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DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE  
*MASTER'S THESIS*

THE EPIC OF ZIMRĪ-LĪM

*EPOS O ZIMRĪ-LĪMOVI*

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Podpis:

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## ABSTRACT

The presented master's thesis deals with the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, a text from the ancient city of Mari from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC. The text of the epic is included in transliteration (based on the edition by Michaël Guichard from 2014) and in English translation. The epic has also been published online as the first entry of *NERE* (*Near Eastern Royal Epics*) project on *ORACC* (*Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus*). In addition to the text itself, the thesis includes a broader historical-cultural commentary. There, selected elements of the ancient text are portrayed as well-set within the lived cultural-political environment of the ancient Near East, with particular attention to the time of Zimrī-Lîm. Most of the space is devoted to the religious aspect of the work, especially the role of the deities. Last but not least, the composition is discussed within the context of other royal epics of the ancient Near East.

## KEY WORDS

Zimrī-Lîm, Mari, Tell Hariri, epic, royal epics, Akkadian literature, narrative, royal ideology, religion, ancient Syria, ancient Mesopotamia, ancient Near East, Middle Bronze Age

## ANOTACE

Předkládaná diplomová práce se zabývá *Eposem o Zimī-Lîmovi*, textem ze starověkého města Mari, z počátku 18. století př. n. l. Text eposu je v práci poskytnut v transliteraci akkadského originálu (založené na předchozí edici Michaëla Guicharda z roku 2014) a v anglickém překladu. Zároveň byl tento epos publikován i v elektronické podobě jako první text projektu *NERE* (*Near Eastern Royal Epics*) na *ORACCu* (*Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus*). Mimo samotný epos tato práce obsahuje také širší historicko-kulturní komentář. V jeho rámci jsou vybrané prvky starověkého textu ukázány jako reflektující žitou kulturně-politickou situaci starověkého Předního východu, se zvláštním zřetelem na dobu a prostředí Zimrī-Lîma. Nejvíce prostoru je věnováno náboženskému aspektu díla, zejména roli božstev. V neposlední řadě je zkoumaný text zasazen do kontextu dalších královských eposů starověkého Předního východu.

## KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Zimrī-Lîm, Mari, Tell Hariri, epos, královské eposy, akkadská literatura, narativ, královská ideologie, náboženství, starověká Sýrie, starověká Mezopotámie, starověký Přední východ, střední doba bronzová

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of this master’s thesis is the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*. Shortly summarized, this *epic* is an Akkadian text inscribed on a single clay tablet, discovered in the ruins of the city of Mari in Syria (modern Tell Hariri), praising one of the kings of this city, Zimrī-Lîm (ruled ca. 1780–1758 BC<sup>1</sup>). Only one exemplar of this text has been discovered to date, and it does not belong to the most famous works of ancient literature. However, it is still a valuable piece of literature that allows us to construct a more vivid picture of ancient times. Therefore, it deserves our attention.

There are several goals I try to achieve within this thesis. First, I aim to provide a wider audience with a solid, usable, and available translation of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* with transliteration (3.2 *Text and Translation*). This does not mean that there is no solid edition of the epic,<sup>2</sup> but that the general availability of the text is rather limited.<sup>3</sup> My initial intention to make this thesis an edition *per se* unfortunately failed.<sup>4</sup> In the end, I had to rely solely on the previous edition in the transliteration.<sup>5</sup> However, I hope some scholars may find my thesis useful in this regard.

Hand in hand with this goal, the availability of the text should be achieved by publishing the text on ORACC (see 5.2 *NERE Project on ORACC*), where the transliterated text is lemmatized and tagged. I consider this to be one of the most important practical applications of this thesis, as ORACC truly brings the epic to a wider audience in a digitally enriched format.

Second, the thesis aims to comment on the contents of the epic (4 *Commentary*). My background is in the field of religious studies with a primary focus on the religion of ancient Syria. This leads me to focus mainly on the cultural, especially religious, contexts of the epic. Therefore, for the most part, I put aside discussions on the linguistics of this text or its potential as a source for the military history

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<sup>1</sup> Not dealing with the problems of chronology of the ancient Near East here, I follow the middle chronology dates, according to Liverani’s *The Ancient Near East* (2014).

<sup>2</sup> This thesis is, after all, based on a great edition by Michaël Guichard (2014a). However, French translation and notes may indeed limit some of the scholars. Also, the limited access to this publication by many institutions may be a problem.

<sup>3</sup> There is a full English translation in *The Context of Scripture* by Adam Miglio (2017), but this one lacks transliteration to which scholars may compare the translation without consulting the original edition. Thus, while this brings the texts to a broader audience, its use for scholars is limited by the format of the volume.

<sup>4</sup> Due to the unavailability of the physical tablets or good-quality photographs; see the discussion in Chapter 3.1.1 *Previous Editions and Translations*.

<sup>5</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3.1.1 *Previous Editions and Translations*, the photographs of the tablet in Guichard’s edition does not allow me to provide a reliable transliteration of my own. And, admittedly, even if that was the case, I could hardly beat Guichard in palaeographic skills, especially since he had access to the physical tablets; see 3.1.2 *Archaeology of the Text*.

of Mari. I leave that to the more competent scholars. After all, the edition of the text by Guichard deals with these topics, and I would hardly compete with that.

In the thesis, I wish to explore the epic from two basic points of view. 1) How the epic corresponds with the lived political and cultural reality of Mari. 2) How the epic fits into the broader context of royal ideology and (self-)presentation in the ancient Near East. While maintaining a strict distinction between these two research questions, I mostly discuss them side by side in relation to particular sections or themes of the epic. I mostly try to follow selected primary sources instead of only citing scholarly discussions, interpretations, and constructed concepts about the culture of Mari or the ancient Near East in general.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the general approach of this thesis is based mainly on intertextuality. The overview of the sources to which I relate the epic is presented below in section *1.1 Sources*.

Third, building on the discussion of the broader context of royal ideology, I try to focus on a poorly defined genre of *royal epics* (*5 Near Eastern Royal Epics*). This section is intended primarily as a suggestion for future research. It also foreshadows a recently started project on *ORACC: Near Eastern Royal Epics (NERE)*,<sup>7</sup> of which the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* is the first (and, so far, the only) entry.

Naturally, Guichard has already commented on many of the topics I discuss here, too. Consequently, while I try to broaden the discussion, I sometimes refer to the same parallels, and in contrast, some of the topics have fallen out of my sight. Therefore, I recommend that anyone interested in the cultural context of the epic to see not only my contribution but also Guichard's one.

*ana pānīšu pārikum u[l ibašši]*

*Before him, [there is nothi]ng opposing him.*<sup>8</sup>

So far, I have summarized my intentions. Nonetheless, unlike Zimrī-Lîm in his epic, some things are opposing me. First, I lack the background of knowing the Mari corpus in its entirety – therefore, I have to mostly rely on the citations of others and the chance of encountering relevant texts. Second, my primary focus right now is the religion of LBA Ugarit,<sup>9</sup> and I cannot in any way compete with the scholars who orient well in the material. Consequently, my conclusions must remain only provisional and should be looked at with a larger portion of scepticism and care. Third, while I try to follow the earliest developments of the field in general, some of my conclusions or sources may be outdated now. Last but not least, most of the topics would deserve more references and a deeper examination. Various new topics that need further discussion appeared during the writing, but unfortunately, there is not enough time or space in the thesis format. As I will often state throughout the thesis, I have left many of

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<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, I am very well aware that I actually follow interpretations of the sources, even when working with the sources directly.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://build-oracc.museum.upenn.edu/nere/corpus/> [cited 21<sup>th</sup> December]. For now, I can provide only this link for the build version as the project is not yet made public among other *ORACC* projects. It is still a work in progress.

<sup>8</sup> *EpZL* ii: 5.

<sup>9</sup> Currently, I am also a PhD student at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University.

those simply “for future research,” and I truly intend to work on the topic of royal epics in the future. Still, I hope that this work can be presented as a coherent and useful study.

## 1.1 SOURCES

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the most important sources with which I work throughout the thesis. I begin the discussion with a short presentation of the city of Mari, then proceed to sources from this city, and finally discuss the sources from other sites and periods to which I relate the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm*. As I have already stated, I want to relate the epic mainly to primary sources and not only to scholarly discussions,<sup>10</sup> especially to the sources of Mari for the immediate context of the contents of the epic. On the other hand, I also look at the epic from a distance, fitting it into the larger context of royal presentation in the ancient Near East.

Throughout the thesis, I try to give a proper reference to the texts I am citing. I also try to include the transcribed or transliterated original, either in parallel or in a note.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, I was not able to do this in all cases. Whenever I do not refer to a translation source, the translation is mine. For concordances of cited texts from Mari, I provide a table in *7 Mari Texts Concordances*. Obviously, I could often cite many more sources and parallels for some of the discussed topics or for those not discussed. However, my goal is not to collect all relevant texts, but to show that the epic is not set in a vacuum.

### 1.1.1 THE CITY OF MARI

The city of Mari is located on a Tell Hariri in the Abu Kamal District of the Syrian governorate of Deir ez-Zor (Fig. 1). From a stratigraphical point of view, the city consists of three basic layers: City I (ca. 2950–2650 BC),<sup>12</sup> when the city of Mari was founded *ex nihilo* in a strategic position in the Middle Euphrates region, probably as a hub for the Euphrates river transport; the circumstances of its end are not clear;<sup>13</sup> City II (ca. 2550–2220 BC)<sup>14</sup> followed by a complete reconstruction after a short break in the settlement, and did not last for a long time; it ended in destruction, probably imposed by the Agade ruler Narām-Sîn; and City III (ca. 2220–1758 BC)<sup>15</sup> of which the final stage is the most important to us as the era in which the epic was composed and when its plot is set in. The historical circumstances of the

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<sup>10</sup> However, I must admit that I work primarily with translations and only subsequently consult the transcribed text. I have not worked with any of the texts in original and I only seldomly had a look at any autographs or photographs.

<sup>11</sup> I was not able to be completely consistent in using transcription or transliteration, I used what was at my hand with a preference for transliteration.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g., Margueron 2004: 49–124; 2013: 517–523; 2014: 14–25, 44–50, 67–68, 127, 140–142.

<sup>13</sup> Margueron 2013: 520–521 and 2014: 1–9, 19–22. Margueron argues that the large canal connection Mari with Ḫābur along the Euphrates, making the river transport significantly more effective, seems to be the only justification for the existence of this city in otherwise very inhospitable region which provided no proper natural resources, and thus it is hard not to connect its construction with the beginning of the city.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g., Margueron 2004: 125–316; 2013: 523–528; 2014: 25–31, 68–93, 101–113, 127, 142–148

<sup>15</sup> See e.g., Margueron 2004: 317–324; 2013: 528–537; 2014: 32–33, 81, 93–100, 113–126, 127–130, 148–155.

relevant period are discussed in Chapter 2 *Historical Context*. In addition, while the fame and greatness of the city faded with its destruction, the area also shows limited traces of human presence in the later periods.

It seems that since its foundation, the city has had a characteristic circular layout<sup>16</sup> that has been kept in all following layers until the very end. The city has been crossed by a canal that connected the city with the Euphrates. Thus, the city port could have been placed right within the fortifications, although the city was quite far from the river itself. This architectural conception provided Mari with access to water while being protected from possible floods. The general layout of the city is shown in Fig. 2. In the City III, the *Great Royal Palace* and several temples<sup>17</sup> were unearthed. The royal palace is the place of the discovery of the cuneiform tablets inscribed with the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm*.<sup>18</sup>

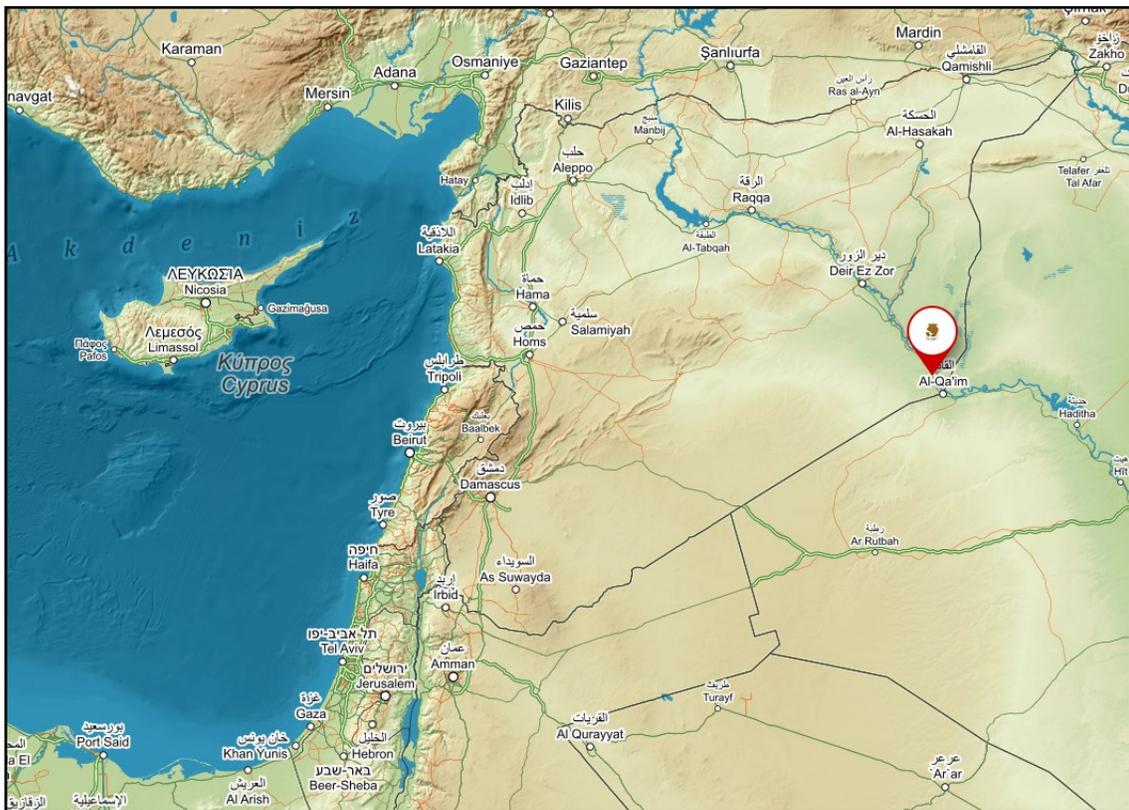


Figure 1 Location of Mari; from *mapy.cz* [visited 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021].

<sup>16</sup> For a broader discussion on the circular layout of EBA cities, see Castel, Meyer & Quenet 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Among the unearthed temples we can count: so-called *Temple of Lions* connected with the *High Terrace*, *Temple Tower of Ninḫursag*, and *Temple of Šamaš* (É.GIR<sub>17</sub>.ZAL.AN.KI, ‘House of Joy of Heaven and Earth’) all concentrated in one city sector between the so-called *Sacred Way* and the *Great Way*. In addition, the palace incorporated a sacred precinct, too, including a sanctuary of Ištar (É.GÜN.A, ‘Coloured House’). For an overview of the sacred spaces in archaeology of the City III and its relation to the City II, see Margueron 2014: 93–100 and George 1993: 95, 97. However, the city could have included more temples and shrines as attested by textual sources, e.g., there could have been a temple of Ištar (É.ŠA.BA.AN.NA, ‘House of the Heart of Heaven’, see George 1993: 143 and *RIME* 4 6.11.2: 2) or a temple of Annunitum (see e.g., Durand 2008: 202).

<sup>18</sup> See 3.1.2 *Archaeology of the Text*.

The site has been excavated since 1933 by a French mission.<sup>19</sup> The directors of the mission were André Parrot (1933–1974), Jean-Claude Margueron (1979–2004), and Pascal Butterlin (2005–present). The recent development of the geo-political situation in the Middle East has caused a severe humanitarian crisis in the region. That also negatively influenced the on-site archaeological missions in the area and led to illegal diggings and even some grave damage to the site, including the destruction of the royal palace.<sup>20</sup>

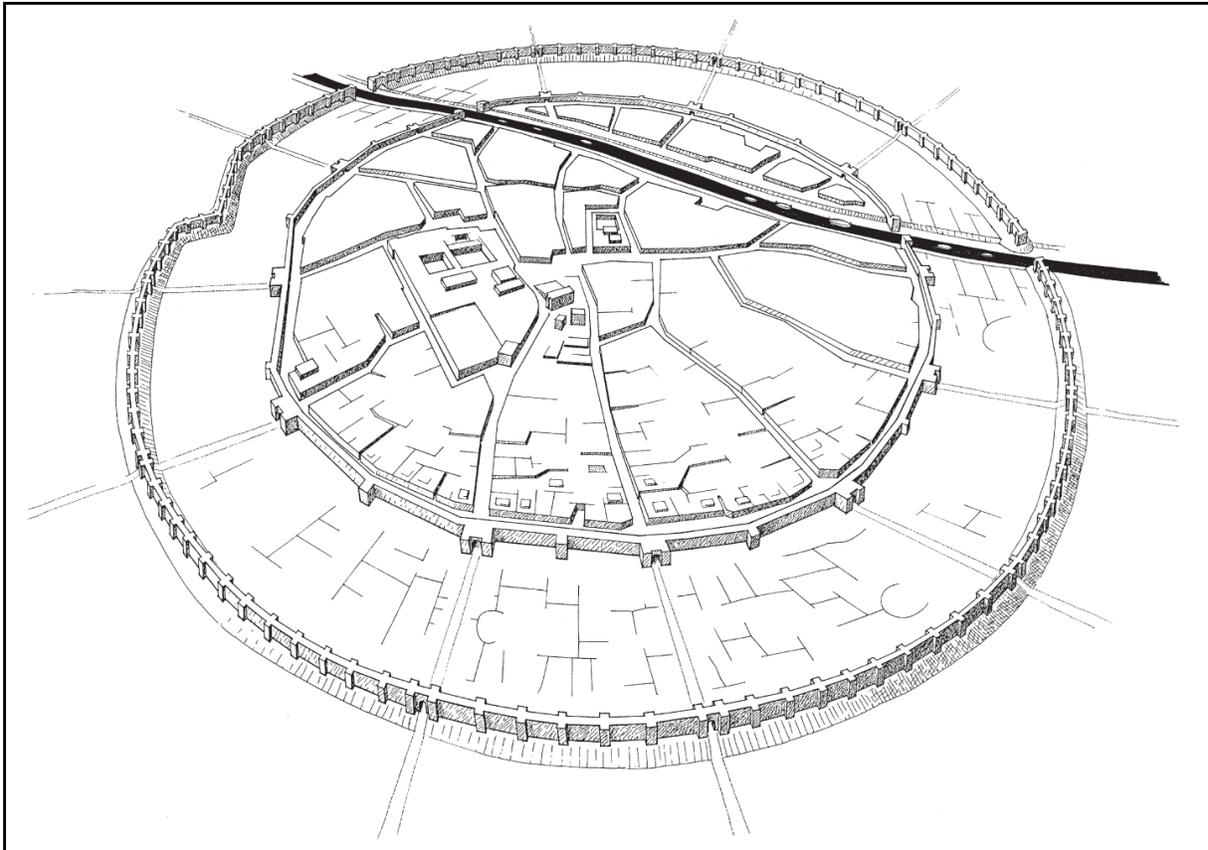


Figure 2 Layout of the City III; Margueron 2014: 66.

<sup>19</sup> For a short summary of the archaeology of this site, see e.g., Margueron 2004: 10–14; 2014: 9–13 or Knott 2016: 36–38, or <https://archeologie.culture.fr/mari/fr/histoire-recherches> [visited 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021]. Numerous excavation reports are scattered among the journal *Syria*, the series *MARI*, or the series *Akh-Purattim*. Indispensable are also the initial publications by André Parrot, the *Mission archéologique de Mari* series.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g., <https://archeologie.culture.fr/mari/fr/etat-lieux> [visited 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021], or <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/apr/19/destruction-at-the-ancient-site-of-mari-in-syria> [visited 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021]. Considering the photos online and in Margueron (2014: 105), I would say the destroyed palace is that of City II.

### 1.1.2 TEXTS FROM MARI

Apart from the obvious text – the *Epic of Zimri-Lim* itself<sup>21</sup> – there is a vast number of cuneiform tablets from Mari dated to the reign of Zimri-Lim. As is often the case, the vast majority of the discovered tablets date to approximately the last fifty years of the city’s existence due to its abrupt destruction.<sup>22</sup> While it is assumed that the Babylonians took some of the Mariote tablets to their own archives, there was still much left, mostly in the royal palace.<sup>23</sup> As I have already stated, I work with the texts from Mari to show that some of the topics mentioned in the *Epic of Zimri-Lim* are well rooted in the lived reality of Mariote culture and politics. This is the central focus of my commentary.

In the thesis, I deal mainly with a rich genre of correspondence. Edited texts are scattered among many publications, namely in volumes of *ARM* or *LAPPO 16–18*. Very useful for my work were English translations of the correspondence in Sasson 2015 (*From the Mari Archives. An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters*) and Heimpel 2003 (*Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*). The correspondence of Mari is a broad topic treated by many scholars. For example, one of the more relevant selections of letters is provided by Nissinen 2003: 13–91 (material from Mari, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*), who also discusses some other textual materials from this city, including the *Epic of Zimri-Lim* itself. Nonetheless, there is no need to enumerate all the possible editions of these texts, since central to this thesis is their content.

The second genre from Mari that is of interest to me is royal inscriptions. Those are a fine source for the reconstruction of royal ideology. I have worked with the *RIM* series (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia*). For Mari, namely *RIME 4* by Frayne, focused on the Old Babylonian period that also contains the inscriptions of the kings of Mari.

### 1.1.3 TEXTS OUTSIDE OF MARI

While the concern of my commentary is primarily to fit the epic into the immediate context of Mariote culture and politics, it is still set within the broader culture of Mesopotamia and the ancient Near East in general. In many cases, the topics of the epic are not limited to Mari and its time, but were present long before and lived long after. After all, the epic was also a product of scribal education, which was not set in a vacuum. Moreover, the king of Mari, our hero, was an active participant in the international politics of that time. Some of the topics are also so “universal” that it would be easy to find parallels all over the World, but that is not the aim of the presented work.

Taking into account all this, I have chosen two main genres for comparison. First, it is the genre of *royal epics*. The genre is highly varied and poorly defined<sup>24</sup> but provides us with rich material for

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<sup>21</sup> The epic itself as a source is discussed in *3.1 Preliminary Remarks*.

<sup>22</sup> Margueron 2014: 33.

<sup>23</sup> Margueron 2014: 33.

<sup>24</sup> For the discussion on the definition, or rather conception, of this genre, see *5.1 The Genre of Royal Epic*.

comparison. I have chosen to discuss only a limited selection<sup>25</sup> of royal epics that show us the variety of this genre while including enough similarities to reveal some patterns.

- 1) *Epics of the Sumerian kings*. This is a broad category that includes several compositions. I work with the edition and translation of these texts by Vanstiphout 2003 (*Epics of Sumerian Kings: The Matter of Aratta*). These compositions might have been among those that could influence the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, as they were part of the scribal milieu of his time.
- 2) *Epics of the kings of Agade*. I follow Westenholz 1997 (*Legends of the Kings of Akkade*) that includes editions of all the known narratives about the kings of this famous dynasty.<sup>26</sup> There should have been a second volume that would interpret the texts, explain their purpose, and provide other discussions, which would be very useful for the presented thesis.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, this second volume has never been finished as far as I know. Just like the Sumerian epics, these could have had a direct influence on the work of the scribes of Mari.
- 3) *Epics of the Middle Assyrian kings*. Contrary to previous works, this postdates the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* by several centuries. This category is included to demonstrate that the tradition of royal epics was not limited to the Old Babylonian milieu. In addition, these are probably the most important compositions for comparison regarding their origin and purpose.<sup>28</sup> The chosen composition for this category is *The Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta*, for which I follow the edition of Machinist 1978 (*The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta: A Study in Middle Assyrian Literature*).

I have not included the *Epic of Gilgames*<sup>29</sup> in any deeper discussion for now. Not because it would not fit into the topic, but because now my focus is already too broad and this epic is rather at the periphery of my definition of the royal epics when I take the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* as its core. For similar reasons, I did not include the Ugaritic epics about Aqhat<sup>30</sup> and Kirta,<sup>31</sup> no matter how fruitful and interesting the comparison and analysis could have been. I leave these, as well as other possible compositions,<sup>32</sup> for future research.

Second, I have often consulted royal inscriptions outside of Mari. For these, I also use the editions in the *RIM* series, namely the volumes on *Early Periods* (mainly *RIME 3/2* and *4* by Frayne), *Assyrian Periods* (*RIMA 1* by Grayson), and *Babylonian Periods* (*RIMB 2* by Frame). Very helpful were

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<sup>25</sup> The selection process was admittedly rather random, and there is no particular agenda behind it. The selected epics are simply those I have already known or encountered while writing this thesis and which have fallen within the core of my definition of the genre.

<sup>26</sup> See Westenholz 1997: 3. Of course, the selection also depends on her definition of the genre, which, e.g., does not include royal inscription and other historical materials.

<sup>27</sup> See Westenholz 1997: 3.

<sup>28</sup> Composed during the life of the ruler.

<sup>29</sup> For edition and translation, see e.g., George 2003.

<sup>30</sup> KTU 1.17–1.19, for translation, see e.g., Parker 1997: 49–80.

<sup>31</sup> KTU 1.14–1.16, for translation, see e.g., Greenstein's contribution in Parker 1997: 9–48.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., the *Epic of Adad-Nārārī*, extant only fragmentary; tablets Rm. 293, VAT 10084, VAT 9820, and VAT 10889.

also *RIAo* and *RIBo* projects on *ORACC*. Unfortunately, neither *RIMB* nor *RIBo* include the inscriptions of the Kassite rulers.<sup>33</sup>

For now, I have not included any deeper discussion on the similarities with the hymnic literature. The reasons for that are simply time and space. This genre is only briefly mentioned in the section on the use and purpose of the epic (5.1.2 *How Was the Genre Used?*).

#### 1.1.4 NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION, TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION

Throughout the thesis, I refer to some of the texts in their original Akkadian or Sumerian form in transliteration or transcription. Some of the readers may not know the conventions by which the Assyriologists indicate peculiarities of the cuneiform texts when transferred to the Latin script. Here, I present some of the basic conventions as I use them in the thesis.

<i>cursive</i>	text in Akkadian
SMALL-CAPS	text in Sumerian; sumerograms, ideograms
CAPITALS	sign names
UPPER INDEX SMALL CAPS	determinatives and postdeterminatives
<text>	texts filled by the editor
[text]	damaged text, reconstructed by editor
「text」	partially damaged text
te[xt and te]xt	partially damaged text connected to completely damaged text.
{text}	redundant text considered by the editor to be a mistake
x	sign not interpreted by the editor
(text)	text in translation filled by the translator
(...)	untranslated text

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<sup>33</sup> Some of these are collected in *CDLI* within the *Mesopotamian Royal Inscriptions* project; see <https://cdli.ucla.edu/projects/royal/royal.html> [visited 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021]. Unfortunately, only few are transcribed and even less translated.

## 2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

What is presented in this chapter is more or less “the concise history” of Mari in the MBA in a larger context of the history of the MBA Near East, aimed to outline the historical context of the plot of the epic. Thus, it does not bring anything new into the discussion, and those familiar with this topic can move forward with ease. In general, this chapter is based on Mario Liverani’s *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy* (2014, especially p. 221–239) and Marc Van De Mieroop’s *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000–323 BC* (2007, especially p. 103–119).<sup>34</sup> Therefore, I provide references only on information where the source is someone else. Also, I deemed it necessary to comment or clarify some topics in a few cases. As stated in the introduction, I use the middle chronology, following the dates in Liverani 2014.

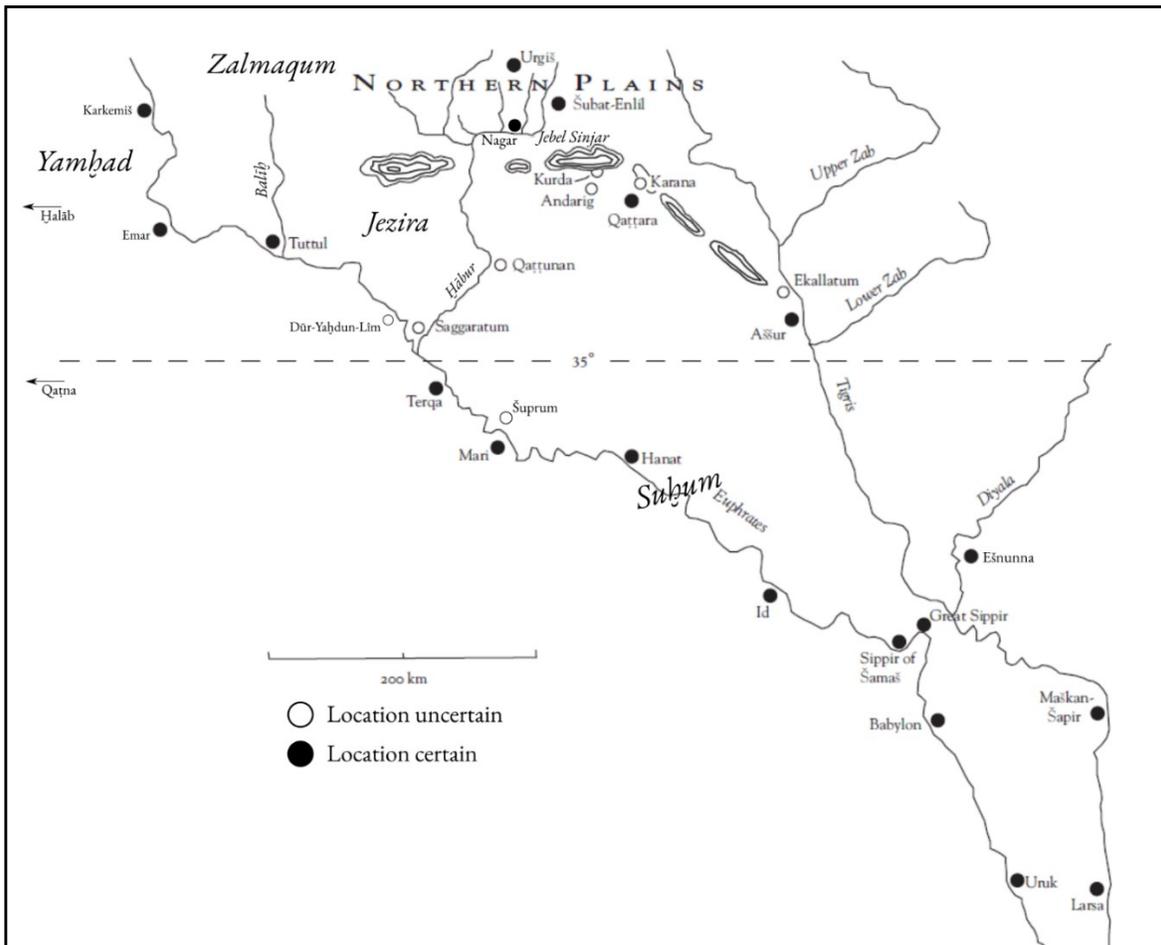


Figure 3 Map for the historical context. Based on Heimpel 2003: xxi, edited.

<sup>34</sup> For a more focused study on the history of Mari during the delimited timeframe, see e.g., Heimpel 2003: 1–163.

