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HIRED LABOUR IN THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE *

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For the understanding of any society it is vital to have a grasp of the key principles of its economic basis. Yet for the Neo-Assyrian Empire our knowledge can only be described as marginal in this respect, unlike for the Neo-Babylonian Empire where the field of economic history has always been popular; at the root of this lies of course the fact that the available primary documentation is extremely different: the business records of temple households and private family firms from several major Babylonian cities, which constitute the vast majority of the known Neo-Babylonian sources and offer a wealth of information for the economic historian, have no parallel in the finds yielded at Nineveh and Kalḫu, cities that are intimately linked with the Assyrian king and certainly not representative of all of Assyria or even all of its urban environments. But it is the texts from Nineveh and Kalḫu, originating mainly from the royal archives, that have shaped our appreciation of Assyria in the first millennium more than any other body of texts. This explains in part why economic key issues, such as whether hired labour even existed in Assyria's economy, have remained ignored or left undecided. It is this question that I will try to address in this paper, and to anticipate my conclusion, the answer is an emphatic yes.

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Only J.N. Postgate has previously dealt with the subject, in his important study “Employer, Employee and Employment in the Neo-Assyrian Empire.” While published in 1987 in the volume *Labor in the Ancient Near East* (edited by M.A. Powell), this work had its origins much earlier in an invited lecture for the Ancient Near Eastern section of the 1978 *Congress of the International Association of Economic Historians* in Edinburgh, organized by I.M. Diakonoff (cf. Postgate 1987, p. 257). Postgate had been asked to present his views on the topic of “Non-Slave Labour in Assyria”, but — given the bias of the available documentary record towards large-scale organized labour and his reluctance to “become involved in the problems of definition” of socio-economic classes — had preferred to speak on the more general subject of “The Organization of Labour in Assyria”.¹ At that time, there was hardly any material available to throw light on the topic of what Postgate labeled “the employment of free persons”. To quote the author himself (Postgate 1987, p. 260):

The “self-employed” of Assyria must have existed as an important part of the economy, whether they were farmers, craftsmen with small businesses, or merchants. However, in the complete absence of documentary evidence we have to pass over them with this bare mention.

And in a footnote to this, he quotes from Diakonoff’s response to his 1978 Edinburgh paper:

For this summary dismissal of the self-employed I was taken to task by Diakonoff. It is true, as he commented, that we should like to know the answer to such questions about them as: did such a group exist at all? Did they supplement their own labour with that of slaves? Were they numerous or of marginal importance? To some extent I have given an opinion on these points, directly or indirectly, but my principal line of defense is that we just do not have the evidence to answer the questions.

Postgate then summarily presented the “various situations in which free persons are temporarily subordinated to other employers” (Postgate 1987, p. 260) and briefly discussed four specific circumstances:

1. I am able to elaborate on the background of the 1987 paper due to the fact that some years ago J.N. Postgate very kindly provided me with a copy of his original 1978 manuscript, together with the response of I.M. Diakonoff. I wish to thank him again for his generosity in sharing this material.

1. Free persons working for hire: “This group would include those attached to one particular employer on a more or less permanent, but voluntary basis (i.e., neither under economic or social coercion), and receiving a regular wage (not rations). It must also include those, virtually self-employed, who undertook piece-work or contract work wherever they found it (Postgate 1987, p. 261).”²
2. Free persons attached to institutions or households (i.e., receiving regular rations for regular service [hardly represented in the documentary record at all]).
3. Free persons temporarily on state service (i.e., *ilku* and *dullu ša šarri*; see Postgate 1974, pp. 63-79, 218-229).
4. Free persons temporarily enslaved (i.e., pledges and debt slavery; see now Radner 2001, pp. 269-271, 280-284).

I will focus on the subject of labour for hire, Postgate’s first category, for two reasons. Firstly and crucially, the sheer existence of one group that Postgate included in this labour category was not at all accepted by Diakonoff in his response to the 1978 paper. To quote from the published version (Postgate 1987, p. 261 fn. 7):

Diakonoff feels that this group [i.e., those attached to one particular employer on a more or less permanent, but voluntary basis (KR)] “is purely imaginary. I cannot think of any real basis on which such a subgroup might have arisen”. I could not myself be so emphatic: can we really be sure that it was not possible for a (legally) free Assyrian to work regularly for another free Assyrian without the coercion of debtor: creditor relationship, but more permanently than a seasonally hired worker or one carrying out a specific piece of contract work?

As Postgate at that time could not offer any solid evidence for his point of view and as one of the most influential economic historians of the time was not willing to even consider the possibility that such a form of labour should have existed meant that the argument has remained a matter of belief ever since, and the unresolved issue of whether there was hired labour in the Neo-Assyrian Empire has been ignored ever since.³

2. As I have previously dealt with the documentary record for work contracts, I will not discuss this aspect again. For the production of bricks see Radner 1997-98, pp. 160-161; for building work see SAA 6, 21, and cf. Radner 1997a, p. 259; for harvest work see Radner 1997b, pp. 14-17; Radner 2004, pp. 68-69, 73; for the processing of barley see Radner 2004, pp. 69, 76-79.
3. Tellingly, there is no entry for “Miete. Neuassyrisch” in the RIA, while the Old Assyrian, Old Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian evidence is discussed in some detail by Veenhof 1993-97, Stol 1993-97 and Ries 1993-97 (see s.v. “Personenmiete”).

My second and more pragmatic reason is that the amount of relevant sources has dramatically increased in recent years. This material stems from the city of Assur, and while some pertinent texts were found during the Iraqi excavation of 1979-80 and the German excavations of 1990, the bulk of the evidence was unearthed already between 1903–1914 by Walter Andrae, yet has only just become available since the resumed publication of the materials from the 7th century private archives in the 1990ies. In contrast to this, the substantial new text finds from Syria (Dūr-Katlimmu, Til Barsip, Būr-marīna) have failed to provide us with additional data for this subject, mirroring the lack of information to be derived from the long-familiar archive of Guzāna and also of Nineveh and Kalḫu.

Yet as we shall see, the phenomenon of hired labour is certainly not restricted to the city of Assur. We have to bear in mind that the archives discovered in Assur's residential areas are the business files of families of craftsmen and specialists attached to the Aššur temple, rather than those of high ranking officials of the royal administration attested in the archives known from elsewhere. Through their position, the latter may have had other ways to remedy a shortage of personnel at their disposal, methods that unlike in the case of the Assur families did not require a formal legal relationship — with a record documenting it — to be set up: the new evidence for hired labour from Assur stems exclusively from legal documents.

The Assyrian terminology for hired labour

Our task begins with an identification of the terminology that the Assyrians employed to refer to hired labour. All pertinent vocabulary is derived from the verb *agāru*, “to hire”, which is used in the *G* stem and the *N* stem (passive). Attested are the terms *munnaḡru*, “hired worker”, *nāḡurtu*, “labour as a hired worker”, and, by far most widely used, *igrē*, “wages (for hired labour)”. The true nature of these wages, however, is difficult to establish without a context. As we shall see, some hired men, such as sailors and mercenaries, were in full-time service while others, such as goldsmiths and tailors, were employed by palace and temple and worked for hire on the side, charging a fee for their services.

agāru G SAA 15, 2, 6: *e-ga-ru-ni-ni*.

agāru N SAA 1, 223, 9: *in-na-gu-ru*; SAA 2, 6, iii 27': *in-na-^rga¹-ru-u-ni*.

*munnaḡru*⁴ SAA 1, 223, 6: LÚ*.mu-un-n[a-ag-r]u-te.

4. The term *munnaḡru* is only attested in CT 53, 87 = SAA 1, 223, and was first recognized by Postgate 1987, p. 261.

*nāgurtu*⁵ SAA 1, 207, 5: *na-gu-ur-te*; SAA 5, 46, 7': *na-gúr-te*; SAA 5, 105, 18: *na-gúr-tú*; SAA 5, 105, rev. 3: *na-gúr-te*; StAT 1, 52, 10: *na-gúr-ta-[ka]*.

Whose services are for hire, who works for wages?

We will investigate who worked for hire by looking at the available evidence, spanning 150 years, in chronological order.⁶ The nature of that evidence, although small in number, is quite diverse: we are able to use legal contracts, letters, both private and from the royal correspondence, administrative notes and an international treaty.

The wide range of different sources to a certain extent compensates us for the lack of quantity as we find a variety of occupations attested: working for hire are military men, namely bodyguards and scouts, craftsmen, namely goldsmiths, tailors and specialists fit to assist an exorcist, as well as — implicitly attested — sailors, caravan staff and harvesters.

The earliest references date to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744–725). It is a legal document from the Governor's Palace in Kalḫu (no. 1 in Appendix B) in the form of a receipt for some copper which is described as the compensation for somebody's wages. The phrasing makes clear that the affair had been subject to a court case and was settled with this agreement; although not explicitly stated, the archival context suggests that the case was decided by the governor of Kalḫu.⁷ In the commentary of the text's edition, Postgate found the fact that the man in question was introduced as the servant of another man worth of mention;⁸ but as those two are the only parties referred to by name, it is impossible to know from what kind of work arrangement the financial claim resulted and who actually satisfied it.

