

The Economy of Emar II - Real estate sale contracts

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[Following my previous article on field sales, this paper focuses on the real estate market as part of a larger project on the economy of Emar. Through a comparative analysis of sale contracts, it aims to understand the factors underlying prices, exploring the socio-economic principles governing transactions.]

Keyword: Emar, economy, real estate prices.

The Emar documentation provides a great number of real estate sale contracts. Most transactions concern houses and *eršetu*¹, but, less frequently, they deal with other types of real estate identified by the terms *tugguru*, *ḥablu*, *ḥiṭru* and *ḥabā'u*.

Sale contracts usually give measurements of the sold objects in cubits (*ammatu* in akkadian)², the unity of measure in use at Emar for real estate.

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1. House Sales

- a) Sizes
- b) Sellers and buyers
- c) Sales under special condition
- d) Type of building
- e) Location
- f) Price fluctuation

1. For this term see paragraph 3.

2. On the reconstruction of the measurement system of Emar different proposals have been advanced: Mori 2003, 29, regards the cubit as corresponding to 50 cm instead Chambon 2008, 151, points to 20 cm. As Mori 2003, 29-34 pointed out archaeological finds seem to substantiate the hypothesis that the cubit is equivalent to 50 cm: excavated houses have an average surface of 71,5 m² which is close to the average provided by text data, 317 square cubits (s. paragraph 1), assuming a measurement of 50 cm: ca. 79 m²; with a value of 20 cm, 317 square cubits would be equivalent to ca. 13 m² which is obviously a surface too small for a house. A discussion on the measurement system is out of the limits of this article, nevertheless it needs to recall that either value (50 or 20 cm) does not affect the results of this study because it only concerns buildings whose measurements, in the Emar texts, are exclusively expressed in *ammatu* which is always referred to as cubit in the present paper.

2. *tugguru* building sales

 3. *eršetu* sales

- a) Sizes
- b) Sellers and buyers
- c) Location
- d) Other features
- e) Price fluctuation

Conclusions

 1. *House sales*

This section deals with private houses identified in the Emar texts by the Sumerogram É, Akkadian *bītu*. An amount of 61 house sale contracts, for a total of 70 transactions³, have been discovered in the regular excavations or from the antiquary market. All these documents, which include a testament (RE 39) reporting a previous sale of the bequeathed object, and a conveyance for debt (TBR 82), are listed in Table 1, that gives the name of the contracting parties and the adjoining properties for each transaction. This table also regards one sale of a *ḥiṭru*⁴ building (E 139) and two of *ḥablu* buildings⁵ (E 85, Hirayama 7) because these types of real estate are always found in connection with houses. Table 2, instead, only lists those deeds which record the price of the sold house, and it provides measurements (if given by texts) and surface area. This table does not file the contracts which have not preserved the price or those in which the given price refers not only to the sold house but also to other types of properties such as fields or *eršetu*⁶. However, it contains the aforementioned texts concerning *ḥiṭru* and *ḥablu* buildings.

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
ASJ13 B	S	[...]-ia	Hunnanu son of Hi[...]	[...]-bie	[...]-nuda- Dagan	Hula'u	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
AuOr5 7	S	Išbi-Dagan son of Napši	Sons of Abda son of Napši	Sons of Zū- Aštarti	Son of Ibe	Son of I[...]	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
AuOr5 9	SH	Irna son of Ašdu	Amat-ilī wife of Šarrumasi	SILA.DAG AL	<i>ḥablu</i> of Abdī-ilī son of Zū-Ba'la	House of Iadi-Dagan son of Ša'lu	SILA.DAG AL
BLMJ 4	S	Ilī-yamūt son of Lim- Da[gan?]	Ir'ibu, Ir'am-Dagan sons of Abda son of Muḥra	NG	NG	NG	NG
BLMJ 5a	S	Puašata son of Šadī- Dagan	Pilsu-Dagan	Izizili	SILA.DAG AL	Ikunanni	SILA.DAG AL

3. Counting the *ḥablu* buildings in E 85 and Hirayama 7 as single transactions the total is 72.

4. This building is probably to identify as an animal enclosure, cfr. Mori 2003, 72-73.

5. For this building s. paragraph 1d).

6. BLMJ 5 (a house and a vineyard), BLMJ 7 (a house, a *tugguru* building, and fields), RE 29 (a house and a *eršetu*), SMEA30 4 (a house and a vineyard); the houses sold in these contracts are listed in Table 1.

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
BLMJ 6	S	Ib[...]	NINURTA	Rībia son of Hurašu	Abdu-Dagan	Aḫī-ḫamis son of Kaška	SILA.DAG AL
BLMJ 7	111S	Ba'al-malik son of Iṣṣur-Dagan son of Ba'al-kabar	Kāpi son of Lieda	Sons of Hananu	Sons of Hananu	Bēli-mi son of Attuwa	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
E 9a	S	Agalli son of Hinnu-Dagan	NINURTA	[...] son of Iaḫṣi-ma	?	Ilī-abī son of Hattu	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
E 9b	S	Agalli son of Hinnu-Dagan	NINURTA	Karbu son of Elli	Ilī-abī son of Hattu	“The Rock of the Boat”	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
E 9c	S	Agalli son of Hinnu-Dagan	NINURTA	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>	Bēlu-līmī son of Daqqa	Hannānu son of Daqqa	KASKAL
E 20	S	Baba son of RašAp-ilu	Abini wife of Iddiḫ-RA son of Hemi	SILA.DAG AL	Baba son of Rašap-ilī	Baba son of Rašap-ilī	SILA <i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
E 80A	SH	Baba son of Zū-Ba'la	Aḫati-bītu daughter of Ilī-še[mi] Dagan-na'i son of Zu[...]	?	Abdi- [...]	House of [...], Zū-Aštarti	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
E 80B	SH	Dagan-taliḫ son of Ḫima Imittī-Sīn son of Asduḫami	Baba son of Zū-Ba'la	?	Abdi- [...]	House of [...], Zū-Aštarti	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
E 81	SH	NG	Dagan-taliḫ son of Ḫima	NG	NG	NG	NG
E 85 a + b (<i>ḫablu</i>) ⁷	SH	Dagan-kabar son of Dagan-taliḫ son of Ḫima	Tīri-Dagan Ṣaggar-abu Zū-Ba'la sons of Kāpī-Dagan son of Baši	KASKAL, ?	House that Amama son of [...]-ša bought from Lalu	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>	Gate of Baši
E 92	SH	?	?	[...] son of Zū-Eia	[...] son of Iku-Dagan	[...] of sons of Iṣṣa	?
E 97	S	?	?	Iaši-Aštar son of Alani	[...] -bu son of Abī-kā[pī?]	[...] -uia son of Amudu	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>

7. E 85b is a *ḫablu* building whose adjoining properties are not given, since the text only reports that it is located in the same place of the house.

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
E 111	S	Aštar-abu wife of Itār- Dagan	Ba'al- ma[lik?] son of Abda	Son of Iaqla	Ir'ib-Ba'al son of Šaḡaru	URU	SILA <i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
E 113	SH	Aḫī-Dagan son of Dagan-kabar son of Milki-Dagan	Dagan- damiq daughter of Tarinna son of Azitu	NG	NG	NG	NG
E 120	SH	Milki-Dagan son of Aḫī- Dagan	Ba'al-qarrād son of Aḫī- Dagan	NG	NG	NG	NG
E 122	SH	Burāqu son of Kidabu	Hussa son of Zimri-Dagan	Bēlu-kabar son of Biqlati	House of Tarinna son of Zimri- Dagan	Lād-Dagan son of Ḥimaši	KASKAL.G AL
E 125	S	Ilia son of Tūra-Dagan	Itti-Da[gan] son of Abī- kāpī	Ipqīdu son of Abī-kāpī	Ilia son of Tūra-Dagan	Sons of Šaddū Sons of Ilu-bītu	SILA <i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
E 126	S	Ḥimaši son of Ilu-malik	NINURTA	Ba'al-kabar	Muḡra-aḫī son of Iaḡšuru	Sons of Ḥima-Ra, Sons of Isiru	SILA.DAG AL, Field of NINURTA
E 139a	S	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	NINURTA	Zū-Ba'la son of Hania	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>	Šuršia son of Anini	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
E 139b (<i>ḥiṭru</i>)	S	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	NINURTA	KASKAL of [...]	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
E 139c	S	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	NINURTA	Sons of Aḫitu	Euphrates	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i> Sons of Šurši- Da[gan?]
E 139d	S	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	NINURTA	Euphrates	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
E 141	S	Ba'al-malik son of Iššur- Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	Aḫī-mi son of Huzamu	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>	Susimu son of Gallābu	SILA.DAG AL
E 156	S	Dagan-bēlu son of Aḫī- malik	Sons of Aḫī- malik son of Abda	NG	NG	NG	NG
E 157	S	?	?	Sons of Tinišli	?	?	?

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
E 158	S	Šurši son of Itti-Da[gan?] (diviner)	Aḫī-raḫaq son of Aḫī-šarri	Milka son of Hinna-Ba'al Turia son of Ibtnia	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i> of Nergal-bēl-idri	Aḫī-raḫaq son of Aḫī-šarri	Pil-GAL-su-ilī
E 161	S	?	Rašap-abu	Sons of Dagan-[...]	Abda	Rašap-abu	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
E 225a	SH	Zūzu son of Ba'al-malik	Ipqi-Dagan son of Ba'al-malik	NG	NG	NG	NG
E 225b	SH	Zūzu son of Ba'al-malik	Ipqi-Dagan son of Ba'al-malik	NG	NG	NG	NG
Hirayama 7 a + b (<i>ḫablu</i>) ⁸	S	Mašruḫe son of Ba'al-bāru	NINURTA	?	?	[...] son of Baianu	SILA.DAG AL
Hirayama 8	S	Amzaḫḫi Abia sons of Ibrimusa	Būbu, Tuḡaku sons of Šaddia	Dagan-tariḫ son of Taḫanni-ilu	Iabruqu	Mar-ḫirāte	SILA.DAG AL
Hirayama 9	SH	Gurīnu	Ani-Dagan son of Ba'al-gamil son of Tuttu	House of Gurīnu son of Habaši	House of Bēlu-līmu	House of Dagan-qarrād son of Matkali-Dagan	KASKAL SILA.DAG AL
Hirayama 10	S	Zū-Ba'al son of Pilsia	Nabū-damiq servant of the king	[...]du son of Hazia	Iatur-Dagan son of Lala	Baba son of Kutbe, Ba'al lady of GIŠ.LAM. GAL	SILA.DAG AL
Hirayama 11A	SH	Iaḫšu-Dagan son of Kabšānu	Labu-Dagan son of Lala	Threshing floor	Sons of Bulla	Igmil-Dagan son of Aḫuqqa	SILA.DAG AL
Hirayama 11B	SH	Dudu son of Lala	Abdi-Ili, Nuri-Dagan sons of Iaḫšu-Dagan son of Kabšānu	Threshing floor	Sons of Bulla	Igmil-Dagan son of Aḫuqqa	SILA.DAG AL
Hirayama 11C	SH	Igur-Rašap son of Igur-Dagan	Dudu son of Lala	Threshing floor	Sons of Bulla	Igmil-Dagan son of Aḫuqqa	SILA.DAG AL
Hirayama 12 / AuOr5 4	S	Abda son of Iša-Dagan	Ilī-yamut son of Zū-Ba'al	House of the son of Meia	House of the son of Baba	House of the son of Idia	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>

8. The adjoining properties refer to both buildings.

THE ECONOMY OF EMAR II - REAL ESTATE SALE CONTRACTS

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
RE 9	S	Iaḥṣiya son of Mattiya	Zū-Aštarti	Abdu son of Daḥuri	É <i>ḥitru</i> of Luluḥi	Ribia son of Huraši	KASKAL.G AL <i>ša</i> LÚ.MES <i>rapisi</i>
RE 12	SH	[...]-zi	Ali-Dagan son of Ba'al-gamil	House of Aḥu-damiq son of Pagru	House of Aḥu-damiq son of Pagru	Dagan-qarrād son of Matkali-Dagan (diviner)	House of Ali-Dagan son of Ba'al-gamil
RE 20	S	Iḫur-Dagan son of Abda son of Kapara	Bēlu-li'mi son of Abdu-Da[gan] son of Kapara	Aḥi-mi son of Abdu-Da son of Kapara	Son of the daughter of Da'a	Abi-bēlu, Iddi'-Ra	SILA.DAG AL
RE 29a	S	Še'i-bēlu son of Ba'al-abu	NINURTA	Son of Ilia	Dagan-ma son of Kulišta	Ba'al-ma[lik?] son of Šamalla-Šamaš	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
RE 34	S	Itūr-Dagan son of Iaḥṣi-Dagan	NINURTA	House of Dagan-kabar son of Muḥra-aḥi	House of Iḫur-Dagan son of Ilī-iamut	House of Zimri-Dagan	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
RE 39	SH	PN	Igmu[lu]	NG	NG	NG	NG
RE 54	SH	Muḥra-aḥi son of Titiya	Ibni-Dagan son of Aḥi-malik	Dagan-tariḥ son of Li'mi-Dagan	Hemu son of Li'mi-Dagan	Maš'u	KASKAL of the bronze [...] of Ninkur
RE 59	S	Addu son of Adiru	Ba'al-bēlu son of Hudadu	Sons of Lulu	Atiru son of Bēla	NG	SILA.DAG AL
RE 70	S	Ziya son of Per'i-Da[gan?]	Ipqi-Dagan son of Hinnu-Dagan	Zia	Hinnu-Dagan son of Iddiḥ-Ra Abi-Ra son of Zū-Ba'la	Mountain	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
RE 79	S	?	?	?	?	?	?
RE 80	SH	Šaggar-kabar son of Aḥi-Dagan	Danna son of Dādī	Bēlu-dar	Bēlu-li'mi son of the smith	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>	SILA.DAG AL
SMEA30 2	S	Hulu son of Alal-abu	Sons of Šāti-Dagan	Qiria son of Itti-Dagan	Ilī-abī son of Ibbili	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>	SILA.DAG AL
SMEA30 4	S	Itūr-Dagan son of Hinnu-Dagan	NINURTA	NG	NG	NG	NG
TBR 4	S	Iadi-Ba'ala son of Ilī-abu	NINURTA	Sons of Zū-Ba'la son of Mannini	Zū-Ba'la son of Ilī-abī	Abda son of Ipqa	SILA.DAG AL

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
TBR 8	S	Itūr-Dagan son of Abī- da'ī	NINURTA	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>	Iaḥanni-ilu son of I[...]	Dagan-ma son of A-[...]	SILA.DAG AL <i>ana</i> <i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
TBR 10	S	Ma[...]	NINURTA	SILA.DAG AL	Tutu	Abī-ḥa	SILA.DAG AL
TBR 33	SH	Abdu son of Zū-Aštarti son of Qabaru	Aḥī-Dagan, Abdi-ilī sons of Ibni-be	Kiln of the sons of Ganu	House of the sons of Batta	Attu son of Zū-Ba'la	Dagan-abu son of Gani
TBR 37	SH	Iašur-Dagan	Zikria, Eḥli-kuzuḥ (servants of Marianni), sons of Akkulenna	Ura (merchant)	SILA.DAG AL	Kiln of the sons of Ganu	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i> of the sons of Batta
TBR 53	SH	Kitta son of Lallu	Ia'zānu son of Šuršia- bīt-Aštarti	NG	NG	NG	NG
TBR 54	S	?	Ir'ib-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	SILA.DAG AL.LA.GAL	Tūra son of Līmī-Dagan	[...] son of Zū-Anna	SILA.DAG AL, KASKAL
TBR 56	SH	Dagan-kabar son of Zū- Ba'la son of Aziti	Zizi son of Zū-Ba'la son of Aziti	NG	NG	NG	NG
TBR 57	S	Ipqi-Dagan son of Dagan-malik	Ilī-yamūt son of Ṭab- dadmu, Aḥa-mi[?] mother of Ilī-yamūt	Awiru son of Ipqa	Še'i-Dagan son of Mut- Rāmi	House of Iaši-Dagan son of Kapara	Storehouse of Ba'al (lord of enclosure)
TBR 59	S	Hara son of Itūr-Dagan son of Dadi	Ibnia son of Pazu	?	?	?	SILA.DAG AL
TBR 60	S	[...]-Dagan son of Kunātu	Sons of Šēia son of Ba'al- bēlu son of Aḥ-ummišu	?	?	?	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
TBR 61	S	Pazūwu	Ilī-abu	Sons of Abzaki	Ibni son of Zidānu	Euphrates	KASKAL. GAL

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
TBR 65	SH	Dūdu, Bēlu-kabar sons of Abdi-ilī	Adama-ilī wife of Abī-kāpī son of Gaku, Dagan-niwari, Immi, Habu, Abiu sons of Abī-kāpī	NG	NG	NG	NG
TBR 66	SH	Dagan-bēlu son of Tai	Hemia son of Kutbe son of Daqanu son of Kutbe	NG	NG	NG	NG
TBR 82	S	Garibu son of Abia	Aia son of Abia	SILA.DAG AL	Aḫī-[...] son of Abia	Abdu son of Zū-He	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>

Table 1 – House sale contracts

Text	Tablet	Measurements	Area	Price	Square cubit price	Buyer	Seller
ASJ13-B	S	NG	?	50	?	PN	PN
AuOr5 7	S	NG	?	12	?	PN	PN
AuOr5 9	SH	15 x 15	225	44	0,195	PN	PN
BLMJ 4	S	NG	?	40	?	PN	PN
BLMJ 6	S	26 x 13	338	100	0,295	PN	NIN
E 9a	S	NG	?	200	?	PN	NIN
E 9b		21 x 9	189				
E 9c		17 x 13	221				
E 20	S	NG	?	170		PN	PN
E 80A ⁹	SH	20 x 10	200	30	0,15	PN	PN
E 80B			200	18	0,09	FH	PN
E 81 ¹⁰	SH	NG	?	81	?	PN	FH
E 85 a	SH	20 x 10	200	310	0,62	FH	PN
E 85 b (<i>ḫablu</i>)		20 x 15	300				
E 111	S	20 x 20	400	300	0,75	PN	PN
E 113	SH	NG	?	20		FM	PN
E 122	SH	23 x 22	506	20	0,039	PN	PN
E 125	S	19 x 18 x 13	294,5	100	0,339	PN	PN

9. According to Arnaud the price of the first transaction is 36 *sh.*, but Durand 1989, 188-189 corrected it as 20 *sh.* on the base of Msk 74750a:16 that he read *a-[n]a 20 G[ÍN KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ ŠÁM.TIL.LA]*. Since the last readable sign is a Winkelhaken I read this line as follows: *a-[n]a 30 [GÍN KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ ŠÁM.TIL.LA]*; line 13 in Msk 74737, that also reports the price, is only partially preserved so the number could be read either as 20 or 30.

10. Arnaud reads line 3 as follows: *a-na 70 ù 1 KÙ.BABBAR ŠÁM MEŠ*, but Durand (*ibid.*, 190) underlined that this reading “est suspect” and interpreted *ù 1* as *GÍN*; I read the line as: *a-na 81 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ŠÁM MEŠ*.