From the point of view of this thesis, the city of Mari was set in the centre of a very turbulent area in very turbulent times.<sup>35</sup> By the time it comes into our focus, this part of the ANE was “controlled” by multiple Amorite tribal groups, some of which became the ruling class of palatial cultures of the time. Consequently, one of the characteristic features of the time is an opposition of nomadic and settlement social organization. As was noted (not only) by Liverani, this opposition should not be seen as (only) hostile opposition (mostly favouring the settlers), but also as a mode of complementarity. For example, complementarity is visible in a product exchange and in military activities, where the expansionistic palace cultures often employed nomads into their services as soldiers. Complementarity was also demonstrated by royal titles, which often combined both nomadic and settlement elements, e. g. *king of Mari and Hana*<sup>36</sup> (LUGAL<sup>37</sup> *Mari u māt Hana*). The declared opposition was mainly between the two largest tribal confederations in this area – *Banu-Simʿal* (‘Sons of left=north’) and *Banu-Yamina* (‘Sons of right=south’).<sup>38</sup>

The other important feature of this time is a fast-paced mode of production, exploitative economy and war-making which is reflected not only in the turbulence of political alliances but also in the relatively short period we can focus on. As noted by Liverani: “*Around 1800–1750 BC, the Middle Euphrates Valley and the Lower Khabur had been a large network of thriving palaces. However, only a century later, the area became a de-urbanised region.*”<sup>39</sup>

The city and state of Mari did not appear at the beginning of our timeframe but had a long history before and engaged in the international relations of the EBA – with Ebla, the Akkadian Empire, or Ur III. Before the Lîm dynasty, the city was ruled by the *šakkanakku* dynasty. The exact nature of the end of this dynasty is not a case of scholarly consensus. According to Van De Mieroop, this dynasty faded out, and Mari was possibly left. According to Liverani, the Lîm dynasty replaced the previous one without indicating the nature of this replacement.

## 2.1 MARI UNDER THE LÎM DYNASTY

The Lîm dynasty starts for Mari with the reign of Yaḥdun-Lîm of the *Banu-Simʿal* tribal confederation. Already his father, Yaggid-Lîm, has controlled the larger area of the Middle Euphrates, but his capital

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<sup>35</sup> Sasson (2015: 344) sums up the situation: “*Politically, the region was a vast Serengeti Plain, in which ravenous predators operated in packs and their prey feared striking out on their own.*”

<sup>36</sup> The term *Hana* refers to nomads in general. Previously, it has been thought to designate a third large tribal confederation in addition to *Banu-Simʿal* and *Banu-Yamina*. See Liverani 2014: 223.

<sup>37</sup> I leave this term in its form of a sumerogram, as it is not clear whether it should be transcribed into Akkadian as *šarrum* or *malkum*. For a brief discussion, see Sasson 2015: 21. Durand in *LPO 16*: 475, note c, argues for the choice of *malkum* based on the use of term *namlakātum* for kingship/kingdom. However, e.g., in *RIME 4* 6.8.1: 10, *šarrūtu* is used for Yaḥdun-Lîm’s kingship. Therefore, I remain open to both possibilities, which may not necessarily exclude each other, but rather reflect the use of either western or eastern Semitic language branch. Here, we may observe the fluidity of language.

<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, there was an (unsuccessful) attempt at joining the forces during the time of the initial reconquest of the Mari state for Zimri-Lîm. On the relations between Zimri-Lîm (*Banu-Simʿal*) and *Banu-Yamina*, see e.g., Heimpel 2003: 45–47 with a summary and further references. See also Reculeau 2016: 177–186, for the tribal organization.

<sup>39</sup> Liverani 2014: 225.

was Šuprum. Yaggid-Lîm was also engaged in war with Ila-Kabkabi, the father of Šamšî-Adad, who later played a crucial role in the history of Mari.

The exact time when Yaḥdun-Lîm moved the capital to Mari is not precisely datable, possibly somewhere around 1810 BC. Based on the Babylonian model, he introduced a new scribal culture in the city and its state administration.<sup>40</sup> This administration also introduced a new practice of naming the years after the length of the rule. In addition, Yaḥdun-Lîm engaged in numerous building activities, focusing on temples, fortifications, canals<sup>41</sup> or even a new city (Dūr-Yaḥdun-Lîm). He also commissioned the reconstruction of the Mari royal palace, which later became very famous throughout the ANE.

Yaḥdun-Lîm largely expanded the territories of the Mari state. Chasing *Banu-Yamina*, the state expanded up to the Balîḥ river in the northwest (conquering Tuttul and Emar). In the north (the area of Ḥābur), this ruler repeatedly clashed with Šamšî-Adad, whose *Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia* proved to be the major opponent of the Mari state. Thus, Yaḥdun-Lîm concluded an alliance with Yamḥad and Ešnunna, by that time his closest neighbours.

However, the alliance with Yamḥad had its limits – while both of the states feared the growth of Šamšî-Adad’s kingdom, the king of Yamḥad Sūmū-Epuḥ at times supported the *Banu-Yamina* against the Mariote expansion. Yamḥad also allowed Yaḥdun-Lîm to cross its territory in an expedition to the Mediterranean Sea, which gained him the privilege of reaching the *end of the World* and allowed him to acquire some cedar wood for his construction projects.

The conflict with Šamšî-Adad proved deadly for the Yaḥdun-Lîm’s kingdom. While he was quite successful at first, reaching far to the territories of his opponent (as far as Ekallātum or Nagar), the conflict did not end well for him. The actual events leading to the first end of the Lîm dynasty remain in the mist. According to Van De Mieroop, Yaḥdun-Lîm became a victim of a palace coup and was succeeded by his son Sūmū-Yamam, who did not survive him by long and the city was left to Šamšî-Adad.<sup>42</sup> The support of Yamḥad proved essentially ineffective. However, Liverani does not mention any palace coup, but suggests that Yaḥdun-Lîm fled to Yamḥad.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Within the thesis, I use the presence of Babylonian/southern scribal culture at Mari as an important argument for some of my interpretations. However, I must admit I have neither examined in detail the process of its incorporation at Mari nor how the scribal education worked there. I simply take it as a known and widely accepted fact. Nonetheless, the statement that Yaḥdun-Lîm introduced this scribal culture may not be as straightforward as I present it. E.g., Larsen (2008: 16) states that it was brought there by Ešnunna that “*at one point*” forced Mari to accept it. Larsen refers to Durand (1992: 121–123) for this, but unfortunately, this text is not at my disposal now.

<sup>41</sup> Some may argue that he constructed the large navigational canal connecting Mari with Ḥābur along the Euphrates. However, e.g., Margueron suggests that he reconstructed it at best (2014: 19); see also his inscriptions, e.g., *RIME* 4 6.8.1: 35–49, where he commemorates the construction of canal Išim-Yaḥdun-Lîm and city Dūr-Yaḥdun-Lîm.

<sup>42</sup> Van De Mieroop 2007: 104.

<sup>43</sup> Liverani 2014: 226–227. There seems to be a slight contradiction in Liverani’s reconstruction in the events. On p. 226 he states that Yaḥdun-Lîm suffered a defeat from Šamšî-Adad and was succeeded by his son Sūmū-Yamam, who sought the support of Yamḥad but did not last more than a few years. On p. 227 however, Liverani talks about Yaḥdun-Lîm fleeing to Yamḥad, *his enemy*.

## 2.2 MARI UNDER THE RULE OF THE KINGDOM OF UPPER MESOPOTAMIA

Soon after conquering Mari, Šamši-Adad placed his younger son Yasmaḥ-Addu on the throne, trusting him with the rule over the western part of his *Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia*. Interestingly, thanks to the discovery of the archives of Mari, the second half of the reign of Šamši-Adad is best known from the perspective of this city. The administrative system remained mostly unchanged, but the practice of year-names has changed once again, following the Assyrian practice of dating years according to eponyms (Akk. *limmu*<sup>44</sup>). Mari's resources (both material and human) were partially used by the *Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia*, which negatively influenced the economy of the city and its state.

Yamḥad, under the rule of Sūmū-Epuḥ, remained the arch-enemy of the west. Consequently, Šamši-Adad concluded an alliance with Karkemiš and Qaṭna. Yasmaḥ-Addu even entered into a marriage with a daughter of Iši-Adad, the king of Qaṭna. Thanks to this alliance, both Šamši-Adad and Yasmaḥ-Addu could reach the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, claiming to reach the *end of the World*. As we have seen it with Yaḥdun-Lîm, this was a powerful symbolic element in the royal ideologies of the time.

Yasmaḥ-Addu sat on the throne of Mari for almost twenty years. However, his rule did not survive his father's death around 1780. This seems to essentially confirm his alleged incompetence as expressed by his father and older brother (Išmê-Dagān) in numerous letters.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.3 RETURN OF THE LÎM DYNASTY AND THE RULE OF ZIMRÎ-LÎM

The death of Šamši-Adad made Mari, just as other parts of the disintegrating *Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia*, “easily” available for conquest once again. Yasmaḥ-Addu lost the throne of Mari in favour of Zimrî-Lîm. However, there is no clear consensus on who reconquered the city in the first place.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See e.g., Birot 1985 for a study on *limmu* at Mari.

<sup>45</sup> I know neither of any collection of such letters nor of any study on this topic to which I could refer the reader. However, my favourite letter in this regard is A.3609 (edited in *FM* 8, text 1, p. 17–20) where Šamši-Adad rebukes Yasmaḥ-Addu for making new deities. While he complimented his piety, he condemned his actions as far too expensive (both for manufacture and subsequent cult). The exclamation of Šamši-Adad “*Are you a child?*” sums up the attitude towards this ruler. For English translation, see e.g., Sasson 2015: 250.

<sup>46</sup> Among the discussed possibilities, there are for example Zimrî-Lîm himself, a chief of *Banu-Sim'al* who did this in favour of Zimrî-Lîm (Liverani 2014: 228; Sasson 2015: 27), or by Ibal-pî-El II of Ešnunna (Heimpel 2003: 41–42), or he left for some other reason. According to Heimpel (see his full discussion; 2003: 38–42), it is usually assumed that Zimrî-Lîm chased his predecessor, but it rather contradicts the sources. Actually, the events of the transition are mostly lost in the mist of damaged tablets, where only modern reconstructions decide who defeated whom. Also, outside lacunae there seem to be no mentions of Zimrî-Lîm defeating Yasmaḥ-Addu, and Zimrî-Lîm himself referred to this transition of power in words “*when Yasmaḥ-Addu went out from Mari?*” (e.g., in *ARM X* 140; translation by Heimpel 2003: 40). There is also a possibility that Yasmaḥ-Addu was defeated by Ibal-pî-El II of Ešnunna and therefore Zimrî-Lîm could not claim the victory (see Heimpel 2003: 41). There was also acknowledged help for the acquisition of the throne from Ḥalāb (Yarîm-Lîm, based e.g., on *ARM XXVIII* 16). The theory mentioned by Liverani (2014: 228) or Sasson (2015: 27) is based on a seal of a certain Baninum of Mullḥan, servant of Yaḥdun-Lîm, who described himself as the one “*who restored Yaḥdun-Lîm's progeny to its rightful place?*” (translation according to Sasson 2015: 27). The seal was published in Charpin & Durand 1985: 323–324. See Villard 1994 for a discussion on this individual. Another source is a Mariote inscription *RIME* 4 6.12.1 that, according to Frayne, narrates

Anyhow, Zimrī-Lîm managed to re-establish the Lîm dynasty in the city of Mari.<sup>47</sup> He also ensured the help of the Yarîm-Lîm of Yamḥad, who succeeded Sûmû-Epuḥ about ten years before the death of Šamši-Adad, and who made Yamḥad the most important state able to oppose the Assyrian ruler.

The new ruler claimed to be a descendant of Yaḥdun-Lîm, sometimes stating to be his son.<sup>48</sup> However, there are serious doubts about his family relations to the previous ruler<sup>49</sup>, and it should be taken instead as a symbolic expression.<sup>50</sup> It seems that Zimrī-Lîm had much warmer relations with the court of Yamḥad than his claimed father. After he gained the throne, he married Šibtu, the daughter of the Yamḥad ruler.<sup>51</sup> Soon after, Zimrī-Lîm began to expand his territories, making small independent kingdoms, which claimed independence after the collapse of the *Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia*, his own vassals. This initial phase of kingdom expansion is probably the time of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* that is the central focus of this study.<sup>52</sup> The domain of the Mari state stretched along Ḥābur up to the Balīḥ and foothills of Jebel Sinjar. This expansion clashed with the interest of Išmê-Dagān, son of Šamši-Adad, who for now managed to hold the control of the centre of the Assyrian state.

The time of Zimrī-Lîm's reign was very turbulent from a political point of view. He tried to control the conquered areas through a series of dynastical marriages of his daughters with local kings. He also sent one of his daughters to be the *wife of Šamaš* in his temple at Sippar. Often, the situation of his daughters was not very pleasant, and some of the marriages had to be even annulled.<sup>53</sup> Zimrī-Lîm tried to hold his position in these dramatic times by joining several alliances with his powerful neighbours. This has proven to be essentially ineffective in the long run.

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about the reconquest of the kingdom of Mari by Zimrī-Lîm. However, the text is damaged, and exact interpretation is thus complicated. E.g., Charpin and Durand (1985: 319–322) suggest that this inscription relates to a victory of the previous ruler of Mari, Yasmaḥ-Addu. To conclude, the material related to this event is rich and contradictory, probably due to different ideological intentions of various (ancient) authors. I restrain myself from making definitive conclusions in this thesis, but I deemed it important to refer to the complexity of this issue. After all, the epic in discussion also relates to the royal ideology and legitimization of which the reconquest of the kingdom was a part. Although I do not discuss this topic more in this thesis, it is a relevant topic for further research.

<sup>47</sup> This also brought, once again, a change in the dating system. A nice example of the practice is letter *LAPO 16 90*, which records discussions about how a year should be named. See e.g., Sasson 2015: 38.

<sup>48</sup> E.g., in *RIME 4* 6.12.3. or 6.12.4.

<sup>49</sup> Probably, he was a son of certain Hadnī-Addu. For further discussion, see e.g., Charpin & Durand 1985: 336–337, Heimpel 2003: 42–43, Guichard 2014a: 4 and 27, or *FM 5*: 175. His affiliation to Yaḥdun-Lîm may be either tribal or he might have indeed been his relative – grandson or nephew.

<sup>50</sup> Zimrī-Lîm e.g., also referred to Ibal-pī-El II of Ešnunna as his father in *LAPO 16 281* when requesting troops for his campaign in Ida-Maraš (see Heimpel 2003: 43). For a more detailed study on the use of family relationship as symbolic statements, see e.g., Schloen 2001.

<sup>51</sup> For diplomacy related to this marriage, see *ARM XXVI*: 95–117. Šibtu is mentioned a few times in this thesis, because she informed the king about important visions, dreams, or oracles that appeared in the kingdom.

<sup>52</sup> However, the focus of this study is not to examine the epic as a source for the reconstruction of history. This is a rather peculiar topic that requires detailed knowledge of the history of Mari. In addition, this hard work has been already done by Guichard (2014a: 101–131).

<sup>53</sup> A nice overview of the sources related to these marriages were collected by Sasson 2015: 110–118. E.g., princess Kiru was so unhappy with her marriage that she even threatened to commit a suicide by jumping of the roof (see *LAPO 18 1230*).

Here, I only briefly summarize the outline of fluctuating alliances and conflicts. Ešnunna (ruled by Ibal-pî-El<sup>54</sup>) dangerously approached Mari along the Euphrates, conquered the region of Suḫum and incited revolts of *Banu-Yamina* against Mari. On the other front, along the Tigris, they also managed to conquer Aššur and Ekallātum, from which Išmê-Dagān fled to Babylonia into a transitional exile. Zimrî-Lîm joined forces with Yamḥad and Babylon to oppose this dangerous expansion. Together, they averted this threat, and Mari lived through a short period of peace times. Unfortunately, soon after, another threat appeared in the east: Elam. At first, this eastern power was supported by Mari and Babylon, hoping to eliminate Ešnunna without much interference. However, Elam did not stop there and soon began to threaten both Babylon and Mari in the region of Sinjar. The advancement of the Elamite army led to the formation of a large coalition of Mari, Babylon, Yamḥad, Zalmaqum, and smaller kingdoms in the Jezira region. Together they managed to chase off this threat. However, it did not take long, and the alliances changed once again, this time not for the benefit of Mari.

## 2.4 END OF THE KINGDOM OF MARI

King Ḥammurabi of Babylon waited a very long time to make his state the most important power of Mesopotamia. However, once he had the opportunity, he took advantage of it. As we have seen, he easily made both allies and enemies as suited him. Babylonia was enclosed both from north and south for a long time, with few expansion opportunities. The chance came around 1763 (the 31<sup>st</sup> year of the rule of Ḥammurabi) when king Rîm-Sîn of Larsa had already been old and his state weak. Ḥammurabi conquered Larsa and finally could focus only on one front. Shortly after, he expanded his dominion over Ešnunna (in his 32<sup>nd</sup> regnal year), Mari (in his 33<sup>rd</sup> regnal year<sup>55</sup>), and beyond, being stopped only by Yamḥad.

His control over this area was probably not very firm at first, as can be judged from the fact that only a few years later (in 1758, his 35<sup>th</sup> regnal year<sup>56</sup>), he destroyed the city together with its palace after a rebellion. Thus, the rule of Zimrî-Lîm and the Lîm dynasty ended.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> It seems that Ešnunna under Ibal-pî-El was at first a wannabe ally of Mari (see e.g., note 51 on the request of Ešnunna troops for Mari military activities) but Zimrî-Lîm preferred to strengthen his relations with Ḥalāb instead and Ešnunna became an enemy instead. On the development of relations between Mari and Ešnunna, see e.g., Heimpel 2003: 43–45.

<sup>55</sup> This is attested in a part of this year's name: "*He (Ḥammurabi) defeated the army of Mari and Ma[lgi] in battle, he caused Mari to fall and...*" Sum.: BÍ.IN.GI<sub>4</sub>.[A] UGNIM MA.RÍ<sup>KI</sup> Û MA.[AL.GI<sup>KI</sup>] MÈ.TA BÍ.ÍB.ŠUB.BI MA.RÍ<sup>KI</sup> Û...; transliteration according to Horsnell 1999: 148. For the overview of the year names of Ḥammurabi, see also: <https://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/yeardnames/HTML/T12K6.htm> [visited 18th December 2021]

<sup>56</sup> This is also attested the year's name: "*Upon the command of (Anu and) Enlil he (Ḥammurabi) destroyed the (great) walls of Mari (and Malgi).*" Sum.: DU<sub>11</sub> (AN) <sup>D</sup>EN.LÍL.LÁ.TA BÁD (GAL) MÁ.RÍ<sup>KI</sup> Û BÁD MÀ.AL.GI<sub>4</sub>.A<sup>KI</sup> MU.UN.GUL(.GUL).LÁ; transliteration according to Horsnell 1999: 151.

<sup>57</sup> Liverani counts Zimrî-Lîm's years of rule up to this year.

## 3 TEXT AND TRANSLATION

### 3.1 PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 3.1.1 PREVIOUS EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Fragments of the tablet containing the text of the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm* have been excavated for a long time, but their recognition as this particular composition was announced only in 1985 by Charpin and Durand.<sup>58</sup> Since then, only partial editions, translations, and allusions have been made by some scholars.<sup>59</sup> Only in 2014, Michaël Guichard has published the *editio princeps* of the text, together with a French translation and extensive commentary. Guichard personally examined the tablets in 2009 in the museum of Deir ez-Zor in Syria, where the tablets were located at that time.<sup>60</sup> This edition also includes a number of photos of the tablet and its fragments, unfortunately not of great quality. I am not aware of any new editions or new photographs.

For a short time, the epic was available only in French translation. However, already a year later, Sasson published a translation of a few selected passages in English.<sup>61</sup> The complete English translation was published in the 4<sup>th</sup> volume of *The Context of Scripture* in 2017.<sup>62</sup>

So far, the text has been published neither on *CDLI* nor on *ORACC*. One of the main aims of this thesis is to provide an electronic edition on *ORACC* (see 5.2 *NERE Project on ORACC*) where the text will be open to a broader scholarly community. As discussed further on, I had no opportunity to properly examine the tablets. Therefore, the presented work is completely based on the edition of Guichard.

#### 3.1.2 ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE TEXT<sup>63</sup>

Unfortunately, the modern history of the excavated tablet is not well attested. Possibly, those with access to the materials from excavations, including archaeological diaries, could have better options, and it is possible that it may be better reconstructed in the future. Guichard himself remains somewhat elusive and not too specific. I have not been able to find out even the year of the discovery. Probably it was sometime during the first years of excavations when the palace was unearthed.

The fragments were initially kept in France in the hotel of Chalon-Luxembourg, Paris, until they were moved back to Syria, to the museum of Deir ez-Zor. According to Guichard, the state in which it

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<sup>58</sup> Charpin & Durand 1985: 325.

<sup>59</sup> See Guichard 2014a: 3–4 for a selection.

<sup>60</sup> Guichard 2014a: 1.

<sup>61</sup> Sasson 2015: 32–35.

<sup>62</sup> Miglio 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Unless stated otherwise, this section is based on Guichard 2014a: 1–4.

arrived in France suggests that a pickaxe hit it during the excavations, which unfortunately damaged the tablet. Therefore, it was probably during the excavation process when it was broken into three pieces – one of them was not even assigned an excavation number (therefore, the tablet is referred to as *A.3152 + M.5665 + unnumbered fragment*). Smaller fragments were probably lost in the process of excavation or possibly already during the sack of the palace in the 18<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The recent conflict in Syria has led to the evacuation of the Deir ez-Zor museum in 2015.<sup>64</sup> The present location of these texts is unknown to me.

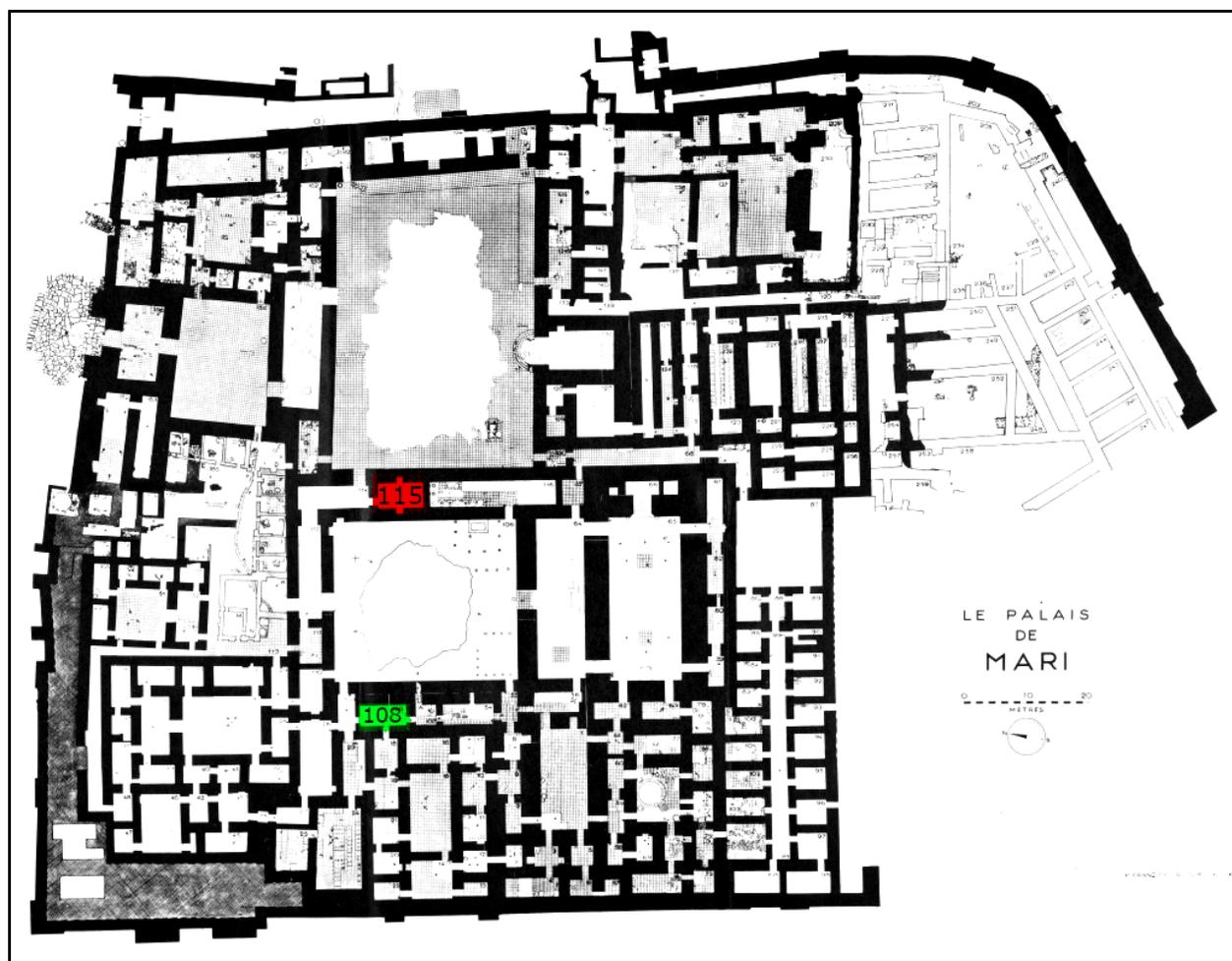


Figure 4 The Great Palace of Mari with highlighted rooms 115 and 108 (the possible places of discovery of the text); after Parrot 1958, plate LXV (?).

<sup>64</sup> <http://aranews.net/files/2015/05/syrian-regime-evacuates-deir-ez-zors-museum-amid-isis-progress/> [visited 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021] and <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/vaa/forschung/Deir-ez-Zor/index.html> [visited 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021].

The site of the discovery should be room 115 of the *Great Royal Palace* (see Fig. 4).<sup>65</sup> It has been suggested that the texts might have been moved there by the Babylonians during the final days of the city.<sup>66</sup> The tablet of the epic has been placed among royal correspondence, administrative and legal texts, and a few literary texts.

Can this context be of any use to us in the interpretation? Should we accept the suggestion that the Babylonians moved the tablets, it can mean that the epic was of no great interest to them. Otherwise, they would have moved it to their archives in Babylon.<sup>67</sup> This suggestion can also break the connection of this text with the other texts discovered in the same place unless all the texts have been moved there from the previous common archive.

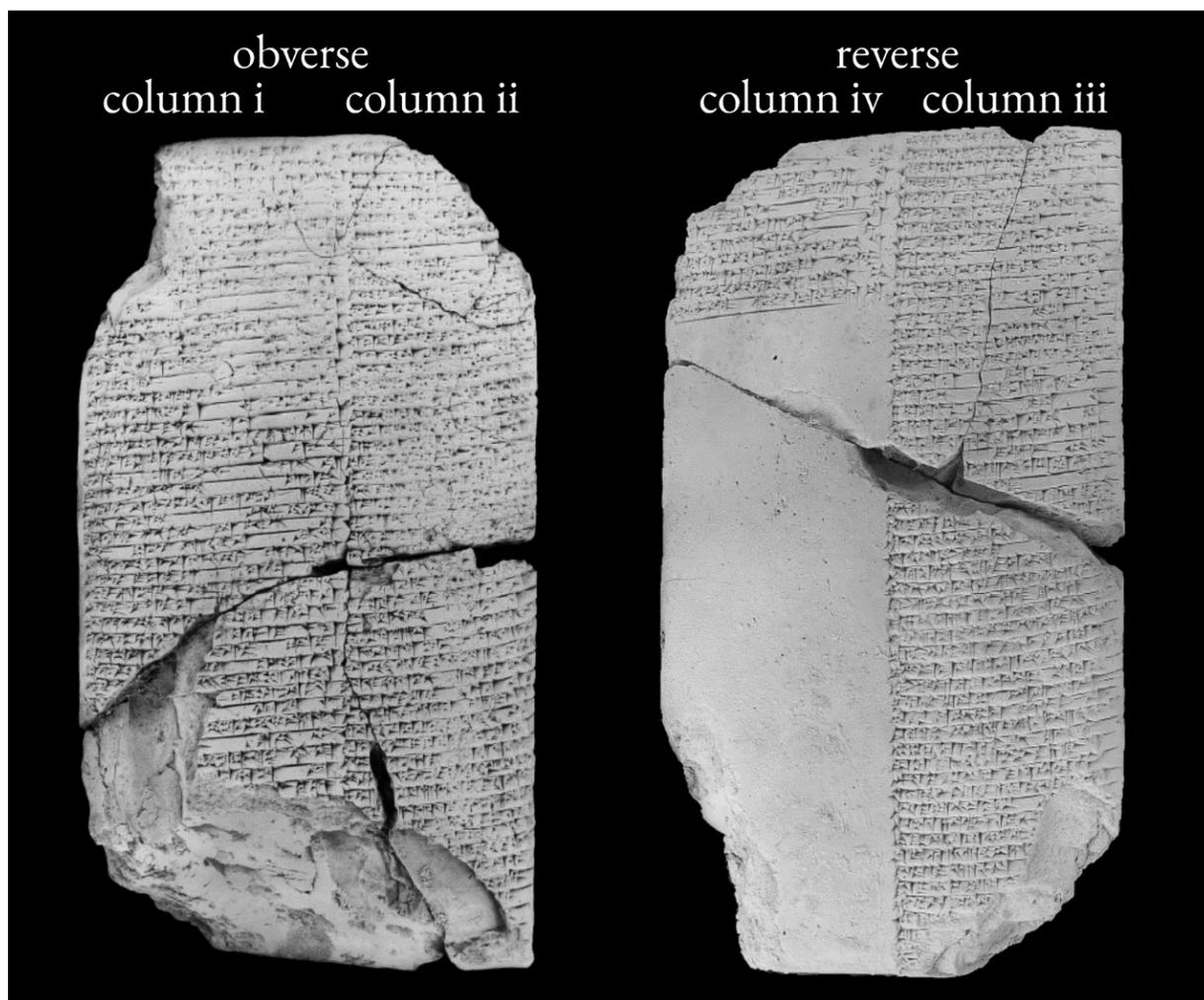


Figure 5 The Epic of Zimri-Lim (A.3152 + M.5665 + unnumbered fragment); after Guichard 2014a: 142–143.

<sup>65</sup> However, during the excavations, there might have been some mixing of texts from room 115 and 108; see Charpin 1995: 35–36. It can be seen on Fig. 4, that these rooms are not that close to one another. Nonetheless, it seems that the provenance of the epic in room 115 seems more probable.

<sup>66</sup> See Margueron 2004: 480–481, Charpin 1995 or 2010: 125. See also note 352.

<sup>67</sup> At least, they did not prioritize the transport of this archive to the destruction of the city.

