THE BAN IN MARI AND IN THE BIBLE

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The Mari documents have had considerable impact on the study of the early history of the Israelites and have brought about a clearer understanding of the social and religious practices and institutions, especially in their nomadic "pre-history" and in the period of the settlement. One most instructive parallel manifestation between Mari and Israel is seemingly the concept of the "ban" and its enforcement as punishment for transgression.

The biblical "ban" dealt with here is the ḫerem in its aspect of a taboo, that is forbidden contact with an object, either because of its extreme uncleanness or because of its extreme holiness. This ambivalent nature of the ḫerem, usually found in forms of taboo, is attested in the biblical sources, some of which regard the banned object as a thing to be abominated and abhorred (cf. Deut. vii, 26), while others include it amongst "the most sacred things" (Lev. xxvii, 28). What is common to these ostensibly opposed aspects of the ḫerem is the absolute prohibition, in both cases, of coming into contact with the banned object, let alone of putting it to any use. Anyone touching the ḫerem thus himself becomes a devoted object and as such must be put to death.

The exact nature of the biblical ban and its religious and judicial corollaries may now be further comprehended through the Mari documents. There, asakkum and asakkam akālūm (lit. "to eat the asakku), terms used in Akkadian to denote the conception of taboo and its violation, are of frequent occurrence. The meaning of the word asakku was established by Landsberger, even before the Mari evidence, from Akkadian religious documents and lexical lists. In these references, however, the word appears only in a stereotyped manner; in contrast the Mari documents display a dynamic use of this conception which closely resembles the several nuances attached to the term ḫerem in the biblical sources.

In the eighth volume of Archives royales de Mari, containing legal texts, the term asakku constitutes an important element in the sanctions invoked upon the violation of the contract — a use unknown outside Mari. In several contracts, a man who goes back on terms agreed upon is likened to "one who has eaten the asakku" of a particular king or god. Thus in one case the penalty exacted for failure to honour a contract on the sale of a field is likened to that of eating the asakku of the god Dagan, of the king Shamshi-Adad, and of the god Iatūr-Mer (ARM VIII 6:9'-11'). In another
instance, the penalty is as that meted out for eating the *asakku*
 of the god Shamash, of... and of the king Shamshi-Adad (*ibid.
 7 : 9'-10'); and, in a third case the contract-breaker is compared
to one who has eaten the *asakku* of the god Itiir·Mer, of the
goddess Ḥanat, and of the king Zimri-Lim (*ibid. 85 : 3'-5').

In all these cases, the breach of contract is treated as a
serious religious transgression equal to the eating of a taboo; or,
in biblical terms, to the violation of a holy or banned object. The
simile of eating the *asakku* was likely founded on actual practice,
as clearly indicated by an alternate formula, where the term *asakku*
is replaced by the Sumerogram SAR, a word meaning "plant" or
"herb". In this particular instance, the contractbreaker's punish-
ment is compared to that of "one who has eaten the 'herbs' of (the
king) Shamshi-Adad, of... and of Awin the Rabbæan" (the head
of a clan of a semi-nomadic tribe called Rabbû) (*ibid. 11 : 29—31).
From this variant reading the editor of the text concludes that the
*asakku* was originally some sort of plant, thought to have magical
influence on the health of its possessor (*ibid., p. 167).

Whatever the case, the *asakku* of a god or king is not to be
considered a mere figure of speech derived from archaic religious
conceptions, solely employed in penal clauses of contracts, but at
times was conceived as an actual, physical object. This is attested
by use of the term *asakku* in Mari to denote the property belonging
exclusively to divinity or royalty. In one of his letters, Shamshi-Adad
mentions "bronze (which is) the *asakku* of (the god) Adad" (*ARM
I 101 : 6); and an administrative document records a consignment
of 1 talent and 21½ minas (i.e. about 40 kg.), apparently of some
metal (the word is missing), constituting "the *asakku* of (the god)

Such property in divine possession is also known from the
Bible, actually in a case of imposition of the *herēm*. The ban of
destruction decreed upon Jericho excluded all metal objects: "But
all silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are sacred
to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord" (*Josh.
vii, 19; cf. v. 24). In other words we have here an "*asakku* of Yahwe",
so to speak, and, in Israel as in Mari consisting of metal objects.7)

Apart from Mari, there is no reference in the whole of Akkadian
literature, to the *asakku* (and for that matter to the *ikkibu*) of a
king (*asak šarrim*) or other mortal, in contrast to the *asakku* of
a god. Thus Mari was unique in its well-established tradition of
a taboo existing outside the sphere of deities. The *asakku* of a king
could be used even to give binding force to an oath, reflecting upon
its religious significance. Thus, in place of the usual formula of
oath by king or a god, in one contract the two parties swear to
observe the agreement by the *asakku* of Iaḥdun-Lim and Zimri-Lim
(*ARM VIII 16 : 6'-8').

