

Come as you are, as you were, as I want you to be:
A Study of Foreign Musicians in the Mari Archives

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This thesis presents a study of the ‘foreign musician’ who are so often mentioned and yet rarely discussed in studies of the music of Old Babylonian Mesopotamia.

At its core is a discussion of ‘foreign’ musical professionals. This includes considering the complexities and values of ‘foreign’ music and its practitioners, and the merits of other methodologies, such as onomastic studies, for their potential contributions.

To do so, it uses the texts published from the Mari archives and discusses them in light of some fundamental questions, which include: What is ‘foreign’? What is a ‘musician’? What would have been considered a ‘foreign musician’ during this period, and does this correlate with our current assumptions?

The issue of ethnicity in the ancient Near East is a particular point of interest to this study: it is considered both as related to the world of the Mari archives and the world of modern Assyriology.

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Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) _____ Date: _____

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1. *Introduction*

This thesis will focus on ‘foreign musicians’ in the textual evidence of Mari; that is, those who originate from places other than the courts in which they work. Alongside this discussion, however, I also examine the way in which Assyriologists understand and theorise about these individuals. In particular, the body of work surrounding ‘ethnicity’ and its identification in this period of the ancient Near East must be dealt with. Preconceptions on our (modern) part, derived from Western ethno-racial theory, have significantly influenced our interpretation of the political and social landscape of the second millennium, and this in turn has impacted how we understand the ‘foreign musicians’ present in many courts at this time. As well as presenting this investigation into foreign musical professionals, I will also discuss the social and professional positions these individuals occupy, and the way in which this is inextricably linked with the valuation of their musical skill as a commodity, and therefore their foreign identity/ies. I will also posit that, in discussing the aforementioned, there are ‘zones’ of foreignness in operation during this period, in contrast to the dominant understanding of this region as comprised of distinct cultural groups. Those from cities that are, at various points, linked with Mari, are considered foreign ‘enough’ that their origins are designated within the texts, but still comfortably ‘domestic’ enough that they could achieve very high positions within the Mari court. Those, however, from cities that are ‘unknown quantities’, from conquered regions, or from areas of disputed territory, whilst still maintaining the appropriate status as related to their (foreign) music, do not climb to the same social heights as their localised associates.

1.1. *Current state of the field*¹

As far as I am aware, there are no large-scale studies of foreign musicians at Mari specifically; this is likely due to the limited evidence for their existence (including identifying them), and the issues associated with discussing ‘foreign’-ness in the ancient world. In completing this study, this thesis has therefore drawn from several areas of Assyriological

¹ Two new publications of relevance to this thesis’ topic were unavailable to me at the time of writing but may provide points of interest or clarification to this discussion: A. Garcia-Ventura, C. Tavorieri, and L. Verderame, (eds.), *The Study of Musical Performance in Antiquity: Archaeology and Written Sources*, (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2018); and N. Wasserman and Y. Bloch, *The Amorites: Mesopotamia in the Early Second Millennium BCE*, (Jerusalem, 2019).

research, as well as from other fields (such as anthropology, sociology, linguistics, general ethnomusicology and cultural-geography). A brief review of these previous works will allow us to continue with this thesis, well-situated in the relevant scholarship, despite that it seeks to fill something of a void.

1.1.1. *Studies of music/ians in Assyriology*

Although no studies exist focusing specifically on the foreign musicians, there are several Assyriological studies of musicians in old Babylonian Mesopotamia (largely from Mari), especially by Ziegler,² Shehata,³ Krispijn,⁴ and Dumbrell;⁵ other studies of note include the publication and discussion of musical ‘texts’ and related concepts, by Bayer,⁶ Duchesne-Guillemin,⁷ Kilmer,⁸ Kilmer et al.,⁹ Gurney,¹⁰ Crickmore, Crocker, Colburn, Horowitz,

² N. Ziegler, *Florilegium marianum IX: Les Musiciens et la musique d’après les archives de Mari*, (Paris, 2007); *idem*, “Teachers and Students: Conveying Musical Knowledge in the Kingdom of Mari,” in R. Pruzsinszky and D. Shehata, (eds.), *Musiker und Tradierung: Studien zur Rolle von Musikern bei der Verschriftlichung und Tradierung von literarischen Werken*, (Berlin, 2010), pp. 119 – 134; *idem*, “Music, the Work of Professionals,” in K. Radner and E. Robson, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, (New York, 2011), pp. 288 – 312.

³ D. Shehata, “Privates Musizieren in Mesopotamien?” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Vol. 97: Festschrift für Hermann Hunger zum. 65 Geburtstag gewidmet von seinen Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern, (2007), pp. 521 – 529; *idem*, *Musiker und ihr vokales Repertoire: Untersuchungen zu Inhalt und Organisation von Musikerberufen und Liedgattungen in altbabylonischer Zeit*, (Göttingen, 2009); *idem*, “Sounds from the Divine: Religious Musical Instruments in the Ancient Near East,” in J. G. Westenholz, Y. Maurey, and E. Seroussi, (eds.), *Music in Antiquity: The Near East and the Mediterranean*, (Berlin/Boston and Jerusalem, 2014), pp. 102 – 128.

⁴ T. H. Krispijn, “Musical Ensembles in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in R. Dumbrell and I. Finkel, (eds.), *ICONEA 2008, Proceedings of the International Conference of Near Eastern Archaeomusicology held at the British Museum, December 4, 5, and 6, 2008*, (New York, 2010), pp. 125 – 150.

⁵ R. J. Dumbrell, *The Archaeomusicology of the Ancient Near East*, second edition, (Victoria, BC, 2005).

⁶ B. Bayer, “The Mesopotamian Theory of Music and the Ugarit Notation – a Reexamination,” in J. G. Westenholz, Y. Maurey, and E. Seroussi, (eds.), *Music in Antiquity: The Near East and the Mediterranean*, (Berlin/Boston and Jerusalem, 2014), pp. 15 – 91.

⁷ M. Duchesne-Guillemin, “Music in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt,” *World Archaeology*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1981), pp. 287 – 297.

⁸ A. D. Kilmer, “Two New Lists of Key Numbers for Mathematical Operations,” *Orientalia*, Vol. 29, (1960), pp. 273 – 308; *idem*, “The Cult Song With Music From Ancient Ugarit: Another Interpretation,” *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale*, Vol. 68, No. 1, (1974), pp. 69 – 82; *idem*, “A Music Tablet from Sippar (?): BM 65217 + 66616,” *Iraq*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (1984), pp. 69 – 80; *idem*, “The Musical Instruments from Ur and Ancient Mesopotamian Music,” *Expedition*, Vol. 40, No. 2, (1998), pp. 12 – 19; *idem*, “Mesopotamian Music Theory Since 1977,” in J. G. Westenholz, Y. Maurey, and E. Seroussi, (eds.), *Music in Antiquity: The Near East and the Mediterranean*, (Berlin/Boston and Jerusalem, 2014), pp. 92 – 101.

⁹ A. D. Kilmer and S. Tinney, “Old Babylonian Music Instruction Texts,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 48, (1996), pp. 49 – 56; A. D. Kilmer and S. Mirelman, “Mesopotamia,” in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, (2001), accessed online, via <<http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18485>>; A. D. Kilmer and J. Peterson, “More Old Babylonian Music-Instruction Fragments from Nippur,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 61, (2009), pp. 93 – 96.

¹⁰ O. R. Gurney, “An Old Babylonian Treatise on the Tuning of the Harp,” *Iraq*, Vol. 30, (1968), pp. 215 – 228; *idem*, “Babylonian Music Again,” *Iraq*, Vol. 56, (1994), pp. 101 – 106; also O. R. Gurney and M. L. West, “Mesopotamian Tonal Systems: A Reply,” *Iraq*, Vol. 60, (1998), pp. 223 – 227; B. Lawergren and O. R.

Mirelman,¹¹ and others.¹² There are also studies of instrumentation,¹³ musical education – particularly those of Michalowski,¹⁴ and Geller¹⁵ – and several music-related entries in the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*.¹⁶ Although the field of those who study the musical world of Mesopotamia is relatively small, there is a general interest in the study of music in the ancient world. Many studies of Mesopotamian music are therefore published in a variety of journals, as part of published colloquia, or as part of other broad-scope studies.

Although these studies represent a significant contribution to Assyriology, especially in promoting the use of interdisciplinary approaches to discuss and theorise regarding musical text and practice of music in the Near East, there are, as with any historical field, issues generally. With particular reference to this thesis' scope, there is little discussion of broadly applied terms such as 'musician', 'identity', or, when mentioned, 'foreign', which have created disparities across the various studies, as well as muddying the general waters.

This thesis also feels that debate regarding a handful of obscure musical-'theory' texts has stagnated research – although there is definite movement away from discussion of these texts in recent decades. It also demonstrates a traditional Assyriological focus on and value for

Gurney, "Sound Holes and Geometrical Figures: Clues to the Terminology of Ancient Mesopotamian Harps", *Iraq*, Vol. 49, (1987), pp. 37 – 52.

¹¹ S. Mirelman, "A New Fragment of Music Theory from Ancient Iraq", *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 67, No. 1, (2010), pp. 45 – 51; *idem*, "Tuning Procedures in Ancient Iraq", *Analytical Approaches to World Music*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2013), pp. 43 – 56; and S. Mirelman and T. H. Krispijn, "The Old Babylonian Tuning Text UET VI/3 899", *Iraq*, Vol. 71, (2009), pp. 43 – 52.

¹² L. Crickmore, "A Musicological Interpretation of the Akkadian Term *Sihpu*", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 64, (2012), pp. 57 – 64; V. Doubleday, "The Frame Drum in the Middle East: Women, Musical Instruments and Power", *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 43, (1999), pp. 101 – 134; W. Farber, "Magic at the Cradle: Babylonian and Assyrian Lullabies", *Anthropos*, Vol. 85, No. 1/3, (1990), pp. 139 – 148; J. Friberg, "Seven-Sided Star Figures and Tuning Algorithms in Mesopotamian, Greek, and Islamic Texts", *Archiv für Orientforschung*, Vol. 52, (2011), pp. 121 – 155; W. Horowitz, "A Late Babylonian Tablet with Concentric Circles from the University Museum (CBS 1766)", *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, (2006), pp. 37 – 53; A. Shaffer, "A New Musical Term in Ancient Mesopotamian Music", *Iraq*, Vol. 43, No. 1, (1981), pp. 79 – 83; C. Waerzeggers and R. Siebes, "An Alternative Interpretation of the Seven-Pointed Star on CBS 1766", *Nouvelle Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*, Vol. 40, (2007), pp. 43 – 44.

¹³ S. Mirelman, "The Ala-Instrument: Its Identification and Role," in J. G. Westenholz, Y. Maurey, and E. Seroussi, (eds.), *Music in Antiquity: The Near East and the Mediterranean*, (Berlin/Boston and Jerusalem, 2014), pp. 148 – 171; U. Gabbay, "The Balaḡ Instrument and Its Role in the Cult of Ancient Mesopotamia," in J. G. Westenholz, Y. Maurey, and E. Seroussi, (eds.), *Music in Antiquity: The Near East and the Mediterranean*, (Berlin/Boston and Jerusalem, 2014), pp. 129 – 147.

¹⁴ P. Michalowski, "Learning Music: Schooling, Apprenticeship, and Gender in Early Mesopotamia," in R. Pruzsinszky and D. Shehata, (eds.), *Musiker und Tradierung: Studien zur Rolle von Musikern bei der Verschriftlichung und Tradierung von literarischen Werken*, (Berlin, 2010), pp. 199 – 239.

¹⁵ M. Geller, "Music Lessons," in G. J. Selz, (ed.), *Festschrift für Burkhard Kienast*, (Münster, 2003), pp. 109 – 111.

¹⁶ Most importantly, A. D. Kilmer's comprehensive article: "Musik, A.I.," in M. P. Streck, (ed.), *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, Bd. 8, (1997), pp. 463 – 482.

‘direct’ textual evidence and the cuneiform tablet. As this thesis will demonstrate, there is already a great deal of evidence for musical practitioners of many kinds within the texts, even indirectly.

Another point of issue is the indirect acknowledgement of gender constructs on our conceptions of the ancient past, particularly relating to ancient musicians, and ancient foreign musicians (in the ‘harem’ especially). There are assumptions inherent in theorisations that instruments would be segregated by gender, or that some positions were restricted to individuals of a particular gender. Whilst this may indeed have been the case, and indeed there is evidence that certain instruments were restricted to certain groups, I think we need to be more careful with the way we approach discussions of gendered spaces and objects, certainly beginning with acknowledging that we automatically construct narratives and social frameworks that contain this binary.

My final note on this matter: despite the fact that nearly all surviving evidence for named musicians reflects the upper segments of the Old Babylonian musical (and social) hierarchy, and nearly all are men, there is little explicit acknowledgement of this fact and the impact this has on our perspective of, firstly, the whole picture of the period, and secondly, the view of those whose voices we do not have, especially women and children.

1.1.2. Ethnomusicology and music-archaeology: the academia of musicians, music, and musical practice in history

Music-archaeology studies “the phenomenon of past musical behaviours and sound”; it combines musicological, historical, and archaeological approaches in order to do so.¹⁷ Several studies have been published discussing the use and demarcation of related terminology in Assyriology.¹⁸

¹⁷ A. Adje Both, “Music Archaeology: Some Methodological and Theoretical Considerations,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 41, (2009), pp. 1 – 11.

¹⁸ See especially S. Mirelman, “The Definition of ‘Music’ in ‘Music Archaeology’: The Contribution of Historical Ethnomusicology,” in R. Eichmann and L. Koch, (eds.), *Studien zur Musikarchäologie 7*, (Raben and Westfalen, 2010), pp. 115 – 118; *idem*, “The False Decipherment of Cuneiform ‘Notation’ in the Early Twentieth Century,” in S. Mirelman, (ed.), *The Historiography of Music in Global Perspective*, (Piscataway, 2010), pp. 135 – 144; A. D. Kilmer, “A Brief Account of the Development of the Field of Music Archaeology,” in J. G. Westenholz, Y. Maurey, and E. Seroussi, (eds.), *Music in Antiquity: The Near East and the Mediterranean*, (Berlin/Boston and Jerusalem, 2014), pp. 11 – 14.

There is also the field of ‘historical-ethnomusicology’, which serves to study musical practice in history more generally and stems from anthropological studies of non-Western musical traditions.¹⁹ This work, however, created ways of discussing and understanding music/musical practice in antiquity that music-archaeological studies are based on. This is particularly true of the incorporation of historical methodology as part of music-archaeological approaches and some historical-ethnomusicographical studies.²⁰

Music-archaeology in Assyriology represents a trend towards the integration of textual and archaeological evidence, (including visual and physical evidence for musical practice), as opposed to the more ‘traditional’ textually-based Assyriological approaches, grounded solely in cuneiform tablets.²¹ This thesis sought to focus more on a music-archaeological approach in considering the musical practices of the early Old Babylonian period, however, there are limited ways to apply musical-archaeological approaches to an already restricted corpus, particularly when visual or archaeological evidence is negligible.

1.1.3. *Studies of ethnicity and the ‘foreign’ in Assyriology*

As well as more musicologically-based studies, this thesis also utilises a much broader range of Assyriological work as it intersects with the question of foreign individuals during this period. The study of ethnicity in Assyriological contexts has a difficult history, particularly linked with the early use of racial frameworks: this is discussed in 1.6.1. Despite the increasing use of ethnic frameworks to discuss cultural interactions and landscape of Mesopotamia in the Old Babylonian period, there has been limited work on these ideas

¹⁹ B. Nettl, “Historical Aspects of Ethnomusicology,” *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 60, No. 3, (1958), pp. 518-532, esp. 519 – 521; J. McCollum and D. G. Herbert, “Foundations of Historical Ethnomusicology,” in J. McCollum and D. G. Herbert, (eds.), *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology*, (London, 2014), pp. 1 – 34, especially pg. 5; also cf. *idem*, “Methodologies for Historical Ethnomusicology in the Twenty-First Century,” and “Philosophy of History and Theory in Historical Ethnomusicology,” in J. McCollum and D. G. Herbert, (eds.), *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology*, (London, 2014), pp. 35 – 84 and 85 – 148, respectively; also B. Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts*, second edition, (Champaign, IL, 2005); T. Rice, *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction*, (New York, 2014).

²⁰ A. E. Lucas, “Ancient Music, Modern Myth: Persian Music and the Pursuit of Methodology in Historical Ethnomusicology,” in J. McCollum and D. G. Herbert, (eds.), *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology*, (London, 2014), pp. 175 – 196.

²¹ A. Buckley, “Music Archaeology: Its Contribution to ‘Cultural’ Musicology and ‘Historical’ Ethnomusicology,” in J. Braun and U. Sharvit, *Studies in Socio-Musical Sciences*, (Ramat Gan, 1998), pp. 109-115.

themselves. A Rencontre was held on the topic in 2002, with papers published in 2005.²² These cover an extensive range of topics and periods, and the introduction by van Driel²³ raises a number of interesting points regarding the use and definition of ‘ethnicity’. Papers particularly relevant to this thesis include those by Beaulieu,²⁴ De Bernardi,²⁵ Fitzgerald,²⁶ Forlanini,²⁷ Goddeeris,²⁸ Roaf,²⁹ and Whittaker.³⁰ As with so many similar collections of papers, however, there are many points raised that would benefit from further discussion, but which do not have the chance. Other studies that consider the question of ethnicity include those of Emberling,³¹ Emberling and Yoffee,³² Potts,³³ Young,³⁴ and more recently, Bahrani.³⁵

The complexity of the issue and the difficulty of making umbrella-statements in reference to the Near East, both chronologically and temporally, mean that much of the published work is quite focused in nature. It can thus be frustratingly inapplicable due to changes in socio-

²² W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005).

²³ G. van Driel, “Ethnicity, how to cope with the subject,” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 1 – 10.

²⁴ P.-A. Beaulieu, “The god Amurru as emblem of ethnic and cultural identity?” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 33 – 46.

²⁵ C. De Bernardi, “Methodological problems in the approach to ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 78 – 89.

²⁶ M. A. Fitzgerald, “The ethnic and political identity of the Kudur-mabuk dynasty,” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 101 – 110.

²⁷ M. Forlanini, “Un peuple, plusieurs noms: le problème des ethniques au Proche Orient ancien. Cas connus, cas à découvrir,” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 111 – 119.

²⁸ A. Goddeeris, “The emergence of Amorite dynasties in northern Babylonia during the Old Babylonian period,” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 138 – 146.

²⁹ M. Roaf, “Ethnicity and Near Eastern archaeology: the limits of inference,” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 306 – 315.

³⁰ G. Whittaker, “The Sumerian question: reviewing the issues,” in W. H. van Soldt, (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pp. 409 – 429.

³¹ G. Emberling, “Ethnicity in complex societies: archaeological perspectives,” *Journal of Archaeological Research*, Vol. 5, No. 4, (1997), pp. 295 – 344.

³² G. Emberling and N. Yoffee, “Thinking about ethnicity in Mesopotamian archaeology and history,” in H. Kühne, R. Bernbeck, and K. Bartl, (eds.), *Fluchtpunkt Uruk: Schriften für Hans Jörg Nissen*, (Rahden, 1999), pp. 272 – 281.

³³ D. Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization: The Material Foundations*, (Ithaca, 1997).

³⁴ R. Young, *White Mythologies: Writing Histories and the West*, (London, 1990); *idem*, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, (London, 1995).

³⁵ Z. Bahrani, “Race and Ethnicity in Mesopotamian Antiquity,” *World Archaeology*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (2006), pp. 48 – 59.

cultural contexts; but those studies that speak with a broader purview also often require ‘tweaking’ to apply to any specific area of study. The recent work, although limited, seeks to challenge many traditional Assyriological understandings of cultural interactions, and deals competently with a complex topic, even with its issues.

A particular factor of note is the background of these studies: many approach discussions from an archaeological perspective (Emberling, Potts, Young, ect), Bahrani discusses ethnicity from an art-historical viewpoint, and others (those in RAI 2002, for example) focus largely on textual evidence. The arguments for, and definitions of, ‘ethnicity’, based on varying bodies of evidence, are worth noting, as this thesis works primarily with textual evidence and therefore has to adapt its discussion based on the aspects available.

1.1.4. Other fields of contribution

Fields other than musicology and anthropology/sociology have made contributions to the work of this thesis. These are primarily the fields of linguistics, cultural-geography, anthropology and sociology, and the neuroscience of music cognition. The discussion of these works will be brief, as they do not form the core of this thesis’ work or the theory on which it is based, but rather supplement it.

