THE RURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE: A SURVEY

Frederick Mario Fales — Padova

Introduction

For the last twenty years, the subject of "land and people in Assyria" has been broached a number of times by different specialists of the Neo-Assyrian period, always in regard to a set of wide-ranging issues of the socio-economic history of the Neo-Assyrian empire. Essentially, these issues concerned (1) the ownership of the land — and specifically the relation between a well-attested, territorially vast private property in the rural sector and the alleged possession of all the land by the king — and (2) the social and economic status of those mentioned in the texts as actually at work on the land, but rarely if at all ranged among the proprietors1. While often at variance in their conclusions, these studies shared by and large a specific and not particularly extensive range of data on the rural sector in Neo-Assyrian times, drawn from legal, administrative, and epistolary documents of the age. The handicap constituted by the lack of a comprehensive survey and collection of the textual information relevant to this crucial sector of the Neo-Assyrian economy was often remarked upon, although few concrete measures were taken to deal with the matter.

The present study is meant to provide an analytical survey leading through the collection of NA epigraphical materials pertaining to the rural landscape: in other words, while a complete catalogue of the data on this subject is beyond our scope, completeness in itemization on such data will be attempted, providing as ample a choice

of attestations for each category as possible. Although planned long ago, this study proves to be particularly feasible and rich in implications nowadays, due to the advanced status of the editions of NA texts and to the presence of many and multi-faceted secondary studies on the rural sector in the Ancient Near East. From the point of view of the editions of the sources, the international project called CNA, based in Helsinki, has widely contributed toward an unified presentation of all NA sources known at present, by providing textual editions (the SAA volume series) and computer-based files generally available to interested scholars\(^2\). Thus, the textual quotes provided in the following pages derive from editions of the last five years, with rare exceptions.

A wide range of secondary studies on the rural countryside of the Ancient Near East—or of other sectors and periods—should also be taken into account, for these contributions prove to have progressively widened the range of questions to be posed when dealing with the written data. Foremost, for the very definition of “rural/agricultural landscape”, mention should be made of the work of Emilio Sereni in the field of agricultural history\(^3\). In his main treatise, *Storia del paesaggio agrario italiano*\(^4\), Sereni gives a clear definition of the agricultural landscape\(^5\) as “the form that man, in the course and for the aims of his activities in agricultural production, impresses consciously and systematically to the natural landscape”\(^6\). Such a definition implies the setting up of a multiplicity of links for interdisciplinary investigation involving the overall domains of “history” and “geography”, from philology to topography, from socio-economic historical theory to cartography\(^7\). As a further implication of this approach, all available sources may be considered—at least from a general standpoint—equally meaningful. Sereni takes pains to point out the intentional inclusion of a variety of sources—ranging


\(^4\) Bari 1961. Of course, mention should be also made of the work that Sereni acknowledged as the pioneering contribution in his field, Marc Bloch’s *Les caractères originaux de l’histoire rurale française*, Paris 1931.

\(^5\) On the history and evolution of the term and concept of “landscape”, a clear overview is given in the article *Paesaggio*, *Enciclopedia Einaudi*, vol. 10, Torino 1980, pp. 320-340.

\(^6\) Sereni, *Storia*, cit., p. 29.

\(^7\) Sereni’s many interests apparently did not comprise field archeology, although it may be noted that this discipline fits perfectly, and in fact in a central position, within the research framework on the agricultural landscape of any region. The by now “classic” surface investigations aimed at reconstructing the settlement patterns—and thus also the settlement typology and use of natural resources—in southern Mesopotamia are of course those of R. McC. Adams, *Land behind Baghdad*, Chicago 1965; *The Uruk Countryside*, Chicago 1972; *Heartland of Cities*, Chicago 1981.
from quotes from bucolic poems, to data from rural folklore, to visual materials from ancient mosaics and medieval or Renaissance paintings — in his treatise, as different, but complementary testimonials of the historical framework he is seeking.

The degree to which this theoretical framework may be applied to the Ancient Near East has not been hitherto tested in full. Yet, reflexes of this set of problems may be detected in a number of recent studies on Ancient Western Asia, whether directly bearing on the reconstruction of parts/segments of the ancient rural landscape, or more generally concerned with the retrieval of man-made modifications to the natural environment: on this count, one should recall in particular the increasing number of international research projects which — proceeding from archeological investigations in the Near East — aim at reconstructing the "ecological" or "cultural-ecological" patterns of given areas in ancient times. It may, of course, be legitimately questioned whether a history of the rural landscape, as diachronically and synchronically wide-ranging and detailed as the one laid out by Sereni for Italy, may be attained for the pre-classical Near East in the near future, if not at present, in view of the complexity and overall scarcity of sources. Leaving this question unanswered for the moment, it is in any case clear that the "rural landscape" represents a crucial area of research on the Ancient Near East, which sheds light on both the socio-economic and environmental/geographical histories of this time and place.

8) Sereni, op. cit., p. 25.
I. SOURCES

1. Typology
   a. Legal

Among Neo-Assyrian legal documents, conveyance deeds of real estate or of "mixed" type — essentially sales of land only or of land with other fixtures of the farm, as well as people — are the types of text that mainly concern the study of the rural landscape. As has been effectively shown by Postgate\(^\text{12}\), the distinctive item in this group of textual materials is represented by a *description* of the property being transacted.

Such a description was surely meant to be as accurate as possible against future litigations, and in fact adheres to a few basic standards. Thus we almost always find (1) listings of the *components* of the real estate complex, from land to orchards to houses to cleared plots for building; (2) notations of *acreage/yield* (with different units of measure according to the land type); (3) *topographical indications* concerning the estate, i.e. the mention of a minimum of two bordering plots or features of the landscape; (4) *localizations* of the estate in relation to greater or smaller sites or entities of administrative geography, from the nearby village to the outlying region or province.

Not a few of these descriptions regard elaborate holdings, in which many different plots or sectors are listed (cf. III.1, below): surely the largest and most famous of these lists is in *NALK 127 (= ADD 414)*, a sale of 21 separate plots of land to the captain and landowner Kakkullānu, active sometime in the 620s\(^\text{13}\). Each of the plots, all located in the village of Bit-abu-ila'a near Sairu, is marked by two adjacent elements — from neighboring properties to waterways to roads — for a total of 20 *emārus*: thus we gain a partial, but probably significant, view of the spatial links between landed holdings and natural/man-made topographic markers which constituted the "landscape" of an Assyrian village\(^\text{14}\).

Of lesser significance for our theme are other, random, notations to be found in the legal documents. For example, some Assyrian or Aramaic toponomastics (names of towns or villages) are meaningful in the sphere of natural characteristics or traditional productive activities: cf. e.g. *Magrisu* (Aram.), "pasture land"\(^\text{15}\), *Abilait* (Aram.),

---

\(^{12}\) J.N. Postgate, *Fifty Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents*, Warminster 1976, pp. 22-25 (henceforth *FNALD*).

\(^{13}\) Cf. F.M. Fales, *Il villaggio assiro Bit Abu-ila'a*, cit.

\(^{14}\) Cf. II.A.2, below, for an analysis of the text and a topographical reconstruction.

\(^{15}\) Cf. R. Zadok, *On West Semites*, p. 140, with etymology.
"meadow"\textsuperscript{16}, \textit{ša-raṭātišu}, "(the town) of the drainage channels"\textsuperscript{17}, \textit{URU.NU.Giš.SAR[MEŠ]}, "(the town) of the gardeners"\textsuperscript{18}. The same may be said for some professional names pointing to the main occupations taking place in the relevant territories: thus, e.g., a text giving the professional designations of the people sold with a landed holding (such as "tiller" or "gardener") will implicitly point to the prevalent activity taking place on the holding itself — which, of course, may be a precious piece of information if it is present on a largely broken tablet\textsuperscript{19}.

While the documentation on the rural sector from legal sources from the NA period is not unsatisfactory from the quantitative point of view (at least 300 fairly preserved texts plus fragments may be utilized\textsuperscript{20}), both the temporal and the spatial distribution of the evidence on real estate or "mixed" sales present some limitations. Taking up legal texts of all kinds into consideration from the chronological point of view for a moment, it may be safely said that more than two thirds of the extant documents pertain to the 7th century B.C.. Materials from the early 8th century are essentially limited to the Tell Halaf archive and some evidence from Nimrud\textsuperscript{21}; while the age of Tiglath-pileser III and following periods of the 8th century are also present at Nineveh\textsuperscript{22}. Among the 7th century texts, almost one half may be referred to the period after 648 B.C., when our knowledge of the sequence of the Assyrian limmus comes to an end\textsuperscript{23}: thus all ranging of data within the last thirty years or so of the empire's existence is open to various possibilities and not a few doubts\textsuperscript{24}.

The outlook from the geographical standpoint is different: single toponyms occurring in legal texts have been progressively localized in one or another region of the Assyrian empire, although a regional approach to such evidence does not seem to have

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{NARGD} 27, 10; cf. also the MA toponym \textit{Būr-ṭāṭi}, \textit{CAD} B, p. 343a.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{ADD} 778, 7.
\textsuperscript{19} On legal texts not directly concerned with transactions over landed property and/or agricultural personnel, such as loan-documents or judicial records, some random notations on the rural sector may equally be present: e.g. a herd of 300 sheep is attested in the court decision \textit{NALK} 108 (= \textit{ADD} 164 = \textit{FNALD} 44); ditto for a herd of 60 sheep in the court decision \textit{AfO} Beih. 6, 106, from Tell Halaf.
\textsuperscript{20} For a list of the material from Nineveh, cf. most recently \textit{NALK}, pp. xx-xxi.
\textsuperscript{22} Cf. \textit{NALK}, p. xxix.
been hitherto attempted\textsuperscript{25}. Geographical indicators are of different types: e.g. the legal
texts from the region around Harran in NW Mesopotamia, may be set apart due to the
presence of penalties referring to the gods of Harran (in legal texts), and/or by specific
toponomastical indications\textsuperscript{26}. Not too different is the case of Kanna' in NE Assyria, seat
of the god Apladad, who is present in the onomastics of the transacting parties\textsuperscript{27}. And
finally, some of the topographic descriptions present revealing details, such as e.g. a
"road leading to the city of Kalhu"\textsuperscript{28}. In general, it may be stated that the legal
documents transacted and/or kept in the capital cities did not necessarily refer to a local
horizon, but rather reflected the place of residence and work of the men who played a
part in the deeds themselves (as sellers or buyers): cf. 1. 2, below\textsuperscript{29}.

\textit{b. Administrative}

The administrative documents from the state archives of Assyria are rarely, if at all,
classifiable according to genre or type. By and large, such texts lack "labels" (as
"headers" or "footers") and forms of inner description and self-referring terminology,
as well as distinctive formulaic markers for their identification and arrangement. In this
regard they differ radically from the texts of the administrations or bureaucracies from
other periods of Mesopotamian history, such as e.g. the texts of the Neo-Sumerian city
and government archives. As far as may be judged from the extant archives of Nineveh,
Kalhu, and other sites\textsuperscript{30}, the very scope of entire groups of administrative texts is not
regularly noted nor made explicit, and if at all present shows no functional correspond­
ence with particular shapes of the tablets or with the inner layouts of the data. In other

\textsuperscript{25} The best result in this line up to the present is certainly the list of geographical settings for the legal texts
from Nineveh given in \textit{NALK}, pp. xxxix-l.

\textsuperscript{26} E.g. in \textit{NALK} 83 (= \textit{ADD} 389), 5', the presence of a \textit{kaskal}\textsuperscript{II} \textit{lugal ša }\textit{kaskal}, "king's road
leading to Harran".

\textsuperscript{27} Cf. E. Lipinski, OrNS 45 (1976), pp. 53-74. Other attempts at arranging the shreds of topographical
evidence offered by the texts, have resulted in new suggestions on the locale of the single documents: cf. e.g.
the localization of the well-attested sites of Sairu and Hašanu in the province of Rasappa by T. Kwasman,
\textit{NALK}, p. 490.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{NALK} 224, 4; and cf. the archive \textit{NALK} 224-227 in its entirety.

\textsuperscript{29} See, e.g., the legal documents relevant to Remanni-Adad, chariot-driver of Ashurbanipal, which were
kept in Nineveh, but referred to land and people mainly in the north-western corner of Mesopotamia: cf. G.

\textsuperscript{30} For the administrative archives from Nineveh, cf. the forthcoming volume in the \textit{SAA} series by F.M.
Fales and J.N. Postgate. The archives from Kalhu are represented in a significant way by the texts published
in the series \textit{Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud} (vols. I-III, [resp. = \textit{NWL}, \textit{GPA}, \textit{TFS}] have hitherto been
published). As for Assur, apart from the earlier materials published in \textit{KAV}, our present knowledge is still
essentially limited to the general contextual information provided by O. Pedersén in his \textit{ALA}, vol. II.
words, the wide majority of the texts drawn up by the NA central or provincial administration falls into a general and indeterminate category of inventories or lists; and the more specific confines or the range of application of each type or exemplar of such lists must be deduced by the observer on the basis of internal clues or external comparisons.

It follows from the above statement that the administrative documents which touch upon the NA rural landscape may be first and foremost described as inventories of land and people: and as such, they form a relatively substantial group. However, further analysis allows a few relatively clear sub-groups to be set apart. These are (1) lists appended to royal grants; (2) cadastral schedules; (3) inventories of the “Harran census” type; (4) other and occasional registers.

(1) The most unambiguous among the named types of inventory is represented by the lists of land and people appended to royal grants; in particular, we refer those grants of real estate made out by the king to private individuals as reward for loyal and faithful service\(^{31}\). The standard grant of this type opens with a detailed introduction of legal character, in which the king recalls the origin and specific conditions of the grant; and only matters concerning our theme quite marginally (such as tax-exemptions on the land) may crop up here. Considering the variety of land grants in general, on the other hand, a few royal introductions do actually present passages of interest as concerns the rural landscape and its modifications; one of the most informative is the decree K. 9657 by Sargon, in which past and present states of a territory are described (cf. discussion in 2.a, below).

Next comes the administrative part of the grant, which is usually constituted by an extended list of landed holdings together with the personnel required for the labor on them: details include the type of cultivation on the holding (cornland, orchard, vineyard, etc.), a quantitative evaluation of the holding itself, the name and profession of the paterfamilias attached to the land, together with the number of people comprising his family — often however abbreviated to the expression adi nišešu, “together with his family”. Taken by themselves, such lists do not show great differences with the cadastral registers of holdings and people in families which make up the following group; in fact, in some cases the only difference is the inclusion of these lists of land and people within the tablet bearing the grant\(^{32}\).

(2) Cadastral schedules are barely a dozen in number, and are essentially known from the Nineveh archives; their inner structure is totally identical with the one known from the grant lists. Thus, the suspicion that they represented fragments, or even complete “second sheets” of the registers included in royal grants, is quite strong. In


particular, one of the most extended among such texts refers to the possessions of one Nabû-šarru-usur, possibly a chief eunuch of Ashurbanipal’s age — whose land grants are independently attested but lack the register of land and people! However as it may be, Nabû-šarru-usur appears to have owned 1,700 emārus of land, 40 vineyards, 2 orchards, and an unspecified number of dwellings altogether; the family groups called to man this huge agricultural complex seem to have been more than 50. On the other hand, the schedule of Nabû-šarru-usur is unfortunately too fragmentary to be eloquent on the geographical distribution of possessions of this size; and we must rather rely on the cadastral text of another — unknown — landowner of the time, who proves to have owned fields and people in villages here and there within various provinces or districts: Arba'il, Kahu, Arrapha, Barhalza, Barzanista, Izallu, Halahhu — from East to West, from the borders of the Iranian to the foothills of the Anatolian plateau.

(3) The “Harran census” is the common designation of a collection of — mostly fragmentary — tablets which differ from the cadastral schedules in format, in the detail of the lists, and possibly in administrative scope. The tablets are homogenously divided into columns and horizontal sections; each section refers to a single holding and usually bears a detailed list of (a) persons, in families (the paterfamilias plus other members of the group); (b) type of cultivation and its quantity, plus notation of fixtures, dwellings, animals, etc.; (c) geographical localization of the holding, usually according to a double pattern (smaller settlement + larger provincial or administrative unit). Despite the fragmentary character of the texts, (d) totals referring to various sections occur every so often, and point to single landowners as possessors of the relevant holdings. A further difference with the cadastral schedules is represented by the overall geographical range of the landed possessions, which is limited to the region of Harran and outlying zones in NW Mesopotamia. As far as the date and the administrative purpose of the census is concerned, it has been plausibly suggested that it was a list of landowners connected with the tax-exemption of Harran and other cities at the beginning of Sargon’s reign.

(4) Outside of these main categories, other texts of administrative character may be of interest for the study of the rural landscape, but only randomly so. Fields and orchards, etc., were certainly seldom in the position of “incoming” or “outgoing” materials or goods, differently from the metal objects, the precious garments, and the food offerings which fill the writings of the NA palace bureaucracy. Rather, the

33) CCENA 23 = ADD 741+749, etc.
36) CCENA 23, Obv. 30 ff.
37) CCENA 24 (= ADD 742), passim.
38) This description follows closely that of CCENA, pp. 3ff.
impression is that lists of fields, tree groves, empty building plots, farm animals, and the like, when they occur in the findings of NA palaces, represent small clues of that peculiar “interface” between the public and the private sector which characterizes this period. Consider the following text, meaningful despite its contextual obscurity and ambiguity:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[x] BAR' } & \text{ x' } [\text{ x x x}] \text{ ri-hu-te } / (\text{blank}) / [\text{x}] \text{ ANŠE URU' } \\
\text{Gul-su-nu} / [0] \text{ GISAR til-lit URU' } & \text{ Hu-ba-ba } / 80 \text{ ANŠE A.SÀ 1 GISAR til-lit NAM KUR' } [\text{x}] / (\text{blank}) / [\text{7}'] \text{ me' } \text{ URU' Na-pi-su } / (\text{blank}) / 50 \text{ ANŠE URU' EN-iq-bi } / \text{ PAP 250 ANŠE A.SÀ NAM URU' La-hi-r[i] } / (\text{blank}) / [\text{GISAR til-lit URU' E-} \\
\text{bir-né-e-kul } / (\text{blank}) / [\text{x} ] \text{ me' } [\text{G}] \text{ ISAR til-(lit) } / [\text{x}] \text{ x } (\text{blank}) \\
\text{LU'GAR } / (\text{blank})
\end{align*}
\]

“...... remainder(?) ; n emārūs of land, the settlement Zinnabat; n emārūs of land, the settlement Gulsunu; 1(?) vineyard, the settlement Hubaba; (in all,) 80 emārūs of land, 1 vineyard, the province of U...; 200 (emārūs) of land, the settlement Napisu; 50 emārūs of land, the settlement Bel-īqbi; in all, 250 emārūs of land, the province of Lahiru; a vineyard, the settlement Ebirnekul(?). (In all), n emārūs of land, 2 vineyards, ... the governor.”

c. Epistolary

Neo-Assyrian letters are usually of an official nature, and have been in the main found in palatial contexts — whether they had been kept on purpose on the premises or had, instead, been consigned to refuse heaps\(^{41}\). The messages borne by such letters may be easily said to concern all aspects of imperial life — insofar as it was deemed important to bring such aspects to the king’s attention. Therefore, although it is to be found absolutely at random, the information on the rural landscape in NA letters may at times be very enlightening. Thus, e.g., the complex relationship between the royal possession of all land and the possibility for private circulation (through sale, inheritance, etc.) of the very same land, could hardly be made clearer than through the following example:

“Regarding the land (A.SÀ), the king, my lord, knows that [n] years ago I built a settlement on Crown land (\text{URU' } [\text{شا}] \text{ ina A.SÀ[ ] ( )} )^{17} \text{ LUGAL' a[ ]}'sip'[u]ni ([ ])). (Then,) under the protection (\text{ina GISMI}) of the king my lord, I acquired (\text{a-si-qi}) 400 emārūs from the subordinates of Ašipā and added them to it. I have erected a fort (\text{URU'HAL.SU}) in that

\(^{40}\) ADD 774, 1-10.
\(^{41}\) On NA letters, their findspots and contextual information, cf. S. Parpola, in ARINH, pp. 117-142; id., LAS II, pp. xii-xxi; SAA I, pp. xi-xx; F.M. Fales, CLNA, pp.1-29.
place. The perimeter of the town is \([n]\) cubits; I have constructed a royal
palace and drawn an image of the king therein. I have settled \((i-se-\text{-}si-\text{ib})\)
200 ..., subjects of the king there."\(^{42}\).

