The Day Unit within the Old Assyrian Calendar

Cécile Michel

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Veysel Donbaz’a Sunulan Yazılar
DUB.SAR É.DUB.BA.A
Studies Presented in Honour of
Veysel Donbaz

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THE DAY UNIT WITHIN THE OLD ASSYRIAN CALENDAR

Cécile MICHEL*

“Now is the time (šattum šanat). Send me some silver so that we can bring in barley for you before you come here. As for the ‘beer bread’ I made for you, it has grown (too) old!” (CCT 3 25, CMK 345). This letter was sent by a woman, alone at home in Aššur, while her husband traded goods in Anatolia. She refers first to a point within the year, using the word “year” twice in figurative sense. Then she complains that a long time will elapse before her husband’s return, expressing this by observing that the ‘beer bread’ she had prepared for him had gone bad. Beyond metaphor, the Assyrians used traditional units of time based on the calendar: day, month, year…

I offer this small study, focused on the “day” to Veysel Bey, who dedicated many studies to the Old Assyrian field, in echo to one of his first publications dealing, which dealt with the month Kanwarta (Donbaz 1971, updated in Donbaz 1984). The day was the smallest unit of time used by the Assyrian merchants. I consider it here in the broader context of Old Assyrian concepts of time and calendar, both in daily life and in financial and commercial activities.

The private letters exchanged between the Assyrians in Kaniš, their families and colleagues in Aššur or settled in other Assyrian colonies in Anatolia are the most numerous documents of the Old Assyrian archives. They deal with both trade matters and daily concerns, and use a language very close to the spoken idiom. They are never dated, but their authors often explain past activities and planned projects. Then, they may specify the days, months or even years elapsed or to come in their scheduled operations. Beside correspondence, numerous loan contracts are systematically dated, mostly by month name and a year eponym, but they never specify the day. They also refer to a system of hamuštum eponyms that is unique in the cuneiform documentation. Some loan contracts use another dating system linked to seasonal activities. Thus, all the examples cited here come mainly from letters and loan contracts.

1. From hours to a day

The smallest unit of time used in the Old Assyrian corpus is the day or night. In the letters sent from Aššur to Kaniš or from other Anatolian cities to Kaniš, activities may be reported that take place in a short time. But, since the letters will take several days to arrive at their final destination (Veenhof 2008), the writer assumes that there is no purpose to give the sequence of narrated events more specifically within the day.

1.1. The case of the bērum

The word bērum usually corresponds to a time unit, a “double-hour”, but all its occurrences in the Old Assyrian corpus refer to the length units equal to the distance a walker may cover within this “double-hour”, a little more than 10 km (Veenhof 1982: 67-72): “Here the king has fallen during the sikkātum, there is upheaval within the

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city and we fear for our lives. There are enemies over a distance of one and a half double-hour (bēra u zūza) and nobody dares to go out into the countryside. One even tries to make us set out together with him for doing battle!” (Kt 92/k 526, 6-15, OBO 160/5: 173, n. 747).

Bērum is used, for example, figuratively to indicate a long distance between two persons: “When you were in Kaniš, Šu-Išhara was right in front of you, but you did not size him and you did not ask him to pay the silver! You have been running after him (without success) for a distance of ten ‘bērū’ (10 bē-re-e…). Instead of following my instructions, you have been running back and forth” (TC 3 60, 16-18, 23-28, Veenhof 2001: 103). So even if bērum is used here as a unit of length and not of time, the general meaning of the sentence conveys the idea of wasting time, calling to mind our modern expression “time is money”: the silver not paid back cannot be reinvested.

1.2. Day and night

One may wonder why, in Old Assyrian letters, we find also almost no mention of the different parts of the day. Most of the times of day known, for example, from the contemporaneous Mari letters are not mentioned in the Old Assyrian corpus. The Mari letters use several words allowing to specify when, during the day, an event takes place: šiḥtum “sunrise”, muštērtum “early morning, time of awakening”, šērum šēramma “early in the morning”, kašātum “morning, morning coolness”, šērtum “morning”, ūnum mašil “midday”, muṣlalum “midday, afternoon”, llūtātum “evening”, kinsigum “late afternoon”, naptanum “time of the evening meal”, qablītum “middle of the night” (Kupper 1996). Perhaps Mari high officials needed to be more precise when they related some events to the king than merchants who were telling their correspondents about their activities.

