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FERRYING GOODS FOR THE GODS: A FAMILY AFFAIR. A MIDDLE ASSYRIAN BOATMAN'S FAMILY IN THE EVIDENCE OF THE TEXTS FROM ARCHIVE M4 *

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Abstract

The present study investigates a group of boatmen attested in Archive M4 from Assur in the context of the mobilisation of provincial contributions for the regular offerings tax through waterborne transportation along the Tigris. A reconsideration of the *ginā'u* system from the perspective of the specialist transporters who materially brought these goods to the port of Assur sheds light on the socio-professional context in which these boatmen operated and the networks of contacts they had and maintained with institutional actors of the state administration. Through the reconstruction of the microhistory of these boatmen and their shipping activity, the paper offers a contribution to a deeper understanding of the river transport organisation, the record-keeping practices and the administrative procedures involved in the management of the *ginā'u*-tax.

Keywords: Boatmen – Shipments – Archive M4 – Middle Assyrian

1. Introduction

Professionals involved in river transport along the main waterways of Assyria are attested in Middle Assyrian archives. The frequent mention of boatmen involved in transport along the Tigris River testifies to the special role they played in the mobilisation of goods to the port of Assur. Throughout Assyrian history, river transport had a positive impact in terms of linking areas of agricultural production with urban areas of consumption, trade, movement of specialists, raw and processed materials, and more generally, of urban development of the Assyrian region. A special category of goods that made their way to the country's capital and religious metropolis via waterborne transportation was due as annual offerings (*ginā'u*) from the provinces and served to maintain the flow of contributions to the cultic activities at the Aššur Temple. Among the texts of Archive M4 issued by the accountants of the regular offerings bureau and stored in some earthenware jars in Room 3′ of the passageway of the southwest side of the Aššur Temple's outer courtyard (area hE4III) in the city of Assur (modern Qal'at Šerqāṭ),[1] a small number constitute the

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1. Pedersén 1985, 43; 1997, 126. For pictures of these pottery containers *in situ*, see Postgate 2013, 92 fig. 4.4 and Maul 2013, 563 fig. 2.

dossier regarding the activities of the family of the sailor Ḫimsātēya.[2] Most of these texts were stored in five jars found in broken condition that belong to the groups labelled with the find numbers Assur 18771,[3] 18773,[4] 18777,[5] 18781[6] and 18783.[7] A number of tablets were found between the clay jars and belong to the group Assur 18784,[8] while six texts cannot be identified since their excavation numbers are missing.[9] Although these tablet jars were uninscribed and contain no explicit reference to officials or reign period, it is clear that all the texts contained in them were issued during the tenure of Ezbu-lēšir in the regular offerings overseer's office; he was a high-ranking official in the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BCE). Some of the tablet jars of the regular offerings archive were exceptionally inscribed,[10] and two have the name of Ezbu-lēšir inscribed as the official responsible for the management of these offerings for the "House of Aššur".[11] In addition to simply inscribing the tablet containers, the administrative staff of the *ginā'u* bureau could also resort to visual language for classifying the documents issued by their office, as the engraved drawing of what seems to be a tablet on the shoulder of one of these jars shows.[12]

Past and more recent research focused on a number of aspects of the documents issued by the Regular Offerings House in Assur,[13] the administrative procedures and the overall system of management of the provincial contributions,[14] not to mention the political-reli-

2. KAJ 302; MARV 1 21; MARV 6 3; 26; 28; 52; 88; MARV 7 28; 36; 88; MARV 8 3; 62; 74; 96; MARV 9 14; 16; 95; MARV 10 86; 88. When the present study was written, these texts were accessible in TCMA, http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/tcma/ (last access: 16.11.2023). Texts MARV 6 28; 88; MARV 7 28; 36; 88; MARV 8 3; 62; 74; 96; MARV 9 14; 95 have not yet been published in TCMA.
3. MARV 10 88 (Assur 18771bp). See Pedersén 1985, 49, Group C, Ass. 18770.
4. MARV 6 3 (Assur 18773f); MARV 6 26 (Assur 18773az); MARV 6 28 (Assur 18773v); MARV 6 88 (Assur 18773w); MARV 8 74 (Assur 18773au). See Pedersén 1985, 50, Group D, Ass. 18772.
5. MARV 6 52 (Assur 18777bb). See Pedersén 1985, 51, Group F, Ass. 18776.
6. MARV 10 86 (Assur 18781bi). See Pedersén 1985, 50, Group H, Ass. 18781.
7. MARV 9 16 (Assur 18783aa). See Pedersén 1985, 52, Group K, Ass. 18783.
8. KAJ 302 (Assur 18784ga[?]; see Ebeling 1933, 23 and Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts and Editions in Portrait Format*, 603); MARV 7 28 (Assur 18784a); MARV 7 36 (Assur 18784cl); MARV 7 88 (Assur 18784bu[?]). See Pedersén 1985, 52, Group L, Ass. 18784.
9. MARV 1 21 (VAT 18008, Assur … k; see Pedersén 1985, 52, Group M); MARV 8 3 (VAT 20309, Assur …); MARV 8 62 (VAT 20690, Assur … w); MARV 8 96 (VAT 20730, Assur … au); MARV 9 14 (VAT 20097, Assur … a); MARV 9 95 (VAT 19209, Assur … ai).
10. The inscribed jars found in Room 3′ are labelled Ass. 18763, 18766 and 18827; see Pedersén 1985, 43 (Groups A, B, and I) and 1997, 126.
11. Ass. 18827 and 18766. For these inscribed jars, see Pedersén 1997, 126; the translations of the inscriptions are given in Postgate 2013, 90.
12. Maul 2013, 564 fig. 3. Visual communication through this pictogram could have been addressed to people who were unfamiliar with cuneiform writing, as Maul observes. The recipients of this visual language may have been the illiterate staff in the service of the *ginā'u* bureau, who needed to know the contents of the jars, especially if the containers were sealed and had to be moved to another place or administrative office.
13. Pedersén 1985, 43–53; 1998, 84–85; Freydank 1997, 47–52; 2011, 431–440; 2016, esp. 53–82, 102–177; Postgate 2013, 89–146; Maul 2013, 561–574; Gauthier 2016.
14. Gaspa 2011a, 161–222; 2011b, 233–259; Postgate 2013, 89–146; Gauthier 2016.

gious meaning in terms of collective or state identity presumably attached to the provincial duty to pay the annual tax for the regular offerings of the "national" cultic centre of the "Land of Aššur".[15] Professions, social contacts and interactions between professional groups and institutional bodies are crucial aspects of Middle Assyrian society and economy, and can be reconsidered in the light of studies on social network analysis, as applied to cuneiform archives.[16] Middle Assyrian boatmen have been the subject of research in works on professions[17] and the administrative management of the *ginā'u*-tax and provincial shipments,[18] but the existing M4 documentation allows for an in-depth study of individual groups of texts or "dossiers" on those boatmen who appear most frequently in the archive.

The following analysis, therefore, focuses on the group of texts from the Archive M4 that deal with river transport activity performed by Ḫimsātēya and other individuals identifiable as his relatives; for the sake of clarity, these texts are referred to as "Ḫimsātēya's dossier". The inquiry discusses the individuals engaged in *ginā'u*-related river transportation in the framework of the Tigris River system and other individuals whose roles were also crucial in the management of *ginā'u*-goods shipping.

The sailors' activities and the socio-professional contacts they had with the institutional sector are discussed in light of the available documentation. From the perspective of social network analysis, Middle Assyrian sailors can be considered both actors at the centre of a network of relations and part of other actors' networks. These differ not only in the properties of the ties and the social-occupational positions of the other actors in the system but also in the geographical setting in which the networks are situated.[19]

In addition to reconstructing the social and professional context in which these sailors acted, the present study reconsiders the *ginā'u* system in terms of shipments. The administrative management of the transport and consignment of shipments emerges at least in part through the available texts, since many aspects remain unknown. The administrative procedures of which the available texts from Ḫimsātēya's dossier and the entire Archive M4 bear traces are therefore taken into account in the present study. Through the microhistory of this boatman's family and the shipments they consigned, we can gain deeper insights into the management of the *ginā'u* provincial contributions by the Assyrian state, the river transport organisation, the record-keeping practices followed by the scribes, and the administrative procedures involved.

2. Ḫimsātēya and his river journeys

If one were to look for a link to the profession in the personal names of Middle Assyrian boatmen, one would soon be disappointed. With the exception of names that explicitly

15. Maul 2013, 569–574; Postgate 2013, 89.
16. On the applicability, advantages and problems of this method, see Waerzeggers 2014.
17. Jakob 2003, 500–507.
18. Gauthier 2016, 199–252. See Gaspa 2023 for a prosopographical study.
19. On these aspects, see Waerzeggers 2014, 210–213.

mention the boatman's activity (*malāḫu*) or hydronyms of the main waterways[20] where their activity presumably took place — certainly to be understood as auspicious for the name-bearer and his everyday work[21] — the onomastics of Middle Assyrian boatmen is in line with that of the time. The personal name borne by the sailor Ḫimsātēya derives from the plural word *ḫimsātu*, "wrongful possessions",[22] or from *ḫimṣātu*, "plundered goods".[23] One cannot exclude the possibility that this anthroponym was a nickname,[24] although the reason why he was so called remains unknown. This is also true if one considers that name-giving in his family seems to have been almost entirely in line with Assyrian anthroponymy, as shown by the theophoric names borne by his relatives.

Ḫimsātēya was one of the boatmen involved in the transport of *ginā'u* contributions on waterways from the provinces of the Middle Assyrian kingdom to the administrative bureau in charge of this tax in Assur during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I.[25] As with all the sailors recruited for the mobilisation of *ginā'u* products from the provinces, the Archive M4 documents only shed light on the transport activity performed for the regular offerings bureau, while nothing is known about this sailor's career as boatman before or after his service to the *ginā'u* administration. Although limited to few texts, the dossier concerning Ḫimsātēya and members of his family is of great importance, since it allows to reconstruct the connections of this family of boatmen with the *ginā'u* administration in Assur across different generations. Ḫimsātēya's activity in the service of the *ginā'u* administration covers the period from the *līmu* of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu to that of Mudammeq-

20. A theophoric name borne by some Middle Assyrian *malāḫu*s explicitly refers to the profession of boatmanship through the qualification of the supreme Assyrian deity. See the name *Aššur-malāḫ*, "Aššur is the boatman" (MARV 1 21, 8; 56, 29; MARV 2 24, r.15, 19; env. r.4″; MARV 3 38, 3; MARV 5 3, r.16; 31, 5′; MARV 6 42, 15; 88, 11). Another type of name is attested in sailor onomastics and concerns the Tigris, as witnessed by the anthroponym *Ṣillī-Digla*, "My shade/protection is the Tigris" (BATSH 18/6 27, r.11; MARV 5 3, e.14; MARV 8 94, e.8; MARV 9 98, 6, r.10). For the variant referring to the Euphrates, see the form *Ṣillī-Puratte* (BATSH 18/6 74, 26′; 77, 28″), but this was not borne by boatmen. Another Tigris-based anthroponym is *Digla-ēriš*, "The Tigris has desired", borne by the father of the sailor Šalgu (MARV 10 16, 2). The tradition of naming individuals after the Tigris was well rooted in second-millennium BCE Assyria, both for men and women; in the Middle Assyrian anthroponymy, see, *e.g.*, *Digla-[…]-aḫḫēšu*, *Digla-ašarēd*, *Digla-šarrat*, *Digla-šēzibat*, *Mār-Digla*, *Kidin-Digla*, *Nūr-Digla*, *Sīqi-Digla*, *Šēpē-Digla*, *Tašme-Digla*, *Ṭāb-pî-Digla*, *Ummī-Digla*, and *Urad-Digla*. On river-based names in Middle Assyrian nomenclature, see also the name *Nāru-erīb* and perhaps also *Ḫābūr-eli*.

21. In the case of sailors' families, this name-giving practice may be considered an integral part of apotropaic practices in use among communities that lived on river transport and was principally aimed at protecting the boatman and his navigation. To some extent, it may be considered analogous to the act of painting or adding eye-shaped elements or other protective elements on the bows of boats, which is still practiced in various parts of the world.

22. CDA, 116b; AHw, 346b. For the verb *ḫummusum*, "to oppress", see CDA, 120a.

23. According to CAD Ḫ, 191b, *ḫimsātu* is the Assyrian form of *ḫimṣātu*, "booty, spoils; gain, profits". See also Saporetti 1970, 123: "bottino". For the verb *ḫamāṣu*, "to tear off, plunder", see CDA, 103b.

24. A non-abbreviated hypocoristic name, according to Saporetti 1970, 87. The name does not appear in the Neo-Assyrian onomastics.

25. On the sailor Ḫimsātēya in previous studies, see Jakob 2003, 502; Postgate 2013, 102f., 123; Freydank 2016, 87–89. For a discussion of the activities of both this sailor and his family, see Gauthier 2016, 205, 230–233.

Bēl, possibly around the middle of the reign.[26] There is consensus that the eponymate of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu constituted the second regnal year of Tiglath-pileser I.[27] It is less clear when the eponymate of Mudammeq-Bēl should be situated within the reign period of this king. According to H. Freydank, it is to be dated to the middle of his reign, perhaps corresponding to the 18th year.[28] Recently, P.E. Gauthier proposed to identify this *līmu* with the 14th regnal year.[29] Both these hypotheses indicate a period of more than a decade in which this boatman worked in river transport. The preserved texts testify to the periods within the time span from the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu to that of Mudammeq-Bēl in which he was available to conduct journeys for the *ginā'u* administration. Other attestations of the activities conducted by this sailor in the Archive M4 documents in which no dates are provided or that cannot be reconstructed[30] are probably to be dated to the same reign. Some texts mentioning Ḫimsātēya and some of his sons show that they operated when Ezbu-lēšir held the office of overseer of the regular offerings (*rab ginā'e*).[31] A list of shipments received in Assur, dated to the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, mentions Ḫimsātēya as the transporter of a barley load from the province of Ḫalaḫḫu and a person who received a cargo, apparently acting as a deputy of Ezbu-lēšir in the role of receiver of *ginā'u* contributions.[32] The *ginā'u* supervisor Ezbu-lēšir is also mentioned in a tabular account dated to the year of Aššur-šallimšunu;[33] in this text a nephew of Ḫimsātēya is mentioned among a number of boatmen.[34] The name Ezbu-lēšir occurs in another record of shipments received, this one dated to the *līmu* of Ina-ilīya-allak, that also includes a barley load brought by Ḫimsātēya from Ḫalaḫḫu.[35] A text dated to the year of Šamaš-apla-ēriš explicitly attests that Ezbu-lēšir received the *ginā'u* contribution related to the year of Aššur-šallimšunu from the province of Katmuḫḫu, part of which constituted the shipment brought by two sons of Ḫimsātēya.[36]

Patronyms represent a valuable source of information for reconstructing family ties in Middle Assyrian society. Concerning the texts of Archive M4, the scribes working for the regular offerings bureau do not seem to have systematically or consistently recorded the patronyms of the individuals engaged in transporting the *ginā'u*-related provincial goods

26. KAJ 302, 10; MARV 1 21, 6; MARV 6 3, 7; 26, 8; 52, r.15; 88, 7; MARV 8 96, 14′; MARV 9 14, r.50′–51′; 16, 4, r.6. The occurrence of MARV 6 3 is omitted in the list of attestations of this sailor in Gauthier 2016, 203.
27. Bloch 2012, 48; Freydank 2016, 128, 155; Gauthier 2016, 716.
28. Freydank 1991, 151; 2016, 128, 160.
29. Gauthier 2016, 717.
30. MARV 6 28, r.8′ (= MARV 1 66); MARV 8 3, 9′, 15′; 74, 9, e.13.
31. MARV 6 26, r.15; 52, e.19; MARV 9 14, r.55′. On the role of supervisor of the regular offerings, see Jakob 2003, 175–181. On Ezbu-lēšir, see Postgate 2013, 90–93 and Freydank 2016, 79–81, 122–124.
32. MARV 6 52, r.17-e.21. See also TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P283270 (last access: 16.11. 2023). The beginning of the name in line r.18 ˹MÍ˺.*la*-˹x-x˺-[…] seems to indicate that a woman acted as a substitute for the *rab ginā'e*.
33. MARV 9 95, r.29. For the restoration of the eponym's name, see Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions in Landscape Format*, *ad* MARV 9 95.
34. MARV 9 95, r.28.
35. MARV 9 14, r.54′–56′.
36. MARV 6 26, r.13–16.

to Assur. In some cases, the use of the patronym clearly served to distinguish otherwise homonymous individuals. In other situations, a patronym could be used in the first mention of the sailor in a document and omitted in the rest of the same text. Some scribes omitted the patronym completely in their texts, probably because the person in question was well known to the administrators and accountants, so there was no need to include redundant information in the records. The scope of these administrative texts also played a role in these omissions of the boatmen's fathers' names. A relevant number of them were ephemeral documents, not intended to archival destination as a reference text for long-term consultation and as sources to compile multi-period accounts. Consequently, the information contained in them was reduced to essential data. Analogous considerations may be made regarding the professional title of *malāḫu*, which is not consistently used by the *ginā'u* accountants. Presumably, information on Ḫimsātēya's occupation was considered unnecessary and redundant by the scribes in light of the fact that he was among the long-term acquaintances of the *ginā'u* administrators and that his river transport service was well known.

Many texts from this dossier identify Ḫimsātēya as the son of a man called Sîn-idnanni.[37] Other documents which omit the patronym could also refer to this individual. The M4 text corpus provides no information on Sîn-idnanni. As he was Ḫimsātēya's father, one cannot exclude the possibility that he practised the same profession as his son, but this is purely conjectural.[38] That this name was used in sailors' onomastics of the period in which the *ginā'u* bureau was active in Assur is evident from a tabular-formatted text whose multi-column layout lists quantities of barley delivered by a number of sailors, the arrears quotas to be paid by the supplying provinces and the names and patronyms of the sailors in charge of carrying these shipments to the capital's harbour.[39] One of the sailors mentioned in this document is the boatman Sîn-idnanni, son of a certain Tunūya.[40] However, the late date of this text shows that this *malāḫu* has nothing to do with Ḫimsātēya, since these sailors were active during the same period. Consequently, this Sîn-idnanni was probably another person, homonymous with Ḫimsātēya's father. Ḫimsātēya's father must have been active a generation earlier.

As Table 1 shows, Ḫimsātēya's activities are recorded in *ginā'u*-related documents that do not belong to the same text category. From the typological and function-related point of view, the majority of texts issued by the accountants of the *ginā'u* administrative unit are records that bear witness to the reception of Ḫimsātēya's cargoes in Assur, all of which concern quantities of barley.[41] This means that these records were written after the

37. MARV 1 21; MARV 6 88; MARV 8 3; MARV 9 14; 16. Note that in AMA, S, 57f. *s.v. Sîn-idnanni*, the occurrence in MARV 1 21, 6 is omitted, while the connection of the occurrence in MARV 9 14, r.51′ with Ḫimsātēya (line r.50′) is not expressed.
38. This anthroponym was not limited to Assur onomastics. An individual bearing the name Sîn-idnanni, father of a man called Gabbe-ina-Adad, is attested in a document from Kulišḫinaš. See AMA, S, 57 *s.v.*
39. Postgate 2013, 102; Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 9 95.
40. MARV 9 95, 3.
41. MARV 1 21; MARV 6 3; 88; MARV 8 3; 74; 96; MARV 9 14; 16.

cargoes reached the port of Assur and that their content was scrupulously measured and finally stored in the stores under the control of the *ginā'u* bureau. In the majority of cases, these documents were written in a text-production context and in a time period far from the events they describe. A type of written reporting which can be considered closer to the event is constituted by notes bearing tally marks and a brief description. Coarsely written notes with tally marks,[42] often on unusually shaped tablets, are illustrative of the cargo-checking operations carried out by the accountants in charge of measurement immediately after the arrival of a boatman in the harbour of Assur. Using a vertical wedge for each half homer (50 *qa* = 5 seahs), presumably the volume of each sack or other container of grain counted, the scribe graphically created "10-sack units" on the tablet, each corresponding to a volume of 5 homers (500 *qa*).[43] The value of 5 seahs was the volumetric capacity of the measuring vessel used by the accountant in measuring cargoes.[44] Rarely, the reverse side of these hastily written receipts with measurements bear traces of the (re)calculations the accountant made regarding the 10-wedge tally marks.[45] Later, the data of these measurements in such primary and laconic notes on the spot[46] were incorporated into secondary texts; namely, well-prepared, multi-shipment summary texts and

42. Tally marks were generally written by M4 scribes on the top part of a tablet's obverse side; see MARV 5 57; MARV 7 22; 46; 61; 83; MARV 8 27; 30; MARV 9 16; MARV 10 86; 88. Rarely, these marks were written on the reverse, as shown by MARV 6 78; MARV 8 13; MARV 10 86. Almost all date to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. In the disbursement document MARV 6 69, 7, tally marks are inserted at the bottom of the obverse, while in MARV 10 86, 4 they are in the penultimate line of the obverse. Interestingly, in the latter text, both obverse and reverse bear tally marks; see line r.5. In MARV 7 83, 1′ and MARV 10 86, r.5, there is no separate section for tally marks, but they are inserted in the line of writing, followed by the text.
43. Maul 2013, 566. The 50-*qa* unit for tally marks is widely attested in Archive M4; see MARV 5 57; MARV 6 69; MARV 7 22; 46; 61; 83; MARV 8 30; MARV 9 16; MARV 10 86; 88. Other equivalences are also attested: see MARV 8 13 and 27 for tally marks equivalent to one homer (= 100 *qa*), and the "10-sack unit" mark corresponding to 10 homers (= 1,000 *qa*). For a discussion, see Gaspa 2011b, 242f.; Gauthier 2016, 268, 755f.
44. Postgate 2016, 232.
45. Traces of both impressed marks and numerical signs are attested in M4 texts. Clearly, these signs were not part of the information on the cargo that had to be submitted to the *ginā'u* bureau after measurement. They were simply intended for the personal use of the author to help him in calculations or to double-check the correctness of calculations. The fact that isolated tally marks are written randomly on the writing space of a reverse side of a tablet, as shown in MARV 6 78, could be an indication of the function of these marks as an aid to the scribe's calculations. The creativity of the Assyrian bureaucrat can also be seen in different marks, all certainly drawn from his school training and everyday writing experience. On the top part of the reverse side of MARV 7 46, after writing the text on the obverse, the scribe made two rows of impressed circles with his stylus, each corresponding to a 10-wedge tally mark, adding some numerical entries referring to calculations of the tally marks in the low part of the same side. For a picture, see Maul 2013, 567 fig. 4b, and for a discussion, Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 393 *ad* MARV 7 46. In addition, note that the author of this text used another type of mark, different from the above-mentioned ones, to check that his calculations were correct: on the right-hand lower corner of the reverse, he incised five vertical parallel lines with the stylus.
46. Which, according to Cancik-Kirschbaum, would bear witness to the "first administrative level" of Middle Assyrian administrative practice. Tablets generated from this level of administrative work, such as reception of products or disbursement of state-owned commodities to employees, are "in intimate relation to concrete events"; see Cancik-Kirschbaum 2018, 5.

annual records. An example of this kind of primary text with tally marks appears in Ḫimsātēya's dossier.

