

TWO MIDDLE ASSYRIAN CONTRACTS HOUSED IN ISTANBUL

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The tablets presented below are from the Tablet Collections of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, excavated from the mound of Qal'at Sherqat by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft between the years 1903–1914. Despite the fact that the majority of the Middle Assyrian documents in Istanbul belong to the group of lists of disbursements, our texts belong to the category of contracts, which do not number more than half a dozen tablets. Two of them are now dealt with here in transliteration, translation and copies. I would like to dedicate this article as a small token of my appreciation to Professor Simo Parpola for his extraordinary contributions to the field of Assyriology, particularly to the Neo-Assyrian studies to which he has dedicated himself. I hope he will be pleased with these Middle Assyrian texts since all the Neo-Assyrian texts preserved in Istanbul are already published.¹

A 320, Ass 14256, Ass.ph. 3947

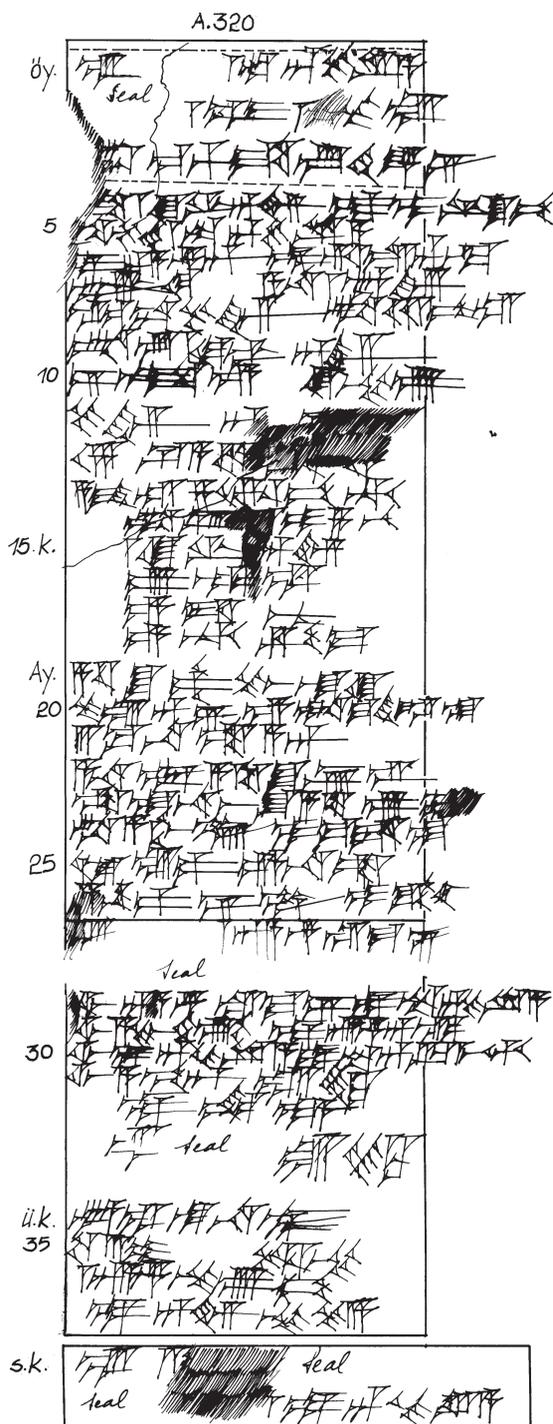
The left edge of the obverse, almost at the top, is damaged and the surface of lower right part of the obverse is abraded (esp. at the end of the lines 11–12). The tablet bears the impressions of a cylinder seal at the beginning of the obverse, immediately before the witness list and at the bottom of the reverse as well as on the left side.²

1	KIŠIB ^m iR- ^d še-ru-a	¹ Seal of Urad-Šerua.
2	1 ANŠE 6 'BÁN?' ŠE-um	² 1 homer 6 <i>seahs</i> of grain (measured)
3	'i' + na GIŠ.BÁN ša É- <i>hi-bur-ni</i>	by the seah of the <i>hiburnu</i> -house,
4	[š]a ^m ki-din- ^d IM DUMU	belonging to Kidin-Adad son of
	<i>i-din-ku-bi</i>	Iddin-Kube, owed by Urad-Šerua
5	'i' + na mu- <i>hi</i> ^m iR- ^d še-ru-a	son of Aššur-ili son of Riš-Ištar – he
6	[D]UMU ^d a-šur-DINGIR DUMU <i>ri-</i>	(the debtor) took.
	<i>iš-d</i> 'U'.DAR	

¹ Donbaz & Parpola 2001.