As Zimri-Lim ascended the throne in Mari many years after
the death of Iahdun-Lim, his father, only upon the overthrow of Assyrian domination, it is obvious that the name of the reigning monarch's dead predecessor is added to his own in the oath-formula (ARM VIII, pp. 32 f., n. 2). From this it would follow that the taboo associated with a king lost none of its force even after his death. However, the case of Iahdun-Lim, who fell victim to a court-conspiracy, apparently instigated by his rival Shamshi-Adad, may be exceptional and mystical powers may have been attributed to his name. A hint of this veneration is to be found in the demand of a diviner-prophet that Zimri-Lim offer sacrifices to his father's manes (ARM III: 40).8)

The king's asakku, like that of the god, at times also took on a tangible, physical significance, as in instances of infringement of palace goods (ARM II 55: 35—37; III 22: 13—15). Thus, royal property was in certain cases conceived as being the king's taboo, a kind of banned or sacred object, the disposal of which against his express wish was regarded as an act of desecration. The biblical conception of sacred objects mentioned in connection with the king is something quite different: these are simply gifts dedicated by the king to the deity.9) Indeed, since the biblical notion of taboo functions on a purely religious plane, banned objects (heræm) and consecrated gifts (qodasim) are the exclusive property of god: "Every devoted thing (heræm) is the most sacred of sacred things to the Lord" (Lev. xxvii, 28), or of his representatives, the priests: "Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours (i.e. the house of Aaron)" (Num. xviii, 14; Ezek. xlv, 29; cf. Lev. xxvii, 21). At the same time, we must concede the probability that in Mari the king had a religious function and was thus regarded as a representative of the deity, not unlike the priests in Israel.

So far we have discussed the asakku proper of the god or king. However, a fuller significance of the comparison of the Mari evidence and the Bible lies in the implications inherent in the infringement of the taboo. The eating of the asakku expresses idiomatically the biblical concept of the violation of the heræm, with all the consequences involved in such an act. The transgressor of the ban himself becomes taboo, as attested by the terms of the ban on Jericho: "As you, in every way, keep yourselves from the devoted things (heræm), lest you make yourselves devoted tahrimû, by taking of the devoted things (heræm), and so make the camp of Israel devoted (heræm), i.e. bring it under the ban) and trouble it"10) (Josh. vi, 18); "Israel has sinned and they have transgressed my covenant, which I commanded them; for they have taken of the devoted thing (heræm)... Therefore the children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies... because they are become devoted (hajû l'heræm)" (ibid. vii, 11—12).

Anyone violating the ban must pay with his life: thus the fate of Achan, who took from the heræm of Jericho, becoming taboo
and consequently being put to death (ibid. vii). This is also clear from the Mosaic Law on the ban: "None devoted that may be devoted (kol ĥėrēm ūśēr īḥorām) of men, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death" (Lev. xxvii, 29).

The same basic principle no doubt underlies the Mari attitude towards a man guilty of eating the asakku of a god or a king. In that case, just as a violator of the biblical ĥėrēm became taboo and had to be destroyed, so the eater of the asakku undoubtedly became taboo and had to be executed.11) Admittedly, this last assumption appears at variance with the fact that the penalty in the Mari contracts is merely a monetary fine. However, from a contract of adoption it is clear that such transgression was originally considered a capital offence. Of the man who fails to honour the terms of this particular contract it is stated: "He has eaten the asakku of (the gods) Shamash and Ītūr-Mer, of (the king) Shamshi-Adad and (the viceroy) Iasmāḥ-Adad, and he shall pay 3½ minas of silver (the fine for) a capital offence (din napištim)" (ARM VIII 1 : 28—31). The wording of this clause strongly suggests that the original punishment for the crime in question was death, but that it was subsequently reduced to a fine (cf. ARM VIII, p. 168).

