the problem.

1. What is the purpose of the inquiry? Is it to say that kings consulted the gods before they set out on martial journeys? Is it to prove that the clergy of an individual city-state thought it imperative that the gods be involved in any major political decisions facing the rulers? But we already had evidence of such activities, mostly from the first millennium, from Israel's immediate as well as distant neighbors. Is it that Mari projected such concern further into the past than previous documentation? But is this such an overriding discovery that its ramifications are to be restricted only to comparison between Israel and Mari?

2. What are the differences in contexts? Was the inquirer interested in establishing whether those involved in prophetic texts were priestly or laity? But if so, it is remarkable how few scholars bothered with prosopographical details and remained content with accepting titles — or their absence —, mentioned in each text under study, as evidence to be tested against that derived from the Old Testament. This approach ignores the fluidity of positions that is clearly recognizable in the Mari archives [cf. the conclusions of Rouault's excellent study of Mukannium, ARMT XVIII, and, in the matter of a particular 'prophet', cf. below, sub 7:6]. Even more troubling is the fact that the comparisons are made among texts belonging to radically different genres and preserved in a radically different mode of communication. Those of Mari are derived from epistolary archives, written in the heat of the moment, so to speak. The Biblical ones, even when dependent, in terms of time-setting and vocabulary, on 'authentic' formulations, were preserved by an audience which found in their alternate warnings and promises powerfully persuasive arguments by which to achieve redemption and salvation. In their selectivity and survival within the OT canon, the Biblical prophecies can scarcely be compared with those of Mari; the latter having been haphazardly stored, along with documents of varying types and importance, in rooms which saw much daily activity [cf. my remarks in Iraq, 34 (1972), 55—67]. Their own recovery depends on the fortune of the spade wielder. Furthermore, the events which an individual prophecy in the OT uses as backdrop were not established by the Biblical historiographer strictly on historical development, but were also shaped under didactic and religious considerations. In the case of Mari, since that task was never entrusted to palace thinkers, we are left to speculate on the historical occasion which necessitated each and every divine pronouncement.

3. Finally, questions will have to be entertained concerning the language used in the respective prophecies: Can one presume that etymological kinship in specific vocabulary and formulaic equivalence in idiomatic usage — items upon which a goodly amount of Bible-Mari parallelsisms centers [cf. Noort, pp. 24—32; 69—82] — are necessarily useful as means by which to compare prophecies separated in time and space? Two separate issues can be presented here, the first of which, moreover, is two-pronged and concerns the contents of the Mari 'prophetic' document.

(a) Assyriologists have often observed that even in the corpora of documents which stem from the same period but from different sites, technical terminology and bureaucratic religious titles sometimes bear appreciably different nuances. With regards to Mari, because its chancellery and scribal schools seem to yield much more commonly than their southern equivalents to West Semiticisms, this technical vocabulary is not always fixed. Consequently, the same terms and titles, as is demonstrable in a few cases, can convey slightly different meanings or functions. This observation is worth keeping in mind for yet another reason.
Some of the letters which are placed within the corpus of Mari prophecy did not originate in Mari, but in other localities. Thus, even when similar vocabulary is encountered in all the texts at our disposal, we have to bear in mind that scribal traditions in those areas may have differed sharply from Mari's.

(b) The other matter concerning textual contents is a bit more hypothetical in its framing, but might yet be worth placing in this agenda of inquiry. There is a good possibility, as suggested by our documentation, that Mari's citizenry spoke a West Semitic language which, for convenience' sake, we might call 'Amorite'. The epistolary archives upon which our information on Mary prophecy is based, were written, as almost all other examples from that site, in Akkadian. One might assume that whenever the gods felt moved to contact their human flock, they used a language that was understandable to it: Amorite. We therefore must take into consideration that all those messages which we study so carefully are, in effect, translations made by scribes; translations which moreover might be perpetuating the style and formulae not so much of the divine messages themselves, but of the scribal schools and their traditions. Whether the scribes at the receiving end felt it necessary to retranslate into the original Amorite when reading before the king is yet one more complication that might have affected the transmission of the message.