Still, the epic is connected with the other texts by its content. Just as administrative or legal text, the epic is part of the state activities. It is aimed at keeping the state functioning under its proper ruler. This does not exclude the possibility that it might have been a school text. After all, the scribes must have known how to praise the king when doing their work. In summary, the location of the text does not seem to indicate much more than that the text was part of the royal agenda during the life of Zimrī-Lîm. Although this seems obvious from the contents of the epic itself, it is not that straightforward as other royal epics show.<sup>68</sup>

The epic is inscribed on a single tablet (Fig. 5). It measures ca. 24 x 12,5 cm. The text is arranged in four columns, of which the fourth does not cover the full length of the tablet. Guichard deduces from it that it is probably an original text rather than a copy.<sup>69</sup> The undamaged tablet contained about 170 lines, of which 113 are completely preserved. For a basic overview of the text as an object, and its palaeography, see the discussion in Guichard.<sup>70</sup>

### 3.2 TEXT AND TRANSLATION<sup>71</sup>

#### COLUMN I

1	[zi-im-ri-l]im ʿri-imʿ tu-qú-um-tim lu-ʿnaʿ-i-id	[Zimrī-L]îm, 'the wild bull' of battle, I want to 'pr'aise
2	[qú-ra-da-a]m a-na di-ri šu-ma-aš-šu lu-uš-ta-aš-ni	[the her]o, for ever I want to repeat his name,
3	[zi-im-ri-li-i]m a-pil ʿia-aḫ-du-li-im a-ša-re-ed ḫa-na	[Zimrī-Li]m, the heir of Yaḫdun-Lîm, the foremost of Ḫanû,
4	[mu-aʿ-ab-bi-it du]-ur na-ak{ʿRIʿ}-ri-im	[the one who destroys the w]all of the enemy.
5	[...] ʿxʿ me-er lu-ul-li še <sub>20</sub> -me-e	[...] Mēr <sup>72</sup> I want to exalt. Hear,

<sup>68</sup> See the discussion in 5.1.2 *How Was the Genre Used?*.

<sup>69</sup> Guichard 2014a: 69. The scribe would have probably planned the size better for a copy.

<sup>70</sup> Especially Guichard 2014a: 69–70.

<sup>71</sup> Due to the unavailability of the physical tablet, the absence of an autograph, and the insufficient quality of any photographs available to me, I have given up the intention of reading the text myself. Therefore, the transliteration is based on Guichard's edition (2014a: 12–24) where he also provides transcribed (vocalised) text. I recommend to any interested reader to consult any doubts with the commentary of Guichard on individual lines (2014a: 25–68). On the lemmatization, see the *NERE* project on *ORACC*: <http://build-oracc.museum.upenn.edu/nere/corpus/> [cited 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021].

<sup>72</sup> One may be very well tempted to reconstruct Itûr in the lacuna. This was done e.g., in the translation by Miglio (2017: 231). However, Guichard comments on this line and argues that this reconstruction is impossible for palaeographical reasons (2014a: 27–28); for the photo of this section see Fig. 6 and 7 in 4.1 *Linguistic Commentary*.

6 [uṣ-ṣi-ra a]-wa-ti mu-ur-ta-<sup>1</sup>di<sup>2</sup>-id<sup>2</sup> za-e-ra-am  
[listen attentively (to)] my [w]ords (about) the one who cha<sup>1</sup>ses<sup>1</sup> the foes,

7 [mu-ka-an-ni-iš] na-ak-ri-šu  
[(about) the one who subdues] his enemies,

8 [eṭ-lum pé-t]i-iú<sup>6</sup>ŠUKUR mu-ut-<sup>1</sup>x-x-ki/di<sup>1</sup>  
[the hero who op]ens a spear (...),

9 [a-ḫi-iz ma-tim] e-li ma-a-tim  
[the one who takes a land] after a land,

10 [zi-im-ri]-li-im pé-ti-iú<sup>6</sup>ŠUKUR<sup>1</sup> mu-ut-x-x-ki/di<sup>1</sup>  
[Zimrī]-Lîm, who opens a spear (...),

11 [a-ḫi-i]z<sup>2</sup> ma-tim e-li<sup>1</sup> ma-a<sup>1</sup>-tim  
[who take]s a land after a <sup>1</sup>land.

12 [i]-<sup>1</sup>ŠA<sup>2</sup> šu<sup>1</sup>-qú-ri ib-bu-ú DINGIR<sup>MES</sup> šum-šu  
[In] <sup>1</sup>the pr<sup>1</sup>ecious <sup>1</sup>heart<sup>1</sup>, the gods have chosen his name,

13 zi-ik-ru<sup>D</sup>a-nim<sup>1</sup> li<sup>1</sup>-te-li-il ri-im ma-ti-šu  
<sup>1</sup>may<sup>1</sup> the command of Anu be pure, the wild bull of his land,

14 zi-im-ri-li-im ib-bu-ú DINGIR<sup>MES</sup> šum-šu  
Zimrī-Lîm, the gods have chosen his name,

15 zi-ik-ru<sup>D</sup>a-nim li-te-li-il<sup>1</sup> ri<sup>1</sup>-im ma-<sup>1</sup>ti-šu<sup>1</sup>  
may the command of Anu be pure, <sup>1</sup>the w<sup>1</sup>ild bull <sup>1</sup>of his<sup>1</sup> lan<sup>1</sup>d<sup>1</sup>.

16 LUGAL ša-pé-e-em<sup>1</sup> lu<sup>2</sup>-ša-<sup>1</sup>ar<sup>1</sup>-bi-ma  
Oh I<sup>73</sup> <sup>1</sup>want<sup>1</sup> to pr<sup>1</sup>ai<sup>1</sup>se the famous king!

17 na-ak-ri<sup>D</sup>EN.LÍL iš-ta-ka-an za-ri-šu  
He has made the enemies of Enlil his enemies.

18 ib-bi-ri-it ḫa-bu-ur ù pu-ra-an-tim  
Between Ḫābur and Euphrates,

19 i-na aš-ri<sup>D</sup>IŠKUR i-di-nu di-na-aš-šu  
in the place (where) Storm-god has judged his judgement,

20 id-di ri-ig-ma-aš-šu qí-in-na-šu ú-pa-ar-ri-ir  
(where) he has raised his roar, (where) he has scattered his clan,

21 a-na ki-ib-ra-at er-be-e-im ṭe-em-šu is-pu-ub  
to the four quarters (of the world) he has dispersed his will.

22 im-šu-ù ma-a-tum bu-ši qa-ti-šu  
The land looted properties of his (enemy?) hand,

<sup>73</sup> Miglio 2017: 231, note 7, translates: “He (Anu) exalted”, reading *ú-ša-ar-bi-ma*.

- 23 *i-na a-lim bi-<sup>r</sup>sa<sup>1</sup>-an<sup>KI</sup> KÙ.SI<sub>22</sub> eb-ba-am* pure gold in the town of Bi<sup>r</sup>sa<sup>1</sup>n.
- 24 *ib-tu-uq na-ak-ra-am ki-i ki-ší-ir a-bi-ḫi-im* He has torn the enemy like a knot of a rope,
- 25 *iš-ti er-še-tum da-mi qar-ra-di* the earth has drunk the blood of warriors.
- 26 *i-il-la-ak an-nu-ni-tum<sup>x74</sup> i-na i-mi-ti-šu* Annunītum has walked by his right side,
- 27 <sup>D</sup>IŠKUR *ša-pu-ú ri-gi-im-šu id-di* the Storm-God has laid down the loudness of his cry,
- 28 *id-di ri-ig-ma-aš-šu iš-te<sub>9</sub>-bi-ir<sup>GISŠ</sup>UKUR na-ak-ri* he has laid down his cry, he has broken the spear of the enemy,
- 29 *it-bu-uk i-ma-as-sú am-ma-ta-[tim]* he has poured his poison onto the lan[d],
- 30 *zi-im-ri-li-im še<sub>20</sub>-bi-ru<sup>GISŠ</sup>UKUR na-ak-ri-im* Zimrī-Lîm, who has broken the spear of the enemy,
- 31 *it-bu-uk i-ma-as-sú e-<sup>r</sup>li<sup>1</sup> na-ak-ri-šu* has poured his poison o<sup>r</sup>n<sup>1</sup> his enemies.
- 32 *pu-tam ta-an-pí-ih-tam is-ri-[im<sup>?</sup>] <sup>r</sup>i<sup>1</sup>-ša-at qa-ab-lim*  
(At) front of the (battle) outburst (?), <sup>r</sup>the f<sup>r</sup>ire of battle has brok<sup>r</sup>e out<sup>1</sup>.
- 33 *ma-an-nu-um el-ka [ša] ú-ba-al-lu-ši-ma* Who is above you [that] he puts it (the fire) down?
- 34 *at-ta te-ep-ti [ ]<sup>75</sup> pu-šu-uq ša-du-i* You have opened a narrow pass of the mountains,
- 35 *ša sí-ik-k[u-ru ed-l]u-ú<sup>GIS</sup>IG ZU NA<sub>4</sub>* of which(?) a bo[lt has sh]ut the door (of) stone panels.
- 36 *zi-im-r[i-li-im p]é-ti-iú<sup>GIS</sup>IG<sup>HÁ</sup> dan-nim* Zimr[ī-Lîm, who has o]pened the doors of the fortress(?)
- 37 *ša s[i-ik-ku-ru ed-lu]-<sup>r</sup>ú<sup>1</sup><sup>GIS</sup>IG ZI.NA NA<sub>4</sub>* of which(?) a b[olt has shu]<sup>r</sup>t<sup>1</sup> the door with stone bars(?).
- 38 [... ma-ti]m<sup>?</sup> ka-li-ši [... lan]d in its entirety.
- 39 [...]x-am tu-ra-am-mi du-un-na-aš-ši [...] you have released her power.

<sup>74</sup> Sign TIM is written here. It may also be a scribal error.

<sup>75</sup> Probably just empty lacuna.

40	[... <i>ka-la</i> (?) <i>ni-š</i> ] <i>i e-pé-tim</i>	[... the whole humani]ty (was) numerous.
41	[... <i>da-r</i> ] <i>a-am tu-ša-aš-ki-in šum-ka</i>	[... for eter]nity you have established your name.
42	[...] <sub>x</sub> <sup>r</sup> <i>e</i> <sup>1</sup> - <i>te-él-le-et</i>	[...] <sup>r</sup> pre <sup>1</sup> eminent lady
43	[...] <sub>x</sub> <sup>r</sup> <i>ta</i> <sup>2</sup> <sup>r</sup> - <i>aš-ku-un</i>	[...] <sup>r</sup> you <sup>1</sup> have placed
44	[...] <sup>r</sup> <i>x-ka</i> <sup>1</sup>	[...] <sup>r</sup> yours(?) <sup>1</sup>
45	(10 lines lost)	[...]

COLUMN II

1	<i>zi-im-ri-l</i> [ <i>i-im</i> ...]	Zimrī-L[îm ...]
2	<i>ki-ma pé-er-di-im</i> x[...]	like an equid [...]
3	<i>ip-pa-an ki-iš-ra-</i> [ <i>tim</i> ...]	in front of the conting[ent ...]
4	<i>ra-ki-ib ši-ḥa-mi</i> [...]	rider on the steed [...]
5	<i>a-na pa-ni-šu pa-ri-kum ú-[ul i-ba-aš-ši]</i>	Before him, [there is nothi]ng opposing him.
6	<i>li-ta-am-ḥa-aḥ na-ak-rum ki-[i ṭi-di-im ina me-e (?)]</i>	May the enemy be soaked li[ke a clay in the water (?)]
7	<i>wa-ar-ku-um ṭà-ri-du-um ú-ul i[ṣ<sup>2</sup>-pa-ar-ši-id]</i>	In the back, no deserter e[scaped],
8	<i>pé<sup>r</sup>-tu<sup>1</sup>-ú-um</i> 2 [...] <sup>76</sup>	in the op <sup>r</sup> en <sup>1</sup> ing of two [...]
9	<i>la-li-iú-um i-du-uk za-r[i-šu ...]</i>	The kid <sup>77</sup> killed [his] hate[rs ...],

<sup>76</sup> Guichard reconstructs <sup>GIS</sup><sup>IG<sup>HA</sup></sup> *ša-du-i* (?), “*vantaux de la montagne* (?)” as a parallel with i: 35–37. I am not completely convinced by this reconstruction and I leave it rather unreconstructed.

<sup>77</sup> Wasserman (2015: 55) disagrees with this interpretation and suggest translating ‘red deer, stag’ from Akk. *lulimum*, connecting it with the first millennium material. For further discussion, see 4.2.4.1 *Zimrī-Lîm*.

- 10 *a-ša-am-ša-tum is-ḫu-ra-šu-nu-ši-im<sup>1</sup>*  
the dust storm has turned against the<sup>1</sup>m<sup>1</sup>.
- 11 *ú-ul i-du-ur a-li<sup>1</sup>-kam [a]-na im-ni-š[u ù šu-me-li-šu (?)]*  
He did not fear (thanks to?) the o<sup>1</sup>ne w<sup>1</sup>alking [o]n h[is] right side [and his left side.]
- 12 *bu-ku-ur<sup>D</sup>EN.LÍL<sup>D</sup> la-ga-ma-al<sup>1</sup> e-te-él<sup>1</sup>-lu*  
The son of Enlil, ‘Lāgamal’, the l<sup>1</sup>or<sup>1</sup>d,
- 13 *ù ti-il-la-as-su-ma<sup>2</sup> i<sup>1</sup>p-ri-ku ša<sup>2</sup>-ni<sup>2</sup> qar<sup>2</sup>-ra<sup>2</sup>-di<sup>2</sup>*  
and his reinforcements ‘have’ prevented ‘the fleeing of warriors’.
- 14 *ki-ma ap-pa-ri-im i-ši-da-am ša-ba-šu*  
He harvested his (enemy?) troops like a reed,
- 15 *ki-ma bi-nim šu-um-qú-tu qar-ra-du*  
the warriors were caused to be fallen like a tamarisk,
- 16 *iš-ti er-še-tum da-mi-šu*  
the earth has drunk his<sup>78</sup> blood.
- 17 *a-ki<sup>2</sup>-i<sup>2</sup> IŠKUR<sup>2</sup> šu-pu<sup>1</sup> a-na ḫu-ur<sup>1</sup>-ri-im*  
As the ‘Storm-God’ was made resple<sup>1</sup>ndent<sup>1</sup> for<sup>1</sup>ev<sup>1</sup>er,
- 18 *zi-im-ri-li-im ni-im-ru a-na-na-tim*  
Zimrī-Lîm, the leopard of battles,
- 19 *da-an-nu-um ka-mi lem<sup>2</sup>-ni<sup>2</sup> [mu]-ḫa-al-li-iq na-ak-ri*  
the strong one, who binds ‘the evil’, [the one who] destroys the enemy,
- 20 *pí-šu i-pu-ša-am i-qa-ab-bi*  
opened his mouth, saying,
- 21 *is-sà-aq-qa-ra-am a-na eṭ-li-šu*  
speaking to his men:
- 22 *ša-as-su-ru-um ib-ni-ku-nu-ti*  
“A womb has created you,
- 23 *um-mu-um ki-ma ku-nu-ti-ma ul-da-an-ni*  
a mother, just like you, has given a birth to me!
- 24 *ša-ti ta-ḫa-zu e-li<sup>1</sup>-ia<sup>2</sup> pa-ni iš<sup>2</sup>-ni*  
The same battle is ‘upon’ me! ‘My face has cha<sup>1</sup>nged!(?)
- 25 *ki-ib-ra-at er-bé-e<sup>1</sup>-im ku-nu-ti<sup>2</sup> na-ak-ra*  
The f<sup>1</sup>ou<sup>1</sup>r quarters (of the world) are hostile to yo<sup>1</sup>u<sup>1</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Probably the tamarisk’s = of the enemies.

- 26 *ù ma-a-tum* [x] <sup>1</sup>ga<sup>2</sup> x <sup>1</sup>ta<sup>2</sup> ri/ur<sup>2</sup> šu-še-ra-nim<sup>1</sup> and the land (...) <sup>1</sup>Get prepared<sup>79</sup> for me<sup>1</sup>!
- 27 *na-ak-ru-um* p[a<sup>2</sup>-ḫi-i]<sup>r<sup>2</sup></sup> x <sup>1</sup>MI<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>x tim<sup>2</sup> x na<sup>2</sup>-tum<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> The enemy is [assemble]d (...)
- 28 *a-na ta-ḫa-*<sup>1</sup>zi-im<sup>1</sup> [e-pé-ši-im a-na-ku lu-uš-te-še]-er To the bat<sup>1</sup>tle<sup>1</sup>, [the action(?), I want to get rea]dy!<sup>2</sup>”
- 29 [<sup>1</sup>ri-im šar-r]<sup>i<sup>2</sup></sup> ku-nu-um <sup>1</sup>ki ša<sup>1</sup> [ḫa-da-an-šu i-ka-ša-du] [The wild bull of king]s, the firm one, <sup>1</sup>just as<sup>1</sup> [he achieved his goal] (?)
- 30 <sup>1</sup>zi-im<sup>1</sup>-ri-li-im ku-nu-um ki <sup>1</sup>ša<sup>1</sup> ḫa-<sup>1</sup>da-an<sup>1</sup>[-šu i-ka-ša-du] <sup>1</sup>Zim<sup>1</sup>rī-Lîm, the firm one, just <sup>1</sup>as<sup>1</sup> [he achieved his] g<sup>1</sup>oal<sup>1</sup> (?)
- 31 *ú-ta-e-er* šu-uk-ka-al-la-šu he ordered his sukkallu,
- 32 <sup>LÚ.MES</sup>su-ga<sup>1</sup>-gi iš-pu-uṭ (his) sugāgū he commanded:
- 33 *qar-ra-di-ia*<sup>180</sup> ḫa-na li-qa-ar-ri-bu-nim “My warriors, the Ḫananeans, may they come close to me,
- 34 DUMU<sup>MES</sup> na-qi-di li-ru-bu ma-aḫ-ri IGI-ia my herdsmen, may they report for duty before me,
- 35 *i-na pí-ih-ri-im* wa-ši-bu-ut a-ḫ pu-ra-an-tim in conscription,<sup>81</sup> the inhabitants of the Banks of Euphrates.
- 36 *i-na mi-il-ki-ku-nu* a-na-ku lu-pu-úš Let me act according to your counsel!”
- 37 *iš-me-ma* an-né-e-em qa-ba-šu Having heard this speech of his,
- 38 *aš-ma-ad* me-er-<sup>2</sup>u<sub>5</sub>-um-ma is-sà-aq-qa-ar-šum Ašmad, the mer’û, speaks to him:
- 39 *mi-na-am* šu-ba-ra-am ta-na-á<sup>2</sup>-<sup>2</sup>i-id “Why do you worry (about) the Šubarean?”

<sup>79</sup> Following the suggestion on Wasserman (2015: 55), I take *šu-še-ra-nim* as a Š-stem form of *ešērum* and not *wuššurum* as Guichard (“*Libérez(-le) pour moi!*”, “Liberate it (the land) for me”). It makes more sense to me as a parallel with ii: 28. Nevertheless, both options make enough sense to me.

<sup>80</sup> Sign E is written here.

<sup>81</sup> See *CAD* P: *pīḫru* ‘mng. unknown’; Mari: ‘elite troops’. However, this term seems to reference ‘recruitment, conscript’ in Mari, derived from *CDA*: 277–278 *puḫru* 2, ‘gathering of clan, family, people, land, etc.’. For the interpretation as ‘recruitment, (regular) conscript’, see discussions in Guichard 2014a: 48, and *LAPO* 17: 196–197 and 362, translation of Miglio (2017: 233), or a brief reference in Hamblin 2006: 192.

40	<i>la ú[s-sà]-ḫi-ru i-ša-at ṽqa¹-ab-li-ka</i>	The fire of your ṽba¹ttle cannot b[e ev]icted.
41	<i>ḫu-ur-[ba-š]u ší-il-lu ṽGIS<sup>1HA</sup> qí-iš-tim</i>	(There is) a chilli[ng fe]ar (in) the shadows of the forest ṽtree¹s
42	<i>gu-šú-r[u-šú]-nu az-zi-im-ma la ḫe-ru li-ša-an pa-ši-im</i>	[the]ir tree-trunk[s], to the appearance (there is) no digging of an axe blade.
43	<i>sà-ap-ḫ[a-at] šu-ba-ar-tum ki-i UDU<sup>HA</sup> ri-tim</i>	Subartu is scatte[red] like a sheep on the pasture.
44	<i>[aš]-ra-[num] a-na re-di-i-im ší-di-tum ša-ak-na-at</i>	[T]he[re], for a soldier a travel provision is placed,
45	<i>[zi-im-ri-l]i-im li-mu-ru qú-ru-ud-ka</i>	[Zimrī-L]îm, may they see your heroism,
46	<i>[te-ni-iš-tum a-na di-r]i² li-na-i-id šum-ka</i>	may [the people for eve]r praise your name.”
47	<i>[LUGAL iḫ-du a-na a]ṽ-wa²-at²¹ me-er-²i₃-im wa-ar-di-šú</i>	[The king rejoiced over the w]ṽord¹ of the mer’û, his servant.
48	<i>[... ki-ma] ṽe¹-ší-du-ut ú-ga-ri-im</i>	[... like] ṽa h¹arvestor of a field(?)
49	<i>[... i]k-tu-um</i>	[... co]vered
50	<i>[...]x-um</i>	[...]
51	<i>[... a]m</i>	[...]
52	<i>[...]</i>	[...]
53	<i>[...]</i>	[...]

COLUMN III

1	<i>ti-il-la-ti-šú-nu ú-ma-a[l-lu] še-ra-am</i>	(With) their reinforcements he fi[lled] up the steppe.
2	<i>la-bi-iš ap-lu-ub-tam ik-ki-ib-šú e-né-nu</i>	Clothed with armour, to ask for mercy (was) a taboo of his,
3	<i>mi-im-ma ša ip-ri-ku a-na pa-ni-šú ma-aq-tu</i>	everyone who faced him is fallen,

4	<i>šu-ul-pu-tu su-up-pu-ḫu up-pu-ú ANŠE<sup>HA</sup></i>	the donkeys seem ruined and scattered,
5	<i>a-ḫu-né-e i-ta-ad-du-ú qar-ra-du</i>	the warriors are (left) fallen, each by himself,
6	<i>ba-al-la-at qé-er-bé-tum i-na da-mi-šu-nu</i>	the environ is covered in their blood.
7	<i>a-di ša ik-šu-du ḫa-da-an-šu LUGAL</i>	Until the king has achieved his goal,
8	<i>ù i-da-ma-ra-aš ú-ka-an-ni-iš aš-še-pé-šu</i>	and Ida-Maraš was subjected under his feet,
9	<i>me-e na-da-tim iš-ta-na-at-ti</i>	he (only) drank water of water-skins,
10	<i>e-si-ik it-ti re-di-i ka-lum-ma iš-šu-uš</i>	counted with the soldiers, everything was torture.
11	<i>ra-ab-bu ba<sup>1</sup>-ia-ru wa-šú-šu</i>	Great (were) the huntsman who went with him,
12	<i>ki-ma sí-ir-ra-<sup>1</sup>mi<sup>1</sup>-im pé-e še-ru-um</i>	like an ona <sup>1</sup> ger <sup>1</sup> (eating) straw in the steppe,
13	<i>ši-ra-am i-ku-lu mu-tu-šu</i>	his man ate meat,
14	<i>li-ib-ba-am ir-šu-ú da-na-na-am uš-bu</i>	they gained courage; they gained strength.
15	<i>zi-im-ri-li-im ki-ma šu-ri-nim ip-pa-na i-la-ak</i>	Zimrī-Lîm goes at the front like a (divine) emblem,
16	<i>is-ḫu-ur a-na la le-i-im i-na-ad-di-in li-ib-ba-am</i>	having turned to the one who was without power, he encourages him:
17	<i>di-in-na-ma i-te-ru-ba</i>	“Be strong and enter(?),
18	<i>iš-di-ku-nu <sup>1</sup>i<sup>1</sup>-im-ma-ar na-ak-rum</i>	the enemy <sup>1</sup> s <sup>1</sup> ees your valour!”
19	<i>ša-ab-tu ši-ru-šu-nu i-ša-tam</i>	Their bodies are taken up with fire,
20	<i>ka-ar-šu-šu-nu ši-wi-tam la-am-du</i>	their stomachs know burning. <sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> *Šiwītu* is not interpreted neither in *CAD* Š: 147 nor in *CDA*: 378 (*šiwīātum*). I have no better suggestion than Guichard, who connects this word with verb *šawūm*, ‘to roast’ in parallel with the previous line (2014a: 58). The same interpretation is followed by Miglio (2017: 233, note 33), too.

- 21 *la<sup>1</sup>-ab-šu pa-at-ri<sup>1</sup> na-am-ša-ri šu-ku<sup>1</sup>-ur-ri*  
 「They are e<sup>1</sup>quipped with daggers, swords and s<sup>1</sup>pe<sup>1</sup>ars,
- 22 *[i-du-ú]<sup>s</sup>-šu-<sup>1</sup>nu<sup>1</sup> i-šu-ur-ru ul-mu*  
 「at their<sup>1</sup> [sides] (...) <sup>83</sup> axes.
- 23 *[a-na šu-te(?)-é]l-li e-zi-ba-at še-ri-im*  
 [For remov]ing (?) (what is) left of the steppe.
- 24 *i<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>-[la-ak pa-na te-l]i-tum eš<sub>4</sub>-tár*  
 「Wal<sup>1</sup>[king at the front (was) the mo]st able Ištar.
- 25 *i-nu-ma x[...]x<sup>1</sup> ú x x<sup>1</sup> NA/DU-AZ/UK-ŠUM*  
 When (...)
- 26 *iš-ku-un ša-ak-ni-š[u i-na a-ab] na-ri-im*  
 He appointed h[is] governors [on the banks] of the river.
- 27 *la na-bi-iú-tim it-ti DIN[GIR<sup>ME5</sup> i-ri-iš a-na r]e-di-im*  
 Those of go[ds] who were not called, [he requested them to acc]ompany (him).
- 28 *ar-ḫi-iš LUGAL i-pu-lu a[n-na-am]*  
 Quickly, they answered the king: "Y[es!]"
- 29 *it-ta-an-pa-ab tu-uq-ma-tim qé-<sup>1</sup>re-eb<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> [ma-a-ti]m<sup>2</sup>*  
 The h<sup>1</sup>ear<sup>1</sup>[lan]d was kindled with a battle.
- 30 *we-de-nu-úš-šu eṭ-lum ú-ul i-la-ak ge-er-r[a-am]*  
 The hero does not go on a camp[aign] by himself,
- 31 *LUGAL zi-ik-ru-úš<sup>D</sup>da-gan e-te<sub>9</sub>-él-ma*  
 the king, by the command of Dagān, the lord,
- 32 *iš-ša-am-ma-ar e-li mu-ti ki-im-ti-šu*  
 he (...) <sup>84</sup> on/over the men, his family,
- 33 *zi-im-ri-li-im zi-ik-ru-úš<sup>D</sup>da-gan e-te<sub>9</sub>-él-ma*  
 Zimrī-Lîm, by the command of Dagān, the lord,
- 34 *tu-uk-la-as-su<sup>D</sup>i-túr-me-er ur-ša-nu*  
 his support (is) Itūr-Mêr, the warrior.
- 35 *i-mu-ur-ma it-ta-šu a-pí-la-am e-te<sub>9</sub>-él ma-ti-<sup>1</sup>šu<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>*  
 Oh, he saw his sign, (revealed by?) the *āpilu*, the hero of 「his<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> land,

<sup>83</sup> Guichard translates “*Les haches (aiguillées) à leur côté fulminaient*”, connecting *išurrū* with the adjective *šērum*, ‘fierce’ (2014a: 60). Miglio, on the other hand, translates “(With) weapons menacing their [x x] <sup>1</sup>” and connects the verb with the Ugaritic root š-r (2017: 233). I am not particularly convinced by any of these suggestions, while I do not have a better one. Therefore, I leave this verb untranslated.

<sup>84</sup> Guichard translates “*pouvait compter sur les guerriers de son clan*”, but his explanation in the commentary (2014a: 63) does not seem very clear to me. The word should be derived from *šamāru*, ‘to wish, strive for’ respectively with its derivate *tišmuru*, ‘intent, anxious’ and I cannot find the logic by which its meaning is transferred to ‘count on, rely on’. Also, the reference to *ARM XXVI/1: 393* seems not very helpful to me, since there Durand only translates *ti-iš-ma-ra* as ‘soyez ardent’. Miglio translates “*Inspected his men (who were like) his family*” without any explanation (2017: 234). I guess this interpretation could be based on *CAD Z: zamāru B*, ‘to account for, to count (?)’. I leave this part untranslated for now.

36	LUGAL <i>li-ib-ba-šu da-na-na-am uš-ba-am</i>	the king gained his courage (and) strength,
37	<i>i-la-ak ad-du-um i-na šu-me-li-šu</i>	Addu goes on his left,
38	<i>èr-ra da-pí-nu-um-ma i-na im-ni-šu</i>	Erra, the savage, on his right.
39	<i>uš-ta-aš-bi-it ki-iš-ri-šu i-na a-aḫ ḫa-bu-ur</i>	He placed his contingents on the banks of the Ḫābur river,
40	<i>mu-ša-am-ma a-na pa-ni-šu-nu e-bi-ir</i>	At night, he stepped in front of them,
41	<i>is-si DUMU<sup>MES</sup> MÁŠ.ŠU.SU<sub>13</sub> ú-za-ak-ki</i>	he summoned the diviners, he purified:
42	<sup>D</sup> UTU <i>qú-ra-du-um i-ta-ap-la-an-ni</i>	“Šamaš, the hero, answered me,
43	<i>u<sub>4</sub>-ma-am an-né-e-em a-ka-am-mi na-ak-<sup>r</sup>ri<sup>1</sup></i>	this very day, I will capture the ene <sup>r</sup> my <sup>1</sup> ,
44	<i>eṭ-lu-ia ti-iš-ma-ra d[a-na-na-a]m<sup>2</sup></i>	my heroes, be intent (and with) s[trengt]h <sup>85</sup>
45	<i>ḫu-us-sà na-ak-ri-ku-nu ki-[i ...]x</i>	beat up your enemy lik[e a ...]”
46	<i>qar-ra-du-šu iš-mu-ú zi-k[i-ir ša-ap-ti-šu (?)]</i>	His warriors heard the spe[ech of his lips. (?)]
47	<i>ki-i 1 ḫu-ḫa-ri-im is-ḫu-p[u na-ak-ri-šu-nu]</i>	Like one (large) bird-trap they entrapp[ed their enemy],
48	<i>ša ip-pa-ar-ši-du [...]</i>	who escaped [...],
49	<i>ša i-ti-qú še-di-ir [...]</i>	who passed by was crooked [...].
50	<i>zi-im-ri-li-im na-[...]</i>	Zimrī-Lîm [...]
51	<i>mi-iš-li n[a<sup>3</sup>-ak-ri ...]</i>	(in?) the centre of e[nemies ...]
52	<i>zu-<sup>r</sup>bi<sup>1</sup> [...]</i>	(...) [...]
53	LUGAL x[...]	the king [...]

<sup>85</sup> In *ARM XXVI/1*: 363, Durand suggested reading *d[i-in-na]*, ‘be strong’, in parallel with the imperative in *tišmurā*. While I like this reconstruction better, it is not in accord with Guichard’s reading of the first and last signs.

54 HI-x [...]

(...) [...]

COLUMN IV

1 [... A]M *ib-pí*

[...] he broke

2 [...] *ʿú<sup>1</sup>-ša-aš-ki-in*

[...] <sup>1</sup>he<sup>1</sup> caused to establish

3 [...] *ú-ma-al-li ma-a-tam*

[...] he filled the land

4 [*ša zi-im-ri*]-*li-im i-pu-lu ze-er-tam*

[those who] answered [Zimrī]-Lîm (with) hostility,

5 [*ú-u*] *l ib-lu-tú šu-nu im-tu-tu*

they did [no]t live, they died.