The application of the asakku is not limited to the breaches of contract but includes all forms of law-breaking and, in particular, the crime of lēse majesté. Thus, for example, the refusal to obey the order given by King Shamshi-Adad for the full mobilization of the tribe of the Yaminites12) is considered a violation of the king’s taboo: "Any ‘mukhtar’ (sugâgum) whose troops are not mustered in full, who leaves out (even) one man, has eaten the king’s asakku” (ARM I 6 : 18—19; cf. below ARM II 13).

Yet the greatest similarity between Mari and Israelite practice is in the imposition of taboo on spoils of war. Though it is uncertain that the origin of taboo is to be sought in the conventions of ancient warfare, it was undoubtedly an important factor in ensuring orderly distribution of booty.13) Such an imposition of taboo served as an alternative for proper military regulation. The taboo was imposed, first and foremost, to deter the individual from laying hands on spoils set aside for the god and, in Mari, also for the king and other mortals. This is evident from two instructive letters sent to Iasmāḥ-Adad, viceroy in Mari, by notables under his tutelage.

In one letter (ARM V 72) a tribal chief relates that, during a war, he issued the following order to his officers: "Whosoever takes of the booty14) has eaten the asakku of the gods Adad and Shamash” (lines 12—13). The writer then goes on to accuse a certain man of appropriating two (bronze) kettles,15) silver, gold, and other articles. Unfortunately the tablet is damaged, so that it is not clear whether, later in the letter (revers, line 1’), the form lidīn-kū “they shall kill” relates to the accused or not. Whatever the
case, the writer ends by again comparing the crime to an infringement of the god’s taboo, further likening it to the desecration of the taboo of the king Shamshi-Adad, and of the viceroy, Iasmaḫ-Adad (lines 20'—22'). From the last line of the letter it would appear that the accused was compelled to pay a mere fine. The resemblance of this case to that of Achan at Jericho is striking (Josh. VII).16) Despite variant details, the basic element is the same in both: enjoying the spoils of war, in particular circumstances, was, considered a violation of the taboo.

However, the classical use of the asakku concept in connection with spoils of war is provided by a second letter, addressed to Iasmaḫ-Adad by one of his high-ranking commanders (ARM II 13).17) Let us quote it in full:

To my lord say.
Thus (speaks) Samadaḫum, your servant:
When the men of [ ] took the city of Šibat
I was told that my lord had departed for [the city of Q]abarā.

5) Therefore I did not bring the slaves (captives) of Šibat to my lord. Thus did I (say to myself):
‘When my lord shall have returned to his country I will bring my lord’s share (of the booty)”. Now, behold, I send you four slaves, my lord’s share.

10) Therefore far be it from my lord to say as follows: “My servant has taken profuse spoils”.
Thus did I [myself] say to the “major(s)” and the “captains”18) saying: “My share, the portion (of the booty)19)
[ ] give [me].”

15) ...........
Three days, four days, I w[aited...]. The “majors” filled their hands full (of the booty)20)
and to me they gave nothing.
On the fifth day they brought me

20) six slaves belonging to the soldiers.
To their owners (i.e. the soldiers)
I returned them.
I assembled the “major(s)”, the “captain(s)”, the “lieutenant(s)” and the “sergeant(s)”18)
and thus did I proclaim my ordinance as follows:

25) “You have not given me my [share],
as well as my lord’s portion (of the booty).19)
The asakku of the god Dagan and the god Itūr-Mer,
the asakku of Shamshi-Adad and Iasmaḫ-Adad — the “colonel” (lit. the Great-of-Amurru), the military scribe (lit. the Scribe-of-Amurru),21) the “major” and the “captain”

30) have (Akk. has) eaten, who have deprived a soldier of his booty”.
In my mouth and (in that) of the “major”
I placed an oath by the king22)
that the booty of a soldier should not be taken.
After my ordinance the tenth day had not yet passed
(when) a letter from your father came (saying) as follows:
35) "He of (my) servants who steals the booty of a soldier
has eaten my asakku (i.e. has committed a sacrilege against me)".
After this matter let my lord pursue.
Other (than of this) to my lord
I do not write.
40) All is well with my lord's army.

