

YARIM-LIM'S WAR DECLARATION

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To Professor Maurice Birot I offer in tribute and in admiration a study of a letter published by the late Georges Dossin, almost three decades ago, in 1956¹. Following Dossin's lead, Schmökel, Kupper, as well as Klengel have turned to it to underscore Yamhadian power during this period². But aside from passing remarks by a few scholars assessing its import regarding Syro-Mesopotamian history and culture during the early 18th c. B.C., as well as occasional musings over the oddity of recovering it in Mari, this letter has not received adequate attention³.

I. THE TEXT⁴

The tablet, A. 1314, was stored among hundreds of documents in room 115 of the palace. It is a well-baked, neatly-written text whose measurements hardly distinguish it from the other letters found in Mari. The obverse contains 18 ruled lines; the reverse has 15. At lines 13 and 24, signs were lightly erased by the scribe who did not bother to write over them. The letter ends with a double ruling, wherein is centered a *Winkelhaken* which separates the text from a line that seems to have been started and partially erased. Traces that are copied by Dossin at the end of this line may give BAR.LA₂; inspection of photos kindly sent to me by J.-M. Durand and D. Charpin indicates that these traces are the result either of pocks on the clay or the remains of the scribe's smudging of lines previously drawn on the tablet. The last may indicate that the scribe had more to say. At least because of this letter's tone and contents, however, we cannot presume that we have the appended personal greetings of scribes; a practice which is better attested from later times (lastly Güterbock, in *Florilegium Anatolicum*).

1. "Une lettre de Iarim-Lim, roi d'Alep, à Iašûb-Iaḥad, roi de Dir", *Syria* 33 (1956), 63-69. Finet appended a few revisions to Dossin's translation in this article's reprint within the *Recueil Georges Dossin* (1983), 180-186.

2. H. Schmökel, *Kulturgeschichte des alten Orient*, 1961, 345 (cf. *Saeculum* 15 [1964], 121); J.-R. Kupper, *CAH*³ II/1 (fasc. n° 14), 20; H. Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v.u.Z.* I (1965), 104-105; *JCS* 19 (1965), 93.

3. E.g. K. Veenhof, *Phoenix* 20 (1974), 372-373, who treats military manoeuvres on water; A. Marzal, *Gleanings from the Wisdom of Mari* [St. Pohl, 11, 1976], 53-54, who glances over Mari similes and metaphors (cf. Finet, *BiOr*, 35 [1978], 222).

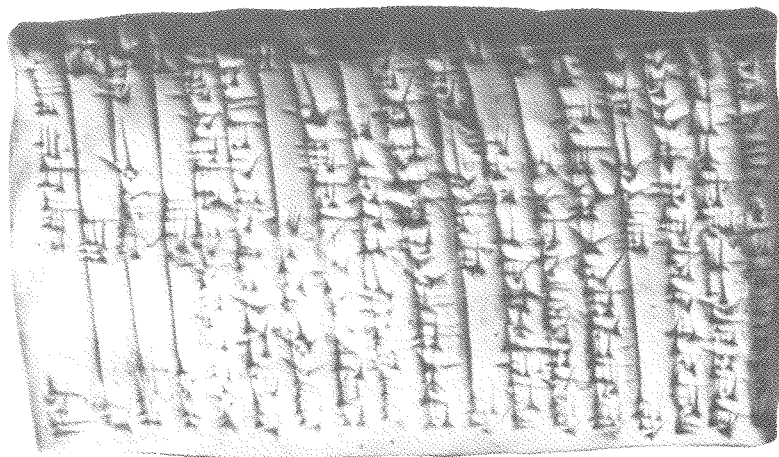
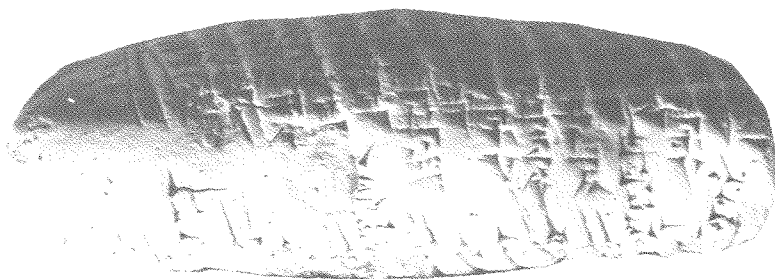
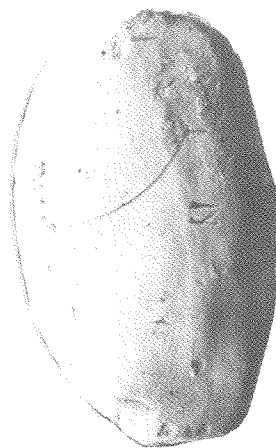
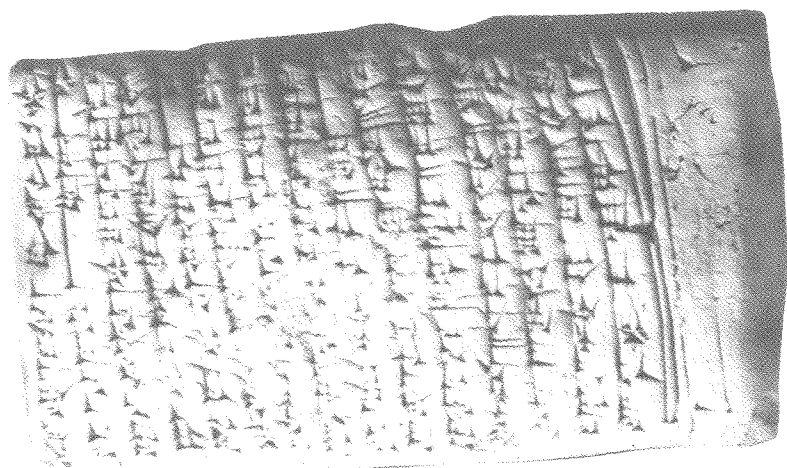
4. I acknowledge with pleasure Marten Stol's critical comments, to this paper in general and to this section in particular.

The tablet's actual layout is gaugeable from Dossin's reliable copy even if photos indicate that vertical alignment among signs is not always exactly reproduced. It gives some insight into how the scribe allocated his material. He had a decided preference to begin a line with the conjunction written as *ù* : of its eight occurrences in the obverse, seven initiate a line ; at times, in a visually impressive vertical series. The reverse is less obvious in this allocation, if only because the scribe had occasion to use the conjunction half as much. Additionally, the scribe strove to assign pride of place to the writing of the king's name. In the obverse, the three occurrences of " Yarim-Lim " are set apart from the one sign which shares their lines (at 3, 11, 15). The fourth occurrence, at l. 32 of the reverse, is also at the end, but is more crowded by other signs. Finally, the scribe was careful to reserve the beginning of a major new section for the reverse.

However, while esthetically satisfying, the scribe's arrangement does not adequately reflect the various blocs of information that the letter is meant to convey. For these to be reconstructed, it is necessary to redraft the Akkadian as follows :

- A.1** *ana Yašub-Yahad qibima*
2 *umma Yarim-Lim ahukama*
- B.3** *Šamaš yattam u kattam lišāl u lišāhiz* ⁵
- C.4** *anāku kīma abim u ahim abaššēkkum* ⁶
5 *attā ayyašim kima lemnim u ayābim tabaššēm*
- D.6** *mannum gimillum ša ina kakki Addu u Yarim-Lim*
ālam Babilī ušēzibu ⁸
7 *u napištam ana mātika u kâta addinu* ⁹
8 *šumma la Addu u Yarim-Lim*
ālam Dēr ištu 15 šanātīm našiptaman
kīma pēm ulaman ūtašu ¹⁰
9 *ul attāman kīam tēpušanni* ¹¹
- E.10** *wuddi Sin-gāmīl šar Diniktīm kīma kâtama*
zērētīm u parkātīm itanappalanni ¹²
11 *5 mētīm maturrē ina kār Diniktīm arkusma* ¹³
12 šanātīm massu u šātu uDaBBi ¹⁴
- F.12** *inanna kâta kīma šâtuma*
zērētīm u parkātīm tatanappalanni ¹⁵
- G.13** *atmakkum Addu ili āliya u Sin ili rēšiya* ¹⁶
14 *šumma adi mātka u kâta uhallaqu apattaruma* ¹⁷
- H.15** *inanna ana pāni dišim allakamma* ¹⁸
16 *ina bāb abullika appassah* ¹⁹
17 *kakkī Addu u Yarim-Lim marrūtīm ukallamka* ²⁰

Yarim-Lim's War Declaration



A. 1314 (photo D. Charpin)

In the remarks given below, numerals within (O) refer to the numbering of lines as found on the text itself.

