

Aleppo, Mari and the aleppine-*mariyanum* dynastic project in the ancient Syria

Alepo, Mari e o projeto dinástico alepino-*mariyanum* na Síria antiga

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ABSTRACT This research aims to present aspects of diplomatic relations in the ancient Near East during the Proto-Babylonian period, focusing on the territorial state of Yamḥad, located in the northwestern Levant, and the expansionist project of Mari, situated in the Middle Euphrates. By establishing an agreement between their respective kingdoms, Yarīm-līm and Zimrī-līm conveyed an ambition to control the northwestern Levant. War policies and commercial interests were set against the backdrop of the dynastic marriage between Zimrī-līm and Shibtu, daughter of Yarīm-līm, which is why this alliance became the foundation for the union of two dynastic lineages of the same Amorite origin. Our hypothesis is that, from a Levantine perspective, Yamḥad became the center of Semitic civilization at the same time that Zimrī-līm ascended the throne of Mari with political and military ambitions aimed at territorial expansion and participation in the trade networks controlled by Yamḥad, through which it would reach connections with

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the eastern Mediterranean. However, Yarīm-līm, as the highest regional authority, allowed neither political nor religious parity. This research seeks to historicize, through contextual intersections, the alliances and environments – perhaps culturally conflicting, yet also capable of fostering affections – through which two dynastic houses may have integrated various ethnic groups from semi-autonomous spheres while maintaining dynamic borders.

KEYWORDS Amorite Yamhad kingdom, Syro-Mesopotamian civilization, alliances in the Ancient World

RESUMO Esta pesquisa tem por objetivo apresentar aspectos das relações diplomáticas do antigo Oriente Próximo no período protobabilônico, focando sobre o Estado territorial de Yamḥad, no noroeste do Levante, e o projeto expansionista de Mari, localizado no Médio Eufrates. Ao pactuarem seus respectivos reinos, Yarīm-līm e Zimrī-līm demonstram aspiração em controlar o noroeste do Levante. As políticas de guerra e os interesses comerciais ficaram sob o plano de fundo do casamento dinástico entre Zimrī-līm e Shibtu, filha de Yarīm-līm, motivo pelo qual essa aliança se tornou o fundamento da união entre as duas linhagens dinásticas de mesma origem amorrita. Nossa hipótese é que, na perspectiva levantina, Yamḥad se tornou o centro da civilização semita na mesma época em que Zimrī-līm subiu ao trono em Mari com pretensões político-militares que visavam à expansão territorial e à participação nas redes comerciais controladas por Yamḥad, pelas quais alcançaria as conexões com o Mediterrâneo oriental. No entanto, Yarīm-līm, como maior autoridade regional, não permitia paridade nem política nem religiosa. Esta pesquisa pretende historizar por meio de interseções contextuais as alianças e os ambientes – talvez culturalmente conflitantes, mas também capazes de gerar afecções – por meio dos quais duas casas dinásticas poderiam ter integrado vários grupos étnicos de universos semiautônomos, mantendo bordas dinâmicas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Reino amorrita de Yamhad, civilização Siro-Mesopotâmia, alianças no mundo antigo

In this research, I will focus on presenting the political processes of a dynasty construction in the northwest region of the Levant from a historiographical perspective, specifically from Aleppo [*ḥa-la-ab^{ki}*; *Ḥalab*] – kingdom of the land of Yamhad [*Yamḥad*] –, within the framework of diplomatic relations. Sometimes, in an oxymoronic classification, the interest in the fortunate material cultures of Mari [*ma-ri^{ki}*] – a city that has often been disassociated from ancient Syria, especially due to its location on the Middle Euphrates and its East-Semitic linguistic relationship – and Ugarit [*ug-ga-ra-at^{ki}*; ^{KUR}*ú-ga-ri-it*], along with the territorialization processes involving the Arpad/Bit-Agusi [^m*gu-u-si* KUR *ia-ḥa-a-nu*; *Bīt-Agūsi*] kingdom, has peripherally linked so many cultures and political entities originating in the Northern Levant.¹ These entities are subordinated on scales that overlap those large index producers.

This has been the case with Aleppo. An ancient Amorite tribal and pastoral structure [MAR.TU; KUR *a-mur-ri*; Amurrû], Aleppo emerged as the capital at a time when it was ruled by the *sharrum* Yarim-lim [*ia-ri-im-li-im*; *Yarīm-līm*]² (c. 1780-1765)³; designated in

1 In the Amorite Period, crystallizations of socio-ethnicities in the the Northern Levant were responsible for the creation of new state and private commercial circuits on newly founded Syrian-Anatolian routes; this is where autochthonous cultures were disseminated as instruments of political identity. The success of that political system from the tribal kingdoms generated structural and technological transformations, in whose expansionist mission Haddu was the tutelary deity. This should place the kingdom of Aleppo and Yamḥad in the long academic debates, predominantly about Mari and Assyria – which is what I tried to do through a book that is currently being published (Santos, 2024).

2 First: *Sharrum* was the title of distinction from the king of Aleppo. Second: In the meaning of the names of Amorite-origin kings, the god Lim is referenced, “invoked in Amorite proper names”. The English gentilic “Amorite” or “Amorrite” from the Sumerian MAR.TU is “derived from the Hebrew version of the original name *Amurru*” (Buccellati, 2008, p. 141; see also Mieroop, 2020, p. 150-151) – it certainly refers in Hebrew to *ʿmōrî*, used in statements in both the singular and plural. The Amorites came to control Mesopotamia in the 19th century, after the Third Dynasty of Ur collapse (c. 2100-2000) and following the development of Isin and Larsa city-states, in Lower Mesopotamia (Porter, 2013, p. 251-325). As for the West Semitic god Lim (Li’m, Limum, Limmu), he is “frequently attested in personal names of the ancient dynasty of Ebla, ancient Babylonian Mari, and Ugarit, including royal Mari names such as Zimri-Lim and Yaḥdun-Lim” (Frayne; Stuckey, 2021, p. 183).

3 Regarding periodization and dating, I add, in appendices, two chronological tables for further information.

the *Archives Royales de Mari* (ARM)⁴ as king of Aleppo and the Yamhad land, son and successor of Sumu-Epuh (*Sūmû-Epuh*, ?-1780), the “beloved of Haddu”, [n]a-ra-[am ^dIŠKUR].

It is important to initially highlight, with historical agents, the notion of geography. Aleppo and its surroundings:

The eastern plateau consists of the steppes surrounding Aleppo (ancient Ḥalab), watered by the Kuweik River, and the areas south until Jabal Abū Rujmayn and Jabal Bishrī (ancient Bashar [...]). The Kuweit, which flows past Aleppo, is fed by sources north of the Kurt Dağ and is a western parallel to the Euphrates. In fact, Aleppo stands roughly midpoint for travel between the Euphrates and the Orontes (Suriano, 2014, p. 12).

The northern edges of the Levant, however, are not on simple scales: Hamat [URU.ḥa-ma-ti; *Ḥamat*, *Ḥama*], in the Orontes valley, with contacts from the Phoenician city-states and their north-south Mediterranean connections; in the Syrian limits from Sam'al Sam'al [sa-am-al-la; *Šam'al*], Karkamish [gar-ga-miš-a-a; *Karkamiš*] and the Aleppo plateau to the Middle Euphrates, with socio-ethnic greatness that participated in Mesopotamians systems such as the Amorite groups of in Jezirah (the ancient tribes KUR. *lab-du-du*, Tu'mūna and KUR. *ḥa-ṭa-lu*), Mari and Babylon [KUR. *kār-dun-ia-áš*; *Bāb-ilī*], advancing between the sacred river Balih [*Baliḥ*] and the river Habur [*Ḥābūr*].

