History 101 - Sumerian Contracts

Contract for the Sale of a Slave, Reign of Rim-Sin, c. 2300 B.C.
Sini-Ishtar has bought a slave, Ea-tappi by name, from Ilu-elatti, and Akhia, his son, and has paid ten shekels of Silver, the price agreed. Ilu-elatti, and Akhia, his son, will not set up a future claim on the slave. In the presence of Ilu-iqisha, son of Likua; in the presence of Ilu-iqisha, son of Immeru; in the presence of Likulubishtum, son of Appa, the scribe, who sealed it with the seal of the witnesses. The tenth of Kisilimu, the year when Rim-Sin, the king, overcame the hostile enemies.

Contract for Rent a House, One Year Term, c. 2000 B.C.
AKHIBTE has taken the house of Mashqu from Mashqu, the owner, on a lease for one year. He will pay one shekel of silver, the rent of one year. On the fifth of Tammuz he takes possession. (Then follow the names of four witnesses.) Dated the fifth of Tammuz, the year of the wall of Kar-Shamash.

Contract for the Sale of Real Estate, Sumer, c. 2000 B.C.
Sini-Ishtar, the son of Ilu-eribu, and Apil-Ili, his brother, have bought one third Shar of land with a house constructed, next the house of Sini-Ishtar, and next the house of Minani; one third Shar of arable land next the house of Sini-Ishtar, which fronts on the street; the property of Minani, the son of Migrat-Sin, from Minani, the son of Migrat-Sin. They have paid four and a half shekels of silver, the price agreed. Never shall further claim be made, on account of the house of Minani. By their king they swore. (The names of fourteen witnesses and a scribe then follow.) Month Tebet, year of the great wall of Karra-Shamash.

Contract for Hire of Laborer, Reign of Shamshu-Iluna, c. 2200 B.C.
MAR-SIPPAR has hired for one year Marduk-nasir, son of Alabbana, from Munapirtu, his mother. He will pay as wages for one year two and a half shekels of silver. She has received one half shekel of silver, one se [1/180th of a shekel], out of a year's wages.

Contract for Partners to Borrow Money against Harvest, c. 2000 B.C.
SIN-KALAMA-ID, son of Ulamasha, and Apil-ilu-shu, Son of Khayamdidu, have borrowed from Arad-Sin sixteen shekels of money for the garnering of the harvest. On the festival of Ab they will pay the wheat.

Contract for Marriage, Reign of Shamshu-Ilu-na, c. 2200 B.C.
RIMUM, son of Shamkhhatum, has taken as a wife and spouse Bashtum, the daughter of Belizunu, the priestess (?) of Shamash, daughter of Uzibitum. Her bridal present shall be ______ shekels of money. When she receives it she shall be free. If Bashtum to Rimum, her husband shall say, "You are not my husband," they shall strangle her and cast her into the river. If Rimum to Bashtum, his wife, shall say, "You are not my wife," he shall pay ten shekels of money as her alimony. They swore by Shamash, Marduk, their king Shamshu-Ilu-na, and Sippar.