5. **B.3** (R). *Samaš yattam u kattam lišāl u lišāhiz*. The phrasing seems to be Babylonian: AbB VIII [= TIM 2 : 106] (Utu); al Zeebari, ABIM 25 : 19 (Utu and Marduk).

6. **C.4** (6-7). *kīma abim u ahim*. The dictionaries' citations indicate that *bēlum* is normally preferred as the higher stake in the pairing (but note BIN 4 14 : 15 *abi attā ahī attā*). Furthermore, while *ahum* is a term commonly shared between correspondants, *abum* is usually invoked by the *lesser* partner, especially when seeking favor from someone in a position to fulfill it (e.g. Zimri-Lim when addressing Yarim-Lim; excellent OB example in Dossin, *Akkadica* 6 [1978], 4:8 with the following series: *abum, ahum, garrum* [?], *na'rārum, tillatum*). [cf. ci-dessous, p. 252].

7. **C.5** (8-9). Uncommon features regarding *bašūm* heap up here. According to the dictionaries, the verb is rarely used in the 1st and 2nd persons, and it does not readily welcome dative suffixes. All these features, however, are available to West Semitic, especially Hebrew, e.g. in connection of the verb *hāyah*, BDB, 206 [II, 2, d].

Unlike *-kum* which, as a dative suffix to the verb *bašūm*, is necessary to convey Yarim-Lim's efforts in Yašub-Yahad's behalf, *ayyašim* may seem redundant, since *-m* in the form *tabaššēm* nicely conveys the indirect object. In fact, it even damages a perfect parallelism between **C.4** and **C.5**. But *ayyašim* does allow the writer to once more juxtapose for sharp contrast pronouns that represent differing camps. Stol thinks that a remote parallel could be *uznāya ibaššīā* + dative, "my mind is on you". CAD B 149a (OB letter).

8. **D.6** (10). *mannum gimillum* is difficult (collated through photo). Dossin, 1956, 66 n. 2 regards *mannum* as confused for *mīnum*, and I follow him. However, it is possible to take *gimillum* in the sense of LÚ *gimillim* (CAD, s.v. OA only), and to translate, "Who is the man of good will [but I] who, by means of the weapons of Addu and Yarim-Lim, I saved the city of Babylon and gave life to your land and to you?". Note I : 109 : 14-17 *mannum annūm taklum ša annānum izzazzuma išdī ekallim annim irakkasu* "Who is this reliable man who can be here so he can stabilize this palace's foundations?"

9. **D. 6-7** (10-14). There is nothing exceptional in *ālam/mātam šūzubum* to OB or Mari epistolary style. *napištam ana* GN *nadānum* likewise seems to be current at this period (CH III : 66 : IV : 2). *napištam ana* PN *nadānum*, however, seems unusual. In Mari, as elsewhere, whether for 3rd or 1st person, the idiom most favored seems to use the verb *bullutum* : *u ālānū ša kīma uhuru ušēzib u napaštī uballūt*, "I have rescued whatever cities remaining, and managed to keep myself alive" (I : 1 : 10'-11').

10. **D.8** (14-16). So far, all OB epistolary usage of *našāpum* are in texts found at Mari. The form *našiptaman* is difficult (collated through photo). Dossin apparently regarded it as a stative, 2pms, rendering "tu aurais pu souffler sur elle", [for **našpataman*, possibly thinking of the "inversion des sons" as collected by Finet in XV, 102]. Under A/2 519b, CAD renders "windblown dust", apparently treating the form as a (fem.) verbal adjective, modifying "dust". Marzal, *Wisdom*, 54, 85, follows the CAD. However, Von Soden criticised this rendering, ZA 66 (1976), 293, and a modified translation is offered in N/2, 56 ("Had it not been for DN and RN, GN would have been winnowed fifteen years ago so that, like chaff, no one would have been able to find it"). In the *Recueil Dossin*, 186, Finet appends a translation that refers to the CAD's last rendering. Von Soden himself, AHW, 758b, does not translate but thinks the form as "Kan. St."

The form remains perplexing, even if the sense of Yarim-Lim's statement is not.

11. **D.9** (18). For *-man* suffixed to the independent pronoun, see X : 74 : 36-37 : *šumman šēr bēliya irām yātīman amaka irāmami* "Had he really loved my lord's kin, should he not have loved me, your own servant?"

12. **E.10** (19). A diligent analysis of the use of *wuddi* in Mari-found texts does not reveal unusual usage. It seems extraordinarily versatile in terms of position, types of sentences, verbal relationships, associations with coordinating particles, or the like. Here, it may be possible to regard it as something like "Notice".

13. **E.11** (22). *maturrum*, following its constituent sumerograms (GIŠ.MÁ.TUR), is rendered literally "small ship" by the CAD M/1, s.v., on the basis of documentation almost exclusively recovered from Mari. Unlike the occasion which found full sized ships (*eleppum*) with undoubted martial functions (e.g. the 240 ships that approached Maškan-šapir according to a Kish letter [Kupper, RA 53 (1959), 34-35]), the proper role for a *maturrum* is not easy to ascertain. Comparison between two versions of terms for a treaty between Rim-Sin of Larsa and Hammurabi of Babylon, as reported by Yarim-Addu to his king Zimri-Lim (*Syria*, 19 [1938], 118 : 11-20 = *ARM* II : 79 : 9-16) allow us to imagine that the *maturrū* were not regarded as important enough to be recalled in one version of treaty. These small ships, boats really, may therefore not have been crucial to actual warmaking, and may have served mainly to carry support for the troops. Note that they are manufactured in large quantities (XXIII : 380). For more on warfare on water, see Veenhof in the *Phoenix* article cited above.

14. **E.11** (24). The verbal form *ū-DA-ab-(?)*-BI is difficult to interpret. The scribe himself seems to have had difficulty in writing the form, for he apparently erased the sign next to the last. Dossin has opted for the verb *ta/epūm*, and etymologized by comparison to a verb *tapāh* (D) which appears in Hebrew also as a substantive *tipūhim* (Lam. 2 : 20 : 22). The last, however, is a *hapax legomenon*, whose exact meaning had itself been established on the basis of Akkadian *tepūm/ūpūm*. Cf., Von Soden, *Orientalia* 16 (1947), 77-78.

I tentatively opt for a derivation from *tebūm* in the D, "to sink", as applied to ships, persons, fields, even used figuratively. However, one would expect the form to be **utebbe* in the OB period.

II. TRANSLATION AND READING

A. The antagonists

“ Tell Yašub-Yahad; Yarim-Lim, your brother, says : ”

The text opens in the conventional epistolary manner. The scribe is asked to intone Yarim-Lim's message. *ahum*, “ your brother ”, is also conventional as a term for the friendship that obtains between two equals. But Yašub-Yahad will not be able to dwell long on this cordial note, for only the pausal particle *-ma* separates the greeting from the brutal message that is to follow.

15. The traces in **F.12** (25) support Dossin's reading of *ka-ta*, a usage of the personal pronoun in the non-subject case which in the context is difficult and of which my translation inadequately takes cognizance. Stol's suggestion to read *at'-ta* is seductive (see **Post Scriptum**). But it is to be noted that this text — as is also the case of many Mari texts, even when official or monumental — is full of forms that defy “ classical ” standards. The photograph of this passage tends to support Dossin's reading, although the sign is less sharply drawn than Dossin's copy would indicate.

16. **G.13** (27). *atmakkum*. The G of *tamûm* with a dative suffix is unusual. AHW gives few OA examples: TC 3: 371 : 36 [Hirsch, AfO Beiheft. 13. 68 ; cf. also Garelli, *Assyriens en Cappadoce*, 324ff]. The alternative, to regard it as a form of *awûm* in the Gt is difficult because of the distribution and quality of the second vowel. But what does the dative suffix *-kum* really mean? It may well be a West Semiticism, where the verb *šaba'* (H/N) sometimes takes an indirect object by means of the preposition *le-*.