By the end of the third millennium, urbanization had led to the development of several cities. Hamat, Qatna [*Qa-ta-nim*^{ki}; *Qaṭna*], Ebla [*Īblā*], Karkamish, Mari, and Aleppo were among the most important in the north and northwest of the Levant. In the early First-Babylonian period (c. 1800-1595/1792-1592), these cities, except Mari, became part of Yamhad's territory. With an innovative policy, structurally *temple-palace*, Aleppo became the religious center of the Haddu god [^{il}*adad*

4 Cf. Frayne (1990, p. 781).

be-el ḥa-la-ab^{ki}, “god Adad, lord of Aleppo”] and exerted a strong influence on the Syria-Mesopotamia. As soon as he came to power in Mari, Zimri-lim [*zi-im-ri-li-im*; *Zimrī-līm*] (c. 1774-1762), the last king of independent Mari, built diplomatic bridges on the borders with north-western Syria and the Upper Euphrates, establishing a strong alliance with Aleppo. In fact, Zimri-lim’s accession occurred amidst great opposition over his illegitimate blood affiliation to the dynasty founded by Amorite Yaggid-lim [*Yaggīd-līm*] (c. 1820), despite both belonging to the same Simalite lineage [*banū Simʿal*]. In this context, the support offered by Eshnunna [*ēš-nun-na*^{ki}; *Ešnunna*], an independent kingdom located in the Diyala valley, with pretensions in Upper Mesopotamia and governed by Ibal-pi’El II [*Ibāl-pī’El*] (c. 1779-1766), proved to be insufficient for stability around the city. These are the reasons for the complaints in letters by the king of Mari and his request for help to Yarim-lim.⁵

Tribal revolts along both banks of the Euphrates River forced agreements between threatened cities. Zimri-lim sent ambassadors to Aleppo with the intention of arranging a meeting to establish territorial security agreements, which resulted in the dynastic marriage with Shibtu [*šibtu*], daughter of Yarim-lim. The terms of the alliance forged the great diplomatic event that would strengthen the two Syrian kingdoms with the consanguineous singularity capable of building a dynastic lineage.⁶ Definitely, with this marriage, there is a testimony of conjunctural construction, in which the aim was to seek conditions for coexistence between urban politicians and pastoralists, sedentary and nomadic social grandeurs.

Through a letter, loyalty agreements were strengthened when Zimri-lim explained the reasons why he rejected a peace pact with the kingdom of Eshnunna. He wrote to the king of Aleppo, whom

5 See this documentation in Sasson (1998, p. 462-463, 2007, p. 465-467, 2014, p. 679-682) and in Porter (2013, p. 33).

6 See textual and iconographic sources in: Dossin (1938); Durand (1988, 1997, 2000); Charpin (2019).

he addressed as his “lord” [*be-lum*] and “father” [*abīya*], communicating that he had refused to talk to ambassadors from Eshnunna for three times because they arrived “without the consent of Yarim-Lim” (cf. Durand, 1997, p. 441-442). The act of distinction, considering the non-existence of an oath of loyalty at the time, was strategically aimed at accessing new commercial markets: Participating in the control of northwestern Levantine routes and receiving garrisons to contain the advance of Hammurabi’s Babylon in the Mesopotamian south [*ḥa-am-mu-ra-pí; Ḥammu-rāpi*] (1792-1750) towards the Upper Euphrates.

Reigning at a time when the largest territorial states had great kings – Hammurabi in Babylon, Shamshi-Addu I [*Šamšī-Addu*] (c. 1807-1775) in Assyria [KUR ^d*a-šur; ʾaššur*] and his son Yasmah-Addu (c. 1795-1776) in Mari,⁷ succeeded by Zimri-lim –, Yarim-lim was considered the most powerful king in the region (Whiting, 1995, p. 1237). By the end of the Amorite period (c. 1774-1750), Aleppo, Mari, Karkemish, Tell Leilan [*šeḥnâ*, renamed *šubat-enlil*], Ekallatum [*é-kál-la-tim*], Babylon, and Assyria constituted important kingdoms for the control of cities in the valleys (Figure 1). Yarim-lim was responsible of transforming a local political entity or tribal kingdom into a reference kingdom in the “land of Yamhad”. The conception of *temple-palace* power⁸ was driven by the logic of expansion through political influence, but those responsible for territorial control and mainly administrative evolution were the military alliances. With them, the transition process between tribalism (chiefdom), tribal kingdom, city-state, and territorial state accelerated in the region⁹. In the territorial State, the structural forms of power reflected

7 The warlike atmosphere in the royal cities located along the Euphrates River can be seen in the letters exchanged within the family between Yasmah-Addu and Shamshi-Addu I, as well as the letters sent and received by Yasmah-Addu, his officials and the kings of the region (cf. Oppenheim, 1967, p. 96-110; specifically on conflicts, p. 105-107).

8 Government strategy based on the connection between the palace (politics) and the temple (religion). In this system, the temple officials are priests appointed by the king and exercise political functions in favor of the dynasty in power. The temple of Aleppo became central to the legitimizing operation: the dissemination of the god designated by the king to be the leader of the pantheon, Haddu/Adad, and the divinatory support for the king (see Santos, 2024).

9 See, for example, Reculeau (2016, p. 179-181).

Figure 1: Great kingdoms of the ancient Near East seen from the northern Levant, c. 2000-1750



Source: Image edited and translated by the author from a map available on the Wikimedia Commons platform: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yamhad_and_Vassals.png. Accessed on: April 24, 2023.

the cultures of the conquered lands, especially the urban ways of life that needed internal defense supports to control the borders [*pāṭum*].

Therefore, the political influence of the city of Aleppo surpassed Yamhad's territory in the context of regional integration and was supported by the worship of Haddu, the storm god. This occurred with the influence of the Yaminites [*banū yamina*], in the conflictive politics of Mari, and in the midst of assassinations of Yaminite kings, around 1772¹⁰, according to the chronological indication of the ARM. In this

10 ZL 2', based on the chronology of Zimri-lim's reign. "ZL" refers to the king's name, Zimri-lim, followed by the year of his reign, so that periods and dates can be checked. From now on, the abbreviation ZL will be used, followed by the corresponding year.

new connective context between Syrian kingdoms, Yarim-lim and Zimri-lim established the marriage alliance that contributed to the increase in the Aleppian leadership on the Euphrates routes. Undertaken as a northwestern expansion strategy aimed at reaching the Mediterranean, the marriage with Shibtu made Zimri-lim a protected king of the Aleppian king. This becomes evident in the extradition of refugees, important to contain the internal conflicts caused by the socio-ethnic groups of Amorite origin that occupied Syrian and Mesopotamian cities since the end of the third millennium.

Above the expectations due to the conjuncture of incidents involving those seminomadic populations that were counting on the support of Emar city-state, on the Upper Euphrates, the apparently victimized Zimri-lim sent caravans of precious objects to the city of Hazor [*tell hāṣōr*], in the Orontes valley. Given the geographical distance, perhaps this is another political move aimed at the Mediterranean, but it could also be, according to the inscription on Tablet Hazor 10,¹¹ a diplomatic action for dowries received from Hazor on the occasion of a dynastic marriage with a *mariyanum* princess. At the time, Hazor was “a center of literature and diplomacy” (Greenberg, 2019, p. 232). With the crisis involving prisoners, generating conflict between vassal rulers, the murder of people and, therefore, damaging inter-regional trade between the Middle Euphrates and Yamhad – notably with the important cities of Qatna, Aleppo, Emar, and Karkamesh –, Mediterranean markets became the alternatives.

DYNASTIC CONSTRUCTION IN MAPOGRAPHY

Northern Levant was transformed into a mosaic of structurally state-owned independent cities. The city pattern – division of social work ordered by the ruling elite, costs of private property, defense outsourcing,

11 See the important archaeological research on Bronze Age city-states carried out by Raphael Greenberg (2019, p. 180-271; specifically on the aforementioned tablet and the historical context of the site, see p. 228-233).

consumption of goods granted by purchase and sale, taxation of goods, state religion –, at an initial stage, attracted large contingents of villagers and affected small towns in the surrounding areas, in which rural lifestyles were preserved. The environmental landscape transformation occurred through the implementation of the idea of territorial distinction through the construction of walls and border towers, even in the steppes. The first fortified cities were identified on the Levant coast, in Yavneh-Yam, 30 kilometers from Ashqelon, and in Tel Burga, in the Karmel region. In these sites, according to the identification by Raphael Greenberg (2019, p. 214-15), uninhabited land was maintained for the cultivation of vegetable gardens and animal pens.