1.1.4.1. Linguistics

In various aspects of this thesis’ examination and discussion of foreign musicians, linguistic theory and approaches have proven themselves to be useful. These are generally familiar to Assyriologists and do not need to be cited in any depth here as such, but as they have not been applied to study foreign musicians, I will simply mention them here: onomastic theory in the study of names; linguistic analysis of various terms for musicians and their etymologies; linguistic analysis regarding the ‘Amorites’; and one case in which analysis of an individual’s language use has led some to conclude that he is of foreign origins (see 2.1.7).

1.1.4.2. Beyond Assyriology: incorporating the social sciences

This thesis’ work in analysing foreign musicians, particularly their origins and social positions, required some expansions beyond Assyriological bounds, especially seeing the limited work available on this thesis’ topic. This primarily came from the field of anthropology and culture-geography (in discussing the movement and interaction of people

within a landscape), with some sociological influence. The corpus of work generally is far too large to relate here; being several sub-fields in and of itself and as such are footnoted as required throughout the body of the paper.

Using modern discussions to interpret ancient material is clearly rife with methodological issues. Selecting some theoretical approaches that can be tested using the ancient evidence, however, and applying these within the bounds of reasonable assumptions, provided this thesis with additional theoretical material.

1.1.4.3. *Music cognition*

Many studies have sought to understand the basis for music's universality;³⁶ whilst largely this is irrelevant to this thesis' investigation, the support for music as communicable across language/cultural barriers, is useful for my proposal of its value as a 'commodity'. (see. 1.9) Studies published include those by Clarke *et. al.*,³⁷ Honing *et. al.*,³⁸ Launay,³⁹ Morley,⁴⁰ Nikolsky,⁴¹ Trehub *et al.*,⁴² and others,⁴³ variously concerned with evolutionary psychology and cognitive sciences as they interact with the theorised cognition of music.

³⁶ Even ethnomusicological ones, cf. B. Nettl, "An ethnomusicologist contemplates universals in musical sound and musical culture," in N. L. Wallin, B. Merker, and S. Brown, (eds.), *The origins of music*, (Cambridge, MA, 2000), pp. 463 – 472; *idem*, "Response to Victor Grauer: on the concept of evolution in the history of ethnomusicology," *World Music*, Vol. 48, (2006), pp. 59 – 72.

³⁷ E. Clarke, T. DeNora, and J. Vuoskoski, "Music, empathy and cultural understanding," in *Physics of Life Reviews*, Vol. 15 (2015), pp. 61 – 88.

³⁸ H. Honing, C. ten Cate, I. Peretz, S. E. Trehub, "Without it no music: cognition, biology and evolution of musicality," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, Vol. 370, Issue 1664, (2015)

³⁹ J. Launay, "Music as a technology for social bonding: Comment on "Music, empathy, and cultural understanding," by E. Clarke et al.," *Physics of Life Reviews*, Vol. 15, (2015), pp. 94 – 95.

⁴⁰ I. Morley, *The prehistory of music: human evolution, archaeology, and the origins of musicality*, (Oxford, 2013).

⁴¹ A. Nikolsky, "Evolution of Tonal Organization in Music Optimizes Neural Mechanisms in Symbolic Encoding of Perceptual Reality, Part 2: Ancient to Seventeenth Century," *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 7, Article 211, (2016).

⁴² S. E. Trehub, J. Becker, and I. Morley, "Cross-cultural perspectives on music and musicality," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, Vol. 370, Issue 1664, (2015); cf. also, S. E. Trehub, "The developmental origins of musicality," *Nature Neuroscience*, Vol. 6, (2003), pp. 669 – 673.

⁴³ W. Tecumseh Fitch, "Four principles of bio-musicology," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, Vol. 370, Issue 1664, (2015); S. Brown and J. Jordania, "Universals in the world's musics," *Psychology of Music*, Vol. 41, Issue 2, (2011), pp. 229 – 248; M. A. Arbib, (ed.), *Music, Language, and the Brain: A Mysterious Relationship*, (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

1.2. *The Mari archives*

This thesis works primarily with the evidence from the Mari archives, as they present a rich, if brief, insight into the working musical life of the palace, including its contacts with other centres, during the early second millennium. The site, modern Tell Hariri, is located on the west bank of the Euphrates near the Syria/Iraq border, and was occupied with periodic abandonments from c.2950 BC until the late first millennium.⁴⁴

Excavations began after the chance discovery of a sculpture in 1933 and continued more or less uninterrupted until the outbreak of civil war in 2011 (ongoing as of 2019).⁴⁵ The French-led excavations have uncovered over 20,000 tablets in various parts of the palace and other structures on the site, the bulk of which date to the Old Babylonian period.⁴⁶ Within this, the corpus mainly fall within the twenty years prior to Hammurabi's capture and destruction of the city in c.1750 BC: an act which both ended the city's regional ascendancy and, in setting a large fire, preserved the tablets, which were not routinely fired in antiquity.⁴⁷ The texts themselves cover a huge variety of content (from letters to administrative documents), and were kept in a variety of store-rooms.⁴⁸

As Finet remarks, "La distinction que nous établissons entre correspondance «publique» et correspondance «privée» n'existe pas. Dès qu'un individu, homme ou femme, appartient à l'entourage du roi ou au monde des fonctionnaires, sa vie privée tombe dans le domaine

⁴⁴ T. Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia: The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire*, (London and New York, 2009), pp. 450 – 453.

⁴⁵ B. I. Daniels and K. Hanson, "Archaeological site looting in Syria and Iraq: A Review of the Evidence," in F. Desmarais, (ed.), *Countering Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods: The Global Challenge of Protecting the World's Heritage*, (published online by the ICOM International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods, 2015), pg. 87; J. M. Evans, *The Lives of Sumerian Sculpture: An Archaeology of the Early Dynastic Temple*, (New York, 2012), pg. 180.

⁴⁶ D. Pardee and J. T. Glass, "Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: The Mari Archives," in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 47, No. 2, (1984), pp. 90 – 91

⁴⁷ J. C. Margueron, "Mari and the Syro-Mesopotamian World," in J. Aruz and R. Wallenfels, (eds.), *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus*, (New York, 2003), pg. 138; P. Zimansky, "Archaeology and Texts in the Ancient Near East," in S. Pollock and R. Bernbeck, (eds.), *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical Perspectives*, (Malden, 2005), pg. 314; Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 289; J. E. Reade, "The Manufacture, Evaluation and Conservation of Clay Tablets Inscribed in Cuneiform: Traditional Problems and Solutions," *Iraq*, Vol. 79, (2017), pp. 175 – 177.

⁴⁸ A. Malamat, "Mari," in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (1971), pg. 8; J. M. Sasson, "Some Comments on Archive-Keeping at Mari," *Iraq*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (1972), pg. 55.

public.”⁴⁹ The lives of those involved in the palace’s work, including at least c. 150 musicians at the time of its destruction,⁵⁰ are thus recorded in varying amounts of detail.

Excavation reports were originally published in *Mission archéologique de Mari*, volumes of which focused on various aspects of the site: palace architecture, painted murals, documents/monuments, ect. The directors also published widely about the site. Cuneiform texts were published as part of the *Textes cuneiformes du Louvre* series, until a new series, *Textes cuneiforms de Mari*, was created for the publication of Mari material. This is further divided into two series and published in parallel, both confusingly titled *Archives royales de Mari*. The first (abbreviated ARM) contains only hand-copies of tablets, and the second (abbreviated ARMT, to distinguish it) contains transliterations and (French) translations, sometimes with commentary/glossary. Texts and discussions are also published in a variety of Assyriological journals and books, as well as in other monograph series - such as *Florilegium Marianum*, part of the *Mémoires de NABU (Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires)* monograph series. A journal was established in the early 1980s, *Mari: Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* (abbv. *MARI*), Paris, Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, (1982–), to publish new and ongoing research.

Considering that nearly all the major publications regarding the Mari archives and their contents are in French, and the proliferation of recent publications (both new texts and studies of the available material), there has been some delay in their incorporation into broader scholarship, as well as with their accessibility (perceived or otherwise).⁵¹

⁴⁹ A. Finet, “Les lettres des archives «royales» de Mari,” in K. R. Veenhof, (ed.), *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers read at the 30th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 4-8 July 1983*, (Leiden, 1986), pg. 159.

⁵⁰ Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pp. 289 – 290.

⁵¹ Cf. de Boer, (2014), *op. cit.*, pp. 29, 31.

1.3. *Chronology and periodisation*

In this thesis, given the importance of chronological considerations, I have opted to use the Middle Chronology. This is because it is standardised, supported by current evidence/theories, and the schema most predominantly used in historical-musicological studies.⁵²

1.3.2. *Periodisation of the early second millennium*

As with many temporal distinctions in ancient history, the labelling of the centuries c. 2000 – 1600BC as ‘Old Babylonian’ is entirely arbitrary, based on the phase of the Akkadian language in use across much of Mesopotamia at this time.⁵³ But as with many temporal distinctions in ancient history, there is significant debate as to the effectiveness of this as a label. Given that some of the major proponents of the alternative label – ‘Amorite’ period – are some of the key scholars relevant to this study, and that ‘Amorites’ may be considered ‘foreign’ depending on the way we understand the term itself, I feel it necessary to take a moment to address the term and its usage.

1.3.3. *A ‘période Amorrite’?*

Arguing that ‘Old Babylonian’ emphasises Babylonian hegemony and that it is ‘hardly satisfactory’ to use linguistic categories to define historical periods, Charpin proposes the ‘Amorite period’ instead, which refers to the significance of the Amorite population within Mesopotamia at this time, and that many dynasties also identified with or are identified as Amorites during this period.⁵⁴ Despite its having some traction with, mainly French, scholars, the use of ‘Amorite’ is not without its own significant issues, and warrants a discussion. This is not only as it relates to the question of periodisation, but as the Amorite question is central to the discussion of ‘ethnicity’ and foreign-ness during the early part of the second millennium, it therefore has a significant impact on the work of this thesis.

⁵² G. M. Schwartz, “Problems of Chronology: Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Syro-Levantine Region,” in J. Aruz, *et. al.* (eds.), *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, (New York, New Haven, and London, 2008), pg. 450.

⁵³ A. Seri, *Local Power in Old Babylonian Mesopotamia*, (Sheffield, 2006), pp. 29 – 31.

⁵⁴ D. Charpin, “Histoire politique du Proche-Orient amorrite (2002 – 1595)”, in D. Charpin, *et.al.*, *Mesopotamien: die altbabylonische Zeit*, (Fribourg and Göttingen, 2004), pg. 38: “L'appellation de «période Amorrite» est sans doute meilleure, puisqu'elle met l'accent sur l'importance jouée alors par la population d'origine Amorrite et l'unité d'appartenance de la plupart des dynasties de l'époque; il est d'ailleurs significatif qu'après ses grandes victoires Hammu-rabi de Babylone ait pris le titre de «roi de tout le pays Amorrite». J'ajouterais que l'usage d'une telle nomenclature ne fait que reprendre celle des Anciens, qui distinguaient «la période de Sulgi» (= notre moderne «Ur III»), «la période des Amorrites» et la «période des Kassites».”

1.4. *The Amorite problem: identity or exonym?*

1.4.1. *mar.tu/amurru(m)*

The Akkadian *amurru(m)*, “Amorite” is derived from Sumerian *mar.tu*, “(cardinal) west, western”, and rarely appears before the second millennium.⁵⁵ *amurr(it)um*, “westerner,” is also used as a designation for people.⁵⁶

1.4.2. *An ‘Amorite’ identity?*

Although many studies discuss ‘Amorites’ as an ethnic group, there is no definitive evidence of a cohesive Amorite cultural identity that could be defined as a true ‘ethnic’ group. There is no substantively recorded Amorite language, no Amorite texts or mythology, and no other ‘ethnic’ markers.⁵⁷

1.4.3. *^dAmurru and the ‘god of the Amorites’*

Discussions of the ‘Amorites’, particularly of Amorite ethnicity, is complicated by the appearance of Amurru as a deity. Usually written ^dmar.tu (^d*Amurru*), but also with another writing, an.an.mar.tu, read ^ddingir-mar.tu; ^d*Il Amurrim*, “the god of Amurru.”⁵⁸ As the two writings are interchangeable in some texts, they should not be opposed in meaning. Considering the meanings of *mar.tu* discussed above, ^dAmurru likely relates to the sense of a cardinal direction, or group of peoples. It could, therefore, refer to the ‘Divine West’ (a deified geographical location/s), or to the deified people themselves, as the ‘Divine Westener’.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ P. Michalowski, *The Royal Correspondence of the Ur III Kings*, (Winona Lake, 2011), pg. 105.

⁵⁶ CAD vol. A2, pp. 92 – 94, see *amurru* 1., *amurrû* a); Michalowski, 2011, *op. cit.*, pp. 106 – 107.

⁵⁷ Z. Bahrani, “Race and Ethnicity in Mesopotamian Antiquity,” *World Archaeology*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (2006), pg. 55.

⁵⁸ There is, of course, debate as to the correct reading of AN.AN.MAR.TU, however, a Hurrian god-list from Emar provides good support for its transliteration & translation as ^dDINGIR-MAR.TU/^d*Il Amurrim*, as discussed in P-A. Beaulieu, “The God Amurru as Emblem of Ethnic and Cultural Identity?” in W. H. van Soldt (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pg. 31 – 32, cf. especially n. 4 for discussion of translation and reconstruction of Hurrian lines in the god-list.

⁵⁹ Beaulieu, (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 31 – 32.

There are precedents for both deified geographic locations – the city of Aššur, interchangeable in Old Assyrian texts with its deified personification, the god ^dAššur – and for deified cultural groups – ^dKaššû/^dKaššītu (the ‘Kassite god’, ‘Kassite goddess’), ^dSutītu (the ‘Sutean goddess’), and ^dAḫlamītu (the ‘Aramean goddess’). These are ‘intellectually constructed deities’, and Amurru has been posited likewise as a figurehead for Amorite presence and perhaps even ‘lifestyle’.⁶⁰ These are, however, all later Babylonian creations and as such, reflect their categorisations of the surrounding world, rather than a distinct religious reality.⁶¹ It has also been suggested that the two writings of Amurru developed to keep the name of a deity distinct from a geographical marker. As the writings mar.tu and ^dmar.tu are also known to be interchangeable in contracts from this period, however, this argument is not a resolution, and the translation of ^dAmurru remains ambiguous.⁶²

Many see the presence of religious elements as a manifestation of ethnic identity. They therefore discuss Amurru as the ‘titulary’ god of the Amorite people/s, but this seems highly unlikely. In addition to the issues discussed above, no Amorite names feature either writings as a theophoric element, contrary to what should be expected of a titular deity.⁶³

1.4.4. *Language and social groups: the ‘pots = people’ debate, recast*

Amorite ‘language’ has been entirely reconstructed, mostly from personal names,⁶⁴ and a handful of loanwords identified in Akkadian/Sumerian texts. It resembles ‘West Semitic’ in forms and vocabulary and is considered to, umbrella-like, incorporate several dialects or even multiple distinct languages.⁶⁵ The latter is especially pertinent, given the reconstruction of Amorite from sources of wide geographical (stretching from modern Syria to Bahrain in the Persian Gulf) and temporal origins.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Predominantly the work of Beaulieu, (2005), *op. cit.*; also R. de Boer, *Amorites in the Early Old Babylonian Period*, PhD thesis, (University of Leiden, 2014), pg. 39.

⁶¹ Cf. Beaulieu, (2005), *op. cit.*, pg. 32, n. 6.

⁶² J. G. Dercksen, “Review of Michel, C., *Innāya dans les tablettes paléoassyriennes*,” in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Vol. 49, (1992), pg. 792; M. Stol, *Studies in Old Babylonian History*, (Leiden, 1976), pp. 88 – 89.

⁶³ R. de Boer, (2014), *op. cit.*, pg. 39.

⁶⁴ R. M. Whiting, “Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia,” in J. M. Sasson, (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 2, (New York, 1995), pg. 1233.

⁶⁵ R. S. Homsher and M. S. Cradic, “The Amorite Problem: Resolving an historical dilemma,” *Levant*, Vol. 49, No. 3, (2017), pg. 262; W. von Soden, “Zur Einteilung der semitischen Sprachen,” in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Vol. 56, (1960), pg. 185; D. T. Potts and S. Blau, “Identities in the East Arabian Region,” *Mediterranean Archaeology*, Vol. 11, (1998), pg. 29.

⁶⁶ J. Huehnergard, “Semitic Languages,” in J. M. Sasson, (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 4, (New York, 1995), pg. 2122; I. J. Gelb, *Computer-Aided Analysis of Amorite*, (Chicago, 1980), pg. 2; also cf. Whiting, (1995), *op. cit.* pp. 1238 for discussion of onomastically distinguishable Amorite ‘groups’.

Most importantly: even if there was an ‘Amorite’ language, this does not mean there was an Amorite ethnic group. Just as pots do not equal people, neither do language groups equal social groups.⁶⁷ Any aspects of a cultural ‘identity’ to some degree associated with the term ‘Amorite’ are likely to do more with the way in which we categorise traits of ancient peoples and not with how they identified themselves.

1.4.5. ‘Amorite’ as an ancient exonym

An exonym is a name given to one group by another, as opposed to the name that groups use to refer to themselves (an endonym or sometimes autonym), and both are ‘ethnonyms’ – names that refer to an ‘ethnic’ or cultural group.⁶⁸

1.4.5.1. Adopting a new nomenclature

Whilst a relatively common term in ethnographic studies, geography, anthropology, and sociology, it has not yet spread into the study of the ancient Near East. This may be due to the fact that the theory associated with ethnonyms are best applicable to modern languages. There has, however, been some success in their applications to ancient world studies. Durnford’s 2013 study of Luwian language and cultural nomenclature, for example, proposes four types of exonym, also noting that both weak and strong ethnonyms can change in meaning over time:⁶⁹

1. Weak exonym (equivalent to target language’s endonym)
2. Plain strong exonym (no meaning/etymological implications in target language)
3. Locational strong exonym (derived from a place name not used by the target language for endonymic purposes)

⁶⁷ G. Emberling, “Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives,” *Journal of Archaeological Research*, Vol. 5, No. 4, (1997), pp. 297, 299; F. Barth, “Introduction,” in F. Barth, (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, (London, 1969), pg. 10, cf. especially, “First, we give primary emphasis to the fact that ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people.”; Homsher and Cradic, (2017), *op. cit.*, pg. 262; Potts and Blau, (1998), *op. cit.*, pg. 36.

⁶⁸ The International Council of Onomastic Sciences, *List of Key Onomastic Terms*, published online, date published unknown, date last accessed 2/1/2019, via <<https://icosweb.net/drupal/terminology>>; A. Koopman, “Ethnonyms,” in C. Hough, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, (New York, 2016), pp. 251 – 252; F. Proschan, ““We are all Kmhmu, just the same”: Ethnonyms, Ethnic Identities, and Ethnic Groups,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (1997), pg. 91.

⁶⁹ S. Durnford, “Peoples and Maps – Nomenclature and Definitions,” in A. Mouton, *et. al.* (eds.), *Luwian Identities: Culture, Language and Religion Between Anatolia and the Aegean*, (Leiden and Boston, 2013), pp. 51 – 53.

4. Lexical strong exonym (has etymological meaning in the ‘host’ language, often disparaging).

Due to linguistic, political, and historical changes, a word and its etymological descendants may become abstracted from their original associations, and change from strong to weak exonym, or change in category of strong exonym, depending on their usage.⁷⁰ To this, this thesis also suggests that in a region such as Mesopotamia, where there are a host of varied kingdoms/territories, including linguistic variation, that several meanings could be implied in the use of a single term, depending on the parties and contexts involved.⁷¹

1.4.5.2. *Amorite: locational/lexical strong exonym*

‘Amorite’ fits the criteria for an exonym: there is no evidence that people from ‘Amorite’ regions referred to themselves as such or that the word itself has any ‘Amorite’ or even West Semitic etymology.⁷² Using the meaning/s we can infer and above criteria, it falls into the category of either a locational or lexical ‘strong’ exonym.

Considering the geographic component of ‘Amorite’, it is pertinent to note that the names and identities of many groups are tied to the places they live in, which they are in turn associated with, both internally and externally of the group itself.⁷³ It is possible that, in various uses or at various times, ‘Amorite’ could be both a locational *and* a lexical strong exonym; aside from raising the point, it is out of the scope of this thesis to make a more in-depth survey of its usage.

1.4.6. *Nomads, troublemakers, infiltrators: models of cultural interaction*

One of the biggest issues in discussing ‘Amorite’ populations is the anachronistic way discussions frame their appearance and narrative of their interaction with local populations. A

⁷⁰ Durnford, 2013, *op. cit.*, pg. 53.

⁷¹ J. Huehnergard, “New Directions in the Study of Semitic Languages,” in J. S. Cooper and G. M. Schwartz, (eds.), *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference*, (Winona Lake, 1996), pg. 268; A. George, “Babylonian and Assyrian: a history of Akkadian,” in J. N. Postgate, (ed.), *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern*, (London, 2007), pp. 46 – 47.

