

Chapter Title: Writing as Administrative Option: The Diviner of the Gods at Late Bronze Age Emar

Chapter Author(s): Daniel E. Fleming

Book Title: Legal Documents in Ancient Societies

Book Subtitle: Accounts and Bookkeeping in the Ancient World

Book Editor(s): Andrea Jördens, Uri Yiftach

Published by: Harrassowitz Verlag. (2020)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1453kj0.7>

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Writing as Administrative Option: The Diviner of the Gods at Late Bronze Age Emar

Daniel E. Fleming, New York¹

At a meeting defined by “Accounts and Bookkeeping in the Ancient World,” Julia Lougovaya offered a contribution defined by the possibility of non-written administration, financial oversight in early Greece by *tamiai* “treasurers” whose responsibilities appear to have been carried out without reliance on texts. The conference title invokes terms that are difficult to imagine without written record-keeping: literally so with “bookkeeping” and nearly as restrictively with “accounts.” Yet it is possible for the development of written frameworks for administration to lure us into thinking that financial oversight of institutions requires writing, and then into interpreting all written remains from such oversight as elements of systematic record-keeping that we can only imagine in textual terms.

As a complement to Lougovaya’s contribution, I offer these reflections on a modest collection of administrative documents from the workplace of an official who called himself “the diviner of the gods” at a small city named Emar, on the great bend of the Euphrates River in northwestern Syria. The documents span two generations of the diviners in the 13th and early 12th centuries. As part of larger research on the site, Sophie Démare-Lafont and I have published an extended study of this material, as “Ad Hoc Administration and Archiving at Emar: Free Format and Free Composition in the Diviner’s Text Collection,” *Aula Orientalis* 36 (2018) 29-63. Against what may be expected of administrative writing, we concluded that every such text from this diviner’s archive was conceived independently, not by any repeated template, so that each one takes distinct form, even when the recorded inventories or transfers involved comparable administrative acts. A corollary to this conclusion is that the texts were not essential to the oversight reflected in them; inventory could be conducted without writing down the results, and the diviner could oversee transfers of various goods and valuables without documentary record. With the present article, I pursue the character of this administrative writing as optional, each choice as individual as the texts themselves, in a structure of authority and accountability that is not ultimately defined by the creation of a textual corpus of reference.

1 My contribution to the Schwetzingen meeting was composed as a collaboration with my colleague Sophie Démare-Lafont, with whom I have been working on questions of Emar society and law for more than ten years. Although this article is attached to my name alone, it is as much a product of that collaboration as the pieces published under both names together. Her ideas about the individuality of the diviner’s administrative writing, the limited time horizon for any such texts, and the priority of oral transactions to writing in ancient Near Eastern law suffuse my own approach to this material, and she has of course read and responded to the article before it reached its finished form. By accepting to limit authorship to my name, I acknowledge final responsibility for the ideas therein.

As “diviner of the gods,” the building M-1 diviner was charged to supervise the operation of sacred places and their rites for a range of sites identified with the city of Emar as a body.² The family of the diviners who inhabited this edifice and who bore this title can be traced through three generations:

Zu-Ba‘la (son of Šuršu) – appointed by the Hittites
 Ba‘lu-qarrad son of Zu-Ba‘la
 Šaggar-abu son of Ba‘lu-qarrad
 Ba‘lu-malik son of Ba‘lu-qarrad³

There is no evidence for written reflection of this cultic oversight until the term of Ba‘lu-qarrad, a fact that by itself suggests that responsibility for financial and ritual supervision of sacred affairs could be maintained without textual “bookkeeping.”⁴ We only know about the diviners’ work, however, because of the texts that survived and were excavated in area M at Emar (modern Meskeneh), ranging from long accounts of public ritual performance to lists of names or objects to diverse sketches of transfers involving animals, grain, precious objects and more.⁵

