There are texts that connect us to the human condition through millennia of time: the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad. But these literary voices from the past increasingly harmonize with a chorus of ancient everyday documents, documents that reveal glimpses of a distinctively human condition in new and often intimate ways. Scholars have been studying the business letters and documents from merchants in the trans-Taurus Assyrian trade (1920-1870 BC) for over a century. What has not been yet widely understood is that this dense corpus of letters is the first time in history we can read a community of individuals projecting and contesting intentions: merchants complain about late shipments, wives pine for their husbands, and fathers chide their sons for laziness. What makes their intentions so compelling is that some correspondence can be re-connected to reveal not only quintessential emotions, but also the circumstances and stories of individual merchants, rendering them all the more human. And narrating their dealings with each other reveals perhaps the most human of conditions: the negotiation with time itself.