

## BABYLONIAN PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

CONCERNING PRIVATE PERSONS.

-----  
EDITED BYMM. OPPERT AND MENANT.  
-----

THESE translations are taken from a French work published by Dr. Oppert and M. Ménant;<sup>1</sup> the versions have been revised, in some essential points, for the *Records of the Past*, by Dr. Oppert, who holds himself personally responsible for the exact representation of the sense of these documents; but on account of the

<sup>1</sup> The title of the work is, *Documents juridiques de l'Assyrie et de la Chaldée*, par J. Oppert and J. Menant, Paris, 1877.

unusual difficulty of these texts, the reader may easily be convinced that for a long time yet, and particularly in details of minor importance, there will remain room enough for a conscientious improvement of all previous translations.



## BABYLONIAN PRIVATE CONTRACTS.

---

### I.

#### THE STONE OF ZA'ALEH.

This document, engraved on a small broken slab of basalt, is dated from the first year of the reign of Marduk-idin-akhe. It was discovered long ago in the small mound of Za'aleh, on the left bank of the Euphrates, a few miles North-west of Babylon. The text forms two columns of cursive Babylonian characters; the first column is extremely damaged. Though defaced, this contract offers some interest by its differing from other documents of the aforesaid reign. It has been published in the first volume of the collection of the British Museum (*W. A. I.*, pl. 66), and translated for the first time by Dr. Oppert, *Expédition en Mésopotamie*, t. I. p. 253.

---

#### COLUMN I.

Covenant which in the town of Babylon, in the month Sebat, in the first year of MARDUK-IDIN-AKHE, the mighty King, the men of M . . . , have agreed :

The waters of the river . . . ,<sup>1</sup> and the waters of the canals did not go through . . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lacuna.

<sup>2</sup> Lacunæ of several lines.

## COLUMN II.

. . . .<sup>1</sup> and all the streams which exist at the mouth of the river Salmani. Therefore, ARADSU, son of ERISNUNAK, has agreed to (aforesaid things) for the times to come, in giving his signature to this tablet.

BIT-KARRA-BASA, son of HEA-HABAL-IDIN, Governor of the town of Isin; BABILAYU, son of SIN-MUSTESIR, Chief; MALIK-AKH-IDINNA, son of NIGAZI, Chief of the *ru-bar*;<sup>2</sup> TAB-ASAP-MARDUK, son of INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU, a Scribe; ZIKAR-NANA, son of . . .<sup>1</sup> BIN, *sabil*; NABU-MUMADDID-ZIR, a servant, son of ZIKAR-EA, a Governor; and NABU-IDIN-AKHE, son of NAMRI, have fixed it in the furnitures of the house.

In the town of Babylon, on the 30th of Sebat (January), in the first year of MARDUK-IDIN-AKHE, the mighty King.

The Masters of the Royal Seal, have granted approbation.

## II.

## THE PARIS MICHAUX STONE.

This monument is so called from the name of the traveller by whom it was brought over to France in 1800. It was discovered near the Tigris, not far from the ruins of the ancient city of Ctesiphon. It is an ovoid basalt stone of 17 inches in height, by 24 in circumference. The upper part is decorated with symbolical figures spread over nearly one third of the monument; one of the sides is divided in two parts. At the top the moon crescent and the sun are represented; in a somewhat lower place there are

<sup>1</sup> Lacuna

<sup>2</sup> Unknown dignity.

four altars; two on the right support tiaras; the other two are adorned with two symbolical figures. In the middle a winged goat kneeling; the lower part of the animal is hidden by the image of another altar. The second part contains two altars; one of them bears a sort of arrow-head which for a long time has been taken for the symbol of the Cuneiform writing, because it resembles the element of these characters. On the other part there is a triangular symbol, then, between both altars, two kneeling monsters; only the fore part of their body is visible. On the left behind the altar there is to be seen a symbolical figure preceding a downward pointed arrow. On the back side of the monument there is a scorpion, a bird roosting. On the ground there is a bird, on the head of which is to be seen an unknown symbol composed of two other monsters, one bears a bird's head, and the other has a hideous horned face; the rest of the body is wrapped up in a sort of sheath; opposite to which a dog kneeling. The top of the stone is bordered with an immense snake; its tail extends into the very inscriptions, its head touches the head of the dog. On each side of the monument in its lower part, there are two columns of cuneiform texts, which contain altogether 95 lines.