E 126	S	NG	?	1000	?	PN	NIN
E 139a	S	23 x 24	552	800	?	RF	NIN
E 139b (<i>hiṭru</i>)		NG	?				
E 139c		NG	?				
E 139d		NG	?				
E 141	S	38 x 28 x 15	817	300	0,367	RF	PN
E 156	S	NG	?	600	?	PN	PN
E 158	S	21 x 13	273	70	0,256	PN	PN
E 225	SH	NG	?	100	?	FZ	FZ
Hirayama 7a	S	NG	?	600	?	PN	NIN
Hirayama 7b (<i>ḥablu</i>)		NG	?				
Hirayama 8	S	23 x 9,5	218,5	50	0,228	PN	PN
Hirayama 9	SH	15 x 8	120	26	0,216	PN	PN
Hirayama 11A	SH	27 x 15	405	?	?	PN	PN
Hirayama 11B				50	0,123	PN	PN
Hirayama 11C				41	0,101	PN	PN
Hirayama 12/AuOr5 4	S	12 x 12 x 7	114	40	0,35	PN	PN
RE 9	S	27 x 23	621	100	0,161	PN	RF
RE 12	SH	20 + ? x 20 + ?	400	55	0,137	PN	PN
RE 20	S	25 x 8 x 6	174,44	30	0,171	PN	PN
RE 34	S	NG	?	300	?	PN	NIN
RE 39	SH	NG	?	25	?	PN	PN
RE 54	SH	25 x 10	250	90	0,36	PN	PN
RE 59	S	24 x 10 x 10	360	60	0,166	PN	PN
RE 70	S	20 x 6	120	250	2,083	PN	PN
RE 79	S	22 x 15	330	100	0,303	PN	?
RE 80	SH	NG	?	40,33	?	PN	PN
SMEA30 2	S	27,5 x 10 x 9	261,25	70	0,267	PN	PN
TBR 4	S	NG	?	120	?	PN	NIN
TBR 8	S	31 x 10 x 9	294,5	100	0,339	PN	NIN
TBR 10	S	(1)2 x 5	60	100	1,666	PN	NIN
TBR 33	SH	25 x 23	575	31	0,053	PN	PN
TBR 37	SH	NG	?	33	?	PN	PN
TBR 53	SH	NG	?	20	?	PN	PN
TBR 56	SH	NG	?	160	?	PN	PN
TBR 57	S	NG	?	200	?	PN	PN
TBR 65	SH	NG	?	45	?	PN	PN
TBR 66	SH	NG	?	20 + 20	?	PN	FKu
TBR 82	S	25 x 15	375	30	0,08	PN	PN

Table 2 – House sales recording prices

Houses were mostly rectangular shaped with surfaces areas varying from 60 to 817 square cubits with an average of 317,041. The purchase prices of houses range from 12 silver *shekels* (AuOr5 7) to 1000 *sh*.

(E 126) with an average of 125,812 *sh.*¹¹, and the prices for square cubit cover a span between 0,03 *sh.* (E 122) and 2,08 *sh.* (RE 70) with a mean of 0,367 *sh.* The price for square cubit could be misleading because the measurements given in the sale contracts only refer to the ground floors and they were probably taken from without the buildings¹², but, as the archeological excavations evidenced, houses could have upper floors. Therefore, the surface areas and the square cubit prices here calculated do not actually correspond to those of the sold houses, since texts do not give any indication concerning upper floors. Nevertheless, the prices for square cubit give an insight into the value of each house, although it can only be calculated for a limited number of transactions¹³. The following figure displays house prices for square cubit set in increasing order:

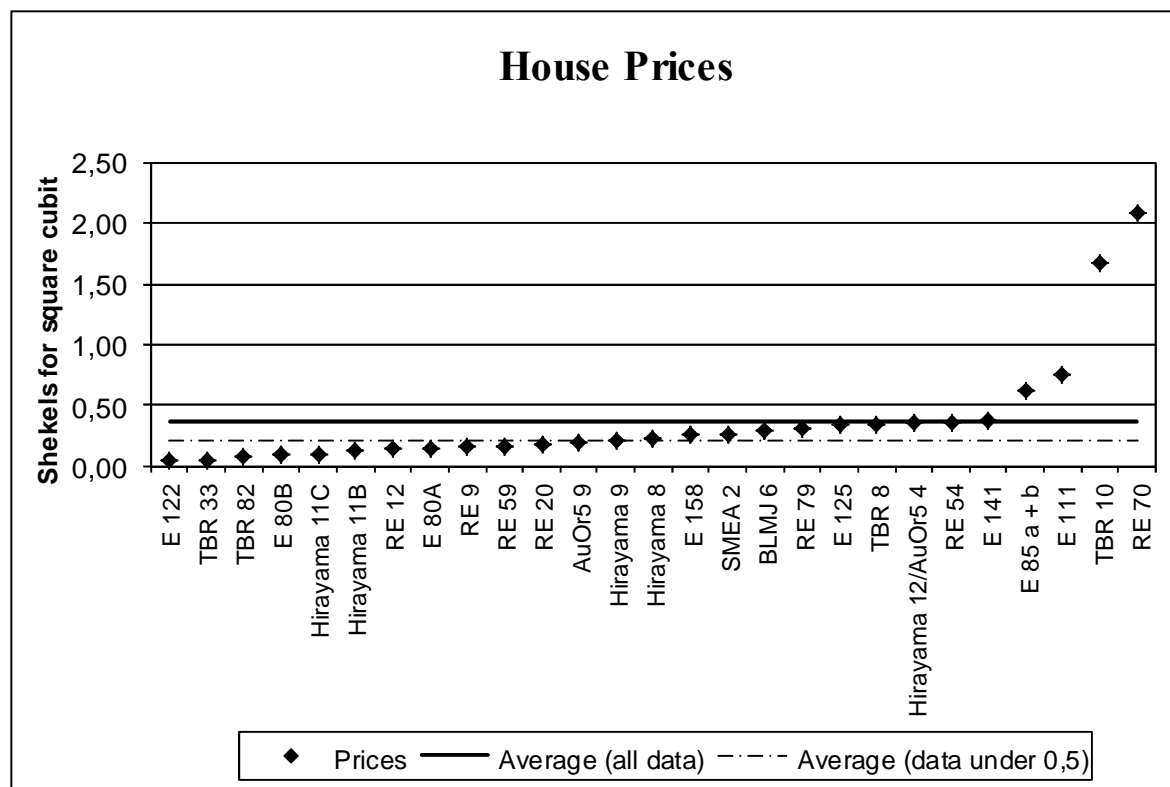


Figure 1

About 93% of data lie in an interval of less than 1 standard deviation (0,466) from the average. As Figure 1 clearly shows, only four deeds record prices for square cubit over 0,5 *sh.* and only two above 1 *sh.* (both over 1,5 *sh.*). Indeed, the average of prices is over-influenced by these four deeds as the others are below average, so the median (0,228 *sh.*) is a value more representative. Taking into account only the

11. This data is anyway misleading since it also includes the prices of the *hablu* buildings in E 85 and Hirayama 7 and of the *hitru* building in E 139. The average of the silver spent in each contract is around 150 *sh.*

12. The measurements give the outer perimeter of a building, i.e. the surface of land occupied by one house, cfr. Mori 2003, 34.

13. 26 deeds for a total of 28 transactions; other 21 deeds give the price but do not preserve the measurements.

prices for square cubit below 0,5 *sh.* (i.e. 85% of the transactions), the average is 0,208¹⁴. It is worth noting that the price for square cubit cannot be calculated for the deeds with the highest purchase prices (E 126, E 156, E 139 Hirayama 7). In order to understand what affected house prices, analysis criteria already used for field sales will be followed.

a) *Sizes*

In view of the small range of prices for square cubit, sizes seem to be an important factor for the house value. For each sold house, Figure 2 displays the recorded price (bars) according to the corresponding surface sorted in ascending order. The trend line shows that with the increase of the surface area, prices tend to grow. This is exemplified by the house sold in E 141 that has the biggest recorded area and one of the highest price with a cost for square cubit exactly corresponding to the mean (0,367 *sh.*). A strong correspondence between size and price is also evident in Hirayama12/AuOr4 5, RE 54, E 125, TBR 8 and RE 79 as shown by Figure 2. Nevertheless, in several instances prices are not related to areas as in the case of RE 9 which, in spite of the second biggest surface, records a cost for square cubit below average (0,161 *sh.*). Since no information is given about the presence of an upper floor some prices, which seem too high for the house size, could refer to buildings bigger than we are able to figure out from text data, but this remains an unsolvable question. In addition, prices and sizes of about half of the transactions cannot be compared because of the fragmentary status of the tablets. In at least one case, TBR 10, the very high price in comparison to the small size of the house¹⁵ could be due to the incomplete preservation¹⁶ of the building length because of a rupture of the tablet, although other explanations are possible¹⁷.

14. Considering the data under 1 *sh.* the price average is 0,246 *sh.*

15. The smallest attested in the house sale contracts.

16. Line 2: [x +]2 *i-na am-ma-ti* [GID.DA-šu].

17. See paragraphs 1b) and 1e).

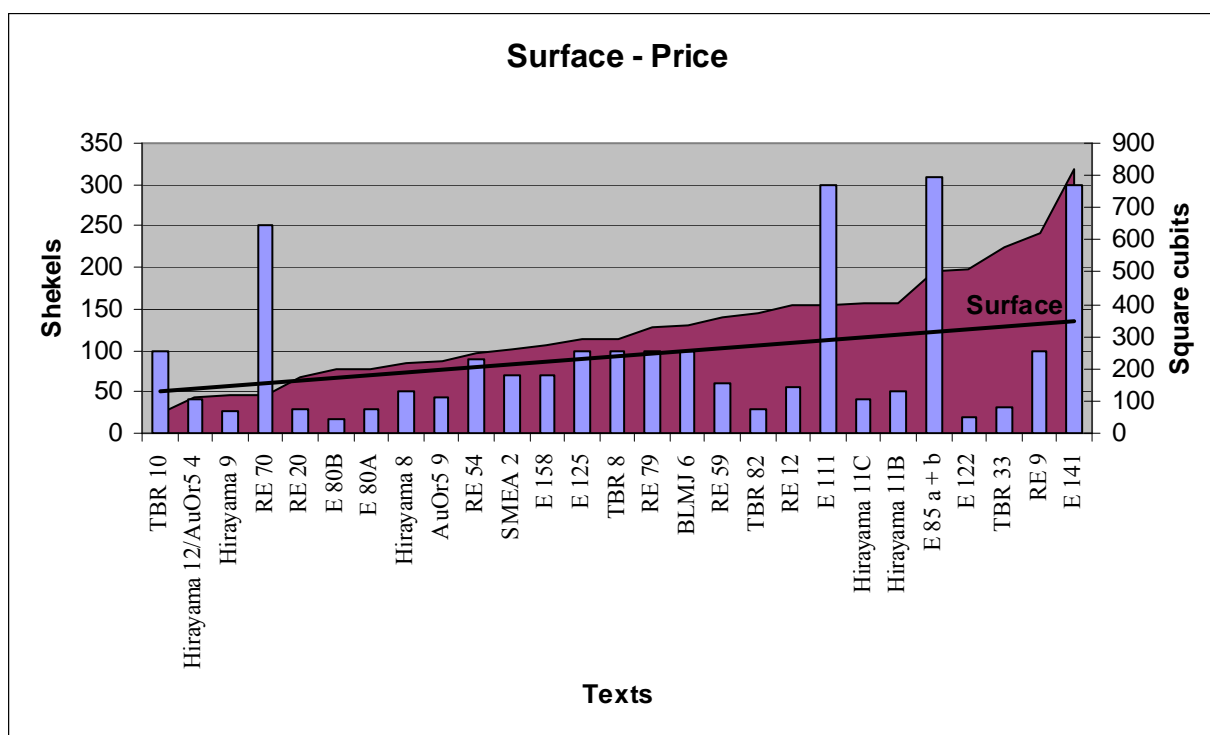


Figure 2

b) *Sellers and buyers*

As typical of the city of Emar, most of the transactions were carried out between private citizens who seldom appeared in more than one instance. Indeed none of sellers is documented more than once and only the members of the royal family appear as buyers in several deeds. They are involved in BLMJ 5, BLMJ 7, E 139, E 141 and RE 9. In E 139 the prince Iššur-Dagan acquires three houses and a *hiṭru* building from Ninurta and the Elders for 800 *sh.* that is the second highest price recorded in the house sale contracts. His son Ba'al-malik, in E 141, buys a house for 300 *sh.* from a certain Aḥī-mi son of Huzamu¹⁸, and in BLMJ 7 he acquires several properties, including a house, for an amount of 200 *sh.* The text BLMJ 5 registers a transaction between members of the royal family as the king Pilsu-Dagan sells a house and a vineyard to his nephew Puašata, son of Šadī-Dagan, for an amount of 70 *sh.* This deed also records another purchase by Puašata of a different type of building¹⁹. In RE 9 the king Zū-Ašarti sells a house for 100 *sh.* to Iaḥšiya son of Mattiya who is elsewhere unknown. Although limited data are available, there is no evidence for an influence of the royal family on the house market as noted for field sales as well. The lack of control on trades is also stressed by the fact that in those instances in which members of the royal family figure as buyers, such as E 139 and E 141, prices are high, instead in RE 9, wherein the seller is the king, the price

18. Aḥī-mi son of Huzamu appears in E 180 as heir of several properties and, even if there is no evidence, one may assume that the sold house in E 141 was part of that inheritance; the text E 180, that lists Pilsu-Dagan as witness, is surely older than E 141 which is dated to Elli.

19. A *tugguru* building, s. paragraph 2).

is low²⁰. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the royal family is particularly involved with big size houses²¹ and its members had a large availability of financial resources as documented by E 139.

Notable families²² are poorly involved in the house sale contracts. Members of the family of Ḥima are attested in E 80B, E 81 and E 85. In E 80B Dagan-taliḥ son of Ḥima buys a house in association with Imittī-Sîn son of Asduḥami for 18 *sh.* corresponding to a price for square cubit of 0,09 *sh.* that is one of the lowest recorded in the Emar house sales. In E 81 Dagan-taliḥ himself sells a house belonging to a certain Zū-Aštarti, son of [...]kabar, for 81 *sh.* Unless the latter was the king of Emar²³, he was reasonably an insolvent debtor forced to give his house to Dagan-taliḥ who, subsequently, sold it. E 85 belongs to the following generation, as the son of Dagan-taliḥ, Dagan-kabar, buys a house and a *hablu* building for 310 *sh.*²⁴. House sales regarding the family of Milki-Dagan only cover its last generation with the texts E 113 and E 120. In the first one Aḥī-Dagan, son of Dagan-kabar son of Milki-Dagan, buys a house from a woman for only 20 *sh.*²⁵. The second conveyance, instead, is wholly carried out within the family circle as Ba'al-qarrād, son of Aḥī-Dagan son of Milki-Dagan (hence cousin of the aforementioned Aḥī-Dagan), sells his inheritance share, namely a house and a vineyard, to his brother Milki-Dagan for 50 *sh.* The family of Kutbe is only involved in TBR 66 in which two of its members, Ḥimia son of Kutbe and the son of his brother Daqqanu, whose name is not preserved, sell their parts of a house to Dagan-bēlu son of Tai. This is an interesting case because these two sales, each for 20 *sh.*, are separately reported in the tablet but the value of the house is unknown because the price for square cubit cannot be calculated. Except E 85, that will be concerned later, these deeds record low prices, which, however, are unlikely tied to the presence of the members of these families since they appear both as sellers and buyers.

Members of the family of the diviner Zū-Ba'la are involved in the house market only in E 225 that records two sales of shares of inheritance by Ipqi-Dagan son of Ba'al-malik to his brother Zūzu. In the first transaction Zūzu buys a house for 100 *sh.*, whereas in the second he purchases²⁶ several properties including a house²⁷. Unfortunately, the measurements of the first sold house, which is identified by the name of the ancient owner, Abiu son of Zikria, are not recorded in the text, and in consequence the price for square cubit cannot be calculated. Events of the life of Abiu son of Zikria and his family can be traced in two other texts, BLMJ 14 and E 213. In BLMJ 14 Abiu assigns the *kubuddā'u*²⁸ to his wife Ḥūdī who in E 213, after the death of her husband, leaves all her goods and her daughter in marriage to the diviner Ba'al-malik in return for the payment of her debts corresponding to 20 *parīsu* of cereals and 20 *shekels* of silver. The list of these properties includes a house which is probably the same inherited by Ipqi-Dagan and sold to Zūzu²⁹. The disparity between the amount of the debt paid off by Ba'al-malik and the price of the sole house sold by Ipqi-Dagan is a clear sign of the hardship that forced Ḥūdī to give all her properties to the diviner.

20. Differences in the prices of these transactions may be related to the locations of the sold properties.

21. Mori 2008, 116.

22. For these families s. Viano 2007, 254-257.

23. Pruzsinszky 2003 pieces together the name as *Zu-Aš-tar-ti* DUMU 'd[IŠKUR]-'GAL', then it would be an outstanding synchronisms between Syrian and Syro-hittite texts, but he should be a homonym of the king.

24. The reason of the sale gets a more extended treatment below.

25. See below for the likely economic difficulties of the seller.

26. I consider the verb *iš-am* (l. 16) as referring to Zūzu (l. 11).

27. Ba'al-malik sells a house, a vineyard, a *tugguru* building, and some fields to Zūzu, but the price is not entirely preserved.

28. For this term s. Durand, Joannes 1990, Beckman 1996b, 72.

29. The practice here displayed of indicating the debtor as the former owner of the sold property would confirm the hypothesis suggested for E 81 (s. above).

Sales performed by women in AuOr5 9, E 20, E 80A, E 113, TBR 57 and TBR 65, might indicate a similar economic distress³⁰. In E 20, a widow, Abini wife of Iddih-Ra son of Hemi, who had been abandoned by her children in a year of famine and war, was forced to sell her house to Baba son of Rašap-ilu, a member of her family³¹. The purchase price, 170 *sh.*, is above average, but the measurements of the house are not recorded, so the cost for square cubit cannot be calculated. The economic difficulties are even more explicit in TBR 65 in which a widow, together with her four children, sells a house³² in a year of famine in order to pay her debts. Although the cost for square cubit is unknown, the purchase price, 45 *sh.*, is very low, and was paid not to the seller, but directly to the creditor, Tura-Dagan son of Attuwa. As for the contract E 113, which, as seen above, concerns the family of Milki-Dagan, one might infer that the woman was under the pressure of hardship from the fact that the object of the sale is defined as the house of the seller's father³³. The text AuOr5 9, which apparently does not provide any evidence for indebtedness, includes the following clause: "Should anyone in future days come forward as adversary in court against Irna (the buyer) concerning this house, Amat-ili (the seller) will compensate him."³⁴ This clause points to the existence of possible claimant(s), likely creditor(s) of the seller who, indeed, was forced to sell off her property for only 44 *sh.* corresponding to 0,195 *sh.* for square cubit. Lastly, in E 80A, even though no clear indication for economic difficulties is given³⁵, Aḥati-bītu daughter of Ilī-še[mi] and Dagan-na'i son of Zu[...] sell a house for 30 *sh.*, that is one of the lowest prices recorded in the house sales corresponding to a cost for square cubit below average (0,15 *sh.*). A woman is also attested as seller, together with her son, in TBR 57 but, even though the sale is carried out in a year of distress, there is no evidence for debt; the price is in fact high but the cost for square cubit cannot be calculated³⁶.

