

# A FORGOTTEN TEXT FROM ALALAKH VII

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Both in the edition of the Alalakh tablets by Wiseman and in his supplementary copies, the rather difficult text *Al.T.* \*98d remained unpublished.<sup>1</sup> This document was described (*The Alalakh Tablets*, 56) as a “Part of a contract of sale” in which “Šamši-Adu(IM) buys something (lost) from Ammu-Adu, son of Niqmi-Adu of Airrašē for 100+ (shekels) of silver at its full value. Penalty clause broken. The name of only one (Eḫli-*adu*) out of 8 witnesses remains.”

During a recent visit to The British Museum,<sup>2</sup> I was able to collate the tablet<sup>3</sup> and the results of my study are presented here in transliteration, comments, translation, and handcopy. Only the first eighteen lines on the obverse are well preserved. The remainder of the tablet is badly damaged; only a few traces remain of the penalty clause as well as the traces of the names of the first two witnesses.

1. D. J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 2 (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1953); Wiseman, “Supplementary Copies of Alalakh Tablets,” *JCS* 8 (1954) 1–30; R. S. Hess, “A Preliminary List of the Published Alalakh Texts,” *UF* 20 (1988) 77.

2. With funds of the Vicerrectorado de Profesorado de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.

3. I wish to thank C. B. F. Walker for permission to collate *Al.T.* \*98d in September 1999 in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities of the British Museum.

*Al.T.* \*98d

Obv.

1. [1] IKU DÙ GIŠ.GEŠTIN  
1 ME 4? ŠÀ.GAL UZ.MUŠEN  
UDU.ḫI.A UGU *am-mu-a-da*  
DUMU *ni-iq-mi-a-du* LÚ *ša-i-id-ḫ[e]*
5. *i-na* URU *a-ir-ra-še<sup>ki</sup>*  
*ki-ma<sup>2</sup> i-ba-aš-šu-ú*  
*šu<sup>2</sup>-ma<sup>2</sup> la<sup>2</sup>-ru<sup>2</sup>-ú ma-az-za-a[z]*  
KI *am-mu-a-da*  
*ù bé-en-di-ma-lik*
10. <sup>1</sup>*sa-am-si-<sup>d</sup>IM*  
*a-na* 1 ME 60 KÙ.BABBAR x  
*a-na ši-im ga-me-er*  
*i-ša-am*  
*a-píl li-ib-ba-šu*
15. *ṭa-a-ab*  
*šum-ma am-mu-a-da*  
*ib-ba-la-ak-ka-at*  
1 ME KÙ.[BABBAR]  
[... Ì.LÁ.E]

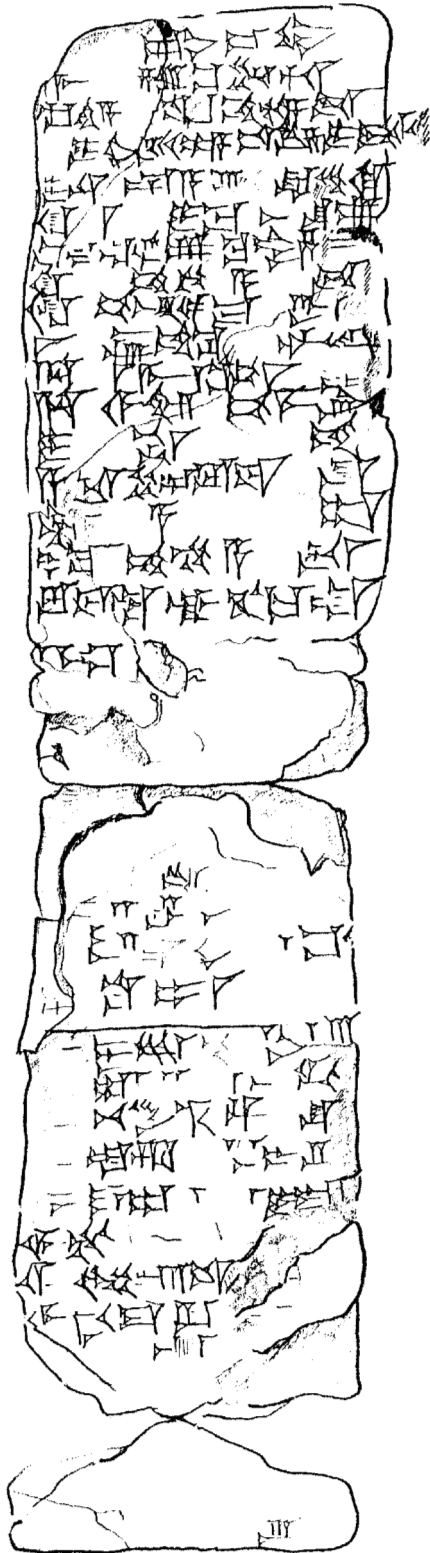
Brd.