6 [*iš*]-*tu LUGAL ik-šu-du ḥa-da-an-šu*

[On]ce the king has achieved his goal,

7 [*i*]-*ru-ub ma-ḥa-ar nu-na-am-ni-ir*

[he] entered before Nunamnir,

8 [*i-n*]*a e-ki-si-iq-qa SÍSKUR.RE-šu iq-qí*

[i]n Ekisiqqa he sacrificed his sacrifice,

9 [*qé*]-*re-eb ter-qa<sup>KI</sup> na-ra-ma-at<sup>D</sup> da-gan*

[in the m]idst of Terqa, the beloved (city) of Dagān,

10 *ba-la-tà-am ḥe-gál-la-am ù da-na-na-am*

life, abundance and strength

11 *it-ti<sup>D</sup> da-gan zi-im-ri-li-im i-ri-iš*

from Dagān, Zimrī-Lîm requested.

## 4 COMMENTARY

### 4.1 LINGUISTIC COMMENTARY

I have repeatedly stated that my thesis is not a proper edition of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*. I have followed the edition of Guichard, including his reconstructions. Where I have encountered problems and uncertainties or differed significantly from the interpretations of Guichard or Miglio, I have placed notes right into the transcribed and translated text in the previous section. For a detailed linguistic commentary, see Guichard 2014a: 25–68 and 83–88. For those interested in the details of my translation, see the edition on *ORACC* that includes lemmatized text.<sup>86</sup> Because the text is lemmatized in this online edition, I have not included a glossary in the thesis itself.

The only comment I have seen unfit for a footnote (because it deserves a picture) is *EpZL* i: 5 and the problem of Mêr or Itūr-Mêr (see note 72 above). It seems clear that the vertical edge before the sign ME in i: 5 indeed contradicts reading the sign TÚR there. A picture is worth a thousand words:



Figure 6 <sup>1</sup>x<sup>1</sup> me-er in *EpZL* i: 5;  
section of plate from Guichard 2014a: 145.

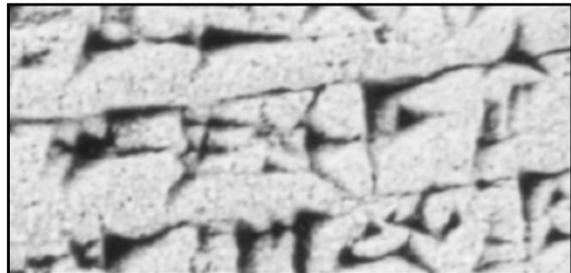


Figure 7 <sup>1</sup>i-túr-me-er in *EpZL* iii: 34;  
section of plate from Guichard 2014a: 154.

### 4.2 HISTORICAL-CULTURAL COMMENTARY

I will not follow the epic line by line, verse by verse – this has already been done by Guichard. Instead, I will focus on only a few selected topics that I will discuss from a broader perspective. The history part has already been discussed by Guichard – I shall not repeat him, and my “historical” commentary shall stick to the context; I do not attempt to reconstruct the (military) history from the epic.

#### 4.2.1 DATING THE TEXT

To place the composition of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* into a historical timeframe seems relatively straightforward. First, both the content and the archaeology of the text provide us with quite

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<sup>86</sup> <http://build-oracc.museum.upenn.edu/nere/corpus/> [cited 26<sup>th</sup> December 2021]. Note that this is only a link to the build version of the *NERE* project. Once the project will be made public on *ORACC*, the published site should be used.

a reasonable *terminus ante* and *post quem*. The text praises the deeds of Zimrī-Lîm, and so it may fit within his reign. The excavation context then confirms that the text was not composed by later scribes praising the deeds of a long-dead king. This gives us a window of about 20 years (1780–1758 BC) when the epic was composed.

By itself, such dating seems precise enough in the context of dating the ancient Near Eastern literature. However, some scholars try to date it with even more precision. Both Guichard<sup>87</sup> and Wasserman<sup>88</sup> date the text to the beginning of Zimrī-Lîm’s reign, most probably years 0–2, when this king reconquered most of the kingdom. In general, I agree with placing the contents into this timeframe, but the composition itself might have taken place later. Interestingly, none of the year-names of Zimrī-Lîm<sup>89</sup> references the accomplishments of the events described in the epic. The closest are “The year in which Zimrī-Lîm seized Kaḫat”, a city located in the upper Ḫābur region, and “The year in which Zimrī-Lîm put in order the Banks-of-the-Euphrates”. These years are situated at the beginning of the king’s reign, but their correlation with the epic cannot be definitively stated.

The effort for such a precise dating of this text may seem superfluous. However, it may provide a helpful hint for further interpretation. For example, the enemy is not named in the epic. Nonetheless, based on the dating of its contents, Guichard assumes that the enemies are Išmê-Dagān and Yasmaḫ-Addu.<sup>90</sup> The precise dating of the composition could help us reconstruct the purpose of this epic. Was it composed shortly after succession or at the end of the king’s reign? These possibilities reveal different intentions.

#### 4.2.2 AUTHORSHIP OF THE TEXT

Hand in hand with considering the date of the composition, its composer comes into mind. Authorship attribution may help us to understand the use and ideology of this text – the question of authorship is not irrelevant. Unfortunately, the epic lacks any colophon. Thus, we are bereft of any direct authorship attribution.<sup>91</sup>

The authorship of the text was commented on by Wasserman.<sup>92</sup> He has found it peculiar that apart from the poem’s hero and deities, only one person is named – *Ašmad*, *the mer’û* (*EpZL* ii: 38).<sup>93</sup> Wasserman compares the role of Ašmad to that of Enkidu in the Epic of Gilgamesh. Just as Enkidu encourages Gilgamesh to go to the Cedar Forest, Ašmad encourages Zimrī-Lîm to attack Subartu (*EpZL*

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<sup>87</sup> Guichard 2014a: 4–7, 70–71, and 101–122, where Guichard discusses the events of the epic as historical events.

<sup>88</sup> Wasserman 2015: 53.

<sup>89</sup> See [https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year\\_names\\_zimri-lim](https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year_names_zimri-lim) [visited 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021] and *FM* 5: 257–262.

<sup>90</sup> Guichard 2014a: 4. However, as we have seen in 2.3 *Return of the Lîm Dynasty and the Rule of Zimrī-Lîm*, this may be doubted, too, even if the timeframe is right.

<sup>91</sup> This should not surprise us as rather few texts are “signed” by their – real or attributed – authors (e.g., the Baʿal Cycle by Ilimilku, prayers by Enḫeduanna, Poem of Erra by Kabti-ilāni-Marduk), and most of the literary texts are anonymous; see e.g., Foster 1991 for a general discussion and Wasserman 2015: 54–55 for a discussion on the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*.

<sup>92</sup> Wasserman 2015: 53–55.

<sup>93</sup> On exceptions to a supposed custom of not mentioning personal names, see Wasserman 2015: 53, especially note 10.

ii: 38–46). His presence, as well as several other reasons,<sup>94</sup> led Wasserman to conclude that Ašmad took an active part in the composition: “*Where Ašmad’s authorship on the spectrum of commission-formation-execution stood is impossible to tell, but the EpZ-L was, I suggest, his creation.*”<sup>95</sup> A similar claim has already been made by Sasson – Ašmad might have sponsored the composition to ensure his place in it.<sup>96</sup> We know that Ašmad was a historical figure, high in the state organization.<sup>97</sup>

Although I have no better suggestion, and I agree that it might have been Ašmad who participated in creating the text, the question remains open. Guichard himself is somewhat cautious in any claims.<sup>98</sup> The Mariote material, in general, is complicated in this regard, and not even the palaeography of “handwriting” was not successful in authorship attribution. Moreover, the scribe and the author could have been two different persons. I must leave the discussion with a rather general answer: The author was probably someone close to the king who participated in the state organization.

Guichard suggests that since column iv is left largely blank, this may be an original composition and not a copy.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the genuine reason for the composition of the text and its intended purpose eludes us. Is it a school text? Is it a draft for a stela? It is a literary composition – an epic? Could it have been a draft of the first tablet of a greater epic praising the king’s deeds? All of these are unresolved questions to which the identity of the author could provide an answer. I return to some of these questions in the further discussion below (5.1.2 *How Was the Genre Used?*).

#### 4.2.3 THE TEXT IN GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

As has been already discussed, the epic seems to be set within the historical reality. This includes the geography of the ancient Near East. Several geographical designations are mentioned in the text: *between Hābur and Euphrates* (i: 18); *Bisan* (i: 23); *the Banks of Euphrates* (ii: 35); *Šubareans* and *Subartu* (ii: 39, ii:43); *Ida-Maraš* (iii: 8); *the banks of the river* (iii: 26); *banks of the Hābur river* (iii: 39); *Ekisiqqa*<sup>100</sup> (iv: 5) in *Terqa* (iv: 9). The historical reconstruction is based mostly on these indices, which can be related to the known geography and thus linked with the events described in other sources. Interestingly, the city of Mari is not mentioned in the epic at all, not even as a title of Zimrī-Līm. It is difficult to place some of the names on the map. For example, the land of Subartu is defined only very vaguely, and the land of Ida-Maraš seems to be a part of it, maybe even identified with it in the epic.<sup>101</sup> The map I provide here

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<sup>94</sup> Similarity to some key-images of the correspondence of Mari, notably that of Ašmad; simplicity of vocabulary comparable to the correspondence; structure of the epic (Ašmad is at its centre and he is the active participant of the events); message of the epic – king is only *primus inter pares*, asks for an advice, and Ašmad gives it to him; etc.

<sup>95</sup> Wasserman 2015: 55.

<sup>96</sup> Sasson 2015: 33, note 37.

<sup>97</sup> See e.g., Heimpel 2003: 529 with references to Ašmad’s letters.

<sup>98</sup> See the discussion in Guichard 2014a: 69–70.

<sup>99</sup> Guichard 2014a: 69.

<sup>100</sup> The temple of Dagān.

<sup>101</sup> See Guichard 2014b: 150–152, 2014a: 104 and 120, and Heimpel 2003: 613 and 624.

(Fig. 8), is intended only for a very approximate idea of the geography of the epic.<sup>102</sup> The city of Bisan was probably located near Saggaratum.<sup>103</sup> The expression *Banks of the Euphrates (Ab-Purattim)* refers to the area of the kingdom of Mari.

In addition, the geography of the epic should not be taken simply as physical geography. It includes ideological overtones. For example, the land of Subartu may draw on the Sumerian notion of this land as a literary enemy of the civilization *par excellence*,<sup>104</sup> just as the literary topos of the *four quarters* suggests the world in its entirety.<sup>105</sup> The mountains mentioned in the text (i: 34) are hard to interpret as there was no need to cross the mountains to get to the area a. However, the mountainous areas might have been where the enemies fled. In addition, mountains are used as model obstacles for the king to overcome.<sup>106</sup>

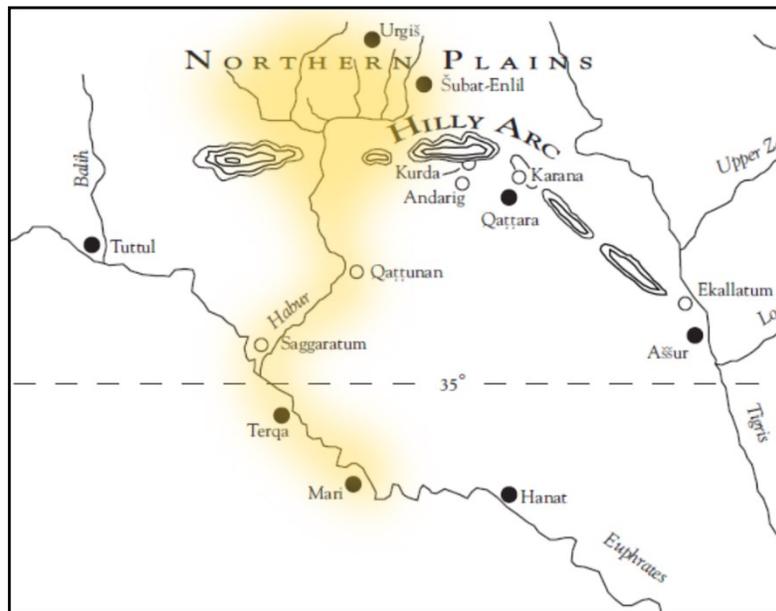


Figure 8 Approximate geography of the epic; after Heimpel 2003: xxi.

#### 4.2.4 ZIMRĪ-LĪM AND HIS SIDE

The self-determination of the epic is to praise Zimrī-Līm: [Zimrī]<sup>r</sup>-Līm rīm<sup>1</sup> tuqumtim luna<sup>2</sup>id, “[Zimrī]<sup>r</sup>-Līm, the wild bull<sup>1</sup> of battle, I want to praise” (i: 1). It is then no surprise that most of the text describes the deeds of this king and his great persona. At the same time, the text deals with his allies and the king himself is depicted as a *primus inter pares*. This imagery could have been connected with the tribal organization of Amorite societies. It may also help us reconstruct the audience of the epic – an

<sup>102</sup> For a more detailed studies on the geography of the area, see e.g., contributions in Cancik-Kirschbaum & Ziegler 2009 and 2014, or *RGTC 3*.

<sup>103</sup> Guichard 2014a: 36. For the reason of the inclusion of this site, see Guichard 2014a: 109–110. Guichard speculates that this could be a word-play on *pisannu*, ‘chest’, that could contain the pure gold.

<sup>104</sup> Guichard 2014a: 107.

<sup>105</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 4.2.7.1 *The Four Quarters of the World*.

<sup>106</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 4.2.7.3 *Before Him, There Is Nothing Opposing Him*.

audience that needed to hear that Zimrī-Lîm is the king and true leader while consulting and respecting his men.

#### 4.2.4.1 ZIMRĪ-LÎM

Zimrī-Lîm is consistently described as LUGAL – the king. However, never as the king of Mari. Whether this absence is of any significance is debatable. Either it can mean that the king is yet to become the king of Mari on a large scale, and he is only reconquering his domain, or it is seen as a redundant specification for which there is no need. In addition, it may draw the audience's attention from the fact that Zimrī-Lîm is “only” the king of Mari and not of the rest of the world.<sup>107</sup>

First, the king is described as the one whom the gods have chosen for his role (i: 12, i: 14) and whom the gods help in his endeavour. This topic is discussed further in the following section on divine characters and their intervention.<sup>108</sup> Here, I only wish to mention that the king is not compared to or identified with the deities. The only exception is when he goes at the front of his army as a divine emblem (*šurīnum*, iii: 15). On the contrary, Tukultī-Ninurta in his epic is compared to Addu: “*When he thunders like Adad, the mountains tremble.*”<sup>109</sup> In general, the praise for Tukultī-Ninurta exceeds the praise for Zimrī-Lîm. The divine descriptions of Tukultī-Ninurta are more extensive. He is also compared to Ninurta,<sup>110</sup> and his body is compared to the flesh of the gods.<sup>111</sup> In addition, the Assyrian ruler uses the imagery of his divine birth.<sup>112</sup> As is discussed below (4.2.4.2 *The Side of Zimrī-Lîm*), the use of the imagery of birth is the exact opposite in the case of the king of Mari. By his birth, he is closer to his men.

We have already seen that Zimrī-Lîm was not a direct heir to Yaḥdun-Lîm.<sup>113</sup> However, within the context of the epic, he is described as *apil* <sup>M</sup>*Yaḥdun-Lîm ašarēd Ḥana*, “*the heir of Yaḥdun-Lîm, the foremost of Ḥanû*” (i: 3). In addition to the divine election, the continuity with the pre-Šamšī-Adad lineage, and belonging to the people of the land (*Ḥanû*), were his most significant grounds for taking the throne.

The deeds of the king are manifested above all by military achievements, and his descriptions as a warrior are rich.<sup>114</sup> As a demonstrative example, we may cite a few lines from the opening of the epic:

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<sup>107</sup> See also the discussion in Guichard 2014a: 113.

<sup>108</sup> See below XY.

<sup>109</sup> *EpTN A/F* i: 14'; *ki-ma* <sup>D</sup>*Ad-di a-na ša-gi-im-me-šu it-tar-ra-ru* KUR<sup>MES</sup>-ú.

<sup>110</sup> *EpTN A/F* i: 15'.

<sup>111</sup> *EpTN A/F* i: 16'. However, this line is a bit problematic, see the discussion of Machinist 1978: 193. While Machinist argues that this line affirms the divine status of Tukultī-Ninurta, I would not dare to make such a bold claim and argue rather for a kind of a hyperbole, a *poetic license*.

<sup>112</sup> *EpTN A/F* i: 17': *INA EŠ.BAR EN KUR.KUR INA ŠÀ.TÜR DINGIR<sup>MES</sup> ši-pi-ik-šu i-te-eš-ra* = *By the decision of the lord of all the lands, he was successfully engendered through/cast into the channel of the womb of the gods*; translation according to Machinist.

<sup>113</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 2.3 *Return of the Lîm Dynasty and the Rule of Zimrī-Lîm*.

<sup>114</sup> This description of the hero is so ubiquitous that I do not intend to cite references to other royal epics. Almost all of them deal at least partially with war, combats, conquests, etc. and the kings are in this context always praised as great warriors. The most obvious examples may be seen in the composition *King of Battle*, which narrates of Sargon's deeds.

4	[ <i>mu-a'ab-bi-it du</i> ]- <i>ur na-ak</i> { <sup>RI</sup> }- <i>ri-im</i>	[the one who destroys the w]all of the enemy.
7	[ <i>mu-ka-an-ni-iš</i> ] <i>na-ak-ri-š</i>	[the one who subdues] his enemies,
8	[ <i>eṭ-lum pé-t</i> ]- <i>i-iú</i> <sup>GIS</sup> ŠUKUR <i>mu-ut</i> - <sup>RI</sup> <i>x-x-ki/di</i> <sup>1</sup>	[the hero who op]ens a spear (...),
9	[ <i>a-ḫi-iz ma-tim</i> ] <i>e-li ma-a-tim</i>	[the one who takes a land] after a land,
10	[ <i>zi-im-ri</i> ]- <i>li-im pé-ti-iú</i> <sup>GIS</sup> ŠUKUR <sup>RI</sup> <i>mu-ut-x-x-ki/di</i> <sup>1</sup>	[Zimrī]-Lîm, who opens a spear (...),
11	[ <i>a-ḫi-i</i> ] <sup>z</sup> <i>ma-tim e-li</i> <sup>RI</sup> <i>ma-a</i> <sup>1</sup> - <i>tim</i>	[who take]s a land after a 'la'nd.

The king is also the one who marches at the front of his army (iii: 15). He is the heroic warrior. Additionally, Tukultī-Ninurta is described as a hero and a true leader who swoops on the enemy in the vanguard of his army. Usually, both kings do this together with the gods, their helpers, or immediately after them.<sup>115</sup> While in the epic and some other material, the king of Mari is praised for his active role in the fight, there are also some indications that not every official was fond of this approach that surely threatened his life. For example, in one letter, an officer rebukes Zimrī-Lîm for his active role in combat and advises him not to be at the front of the army but at its centre and protect himself.<sup>116</sup> At the same time, this letter may suggest that the king's involvement in battle was not only a literary topos or an ideological statement, but it might have been rooted in his actual deeds.

Within military imagery, Zimrī-Lîm is described as *ašamšūtu*, 'dust storm' (ii: 10). This description is based on a weather phenomenon that frequently appears in the area in question.<sup>117</sup> I have not encountered any parallel use of *ašamšūtu* as a description of a king. Still, by simply exploring occurrences of *ašamšūtu* in *CAD*<sup>118</sup> I can state that the imagery of a dust-storm could be used at least as a description of the destructive force of daemons. The closest parallel I have encountered is the use of *abūbu*, 'flood, flood-storm' in a few royal titles (including Ḥammurabi or Tukultī-Ninurta).<sup>119</sup> However, the imagery is largely self-evident and is related to lived reality.

Comparison with animals is more frequent. Right at the beginning, the king is labelled as *rīm tuqumtim/šarrī*, 'the wild bull of battle/kings' (i: 1, [ii: 29]). The symbolic association of bulls fits very well with the imagery of the ancient Near East.<sup>120</sup> Bulls are, above all, associated with strength and divine

<sup>115</sup> Compare *EpTNA* v: 41', *EpZL* ii: 3 and iii: 15, 24.

<sup>116</sup> A.1975: 36–41; see Sasson 2015: 203, note 39 and Trimm 2017: 301–302.

<sup>117</sup> See Guichard 2014a: 44–45. Guichard also refers to several other cases where this imagery is used.

<sup>118</sup> *CAD* A2: 411–413.

<sup>119</sup> See Seux 1967: 34.

<sup>120</sup> Few references to Gilgameš, Shalmaneser, or Yaḥdun-Lîm are mentioned by Guichard 2014a: 26. See also Seux 1967: 250 for royal epithets including *rīmu*; and Watanabe 2002: 57–64.

character.<sup>121</sup> The epithet *nimru ananātim*, ‘the leopard of battles’ (ii: 18), is in parallel. Once again, this imagery is quite self-evident.<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, there are possibly more symbolic associations of which I am not aware.

In a fragmentary section, Zimrī-Līm is described as an ‘equid’ (*pirdu*, ii: 2) and a rider on a ‘steed’ (*šihāmu*, ii: 4). Guichard has brought my attention to the possibility that these descriptions of the king may be a reflection of his relation to equids.<sup>123</sup> Also, he takes this as a reference to the physical fitness of the king – he is athletic and energetic.<sup>124</sup> However, there could also be other associations with the equids in general. After all, at the time of Zimrī-Līm, horses<sup>125</sup> were not that widespread in the area and were rather precious.<sup>126</sup>

Probably the most striking animal characterization of Zimrī-Līm is *laliu*, ‘kid’ (ii: 9). I have already commented on this term in the translation,<sup>127</sup> as Wasserman suggests interpreting the animal as *lulīmu*, ‘stag, red deer’, based on 1<sup>st</sup>-millennium parallel.<sup>128</sup> However, the time distance reduces the probability of such an interpretation. Guichard tries to connect the imagery of this animal in a mountainous area – agile and fierce.<sup>129</sup> Miglio<sup>130</sup> relates this term with *ka/izzu* ‘(young male) goat’ as used in *The Song of Bazi*, where it is associated with goring of the enemies.<sup>131</sup> This is the only useful reference for this line that I have encountered so far. Generally, I would suggest that we simply do not adequately understand the symbolic references of kids in Mari.<sup>132</sup>

The heroes of other royal epics may also be described as animals. For example, Sargon is described as a ‘raging lion’, a description that even gave a name to one of the compositions about him: *Sargon, the Lion*.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> After all, the most frequent symbol of divinity in iconography is horns. Some of the deities are also described as bulls. See also numerous discussions on bulls in Watanabe 2002.

<sup>122</sup> In *SargonL* rev.: 15, Sargon is described as *nimru*, too. Westenholz (1997: 101) translates this term as a panther, however, it is the same term and my intention here is not to speculate over ancient fauna. *CAD* N2: 234–235, *nimru* A, has ‘panther’, *CDA*: 253, *nimru* I, has ‘leopard’.

<sup>123</sup> Guichard 2014a: 42–43. With reference to *LAPO 18 1110*.

<sup>124</sup> Guichard 2014a: 98.

<sup>125</sup> Unfortunately, I am not experienced in the ancient fauna to connect *pirdu* and *šihāmu* directly with horses.

<sup>126</sup> See e.g., Hamblin 2006: 8 and 129–132 for a discussion on nomad and warfare use of horses.

<sup>127</sup> See note 77.

<sup>128</sup> Wasserman 2015: 55. For *lulīmu*, ‘stag, deer’ as a royal epithet, see also Seux 1967: 153.

<sup>129</sup> Guichard 2014a: 98.

<sup>130</sup> Miglio 2017: 232, note 21.

<sup>131</sup> George 2009: 6–7, lines 34–37. “*He (Šamaš) rules the sacred people, the ka-az-zum monarch of his city. Behold the king, lord of the throne-dais, sharp of horn, gorer of his enemies*”; translation according to George. However, Guichard translates the term *kazzum* as ‘ram’. Although I stick to the interpretation of Miglio and *CDA*: 163, *kizzu*, George’s translation casts some doubt on the usefulness of this interpretation. Also, the second part of this citation may not necessarily be connected with the first one, and the whole association falls apart.

<sup>132</sup> I have searched for this animal in Watanabe (2002), where he discusses animal symbolism. Unfortunately, he mentions *lalūm* only once, as an element of some personal names (p. 29) within his discussion on totemistic thought. As with many other topics, I leave this for future research.

<sup>133</sup> Westenholz 1997: 94–101.

Last but not least, Zimrī-Lîm is described as the one who overcomes obstacles. I discuss this topic within the section 4.2.7 *Literary Topoi*.

#### 4.2.4.2 THE SIDE OF ZIMRĪ-LÎM

Since the epic is intended as the praise for Zimrī-Lîm, it may come as a surprise that he does not act as an absolute monarch. First, he acts in accordance with the will of the deities. This topic is discussed in the following section (4.2.6 *Divine Involvement*). Second, he listens to and respects his men. Although only Ašmad is named, many other anonymous men of Zimrī-Lîm are also mentioned – soldiers, higher state officials,<sup>134</sup> or diviners.<sup>135</sup> Even though the king is praised above all the men, his co-substantiality with his men is highlighted, too. This contradiction probably serves two different purposes, which both need to be attained.

There are especially two passages of the epic that emphasise his bond with the army. The first is his speech to his men (ii: 22–28):

- 22 *ša-as-su-ru-um ib-ni-ku-nu-ti* “A womb has created you,  
 23 *um-mu-um ki-ma ku-nu-ti-ma ul-da-an-ni* a mother, just like you, has given a birth to me!  
 24 *ša-ti ta-ḫa-zu ʿe-liʿ-iaʿ ʿpa-ni išʿ-ni* The same battle is ʿuponʿ me! ʿMy face has chaʿnged!(?)  
 25 *ki-ib-ra-at er-ʿbé-eʿ-im ku-nu-ʿtiʿ na-ak-ra* The fʿouʿr quarters (of the world) are hostile to yoʿuʿ  
 26 *ù ma-a-tum [x] ʿgaʿ x ʿtaʿ ri/urʿ šu-še-ra-nimʿ* and the land (...) ʿGet prepared for meʿ!  
 27 *na-ak-ru-um p[aʿ-ḫi-i]rʿ x ʿMIʿ x timʿ x naʿ-tumʿ* The enemy is [assemble]d (...)  
 28 *a-na ta-ḫa-ʿzi-imʿ [e-pé-ši-im a-na-ku lu-uš-te-še]-er* To the batʿtleʿ, [the action(?), I want to get rea]dy!”

I have already mentioned above the imagery of birth that Tukultī-Ninurta used in his epic to highlight his superior status.<sup>136</sup> On the contrary, Zimrī-Lîm reminds his men that he stands by their side, as human as they. He faces the war just as they do. The second section of the epic that draws our attention to the co-substantiality of the king and his men is iii: 9–14:

- 9 *me-e na-da-tim iš-ta-na-at-ti* he (only) drank water of water-skins,

<sup>134</sup> His *sukkallu* (ii: 31); his *sugāgū* (ii: 32); Ašmad, the *merʿū* (ii: 38–47), his governors (*šaknišu*, iii: 26). However, I do not intend to discuss the state organization of Mari in this thesis. See e.g., Sasson 2015: 119–180 where the state administration is discussed within the context of primary sources.

<sup>135</sup> Diviners (DUMU<sup>MES</sup> MÁŠ.ŠU.SU<sub>13</sub>, iii: 41) and *āpilu* (iii: 35). See the discussion in 4.2.6 *Divine Involvement*.

<sup>136</sup> See note 112.

- 10 *e-si-ik it-ti re-di-i ka-lum-ma iš-šu-uš*  
counted with the soldiers, everything was torture.
- 11 *ra-ab-bu ba<sup>1</sup>-ia-ru wa-šú-šu*  
Great (were) the huntsman who went with him,
- 12 *ki-ma sí-ir-ra-<sup>1</sup>mi<sup>1</sup>-im pé-e še-ru-um*  
like an ona<sup>1</sup>ger<sup>1</sup> (eating) straw in the steppe,
- 13 *ši-ra-am i-ku-lu mu-tu-šu*  
his man ate meat,
- 14 *li-ib-ba-am ir-šu-ú da-na-na-am uš-bu*  
they gained courage; they gained strength.

I take the reference to meat consumption (iii: 13) within the longer passage describing the life of the campaign (iii: 7–22) as the proper nourishment for the soldiers that helps them to gain courage and strength (iii: 14).<sup>137</sup> Guichard comments on the mixed symbolic associations of hunters and soldiers at the campaign.<sup>138</sup> While the outcome of this life is positive – the army is courageous and strong – it also has a shady side. This life may be seen as unwanted, savage, and uncivilised, and Guichard even brings up the imagery of eating raw meat.<sup>139</sup> However, the hunt also bears positive imagery, and the topic of the king in hunting scenes is well known, especially from the later reliefs of Nineveh. Thus, this section brings up both negative and positive connotations. This was well expressed by the poet, who speaks of both the arduous conditions and the army's fitness.

The king is also depicted as someone who motivates his men who are weakened and lose their courage (iii: 15–18):

- 15 *zi-im-ri-li-im ki-ma šu-ri-nim ip-pa-na i-la-ak*  
Zimrī-Lîm goes at the front like a (divine) emblem,
- 16 *is-ḫu-ur a-na la le-i-im i-na-ad-di-in li-ib-ba-am*  
having turned to the one who was without power, he encourages him:
- 17 *di-in-na-ma i-te-ru-ba*  
“Be strong and enter(?),
- 18 *iš-di-ku-nu <sup>1</sup>i<sup>1</sup>-im-ma-ar na-ak-rum*  
the enemy <sup>1</sup>s<sup>1</sup>ees your valour!”

However, when some of his men deserted, he was probably not that benevolent and supportive. In a letter, Baḫdī-Lîm, the governor of Mari,<sup>140</sup> advises the king that he should have deserters brought to

<sup>137</sup> Compare to *NSLoA* obv. 5', where the drinking of the water from waterskins is also used as a literary topos of campaigns. See also *Lugalbanda W*, l. 85–115, where the campaign provisions are far richer.

<sup>138</sup> Guichard 2014a: 99–100.

<sup>139</sup> Especially in relation to the stereotype of Amorites in the Mesopotamian culture, I am doubtful whether this might have been an intention of anyone hoping to praise Zimrī-Lîm. This is expressed e.g., in the composition *Marriage of Martu*, l. 36; See e.g., Klein 1997 for edition.

<sup>140</sup> See Heimpel 2003: 531. In his letters he also informs the king about important oracles.

him in shackles and punish them exemplary so that other people are fearful.<sup>141</sup> Another letter, this time of Yamšum,<sup>142</sup> informs us about a process of keeping records of soldiers both for purposes of their death or desertion.<sup>143</sup> From the letter, it seems clear that Zimrī-Lîm wanted to keep the records on a personal level: “*Write down each man and his name and make it brought over to me so I can keep control of the soldiers here.*”<sup>144</sup>

The king's support and encouragement of the soldiers are also attested in letter A.510. In this text, the king is advised by one of his *mehru*, Meptum, to take omens and then join his troops:

*“Even if the omens are unfavorable, my lord should still come to see his servants and to give his blessings to them. And when my lord stands in the assembly of his servants so that his servants see him, the heart of the warriors revives. And when accompanied by his troops my lord would have gone to his destination, the heart of the troops will shine like the sun.”*<sup>145</sup>

Once again, the letters record that the practice in the epic is not necessarily only a literary description of the king, intended only to praise him. The world of the Mariote correspondence shows us that he might have been in closer contact with the mass of the soldiers more than we would expect and that he took them, at least in some cases, as individuals with names and not just as numbers of dispensable and anonymous war-force. However, this statement should not be taken and interpreted as some idealization of this king. Nonetheless, it could be another interesting topic for further, more profound, research.