The Assyrian merchants make use of two verbs to refer to activities during the early morning and the late evening: šiārum “to rise early” and šumšû “to spend the night awake”. The former is also used as a substantive to refer to the morning: “A servant of mine went out in the morning (ina šiārim…) to wash his hands” (KTS 1, 8a, 5-10, Innāya 31). The verbs appear together in two unpublished letters in the expression: ašiar u ušamša (1st person) which we translate as an expression for “morning and night”, in the sense “all day long”. In the first instance, Imdīlum is waiting for silver that does not come: “Every day, morning and night (I write to you) saying: ‘Release the silver and I will make a purchase’”. In the second, a merchant complains that he has no access to a house that has been sealed by the eponym; he goes “morning and night” to see representatives without any success.

The Mesopotamian “day” consists of daytime and nighttime (nychtemeron). The word night, mūšum or mušītum, appears often in the Old Assyrian documentation. This is the time of danger, preferred by robbers and fugitives. In some letters addressed to women at home alone, their husbands give them advice such as this: “Watch the house at night (i-mūšim…)” (BIN 6 6, 16-17, CMK 335). A young lady who has to stay with her in-laws, while her husband is abroad, runs away at night to her father’s house (AAA 1/3 1, CMK 320). Nighttime is also expressed by the term nabattum. A merchant complains that he had to follow three robbers who stole textiles and left the town at night: “We left Badna together during the night (nabattam) but they did not let me go to the inn with them, I had to spend the night (abīt) alone in the stable” (KTH 3, 10-16, OAA 1 130). In this letter, «to stay at night» is rendered by the verb biātum, as in many other texts, where it is clear that, when travelling, merchants have to go quickly from one place to another, when possible without staying overnight, if only to save time and money.

1 C 15 (transcription B. Landsberger), 18-23: i-na u₄-mi-im i-na u₄-mi-im, a-šī-ar ū u-ša-am-ša, a-na ū-rī-šu-nu, um-ma-a-na-ku-ma KÙ.BABBAR, wa-šī-ra-ma šī-ma-am, a-ša-a-ma.
2 Kt c/k 266, 21-22 (courtesy J. G. Dercksen): a-na šē-er mu-zi-ti-kā, a-šī-a-ar ū u-ša-am-ša
3 See for example CCT 4 28a, 19, CMK 354: u₄-ma-kāl’ : lá i-bi-a-at; CCT 3 36b, 10, CMK 190: lá i-bi₄-at.
1.3. The day unit

The word “day” is very common in the Old Assyrian letters. It is used as a unit of time but also in several expressions which have nothing to do with the length of a day. Some texts refer to a single day using the word ūmakkal: “Do not stay on (there) one single day (ūmakkal)” (CCT 6 2a, 6-7, CMK 32), while others use the term ūmam istēn: “Wait one day with him” (KTH 6, 14-15, CMK 378).

Days are counted in letters from one to twenty or more: “Write on a memorandum how many days (mala ūmēšu)…” (TC 2 9, 30-31, CMK 183); “Three days later, they got up and left to go to you” (CCT 3 6b, 30-32, CMK 254), “I left for five days” (BIN 6 23, 4-5, CMK 69). Sometimes, the writer foresees the number of days needed for a trip: “He will arrive within two days” (VS 26 47, 15, CMK 107); “In ten days’ time the caravan will arrive” (BIN 4 84, 12-13, CMK 200); “I just sent servants to Nihriya. They will arrive within five days and will deliver to you 2 or 3 donkeys” (CCT 4 36b+37a, 3-7, CMK 365). In this case, the letter was supposed to travel with a fast messenger to arrive before the announced servants. The sender of the letter may also plan to send a letter or a shipment: “Within 5 days after this (negotiation) I shall send you word” (KTH 2, 7-9, OAA 1 29) or “In five days’ time I will send you the silver” (HUCA 40 47-48, 27-28, POAT 21, CMK 148). It is clear that in some cases, the indicated amount of days is more or less precise: “During the (next) ten days, travellers will leave two or three times” (CCT 4 10a, 10-13, CMK 242); “You should not stay in the kārum of Buruḫattum, when you arrive, do not stay there more than ten days!” (CCT 3 4, 41-45, CMK 267); “He let us wait twenty days” (TC 3 85, 17, CMK 90).

