

## NEO-ASSYRIAN CORN-LOANS: PRELIMINARY NOTES\*

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The general typology of loan texts and the functioning of credit procedures in the Neo-Assyrian period have been described by J.N. Postgate in *Fifty Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents*<sup>1</sup>. The recent re-edition of a large part of the legal texts from Nineveh by T. Kwasman presents the documents ordered on the basis of the archives' owners<sup>2</sup>, thus integrating Postgate's approach and stimulating a new consideration of the epigraphical material. The identification of the parties involved in the contract and the recognition of their role, by means of the study of every single archive, represents the first step toward establishing the relevance of the various transactions and connecting them to an overall picture of socio-economic conditions<sup>3</sup>. The task of tracing the context of the exchanges requires, on the other hand, meticulous comparisons and the compilation of a prosopography divided into sub-sectors.

The present study is meant to be a preliminary contribution to the classification and arrangement of the data drawn from the various archives. The section of texts chosen for this first cataloguing is that of the corn-loan documents. These texts differ from the silver loans (and may therefore be treated as a separate category) in two significant ways: a) they are linked with the seasonal and productive cycle, a fact which influences the date of issue and repayment, b) they refer to a circuit of utilization of a basic subsistence item, which constitutes a good starting point for the examination of relations between the parties.

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<sup>1</sup> Warminster, 1976, particularly pp. 32-55, and texts nos. 20-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum*, Roma 1988 (NALK).

<sup>3</sup> For a general description of NA economy see J.N. Postgate, *The Economic Structure of the Assyrian Empire*, *Mesopotamia* 7 (1979), pp. 193ff., with previous bibliography. More recently, on a specific aspect, see K. Deller, *Tamkâru-Kredite in neuassyrischer Zeit*, *JESHO* 30 (1987), pp. 1-29.

## 1. The data

The most relevant data pertaining to textual typology, chronology, archives of provenance of the corn loans have been listed in a summarizing table. The aim has been that of providing a general inventory of the contracts belonging to this sector of exchanges, and of facilitating a comparative view of their main features and figures.

The table also includes the mixed loans of cereals and silver, while the few texts on which cereals represent the object of the repayment, but not of the advance, will be discussed in the commentary below. The identification and typological classification of the texts on the basis of the operative formulae follows the scheme indicated by Postgate in *FNALD*, pp. 36ff.

The tabulated data are: the physical shape of the documents (an asterisk marks the docket-shaped texts), the quantity of the advanced cereals (in *emāru*), the date of stipulation and the expiration term of the allowance, interests and penalties (the + sign indicates the request of straw in addition to the interest rate for the corn). The items not expressly mentioned in the documents have been marked with —, in order to avoid any ambiguity with those cases in which lack of information derives from the bad state of preservation of the tablets. The contractual clauses have been noted in the right hand column by means of the following codes: m = mixed loans (corn + silver); 0 = simplest formulation (with *ina pāni*); 1 = presence of the *ina pūhi* specification; 2 = pledge-contracts; 3 = indications of two or more debtors; 4 = inclusion of the harvester-clause; 5 = specification of the repayment place; 6 = mention of a guarantor.

### *Texts from Kalhu*

#### a) Archive of the Nabû temple<sup>4</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
*ND 5475/7	33	19.I	—		—	1
*ND 5475/8	3+?	19.I				3
*ND 5461		16.XII.668	<i>adri</i>	50%	100%	1
*ND 5451	1.5	2.II.665	VI		20%	1
*ND 5453	3	18.I.662	<i>adri</i>	20%	100%	1,3
*ND 5458	2	661	<i>adri</i>		20%	1
*ND 5460	3.2	21.I.661	<i>adri</i>			1,3

<sup>4</sup>) B. Parker, *Nimrud Tablets, 1956 - Economic and Legal Texts from the Nabû Temple*, Iraq 19 (1957), pp. 125ff. and pls. XXVII-XXXIII. The texts, with the exception of ND 5457, have been partially (without the witness list) re-edited by B. Menzel, *AT*, nos. 110ff.. For the description of the site, see also J.N. Postgate, *The bit akīti in Assyrian Nabû Temples*, Sumer 30 (1974), pp. 51ff..

*ND 5469	10	? .XI.661	<i>adri</i>	50%	100%	1,3,4
*ND 5449	3	28.XI.661	—	20%		1
*ND 5455	4	27.[XII].661	<i>adri</i>		50%	1
*ND 5459	3	28.XII.661	—			1
*ND 5456	3	28.XII.661	—	20%		1
*ND 5452	5	28.XII.661	—	40%		1,3
*ND 5447	6	28.XII.661	<i>adri</i>	33%	50%	1
*ND 5454	3	27.XII.661	<i>adri</i>		50%	1
*ND 5450	2.5	5.X.659	<i>adri</i>	20%	50%	1
*ND 5464	1.7	II.659	<i>adri</i>	20%	50%	1,3
*ND 5448	21	26.I.656	<i>adri</i>	50%+	100%	1,2
*ND 5468	4	17.XI.652	<i>adri</i>	20%		0
*ND 5465	1.1	1.II.645	<i>adri</i>	50%	100%	1,4

## b) Archive of the Governor's Palace

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
<i>GPA</i> 105	10	24.I.742			100%	1,4,5

c) Archive of the Burnt Palace<sup>5</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
*ND 2063	3	I.671/666	—	50%		1

d) Archive of the *rab ekalli* of the Review Palace

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
* <i>TFS</i> 13		V.642	VI		<i>putuhu</i> <sup>6</sup>	0
* <i>TFS</i> 14	9	II.642?	<i>adri</i>		<i>putuhu</i>	0
* <i>TFS</i> 15	straw <sup>7</sup>	25.II.642				0
* <i>TFS</i> 16	straw	25.II.642	<i>adri</i>			0
<i>TFS</i> 12	2	26.VIII.624				
* <i>TFS</i> 11	2	9.I.623?	<i>adri</i>	20%	50%	1,4
* <i>TFS</i> 19		I				
* <i>TFS</i> 18			1.III		50%	1

<sup>5</sup>) The contract is described in Iraq 16, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup>) On this term see *FNALD*, pp. 43f.. The cereal mentioned in this text is wheat.

<sup>7</sup>) These texts, although not referring to cereals, have been included because of their close relationship with the other documents, as will be illustrated in the commentary.

e) Archive of the *šakintu* of the Review Palace<sup>8</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
<i>TFS</i> 42	1.5		<i>adri</i>	50%		m,4
* <i>TFS</i> 43 <sup>9</sup>	1	27.VIII.636	<i>adri</i>	50%	50%	1
<i>TFS</i> 44	15	1.VI.616	<i>umu ša ...</i>		50%	3,5
* <i>TFS</i> 92	4		II		100%	0

f) Archive of *Šamaš-šarra-ušur*<sup>10</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
*ND 3464	3	5.II.666	—		—	1
*ND 3447	3	11.II.642	<i>adri</i>		50%	0
*ND 3446	1	16.I.640	<i>adri</i>		50%	1
ND 3456	3.2	16.VII.638	—		—	0
*ND 3449	5	14.XII.637	<i>adri</i>		50%	1
*ND 3450	1	28.VIII.629	—	50%		1
ND 3458	1.5	3.II.628	<i>adri</i>		—	m
ND 3442	3.4	24.IV.628	VII	— <sup>11</sup>		m

g) Archive of the northern wing of North-West Palace<sup>12</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
ND 2321	10?	21.XI?.671/66	<i>adri</i>		100%	3,5
*ND 2317	3.3	8.XII.671/66		33%		0
*ND 2302	10	16.II.653	<i>adri</i>	20%	50%	3
ND 2339	20.3	1.V.639?	VII		?	1
*ND 2088	3	26.I.639/27	—	50%+		0

<sup>8)</sup> For the provenance of *TFS* 92 and its connection with this archive see *TFS*, p. 16: "No. 92 quite clearly belongs with the post-canonical tablets nos. 32 and 44 despite being found in NE 50."