On the use of *tamûm* as verb introducing oaths, see W. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen “ Gebetsbeschwörungen ”* (St. Pohl : SM, 5, 1976), 193-195 ; reference courtesy M. Stol, who also directs to E. Reiner, *Šurpu*, 55 where is given a whole series of construction *ana* + noun... *lu atma*.

ili rēšiya. Is it a coincidence that Šamsi-Adad also says : *Sin ili rēšiya lu rābiš lemuttišu ana dārētīm*, “ May Sin, my personal God, be his counsel for evil, for evermore ” ? ; quoted in CAD I/J, 96b. Note Grayson in ARI 1, 130 (p. 21, n. 69) : “ Is this an ellipsis for *ilu mulli rēšīa*, « The god who has elevated me » ? ”.

17. **G.14** (29). It may be prudent to understand the verb as G of *paṭārum*, and to translate elliptically with “ to go away ”. However, although not supported by the collection within the AHW I wonder whether one can normalize as *appaṭaru*, and parse as N imperfect, with a meaning “ to be released (from the oath) ” : “ I swear to you by Addu, my city's god, and by Sin, my own god : (may I be punished) should I ever seek release (from the oath) until I annihilate your land and you ”. Mari knows of spellings which fail to show the doubling of the 1st consonant, ALM 8 (pp. 8-9). The form is in the subjunctive of oath. In either case, we may have here yet one more Mari example of an emphatic *-ma* appended to a verbal form : ALM 100c (p. 230).

18. **H.15** (30). *dīšim*. Spring as the season for opening hostilities is very common in literature ; note 2 Sam. 11 : 1 “ In the spring of the year, when kings go to battle... ” ; Goetze, *Iraq* 25, 128. In actuality war raged whenever it best suited the opponents, cf. Brinkman, AnOr 43, 313-314 ; Saggs, *Iraq* 25, 146-147.

19. **H.16** (31). *appassah*, probably in the reflexive, CAD, A/1,84 (c), “ pitch my camp (?) ”. The exact sequence of the verbs *alākum* and *pasāhum* in the imperfect, but in the 3rd rather than 1st person sing., occurs in ARM XIV : 103 : 21'. Yaqqim-Addu tells his king that he had sent messengers from Ešnunna to Terqa, rather than to Mari, because he did not want the citizenry to learn of disorders among Mari's troops (Birof understands differently). As we find out from Kibri-Dagan's letter regarding the same matter (XIII : 130), Yaqqim-Addu was obviously not being forthright with the messengers when he told them : “ The king will arrive (at Terqa) within 3 days, the (king ?) will come by the route beyond the river and will camp ?... (*šarrum adi UD.3.KAM ikaššadam šarrum ? girram ša ebirtim illakamma ippassaham...*) ”. It is unfortunate that the remaining lines do not allow better comprehension of the whole statement.

20. **H.17** (33). *marrūtum* as applied to weapons is, to my knowledge, unique here and reminds me of Biblical vocabulary (cf. BDB. 600 ; W.A. Ward, UF 12, 359). It should be noted, however, that the verb *marārum* (A) in the G as well as in the Š stem controls *kakkum* to give a meaning “ to [cause one to] prevail (over the enemy) ”. *marārum* (C), not so far construed with *kakkum*, means “ to expel ”.

B. The appeal

“Šamaš ought to investigate and decide on your conduct and mine.”

The opening phrase is made up of three elements: a divine name used as subject, followed by pairings, of objects (*yattam* and *kattam*) as well as of verbs (*šalum* and *šūhuzum*)²¹. The placing of Šamaš's name at the heading may not be accidental, for Yarim-Lim does intend this letter to be a legal brief, eventually requiring the involvement of two gods: Šamaš, in his capacity as purveyor of just retribution, and Adad, as executor of divine sentence on earth. Šamaš's task is at this point conveyed by two verbs which may be read as metathetical acts: “investigate (*šalum* + accusative of matter)” Yarim-Lim's affairs/ conduct, and “decide” on Yašub-Yahad's temerity. In the AbB citation given in the notes to B.3, *ŷattam u kattam Šamaš lišāl* occurs right after the epistolary formulae, exactly as in our letter. However, note how the god's name is positioned, emphasizing, perhaps, that the dispute between the correspondants, Lammassum and Etel-pi-šarri, is about earthly belongings. The addressor turns to the subject at hand directly. The context is not clear, however, in the ABIM passage which has *Šamaš u Marduk yattam u kattam nišāl(?)*²².

Mari knows of other examples in which the verb *šalum*, with accusative of person, is used with the sense of “calling into account” for the purpose of carrying on justice. In the famous letter of Yasmah-Adad to a deity, the king writes (I: 3: 14): *Yaggid-Limma ana Ilakabkabu uqallel telqēma tašālšu*; “But it was Yaggid-Lim who wronged Ilakabkabu! Upon finding (this) out, you called him to account”. Another citation is even more telling and is available in a letter Zimri-Lim wrote to his official, Iddiyatum (XIII: 97; collations and suggested rendering, Durand, *M.A.R.I.* 2, p. 154):

Atamrum, for whom I have done so much, *he* has demeaned me. In the face of good deeds, he returned evil ones, and then he plotted only wicked things. God has called him to account... *Atamrum ša anā<ku> udammiqušum šū uqallilam u ana pān gimil dumqi gimil lumni irtēbam u ana lemnētīm pānišu iškun¹² ilum išta'alšu*²³.

How does *lišāhiz* work here? What is Šamaš to do once he has investigated the postures of Yarim-Lim and of his opponent? An interesting passage can be brought for comparisons. MDP 28: 5 has Atta-hušu boasting of a stela of justice which he had placed in the market place, apparently as companion to the one which we are citing: “He who has not learnt the just price [from the accompanying stela], *Šamaš lišāhissu*”²⁴. It is obvious that this is not merely a matter of the god just bringing the correct price to the attention of the reader; but, as is common to this genre of literature, it is a threat to him who ignores the price fixed on the stela. In the case of Yarim-Lim's letter, upon investigating Yašub-Yahad's sordid activities, Šamaš is expected to teach lessons not only to the king of Dēr, but also to all those who are similarly ungrateful.

21. The following discussion has been sharpened by Stol's remarks, for which I am grateful.

22. The verbal form needs collation; CAD K. 480 (b. 1, a') emends into *lišāl*.

23. Text: *iš-ta-al-lu*; but cf. AHW. 1151 (b) and X: 177 which is about the same matter and which has: *awilam šātu ša lemuntam iš-še-ni-ši-im ilum išta'alšu*, “This man who has plotted evil against us, the god has brought him to account”; CAD L. 128b emends to *ištenesim* (Gtn of *še'im*, which is attested for the idiom, plus *-sim*, which makes little sense in the context. See now Durand *M.A.R.I.* 3, 139 who comes to the same conclusion by showing that X: 177, joining with X: 134, make the 3rd pfs suffix unlikely in the context).

One other Mari reference to *šalum* is given in garbled form in a text to be soon reedited by Charpin: Jean RÉS. 1939, 67, n. 3.

24. The passage is cited in CAD A/1. 181 (9, 3') and translated in IRSA IV 06c (p. 260). I cannot judge whether a similar threat is at stake in AbB V 39: 7-9 (courtesy Stol), since the letter is not well preserved. How does one translate the name Sin-lišāhiz of AbB VIII 27: 3?

But what is Šamaš to consider and how to entertain it are kept ambiguous for now. The possessive pronouns, *yattam* and *kattam*, are paired contrastively and refer to nothing that is specific; hence they allude to everything that concerns Yarim-Lim and his opponent. *yattam* is placed in proximity of Šamaš's name in conformity with Akkadian syntax; but the juxtapositioning of Yarim-Lim's name and cause to that of a deity will be consistently maintained throughout the document.

Brief as it may be, the contents as well as the structure of this opening will inform the major themes that will be detailed in the letter. It establishes two spheres of influence: the first is divine and will include Šamaš, Adad, and to a lesser extent, Sin. Its vocabulary is that of investigation and, if our comment to the Atta-hušu text are found plausible, it is also of judgment. The second is human, but is itself split into two opposites: one world which is Yarim-Lim to control, and its vocabulary will be that of noble qualities, righteous ire, and firm actions. The other, is Yašub-Yahad's, and its terminology is generic to all those whose posture he imitates. The activity they pursue is reported in the language of cowardice, but above all, of ingratitude²⁵

C. The grievance

“I have acted as father and brother towards you; towards me, you have acted as a villain and enemy”.