⁷² Beaulieu, (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 34 – 35.

⁷³ P. Jordan, “The endonym/exonym divide related to transboundary features: Recent discussions in the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms”, paper presented at the *15th International Seminar on Sea Names*, held 3 – 5 September, 2009, Sydney, Australia, (Published online, 2009), pp. 6 – 15. Last accessed 2/1/2019, via <<http://eastsea1994.org/data/bbsData/14630289801.pdf>>, pg. 13.

dichotomy of nomadic/sedentary, rural/urban, uncivilised/civilised is at the core of much work discussing the Amorites. This impacts this thesis, as dealing with ‘Amorite’ musicians, but also as it influences the broader paradigm of cultural interaction within northern Mesopotamia during the Old Babylonian period.

The idea that the Amorite ‘nomads’ were incorporated or (more often) that they ‘infiltrated’ into a ‘sedentary’ Mesopotamian population stems in particular from the work of Buccellati.⁷⁴ In conjunction with the issue of ‘Amorite’ ethnicity, as discussed in 1.4.5 (and 1.4 more generally), it often conflicts with the evidence for lived experience in the ancient Near East during the second millennium.

Using a more complex understanding of ‘foreign’-ness, linked with socio-political zones and changes (discussed in 1.5.4 below), combined with acknowledgement that an ‘Amorite’ identity may in fact encompass several ethnic or cultural groups,⁷⁵ I suggest that ‘Amorite’ in sources must be contextualised as it has different implications in different usages. For the purposes of this thesis, when discussing ‘Amorite’ musicians, I am not referring to those of the Mari region themselves, and will clarify as necessary.

Mari and surrounds, particularly, are identified as having an ‘Amorite’ population; yet there are (foreign) musicians identified in texts as ‘Amorite’ that come to the city from the coast of the Mediterranean, as well as from across the north and even to the north-west. Aside from Amorite names, there seems to be little to identify the city as ‘Amorite’: there is certainly evidence for regionalisation, but that is a trend across all of Mesopotamia in the post Ur-III period. The Amorite problem is a problem of terminology, primarily a problem of applying concepts and terminology before they are fully understood in the modern era.

Having discussed the problems and impacts of the Amorite question, particularly noting the ambiguities involved, and acknowledging the issues associated with the chosen nomenclature, this thesis will use ‘Old Babylonian’ in referring to its chosen delineation of time. We turn now to the core of this thesis’ work: discussing foreign musicians. In order to do so, however, we must first lay some groundwork in the form of the following questions:

⁷⁴ G. Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period*, (Naples, 1966), see Chapter X, pp. 355 – 60.

⁷⁵ Whiting, (1995), *op. cit.*, pp. 1238 – 1239.

what is foreign? What is a musician? Can we discuss ‘foreign music’, and what about it separates these musicians from other skilled professionals? What about ‘music’ makes it a cross-cultural commodity of value, and how can we tell?

1.5. *Defining and understanding ‘foreign’ in the Old Babylonian period*

It seems overly simple to ask what ‘foreign’ is, given the ubiquitousness of the term, but like many ‘simple’ terms, it presents a challenging array of issues for this thesis’ definition of scope.

1.5.1. *Constructions of ‘foreign’-ness: the perception of the ‘other’ in the Mari texts*

There are two adjectives in Akkadian that can be translated as ‘foreign’: *aḫûm* (“strange (person), foreigner, outsider, alien (object)”), and *nakrum* (“foreign, alien, strange, hostile; (in substantive use) enemy, foe”). Both these Akkadian (and most modern language) words correlating with the concept of ‘foreign’ derive their meaning from invoking the sense of the ‘other’.

1.5.2. *Local pride – the unit of the city and its relevance to understanding the ‘foreign’*

The Old Babylonian ‘unit’ in a socio-political sense was the city and its surrounds.⁷⁶ Following the collapse of the Ur-III administration, and despite ongoing cultural continuity in many respects, the second millennium is marked by a political landscape in flux. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the Old Babylonian unit for an individual’s frame of reference was their city. Certainly, there was no concept of ‘nation’ or ‘Mesopotamian’ in the sense of the modern Western worldview, and without access to globes or other cartographic projections, or other visualisations of the world beyond their own sphere of interaction, understandings of relative distance and ‘foreign’-ness were likely to have significant variance.

1.5.3. *How are ‘foreign’ musicians labelled?*

Musicians are not recorded as either *aḫum* or *nakrum* in the Mari texts, although there are definitely ‘foreign’ musicians referenced/writing texts from the archives themselves. Rather, they are usually unidentified as such, or simply listed as a person ‘of [location name]’, or even ‘of [ruler name]’. Clearly, and no doubt related to its position as an important trading centre situated in northern Mesopotamia, the concept of ‘foreign’ was more complicated at Mari, as likely elsewhere in the Near East.

⁷⁶ Seri, (2006), *op. cit.*, pp. 46 – 50.

1.5.4. *Zones of 'foreign'-ness: constructing the 'other'*

This conceptualisation of 'foreign', I argue, is (in conjunction with a focus on the unit of the city) constructed relative to the spread of alliances, trading links, and/or other controls as Mari's influence waxed and waned across the early Old Babylonian period. Constructing 'otherness' requires a relative space zoned as 'self'. The rest of the world, however, is not simply all one monolithic 'other'. There are, especially in the politically tumultuous centuries of the early second millennium, varying degrees of relations between kingdoms, cities, and peoples of all kinds.⁷⁷ The Mari archives demonstrate nothing if the extent to which the cuneiform letter allowed diplomatic relations to spread.⁷⁸

This theory also relates to variance in the perceived world between individuals. Those in the palace, who interact frequently with people from a range of locales either in person or through the medium of the cuneiform tablet, may have been more conditioned to distance than those who did not have the same exposure.

We will return to this point, following the discussion of foreign musicians themselves, as it seems a good way to make sense of the competing dichotomies of difference in identity/familiarity with identity that are often presented in the Mari texts.

⁷⁷ Cf. J. F. Robertson, "Social Tensions in the Ancient Near East", in D. C. Snell, (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, (Cornwall, 2005), pg. 203.

⁷⁸ Cf. D. Charpin, *Reading and Writing in Babylon*, trans. J. M. Todd, (Cambridge, MA/London, 2010), pp. 151 – 153.

1.6. *Race, ethnicity, and categorisation of identity*

In discussing ‘foreign’ there are certain concepts in place which structure this thesis’ approach, and that of much other work on the topic, to the interaction and categorisation of peoples in the ancient Near East. As these are integral to basic assumptions regarding this thesis’ topic – for example, that a concept of ‘foreign’ musicians existed – I will briefly review them.

1.6.1. *Historiographical developments – the discarding of ‘race’?*

Recent work on ‘ethnicity’ in Assyriology has already been discussed (1.1.4), but here I will discuss the historiographical development of studying ‘race’, ethnicity, and groups of people in the Near East, as the current understandings are central to my work. As Jones notes: “[C]oncepts such as ‘ethnic group’ and ‘culture’ are regarded as natural categories, and it is important to consider the historical contingency of these concepts.[...]”⁷⁹

The study of groups of people – whether as ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’, or another approach – has a chequered history within Assyriology; largely related to the discipline’s origins, linked with colonial British and French interests in the region.⁸⁰ Early understandings of the ancient Mesopotamian past were framed in the lens of colonialist, Darwinian, and orientalist notions about the development of human history, particularly the spread of language and ‘culture’.⁸¹ These were viewed through the lens of ‘race’ – human groups as biologically or hereditarily distinct, and in turn, usually associated with various traits.⁸² The ‘Sumerian question’, for example, devolved into an obsession with racial identity and latent propagandising of the past to fit colonial narratives of historical development, with the West at its apogee.⁸³

In response to the ‘racial determinism’ of the twentieth century, including racist regimes,⁸⁴ many scholars quickly abandoned the use of ‘race’ and racial frameworks to discuss ancient

⁷⁹ S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, (London and New York, 2002), pg. 39.

⁸⁰ Bahrani, (2006), *op. cit.*, pp. 48 – 49; also cf. *idem*, *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria*, (Philadelphia, 2003), pp. 13 – 49 (in the context of art history).

⁸¹ B. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, second edition, (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 70, 72 – 73, 113 – 114; Jones, (2002), *op. cit.*, pp. 44 – 45.

⁸² M. Banton, *The Idea of Race*, (London, 1977), pg. 18, M. D. Biddiss, “Introduction,” in M. D. Biddiss, (ed.), *Images of Race*, (New York, 1979), pp. 11 – 12.

⁸³ Whittaker, (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 409 – 410.

⁸⁴ With reference to Assyriology, the use of history regarding the Sumerian ‘origin of language’ and ‘culture’ in the Nazi regime (in explicit comparison with Akkadian ‘Semites’); other abuses of historical data to support the

peoples.⁸⁵ Instead, they turned to using ‘culture’, a concept introduced by the anthropologist Boas in the nineteenth century,⁸⁶ and later, ‘ethnicity’. The latter quickly became a predominant concept in the study of the ancient Near East. The change in terminology, however, did not cast off all the influences of racial theory, remnants of which remained implicit.⁸⁷ The understanding of history as comprised of distinct, bounded, peoples (or, ‘tribes’) is one such hangover.⁸⁸ Another is seen in increasing interest in mitochondrial-DNA tracing and consequent assignment of ethnic labels, evidencing the persistence of racial underpinnings in the way many studies seek to label and discuss social relations.⁸⁹

Studies of ethnicity have, linked with current issues in the Western political and broader global climate, become an issue of increasing interest across many ancient disciplines in recent decades.⁹⁰ These studies, increasingly self-aware, have become cognisant also of the conflict between contemporary studies of ancient people, which use a variety of concepts and frameworks, and ancient peoples’ inter- and intra- personal understandings of themselves, with their own complexities.⁹¹ Largely, however, there is a lack of consistency in defining what ‘ethnicity’ means, and little work to acknowledge the origins and ongoing structural influence of the concept of ‘race’ on the framework with which it is applied to Assyriological study.⁹²

racist ideologies of various regimes is also known, cf. E. Herring, “Ethnicity and Culture”, in A. Eskine (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient History* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 123 – 124.

⁸⁵ D. E. McCoskey, *Race: Antiquity and its Legacy*, (London, 2012); cf. also D. L. Brunsma and K. A. Rockquemore, “The End of Race? Rethinking the Meaning of Blackness in Post-Civil Rights America,” in R. D. Coates, (ed.), *Race and Ethnicity: Across Time, Space and Discipline*, (Leiden, 2004), pp. 73 – 92.

⁸⁶ F. Boas, “The occurrence of similar inventions in areas widely apart,” “Museums of ethnology and their classification,” (both originally published 1887), “The mythologies of the Indians,” (originally published 1905), all reprinted in G. W. Stocking, (ed.), *The Shaping of American Anthropology 1883-1911: A Franz Boas reader* (New York, 1974), pp. 61 – 67, 135 – 148; also cf. G. W. Stocking, *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, (Chicago, 1968), pp. 213– 233

⁸⁷ M.-K. Jung and T. Almaguer, “The State and the Production of Racial Categories,” in R. D. Coates, (ed.), *Race and Ethnicity: Across Time, Space and Discipline*, (Leiden, 2004), pp. 55 – 56.

⁸⁸ J. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, (Cambridge, MA, 1988), pp. 232 – 233, 234, 273; Jones, (2002), *op. cit.*, pg. 48.

⁸⁹ J. McInerney, (2014), *op. cit.*, pg. 4.

⁹⁰ Herring, (2009), *op. cit.*, pp. 123 – 124.

⁹¹ J. McInerney, “Ethnicity: An Introduction,” in J. McInerney, *Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, (Hoboken, 2014), pg. 2; J. Retsö, “The Concept of Ethnicity, Nationality and the Study of Ancient History,” *Topoi*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (2006), pp. 14 – 15.

⁹² A. B. Knapp, “Mediterranean Archaeology and Ethnicity”, in J. McInerney (ed.), *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2014), pg. 35.

1.6.2. *Ethnicity as label and as interpretative framework*

‘Ethnicity’ is used by, and impacted by, a multitude of disciplines in various methodological frameworks, particularly relating to the scope and aspects of research of ‘ethnic’ groups in modern anthropology and sociology.⁹³ Trends towards promoting behaviours as ethnic ‘indicators’ and a lack of shared theoretical understanding complicate these debates. A comprehensive overview of current discourses, therefore, regarding objectivity and perspective, and the definition of ‘ethnicity’ across multi-disciplinary fields is extensive, and beyond the scope of this limited overview.

In defining ‘ethnicity’ for our purposes we come across the issue of specificity. General definitions are broadly applicable, but unhelpful for specific discussions: specific definitions are unhelpful for comparisons, and function more as descriptions.⁹⁴ Historians have tended to develop theories of ethnicity linked with identity and social structures.⁹⁵ This correlates with a shift in the classification of ethnicity as a ‘self-defining system’; understood less as a ‘static’ entity and more as an active, self-defined ‘process’, although this in turn makes it much harder to define.⁹⁶

At a fundamental level, defining ethnicity usually invokes otherness (just as defining ‘foreign’ does), usually an ‘internal’ distinction, but recognised externally.⁹⁷ Criteria often associated with ‘ethnicity’ include: a sense of connection between an individual and a social group, linked with kinship ties, collective memories, and other self-ascribed features such as common name/s, a ‘homeland’, and shared language, religion, occupations, and traditions.⁹⁸

In studying the ancient world, however, where the limitations of evidence are felt by scholars in all disciplines, we may have any point on the spectrum between all or none of the above, and the situation is consequently more complicated.⁹⁹ Following McInerney, “what ethnicity

⁹³ S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, (London and New York, 2002), pg. 56.

⁹⁴ S. Jones, (2002), *op cit.*, pg. 57.

⁹⁵ S. Jones, (2002), *op cit.*, pp. 73 – 76.

⁹⁶ S. Jones, (2002), *op cit.*, pg. 84

⁹⁷ M. Roaf, “Ethnicity and Near Eastern Archaeology: The Limits of Inference”, in W. H. van Soldt (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*, (Leiden, 2005), pg. 308.

⁹⁸ A. B. Knapp, “Mediterranean Archaeology and Ethnicity”, in J. McInerney (ed.), *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2014), pg. 35; van Driel, *op. cit.* (2002), pp. 4 – 6.

⁹⁹ McInerney, (2014), *op. cit.*, pg. 2.

is emphatically not is a fixed biological entity based on primordial ties of kinship;” ethnicity, as a social concept in flux, should not be associated with biological facts or ‘evidences’.¹⁰⁰

Manifestations of identity also impact any discussion of ethnicity. People discuss and stress aspects of their identity in various situations, and not all of these are recorded in the evidence available to us – especially rarely do they manifest in archaeological or physical evidence, and only in specific ways in textual evidence.¹⁰¹

Narrowing the scope to Assyriology, Bahrani argues that “while most Mesopotamian archaeologists consider that gender is a modern categorization imposed on to the past, they are more likely to see ethnicity as a cross-chronological and cross-cultural reality, even though both gender and ethnicity are discourses of the body and identity.”¹⁰²

van Driel, in his introduction to the collection of papers from the 2002 *Recontre Assyriologique Internationale*, suggests following Jones’ definition of ethnicity, which is: “...all those social and psychological phenomena associated with a culturally constructed group identity[, focusing on] the ways in which social and cultural processes intersect with one another in the identification of, and interaction between, ethnic groups.”¹⁰³

As this thesis is concerned more with understanding foreign musicians than it is with making a map of the ethnic identities of northern Mesopotamia in the early Old Babylonian period, I (tentatively) adopt this as a working definition, acknowledging the issues in assigning ‘ethnicity’ to peoples who (largely) do not speak for themselves in the sources.

Speaking to the above points, understanding the intra-regional relations of northern Mesopotamia during the second millennium as more fluid ‘zones’ of ‘foreign’-ness (cf. 1.5.4) actively seeks to challenge racially-based theories of ‘ethnicity’ which underpin theories of cataloguing distinct ethnic groups (particularly with reference to the ‘Amorites’). In interpreting ethnicity within Mesopotamia at this time, thesis was particularly informed by

¹⁰⁰ J. McInerney, (2014), *op. cit.*, pg. 3.

¹⁰¹ Herring, (2009), *op. cit.* pg. 125.

¹⁰² Z. Bahrani, “Race and ethnicity in Mesopotamian antiquity,” *World Archaeology*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (2006), pg. 53.

¹⁰³ Jones, (2002), *op. cit.*, pg. xiii; van Driel, (2002), *op cit.*, pp. 1 – 2.

the work of Michalowski¹⁰⁴ and de Boer¹⁰⁵; as well as questions raised by the 2002 Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, especially that of van Driel.¹⁰⁶

1.6.3. *'Identity': what is it, and how can it be understood?*

In addition to discussions of 'ethnicities', this thesis also uses the concept of 'identity' and identity expression. This is primarily as it is useful as a term to discuss the individual experience, and as it allows for varying amalgamations of different 'ethnic' influences on a person. Again, as used in a multitude of disciplines, 'identity' has a wide variance in definitions. As a concept, identity is a multifaceted 'construction' involving intra-, extra-, and inter- personal influences of physical and life experience, culture, and language. It deals primarily with the individual.

Importantly for this thesis' study of foreign musicians, it is possible for a person to have more than one identity, and for these identities to be in competition or work in cooperation with each other at any given point in their life; in expressing their identity, a person may accentuate specific features and suppress others.¹⁰⁷

People also 'select' features in describing the identity of others. Expression of identity often has material components as individuals interact with objects and spaces around them, (of note for this discussion of musicians) making identity a 'contingent and discursive' concept.¹⁰⁸

As identity is an important concept for this thesis, I propose the following working definition: "a person's self-understanding, including various aspects and influences (such as gender, age, culture, language), and expressed through various behavioural, physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects of that person, at different times and places."

¹⁰⁴ Michalowski (2011), *op. cit.*, pp. 82-121.

¹⁰⁵ de Boer, (2014), *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶ van Driel, (2002), *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷ J. F. Robertson, "Social Tensions in the Ancient Near East," in D. C. Snell, (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, (Malden, 2005), pg.197.

¹⁰⁸ J. C. Ross and S. R. Steadman, "Agency and Identity in the Ancient Near East: New Paths Forward", in S. R. Steadman and J. C. Ross, (eds.), *Agency and Identity in the Ancient Near East: New Paths Forward*, (London, 2010), pg. 1.

1.7. *What is a ‘musician’?*

1.7.1. *Musical practitioners of the Old Babylonian period*

These were individuals who trained for many years, in the *bît-mummim* (‘conservatory’); or in a system of private tuition. At Mari, however, no contracts for private music training survive, so we cannot discuss them, although it is likely they existed. Fully trained musicians went on to work (usually) in the palace of the king or a higher official, or in other institutions such as the temples. Some musicians achieved significant rank within the musical hierarchy; we also know of those gifted various items as reward for their skill and/or service.¹⁰⁹

Women, who were also able to partake in musical training were less likely to reach high positions in the musical hierarchy.¹¹⁰ We know of them especially in the ‘harem’ or as temple musicians and know of only a handful by name.

In many respects, the musical system is reminiscent of the great Old Babylonian scribal system. Parallels are particularly obvious in the ‘school’ system; it is arguable that the musicians themselves were equally specialised in skill and status as a fully trained scribe.

Musical practitioners could be trained to play a variety of instruments, including chordophones and percussion; we do not have evidence from Mari for their training in aerophones.¹¹¹ There was a range of musical repertoire to learn, as well as types of singing or other vocal performances. We know of orchestras, which could comprise of a single type of instrument,¹¹² or multiple, similar to a modern orchestra.

1.7.2. *What’s in a name?*

This will be discussed in more detail when this thesis presents the individuals in question, but there are also those in the Mari texts categorised as musicians who do not correlate with the modern (Western) understanding of a ‘musician’; the *huppum*- and *aluzinnum*- entertainers,

¹⁰⁹ This discussed in detail in 3.1.2.2.

¹¹⁰ Ziegler, (2010), *op. cit.*, pg. 121.

¹¹¹ This may be linked with the ‘lower’ status of such instruments, or their association with everyday music; cf. A. Spycket, “La musique instrumentale mésopotamienne,” *Journal des Savants*, (1972), pg. 195.

¹¹² Cf. the inscription of Takil-ilissu of Malgium, quoted in CAD, Š/3, pg. 146, b), “*šiṭru*”, also D. R. Frayne, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595BC)*, (Toronto, 1990), pg. 672 – 674, 4.11.2.2: “(52) 2 *me-at ti-gi-a-tim* (53) *ši-iṭ-ra-am ra-bi-a-am* “[I installed in that temple] two hundred female tigi-players, a great orchestra[...].” Also quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 13, n. 37.

and the *muštawûm*, for example. Whilst these do not necessarily present a huge challenge to our definition of ‘musician’, it is a reminder that modern categories do not transfer to the ancient Near East, and our definition should adjust accordingly.