<sup>9)</sup> The advance includes a load of straw.

<sup>10)</sup> For the texts edition (mainly in the form of "catalogue notes") see D.J. Wiseman, *The Nimrud Tablets, 1953*, Iraq 15 (1953), pp. 135ff.. See also B. Parker, *Excavations at Nimrud, 1949-1953, Seals and Seal Impressions*, Iraq 17 (1955), pp. 93ff., and particularly Pl. XXVI for the photographs of texts ND 3447, 3449 and 3464.

<sup>11)</sup> The interest is specified for the silver at the rate of 25%.

<sup>12)</sup> The texts are published in B. Parker, *The Nimrud tablets, 1952 - Business Documents*, Iraq 16 (1954), pp. 29ff., and pls. V-IX (many of them only in a summarized version). ND 2334 is re-edited as *FNALD*, no. 33. The documents were spread in different rooms of the same complex (see fig. 6), namely: room ZT 13: 2088; ZT 14: 2077, 2092; ZT 16: 2321, 2317; ZT 17: 2076, 2083, 2302, 2334, 2339. 2302 comes from the courtyard. Note also the receipt ND 2331 for 10 *emārus* of barley *adu ilkakāte*, dated on 10.IX.679. For *ilkakāte*, see *TCAE*, p. 71 and 85f..

*ND 2083	0.3?	19.II.639/27	<i>adri</i>		100%	1
ND 2092		17.VI.631		50%		1,4
ND 2334	15	XII.624		50%		1,3,4,5
*ND 2076	2.5	14.VI.620	—	50%		0
*ND 2077						1?

*Texts from Nineveh*<sup>13</sup>

## a) Archive of Bahianu

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
*NALK 68	8+?	10?.I				1,3
*NALK 66	12					[1?],3
*NALK 49	3	I.704	—	—		1
*NALK 51	4	18.V.696	—	—		1
*NALK 56	10	6.[ ] .688	—	—		1
*NALK 54	23	23.IV.688	<i>adri</i>		50%	0
*NALK 57	4	29.VI.688	—	—		1,3
*NALK 59	2	27.I.685	—	33%		1
*NALK 61	4	IX.684	—	50%		1
*NALK 60	10	21.III.684	—			
*NALK 62	4	21.I.682	—	50%		1,4
*NALK 64	3.3	26.II.682	—	—		1,3
NALK 65		5.II.667	—	—		0

b) Archives belonging to other creditors<sup>14</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
*NALK 39	1	694				
*NALK 383	5	VII.682	—	50%		4

<sup>13</sup>) From the same archive note also the docket *NALK 63*, in a very fragmentary state, which possibly refers to cereals. It is dated on 20.II.682; what remains of the operative section may be classified with the codes 1, 3. See also *ARU 305*, very fragmentary. In addition, cf. the following Aramaic dockets, published in F.M. Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Roma 1986 (= *AECT*):

Text	quantity	date	repayment	interest	type
*AECT 7					
*AECT 9	5	674	—	20%	4.

In both documents the barley is said to belong to the *br mlk'*. *NALK 68* adds the clause [PAP X ANŠE X BÂN ŠE.PAD<sup>MES</sup> n]a-as-ha-at.

<sup>14</sup>) The documents are distributed in the archives as follows: *NALK 39*: Aššur-ibni; *NALK 383-4*: Taquni (these two texts possibly originate from Assur, see *NALK*); *NALK 303*: Silim-Aššur; *NALK 198*: Nabû-dürî; *NALK 9*: Aduniha; *NALK 287*: Remanni-ili; *NALK 79*: Bêl-iqîša; *NALK 417*: šakintu.

*NALK 384	5.8	[682?]		[50%?]		3,4
NALK 303	120	III.680	VI		50%	m,3
*NALK 198	30	17.VIII.665	VIII		100%	5
NALK 9	3	II.660	VI		50%	4,5
NALK 287	2.5	22.II.650	adri		50%	5
NALK 79	10					m,1
NALK 417	200	IV	V			5

*Texts from Guzana*<sup>15</sup>a) Archive of Ila-manani<sup>16</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
TH 101	[ ]	II.612?	adri		la tarabbi	m
TH 102	5	[ ]	—		100%	m
TH 105	30	I.612?	adri		100%	m,6

## b) Archive of Adad-milki-ilaja

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
*TH 108	15+	8?.I.612?	adri		50%	m,6

*Texts from Assur*<sup>17</sup>

Text	Quantity	Date	Repayment	Interest	Penalty	Type
RA 24 IV	27	26.IV.658	VII		100%	2,6
RA 24 VI	30	16.VI.635	adri		irabbi	1
CT 53,15	2	10.I.626	adri		50%	0

<sup>15</sup> A. Ungnad, *Spätassyrische und neubabylonische Privaturkunden von Tell Halaf*, AfO Beiheft 6, Graz 1940, pp. 47ff., Tafeln 18-22.

<sup>16</sup> The following Aramaic contracts come from the same archive:

Text	quantity	date	repayment	interest	type
*AECT 53	5	—	adri	[ly] rb[wh]	0
*AECT 54	2		VII	100%	0
*AECT 55	2+[n]				
*AECT 56					
*AECT 57					

In AECT 54 the debt is defined by the label *hbln*.

<sup>17</sup> See V. Scheil, *Quelques contrats ninivites*, RA 24 (1927), pp. 111ff.. In RA 24, IV, the pledge is real estate. On the archives cf. K. Deller, *Drei wiederentdeckte neuassyrischen Rechtsurkunden aus Assur*, BaM

## 2. Notes on the Archives

In this section the data presented above will be connected and compared to the aim of determining the specific features of each archive. The analysis will primarily focus on the archives' owners and on all the individuals whose position could be isolated from the context, determined to a certain extent, or simply made the object of conjecture. The compilation of an extensive prosopography lays beyond the scope of the present preliminary survey<sup>20</sup>.

The archives from Kalhu, which may be assigned to the various quarters of the citadel on the basis of information about the site of their discovery, and therefore may be placed in a specific context of temple, palace or private administration, will constitute the starting point for the exposition of data.

### a) The archive of the Nabû temple (669-652)

The lot of texts found in the rooms adjacent to the Nabû temple at Kalhu deals exclusively with loans of cereals, issued by the temple granaries, with the designation of ŠE.PAD<sup>MEŠ</sup> *ša Nabû*, and granted presumably under the supervision of Nabû-šumu-ušur, the *šangû* who is mentioned as creditor in only one of the preserved texts<sup>21</sup>.

