THE INSCRIPTION OF JIBBIṬ-LÎM,

KING OF EBLA

BY
I. J. GELB

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1. Introductory remarks

In 1970, Paolo Matthiae and Giovanni Pettinato made known the discovery of
the statue and inscription of Jibbiṭ-Lîm, king of Ebla, at Tell Mardikh in
north Syria, which for the first time raised the possibility, now a reality,
that the modern site of Tell Mardikh hides the ruins of the ancient city of
Ebla.

The discovery of the statue with the inscription was first reported by Mat-
thiae, "Mission archéologique de l'Université de Rome à Tell Mardikh", Annales
archéologiques arabes syriennes (abbr. *AAAS*) XX (1970) pp. 55-71, and Pettina-
to, "Inscription de Ibbit-Lim, roi de Ebla", ibid. pp. 73-76 (with a copy of
the inscription in fig. 8 and photos in figs. 23-26). Both articles were re-
published in Matthiae, editor, Tell Mardikh, Missione Archeologica Italiana
in Siria, (season) 1967-1968 (Roma, 1972) pp. 1-35, a volume that is not avail-
able here (abbr. *MAIS*). Subsequently, Matthiae discussed the statue in his
book *Ebla* (Torino, 1977) pp. 52f. and the English version *Ebla* (London, 1980)
pp. 49, 58f., while Pettinato discussed mainly the inscription in his book
Ebla (Milano, 1979) pp. 22-28 and the English version, *The Archives of Ebla*
(New York, 1981) pp. 23-28 (these four books are cited below by the name of
the author, title, and year of publication). W. G. Lambert, *RA* LXXV (1981) pp.
95-96, offered a number of constructive criticisms and suggestions on the in-
scription.

The circumstances of the discovery of the statue were described by Matthiae,
MAIS 1967/1968 pp. 1-2, in the following way, as cited in Pettinato, *Archives*
pp. 23f.:

  "The opening up of the sector called G, in the southwest area of the Acrop-
  olis was undertaken to obtain some indications concerning the topography
  of the presumed approach to the Acropolis itself. Though this digging ad-
  duced only negative elements for an urban interpretation of the organi-
  zation of the southwest slope of the citadel which hypothetically gave

shape to the Acropolis, it led, however, to an unusually important discovery for the history of the city. The exploration of the limited area of the upper slope of the Acropolis called sector G did in fact bring to light the torso of a statue in basalt, TM.68.G.61. Its chief interest lies in the relatively well-preserved Akkadian cuneiform inscription on the upper part of the bust. In its present condition the torso measures 0.54 meters in height on the left side of the body which is more extensively preserved. At the height of the shoulders, which preserve their original dimensions, the statue is 0.47 meters wide. It is 0.21 meters thick at shoulder height corresponding to the beard while in the lower part of the fragment at the level of the break its thickness measures 0.23 meters."

This is how Pettinato, *Archives* p. 24, describes the inscription:

"The 26-line cuneiform inscription was added crosswise to the normal erect position of the statue. It begins on the figure back at the height of the spine, continues on the left shoulder and goes on to the chest as far as chin level to finish, after an empty space, on the right shoulder.

The text was written on one column in a rectangular space well demarcated on its four sides. The scribe took constant care always to fill the space at his disposal between the outer edges of the rectangular column, sometimes elongating the signs in an exaggerated manner, and was careful not to transgress the right edge of the column."

Contrary to the Pettinato description and the drawing of the inscription, parts of the outside frame enclosing the inscription and many dividing lines within the frame are not recognizable on the available photographs.

The top frame is preserved fully and the bottom frame, below line 28, partially. That the bottom line is a part of the frame and not a dividing line is assured by the fact that, to all appearances, lines 18-28 are not separated by dividing lines. On the left side, only the frame before lines 1-8 is clearly visible. The right frame is visible at the end of lines 1-19, but, contrary to Pettinato's copy, there is a long blank space between the existing signs and the right frame in lines 13-19. The right frame is destroyed at the end of lines 20-28.

The horizontal dividing lines of the inscription are recognizable only in lines 1-17. Nothing is visible in lines 18-26, and, contrary to the copy, the scribe failed to use dividing lines in the last part of the inscription. Apparently, the scribe, unaware of the length of the text, first drew the dividing lines 1-17 then filled them out with writing and continued to the end without bothering to add the rest of the dividing lines.

Lines 1-19 of the inscription are fully preserved, except for ^{d}[EŠ$_4$.DAR] in the middle of line 1 and *iš-k*[*u-un*] at the end of line 18. While the beginnings of lines 20-26 are not visible on the photo, probably nothing is missing, except for line 23. The ends of lines 20-26 are broken away; the broken parts

may have contained either one or two elongated signs or full words.

Pettinato, *AAAS* XX p. 76, dated the inscription to "la fin de la troisième dynastie de Ur, vers l'an 2000 av. J. C."; he writes as follows in *Archives* p. 24: "Since the statue ... was not found in situ, its dating can only be approximate. While not categorically excluding an earlier date, Matthiae [*MAIS* 1967/1968 p. 16], for historical-artistic reasons, tends to favor a date between 2000 and 1900 B.C."

The exact dating of the inscription, naturally, hinges on its writing and language. On both levels, we can immediately eliminate the two extremes, the Pre-Sargonic and Sargonic periods at one end, and classical Old Babylonian at the other. What remains is the Ur III and post-Ur III periods from which we have ample documentation not at Ebla but at Mari. It consists, in the first place, of the bulk of the votive inscriptions of the kings, governor-generals, and related personnel discovered at Mari and dated from Bûr-Sin to the first years of Ibbî-Sin at the end of the Third Dynasty of Ur, and, in the second place, of the references to the individuals of Mari who are named in the Sumerian administrative texts of Babylonia. The post-Ur III documentation at Mari, which lasted about two hundred years from the time of Ibbî-Sin at the end of the Ur III period to the rise of the Lîm Dynasty in the classical OB period, consists of a few votive inscriptions, dozens of liver omina, and hundreds of administrative texts. The details concerning the writing and language of Mari in the Ur III period and post-Ur III times are collected and described in my forthcoming article "Mari and the Kish Civilization", those in the inscription of Jibbiṭ-Lîm, below section 5. The twenty-six line inscription is too brief to allow us to date it exactly. Nevertheless, two points stand out clearly. While the forms of the signs and their usage are certainly not of the classical OB period, they appear to be closer to the Old Babylonian than the Ur III period; the individual signs are not grouped together in cases containing one to three signs as in the Ur III period, but follow each other in horizontal lines containing up to about ten signs as from post-Ur III times on. Accordingly, the Jibbiṭ-Lîm inscription is to be dated to the end of the dark period between the time of Ibbî-Sin of Ur and the Lîm Dynasty at Mari.

