

Libiamo ne' lieti calici

**Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented
to Lucio Milano on the Occasion of his 65th
Birthday by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends**

edited by
Paola Corò, Elena Devecchi, Nicla De Zorzi,
and Massimo Maiocchi
with the collaboration of Stefania Ermidoro
and Erica Scarpa

Alter Orient und Altes Testament

Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients
und des Alten Testaments

Band 436

Herausgeber

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2016
Ugarit-Verlag
Münster

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www.ugarit-verlag.de

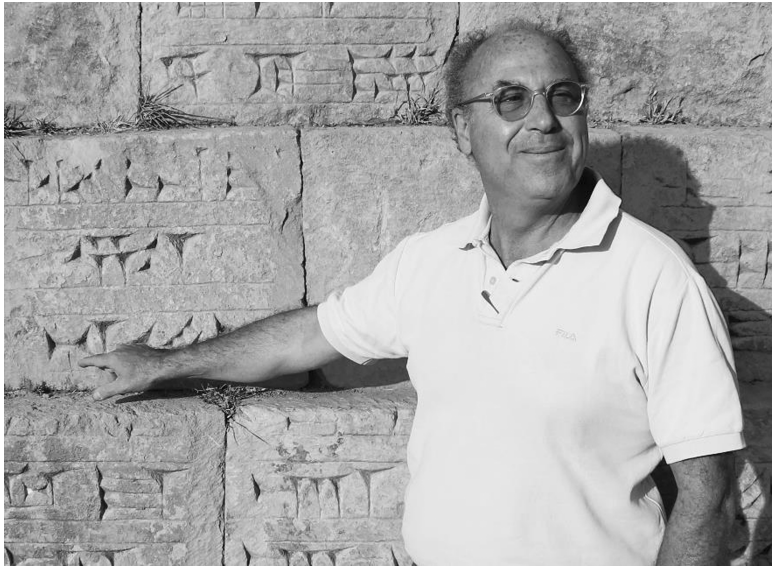
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Printed in Germany

ISBN 978-3-86835-197-2

ISSN 0931-4296

Printed on acid-free paper



Lucio at Jerwan (October 2013)

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Foreword

This book celebrates Lucio Milano's many scholarly achievements in the field of Ancient Near Eastern studies. As former pupils of his who have all greatly benefitted from his wide-ranging scholarship, guidance and support, we felt it was time for us to reciprocate by presenting him with this collection of essays from pupils, friends, and colleagues, as a token of our gratitude and affection on the occasion of his 65th birthday. On the other hand, we could also imagine his reaction: "*Oh ragazzi!*... what are we celebrating? It's too early for my retirement!". Our excuse is that in offering the present volume to Lucio at this time, we arbitrarily picked his 65th birthday as one occasion among the many special events that could have been chosen instead. We have no doubt that there will be many other celebrations for our dear friend Lucio in the future.

Although Lucio's Assyriological interests are manifold, we sought to narrow the scope of this volume to topics that over the course of his career have grown particularly close to his heart.

Lucio's wide-ranging work and interests reflect his intellectual formation. He studied Classics at "La Sapienza" University in Rome and graduated *summa cum laude* in 1975 with a thesis on "Viticoltura e enologia nell'Asia anteriore antica", written under the supervision of Mario Liverani. Appointed in 1977 to the Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies ("Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente") in Rome, he continued to work at "La Sapienza" University as "ricercatore universitario confermato" (1981–1993) at the Department of History, Archaeology and Anthropology ("Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche, Archeologiche e Antropologiche dell'Antichità") and as Professor of History of the Ancient Near East (1984–1987) for the post-graduate course in Oriental Studies ("Corso di Specializzazione in Studi Orientali"). In 1993 he moved to "Ca' Foscari" University in Venice as Associated Professor and since 2001 he has held at that university the chair of History of the Ancient Near East as Full Professor.

Lucio's research focuses on the social, economic, and political history of the third millennium BC, with special focus on Syria and northern Mesopotamia, especially Ebla and Tell Beydar, an area on which he has published extensively. His scholarly publications include several text editions and studies on a wide range of topics, which he explores through a multi-faceted approach, ranging from linguistics to prosopography, to digital tools for the study of the Ancient Near East. He is a leading scholar in the history of palaeonutrition, to which he has contributed articles and congress volumes, as a director of research projects and as a supervisor of doctoral theses. Since the early part of his career he has been heavily involved in archaeology as well, participating as an epigraphist in the expeditions to Ebla, Tell Ashara, Tell Mozan, Tell Leilan and Tell Beydar. In addition, he was active between 1997 and 2010 as director of the "Ca' Fosca-

ri” team at the Syro-European archaeological mission of Tell Beydar. Always ahead of his time, he has worked in digital humanities since the early 1980s, taking part in 1982–1983 in the “Project in the Computer Analysis of the Ebla Texts” initiated by G. Buccellati at the University of California, Los Angeles. Since 2010, he has been the chief editor of the project “Ebla Digital Archives” at “Ca’ Foscari” University.

Lucio has not only been a prolific researcher. Over the years, he has invested an enormous amount of time and energy in activities aiming at the divulgation of knowledge on the Ancient Near East to a wider audience, stimulating at the same time pertinent research. All of the undersigned – and many besides us – have benefitted from his inspirational teaching, from general courses for undergraduates to specialized seminars for doctoral and post-doctoral students. He has succeeded in establishing his own “school” of Ancient Near Eastern studies at “Ca’ Foscari” University. The defining characteristic of our “Venetian school” is not a single theme – far be it from Lucio’s mind to impose a single area of specialization on those who study with him – but is rather its *spiritus rector*’s historical methodology and openness to different approaches to elucidating the multifaceted realities of the Ancient Near East. This attitude is exemplified by Lucio’s endeavours under the auspices of the “Advanced Seminar in the Humanities: Literature and Culture in the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece, Rome and the Near East” at the Venice International University, which he has co-organized since 2005. A volume recently published under his editorship, *Il Vicino Oriente antico dalle origini ad Alessandro Magno* (2012), is on its way to becoming a standard manual for Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian history in Italian universities. Mention must also be made of the journal *Kaskal*, founded in 2003, of which Lucio is co-director, and which has grown into an internationally recognized and increasingly influential forum for the multi-disciplinary study of Ancient Near Eastern cultures.

International recognition for Lucio’s scientific achievements is reflected in his activities, under various titles, at “Ca’ Foscari” University, as well as at universities outside Italy, such as UCLA, Cornell University, and the École Pratique des Hautes Études.

Lucio’s contagious enthusiasm, gentleness, and wit immediately captivate all those who work with him. Only he – as students, colleagues, and friends have learned – could turn brisk walks with him through the Venetian *calli* towards Venice’s railway station into unique opportunities to discuss Assyriology and the vagaries of life. Moreover, his advice is delivered not only in this peripatetic form, but also in the many toasts offered during the numerous informal dinner parties held at his home for welcoming visiting scholars, or for celebrating shared successes.

All this is clearly reflected, we believe, in the contributions to this volume, which stand as a token of appreciation, certainly of Lucio Milano as an out-

standing scholar, but also, and perhaps more significantly, of Lucio as a *Mensch*.

Thus, once more, let us stand and raise our glasses to celebrate Lucio's 65th birthday. *Salute!*

Venice, Turin, Vienna
March 30th, 2016

Paola Corò
Elena Devecchi
Nicla De Zorzi
Massimo Maiocchi

The Wealth of Mari Era Kings

Jack M. Sasson

As is well-known, in the early centuries of the 2nd millennium BC, Syro-Mesopotamia was a hardly pacific stage. The area teemed with newly created power centers, tribal as well as urban, each with its own agenda for enlarging frontiers and for imposing control. Except for a handful of states, among them Babylon and Yamḥad/Aleppo, few dynasties secured the throne for long. Mari is an obvious example: Yaḥdun-Lim was killed, possibly by a kin, Sumu-Yamam. Samsi-Addu dethroned him and within months installed his son Yasmaḥ-Addu as king, acting in his behalf. Zimri-Lim, likely a son of Yaḥdun-Lim from a concubine (other theories exist), came next, lasting about 15 years at most. Especially on the second and third levels of power, thrones hardly got warm, with their owners matching the life-cycle of moths.

Despite such an unappetizing future, there never was a lack of contenders; so much so, that specific terms were attached to certain wannabes: *madārums* were aspirants of royal blood awaiting for a more senior sponsor to lift them to a throne elsewhere than their home base; *keltums* were displaced heirs (their father's throne may have been usurped), taking refuge with another ruler while awaiting an opportunity for a comeback. That their hosts might trade them to a mortal enemy for money or land is a chance they were willing to take.¹ Under these circumstances, why did anyone want power? Aside from increasing their harems and enlarging the pool of sycophants (including scribes willing to chant their praises), what was in it for them?