The second peculiarity of this archive is the concentration of numerous texts in a quite restricted period of time, evidently in connection with the agricultural cycle, a fact which throws some light on the daily credit and book-keeping operations of the temple administration. Likewise, the professions of the debtors mentioned in a certain number of the same contracts provide some hints for reconstructing the social context toward which this activity is addressed. They are members of the temple and palace personnel, and are usually required to pay back interest (with variable rates) on the borrowed capital:

<sup>20</sup>) For the texts from Kalhu lists of names and professions are provided in the various issues of Iraq (although in a still preliminary compilation) and in *GPA* and *TFS*. Cf. also the brief but very significant notes on the subject by K. Deller, *The Neo-Assyrian Epigraphical Remains from Nimrud*, OrNs 35 (1966), pp. 191f.. The prosopography of the texts from Nineveh has been announced for the forthcoming second volume of *NALK*. In the meanwhile, see *ARU*, pp. 403ff.. Examples of the relevance of the prosopographical analysis are provided in the studies of F.M. Fales, *Neo-Assyrian Prosopography, I: The Archive of Remanni-Adad*, SAAB I (1987), pp. 98ff., and *Neo-Assyrian Prosopography, II: The Many Faces of Nabû-šarru-ušur*, SAAB II (1988), pp. 105ff..

<sup>21</sup>) On the archive see Menzel, *AT*, pp. 100ff., particularly on Nabû-šumu-ušur see *ibid.*, p. 19.

ND 5447: *ašlāku*, “washer, bleacher”, interest rate of 33.3%;

ND 5448: *kāširu ša ša ekalli*, “weaver of the queen”, interest rate of 50% and pledge of the debtor’s wife;

ND 5449: *ikkaru*, “farmer”, interest rate of 20%;

ND 5452: *aškāpu*<sup>MES</sup> *ša* <sup>LU</sup>EN.NAM *ša Kalhu*, “leatherworkers/tanners of the governor of Kalhu”, interest of 40%;

ND 5453: *lapputtu* and *šaqu*, “lieutenant” and “cupbearer”, interest of 20%;

ND 5456: *maššār qabli*, “guardian of the grove”, interest of 20%;

ND 5459: *atû*, “door-keeper”, interest clause not preserved;

ND 5469: *mušākil alpe/iššūrē*, “feeder of birds/cattle”, interest of 50% + obligation to provide harvesters<sup>22</sup>.

Nabû-kibsi-ušur and Nabû-na’id, debtors in ND 5464, could possibly belong to the temple personnel, or to a group in permanent connection with its administrative offices. Their names are frequently recorded among the witnesses of the archive<sup>23</sup>. Finally, in ND 5460, one of the two debtors bears the name of Nabû-šumu-ušur. However, his identification with the homonymous *šangû* of the temple is uncertain for the lack of further evidence. No clue remains to assist in tracing the partner in the loan, Nabû-šumu-iddin.

Besides the credit documents, the temple offices kept summary reports of issues, as ND 5457, the only one which we possess, illustrates. This text dates back to 699 and is therefore chronologically separated from the bulk of the documentation. The individuals mentioned remain unknown. Nevertheless it is worth noting that the text was issued on the 16th of Nisan, i.e. presumably shortly before the harvest, as in the case of loan-contracts. The cereals of the temple are recorded along with the officer to whom they are entrusted and their various destinations<sup>24</sup>.

From this text and the loan documents it is possible to reconstruct the redistributive side of the productive circuit centered on the temple organization, although its actual extension remains difficult to determine. The goods deriving from offerings, fiscal

<sup>22</sup>) For the restoration *mu-ša-[kil alpi/iššūrē]* see Menzel, *AT*, T 193. For other attestations of the same profession see the archive of Šamas-šarru-ušur, below.

<sup>23</sup>) The name of Nabû-na’id is mentioned again in the same document among the witnesses. Thus it is probably more correctly to assume the existence of two individuals with the same name. For the attestation of the two names in the witnesses’ lists in the archive see Iraq 19, pp. 137 and 138.

<sup>24</sup>) The text is quoted in *AT*, pp. 101f. For the reading *kar-me*, cf. *TCAE*, p. 402. The text is here quoted for a quicker comparison: (1) 59 ANŠE 2 BÂN *ša ri-š[i-ti(?)]* (2) *ina KAL-ti ša* 29 ANŠE ŠE SIG<sub>5</sub>-ti (3) <sup>LU\*</sup>LUNGA (4) 51 ANŠE *ina ša* 9 1/2 *qa* (5) [*ša*] 24 ANŠE 5 BÂN SIG<sub>5</sub>-ti (6) [<sup>L</sup>]<sup>U\*</sup>NINDA (7) *n[ap-har 1 me]* 10 ANŠE 2 BÂN ŠE.PAD<sup>MES</sup> (8) *gi-nu-u* (9) *ša* <sup>d</sup>PA (10) 30 ANŠE *ina ša kar-me!* KUR (11) <sup>Id</sup>IM-su-ri (12) <sup>LU\*</sup>[A.BA] <sup>KUR</sup>Ar-ma-a-a (13) PAP 1 *me* 40 ANŠE 2 BÂN ŠE.PAD<sup>MES</sup> (14) TA *kar-me ša* <sup>d</sup>PA (15) *ina IGI* <sup>1</sup>NUMUN-ti-i (16) *i-ti-din* (17) <sup>ITI</sup>BÁRA UD.16.KAM (18) *lim-mu* EN-MAN-a-ni.

incomes, and temple agricultural estates are partially processed (production of bread and beer), and partially destined to loans. From the analysis of the debtors' professions it may be assumed that the cereals are mainly issued to the personnel attached to the temple and palace administrations, the same personnel that, from other sources, appears organized in the *kisru*-system and supplied with rations<sup>25</sup>. At the moment, however, it is impossible to establish how and to what extent the stipulation of interest-bearing contracts combines and interacts with the supply system of the rations distribution<sup>26</sup>.

#### b) The Governor's Palace

*GPA* 105 is the only text from this site that corresponds to the usual corn-loan typology. However, since the reading is not completely sure<sup>27</sup>, and since the parties mentioned are not traceable elsewhere, a more precise specification of the context is difficult. For the presence, as creditor, of the palace supervisor (<sup>L</sup>Úša pān bīti), the text may be compared with *GPA* 99, a receipt issued by the governor's eunuch for the delivery of a load of "king's corn".

A third document, *GPA* 110, represents an elsewhere unattested type of record. It registers together the main elements of two contracts actually stipulated, i.e.: the names of the debtors and of the witnesses of each of the two separate transactions, the *ina pūhi* nature of the advances, the quantity of the barley. In addition it gives the sum of the principal invested and of the interest expected.

#### c) The archives of the Review Palace (653-PC)

##### I. The archive of the *rab ekalli*

The few documents from this archive provide examples of the procedures pertaining to the relocation and utilization of fiscal incomes. In *TFS* 13 the *ekal māšarte* appears as the addressee of a consignment of wheat to be employed for aviculture. A

<sup>25</sup> On the term *kisru* and on the kind of personnel organized in this structure see Postgate, *Mesopotamia* 7, pp. 212f., with previous bibliography. Note that the above mentioned professions appear as well in the lists of distributions *NWL* nos. 34-35.

<sup>26</sup> Another feature of this archive is the variety of capacity terms utilized. They have been studied in M.A. Powell, *On the Absolute Value of the Assyrian qa and emār*, *Iraq* 46 (1984), pp. 57ff..

<sup>27</sup> See *GPA*, p. 133 fn. 3. Outstanding feature of this text is the absence of witnesses, a trait comparable with Bahianu's documents.

similar destination is specified in *TFS* 10 for another load of fodder, which represents the *iškāru* due by the *šaniu*-official of Kalhu to the *rab ekalli ša ekal māšarte*, and is expressed according to its value in silver.

The contracting parties belong to the administrative staff and the item transferred constitutes a fiscal contribution. In this context the use of contract-type text and of the technical vocabulary of the credit procedure are aimed at establishing the following aspects: form and means of payment, destination of the fiscal income (defined on the basis of specific, and possibly contingent, demands, and eventually including indications about the way of processing the goods)<sup>28</sup>.