1.7.3. Using ‘musician’

Despite some variance in ancient conceptualisation, there is solid ground to use the word ‘musician’ in this thesis’ work. ‘Musician’ will therefore refer to all musical practitioners of the Mari texts, in an ‘Old Babylonian’ sense of the word: including entertainers and reciters not generally associated with the term in English.

1.8. *Foreign musicians, foreign music, 'international' skills*

Central to my argument that music was a commodity of value (discussed in the following section) and that foreign musicians could therefore utilise this 'commodity' to gain employment and social status, is the implication that music itself is 'universal' and/or transferable. To discuss this point, we must venture briefly into the realm of ethnomusicology; Assyriology has little to offer us on theories of musical transmission as cultural organ.

1.8.1. *Music as...?*

In ethnomusicological theory, music can be interpreted as functioning in various ways: as social or psychological resource, cultural form, social behaviour, a text, a system of signs, or even as art.¹¹³ Discussing all of these interpretations is unhelpful to the present paper: it is merely helpful to note that there is a myriad of ways to approach discussing 'music' as a cultural entity. It is '[undefinable] in the scientific sense',¹¹⁴ does not often have a label that correlates to the English 'music',¹¹⁵ and may belong to several categories.¹¹⁶

There is also debate as to whether music reflects culture, constitutes culture, or acts as a 'site' for cultural practice.¹¹⁷ For this thesis, music is generally discussed in the sense of a social behaviour that reflects broader cultural aspects.

1.8.2. *Is music transferable?*

Many ethnomusicological studies have suggested that music, whatever the debate surrounding its practice and interpretation, is a central component to human societies.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Rice, (2014), *op. cit.*, pp. 44 – 45.

¹¹⁴ A. P. Merriam, "Definitions of 'Comparative Musicology' and 'Ethnomusicology': An Historical-Theoretical Perspective," *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (1977), pg. 190: "Perhaps in [the case of music], we are dealing with a concept which does not lend itself to definition in the scientific sense[...]"

¹¹⁵ H. Zemp, "Are 'are classification of musical types and instruments,'" *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (1978), pg. 37: "[P]robably more languages in the world have no terminological equivalent for what the westerner calls 'music'."; proposes using 'musical types' instead of 'music', but I do not think this is helpful.

¹¹⁶ K. A. Gourlay, "The Non-Universality of Music and the Universality of Non-Music," *The World of Music*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (1984), pp. 26, 28 – 30.

¹¹⁷ M. Clayton, "The Social and Personal Functions of Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in S. Hallam, I. Cross, and M. Thaut, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*, (Oxford, 2016), pg. 48; cf. J. Attali, *Noise: The political economy of music*, (Minneapolis, 1985).

¹¹⁸ I. Cross, "The Nature of Music and its Evolution," in S. Hallam, I. Cross, and M. Thaut, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*, (Oxford, 2016), pp. 6 – 7; C. Kaden, "Music and Sociology: Perspectives, Horizons," in D. Greer, (ed.), *Musicology and Sister Disciplines: Past, Present, Future. Proceedings of the 16th*

Cross suggests conceiving of music as a ‘communicative medium’, as both music and language act to exchange information.¹¹⁹ Unlike language, however, music is ambiguous. It is more open to a variety of interpretations and exhibits ‘floating intentionality’: that is, music gains meaning from context, and vice versa, can contribute meaning to context, encompassing a broad range of experiences and interpretations at any given point.¹²⁰

This ambiguity allows music to be flexible. Despite its creation within a specific context – and therefore association with a specific place or group – and within limitations, it can be experienced and interpreted by a broad range of individuals beyond that group.¹²¹ For this reason, I argue that we can understand music to be fundamentally ‘transferable’ social behaviour, even if coming from a different musical repertoire/tradition.

International Congress of the International Musicological Society, London, 1997, (Oxford, 2000), pg. 274; J. Blacking, *Music, culture and experience*, (London, 1995), pg. 223, a key proponent of the ‘protean’ nature of music: “Music is a primary modelling system of human thought and a part of the infrastructure of human life. ‘Music’-making is a special kind of social action which can have important consequences for other kinds of social action.”

¹¹⁹ I. Cross, “Music and meaning, ambiguity and evolution,” in D. Miell, R. MacDonald, and D. J. Hargreaves, *Musical Communication*, (Oxford, 2005), pp. 27 – 28.

¹²⁰ L. Kramer, “Musicology and Meaning,” *The Musical Times*, Vol. 144, No. 1883, (2003), pg. 9; Cross, (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 34 – 35; cf. also P. V. Bohlman, “Ethnomusicology and Music Sociology,” in D. Greer, (ed.), *Musicology and Sister Disciplines: Past, Present, Future. Proceedings of the 16th International Congress of the International Musicological Society, London, 1997*, (Oxford, 2000), pp. 296 – 297, for an example.

¹²¹ Cross, (2005), *op. cit.*, pg. 36; *idem*, “Music and biocultural evolution,” in M. Clayton, T. Herbert, and R. Middleton, (eds.), *The cultural study of music: a critical introduction*, (London, 2003), pp. 19 – 30; cf. also W. H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time*, (London, 1995); W. Benzon, *Beethoven’s anvil: Music, Mind and Culture*, (New York, 2001).

1.9. *Music as commodity?*

Having established that music can indeed be transferred across linguistic and cultural barriers, I may now argue that it had a position as an ‘exotic’ commodity of value. Ziegler touches upon the value of ‘exotic’ music at several points but does not expound on the topic; usually mentioning it in the context of musical education or exchange of musicians.¹²²

1.9.1. *Recognising the value of music*

Although we have no texts from Mari, or the wider Old Babylonian corpus that I know of, that speak of music/ians directly as they do of other traded commodities and objects, such as metals and ores, oils, stones, wine, textiles and raw materials,¹²³ there is evidence to suggest they were considered in a similar vein. Aside from economic texts discussing their trade, these things are recognised as valuable commodities due to several reasons: association with elite members of society and therefore status, rarity and/or scarcity as linked to their perceived ‘exoticism’, use as gifts or in trade, and finally, restrictions placed on the commodity, including careful ‘guarding’ of it as an asset.

1.9.2. *‘Value-markers’ associated with foreign musicians*

1.9.2.1. *Social elite and status symbols*

Foreign musicians are almost exclusively known through their employment by the royal palace, and some high officials. This may be in part due to the perspectives preserved in the Mari archives, but considering the corpora from other cities (e.g. Sippar), which do not detail musicians that are identifiably ‘foreign’, it is likely a combination of both factors.

The composition of each musical retinue differed from court to court. As well as records of the various northern Mesopotamian kings seeking to expand their music ‘collections’, we also have several examples of high officials requesting a musician to be sent to them for their service. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 but suffice to say here that such requests illustrate the perceived value of these musicians/their music: they were equal to gifts of

¹²² Ziegler, (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 125 – 126.

¹²³ M. Trolle Larsen, “The Middle Bronze Age,” in J. Aruz, K. Benzel, and J. M. Evans, (eds.), *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, (New York and London, 2008), pg. 13; also W. F. Leemans, *Foreign Trade in the Old Babylonian Period, as revealed by texts from Southern Mesopotamia*, (Leiden, 1960), pp. 112 – 113.

money or other precious items that might be bestowed. The fact that the king was the one ‘gifting’ them may also have endowed the musician with status by association, but this is largely speculation on my part.

In much the same way that it was common practice to take other items of value as booty, Zimri-Lim apparently took thirty musicians from locales where he achieved military victories.¹²⁴ This not only indicates their association with other *recherché* items, but their equivalence in value; it may also be linked with physical representations of ascendancy in conquered territories.

1.9.2.2. ‘Exotic’ goods: rarity, scarcity, prestige

Although music was common – despite a lack of textual evidence for ‘folk’ music, there are some clues in literary works, and this is one area we do have some visual representations¹²⁵ – professional musicians were not.¹²⁶ The extensive training required would not have been an option for those who needed power in numbers for farming and subsistence, or who were committed to other trades. The cost of instruments themselves, often made of fine woods or even other precious materials – although this would have been very rare – would have also been prohibitive if not organised through the palace system.¹²⁷

1.9.2.3. Gifts and trading of foreign musicians

Musicians were given as gifts, and we also have evidence for their trading between courts at various points. This is not ‘itinerancy’ or a kind of ‘self-employment’ by the foreign musicians themselves, but at the request or behest of (usually) the king: as such correlated to displays of alliance, status, and power.

This ‘category’ may also include the sending to-and-fro of musicians for training in various cities, a practice recorded in several Mari letters (M.5160, lines 25 – 30, and M.11057).¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 290; cf. also *idem*, *Florilegium Marianum IV – La population féminine des palais d’après les archives royales de Mari: le Harem de Zimri-Lim*, (Paris, 1999).

¹²⁵ Several Old Babylonian ‘clay plaques’, for example, depict musicians playing accompanied by dogs; cf. A. Spycket, “‘Le carnaval des animaux’: on some musician monkeys from the Ancient Near East,” *Iraq*, Vol. 60, (1998), pp. 1 – 10; R. Eichmann, “Ein Hund, ein Schwein, ein Musikant,” in B. Pongratz-Leiste, H. Kühne, and P. Xella, (eds.), *Ana šadī Labnāni lū allik. Beiträge zu altorientalischen und mittelmeerischen Kulturen. Festschrift für Wolfgang Röllig*, (Kevelaer, 1997), pp. 97 – 108.

¹²⁶ Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 308.

¹²⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 71 – 76.

¹²⁸ See Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 128 – 130, 248 – 250, respectively.

Although non-permanent, it stands to reason that these exchanges would not have occurred were, firstly, the musicians' different repertoires not valued, and secondly, the cities involved in some way 'friendly'. Not only does this indicate the importance of expanding the repertoire through exposure to and learning of 'foreign' traditions, but the complexity of regional understandings of identity.

The requirement of assurance that musicians who travelled would return (ARM 26/1 255, lines 18 – 22),¹²⁹ or the paying of 'deposits' (A.3002, lines 5 – 10),¹³⁰ further indicates the value placed on these individuals and their skill. The fact that the recipient has to explicitly state that they will send back the other's musician,¹³¹ or arrange deposits in the presence of witnesses, means this was an issue of concern, and probably had occurred enough that there was a precedent for this kind of letter.

1.9.2.4. *Restrictions and/or 'guarding'*

Foreign musicians were subject to various restrictions. (cf. 3.3.) As discussed above, to travel they had to seek permission and in some cases, had 'deposits' arranged to ensure their return. They did not travel by foot, although this marked their status, and were accompanied by hired 'guides'. The latter potentially acted as more of a protective 'escort' to ensure their safe passage – there are many examples of danger befalling merchants and other small groups whilst on the road during the Old Babylonian period.¹³² The Mari letters frequently mention *ḥabiru*, and texts from Tell Leilan (Šubat-Enlil) refer to *ḥabbātum*, both groups of brigands or bandits, the latter potentially itinerant mercenaries of a kind.¹³³ This is discussed in detail in 3.5., but for this portion of our investigation it does demonstrate the value of the foreign musicians: they were assets, prized and guarded by those who employed them; it was therefore necessary to take appreciable precautions to ensure their safe delivery from point A to point B.

¹²⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 265, n. 124; also, *idem*, (2010), *op. cit.*, pg. 125.

¹³⁰ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 27 – 28.

¹³¹ An unusual letter; resembling a legal text, cf. Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 27.

¹³² C. M. Monroe, "Money and Trade," in D. C. Snell, (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, (Malden, 2005), pg. 164; examples are known from Mari, see J.-M. Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari, Tome III*, (Paris, 2000), pp. 64 – 68: ARM XIV 77 and 78 respectively, cf. M. Birot, *Archives royales de Mari XIV: Lettres de Yaqqim-Addu, gouverneur de Sagaratum*, (Paris, 1976).

¹³³ J. F. Robertson, (2005), *op. cit.*, pg. 208; J. Eidem, *The Royal Archives from Tell Leilan: Old Babylonian Letters and Treaties from the Lower Town Palace East* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 18 – 22; *idem*, "North Syrian Social Structure in the MB Period: New Evidence from Tell Leilan," in F. Ismail, (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Syria and the Ancient Near East 3000-300 BC*, (Aleppo, 1996), pp. 77 – 85.

Further weight to this is lent by letters that evidence even musicians who were travelling ‘en fuite’ (see 3.4.) were afforded certain protections, and even the notion ‘en fuite’ itself denotes that they were subject to restrictions – there has to be something to flee from. Those on the run seem to have asked permission from the kings of their intended destinations. If accepted, they were usually helped to make travel arrangements that included the organising and financing of guides/escorts and ‘caravans’ for their journey.

2. *Identifying and locating foreign musicians*

Having established the setting for this discussion, and the definitions I will be working with, this thesis turns now to its examination of foreign musicians. Working with the constraints of both scope and evidence available to me, the following approaches identify ‘foreign’ musicians (and their geographic origins where plausible) within the corpus of the Mari archives: standard methods of textual analysis, onomastic study, and the use and presence of ‘foreign’ instruments, discussed in turn below.

2.1 *References in textual evidence*

This is perhaps the simplest way in which this thesis can identify foreign musicians, including their origins and to some extent, their movement, thanks to the breadth of the Old Babylonian textual record. Although it is generally rare to find evidence for foreign musicians and specific (that is, named) foreign musicians even more so, there are some exceptions. The Mari archives have given us the names of more than one-hundred and fifty musicians, and references to hundreds more.¹³⁴ This is a comparatively small sample of the evidence from this region, but it is the best documentation of foreign musicians available, and demonstrates the varying power of the following methods to reveal both information about the past, and about the methods applied to ‘read’ that information.

2.1.1. *Categorising (or not) texts*

There have been some studies of genre in Mesopotamia. These have largely concluded that the people of the old Babylonian period had a concept roughly corresponding to our categorisation of ‘genre’, and although this can be deciphered on some level, it is not a genre system translating to our own. As I am not dealing directly with this question, however, it will suffice to acknowledge these issues and to continue with its discussion of the ‘textual record’ as a whole, sidestepping the issue in this discussion.

¹³⁴ Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 290.

2.1.2. *Silence speaks louder than texts*

Despite the surviving information, there is still a significant amount that we do not have about foreign individuals, particularly musicians. We may have some names, geographical information, even head-counts of musical ‘staff’ at various points, but lacking is more comprehensive insight into who these people were, how they lived, and in most cases, what happened to them. This is not uncommon to encounter in the study of the Near East, but it does have implications of note for our discussion. In much the same way that history is famously ‘written by the victors’, much of the musician corpus is written by those who employed or even ‘owned’ these musical professionals to varying degrees. Women are very sparsely represented, although evidence suggests they formed an equal ratio of musical practitioners, if not more, within the palace hierarchy; those from ostensibly quite foreign regions (such as the Levant, or into the foothills of the south-eastern Taurus mountains) do not get a ‘voice’ at all.

2.1.3. *The extent of uniformity*

Due to a combination of ancient and modern factors, including preservation of archaeological provenance, and issues in the illegal trade and export of artefacts for well over 2 centuries, the textual landscape varies greatly from city to city across our area of study. This has clear repercussions for the understanding of northern Mesopotamia at this time, as well as for getting a wider picture – which would be particularly useful in discussing ethnicity and the movement of various people. In undertaking the following study, I would challenge a notion that general studies of Old Babylonian history tend to propagate, that is, cultural homogeneity may not have been so smoothly spread as previously implied, particularly with respect to the employment of musicians in each city’s court. We can see, based on comparisons between Mari letters, that employment of named (high-status) musicians varied, even according to personal taste. There is no reason to suggest that, likewise, the composition of each city’s musical retinue (temples aside) would have been uniform in any major way.

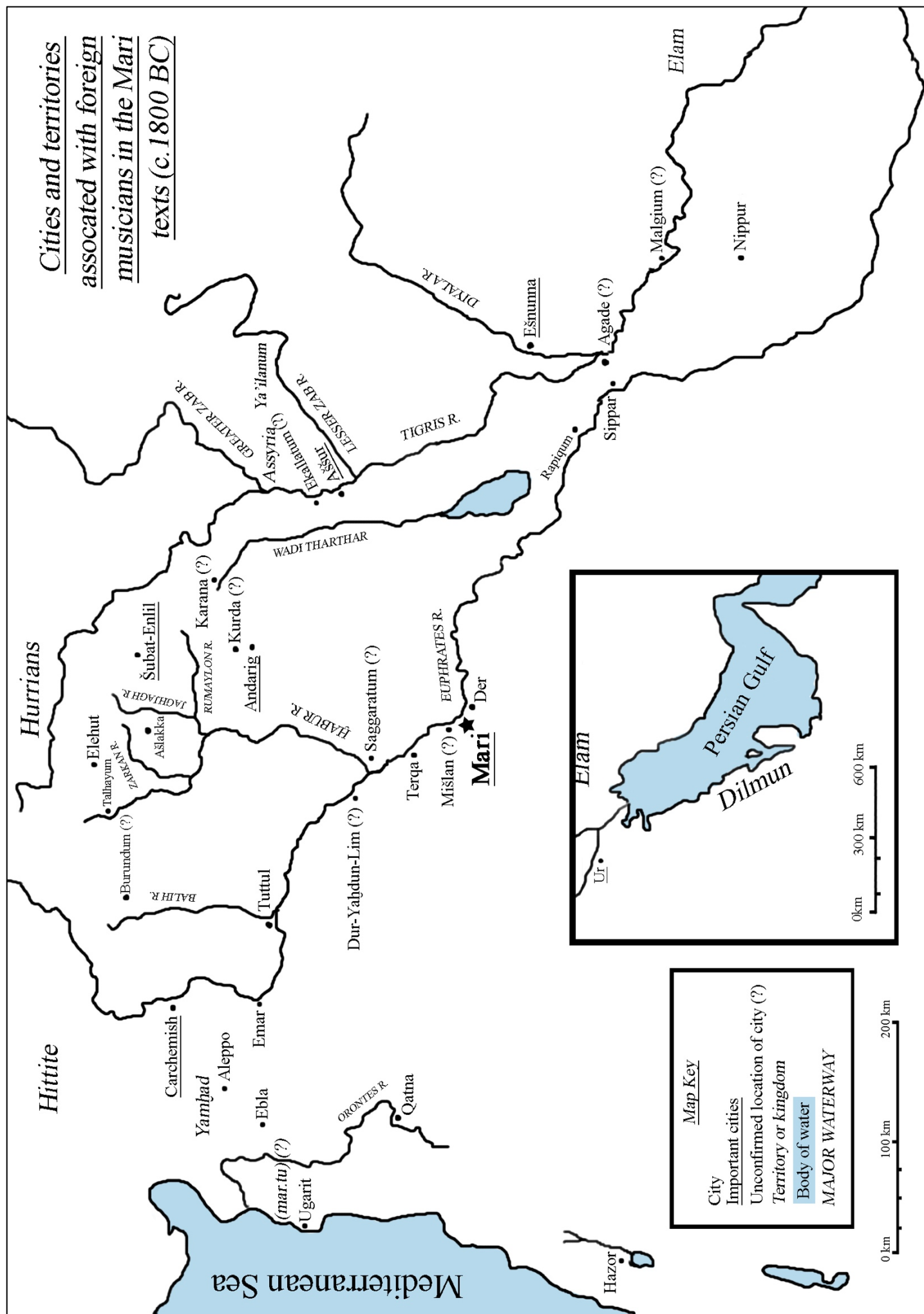
2.1.4. *Foreign musicians in the Mari texts*

I have used primarily texts published in the 2007 work of Ziegler,⁽¹³⁵⁾ a vital reference point in discussing musicians of the Mari texts, to synthesise relevant information from the Mari archives. These cover the region of the city itself, and its sphere of influence in the north of Mesopotamia, particularly as it bordered with the growing power of Assyria. The cities which foreign musician have been associated with in the Mari archives are collated in the map on the following page.¹³⁶ The individuals themselves are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

¹³⁵ There are many works published on the Mari archives; Ziegler's study of musicians is comprehensive, detailed, and raises many points of interest. It also collates a wide variety of examples, published and unpublished, that are otherwise difficult to access. It is also well-referenced and written, despite some points of contention, there are many excellent arguments regarding the musical professionals of the Mari archives.

¹³⁶ Map drawn by author. References used: T. Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia: The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire*, (London and New York, 2009); D. C. Snell, (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, (Cornwall, 2005); Charpin, (2004), *op. cit.*; Oriental Institute online resources: CAMEL <<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/camel/maps>>, Oriental Institute Map Series <<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/computer-laboratory/ancient-near-east-site-maps>>.