The day unit also marks a point of reference corresponding to the moment of an action: “On the day you hear (the contents) of my tablet”8, “On the day I am writing this tablet” (TC 3 13, 3-4, CMK 17); “The day you arrive here” (KTS 1 28, 10-11, CMK 152); “Send me 2 minas of silver and the very day you send the silver, record it on your memorandum” (BIN 4 13, 20-25, CMK 122); “Take a talent of tin (…) and the very day you take it, give him 10 minas of fine silver when it is convenient for him” (HUCA 39 22-23, 25-30, POAT 13, CMK 259). The reference point may match with the day the letter was written: “Seize him and make him pay the silver and its interest (calculated) up to this day” (BIN 4 98, 23-25, CMK 130); “Up to this day (ūmšu-ma), you are late” (TC 3 94, 25, CMK 162), this could also be called “today” from the writer point’s of view. It is expressed by the accusative ūmam.

The following day is written šanîm ūmim, literally “the second day”: “the day after you left…” (TC 3 3, 3-4, CMK 81) or “the day following the one I wrote you this tablet” (Kt n/k 208, 12-14, CMK 101).

1.4. The day in figurative expressions

The importance of the day as a point in time is used figuratively in connection with commercial and financial activities (Michel in press). The word ūmum may be understood as a metaphor for the settlement date in the expression “his days are over” (ūmūšu malû, which means “his time is up”). The construction of ūmum with the verb amārum has to be translated as: “to see the day of one’s ruin”. Thus, after the death of his father, Šu-Kūbum writes11: “May they not be many who would see the day (of the ruin) of the house of our father”.

There are many references among which Kt 92/k 203, 7, CMK 21: i- UTU4 tup-pl-ni ta-ša-me-a-ni or Kt 83/k 117, CMK 44. See also “the day your father will come back” in TC 3 112, 6-7, CMK 350; i-na u₄-mi-im, ša a-bu-kà : ī-lá-kà-ni. See also KTH 1, CMK 64.

The following day is written šanîm ūmim, literally “the second day”: “the day after you left…” (TC 3 3, 3-4, CMK 81) or “the day following the one I wrote you this tablet” (Kt n/k 388, 12-14, CMK 101).

8 There are many references among which Kt 92/k 203, 7, CMK 21: i- UTU⁴ tup-pl-ni ta-ša-me-a-ni or Kt 83/k 117, CMK 44. See also “the day your father will come back” in TC 3 112, 6-7, CMK 350; i-na u₄-mi-im, ša a-bu-kà : ī-lá-kà-ni.
9 See also KTK 6, CMK 55.
10 See also “till this day” in CCT 4 30a, 27, CMK 98: a a diá u₄-mi-im, ša a-bu-kà : ī-lá-kà-ni.
11 CCT 2 33, 8-12: a-wi-lu iš-té-en₄, šé-na la-am-na-tum a-na, Ê a-bi₄-ni da-la-hi-im, i-za-žu a-me-er-ú-um Ê₄ a-bi₄-ni, la i-ma-i-da.
Ahaha writes to her brother: “Accede (to my wish) while you can (still) be obliging (ūm gamālim) and while (I can still) be saved (from financial stress, ūm etārim) and dispatch to me ten minas of silver lest anyone see the day of my (ruin, mamman ūm la emaršu)” (KTH 7, 30-34, CMK 225). In this example, ūmum corresponds to a date before which it is still possible to intervene financially to save the economic situation of someone; it can even be seen as a “poverty line”.

2. From days to a month

2.1. The week

In loan contracts, dates are not expressed in days, but in hamuštum. The value of this unit of time has been a matter of dispute for almost a century. The commonly accepted value of the hamuštum, a week, was computed by K. R. Veenhof in 1996. The calculation of its length was made possible from a few texts that give at the same time the amount of the debt, the interest rate, the amount of the interest and the number of days for which the interest is due after the settlement date has expired. The result could be compared to the unique hamuštum almanach, Kt g/k 118, which seems to give a complete list of 50 to 52 hamuštum corresponding to a single year led to a hamuštum period of a seven-day week. Each hamuštum of this list is named for two merchants. Surprisingly, we have found so far only one hamuštum almanach but we have seven limum lists for the years (see below § 3.3).

How can a hamuštum of seven days be linked with its etymological meaning of 1/5? According to G. Kryszat, those who gave their names to a hamuštum had an administrative task and might belong to a larger group of perhaps ten people at the beginning of kārum II (and later on five), they would then represent 1/5 of the group (OAAS 2: 159-164). According to K. R. Veenhof, this office might have been occupied by junior members of the firms (Veenhof 1996: 26).

In some rare loans made for short periods, the “day”, ūmum, appears in relation to the “week” hamuštum as in this example: “he borrowed the silver (to be paid) within 15 days in the week of Iddin-abum”. Usually the loan contracts start the first day of the hamuštum or of the month since most of the debts result from accounting and balancing operations made on specific days (Veenhof 1996). A few documents specify number of days within which payment should be made; one loan states for example that the silver should be paid after the termination of one month and two days.