This monument is now kept since 1801 in the "Cabinet des Médailles" at Paris (No. 702). Since that epoch it has always attracted the attention of scholars; it was published by M. Millin in 1802, *Monuments inédits*, t. I. pl. viii., ix. Münter first attempted to explain the symbolical figures (*Religion der Babylonier*, p. 102, pl. III). Sir Henry Rawlinson has also

published the inscription again, in *W. A. I.*, Vol. I. p. 70. The sense of this text has been fixed for the first time, in 1856, by M. Oppert's translation in the *Bulletin Archéologique de l'Athénéum Français*. After this translation, Mr. Fox Talbot gave one in 1861, in the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XVIII., p. 54.

---

### COLUMN I.

20 hin of corn is the quantity for seeding an *arura*.<sup>1</sup> The field is situated near the town of Kar-Nabu, on the bank of the river Mekaldan, depending of the property of KILNAMANDU.

The field is measured as follows:<sup>2</sup> Three stades in length towards the East, in the direction of the town of Bagdad; three stades in length towards the West, adjoining the house of TUNAMISSAH; 1 stade 50 fathoms<sup>3</sup> in breadth towards the North, adjoining the property of KILNAMANDU; 1 stade 50 fathoms up in the South, adjoining the property of KILNAMANDU.

SIRUSUR, son of KILNAMANDU, gave it for all future days

<sup>1</sup> Or the great *U*, namely of the field in question.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Oppert's first translation of this passage, which is to be found in almost all documents of this kind, has been corrected in *L'Étalon des mesures assyriennes*, p. 42. The field of Kilnamandu was a rectangle of  $1\frac{5}{6}$  stades in breadth and 3 stades long, viz.,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  square stades, amounting to 19,64 hectares or  $48\frac{1}{2}$  English acres. The Stone of Michaux is the only one which affords a valuation of the land.

The *arura* (great *U*) is valued at 88 hectares, 207 acres in the Babylonian system; a *hin* is almost 3 litres or 5 pints and a quarter, 20 *hins*, therefore, are somewhat more than 13 gallons. The fertility of the Babylonian soil was renowned in antiquity, see *Herodotus* I. 193.

<sup>3</sup> A fathom,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  feet, is the sixtieth part of a stade, 620 feet.

to DUR-SARGINAITI, his daughter, the bride<sup>1</sup> of TAB-ASAP-MARDUK, son of INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU (the pretended), who wrote this; and TAB-ASAP-MARDUK, son of INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU, who wrote this in order to perpetuate without interruption the memory of this gift, and commemorated on this stone the will of the great gods and the god SERAH.

## COLUMN II.

Whosoever in the process of time, among the brothers, the sons, the family, the men and women, the servants both male and female, of the house of KILNAMANDU, either a foreigner, or a guest, or whosoever he may be (or anyone else), who will destroy this field, who will venture to take away the boundary-stone, or will vindicate it: whether he consecrate this field to a god, or earn it for his superior, or claim it for himself, or change the extent, the surface, or the limits, that he reaps new harvests (crops); or who will say of the field with its measures, "There is no granter;" whether he call forth malediction and hostility on the tablets; or establish on it anyone other who change these curses, in swearing: "The head is not the head;" and in asserting: There is no evil eye;<sup>2</sup> whosoever will carry elsewhere those tablets; or will throw them into the waters; will bury them in the earth; will hide them under stones; will burn them with fire, will alter what is written on them, will confine them into a place where they might not be seen; that man shall be cursed:

May the gods ANU, EL, HEA, the Great Goddess, the great gods, inflict upon him the utmost contumely, extirpate his name, annihilate his family.

<sup>1</sup> This word is explained in a syllabary copied by Dr. Oppert in 1855, but which has never been published. The three signs of the ideogram (*Bit-gigunu-a*) are rendered by *kallatu*, "a bride," and this very important statement put the translator on the track of the right interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be a usual formula.