The text E 111 is the only occurrence of a woman as buyer of a house, but it is worth noting that her name, Aštar-abu, is written with both determinatives, masculine and feminine. This probably means that she had been given the status of "male and female" in compliance with a practice performed by the testator who wanted to make his daughter the principal heir³⁷. In this context Aštar-abu was probably a rich woman³⁸, because one may suppose that only within a prominent family a still married woman³⁹ was free to take her business⁴⁰. However, the high price here recorded, 300 *sh.*, corresponding to 0,75 *sh.* for square cubit, should not be referred to the sex of the buyer⁴¹. Summarizing, women mostly appear in the house sale contracts when they are forced to sell their properties due to economic difficulties as the quite low prices recorded in these texts seem to lead⁴².

30. For a complete list of contracts involving women and a discussion on their role in sale transactions s. Justel 2008, 186-201.

31. He is probably an adopted son or a stepson of Abini, but the family situation is not clear, cfr. Zaccagnini 1995, 99 n. 21.

32. The nature of the purchased property is not completely clear, but I consider it as a house, s. Beckman 1997, 108; for a different interpretation s. Seminara 1995, 477-478, Zaccagnini 1996, 94-95.

33. The tablet is broken, so other clauses or information might have been enclosed in the text.

34. Lines 14-17.

35. Cfr. Table 7 for possible evidence of indebtedness.

36. Other reasons account for the high price, s. Table 4 and paragraphs 1c), 1d).

37. Westbrook 2001, 36-38.

38. Justel 2008, 200-201, seems to reach the same conclusion.

39. Since a homonym of her husband, Itār-Dagan, also appears in the witness list, and in the Emar documentation this name is only attested in this text (s. Pruzsinszky 2003), they are probably the same person, then he was still alive; this leads me to consider that Aštar-abu did not get the status of "father and mother" (s. Westbrook 2001, 38-40) but that of "male and female".

40. Cfr. paragraph 1b).

41. Other factors affected the price, s. below Table 4 and Table 6.

42. Justel 2008, 193, 201, states that contracts register a less amount of silver when women are involved.

Few conveyances are clearly carried out within the family circle as the buyer is referred as acting as *ki / kima nikari*, literally “like a foreigner”, obviously indicating that he (or she) was a relative of the seller. The expression *ki / kima nikari* indicates that the transaction, although occurred between relatives, was a normal trade regardless of kinship. The prices recorded in these deeds range from 30 *sh.* (E 80A) to 170 *sh.* (E 20) with an average of 93,33 *sh.* Unfortunately the cost for square cubit can only be calculated for two transactions, and both of them are below average.

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
ASJ13 B	S	50	?
E 20	S	170	?
E 80A	SH	30	0,15
E 120	SH	50 ⁴³	?
E 225a	SH	100	?
Hirayama 11B	SH	50	0,123
TBR 56	SH	160	?

Table 3 – *kima nikari* Texts

Based on these limited data and especially because we are unable to know the price for square cubit for each transaction, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions for these deeds. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that prices recorded in such conveyances are lower on average than those registered in the contracts quoting the ceremony involving the so called ‘Brothers’. As I elsewhere pointed out⁴⁴, the ‘Brothers’ appear in the Syrian sale contracts when the parties are tied by kinship, but differently from deeds quoting the *kima nikari* expression, these transactions do not record low prices. It may not be coincidental that the *kima nikari* deed recording the highest price, the aforementioned E 20, is the only one citing the ceremony involving the so called ‘Brothers’, as Table 4 shows.

Text	Price	Price for square cubit
BLMJ 4	40	?
E 20	170	?
E 111	300	0,75
E 156	600	?
Hirayama 12 /AuOr5 4	40	0,35
RE 20	30	0,171
RE 70	250	2,083
TBR 57	200	?

Table 4 – ‘Brothers’ Texts

The price average for these contracts is 203,75 *sh.* and three out four prices for square cubit are above average. Sales involving the ‘Brothers’ were normal conveyances submitted to the rules of the local market. Prices might have been influenced by kinship between the contracting parties more in the *kima nikari* deeds (although these are defined as outright transactions) than in the sales involving the ‘Brothers’.

43. The price refers to a house and a vineyard.

44. Viano 2010a, 134-142.

Therefore the expression *ki / kima nikari* might simply denote that conveyances were carried out with the payment of a sum, but prices were taken low in reliance on the kinship between the parties. Nevertheless, For the prices of the *kima nikari* texts, another explanation which involves chronology, will be given below.

Like with field trades, the most documented sellers of houses are Ninurta and the Elders. They are attested in eleven deeds⁴⁵ for a total of 15 sold houses, 1 *hitru* building and 1 *hablu* building. With a mean of 221,33 *sh.* that, although inaccurate⁴⁶, is above average, Ninurta's sales record high prices.

Table 5 lists Ninurta's sales recording prices.

Text	Area	Price	Price for square cubit
BLMJ 6	338	100	0,295
E 9a	?		?
E 9b	189	200	?
E 9c	221		?
E 126	?	1000	?
E 139a	552		?
E 139b (<i>hitru</i>)	?	800	?
E 139c	?		?
E 139d	?		?
Hirayama 7a	?	600	?
Hirayama 7b (<i>hablu</i>)	?		?
RE 34	?	300	?
TBR 4	?	120	?
TBR 8	294,5	100	0,339
TBR 10	60(?)	100	1,666

Table 5 – Ninurta's Texts

Ninurta's sales include the contract with the highest price for a single house in the Emar documentation (E 126). The cost for square cubit of this transaction cannot be calculated because measurements have not been recorded although the tablet is entirely preserved, and, except for an alleged very good location, for which only few evidences are available⁴⁷, there is no clear explanation for such a price⁴⁸. The text E 126 clearly influences the price average of the Ninurta's sales which, without it, would be 165,714 *sh.* that is close to the mean of all house sales.

Prices in the Ninurta's sales are quite high⁴⁹, though the limited number of available costs for square cubit does not allow to draw definite conclusions about the influence of Ninurta and the Elders on the house sales. As a hypothesis, if Ninurta and the Elders acquired properties by expropriation, as some

45. BLMJ 6, E 9, E 126, E 139, Hirayama 7, RE 29, RE 34, SMEA30 4, TBR 4, TBR 8, TBR 10.

46. As well as for all transactions, this data is inaccurate since it also includes the prices of the *hitru* building and the *hablu* building.

47. See paragraph 1e).

48. A scribal mistake is also possible.

49. Considering an average surface of 310 square cubit for each house, in Hirayama 7 the price for square cubit would be 0,96 *sh.*; even in E 9 that does not seem to show high prices, taking as 200 square cubits the surface of E 9a on the base of the other two houses, the price for square cubit would be 0,32 *sh.*

texts⁵⁰ clearly state, auction might have been the device by which these house were sold. This type of sale might explain the high purchase prices recorded in the house sales as well as in the field sales⁵¹. Against this background we can even understand the not high prices as good deals⁵².

The Ninurta's text SMEA30 4 could point to the existence of a pre-emption right as Itūr-Dagan, son of Hinnu-Dagan, buys a house and a vineyard that are quoted as his inheritance share. Therefore, by paying he regained possession of his properties of which he had been expropriated⁵³. The purchased price, 60 *sh.*, which is very low compared to the other Ninurta's sales, especially considering that it refers to two sold properties, could have arisen from a pre-emption right that guaranteed a fixed price in case of redemption.

c) *Sales under special condition*

Some house conveyances report a particular event, quoted as the year of famine (E 139, E 158, TBR 57, TBR 65) or war (AuOr5 7, E 20, E 111, RE 70) in which the sale took place. The prices recorded in these deeds range from 12 *sh.* (AuOr5 7) to 800 *sh.* (E 139) with an average of 167,909 *sh.*, but the cost for square cubit can only be calculated for E 158, E 111, RE 70.

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit	Year of famine or war
AuOr5 7	S	12	?	<i>ina nukurti</i> KALA.GA
TBR 65	SH	45	?	<i>ana</i> MU.MEŠ- <i>ti dannati</i>
E 158	S	70	0,256	MU KALA.GA
E 20	S	170	?	<i>ina</i> MU KALA <i>nukurti</i> <i>ana dannati nukurti</i>
TBR 57	S	200	?	<i>ana dannati</i>
RE 70	S	250	2,083	<i>inūma</i> LUGAL ERĪN.MEŠ <i>Hurri</i> ^{URU} Šuma <i>ipuš</i>
E 111	S	300	0,75	MU.HI.A <i>nukurti</i> KALA.GA
E 139a	S	800	?	<i>ina</i> MU KAL.LA.GI
E 139b (<i>hiṭru</i>)			?	
E 139c			?	
E 139d			?	

Table 6 – Texts with year of distress formula

Although some prices are quite high, their huge range, as Table 6 shows⁵⁴, does not allow to infer a direct influence of this formula on them, as already noticed for field sales⁵⁵. If people had been forced to sell their properties under pressure of hardship in order to keep themselves alive, these deeds would not have recorded the highest price for square cubit for a house sale (RE 70)⁵⁶ and the third highest one (E

50. BLMJ 6, Hirayama 7, RE 34, SMEA30 4; BLMJ 6 does not properly state that an expropriation had taken place, but the house sold by Ninurta and the Elders is indicated as belonging to the sons of Ilī-kašrī.

51. For high prices in the Ninurta's field sales s. Viano 2010b, 266-267.

52. Cfr. RE 29 where a house and an *eršetu* are sold for 100 *sh.*

53. It is unclear whether he or his father has been dispossessed.

54. AuOr5 7 records the lowest price for a house sale in the Emar documentation.

55. Viano 2010a, 268, cfr. Zaccagnini 1995, 105-109.

56. Although the attack of the Hurrian troops in RE 70 did not strike Emar, but the city of Šuma, it would refer to the same military operation quoted elsewhere that concerned Emar itself; cfr. Vita 2002, 119.

111). These two conveyances could allude to the same episode of war because, as Beckman⁵⁷ pointed out, the scribe of E 111, Ba'al-gamil, also wrote the text RE 77 which mentions the attack of the Hurrian troops quoted in RE 70 as well. Whether this synchronism were confirmed, there would have been a considerable influence of this specific event on prices⁵⁸. A possible explanation entails that a contraction of transactions took place as a consequence of the Hurrian raid because people tended to conceive houses as a safe asset which, consequently, appreciated its value. As it stands, also in E 139 there is no pressure of economic difficulties since the seller is Ninurta and the buyer is a member of the royal family. Nevertheless, in some instances such as the aforementioned E 20 and TBR 65, the economic distress of the two women, who are forced to sell, is possibly caused by famine. In conclusion in the contracts quoting the year of distress formula there is no evidence of an influence, on prices, of the economic difficulties of the sellers. Although prices do not show any significant difference from normal times, in some cases transactions could have been affected either way (i.e. increasing or decreasing of prices).

The text AuOr5 7 is a transaction accomplished within the family circle as the sons of Abda son of Napši sell a house to their uncle for only 12 *sh.*, even though neither the 'Brothers' nor the *kima nikari* formula are quoted. This price, the lowest recorded in the house sale contracts, might be due to the combination of the kinship between the parties and the distress caused by the war.

Clear cases of conveyances carried out under the pressure of debts are E 85, TBR 33 and TBR 82. The first two report the list of creditors who get their silver back, whereas in TBR 82 Garibu son of Abia takes his brother's house in return for the payment of his debts. The prices for square cubit recorded in TBR 33 (0,053 *sh.*) and TBR 82 (0,08 *sh.*) are indeed the second and the third lowest respectively. On the contrary the price in E 85 (0,62) is far above average, but it could be in reliance on the fact that this sale includes a *hablu* building⁵⁹ and that the two sold buildings had a very large surface⁶⁰. Another house sale in which the low price depends on indebtedness is TBR 53 as clearly indicated by a clause that allows the buyer to take some seller's fields as pledge in case of a third party successful claim against the sold property⁶¹.

Some of the conveyances previously concerned which are clearly carried out under economic difficulties, namely AuOr5 9, TBR 33, TBR 53 and TBR 65, contain a clause that foresees the redemption of the sold property on payment of a sum corresponding to double the purchase price⁶². A condition of indebtedness probably underlies this clause⁶³. Although some of these contracts do not provide evidence for such a circumstance, low prices, as shown in Table 7, seem to validate this view.

Text	Price	Price for square cubit
AuOr5 9	44	0,195
E 80A	30	0,15
E 122	20	0,039
Hirayama 11B	50	0,123
Hirayama 11C	41	0,101
RE 12	55	0,137
TBR 33	31	0,053

57. Beckman 1996c, 98; cfr. Vita 2002, 122.

58. For the price of RE 70 related to location s. paragraph 1e).

59. The other sale of a *hablu* building, Hirayama 7, records a high price; s. paragraph 1d).

60. The surface area is large in both E 85 and TBR 33 but possibly only in the first case it affected the price.

61. For this clause and an explanation of the text s. Skaist 2001, 246, Westbrook 2001, 22-31 and n. 3.

62. Zaccagnini 1996.

63. Leemans 1988, 227-232, Leemans 1992, 14-15, Westbrook 2001, 25-30.

TBR 53	20	?
TBR 65	45	?

Table 7 – Texts with clause of redemption

As for E 80A, the presence of the redemption clause would confirm the economic distress of the seller⁶⁴. It should be noted that, with the exception of the *eršetu* sale RE 33⁶⁵, this clause exclusively belongs to the formulary of the Syro-hittite school texts, but even if not specified, some Syrian contracts could deal with similar situations.

Concerning the text AuOr5 9, we have noted above⁶⁶ the presence of another clause that guarantees the buyer from a possible legal claim by a third party, probably a creditor. The same clause was also appended to other house sale contracts⁶⁷, Hirayama 9 and Hirayama 11; this shows that these transactions had been carried out under the pressure of debts. Thus, the texts AuOr5 9 and Hirayama 11 report both the clause of redemption and that foreseeing a compensation for the buyer in case of successful legal claim.

d) *Type of building*

A few texts give additional information with regard to the type of house. In E 156 the sold house, bought by Dagan-bēlu, son of Aḫī-malik, from his brothers, is referred as É-tu₄ GAL, “the main house”. The high recorded price of 600 *sh.* might depend on the fact that the “main house” was tied to the family cult of the ancestors⁶⁸. In this transaction Dagan-bēlu acquired not only the building but also the right to perform the cult of the family gods⁶⁹.

Some deeds report that the sold house had foundations (É-tu₄ ki ir-dá-nu-šu / É-tu₄ qa-du^{NA-} uš-še-šu^{HI.A}; lit. house with foundations). This apparently superfluous specification seem to point to foundations made of stone, as the determinative NA₄ indicates, which might correspond to the calcareous foundation discovered in the excavation⁷⁰.

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
E 9b	S	(200) ⁷¹	?
E 20	S	170	?
E 161	S	?	?
RE 29a	S	(100) ⁷²	?
RE 80	SH	40,33	?
TBR 8	S	100	0,339

Table 8 – Houses with foundations

64. Cfr. paragraph 1b); the presence of this clause is doubtful since Durand 1989, 188 reads the line 20 KU.BABBAR.MEŠ [il-la-a], but I agree with the Arnaud’s reading: KU.BABBAR.MEŠ [TÉŠ.BI li-din É-ta₅ lil-qî]

65. For this text see conclusions below.

66. Paragraph 1b).

67. This clause is also found in TBR 20 (s. paragraph 2) and in E 84, E 214, TBR 26 and TBR 68; cfr. Zaccagnini 1996, 91 n. 8.

68. For domestic cult s. Pitard 1996, Schmidt 1996. Unfortunately neither the measurements nor the adjoining properties are provided by the text so we are not able to know whether other factors affected the price. However, a chronological explanation is possible, s. conclusions.

69. van der Toorn 1995, 36-39.

70. Mori 2003, 39-40.

71. The price refers to three houses.

72. The price refers to a house and a *eršetu*.

On the base of the actual evidences is not possible to state if the presence of foundations affected the value of houses as both high and low prices are documented, and prices for square cubit cannot be calculated for most of the deeds. The text TBR 57 provides the information that the sold house had a wall which might refer to a surrounding fence. The price is quite high (200 *sh.*) but the cost for square cubit cannot be calculated.

As stated above, in two sale contracts, E 85 and Hirayama 7, a house is sold together with a *hablu*; this building, which has been regarded in several ways⁷³, is always found connected to a house in texts (both sale contracts and wills)⁷⁴. The only reference to the measurements of a *hablu* building (E 85) provides the evidence that its surface area (300 square cubits) was comparable to that of houses. The cost for square cubit cannot be calculated, but the high prices recorded in both documents could indicate that this type of building had a high value. These data are limited but seem to point to that a type of building used for domestic activities is the best definition of *hablu*⁷⁵.

The *hitru* building, probably an animal enclosure⁷⁶, is only attested in E 139, together with three houses. Unfortunately the measurements are not preserved and the price refers to all four buildings, so nothing can be inferred about the value of the *hitru* building.

Another type of building, *habā'u*, is only mentioned in RE 7, a Syro-hittite tablet, in which it is sold by a group of people. Although this is the sole attestation in the Emar documentation and the term *habā'u* is still unidentified, the very low price, 7 *sh.*, might indicate that this building had a small value. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that it was adjoined by other *haba'u* buildings as Table 9 shows.

Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
Tadarri son of Tuqāku	Kiri-Dagan son of Namartu Zū-Ba'la son of Aššurau Rībi Matkali-Dagan son of Baba Itūr-Dagan son of Ḥagalla	<i>haba'u</i> of the son of Bēlī	<i>haba'u</i> of the sons of Timma	Mountain Qaššu	BI-IZ- <i>ḥu</i>

Table 9 – *haba'u* building

e) *Location*

In contrast to field sale contracts, house sales do not usually quote specific locations. This information was not probably required because most houses were located in the urban center of Emar.

73. Faist 2006, 476, with previous bibliography.

74. For attestations s. Mori 2003, 70-71.

75. An identification with a “verfallenes Haus” as supposed by Faist 2006, would not agree with a high value of the building. The rests of a grain silo and food-preparing activities discovered in the building in the “Oberstadt”, even though in Faist’s view should not be overestimated, and the evidence of Hirayama 23 in which it is said that *hablu* building is for baking (É *ḥa-ab-lu ša e-pi*), in my opinion, lead to regard the *hablu* building as a functional unit for domestic activities. It seems to me that the building discovered in the “Oberstadt” was an older *hablu* building in ruin, but still in use; however further research will prove either hypothesis.

76. See. fn. 4.

Only three houses, E 80A-B, E 139c and RE 70, are distinguished by explicit locations: the town of Uri, the Euphrates river, and the *huḫinnu* of the Temple of “Dagan of the Flocks” respectively. As far as the transactions E 80A-B are concerned, the location outside the city of Emar, as the toponym Uri clearly indicates, could have affected the house price along with the other factors treated above⁷⁷; indeed, one may assume that houses situated in a small town in the vicinity of Emar were of less value than those located in the main city. The cost of the house sold in RE 70, which records the highest price for square cubit, may also have been influenced by location in view of the fact that the largest sum paid for *tugguru* (TBR 5)⁷⁸ concerns two buildings situated in the same area quoted in RE 70⁷⁹. Location seems to play a role even in TBR 33 and TBR 37: the houses sold in these contracts, which are next to each other⁸⁰, have quite similar prices, although, as for TBR 33 we have regarded the condition of indebtedness of the seller as the main cause of the price⁸¹.

As pointed out by Mori⁸², there was the tendency of family groups to dwell in the same area by acquiring neighboring houses as for instance in E 139 as Iṣṣur-Dagan already owned several buildings next to those bought.