Other cases of the same type are not only revealing in themselves, but insofar as
they may be seen to issue from a background of other documents, usually of administra­
tive nature. For example, a recently published letter to Sargon by the governor of
Guzana, Mannu-ki-Aššur-le’i, gives a detailed list of all the land owned by Bel-duri, the
governor of Damascus, in a style that reveals the existence of a cadastral list in his
possession:

"I am herewith writing down the land Bel-duri holds in the district of
Guzana and sending (the information) to the king my lord: 60 \(em\text{"urus}\) in
the town Aridu in the environs of the town Kubanašê\(^{43}\); 200 \(em\text{"urus}\) in
the village of Mare’-iaba in the environs of the town Ilhini; 40 \(em\text{"urus}\) in
the town of [...]ritu in the environs of Guzana; 200 \(em\text{"urus}\) [in the village
of] Amdanu near the town of Bur-šarri; in all 500 \(em\text{"urus}\) of land that
Bel-duri holds in the district of Guzana. In addition to this, I have today
assigned to him the 80 \(em\text{"urus}\) of [...and] about which the king my lord now
wrote [to me]"\(^{44}\).

d. Other

The annalistic texts of the Assyrian rulers, written in the Standard Babylonian
literary language, were early on considered the sole source of historical information on
the empire of Assyria, but today the structural core of these royal inscriptions is viewed
by and large as ideologically conditioned and written for propagandistic purposes\(^{45}\). Yet
it is apparent that many a detailed information purveyed by such texts still stands good
chances of being proved unbiased and valid for historical reconstruction — especially if

\(^{42}\) SAA V, 15, 14-Rev. 12 (translation ours: in Rev. 11, Parpola-Lanfranchi read 2 \(me \text{ l. dib} \text{ LAD\(\)}\)\(_{\text{RAD\(\}}\text{ LUGAL}\), and translate "I have placed 200 stone slabs there and settled the king's subjects there", although
only one verb is present). On other examples and a partial analysis of the fluctuating relationship between
Crown and private property in the NA period, cf. our contribution in Archi (ed.). Circulation of Goods,
cit., pp. 207-220. For other views, cf. e.g. J. Zablocka, Palast und König. Ein Beitrag zu den neuassyrischen

\(^{43}\) The same two towns are linked by a royal road (kaskal lugal) in KAV 54 (= NARGD 27), 16, of the
age of Adad-nirari III (788 B.C.).

\(^{44}\) SAA I, 233 (= CT 53, 2), Obv. 25-Rev. 8. For the link between this letter and administrative material

\(^{45}\) Cf. in general the essays in F.M. Fales (Ed.), ARINH, passim, for this approach.
it finds good comparisons or parallels with data from other written sources of the age. As concerns our survey of the rural landscape, however, a slightly different stance toward Assyrian royal inscriptions may be taken. A "landscape" exists in these res gestae of the Assyrian kings as well — but it is largely a landscape of connotated features, formed by the projection of the royal ideology onto a geographical-topographical reality. Thus, for example, the enemy ekes out his not fully human existence in the wildest of habitats and climes, be it mountain, desert, or marshland; while the Assyrians dominate an ordered and well-functioning countryside which reflects fully the intrinsic positivity of their actions and beliefs.

Now, of course, the only way to reconcile this "ideological landscape", which reflects in full the moral qualities of its inhabitants, with the landscape that we are seeking, as outcome of man's historically documented activity, is per differentiam. In other words, a comparison between these two "landscapes" can only result in two different sets of meanings for a certain number of commonly attested terms. But this is far from being a negative outcome: in the absence of ancient geographic/administrative commentaries, of views of our subject-matter "from outside", in the absence of an Akkadian Pliny or Columella, our survey of the rural countryside can only benefit from the semantic "counterpoint" created by a comparison with the mythical-ideological landscape of the Assyrian royal inscriptions. For a number of terms, then, it will be useful to quote their respective meanings in the realm of Assyrian royal inscriptions, in a search for differences which might prove revealing for our present aims.

2. Limitations in approaches and results

With the aid of such a wide variety of sources, a correspondingly vast amount of data, from well-bracketed major items and features of detail to points still open for discussion and future research, will be available for the planned survey on the NA rural landscape, as will be seen in the following pages. Before embarking on such a task, on the other hand, it will be advisable to illustrate a series of shortcomings which mark our sources, both considered per se and in comparison with other textual horizons of the Ancient Near East.

46) The works of K. Kessler (Untersuchungen zur historischen Topographie Nordmesopotamiens, Wiesbaden 1980), I. Eph'al (The Ancient Arabs, Jerusalem 1982), etc., illustrate the accurate use of combined materials from annalistic and administrative or epistolary sources for historical reconstructions on the NA period.
48) For applications of this approach, cf. ad II.A.1, and II.B.2.c, below.
Starting from those limitations which relate to methodology rather than to the factual level of information attained, it must be pointed out that an analysis of the NA rural landscape, such as is possible at present, gives rise to a high degree of compression of the overall historical picture from the spatial and chronological point of view. In the light of the relatively tight temporal limits in which all NA sources must be placed, limits which comprise a series of significant documentary gaps as well, it is obvious that most of the features which will be set in evidence in the following pages will not be open for a diachronical consideration, but only for a forcedly (i.e. artificially) synchronical one. And just to give one example of the consequences of this limitation, in the treatment of the settlement type called uru : se = kapru, we will gain a clear perception of social implications in the toponomastics of these sites which might have a “history” — although we have virtually no means of reconstructing it at present.

Much of the same may be said for the spatial aspect: the fact that the majority of sources comes from the two main NA capitals, Nineveh and Kalhu, tends again to a compression of the evidence around the general area of the Upper Tigris basin, with occasional forays west (to the Sinjar, to the Habur, to Harran) or east (Lahiru, Arrapha, etc.). On some rare and felicitous occasions, it is true, we will gain a “snapshot” of the rural landscape which shows to fit within a specific geographical setting: thus, e.g., the legal texts from Singara, and the “Harran census”, as well as some random notations in letters, provide us with an occasional glimpse of clearly identifiable regional landscapes. In most other cases, however, we will fall prey to the rather standardized Assyrian descriptions of the countryside: thus, “fields”, “orchards”, “brooks”, “roads” may tend to pile up indiscriminately, whether the locale of the text is the reaches of the Upper Zab or the Jazirah plain.

A different type of limitation involves a class of data which is traditionally utilized for the study of agricultural settings in the Ancient Near East: quantitative information on the rural sector of NA society. For other locales and periods we may be sufficiently informed on the extension of fields, or on the average yields of some types of seed; not so, at least from a general point of view, in studies on the NA period\textsuperscript{49}. The reason for this is partly tied to the use of capacity units of measure which had (as yet undetermined) correspondences in the sphere of area measures, for the evaluation of the size of fields\textsuperscript{50};


and partly to the absence of precise correlations of seed to yield in the texts at our disposal. In brief, neither the seeding capacity (which has much to do with the size of the field) nor the yield (which is linked to natural factors as well as to the technology of agricultural use) are familiar, or to tell the truth at all available, categories of information at this time. And neither can the overall subject of the comparative worth of fields or other agricultural fixtures be approached from the point of view of their comparative prices, since — aside from some useful initial suggestions 51 — a historical outline of NA prices is lacking. In brief, then, a series of quantitative corollaries to the analytical survey of the NA rural countryside will be found to be absent, much to the regret of all concerned.

II. MAIN UNITS AND SUBDIVISIONS OF THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

A. ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

1. Cities as administrative units endowed of rural territories

"I conquered the city Hudun and 30 cities in its environs. I massacred them (and) carried off captives, oxen (and) sheep from them. I razed, destroyed, and burnt their cities. I burnt their adolescent boys (and) girls. I conquered the city Kisirtu, the fortified city which was ruled by Sabini, together with 10 cities in its environs ..." 52.

When the Assyrian kings relate the conquest of foreign territories, their main geographical referent is the city (ālu, or āl dawnati, or āl belati, etc.), around which a series of smaller townships (again alāni, but also alāni ṣehrūti etc.) are located 53. This spatial relation between the city and the minor centers is usually expressed by the word limītu, "environs" 54. Now, it is interesting to notice that this word, very frequent in the Standard Babylonian literary language of the Assyrian royal inscriptions but absent from Neo-Assyrian, occurs once in the already-quoted grant made by Sargon II on the occasion of the building of the capital city Dur-Sarruken 55. After having chosen the site of Maganubba in the district of Nineveh, an apparently abandoned settlement, and

51) J.N. Postgate, GPA, p. 25.
53) Cf. CAD A/1, p. 380b (ad 4'), p. 381b (ad c), p. 382a, for examples.
55) NARGD, 32; cf. I.l.a, above. The language of this grant presents, according to Postgate, NARGD, p. 65, "a mixture of Assyrian and Babylonian forms".
having planned to name the new capital after himself, Sargon faces the problem of the existence of landowners in the chosen territory: he thus checks a.ŠÁMES li-mi-ti-šú pi-i tup-pa-a-ti [sayyamanûti, “the fields in its environs, according to the tablets [of purchase]”\(^{56}\), and then proceeds to settle the issue.

The retrieval of a shred of evidence for *limûtu* in relation to the Assyrian rural landscape is not a matter of philological curiosity: for what it is worth, it implies that the geographical outlook on foreign territories in the Assyrian royal inscriptions reflected to some extent familiar notions “back home”, and specifically in the juridical and administrative realm. In particular, we gain from all sources the general picture of rural territories being located in the “environs” (*limûtu*) of a major city, i.e. finding their topographical localization, but also their administrative and juridical identification, in relation to a neighboring settlement of major proportions or rank. The very same picture, although with different terminology, issues from the contemporary administrative and legal tablets in the NA dialect, as will be seen in the following sections.

### a. “Official” contiguity of countryside to cities

*šalina/ana qanni ša GN*, “on the outskirts of the settlement GN”

_Qannu, “edge, border”, is attested from Middle Assyrian on with the meaning “around, in the outskirts of, outside of, in the environs of” in conjunction with ša or i/ana\(^{57}\). In connection with toponyms, and in particular as concerns the NA countryside, ša qanni etc. constitutes the main marker of a link between a smaller rural settlement and a larger site. Thus the single agricultural establishment, be it field or vineyard or orchard, and whether listed for cadastral or for legal purposes, may be localized in relation to an immediately surrounding settlement, which in its turn is localized as being in the “environs” — in the rural “belt”, we might say — of a larger site. Notice e.g. the following administrative text from Nimrud, which bears a list of the agricultural capacities of a group of small townships, which are in their turn classified in their spatial relation to outlying larger city units: (4) URU ŠE ša IGI URU Ú-du-u-a (5) 10 GISSARMES ina lib-bi (6) URU Ga-ba-se-e 6 GISSARMES ina lib-bi (7) PAF 7 URU MES-ni ša qa-an-ni URU Arba-il (8) URU Hu-sa-na 350 A.ŠÁ ina lib-bi (9) URU ŠE Sa-ha-ru-na-a-a qa-an-ni URU Arba-il (10) 300 A.ŠÁ ina lib-bi, “...the farm which faces the town Udû’a: 10 orchards therein. The town Gabase’: 6 orchards therein. In all, 7 settlements on the outskirts of Arba’il.*

\(^{56}\) *Ibid.*, 19'-20'. One of these tablets of purchase could have been TCL IX, 58 (= FNALD, 2), according to Postgate, *FNALD*, p. 81.

\(^{57}\) Cf. AHw., p. 897; CAD Q, pp. 81-83.
The town Husana: 350 (emārus) of land therein. The village of Saharunayyu, in the environs of Arba’i:l: 300 (emārus) of land therein. ...."58.

As said above, the use of the preposition preceding qanni is lax. A further example of ša qanni to mark the double localization of agricultural units is provided in a letter to Sargon, already quoted (SAA I, 233, Obv. 25-Rev. 8; cf. I.1.c, above). A similar use is reserved to ina qanni in another letter: “A[s to] the [towns of] the country Hau, about which Kišir-[Aššur]s[ā][l to the king, [my] lord: 'Let them give me 200 (emārus) of field in their outskirts ([ina qa]-ni)^15: "lī-di-nu-u^-ni", l. 7)" 59.

Still different is the case of the “Harran census”, in which, as said above (I.1.b), a double localization for the listed holdings is often provided (= closest settlement + encompassing provincial or administrative unit). For the closest toponym, the “census” appears to prefer the simplest form, i.e. just qanni, reserving ina etc. for the outlying region when necessary, e.g. PAP URU.ŠE LUGAL / qa-ni URU Dim-me-ti / ina Ki-pa-a-ni, “total: the village ‘of the King’, in the environs of the settlement Dimmeti, in (the region of) Q/Kipani”60. And notice may be finally taken of a further variant, qa-an-ni ša, in a description for legal use: (a house sold) ina URUÉ-SU-DINGIR / qa-an-ni ša URU ÉRIM MEŠ, “in the town of Bit-Eriba-li, in the environs of the town of Sabe-Adad”61.

Aside from the detail of the single attestations, it may be stated that ša qanni, etc., is a topographical marker of the external contiguity between a minor settlement or rural complex and a larger unit. As such, it stands in direct opposition to ina qabsi62.

**ina qabsi GN, “inside, within the settlement GN”**

The term is applied to estates or villages, yielding obviously a variety of possible relations between the agricultural area and the site which comprises it. The following are only a limited sampler of cases.

_NALK_ 121 (=_ADD_ 361), 1'-2': [GIS]SAR zaq-pu ša GIS til-lit / [ina] URU.ŠE qab-si URU Ap-pu-u-ni, “A vineyard, fully planted, in the farm which is comprised within the town of Appuni”63. It may be noticed that the idea, here given, of a rural “corner”  

---

58) ND 2728+ (= Iraq 23, 46), 4-10. For the interpretation of l. 4, cf. _CCENA_, p. 12941.
59) SAA V, 233, 4'-7'.
60) _CCENA_ I 139. The objection by Postgate, _TCAE_, p. 31, ad 8.3, is groundless.
61) _NALK_ 245 (= _ADD_ 331), 5-6.
62) Cf. the letter Iraq 4, p. 186, 10-12, for an opposition between the city gate (kA GAL) qabasite and the one ša qa-ni (cf. _CAD_ N/1, p. 219b, quoting Deller, _OrNS_ 34, p. 263; but see the different interpretation of the same clause in _CAD_ Q, p. 1a).
63) _NALK_, p. 147: “in the village (from) in the center of the city of Appûna” — a translation difficult to unravel. For ina qabsi as more often than not meaning simply “inside, within”, cf. e.g. the opposition lu ina harrâni lu ina qabsi mâtî, “whether on a campaign or within the land”, SAA II, 36, 199.
within an area also (and perhaps prevalently) devoted to inhabitation, is reinforced by the subsequent list of neighboring points: \( ^{1} \text{tihi} \) \( ^{1} \text{Kal-da-a-a} + ^{1} \text{tihi} \) \( ^{1} \text{Ku-kul-la-ni} \) \( ^{1} \text{su-qa-qi} \), “adjacent to the river, adjacent to the vineyard of Kaldayyu, adjacent to the vineyard of Kukkuli, adjacent to the alley” (3'-5').

Even more complex is the following layout, which refers to the Syrian city of Qatna (\( ^{1} \text{Qa-di-né-e} \)):

\[ \text{E 10 ANŠE A.ŠA} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{sa} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{sa} \quad \text{IMAN-nu-ki-nu} \quad \text{IN} \quad \text{GIŠ SAR} \quad \text{MES} \quad \text{GU} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{QA-DI-né} \quad \text{TIHI} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{SU-qa-qi} \]

Even more complex is the following layout, which refers to the Syrian city of Qatna (\( ^{1} \text{Qa-di-né-e} \)):

\[ \text{E 10 ANŠE A.ŠA} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{sa} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{sa} \quad \text{IMAN-nu-ki-nu} \quad \text{IN} \quad \text{GIŠ SAR} \quad \text{MES} \quad \text{GU} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{QA-DI-né} \quad \text{TIHI} \quad \text{URU} \quad \text{SU-qa-qi} \]

\[ = \text{ADD} 441, 5'-8'; \text{cf.} \text{Kessler, Untersuchungen, cit.}, \text{pp. 227-228.} \text{For the city Dur-Aduk-Lim / Dur-Katlimmu, cf.} \text{W. Röllig, OrNS 47 (1978), pp. 424ff.} \]

\[ = \text{ADD} 778, 7'-12'. \]

\[ \text{ADD 156 (= ADD 330), 4. The translation “a field <in> the city of Zidada”, NALK p. 192, is erroneous.} \]
b. Other markers of contiguity of countryside to cities

A further marker of rural-urban contiguity is (ina) KĀ, lit., “within the gate” followed by a toponym, much less frequently attested than the ones mentioned above, and as such usually taken at face value. In fact, we believe it should be understood rather as an idiomatic expression for “inside”, when occurring in the documentation on the rural landscape. Notice, e.g. GPA 19, 5-7, sale of GISAR Ü<.SAR> ina KĀMES-šū / ša ē ȘU-ĂMAR.UTU / 46 GID 30 DAGAL, “a vegetable garden within the estate of EribaMarduk, 46 (cubits) long, 30 (cubit) wide”; GPA, 26, 4, sale of 2-BÁN A.ŠA ina KĀ URU, “an estate of 2 sutus of land inside the city”; and TRL IX, 58, 9, 11, where ina KĀ URU + toponym alternates with qa-an-ni URU + toponym69.

And finally, an actual “photograph” of the tight connection in many local environments of the Assyrian empire between the rural landscape and the areas and structures of permanent settlement and inhabitation, from villages to cities, may be gained by a consideration of some of the descriptions of “neighboring” land in the legal documents. Such depictions of immediate spatial contiguity are formulated in NA texts through two main indicators: tīhi, “adjoining ...”, which is represented by means of a sign complex with two historical “layers”70, and the still uncertain GAB.DI — the meaning of which should equally be in the sphere of adjacency, contiguity, etc.71.

A mere sampler of such descriptions may suffice. Consider, e.g., a sale of a group of plots, 11 emārus in size, comprising a threshing-floor, orchards, and an ox as well, which proves to be divided up in a variety of smaller holdings, viz.: Ė ANŠE A.ŠA tīhi A.ŠA ša [x x x x] / tīhi kaskal ša ina URU IG ÅMES DU-[u-ni] / Ė 1 ANŠE 6-BÁN A.ŠA GAB.DI 1MAN-n[u-ki-dIM] / tīhi A.ŠA ša 1DUG.GA-EN Ė 1 [ANŠE A.ŠA] / GAB.DI 1Te-er-ri tī[hi] 1DINGIR-X X X X / GAB.DI KASKAL EDIN etc., “a plot of 2 emārus, adjacent to the field of ..., adjacent to the road that leads to the city of Enatu (?); a plot of 1 emārus, 6 sutus near Mannu-ki-Adad, adjacent to the holding of Ṭab-Bēl; a plot of 1 emāru, near Terri, adjacent to Iī-, adjacent to the road of the open countryside, etc.”72. In another text, notice e.g. a holding of 50 emārus which was located tīhi URU Bu-ru-ku-tu'-un-te / tīhi URU E.4UTU / tīhi URU ša Kur-bi-il-a-a / tīhi A.ŠA ša EMES E.GAL / tīhi URU ša SİLM-ni-ÂS+šur, “near the settlement of Buru-kutunte, near the settlement of the Šamaš temple, near the settle-

69) Notice also the ambiguous Ė 10 ANŠE A.ŠA KĀ 0-ar-h[a, NALK 285 (= ADD 1189), 5.
71) For our hypothesis of a connection with Aramaic (b)gβ dy, “to the side of ...”, cf. CCENA, p. 62 (see FNLAD, p. 23). However, at least one case of GAB.DU seems attested in the still unpublished Assur legal texts kept in Berlin (as personally seen during examination of the materials in X/1990).
72) NALK 396 (= ADD 1185), 3-8. This is one of the very few texts in which the two “labels” tīhi and GAB.DI occur together.
ment of Kurbi'ilayyu, near the land of the palace personnel, near the settlement of Šallimani-Âššûr.\textsuperscript{73}

c. Roads through the rural sector

\textit{harrānu / hālu}, "road".