(several lines lost)

Rev.

[*i-na pí-šu a-ba-ra-am<sup>2</sup>*]  
[*i-ša-ap-[pa-ku<sup>2</sup>*]

- 
- 1'. [IGI] *i-[ ... ]*  
[IGI] *ab-[ba-AN<sup>2</sup> ... ]*  
[IGI] *be-in-[d]i-IŠKUR [...]-šu*  
[IGI] *ad-ri-[a-du SUKKAL É.GAL<sup>2</sup>*
- 5'. [IGI] *ia-ab-[ ]*  
IGI *mu-[ ]*



Al.T. \*98d

IGI *eh-li-a-du* [SUKKAL]

IGI *a<sup>2</sup>-tar<sup>2</sup>-ma-lik*

...

(rest broken)

### Commentary

According to Wiseman's catalog, this tablet belongs to the sale material *Al.T.* \*52–\*75<sup>4</sup>: \*52–\*58 (purchase of several villages by two governors of Alalakh<sup>5</sup> and by other people), \*59–\*61 and \*65 (purchase of houses and servants), and \*62–\*64<sup>6</sup> (purchase of vineyards). *Al.T.* \*98d belongs to this last group. Our text is closely related to \*63, in which one "Samsi-Adu buys 2 *iku* of vineyard also in the district of Airraše."<sup>7</sup> To this should be added the material cataloged by Wiseman as "Contracts too fragmentary for exact classification," \*95–\*98f,<sup>8</sup> that is the group into which the present document was originally classified. These sources therefore have to be taken into account during the analysis of the new text.

Line 1: [1?] IKU DÙ GIŠ.GEŠTIN, read [1?] *iku* (IKU) *kàl* (DÙ) *karāni* (GIŠ.GEŠTIN); for the use of *kalu* in stat. const. see *CAD* K, 88–89a; this entry shows the use of the value *kàl* (DÙ) in late OB times in northern Syria.<sup>9</sup> The usual formula in the vineyard sales \*62:1, \*63:1 and \*64:1 is, however, x IKU A.ŠÀ GIŠ.GEŠTIN. For the sign GEŠTIN in this line compare R. Borger, *ABZ*,

4. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, (III) (b) Sales, 47–52.

5. For a new revision of the chronography of the Alalakh VII archive see J. C. Oliva, "Alalah VII Chronographica," *AuOr* 17–18 (1999–2000) 229–39 [Spanish].

6. See E. Gaál, "The Economic Life of Alalah in the 18–17th Centuries B.C.," *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestensis de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae, Sectio Historica*, 13 (1972) 283–84.

7. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, 50.

8. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, 55–56.

9. The value *kàl* was hitherto assumed to be documented only in NA texts, cf. R. Borger, *ABZ* 230; W. von Soden-W. Röllig, *Das akkadische Syllabar*, *AnOr* 42 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), 27: 145.

I Paläographie, p. 17, number 210, third column, under *kudurrus*.

Line 2: The sign ME at the beginning and UZ.MUŠEN at the end of the line are still recognizable. After ME only very faint traces remain. By comparing UZ.MUŠEN with the formula: ŠĀ.GAL UZ.MUŠEN in the ration lists from Alalakh VII \*251:6,10,15,26 and \*264:11,<sup>10</sup> we can surely read the line as suggested above. In close connection with this is the expression: ŠĀ.GAL MUŠEN.ĤI.A *ú-sí* (\*261:7; \*273:4).<sup>11</sup> For Akkadian *ūsu* (UZ.MUŠEN), “duck,” see Borger, *ABZ*, 372; *AHw* 1438b.<sup>12</sup>

Line 3: A reading UDU for the first sign seems to me the most likely. On the other hand, the sign UGU, although rather damaged, is still recognizable. According to this formula, it appears that the entire property is understood to be *charged to* or *on account of* Ammu-Ada as landowner.