At a time when kings from the northwest made alliances in order to increase control over vassal rulers and annex locations within their limits of influence, two city-states unbalanced the geopolitical bloc formation: Qatna and Aleppo. Correspondence from the ARM attests to the political power of Syrian cities in the formation of blocs.

The city of Mari was located upstream of Babylonia on the Euphrates, just below where the Ḫabur flows into it from the hills to the north. Through several decades and two separate political administrations, the Mari kingdom bridged the eastern Mesopotamian powers and the great Syrian centers of Aleppo and Qatna (Fleming, 2009, p. 228).

The accession of kings and vassal rulers from the region to Aleppo demonstrated the power recognition of a city that now had the same influence as a territorial state. The metaphorical significance of this adherence, *qaran ṣubāt*, “grasping the hem of his clothing”, testified to the search for protection from the great king Yarim-lim, responsible for building the monarchical structure of Yamhad (Lauinger, 2015, p. 4-5; Mieroop, 2020, p. 126-27). On the other hand, other state powers tried to advance towards the Levantine northwest and participate in decisions in the military and economic spheres emerging in the north. Burke (2023, p. 357) alludes to the fact that disputes over productive land

in the steppe involving Yamhad, Mari and Assyria have been attested since the end of the 20th century. This was the case with Ibal-pi'El II of Eshnunna and Hammurabi of Babylon. Hammurabi sent diplomats to the kingdom of Yamhad with the aim of establishing strategic alliances in northwestern Syria with Aleppo and in central Syria with Qatna (Charpin, 2019, p. 61).

Akkadian sources (Silva Castillo, 2007, p. 146-147) indicate that several nomadic social groups maintained settlements in the north-west at the beginning of the second millennium. Two Amorite groups, Yaminite and Simalite, formed the so-called kingdom of mobile pastoralists of Hana [*hana*], or Hananite of the steppes [*nawūm*] (Porter, 2009, p. 203). Zimri-lim presented himself, from the beginning, as the son of Yahdun-lim [*ia-aḥ-du-ul-li-im*; *Yaḥdun-līm*] (c. 1810-1794) and designated himself as “the king of Mari and *māt Hana*”, while his reign lasted about thirteen years and three months.¹² The strategy success did not isolate the city from conflicts on the borders, mainly caused by the expansionist policies of Eshnunna and Babylon. On the contrary, it aroused the admiration of kings, as from the king of Ugarit city-state, who, in an unsigned letter sent to King Hammurabi I (c. 1765-1760), Yarim-lim's successor in Aleppo, asked for the approval to visit the palace of Mari: “Show me the palace of Zimri-Lim! I wish to see him” (Gates, 2011, p. 62, 158).

Despite the technological evolution of Mari, the great regional power continued to be from Aleppo, whose expansion had made it “strategically located on the commercial route from the Euphrates valley to the Mediterranean Sea” (Mieroop, 2020, p. 148). At that time, many individuals from the ruling classes held the title of “factors” of merchants, who, far from their cities, could act as a “corporation” [AB¹³:

12 As he was not a military commander, in my opinion, Zimri-lim's concerns about royal legitimacy involved family integration or kinship lineage. About this, see Porter (2013, p. 60-61). On the duration of the reign, see Dossin (1938, p. 114); Lacambre (2002, p. 2); Barreya Fracaroli (2011, p. 194).

13 *Antigo Babilônio (AB)*. Cf. Burke (2023, p. 198).

tamkārū, kārū]. This broad domain for the Euphrates valley began after several conflicts in central Syria involving city-states supported by the Assyrians, in which the control of territories in Upper Mesopotamia occurred after the death of Shamshi-Addu I. The regional authority of Yarim-lim noted in the report sent by Zimri-lim to his commissioner in Aleppo, which I mentioned above:

Tell my lord: (says) his servant Yatar-Kabkab.

My lord told me this about Eshnunna: “During your journey up the river, when you find yourself in the presence of Yarim-Lim, you will speak to him like this about Eshnunna: ‘(The king of) Eshnunna does not cease to send me messages for a non-aggression pact. The first time, he sent me a messenger; I sent him back to his own border. He sent me a second time, and I sent him back to his own border. And afterwards an ambassador [*rākib imêrim*] came and I sent him back to his own border, saying: How, without the consent of Yarim-Lim, would there be a pact of peace with Eshnunna(?)’”.¹⁴

Political affiliations among pastoralists at the beginning of the second millennium were fluid, a consequence of constant environmental changes, while city relations were based on the crystallization of same-group identities. In both, the “awareness of historical location” culture is preserved, to use an expression by Anne Porter (2013, p. 319), which plays a background role in Zimri-lim’s response to Eshnunna’s representatives – a kingdom that was a great explorer of minerals, starting in the

14 In the original: “Dis à mon Seigneur: ainsi [parle] ton serviteur Yatar-Kabkab. Mon Seigneur m’avait dit ceci à propos d’Ešnunna : ‘Lors de ton voyage en amont, quand tu te trouveras en présence de Yarim-Lim, tu lui parleras ainsi à propos d’Ešnunna : ‘[Le roi d’]Ešnunna ne cesse de m’envoyer des messages en vue d’un pacte de non-agression. Une première fois, il m’a envoyé un messenger ; je l’ai renvoyé à la frontière même. Il m’en a envoyé une deuxième fois, et je l’ai renvoyé à la frontière même. Et par la suite, un dignitaire est venu et je l’ai renvoyé à la frontière même, en disant : Comment, sans l’aveu de Yarim-Lim, y aurait-il alliance de paix avec Ešnunna[?]’”. Cf. Durand (1997, p. 441-442).

20th century, and that advanced into Assyria and Upper Mesopotamia when governed by king Naram-Sin [*Narām-Sîn*] (c. 1794-1785).

At various times, diplomatic relations between Aleppo and Mari presented concepts associated with kinship lineage, not exactly international dealings. Perhaps this happened because the new dynasty that came to power in the Middle Euphrates in the mid-19th century had the same Amorite origin as the Aleppian kings. Shibtu's influence as queen and administrator with royal autonomy can be gauged from the many letters exchanged between Zimri-lim and her. Part of this documentation found in the ARM was sent when the king was on military campaigns and diplomatic trips (Melville, 2007, p. 238). He informs her about his activities, and she transmits the information to the palace officials [*šarāḫu*], ordering them tasks that go beyond the city limits. With this dynastic marriage, in addition to the establishment of diplomatic relations and the legitimization of the king who came to power through a kinship line not recognized by his subjects, there was the beginning of a dynasty construction involving two powerful Amorite states, in which the military protection exchange alliance evolved into a dynasty, with loyalty to the great Aleppian king for identity of time and territorial dominance.

THE DYNASTY IMAGE CARVED INTO THE CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence between Yarim-lim and his son and successor Hammurabi I proves the existence of a highly qualified diplomatic nucleus in Aleppo, capable of shortening great geographical distances and ethnic distinctions. The territorialization of the ancient Near East in the First-Babylonian period maintained recognized borders built by territorial states, whose political hierarchy was based on the military power of royal authority. Given this, politics between Yarim-lim and Zimri-lim was directly associated with state projects in which local kingdoms, by maintaining their borders, proposed new forms of expansion through diplomacy. The expansion of Mari occurred in a succession of events that allows it to be designated, according to Fleming (2009, p. 235-36),

as “the construction of the Zimri-Lim kingdom”. The designative statement is possible, in my opinion, because the kingdom of Yamhad already had its structures in operation, and Aleppo presented itself as a potential regional adversary. The diplomatic strategy I refer to allow an amalgam of socio-ethnicities from mobile cultures to settle on the right [*banū yamina*] and left [*banū sim'al*] of the Euphrates River and rule urbanized centers associated with the ancient kingdom of Hana.