The lists of adjoining properties, in particular the roads onto which houses opened, are an important source for the connection between location and price. The Emar road system⁸³ consists of KASKAL (Akkadian *hārranu*), a street typical of the extra-urban area⁸⁴, SILA.DAGAL.LA (Akkadian *ribītu*), the main street in urban context⁸⁵, and *huḫinnu*, a local term which identifies an alley⁸⁶. The most documented road flanking houses is *huḫinnu*, 49,4%, whereas SILA.DAGAL.LA is present in 32,2% of cases and in only 18,8% of the times a KASKAL road is attested⁸⁷. The analysis of contracts shows that the houses giving onto KASKAL roads (Table 10) have lower prices than those open onto *huḫinnu* (Table 11) and SILA.DAGAL.LA (Table 12) roads.

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
E 9c	S	(66,66) ⁸⁸	?
E 122	SH	20	0,039
Hirayama 9 ⁸⁹	SH	26	0,216

77. Suffice it to recall that the seller in E 80A is a indebted woman; cfr. paragraphs 1b), 1c).

78. See paragraph 2) below.

79. Mori 2003, 68-69.

80. Ibid., 47-48.

81. See paragraph 1c).

82. Mori 2003, 41-42.

83. For the road system s. Ibid., 73-76.

84. Belmonte Marín 2004, 216, distinguishes between KASKAL.GAL = main street and KASKAL = street; however KASKAL is far more attested in extra-urban context in conjunction with fields, therefore this term probably identifies a road connecting the countryside with the town.

85. Belmonte *ibid.*, 216, identifies SILA.DAGAL.LA with square, but (n. 175) he admits that there is little evidence for square at Emar: “Arquológicamente solo tenemos datos de la “explanada” fronte al templo M2”; usually squares are much less numerous than streets, instead the percentage of SILA.DAGAL.LA in the Emar texts is high. CAD R, 317, translates *ribītu* = SILA.DAGAL.LA with main street. Therefore, looking forward further research, I would tend to consider SILA.DAGAL.LA as a street.

86. Belmonte (*ibid.*, 216 and n. 159) regards the term *huḫinnu* as emarite gloss for SILA; the houses sold in E 20, E 111 and E 125, which open onto SILA *huḫinnu*, are only listed in Table 11.

87. Data according to Mori 2003, 74.

88. This data results from a hypothetical division of the purchase price, 200 *sh.*, by three, namely the number of sold houses, among which two open onto a *huḫinnu* and one onto a KASKAL road.

89. This house opens onto a crossroad of a KASKAL and a SILA.DAGAL.LA road; cfr. Table 12.

RE 9	S	100	0,161
RE 54	SH	90	0,36
		Average	Average
		61,532	0,194

Table 10 – Houses open onto KASKAL

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
ASJ13 B	S	50	?
AuOr5 7	S	12	?
E 9a	S	(133,33) ⁹⁰	?
E 9b	S		?
E 20	S	170	?
E 80A	SH	30	0,15
E 80B	SH	18	0,09
E 111	S	300	0,75
E 125	S	100	0,339
E 139a	S	800	?
E 139b			?
E 139c			?
E 139d			?
Hirayama 12/AuOr5 4	S	40	0,35
RE 34	S	300	?
RE 70	S	250	2,083
TBR 37	SH	33	?
TBR 82	S	30	0,08
		Average	Average
		126,907	0,549

 Table 11 – Houses open onto *ḥuḥinnu*

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
AuOr5 9	SH	44	0,195
BLMJ 6	S	100	0,295
E 126	S	1000	?
E 141	S	300	0,367
Hirayama 7a	S	600	?
Hirayama 7b (<i>ḥablu</i>)			?
Hirayama 8	S	50	0,228
Hirayama 9	SH	26	0,216
Hirayama 11B	SH	50	0,123

90. For this price s. note 88.

Hirayama 11C	SH	41	0,101
RE 20	S	30	0,171
RE 59	S	60	0,166
RE 80	SH	40,33	?
SMEA30 2	S	70	0,267
TBR 4	S	120	?
TBR 8	S	100	0,339
TBR 10	S	100	1,666
		Average	Average
		160,666	0,345

Table 12 – Houses open onto SILA.DAGAL.LA

This result might have been influenced by the fewer available data for KASKAL than for the other roads, and, however, it should be noted that the range of prices for each type of road onto which houses open is considerably large. In addition, *ḥuḥinnū*, that are related to higher prices than KASKAL roads, are not limited to the urban context but they can also be located in the countryside⁹¹. Therefore, it is not possible to assert whether the low prices evidenced in correlation to KASKAL roads really reflect the situation at Emar, but a minor value for houses situated in peripheral, or even extra-urban areas seems plausible⁹².

Periphery was not always related to low prices. Indeed, the aforementioned area of the Temple of “Dagan of the Flocks”, which was probably located in a marginal setting of the city⁹³ as the reference to the ‘mountain’ as adjoining the house sold in RE 70 seems to indicate, had a high value. The same can be inferred for the houses sold in E 139 which seem to be located outside the town⁹⁴. Although the price for square cubit of each building is unknown, even calculating hypothetically the area on the base of the only preserved measurements (E 139a), that provide a surface far above average, the cost of houses would be high⁹⁵.

The house and the *ḥablu* building sold in E 85 were located in the outskirts of the city since they open onto the Gate of Baši and have a KASKAL road on their right side, but, as seen above, they record very high prices.

The area around threshing floors did not probably have a good value, as shown by the house sold in Hirayama 11 that registers a low price, though it opens onto a SILA.DAGAL.LA road⁹⁶. Only few other topographical indications are given in texts but it is not possible to correlate them with prices.

91. Mori 2003, 74; E 80 and E 139 are located outside the town.

92. The reason for a not so high price in E 9 compared to the other Ninurta’s sale could lie in the location of the sold houses at the margin of the city close to moorings for river boats, cfr. Ibid., 43.

93. Cfr. Ibid., 60.

94. Ibid., 44-45.

95. The area of E 139a is 552 square cubits, then taking this datum as parameter, the surface of all four buildings would slightly exceed 2000 square cubits with a price for square cubit over 0,3 *sh*.

96. Also the *eršetu* sold in Hirayama 3 that adjoins a threshing floor, records a low price.

f) *Price fluctuation*

Figure 1 has shown that prices for square cubit have a small dispersion because most of them are between 0,039 *sh.* (E 122) and 0,367 (E 141). As a result only four data, E 85, E 111, RE 70, TBR 10, lie outside this interval. Nevertheless, even though prices are very close one another, some conclusions on price fluctuation can be drawn.

A diachronic analysis will only deal with those documents for which the price for square cubit can be calculated. A chronological sequence will be provided, but one must be aware that a succession of texts can only be assured for those dating to different kings, whereas the ordering within each reign is uncertain.

AuOr5 9

This contract shares two witnesses with the texts of the archives of the families of Awiru, Kutbe, Milki-Dagan and Ḥima, which go back to the end of the Emar documentation⁹⁷: Alal-abu son of Ameu is also attested in TBR 24 (Bulalu son of Awiru)⁹⁸, RE 13 (Zū-Aštarti son of Aḥi-malik son of Kutbe), E 117 (Aḥi-Dagan son of Milki-Dagan), E 76 (Dagan-kabar son of Ḥima) and E 85⁹⁹ (Dagan-kabar son of Dagan-taliḥ son of Ḥima); Ba'al-qarrād son of Kunazi is found in E 79 (Dagan-kabar son of Ḥima) as well.

BLMJ 6

Elli leads the witness list followed by his son Ba'al-kabar.

E 80A-B

E 80B belongs to the first attested generation of the family of Ḥima. E 80A refers to a previous sale of the same house.

E 85

This text belongs to the successive generation to that of E 80 and E 81¹⁰⁰.

E 111

This text dates to a span within the reigns of Ba'al-kabar I and Pilsu-Dagan. As noticed above the scribe is the same of the text RE 77 which goes back to Pilsu-Dagan, but one of the witness, Ida-Da son of Imliki, also appears in E 109 that belongs to the family of Nunia¹⁰¹ dating to the reign of Ba'al-kabar I.

E 122

This text is slightly later than Hirayama 11 (s. below) since both list Kāpī-Dagan as witness: in E 122 he bears the title of diviner, LÚ.ḤAL, whereas in Hirayama 11 he is referred as DUMU LÚ.ḤAL.

E 125

Pilsu-Dagan leads the witness list followed by his son Elli.

97. For the chronological placement of these families s. Viano 2007, 254-257.

98. In parenthesis the name of the member of the family involved in the text is given.

99. See below.

100. See paragraph 1b).

101. For this archive s. paragraph 3e) under E 109-110.

E 141

Elli leads the witness list followed by his son Ba'al-kabar.

E 158

Pilsu-Dagan leads the witness list followed by his son Elli.

Hirayama 8

Zū-Aštarti leads the witness list.

Hirayama 9

This text is contemporaneous with the archives of the family of Kutbe and Awiru, since it lists as witness Sin-abu son of Husiru who also appears in Hirayama 41, where Zū-Aštarti, son of Kutbe, is involved, and in TBR 22 and TBR 24 which belong to Arwu, son of Awiru, and to his son Bulalu respectively.

Hirayama 11¹⁰²

This text is contemporaneous with the third generation of the family of Zū-Ba'la, since it lists as witness Dagan-tariḥ son of Matkali-Dagan who also appears in E 214, a document belonging to the diviner Ba'al-malik, son of Ba'al-qarrād son of Zū-Ba'la.

Hirayama 12/AuOr5 4

The scribe of this text is Dagan-bēlu who worked under Igmil-Dagan (E 150, Hirayama 28/AuOr5 17, RE 91) and Iaši-Dagan (TBR 1); I tend to date this text to the first dynasty since the scribe is more active under Igmil-Dagan and because it reports a date with both month and eponymous year, whereas in the documents produced at the time of Iaši-Dagan only the month is usually given¹⁰³.

RE 9

The king Zū-Aštarti is the seller.

RE 12

The tablet is sealed by the "Overseer of the Land" Aḥi-malik who was contemporaneous with the family of Awiru¹⁰⁴.

RE 20

The scribe, Dagalli, operated under Pilsu-Dagan and Elli, but I would date this text to the latter because one of the witnesses, Hannānu son of Zu'a, is also attested in two documents (E 140, TBR 59) which go back to the Elli's reign.

RE 54

This document is drawn up before the king of Karkemiš Ini-Tešup. According to the chronology proposed by Di Filippo¹⁰⁵ Elli's reign is to be placed before Ini-Tešub because Muḥra-aḥi, the father of the person who addresses the king of Karmemiš in RE 54 had previously bought a house from Ibni-Dagan,

102. Cfr. E 122 above.

103. Fleming 2000, 203-204.

104. Skaist 1998a, Di Filippo 2004, Viano 2007, 255-256.

105. Di Filippo 2008, 61.

son of Aḫi-malik, who is attested in documents drafted under both Zū-Aštarti and Elli. However, this picture does not take into account that in RE 55 the same Muḫra-aḫi personally addresses the king Ini-Tešup leading to the conclusion that even Muḫra-aḫi, along with Ibni-Dagan, was contemporaneous with Elli. This establishes a synchronism between Elli and Ini-Tešup who, at least partially, overlapped. The texts RE 54 was composed at a later phase than RE 55, when Muḫra-aḫi was probably dead, but the king of Karkemiš was still alive. When the beginning of the Ini-Tešup's reign should be placed in relation to the chronology of Emar is not easy to answer, because we do not know how long Muḫra-aḫi, Ibni-Dagan and Elli have lived, but we know that he became king at very young age¹⁰⁶ during the reign of Elli and possibly at the beginning of it. To this regard some remarks are necessary. Di Filippo¹⁰⁷ rejects the synchronism between Iššur-Dagan, brother of Pilsu-Dagan, and the diviner Ba'al-qarrād, contemporaneous with Ini-Tešup, which was previously recognized¹⁰⁸ on the base of E 168, a Syro-hittite lists of real estate found in the Building M1, which counts properties of both Iššur-Dagan and Ba'al-qarrād, but some data could lead to a different conclusion:

- In E 168 Iššur-Dagan does not only appear in the list of the adjoining properties but also as owner of a field (ll.24-28), the same acquired in E 137
- Niqala son of Asda-aḫi, the owner of an orchard in E 168 (ll. 3-7), is attested in BLMJ 3, E 8, E 10, dating to Pilsu-Dagan
- There is no evidence that Iššur-Dagan quoted in SMEA30 7 (the testament of Ba'al-qarrād) as the previous owner of four 'house tablets' (i.e. contracts), after acquired by Ba'al-qarrād, is the brother of Pilsu-Dagan since he is not qualified as son of Ba'al-kabar or DUMU.LUGAL like in other cases; in addition the four tablets cannot be E 137, E 138, E 139 and E 140 as supposed by Di Filippo, because only E 139 concerns houses.

Di Filippo's view is based on the assumption that all the properties listed in E 168 belong to Ba'al-qarrād and that the other owners, Iššur-Dagan and Niqala were dead when the text was drafted, but, even though this could be plausible, there is no evidence. If, instead, the listed properties belonged to the quoted owners, a synchronism between Ba'al-qarrād and Iššur-Dagan should be established. In particular Iššur-Dagan is attested four times in the list of the adjoining properties and once as owner, that seems a too high frequency for a dead person. Even though Iššur-Dagan quoted in SMEA30 7 were the brother of Pilsu-Dagan, this does not imply that Iššur-Dagan was already dead in E 168 since there is probably a span of time between the two documents¹⁰⁹ and it would not surprise that when Ba'al-qarrād drafted his will (SMEA30 7) Iššur-Dagan, who was surely elder than the diviner, was dead. A synchronism between Ba'al-qarrād and Iššur-Dagan would agree with that above outlined between Ini-Tešup and Elli since Iššur-Dagan was alive during the Elli's reign¹¹⁰; however further studies will hopefully provide a better calibration of chronology. In conclusion Ini-Tešup ascended to the throne shortly after Elli became king, and RE 54 was drafted in the late phase of the Ini-Tešup's reign; however this text cannot be precisely dated in relation to Emar kings, so it is placed after Elli's reign.

RE 59

Elli leads the witness list followed by his brother Iššur-Dagan.

106. Cfr. Owen 1995.

107. Di Filippo 2008, 57-61.

108. Cfr. Skaist 1998a, 50-51, Di Filippo 2004.

109. As testament SMEA 30 7 was probably one of the last deeds of Ba'al-qarrad.

110. Cfr. for example E 139 and E 140, Iššur-Dagan's sale contracts, in which Elli figures as first witness.

RE 70

This text goes back to Pilsu-Dagan because it mentions the attack of the Hurrian troops that took place under his reign¹¹¹.

RE 79

Zū-Aštarti leads the witness list.

SMEA30 2

This text dates to a span between the reigns of Pilsu-Dagan and Zū-Aštarti, because the Pilsu-Dagan's son, Iaši-Dagan, is the first witness, and the tablet was drafted by Imlik-Dagan who was the only scribe to work under Zū-Aštarti.

TBR 8

Pilsu-Dagan leads the witness list.

TBR 10

Elli leads the witness list followed by his brother Iaši-Dagan.

TBR 33

The tablet is sealed by the "Overseer of the Land" Aḫi-malik¹¹².

TBR 82

Elli leads the witness list followed by his brother Iaši-Dagan.

The following table provides the sequence of texts.

Text	Tablet	Date
Hirayama 12/AuOr5 4	S	Igmil-Dagan
E 111	S	Ba'al-kabar I/Pilsu-Dagan
RE 70	S	Pilsu-Dagan
TBR 8	S	Pilsu-Dagan
E 125	S	Pilsu-Dagan
E 158	S	Pilsu-Dagan
SMEA30 2	S	End of Pilsu-Dagan reign
RE 79	S	Zū-Aštarti
Hirayama 8	S	Zū-Aštarti
RE 9	S	Zū-Aštarti
RE 20	S	Elli
RE 59	S	Elli
TBR 10	S	Elli
TBR 82	S	Elli
BLMJ 6	S	Elli
E 141	S	Elli

111. Cfr. Vita 2002, 119.

112. Cfr. RE 12 above.

RE 54	SH	Ini-Tešup
Hirayama 11C	SH	Family of Zū-Ba‘la (III generation – Ba‘al-malik, son of Ba‘al-qarrād)
Hirayama 11B	SH	Family of Zū-Ba‘la (III generation – Ba‘al-malik, son of Ba‘al-qarrād)
E 122	SH	After Hirayama 11
E 80A	SH	Before E 80B
E 80B	SH	Family archives (I generation)
Hirayama 9	SH	Family archives (I-II generation)
AuOr5 9	SH	Family archives (I-II-III generation)
E 85	SH	Family archives (II generation)
TBR 33	SH	Aḥi-malik (Overseer of the Land
RE 12	SH	Aḥi-malik (Overseer of the Land)

Table 13 – Chronological sequence of the house sales

On the base of the chronological sequence price fluctuation is shown in the following graph.

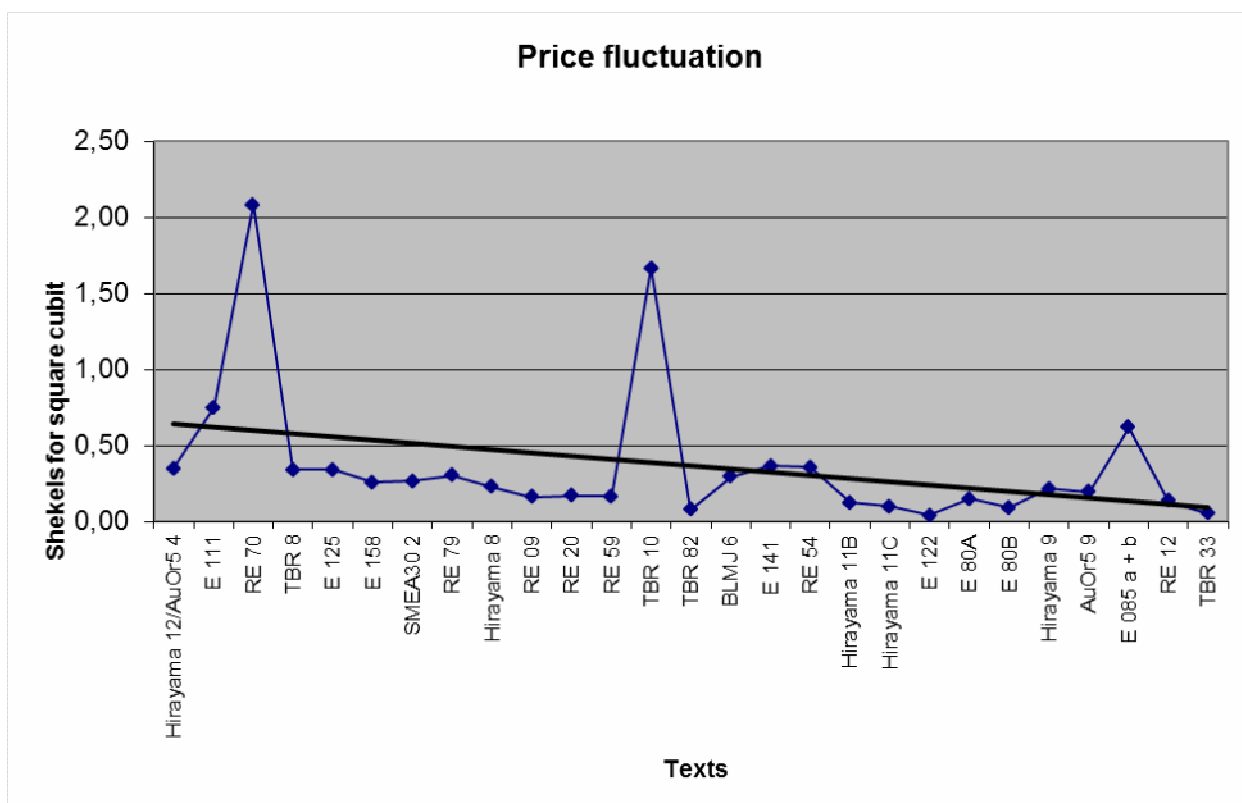


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows that a decreasing of prices took place. The same tendency is ascertainable considering only the prices for square cubit under 0,5 sh. as Figure 4 indicates.