Despite its brevity, the votive inscription of Jibbiṭ-Lîm contributes immeasurably to our knowledge of the latest phases of the language of Ebla. Among its many distinctive features discussed below, the following are among the most noteworthy: The preservation of *aw*, not *û*; the feminine verbal pre-

fix ta-, not ji-; the subjunctive -a, not -u; and the verb + object, not object + verb, syntax.

2. T r a n s l i t e r a t i o n   a n d   t r a n s l a t i o n

1) a-na ^{d}[EŠ$_4$.DAR] ⌜ap⌝-za-am	1) For Eštar,
2) I-bi-$iṭ$-Li-im	2) Jibbiṭ-Lîm
3) DUMU Ig-ri-$iś$-ḪI.IB LUGAL	3) son of Jigriś-ḪI.IB, the king,
4) me-ki-im Ib-la-i-im	4) who raises (the spirits of) the Ebleans,
5) $ú$-si-ri-ib	5) brought the water basin (1. 1) (into the temple)
6) MU 8 $ša$ ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR	6) in the eighth year after Eštar
7) ta-$ú$-bi-a i-na Ib-la	7) had manifested herself in Ebla.
8) ma-za-zu-um	8) The name (1. 10) of the stand,
9) I-bi-$iṭ$-Li-im	9) Jibbiṭ-Lîm
10) $šu$-um-$šu$ a-na ba-la-ti-$šu$	10) for his life
11) $ù$ ba-la-$aṭ$	11) and the life
12) me-ir-e-$šu$ ⟨$ištur$?⟩	12) of his sons (children) ⟨wrote?⟩.
13) ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR ⟨⟨U⟩⟩	13) Eštar
14) ta-ar-ta-$šu$-ma	14) loved him, and (as a result)
15) ma-za-zu-$ú$	15) the stand
16) IGI ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR	16) before Eštar
17) bi-el-ti-$šu$	17) his lady,
18) $ú$-$ša$-zi-iz $iš$-k[u-un]	18) he set up (and) established.
19) $šu$-um-$šu$	19) The name
20) $ša$ ma-za-zi-[im $šu$-um-$šu$ $ù$]	20) of the stand, [his name, and]
21) $šu$-me-$šu$-[nu $ša$]	21) the names [of]
22) me-ir-e-[$šu$ $ša$ $ipaššiṭa$?]	22) [his] sons (children) [whoever erases?],
23) ^{d}EŠ$_4$.[DAR lu $ta'ruršu$?]	23) [may] Eš[tar curse him?].
24) $ú$-lu-[ma]	24) Or, whoever (1. 26)
25) $šu$-um-[$šu$]	25) [his] (own) name
26) $ša$ i-[$ša$-$ṭa$-ra $liḥliq$?]	26) will w[rite shall perish?].

3. P h i l o l o g i c a l   c o m m e n t a r y

Lines 1, 6, 13, 16, and 23: ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR. — The ossified transliteration ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR is written with ^{d}, the semantic indicator for divine names, plus the "Winkel-haken", usually transliterated as U, plus the sign DAR. Ultimately, it goes back to a syllabic spelling written as an oblique, vertical, or horizontal

wedge, to be read *aš* or *eš₄* plus *dar*. The choice between *aš* or *eš₄* depends on the period when the vowel *a* became *e* in the proximity of the phoneme *ᶜ*. In our case, the reading ^{d}EŠ₄.DAR is preferred because of the occurrence of *ušêrib*, written *ú-si-ri-ib* in line 5, in place of *jušaᶜrib*, written *ú-sá-ri-ib* in the Sargonic period (*MAD* III p. 61). The semantic indicator ^{d} began to be used when the syllabic spellings *Aš-dar* and *Eš₄-dar* died out and were replaced by the semi-logographic writing ^{d}EŠ₄.DAR. The feminine gender of Eštar is indicated by the congruence of Eštar with *taʷpiᶜa* in line 7 (see below) and *tartâššuma* in line 14 (see below), both with the feminine prefix *ta-*.

Line 1: *ap-za-am*. — The noun *apsâm* in accusative, contracted from **apsuʷam*, is a loanword from the Sumerian *abzu*. The meaning of the Sumerian *abzu* and Akkadian *apsûm*, originally "underground water" and "sea", is "water basin" when applied to objects dedicated to the temple. Pettinato, *AAAS* XX p. 75, refers to several basins excavated at Tell Mardikh and reported in Matthiae, *MAIS* 1964 pp. 66ff. and *MAIS* 1965 pp. 113ff.

Lines 2, 3, and 9: *I-bi-iṭ-Li-im* son of *Ig-ri-iš-ḪI.IB*. — Each name is composed of two elements, the first of which expresses a verbal form, the second a divine name. The only parallels to *I-bi-iṭ-Li-im* known to me are *I-bí-iṭ-Ìr-ra* (Legrain, *TRU* 67:3) in the Ur III period, listed under 'BT? in *MAD* III p. 15, and *I-en-bí-iṭ-^{d}Tišpak* (*JCS* XXIV p. 49 no. 15:3, from Tell Harmal) and *Ib-bi-it-^{d}UTU* (*TIM* IV 46:3) in Old Babylonian. Because of the spelling with *nb* and *bb* in the two names, *I-en-bí-ID-^{d}Tišpak* and *Ib-bi-ID-^{d}UTU* cannot be derived from Akkadian *abātum* I "to destroy" or *abātum* II "to run away", "to flee" which occurs as *iʾbut*, *iʾabbat* in the B stem, but from *nabāṭum* "to become bright", "to shine brightly", with **ibbuṭ*, *inabbuṭ* in the B stem and *ittanbiṭ*, *ittananbiṭ* (and *ittananbaṭ*) in the BTN stem. Furthermore, the occurrence of the fire god Era in the name *I-bí-iṭ-Ìr-ra* and of the sun god Šamaš in the name *Ib-bi-iṭ-^{d}UTU* makes the derivation of the verbal form from *nabāṭum* "to become bright", "to shine brightly" more plausible than from *abātum* I or II. As indicated by the prefix *je-*, from *ja-*, and the preservation of *nb* (not *bb*), the name *I-en-bí-iṭ-^{d}Tišpak* is Amorite. See Gelb, *et al.*, *CAAA* p. 332. The preterit *ibbiṭ* is in disagreement with **ibbuṭ*, *inabbuṭ* in Akkadian. The two forms are two dialectically distinguished patterns in the same way that Eblaic *jigriš* is different from Old Akkadian *jigruš* (see just below) or standard Akkadian *igmil*, *igammil* is different from Old Akkadian *igmul*, *igammal* (*MAD* III p. 118).