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12 The only consensus which has been made on this word is that it must be derived from the Semitic root “five” HMŠ. The different proposals to equate the hamuštum with a number of days are the following: 1/5 of the year because the Akkadian number hamšum means 1/5 (Lewy 1939); 50 days or pentecontad (Lewy/Lewy 1943); 10 days: because the original significance is a “committee of five”, the length of a hamuštum should have nothing to do with the number 5; the calculations are then based on mathematical data given in the texts (Brinkman 1963); 6 days: hamuštum must equal to 1/5 of a month (Jankowska 1967; this proposal was accepted by von Soden in AHw 319b); 5 days because 6 hamuštum should equal to one month, which fits the sexigesimal system (Landsberger 1925, Gelb 1935, Balkan 1965; this proposal was accepted by the CAD H 74-75). None of these authors agree on the frequency of the ascending sequence: hamuštum – warhum – līmum in the loan contracts dates, which proved that the hamuštum consists of less than 30 days.

13 Veenhof 1996: this tablet is partly broken but according to Veenhof’s reconstruction it would comprise 50 to 52 lines, each line corresponding to a hamuštum. Thus, the equation of a hamuštum to a seven days week would then be correct because 52 weeks make one year. Memoranda give the data of several loans and the attested number of seven-day week up to 50 (BIN 4 61: 45, 47 and 50 hamuštum); numbers over 50 are extremely rare (once 100 hamuštum). The most frequent numbers are from 1 to 3, which correspond to a fraction of a month. Numbers 4 and 13 are also frequent because 4 hamuštum equal to one month and 13 hamuštum = 3 months = ¼ of a year. The maximum number of different hamuštum attested during one and the same month (month ix of KEL 89) is four.

14 This system means that during a single year, a hundred persons would give their names to a hamuštum period. But Assyrians gave their names several times within a year. Under the reign of Puzur-Aššur II, around the eponym KEL 98, the hamuštum system was simplified, each hamuštum being thereafter named for one and no longer two merchants; see Veenhof 1996.

15 kt 94/k 721, 22-23 (courtesy Larsen): (amā 15 U₄; ha-mu-šu-tum, ša l-dš-a-bi-im KÙ.BABBAR al-qf. In other cases, the hamuštum is combined with a month name, as in TC 1 3, 20: hamuštum ša ti’ištum; this should be understand as the first hamuštum of month x.

16 BIN 4 147, 20-21 quotes the first day of the week (SAG hamuštum). For the first day of the month, see below § 2.3.

17 Kt j/k 90, 6-8 (courtesy C. Günbattı): ITI.KAM, ū U₄ 2 i-qā-ti-ma, KB i-ša-qal.
2.2. Half-month and days corresponding to phases of the moon

Between the seven-day week unit and the month, the Assyrians use another time unit which is the šapattum. There are about thirty references to the šapattum in the documents at our disposal, it is used to precise the date loans. In some of these tablets, šapattum is to be translated as “the day of the full moon”, precisely corresponding to the middle of the month: “from the week of Kudādum, the (moon) god having reached the full moon day, month x, eponym KEL 104”18 or “one month, after the day of the full moon”19.

In other cases, the šapattum corresponds to half a month, the month being divided in two by the šapattum day: the first part of the month has theoretically 15 days while the second part might have 14 or 15 days20. K.R. Veenhof suggested that šapattum in our texts refers to the first fifteen days of the month ending with the šapattum day (Veenhof 1996): “I will take interest for 2 months and a šapattum (= half-month)”, the payment should not be made after the full moon21. Another example combines šapattum not with months but with weeks: “I took interest on 5 minas of silver for 8 weeks and a šapattum (half-month)”22.

Apart from the šapattum, there are very few references, in the loan contracts, to days corresponding to the moon phases (Veenhof 1996):

First day of the month: “from the hamuštum of Ah-šalim (the day of) the appearance of the (moon) god (nāmarti ilim), within one month they will pay. If not, they shall add interest” (ICK 2 45A, 6).

End of the month: “from the hamuštum of Ah-šalim, the (moon) god having disappeared (ilum ūbilma)” (ICK 2 196)

“(When) the (moon) god was standing (in the sky) for 5 days (ilum 5 ānim issas)” (AKT 1 35, 10).

