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What's in a Name?

Terminology related to the Work Force
and Job Categories in the Ancient Near East

Agnès Garcia-Ventura

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Agnès Garcia-Ventura

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and Job Categories in the Ancient Near East

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
<i>Agnès Garcia-Ventura</i>	
Introduction: The Work Force and Job Categories in the Ancient Near East.....	9
<i>Jacob L. Dahl / Laura F. Hawkins / Kathryn Kelley</i>	
Labor Administration in Proto-Elamite Iran	15
<i>Vitali Bartash</i>	
Age, Gender and Labor: Recording Human Resources in 3350–2500 BC Mesopotamia.....	45
<i>Camille Lecompte</i>	
The Archaic Lists of Professions and Their Relevance for the Late Uruk Period: Observations on Some Officials in Their Administrative Context	81
<i>Fumi Karahashi</i>	
Female Servants of Royal Household (ar ₃ -tu munus) in the Presargonic Lagaš Corpus	133
<i>Massimo Maiocchi</i>	
Reading History through Lexicography: The Weavers of Sargonic Adab in Comparative Perspective	147
<i>Laura Culbertson</i>	
The maškim in Ur III Legal Documents.....	169
<i>Katrien De Graef</i>	
kīma napišti māti eqlumma ul tīdê? Field Work in Old Babylonian Sippar.....	189
<i>Jaume Llop</i>	
The Gold- and Silversmith in the Middle Assyrian Documents.....	243
<i>Daniel Justel</i>	
Middle Babylonian Terminology related to Workforce.....	259
<i>Matteo Vigo</i>	
On the Terminology of Some (Job) Titles in Hittite Texts.....	271

Josué J. Justel

The Role of the “Overseer” as the Person Responsible for the Labour Force in the Hurrian Milieu.....	315
--	-----

Philippe Abrahams / Brigitte Lion

Aspects of Job Categories and Household Workforce Management in Nuzi Documentation	329
--	-----

Juan-Pablo Vita

Terminology related to Work Force and Job Categories in Ugarit	355
--	-----

Melanie Groß

Craftsmen in the Neo-Assyrian Empire	369
--	-----

Lorenzo Verderame

Travel and Displacement as Part of the Job: The Case of the Neo-Assyrian <i>ummânu</i>	397
--	-----

Stefan Zawadzki

The Organization of Building Works in Neo-Babylonian Sippar	417
---	-----

Kristin Kleber

Dependent Labor and Status in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods	441
---	-----

Mark Tamerus

Labour in the Achaemenid Heartland.....	467
---	-----

Indices	495
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1. Texts.....	495
2. Names (2.1. Personal Names; 2.2. Topographical and Ethnic Names, 2.3. Divine Names; 2.4. Temple Names).....	510
3. Words (3.1. Akkadian; 3.2. Aramaic; 3.3. Eblaite; 3.4. Elamite; 3.5. Greek; 3.6. Iranian; 3.7. Hattian; 3.8. Hittite; 3.9. Hurrian; 3.10. Luwian; 3.11. Old-Persian; 3.12. Persian; 3.13. Sumerian; 3.14. Ugaritic)	520

Dependent Labor and Status in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods

Kristin Kleber¹

0. Introduction

The social and economic realities of ancient Near Eastern societies cannot be properly understood without sufficient clarity about the terminology used for laborers and their juridical status. The diachronic overview that this volume aims to provide is therefore more than welcome. The present article gives an overview of terms for workers, servile dependents and juridical statuses in Babylonia in the first millennium BC with a focus on the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods (ca. 620–330 BC). It draws heavily on previous studies, in particular Muhammad A. Dandamaev's *Slavery in Babylonia*² and various more recent studies that touched upon terms and concepts that are difficult to interpret.

The meaning of most first millennium professional designations has been clarified; there is no need to address them here, with few exceptions. The first is a new identification, namely *pūṣāju* “linen weaver”, recently established by Stefan Zawadzki.³ The CAD's (P: 538) translation “launderer” is thereby outdated. The second pertains to two terms that must not be confused, *arad ekalli* and *arad šarri*. The literal meaning of *arad ekalli* “palace servant” is a correct translation for the Old and Middle Babylonian periods (ca. 1900–1200 BC). The feminine form *amat ekalli* existed, too. However, from the Neo-Babylonian period onwards, *arad ekalli* is always an “architect” or “builder” (not a lowly menial worker). *Itinnu* “builder” is either a synonym or an *arad ekalli* is an *itinnu* with a temporary specific task.⁴ Hence, the word is a professional designation and has no servile meaning, in contrast to *arad šarri* which will be discussed in the next paragraph under “Status Terms”. Two words for “ploughmen, farm worker” will also be treated below because some scholars have suggested that they represent a

¹ Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. This article was written under the auspices of the Vidi project “Paying for *All the King's Horses and All the King's Men*: A Fiscal History of the Achaemenid Empire” financed by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). Abbreviations of texts follow the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*.