Li-im of the name *I-bi-iṭ-Li-im* is the dynastic god of Mari in the Old Babylonian period; he occurs also at Ebla in the Pre-Sargonic period.

The best parallel to our $Ig-ri-iš$-ḪI.IB is $Ig-ri-iš$, $Ig-ri-iš-Da-mu$, $Ig-ri-iš$-
$Ḫa-lam$ at Ebla (Pettinato, *MEE* I p. 270). Its verbal derivates are attested
in the lexical texts of Ebla, where we find $gú-ra-su-um$ = SAG.DU$_8$ and $gú-ri-$
$šu$ = SAG.DU$_8$. The meaning of the Eblaic nouns may be established on the basis
of SAG.DU$_8$.DU$_8$ = $šab-bi-ṭu$, $mur-tap-pi-du$ "roving (demon)" in Akkadian. For
a discussion of the Ebla entries, cf. Fronzaroli, *SE* I p. 7, who trans-
lates $garāšum$ as "scacciare". Preterit $jigruš$ occurs twice in Old Akkadian,
both times in disturbed context. The first of these occurrences reads $ig?-ru-$
$sa-am$ (*MAD* I 172), the second $[a]-ti\ la\ dag-ru-⌈sa⌉?-am$ "[as long as] you have
not .... to me" (*RA* XXIII 25:14), which Thureau-Dangin, *loc. cit.*, translated
as "tant que tu ne n'aures pas parlé", comparing Arabic $jarasa$ "rendre un
(faible) son", "parler (à voix basse)". In *MAD* III p. 120, I compared Old Ak-
kadian $jigruš$ with $ig-ru-uš$, parallel to $iq-ra-ab$ "he has come near", "he ap-
proached" in a poetic text of later date (*RA* VII p. 18:8). The word is not
attested elsewhere in Akkadian. The pattern $jigruš$ of Old Akkadian corresponds
to the pattern $jigriš$ of Pre-Sargonic and post-Ur III Ebla. (See just above.)
The verb GRŠ and its derivates are attested in Ugaritic, Hebrew, and Syriac,
but not in Amorite. In all cases GRŠ denotes a verb of movement.

The second element in the name $Ig-ri-iš$-ḪI.IB resembles nothing Semitic. If
read and copied correctly, it may correspond to the divine name Ḫipa (or Ḫepa)
as taken by Pettinato in his transliteration $Ḫe-epa_x$(IB). In the form $Ḫe/ipa$
or $Ḫe/ipatu$ the divine name is widely scattered throughout Anatolia and Syria
as far as Palestine.

In resuming the evaluation of the two royal names, we find that while the
verb $nabāṭum$ of $I-bi-iṭ-Li-im$ is at home in Akkadian, its pattern $jibbiṭ$,
attested in an Amorite name, is in disagreement with the Akkadian pattern
*$ibbuṭ$. While the verb $garāšum$ of $Ig-ri-iš$-ḪI.IB occurs in two Old Akkadian
"poetic" texts, it is not productive in Akkadian onomastics and its pattern
$jigriš$, known at Pre-Sargonic Ebla, is in disagreement with the pattern $jig-$
$ruš$ of Old Akkadian. Of the two divine names, $Li-im$ is the dynastic god of
Mari in the Old Babylonian period although it is also found in Ebla onomastics
of the Pre-Sargonic period, and ḪI.IB, if read correctly, is known as a Syro-
Anatolian god in later periods. All in all it may be concluded that the names
Jibbiṭ-Lîm and Jigriš-Ḫip(a) belong to Mari-Ebla, but not Akkadian, onomastics.

Line 4: $me-ki-im\ Ib-la-i-im$ "who raises (lifts up the spirits of) the Ebleans".
— This line was translated by Pettinato, *AAAS* XX p. 75, as "de la 'lignée'

éblaïte" ("of Eblaite stock" in his *Archives* p. 25) and interpreted as follows: "La traduction 'lignée' pour *mékûm* [sic] est ad sensum, car elle a été tirée du context. Toutefois, le terme n'est pas très claire du point de vue lexical." To me, *me-ki-im* is a construct state with a noun in genitive *Ib-la-i-im* /Ebla-jim/. The form *me-ki-im* is to be interpreted as *mêqîm*, a participle hifil from **mu+ha+qîm* of the verbs mediae infirmae. In form, it corresponds exactly to *Mêqîmum*, *Mêkînum* of Amorite and *mêqîm* of Hebrew. The situation at Ebla is controversial. While Ś (and ŚT) forms are occasionally attested, mostly in lexical texts (Gelb, *EKC* p. 40), nothing stands in the way of assuming that both šafel and hifil were used at Ebla, as they were, for instance, in Ugaritic.