The contrast between the opponents is sharply registered, and its consequence clearly suggested, in two almost perfectly antonymous parallel sentences and by means of two more sets of pairings. These sentences clarify what *yattam* and *kattam* are about. Yarim-Lim is first to address the issue. He is an *abum*, hence a counsellor as well as a protector; he is also an *ahum*, hence a partner in difficult undertakings. Whether the whole is read progressively or hendiatically, the vocabulary conveys the impression that Yarim-Lim is an honorable and reliable overlord. However, since an inspection of the dictionaries reveals that *abum* is invoked by the addressor most commonly when *deities* label themselves protectors of kings, it is probable that Yarim-Lim is doing more than reporting on his human qualities. Indeed, in judging Yašub-Yahad's behavior, Yarim-Lim may be purposely setting himself as instrument of the gods.

That behavior of Yašub-Yahad is judged in hues that are dark; conventional though these may be. They cannot be otherwise, for Yašub-Yahad exemplifies all those who are enemies, not only of Yarim-Lim, but, of decency and loyalty among allies. Again, the vocabulary applied to Yašub-Yahad may be read in sequence, or it may be read as one concept; but it amounts to a perfect mirror image of what Yarim-Lim represents.

D. The case: 1. *gimil dumqi*

“What good was it that, by means of the weapons of Addu and Yarim-Lim, I saved the city of Babylon and gave life to your land and to you? Were it not for Addu and Yarim-Lim, 15 years ago, the city of Dēr could have been windblown (matter?); as if it were chaff, one would never have found it. Would you then have been able to treat me like this?”

It is unfortunate that the opening of Yarim-Lim's argument is marred by the grammatical difficulty reported above in the notes. The gist, however, is clear. In presenting a case for divine judgment, Yarim-Lim is pretty careful to give primary credit to the weapons of Addu, for whom he is but an extension. Yarim-Lim does not report extensively on his involvement with

25. See the interesting study of M. Fales, XXV^{cmc} RAI (1978), 425-435.

Babylon. The matter may be public knowledge, and all that is needed at this point is to remind Yašub-Yahad that Yamhad's act of grace allowed restoration of life to a city whose existence was on the brink of ending. It may be obvious that the city's destruction would have ended Yašub-Yahad's career, but Yarim-Lim needed to make this clear since his next thought, albeit amplifying on the previous statement, aims to personalize the evil judgment that develops at Dēr.

The transition between Yarim-Lim's (and Addu's) good deed and Yašub-Yahad's negative response is fashioned through a metaphor which, because framed in a hypothetical mode, accentuates the value of Yamhad's interference. This time, however, no weapons are paraded, for Addu works merely through the power of wind, and we are left to speculate whether Dēr's future, as was Babylon's, was in reality resolved through martial means. No doubt Yašub-Yahad himself did not need to be reminded of those events which occurred half a generation ago. Likewise, his connection to Dēr, if any, is left to us to chart, with only the logic of the argument permitting us to place Yašub-Yahad as Dēr's king.

The progression in Yarim-Lim's twofold argument is dependent on a sharp veer, from verbal forms wherein Yarim-Lim's personality as savior (*ālam B. ušēzib*), sustainer, and life giver (*napištam ana mātika u kâta addin*) is forcefully presented by means of 1pms conjugations, to forms wherein the main contenders are the immediate focus. *našiptaman* may be difficult grammatically, but it has paronomastic potential on a twofold level. Parasonantically, it reminds the ear of *napištam an(a)* of the previous phrase and, antonymously, it offers to the mind a sharp contrast between the life, as granted by Yarim-Lim, and the death that might have overcome Dēr.

That fate is communicated by means of a simile which has, so far, found its best parallels in Hebrew scriptures (BDB, 558, s.v. *mōš*; cf., also, *ḥašaš*, 'ur, *qaš*). The imagery of windswept chaff is that of dessication, of irrevocable transmutation, and of inconstancy; it is also that of inconsequence (Maqlu VI: 33; Ps. 35: 5), wickedness (e.g. Ps. 1: 4; Job 21: 18), and hostility (cf. Is. 17: 13). It also forewarns of judgment to the proud (Is. 40: 23) and of destruction to the mighty (Is. 41: 15).

The subject of *ūtašu* is itself ambiguous. Yašub-Yahad may have understood it, as did Dossin, as 1pms, and the clause may have evoked for him a dramatic scene in which Yarim-Lim's eye, settling upon a ruined city, fails even to acknowledge its past existence. In its favor, such a reading would allow continuity in the series of verbs wherein Yarim-Lim is firmly at the center of action. Yašub-Yahad may, on the other hand, have heard it, as did the CAD, as impersonal 3pms, and in this way found a chiasmic closure to Yarim-Lim's rather impersonal *mannum gimillum* which opened his argument. However perceived, Yašub-Yahad knows what next to expect; for Yarim-Lim turns (*kīam*) to the lessons of recent experience.

E. The case: 2. *gimil lumni*

“Certainly, *Sin-gāmil*, king of *Diniktum*, very much like you would repeatedly respond to me by means of lies and provocations. Having docked 500 boats in *Diniktum*'s quay, I “sank” his land as well as him for 12 year!”

Once more, Yarim-Lim offers information that must have been well-known to Yašub-Yahad. No attempt, therefore, is made to situate this event in comparison with those just cited, and we are left to our own imperfect devices to alleviate this failure. But that this chapter from recent history contains a moral is made clear by embedding it in a chiasmic structure which will be fully realized in the next section and which speaks only of ingratitude and wickedness: *zērētīm u parkātīm atappulum*. It is therefore likely, and here I differ with Dossin's assessment, that whatever the precise meaning communicated by the form *ú-DA-AB-{x}-BI*, the gist of Yarim-Lim's remark must be concerned with anger and punishment. As such, *massu u šātu*

uDaBBi ought to contrast to the statement Yarim-Lim made regarding Dēr, *napištam ana mātika u kâta addin*. And to make sure that Yašub-Yahad fully recognizes the power that he will be facing, Yarim-Lim reminds him that Sin-gāmil was not subject to a quick and dashing raid which succeeded because of peculiar circumstances or through good fortune; on the contrary, Halab occupied Diniktum for over a decade.

F. The indictment

“Now, as to you being like him: you are continually responding to me with lies and provocations.”

If we follow Aristotle's insight (*Rhetoric*, II, 1383a) that to elicit fear, one “must argue that others greater than [the addressee] have suffered... at times when they thought themselves safe”, we can appreciate Yarim-Lim's economy of words. Sin-gāmil was much more imposing a foe than Yašub-Yahad could ever become; and yet Yarim-Lim shattered Diniktum's world. Listening to the first of two statements introduced by *inanna*, Yašub-Yahad did not need to break down the various acts that were reckoned to constitute *zērētum* and *parkātum*, for by now his ear has become used to Yarim-Lim's fondness for the *merismus*. Instead, he could now concentrate on the threat that is sure to come from a Yarim-Lim who has come to make Yašub-Yahad and Sin-gāmil equal in deceit and indifference.

G. The oath

“I swear to you by Addu, my city's god, and by Sin, my own god: [may I be punished] should I ever go away before annihilating your land and you!”

The brief presented before Šamaš against Yašub-Yahad is now complete. Just as Sin-gāmil's past insubordination brought him the expected punishment, Yašub-Yahad's unworthy behavior will find a similar response. For one last time, “your land and you” is recorded; but this time with results reversing what was offered when Yarim-Lim came to Babylon's aid. It remains for Yarim-Lim now only to declare himself instrument for that punishment and to bind himself to the task through powerful oaths. Yarim-Lim may have taken the oath in the privacy of his chamber or temple, but Yašub-Yahad is made partner to it through the use of the dative *-kum*; an unusual act, perhaps, but made to emphasize Yarim-Lim's utter resolve. Henceforth, Yarim-Lim's failure to fulfill his promise will be not only a matter between himself and his own gods, but also it will also allow Yašub-Yahad to draw conclusions on the justice of his cause which can only be mistaken.

Yarim-Lim cannot leave Yašub-Yahad with any hope. And to make sure that he could never come to such a conclusion, Yarim-Lim has one final statement to communicate.