² Dandamaev 2009². The first English edition, published in 1984, is based on the Russian original that appeared in 1974. The book contains a useful collection of texts but some parts are outdated. Especially the treatment of the temple dependents (*širku*) as slaves cannot be upheld.

³ Zawadzki 2006: 66.

⁴ The latest treatment is Baker 2005: 7–12 (with previous literature). See also Dandamaev 2009²: 565–567; p. 280 for an apprenticeship contract (*arad ekallūti*).

combination of status and professional terms.

Nouns related to status and workforce categories provide more difficulties. Some are general words for “servant” or “worker” (male or female) without having a bearing on the legal status of that worker. These appellatives are often used synonymously with others that intersect in meaning. Different terms can be used to label the same person – usage often depended on the nuance which the speaker intended to express in a certain situation.

1. Status Terms

Labor obligations were intrinsically connected to lower status. Yet, clear-cut status concepts beyond the distinction “slave” (a human as property that can be sold) and “non-slave” (a person that cannot be sold) were never developed. In practice, semi-free states existed in all ancient societies but this phenomenon was rarely addressed in the way Pollux 3, 83 did in his description of the position of ancient Greek peasants as “between freemen and slaves” (μεταξὺ ἐλευθέρων καὶ δούλων). In the ancient Near East, as in antiquity in general, these people were not conceptualized as a class. There is no single category that we could translate as “serf”. The closest we get to an enumeration of status terms is in the guarantee clause of Late Babylonian slave sale contracts.⁵ The seller guarantees against various claims, such as the claim of ownership by a third party and the claims of freedom (*mār banūti*), temple dependency (*širkūtu*), royal dependency (*arad šarrūti*) and state dependency (*šušānūtu*). In the Hellenistic period, various “fief” categories (state-administered land in the ‘land-for-service’ system, such as *bīt kussī* “throne estate” and *bīt narkabti* “chariot fief”) were added to the list of title deficiencies, implying that the sold person was not in bondage to such a state domain. This list sounds like an itemization of juridical states but we should be careful not to embrace them as sociological categories. The purpose of the clause was to guarantee title, i.e. that the sold person is legally adjudicated as a chattel, that he/she does not belong to another owner, and that neither king nor temple, nor any state official or proprietor of a fief had any claims/rights to the person’s labor. *Mār banūti*, “freedom”, should be understood in this context as the ability of the person to claim himself.

1.1. *Ardu/amtu* “Subordinate”, “Servant, Slave” versus *qallu/qallatu* “(Chattel) slave”

Ardu (ĪR) and *amtu* (GEMÉ) have retained their wide semantic range in Late Babylonian. Like in older stages of Akkadian, the words designated men and women in a functionally subordinate position, irrespective of their legal status. A person can be, for example, a “servant” of a god or of any human superior. At the same time *ardu/amtu* also designated a chattel slave. Perhaps in order to disambiguate, a new word was introduced for a chattel slave from the Neo-Assyrian period onwards: *qallu/qallatu*, deriving from *qallu* “little, of low standing, of little value”.⁶ In the 6th century BC *qallu/qallatu* became the most widely used term for

⁵ See Lewenton 1970: 10.

⁶ The logographic writing ¹⁰GIŠGAL for *qallu* is exclusively used in Neo-Assyrian texts. Neo-Babylonian texts always spell the word syllabically. The fact that Darius’ Bisotun-

“chattel slave”. Later, in the 5th century BC, the use of the term *qallu* petered out, making room for the logographic spelling *ir* which became the predominant denotation for a slave.⁷ Occasionally the same person was designated as *ir* and *qallu*. The communis opinio holds that *ir* must be read *ardu*, and that *ardu* and *qallu* were interchangeable terms in the 6th century BC.

Chattel slaves could be sold, bequeathed, pledged, hired out, etc. – they were the property of their masters.⁸ Their hands were often tattooed with the name of their owners. However, a lowly legal status did not per definition exclude someone from important economic and administrative tasks. Slaves worked in lowly and high positions. Some slaves performed heavy household chores but some of them were trained and worked in town-based professions, e.g., as weavers, leatherworkers, brewers, and women as tavern keepers. Both in the 6th and 5th centuries BC we encounter slaves of important business firms, such as the Egibi and Murašû families, who were influential agents of the principle actors of the firms. These slaves were wealthy: in addition to their business on behalf of their superiors they used a peculium. Through these means they were able to conduct their own business just like free men; they even owned slaves themselves.⁹ However, all property owned by a slave was eventually the property of his master.¹⁰

