45) Fara Notes 3: Mariotes in Šuruppag — The photo for TSŠ 881 on CDLI (P010929_d) allows a better interpretation of this document, and it provides the earliest reference to Mari in an archival text from Babylonia. As noted in Fara Note 2, the photo must have been taken before Jestin's publication in 1937, and evidently the relevant passage of the tablet is not preserved any more, since Steible (2015) in his very careful study of the geographical names occurring in Fara texts did not mention the reference to "Mari" discussed here, although his article is based on his thorough knowledge of the Fara tablets housed in Istanbul.
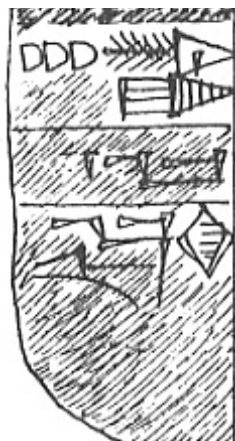
TSŠ 881 lists not only expenditures of flour and beer to people, but also repeated charges of barley to feed donkeys (anše) of guests. The entries usually follow the pattern *n* še anše PERSON "*n* (amount of) barley for the donkeys of PERSON". Although the same sign (LAK 240/53, Krebernik 1998, 277) is used for both ĝiri₃ and anše, an interpretation of the phrase *n* še anše PERSON as *ĝiri₃ PN "via PN", "expedition of PN", can be safely excluded: (1) in all instances the document lists še "barley", and not flour, as in the other instances of expenditures for persons; (2) anše is usually written in the same box as še, but neither occurs in a separate box, nor combined with the personal name (še anše thus is graphically organised in the same way as the note that barley was used to buy beer, še kaš sa₁₀); (3) entries with the phrase *n* še anše PERSON are usually concluded by a person acting as maškim "commissary" (or as "scribe", dub-sar), thus another "conveyor" (if it were *ĝiri₃ PN) can be excluded; (4) the long entry o. vii 6–13 lists in hierarchical order first flour for the recipient, then "barley to buy beer" (še kaš sa₁₀) and finally "barley for donkeys" (še anše); (5) the frequent combination *n* še anše PN naĝ can be understood as "n barley for donkeys of PN (who was at the) drinking (party)"; the photo does not permit an interpretation as gu₇ "to eat".

The owners of the donkeys mentioned in TSŠ 881 include an "envoy" (sugal₇, o. v 16), a "son of the king" (dumu lu[gal]) for one month (o. ii 11′–13′), and even the "king" (lugal, r. ii 5) himself. Another royal prince who received flour and beer during his stay was associated with the city of Sippir (o.

vi 11–12), another person came from Kiš (r. iv 15–16), one from Urua (URU×A o. v 2–3), a shipper and a fisherman from Elam were there (lu₂ u₅ NIM, r. viii 12–13; šukud₂ NIM, r. iv 2–3), and Dilmun is mentioned in an unclear context (o. vii 2). These place-names (Sippir, Kiš, Urua, Elam, Dilmun) demarcate the borders of the geographical scope covered by the texts from Fara (Steible 2015, 160–61). The expenditures directly reflect the comings and goings of people at the local ruler's residence at Fara, and indeed the first entry notes flour and beer for the "big ruler (*ensi*.g) at a drinking party(?)" (NIĜ₂.PA.TE.SI gal / ⌈naĝ⌉?⌉ o. i 4′–5′). Already the second entry is the one that interests us here:

3.0.0c še lid₂-ga anše / ma-ri₂ᵏⁱ / [šu ba]-ti (TSŠ 881 o. i 6′-8′)

"3 *litka*-measures (= 720 *sila*) for the donkeys, the one(s) from Mari received it"

TSŠ 881 o. i 6′-8′; left photo published in CDLI (P010929-d), right excerpt from the copy of Jestin (1937)

The restoration of o. i 8′ is based on parallel entries in the same text, with groups of persons "having received" (šu ba-ti) flour ("persons punting boats", lu₂ ma₂-gid₂, o. vi 13–14; "three carriers", il₂, r. i 11–12; "persons *cutting brushwood*(?) from Kiš", lu₂ u₂-ku₅ kišiᵏⁱ, r. iv 15–16; unclear r. vi 7–8).

Donkeys of high-ranking guests were thus fed from the granaries of a city, a practice known from the ED IIIb archive from Tell Beydar (ancient Nabada; early-mid 24th century BCE), with large expenditures of barley for the king (EN) of Nagar who regularly came to Nabada to stay there for several days (Sallaberger 1996, 103–6).

TSŠ 881 offers the first reference to the city of Mari in an administrative document from the Fara period (ED IIIa, 26th century BCE). Previously, Mari was only known from two entries in scholarly texts from Tell Abū Ṣalābīḫ: Early Dynastic Practical Vocabulary (EDPV) A line 208 balaĝ ma-ri₂ᵏⁱ "the Mari harp" (Abū Ṣalābīḫ source OIP 99, 33 viii 21; edition Civil 2008); OIP 99, 328 v 7 ma-ri₂ in an unclear literary or lexical context.

The administrative context now attests to Mariotes arriving by donkey at Šuruppag. As is well known, Šuruppag served in this period as an important centre for the cities of Sumer (ki-en-ge), a region from Uruk in the south to Kiš in the north and including Lagaš, Umma, Adab and Nippur (Steible 2015, 161 with further literature). The Fāra document TSŠ 881 allows a glimpse of the political centre of Šuruppag, where travellers from the Gulf (Dilmun), from Elam, or from Mari and the inhabitants of Babylonia met. The administrative note on fodder for donkeys thus provides a historical anchorage for close links between Mari and Lower Mesopotamia, as well as the wide-reaching trade connections during the period of the rise of Mari's Ville II (Otto 2014), one and a half centuries before the contacts revealed by the documents from the Royal Palace G at Ebla (second third of the 24th century BCE).

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