Line 4: The Akkado-Hurrian occupational name LÚ *šā'id=he*, “hunter,” is also documented in \*206:14. The Akkadian form: LÚ *šā'idu* occurs in \*247:5.<sup>13</sup>

Line 5: The city of Airraše is frequently attested in the Alalakh VII texts.<sup>14</sup>

Line 6: Although the beginning is quite damaged, one might consider a restoration *-ma* after

the *ki-* sign. In the expression: *kīma ibaššū*, (see, for example, *ki-ma KAR ibaššū*, “as the market value is,” *VAS* 16, 98:10<sup>15</sup>) it remains unclear whether *kīma* could be interpreted either as a conjunction, in the sense of “as,” “concerning,”<sup>16</sup> or as a preposition “corresponding/according to.”<sup>17</sup> The verbal form *ibaššū*, “they are”/“it is,” could refer presumably to the existing property, i.e. the vineyard and foodstuff sold within.<sup>18</sup>

Line 7: Since the beginning is quite damaged, we can only suggest a tentative reading with all reservations. The phrase might function as an apposition of the preceding line: *šu-ma* (third sing. masc. anaphoric pronoun *šu*<sup>19</sup> plus the enclitic emphatic particle *-ma*<sup>20</sup>), could draw emphatic attention to a possible following subject:<sup>21</sup> *larū*, “branch” and nearly related concepts;<sup>22</sup> *ma-az-za-a[z]* could refer to *larū* as a nominal predicative.

Except for \*28:20 and \*36:6, the OB Alalakh texts regularly attest *mazzazānu* “pledge,” “security,” and *mazzazānūtu*, “state of being a pledge,” after the preposition *ana*.<sup>23</sup> It is not clear whether

10. See D. J. Wiseman, “Ration Lists from Alalakh VII,” *JCS* 13 (1959) 23, 26.

11. Wiseman, *JCS* 13 (1959) 26, 30. See also the formula: ŠĀ.GAL MUŠEN.ĤI.A in the following ration lists from Alalakh VII: \*241:5; \*242:9,11; \*243:7,8,19,22; \*246:27; \*248:5; \*257:5; \*273:6; \*274:18,19,32; \*281:3; \*283b:10.

12. Instead of Wiseman’s reading: UZ.MUŠEN in \*266:3 (*JCS* 13 [1959] 27; *AHw* 1438b), read: ANŠE.ĤI.A (personal collation, J. Oliva, “Neue Kollationen und Anmerkungen zu einigen Alalah VII-Texten.” *UF* 30 [1998] 595).

13. See my remarks in *UF* 30 (1998) 591; a new attestation surely occurs in \*44:1-2: [ ]-bi LÚ [*ša*]-i-id-*he*.

14. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, 154a; add \*63:2; \*455:6,22,25,40, \*96:9,14, see N. Na’aman, “The Chronology of Alalakh Level VII Unce Again,” *AnSt* 29 (1979) 110–11; F. Zeeb, “Die Ortsnamen und geographischen Bezeichnungen der Texte aus Alalah VII,” *UF* 30 (1998) 845–

46; see also in Hurrian material from Ugarit, M. Dietrich-W. Mayer, *UF* 26 (1994) 74, 78, 82, 84.

15. *CAD* K, 364a.

16. G. Giacomakis, *The Akkadian of Alalah*, *Janua Linguarum Series Practica*, 59 (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 82; *CAD* K, 363a. No parallels of this expression are attested at Alalakh VII.

17. *CAD* K, 367a. Cf. other forms of *bašūm* in Giacomakis, *The Akkadian of Alalah*, 70.

18. Cf. \*56:10: *u eperišu ašar ibaššū*; \*456:11–12: *ana puḫat eperi ša ina U[RU] ibaššū*.

19. W. von Soden, *GAG*, §41 b; Giacomakis, *The Akkadian of Alalah*, 31.

20. *GAG*, §123 a g), see also §126 c–d, g; Giacomakis, *The Akkadian of Alalah*, 59–60.

21. Compare J. Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit*, HSS 34 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 134 n. 53 and 213–14, although here it is not clearly subject. Compare also S. Izre’el, *Amurru Akkadian* I, HSS 40 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 326, (2) and (3), and EA 20:70; cf. at Nuzi *šu-ma* plus subject in: *šu-ma* PN *uzakka*, *CAD* S III, 157b, j).

22. *CAD* L, 103b–104; *AHw* 538b: “Zweig,” “Ast;” a PN is quite unlikely.