The important economic and administrative functions that some Murašû subordinates occupied, for instance the *ardu* Rībat, led Guillaume Cardascia (1951: 13f.) to believe that these *ardu* (*ir*) were not chattel slaves but rather free subordinates of the business firm. Matthew Stolper (1985: 21) translates “servant” to stress the “operational subordination rather than legal status” but states that “the archive gives no reason to doubt that individuals called ‘servants of so-and-so’ were often, if not always, chattel slaves”. Ronan Head (2010) investigated the issue in detail. Although he does not want to make a definitive decision, he tends to follow Cardascia because of certain differences between the high-standing business administrators with (undisputed) slave status (called *qallu* and *ir*) in the 6th century and those in the 5th (designated as *ir*). A difference is, according to

inscription (see Bae 2001) uses *qallu* for non-slave subjects of the king has no bearing on the meaning of the word in Babylonian. The Akkadian of the Bisotun-inscription is non-idiomatic Babylonian. *Qallu* here renders Old Persian *bandaka* “vassal, servant”, equivalent to Babylonian *ardu* in the broader sense.

⁷ The question arises therefore, whether *ir* in the 5th century could be read *qallu* when a chattel slave was meant. This is difficult to answer because Neo-Babylonian syllabic spellings for *ir* as *ar-du* (or similar) are not attested for a person who is also called *qallu* or is otherwise characterized as a chattel slave. However, there is also no positive evidence that points to the reading of *ir* as *qallu*. Therefore it is preferable to stick with the equation *ir* = *ardu*, GEMÉ = *amtu* until proven otherwise. The abstract noun *ardūtu* “slavery”, “position of a royal official, vassalage”, “role of a worshipper” (*CAD* A: 251–253) can be written syllabically in Neo-Assyrian texts. The Neo-Babylonian examples in the *CAD* display *ir-ū-tu*.

⁸ *CAD* Q: 64–66 and *CAD* A: 246f. with plenty of references. See also Dandamaev 2009²: 132–371; Wunsch / Magdalene 2014: 338.

⁹ Dandamaev 2009²: 320–378; Head 2010.

¹⁰ Wunsch / Magdalene 2014: 338 with fn. 6.

Head (2010: 150f.), the lack of evidence that the latter were pledged or threatened by sale. Secondly, they used their own seals, agreed to pay fines with their own assets, and the Murašû servant Rībat possessed a prison. It remains to be proven whether the differences are indeed distinguishing criteria.¹¹

1.2. *Arad/amat šarri* “Royal Servant”

So far we have no Late Babylonian evidence for slaves being called *arad* or *amat šarri*. The rare attestations of this term in Neo-Babylonian letters to the Assyrian king seem to refer to non-slave subordinates of the king, when *ir* = *arad* was used in its more general meaning of “servant”.¹² In Late-Babylonian contexts *arad/amat šarrūti* “status as a royal servant” appears exclusively in guarantee clauses of slave sale documents.¹³ The seller guarantees that the sold person is indeed his private chattel, and not, among other deficiencies of title, an *arad/amat šarri*. According to Dandamaev, an *arad šarri* is a “royal slave”, i.e. a person belonging to the king as his private property.¹⁴ He mentions the “overseer of the servants” (*rab amēlutti*) of a palace and slaves owned by members of the royal family. However, the latter were called *qallu*, cf. the slave (*qallu*) of a princess in CT 56, 237. I would rather distinguish private slaves of members of the royal family from *arad* or *amat šarri*. One may speculate that the latter were personnel of the royal palace proper, and that the term replaced the older *arad ekalli* which came to designate an architect in the Neo-Babylonian period.

1.3. *Širku/širkatu* “Temple Dependent”, “Oblate”

Širku/širkatu (^{LÚ/SAL}RIG7) derives from *šarāku* “to give as a gift, donate” and designates people who were dedicated to a temple and the offspring of these people.¹⁵ It can be assumed that in the 6th century BC most temple dependents were born as such. External sources were royal dedications of prisoners of war to Babylonian temples, as well as private dedications of individuals, mostly manumitted slaves but sometimes also own children dedicated to the temple in dire

¹¹ Another, rather important argument is that Rībat held a bow-fief in his own name (PBS 2/1, 115, see Head 2010: 141). This is unusual even if Rībat was legally free because members of the Murašû family did not normally possess fiefs. They once acquired one by fictive adoption (Stolper 1985: 27), as state domains could not be alienated.

¹² *SAA* 10, 8; *ABL* 1236. The *CAD* (A/II: 247) translates “royal official” accordingly in some documents from earlier periods.

¹³ E.g., *Nbk.* 100; *TCL* 12, 65; *YOS* 6, 207. For the guarantee clause, see Lewenton 1970: 8–13. The lack of evidence beyond these clauses is most likely due to the scarcity of documentation from royal palaces from the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods.

