

54) **A new attestation of the term *malDītu**** — In a recently published note brève M. Jursa offers a discussion of the rare Neo-Babylonian term *maldītu* (or *malīṭu*) encountered in a number of letters and legal and administrative documents from the long 6th century (JURSA 2012). The suggested meanings – ‘after’ and ‘afterwards’ – are solely inferred from context, as its etymology defies a convincing interpretation. Formally, it has been classified as a noun in the accusative case used as an adverb or preposition.

A hitherto unrecognised attestation of the term is found in the land lease contract JOANNÈS/LEMAIRE 1996, no. 6¹⁾. The passage in question reads (lines 1–9):

PN ^{lú}*mī-šir-a-a*, ^{lú}*sag lugal* ^{lú}*ú-ma-as-ta-ar-ba-ra-a*’ a-šú, šá PN₂ *ina mī-gir lib-bi-šú* še.numun, šá *ina* a.šà *egir* ^{lú}*ar-ba-a-a* šá **ma-al-DI-tu**₄ id, šá PN₃ **igi-ri-i-tu**₄ id šá PN₄, pab 45 gur še.numun *pi-i šul-pu u é* ^{gis}*ban-šú gab-bi šá* [...], (...), *a-na* PN₅, a-šú P[N₆], *id-din*

Before offering a translation, a few remarks are in order. For the sequence *igi-ri-i-tu*₄ in line 5, the editors proposed a reading *ši-ri-i-tu*₄ which they connected with the term **širītu* (written *ši-RI-ti-šú*), a supposed synonym for *šilihtu* ‘part of a canal; reservoir(?)’ found in line 2 of CT 44 77²⁾ (JOANNÈS/LEMAIRE 1996, 50). According to CAD, however, *ši-RI-ti-šú* should be considered a mere misspelling for *šilihtu* (with suffix).³⁾ The reading presented here, on the other hand, yields the common word *maḥrītu*⁴⁾. This incidentally conforms well with the suggested meaning of *malDītu*, since the two terms are then used in symmetry with each other to describe the location of the rented field:

‘PN, the Egyptian, the royal courtier⁵⁾, son of PN, acting of his own volition, has turned over the arable land located within the field behind (that of the) Arab, whose **rear side** (is made up) by the canal of PN₃ (and) whose **front side** (is made up) by the canal of PN₄ – altogether 45 *kurru* of arable land under cultivation for grain, his entire bow land of [...] – (...) to PN₅, son of PN₆ (for cultivation).’

Regardless of whether *malDītu* is to be understood as a nominalized adjective or an attributive adjective without the noun it modifies (e.g., *pūtu* ‘short side’), it is clear from the context that here it stands for *arkītu*, just as it does for *arkû* (or *uškû*) in the examples presented in JURSA 2012.

*) My work on this topic has been supported by a Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Bonn, Germany. Abbreviations are those of the *Archiv für Orientforschung* 48/49 (2001/2002), 311–505. Note furthermore: Art = Artaxerxes; Dar = Darius.

¹⁾ Babylon, Dar I 26, Zababa-šarru-ušur archive. The archive, or rather, quasi-archival group is part of a corpus of some 250 texts which Assyriology has come to call documents of Judean exiles and West Semites in Babylonia (see the introduction of CUSAS 28 and WAERZEGGERS 2015).

2 Babylon, Art III 4, Esangila archive. The text, a service contract, is edited in HACKL 2013 as no. 76.

3 See CAD Š 2 443 *šiliḫtu* A and *passim*.

4 Admittedly, the spelling is somewhat unorthodox, but not unexpected given the high incidence of scribal errors encountered in the documents of Judean exiles and West Semites in Babylonia (published in CUSAS 28 and *BaAr* 6); see HACKL *in press*. A reading *ar-i-tu₄* for *ārittu* ‘canal branching off at a right angle’ is unlikely, both on grounds of orthography and syntax.

5 The two titles – Akkadian *ša rēši* and the Old Iranian loan *ustarbaru* (< **vastra-bara*-) – are interpreted as synonymous at the time (JURSA 2011, 167–168).

Bibliography

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