

## Two N/LB documents from the British Museum —

I should like to thank the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to publish these texts.

BM 26528

1. D[UB-*pi*?] 12 GI<sup>mes</sup> É *ep-ši*
  2. *k[i]-i*<sup>1</sup> 2 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR KÙ.PAD.DU
  3. <sup>m</sup>ŠÁ1-MU DUMU <sup>m</sup>dAG-KAR<sup>er</sup>
  4. KI <sup>m</sup>LÚ.<sup>d</sup>*na-na-a* DUMU <sup>m</sup>*mi-šir-A+A*
  5. <sup>r</sup>*ki*<sup>1</sup>-*i* KÙ.BABBAR *ga-mir-ti id-din*
  6. *m[a]-hir a-pil za-ki*
  7. *ru-gúm-ma-[a ul]* <sup>r</sup>*i-ši*<sup>1</sup>
  8. <sup>r</sup>*ul*<sup>1</sup> *i-tur-ru-ma a-na a-ha-meš*
  9. <sup>r</sup>*ul*<sup>1</sup> [*i*]-*rag-gu-mu ma-ti-ma*
  10. AŠ EGIR<sup>mes</sup> *u<sub>4</sub>-me* AŠ ŠEŠ<sup>mes</sup>
  11. DUMU<sup>mes</sup> *kim-ti né-su-ti*
  12. *ù sa-la-ti šá* É <sup>m</sup>dAG-KAR<sup>er</sup>
  13. <sup>r</sup>*šá*<sup>1</sup> E<sub>11</sub>-*ma* AŠ UGU É *šu-a-ti*
  14. *ú-<sup>r</sup>da<sup>1</sup>-bu-bu ú-šad-ba-bu*
  15. [*i*]*n-nu-ú ú-paq-qa-ru*
  16. [*u*]*m-ma* É *ul na-din* KÙ.BABBAR
- Lo.E. 17. <sup>r</sup>*ul*<sup>1</sup> *ma-hir i-qab-bu-ú*
- r. 18. <sup>r</sup>*x*<sup>1</sup> [KÙ.BABBAR *im-hu*]-<sup>r</sup>*ru*<sup>1</sup> EN 12-TA.ÀM
  19. <sup>r</sup>*i*<sup>1</sup>-<sup>r</sup>*ta*<sup>1</sup>-*nap-pal*
  20. KI <sup>r</sup>2 GÍN<sup>1</sup> KÙ.BABBAR *ki-i* DIRIG SUM<sup>m</sup>
  21. [AŠ *ka*]-*nak* <sup>na</sup>.DUB *šu-a-ti*
  22. *a-na* I[G]I(?) <sup>m</sup>dAG-MU-*im-bi* DUMU <sup>m</sup>AŠ-SUR
  23. <sup>is</sup>GAR UMUŠ *bar-sipa*<sup>ki</sup>
  24. IGI <sup>m</sup>šá-*pi-ku* DUMU <sup>is</sup>MUK
  25. IGI <sup>m</sup>dU+GUR-TIN<sup>1(er)</sup> DUMU KIMIN
  26. <sup>m</sup>šu-x<sup>1</sup> -[...] DUMU <sup>m</sup>dEN-NIGIN<sup>r</sup>
  27. <sup>m</sup>*x*<sup>1</sup>-[...] A <sup>is</sup>MUK
  28. [...] DUMU <sup>m</sup>dAG-KAR<sup>er</sup>
  29. <sup>r</sup>*m*<sup>1</sup>[... DUMU] <sup>is</sup>MUK
  30. <sup>is</sup>DUB.SAR [*šá-<sup>r</sup>ti*]<sup>r</sup> [<sup>na</sup>]*DUB*
  31. <sup>m</sup>dAG-<sup>r</sup>SUM<sup>1(m)</sup> DUMU <sup>m</sup>AŠ-SUR
  32. *bár-sipa*<sup>ki</sup> <sup>is</sup>KIN U<sub>4</sub> 7 KAM
  33. MU [*x* KAM <sup>d</sup>A]G-MU-*iš-kun*
  34. [LUGAL] <sup>r</sup>E<sup>1</sup> (or [TIN.TI]R)<sup>ki</sup>