The stability of Yamhad became a kind of parameter for the organization of districts whose rulers should act as representatives of the king or vassal kings, combining pastoral nomadism with city dwellers and sedentary farmers. The circumstances were more than propitious for a meeting between the two most important Syro-Mesopotamian kingdoms. Although “good words” were established through letters exchanged at various stages, the alliance between the two kings has not been classified as having been concluded at a distance. Asqudum’s diplomatic legitimacy allowed him to take oaths in Aleppo before the Aleppian king and immolate a colt [*hayaram qaṭālum*], as it usually happened during an Amorite festival dedicated to the Haddu god.¹⁵

The construction of the .Aleppine-Mariyanum alliance made two complementary strategies viable: In favor of Aleppo, in addition to the already mentioned leadership on the Euphrates routes, it guaranteed a safe commercial route with Euphratenic cities and maintained contact with the Levantine coast, channels for the diffusion of the *temple-palace* power. In favor of Mari, it functioned as a diplomatic horizon of protection against conflicts that could reach it from the Upper Euphrates, because the regional powers agreed to secure the internal borders and landmarks on the coastal routes.¹⁶ As proposed by Porter (2013, p. 26), the pastoralist Zimri-lim did not simply adopt the palace life, he

15 Cf. Burke (2023); Podany (2022, p. 289-300); Charpin (2019).

16 There is evidence that Zimri-lim visited the city-state of Ugarit (present-day Ras Shamra). On the evidence, see DOSSIN, Georges. Les archives épistolaires du palais de Mari. *Syria: Archéologie, Art et Histoire*, t. 19, fascicule 2, p. 105-126, 1938. About the itinerary of the trip to Ugarit, see Sasson (1984; 2008, p. 100).

appropriated the sedentary world. By taking the initiative for the integration of two worlds, the mobility and transhumance of the steppes and the state structure, the *Mariyanum* king operated an economic symbiosis. The process of iconographic representation and verbal images involves three aspects: (1) diplomatic marriage, (2) worship of Haddu, the tutelary god of Aleppo, and (3) external political-military support. However, the alliance was concluded by the king of greater power and age:

Regarding the oath by the gods, about which you wrote to me, let us establish the modalities of the oath by the gods! I am willing to be your ally (*tillatum*) and you, be my ally! When there are signs of fire in Yamhad, come and put them out! And when there are signs of fire in (the kingdom of) Mari, I am willing to come and extinguish them.¹⁷

The letter lacked the Amorite expression *šimdatam šamâdum*, “advance coupled”. Charpin (2019, p. 49-50) remembers that it was Zimri-lim who asked for the alliance conclusion, certain that it would be up to the older king to do so; but this is evident in the correspondences by the fact that Yarim-lim is addressed as “father” and, therefore, the alliance is a hierarchical level event.

The wedding

In Yamhad’s most important set of events, Shibtu’s marriage gained prominence because of Mari’s diplomatic service¹⁸, as well as Shibtu’s

17 In the original: “Au sujet du serment par les dieux, à propôs duquel tu m’as écrit, établissons les modalités du serment par les dieux ! Je veux bien être ton allié (*tillatum*) et toi, sois mon allié ! Lorsqu’il y aura des signaux de feu au Yamhad, viens les éteindre ! Et lorsqu’il y aura des signaux de feu dans (le royaume de) Mari, je veux bien venir les éteindre”. Cf. Charpin (2019, p. 65).

18 The Mari archives are indeed very important, but this does not prevent a problematic postulation by master Mario Liverani (2007, p. 12) about the predominance of Mari in the sub-region between the Middle Euphrates and northwestern Syria. Understanding that historically, based

political-administrative ability, later made public. Jean-Marie Durand¹⁹ states that Shibtu is the woman who most appears in the ARM, highlighting her presence in the cuneiform tradition, which includes the Hittite queens. Zimri-lim had already been married several times and was no longer young; furthermore, it made marriage alliances a successful palace policy. In fact, the projects are particularly different, they aim at opposite sides of the ancient Near East: Expansion through the control of Euphratenic cities with autonomous local systems in parallel with the formation of a multi-social commercial bloc in the Mediterranean,²⁰ with Ugarit being the starting point of Amorite integration.

The event became a mission for Asqudum, official *mariyanum* correspondent, who was concerned about the dangers of the

on the emergence of new powers, the 17th century cannot be a “Mari Era”. For the 17th century, the chronologies lead us to the “first Babylonian dynasty” and the “Hittite Old Kingdom”. See Mierooop (2020, p. 419); Podany (2022, p. 550-551); Burke (2023, p. 178).

19 DURAND, Jean-Marie. *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari*. T. III. Paris: Cerf, 2000, p. 304.

20 I consider it important to highlight the idealistic aspect of the king's project because of the integrative plan. When he advanced towards the Levant coast, Zimri-lim demonstrated his intention to integrate the producing and mercantile metropolises of the northern Mediterranean into his imperial project; these different Amorite socio-ethnic magnitudes are part of their origin. Apart from the vital movements of the steppes and valleys of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Middle Bronze Age I-IIA, from inscriptions from the campaigns of Tiglat-pileser I (*Tukulti-apil-Ešarra*, c. 1114-1076) west of the Euphrates River – this is also valid for Assyrian kings who preceded them in centuries of Hittite predominance –, it is known that the ethnic constitution of the sea peoples who inhabited the Mediterranean metropolises has an Amorite origin: “I marched into the land of Lebanon [KUR *lab-na-ni-lu*]. I cut (and) carried cedar beams to the temple of the gods Anu and Adad [^d*a-nim* ù ^d*IŠKUR*], the great gods, my lords. I continued to the land of Amurru [KUR *a-mur-ri*] (and) I conquered the whole land of Amurru [KUR *a-mur-ri*]. I received tribute from the lands of Byblos [KUR *gu-bal*], Sidon [KUR *ši-du-ni*], (and) Arwad [KUR *ar-ma-da*]. I was in boats of the people of Arwad [KUR *ar-ma-da*] (and) covered in triumph a distance of three double hours from the city of Arwad [KUR *ar-ma-da*], an island, to the city of Samuru [URU *ša-mu-ri*], which is in the land of Amurru [KUR *a-mur-ri*]. I killed in the sea a *nāḫiru*, which is called a seahorse”. Passage translated by the author: “insert excerpt”. A.O.87.3, lines 16-25; GRAYSON, A. Kirk. *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC, I (1114-859 BC): The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Early Periods*. V. 2. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002, p. 37. In A.O.87.4, line 27, a parallel text, we have a perhaps complementary version for “*nāḫiru*, which is called a seahorse”: [*nam-s*]u-*ḫa pa-gu-ta GAL-[ti] ša a-aḫ*, “a crocodile (and) a large female sea monkey”.

Syro-Euphrathenian routes in view of the varied discouraging testimonies: The king of Terqa [*Ter-qa*] said that the time would be inappropriate for the queen to proceed to Mari, the ruler of Saggarātum recalled the security apparatus he had to prepare for a commercial convoy, and even Emar, the closest city to Aleppo for access to the Euphrates, was included in the security measures.²¹ On the other hand, still at the beginning of his reign, Zimri-lim needed to guarantee the solidity of the throne:

Zimri-Lim did not marry Shibtu before returning to the ancestral throne. Married to other women of still unknown origin, mothers of the princesses he gave as wives to his main vassals, it was only after having his power relatively asserted in his own kingdom that he concluded the dynastic alliance with the great western monarchy (Durand, 1988, p. 95).²²

With “great Western dynasty”, as far as Western Semites are concerned, Jean-Marie Durand (1988, p. 95) refers to Yamhad. The beginning of the agreements between the ambassadors and the king of Mari must be dated to month 10 [*Bêlet bîrî*, “September 15-October 15”], the time when Asqudum traveled to Aleppo.²³ Regarding care, it is about guaranteeing Shibtu the necessary security on the transregional journey and in the palace. Although the lunar calendar involves atmospheric accidents and continuous physical displacements, Durand (1988, p. 97) states “believing that the departure should be placed between December 15th and January 15th of our calendar; therefore, at a relatively favorable

21 Durand (1988, p. 14; p. 16, 1998, p. 155).

22 In the original: “Zimri-Lim n’a pas épousé Šibtu *avant* de revenir sur le trône ancestral. Marié avec d’autres femmes d’origine toujours inconnue, mères des princesses qu’il donna comme épouses à ses principaux vassaux, ce n’est qu’une fois son pouvoir relativement affermi dans son propre royaume qu’il obtint la conclusion de l’alliance dynastique avec la grande monarchie occidentale”.