H. The declaration of war

“Now therefore, I shall come at springtime and shall pitch camp at your city's gate. I shall have you witness the galling weapons of Addu and of Yarim-Lim”.

Introduced by *inanna*, the last topic strives to make palpable Yarim-Lim's threat. Three verbs in the imperfect — the first and last of which may perhaps have suited paronomastic taste (*allakamma/ukallamka*) —, bring Yarim-Lim closer to his opponent. He is to come, to conquer, and to force judgment upon Yašub-Yahad. The “weapons of Addu and Yarim-Lim”, which had inaugurated the lesson so beneficially in the case of Babylon, now come to close it with a jarring

tone because of the insertion of the adjective *marrūtum*. Juxtaposed to Yarim-Lim's name, it allowed the ear to vibrate one last time to shared labials and liquids in a way that could not be possible had Yarim-Lim used the usual *rabūtum/ dannūtum*. We are left to wonder, however, whether Yašub-Yahad, so far away from Halab, could have really appreciated the many sided nuances which the root **mrr* conveyed to the West Semitic world.

III. CONTEXTS

The Contracting Powers recognize that hostilities between them ought not to commence without a warning previously given and unequivocal which shall take the form either of a declaration of war, accompanied by reasons, or of an ultimatum with a conditional declaration of war.

Hague Conventions (1907): *War or Land*, II: 16

A. The Historical Context

Since Dossin appended remarks concerning the historical setting of this letter, no new fact has come to force radical reassessment in the role of the protagonists. There is no reason to doubt that the writer was indeed the Yarim-Lim of Yamhad, even if the name was shared by other persons in the Mari and al-Rimah archives, including a Benyaminite chieftain (Durand, *M.A.R.I.* 3, 137-138, who may be the same man known as a Numhean leader from Yahdun-Lim's period [XXII: 164: 7-9]). The other Yarim-Lim known to us, a kinglet near Ešnunna, was active a few generations earlier (Harris, JCS 9, 49-50; Edzard, ZZB, 119-120; Greengus, OBTI 326: 55). However, since Addu is regarded as god of Yarim-Lim's city, it is very likely that we are dealing with Halab and its ruler.

We now know a bit more about this Yarim-Lim, and can pinpoint the moments of his reign even if we cannot be specific about its length. He was the son of Sumu-Epuh, as is clear from a sealing that is to be published by Charpin, and he came to the throne during the "Assyrian interregnum" since we have a letter for Šamši-Adad gloating over the death of Sumu-epuh (V: 21). Yarim-Lim's reign was certainly coeval with Babylon's Hammurabi; but he may have had Sin-muballit as contemporary for a very few years.

Moreover, one could narrow the moments wherein this letter was written. Since it was found in Mari, it likely reached this city after Zimri-Lim married Šiptu. That particular event can now be placed around the year "Euphrates" or the one following it, "Benyaminites", equivalent to something like Hammurabi 20.

Yarim-Lim died in the Year "Addu of Mahanum", that is, around Hammurabi 28. [On all these particulars, see Birot, *Syria* 55 (1978), 333-343]. As a historical document, the letter, therefore, can be located within the rather brief span between Hammurabi 20-28. Since it recalls events at Babylon 15 years earlier, Yarim-Lim's interference may have occurred anywhere between Hammurabi 5-13. If we decide that the letter came from the time Zimri-Lim regained his throne, and not just when he married Šiptu, then we may place this event a handful of years earlier, just about the time a change of government took place in Babylon. The little we know about this particular period, mostly from year-names and the like, does not seem auspicious as a setting for Babylon's dependence on distant Yamhad.

Yašub-Yahad, who has such a vividly West Semitic name, is still unattested elsewhere; but there is no reason to doubt his existence. His city was *apparently* Dēr [see above]. Now the Mari documents give ample evidence for at least two towns named Dēr: one, within Mari's own province; the other, a locality in Upper Mesopotamia (ARM XVI/1, s.v.). While Yašub-Yahad

may have ruled at the second-mentioned Dēr, reference to Babylon and Diniktum obviously turns the attention to the transtigridian Dēr (Tell `Aqar, near Badra), even if this would so far be its only attestation among the documents recovered from Mari. We should note, however, that outside of this letter and a broken context in TCL I, 1: 20, Dēr's name is written with the Sumerogram BĀD.A(N) in the OB period (RGTC 3, 33). Edzard, ZZB 73 n. 355, indicates that ēr's ruler was not usually labelled "king".

Sin-gāmil is still known to us only from the inscription wherein he is called a *rabiānum* (Stol, *Studies in OB History*, 88): a term which should not, of course, prevent his contemporaries from assigning him the more convenient term "king". His city, Diniktum, is now generally placed not too far from Harmal (RGTC 3, 54).

But if the actors mentioned in the letter are nearly all chartable from other evidence, a context for them remains difficult to reconstruct. Above all, we simply do not know how and when Yarim-Lim could have played such a major role in shaping territory so far away from his own city, and the series of questions which Dossin raised at the end of his article remain as agenda for any future inquiry on the matter.

B. The Literary Category

Without ignoring the value of such a program of historical research, I would nevertheless want to briefly suggest an alternate avenue for assessing the context of this letter by raising questions on the value of sending a declaration of war to an opponent. It is true that the gods, and in particular Šamaš, are asked to investigate the behavior of the parties at dispute. However, as is clear from the letter's last paragraph, this is not a missive which aims to leave them to punish Yašub-Yahad. Likewise, this is certainly not an ultimatum which, either by cajoling or even by threatening, persuades the opponent to deliver what is wanted with minimal display of actual force. If there were such negotiations, they must have ended in previous correspondance and diplomatic exchanges between Yarim-Lim and Yašub-Yahad. This letter was drafted after all avenues had been exhausted, after all efforts to persuade had come to nought. Yarim-Lim focused the gods' attention upon Yašub-Yahad's breach of covenant, even when he recognized that only his weapons will bring Dēr to its knees.

But if this is the case, why then alert your opponent to that fact? If war is impossible because of distance — Dēr was hundreds of miles distant from Halab and they were separated by many powerful city-states —, then it would not be terribly satisfying to offer your enemy a colorful example of vain boasts; this can only earn Yarim-Lim the unenviable reputation — to use Hattušiliš's words as applied to Kadašman-Turgu — of "a king who prepares for war, but then stays home".

If, on the other hand, war is possible logistically, then it would be foolish to alert your opponent to your future moves. As exemplified by the Mari diviner's inquiries regarding the intents of Hammurabi of Babylon (X: 134 + 177; see now Durand *M.A.R.I.* 3, 139), no steps separated strained relationships from hostile armies surrounding a city's wall. Wars apparently began when the army of one power crossed into another's frontier (cf. the dictionaires *sub nukurtum*, *gerûm*). Heroic declamations between the leaders may indeed be spoken then (cf. the dictionaries *sub ga/erûm*). As reported in Sargon's letter to Aššur, messengers may occasionally communicate a gallant invitation to battle — or is it a trick to trap? ²⁶. Under such circumstances the attacked was lucky to be warned by means of fire signals (cf. *sub dipārum*). In fact, a major feature of treaty-making, at least among the Hittites, is that vassals are not to warn opponents of an ally's impending attack (eg. ANET³, 204a [§ 9]; 529b [ii,35]). One Hittite king even boasted of his god's help in effectively camouflaging his martial movements until he was ready to pounce

²⁶ TCL 3, 111: *ša taqrubtu u šuēlup annati išpura mār šipri*. " [Ursā] sent a messenger (with a challenge) to attack and mingle in battle "; transl. CAD E, 88a, comments in Oppenheim, JNES 19, 139.

on his enemy²⁷. These patterns are observable in Hebrew law codes (Deut. 20: 10) as well as in Egyptian documents (cf. Pi[yanky]'s victory stela)²⁸. De Vaux summarizes the situation well in his *Ancient Israel*, 250-251:

There was no declaration of war. The nearest approach to one is the challenge flung down by Amasias of Juda to Joas of Israel: "Come and let us test our strength!" (2 K 14: 8), but it is unusual... Only when a commander had pitched his camp in enemy country and shown his power would he lay down conditions, the refusal of which would unleash hostilities...; but the war had already begun.

