

44) Fara Notes, 2: $\hat{g}iri_2 du_3$ “to mark out (a field) with a dagger” — TSS 881 is a most remarkable Fara text with more than fifty entries listing barley, barley flour, and beer for various recipients, summarized as “barley” given out during a period of one month (iti 1, r.x). The text can thus be described as an early representative of the important group of “bread and beer” texts known so well from many third-millennium archives (see also Fara Note 3). The photograph available for TSS 881 on CDLI (P010929_d) shows many details that are not seen on Raymond Jestin’s copy from 1937, and the tablet might have already suffered in the decades after its discovery in 1902. Evidently, Cripps (2013, § 9) could not use the photo, and thus his edition is largely outdated now.

The cereals were not only given to guests at the political centre of the city of Šuruppag (see Fara Note 3), but also for festivals: the a_2 -ki-ti of the e_2 -kur temple (o. ii 2’-3’), the ab- e_3 festival (r.i 6), an unclear action related to a “large garment” (tu₉ gu₂-la₂) for a bride (e_2 -gi₄-a; o. v 6-15), an expenditure for carriers, “when ... (for?) the incense (burner) was filled”(? , u₄ huš na-izi si-ga, o. x 3-4) and some references to rites or occasions which are still unclear (e.g. NI-ba-DU o. ii 6’). Also, grain is used in the context of purchases, such as “buying a well house” (e_2 engur sa₁₀, o. iii 8’), or “buying a well house for water” (e_2 engur a sa₁₀, r.vi 10-11). The sale documents from the Fara period include long lists of gifts (namely barley and cereal products, fat, soup, and textiles) given to the sellers and persons involved in the transaction (see, e.g. Krecher 1980, 491-493; Gelb et al. 1991; Wilcke 1996). Our document most probably reflects the issuing of a segment of these donations, namely the barley products from the granary-milling house complex of the local palace of Šuruppag.

Seen in this light, the expenditure for a ritual act called aš₅ $\hat{g}iri_2 du_3$, literally “to drive in daggers (at) a field”, fits well into a larger context of ritual acts performed at sales. The two relevant passages read as follows (the transliteration of numbers follows Molina 2014, 39-40):

(1) TSS 881 r.iv 7-13:

0.2.0c dabin / 0.2.0c dabin tur-tur / lac kaš sila₃ / aš₅ $\hat{g}iri_2 du_3$ / ‘u₄’ kaš kur-ra / baḥar^{bar} / maškim

“120 *sila* of barley flour, 120 *sila* of ‘small’ (breads made from?) barley flour, 1 *sila*-vessel of beer: marking out the field by a dagger, at the day of beer of the ... (lit. mountain); Baḥar was the commissary (responsible for the transaction)”

(2) TSS 881 r.vii 15-18:

[x ka]š sila₃ / ½c še din sila₃ / aš₅ $\hat{g}iri_2 du_3$ / nam-maḥ / dub-sar

“[x] *sila*-vessel of beer, half a *sila*-vessel of barley beer: marking out the field by a dagger; Nammaḥ was the scribe (responsible for the transaction)”

The parallels and the context prove that $\hat{g}iri_2 du_3$ cannot be the name of a field. The meaning of the phrase “beer of the mountain (kur)” eludes me; it evidently refers to a drinking party, but I am not aware of any passages which provide information to define kur more precisely.

The act of “driving in” (du_3) a dagger reminds one of the symbolic act of “driving a nail” (gag du_3) into the wall (eḡar) of a house to mark the property and its sale (see Müller 1979; Malul 1987; id. 1988, 363-76; Gelb et al. 1991, 240-41). However, since this act is performed for fields as well, a simple

distribution of the phrase with a “nail” (gag) for houses and with a “dagger” (ĝiri₂) for fields does not seem plausible.

A “dagger” (or “sword”, ĝiri₂) is a highly symbolic weapon, as made clear by an oath sworn in the context of field sales. CT 5, 3 = OIP 104, no. 36 ii 4-11 (Sippar, ED IIIb): NAM.KUD / I₃.IR / LU₂.NA.ME / i-na-kir / ap-lu / GIR₂ / ^dLUGAL-^{giš}ASAL_x(RÉC-65.a) / HI.UŠ₂, translated by P. Steinkeller as follows (Gelb et al. 1991, 109): “the oath by oil nobody should change/violate; (if somebody does change it), then the heirs(?) of the sellers with the dagger of Lugal-asal will kill him”; or: “(the preceding persons) have sworn by oil that ...”. This oath most probably refers to the symbolic act of anointing often performed by the herald (niĝir) in sales of houses, fields, and persons: a “nail” (gag) is driven into a wall, and its spot is anointed, as recorded by the formula gag-be₂ eĝar-ra bi₂-du₃ i₃-be₂ za₃-ge be₂-a₅ (Gelb et al. 1991, 240–42; Krecher 1980, 494): “he drove its ‘nail’ (referring to the contract, i.e. serving as a writing medium for the text) into the wall, he applied the oil (necessary for the proper execution of this act) on it (i.e. the nail)” (i₃ ak “to apply oil” is construed with the directive case).