A similar situation is portrayed in *TFS* 14. Here the palace is the addressee of the *nusāhē*-tax on the *ma'uttu*-land, the *rab karmāni* is the official entrusted with the collection, the cereals are probably meant for the preparation of a by-product denominated *ašudu*<sup>29</sup>. Unfortunately it is impossible to figure out the social position of the debtor Šamaš-ahu-iddin, known only from this group of texts. In *TFS* 16 he owes a load of straw as *šibšu*-tax. Same situation is depicted in *TFS* 15, where the payment is charged to Šepe-Ištar, possibly present as witness in *TFS* 13, and therefore possibly in a position of specific relationship with the palace administration.

The last transaction clearly assignable to the administrative typology is illustrated by *TFS* 12, which records the issue of fodder (*kissutu*) by the *rab ekalli* to a *rab urāte ša rab ša rēšē* official<sup>30</sup>, and indicates the name of the functionary originally in charge of it.

Together with these documents the palace archives retain memory of two *ina pūhi*-loans (*TFS* 11 and 18). The parties are not identifiable, and the only peculiar notation is, in *TFS* 11, the provenance of a debtor from a "Brewers' Village" (<sup>URU</sup>ŠIM×A<sup>MES</sup>).

## II. The *šakintu*'s archive

The data relating to professions in this section are extremely scanty, and the position of the parties involved in the transactions needs to be tentatively drawn through internal comparisons.

Ahhe-eriba plays the role of debtor in *TFS* 42 and *TFS* 44. In the latter document he is one of seven debtors who bind themselves to a shipment of barley to the locality of

<sup>28</sup>) See *TCAE*, pp. 94ff., and *Mesopotamia* 7, p. 205, under *iškāru*. On the employment of the loan-type texts for registering fiscal obligations see *TCAE*, p. 180.

<sup>29</sup>) On the *ma'uttu*-land, see S. Parpola, *ZA* 65 (1975), p. 295; J.N. Postgate, *Iraq* 32, p. 135. For the term *ašudu*, cf. *TFS*, p. 67, and also *AT*, texts nos. 79-80 (from Assur), in which it is defined *iškāru ša Aššur*. For the mention of *ašudu* in rations lists, see *NWL* no. 35.

<sup>30</sup>) See *TFS*, p. 64.

Buru-Wer, “on the very day that the king will enter Nineveh”. Ahhe-eriba might, on the other hand, be the creditor in whose favour the judicial verdict (*dēnu*) *TFS* 31, concerning the settlement of an account, is issued<sup>31</sup>.

As to the creditors of *TFS* 44, one of them, Dur-maki-Ninurta, is requested in *TFS* 60 to repay a sum of silver in the short term of seven days, to avoid the growth of interest.

Finally, in *TFS* 92 it is the *rab karmāni*, the official in charge of the provisions, who must deliver fodder in the month of Ajjaru to Mannu-ki-Arba’il, whose role is not identifiable, but who might be among the debtors listed in *TFS* 44<sup>32</sup>.

From these fragments of information it is possible to deduce a hypothetical pattern of relationships characterized by: continuity of contacts among the same individuals, interchangeability in the creditor-debtor role, connection with the palace establishment. All clues point to the role of the parties as that of agents for provisions operating on behalf of or for the palace administration.

#### d) The archive of Šamaš-šarru-ušur (666-612)

The group of texts analyzed below originates from the private residence of the rein holder (*mukil appāte*) Šamaš-šarru-ušur<sup>33</sup>, and precisely from room no. 19 of the dwelling complex TW 53, located against the city wall of Kalhu. The utilization of the room as commodities store as well as archive induced Wiseman to identify Šamaš-šarru-ušur as a “a wealthy merchant”, whose activity could be compared with the precious information available on the private archives from Assur. There too, a similar pattern of private commercial activity, carried on by individuals otherwise attached to the administration, seems detectable<sup>34</sup>.

The specific activity of Šamaš-šarru-ušur may be studied by comparing the references to the object of repayment and to the debtors’ professions. These, however, are retrievable only in two of the corn loan documents belonging to him, namely: ND 3456, where Nabû-ahu-ušur, the debtor, bears the title of *mušākil iššūrē*, and ND 3442 in

<sup>31</sup>) The term *nikkassu* is employed both in administrative contexts and in the commercial practice, see *TCAE*, p. 24, par. 7.3.4 (= *GPA* 265) and p. 235. Iraq 32, no. 16 is also an accounts record probably settled in an administrative context.

<sup>32</sup>) The same personal name appears also in various texts from Šamaš-šarru-ušur’s archive (see *TFS* 92, fn. 3), and in *NALK* 261. The name is, on the other hand, quite a common one and there are no extant hints allowing the identification of one and the same person in the different documents.

<sup>33</sup>) On Šamaš-šarru-ušur, see *TFS*, p. 2, fn. 4. For a description of the place of discovery see Iraq 16, pp. 130ff., and *Nimrud and Its Remains*, pp. 186ff. from which is taken fig. 7 reproduced below.

<sup>34</sup>) Cf. K. Deller, *BaM* 15, pp. 225ff..

which the same activity of the debtor may be inferred by comparison with the witness list of ND 3426 (*FNALD* 9).

The title of *mušākil iššūrē* is also noted in the silver loan ND 3437, for Mannu-ki-Nabû<sup>35</sup>, while a profession possibly connected with the same sphere of production, *ušandû*, “fowler”, is known for another character of the archive, Kurilanaja, whose daughter is acquired in ND 3423, probably through an adoption procedure, by Šamaš-šarru-ušur himself<sup>36</sup>.

In the other documents of the archive various types of birds (pigeons, geese, cranes [?]) appear either as object of supplies and as means to balance the account or to compensate a late repayment<sup>37</sup>.

On the other hand, the corn loans issued to the *mušākil iššūrē* do not indicate as date of repayment the usual *ina adri*. These factors together draw to conclude, as a working hypothesis, that the contracts were stipulated in the context of a productive activity controlled or organized by Šamaš-šarru-ušur. The recurrence of the same professions in rations lists<sup>38</sup> induces to formulate the hypothesis that the contracting parties could act as members of the administrative organization, in an operative context where obligations and concerns, although presumably fixed in a general way, required the employment of further procedures to specify and regulate the relationships on a personal basis<sup>39</sup>.

As to the provenance of the cereals, there is reason to assume that Šamaš-šarru-ušur was personally involved also in the control of the means of production, despite the lack of land sale contracts in his archive<sup>40</sup>. He in fact obtains, by means of advance of silver, the direct usufruct of cultivated fields, as attested by ND 3430 and ND 3457<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> See Iraq 17, p. 117. Other *mušākil iššūrēs* are mentioned as witnesses in ND 3426, ll. 41-43, an *ušandû* in l. 43.

<sup>36</sup> See Iraq 17, pl. XXIII, and Deller, OrNS 35, p. 193, where the typology of the transaction is defined as follows: “not sale of slave but adoption”. For the formation of the PN Kurilanaja cf. *TFS* p. 100, fn. 21, for the reading of the theophoric *Kur*, and Zadok, *WSB*, pp. 167f., for the ending with a compound hypocoristic suffix *-an + ay(ya)*.

<sup>37</sup> Advances of birds: ND 3445, 3448, 3439, 3455, 3465, 3436; penalty clauses mentioning birds: ND 3432, 3434.