Roads or highways are often mentioned as bordering elements to the plots being transacted. The indication is consistently \textit{kaskal} (= \textit{harrānu or hālu})\textsuperscript{74}, accompanied by a notation on the places of origin and of destination of the thoroughfare (or merely the latter), e.g.: (an estate) \textit{tihi kaskal}[,1] \textit{'ša} \textit{[a-n]a} \textit{uru-še} \textit{Bi[r-[x x ]} / \textit{du}-u-\textit{ni}, “adjoining the road leading to the farm of Bir-...”; (a field) \textit{tihi kaskal} \textit{ša} \textit{ta} \textit{urū} \textit{kur-b[il]-l} / \textit{<ša> a-n} \textit{urū} \textit{a-na-tū} il-lak-[u-\textit{ni]}, “adjoining the road which runs from the town of Kurbail to the town Anatu.”\textsuperscript{75}

The roads bordering a field can be, of course, even more than one; thus in a deed relevant to the north-eastern corner of Assyria (area of Kannū and Adīan), a plot of 30 \textit{emārus} is limited by royal highways (cf. below) and ordinary “inter-city” roads, on three of its sides.\textsuperscript{76}

The most intricate network of roads known for the NA rural landscape to date is, not surprisingly, the one attested in \textit{ADD 414} (= \textit{NALK 127}), the extensive sale-document concerning the village of Bit-abu-ila’a. Among its various interesting aspects of topographical description within the village Bit-abu-ila’a, this text presents numerous roads bordering on the plots being sold: “a plot of 1 \textit{emāru} of land adjacent to the road of the town of Hašanu”\textsuperscript{77}; “a plot of 6 \textit{satus} of land adjacent to the road of the town Sairi,”\textsuperscript{78} adjacent to the field of Kišir-Âššûr, a plot of 1 \textit{emāru} of land adjacent to the road of the town Sairi again, adjacent to the field of Kišir-Âššûr again, a plot of \textit{[n]} of land adjacent to the road of the town Sairi again, adjacent to the temple; and “a plot of 2 \textit{satus} of

\textsuperscript{73} Iraq 32 (1970), no. 8, 6'-10'. Cf. also e.g. the use of \textit{ina} \textit{šeri} followed by a toponym in II. B. 2, s.v. \textit{šeru}.

\textsuperscript{74} A possible exception — and one of the possible clues for a reading at the same time — is constituted by the disputable \textit{hu-ši} in \textit{NALK 386} (= \textit{ADD 443}), 6.

\textsuperscript{75} Resp. \textit{NALK 83} (= \textit{ADD 389}), 4’; \textit{NALK 202}, 14'-15’. Cf. also, e.g., \textit{NALK 252} (= \textit{ADD 377}) / \textit{NALK 253} (= \textit{ADD 439}) for roads leading from village to another. The town Anatu is, according to Parpola, \textit{Nat}, p. 174, identical with \textit{uru-hu-ši} (= \textit{*Enda}) in \textit{NALK 396} (= \textit{ADD 1185}), 4, which also has a road leading to it.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{NALK 386} (= \textit{ADD 1185}), 3-10.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{NALK 127} (= \textit{ADD 414}), 16-17: \textit{ē 1 anše a-ša gab-di} \textit{kaskal} \textit{ša} \textit{urū} \textit{haša-nu} / \textit{gab-di} na-hal-\textit{li}.

\textsuperscript{78} This town is the localization of a field of 35 \textit{emārus}, under cultivation (\textit{ina} \textit{mazzarat}) in \textit{NALK 343} (= \textit{ADD 383}), 3-5, of 674 B.C.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 22-25: \textsuperscript{22}[6 \textit{ē}] \textit{bān še a-ša gab-di} \textit{kaskal} \textit{ša} \textit{urū} \textit{sa-i-ri} / \textit{gab-di} \textit{kaskal} \textit{ša} \textit{urū} \textit{sa-i-ri-ma} \textit{gab-di} \textit{kišir-āššûr} \textit{ē} \textit{1 anše a-ša} / \textit{gab-di} \textit{kaskal} \textit{ša} \textit{urū} \textit{sa-i-ri-ma} \textit{gab-di} \textit{ē} \textit{dingir} / cf. also l. 28, fragmentary.
land adjacent to Arbitehi, adjacent to the road of the town Hašanu; a plot of 1 emāru of land adjacent to the road of the town Hašanu again, adjacent to the field of Bel-ukin.\(^{80}\)

The “road of the town Hašanu” is also attested in the smaller deed, still pertaining to the village Bit-abu-ila’a.\(^{81}\) As suggested below (II.A.2), the thoroughfares to Hašanu and Sairi could have formed a crossroads which represented one of the main topographical markers of this agricultural village.

Other roads: a road leading “to the steppe” (KASKAL EDIN) is documented in a sale of land, as bordering element\(^{82}\); while a plot is elsewhere described as ina KASKAL qa-at-ni, “on the small road”\(^{83}\). Was the presence of a larger thoroughfare, possibly even the “royal highway” (see below) implied?

**harrān šarri, “royal highway”**

Some plots are said to border on the the “royal highway” (KASKAL LUGAL/MAN), a thoroughfare which connected the main centers of the empire\(^{84}\). Thus, e.g. a field is described as tiši KASKAL LUGAL ša URU KASKAL, “adjoining the royal highway leading to the city of Harran”\(^{85}\), and an orchard within the walls of Nineveh adjoins “the royal road” as well as “the river”, i.e. the Tigris\(^{86}\). A royal road ran through most centers of Northern Mesopotamia, e.g. through the city of Nemed-Istar in the Sinjar\(^{87}\), as well as through Dur-Katlimmu on the Habur\(^{88}\).

### 2. Townships and villages

#### a. ālu

ālu, the term seen above for “city, town”, is equally applicable to various types of

---

80) *Ibid.*, 37-39: 37\(^{2}\) BĀN A.ŠA GAB.DI \(1^\)Ar-bit-te-hi \(38\)[GAB.DI] KASKAL ša \(1^\)URU Ha-sa-nu \(\varepsilon\) 1 AŠE A.ŠA GAB.DI
KASKAL ša \(1^\)URU Ha-sa-ni-ma \(39\)[GAB.DI A.ŠA] ša \(\varepsilon\) EN-DU.

81) NALK 126 (= ADD 621), 10-11: tiši KASKAL \(1^\)URU ša a-na \(1^\)URU Ha-sa-na DU-\(n\)-ni.

82) NALK 396 (= ADD 1185), 8.

83) NALK 226 (= ADD 382), 4-6.


85) NALK 83 (= ADD 389), 4'-5'.

86) NALK 154 (= ADD 364), 7.

87) NALK 283 (= ADD 1153), 5'.

88) NALK 263 (= ADD 418), 7'-8'.

smaller units of common living and activity, rather more distant from the urban setting than from the fully rural one. In other words, a number of attestations of ālu — in legal and administrative documents — refer to what we would barely perceive as a hamlet in a decidedly rural landscape: a case in point is that of the ālu of Elumu, attested in a unique administrative tablet from Carchemish\textsuperscript{90}: here 16 patresfamilias are said to represent “all the village, from old men to children (\textit{URU} Ú\textit{AB} Ú\textit{MES} / \textit{a-di LU ŠE-eh-ru-te})” and to guarantee dues on “field, house, and orchard” (\textit{A-SA} \textit{GIS} \textit{SAR})\textsuperscript{90}. Possibly even smaller were the \textit{alāni} depicted in the “Harran census”, whether the listing exhausted the settlement or not\textsuperscript{91}.

Even further remote from the concept of collective inhabitation are those \textit{alāni} which prove to have been founded on the spur of administrative decisions, virtually “traced” out of previously bare territory. For example, in a land-grant of Adad-nirari III of 788 B.C.\textsuperscript{92}, we find a “landscape” of \textit{alāni} as agricultural holdings of specific members of the palace personnel, as ensues not only from the case at hand but from the neighboring toponyms:

“An estate of 1,000 (\textit{emārus}) of land in the province of Assur: I took an estate, and gave it the name 'settlement of Qibit-Aššur’ (\textit{URU} \textit{RA} \textit{URU} \textit{DIB-bat} \textit{URU} \textit{Qi-bit-ASš} Ú-as KUN): adjoining the [settlement of] ... , the tanner from Assur; adjoining the settlement Kār-Mulissi of Šamaš-abi'a, the governor of ... na; adjoining the farm of Qurdi-Aššur, the palace overseer; adjoining the ‘salt-water’ settlement\textsuperscript{93} of the governor of Kalhu, adjoining ... , adjoining the ‘salt-water’ settlement of the governor of Assur, adjoining the town of Harbat-niari\textsuperscript{94} of the ...-man of the town Šabbi, adjoining the settlement of Ili-ma-le'i, village head of the town Šabbi, adjoining the farm of Šumma-iliya, adjoining the settlement Šušani, adjoining the royal road running from Ekallate to [ ... ], adjoining the road running from Šušani to Šamani\textsuperscript{95}.

Largely the same picture emerges from a letter again stemming from the widespread — and partially empty — Assur province, but this time from the age of Sargon II:

“The estate called Qurani (\textit{URU} \textit{Qu-ra-ni i-qabu-ni-su}) in the province of Halahhi — it comprises 4,000 (\textit{emārus}) of land (\textit{URU} < <I> > Sa-ma-na-a gab-bu, "the entire village of Samanu”:\textsuperscript{90} Carch., 26-27, 23, resp. This tablet might be dated to the late 9th century, similarly to the Tell Halaf material. Interestingly enough, the same settlement appears to have been an \textit{URU} \textit{NE/kapru}, owned by a single proprietor, with no village community to speak of, in the 7th century (cf. fn. 106, below).

\textsuperscript{91} Cf. also \textit{NALK} 334 (= \textit{ADD} 618), in which 10 patresfamilias seal a document as \textit{URU} < <I> > Sa-ma-na-a gab-bu, "the entire village of Samanu”:

\textsuperscript{92} See also Postgate, \textit{NARGD}, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{93} For this place name, cf. \textit{CAD} N/II, p. 201a.

\textsuperscript{94} Summarization of the data translated here in \textit{NARGD}, p. 58.
The king, my lord, took it, and [gave] it to the Nabû temple of Dur-Šarruken. And the king my lord [gave this order] to [Kišir]-Aššur: 'Give an estate to the Governor of the land in return for the estate [...]'" 96.

The lower limit of an ālu is reached and overstepped when the settlement loses its identity as such and reverts to mere "land". In the royal grant K. 965797, Sargon II relates his extended action in clearing land near Maganubba for the founding of the new capital Dur-Šarrukin. During this activity, he discovers that some holdings — apparently abandoned or uncultivated at present98 — had in fact been granted about a century earlier (by Adad-nirari III) to three individuals against the supply of temple offerings. He therefore selects new land near Nineveh and assigns it to the descendants of the original owners in a one-to-one exchange, while at the same time renewing the agreement for the temple supplies, as follows:

"The town 'of the bakers' ([\textipa{URU?]L\textipa{UNINDA}MES-ni], which Adad-nirari, son of Šamši-Adad, a king who preceded me, had exempted (from taxation) and given to Qanuni, Aššur-lamur and Manna-ki-abi, and imposed on them 10 emārūs of haššatu-corn for offerings to the gods Aššur and Bau and sealed the (relevant) tablet: that settlement had reverted to fields, and the people living there had been evicted from it by the spade(?). I paid great respect to the command of Aššur, my lord, who called my name, who makes my kingship flourish and makes my weapons great, and I cleared 95 emārūs of land in the flats (ugāru)99 of the settlement of the ērib biti personnel ([\textipa{URU\textipa{L}TU}MES-ê]) in the district of Nineveh, one holding to one holding100, and gave them to Šulmu-šarrī, Paršiddu and Ubūr-Īstar, the sons of Aššur-lamur, to Rišišu, the son of Qanuni, to Manna-ki-abi, and their sons".

At times owned by single proprietors or groups, at times preserving interesting remnants of community life; at times marked out by cultic structures, at times representing little more than a "dot on the map": undoubtedly, the image of a NA ālu is very complex, and should be evaluated case by case in view of its definition — whether in the realm of the village, of the hamlet, of the small town, or in the realm of the agricultural settlement, of the rural estate.

96) SAA I, 106 (= ABL 480), 6-14.
98) The crucial line here is n. 27', not without difficulties: [\textipa{UR}]U 'su-a-tu i-na bi-rint A.ŠA MES i-tu-ram-ma UNMES aši-bi-ut lib-bišša mar-ru' ud-[te-si]a-a-sū.
99) Cf. above, ad II.A.1.a., s.v. ugāru.
b. kapru

A study on the Neo-Assyrian kapru (logographic writing: urūšē) is hitherto lacking, and even a full list of the scores of toponyms referring to this type of inhabitation unit, which proves to have represented the main link between the rural and the urban environments in this period, has not been published\(^{101}\). Undoubtedly, part of this delay is due to the fact that the reading of the complex urūšē as kapru was only established in recent times\(^{102}\). But in any case, the overall role of this enclave of inhabitation and agricultural production within the empire, in itself, and in relation to the larger subdivisions of administrative and social organization, still remains to be clarified. The following remarks may thus prove useful for a first approach to the matter.

Definition

The earliest definition of the Neo-Assyrian kapru was provided by C.H.W. Johns in his editio princeps of the “Harran census”, with reference to the logographic complex urūšē: “Such a small 'holding' or farm is more often called the āl šē of some one, probably its original or traditional possessor. The practice of calling farms after some former owner still obtains in England”\(^{103}\). We may proceed from this definition to notice the fact that the “profile” of the urūšē resulting from a contextual analysis of the attestations of these sites is often (agreeing with Johns) that of an agricultural settlement devoid of community structures of sorts — in essence, a “farmstead”. This “profile” not only results from the “Harran census” (where the possibility is strong that, at least in some cases, the listings of 1-2 families and one rural holding exhausted single kaprus)\(^{104}\); it also ensues from some legal documents, e.g. the description of the urūšē \(1\)Ba-ha-a+a a-na gi-mir-ti-šā  a-di A.ŠĀMES-su 1 \(1\)ENGAR a-di UNMES-su: “The k. of Bahayyu in its entirety, including its fields, (and) one farmer with his family”\(^{105}\), and is even hinted at in a little-known grant\(^{106}\).

---

\(^{101}\) Cf. S. Parpola, NAT, where the writings with urūšē are omitted.

\(^{102}\) For the correspondence, Postgate, AFO 24 (1973), p. 75. For syllabic writings, cf. already Weidner, AFO Beih. 6, p. 27; and see CAD K, pp. 189a-190b.


\(^{105}\) NALK 173 (= ADD 627), 3-4.

\(^{106}\) K. 2564 (= Bauer, IWA, p. 90, Taf. 2), ii. 7, 17, 21: donation of an urūšē a-na gi-mir-ti-šā, including its fields and orchards (of unspecified quantity) owned by a private individual to the Moon-god Sin; subsequent disavowal, leading to renewed grant by Ashurbanipal.
Also in line with the previous definition of \textit{uru.še/kapru}, is a case of two almost parallel passages from Nimrud texts. In the first text, a plot to be sold is localized in the "valley of the town of Bit-Šaššeri" (\(\text{E}5-\text{BA}N\ A.Š\text{A ina ū-šal-li / ina URU.Ē IM DIR}\)), but is placed in the "k. of Bit-Šaššeri, in the valley" in the second text (\(\text{E}5-\text{BA}N\ A.Š\text{A ina URU.ŠE ša E-Ša-ši-ri / ina ū-šal-li}\)). The two passages, relevant to the same buyer, Giritu, but two years apart in time (746/744 B.C.), need not necessarily refer to the same plot: it is sufficient to notice that (a) Bit-Šaššeri is well documented as a city or minimally as a large town; (b) on the other hand, the \textit{kapru} has no name of its own, and must hark back to the larger site for identification. In this case again, then, a meaning as "farmstead" or similar seems particularly apt.

A case of particular interest in connection with this possible meaning is the threefold distinction of Phoenician settlements given in Esarhaddon's treaty with Baal of Tyre: listing all the places which will pay toll, "as in the past", the Assyrian king mentions, in order, \textit{URU.Ē Mes-su URU.Ē Mes-su KAR.Ē Mes-su}, "his towns, his k.s, his ports of trade". Now, it is possible that \textit{kapru} was here meant again as a locality specialized in agricultural production, as opposed to actual settlements of the small Tyrian city-state on one hand, and in parallel to the "seaports" on the other.

**Toponomastics of the \textit{uru.še/kapru}**

However as that may be, it is important to notice that, alone among the major categories of settlement in the NA period, the \textit{uru.še/kapru} presents a toponymy with a consistent social connotation. As already noted by Johns in the passage quoted above, the most frequently attested component of the toponomastics of the \textit{uru.še/kapru} is a personal name — duly preceded by the "Mr." determinative —, which in the majority of cases does not correspond to the name of the owner of the settlement in the texts at our disposal.

A good sampler of this particular feature in the toponomastics of the \textit{kapru} may be found in the "Harran census". Notice in particular the villages "of" Bel-abu’a, 'Anâ,

107) \textit{GPA} 24, 4-5.
108) \textit{GPA} 25, 3-5.
110) \textit{SAA II}, p. 27, 25' (here \textit{UrU.ŠE} = "village").
111) On the other hand, it must be of course recalled that \textit{kapru} occurs sporadically in the Assyrian royal inscriptions — especially from the early centuries of the 1st millennium — in the prevalent meaning of "village", at times in alternation with \textit{alu}: cf. some examples in \textit{CAD K}, p. 190b.
112) The sole exception would seem to be represented by the case of toponyms of the type \textit{kap-ri} + PN + professional title in \textit{NARGD}, no. 27 (cf. above, sub \textit{alu}): here, perhaps, the personal name \textit{did} correspond to that of the owner of the farm at the \textit{time}. 
Kaparu, Arrizu, Adallal, Nagâ, Adad-bi’di, Remanni-ili, Lahe-ili, Naga[hi(?)], Hamû, Akaru, Urđi. Assyrian and West Semitic names which do not refer to those of any person (whether landowner or *glebae adscriptus*) present in the census. Elsewhere the pattern is largely the same: from the 9th century onward, in which land of the *URU.ŠE 1Sa-an-ga-ri* is exchanged against that of the *URU.ŠE 1Pap-la-mur* to the *URU.ŠE 1Zi-zi-i* of the 7th century, the *kapru* + personal name model appears to be the prevalent one. On the other hand, variant formations — albeit still with social denotations — seem to compete with the main typology. Thus, e.g., in the “Harran census”, we find the villages “of” the king (*URU.ŠE LUGAL*) and “of” the god Têr (*URU.ŠE dTe-er*); while a Nimrud text introduces us to the *URU.ŠE* “of” the *turtânu*, of which Ahu’ānu is mayor, and an administrative document from the same site attests an *URU.ŠE* “of” the (chief) Cupbearer.

The *kapru* in the rural landscape

Virtually nothing is known of possible fixtures or characteristics of the *kapru*, if at all different from that of the smaller *âlus*: in the already much-quoted cadastral and census material, indiscriminate possession in, or of, both types of settlement is freely attested. The same may essentially be stated for the prevalent type of produce: both grain and wine represent the staple subsistence products, depending on the area, with orchards and fruit trees as secondary yields.

Further, no differently from the smaller *âlu*, the grouping of a number of similar settlements in the open countryside characterizes the *kapru*. A series of contiguous *kaprus* in the province of Lahîru, to the southeast, are attested in a group of sales documents, which perhaps were not of a private nature. Thus in one text we find the following description:

```
7 URU.ŠE 1 Ba-ha-a+a a-di gi-mir-ti-šu 8 5 me a.Ša a-di <<al>> ŠE.NUMUN-šu ar-ši 9 Ŧhi URU.ŠE 1 Tab-ha-a-rī "X" 10 Ţhi a.Ša ša URU.ŠE 1 šili-EN 11 SIPA sa-kul-lat 11 Ţhi a.Ša ša URU.ŠE 1 Pâ-ia-qar u URU.ŠE 1 šili-EN, “The farm of Bahayyu in its entirety, an estate of 500 emârûs of land including its land under cultivation, sown, adjoining the farm of Tab-
```
hari, adjoining the farm of Silli-Bel the herdsman, adjoining the farm of Paqutu — which belongs to the town of Sarru-kin — adjoining the farm of Ahi-iaqar and the farm of Silli-Bel (again)" \(^{121}\). In another conveyance, the kapru being sold was surely not too far away, for we find: \(^3\) [URU.$\text{Š}$]E $\text{Id}$-PA-ŠE-ZIB a-na gi-mír-te-šu$^5$ [a-dî $\lambda$].ŠA$^\text{MES}-šū a-dî [G]\$RAR$^\text{MES}-šū [a-dî $\text{UN}$]ME$^\text{S}-šū ina qa-b$^\text{Š}$-si r$^\text{Š}$a URU Ak$^\text{L}$.x x x] $^6$ [tihi UR]U.SÉ $^1$Ba-ha-a-+ [a] $^7$ [tihi UR]U.SÉ $^1$Ta-ba-î[a-a-+a]$ $^8$ [tihi UR]U.SÉ $^1$x x x].$^7$X$^\text{Š}$-u-te$^3$ [tihi UR]U.SÉ $^1[\text{d}][\text{p}]$A-MUN-PAP$^\text{MES}10$ [tihi URU.$\text{Š}$]E $^1$Da-ka-na-n$^11$ [URU].ŠÉ $^1$NUMUN-ŠI-i, "The farm of Nabû-Šezib in its entirety including its fields, including its gardens, including its people, within the town Ak-...., adjoining the farm of Bahayyu, adjoining the farm of Tabalayyu, adjoining the farm of ...ute, adjoining the farm of Nabû-bel-ahhe, adjoining the farms of Dakanani and Zeruti" \(^{122}\).