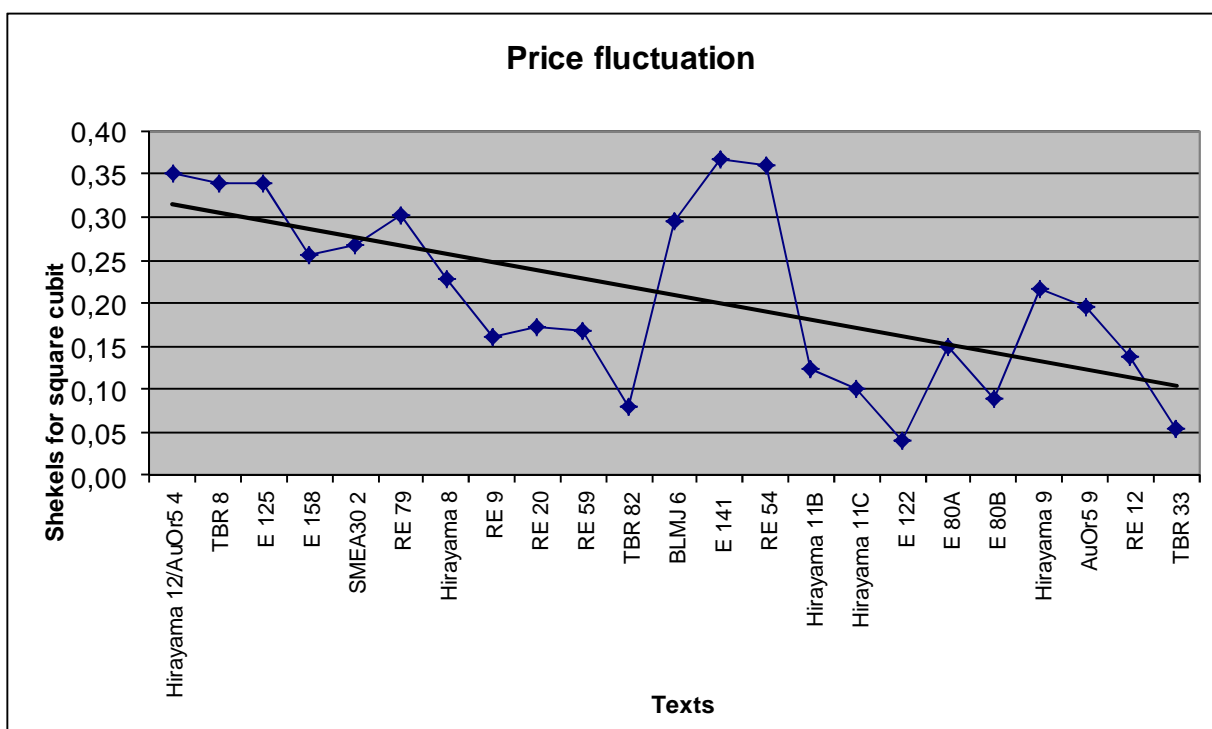


Figure 4

A better understanding is given by grouping prices by generations. As expected, most of the contracts go back to the last decades of the Emar history; only few documents are available for early times¹¹³, like the period before Pilsu-Dagan which is only covered by Hirayama 12/AuOr5 4 with regard to texts providing the price for square cubit¹¹⁴. This fact leads to collect together contracts from different generations in order to have a certain quantity of data and prevent misleading outcomes. Therefore, documents preceding the third generation of the second dynasty will be counted together with the deeds drafted under Pilsu-Dagan and Zū-Aštarti.

Generation	Average price for square cubit	
Before Pilsu-Dagan	One only deed	0,508 ¹¹⁵
Pilsu-Dagan	0,672 ¹¹⁶	
Zū-Aštarti	0,23	
Elli		0,458 ¹¹⁷
SH texts		0,189 ¹¹⁸

Table 14

113. Cfr. Di Filippo 2004.

114. Possibly, also E 111 dates to the reign of Ba'al-kabar I, but it is uncertain.

115. The price average for square cubit considering together Pilsu-Dagan's and Zū-Aštarti's texts is 0,497.

116. This data also includes E 111; without it the average is 0,657 *sh.* and that of the period before Pilsu-Dagan is 0,55 *sh.*

117. Counting also RE 54 which could date to the period of Elli's reign the average price for square cubit is 0,444 *sh.*

118. Without RE 54 the average is 0,172 *sh.*

A similar scenario can be traced considering only the prices for square cubit below 0,5 *sh*.

Generation	Average price for square cubit	
Before Pilsu-Dagan	One only deed	0,28
Pilsu-Dagan	0,3	
Zū-Aštarti	0,23	
Elli		0,216 ¹¹⁹
SH texts		0,146 ¹²⁰

Table 15

Table 14 and 15 clearly show that house prices substantially hold steady until the reign of Elli, even though with slight variations among the generations that, anyway, could be due to the different quantity of texts available for each period¹²¹. The small price decrease between the third and the fourth generations of the royal family got bigger at the end of Elli's reign. The price average of the documents of the last generations of the Emar history, all Syro-hittite, such as the contracts belonging to the family of Ḫima, Milki-Dagan and Kutbe, is considerably lower than in earlier periods. A comparison between Syrian and Syro-hittite house sale contracts¹²² clearly indicates that prices, both purchasing and for square cubit, are higher in the Syrian school texts¹²³.

School	Price average	Average price for square cubit
Syrian	173,294	0,489
Syro-hittite	55,623	0,189

Table 16

The text E 85 is the only Syro-hittite contract recording a price for square cubit above 0,5 *sh*., but it needs to recall that it includes a *hablu* building¹²⁴. Chronology might also have influenced prices recorded in the sales of the houses open onto KASKAL roads since most of them were drafted on Syro-hittite tablets. This result states that a contraction of the average amount of silver spent for buying houses took place during the last generations and prices strongly decreased¹²⁵.

Some contracts report subsequent sales of the same house, offering the opportunity to observe the trend of the cost of a single real estate in the course of time. As we have seen above, in E 80A and E 80B, Aḫati-bītu e Dagan-na'i sold their house for 30 *sh*. to a relative, Baba, who, afterwards, resold it to Dagan-taliḫ and Imittī-Sîn for only 18 *sh*. Both transactions record low prices, but while the first one is possibly due to a distress condition no evidence for economic difficulties can be alleged in the second one.

119. With RE 54 the average is 0,24 *sh*.

120. Without RE 54 the average is 0,123 *sh*.

121. The low average recorded in the Zū-Aštarti's texts might have been originated not only from the few available documents, but also from the inner trouble occurred during his reign; cfr. Adamthwaite 2001, 233-259.

122. Syro-hittite contracts also include RE 54 and TBR 56, drafted in the presence of Ini-Tešup and Puḫi-Šenni respectively.

123. It should be considered that house sale contracts reporting prices are more numerous for the Syrian school (28 deeds for 34 transactions) than for the Syro-hittite (20 deeds for 23 transactions).

124. If the object of the sale (*hablu* building) were not the reason of the rate, a single high value in a period of decreasing of prices would not be impossible.

125. The reason of this fluctuation will be approached in a further article along with a global analysis of economy of Emar.

Hirayama 11 reflects a similar circumstance, reporting two sales of the same house and quoting a third older transaction¹²⁶. This property had been bought by Iaḥṣu-Dagan son of Kabṣanu from Labu-Dagan son of Lala, then the sons of Iaḥṣu-Dagan, Abdi-Ili and Nuri-Dagan, sold the house to a brother of the old owner, Dudu, who lastly resold it to a certain Igur-Rašap son of Igur-Dagan. The text does not give the price of the first sale, but it provides the purchase prices of the other two transactions, which are 50 *sh.* and 41 *sh.* respectively.

These instances show a similar decrease of prices which could depend on the time elapsed from the first to the second transaction, but the span between the two sales is unknown. The trades in both cases seem to be close one another¹²⁷, and if the difference of prices was due to the economic trend, it would be a proof that the decrease of prices took place not only between the end of the Elli's reign and the following period, but also in the short term during the last generations. However, the low prices of the first transactions are to understood in consideration of the fact that E 80A-B and Hirayama 11 are Syro-hittite tablets.

Above, we discussed about the *kima nikari* texts suggesting that there could be a chronological explanation for low prices recorded in such deeds.

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit	Date
ASJ13 B	S	50	?	?
E 20	S	170	?	Pilsu-Dagan
E 80A	SH	30	0,15	Family of Ḫima (I gen.)
E 120	SH	50	?	Family of Milki-Dagan
E 225a	SH	100	?	Family of Zū-Ba'la (IV gen.)
Hirayama 11B	SH	50	0,123	// to Family of Zū-Ba'la (III gen.)
TBR 56	SH	160	?	Puḫi-Šenni

Table 17 – Chronology of the *kima nikari* texts

As Table 17 shows, most of these conveyances are Syro-hittite texts dating to the last generations of the Emar archives when prices were low. It should be noted that the Syro-hittite text with the highest price, TBR 56, does not date to the last generations, but goes back to Puḫi-Šenni's period of activities, who was contemporaneous or even earlier than Ini-Tešup¹²⁸. Thus, the two highest prices recorded in the *kima nikari* deeds are also the older texts.

1) *tugguru building sales*

The *tugguru*, which is concerned in ten conveyances (Table 18) was probably a kind of rural building connected to cultivated areas as the locations of this type of property seem to point to¹²⁹.

126. Cfr. Zaccagnini 1996, 97.

127. E 80A and E 80B are two different tablets both Syro-hittite, edited with one reference number by Arnaud, cfr. fn. 9.

128. Di Filippo 2004.

129. Mori 2003, 65-70.

Text	Tablet	Location	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
BLMJ 5	S	Gate of Well	Puašata son of Šadī-Dagan	Itūr-Dagan son of Aššilla	?	?	?	?
BLMJ 7	S	Gate of city of Iaššuni	Ba'al-malik son of Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al-kabar	Kāpi son of Lieda	?	?	?	?
E 82	SH		Dagan-taliḥ son of Ḫima	Ba'al-nax[...]	?	?	?	?
E 115	SH	City of Kullati	Aḫī-Dagan son of Dagan-kabar son of Milki-Dagan	Ba'al-bēlu, Ḫuzzū sons of Bēlu-kabar	?	?	?	?
E 138	S		Iššur-Dagan	Zū-Ba'la son of Ḫudadu	Sons of Iš-Purate	Iašur-Dagan son of Iš-Purate	Sons of Iš-Purate	KASKAL
E 144	S	<i>ina ḫušurani</i> ¹³⁰	Belia son of Ḫinnu-Dagan	NINURTA	<i>eršetu</i> of Eḫli-Kuša	Iddi-Dagan son of Dagan-bēlu son of Il-ammu	Abda-malik son of Alaḫi	KASKAL GAL
E 225	SH	City of Kušaḫ	Zūzu son of Ba'al-malik	Ipqi-Dagan son of Ba'al-malik	?	?	?	?
TBR 5a	S	<i>ina meḫdili</i> ¹³¹	Ir'am-Dagan son of Illatu	NINURTA	House of Abba-abu son of Milka-ma, house of Ir'am-Dagan son of Illatu	House of Zuwada grandson of Immaru	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i> , house of Tatta	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i> , house of Baba son of Immaru

130. For this term s. Ibid., 67.

131. Ibid.

Text	Tablet	Location	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
TBR 5b	S	<i>ina meḥdili</i>	Ir'am-Dagan son of Illatu	NINURTA	Ir'am-Dagan son of Illatu, sons of Immaru	Temple of Dagan of the flocks	Amur-ša-Dagan son of Milka-ma-Dagan	House of Abba-abu, <i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
TBR 20	SH	Gate of Amzaḫi son of Itūr-Dagan	Arwu son of Awiru	Amzaḫi son of Itūr-Dagan son of Aḫī-mi	?	?	?	?
TBR 67	S	<i>ina meḥdili</i> GAL	Qīri-Dagan son of Zalāku	Aḫu-dannu son of Zū-Ea	Ir'ib-Dagan son of Iaḫṣi-Dagan	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i> of Zadamma son of Ir'am-Dagan	'bedroom' of Zadamma son of Ir'am-Dagan	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>

Table 18 – *tugguru*

Only five deeds concern *tugguru* buildings as single sales and provide prices (Table 19) while the others are purchases of several properties giving a total price.

Text	Tablet	Date	Measurements	Area	Price	Square cubit price
E 138	S	Pilsu-Dagan	28 x 20 x 20 x 25	480	60	0,125
E 144	S	Ba'al-kabar I	NG	?	500	?
TBR 5 a + b	S	Abbanu	a) 24 x 24 b) 26 x 20 x 13	1005	1000	0,995
TBR 20	SH	Family of Awiru (I gen.)	NG	?	9	?
TBR 67	S	Abbanu	17 x 11	187	170	0,909

Table 19 – Single sales of *tugguru* buildings

Purchase prices have a huge range spanning from 9 *sh.* to 1000 *sh.*, but unfortunately for only three conveyances the cost for square cubit can be calculated. Compared to houses, *tugguru* buildings seem to have a higher value. The purchase price average, 289,833 *sh.*, and two out three prices for square cubit are above the mean registered for houses, whereas the remaining one is comparable to that of many houses. Nevertheless the multiple sales in which *tugguru* buildings are concerned record low prices as Table 20 shows.

Text	Tablet	Date	Price	Properties sold along with <i>tugguru</i> build.
BLMJ5	S	Pilsu-Dagan	30	5 BUR of fields beside the city of Bin'ati
BLMJ7	S	Elli	200	House Fields inside the gate of the city of Iaššunu
E 82	SH	Family of Ḫima (I gen.)	10	Orchards, Sown field
E 115	SH	Family of Milki-Dagan (II gen.)	20	5 fields

				Other fields
E 225	SH	Family of Zū-Ba'la (IV gen.)	[1]15 ¹³²	House, Fields, Vineyard

Table 20 – Multiple sales involving *tugguru* buildings

The prices in the contracts listed in Table 20 are comparatively lower than in single sales, especially in consideration of the large amount of sold properties. Mori¹³³ pointed out that *tugguru* buildings located in the countryside next to fields, vineyards or orchards (BLMJ 5, E 82, E 115, E 138, TBR 20), had prices lower than those near the urban area (E 144, TBR 67, TBR 5). However, there may be other factors that affected *tugguru* building prices which, anyway, do not discard the one suggested by Mori. Indeed, in E 82 and E 115 low prices result from the pressure of debts which clearly forced the sales: in the first one a widow sells her properties to keep her children alive, and in the second the sum is paid to the creditor¹³⁴. Evidence for indebtedness is also provided in TBR 20 since it quotes the clause foreseeing a compensation by the seller in case of legal claim that, as stated above, seems to indicate the existence of a creditor¹³⁵. As for E 138 the price might have been influenced by the year of famine during which the sale took place. In conclusion all these cases show a condition of economic distress that seems to be the reason for low prices rather than (or even in addition to) the location.

It is worth noting that highest prices are recorded in sales performed by Ninurta and the Elders (E 144, TBR 5). This might confirm the hypothesis, put forward with regard to houses, that high prices in the Ninurta's sales derive from a sort of auction. As for TBR 5, we have noted above that the high value could be tied to the location of the *tugguru*¹³⁶. As with house sales, the lowest prices for *tugguru* are recorded in the Syro-hittite contracts.

The limited data do not allow to draw any outstanding conclusion, but it seems that the value of this building was comparable to that of living houses or even bigger.

2) *eršetu* sales

The word *eršetu* which is normally spelled KI *ir-ši-tu₄*¹³⁷ in the Emar documentation has gained the attention of scholars who have put forward several hypothesis on its meaning. The first reading with the French 'cabanon' has been suggested by Arnaud¹³⁸ in the edition of the texts discovered in the regular excavations. The most recognized interpretation, first proposed by Wilcke, is the translation with "plot of land" or "building plot"¹³⁹. Later Seminara¹⁴⁰ advanced a further reading with the term "ruin" on the base of a philological analysis. The interpretation of the term *eršetu* is not a primary goal of this article but

132. The tablet is not well preserved.

133. Mori 2003, 70.

134. Cfr. Zaccagnini 1995, 108.

135. See paragraph 1c).

136. See paragraph 1e), another possible explanation related to location is given in the conclusions (s. below).

137. Cfr. Tsukimoto 1990, 179.

138. Arnaud 1985-1987; he reads the term as *kiršitu*.

139. Wilcke 1990, Huehnergard 1991, Zaccagnini 1992; Wilcke reads *er-še-tu₄* as gloss of KI; this interpretation is here followed with the writing *eršetu*.

140. Seminara 1995; s. Mori 2003, 49-53, for a complete bibliography on *eršetu*.

some remarks will be put forward. Emar archives have preserved 41 contracts of sale of *eršetu* for a total of 44 transactions; these are listed in Table 21.