<sup>38</sup> For *mušākil iššūrē* see ND 2803 (Iraq 23) = *NWL*, p. 88; for *ušandû* see *NWL* 128, 26; 130, a 8; 132, rev. 5. Note also the absence of witnesses in ND 3456.

<sup>39</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that other documents of clear administrative origin come from the same area: ND 3467 from TW53, room no. 33, list of rations of *ilku* to charioteers (with commentary in *TCAE*, p. 221f.), and ND 3468 from room no. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the position of land owner of his colleague and friend Remanni-Adad, described in Fales, SAAB I, pp. 98ff..

<sup>41</sup> The content of ND 3430 as it results from the summary given in Iraq 15, p. 142 is unfortunately rather unclear: “Instead of interest they (the two debtors) pledge 2 *emārus* of an irrigated field belonging to Šangi-Ištar and 2 *emārus* of a field in the town of Šeusani. To be repaid in 6 years. When the silver is paid the

## e) The archive of the north-west Palace (mainly PC)

The northern wing of the palace has been described as an administrative sector for the discovery of lists of goods, animals, people, and of legal documents, scattered in various contiguous sections<sup>42</sup>.

In the group of contracts, found in room ZT 17, the most frequently occurring proper name is that of Izbu, whose profession is unfortunately unknown<sup>43</sup>. He plays the role of lender of cereals only in ND 2303, but his archive reveals other connections with the agricultural activity.

The majority of the contracts record advances of silver (ND 2336, about *rēšēte ša Ištar*<sup>44</sup>, 2338, 2081, and 2342) and purchases of slaves (ND 2324, 2326, 2327, and 2328), giving evidence for a wealthy and relevant position of his. Izbu, on the other hand, appears as debtor together with ten other people in ND 2334 (= *FNALD* 33), a contract that apparently establishes heavy conditions, since it requires, besides the interest on corn at the rate of 50%, the provision of a group of laborers. Izbu occupies a special position anyway, since he is also mentioned as surety for the loan together with a scribe, Nani, perhaps to be identified with the *lahhinu ša Nabû*, witness in the dedication texts ND 5550, *NALK* 424 and 426, emanating from the Nabû temple<sup>45</sup>.

field will be freed.”. Particularly problematical is the role of Šangi-Ištar, who appears also among the witnesses. As to the second text, ND 3457 (+ pl. XIII), it is discussed together with ND 2342 (*FNALD* 28) from Izbu’s archive by Postgate, *FNALD*, pp. 134f., because the same operative formulae are present: (1) 3 ANŠE *ka-rap-hi* (2) *ša* <sup>d</sup>DI-MU-EN (3) <sup>1d</sup>UTU-MAN-PAP *e-ra-áš* (4) *e-ši-id ú-ga-lap* (5) *e-li la še-ib-še* (6) *la nu-sa-he* (7) 3 GÌN KÙ.BABBAR *gi-mir* (8) A.ŠA-ŠÚ *i-ti-ši*. Considering Šamaš-šarru-ušur’s position, we would dismiss the hypothesis of a work contract implying for him the necessity to repay a debt with personal service as a laborer (situation that seems instead to be portrayed in ND 2342). He should rather have been in the position of organizing the agricultural work. See commentary *sub TFS*, no. 45.

<sup>42</sup> “Scribal quarter” in Iraq 15, 33; “the administrative wing of the North West Palace” in *TFS*, p. 19. For a general description of the site and for maps showing the location of the different rooms, cf. *Nimrud and Its Remains*, pp. 164 ff. For the lists see also B. Parker, *Administrative Tablets from the North-West Palace, Nimrud*, Iraq 23 (1961), pp. 15ff.. See also the document ND 3468 from ZTW 4 (in Iraq 15), recording the delivery of a large amount of corn to the *rab kissete* and the *rab karmāni*-officials, quoted in *TCAE*, p. 402.

<sup>43</sup> For his employment in the administrative sector speaks ND 2334 = *FNALD* 33, discussed above. At the end of the debtor’s list (rev. 1), which is concluded by the name of Izbu, the document presents the unfortunately incomplete indication [ x x ] DUMU MAN. Postgate suggests to restore a professional or official title. But a plausible alternative integration could be also [ŠE.PAD *ša*] DUMU MAN. The name Izbu appears also in a list of men depending from an otherwise unknown personage, from ZT 14, see Iraq 23, ND 2084.

<sup>44</sup> On the question of the *rēšēte* capitals see Postgate, *JSS* 28 (1983), pp. 155ff..

<sup>45</sup> Nani also “signs” as witness the documents ND 2332 and 2308 from ZT, ND 3460 and 3463 from Šamaš-šarru-ušur’s archives. Other contacts between personnel of the North-West Palace and of the temple of Nabû may be shown by comparing the occurrences of the following names: Nabû-ahhe-eriba (*lahhinu*), Nabû-šarra-ušur, Nabû-šumu-ušur (*šangû*), Ninurta-eriba (*tamkāru*), Urad-Ištar (*šangû*). The prosopographical notes here quoted are taken in large proportion from Deller, *OrNS* 35, pp. 190ff..

The particular reason for this debt note escapes us, mainly because from other documents of the archive, related to advance of silver, it is possible to deduce that Izbu not only owned or controlled capitals, but invested them for financing both the production and the commercialization of agricultural products.

In ND 2342 (= *FNALD* 28), the silver borrowed by Sikin-Ištar, the same person that purchases a slave in ND 2302, is probably connected to farming activities, since it has to be paid back in the eighth month, *ina urki ebūri*, one year after the sealing of the contract<sup>46</sup>. The obligation requires the debtor to till an incultivated area and indicates a penalty for neglecting the repayment date.

In ND 2081 Izbu lends 10 shekels of silver under the condition of a mixed repayment, half in the same currency and half in barley, specifying the equivalence rate: *akī mahīri ša URU<sup>AD</sup>-himme*.

The document ND 2338 is also related to the circulation of cereals. Izbu advances a sum of silver to a group of three debtors; among them Baṭuṭanni and Ninurta-ajjalū-id-din play the role of creditors in another contract from the same site, ND 2335 (= *FNALD* 29). In the latter case the money is invested in a commercial enterprise (*harrānu*) for the supply of corn to be paid at the equivalence rate valid in the *nāgir ekalli*'s district<sup>47</sup>. Qallaja, who appears in ND 2335 as partner in the enterprise, shares some responsibility also in the present agreement: *šum-ma<sup>1</sup> QĀL-a-a \*TA ŠĀ na-ad-ba-ki an-ni-e ur-ta-me pu-u-tū-hu 4 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR i-na-ši*<sup>48</sup>.

In sum, Izbu operates clearly in the context of a commercial activity. The debt note ND 2334, where he appears as debtor, could represent a particular form of settlement of account between business partners.

Another small group of documents originates mainly from room ZT 16. Among the individuals mentioned therein the name of Lakipu may also be connected with a series, albeit quite limited, of commercial transactions. His role in the extant documents is in fact split between that of creditor (of corn in ND 2317, of silver in ND 2322) and of debtor for the purchase of pack mules (in ND 2091, 2095 and 2318).

<sup>46</sup> For similar attestations from Assur, see K. Deller, *RA* 66 (1972), p. 94, where two texts are quoted in which the advance of silver is redeemable after the harvest: a contract previously published as *RA* 65 (1971), p. 85: (3) 1 + *en mi-[šil]* (4) *ina SAG.DU DINGIR GIBIL ša ITI<sup>GAN</sup>* (5) 1 *mi-šil* (EGIR) *e-bu-ri x x* (6) *ū-ba-la a-na PN SUM-an*; and VAT 9703: (6) 4 GÍN (UD) 1 ITI<sup>KIN</sup> (7) *SUM-an 4 GÍN* (8) *ina ur-ki (e)-bu-ri SUM*.