During the reign of Sargon II (721–705), our data stems from various letters to the king. Hence, a dispatch of the governor of Arrapha informs us that one could hire bodyguards: "Concerning the guard about whom the king, my lord, wrote to me and whom the servants of the king, my lord, have hired for me: he will set forth tomorrow".⁹ The letter continues with information on a planned trip by boat, leading through dangerous

5. The term *nāgurtu* was identified and discussed by Radner 1999a, pp. 174-175.

6. This will not duplicate Postgate 1987, p. 261, as he only used two of these texts: the Kalḫu administrative list ND 2310 and the Sargon letter CT 53, 87 (= SAA 1, 223).

7. The document shares this feature with another relevant legal text from Kalḫu (no. 2 in the Appendix) that also portrays a hired work arrangement as the outcome of a court case.

8. Postgate 1973, p. 126.

9. SAA 15, 2, 4–7: [*ina* UGU LÚ*.š]á-EN.NUN ša LUGAL *be-li* [*iš-pur-an-ni*]i ša LÚ*.İR.MEŠ [*ša* LUGA]L *be-lí-ia e-ga-ru-ni-ni* [*ina ši*]-a-ri ú-nam-ma-áš.

territory to Babylonia; the guard may well have been hired as protection for this enterprise.

There is also evidence for scouts hiring out their services. An official informs his king about the reaction of Ariyê and Arišâ, the co-regents of Assyria's northern neighbour and vassal state, the small mountain kingdom of Kumme, to a royal order concerning a plan to subjugate their subjects residing in Assyria to the standard deportation practice:

The king, our lord, he is the master of all. What can we say (against his orders)? The king, our lord, may take the men from Kumme who hold houses in the countries (i.e., who live in the provinces of the Assyrian Empire) to wherever is good (in the king's opinion), but the scouts from Kumme who have gone away from Kumme in hired service have not yet come back: they are still there (i.e., in Assyria). The king, our lord, should ask and investigate — maybe they are among those (i.e., the men from Kumme living in Assyria) who are getting deported.¹⁰

The author of the letter then counsels Sargon to take this request seriously, these scouts being valuable assets when operating from home where they played an important role in gathering intelligence about Assyria's arch enemy Urartu:

The king, my lord, should return them to Kumme. The king, my lord, knows how they are withdrawn from (their regular working environment in) Urartu and that they are in Assyria (only) in hired service.¹¹

The scouts from Kumme are quite clearly compensated for their services with payment, and this links our present topic to the issue of mercenaries in the Assyrian army: while the presence of foreign troops in Saite Egypt and the Neo-Babylonian Empire is well attested, this reference from the late 8th century is valuable evidence for the fact that already Assyria's army relied on the paid service of professional soldiers from outside the Empire.

10. SAA 5, 105, 11–23: [ma]-a LUGAL be-lí-i-ni be-lí š[a] gab-bi [šu]-ú ma-a a-ni-nu mi-nu ni-qab-bi ma-a LÚ*.ku-ma-a-a-e am-mar ina KUR.KUR.MEŠ É.MEŠ ú-kal-lu-u-ni LUGAL be-lí-(ni) É ša-bu-u-ni lu-bi-li ù LÚ*.ku-ma-a-a-e LÚ*.da-ia-a-li ša TA* URU.ku-me a-na na-gúr-tú il-li-ku-u-ni ú-dí-ni la il-la-ku-[u-ni] am-ma-ka-ma šú-nu LUGAL be-[lí-ni] liš-al lu-ši-ši i-s[u-ri] qa-ni am-mu-te ú-šá-ga-lu-šú-nu.
11. SAA 5, 105, 24–rev. 3: LUGAL be-lí ina URU.ku-me lu-sa-ḫi-ir-šú-nu LUGAL be-lí ú-da a-ki TA* ŠA KUR.URI bat-qu-ni ina KUR-aš-šur a-na na-gúr-te šú-nu-ni.

As soon as the subjects of a foreign ruler lived and worked in Assyria there was room for potential conflict. That a vassal's subjects working in Assyria as hired hands could fall victim to the Assyrian authorities is attested in another letter to Sargon, sent by the upset ruler of a northern vassal state, possibly Šubria: "They (i.e., the Assyrians) attack my cities. They also capture my servants who work for hire in the countries (i.e., in the provinces of the Assyrian Empire)!"¹² It would seem likely that the vassal king's subject were drafted into military service which, however, they did not owe to the king of Assyria but to their own master, at least according to the latter's views.

People working for hire were clearly quite common during Sargon's reign and could be found far from their place of origin. While we learn about foreigners working in Assyria from the two letters just discussed, the hirelings mentioned in yet another letter from Sargon's reign are Assyrian subjects living in Assyria, if far from their original home. What kind of work the people from the town of Šadikanni (mod. Tell Ağağa on the Ḫābūr) were employed to do was not mentioned when an official from that region wrote to Sargon, but the author took care to make absolutely clear that they were good tax-paying citizens who should be treated accordingly:

The king, my lord, knows that the men from Šadikanni are hired workers; they work in the countries of the king (i.e., in the provinces of the Assyrian Empire). They are no fugitives: they perform their tax obligations and supply king's men (i.e., conscripts for the Assyrian army) from their midst.¹³

The same group of people may well be the subject of the letter of another official from the Ḫābūr region to the king, too fragmentarily preserved to offer any further information.¹⁴

A source from the time of Esarhaddon (680–669) shows that, not surprisingly, sailors are among those professions who worked for hire. This is clear from one of the stipulations found in the treaty with Ba'alū, king of Tyre, that grants the Tyrian ships access to the Mediterranean harbours under Assyrian control; it is specifically stated that the ships and their crew should not be harmed: "Nobody will [cause] injustice [to those]

12. SAA 5, 46, 6'-8': URU.MEŠ-ni-ia i-[kaš-šu-du] IR.MEŠ-ni-ia] ša a-na na-gúr-te [ina KUR.KUR.MEŠ] ú-šab-bu-tú.

13. SAA 1, 223, 3–13: LUGAL be-lí ú-da ki-i URU.š[e-d]i-kan-a-a LÚ*.mu-na-n[a-ag-r]u-te šu-nu-u-ni ina KUR.KUR.MEŠ ša LUGAL in-na-gu-ru [l]a ḫal-qu-te šú-nu [i]l-ku il-lu-ku [TA* š]À-bi-šú-nu LÚ.ÉRIN.MEŠ-MAN [id-d]u-nu.

14. SAA 1, 207, 4–5: LUGAL be-lí ú-d[a] ki-[i] na-gu-ur-tú [...], "The king, my lord, knows that hired labor [...]."

who are hired (as the ship's crew) nor impair their ships."¹⁵ The treaty between Esarhaddon and Ba'alû firmly places the ships and their crews in a predominately commercial context, but the sailors' duties are in many ways comparable to the tasks of the scouts and bodyguards attested in the Sargon letters: long-distance trade, whether overland or aboard a ship, was always a risky enterprise that needed armed protection.

The evidence for hired labour during the reign of Assurbanipal (668–ca. 630) comes from a very different world and stems from two letters of the scholarly correspondence. That one could hire a tailor and pay him to sew one's clothes is to be gained from the letter of an unhappy scholar, who eloquently pleads with the king to rescue him from his dire straits; one of the more graphic examples for his increasingly troublesome financial situation is: "(I swear) that I can afford neither shoes nor the wages for a tailor!"¹⁶ If the writer of this letter is correctly identified with the exorcist Urdu-Gula, then we find another reference to his lack of proper clothing and, more importantly for our purposes, to wages paid to an exorcist's helper in a second piece of his correspondence: after listing various garments that a certain scholar has secured for himself Urdu-Gula contrasts these riches with his own poverty and that of his colleagues:

And we emerged with empty hands! How can we possibly remedy our lack of clothing? When will we receive our wages, we who not even command wages as high as his assistant?¹⁷

That the work of goldsmiths was for hire, too, is to be gained from a 7th century administrative text from Kalḫu that lists various expenses, mostly for foodstuff such as bread, wine and meat; the last item listed, however, is of a different nature: "One shekel (of silver): wages of the goldsmith."¹⁸ This reference illustrates our difficulty to distinguish full-time employment from services rendered for a view; it is likely that the latter was the case here, and the goldsmith in question may well have been part of a palace or temple household otherwise. Nabû-balāssu-iqbi from Assur was such a goldsmith: while being part of the goldsmiths' guild of the Aššur temple his work was also for hire elsewhere as he needed money to settle outstanding debts. We learn this from a letter to

15. SAA 2, 5, iii 26'–28': [ša] in-na-ga-ru-u-ni me-me-ni pi-ir-k[u ep-pa-āš-ma] ina šà GIŠ.MÁ.MEŠ-šú-nu la i-ḫa-ši.

16. SAA 10, 294, rev. 27-28: šúm-mu am-mar KUŠ.E.SÍR am-mar ig-re ša LÚ.TÚG.KA.KÉŠ ma-aš-ša-ku-ni.

17. SAA 10, 289, rev. 9'-13': ù a-né-en-nu TA* a-ḫi-in-n[i ra-aq-te] né-ta-li-a bat-qu ša TÚG.gu-zip-pi-ni ina šà mi-i-ni ni-ik-šur TA* a-a-ka ni-iš-ši-a ig-re-e ša am-mar LÚ.TUR-šú a-ni-nu la ma-aš-ša-ni-ni.