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
BLMJ 10	S	?	NINURTA?	House of Za- [...] son of Ittini	<i>eršetu</i> of [...], Dagan-zi wife of [...]	Ir'ammu	<i>huḫinnu</i> , house of [...] son of Ḫalû
E 76	SH	Dagan-Kabar son of Ḫima	Ba'al-malik son of Pabaḫa	New house of Alal-abu son of Ameu	House of Dagan-kabar son of Ḫima	<i>eršetu</i> of Dagan-kabar son of Ura	KASKAL of Nergal
E 94	S	Ḫumanu son of Lalû	Dagan-na'i son of Imlik- Dagan	?	in its exit (?)	in its exit (?)	SILA.DA GAL
E 95	S	?	Elli son of Pilsu-Dagan	?	Sons of Bi[...]	Sons of Ša[...]	KASKAL
E 96	S	?	?	[...] of Lalû	Ittina-Da	?	?
E 109	S	Abda son of Nunia	Iliā son of Aḫī-ḫamiš	SILA.DA GAL	House of the sons of Ikkiru	<i>eršetu</i> of the sons of Abda son of Nunia	<i>huḫinnu</i>
E 110	S	Abda son of Nunia	Milki-Dagan son of Ia-[...]	Iagad-Dagan son of Zidanna	Iaqūm-bēlu son of Adda	Ditch	<i>huḫinnu</i>
E 114A	SH	Burāqu	Ḫusa son of Aziti	NG	NG	NG	NG
E 114B	SH	Aḫī-Dagan son of Dagan-kabar son of Milki- Dagan	Šaggar-kimī daughter of Ḫimani wife of Burāqu	NG	NG	NG	NG
E 130	S	Iašur-Dagan son of Ilī- Dagan	Ba'al-malik son of Iaḫnu- Dagan, [...] daughter of Ilī-abu (mother of Ba'al-malik)	House of Ḫubabi	House of Ba'al-malik son of Iaḫnu- Dagan	House of Ḫinna son of Naḫia	<i>huḫinnu</i>
E 137d	S	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	Abī-līmu son of Iš[...]	<i>huḫinnu</i>	Abbanu son of Illatu	Ilie son of Tulpia	SILA.DA GAL
E 137e	S	Iššur-Dagan son of Ba'al- kabar	NP	Sons of Eḫli- Kuša	Sons of Ali- Dagan	Itūr-Dagan	SILA.DA GAL
E 145	S	?	NINURTA	?	?	?	?
E 148	S	Ilī-Gašru son of Zū-Ba'la	NINURTA	House of Munati	<i>huḫinnu</i>	House of Amur-ša son of Baššu	SILA.DA GAL

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
E 150	S	Ḥimaši-Dagan son of Abī-Dagan	NINURTA	<i>eršetu</i> of Muḥra-aḥi son of Abī-līmu	Wall	<i>eršetu</i> of Ikun-Dagan son of Abī-līmu	KASKAL
E 152	S	Ia- [...]	NINURTA	House of Ḥai [...]	House of [...]	House of [...]	?
E 153	S	Zikri-Dagan son of [...]Dagan	NINURTA	[kiršit]u of [...]	?	?	?
E 171	S	Zū-Aštarti son of Itūr- [...]	Zū-Ba'la son of Ba'al- [...]	Ba'al-kabar son of Līmī-ilu	Zū-Ba'la son of Abba	Mountain	NG
E 207a	SH	Ba'al-qarrād son of Zū-Ba'la	Abdi-Išhara son of Abdi-ili son of Abia	Ipki-Dagan son of Dada	Abia son of Bēlī-Da	Bītī son of Kīnu	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
E 207b	SH	Ba'al-qarrād son of Zū-Ba'la	Abdi-ilī son of Zū-Ba'la son of Šamaš-da'i	Sons of Anini	Abdi-Išhara son of Abdi-ili son of Abia	Sons of Kīnu	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
FK 3	SH	Gurinu son of Ḥabašu	Warbazi son of Matkali-Dagan	KASKAL GAL of the god Lulal	House of Warbazi son of Matkali-Dagan	House of Gurinu son of Ḥabašu	SILA.DA GAL, KASKAL GAL
Hirayama 1	S	Ilī-aḥī son of Abia	Ikūn-Tešub son of Kalalu	Ilī-aḥi son of Abia	Karba son of Bāni	Sons of Tulli	KASKAL of Ba'al
Hirayama 2	S	Sons of Aḥī-ḥamis	NINURTA	<i>eršetu</i> of Muḥra-aḥi son of Kunazu, Šamaš-abu son of Pukanu	House of Itur-Dagan son of Zū-Dagan	NG	NG
Hirayama 3	SH	Baḥli daughter of Abu-Dagan (beer merchant)	Ḥamar-šenni	House of Ennamādi (servant of the king)	Šūb-aḥu son of Burami	Threshing-floor of the palace	KASKAL GAL of Ninkur and Aštar-šarba
RE 3	S	Na'e-Dagan son of Pilsu-Dagan	Aḥu son of Kakkanu son of Meya	Zū-Anna son of Iši-ka	Itti-rāmu son of Malik	Asda-aḥi son of Ili-aḥu	<i>ḥuḥinnu</i>
RE 11	SH	Gurinu son of Ḥabašu	Gurānu son of Abda son of Aba	KASKAL	House of Šaggar-kabar son of Buqāru	Ia'šu	KASKAL of the Gate of the Lady of the Wall

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
RE 14	S	Iatūr-Dagan son of Rībi	Ba'al-kabar son of Iaši-Dagan	Abda son of Ia'su	<i>huḫinnu</i>	Ba'al-kabar (king)	<i>huḫinnu</i>
RE 29b	S	Šē'ī-bēlu son of Ba'al-abu	NINURTA	Ibbi-ma son of Ba'al-abu	[...]-li	Bēlu-te son of [...]-muli	<i>huḫinnu</i>
RE 31	S	Itur-Dagan son of Am(a)zaḫi	Yašur-Dagan, Abī-malik sons of Abī-kāpī, Dagan-mi (mother)	NG	NG	NG	NG
RE 33	S	Abī-Rašap son of Ašdudima	Iatur-[...] son of Zū-Anna	House of Muḫra-aḫi	<i>eršetu</i> of Li'mī-šarru, <i>eršetu</i> of Dagan-kabar son of Iḫur-Rašap	Ditch	<i>huḫinnu</i> of Muḫra-aḫi
RE 38	S	[...] son of Dagan-[...], Kitta son of Ba[...]	NINURTA	<i>ḫummasu</i> ¹⁴¹ of the City	Wall of the City	Ditch	<i>huḫinnu</i>
RE 43	S	?	?	?	?	?	?
RE 68	SH	Itūr-libbu son of Atudu	Ba'la-kimī wife of Aḫī-raḫaq	House of Ḫuḫri son of Titiya	<i>ḫablu</i> building of Gurinu son of Ḫabaši	SILA.DA GAL	KASKAL of Ninkurra
RE 71	S	Igmil-Dagan son of Aḫu-qa	NINURTA	Zadamma son of Attaliki	Ir'ibu son of Urra	Abba son of Kišzuwa	SILA.DA GAL
RE 81	S	Alal-abu son of Abī-ḫamiš	NINURTA	Šē'u-malik son of Itti-Dagan	Milkiya son of Abī-na'i	<i>huḫinnu</i>	SILA.DA GAL
RE 86a	S	Zū-Ba'la son of Kuwazi	Ḫanna son of Iddiḫ-rami	Ḫanna son of Iddiḫ-rami	[...]-limiya son of Ganiya	Wall	<i>huḫinnu</i>
RE 91	S	?	NINURTA	Ḫamadi	<i>eršetu</i> of Iaḫši-Dagan son of Zidanna	Wall	<i>huḫinnu</i>
SMEA30 5	SH	[...] son of [...]-ti-Šaggar	Ini-Tešub king of Karkemiš	King	?	Iaḫi-el[...]	?

141. For his term, probably a commemorative stele s. Mori 2003, 63.

Text	Tablet	Buyer	Seller	Right Side	Left Side	Back Side	Front Side
TBR 1	S	Iḫur-Dagan son of Ba'al-bēlu	NINURTA	House of son of Libbu	House of son of Ḫarru	House of son of Iqqiru	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
TBR 13	S	Ḫaia son of Itūr-Dagan	NINURTA	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>	Son of Ḫamši	Aḫu son of Ilu-ma	SILA.DA GAL
TBR 14	S	Izraḫ-Dagan son of Ḫimāš	NINURTA	House of Aialu	<i>eršetu</i> of Ikkiku son of Baššu	House of Nu'i	Wall
TBR 24	SH	Bulālu son of Arwu	Kiri-Dagan son of Ḫabu son of Paḫari	House of Alal-abu son of Ameu	House of Ilani son of Lala	House of Arwu son of Šarianti	<i>ḫuḫinnu</i>
TBR 64	SH	Bēlu-kabar, Dūdu sons of Abdi-ilī son of Lab'u-Dagan	Tūra-Dagan son of Ili-aḫu son of Attuwu	NG	NG	NG	NG
TBR 81	SH	Ummī-bītu daughter of Iadda son of Ba'ala	Amzaḫi son of Iadda son of Ba'ala	NG	NG	NG	NG

 Table 21 – *eršetu* sales

Table 22 only lists those texts providing the price of the sold *eršetu*.

Text	Tablet	Sizes	Area	Price	Price for square cubit	Buyer	Seller
E 76	SH	24 x 18	432	30	0,069	PN	PN
E 94	S	30 x 10	300	100	0,333	PN	PN
E 95	S	NG	?	200	?	PN	RF
E 109	S	22 x 18	396	130	0,328	PN	PN
E 110	S	25 x -	?	50	?	PN	PN
E 114A	SH	NG	?	20	?	PN	PN
E 114B				8	?	FM	PN
E 137d	S	18 x 17 x 13	270	20	0,074	RF	PN
E 137e		30 x 20	600	40	0,066	RF	PN
E 148	S	NG	?	110	?	PN	NIN
E 150	S	20 x 9	180	14	0,077	PN	NIN
E 153	S	NG	?	40	?	PN	NIN
E 171	S	17 x 5	85	25	0,294	PN	PN
E 207a	SH	22 x 18 x 15	363	60	0,165	FZ	PN
E 207b		18 x 12	216	60	0,277	FZ	PN
FK 3	SH	12 x 13 x 10	138	4	0,028	PN	PN
Hirayama 1	S	20 x 9	180	20	0,111	PN	PN
Hirayama 2	S	20 x 14	280	15	0,053	PN	NIN
Hirayama 3	SH	23 x 19	437	20	0,045	PN	PN

RE 3	S	10 x 10 x 6	80	10	0,125	PN	PN
RE 11	SH	18 x 18	324	4,5	0,013	PN	PN
RE 14	S	20 x 13	260	140	0,538	PN	RF
RE 31	S	17 x 2 + [x]	340	30	0,088	PN	PN
RE 33	S	25 x 10 x 9	237,5	120	0,505	PN	PN
RE 68	SH	25 x 16	400	6	0,015	PN	PN
RE 71	S	[2]1 + [x] x 23 x 23	506	800	1,581	PN	NIN
RE 81	S	27,5 x 10 x 9	261,25	40	0,153	PN	NIN
RE 91	S	NG	?	20	?	PN	NIN
TBR 1	S	NG	?	100	?	PN	NIN
TBR 13	S	20 x 17	340	51	0,15	PN	NIN
TBR 14	S	NG	?	30	?	PN	NIN
TBR 24	SH	20 x 8	160	33	0,206	FA	PN
TBR 64	SH	NG	?	35	?	PN	PN
TBR 81	SH	NG	?	15	?	PN	PN

Table 22 – *eršetu* sales providing prices

Purchase prices range from 4 *sh.* (FK 3) to 800 (RE 71) with an average of 70,602 *sh.* The prices for square cubit can only be calculated for 23 properties and have a range from 0,013 (RE 11) to 1,581 *sh.* (RE 71) with an average of 0,23 *sh.* These data clearly indicate that *eršetu* had a lower value than houses. The following figure displays the prices for square cubit in ascending order.

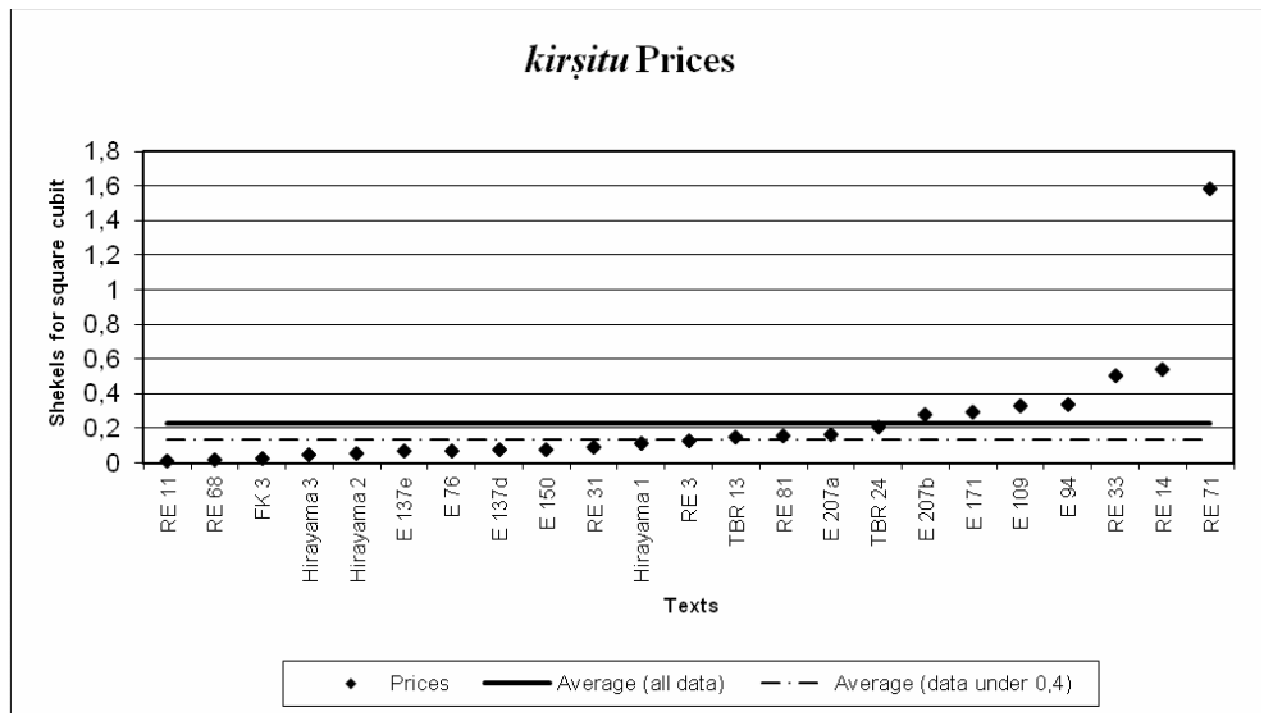


Figure 5

As Figure 5 clearly shows, 93% of deeds record prices for square cubit below 0,6 *sh.*, of which only 2 data (RE 33, RE 14) are above 0,4 *sh.* This means that results are over influenced by the text RE 71 which registers the highest purchase price and a cost for square cubit more than twice the second highest datum¹⁴². Like with house sales, the median, 0,125 is a value more representative; indeed the price average for square cubit of all contracts except RE 71 is only 0,169, and that of the data below 0,4 *sh.* is 0,133 *sh.*

a) *Sizes*

Sizes and shapes of *eršetu* are comparable to those of houses as indicated by surface areas which range from 80 (RE 3) to 600 (E 137e) square cubits with an average of 295,032. Sizes surely affected the prices of *eršetu*, but perhaps to a lesser extent than for houses as displayed in Figure 6¹⁴³.

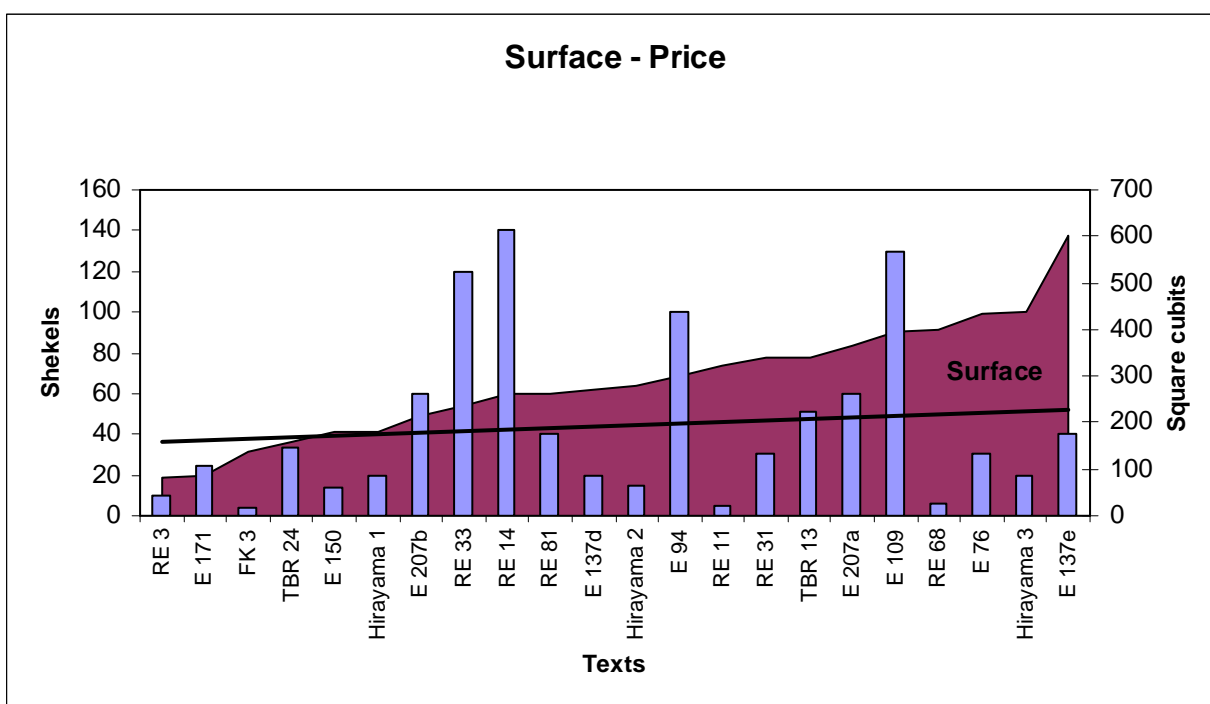


Figure 6

The trend line in Figure 6 indicates that with the increase of the surface area, the price rises only slightly. There is no strong correlation between purchase prices and sizes as shown by the *eršetu* sold in RE 68, E 76, Hirayama 3 and E 137e, which, in spite of the biggest surface areas recorded for this type of real estate, have some of the lowest prices for square cubit. Therefore, other factor affected prices.

142. Consider the difference between the standard deviation of all data, 0,329, and that without RE 71, 0,15.

143. Figure 6 includes the purchase prices given in texts except that recorded in RE 71 because it exceeds the others so much that it would cause problems with the graph display; the *eršetu* sold in RE 71 is the second biggest one with a surface area of 506 square cubits.

b) *Sellers and buyers*

For *eršetu* as well, Ninurta and the Elders are the principal seller with 15 out of 34 sold properties, but only 10 transactions preserve prices. Nevertheless, in comparison with fields and houses, Ninurta's sales of *eršetu* do not give so clear evidence for high prices. The purchase price average of the *eršetu* sold by Ninurta, 122 *sh.*, is higher than the mean of all transactions, but this data includes the aforementioned RE 71. To its exclusion, the average, 46,666 *sh.*, results below the mean of all transactions without RE 71 (48,5 *sh.*). The prices for square cubit, although they can be calculated for only 5 deeds¹⁴⁴, show suchlike picture, with an average for the Ninurta's sales of 0,403 *sh.* counting RE 71 and 0,108 *sh.* without it, compared to 0,23 *sh.* and 0,169 *sh.* respectively. For the sake of clarity I summarize these results in Table 23.

Transactions	Price average	Price average without RE 71	Price average for square cubit	Price average for square cubit without RE 71
All sales	70,602	48,5	0,23	0,169
Ninurta's sales	122	46,666	0,403	0,108

Table 23

Outcomes concerning *eršetu* sales are over-influenced by RE 71, and only by recalling the way of selling by Ninurta suggested for houses, we might understand such a high price, since there is no other evidence for it. On the whole, *eršetu* sold by Ninurta record several low purchase prices with 6 out of 10 transactions under 50 *sh.* as Table 24 shows.

Text	Price	Price for square cubit
E 148	110	?
E 150	14	0,077
E 153	40	?
Hirayama 2	15	0,053
RE 71	800	1,581
RE 81	40	0,153
RE 91	20	?
TBR 1	100	?
TBR 13	51	0,15
TBR 14	30	?