<sup>47</sup> See *FNALD*, p. 39. For the meaning of the text and of *harrānu*-contracts, see also Deller, *BaM* 15, pp. 243f.. The dates of ND 2335 and 2338 are almost the same, i.e., 14.XI for the first contract, and 4.XI for the second. It is worth noting moreover that Turši-Ištar, the commercial agent (debtor) of ND 2335, also appears elsewhere in this archive (2093 and 2316).

<sup>48</sup> On *nad/tbāki* cf. *NRGD*, nos. 42-44, the discussion in *FNALD*, p. 46, and the other attestation quoted in *AT*, p. 48.

Another hint of a commercial activity is provided by another text from the same room, ND 2321, obligation for the delivery to Nineveh of the barley contracted<sup>49</sup>.

Besides the loan-documents, tablets recording lists of expenditures have been unearthed in ZT 16. Postgate interpreted them as summaries of the expenses afforded for gifts and preparations undertaken in the occasion of a wedding ceremony, and, considering the presence of other transactions in her name, brought forth the hypothesis of the utilization of this sector by the *šakintu*'s administration<sup>50</sup>. The connection with this archive does not however represent the only outer relation, since contacts with the archive of Šamaš-šarru-ušur and with the temple of Nabû may be equally traced<sup>51</sup>.

To sum up, the connections with other administrative sectors and the presence of different types of records, which include contracts of clear commercial nature, bring us to recognize in the offices of the New Palace an important center for the regulation of the flow of goods to and from Kalhu.

#### The archives from Nineveh

The most relevant group of texts here belong, as is well known, to Bahianu, who is probably attached to the administrative hierarchy<sup>52</sup>, as indicated by the lack of witnesses in several transactions<sup>53</sup>. As to the professions of the parts to the agreements, it is possible to hypothesize the title of *mār damqi*, "chariot fighter", for the debtor of *NALK* 54, since the same name appears with this qualification in *NALK* 56 in the witnesses' list. However, despite the quite large number of preserved texts, it is difficult to point out further connections and informations.

More details emerge for other archives. *NALK* 137, from the records belonging to the *rab kišir* Kišir-Aššur<sup>54</sup>, centers on the role of intermediary of a certain Rapa<sup>5</sup>, who bears the title of *nāru*, and who also appears elsewhere as a witness<sup>55</sup>. In this contract, signed perhaps shortly before the harvest, he commits himself to supply a certain

<sup>49</sup>) In the same lot of texts note also ND 2319 and 2320. The first document indicates, as penalty relevant to an advance of silver, the supply of a load of corn to Kalhu. The second one is an obligation to provide agricultural laborers in return for a load of silver.

<sup>50</sup>) *On some Assyrian Ladies*, Iraq 41 (1979), particularly pp. 100ff.; the texts ND 2310-2312 were firstly edited in Iraq 23, pp. 20ff..

<sup>51</sup>) Cf. fn. 44, above, and the mention of Izbu as surety together with Aqbi-ilu in TW 53, ND 3435. A more thorough prosopographical analysis would however be necessary to establish other relations with certainty.

<sup>52</sup>) *AT*, p. 12 (and fn. 9), indicates the title of *rab alāni ša lahhinete*, on the basis of *ARU* 58, 2.

<sup>53</sup>) Similar cases are represented by *GPA* 105 and ND 3456.

<sup>54</sup>) For this archive see *NALK* nos. 136-141.

<sup>55</sup>) *NALK* 140. On this title, cf. Menzel, *AT*, pp. 254ff..

amount of straw, part of which needs to be collected from other furnishers. The particular relevance of the document derives from the explicit and complete formulation of the supply agreement, which includes the indication of the price: 10 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ša PN (Kišir-Aššur) (...) *ina* IGI-šú *ina ad-ri* ŠE.IN.NU<sup>MEŠ</sup> (...) 1 *me ma-qar-rata*<sup>MEŠ</sup> ša ŠE.IN.[NU<sup>MEŠ</sup>] ša 10 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *ina* GN SUM-na, “10 shekels of silver belonging to Kišir-Aššur (...) are at their disposal. On the threshing floor of straw (...) a total of 100 bales of straw (worth) 10 shekels of silver, they shall deliver in GN.”

A similar case is probably portrayed in *NALK* 198, which records an obligation made upon a charioteer, whose dependence from the administrative sector is clear from the indication of the unity (*kišru*) to which he belongs. The commitment consists in delivering barley in the city of Maganiši, from which the charioteer comes.

As to the context of Kišir-Aššur's activity, it might be identified as an administrative one, on the basis of his title and of the professions of his counterparts in the contracts<sup>56</sup>. As to the mechanisms of the transactions, it should be noted that Kišir-Aššur has cash at his disposal and is entitled to use it for investments deposits of the Ištār temple, as shown by the numerous credit documents for silver belonging to his archive. With the same money he probably organizes and finances commercial and transport enterprises, as hinted at in *NALK* 141, a contract stipulated for the provision of a boat (*maškuru*).

Silim-Aššur, acting as creditor for cereals in *NALK* 303, is another important personality within the Nineveh archives. He appears to carry on a financing and investment activity during Esarhaddon's reign<sup>57</sup>. Namely, by utilizing *rēšēte*-deposits, by issuing short-term silver loans (*NALK* 311-313), and by enjoying the usufruct of farm land assigned to him as antichretic pledge (*NALK* 305-306, 315).

As to the aspect of the continuity in the relations with the same economic partners, the relevant records are *NALK* 304, concerning cattle (= *FNALD* 31), and *NALK* 303, about cereals, where the same debtors, Handasanu and Marduk-šumu-ušur, and the same surety, Bēl-ereš, occur.

In *NALK* 303 the statement of the quantity borrowed is formulated in a peculiar way, with the inclusion of the interest rate: 10 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR 1 *me* 20 ANŠE SE.PAD<sup>MEŠ</sup> *a-du ru-bé-šú*. This unusual attestation leads us to consider too general the translation presented in *NALK* and to interpret the transaction in the light of the evidence provided by *NALK* 137. The document does not register a mixed loan of corn and silver but, more likely, the agreement for the delivery of corn, in which the price is negotiated and

<sup>56</sup> Cf. also his inclusion in lists from Kalhu, see *TFS* no. 101, I, 7.

<sup>57</sup> He may be identified with the *sukkallu dannu*, known as witness from the texts *NALK* 256 (663), 257-258 (660) and 262, originating from Remanni-Adad's archive, and as eponym for the year 659, although the extant documents bearing his name go back to the time span 680-670.

fixed<sup>58</sup>. The role of the debtors, here as well as in *NALK* 304, would be that of trade agents.

Two other commercial contracts, *NALK* 309 and 310 (for us less explicitly formulated) concern wine. The debtor in *NALK* 301 bears the title of *rab alāni* of Ahusite<sup>59</sup>.

Finally, *NALK* 417 is an obligation to supply a large amount of barley to the *šakintu* of Dur-Šarruken, charged on the *rab-karmāni*-official Ilu-ammār. His small archive allows to add some particulars to the picture. The contracts *NALK* 358 and 359 attest the sale to Šumma-ilani of real estates, including vineyards as well as laborers, located in different geographical areas, among which Maganubba is the most relevant<sup>60</sup>. On the basis of these attestations it is possible to assume that the official Ilu-ammār was probably able to organize the delivery of products yielded by his own farm lands.