The form *Ib-la-i-im* in line 4 is a gentilic formation of *Ib-la* in line 7. At Ebla-Mari, there is *-ijum* from the Pre-Sargonic to post-Ur III periods, while *-ajum* begins in the OB period. Cf., *e.g.*, *Karkamišijum* (*ARMT* XIX 299, post-Ur III) and *Karkamišaju* (*ARMT* XII 747, OB), both at Mari. The *-ajum* suffix is characteristic of the Assyrian dialect, as in *Ibla(j)ittu*, *Aššura(j)ittu*, contrasted with *-ijum* of the Old Akkadian and Babylonian dialects, as in *Akkadijum*, *Iblîtum*. The use of the singular "Eblaite", rather than the plural "Eblaites", occurs in *Marijam*, *Jarmutijam* of the Old Akkadian inscriptions of Sargon (Hirsch, *AfO* XX pp. 38 and 49). The semantic indicator [KI] is omitted in both *Ib-la-i-im* and *Ib-la* as it frequently is in geographical names written syllabically, not logographically, in Old Akkadian (*MAD* II[2] p. 23) and occasionally at post-Ur III Mari (Limet, *ARMT* XIX pp. 159-163).

Line 5: *ú-si-ri-ib* "he made enter (brought)". — See the commentary to line 1.

Line 6: MU 8 "(in) the eighth year". — Pettinato, *AAAS* XX pp. 74f., translates MU 8 as "dans la huitième année (de Estar, depuis que [....])" and takes it to be "une formule de datation" or "datation de l'événement" (pp. 73f. and 76). Subsequently, Pettinato changed his interpretation in his *Ebla* p. 23 and *Archives* pp. 24f. and p. 29 n. 35, and read MU 8 as mu.sà.sà (that is, MU.ZA.ZA), and, following a suggestion of E. Sollberger, translated it as "he to whom the goddess Eštar has given the name". Lambert reads the signs as MU 8 and translates it "eight years".

Lines 6-7: *ša* [d]EŠ$_4$.DAR *ta-ú-bi-a i-na Ib-la* "when/after Eštar manifested herself in Ebla". — Pettinato, *AAAS* XX pp. 74f., links *ša* [d]EŠ$_4$.DAR with the preceding MU 8 (see just above) and continues with *ša? ú-pí-a i-na Eb-la*, translating it "depuis que? elle 'resplendit' en Ebla". For reasons unclear to me, Pettinato, *Ebla* p. 23, translates this sentence "che a preso possesso in Ebla"

and in his *Archives* pp. 25 and 27 translates it "who has taken possession in
Ebla". Lambert corrects the reading of *ša? ú-pí-a* to *ta-ú-pí-a*, translating it
"after? Istar appeared/revealed herself (in Ebla)". Of the two interpretations,
the second is preferred because it is in agreement with the congruence of *Eš-
tar tartâššuma* in line 14, where the feminine prefix *ta-* goes with the femi-
nine divine name Eštar. Nevertheless, Lambert's interpretation involves the
reading of TA in place of ŠA, which requires justification. While a clear
sign TA appears twice in line 14 and a clear sign ŠA is attested three times
in lines 6, 18, and 26, the questionable sign, as copied in line 7, has a form
that lies somewhere inbetween TA and ŠA. Because of the uncertainties, we may
be justified in considering other interpretations besides those offered by
Pettinato and Lambert, for instance: (in the eighth year) *ša* ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR *ša Ú-bi-
a* "of Eštar of Ub/pija" or *ša* ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR *Ša-ú-bi-a* "of Eštar of Ša'ub/pija" or
ša ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR *Ta-ú-bi-a* "of Eštar of Ta'ub/pija". None of these possibilities
is persuasive. The geographical names *Ú-bi-a*, *Ša-ú-bi-a*, or *Ta-ú-bi-a* are ei-
ther unattested, or are attested outside of the area of Ebla or north Syria
generally, and Eštar of any of these locations is unknown anywhere. In coming
back to Lambert's interpretation, we find, first of all, that it is strength-
ened by the numerous occurrences of Eštar revealing/manifesting herself in
Akkadian literature, as, for instance, in "for whom Eštar revealed herself at
the rising of her light" (*TCL* VI 1 rev. 1, later Akkadian, cited by Joan Good-
nick Westenholz, *JNES* XLIII p. 79a). Furthermore, the form *ta-ú-bi-a* /tawpi^{c}a/
fully conforms with the semantic, phonological, morphological, and syntactical
features that had been known previously. As shown by the spelling *ta-ú-bi-a*,
the consonantal root of /tawpi^{c}a/ is *WP^c* with an initial strong /w/. The spel-
ling Ca-ú as well as the spellings Ca-aw(PI) and Ca-a all stand for Caw, as
in the following examples, all culled from Amorite (Gelb & al., *CAAA* pp. 100f.):
Ia-ú-ḫi- /Jawḫî/ or /Jawḫî/, third person preterit, root unknown; *A-ú-da-*
/'Awdâ/, first person present-future of the basic stem, or /Hawdâ/, third per-
son perfect, as in Hebrew *hôdᵓ* "to confess", "to give thanks"; *Ia-aw-ma-*
/Jawma'/, third person present-future of the basic stem, contrasted with *ù-má*,
ú-má /'ûma'/ "I swear" in Old Akkadian (*MAD* III p. 43); *Ia-a-pa-ah* /Jawpa^c/,
third person present-future of the basic stem, contrasted with *Ú-bí-* /Jûpi^c/
"he manifested himself" in Old Akkadian (*MAD* III p. 55); *Ia-ú-ṣi-*, *Ia-ú-zi-*,
Ia-aw-zi- /Jawṣi'/, third person preterit of the basic stem, contrasted with
U-ṣí- /Jûṣi'/ "he went out" in Old Akkadian (*MAD* III p. 70). A similar case of
aw is known from the writing of *Aw-na-ni-[im]* /'Awnānim/ at Pre-Sargonic Mari
(Parrot & al., *MAM* III p. 309), and Old Babylonian *Aw-na-nu-um* and, with *w > m*

change, *Am-na-nu-um*. As is well known, the diphthongs *aw* and *aj* do not exist
in Akkadian; for example, **jawmum* becomes *jûmum*, *ûmum* "day", our *tawpiᶜa* be-
comes *tûpâ*, and **baytum* becomes *bîtum* "house". The preservation of *aw* in *taw-
piᶜa* of our inscription is non-Akkadian. It could possibly be Amorite or, more
plausibly, local Ebla.