¹⁴ Dandamaev 2009²: 561–564 with older literature. Some scholars have understood the clause in slave sales as a guarantee that the sold person has already fulfilled the state service of a serf (*arad šarrūti*). Dandamaev convincingly refuted this interpretation with the argument that a labor obligation connected to a juridical status is never performed only once in a lifetime.

¹⁵ The most comprehensive treatment of *širkūtu* is Ragen 2006. See also Kleber 2011 and Wunsch / Magdalene 2014. Dandamaev 2009² contains transliterations and translations of pertinent texts but treats *širkus* as temple slaves.

straits (e.g., during a famine to keep the children alive with rations from the temple). The origins of *širkūtu* “temple dependency” go back to the end of the second millennium BC but the great majority of the attestations come from the “long” 6th century BC.¹⁶ *Širkūtu* is a status that can best be described as semi-free. We should not translate “temple slave” because the temple did not own *širkus* in the sense that a person could own a chattel slave.¹⁷ The temples in the Neo-Babylonian period accepted chattel slaves in lieu of outstanding debts from insolvent debtors but did not actively engage in buying slaves.¹⁸ *Širkus* were subordinate members of an institutional household, being restricted in their movement and owing labor to the temple but also receiving a social home and protection in return.¹⁹ Temple dependents could not be sold or pledged by the temple, neither could they be manumitted. *Širkūtu* was thus a permanent and hereditary status. *Širkus* contracted legal marriages, lived in families in private homes and used their father’s names for identification. In many cases this is the only identification given: their legal status is referred to only in contexts where this information was meaningful. Temple dependents could own houses and moveable property, including slaves.²⁰ Children were entitled to inherit their parents’ property. *Širkus* occasionally held important positions in the temple’s economic administration that entailed a considerable amount of control, but they were excluded from participation in the temple cult. Yet, the freedom of temple dependents was restricted. Most importantly, they had to perform labor for the temple, often hard physical labor. Female temple dependents are attested as millers,²¹ others that lived as homemakers and mothers had at least a weaving task.²² For men, the obligation included heavy labor such as canal maintenance and

¹⁶ Ragen 2006: 7. For the term “long 6th century” (because it covers a slightly longer period than one century), see Jursa 2010: 5.

¹⁷ *Contra* Dandamaev 2009²: 483 and 510. *Širkus* were never called the “property” (*makkūru*) of the temple. The passages cited by Dandamaev refer to real estate and silver, not to the personnel. Temple dependents “belonged” to a god in the sense that the temple was their social home; see Wunsch / Magdalene 2014: 340 with fn. 26.

¹⁸ We do not hear that the temple possessed slaves, but neither do our texts explicitly say that private slaves who were accepted in lieu of debts were manumitted and turned into *širkus*. *AnOr* 8, 73 is relevant here, but does not solve the question: debtors had transferred a slave to the temple but the slave escaped. They assumed guarantee that another slave, turned over as a replacement, would not escape. That slave was bound to serve with the archers in guard posts (*kādānu*). We know that the temple sent *širkus* to perform that royal service (Kleber 2008: 204–214 with fn. 597). This may be an indication that this slave assumed *širku*-status but it is not certain.

¹⁹ *Širkūtu* was definitely preferred over slavery: Whenever slaves went to court to challenge their status, they pleaded that they had been manumitted, or manumitted and dedicated to the temple, e.g. *OIP* 122, 38; *Cyr.* 322 for *širkūtu*; *Nbn.* 1113 for full freedom (*mār banūti*).

²⁰ See *YOS* 7, 2 for a house owned by a *širku*. According to *PTS* 2308 a *širku* hires out his female slave to a free woman.

²¹ *YOS* 7, 107, see also *TCL* 9, 121 (*bīt qēmēti*). In contrast to earlier periods, women figure rarely on personnel and ration lists. But men received rations of 90–180 liters, thus high enough to feed a small family.

²² They normally had to weave one standard garment per year (*PTS* 2443; *NCBT* 176).

labor on one of the royal building projects for which the temples were partially responsible.²³ Conscription to this labor duty meant separation from their families for several weeks or months as the building sites often lay far away from their home town. Therefore we sometimes find references to escaped *širkus* who sought to defy the temple's control.