Other texts in his dossier and in those of his relatives represent secondary texts; that is, documents written long after the events described that summarise data from primary texts, such as disbursement of products received to numbers of employees and records listing shipments received from various locations that were transported and consigned by different boatmen in different periods. As such, these texts represent the second level of the administrative work[47] of the *ginā'u* bureaucrats, and are not directly related to the primary accounting events they summarise. On the contrary, they testify to a process of internal re-organisation and systematisation of primary and individual data in a formal setting that is appropriate to this second-level administrative work,[48] which was aimed at the long-term storage of data for consultation and monitoring and communicating quantitative and qualitative information in essential, concise and easily accessible terms within the same office or administrative sector. The resulting picture that can be reconstructed about Ḫimsātēya's activities for the Regular Offerings House is therefore partial and unbalanced, consisting almost entirely of secondary, compilation documents. Single accounting events that precede the later compilation of partial or final multi-shipment accounts and that refer to procedures related to the various stages of organisation of the sailor's trip from the supplying province to Assur, the consignment of the cargo at the Assur's harbour, the checking operation on the received cargo and the storage of the commodities comprising the cargo in the storage facilities in Assur cannot be reconstructed with the available documentation, although these events may be inferred from the second-level documents.

In three documents in Ḫimsātēya's dossier, the administrators' focus is not on the reception of the shipments brought by the sailor (secondary information), but on the division of the total amount of grain into specific quotas to be allocated to officials of the temple staff (primary information).[49] Apart from an epistolary text whose main purpose is to confirm to the recipient the delivery of a cargo and the goods that comprised it, all the texts concerning this sailor involve his transport of *ginā'u* commodities to Assur. As with many documents issued by the regular offerings bureau, these texts from Ḫimsātēya's dossier are unsealed, an indication that they were internal records of this administrative unit. They were not intended for external readers and do not reflect bilateral transactions, but were reference documents — of different scope and "archival life" — for the same scribes in charge of managing the *ginā'u*-tax from the provinces and the allocation of these goods to temple staff responsible for processing them into end products.[50] The validity of these documents derives from their being issued institutionally.[51] The sole sealed document in the dossier is a short note still dealing with delivery of commodities, but the fragmentary status of the tablet does not help clarify its function.

47. Cancik-Kirschbaum 2018, 5.
48. Cancik-Kirschbaum 2018, 5f.
49. MARV 8 3; 96; MARV 9 14.
50. Postgate 2013, 135–138, 144.
51. Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 27.

The purpose of internal records also characterises the sole tabular text in Ḫimsātēya's dossier, which deals with multiple barley shipments delivered by various sailors from different contributing provinces. The dates of six texts are unknown, a fact that prevents us from understanding how these documents relate to the dated texts and from reconstructing the exact chronology of Ḫimsātēya's river transport activity for the *ginā'u* administration.

Text	*Date*	*Type of document and content*	*Notes*
KAJ 302	Unknown	Letter to Ezbu-lēšir	Confirmation of delivery of a load
MARV 1 21	After the 13th day of the month Muḫur-ilāni (X), eponym Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu	Reception of barley shipments	Unsealed
MARV 6 52	12th? day of the month Abu-šarrāni (XI), ep. Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu	Reception of barley shipments	Unsealed
MARV 6 88	Unknown, but possibly ep. Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu	Reception of barley shipments	Unsealed
MARV 6 3	Unknown, ep. Aššur-šallimšunu	Reception of multiple barley shipments	Unsealed; six-column tabular tablet
MARV 9 16	28th day of the month Abu-šarrāni (XI), ep. Ḫiyašāyu	Reception of barley and flour	Unsealed; tally marks made upon the arrival of the cargo
MARV 9 14	Day unknown of the month Abu-šarrāni (XI), ep. Ina-ilīya-allak	Reception of barley shipments	Unsealed; redistribution of barley to officials of the temple staff
MARV 6 28 (= MARV 1 66)	Unknown	Note on delivery of sesame and syrup	Sealed
MARV 8 3	Unknown	Disbursement of barley from received shipments	Unsealed; redistribution of barley to officials of the temple staff
MARV 8 74	Unknown	Reception of barley and fruit shipments	Unsealed
MARV 8 96	Unknown (ep. Mudammeq-Bēl?)	Disbursement of barley from received shipments	Unsealed; redistribution of barley to officials of the temple staff

Table 1. Types of documents regarding Ḫimsātēya's shipments.

As shown in Table 1, the earliest attestation of Ḫimsātēya's engagement in river transport of *ginā'u* products from the provinces informs us of the consignment of 11 homers 4 *sūtu*s of barley, measured using the *sūtu* of the *ša pirik ritte*-type, "the handbreadth seah", in the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu.[52] In this document, which summarises a number of shipments received according to transporters and the officials who managed them, the entry concerning Ḫimsātēya's shipment occurs between entries regarding two other sailors, Ninurtāya and Aššur-malāḫ. The same metrological unit was also used for the cargoes of these two boatmen, as well as for the one brought by Ḫubbutu.[53] According to this document, the cargo consigned by Ḫimsātēya was part of a larger quantity of 79 homers 9

52. MARV 1 21, 5–6. This occurrence of the anthroponym is omitted in AMA, Ḫ, 29 *s.v. Ḫimsātēju*.
53. MARV 1 21, 3, 7, 11.

*sūtu*s of barley received on the 13th? day of Muḫur-ilāni (10th month) of the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu.[54] In the totals section of the document, it is stated that the grand total is in accordance with the wording of a "large tablet of *receipts*",[55] clearly referring to an earlier record listing these incoming shipments.[56] This *ṭuppu rabītu* must have been a prior and partial compilation of shipments whose data were probably updated with the later records.[57] Unfortunately, the text does not mention the provenance of Ḫimsātēya's shipment, evidently because the author's purpose was not to clarify the identity of the *ginā'u* contributions' suppliers and the place of origin of the goods but to note the actors involved. By contrast, the province from which the *ginā'u* products were delivered to Assur is explicitly mentioned in other M4 documents. In the same year, the *līmu* of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, Ḫimsātēya was apparently involved in another river journey to bring 12? homers 4? seahs of barley from the province of Ḫalaḫḫu, as shown in a multi-shipment document dated to the 12th? day of Abu-šarrāni (11th month).[58] Interestingly, that cargo was not received and presumably also checked and measured on the premises of the *ginā'u* administration, as expected, but in an unspecified "gatehouse" (*bēt bābi*).[59] It is reasonable to think that the shipment in question was the same as the one described in the above-mentioned record and that the author simply amended the quantity of the cargo received by adding an extra homer,[60] presumably after a more thorough check of the archival documentation or after receiving the missing amount. This figure was probably considered the final one; the same quantity occurs in an annual tabular account, as discussed below.

It was only during the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur (1190–1179/1181–1169 BCE) that Ḫalaḫḫu was the seat of a governor, but one cannot exclude the possibility that it may have been a province well before this period.[61] Ḫalaḫḫu as a contributing province in the *ginā'u*-tax system is not limited to the time of Ḫimsātēya, since it had already provided barley and other *ginā'u*-related products in the reigns preceding the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. A cargo possibly from the province of Ḫalaḫḫu, and consisting of 62 homers of barley, 9 seahs, 3 *qa* of syrup and more than 160 *qa* of sesame, was brought by the sailor Aššur-kēttī-īde during the eponymous year of Ninurta-apil-Ekur.[62] In addition, 3 homers 3 seahs of sesame from that district appear among the *ginā'u* contributions received on

54. MARV 1 21, e.21, 24–25. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 5 *ad* MARV 1 21.
55. MARV 1 21, r.22–23 *ša pi-i* DUB-*pi* GAL-*te* / ˹*ša*?˺ *ma-ḫar ma-ḫar*.
56. Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 6 *ad* MARV 1 21, r.22–23.
57. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 6 *ad* MARV 1 21, r.22–23. Gauthier thinks that this *ṭuppu rabītu* could have been a writing board, but this seems improbable since the scribe uses the word *ṭuppu* rather than *lē'u*.
58. MARV 6 52, r.11–16. See Freydank 2016, 88 and Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 254 *ad* MARV 6 52. For the reconstruction of the eponym's name, see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 254, line 2: ^{m}*iš-tu–*$^{r d}$[*aš-šur–a-šàm-šu*]. See also TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P283270 (last access: 16.11.2023). For this occurrence of the sailor's name, see AMA, Ḫ, 29 *s.v.*
59. MARV 6 52, r.17.
60. Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 255 *ad* MARV 6 52, r.11.
61. Llop 2012, 102.
62. MARV 5 35, 5–6. The contributing province is mentioned in line 9. The date section of this list of deliveries in lines r.10′–11′ cites only the "received *ginā'u*" of the king, with no day or month.

the 24th day of Sîn (4th month), in the year of Bēr-nāṣir, during the same king's reign.[63] A cargo of sesame that originated from Ḫalaḫḫu was transported by Aššur-malāḫ, son of a certain Girdu, on the 25th day of Ḫibur (12th month), in the year of Erība-Aššur, during the same reign period.[64] A total amount of 50 homers of barley, presumably involving a number of small individual shipments, is recorded as the contribution from Ḫalaḫḫu on an unsealed and undated list of deliveries,[65] perhaps written during the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur or the beginning of Aššur-dān I's reign (1178–1134/1168–1134 BCE).[66] Another shipment from that province was received in the year of Da'iq-dēn-Aššur, possibly during the reign of Aššur-dān I; it was brought to Assur by the sailor Mardukīya and included 3? homers? of barley, 7 seahs of syrup and 1 homer and 8 seahs of fruit.[67] Moreover, a few years before Ḫimsātēya's shipment of 12? homers 4? seahs, a man called Kuriu, presumably another sailor recruited by the regular offerings administration, brought a cargo of 28 homers of barley from that province.[68]

Indeed, the mobilisation of the *ginā'u* contributions from the province of Ḫalaḫḫu seems to have been the primary task of Ḫimsātēya's engagement in the service of the regular offerings administration, but Ḫalaḫḫu's location is far from certain. Given that in the Neo-Assyrian period its territory included the city of Dūr-Šarrukēn (Ḫōrsābād) and that Tall al-'Abbāsīyah[69] and the Ba'ashiqa-Maqlūb hill range[70] have been suggested as plausible candidates for Ḫalaḫḫu,[71] it is reasonable to assume that the district in question lay between the provinces of Talmuššu to the west and Ninua and Šibanibe to the south and southeast.[72] Accordingly, it probably extended between the area of Dūr-Šarrukēn in the south and the source of the Ḫosr River in the north.[73] If these conclusions on the location of Ḫalaḫḫu are valid, Ḫimsātēya may have loaded his *ginā'u* cargoes at a port on a canal or river in that district and then sailed down the Ḫosr to its mouth on the Tigris and from there to Assur. An alternative route for Ḫimsātēya's river journeys to Assur may have been along the Ḫāzir to the Upper Zab and, upon reaching the confluence of the latter

63. MARV 6 29, r.13. On Bēr-nāṣir as one of the eponyms of the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur, see Freydank 1991, 129 and 2016, 31, 145. According to Freydank 2016, 31, the year of Bēr-nāṣir probably corresponded to the 8th regnal year of this king. For the hypothesis that his eponymate was the 5th regnal year of Ninurta-apil-Ekur, see Gauthier 2016, 715.
64. MARV 3 38, 1–5. The exact year of this eponym remains unidentified. This *līmu* seems to have occurred after Ninurta-apil-Ekur's reign, as stated in Freydank 1991, 133. However, according to Freydank 2016, 31, this eponymate is to be assigned to the beginning of that king's reign; perhaps it corresponded to the 4th regnal year. In Bloch 2012, 35f., 46, the *līmu* of Erība-Aššur is regarded as representing the antepenultimate (11th) regnal year of Ninurta-apil-Ekur. Bloch's hypothesis is followed in Gauthier 2016, 715.
65. MARV 8 94, r.14.
66. Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 527 *ad* MARV 8 94.
67. MARV 6 10, 1–5.
68. MARV 7 15, 4′–6′. See AMA, K, 67 *s.v. Kurû*[…].
69. Forrer 1920, 112. See Nashef 1982, 115.
70. Reade 1978, 52f. Reade's suggestion is followed in Parpola & Porter 2001, maps 4 and 28; see Rosa 2010, 332 fn. 32.
71. Postgate 1985, 97.
72. See also Postgate 2013, 31 fig. 2.1.
73. Rosa 2010, 332.

with the Tigris, along the main river to the capital's port. In all likelihood, an experienced boatman with a fully laden boat would certainly have been able to take the right measures when navigating from the mouth of the Upper Zab to enter the waters of the Tigris.[74]

One text referring to Ḫimsātēya is a letter from the same archive, which is addressed to Ezbu-lēšir, the supervisor of the regular offerings administration.[75] Provincial officials often wrote directly to the *ginā'u* supervisor to describe small cargoes they had organised, entrusting them to specific sailors.[76] In this letter, the sender, one Ṣillīya, presumably a provincial official of a contributing district, as N. Postgate suggests,[77] or a member of the *ginā'u* administration,[78] states that he had delivered large quantities of commodities for regular offerings, evidently to the capital. The cargo consisted of 50 homers of barley, one homer of syrup, and 1 homer and 5 seahs of sesame.[79] These quantitative details indirectly confirm that the loading of the boat was monitored by the local authorities or representatives of the governor, and that the goods loaded were measured by the accountants of the provincial government. The place from which the commodities came is not specified in this epistolary text, but Ḫalaḫḫu cannot be ruled out.[80] Ṣillīya explicitly states that the goods were loaded onto Ḫimsātēya's boat,[81] and that in addition to the aforesaid cargo, he was sending his lord Ezbu-lēšir wine and two sheep as a personal gift.[82] Ṣillīya's message to the head of the regular offerings bureau does not indicate the load in the *malāḫu*'s boat with a specific term, which at least from the tabular list MARV 5 5 seems to be indicated by the term *tarkubtu*,[83] possibly referring to the act of loading goods and hence to the cargo.[84]

In a landscape-formatted list of shipments received in Assur, possibly dated to the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu (the same period as the records discussed above), Ḫimsātēya is associated with a cargo from Ḫalaḫḫu of an unspecified good, in all likelihood barley,

74. As observed in De Graeve 1981, 9, entering the Tigris from the Upper Zab, a river with a considerable discharge, was difficult because of the meandering of the main river.
75. KAJ 302. See Ebeling 1933, 23. The text has been re-edited in Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 603, and in TCMA (http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P282315; last access: 20.02.2023); see also Jakob 2003, 178f.; Freydank 2016, 89; Postgate 2013, 103. This attestation of the anthroponym is omitted in AMA, Ḫ, 29–31 *s.v.*
76. Another case is represented by a letter of Šamaš-abī-īde, in which the sender informs the same *rab ginā'e* that he has organised a shipment of 6 homers of sesame as *ginā'u* payment to be brought to his lord via the boatman Ḫurādāyu; see MARV 2 8, 3–7.
77. Postgate 2013, 95 fn. 17.
78. For the possibility that he was an agent dispatched by Ezbu-lēšir to organise the delivery of the *ginā'u* goods from that district, see Gauthier 2016, 232.
79. KAJ 302, 6–8.
80. Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 604 *ad* KAJ 302.
81. KAJ 302, 9–11.
82. KAJ 302, e.12–r.15. See Postgate 2013, 103.
83. MARV 5 5, 5, 7, 8, r.18, 21, 24, 28. See Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 5 5 and TCMA (http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P283401; last access: 16.11.2023).
84. For the interpretation that *tarkubtu* refers to the loading and a charge associated with river transport, see Postgate 2013, 101. Other authors think that the term simply means "cargo". See Gauthier 2016, 224, and De Ridder 2021, 228.

amounting to more than 15 homers and measured by the handbreadth *sūtu*.[85] Here, the scribe summarises the data of previously received shipments according to the criteria followed in the text dated to the 12th(?) day of Abu-šarrāni, but also integrates the names of the supplying provinces, among which is Ḫalaḫḫu. It is in any case unclear how this document correlates with the final annual account of the eponymate of Aššur-šallimšunu, since most of the figures in its columns are lost and the preserved ones do not agree with the quantity of more than 15 *emāru*s.

According to an annual account of shipments structured into a large, six-column tabular format, a type of accurately prepared document destined for a longer archival life in the regular offerings administrative unit and whose data were presumably drawn by the author from previous records of individual cargo deliveries and prior and partial multi-shipment summaries, Ḫimsātēya transported various quantities of barley from Ḫalaḫḫu in the year of Aššur-šallimšunu.[86] How this *līmu* could be related to the known chronology of Tiglath-pileser I's eponyms is unclear. H. Freydank suggested that this eponym might be dated to the reign of Aššur-rēša-iši I (1131–1115 BCE) or of Tiglath-pileser I, more specifically in the final years of Aššur-rēša-iši I or the early years of Tiglath-pileser I.[87] P.E. Gauthier put forward the hypothesis that Aššur-šallimšunu's *līmu* was the 3rd regnal year of Tiglath-pileser I.[88] The multi-column layout, the horizontal rulings to delimit the boatmen's sections, and the totals section for each boatman listed shows that the author's focus was on partial and grand totals of the quantities of *ginā'u* barley received from a number of provinces during the year in question. Consequently, each column would represent a single shipment or the total volume of different small shipments received during a specific period of the year.[89] The fragmentary status of the passage of the text concerning the quantities of barley transported by Ḫimsātēya prevents us from knowing the specific amounts transported in each trip (or the total quantities each resulting from his multiple trips within a specific period) and consigned during the year, along with the grand total received by the *ginā'u* administration during this accounting period. Only in the fourth and sixth columns are the figures of the transported quantities of grain partially readable: one shipment consisted of more than one homer, while another amounted to 12 homers 4 seahs.[90] It is worth noting that the latter figure corresponds to the quantity recorded in one of the above-mentioned multi-shipment accounts referring to a cargo consigned in a specific period of the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu.[91] Following Gauthier's hy-

85. MARV 6 88, 6f. See Freydank 2016, 87f. and Postgate 2013, 101; for this occurrence of the name, see AMA, Ḫ, 30 *s.v.*
86. MARV 6 3, 6–7. For the restoration of line 7, see Freydank 2016, 87, and Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 6 3. This occurrence of the name is listed in AMA, *Iniziale frammentaria*, 108 *s.v.* […]-*tēja*. The grid of vertical rulings of this tabular account is not consistently applied by the scribe; the obverse shows a five-column grid, while the reverse has six columns.
87. See Freydank 1991, 87, 123; 2016, 101.
88. Gauthier 2016, 716.
89. On this aspect, see Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 6 3. Gauthier suggests that the amount listed in each column represents the quantity received within a two-month period.
90. MARV 6 3, 6: ˹1+x ANŠE˺ and 12 ANŠE 4 BÁN.
91. MARV 6 52, r.11; the same cargo is recorded in MARV 1 21, 5.

pothesis, we would expect to find the other quantity attested, corresponding to more than 15 homers, in one of the other columns, but no signs are visible on this section of the tablet.[92] Presumably, the Ḫalaḫḫean barley also transported by Ḫimsātēya was measured by the accountants by the metrological unit of the *pirik ritte* seah; it seems that this seah was the predominant measure used in the barley cargoes received during the year of Aššur-šallimšunu, as we read in this document.[93]

Some years later, Ḫimsātēya was involved in transporting another quantity of barley, as evident from a succinct and coarsely made note on a landscape-formatted tablet written upon the arrival of the cargo and dated to the year of Ḫiyašāyu. This eponymate probably occurred in the first third of Tiglath-pileser I's reign, more precisely in the early years, if we follow Freydank's suggestion;[94] it could have been his 4th regnal year,[95] while Gauthier proposes the 5th regnal year.[96] The information contained in the document is essential (*i.e.*, quantities carried, identity of the transporter and date of consignment) and reflects the administrative event determined by the arrival of the boat at the port, the unloading operations and the measurement made by the *ginā'u* accountant. Interestingly, an important piece of information is not included in this short text; the provenance of the load carried in Ḫimsātēya's boat is not indicated by the scribe, but it was probably the province of Ḫalaḫḫu.[97] The quantity of barley measured upon the arrival of Ḫimsātēya's vessel is indicated on the tablet by 160 tally marks engraved on the first half of the obverse side, and the figure of 80 homers is noted in the prose text section.[98] The equivalence between tally marks and the numerical entry shows that the accountant used the 50-*qa* seah in his measurements of Ḫimsātēya's cargo. The scribe puts much more emphasis on identifying the transporter. Indeed, the boatman's identity is indicated twice in this document: at the end of the section regarding barley,[99] and at the end of another section that mentions a quantity of more than 170 *qa* of flour.[100] In the latter, Ḫimsātēya is identified by his personal name and patronym. Like the wine and sheep mentioned in Ṣillīya's missive, the presence of flour in Ḫimsātēya's cargo shows that the river transport of *ginā'u* goods could include products beyond the ones that constituted the standard commodities of the *ginā'u*-tax. These goods might not necessarily be linked to the tax for regular offerings, and probably served as personal gifts to consolidate social and professional relationships

92. No reconstruction of the figures in columns 1, 2, 3 and 5 is suggested in TCMA (http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P288636; last access: 16.11.2023). Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 6 3, tentatively proposes that the first column includes the figure "x+1500 *qa*". However suggestive this hypothesis may be, the number is in any case not visible in the CDLI photo of the tablet at https://cdli.ucla.edu/P288636 (last access: 16.11.2023).
93. MARV 6 3, 11, e.19, r.21, 27. The same metrological unit is restored by Gauthier in lines 3, 5, 9; see Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 6 3.
94. Freydank 1991, 87, 138; 2016, 128, 148.
95. Freydank 2016, 128.
96. Gauthier 2016, 717.
97. Gauthier 2016, 231.
98. MARV 9 16, 1–3.
99. MARV 9 16, 4; see Freydank 2016, 89 and AMA, Ḫ, 31 *s.v.*
100. MARV 9 16, r.6. See AMA, Ḫ, 31 *s.v.*

with higher-ranking officials in return for favours. In any case, the presence or absence of these additional goods was determined by the space left available inside the transporter's boat after loading the *ginā'u*-related provincial commodities.