The second of these issues is concerned with the completeness of the divine message as reported in any of the Mari texts. In my comments to ARMT X: 8, (below), I try to show that the divine message and its recipient are by no means the only ones to receive attention from those charged with responding to the god's wishes. In our case, at least three other personalities are involved in communicating that message — but, interestingly enough, not its original recipient. It should also be noted that three distinct exemplars of that message, written over two different days, reach the king, and that, it is very possible, an emissary ready to communicate the same message orally (in Amorite?) reached the same destination. In view of all this, it seems unlikely to suppose that the text, over which modern scholarship pores to extract information for comparison with the Biblical prophetic traditions, is complete in its recording of the divine message, or that we shall ever be in a position to reconstruct it in its entirety, and recover in its full power, any single prophetic revelation from Mari. For that to be achieved, cassette recorders would have had to be invented centuries before our time.

But meanwhile the task of the historian is still to try to reconstruct as complete a picture of an ancient civilization as possible. Mari, with a large and variegated documentation, spanning but a couple of generations of the early 18th century B.C., comes closer than most other city-states in allowing the researcher to fulfill this enterprise. As of this writing, hundreds of letters, and administrative and legal documents have been published. We have been most fortunate that their presentation reaches us, under the auspices of the ARMT series, in a welcome pre-digested form. Georges Dossin has been responsible, either individually or cooperatively, for almost every one of these volumes. It is pleasure to greet his latest effort, ARMT X. Ably aided in his task by Finet, Dossin has given his readers a work which, once more, underscores the benefits to be gained when a veteran of Mari scholarship offers his opinions on even the most intractable of passages.

The volume follows the successful formula of its predecessors in the series. Brief summaries of each text are given by way of introduction (pp. 1–18). The texts themselves are given in transliterations and, in facing pages, in translations. Notes are provided at the end, pp. 252–287, with which to support difficult renderings or to propose plausible solutions. A bonus includes indices of personal, place, and divine names as well as a listing of a selected vocabulary (pp. 288–299). In view of the heavy utilization of ARM X, it is nevertheless remarkable how often ARMT offers fresh — and persuasive — readings and proposals for translations [e.g. at 29: 9; 28: 4; 31: 15–16; 41: 4'–9'; 42: 8'–12'; 69: 7, 9; 74: 25; 79: 8; 84: 23, 26; 97: 11–12; 121: 6; 139: 10–14]. There are, to be sure, examples in which arguable offerings are promoted [e.g. at 30: 6, 10; 31: 9, passim; 37: 27–29; 46: 13'; 53: 12–13; 55: 17–20; 56: 11; 60: 19; 73: 8; 90: 37; 94: 6–7; 111: 15–16; 118: tr. 3–4]. One can but be grateful for having a debate launched even in these last instances. In the few examples offered below, I hope that Messieurs Dossin and Finet would find testimony to the interest which their work has evoked.
Two Recent Works on Mari

[Below, the following abbreviations are observed: Batto = B. F. Batto, Studies on Women at Mari, Baltimore, 1974; Moran = W. L. Moran, «New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy», Biblica 50 (1969), 16ff.; Römer = W. H. Ph. Römer, Frauenbriefe über Religion ... (AOAT 12), Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1971.]


2. 6. This is probably the same name as the one read ma-an-na-še, cf. XVI/1, 149.

3. Kunšimatum is a good example of a person who survived the leadership transitions, retaining an important place in the administration. I doubt Batto’s hypothesis, that she was a wife of Yasmah-Adad. For further listing of her name, see XVI/1, 141 2° + 3°: l. 19. [da-na-am/di-nam] ą-la-ša-az-ma, I shall try them (the context suggests a legal matter is at stake); rev. On slander and its vocabulary, see JESHO, 20 (1977), 110—112; 5°. ri-t[i]-ti-im-ma-a’i ı̄-ša-AT, and cf. ALM § 1Old (p. 283); 6°—8°. ... the promises before you callunies against me; 16°. Either bu-[ul-li-[i]]; or bu-[li-[i];]

4. ARMT offers many readings and interpretations which differ from previous attempts (bibilography on p. 252); l. 6. The search is still on for a proper reading and understanding of the first (2) sign(s); Lines 6°—11° of the Mari text treated by Nougayrol, JCS 21 (1967), 229—232 [A. 4222], are reminiscent of the type of questions raised in this letter. That text, however, is datable to Zimri-Lim’s last years on the throne. Further, see X: 177: 8ff.