18. ND 2310, 22': 1 GÍN ig-re ša LÚ.SIMUG.KÛ.GI. For an edition see Postgate 1979a, pp. 100-101, and cf. Postgate 1987, p. 261 with fn. 9.

Nabû-zēru-iddina, a high-ranking goldsmith of the Aššur temple during Assurbanipal's reign who is informed about Nabû-balāssu-iqbi's activities by one of his subordinates: "I said to Nabû-balāssu-iqbi: 'Where do you work for hire?' He answered: '[...]. I will pay off the old debts!' ".¹⁹ This last reference makes it clear that working for hire could be the result of financial difficulties and was then surely meant to supplement the basic income drawn from working one's own land or from regular sustenance from the public sector. Given the patchy documentation it would be hasty to take this reference as an indication for the emergence of an urban proletariat in the Assyrian centers of the 7th century; however, it is important to be aware of the fact that working for hire was a possible way of supplementing and even replacing one's income.

Another case of hired labour in the reign of Assurbanipal is documented in a legal text from the archive of Šamaš-šarru-ušur of Kalḫu, a royal eunuch whose private business activities included a strong interest in poultry (no. 2. in Appendix B). The city overseer of Kalḫu settled a court case between this man and one Mannu-kī-Arbail by establishing a work relationship between the eunuch and an individual under Mannu-kī-Arbail's authority (described as a LÚ.TUR, "assistant, helper"). For his services, the man was to receive wages, payable to his superior. These "wages", however, were a legal fiction; in reality, they constituted the contested sum. The work relationship was to end after a certain period, and the man was then free to leave. This illustrates the main difference between such an arrangement and the very common institution of pledge: a pledged person was placed with the creditor in order to cover the debtor's interest, and that person's discharge could only be brought about by paying back the debt sum. Nevertheless, the relationship between employer and employee can hardly be described as voluntary; this reminds us once again of the wide semantic range of the term *igrē*, "wages".

This is useful when we consider the documentation from the two decades before the fall of Assyria, i.e. the reigns of Assurbanipal's successors Aššur-ētel-ilāni and Sîn-šar-ru-iškun. No less than 21 legal contracts from the city of Assur document the hiring of men — never women! — for periods between one and ten months (nos. 3–23 in Appendix B). For our purposes, these texts are the most instructive source material presently available, as they provide us with information about both parties, employer and employee, the length of the labour agreement and the amount of wages. The tables in Appendix A are meant to provide an overview over the archival context (a), the length of hired work contracts (b), the wages per months and special arrangements that might ex-

19. VAT 8646 = StAT 1, 52, 9–15: *a-na* ^{ld}_{PA-TI.LA-su-E} *mu-uk na-gúr-ta-[ka] a-le-e ma-[a x x x m]a-a da-[x x h]a-bu-le la-bi-ru-[i] ú-šal-lam.*

plain the considerable variations (c), as well as the distribution of the contracts over the seasons (d) and the years (e).

Only some of these texts, however, offer a clue to the nature of the work the hired hand was to perform. One text (no. 4 in Appendix B) states explicitly that the hired worker was to bring in his employer's harvest; the contract is for only one month and was established in December — at a time when bringing in the crops was a good half year in the future: December was rather the season to think about planting the seed. As the text mentions the — unusual — fact that the hired worker had already received his complete wages, the man in all probability had found himself short of cash and resolved this problem by pledging his labour for the busiest time of the agricultural year to somebody who was willing to help him out right now. It has to be noted that in Neo-Assyrian debt notes the debtor's obligation to provide harvesters during harvest time often replaces the provision of interest,²⁰ taking advantage of the debtor's financial situation to secure additional workers at harvest time; we can therefore safely assume that the hired worker's decision to pledge his labour months before the next harvest was to his employer's advantage. Indeed, as we shall see, the wage of one shekel of silver for a month's work is at the bottom scale of the wages attested in the Assur material.

Four other Assur contracts contain the stipulation *alaktu ušēša ušērab*, “he will make the caravan leave and enter”, *alaktu ušērab ušēša*, “he will make the caravan enter and leave”, or *alaktu ušērab*, “he will make the caravan enter” (nos. 12, 13, 15 and 22 in Appendix B); the point of reference is certainly the city of Assur. Whether we should take the variants of the clause as an indication to what the specific duties of the employee were to be, or whether these differences in phrasing should be disregarded is difficult to decide at present, but it would seem quite possible that staff members were hired at various stages of the enterprise, some when the trek was leaving Assur, others when setting out to return to the city. That *alaktu* indeed means “caravan; trading mission” is clear from a group of private letters from a contemporary archive in Assur that deal with commercial activities conducted further up the Tigris in the “mountains” and feature a characteristic introduction formula. After the usual greeting formula the sender assures the addressee about the good state of their joint business: “The whole caravan is well. You may be happy!”²¹

20. For references see. fn. 2, above

21. IM 124717 = Ass. 1990-103, 4–5: *DI-mu a-lak-tú gab-bu šà-ba-ka lu DÙG.GA-ka*. Similar in IM 124703 = Ass. 1990-51, envelope 2 // inner tablet 4–5: *DI-mu a-lak-tú šà-ba-ka lu DÙG.GA-ka*, “The caravan is well. You may be happy!”, in IM 124686 = Ass. 1990-23, 3: *DI-mu a-l[ak-tú]*, “The caravan is well”. and in IM 124709 = Ass. 1990-67, 5–6: *DI-mu a-lak-ti-ni gab-bu šà-ba-ku-nu lu DÙG-ku-nu*, “Our whole caravan is well. You may be happy!”. I will publish these texts in the final excavation report

The men hired according to the four Assur contracts would seem to have been part of trade caravans leaving from Assur, and their duties can be easily compared with the body guards, scouts and sailors who are attested in the Sargon letters and the Esarhad-don treaty as professionals whose work was for hire: the men employed to go on long-distance trading missions will have been expected to find their way from Assur to their destination and back again, to man the boats and rafts constructed out of two types of popular merchandise, wine skins and wood, whenever using the river was possible²², and at all times to guard the merchandise and funds with their lives. Their wages are in the top region of the Assur wage scale (see Table c in Appendix A), and it seems likely that the other contracts with similar arrangements for the appointment (seven to ten months) and wages (2–3 1/2 shekels per month) also deal with caravan staff members, the difference in payment perhaps reflecting the level of responsibility and experience. The generally high wages attested in this group of documents reflect the fact that travelling always meant putting one's life in danger, and the employees were thus compensated with payments that are at least twice as high as the going rate for harvesting work.

The caravan contracts are all dated between late September/early October and late December/early January, i.e. the more quiet season of the agricultural year when the fields had already been harvested and were not yet cultivated again. The longest period of employment is ten months, which would allow the employee to tend to his fields before accepting a paid appointment. While our evidence stems exclusively from the last decades of the Assyrian Empire, it is difficult to establish whether this is at all significant. We have to bear in mind that debt notes, pledge arrangements, labour contracts and the likes were, unlike purchase texts, not meant to be kept forever, and hence the documentary record for these Neo-Assyrian types of documents favours the decades before the destruction of the urban centres at the end of the 7th century. Hence, while it may be tempting to take these references as evidence for a problematic economic situation in the heartland of Assyria, when farmers were not able to subsist by relying on agriculture alone and had to support their income by hiring themselves out as caravan staff, it would seem to me to be far more significant that the population of Assur was traditionally exempt from military service and corvée work and hence had the option to use the part of the year normally reserved for state service for other enterprises, in the last decades of the Assyrian Empire as well as long before.

edited by P. Miglus which will appear in the series *Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*.

22. The waters of the Tigris are too swift to allow to navigate an oar-manned boat upstreams, and consequently it was common practice until the beginning of the 20th century AD to travel upstreams alongside the river but make use of the river when going downstreams. Navigating the other rivers of the region (Euphrates, Diyala, the two Zabs) was less problematic; see Fales 1995, pp. 211-213.

It is, however, remarkable to see that no less than 18 of the 21 contracts for hired labour from Assur stem from the same two archives, or rather one big archive that was stored in two parts: the archives N9 and N10²³ of the *Ḫundurāyē* were found in the houses built in the so-called *Außenhaken* in the northwest of the city of Assur (see table a in Appendix A). *Ḫundur* (also known as *Ḫundir*) is a place in the Zagros region, specifically the hinterland of the city of Kišessim that became the capital of a newly founded Assyrian province in 716, and *Ḫundurāyē* is in its primary meaning a gentilic referring to the inhabitants of *Ḫundur*, a region inhabited by Medes. *Ḫundurāyē* are attested in the city of Assur from the reign of Sargon II onwards who had integrated this area of the Zagros into the Assyrian Empire, and we can safely assume that the *Ḫundurāyē* of Assur were the deportees from the *Ḫundur* area and their offspring; at Assur, the term takes on a secondary meaning, indicating a certain kind of craftsman that may well have created carpets.²⁴ Like other Assur inhabitants, the *Ḫundurāyē* were active in the overland trade that is best attested by the partnership contracts setting up a finance group for a caravan.²⁵ Assur and its inhabitants were not only exempt from state service, as already mentioned, but also from taxation, and, as trading enterprises were otherwise subject to heavy dues,²⁶ the tax-exempt citizens of Assur may have been more likely than other inhabitants of the Assyrian Empire to engage in caravan trade.²⁷ However, at least according to the surviving documentary record, the *Ḫundurāyē* seem to be the only Assur trading entrepreneurs who hired caravan staff — and other workers — on a regular basis. One can only speculate whether these trading missions may have set out for the original homeland of the *Ḫundurāyē* in Iran, taking advantage of old family connections; it would seem a likely destination to me. At all times, we must bear in mind how little is known about Assyria's relationship with Western Iran in the second half of the 7th century. If we assume regular trading contacts between private entrepreneurs from Assur with the Median heartland in the period immediately prior to the Median attack on

23. The numbering of these and the other Assur archives discovered during Andrae's excavations follows Pedersén 1986.

24. See Radner 2003, pp. 62–63.

25. The EN KASKAL contracts were discussed by Radner 1999b, pp. 109–119. Among the texts presented there, nos. 3, 6, 9 and 20 stem from the archives N9 and N10, and two of the three partners in no. 6 (= VAT 20362 = KAN 1, 64), dating to the eponym of Bēl-aḫu-uṣur (= 621 BC according to Reade 1998), are attested together as employers in our texts nos. 21 and 22.

