

## A NEW FARA CONTRACT

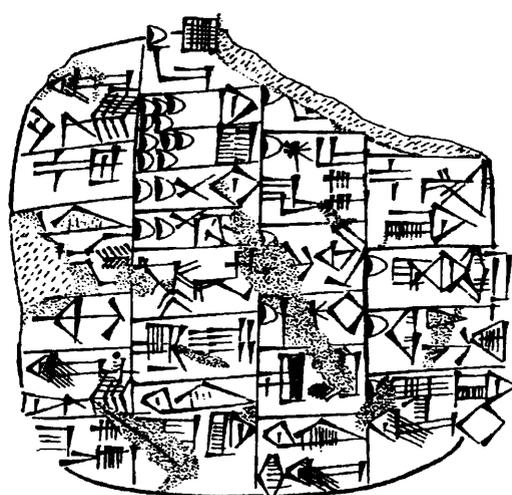
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A new Fara contract is presented here. At the moment, the tablet is in the possession of Pars Antiques a dealer in antiquarities in London to whom we owe the opportunity to copy and transliterate the tablet. The tablet itself has been well baked in antiquity and possibly again in modern times. It is yellowish to brown on the outside, brown in colour in the inside, the dimensions of the tablet are 85x87x21 mm.

Obverse



Reverse



Obv i 1) 6  $\frac{2}{3}$  ma-na u rudu

2) [š]ám-é

3) 1  $\frac{2}{3}$ ' sar é-bi

4) 10+2+ $\frac{1}{3}$  urudu ma-na

5) nì-diri

6) 4 urudu ma.na

ii 1) é-dù

2) 2 (bán) še ninda

3) 20 gúg

4) 3 PAP tu,

5) 3 PAP GÁxHA.A

6) 1 ì sila

7) ur-<sup>4</sup>iškur

iii 1) é-sahar-ta

2) su<sub>6</sub> (LAK 332)-mú

3) lú-šám-kú

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4) 1 me-túg-gál                 | 5) 1 še[š]-pà               |
| 5) 2 (bán) še ninda             | 6) 1 me-an-du <sub>10</sub> |
| 6) 10[+10 gúg]                  | 7) dub-[s]ar                |
| 7)] [2 PAP tu <sub>7</sub> ]    | 8) lú-ki-inim               |
| iv 1) 2 PAP GÁxHA.A             | iii 1) 1 siki ma-[na]       |
| 2) su <sub>6</sub> -mú          | 2) 5 ninda                  |
| 3) 1 lugal-ezen                 | 3) 5 gúg                    |
| 4) 1 lam-ma                     | 4) 2 PAP tu <sub>7</sub>    |
| 2/3 lines missing               | 5) 2 PAP GÁxHA.A            |
|                                 | 6) nam-mah                  |
| rev i 2/3 lines missing         | 7) um-mi-a                  |
| 1') maškim-bi                   | 8) lú-'é'-és-gar            |
| 2') 1 eden-si                   | iv 1) inim-utu-zi           |
| 3') 1 ki-ni-mu-zu               | 2) sipa                     |
| 4') 1 é-šùd-bi-du <sub>10</sub> | 3) lú-šám-'è'               |
| ii 1) [       ]                 | 4) bala                     |
| 2) [       ]                    | 5) inim-ni-zi               |
| 3) 1 [x.x]                      | 6) kin-nir                  |
| 4) 1 ur- <sup>q</sup> kin-nir   |                             |

6 minas and 20 shekels of copper is the principal price to buy the house; (the size of) the house is 1 e 2/3 sar; 12 and 1/3 minas of copper (is) the additional price; 4 minas of copper for the built-up house lot; 20 litres of barley bread; 20 cakes; 3 PAP measures of soup; 3 PAP measures of fish...; 1 litre of oil; to Ur-Iskur, Esaharta and Sumu, the sellers; 1 garment megal; 30 litres of barley bread; 20 cakes; 2 PAP measures of soup; 2 PAP measures of fish to Sumu. 1 Lugal-ezen, Lamma, [1 PN] the supervisor, 1 Edensi, 1 Kinimuzu, 1 Eshudbidu, 1 [PN], 1 Ur-Kinnir, 1 Šešpa, and 1 Meannedu the scribe, are the witnesses; 1 mina of wool, 5 loaves of bread, 5 cakes, 2 PAP measures of soup, and 2 PAP measures of fish to Nammah, the master who measured the house; Inimutuzi, the shepherd, is the buyer of the house, when Inimmani-zi (of) Kinnir, was the bala-official.