23 Ver Durand (1988, p. 14, 1998, p. 155).

moment: It is before the extreme cold, and the arrival of the flood makes the river navigable”,²⁴ with the currents still weak.

Zimri-lim traveled to Aleppo to propose to Shibtu in late 1774; after agreements with the Aleppian king, he returned to Mari. However, before the marriage, the king signed international agreements in Mari, guided ministers and priests, and even intervened in conflicts involving Karānatum, the then palatial maestro, and Rīšiya [*rīšiya*; *ri-ši-ia*], maestro of the predecessor king, Yahdun-lim. Rishiya can be considered the artistic promoter of the palace, having transformed her house into a conservatory for the training of musicians and the production of musical instruments (Podany, 2022, p. 254). He returned to Aleppo hurriedly at the beginning of 1773, with the intention of ensuring that the wedding took place in time to find alive the queen mother Sūmūn-na-Abī [*su-um-un-na-a-bi*], wife of the king Sumu-Epuh, father and predecessor of Yarim-lim. He would then promote the replacement of Shimrum [*šimrum*], the dead commissioner, amid marriage negotiations, with the new commissioner Tab-balati [*tāb-balāṭi*] (Durand, 1988, p. 96-97).

The wedding was the founding event for future times involving the two kingdoms, and everything followed the strict chronological and financial planning, both by local officials and the Mari ambassadors. Notably, Šimrum had demanded his payment several times in the deal. Asqudum, the commissioner of Zimri-lim, sided with Yarim-lim when he requested his *biblum*, “dowry” [*mu-tù*, em Mari; *šūbultum* or *šūrubtum*, in Aleppo], and when he inquired whether he had been sent the shipment containing four necklaces, pearl and gold threads, crockery, many clothes and leather objects (shoes and others), bulls, hundreds of cows and thousands of sheep (Durand, 1988, p. 101-102). Michèle Casanova (2014, p. 419) alludes to the dowry as being just a set of “four necklaces of lapis lazuli beads and gold clasps, medallions, and a fibula

24 In the original: “On pourrait donc croire qu’il faut placer son départ entre le 15 décembre et le 15 janvier de notre calendrier, donc à un moment relativement favorable: c’est avant les grands froids et l’arrivée de la crue rend sa navigabilité au fleuve”.

inlaid with lapis lazuli”²⁵, which does not reflect the distinction of the dynastic marriage involving powerful kingdoms. Regarding marriage:

The very sanction of marriage, or the symbolic conduct that proves that it really took place, is, on the other hand, the young girl’s taking of the veil. The veil is placed on the bride’s head by the king of Mari’s messengers, not by her father. Once the *biblum* was brought and accepted, the woman, therefore, left the paternal home and became part of another social group. All of these indications are extremely valuable. Another very interesting peculiarity of the marriage of Šibtu and Zimri-Lim is, on the other hand, the fact that the presence of the groom is not necessary. It is enough for him to have constituents. In a sense, Šibtu’s marriage can be considered the oldest example of “marriage by proxy.” We can therefore assume that, during the ceremony in the presence of the husband, it was the latter who performed the handing over of the veil to his wife.²⁶

What the literary source²⁷ of the alliance concluded with Šibtu’s marriage states:

25 In the original: “quatre colliers de perles de lapis-lazuli et fermoirs en or, des médaillons et une fibule incrustée de lapis-lazuli”.

26 In the original: “La sanction même du mariage, soit la conduite symbolique qui prouve qu’il a vraiment eu lieu, est par contre la prise du voile par la jeune fille. Le voile est mis sur la tête de l’épouse par les messagers du roi de Mari et non par son père. Une fois le *biblum* apporté et accepté, la femme est donc sortie de la maison paternelle et elle relève d’un autre groupe social. Toutes ces indications sont extrêmement précieuses. Une autre particularité très intéressante du mariage de Šibtu et de Zimri-Lim est, d’autre part, le fait que la présence de l’époux n’est pas nécessaire. Il lui suffit d’avoir des mandants. Dans un sens, on peut dire que le mariage de Šibtu est l’exemple le plus ancien du ‘mariage par procuration’. On peut donc supposer que, lors de la cérémonie en présence du mari, c’était ce dernier qui opérait la remise du voile à son épouse”.

27 Translated and transliterated by the author from Durand (1988, p. 105-107).

[a-na be-lí-ne qí-bí-ma] 2 [um-ma às-qú-du-um] [ù] ri-š[i-ia] 4 [ir-d]u ka-[a-ma] ¹ia-r[i-im-li-im] 6 i-na a-wa-tim ki-a-a[m iš-ba-ta-né-ti] um-ma-a-mi bi-i[b-lam tu-ub-la] 8 ù ¹um-mi [ma-ar-ša-at] ù as-sú-ur-ri-ma mi-im-[ma le-em-nu-um] 10 i-na é-kál-li-ia ib-[ba-aš-ši] ù u4-mu-ku-nu q[é]-e[r-bu] 12 ik-ki-a-am ni-ih-mu-u[-[ma] bi-ib-lam ša be-el-ni ú-ša-[bi-l]a-an-n[é-ti] 14 nu-še-ri-ib ù túg ku-tu-um-mé e-li dumu-munus ni-id-di 16 i-na ša-al-ši-im u4-mi-im ša bi-ib-lam nu-še-ri-bu 18 ¹su-mu-un-na-a-bi a-na ši-im-ti-ša il-li-ik 20 lugal ia-ri-im-[li-im] ¹à-ab-ba-la-[ti] 22 ki-a-am iš-pu-ra-an-n[é-ši-im] um-ma-a-mi al-ka a-al dan-[na-ti-ia] 24 ù é-há-ia a-ta-am-ma-ra-n[im] ni -nu 26 ni-iš⁷-ta-al-ma a-na lugal ki-a-am ni-iš-pu-ur 28 um-ma ni-nu-ma a-na mi-nim be-el-ni ša-pa-ra-am an-né-e-em iš-pu-ra-an-né-ši-im 30 um-ma-a-mi al-ka a-al dan-na-ti-ia ù é-[h]á-ia a-ta-am-[m]a-ra-nim 32 an-ni-tam ni-pu-ul wa-ar-ka-nu-um ki-a-am ni-iš-pu-ur . 34 um-ma ni-nu-ma ¹su-mu-un-na-a-bi ú-[ul] be-le-et-ni-i šum-ma ni-nu ma-h[a-a]r be-lí-ne 36 la-a wa-aš-ba-nu ù a-wa-tum an-ni-[tum] i-na ma-ri^{ki}-ma it-te-eš-me lu-lú [....] 38 ù ir-du-meš ša dumu-ka [i]t-t[i-ni li-iš-bu].	1 Tell our Lord: Asqudum and Rišiya, their servants, [say]: 5 Yarim-lim 6 we pledge ourselves on these terms: 7 “You brought the gift-<i>biblum</i> 8 but my mother is ill 9 and I fear that misfortune 10 will occur in my palace. 11 Besides, you have little time left”. 12 That is why, hurriedly, 14 we brought [into the palace] 15 the <i>biblum</i>-gift that our Lord made us carry 15 and we set off in the direction of the girl. 16 Two days after 17 we brought [to the palace] the <i>biblum</i>-gift, 18 Lady Sūmūn-na-Abī 19 went “to her destination”. 20 King Yarim-lim, 21 by Tāb-balāti, 22 made us say: 23 “Go, and my fortified cities, 24 as well as my residences, see them all!” 25 We, 26 questioning ourselves, 27 sent the king this message: 28 “Why has our Lord 29 sent us this message: 30 ‘Go, and my fortified cities, 31 as well as my residences, look at them all!’” This is our answer. 33 We then sent the following message: 34 “Lady Sūmūn-na-Abī, 35 is she not our Queen? If we 36 do not have a seat 35 before our Lord, 36 and this matter 37 is brought to the attention of Mari, it will certainly be regrettable. 38 Furthermore, your son’s servants must sit with us.”
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According to the document, amid the intense preparations for the wedding, *mariyanum* officials came to consider themselves subjects or “sons” of Yarim-lim and desired to sit next to the queen mother at the wedding ceremony. Chronologically, the marriage took place the year after preparations began, in the third year of Zimri-lim’s reign, about 1773. Then, Queen Shibtu followed in a convoy, on a journey of almost a month, to Mari in the month of Hibirtum – the month of May in the eponymous dating –, corresponding to the month of May in the eponymous dating used in Mari, after the time of the floods on the Euphrates River.