² For the archival context (M9) of the document see Pedersén 1985: 95.

7	<i>il-qi a-na</i> 1 ITI- <i>im</i>	7	He shall measure out the capital
8	SAG.DU ŠE- <i>im</i> <i>i+na</i> ŠĀ- <i>bi</i> -URU		of the grain in the Inner City, in the
9	<i>i+na</i> É ^m <i>ki-din</i> - ^d IM		house of Kidin-Adad, within one
			month.
10	Ì.ĀG.E <i>ki-mu-ú</i>	10	In lieu of this grain Kidin-Adad
11	ŠE- <i>im</i> an- ^r <i>ni</i> [- <i>e</i>]		will select and take 15 <i>ikû</i> of his
12	15 IKU A.ŠĀ- ^r <i>šu</i> SIG ₅ ^r [<i>i+na</i> ?]		fertile field [from] the fields of
13	A.GĀR URU.ĥa- <i>ri-bi-ti</i>		<i>the wasteland</i> , and distraint it (as
14	<i>i+na-sa</i> - ^r <i>aq</i> ^r <i>i-ša-bat</i>		security).
e.15	^m <i>ki-din</i> - ^d IM		
16	<i>ú-ka-al</i>	17	(If) the fixed term is exceeded,
17	<i>e-da-nu</i>		his (the debtor's) field should (be
18	<i>e-ti-iq-ma</i>		considered as) legally sold (to the
r.19	A.ŠĀ- <i>šu up-pu la-qé</i>		lender).
		20	This grain at a rate of three minas
20	ŠE- <i>um an-ni-e i-na</i>		(<i>of tin</i>) each is to be declared as the
	<i>ma-ĥi-ra-at</i>		price of his field; it is given to him
21	3 MA.NA.TA.ĀM		(the debtor). He shall cle[ar] the
22	<i>a-na</i> ŠĀM A.ŠĀ- <i>šu sa-si</i>		field (of possible claims), measure
23	<i>ta-ad-na-aš-šu</i> A.ŠĀ		it with the royal measuring line and
	<i>ú-za</i> [<i>k-ka</i>]		write a valid tablet on behalf of the
24	<i>i+na a-šal</i> LUGAL <i>i-ma-da-ad</i>		king.
25	<i>ù tu-pa dan-na-ta</i>		
26	^r <i>a-na pa-ni</i> LUGAL <i>i-ša-tar</i>		
27	(over seal imprints)	27	Seal of Aššur-išmanni.
	KIŠIB ^m <i>a-šur-iš-ma-ni</i>		
28	IGI ^d <i>a-šur-iš-ma-ni</i> DUMU	28	Witness Aššur-išmanni, son of
	İR- ^d <i>še-ru-a</i>		Urad-Šerua.
29	IGI <i>a-bu</i> -DÜG.GA DUMU	29	Witness Abu-ṭab, son of Aššur-
	^d <i>a-šur</i> -DINGIR-SAG		ilu-ašared.
30	IGI DUMU- ^d <i>še-ru-a</i> DUMU	30	Witness Mar-Šerua, son of Urad-
	İR- ^d <i>taš-me-ti</i>		Tašmetu.
31	IGI <i>a-bi</i> -DINGIR DUB.SAR	31	Witness Abi-ili, the scribe, son of
32	DUMU NE- <i>ia</i> (over seal imprint)		Nuriya.
33	KIŠIB DUB.SAR	33	Seal of the scribe.
34e	ITI <i>al-la-na-tum</i>	34	Month of <i>Allanatu</i> , 3rd day,
35e	UD.3.KĀM <i>li-mu</i>		eponym year of Aššur-šuma-ušur,
36e	^{md} <i>a-šur</i> -MU- ^u <i>šur</i>		son of Adad-mušežib.
37e	DUMU ^d IM- <i>mu</i> -KAR	38	Seal of A[<i>bu-ṭab</i>].
s.38	KIŠIB <i>a-b</i> [<i>u</i> -DÜG.GA] (over cylinder		
	seal impressions)		
39	[KIŠIB] ^m DUMU- ^d <i>še-ru-a</i>	39	[<i>Sea</i>] of Mar-Šerua.