26. Postgate 1979b, pp. 205–206. How heavily trade was taxed in the 1st millennium is unknown; in the Middle Assyrian period there seems to have been no fixed rate, and cases were decided by tax inspectors on an individual basis, see Jakob 2003, pp. 169–172. In one such instance the tax due amounted to one fourth of the merchandise's value (TR 3019, see Jakob 2003, pp. 171–172).

27. Radner 2000, pp. 101–103.

Assur in 614, we must also allow for the possibility that these contacts may have been instrumental in triggering Cyaxares' invasion plans, and may even have contributed to Assur's sudden fall.

Whether it is due to the specific nature of the business transactions of the *Ḫundurāyē* or whether it is due to their origin and family relationships or rather due to some other coincidence that this sort of text has been found in such high numbers in their archive is hard to decide at present. Yet, when combined with the references from other and earlier sources, the rich evidence for hired labour in this particular archive suggests just how common the practice to work for wages must have been in Assyria — and how diverse the motivations triggering this form of employment. To quantify the phenomenon of hired workers within the Neo-Assyrian labour market is currently not viable but all attempts to reconstruct the workings of the society and economy of Assyria Empire must accommodate the fact that there was labour for hire.

Appendix A
7th century wages according to the Assur documentation

a. Archival contexts: N9 and N10 = archives of the Ḫundurāyē in the Außenhaken area

	archive	date	time span	shekels	shekels per month	special arrangements
3	1979-80	ix. 616	<i>tuppu</i>	10	(1)	
4	1990	iv. 631	1 month	1	1	<i>eṣādu</i> -agreement
5	N2	vi. 620	<i>tuppu</i>	15	(1 1/2)	
6	N9	viii. 631	9 months	20 (1/4)	2 1/4	
7	N9	viii. 629	10 months	17 1/2	1 3/4	
8	N9	viii. 625	8 months	30	3 3/4	
9	N9	ix. 625	9 months	[...]		
10	N9	vii. 624	10 months	12 1/2	1 1/4	
11	N9	viii. 623	10 months	—		
12	N9	vi. 623	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab</i>
13	N9	vii. 621	10 months	32 1/2	3 1/4	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>
14	N9	vii. 621 [?]	10 months	38 2/3	3 13/15	
15	N10	x. 628	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab ušēša</i>
16	N10	viii. 625	[...]	4		
17	N10	vii. 624	8 months	15	1 7/8	
18	N10	vii. 621	10 months	35	3 1/2	
19	N10	viii. 621	[...]	15		
20	N10	vii. 619	10 months	11 2/3	1 1/6	
21	N10	viii. 619	10 months	35	3 1/2	
22	N10	ix. 616	<i>tuppu</i>	30+	(3+)	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>
23	N31	x. 622	2 months	4 2/3	2 1/3	

b. Length of work contract: mostly seven to ten months.

	time span	shekels	shekels per month	special arrangements	date	archive
4	1 month	1	1	<i>eṣādu</i> -agreement	iv. 631	1990
23	2 months	4 2/3	2 1/3		x. 622	N31
12	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab</i>	vi. 623	N9
15	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab ušēša</i>	x. 628	N10
8	8 months	30	3 3/4		viii. 625	N9
17	8 months	15	1 7/8		vii. 624	N10
6	9 months	20 (1/4)	2 1/4		viii. 631	N9
9	9 months	[...]			ix. 625	N9
11	10 months	—			viii. 623	N9
20	10 months	11 2/3	1 1/6		vii. 619	N10
10	10 months	12 1/2	1 1/4		vii. 624	N9
7	10 months	17 1/2	1 3/4		viii. 629	N9
13	10 months	32 1/2	3 1/4	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	vii. 621	N9
18	10 months	35	3 1/2		vii. 621	N10
21	10 months	35	3 1/2		viii. 619	N10
14	10 months	38 2/3	3 13/15		vii. 621 [?]	N9
3	<i>ṭuppu</i>	10	(1)		ix. 616	1979/80
5	<i>ṭuppu</i>	15	(1 1/2)		vi. 620	N2
22	<i>ṭuppu</i>	30+	(3+)	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	ix. 616	N10

c. Wages per month: being paid in advance cuts the wages, but working abroad pays better.

	shekels per month	shekels	time span	special arrangements	date	archive
4	1 = 1,000	1	1 month	<i>eṣādu</i> -agreement / wages paid	iv. 631	1990
3	(1) = 1,000	10	<i>tuppu</i>	third party = father takes wages / wages paid	ix. 616	1979-80
20	1 1/6 = 1,166	11 2/3	10 months	3rd party takes wages	vii. 619	N10
5	(1 1/5) = 1,200	15	<i>tuppu</i>	previous obligation needs to be paid off	vi. 620	N2
10	1 1/4 = 1,250	12 1/2	10 months	third party = father takes wages	vii. 624	N9
7	1 3/4 = 1,750	17 1/2	10 months	guarantor	viii. 629	N9
17	1 7/8 = 1,875	15	8 months		vii. 624	N10
12	2 = 2,000	14	7 months	<i>alaktu ušērab</i> / Guarantor	vii. 624	N9
15	2 = 2,000	14	7 months	<i>alaktu ušērab ušēša</i> / third party takes wages	x. 628	N10
6	2 1/4 = 2,250	20 (1/4)	9 months		viii. 631	N9
23	2 1/3 = 2,333	4 2/3	2 months		x. 622	N31
13	3 1/4 = 3,250	32 1/2	10 months	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	vii. 621	N9
18	3 1/2 = 3,500	35	10 months		vii. 621	N10
21	3 1/2 = 3,500	35	10 months		viii. 619	N10
8	3 3/4 = 3,750	30	8 months		viii. 625	N9
14	3 13/15 = 3,866	38 2/3	10 months		vii. 621 [?]	N9
22	(3+) = >3,000	30+	<i>tuppu</i>	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	ix. 616	N10

*d. Distribution of contracts over the seasons: mostly autumn and winter
(September to January)*

	date	time span	shekels	shekels per month	special arrangements	archive
4	iv. 631	1 month	1	1	<i>eṣādu</i> -agreement	1990
12	vi. 623	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab</i>	N9
5	vi. 620	<i>tuppu</i>	15	(1 1/2)		N2
17	vii. 624	8 months	15	1 7/8		N10
10	vii. 624	10 months	12 1/2	1 1/4		N9
13	vii. 621	10 months	32 1/2	3 1/4	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	N9
18	vii. 621	10 months	35	3 1/2		N10
14	vii. 621 ²	10 months	38 2/3	3 13/15		N9
20	vii. 619	10 months	11 2/3	1 1/6		N10
6	viii. 631	9 months	20 (1/4)	2 1/4		N9
7	viii. 629	10 months	17 1/2	1 3/4		N9
8	viii. 625	8 months	30	3 3/4		N9
21	viii. 619	10 months	35	3 1/2		N10
16	viii. 625	[...]	4			N10
11	viii. 623	10 months	—			N9
19	viii. 621	[...]	15			N10
9	ix. 625	9 months	[...]			N9
3	ix. 616	<i>tuppu</i>	10	(1)		1979-80
22	ix. 616	<i>tuppu</i>	30+	(3+)	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	N10
15	x. 628	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab ušēša</i>	N10
23	x. 622	2 months	4 2/3	2 1/3		N31

e. Distribution of contracts over the years (NB: Year sequence after 648 is uncertain!)

	date	time span	shekels	shekels per month	special arrangements	archive
4	iv. 631	1 month	1	1	<i>eṣādu</i> -agreement	1990
6	viii. 631	9 months	20 (1/4)	2 1/4		N9
7	viii. 629	10 months	17 1/2	1 3/4		N9
15	x. 628	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab ušēša</i>	N10
8	viii. 625	8 months	30	3 3/4		N9
16	viii. 625	[...]	4			N10
9	ix. 625	9 months	[...]			N9
17	vii. 624	8 months	15	1 7/8		N10
10	vii. 624	10 months	12 1/2	1 1/4		N9
12	vi. 623	7 months	14	2	<i>alaktu ušērab</i>	N9
11	viii. 623	10 months	—			N9
23	x. 622	2 months	4 2/3	2 1/3		N31
13	vii. 621	10 months	32 1/2	3 1/4	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	N9
18	vii. 621	10 months	35	3 1/2		N10
14	vii. 621 ²	10 months	38 2/3	3 13/15		N9
19	viii. 621	[...]	15			N10
5	vi. 620	<i>tuppu</i>	15	(1 1/2)		N2
20	vii. 619	10 months	11 2/3	1 1/6		N10
21	viii. 619	10 months	35	3 1/2		N10
3	ix. 616	<i>tuppu</i>	10	(1)		1979-80
22	ix. 616	<i>tuppu</i>	30+	(3+)	<i>alaktu ušēša ušērab</i>	N10