The feminine prefix *ta-* of *tawpiᶜa* and of *tartâššuma* in line 14 is in congru-
ence with the feminine gender of ^{d}EŠ₄.DAR. This feature is common Semitic, in-
cluding Pre-Sargonic Ebla, Pre-Sargonic, Ur III, and post-Ur III Mari, Old Ak-
kadian, and the Assyrian dialect; the prefix is *i-* in the Babylonian dialect
from Old Babylonian times on.

Both Pettinato in his reading *ša? ú-pí-a* and Lambert in his reading *ta-ú-pí-a*
have recognized that the suffix *-a* functions as a subjunctive, in place of the
suffix *-u* of standard Akkadian. Lambert refers to "the subjunctive ending *-a*
which Gelb notes in Old Akkadian tablets probably from the Diyala region (*MAD*
II² 170f.)". The occurrence of the subjunctive *-a* in an area as far west as
Ebla is one of the most surprising features of the Jibbiṭ-Lîm inscription.
First discovered in the Old Akkadian texts from Išnun (Tell Asmar) in the
Diyala River region, as in AB+ÁŠ 1(PI) ŠE PN₁ *a-na* PN₂ *i-ti-na* "witnesses (to
the fact) that PN₁ gave 1 PI of barley to PN₂" (Gelb, *FM* 2:7-10), traces of it
have been detected also in the post-Ur III liver omina of Mari, as in *sá ....
il-ga-ʾà*(É) or *sá .... il-ga-a* "which he has taken" (*RA* XXXV p. 42 no. 3 and
p. 43 no. 9). The full evidence in favor of the subjunctive *-a* in the Diyala
River region and Mari has been collected and discussed in Gelb, *FM* p. 190;
Morphology of Akkadian (mimeographed) pp. 6 and 10f.; *MAD* II² pp. 170f.; and
Sequential Reconstruction of Proto-Akkadian pp. 103ff. The new evidence pro-
vided by *tawpiᶜa* of the Jibbiṭ-Lîm inscription of Ebla, added to that known
primarily from the texts at Išnun and Mari, links together three sites within
the broad span of the Kish Civilization. Especially important is the link be-
tween Mari and Ebla in post-Ur III times. Survivals of the subjunctive *-a* are
found in Arabic and possibly in Ugaritic.

Lines 8, 15, and 20: *ma-za-zu-um*, *ma-za-zu-ú*, and *ma-za-zi-[im]*. — The writ-
ings *ma-za-zu-um* and *ma-za-zu-ú* are nominatives in form but anticipated accu-
satives in syntax since they are objects of actions expressed by the verbs
⟨*ištur*⟩ "he wrote" in line 12 and *ušazziz* "he set up" in line 18. Abnormal
spellings such as *ma-za-zu-ú*, in place of the correct *ma-za-zu-um* are known
to me from Old Babylonian lexical texts, such as *ṣú-ḫa-ru-u* "child", *da-ḪI-
mu-ú* "lance", or ZU-ḪU-*nu-ú* "to adorn".

The noun *mazzāzum* of our text appears rarely as *mazzāzum*, mainly as *manzāzum* in Akkadian, exemplifying a case of *zz > nz* dissimilation. Its neaning is recorded as "emplacement", "stand", "socle (of a stela)", etc. in *CAD* M I pp. 234ff., and as "Socel v Bildern usw." in von Soden, *AHw.* p. 639a. With an eye on the fact that the inscription of Jibbiṭ-Lîm is written on a statue, both Pettinato and Lambert translated *mazzāzum* not as a stand, but a statue. The reason why the stand for a statue is stressed in the ex-voto offering of Jibbiṭ-Lîm, rather than his statue, is unclear. For additional discussion of *mazzāzum*, see below in section 4.

Lines 10, 19, 21, and 25: *šu-um-šu*, *šu-um-šu*, *šu-me-šu-[nu]*, and *šu-um-šu*. — As copied, the reading *šu-me-šu-[nu]* in line 21 is rather difficult and so is the form *šumēšunu*, instead of the expected *šumšunu*, in the plural. Nothing but a collation of the text will settle the correct reading. Pettinato, *AAAS* XX p. 75 and *Archives* p. 25, linked *šu-um-šu* in line 10 with *I-bi-iṭ-Li-im* and translated them "le susdit Ibbiṭ-Lim" and "the above-mentioned I.", respectively. Lines 19f. and 25f. were translated by him on p. 74, with an interpretation on p. 76, as "le nom de la statue" and "le nom de Ibbit-Lim", respectively. Landsberger, "Die Inschrift des assyrischen Königs Irišum ....", *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten* XLV (1950) pp. 248-50, devoted an extensive discussion to the meanings of *šumšu* and the like, which he interpreted as: In der Bedeutung eines unbestimmten Artikels: gemein-akkadisch nur *mimma šumšu* = "was auch immer"; "irgendein", "ein" im Sinne von englisch any; "irgendwelches"; "namens"; and "ein unbestimmter Artikel".

The exact meanings of *šumšu* and the like in our inscription are not uniform. The most natural way of translating *mazzāzum Jibbiṭ-Lîm šumšu* in line 8-10 is "the stand, 'Jibbiṭ-Lîm' is its name" or "the stand by the name of 'Jibbiṭ-Lîm'". This interpretation is impossible because it does not accord with the known forms of the names of the ex-voto objects as practiced in the Sumerian and Akkadian votive inscriptions; see my article "The Names of Ex-Voto Objects in Ancient Mesopotamia", *Names* IV (1956) pp. 65-69. According to the evidence cited there and many other examples, collected but not cited, votive objects are named in the form of phrases, sentences, or single nouns plus several attributes, but not of personal names. The occurrence of the word for "name" in reference to persons in lines 20 and 25 is standard in the curse formulas of the votive inscriptions.

Lines 12 and 22: *me-ir-e-šu* and *me-ir-e-[šu]*. — The convention of writing syllabically *mer'um* when it is followed by pronominal suffixes, but logograph-

ically, DUMU, when it occurs in a genealogical structure, such as PN DUMU PN₂,
as in lines 2f., is Old Assyrian. So is the form *mer'um* as contrasted with the
dialectal Old Babylonian *mar'um*, later *mârum*. In line with the Old Assyrian
spellings of *me-ir-i-šu* /mer'išu/ in genitive singular, but *me-ir-e-šu* /mer'-
ēšu/ in genitive plural, our spelling *me-ir-e-šu* must be taken as a plural
"sons", "children", "descendants".