The king does not encourage his troops (only) by the goodness of his heart. He needs them. In iii: 30, we read that “*The hero does not go on a campaign by himself*”.<sup>146</sup> Primarily, this statement is in the context of divine help; however, it may also be broadened to his army in general. Once again, this could be set within the broader context, as attested in the correspondence. We may compare this statement with a letter about a rebellion: “*...Surround yourself with the servants, your agents, whom you love! Let them stand (before you), and let them protect you! Do not go by yourself! ...*”<sup>147</sup>

Last but not least, Zimrī-Lîm seeks the advice of his men (ii: 33–36). While I have speculated that the tribal organization of Amorite societies might have influenced this, the same theme appears in other royal epics, too. For example, in the *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta*, while the king is praised above the soldiers, he is at the same time attentive to his people and listens to their counsel.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, in texts labelled by

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<sup>141</sup> See e.g., *LAP0 17 569*, Sasson 2015: 208, and Trimm 2017: 510.

<sup>142</sup> See Heimpel 2003: 563–564.

<sup>143</sup> *ARM XXVI 314*. See e.g., Sasson 2015: 192. The letter also discusses insufficient food rations for the soldiers.

<sup>144</sup> LÚ ù šum-šu šu-ṭe-ra-am a-na ṣe-ri-ia š[u-bi-lam] aš-šum an-ni-ki-a-am LÚ ṣa-ba-am a-sa-ni-ḡú; *ARM XXVI 314*: 33–34.

<sup>145</sup> I have access to this letter only in Sasson's translation; 2015: 197.

<sup>146</sup> Contrast with *RLugalbanda*, see especially l. 1–8. There, the plot is based on the hero being alone.

<sup>147</sup> *ARM XXVI 213*; translation according to Heimpel 2003: 260.

<sup>148</sup> *EpTNA/F i*: 18'.

Westenholz as *Res Gestae Sargonis*, the king acts, like a *primus inter pares*, listening to the advice of his people.<sup>149</sup>

The call for counsel is answered by Ašmad (ii: 37–47), the *mer'û*. His speech in which he supports Zimrī-Līm may recall other speeches in different epics. For example, in *Narām Sîn and the Lord of Apišal*, the king also engages in discussion with his *šukallu*.<sup>150</sup> The *mer'û*<sup>151</sup> in Mari are described simply as ‘tribal leaders’ or ‘nomad army chiefs’ by Sasson.<sup>152</sup> They held a high position in the state administration and often communicated with the king. The active role of Ašmad in the epic is thus not connected only to his possible role as the author, but it is a part of the imagery that depicts the ruler as *primus inter pares*, namely within the tribal groups. Zimrī-Līm is the *foremost of Hanû*<sup>153</sup> – the nomads. He is a good king who takes counsel with tribal leaders and does not act by himself. Ašmad and his role (both in the epic and in the state administration of Mari) is discussed in length by Guichard.<sup>154</sup> This person is well known from the Mariote correspondence, and his historicity is thus well established. In *ARM XXVI* 35, Ašmad is mentioned in relation to the evacuation of Yabliya and other cities in Suḥum – the areas endangered by the expansion of Ešnunna under Ibal-pî-El. Ašmad (together with Ašqudum) was in charge of this evacuation.<sup>155</sup> Thus, we may observe that Ašmad’s career did not end after the conquests of the epic, but he remained an important figure of the Zimrī-Līm’s administration. While Ašmad and his role are not irrelevant for the cultural context,<sup>156</sup> I must leave him aside for now as I cannot properly explore this line of enquiry.

#### 4.2.5 DIVINE CHARACTERS

In this section, I would like to focus on the divine characters of the epic. Not only on “who they are” from the mythological point of view, but mostly on why the author mentions them. What is their role in the plot? What does their appearance mean, and to what traditions does it refer?

One of the essential facts we need to consider is that although Mari was a part of the cultural-religious continuum of the ancient Near East, the “pantheon of the epic” may not necessarily be a subset of the “cultic pantheon of Mari”.<sup>157</sup> First, the epic was created by scribes influenced by the southern scribal tradition and its literary models. Second, the intended audience might not necessarily have been (only) that of Mari, and the cultural contents of the work must have been adjusted to that. Also,

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<sup>149</sup> Westenholz 1997: 57. E.g., in *SargonCH*, i: 10–16, Sargon listens to an advice of his foreman (*ašarēdu*), this section resembles the speech of Ašmad. Similarly, he consults his ‘heroes’ (*qurādū*) in *SargonFL*, i: 16–17.

<sup>150</sup> *NSLoA* rev. v: 12–19.

<sup>151</sup> Or *mehrû*.

<sup>152</sup> Sasson 2015: 119 and 137

<sup>153</sup> Akk. *ašarēd Hanā*. *EpZL* i: 3.

<sup>154</sup> Guichard 2014a: 110–113.

<sup>155</sup> See also Heimpel 2003: 44.

<sup>156</sup> E.g., in regard to the context of state organization, role of the officials, authorship of the text, or even the purpose of the text itself.

<sup>157</sup> See e.g., Sasson 2015: 235–237, Lambert 1985, and Durand 2008: 196–283. Durand explore various different conceptions of divine grouping, including e.g., the “pantheon of the scholars” or “literary pantheon”.

theoretically, the geography of the epic could have played a role, but except for the role of Dagān of Terqa, I do not find any proof of that.

Consequently, the role of the deities must also be seen from a broader perspective of Mesopotamian culture. At the same time, the deities in the epic demonstrate this scribal milieu and can be used as an argument for possible interpretations on uses or audiences of the epic.<sup>158</sup>

Compared to some of the Mari ritual texts, the deities in the epic are not all the most venerated deities in the city. Sasson presents us with three texts composed as lists of sacrifices for deities, intended for several occasions, including Zimrī-Lîm's tour of shrines after his enthronement.<sup>159</sup> Of the deities mentioned in the epic, these ritual texts include Itūr-Mêr, Addu (the Storm-God), Annunītum, Ištar, Dagān, and Šamaš. Not included are Anu and Enlil, Lāgamal, Erra, and Nunamnir. I hope to show in the following discussion that the situation of these ritual texts is quite similar to that of the general cultural milieu of Mari. The deities outside of the city's cult are also mostly outside of the correspondence and appear instead as part of the scribal tradition and international diplomacy.<sup>160</sup> In addition, several of the deities mentioned both in the epic and in the ritual texts are also included in the year names of Zimrī-Lîm's rule as recipients of new cultic furniture.<sup>161</sup>

The deities in this section are ordered by their appearance in the Epic.

#### 4.2.5.1 (ITŪR-)MÊR

The first deity mentioned in the epic is Mêr (i: 5), who also appears later as Itūr-Mêr (iii: 34).<sup>162</sup> I do not intend here to speculate about the origin of this deity.<sup>163</sup> The important fact for us is that Itūr-Mêr was a city god of Mari<sup>164</sup> where his position was quite high and where he belonged among the most venerated deities.<sup>165</sup> His importance for the state organization is reflected in some of the letters, where he is mentioned in connection with divination<sup>166</sup> and oath-taking.<sup>167</sup>

Regarding the imminent content of the epic, two roles of Itūr-Mêr are the most important. First, his rule over Mari is essential for Zimrī-Lîm. Anyone hoping to rule over an area must have the support

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<sup>158</sup> This could catch us in a kind of circular argumentation, but I hope rather to fit it into a proper net of references.

<sup>159</sup> See Sasson 2015: 235–237; texts *ARM XXIII* 264, *XXIV* 263. See also the discussion in Durand 2008: 196–199 and Lambert 1985.

<sup>160</sup> On the other hand, I am well aware that this might be only an optical illusion caused by the material that I have encountered or that remained available. E.g., Lāgamal was certainly present in the cult of Mari, see 4.2.5.5 *Lāgamal*.

<sup>161</sup> These are Annunītum, Addu, Šamaš, and Dagān. See [https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year\\_names\\_zimri-lim](https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year_names_zimri-lim) [visited 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021] and *FM* 5: 257–262.

<sup>162</sup> I hope that the supposed identity of these two names is not an error, but I have found no argument for their differentiation.

<sup>163</sup> See e.g., Durand 2008: 189–194, or Leick 1998: 100. The name of this deity resembles anthroponyms. Consequently, some scholars argue that this deity may be a divinised ancestor; see e.g., Sasson 2015: 235, note 2, or Durand 2008: 191.

<sup>164</sup> See the discussion in Nakata 2011, especially 129, with further references. However, some scholars expand his role to the kingdom in general, see e.g., Lambert 1985: 538–359.

<sup>165</sup> See Nakata 2011: 130–131 and 1991: 256–257.

<sup>166</sup> See Nakata 2011: 130. In Heimpele 2003, see *ARM XXVI* 236 and 238.

<sup>167</sup> In Heimpele 2003, see e.g., *ARM XXVI* 302, *XXVII* 116 and *III* 19; Nakata 2011: 133–134; Durand 1997.



sponsors this decision.<sup>173</sup> At the same time, this decision is supported by the fact that Zimrī-Lîm opposes the enemies of Enlil, the enemies of order and just rule.

When considering Mari as part of the Mesopotamian cultural sphere, this is not surprising. However, neither Anu nor Enlil had any important role in the cults of Mari and are only rarely mentioned in any of the Mariote materials that I have dealt with. A few times, they are mentioned in curses.<sup>174</sup> Probably, this should be attributed mostly to the fact that the main deities of the area were Dagān,<sup>175</sup> Itūr-Mêr or Addu:

*“Dagān, Addu and Itūr-Mêr are marching in support of my lord. The gods of my lord are bringing to account anyone who transgresses against my lord. My lord therefore remains firmly on his throne”*<sup>176</sup>

The inclusion of Anu and Enlil may also be seen as an ideological statement that the just rule was transferred from the state of Šamši-Adad to that of Zimrī-Lîm. After all, the archenemy of the Lîm dynasty, the king of the *Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia*, was very fond of this god and even named his capital after him – Šubat-Enlil.<sup>177</sup>

At the same time, there is a strong connection to the Babylonian tradition, so the possible “reactiveness” to Šamši-Adad is only one part of the message. Just to demonstrate the similarity of Zimrī-Lîm’s descriptions to the self-presentation of Ḫammurabi, his contemporary, I shall cite one of his inscriptions:

*Ḫammurabi, the strong man, the king, the hero, the king who brings the four quarters into constant obedience, the favourite of Anu, who [makes] apparent the ...[...]... of Enlil. When [Anu] and Enlil made his destiny great (and) the great gods called him, he tied the enemy with his fetters. His weapon defeated the army that hated him. He slew the evil land in battle...*<sup>178</sup>

The tradition was rooted well before the rule of Šamši-Adad, Zimrī-Lîm, or Ḫammurabi. The kings of the Ur III dynasty employed a similar justification for their rule. To cite but one example: “Šū-

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<sup>173</sup> See also the discussion in Guichard 2014a: 30–33. Guichard provides some other examples for the roles of Anu (and Enlil) as those who nominate or choose the king.

<sup>174</sup> E.g., in the selection of letters by Heimpel 2003, I have not encountered Anu at all and Enlil only once in *ARM XXVI* 370. The index of divinities both in *ARM XXVI/1* (p. 604–605) and *XXVI/2* (p. 651) does not mention any other text that includes them. Within the *LAPO* series, I have encountered them only in *LAPO 16 22*, discussed below. These two deities also appear in a curse formula in an inscription of Yaḥdun-Lîm (*RIME 4 6.8.1*). In A.4510, these two deities take role in a curse formula that is to be attached to a weapon of Nergal; see Sasson 2015: 257–258.

<sup>175</sup> Who is by some scholars identified with Enlil, see discussion on 4.2.5.7 *Dagān*.

<sup>176</sup> A.1068, translation according to Sasson 2015: 268–269.

<sup>177</sup> It may also reflect on Šamši-Adad’s royal inscriptions. He has also claimed to be the chosen one of Anu and Enlil (and, of course, also of Aššur); see e.g., *RIMA 1* A.0.39.1: 12–17. He also called himself the “*appointee of the Enlil, governor of Aššur, beloved of Ištar*”; see *RIMA 1* A.0.39.2: 4–6; *ša-ki-in*<sup>D</sup>EN.LÍL ÉNSI<sup>D</sup>a-šur<sub>4</sub> na-ra-am<sup>D</sup>INANNA.

<sup>178</sup> Excerpt of *RIME 4 3.6.4*, translation according to Van De Mierop 2011: 321.

*Sîn, called by name by Anu, beloved of Enlil, king whom Enlil chose in his heart as a shepherd of the land and of the four quarters of the universe...*<sup>179</sup>

An interesting comparison can be made with the letter *LAPO 16 22*, a Sumerian-Akkadian (quasi) bilingual text that praises Zimrī-Lîm in a southern manner.<sup>180</sup> In this letter, the king of Mari is also described as the just king, beloved of Nunamnir,<sup>181</sup> who is the chosen one of Anu and Enlil, whose great destiny is fixed by Enki/Ea. As Durand rightly points out, this text reveals more about the origin of the scholar than about the religious situation in the kingdom of Mari.<sup>182</sup> Also, the deities are mentioned in some other letters, for example, in benediction formulas.<sup>183</sup>

In conclusion, even though Enlil or Anu do not seem to have played a crucial role in Mari, their naming should not be seen only as a coincidence, an exchange for Dagān and other ruling deities, or a simple copy of the Mesopotamian pattern. Their inclusion of the epic could follow an ideological goal of legitimizing the rule of Zimrī-Lîm among other rulers of the ancient Near East. The concept of transference of divine favour was nothing strange and was used quite often by competing dynasties.<sup>184</sup> Consequently, this passage may hint at the possibility of a foreign audience of the epic. The inclusion of Anu and Enlil might have worked as a legitimacy scheme on the international level.

#### 4.2.5.3 STORM-GOD

The Storm-god appears in the epic four times. Three times, his name is written ideographically as 𒀭ISKUR (i: 19, ii: 27, iii: 17), once syllabically as Addu (iii: 37, without the DINGIR sign<sup>185</sup>). We have already mentioned this deity several times as an important deity of the area, often connected with Itūr-Mêr and Dagān.<sup>186</sup> For example, in *ARM XXVI 194*, Zimrī-Lîm is described as ‘*the regent of 𒀭Dagān and Addu*’. This probably reflects Zimrī-Lîm’s responsibilities and indebtedness towards Ḫalāb (Yamḥad respectively<sup>187</sup>), the most important cult centre of the Storm-God. In the letter, the Mariote king is asked to provide part of the booty to the Ḫalābian temple.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> *RIME 3/2* 1.4.3: 4–13; 𒀭su-𒀭EN.ZU MU.PÀ.DA.AN.NA KI.𒀭AG.𒀭PEN.LÍL.LÁ LUGAL 𒀭EN.LÍL.LE ŠÀ.GA.NA IN.PÀ SIPA.KALAM.MA. Translation according to Frayne, slightly modified.

<sup>180</sup> See *LAPO 16*: 103–110 and Durand 2008: 266–267, or Sasson 2015: 36–37.

<sup>181</sup> Who is also associated to Enlil, see 4.2.5.10 *Nunamnir*.

<sup>182</sup> Durand 2008: 267. This could have been a letter of a former scribe of Yasmaḥ-Addu who now wanted to be employed by Zimrī-Lîm; see Charpin 2010: 97.

<sup>183</sup> See e.g., the letters of Rīšiya, the chief musician of both Yasmaḥ-Addu, and Zimrī-Lîm, *FM 9*: 95–96. His case also demonstrates that we cannot do any strict division between the two administrations and that a strong continuity existed.

<sup>184</sup> This is the topic of the famous *Sumerian King List*. In addition, similar ideology is used in the *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta*, when the adversary, Kaštilyaš, loses the divine favour which is transferred to the Assyrian king. See the discussion in 4.2.6 *Divine Involvement*.

<sup>185</sup> See the discussion in Guichard 2014a: 70.

<sup>186</sup> See also the discussions on these deities in this thesis.

<sup>187</sup> As it mentioned in 2.3 *Return of the Lîm Dynasty and the Rule of Zimrī-Lîm*, Zimrī-Lîm was tied to this kingdom by marriage and their support in reconquering the kingdom of Mari.

<sup>188</sup> See the discussion and references in Heimpel 2003: 249–250.

In letters *FM* 7 38 and 39, from Nūr-Sîn to Zimrī-Lîm, the importance of Addu for the kingship of Zimrī-Lîm is revealed.<sup>189</sup> In these letters, Nūr-Sîn informs his lord about the omens of Addu collected in Ḫalāb. Through these omens, Addu has several requests for the king of Mari and warns him that he is the one who has given him his throne and that he may as well take it from him (as he claims to have done to Yaḥdun-Lîm):

*“Am I not Addu, Lord of Kallassu, who has raised him (the king) on my lap and has returned him to the throne of the house of his father?”*<sup>190</sup>

*“I shall take from his estate a property in perpetuity. If he does not hand (it) over, I, the lord of throne, territory, and cities, can take away what I have given. But if it is otherwise, and he does hand over what I am requesting, I shall give him throne upon throne, estate upon estate, territory upon territory, town upon town. I shall give him land from its east to its west.”*<sup>191</sup>

*“I had given all the land to Yaḥdun-Lîm, and by means of my weapons he had no opponent. When he abandoned me, the land I had given him, I gave to Šamšī-Addu [...] I wanted to bring you back. I brought you back on your father’s throne and I handed you the weapon with which I battled against Sea. I rubbed you with oil from my numinous radiance so that no one can stand up to you. Now, this is my only wish: ...”*<sup>192</sup>

In this message, Addu also highlights the importance of his divine command and approval for the actions of the king.<sup>193</sup> Sided with Dagān and Šamaš, Addu appears in the royal correspondence as one of the most important deities that give the oracular decisions about wars – the king may not act without their approval.<sup>194</sup> In addition, Addu and Šamaš appear as oath-takers in the field of international politics. For example, Ḫammurabi swore an oath to Zimrī-Lîm about their joined politics towards Elam by these two deities.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>189</sup> See also Sasson 2015: 280–281. He considers it to be a “bogus prophecy”. I leave this matter for future discussion.

<sup>190</sup> *FM* 7 39: 14–17; *ú-ul a-na-ku-ú-ú* <sup>Γ</sup>IM<sup>Γ</sup> *be-el ka-al-la-as-sú<sup>KI</sup> ša i-na bi-ri-it pa-ḫa-al-li-ia ú-ra-ab-bu-šu-ma a-na GIŠ.GU.ZA É a-bi-šu ú-te-er-ru-šu.*

<sup>191</sup> *FM* 7 39: 20–28; *ni-iḫ-la-tam i-na É-ti-šu e-le-eq-qé šum-ma ú-ul i-na-ad-di-in be-el GIŠ.GU.ZA e-pé-ri ù a-lim<sup>KI</sup> a-na-ku-ma ša ad-di-nu a-ta-ab-ba-al šum-ma la ki-a-am-ma* <sup>Γ</sup>e<sup>Γ</sup>-ri-iš<sup>Γ</sup>-ti i-na-ad-di-in GIŠ.GU.ZA e-li GIŠ.GU-<sup>Γ</sup>ZA<sup>Γ</sup> <sup>Γ</sup>E<sup>Γ</sup>-tam e-li É-tim e-pé-ri e-li e-pé-ri a-lam<sup>KI</sup> e-li a-lim<sup>KI</sup> a-na-ad-di-in-šum <sup>Γ</sup>ù<sup>Γ</sup> ma-a-tam iš-tu ši-ti-ša a-na er-pé-ša a-na-ad-di-in-šu. Translation according to Sasson 2015: 281, slightly modified.

<sup>192</sup> *FM* 7 38: 5–9 and 1’–6’; *ma-a-tum ka-la-ša a-na ia-aḫ-du-li-im ad-di-in ù i-na GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ-ia ma-ḫi-ra-am ú-ul ir-ši i-ia-tam i-zi-ib-ma ma-a-tam ša ad-di-nu-šu[m] a-na sa-am-si-<sup>P</sup>IM ad-[di-i]n and lu-t[e-e]r-ka a-na GIŠ.G[U.ZA É a-bi-ka] ú-te-er-ka GIŠ.TUKUL.[MEŠ] ša it-ti te-em-tim am-ta-aḫ-šú ad-di-na-ak-kum Ì ša nam-ri-ru-ti-ia ap-šu-úš-ka-ma ma-am-ma-an a-na pa-ni-ka ú-ul iz-z[i-iz a]-wa-ti iš-te-et ši-me. Translation according to Sasson 2015: 281, slightly modified.*

<sup>193</sup> *FM* 7 38: 14’–17’. The section is not cited here.

<sup>194</sup> See e.g., *ARM XXVI* 176.

<sup>195</sup> *LAPPO* 16 290.

In the letter of Nūr-Sîn cited above, the weapons of the Storm-God, with which he defeated the Sea,<sup>196</sup> are mentioned. In *FM* 7 38, we can see that Addu of Ḫalāb promises Zimrī-Lîm these weapons, and states that he has anointed the king with the oil of his victory. Another letter<sup>197</sup> informs us that these weapons were to be placed in the temple of Dagān in Terqa. The question is, why to store them in this temple and not in some temple of the Storm-God in the kingdom of Mari. Possibly, it is because Addu was below Dagān in the local pantheon hierarchy. Dagān was the ruler of the area, and the Storm-God fought for him. Also, the choice may be linked with the relation of these two deities as the Storm-God is sometimes seen as the son of Dagān.<sup>198</sup> Although the weapons are not mentioned in the epic,<sup>199</sup> it is an interesting topic related to divine support in the war. To conclude, the epic also recalls the basic characteristic of this deity – the weather. This is the fundamental manifestation of this deity, and it fits very well into the martial context.

#### 4.2.5.4 ANNUNĪTUM

This goddess appears in the epic only once, walking by the side of Zimrī-Lîm (i: 26). In Mari, she belonged among the most important deities,<sup>200</sup> and her oracular messages influenced the state organization. One of the letters informs us about her involvement in the actions of Zimrī-Lîm:

*A muḫḫûtu*<sup>201</sup> rose in Annunītum's temple to say: "Zimrī-Lîm, you must not go on a journey. Stay in Mari, and I shall continue to be communicating (with you)." My lord should not neglect his personal safety.<sup>202</sup>

Heimpel has brought my attention to the possibility that she was primarily venerated by *Banu Yamina*.<sup>203</sup> Thus, she would be in a kind of opposition to Zimrī-Lîm. While I have not encountered any data that would support Heimpel's thesis,<sup>204</sup> there is one letter that may betray Zimrī-Lîm's attitude towards this goddess. In it, Šibtu informs the king of a message of Annunītum:

<sup>196</sup> This is reminiscent of the famous Ugaritic conflict between Yamm and Baʿal (*KTU*<sup>3</sup> 1.1–1.3); for the topic, see e.g., Del Olmo Lete 1992.

<sup>197</sup> *LPO* 18 982.

<sup>198</sup> This applies at least for the Ugaritic sources where Baʿalu is described as *bn dgn*, 'the son of Dagān', on multiple occasions (taking only one as an example: *KTU*<sup>3</sup> 1.6 I: 6). Unfortunately, I know of no Mariote source confirming this for its own time and area. For an interesting discussion regarding the paternity of the Storm-God, see Ayali-Darshan 2013.

<sup>199</sup> Unless we take his weather manifestations as poetic descriptions of his weapons.

<sup>200</sup> See e.g., Cohen 2015: 317–319, where he comments on some of her feasts. Annunītum, her temple, or her officials are mentioned in a number of letters discussed by Heimpel: *ARM* XXVI 150, 197, 200, 212, 213, 214, 224, 229, 237; see also Durand 2008: 202. See also Sasson 1983 for her high position in Mariote dreams.

<sup>201</sup> An 'ecstatic'; see the discussion in 4.2.6 *Divine Involvement*.

<sup>202</sup> *ARM* XXVI 237: 22–28; <sup>f</sup>*mu-ub-ḫu-tum i-na É an-nu-ni-tim* <sup>r</sup>*it<sup>1</sup>-bé-e-ma um-ma-mi zi-im-ri-li-im a-na KASKAL-a la ta-al-la-ak i-na ma-ri<sup>st</sup> ši-ib-ma ù a-na-ku-ma a-ta-na-ap-pa-al a-na pa-ag-ri-šu na-ša-ri-im be-lí a-aḫ-šu la i-na-ad-di*. Translation according to Sasson 2015: 286, slightly modified.

<sup>203</sup> Heimpel 2003: 233.

<sup>204</sup> E.g., Durand (2008: 202) states that she was important for the rule of Zimrī-Lîm.

*“Zimri-Lim, even if you disregard me, I caress you. I will hand over your enemies to you. And I will seize those who steal from me and collect them for annihilation by Bēlet-Ekallim.”*<sup>205</sup>

However, the deity communicates with the king more often, and apart from this one letter, I see no restriction towards her. For example, in *ARM XXVI* 213, Šibtu writes to Zimrī-Līm that this goddess warns him of a rebellion.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, a year name of Zimrī-Līm (ZL1): “*Year in which Zimrī-Līm made the statue of Annunītum of Šeḫrum*”<sup>207</sup> shows us that his aloofness might have been only a temporary state.

This goddess also had a place in a broader cultural environment. She appears already in the age of Agade as a patron deity of this dynasty.<sup>208</sup> Narām-Sîn even called himself *mūt Ištar-Anunītum*, ‘husband of Ištar-Anunītum’.<sup>209</sup> Her relationship with Ištar is well-rooted.<sup>210</sup> However, in the Mariote material, these two deities appear as two distinct personas – even if their role as martial goddesses is the same. Her connection with Agade is also reflected in the later *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurtaw* when she is said to leave the city because Kaštiliyaš was an oath-breaker.<sup>211</sup>

#### 4.2.5.5 LĀGAMAL

A deity named Lāgamal appears only once in the epic (ii 12). He<sup>212</sup> is one of the deities who accompany Zimrī-Līm into the battle, preventing the fleeing of the enemies. However, his role in the kingdom of Mari is almost unknown.<sup>213</sup> His attestations are scarce, even within onomastics.<sup>214</sup> Although the information is scarce and mostly inconclusive, we know that Lāgamal had a cult at Mari. The letter

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<sup>205</sup> Excerpt of *ARM XXVI* 214; translation according to Heimpel 2003: 260.

<sup>206</sup> Among other letters, we may mention *ARM XXVI* 237, where Annunītum and Bēlet-Ekallim warn the king once more, or *ARM XXVI* 224, where it is pointed out to the king that he must offer to this deity.

<sup>207</sup> See [https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year\\_names\\_zimri-lim](https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year_names_zimri-lim) [visited 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021]

<sup>208</sup> Frayne & Stuckey 2021: 24–25.

<sup>209</sup> E.g., *RIME* 2 1.4.1: 8’–9’.

<sup>210</sup> For the most part, I consider these goddesses to be contextually interchangeable. We encounter the same situation with Enlil, Dagān, and Nunamnir. There is no clear answer to their identification or differentiation – which can be stated only in specific contexts, or for specific periods and places. For example, in *Erra and Narām-Sîn*, she is identified with <sup>D</sup>INANNA by means of *paralelismus membrorum*; e.g., *ENS* obv. i: 7–13. “*Annunītum spoke to Narām-Sîn, the Iridescent-[of-Eyes expressed] her utterance, skilful (?) Ištar [(spoke to)] the king about her desire in victory: ...*”; translation according to Westenholz 1997: 192–195. However, at other times, these two names are differentiated even in the Agade epics; e.g., *RevoltNS* 16B: 4.

<sup>211</sup> *EpTNB* i: 44’.

<sup>212</sup> Durand often refers to this deity as feminine; see e.g., 2008: 173 or 332. On p. 298 he gives Lāgamal as both male and female. Guichard 2014a: 46 explicitly, and in reaction to Durand, presents Lāgamal as male. In the epic, Lāgamal is described primarily by the masculine designation *bukru* and not by a feminine *bukurtu*. Therefore, I shall stick to the masculine language.

<sup>213</sup> A late Assyrian copy of a Babylonian text is referred to both by Lambert (1985: 532–533) and Durand (2008: 173). This text states that Lāgamal and Malik were divine kings of Mari. However, the Mariote material hardly supports this late suggestion.

<sup>214</sup> Durand 2008: 651.

*LAPO 18 991*<sup>215</sup> informs us that Lāgamal, together with Ikšudum, has arrived at Terqa from Mari. Lāgamal is also mentioned side by side Ikšudum in M.6607 or A.3597.<sup>216</sup> The importance of these deities can be inferred from the fact that there should be about 100 men accompanying them on the journey. Text M.7515 is an oracular protocol regarding the manufacture of a statue of this deity. Among the questions, an inquiry is made about how many horns he should have. Eight, four or only two?<sup>217</sup>

His character and, consequently, the reason for his role in the epic could possibly be understood from his name. It could be understood as ‘Ruthless’.<sup>218</sup> However, Durand renders him as ‘Vraiment généreux’ in French.<sup>219</sup> He considers the translations ‘Ruthless’ as only a later reinterpretation.<sup>220</sup> The second hint to his character is provided by a list of deities identifying him with Nergal, the lord of the underworld.<sup>221</sup> The possible double understanding of the name (Lagamal, ‘truly merciful’ vs. Lāgamal, ‘without mercy’) could actually fit well the character of the underworld deity.

#### 4.2.5.6 IŠTAR

Ištar<sup>222</sup> – probably the most famous goddess of ancient Mesopotamia – appears in the epic only once (iii: 24). Unfortunately, this part is fragmentary, but the reconstruction of Guichard is in good agreement with the martial character of this goddess: *‘i<sup>21</sup>-[la-ak pa-na te-l]i-tum eš-tár, “Wal [king at the front (was) the mo]st able Ištar”*. In Mari, she was associated with warfare, too, as can be demonstrated by local correspondence:

*“[To] ‘Zimrī-Līm speak! Ištar ‘Ninet<sup>223</sup> (says), “With<sup>1</sup> my ‘strong<sup>1</sup> weapons I stand by you. Build for me a bedstead house in Mari. I instruct you as follows: I (say), When you are one double-hour from your enemies, make haste, light a fire, and the vizier Habdu-Malik ‘must<sup>1</sup> extinguish it.”<sup>224</sup>*

This brings us once again to the topic of oracular decisions to which the king must abide. Ištar is mentioned in connection with divination in several Mariote letters.<sup>225</sup> Obviously, her connection with

<sup>215</sup> For translation, see Sasson 2015: 267.

<sup>216</sup> See Sasson 2015: 255 and 268 or Durand 2008: 363–364. Durand considers Lāgamal as the *paredros* of Ikšudum.

<sup>217</sup> See Durand 2008: 173, 330.

<sup>218</sup> *Lā*, as negation + *gāmilu*, ‘merciful, sparing’.

<sup>219</sup> Durand 2008: 651. Taking *la* as permansif instead of negation.

<sup>220</sup> Nonetheless, I believe that we should not ignore folk etymologies since these are often more important with the actual use of words.