Cities and territories
associated with foreign
musicians in the Mari
texts (c.1800 BC)



3. *Foreign musicians: origins, roles, and relationships*

3.1 *Where do musicians come from in the Mari texts?*

From the above study of the texts, we know that there are musicians from Mari itself, and its various ‘districts’ – Puzur-Dagan, Sabimum, and Puzur-Annu. We also know, however, from explicit references and contextual clues within the texts, that there are musicians from the neighbouring cities of Mišlan, Der, Zurubban, Terqa, and Saggaratum, as well as from further afield in Mari’s field of influence, extending north-west along the Euphrates river: Dur-Yahdun-Lim and Tuttul. In terms of what might be understood as more truly ‘foreign’ – that is, extending into zones of cultural-linguistic-territorial difference, musicians are recorded in the Mari texts from as far south-west as the city of Hazor; from Qatna, the kingdom of Yamhad (and its capital, Aleppo), Carchemish, Burundum, and Ašlakka in the north-west; from Šubat-Enlil, Kurda, Andarig, Ekallatum, Aššur, and the territory of Ya’ilanum in the north-east; and from Ešnunna, Rapiqum, Sippar, and into the heart of Babylonia in the south-east. These musicians are identified and discussed in detail in the next chapter.

3.1.2. *What is a ‘foreign’ musician in the Mari texts?*

Generally, our first thought upon seeing the information above presented visually would be to designate ‘foreign’ based on a scale of distance. The prior discussion of ethnicity and the construction of ‘foreign’-ness in this period (cf. 1.5; 1.6), prompts us to reconsider this assumption. Although cities such as Andarig and Ekallatum are more than one hundred kilometres from Mari, Šubat-Enlil and Ašlakka even further, they are perhaps not considered as foreign as musicians from Hazor, the territory of Yamhad, or the ‘Subareans’ (identified with Hurrians), even though many of these same locales are equidistant or closer to Mari and its territory.

‘Foreign’ musicians, therefore, in the Mari texts, seem to be:

- Those that come from outside the city itself, and from beyond its ‘districts’
- To a certain extent, from territories and cities with which Mari maintained diplomatic or cultural ties at various points in the history of the archives

- At most times, those from territories and cities with which Mari had contact but was not as close with: this included areas Mari had territorial interests in or rivalries with (such as Ya'ilanum to the far east).

Many of these 'foreign' musicians correlate with some kind of 'ethnic' labels, whether applied to them, or to the musical traditions they practiced. But, in cognisance of the issues with assigning ethnicity to already confusing textual references, I do not believe that an 'ethnicity' necessarily correlated with 'foreign'-ness in a way that is preserved for us to interpret. Being associated with a particular place within a text (expressed as epithet or otherwise) is enough to mark some kind of sense of belonging to that place; 'ethnicity' is an entirely separate presentation of the ancient individual in specific contexts.

3.1.3. *An example worth discussing: Rišiya*

I will briefly discuss one person here, as they illustrate the value of textual analysis. This is Rišiya, the *nargallum* (chief musician) appointed by Yasmaḥ-Addu, but who served into the beginning of his successor, Zimri-Lim's, reign. The range of responsibilities associated with his work as *nargallum* are outlined in 3.1.1.1. This section is interested specifically in Rišiya as a foreign individual. From the study of Rišiya's correspondence, especially features of the linguistic style employed in his letters and the invocation of specific deities, Durand and Ziegler have suggested that he was foreign to Mari.¹³⁷ It seems he came from the city of Rapiqum (probably modern Tell Anbar), located on the middle Euphrates, just north of Sippar.¹³⁸ Textual evidence alone has identified Rišiya's origins; this hypothesis is only possible due to the detailed letters preserved from the individual themselves. It therefore does not present a usual case for musicians during this period.

3.1.3.1. *a-na aḥ-ḫi-šu^{lu}ma-ra-yi^{ki}*

With the above in mind, the difficulties early on in Rišiya's appointment – Šamši-Addu was opposed to his son's choice of *nargallum*, and vocal about it – may make more sense to us. (M.6851) has Šamši-Addu arguing for the appointment of his preferred candidate: "Appoint

¹³⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 95; J.-M. Durand, "Le mythologème du combat entre le Dieu de l'orage et la Mer en Mésopotamie," *Mari: Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires*, Vol. 7, (1993), pp. 41 – 61.

¹³⁸ Durand, (1993), *op. cit.*, pg. 52, n. 48.

Gumul-Dagan as nar-gal on behalf of ⁽¹³⁹⁾ his Mariote brothers!”¹⁴⁰ It is the latter part of this sentence that regards our discussion.

Aside from the fact that Gumul-Dagan seems to have been a favourite of Šamši-Addu prior to this situation, invoking the good of the Mari musical community – ‘his Mariote brothers’ – is a plea that may in fact be referencing Rišiya’s position as outsider to this community. It must be understood in conjunction with Šamši-Addu’s strong personal preferences; but that construction of community in such a way to implicitly exclude Rišiya has been included at all is indicative that it must have meant something to both the father writing and the son he hoped to influence.

Unfortunately for Gumul-Dagan, the lobbying on his side was unsuccessful; he was, according to Ziegler, “il fut victime d’une sorte ‘chahut’ à Mari,”¹⁴¹ and (M.8107) details Šamši-Addu’s request for him to be sent post-haste¹⁴² to Šubat-Enlil. (A.4466), which details how Rišiya was compelled to defend himself there against ‘accusations’ from Gumul-Dagan and Imgur-Šamaš, probably means that Gumul-Dagan had settled there.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ For *ana* with this sense, see J. Black, A. George, and N. Postgate (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, (Wiesbaden, 2000), pg. 16, *ana*/7.

¹⁴⁰ (11) *ma-a gu-mu-ul-da-gan-ma* (12) *a-na ah-hi-šu lu ma-ra-yi ki* (13) *a-na nar-gal-tim šu-ku-un-šu*; quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 246, n. 61.

¹⁴¹ A.3085, lines 4 – 25; cf discussion on Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 104. It seems that in the incident this letter refers to, Gumul-Dagan had been slighted very publicly at a banquet when a ceremonial cup was passed over him and instead given first to Rišiya, and then to all the other court musicians, before him. Gumul-Dagan may have been acting as envoy for Šamši-Addu on this occasion, which would make the incident even more offensive. For discussion, see Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 292.

¹⁴² *arhiš*, (M.8107, line 5).

¹⁴³ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 246.

3.2. *Other ways to locate foreign musicians?*

Although this thesis focuses primarily on the study of the textual evidence from the Mari archives themselves, there are two other interpretative methods that could be arguably employed to understand where ‘foreign’ musicians are from. These (onomastic study, and the study of musical instruments) are discussed briefly in the following sections of this chapter.

3.3. *Onomastic study*

Onomastics – the study of (mainly personal) names – can provide a particular insight into the movement and integration of different groups within societies and are useful given that many individuals from the Old Babylonian period survive as little more than their name.¹⁴⁴ By nature of their approach, however, these studies require a certain kind of evidence; it is hardly surprising they originate from the ancient Greek world and studies thereof, where names of all kinds abounded.¹⁴⁵

Separate from the language=ethnicity hypothesis, it is understood that language variation can be associated with broader geographical regions. In the Near East, West Semitic and ‘Amorite’ (inasmuch as we can talk of Amorite, cf. 1.4.4) exist to the north-west and into the Levant; Hurrian (distinctive in its forms) seems to originate from the northern foothills of the Taurus mountains; dialectical forms of Akkadian are regionalised. In discussing the foreign musician as one who has originated from or travelled from another place, using an onomastic approach to examine the names of musicians will demonstrate either its usefulness or its outdatedness for the field of this discussion.

3.3.1. *Applying onomastic study to the Mari texts*

As aforementioned, the application of these studies to the ancient Near East is limited by the confines of the available evidence. There is very little, if any, circumstantial textual evidence surviving: a cuneiform tablet, whilst portable and small, was deliberately made to record

¹⁴⁴ C. Hough, “Introduction”, in C. Hough, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, (Oxford, 2016), pg. 1; see also R. Coates, “What is onomastics?”, *International Council of Onomastic Sciences*, date created/last updated unknown, last accessed 13/11/2018, via <<https://icosweb.net/drupal/what-is-onomastics>>.

¹⁴⁵ J. M. Anderson, *The Grammar of Names*, (Oxford, 2007), pg. 3; C. Hough, (2016), *op. cit.*, pg. 1; H. Solin, “Ancient onomastics: perspectives and problems,” in A. D. Rizakis, (ed.), *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East: Social and Political Aspects (Proceedings of the International Colloquium Organized by the Finnish Institute and the Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, Athens 7-9 September 1993)*, (Athens, 1996), pp. 1 – 9.

something. They were ‘composed’. We lack the vast amounts of graffiti and inscriptional evidence common to Greco-Roman cities, and as such our corpus gives a particular insight into the ancient world.

The evidence available to conduct any kind of onomastic survey from the Mari archives largely records the lives of male musicians. These individuals also often belong to the social elite, are older (with children or having received honours), and many of whom seem to be literate, or hold other positions of status or skill.

Despite evidence (especially from ration-lists) suggesting the presence of more female musicians in the court of Mari, their names are not recorded, and they cannot be candidates for this type of study. This is a trend across much of the corpus of the Near East, relating to the presence and interplay of gender structures, education, literacy, and social hierarchy during this period across the socio-cultural landscape.

3.3.2. *Onomastics as evidencing foreign musicians*

In brief, there are several ways in which onomastic evidence can provide evidence for foreign origins of a person. These generally fall within four categories: names that contain reference/s to a foreign place, names containing elements of foreign languages, and names with theophoric elements of toponymic or regional deities.

Interestingly, studies that have been conducted of foreign peoples during this period have found disparities in the types of names associated with a) foreign people of status, with Akkadian names being of some significance, and b) types of names that male and female foreigners have, partially connected to questions of social position and slavery.¹⁴⁶ A significant part of these studies includes contextual clues: taking the musicians’ names within the Mari texts as an example, some are obviously foreign, and the rest are identifiable only because more information is available to us (including comparison with studies of other cities, such as those of Sippar and Nippur, and analyses of textual databases). Stol also

¹⁴⁶ R. Harris, “Notes on the Nomenclature of Old Babylonian Sippar,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (1972), pp. 102 – 104; *idem*, “Notes on the Slave Names of Old Babylonian Sippar,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, (1977), pp. 46 – 51.

suggests that ‘archaic’ names are more common at Mari, which also causes issues in identifying and understanding them.¹⁴⁷

Difficulties arise in the transliteration and standardisation of names. With different conventions at work, consonants can be swapped (g for q; i/y/j, ect.), and signs (primarily logograms) may be interpreted variously, leading to different transliterations and even different translations.

Reconsidering the archives with the aforementioned in mind, and with the purpose of demonstrating how onomastic study can reveal the potential origins of foreign musicians, we may now discuss some examples.

3.3.2.1. *Names referring to a foreign place*

These are relatively rare in the corpus from Mari, however, there are some for this discussion: Akšak-magir, Aranziḫ-adal, Hiddu/Hiṭte. Akšak was a city on the northern border of Akkadian territory, probably near Ešnunna, and had its peak in c. 2500 BC, is unclear to me why it features as a toponymical element, but it is certainly uncommon.¹⁴⁸ Aranziḫ refers to the Tigris river; and Hiddu/Hiṭte to the region of the Hittites, in Anatolia. Presumably those individuals with these names had some link to the places referenced; ‘Hitte’ in particular may have been another example of an exonymic name, this time for an individual.¹⁴⁹

3.3.2.2. *Names containing foreign language elements*

Taking the standpoint of Akkadian/Sumerian as the *lingua franca* for the documents of the Mari region during this time, then names containing elements/influences of ‘Amorite’/West Semitic, Assyrian, even Hurrian, could be considered to fit this criterion. This is not to rescind on the discussion of the language=culture debate in Chapter 1; names featuring linguistic elements that are linked with another geographic zone – not necessarily an ethnicity or culture – can trace the movement of people from that zone.

¹⁴⁷ M. Stol, “Old Babylonian Personal Names,” *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico*, Vol. 8, (1991), pg. 196.

¹⁴⁸ Bryce, (2009), *op. cit.*, pg. 20.

¹⁴⁹ See 1.4.5.

The fact that examples are preserved in the names of musicians is noteworthy, given the power of names to mark those of disparate origins. Following the argument of Gelb, ‘foreign’ names generally disappear after a generation, with trends indicating preference for relatively standard Akkadian names.¹⁵⁰

3.3.2.2.1. ‘Amorite’ and West Semitic names:

Many studies of ‘Amorite’ names exist and have identified quite literally hundreds of names and variants.¹⁵¹ When discussing ‘Amorite’ names here, I am referring to those which have obvious West Semitic/other influences, or are a name documented only as an ‘Amorite’ name (that is, appearing in a specific region or restricted to a particular population as far as is known). The issue is far too complicated to break down in any detail within this context, but the names themselves can be variously interpreted – the complexities of reading cuneiform signs has a big part in this.

As discussed in (1.4.4) there are many issues in discussing an ‘Amorite’ language based largely on studies of these names themselves. They do, however, show particular features that distinguish them from standardised forms of Old Babylonian names; names that are West Semitic in form are particularly distinctive, and many ‘Amorite’ names feature a kind of hybrid West Semitic and Akkadian dialect in their forms. Grammatically speaking, consonantal shifts, unusual forms, and a use of y/j in the place of i, as well as differences in vocabulary and expression, all indicate a western origin for the name, and potentially the person.

There are also some names in the ‘Amorite’ corpus that do not appear across the broader Mesopotamian region: if any names could be linked with a real sense of regional identity, these are the likely candidates. The examples that could be identified include Aḫum,

¹⁵⁰ I. J. Gelb, “Ethnic Reconstruction and Onomastic Evidence,” *Names*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (1962), pp. 45 – 52; also R. Harris, “On Foreigners in Old Babylonian Sippar,” *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale*, Vol. 70, No. 2, (1976), pg. 152.

¹⁵¹ See, for example, the work of I. J. Gelb, “An Old Babylonian List of Amorites,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 88, No. 1, (1968), pp. 39 – 46; *idem*, *Computer-Aided Analysis of Amorite*, (Chicago, 1980); M. P. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonische Zeit*, (Münster, 2000); H. B. Huffman, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study*, (Baltimore, 1965); M. O’Connor, “The Onomastic Evidence for Bronze-Age West Semitic,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 124, No. 3, (2004), pp. 439 – 470.
cf. Stol, (1991), *op. cit.*; I. Nakata, “A Study of Women’s Theophoric Personal Names in the Old Babylonian Texts from Mari,” *Orient*, Vols. 30 – 31, (1995), pp. 234 – 253.

Haqbatan, Kabkabuyatum (sic), Urabba-ana-šarrim, Yakunum, Gubbum, and certainly others, given more depth of study to survey the existing work on West Semitic/Amorite names. Given the prevalence of ‘Amorite’ names in the Mari region, these, although a distinctive onomastic category, do not really help us to distinguish origins, unless they are distinctively West Semitic (such as Gubbum).

3.3.2.2.2. *Hurrian*

Hurrian names are identifiable largely by their vocabulary, as Hurrian is linguistically distinct from Semitic languages.¹⁵² Some Hurrian texts are known from Mari (identified as prophecies), so it is clear that there was an established relationship between the two regions.¹⁵³ The presence of musicians with Hurrian names, such as Aranziḫ-adal¹⁵⁴ and Kulbi-adal, therefore, are indicative of the contact and exchange between these two regions. A study published by Sasson has also provided us with the names of some female Hurrian musicians from Mari: Awis-na, Azzu-eli,¹⁵⁵ Ela-patal, Elum-šeḫir-e,¹⁵⁶ Pirḫu-na¹⁵⁷, and Puḫ-tani.¹⁵⁸ Based on onomastic concepts, we would associate these names with the region of very northern Mesopotamia and Anatolia; the Hurrian territories.

3.3.2.2.3. *Assyrian*

Assyrian names, such as Akiya and Ellet-šubassu, present an interesting question for this discussion. The territory of Assyria in this period of Assyrian expansion (c.eighteenth century BC) had its capital at Šubat-Enlil, and from both the Mari archives and the c. 1,100 texts excavated from Tell Leilan, we know that the two cities (until Šamši-Addu’s death and Zimri-Lim’s return to the throne) were in regular contact.¹⁵⁹ They were, however, far enough in distance that I think we could consider musicians travelling from one to the other as ‘foreign’ in the eyes of the receiving court.

¹⁵² G. Wilhelm, “Hurrian,” in R. D. Woodward, (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Asia Minor*, (New York, 2008), pp. 81 – 82. Interestingly, there are significantly more Hurrian personal names (hundreds) known than texts preserved (tens).

¹⁵³ G. Wilhelm, (2008), *op. cit.*, pg. 82

¹⁵⁴ Note this is not the god, the deified river itself, (as not written with the dingir), but the place.

¹⁵⁵ J. Sasson, “Hurrians and Hurrian Names in the Mari Texts”, *Ugarit-Forschungen*, Vol. 6, (1974), pg. 359.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pg. 360.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pg. 366.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pg. 367.

¹⁵⁹ H. Weiss, “Tell Leilan and Shubat Enlil,” *Mari: Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires*, Vol. 4, (1985), pp. 269 – 292; L. Ristvet and H. Weiss, “The Hābūr Region in the Late Third and Early Second Millennium B.C.,” in W. Orthmann, (ed.), *The History and Archaeology of Syria: Volume 1*. (Saarbrücken, 2005), pp. 101 – 116; M. Van De Mieroop, “The Tell Leilan Tablets 1991: A Preliminary Report,” *Orientalia*, Vol. 63, No. 4, (1994), pp. 305 – 344.

3.3.2.2.4. (Un)like father, (un)like son: Hašri-Amim and Kulbi-adal

A significant issue in the use of onomastic study to identify ‘ethnicity’ amongst a population is the myriad of other factors that influence naming practices. Demonstrating this is the example of Hašri-Amim and his son, Kulbi-adal, both of whom were musicians (see 3.8). Hašri-Amim has an ‘Amorite’ name, whilst his son has a Hurrian name. There is no real explanation for Hašri-Amim’s choice in name for his son: clearly, the situation vis-à-vis naming was more complicated than the textual evidence records.

3.3.2.3. Names with containing theophoric elements of toponymic or regional deities

Mesopotamian religion has a broad pantheon of deities and divine beings, some of whom are associated with very specific regions (even cities). As such, onomastic studies have found it irresistible to consider the links between theophoric elements in names and the location of their owners. There have been studies of the theophoric names from Mari,¹⁶⁰ but in terms of our purposes, there are few musicians with theophoric elements that are firstly, distinguishable, and secondly, definitively associated with a region other than that of Mari or northern Mesopotamia more generally.

3.3.2.3.1. ^dIM: Adad, Addu, Hadad...?

Before I discuss those deities which concern the above point, I feel it necessary to make a point of noting the transliteration of ^dIM in the Mari texts. The storm-god Adad, worshipped across Mesopotamia, is common in many names of the Old Babylonian period. The theophoric element is usually written (in Mari texts) as ^dIM: normalising it as ‘Addu’ is a conscious choice on the part of the Assyriologist.¹⁶¹ This choice within the context of the Mari archives reflects an interpretation regarding the individual’s identity; especially given that many of the names featuring Adad are fairly standard in their other linguistic components.

¹⁶⁰ For example, I. Nakata, (1995), *op. cit.*

¹⁶¹ K. Stevens, “Iškur/Adad (god),” *Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses*, ORACC and the UK Higher Education Academy, (2016), last accessed 16/02/2019, via <<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/ikur/>>; thank you also to Noel Weeks for discussing this point with me.

3.3.2.3.2. *Dagan*

Although the etymology of Dagan's name and broader mythology is obscure, he is well-established as an important deity of the Middle Euphrates region.¹⁶² He is particularly associated with the cities of Tuttul and Terqa.¹⁶³ Crowell argues that Mari has the "highest quantity of documentary evidence" for Dagan;¹⁶⁴ this may well in part be due to the preservation of the archives, as well as any predilection for Dagan himself.

Musicians whose names pay especial homage to Dagan (such as Gumul-Dagan, Šilli-Dagan, Yarim-Dagan, and Yazrah-Dagan) may well have been from cities other than Mari where Dagan was particularly venerated.

3.3.2.3.4. *El*

During this period, El is a deity associated with the region of modern Syria and the west generally, he is also well known from texts discovered at Ugarit.¹⁶⁵ We know of a Milki-El; the association of El as a deity with the northern Levant (Ugarit in particular) could offer a suggestion as to where this musician or their family was from.