The kapru: Conclusions

As we find it, the kapru/URU.$\text{Š}$E represents an agricultural settlement of usually very small dimensions, with little or no traces of a community exceeding the family groups directly at work on the land. It thus appears essentially to have been a "farmstead", or alternatively a "village" in the most limiting and reductive sense of the term. The kapru — on which a comparative outlook toward West Semitic kpr should perhaps be added in future studies — leaves us with the impression of having possibly been subjected to socio-economic modifications in time, which brought about some sort of a reduction in status and dimensions — but there is frankly no real evidence for this possible shift in the presently available sources.

c. Other settlement types.

Fortified towns

Fortified towns were probably not rare in the rural territories of the empire, although a bird's-eye view of the relevant toponomastics (towns formed with the complex $\text{URU.BAD}$) would seem to link this typology of settlement with truly strategic areas of the empire, such as the crucial eastern and north-eastern sectors\(^ {123}\). On the

---

\(^{121}\) NALK 46 (= ADD 625), 7-14. In another conveyance text, NALK 173 (= ADD 627), 3-5, the same village of Bahayyu is more cursorily described, with no boundaries: cf. above, kapru, Definition.

\(^{122}\) NALK 174 (= ADD 472), 3-11.

\(^{123}\) Cf. Parpola, NAT, pp. 108-115. The place names formed by $\text{Dur}$ plus a Chaldean personal name should be rather viewed as indigenous Southern Babylonian toponymic formations, similarly to the ones with $\text{Bit}$
presence of cultivations in the vicinity of town ramparts, our information is extremely scanty: in one good example, a moat (hirišu) to be sold, "inclusive of its side of the wall and its moat rim" (a-di uš ƀâd-šu / a-di ša-pi-ît hi-ri-ši-šu) is described as reaching "from the tower (na-meri) on the right side to the entrance of the wall in the direction of Nineveh (si-ip-pi ša du-u-ri / a-na NINAلى), adjoining the wall, adjoining the road to Nineveh".\textsuperscript{124}

iset(t)u.

The term is very rare in NA: cf. — as description of a holding — \textsuperscript{U}RU\textsuperscript{i-si-tû bi-it} 10 \textsuperscript{AN[ŠE A.Š.A.GA MES]} / ina lib-bi ū-sal-li ina \textsuperscript{URU} x x x, "an i. (and) a plot of 10 emûrus of land in the valley in the town of ..."\textsuperscript{125}; summarized in a duplicate text\textsuperscript{126} as \textsuperscript{URU}i-si-tû a-di A.S[A.GA MES], "the i. including the fields". Other cases come from epistolary texts, especially the following: GL\textsuperscript{AMBAR MES} / mar i-ba-šû-ni / a-na ma-te-ni / LI\textsuperscript{qur-bu-te} / a-na pa-ni \textsuperscript{GIŠKIN.KUD} / hu-ub-tû / ( ) i-si-te / [û]-ra-mu-ni / GL\textsuperscript{AMBAR MES} / a-na \textsuperscript{t}i-si-te-ia / la-äš-šu, “the reeds, as many as there are, are (required) for our region! (But) the soldiers, when faced with a harvest, (always) forego the pillage of an i. (Thus), reeds for our i. are lacking!”\textsuperscript{127}.

The interpretations of this term vary: according to the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary\textsuperscript{128} we should be dealing with a variant of \textsuperscript{išittû}, "storehouse"; and certainly this meaning would seem to fit the attestation ABL 124, seen above\textsuperscript{129}. However Kwasman, NALK, following AHw. rather thinks of a turreted farm-house, which recalls the Middle Assyrian \textsuperscript{dimtu}\textsuperscript{130}; and certainly the legal contexts appear to fit this view.

\textsuperscript{124) BT 136, 3-8 (translation ours). Cf. CAD S, p. 303a, for a variant possibility regarding sippû.
\textsuperscript{125) NALK 27 (= ADD 473), 3-4.
\textsuperscript{126) NALK 28 (= ADD 474), 6'. Cf. also the parallel passage NALK 27, 8'.
\textsuperscript{127) ABL 124, 3-Rev.4 ; and see fn. 129, below.
\textsuperscript{128) CAD A/2, p. 333b, s.v. asittû.
\textsuperscript{129) Cf. Fales, CLNA I, no. 13 (pp. 54-55), "deposito / magazzino", and see also ibid., p. 82.
\textsuperscript{130) Cf. already AHw., p. 74a-b, “Farming o.a. mit Wachturm”. NALK, p. 39: “it is likely that this is the Assyrian word for AN.ZA.KAR = dimtu”. On \textsuperscript{dimtu}, cf. C. Zaccagnini, The Rural Landscape of the Land of Arrapha, Roma 1979, pp. 47-47, with three basic meanings for the term: (1) a minor settlement (within the territory of an ålu); (2) a geographical district (within the territory of an ålu [?]); (3) a fortified [?] farm-house.
A plot is said to be adjoining the river as well as a sa-ha-ru, “a tower”\(^{131}\). Is this a sort of structure like the one reconstructed above for isittu?

### B. NATURAL COMPONENTS

#### 1. Watercourses: rivers, sources

A variety of watercourses is reflected in the NA texts of legal and administrative character pertaining to the rural landscape. Due to our limitations in the geographical localization of the written evidence — already expressed above — it is next to impossible to pinpoint the different hydrographic locales to which our sources refer. The main hydrographic features known for Assyria and the Jezirah are undoubtedly present: from the greater or smaller rivers with their affluents to the brooks of mountainous and hilly territory to the wadis and ponds of the flat areas near the riverbanks, to artificial canals and irrigated basins.

**a. nāru, “river”**

The mentions of “rivers” are relatively rare in the documentation dealing directly with the Neo-Assyrian countryside, and usually with no further specification. In some cases, it is probable that the Tigris itself was meant: thus, e.g., a deed from Nineveh mentions an orchard tihi tihi GIS\(\text{SAR} \ šā \ iK\text{al-da-a+a tihi GIS}\text{SAR} \ šā \ iKu-kul-la-ni tihi su-qi-qi, “adjacent to the river, etc.” (cf. II.A.1.a.)\(^{132}\); while one from Nimrud refers to an estate of 29 emârūs “in the town of Ša-la-hîtaya, adjacent to an orchard, adjacent to a river” (ina \(\text{i}\)\(\text{RU} \ Ša-la-hî-ta-a-a i [tihi GIS}\text{SAR tihi ti}\)\(^{133}\)). The picture here is that of cultivations taking place right on the riverbank — the best possible locale for orchards\(^{134}\).

---

\(^{131}\) *NALK* \(165 = ADD\ 378\), 10.

\(^{132}\) *NALK* \(234 = ADD\ 121\), 3'-5'. Cf. also e.g. *NALK* \(154 = ADD\ 364\), 3-7, a deed of sale of “an orchard in Nineveh, in front of the Old Bridge (ina igi ti-tu-ri sumun)”, and adjacent to “the river”.

\(^{133}\) *GPA*, 4'-5'. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 70, for the toponym.

\(^{134}\) The river Habur might be mentioned in the deed *NALK* \(263 = ADD\ 418\), 3’, referring to the area of Qatna: cf. *NALK*, pp. 312-313.
b. *enu ša mê*, "spring of water"

Springs of water are mentioned from time to time as part of an estate in descriptions for legal use: cf. e.g. *NALK* 19 (= *ADD* 468), 4, 10; *NALK* 92 (= *ADD* 386), 2', 6'(*ig*"*II*.MES, "springs", mentioned with cornland and a threshing-floor\(^{135}\)); *NALK* 271 (= *ADD* 419), 13' (*fo.*"*ig*"*II*.MES, in connection with a *bit šiqi*, "irrigated area": cf. below); and *NALK* 292 (= *ADD* 624), 6: a plot "on a spring between the canals" (*ina e-nu bir-ti hi-ri-a-te*).

c. *nahallu*, "brook"

The *nahallu* — presumably a watercourse of limited size and capacity, possibly even of seasonal flow (i.e. a wadi), as in other contexts\(^{136}\) — is mentioned in various deeds as bordering element to the plots being transacted.

Thus, e.g., in the smaller of the two deeds of Kakkullanu concerning the village Bit-abu-ila’a, a *nahallu* is found alongside landed properties and “the open countryside”\(^{137}\). As shown by the larger deed of real estate purchase concerning Bit-abu-ila’a (*NALK* 127 = *ADD* 414; cf. II.A.2), brooks were a crucial part of the landscape here: we find seven attestations\(^{138}\) referring to at least three distinct watercourses which flowed inside or at the outskirts of the village. The identification of the village through which the *nahallu* flowed is sometimes given: cf. e.g. *na-*ah-*li* (sa) *URU* Na-pi-hi in a deed of 709 B.C.\(^{139}\).

In Bit-abu-ila’a, we also find a *nahallu* *danna*, “large brook” mentioned as bordering element jointly with the field of Ubur-Nabû; and it reappears together with the well-attested possessions of *Kiṣir-Asšur* a few lines later\(^{140}\). Was the difference with an ordinary *nahallu* merely one of size? Possibly not, considering that the term is also present elsewhere in NA deeds, e.g. as bordering element within a hilly landscape\(^{141}\). Thus it might be understood as a technical term, perhaps with reference to a non-seasonal but steady flow of its waters — i.e. as a real brook, and not a wadi.

A further case in the Bit-abu-ila’a context is that of the *nahallu* *d* *Ku-si* or *an-ku-si*,

\(^{135}\) *NALK*, p. 107, note ad 6’, firstly believes the second *ig*"*II*.MES to be a mistake for *ki*"*MES, but then translates “springs” in both cases with no problems.


\(^{137}\) *NALK* 126 (= *ADD* 621), 6.

\(^{138}\) *NALK* 127 (= *ADD* 414), ll. 10, 17, 18, 21, 26, 34, 36.

\(^{139}\) *TCL* IX, 58 (= *ARU* 113 = *FNALD* 2), 7, 13.

\(^{140}\) *Ibid.*, ll. 18, 36, resp.

\(^{141}\) *NALK* 37 (= *ADD* 425), 12' (*na-hal dan-nu*).
which occurs twice (ll. 21, 36). The former reading has been interpreted as a divine name of possibly West Semitic origin\textsuperscript{142}; the latter one has been recently suggested, but with no actual explanation\textsuperscript{143}.

d. iarhu, "water hole, pool, pond"

Still in the larger Bit-abu-ila'a text, we find one more instance of a brook: the "brook that flows into the iarhu" (\textit{na-hal-lu šá ina šâ ia-ar-hu it-ta-la-ku-u-ni})\textsuperscript{144}. Here we would seem to be dealing with a greater or smaller water hole in which the brook ended its course; and a very similar image is provided by a sales document from the temple of Mamu at Imgur-Bel, referring to a plot of 5 sutus "adjoining the brook which is below the iarhu at the head of the graveyard" (\textit{tihi na-ah-li / ša šap-li ia'-ar'-hi / re-eś qa-bu-ra-ni})\textsuperscript{145}. The iarhu in itself is rare, but not totally absent from Neo-Assyrian deeds concerning gardens and orchards: in a conveyance text concerning the hilly region of Singara (present-day Jebel Sinjar), the iarhu appears to be crucial in the upkeep of the neighboring vineyards\textsuperscript{146}. Further occurrences of the term iarhu would seem to confirm its nature as a place of water deposit and storage exclusively fed by flowing (or rain) water, and thus basically in opposition with the well\textsuperscript{147}.

e. Other

\textit{hiritu}, "canal"

Canals or ditches are rarely named in the NA legal documents. In a text of 707 B.C., a building plot is described as \textit{tihi hi-ri-te / ša URU A-di-an}, "adjoining the canals of

\textsuperscript{142} Cf. R. Zadok, \textit{On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achemenian Periods}, Jerusalem 1978, pp. 61-62. See also \textit{ARU} 210; \textit{FNALD} 3.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{NALK}, p. 158: "It is probable that an-ku-su is either a geographical term of unknown meaning or a foreign word. It appears to have the opposite meaning of nahallu dannu ll. 18 and 34".

\textsuperscript{144} \textit{NALK} 127 (= \textit{ADD} 414), 26.

\textsuperscript{145} BT 106, 3-5, our reading based on the (very clear) copy by B. Parker, \textit{Iraq} 25 (1963), pl. XX. The integration in \textit{CAD} Q, p. 293a is wrong.

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{NALK} 257 (= \textit{ADD} 444), 8, where a iarhu is part of a vine-growing estate, bordered by other similar holdings. For the Sinjar region in Ancient Near Eastern texts, cf. M. Stol, \textit{On Trees, Mountains, and Millstones in the Ancient Near East}, Leiden 1979, passim.

\textsuperscript{147} Cf. \textit{CAD} I/J, p. 325b. A similar type of water hole was described by A.H. Layard, \textit{Nineveh and Babylon}, London 1853, pp. 240-242 ("Our tents were pitched near a pool of rain water, which, although muddy and scant, sufficed for our wants").
110

FREDERICK MARIO FALES

the city Adian\(^{148}\); another one is GAB.D1 hi-ri-ti\(^{149}\). A number of canals is mentioned in two deeds transacted one year apart from each other: in the first one, a plot located “between the canals” (bir-ti hi-ri-a-te) also has canals as bordering elements\(^{150}\); while in the second only fields act as borders for the plot again described as “between the canals”\(^{151}\).

\[^{masqitu}\]

The term is attested in a topographical description of a plot sold in 717 B.C. and then again in 710: a field of 3 emārus is said to be qa-ni / ina qa-an-ni ma-šá-qí-te / maš-qí-te, “on the edge of the m.”\(^{152}\). Certainly connected with water, it could equally well have been an irrigation outlet or — more probably — a watering-place\(^{153}\).

2. The open countryside: hills, valleys, steppe.

\[^{a. mūlū, and other terms for “height, hill”}\]

The term mūlū\(^{154}\) would seem to describe the naturally hilly or sloping ground which characterizes a large part of the landscape of the Assyrian homeland; its opposite is precisely noted as being ušallu in a Nimrud text\(^{155}\). The majority of the references to

\[^{148}\] NALK 103 (= ADD 350), 6-7. The site was probably in the area of Kirkuk (cf. Postgate, in Reflets des Deux Fleuves, cit., p. 142).
\[^{149}\] NALK 323 (= ADD 464), 2'.
\[^{150}\] NALK 292 (= ADD 624), 6, 7, 9 (țihi hi-ri-te).
\[^{151}\] NALK 293, 5.
\[^{152}\] NALK 224 (= ADD 391), 3; NALK 227 (= ADD 392), 3, resp.
\[^{153}\] Cf. CAD M/1, pp. 382ff; Kwasman, NALK, p. 266 — both preferring the meaning “irrigation outlet”. This meaning does in fact occur in other legal documents — but exclusively from a Southern Mesopotamian or Elamite context, of OB and MB date. On the other hand, it is true that the meaning “watering-place” seems limited in use to Standard Babylonian inscriptions. However, it may be recalled that the term with this meaning undergoes a loan-translation into Aramaic mšqy in the 9th century bilingual inscription from Tell Fekheriye (cf. A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil, A. R. Millard, La statue de Tell Fekheriye, Paris 1982, p. 23, 3; F.M. Fales, Syria 60 [1983], p. 246); from here, a “rebound” of the term into the “language” of the NA administrative texts could have taken place, similarly to what is suggested concerning tahɛmu, below. Notice in any case the — surely not casual — presence of a town “of the Potters” in the neighborhood of this area rich in water.
\[^{154}\] CAD M/2, p. 193a-b.
\[^{155}\] GPA, 23, 3-4; cf. Postgate, GPA, p. 58.
this environment are brief and uninformative\textsuperscript{156}; in a relatively explicit case\textsuperscript{157} we notice that "an estate of 34 em\text{"u}rus of hilly land" (\/\text{\footnotesize E} \text{\footnotesize ANSE A.\text{"A.A.E} mu-ll[e-e]} ) represents the partial total of at least 18 very small holdings (from 7 em\text{"u}rus to 2 sutus) bordering on other fields, or on rivers and brooks\textsuperscript{158}. In a further conveyance, a plot \textit{ina u\text{"a}llu} is followed by one \textit{ina m\text{"u}lu\text{"e}}\textsuperscript{159}.

A topographical feature which cannot in fact have been very far removed from \textit{m\text{"u}lu} is expressed by the presence of the term \textit{sad\text{"u}}, (basically = "mountain"). In one text from Nineveh\textsuperscript{160}, a plot is stated to be \textit{ti\text{"e} KUR-u}, "adjacent to a \text{"e}.") as well as to a road and to a field; in one from Nimrud\textsuperscript{161}, it is the transacted field itself which is "in the \text{"e}." (\/\text{\footnotesize E} \text{\footnotesize I ANSE A.\text{"A.A.GA} / ina KUR-e} ). On the other hand, the possibility that the further meaning of \textit{sad\text{"u}}, "open country" was here meant (similarly to \textit{madbaru} and \textit{\text{"e}ru}, cf. below) should not be totally ruled out\textsuperscript{162}.

Finally, we find the \textit{tillu}, i.e. the "tell" well known to all who visit the Near East — the mound formed by subsequently overlaid archaeological deposits\textsuperscript{163}. In one deed, two plots relevant to a single site are respectively said to be "at the foot of the tell" (\textit{ina G\text{"e}R II DU6}), and "at the back of the tell" (\textit{ina ku-tal DU6})\textsuperscript{164}. In a letter to Sargon, it is on the other hand clear that settlement took place at the top of the tells: TA* UGU ti-la-a-ni : lu-ri-du-u-ni / ina \textit{\text{"a}p-li\text{"e}t} (text \text{"u}) "li\text{"e}r-\text{"i}p-\text{"e}t", "The people living on the tells should come down and build at the bottom"\textsuperscript{165}.

\textbf{b. \textit{u\text{"a}llu}, "lowland, valley"}

As said above, \textit{u\text{"a}llu} is the exact opposite of \textit{m\text{"u}lu}: what is meant is ground in lowland, flat territory — perhaps with implications on the presence of nearby water-

\textsuperscript{156} E.g. \textit{NALK} 3 (= \textit{ADD} 70), 8'-9' bears a fragmentary reference to $^{\text{14R}}$\textit{Si-[mu]} / ina \text{\footnotesize MU-LE-e} [ \text{x x x} ].
\textsuperscript{157} \textit{NALK} 37 (= \textit{ADD} 425), 22'.
\textsuperscript{158} Cf. III.B.1, above.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{NALK} 204 (= \textit{ADD} 1167), 11, 13.
\textsuperscript{160} \textit{NALK} 202 (= \textit{ADD} 385), 20'.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{GPA}, 27, 3-4.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Contra}, \textit{CAD} 5/1, p. 53a (quote of \textit{ADD} 385), pp. 58b-59b (where no NA passages for "open country" are presented). Cf. also Postgate, \textit{GPA}, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{164} \textit{NALK} 128 (= \textit{ADD} 623), 16', 17', resp. Cf. also \textit{NALK} 229 (= \textit{ADD} 393), 5'.
\textsuperscript{165} \textit{SAA} 1, 176, 35-36. Parpola reads correctly \textit{ina S\text{"a}\text{"a}l\text{"a}}, but notes (\textit{SAA} I, p. 138) that $^{\text{14R}}$\textit{HAL.\text{"U}U} or the like" are expected, and thus translates "build the fort". However, \textit{\text{"a}p-l\text{"e}t} does not seem totally absent from NA, although/admittedly in contexts influenced by the literary dialect (cf. e.g. \textit{SAA} II, p. 103b).
courses. The best-documented case concerning the ušallu-environment is that of the territory around the town of Bit-Šaššeri, already mentioned (cf. II. A.2.b, above). From this general area, we have three separate texts, two of which are deeds of conveyance recording the sale of plots located ina ú-šal-li, “in the valley-land”; and the third of which is a cadastral appendix to a royal grant listing both land ina šá ú-šal-li and ina šá mu-le-e as forming an overall estate in the town itself or within the outlying territory.

c. madbaru, “steppe, desert, countryside”

Madbaru is a major term of geographical description, and finds ample attestations in Assyrian royal inscriptions as well. As an element of the largely topical geography of the annalistic inscriptions of the Assyrian kings, it usually applies to a far-off, uninhabited area, lacking water and almost all plant life, fit only for the foraging of wild animals and the roaming of the predatory Arab nomad. As such, it stands in opposition to all colonized land, whether of urban or rural context; it is the wilderness, the outer limit of all civilized existence.

The use of the term in the legal and administrative documents of the NA period is undoubtedly less dramatic. From cadastral material, legal texts, and letters alike we obtain a common meaning “steppe, open countryside”, with reference to the area on the outside of, and with no link to, the zone of the settlements including the immediate environs of the latter (qannu, uğaru; cf. above). Thus, e.g. a settlement in the “Harran census” is located ina mad-bar šá URU Ba-li-hi, “in the steppe of the town Baliwu”, while an 8th century letter clarifies the fact that alānî qab(a)si mudabiri šunu, “these settle-

---

166) Cf. Postgate, GPA, p. 58, according to whom “coming as the word does from the south, it appears to mean flat, watered, and presumably water-laid ground”. For the word as decidedly meaning “river-valley” at Nuzi, cf. C. Zaccagnini, The Rural Landscape of the Land of Arraphe, Roma 1979, p. 11. Notice further that Sennacherib uses qaqqar ušallī to describe his building material for the terrace of the Armory (Luckenbill, Sennacherib, p. 129, 49).