Not all *širkus* were permanently employed by the temple. Many were, among them agricultural personnel (*ikkarus*) and the personnel at the sanctuary proper (e.g., craftsmen, workers of the storehouse and the stables, etc., together called *širkū ša āli* “*širkus* of the city” in ration lists). But temple dependents could also run their own businesses.²⁴ Occasionally the temple hired out dependents to a third party: in this case the hiring party would pay compensation for the labor.²⁵ Temple dependents, as members of the temple household, were not supposed to move out of the temple's control. Leaving their residence (or work place) without the permission of the temple was prohibited. Female dependents were not allowed to marry a free man, nor could they give their children in adoption to a free person.²⁶ Marriage between persons of different status was presumably discouraged to avoid status related disputes.²⁷ Nevertheless mixed marriages existed and there were regulations for this. In case a *širku* was married to a freewoman or a slave, the offspring of the marriage would have *širkūtu* status.²⁸ Children born to manumitted (and not legally married) slave women after their dedication to the temple would always be *širkus*, regardless of whether the father was a free man (including her previous owner).

1.4. *Šušānu* “Animal Keeper”, “State Dependent”, “Retainer”

Šušānu has two different meanings in Late Babylonian texts. It is used as the professional designation “animal keeper” but it is also a status term. In certain contexts it can be hard to decide which meaning is referred to. According to Ebeling, Babylonian *šušānu*, together with its Assyrian form *susānu*, is an Indo-European loanword; he adduced Indic *açva-śani* “horse taming”.²⁹ We find *susānus* as horse grooms in Middle- and Neo-Assyrian sources. According to Late Babylonian texts *šušānus* took care of horses but also of other animals, such

²³ Kleber 2008: 108–132 treated the organization of the troop of *širkus* working on royal building projects.

²⁴ E.g. *RA* 12 (1915), 1ff. concerning a *širku*, a baker by profession, who had been pledged to a private person for ten years.

²⁵ The compensation was called *mandattu*, e.g. BM 114586. See Kleber 2011: 107.

²⁶ *Dar.* 43 (the document does not explicitly call these women *širkatus*). For this text, see here under →*najjālu*.

²⁷ Compare e.g. *YOS* 7, 56 according to which a *širkatu* is interdicted to meet a man from Kiš. According to one document a free woman who was married to a chattel slave had to provide the owner of her husband with at least one child (BM 94589, referred to by Oelsner / Wells / Wunsch 2003: 929).

²⁸ *OIP* 122, 38.

²⁹ Ebeling 1952: 213, he also compares the Hittite cognate *aššūššanni* and thinks that both words were borrowed via Hurrian.

as cattle and monkeys,³⁰ the Syriac cognate even has them as elephant grooms.³¹ People bearing the title *šušānu* are occasionally connected with officials, such as the king and the chief temple administrator (*šatammu*). Ebeling assumes a development of the term from “horse groom” to “deputy”, a lower rank state official in the administration and military.³² However, it is still possible that the *šušānu* of the *šatammu* and that of the king³³ were personal horse grooms.

From the reign of Nebuchadnezzar onwards the word appears in connection with agricultural holdings, state properties that were cultivated by *šušānus* organized in *hadru*-units. As Stolper puts it, “the common element among *haṭru* members was not military, professional or ethnic identity as such. Rather it was a condition of economic and juridical dependence on the state”.³⁴ The latter is the reason why *šušānūtu* is listed among the deficiencies in title in slave sale contracts along with “freedom” and “temple dependency”.³⁵ *Šušānūtu* was a hereditary semi-free status³⁶, one encumbered with obligations to the state, and at the same time it protected someone from being sold as a chattel slave. Many deportees from the Levant who were settled in Babylonia received this status.³⁷ The term also turns up in temple archives but we should not conclude that *šušānus* were regular dependents of the temple households. In temple contexts *šušānu* is often used as the professional designation “animal keeper”. Where the status term is meant, it could possibly refer to dependents of the state in the physical realm of temple estates.³⁸

The fact that *šušānus* could be conscripted because of their status is reflected in text no. 113 in Stolper 1985.³⁹ As a fulfillment of an obligation a group of settlers offer forty “workmen” (^{LÚ}ERÍN^{MES}) for one month who work on wage basis but ten men were to work as *šušānus*. Hence, in contrast to the workers receiving a wage, ten men performed the work as part of a corvée labor obligation based on their *šušānūtu*-status. The difference has economic repercussions. In the “long” 6th century BC rations of temple dependents were much lower than

³⁰ References in *CAD* Š/III: 379a. The *šušānus* in the Eanna-archive often appear in connection with cattle (e.g. *GC* 1, 182; *YOS* 6, 200).

³¹ The Syriac word has, exactly like Babylonian, both meanings, namely “animal keeper” and “servant” in general, see Ebeling 1952: 213.

³² Ebeling 1952: 213 compared *šušānu* to the older German word “Weibel” (compare “Feldweibel”).

³³ *YOS* 7, 106 (^{LÚ}šū-šá-nu LUGAL among *mār banē* witnesses) and *TCL* 9, 83 (a fugitive ^{LÚ}šū-šá-nu šá ^{LÚ}ŠA.TAM clearly in subordinate position).