The Mari archives are drawn almost exclusively from the palace, so they represent the private dealings of kings. There, “economy” or “trade” is mostly the recycling of gifts among the elite, in which the exchange of valuables was regulated less by market forces than by custom, honor, and fear of scandal (on the last, see Sasson 2012). In the diplomatic and bureaucratic records, notices about merchants and their activities are incidental, albeit valuable. The administrative accounts on presents coming in (*šūrubtum*) and out (*šūbultum*) and their transformations into products (devotional, comestible, or for daily use) have received good studies.²

In this paper, offered in homage to Lucio Milano, a dear friend – in fact, a

¹ On this topic see Sasson 2007; Charpin 2009.

² Among other publications, discussions can be found in a number of chapters in ARMT 23 and in specialized works, such as Lerouxel 2002 (on gift giving and receiving), and Sasson 2004 (on the king's table). The trade in wine is discussed by Chambon (2009), cultic expenses by Jacquet (2011), luxury vessels by Guichard (2005) and textiles by Durand (2009). Especially when travelling over a long distance or for an appreciable time, kings found it prudent to transport in coffers the best of their collection.

(much younger) brother in all essential matters – I sample information on the diverse ways in which kings enriched themselves, hoping that it might be of interest to Lucio, a scholar who has done so much to focus our attention on the realia of past cultures, in his own works and as editor of series and journals. The collection is far from complete; but it strives for useful coverage.³ To achieve that end, I illustrate by selectively citing documents from diverse kings, ignoring chronology, and by drawing the information from an artificially constructed series of categories for wealth creation: **a. From conquest; b. From diplomacy; c. From suzerainty; d. From rule; and e. From commercial activities.**

a. From conquest

1. Treasures from the conquered. A good portion of a king's wealth was locked in storehouses, consisting of vessels (bowls, cups, plates, basins, and the like, made of precious and non-precious metals), jewelry, chariot parts, musical instruments, weapons, textiles, leather objects, timber, ingots, wood products, unguents, and the like. They were stored in a "House" (*bītum*) or in a "Chamber" (*kisallum*) that stocked more broadly than their names might imply, such as: ~ Barbers (actually bathhouses), ~ Oil, ~ Wine, ~ Beets, ~ Beds, ~ Sealings, ~ Bitumen, and the like. Not surprisingly, this wealth was a magnet for potential conquerors. How successful were conquerors in looting the treasury of their target city has much to do with how quickly the target power collapses. When Samsi-Addu took over Mari, there was enough wealth still in it to fill 8 coffers. An inventory was created with officials of the previous administration in attendance, for administrators rarely joined their king in exile and were too valuable to massacre (Charpin 1983). When Zimri-Lim occupied Mari the palace was likely sacked by his allies (among them Bannum and other *merhûms*) that got there before him, so it took a few years before similar inventories were developed.⁴

Three years after the death of Samsi-Addu, Šubat-Enlil remained under the control of a trusted official and we have a nice note to Zimri-Lim in which Sumuḥadu, likely then governor of Saggaratum palace, cited an appeal he has launched to tribal leaders (A.556 = FM 2 116; Eidem 1994):

Turum-nakte of [...] and the people of Šubat-Enlil keep on writing to your leader about opening the City Šubat-Enlil, saying, 'Come and capture this town. Take its silver, gold and spoils'.⁵ Now, you all know that the treasure of Samsi-Addu is inside this city. So, do follow your lord on this campaign with your brothers of the

³ A larger, albeit also not complete, selection is available in Sasson 2015 (under paragraph 1.3).

⁴ Zimri-Lim complained bitterly (but maybe also opportunistically) about the empty quarters he occupied. Among the inventories prepared for Zimri-Lim are M.12268 (Arkhipov 2012, 243–256). On these matters, see Guichard 2005, 29–33 and Arkhipov 2012, 5.

⁵ Turum-nakte (many variations on his name) eventually ruled from Šubat-Enlil, its name restored to Šeḫna.

Sim'al tribe: he who is without a slave, let him take one for himself; he who is without a woman slave, let him take one for himself; he who is without an *agallum*-donkey, let him take one for himself.

It also seems that nothing conquered is sacrosanct. We have a note to Samsi-Addu (A.2177; see Ziegler 2000, 17–18) in which raiding Yaḥdun-Lim's tomb is recommended so as to retrieve from it the bronze needed for the manufacture of lance heads. From the same tomb was also pilfered silver for the dowry of Princess Beltum of Qatna (M.14871; see Guichard 2005, 93–95; see Charpin 2008, 79).

2. Share from spoils (*zittum, ḥuzbātum*). Division of spoils among troops, their leaders, and the kings that sent them on campaigns was regulated. Campaigning near the Lebanon, General Samadaḥum assures Yasmaḥ-Addu of his scrupulous attention to protocol. In ARM 2 13 (LAPO 17 457), he writes:

When the troops captured Šibat, I was told about my lord's military campaign against the city Qabra. I therefore did not convey slaves from Šibat to my lord thinking, 'I will certainly convey my lord's share on his return to his country'. I am therefore just now conveying 4 slaves, my lord's share. My lord must not say, 'My servant (Samadaḥum) has taken the larger share of the booty'. I myself had told the section-chiefs and the lieutenants, 'Give me my share, (drawn) by lot'. (They did not do it). I waited 3 to 4 days. To increase what they would take – and not to give me anything – the section-chiefs, presented to me 6 slaves that in fact belonged to the soldiers. But I had them returned to their owners.

Among the other bounties that accrue to a conqueror is what we conventionally call the "harem" of the conquered. It may include daughters from concubines and they could become valuable assets, as they can be wedded off to minor vassals or to deserving loyalists, as was the case of the diviner Asqudum whose wife, a daughter of Yaḥdun-Lim, raised his stature when her brother Zimri-Lim took the throne. Samsi-Addu has this instruction for his son (ARM 1 64 = LAPO 16 15; see Ziegler 2007, 42–43):

The young girls of Yaḥdullim that I have given you – these young girls are now grown (...). Have them escorted (either to Ekallatum) or to Šubat-Enlil, where they can stay in your home. They should be taught music (...).⁶

⁶ We have information about what are conventionally termed "harems" of several defeated kings, among them those of Yaḥdun-Lim (Mari), Yasmaḥ-Addu (Mari), a follower of Samsi-Addu (Kaḥat), and Ibal-Addu (Ašlakka). From Kaḥat, Zimri-Lim deported to Mari about 30 women, among them Akatiya, likely one of the wives of Samsi-Addu. The deportation of women from Ašlakka was much more numerous, as Ibal-Addu had increased the number of primary wives (at least ten, at two localities) when conquering neighboring cities. On all this see Marelli 1994; Ziegler 1999b, and Ziegler 1999a, especially pp. 33–38, 119–120. The archives of Sin-iqišam, a relatively minor personality in Ašnakum (at Tell Chagar Bazar) then under control of Yasmaḥ-Addu, prove

Captives were quickly embedded in the palace. Male captives were likely shifted to (forced) menial labor, as this note from Tarim-šakim, a counselor to Yasmaḥ-Addu, indicates (ARM 5 27 = LAPO 17 627):

1,300 captured men that the king (Samsi-Addu) has assigned to the Bank of the Euphrates (region) to (reverse) the palace's deficiency were conveyed to Kaḥat. I myself will go to Saggartum to meet those captured. I will receive the captured in Saggartum and then assign its (members) to the palace.

Women were parceled out to kitchens and textile workshops, a few with special skills among were offered as gifts to officials and vassals. Attractive women were especially likely to be sought or bartered.⁷

Early in his reign, Zimri-Lim wrote ARM 10 140 (LAPO 18 1184) to his sister (real or not) Liqtum, wife of Adal-šenni of Burundum:

On what you wrote me regarding sending to you an attractive young *kezretum* woman (likely a type of musician) for your personal service – when Yasmaḥ-Addu left Mari, the palace was plundered. Ever since then, I have kept on campaigning and turned over as many captives as were due to me (to offset) the shortage of palace administrators. Henceforth, when I go north on a campaign, I will select from the captives due to me a *kezretum* woman who could personally serve you and send her under escort to you.

This letter was not sent, for reasons remaining obscure.⁸

him to have had 2 main wives, 5 secondary wives, as well as 33 songstresses who might well have included concubines; see Lacambre 2010, 101–102.