Appendix B
Neo-Assyrian legal documents dealing with hired labour²⁸

1. Kalḫu – Governor’s Palace, Room K

CTN 2 98 = ND 218 = IM 56816

Date: i. 738

Obverse

1. 21 MA.NA URUDU.MEŠ
2. ¹*bar-ruq* LÚ*.ÌR
3. *ša* ¹*di-lil*-15
4. URU-*ša*-¹*lib-luš-a-a*
5. ¹*ku*-um *ig-re-šu*
6. [*i*]t-ti-ši ú-*tu-ru*

Left edge

7. *mám-ma* TA* *mám-ma la* DU[G₄].DUG₄

Reverse

(three witnesses)

Upper Edge

14. ITU.BARAG U₄-13-KÁM
(one witness)

Left Edge

16. [*I*]im-mu ¹10-EN-GI[N]
17. [*ina*] 2 *pu-ri*

21 mina of copper. Barruqu, servant of Dilīl-Issār from Al-ša-Libluṭ, has taken (the copper) in compensation of his wages. They are mutually contented, and neither will sue the other.

28. In addition to the usual abbreviations the following sigla are used: KAN 1 = Jakob-Rost – Fales 1996; KAN 3 = Faist 2005; StAT 1 = Radner 1999; StAT 2 = Donbaz – Parpola 2001. Note that the dates are not translated but given in the headings.

2. Kalḫu – private archive (TW 53, Room 19)ND 3433 = IM 57058 (unpublished)²⁹

Date: x. 638 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. 8 GÍN.MEŠ KÙ.BABBAR

Obverse

2. *ig-re ša* ^IPAP-*e-di*
3. *ša* ^{Id}*ša-maš*-MAN-PAP
(two stamp seal impressions)
4. *ina* IGI ^I*man-nu-ki-arba-il*
5. *ina* ŠÀ ^IPAP-*e-di* LÚ.TUR ŠU.2-*šú*
6. *it-ta-na-áš-šu*

Left Edge

7. [x x] *e-da-nu ina* ^rŠÀ *e-da-ni*^r
8. *i-pa-làḫ-šú ki-m[a]*

Reverse

9. *i-da-nu-šú us-sal-lim*
10. *il-lak ú-ša*
11. ITU.AB U₄-22 *lim-mu*
12. ^I*ú-paq-ana-arba-il*
13. IGI ^ISU-*ba-a-a* LÚ.šá-UGU-URU
14. *ša de-e-nu e-me-du-ni*
(three witnesses)

Eight shekels of silver, being the wages of Aḫu-ēdi which Šamaš-šarru-ušur has given to Mannu-kī-Arbail on behalf of Aḫu-ēdi, the apprentice under his authority. [*x months*?] is the (agreed) term. He (i.e. Aḫu-ēdi) will serve him (i.e. Šamaš-šarru-ušur) during this term. As soon as his term has been completed he shall go and leave. *Date*. (13-14) Witnessed by Rībāya, the city overseer who has passed this verdict.

29. Cf. Wiseman 1953, p. 142.

3. Assur – private archive (Iraqi excavations 1979-80)

“Aššur 15” = A.Y. Ahmad, *al-Rafidan* 17, 1996, no. 14

Date: ix. 616 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Obverse

1. NA₄.KIŠIB ¹*sam-si-u-ni*
2. TA* ŠÀ URU.*ta-qá-ri-te-en*₆
3. ¹*a-ku-e*-^dAG
stamp seal impression
4. DUMU-šú *tup-pi-šú*
5. *ana* IGI ^d*aš-šur*-KUR-LAL
6. *i-pa-laḥ-šu*
7. 10 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
8. [¹]*sam-si-u-nu* AD-šú
9. [*i*]*g-re-šú ša tup-pi-šú it-ti-ši*
10. [^{šú}]*m-mu e-te-gi* DUMU-šú
11. U₄ *im-te-ki* KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM-*an*
12. ÚŠ ZÁḤ *ina* UGU AD-šú
13. ITU.GAN U₄-1-KÁM *lim-mu*
14. ^dPA-*tap-pu-tú-a-lik*
(seven witnesses)

Seal of Samsiūnu from the city of Taqritēn (mod. Tigrīt). His son Akue-Nabū will serve Aššur-mātu-taqqin for his *tuppu* (i.e., a fixed period of time). His father Samsiūnu has (already) taken ten shekels of silver as his wages for his *tuppu*. Should his son be negligent and careless for even one day, he (i.e., Samsiūnu) shall give the double amount of silver. (To compensate for his) death or escape is the duty of his father.

4. Assur – private archive (German excavations 1990)

IM 124719 = *Ass.* 1990-105

Date: iv. 631 (sequence of Reade 1998)

A: Envelope

Upper Edge

1. [NA₄].KIŠIB ¹IR-^dGAŠAN
2. [TA*] É ¹*aš-šur*-MAN-PAP KÙ¹

Obverse

3. 1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *šá* ITU U₄.MEŠ4. *ig-re-[šú]* ÍL

fingernail impressions

rest lost

Reverse

beginning lost

1'. [*pu-tuḫ-ḫu*] BURU₁₄ *i-na-ši*2'. [*ig-re-šú*] *ik-ti-mis* ÍL3'. [ITU.Š]U U₄-20-KÁM4'. [*lim-m*]u^{Id}ŠÚ-MAN-PAP
(*three witnesses*)

Seal of Urdu-Bēltī from the household of the goldsmith Aššur-šarru-ušur. He will take one shekel of silver as his wages for a full month. [. Should he fail to harvest,] he shall bear the liability for the harvest. He has (already) collected and taken his wages.

B: Inner Tablet

Upper Edge

1. ITU U₄.MEŠ *e-ša-du*

Obverse

2. *ša*^IBÀD-*aš-šur*3. ^IIR-^dGAŠAN *e-ši-di*4. *šum-mu la e-ši-di*5. *pu-tuḫ-ḫu*^I BURU₁₄ *i-na-ši*

Left Edge

6. ITU.DUL U₄-207. *lim-mu*^{Id}ŠÚ-MAN-PAP

Reverse

8. 1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *šá* ITU U₄.MEŠ9. *ik-ti-mis* ÍL

(four witnesses)

For a full month, Urdu-Bēltī will bring in the harvest of Dūrī-Aššur. Should he fail to harvest, he shall bear the liability for the harvest. *Date*. He has (already) collected and taken one shekel of silver, (his wages) for a full month.

5. Assur – private archive N 2M³⁰

KAN 3 11 = VAT 9783 = Ass. 2282h

Date: vi. 620 (sequence of Reade 1998)

A: Envelope

Upper Edge

1. NA₄.KIŠIB ^Ipar-ru-tu A ^IDÙ-aš-šur
2. 15 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ša ^Ihu-ba-šá-[a]-te

Obverse

3. ina IGI ^Ipar-ru-tu ^rina ig-re-šú^r
4. šá ^rtup-pi-šú^r i-ti-ši
5. 10 GÍ[N] KÙ.BABBAR ma-ku-^rsu šá ^rtup^r-[p]i-[šú]
6. a-na ^Iqu-ni-i a-^rna ^{Id}[PA]-mu-S[IG]
7. a-na ^IPAB-lam-ma a-^rna ^IMU^r-[DING]IR
(two stamp seal impressions)

Left Edge

8. [a-na] ^Irém-u-te a-na ^ISUH[UŠ]-30
9. [a-na] ^IPAP-la-mur a-na ^Iaš-šur-ZI-PAP
10. ^ra-na pu^r-uh-^{hi} i-ta-šu
11. ^rtup-pi-šú i-pal-làh-šú

Reverse

12. U₄-mu e-t[i-g]i ^rla i^r-[p]al-làh
13. IT[U a-n]a [^Ihu-ba-šá-a-te] ^ri^r-pal-là[h]
14. šum-[ma la i-p]al-l[àh] KÙ.BABBAR
15. ^re^r-šip SUM-an
16. TU.KIN U₄-11-KÁM*
17. lim-mu ^Isa-i-lu
(six witnesses)

Seal of Parruṭu son of Bāni-Aššur. Fifteen shekels of silver belonging to Ḫubašāte and made available to Parruṭu. He has taken (the silver) as his wages for his *tuppu* (i.e., a fixed period of time). Ten shekels of silver are the compensation for his *tuppu* to Qunî,

30. In Pedersén 1986, p. 33, this text — which was found as part of a group of 16 tablets stored in a clay pot — was listed as part of the archive N 2. According to Pedersén 1998, p. 142, however, the pot was excavated in another building than the texts of N 2 and the tablets found within it are now interpreted as constituting a separate archive (N 2M).