## Translation

<sup>1</sup>[tablet (=deed) (?)] of 12 reeds (a measure of length) of a built-on house plot. <sup>3</sup>Šākin-šumi son/descendant of Nabû-ēter <sup>3</sup>sold (lit. « gave ») <sup>4</sup>to (lit. « with ») Amēl-Nanâ descendant of Miš(i)rayyu <sup>2</sup>(for a sum) amounting to 2 minas of silver in pieces, <sup>5</sup>as the full price. <sup>6</sup>He has received (the purchase price), he is paid and has been quit (of claims). <sup>7</sup>There shall be [no] (basis) for claim. <sup>8</sup>They shall not initiate (reopen) litigation against each other. <sup>9</sup>Whenever <sup>10</sup>in the future any of the brothers, <sup>11</sup>sons, family, kin <sup>12</sup>or relatives of Nabû-ēter's house (= clan) <sup>13</sup>raises a claim concerning this house <sup>14</sup>or induces somebody to make a claim, <sup>15</sup>changes (revokes), lays a claim and declares : <sup>16</sup>« The house was not sold and the silver <sup>17</sup>was not received », <sup>18</sup>(the litigant) <sup>19</sup>shall pay <sup>18</sup>twelvefold the silver he has received.

<sup>20</sup>With two shekels of silver given as an additional payment.

<sup>21</sup> (Witnesses) at the sealing of this tablet :

<sup>22</sup>Before Nabû-šuma-imbi descendant of AŠ-SUR, <sup>23</sup>the governor of Borsippa ; <sup>24</sup>Before Šāpiku descendant of <sup>10</sup>MUK ; <sup>25</sup>Before Nergal-uballiṭ descendant of ditto ; <sup>26</sup>Šu (or Gimil)-x son/descendant of Nabû-ēter ; <sup>27</sup>x-[...] descendant of <sup>10</sup>MUK ; <sup>28</sup>[...] son/descendant of Nabû-ēter ; <sup>29</sup>[...] descendant of <sup>10</sup>MUK. <sup>30</sup>Scribe, writer of the tablet : <sup>31</sup>Nabû-iddina descendant of AŠ-SUR. <sup>32</sup>Borsippa, month VI, day 7, <sup>33</sup>year [x of Na]bû-šuma-iškun <sup>34</sup>[King] of Babylon.

## Commentary

**Line 4.** DUMU <sup>m</sup>mi-šir-A+A is so far the earliest member of this important family in Babylonia. It is noteworthy that this surname is recorded in Babylonia almost hundred years before Esarhaddon's conquest of Egypt, thereby causing a historical problem. As is well-known, there were relations between Babylonia and Egypt in the Amarna Age, but there is no evidence for any direct mutual contacts in the ensuing periods before both countries formed part of the Assyrian empire. This single occurrence is, of course, not adequate proof of direct contacts between Egypt and Babylonia during the 1st quarter of the 1st millennium B.C. The crystalization of Babylonian surnames presumably took place as early as the end of the 2nd millennium B.C. (see W. G. Lambert, *JCS* 16, 1962, 75f. ; cf. Zadok, *Lingua Aegyptia* 2, 1992, 144, bottom).

**Line 5.** For *ki-i* KÙ.BABBAR cf. J. A. Brinkman, in H. Behrens, D. M. Loding and M. T. Roth (eds.), DUMU-E<sub>2</sub>-DUB.BA-A, *Studies in honor of VO(A) ;<sup>o</sup>ke W. Sjöberg* (Philadelphia 1989 [henceforth *Fs. Sjöberg*]), 39, r. 3<sup>r</sup>.