### 3. Some general considerations on the pattern of circulation of cereals

The extant records, drawn up and kept in the administrative bureaus, allow us to point out a few particular features of the pattern of legal and economical procedures implemented to assure the flow of goods to and from the centers of the NA empire.

By combining criteria like the find spot of the texts, the professions of the parties, and intertextual connections, it may be assumed that the contract-style definition of personal responsibilities and of provenance and destination of the goods was an instrument of the administrative and fiscal practice. The interrelation between commercial activities and fiscal system is however more substantial, i.e. not limited to the aspect of

<sup>58</sup>) The equivalence 10 minas of silver = 120 *emārus* of barley may generally be admitted as possible. Since we do not know the rate of interest, we may only hypothetically indicate an interval of 3-6 shekels for 1 *emāru* as price for the corn. This equivalence would occupy a middle position between the rate known for period of economical crisis, i.e. 1 shekel per *sūtu* (see K. Deller, *Getreidekursangaben in neuassyrischen Rechtsurkunden*, OrNS 33, pp. 257ff.), and the rate resulting from a particularly good yield, i.e. from 1 to 2 *emāru* for 1 mina of copper, worth probably 1 shekel of silver (see *ibid.*, p. 250).

<sup>59</sup>) *NALK* 309: 5 ANŠE GEŠTIN<sup>MES</sup> ina 1 qa ša MAN ša <sup>1</sup>Si-lim-Aš-šur ina IGI PN<sub>2</sub> ina UD 1 KAM šá <sup>ITI</sup>BÁRA i-dan BE-ma la i-din GEŠTIN<sup>MES</sup> a-ki ma-hi-ri ša <sup>URU</sup>NINA<sup>KI</sup> SUM-na; *NALK* 310: <sup>NA</sup>KIŠIB PN<sub>1</sub> <sup>LU</sup>GAL URU<sup>MES</sup> šá <sup>KUR</sup>A-hu-si-te 5 ANŠE 2 BÁN GEŠTIN<sup>MES</sup> ina 1 qa šá MAN šá PN<sub>2</sub> (Silim-Aššur) ina IGI PN<sub>1</sub> ina <sup>ITI</sup>NE (IV) SUM-na. The interval between the date of issuing of the two documents is of only two months and some of the witnesses are in common. A very tempting suggestion is to interpret, in the latter text, that the delivery of the wine to Silim-Aššur by the *rab alāni* official is in fact a way to convert into silver the *realia* collected as taxes, with the aim to forward them in this form to the royal administration. For the price of wine, cf. ND 2321, Iraq 23; see also *ARU* 218, where silver is disbursed for the supply of wine in Bit-Zamani, and the repayment at the market price of Nineveh is given as penalty. The date of issue is 3.XI.687.

<sup>60</sup>) Šumma-ilani is owner of a large archive, see *NALK* nos. 355-377; for the profession, cf. *NALK*, p. 409.

the formalization of the relationships between the parties. As attested by the archives of Izbu, Šamaš-šarra-ušur, and of the Review Palace from Kalhu, by the contracts of the *hundurayu*-family from Assur and by the documents belonging to the wealthy officials from Nineveh, provisions for administrative sectors and the army considerably depended upon the private management of land tenure and of trade, whose incomes augmented the fixed fiscal revenues.

As to the redistribution of the goods, again a double channel is detectable. The economic texts originating from administrative centers suggest the hypothesis of a particular kind of commercialization, by means of interest-bearing loans, for the surplus of goods stored in granaries belonging to the temple or provincial organization.

Epistolary texts provide parallel information on the system of utilization of the resources. The letters SAA I, 170, 181, 182 portray a severe control and a thorough registration of revenues and expenditures and a fixed program of consumption, with quantities calculated daily and monthly. At the same time it appears evident that this system was open to problems and disruptions deriving from malpractice and arbitrary interventions by the officials. In SAA I, 105, Ṭab-šill-Ešarra complains of the irregular and illegitimate depletion of straw and corn supplies. Despite the bad state of preservation of the tablet, it seems possible to conclude that an official was responsible for the unauthorized unsealing of a store and for the distribution of the goods to dependent laborers, following the *ina pūhi* modality<sup>61</sup>. The comparison between this attestation and evidence drawn from the contracts reveals an opposition between the *ina pūhi* procedure and a regular system of controlled distribution of rations<sup>62</sup>.

Of particular interest in this context, but deserving a further, specific investigation, is the possible participation to this system of the crown prince himself. In some contracts the corn is referred to as belonging to the *mār šarri* and sometimes, in addition, as entrusted to an official<sup>63</sup>. Among these texts should be placed also NALK 73, not included in the list since it is a record of default of payment rather than a loan text. It

<sup>61</sup>) Cf. particularly ll. 10'ff.: PN [ina U]RUŠE-KAM<sup>MES</sup> [ina KU]R mu-da-bir 16 ANŠE ŠE.PAD<sup>MES</sup> ŠE kur-diš-šu ša ŠE.IN.NU it-ti-ši LÚ\* ENGAR<sup>MES</sup> É.GAL ú-ša-bi-t a-na pu-u-hi [ x x na]-šu-u-ni ( ... ) ša la-a LÚE[N.NAM x x x x ] i-pat-ti-u, "(While in the village of Diqarate in the desert, PN has taken 16 homers of barley and a pile of straw and seized the farmers of the Palace. They have borrowed ... they open [ ... ] without the governor's permission."

<sup>62</sup>) The explanation of the exact meaning of the *ina pūhi*-clause is not possible, and the assumption of its use as mark of distinguishing a distributive mode, different from the ration system but pertaining to the same administrative context, remains to be proven against further evidence, primarily that deriving from silver loans. On the subject see most recently T. Kwasman, *Mesopotamia* 21, p. 210, who expresses doubts about the possibility of reaching a definite interpretation. A MA attestation of the expression which offers possibilities for comparison, since it equally refers to the administrative system, is presented in B.K. Ismail, *Fünf Mittelassyrische Texte aus Assur*, *Sumer* 24, pp. 17ff., nos. 1 and 2.

<sup>63</sup>) In addition to the texts quoted below, see the Aramaic examples mentioned in fn. 13, above.

decrees, in fact, the enslavement of the debtor: *kūm* ŠE.PAD<sup>MEŠ</sup> (= 32.5 *emārus*) *kūm* GU<sub>4</sub>.NITA *ana* PN *ipallahšu*. The grain is administered by the EN.NAM of the *mār šarri*, the crown prince being the actual owner, as indicated also in *NALK* 383-384, where the intermediate role is played by a *šaniu*-official.

On the other hand, a reference to the role of the *mār šarri*, in the control of distributions of corn is provided also by epistolary texts; see, e.g., *SAA* I, 232: *ina* IGI DUMU LUGAL *liq-qi-bi* ŠE.PAD<sup>MEŠ</sup> ŠE.GĪS.Ì *bi-la-nu a-ke* ŠE.PAD<sup>MEŠ</sup> *ta-na-ši ma-nu ta-da-šu-nu ana-ku ú-da-ia a-ka-li-šú*, “He should speak in the presence of the crown prince. Bring me the barley and the sesame! Why do you take away the barley? To whom did you distribute it? I alone am being excluded from it!”.