<sup>221</sup> See Litke 1998: 172 and 200, and Lambert 1985: 533, note 16.

<sup>222</sup> She is sometimes transcribed as Eštar because she is usually written as *eš-tár* in the Mariote material. I have chosen to use Ištar just for convenience.

<sup>223</sup> I have decided not to deal much with different local versions of the deities, as the deities of myth and epic are mostly considered as one. Ištar, in particular, was present in the Mariote corpus in many different forms. For a discussion on this form of Ištar, see e.g., Heimpel 2003: 249.

<sup>224</sup> Excerpt from *ARM XXVI* 192; translation according to Heimpel 2003: 248.

<sup>225</sup> In Heimpel 2003, these are: *ARM XXVI* 83, 192, 237, and *XXVII* 58.

battle and war is also noted in other epic traditions.<sup>226</sup> While Ištar is not the top deity in Mari, her cult was strong there.<sup>227</sup> There is also evidence for a larger ritual concerning Ištar where the king is involved.<sup>228</sup> Her connection with warfare and the king is not surprising. It reflects the general cultural milieu of the ancient Near East.

#### 4.2.5.7 DAGĀN

The god Dagān<sup>229</sup> appears in two important passages of the epic (iii 30–36 and iv 6–11). He is the one who commands Zimrī-Lîm and the one who is venerated for the successful victory in his temple in Terqa – Ekisiqqa. The epic ends with the king requesting *life, abundance and strength* from this deity. We have already mentioned him several times as the patron of the area Zimrī-Lîm wishes to conquer.

His patronage over the area<sup>230</sup> was well established by the time of the Amorite ruler. Already Sargon and Narām-Sîn respected this deity when conquering the region.<sup>231</sup> Feliu gives the onomasticon of Mari of the Šakkanakku period. Dagān was a very popular theophoric element among the šakkanakkū – eight out of eighteen known rulers have Dagān in their name.<sup>232</sup> The first ruler of the Lîm dynasty, Yaḥdun-Lîm, expressed his feeling of indebtedness to Dagān as well.<sup>233</sup> We have already seen that Šamši-Adad, acknowledged the importance of Itūr-Mêr for the rule over Mari and its surroundings. In parallel, he also acknowledged that the rule of the broader land ‘between Tigris and Euphrates’ was connected to Dagān. He describes himself as the ‘beloved of Dagān’.<sup>234</sup> Also, he has boasted of building Ekisiqqa.<sup>235</sup> The royal correspondence of Zimrī-Lîm then references Dagān’s patronage quite often.<sup>236</sup> Many of the king’s decisions were dependent upon Dagān’s commands:

*“...and my lord must ‘keep catering to the wishes’ of Dagān, Šamaš, and Addu about these things. As long as my lord keeps catering to the wishes of Dagān, Šamaš, and Addu, my lord must not hurry to do battle, and my lord must not ‘approach(?)’ that enemy. He must (...)*

<sup>226</sup> To cite just one example: *Lugalbanda W* l. 14.

<sup>227</sup> Her cult is mentioned in several letters (e.g., *ARM XXVI* 26, 285, 352), and her name was quite often employed in onomastics (see the *Index of Individuals* in Heimpel 2003).

<sup>228</sup> *FM 3 2*; some scholars would probably see there an example of the so-called *hieros gamos* due to the following formulation: “*He places (a bed) in Ištar’s own temple. If it pleases the king, he lies down on the bed of Ištar*” (translation according to Sasson 2015: 243). I am rather restricted in my interpretations of this rite and its exact form, as is also e.g., Cohen 2015: 325. For the rite, see e.g., *FM 3 2*, p. 52–58 or Sasson 2015: 243–245.

<sup>229</sup> For a detailed study on this deity, see Feliu 2003.

<sup>230</sup> His main cult centres were Terqa and Tuttul. See also Nakata 2011: 131–132 and Durand 2008: 194.

<sup>231</sup> See e.g., *RIME 2* 1.1.11: 14–28, 1.1.12: 6’–21’, or 1.4.26 ii 8–23.

<sup>232</sup> Feliu 2003: 60–61.

<sup>233</sup> *RIME 4* 6.8.1: 1–20.

<sup>234</sup> E.g., *RIMA 1* A.0.39.7: 5–8.

<sup>235</sup> See *RIMA 1* A.0.39.8.

<sup>236</sup> In the selection of correspondence by Heimpel 2003, this topic is mentioned e.g., in *ARM XXVI* 119, 176, 194, 196, 197, 199, 206, 207, 220, 221, 232 or 233.

him. 'When' *Dagān*, *Šamaš*, and *Addu*, these gods, have answered you with yes and 'your' extispicies [are sound], then my lord [must do] battle!<sup>237</sup>

Zimrī-Līm visits the temple of *Dagān* in *Terqa*. However, he was also informed about the oracular decision of *Dagān* of *Tuttul*. However, *Terqa* seems to be more important for the politics of the kingdom of *Mari* as some of the messages from *Tuttul* had to be ratified in *Terqa*.<sup>238</sup>

A fascinating notion is that it was not only the king who was informed about the decisions of the deities, but the deities also wanted to be informed on the deeds of the king. This can be observed, for example, in *ARM XXVI* 233, where *Dagān* requests regular reports on the development with the conflict with *Zimrī-Līm* and *Banu Yamina*, hoping for peace.<sup>239</sup> *Dagān* is also mentioned in a report of a dream of *Adda-Dūri*,<sup>240</sup> in an unclear context, possibly related with a fear of *Dagān* leaving his temple – a sinister vision for the Mesopotamian mind, full of unwanted consequences.<sup>241</sup>

The political role of *Dagān* in the kingdom of *Mari* is also visible in the topic of oaths.<sup>242</sup> While that is not a topic directly related to the epic, it shows yet another role of this Deity and why he was so important for *Zimrī-Līm* and his rule. Oaths were sometimes taken in front of *Dagān*, *Itūr-Mēr*, and the king himself.<sup>243</sup>

Hand in hand with the role of *Dagān* as the ruler *par excellence* in this area, he is often identified with *Enlil*.<sup>244</sup> I once again open the topic of *contextual interchangeability*. The structural position of *Dagān* and *Enlil* (or even *Anu*<sup>245</sup>) leads to their interchangeability within some contexts. For example, a foreigner

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<sup>237</sup> Excerpt from *ARM XXVI* 176; translation according to Heimpel 2003: 243.

<sup>238</sup> See the discussion in Feliu 2003: 120–123, and *ARM XXVI* 199.

<sup>239</sup> See also Sasson 1983: 292–291 and Feliu 2003: 117–118.

<sup>240</sup> *ARM XXVI* 237.

<sup>241</sup> There are several possible interpretations of the phrase *tūra Dagān*. The one which I consider the most probable is connected to the first part of the dream report, where the dreamer saw that *Bēlet-Ekallim* was not in her residence. Thus, I would translate this part as “*Oh Dagān, come back*”. Nevertheless, Heimpel (2003: 267) translates “*Turn to me, oh Dagān*” and Sasson (1983: 289) speculates, that this may be a reference to a previous ruler of *Mari*, *Tūra-Dagān*, and his *etemmu*. Yet another interpretation of this dream was suggested by Feliu (2003: 96). He suggests that this dream is linked to the return of (the statue of) *Dagān* to his temple in *Terqa* by *Zimrī-Līm*. Supposedly, it was *Šamši-Adad* who moved *Dagān* from *Terqa* to *Mari* in the previous period.

<sup>242</sup> See e.g., the discussion in Feliu 2003: 143–146.

<sup>243</sup> See e.g., *ARM III* 19; for translation see e.g., Heimpel 2003: 482–483. They could also be accompanied by other deities, e.g., in *ARM VIII* 85 there is also *Ḫanat* by their side. Moreover, this practice is attested at *Mari* during the period of the *Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia*, when oaths could have been made in front of *Dagān*, *Šamši-Adad* and *Yasmaḫ-Addu*; see Feliu 2003: 143 with reference to *ARM VIII* 9.

<sup>244</sup> See e.g., Durand 2008: 177–178.

<sup>245</sup> See e.g., the comment of Guichard 2014a: 30, where he points out the parallel of *EpZL* i: 15 and iii: 31 and 33, where we read of the ‘command of *Anu*’ and ‘command of *Dagān*’. According to Guichard, the poet plays with the quasi-equivalence of *Anu* and *Dagān*.

may see the persona of Dagān as Enlil, whom he knows better, and to him they may be the same.<sup>246</sup> However, the Mariote material does not support their identity even though their roles are close to each other. For example, in an inscription of Yaḥdun-Lîm,<sup>247</sup> he talks about Dagān within imagery similar to the section of the epic discussed in connection with Enlil and Anu:

9	<i>ᵀda-gan</i>	Dagān
10	<i>šar-ru-ti ib-bi</i>	proclaimed my kingship,
11	<sup>GIS</sup> TUKUL KALA.GA	a mighty weapon
12	<i>mu-ša-am-qí-it</i>	“The Wrecker
13	LUGAL <sup>MES</sup> <i>na-ki-ri-ia</i>	of the Kings (who Are) Hostile (to) Me <sup>248</sup>
14	<i>id-di-nam-ma</i>	he gave to me

This inscription illustrates that it is Dagān, who gives the kingship to the king of Mari, and also helps the king to fight their enemies. In this inscription, Anu and Enlil are mentioned separately and distinctly from Dagān (l. 61 and 77). They are those deities who cause harm to anyone who damages or removes the foundation deposit.<sup>249</sup> These malediction formulations at the end of many royal inscriptions open up the topic of local vs. scribal traditions.

#### 4.2.5.8 ERRA

The Mesopotamian deity Erra is mentioned only once in the epic (iii: 38) as one of the deities walking by the side of Zimrî-Lîm. He is almost absent from the Mariote material, I have encountered him only three times as a theophoric element in personal names.<sup>250</sup> The character of Erra, probably known to the scribes, should be an argument by itself for his incorporation into the battle scenery. Thus, I connect his presence with the scribal knowledge. Also, he could be intended for a foreign audience. In parallel, we may cite from *Erra and Narām-Sîn*:<sup>251</sup>

33	<i>i-lu-um er-ra ù na-ra-am-ᵀEN.ZU</i>	The god Erra and Narām-Sîn
34	<i>pu-úḫ-ri-iš il-li-ku ru-šu ù šu</i>	went together, his companion and he.
35	<i>ta-at-ta-ak-pi-iš ma-ta-am qá-ba-al-šu</i>	His battle overwhelmed (?) the land
36	<i>it-na-al-la-ak iš-ta-šu qú-ra-du-um er-ra</i>	The hero Erra went with him.

<sup>246</sup> After all, their “identity” was postulated in the list of deities and therefore also for the Babylonian scribal tradition; see Litke 1998: 42. However, see also his comments on p. 13 which points to only a loose connection of these two deities within the lists’ tradition.

<sup>247</sup> *RIME* 4 6.8.1.

<sup>248</sup> Following Sasson 2015: 32, I have chosen to see this as a name of the weapon. Frayne in *RIME* sees it simply as a ‘mighty weapon that fells my royal enemies’. One interpretation is more in favour of seeing there enemies of Dagān, the other of Yaḥdun-Lîm.

<sup>249</sup> They are accompanied by Šamaš, who also appears in such maledictions frequently, and by Ašnan and Šakkan/Sumuqan (compare *RIME* 4: 604 and Sasson 2015: 32), who are not frequent in the Old Babylonian royal inscriptions corpus; Šakkan appears, e.g., in an inscription of Išmê-Dagān of Isin (*RIME* 4 1.4.8: 35).

<sup>250</sup> Aḫi-Erra, Erra-Habit and Erra-Nada; see Heimpel 2003: 526 and 534. Their relation to Mari is weak as two of them are connected to Babylonia and one is an official in Ḥarbe, halfway to Babylon.

<sup>251</sup> *ENS* obv. 33–36. Translation according to Westenholz 1997: 197.

#### 4.2.5.9 ŠAMAŠ

The solar deity Šamaš appears once in the epic (iii 42) in the context of divination. We have already encountered this deity several times in the discussions above. His role as a patron of divination, law, and oaths across the ancient Near East is well known, and we do not need to discuss it here. It stands as the main reason for his incorporation into the epic. Although the context is mainly oracular in character, it also promises Zimrī-Lîm the defeat of his enemies:

- 42 <sup>D</sup>UTU *qú-ra-du-um i-ta-ap-la-an-ni* Šamaš, the hero, answered me,  
 43 *u<sub>4</sub>-ma-am an-né-e-em a-ka-am-mi na-ak-<sup>r</sup>ri<sup>1</sup>* this very day, I will capture the ene<sup>r</sup>my<sup>1</sup>,

This could evoke the role of Šamaš as the oath-taker as those who break the oath become enemies. Oath-taking before Šamaš is a topic of several letters. We have already mentioned an oath of Ḫammurabi before Šamaš and Addu about the joint approach toward Elam.<sup>252</sup> Another example may be *LAPPO 16 291*, where Atamrum, son of Warad-Sîn, king of Andarig swears by Šamaš.<sup>253</sup>

We have already mentioned that Zimrī-Lîm has sent one of his daughters to be the wife of Šamaš in Sippar.<sup>254</sup> This is the topic of the letter *ARM XXVI 194*. This letter testifies to the importance of the Šamaš of Sippar even outside the southern Mesopotamian context. Furthermore, at this time, Zimrī-Lîm was still an ally of Ḫammurabi of Babylon to whose sphere of influence Sippar belonged. Giving a daughter to Šamaš is well comparable with inter-dynastic marriages. In sum, Šamaš was an important deity at both national and international levels.

#### 4.2.5.10 NUNAMNIR

The last deity I wish to discuss is Nunamnir. He appears at the end of the epic (iv: 7) as an inhabitant of the Ekisiqqa temple. I have not encountered this name in the texts of Mari that I have examined. His appearance could be explained by the loose connection between Dagān and Enlil. One of Enlil's epithets was Nunamnir.<sup>255</sup> While I have advocated against the identification of these two deities, I think this epithet of Enlil could be easily used for Dagān. This statement expresses that Dagān is in the same structural position as his Mesopotamian counterpart.<sup>256</sup> Once again, this only works for a specific

<sup>252</sup> *LAPPO 16 290*.

<sup>253</sup> The letter includes several statements. To select one: “*From this day on, as long as I live, I will [not] cause harm to Zimri-Lim, son of Yabdun-Lim, ‘king’ of Mari and the land of the Hana, his [city], his troops, and his land.*”; translation according to Heimpel 2003: 504–505.

<sup>254</sup> 2.3 (*Return of the Lîm Dynasty and the Rule of Zimrī-Lîm*).

<sup>255</sup> See e.g., Annus 2002: 21–23, 28, 40 and 151, Leick 1998: 46, Litke 1998: 38.

<sup>256</sup> My favourite example to illustrate this mode of *contextual interchangeability* is based on the book *Kaiser von Amerika* by Pollack (2010). There, a picture of the Statue of Liberty was used by traffickers to persuade Polish emigrants-to-be to go to the USA. It was said to be the Virgin Mary, the queen of Poland. An image belonging to one concept can be used to “rebrand” another; see Pollack 2010; unfortunately, I have reference only to the Czech translation: 2014: 250–251.

audience. It is one of the hints that betray the strong influence of southern scribal tradition on the composition of the epic.<sup>257</sup>

However, why should this particular epithet be recalled? So far, the best description of Nunamnir I have encountered is from an inscription of Shalmaneser I:

*“Ekur – the desired object of the gods (and) the mountain of Nunamnir –, merciless crusher of criminals, great dragon of conflict, curser of enemies, the weapon which destroys the insubmissive, who weakens fierce (enemies), trampler of the rebellious, subduer of all the mountains, who flattened like grain the extensive army of the Qutu to remote regions, conqueror of the Lulluu and Šubaru, who carries off hostile foes above and below.”<sup>258</sup>*

Even though time and space significantly separate the epic and this inscription, I think it is quite possible to connect this imagery with the Nunamnir of the epic.

#### 4.2.5.11 DINGIR<sup>MES</sup>

In addition to the named deities, there are several instances when the larger body of gods and goddesses is invoked. The first instance is related to the above-discussed case of Anu (i: 12–15). Although it is Anu by whose command the king is selected, the decision is also sponsored by the deities in general. The command of Anu is rooted in the decision of the pantheon:

- 12 [i]-<sup>ṛ</sup>šà<sup>ʔ</sup> šu<sup>ṛ</sup>-qú-ri ib-bu-ú DINGIR<sup>MES</sup> šum-šu  
[In] <sup>ṛ</sup>the p<sup>ṛ</sup>ecious <sup>ṛ</sup>heart<sup>ṛ</sup>, the gods have chosen his name,
- 13 zi-ik-ru <sup>ḏ</sup>a-nim <sup>ṛ</sup>li<sup>ṛ</sup>-te-<sup>ḫ</sup>li-il ri-im ma-ti-šu  
<sup>ṛ</sup>may<sup>ṛ</sup> the command of Anu be pure, the wild bull of his land,
- 14 zi-im-ri-li-im ib-bu-ú DINGIR<sup>MES</sup> šum-šu  
Zimrī-Lîm, the gods have chosen his name,
- 15 zi-ik-ru <sup>ḏ</sup>a-nim li-te-<sup>ḫ</sup>li-il <sup>ṛ</sup>ri<sup>ṛ</sup>-im ma-<sup>ṛ</sup>ti-šu<sup>ṛ</sup>  
may the command of Anu be pure, <sup>ṛ</sup>the w<sup>ṛ</sup>ild bull <sup>ṛ</sup>of his<sup>ṛ</sup> lan<sup>ṛ</sup>d<sup>ṛ</sup>.

In the second case where we encounter DINGIR<sup>MES</sup>, the king ensures the support of all the deities he has not yet named. For him, it is imperative to request full divine support. As expected, he gets their blessing and accompany the king to the battle:

- 27 la na-bi-iú-tim it-ti DIN[GIR<sup>MES</sup> i-ri-iš a-na r]e-di-im  
Those of go[ds] who were not called, [he requested them to acc]ompany (him).
- 28 ar-<sup>ḫ</sup>i-iš LUGAL i-pu-lu a[n-na-am]  
Quickly, they answered the king: "Y[es!]"

<sup>257</sup> See also Feliu 2003: 102. As it is noted in the entry on Enlil in the *Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses ORACC* project, this epithet is reserved for religious and literary texts; see <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/enlil/index.html> [visited 28<sup>th</sup> December 2021].

<sup>258</sup> *RIMA 1* A.0.77.4: 3–16. Translation according to Grayson.

#### 4.2.6 DIVINE INVOLVEMENT

So far, I have focused on individual deities, their known roles in Mari or elsewhere in the ancient Near East, and explored why they were incorporated in the epic. In the following section, I strive to summarize how deities are involved in daily politics.<sup>259</sup> The main point is that divine involvement was not reserved only for the realms of myth and epic. The deities were part of the daily life of the state administration and organization. Thus, the epic, while it has many parallels in the narrative traditions, also reflects the lived reality.<sup>260</sup>

The deities participate in the narrative in several modes. First, they are those who have selected the king for the throne. Second, they are those who command him through the means of divination. Third, they accompany the king to the battle. Lastly, they also require something in return – sacrifices and adoration. In this chapter, I shall focus on the topics of divine will and divine support. These two topics are quite often interwoven.

Although the conception of kingship in the ancient Near East is often described as *oriental despotism*, we can often observe that power was limited. We have already discussed that Zimrī-Lîm consulted his men. Now we shall turn our attention to the divine realm. In discussing individual deities, we have already seen that the king abided by their commands.

Consulting warfare with the divine realm or walking into battles alongside deities was not characteristic only of the Mari of Zimrī-Lîm. It was a general practice in the ancient Near East.<sup>261</sup> One letter seems enough to illustrate this from the perspective of Ḫammurabi:

[Ḫammurabi:] “... *I have now appealed to Šamaš and Marduk and they have answered me positively. I would certainly not have risen to this attack without (consulting) god*” ... *To his troops [Ḫammurabi] said this: “Go and may god go before you...”*<sup>262</sup>

The importance of divine will for the state organization in Mari is well demonstrated in the so-called *Protocol for Diviners*.<sup>263</sup> The text also reveals the nature of the omens for the king. These are regarded as state secrets that should not be disclosed to anyone unauthorised. Thus, we can see that the

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<sup>259</sup> See also the discussion in Guichard 2014a: 125–131. It is more or less complementary to my discussion. However, I differ e.g., in the discussion on the relation of Zimrī-Lîm and Addu, Guichard’s view Zimrī-Lîm is in the end an “incarnation” of the Storm-God. In my opinion, this rather contradicts the conception of divinity in the ancient Near East as well as the contents of the epic that highlights the relationship of the king and his army. Once again, this is a topic for further discussion.

<sup>260</sup> For the divine role in the politics of Mari, see e.g., Durand 2008: 284–287.

<sup>261</sup> For a general introduction to this topic, see Trimm 2017: 553–625. See also Guichard 1999 and Hamblin 2006: 186–192 for a discussion on divine involvement in warfare in the Mari Age.

<sup>262</sup> Excerpt from *ARM XXVI* 358, translation according to Sasson 2015: 269.

<sup>263</sup> Text *ARM XXVI* 1, where Durand titles it with this name. See also the discussions and translations in Lenzi 2008: 42–45, Heimpel 2003: 174–175, or Sasson 2015: 272–273.

diviners were trusted people with responsibilities towards the king<sup>264</sup> and could have made him vulnerable:<sup>265</sup>

*When inspecting the omens for my lord Zimrī-Lîm, when performing a ritual procedure: whatever are the signs that I observe; or when inspecting the omens for a commoner, when performing a ritual procedure: all that I observe, the bad finding or good, I shall surely report it to my lord, I shall not conceal it.*

*If I observe a bad or good finding when omen-taking for my lord Zimrī-Lîm, whether manifested in an izbum or an izmum, I shall report it to no individual whatsoever.*

*Whatever secret information Zimrī-Lîm tells me on which to take omens, or whatever I hear Zimrī-Lîm tell a diviner, a colleague of mine, or if I observe that finding in the performance of omen-taking allotted to a diviner colleague of mine, I shall surely keep this information secret.<sup>266</sup>*

Throughout the Mariote epistolary corpus, we observe references to divinations, dreams, and visions.<sup>267</sup> In *ARM XXVI* 186, the king gets a report on unfavourable omens regarding the safety of the city. The sender (lost) asks for more sheep to perform the second round of omens and advises the king not to neglect this line of enquiry. Does this mean that Zimrī-Lîm sometimes chose to ignore the signs and the will of the gods? While it is surely possible, the texts, in general, give us instead a picture of a pious king who listens to and acts according to the command of deities.

The divine messages were communicated with humans by several means. Oracles could have been revealed in dreams, ecstatic behaviour,<sup>268</sup> or induced divination and prophecy performed by specialists. Such messages were not usually communicated by the gods directly to the king,<sup>269</sup> but were usually disclosed to someone else, and the king was informed later. I do not intend to discuss here the broad topic of divination, which is well known and explored,<sup>270</sup> but I would like to highlight the importance of “spontaneous” revelation of messages through dreams that had a strong tradition at Mari.<sup>271</sup> We have seen quite a lot of examples of this practice in the material discussed above in relation

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<sup>264</sup> Compare with *FM* 7 38 and 39 (see 4.2.5.3 *Storm-God*), where Nūr-Sîn writes to Zimrī-Lîm from Aleppo that even though he moved far from his lord, he does not intend to stop informing him about the divine messages he encounters. Although Sasson (2015: 280) considers these texts to be a “bogus” prophecy, the letters are still a valuable source on the importance of divine involvement for us.

<sup>265</sup> I have not cited the section of the *Protocol for Diviners* which includes a loyalty oath of diviners to the king. For a discussion on power held by the diviners and their possible treacherousness, see Lenzi 2008: 44–49.

<sup>266</sup> Translation according to Sasson 2015: 272, slightly modified.

<sup>267</sup> A selection of the Mariote corpus related to divination and other means of communication with the deities can be found either in Nissinen 2003: 13–92, or Sasson 2015: 271–293. For a general introduction, see Deluty 2020 or Charpin 2012.

<sup>268</sup> Many letters include references to ‘ecstatics’, *muhbû*. For a discussion, see e.g., Feliu 2003: 148–151.

<sup>269</sup> However, I have encountered at least one text that mentions a dream of Zimrī-Lîm that is then a subject of oracular verification; *ARM XXVI* 225, see e.g., Sasson 2015: 287.

<sup>270</sup> For a general overview of the topic, see e.g., Maul 2018.

<sup>271</sup> See e.g., Sasson 1983 or Feliu 2003: 147–154.

to several deities that appear in the epic. As we have seen in the examples from correspondence, some of the divine commands that appear in the epic might have been based on dreams. References to *āpilu* (iii 35) and ‘diviners’ (DUMU<sup>MES</sup> MĀŠ.ŠU.SU<sub>13</sub>, Akk. *bārû*, iii: 41) suggest that the divination and prophecy in the epic were performed by specialists rather than revealed spontaneously.<sup>272</sup> After all, the spontaneous oracles must have been confirmed by more reliable methods, so there was a permanent need for such specialists.<sup>273</sup>

This topic is also present in other narrative traditions. In the epics of the kings of Agade, the heroes also seek advice or a command from the divine realm.<sup>274</sup> In the *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta*, the king ensures divine favour as well.<sup>275</sup> In addition, this topic is often approached from another perspective. The abidance of the king to divine commands can be expressed by contrasting him with his opponent. The Kassite ruler Kaštīliyaš is described as the one who transgresses the will of the gods and as an oath-breaker.<sup>276</sup> This transgression of divine will is the main reason for Kaštīliyaš’s defeat<sup>277</sup> and works as a command for Tukultī-Ninurta to intervene. Contrary to Zimrī-Līm or Tukultī-Ninurta, Kaštīliyaš takes a counsel with himself,<sup>278</sup> not with the deities. What happens when the king does not act according to the will of the gods is illustrated well in a section of *Narām-Sîn and the Enemy Hordes*:<sup>279</sup>

79	<i>kīam aqbi ana libbīya umma lù anākūma</i>	Thus I said to my heart, these were my words:
80	<i>ayû nēšu bīri ibri</i>	“What lion (ever) performed extispicy?
81	<i>ayû barbaru iš<sup>3</sup>al šā<sup>3</sup>iltu</i>	What wolf (ever) consulted a dream-interpreter?
82	<i>lullik kī mār ḥabbāti [ina] migir libbīya</i>	I will go like a brigand according to my own inclination.
83	<i>u luddi ša ilimma yāti lušbat</i>	And I will cast aside that (oracle) of the god(s); I will be in control of myself.”
84	<i>šattu maḥrītu ina kašādi</i>	When the first year arrived,
85	<i>2 šūši līm ummāni ušēšīma ina libbišunu ištēn balṭu ul itūra</i>	I sent out 120 000 troops, but none of them returned alive.
86	<i>šanītum šattu ina kašādi 90 līm KIMIN</i>	When the second year arrived, I send out 90 000 troops, the same (happened).
87	<i>šaluštum šattu ina kašādi 60 līm 7 mē KIMIN</i>	When the third year arrived, I sent out 60 700 troops, the same (happened)

<sup>272</sup> For a discussion on *āpilu*, see e.g., Feliu 2003: 147, 151–152. In contrast to *mubḥû*, this term describes a specialist who is capable to induce a prophecy, to communicate, and to interpret the divine will.

<sup>273</sup> See e.g., *ARM XXVI* 186 mentioned above.

<sup>274</sup> Just to refer to one example for illustration: *SargonFL*, i: 13’–17’.

<sup>275</sup> *EpTN A ii*: 7’–24’ is comparable to the visit of Zimrī-Līm to Ekisīqqa. The Assyrian epic describes this episode more extensively.

<sup>276</sup> E.g., *EpTN A i*: 34’, or *EpTN B i*: 32’–34’.

<sup>277</sup> *EpTN B i*: 36’–46’. Kaštīliyaš is left by the deities of Babylonia on his own.

<sup>278</sup> *EpTN A/E iii*: 22’–25’.

<sup>279</sup> *NSEH*, standard Babylonian recension, l. 79–87. Translation according to Westenholz 1997: 316–319, slightly modified.

The divine presence on the battlefield should not be taken as a literary or mythical reference in the narrative but as a fact. Although it may be contra-intuitive to the modern reader, the divine statues and emblems *were* the deities.<sup>280</sup> The conception of the divine in the ancient Near East was very physical. Therefore, the deities probably *truly* accompanied the army into the battlefield.<sup>281</sup> Trimm has brought to my attention that divine emblems in battle are possibly depicted in the stele of Narām-Sîn (Fig. 9).<sup>282</sup>



Figure 9 Troops with divine emblems on the Stele of Narām-Sîn;  
by Rama, CC BY-SA 3.0 fr, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2966753>

The topic of divine help is also ubiquitous in other royal epics. For example, deities accompany Tukultī-Ninurta to the battle, and they do so in a far more epic manner than in the case of the *Epic of Zimrī-Līm*.<sup>283</sup> In *Narām Sîn and the Lord of Apišal*, the Agade king is accompanied by several deities. Annunītum and Šilabba are mentioned there as emblems. This opens yet another line of enquiry, the difference in the substance of *deities* in contrast to their *emblems*. That is left for further discussion.

2' <i>na-ra-am</i> - <sup>D</sup> EN.ZU <i>ur-ḫa-šu i-la-ak-ma</i>	Narām-Sîn goes on his way,
3' <i>il ma-tim i-la-ku iš-ti-šu</i>	the God-of-the-Land, they go with him.
4' <i>im-ma-ḫa-ra i-la-ba pa-li-il ur-ḫi-i-im</i>	At the front, Ilaba, the pathfinder,
5' <i>i-wa-ar-ka za-ba-ba e-da-ta-am qá-ar-ni-in</i>	at the rear, Zababa, the sharped-horned,
6' <i>šu-ri-in An-nu-ni-ti ù ši-la-ba ki-la-al</i>	the emblems of Anunnītu and Šilaba both
7' <i>i-mi-ta-am ù šu-we-la-a-am qá-ar-na-am</i>	right and left, the horns. <sup>284</sup>

In addition, many of the inscriptions throughout the corpus I have examined refer to the support of deities. The topic is so ever-present that I do not give any example, just open any of the *RIM* editions and choose a random text. Soon enough, you will encounter such a statement.

<sup>280</sup> For a brief introduction to the nature of divine representations, see e.g., Dick 2005.

<sup>281</sup> Just as deities could leave their temples, visit each other, be deported or stolen.

<sup>282</sup> Trimm 2017: 201.

<sup>283</sup> *EpTN* A v: 31'–54'.

<sup>284</sup> *NSLoA* obv. ii: 2'–7'.

#### 4.2.7 LITERARY TOPOI

In the following chapter, I shall only briefly discuss several themes that appear in the epic and their literary descriptions. I have chosen to look at four selected themes: expression *four quarters of the World*, descriptions of the enemies and their defeat, king's obstacles, and speeches.