Thus the writer complains to his overlord of unjust distribution
of spoils, in this case captives. He accuses the army officers of
appropriating, in addition to their own shares of the booty, those
rightly reserved for their soldiers and for the viceroy at Mari —
and for the writer himself. In order to prevent such wantonness,
the writer invokes the taboo, proclaiming the misdeed to be a
violation of the asakku of the gods, the king and his viceroy.23)
The document contains instructive details on the manner in
which the taboo was imposed, through a public proclamation —
here called šiptu, "ordinance" (lines 24, 33).24) Of the two documents
previously quoted (p. 43), one employs this identical term, refer-
ning to an order for mustering troops (ARM I: 14—15), whereas
the other uses the synonymous phrase dannūtim šakānu, "to issue
a stern order", addressed to the "majors" and "captains" (ARM V:
72:11). Siptu, in this context, is of particular interest, being derived
from an apparently West Semitic root špt, which also yields verbal
sapātu, participial šāpiṭu (the counterpart of the šōfēṭ in the Book
of Judges) and abstract šapiṭūtu, all characteristic of the Mari
idiom. This root, as often with its Hebrew cognate, does not prima-
arily signify the judicial process, for which Akkadian uses the
verb daia.nu and derivatives; rather it is of broader significance,
referring to administration and rule of some sort, probably origin-
ating in nomadic-tribal structure.25) The expression šiptam nadānu/
šakānu corresponds to biblical šim mišpaṭi, "making an ordinance"
by a duly authorized person, employed in connection with the
authoritative acts of a Moses, a Joshua and a David (Ex. xv, 25;
Josh. xxiv, 25; 1 Sam. xxx, 25). The last instance is in a context
similar to that of our document: After the defeat of the Amalekites,
David promulgated regulations for the just distribution of the
booty between the combat troops and those of the reserve-guard
(cf. similarly Num. xxxi, 27). On this ruling the text comments:
"He made it a statute and an ordinance (hoq u-mišpati)".
From our document it may further be inferred that in Mari
the invocation of a taboo was not the prerogative of the king
alone, though its imposition did apparently require royal assent.
It is in this sense that the letter of king Shamshi-Adad, quoted there
in lines 34—36, should be understood. In Israel, as in Mari, the ban
did not become automatically operative in battle, nor was it an
the death of Iaḫdun-Lim, his father, only upon the overthrow of

established element even of the “holy war”, as is maintained by von
Rad.26) Here, too, it was imposed by special decision taken for
the particular occasion ad hoc, as is evident from the traditions
on the enforcement of the hērem preserved in the Bible. Prior to
the fall of Jericho, Joshua proclaimed the banning of the city before
the whole people and reinforced his decree with a stern warning
to touch nothing included within the ban (Josh. vi, 16—19).
Similarly, the banning of Amalek was decreed by Samuel, at God’s
command (1 Sam. xv, 3), while that of the Canaanites in the
vicinity of Ḥormah (Num. xxi, 1—3) was by means of a special
vow made to the Lord.27)

Thus we see that in the military sphere, too, the institution
of the hērem was essentially the same in both Mari and Israel,
with the exception that in Israel it had a purely religious function.
Hence even the banning of spoils of war occurs in the Bible only
on behalf of the deity himself. This is stressed explicitly in various
passages, such as Josh. vi, 17: “And the city (Jericho) and all that
within it shall be devoted to the Lord” (cf. Deut. xiii, 16—17).

Under the Hebrew Kingship, when the institution of the hērem
became neglected, it was the Prophets, as the instruments of God,
who tended its preservation.28) Cf. e.g., Mic. iv, 13: “You shall
crush many peoples, and devote (LXX; MT: I shall devote) their
spoil to the Lord”. In these terms the collision of Saul and Samuel
over the banning of Amalek is to be comprehended (1 Sam. xv),
the king having “spared Agag and the best of the sheep ... and
would not devote them” (v. 9), whereas the prophet absolutely
condemned such violation of the hērem. This is in essence pre­
cisely parallel to the clash between an anonymous prophet and
king Ahab over the sparing of Ben-Hadad, the vanquished Aramaean
king (cf. 1 Kings xx, 31: “the kings of the house of Israel are
merciful kings”), concluding: “Thus says the Lord: ‘Because you
have let go out of your hand the man under my ban (iš hārōmi),
your life shall go for his life and your people for his
people’” (ibid., v. 42; for the consequences cf. the fate of Achan).
Contemporary to the latter case is the illuminating passage in
the Mesha inscription, where the king of Moab boasts: “And
Chemosh said to me, ‘Go take Nebo from Israel!’ So I ... slayed
all... for I had devoted them (hērmth) to (the deity) Ashtar­
Chemosh” (lines 14—17).29) Just as the Israelites here came under
the ban of the Moabite deity, conversely the Edomites are con­
sidered in Isa. xxxiv, 5 as ʿām hārōmi, “the people under my ban”,
i.e. the ban of Yahwe.