**Lines 7-19.** The impeachment clause (*Anfechtungsklausel*) almost exactly conforms to « Formular A » of H. Petschow, *Kaufformulare*, 28, the only deviation being the omission of *paqirānu ušabšû* in line 15. Formular A is almost the only one found in the « pre-Chaldean » period. The only exceptions noticed by Petschow are three documents with « Formular C » (shorter than « A » and the later short and generalized « Formular B ») from Borsippa (*TuM* 2/3, 11, 12, 14). The formula in a document from 775 B.C. (reign of Marduk-erība, the

predecessor of Nabû-šuma-iškun; Brinkman, *Fs. Sjöberg*, 37-49; from Babylon) is even shorter than Petschow's «Formular C», thereby being the shortest recorded formula. The transaction recorded in that document is basically of the same type as that of this deed, but unfortunately most of the formula is broken, except for r. 5' [... za]-ki ru-gúm-ma-a NU.TUK [u<sup>a</sup>pa-qi]r-a-nu 12-TA.ÀM i-ta-*nap-pal*.

**Line 18.** There is no room for restoring *pa-qir-a-nu*.

**Line 20.** For the *atru* clause see Petschow, *Kaufformulare*, 25. A separate clause perhaps supports M. San Nicolò's assumption that the *atru* was paid as earnest money (a token for concluding the sale contract, *NRV* 54, n. 12 *ad* 33), but note Petschow's reservations (*Kaufformulare* 28).

**Line 22.** The same governor of Borsippa also occurs in *BM* 33428 (S.A. Strong, *JRAS* 1892, 354, i, 31, undated; re-edited by W.G. Lambert, *JAOS* 88, 1968, 126, Ib, 22), where he bore more titles (*nišakku* and *ērib-būti* of Nabû, 353, i, 9f., etc., see Brinkman, *PKB*, 225 with n. 1424; G. Frame, *JCS* 36, 1984, 74, 77, 78 with n. 60).

**Line 22, 31.** The surname <sup>m</sup>AŠ-SUR is recorded in Babylon, Borsippa, Dilbat and Uruk between 753 and the 5th century B.C. (see Frame, *JCS* 36, 74, 78; F. Joannès, *Archives de Borsippa: la famille Ea-ilūta-bāni. Etude d'un lot d'archives familiales en Babylonie du VIII<sup>e</sup> au V<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C.* Geneva 1989, 371 with refs.; *TCL* 12, 30, 5, 9, 12; 41, 11; *TEBR* 58, 23; *YOS* 6, 191, 2, 6, 11, 12; 17, 360, iv, 9; K. Kessler, Uruk: *Urkunden aus Privathäusern; die Wohnhäuser westlich des Enna Tempelbereichs* 1, Mainz 1991, 99f. *ad* 11, 6 [<sup>m</sup>AŠ]-; 18, 6, 14'; 19, 15; 32, 4; 56, 3; 58, 14'). Note Nabû-nādin-šumi (<sup>d</sup>PA-SUM<sup>m</sup>-MU) DUMU AŠ+SUR (prayer to Nabû, K. Watanabe, in H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa [ed.], *Essays on ancient Anatolia and its surrounding civilizations*, Wiesbaden 1995, 227). The surname is less frequently spelled <sup>m</sup>AŠ-SUR (*Dar.* 235, 14; *Nbn.* 113, 13; *TCL* 12, 41, 4). It was interpreted at its face value, i.e. Aššur, by Tallqvist (*NB* 16b; 10x). This interpretation was rejected by O. Krückmann, who read this combination of signs as a Sumerogram for *Ēda-ēter* (*TuM* 2/3, 25b; for an elaborate discussion see Brinkman, *PKB*, 225 with n. 1420). However, doubt is cast on the reading *Ēda-ēter* by the occurrence of Nabû-ušallim (<sup>d</sup>AG-GI) son of Nabû-mukīn-apli (<sup>d</sup>AG-DU-A) descendant of <sup>m</sup>AŠ-SUR<sup>ki</sup> (witness, Borsippa, 13.IV.510/09 B.C.; *BM* 29484, 9f., unpubl.; archive of Šaddinnu s. of Balassu desc. of Bēliyau). The 1st element is exclusively spelled with AŠ and not with AŠ (which is much more common in N/LB), presumably because the toponym is exclusively written with AŠ. In addition, among the dozens of occurrences of this surname there is not a single spelling with -KAR<sup>er</sup>. Note that this deed has -KAR<sup>er</sup> for *-ēter* (in Nabû-). This much may be argued for the case of reading this surname as *Aššur*. Admittedly, it should not be forgotten that only a single occurrence out of many is written with the determinative *ki*. Moreover, it would be difficult to apply the reading Aššur in the only occurrence of this anthroponym as a given name, viz. <sup>m</sup>AŠ-SUR A <sup>m</sup>U.MUK (last witness, Babylon, 1st