- ob. i 1; i 4. It should be noted the use of two different writings to express a third of mina.  
 i 2. This is the only case where ni-diri and é-dù are recorded as two different additional payments. In other contracts (see ELTS<sup>1</sup> p. 223) the scribes preferred to join both payments.  
 ii 4.: On the capacity measure PAP, perhaps to be read kúr, see NSRJ 179-180. For the reading tu<sub>7</sub> of HIXDIŠ see ELTS p.293  
 ii 5. For the possibility to interpret GÁxHA.A as “dried or processed fish”, see ELTS p. 293.  
 iii 1. This personal name (the full form is é-sahar-ta-è) does not occur in the Fara contracts but it appears elsewhere in Fara texts. The same for Ur-Iškur. The third seller Sumu occurs as seller in other contracts in Ung n. 4 ob. iii<sup>5</sup> and RTC 12 ob. i 6

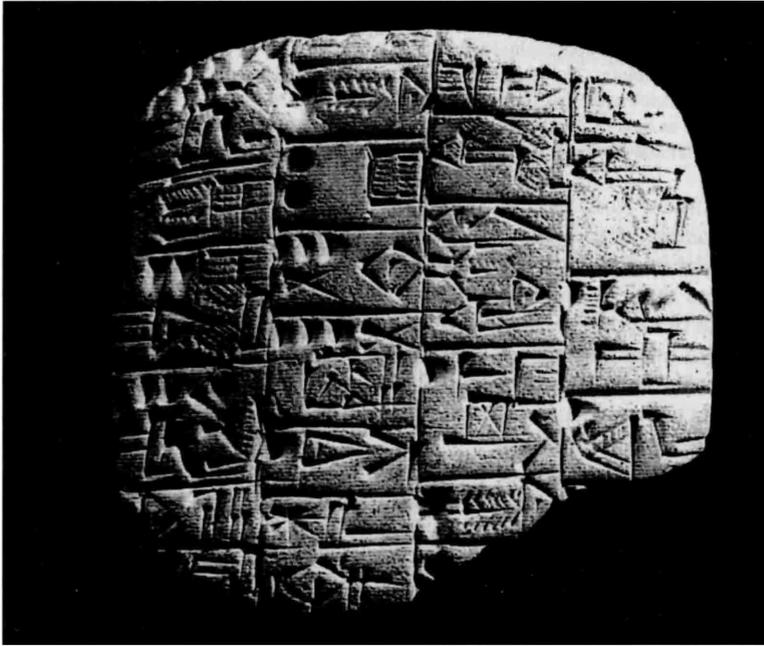
<sup>1</sup> I.J. Gelb - P. Steinkeller - R.M. Whiting, *Earliest Land Tenure Systems in the Near East: Ancient Kudurrus*, OIP 104, Chicago 1992.

<sup>2</sup> M. Lambert, “Quatre nouveaux contrats de l'époque de Shuruppak”, in M. Lurker (ed.), *In memoriam of Eckhard Unger, Beiträge zu Geschichte, Kultur und Religion des Alten Orients*, Baden-Baden 1971.

- iv 1-rev. iii 6'. For the occurrence of the witnesses mentioned in this document in other contracts of Fara see G. Visicato, "The Prosopography of the Sale Contracts of Fara", in H. Martin - F. Pomponio - G. Visicato - A. Westenholz, *The Fara Tablets in the University of the Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, Bethesda 2001, pp. 130-161.
- rev. iv 4-6. Inimnizi as bala official appears in 9 contracts (*ibid.*, p. 140) but he is never followed by the characterizing element Kinnir which likely indicates the household of the goddess Kinnir.

The sale contracts from ED IIIa Šuruppak, written on clay tablets, are (excluding the Uruk-period *kudurru*) the oldest and most homogeneous corpus of its kind known. The tablets are similar in shape square with round corners, but they have different sizes. They span from more than 10 cm of diameter to 6 cm. The tablets are all well baked in antiquity, made of sandy clay, and unusually thin for their size, two cm or less. Their surfaces are also often rather worn. Almost all of them are carefully and neatly written, unlike the crowded writing characteristic of most of the administrative records. Evidently, they were meant to be permanent records of the transfer of ownership, and to display the skill of the scribes who wrote them.

Unlike similar documents from later times (Girsu ED IIIb, Sargonic and Ur III), which record the purchase of any kind of property, they only deal with fields and houses. The structure and the typology of the early sale documents and the ancient *kudurru*s have been discussed in ELTS.



Obv.



Rev.