All the foregoing instances fit the Akkadian concept of “asakku
(or ikkibu) of a particular god”, whereas in Mari the ban could,
further, be imposed for the benefit of mortals, first and foremost
the king, but even common soldiers, as seen above. Despite this
fundamental difference, the Mari documents help us attain a

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fuller historical and legal appreciation of those passages of the Bible dealing with enforcement of the *herem*. This is particularly so of the story of Achan, whatever its true historical context. This peculiar episode can now be reconciled with the very old legal practices current among the West Semitic tribes, substantially of seminomadic existence, hundreds of years before the Israelite conquest of Canaan.31) Though the comparison of the concepts of *asakkam akālu* and *herem* is mutually illuminating, only a comprehensive treatment of the various parallel manifestations in Mari and in the Bible may reveal the quintessence of this relationship.

NOTES

* This is an elaboration of part of my lecture on "Mari and the Bible" delivered at the Stellenbosch conference, July 1966. An earlier version appeared in Hebrew in the *Y. Kaufmann* Jubilee Volume, Jerusalem 1960.

1) On the various facts of the *herem* see the monograph by C. H. W. Brekelmans, *De Herem in het Oude Testament*, 1959 (henceforth *Herem*). The use of *herem* in the sense of "ostracism" is alluded to at earliest in the time of the Second Temple (Ez. x, 8).


3) For the instances in the first five volumes of *Archives royales de Mari* (henceforth *ARM*) see Bottéro et Finet, Répertoire analytique, *ARM* XV, 176. For *ARM* VIII see below.

4) See B. Landsberger, *ZA*, N.F., 7, 1933, 218–219; and now von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (=*AHw*), I, 1965, 73, who following Landsberger, distinguishes between the word under discussion (s.v. *asakku* II) and its Akkadian homonym (*asakku* I), which denotes a demon, as well as an illness. Cf. also *CAD* I, 255 (s.v. *akālu* 7a). The somewhat synonymous concept *ikkibu* (see *CAD* VII, s.v., especially 57b), not occurring in Mari, lies outside the scope of the present discussion.

5) In an unpublished lecture Landsberger alluded to the possibility that the phrase *asakkam ëkul* was an attempt to translate some Canaanite expression such as *hái* ḫ*herem*. Also Brekelmans, *Herem*, 138 f. mentions in passing this Mari reference without, however, realizing its import for our subject.


7) In this connection note the entry in one of the lexical series in which *asakku* is defined as silver of the god: *a-sak-ku=kas-pa ili* (for references see note 4).


9) Votive gifts of the kings of Israel and Judah are mentioned in 1 Ki. vii, 51 (cf. 2 Sam. viii, 11); xv, 15; 2 Ki. xii, 19 (English version v. 18); 1 Chron. xxvi, 26. It is noteworthy that the Bible distinguishes between "the treasuries of the house of God" and "the treasuries of the consecrated gifts (ostrōt haqq'dašîm)" (1 Chron. xxvi, 20). On the several treasuries see M. Delcor, *Le trésor de la maison de Yahweh etc.*, *VT* 12, 1962, 353 ff.


11) On the contagious nature of the taboo see Smith, *op cit.*, 446–454, and Steiner, *op. cit.*, chaps. 5–6 (above, n. 2).
12) On this name and its relation with the Hebrew tribal name Benjamin cf. my remarks in “Aspects of Tribal Societies in Mari and Israel, Compte Rendu, XVe Rencontre assyriologique international Liége 1966, n. 22 (in press).

13) This point has been particularly stressed by F. Schwally, Semitische Kriegsaltertümer I, 1901, 39 ff. But cf. Brekelmans’ criticism, Herem, 148.

14) The word suḫtu, translated “booty” in ARM, is defined by von Soden, Orientalia 22, 1953, 209, as “Grünspan” (verdigris); cf. also H. Limet, Le travail du métal au pays de Sumer, 1960, 270 and 276. If so, the meaning is possibly “whosoever takes (of the spoil, even) a piece of rusty copper…”

15) For the exact meaning of ruqqu, see now A. Salonen, Die Hausgeräte der alten Mesopotamier, II, 1966, 255 ff.

16) Cf. Brekelmans, Herem, 138, where the similarity is noted.