23. *CAD* M/I, 232b–233a; *AHw* 638a; Giacomakis, *The Akkadian of Alalah*, 88; B. L. Eichler, *Indenture at Nuzi*,

*mazza*[z] would mention here a new case of the *mazzazānūtu*-service.<sup>24</sup> However, assuming that \*98d records a purchase of real estate by Samsi-Adu (cf. lines 12–13: *ana šim gamer išām*), a *mazzazānu* transaction would not be involved in this case, since Ammu-Ada (together with Bendi-Malik) appears as seller of the vineyard. If this be correct, *mazza*[z] might be interpreted independently of the *mazzazānu*/*mazzazānūtu* texts.

A tentative reading: *šu-ma la-ru-ú ma-az-za-a*[z] reminds us in a way to standard Akkadian expressions in which *larū* (logogram PA) appears in close relation to *manzazu*<sup>25</sup> and to *padānu* “path.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, although the actual sense of the line remains unclear, it would appear, by means of this interpretation, that the text could draw specific attention to an additional land part, maybe that of the access way to the vineyard, which could have been included within the full price of the property.

Line 8: Parallels of this use of *itti* (KI), “from,” are attested in a number of transactions from OB Alalakh.<sup>27</sup>

Line 9: Hybrid PNN are well-known in Alalakh texts. Although as far as I know this Hurro-West Semitic PN Bendi-Malik, “the king is righteous,” is not documented at Alalakh anymore, compare Bendi-Ili (\*32:15; \*36:7; \*38:14,16; \*55:36;

YNER 5 (New Haven: Yale University, 1973), 49–95; F. Zeeb, “Studien zu den altbabylonischen Texten aus Alalah II: Pfandurkunden,” *UF* 24 (1992) 447–80.

24. Mesopotamian lexical evidence indicates, in fact, that real estate may also constitute a *mazzazānu*, see Eichler, *Indenture at Nuzi*, 51 and 78 n. 49; see even in this regard *Al.T.* \*41, where the village of Kunuwe constitutes a *mazzazānu*-pledge, Eichler, *Indenture at Nuzi*, 74–75 (cf. also from MB Alalakh *Al.T.* 49, Eichler, *Indenture at Nuzi*, 77, 87 n. 103).

25. See especially *CAD* M/I, 235a and 237b, 4.

26. *CAD* L, 104b. A possible close reference quoted in G. Pettinato, *Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla 2* (Naples: Istituto universitario orientale, 1980), 374b: *man-za-az pa-a(n)* (sic), could not be checked.

27. See Giacomakis, *The Akkadian of Alalah*, 80.

28. See Na’aman, *AnSt* 29 (1979) 110–11. I collated the tablet in September 1998.

\*455:2ff.), Bendi-Adu (\*18:4; \*204:2; \*98d:Rev.3’; from Alalakh IV, Benti-Addu, 181:4), Bendi-Ada (\*63:16) and Bend-Aya (\*246:16). The case of Bent-ammu (\*270:7,29; \*409:34; see A. E. Draffkorn, *Hurrians and Hurrian at Alalah: An Ethno-Linguistic Analysis*, Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959, 47–48), which also occurs at Alalakh IV (154:15,26; rendered: Be-tam-mu in 166:13,17; 180:5; 192:Rev.4; 214+217:Rev.42’; 222:Rev.27’), is not so clear because it can be interpreted as an abbreviation of the Hurrian spelling Bentam-mušuni attested in other sources.

Line 10: As already stated, according to \*63 presumably the same Samsi-Adu buys 2 *iku* of vineyard at Airrase. He is also mentioned in \*96:7, in which Sumunnabi acquires the city of Airraše respecting the property of Samsi-Adu (*ana epiri ša<sup>m</sup>Samsi-<sup>d</sup>IM ūl ittiq*).<sup>28</sup> Since both texts are dated to the reign of Niqmepuh of Yamhad, \*98d can safely be dated to this same phase.<sup>29</sup>

Line 11: The sum of 160 shekels of silver parallels that of another vineyard in \*62,<sup>30</sup> possibly in the district of Alalakh, which costed 100 shekels of silver plus minor goods. The number of *iku* sold in the present text remains however unclear. In the already mentioned text \*63,<sup>31</sup> Samsi-Adu acquires for 20 shekels of silver 2 *iku* of vineyard also at Airraše.<sup>32</sup> As in \*63 and \*64, the price of the vineyard in \*98d consists of the quoted sum of silver. In comparison with that amount, the price of a village or a city was usually much higher. The city of Iburiya (\*52), for instance, costed 1000

29. See already Na’aman, *AnSt* 29 (1979) 110–11; E. Gaál, “State and Private Sectors in Alalah VII,” *AcAn* 30 (1982–1984) 7; Oliva, *AuOr* 17–18 (1999/2000) 239.