In the eponymate of Ina-ilīya-allak, identified as the 6th regnal year of Tiglath-pileser I,[101] Ḫimsātēya continued to serve the regular offerings bureau through river trips from Ḫalaḫḫu. A record concerning the reception of a number of shipments from provinces on different dates and whose barley quantities were distributed to *alaḫḫinu*s and brewers of the Aššur Temple staff sheds further light on this sailor's activity. This is another type of second-level document, in which the scribe's interest is in the allocation on specific days of the same year of the grain cargoes received to a number of employees in charge of processing the barley and the exact individual quotas into which the total amounts were divided. In the case of this journey, the amount of barley carried from Ḫalaḫḫu was 220 homers,[102] a decidedly exceptional quantity when compared to his previous loads. This cargo arrived on an otherwise unknown day of Abu-šarrāni (11th month),[103] and was measured using the handbreadth seah,[104] a capacity measure that had also been used by the *ginā'u* accountants in Ḫimsātēya's previous missions. Once carefully checked and measured, the barley was then allocated to the above-mentioned temple officials.[105] To judge from the grand total section of this account, the quantity of barley recorded was in accordance with what was stated in a previous — literally, "old" (*labērtu*) — document of Ezbu-lēšir.[106] Was this *ṭuppu labērtu* sealed or unsealed? We can suppose that this was an earlier formal document attesting to the reception of these barley quantities from suppliers, and as such did not bear any seal. In this case, the *ṭuppu labērtu* was probably analogous to the *ṭuppu rabītu* cited in the above-discussed account.[107] Multi-shipment accounts were unilateral and informal documents that the *ginā'u* office issued for internal purposes and were thus not sealed.[108] If Ezbu-lēšir's *ṭuppu* in question were a sealed document, it would be unusual for the author not to use the terminology regarding formal documents and sealing,[109] but only generically refer to a prior tablet related to Ezbu-lēšir. Perhaps the best explanation for the use of the phrase *ana pî ṭuppe labērte*[110] is that the

101. See Freydank 1991, 87, 142; 2016, 128, 152; Gauthier 2016, 717.
102. MARV 9 14, r.48′–51′. See Freydank 2016, 88f., and Gauthier 2016, 231. On this occurrence of the name, see AMA, Ḫ, 31 *s.v.*
103. MARV 9 14, r.41′. Note that in lines 1 and e.28 the days 24th and 16th+x, respectively, are indicated.
104. MARV 9 14, r.49′.
105. MARV 9 14, r.52′–53′. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 538f., *ad* MARV 9 14.
106. Gauthier transliterates lines r.55′–56′ as *ša* ˹*a*?*-na pi*?*-i*? DUB? SUMUN˺ *ša* m*ez-bu*—˹SI˺.SÁ / *ma-aḫ-*˹*ru*˺*-ú-*˹*ni*˺; see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 537, *ad* MARV 9 14.
107. MARV 1 21, r.22–23.
108. See Postgate 2013, 136 on tabulated annual accounts of receipts or arrears.
109. For the terminology regarding formal documents (*kiṣirtu*) and sealing (*kunukku*), see MARV 3 36, r.17–18; env. 85 3′–4′; MARV 5 7, 16–e.18; 42, r.14–15; env. 1″. See also Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 539f., *ad* MARV 9 14, r.55′.
110. For the possibility that the formula *ana pî ṭuppi*, "according to the wording of the tablet", is used in MARV 9 14, r.55′, see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 539f., *ad* line r.55′. The phrase is also attested in the document AuOrS 1 105, 4 (TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/tsh1/P531095; last access 16.11.2023).

"old document" in question was an informal document, more precisely a summary of receipts, that simply mentioned in its final section the *rab ginā'e* as the one who received the contributions from the suppliers.

Ḫimsātēya also occurs in a sealed note on a landscape-formatted tablet with an unpreserved eponymal name[111] regarding a delivery of sesame and syrup,[112] and in a document of unknown date[113] concerning barley disbursement.[114] In the former document, unfortunately damaged, the presence of the sealing on the top part of the obverse side, representing a winged centaur armed with bow and arrow in front of the motif of the so-called "Assyrian sacred tree" or "tree of life",[115] attests to the bilateral function of the document[116] and admission to liability.[117] Possibly, it was a bilateral receipt involving a high-ranking official.[118] What is clear is that the sailor in question was a long-term acquaintance of the *ginā'u* administrators, having brought a number of provincial shipments to Assur. In the rest of Ḫimsātēya's dossier, no document bears sealing. However, the sealed note on sesame and syrup also had an internal function as written evidence of the administrative event in question for the memory of the author or colleagues at the same bureau, since the scribe wrote down the content so as not to forget, as the final phrase of the text implies.[119]

In the latter text, which follows the format of disbursement documents, different cargoes of barley are said to have been distributed to officials, although the scribe does not specify the dates on which the various quantities were so allocated. In this text, Ḫimsātēya is probably mentioned as the person responsible for transporting the grain cargo to the capital. However, one wonders whether this task was performed with the cooperation of another individual (sailor? official?) whose name is only partially readable on the tablet.[120] The figure concerning the total amount of barley brought by this boatman is broken

111. MARV 6 28, r.12′ (= MARV 1 66) [*li*]-*mu* ^{m}x[…].
112. MARV 6 28, r.8′–9′ (= MARV 1 66). As observed by Freydank in MARV 6 *Inhaltsübersicht*, 9, this text is characterised by unusually syllabic writing of one of the commodities listed (line 2: *di-iš-pu*.M[EŠ?]) and Ḫimsātēya's professional qualification (line r.9: ˹LÚ.˺*ma-la-ḫu*), along with a certain degree of confusion about the usual writing of the word "sesame" (line 1: GIŠ.ŠE.˹Ì.MEŠ˺, but line 5: ŠE.GIŠ.˹Ì.MEŠ˺). On this occurrence of the sailor's name, see AMA, Ḫ, 29 *s.v.*
113. The mention of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu in line r.11′ confirms that the document was written during Tiglathpileser I's reign. For the possibility that it dates to around the first decade of his reign, see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 467 *ad* MARV 8 3.
114. MARV 8 3, 8′–9′; see Freydank 2016, 88. For this occurrence of the anthroponym see AMA, Ḫ, 30 *s.v.*
115. Seal no. 11 (VAT 16397); see MARV 6 *Siegelkatalog*, 83 for a description and Pl. 13, nos. 33–35 for a picture and line drawings of the reconstructed seal.
116. On the categories of bilateral sealed documents issued by the *ginā'u* bureau, see Postgate 2013, 130–134, 138, 144.
117. See Postgate 2013, 75.
118. See Gauthier 2016, 265.
119. MARV 6 28, r.10; on this formula, see Postgate 2013, 80. For the suggestion that the phrase characterised informal documents written by the *ginā'u* supervisor, see Gauthier 2016, 669–671.
120. MARV 8 3, 9′–10′ [*i-na* ŠU] ˹^{m}˺*ḫi-im-sa-te-ia* DUMU 30—*id-na-ni* / […] ˹x-x˺-*ia-e*. No suggestion is made in Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 466 *ad* MARV 8 3 regarding the name in line 10′.

on the tablet, but it must have consisted of a number of homers.[121] Interestingly, the metrological unit used in this case to measure this load was the 12-*qa sūtu*,[122] not the handbreadth *sūtu*. According to the same text, it appears that Ḫimsātēya was also involved in a second delivery, with an amount of barley still measured by the seah of 12 *qa*, but in this case in the *ḫiṣnu* mode;[123] namely, by retaining the grain within the measuring vessel, possibly by levelling off the top of the contents with a tool, as suggested by Postgate.[124] The scribe does not indicate the provenance of either cargo. The only place of origin of *ginā'u* barley in this text is explicitly indicated in two sections on the reverse of the tablet.[125] It seems that the quantitative information contained in this text was checked by the scribe, as the horizontal checking marks (AŠ-signs) before two entries in a section of the reverse suggest.[126] Checking marks constitute another category of the extrinsic features of a document[127] and convey information concerning the completeness and accuracy of what was written. They may have been added during the revision of the text by the author himself and thus be contemporaneous with the text production. Alternatively, they might have been added by a second scribe, presumably in charge of double-checking the work of the document's author at a stage following but not too distant from the production of the text.

A further cargo entrusted to Ḫimsātēya is recorded in an undated and rather concise list of shipments of barley and fruit, which shows the same "quantity — metrological unit — transporter" format of the two above-discussed accounts in the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu.[128] According to this text, the boatman brought a load of more than 25 homers (of barley) to the capital.[129] In some of this document's entries, the metrological unit used to measure the barley quantities is the seah of 50 *qa*,[130] and it is reasonable to think that it was also used in the measurement of Ḫimsātēya's barley cargo.[131] In this case too, the contributing province is not mentioned by the scribe, but one wonders why the name of Kulišḫinaš was included in the final section of the document.[132] We ignore whether the province mentioned at the end of the text was the place of origin of all the cargoes listed

121. MARV 8 3, 8′ [PAP …] ˹ANŠE˺.
122. MARV 8 3, 8′.
123. MARV 8 3, 14′–15′. The metrological notation in lines 14′–15′ *ḫi-˹iṣ˺-nu* / […]-˹*di*?˺ may refer to the expression *ḫiṣnu madid*, "measured in the *ḫiṣnu* mode"; see Postgate 2016, 235. Note that in Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 466 *ad* MARV 8 3, this measuring technique is only translated as "*ḫiṣnu*-style". In De Ridder 2021, 169, the term *ḫiṣnu* is considered as a designation for a type of barley, while no mention is made about measuring.
124. Postgate 2016, 237.
125. MARV 8 3, r.7′, 15′.
126. MARV 8 3, r.8′, 9′. Perhaps these marks were also present in other lines of the tablet, but the broken parts at the beginning of each line on both the obverse and reverse prevent us from knowing.
127. For the extrinsic and intrinsic features of a text in the terminology of diplomatics as applied to administrative documents, see Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 26–28.
128. MARV 1 21; MARV 6 88; see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 516 *ad* MARV 8 74.
129. MARV 8 74, 8–9; for this attestation of the name, see AMA, Ḫ, 30 *s.v.*
130. MARV 8 74, 1, 6.
131. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 515 *ad* MARV 8 74.
132. MARV 8 74, r.1′ ˹x˺ […URU?.*ku*?-*liš*?]-*ḫi-na-˹áš*!?˺; see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 515.

or, much more likely, only of a shipment that was probably mentioned in the last, heavily damaged lines of the reverse. If Ḫimsātēya's cargo originated in Kulišḫinaš, it is reasonable to think that it was transported overland to the nearest port of embarkation along the Tigris, where the boatman could load it into his boat and start his trip to Assur. The identification of the site of Kulišḫinaš, the capital of the homonymous province, is far from certain. It may have been located in the northeastern part of the Upper Ḫābūr basin (Tell ʻĀmūdā)[133] or in the southern part of the Ḫābūr triangle.[134]

The final attestation of Ḫimsātēya is in an undated document, perhaps to be dated to the year of Mudammeq-Bēl,[135] which concerns the transport of more than one homer[?] and one seah of barley received by *sirāšû*s and *alaḫḫinu*s of the Aššur Temple.[136] In this case, each section of the text probably specified the date of disbursement[137] in addition to the individual quotas of barley that were distributed to officials of the temple staff, the total amount received by these employees, and the person in charge of the transport of the cargo. However, no date is preserved in the text, and the only *malāḫu* mentioned in the document is Ḫimsātēya.

The name of this boatman or a homonymous individual also appears in an undated document that belongs to the text group Assur 18771 of Archive M4. That text lists quantities of an unknown commodity (barley?) apparently allocated to a number of individuals,[138] but the purpose of this disbursement and the professions of the people listed are obscure.[139] Moreover, the names of the individuals listed before and after the entry regarding the individual called Ḫimsātēya do not help identify him.[140]

During the same period in which the boatman Ḫimsātēya conducted his river trips to transport quantities of *ginā'u* barley from the supplying provinces to Assur, the name Ḫimsātēya seems to have been borne by another boatman attested in Archive M4. An undated letter belonging to the text group Assur 18778,[141] written by an unknown provincial official to a supervisor of regular offerings whose name is not preserved, informs us that one Ḫimsātēya, son of a man called Gallābu, "the barber", in one of his missions was transporting 40 homers of barley from a province whose name is not preserved on the

133. Nashef 1982, 171; Postgate 1985, 98; Faivre 1992, 134, 142–146; Rosa 2010, 333.
134. Shibata 2017, 501.
135. MARV 8 96, 6′, 18′; see Freydank 2016, 88 and Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 530 *ad* MARV 8 96.
136. MARV 8 96, 13′–15′; see Freydank 2016, 88 and AMA, Ḫ, 30 *s.v.*
137. See MARV 8 96, 7, r.16′.
138. MARV 5 34, 15′ [x] ANŠE 3 BÁN 6 *qa* ^{m}*ḫi-*^{r}*im-sa*$^{\urcorner}$-[*te-ia*]. For the reconstruction of the line, see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 131, *ad* MARV 5 34 and TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P307406 (last access: 16.11.2023). This occurrence of the anthroponym is listed in AMA, Ḫ, 29 *s.v. Ḫim*[…].
139. For a discussion of this problematic text, see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 134, *ad* MARV 5 34. Although his view is purely conjectural, Gauthier thinks that the text deals with the milling staff and the quantities of grain that each miller had on hand.
140. MARV 5 34, 13′–14′ mentions two individuals whose names are not preserved (^{mr}*ú*$^{?\urcorner}$-[…], ^{mr}x-x$^{\urcorner}$-[…]). An analogous case occurs in lines 16′–17′, in which other two persons are cited (^{m}*ḫa-ṣi-*^{r}x$^{\urcorner}$-[…], ^{mr}x-x$^{\urcorner}$-[…]). See also TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P307406 (last access: 16.11.2023).
141. Found in a broken jar of Room 3′; see Pedersén 1985, 51, Group G.

tablet.[142] From the sender's words, it appears that this same quantity was removed from Ḫimsātēya's boat and, by virtue of this official's authority, entrusted to a certain Erība-Aššur, an individual not otherwise attested in Archive M4[143] who was sent with the cargo to Assur instead of Ḫimsātēya.[144] From the sender's intentions, the amount removed from Ḫimsātēya's shipment had to cover an outstanding *ginā'u* payment from the sender's province from two years earlier.[145]

Another man named Ḫimsātēya appears in a brief undated note from the text group Assur 21101, belonging to Archive M7, as the father of a certain Urad-Kūbe, a bow-maker.[146] As far as Archive M4 is concerned, two *alaḫḫinu*s with this name worked in the service of the Aššur Temple: one during the reign of Enlil-kudurrī-uṣur (1195–1191/ 1186–1182 BCE) or from that period to the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur,[147] and the second during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I.[148] From another document from Tiglath-pileser I's reign — more precisely, from the text group Assur 13058 (Archive M7) — we learn that another individual bore the name Ḫimsātēya. This person occurs in a list of quantities of madder, apparently as one of the recipients of this dyeing substance.[149] This was a material related to textile processing that helped these individuals complete their work-assignment.[150] The text mentions the eponymate of Sîn-apla-iddina[151] as the period in which the individuals received the madder, a commodity obtained through a commercial journey.[152]

3. Ḫimsātēya's brother and nephew and their activities

Other members of Ḫimsātēya's family can be identified in the Archive M4 texts. Although most of those documents are undated, they presumably belong to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. Ḫimsātēya had a brother named Ištar-tuballissu who also worked as a sailor for the *ginā'u* administration. From Table 2, we can see that his individual dossier comprises only three documents, all of which relate to loans of *ginā'u* goods; none of them is sealed.

142. MARV 7 14, e.13–14. See AMA, Ḫ, 30 *s.v.*
143. Not to be identified with the well-known eponyms named Erība-Aššur. Two eponyms with this name are attested during the period covered in Archive M4. The *līmu* of Erība-Aššur occurred at the beginning (4th year?) of Ninurta-apil-Ekur's reign: see Freydank 2016, 31, 146. A different opinion is expressed in Bloch 2012, 35–36, 46. For him, it was the 11th regnal year, a position also taken by Gauthier 2016, 715. The second eponym with this name must be referred to Aššur-rēša-iši I's reign. According to Freydank 2016, 101, 187, the year of Erība-Aššur probably occurred at the beginning of the second half of Aššur-rēša-iši I's reign (the 11th year?). An official with this name acted as supplier of *ginā'u* contributions. For Erība-Aššur's household, see MARV 1 21, 4; MARV 7 22, e.20.
144. MARV 7 14, 1–r.21.
145. Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 344f., *ad* MARV 7 14.
146. MARV 10 46, 5–6 (= StAT 5, 46). See AMA, Ḫ, 31 *s.v.*
147. MARV 5 28, 4; 51, 6; MARV 7 39, 4′; MARV 9 17, 3; see Freydank 2016, 61f. and Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 378, 542.
148. MARV 7 36, r.11.
149. KAM 11 48, r.17. See AMA, Ḫ, 29 *s.v.*
150. KAM 11 48, r.25.
151. Freydank (2016, 128) tentatively assigns this *līmu* to the 26th regnal year of Tiglath-pileser I.
152. KAM 11 48, r.24.

Text	*Date*	*Sailors involved*	*Type of document and content*	*Notes*
MARV 8 62	Unknown (broken?)	Ištar-tuballissu	Document concerning barley with a legal(?) clause	Unsealed
MARV 7 28	Unknown	Ištar-tuballissu	Document concerning a loan of *ginā'u* goods, including syrup	Unsealed
MARV 7 88	1st day of the month Abu-šarrāni (XI), unknown eponym	Ištar-tuballissu	Summary of barley loans	Unsealed
MARV 9 95	5th day of the month Ša-sarrāte (VIII), ep. Aššur-šallimšunu?	…akdu?	Reception of barley shipments and list of arrear quotas to be paid	Unsealed; four-column tabular tablet

Table 2. Types of documents regarding Ištar-tuballissu's shipments.

In a fragmentary tablet bearing no date, of which only the obverse side survives, Ištar-tuballissu is identified as the son of Sîn-idnanni and responsible for a shipment of barley.[153] These elements identify him as the boatman Ištar-tuballissu, although his profession is not specified by the scribe. Of the quantities of barley loaned recorded in this text, one homer(?) is said to be *ana bēti*, allocated for an unspecified household(?), and 80 homers are reported to have been measured using the norm of the *ša pî* 5 *sūte*, "the opening of the 50-*qa* seah".[154] It appears that the barley belonged to a certain Urad-…, son of Ninurta?-mušallim, who is otherwise unattested in Archive M4.[155] One wonders whether he was the official who provided the barley. Since the barley's place of origin is not specified, nothing can be stated about the route Ištar-tuballissu followed.