Line 12: ⟨*ištur*⟩. — Pettinato, *AAAS* XX p. 75 and *Archives* p. 25, reconstruc-
ted ⟨*i-pu-uš*⟩ "il fit sculpter" and "he sculpted" after *me-ir-e-šu*. It may be
of some interest to note that the Irišum inscription (cited above in the note
to line 10) uses a sequence of the verbs *êpuš*, *aškun*, and *ušazziz*, of which
ušazziz and *iškun* also recur in our inscription.

Lines 13f.: ^dEŠ₄.DAR *ta-ar-ta-šu-ma* "Eštar loved him/it and". — Both Petti-
nato and Lambert interpret the form as BT of *ra'āmum* "to love". The phonetic
development of *mš* > *šš* in *tartâm-šuma* > *tartâššuma* is attested at Pre-Sargonic
Ebla and in Old Assyrian. The love of gods for humans is expressed in column
i 10-12 of the Nâram-Sin inscription from Bassetki published by Abdul-Hadi Al-
Fouadi, *Sumer* XXXII (1976) pp. 63-75 (cf. Walter Farber, *Or.* NS LII (1983) pp.
67-72): *in rí-ma-ti* ^dInnin *dar-a-mu-su₄* "by the grace (love) of Innin who
loved him".

Line 17: *bi-el-ti-šu* "his lady" (gen.). — Note the spelling *bi-el-ti-šu* and
not *be-el-ti-šu*, and the late form *bêltum* and not the early form *bêlatum*
known in the Sargonic and Ur III periods (*MAD* III p. 90).

Line 18: *ú-ša-zi-iz iš-k[u-un]* "he set up and established (the stand)". —
Pettinato read *ú-ša-zi-iz iš-k[u?-....]* in line 18, translating it "il érigea
...." and linked *šu-um-šu* of line 19 with *ša ma-za-zi-[im]* of line 20, trans-
lating it as "le nom de la statue"; Lambert restored Pettinato's *iš-k[u?-....]*
as *iš-k[u-un]* and linked it with *šu-um-šu* in line 19, rather than with *ú-ša-
zi-iz* in line 18. Although both interpretations appear, on the surface, equal-
ly possible, there may be some justification for favoring the first one. First,
there is no good reason to read the signs in lines 18-19 in the order 18) *ú-
ša-zi-iz* 19) *šu-um-šu iš-k[u-un]*, rather than 18) *ú-ša-zi-iz iš-k[u-un]* 19)
šu-um-šu (*ša ma-za-zi-[im]*). The resulting hendiadys, *ušazziz iškun* "he set up
(and) established (the stand)" is well known in Akkadian, as in *aḫmuṭma ašpur*
"I hastened and sent", "I sent quickly" or *niḫarrup nišaqqî* "we shall hurry
(and) give drink", "we shall give drink early". Second, in the suggested se-
quence of lines 19-22, the name of the stand, the names of Jibbiṭ-Lîm and of
his children are identical with that proposed above for line 8-12 of the in-
scription.

Lines 19-26: Curse formula. — Pettinato, *AAAS* XX p. 75, and, similarly, *Ar-chives* p. 25, translated lines 19-20 as "le nom de la statue (est):" and took the rest of the text to be the wording of the name of the statue. Lambert *RA* LXXV p. 96, interpreted lines 20-21 as the beginning of a curse formula: *ša ma-za-zi* [*ù*] *šu-mì* x x [....] "whoever (destroys) my statue and my name [....]" and left the rest unexplained. Lambert's assumption to begin the curse formula with line 20, rather than line 19, relies not so much on the context as the alleged division of the inscription into a right-hand panel (lines 1-19) and a left-hand panel (lines 20-26), for which there is no justification. My re-construction of the verbs at the end of lines 22, 23, and 26 is based on the structure of curse formulas in general and is open to revision. Below line 26 there are traces of a horizontal line that forms the bottom frame of the in-scription. It is clearly visible in the photo and was taken by Pettinato as indicating that line 26 is the final line of the text.

4. T h e   s t r u c t u r e   o f   t h e   i n s c r i p t i o n

A free translation of the inscription is:

Part 1, lines 1-7: "Jibbiṭ-Lîm son of Jigriś-ḪI.IB, the king, who raises the spirits of the Ebleans, dedicated the water basin for Eštar in the eighth year after Eštar had manifested herself in Ebla."

Part 2, lines 8-18: "Jibbiṭ-Lîm wrote the name of the stand for his life and the life of his children. Eštar showed him love and (in gratitude) he erected the stand before Eštar, his lady."

Part 3, lines 19-26: "May Eštar [curse him] who [erases] the name of the stand, [his name, and] the names of [his] children. Or, whoever will w[rite] his own name (in their place) [shall perish]."

The division of the inscription into three parts is self-evident. The first part contains the statement about the construction of a water basin and its dedication to Eštar; the second part deals with the erection of a stand also for Eštar; the third and final part contains the standard curse formula against the violator of the inscription.

There are no grave problems with the understanding of the first part and the only moot question relates to the manifestation of Eštar in Ebla, described in lines 6-7, which may be taken either as the conclusion of the first part or the beginning of the second. By contrast, part two bristles with difficulties: In lines 8-10, the sequence *mazzāzum Jibbiṭ-Lîm šunšu* cannot mean "the stand, 'Jibbiṭ-Lîm' is its name", but "the name of the stand Jibbiṭ-Lîm (⟨wrote⟩)";

in lines 13-14, we meet with a rare occurrence of *Eštar tartâššuma* "Eštar loved
him and"; in line 15, we have an unusual spelling *ma-za-zu-û* which along with
mazzāzum of line 8 apparently are nominatives in form, but accusatives in mean-
ing; in line 18, the sequence *ušazziz iškun* "he set up (and) established (the
stand)" may provide, if correctly interpreted, a good example of hendiadys. It
is probably with reference to these problems that Lambert, *RA* LXXV p. 95, con-
cluded "that due to the lack of comparable texts and its own peculiar features,
[the inscription] is very difficult". The curse formulas in part three contain
several lacunae and their reconstruction is open to several possibilities.