Such initial observations have led me to search, perhaps not as exhaustively as I should, the literature that might be regarded as historical or historiographical — but, N.B., *not* the myths and epics —, in order to locate a primary document that can be classified either as an ultimatum or as a declaration of war. The result may be briefly summarized here.

1. Akkadian is particularly rich in vocabulary concerned with war and war-making; *anantum/anuntum*, *kakkum*, *nukurtum/nikurtum*, *qablum*, *šaltum*, *tāhāzum*, *taqribtum* are but a few of the better attested substantives which, in order to convey martial activities, are frequently associated with verba such as *alākum*, *epēšum*, *gerūm*, *šasūm*, *tehūm*. In surveying this literature, I found many examples of inflammatory messages which were not, however, intended to provoke war, if only because no specific demands were to be met. Despite its appeal to the gods, the famous Old Assyrian Anum-hirbi letter may belong here (latest translation, Garelli, *Assyriens en Cappadoce*, 210-211). Here too may be placed Išhi-Addu of Qatna's bitter letter to Išme-Dagan (V: 20). In the treaties, especially those of the Hittite, there are hints of the classic *argumentum ad baculum*, "appeal to force", had the powers not come to agreement; but in view of the context, the emphasis here is naturally on the benefits the partners or the vassals would derive from ratifying the treaty. The same can be said to the documents from Egypt ("Kriegserklärungen an den feindlichen Staat waren unbekannt", *Lex. d. Ägypt.* III, 774). If one disagrees — as one should — with Van den Branden's analysis of the Byblos Spatula as an ultimatum (*RSF*, 2 [1974], 139), similar results obtain from searches into the Canaanite/Phoenician documents.

2. I found that the omen texts in particular give evidence that missions and documents were indeed exchanged before war broke out; but they do not tell us how close were the armies at that particular time. The vocabulary most often includes the nouns *nukurtum/nikurtum* (less often *zērātum*) and construed with the verb *šapārum*²⁹. A recently published text from Ugarit, apparently a historicizing narrative of dubious historical value, gives us even a more precise terminology as well as suggests one sequence before the onset of war (Lackenbacher, *RA* 76, 141-156):

a. A Hittite king writes angrily to an Assyrian king regarding hostile manoeuvres. The Assyrian assures him otherwise.

b. The Hittite king sends a messenger with 2 (sic) *tuppātu ša nukurti*, "instruments of war". Upon hearing them the Assyrian troops cannot wait to go to war. These documents at the very least can be regarded as ultimatums. Why two? Since they were apparently handed over simultaneously, I suspect that they had many conditions that must be met.

c. Realizing that the documents did not have the expected effect (surrender to conditions), the Hittite messenger, three days later, hands over one *tuppu ša šulmi*, which, the

27. Ph. Houwink ten Cate, *Florilegium Anatolicum*, 162-164.

28. M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, III, 66-84.

29. Cf. the dictionaries: Oppenheim, *Orientalia* 5, 208-209, 209 n. 1, 2. Many bellicose passages in the Amarna correspondence wherein "to declare war" is occasionally translated for *nukurtam epēšum* (e.g. ANET³, 485, 250: 15), should be corrected into "wage war," "initiate battle" or the like; they are removed from consideration here.

text goes on to state, contained an oath of non-belligerence on the part of the Hittite. (The tale continues with further misadventures of the protagonists. A declaration of war is apparently not involved).

3. While I have so far failed to find one primary text which can be comfortably labelled either an ultimatum or a declaration of war among published texts, I did find meagre recall of such acts within historiographic monuments.

a. The Lagash-Umma conflict of the 3rd millennium B.C. is known to us primarily from Lagash's historiographic monuments. In his recent reassessment of the evidence, J. Cooper collects three instances which involved the dispatch of provocative messages (SANET 2/1, 1983, 38-43). These, he is careful to note, may have been merely narrative devices to sharpen inter-state antagonism. One of these messages, sent by Il of Umma to Enmetena apparently did not lead to war. The second recalls an ultimatum sent by Enanatum of Lagash to Uruk. Because Ningirsu is said to have won the ensuing skirmish, it is difficult to properly assess the context. The last example is clearly an ultimatum sent by Lagash, to judge from Cooper's translation of a very fragmentary text (cf. pp. 17, 53, §11). However, the material upon which it is inscribed and the fact that it was recovered in Lagash indicate it to have been a historiographic pronouncement.

b. In the annals composed during Murshilish II's reign — two for him as well as one for his father —, there are at least three occasions in which are embedded justifications for opening hostilities (collected in P. Machinist's soon to be published dissertation on the Tukulti-Ninurta epic, Chapter II). These may be regarded as declarations of war since the addressees were not expected to alter their plans as a result of the missive; indeed the statements were composed as the two camps were about to face each other. It should be noted, however, that these justifications were probably redacted *post factum* for, ever since Khatti experienced cruel outbreaks of plagues, Murshilish II was particularly cautious about breaking old vows consecrated by the gods.

c. A few examples from Neo-Assyrian monuments are gathered in P. Gerardi's study of a fragment of a NB literary text which she, however, wrongly labels a "declaration of war" (forthcoming in *AfO*). These examples are qualitatively similar to the above *post factum* justifications.

d. Hebrew Scripture is full of anecdotal preliminaries to war. Some of the ultimatums are so outlandishly formulated that they leave no room for positive response (e.g. 1Sam.11). These find closest parallel in ancient Near Eastern fictional histories (e.g. "Gilgamesh and Agga", "Keret", the Adad-nerari and Tukulti-Ninurta epics, "Apophis and Sekenenre"). One example, however, tries very much to read as if drawn from an actual document. This is Jephtha the Gileadite's (written?) declaration before the Ammonites (Judges 11). Since it means to be a reasoned rejection of the Ammonites' previous ultimatum (v. 13), the document follows the content, but not the sequence, of our text. It includes a "historical" argument that justifies Israel's territorial rights and integrity (vs. 14-24), gives a "historical" example for the Ammonites to consider (vs. 25), questions the Ammonites' integrity regarding their demands (vs. 26), presents Jephtha's case (27a), and concludes "God, the Judge, will now decide between Israel and Ammon" (27b). That this counter-ultimatum is in reality a declaration of war is clear from the fact that Jephtha crosses into Ammonite territory and begins his fateful encounters with the enemy.

4. *An Ultimatum from Gilgamesh.* Having failed to locate an ultimatum or a declaration of war that was contemporaneous to the events at stake, I can, however, refer to one letter which fulfill all requirements; except for the fact that this letter is a product of a literary school. Found at Sultantepe, this example has been studied most recently by F.R. Kraus who considers it to be a unique example of a "fictitious letter of a legendary figure from literature" (the *Gurney Festschrift* [An.St. 30], 115). It has the following outline:

- a. The *antagonists*, presented in epistolary style, consist of a king whose name and land are lost in a break, and of Gilgamesh, whose epithets stretch over 5 lines (1-6) ³⁰.
- b. The *case* is presented in lines 7-10 and it apparently includes the information that Gilgamesh's demand came at Enlil's urging. Thus Gilgamesh had merely requested what the god himself had ordained, perhaps after divine investigations. If so, this presupposes an *appeal*.
- c. The *demand* is absurd, of course ; but it does allow the scribe to fill his lines with desirable objects (lines 11-30).
- d. The *conditions* are next stated. Note how Babylon's wharf is introduced, with less than good logic, as a place where the shipments of goods ought to arrive (line 31). The opponent is himself to come, by a definite date, to Ur in order to pay homage (line 32).
- e. The *oaths* (lines 33-35), are elaborate and involve a number of gods : of the oath, and of Gilgamesh (the same?). A linkage with the offending king is made by swearing on Zababa, who is apparently worshipped by both parties ; lines 33-35.
- f. The *declaration* (line 36-43), is full of threats, including destruction and humiliation ;
- g. The *warning* (line 44), a feature in an ultimatum, gives Gilgamesh's opponent one more opportunity to redeem himself. Line 45 may properly be regarded as the colophon which, as preserved in one of this letter's three exemplars, is expanded by two other lines in order to validate the "authenticity" of the document.