Table 24 – Ninurta's sales

The texts E 153, Hirayama 2 and TBR 14 belong to the so called "Arana documents"¹⁴⁵ which quote payments of tributes to the Hurrian king when the city was under the rule of Mitanni¹⁴⁶. They refer to at least two tributes occurred at the time of the first dynasty of Emar, respectively under Irīb-Ba'al

144. E 150, Hirayama 2, RE 71, RE 81, TBR 13.

145. For the "Arana documents" see Yamada 1993, Beckman 1996a, Skaist 1998b.

146. Skaist 1998a, 61-62.

(TBR 14) and Igmil-Dagan (Hirayama 2, E 153¹⁴⁷). These texts state that in order to afford the tribute demanded to the city of Emar, real estate properties and goods, such as garments, were sold by the city authorities for silver and gold. This statement, apparently not tied to the rest of the contracts, points to the circumstances in which these sales took place. Therefore, the prices, below average in all of the three instances, might have been influenced by this situation, even though we do not know how.

In the *eršetu* sales every seller is documented only once; on the contrary, some buyers are attested in more than one deed. Abda son of Nunia appears in E 109 acquiring, for 130 *sh.*, an *eršetu* adjoining another one owned by his sons, and in E 110 in which the purchase price is 50 *sh.* The sale recorded in E 109 is carried out under the pressure of debts since the text states that creditors “have sized” Iliā son of Aḥī-ḥamiš, the seller. Nevertheless, the price is not low as usual in case of indebtedness but a possible reason could be the kinship between the contracting parties, since the “Brothers” are involved. Thus, Abda son of Nunia did not take advantage of the situation, but helped his relative paying the full price. However, this text does not give information about the amount of debts, as other contracts do by means of lists of creditors. Another person documented in more than one transaction is Gurinu son of Ḥabašu who buys two *eršetu* in FK 3¹⁴⁸ and RE 11 for the lowest attested prices (4 *sh.*, 4,5 *sh.*). Gurinu also appears in Hirayama 9 as buyer of a house¹⁴⁹, probably located in the same area of the *eršetu* bought in FK 3¹⁵⁰. This fact shows an intense activity in the real estate market by him.

With regard to the family of Zū-Ba‘la, only Ba‘al-qarrād is involved. In E 207 he buys two *eršetu*, one from Abdi-Išhara, son of Abdi-ili son of Abia, and another one from Abdi-ilī son of Zū-Ba‘la son of Šamaš-da‘i, for 60 *sh.* each one.

Also the prince Išsur-Dagan son of Ba‘al-kabar is involved in more than one transaction in the text E 137 in which he buys two *eršetu* for 20 and 40 *sh.* respectively. Other members of the royal family are involved in *eršetu* sales in RE 14¹⁵¹ and E 95. In the first one Ba‘al-kabar son of Iaši-Dagan sells his property¹⁵² for 140 *sh.* (0,538 *sh.* for square cubit), whereas in the second one an *eršetu* is sold by Elli for 200 *sh.* It should be noted that both transactions record high prices whereas in E 137, in which a member of royal family figures as buyer, prices are low, but on this limited data no conclusion can be drawn.

Notable families are poorly involved in the transactions of this type of real estate. A member of the family of Awiru, Bulālu son of Arwu buys an *eršetu* in TBR 24 for 33 *sh.* (0,206 *sh.* for square cubit). The family of Ḥima is only attested in E 76 in the person of Dagan-kabar who acquires an *eršetu* for 30 *sh.* (0,069 *sh.* for square cubit) adjacent to a house he already owned. Aḥī-Dagan son of Dagan-kabar, member of the family of Milki-Dagan, buys an *eršetu* in E 114B for only 8 *sh.* from Šaggar-kimī, daughter of Ḥimani. She, likely under the pressure of debts, was forced to sell the property once belonged to her probably deceased husband Burāqu, who had bought it for 20 *sh.* (E 114A). The large difference between the first and the second transaction, clearly indicates the financial distress of the seller.

Conditions of economic hardship related to women are possibly documented in further texts. In RE 68 Ba‘ala-kimī, wife of Aḥī-raḥaq son of Ia’šu, sells the *eršetu* once belonged to her husband for only 6 *sh.* (0,015 *sh.* for square cubit)¹⁵³. Another woman, together with her son, sells an *eršetu* in E 130, but unfortunately the price is not preserved. In RE 31 a woman and her two sons sell their property for only 30 *sh.* corresponding to a price for square cubit far below average (0,088 *sh.*). This is the only contract

147. On the possibly presence of Igmil-Dagan in E 153 see *ibid.*, 62 n. 45.

148. Both the seller and the buyer own a house bordering the sold *eršetu*.

149. Cfr. paragraph 1).

150. Cfr. Mori 2003, 65.

151. As for RE 14 a hypothesis on the high price is given below in the conclusions.

152. Ba‘al-kabar himself owns a property on the back side of the sold *eršetu*.

153. Besides the indebtedness, the very low price could also be due to the location in a peripheral area, s. Table 25.

concerning *eršetu* which quotes the formula of the year of distress, and in consequence the price might have been affected by economic adversity¹⁵⁴. Women also occur as buyers in Hirayama 3¹⁵⁵ and TBR 81, and both sales record low prices. TBR 81 is fulfilled within the family circle since a brother sells to his sister, and probably a financial hardship underlies the sale because it contains the redemption clause¹⁵⁶.

SMEA30 5 is a very interesting text because the king of Karkemiš, Ini-Tešup, figures as seller of an *eršetu*. Unfortunately the purchase price is not preserved, but the presence of the king in a sale contract as a normal citizen is revealing of the respect of the laws and customs of the Emar society even by the Hittite authorities¹⁵⁷.

In the text TBR 64, Bēlu-kabar and Dūdu, sons of Abdi-ilī, who also appear as buyers in the house sale TBR 65, acquire an *eršetu* by the “Gate of Lala” for only 35 *sh*. This contract contains the clause foreseeing a penalty corresponding to double the purchase price in case of vindication by the seller¹⁵⁸, that, as stated above¹⁵⁹, usually refers to a condition of indebtedness. In addition to this clause, the presence of Bēlu-kabar and Dūdu, who in TBR 65 are also involved in a sale for debts, and the formulation itself of the contract¹⁶⁰, lead to consider the low purchase price in reliance on the economic distress of the seller.

c) Location

Location was a primary factor for this type of real estate as well. Mori¹⁶¹ noticed that *eršetu* were located in peripheral areas, or even outside the city, more frequently than houses, and quite often they were adjacent to other *eršetu* which, conversely, are never attested as adjoining properties in the house sale contracts. These features lead me to consider as more accurate the definition of *eršetu* as building plot of land since, as it stands, free places were more available at the edge of the city than in the already fully built center. In addition, if the term KI-*eršetu* referred to a ruin, it does not seem very conceivable that almost all the ruins of the city were concentrated in the same areas, maybe adjacent one another, as shown by the lists of adjoining properties.

As far the relation between value and location is concerned, *eršetu* opening onto a KASKAL road (Table 25), which was typical of the countryside, have a tendency to record low prices. The only contract recording a high price is E 95, but the cost for square cubit cannot be calculated and the tablet is not entirely preserved¹⁶².

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
E 76	SH	30	0,069
E 95	S	200	?

154. It is worth noting that at the end of the text after the year formula, it is repeated that the sellers had given the *eršetu* to the buyer, like to stress that the hardship had influenced the sale: 21. *i-na nu-ku-ur-ti i-na* MU.KAM KALA.GA, 22. ^m*A-bi-malik Ia-šur-^dDa-[g]an*, 23. ^u*Da-gan-mi* AMA-šu-nu, 24. *ki-ir-ši-ta*, 25. *i-na I-tūr-^dDa-gan*, 26. *id-di-nu-uš-šu*.

155. For this text s. conclusions.

156. I do not agree with Westbrook 2001, 30, that the woman was the weak party, because the price is very low and the penalty is fixed to four-fold the purchase price.

157. Cfr. Viano 2010a for the role of the local authorities in the Emar economy.

158. Cfr. Zaccagnini 1996, 95.

159. See paragraph 1c) and Table 7.

160. This contract is *e latere venditoris* and the seller, unusually for sale contracts but typical of testaments, comes forward to declare his sale: *a-kān-na iq-bi*.

161. Mori 2003, 57-58.

162. As for *eršetu* sales, we have above noted that, as in this case, when a member of the royal family appears as seller high prices are documented.

E 150	S	14	0,077
Hirayama 1	S	20	0,111
Hirayama 3	SH	20	0,045
FK 3 ¹⁶³	SH	4	0,028
RE 11	SH	4,5	0,013
RE 68	SH	6	0,015
		Average	Average
		37,312	0,051

 Table 25 – *eršetu* open onto KASKAL

With regard to the other types of road, *huḫinnu* (Table 26) and SILA.DAGAL.LA (Table 27), prices are higher on average, although low prices are also attested¹⁶⁴. This fact support the picture emerged from the analysis of the house locations. The difference in the available data for each type of road is not as much large as for houses, so the low prices in connection with KASKAL roads do reflect the reality of Emar. As for the SILA.DAGAL.LA roads, the average, both for purchase and square cubit price, higher than for *huḫinnu* is strongly influenced by the data of RE 71. Not counting it, the mean for purchase price is 52,142 *sh.* and the average cost for square cubit is 0,134 *sh.* Nevertheless, it is not possible to state which of the two types of road, *huḫinnu* or SILA.DAGAL.LA, had a greater value.

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
E 109	S	130	0,328
E 110	S	50	?
E 207a	SH	60	0,165
E 207b		60	0,277
RE 3	S	10	0,125
RE 14	S	140	0,538
RE 33	S	120	0,505
RE 91	S	20	?
TBR 1	S	100	?
TBR 24	SH	33	0,206
		Average	Average
		72,3	0,306

 Table 26 – *eršetu* open onto *huḫinnu*

163. This *eršetu* opens onto a crossroad of a KASKAL and a SILA.DAGAL.LA, s. Table 27

164. For the sake of simplicity Table 26 and Table 27 only list *eršetu* opening onto *huḫinnu* and SILA.DAGAL.LA on their front side (*panu*). *Huḫinnu* is also attested in E 137d, TBR 13, RE 81, E 148 in which the sold *eršetu* open onto SILA.DAGAL.LA; SILA.DAGAL.LA roads occur in E 109, in correspondence with a *huḫinnu* on the front side, and in RE 68 in association with a KASKAL. KASKAL roads are only attested in connection with the same type of road on the front side (Table 25).

Text	Tablet	Price	Price for square cubit
E 94	S	100	0,333
E 137e	S	40	0,066
E 137d		20	0,074
E 148	S	110	?
FK 3	SH	4	0,028
RE 71	S	800	1,581
RE 81	S	40	0,153
TBR 13	S	51	0,15
		Average	Average
		165,857	0,393

Table 27 – *eršetu* open onto SILA.DAGAL.LA

The location could be one possible explanation for the unusual low prices recorded in the Ninurta's sales, including the "Arana documents". Indeed, four out five *eršetu* bordering the city wall, that clearly indicates a peripheral area, are sold by Ninurta and the Elders¹⁶⁵. Two other Ninurta's sales¹⁶⁶, including an "Arana document", which quote a 'gate' as the place of the sold *eršetu*, probably point to a marginal setting of the town. Indication of peripheral location is probably to be supposed in those contracts which list an *eršetu* as adjoining property. Among these deeds, only two (E 109¹⁶⁷, RE 33) record prices above 50 *sh.* and 0,1 *sh.* for square cubit, whereas six conveyances¹⁶⁸, of which five are Ninurta's sales including all the "Arana documents", have prices below 50 *sh.* Thus, most of the *eršetu* sold by Ninurta and the Elders were located in peripheral areas which, in consequence, affected their prices.

Besides the aforementioned E 150 and E 153, other texts quote specific locations, as gates are also documented in E 171 and TBR 64, and an "oak wood" is cited in E 110 as listed in Table 28.

Text	Tablet	Location	Price	Price for square cubit
E 171	S	Cultivated territory of the Gate of Zirḥana	25	0,294
E 153	S	Gate of Aštarte of the sea	40	?
TBR 64	SH	Gate of Lala	35	?
E 110	S	Oak wood	50	?
E 150	S	On the right of the Great Door of the God	14	0,077

Table 28 – *eršetu* with specific location

All of these contracts do not record prices over 50 *sh.*, and the *eršetu* located in proximity of a gate do not exceed 40 *sh.* as purchase price. The low price recorded in E 110, compared to the *eršetu* in E 109

165. E 150, RE 38, RE 91, TBR 14 (Arana); the only one not sold by Ninurta and the Elders is RE 86a. All of them register low prices.

166. E 150, E 153.

167. For this text s. above under 3b).

168. E 76, E 150, E 153 (Arana), Hirayama 2 (Arana), RE 91, TBR 14 (Arana); as for E 150 in addition to the quotation of a 'gate' and the list of other *eršetu* as adjoining properties, a peripheral location is also supported by the presence of a KASKAL road onto which the *eršetu* opens. E 76 opens onto a KASKAL road as well.

bought by the same person¹⁶⁹, is probably due to the location at the edge of the town which is also evidenced by the presence of a ditch and the city wall in the vicinity¹⁷⁰. As for E 171, that registers a price for square cubit above average (0,294 *sh.*), if Bi-iZ-*hi*¹⁷¹ is a metathesis for *sip \dot{h} u*¹⁷², which usually refers to fields of good value¹⁷³, the high price for square cubit could be related to this location.

The high price documented in RE 33 could be tied to the presence of a reservoir next to the sold *eršetu*¹⁷⁴.

On the whole, the peripheral areas are related to low prices. Conversely, a central location was an important factor for the value of the sold properties, in fact, among the Ninurta's sales, those *eršetu* probably sited in areas close to the city center, such as E 148 and TBR 1¹⁷⁵ record higher prices.

d) *Other features*

Differently from the house sales, the contracts concerning *eršetu* do not report any particular clause such as *kima nikari*, which is completely absent, or the year of distress formula that, as stated above, is only attested in RE 31.

The redemption clause which is usually related to a condition of economic hardship of the seller¹⁷⁶, is only documented in RE 33, TBR 81 and TBR 64¹⁷⁷. The text RE 33¹⁷⁸ is very interesting because in spite of this clause the price, for which I suggested a correlation with the presence of a reservoir, is high. Several peculiarities that make this text unique could underlie this fact. This is the only Syrian school text which reports the redemption clause, and it foresees not only the payment of double the purchase price in case of vindication, but also a penalty to be paid to Ninurta and the Brothers who are also involved in the ceremony. Moreover, it is the only instance in which the penalty for the redemption by the seller is written with the term *mithāru* instead of the usual TĒŠ.BI¹⁷⁹. Therefore, it is possible that this transaction was carried out within the family circle and likely there was no condition of indebtedness as background of the sale.

Besides RE 33 the Brothers are quoted in E 109, E 110, E 130, E 171, Hirayama 1 and RE 31, but no influence on the prices can be inferred.

Some texts (E 130, RE 29 RE 38, RE 81) provide the information that the sold *eršetu* had stone foundations. Unfortunately, only RE 81 has preserved the price that anyway does not seem to be affected by this feature. The presence of foundations could be related to an initial stage of construction.

169. Cfr. paragraph 3b).

170. Cfr. Mori 2003, 62-63.

171. The location of the *eršetu* sold in E 171 is quoted as *i-na Bi-iZ- \dot{h} i ša KÁ zi-ir- \dot{h} a-na*. Differently Belmonte Marin 2004, 216 and n. 81, 160, who reads Bi-iZ-*hi* as *ur \dot{z} - \dot{h} i* = path, way.

172. Cfr. Mori 2003, 59 with bibliography.

173. Viano 2010b, 265.

174. Cfr. Mori 2003, 64.

175. Urban context for these *eršetu* seems to be documented by the presence of only houses, *hu \dot{h} innu* and SILA.DAGAL.LA roads bordering the sold properties.

176. See Table 7.

177. For TBR 64 and TBR 81 s. paragraph 3b).

178. For this text cfr. Zaccagnini 1996, 98-99.

179. In three other instances *mithāriš* is used; cfr. *Ibid.*, 89.

e) *Price fluctuation*

Following the methodology used for fields and houses a diachronic analysis of prices for square cubit will be provided. Here follows the chronological sequence of texts with explanation for each of them.

E 76

This text belongs to the archive of the family of Ḥima in the person of Dagan-kabar son of Ḥima.

E 94

Elli leads the witness list followed by his brother Zūzu.

E 109, E 110

These texts belong to the family of Nunia that goes back to the first generations of the second dynasty since one of the witnesses of E 109, a certain Bēlanu son of Lanaša, is also documented in E 14 which dates to the king Baʿal-kabar I. In addition, E 110 is dated with the eponym system¹⁸⁰ which was typical of early times at Emar. It is also worth noting that these texts have been found in the same spot¹⁸¹ of those of the family of Milki-Dagan, even though these two sets of tablets date to different periods.

E 137

Pilsu-Dagan leads the witness list followed by his son Elli.

E 150

The king of the first dynasty Igmil-Dagan son of Irīb-Baʿal leads the witness list.

E 171

This text dates to a span covered by the reigns of Abbanu and Pilsu-Dagan since one of the witness, Abda son of Ḥima, also appears in E 2, a document going back to Abbanu, and in Hirayama 7 that was drawn up under Pilsu-Dagan.

E 207

This text belongs to the diviner Baʿal-qarrād, son of Zū-Baʿla, who was contemporaneous with the king of Karkemiš Ini-Tešup.¹⁸²

FK 3

This text registers the same buyer of RE 11 (s. below), Gurīnu son of Habašu.

Hirayama 1

Elli leads the witness list.

Hirayama 2

The king of the first dynasty Igmil-Dagan son of Irīb-Baʿal leads the witness list.

180. Month of Adama, second year of Išaḥu.

181. Canthier V.

182. Cfr. discussion on RE 54 above.

Hirayama 3

This text is sealed by ʕešmi-Tešub who was in office as “DUMU.LUGAL” under the king of Karkemiš, and his brother, Ini-Tešup¹⁸³. As noted above Ini-Tešup was contemporaneous with Elli but *eršetu* sales drafted under Elli probably date back to the first part of his reign because the scribe of Hirayama 1, Dagalli, also worked under Pilsu-Dagan and in E 94 the king’s brother Zūzu is the second witness, instead of the son Ba‘al-kabar II as in later texts. As a consequence E 207 and Hirayama 3 will be placed after Elli’s documents.

RE 3

Pilsu-Dagan leads the witness list followed by his brother Aḥī-malik.

RE 11

This text dates to the last period of Emar history when Aḥī-malik took the office of “LÚ.UGULA.KALAMMA” since it quotes Ba‘al-malik son of Šalmi who is also documented in BLMJ 2 that is sealed by Aḥī-malik.

RE 14

Ba‘al-kabar I is the seller.

RE 33

This text was probably drawn up during the reign of Pilsu-Dagan on the base of the identification of Ilī-abī son of Iari-[...] with the homonymous person attested in E 20 in which Pilsu-Dagan leads the witness list.

RE 68

As FK 3 and RE 11 (s. above) this text quotes Gurīnu son of Habašu.

RE 71

Abbanu leads the witness list.

RE 81

Ba‘al-kabar II leads the witness list.

TBR 13

Ba‘al-kabar II leads the witness list.

TBR 24

This text belongs to the archive of the family of Awiru in the person of Bulālu son of Arwu.

Table 29 provides the sequence of texts; it is worth of consideration that texts from E 76 to RE 11 in the following table are contemporaneous.