In its tripartite division, our votive inscription resembles the standard struc-
ture of the votive inscriptions of all times, which normally consist of three
parts: 1) the *inu* (*inuma, in ûmim, inûmi*) "when" clause, which deals with the
occasion, such as the winning of a battle or war, for the action described in
2) the *inûmišu* (*in ûmišu*) "then" clause, such as the offering of an ex-voto
object or the building of a temple, and 3) the curse formulas against the vio-
lator or, rarely, blessings for the benefactor of the ex-voto object or tem-
ple. Occasionally, either *inu* or *inûmišu* is missing, very rarely both, but, in
all cases, the theme of the *inu-inûmišu* clauses is retained.

Our votive inscription has neither *inu* nor *inûmišu* and, what is even more im-
portant, the occasion described in the first part does not concern a historical
event, such as the winning of a battle or a war. To an unprejudiced eye, the
construction of a water basin, described in the first part, and the erection
of a stand, described in the second part, look like two parallel actions.

This forces us to deviate from the standard structure of the votive inscrip-
tions and to suggest the following interpretation for our inscription. After
Jibbiṭ-Lîm made the water basin in the eighth year of Eštar's manifestation in
Ebla, then he erected the stand for Eštar. This brings us to the question of
what is the relation between *apsûm* "water basin" and *mazzāzum* "stand"? Is *maz-
zāzum* a stand for a statue, as generally assumed, or could it be a stand for
a water basin? Finally, we can ask whether the "statue" of Jibbiṭ-Lîm was orig-
inally a free-standing piece of sculpture designed to be set on a "stand", or
whether it might have formed part of a stand for a water basin. Since the
"statue" is badly broken, its original shape and function are thereby obscured
and these questions arise primarily from philological considerations.

Contrasting with the tripartite division of the inscription, described above,
Pettinato, *Archives* p. 25, divides the inscription into two unequal parts:

A) the offering of a basin for ritual ablutions to Eštar (lines 1-5) and B)
the dedication of a statue of the king to Eštar, concluding with the name
given to the statue by the king (lines 6-26).

5. Writing and language of the inscription

The following features may be noted in the writing:

Double consonants are not expressed in the writing of *I-bi-iṭ-* for *Jibbiṭ-*
(lines 2 and 9); *ma-za-zu-um* and the like for *mazzāzum* (lines 8, 15, and 20);
ta-ar-ta-šu-ma for *tartâššuma* (line 11); and *ú-ša-zi-iz* for *ušazziz* (line 18).
This is a feature of Sargonic, Ur III, archaic OB, and OA, but not classical
OB. The semantic indicator ^{d} is used in the semi-logographic writing of the
divine name ^{d}EŠ$_4$.DAR, but not in the syllabic spelling of *-Li-im* (lines 2 and
9) and -ḪI.IB (line 3); ^{KI} is not used in the syllabic spellings of *Ib-la-i-im*
(line 4) or *Ib-la* (line 7). The free use of the semantic indicators is char-
acteristic of Old Akkadian writing (*MAD* II^2 p. 23); occasionally it is found
at post-Ur III Mari (Limet, *ARMT* XIX pp. 159-163).

The use of the logographic spelling DUMU "son" (line 3) in the structure PN$_1$
DUMU PN$_2$, but of the syllabic spelling *me-ir-e-šu* (lines 12 and 22) in the
noun plus a pronominal suffix is characteristic of OA.

The abnormal spelling *ma-za-zu-ú* (line 15), instead of *ma-za-zu-um* (line 8),
has been noted in many spellings in later lexical texts.

The combination of signs Ca+ú is used for Caw in *ta-ú-bi-a* /tawpi^{c}a/ (line 7),
as in the Amorite names of the OB period.

The sign BI is used for *pí* in *ta-ú-bi-a* /tawpi^{c}a/ (line 7) and for *bè* in *bi-
el-ti-šu* /bêltišu/ (line 17).

The sign ME in *šu-me-šu-[nu]* /šumēšunu/ (line 8), *me-ki-im* /mêqîm/ (line 11),
and *me-ir-e-šu* /mer'ēšu/ (lines 12 and 22) is not characteristic of OA writing,
as suggested in the case of *šu-me-* (line 8) by Lambert, *RA* LXXV p. 96, since
in all cases ME is used for *me*, not *mì*.

The use of the sign SI for *šé* in *ú-si-ri-ib* /ušêrib/ (line 5), but ŠA for *ša*
(*passim*) and ŠU for *šu* (*passim*) is characteristic of post-Ur III Mari, OA, and
archaic OB.

The use of the sign ZA for *sà* in ⌜*ap*⌝-*za-am* /apsâm/ (line 1) is known from Old
Akkadian to pre-classical OB.

In the field of phonology we note the following:

The vocalic change of $a > e$ in the vicinity of ^{c} may be noted in $\acute{u}$-si-ri-ib /ušêrib/ from /jušaᶜrib/ (line 5), which is post-Sargonic, and bi-el-ti-$\check{s}u$ /bêltišu/ (line 17) from /*baᶜlatišu/, which, in the case of $b\hat{e}lum$, appears already in the Pre-Sargonic period.

The preservation of aw takes place in ta-$\acute{u}$-bi-a /tawpiᶜa/ (line 7), against the common Akkadian $t\hat{u}p\hat{a}$.

The preservation of two syllables i+$^c a$ in ta-$\acute{u}$-bi-a /tawpiᶜa/ (line 7) may be contrasted with the contraction of $u^w a$ to $\hat{a}$ in ⌜ap⌝-za-am /apsâm/ (line 1) from $apsu^w am$, which is pre-OB.

The loss of the feminine marker a in bi-el-ti-$\check{s}u$ /bêltišu/ (line 17) from /*baᶜlatišu/, which is post-Sargonic.

The vocalic change of $a > e$ in proximity to r, observable in me-ir-e-$\check{s}u$ /mer'-êšu/ (lines 12 and 22) from /mar'īšu/, is found in OA.