⁷ That the pulchritude of slaves was kept in consideration is obvious from ARM 27 85. Zakira-ḥammu, then governor of Qattunan, has this to say to Zimri-Lim: “On the release of a maidservant to the envoy of Ḥaya-sumu (of Ilaṣura), my lord wrote me the following, ‘Agree on a substitute for this maidservant and release his wife’. I have really looked into all these matters. This maidservant is one of the palace's servants. When my lord captured Ḥazzakkanum, this servant was being raised; she is now a weaver. Realizing how beautiful (lit., glowing, *nawrat*) is this maidservant and (in contrast) how aged is the one they are holding as replacement, I have decided not to release this maidservant to Ḥaya-sumu's envoy”.

⁸ The demand for such personnel was constant. In this Tell al-Rimaḥ note (OBTR 160; see Dalley *et al.* 1976, 131–132) Azzu-ena of Ašal writes Mutu-ḥadki, a major official for Hammurabi of Babylon, “When I lived by you in Šarbat, my father and lord told me, ‘Ahead of me, booty will be plentiful. Once you hear about me partaking of it, write me and I will give you a maidservant’. This is what you told me. Now God has spoken and there was no one to block you. Booty is now plentiful with you, so my father and lord should give me a maidservant, so as to free my hands from the millstone. Or else, my father and lord should write Iltani (so that the maidservant) I have requested would be set aside for me”.

In two instances Zimri-Lim got in trouble for promising distribution of accomplished women. In one case, Šimrum, likely a secretary for the king of Yamḥad, made it clear that his support in an intricate negotiation could be bought. Sent on a mission there, the *Kapellmeister* Rišiya gives this

Late in his reign, Zimri-Lim wrote two notes to his wife about captured women from the harem of Ibal-Addu of Ašlakka, a son-in-law turned hostile. In the first, he clarifies that the choice of women as songstresses is his to make, as they likely performed in his presence:

About selecting the young women for the choir (*sitrum*) from among captives which I led to you, and about whom I had written earlier; in no way should such women be chosen for the choir from this group of captives. Rather, they ought to be allocated for weaving. I expect there will be another group of captives. I myself want to choose and direct to you women for the choir from among the future group of captives (ARM 10 125 = LAPO 18 1167).

He returns to the topic in ARM 10 126 (LAPO 18 1166):

I have just directed to you female weavers, among whom there are *ugbaltum*-priestesses. Pick out the *ugbaltum*-priestesses and assign them to a weaving establishment. Among these female weavers and among those *previous* as well, select thirty – or as many as there are worth selecting – attractive female weavers who show no blemish from toenail to head hair and assign them to Warad-ilišu (head musician). Warad-ilišu ought to teach them Subarean choir-music. Their *dwelling*,

report to Zimri-Lim (ARM 26 9), “We brought to a successful close my lord’s journey and the king (Yarim-Lim) is very pleased. We set before Šimru the instruction that my lord entrusted us – Asqudum and me; Šimrum [*sic*] was very pleased with it. In fact, Šimru is advancing our case to King Yarim-Lim. Šimru will keep presenting before the king the substance of our lord’s instruction and getting for us honest answers. Another matter: Šimru said the following: ‘What about the songstress concerning whom I have repeatedly written my lord (Zimri-Lim) and he has not (yet) conveyed to me? Therefore, the moment our lord listens to this tablet, he must have the songstress Karanatum ride a mule of Yasim-Dagan– or that of any of the others. On the morrow of this tablet, she must leave so that she could promptly get here. For Šimru to advance before the king the matters with which we are entrusted, my lord should act so that the arrival of this songstress is prompt’.

The other occasion got Zimri-Lim in trouble. His father-in-law Yarim-Lim had the hots for Duššuba, a Mari songstress, likely when Zimri-Lim visited his court. Zimri-Lim promised her to him but Yarim-Lim’s wife, Gašera, opposed the transfer, leading Zimri-Lim to write one of the most tortured letters in the archives to deflect blame while placing the onus on Gašera (ARM 10 139 = LAPO 18 1191), “Previously, when you wrote me about not giving to Yarim-Lim the songstress Duššuba, I had answered you, ‘If I give her to another, will Yarim-Lim not be angry with me?’ This is what I told you. When I reached Mari, you wrote me repeatedly and now you have written your daughter. I heard that you have written Šiptu your daughter about having to keep her. I will not give this young woman to (Yarim-Lim); I will give her to Aplaḥanda (of Karkemiš). Feel reassured about this young woman and do not worry in any way about her.

However, if Yarim-Lim gets angry because of this young woman and writes me something, I will answer him disingenuously, ‘I did not give you this woman (because) Gašera wrote that I should not give her to you. Aplaḥanda did request her, and I gave her to him (...). You (Gašera) must not hate me’”. Ziegler (2007 37) relies on ARM 23 535 iv: 32–35, to make a drama of this affair. In any event, Zimri-Lim rethought the matter and did not send this letter, as it was found in his archives.

however, ought to be moved. Be careful with their food-rations so that their looks will not change. When you make your selection, Warad-ilišu should attend. Moreover, alert Mukannišum so that the looks of the other female weavers that you assign to him should not deteriorate.

Cattle too were divided among all participants. A memorandum from Tuttul (Tell Bia) records oaths taken during the disbursement of spoils (KTT 55a; see Durand – Marti 2003, 168–170):

About mortal oath: Amatpiel (of Qatna), Yaḥdullim (of Mari) and Amunapiḫ (of Tuttul) swore (as follows): ‘The selected number of cattle taken from Tupḫu was 1350, from a total of 1665.’ This (is the status of the) spoil that my servant revealed, as well as what Merimel, servant of Yaḥdullim said. There is no lie (in it). Ask and investigate.

3. Ransom money from the release of captives (*iptirum*).⁹ Release of people captured in campaigns was a source of income for kings. The mechanism on ascertaining who is to be kept as slave and who is to be bartered is not clear. But rules were set on how the release process was to operate. In A.1286 (FM 6 50; see Lafont 2002, 385–387), Aqba-aḫum instructs his successor Mukannišum:

Before I left, you told me, ‘You are about to depart; yet I fear that I could be requested to release people from the Yaminite captives. How do I deliver?’ I told (you), ‘If you are requested (the release) of one person from among the women weavers or the men under your control, do it; but accept the money and take possession of a sealed order from the superintendent (*šukallum*).’ This is what I instructed you. In fact, when I instructed you, Nana-šalasu would be standing by. In no way did I instruct you to continually give sealed orders to those in charge or to the Upper district.

The ransom price seems to have been set at 10 shekels, plus or minus a couple more, likely depending on age and status.¹⁰ Sammetar of Ašnakkum sent this note

⁹ The subject is now nicely covered in Charpin 2014, with a table that details ransom prices in the Old Babylonian period. In 14th century Europe, the ransoming of captured knights (and even of kings, such as Jean II of France) was a major source of economic infusion. When the convention for the process weakened, it induced severe strains on England and France; see Tuchman 1978, 673 (*sub* “ransom”).

¹⁰ Šeparum, a king of an as yet undetermined city, writes ARM 28 161 to Zimri-Lim, “A young woman, Šawannikizi by name, is now in the household of Aḫanuta the merchant. This young woman is my kin. For one mina of silver, have her brought out from the merchant’s household and conveyed to me. Just as I will release from 10 to 5 Mari citizens, so do have the young woman brought out of the merchant’s household and conveyed to me”. The offer of one mina and the promised release of Mari personnel, possibly as an additional inducement, tells us that there is an exceptional story unfolding.

to Zimri-Lim (ARM 28 97b):

I have herewith sealed under my name and have conveyed to my lord 11 shekels of silver. This money is for the redemption of the son of the man bearing this tablet. My father should accept (it) and release his son.¹¹

Villard (1984, 476–506) has compiled an extensive dossier of ransom payments for the release of Yaminite tribesmen taken prisoners during a revolt against Zimri-Lim. The documents are brief and specify who is to be ransomed, who is paying and which official is collecting the money. Occasionally, a document such as ARM 8 78 tells more:

In Karkemiš, Mar-Šamaš son of Ili-iddinam and Aḥam-Arši son of Abiyatum paid by the standard of Karkemiš 15 shekels of refined silver as ransom for Yaqqim-Addu son of Yasim-Abim of Niḥadu (in Saggaratum). At the commercial center of Niḥadu, he shall pay 30 shekels of silver. Should he fail to do so, in Niḥadu he will give 5 jars of wine for each (shekel) to Yatarum son of La'um, at the market value in Karkemiš. The money paid belongs to Yatarum son of La'um. The money of Yatarum son of La'um has been paid to affect his (Yaqqim-Addu's) ransom. He (Yaqqim-Addu) stands responsible to the bearer of his tablet at any commercial center where he appears, in accordance with the contents of this tablet. Moreover, he will give a sheep to his merchant and a ram to his god.