Notes

Despite the fact that our text is a contract concerning a loan of grain with a field as security for the creditor, one of the first questions that may arise is whether this text is related to a few texts of a different type, published in Postgate 1988, where nos. 10, 38, 68 and 69 all mention a certain Mar-Šerua being either the father of Kurbanu (no. 10: 6–7) or that of Šilli-Adad (no. 38: 10–11). However, in our text the witness named Mar-Šerua is a son of Urad-Tašmetu (l. 30); and actually there is clear evidence showing that one or two persons called Mar-Šerua in the Urad-Šerua archive cannot be identified with the Mar-Šerua of A 320:

(a) The archival context of A 320 is M9 but that of Mar-Šerua, father of Kurbanu and Šilli-Adad, is M10;

(b) Aššur-šuma-ušur, the eponym official of A 320, is to be dated in the reign of Aššur-uballiṭ in the 14th century BC (see below, comment to lines 36–37) while the archive of Urad-Šerua originates from the 13th century BC. In fact, Mar-Šerua son of Urad-Tašmetu (l. 30) is also attested in KAJ 38:22 and KAJ 35:25 (see OMA 1: 320–321) and the eponym of the latter document (KAJ 35:31) is King Eriba-Adad I ([SU–d.I]M PA–li, see OMA 1: 204), who ruled between 1380–1354 BC and whose eponym year was probably his first or second year as king. This confirms that it is impossible to identify Mar-Šerua of M10, from the 13th century BC, with Mar-šerua of M9 (A 320), who lived in the early 14th century.

Further, Urad-Šerua, the debtor of this text (ll. 1, 5, 28) has nothing to do with the man having the same name and attested as son of Melisaḥ and father of Išme-Ninurta (see Postgate 1988). On the contrary, a great-grandfather – grandfather – father – son relation is attested in our text in which Urad-Šerua is a grandson of Riš-Ištar and a son of Aššur-ili (l. 6) but father of Aššur-išmanni (l. 28). Another common name Nuriya, father of the scribe Abi-ili (l. 31–32), appears as a scribe and son of Kidin-Nabû in Postgate's edition (no. 11: 23–24). All this hints at the frequency of some of these personal names, and without due caution, such frequency may lead us astray when identifying people in Middle Assyrian documents.

2. The two signs following ANŠE are probably 6 "BÁN?" or less likely 1 "qa?" "1 homer 1 'litre' of grain".

4. Kidin-Adad, son of Iddin-Kube, is a well-known person (see OMA 1: 280, 1), who appears in the documents of the so-called family A, as part of the third generation of the family (see Saporetti 1979b: 63–78, Pedersén 1985: 91). His activity as lender is well documented (Saporetti, *ibid.*) and three other loans of grain from him are known (KAJ 61, 63 and 67).

12. Restoration at the end of the line is uncertain as writing [*i+na*] was optional in such contexts and could thus have been left out as well.

13. URU.ḫa-ri-bi-ti: For ḫarībatu “wasteland” see CAD H: 100b, AHw. 325b and Freydank 2003: 249 (on KAJ 177). Note that URU does not always imply a city/town name (Llop 2005: 43). However, it may not be excluded that a name such as “wasteland” could have established itself as a proper name referring, for instance, to a part of the city or its surroundings, perhaps to formerly unused land.

14. Middle Assyrian evidence recorded in CAD N/2: 21 s.v. *nasāqu* A 1. 1’.

19. From the “Perfektionsklausel” *uppu laqe* “ist vorgezeigt (und) übernommen” (AHw. 1459b), at least one occurrence is known to have survived until the Neo-Assyrian period (Radner 1997: 353).

20. *še-um an-ni-e* instead of the expected *še-um an-ni-ú*.

22. *sa-si*: stat. 3rd m.sg. of *šasā’u/sasā’u*, for MA attestations see CAD Š/2: 158–159 5b.

23. See e.g. *ú-za-ka* KAJ 147:20, *ú-zak-ka* KAJ 149:19; for further attestations, see also AHw. 1507a, D, 8 and CAD Z: 30a, c, 1’.

25. *tuṣ-pa dan-na-ta* “valid tablet”, i.e., the official contract.

29. It is almost certain that the name of Abu-ṭab’s father should be read as Aššur-ilu-ašared(u) “Aššur is the foremost god”. For names of the type DN-ilu-ašared cf. Adad-ilu-ašared (MARV 1 1 i 33’ = NAOMA: 18) and Šamaš-ilu-ašared (OMA 1: 437 and MARV 2 30:15).

36–37. Aššur-šuma-ušur, son of Adad-mušeziḫ, functioned as eponym official during the reign of Aššur-uballiṭ in the 14th century BC (Saporetti 1979a: 53, Freydank 1991: 124).