³⁴ Stolper 1985: 79. See also the discussion in van Driel 2002: 210.

³⁵ Lewenton 1970: 10.

³⁶ Stolper 1985: 80: “It labels workers of many kinds, in diverse activities, neither chattel slaves nor fully free”.

³⁷ The term is prominent in the archives of the Judean settlers (Pearce / Wunsch 2014) and the Murašû-archive, both from the area around Nippur.

³⁸ *Contra* Dandamaev 2009²: 640 who believes that *šušānu* were “persons bound to perform certain service duties for the state, the temple, and possibly for private persons”. *Šušānus* in the Eanna archive are, for example, the runaway sons of a *šušānu ša nakkandi* in *BIN* 1, 48. *Nakkandu* may designate a storage facility but it is also a type of field held in reserve (*CAD* N/1: 183f.; Janković 2013: 284) that could be associated with the king.

³⁹ Stolper 1985: 281 (transliteration), see p. 81 for a partial translation and discussion.

the wages that hirelings were able to claim.⁴⁰ Presumably the same was true for a *šušānu*'s remuneration.⁴¹

Šušānus could be tenant farmers but also overseers of state lands ("feudatories"), and thereby agents of the crown. Their freedom of movement was limited; this is the reason why we occasionally hear of *šušānus* who had run away.⁴²

1.5. *Mār banê* / *mārat banê* "Free Man / Woman", "Gentleman / Gentlewoman"

The *CAD* translates *mār banê* as "free person, citizen" and "nobleman".⁴³ *Mār banûti* is a recognized juridical status that could be claimed by legal action at court (by, e.g., manumitted slaves). The second element in the term derives from *banû* "fine, well-formed, friendly, of good quality".⁴⁴ The translations "citizen" and "nobleman" are based on the fact that *mār banê* often describes the members of the temple assembly. However, the concept of nobility is not easily applicable to 6th century BC Babylonia and definitely not all persons designated as *mār banê* belonged to a privileged group.⁴⁵

Although several studies explored the meaning of this term, it remains difficult to pinpoint, largely due to the fact that there is no term for "full freedom" in Babylonian. As Asher Ragen pointed out aptly, the major dividing line in Babylonian society was between chattel slave and non-slave,⁴⁶ a person who could be sold and someone who was protected from being sold. A *mār banê* was definitely a non-slave. However, occasionally semi-free persons were called *mār banê* as well. Semi-free dependents, such as the *širkus* of temples, owed labor obligations as a consequence of their status as subordinate household members of the temple. Nevertheless they could be called *mārê banê* "free men". This is illustrated by slave manumission deeds, called *ṭuppi mār banûti* "tablet of *mār banûti* (free) status", regardless whether the slave was manumitted into "full freedom" or manumitted and dedicated to a temple. We have two court protocols about status litigations where both concepts were applied to the same person. In the first case *mār banûti* and *širkûtu* appear both as states of a manumitted slave who had been dedicated to Ištar of Uruk. In the second text, recording a case that was dismissed, the litigant could not produce any proof of her slave's *mār banûti* and *širkûtu*-status.⁴⁷ After all, the double designation may only be a matter of

⁴⁰ Jursa 2010: 669–681.

⁴¹ *Šušānus* in temple archives received rations (*kurummatu*), e.g. in *YOS* 6, 229. The same person is mentioned in *YOS* 6, 220 in connection with cattle, therefore he may have been a cattle groom. The "royal" connection may, however, also derive from the cattle pen as such: we know that the temple kept cattle of the king.

⁴² E.g. in *YOS* 7, 152 (3 Cambyses, in the context of the famine in these years).

⁴³ *CAD* M/1: 256. For *mār banûti* in general, see Ragen 2006: 290–302; Wunsch / Magdalene 2014.

⁴⁴ *CAD* B: 81.

⁴⁵ Also foreigners would not be called *mār banê* if this term denoted "noble", see Ragen 2006: 294. However, *mār banê*-status was a prerequisite to belong to the temple assembly (Ragen 2006: 302).

⁴⁶ Ragen 2006: 302.

⁴⁷ The combination of *mār banûtu* and *širkûtu* in *OIP* 122, 38 has led to many discussions

perspective, i.e., that from the point of view of the previous owner, the slave was free (*mār banê*) after manumission but from the temple's point of view, the slave had become a *širku*. Wunsch / Magdalene introduced the concept of emancipation to our discussion. According to them, *širkus* were "some type of *mār banê*, that is, persons of free status"⁴⁸ but they were usually not emancipated.