- 2 This is evident in the oldest ritual text preserved from the building M-1, which records six months of public celebrations under the heading, “rites of the city” ([*pār-ši*] *ša* URU.KI, E446:1) and then makes repeated reference to the diviner’s interest (lines [26], 28, 39, 26*, 44, 51, 53, 64, 65, 82, 95, 102, 105, and 116). For systematic treatment of the text and a collated edition, see Daniel Fleming, *Time at Emar: The Cultic Calendar and the Rituals from the Diviner’s Archive* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000) 143-73, 268-80. The texts from Emar’s building M-1 have been examined as a securely provenanced whole by Matthew Rutz, *Bodies of Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Diviners of Late Bronze Age Emar and Their Tablet Collection* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
- 3 For the filiation of Zu-Ba‘la see Yoram Cohen, “Problems in the History and Chronology of Emar,” *Kaskal* 10 (2013) 291-92 (281-94), in response to Masamichi Yamada, “The Chronology of the Emar Texts Reassessed,” *Orient* 48 (2013) 125-56. In our own extended reevaluation of the chronology and textual production of Emar, Démare-Lafont and I estimate that Zu-Ba‘la was active from the 1260s to the 1250s, Ba‘lu-qarrad from the 1240s to the 1220s, and Ba‘lu-malik from the 1200s to the 1180s, after his older brother died without extended service; see Sophie Démare-Lafont and Daniel Fleming, “Emar Chronology and Scribal Streams: Cosmopolitanism and Legal Diversity,” *Revue d’Assyriologie* 109 (2015) 45-77.
- 4 The important alignment of the written texts with the last two generations of building M-1 diviners was worked out by Yoram Cohen, *The Scribes and Scholars of the City of Emar in the Late Bronze Age* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009) 147-83.
- 5 In his publication of the Akkadian texts from daily life, Daniel Arnaud divides the cultic and administrative materials into various groups of records (especially E274 – E368) and of rituals (E369 – E535); *Recherches au pays d’Aštata: Emar VI/3* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1986). While the distinct text numbers suggest more than 250 documents, more than half of these are fragments that probably reflect a much smaller number of original tablets, now impossible to reconstruct in most cases. It is likely that beyond the French excavations, further looting of the site took tablets from the building M-1, as seen in the testament of the diviner Ba‘lu-qarrad published as no.7 in Arnaud, “Tablettes de genres divers au Moyen-Euphrate,” *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* 30 (1992) 195-245. Many of the “lists” published as BLM 16-30 could only have been composed as part of the same cultic supervision, an impression most unavoidable in the dedication of offerings by (the diviner) Ba‘lu-malik in BLM 24, which includes reference to his two sons, elsewhere known as Zuzu and Ipqi-Dagan; Joan Goodnick Westenholz, *Cuneiform Inscriptions in the Collection of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem: The Emar Tablets* (Groningen: Styx, 2000). Among the various texts published from the antiquities market, these are not the only probable examples, but there is benefit to working from a text base

Especially in light of the individuality of the diviner's textual accounting, it is extremely difficult to reconstruct the purpose of his writing, which certainly varied. We must keep in mind that written accounting has a natural time horizon beyond which records would be discarded as irrelevant. Even where the work relied heavily on systematic text production in a mode that evokes bureaucracy – which is not true of Emar – the interest would generally have been short-term. At the same time, the point of writing appears to be to look at something again, whether in an hour, the next day, or later. We cannot be sure whether return to a text was planned or merely potential; whether a text would be viewed more than once; or how long the horizon of its potential usefulness may have been. The disposal of a written text, in contrast, would mean that both planned and potential reference to it were dropped with finality. No one would ever again check the text, and any memory of the transaction it recorded would be only in the mind of the person who oversaw it. The decision to abandon all possibility of return to a text may have been driven by diverse intents: a systematic housecleaning of documents; or attached to the individual text in hand and a particular moment of decision. Also, while texts would only be jettisoned consciously, as we know too well, they may overstay their usefulness, like our own.⁶

The question is then what the diviner's texts from Emar could reveal about this expectation of planned or potential return to them. Although we have only limited ability to penetrate the mindset behind their composition and reuse, there are features that Démare-Lafont and I did not pursue with our primary analysis of the collection.