The week and half-month periods seem to be used for salary computations in five accounting drafts in which the scribes mention salaries (igrum) and food products (oil containers and cuts of meat) together with the signs 7

2.3. The month and the first day of the month

There are also about thirty references to the beginning of the month SAG/rēš warhim, which seems to correspond to the first day of the visibility of the new moon24:

“From the beginning of the month Te’inātum he will pay in two month’s time” (CCT 1 5a, 4-6)25.

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18 Kt 93/k 531, 37-39 (loan between Assyrians): ša-tū ha-maš-tim ša Ku-da-dim, DINGIR ša-pā-tim i-li-ik ITI.KAM Té-i-na-tim, li-mu-um A-šar-ma-li DUMU A-ša-hi-tim. It is also used among Anatolians, see for example Kt 93/k 206, 5-7’: ša-pā-tim, i-li-ik-ma KÜ BABBAR, il, qé-ú. For other occurrences, see Kt a/k 459, 12-13; Kt a/k 497, 3; Kt a/k 1055, 5; Kt c/k 384, 19; Kt k/k 82, 12; Kt n/k 220, 4; ; Kt n/k 1647, 6; Kt 87/k 290, 11; Kt 94/k 826; OIP 27, 56, 22.

19 Kt 89/k 294, 5 (courtesy Y. Kawasaki): ITI 1.KAM war-ki ša-pā-tim. See also KTP 45, 7-9’: ša-tū ša-pā-tim, a-ni-tim a-ṣí-ib-tim, ni-il₂,qé-ma.

20 Two full moon days are separated by 29 ½ days. But Tanret 2004 proposed that all the Old Babylonian months had 30 days.

21 KKS 12a, 7-8: ša ITI.2.KAM ša ša-pā-tim, ši-ba-tim a-ša-lú-qé. See also Kt 94/k 858b, 9-13 (courtesy M. T. Larsen): u₂-mu-kā 3 ITI.KAM : ša ša-pā-tim 17 1/2 GIN KÜ BABBAR, ši-b-ib-tim, il₂,qé.

22 Kt b/k 651 (Balkan 1965: 164): ša 5 MA NA KÜ BABBAR, ša 8 ha-am-la-tim, ša ša-pā-tim, 2/3 GIN 15 ŠE, ši-b-ib-tim, al-qé.

23 See Michel 2008a, and the documents A = KTP 39, Hecker 1993: n°7; B = Kt k/k 23, Hecker 1993: n°8; C = private coll., Donbaz 1990; D = Kt 98/k 107, Donbaz 2001: 109 (kārum IB); E = TPAK 1 209.

24 According to Durand 2009, in Babylone, rēš warhim refers to the end of the month and the beginning of the next month.

25 References to the beginning of the month ITI.KAM of the month are the following. Without mention of the month’s name: Kt 93/k 168, 14. Month i, Bēlet ekallim: Kt m/k 113, 5; Kt n/k 147, 24; Kt k/k 110, 5; Kt 94/k 839, 16; Kt 94/k 841, 18. Month ii, (Narmand Aššur) ša Sarrātim: Kt m/k 123, 13. Month iii, (Narmand Aššur) ša Kēnātim: Prag I 544, 7-8; Kt c/k n56, 17; Kt 91/k 129, 10; Kt 91/k 493, 5-6. Note TC 1 75, 7-8: SAG ITI.KAM, Narmand-Aššur (month ii or iii). Month iv, Mahur illi: Kt a/k 205, 4; KKS 26a, 5-9. Month vi, Hubur: AKT 1 19, 6-7; KTS 2 1. Month vii, Sīp urni: Kt a/k 659, 5; Kt n/k 1940, 15. Month viii, Qarrātim: KTBl 4, 10-15; Kt a/k 900b, 3; Kt a/k 978b, 10; Kt b/k 143, 4. Month ix, Kanwarta: Kt a/k 888, 5; Kt 93/k 442, 8-9. Month x, Te’inātum (this month is called Sin during the IB period): KKS 30a. Month xi, Kuzzallum: AKT 3 11, 13; Kt c/k
But most of the time there is no precision and one should suppose that when a date starts from a named month, this means “from (the beginning of) the month”. In fact, the basic meaning of warhum is “the new moon”.