In the realm of state lands ("fiefs") dependent workers were called *šušānu*. They too had a semi-free status which means that they were protected from being sold as slaves but were restricted in their movement. Yet, in one text a *šušānu* of the king appears in a list of witnesses under the heading *mār banê*.⁴⁹

Mār banûti is a status-term that could be claimed by legal action. Slave sale documents include *mār banûti* among various deficiencies in title alongside *širkûtu* and *šušānûtu*.⁵⁰ The deficiencies are not necessarily exclusive: Hellenistic slave sale documents add various types of "fiefs" to the list and we know that *šušānus* were settled on "fiefs", hence *šušānûtu* and people in bondage to a "fief" are certainly not categories that exclude each other. Nevertheless, *mār banûti* here is used in the sense of "free man", a person *sui juris* who is not subjected to the patriarchic power of another person or an institution but was a head of a household (including his wife and legitimate sons and daughters as *mār* and *mārat banês*) himself who earned his own income. Hence, in this second, semantically more restricted meaning *mār banê* designates a free man. "Free" in this sense means that the movements of this person within the boundaries of the state are not curtailed by anyone. For women this meant the right "to enter the house

of this document; see e.g. Westbrook 2009; Kleber 2011: 102–104; Wunsch / Magdalene 2014. The second text is Cyr. 322 (translation in Westbrook 2009: 194): A court protocol reporting a claim concerning manumission and temple dependency of a slave. The court however, states *mim-mu šá* ^{LÚ}RIG7-ki-ú-tu ù ^{LÚ}DUMU-DÙ-ú-tu šá PN *la tu-kal-lim-mu* "she did not demonstrate any (proof) of *širkûtu*-status and *mār banûti*-status of PN". The ù could be translated as "and" or "or" but Westbrook (2009: 195) rightly argues that it should be understood as "and" since both status are referred to in the document.

⁴⁸ Wunsch / Magdalene 2014: 342. In a letter from the Eanna archive the sender instructed the recipient to check the journals (on wax boards) of the *širkus* (*lê'i ša širkī*) and send anyone who is listed there. Those therein (*ina libbi*) who were *mār banês* should hire wage laborers to perform the corvée duty in their stead. It is possible that free men who owed taxes to the temples were also registered on the *širku*-lists but as *mār banê*. This is the interpretation I favored in Kleber 2008: 104, and it may be the correct one. But the passage could also be understood differently, namely that some *širkus* performed the work themselves and other *širkus*, who were *mār banê*, were expected to hire substitute workers. Some *širkus* were not dependent on the temple for their livelihood but had their own businesses, which means that they were emancipated in the sense that they were not dependent on the temple for their livelihood. Could it be that those *širkus* were designated as *mār banê* in certain circumstances?

⁴⁹ YOS 7, 106. It is still possible that *šušānu* here does not designate the status but the profession "animal keeper". Furthermore, headlines are not always fully "correct", the list underneath can always contain exceptions that would not fall under the category that the headline indicated.

⁵⁰ The seller guarantees that the sold person is not a *mār/mārat banê* (= free) and does not belong to any of the semi-free states either.

of a *mār banê*”, probably in marriage.⁵¹ This is the opposite of the restrictions that *širkatus* were subjected to: they could not choose to move to another town, dwell in a *mār banê*’s house or give their children in adoption to free persons because they did not possess full power of disposition over themselves and their children.

Hence, the common semantic field shared by all attestations of *mār banê* is “non-slave”,⁵² regardless of whether this person was emancipated or legally encumbered with the rights of third parties (e.g., the temple or the king) or not. But because the language lacks an exclusive term for “free”, *mār banûti* was also used to designate what we would call “freedom”.⁵³

1.6. *Zakû/zakîtu* “Freedman/Freedwoman”

The term which derives from *zukkû* “to free, release”⁵⁴ designates a manumitted slave, regardless of whether he or she was released unconditionally, under the condition of paramone-service, or was dedicated to a temple. The expression *ana DIVINE NAME zukkû* “to release to DIVINE NAME” expresses manumission and simultaneous dedication. The slaves often served in paramone until their masters’ death (sometimes even longer). Paramone means that the previous owner relinquishes ownership but reserved his/her rights of usufruct. Yet, the freedman or freedwoman was considered a dependent of the temple (*širku*) from the moment of the dedication onwards.⁵⁵

When in the temple archives dependents were called *zakû/zakîtu*, we are dealing with “first-generation *širkus*”⁵⁶; they usually bore the mark of the deity on their hands which they received from their previous owner as a sign of their dedication to the temple. All the offspring born by a freedwoman after her dedication have *širkûtu*-status,⁵⁷ whether she was still serving in paramone or not. *Zakîtus* were often single women with children; their sons who had been trans-

⁵¹ Ragen 2006: 300f. I disagree with his ideas about the special characteristics of the “household of a *mār banê*”. In my opinion it is any household of a free man in a town or in the countryside. An example of the clause that guarantees the right of free movement (and the right to choose a new social home according to her own wishes) can be found in *OIP* 122, 37, a manumission deed for a woman and her children. A similar phrase appears in divorce clauses, indicating that the wife is a free woman.