168) NARGD 5, 4-6. The extension of the estate can only be reconstructed as [PAH n] + 40 ANŠE A.ŠA ina URUŠ-Ša-ši-ša (1. 6).


170) Cf. in general CAD M/1, p. 12a-b.

ments are right in the countryside”, and finally a NA tablet with NB script is entirely dedicated to the possession of a group of landowners, part in the madbaru, part in settlements.172.

From these and various other similar quotes, however, we might gain the impression that the madbaru was — also in the NA material — more a “non-place” than a place: i.e. that its definition was rather obtained by contrast from the image of the urban and rural zones, than as issuing from a straightforward conception of the outer, scarcely inhabited reaches of the rural sector. But to dispel this notion, even a single text may suffice, as in the following case: [m]a-hi-ru i-na KUR / SIG2-iq a-dan-niš / 1 ANŠE ŠE.PAD. MES / ša 1 MA.NA URUDU.MES / ina URU.Ni-ru-a [i]-lak / 1 ANŠE 5 BÁN ina KUR Ha-lâh-h[i] / 2 ANŠE ina KUR mu-da-bi-ri, “The market rate is extremely good: 1 emâru of barley is worth 1 mina of copper in Nineveh, 1 emâru 5 sutus in the province of Halahhu, 2 emârus in the country”.173. In the meaning provided by this text, the madbaru comes as close to becoming an actual zone — let us say, the outmost agricultural “belt” — as it possibly can: even a working set of market prices may be evoked for this environment.

d. šēru, “open country(side)”

This term — in its not too frequent occurrences — is functional in illuminating spatial relations between a town or village and the outlying steppe.174. For a case involving a major site, cf. ku-um 2.MA.NA KÜ.BABBAR É 12 ANŠE / A.ŠA.GA ina UGU EDIN URU Aš-šur, “in lieu of 2 minas of silver, an area of 12 emârus of land facing the open country (outside) of the city Assur (are pledged)”175. The following case, on the other hand, refers to the agricultural village of Bit-abu-ila’a: É 2 ANŠE 3-BÁN pu-u-ru / ‘iti na-hal ‘iti 1Ki-ṣir.Aš-šur / ‘iti se-e-ri ścihi / A.ŠA ša 1ŠUHUŠ.ŠPA, “(sale of) an estate of 2 emârus, (formed by) a bare plot, adjacent to a brook, adjacent to Kišir-Aššur, adjacent to the open countryside, adjacent to the estate of Ubûr-Nabû.”176.

172) See, resp., CCENA 9, 12; Iraq 25, p. 79 (= NL 70), Rev. 13; and K. 764, which runs as follows: (1) ša la Aš-šur-mu-sum-na (2) 30 šE.nUMUN ina mu-da-bi-ri (3) 60 šE.nUMUN ina KUR Ga-za-a-nu (4) (hor. line) ša la UDU-de-ni-a-mur (5) 70 šE.nUMUN ina mu-da-bi-ri (6) šE KUR Ra-ṣa-pi (7) 30 šE.nUMUN ina bi-ri KUR.MES (hor. line) (9) 60 šE.nUMUN ša 1Ki-ṣir-S(Aš)-šur.173) Iraq 21, p. 162 (= NL 52), 7-13.
174) Similar is the use of šēru in Neo-Babylonian, cf. G. van Driel, Neo-Babylonian Agriculture. III. Cultivation, BSA V (1990), p. 223, “a general term for all land outside the town(s) — perhaps even outside one’s own town”.175) NALK 7 (= ADD 58), 5-6.
176) NALK 126 (= ADD 621), 5-8. Cf. also s.v. harrānu.
III. THE ESTATE

1. The estate in its entirety.

a. Introduction.

As has been many times observed, the general picture of rural possession is that of a multiplicity of smallish plots, scattered here and there in one province, or even in different provinces: cf. resp., for the two situations, the evidence given in short lists such as e.g. ADD 972 (plots in the province of Arrapha)\(^{177}\), and the data in the huge cadastral “schedules” or in letters\(^{178}\), above. Thus, at least in theory an individual’s “estate” could be formed by a variety of parcels even separated by many days’ journey, and — correspondingly — spanning many different regional landscapes. We perceive this clearly in a letter to Esarhaddon from a member of the Nineveh palatial elite, worried about his far-off possessions:

“There are servants of mine in the province of the Chief Cupbearer, and there are fields and orchards (A.SA GISAR) there. But the servants of the Chief Cupbearer, hankering after my orchards, snatched (them) away (and) chased my people off. As soon as they chased them off, they took fright and fled off altogether”\(^{179}\).

At its uppermost limit, the estate could comprise not only any number of separate fields, gardens, pasture land, but it could even coincide with entire settlements: thus, e.g., among the many possessions of Remanni-Adad, we must list also a settlement, URU Mu-se-na-aš a-na gi-mir-ti-sū\(^{180}\).

For the purpose of the contemporary sale documents, however, the notion of “estate” is limited to the total of land parcels being sold in one single locale, specified by the text itself — either initially, or in the summing-up of holdings — as constituting a bitu\(^{181}\). Viewed from this (entirely formal-juridical) point of view, the estate may present almost any conceivable dimension or inner composition of land types, fixtures, etc. E.g. it may correspond to the entire agricultural village in which it is housed: URU ŠE 1 Ba-ha-a+a a-di gi-mir-ti-sū / 5 500 A.SA a-di <<al>> ŠE NUMUN-sū ar-sū “the

\(^{177}\) ADD 972, 1-Rev. 2: (1) [3]0 ANŠE ŠE NUMUN (2) URU ŠE Ka-an-x [x ] Aš15 (3) 20 ANŠE ŠE NUMUN [(1)] (4) ina URU Lu-a-ma [x] [r.1] PAP 50 ANŠE ŠE NUMUN (2) ina na-ge-e ša “URU” Aš-ap-a-ha.

\(^{178}\) Cf. I.1.c. above.

\(^{179}\) LAS 36, Rev. 8-16: translation following LAS, with minimal variations. On the province of the Chief Cupbearer, cf. Kessler, Untersuchungen, cit., pp. 159-182.

\(^{180}\) NALK 260 (= ADD 471), 12’. The settlement was in the district of Arpad, and comprised fields, a vineyard, an orchard, and 6 people.

\(^{181}\) The term is usually written logographically (ℓ), but a small series of syllabic renderings (as bi-ℓ, e.g. NALK 27 = ADD 473, 3) also occur.
village 'of Bahayyu' in its entirety: an estate of 500 emārus of land including its sown fields under cultivation".\(^{182}\)

Or, in any case, it may span vast expanses of land, cf. e.g. an estate of 200 emārus of land (200 A.ŠA.GA) in the town of Qubate (\(^{183}\)URU Qu-ba-ra-te") which is sold with 6 people, and 2 oxen. It comprised 10 emārus of sown fields (10 ANŠE NUMUN\(^{184}\) [a-ar-šū])\(^{183}\).

On the other hand, we may more frequently find medium-to-small landed holdings, even comprising a plurality of features, as e.g. in the following cases: \(\bar{\text{e}}\) 30 ANŠE A.ŠA \(\bar{\text{e}}\) a-na gi-mir-ti-šū / [n]a-\(\text{a}'\)al pū \(\text{E}\) TÜR\(^{185}\) GIS\(^{186}\) SAR\(^{185}\), "an estate of 30 emārus — the estate in its entirety — (comprising) a brook, a well, a dwelling, a corral, and orchards"\(^{184}\); PAP 20 ANŠE A.ŠA \(\text{in}\) GIS\(^{187}\) BAN \(\text{sa}\) 9 qa ē / ad-ru GIS\(^{187}\) SAR tab-ri-ū pū \(\text{in}\) URU Qur-ū-bi, "in all, 20 emārus of land by the sutu of 9 qas, (comprising) a dwelling, a threshing-floor, an orchard, a hay-field (?), a well, in the town Qurubī"\(^{185}\).

b. Key terms

In order to capture the reality of the NA estate we should start by taking into account its lexical definitions: the ways in which, in a gamut of utterances ranging from everyday speech to technical jargon, the holding or a plurality of holdings for agricultural activity were described. The least structured among such definitions is undoubtedly the simple grouping of "fields and orchards" that is to be found in letters when referring to land allotments, viz.: \(\text{lu-še-si-šū-nu} / \text{ina Ša-bi URU Ar-gi-te} / \text{lu-še-sib-sū-nu A.ŠA MES GIS\(^{188}\) SAR\(^{189}\)} / li-di-nā'ād-šū-nu, "Let him move them out, settle them in the town of Argitu, and give them fields and orchards"\(^{186}\). Or again: \(\text{ta}^* \text{ ma-ši} \text{ ra-LIR} \text{ ša LU GAR at-ta-ni mu-ku A.ŠA.GA GIS\(^{187}\) SAR / ina KUR la-su-bu-qi la-di-na-ka}, "Insofar as you are a servant of the king, I will assign fields and gardens in the land of Lasubuq to you"\(^{187}\).

Agricultural land in general is usually described through the expression \(\bar{\text{e}} / \text{bītu} + \text{MEASURE} + \text{A.ŠA.GA}\). On the basis of later Aramaic\(^{188}\) it is suggested that this expression be analyzed as formed of a main compound \(*\text{bīt} ... \text{eqli}, with the meaning(s) “field, rural holding, landed estate”, as the case may be, plus a customarily interposed

---

182) NALK 46 (= ADD 625), 7-8.
183) NALK 90 (= ADD 64), 4-13.
184) NALK 32 (= ADD 1152), 6-7.
185) NALK 128 (= ADD 623), 19'-20'.
186) SAA I, 177 (= ABL 414), 13-16.
187) SAA I, 179 (= CT 53, 10), 16-18.
measurement. Cases such as ܐܠܒܢܢ ܠܐ ܐ-ܢܐ ܢܨ ܐ.ܫܢ, “A holding of 2 emārus less one sütu”\(^\text{189}\) are encouraging in this respect.

\(\text{š.} \text{e.} \text{NUMUN}\) is something given as an alternative to ܐ.ܫܢ. The translation “(arable) field(s) / arable land” seems the most meaningful for \(\text{š.} \text{e.} \text{NUMUN}\) in a variety of contexts\(^\text{190}\): cf. III.2, below, and see further and especially clauses like the following one, in which \(\text{š.} \text{e.} \text{NUMUN}\) and ܐ.ܫܢ are equated: ܐܕ-ܫܸܹܐ ܠܘܓܠܐ ܐܢ-ܝܬ / 10 ܢܨ ܐ.ܫܢ ܐܢ \(\text{KUR}\) ܚܲܠܠ-ܚܝ / ܝܬ-ܫܢܐ 14 ܡܢ.ܢܢ.ܢܢ \(\text{MES}\) / ܐ.ܫܢ ܐ-ܬ-ܟܠ / ܡܐ-ܡܝ-ܢܐ / ܠܲܕ-ܕܲܒ-ܐܒ / ܐ-ܡܐ-ܡ \(\text{LU} \text{EN.} \text{NAM} / \text{la (sic)} \text{KUR} \) ܒܪ-ܚܠ-ܙܐ ܝܬ-ܟܐ / ܠܘܓܪܐ ܝܚ-ܬ� / ܫܘܐ ܝܡ-ܬ-ܫܸܹܐ / ܐ.ܫܸܹܐ ܝܦ-ܬ-ܐ. The father of the king my lord gave me 10 emārus of arable land in the province of Halahhu. For 14 years I enjoyed the usufruct of the field, (and) nobody argued with me. (But) now the governor of Barhalzi has come, mistreated the farmer, plundered his dwelling, and taken away my field!”\(^\text{191}\). Other cases are, e.g.: ܐ.ܫܢ \(\text{NUMUN} \text{MES} \) ܠܘܓܠܐ ܐܢ-ܝܬ / ܝܬܫܢܐ ܒܠ-ܠܐ ܐ-ܪܐ-ܐܣ, “I can’t put the king my lord’s arable fields under cultivation”\(^\text{192}\) or ܐ.ܫܢ \(\text{NUMUN} \text{MES} \) ܠܘܓܠܐ ܐ-ܪܝ-ܟܠ / ܠܘܓܪܐ ܠܐ-ܒܪ-ܐ-ܐ / ܐ-ܡܐ-ܡ \(\text{LU} \text{EN.} \text{NAM} \) / ܠܫܢܐ / ܠܘܓܪܐ ܐ-ܫܡ-ܕܐ / ܠܘܓܪܐ ܠܐ-ܒܪ-ܐ-ܐ, “I am harvesting the arable land of the town [H[...]], and in addition to this I am harvesting an extra 1,000 emārus of the arable land of the town Laba’u”\(^\text{193}\).

2. Cornland

\textit{a. Layout of cereal fields}

As we have seen above (III.1.a.), a “field” — a tract of land devoted to cereal cultivation — could be of very small proportions or could, on the other hand, coincide with that of a rural settlement in its entirety: our available surface measures range from fractions of the emāru to various scores, even hundreds of emārus. Bearing this in mind, we will attempt to concentrate here on the problem of the possible shape or layout of such plots. Caution is undoubtedly required for this topic since information is indeed scanty: linear measures (i.e. width and length) of fields were not given as a matter of

\(^{189}\) \textit{NALK} 127 (\(\text{ADD} \) 414), 4.

\(^{190}\) Cf. however also other interpretations, e.g. \textit{CADZ}, pp. 92-93 (which makes a distinction between two \(\text{š.} \text{e.} \text{NUMUN} \) — “acreage” and “arable land” — in NA, albeit with little supporting evidence), or — less convincingly — \textit{NALK}, p. 63, “sown seed”.

\(^{191}\) \textit{LAS} 114 (\(\text{ABL} \) 421), 6-16.

\(^{192}\) \textit{SAA} 1, 106 (\(\text{ABL} \) 480), R. 9-10.

\(^{193}\) \textit{SAA} 1, 176 (\(\text{NL} \) 20), 25-28. See also e.g. \textit{NL} 13, 24-25: \(\text{š.} \text{e.} \text{NUMUN} \text{MES} \) ܫ-ܢ-ܐ / ܐ-ܪ-ܝ-ܐ, “I will cultivate their arable land”; \textit{NL} 23, 25, \(\text{š.} \text{e.} \text{NUMUN} \) ܢ-ܐ-ܢ-ܐ / ܣ-ܛ-ܐ/ܘ-ܢ, “this arable field which he is cultivating”. Note further the possible derived Syriac compound \(ܒ�t \) \(ܕ) \) \(ܡܐ) \(ܫܫ) \(ܟܠ) \) “sowable land” (U. Seidel, \textit{Vokabular der Landwirtschaft in Syrischen}, I. AoF 15(1988), p. 154).
custom, and only the measures of unbuilt plots (gaqquru puṣā'u), rather destined for inhabitation than for agriculture, are attested\textsuperscript{194}. Other periods of Mesopotamian history, from very ancient to very modern, show us the existence of a system of division of the land reserved for cereal cultivation within a site into many adjacent rectangular strips\textsuperscript{195}. On the other hand, cases from Northern Mesopotamia (Nuzi) do not seem to bear out this specific layout, although an elongated shape rather than a square shape for the fields, often tightly adjacent, is clearly preferred\textsuperscript{196}.

An attempt to clarify the arrangement of fields in 1st millennium Assyria is more a question of raising problems than of finding solutions to them. On one hand, no evidence for agricultural land laid out in a plurality of rectangular strips in the Neo-Assyrian rural landscape may be actually summoned; and this is not too surprising, also in consideration of the undoubtedly different use of agricultural space in the wider areas of Northern and Northwestern Mesopotamia, as compared to the central and southern part of the alluvial plain — similarly to what may be deduced for the Nuzi period. On the other hand, a limited group of documents do in fact provide clues for the adjacency of many single plots of limited extension within a site, thereby allowing us to postulate an overall layout which may have borne some resemblance to the one described for Nuzi. The best illustration for this topographical situation comes from the already much-quoted NALK 127 (= ADD 414), a 65-line conveyance document from Bit-abu-ila'a; since we have elsewhere provided a detailed discussion of the topographical indications of this text\textsuperscript{197}, it will here suffice to summarize these results, so as to build our present conclusions upon them.

The village of Bit-abu-ila'a in the province of Rasappa\textsuperscript{198} is known to us as seat of the landed purchases of Kakkullanu, a rab kишri of the late 7th century B.C.. Kakkullanu appears involved in a joint action of acquisition with a number of his colleagues in the military, all of which presumably acted upon the need of the former community of inhabitants of the site to sell out, due to general impoverishment or indebtedness\textsuperscript{199}. Be

\textsuperscript{194} For the undoubtedly existing relation between the units of area of the time (and essentially the emаr) and specific linear measures — a relation which still escapes us (cf. I.2., above) — cf. Postgate, FNALD, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{195} Such, e.g. is the outcome of the study of the Ur III rural landscape by M. Liverani, BSA V (1990), pp. 147-186, as well as of the investigation into modern agricultural conditions in a Middle Tigris village by J.N. Postgate, ibid., pp. 65-74.
\textsuperscript{196} Cf. Zaccagnini, The Rural Landscape of the Land of Arraphe, cit., p. 86.
\textsuperscript{198} Cf. 1.a, above.
\textsuperscript{199} This conclusion is reached by ideally summing the 25 plots of Kakkullanu's: to all the bordering properties owned by his colleagues, who appear in the witness list of the Bit-abu-ila'a texts themselves, or in other documents of the Kakkullanu archive (cf. Fales, cit., pp. 184 ff.).
The process of purchase consisted in buying out all the possessions of specific proprietors within the village, from greater to smaller holdings, so as to eliminate the former group of landowners one by one.

The plots undergoing transaction in the known documents from Bit-abu-ila'a are not — in the main — reciprocally adjacent, i.e. they do not form one continuous latifundium being purely and simply taken over by Kakkullanu. However, while spatially separate, they are very often bordered by other agricultural land, some of which had been previously acquired by the very enterprising rab kisri: thus, and specifically, the 25 plots bought by Kakkullanu in NALK 127 (= ADD 414) are described with two bordering elements each, of which 30 are other fields, either already in Kakkullanu's possession or in that of a military crony. In a smaller number of cases, the plots being sold are said to flank one of a group of natural or man-made structures present within the site, which range from brooks to roads to temples to boundary markers (ummu, cf. below).

The ensuing “landscape” of Bit-abu-ila'a is thus of great richness and complexity: we have to deal with a minimum of two roads, four streams or brooks, one pond, various borderlines of contiguous settlements, in addition to the already mentioned 30 fields adjacent to the ones being sold, and also taking into account the existence of an outer sēru. Now, as stated in our previous work on the subject, an attempt to “place on the map” the village Bit-abu-ila'a on the basis of the descriptions of all 75 mutually bordering topographical elements, is destined to yield a totally theoretical graphic outcome: let us say, one map out of $n$ possible maps. But in any case, it is very plausible to infer from the text itself (i.e. from the order of the described elements, as well as from the terminology used) that some groups of holdings were placed in a pattern of tight adjacency, whichever the chart utilized. In particular, in the map suggested below (Fig. 1), plots nos. 5-6, and 11-13, are shown to be contiguous; and this possibility should be extended to nos. 15-16, 19-20. This would point, then, to the choice of specific areas within the overall territory of the sites for the preferential development of agricultural activities, while other parts of the rural site were left bare or untenured. The choice of spots for the common division of the land in “fields” could have resulted from the possibility to share collective developmental resources such as water, or from a merely topographical option, e.g. the proximity of a road or other structures. As for the bare land, this may have been an actually non-colonized part of the rural enclave, or might have been the result of specific choices in the matter of crop rotation.

---

200) NALK 126 (= ADD 621), passim.
201) For the average size of Kakkullanu's land (from 7 to 0.2 emaras), cf. Fales, cit., p. 174.
202) Clearly noted as bordering element in NALK 126 (= ADD 621), 7.
b. Cultivation procedures

Crop rotation

It is quite probable that the main system of crop rotation practiced on agricultural land reserved for cereal cultivation in the NA empire was on a 2-year basis. This practice of alternating fallow years on the land would seem to be indicated in documents of antichretic pledge by the usufruct formula, mentioning the amount of time, divided into equal years of cultivation and fallow, in which the transacted holdings may be "enjoyed". The terms most often used are (še.) mērešu “land under cultivation”, and (še.) karaphu, “fallow land”. No fixed order of precedence of one over the other is to be found, while the number of years before redemption of the pledged land is usually 6, but can also be 8, viz. 3 karaphu / 3 mērešu; 3/4 mērešu / 3/4 karaphu; 3 ŠE.mērešu / 3 ŠE.karaphu; etc.