year of Kandalānu, i.e. 647/6 B.C. ; *Vs* 5, 3, E), where a common Babylonian anthroponym like *Ēda-ētir* seems more likely. On the whole, it would seem too optimistic to state that the reading of this common surname is finally settled.

**Line 27.** Surface effaced, so there is no telling whether *IGI* stood there.

**Line 33.** For the king Nabû-šuma-iškun (c. 760-748 B.C.) see Brinkman, *PKB*, 224ff. The same spelling of the RN is also recorded in *BM* 33428 (the spellings are discussed by Brinkman, *PKB*, 224, n. 1408).

**Line 34.** LUGAL or LUGAL E (*BRM* 1, 2, 3); LUGAL TIN.TIR<sup>ki</sup> (*Vs* 1, 36, iv, 13, from Borsippa).

BM 59568 (82-7-14, 3978)

16.IV.488/7 B.C., land sale

1. BÁN ŠE.NUMUN A.ŠÀ EDIN É URU *e-la-an* KÁ I<sub>7</sub> GÚ.DU<sub>8</sub>.A<sup>ki</sup>
  2. *la-bi-ru* GABA KÁ.GAL <sup>d</sup>*iš-tar pi-hat* TIN.TIR<sup>ki</sup>
  3. ÚS AN.TA IM SI.SÁ ÚS.SA.DU <sup>m</sup>NUM-*a na-din* A.ŠÀ
  4. ÚS KI.TA IM.U<sub>x</sub>.LU ÚS.SA.DU <sup>m</sup>dAG-ÚRU-šú DUMU <sup>m</sup>ŠITIM
  5. SAG AN.TA IM.MAR.TU ÚS.SA.DU <sup>m</sup>zu-um-*ba-a na-din* A.ŠÀ
  6. SAG KI.TA IM.KUR.RA ÚS.SA.DU <sup>m</sup>zu-um-*ba-a na-din* A.ŠÀ
  7. ŠU.NIGIN BÁN(*sūtu*) ŠE.NUMUN A.ŠÀ *šu-a-ti it-ti* <sup>m</sup>zu-um-*ba-a*
  8. DUMU *šá* <sup>m</sup>dU+GUR-SÙH-KAR<sup>er</sup> <sup>m</sup>dEN-*ú-bal-liṭ* DUMU *šá*
  9. <sup>m</sup>re-e-*mu-tu* {*ki-i* <sup>m</sup>NU[M] *a-na* 10 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR }
  10. KILAM *im-bi-e-ma* 1 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR *i-šá-am*
  11. *a-na ši-mi gam-ru-tú* ù 1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
  12. *at-ra id-din-šú*
- 
13. ŠU.NIGIN 1 MA.NA 1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR KÙ.PAD.DU {*i-na*}
  14. *i-na qá-at* <sup>m</sup>dEN-*ú-bal-liṭ* DUMU *šá*
  15. <sup>m</sup>re-e-*mu-tu* <sup>m</sup>NUM-*a* DUMU *šá* <sup>m</sup>dU+GUR-SÙH-KAR<sup>er</sup>
  16. *ši-mi* A.ŠÀ-šú *ka-sa-ap ga-mir-ti*
  17. *ma-hi-ir a-pi-il ru-gúm-ma*<sup>1</sup>
  18. *ul i-ši ul i-tu-ru-ma*<sup>1</sup>
- 
- r. 19. *a-na a-h[a-meš ul i-rag-gu-mu]*
  20. *ma-ti-ma i* (text MA)-*n[a]* Š[<sup>EŠ</sup><sup>mes</sup> DUMU<sup>mes</sup> (*kim-ti né-su-ti ù sa-la-ti*) *šá* É <sup>m</sup>NUM-*a*]
  21. *šá i-rag-gu-mu um-ma* A.ŠÀ
  22. *ul na-din-ma kàs-pa* <sup>w</sup>l *ma-hi-ir*<sup>1</sup>
  23. *pa-qí-ra-nu* KÙ.BABBAR *im-hu-ru a-di* 12-TA.ÀM
  24. *i-ta-nap-pal ŠE.NUMUN at-ra u ma-ṭu ki-ma*
  25. KILAM-šú-*nu a-ha-meš ip-pa-lu*
- 
26. AŠ *ma-har* <sup>m</sup>ú-*su-par-ra* DI.KU<sub>5</sub> DUMU *šá* <sup>m</sup>hu-*ma-a-za-ta*
  27. <sup>m</sup>dAG-*mu-še-ti-iq*-<UD.>DA DI.KU<sub>5</sub> DUMU *šá* <sup>m</sup>ap-*la-a*