3.3.3.4 *'Slave names' and the onomastic study of foreign musicians*

Many onomastic studies focusing on foreign populations in this period discuss slave names. This is as a large portion of the corpus comes from contracts, or receipts from transactions to do with slave ownership during this period, also as they preserve a significant proportion of foreign names. Despite the presence of captive or even potentially slave musicians in the palace of Mari, we do not have evidence for their names in the same way as in other cities (such as Sippar). This is probably due to the status of the individuals themselves, and the limited temporal scope of the bulk of the archives; it may also be a problem of what was preserved or even recorded.

¹⁶² B. L. Crowell, "The Development of Dagan: A Sketch," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*, Vol. 1, (2001), pg. 34.

¹⁶³ L. Feliu, *The God Dagan in Bronze Age Syria*, trans. W. G. E. Watson, (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pg. 94; A. Stone, "Dagan (god)," *Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses*, ORACC and the UK Higher Education Academy, (2013), last accessed 16/02/2019, via <<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/dagan/>>

¹⁶⁴ Crowell, (2001), *op. cit.*, pp. 40 – 41.

¹⁶⁵ I. Nakata, *Deities in the Mari Texts*, PhD dissertation, (Columbia University, 1974), pp. 223 – 225; also M. S. Smith and W. T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume II*, (Leiden and Boston, 2009), cf. pg. 5.

3.4. *The use and presence of ‘foreign’ instruments and their names*

Following on from the previous discussion of onomastic evidence, another aspect of the archaeological and textual records that could be understood to demonstrate the origins of the ‘foreign’ with particular regard to music is the musical instruments themselves. Similar to names that contain toponymic or linguistic elements, the names of musical instruments likewise can indicate origins external to the society in which they are played or even produced.

Whether the music played on these instruments also belonged, musicologically speaking, to an entirely ‘foreign’ tradition, or they were also co-opted to play local repertoire, is something that cannot be determined (due to the lack of extant written or otherwise recorded music). This question, however, raises a point of interest that will be briefly discussed here.

3.4.1. *Can we talk of foreign music?*

The presence of foreign instruments and foreign musicians, suggests the presence of foreign music itself. This is not an isolated idea: across human musical history, various instruments have been associated with a particular musical tradition or even geographical location. Music consistently appears as a way of communicating and expressing marginalised identities in a context where they are not the dominant social group.

As discussed in (1.8 and 1.9), the value placed on the exchange and custodianship of (foreign) musicians, for their music specifically, indicates that there was some understanding of differing musical traditions. In the same way that language does not operate without dialectical variation, music must have also had regional or even local repertoire. Although we cannot speak to much of the Old Babylonian musical landscape, I think we can understand that there was operating, on some level, awareness of different musical traditions. This is arguably ‘foreign’ music; whether or not the people practicing it were themselves ‘foreign’.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ We know that musicians were, in addition to being brought to the palace, sent to different cities to train with teachers proficient in a particular ‘style’ or repertoire; cf. Ziegler, (2010), pp. 124 – 125.

3.4.2. *The geography of foreign instruments*

We know of several instruments which are explicitly understood to have been associated with a land, region, or more specific locale, such as a city. References to these instruments come from two main types of texts during the Old Babylonian period: lexical lists and ‘literary texts’.¹⁶⁷ Using Krispijn’s excellent, if brief, study of musicians and musical ensembles in ancient Mesopotamia¹⁶⁸ as a basis, the various relevant instruments are listed briefly below. It is not the aim of this thesis to delve into the specifics of instrumentation: they will not be discussed beyond a brief description, but I acknowledge many of these more obscure instruments are a source of much debate.

3.4.2.1. *alġarsur*

This, potentially a sort of ‘drumstick’, or less likely a stringed lyre or harp, has two regional types listed, including an ‘Elamite’ type.¹⁶⁹

3.4.2.2. Instruments of...

The *malgatum*, ‘song/instrument from *Malgium*’, is obscure and it is very unclear what type of instrument (or song) this was.¹⁷⁰ There is also the *paraḥšitum*, the ‘instrument from Far(a)hšum/Fars’, occurring in later periods from texts found at Emar, but attested at Mari.¹⁷¹ Of particular interest is the *miritum*, ‘the instrument from Mari’. It occurs in Ur II and early Old Babylonian period texts in Isin: a furniture shape for the ‘side’ of objects¹⁷² is known from Ur, Umma, Puzriš-Dagan, and Nippur-Esagdana, indicating the instrument’s popularity aesthetically, if not aurally, was widespread.¹⁷³

3.4.2.6. *zannarum/kinnarum*

This ‘Syrian lyre’, potentially a loanword from Hattic, is also written as *kinnaru*. It is associated with the north-western Mediterranean coastal region; (ARM XXV, 547) details

¹⁶⁷ See previous discussion of genre.

¹⁶⁸ T. Krispijn, “Musical Ensembles in Ancient Mesopotamia”, in R. Dunbrill and I. Finkel, (eds.) *ICONEA 2008, Proceedings of the International Conference of Near Eastern Archaeomusicology held at the British Museum, December 4, 5, and 6, 2008*, (USA, 2010), pp. 125 – 150. cf. in particular the “Glossary of musical instruments and their writing”, pp. 144 – 148.

¹⁶⁹ N. C. Veldhuis, “The Sur₉-Priest, the Instrument ^{giš}Al-gar-sur₉, and the Forms and Uses of a Rare Sign,” *Archiv für Orientforschung*, Vols. 44 – 45, (1997/1998), pp. 115 – 128, particularly pp. 119 – 120.

¹⁷⁰ Krispijn, (2010), *op. cit.*, pg. 127.

¹⁷¹ Krispijn, (2010), *op. cit.*, pg. 146.

¹⁷² ^{giš}zà.mi.ri.tum: ‘side (in the shape of the) miritum’

¹⁷³ Krispijn, (2010), *op. cit.*, pg. 146; citing the lexical list Can Hh VII B, 78, where the instrument is associated with ^{giš}gú, ‘wooden neck’.

quantities of gold sent for the plating of several instruments, among them a *kinnarum*-lyre. Given the links between Mari and the Mediterranean region, discussed in the following chapter, it is not surprising to find evidence for the *kinnarum*-lyre within the archives.

3.4.3. *Attestation or circulation?*

Many of these instruments are attested in Mari texts before they are attested in standardised Babylonian sources (assuming a southern-centric mode of linguistic development). Whether this is simply due to what is extant, or reflecting an ancient reality, is unclear. It is clear, however, that there was a variety of musical traditions circulating the region of Mesopotamia, and these probably correlated with the foreign musicians also mentioned in the archive's texts.

3.5 *Foreign musicians, local positions*

Having established the presence of foreign musicians, including some who are known to us as individuals, this thesis will now discuss their roles in Old Babylonian cities, comparing this with the picture we have of other foreign groups, before discussing the part that identity expression and agency, and the value of music as a commodity and status symbol, have to play in the creation and maintenance of status for these musicians. I will continue to use Mari as a case study, however the broader points of discussion provide for points of comparison with other Old Babylonian cities, where evidence allows it.¹⁷⁴

Foreign musicians, as per the study of textual evidence undertaken in the previous chapter, are known to have held a range of positions within the social and political hierarchy of the Mari court. Some of these positions are obscure within the general corpus of Old Babylonian texts, but documented at Mari, and with examples of foreign individuals identified with these titles: although other studies do not discuss these musical professionals, I will do so.

3.5.1. *nargallum – The head musician*

The *nargallum* (from Sumerian *nar.gal*, lit. 'great musician') was the highest position in the hierarchy of court musicians and by extension, the hierarchy of musicians within the city

¹⁷⁴ I have not, however, included parallels with other periods of Mesopotamian history, as these lie outside the remit of this thesis, although many parallels exist in the histories of Ebla, Nuzi, Nimrud, and indeed in the general Ur III corpus.

itself. They had a role similar to that of the modern Kapellmeister,¹⁷⁵ which included allocating musicians to ensembles and teachers, the organisation of said ensembles, procurement and distribution of instruments and repertoire, and coordination of daily rehearsal and performances, assisted by several other musical officials.¹⁷⁶ As well as this, the *nargallum* had several other duties: they are often recorded as tasked with overseeing the care of the women of the ‘harem’,¹⁷⁷ selecting new musicians from captive arrivals to the palace,¹⁷⁸ or even sent on ‘missions’ for the king (some requiring significant travel),¹⁷⁹ including arranging and facilitating marriages.¹⁸⁰ They were within the personal circle of the king (and other members of the royal family, including the royal wives), and as far as is known this was a position held exclusively by men.¹⁸¹ Ziegler and Shehata argue that these men would have been castrates, as they interacted with the women of the harem, but the evidence is not conclusive.¹⁸²

There is also some evidence that the *nargallum* was responsible for the music of the temple, that is, performed as part of religious practice, but the textual evidence for our understandings of this is limited.¹⁸³ At Mari there was a *galamāḥum* (head lamenter) who answered to the *nargallum*, but in the southern cities the *galamāḥum* seems to have been more independent, and encompassed broader responsibilities associated with the practice of religious rites and

¹⁷⁵ Lit. ‘Chapel-master’, but designating the figurehead in charge of orchestrating music (often associated with the German courts of the 1800s), usually also a musician themselves, and with a broader range of duties than performed by conductor or concertmaster in modern professional settings.

¹⁷⁶ J.-M. Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari, volume III*, (Paris, 2000), pg. 139; N. Ziegler, “Teachers and Students: Conveying Musical Knowledge in the Kingdom of Mari,” in R. Pruzsinszky and D. Shehata, (eds.), *Musiker und Tradierung: Studien zur Rolle von Musikern bei der Verschriftlichung und Tradierung von literarischen Werken*, (Berlin, 2010), pg. 120; N. Ziegler, *Florilegium marianum IX: Les Musiciens et la musique d’après les archives de Mari*, (Paris, 2007), pp 7 – 9, 11; D. Shehata, *Musiker und ihr vokales Repertoire: Untersuchungen zu Inhalt und Organisation von Musikerberufen und Liedgattungen in altbabylonischer Zeit*, (Göttingen, 2009), pg. 23.

¹⁷⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 10, Durand, (2000), *op. cit.*, pg. 139.

¹⁷⁸ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 11.

¹⁷⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ R. Pruzsinszky, “Singers, Musicians, and their Mobility in Ur III Period Cuneiform Texts,” in R. Dumbrill, (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Conference of Near Eastern Archaeomusicology (ICONEA 2009 – 2010). Held at the Université de la Sorbonne, November 2009, and at Senate House, School of Musical Research, University of London, December 2010*, (Piscataway, 2012), pg. 32.

¹⁸¹ Shehata, (2009), *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 21.

¹⁸² Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, 23 -24; Pruzsinszky, reiterates this point in discussing Ur III musicians in the service of the king, cf. R. Pruzsinszky, “Die königlichen Sänger der Ur III-Zeit als Werkzeug politischer Propaganda,” in R. Pruzsinszky and D. Shehata, (eds.), *Musiker und Tradierung: Studien zur Rolle von Musikern bei der Verschriftlichung und Tradierung von literarischen Werken*, (Berlin, 2010), pg. 101.

¹⁸³ N. Ziegler, “Music, the Work of Professionals,” in K. Radner and E. Robson, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, (New York, 2011), pg. 299.

worship across the city's temples.¹⁸⁴ For more discussion of foreign musicians and religion, see 3.8.

3.5.2. *The nâr(t)um*

The standard title for 'musicians' was *nârum/nârtum*, usually written with the Sumerogram *nar*. Although translated 'musician', it is sometimes translated 'singer' within the context of literary works (where this latter meaning is often implied). Within the Mari texts, 'musician' is a suitable translation, as it refers to a general musical practitioner, be it vocalist, instrumentalist, or both. Musicians were relatively high in the social structure and workforce of the palace, but were under the authority of *mušāḥizum* ('teachers') and, of course, the *nargallum*.

There are several examples from the Mari archives where the value of a (foreign) *nârum* is evident as various kings petition each other for musicians. In some cases, this is addressed as part of a diplomatic exchange, in return for faithful service, or as part of a gift-exchange: (A.2997) details Zudiya's request for a musician from Zimri-Lim, arguing that he has 'never asked for anything' from him before, and that without fail he provides messengers that stop at his home with bread and beer.¹⁸⁵ Zudiya's home served as a relay point on the way to the palace of Zaziya, king of the Turukkeans (a group based in the Urmia basin and valleys of the north-western Zagros mountains in modern Iran).¹⁸⁶ Zudiya is unknown from other sources: he was *šapiṭum* (governor) of what was probably a very minor portion of land. Foreign musicians were also requested against 'cash' payments, usually of silver, (ARM XXVIII, 86, lines 24 – 28) has Ḫaya-Sumu, king of Ilan-šura, request a 'beautiful, talented' musician from Zimri-Lim, having supplied one-half *mana* of silver.¹⁸⁷ Zimri-Lim himself requested (ARM II, 19 (LAPO 16, 351, lines 2'–4') two 'beautiful' Assyrian female musicians from Išme-Dagan – another example demonstrating the general value of the foreign musician, but also their value as a diplomatic gift.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Cf. D. Shehata, "Status and Organisation of the Babylonian Lamentation Priests," in S. Emerit, (ed.), *Le statut du musicien dans la Méditerranée ancienne: Égypte, Mésopotamie, Grèce, Rome. Actes de la table ronde internationale tenue à Lyon, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée (université Lumière Lyon 2), les 4 et 5 juillet 2008, Lyon*, (Paris, 2013), pp. 69 – 85.

¹⁸⁵ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 39 – 40.

¹⁸⁶ Bryce, (2009), *op. cit.*, pg. 721.

¹⁸⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 37, also n. 167 on the same page.

¹⁸⁸ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 39.

Senior officials, who also had ‘palaces’, and could possess a retinue of female musicians, likewise requested musicians in return for their service. One such example is ‘le premier ministre’ of Aleppo, who received a female Mariote musician for loyal service.¹⁸⁹ These ‘private’ venues modelled the value of and learning from foreign musicians seen in the royal palaces of cities such as Mari. A letter (A.4377) from Hitti[...] to Isar-Lim, king of Terqa, mentions, among other civilities, the practising of the palace’s musicians with some of Šamiya’s musicians.¹⁹⁰ Clearly, foreign musicians were seen as a resource for the learning of new repertoire outside of the ‘royal’ palaces. Given this example and what little we know of music at even lower levels of society, it may well have been so that ‘foreign’ musicians that travelled at these levels helped to spread new repertoire across regions of northern Mesopotamia.

We even have an example of a queen requesting foreign musicians to be brought back for her: Liqtum, sister of Zimri-Lim, who was married to the king of Burundum, Adalšenni, and asked him to bring her some female musicians.¹⁹¹ Zimri-Lim replied (ARM X, 140 (LAPO 18, 1184)), saying that as Yasmaḥ-Addu palace had been recently looted, there were no more to send her, and she would have to wait.¹⁹²

We know, however, that the *nârum* was a professional position, requiring many years of training from an early age; there were very few *nârum* in comparison with other skilled professionals (such as scribes).¹⁹³ This is also evident in that it also seems to be a position that – in the eyes of many *nârum* themselves – deserved a certain level of ‘respect’, shown in several ways: ‘use’, gifts, and in protection. In discussing foreign *nârum*, these remunerations indicate value placed not only on the musicians themselves, but on their music, even as they operated at different skill levels.

¹⁸⁹ ARM XXVI/1, 9, lines 19 – 34; Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 41.

¹⁹⁰ A.4377: (9) munus *na-ra-tu-k[a]* (10) *it-ti* munus *na-ra-tim* (11) *ša sa-mi-ia i-ha-[za]*

¹⁹¹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 40.

¹⁹² Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 40, n. 169.

¹⁹³ Ziegler, (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 122 – 123; *idem*, (2011), *op. cit.*, pp. 288 – 289.

3.5.2.1. *Underappreciated, underpaid, overperforming?*

The *nârum* Baliya is one example of a foreign musician who sought new employment because they felt they were not being ‘appreciated’ enough in their current situation.¹⁹⁴ We know of this from a letter (A.597, unpublished), sent from Zimri-Lim to Itûr-Asdu, explaining that Baliya plans to go to Mari, and asking for the governor to make the appropriate arrangements for his travel.¹⁹⁵ Having relayed the plan, Itûr-Asdu reported (A.1878, unpublished) back to Zimri-Lim that *lú šu-u ma-di-iš iḫ-du* – [Baliya] was exceedingly happy with it, although it goes on to explain that he was delayed in his journey (“raisons de santé”).¹⁹⁶ The ‘men of Ḫurra’ hired to accompany him on his travels are mentioned in (A.498: lines 72 – 25).¹⁹⁷

From both letters we also know that Baliya was no stranger to travel: originally from Kurda (north of Andarig), he was given (*nadānum*) to Šarraya of Elehut (c. modern Tur ‘Abdin).¹⁹⁸ Evidently, Baliya understood the value of his skills as a commodity. He felt that he was not secure enough – whether that was due to actual ‘income insecurity’ brought about by under-work, or “[...] cherchent de nouveaux maîtres parce que les leurs ne les employaient [...] selon ce qu’ils estimaient leur juste valeur.”¹⁹⁹ His next step, knowing that he had a source of power in his musical skills, was to arrange new employment: the wording of (A.597) ⁽²⁰⁰⁾ implies that Baliya was the one who asked to join the court at Mari.

3.5.2.2. *Valued members of the court*

Aside from those discussed above we also know of other foreign *nârum*-musicians who were particularly prized. Eteya, who worked in the court of Išme-Dagan (Ekallatum) was coveted by Yasmaḥ-Addu: we know of this from several letters exchanged between the two brothers. Išme-Dagan retained him at the request of Yasmaḥ-Addu (ARM IV: 57 (=LAPO 17: 642),

¹⁹⁴ Lit. (8) *ú-ul pá-qi-id-ma* “... has no-one to take care [of him]”. A.597, unpublished: quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 30, n. 146.

¹⁹⁵ The use of guards and guides is discussed in 3.5.

¹⁹⁶ A.1878, unpublished, quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 30, n. 147; *idem*, n. 148.

¹⁹⁷ A.498, unpublished, cf. Ziegler, (2007), *ibid*.

¹⁹⁸ A. 597: (6) ^[1] *[b]a-li-ia ša ha-am-mu-ra-bi* (7) *a-na šar-ra-a-ia e-lu-uh-ti-im^{ki} id-d[i-na]m*

A.1878: (34) [...] *lú-nar* (35) *š[a] iṣ-tu kur-da^{ki} a-na šar-ra-a-ia id-di-nu-šu*

Both quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 30.

¹⁹⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *ibid*.

²⁰⁰ (8) [...] *pa-nu-šu a-na at-lu-ki-im* (9) *a-na še-ri-ia ša-ak-nu*, quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *ibid*; *pāna* used to indicate intention, cf CAD P, “*panu*,” 6. b), pg. 92.

lines 5-7). At a later date, Eteya seems to have spent some time at Mari, and was held back by Yasmaḥ-Addu, who hoped to keep him.²⁰¹ (A.2882, cf. lines 3'-5') details Išme-Dagan's refusal; even though his brother had sent Ikšud-appašu and the 'sons of Là'ûm' (presumably other musicians) to Ekallatum in his place.²⁰² Although there is no record remaining of how the issue was resolved, Ziegler proposes that both (ARM V: 76, lines 13-14),²⁰³ and the fact that no economic texts recording Eteya's name have been found from Mari, indicate "[...]son séjour ne s'y prolongea pas [...]".²⁰⁴

(FM III, 143, lines 8 – 16) relate the arrival of a delegation from Hazor, to the north of the Sea of Galilee in the Levantine region, including three female *nârum*-musicians. These musicians, as from a particularly foreign region, were a gift to Zimri-Lim. Following Ziegler, and reading their description (lú nar meš [mar]-tu) as 'mar.tu' Amorite,²⁰⁵ in this context it may be more plausible to consider them as musicians from the West. As such, 'mar-tu' refers to the foreignness of the musicians, not in an 'ethnic' sense, but in a geographical sense – emphasising how distant in the worldview of the Mari court their hometown was. Similarly 'foreign' female musicians were brought back from Qatna by the general Samadaḥum; we know of this exchange as Ilšu-ibbišu considered them 'n'étaient pas du goût' (A.979): they were all *kaša šiba*: 'cold' and old.²⁰⁶ Ilšu-ibbišu is probably making a comment on the physical appearance of the women and not in regards to their musical skill; a concern also reflected in the selection of foreign musicians from captive women

Other foreign female musicians are known from the Idamaras region (the western portion of the Ḥabur triangle), (ARM X, 126, line 17) has them destined to form a 'Subarean' [ensemble] – it is unknown whether they would have performed in Hurrian language.²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 253.

²⁰² A.2882, reverse: (3') *i-nu-[ma m]a-ah-ri-ka* (4') *úš-[ša]-bu* (5') *ša 'ma-an¹-nim ú-ul ir-di-i*

²⁰³ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 153 – 154; the text has been published variously but is collated into a single version in Ziegler's work (as text no. 33); publications cited are ARM V, 76; LAPO 16, 10; and discussion of lines 5, 8, and 9 in *MARI* 4, pg. 403, n. 119.