5. 5. [assembly]-t[u][n] ... (a typo!). On the sender and the political circumstances, see JCS 25 (1973), 69—72; l. 31. AHw, 917a (D 1 b) restores šu after bu-; l. 35. ī-ša-ı̄-šd; cf. Moran’s review of ARMT [forthcoming, JAOS: [7]°. 11°; l. 40. AM.MA is not likely to be a ‘pseudo-sumérogrammes’ (p. 253). Read perhaps SES.ma.

6. The dated texts from Mari, Êjaya-Sumú’s activities are charted during the 4 years sequence which ends about 6 years before Zimri-Lim’s demise [Throne of Samaš, Census, Dur Yakhun-Lim, and Ḥatta]. Those of Sima-ila-ḫanem (or however the name is to be read) are attested during Zimri-Lim’s last years; cf. Birot, Restoration, 66 (1972), 131—139.

7. 9. This is probably the same name as the one read ma-an-na-še, cf. XVI/1, 149. It should be emphasized that the restorations here, which would implicate Hammurapi of Babylon, are extremely tentative.

7. 19. While it is more likely to indicate a fluidity in title or appellation, likewise found in the administration and the bureaucracy, than a reflection on Šeltum’s rise in ecclesiastical circles. If the same man is at stake here, it might also indicate that the first term may not indicate a ‘eunuch’, since it is unlikely that those cut out for that position could be rendered whole for the latter one. [Bibliography on asinnum in Noort, p. 70, n. 1.] The reverse movement is as unlikely; l. 22, end, could be restored on the basis of 8: 14 as ı̄-ma-a-[l-la], despite the presence of ı̄ in 8: 15.

8. Together with VI: 45, this text shows the complex routes taken before prophetic materials are placed before the king:

a. The message of Annunitum of Mari reaches Ahatum, Dagan-malkî’s girl;

b. Ahatum reports it to the šangum Aḫum;

c. The same day Aḫum:

i. takes hair and fringes,

ii. writes down the message on a tablet (VI: 45),

iii. takes the tablet, hair and fringes to Baḫdi-Lim;

d. Baḫdi-Lim dispatches the tablet, hair and fringes to the king;

e. The next day, Aḫum goes to Šibtu and repeats the message (orally?);

f. Šibtu writes the message on a tablet and dispatches it (with) hair and fringes. It is possible that Aḫum is sent along with the message.

Thus Zimri-Lim ends up receiving: 1. letter of Aḫum (from Baḫdi-Lim); 2. Baḫdi-Lim’s own letter, together with hair and fringes; 3. Letter of Šibtu — with message — together with (more) hair and fringes; 4. possibly also Aḫum.

This seemingly very cumbersome process is not merely an indication of a bureaucracy gone to extremes (on which cf. also Iraq 34 (1972), 55—67) but also that, in dire times, as clearly indicated by the contents of the messages at stake, elaborate means are established by the governors to make sure that the governed are not exacerbating, deliberately or otherwise, tensions and contributing to the aura of unstability that besets any authority that is fighting for survival. Socioanthropologists have spoken of this context between structures and anti-structures as occurring between the secular and religious authorities under conditions that seem to obtain at Mari of the Zimri-Lim period. See, generally, Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure, Chicago, 1969 and his collection of essays Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society, Ithaca, NY. 1974.

9. I have studied this text, offering different renderings and translations in some crucial contexts, in a paper, «An Apocalyptic Vision from Mari?» Speculations on ARM X: 9, appearing in the first issue of the Cahiers de Mari [= Syria].
10. 10. Note that a reading šÁ.BA is attested in XIII: 45: 13; (Or should one read ba-na there also?)

11. 11. ARMT’s explanation, p. 254, for kal mù (m. pl.) does not take into account the form kal mü (f.) found in X: 10: 4; 1. 21. With Römer, p. 42, n. 2, we may translate: «Only in tribute will he come to term with my lord».

12. 20. Printing error: add ] after -[nu]; 1. 34. ]a [p-tu-á'. How does one seal with the ‘leather strips’ of a seal?

15. Ascribing this letter to Šimatum is indeed plausible. Note that Kirum, her sister and rival for their common husband’s affection, is also involved in the cult (cf. X: 113: 20 — 22 and Batto, 128 — 129).

16. R. Glasemann, apud Y. Al-Khalesi, BIMes 8, 1976, 73ff., uses this text, as well as X: 136, to measure the surface of the sanctuary roof and thence to locate the last within the Mari palace.