According to another loan document, the *alaḫḫinu* Naṯāya received certain goods, including 12? *qa* of syrup, from Ištar-tuballissu as a loan.[156] Although *dišpu* as a sweetening substance in the context of offering food processing is generally associated with the *karkadinnu*s, who were in charge of pastry-making, in a few cases it also appears in connection with *alaḫḫinu*s and brewers.[157] Since the lines related to the goods brought by the *malāḫu* are unpreserved on the tablet, except the reference to syrup, we do not know what kind of goods and in which quantities were borrowed by the *alaḫḫinu*. The amount of *dišpu* taken as a loan is very small and was stored in the *bēt ginā'e*, "the House of the Regular Offerings".[158] What this document tells us is that boatmen were entitled to give *ginā'u* goods transported by them and belonging to the "House of the Regular Offerings" stock, to state employees as loans, unless we hold that the syrup loaned was the boatman's

153. MARV 8 62, 7′–8′; see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 506, *ad* MARV 8 62 and AMA, I, 118 *s.v.*
154. MARV 8 62, 2′–4′. The metrological unit may also refer to the first quantity of barley. The translation of the metrological notation *ša pî* 5 *sūte* as "opening of the 50-*qa sūtu*" or "open 50-*qa sūtu*" is used in Gauthier 2016.
155. MARV 8 62, 4′–5′; see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 506.
156. MARV 7 28, 2–4. In Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 367, *ad* MARV 7 28, Gauthier tentatively reads the beginning of the line 2 as ⌜12?⌝ *qa*, thus interpreting the *Winkelhaken* as part of the numerical sign 12 written in an unconventional way. Following the alternative reading suggested by the same author, the beginning could also be read as *u* 2 *qa*, "and 2 *qa*". This second possibility would indicate that the amount of syrup loaned was even smaller; for this attestation of the anthroponym, see AMA, I, 118 *s.v.*
157. See Gauthier 2016, 373.
158. MARV 7 28, 4.

personal property[159] and was temporarily stored in the *bēt ginā'e* as a favour accorded to a professional with whom the *ginā'u* institution had collaborated for a long time. As observed by N. Postgate, it is unclear whether the *bēt ginā'e* in this and other texts refer to a specific building or the institution of the regular offerings in abstract terms.[160] The location of the "House of the Regular Offerings" has not yet been identified,[161] although the seat of the *ginā'u* office, where Ezbu-lēšir operated with his administrative staff, must have been located on the south-west side of the southern courtyard.[162] The building of the house was not in any case too far from the river quay below the Aššur Temple, as a relevant part of the provincial contributions for the *ginā'u*-tax reached it by river transport.[163] Goods received from boatmen were regularly transferred to storage facilities of the Aššur Temple complex, but we do not know if these storehouses were adjacent to the area of Room 3′ where the M4 texts were kept.[164] What is clear is that *ginā'u* commodities used for loans were issued from the *bēt ginā'e*. From other M4 texts, we learn that *ginā'u* goods, predominantly cereals, were stored in the *bēt ginā'e*[165] and disbursed from there to officials[166] or issued as loans[167] and that measurements[168] and inspection operations[169] took place there.[170] If these control operations revealed a shortfall compared to the requested amount, the missing part had to be consigned with the next delivery.[171] Boatmen were among the professionals who could take amounts of *ginā'u* goods from the stock of the *bēt ginā'e* as loans.[172] Concerning the *alaḫḫinu* Naṯāya, since he is also attested in the eponymates of Aššur-šuma-aṣbat[173] and Aššur-kēna-šallim,[174] we can suppose that Ištar-tuballissu (and perhaps his brother Ḫimsātēya) was already active in river transport during the reign of Aššur-rēša-iši I, if not earlier.

The individual dossier of Ḫimsātēya's brother includes a third document related to loans issued by the regular offerings administration. This text is a compilation of loans, structured into different sections, and among various quantities of barley given as loans, also records 40[?] homers of barley measured using the 50-*qa* seah.[175] The recipients of this

159. Gauthier 2016, 657.
160. Postgate 2013, 107.
161. Jakob 2003, 177.
162. Postgate 2013, 107.
163. Jakob 2003, 177.
164. Postgate 2013, 107f.
165. MARV 6 34, e.14; MARV 10 68, 5.
166. MARV 3 76, 8; MARV 5 24, e.8; 76, e.9; MARV 6 12, e.8; MARV 9 10, r.7′ (as an alternative place of disbursement instead of the *ḫiburnu* storehouse).
167. MARV 7 5, r.13′–e.15′ (mentioned with the *bēt nakkamti*, another store location).
168. MARV 2 24, env. 6′–7′ (sesame); MARV 7 71, 8–9 (sesame and fruit).
169. MARV 7 51, r.13–14. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 400f. *ad* MARV 7 51.
170. Jakob 2003, 177.
171. Jakob 2003, 179.
172. As shown by barley loans to boatmen in Archive Ass. 1876; see Freydank 1992, 284 text no.1, 300f. text no. 20, and Postgate 2013, 122.
173. MARV 7 20, 4. On the *līmu* Aššur-šuma-aṣbat, see Freydank 2016, 101, 140.
174. MARV 7 61, e.9. On this eponym, see Freydank 2016, 100, 138.
175. MARV 7 88, e.16.

loan are the boatman Ištar-tuballissu and the *sirāšû* Ašqudu,[176] an indication that confirms that both river transporters and state employees — in this case a brewer — had access to loans from the *bēt ginā'e*'s stock. It is not clear why the amount loaned is recorded as a combined sum of the two debtors, and not in the form of individual amounts, which presumably must have been recorded on earlier single loan documents.[177] Moreover, one may suspect that a state employee like a brewer of the Aššur Temple was entitled to borrow on terms more favourable from the Regular Offerings House[178] than a sailor. The latter was a professional external to that organisation and likely worked not on a regular basis but through specific work-assignments and transport missions, unless he was employed full-time by the *ginā'u* organisation or a private elite household. The section preceding the one related to Ištar-tuballissu and Ašqudu concerns Nuskūya and Usātēya,[179] two other people who received loans and who are also mentioned together. However, unlike the case of Ištar-tuballissu and Ašqudu, the amounts they received are enumerated separately.[180] As we read in the totals section that follows this part after a blank space, the amounts of barley loaned to Nuskūya and Usātēya and the combined amount disbursed to Ištar-tuballissu and Ašqudu — the latter presumably subdivided into individual sums — were integral parts of the total amount of 75 homers of barley issued as loans within a given period of time, perhaps a month.[181]

Ištar-tuballissu's son continued his father's profession for the regular offerings administration (see Table 2). One of the boatmen attested in a four-column tabular account dated to the 5th day of Ša-sarrāte (8th month), in the eponymate of Aššur-šallimšunu,[182] is identified as the son of Ḫimsātēya's brother. His name is only partially preserved on the tablet: …akdu[?], son of Ištar-tuballissu.[183] This boatman was therefore active in the same period when Ḫimsātēya's sons served the *ginā'u* administration.[184] This well-prepared tabular account records the *ginā'u* cargoes transported and the arrears quotas owed by a number of *malāḫu*s to the *ginā'u* administration. The entries are preceded by headings in the first

176. MARV 7 88, r.17–18. See AMA, I, 118 *s.v.* The names of the recipients were written at the top of the reverse of the tablet, since no space on the lower edge was available.
177. See MARV 7 88, r.22 on *ṭuppātu ṣabbutātu*, which clearly refers to these earlier formally executed and sealed documents. See Postgate 2013, 66f., 75.
178. Postgate 2013, 125.
179. MARV 7 88, 11–e.15. For the palace supervisor Nuskūya, see MARV 3 9, r.27; MARV 8 60, 10. A man with the name Usātēya also occurs in KAM 11 49, r.31, an undated list of individuals and their hometowns from Archive M7.
180. MARV 7 88, 11, 13.
181. MARV 7 88, r.19–21. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 448 *ad* MARV 7 88 for the hypothesis that the lending period was from the 24th day of Ša-kenāte (IX) to the 20th day of Muḫur-ilāni (X).
182. MARV 9 95, r.29 ITI.*ša—sa-*ˈ*ra*ˀ*-te* UD.ˈ5ˀ.KÁM *li-mu* ^{md}*a-šur—*[*šal-lim-šu-nu*]. For the reconstruction of the eponym's name, see Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 9 95. This occurrence of the *līmu*'s name is omitted in Freydank 2016, 140.
183. MARV 9 95, r.21. Freydank, in MARV 9 *Indizes*, 18b, transliterated the anthroponym as ˈ^{m}ˀx-x-ˈ*ak*[?]-*du*[!?]ˀ. For this reading of the name, see also AMA, *Iniziale frammentaria*, 10 *s.v.* […]*akdu*. However, note that in AMA, this individual is erroneously listed as the father of Ištar-tuballissu. In Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 9 95, the name is read as ^{m}ˈxˀ-*ak*-ˈxˀ.
184. Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 9 95, r.29.

line of the table concerning the barley amounts, the quantities of the arrears and the identity of the boatmen involved.[185] The fourth column contains the boatmen's patronyms or their professional connections with specific households[186] — a further element of identification of the *malāḫu*s listed that proves that they were professionals outside the Regular Offerings House rather than internal employees.[187] The penultimate line, badly preserved, clearly mentions Ezbu-lēšir[188] as the one who was in charge of formally receiving these *ginā'u* payments from the provinces. On the reverse, the multi-column section is followed by a blank space and a totals section. In this part, the scribe wrote down the total amount of barley, including both the quantities received and those still to be paid from insolvent provinces. Interestingly, the insolvent contributors mentioned in this text are not actually the provinces but the individuals who personally transported and consigned the grain cargoes to Assur. The obligation to pay the *ginā'u*-tax and arrears payments was incumbent on the provincial authorities, principally the governors and secondly other institutional actors,[189] while the boatmen could be considered liable when they failed in their shipping duties, primarily for consigning incomplete cargoes.[190] In this case, the liability apparently falls on the boatmen. The amounts of the barley consigned and the quantities still to be brought show that the regular offerings administration was able to establish individual shipment quotas, imposing on each of the boatmen mentioned in this text an obligation of 20 homers of grain (with the exception of the last *malāḫu* listed, who consigned an amount below this standard), presumably to be paid with shipments of around 5–7 homers per trip, which means three or four journeys.[191] It is reasonable to think that this second-level and summary document was compiled through consultation of single work-assignment documents, receipts of barley consigned and debt notes regarding each of the sailors listed that had been retained in the archive. The total quantity of barley given in the totals section amounts to 451 homers 7 seahs, according to the metrological unit of the "large

185. MARV 9 95, 1 ˹ŠE˺-*am it-tab-la* LAL.MEŠ LÚ.MÁ.LAḪ$_5$.MEŠ.
186. Ṭāb-kār-Aššur is the only one among the sailors listed who is identified not by his patronym, but through his professional connection with the household (*bētu*) of an unknown official for which he worked, known as the "House of Šar[…]." See MARV 9 95, e.16.
187. See Postgate 2013, 135.
188. MARV 9 95, r.28.
189. Postgate 2013, 93, 96; Gauthier 2016, 158–162.
190. Gauthier 2016, 163f. One situation in which a boatman could become a debtor to the *ginā'u* administration was if his cargo was ruined during the trip, as shown in MARV 3 27, r.11–14, which deals with barley arriving at its destination wet and therefore ruined (perhaps during the loading operation in the province's port or due to a temporary transfer ashore during the journey to facilitate manoeuvring in a difficult stretch of the river, a situation that could occur when boats ran aground and that left exposed and vulnerable the goods). In this case, the unpaid portion of barley had to be repaid by the boatman; see Freydank 1992, 284; Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 50 *ad* MARV 3 27. An analogous situation probably concerned the boatman Mār-ṣillīya, who according to MARV 5 39, e.10, r.22–24 had to pay interest on some of the *ginā'u* goods he had transported. If upon a boat's arrival in Assur the *ginā'u* inspectors found that the cargo was only a portion of its nominal volume, the boatman had to provide the missing quantity of the goods on a subsequent journey, as witnessed by MARV 3 38, 6–r.12; see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 67f. *ad* MARV 3 38. See also MARV 6 42, which is a list of debts owed to the regular offerings administration that mentions sailors.
191. See Gauthier 2016, 226.

seah" (*sūtu rabītu*),[192] possibly another way to indicate the "boatman's seah" (*sūtu ša malāḫu*).[193] In addition, the author of the account also converted this sum to the "small seah" (*sūtu ṣeḫertu*) for a total amount of 700 homers[194] and wrote down the interest, presumably charged on the quantities in arrears that remained to be paid.[195]

According to this document, …akdu[?] brought to Assur 20 homers of barley,[196] and like other *malāḫu*s cited in this document owed no arrears to the *ginā'u* office,[197] since he fully accomplished his work-assignment. In the documentation regarding the activities of Ištar-tuballissu and his son, no information can be found about the province(s) from which they transported the *ginā'u* goods to the capital.

4. Ḫimsātēya's sons and their activities

The activities of Ḫimsātēya's sons are better documented. Ḫimsātēya was still active when his sons engaged in river transport. As Table 3 shows, the dossier concerning his sons' activities consists entirely of unsealed tablets, all of which deal with the reception of shipments. Two texts bear witness to the measurement and inspection of the consigned cargoes, while one document deals with disbursement of received *ginā'u* barley to officials. Interestingly, in four documents both Ḫimsātēya and his sons are mentioned.

From the dossier constituted by these documents, we learn that three sons continued in their father's profession. In a compilation of barley shipments in which Ḫimsātēya is also attested, we find Šūzub-Marduk, identified through his professional title,[198] and Urad-ilāni[?], identified (unlike Šūzub-Marduk) as the "son of Ḫimsātēya".[199] The former brought 20[?] homers of barley, measured using the 50-*qa* seah,[200] while the latter appears in a damaged part of the text regarding two additional cargoes that are not included in the totals section, one qualified as "*ginā'u* of the country" (*ginā'e ša māte*) and the other related to the *bēt ḫiburni*, both possibly transported by him.[201] Since these and the other shipments are recorded in this text as received on the 13th[?] day of Muḫur-ilāni (10th month)

192. MARV 9 95, r.25–26.
193. Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 9 95, r.26.
194. MARV 9 95, r.26.
195. MARV 9 95, r.27. The sum is only partially readable because of the break at the beginning of the line. It is possible that the interest sum was 25 homers 5 seahs, as tentatively restored in Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 9 95, r.27.
196. The same quota also characterises the shipments of the sailors cited in MARV 9 95, e.14, 16, r.17–20, 22, 23.
197. MARV 9 95, r.21. Boatmen who had no arrears to pay were not only the ones who had already consigned 20-homer cargoes, for which see MARV 9 95, e.14, 16, r.17–20, 22, 23. There is also a boatman whose name is not preserved who transported a shipment that was below 8 homers 3 seahs the standard shipment quota of 20 *emāru*s, namely 11 homers 7 seahs of barley. See MARV 9 95, r.24.
198. MARV 1 21, 10. See Freydank 2016, 88. The occurrence of the name is omitted in AMA, Š, 150–155 *s.v.*
199. MARV 1 21, r.28. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 4, *ad* MARV 1 21. This occurrence is not included in AMA, U, 64–70 *s.v.*
200. MARV 1 21, 9. Note that in TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P281888 (last access: 16.11.2023), the number is erroneously translated as "36 homers".
201. MARV 1 21, r.26–28. It is not clear if this section is related to line r.29, which mentions the *ginā'u* from the province of Idu.

of the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, the barley cargoes brought by Šūzub-Marduk and Urad-ilāni[?] were evidently consigned in a date starting from that day. The provenance of these shipments is not specified in this summary text. The entry regarding Šūzub-Marduk in this document was inserted by the scribe between those referring to the sailors Aššur-malāḫ and Ḫubbutu.[202]

Text	*Date*	*Sailor involved*	*Type of document and content*	*Notes*
MARV 1 21	After the 13th day of the month Muḫur-ilāni (X), ep. Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu	Šūzub-Marduk, Urad-ilāni[?]	Reception of barley shipments	Unsealed
MARV 6 88	Unknown, but possibly ep. Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu	Urad-ilāni	Reception of barley shipments	Unsealed
MARV 6 3	Unknown, ep. Aššur-šallimšunu	Šūzub-Marduk	Reception of multiple barley shipments	Unsealed; six-column tabular tablet
MARV 7 36	Unknown (broken), ep. Aššur-šallimšunu	Ḫattāyu	Disbursement of barley from received shipments	Unsealed; redistribution to officials of the temple staff
MARV 6 26	26th day of an unknown month, ep. Šamaš-apla-ēriš	Ḫattāyu, Šūzub-Marduk	Reception of syrup, sesame and fruit	Unsealed
MARV 10 88	12th day of the month of Sîn (IV), ep. Mudammeq-Bēl	Šūzub-Marduk	Reception of one barley shipment	Unsealed; tally marks made at the arrival of the cargo
MARV 8 74	Unknown	Šūzub-Marduk	Reception of barley and fruit shipments	Unsealed
MARV 10 86	14th+x[?] day of an unknown month, unknown eponym	Šūzub-Marduk	Reception of barley shipments	Unsealed; round tablet; tally marks made at the arrival of the cargo

Table 3. Types of documents regarding shipments made by Ḫimsātēya's sons.

A different order of enumeration is given in MARV 6 88, which is another summary of receipts, and the annual tabular account MARV 6 3. In the former text, the entry regarding Šūzub-Marduk is preceded by that of Kidinnīya and followed by that of Bēr-aḫa-iddina,[203] while in the latter the order is inverted, with Bēr-aḫa-iddina's entry preceding Šūzub-Marduk's and Kidinnīya's entry following it.[204] It is also worth noting that in both MARV 6 88 and the annual tabular account MARV 6 3, the authors maintained the sequence "Aššur-malāḫ – Šūzub-Marduk – Ḫubbutu", but inserted the references to Kidinnīya and Bēr-aḫa-iddina before and after Šūzub-Marduk's entry. From a quantitative point of view, it is interesting to observe that the 20-homer amount of barley that Šūzub-Marduk con-

202. MARV 1 21, 7–8, 11–12.
203. MARV 6 88, 12–13, 16–17. Note that in MARV 6 88, 17 a second individual was probably mentioned after the name of Bēr-aḫa-iddina: *i-na* ŠU ^{md}*be-er*–ŠEŠ–SUM-*na* LÚ.MÁ.LAḪ$_5$ *i-na* ŠU $^{m\text{r}}$x$^{\text{?}}$-[…]. See Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 6 88. The *ina qāt* phrase before the second anthroponym leaves no doubt about the responsibility of this second person for managing the shipment. Possibly, this was a second sailor with whom Bēr-aḫa-iddina cooperated to bring the *ginā'u* cargo to Assur. However, no mention is made of this second person in the annual account MARV 6 3, 11, in which the barley amounts transported are uniquely associated with Bēr-aḫa-iddina.
204. MARV 6 3, 10–11, 14–15.

signed during the eponymate of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, according to MARV 1 21, corresponds to the quantity inserted in the second column of MARV 6 3.[205]

It is not always clear if the attestations in M4 documents refer to Šūzub-Marduk, the son of Ḫimsātēya, to a homonymous sailor or an official.[206] Analogous considerations may be made about Urad-ilāni. From another compilation of shipments, possibly dating from the *līmu* of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, we learn that a cargo (of barley) was consigned by one Urad-ilāni and measured using the handbreadth *sūtu*.[207] His entry occurs in a section of the document in which the barley quantities consigned did not come from provincial governments, but from individual contributors.[208] This explains why this type of *ginā'u* shipments are qualified as "loan" (*pūḫu*) in the text.[209] It is therefore plausible that also his cargo was labelled as *pūḫu*. However, it is not certain that he is the same person as the sailor mentioned above. One cannot exclude that he may have been an official acting on behalf of Aššur-bēla-šallim's Household.[210] Differently from the format of MARV 1 21, the author of this text specifies the places of provenance of the cargoes, and we learn that Šūzub-Marduk consigned 5 homers (of barley) from Katmuḫḫu, measured using the 50-*qa sūtu*.[211] This was the northernmost province of the Middle Assyrian kingdom. It might have extended to the north-west of Dahūk, with its central region in the eastern part of the Kāšiyāri mountain area (modern Ṭūr 'Abdīn).[212] Its exact extent cannot be determined, and further evidence is needed. If this was the location of the province, one can suggest that boatmen who transported *ginā'u* shipments from this area of Assyria presumably loaded them at the northernmost port of the Tigris River system, perhaps in the stretch of

205. MARV 6 3, 12. The same figure can be restored in column 4 and perhaps in column 6; see Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 6 3. In TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P288636 (last access: 16.11.2023), no suggestion is made about the quantity of the sixth column.
206. Gauthier 2016, 203 lists only MARV 6 26 and MARV 10 88 as attestations of Šūzub-Marduk, son of Ḫimsātēya. However, *ibid.*, 232, the occurrences in MARV 6 3, MARV 6 26 and MARV 10 88 refer to Ḫimsātēya's son. A sailor and an official with this name were active in the same period. On the *malāḫu* Šūzub-Marduk, son of Šamaš-mušabši[?], see MARV 9 14, 23–27. The homonymous official is attested in MARV 8 96, 2′, 12′; MARV 9 14, e.29 and *passim*. See Freydank 2016, 70, 76.
207. MARV 6 88, 30. For this occurrence of the name see AMA, U, 68 *s.v.* Note that in MARV 6 *Indizes*, 18 s.v. *Urad-ilāni* the occurrence is erroneously cited as in line 31.
208. See Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 6 88.
209. See the entries concerning the shipments of Uddû, the steward of (the House of) Ilī-padda, Rūqī-lāmur, Mār-āpi'e, Adad-aḫa-ēriš, an unknown *alaḫḫinu*, and Urad-Aššur in MARV 6 88, 22–r.37. A "loan-section" is also included in the annual tabular account MARV 6 3, r.22–29, which mentions, in the order, Rūqī-lāmur, Mār-āpi'e, Uddû and a boatman whose name is unpreserved in the tablet. Surprisingly, the entries concerning Adad-aḫa-ēriš, the *alaḫḫinu* and Urad-Aššur are omitted in this final account.
210. MARV 6 88, 31 [… *ša*] ˹É˺ ^{md}*a-šur*–EN–*šal-*˹*lim*˺ [*pu-ú-hu*]. The broken part at the *incipit* of the line prevents from knowing his profession, and, therefore, his connection to the *bēt Aššur-bēla-šallim*. According to Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions …*, *ad* MARV 6 88, 31, the beginning of the line should be restored as [LÚ.AGRIG *ša*] ˹É˺ ^{md}*a-šur*–EN–*šal-*˹*lim*˺. He could therefore have been the steward of Aššur-bēla-šallim's Household. In AMA, A, 301 and U, 68 *s.v.*, he is interpreted as Aššur-bēla-šallim's son, presumably following Freydank's interpretation; see MARV 6 *Indizes*, 18 *s.v. Urad-ilāni*.
211. MARV 6 88, 14–15. See Freydank 2016, 88 and AMA, Š, 153 *s.v.*
212. Nashef 1982, 166; Postgate 1985, 98; Rosa 2010, 333. See also Radner 2006–08, 53; Postgate 2013, 31 fig. 2.1; Parpola & Porter 2001, Maps 3 E3, 4 A4.

the river between the area of Cizre at its northernmost point and the area north-west of Fā'ida at its southernmost point. A more southerly embarkation point, for example below Tastiāti, in the vicinity of Nineveh, should have been preferable because of the greater and safer navigability of the Tigris for large cargo boats.[213]