17) This document was first published by F. Thureau-Dangin, RA 38, 1941, 41–43.

18) The military titles given here are used only to convey the relativity of the ranks involved; for the terms GAL, KUD and NU, BANDA, see Bottéro, ARM VII, 190ff. and 243ff. Cf. B. Landsberger, JCS 9, 1955, 122ff., for the military hierarchy in the Old Babylonian period.

19) For isqu, “lot, share”, here translated “portion” (assigned by casting lots), see CAD VII, 198ff. In line 26 isiqtu is either the feminine form or is derived from the verb esēk/qa—esēḫ/u of a similar meaning; for the latter alternative, CAD VII, s.v. isiqtu, 191b.

20) On the significance of the idiom aná mil ṣāṭīsumu, “to fill their hands”, as an expression which was taken over into the cultic terminology of the Bible, see M. Noth, Amt und Berufung im Alten Testament, Bonner Akad. Reden, 19, 1958, 8ff. and 28, n. 9. Following our conclusion (see below) that the booty in question was banned or consecrated, the Akkadian in this instance too, and in contrast to the common use of aná qāt X mulšiq (cf. AHw, 598), possibly had a certain ritual nuance, referring to the appropriation of such objects; cf., e.g. the expression l’mallē gei ʿadam, Ex. xxix, 33.

21) On the designations GAL, MAR, TU (the Great-of-Amurru) and DUB, SAR, MAR, TU (the Scribe-of-Amurru), the latter being attested only in Mari, see J. R. Kupper, Les nomades en Mésopotamie au temps de rois de Mari, 1957, 190 ff. In the Mari period those are military titles of high rank, originally of commanders over troops mustered from amongst the Amurru, i.e. the nomadic tribes. For the special function, in the Bible, of military scribes, see 2 Kings xxv, 19 = Jcr. lii, 25 and 2 Chron. xxvi, 11.

22) I.e. I have committed myself and the “major” through an oath by the king; cf. Thureau-Dangin, RA 38, 42, n. 9. For a similar expression see now A. Al-Zeebari, Altbabylonische Briefe des Iraq-Museums, 1964, no. 8, lines 43–44 and p. 28. On the expression nāš šarrīm in the sense of an oath by the life of the king, cf. ARM VIII, 173.

23) A division of war-spoils in the Bible, among the king (both Saul and David) and his senior officers, is inferred from the reference to the consecration of spoils to “the house of God” in 1 Chron. xxvi, 26–28. See also Gen. xiv, 24, where the “boys” (necarimm) and “men” (našim), who participated in Abraham’s raid, are to receive their share (ḥeqikam) of the booty (the verb skt, used in connection with the necarimm does not mean “to eat” but “to appropriate”, what is due to them, like the Akkadian usage of akālu, cf. CAD I, 251 b (s.v. akālu 2a). As for the setting aside of captives and cattle, from the spoils note the biblical institution of maqkkas, “excise” (occurring only in connection with the war against Midian), Num. xxxi, 28ff. Cf. M. Haran, Enzyklopaedia Biblica, IV, s.v. maqkkas (Hebrew). Biblical maqkkas, like hergem, is exclusively devoted to the religious authorities, whereas the Akkadian cognate miksu, “levy, toll”, is purely secular. For the latter cf. AHw, 652 and F. R. Kraus, Ein Edikt des Königs Ammi-šaduqa von Babylon,

24) The initial study of *siptu* was F. Thureau-Dangin, *Orientalia* 12, 1943, 110–12. Yet his translation (and others following him) “reprimand, rebuke” does not adequately convey its basic meaning, which rather connotes the making of a definite order.


27) On these three instances, as the only reliable historical traditions in the Bible to have been transmitted on the enforcement of the heræm, see Brekelmans, *Herem*, 153 ff. However, the etiological motifs in these, such as the derivation of the place-name Hormah from the root *hrm*, have also played an important role in the formation of this tradition.


29) The *heræm* is not, to be regarded as a sacrifice or votive gift to the Lord, as some scholars have argued, but a doomed thing and entirely taboo; cf. W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 1', 1957, 82 f. Thus the offering up of the “best of the heræm” (v. 21) from the spoils of Amalek to the Lord is expressly treated as a grave violation of the ban.


31) The ancient legal character of the Achan episode *per se* has been stressed by Y. Kaufmann in his commentary on *The Book of Joshua*, 1959, 110–122 (Hebrew).