May MARDUK, the great Lord of eternity without end, bind him in fetters which cannot be broken.

May SAMAS, the great Judge of heaven and earth, judge his unpunished misdeeds, and surprise him in flagrant deeds.

May SIN, the brilliant (*Nannar*), who dwells in the sacred heavens, clothe him in leprosy as in a garment, and give him up to the wild beasts that wander in the outsides of the town.

May ISTAR, the Queen of heaven and earth, carry him off, and deliver him for avenge to the god and the king.

May NINIP, son of the zenith, son of EL the sublime, take away his lands, funds, and limits.

May GULA, the great Queen, the wife of NINIP, infiltrate into his bowels a poison which cannot be pushed out, and may he void blood and pus like water.<sup>1</sup>

May BIN, the great Guardian of heaven and earth, the son of the warrior ANU, inundate his field.

May SERAH destroy his firstborn; may he torture his flesh, and load his feet with chains.

May NABU, the supreme Watcher, strike him with misfortune and ruin, and blast his happiness that he not obtain it, in the wrath of his face.

May all the great gods whose names are recorded on this tablet, curse him with irrevocable malediction, and scatter his race even to the last days.

---

### III.

#### CONTRACT CONCERNING THE HOUSE OF ADA. (BRITISH MUSEUM.)

This monument is equally engraved on a black basalt stone; it offers the same arrangement as the stone of

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "micturate."



Michaux. The analogous documents show that numerous inaccuracies have been committed.

In the upper part there occur the same altars, tiaras, birds, as well as the above-mentioned goat, dog, scorpion, and snake. The surface of the basso-relievo is also covered with Cuneiform writing.

The inscriptions are arranged in four columns, and take both sides of the monument. The first column originally finished at the 30th line; it seems to have been completed by four lines, which contain one of the essential articles of the contract, but which evidently are not in their right place, and had been actually forgotten in the original engraving.

On the margins and the basso-relievo many additions and repetitions are to be read, which also prove the engraver's carelessness or precipitation.

---

20 hins<sup>1</sup> of corn are sufficient to seed an *arura*,<sup>2</sup> a field in the land of Zunire,<sup>3</sup> on the bank of the river Zirzirri, belonging to the house of ADA.

MARDUK-IDIN-AKHE, King of Babylon, has thus sentenced according to the laws of the country of Assur. BIN-ZIR-BASA, his Minister, has favoured MARDUK-ILUSU, son of INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU,<sup>4</sup> who has written this to the King of Babylon: I say, He has loaded me with favours, and I proclaim that

<sup>1</sup> Twenty hins are equal to 60 litres, 13½ gallons.

<sup>2</sup> Great U, the standard agrarian measure.

<sup>3</sup> The country is unknown, the river Zirzirri is also mentioned elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> This name signifies: "In the Pyramid he will increase."

this rating has been made according to the epha<sup>1</sup> of the King of Babylon.

20 hin of corn are sufficient to seed an *arura*. BIN-ZIR-BASA, the Lieutenant (of the King), has invested him with it, and (the measurer of lands) has thus measured it for the time to come.

In the length<sup>2</sup> above towards the North, turned to the river Zirzirri, adjoining the house of ADA, and the field of the house of the Satraps. In the length below, towards the South of the river Atab-du-Istar, adjoining the house of ADA. In breadth above towards the East, adjoining the limits of Bit-ulbar. In breadth below towards the West, adjoining the house of ADA.

According to the law of MARDUK-IDIN-AKHE, King of Babylon, servant of the gods of the City of the eternal fire,<sup>3</sup> it was so measured by BEL-ZIR-KINI, son of ZIKAR-ISTAR, the measurer of the field.

In the town of Dindu, in the month of Tebet, on the 28th day (December) in the 10th year of MARDUK-IDIN-AKHE, King of Babylon.