18. 5. UD. 5.'KAM.

20. This letter is related to II: 117. Read in l. 16 [i-na É-ka] as in II: 117: 11; In II: 117: 9 one might read [la-a]. In II: 117: 12 dumqi refers to ZID dumqi(m) of X: 20: 4. Thus CAD D, 182 (7) ought to be corrected accordingly. On butum, add to the bibliography of ARMT X, p. 256, Stol, TMM, 1979, 8ff.

24. 25: 14. It would be nice to be able to read, as in XIII: 28: 9, i-tu-uk-šu. 1.

27. Connect perhaps with Joan, excerpta, (RES, 1939), p. 68, which also concerns the sick child of Šamaš-šaṣṣer (cf. XVI/1, 192).

29. 29. Perhaps a-na SAL ki’-ri-im, although the gen. for this PN is ki-re-e-em in 135: 3; 1. 9. on abullâm kalâm as only occasionally implying confinement within city gates, see JESHO 20 (1977), 103, n. 32; lines 8ff. offer an example of how difficult it is always to decide on the parameters of quotations. It is possible to offer the following rendering: «As to Sin-ašarëd, they have retained him, but he wrote to the village/king [cf. p. 258] as follows: «Heaven forbid that they lead away my servants. [Now] he has taken in his wife and former sons in preference to my household and your [i. e. Sunuḫ-RA-ralu’s] younger wife and former sons in preference to my household and your [i. e. Sunuḫ-RA-ralu’s] younger wife and former sons».

32. A very difficult text. If the readings UR.KU, ‘dog’ of lines 12 and 3 are ever confirmed then, in addition to the note of p. 259, one might look at VT 26 (1976), 199 — 207; l. 9. wa-bi-il (typro); lines 11 — 15 might be regarded as dropping with sarcasm, cf. JBL 97 (1978), 96. For different renderings for this section of the text, see JCS 25 (1973), 68 — 69.

34. 34: 5 — 8. «You have written me often about the prospect of my coming to you, but my lord has not (yet) released me officially (i. e. by means of a written document, cf. ALM § 66.e)».

35. 35. 13. The forms of the pret. damm differ in their syllabifications, i-tu-uk, i-tu-uk-i, and i-tu-uk in 13, 14, 15 respectively. The scribe of this, as well as other Kirum missives, does not seem overly experienced. One might conjecture, therefore, that in light of the context, the scribe was searching for an N-stem pret. [Probably *iddik, albeit unattested elsewhere as far as the dictionaries are concerned]. If so, the rendering for 10ff. might be: «Further, Zimri-šammu [for first sign of l. 12 read zi-], the shape of which recalls its equivalent in 1: 75: 22 (almost!) was killed. People say (that) a lion killed him, and it also killed two women».

36. 22 — 26. For different readings and translation of this passage, see Batto, 99 — 100; 106, n. 43 — 44. A rendering which would accept ARMT’s ulamaddiâni of l. 24, but not its conjecture that ul is to be found in the next line, might be: «My rations of food and clothing which (my) father has asked to be delivered to me [hendiadya], let them give me (so that I do not go hungry».


38. 37. Last sign should be š (typro).

40. 40. 12. Restore perhaps a-na; 1. 13’. Some form of the verbs legiš/madâdum is expected at the end. Perhaps the sign presented as š in line 12’ is to belong here.

41. 6 — 7’. Kraus, Festschrift Böhl (1973), 255, No. 34 proposes to read: ši-pi ši-ni(?) be-el-ia a-pa-[al-[a]-ši. 100, read: ši-p ši-n (conf.).

42. 14. Neither ARMT’s reading of the last vocable (um-[m-[a]-ni-]) nor that of Batto for the same (p. 99 šup-[p]-[š]-um) inspires confidence. In XIV: 72: 11, esub is followed by la. Although this is possible in our line, we would be stuck with a fragment of a sign at the end. It is possible, however, to consider that the last sign belongs to the obverse. Collation is needed.