Well before the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, Katmuḫḫu, that was seat of a governor during the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta I,[214] was one of the provinces that contributed to the regular offerings with its barley. Deliveries from this place are documented in the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur, and presumably continued in the subsequent years. A document bearing a boatman's sealing records 4 homers of barley as *ginā'u* contribution from the province of Katmuḫḫu.[215] As a barley-contributing province, it is also attested in an undated document, possibly later than the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur.[216] For the regnal year of Tiglath-pileser I, a huge amount of 275 homers and 6 seahs of barley was received from this administrative district.[217] It seems that this province was insolvent in this king's reign regarding its *ginā'u* duties. Documents issued by the bureaucrats of the *ginā'u* office show that arrears from the *līmu* of Tiglath-pileser I were paid by the province in the year of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu.[218]

To come back to Šūzub-Marduk's activity, as we read in an annual tabular account, in the year of Aššur-šallimšunu this *malāḫu* was in charge of various shipments of barley, possibly originating from Katmuḫḫu.[219] The author of this annual account inserted the data about Šūzub-Marduk's shipments together with those concerning the sailor Kidinnīya[220] in a section related to the *ginā'u* of the province of Katmuḫḫu. Both the total amount of barley brought by Šūzub-Marduk and that of Kidinnīya are then summed up in a grand totals section at the end of this part of the document. The single quantities of these deliveries are recorded in five of the table's six columns, but only in the second

213. See De Graeve 1981, 18. On the possible location of Tastiāti on the western side of the Tigris, near Mosul, see Reade 1978, 55. However, to judge from 19th-century travel accounts, it seems that river trips with large rafts could be made on the Tigris downstream from Diyarbakır to Mosul. In the flood season, they lasted 3–4 days, while in the law-water season around 15 days. See Chesney 1850, 32, 38f. cited in Rost 2019, 32.
214. Llop 2012, 102.
215. MARV 3 14, 2–5. The same quantity is recorded in two lists of outstanding debts owed to the *ginā'u* administration. See MARV 7 5, 1–3; MARV 6 42, 21–22.
216. MARV 7 19, 1, 9, 18, r.25, 34. For the possibility that it may be dated to Aššur-dān I's reign, see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 352 *ad* MARV 7 19.
217. MARV 6 70, 5.
218. MARV 7 22, r.15; 58, 4. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 362 *ad* MARV 7 22, r.15–20. A quantity of barley received during the *līmu* of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu from this province is listed in MARV 8 13, 1.
219. For the restoration of the sailor's name in the broken part of MARV 6 3, 13, see Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 6 3 and TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P288636 (last access: 16.11.2023). The province's name is restored by Gauthier in line 16 on the basis of the information provided by MARV 6 88. See Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 6 3. In TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P288636 (last access: 16.11.2023) the province's name is rendered as ˹KUR˺.[…]. See also the discussion in Gauthier 2016, 232.
220. MARV 6 3, 14–15. But note that in TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P288636 (last access: 16.11.2023) the name of Kidinnīya (^{m}šÚ) is omitted in line 15.

column the number is preserved and fully readable. The barley quantity consigned by him amounted to 20 homers.[221] This quantity coincides with that recorded in MARV 6 88, as already observed. If the quantities given in the first and fifth columns were of 5 and 7 homers respectively,[222] one can suppose that an individual cargo brought by this sailor ranged from a minimum of 5–7 homers to a maximum of 20 homers. If the hypothesis that the amounts of each column represent the size of single shipments or partial totals resulting from different shipments received within a given period, the quantitative data of these columns must have been excerpted by the scribe from receipts of single shipments or compilation records that summarised a number of shipments. The total quantity of barley consigned by Šūzub-Marduk to the *ginā'u* administrators amounted to 72 homers, an amount that was measured using the 50-*qa* seah. Interestingly, in the same line the scribe specifies this metrological notation indicating that the 50-*qa* seah was the boatman's seah,[223] namely a norm alien to the administration's standard metrology, although known to them. In addition, the author of this annual account mentions the *sūtu ša malāḫi* also in association with the quantity of barley inserted in the sixth column.[224] Presumably, his intention was to specify that all the single quantities consigned in the different periods of the year taken into consideration were always measured using this metrological norm. All the shipments brought by Šūzub-Marduk, added to those of his colleague Kidinnīya (65[?] homers and [4[?]] seahs),[225] concurred to form the total amount of barley delivered by the province of Katmuḫḫu as *ginā'u* contribution in the year of Aššur-šallimšunu: 137[?] homers and 4 seahs of barley.[226]

In the same period during which both Ḫimsātēya and Šūzub-Marduk served the *ginā'u* administration, another son of Ḫimsātēya did the same, transporting *ginā'u* products from the provinces. His name, Ḫattāyu, "the man from Ḫatti",[227] differs from the predominant theophoric onomastics of his family. Perhaps, this nickname is a possible indication of the "western" provenance of him and his parents, but this is only a conjecture. Onomastics cannot be a secure basis for tracing the geographical origin of an individual or family, since various cultural factors may have determined the acquisition of certain names or nicknames. In addition, name-giving traditions — within the Assyrian society, village

221. MARV 6 3, 12.
222. See MARV 6 3, 12, according to the restoration provided in Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 6 3 and TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P288636 (last access: 16.11.2023). But note that in TCMA no quantity is restored in column 5.
223. MARV 6 3, 13 PAP 72 ANŠE *i-na* GIŠ.5BÁN-*te* ⌜*ša*⌝ GIŠ.BÁN ⌜*ša*⌝ GIŠ.MÁ.LAḪ$_5$. The same measure of the 50-*qa* seah was used for the Katmuḫḫean barley brought by his colleague Kidinnīya, as we read in line 15. Presumably, in the broken part of this line the scribe specified that the seah in question was the *sūtu ša malāḫi*.
224. MARV 6 3, 12 [20[?]] ⌜ANŠE *i-na* GIŠ⌝.BÁN *ša* GIŠ.MÁ.LAḪ$_5$.
225. MARV 6 3, 15.
226. MARV 6 3, 16.
227. On the place name Ḫatti, see Nashef 1982, 123f.; Cancik-Kirschbaum & Hess 2017, *s.v. Ḫatti* (last access: 20.11.2023). After the collapse of the Hittite Empire around 1180 BCE, the term Ḫatti was transferred to the territory controlled by Karkemiš in northern Syria. Another example of a personal name formed with a toponym and the *nisbe* suffix *-āy* in the nomenclature of *ginā'u*-related sailors is Ninu'āyu, "the man from Nineveh", attested in MARV 8 46, r.23.

community or the single family — certainly existed. The boatmen who operated in the Tigris navigation network in the Middle Assyrian period certainly included indigenous Assyrians as well as individuals of different provenance, and, presumably, varying degrees of Assyrianisation into the Middle Assyrian society. As far as the boatmen in M4 texts are concerned, the onomastics appears, however, predominantly Assyrian.

In a document recording the disbursement of barley in the year of Aššur-šallimšunu, *i.e.*, in the same eponymous period of the above-mentioned tabular account in which his brother Šūzub-Marduk was mentioned, Ḫattāyu and the official Urad-Kūbe are cited together with another person, presumably another official, but it is not clear why these people are mentioned together.[228] In this text, Ḫattāyu is identified only by his professional title, not by his patronym. The previous section of this document concerns the disbursement of 30 homers of barley, measured by the *pirik ritte* seah, to three *alaḫḫinu*s in the *bēt ginā'e* in the evening,[229] but provides no information about the province from which the barley was delivered via river transport. The reference to Ḫattāyu's profession indicates that he was responsible for the barley and that he transported it from the supplying province to Assur, presumably through a transport mission coordinated by the official Urad-Kūbe.

Ḫattāyu's activities in the service of the regular offerings bureau were not limited to what is stated in this document. According to a receipt, on the 26th day of an unknown month of the year of Šamaš-apla-ēriš, possibly in the period following the eponymate of Aššur-šallimšunu,[230] Ḫattāyu and his brother Šūzub-Marduk[231] transported and consigned a cargo consisting of 1 homer, 2 seahs and 8 *qa* of syrup and 18[?] homers of sesame from Katmuḫḫu.[232] In this case, no barley was included in the shipment. Apparently, the size of the cargo — just over 19[?] homers — does not seem exceptional and such as to require the involvement of a second sailor, but it is likely that boats of this capacity travelled with two or more *malāḫu*s. The texts do not specify how many men made up a crew in the Middle Assyrian period and how the number of crewmembers varied in relation to the size of the cargo carried. It is reasonable to think that larger fully loaded barges or rafts would have required larger crews. In all likelihood, the scribes, when recording an incoming cargo, only mentioned the captain of the boat, the one who was responsible for the cargo. In this case, the responsibility for the cargo was probably shared between Ḫattāyu and Šūzub-Marduk, but we do not know whether they alone constituted the boat's crew. Another shipment from the same district concerned more than 17 homers of fruit, managed by the

228. MARV 7 36, r.11–15. See AMA, Ḫ, 24 *s.v. Ḫattāju.* This occurrence is not mentioned in the list of attestations of this boatman in Gauthier 2016, 203.
229. MARV 7 36, 3–e.10.
230. The year of the eponym Šamaš-apla-ēriš is unknown. He could have been *līmu* in one of the last regnal years of Aššur-rēša-iši I, as suggested in Freydank 2016, 101, 173. Bloch and Gauthier suggested alternative hypotheses: Bloch 2012, 39, 48 the period before Tiglath-pileser I's *līmu*; Gauthier 2016, 717; *ibid*., *List of M4 Texts* …, 210 *ad* MARV 6 26 the 4th regnal year of Tiglath-pileser I.
231. MARV 6 26, 6–8. On this occurrence of the name Šūzub-Marduk, see AMA, Š, 153 *s.v.*, although the reference is cited there erroneously as MARV 6 27, 6.
232. MARV 6 26, 3–9. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 210f., *ad* MARV 6 26.

official Adad-apla-iddina, as we read in the same text.[233] This was probably an official in charge of fruit deliveries, for which he cooperated with boatmen. From his professional qualification (*rab karāne*),[234] it is clear that grapes played an important part of the fruit cargoes from this district.[235] Interestingly, both these cargoes constituted the *ginā'u* expected from the province of Katmuḫḫu for the year of Aššur-šallimšunu,[236] evidently arrears payments of the above-mentioned commodities.

If the partially readable name of the individual that follows that of Ḫimsātēya in the barley disbursement document discussed above is that of Ḫattāyu,[237] this would be another piece of evidence of Ḫattāyu's activity and of his involvement in transport missions in cooperation with other sailors. In the case of this shipment, the cargo in question would have been carried through one journey by father and son in cooperation — a fact that must certainly not have been unusual in a family of boatmen where the profession passed from one generation to the next. Other attestations of the name Ḫattāyu in Archive M4 do not specify whether they are to be referred to this sailor or the homonymous *alaḫḫinu*.[238]

Unlike his brother Ḫattāyu, Šūzub-Marduk's activity seems to have extended over a longer period. A receipt issued by the *ginā'u* office shows that Šūzub-Marduk continued to serve the province of Katmuḫḫu. The horizontally-written tablet of this document shows an uncommon ratio between width and height if compared to analogous rectangular tablets written by *ginā'u* accountants. This trait testifies to the ephemeral and informal character of notes hastily written on the spot at the arrival of the boat[239] and raises questions about the degree of conformity to the scribal standards in administrative writing's practices.[240] The presence of air pockets in the middle of the lower part of the reverse

233. MARV 6 26, e.10–12.
234. MARV 6 26, r.12. On this Middle Assyrian official, who in MARV 7 51, 8 is referred to with the synonymic title of *ša muḫḫi karāne*, see Gauthier 2016, 232, 236f.; *ibid*., *List of M4 Texts* …, 212, *ad* MARV 6 26, r.12. It is interesting to note that he is not called *rab azamri*, but *rab karāni*. Unlike in the Neo-Assyrian period (see the "fruit master" in the tribute-distribution account SAA 11, 36 i 28), a *rab azamri* does not seem to be attested in the sources from the Middle Assyrian period.
235. Grapes occur in the Archive M4, as witnessed by MARV 10 84, 3. In other Middle Assyrian texts, namely KAJ 302, e.12 and MARV 5 77, r.[?] v[?] 2′ (a document not belonging to the M4 corpus) the logogram GEŠTIN probably refers to wine. That vineyards were an integral part of the Middle Assyrian rural landscape is evident from the Dūr-Katlimmu document edited in Fales 1989, 53f. On grapes (or wine?) transported in boats in the Middle Assyrian period, see Aplīya's letter KAM 11 106, 4–5. In the Neo-Assyrian period, the management of fruit deliveries from the production areas was not among the duties of the *rab karāni*, who took care of the supply of wine in the royal households and temples and was concerned with operations of acquisition, storage and distribution of this high-class drink. See Gaspa 2012, 235 and Groß 2020, 329–333.
236. MARV 6 26, r.13–14.
237. MARV 8 3, 10′. See fn. 120, above. The name may perhaps be reconstructed as [*ḫa*[?]-*at*[?]]-*ta*[?]-*ia-e*.
238. See MARV 10 83, 8, concerning payments received from the provinces of Assur and Šaduḫu. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 591 *ad* MARV 10 83, 7–9 and, for this occurrence, AMA, Ḫ, 24 *s.v.* On the *alaḫḫinu* Ḫattāyu, see MARV 3 61, 8; MARV 6 27, e.27′; 30, 7'; MARV 7 7, r.18.
239. On MARV 10 88, see Postgate 2013, 101 and fn. 33, 129; Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 596 *ad* MARV 10 88. For a picture of this tablet, see Maul 2013, 567 fig. 5.
240. On this aspect regarding the *medium* in Middle Assyrian administrative writing, see Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 27.

side, evidently not removed during the operation of smoothing the tablet's surface with a rolling pin or other hard tool,[241] confirms a low level of manufacture by the one who materially shaped the tablet.[242] This tablet's obverse side is roughly divided by two horizontal rulings and bears two series of tally marks, for a total of 174 marks.[243] These signs witness to the operation of inspecting and measuring the cargo at the arrival in Assur's port. The scribe in charge of this inspection did not write down the corresponding quantity in numerical terms, but on the basis of the equivalence with the 50-*qa* unit it is clear that the barley consigned on the 12th day of Sîn (4th month) of the year of Mudammeq-Bēl[244] amounted to 87 homers.[245] The essential information to be included in these hastily written notes were the name of the sailor who transported the cargo and the date. The transporter of this 87-homer cargo was Šūzub-Marduk, identified as the son of Ḫimsātēya.[246] In a socio-professional context in which more homonymous persons interacted with the regular offerings bureau, the patronymic certainly helped to identify the transporter more precisely. It is worth noting that in the same year Šūzub-Marduk's father was still active in river transport.[247] In an undated compilation of shipments, we find that Šūzub-Marduk consigned 32 homers of barley of unknown provenance measured using the 50-*qa sūtu*. Apparently, it seems that this quantity was measured using the seah of Šūzub-Marduk himself.[248] Unlike the previously discussed text with tallies, the author of this summary document did not feel the necessity to identify Šūzub-Marduk by mentioning his father's name. Moreover, this text is another piece of evidence that Ḫimsātēya was still active in his *ginā'u*-related transport service. He brought more than 25 homers of barley, possibly measured at the arrival by the 50-*qa* seah.[249] Ḫimsātēya's name on the lower edge of the tablet suggests that in this damaged part of the document another shipment was recorded, and that the transporter was a Ḫimsātēya's son. Presumably, this boatman was identified by the scribe by name and patronym.[250]

241. On the possible use of hard tools in the finishing of clay tablets, see Taylor 2011, 11.
242. The air pockets or other fissures on the clay surface of tablets could affect the intelligibility of the text. Perhaps, this is why the author of MARV 10 88, in writing the name of the eponym in line r.5, avoided writing across the fissure in the middle of the reverse side and divided the eponym's name ^{m}*mu*-SIG$_5$–EN, Mudammeq-Bēl, into two parts for the sake of clarity, *i.e.*, ^{m}*mu*-SIG$_5$ separated from EN by an uncommon large blank space.
243. MARV 10 88, 1–2.
244. MARV 10 88, r.4–5.
245. See Gaspa 2011b, 243; Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 596, *ad* MARV 10 88. However, Freydank interprets these marks as referring to 84 homers in MARV 10 *Inhaltsübersicht*, 9.
246. MARV 10 88, r.3. See AMA, Š, 154 *s.v.*
247. See MARV 8 96, 6′, 18′.
248. MARV 8 74, 5–6. Unusually, the *malāḫu*'s name is not introduced by *ina qāt*, which attests to the sailor's responsibility in connection with the cargo transported. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 516, *ad* MARV 8 74, 5–6 for a discussion of this passage. This occurrence of the name is not included in AMA, Š, 148, 153.
249. MARV 8 74, 8–9.
250. MARV 8 74, e.12–13 [x x] ˹x˺ […] ˹x˺ LÚ.˹MÁ˺.[LAḪ$_5$] / [DUMU$^{?}$ ^{m}*ḫi*]-˹*im-sa*˺-[*te-ia* …]. Reconstruction of the lines by the author, based on Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 515f. In the edition of the text by Freydank and Feller, one of the signs before the *nomen professionis* could be restored as ARAD, perhaps, the beginning of the name ^{m}ARAD–DINGIR.MEŠ-*ni*, "Urad-ilāni(?)".

Of the shipments recorded on an ephemeral document unusually written on a round tablet, one, possibly of barley, was consigned by Šūzub-Marduk and amounted to 40 homers.[251] Such disk-shaped tablets are rarely found in Archive M4 and were used for ephemeral notes.[252] This format, and the sloppy handwriting often associated to it seem to indicate a scribal competence not yet matured, but still in its school training phase. This leads to the assumption that the authors were apprentice scribes in the service of the regular offerings bureau.[253] We cannot, however, exclude the possibility that the very event of record-keeping, when the cargo arrived at the port, imposed a limited amount of time on the accountant dispatched there with the task of checking and measuring the cargo, and writing down this kind of reception notes — hence the sloppy handwriting. Further, that in the absence of the more common rectangular tablets, the *ginā'u* office's accountant could resort to any clay medium that was available, for example poorly formatted tablets of different shapes prepared earlier by apprentices, including round ones, otherwise destined to everyday school exercises. Since this possibility would represent a deviation from the standardised practices of administrative writing, indicating a certain degree of individual freedom on the part of the single scribe, the acceptance of these changes by the office would denote a commonly shared "flexible ethos" as regards the adherence to the scribal rules of the central state administration.[254]

The author of this text organised the layout in a way that each entry is in a section ending in a horizontal ruling. After a double horizontal ruling, a section for tally marks is given in each side of the tablet.[255] The numerical quantity concerning Šūzub-Marduk's cargo is indicated in the previous line by 80 tally marks,[256] in this case too showing that

251. MARV 10 86, 5. On this occurrence, see AMA, Š, 154 *s.v.*
252. On the use of round tablets for tallies in Archive M4, see Gaspa 2011b, 242; Postgate 2013, 101 fn. 33; Gauthier 2016, 269, 667f. Apart from MARV 10 86, the disk-shaped format is used by scribes of the *ginā'u* office for recording payments in kind (MARV 10 83: figs, *mirqu* and sesame, cf. MARV 10 84 on figs and grapes) and disbursements of commodities to officials (MARV 7 18; 60; 81; MARV 10 85; 87; 91).
253. See Gauthier 2016, 667f., suggesting that these could have been the sons of scribes working at the regular offerings bureau and that they probably drafted these tablets as part of their scribal training.
254. On deviation from standardised norms and practices in external features of Middle Assyrian administrative documents, see Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 26f., 30.
255. MARV 10 86, 4, r.5. Note that obverse and reverse in Prechel and Freydank's edition do not correspond to the edition of the text given in Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts …*, 593f. *ad* MARV 10 86. The authors of M4 disk-shaped tablets used horizontal rulings to separate sections of different entries (MARV 7 18; 81; MARV 10 83) or vertical rulings, apparently to separate numerical data from related qualitative information (MARV 10 84). They could also resort to more complex layouts, combining horizontal rulings for sections or headings and vertical lines for columns (MARV 10 87; 91). However, the scribes could also ignore the grid of horizontal and vertical rulings and write their text across the lines (see MARV 10 91) or incomprehensibly entering compactly the whole inscription within a section delimited by horizontal rulings (MARV 10 91), thus ignoring the function for which rows and columns were preliminarily incised on the tablet. Round tablets bear very condensed inscriptions on only one side (MARV 10 83; 84; 91) or very short inscriptions extending on both sides, but confined to some parts of the tablet and leaving large portions of it uninscribed (MARV 10 85; 87). All these cases testify to a difficulty in estimating and organising the space of writing on the tablet.
256. MARV 10 86, 4.

the *ginā'u* office's employee used the 50-*qa* unit to measure the barley. The supplying province could possibly be Katmuḫḫu, which is not mentioned in the section referring to Šūzub-Marduk's cargo, whereas it is at the beginning of the reverse side of the tablet[257] in connection with the delivery of 100 homers of barley managed by a certain Ḫaḫutu.[258] This individual is not otherwise attested in this archive, and nothing is known about his profession. The fact that he appears also in the grand totals section of the document corroborates the hypothesis that he could have been an official in charge of the 40-homer cargo transported by Šūzub-Marduk and the 100-homer cargo delivered by himself, presumably, via an unnamed sailor who was not Šūzub-Marduk.[259] The date of the document also deserves to be discussed. Unlike the other formal and informal receipts of this archive that bear a full or partially complete date,[260] this short note is only dated by day, with no details about month and year. This indicates that month and year were considered irrelevant information for the author and other accountants involved in keeping record of this shipment, probably because the text was destined to a very short archival life within the *ginā'u* bureau — presumably the time required to enter the shipment details and the complete date in a long-term archival document.