Signed with Seals

Some of the surviving administrative texts were sealed.⁷ All writing suggests at least the possibility of return to the text, but sealing indicates a return that concerns the legitimacy of and specific authority behind the given transaction. With the seal, it is not just the details of objects, persons, gods, and occasions that are recalled; it is the character of the administrative act. Even as some texts were sealed, in keeping with the larger pattern of this textual assemblage, sealing was in no way systematic. Among the excavated tablets, ten bear seals, all but two of which (E279 and E285) exhibit some association with sacred affairs.⁸

Texts are sealed by widely different people, with different seals. E363, E364, and E366 were all sealed by the diviner Ba'lu-qarrad, who used a cylinder seal bearing the name of

limited to the excavated tablets from the building M-1, the identification of which has no element of guesswork.

6 These ruminations reflect a particular conversation with Sophie Démare-Lafont regarding what she finds surprising in any survival of accounting texts, which would naturally not have been kept long-term in any systematic way.

7 Beyond the primary publication of the Emar seals by Dominique Beyer, *Emar IV: Les sceaux* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), see also Maria Elena Balza, *Sigilli e modalità di sigillatura a Emar nel Tardo Bronzo (XIV – XIII sec. a.C.)* (Lugano: Italian University Press, 2009).

8 This set could be extended in two directions by inclusion of texts without provenance but with contents and seal impressions that align with the building M-1 tablets, as well as by considering some of the documents from the storm god temple in area E, which display seals from the diviner's family (E43, E56, and E61); see the chart in Balza (2009: 26). It is not clear what texts beyond those with seals can be identified with the diviner's supervisory work.

Dagan-aḥu, found also on Ba‘lu-qarrad’s personal testament (SMEA 30 no.7).⁹ E285, E287, and E305 all have the diviner Ba‘lu-malik’s seal, and the first two of these include a second seal to represent some authority outside the diviner’s office: E285 with an unknown but evidently external character named Punu; and E287 with a Hittite/Carchemish official named Kili-Šarruma.¹⁰ Four more texts have a single seal each, all with different people, none of whom belongs to the diviner’s workplace. E275 has a stamp seal belonging to a probable outsider of uncertain name;¹¹ E279 preserves only a damaged impression without identification;¹² E290 has a ring seal inscribed in Anatolian hieroglyphs only with the divine name ^dTeššub-ba;¹³ and the Mittani-type seal on E309 resembles the unidentified example with E279.¹⁴

The sealed texts as a group do not reflect a single framework of authority or oversight. The repeated use of the diviner’s seals is a natural extension of composition in this setting, even as the occasional rather than systematic use raises the question of what transactions warranted special attention to the resulting document. Most of the texts with the diviner’s seal deal with transfer of goods for ritual (287, 305, 363, 364, 366), with one text (285) suggesting the personal affairs of the diviner and his family.¹⁵ That last text is one with a second seal, indicating concern to confirm a second authority. While the small set of what Démare-Lafont and I call “inventories” is not generally associated with sealing, a unique list of “jewels” (*šukuttu*) found in the storm god temple of area E is signed on the reverse with four seals, led by Ba‘lu-qarrad’s brother Kapi-Dagan as “diviner” (^{lu}ḫal) and concluded by his son Ba‘lu-malik. The occasion for such unusual oversight is not clear, with