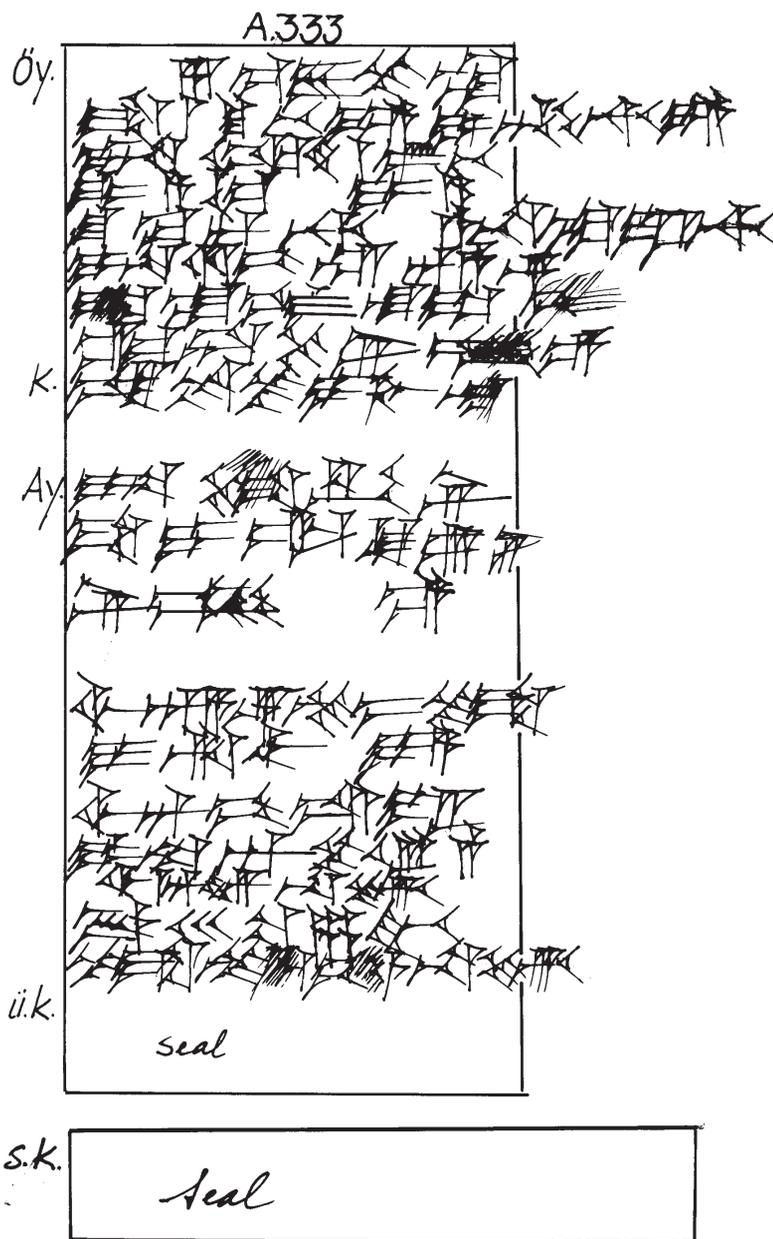
38. Alternatively to be read as KIŠIB ^mr a’-[bu-DÜG.GA].

A 333, Ass 1235, Ass.ph.

Intact tablet (5.3 x 5 x 1.8 cm). Cylinder seal impressions on the upper and left edges.

1	4 ANŠE <i>še-um</i>	¹ Four homers of grain belonging to Kubeya
2	<i>ša</i> ^m ku-be-ia DUMU <i>bal-ṭi-ia</i>	son of Baṭṭiya, owed by Uppe son of Adiya
3	<i>i-na</i> UGU-ḫi ^m ú-pè	– he took.
4	DUMU <i>a-di-ia</i>	
5	ŠU.BA.AN.TI <i>a-na ad-ra-ti</i>	⁵ He shall measure out the capital of the
6	<i>i-na</i> ŠĀ-bi URU. ^d a-šur	grain at the threshing floors in the city of
7	^r ša ^r -at-tum <i>la ša-tum</i>	Assur year by year (not skipping any).
8	SAG.DU ŠE Ì.ĀG.E	
e.9	<i>ka-te</i> ŠE <i>i-šal-la</i>	⁹ (If) he (the debtor) makes trouble
r.10	<i>i-na li-ig-ni</i>	(concerning the) security for the grain, he
11	<i>ša i-al-qé-ú-ni</i>	shall measure (a compensation to the lender)
12	Ì.ĀG.E	by the (same wooden) measure by which he
		received (the grain).