5. Concluding remarks

This analysis of Ḫimsātēya's dossier has allowed to learn about the work that he and his family members carried out in the service of the regular offerings administration. Some questions arise as regards the transport activity of these boatmen, and the following concluding remarks are devoted to those matters.

5.1. The total volume of goods mobilised by Ḫimsātēya's family: a quantitative analysis

A first aspect worthy of discussion concerns the quantities of *ginā'u* goods transported by these *malāḫu*s. An exact reconstruction of the total amounts of the standard *ginā'u* products that in the time span considered — the reign period of Tiglath-pileser I — made their way from the supplying provinces to the Regular Offerings House's stores through the journeys of Ḫimsātēya and his relatives is impossible, due to the heterogeneity and in some cases the fragmentary condition of the texts, not to mention the extremely limited evidence about the total quantities consigned by these sailors each year. Although the complete careers of these boatmen and the detailed itineraries of their work cannot be reconstructed, it is clear from the available evidence that the ferrying activity of some of these sailors involved the northern provinces of Ḫalaḫḫu and Katmuḫḫu.[261] These two

257. MARV 10 86, r.3. For the restoration of the province's name, see Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 594, *ad* MARV 10 86.
258. MARV 10 86, r.2–3. For the name, see AMA, Ḫ, 11 *s.v.*
259. MARV 10 86, r.5–6. Note that the 56 tally marks preceding his name in line r.5 do not agree with the total sum of 140 homers of line r.6. See the discussion in Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 595, *ad* MARV 10 86, r.5.
260. Gauthier 2016, 681.
261. Gauthier 2016, 204f.

administrative districts were among the main contributors of *ginā'u*-payments.[262] The geographic provenance of the sailors is never explicitly mentioned in the M4 documents, and only rarely do we find specific connections with certain places. The sailor Aba-īde, son of Piradi, is cited as related to the city of Šamaia[?] in the document MARV 3 27.[263] In the text KAM 10, 47, the sailor Šamaš-apla-iddina is connected to the city of Šīmu,[264] but this is due to the transport of *ginā'u* products he managed from this place.[265] However, this does not exclude that the province served by the sailor was also where he lived. Therefore, it is possible that Ḫimsātēya's family lived in Ḫalaḫḫu, Katmuḫḫu or an adjacent place in the northern part of Assyria and based there their river transport business, namely, the shipyards for building and repairing boats, and the port for mooring their fleet of transport vessels.[266] It is not difficult to imagine that the freight business engaged the entire family clan of Ḫimsātēya, and that in the shipyard members from different generations were occupied each with specific tasks, from hull construction to caulking and boat repair, including the production of navigational tools (paddles, poles and oars). If the boatmen mentioned in the M4 documents were also boat-builders, it is conceivable that Ḫimsātēya and his relatives also practised the profession of *nagār eleppāte*.[267] From their home province, it was evidently possible to reach other destinations in neighbouring provinces by river. The daily and presumably short-haul transport business that these sailors carried out on their own (or their lords') account and the state-directed long-distance transport missions of *ginā'u* products probably favoured the expansion of the reach of the sailing families' business to neighbouring provinces.

According to Gauthier's quantitative reconstruction of the amounts of these products per province, based on the annual quantities delivered or expected from those districts, the contribution of barley from Ḫalaḫḫu generally amounted to more than 200 homers (= 20,000 *qa*), and in some cases slightly more than 280 homers (= 28,000 *qa*).[268] The amounts of syrup were in the majority of cases greater than one homer (= 100 *qa*),[269] while the

262. Gaspa 2011b, 234.
263. MARV 3 27, 7–e.10. See Freydank 1992, 284 text no. 1. In Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 50, Gauthier translates "the boatman of the people of (Ša)-Šamayu[?]", restoring the toponym on the basis of the name Ša-Samaya, attested in Donbaz 1976, 24, text A. 1749, 5 (Archive M6). Note that in TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P281978 (last access: 16.11.2023), the name of the sailor is erroneously rendered as "Aba-lā-ide" (the same as the regular offerings overseer), and the toponym is rendered as "the city Šam-...".
264. KAM 10 47, 11–e.12. See Freydank 2014, 34. Both the city and province of Šīmu are also attested in MARV 1 56, r.44; MARV 2 21, r.24; MARV 3 44, r.11; MARV 4 61+30′; 119, 10; 127, 15; 131, 19; MARV 5 1, r.24; 4, r.19; 12, r.20; 14, 20; 60, r.20; 67, r.19; MARV 6 3, e.19; 9+, r.22; 32, r.1; 50, r.25; 87, 2.
265. See MARV 7 51, r.18–19.
266. Presumably, this was nothing comparable to the much more developed river transport system of southern Mesopotamia, where shipyards employed a vast number of skilled workers. For the shipyards of Sumerian cities in the Ur III period, see Carter 2012, 365f. and Bagg 2016, 135.
267. To my knowledge, the term for this occupation in the Assyrian dialect is documented only in the late Neo-Assyrian age. See RINAP 4, 9 i′ 15′ (*nagār eleppēti*). This Neo-Assyrian occurrence is omitted among the designations of this profession in Weszeli 2009–11, 163.
268. Gauthier 2016, 824.
269. Gauthier 2016, 825.

quantity of sesame was slightly less than or equal to 10 homers (= 1,000 *qa*); it could also be more than that amount.[270] The annual quantity of fruit provided by Ḫalaḫḫu fluctuates much more widely, but most texts point to an amount below 10 homers (= 1,000 *qa*) as the standard.[271] Concerning Katmuḫḫu, some texts show that its contribution of barley was generally between 180 homers (= 18,000 *qa*) and more than 230 homers (= 23,000 *qa*),[272] while its syrup quantity was slightly more than 1 homer 8 seahs (= 180 *qa*).[273] The quantity of sesame fluctuates between amounts below 10 homers (= 1,000 *qa*) and amounts around 18 homers (= 1,800 *qa*).[274] The fruit contribution from that province comprised amounts below 10 homers (= 1,000 *qa*) and amounts ranging from more than 12 homers (= 1,200 *qa*) to 21 homers (= 2,100 *qa*).[275] It was in the setting described by these provincial quotas and the contribution trends that the transport activity of Ḫimsātēya and his relatives took place.

From the available quantitative data about the *ginā'u* commodities transported by Ḫimsātēya and his relatives in their journeys from the contributing provinces to the city of Assur, as summarised in Table 4, below, this sailor's family was primarily concerned with the mobilisation of barley. They were able to consign to the Regular Offerings House a vast amount of barley corresponding to more than 734[?] homers (73,400[?] *qa*). Other *ginā'u* goods loaded in their boats and consigned to the accountants in Assur were syrup and sesame, but in much smaller quantities: a total of 2 homers 2 seahs 8 *qa* of syrup and 19[?] homers 5 seahs of sesame. Regarding barley, excluding the exceptionally largest and the very smallest shipments, the average cargo on Ḫimsātēya's journeys ranged from more than 10 homers to various tens of homers. That this was also the pattern for his relatives' shipments can be seen by the cases of his sons and nephew. Cargoes carried by his son Šūzub-Marduk ranged from 20[?] to 87 homers, if we exclude the smallest amount of 5 homers. An analogous case is that of his son Ḫattāyu and his nephew …akdu[?], who consigned 30 and 20 homers, respectively. Nothing can be stated about the barley transported by Urad-ilāni. For shipments regarding the other *ginā'u* goods we are scarcely informed, and the few quantities attested cannot help us reconstruct any trend in the size of those cargoes. The only available data enable us to state that Ḫimsātēya's cargoes could include syrup amounts of one homer, while a slightly larger quantity was transported by his sons Ḫattāyu and Šūzub-Marduk. In the only attestation known, the sesame transported by Ḫimsātēya exceeded the measure of one homer. His sons appear to have been involved in transporting a much larger amount. No data are available for reconstructing the standard quantity of fruit in these sailors' cargoes. Cooperation between sailors in the transport of certain cargoes is attested in the case of the brothers Ḫattāyu and Šūzub-Marduk regarding syrup and sesame; an analogous case may have existed for Ḫimsātēya and Ḫattāyu and a barley cargo of unknown size.

270. Gauthier 2016, 826.
271. Gauthier 2016, 827.
272. Gauthier 2016, 836.
273. Gauthier 2016, 837.
274. Gauthier 2016, 838.
275. Gauthier 2016, 839.

Transporter	*Ginā'u product*	*Quantity*	*Seah used in measurement*	*Attestation*
Ḫimsātēya	Barley	11 homers 4 seahs	*sūtu ša pirik ritte* "handbreadth seah"	MARV 1 21
		12ʔ homers 4ʔ seahs	Unspecified, but possibly the *ša pirik ritte* seah[276]	MARV 6 52
		50 homers	Unspecified	KAJ 302
		80 homers	Unspecified	MARV 9 16
		>15 homers	*ša pirik ritte*	MARV 6 88
		>13 homers 4 seahs	*ša pirik ritte*	MARV 6 3
		220 homers	*ša pirik ritte*	MARV 9 14
		>25 homers	*sūtu ša pî* 5 *sūte*, "opening of the 50-*qa* seah"	MARV 8 74
		>1 homerʔ 1 seah	Unspecified	MARV 8 96
(ḪIM + Ḫattāyu?)	Barley	?	12-*qa* seah (once by the *ḫišnu* mode)	MARV 8 3
Total barley		**>428ʔ homers 3 seahs**		
Ḫimsātēya	Syrup	1 homer	Unspecified	KAJ 302
	Sesame	1 homer 5 seahs	Unspecified	KAJ 302
Ištar-tuballissu	Barley	?	50-*qa* seah[277]	MARV 8 62
		?	50-*qa* seah[278]	MARV 7 88
…akduʔ	Barley	20 homers	Large seah, converted by the small seah	MARV 9 95
Šūzub-Marduk	Barley	20ʔ homers	50-*qa* seah	MARV 1 21[279]
		5 homers	50-*qa* seah	MARV 6 88
		72 homers	50-*qa* seah	MARV 6 3
		87 homers	Unspecified	MARV 10 88
		32 homers	*sūtu ša pî* 5 *sūte*	MARV 8 74
		40 homers	Unspecified	MARV 10 86
Total barley		**256ʔ homers**		
Urad-ilāni	Barley	?	Unspecified	MARV 1 21
		? homer(s)	*ša pirik ritte*	MARV 6 88
Ḫattāyu	Barley	30 homers	*ša pirik ritte*	MARV 7 36
(ḪA + Šūzub-Marduk)	Syrup	1 homer 2 seahs 8 *qa*	Unspecified	MARV 6 26
(ḪA + Šūzub-Marduk)	Sesame	18ʔ homers	Unspecified	MARV 6 26

Table 4. Commodities, quantities and metrology in the journeys of Ḫimsātēya and his relatives (Abbreviations: ḪIM = Ḫimsātēya, ḪA = Ḫattāyu).

5.2. Remarks on the transport vessels used for the shipments of Ḫimsātēya's family

Unlike the documentation from Babylonia and Mari, which informs us about the size and carrying capacity of cargo ships in use in lower Mesopotamia and the middle Euphrates,[280] Middle Assyrian texts are silent on these aspects. Although the exact typology of rivercraft used by the Assyrian *malāḫu*s is not described in the M4 texts, the cargo volumes mentioned in the documents from this archive can provide useful indications for an idea, albeit a rough one, of the type of transport vessel in use. If we exclude the smallest

276. See MARV 1 21 and MARV 6 3.
277. This measure is explicitly referred to the barley mentioned in the first lines of MARV 8 62, belonging to a son of Ninurta-mušallim. The assumption is that it was brought by Ištar-tuballissu and measured using this metrological unit.
278. The metrological unit used to measure the barley loaned to the sailor. No details are given in the document MARV 7 88 about the barley brought by Ištar-tuballissu.
279. Cf. MARV 6 3.
280. See Chambon 2016, 142f. on boats used in the Euphrates according to the archives of Mari. On the size and capacity of boats in the Old and the Neo-Babylonian periods, see Weszeli 2020, 91–94.

grain shipments of one or a few homers, which can hardly be considered a full load, and the largest loads exceeding 100 homers, the above-discussed quantitative data about the grain shipments point to a boat (or to various types of boats) whose load capacity generally ranged from a little more than 10 homers to 80 homers. This is true for Ḫimsātēya's shipments. Šūzub-Marduk's cargoes range from 20 homers to more than 80 homers, with the 20-homer cargo also attested in the case of Ištar-tuballissu's son. Little information is available regarding Ḫattāyu's cargoes, but his 30-homer shipment is close to the lower values attested for the cargoes of Ḫimsātēya, Šūzub-Marduk and …akdu[?]. These grain cargoes were presumably transported along with other goods, a conclusion that becomes more realistic in case of grain cargoes of only or just over one homer. Moreover, we are not certain that each boat was loaded to maximum capacity. Instead of imagining that these boatmen used only one type of boat, it may be assumed that they had several types of vessels available for their long-distance trips, depending on the load to be transported, the length of the journey and the size of the crew. The above-mentioned figures generally indicate medium-sized boats — possibly barges, although rafts cannot be excluded — whose smallest variety had a carrying capacity ranging from just over 10 homers to around 20 homers, while the largest type of boat of the middle-sized category could carry several dozen homers. A larger category of transport boat may have had a capacity ranging from around 50 homers to less than 100 homers. The loads attested in other texts of the M4 corpus corroborate this assumption, since the average size of a grain shipment is generally just over 10 homers; in some cases, the shipment was less than 20 homers or around that value.[281] That these measures characterised the average size of most common cargo boats is confirmed by the shipment brought by Ḫattāyu and Šūzub-Marduk according to MARV 6 26.[282] In this case, the cargo did not include barley but 1 homer 2 seahs 8 *qa* of syrup and 18[?] homers of sesame. Altogether, these commodities amounted to more than 19[?] homers, a measure close to the 20-homer standard.

On rare occasions, the size of a grain cargo amounted to 100 homers, as in the case of Ḫaḫutu's barley shipment from Katmuḫḫu, or a larger quantity, like the exceptional barley cargo of 220 homers brought by Ḫimsātēya from Ḫalaḫḫu in the year of Ina-ilīya-allak.[283] Shipments of grain exceeding those of Ḫaḫutu and Ḫimsātēya are attested in the M4 corpus. We read of a complete *ginā'u*-payment received from Talmuššu of the year of Hiyašāyu amounting to 135 homers 6 seahs[284] and of the 150 homers brought by a

281. For grain cargoes of just over 10 homers, see MARV 1 56, r.51; MARV 5 3, 8, e.13; MARV 6 29, 1; 34, 4, 5, r.18; MARV 8 94, 5. For loads of 20 homers or a little more, see KAM 11 100, 7–10; MARV 1 56, r.57; MARV 5 3, 7, 11; MARV 7 15, 4′.

282. MARV 6 29, 3–9.

283. Another load exceeding the typical size of *ginā'u* barley shipments is the cargo that according to a summary text was brought by a certain …ḫulāyu from an unknown province and redistributed to *alaḫḫinu*s and brewers during the month of Muḫur-ilāni in the year of Aššur-apla-iqīša: KAM 10 46, 18–20 PAP [x[?]]-*me* 4 ANŠE ŠE-*um* […] / *gi-na-ú ša iš-tu*[?] ˹URU[?]˺.[…] / *i-na* ŠU [^{m}x]-*ḫu-la-a* DUMU ˹x˺ […]. See Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 609 and TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/X001365 (last access: 16.11.2023). According to Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 610, the shipment amounted to "20400 *qa* of barley".

284. MARV 5 42, 1 (TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P281976, last access: 16.11.2023). See Postgate

certain Ārik-dēn-ili from Ḫalaḫḫu, which was part of the 230-homer payment owed in the year of Ḫaburrāru.[285] A quantity greater than 100 homers was also received by the *ginā'u* administrators through multiple journeys made by the sailors Šūzub-Marduk and Kidinnīya in the year of Aššur-šallimšunu, as discussed above. A two-year arrears payment of 194 homers 2 seahs was paid by the province of Kilizu during the *līmu* of Aplīya.[286] Moreover, an enormous amount of 466 homers of barley characterised the *ginā'u*-quota paid by Arbela in the year of Šamaš-apla-ēriš, a quantity that included the arrears owed in the *līmu* of Aššur-šallimšunu.[287] Vessels of uncommon capacity, perhaps a large type of barge, were likely used for these very large cargoes. We cannot exclude the possibility that to meet the state's pressing demand — especially in cases of large arrears — boats of exceptional size were built in boatmen's shipyards, presumably with the organisational support of the provincial authorities,[288] who provided workforce and shipbuilding materials, not to mention additional transport sacks, baskets and earthenware vessels to store the goods and the crew's rations, and mats and tarpaulins to cover and protect the commodities aboard the boats.[289] To stabilise the cargo in a boat, removable structures made of wood or rope may have been used.[290] It is reasonable to think that the introduction of transport vessels with exceptionally large carrying capacities under the increasing demand for goods from the state played a role in the development of river transport in the Tigris network. It must have affected the entire riverine economy and the mobility practices: the boat traffic, presumably growing on routes already affected by the pre-existing short- and long-distance river transport; itineraries, some of which probably expanded to a regional dimension from a local one; the lifestyle of the boatmen, who were away from home for longer periods due to the repeated journeys needed to transport the *ginā'u* products (including arrears from previous years) and increasing responsibilities in organising shipments (especially of large size) from the provinces; the human geography of the (full-time or seasonal) professionals that to varying degrees characterised the ports of embarkation, mooring places and every stopping point along the route (*i.e.*, other boatmen, boat-haulers, merchants, private customers or anyone who could provide goods, food, help or occasional cooperation during the journey, and perhaps also informants sent to monitor the cargo's journey along the route and promptly inform the state authorities). In light of the provinces' obligation to supply goods to the central government and to maintain the state's economic system and infrastructure in good working order, the latter aspect represents another field in which local governments presumably did their part to maintain the movement of goods and to keep the waterborne transportation infrastructure

2013, 132.

285. MARV 9 17, 4.
286. MARV 6 90+1 (TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P283003, last access: 16.11.2023). See Postgate 2013, 134.
287. MARV 6 86, r.9 (TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P283021, last access: 16.11.2023).
288. See Gauthier 2016, 217.
289. Transport baskets and vessels, and mats and tarpaulins constituted the basic equipment needed in cargo boats, according to the Old Babylonian texts. See Weszeli 2020, 99.
290. See Chambon 2016, 144f. regarding transport boats in the Euphrates network.

efficient. In this connection, one wonders whether a form of organisation existed for towing boats along the banks of the Tigris, a practice required for upstream navigation and to overcome difficult stretches of the river. Southern Mesopotamian evidence from the Ur III period shows that boat towing was a common operation in trips upstream on the Tigris and its network of canals. Depending on the route to be covered, such a trip could take several days and a large number of men.[291] The size of a river craft and the volume of a given cargo were among the factors that affected the towing rate in terms of kilometres per day.[292] From Old Babylonian data for water transport costs, we learn that expenses for personnel related to the boat included wages for towmen.[293] We can assume that teams of two or more workers or donkeys with their drivers could have periodically been recruited by Assyrian provincial authorities from the local agricultural population to ensure an efficient boat-towing service along the Tigris route and keep the towing paths along the river's banks clear and functional.[294] The boat crew itself must also have taken an active part in the operation.[295] Since the river route crossed territories belonging to different provinces, it is reasonable to think that this towing service required some kind of supra-regional coordination between the authorities of contiguous administrative districts. The towing service must certainly have facilitated the boatmen's return journey upstream on the Tigris once they had unloaded their cargo in Assur.