For lines 18 — 20, Batto’s understanding is preferable, especially if one were to doubt ARMT’s restoration of -ni in l. 20. The whole passage is reminiscent of a saying (†), invoked in differing vocabularies, in I: 27: 22 — 23; cf. Marzl, Studia Pohl, 11, 31 — 37, and CAD K, 542 (2): «If one treats the soldier in a friendly way he will show respect (†) to his master (and accept a nice gift)» [but cf. von Soden ZA 66 (1977), 292, who refers to AHw 605a [mamû(m) N] for a different restoration of l. 23]. At any rate, ARMT’s conjecture, that prisoners brought into the temple are doing honor to Erišti-Aya, seems to me far-fetched.

44. 12. šaq is not known to Mari; cf. X: 80: 15 ь-ša-q, ap-qâ-na, and OBTR 82: 9.

46. 14’. Perhaps read ga-ga-di-i ь-ša-[a-al], and cf. II: 39: 56; XIII RAI, 63: 49 (different sense).
Two Recent Works on Mari

49: 2'. XVI/1, 75 doubts the existence of a PN Bannum, and suggests, rightly, that mannum be read here.
50. This is a very complex 'prophetic' letter. It incorporates a doublefold dream received by Addu-dūri under circumstances or in appearance strongly reminiscent of previous visions. At first, she sees the temple of Bëlet-ekallim as empty, prognosticating a future sacking of Mari, abandoned by its goddess. In the second part, she sees a high-priest of Ishtar-pišra, very likely (recently) deceased, who, in an eerie voice assumed by ghosts, commands her to leave the city and go to GN. «My hair-parings and my fringes, since Addu-dūri's visions are to be tested for authenticity. For attempts to read the first sign of line 31, see Moran, p. 38 a n. 3 (anûdu, so too Ellermeier, ThOrAr 1, 66); von Soden [UF, 64 (1969)], Berger, ibid. 209, Batto, 74 n. 20, and Finet, Annales, Centre d'étude des Religions, 3, 113 n. 59 all read sininniš.»

56: 5. The PN here might be read zu-du-l' (erasure)-tu and compared with the physician from the 'Assyrian' period (A. 2543: 5 = Finet AIPHOS 14 (195457), 132). Persons belonging to that profession traveled constantly, cf. BASOR 190 (1988), 46—54; lines 21—22. On lines levied by the palace, see JESHO 20 (1977), 109—110. The verb alûkum is used here, much as in Hebrew, in view of II: 113: 19.

99: 9. Römer's restoration at the beginning of l. 16 (p. 60, n. 2) is more likely, implying the following rendering: «... Let my lord act so that I may not be abandoned (ka la) e-e-bi-ya in GN». The objections against invoking the D stem of salûlum here, presented already by Moran, 54 n. 3, are not well met in the remarks of p. 271. 102: 5. An imperfectly written form of greeting, as in 103: 4, may be at stake here rather than a PN. On remarks to line 3 (p. 272), correct reference to read p. 354 b.

104: 1. Kibri-Dagan's name is surely to be restored here, cf. 114: 6; 1. 6. Despite the notes on this line on p. 272, text should read fù (TU) rather than ARMT's (TUM), an attestation which would be unique to Mari. For shape, see XV, p. 6 No. 30; 1. 9. Too many breaks in context to suggest a reading ü₃ for the conjunction.

105: 9—10. Note the unusual allocation of signs at the end of 9 and beginning of 10.
114. Tariš-ḥattum is insisting that before anyone accuses her of ordering a certain girl’s jewelry to be taken away, either a witness (in this case the messenger mentioned in 1. 16) or a document containing that order be brought forward. Thus translate line 14—20: ‘Now, let my messenger come here or have them produce my document which (indicates that) when I wrote, they stripped away the jewelry box of this girl on my orders.

115. From everything we know of Ḫaya-Sumu and his activities, it is quite unlikely that he could have authored, under the ‘hypocorism’ Ḫayaya, this letter (as suggested in ARMT X, p. 274).


125. On širum, see now Kutecher/Wilcke, ZA 68 (1978), 122—123.

126: 5. The notes to that line, p. 276, indicate that a transcription uybatum is possible for NIN.DINGIR.RA. The same could be said for its occurrence in 125: 11. 1. 9. Despite the remarks on reading the sumerogram MAŠ.KAR.RA on p. 276, the traces are not very favorable. Admittedly other efforts (e. g. Batto, 26, paššu-nu-tim; Römer, 70, anša-tim) are no more convincing.

127: 5. XVI/1, p. 226, is surely more correct in suggesting reading the PN as [...] la-ri-im-ba-ah-li (cf. also XVI/1, 144).