In the presence of BET-ULBAR-SAKIMU, son of BAZI,  
 Chief of the *ru-bar* of the countries ;  
 in the presence of BABILAI, son of SIN-MUSTESIR,<sup>4</sup> Chief  
 of the head Rulers of the country ;  
 in the presence of HEA-KUDURRI-IBNI, son of ZIKAR-EA,  
 Governor of the provinces ;

<sup>1</sup> The valuations of the estates are made by the quantity of corn required to seed them, as it is the case in Rabbinical literature, where the unity is a *Beth-sea*, or the surface seeded by a *sea*. Therefore the Epha of the king (royal Epha) is quite in its place: the epha is varying from 32 to 36 pints.

The text itself states the royal endowment of a perhaps conquered land.

<sup>2</sup> There is no valuation of the field. An error crept into the French transliteration; *us* is not "a stade," but the word "length."

<sup>3</sup> This is the city generally read *Agade*.

<sup>4</sup> Person already mentioned in the *Za'aleh Stone*.

in the presence of BEL-NASIR-HABAL, son of the Chief of  
 the *rubar* of the orders in the provinces ;  
 in the presence of TAKISA-BELIT, son of RIU-SIMTI ;  
 in the presence of UBALLITSU, son of KARISTIYA-  
 NAPASTI ;  
 in the presence of BEL-IDIN-AKH, son of SUTI ;  
 in the presence of SUKAMUNA<sup>1</sup>-IDIN, son of MILI-  
 HARBAT ;  
 in the presence of ISU-IL, son of HABLIIYA ;  
 in the presence of BEL-AKHESU, son of MELIHARBAT ;  
 in the presence of NIS-BET-ULBAR, son of ULAMHALA ;  
 in the presence of SUMIDU, son of MARDUK-KABUYA,  
 Prefect of the house of ADA ;  
 in the presence of E-SAGGATU-BUNUYA, *hazan*<sup>2</sup> of the  
 house of ADA ;  
 in the presence of BABRABTATUTAI, son of SAR-BABIL-AS-  
 SUR-ISSI ;  
 in the presence of SADU-RABU-KABUYA, Judge ;  
 in the presence of MARDUK-NASIR, son of GAMILU.

### COLUMN III.

Whoever in the process of time, among the brothers, the  
 sons, among the near relations, the allies of the family of the  
 house of ADA, would claim this land, would nourish against  
 it bad designs, or would suggest them ; whoever would utter  
 these words: "There is no giver;" who would say: "There is  
 no sealer;" or whosoever will say: "I deny that there is a  
 master of the house of ADA, that there is a Chief in the  
 house of ADA ; that there is a *hazan*<sup>2</sup> of the house of ADA ;  
 or that there is either a speculator for the house of ADA ;

<sup>1</sup> The god *Sukamanu* occurs elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> The *hazan* seems to be a superintendent.

or a *gitta*<sup>1</sup> of the house of ADA; or a *sumtalu*; or a *lubattu*; or an *aklu*; or a *kisirtu* in the house of ADA; or he will say, The confiscation has been pronounced; whether he say: "This field has no measurer;" or say: "This seal is not of a sealer" (who has the right to); or whoever will take possession of this field; or consecrate it to the gods; or claim it for himself; or alter its surface, circumference and limits; or construct buildings on this land, and in the middle of this field (that man will be cursed):

The gods who are inscribed on this tablet, all those whose name is commemorated herein, will curse him with irrevocable curses.

May the gods ANU,<sup>2</sup> BEL, HEA, these great gods, torment him and overwhelm him; that . . . .<sup>3</sup>

May MARDUK, the great Lord of eternity without limits, fetter him with inextricable bonds.

May NEBO, the supreme minister, overthrow the surface, circumference, and limits of his properties.

May BIN, the great Lord of heaven and earth, cause the streams of his river to overflow<sup>4</sup> . . . . have his progeny circumcised, and load his feet with a heavy chain.

May SIN, who turns around heaven, envelop his body with leprosy as in a garment.

May SAMAS, the bright Judge of heaven and earth, judge his lawsuit, and have him seized in deed doing.

May ISTAR, the goddess of heaven and earth, deliver him to the vengeance of the gods and of the King.

May GULA, the Sovereign Lady, the great wife of NINIP,

<sup>1</sup> By an error, this line is omitted in the French work; the Assyrian words are not yet understood.

<sup>2</sup> In the text is *nu*.

<sup>3</sup> Lacuna.

