Between 1987 and 2001, three documents from Mari were published and re-published which reveal that this culture viewed the God Dumuzi as a dying-and-rising god. One of these documents is a letter that dates to the 12th year of Zimri-līm’s reign (from the first half of the eighteenth century BCE), written by the head of the Sami-nomadic Amorite tribe, in which he casually mentions the death and return of Dumuzi. The other two are documents relate to economic matters: one document marks the day of Dumuzi’s burial from the 4th year of Zimri-līm, and the other marks the day of his return.
Because prior to the publication of these documents we had but a single testimony written in Cuneiform relating to Dumuzi’s return from the underworld, contrasted with countless testimonies of his death, the testimonies from Mari are of great importance for understanding the mythology of Dumuzi in Mesopotamia in particular, and the mythology of the dying-and-rising gods in Western Asia in general. However, the fact that evidence for this mythology was found in Mari, the most significant piece of which is included in the letter written by one of the leaders of said tribes (and not, for example, in the letter of an ambassador or priest), raises the question of whether the origin of this mythology is in Mari. In light of the fact that it is the Mesopotamian name ‘Dumuzi’ in question, should its origin be traced to the Mesopotamian culture east of Mari, or does the origin of this mythology lie in the Amorite tribes who migrated from the Levant to Mari at the end of the third millennium?
Scholars have long been concerned with the western-semetic characteristics of Mari’s Amorite culture, which originated in cultures that inhabited Syria and the Levant; Might we have before us another such characteristic?

To discuss this question I will briefly review the evidence we have for the existence of dying-and-rising gods from both of Mari’s pasts: I will begin with the data from Mesopotamia which are among the first discoveries in the modern study of Cuneiform, and will continue with the relatively new data from Mari. Finally I will analyze the data from the Levant. In light of these findings, I would like to offer a new perspective on the question of dying-and-rising gods in general and the question of the resurrection of Dumuzi in particular—questions that have occupied scholars since the end of the nineteenth century.