²⁰⁴ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 253.

²⁰⁵ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 20; also cf. pg. 19 n. 87; citing A. Malamat, "Amorrite Musicians at Mari," NABU (1999) Vol. 46, and "Musicians from Hazor at Mari," in P. Marrassini (ed.), *Semitic and Assyriological Studies Presented to Pelio Fronzaroli by Pupils and Colleagues*, (Wiesbaden, 2001), pp. 355-357.

²⁰⁶ A.979, line 10'; *kaša* here is used in a previously unattested imagined sense, previously only used to designate words. Ilšu-ibbišu is probably making a comment on the physical appearance of the women; not their musical skill; Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 220.

²⁰⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 20, also n. 91, on the same page.

3.5.2.3. *It takes two to raqādu: sending foreign musicians from Mari*

Turning back to the discussion of the musicians from Hazor, we also know of musicians that would have been considered ‘foreign’ in the opposite direction: (M.14663) details the concerns of Warad-ilišu regarding the promise of three female musicians to Hazor. A break in the beginning of the letter means that it is unclear whether a Habdu-malik, who wants to send an apprentice *nârum* somewhere, is related to the issue raised later. Regardless of whether Habdu-malik is involved, Warad-ilisu is upset that Zimri-Lim has promised three young *eštalûm*-musicians to Hazor: he opines that sending them will scatter the orchestra. Orchestral issues aside, this is a clear example that, even considering Mari’s ascendancy, patterns of diplomatic gift exchange apply to the exchange of musicians as well as other valued items.

3.5.3. *The nargallum as royal envoy*

Eteya the *nârum*-musician, however, is known to us beyond his role in a minor dispute between two Assyrian royal brothers. After the collapse of the upper Mesopotamian Empire, he appears in (ARM XXVI/2: 404, line 8) as the *nargallum* for Aškur-Addu of Karana, north-west of Ekallatum. More interesting than his promotion to *nargallum*, however, is his position as royal envoy and peacemaker. The text in question, from Yasim-El, the Mariote envoy to Andarum of Andarig, details how Eteya, (acting as envoy for Aškur-Addu) led the opposing forces of Atamrum to the city of Sidqum, where they swore an oath of alliance.²⁰⁸ Here we have an example of a foreign musician themselves acting not only in a role of great importance (*nargallum*), but acting as mediator in an “international” dispute.

Ziegler remarks “– et il est possible qu’un chef de musique fût bien placé pour un mission de ce genre.” I think this is certainly true of the *nargallum* generally, considering their range of duties and connections. Considering Eteya’s travels as we know of them, in conjunction with his role as *nargallum* at Karana, it also seems likely that his ‘foreign-ness’ (at least inasmuch as it related to experience with a range of peoples) certainly contributed to his success as royal envoy as related by Yasim-El.

²⁰⁸ ARM XXVI/2: 404, lines 3-12, quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 254, n.78.

We have another example of a foreign musician as *nargallum* that acted as royal envoy – Rišiya, who undertook travel on several occasions for Zimri-Lim. It is possible that his role, also, as head of music, had him well placed for diplomatic missions. We know that he was sent to arrange diplomatic marriages of great importance; he also travelled to Aleppo to choose a wife for Zimri-Lim himself.²⁰⁹ As discussed in 2.1.7., we know that Rišiya was also ‘foreign’, and as Eteya’s ‘foreign’-ness assisted him, it may have done the same for Rišiya.

3.6. ‘Grades’ of musicians(*hip*)

Ziegler has argued for distinctions within the ‘ranks’ of the *nârum* employed at the palace, based on a system of “niveaux de perfectionnement,” many of which correlated to stages of apprenticeship and the ages of the musicians themselves.²¹⁰ There are clear evidences for some of these distinctions, which I will discuss first; and there are others which are not so easily understood in this way.

3.6.1. nar.tur

The nar.tur was an apprentice musician, literally, ‘small/little musician’.²¹¹ This designated younger individuals, probably prepubescent children or those in their early teens. It, and the following (nar.tur.tur) are not well attested in texts from the south of Mesopotamia (Babylonia proper), where the terms do not occur at all outside of lexical lists.²¹²

3.6.2. nar.tur.tur: “les très petites musiciennes”

As well as the young apprentices, there are also those designated as nar.tur.tur: very young musicians. We have several nar.tur.tur musicians with Hurrian names: the unusual choice of name indicating perhaps their parents’ origins or even their own. Given their young age (less than that of the nar.tur: likely under 10), these were likely children of palace

²⁰⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 90 – 92, with relevant correspondence cited; also Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 295.

²¹⁰ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 15, §1.2.2.

²¹¹ There seems to be some disagreement about whether nar.tur should be read *šamallûm* (cf. Ziegler, 2007, pg. 15; 2010, pg. 122) or *hallatuššû* (cf. Shehata, 2009, pp. 26 – 27). Both mean an ‘apprentice’, the difference being that *šamallûm* is associated with apprenticeship in scribal “or other scholarly professions.” (CAD, Š: 1, *šamallû* b), pg. 294). The lexical list Lu₂=ša IV, (as quoted in Shehata, 2009, pg. 26, n. 114) has nar - tur = *hal-la-tu-šu-u*; cf. M. Civil, *Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon/Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon: Volume 12. The Series lû=ša and Related Texts*, (Rome, 1969), 135 (line 215).

²¹²

musicians/servants, or otherwise attached children – those given in apprenticeship, for example.²¹³

3.6.3. *a/eštalûm and a/eštalîtum*

These musicians are defined in the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary as “a type of singer,” with the entry concluding that the word’s etymology is “apparently not Sum[erian], but a Kulturwort.”²¹⁴ Ziegler argues that they were of inferior rank to those designated as *nârum*, perhaps due to incomplete aspects of their training or other skills they had yet to learn, but that they were still relatively skilled performers in their own right, citing a letter which discusses *eštalîtum*-musicians associated as part of a *sitrum* (‘orchestra’).²¹⁵ Further complicating matters is the scarcity of references to *eštalûm*-musicians. Lexical lists categorise *eštalûm* with words associated to boasting and quarrelling, but there is no evidence for *eštalîtum* as understood in the same way, or if we can understand the two terms as counterparts to each other (although this is generally accepted).²¹⁶

We know of several foreign *eštalûm*-musicians from Mari, including Aḫum and Tîr-Ea. According to (ARM I: 63 + M.11322, line 5), these musicians left (fled) the court of Samsî-Addu (of Šubat-Enlil) and travelled to Mari.²¹⁷ Ziegler argues for Aḫum’s identification with a *nârum* of the same name who appears in a census list of the 10th year of Zimri-Lim’s reign; his companion Tîr-Ea had a similar development in his musical ‘career’ (from *eštalûm* to *nârum*). Aḫum appears in the census alongside another *nârum*, Akiya, and both are listed as residents of Mari.²¹⁸ This seems to indicate, therefore, that *eštalûm* could be a stage in training, or a particular set of musical skills that were then fleshed out in order to attain *nârum* ‘qualifications’.

Aplaḫanda, (of Carchemish), is also recorded in (ARM I: 83 (=LAPO 16: 255), lines 5 – 14) as requesting an *eštalûm*-musician to be sent to him from the court at Mari.²¹⁹ This may again

²¹³ See M.13050 for an example of a father abandoning (literally, line 6: *id-de-em-ma*, from *nadûm*, ‘to give up, abandon’) his sons to musical apprenticeship under Rišiya; cf. N. Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 136 – 138, 15, §1.2.2.1.

²¹⁴ CAD, E, *eštalû*, pp. 378 – 379.

²¹⁵ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 16.

²¹⁶ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 16 – 17.

²¹⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 234 – 235.

²¹⁸ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 252.

²¹⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 48; also cf. pg. 31.

hint at their having a special musical skill-set; or, if it is true that the *eštalûm* were an intermediate stage in training, perhaps Aplahanda thought one would be given up more easily than a prized, fully trained musician, whilst still bringing some expertise, and the value of being a foreign musician themselves. Interestingly, Yasmaḥ-Addu tells Zimri-Lim not to give away any of his ‘splendid’ *eštalûm*-musicians, but instead to send a woman [-musician?] instead.²²⁰ The rarity of *eštalûm*-musicians, compared with women, presumably of the harem, (including foreign women) is evident in the texts, and it evidently also correlated with a value judgement in the mind of those who employed musical professionals.

3.6.4. *muštawûm – the slam-poets of their day?*

The role of these individuals is obscure, and this, combined with limited evidence, has meant that few studies discuss the *muštawûm* in any capacity. Looking at the etymology of their title, it seems that they are associated with some kind of spoken tradition, as opposed to instrumental or vocalised musical forms of performance. *Muštawûm* is a participle derived from *šutawum*, ‘to recite’,²²¹ which in turn is causative of *atmû/atwû* ‘to speak to somebody’.²²² In considering this, Ziegler proposes their role as ‘spécialistes de le declamation’, a panegyrist or ‘réciteur’, which I agree with: “leur art était peut-être une récitation mélodieuse, qui n'est pas du chant.”²²³ Given their close association with musicians and with musical *practice*, however, they are potentially more aligned with the concept of a spoken-word performer.²²⁴

In citing the unpublished (M.7829+: iv), Ziegler concludes that these individuals were a sub-category of the *nârum*-musician.²²⁵ Although several other ‘economic’ texts distinguish the *muštawûm* as their own ‘guild’ (from the *nârum*), this does not mean that they are not both ‘musicians’.²²⁶ The texts in question are meat-ration lists; primarily concerned with economic

²²⁰ (7) *ma-a i-na nar aš-ta-li-ka* (8) *ta-na-ad-di-in-šum* (9) *nar aš-ta-lu-ka ka-lu-šu-[nu]* (10) *[n]a-am₇ -ru i-na nar aš-[ta-li š]u-nu-ti* (11) *ú-[u]l ša šu-še-[e-im]*; quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 48, n. 188.

²²¹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 50; CAD, A/2, pg. 89: 5.

²²² CAD, A/2, pg. 87: 3.

²²³ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 50 – 51.

²²⁴ It is outside the remit of this thesis to discuss spoken-word performers in more depth, however, I would suggest that there are grounds to discuss the *muštawûm*-musicians and potentially other ‘reciters’ within this framework; certain aspects of spoken-word performance are broadly attested cross-culturally and given the rhythmic-percussive nature of spoken language, may have also been present in the ancient Near East.

²²⁵ Cf. Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 128, no. 41: gives the unpublished M.7829+, line iv: ‘*qí-iš-ì-lí nar mu-uš-ta-wu 1 tur*’.

²²⁶ Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 128.

and not lexical content.²²⁷ There are many other instances where such texts distinguish between sub-categories of ‘musician’, and even between genders or between foreign/non-foreign musicians, because (for whatever variety of reasons) they receive varying amounts of rations.²²⁸

The *muštawûm* also features individuals who are from outside of the city of Mari proper: we know of one *muštawûm* in the court of Ibal-Addu, named Hitte, from a letter written to Zimri-Lim. He was originally from Ašlakka, but employed by Asqur-Addu, of Karana; and at the time of writing was working for Ibal-Addu, once again in Ašlakka. The letter emphasises Hitte’s skills,²²⁹ and concludes that he is “suitable to be at my lord’s service,”²³⁰ and that Zimri-Lim should have him brought to his court to perform as such.²³¹

I would argue that, accepting the role of the *muštawûm* as spoken-word performer, this is related specifically due to the value of their oral performance as part of a ‘foreign’ or ‘exotic’ tradition, (cf. 1.9). Part of the value of Hitte’s skills to Zimri-Lim must have been his value as a foreign musical professional, from a relatively far-away ‘zone’, thereby bringing new content of interest to the court, as well as proficiency in his profession, and experience working in several courts already. There is also a *nârum* from the court of Ibal-Addu at Ašlakka named Hitte, recorded as having received a ‘silver ring’ in Ḫušla (ARM XXV, 615) a few years earlier.²³² Whether they are the same person is unclear.

²²⁷ ARM XII, 747: (10) 2 lú nar meš / **(11)** mu-uš-ta-wu / (12) 2 dumu-meš um-me-ni [...] G. Barde, (et. al.), *Archives royales de Mari XXIII: Archives administratives de Mari I* (Paris, 1984). 243: (22) 1 dumu-meš é ʔup-pi / (23) 4 dumu-meš nar / **(24)** 1 ¹⁰mu-uš-ta-ú M.10640 (unpublished): (14) 1 dumu-meš nar / (15) 1 qú-tu-ú / (16) 1 áš-ta-lu-ú / **(17)** 1 mu-uš-ta-wu-ú All quoted (with translation) in Ziegler (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 52, n. 208 – 210.

²²⁸ Subareans and female musicians are allotted different amounts of oil rations; cf. Ziegler, 2007, *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 158-161.

²²⁹ A.27: (10) lú šu-ú ma-di-iš / (R) mu-uš-ta-wu

²³⁰ A.27: (12) ma-ḥa-ar be-lí-ia (13) ana ú-zu-zí-im; Ziegler, (2011), *op. cit.*, pg. 128.

²³¹ Cf. lines 14 – 17; especially noting the final (17) ú be-lí li-iš_x(UŠ)-ta-wi, “He will recite for my lord.” Or, more literally, ‘he will recite my lord’; see Ziegler (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 51: “En l’absence de *ana*, *bêlî* pourrait être considéré comme un accusatif complément de *lištawî*. En ce cas, la traduction pourrait être: ‘qu’il récite (=fasse l’éloge de) mon seigneur’.

²³² Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 51.

3.6.5. *Jokers and jesters: the aluzinnum- and huppum- performers*

The individuals who worked as *aluzinnum* and *huppum* had a role that featured more physical aspects (dancing) and potentially even ‘entertaining’: they are, like the *muštawûm*, still associated with musicians and therefore part of this study.

3.6.5.1. *huppum*

The term is translated as saltimbanque by Ziegler, but given the connotations of *saltimbanco* in English,²³³ a better translation for the purposes of this thesis is ‘acrobatic performer,’ as we know from available context that these were not buskers. The *huppum*-performers did some kind of physical performance, of which music was a part, but involved some form of dance or routine: the verb used to describe their movement that gives us the most clue is *nabalkutum* (IV/3), ‘turning from side-to-side, making cabrioles’⁽²³⁴⁾, von Soden suggests *einher springen*, ‘jumping along’.²³⁵ There is also evidence for their performing ‘dances du sabre’, and potentially wrestling-like displays.²³⁶ We do not know of any female *huppum*-performers, Ziegler suggests this is because “Les mouvements qu’ils faisaient pourraient avoir été jugés inconvenants pour des femmes,”²³⁷ and also that “[l]e caractère guerrier de cette profession expliquerait l’absence de femmes,”²³⁸ but in the absence of more evidence, I do not know that we can make these assumptions.

The *huppum*-performers also had a religious role, mainly associated with a ritual of Ištar; but aside from references to the times they should perform during the banquet for the goddess, there is little preserved regarding their religious function.²³⁹

Ziegler argues that “Appartenant au monde de la musique, mais séparés des musiciens par une sorte d’esprit de corps très marqué,”²⁴⁰ also citing a rivalry between the *huppum* and the ranks of the *nârum* (although offering no real examples except for two lines in (A.4466). Here, Rišiya says, declaring his loyalty to Yasmaḥ-Addu, “(I swear that), even if you make

²³³ Translates into the English mountebank, generally connotes charlatanism.

²³⁴ A ballet jump, (lit. ‘caper’) where the first leg is extended into the air, the other brought up to meet it, and the performer lands on the leg that is underneath.

²³⁵ W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch, Band II: 8*, (Wiesbaden, 1967), 356b.

²³⁶ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 261, 264.

²³⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 262.

²³⁸ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 264.

²³⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 261; for the Ištar ritual cf. S. De Martino, *La danza nelle culture ittite*, (Florence, 1989), and (FM III, 2: iii, lines 19 – 30).

²⁴⁰ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 261.

me out (*wašûm*) to make me a *huppum*-performer,²⁴¹ (there is not) the slightest word that I intend to reveal by pronouncing it.”²⁴² This is the only attested example of this particular oath,²⁴³ and as such I would argue that Rišiya’s abject horror at the thought of becoming a *huppum*-performer is linked more with his personal opinion, rather than generally representative; I would argue that there is in fact more concrete evidence for the competition between the various *huppum*-performers.²⁴⁴

3.6.5.2. *A ‘foreign’ profession?*

Although some studies have argued that the *huppum* was specifically associated with the city of Aleppo, this seems unlikely. It does seem probable that this particular musical art was associated with the ‘west’, however; several Babylonian sources address Mari when soliciting *huppum*-performers, such as (ARM XXVI/1, 255, lines 18 – 22), where a Babylonian official named Sîn-bêl-aplim repeats a request for a *huppum*-performer to be sent to meet him, and promises that he will return to Mari in a ‘caravan’.²⁴⁵ This was likely due to the city’s location roughly halfway between Aleppo and the southern cities of Babylonia proper. And whilst not the origin of the *huppum* itself, Aleppo had a reputation as a centre for the training of these professionals: Ziegler quotes a request (M.7545) from some *huppum*-performers there that Zimri-Lim give them an apprentice to train.²⁴⁶

3.6.5.3. *aluzinnum*

The *aluzinnum* was probably closer to the modern concept of a ‘jester’ or court entertainer – music formed part of their repertoire, but they also had other skills. The Lu-lexical list describes them as *êpiš namûtim*: joke-makers.²⁴⁷ Although there is evidence for their profession within the Mari texts, there are no ‘foreign’ *aluzinnum* recorded; they will thus not form part of this study.

²⁴¹ (19) *šum-ma a-na hu-up-pí-im-ma* (20) *ʾú ʾ-še-eš-šú-ni-in-niš*

²⁴² (21) *[a-wa]-tu-ú-um mi-im-[m]a* (22) *[ša i-n]a li-ib-bi-ia a-n[a š]a-ap-ti-ia* (23) *[ša-ak-n]a-ku a-qa-ab-bi*

²⁴³ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 108.

²⁴⁴ This is not the topic of this thesis and will not be discussed further, but the rivalry of Piradi and Beli-liter, for instance, (cf. A.440 especially) is recognisable to anyone who has worked with competing artists of any kind.

²⁴⁵ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 265, n. 124.

²⁴⁶ M.7545, lines 15 – 17;

²⁴⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 277.

3.7. *Restrictions on the movements of foreign musicians*

As discussed with regards to 2.3's examination of the onomastic corpus, there is no evidence for slaves within the corpus for musicians.²⁴⁸ Given their 'value', and especially with regards to women and those taken into the palace as captives, it does not seem unlikely, however, to suggest that those foreign musicians of certain 'rank' may have been bound by restrictions on their movements and/or persons. The presence of a 'harem' or quarters for women of the palace, where female musicians lived and were 'kept', is typical of population management; there is substantial evidence that some foreign musicians had restrictions on their personal freedom/s of movement, to wit, most movement was directed by the king (sometimes the queen/s), by officials, or by the *nargallum*, who acted on behalf of the king.²⁴⁹

3.8. *Have lyre, will travel: musicians 'on the run'*

Related to the question of the restrictions placed on (foreign) musicians is the question of musicians 'en fuite'. The fact that musicians are recorded as having, literally, 'fled',⁽²⁵⁰⁾ from their posts, and attempts are made to recover them, indicates that there were certain controls over their freedom of movement. I would argue that these would be linked not only to their status as 'employed' in the court, but also their status as possessing a commodity of value.

There are several foreign musicians recorded as having fled from their posts: Šamaš-našir, for example, who has quantities of bread and beer recorded as travel provisions in (KTT 144, lines 3 – 9).²⁵¹ The text itself is from Tuttul, where Šamaš-našir presumably received these supplies during a stopover on his decampment from Aleppo. Another example, the *nârum* Sin-iqišam, fled from Talhayum with his family and two of his friends (Gurgurru, a barber, and Šillaya, occupation unknown) after being deported there from Ešnunna. The Ešnunna deportations in context are discussed below in 3.6. From Talhayum, he made his way to Mari

²⁴⁸ Although not explicitly a foreign musician, (A.4202) from Enlil-îpuš, the *abu bîtim* (steward) of Dur-Yaḥdun-Lim begins to present the case of Milki-El, a *huppum*-entertainer, before the text is cut off by damage to the tablet. It seems that Milki-El was 'out of bounds': Enlil-îpuš tells Zimri-Lim that he has given Milki-El *appatum* and ^g*kuršim*, (some form of cuff or similar metal object, and what Ziegler translates as 'pince-nez') and 'got him' into the *néparim*. Ziegler translates this as 'ergastule'; it was certainly some kind of detention area, perhaps also functioning as a work-house; cf. J. M. Sasson, *The Military Establishments at Mari*, (Rome, 1969), pg. 54.