28. <sup>m</sup>dAG-it-tan-na DI.KU<sub>5</sub> DUMU šá <sup>m</sup>re-mu-tu  
 29. <sup>m</sup>dEN-ú-bal-liṭ DI.KU<sub>5</sub> DUMU šá <sup>m</sup>bár-sipa<sup>ki</sup>-A+A  
 30. <sup>m</sup>šad-din-nu DUB.SAR DUMU <sup>m</sup>DÛ<sup>cs</sup>-DINGIR  
 31. <sup>m</sup>mi-nu-ú-a-na-<sup>d</sup>EN-da-nu DUB.SAR  
 32. <sup>r</sup>DUMU<sup>1</sup> <sup>m</sup>MU-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU KÁ.DINGIR.RA<sup>ki</sup> <sup>m</sup>ŠU  
 33. U<sub>4</sub> 16 KAM MU 35 KAM <sup>m</sup>da-ri-ia-muš  
 34. LUGAL KÁ.DINGIR.RA<sup>ki</sup> (text : nu) LUGAL KUR.KUR  
 35. [UM]BIN <sup>m</sup>NUM-a na-din A.ŠĀ [ki-ma na<sub>4</sub> KIŠIB]-šú

(nailmarks on both ends of U.E. ; Lo.E. mostly effaced)

### Translation

<sup>1</sup>One seah (*sūtu*) of arable land (farmland), steppeland, area of the settlement, upstream from the gate of the <sup>2</sup>Old Cutha canal opposite the city gate of Istar (in) the district of Babylon ; <sup>3</sup>its upper (long) side on the north, bordering on (property of) Zumbā, the seller of the field ; <sup>4</sup>its lower (long) side on the south, bordering on (property of) Nabû-ušuršu descendant of the House Builder ; <sup>5</sup>its upper (short) side on the west, bordering on (property of) Zumbā, the seller of the field ; <sup>6</sup>its lower (short) side on the east, bordering on (property of) Zumbā, the seller of the field. <sup>7</sup>The total is one seah of arable land of that field. Together with Zumbā <sup>8</sup>son of Nergal-ina-tēšî-eṭir, Bēl-uballiṭ <sup>9</sup>son of Rēmūtu {Zumbā for ten shekels of silver} <sup>10</sup>declared the equivalent (rate of exchange to be) one mina of silver and he bought <sup>11</sup>at the full price ; and <sup>12</sup>he has given him <sup>13</sup>one shekel of silver <sup>12</sup> as an additional payment. <sup>15</sup>Zumbā son of Nergal-ina-tēšî-eṭir <sup>17</sup>has received <sup>14</sup>from the hand of Bēl-uballiṭ son of <sup>15</sup>Rēmūtu <sup>16</sup>the full price in silver for his field, <sup>13</sup>altogether a sum of one mina (and) one shekel of silver in pieces. <sup>17</sup>He is cleared. <sup>18</sup>There shall be no (basis) for claim. They shall not initiate (reopen) <sup>19</sup>litigation against each other. <sup>20</sup>Whenever any of the brothers, sons, family, kin or relatives of Zumbā <sup>21</sup>raises a claim and declares : « The field <sup>22</sup>was not sold and the silver was not received », <sup>23</sup>the claimant <sup>24</sup>will repay <sup>23</sup>twelfold the silver he has received. <sup>24</sup>(If) the field is larger or smaller (than indicated) <sup>25</sup>they compensate each other with respect to the price.