- 13 IGI ^da-šur-mu-tab-li ¹³ Witness Aššur-muttabli, son of Rešiya.
 14 DUMU re-ši-ia
 15 IGI DINGIR-bi-iš-ra ¹⁵ Witness Ili-bišra, son of Urad-Šerua.
 16 DUMU ^mIR-^dše-ru-a



17	IGI ^d IM-na-šir	¹⁷ Witness Adad-našir.
18	ITI 30 UD.6.KAM	¹⁸ Month of Šin, 6th day, eponym year of
19	li-mu ^{md} AMAR.UTU-na-šir	Marduk-našir.
	Seal impressions	
20	Space for seal impression	

Notes

At present, A 333 cannot be placed in any of the known archives with certainty as the persons of the document (the creditor, debtor, and witnesses) have not been attested elsewhere and the eponym is also new. Furthermore, the document offers some new vocabulary and phrases in MA context.

2. Bałtiya or Baltiya as both readings are possible; see OMA 2: 107 as well as CAD B 68b and 143b.

5–8. Here two phrases are inserted in the middle of the frequent clause *ina adrāte qaqqad še'i imaddad* to specify the time and place for the agreed conditions of payment. The interpretation of *ina libbi āl Aššur* is comparable to that of a Neo-Assyrian letter (SAA 1 98:14). Interestingly the phrase *šattum lā šattum* is new in Middle Assyrian. It is difficult to determine whether the suggested meaning “*year by year (not skipping any)*” makes good sense in the context, because it would imply that we are dealing with a long-term loan. Alternatively, one could, for instance, think of “within a year”. The use of negation in similar clauses is treated by Mayer 1989. For the possible meaning of the clause cf. also CAD Š/2: 203b, 1. g5’.

9. *kātu/kattu*: see AHw. 466a s.v. *kātu* “Sicherheit(sleistung)” and CAD K: 308a s.v. *kattū* 2. “security”: *qā* is an infrequent reading value in MA, but see now Kogan 2006: 270–271, whose argument etymologically supports reading the passage as *qā-te*. Usually *kātu* is followed by the object (a field, a house, persons, etc., cf. KAJ 16:15–16; 32:16–17; 37:13–14; 46:11–13; 69:13; 71:14–15; 85:22; VDI 81, 71:21, etc.) used as guarantee for a loan, but this is not the case here. *šalā’u* (AHw. 1147b, CAD Š/1: 241a) “to do harm, to make trouble”. This is the first attestation of the verb, which was earlier only attested in OA, in MA.

10–12. The plausible meaning of *lignu* (or *liknu*) is “(a wooden measure)” or “(a wooden) container” (cf. CDA: 182a and AEAD: 56a). The evidence for the word is scanty, and before this document, the only known Assyrian (NA) attestation was: GIŠ.li-ig-nu ŠE.BAR DIRIG-ma in BBR 60:18’ (K 8380) where it was translated by Zimmern, “du [sollst] eine Schale mit Gerste füllen”.

ša i-al-qé-ú-ni: we can interpret the verb of this subordinate relative clause in two ways. The first and more probable option is *ilqeūni*, pret. 3rd m.sg. subj. In that case the scribe may have had problems with the initial vowels and written *i-al-* instead of *il-*. Another solution is to read *ilaqqeūni*, pres. 3rd m.sg. subj., interpreting

al an “Umkehrschreibung”, but this would be quite surprising as the scribe uses the easier sign *la* in lines 7 and 9. The clause *ina ligni ša ilqeūni imaddad* clearly provides security for the lender but it should be stressed that its exact meaning is not certain without textual parallels.

15–16. “Ili-bišra son of Urad-Šerua”: this combination is not attested elsewhere. It is not certain whether Urad-Šerua, father of Aššur-išmanni, in our first text (A 320:28) has any relation with Urad-Šerua here. Be that as it may, we are not aware of any cogent evidence that would connect the men bearing the name Urad-Šerua in the two texts published above with the one whose archive was published by Postgate.³ On the other hand, it is interesting to observe the name being used so frequently around the same time (cf. Saporetti 1979a: 107–108 as eponym).

19. Marduk-našir is interestingly attested for the first time as an eponym here. Under which Assyrian king he served as eponym official is not known.⁴ The name Marduk-našir is not common in MA, see OMA 1: 315 which lists only two attestations from one document of the 14th century (KAJ 44:19, 23); there is one further attestation in MARV 4 67:4', from the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I.

³ Postgate 1988: 213.

⁴ For eponyms of the Middle Assyrian period see especially Saporetti 1979 and Freydank 1991. The unpublished Middle Assyrian documents housed in Istanbul may shed some further light on these officials.