30. See Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, 49; Wiseman, *JCS* 8 (1954) 7; B. Kienast, “Die altbabylonischen Kaufurkunden aus Alalah,” *WO* 11 (1980) 60–61.

31. Kienast, *WO* 11 (1980) 61–62.

32. The same is true for Sumunnabi, who bought 3 *iku* of vineyard at Airraše for 27 shekels of silver (\*64); see Kienast, *WO* 11 (1980) 62.

shekels of silver plus 2000 *parisi* of grain.<sup>33</sup> The village of Ammenaše (\*58) was quite less important, since it costed 100 shekels of silver plus minor goods, therefore, cheaper than the present vineyard at Airraše. It seems then that this vineyard must have been quite an important property.<sup>34</sup>

Lines 14–15: For this formula cf. \*58:10: *apil libbašu t̄āb* and in \*61:12: *apil ŠÀ [t̄āb]*.<sup>35</sup> See also *aplu libbašunu t̄āb* (\*52:16–17).<sup>36</sup>

Line 17: A parallel of this verbal form in the present 3. sing. is employed in \*56:35,39 as well.<sup>37</sup>

Line 19: In view of other parallel documents,<sup>38</sup>

a penalty clause formula including the sequence Ì.LÁ.E might well have been used in this line.

Rev.: For the restitution *i-ša-ap-[pa-ku]* see for instance: \*8:31; \*9:Brd.,<sup>39</sup> \*28:25–26; \*61:18–19 and on its envelope \*61A:9–10<sup>40</sup>; \*95:32; \*96:Rev.4'–5'.

Line 3': Cf. in \*63:16: *bé-en-di-a-da*.

Line 4': For this tentative restitution see \*96:7', where a certain adri-a-du(?) seems to have been a visir of the palace at Airraše.

Line 7': For this restitution see \*63:17.

Line 8': For this conjectural restitution see \*64:10.

33. The village of Kunuwe (\*53) cost 770 shekels of silver plus 510 *parisi* of grain (see in this regard Eichler, *Indenture at Nuzi*, 74–75 n. 34); Akē (\*54) 1800 shekels of silver plus grain, animals and other goods; compare also \*56: 3 villages and other territories for 3080 shekels of silver plus minor goods; [x]-ištabar (\*57) for 3000 shekels of silver.

34. In \*59, one house at Alalakh costed about 15 shekels of silver; another one at Ebla, however, with its household furnishings (\*60), came to 400 shekels.

35. In disagreement with Kienast, *WO* 11 (1980) 59, after personal collation of the tablet (BM) in September 1999. For a comparison of this formula in OB Alalakh texts with Aramaic alloforms cf. Y. Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine*, (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 74–77.

36. See Kienast, *WO* 11 (1980) 51: “*Sie sind beglichen; ihr Herz ist befriedigt*”; cf. however Giacumakis, *The Akkadian of Alalah*, 67; for the form *apil* see also *AHw* 56b. In \*53:12–13, a similar formula is broken. Cf. furthermore \*79:14: [ ]-šu *t̄āb*, see Na'aman, *AnSt* 29 (1979) 110. I collated this text in the BM.

37. See already Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, Plates XIV–XV; emend therefore clearly *ibbalakkat*(!), instead of *ibbalakkatu* in Kienast, *WO* 11 (1980) 56–57.

38. \*52:14–21; \*58:9–14; \*61:13'–19'; \*96:Rev.1'–5'.

### Translation

“One complete *iku*-field of vineyard, one hundred ... food rations for duck (and) sheep, (are) on account of Ammu-Ada, son of Niqmi-Adu, hunter, in the city of Airraše. Concerning (what) they are/it is, *even the located (access) path*(?),<sup>41</sup> from Ammu-Ada and Bendi-Malik, Samsi-Adu bought for 160 (shekels) of silver at its full price. He is paid off; his heart is satisfied. If Ammu-Ada claims, [he will pay] 100+ (shekels) of sil[ver] ...”

Penalty clause and eight witnesses follow.

39. See Na'aman, *AnSt* 29 (1979) 110.

40. Personal collation (BM, September 1999).

41. *šu-ma la-ru-ú ma-az-za-a[z]* lit. theoretically: “itself the branch (bifurcation?)“ (is) place” (?).