128: 10. Batto’s reading, p. 18, as ḣṣḥ-karu-me-tam is likelier.

129: 5, 20 (and 130: 3, 14). Both AHw, 1054b, and CAD (e. g. M/2, 283b sub mudāẖḫēziu) prefer the reading sīmum. 129 has been repeatedly studied; see the bibliography in Batto, 36, n. 103, to which add Veenhof, Phoenix 14 (1968), 149. A different reading of the main body of the text is given by Moran in his review of ARMT X, forthcoming in the JAOS. 131. Besides as well as 133, have been placed in the context of wine trade by Finet, AFO 25 (1974—77), 122—131; cf. also 126, n. 33 and 130, n. 67.

138: 5ff. Cf. CAD M/1, 277.

135. According to XIV: 118, poor Kirum was not allowed to leave Ḫaya-Sumu’s palace. Sad fate!

136: 13—14. A defense for the reading of this line is made by Finet, AFO 25 (1973—77), 127 n. 52.

137: 11. Surely a PN is to be expected here. See, possibly, XVI/1, 53, sub Aḫatum (No. 35).

139: 3. Perhaps read du-ṣšu-UH-tim and cf. XVI/1, 87 (s. v.). In view of TEM IV: 1: 8, however, one is sorely tempted to restore du-ṣšu-kaš-tim, and recover here the name of yet one more daughter of Zimri-Lim; 1. 17. Perhaps syour hearts; lines 26—27. A quote within quote is at stake in line 26, and we might restore ad-di-in-šī in 1. 27 in view of lines 14—16. Thus, translate lines 20ff. If on account of this woman, Yarim-Lim becomes very angry and writes something about it, I will tell him the simple truth (for line 23, see Moran’s review, forthcoming JAOS) as follows: ‘this girl was not given (since) Gašera wrote me to say: ‘do not give her to him’; I have therefore given her to Aplaḫanda’. [This is what I will respond].’ Gašera, wife of Yarim-Lim of Yamhad, is interfering in her husband’s desire to increase his harem by seeking a girl/daughter from his son-in-law.

141: 25—28. Moran’s rendering for these lines, BASOR 200 (1970), 53, is more likely: ‘This is to be a token: When it rains, recall me to mind so you will not forget me. 148: 15. Cf., rather, Kraus, RA 64 (1970), 53—55 (followed by Batto, 68).

150: 11. Both Finet and Marzal, as cited in the remarks of p. 281, read i-ṣšil-ul-la. Perhaps one might read i-su-ul la ... and translate lines 8ff.: ... It is like the proverb which goes as follows: ‘The fire that consumes the reed would have (already) consumed its (the reed’s) companions’. Is it not the same for them now ?

151. I still insist that the letter could not have been written by Yarim-Lim of Yamhad (cf. AOAT 25, 407—408 contra ARMT X, 15, No. 151: ‘Yarim-Lim, sans doute le roi d’Alep ... ’). Rather it is by a homonymous Benjaminite leader; cf. XVI/1, 227, 2°; 1. 6. read the PN ba-ma-nu and cf. RA 66 (1972), 179; XVI/1, 98. The Japaneese study of S. Shibayama, Cultura Antiqua, 28 (1976), 1—22, is known to me only through a synopsis prepared by Y. Tomabechi. To be noted is the understanding ‘watercourse’ for dunnum. 168: 6. Partum, it is now clear, is yet another(!) daughter of Zimri-Lim. Information on her is available through perusal of XVI/1, 167 [especially VII: 91: 8; XIV: 81: 45; ARMT X, p. 252 (note to 1: 3)]. 154: 2°. Despite II: 77: 2, normalize this PN as Abu-mekim, cf. XVI/1, 48.

156. This letter indicates that the strains occurring between Aleppo and Mari were exacerbated by personal animosity between the new king, Hammurabi — brother of Šibtu — and his brother-in-law Zimri-Lim; line 10: on akšum DN as an oath, cf. Veenhof, JCS 30 (1978), 186—188.

159. This document has been treated by Heintz, Semitska 22 (1973), 6, as an example of a literary Hafṭil.


169: 6ff. ‘You wrote as follows: ‘Why have you not written me concerning your illness?’. Is it done that someone writes his brother about sickness? I write (only) good news, as follows: ‘Having been ill, I became well (by) now’.