9 See A.62, in Beyer 2001: 84.

10 Ba‘lu-malik’s seal is A.69 in Beyer (2001: 88), and it appears with an impressive range: on these three texts from the building M-1; on three administrative texts from the storm god’s temple in area E (E43, E56, and E61); on two cult inventories published by Westenholz (BLM 28 and 29), identified by Cohen (2009: 170-71); and on TBR 70, a private legal document without excavated provenance (Arnaud, *Textes syriens de l’Âge du Bronze Récent* [Barcelona: Editorial AUSA, 1991]). Westenholz (2000: 70) observes that BLM 28 and 29 “refer to similar items, people and gods” as E287, which is also sealed by Kili-Šarruma, whom Cohen (2009: 114) considers “a Hittite official of a high rank,” since he is the son of the “Overseer of the Land” (*ugula.kalam.ma*) Mutri-Teššub. He has three different seals (B33, B63, and B64 in Beyer 2001), found also on ASJ 14 no.48; TBR 20, 97; BLM 28, 29; and E61. For ASJ 14 texts, see Akio Tsukimoto, “Akkadian Texts in the Hirayama Collection III,” *Acta Sumerologica* 14 (1992) 289-310. Because of the connection in E61, Cohen (2009: 171) guesses that BLM 28 and 29 may have come from the storm god temple, but given the larger number of unprovenanced Emar texts clearly from the building M-1 and the similar conjunction of names in E287, this origin may be more likely.

11 Beyer (2001: 153) reads Kutumilia(?), as C3, only here; Balza (2009: 100 n.122) has *Ku-tu/tú-x-x-i[a]*.

12 Beyer (2001: 242), E71, of Mittani type, only here.

13 Beyer (2001: 137), B49, only here.

14 Beyer (2001: 245), E79, only here.

15 With their resemblance to E287, BLM 28 and 29 appear to reflect transfer of precious objects rather than simple inventory of items on hand. Westenholz observes for BLM 28 that Kili-Šarruma “has the responsibility for sealing incoming and outgoing materials for various deities in several localities” (2000: 90). ASJ 14 no.48 records the transfer of metal objects, evidently into (rather than out of) the domains of two gods identified with the nearby town of Ešši, sealed only by Kili-Šarruma. The small tablet E61 simply records a basket of special stones, also perhaps as an arrival or departure from the storm god temple.

two of the building M-1 diviners joining two outsiders to account for valuables identified with “Aštartu of the City” though the text was found in the male storm god’s temple.¹⁶

Ba’lu-qarrad’s seal only appears on accounting texts alone, without need of or benefit from any further authority (E363, E364, and E366).¹⁷ Stated differently, the need to join the diviner’s authority to some other figure only arises in the last generation of building M-1 diviners. The political conditions for such a shift are intriguingly complex. It is almost certain that Emar’s local monarchy collapsed before the fall of the city.¹⁸ The period after that collapse coincided roughly with the activity of the diviner Ba’lu-malik and a time of less direct involvement of the Carchemish sovereign at Emar. This was a time when conditions at Emar may have depended more on factors in the immediate region, still perhaps outside the city itself, than on imposition from an imperial hierarchy going up the chain of authority by way of Carchemish and the Hittite capital.

Unsealed Texts

It is as important to emphasize what was not sealed as what carries one or more seals. In the diviner’s archive itself, ten texts bear seal impressions and roughly thirty do not, if we exclude small fragments that cannot be evaluated and probably connect to larger tablets. The non-sealed texts cover a wide range of types, including the inventories as well as all the types that could be sealed – so far as any “type” exists in the archive, since the text assemblage is so completely individual. The following list reflects the categories from Fleming and Démare-Lafont (2018), which includes an appendix with individual text summaries:

Sealed:

E275: transfer with ritual association
(reverse mostly uninscribed)

E279: transfer without evident sacred association – support for hostages at distance?
(fully inscribed)

16 The placement of Ba’lu-malik’s seal sets it apart from the other three: the seals of Kapi-Dagan the diviner, Abunnu, and Ari-Šarruma each follow the cuneiform description on the reverse and lower edge of the tablet. Ba’lu-malik’s name and seal are found on the right edge, in uncertain relation to the others (Beyer 2001: 88, 139). Cohen (2009: 171-73) suggests that Ba’lu-malik and his uncle Kapi-Dagan may have competed for the office after the death of Ba’lu-qarrad, so the appearance of their seals on the same tablet does not necessarily demonstrate collaboration. It is even possible that the seal of Ba’lu-malik was added later, since the arrangement appears to depend on the other three.