The text was drafted in Karkemiš itself, and bears a local month name; but is dated to one of Zimri-Lim's early years. What is interesting is the revelation that the gain from ransoming goes to many pockets, the release being an investment for further profit. The palace receives payment for releasing prisoners and Mari officials gain by funding the release of a local person. The investor, Yatarum, is likely the brother of Sammetar, a Mari blue-blood. It is all in the family!¹²

In some cases, the status or fate of a particular person was difficult to ascertain, so that how and with whom to negotiate had to be investigated. Aplaḥanda of Karkemiš answers Yasmaḥ-Addu's query on a woman who was taken to his city (ARM 5 8 = LAPO 18 1029):

You wrote to me about the wife of Zimran. So where does this woman live? In whose home is she living? Who has brought her (here)? Alright—anyone who might know this woman should come here. (S)he should come here and show me the home in which lives this woman or (at least) the area where lives this woman. She can then be taken. I just do not know her.

¹¹ So too in the Leilan (Šeḥna) archives. Warad-Ištar posted this note to an undetermined Šeḥna ruler (RATL 153 = L.87–457, Eidem 2011, 229–230).

¹² See Durand 1982, 118–119; van Koppen 2002, 303.

4. Kickbacks. Raiding an enemy is not limited to kings, but anyone else hoping to profit from a razziah needed to clear it with the king; but for a price. Ašmad, a Simal *merhûm* writes FM 8 43 (A.2470+; see Durand 2005, 150–153) to Zimri-Lim: “All of the nomads gathered, saying this, ‘Write to our lord so as to allow us to make a raid on the sheep of Išme-Dagan in Rapiqum and Yabliya. We want then to turn back toward the Bank of the Euphrates (*i.e.* Mari), (at which point) we will give many sheep to our lord. In this way, our lord would not keep on requesting sheep from us.’ This is what all the nomads said as in one voice. Now if it pleases my lord, my lord should not prevent his servants the nomads from this (plan). My lord should listen to this tablet and, right away, on the same day, he should hand over to the man who delivered this here tablet of mine an answer to my tablet so as it reaches me before the *râmum* (festival). In this way, right after this *râmum*, we will go out on that campaign to capture these sheep. We need to go down to fight before the Ištar sacrifice, *so that*, on leading (the sheep) back, I will present our lord half of these sheep; the other half will be divided up among my lord’s servants. (Let me hear) my lord’s opinion, for I want to go, my lord, and gain many sheep.” Ašmad reassures the king that the raid will not leave any incriminating evidence.

b. From diplomacy

1. Exchange of gifts and favors. The shuttle of gifts was highly regulated, formalized, and staged, with diplomats in foreign courts delivering presents worthy of their senders and returning with gifts worthy of their receivers. The value of such gifts is calculated by its contents in precious objects rather than by any artistic merit and the value of the exchange had to be matched: too little would mean scorn and calumny; too much might open a bidding war that can bankrupt.¹³ Well known is a smoldering letter from Išhi-Addu of Qatna that never reached its addressee: Išme-Dagan of Ekallatum (ARM 5 20 = LAPO 16 256):

This matter ought not be discussed; yet I must say it now and vent my feelings. You are a great king. When you placed a request with me for 2 horses, I indeed had them conveyed to you. Yet you, you sent me (just) 20 pounds of tin. Without doubt, when you sent this paltry amount of tin, you had no desire to have honorable discourse with me. Had you planned sending nothing at all – by the god of my father! – I might be displeased! Among us in Qatna, the value of such horses is 600 shekels [= 10 pounds] of silver. But you sent me just 20 pounds of tin! What would anyone hearing this say? Would he not mock us? This house is your house. What is lacking in your house that a brother cannot fulfill the need of his equal? Had you

¹³ See Sasson 2012. One of the saddest episodes in the Mari archives has Ibal-Addu of Ašlakka (ARM 28 49) begging Zimri-Lim to stop offering him presents because shame – and likely also dethronement – await his inability to respond in kind. He admits that even messengers were rejecting his paltry gifts, lest they feel disrespected.

not planned to send me any tin, I might not be upset over it. Are you not a great king? Why have you done this? This house is your house!

There is also the exchange of occasional gifts (*zikir šumim*), more out of courtesy, affection, or just to curry favor. These include first fruits of the season (*nissān šattim*, for example pears and pistachios, ARM 4 42 = LAPO 17 499), timber, mushrooms (especially annual truffles), fish, birds (ostriches and their eggs were in much demand), locusts, and exotic animals (see Sasson 2004). Although the occasion for such swaps is not always clear to us, they surely included diplomatic visits. The vocabulary for these transactions differed. An informally bestowed good-will gift is termed a *dummuqtum*. Dadi-ḥadun, a Rabbû (Yaminite) leader writes A.3185 (Durand – Guichard 2012) to Zimri-Lim:

Aplaḥanda (of Karkemiš) has taken counsel and, with the Near (left) bank (of the Euphrates) experiencing trouble and with the king (of) Aleppo being so harsh on the Yaminites that they feel oppressed, he wrote to me in Ḥalab, saying, ‘Now you are to identify *šihamum*-equids for (sending) to your “father” Zimri-Lim. Escorts for them should be set. Let this be a good-will gift (*dummuqtum*) for Zimri-Lim’.

The gift of *zakukītum* (“glass”) from Nanip-Šawuri of Ḥaburatum (Tigris region) to Zimri-Lim likely falls into this category (A.2178; Kupper 1994).

More the object of trade than good will are the many disbursements of tin, essential for alloying with copper to obtain bronze. For a brief period during Zimri-Lim’s reign (ZL8 to ZL10), Mari received tin directly from Elam before their friendship collapsed; see Joannès 1991. When Zimri-Lim led troops to help Yarim-Lim of Yamḥad (ZL9–10), he took the occasion to travel to the Mediterranean, possibly in imitation of Yaḥdun-Lim’s trek westward. With him was a huge retinue that included one of his wives, many messengers, administrators, and scribes. He packed away a great variety of gifts, including vessels (some of precious metals), jewelry and garments, dropping a few of them at every stop. He also conveyed much tin. According to ARM 23 556, about 970 minas (pounds) of it remained for distribution when he reached westerly distribution sites. Among the largest recipients for this was the Yamḥad royal family, among them its king (the largest portion), his queen, the crown prince, assorted officials that include a military general and the private secretaries to the king and to the crown prince. Smaller gifts were posted to rulers in Hazor and Qatna and a merchant who doubled as translator for Caphtor traders.

c. From suzerainty¹⁴

The larger number of vassals, the larger is the harvest of gifts and tributes. To be a vassal in a stage full of devouring powers was not an attractive fate, for it was hardly ever a one to one relationship, as a vassal at the bottom of the rung might have many suzerains to satisfy. Lanasum, who is Zimri-Lim's commissioner to Tuttul, a vassal town, reports (A.885; see Durand 1990, 52):

About the *sīrum*-tribute for my lord that is imposed on the people of Tuttul, I have had a council (*tatamūm*) convene not once, but three times. When I asked them, they wrote a couple of times to Imar. The people of Imar answered them in this way, 'As for us, we pay tribute to three kings; but as for you, would you not pay to Zimri-Lim your lord?' When the people of Imar answered them in this way, those of Tuttul took 3 silver shekels, went back to Imar, and bought jars of wine. They gathered the elders of Imar and drank. As the land reconsidered, the people of Tuttul then assembled on the matter of their tribute and debated as follows (...).

The vocabulary for such tribute was broad:

1. The *biltum* (or *sīrum*) is payment a vassal makes to avert an unpleasant event (attacks or siege). It is a "shakedown" of sorts and it can be imposed repeatedly or as needed. Its amount is not normally fixed and unless explicitly stated, it need not be permanent or regular; see Lafont 2001, 249–251. Exceptional is the occasion in which Yaḥdun-Lim sets a "perpetual *biltum*" on defeated foes:

[Yaḥdun-Lim] penetrated the cedar and boxwood mountains, great mountains, and cut down these trees – box, cedar, cypress, and *elammakum*. He set up a commemorative monument, thus establishing his fame and displaying his might proclaim. He forced the land at the shore of the Sea into submission, subjected it to a single rule, and made it vassal. He imposed a recurrent tribute (*biltam kayyantam*) on them, that tribute of theirs specifically for him.¹⁵

Worth noting, however, are the literary nature of this particular text, the undetermined land on which tribute was said imposed, and the unlikelihood that the Mari of Yaḥdun-Lim could enforce its desire.