183. Cfr. E 18 which quotes together ʕešmi-Tešub and Ini-Tešup.

Text	Tablet	Date
Hirayama 2	S	Igmil-Dagan
E 150	S	Igmil-Dagan
RE 14	S	Ba'al-kabar I
E 109	S	Ba'al-kabar I
RE 71	S	Abbanu
E 171	S	Abbanu / Pilsu-Dagan
RE 33	S	Pilsu-Dagan
RE 3	S	Pilsu-Dagan
E 137	S	Pilsu-Dagan
Hirayama 1	S	Elli
E 94	S	Elli
E 207	SH	Ini-Tešup
Hirayama 3	SH	Ini-Tešup
E 76	SH	Families archives (I generation)
RE 81	S	Ba'al-kabar II
TBR 13	S	Ba'al-kabar II
TBR 24	SH	Families archives (II generation)
RE 11	SH	Aḫī-malik "Overseer of the Land"
FK 3	SH	Contemporaneous to RE 11
RE 68	SH	Contemporaneous to RE 11 and FK 3

Table 29 – Chronological sequence of the *eršetu* sales

On the base of the chronological sequence price fluctuation is shown in the Figure 7.

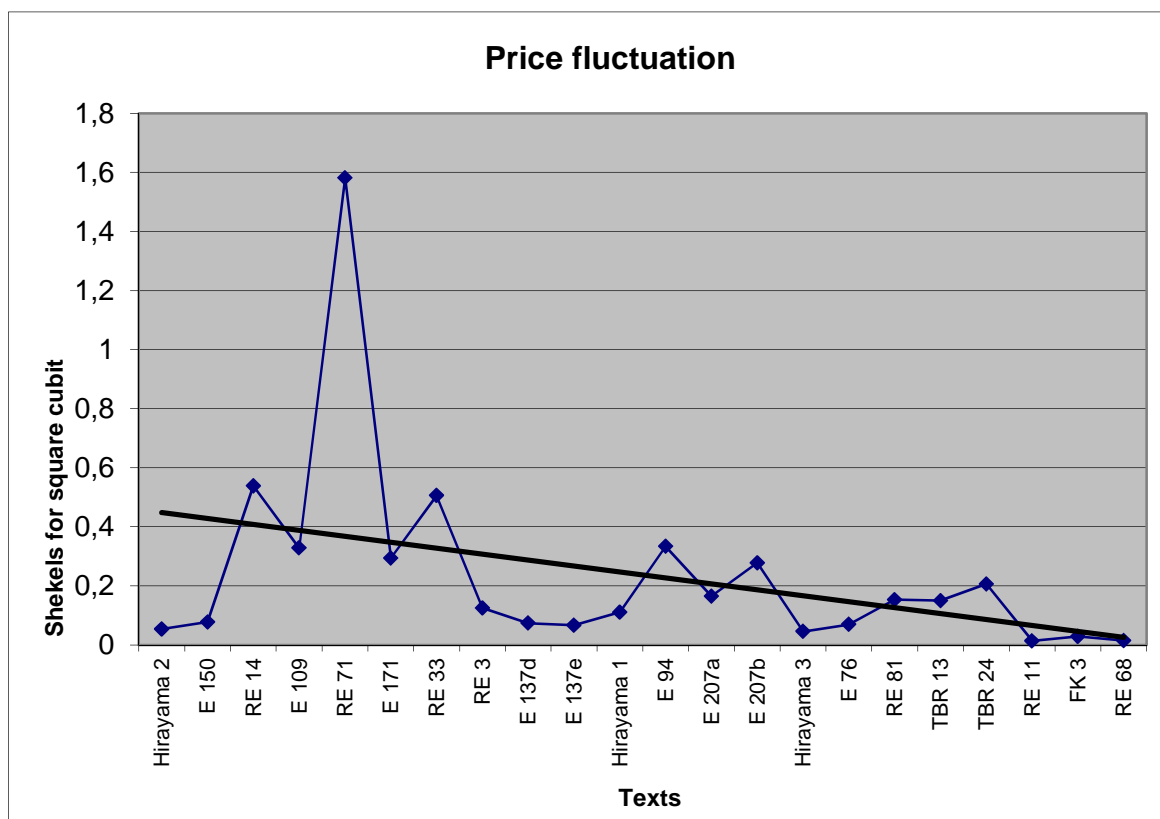


Figure 7

The picture given by

Figure 7 is very close to that shown for houses with a decrease of prices reflecting a general tendency which is well evidenced by grouping data by generations. Even though for the sake of completeness I also provide price average for each generation, four main periods are taken as parameters because available data are too limited. From Table 30 I excluded RE 71 because, as we have already noticed, it would alter the result.

Generation		Average price for square cubit	
Before Pilsu-Dagan	Igmil-Dagan	0,065	0,249
	Ba'al-kabar I	0,433	
Pilsu-Dagan			0,205 ¹⁸⁴
Elli – Ini-Tešup	Elli	0,222	0,186
	Ini-Tešup	0,162	
After Elli	Ba'al-kabar II	0,151	0,09
	SH contracts	0,066	

Table 30 – Prices by generation

184. Considering RE 71, dated to the predecessor of Pilsu-Dagan, Abbanu, the data would be 0,441 *sh*.

The data referring to the reign of Igmil-Dagan is only based on two deeds, but considering the purchase prices of the other contracts dating to the early rulers (Table 31), the cost for *eršetu* during the first dynasty seems lower than in the very following generation. The purchase price average is indeed 38,166 *sh*.

Text	Date	Price	Price for square cubit
TBR 14	Irib-Ba'al	30	?
Hirayama 2	Igmil-Dagan	15	0,053
E 150	Igmil-Dagan	14	0,077
RE 91	Igmil-Dagan	20	?
E 153	Igmil-Dagan	40	?
E 148	Išbi-Dagan	110	?

Table 31 – *eršetu* sales dating to the first dynasty

Together with field sales¹⁸⁵, contracts concerning *eršetu* are the only to give an insight into trades at the time of the first dynasty and, although available data are limited, both sets of sale contracts register prices lower in that period than in the following generation. It should be noted that the highest price recorded in Table 31 is also the later one: E 148 is chronologically close to the second dynasty¹⁸⁶ when, especially under Iaši-Dagan and Ba'al-kabar I, prices increased¹⁸⁷. All the documents going back to the first dynasty are Ninurta's sales, and in consequence their prices might also have been influenced by the period in which transactions took place. The influence of chronology also concerns other two Ninurta's sales: RE 81 and TBR 13 go back to the reign of Ba'al-kabar II (the last attested king of Emar), when prices decreased. On the whole, except RE 81 and TBR 13, dating to the end of Emar history, TBR 1 and RE 71 are the only Ninurta's sales going back to the second dynasty, to be exact to Iaši-Dagan and Ba'al-kabar I respectively. Against this background we can understand the difference in prices between the Ninurta's sales of houses and *eršetu*. Therefore, chronology is to add to the other factors which concurred to affect the Ninurta's sales of *eršetu*, namely location and circumstance of transaction (i.e. Arana documents).

Likewise house contracts, *eršetu* sales evidence a striking difference of prices between Syrian and Syro-hittite texts. As Table 32 shows, the purchase price average of Syro-hittite texts is about one fourth of the Syrian ones, whereas as for the cost for square cubit the ratio is about one to three¹⁸⁸.

Scribal school	Price average	Average price for square cubit
Syrian	95,682	0,298
Syro-hittite	24,625	0,102

Table 32

This difference also influenced those prices which have been related to a particular feature such as location. This is the case of the sales of *eršetu* flanked by KASKAL roads, which similarly to house

185. Cfr. Viano 2010b, 275-276.

186. Perhaps the two dynasties partially overlapped, cfr. Di Filippo 2004, 196-198.

187. The purchase price average under Iaši-Dagan and Ba'al-kabar I is 105 *sh*.

188. Syrian school deeds include RE 71 but even without it, they record averages more than double the Syro-hittite texts, namely 62,142 *sh*. for purchase price and 0,207 *sh* for square cubit price.

transactions, are mostly attested in Syro-hittite contracts, whereas for the other types of road Syrian tablets are more common. As it stands, the low price average attested for Syro-hittite texts affected these sales, but data from Syrian sales of *eršetu* open onto KASKAL roads show that the tablet style (and consequently the chronology) is not the only reason for low prices in connection with this type of road¹⁸⁹.

Conclusions

This study evidenced that prices of real estates were affected by many factors which need to be summarized. In E 122 the location, the condition of the seller and the chronology concurred to keep the price low; in fact the sold house opens onto a KASKAL road¹⁹⁰, the seller was probably indebted¹⁹¹, and the sale took place at the end of Emar history when prices were regularly lower than in the previous periods. In E 20 the unexpected high price, in spite of the indebtedness of the seller¹⁹², has several reasons: the kinship¹⁹³ between the contracting parties which led the buyer, Baba, not to take advantage of his relative; the location as the house was at the crossroad of a *ḥuḥinnu* and a SILA.DAGAL.LA¹⁹⁴; and the strongly wish of Baba to expand his possessions since he already owned two properties, probably houses, adjoining the one sold in this contract¹⁹⁵. All these elements kept up the price. In Hirayama 7, besides the presence of Ninurta as seller, which is normally correlated to expensive properties, other factors for the high recorded price are: the location, which was possibly good¹⁹⁶; the fact that the sale included a *ḥablu* building¹⁹⁷; and the social status of the buyer who was an important citizen.

General assumptions on the tendency of prices related to specific factors do not fully explain every single instance. The few low prices recorded for houses opening onto SILA.DAGAL.LA roads¹⁹⁸, have several causes. The texts AuOr5 9, Hirayama 11 and RE 80, all Syro-hittite texts, date back to the last generations of Emar history when prices decreased. In addition the sellers in AuOr5 9 and Hirayama 11 were indebted¹⁹⁹ and the location in the Hirayama 11 was not of good value. These circumstances could clarify why the houses sold in these contracts record prices lower than the others with the same location. For some houses opening onto SILA.DAGAL.LA roads, such as RE 20 and RE 59, it is not possible to find the reason of low prices, which, however, should be related to less prestigious locations. Several houses opening onto SILA.DAGAL.LA roads with quite high prices (BLMJ 6, E 126, Hirayama 7, TBR 4, TBR 8) were sold by Ninurta; this means, on the one hand, that Ninurta managed properties of high value, and, on the other hand, that these prices have been influenced by both location and seller²⁰⁰. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that among these conveyances the one with the lowest purchase and square cubit price, BLMJ 6, dates to the reign of Elli, and probably to the end of it²⁰¹, when prices started decreasing. Two of the lowest prices recorded for *eršetu* (FK 3, RE 11) also seem to be related to several factors such as the

189. Prices recorded in Syrian tablet are quite low, cfr. Table 25.

190. See Table 10.

191. See Table 7.

192. See paragraphs 1b), 1c).

193. See Table 3, Table 4.

194. In addition this contract quotes the presence of stone foundations, s. Table 8.

195. See Table 1.

196. See paragraph 1e) and Table 12.

197. Cfr. paragraph 1d).

198. See Table 12.

199. Cfr. paragraph 1c).

200. Suffice it to recall the hypothesis of auction as the way of selling by Ninurta.

201. In the witness list the king Elli is followed by his son Ba'al-kabar; the name is collated but it seems plausible, cfr. texts with the same witness list: BLMJ 7, BLMJ 11, TBR 60.

location (both are situated at a crossroad, and open onto a KASKAL road)²⁰², the presence of the same buyer (who probably was a person good at bargaining), and a late date. Among the *eršetu* open onto SILA.DAGAL.LA roads, FK 3 is the sale recording the lowest price probably because it is the only Syro-hittite text²⁰³ and the sold property is also flanked by a KASKAL road.

As stated above²⁰⁴, the royal family had no dominant role upon the house market, and on the base of the result provided by field sales²⁰⁵, a control should be excluded for *eršetu* sales as well, although prices are higher when its members appear as sellers (E 95, RE 14) and lower when they act as buyers (E 137). Probably, reasons which we are not able to draw from the text analysis, such as location, underlie these prices. Conversely, if the members of the royal family did take some advantage by their role in these contracts, we should only consider them as isolated cases and not as evidences of a dominant position.

Notwithstanding the absence of control on the market by the royal family, the king had a certain role in the property trades. Indeed, the house sold by Ninurta and the Elders to Agalli in E 9 are concerned in E 8 as the object of an exchange between Agalli himself and Pilsu-Dagan on behalf of the Palace. As Leemans²⁰⁶ and Durand²⁰⁷ pointed out, Agalli acquired some houses (E 9) which later were taken by the Palace in exchange for other unnamed houses (E 8). Contrary to this picture is the presence in the supposed later text (E 9) of Pilsu-Dagan, whereas Elli appears in the older one (E 8). A possible solution is that E 8 was drafted at the time of Pilsu-Dagan and Elli acted as first witness in his role of son of the king, but this would cast shadow upon the chronology of the all Emar texts. Another problem is the difference of sizes given for the same house (E 9b = E 8b) in these two deeds²⁰⁸ that shows that measurements were taken inaccurately.

One of the topographical indication given by some texts, including a royal purchase, provides conflicting evidences. The term *mehdilu*, which has been regarded as ‘diversion of a canal or river’ generally typical of the extra-urban areas²⁰⁹, is indicated as the location of four properties, two *tugguru* buildings (TBR 5, TBR 67) and two *eršetu* (Hirayama 3, RE 14). The texts RE 14, TBR 5²¹⁰ and TBR 67 record high prices but Hirayama 3 registers the third lowest price for square cubit of *eršetu* sales. Whether *mehdilu* had really affected the value of these properties, the low price in Hirayama 3 requires an explanation. First of all this text, unlike the others, belongs to the Syro-hittite school, albeit it does not go back to the last generations but to the time of Ini-Tešup. However, the three Syrian tablets are earlier, dating to the first generations of the second dynasty²¹¹ when prices were higher. Furthermore, Hirayama 3 reports several transactions of the same property: the *eršetu* was previously a possession of Iadi-Dagan son of Iaḥṣu-Dagan, then was given by the Palace to Ennamadi, a servant of the king, who gave it to Ḥamar-šenni who, lastly, sold it to Baḥli, daughter of Abu-Dagan, the beer merchant, for 20 *sh*. The quotation of the Palace in a Syro-hittite tablet is unexpected, but it is unfortunately unknown the way by which it took possession of the *eršetu* from Iadi-Dagan, namely whether by purchase, by exchange or by expropriation. In addition, this *eršetu* was clearly located in a rural area since it adjoins a threshing floor of

202. Cfr. Mori 2003, 93.

203. Cfr. Table 27.

204. See Paragraph 1b).

205. Viano 2010b, 266-267.

206. Leemans 1988, 222-223.

207. Durand 1989, 172.

208. The measurements of E 8b are 22 cubits in length and 7 cubits in width.

209. Cfr. Mori 2003, 59-60.

210. As far as TBR 5 is concerned, I have already indicated the location by the temple of “Dagan of the flock” as one of the main factor for the high value, but there could be other causes along with it. Concerning RE 14, it is important to recall that the seller is the king Ba‘al-kabar I.

211. TBR 5 dates to Abbanu and one of the witnesses is Baba son of Attia who also appears in TBR 67.

the Palace²¹² and opens onto a KASKAL road. Lastly, the buyer is a woman. All these characteristics might have influenced the price but it is not possible to state to what extent. Likewise, the chronology of RE 14, TBR 5 and TBR 67, or better the economic trend in which these transactions took place, could also have affected the prices²¹³. Thus, we are not able to assure a relation between *mehdilu* and high prices.

As overview, in Table 33 I provide a comparison among the data of the three types of real estate treated in this article²¹⁴.

Real estate	Transactions	Purchase price average	Price average for square cubit	Surface area average
Houses	57	125,812	0,367	317,041
<i>eršetu</i>	34	70,602	0,23	295,032
<i>tugguru</i>	6	289,833	0,676	418

Table 33

This table shows that most of the transactions concern houses whose sales are about twice the *eršetu* ones. *Tugguru* apparently seems to be the biggest and the most valuable building at Emar, but it is to recall that this result is based on only 6 transactions, which also have a large span of prices, and, above all, the right function of this building is unknown²¹⁵. The total amount of silver spent for each type of real estate (Table 34), which for houses is about three-fold that for *eršetu*, fits the picture given by Table 33. It is worth noting that in only 6 transactions, the sales of *tugguru* reach about two thirds of the silver spent for *eršetu*.

Real estate	Spent silver
Houses	7171,33
<i>eršetu</i>	2400,5
<i>tugguru</i>	1739

Table 34

This article evidenced that both house and *eršetu* sales show the same economic trend with an identical price fluctuation consisting of a stability of prices until the reign of Elli and a decreasing after it. Moreover, for all of the types of real estate, Syrian school contracts record prices higher than Syro-hittite conveyances which are also the most recent and correspond to the period of decreasing of prices. Most of the sales carried out under the pressure of debts date to the end of the Emar history and were drafted in the Syro-hittite style; this indicates that the population of the city had been facing hardship condition for a negative tendency of the economy in that period. The chronology of texts also influenced Syrian school contracts; the *eršetu* sales going back to the first dynasty, all performed by Ninurta, seem to record prices lower than the contracts of the following generations. This result only regards *eršetu* and field sales, but, probably, it would also be confirmed by house transactions if more deeds dating to the first dynasty were available²¹⁶.

212. Cfr. fn. 96.

213. During the first generations of the first dynasty prices are high on average.

214. The amount of transactions in Table 33 only refers to those providing prices, s. Table 2, Table 19, Table 22.

215. That a rural building could have a high value must not be ruled out.

216. In view of the evidence provided by *eršetu* sales which show an increase of prices during the first two generations of the second dynasty, the cost of the house sold in E 156 (cfr. paragraph 1d) could be tied to this economic trend since this contract dates to Ba'al-kabar I. Nevertheless the only other sale going back to this king (TBR 4) does not record a high price.

Sizes were an important factor but they seem to influence prices of houses to a bigger extent compared to *eršetu* sales. This should relate to the fact that houses were mostly situated in the city center, where one may suppose that the cost for square cubit shortly ranged; *eršetu*, instead, were spread over a bigger area, and in consequence they were more influenced by location. However, as stated above, the lack of information concerning the upper floors, prevent a full knowledge of the value of houses.

Together with chronology, location is the primary factor affecting prices as in modern real estate market. All sales display the same result regarding the roads onto which real estate open: prices in correlation to KASKAL roads are lower than in connection to *huḫinnu* and SILA.DAGAL.LA. As for these two roads, the limited data and the strong influence of some very high prices²¹⁷, do not give clear evidence on their correlation to prices, but a higher value of real estate in connection to a central location, usually more related with SILA.DAGAL.LA roads than with *huḫinnu*, seems plausible. For all instances which do not provide any indication of an influence of factors such as indebtedness, we must suppose that prices depended on location even though we do not have any details on the topography.

Insofar as we go into the analysis of texts, we are completely unaware of the social and psychological factors underlying the sales such as the personal relationship between buyer and seller or the ability of people to bargain. All these factors strongly influenced prices in a way that we are not able to recognize at all. For instance, it is possible that someone preferred to sell to a friend of his, maybe for a lower price, than to an unknown person, in order to obtain a favor not documented in the contract. Although a part of the background of transactions still remains obscure, this article tried to shed light on an important piece of the economy of Emar.

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217. RE 70 for houses open onto *huḫinnu* and RE 71 for *eršetu* sales open onto SILA.DAGAL.LA.

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