Nabû-mudammiq, Aḥu-lamma, Šumma-ilī, Ubru-Sîn, Rēmûte, Aḥu-lāmur and Aššur-napšāte-ušur. They took (the silver) as a loan. He (i.e., Parrušu) will serve him (i.e., Ḥubašāte) for his *tuppu*. Should he be negligent and not serve for even a day, he will serve Ḥubašāte for a month (per missed working day). Should he not serve (for a month per missed working day), he will give the double amount of silver.

Inner Tablet

Upper Edge

1. 15 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR

Obverse

2. *šá* ^I*ḥu-ba-šá-a-te*
3. *ina* IGI ^I*par-ru-tu*
4. *ig-re-šú šá* ^I*tup-pi-šú*
5. *i-ti-(ši)* 10 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
6. *ma-ku-su šá* ^I*tup-pi-šú*

Left Edge

7. *a-na* ^I*qu-ni-i*
8. *a-na* ^{Id}*PA-mu-SIG*

Reverse

9. *a-na* ^I*PAB-lam-ma*
10. *a-na* ^I*MU-DINGIR*
11. [*a*]-*na* ^I*SUḤUŠ-30*
12. [*a-n*]*a* ^I*rém-u-te*
13. *a-na* ^I*PAP-la-mur*
14. *a-na* ^I*aš-šur-ZI-PAP*

Upper Edge

15. [IT]U.KIN U₄-11

Left Edge

16. *lim-m[u* ^I*sa]-i-l[u]*
(two witnesses)

Fifteen shekels of silver belonging to Ḥubašāte and made available to Parrušu. He has taken (the silver) as his wages for his *tuppu* (i.e., a fixed period of time). Ten shekels of silver are the compensation for his *tuppu* to Qunî, Nabû-mudammiq, Aḥu-lamma, Šumma-ilī, Ubru-Sîn, Rēmûte, Aḥu-lāmur and Aššur-napšāte-ušur.

Notes

The term *makûtu* „compensation“ is also attested in CTN 3 9: 11.
For the clause in lines 12-15 of the envelope compare no. 22: 9-12.

6. Assur – private archive N9

VAT 20360 = Ass. 9661d (unpublished; collated by Betina Faist in April 2005)

Date: viii. 631 (sequence of Reade 1998)

A: Envelope (today lost)

Upper Edge

1. NA₄.KIŠIB ^I*aš-šur-še-zib-a-ni*

Obverse

2. A ^I[x x x x]

3. [^I*aš-šur*]-*še-zib-a-ni* TA* IGI ^I*mu-SIG-aš-šur*

4. TA* IGI ^I*sa-kip-aš-šur* TA* IGI ^IIM-DINGIR

5. ^I*i-na-aš-ši* 9 ITU.MEŠ-*ni* ^I*i*-[*pa-làh*]

(finger nail impressions)

break of some lines

Left Edge

1'. [*e-šip* SUM] ^IITU^I. [APIN U₄-1-(KÁM)]

Reverse

2'. *lim-mu* ^IdšÚ-MAN-P[AP]

(five witnesses)

Seal of Aššur-šēzibanni son of [PN]. Aššur-šēzibanni will take (the silver) from Mudammiq-Aššur, Sākip-Aššur and Šār-ilī. He will serve for nine months. [... Should he be negligent for even a day, he will give the double amount of silver].

B: Inner Tablet

Upper Edge

1. 1/3 MA KÙ.BABBAR *ig-ri-šú*

2. *šá* 9 ITU.MEŠ-*ni*

Obverse

3. ^I*aš-šur-še-zib-a-ni*

4. TA* IGI ^I*mu-SIG-aš-šur*

5. TA* IGI ^I*sa-kip-aš-šur*

6. TA* IGI ^IIM-DINGIR ÍL
7. 9 ITU.MEŠ-*ni i-pa-làḥ*
8. 2 1/4 GÍN *ša* ITU-šú *i-man-nu*
9. MU U₄-*mu e-te-gi*

Left Edge

10. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM
11. ITU.APIN U₄-1 *lim-mu* ^IŠÚ-MAN-PAP
(three witnesses)

20 shekels, being his wages for nine months. Aššur-šēzibanni will take (the silver) from Mudammīq-Aššur, Sākip-Aššur and Šār-ilī. He will serve for nine months. They calculate 1 1/4 shekels per month. Should he be negligent for even a day, he will give the double amount of silver.

7. Assur – private archive N9

KAN 1 46 = VAT 20396 = Ass. 9661f

Date: viii. 629 (sequence of Reade 1998)

A: Envelope

Upper Edge

1. NA₄.KIŠIB ^IPAP-*li-[di]*
2. DUMU ^IdPA-[KAM-*eš*]

Obverse

3. 17 1/2 GÍN KÙ.[BABBAR]
4. [*ig-re-šú* TA* IGI ^Imu-SIG-*aš-šur*]
5. [T]^rA IGI ^IIM^r-DIN[GIR]
6. [T]A IGI ^Isa-*kip-aš-š[ur]*
7. [*u*] ^IdUTU-*de-ni-ia*
8. [10] ITU.MEŠ *i-pal-laḥ*
9. [*a*]-*lak-tú u-še-rab u-še-[ša]*
10. ^rITU^r U₄ *i-ma-ki*

Left Edge

11. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM-*an*
12. ITU.APIN U₄-1-KAM

Reverse

13. *lim-mu* ^{Id}PA-*sa-kip*
(four witnesses)

Left Edge

18. ^IGIN-*i* DUMU-*šú*
19. EN-ŠU.2.[MEŠ]

Seal of Aḥu-līdi son of Nabû-ēreš. 17 1/2 shekels of silver, being his wages from Mudammiq-Aššur, Šar-ili, Sākip-Aššur and Šamaš-dēnīa. He will serve for ten months. He will make the caravan enter and leave (the foreign territory). Should he be careless, be it a month or only a day, he shall give the double amount of silver. (18-19) His son Kēnī is the guarantor.

B: Inner Tablet

Obverse

1. 7 1/2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *ig-re-šú*
2. ^IPAP-*li-di* A ^{Id}PA-KAM-*eš*
3. TA* IGI ^Imu-SIG-*aš-šur*
4. : ^IIM-DINGIR TA* IGI ^Isa-*kip-aš-[šur]*
5. *u* ^{Id}UTU-*de-ni-ia*
6. *ša* 10 ITU.MEŠ *i-pal-laḥ*
7. 'ITU' U₄-*mu i-ma-ki*

Left Edge

8. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* [SU]M-*a[n]*

Reverse

covered by remainders of envelope

Upper Edge

- 1'. ^IGIN-*i* DUMU-*šú*
2'. EN-ŠU.2.MEŠ

17 1/2 shekels of silver, being his wages. Aḥu-līdi son of Nabû-ēreš (will take the silver) from Mudammiq-Aššur, Šar-ili, Sākip-Aššur and Šamaš-dēnīa. He will serve for ten months. Should he be careless, be it a month or only a day, he shall give the double amount of silver. [...] (u.e.1-2) His son Kēnī is the guarantor.

8. Assur – private archive N9

VAT 20390 = Ass. 9661k (unpublished; line 2 of the inner tablet collated by Betina Faist in April 2005)

Date: viii. 625 (sequence of Reade 1998)

A: Envelope (today lost)

Obverse

Beginning Lost

1'. [a-n]a^{Id}UTU-MAN-PAP

2'. [a-n]a^IIM-DINGIR

3'. [a-n]a^Imu-qa-lil-[IDIM]

(stamp seal impression)

rest lost

Reverse

Beginning Lost

1'. [IT]U.APIN U₄-15-KA[M]

2'. [lim-m]u^Iaš-šur-rém-a-ni

(two witnesses)

rest lost

[... He will serve] Šamaš-šarru-ušur, Šār-ilī and Muqallil-kabti. [...]

B: Inner Tablet

Upper Edge

1. 1/2 MA KÙ.BABBAR *ig-re-šú*

2. ^{rI}KI-še-rum-TI[?].LA PAP

Obverse

3. *ša* 8 ITU.MEŠ ÍL

4. a-na^{Id}UTU-MAN-PAP

5. a-na^IIM-DINGIR

6. a-na^Imu-qa-lil-IDIM

7. i-pa-làḫ MU U₄-mu

Left Edge

8. e-ti-gi KÙ.BABBAR

9. e-šip SUM-an ITU.APIN U₄-15

Reverse

10. *lim-mu* ^{Id}*aš-šur-rém-a-ni*
(four witnesses)

Thirty shekels of silver will Itti-Šēr-balāṭu, the brother, take as his wages for eight months. He will serve Šamaš-šarru-ušur, Šār-ilī and Muqallil-kabti. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount of silver.

9. Assur – private archive N9

KAN 1 6 = VAT 20347 = Ass. 9570f

Date: ix. 625 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. [*x* Gf]N KÙ.BABBAR

Obverse

2. [*ig-re-š*]ú šá 9* ITU.MEŠ
3. [¹IR[?]]-*aš-šur* A ¹*sa-kip-aš-šur*
4. [¹L] *a-na* ^{Id}*mu-SIG-aš-šur*
5. [*i-p*]*a-làḥ* šum U₄-*mu*
6. [*e*]-*te-gi* KÙ.BABBAR
7. ^r*e*[?]-*šip* SUM-*an*

Left Edge

8. [ITU].GAN U₄-20-KAM
9. [*lim-mu*] ¹*aš-šur-rém-a-ni*
(four witnesses)

[...] shekels of silver will [Urdu[?]]-Aššur son of Sākip-Aššur take as his wages for nine months. He will serve Mudammiq-Aššur. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount of silver.