Imposing tribute is no guarantee of its effective harvesting, as vassals may balk when an erstwhile suzerain is judged too weak, preoccupied, or distant to impose his will. In ARM 26 318, Yamšum, Zimri-Lim's envoy posted in Andarig, reports on goings on between Atamrum of Andarig and Šarraya of Razama:

¹⁴ A larger vocabulary for such transactions than is given here - for example, *piqittum* and *zikir šumim* - occurs in the Mari records. A specialized study may calibrate them better.

¹⁵ Passage from the Yaḥdun-Lim disk brick inscription is cited from Frayne 1990, 606 (E4.6.8.2): 51–66.

The news reaching me about Razama is that Šarriya has set bitumen opposite the siege-tower and set it on fire so that the tower collapsed. The fire has destroyed the footbridges. As to the fortification within the city [a few lines damaged]. Because these events occurred, Atamrum informed Šarriya, ‘Pay me a *biltum* and surrender to me the men you have brought (into town).’ But he did not pay him a *biltum* and he did not release to him the men he had brought in. The town remains strong.

Commissioner Lanasum wrote a note to Zimri-Lim (A.673, cited in translation only in Guichard 1996, 79–80), reporting on a hex the citizens attached to their tribute:

About the money that they are to send (as tribute) to my lord, they gathered it in town, placing it before (the god) Dagan. They cut the necks of lambs and fowls over it and set up laments... These people (in Tuttul) should no longer find grace in my lord’s countenance. He should be severe with them and show them at the palace gate.

2. The term *nēbeḫum* (literally a “sash”) applies to any payment for favor or service rendered, normally to superiors, so more or less a baksheesh.¹⁶ ARM 26 350, a letter that Šaknum, resident representative of Zimri-Lim in Ilaṣura, wrote to Zimri-Lim, gives the essentials:

You have written your ‘son’ (vassal) Ḫaya-sumu (of Ilaṣura) about Ḫuziri. Ḫuziri has just now entered into his city, Ḫazzikkannum. My lord should therefore send his servant to Ḫuziri to collect the *nēbeḫum*-compensation due my lord.

The *quid pro quo* nature of the delivery is clear from ARM 28 122. Yakun-Dir of Tarmanni in the Idamarāṣ writes to Zimri-Lim:

My lord looked at me with his kind gaze (benevolent eyes), thus determining my destiny. He instructed Itur-asdu (governor in Naḫur) this way, ‘You must now release towns of mine (controlled by) Yakun-Dir’. Having reached the heartland, I

¹⁶ See ARM 2 28 where it is a calculated bribe. Many examples are collected in Ziegler 1994, 15–16, among which is A.2442. Itur-asdu, governor in Naḫur, cites the statement by an Ili-sûmû, “When my lord sets me up (as king) at Ašnakkum, he could take away the whole of its palace, down to straw and twig, leaving me nothing but bricks. I will nevertheless give to my lord ten pounds of pure silver as *nēbeḫum*”.

This type of compensation for service offered need not be made for political reasons. In FM 2 40 (Bonechi – Catagnoli 1994, 76–77), a woman offers a *nēbeḫum* to a governor. Writes Yaqqim-Addu of Saggaratum, “Yesterday, a woman, wife of Yaššibum, came here bearing 2 shekels of silver. She said, ‘This is your *nēbeḫum*-compensation. I have had a young woman enter as a bride for my son’. I told her, ‘I do not require a *nēbeḫum*-compensation for the young woman bride. The overseer (*laputtûm*) is to benefit from it. Why did you bring to me what I cannot accept? Is there any (other) purpose?’ She said, ‘There is absolutely no other purpose (...)’.

had not yet witnessed Itur-asdu's travel. Just now, however, he arrived and I asked him, 'Why do you still retain my towns'? He has in no way satisfied me, even when he pledged to show up. Itur-asdu does not release even half a cubit of these towns. Yet Šubram (of Susa) is retaining 10 (of these) towns. So, to whom must I kowtow now: to Itur-asdu or Šubram? Now, if it suits my lord, he should send one of his servants to act as inspector for me, so that he could restore the district to my control. I shall gladly pay in silver the *nēbeḫum*-compensation I have promised.¹⁷

3. A *tāmartum* is an 'audience' gift that diverse persons (ambassadors, artisans) bring when visiting a king. The word is rooted in the verb *amārum*, "to see, look" and while it might suggest a courtesy gift, some dictionary citations (CAD B, s.v., 236) connect it with *biltum* and other forced obligations. An extensive list of such gifts brought by artisans is ARM 31 24 (M.5756; Guichard 2005, 357360), in conjunction with Zimri-Lim's first celebration of the Istar festival (11.xi.ZL1). FM 11 182 (ARM 26 105) is one of several notes of similar contents Ḫali-ḫadun and Ka'alalum (guards in Mari) sent to Zimri-Lim:

On the day we posted this note of ours to our lord, Mannanum, a messenger from Babylon, and his guide, a man from Qatna, have rented a boat in making their way to Babylon. They loaded 30 jars of wine and 10 planks of boxwood as their gift of audience (*tāmartum*). Both and together they launched their boat.

d. From monarchy

1. The *sugāgūtum* is a fee paid by sheiks (*sugāgū*) for settling on royal land; see Marti 2008.¹⁸ On their appointments, these sheiks paid a certain fee, whether renewable at a fixed period is not clear. In ARM 5 24 (LAPO 16 80), Tarim-šakim gives this advice to Yasmaḫ-Addu:

Baqqum of Tizraḫ has just died. Men from Tizraḫ came here to say, 'Appoint Ka'ali-ilumma as prefect (*šāpirum*) over us. He has given his word to pay 1 mina of silver to the palace.' I am now sending Ka'ali-ilumma to my lord so that he could appoint him as sheikh (*sugāgum*). 1 mina of silver should be accepted there from him.

Worth noting is the difference in vocabulary, likely reflecting different expectations: The men of Tizraḫ want a *šāpirum* (a manager of sort) while the palace

¹⁷ Ḫammi-kun of Šaduḫum is more precise in writing Ibal-Addu of Ašlakka (ARM 28 111): "Another matter: If you are truly my brother and do care for me, the elders will restore me to the throne of my father's house. Let a trusted overseer of the king come with you. I will then give 300 sheep as your compensation".

¹⁸ The fees kings collected for allowing settlement of conquered territory come close to the notion of *nahālā*, land disbursed to diverse Hebrew tribes for which they owed allegiance to God.

appoints a sheikh (*sugāgum*).¹⁹ Collecting fees was not always easy, as this excerpt from a note Kibri-Dagan of Terqa sent the king suggests (ARMT 13 110 = LAPO 18 1074):

Another matter: About the money of Yanšib-[Dagan?] – this man has not yet resolved to pay the money. He continues to shear his sheep and acts as if it is not of his concern. He neglects the matter, hardly taking seriously any order from the palace. My lord must send tough orders to have this man pay the money promptly.

2. Akin to the Hebrew *nēdāvā*, *igisûm* (Sumerian *igi.sá*) is a “free-will” offering to the king, normally by high officials or wealthy individuals, of a large animal, destined for consumption at feasts. FM 2 46 suggests that such gifts were expected. Samsi-Addu sent ARM 1 86 (LAPO 18 971) to his son to tell him:

There is in Mari an ox that Šamaš-tillassu has fattened for an *igisûm*. Šamaš-tillassu has told me, ‘This bull is now very full; a (perfect) shape!’. Take this ox and write to Mubalšaga to exchange him in town (Ekallatum), ox for ox, so that he could offer (the new ox) as his own *igisûm*.

Worth noticing, however, is that not seldom the cattle offered as *igisûm* can be unhealthy, as in this case reported to the king by the palace controller Yasim-sumu (ARMT 13 25 = LAPO 18 970):

The ox that Warad-ilišu (head musician) has presented to my lord was already *feeble* even as he presented it. I was ready to tell my lord (about it), but thought, ‘It might well get better, so let it wait two or three more days before its condition is resolved’. But now this ox is still feeble. If it pleases my lord, this ox should be sold to merchants and an ox be readied in its stead.

Occasionally, strong-armed tactics were needed to coax the presentation, as suggested by the note the *merhûm* Ašmad, a chief of tribal troops, posted to Zimri-Lim (FM 2 52):

Memi’um, a tribesman from Qattunan, is now forced into jail (*nēparum*). My lord had imposed on him 100 sheep. From that amount just 50 and an ox have been

¹⁹ A fuller account (with complications) of the procedure is in FM 2 131 (see Villard 1994). Yaḫsuran, an obscure official, writes to Zimri-Lim. “When Bannum acted as a *merhûm*, Yaḫsi-ḥadnu presented to him 3.5 minas (pounds) of silver and 300 sheep saying, ‘Set me up as sheikh (*sugāgum*)’. But Bannum answered him, ‘Wait until my lord’s trip; but let me accept your contribution and turn the townspeople favorably toward you. Your servant should come here and hand over the contribution. Bring over your kinfolk and I will introduce you to my lord, so that my lord will give you his blessing’. This is what Bannum told him in the presence of Inniḫan and ten (other) men. Subsequently Bannum died, having kept in his own place the silver as well as the sheep”.

received; but the 50 remaining are now in arrears. If it pleases my lords, Akin-urubam (Qattunan governor) should guarantee payment of his debt. He will pay the 50 sheep when my lord travels to Qattunan. This tribesman ought not die in jail.