We also cannot rule out that the above-mentioned exceptional loads were transported through a number of lower-capacity boats. When the texts specify only the amount of the provincial contribution, it is presumed that this resulted from a number of small-sized shipments.[296] That multiple shipments ranging from a few homers to 36 homers were brought by the same boatman appears to be confirmed by the tabular list MARV 6 3. Small-sized cargoes carried over a number of trips enabled the boatman to fulfil his individual shipment quota established by the administration, as the 20-homer obligation of MARV 9 95 suggests. Splitting a huge cargo into small-scale shipments through a number of boats (that is, those that were available in the province, regardless of size or capacity) could have been a feasible solution.[297] If these small shipments were sent on the same day, we might think of a convoy of barges, lined up one behind the other. In that case, the leading boat could have been steered by the chief boatman or commander and each of the

291. See Steinkeller 2001, 45, 52f., 57–62, 67–71. The examples collected by Steinkeller show that it could take from one day to six days, depending on the distance to be covered.
292. On this aspect, see Steinkeller 2001, 59 fn. 156.
293. Weszeli 2020, 99.
294. As observed in De Graeve 1981, 151f. regarding the visual evidence of boat-towing in Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs; in Assyria boat-haulers could be two or more people, depending on the size of the rivercraft to be towed. The haulers walked along the riverbank and held a rope, presumably of reed bast and bulrush, over their shoulders or at their breasts. A single rope could be used, there could be ropes one for each hauler or group of haulers. For ethnographic evidence of modern boat towing in Majar al-Kabīr, in Southeastern Iraq, see Rost 2019, 32 fig. 2. The only known occurrence of the boat-tower (*šaddidu*) in Assyria is in RINAP 4 39, 5′, but this Neo-Assyrian attestation is omitted in Weszeli 2009–11, 164.
295. For the Ur III evidence, see Steinkeller 2001, 62.
296. See MARV 8 94, r.12–14 on the contributions from Talmuššu and Ḫalaḫḫu.
297. Gauthier 2016, 217.

others following it by members of the crew. Steering a convoy of barges would certainly have entailed a greater risk to the safety of the goods and would have required greater care on the part of the crew in terms of safe navigation, such as avoiding sandbars, overhanging rocks or floating materials, and in manoeuvring boats in case of strong currents and seasonal floods.[298] Collisions with other boats, especially equally large transport vessels, and when navigation involved the roughest stretches of a river would have greatly increased the risks posed to multi-barge shipment.[299] Avoiding hitting other obstacles, primarily the riverbank, due to the swift current of the Tigris, must have required a certain amount of skill on the part of the crew, especially if large loads were transported.[300] A convoy of barges would also have had an undoubted advantage over a single barge: in the event of a single load of the convoy being lost, the rest of the shipment would remain. Accordingly, the above-mentioned 100 homers of barley delivered from Katmuḫḫu could have been more easily loaded into two boats carrying 50 homers each, three boats of 33 homers of capacity or four of 25 homers;[301] while the 220 homers that Sîn-idnanni's son transported from Ḫalaḫḫu could have been more advantageously embarked in three boats each carrying just over 70 homers or in four boats of 55 homers each.[302]

5.3. Trends in delivery time in the shipments of Ḫimsātēya's family

Regarding the period when the *ginā'u* cargoes reached their destination on Ḫimsātēya and his relatives' trips, only a few documents in Ḫimsātēya's dossier contains dates. Although the correspondence of the months of the Middle Assyrian calendar to the seasonal year appear in general quite clear, albeit with some room for uncertainty,[303] questions arise as to how the Assyrian calendar was calibrated with the Babylonian calendar and what factors may have determined the variations between the two systems. To complicate matters,

298. The hypothesis reported in Gauthier 2016, 217 fn. 12 — that boatmen tied up vessels — seems entirely improbable for reasons relating to the safety of both navigation and the transported cargo, considering the navigation conditions of the Tigris.
299. On ramming and sinking fully laden boats in the Middle Assyrian Laws, see TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P282409, MAL M § 2 (last access: 16.11.2023).
300. This risk was well known to Iraqi boatmen steering rafts and *quffa*s along the Tigris through the 20th century. As observed in Frost 1905–06, 193f., while rafts could suffer severe damage to their skins after a collision with the riverbank, *quffa*s could bump violently into the bank without any material damage.
301. The magnitude of some loads in the M4 documents supports this hypothesis. For a cargo of just over 50 homers, see KAJ 302, 6–8, according to which Ḫimsātēya's boat was loaded with 50 homers of barley, 1 homer of syrup and 1 homer 5 seahs of sesame, for a total of 52 homers 5 seahs of *ginā'u* commodities. See also the 32-homer shipment carried by Šūzub-Marduk and the cargo of 31 homers of Aššur-aḫa-iddina, according to MARV 8 74, 5–6. Another 31-homer cargo was brought by Umzarḫu; it consisted of 27 homers of barley and 4 homers of wheat, as we read in MARV 9 98, 1–4. For a 25[+x?]-homer cargo carried by Ḫimsātēya, see MARV 8 74, 8.
302. MARV 8 27, 3 records a shipment of 72? homers, possibly of barley, brought by a sailor. In MARV 5 35, 8 a shipment delivered from Ḫalaḫḫu comprised 75[+x?] homers of barley and 1 homer 1 *qa* of syrup. For a 50-homer cargo, see MARV 8 74, 1. See also the shipment of 57? homers, possibly of barley, recorded in MARV 8 30, 4. As shown by MARV 1 56, r.44, the cargo brought by a certain Ubānu from Šīmu consisted of 52 homers 4 seahs of barley and 1 seah 7 *qa* of syrup.
303. Cancik-Kirschbaum & Cale Johnson 2011–12, 116 and fig. 8.

the correspondences between the Assyrian and the Babylonian calendrical systems appear to have been driven by the need to calibrate the administrative and cultic calendars.[304] The dates preserved in Ḫimsātēya's dossier are of limited value for the reconstruction of general trends in the time of consignment of this family's shipments. However, some interesting aspects emerge. Of the 18 documents that form Ḫimsātēya's dossier, the majority of dated texts show that the shipments were received in the 11th month (Abu-šarrāni),[305] while the remaining dated documents refer to the 4th (Sîn),[306] the 8th (Ša-sarrāte)[307] and the 10th months (Muḫur-ilāni)[308] as the time of consignment. Ḫimsātēya usually consigned his shipments during Abu-šarrāni, and in only one case in the preceding month (Muḫur-ilāni). His nephew, …akdu[?], brought his loads earlier in the year, consigning during Ša-sarrāte. Concerning Ḫimsātēya's sons, Šūzub-Marduk transported and consigned his shipments in both Sîn and Muḫur-ilāni, while Urad-ilāni[?] consigned during Muḫur-ilāni; no information of this sort can be obtained regarding Ḫattāyu.

From these data we can state that Ḫimsātēya and his relatives preferred to organise their trips in the second half of the year (from the 8th to the 11th month) and that the peak period of consignments was the 11th month. An exception to this rule is the shipment carried by Šūzub-Marduk in the 4th month. Comparing these data for Ḫimsātēya's family with those concerning other sailors in the M4 text corpus — largely attested in the same reign period of Tiglath-pileser I — we observe that the major peak in consignments of *ginā'u* cargoes occurred in the 11th month, with minor peaks in the 12th, 1st and 4th months.[309] The deliveries continued with significant albeit lower values in the 2nd and 5th months and decreased in the 8th through 10th months. This means that shipments were transported by Middle Assyrian *malāḫu*s for most of the year, preferably in the period from the 8th month of one year to the 5th month of the following year, with a remarkable increase in the 11th month. Evidently, the main factor that conditioned the deliveries was the seasonal accessibility of the Tigris and the other watercourses of the region for navigation, because of flooding in the period from February to May.[310]

304. Cancik-Kirschbaum & Cale Johnson 2011–12, 134–145.
305. MARV 6 52; MARV 9 14; 16. For Abu-šarrāni as the month of consignment of *ginā'u* shipments, see also MARV 3 36+ (Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 62f.; TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P281980, last access: 16.11.2023); 85+ (Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 88; TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/X281977, last access: 16.11.2023); MARV 5 42; MARV 6 90+ (Gauthier 2016, *List of M4 Texts* …, 315f.; TCMA, http://oracc.org/tcma/assur/P283003, last access: 16.11.2023); MARV 9 97; 112.
306. MARV 10 88. For shipments received in the month of Sîn, see also MARV 6 29; 57; MARV 7 83.
307. MARV 9 95. For shipments received in Ša-sarrāte, see also MARV 6 77.
308. MARV 1 21. For Muḫur-ilāni as the month of consignment, see also MARV 6 89.
309. See Gauthier 2016, 212 fig. I.2–3.
310. See Fales 1995, 205f. The wet season in which navigation was difficult coincides with the period from the 12th month of one year to the 2nd month of the next in the Babylonian calendar. See Gauthier 2016, 214. Looking to the present-day water regime of the Tigris and the other waterways of the Assyrian region, especially to data prior to the heavy anthropogenic impact that has occurred since the 1970s, local variations are recognizable in the watercourses of the region. The Tigris downstream of Mosul and the Upper Zab reached the peak in high-water level in February, while the Ḫāzir and the Lower Zab did so in January. The period in which the rivers ran below capacity was July for the Tigris and

It is reasonable to think that the increase in river traffic occurred immediately after the wet period or began in its final phase.[311] The delivery patterns in Ḫimsātēya's family thus appear to be in line with the general trend that can be reconstructed from the available texts of the archive. It is reasonable to think that the size of the cargo — especially large amounts of barley — was conditioned by the seasonal navigability of the watercourses. A conditioning factor for the transport of fully loaded boats is water depth, which in the summer and especially in September-October reaches its lowest point.[312] Low water probably reduced river traffic, with an impact on the movement of goods and delivery times. Regarding the delivery by Šūzub-Marduk in the 4th month, which was apparently well outside the usual delivery period but presumably at a point when the water level started to rise,[313] there appears to be no correlation between cargo size and navigability. The cargo he brought in the month of Sîn of the year of Mudammeq-Bēl (87 homers)[314] was even greater than a similar cargo of 80 homers carried by his father in the month of Abu-šarrāni several years earlier, more precisely in the year of Ḫiyašāyu.[315] It is also worth noting that the 20-homer shipment brought by …akdu[?] in the 8th month of the year of Aššur-šallimšunu[316] occurred during the wet period, precisely when the high-water peak occurred and navigation was difficult though not impossible for an experienced boatman. The low number of shipments received by the regular offerings administration from Šasarrāte to Muḫur-ilāni is probably an indication of the less favourable navigation conditions of the Tigris in that period. The navigability of the Tigris and its tributaries may have changed from year to year, however, depending on fluctuations in the precipitation regime over the years.[317]

5.4. Measuring the cargoes of Ḫimsātēya's family: metrological units and measuring practices

A few considerations may also be made regarding the metrological units used in measuring the *ginā'u* barley consigned by these sailors. It is known that Assyrian capacity norms used the *emāru*, the *sūtu* and the *qû*.[318] Barley is the most frequently attested among the

the Upper Zab and June for the Ḫāzir and the Lower Zab. See Reculeau 2011, 18 and Yaseen *et al.* 2021, 232, 235. According to De Graeve 1981, 18, in the Neo-Assyrian period the Tigris was navigable for large warships between Nineveh and Opis and for barges below Tastiāti.

311. On the 3rd to 6th Babylonian months as the "delivery season", see Gauthier 2016, 214.
312. Rost 2019, 32, 45.
313. After the low waters from September on, the autumn regime of the Tigris sees a rise from November on, as observed in Reculeau 2011, 18.
314. MARV 10 88, 1–2 (expressed in tally marks).
315. MARV 9 16, 3. Assigning the *līmu* of Ḫiyašāyu to the 4th regnal year of Tiglath-pileser I and the 18th to that of Mudammeq-Bēl, as tentatively suggested in Freydank 2016, 128, the elapsed time from the eponymate of Ḫiyašāyu to that of Mudammeq-Bēl would be 14 years. See Gauthier 2016, 717 for the possibility that Ḫiyašāyu represented the 5th regnal year and Mudammeq-Bēl the 14th. In that case, the elapsed time would be only 9 years.
316. MARV 9 95, r.21.
317. The snow- and rain-fed regime of the Tigris and the other waterways of the region depended on precipitation in the highlands of their drainage basin. See Reculeau 2011, 18.
318. Saporetti 1969, 273–283; Powell 1987–90, 501f.; Postgate 2013, 55f. and table 3.2.

ginā'u products that were transported, and different metrological norms are documented in M4 texts regarding that crop. In the majority of the shipments transported by Ḫimsātēya and his relatives we can observe that the metrological unit used by the *ginā'u* accountants to measure the incoming cargoes was not the same, at least in the terminology. As for Ḫimsātēya, the majority of attestations concern the *sūtu ša pirik ritte*, "the handbreadth seah", with only one occurrence each for the other two measures attested in the archive; namely, the *ša pî* 5 *sūte*, "of the opening of the 50-*qa* seah"[319] and the 12-*qa* seah. The handbreadth seah also appears in the case of cargoes transported by Urad-ilāni and Ḫattāyu. The expression *pirik ritte*, literally "through, across the hand",[320] probably refers to the way the barley was measured, but not in the sense that the grain was poured into the measuring vessel flowing across the hand.[321] Two possibilities can be suggested: when for various reasons the measurement according to the regular metrological unit of the *ginā'u* bureau could not take place for certain incoming cargoes, the grain was measured using a correspondence, perhaps approximate, between the (cubic?) hand span and the *sūtu*-based volumetric system. However, since this expression occurs in measurements performed in official contexts,[322] it is difficult to believe that the accountants made uncommon and approximate measurements. Given that this expression is not exclusively linked to a particular type of seah and grain,[323] another hypothesis is that *pirik ritte* refers to some operation carried out with the open palms of the hands in the phase of measurement in the *sūtu*-measuring container, perhaps pressing with the entire palm of the hand to compact the grain inside the container.[324]

The metrological notations referring to the "opening of the 50-*qa* seah" and the 12-*qa* seah are problematic, but the former may simply have referred to units of barley that the

319. Literally, "of the opening of the 5 seahs".
320. See CAD P, 407f. *s.v. pirku* B 1d for prepositional and adverbial use. In many M4 documents, the phrase occurs in final sections concerning the total quantities of barley measured, as in KAM 10, 46, r.12′; MARV 6 19, e.13 (barley from Ḫalaḫḫu); 24, e.12 (barley from Šūdu); MARV 7 36, 7; MARV 8 46, e.28. In summary documents concerning various shipments received, it occurs only for a number of cargoes. See MARV 1 21, 3, 5, 7; 25, 2; MARV 2 24, 5, env. 3′; MARV 6 3, 3, 11, e.19, r.27. On notes concerning distribution of barley using this expression, see MARV 6 81, 2; MARV 7 36, 7.
321. As argued in Gauthier 2016, 762. Gauthier suggests that the phrase could refer to situations in which the grain was measured by actually pouring it into a measuring container instead of counting it in premeasured units.
322. Barley was measured by the *ša pirik ritte* seah in the House of Ezbu-lēšir, the regular offerings overseer (MARV 2 24, 5–7, env. 3′–4′; see also *ibid.*, lines 3–4, env. 1′–2′ on barley measured in the House of Ippitte). See also the *ša pirik ritte* seah used for barley measured and distributed in the *bēt ginā'e* (MARV 7 36, 6–e.10).
323. MARV 3 42 records a quantity of barley belonging to the regular offerings stocks of the Aššur Temple. The barley is measured by the seah of the god's ration "across the hand" (lines 2–4). From MARV 3 60, 1–4 we learn that a quantity of sesame from the *ginā'u* of the Aššur Temple is measured by the seah of the *ḫiburnu*-house; in this case, the measurement is also qualified as *pirik ritte* by the scribe. In MARV 6 40, 4–5, a quantity of *simdu*-flour is measured by an unknown seah "across the hand". The norm is probably the 50-*qa* seah, mentioned in connection with the same type of flour in lines 11–12 of the same text. See *ibid.*, lines 20–21 on *simdu*-flour measured by the seah of the work-assignments "across the hand".
324. See Postgate 2016, 234.

staff of the *ginā'u* office had not physically checked to verify that their nominal size actually corresponded to 50 *qa* (hence the use of the phrase *ša pî*, "according to").[325] Another plausible alternative is that the notation refers to the way the barley was measured regarding the mouth of the 50-*qa* measuring container, presumably depending on whether it was completely filled to the brim or not, heaped up or levelled flat.[326] Hence, another translation of this expression would be "the 50-*qa* seah (measured with regard to) the opening (of the corresponding measuring container)".

Concerning the unusual 12-*qa* seah, it is attested only once in Ḫimsātēya's dossier and may refer to a *sūtu* norm that diverged from the standard measure commonly used by the *ginā'u* bureaucrats.[327] The same norm — the seah of 12.5 *qa* — is used in other documents of the archive,[328] although in the case of Ḫimsātēya's cargo it appears to have been rounded down.[329]

The seah of 50 *qa*, which was the standard metrological norm in measurements made by the *ginā'u* measurers at the arrival of cargoes in Assur and was presumably also followed in the measurement phase during the loading of barley onto the *malāḫu*s' boats in the provinces' embarkation points,[330] is frequently attested in the case of Šūzub-Marduk's cargoes. It seems that this measure was used for shipments from some grain-paying provinces but not all the grain-supplying administrative districts of the Assyrian kingdom. The majority of attestations of the 50-*qa* seah concern Ḫalaḫḫu and Katmuḫḫu,[331] and in most cases this notation is expressed in terms of "opening of the 50-*qa* seah".[332] Interestingly, in the case of Ḫalaḫḫu in the same document, we find barley cargoes measured differently: in MARV 6 88 a cargo brought by Ḫimsātēya was measured by the handbreadth seah,[333] while another transported by a sailor whose name is not preserved by the "opening of the 50-*qa* seah".[334] Local variations in Assyrian capacity norms certainly existed, and this was also true for the 50-*qa* seah measure. Boatmen often used capacity standards that diverged from those used in the regular offerings bureau in Assur, presumably long-established in the places they came from and commonly used in the river routes they travelled. In the case of the *ginā'u* cargoes from the provinces, they could use their own 50-*qa* seah or other types of seah, and the scribes of the *ginā'u* office recorded this in their documents.[335] Šūzub-Marduk had his own 50-*qa* seah, and his barley cargoes from

325. Gauthier 2016, 758–760.
326. On these aspects, see Postgate 2016, 233f.
327. Gauthier 2016, 751f.
328. See the 13-*qa sūtu* used by the scribe Mār-āpi'e in MARV 6 88, 26. This is the value of the seah of 12.5 *qa*, which is rounded up. The same norm is probably intended by the "seah of Mār-āpi'e" mentioned in MARV 9 112, 4; see Gauthier 2016, 751.
329. Gauthier 2016, 752.
330. See Gauthier 2016, 756f. for pre-measured standard units of grain.
331. For Ḫalaḫḫu, see MARV 6 10, 2; 77, 6; 88, r.41; MARV 8 66, r.5′. For Katmuḫḫu, see MARV 3 14, 3; MARV 6 3, 13, 15; 88, 12, 14; MARV 7 5, 2, 4, 5; this aspect is discussed in Gauthier 2016, 758.
332. See, for Ḫalaḫḫu, MARV 6 77, 6; 88, r.41; MARV 8 66, r.5′. In the case of Katmuḫḫu, only two attestations refer to the *ša pî* 5 *sūte* measure.
333. MARV 6 88, 6.
334. MARV 6 88, r.41.
335. See Gauthier 2016, 766.

Katmuḫḫu were measured by that norm.[336] The same is true of his colleague Kidinnīya, who was also involved in transporting various barley cargoes from the same district.[337] Another cargo brought by Šūzub-Marduk was measured by his own 50-*qa sūtu*, but in this case the *ša pî* notation is used, and the origin of the barley is not specified by the scribe.[338] This plurality of coexisting metrological norms, particularly norms that belonged to a sailor's regional background and evidently shared by the local authorities of the contributing province, also indirectly testifies to the skills that a scribe of the *ginā'u* administration in Assur had in solving problems that arose when checking and measuring loads. We may assume that the difficulties probably increased in the case of apprentice scribes dispatched to the port with little experience, even of the boatmen's jargon, as is suggested by a Neo-Assyrian bilingual literary work from Assur concerning the exam at the scribal school and the importance of understanding the terminology of the *malāḫu*.[339]

In all likelihood, the 50-*qa sūtu* norm was also used in the case of shipments brought by Šūzub-Marduk's uncle, if we consider the references to the 50-*qa* seah of MARV 8 62 and MARV 7 88 in the context of measurements of loaned barley. At least in the case of MARV 8 62, it appears that it was previously brought in Ištar-tuballissu's shipments. The use of the *ša pî* 5 *sūte* norm in Šūzub-Marduk's cargoes is limited to one occurrence. As to the "large seah" and the "small seah", evidence for these two norms are limited to the sailor …akdu[?], the son of Ištar-tuballissu mentioned in MARV 9 95, but it is possible that the *sūtu rabītu* was another way to refer to the "boatman's seah", a norm that Gauthier calculates was 1.550 times the size of the small seah.[340]

Chronologically, as far as Ḫimsātēya's dossier is concerned, all these metrological notations coexisted in the accounting practice of the same period: the dated texts show that *ša pirik ritte* seah was used in the eponymates of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, Aššur-šallimšunu and Ina-ilīya-allak. In the *līmu*s of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu and Aššur-šallimšunu, the scribes used the 50-*qa* seah, while large and small seahs are attested in that of Aššur-šallimšunu. As to the 12-*qa* seah, the text in which it occurs has no date, but documents using the 12.5 seah norm show that it was in use at least in the first two decades of Tiglath-pileser I's reign.[341]

5.5. Ḫimsātēya's family and its socio-professional networks: institutional and non-institutional contacts

Regarding the institutional actors mentioned in the texts in which Ḫimsātēya and his relatives appear, if we exclude references to the *rab ginā'e*, the head of the Regular Offerings

336. MARV 6 3, 13.
337. MARV 6 3, 15.
338. MARV 8 74, r.5–6.
339. Sjöberg 1975, 144f., line 26.
340. Gauthier 2016, 752.
341. See MARV 6 88, possibly dated to the eponymate of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, and MARV 9 112, dated to the *līmu* of Ninu'āyu. According to Freydank 2016, 128, the year of Ninu'āyu occurred in the middle of the reign, perhaps the 21st. In Gauthier 2016, 718, this *līmu* is tentatively assigned to the 23rd regnal year.

Date (and source)	*Boatman*	*Officials*	*Households and officials linked to households*	*Aššur Temple staff*		*Other professionals*
				*Alaḫḫinu*s	*Brewers*	
? (KAJ 302)	ḪIM	Ṣillīya*	—	—	–	—
IAA (MARV 1 21)	ḪIM	Pān-Aššur-dugul	House of Erība-Aššur Lirnin[…, *mašennu*?], of the House of Kīdītê		Kidinnīya, brewer	
IAA (MARV 6 52)	ḪIM	—	—	—	—	La[…], a representative? of the *rab ginā'e**
IAA? (MARV 6 88)	ḪIM ŠM	Aššur-šallimšunu, […]	House of Erība-Aššur […], *mašennu* of Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu Uddû, *mašennu* of Ilī-padda Urad-ilāni, […] of the House of Aššur-bēla-šallim House of Uddû	[…], *alaḫḫinu* Urad-Aššur, *alaḫḫinu* of the Aššur [Temple?]	—	Mār-āpi'e, scribe
AŠ (MARV 6 3)	ḪIM ŠM	—	House of Erība-Aššur [Uddû], *mašennu* of Ilī-padda	—	—	—
AŠ (MARV 7 36)	ḪA	Urad-Kūbe*	—	Urad-Gula*, Aššur-danninni*, Siqqi-Aššur-aṣbat*		—
ŠAĒ (MARV 6 26)	ḪA ŠM	Adad-apla-iddina, *rab karāne* […], son of Ukapani	—	—	—	
IIA (MARV 9 14)	ḪIM	—	Aššur-apla-uṣur?, […] of (the House of) Kīdītê	Urad-Gula?*, Šūzub-Sîn?*, Aššur-danninni*, Tišpakīya?*, Sîn-ašarēd*, Kuttaḫḫu*, Tišpak-šuma-uṣur		—
? (MARV 8 3)	ḪIM	Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu	[House of?] Erība-[…] House of Aššur-MU-[…]	Šūzub-Sîn?* Aššur-danninni*	Urad-Gula* Sîn-ašarēd*	—
? (MARV 8 74)	ḪIM ŠM	—	House of Bi[…]	—	—	—
MB? (MARV 8 96)	ḪIM	—	—	Ša-Aššur-lēšir*, Tišpakīya*, Urad-Aššur*, Aššur-šuma-iddina*, Šūzub-Marduk*, Kuttaḫḫu		—
? (MARV 10 86)	ŠM	Aššur-apla-ēriš Hahutu	—	—		—

Table 5. Officials and professionals active during the period of Ḫimsātēya and his family (Abbreviations: IAA = Ištu-Aššur-ašāmšu, AŠ = Aššur-šallimšunu, ŠAĒ = Šamaš-apla-ēriš, IIA = Ina-ilīya-allak, MB = Mudammeq-Bēl; ḪIM = Ḫimsātēya, ḪA = Ḫattāyu, ŠM = Šūzub-Marduk; the sign * indicates that the individuals are directly related to the sailor's shipment).