C. A suggestion

A power may justify its wars by retrospectively recalling, in its annals or the like, occasions when it presented its enemy with warning or with threats. The reality, however, may have been altogether different, with sequence of events precluding alerts or early warnings. These observations are supported by scholarship on Hellenistic and Roman warfare. A recent careful review of the evidence regarding Rome's expansion has shown that, its vaunted legalistic attitude notwithstanding, Rome rarely initiated contacts after its Senate voted war; maybe once, and this at the opponent's request ³¹.

The dearth of historical texts which could be categorized either as ultimatums or declarations of wars ought not force us to discount the historical value of Yarim-Lim's letter to Yašub-Yahad. Even if I had succeeded in thoroughly inspecting all available documentation from the ancient Near East, it would still not be very desirable to argue from silence. Nevertheless, the information given above — the apologetic nature of declarations inserted in historiographic documents ; but especially the parallel that can be made with Gilgamesh's fictive ultimatum as drafted by Sultantepe's scribal community —, allows me to doubt that A. 1314

30. Placing Gilgamesh in Ur rather than Uruk, a seemingly cavalier attribution, may be blamed on the scribe who admits to being an apprentice ; it is possible, however, that this was an unsubtle hint, by a school which did in fact know of Gilgamesh's canonical deeds, to regard the ensuing text as "fictive". Such a device is known from Hebrew and Jewish scripture (e.g. placing Job in an obviously non-existent city ; speaking of Nebuchadnezzar as king of *Assyria*, as well as of the non-existent Bethulia, in the otherwise literarily accomplished book of Judith).

31. J.W. Rich, *Declaring War in the Roman Republic in the Period of Transmarine Expansion*, (Collection Latomus, n° 149), Brussels, 1976, 102-104. Note also C. Phillipson, *The International Law and Custom of Ancient Greece and Rome*, II (1911), 19-202, who accords greater space to occasions which dispensed with declarations of war or ultimatums. In fact, the value of the Hague Conventions' declaration quoted above was seriously weakened by the failure of participants to establish a time span between declarations and warmaking (T.E. Holland, *The Laws of War on Land*, Oxford, 1908, 18).

The tendency of historiographers to favor, indeed to invent ultimatums and declarations of war to dramatize historical events is well illustrated by the permutations displayed over two centuries by an exchange of letters, itself of doubtful reality, between Hulagu Khan and his Ayyubid and Mamluk enemies, see W.M. Brinner, IOS 2, 1972, 117-143.

originated in Yamhad. Rather, I would classify it as a fictitious letter, involving living personalities, which was drafted in Mari, the city from whose soil it was ultimately recovered. One may, of course, decide that our letter, because it includes Diyala city-states, should be assigned to a Diyala Yarim-Lim. The fact that this letter was found in Mari would nevertheless betray it as a literary school exercise —whether it involved the scribes in copying or in formulating events of time past. Long ago, Dossin had alerted us to Mari's literary imagination by citing a bilingual letter addressed to Zimri-Lim (*Syria* 20, 100). The recovery of other Mari documents, similarly historicizing in nature, will not be unexpected.

Although scholarship has not typologized the fictive letters produced by scribal intelligentsia much beyond the Larsa period (lastly, Michalowski, RIA, *sub* "Königsbriefe"), the genre did not die out then. M. Cohen, cited by Michalowski, *ibid.*, 6, refers to a catalogue which includes such a letter to Sumu-la-El. Two somewhat contemporaneous letters which occupy the same tablet, published (*Sumer* 13, 21-22) and analysed by van Dijk as historical texts (*AfO* 23, 65-71), are rightly regarded as literary by Borger (HKL, III, 58). Stol alerts me to TIM VIII 92//97 and to TIM IX 21 which are likely to fit the same category. But for the last cited text, these examples not only have our letter's military interests, but the van Dijk texts also share some of its vocabulary. Of the material I surveyed above, I now wonder whether the Ugarit letter published by Lackenbacher, and perhaps also the famous Hattusilis letter to Kadašman-Enlil, ought to be classified as probable products of a scribal communities.

Even if we decide to regard it as a Mari letter, fictitious in contents but involving actual, perhaps even living, personalities, as far as Mari is concerned, the *historical* consequences will not be enormous. Published letters from this period have shown that Zimri-Lim did regard Yarim-Lim of Yamhad as a powerful protector (e.g. Dossin, *Voix de l'opposition*, 179), and that this perspective was shared by officials who assigned him the lion's share of local vassals (cf. the oft-quoted statement Dossin published in *Syria* 19, 117-118). True, it would no longer be necessary for historians to redraft Hammurabi's (or Sin-muballiṭ's) career in order to have it deeply affected by Aleppo's largesse. Likewise, we would not be required to thread Yamhadian armies through numerous territories in order to have them reach Diniktu or to camp them before Dēr.

Instead, in treating this text as a literary rather than as an actual letter, we can come to better appreciate the political fantasies that occupied the Mari chancellery at one moment during the reign of Zimri-Lim. Using a language that is full of literary touches — but betraying their hands by referring to Dēr with a spelling (*de-er^{ki}*) that is better suited to a local town —, the Mari scribes sought to glorify the dependable ally that was Yarim-Lim by involving him in an imaginary political drama. Because he is shown capable of stretching his power over vast distances, Yarim-Lim *could*, when needed, unfold it once more to teach the lessons of proper political behavior. To an administration which — to judge only from the many prophetic and divinatory texts which warn against treacherous allies —, felt itself increasingly embattled, this must have been an especially comforting perspective to own.

Post Scriptum

Jean-Marie Durand was kind enough to mail me this past month second page proofs of his joint article with Dominique Charpin, "La Prise du Pouvoir par Zimri-Lim", scheduled to appear in *M.A.R.I.* 4 (1985), 447-497. They have done so because what they have to say about A. 1314 differs appreciably from my own evaluation of the document. M. Durand went beyond this act of kindness by placing at my disposal two letters which Dariš-libur, then ambassador to Yamhad, sent Zimri-Lim. These are to appear in (AEM 1 =) *ARM* XXVI, but Charpin and Durand have cited some passages from these letters in this same article, pp. 482-483; 488, n. 205. I am very grateful to these colleagues who, by displaying their customary cooperative spirit, permit me to append the following note to my article.

1. Collation and grammatical features (see p. 464, n. 78-79). Closer inspection of the actual tablet has confirmed Dossin's accuracy in copying, with only one change needed: in l. 13 read *ma-ti-i*-ka*. The authors, however, judge a damaged sign in l. 25 to favor the grammatically correct *a[t*-]ta* (see above). In the same notes, they read *a-LAM* in l. 16, adding "toute une série de lettres de Mari atteste la graphie *a-LAM* pour *alum*", offering an (unlikely) parsing of the difficult form in l. 16 as *našip(a)tam-ma*, "ventif + permansif", and consider the verb in l. 24 as *i*-mode (but D present [! ?]) of *īābum*, "j'ai fait du bien à son [Sin-gamil's] pays et à lui-même". Finally, Durand kindly reminded me, by letter, that *abum u ahum* also occur in ARM X: 5: 40, for which see *M.A.R.I.* 3, p. 277.

2. In the study offered above, I pursued two avenues by which to evaluate Yarim-Lim's declaration of war, the first of which regards it as a historically reliable letter. I pointed out, however, that until we have more information regarding some of the major characters mentioned in the letter (Yašub-Yahab; Sin-gāmil; whoever was then ruling Babylon), what we do know now about Old Babylonian history makes Yarim-Lim's claims difficult to substantiate. For this reason, I moved to a second approach which asks whether it really makes sense for a power to declare war — and not just to send an ultimatum — months in advance of launching a campaign, let alone to send copies of such a declaration to its allies.