3. A *nēmēttum* (from *emēdum*, ‘to impose’) seems to be a donation (forced or not) from notables (and vassals). An administrative account (M.11440 = ARM 25 376; Arkhipov 2012, 304–305) reads:

9 minas, 10 shekels of gold, that the king handed to Mukannišum: 10 shekels of gold, Yassi-Dagan’s donation for the palanquin; 5+ shekels, Yašub-nar’s (donation); 3 shekels, Dariš-libur’s donation; 3.5 shekels, donation of Yatar-asdu (Itur-asdu) that were received via Laḥsudi-El (...). Total 9.5 minas, 2+ shekels, for the mountings on a palanquin. Entrusted to Mukannišum. [28.v.ZL6].

ARMT 25 758 establishes the silver value of slaves and animals sent by a vassal:

Total: 8 minas, 5 shekels of silver, *nēmēttum* of Ibal-Addu that Laiwium received in Ašlakka.

4. The *šibšum* is a grain tax collected on the harvests mostly of the *muškēnū*, commoners who work non-palace lands. This is clear from a clause in ARM 3 17 (LAPO 18 976) that Kibri-Dagan sent the king:

I have not been negligent about amassing the grain taxed (*šibšum*) in my district and the grain of the palace.

An entry in a memorandum (ARMT 23 100) records an accusation against an official, apparently too eager to fleece the commoners:

A commoner (*muškēnum*) stated, ‘he [the administrator] gave (permission) for a seah (*sūtum*) measure that was each time 4 liters too big in collecting the *šibšum* grain tax.

I imagine that he was cropping the difference for private gains.

5. Corvée. Akkadian dictionaries have an entry for corvée, *sablum* that derives its meaning largely from Mari occurrences. The Mari contexts were interpreted via Hebrew *sēvel*. Held (1968, 94) defended the connection and it has now entered most Hebrew dictionaries. However, Durand (1988, 15–16) has shown that *sablum/saplum* refers to a certain type of citizenry. Nonetheless, forced labor corvée remains an institution at Mari, most often associated with *ālik eqlim* or *muškēnum* being assembled (verb: *esēkum*) to work on palace land and maintaining canals (see Reculeau 2008, 351–352). In some protocols, officers take an oath not to

force personnel into working their private estates (see Charpin 2010, 55 § 4).

The nature of the obligation is obvious from a note Kibri-Dagan of Terqa sent to the king (ARM 3 6 = LAPO 17 800)

I have assembled the working crew of the district as well as the Terqa townsmen to work on the Mari canal. Half of the crew from Yaminite towns did not come here. A town that was earmarked for 50 gave me a working crew of 25 and one earmarked from 30 gave me 15. I objected violently (“‘I am robbed’, I shouted”) and have complained to my lord. My lord must write forcefully to the sheikhs that they assemble their crews (...).

Clarity about the obligation might well explain reluctance to respond in full, and this confusion is illustrated in a long note Yaqqim-Addu, governor of Saggaratum, sent the king (ARM 14 48 = LAPO 17 651). He is in dispute with the palace’s chief accountant, Yasim-sumu, about a pledge the king had given commoners (*muškēnū*) that they will not be burdened beyond a specific corvée duty. He wishes to honor that pledge, but Yasim-sumu is saddling them further by wishing delivery of their oxen to thresh the palace grain, another corvée task. The matter gets further entangled by the implication that letters to the king are being kept back.

6. Impost (*miksum*) for river traffic passing through Mari is another source of revenue. Zimri-Lim posted ARM 18 7 (LAPO 18 909) to Mukannišum, chief store-keeper for the palace, but the use of plural forms (in CAPS) indicate that he is also addressing other bureaucrats

GIVE strict orders that not one raft of any kind could bypass Mari or downstream from it. *As soon as you find* a raft that is bypassing, confiscate it for the palace, and bring the raft’s owner into jail (*nēparum*). The raft’s owner might well tell you, ‘There is no provision (here), and it is to get my provisions that I am going.’ You must answer him, ‘You, go back to the king (for permission), or write your household to fetch your provision from your own home’. Should they nevertheless talk to you and within the next couple of months. YOU allow the release 5 or 6 rafts, I shall hear of the matter of the raft that YOU are releasing, and for every raft that YOU are releasing, I shall have YOU pay a mina of silver. DO not be negligent over this matter.

Not that people were always ready to pay the impost. The *merḥûm* Ašmad attaches this comment to a longer note (A.229; Durand 2014) to the king:

Another matter: Merchants from Imar came to the encampment, wanting to buy sheep. I talked to them about (paying) the *miksum*, but they answered me in this way, ‘We will not pay the *miksum*’. Now then, must I assess 1 sheep for 10 as *miksum*? If not, I will do what my lord says. My lord should listen to this tablet and

send me promptly an answer to it.²⁰

In a series of notes, Numušda-naḥrari informed his superior Iddiyatum, a merchant who was also a military leader, about imposing a tax (*miksum*) on boat movements near Mari. These transactions may have been private; but as the records were found in the palace, they likely profited the king. ARM 13 96 (LAPO 18 876) is one of several such notes, in fact among the longest:

The two bitumen boats of Sin-bel-aplim and Bunene-abi are not inspected nor taxed. Tax (them). The inspector for these two boats (should be) Iddin-itur-Mer son of Šamaš-reti, the merchant, from Dur-Yaḥdullim.²¹

7. Appropriations of household at the death or disgrace of high officials.²²

High officials owed their position to the king who appointed them. The notion was that the holdings assigned to them on taking their post revert to the king on their death or removal from office. Zimri-Lim took over the Mari throne after major military efforts by tribal leaders, among them the tough-minded Bannum and more pliant Zakura-abum. Not long after these leaders died, Akšak-magir, an official in Qattunan, wrote FM 2 49 (Durand 1994: 87) to the king:²³

Iši-aḥu, a courier from Zibnatum arrived before me, but without carrying a letter from my lord. He told me, “By order of my lord, seal the homes of Bannum and of Zakura-abum”. So I, Yaḥšib-El, Yatarum, a surveyor (*ša sikkatim*), Iši-aḥu, my lord’s messenger, and Ḥabdiya, the steward of Bannum’s house, we all stayed in Bannum’s house and inspected it. (We found):

- 19 men, 2 women, 4 youngsters, 1 carpenter, 1 leather worker, 1 weaver, 3 male [...], [x number] of transient workers, [x number] of run-aways. The asset of the wife of Bannum.
- 9 women, 9 plow-bulls, 55 gurs (about 176 bushels) of sesame, 100 gurs (320

²⁰ An extract from a letter Yatar-kabkab sent to Zimri-Lim early in his reign (A.2052+; see Durand 2011, 182–187) suggests that refusal to pay was customary. The argument with Emar merchants is about shipment of grain, “Once again (...). I told them this about the grain, ‘I plan to load (on boats) the grain that Aplaḥanda (of Karkemiš) has given my lord; Anyone objects?’ They answered me, ‘There is no fault on our part; but the *miksum* (impost) is high.’ I then told them, ‘Is this *miksum* something new that my lord has imposed? Has he set something that was not set previously? Is it good that my lord just now abolishes this *miksum* that was set from old? And what about your *miksum*? The Tuttul *miksum* is 10 minas of silver for 30 carpenters, (equivalent) to the money his father (Yaḥdun-Lim) paid Ešnunna. He cannot absolve you!’ (...).”

²¹ For others, see LAPO 18 nos. 862–904.

²² Subject nicely studied in van Koppen 2002; see also Heimpel 1997.

²³ Bannum, one of the Sima’al tribal leaders to whom Zimri-Lim owed his throne, died soon after the king’s ascent. He owned a home in Qattunan. Zakura-abum, likely the king of Zalluḥan and son-in-law of Zimri-Lim, also had holdings there.

bushels) of grain, 7 gurs of ...; 13 gurs of *šahlatum*; 2 gurs of beans, 5 gurs [...], 1 talent of wool. All these are the assets of the house of Bannum that were received via Ḥabdiya, the butler.

– 1 man, 2 women, 1 male youngster, [x] female youngsters, 2 bulls, 5 gurs and 20 liters, sesame, 15 pounds of wool. (These are) the assets of the house of Zakura-abum.