The preservation of zz in ma-za-zu-um /mazzāzum/ (lines 8 and, similarly, 15 and 20) contrasts with the assimilation of $m\check{s} > \check{s}\check{s}$ in ta-ar-ta-$\check{s}u$-ma /tartâš-šuma/ (line 14) from /tartâmšuma/.

The prefix Ja- becomes Ji- in I-bi-$i\dot{t}$- /Jibbiṭ-/ (lines 2 and 9) and Ig-ri-$i\acute{s}$- /Jigriś-/ (line 3). This feature is characteristic of Akkadian in all its stages, Pre-Sargonic Ebla, and Pre-Sargonic, Ur III, and post-Ur III Mari, but not of Amorite.

In the field of morphology the following features may be noted:

The gentilic formation $-ajum$, found in Ib-la-i-im /Eblajim/ (line 4), is characteristic of the classical Old Babylonian dialect of Mari and of the Assyrian dialect and contrasts with $-ijum$ of the Old Akkadian and Babylonian dialects.

The verbal pattern $jiqtil$ of I-bi-$i\dot{t}$- /Jibbiṭ-/ (lines 2 and 9) contrasts with the pattern $(j)iqtul$ of $ibbu\dot{t}$ in Akkadian; the pattern of Ig-ri-$i\acute{s}$- /Jigriś-/ contrasts with that of $jigru\acute{s}$ at Pre-Sargonic Ebla and in Old Akkadian.

The feminine prefix ta-, found in ta-$\acute{u}$-bi-a /tawpiᶜa/ (line 7) and ta-ar-ta-$\check{s}u$-ma /tartâššuma/ (line 14), is common Semitic, including Pre-Sargonic Ebla, Pre-Sargonic, Ur III, and post-Ur III Mari and the Assyrian, but not Babylonian, dialect.

The subjunctive suffix $-a$ occurring in $(\check{s}a)$ ta-$\acute{u}$-bi-a /tawpiᶜa/ (line 7) is parallelled by several examples in the Diyala River region in the Sargonic

period and at Mari in the post-Ur III liver omina and rarely in classical OB. Standard Akkadian has only the suffix *-u* for the subjunctive.

The participle of the causative-factitive H stem of *me-ki-im* /mêqîm/ (line 4) contrasts with the Akkadian Š stem of /ušêrib/ (line 5) and /ušazziz/ (line 18). This feature is common only in Amorite although its existence at Ebla cannot, *a priori*, be denied.

The nominative *mazzāzum* (lines 8 and, similarly, 15) functions as an accusative.

The dependent sentence *ša Eštar tawpiᶜa ina Ebla* "after Eštar had manifested herself in Ebla" (lines 6-7) exemplifies a case of free syntax known at Pre-Sargonic Ebla-Mari and post-Ur III Mari. Similar may be the case of *išk[un] šumšu* "he established his name" (lines 18-19) if Lambert's interpretation is accepted.

Besides the logographic entries DUMU (line 5), LUGAL (line 5), IGI (line 16), and ᵈEŠ₄.DAR (passim), the following lexical morphemes, listed in the order of the inscription, are attested: *apsûm, qâmum, erēbum, ša, wapāᶜum, ina, mazzāzum, šumum, ana, balāṭum, u, mer'um, ra'āmum, -ma, bêltum, ušuzzum, šakā-[num]*, and *ulu[ma]*. In personal names we find the lexemes *nabāṭum* in *I-bi-iṭ-* (lines 2 and 9) and *garāśum* in *Ig-ri-iš-* (line 3). Among geographical names there is *Ib-la* (line 7) and the corresponding gentilic formation *Ib-la-i-im* (line 4); among divine names we have *Eštar* (passim), occurring freely, and *-Li-im* (lines 2 and 9) and *-ḪI.IB* (line 3), occurring in personal names.

All lexemes recur in Akkadian with the following qualifications: *Qâmum* is attested only in Amorite personal names; *balāṭum* is known at Pre-Sargonic Ebla, but in the Ur III period it begins to be used in Babylonia, partially replacing the older *na'āśum*; *uluma* occurs mainly at OB Mari; *nabāṭum* occurs in Akkadian and is productive in an Amorite personal name, while *garāśum*, occurring in the Pre-Sargonic period at Ebla and in the Sargonic period in Babylonia, is productive only in Ebla personal names; the divine name *Lîm*, first attested at Pre-Sargonic Ebla, becomes the dynastic god of Mari in the OB period.

The language of the votive inscription of Jibbiṭ-Lîm is clearly Akkadian with an admixture of features that are either non-Akkadian or are Akkadian with certain limitations. Among these are: The preservation of the diphthong *aw*, against *û* of Akkadian; the subjunctive *-a*, against *-u* of Akkadian (except *-a* in the Diyala region); the hifil *mêqîm* against the šafel of Akkadian and the lexeme

qâmum against *kunnum* of Akkadian; free syntax, against the obligatory syntax
of Akkadian. Several features of the writing and language of the inscription
are called "Assyrian" above pp. 17-18. On all these levels, the votive in-
scription of Ebla resembles, more than anything else, the votive inscriptions
and the liver omina of Mari which are also composed in the Akkadian language
and also contain an admixture of features that cannot be classified as Akka-
dian.

The following conclusion on the language of Ebla and Mari, partly discussed
also in my forthcoming article "Mari and the Kish Civilization" (see above,
section 1), may be drawn:

The non-Akkadian features that may be recovered in the post-Ur III votive in-
scription of Jibbiṭ-Lîm of Ebla belong to the local language that is known at
Mari from the Ur III votive inscriptions and the post-Ur III administrative
texts and liver omina.

The local language of Ebla and Mari is, for all practical purposes, identi-
cal.

The late language of Ebla and Mari is a direct descendant of the language that
was used in the area in Pre-Sargonic times.

The fact that not all features may be duplicated both at Ebla and Mari and
that not all features occurring in the late periods are reflected in earlier
times at Ebla and Mari may be explained partly by the disparities in the nature
and quantity of sources from the two sites, partly by areal and temporal dif-
ferentations.

The question of the so-called "Assyrian" features in the writing and language
of Ebla-Mari, which abound from the Pre-Sargonic to the post-Ur III periods,
must be left for the future to resolve.