House and the one who was formally responsible for receiving the provincial cargoes in Assur, a number of officials and other professionals enable us to form an idea of the institutional figures active when Ḫimsātēya and his family worked in *ginā'u*-related river transport. These sailors maintained professional relations with some of these high-ranking members of the institutional sector. The names of various officials and other professionals from Ḫimsātēya's dossier are presented in Table 5. The individuals belong to various categories: some are state officials, mentioned alone or as linked to specific households. They were directly involved with the provision of *ginā'u* products and managing the delivery of these goods from the provinces to Assur. Other individuals belong to categories directly involved in the process of redistribution of the products received from the stores of the Regular Offerings House and were in charge of processing them into foodstuffs ready for cultic consumption: they were the *alaḫḫinu*s and brewers of the Aššur Temple. The former professionals were responsible for processing cereals into flour,[342] the latter specialists in making beer. Presumably, different varieties of flour and beer were produced by these specialists. Flour quality varied primarily with the grain used and the culinary purpose intended (both unprocessed flour and finished culinary products like breads and cakes were presented in cultic offerings). The grinding process determined different degrees of consistency and refining. Other characteristics, such as colour and flavour, must also have played a role in their final use. The different qualities of beer depended primarily on the malt used and the fermentation process, along with any additives that might enrich the flavour of the final product.

The individuals qualified as *alaḫḫinus* probably supervised their own staffs of dependent grinders to actually carry out the grinding operation.[343] Analogous considerations may be made about the *sirāšu*s, who presumably had their own crews of workers in charge of every phase of the brewing process.[344] Other professionals cited in Ḫimsātēya's dossier include one person apparently in charge of receiving the cargo in place of the *rab ginā'e*, and a scribe who appears as responsible for the delivery of a quantity of barley to Assur. More directly involved in the shipments brought by Ḫimsātēya and his relatives are the *alaḫḫinu*s and brewers, who were the direct beneficiaries of the *ginā'u* barley transported by the sailors.

Four documents from the dossier enumerate various food processors as beneficiaries of quotas of the barley consigned by the sailors Ḫimsātēya and Ḫattāyu: they are, in the order in which they appear in Table 5, Urad-Gula, Aššur-danninni, Siqqi-Aššur-aṣbat, Šūzub-Sîn, Tišpakīya, Sîn-ašarēd, Kuttaḫḫu, Ša-Aššur-lēšir, Urad-Aššur, Aššur-šuma-iddina and Šūzub-Marduk. While in Ḫattāyu's activity of the year of Aššur-šallimšunu we find the group of *alaḫḫinu*s formed by Urad-Gula, Aššur-danninni and Siqqi-Aššur-aṣbat,[345] with the latter acting as a temporary substitute of Šūzub-Sîn,[346] in the case of

342. Postgate 2013, 110.
343. Postgate 2013, 110f.
344. In comparison to the *alaḫḫinu*s, less information on the internal specialisation of beer-makers is provided in Middle Assyrian texts; see Postgate 2013, 112.
345. MARV 7 36, 3–5. For these occurrences of the anthroponyms, see AMA, A, 323; S, 97; U, 60 *s.v.* On these specialists, see Freydank 2016, 64f., 72f., 81f.
346. Gauthier 2016, 795.

Ḫimsātēya's activity the beneficiaries include a larger group that varied over the years. Urad-Gula, Aššur-danninni and Šūzub-Sîn are attested as a group of *alaḫḫinu*s since the middle of Aššur-rēša-iši I's reign.[347] In the year of Ina-ilīya-allak, the specialists involved in the allocation of consigned barley are the same as those already seen in the year of Aššur-šallimšunu, although there are some differences. The latter group was composed of Urad-Gula, Šūzub-Sîn and Aššur-danninni, with the addition of Kuttaḫḫu, another *alaḫḫinu*, possibly holding a low-ranking position in the team,[348] and of the brewers Tišpakīya and Sîn-ašarēd,[349] who are found together in other texts from the *līmu* of Ina-ilīya-allak.[350] In MARV 8 3, we find the same group of beneficiaries. Albeit regarding one of the barley amounts consigned by Ḫimsātēya, the specialists' group also includes the brewer Sîn-ašarēd.[351] It is worth noting that in this case Sîn-ašarēd occurs alone, not in association with his colleague Mutakkil-Aššur or his substitute Tišpakīya.[352] In the case of another barley cargo brought by Ḫimsātēya and later distributed to *alaḫḫinu*s and brewers, the beneficiaries mentioned in MARV 8 96 are, in the order of enumeration, Ša-Aššur-lēšir, Tišpakīya, Urad-Aššur, Aššur-šuma-iddina and Šūzub-Marduk.[353] In this document we find two brewers (Ša-Aššur-lēšir and Tišpakīya)[354] at the beginning of the group of specialists, followed by three *alaḫḫinu*s (Urad-Aššur, Aššur-šuma-iddina and Šūzub-Marduk).[355] The brewers Ša-Aššur-lēšir and Tišpakīya are mentioned together in documents from the eponymate of Mudammeq-Bēl to that of Ninu'āyu,[356] while the three *alaḫḫinu*s are attested as a team in documents dated to the 9th and 10th months of the year of Mudammeq-Bēl.[357] MARV 8 96 also shows that on another disbursement date the *alaḫḫinu* Urad-Aššur received *ginā'u* barley when he worked as a brewer,[358] showing that these professional roles could be interchangeable and that members of one group could join the other as substitutes.

However, the process of allocating quotas of barley to these specialists does not imply direct interaction with the sailors, since that disbursement was an administrative procedure managed by the staff of the Regular Offerings House and of the stores where the *ginā'u* products were kept. That said, it is clear that Ḫimsātēya and his relatives interacted

347. Gauthier 2016, 795.
348. Gauthier 2016, 804.
349. MARV 9 14, r.42′–47′. For these occurrences of the names, see AMA, A, 326; K, 72; S, 49; T, 30 *s.v.* Note that these occurrences of the names Šūzub-Sîn and Urad-Gula are omitted in AMA, Š, 162; U, 63 *s.v.* On these specialists, see Freydank 2016, 67–71.
350. MARV 6 19+, 6–7; 24, 6–7. See Gauthier 2016, 807; *ibid.*, *List of M4 Texts* …, 201, 208.
351. MARV 8 3, 4′–7′, 11′–13′. See AMA, A, 324; S, 48; Š, 161; U, 61 *s.v.*
352. Gauthier 2016, 807.
353. MARV 8 96, 8′–12′. See AMA, Š, 7; T, 30; U, 52 *s.v.* This attestation of the name Aššur-šuma-iddina is omitted in AMA, A, 427. Note that the occurrence of the name Šūzub-Marduk is included in AMA, *Iniziale frammentaria*, 68. For these specialists, see Freydank 2016, 65f., 69–72.
354. See Gauthier 2016, 808, but note that in Gauthier's list of attestations of the team formed by Ša-Aššur-lēšir and Tišpakīya, the occurrence of MARV 8 96 is omitted.
355. Gauthier 2016, 798.
356. Gauthier 2016, 808.
357. Gauthier 2016, 798.
358. MARV 8 96, 3′.

with a variety of institutional actors in the phase of loading the cargo in the contributing province's port of embarkation and in the process of unloading and measurement in the port of Assur. Provincial governors and officials of the local district were responsible for finding sailors available to transport the *ginā'u* goods and organising delivery to Assur. Direct interaction with such institutional actors is suggested by KAJ 302, where Ṣillīya reports having loaded Ḫimsātēya's boat — an operation that implied cooperation with the boatman and his crew. Cooperation between institutional actors and sailors is probably also indicated by MARV 7 36, which is related to a transport mission conducted by the sailor Ḫattāyu and possibly coordinated by the official Urad-Kūbe. An analogous case is possibly described in MARV 10 86, where a certain Ḫaḫutu could have been the official responsible for the *ginā'u* shipments from Katmuḫḫu. He may have been involved in the management of both the shipment delivered through the sailor Šūzub-Marduk and the one he managed directly and possibly carried by another sailor, as suggested above. All these examples indicate that the boatman's network of socio-professional contacts affected multiple relational dimensions: economic (the assignment of a transport mission being the expression of occupational interaction), patronage (institutional ties of dependence with local state officials and administration) and residential (if we assume that the sailor selected by the state authorities was resident in the same geographical area of the provincial commissioner responsible for the *ginā'u* shipment).[359]

Once a sailor reached the destination, he interacted with the representatives of the *ginā'u* bureau to formalise the consignment of the cargo. This is the case of the person mentioned in MARV 6 52, who was probably physically present during the consignment phase and had to certify that the transport mission had been accomplished.[360] On that occasion, scribes and measurers of the *ginā'u* bureau were dispatched to the port to inspect the cargo and measure its contents while they were being unloaded from the ship and stored in the *bēt ginā'e*'s warehouse. The cargo was checked to ascertain whether it corresponded to the nominal value expected by the administration and to determine any shortfall to be borne by the boatman and made up in the next transport mission. This phase constituted another level of the relational dimension that the *malāḫu* in charge of a cargo maintained with the personnel of the state apparatus, in this case the staff of the administrative unit in charge of the permanent offerings at the Aššur Temple in Assur.

As Ḫimsātēya's dossier shows, *ginā'u*-related river transport was a well-consolidated family business in which several members operated simultaneously, each establishing his own network of institutional contacts in the provinces touched by his transport activity and the capital. The fact that several members were active at the same time suggests a "family management" of this activity in the service of the *ginā'u* administration. From time to time, at the request of the state authorities one or more members had to be indicated by the family to the regular offerings office and the local institutional administration

359. See Waerzeggers 2014, 216 on the types of relational data that can be found in cuneiform archives.

360. Regarding formalising the reception of incoming goods, a comparison can be made with Old Babylonian texts showing that if an owner was not present, his representative was in charge of receiving the goods once the cargo arrived at the port and the unloading operation was performed. See Weszeli 2020, 98.

as available to transport certain cargoes. The recruited sailors acted as captains in charge of the cargoes commissioned by the state, leaving other family members to manage other transport missions for other commissioners. If this indeed was the typical *modus operandi*, one can presume that it was meant to diversify the family business, enabling each family head of the clan (the "patriarch" Ḫimsātēya and his sons and grandsons, along with his brothers and nephews, likely each heading a family unit) to enjoy the benefits of this activity. Some evidence has shown that two members of the family engaged in transporting the same cargo. Although river transport ships required smaller crews than sea-going craft,[361] it is conceivable that the M4 texts only mention the captains in charge of the cargoes. It is reasonable to think that each was assisted on their journeys by one or more assistant boatmen, whether members of their family or other sailors.

The institutional contacts that the sailors maintained with the state apparatus certainly provided further opportunities for them to collaborate with other sectors of the Assyrian state organisation, such as the provision of various commodities to institutional households, the transport of civil and military personnel from one place to another along the course of the Tigris and its navigation network, or simply from one bank of a river to another, and new work opportunities outside the institutional sector. New high-ranking customers were probably interested in using the boatman's transport service for their own private interests and for trade activities aimed at increasing the wealth of their households, with an economically positive impact on the *malāḫu*'s activity.

The patterns of mobility that characterised the *ginā'u* trips along the Tigris certainly played a role in generating, consolidating and expanding the social networks of the actors involved.[362] The repetitive journeys that a sailor had to make along the same route (only a fraction of which left traces in the *ginā'u*-related written documentation) shaped the social contacts of these professional transporters. The relationship of trust between Ḫimsātēya's family and the *ginā'u* administration and the consolidated collaboration that he and his relatives enjoyed with the state sector over the years may have facilitated the expansion of this family's river business to other areas of the state's territory or for work in the service of high-ranking officials. This is suggested by the case of Mār-Ištar, another boatman who was active during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I and whose activities were not confined to the transport of *ginā'u* goods to Assur for the regular offerings administration. They also involved the transport of materials and work tools for individuals. A document from Archive M7 from Assur, an archive related to the movement of various materials and finished objects within the palace sector under the responsibility of the palace steward,[363] shows that in one of his transport missions Mār-Ištar brought plane tree wood (or some unspecified objects made from that kind of wood) and grindstones and

361. This is especially true for transport river craft, whose crews generally had ready access to supplies ashore and ample space on board for goods; see Vosmer 2008, 233f.
362. See Waerzeggers 2014, 217–219 on intercity relations generated by the mobility of persons in the evidence of Neo-Babylonian sources.
363. Postgate 2013, 148f. For an introduction to this archive, see Pedersén 1998, 85f.; Postgate 2013, 147–176.

that these goods were consigned to a man called Asmīdu,[364] possibly the official who commissioned the sailor's river transport mission for the palace organisation or the palace-dependent professional for whom these goods were ordered. In the latter case, it was by means of these tools that the worker was expected to carry out his work. Unfortunately, this individual is not otherwise attested in the Middle Assyrian sources. In addition, the partially preserved name of the eponym[365] does not allow the document to be dated. Mār-Ištar, who appears in both M4 and M7 texts, is an example of a boatman who was part of the social networks based on different organisations and documented in distinct archives. In all likelihood, this situation also characterised other boatmen, especially those who interacted most frequently with institutions over the years. Further social contacts that a sailor could have and maintain in Assur may have involved other institutional figures of different ranks, affiliated with the Aššur Temple or other institutions, as on the occasion of the formalisation of the boatman's debt by the regular offerings administration.[366]

Although other activities of these *malāḫu*s are not attested in the Middle Assyrian corpus, it is clear that their growing interactions with institutional figures enabled these sailors to create or consolidate friendship and professional connections and enter the *ginā'u*-related officials' circles of acquaintances. Perhaps these relationships emerged in private transactions involving institutional actors as purchasers or sellers of the goods transacted, and in which the sailor acted as a witness among colleagues and other dependent professionals from the same institutional milieu, although supporting evidence from this period is lacking. In their dual capacity, as part of their lords' circles of acquaintances due to their (full-time or temporary) professional dependence, and as part of the city community, presumably due to the multiple affiliations and well-established links that their work fostered with administrators, private households and local agents of interests of the urban community (*i.e.*, families, professional groups), sailors could already have played a role in such transactions in the Middle Assyrian period.[367]

364. MARV 10 72, 1–6 (= StAT 5, 72); this document belongs to the tablet group Assur 21101 (M7 F) and is discussed in Prechel & Freydank 2014, 1–12.

365. MARV 10 72, r.13′ (= StAT 5, 72) ˹m*aš*˺-*š*[*ur*-…]. It is tempting to reconstruct the name as Aššur-šallimšunu[?], since the document MARV 9 95 in which Mār-Ištar and his sons occur is dated to this *līmu*; see Gauthier 2016, *Text Editions* …, *ad* MARV 9 95.

366. For example, in the legal document MARV 8 50, r.7′–11′, various personnel of the Aššur Temple act as witnesses; the list includes priests, an *alaḫḫinu*[?], a cupbearer and the temple's doorkeeper.

367. The occurrences of *malāḫu*s in the role of witnesses in connection with military personnel and city officials is documented in Neo-Assyrian legal documents. For instance, in SAA 6 142, r.14–16, two chief boatmen bearing Egyptian names appear as witnesses in a contract for the purchase of a house by an Egyptian scribe, along with other witnesses, some of whom also have Egyptian names; namely, the king's brother-in-law, the "third man" of a chariot team and a horse trainer. In SAA 14 262, r.11′, a contract for the purchase of a house that involved a eunuch, a sailor occurs in a list of witnesses, joined by horse trainers, a singer, a "third man", a chariot driver and a master builder. In the conveyance document SAA 14 397, r.11′, a sailor acts as a witness, along with two mayors and two horse trainers of the royal bodyguard. Another *malāḫu* acting as a witness appears in the contract Fales & Jakob-Rost 1991, 80 text no. 35, r.30, concerning the sale of a plot of bare ground by a *ḫazannu*, a *ša muḫḫi āli* and a commander-of-ten of the scribes. In the debt note Parpola 2008, 55 text no. 8, e.9, a boatman is one of the witnesses, in company with a town manager, a scribe and a cupbearer. The role

One wonders whether sailors who were attached to state or high-ranking officials' households worked as full-time dependents of these organisations, probably as a result of the long-standing collaboration they maintained with institutional organisations over the years and for the importance of their river transport service for the state's economic system.[368] In Ḫimsātēya's case, Postgate suggests that he may have been employed regularly by the regular offerings administration, rather than by the individual provincial governors.[369] Whatever the relationship of dependency that he and his relatives had with the state administration, it is reasonable to conclude that many boatmen were recruited on a temporary basis for specific transport missions and were therefore not part of the full-time staff of institutional or private households. For boatmen who already worked for institutional figures in the provinces, going into service for the regular offerings administration meant additional opportunities to extend their business and increase their wealth. Moreover, the institutional contacts developed during their river transport activity gave these sailors access to the Regular Offerings House's services, such as loans from the *bēt ginā'e*'s stock, as shown by the case of Ištar-tuballissu. Personal loans are another indicator of social relationships.[370] Access to these loans on favourable terms could also have been granted to other members of Ḫimsātēya's family,[371] although the M4 documents are silent in this regard.

We do not know how transport trips for customers external to the state apparatus and private elite households were balanced with transport activities for these main users. It is clear, however, that the way this profession was performed and how its organisation developed over time was closely linked to the state's economic policies on river transport management and factors determined by those policies, such as economic growth and increased river mobility, including trade and private initiative, the organisation of professions and the social developments that the Assyrian state experienced throughout its history. Some leeway and growth potential of the profession was probably guaranteed by the mobility of this occupation and the non-institutional social network that the boatman created and maintained in the places touched by his journeys with equally mobile economic actors (merchants, smugglers, transporters and donkey drivers). These contacts and any business they might generate were beyond the control of the institutional organisations and households for which they worked. In the course of time, boatmen operating in the Tigris transport network presumably began to gain more space for themselves in the field

of witnesses and their relationships with contracting parties in the Neo-Assyrian period has been studied in Ponchia 2009, esp. 144–158.

368. The possibility that at least some boatmen were recruited as full-time dependents may be suggested in the cases of Baḫû, a boatman attached to the Aššur Temple (MARV 5 5; Archive M4), Šamaš-aḫa-īde, who worked for Ilī-padda's household (MARV 10 90; Archive M4), and Šalgu, a palace boatman (MARV 10 16; Archive M7).

369. Postgate 2013, 102.

370. See Waerzeggers 2014, 216.

371. The question arises as to whether Ḫimsātēya, the son of Sîn-idnanni, is the individual mentioned as the assignee of a quantity of a commodity, perhaps related to a barley loan to be repaid, on the disbursement list MARV 5 34, 15′. However, the identity of that person and the purpose of that disbursement are unclear.

of private entrepreneurial activities, as evidenced for the Neo-Assyrian period by the participation of boatmen in joint commercial ventures with other private economic actors.[372]

The present study has illustrated how the analysis of the microhistory of a group of sailors can reveal many aspects not only of the relationships they had with various institutional actors in the performance of their work, but also of the mechanisms of management of a tax that was supposed to bind all Assyrians to the country's religious centre. It has been argued that the regular offerings system and the flow of provincial contributions likely played a role in creating the collective identity of the Assyrian state.[373] In this respect, one wonders whether even the individual operators who to different degrees and according to their respective tasks participated in the system had developed a sense of belonging to the *māt Aššur* and the greater project it implied. After all, the boatmen with their numerous trips in the Tigris network were primary actors in the construction of the Assyrian economic system, and it was on their transport service that local and central state authorities relied. Within riverine mobility, the movement of goods and the connections between places, government authorities and professionals that their activities created and consolidated, it cannot be excluded that transporting *ginā'u* products (and other state-commissioned transport missions) played a role in fostering among the *malāḫu*s a sense of belonging to territorial, social and cultural realities previously considered distant from their daily horizons. However, it is reasonable to presume that whatever this new sense of collective identity was (if it did exist), divine protection may have been felt to be more reassuring. It was to the gods and to his own protective spirit[374] that every boatman likely entrusted the success of his transport mission and the safety of his and the crew's lives on the outward and return journeys, in the awareness of the significance a fully loaded boat had.[375]

372. For boatmen in documents from Dūrī-Aššur's archive in Assur, see Radner 2016, 86 text no. I.5, env. e.2, 103 text no. I.34, r.5′–6′.
373. Maul 2013, 569–574; Postgate 2013, 89.
374. As may be inferred from Issār-šumu-ēreš's astrological report SAA 8 23, r.2–5.
375. On metaphoric uses of cargoes and transport boats in Mesopotamian literature, see Hätinen 2017, 171–183. The numerous uses of boats in figurative language in Sumerian and Akkadian literature are a vivid illustration of how deeply waterborne transportation shaped the view and imagery of human life in the riverine societies of ancient Mesopotamia.

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