10. Assur – private archive N9

VAT 20373 = Ass. 9648 (unpublished)

Date: vii. 624 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. 12 1/2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR

Obverse

2. *ig-re šá A-šú*
3. *ša 10 ITU.MEŠ¹ la-qep*
4. *íl¹ BÀD-^rKUR²-aš-šur*
5. *a-na¹ IR-na-na-a*
6. *a-na¹ mu-SIG-aš-šur i-pa-làḫ*
7. *šum-mu U₄-mu e-te-gi*

Left Edge

8. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM-*an*
9. 1 1/4 (GÍN) *ša* ITU-*šú*

Reverse

10. ITU.DU₆ U₄-20
11. *lim-mu* Id_{PA}-MAN-PAP
(four witnesses)

12 1/2 shekels of silver will Lā-qēpu take as wages for his son for ten months. Dūr-māt-Aššur will serve Urdu-Nanāya and Mudammiq-Aššur. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount of silver. (They calculate) 1 1/4 shekels per month.

11. Assur – private archive N9

KAN 1 15 = VAT 20384 = Ass. 9570p

Date: viii. 623 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. 10 ITU.MEŠ

Obverse

2. Id_{PAP}-*ḫu-ma*
3. *a-na¹ mu-SIG-aš-šur*
4. *i-pal-làḫ*
5. *šum-ma* U₄-*mu e-gi*

Left Edge

6. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM-*an*
7. ITU.ŠU (U₄)-14-KÁM

Reverse

8. *lim-mu* ^INU-MAN-E
(three witnesses)

Aḫuma will serve Mudammīq-Aššur for ten months. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount of silver.

12. Assur – private archive N9

V. Scheil, RA 24, 1927, 119 no. 10 (formerly in private collection; present location unknown)

Date: vi. 623 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. 4 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR

Obverse

2. ^Imu-SIG-*aš-šur* DUMU ^Ipa-ru-š[u]
3. *ig-re-šú* [Í]L
4. TA* IGI ^IU.GUR-[x x]
5. *u* ^Isa-*kip-aš-šur*
6. *a-lak¹-tú u-še-rab*

Left Edge

7. [šù]m-mu U₄¹ i-^rma-ki^r
8. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* 2 ^rGÍN^r

Reverse

9. *ša* ITU-šú i-[*man-nu*]
10. ITU.KIN U₄-10-[KÁM]
11. *lim-mu* ^Išal-mu-MAN-[E]
12. IGI ^Ibi^r-[su]-u-a
13. IGI ^Išá-k[il]-ia

Upper Edge

14. IGI ^Iman-nu-[k]i-AD
15. ^{Id}[x x]-i

16. EN-ŠU.2.MEŠ

Fourteen shekels of silver will Mudammiq-Aššur son of Paruṭtu take as his wages, from Nergal-[...] and Sākip-Aššur. He will make the caravan enter (foreign territory). Should he be careless for even one day, he shall give the double amount of silver. They calculate two shekels per month. *Date and witnesses.* (15-16) PN is the guarantor.

13. Assur – private archive N9

KAN 1 48 = VAT 20382 = Ass. 9661i

Date: vii. 621 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. 1/2 MA 2 1/2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
2. *ig-re-šú*

Obverse

3. *ša 10 ur-ḥa-a-ni*
4. ^IPAP-*tab-ši i-na-áš-ši*
5. *i-pal-làḥ*
6. *a-na* ^IIM-DINGIR
7. *a-na* ^{Id}PA-SU

Left Edge

8. *a-na* ^Imu-*qal-lil*-IDIM
9. *a-lak-tú ú-še-ša*

Reverse

10. *u-še-rab re-eḫ-te*
11. *ig-re-šú i-na-áš-ši*
12. ITU.DU₆ U₄-20-KÁM
13. *lim-mu* ^IEN-PAP-PAP
(three witnesses)

32 1/2 shekels of silver will Aḫu-tabši take as his wages for ten months. He will serve Šar-ilī, Nabû-erība and Muqallil-kabti. He will make the caravan enter and leave (the foreign territory). (Then) he will take the remainder of his wages.

14. Assur – private archive N9

KAN 1 56 = VAT 20343 = Ass. 9570y

Date: vii. 621[?] (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. 1/2 MA 8 2/3 GÍN (KÙ.BABBAR)

Obverse

2. *ša* 10 ITU.MEŠ
3. ^I*ra-ú-zu*
4. TA* IGI ^{Id}UTU–MAN–PAP
5. TA* IGI ^IIM–DINGIR
6. TA* IGI ^I*mu-qal-lil*–IDIM
7. ÍL 10 ITU.MEŠ

Left Edge

8. *i-pal-làh-šú-nu*
9. U₄-*mu e-ti-gi*

Reverse

10. *a-na* ^IIM–DINGIR *la* [*i-pal-làh*]
11. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM
12. ITU.DU₆ U₄–1–KÁM
13. *lim-m*[*u* ^IEN–PAP]–PAP
(three witnesses)

38 2/3 shekels of silver (as wages) for ten months will Ra'uzu take from Šamaš-šarru-ušur, Šār-ilī and Muqallil-kabti. He will serve them for ten months. Should he be negligent for even a day and not serve Šār-ilī, he shall give the double amount of silver.

15. Assur – private archive N10

StAT 2, 21 = A 2636 = Ass. 9966f

Date: x. 628 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Obverse

1. 4^I GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *ig-re-šú*
2. *ša* 7 ITU.MEŠ *ša* ^IITU.AB-*a-a*
3. ^I*sùk-a-a* A ^I*gir-a-a*
4. ÍL *a-na* ^I*aš-šur*–A–GIŠ

5. *a-na* ¹*a-ḫu-lam-ma*
6. *a-lak-tú* (*ú*)-še-^r*rab ú-še-ša*^r

Left Edge

7. *re-eḫ-te ig-re-šú*
8. *i-na-áš-ši*

Reverse

9. *šum-mu* U₄ *e-te-gi*
10. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM
11. ^rITU.AB^r U₄-8
12. [*lim-m*]u ¹30-MAN-PAP A.BA-KUR
(four witnesses)
17. 2¹ GÍN¹ *ša* ITU-šú

Fourteen shekels of silver, being Kanūnāyu's wages for seven months. Sukkāya son of Gīrāya will take it. (Kanūnāyu will serve) Aššur-aplu-lēšir and Aḫu-lamma. He will make the caravan enter and leave (the foreign territory). (Then) he will take the remainder of his wages. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount of silver. *Date and witnesses.* (17) (They calculate) two shekels per month.

16. Assur – private archive N10

StAT 2, 24 = A 2628 = Ass. 9881

Date: viii. 625 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Obverse

1. ^r4^r GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *ig-re-šú*
2. [*ša x*] ITU.MEŠ ¹SUḪUŠ-*te*
3. ÌL 1 GÍN
4. *ša* ¹*x x x x* ³¹
5. ^rITU^r.APIN U₄-1-KÁM

Left Edge

6. *lim-mu* ¹*aš-šur-rém-a-ni*
(two witnesses)

31. Donbaz' edition has *ša* ¹*pi-šir-aš-šur*, but this is certainly misread and needs collating. I would assume a reading *ša* ITU-šú *i-man-nu* likely although this cannot easily be reconstructed from Donbaz' reading

Four shekels of silver will Ubrūte take as his wages for [...] months. *They calculate one shekel per month.*”

Notes

My translation of the last clause is based on the assumption that the familiar clause of no. 6:8, no. 10:9, no. 12:8-9 and no. 15:17 is present also here.

17. Assur – private archive N10

StAT 2, 19 + 20 = A 2634 = Ass. 9966e

Date: vii. 624 (sequence of Reade 1998)

A: Envelope

Obverse

1. [NA₄.KIŠIB ^{Id}]r^{PA-u-a}
2. [A ^{Id}PA-ku-ṣur]-a-ni
3. [15 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR i]g-re-šú
4. [ša 8 ITU.MEŠ] ÍL
(stamp seal impression)

Left Edge

5. [a-na ^Iaš-šu]r-SU
6. [a]-na ^Iba-si-a i-pa-làḥ

Reverse

7. [1]-en U₄-mu e-ti-^rgi^r
8. KÙ.BABBAR e-ṣip SUM
9. ITU.DUL U₄-1-KÁM
10. [l]im-mu ^{Id}PA-MAN-PAP
(three witnesses)

Seal of Nabû'a son of Nabû-kušuranni. Fifteen shekels of silver will he take as his wages for eight months. He will serve Aššur-erība and Bāsīa. Should he be negligent for even one day, he shall give the double amount of silver.

B: Inner Tablet

Obverse

1. 15 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ^{Id}PA-u-a
2. A ^{Id}PA-ku-ṣur-a-ni

3. *ša* 8 ITU.MEŠ ÍL
4. *a-na* ^I*aš-šur*-SU
5. *a-na* ^I*ba-si-a*
6. *i-pa-làḥ* MU

Left Edge

7. *e-ti-gi*

Reverse

8. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM
9. ITU.DUL U₄-1-KÁM
10. *lim-mu* ^{Id}PA-MAN-PAP
(two witnesses)

Fifteen shekels of silver will Nabû'a son of Nabû-kušuranni take for eight months. He will serve Aššur-erība and Bāsīa. Should he be negligent, he shall give the double amount of silver.