The Old Assyrian months are named after cultic and seasonal events (see note 25). They are usually used in the loan contract dates, but time computation by month may also be used in letters where the hamuštum system is seldom mentioned. Note that many letters come from Aššur while the hamuštum system is used in the kārum in Anatolia. In a letter addressed to her son Aššur-taklāku, who has been detained by the local palace, Ab-šalim writes: “Here, we heard that since month Mahhur-ilî (iv) they detain you (…) since month Kuzallum (ix) I have not received any help” (Kt 93/k 296). More often, the merchants calculate time elapsed by adding months, just as they do with days (and with years): “Five months ago, your father left for Qabrā… and till now he is not back” (TC 3 112, CMK 350).

3. From months to a year

3.1. Anatolian seasonal dates

In Anatolia, debt notes are not always using the Old Assyrian calendar but can be dated after important events such as the death or accession of a local ruler26, or after the agricultural calendar. The loan contracts using the agricultural calendar are predominantly those concerning Anatolians and dealing with barley. They follow the many agricultural events from seeding to threshing and refer to seasons as daš’ū “spring” or harpū “summer” (Veenhof in OBO 160/5: 238-245).

Seasons had an important impact on trade. In Anatolia during the summer, the entire population took part in the harvest and had less time to trade with the Assyrians. In winter time, roads between Upper Mesopotamia and Anatolia were closed and caravan traffic stopped during for four months (Michel 2008b).

3.2. New year’s Day

A silver debt excavated in 1990 at Kültepe proposes an equation between the seasonal calendar and the Old Assyrian months. The loan runs “from the spring, month Šip’um (vii), from the week of Aššur-ṭāb, year eponym of Ennām-Aššur” (KEL 113, TPAK 1 98). According to this document, the seventh month in the Old Assyrian calendar, Šip’um, fell in spring (March-June, OBO 160/5: 243); this would mean that the first month, Bēlet-ekallim (i), fell in autumn (September-December). Thus, the Old Assyrian year may have started the day of the autumnal equinox (22-23 September), if we consider that Šip’um was the first month of the spring.

3.3. The solar year and intercalary months

In Aššur, years were named after eponyms. Over the past decade, seven copies of Aššur eponyms list (Kültepe Eponym List, KEL), covering both kārum level II and Ib periods, have been identified and published (Veenhof in OALE, Günbattı 2008a and 2008b). The new eponym was chosen in Aššur by lot, so it was impossible to know in advance the name of the new eponym and, since the information had to travel to Anatolia, it is common that during the first months of the year dates referred to the name of the previous eponym: ḫum ša qāṭī PN, “the eponym following PN”. We find mentions of ša qāṭī eponyms during the first four months of the year (Veenhof 1996 and 2000, OAAS 2). This means that the Assyrian calendar was based on the solar year.

As the Assyrians were using lunar months with a solar year, they sometimes need to add sometimes an intercalary month. If the year started on the day of the autumnal equinox, then we expect the addition, some years, of a

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25 I could not find references for months v (Ab šarrāni) and xii (Allānātum).

26 ICK 1, 178, 2-4: “When Labarša became king” or Kt n/k 716, 12-13: “When Asu, king of Luhusaddia had died”.
thirteen month after Allānātum (xii), so that the first day of Bēlet-ekallim (i) stays correlated with the autumnal equinox. K. R. Veenhof proposed that the Assyrians might have doubled the last month of the year without changing its name, a tradition still surviving in the Middle Assyrian period (Veenhof 2000). Since the new eponym was chosen during the first months of the year, the references to ša qatt límu during month xii (in KEL 92, 93, 97, 99 and 107) might refer to a second month xii. He also pointed out the existence of three references to a month Zibiba/urum, at least, two of them corresponding to very late dates in the year, after month xii. They occur during KEL 81 and 84, at any interval years, suitable for months to fit with the solar year.

The day holds a special place in the Kültepe archives, being the smallest unit of time of the Old Assyrian calendar. Contrary to Old Babylonian practice, it is generally absent from loan contract dates, which prefer weeks, months and years. Based on lunar months and the solar year, the Old Assyrian calendar uses a quite unusual division of the month into weeks that might have been inspired originally by the phases of the moon, starting first with the full moon, šapattum, also used for half a month, and then with half a šapattum, corresponding to a week of seven days.
Bibliography

The Old Assyrian abbreviations used in this paper are those listed in OAAS 1 [C. Michel, Old Assyrian Bibliography of Cuneiform Texts, Bullae, Seals and the Results of the Excavations at Aššur, Kültepe/Kaniš, Acemhöyük, Alişar and Boğazköy, Leiden, 2003] and OAB 1 [C. Michel, Old Assyrian Bibliography 1 (February 2003 – July 2006)], AJo 51 (2005-2006), 436-449. Some are repeated here for the convenience of the reader.