A variant outlook on the same phenomenon is offered by the two-column text ADD 773: here we find a list of landed holdings, tied to a question of inheritance, divided equally into fallow and cultivated portions, i.e. again implying that half of all the available land was customarily left fallow. The term for “cultivated land” is here ŠE.NUMUN, as in III.1.b, above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>ŠE.NUMUN       ka-rap-hi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 ANŠE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ŠE.ŠE 1 Ku-šur! [0!]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20 ANŠE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ŠE.ŠE.Ie-ri [( )]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20 ANŠE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ŠE.ŠE 1 Qi-[ x x ] x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 ANŠE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ŠE.ŠE Ba-am-bu-[ki]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15 ANŠE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ŠE.ŠE Ha-ar-bi-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 ANŠE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ŠE.ŠE Gil-sa-nu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rev.1 92 ANŠE ŠE.NUMUN 92 ANŠE ka-rap-hi
| 2 | 2 GISŠAR MESš Ša GISŠ GESTIN |
| 3 | ū zi-iš'-tumı bi-šs [ x (x)] |
| 4 | TA* É-AD-šu i-na-š[t] |

---

204) Similarly, e.g., to Nuzi: cf. C. Zaccagnini, The Rural Landscape of the Land of Arraphe, cit., p. 31. Cf. also the modern Turkish parallels quoted by Postgate, in Reflets des Deux Fleuves, cit., p. 144.
205) For the formula, cf. FNALD, p. 30.
206) Cf. CAD M2, p. 25.
207) Cf. e.g. NALK 3 (= ADD 70), 16; BM 139950 (= NALK App. I), 15.
208) Cf. e.g. Iraq 32, no. 8, 16; NALK 128 (= ADD 623), 23; NALK 305 (= ADD 83), 9.
209) Cf. e.g. NALK 105 (= ADD 622), 8-9.
“Sown vs. fallow. 20 emārus : : 20 emārus — the village of Kuṣur—[…]; 20 e. : : 20 e.: the town of Ieri; 20 e. : : 20 e.: the village of Qi—…; 10 e. : : 10 e.: the city of Bambuki; 15 e. : : 15 e.: the city of Harbina; 7 e. : : 7 e.: the city of Gilsanu. (In all,) 92 e. sown, 92 e. fallow; 2 vineyards; and the portion of ..., from his father’s estate he took”.

A further case — with terminological variants — is provided by a Nimrud legal document, 3 ANŠE ŠE.NUMUN ar-su 3 ANŠE kar-pa-hi, “3 emārus of sown (and?) cultivated land, 3 emārus of fallow land”\(^{210}\).

The possibility that — due to unknown conditions — more than 50% of the land in a specific holding had been left fallow, would seem to be implied by a notation in legal and cadastral texts, referring to the amount of land being cultivated specifically in the time and place to which the deed refers. This notation again comprises the term aršu, “planted, drilled (= plowed & sown), cultivated”, applied to a part of the entire surface of specific holdings\(^{211}\). A sampler of applications is represented by the following cases:

(sale of) \(\$ 500\) A.SA a-di \(<<al>\) ŠE.NUMUN-sū ar-si, “500 (emārus) of land including its land under cultivation, sown”\(^{212}\); (sale of) \(\$ 200\) A.SA.GA Qu-uba’-a-te” plus 6 people, 2 oxen, and 10 ANŠE ŠE.NUMUN\(^{MES}\) a-ar-sū, “an estate of 200 emārus of land in the town Qubbate etc. etc. … (and) 10 emārus of cultivated-arable land”\(^{213}\); (fragmentary inventory of an estate) \([n]\) ANŠE ŠE.NUMUN ar-sū *r[Α ΣΑ] / \([n]\) EMES 1 ad-ru, “an emārus of cultivated arable land therein, n dwellings, one threshing-floor”\(^{214}\). As said above, the reasons for which relatively small parts of these agricultural holdings were under cultivation at the time of their description, is impossible to ascertain: both environmental and economic causes could have been behind such situations.

Cultivated land is further noted by two sets of terms, ina mazzarūti and pa-an-zi, which may be briefly discussed. Ina mazzarūti is, in itself, a quasi-synonym of aršu. Considering the descriptions of property in which this expression occurs, it appears to denote regularly a subdivision of the landed holding being transacted, and specifically the part “cultivated, under cultivation, cultivable”. In other words, the purpose of such an expression would have been that of specifying the actual crop-bearing portion of the land, either in the sense of being cultivated at the time of the deed, or because sowing was here possible/favorable\(^{215}\). Of course, the mazzarūtu-part could at times even

---

\(^{210}\) ND 2778 (= Iraq 23, 50), 7.

\(^{211}\) Cf. CAD E, pp.314b-315a.

\(^{212}\) NALK 46 (= ADD 625), 8.

\(^{213}\) NALK 90 (= ADD 64), 4ff. Cf. III.1, above. The town Qubbate here is certainly the same as Qumbate in BM 139950 quoted above (cf. NALK, Appendix I).

\(^{214}\) CCENA 19, 4-5.

\(^{215}\) A slightly different interpretation of the meaning of the term is the one given by J.N. Postgate, Iraq 32 (1970), p. 135, who understands mazzarūtu as “cultivation in the sense of a cultivated area”. Such a designation “would thus stand in opposition to the finer quality land, which was irrigated, and called
coincide with the entire holding. Thus, in the case of an antichretic pledge, it was important to note that all the pledged holding was cultivable, cf. e.g. 1 ANŠE A.SA ina GIS BAN ša' 8 qa / ina ma-za-ru-u-te, "a property of 1 emāru by the sutu of 8 qas, under cultivation". Even clearer is the following passage, although fragmentary: PAP 2'b(x) ANŠE gi-[mir-t]i / ina ma-za-ru-ti, "in all a property of 2 emārus, entirely (?) under cultivation".

pa-an-zi: NALK 305 (= ADD 83), 12, would also seem to mean “cultivated”, due to its position in the text. However, the etymology of this term is still at present obscure; and perhaps even its reading may be considered doubtful.

Harvest, storage, etc.

šu-nu šE.NUMUN / [e]-ta-á-ršu TA* ša-bi r'i-ku³-ul / [TA*] ša-bi KUR.RA.MES[-šu-nu] / ri'-ša-ku-ul TA* / [še]-NUMUN i-ru-[šu],
"they, on the other hand, having planted their seed, eat from it, feed [their] horses from it, and (even) cultivate cornland from it".

The study of the agricultural tasks effected on the land in the normal seasonal rhythms and periodic sequences is, in the main, not particularly relevant to the subject at hand: however, a few notations for the NA period on a topic which is now enjoying a renewal in contributions and methods may be helpful. The sequence of operations on a field, from ploughing to fallow, is well clarified by a clause in legal documents from Nimrud dealing with fallow land; cf. e.g. 1 ANŠE GIS KASKAL GISAPINMES_te, "land, a road, plows", NALK 354 (= ADD 1176+1236), 10. Cf. also FNALD, 2. 15.

216) NALK 105 (= ADD 622), 3-4.
217) Iraq 32, no. 3, 11-12; see also ibid., no. 6, 4-6: ša GIS.BAN ša' 8 qa / ina ma-za-ru-u-te.
218) SAA V, 216, 11-15 (letter from Mazama).
barley, as we may judge from the loan-documents, however indications of other crops may be found here and there, e.g. in the fragmentary formula še ar-su ša še.gig, “land sown with wheat-seed,” or in the equally fragmentary notation of 2 emārus devoted to še.giš.1, “sesame.”

Still from legal contexts, we learn of the notion of a “beginning” of the harvest season (ʾāmu surri), when “reapers” (liše.kin.kud / ėṣidu) were placed by the creditor at the disposal of the debtor — thus adding a small extra to the sum owed by the latter. For their work, these reapers were certainly provided with sickles, an item which we find as an object of loans in itself.

After the harvest, threshing-time was of course the moment of repayment of the loans in corn (cf. III.5.b.); but the material stored on the adru in await for the creditor comprised straw, rolled up in large bales (maqarrutu). Cf. e.g. the provisions given in a delivery contract for corn, ina ad-ri še.in.nu še.giš. sā ša še.in.nu, “On the threshing-floor, straw: 60 bales at the disposal of Rapa, 20 ditto at the disposal of Ahubi; 20 ditto at the disposal of Šašmayu: in all, 100 bales of straw.” Thus in village depots barley and straw had common — or contiguous — storage facilities, if one is e.g. to judge from a letter of the age of Sargūn referring the seizure of “40 emārus of barley and 200 bales of straw” from one village, and 16 anše še.pad še-kur-diš-šu ša še.in.nu, “16 emārus of barley and a barn (load) of straw” from another site “in the steppe” (ina kuš mu-da-bi)229.

222) Cf. most recently S. Ponchia, Loans of Cereals in the Neo-Assyrian Period: Preliminary Notes, SAAB IV (1990), pp. 39-60.
223) Iraq 32 (1970), p. 150 no. 16, 10. This tallies with loans of “wheat” (again še.gig) in texts such as NALK 9 (= ADD 148), 1.
224) NALK 165 (= ADD 378), 5-6. For the action of sowing, cf. the dialogue quoted in the court case TFS, 70, 5-6: ma-a šum4-[m]a 9 bān numum-ū ina ša aša/ša l0 gal e.gal la a-ru-šu-ú-ni, “I swear that I sowed 9 sutus of seed in the field of the palace manager”.
227) Cf. NALK 234 (= ADD 121), 1, as reconstructed by Kwasman following K. Deller.
228) NALK 137 (= ADD 151; FNALD 30), 4-8.
229) SAA I, 105 (= ABL 871), 3'-4', Rev. 2-4, 1, resp. For kurdištu and its synonyms, cf. CAD K, p. 557b; the term occurs also in the MA laws (KAV 2, col. VII, 14'; cf. the lengthy discussion by Cardascia, Les lois assyriennes, Paris 1969, p. 291 ad d, based essentially on the views of Landsberger, JNES 8, 291).
3. Vineyards

a. Size and layout of vineyards

Vineyards\(^{230}\) are known to require particular geographical and ecological conditions for their cultivation, such as abundant rainfall or sufficient ground humidity. Not surprisingly, the cultivations of the vine that we are able to pinpoint for Assyria are centered in hilly areas, such as the Jebel Sinjar or Kipani to the NE of Harran, and in the river valleys of the Balih, Habur, and Tigris\(^{231}\). In other cases, a wine-growing area appears as such due to a plurality of attestations: thus, e.g., the legal texts of one Mannu-ki-Arba'il, operating ca. 680-675, show him engaged in buying vineyards in the vicinity of Kipšuna, an area plentiful in streams and wells\(^{232}\).

For their connections with particular physical environments, and possibly in the light of some sharing of resources among neighbors, vineyards are often found to border upon other vineyards: notice, e.g., a sale document concerning a vineyard "adjoining the vineyard of Parsiddu, adjoining the vineyard of Kannunayya, adjoining the vineyard of Šamaš-ahu-\(^{233}\)x", adjoining the vineyard of Dana'\(^{\prime}\a")\(^{233}\); or a vineyard "adjoining the vineyard of Ulkā, adjoining the vineyard of Bani-ahhe, adjoining the vineyard of Ubur-ilani, adjoining the vineyard of Keni, adjoining the vineyard of Nabū-duru-\(^{234}\)usur\(^{\prime}\).

Vineyards of the NA period are not measured all the time, but when they are, the measure given is in "vine shoots" (tillutu) by the thousands\(^{235}\). The measures attested vary from case to case, from environment to environment. A good sampler of this variability is given in the "Harran census", which refers largely to vine-growing regions (Harran, Kipani). In the smaller range we find holdings with less than 10,000 shoots\(^{236}\).

---

\(^{230}\) Usually defined \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{sa} \text{GIS} \text{til-ii}(i)-ti\) (for this term, cf. fn. 235, below), or \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{sa} \text{til-liti}\) (e.g. \(\text{NALK} 358 = \text{ADD} 427\)), 5, more rarely \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{sa} \text{GIS} \text{GEŠTIN}\) (e.g. \(\text{ADD} 773\), Rev. 2): cf. \(\text{CAD K}\), p. 413a.


\(^{232}\) Cf. \(\text{NALK} 152 = \text{ADD} 360\) and \(\text{NALK} 153 = \text{ADD} 359\), both relevant to the same general area, with mentions of river fords, watercourses and a well or cistern.

\(^{233}\) \(\text{NALK} 75 = \text{ADD} 467\), 3'-6': (3') tihi \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{sa} \text{Par-ši}(d)a\) / (4') tihi \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{ša} \text{Kan-nun-z}a'[a]\) / (5') tihi \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{ša} \text{IU-tu-PAP} \text{x} / (6') tihi \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{ša} \text{I} \text{Da}^{-} \text{na}^{-} a^{-}\) [a].

\(^{234}\) \(\text{NALK} 119 = \text{ADD} 446\), 5-8: (5) tihi \(\text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{ša} \text{Ul-ka-a} (6) tihi \text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{ša} \text{IQ-PA-PAP} \text{ES} (7) tihi \text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{ša} \text{SuHUŠ-ĐINGIRMES-ni} (8) tihi \text{GIS} \text{SAR} \text{ša} \text{I} \text{Gin-š} \text{a} \text{IA} \text{PA-BAD-PAP}.

\(^{235}\) \(\text{Tillutu}\) is short for \(\text{tillutu} \text{ša karani}\), known from Middle Assyrian material and lexical texts: cf. in detail F.M. Fales, \(\text{A Middle Assyrian Text concerning Vineyards and Fruit Groves}\), \text{SAAB}\ III (1989), pp. 53ff., esp. 55-56.

\(^{236}\) \(\text{CCENA} 1, I, 47 (6,000); II, 4 (5,000); \text{ibid.}, 13 (4,000); \text{ibid.}, 35 (7,000); 3, III, 2 (6,000); 4, IV, 4 (4,000); \text{ibid.}, VII, 5 (2,000) \text{?}; \text{ibid.}, 9 (2,000); \text{ibid.}, 11 (6,000, regional total); 5, I, 12 (5,000); 6, 3' (5,000); 7, 6' (3,000); 8, 9' (6,000); 11, III, 6' (6,000); IV, 5 (4,000); \text{ibid.}, 13 (2,000); 14, I, 7 (8,000).
while the larger estates can easily reach the tens of thousands\textsuperscript{237}. Less frequently noted are such measures in legal texts: cf. however e.g., the sale-documents of Remanni-Adad, which often show the extension of the vineyards, smaller or greater as the case may be (1,000\textsuperscript{238}, 1,500\textsuperscript{239}, 2,600\textsuperscript{240}, 4,000\textsuperscript{241}). Another landowner, Šummu-ilani, once purchases 10,000 shoots together with 50 emārus of land, a fully built house, and 9 people\textsuperscript{242}.

\textit{b. Other specifications.}

\textit{zaqpu}, “(fully) planted”

This specification should be of a technical nature — i.e. a “tillage” term — if we are to judge from its use in Neo-Babylonian, where it “always refers to an orchard, in which newly planted areas are sometimes differentiated from older fruit-bearing plantations”\textsuperscript{243}. The two best-known cases for \textit{zaqpu} are the following: (sale of a) $\text{GIS} \text{SAR ša } \text{GIŠ} \text{til-šu } \text{zaq-pu } / \text{ina URU.ŠE } \text{EN.} \text{PAP } \text{MES } \text{tihi } \text{GIS} \text{SAR ša } / \text{Ha-ba-su tihi } \text{Se-e'-ba'-rak-ku} / \text{tihi } \text{GIS} \text{SAR } \text{LGAL } \text{A.BA}$, “fully planted vineyard, in the agricultural settlement Bel-ahhe, adjoining the vineyard of Habasu, adjoining the vineyard of Se'-barakku, adjoining the vineyard of the chief scribe”\textsuperscript{244}; (sale of a) $\text{GIS} \text{SAR zaq-pu ša } \text{GIŠ} \text{til-li} $ in the town of Urulli\textsuperscript{245}.

\textit{šalmu}, “complete”

This term, attested in the expression $\text{GIS} \text{SAR šal-mu ša } \text{GIŠ} \text{til-li}$\textsuperscript{246}, would on the other hand seem to be a “quality” term for the vineyard.

\textsuperscript{237} Cf. CCENA I 19 (10,000); ibid., 21 (15,000); ibid., 35 (29,000); III 36 (40,000, regional total); ibid., 38 (25,000, regional total); 3 IV 6 (10,000, regional total); VI 12 (10,000); VII 13 (10,000); 4 VIII 2 (13,000); 9 VIII 2 (49,300, regional total); 10 VII 2 (20,000, regional total); 20 II 4 (10,000).

\textsuperscript{238} \textit{NALK} 257 (= ADD 444), 5. Cf. also the duplicate text \textit{NALK} 258 (= ADD 445), 5.

\textsuperscript{239} \textit{NALK} 260 (= ADD 471), 7.

\textsuperscript{240} \textit{NALK} 259 (= ADD 362), 5.

\textsuperscript{241} \textit{NALK} 265 (= ADD 448), 11-12.

\textsuperscript{242} \textit{NALK} 370 (= ADD 422), 3.


\textsuperscript{244} \textit{NALK} 112 (= ADD 66), 7-10.

\textsuperscript{245} \textit{NALK} 152 (= ADD 360), 2; cf. below, sub \textit{qablu}, for other adjoining elements.

\textsuperscript{246} \textit{NALK} 119 (= ADD 446), 4.
4. Other types of yield

a. Vegetable gardens and fruit orchards

Vegetable gardens are attested all over Assyria, and in fact statistically represent the second agricultural product of the land after cereals. The possibility to plant vegetable patches in virtually every “corner” of the holding, and even in fully urban contexts, is well documented by legal descriptions, such as the following, for the sale of GISAR Û<.SAR> ina KA MEŠ-šú / ša é 1.SU-AMAR.UTU / 46 GID 30 DAGAL, “a vegetable garden just outside of the house of Eriba-Marduk, 46 (cubits) long, 30 (cubit) wide.”

Elsewhere, of course, the orchard is coupled with the vineyard, as in the “Harran census”; or the sale of GISAR ša Û.SAR ina URU Ni-nu-a / ina 100 ti-tu-ri SUMUN / tīhī GISAR ša 1.DA.GI.DU.gul 1S[IG] / tīhī GISAR ša dMAŠ MAŠ / tīhī KASKAL MAN tīhī ID, “an orchard in Nineveh, in front of the Old Bridge, adjoining the orchard of Nabû-kenudugul the chariot-fighter, adjoining the orchard of the god Nergal, adjoining the royal highway, adjoining the river.”

The same picture is provided by cadastral material: one-half of an orchard (1/2 GISAR Ū.SAR) is planted in front of the Nineveh gate of the city Arba’il.

Orchards of mixed fruit trees are not mentioned particularly often in NA texts, yet they must have been a regular component of the estate in the northern Jezirah, also in the foothills to the East. The key-word employed here is zamru, which is already known from Middle Assyrian texts and may now be shown to be the general term for “fruit”. Typically enough, it is the “Harran census” which yields the clearest attestations of zamru-orchards: thus we find e.g. 1 GISAR za-am-ri Ū.SAR / ina KASKAL / 300 kan-ni zam-ri ina SÅ “a (mixed) fruit and vegetable garden in Harran: 300 fruit shoots are in it.” In another holding, 30 emārus of land, of which one half under cultivation (arsu) are coupled with a fruit grove (1 GISAR za-am-ri) and an ox; while elsewhere, a partial summarization of the possessions of Sin-ereš, a cook from Harran, also present one zamru-grove near the city of the Moon-God. Elsewhere in cadastral material, 3

247) GPA, 19, 5-7. Postgate translates “inside the gates”, but cf. ad II.A.1.b, above.
248) NALK 154 (= ADD 364), 3-7.
249) CCENA 24, 8.
250) See in detail Fales, A Middle Assyrian Text, cit., with previous opinions and bibliography on the matter.
251) CCENA 3, I, 6; further trees are indicated (and counted) in this section of the text, but they are of the type one would expect in a qablu (i.e. poplars and willows): cf. sub qablu, below.
252) CCENA 3, II, 4-7.
zamru-gardens are attested as unitary possession, together with 40 emārus of land and glebae adscripti, in the village of the god Nabû in the province of Halahhu\textsuperscript{254}. As for legal material, the best example is that of a sale of 17 people, among which a LŪ NU. GİŞ. S Ā R, “gardener”, together with a GİŞ KIRI šá za-mar in the town of Na-b[u-]lu\textsuperscript{255}.

b. Tree groves

Partially in the same semantic sphere is the word qablu, which refers to natural woodland, also liable of inclusion in, and adaptation to, the rural landscape, as is made explicit in the text ADD 778, an administrative list of qablātē connecting to different towns, and presenting a partial total of those elements “which the king allotted” (ša LUGAL i-di-nu-ni). This said, an etymology for the word is not immediately apparent\textsuperscript{256}: and it is only from an examination of the contexts that a meaning “grove” appears to be the most fitting\textsuperscript{257}. In particular, notice the following passage of a letter to Sargon: “We took the men downstream, and they are now cutting (the timber). We shall cut within the area which the king assigned to us, and (then) leave. (But) we shall leave the best logs [in] the groves (when) we go (GISURMES SIG5MES [ina GIS MURUB4MES / nu-ra-am-ma / ni-la-ka],)\textsuperscript{258}. Or the next one: “All my men are in the mountains, felling trees in groves (ina GIS MURUB4MES) where there are logs for door and roof beams (bê-te GIS SUMES / bê-te GISURMES i-ba-šu-ni),\textsuperscript{259}

As a component of the rural landscape, the qablu is part of the farms listed in the “Harran census”: and as already noted elsewhere, the trees to which the term is attached in this NW Mesopotamian setting are not only examples of typical riverbank flora, but also fruit trees, even in the position of main subsistence item of the farm itself, for which a “guardian” (maššar qabli) was responsible\textsuperscript{260}. In legal texts, the qablu appears from time to time as bordering element, possibly even as a wild patch of trees just outside the limits of the farm. Thus we may find e.g. a vine-growing plot bordered by a threshing-floor, by a qablu with no further specification, by a road leading to a neighboring town.