17 One building M-1 administrative text is sealed by Ba’lu-malik alone: E305, involving ritual vessels assigned to named men. Two of the three texts sealed by Ba’lu-qarrad also involve the transfer of the same kind of ritual vessels (E363 and E364). The third Ba’lu-qarrad text (E366) describes bronze assigned to men associated with the *kubadu* rite; note also one more text sealed only by the diviner Ba’lu-malik, found in the storm god temple, involving the transfer of silver (E56).

18 See our engagement in Démare-Lafont and Fleming (2015) with the historical reconstruction of Yoram Cohen and Lorenzo d’Alfonso, “The Duration of the Emar Archives and the Relative and Absolute Chronology of the City,” in d’Alfonso, Cohen, and Dietrich Sürenhagen eds., *Emar among the Late Bronze Age Empires: Chronology, Environment, Society* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008) 1-23. We agree that the monarchy fell before the end of the Late Bronze Age city, though roughly one generation before it instead of two.

- E285: transfer for the diviner's household
(bottom half of reverse uninscribed)
- E287: transfer for temples and shrines
(reverse uninscribed)
- E290: transfer with general link to sacred stores
(bottom half of reverse uninscribed)
- E305: transfer with ritual association
(reverse uninscribed)
- E309: transfer with general link to sacred stores
(bottom half of obverse and entire reverse uninscribed)
- E363: transfer with ritual association
(reverse uninscribed)
- E364: transfer with ritual association
(reverse uninscribed)
- E366: transfer with ritual association
(reverse uninscribed)

Unsealed:

- E274?: inventory not as "jewels" (*šukuttu*) with other religious interest
(fully inscribed)
- E276: transfer with ritual association
(uncertain sealing)
- E277: transfer without evident sacred association
(uncertain sealing)
- E278: transfer without evident sacred association
(reverse uninscribed)
- E282: inventory as "jewels" (*šukuttu*)
(reverse uninscribed?)
- E283: inventory not as "jewels" (*šukuttu*) with other religious interest
(fully inscribed)
- E284?: transfer for temples and shrines
(reverse covered by writing overlapping from obverse)
- E286: transfer for temples and shrines
(reverse uninscribed)
- E288?: inventory as "jewels" (*šukuttu*)
(reverse uninscribed?)
- E289: transfer for temples and shrines
(reverse uninscribed?)
- E296: transfer with general link to sacred stores
(reverse partly uninscribed)
- E300?: transfer with ritual association
(reverse partly uninscribed)
- E303?: possible inventory
(fully inscribed)

- E304?: (not definitely administrative)
(large left margin)
- E306: transfer with ritual association
(fully inscribed)
- E307: transfer with ritual association
(reverse partly uninscribed)
- E311: transfer without evident sacred association
(reverse uninscribed)
- E312: transfer for the diviner's household
(reverse uninscribed)
- E316: transfer without evident sacred association?
(reverse uninscribed – only three lines on the obverse)
- E317?: transfer without evident sacred association
(reverse uninscribed)
- E318: transfer without evident sacred association
(reverse partly uninscribed)
- E319: transfer without evident sacred association (extract from E279)
(reverse uninscribed with some lines extending from obverse)
- E320: transfer without evident sacred association
(reverse partly uninscribed)
- E321: transfer without evident sacred association
(fully inscribed)
- E323: transfer with general link to sacred stores?
(reverse uninscribed?)
- E325?: transfer with general link to sacred stores
(apparently fully inscribed)
- E327: transfer with general link to sacred stores?
(fully inscribed)
- E331: transfer with general link to sacred stores?
(reverse uninscribed)
- E336: list of personal names
(four-column tablet with two and a half columns inscribed – the only multi-column tablet associated with administration, outside the ritual texts)
- E338: list of personal names
(fully inscribed)
- E361: transfer without evident sacred association
(fully inscribed)
- E365?: transfer with ritual association
(fully inscribed?)
- E367: transfer for the diviner's household
(fully inscribed)

