

The Mari Letters & The Benjamites Translation – (Transcription)

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In 1935-38 Andre Parrot excavated the palace of king Zimri – Lin (1730-1700BC) at Tell el-Hariri, ancient Mari on the Euphrates. Among nearly 20,000 cuneiform tablets found in this palace were some 5,000 letters, mostly written by native Amorites.

To my lord say: Thus Bannum, thy servant. Yesterday, I departed from Mari, and spent the night at Zuruban. All the Benjaminites, raised fire-signals. From Samanum to Ilum-Muluk, from Ilum-Muluk to Mishlan, all the cities of the Benjaminites of the Terqa district raised fire signals in response, and so far I have not ascertained the meaning of those signals. Now I shall determine the meaning, and I shall write to my lord whether it is thus or not. Let the guard of the city of Mari be strengthened, and let my lord not go outside the gate.

Source: The Ancient Near East – An Anthology of Texts and Pictures
by James Pritchard - 1958 Princeton University Press