<sup>4</sup> The passage is very obscure; if Dr. Oppert's idea is correct, there is an allusion to the detested custom of circumcision, the performance of which was regarded as an affliction.

infiltrate into his bowels with a poison that will not leave him, and may he void pus and blood like water.

May NINIP, the god of boundaries, *filium camelas inire cogat*.<sup>1</sup>

May NERGAL, the god of arms and bows, break his arrows.

May ZAMAL, the King of battles, prevent him in the midst of the fray from taking a prisoner.

May TURDA, the Keeper of the images of the great gods, walking in the right ways of the gods, besiege his door during the night.

May ISKHARA, the goddess of the ancient customs, not hear him in the battles.

May MALIK, the great Master of Heaven,<sup>2</sup> whilst he sins cause him to be slain in the act.

May all the gods that are on this stone, whose name is commemorated, curse him with irrevocable curses.

The lines at the end of the first column read as follows :

<sup>3</sup>If anybody swears thus : This head is not a head . . . .<sup>3</sup> or institutes here an outlaw or a causer of mischief, immerse them in the waters, bury them in the earth, hide them under a heap of stones, destroy them by fire.

On the edge of the second column :

May the gods whose image is on this table, and whose name is invoked, curse him with irrevocable curses.

On the edge of the fourth column :

The horses . . . .<sup>4</sup> the Master of the house of ADA may dispose of them after him. 30 horses, 25 buffaloes, 3 mares

<sup>1</sup> See Lev. xx. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Gara anna*.

<sup>3</sup> In the French work, this passage has been left untranslated.

<sup>4</sup> Lacunæ.

in the fields are not inclosed in the decree of the King of Babylon ; BIN-ZIR-BASA has ascribed it for the benefit of MAHANITU, after MARDUK-ILUSU, son of INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU.

The Chief of the *rubar* of the house of ADA has said it (named and pronounced) to MARDUK-ILUSU, son of the Scribe of MARDUK-IDIN-AKHE, King of Babylon, and INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU, the Scribe, the field, this one has<sup>1</sup> . . . . . owner of the house of ADA, has given it for the days to come, and has yielded it up.

A great many short inscriptions are placed over the basso-relievos.

1. The smallest of them is placed over a kind of lyre. It reads :

In sum, an epha and a half.

2. Entangled between the branches of an object difficult to design and the horns of a goat, occurs a sentence which has not been translated.

3. The word *nase* is written between and the altar supporting a triangular object.

4. A legend of three lines is engraved between the mentioned altar, and a horned animal.

So that he may not devastate the land of Zunire, nor the dwellings which are belonging to the Governor of Zunire.

5. Under an undetermined object, opposite to the nose of the abovementioned fantastical animal is written a sentence composed of a perpendicular line and four lines parallel to the circumference.

That he will not acknowledge either the *kisirtu* or the

<sup>1</sup> Here are two very obscure words.

tribute of this house, or the Prefect, or the *hazan* of the house of ADA.

6. Below the preceding one.

Either the author of the treaty, or the *hazan* of the land of Zunirie.

7. Included between the roost and the back of the dog occurs another sentence which has not been translated.

8. Across the symbolical figures.

[Commencement obscure.]

That he might not watch upon the streets of Bit-Ada.

9. Between the scorpion and the back of the snake.

That he may pay the rent of the land.

10. Over the head of the snake.

That in his abode, there may not be any power, any judge, any implorer.

---

#### IV.

#### CONTRACT OF HANKAS.

(BRITISH MUSEUM).

The fourth monument of the reign of Marduk-idin-akhe is a black basalt stone of nearly the same size and arrangement as the preceding. At the top we also see analogous symbols disposed in a similar way. The inscription has but two columns, and occupies but one

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:  
**Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature**  
which can be purchased on our Website :

[www.Brainfly.net](http://www.Brainfly.net)

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :

**Brainfly Inc.**

**5100 Garfield Ave. #46**

**Sacramento CA 95841-3839**

## **TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:**

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website ([www.Brainfly.net](http://www.Brainfly.net)) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

[webcomments@brainfly.net](mailto:webcomments@brainfly.net)