Sealing seems mainly to have been reserved for affairs in the sacred sphere, the primary domain of the diviner's supervisory role. Likewise, transfers not involving the gods, their sanctuaries, and their rites were not generally sealed. In the above group of unsealed ad-

ministrative texts, ten are transfers “without evident sacred association” and two are transfers “for the diviner’s household.” This pattern nevertheless leaves a substantial number of texts with some connection to the diviner’s oversight of Emar’s cultic establishments.

It does not appear to have been necessary to prove a count of sacred items by showing who made the count or confirmed it. Equally, most transfer texts – not to mention the transfers never recorded in texts – did not require a seal. It appears that the seal demonstrates supervision by the signing authorities, yet the same diviner would have recorded similar transactions without seal. For example, the precious items in E287 were sealed by the diviner, but the similar account in E286 lacks the seal; a transfer of vessels is sealed in E305 but not in E307, a less elaborate text with concern for assignment of the same items. There should be some added value to sealing, when it was done, even if sealing was not necessary.

Each of the sealed documents reflects the need of a single moment, not a systematic, repeated process and its recording. There is no sign that the creation of sealed texts was ever part of a larger accounting or checking of records; the authority was needed for any future check on the transaction in itself. Most often, the sealed texts are fairly short, inscribed only on the obverse of tablets – another reflection of the focus on individual transactions rather than complex accounting. Two exceptions are E275 and E279, both sealed by outsiders to the diviner’s office. Whatever provoked the need for a seal, these do not depend on the diviner’s own authority.

For the purposes of my reflection on written administrative texts from the diviner’s archive at Emar, the most important feature of sealing practice is its unsystematic character. Sealing suggests the possibility of a check by some accounting authority beyond the diviner himself, but attention to such authority depended on the (unknown) occasion and the availability of high-status persons who had no demonstrable relationship to the diviner, public religious practice at Emar, or any of its sacred sites. We cannot know whether a sealed text was kept longer than an unsealed one, and with what expectations. Sealing was an extension of writing itself, as a check on the diviner’s accounting, even as writing appears to have been an extension of oversight that did not generally require a written record.

Tablet Preparation

In our investigation of the Emar diviner’s administrative collection as a whole, Démare-Lafont and I observed that no two texts are iterations of the same accounting operation, drawn up according to a predetermined template. One example is the inventory of *šukuttu* “jewels”: the storm god temple text E43 is sealed by four authorities for a single sacred store, belonging to Aštartu of the City, whereas E282 is unsealed and combines lists of jewels for three different deities. Several of the transfer texts involve grain, flour, or bread, and all take different form. For example:

- E312 simply presents some matching quantity of flour for seven individuals, five of whom are women.
- E316 has only three lines, noting quantities of grain and a milled product “into the hand of Ipqi-Dagan.”

- E317 is likewise short: in four lines, the text identifies barley rendered as “porridge” (*pappāsu*-meal), then abruptly switches to donkeys and silver that a man must “now” give – for that grain?
- E318 offers a longer selection of different quantities of different bread type, without identifying the recipients by the names of humans or gods.
- E320 lists nine men who did not “give” grain, concluded by a “total” counted by 34 “houses.”

While the construction of each administrative text is unique, whether short or long, there is another aspect of what I have labeled “tablet preparation” that suggests patterns that appear to be related to intended use. These patterns warrant comparison with cuneiform administration outside Emar that I do not undertake here. The primary observation is that the diviner’s administrative writing relates in very different ways to the capacity of each tablet. Many of the texts leave all or a large part of the reverse uninscribed, whether or not they are sealed. In contrast, a smaller selection of the texts fill the tablet entirely, suggesting that the relationship between tablet and written product was more carefully planned. This in turn raises the possibility that such texts may have accompanied a different expectation of future reference or may have been disposed of less quickly.