<sup>26</sup>(This contract was concluded) before Usuparra, judge, son of Humāzāta ; <sup>27</sup>Nabû-mušētiq-uddē, judge, son of Aplā ; <sup>28</sup>Nabû-ittannu, judge, son of Rēmūtu ; <sup>29</sup>Bēl-uballiṭ, judge, son of Barsippayyu ; <sup>30</sup>Šaddinu, scribe, descendant of Ēpeš-ilu. <sup>31</sup>Minū-ana-Bēl-dānu, scribe, <sup>32</sup>son of Iddina-Marduk.

Babylon, month IV, 33day 16, year 34 of Darius, <sup>34</sup>King of Babylon, King of Lands.

<sup>35</sup>Nailmark of Zumbā, the seller of the field (is affixed) [as] his [seal].

## Commentary

**Line 1.** The reading EDIN É was confirmed by Dr. M. Jursa. A.ŠÀ EDIN also occurs in Brinkman, *Fs. Sjöberg*, 39, 1 ; *e-la-an* « above, upstream from ».

**Line 4.** Possibly identical with Nabû-ušuršu, s. of Iddina-Bêl desc. of Itinnu (*Vs* 3, 136, presumably from Babylon, as the delivery took place there ; 498/7 B.C.).

**Line 9.** The *ki-i* should have been placed before 1 MA.NA, the normal word order being *kī* (sum) KILLAM *imbēma išām*.

**Line 14.** *qá* is rare in N/LB, except for « Chaldean » royal inscriptions (cf. von Soden and Röllig, *Syllabar*, 32 :170).

**Lines 18ff.** Short formulary (« B », cf. Petschow, *Kaufformulare*, 29f., 36f.).

**Line 19.** There is space for at least another ten signs.

**Line 20.** There is space for at least another six signs.

**Line 26f.** The determinative <sup>16</sup> is deliberately omitted. *Ú-su-par-ra*, is possibly OIran. \**Hu-spara-* « having a good, beautiful, fine shield ». His patronym is OIran \**Hu-āzāta-* (with a glide, Av. *hv-āzāta-*) « very, right noble », which is extant as an anthroponym on an Aramaic seal of Achaemenian age (*Hwzt*, see M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* 2, Giessen 1908, 400 ; sent to him by F. Delitzsch in February 1907). Note that the judge with an Iranian name and an Iranian patronym is listed before his three colleagues bearing Babylonian names ; he might have chaired the collegium of judges.

**Line 30.** Šaddinnu, s. of Šāpik-zēri desc. of Ēpeš-ili acted as the first witness in *Camb.* 31, 13 (Babylon, 7.1.529/8 B.C. ; Egibi archive). The shape of SAR here (followed by an erasure of one sign) is different than that of SAR in the following line.

The description of the property as « field of the steppe, area of the settlement » (line 2) is a *contradictio in adjecto*. In addition, the price is 10 shekels (= 1/6 mina) in line 9, but one mina in lines 10, 13. Due to these discrepancies, I think that this cannot be an actual deed, but just a draft. It was written, in all probability, by an apprentice of a scribe (therefore two scribes are listed ; the first was presumably the master), the more so in view of the errors and inconsistencies in writing common appellatives and names.

Ran Zadok (08-01-97)