\textsuperscript{254) CCENA 24, Rev. 14. A GIS SAR za-am-ri in fragmentary context occurs also in CCENA 23, 35.
256) Cf. CAD Q, p. 16a, with reference to CCENA, 19; but in fact cf. foremost Johns, ADB, p. 79a, “some sort of garden, or enclosure...”. The writing of the term is syllabic or with the expected logographic correspondence (GIS MURUB4).
258) SAA I, 98 (= ABL 484), Rev. 10'-12' (translation slightly different from that of SAA I, p. 83).
259) SAA V, 26, Rev. 4'-7' (translation slightly different from that of SAA V, p. 16).

(KASKAL šá a-na URU Kip-šu-u-ni du-ni), by one leading to an irrigation device (šá a-na mu-še-bi-rit du-ni), and by a further vineyard261. At other times the qabl is part of the estate itself: cf. e.g. an area of 2 emârus, occupied by a qabl of oak trees (šá ANŠE / AŠA qab-lu šá GIS al-la-an) in the vine-growing landscape of the Singara region262.

5. Spatial and architectural constituents of the farm

a. Other types of spatial subdivisions (areas, plots, etc.)

(qaquru) puša'u, "bare, unbuilt, (but) buildable plot"

This term for a specific type of land occurs often by itself in legal texts, as an element of the village/city context263: it may be ranged in opposition to šá, bišu, "(village/city) house" in view of the system of measures shared with the latter, by the length of its flanks. In connection with the agricultural estates, on the other hand, it makes very few appearances: notice e.g. NALK 103 (= ADD 350), 3-4: qaq-qi-ri pu-[še-e x x] ʃx ʃi / GIS SAR ē 1 ANŠE 6 BĀN AŠA ina URU š-Da-gan (summarized as AŠA GA šu-a-tu in l. 11)264. A special case is that of a brief Nimrud docket which states laconically: ē 15 ANŠE 3 BĀN ŠE NUMUN / qa-qu-ru ra-qu / qa-ab-si uru, "a plot of 15 emârus, 3 sutus of arable land, (presently [?] an empty ground, within the town)"265.

pušu, "lot, plot, parcel of land"

The term pušu266 is quite rare in Neo-Assyrian deeds, but very frequent in middle Assyrian texts267. It seems to be used to refer to agricultural land in general, as a variant of šá ... AŠA but perhaps also of other types of cultivation. Notice, e.g., the following examples:

In a text from Nineveh a division of inheritance is said (l. 1) to regard both eqlu and bišu: correspondingly, the description of the estate runs as follows (6-8): pu-u-ru ša ina

261) NALK 152 (= ADD 360), 3-6.
262) NALK 257 (= ADD 444), 5-6. The writing MURUB4 might occur in NALK 268 (= ADD 451), 3'.
263) See e.g., the sale of a "qaq-qi-ri pu-[še-e x x] ʃx ʃi / GIS SAR ē 1 ANŠE 6 BĀN AŠA ina URU š-Da-gan (summarized as AŠA GA šu-a-tu in l. 11)264.
264) Also e.g. NALK 92 (= ADD 386), 6'.
265) GPA 156, 1-3.
266) Plural pu-ra-[a-ni: NALK 319 (= ADD 384 + 528), 4.
UGU / É DUMU.MAN É ub(ā)-sa-tē / É.S̱uII ša ina UGU É ub(ā)-sa-te-in-ni, “a lot facing the estate of the crown prince, a storehouse, and a domestic building facing the storehouse.” In a sale document, puru is used as part of a legal clause: [ē] 4 ANŠE A.ŠA.GA ina URU Du-ni / [ [ ] ] X̣ X̣ mi-šiCu pu-ri š-su ša pu-ri / [ū-pi]š-su-ma / Aššur-apal-šur-A-PAP, “An estate of 4 emārus of land in the town Duni, — [there is not] one-half of a parcel, not even one-fifth of a parcel, [left] — Aššur-apal-šur bought.” Further, in a long document of redemption, one Nabū-šapik-zeri agrees to return 36 emārus of barley at threshing-time, thus causing the redemption of a “field” (A.ŠA), adjoining other properties and roads, summarized as PAP 1-en puru (BUR) SAG.DU, “in all one plot, capital sum”; a further “field” to be redeemed is thereupon listed. Finally, an area of 3 emārus is defined “a large plot” (pu-ru dan-na).

bīt zibli, “rubble, land for manure”

A plot described as ū-bi-i-bi-li is sold in two conveyance texts, one of which perhaps referred to Syria; brooks, roads, and fields border it.

kišubbû, “waste land”

This term is decidedly Babylonian, and occurs apparently in only one NA text, from the age of Sargon, as bordering element.

268) Iraq 32, no. 1. Postgate, Iraq 32, p. 131, consistently translates ina muhhi here as “above”; but I think we are here referring to a contiguity of estates. For a similar use of ina muhhi, cf. NALK 7, 6, quoted ad II.B.2.d, above.

269) NALK 36 (= ADD 1180), 3-5. For the la réhi formula, cf. Deller, WZKM 57 (1961), pp. 41-42. Of course the formula as such is hitherto only known for court decisions; but the presence of a larger and smaller measure in sequence appear to have the same “Heller und Pfennig” meaning that Deller points out in his study. Notice further that the X̣ sign as traced by NALK, p. 50, could well be a “hū”, as in [la ū-]hū.

270) NALK 202 (= ADD 385), 3 ff. The puru-clause is on l. 16’. It may be noticed that for the clause(s) man-nu ša gis-ur-na / ŠE.PAD ina ad-ri a-na / id-dan in ll. 8'-10’, Kwasman’s interpretation (NALK, p. 239: “Whoever breaches the contract shall pay the barley on the threshing floor for Nabu”) is totally erroneous, both conceptually and philologically. It should be understood thus: “Whoever breaches the contract ... omisis. He (= Nabū-šapik-zeri) will give back the barley at threshing-time. (Otherwise, it will increase) by 100 percent (a-na mū-‘ār)”.)

271) NALK 292 (= ADD 624), 5. A list of pu-ra-ni with their borders is in the unpublished administrative list A 7880, from Khorsabad (planned publication by S. Parpola).

272) ADD 630 (= ARU 145, 3, which also mentions KASKAL ša a-na URUli du-ur-ni (l. 4); cf. also PSBA 30 (1908), 112, 5. An important attestation of zibu(MES) is at Nuzi: AASOR 16,3.27 and 31.


274) TCL IX, 58 (= ARU 113 = FNALD 2), 19.
bit šiqi, "irrigated area"

The subdivision of the farm named bit šiqi is not often attested, but it always appears in very significant descriptions of the property. In one case, it is quoted as part of an estate also comprising cornland, "springs", and a plot of "bare ground".275 In the deeds of Remanni-Adad, the chariot-driver of Ashurbanipal276, the bit šiqi is attested once as part of an estate — in Syria — formed by various small plots not far from a river, comprising also 50 emārus of land, a dwelling, a threshing-floor, and 2 orchards277; while a further text of this individual — referring to the province of Arrapha — refers to the acquisition of an enormous estate, comprising 580 emārus of cornland, 10 vineyards, and 6 ṣišaršemīṣ šiqi ṣašemīṣ 278. It could thus refer in general terms to a plot which received irrigation from the nearby sources, similarly to the šiqi in the MA laws, explicitly connected to the digging of a well279.

b. Threshing-floors

The "threshing-floor", adru, is quite often invoked in NA loan documents, since it enters in the contractual clause "he will repay [the debt] at the threshing-floor" (ina adri iddan or similar). This formula is ambiguous in that it appears to refer equally to the period of the year when the adru is in use — threshing time, when there is the main opportunity to repay debts in barley to the creditor, even brevi manu if the latter is physically present280.

In our enquiry, however, the adru is rather of interest for its physical characteristics, insofar as they may be ascertained from the laconic nature of the written evidence:

275) In the fragmentary deed NALK, 92 (= ADD 386), 6; see also TFS, 57, 4 (an estate of n emārus) ṣi-qi(?).
276) Cf. fn. 29, above.
277) NALK 263 (= ADD 418), 8'-9': PAP 50 anše ašā / ṣi-qi ṣa ad-ru 2 ṣišaršemīṣ ṣašemīṣ.
278) NALK 271 (= ADD 419), 5'-6'. Kwasman translates here "6 irrigated orchards (with) water", but I think we should understand the passage as referring to two distinct items, i.e. 6 orchards (= šišaršemīṣ with Šašemīṣ left out, as in NALK 263, 16') and one or more (bit) šiqi ša mē. The specification ša mē is possibly less obvious than appears at first sight, since it could refer to the presence of a spring (normally ēnū ša mē, see above ad II.B.1.b) on the estate: cf. a further summary of the holding (ibid., ll. 12'-13') which adds ad-rišemša, "threshing-floors" and ṣirīšemša, "springs of running water" (Kwasman: "wells" [sic]). Finally, a bit šiqi is attested in a further Remanni-Adad text, NALK 270 (= ADD 515), 4' (fragmentary; area of Darigu).
280) Cf. FNALD, p. 38, for the view that, given the possibility of multiple credits contracted by the same person, "the phrase came to refer to the time, rather than necessarily the place, of repayment".
if in the main the adru is mentioned in the estate with no particular qualifications (e.g. a typical sale summary runs as follows: "a plot of 14 emārus under cultivation, a dwelling, a threshing-floor, and an orchard in the settlement of the Goldsmiths") 281), notice on the other hand, e.g., E 9 qa ad-ru ina URU Du'-u-ú-a, "an area of 9 qa, (for use as) a threshing-floor, in the town Du'a" 282. More interesting, although fragmentary is the following context: 160 4(+n) KUŠ GD 40 KUŠ DAGAL ša ad-ri, "160 (+n) cubits is the length, 40 cubits is the width of the threshing floor" 283 — which gives us a possible area for this adru of 3,072 square meters 284.

c. Meadows

It may be noticed that no specific term has hitherto been brought forth to define the sector of the estate devoted to the production of fodder — the "inner" pasture land, as opposed to the surrounding countryside (for which the terms sēru and madbaru were employed). Now, it is possible that this constituent of the estate was represented by the word tabriu, which appears rarely, but in particular when long descriptions of the property are provided — thus implying that it could have been present more often than we can make out through the texts 285. Tabriu occurs already in the Nuzi documents as possibly meaning “cereals for fodder” 286; it is also present in Middle Assyrian in connection with horse-training 287, and it has a lexical equivalence with ablatum, “dry grass” 288.

In the NA deeds, however, we are certainly dealing with a type, or agricultural destination, of field. This can be shown, e.g., by the insertion of tabrius in real estate contexts, alongside threshing-floors, wells, corrals, etc. 289. In some cases, even the measurements of the immovable are provided, cf. e.g. the sale of an E 1 BAN tab-ri-u [( )], “a plot of 1 sutu, (constituted by a) t." 290, or the sale of an E 9 ANŠE 3 BĀN "a.ŠA"
tab-"ru" ga[l-u], "a plot of 3 sutus, (forming) a large t."\(^{291}\) — the neighboring elements being here constituted on 5 sides by fields\(^{292}\). Clearer still is the presence of tabriu in the formula tabri harbātu zakātu, "the t. and the waste land are tax-exempt"\(^{293}\). From this case we gain the clear impression that the tabriu was an uncultivated plot, set aside for the growth of fodder — and possibly for the stacking of hay. Insofar as may be deduced from the legal descriptions, the frequently attested spatial contiguity of the tabriu with the threshing-floor\(^{294}\) would fit quite well with the picture given above. Notice further, in this light, a "mixed bag" bequeathed by a father to his son, comprising a she-ass, 50 sheep, plus 5 \(\text{ANSE A.ŠA} 4-tu \text{ina ad-ri} / 4-tu \text{ina} \text{šš 3} \text{tab-ri-a-te}, "a plot of 5 emārus, one-fourth (of it) in a threshing-floor, and (the 3) further fourths therein (corresponding to) 3 tabrius"\(^{295}\).

d. Corrals, pens

The only term attested here is ṭūr / tarbaṣu, known from all periods of Akkadian with various meanings\(^{296}\). As a rural term, it appears sparsely, usually in the last positions of lists: cf. e.g. \(\text{NALK 32 (} \text{ADD 1152)}\), 6; \(\text{NALK 333 (} \text{ADD 324)}\), 7\(^{297}\).

Cf. also below, s.v. ripitu.

e. Wells, cisterns, irrigation devices.

The wells and cisterns of the estate enter at times in the list of fixtures of the NA farmhouse, though consistently in the end positions.

Thus birtu, "well, cistern" is attested in sale inventories such as the following: \(\text{E 30 } \text{ANSE A.ŠA} \text{ a-na gi-mir-ti-šu} / [\text{n}]a-2-hal ū / \text{TUR} \text{GIS-SAR MES} \), "an estate of 30 emārus of land (corresponding to) an estate in its entirety, (comprising) a brook, a well, a house, a corral, and orchards\(^{298}\); \(\text{E A.ŠA ad-ru tab-ri-[u]} / \text{PU } \text{a-na} \text{tar-ba-ṣu}, "plot of land, threshing-floor, meadow, well, corral\(^{299}\). Similarly to other fixtures of the farm seen

\(^{291}\) \(\text{NALK 297 (} \text{ADD 397)}\), 6.
\(^{292}\) \text{Ibid.}, ll. 7-11.
\(^{293}\) As in \(\text{NALK 352b (} \text{ADD 81)}\), 7-8.
\(^{294}\) Cf. also e.g. \(\text{NALK 353 (} \text{ADD 1195)}\), 5: \(\text{E 1 BAN tab-ri-ū [ad-ru]}, "a plot of of 1 sutu (formed by) a t. and a threshing-floor" (restoration of ad-ru confirmed by \text{Ibid.}, l. 10); and \(\text{NALK 289 (} \text{ADD 409)}\), 7-8.
\(^{295}\) \(\text{ARU} 46, 4-6.
\(^{296}\) Cf. \(\text{AHw.}, \text{pp. 1327-1328}.
\(^{297}\) Cf. also \(\text{CCENA 9, VIII, 5}.
\(^{298}\) \(\text{NALK 32 (} \text{ADD 1152)}\), 7.
\(^{299}\) \(\text{ADD 404 (} \text{ARU 442)}\), 3. Interesting, although pertaining to an urban context is the case of \(\text{NALK} \)
above, a well could be owned by more than one person: thus an estate being sold in the
village of Kiluhte (region unknown) comprised “5 emārus and 2 sutus of land, a house, a
threshing-floor, an orchard, and one-third of a well (3-su ša rū)”300. At times the well
belonged in common to the entire village, as is stated in a clause of water rights: A\textsuperscript{MES} ina
rū TA URUŠū i-ša-tī, “he may drink water at the well together with his village”301. At
other times, the well could be inside the compound of the house: thus, e.g. a complete
dwelling in town — inclusive of fixtures, secondary buildings, storehouse, workrooms,
even a family tomb — also comprised a private well302.

A further term in use is gubbu, which may be taken both as “well” and as “cistern”.
The latter meaning would seem to be applicable to a fragmentary summary in the
“Harran census” in which mention is made of [n gub]-bi A\textsuperscript{MES}, belonging to one
landowner in the environs of Harran itself303. The crucial importance of a gubbu on the
farm is made very clear in a letter to Sargon, recounting how an attempt
of a governor to
add further parcels to his possessions was thwarted: ma-a ī gu-ub-bu / ŠE.NU[MUN\textsuperscript{MES}
r]a-am-me, “he (= the royal bodyguard) said: ‘Lay your hands off the property, the
well, and the arable land!”304.

As for irrigation devices on the farm, very scarce evidence may be summoned: on a
vine-growing plot, a bordering element is a road leading to a mušebirtu (šā a-na
mu-šē-bi-rit DU-ni)305. The term — previously understood as “ferry”306 — should
possibly rather refer to an installation for irrigation, in view of the clause of water rights
which concludes the text: 2 īD-mu\textsuperscript{MES} 2 GI\textsuperscript{MES} / A\textsuperscript{MES} ut-ru-te NAG, “he may drink the
extra water for 2 days and nights”307.

118 (= ADD 349), 7-8, relevant to the sale of a bit akulli (= warehouse?) in Nineveh, comprising a “cistern
of 43 cubits’ length, 25 cubits’ width” (rū ina lib-bi 43 ina 1 KŪŠ GĪ.DA / 25 ina KŪŠ DAGAL).

300 NALK 204 (= ADD 1167), 15-16.
301 TCL IX, 58 (= ARU 113 = FNALD 2), 60.
302 NALK 373 (= ADD 326), 3-7, and cf. esp. l. 5 (rū ša ī dan-ni, “the well of the main house”).
Kwasman’s translation of the final part of the description is erroneously quaint: we should not be dealing
with “... a workroom with a tomb in it” (!), but with “a house, (with) ... a storehouse, a workroom, a tomb
included (ina lib-bi)”. 303 CCENA 16, 1 3.
304 SAA V, 15, 12-13 (translation ours).
305 NALK 152 (= ADD 360), 5.
306 Cf. ARU, p. 236; similarly NALK, p. 187.
307 Agreeing with K. Deller, OrNs 53 (1984), p. 90. For the clauses of water rights, cf. the brief mention by
J.N. Postgate, FNALD, p. 24. Here we believe that the clause assigns 1/15 of the monthly communal
quota of water left over from agriculture to the buyer of the vineyard. Cf. above, ad ala.
There is limited, but in our opinion sufficient, evidence in both cadastral material and legal documents for dwellings as independent units, worthy of description and sale, within the estate. On building activities on rural land, cf. a letter of the age of Sargon referring to Allabria: "They are peaceful and do their work. I have brought them out from six forts, saying: 'Go! Each one of you should build (a house) in the fields and stay there (a-lik al-ka / ia-a-mut-tu ana ugu A.ŠÀ / li-ir-si-ip lu-ši-ib, l. 11)'". In cadastral material, the term employed is consistently $bêtu$, in the majority of cases with no further specification, in a secondary position within the lists.

The same may be said for legal descriptions of property: cf. e.g. the purchase of $[PÀ]$P 20 <ANSE> A.ŠÀ 3 $gü$MES 3 $ad$-[ri]MES G$SÀR pù tab-ri-ù], "in all, 20 emûrus of land, 3 dwellings, 3 threshing-floors, an orchard, a well, and a meadow" by the šakintu of the Inner City of Nineveh, or that of PAP-ma [n ANSE] / A.ŠÀ ina ma-za-ru-te ina G$SÀR ša 9 1/2 qa urud[$ü$MES] / [a]d-ru $ê$i-se-niš ina URU$ENGAR$MES, "grand total, n emûrus of land under cultivation by the sutu of 9 1/2 qas of copper, together with a threshing-floor, and a dwelling in the Town of the Farmers". 

In a limited number of cases, the rural dwelling is endowed with a further qualification, *ripûtu (ri-pi-tu/ðú), which characterizes equally independent housing units in urban contexts. Thus e.g. we find Remanni-Adad buying an estate which comprised $ê$ 60 ANSE A.ŠÀ ina G$SÀR ša 10 qa / $ê$ri-pi-ú a-na gi-miš-tišú / $ê$ 2 $bàn$ ad-ru ina URU$ENGAR$MES, "A plot of 60 emûrus of land, by the sutu of 10 qas; a ripûtu-building, in its entirety, and a plot of 2 sutus, (to be used as) threshing-floor in the town of Til-nahiri". This description is not too different from the one employed in the
following passage, for a city dwelling bought by another famous landowner, Kak-kullanu314: "ē ep-šā a-du GISURMES šū / 6 GIS MES pū ina lib-bi / VAP ē [ri]-pi-tū a-na gi-mir-te-šā / ina URU NINA, "a fully built house, down to its beams, and 6 doors, including a well — total: a ripītu-building in its entirety, in Nineveh". However, a further text makes it clear that an adjective was not meant here: a sale document of 651 B.C., presenting the seal of the EN ETA-DA-NI, "the owner of the building being sold", regards ri-pi-tū a-na gi-mir-tū-[šā] / ri-pi-tū ša 14PA-MU-[iš-kun], "a ripītu-building in its entirety, the ripītu-building of Nabū-šumu-īškun". In view of these and other similar passages, it may be surmised that *ripītu was a specific building within the rural estate or urban compound, although no truly convincing etymology or meaning has been suggested for the present.