##### 4.2.7.1 THE FOUR QUARTERS OF THE WORLD

In the epic, the phrase *kibrāt erbē'im* appears twice (i: 21, ii: 25). This can be translated as 'the four quarters (of the world)'.<sup>285</sup> This expression usually refers symbolically to the full extent of the earth's surface or the world in general.<sup>286</sup> As such, it is sometimes incorporated as a title of kings. This was first attested for Narām-Sîn of Agade, who aimed at ruling over the whole known world.<sup>287</sup>

However, Zimrī-Lîm did not incorporate this claim into his titles.<sup>288</sup> In his epic, the phrase is used to describe the totality of the world, over which, however, the king does not proclaim control.<sup>289</sup> In the first section, where it appears, the expression is used to demonstrate the extent of the rule and power of the Storm-God (i: 18–21):

18	<i>ib-bi-ri-it ḥa-bu-ur ù pu-ra-an-tim</i>	Between Ḥābur and Euphrates,
19	<i>i-na aš-ri<sup>D</sup>IŠKUR i-di-nu di-na-aš-šu</i>	in the place (where) Storm-god has judged his judgement,
20	<i>id-di ri-ig-ma-aš-šu qí-in-na-šu ú-pa-ar-ri-ir</i>	(where) he has raised his roar, (where) he has scattered his clan,
21	<i>a-na ki-ib-ra-at er-be-e-im ṭe-em-šu is-pu-ub</i>	to the four quarters (of the world) he has dispersed his will.

For the second time, the expression appears within Zimrī-Lîm's incentive speech to his soldiers (ii: 18–28), where it simply highlights that they are facing the enmity of the whole world:

25	<i>ki-ib-ra-at er-<sup>r</sup>bé-e<sup>l</sup>-im ku-nu-<sup>r</sup>tí<sup>r</sup> na-ak-ra</i>	The f <sup>r</sup> ou <sup>r</sup> quarters (of the world) are hostile to yo <sup>r</sup> u <sup>l</sup>
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<sup>285</sup> See CAD K, *kibrātu* (p. 331–333). Among other frequent translations there may be 'four regions/quadrants/edges (of the world)'. CDA: 156 has this expression under *kibru*, 'bank, shore, rim'.

<sup>286</sup> For a discussion on this phrase in a context of cosmic geography, see e.g., Hurowitz 2011: 204–205, 295–296, 298–299 or 324–325. Among its variants, we may count Sum. AN.UB.DA.4.BA.(KE<sub>4</sub>), UB.DA.4.BA.(KE<sub>4</sub>), UB.DA.4, UB.DA.AN.KI, AN.UB, or Akk. *kibrāt erbetti/arba'i*, *tubuqāt erbetti/arba'i*, *kibrātu*. This expression is also found on the famous *Babylonian Map of the World* (BM 92687, rev. 26'), where this, according to Hurowitz, summarizes the whole reverse section (2011: 37).

<sup>287</sup> Sum. LUGAL.AN.UB.4.BA (e.g., RIME 2 1.4.2001) = Akk. *šar kibrāt arba'im* (e.g., RIME 2 1.4.1); see also Hallo 1957: 49–52.

<sup>288</sup> At least, I am not aware of any such claim and my search for it was in vain.

<sup>289</sup> On the contrary, Tukultī-Ninurta in his epic is described as the one *who (controls) the entire four directions* (EpTN A/F i: 13'). In this case, the used phrase is *kip-pat* IM.4 (*kippāt šārī arba'i*), 'the circle/perimeter of the four winds'.

Similar imagery was employed, for example, by Ašdūni-Yarīm of Kiš in his inscriptions. He used the enmity of the *four quarters* as a reason to build the wall of Kiš<sup>290</sup> or to wage war for eight years.<sup>291</sup> Yet another example of the imagery of hostile *four quarters* may be observed in some of the Narām-Sîn's inscriptions.<sup>292</sup> Luckily for this ruler, the god Ea also [*ga*]v[*e him no*] *rival in the four quarters*.<sup>293</sup>

It seems that it is possible to connect this topos with Sumerian/Babylonian influence.<sup>294</sup> The Assyrian rulers more often employed the title LUGAL KIŠ = Akk. *šar kiššatim*, 'king of the universe' to express their "universal rule".<sup>295</sup> It seems that only Tukultī-Ninurta expanded the title by adding *the four quarters*.<sup>296</sup> He used it side by side with the title *king of the universe*. He also employed this expression in his inscriptions followingly: shepherd of the four quarters, he was given the four quarters to administer (both *RIMA 1 A.0.78.1*, col. i). I have not encountered any other Assyrian ruler before him who would employ this topos.<sup>297</sup> Thus, it seems plausible to connect it with his conquest of Kassite Babylonia.<sup>298</sup> Similar imagery also appears in the *Epic of Gilgames*.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> *RIME 4 8.1.1*: 43–51.

<sup>291</sup> *RIME 4 8.1.2*: 4–11.

<sup>292</sup> E.g., *RIME 2 1.4.3*: 27–32.

<sup>293</sup> *RIME 2 1.4.24*.

<sup>294</sup> After the age of Agade, this tradition was followed by Ur III kings: Šulgi (e.g., *RIME 3/2 1.2.23*: 4–6), Amar-Suen (e.g., *RIME 3/2 1.3.1*: 9), Šū-Sîn (e.g., *RIME 3/2 1.4.1*: ii: 11), and Ibbi-Sîn (e.g., *RIME 3/2 1.5.2012*). The kings of the Ur III dynasty employed this title very often, and the references are nothing but a single demonstrative sample selected from *RIME 3/2*. I have not encountered Ur-Nammu, the founder of the dynasty, bearing this title. The tradition could have been employed by Šulgi, who probably had far more universalistic goals than his predecessor. In addition, Utu-Ḫegal, the pre-Ur III king of Uruk, claimed this title (e.g., *RIME 2 13.6*: 1–3). For later periods, see e.g., Išbi-Erra of Isin (*RIME 4 1.1.2005*, 2006), Išmê-Dagān of Isin (*RIME 4 1.4.5*), Ḫammurabi (*RIME 4 3.6.12*, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17), Šamšu-iluna (*RIME 4 3.7.1*, 3, 6). Ḫammurabi makes the four quarters at peace (*RIME 4 3.6.4*, 7, 9), he makes his father Sîn-muballiṭ known in the four quarters (*RIME 4 3.6.7*); Šamšu-iluna uses this similarly in his inscriptions – he makes peace in the four quarters (*RIME 4 3.7.8*), and he also employs the imagery of shepherdship over the four quarters (*RIME 4 3.7.5*). See also Hallo 1957: 52–56.

<sup>295</sup> Šamši-Adad (*RIMA 1 A.0.39.1*, 2, 8, 12), Adad-Nārārī I (*RIMA 1 A.0.73.3*, 9, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 44, 46), Shalmaneser I (*RIMA 1 A.0.77.6*, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 37), Tukultī-Ninurta I (*RIMA 1 A.0.78.1*, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 19, etc.), Aššur-nādin-apli (*RIMA 1 A.0.79.2*), Ninurta-apil-Ekur (*RIMA 1 A.0.82.1*, 2), Aššur-rēša-iši I (*RIMA 1 A.0.86.2*, 4, 5, 6). Compare also LUGAL KIŠ UN.MEŠ ('king of all people'): Shalmaneser I (*RIMA 1 A.0.77.4*, 18), Aššur-nādin-apli (*RIMA 1 A.0.79.1*).

<sup>296</sup> E.g., *RIMA 1 A.0.78.2*, 3, 5, 7, 19, etc.

<sup>297</sup> Later Assyrian rulers employed this title from time to time, especially during the Neo-Assyrian period (this is based on a swift browse of *RLAo*), as well as some of the later rulers of Babylonia (based on a swift browse of *RIBo* and *RIMB 2*). However, for now I have limited the discussion by the rule of Tukultī-Ninurta.

<sup>298</sup> The case of Kassites is more complicated. The *RIM* volume on this period has not been published yet. Also, this period is not (yet) included in *RIBo*. Several Kassite inscriptions are available on *CDLI*. By searching there, I have encountered the title "king of the universe/world" (LUGAL KIŠ/LUGAL ŠĀR(.RA)), used for Nazi-Marutaš (P498314: i: 2, ii: 27), Marduk-apla-iddina (P498314 vi: 3), Marduk-šāpik-zēri of the second dynasty of Isin (P469043: 2), Nabū-šumu-libūr of the Second Sealand Dynasty (P469058: 2, P468725: 2). I have encountered title *king of the four quarters* applied only to Kurigalzu in several inscriptions (e.g., P373952: 7, P373953: 7, P428557: 2', P427957: 7, P428556: 1', P428301: 2').

<sup>299</sup> *Gilgames* I i 41: "(*Gilgames*)... who scoured the world-regions (*kibrāti*) ever searching for life"; after George 2003: 541.

#### 4.2.7.2 THE EARTH HAS DRUNK THE BLOOD OF WARRIORS

The destruction of enemies is one of the most important topics in the epic, and rich imagery is used to describe it. In this aspect, the epic is not much different from any of the self-presentations of other rulers of the ancient Near East. The war and destruction of enemies appear very often in royal inscriptions, and it is a topic of most of the discussed royal epics. Although ancient rulers presented themselves in many areas, this was truly one of the major themes by which they wanted to be remembered.<sup>300</sup> We may cite here several of such descriptions from the epic:

- i: 24 *ib-tu-uq na-ak-ra-am ki-i ki-ší-ir a-bi-ḫi-im*  
He has torn the enemy like a knot of a rope,
- i: 25 *iš-ti er-še-tum da-mi qar-ra-di*  
the earth has drunk the blood of warriors.
- ii: 6 *li-ta-am-ḫa-aḫ na-ak-rum ki-[i ṭi-di-im ina me-e (?)]*  
May the enemy be soaked li[ke a clay in the water (?)]
- ii: 14 *ki-ma ap-pa-ri-im i-ší-da-am ša-ba-šu*  
He harvested his (enemy?) troops like a reed,
- ii: 15 *ki-ma bi-nim šu-um-qú-tu qar-ra-du*  
the warriors were caused to be fallen like a tamarisk,
- ii: 16 *iš-ti er-še-tum da-mi-šu*  
the earth has drunk his blood.
- ii: 43 *sà-ap-ḫ[a-at] šu-ba-ar-tum ki-i UDU<sup>HA</sup> ri-tim*  
Subartu is scatte[red] like a sheep on the pasture.
- iii: 3 *mi-im-ma ša ip-ri-ku a-na pa-ni-šu ma-aq-tu*  
everyone who faced him is fallen,
- iii: 4 *šu-ul-pu-tu su-up-pu-ḫu up-pu-ú ANŠE<sup>HA</sup>*  
the donkeys seem ruined and scattered,
- iii: 5 *a-ḫu-né-e i-ta-ad-du-ú qar-ra-du*  
the warriors are (left) fallen, each by himself,
- iii: 6 *ba-al-la-at qé-er-bé-tum i-na da-mi-šu-nu*  
the environ is covered in their blood.
- iii: 47 *ki-i 1 ḫu-ḫa-ri-im iš-ḫu-p[u na-ak-ri-šu-nu]*  
Like one (large) bird-trap they entrapp[ed their enemy,]
- iv: 4 *[ša zi-im-ri]-li-im i-pu-lu ze-er-tam*  
[those who] answered [Zimri]-Lîm (with) hostility,

<sup>300</sup> Here I paraphrase a comment of Van De Mieroop (2011: 335), who comments on the dominance of the military history approach to the reconstruction of the past.

iv: 5 [ú-u]l ib-lu-tú šu-nu im-tu-tu

they did [no]t live, they died.

I shall only briefly comment on several of these. We can see that imagery of the earth drinking the blood of fallen soldiers repeatedly appears in the *Epic of Zimri-Lim*. Similar imagery is also found in the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta*, in the speech of Kaštiliyaš, where he threatens Tukulti-Ninurta: “*This is the day when the blood of your people will water the steppes and meadows.*”<sup>301</sup> However, in the end, it is the blood of his warriors that ends up soaking in the land.<sup>302</sup>

The epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi also employs this topos: “*cause the warriors to fall, may the earth drink their blood.*”<sup>303</sup> This utterance is included in a section where Hammurabi invokes Ištar in her military function. She is the supporter of just war, the one who fights the enemies. This topos is then reminiscent of a name of a protective lion, possibly in a temple of Ištar at Mari: “*On order of Ištar, drinker of the blood of Šamšī-Addu’s enemies.*”<sup>304</sup>

Although the martial imagery of the earth drinking the enemy’s blood is quite self-evident and does not need further explanation or cultural context, it may be useful to observe that it was present elsewhere, too. Therefore, it might have been a part of the literary topos of the war. After all, even though it is self-evident and may seem casual, there are also countless other possibilities of expressing it. Thus, the choice might not have been coincidental.

At least two other topos deserve a brief comment. In ii: 6, the enemy is said to dissolve like clay in the water. This passage is reconstructed by Guichard. He based his reconstruction on a parallel with the Mesopotamian magic tradition, where clay figurines representing evil are dissolved in water.<sup>305</sup> This case shows us the usefulness of exploring cultural contexts and intertextuality. It can help us to fill the gaps of damaged texts reasonably. Although our reconstructions may be wrong and remain an educated guess, the repetitiveness of ancient Near Eastern texts works for our benefit. The second imagery I wish to highlight is expressed in the epic as: “*Subartu is scattered like a sheep on the pasture*” (ii: 43). It could be linked to the pasture imagery of the Amorites, but it is also found in different epic traditions. For example, we can observe the same imagery in *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, where the land of Aratta

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<sup>301</sup> *EpTN* A iv: 32: ‘*ma-a<sup>1</sup>-an-nu-ú U<sub>4</sub>-mu šá da-am UKU<sup>MES</sup>-ka ú-ma-ka-ru na-me-e qer-be-ti*; translation according to Machinist.

<sup>302</sup> *EpTN* A iv: 41’, where Machinist reconstructs(!) this imagery based on the previous statement.

<sup>303</sup> In this reference, I follow Guichard 2014a: 38; *qar-ra-di-šu li-ša-am-qí-it da-mi-šu-nu er-še-tam li-iš-qí* (rev. xxviii 8–11; in section E27 according to Richardson 2004:130–133).

<sup>304</sup> M.7499, see Sasson 2015: 255.

<sup>305</sup> Guichard 2014a: 43–44. The use of this imagery is not limited to magic tradition and the *Epic of Zimri-Lim*. For example, a similar formulation can be seen in a “petition letter” *Sin-iddinam to Utu*, see Brisch 2007: 79, 158–159, 162–163. Brisch also refers to a statue inscription of Hammurabi for the same imagery, see Brisch 2007: 168. In addition, in *LIH 60* iv, Hammurabi is described as the one “*who destroyed warriors like a figurine of clay*”, see Van De Mieroop 2011: 325.

is described like scattered ewes, too.<sup>306</sup> A fascinating topic could also be what happened to the captured enemies. There is a lot of material for discussion,<sup>307</sup> but since this theme is only marginal in the epic, I leave that for future research.

One question remains: Who were the enemies of Zimrī-Lîm? Guichard rightly points out that the enemy is not named in the epic, but is generally referred to as the ‘enemies of Enlil’ (i: 17). As discussed above, this complicates the setting of the epic in the course of history. The enemies are interpreted by Guichard as Išmê-Dagān and Yasmaḥ-Addu.<sup>308</sup> While Wasserman notes that enemies are often named in second-millennium Akkadian royal hymns,<sup>309</sup> it was also pointed out by Van De Mieroop that the enemies of Ḫammurabi are sometimes referred to only in general terms. As those who do not obey Marduk or those who Enlil ordered to destroy.<sup>310</sup> Maybe there was no need to name the enemy because it was clear to the audience? Or was the enemy not that important? Or were the enemies so numerous (all the petty kings of the reconquered areas)? As mentioned in the historical introduction,<sup>311</sup> Zimrī-Lîm probably could not claim the defeat of Yasmaḥ-Addu for himself.

#### 4.2.7.3 BEFORE HIM, THERE IS NOTHING OPPOSING HIM<sup>312</sup>

Only shortly, I wish to comment on the topos of overcoming obstacles facing the king. The king is described as passing mountains, opening a new pass there (i: 34–37). In the imagery, mountains serve as an obstacle *par excellence*. Guichard points out the ideological aspects of opening new passages and ways.<sup>313</sup> An interesting comparison can be made with *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, where the hero's opponent boasts of being surrounded by impenetrable mountain ranges.<sup>314</sup> Obviously, this obstacle is surpassed. Similarly, in *Lugalbanda in the Wilderness*, the mountains serve as a prime example of difficult terrain to pass.<sup>315</sup> This poem also uses the imagery of mountains as bolted doors.<sup>316</sup> In the Sargon Birth Legend, the king claims to cut his way through the difficult mountains, ascending and traversing them.<sup>317</sup> Similar statements are also mentioned in the *Epic of Gilgameš*.<sup>318</sup> This topos may also employ

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<sup>306</sup> *ELA* l. 444.

<sup>307</sup> See e.g., Trimm 2017: 316–346.

<sup>308</sup> Guichard 2014a: 4.

<sup>309</sup> Wasserman 2015: 53

<sup>310</sup> Van De Mieroop 2011: 326.

<sup>311</sup> *2.3 Return of the Lîm Dynasty and the Rule of Zimrī-Lîm*.

<sup>312</sup> *EpZL* ii: 5.

<sup>313</sup> Guichard 2014a: 41, with reference to Favaro 2007: 110–111.

<sup>314</sup> *ELA* l. 243–247 and 268–273.

<sup>315</sup> *Lugalbanda W1*. 44–50.

<sup>316</sup> *Lugalbanda W*, l. 455. The terms used are <sup>G15</sup>IG for the door and <sup>G15</sup>GAN for the door bolt. However, neither *CDA*, *CAD* nor *ePSD* give <sup>G15</sup>GAN as a Sumerian equivalent for *sikkûru* used in *EpZL*, which is <sup>G15</sup>SAG.GUL or <sup>G15</sup>SAG.KUL.

<sup>317</sup> *SargonBL*, l. 15–17. See also *NSLoA* obv. i: 3' for similar statements in connection with Narām-Sîn.

<sup>318</sup> E.g., *Gilgameš I* i: 38, see George 2003: 541.

the imagery of forests as a model obstacle,<sup>319</sup> which evokes the description of the “*chilling fear in the shadows of the forest trees*” from the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* (ii 41).

The obstacles could also be seen in the enemies themselves. However, the hero is hardly ever faces with an equal opponent. This is well illustrated in a passage of the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta*: “*There did not sta[nd before him any pri]nce (who was) his equal in battle.*”<sup>320</sup>

#### 4.2.7.4 HE OPENED HIS MOUTH, SAYING, SPEAKING TO HIS MEN

There are several speeches in the epic. Most of them are delivered by the king himself,<sup>321</sup> one is delivered by Ašmad.<sup>322</sup> The speeches are a traditional part of Near Eastern narratives. The literary introduction to a speech often follows the same pattern as in the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* and may thus be considered a literary topos. I have chosen just three examples from three different compositions to illustrate this:

*pí-šu i-pu-ša-am i-qa-ab-bi is-sà-aq-qa-ra-am a-na eṭ-li-šu*<sup>323</sup>  
“opened his mouth, saying, speaking to his men: ...”

KAXU-šu e-ip-pu-ša i-qáb-bi [iz-za-kàr] LUGAL tam-ḫa-ri<sup>324</sup>  
“opened his mouth, saying, speaking, the King of Battle: ...”

*pa-a-šu i-pu-ša-[am-ma is-sà]-aq-qar ana i-li aḫ-ḫi-šu*<sup>325</sup>  
“opened his mouth, saying, speaking to the gods, his brothers: ...”

<sup>319</sup> *SargonFL*, iv: 10’.

<sup>320</sup> *EpTN* A/F i: 23’: ul [iz-zi-iz] [maḫ-ru-uš-šu a-iu-um-ma ma]l-ku ga-ba-ra-šu a-šar ta-ḫa-zi; translation according to Machinist.

<sup>321</sup> *EpZL* ii: 20–28, ii: 32–36, iii: 16–18, and iii: 41–45.

<sup>322</sup> *EpZL* ii:38–46.

<sup>323</sup> *Zimrī-Lîm* in *EpZL* ii: 20–21

<sup>324</sup> *Sargon* in *KB* 9B obv.: 23–24:

<sup>325</sup> *Anu* in *Atrahasis* i: 147–175.

## 5 NEAR EASTERN ROYAL EPICS

The last section of my thesis deals with the genre of *royal epics*, of which the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm* is an example. It is intended mainly as a first step in further research that I wish to follow in the future. Therefore, the discussion here is considered only provisional.

### 5.1 THE GENRE OF ROYAL EPIC

#### 5.1.1 DEFINING THE GENRE

Obviously, the first question we encounter is the definition of the genre. According to Machinist, the editor of the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta*, the procedure of labelling is a risky endeavour. There seems to be no native designation of such compositions. However, he deems it useful to borrow a label from Greek tradition. The label is not that inappropriate, as the compositions in our discussion are also *dramatic poems that describe connected historical events*. On the other hand, he also warns that our desire to put labels on this material should not become an obsession.<sup>326</sup> Personally, I find this approach very useful. The widely known label of an *epic* shows to modern readers more or less what they should expect from its form and contents. At the same time, we should warn the readers that their expectations may not be fulfilled and that they should rather appreciate their uniqueness. In addition, this labelling and confronting expectations with reality can be used for didactic purposes of using any labels in our daily lives.

However, we should at least try to relate the selected compositions to some emic categories. Machinist suggests that the term *zamāru/zimru*, ‘song’, could have been the closest term available. It has been applied to similar works which were meant to be sung. At the same time, he points out that this term is never applied to the epic he discusses and that we don’t even know if it was sung at all.<sup>327</sup> Another suggestion comes from Guichard: *tanittum*.<sup>328</sup> However, as Guichard himself states, this term bears many difficulties and is unsuitable in the end.

The third suggestion I found interesting is that of Westenholz. In her discussion, she explores the term *narû*.<sup>329</sup> The fluidity of the scholar’s approach is reflected in a number of terms used to define *narû*-texts. Suggestions include historical text, legends, myths, historical epics, (simulated) autobiographies, etc.

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<sup>326</sup> Machinist 1987: 44.

<sup>327</sup> See Machinist 1987: 58–59, n. 97.

<sup>328</sup> *CDA*: 398: ‘(hymn of) praise’; *CAD T*: 173–175: ‘praise, renown, glory’. For Guichard’s discussion on the genre, see 2014a: 71–75.

<sup>329</sup> See Westenholz 1997: 16–24.

Most of the time, we encounter this term on royal steles.<sup>330</sup> At the same time, the term *narû* is used as a self-reference in some of the texts I discuss. For example, the composition *Narām-Sîn and the Enemy Hordes*<sup>331</sup> is framed as if it were a text on a stela (*narû*) and thus is often not considered by scholars as belonging to the genre of epics.<sup>332</sup> However, it is the most copied piece of the Agade epics.<sup>333</sup> As an example, two passages of the Standard Babylonian recension of this composition:<sup>334</sup>

1	[ <i>tupšenna pitēma</i> ] <i>narâ šitassi</i>	[Open the tablet-box] and read out the stela,
2	[ <i>ša anāku Narām-Sîn</i> ] <i>mār Šarru-kīn</i>	[which I, Narām-Sîn,] son of Sargon,
3	[ <i>išturūma ēzibūšu ana</i> ] <i>ūmē šāti</i>	[have inscribed and left for] future days.
...		
151	<i>tupšenna ēpuška narâ ašturka</i>	I made a tablet-box for you and inscribed a stela for you.

Walker also brought my attention to the prologue of the *Epic of Gilgameš* (from the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC), where the text is described as a piece of *narû* literature, also in connection with the *tupšennu*.<sup>335</sup> In light of this, Machinist suggests that the *Epic of Gilgameš* could have been interpreted as a foundation deposit text beneath the wall of Ur.<sup>336</sup> Thus, the connection between epic and royal inscriptions/steles (*narû*) is perhaps closer than may appear at first sight.

After all, some of the royal inscriptions are also largely narrative and, at the same time, long enough to be compared to some other works described as epics. Usually, royal inscriptions are differentiated by the material or object on which they are inscribed. However, there are also royal inscriptions on tablets, usually considered as copies or drafts by scholars. What generally differentiates the inscription from epic is the tendency to be related with a specific activity<sup>337</sup> and the inclusion of curses at the end of the inscription. However, some of the inscriptions do not fit this description. For example, the inscription of Adad-Nīrārī<sup>338</sup> would be easily mistaken for a short epic narrative had it not been inscribed on a stone. Another building inscription, this time of Shalmaneser,<sup>339</sup> is comparable with the *Epic of Zimrī-Līm* in length and many of its contents. Even his building activities are described in the form of a narrative. However, the curse formula, the material (stone tablet), and self-reference as *narû* distinguish it from what we would normally consider epic. The third and last example I shall mention is an inscription of Tukultī-Ninurta.<sup>340</sup> Once again, in its length and content it is quite comparable to the *Epic of Zimrī-Līm*. The text is composed of numerous fragments, not all of them belonging to the same

<sup>330</sup> See CAD N1: *narû* A 3, ‘memorial monument set up by a king’, p. 366–367.

<sup>331</sup> Or *The Cutbean Legend*; see Westenholz 1997: 263–368.

<sup>332</sup> Westenholz 1997: 266.

<sup>333</sup> Westenholz 1997: 263.

<sup>334</sup> *NSEH*, standard Babylonian recension, l. 1–3 and 151. Translations according to Westenholz 1997: 300–301 and 326–327.

<sup>335</sup> Walker 1981: 194

<sup>336</sup> Machinist 1986: 194 and note 53, p. 516.

<sup>337</sup> E.g., building.

<sup>338</sup> *RIMA 1* A.076.3.

<sup>339</sup> *RIMA 1* A.0.77.1.

<sup>340</sup> *RIMA 1* A.0.78.1.

object. It has been preserved primarily on stone tablets, but some of its parts were found on clay tablets.<sup>341</sup> Once again, the most distinctive part is the curse formula and self-reference as *narû*. Many similarities could also be pointed out with the genre of royal hymns.<sup>342</sup>

Royal inscriptions also bring us to the question of material. Is the object that bears an inscription relevant to the genre? Could an inscription on a stela or a statue be considered an epic? What is to say that the *Epic of Zimrî-Lîm* was not only a draft or a copy of an inscription? For example, the so-called *Victory Stele of Zimrî-Lîm* is not a stele at all but a tablet that supposedly includes a copy of a triumphal inscription.<sup>343</sup> It surely includes some passages we may consider narrative, and with just a bit of imagination, it might also have been an excerpt of an epic. And what about the statue of Idrimi and its inscription?<sup>344</sup> Van De Mieroop rightly states that the relation of stone and clay tablets, inscription on statues or monumental inscriptions is a problem for the researchers. Sometimes, clay tablets are simply taken as copies of inscriptions. However, “*The connection between the two media, stone and clay, is thus far from clear, and this example does not allow us to conclude that royal hymns were regularly carved on steles or statues.*”<sup>345</sup>

One of the most important observations in Westenholz’s discussion is similar to that of Machinist or Guichard. There is no native classification for the selected corpus, and we have to define our own analytic framework.<sup>346</sup> She also points out that the legends of the kings of Agade are very diverse. Sometimes these cannot even be considered narratives but “only” praise poetry.<sup>347</sup>

Following her suggestion that we must define our analytic framework also implies that we do not have to follow any of the previously suggested definitions, including her own. The genre we try to define, is not a genre of the ancient Near East but our own. Therefore, all definitions and selections of the corpus are legitimate as long as we do not claim that this is a native Near Eastern genre. My selection simply reflects that I observe some similarities among the texts. Therefore, I choose to discuss them together. It simply makes sense to discuss them together and compare them, while it also makes sense to make a totally different selection for other purposes.

My definition is rather minimalistic and implicit in character. *Royal epics* are simply “narrative texts about kings”. The label *Near Eastern* then only limits the timeframe and area I wish to explore. When I take the *Epic of Zimrî-Lîm* as the core of my definition, the most important are the narratives about historical kings. However, the difference between historical, legendary, or mythological kings is

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<sup>341</sup> See *RIMA I*: 232.

<sup>342</sup> This line of enquiry is explored e.g., by Guichard 2014a: 71–73.

<sup>343</sup> See its edition in *RIME 4* 6.12.1 and Charpin & Durand 1985: 319–322, which also includes photos. We are not even sure if this was actually an inscription of Zimrî-Lîm or of his predecessors.

<sup>344</sup> See e.g., its edition on *ORACC*: <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/aemw/alalakh/idrimi> [cited 29<sup>th</sup> December 2021].

<sup>345</sup> Van De Mieroop 2011: 330.

<sup>346</sup> Westenholz 1997: 21.

<sup>347</sup> Westenholz 1997: 6.

not actually important regarding the genre in general.<sup>348</sup> Also, there is no functionalistic element in my definition. Although the explicit purpose of the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm* is to praise the king: “[*Zimri-Lîm*], ‘the wild bull’ of battle, I want to ‘praise’” (i: 1), other royal epics could have been intended for different purposes. Thus, *Near Eastern royal epics* are intended as a fluid category that borders and mingles with other genres – hymns, poems, myths, legends, etc.

### 5.1.2 HOW WAS THE GENRE USED?

One of the most intriguing topics to discuss is the purpose and use of royal epics. Why were these texts composed? Were they read out loud in front of the public? Were they enacted in a kind of drama? Were they known only to a limited number of people or widely known? Following the previous discussion on the definition of the genre, it would be surprising if all the selected texts had the same purpose and use. The fluid and non-emic definition of the genre necessarily leads to various purposes and uses. Nonetheless, I believe there are some areas in which the purpose of these texts is either the same or at least similar.

Unfortunately, there is often not much to say with certainty. This goes double for the epic of *Zimri-Lîm*. We are not sure who composed the epic,<sup>349</sup> the excavation context is dubious,<sup>350</sup> and we have no copies of this literary opus. This suggests that there was no tradition following it.<sup>351</sup> Furthermore, this work probably did not even interest the Babylonians enough to relocate it to their own archives.<sup>352</sup> The explicit purpose of the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm* is to praise the king: “[*Zimri-Lîm*], ‘the wild bull’ of battle, I want to ‘praise’” (i: 1). Unfortunately, how the praise should be achieved is unknown. Before we return to this question in the second part of this section, we should briefly note the use of other royal epics.

The epics of the Sumerian kings were composed to praise the glorious past of the House of Uruk and Sumer as a whole. The glory of the Ur III state, which traced their origins to the *House of Unug* (Uruk). The legitimization process here worked as well, but not for the epics’ heroes but for their (it does not

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<sup>348</sup> This distinction may be more relevant to us than to those composing the epics. While I do not disregard the possibility of an active process of the invention of tradition on part of the scribes, for the most part we are following periods when the traditions have been already present for a considerable time, and thus the discussed traditions should not be perceived as recently invented but rather as socially constructed. On these topics from a sociological/anthropological perspective, see namely Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012 and Berger & Luckmann 1991; the exact process of composition, its invention, or traditionality is a topic outside the scope of this thesis. On the other hand, this topic must be discussed regarding epics composed for living kings. There, the distinction is essential.

<sup>349</sup> See 4.2.2 *Authorship of the Text*.

<sup>350</sup> See 3.1.2 *Archaeology of the Text*.

<sup>351</sup> As Sasson (1998: 453) states: “No poet sang his praise posthumously, and no legend was built around his deeds.”