18. Assur – private archive N10

StAT 2, 25 = A 2635 = Ass. 9966c

Date: vii. 621 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Obverse

1. [NA₄].KIŠIB ^ISU-*aš-šur*
2. A ^I*aš-šur*-SAG-*iš*
3. 1/2 MA 5 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
4. *ig-re-šú šá* 10 ITU.MEŠ
5. ÍL *a-na* ^I*aš-šur*-A-GIŠ
6. *a-na* ^I*aš-šur*-SU *i-pa-làḥ*
(two stamp seal impression)

Left Edge

7. ^rITU! ^{3!} 1/2 GÍN *ša i[g-r]i-šú*
8. *i-du-nu* [MU U₄-*mu e-ti-gi*]
9. KÙ.BABBAR *e-šip* SUM-*an*

Reverse

10. ITU.DU₆ U₄-8-KAM

11. [l]im-mu ^IEN-PAP-PAP
(six witnesses)

Seal of Rība-Aššur son of Aššur-rēšī-išši. 35 shekels of silver will he take as his wages for ten months. He will serve Aššur-aplu-lēšir and Aššur-erība. Each month, they will give (him) 3 1/2 shekels of his wages. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount of silver.

19. Assur – private archive N10

StAT 2, 26 = A 2641 = Ass. 10070

Date: viii. 621 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Obverse

1. 15 GÍN [KÙ.BABBAR]
2. ig-re-šú [šá x ITU.MEŠ]
3. ^Iaš-šur-TI A ^I[x x x]
4. ÍL a-na ^Iaš-šur-[A-GIŠ]
5. ʾùʾ ^Iaš-šur-ʾSUʾ
6. ù ^Iba-si-i
7. i-pa-làḫ šum U₄-m[u]
8. e-te-ʾgiʾ KÙ.BABBAR
9. e-šip SUM-an

Reverse

10. ITU.APIN U₄-8
11. lim-mu ^IEN-PAP-PAP
(four witnesses)
16. 2 1/2 GÍN re-ḫe

Fifteen shekels of silver will Aššur-balliṭ son of PN take as his wages for [...] months. He will serve Aššur-aplu-lēšir, Aššur-erība and Bāsīa. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount of silver. *Date and witnesses.* (16) 2 1/2 shekels remain.

20. Assur – private archive N10

VAT 20385 = Ass. 9644d (unpublished; lines 1–2 collated by Betina Faist in April 2005)

Date: vii. 619 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Obverse

1. 11 1/2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
2. *ig-re šá* ¹r^dAG⁷-TUKUL-ti [(O)]
3. *ša* 10 ITU.MEŠ ¹mu-[x x (x)]
4. ÍL *a-na* ¹aš-šur-^rA⁷-[GIŠ]
5. *a-na* ¹aš-šur-S[U *i-pal-làḥ*]

Left Edge

6. MU U₄-mu [*e-te-gi e-šip* SUM]

Reverse

7. ITU.DU₆ [U₄-x-(KÁM)]
8. *lim-mu* ¹EN-^rE⁷
(one witness)

11 1/2 shekels of silver, being Nabû-tukultī's wages for ten months. Mu[...] will take it. He (i.e., Nabû-tukultī) will serve Aššur-aplu-lēšir, Aššur-erība and Bāšīa. Should he be negligent for even a day, he shall give the double amount (of silver).

21. Assur – private archive N10

StAT 2, 22 + 23 = A 2633 = Ass. 9966b

Date: viii. 619 (sequence of Reade 1998)

A: Envelope

Obverse

1. [NA₄.KIŠIB ¹x x x]
2. [A ¹x x x]
3. [1/2 MA.N]A 5 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
4. [*ig-r*]e-šú TA* IGI ¹aš-šur-AD-GIŠ
5. TA* IGI ¹aš-šur-SU

(stamp seal impressions)

Left Edge

8. ^rÍL⁷-šī 10 ITU.MEŠ

7. [i-p]al-laḥ-šú-nu
8. [U]₄-mu e-ṭi-r[i]

Reverse

9. šúm im-ti-ki
10. [KÙ].BABBAR e-šip SUM-an
11. ITU.APIN U₄-10-KAM
12. lim-mu^IEN-E
(five witnesses)

[Seal of PN₁ son of PN₂]. 35 shekels of silver will he take as his wages from Aššur-abu-lēšir and Aššur-erība. He will serve them for ten months. Should a day be wasted or should he be careless, he shall give the double amount of silver.

B: Inner Tablet

Obverse

1. 1/2 MA 5 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
2. ig-re-šú
3. TA* IGI^Iaš-šur-AD-GIŠ
4. TA* IGI^Iaš-šur-SU
5. ÍL-ši 10 ITU.MEŠ-ni
6. i-pal-laḥ-šú-nu

Left Edge

7. U₄-mu e-ṭi-ri
8. 'šúm' im-ti-ki

Reverse

9. ITU.APIN U₄-10-KÁM
10. lim-me^IEN-E
(one witness)

35 shekels of silver will he take as his wages from Aššur-abu-lēšir and Aššur-erība. He will serve them for ten months. Should a day be wasted or should he be careless, (he shall give the double amount of silver.)

Notes

According to Donbaz' rendering of the text the name of the hired worker would neither be mentioned in the envelope nor on the inner tablet — an exceedingly odd feature

which could only be explained as a scribal mistake. But it is far more likely that the name was given, at least on the envelope where it is easy to reconstruct two lines at the beginning of the text (as assumed here). The document needs collating.

22. Assur – private archive N10

VAT 20397 = Ass. 9644m (unpublished; line 8 collated by Betina Faist in April 2005)

Date: ix. 616 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Upper Edge

1. NA₄.KIŠIB [¹*aš-šur-rém-a-ni*]

Obverse

2. A ¹*š*¹-[*x x x x*]

3. 1/2 MA [*x GÍN KÙ.BABBAR*]

4. *ša* ¹*aš-šur*¹ [*ur-SU?*]

5. *ša* ¹*PAP*-¹*lam-ma*¹

6. *ša* ¹*aš-šur*-AD-GIŠ

Left Edge

7. ¹*aš-šur-rém-a-ni ig-re*-[¹*šú*]

8. *ša* ¹[*up*]-¹*pi-šú šá* ¹*PAP*¹.MEŠ-¹*šú*

9. *i*-¹*ti*¹-¹*ši* ¹*tup-p*[¹*i-šú*]

Reverse

10. *i-pal-làh* U₄-*mu e-te*-¹*gi*¹

11. [ITU] *i-pal-làh* ¹*šum*-¹*ma*¹

12. [*la i*]-*pal*-¹*láh*¹ KÙ.BABBAR *e*-¹*šip*¹ SUM-*an*

13. [*a-lak-tú*] *ú-še-ša* *ú-še*¹-*ra-ba*

14. ITU.GAN U₄-I-KÁM

Upper Edge

15. *lim*-¹*me*¹ ¹*d*_{PA}-*tap-pu*-(*tú*)-DU

(two witnesses)

Seal of Aššur-rēmanni son of Ši[...]. 30+ shekels of silver, belonging to Aššur-erība, Aḫu-lamma and Aššur-abu-lēšir. Aššur-rēmanni has taken (the silver) as his wages for his *tuppu*, belonging to his brothers. He will serve for his *tuppu*. Should he be negligent for even a day, he will serve for a month (per missed working day). Should he not serve

(for a month per missed working day), he shall give the double amount of silver. He will make the caravan leave and enter (the foreign territory).

Notes

The exact interpretation of the end of line 8 remains obscure, though the reading seems to be clear. For the clause in lines 9-12 compare no. 5, 12-15 (envelope).

23. Assur – private archive N31 ³²

StAT 2, 202 = A 1869 = Ass. 14671h

Date: x. 622 (sequence of Reade 1998)

Obverse

1. ʿ4² 2/3 (GÍN) KÙ.BABBAR
2. *ig-re-šú-nu šá* ¹*aš*-[šur-x x]
3. *ša* ¹*aš-šur*-MU-GI[N]
4. TA* ¹*IR-aš-šur* [ÍL]
5. 2² ITU.MEŠ ¹*aš*-[šur-x x]
6. ʿa-na¹ ¹*IR-aš-šur*

Left Edge

7. [*i*]-pal-[*lah*]
8. [ITU].AB U₄-2-[KÁM]

Reverse

9. *lim-mu* ¹*U.U-i*
(three witnesses)

4 2/3 shekels of silver, being the wages of Aššur-[...] and Aššur-šumu-ukīn. They will take (the silver) from Urdu-Aššur. Aššur-[...] will serve Urdu-Aššur for two months.

32. *igrē*, “wages”, are also mentioned in two more texts from the archive N31: StAT 2, 186 = A 2779 = Ass. 21506bq and StAT 2, 230 = A 1870 = Ass. 14671aa. However, the phrasing of these documents differs considerably from that of the texts discussed here, and as both are in a fragmentary state of preservation, with several difficulties remaining in the available editions, I refrain from making proper use of them in the present context.

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