In their article Durand and Charpin do not find it necessary to pose the second query; therefore, they directly confront the first. Their article — chock full of insights, far-reaching reappreciations of previously published documentations, and quotations from as yet unpublished texts, including excerpts from a sensational Zimri-Lim epic —, devotes important pages to A. 1314 (particularly pp. 462-464). With only one piece of evidence that is beyond dispute (the death of Yarim-Lim occurred in ZL 9' [see above]), their contribution on this subject proceeds from the following *assumptions*, listed in what I judge to be the ascending order of importance to their thesis:

a. The death of Sumu-epuh, Yarim-Lim's father, occurred either in Hammurabi 12 or 13 (pp. 470-471). This is plausible, although I do not know of a documentation that shows this to be certain. It seems unnecessary, however, to await the next year, Hammurabi 14, to have his son take his place as king (p. 472).

b. Šamši-Adad died, perhaps in battle, fighting against a Yamhadian coalition, around Hammurabi 17 (pp. 473; with a forceful rejection of the regnant view that placed Šamši-Adad's death at Hammurabi 11-13, pp. 460-461). At that time, Hammurabi benefitted from Yarim-Lim's largess; a thesis that depends almost totally on A. 1314.

c. ZL's reign began immediately after Šamši-Adad's death, that is in Hammurabi 18, an event which coincided with the Mari first month, Urāhum, of ZL's first year, "accession to the throne of his father". We should begin the known sequence of ZL's reign, 1'-12', within a year after ZL 1 (p. 459 f.). The second half of this statement is certainly defensible, even if I can think of an alternative sequence for the first years of ZL's reign:

ZL 1

ZL 1' parallels ZL 22 (Annunitum)

ZL 2' parallels ZL 4 (Kahat). This because both years are alone to have have an intercalary 12th month

ZL 3' parallels ZL 20 (probably also ZL 5); etc.

d. Since Yarim-Lim speaks of having helped Babylon "15 years ago" and punished [D. and C. "helped", p. 464] Diniktum "12 years ago", A. 1314 could not have been written before ZL 9'. Because their chronology is tightly constructed, with little room to manoeuvre, Durand and Charpin are forced to the most suspicious of coincidences: Yarim-Lim drops dead pretty soon after he sends Yašub-Yahad his declaration of war.

I think everyone of the theses presented above, even the one offered in b. (for which I could use more time to evaluate), is defensible. However, the fact remains that rather than offering new evidence on the protagonists mentioned in A. 1314, Charpin and Durand have imagina-

tively reassessed available information in order to validate Yarim-Lim's assertions. "Je prends les choses très au sérieux", writes me J.-M. Durand, "et je pense qu'il faut considérer Alep comme la puissance majeure de l'époque, contrebalancée uniquement par l'Elam. C'est nous qui, à cause de la documentation suméro-akkadienne, nous imaginons aujourd'hui que Babylone ou Larsa étaient les centres du monde..." (See also p. 473). However, until such data comes to us, it would not harm, I think, for us to resist redrafting history on such a large scale and to keep the second of my approaches under consideration.

3. That second approach actually benefits from the two Dariš-libur letters which Mr. Durand sent me and which I label A. and B. The two letters deal with the same subject, a request (demand!) by Zimri-Lim that Benyaminites enemies be extradited. Given the subject matter, the letters were probably written just after 1'-2' when the war ended with a victory for Mari, but B. was composed slightly later than A. I would not want to abuse Durand's kindness, so I shall paraphrase the contents of the documents and only focus on 2 versions of a section which has already been quoted in the *M.A.R.I.* 4 article (p. 488, n. 205) ¹.

1. The first letter is to the point, with Dariš-libur playing an active role in forcing Yarim-Lim's to interfere in ZL's behalf. After Yarim-Lim make the statement recorded here, Dariš-libur provokes Yarim-Lim into issuing a threat against the elders of Emar (under Yamhad's direct control) should they give the "Benyaminites kings" sanctuary, a warning which, not surprisingly, the elders take to heart immediately. In a final paragraph, Dariš-libur thinks that the king of Carchemish, with whom Samsi-Addu and Yagih-Addu are presumed to have taken refuge, is to come to Aleppo to resolve the problem.

The second letter was probably written after Dariš-libur confronted Yarim-Lim with evidence that the kings are in Qatna and Carchemish. Dariš-libur this time merely reports Yarim-Lim's response seriatim and with no interjections. Yarim-Lim apparently reminds ZL that no land is kept when its kings break solemn vows; that among these solemn vows are the extradition of an ally's enemy; that the enemies ZL is seeking are not in Yamhad; that he wrote Qatna asking its king (a subordinate ally) to extradite Samsi-Addu, and that he wrote Carchemish (another vassal state) warning of troubles which another of ZL's enemy can foment.

There is a nice dossier on both of these enemies of Zimri-Lim now (cf. XVI/1, 215 + XXIII : 257 [for Yagih-Addu], and XVI/1, 193, 40 + Bottéro, *Annales*, Pisa, 11 [1981], 1043-1044). It is worth speculating that Samsi-Addu may have found prominent position in Yamhad's court (ibid. 40 + XXI : 430 : 3 ; VII : 86 : 13'), although to do so, he must have gained quick favor with Yarim-Lim. More on these men, in the article of Charpin and Durand.

A. [3347 + M.5112: 8-23]

šarrū šunu ina libbi mātiya ul wašbū
šumma ina libbi mātiya wašbūma
u ana Zimri-Lim akalla(š)šunūti
 Addu bel Halab Yarim-Lim lišāl
u ištu inanna ana šanat ana šitta šanātim ana
10 šanātim ana libbi mātiya līrubūnim

akassūšunūtima
ana šēr Zimri-Lim asahhuraššunūti

awīlū šunu ina dadmīm ul wašbū

These kings are not within my land.

Were they to be in my land and I deny them to Zimri-Lim, may Addu, Halab's lord, investigate Yarim-Lim.

From now on, — be it one, two, ten years —, should they come into my land, I shall bind them and turn them back to Zimri-Lim.

These men are not within (my) *sphere of influence*.

B. [A.00 + M.14800 + etc. :32-46]

šumma awīlū ina libbi mātiya wašbūma
ana Zimri-Lim akla(š)šunūti
 ina ūmišu Zimri-Lim niziq libbim liršēm
ištu inanna ana šanat ana šitta šanātim ana 10
šanātim awīlū šunu ana mātiya u namlakātiya
lishurūnim līrubūnimma
akassūšunūtima
ana šēr Zimri-Lim ušarraššunūti
šumma annītam ana Zimri-Lim la akaššar
 Addu bēl halab Yarim-Lim lišāl

Had these men been in my land, and I have denied them to Zimri-Lim, Zimri-Lim ought to be then and there resentful.

From now on, — be it one, two, ten years —, should these men once again plan to enter my land or kingdom, I promise to bind and have them brought to Zimri-Lim.

Should I not fulfill for Zimri-Lim this (promise), may Addu, Halab's lord, investigate Yarim-Lim.

To be noted here is how the Mari chancellery receives information that was not only orally communicated, but probably also delivered in a foreign language. We do not have Yarim-Lim's words here, but only what Dariš-libur remembered and how his scribe translated it. In A., Yarim-Lim's denial of the refugee's presence in his court is placed solidly within chiasms, thus accentuating the verity of his statements. The appeal to Adad to vouch for Yarim-Lim's declaration is centered between two categoricals, one regarding Yarim-Lim's intent never to deny Zimri-Lim in this request, the other regarding the infinite time period in which the guarantee is to stay active. All in all, this first letter, followed as it is with Yarim-Lim's unnecessary threat against Emar's elders, is written in a way to convey to Zimri-Lim Dariš-libur's own certainty of the reliability of Yarim-Lim.

The second missive's recording of the same notions is quite different. Here Yarim-Lim's tone is not as authoritarian. There is no longer the blanquet denial of the men's presence that was found in A. Instead, Dariš-libur is to tell Zimri-Lim that he should be vexed only if the men are in the country *and* Yarim-Lim does not send them to him. The burden of proof has shifted somewhat toward Mari. Moreover, if these men ever decide to come back once more (note the use of *sahārum* here, doubtless in hendiadys: CAD S. 40, 2)), even if it be within ten years, Yarim-Lim will force them back to Zimri-Lim. *Addu bēl halab Yarim-Lim lišāl*, which earlier was used to communicate Yarim-Lim's purposeful declarations, here plays a different role: it is used by Dariš-libur to tell Zimri-Lim that Yarim-Lim is under oath to fulfill all that was said before.

Yarim-Lim's War Declaration

Thus, the two clauses within this passage that probably are genuinely attributable to Yarim-Lim — the appeal to Adad and the colorful way of speaking about time eternal —, are manipulated by Dariš-libur in order to sooth his own's king's anger. We shall never know what exactly transpired in the interview between Zimri-Lim's envoy and Halab's king (Zimri-Lim no doubt received a fuller account after the return of Dariš-libur home), but from this exercise, we can note that the chancellery at Mari was not beyond interfering with messages in order either to promote its own mediative powers, or to veil its own manifest failures.

(August, 1985)