²⁴⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 27.

²⁵⁰ The verb used is the N-stem of *abatum*: cf. *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, *abātu(m)*, II, "to flee from, escape (from)."

²⁵¹ (3) *ši-di-it* (4) ^d*utu-na-šir* (5) *lú-nar* (6) *i-nu-ma* (7) *iš-tu* (8) *ha-la-ab^{ki}* (9) *in-na-bi-tam*, quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 29, n. 141.

(ARM II, 4, lines 4 – 9), where Yasmaḥ-Addu seems to have been willing to accept him into his retinue. (ARM II, 4), from Šamši-Addu, says that he had an ‘interview’ with the three men prior to their escape – he concludes the letter by telling Yasmaḥ-Addu to physically ‘bind’ them (*kasûm*),²⁵² strengthen their guards, and send them to him in Šubat-Enlil.²⁵³ The physical ‘binding’ is intriguing – part of it is certainly due to their escape, but I think part of it is also due to the ‘value’ of these three professionals in the eyes of Šamši-Addu. Again, we also see the use of guards to ensure the safe passage of a musician, flight aside, this was also afforded to most other musicians on the road, and is reflective of his marked status and skill, even as a deportee.

3.9. *Secure your valuables: the hiring of guides, guards, and escorts*

One of the most important aspects that indicates the value of these foreign musicians to us in the present study is the lengths taken and expenses paid to ensure their safe passage between places of employment. (A.4710, lines 5 – 7) records a caravan of one hundred donkeys put at the disposal of Tir-Ea, who had recently been employed by the *nargallum*; presumably he was in some part responsible for organising safe travel.²⁵⁴ Women “ne voyageaient jamais seules,”²⁵⁵ they were probably more vulnerable to attacks whilst travelling. (M.11058) records fifteen men to accompany a group of Rišiya’s female musicians on a journey, and (ARM XXIII, 28, lines 1 – 10)²⁵⁶ lists some supplies allocated to female musicians on a journey to Qatna as ‘entrusted to Yamši-El’. He may have been their escort: (ARM II 105 (LAPO 17, 713)) records him acting as a guide for Šura-Ḫammu on another journey.²⁵⁷ Longer journeys cost more: those hired to accompany Huššutum, discussed in the following paragraph, were given 10 su kù babbar for their services; Itur-Ašdu was prepared (A.597, lines 19 – 20, unpublished) to pay 1 – 2 su each for three or four men to escort the *nârum* Baliya. Payments were made under all circumstances, as an insurance of sorts – and evidence the prudence on the part of those who employed these foreign musicians. They were also made to cover the transport of the family of foreign musicians, or other relevant members of their household.²⁵⁸

²⁵² ARM II, 4, line 18.

²⁵³ ARM II, 4, lines 19 – 22; Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 290.

²⁵⁴ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 27, n. 138.im

²⁵⁵ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 44.

²⁵⁶ (ARM XXIII, 28) is a copy of (MARI 5, pg. 104).

²⁵⁷ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 44, also n. 183 on the same page.

²⁵⁸ Eg. (A.2806, lines 7” – 11”); Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 27.

We know of a Yamhadean musician, Kabkabuyatum (sic), who was given a bronze weapon, the expense recorded in (M.10476, unpublished).²⁵⁹ The foreign-ness of the individual (indicating a distance travelled outside of the regular correspondence channels), combined with the practicality of the weapon itself, tell us that this was for self-protection, not just a gift.²⁶⁰ This protection may have been well-needed: in addition to the dangers known to travellers and merchants (cf. 1.9.2.4), (A.3917) records the difficulties two female musicians faced in travelling from the city of Ešnunna (after the city was sacked by an Elamite-led coalition in c. 1765/6).²⁶¹ One (Taram-Tišpak) is dead,²⁶² and the other (Huššutum) has been kidnapped en route. We have another letter (M.14730) also mentioning musicians from Ešnunna in this historical context, but it is quite damaged; it does seem to be discussing their movement as well.²⁶³

The case of Huššutum, a *nārum*-musician from Ešnunna, is particularly interesting. The text is ‘acéphale’ – the top of the tablet has been broken – and so we do not know who sent the letter. Ziegler suggests that it is probably from Meptûm, governor of Suḫum and in charge of repatriating those from Ešnunna,²⁶⁴ another suggestion is Yasîm-Dagan, the Mariote general who participated in the overthrowing of Ešnunna.²⁶⁵

According to the report of (A.3917, lines 8 – 30) Huššutum was sent from the city of the letter’s author, with strict instructions given that “Until [you] have passed through a border [city?], change her clothing and headgear!”²⁶⁶ The party, which “also included 3 or 4 other

²⁵⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 27, also n. 140 on the same page; text from the year 24-ix-^{*}Tab-silli-Aššur in the reign of Yasmah-Addu.

²⁶⁰ Other weapons given to musical professionals (knives) – were made of precious metals, such as silver. We might think of them as ‘ornamental’; they do not seem to have been for practical fighting purposes, but for performance or payment.

²⁶¹ M. Van De Mieroop, *King Hammurabi of Babylon: A Biography*, (Malden, 2005), pg. 17.

²⁶² (7) [^{lft}]a-ra-am-^dtišpak ba-úš; “úš ‘die’,” S. Timney and P. Jones, *electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary Project*, (last updated, unknown), last accessed 17/02/2019, via <<http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/e6292.html>>

²⁶³ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 286 – 289.

²⁶⁴ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 282, 285.

²⁶⁵ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 281, n. 166.

²⁶⁶ A.3917: (21) [ki-a-am] ú-wa-e-er um-ma an-na-ku-ma a-di munus (22) [a-a]l pa-ti-im tu-še-et-te-qa túg-ba-ša (23) ù hu-pu-ur-ta-ša nu-uk-ki-ra lú-meš i-gu-^{MA}/ù-ma (24)

women,” reached the town of Agade²⁶⁷ without incident.²⁶⁸ At Agade, however, the letter records that, after stopping to drink beer,²⁶⁹ they ‘led’ Huššutum through the city’s (main) square on the back of a donkey: she was identified and captured.²⁷⁰ The rest of (A.3917) details the consequent fallout directed at Gumul-Sin,²⁷¹ and his consequent attempts to save face. This Gumul-Sin was probably the one in charge of the expedition and therefore responsible for their failings.²⁷²

The end of the tablet is broken, and we do not know what happened to Huššutum. Several women are known with this name, one at Terqa,²⁷³ and another at Mari,²⁷⁴ if she survived the ordeal, it is possible that one of these Huššutum is our musician. There is also a Huššutum in the time of Yahdun-Lim,²⁷⁵ but this is definitely not the same person.

From the above, we know several things. As I have previously discussed, the protection of foreign musicians on the road was of importance – due to their value as a commodity and status symbol. The importance of Huššutum arriving safely is stressed in several ways: the instructions to dress incognito, the inclusion of other women in the party (presumably for safety in numbers), and the appointment of multiple guides. The emphasis on how angry the officials were at discovering what had happened – 30 troops⁽²⁷⁶⁾ with bronze spears⁽²⁷⁷⁾ encircled him – also implies the significance and ‘value’ of those involved.

The question of changing clothing and headgear also raises the question of regional or, more likely, social/class as represented in one’s appearance. As we know musicians were of higher

²⁶⁷ Probably located on the western bank of the Tigris river, near at its convergence with the Diyala river. Cf. Bryce, (2009), *op. cit.*, pp. 17 – 18, also Map 17 (pg. 669).

This would have been one of their first stops on a journey towards Mari, especially if they were travelling by boat; it is less than 100km from Ešnunna.

²⁶⁸ A.3917, lines R.26’ – 27’, the city is spelt *ak-ka-de^{ki}*; an uncommon writing, cf. Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 285.

²⁶⁹ (27) [...] *ši-ka-ra-am* (28’) *iš7-tu-ú-ma*

²⁷⁰ (30’) *munus ú-te-^red-di¹-(O)-ma iṣ-ša-ab-tu-ši*; the reconstruction of the beginning of the line is not totally certain, cf. Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 286. Huššutum is identified for most of the letter as *munus*, ‘the woman’.

²⁷¹ “[You have received silver] and yet you do not stop selling Ešnunna’s women!” cf. lines 33 – 36.

²⁷² Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 285.

²⁷³ ARM X, 27 (LAPO 18, 1136); ARM X, 96 (LAPO 18, 1214).

²⁷⁴ N. Ziegler, *Florilegium Marianum IV: Le Harem de Zimri-Lim*, (Paris, 1999), pg. 90.

²⁷⁵ T.238, line 15, unpublished; quoted in Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 285.

²⁷⁶ The text uses ‘*ṣabum*’; line 33’.

²⁷⁷ ^{giš} IGI¹(UD).KAK ^{zabar}, a lance or spear (with wooden and bronze object determinatives); “šukur, lance,” S. Timney and P. Jones, *electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary Project*, (last updated, unknown), last accessed 17/02/2019, via <<http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/e5550.html>>

status, they were likely to wear garments and accessories, perhaps even hairstyles ⁽²⁷⁸⁾ that reflected this. The reason Huššutum was spotted and kidnapped was because, (the text is not precisely clear to us) due to her riding a donkey. Perhaps the ‘guides’ had neglected to follow the letter’s author’s instructions to change her appearance. Either way, her history demonstrates that, even in situations of political and social tension, the value of foreign musicians in the eyes of the elite did not change.

3.10. *Foreign musicians by force: deportees from Ešnunna*

As well as the case of Huššutum above, we know of several other musicians that were deported from the city of Ešnunna after its sacking in the mid-1760s. The individuals themselves have been discussed at various points, but it is worth mentioning the circumstances under which they became ‘foreign’ musicians. The destruction of their city’s political structure (and some of the physical city as well), and the murder of the royal family, left them without employment; recognised as ‘valuables’ by the occupying powers, they were re-located accordingly. Those in charge knew the value of these foreign musicians: they were accompanied on their relocation under heavy guard, and some even met with the kings that were their new employers.²⁷⁹

3.11. *Captive musicians: ‘d’une triste banalité’²⁸⁰*

Ešnunna was not the only city from which musicians were deported into the city of Mari and its territory. Zimri-Lim is known to have seized women and musicians following military successes; Ziegler has shown that approximately thirty of these became musicians and the rest became textile-workers or were given as ‘gifts’.²⁸¹ One such example of this occurred after the conquest of Ašlakka, and the palace’s population was deported to Mari. The queen Sibtu and *nargallum* Warad-ilišu were instructed (ARM X, 126 (LAPO 18, 1166), lines 8 – 28) to select thirty musicians from the women for the ‘harem’, to form a ‘soubaréen’

²⁷⁸ Cf. Šamši-Addu, instructing his son concerning captives of a high rank to “[o]nly remove their hair[styles?] and clothes, and take [away] their silver and their gold [...]”. ARM 1, 8 (LAPO 17, 679): (31) *ša q^aa-di-ši-na ù tûg-hâ-ši-n[a] e²-di-i[š-šina]* (32) *li-sû-uh-ha-ma* (33) *kù-babbar-ši-na ù kù-gi-<šî>-na* [...] These would have been indicators of their status, and confiscating them demonstrates their capture and subordination, as well as ensuring they did not have means to escape.

²⁷⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 289.

²⁸⁰ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 43.

²⁸¹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 42.

orchestra.²⁸² Ašlakka is in the north of the Tigris system: this probably refers to a particular repertoire of music of that region.

There is a similar example also from the city of Mišlan, approximately twenty-five kilometres north of Mari: after Zimri-Lim had defeated its ruler, Yaggih-Addu, he took possession of his female musicians. (A.78) records Warad-ilišu contacting Zimri-Lim to make plans for the movement of these musicians, presumably back to Mari. He suggests that they should either cross the river to Šuprum, or and house the musicians at a ‘safe place’, such as the ‘Palace of Išar-Lim’, which seems to have been an unoccupied building of some size. Ziegler suggests that it could be the former palace of a king of the same name.²⁸³ The care with which Warad-ilišu lays out the potential plans for the movement of these women, including a plan for their being kept in an abandoned settlement rather than attempt the crossing to Šuprum, is intriguing. We know from the case of Huššutum that the loss of musicians en route was a serious issue, and this may have factored into the considerations, however overall the letter discusses these musicians not dissimilar to the smuggling of precious goods. There was obviously more at stake in this journey than Warad-ilišu’s reputation.

Šamši-Addu took two Ya’ilanum musicians from Namra-šarur. Ziegler also suggests that he seized the harem of Yaḥdun-Lim,²⁸⁴ based on his instructions to Yasmaḥ-Addu (ARM I 64 (LAPO 16), lines 15, 7 – 8 rev.) that the young girls of Yaḥdun-Lim had grown up and so he should send them to Ekallatum or Šubat-Enlil and have them instructed in music.²⁸⁵

3.12. *Foreign musicians and local traditions: the involvement of foreign musicians in religion*

One area in which this thesis has not discussed the involvement of foreign musicians in much detail is that of religious practice. There is some evidence for the exchange of musicians between different temples. As these are within the diplomatic zones of alliance, however, they are therefore less ‘foreign’. We do not have evidence for foreign musicians operating in minor or very localised religious activity: these musicians that are exchanged are working for

²⁸² Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 168 – 169, also pg. 169., n. 148.

²⁸³ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 183.

²⁸⁴ Cf. ARM XXVI/2, 298, lines 13 – 14.

²⁸⁵ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 42s

cults of major deities that are broadly attested across Mesopotamia. One such example is Kulbi-Adal (discussed briefly in 2.3.2.2.4), a *nârum* of Nergal²⁸⁶, who was deported to Mari.²⁸⁷ (ARM 1, 78 (LAPO 16, 14), lines 4 – 15) tells us that Kulbi-Adal was originally working at Hubšalum, a cult centre of Nergal, near Andarig. The letter requests that he be sent to Šubat-Enlil; Ziegler says as “Šamši-Addu [sic] voulait que le temple de Nergal, [in Šubat-Enlil], puisse bénéficier du savoir d’un musicien déporté.” Presumably why Kulbi-Adal was deported to Mari in the first place was due to his skill; and this is also why he is being solicited for the temple at Šubat-Enlil.

Foreign musicians who were associated with religious cult that we know of seem to have been those involved in what Ziegler describes as ‘divinités infernales’ – all the examples discussed here relate to Nergal. In addition to the case of Kulbi-Adal discussed above, we have several texts from Aplaḥanda, the king of Carchemish, as he was involved in a dispute over several musicians with Zimri-Lim. Both sent by Ištaran-nasir, one of Zimri-Lim’s envoys, the first correspondence (M.7618+M.14609) details that Zimri-Lim had requested a specific Yamhadean musician from Aplaḥanda, but he is unable to be sent as the musician was dedicated to Nergal. The second letter, (A.93+A.94), a follow-up, says that, in fact, Zimri-Lim cannot get any musicians from Aplaḥanda: he has dedicated them all to Nergal and has none to give away.²⁸⁸ Ziegler puts it nicely: “Il est vraisemblable que, sentant sa mort prochaine, Aplaḥanda crut préférable de se propitier le dieu des Enfers plutôt qu son voisin Mariote.”²⁸⁹

Although there is no substantial evidence for the involvement of foreign musicians in the religious sphere of Mari, there is also no evidence to the contrary, and therefore we should not draw generalised conclusions based on perceptions of ‘intruders’ to religious traditions. It may also be possible that these institutions had their own system for training many of the ‘lamentation’ musicians that they would require; and supplemented by professional musicians from the *mummum*-conservatory.

²⁸⁶ Lit. “nar ša d^hnè-iri₁₁-gal”, ARM 1, 78 (LAPO 16, 14)

²⁸⁷ ARM 1, 78 (LAPO 16, 14): (8) *a-na na-si-hu-tim* (9) [*a-n*]a ma-ri^{ki}; From *nasāḥum* “to deport, send s.o away, move, remove.” Cf. Concise Dictionary of Akkadian, *op. cit.*, pg. 242, *nasāḥu(m)*, 2; also cf. Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 66.

²⁸⁸ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 70.

²⁸⁹ Ziegler, (2007), *op. cit.*, pg. 66.

3.13. *Coming to conclusions: ‘exotic music’?*

Having laid out the evidence, so to speak, I will return to one final point: the question of ‘exotic’ music. Ziegler states that “[‘e]xotic music’, which is attested for all periods of the Mesopotamian history, was in Mari the music of Šubareans or of the Amorrites.”²⁹⁰

Considering this statement in light of the previous discussion, I dispute this. We know that, in Mari, musicians were drawn from cities across more than a three-hundred-kilometre radius from the city itself. ‘Amorite’, in this context, means little. I have discussed the problems with ‘Amorite’ as category at length, so I will not reiterate them here, but I will mention that at Mari there were musicians from both Hazor and Qatna, both ‘Amorite’, but these two cities themselves were at least a hundred kilometres apart.

‘Exotic’ music is linked to understandings of both foreign, and of musical traditions. For the first, we know that Old Babylonian perceptions of what constituted a ‘foreign’ musician were flexible and likely operated within a system of ‘zones’; for the second, we do not have musical traditions attested for enough of the region to make a judgement based on this evidence. Although in undertaking this study, I have made some foray into the world of those obscured by the passing of time, I have also shown that we need to be far more selective in our terminology, and this is something I will discuss further in the conclusion of this thesis.

²⁹⁰ Ziegler, (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 125 – 126.

4. *Conclusion*

This thesis, which initially began with the question ‘what do the Mari texts have to say about foreign musicians?’ became a study of these musical professionals, their lives where recorded, and a discourse on ways in which they are understood in modern Assyriology.

Within the introductory chapter I sought not only to provide an overview of this thesis’ situation in the Assyriological and broader literature, but to break down some key questions that provide the basis for my work. These included the ‘nitty-gritty’ of what ‘foreign’ and ‘musician’ actually mean, in modern and in ancient Near Eastern contexts; how we can understand music as a commodity, including whether it is, as theorised, ‘transferable’; and the ‘Amorite question’.

Having established the remit of this thesis and the definition of terms – inasmuch as they could be defined – I then turned, in my second chapter, to discussing what the Mari archives understood as ‘foreign’ musicians, and where they came from across the wider Mesopotamian region. This included a brief examination of the merits of onomastic study to expand our corpus of known foreign musicians, but having shown that, in this case at least, the results are inconclusive at best, I then discussed the names of foreign instruments. These, I argue, like onomastic study, can provide us with some idea of regions that music was associated with. They are generally nonspecific and also sit within a much wider variance, given the pace at which language changes.

Chapter Three is the crux of this thesis’ work. Applying the definitions, theories, and studies of my previous two chapters, I discussed foreign musicians in the range of roles we have attested. This included examples of women, fugitive musicians, and foreign musicians involved in palace rivalries and intrigue, and brought my arguments as to the complexity and value of ‘foreign’-ness to life.

The issues which I have drawn out over the course of the preceding chapters indicate that many of the ambiguities regarding foreign musicians relate to issues in the way that we categorise, discuss, and theorise about them, rather than a question of whether they existed in the minds of people/s living in Mesopotamia in the second millennium.

In particular, the use of ‘ethnicity’ as a category falls apart on closer examination, as well as when the texts themselves are combed for indicators of such a concept. We as a discipline need to acknowledge the racial foundations upon which this category exists, and work to dismantle them. On a practical level there is no biological evidence to support this interpretation of human socio-cultural ‘units’, and there is no evidence suggesting that the people of the Near East understood a similarly differential category to exist.

In this vein, this study has worked to discuss evidence for female musicians where relevant; despite not having their names in most cases, these foreign musicians were just as valued in the eyes of the cuneiform texts. Again, this is another area in which assumptions based on gender structures and constructs of (Western) modernity are heavily influential – women may not have been matriarchs of the political system, but they were not helpless either. The lives of many female foreign musicians – travelling considerable distances; being taken as captives; travelling dangerous roads after the collapse of political stability – indicate that they faced upheaval and uprooting, among other dangers, with resilience.

As is the case with so many aspects of the ancient Near East, the situation *vis-à-vis* ‘foreign’ is more complex than it seems at a cursory glance. I argued that understandings of ‘foreign’ are intrinsically linked with political and social patterns of exchange and conflict: they are accordingly, in flux. They are also linked with the value of ‘exotic’ commodity, and I have put forward a case for understanding the valuation of foreign music in this way. These concepts are well supported by the evidence from the archives at Mari, which document a range of contacts both temporally and geographically, with different periods of governance referencing different relationships.

Far from what it seems when the archival material is first examined, there are many references to foreign musicians fulfilling a range of positions within the hierarchy of musical employment. A discussion of this is what preoccupied most of this thesis, as it better illustrates the complexities and nuances of northern Mesopotamia than categorically discussing locations or ‘ethnic’ groups, which presuppose a ‘compartmentalised’ framework of existence.

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