<sup>352</sup> Unless, of course, they did so and the copies only lie in the unexcavated layers of Babylon. Probably, the tablets were intended to be transported, but then the Babylonians destroyed the city before the final move happened; see Charpin 1995 and 2010: 125. It seems that these texts were not prioritized. This could also open another line of enquiry: Why did they not destroy it? Possibly because this was not a public monument and thus, there was no need to manifest the defeat on it and it was more useful to keep the text for archival reasons?

matter that only ideological) successors.<sup>353</sup> Similarly, in the *Sargon Birth Legend*, we can observe that the epic could be used as a model or a promise for future kings when he wants them to repeat some of his deeds.<sup>354</sup>

In the epics of the Sumerian kings, the glory also belongs to the culture of Sumer and its technological innovations, including the invention of writing. “Therefore, it is perhaps not really extravagant to state that the intention and message of the cycle is to illustrate that Sumer has a right of supremacy over all foreign countries.”<sup>355</sup> Vanstiphout further notes that these poems “were not studied for life, but for schooling as the Latin saying *non vitae, sed scholae discimus*”.<sup>356</sup> We know these texts mainly from the scribal curriculum as the final step in the scribal education process.<sup>357</sup> Also, some themes hint that the scribes praised the invention of writing and the scribal culture within these works.<sup>358</sup> The same environment is where we found the epics of the kings of Agade. On the other hand, Vanstiphout points out that the rich ideological overtones of these epics show that it is not unreasonable to look for a further purpose.<sup>359</sup> One of the main reasons for keeping the tradition of the Sumerian or Agade kings alive in the environment of scribal schools may have actually been for inspiration.<sup>360</sup> The praise of the living king could have been based on them.

The *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta* offers no better hint of its use than the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*. While its ideological contents are obvious and it very much seems to be a part of royal propaganda, the exact manner in which this was done is not known to us. Machinist is also rather reserved in his edition and does not engage in wild speculations.<sup>361</sup> However, he suggests that the intended audience might have been the opposition of the king among the Assyrian elite, for which he needed to justify some of his actions. In the end, however, this propaganda seems to have not worked well enough. Tukultī-Ninurta became a victim of an inner coup.<sup>362</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> See Vanstiphout 2003: 8–9. We should be careful with the ideological overtones, as we do not know for sure that these poems developed in the Ur III period. We possess almost exclusively copies from the Isin-Larsa period as a product of scribal schools, mainly from Nippur and Ur. None were prior to this period, but we have some rare later examples. See Vanstiphout 2003: 17, note 5. In general, these narratives are part of the Isin-Larsa culture. Still, Vanstiphout argues that there is little doubt that these originated in the Ur III period.

<sup>354</sup> *SargonBL*, l. 22–31. Sargon here uses precative formulations (‘let the king do something’). This section repeats l. 13–21 where all these activities like ruling, overcoming obstacles, submitting foreign lands, etc. are exercised by Sargon himself.

<sup>355</sup> Vanstiphout 2003: 9.

<sup>356</sup> Vanstiphout 2003: 13.

<sup>357</sup> Vanstiphout 2003: 13.

<sup>358</sup> See Vanstiphout 2003: 53 and e.g., passages in *ELA*, l. 497–506 and 536–541.

<sup>359</sup> Vanstiphout 2003: 13–14. On the other hand, I am rather reserved towards his suggestions of dramatic performances, for which I see no proof. I see this rather as a product of *Myth and Ritual* school approach.

<sup>360</sup> See Vanstiphout 1998, especially p. 586. This applies also outside of Mesopotamia; see e.g., Rieken 2001: 583–584, for the use of *KB* as a model text for the Hittite scribes.

<sup>361</sup> For his full discussion, see Machinist 1978: 526–531.

<sup>362</sup> Liverani 2014: 355.

Liverani points out that the reason for its composition could have also been to legitimize the deportation of the Babylonian deities.<sup>363</sup> We should not simply disregard the possibility that the intended audience could have been the gods and goddesses, too.<sup>364</sup> Indeed, one of the central focuses of this epic is to prove Kaštīliyaš as the one opposed to gods and Tukultī-Ninurta as his exact opposite.

After the death of its hero, the epic survived and entered the realm of Assyrian tradition. Unfortunately, its role and use within this tradition are no more apparent. It could have entered the scribal curriculum just as the epics of the Sumerian and Agade kings.

Now, we can return to the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*. It seems clear that this epic is closer in its use to that of Tukultī-Ninurta. Considering the minimalistic approach, I would not dare say more than that it was probably composed by someone close to the king, with the aim of praising the king's deeds. It is also well fitted into the historical-cultural context of the time. It contains elements that could appeal to local, foreign, and divine audiences at the same time. There is also the possibility that the epic served within scribal education as an exercise model for making royal inscriptions.

Contrary to its Assyrian successor, it escaped the fate of traditionalization. The abrupt end of the kingdom of Mari and its royal line probably played a major role. Simply, no one was interested in repeating the deeds of Zimrī-Lîm, a recently defeated ruler.

Regarding the mode of its performance, there is an interesting letter in the Mariote corpus.<sup>365</sup> It may slightly and indirectly hint at the possibility of recitation of the epic by a vocal artist. The letter mentions a musician (DUMU.NAR) named ẖitte who is recommended to Zimrī-Lîm to join his services so that he “*may extol my lord*” (*bēli lištawī*). This text clearly demonstrates that professional musicians might have been employed to praise the king's deeds. Whether this was the case of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, unfortunately, remains unproven.<sup>366</sup>

In sum, I do not have any strong opinion on the use of this epic or the other epics. I believe that the genre was multifunctional and its uses and purposes changed over time. During the life of the ruler, there might have been a need to legitimize his rule narratively. Also, following the message of Gilgameš, any ruler might wish to create a legacy, fame, and become immortal through his deeds that would be praised for eternity. This might have actually been one of the purposes of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, judged based on its contents: “[... *for eter*]nity you have established your name.”<sup>367</sup>

Later, the successors of the praised might have deemed it necessary to praise their predecessors as a form of support of the dynasty. Later, however, the epic loses this function and becomes a part of

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<sup>363</sup> Liverani 2014: 359. Liverani, as well as Machinist (see below), highlights the Babylonian style of this composition.

<sup>364</sup> We should bear in mind that all ideologically rich materials were intended for any living audience. For example, many of the royal inscriptions were not displayed visibly but were hidden in foundations deposits.

<sup>365</sup> FM 9 8.

<sup>366</sup> See also Sasson 2015: 36.

<sup>367</sup> EpZL i 41: [... *da-r*]a-am tu-ša-aš-ki-in šum-ka.

narrative history commemorating the great kings of the past. Entering the *edubba* environment, these may be used as a didactic tool or a source of (*sacred?*) *knowledge*.

### 5.1.3 THE EPIC OF ZIMRĪ-LÎM IN THE CONTEXT OF NEAR EASTERN ROYAL EPICS

The last topic I wish to discuss within this thesis is the general form and content of several *Near Eastern royal epics*. It has already been stated in the introduction that the explored corpus is limited to four categories: epics of the Sumerian kings, epics of the kings of Agade, *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, and *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta*. Many parallels have already been discussed within the thesis. This final comparison illustrates how the genre is diverse and fluid, while containing many similarities. The most obvious similarity is that their hero is a king.

The Sumerian epics are mostly set in heroic/mythical times in a semi-mythological area.<sup>368</sup> Their historical context is dubious. In this aspect, they are like the *Epic of Gilgameš*. In contrast to the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, these are much longer,<sup>369</sup> and, in contrast to Gilgameš, these are much shorter. Just as in the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, the praised hero<sup>370</sup> is also accompanied by the gods,<sup>371</sup> and his rule is given to him by the gods<sup>372</sup>, and he depends on the divine favour and respects their decisions.<sup>373</sup>

The contrast in length mentioned above is even more evident in the case of the *Epics of the Kings of Agade*. Sometimes the selected texts in Westenholz are so short that I wonder whether to discuss them at all. For example, *I Sargon* could be simply seen as a royal title. Another difference may be seen in the tendency of the Agade epics to refer to the numbers of troops in the armies. This tendency is not present in the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*.

The legitimacy of comparison and postulating relations between the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* and compositions subsumed under the heading *Epics of the Kings of Agade* may be supported not only by the supposed affinity of Babylonian and Mariote scribal traditions but also by a physical discovery of one of the versions of *The Great Revolt against Narām-Sîn* in the palace of Mari.<sup>374</sup>

The most similar text to the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* within our corpus is the *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta*. Thus, I provide him with more space. It narrates the conflict between Tukultī-Ninurta of Assyria and Kaštiliyaš of Babylonia by the end of LBA. That places its creation at least 550 years after the composition of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*. On the contrary, the other epics were contemporaneously attested with the Mariote epic.

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<sup>368</sup> See Vanstiphout 2003: 4–6.

<sup>369</sup> E.g., *EE*: about 280 lines, *ELA*: about 640 lines, *Lugalbanda W*: about 500 lines

<sup>370</sup> The praise is obvious throughout the epics, but it is also explicitly referenced, e.g., in *ELA*, l. 104.

<sup>371</sup> E.g., *EE*, l. 87–88 or *Lugalbanda W*, l. 234–236.

<sup>372</sup> E.g., *EE*, l. 89–95 (chosen by Enlil), *ELA*, l. 33–34 (chosen by Inanna).

<sup>373</sup> E.g., *EE* l. 106–107.

<sup>374</sup> A.1252+, probably from room 108; Westenholz 1997: 231. However, just as it is the case with the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, there might be a confusion between rooms 115 and 108; see the discussion in 3.1.2 *Archaeology of the Text*.

Unfortunately, all the extant fragments are fairly damaged. Consequently, most of the epic is missing. Nevertheless, it still preserves valuable material for comparison. Also, this epic was much longer than the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*.

Like the Sumerian and Agade epics, and unlike the Mariote epic, the Assyrian epic survived the death of his hero. Archaeologists have discovered at least three versions of this text.<sup>375</sup> However, there is no indication that this text was part of a scribal education/tradition in the same way as the narratives about the kings of Agade. On the other hand, its (supposed)<sup>376</sup> appearance in the library of Aššurbanipal in Niniveh may suggest an archival interest in this opus.

In their contents, the two epics in the discussion are quite different. While they both fit well into the genre of royal epics, as outlined above, I see more differences than similarities. Contrary to the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, the contents of the *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta* appears to be more focused. The events described in it are far more easily recognizable within history. In addition, the reasoning for the conquest of the enemy land appears to be different in the two epics. While in the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*, the main reason seems to be the (re)conquest of the lands given to him to rule by the gods, the author of the Assyrian epic exerts considerable effort to show how exactly Kaštiliyaš transgressed the divine order and thus lost the right to rule.<sup>377</sup> In the Mariote epic, the enemies are marked as enemies (of Enlil) immediately. On the contrary, the Babylonian king previously had the right to his land but lost it due to his impious and treacherous behaviour. On the other hand, the same reasoning may also be hidden behind the overt message of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm*.

Last but not least, Machinist draws our attention to how the *Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta* combines the Assyrian tradition with the tradition of Mesopotamian south, the Sumero-Babylonian tradition, both in poetics/phraseology and themes used.<sup>378</sup> He highlights, namely, the use of speeches – something we can observe well in the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* and other epics – and themes used in southern hymns. A similar situation might have had its importance in the composition of the *Epic of Zimrī-Lîm* when the Babylonian scribal tradition and the contacts with Babylonia were more intense during the reign of Zimrī-Lîm. The role of the epics of the kings of Agade in the Babylonian scribal tradition might well have played an influential role in the Mariote composition. However, at this point, I do not feel competent enough to support this suggestion with any proper evidence.

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<sup>375</sup> For the full discussion, see Machinist 1978: 7ff. Discovered versions, following Machinist, are: 1) Middle Assyrian from Niniveh: fragment A=BM 121033, fragment B=BM 98731, and C=BM 98731; 2) Middle Assyrian from Aššur: fragment D=VAT 9596 + 12960; 3) possibly Middle Assyrian from Aššur: fragment E=VAT 10358, maybe a part of version 2; 4) Neo Assyrian from Niniveh: F=Rm. 142.

<sup>376</sup> See Machinist 1978: 16–17.

<sup>377</sup> As a prime example of the extensive shame on Kaštiliyaš, see the beginning of *EpTN* col. iv.

<sup>378</sup> See the discussion in Machinist 1978: 509–515.

## 5.2 NERE PROJECT ON ORACC

I have already stated in the Introduction that one of the goals of the thesis was to publish the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm* on *ORACC*. There, I have started a project called *Near Eastern Royal Epics* for that purpose. It is clear from my treatment of the royal epics in this thesis that the project is merely in its infancy. However, I hope to significantly expand the corpus as well as related studies in the future. Although this project did not substantially expand my thesis, it is one of the more important achievements.

The digitally enriched corpus of royal epics could significantly expand research possibilities. Studies on intertextuality could be more nuanced and faster. In addition, *ORACC* already includes many other relevant texts. Their mutual comparison is then “only” a question of developing the right tools. Unfortunately, I have to conclude with a more pessimistic overtone. As stated many times in this thesis: all of this is intended for future research.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The presented thesis discussed an Old Babylonian text from Mari named the *Epic of Zimrī-Līm*. This text is provided transcribed and translated in Chapter 3.2 *Text and Translation*. The transcription follows the previous edition by Michaël Guichard (2014a). In addition to the edition in this thesis, the text was also made available in a digital edition as part of the *ORACC* project *Near Eastern Royal Epics*. The basic archaeological context for the discovered tablet has also been discussed (Chapter 3.1.2 *Archaeology of the Text*). In addition, the thesis includes a section on the general historical context of the age when the epic was composed (Chapter 2 *Historical Context*).

The commentary on the epic can be found in Chapter 4 *Commentary*. The linguistic analysis is not intended to be thorough, as the text has already been extensively discussed by Guichard. Some notes are mentioned within the translation itself and in Chapter 4.1 *Linguistic Commentary*. Next, the question of authorship is discussed in Chapter 4.2.2 *Authorship of the Text*. Unfortunately, this question remains essentially unanswered. The conclusion is that the text probably originated in an environment “close to the king”, which is hardly a surprising suggestion. The only person discussed by name in this context is Ašmad. However, this authorship attribution is not yet proven. Several remarks on the geographical context of the epic are discussed in Chapter 4.2.3 *The Text in Geographical Context*. The text seems to suggest that the plot was situated upstream of Mari, along the Euphrates, turning north along the river Ḫābur up to the area of the Ḫābur triangle, named Subartu and Ida-Maraš in the epic. Our understanding of these toponyms is rather vague. Only two cities are mentioned by name: Bisan and Terqa. Interestingly, any mention of Mari is absent. These geographical references allow us to situate the plot at the beginning of the reign of Zimrī-Līm, interpreting it as a reconquest of his kingdom.

The next section of the thesis is dedicated to the descriptions of Zimrī-Līm and his allies (Chapter 4.2.4 *Zimrī-Līm and his Side*). The epic describes the king as a man chosen by the deities to execute the rule. These deities also give him full support and accompany him into battles. He is depicted as an apt warrior, using imagery of fauna (wild bull, leopard, kid, equid), dust-storm and even a divine emblem. At the same time, the poet put a lot of effort to highlight his relation to his men. He is described as *primus inter pares*, caring for his soldiers, taking advice with his men, and enduring all the distress of the campaign with his army. His side is generally mentioned anonymously; only one of his officials, Ašmad, is mentioned by name.

The most extensive commentary is devoted to deities and their roles in the epic (Chapter 4.2.5 *Divine Characters* and 4.2.6 *Divine Involvement*). Individual deities mentioned in the epic are discussed: Itūr-Mêr, Anu, Enlil, Storm-God (Addu), Annunītum, Lāgamal, Ištar, Dagān, Erra, Šamaš and Nunamnir. The discussion aims to discover the reasons for their incorporation into the epic. Not all the deities were cultically present in the kingdom of Mari (or their cult was only minor). In this light, the epic seems to negotiate between local and international religious environments. A substantial part of the

discussion is then devoted to illustrating that the divine involvement in the epic was not only a literary topos but a reflection of lived religious and political practices. Two main conclusions can be highlighted. First, the divine will and commands were an essential part of state decision making. The royal correspondence often deals with divination, dreams, and visions, and the king himself actively followed divine orders revealed by such means. Second, the imagery of deities accompanying the king and his army to the battles can be connected to the material conception of divinities. Thus, the divine presence in the war could have been ensured by the presence of their images.

The last section of the commentary briefly reflects on the literary topoi used by the scribes in the epic (Chapter 4.2.7 *Literary Topoi*). The epic is described as a work that belongs to the environment of the Babylonian scribal tradition. Four literary themes are discussed in this section: the expression *four quarters of the World*, descriptions of the enemies and their defeat, king's obstacles, and speeches.

The epic is then set within the category of royal epic. First, the genre of royal epics is discussed (Chapter 5.1.1 *Defining the Genre*). There seems to be no emic category encompassing those works usually described as (royal) epics. Probably the closest parallel could be made with *narû*, a term used mainly for royal steles and inscriptions. However, there are limits to such a conception, and many parallels can be made with other genres like hymns, poems, myths, etc. In conclusion, the genre is considered as fluid and vague, encompassing all “narratives about kings” (both historical and fictional). The genre remains a scholarly category.

Then, the purposes and uses of texts belonging to this category are explored (Chapter 5.1.2 *How Was the Genre Used?*). The distinction can be made between epics composed for living kings (for example, the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm* and *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta*), which could have served as means for legitimizing the king. The exact performance of these texts remains unknown. They could have been intended for direct recitation or as a draft/scribal exercise for royal inscriptions for either public or secret display. No later copies of the *Epic of Zimri-Lîm* have ever been discovered. However, other royal epics entered the tradition of scribal education. There, these could have worked as inspiration for new royal inscriptions, scribal exercises, or sources of (*sacred?*) *knowledge*.

The Mariote epic is then briefly compared to the selected corpus of other royal epics (Chapter 5.1.3 *The Epic of Zimri-Lîm in the Context of Near Eastern Royal Epics*). These are the *Epics of the Sumerian Kings*, the *Epics of the Kings of Agade*, and the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta*. This part illustrates both the differences and similarities of the genre.

Finally, in Chapter 5.2 *NERE Project on ORACC*, the *Near Eastern Royal Epics* project on *ORACC* is briefly introduced. I wish to primarily collect the royal epics within this project and make them available in a digitally enriched edition. Also, I want to continue to explore the peculiarities of the genre and discuss those topics that were left out of this thesis.

ARM	LAPO	FM	museal siglum	Sasson 2015	Heimpel 2003	Thesis page
			A.3152+M.5665+	p. 32–35		<i>Epic of Zimri-Lîm</i>
III 19	17 563				p. 482–483	p. 40, 49
VI 35	17 569			p. 208	p. 486	p. 38
VIII 9				p. 231		p. 49
VIII 85			A.4304	p. 74–75		p. 49
X 33	18 1230			p. 115	p. 491	p. 13
X 140	18 1184			p. 45		p. 12
X 147	18 1110					p. 35
XIII 47	16 90			p. 38		p. 13
XIII 111	18 991			p. 267		p. 47
XXIII 264			M.18390	p. 235–237		p. 40
XXIV 263				p. 235–237		p. 40
XXVI 1			M.13091	p. 272–273	p. 174–175	p. 53
XXVI 26			A.3635		p. 191	p. 48
XXVI 35			A.2989		p. 195	p. 39
XXVI 83			A.2716		p. 209	p. 47
XXVI 119			A.2643	p. 72–73	p. 222	p. 48
XXVI 150			A.4239		p. 233	p. 45
XXVI 176	17 620		A.4977+A.2547		p. 242–243	p. 44, 48–49
XXVI 186			M.14762	p. 273	p. 247	p. 54–55
XXVI 192			M.9714		p. 248–249	p. 47
XXVI 194	18 940		A.4260	p. 266	p. 249–250	p. 43, 48, 51
XXVI 196	18 1142		A.3719	p. 282–283	p. 250–251	p. 48
XXVI 197	18 1203		A.1047	p. 263–264	p. 251–252	p. 45, 48
XXVI 199			A.925+A.2050	p. 284–285	p. 252–254	p. 48–49
XXVI 200			M.6188		p. 255	p. 45
XXVI 206			A.3893	p. 279	p. 256	p. 48
XXVI 207	18 1144		A.996	p. 283	p. 257–258	p. 41, 48
XXVI 212	18 1146		A.3217	p. 283–284	p. 259–260	p. 45
XXVI 213	18 1137		A.100	p. 261	p. 260	p. 38, 45–46
XXVI 214	18 1138		A.671		p. 260	p. 45–46
XXVI 220	18 978		A.4865	p. 248	p. 262	p. 48
XXVI 221	18 941		A.2030	p. 341	p. 263	p. 48
XXVI 224			A.2559		p. 263–264	p. 45–46
XXVI 225			M.5704	p. 287	p. 264	p. 54
XXVI 229	18 932		A.222		p. 265	p. 45
XXVI 232	18 1262		A.907	p. 75	p. 265–266	p. 48
XXVI 233	18 933		A.15	p. 287–288	p. 266	p. 48–49
XXVI 236	18 1139		A.2437	p. 27	p. 267	p. 40
XXVI 237	18 1094		A.994	p. 285–286	p. 267–268	p. 45–47, 49

XXVI 238	18 1095		A.122		p. 268	p. 40
XXVI 285			M.5702		p. 284–285	p. 48
XXVI 302			M.7099		p. 289–290	p. 40
XXVI 314			A.4287+A.4368	p. 192	p. 297–298	p. 38
XXVI 352			A.2748	p. 114	p. 312	p. 48
XXVI 358			A.3553		p. 316	p. 53
XXVI 370			A.3610		p. 324	p. 42
XXVII 58			A.4390		p. 430	p. 47
XXVII 116			A.403	p. 130–131	p. 450–451	p. 40
XXVIII 16	18 857		A.1153			p. 12
	16 22	FM 3 6	A.1258+	p. 36–37		p. 42–43
	16 281		A.1289+M.13103 +M.18136			p. 13
	16 290		M.6435+M.8987	p. 98–99	p. 512–513	p. 44, 51
	16 291		A.96		p. 504–505	p. 51
	18 982	FM 7 5	A.1858	p. 257		p. 45
			A.1068	p. 268–269		p. 41–42
	18 984	FM 7 39	A.1121+A.2731	p. 280–281		p. 44, 54
		FM 3 1	A.1252+			p. 69
	18 934	FM 7 38	A.1968	p. 280–281		p. 44–45, 54
			A.1975			p. 34
		FM 9 8	A.27	p. 36–37		p. 68
		FM 3 2	A.3165	p. 243–245		p. 48
			A.3597	p. 268		p. 47
		FM 8 1	A.3609	p. 250		p. 12
			A.4510	p. 257–258		p. 42
			A.489	p. 269		p. 41
			A.510	p. 197		p. 38
			M.6607	p. 255		p. 47
			M.7499	p. 255		p. 60
			M.7515	p. 254		p. 47

- Figure 1* Location of Mari; from *mapy.cz* [visited 4th December 2021].
- Figure 6* Layout of the City III; Margueron 2014: 66.
- Figure 7* Map for the historical context. Based on Heimpel 2003: xxi, edited.
- Figure 8* The Great Palace of Mari with highlighted rooms 115 and 108 (the possible places of discovery of the text); after Parrot 1958, plate LXV (?).
- Figure 9* The Epic of Zimrī-Lîm (A.3152 + M.5665 + unnumbered fragment); after Guichard 2014a: 142–143.
- Figure 6* <sup>ṛ</sup>*x* *me-er* in *EpZL* i: 5; section of plate from Guichard 2014a: 145.
- Figure 7* <sup>ḏ</sup>*i-túr-me-er* in *EpZL* iii: 34; section of plate from Guichard 2014a: 154.
- Figure 8* Approximate geography of the epic; after Heimpel 2003: xxi.
- Figure 9* Troops with divine emblems on the Stele of Narām-Sîn; by Rama, CC BY-SA 3.0 fr, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2966753>

## 9.1 ABBREVIATED COMPOSITIONS

<i>Atraḥasīs</i>	<i>Atraḥasīs</i> , according to Lambert 1969.
<i>EE</i>	<i>Enmerkar and Ensubgirana</i> , according to Vanstiphout 2003: 23–48.
<i>ELA</i>	<i>Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta</i> , according to Vanstiphout 2003: 49–96.
<i>ENS</i>	<i>Erra and Narām-Sîn</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 189–201.
<i>EpTN</i>	<i>Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta</i> , according to Machinist 1978.
<i>EpZL</i>	<i>Epic of Zimrī-Lîm</i> , according to this thesis, following Guichard 2014a.
<i>I Sargon</i>	<i>I Sargon</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 34–35.
<i>KB</i>	<i>King of Battle</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 102–139.
<i>LugalbandaW</i>	<i>Lugalbanda and the Wilderness</i> , according to Vanstiphout 2003: 99–131.
<i>NSEH</i>	<i>Narām-Sîn and the Enemy Hordes: The Cuthean Legend</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 263–368.
<i>NSLoA</i>	<i>Narām-Sîn and the Lord of Apišal</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 173–187.
<i>RevoltNS</i>	<i>The Great Revolt against Narām-Sîn</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 221–261.
<i>RLugalbanda</i>	<i>The Return of Lugalbanda</i> , according to Vanstiphout 2003: 132–158.
<i>SargonBL</i>	<i>Sargon Birth Legend</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 36–49.
<i>SargonCH</i>	<i>Sargon, the Conquering Hero</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 59–77.
<i>SargonFL</i>	<i>Sargon in Foreign Lands</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 78–93.
<i>SargonL</i>	<i>Sargon, the Lion</i> , according to Westenholz 1997: 94–101.

## 9.2 GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

A./M.	accession no., Mari tablets
Akk.	Akkadian
BM	museum siglum of the <i>British Museum</i> , London
CDLI	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative</i> . Online: <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu/">https://cdli.ucla.edu/</a> [cited 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2021].
EBA	Early Bronze Age
ePSD	<i>The Pennsylvania Sumerian</i> . Online: <a href="http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/">http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/</a> [cited 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2021].
LBA	Late Bronze Age

MBA	Middle Bronze Age
NERE	<i>Near Eastern Royal Epics, ORACC</i> . Build version. Online: <a href="http://build-oracc.museum.upenn.edu/nere/corpus/">http://build-oracc.museum.upenn.edu/nere/corpus/</a> [cited 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2021].
ORACC	<i>Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus</i> . Online: <a href="http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/">http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/</a> [cited 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2021].
P	CDLI number
RIAo	<i>The Royal Inscriptions of Assyria online (RIAo) Project</i> : <a href="http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/index.html">http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/index.html</a> [visited 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2021].
RIBo	<i>The Royal Inscriptions of Babylonia online (RIBo) Project</i> : <a href="http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ribo/index.html">http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ribo/index.html</a> [visited 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2021].
Rm.	museum siglum of the <i>British Museum</i> , London ( <i>Rassam</i> )
Sum.	Sumerian
VAT	museum siglum of the <i>Vorderasiatisches Museum</i> , Berlin ( <i>Vorderasiatische Abteilung. Tontafeln</i> )

### 9.3 BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ARM</i>	<i>Archives royales de Mari</i> series
<i>ARM III</i>	KUPPER, Jean-Robert 1950. <i>Correspondance de Kibri-Daga de Terqa</i> . Paris: Imprimerie nationale.
<i>ARM VI</i>	Kupper, Jean-Robert 1954. <i>Correspondance de Baḫdi-Lim, Préfet du palais de Mari</i> . Paris: Imprimerie nationale.
<i>ARM VIII</i>	BOYER, Georges 1958. <i>Textes juridiques</i> . Paris: Imprimerie nationale.
<i>ARM X</i>	DOSSIN, Georges & André FINET 1978. <i>Correspondance féminine. Transcrite et traduite</i> . Paris: Paul Geuthner.
<i>ARM XIII</i>	DOSSIN, Georges & al. 1964. <i>Textes divers</i> . Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner.
<i>ARM XXIII</i>	BARDET, Guillaume & al. 1984. <i>Archives administratives de Mari</i> . Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations.
<i>ARM XXIV</i>	TALON, Philippe 1985. <i>Textes administratifs de salles Y et Z du palais de Mari</i> . Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations.
<i>ARM XXVI</i>	vol. 1: DURAND, Jean-Marie 1998. <i>Archives épistolaires de Mari I/1</i> . Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations. vol. 2: CHARPIN, Dominique & al. 1988. <i>Archives épistolaires de Mari I/2</i> . Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations.
<i>ARM XXVII</i>	BIROT, Maurice 1993. <i>Correspondance des gouverneurs de Qaṭṭunân</i> . Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations.
<i>ARM XXVIII</i>	KUPPER, Jean-Robert 1998. <i>Lettres royales du temps de Zimri-Lim</i> . Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

- CAD* *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago* (Chicago 1956 ff.)
- CDA* BLACK, Jeremy, Andrew GEORGE & Nicholas POSTGATE (eds.) 2000. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. 2<sup>nd</sup> (corrected) printing. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- FM* *Florilegium marianum* series
- FM 2* CHARPIN, Dominique & Jean-Marie DURAND 1994. *Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Maurice Birot*. Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 3. Paris: SEPOA.
- FM 3* CHARPIN, Dominique & Jean-Marie DURAND 1997. *Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Marie-Thérèse Barrelet*. Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 4. Paris: SEPOA.
- FM 5* CHARPIN, Dominique & Nele ZIEGLER 2003. *Mari et le Proche-Orient à l'époque amorrite: Essai d'histoire politique*. Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 6. Paris: SEPOA.
- FM 8* DURAND, Jean-Marie 2005. *Le culte des pierres et les monuments commémoratifs en Syrie amorrite*. Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 9. Paris: SEPOA.
- FM 9* ZIEGLER, Nele 2007. *Les Musiciens et la musique d'après les archives de Mari*. Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 10. Paris: SEPOA.
- FM 14* Guichard 2014a.
- KTU<sup>3</sup>* DIETRICH, Manfred, Oswald LORETZ, Joaquín SANMARTÍN & Hans NEUMANN. 2013. *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani und anderen Orten = The cuneiform alphabetic texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other places = KTU<sup>3</sup>*. Dritte, erweiterte Auflage = Third, enlarged edition. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- LAPO 16* DURAND, Jean-Marie. *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari I*. Paris: Le Cerf. 1997.
- LAPO 17* DURAND, Jean-Marie. *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari II*. Paris: Le Cerf. 1998.
- LAPO 18* DURAND, Jean-Marie. *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari III*. Paris: Le Cerf. 2000.
- LIH* KING, Leonard William. 1898-1900. *The Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi*. London: Luzac and Co.
- MARI 3* MARGUERON, Jean-Claude (ed.) 1984. *Mari Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 3. Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations.
- MARI 4* DURAND, Jean-Marie & Jean-Claude MARGUERON (eds.) 1985. *Mari Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires 4: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires; A propos d'un cinquantenaire: Mari, bilan et perspective. Colloque international n° 620 du CNRS, 1983*. Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations.
- MZL* BORGER, Rykle 2004. *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- RGTC 3* GRONEBERG, Brigitte 1980. *Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes vol. 3: Die Orts- und Gewässernamen d. altbabylonischen Zeit*. Wiesbaden: Reichert.
- RIM* *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia* series

- RIMA 1* GRAYSON, Kirk A. 1987. *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115 BC)*. *RIM Assyrian periods 1*. Toronto/Buffalo/London: University Press of Toronto.
- RIMB 2* FRAME, Grant. 1995. *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)*. *RIM Babylonian Periods 2*. Toronto/Buffalo/London: University Press of Toronto.
- RIME 2* FRAYNE, Douglas. 1993. *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (234–2113)*. *RIM Early Periods 2*. Toronto/Buffalo/London: University Press of Toronto.
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