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Redemption in the Old Babylonian Period: texts, archives, practice

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STELLINGEN

- I. The text CUSAS 10 18 (= CUSAS 43 65) is, or is a witness to, the first extant royal edict from Mesopotamia mandating the return of property, and its contents originated from the chancery of Rīm-Sîn I of Larsa.
- II. The *mīšarum*-edict of Samsu-iluna king of Babylon, issued upon his accession to the throne, incorporated provisions from Rīm-Sîn I's edict tradition, a borrowing and adoption that most likely originated with Samsu-iluna's father Ḫammurabi upon the annexation of Larsa.
- III. The force behind the traditional right of redemption (of property and persons) lay in the social, religious and familial need to maintain the integrity of the *bīt abim* "paternal estate".
- IV. The effective working of the traditional right of redemption relied upon trusted counterparties and even networks that extended beyond the immediate family.
- V. The continued spread of a strong written customary tradition in the Old Babylonian period was helped not hindered by the adoption (with local variation) of Sumerian contractual register by Akkadian speakers.
- VI. Full editions of the late Old Babylonian manuscripts of the law collection of Ḫammurabi would shed important light on its native reception and early transmission.
- VII. Cuneiform diplomatic has value not only for classifying and understanding legal and administrative documents but all text genres.
- VIII. As Landsberger knew, an Assyriologist must possess 'Donegality'.
- IX. The Humanities still need Giambattista Vico.