A substantial majority of both the sealed and unsealed texts was composed by leaving some portion of the tablet uninscribed. Of the six texts sealed by one of the diviners, all but E285 are written with the entire reverse left uninscribed, and E285 leaves a space at the end for sealing. Because so many unsealed texts were written in the same way, the failure to use the whole tablet cannot be explained by the need to accommodate a seal. The fact that such tablets could be sealed shows that they cannot all be regarded as reminders to use and then discard immediately. And yet we also find similar tablets that seem more ephemeral; Arnaud considers the three-line E316 to be written with “negligence,” and this could be no more than a short-term personal reminder. Overall, these small tablets are adaptable, prepared without commitment to any specific application.

In contrast to the texts that do not fill their tablets, another group of texts fill the obverse and reverse. From the list presented above, the “fully inscribed” tablets include the following:

- E274: at least 27 lines; inventory of vessels identified with various deities
- E279: 50 lines; grain allotments without sacred association (related to E319) – sealed¹⁹
- E283: 25 lines; inventory of bronze objects as *unūtu* (“items”) with concern for weight
- E303: more than 6 lines; possible inventory of silver, furniture, textiles
- E306: 19 lines; vessels for “men of battle,” “men of the goddesses”
- E321: 20 lines; animals, garments, etc. “received” by various persons or groups
- E327: 16 lines; mostly sheep for transfer – sacred context?
- E338: 24 lines; list of personal names
- E361: 12 lines; provision for the move of a queen from Kinza (Qadesh) to Šatappi

19 For discussion of this pair of texts, see Fleming and Démare-Lafont (2018: 40-1). E319 represents an extract from E279, but the shorter text offers more detail regarding the transfer, which is described as a *hubiētu*, which we suggest could be interpreted as an abstract form of the noun *hubtu*, that which is taken by force, possibly referring to captives who receive financial support from their city of origin.

E365: at least 10 line; transfer of sheep to gods and humans

E367: 9 lines; flour, partly for the diviner's household

All of these but E279 are unsealed, so their basis for reexamination does not derived from recording the formal authority by which the transaction was witnessed. Three inventories are drawn up in this manner. Transfers involve both cultic and evidently non-cultic affairs. Although the texts tend to be longer than those with uninscribed or partially inscribed reverse, their scale varies vastly.

Another notable group is recorded with a horizontal dividing line between every entry, a degree of effort that appears superfluous for a short-lived memorandum. These are concentrated among the transfers of grain or bread for purposes not evidently associated with cultic affairs (E315 and E318), and of sheep for what may be sacred use (E324, E325, and E329).

Conclusion

I return to where we began: no two texts from the diviner's administrative corpus follow the same structure, even when the transactions belong to the same type. This means that the relationship of writing or text production to administrative act is individual, by convenience, rather than by standard. Further, the writing does not reflect accountability to any higher or external authority; the appearance of outsiders in seals is by convenience. Rather, these texts serve only the writers, the diviners of the M-1 building. The diviner himself serves both the city of Emar and the sovereign external power of the Hittites as manifest at Carchemish, but he runs the practical operation of his supervisory role on his own terms.

Therefore, the administrative authority of the diviner does not lie in the creation of a textual record but in the oversight itself. The individuality of the texts suggests also that the connection between writing and administrative acts is partial, not systematic or complete. It is likely that a minority, even a small minority, of all the administrative acts of the diviner are preserved in the documentation preserved in the M-1 building. It is not just that the rest of the texts were lost or discarded. The individuality and ad hoc character of the texts and their sealing suggests that writing was only used according to perceived need. In his responsibility for the oversight of sacred affairs defined by the city of Emar, the diviner of the building M-1 thus partook of an authority and process that overlaps with and in broad historical terms anticipates what is suggested for early Greece in the old narrative texts cited by Lougovaya.