314) Cf. Fales, Il villaggio assiro Bit Abu-ila'a, cit., passim, for this individual.
315) NALK 123 (= ADD 325), 4-7.
316) NALK 335 (= ADD 1269 + 333), 3-4.
317) Cf. AHw., p. 987a-b; GPA, p. 99, for a detailed list.
318) Kwasman, NALK, passim, translates "barnyard" with no explanation, from which we might deume that he refers to Hebrew *refet, "stable, stall"; but there is absolutely no evidence for such a derivation — which by the way implies a hapax legomenon of uncertain etymology in itself (cf. the Hebr. dictionaries). For possibilities with the reading talpītu, i.e. in relation to lapātu D, cf. already CCENA, pp. 53-54; and especially GPA, p. 99 ("booked to someone, registered", etc., although admittedly with reference to a meaning of the verb attested only in Old Assyrian). Further, it is not sure, in our opinion, that the ri-pi-tū noted by Postgate in connection with wine and bread in administrative documents (in opposition to sadru) should be considered the same word as the one here studied.
319) Most recent publication in Fales, AECT, no. 56 (pp. 253-258).
320) Cf. ibid., 255, with previous bibliography and interpretations; and cf. already Fales, AION 35 (1976), pp. 541-548, for ummu — together with the possibly connected Hebrew expression *emm had-derek, "signpost, point of division between roads" (Ez. 21:26). A NB ummu exists as well, but is not necessarily connected to the present term (cf. AHw., p. 1417a, s.v. ummu(m), ad 17a-b).
Specifically, as for the NA attestations, it may be noticed that the term is connected to (i.e. it is followed by) clear geo/topographical constituents, such as named towns or villages; thus it could be understood as something like a Neo-Assyrian counterpart to the MA/MB and SB term *kudurru*, in one or more of the many acceptations of the latter: as a border mark, boundary line, or a delimited territory.\(^{321}\)

A bird’s-eye view of the main attestations gives the following results: \(\text{nalk} 105 (= \text{add} 622), 5: \) transaction concerning a sown plot *tihi ama ša URU Du-un-ni*, “adjacent to the border line of the town Dunni”; \(\text{nalk} 224-227, \) *passim* (archive of the legal texts of Ninurta-ilaya): *ama ša Ši-bi-i* and *ama ša URU Su-x-x*, “the border of the settlement Suri”; \(\text{nalk} 315 (= \text{add} 629), 6: \) *ama ša URU Sa-i-ri*, “the border of the town Sairi”; \(\text{nalk} 331 (= \text{add} 373), 5: \) *ama ša EN-le-i*, “the border of (the settlement?) of Bel-Ie’i”; \(\text{nalk} 421 (= \text{add} 434), 10: \) *ama URUDU6-UJKUR. GAR. RA*, “the border of the village of Til-Kurgarri”; \(\text{tel} 9, 58 (= \text{aru} 113 = \text{fnald} 2), 27: \) *um-mi ša LUSIPAMES*, “the border of (the township) of the Shepherds”.\(^{324}\)

In the deed \(\text{nalk} 127 (= \text{add} 414), \) as for other cases, the mentions of *ummu* (always written logographically *ama*) are particularly abundant, viz. ll. 8-9: *ē 8 BAN A.SA GAB.DI AMA ša URU Sa-i-ri 9 GAB.DI A.SA ša EN-DU*, “a plot of 8 *sutus* of land, adjacent to the border of the town Sa’iri”; ll. 34-35: *ē 3 BAN A.SA GAB.DI AMA ša URU.ŠE di-qa-ra-te 35 [GAB.DI A.SA ša SSUHUŞ-PA*, “a plot of 3 *sutus* of land adjacent to the border of the village of the *diqaru*-bowls”, adjacent to the field of Ubir-Nabû”; ll. 40-41: *ē 8 BAN A.SA GAB.DI AMA 41 [ša URU.ŠE di-qa-ra-te GAB.DI 1Ar-bi-te-hi*, “a plot of 8 *sutus* of land, adjacent to the border of the village of the *diqaru*-bowls, adjacent to Arbitehi”.

---

\(^{321}\) At all events, \(\text{nalk}’s\) rendering “road” (cf. p. 491a) has no real basis; see e.g. \(\text{fnald}, p. 210a. For the equivalence between Aramaic ‘m and Assyrian *ummu*, cf. most recently S.A. Kaufman, \(\text{jaos} 109\) (1989), p. 100, ad no. 58.

\(^{322}\) This place was near Kalhu, and in fact it occurs again in the texts discovered at Nimrud: cf. \(\text{tfs}, 35\).

\(^{323}\) Notice \(\text{kaskal ša URU.ŠE} \) [s x x ] in the following line.

\(^{324}\) Cf. also the following line, which is difficult.

\(^{325}\) For a syllabic writing of the village of Kapar-Diqarate, cf. Postgate, \(\text{afO} 24 \) (1973), p. 75; and cf. now also the totally logographic attestation \(\text{sa}a\) I, 105 (\(= \text{abl} 871\), 10-Rev. 1.: *URU.ŠE KAM\(^{\text{MES}}\) [ina KU]\(\text{mu-da-bir, the village of the *diqaru*-bowls in the steppe}.\)
abnu zaqpu, “upright stone”

This topographical feature is only attested in the deed NALK 127 (= ADD 414) as far as the published evidence goes ([1].10-11: § 9 BĀN A.ŠĀ GAB.DI na-hal-li / GAB.DI NA₄ zaq-pu, “a plot of 9 sutus adjacent to the brook, adjacent to the upright stone(s)”; and, as such, it might equally be taken for a natural formation as for a man-made element. The latter hypothesis is reinforced by an unpublished parallel[326], where NA₄.RÚ zaq-pu, “an upright boundary stone” seems to be attested. And this view would tally quite well with what has been said above concerning ummu — i.e. the texts on the village Bit-abu-ila’a would depict a rural landscape deeply marked by lines and stelae establishing the mutual boundaries of different properties or administrative units.

kudurru, “boundary stone”

In the normal form kudurru, as is well known[327], the term is not attested in NA. The sole exception is a difficult double passage on locusts in a letter from the governor of Assur province to king Sargon: “[As to the locusts [concerning which the king, my lord] wrote to me: ‘Send word that fields infested with locusts be marked off with boundary stones! ([ma]’a’ ku-du-bur-a-ni / [lu-k]a-di-ru) …’[328].

tahumu, “border(line)”

Tahumu, well known in NA from historical inscriptions and letters as a general term for “(territorial) border”[329], seems to occur very rarely as technical term for a landmark of the rural landscape, possibly as a “rebound” of Aramaic ḫm[330]. Cf. the sale of an ālu, in its entirety, ‘tihi ta₄ ḫu’-[me šā URU x x x ] / ḫi’ti’i’ ta-hu-me šā URU DUG.GA-GISI-M[ x x x ] / ḫi’ti’i URU Né-re-bi šā L.E N.A M UR [U Ar-pa-da], “adjoining the borderline of the town…, adjoining the borderline of the town Tab-šill-[…], adjoining the town of Nerebu belonging to the governor of Arpad[331].

[326] Quoted by Kwasman (NALK, p. 158) from K. Deller.
[327] CAD K, pp. 495a-496a.
[328] SAA I, 103, 10-11; a parallel in ibid., Rev. 6-7. Cf. also CAD K, p. 31a (“boundary ditches”).
[330] Cf. DISO, pp. 325-326, for the evidence from Elephantine, relevant to real estate; for an Assyro-Aramaic case, cf. Fales, AECT, no. 58, 6 (quoted ad ummu, above). Notice, in any case, that an application of tahumu to landed possessions is attested also for MA: cf. AHw., loc. cit. .
[331] NALK 260 (= ADD 471), 4’-6’. For a further fragmentary case, cf. NALK 291 (= ADD 410), 8’, and the unpublished administrative list A 7880, Rev. 11’.

igāru, "wall"

As bordering element, an igāru with no further qualification occurs in the sale document of a dwelling[^332]; while 4 stone walls (NΛNi-ga-ral[a-te]) are part of a "package deal" made by Remanni-Adad in Ispallurē, together with people, vineyards, and dwellings[^333].

h. Topographical terms of uncertain denotation

bit ithiśi

This is a specification added to the description of a single plot of land (of 5 sutus)[^334], totally obscure in meaning.

gaba'

This term is attested only once in legal texts (NALK 25 [= ADD 628], 7), as a neighboring element to a field sold in the town Dayyan-Adad[^335]. However, it might be connected with the noun gab'u, of possible West Semitic origin, which is attested a few times in Assyrian royal inscriptions (notably of Tiglath-pileser I), and elsewhere: the translation commonly given to the word is "height", on the basis of a Hebrew etymology[^336].

kabaku

The term is particularly obscure[^337]. As far as known to the present author, it occurs only in two, widely diverging, texts: in an administrative list of plots of late MA/early NA date, and in a legal document of the post-648 period. In the first case, kabaku

[^332]: Kelsey 89519 (M. Stolper, AFO 27 [1980], p. 84), 5'.
[^333]: NALK 265 (= ADD 448), 19; see also 12. It is interesting to notice that both Ispallurē and the toponym mentioned just before it, KUR-ta-ri (l. 13), are attested in close proximity in the cadastral schedule CCENA 24, 32-33, which is, as said above, unattributed.
[^334]: NALK 128 (= ADD 623), 16'.
[^335]: In ARU, no. 144, the relevant signs were considered illegible. Thus, no quote of this passage is provided in the Akkadian vocabularies.
[^336]: CAD G, pp. 6b-7a; AHw., p. 272b ("Gipfel").
[^337]: Cf. CAD K, 2b: "(a type of field)".
represents a neighboring element to the listed plot, which stretches to the boundary-line marker (ummu338); in the second case, it is the further specification of a small plot among a group of holdings later recapitulated as PAP 20 A.N.Ś, “in all, 20 emārus of land”339.

kudaru

The term refers to an unspecified topographical feature340. Cf. NALK 25 (= ADD 628), 6, 9, GAB. DI ku-da-ri; NALK 331 (= ADD 373), 5, e 1 A.N.Ś tihi A.M.Ś ku-da-ri; GPA 35, 7, e (x) 15 A.N.Ś ina ku-da-a-ri [ uNAR]/ [ina] URU Kur-ba-il (= sale of land made by 4 singers and a kalā-priest); NARGD 54, I 3'-5', 1 qa la MES 1 q[a x (x x)] / URU ku-ud-d[a-ri] / i-da-[an].

kussū

Plots described as kussū (p. kussāte) occur sporadically as transacted in the legal documentation (NALK 204 (= ADD 1167), 9, 3 A.N.Ś GIS.ZA ina ù-šal-li, etc.; NALK 224, 16; TFS 66, 3: 2 GIS.ZA MES-te; NALK 396 (= ADD 1185), 15, 20: GIS.ZA-ù). Could this “throne(-land)” by any chance have been an administrative, and not a geographical, “label”341?

ma'ut(t)u

This is a further unexplained label, although the numerous attestations and the possibilities for etymological attribution have allowed variant interpretations to be set forth342. An overview of the available evidence shows that ma'uttu-fields were mentioned among other properties within specific village sites343, that they were regu-
larly harvested, as an epistolary text informs us\textsuperscript{344}, yielding both barley\textsuperscript{345} and straw\textsuperscript{346} in connection with taxation\textsuperscript{347}. As with kussū, seen above, the basic doubt is between a topographical and a purely administrative meaning tied to this term — with the latter ("prebend", or sim.) at present more probable\textsuperscript{348}.

\textit{malgutu}

In a deed of sale, a plot is said to be \textit{ina ma-al-gu-te}, while a further plot is described as \textit{ina KASKAL qa-at-ni}, "on the small road"\textsuperscript{349} might give rise to the suspicion that \textit{malgutu} had something to do with the road system: a further text from the same archive adds only a fragmentary quote to the problem\textsuperscript{350}.

\textit{*musakkiltu}

This term is a \textit{hapax}, known only in the plural(?) as a bordering element to a plot in the town of Sairi: \textit{tihi mu-sa-kil-a-te}\textsuperscript{351}. Taking later Aramaic into account\textsuperscript{352}, an interpretation as "(wash-)basins" (as permanent structures, i.e. a sort of "wash-house") might be suggested.

\textit{quānu}

A further \textit{hapax}, only attested in KAV 186, a text from (late Middle-Assyrian or

\textsuperscript{344} Iraq 21 (1959), p. 162, n. 52, 5-6: \textit{ma-’u-ta-[i]} / \textit{sa LUGAL ka-nu-tā}, "The ma’uttu-fields of the king are harvested" (cf. K. Deller, OrNS 33 [1964], p. 260).

\textsuperscript{345} E.g. \textit{TFS}, 11, 1-2: 2 \textit{ANSE ŠE.PADMEŠ / ša ma-[u-u]l-tū}.

\textsuperscript{346} \textit{TFS}, 15, 4; 16, 4.

\textsuperscript{347} \textit{TCAE}, p. 336; cf. \textit{TFS}, 14, 3-5: \textit{nu-sa-he / ša ma-u-te / ša MAN}.

\textsuperscript{348} Notice also the suspicious \textit{ma-KU-u-ti} as bordering element in the house sale Kelsey 89519, 4' (M. Stolper, AFO 27 [1980], p. 84).

\textsuperscript{349} NALK 226 (= ADD 382), 4-6: cf. above, s.v. \textit{harrānu}.

\textsuperscript{350} NALK 225 (= ADD 394), 10'. Notice that the corrected reading \textit{ma-al-gu-te} suggested in Kessler, Untersuchungen, p. 227, for \textit{ARU} 211 (= NALK 263 = ADD 418), 4', is not confirmed (Kwasman: \textit{ma-u-te}).

\textsuperscript{351} NALK 343 (= ADD 383), 8.

\textsuperscript{352} Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 852b.
early Neo-Assyrian?) Assur, but finds many parallels in Neo-Babylonian: it might refer to a plot formed by a small or thin strip of land.

unzarhu

This term presents a variety of attestations and contexts in Neo-Assyrian; but, in our opinion, has little or nothing to do with the rural landscape of this age. If we consider the deed NALK 37 (= ADD 425), 20'-21', the only “rural” case in which the term occurs, we may notice that the scribe, faced with a plurality of small plots and possibly endowed with less patience than other colleagues of his, does progressively away with the usual markers of “contiguity” (tihi survives for the first 10 lines, but is thereupon abandoned). Thus, despite a certain amount of confusion and ambiguity, it is probable that the two mentions of un-zar-he in this text should be split from the previous a.s - and should be consequently considered part of the descriptions of the “neighboring” plots. In brief, then, no eglu unzarhu would have existed — merely an unzarhu, “servant” or libertus as neighbor of the small holdings being listed.

6. Animal husbandry

The presence of animals on the Neo-Assyrian farms is usually presented in implicit form, e.g. by listing the goods of the estate a-di gudMes-sá-šu a-di uduMes-sá-šu, “together with their cattle and sheep”. However, in some sections of the “Harran census”, the farm animals are meticulously given by types and numbers.

a. Cattle

Oxen are the most frequently mentioned farm animals in the cadastral texts. As draught-animals, usually no more than one or two specimens are present in the holdings of the “Harran census”. On the other hand, some of the estates in the Harran area were specialized in breeding: thus we may find, e.g., 30 oxen explicitly noted as

---

355) E.g. NALK 15 (= ADD 59), 9.
356) CCENA I, 1, 36 (2 oxen); 2, II, 7 (1 ox); III, 4, (2 oxen); 3, II, 6 (1 ox); V, 8 (2 oxen); VI, 12 (1 ox); 9, I, 16, 24 (1 ox, twice).
constituting a “herd” (Â.B. GUD.HÁ)\(^{357}\) assigned to a “cowherd” (LU₅IPA GUDMEŠ)\(^{358}\). In other textual categories, cf. e.g. NALK 396 (= ADD 1185), 24 for a sale of an estate of 11 emārus, a threshing-floor, a garden, and an ox (gud); NALK 73 (= ADD 152), 2: 1 GUD.NITÁ ša GIS₅ta-lak-te, “one wagon-ox” as object of a loan\(^{359}\).

\(\text{b. Sheep}\)

Sheep are not as plentiful in the legal documentation of the NA period as in other phases of Mesopotamian history; and their “active” connection with the farm is hardly mentioned by the administrative texts, where on the other hand the role of sheep and goats as sacrificial animals is paramount\(^{360}\). Again, then, it is essentially through the “Harran census” that we gain an idea of the presence of sheep on the NA rural holdings. The quantities of the animals vary from one family unit of shepherds to the next: we find a number of smaller-sized flocks (from 40 to 60 heads\(^{361}\)), and an equal number of flocks with ca. 200 animals\(^{362}\), while a running list of 10 individuals with the sheep in their charge shows variations of flocks from 30 to 100 animals\(^{363}\). Finally, a grand total referring to a specific — unknown — proprietor, who owned vast quantities of land from Harran to Haurina, singles out 8,071 sheep, almost entirely formed by animals subject to the îškāru-tax, while 450 heads are described as “not (yet) checked”\(^{364}\).

\(^{357}\) I.e. sugullu: cf. AHw., p. 1053b; CAD S, pp. 345a-346a.

\(^{358}\) CCENA 4, III, 17; for another herd of 11 oxen, cf. CCENA 18, 3. Notice also 6 oxen in a regional total, CCENA 3, VII, 7.

\(^{359}\) Cf. Deller-Finkel, ZA 74 (1984), p. 85. The use of these particular ox-carts in rural contexts is not self-evident, but possibly the term tallaktu might apply to normal transportation carts or waggons, such as are necessary in the country. Cf. also CT 53, 442, Rev. 1-2: GU₅ME₅ *TA₅tal-[lakME₅(-šu-nu)]/ ta-at-at-a₅a.

\(^{360}\) Cf. for the moment, G. van Driel, The Cult of Assur, Assen 1969, passim, on this aspect.

\(^{361}\) Cf. CCENA 3, VIII, 9, 13; 10, II, 5.

\(^{362}\) Cf. CCENA 8, 1: 9, 10; 13, B, 4°.

\(^{363}\) CCENA 13, A, 1'-10' (the average flock here is ca. 70 sheep).

\(^{364}\) CCENA 12, VII, 1'-2'. For the îškāru-tax, cf. Postgate, TCAE, passim. The original formula is NU II GILAL. For other NA materials on sheep and flocks — though not necessarily in connection with the rural landscape — cf. e.g. ADD 753; GPA, 131, 232 (age-groups of ovids); and some mentions of flocks in loans (such as BT 131: 300 sheep as penalty; NALK 254 (= ADD 115) / NALK 255 (= ADD 116): loan of 75 rams in a contract of 664 B.C.) or in court decisions (such as NALK 108 (= ADD 164), Obv. 3, 8: decision on a flock of 300 sheep, 680 B.C.)
c. Other.

The “Harran census” attests the presence of different types of equids on the farms, as part of local breeding activities: thus we find small “herds” (Ab.Gud.Ha) of donkeys by themselves365 or mixed with oxen366. In one case only the specialized breeding of horses is noted367.

A particular case is represented by the presence of camels and dromedaries in the rural landscape: in a cadastral text, there is no doubt as to the existence of holdings entrusted to family heads described as Lu gam-ma’re, “camel drivers”368, and a fragmentary total concerning “camels” (ANSE gam-mal MES) makes its appearance also in the “Harran census”369. As rare and precious beasts, the camels could become the object of loans: one contract of 674 B.C. deals with 2 ANSE.AB.BA / ša 2-a za-kar-ru-u-ni, “two camels, which they call double-humped”370.

---

365 12 donkeys: CCENA 18, 4.
366 CCENA 11, III, 4-5: 6 animals of each species, entrusted to a Lu SIPA AB GAM.MES, ANSE.MES.
367 CCENA 1 II 24, for “61 horses (in) a herd” (61 ANSE.KUR AB.GUD.HA), entrusted to a Lu S1PA ANSE.KUR.RA.MES (thus possibly correct the previous reading of ibid., l. 17).
368 Cf. CCENA 23, 21.
369 CCENA 1 VII 3.
370 NALK 87b (= ADD 117), 1-2; differently, Postgate, FNA LD, pp. 149, 194a.