\* \* \*

It is evident, from the remarks proposed above, that the topics of credit activity and of the supply system in NA times requires further intensive investigation. Therefore, instead of an overall picture, a summary of the main questions posed by corn-loan texts is here presented as a temporary conclusion. What has been dealt with above, but requires further work, is the following:

- the nature and function of trade bureaus connected with temples and palaces;
- the aims and procedures of the apparently different ways of collecting and redistributing provisions;
- the role of political and administrative hierarchy in the overall credit context<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>64</sup>) A further article on silver loans in the NA texts is in an advanced stage of preparation.

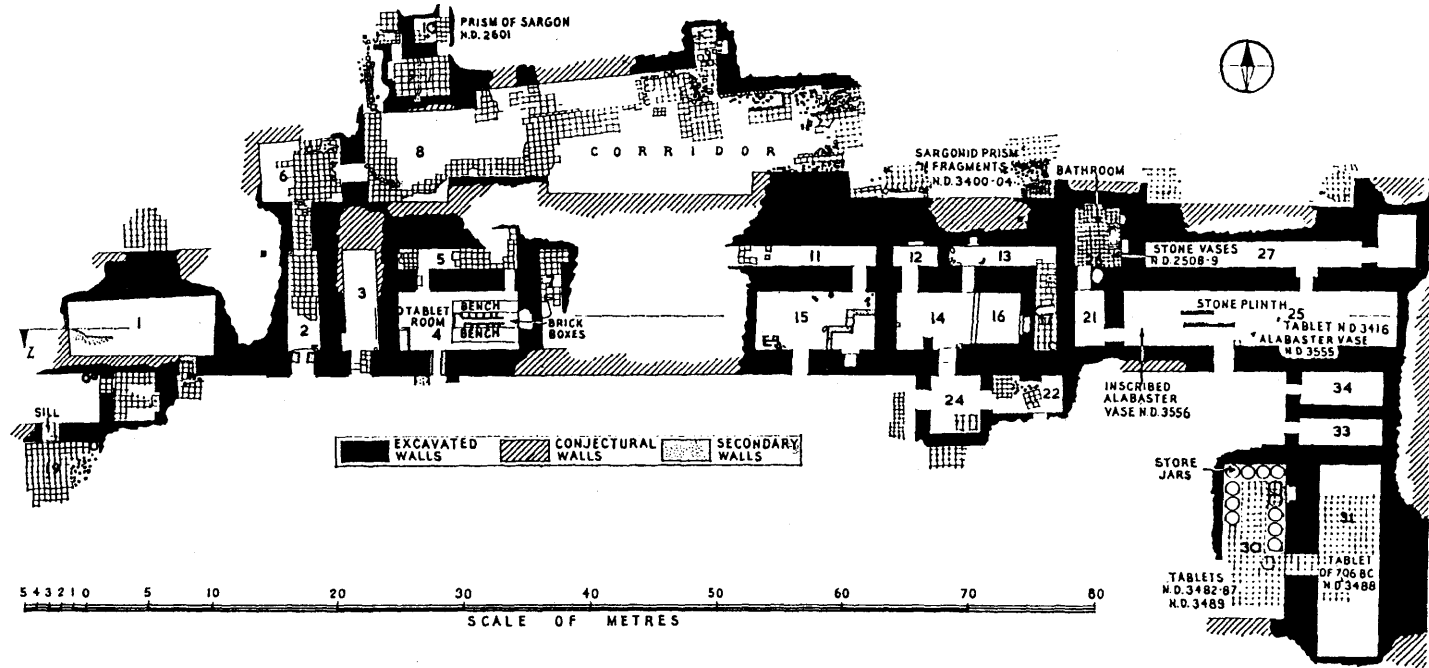


Fig. 6: The northern wing of the North-West Palace (=ZT); from Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, p. 166.

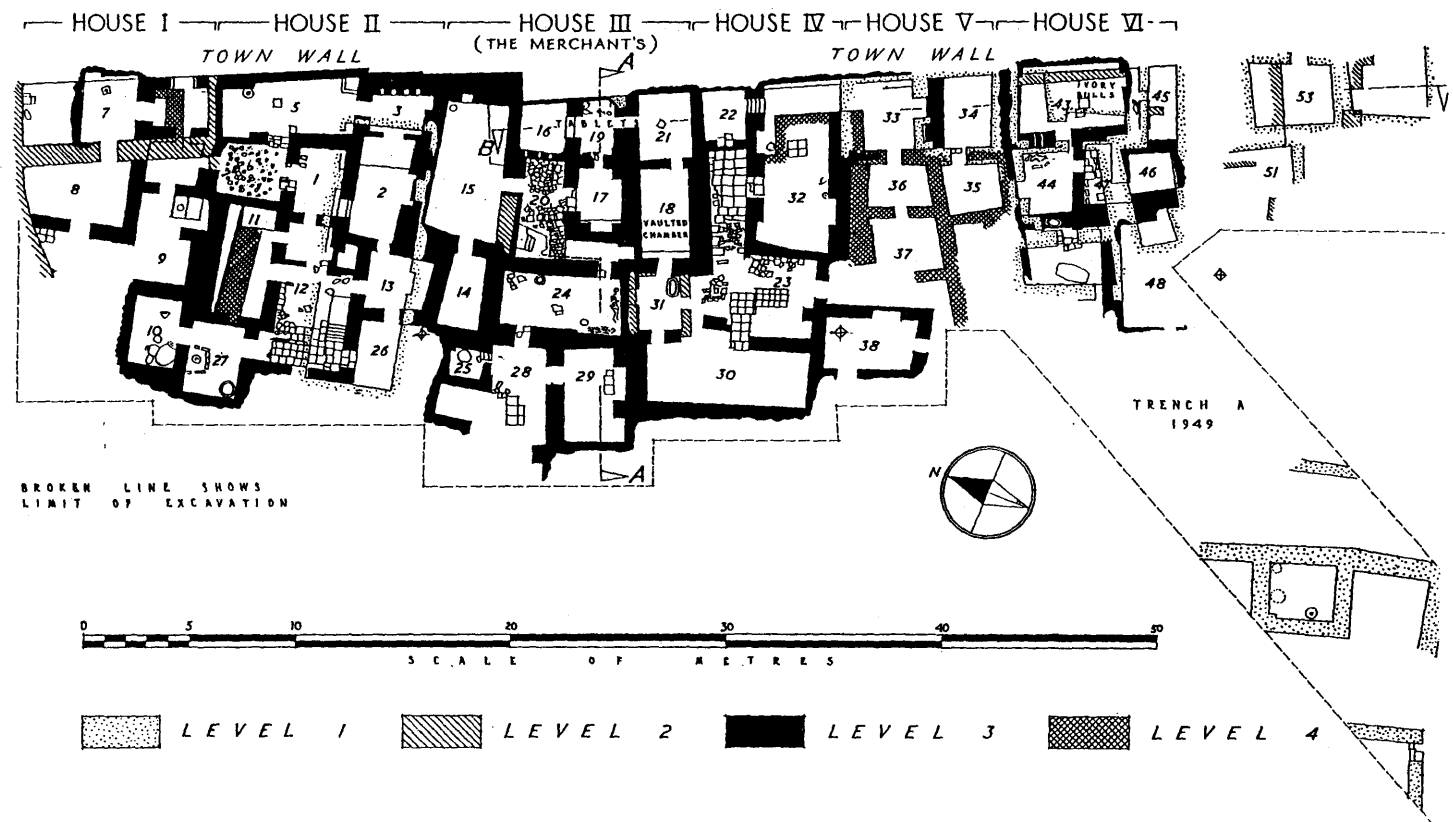


Fig. 7: The House of Šamaš-šarru-ušur; from Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, p. 185.