166 and 167. Aside from the PNs involved, the parallelisms between lines 1—12 of the first and second letters make it clear that the scribe merely copied parts of one into the other. His arrangement of the lines differs somewhat. The main points of divergence include:
Two Recent Works on Mari

a. 1. 4. a-ya-a-hi-im vs. a-ya-a-hi

b. 1. 6. uš-ta-an-ni-im-ma vs. uš-ta-aš-ni-im-ma

c. 1. 9. bu-ul-lu-tim vs. bu-ul-lu-fi-im

A few remarks on these may be in order. It is noticeable that 166 has two occasions in which occurs ana qãt PN addinma. In the first instance, 1. 4, the scribe decided to use the mimated form of the PN, while in the second — and last — occasion, he did not (rev. 81). Now, if 166 were written before 167, it may be that the scribe, in writing 1. 4 of the second text, either was influenced by, or, better, kept in mind, the non-mimated form of 166: 81.

With regard to the difference in b.), the scribe is dealing with forms of the verb kanûm III that, in view of the attestations assembled in AHw, 1166, was not likely to have been resorted to often in epistolary documents. The difference in signs, an vs. aě, is, of course, minimal. The scribe may therefore have decided to display a bit of learnedness and in the first case used the Dtn form [rather than the Dt which would have had quite a different meaning] and in the second the St. It might be noted that either form gives meaning that is similar. (Different analysis of forms in ARMT X, 285, sub 167: 6).

The third instance of divergence, c.), can be understood from the perspective of a scribe who, having more room in 167, since his word bullutim occurs at the end of a line, takes the luxury of filling space by dividing tim into fi-im. This, incidentally, might be considered as another reason to suppose that 166 was written before 167.

177: 5. CAD L, 128 (b) reads iš-te-ne-ši-im and renders: «The god has already questioned the man who constantly plotted evil against her».

Šumma Izbu XIX ll. 129—135

(above p. 67, new text)

129. BE GU4.HI.A ina TÜR [x][. . .] 129. If oxen [. . .] in an animal-pen — — [. . .]
130. BE GU4.HI.A ina SILA.DAGAL.LA [.] 130. If oxen [,] in a city-square [. . .]
131. BE GU4 ina AMEŠ [x x] [x] 'ab f) -bi-ru : ina ID [.] 131. If an ox butted(?) and (then) fled during iš-ma in^-ne-ru-ub DUMU LUGAL a royal sacrifice — — the king's son [.] a city
132. BE GU4 ina SIZKÛR LUGAL in-na-gi-
133. BE GU4 ina GAZ-šú KA.KA-«s¿ 133. If an ox was repeatedly crying out while DUMU EN-¿[rá being killed — — onto the son of its owner [.] a city
134. BE GU4 ina GAZ-M KI ú-tar-rak SUHUŠ 134. If an ox was striking the ground while URU.B[.] being killed — — the foundation of that UR[. . .] a city
135. 66 66. PM ÁMU.ŠID. 1 [BI.IM . . .] 135. 66 numbered lines[. . .]

Notes

180. For the verb nasãsu used with oxen, see JNES 19 (1960) 35 lines 122—123. Perhaps a G preterite or a Gtn present of this verb should be restored here.

182. The precise meaning of nagãsu in this context is uncertain. The lexical equivalence SLMUL = nagãsu ša alpi (CT 18 37 ii 15) implies that there was a nuance of nagãsu specifically related to oxen (for discussion of SLMUL see Heimpel Tierbilder 83—87). The meaning of the N-stem, used here but unattested elsewhere so far as I know, is unclear.

For nérubu, see Leichty Izbu 226, commentary entries 490 and 491: KAR = ner-ru-bu and KAR = la-sa-mu. Commentary entry 489, which equates nérubu with erêbu (BE GU4 ina E LÚ in-ne-ru-
136. BE GU4 ina GAZ-šú KA.KA-«s¿ 133. If an ox was repeatedly crying out while DUMU EN-¿[rá being killed — — onto the son of its owner [.] a city
134. If an ox was striking the ground while URU.B[.] being killed — — the foundation of that UR[. . .] a city
135. 66 66. PM ÁMU.ŠID. 1 [BI.IM . . .] 135. 66 numbered lines[. . .]

Philadelphia. S. M. Moren.

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