Discriminating between state and private property is not always clear (at least to me). When Bunuma-Addu a high (but also venal) official died late in Zimri-Lim's career, the king instructed his wife (ARM 26 185-bis = LAPO 18 1145):

Regarding the assets of Bunuma-Addu's estate about which you wrote me, I have listened to the catalog of his assets. Release (to his family) all about which you have written to me: all the household furniture, as much grain as is available, 50 acres of protected land and the money for his gods.²⁴ Two-thirds of the 21 male servants at his disposal should be given over to his own household while a third should be taken to the palace. His chariot's donkeys are given to (the diviner) Šamaš-in-matim; these donkeys should be assigned to Šamaš-in-matim's household.²⁵

The palace also seized the property of individuals who found it prudent to make a quick exit from their duty, among them military. A nice note from Tell Sakka (SW of Damascus) in Syria (Tell Sakka 2; Abdallah – Durand 2014), gives the fullest inflection (readings from the envelope are set between braces):

Liqma-Addu, the *nāsikum* of Ugulsat, has escaped rather than face the *liqtum* (tax). In his stead, Ili-uštalu has paid the *liqtum*. The elders (of Idda-Adu) have handed

²⁴ Perhaps destined to fulfill a vow; but see van Koppen 2002, 318–319.

²⁵ On Bunuma-Addu's estate, see van Koppen 2002, 331. Durand 1998, 534 cites (French only) from A.265, a letter the controller Šidqi-epuḥ posted to Zimri-Lim, "As it concerns the field of Bunuma-Addu, the worked-land is about 60 acres and in it the harvest is large. My lord has released the whole field to Bunuma-Addu's sons, with the palace taking nothing from it. I have informed my lord. So far, however, I have not assessed the contents of Bunuma-Addu's documents and have not even seen one. My lord has released all grain (...)". Such largess on the part of the palace may have come after intense lobbying by heirs. That not all heirs gave up without a fight is illustrated by this incident. Yaqqim-Addu sent ARM 14 56 (LAPO 18 1020) to the king in which he reported on his effort to sequester the property of Zu-ḥatni(m), a merchant who also ran diplomatic missions to Alep and elsewhere, "On the same day the tablet of my lord about inspecting the home of Zu-ḥatni reached me, the housekeeper (*abarakkum*) Bur-Nunu came to Saggaratum. I summoned him and told him, 'With regards inspecting this house, I am to settle the (accounts). Fetch me (...) the wife of Zu-ḥatni, now living in Dur-Yaḥdullim'. Bur-Nunu went to fetch the wife of Zu-ḥatni, telling her, 'Seal up your home and leave.' But this woman told Bur-Nunu to his face, 'Whatever is in the home, including maids and slaves, as well as (...) cattle and sheep would be taken from me. Should I leave here, an affluent man (lú *damqum*) (will take it)'".

Ili-uštalu the house of Liqma-Addu. Anyone who contests (the status) of Liqma-Addu's house will pay 110 shekels of silver, (plus) 1 shekel of silver as *nēbeḫum* (gratuity) to Zimri-Eraḫ, the judge, and a half a shekel (*i.e.* as gratuity) to Aḫi-malik, the guard. [Many witnesses]. Month: Ibbana; Year: Ammi-kuluḫ, the king, collected the *liqum* of Bit Abi-Samiri.²⁶

e. From commercial activities

Kings also invested funds with merchants, those native to their areas as well as residents at foreign courts. They owned flocks of animals. They operated quarters in foreign capitals, equipping them with wives, officials, and servants, and purchased towns in far-away places.

1. Equipping caravans. Samsi-Addu instructs his son on getting ready for a caravan (ARM 1 17 = LAPO 16 417):

The day after sending this letter of mine, the messengers from Tilmun [Bahrain] will leave Šubat-Enlil [Tell Leilan]. Wealthy men at their arrival should hire 10 poor folks who can accompany them, so that with their wages they could support their people, therefore traveling satisfied. If you send off the wealthy (by themselves), they will simply abandon the caravan. You must simply not send the wealthy off. Let it be arranged as per this tablet:

- 30 male sheep, 30 liters of fine oil, 60 liters of linseed oil – poured into leather bottles, (plus) 3 liters of juniper seed, and boxwood (essence);
- For the 10 Tilmun (messengers) and their servants: leather bottles, 1 per person; shoes, 2 each;
- For 5 servants of mine: leather bottles, 1 each; shoes, 2 each;
- For 7 craftsmen: leather bottles, 1 each; shoes, 2 each;
- For the 10 men who accompany them from Šubat-Enlil: leather bottles, 1 each; shoes, 2 each;
- For the 10 load-donkey: 10 ropes, each 1.5 ninda (9 meters).

Total: 52 leather bottles; 64 pairs of shoes, one large bag; 10 ropes, of 1.5 cubits. Because at their arrival these messengers were detained, when previously they had not, I said to La'um, 'Ḫammi-tilu should make ready in Mari'. You should now send a message that Ḫammi-tilu be brought to you and make ready in Mari for the messengers, so that he could travel with them when they arrive. Supply them with as much provision as they ask of you.

2. Private purchase. Always ready to profit from recycling gifts received, Zimri-Lim had written Yassi-Dagan, a military leader with impressive pedigree (son of

²⁶ The same process affected criminals. Dadu-rabi, an official, writes OBTR 95 (Dalley *et al.* 1976, 81) to King Aqba-ḫammu of Qaṭṭara, "About the estates of the criminals that you seized in Yašibatum, what was there of grain, pigs, malt, 'beer-bread' I gave it to (Queen) Iltanim. Now then, about the grain, pigs, malt, and beer-bread that were taken from these estates (a couple of lines damaged)".

La'um and brother of Sammetar). The latter replied as follows (A.2993+ = LAPO 18 855; Michel 1992, 127–130):

About the *duḥšum*-stone that my lord conveyed to me; after setting a price for it, he wrote: ‘The price for this *duḥšum*-stone could be higher than what I am setting it for you; but it must not be less.’²⁷ This is what my lord wrote me. However, on the price of the *duḥšum*-stone that my lord has set for me, should people (value it) lower it by 10 or 20 shekels, could my decision be like that?²⁸ My lord has sent me this letter as if I am not familiar with palace (practices)! In fact, I had already thought, ‘I need to sell the *duḥšum*-stone that my lord sent me at a higher price than what he had set for me; I should fetch 10 to 20 shekels more’. Now then, according to my lord’s instruction, I will sell this *duḥšum*-stone and I shall use as much money (of the sale) that my lord had assigned me to purchase either tin or lapis-lazuli, depending on what I find available. It may well be that *duḥšum*-stone could be abundant or scarce in this land; but who can tell? Regarding what my lord has instructed, I will not be negligent.

Yassi-Dagan continues by alluding to other ventures:

Regarding the tin about which my lord wrote to me, ‘Buy on credit some tin from a merchant in Ešnunna, and I will pay him (or it) here myself’. This is what my lord wrote me. In accordance with my lord’s instruction, I am buying tin on credit from a merchant. I plan to take along 5 talents of tin for my lord.²⁹

3. Private agents abroad. Practically at every major center where there is relatively amicable relations, kings had agents (diplomats, military leaders, or merchants). Šidqu-lanasi is such an official in Karkemiš.³⁰ In ARM 26 534, he declares his readiness to be Zimri-Lim’s agent:

²⁷ The exact nature of the stone (na4.du8.šú.a, *duḥšum*), likely a quartz, has not been determined. The term is applied in Mari to wool and leather so it may have had a yellowish tinge that sets it off nicely from lapis-lazuli with which jewelers frequently combined it; see CAD D, 200–202 (*dušû* A.)

²⁸ That is, I would never accept it.

²⁹ Meptum, likely a *merḥûm* (tribal army chief) in the region south of Mari, writes A.16 (Dossin 1970, 103–106 = LAPO 18 912) to Zimri-Lim, “In recent days, I have heard it said by my lord’s own mouth about the dearth of tin in the palace and about the palace’s need for tin. Just now a caravan of 29 donkeys and 44 merchants loaded with tin has come from Ešnunna. I have had them directed to my lord. If my lord wants tin, he should talk to the chief merchant, letting him supervise the tin. Or else, my lord could dispatch inspectors ahead of the donkeys, either at Ḫiddan or at Der, so that the tin is not handed (sold) to another hand. Another matter: I have *cleared* their tin, but did not place it under seal. I have looked for tablets thinking, maybe they are smuggling tablets elsewhere”.