In addition to the trip, the residence intended for Shibtu worried Yarim-lim. Here is Zimri-lim’s account:

Yarim-Lim approached me with these words: “I have often heard that the gods are powerful in the palace. Where are my daughter’s belongings going?” I replied, “Your daughter’s palace is wonderful”. He said: “Let my daughter’s belongings be kept in her residence, (but) let my daughter reside with her husband but let her leave (the palace) every 5 or 6 days and let her take care of her residence”.²⁸

The letter sequence demonstrates a certain impersonality, as if the scribe had written away from the king’s presence. However, the sending of palace officials from Aleppo to serve Shibtu shows that the father wished to ensure that his daughter was kept away from the shrines and cultic paraphernalia, i.e., free from the functions and risks of religious phenomena common in Mari, as well as guaranteeing their social freedom in the new city.

28 In the original: “Yarim-Lim m’a entrepris en ces termes : ‘J’ai souvent entendu dire que les dieux sont puissants dans le palais. Où entreront donc les affaires de ma fille ?’ J’ai répondu : ‘La Maison de ta fille est excellente’. Il a dit : ‘Que les affaires de ma fille soient déposées dans sa demeure, (mais) que ma fille réside chez son époux et que 5 ou 6 jours elle quitte (le palais) et qu’elle s’occupe de sa demeure’”. Documentação em ARM, citada por Charpin (2019, p. 229).

Assuming more and more royal power in the face of her husband's frequent external activities, Shibtu became a great queen, as her grand personal documentation attests: She managed the internal affairs of the palace; negotiated the acquisition of utensils; led diplomatic negotiations involving Terqa, Eshnunna, Ida-Maraş, Elam, Babylon; debated with Ishme-Dagan about sending garrisons from Zimri-lim to war; presided over cultic activities; communicated the structural status of real buildings; took care of her children; took care of epidemics in the palace; arbitrated conflicts involving Hammu-rabi I, his father's successor in Aleppo; was at the center of resolving military conflicts over rebellions started by Yaminite warriors.²⁹

One aspect that still needs to be more widely researched concerns the musical environment of Mari during the reign of Zimri-lim, a context that must have led to the formation of a social stratum around the music conservatory – the “House of the Tigum Instrument” –, with an organizational function in palace ceremonies. For the kingdom full of novelties in which the construction of what I call the Aleppine-*Mariyanum* dynasty took place, historian Amanda Podany (2022) highlights in her fascinating work the agency of young women as musicians and others as teachers, scribes, servants, cooks and nannies. Many of them were members of the royal family who lived in the palace and are included in official documentary records. According to Podany (2022, p. 251-252), the sources' fortune is “probably because many of them lived in a suite of more than sixty rooms grouped around courtyards in the area of the royal quarters, just beyond the palm tree court and the king's throne room.” Among them were young princesses, captive and enslaved women, members of local elite families, etc., living in this female residential complex called *tubqum*, which guaranteed them some protection in a society marked by male forms of power and dietary restrictions.

In the history of the politician, it is worth mentioning the authority of Queen Shibtu, because this social affection appears in the sources as a way of transmitting paternal and ethnomonarchical power, whether

29 Sources recorded in Durand (2000, p. 305-370); see also Podany (2022, p. 251-263).

through the demand for a private palace or through religious freedom, but above all because, by transforming the landscape of the kingdom, it ends up characterizing the culture. In a letter, Zimri-lim asks Shibtu to select women with musical potential from among those captured and to take care of their feeding (Podany, 2022, p. 254-255). It is precisely because of the assured authority that Shibtu's royalty – part of the dynastic marriage agreements that maintained her sociopolitical status as queen – guaranteed in a certain way some privileges for women, including health care for female employees and even intellectual activity for those in a situation of slavery inserted in the palace.

Cultic activity directed at Haddu, tutelary god of Aleppo

Even before his marriage to Shibtu, Zimri-lim had committed to the worship of the god Haddu, whose great temple is located in Aleppo. The tutelary divine image of the union of the two dynasties and at the head of several pantheons will be that of the Storm god Haddu, and the homage to the Levantine god Li'm was restricted to some ruling elites, because sacred spaces dedicated to Haddu predominated, always accompanied by his bull [*būru*].

While the king did not resume his diplomatic travels, Asqudum undertook a tour within the kingdom of Yamhad for fifteen days and, therefore, officially represent the king at the sacrificial festival of *hi'arum* [*siskur²-re hi-ia-ri-im*] – a five-day celebration of royalty. For this, Asqudum traveled to Aleppo taking an *ālum*,³⁰ perhaps a musical instrument, as Zimri-lim's votive object to the god Haddu of Aleppo [*hddh lb*]. Dimensioning the votive object size, eight men would only be able to move it, but would not carry it at a medium distance, around 240 kilos or 8 talents of bronze with leather protection (Dossin, 1938, p. 109; Durand, 1988, p. 119):

30 The votive object *ālum* has several meanings. It largely appears prefixed with GIŠ, this determinative precedes names of trees and wooden objects.

Zimri-Lim demonstrated his worship for the god of Aleppo by dedicating his statue to him, as evidenced by the name of one of his regnal years: *MU Zi-im-ri-li-im | šalam-šu a-na ^{il}Adad | Ħa-la ab^{ki} | ú-še-lu-[ú]*, “The year when Zimri-Lim dedicated his statue to the god Adad of Aleppo”³¹ (Dossin, 1938, p. 115).

Many votive goods, animals, and luxury objects were sent from Mari to Aleppo for the worship of Haddu. Upon arriving in Aleppo and after fulfilling the second most important deal, Asqudum wrote to Zimri-lim informing that he had participated in the religious festival. The letter included complaints against the rulers of cities on the trip’s itinerary for not helping with transportation, the delegation fatigue, the need for supplies and the request for fifty sheep. It is important to emphasize that, in the context, disagreements between cultures unfold intellectually, but the initial inscriptions show that the reason for the letter was to inform about adherence to the tutelary god Haddu. The initial statement is significant:

<i>[a-na] be-lí-[ia] 2 [q]í-bí-m[a] um-ma às-qú-du-u[m] 4 ír-ka-a-ma ha-ra-ni ka-lu-ša ša-al-ma-at ír-meš be- [lí-ia] 6 ša er-de-em ša-al-mu a-na li-ib-bi ha- [la-ab^{ki}] [i-te]-er-bu anše ^dIM-ma ù siskur²-re it-ta-qú-ú ù aš- šum š[a-bi-im].</i>	1 Tell my Lord: (says) Asqudun, your servant. 5 My entire caravan is safe. The servants of my Lord 6 whom I led are safe. They have just entered Aleppo. 7 It was Haddu’s ass ³² and we made the sacrifices. ³³
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31 In the original: “Zimrilim a-t-il témoigné de la vénération qu’il portait au dieu d’Alep en lui dédiant sa statue, comme en témoigne le nom d’une de ses années de règne : *MU Zi-im-ri-li-im | šalam-šu a-na ^{il}Adad | Ħa-la ab^{ki} | ú-še-lu-[ú]*, ‘L’année où Zimrilim a dédié sa statue au dieu Adad de Alep’”.

32 The iconographic representations show Haddu on a bull, the so-called *Būru*; here an ass is mentioned. In any case, based on the distinction in the letter, the animal is intended for sacrificial worship, perhaps the *hiṛum*.