The act of announcing the sale by driving a nail into the wall, however, was different from “demarcating with a dagger”, an act performed in a field. Most probably, the latter act delimited the field to which the new property rights were then transferred. If this reconstruction is correct, the dagger used to mark the field for the new owner could have been a divine weapon upon which an oath was sworn at the completion of the procedure (see above).

Delimiting (sur) a field with a dagger (ĝiri₂) for measuring it out (gid₂) is also referred to in TSS 881 in a different way:

(3) TSS 881 o. ix 7-15:

0.0.4c dabin / 0.0.4c dabin ^rtur-tur¹ / ^rx x x¹ / u₄ / aša₅ ĝiri₂ sur / mu-gid₂-da / nam-maḥ / dub-sar / lugal [...]

“40 *sila* of barley flour, 40 *sila* of ‘small’ (breads made from?) barley flour, [for PERSON], when he measured the field, delimited with a dagger; Nammaḥ was the scribe (responsible for the transaction); ...”.

As scribe, Nammaḥ signs as being responsible for the transaction (2) as well; but this does not prove that (2) and (3) refer to one and the same field transfer, since Nammaḥ is more often listed as the scribe responsible for the expenditures that happened during the month covered by TSS 881.

The meaning for the phrase ĝiri₂ du₃ derived from the Fara document TSS 881 explains the final passage in a statue inscription of Enmetena of Lagas. Here Enmetena identifies the fields handed over to Enlil’s newly built sanctuary e₂-ad-da (iii 6); the fields were obviously designated to provide the temple’s income, including a field already selected by his father and predecessor Enanatum (noted, e.g., by Cooper 1986, 63 fn.2).

(4) Ent. 1 (Steible/Behrens 1982/I, 211–214) = RIME 1.9.5.17 (Frayne 2008, 219–222), shoulder inscription, cols. v–vi:

(v) (1) 25.0.0^{GANA₂} en-an-na-tum₂ sur ^dnašše e-ta-e₁₁

(2) 11.0.0^{GANA₂} IM.KA.ZI:ZI.ŠE₃ (3) aša₅ abbar niĝen^{ki}-ka (4) pa₅ ku₃-ge us₂-sa

(6) 1,00.0.0^{GANA₂} den-lil₂ (vi) (1) aša₅ gu₂-eden-na-ka

(2) en-mete(TE.ME)-na (3) ensi₂ (4) lagas^{ki}-ke₄ (5) den-lil₂ (6) e₂-ad-da-ka-ra (7) ĝiri₂ e-na-du₃

“25 *bur* (162.5 hectares) of Enanatum, the border of Nanše, was drained (lit. risen [from the water]),

11 *bur* (71.5 hectares) in the I.-field, a field in the marshes of Niĝen, bordering on the sacred canal,

60 *bur* (390 hectares) of Enlil in the Guedena field:

Enmetena, the ruler of Lagas, marked it (i. e., the described area) out with a dagger for Enlil of the Eadda.”

Steible/Behrens (1982/I, 214) translate: „... hat Enmetena ... dem Enlil ... abgetrennt“. In their commentary (Steible/Behrens 1982/II, 110) they write: „Die Verbindung gír--dù ist, soweit wir sehen, singular. Die Übersetzung ist aufgrund des Kontextes geraten; E. Sollberger, IRSA 66f. mit Anm. c übersetzt ‚a découpé(?)‘ und M. Lambert, OrNS 44 (1975) 36 Anm. 79 ‚fit décréter‘.“

Frayne (2008, 220 ad vi 7) has chosen another solution: “In col. vi line 7 the tentative translation ‘cleared it (from stubble)?’ follows Selz’s ‘gerodet(?)’ (Untersuchungen p. 128 § 8)” (Selz 1995, 128 fn.

504 arrives at this translation by comparing the expression $ku_6 \hat{g}iri_2 du_3$ -a in DP 336 ii 3, „nach dem Kontext vielleicht ‚ausgenommene/entschuppte Fische‘.“. Cooper (1986, 63: La 5.17) left the phrase untranslated. The comparison with the Fara references from TŠ 881 hopefully solves this puzzle.

To the best of my knowledge, the phrase $\hat{g}iri_2 du_3$ “to mark (a field) out with a dagger” survives in the available written documentation only in the name of a field (a-ša₃ $\hat{g}iri_2$ -du₃-a, ITT 3 5268; cf. a-ša₃ $\hat{g}iri_2$ NATN 382 r.10).

Acknowledgements: See above Fara Note 1

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