³⁰ His dossier in ARM 26/2 is reviewed in Lafont 1991 and 1997. Such personalities were likely to represent others besides the kings – in fact, they were merchants with bureaucratic portfolios (or vice versa). For their entrepreneurial dealings with other Mari officials, see FM

My lord! My lord told me the following about his requests for which he had written his brother (Aplaḥanda of Karkemiš), ‘Take up my request and follow its progress; have him deliver on the requests I have sought from my brother’. Whenever my lord speaks or writes about requests, for my part, my lord’s requests – as many as he makes to his brother Aplaḥanda – was it not I who stood ready, and did I not fulfill my lord’s requests? My lord at this moment should not be saying, ‘I have no servant whatsoever in Karkemiš’! Whatever supplies you have requested from your brother, these supplies have been given.

In another note they exchanged (ARM 26 539, see FM 11 186), Šidqu-lanasi writes:

You have sent me $1\frac{2}{3}$ minas (100 shekels) of silver to buy wine and $\frac{1}{2}$ mina of silver to buy (hire) boats. I have used 10 shekels to buy 600 (empty) jars. So with the $1\frac{1}{2}$ minas (90 shekels) of silver remaining, I now can fulfill (an order for) 420 jars of wine. (I shall need to use) the silver for the boat, to which I added $3\frac{1}{2}$ shekels of my own, or else I can fulfill (an order) for just 420 jars of wine.

4. Land acquisition. Among the more interesting revelations of the Mari archives is that Old Babylonian rulers invested in acquiring domains way beyond their own borders. They would set up households there, run by majordomos, with ‘coffers’ that operated as a private bank for commercial transactions. It is possible that these extraterritorial extensions were perceived as a place of refuge should fortune turn against them. Thus Yasmaḥ-Addu had space in Ekallatum and Šubat-Enlil (see Villard 2001, 100–112) and two sons of Hammurabi of Babylon lived in the Mari region (Lion 1994).³¹

Late in his reign, Zimri-Lim negotiated the purchase of several hovels controlled by Yamḥad, as well as of Alaḥtum, likely Alalaḥ (Tell Atchana). The thick dossier is published in exemplary fashion as FM 7 25–48 (Durand 2002, 59–152). In his letter to Zimri-Lim (FM 7 36; Durand 2002, 128–132), Nur-Sin, Mari’s agent in Yamḥad, handsomely reviews the events. In it, he uses ‘lord’ for both kings; out of politeness, but also because he might well have been a Yamḥadian working for Zimri-Lim. While it is a long letter, I reproduce it here but, as I have argued in Sasson 2009, the point to remember as we read it is that Hammurabi (and his mother Gašera) of Yamḥad wanted to give away the town, implying that they could take it back, even after Zimri-Lim had improved it. Zimri-Lim, however, wanted to purchase it and so relieve himself from such a threat.

11 185 (wine for the diviner Asqudum) and FM 6 71 (= ARM 26 545; Marti 2002, 477–478).

³¹ Šukrum-Tešub of Eluḥut wrote this note to Till-abnu of Šeḥna/Šubat-Enlil (RATL 89; Eidem 2011, 159–161), “The house of Eluḥut is your house and the house of Šubat-Enlil is my house (...). You must not give to anyone the home I desire in Šubat-Enlil for I am ready to give you a home in Eluḥut, and I will give you as well the town that you desire. Do ask me for a house in Eluḥut and I shall ask you for a house [in Šubat-Enlil] (...).”

Hammurabi (of Yamḥad) gave the town Alaḥtum to my lord. When he gave this town to my lord, Hammurabi's servant Yasmaḥ-Addu, who is frequently on message service to my lord, Lord Hammurabi sent him along with the Chief Musician (Warad-ilišu) to Alaḥtum. He gathered the citizens of Alaḥtum and Yasmaḥ-Addu reiterated the orders of his lord (Hammurabi), telling them, "My lord Hammurabi has given to Lord Zimri-Lim the town Alaḥtum, its field, its vineyards, and the olive groves stretching from Alaḥtum's limits. From Alaḥtum must leave the elite (*wedūtum*), the home-owners (*maskanū*), the replacements (^{li}*diri.ga*), and whoever holds or works land in Alaḥtum. On your part, get in touch with kin of yours who have gone to another town and bring back to Alaḥtum those who have settled elsewhere". This is what Yasmaḥ-Addu told the citizens in the Chief Musician's presence.

The Chief Musician and Yasmaḥ-Addu remained 10 days in Alaḥtum. They measured the fields, they checked the boundaries of the meadows, tallied the olive-trees, recorded the vineyards, and assessed the households. Once Yasmaḥ-Addu handed over to the Chief Musician town, fields, vineyards, and olive groves, he said the following, "From now on, no one will have claim over the fields of Alaḥtum". At that time, (Queen) Gašera did not write the Chief Musician about the fields of her *sāmiḥū*-peasants, about her vineyards, or her honey (hives).

When the Chief Musician left Alaḥtum for Ḥalab (Aleppo), and brought back to my Lord Hammurabi a report on the town, the vineyards, and the olive groves, Hammurabi told the Chief Musician, "I have now given you the town that Zimri-Lim requested of me. This town is in ruin; he should repair it. There is no opposition. Just as I have left this town, all must leave it". This is what Lord Hammurabi told the Chief Musician.

Ever since Lord Hammurabi told this to the Chief Musician, the Chief Musician stayed in Ḥalab daily for 4 months. I worked the fields of Gašera, of the homeowners, and of the replacements, with Gašera never (once) contacting the Chief Musician. Of the 200 (acres) of the fields belonging to Gašera, I covered 60 (acres) of land with seed, and she never once contacted the Chief Musician; but once the Chief Musician left, Gašera badgered me that I had covered her land with seed. Gašera went before the king and he released to her land. Thereupon the land I had seeded was given to her.

Ever since they took the land, I was made the target of the following accusation, "You have assembled the citizens and told them, 'My lord has paid the price and bought Alaḥtum'. This is what you told the citizens of the town". Once I was told this, I dumped ashes on my skull³² (saying), "Those citizens to whom I said these words, may they charge me before Addu. May Lord Hammurabi, even without my lord's (permission), dock me up to double (the damage). Someone else should inspect my holdings; indeed take the land fully! Why would you slander me"? This is what I told the king.

The matter was stretched for a full day. The next day, Tab-balaṭi (Hammurabi's minister) approached, and I told him, "A terrible accusation has been set against me; it must be supported"! He replied, "The king had a good laugh. Why are you

³² This is a sign of mourning, but also of consternation and resentment, especially when done publically.

taking all this so personally? Maybe they will give (only) half of the town to my lord (Zimri-Lim). Just write your lord". This is what ʿTab-balaṭi told me. On the third day, I put myself again to (assemble) witnesses and to draw (them) near ʿTab-balaṭi. But when he again said the same, I put myself to (assemble more) witnesses. My lord should strive and make happen the moving out of people from the midst of this town. On this day, I am badgered about the town my lord wishes to buy.³³

Zimri-Lim's desire to acquire Alaḫtum was thwarted as long as Nur-Sin was in charge of negotiations for, as I tried to show in Sasson 2009, he was no great tactician, lacked subtlety and was too quick to take offence. Recognizing the problem, Zimri-Lim sent Šunuḫra-ḫalu, his private secretary, who managed to resolve the difficulty but at a cost to his king. Alas for Zimri-Lim, he had but a few months to enjoy possessing Alaḫtum before his reign ended.

The above is but a sampling of the range of profitable ventures opened to Mari era kings. Not wishing to unduly abuse the space offered me in which to honor Lucio, I have avoided reference to other sources of revenue, not least among them the barter in daughters and sisters. Nonetheless, I do hope that this brief presentation might pique his interest enough to engage a subject that can only profit through his own inspection.

³³ The Mari era queens controlled property and funded their own ventures. Šiptu had at least one merchant, Ilesiš, as her exclusive representative (FM 2 29; ARM 10 161 = LAPO 18 1181). But to return to the Alaḫtum transaction, FM 7 36 clearly displays Gašera's clever maneuvers to arrive at the best return for disposing of property. Having used Nur-Sin's clueless negotiations to her advantage, she waits for a visit by Šunuḫra-ḫalu to fully reveal her terms. In FM 7 47, her son Hammurabi urges Zimri-Lim to directly negotiate with her. Gašera complains bitterly about losing her home but then, like Ephron the Hittite, drops a hint about her price, "Come now," says she, "if I just set forth for Mari, will [Zimri-Lim] not give me the land and property for me to exist (lit: eat bread)". In fact, Šunuḫra-ḫalu seems to pick up on the offer, as he answers, flatteringly but also concretely, "How, as to Nur-Sin bothering you, my lord will write you. Alaḫtum town, Harazzik, Tawarambi, and the land of Mari belong to whom if not to you? If you say so, write to my lord and let him give you a town in Mari".

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