33 Free translation by the author, from Durand (1988, p. 131).

Frequently, Mari diplomats conflicted with each other. In a letter dated year 3 of the reign (c. 1773, ZL 1'), Yasim-Sumu [*yasīm-sūmū*] appears as an agent of internal conflict with the palace administrator Sammētar, of the province of Ashnakkum [*ašnakkum*], because he wished to interfere with the administrative matters while the king was absent from the city and decisions were under the responsibility of Asqudum:

the two very important characters who are Sammētar, the *šâpiṭum* [judge or district governor, or even “head of the palace”] and Yasīm-Sūmū, the butler, came into an open conflict. Asqudum sided with Yasīm-Sūmū, against someone who belonged to one of Terqa's leading families (Durand, 1988, p. 75).³⁴

Asqudum took a stand against those who fought the Yaminite, and, as a result, the political parties of agents from the Mari palace became prominent.³⁵

External political-military support

Here I return to the initially historical question regarding the support of the Mari expansionist project put into practice while it had tribes against the State on its borders, to the right and left of the Euphrates River. At the time that he demonstrated the political strategy of obtaining support from the kings of Yamhad, Zimri-lim struggled to understand the need to contain the incursions of the garrisons of Eshnunna. In this sense, Asqudum interpreted the plan correctly. Between years 3 and 5 (ZL 1'-3') of his reign, the king presided over at least two enthronement

34 In the original: “les deux très hauts personnages que sont Sammētar, le *šâpiṭum*, et Yasīm-Sūmū, le Majordome, sont entrés en conflit ouvert. Asqudum a pris le parti de Yasīm-Sūmū, contre quelqu'un qui appartient à l'une des principales familles de Terqa”.

35 The sources present many occasions of conflicts between members of the palace group, particularly regarding decision-making related to foreign policy. Ver Sasson (2014, p. 678-681).

ceremonies for several princes, “members of a royal family”, on the occasion of the annual festival dedicated to the goddess Ishtar [*ištar*, equal to the goddess *inanna* of Sumer].³⁶

One can attest to the transmission of legitimacy by Ishtar, consort of the god Tammuz, in the tempera mural painting on clay in the Amorite palace of Mari (18th century): The main staging takes place in the upper central panel – the temple cella –, where the goddess has a lion as her pedestal and officiates the royal investiture of Zimri-Lim, handing him the symbols of power – the circle and the staff.³⁷ With administrative acts of loyalty performed before the goddess, it was pragmatically desired to convey warning of power to Eshnunna, in view of the increase in the number of its satellite cities and advance into Upper Mesopotamia. In fact, the characteristic activities in Mari project a context in which families from the borders and groups of stateless people have become welcome in the kingdom.

The idea of loyalty value maintained a guideline that benefited refugees, the non-extradition agreement has its origins in oral tradition, a mental law, and the crossing of ethnicities was part of the constitution of both the ancient kingdom of Hana, now integrated into Mari, as of the kingdom of Yamhad. After a regional conflict, Zimri-lim wrote a letter to Yarim-lim in which he proposed a deal to resolve the problem. The proposal indicates that the law in force regarding extradition should be reformed. It appears, evidently, that the city-state of Hazor participated in the broad commercial system that was being affected by the conflict, thus it is up to Yarim-lim to intervene. Here are the statements:

5] You have written the following about a smith ‘This man has taken from Hazor silver, gold, and a fine (precious) stone and has headed toward you. The people of Hazor are holding

36 Ver Lacambre (2002, p. 3-4).

37 Musée du Louvre, Paris. Département des Antiquités orientales, AO 19826, salle 227. Reproduções disponíveis em: <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010144553>. Acesso em: 24 abr. 2023.

back the donkeys and personnel that are on a trade mission, saying, ‘The smith has taken silver, gold, and a fine (precious) stone and has gone toward Zimri-Lim.’ This is what you wrote me.

15] This man has not brought anything at all toward me, be it silver, gold, or a fine (precious) stone. This man was seized and humiliated in Emar. They relieved him of all that was transported and even took away from him the document (proving) that this man paid for what he purchased. [Or: ‘even took away from him the seal that this man had bought’ [(Durand); *kunukkam ša ana kaspim awilum šū išāmu itbalūšu*.] In fact, it was to save his life that this man ran toward me.

26] My father has written me about this man, about returning a man who, like a trembling bird ahead of a falcon, had come to me. Is this a man I should release? If I release this man, afterwards anyone who hears will he seek shelter as if with an interceding deity?

35] If it pleases my father, my father should not request this man. This man’s possession, whatever he took away from Hazor, is now kept in Emar. My father should write to Emar for the man’s belonging to be taken to the [disposal?] of my father.³⁸

A diplomatic problem between states was being resolved in a tribal manner, which gave rise to the presumption of a peace agreement. The event involved the city-states of Emar and Hazor. This is the question: The blacksmith accused of stealing a shipment of luxury objects fled to Mari, and the solution to the conflict fell to the great regional king Yarim-lim.³⁹ He demanded the blacksmith’s extradition.

38 Documentation registered by Sasson (2007, p. 465).

39 Here is Yarim-Lim’s intervention, according to Sasson: “Yarim-Lim gave an ultimatum to the elders of Emar: ‘The Yaminite kings should not stay in Emar. Expel them (*šūšēšunūti*)! From now on, they must not remain here. If these men attempt to enter Emar again, Zimri-Lim and I will wage war against you’”. For Sasson, the threat has no concrete effect because “Yarim-Lim knew that the fugitives were no longer there”.

Zimri-lim respectfully reversed the accusation when he stated that the blacksmith was, in fact, a victim and tried to preserve this refugee's life. Thus, the *Mariyanum* king intended to prevent Mari from being seen as a kingdom without authority to decide on legal issues involving people in its territory, so he tried to establish an administrative principle in diplomacy with the kingdom of Yamhad.⁴⁰ The respectful requests for the extradition of prisoners reveal to be, above all, as requests for military support, in the name of the god Haddu, as a possible solution to contain the invasions of the Yaminite and other rival forces.⁴¹ The letter sent by Yarim-lim shows who leads the region: "Has Zimri-Lim forgotten Addu's command? Indeed, I fear that Zimri-Lim does not know that in the Land of Addu a refugee cannot be extradited!".⁴² A response that seems theologically rhetorical, leaving little evidence regarding a subsequent decision, but with a strong legal basis.

Within the limits of preserved documentation of broad historical representation, the alliance between the kingdoms of Yamhad and Mari demonstrated to be strategically an evolution in the political history of the ancient Near East. Yarim-lim extended his influence as far as the Euphrates, and as the cities led by Aleppo restricted the movement of

40 Regarding the impossibility of determining the date and sending of the letter, says Jack M. Sasson: "But if this letter remained in Mari, was Zimri-Lim afraid and did he decide to send the blacksmith back instead of the letter? Or did it occur to him that the matter was not worth the trouble of a diplomatic commotion and therefore never gave Yarim-lim an answer?". There is another conflict involving fugitives, this time in Aleppo, and it is Zimri-lim who sends a letter through the diplomat Dariš-libur with advice on a problem involving the city-state of Karkamesh. The king of Mari asks Yarim-lim not to grant asylum to the fugitives because "they will cause him sadness". In response, it appears that Zimri-lim obeyed Yarim-lim, but now Yarim-lim states that it is difficult to act in the same way – "in the territory of Haddu, fugitives cannot be handed over into custody" –, he designates Aleppo as "Haddu's territory" and says that the decision about the problem does not rest with Zimri-lim. On the other hand, the possible conflict between the kingdoms consists in the fact that the fugitives were enemies of Zimri-lim, and Yarim-lim stated that they were not in political entities associated with Aleppo.

41 Documentation cited by Sasson (2007, p. 470-473) and Charpin (2019, p. 65-66).

42 Documentation cited by Stökl (2014, p. 56) and Sasson (2007); regional legal context addressed by Charpin (2019, p. 158-160). Original citation recorded in note 44.

Yaminite nomads, Zimri-lim began stationing garrisons on the edges of Eshnunna and Babylon. There were the Elamites, but then *Mariyanum* king supported Hammu-rabi in order to maintain peace in his borders.⁴³

CONCLUSION

The great political project between the two most important kingdoms of the Levant was abruptly interrupted about eight years after it began with the death of Yarim-lim, which was greatly felt by Zimri-lim. In Jack M. Sasson's interpretation (1984, p. 251):

A terse account tells us that Zimri-Lim ordered the dispatch of gifts for Yarim-Lim's tomb on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, within two weeks of entertaining the Babylonian officers. The new king of Khalab (unfortunately for us also named Hammurabi) succeeded his father and began a rule that seems, if not overtly hostile to Zimri-Lim, certainly warmer to his namesake in Babylon. We now know that less than a decade later this direct relationship between the two Hammurabis led to Babylon's aggression against Mari.

Sasson (1984) enunciates an aporia, and, contrary to his interpretation, I understand that the rules initially practiced by Hammu-rabi I of Aleppo preserved the old alliances. As for homage or distinction, the practice was common and was intended to maintain an alliance or enter into a circumstantial treaty. Charpin (2019, p. 208) presents a text⁴⁴ found in Mari, which states that the king of Terqa sent "a precious object on the occasion of the death of the Aleppo's king Yarim-lim", literally, "1

43 Later, between 1762 and 1761, support was strongly disregarded: Hammurabi sent his garrisons to Upper Mesopotamia, on the way he conquered the city of Mari and murdered Zimri-lim.

44 Documentation cited by Charpin (2019, p. 208).

silver *katappum* weapon”. Zimri-lim’s tribute on the occasion of Yarim-Lim’s death was “1 solar disk of fine gold, weighing 48 shekels”.⁴⁵

Despite dedicating himself for almost a decade to actions aimed at a type of Syrian subalternization that would reach the Levant coast and Upper Mesopotamia – a region from where he “received numerous messages” and “where he commanded his vassals or governors”⁴⁶ with his cities (Dossin, 1938, p. 115) –, Zimri-lim did not achieve his objective by allying himself with the kingdom of Yamhad, despite gaining access to the Levantine coast. We can confirm this based on research into the sources and their contextual subtext from an Aleppian perspective. I agree with Sarah C. Melville (2007, p. 240): “marrying Shibtu, the daughter of the powerful State of Yamhad ruler, Zimri-Lim acquired sufficient military support to regain the Mari throne and implement his lifelong effort, however ultimately unsuccessful in extending their territories”.

After the death of Yarim-lim, the ideals of the territorial states superimposed the old physical borders and Amorite cultural traditions, strongly indicating the invalidity of the third treaty that aimed at building the dynasty: The military support and commercial policy of Yamhad to Mari. Even though Mari had the power of Lower Mesopotamia at its gates, Zimri-lim accepted to make an agreement with Hammurabi against the kingdom of Elam. There may have been a great deal of confidence between the parties in Hammurabi’s statement: “From the beginning, the city of Mari and Babylon (are) but one House and but one finger!”⁴⁷ On the other hand, taking advantage of the crucial moment, Elam tried to obtain the support of the new king of Aleppo, but the newly crowned Hammurabi I preferred to “retake his father’s alliances”⁴⁸ (Charpin, 2019, p. 87), in an honorable decision.

45 In the original: “1 disque solaire d’or fin, pesant 48 sicles”. Documentação citada por Charpin (2019, p. 209).

46 In the original: “[...] reçoit de nombreux messages de la Mésopotamie du Nord, où il commande à ses vassaux ou à ses gouverneurs”.

47 In the original: “Depuis toujours, la ville de Mari et Babylone (ne font) qu’une Maison et qu’un doigt !”. Documentação citada por Charpin (2019, p. 234).

48 ⁵² In the original: “Hammu-rabi d’Alepp reprit les aliances de son père”.

Finally, an epitaph to the great king: Awakened, all Amorite kings and queens could protect themselves in the *abīya* Yarim-lim of Yamhad – *qaran šubāt* –, the one who lived under the command of the god Haddu (*tēm Addu*)!

Appendix 1 – Chronology of events⁴⁹

Political and military events	Cultural and technological developments
c. 2070: Shulgi creates the state organization of Ur III; unification of Babylon 2003: the Elamites capture Ur and its king Ibbi-Sin [c. 2027-2003] 2003-1792: Isin-Larsa period in Babylon 2000–1775: Early Assyrian Period in northern Mesopotamia [c. 1974-1795: Amorite Period] 1898: Start of a pitched war between the city-states of Babylon c. 1850: Eshnunna establishes its hegemony over the Diyala region, Mari over the Middle Euphrates valley 1793: Rim-Sin of Larsa [deified king, c. 1822-1763] unifies southern Babylon c. 1792: Shamsi-Adad [c. 1796-1775] creates the kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia 1792-1595: First-Babylonian period in Babylon [or c. 2000-1600] [the <i>sharrum</i> Yarim-lim inherits the throne of Aleppo, c. 1780-1765] c. 1775: Zimri-lim becomes king of Mari [marriage between Shibtu and Zimri-lim, c. 1773] 1766-1761: Hammu-rabi of Babylon eliminates his rivals 1712: Southern Babylon enters a Dark Age Early or mid-17th century: Hattushili I [c. 1650-1620] creates the Hittite Old Kingdom 1595: Hittite king Murshili I [c. 1620-1590] sacks Babylon 16th century: Dark Ages throughout the ancient Near East; creation of the Kassite state in Babylon	21st century: Creation of king celebration literature in Sumerian 19th-18th centuries: Students in southern Babylon copy Sumerian literary tablets 1755: Hammur-abi promulgates his legal code 18th-17th centuries: Development of literature in Akkadian language 16th century: Introduction of the horse and chariot in the ancient Near East

⁴⁹ According to the chronology presented by Mieroop (2020, p. 451-52), with additional information from the author in brackets. Literal translation by the author. On the Amorite period, see Burke (2023, p. 261-262).

Appendix 2 – Chronology of dynastic periods⁵⁰

Year	Eshnunna	Babylon	Assyria	Mari	Yamhad
2000	Nur-Ahum Kirikiri Bilalama, c. 1980 Usur-Awassu		Kikkia Akia Puzur-Ashur I Shalim-ahat [Shalim-ahum]	last shakkanakku	
1950	Abi-madar Azuzum, c. 1925 Ur-Ninkimara Ur-Ningizzida		Ilushuma, c. 1950 Erishum I, 1940-1910		
1900	Ipiq-Adad I, c. 1895 Shiqulanum Abdi-Erah Sharriya Abi-madar Belakum	Sumu-Abum, 1894-1881 Sumu-la'El, 1880-1845	Ikunum Sargon I		
1850	Warassa Rubum, c. 1480 Ibal-pi'El I Ipiq Abad II, 1835-1795 Naram-Sin, 1794-1785	Sabium, 1844-1831 Apil-Sin, 1830-1813 Sin-muballit, 1812-1793	Puzur-Ashur II Naram-Sin Erishum II Shamshi-Adad I, 1812-1780 [1807-1775]	Yaggid-lim, c. 1820 Yahdun-lim, 1815-1790 [Sumu-Yaman]	
1800	[Naram-Sin] Dadush, 1794-1785 Ibal-pi'El II, 1784-1770 Dannum-tahaz Silli-Sin 1761: attached by Babylon [1766]	Hammu-rabi, 1792-1750	Ishme-Dagan, 1780-1740 [1774- ?]	Yashmah-Addu, 1798-1780 [c. 1795-1776] Zimri-lim, 1780-1758 [1775-1762] 1758: attached by Babylon [c. 1761]	Sumu-epuh [c. ? -1780] Yarim-lim I, c. 1790-1770 [c. 1780-1765] Hammu-rabi I, c. 1770-1750 [c. 1765-1760] ? [Abba'El] [Yarim-lim II]

50 Adapted from the chronology presented by Liverani (2016, p. 278-279). Even though the transliteration of early eastern names and the pre-classical dating remain disputed – they concern the studied sources and the method of each researcher –, I made some modifications in the onomastics by suppressing the Anglophone “kh” whenever possible. I maintain Liverani’s dating, but I place the dating presented by Mieroop (2020, p. 418) in brackets as I consider it to be more in line with the events historicized here. Because they are part of recent research, I mention the “cast of characters” and the “timeline” of individuals and events created by Amanda H. Podany (2022, p. 543-553).

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study has been published within the article itself.

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