⁵² *Mār banê* was defined this way already by Wunsch 2003/04: 208.

⁵³ This is probably also the meaning of *mār banê* in the witness lists. We do not have to reckon with finding *širkus* here, in spite of the one attestation of a – rather high standing – *šušānu* in such a list. These witnesses are members of the temple assembly and access to it was restricted – *širkus* were not part of it.

⁵⁴ *CAD Z*: 25–32, literally it means “to cleanse”, in our case “to become free from specific claims or obligations”. That is, becoming free from claims of a third party. For *zakû/zakîtu*, see Wunsch / Magdalene 2014: 340f.

⁵⁵ The manumissions are best comparable to inheritance gifts with a reservation of the right of usufruct. Yet, the manumissions and the dedications took immediate effect, they were not dedications mortis causa, and paramone service was not on contract (see Kleber 2011: 103f.).

⁵⁶ Wunsch / Magdalene 2014: 341.

⁵⁷ Kleber 2011: 103; Wunsch / Magdalene 2014: 341.

ferred to the temple household were then identified as “PN, son of a freedwoman (*zakītu*)”.

2. General Terms for Subordinates

2.1. *Amēltu* “Female Servant” and *amēluttu* “Servants, Menial Staff”

Awīlu/awīltu (in the first millennium BC form *amēlu/amēltu*) retained its meaning “man/woman” throughout all stages of Akkadian.⁵⁸ In the first millennium BC, in particular the feminine form *amēltu* was used with a servile nuance in some of its attestations. The collective, *amēluttu*, always had the meaning “servants” in Neo-Babylonian. It was also used as a singular. Legal documents and letters from private archives show that the servants referred to by the word *amēluttu* could be slaves. They essentially used *amēluttu* synonymously with *qallu* “chattel slave”.⁵⁹ Another clear example is the sale of five slaves designated as *amēluttu*.⁶⁰ Although in many, perhaps in most cases *amēluttu* were (chattel) slaves, the semantic range of the term is larger. In private contexts it included temporary debt slaves, e.g., in *Nbn.* 655 where a freeborn woman given as a pledge for a loan is referred to as *amēluttu*.⁶¹ PTS 2274, a text from the Eanna archive, records an inspection of families of workers, including women and children. The text sums up these people as ^{LÚ}*a-me-lut-ti* “servants”. Their exact legal status remains unknown.

In conclusion, the term *amēluttu* clearly designates people in a servile position but it was neutral with respect to their juridical status. The translations “domestics, servants, menial staff” for the plural and “servant” for the singular are appropriate. “Slave” may be used when the context is unambiguous.

2.2 *Aššābu* “Resident, Peasant (on Someone Else’s Land)”

The Neo-Babylonian attestations for *aššābu* “tenant, resident” or “alien (?) resident (of low status) in a town” (*CAD* AII: 460f.) come mostly from the temple archives. The Eanna temple was in the position to impose labor duties on the *aššābus* of the settlements in its realm. The term *aššābu* has, therefore, been interpreted as having an inherent legal, status-related quality.⁶² Yet, obligations can derive from residency in a particular realm, such as the obligation to pay a

⁵⁸ See also Dandamaev 2009²: 93f.

⁵⁹ E.g. in *Nbn.* 665, a sale of a slave (*qallatu*). The price is referred to as ŠAM *a-me-lut-tu*4-šu “price of his servant”. The term appears regularly in pledge clauses, e.g. in *Dar* 575 where a female slave (*qallatu*) is given as an antichretic pledge. The wage of the servant (*amēluttu*) is offset by the interest.

⁶⁰ *OIP* 122, 15: 6. More examples from letters can be found in Hackl / Jursa / Schmidl 2014, e.g. no. 136 according to which the sender had given a good slave woman as a gift to the recipient (line 10): [*a-m*]e-lu-ut-ti; (line 15): ¹*a-me*1-lu-ut-ti *bab-ba-ni-tú*. Compare also the logographic writing LÚ-ut-ti in letter no. 164.

⁶¹ The pledge clause in *Nbn.* 655 is incomplete but the document can hardly be understood otherwise. The use of *amēluttu* may be due to the standard formula *i-di a-me-lu-tu*4 *ia-a-nu* “There will be no wage for the servant”.

⁶² Remarks on this term can be found in Jursa 1995: 8; van Driel 2002: 207f.; Kleber 2008: 81f.

certain tax or to pay taxes to the state to a local collection scheme. Therefore, the term itself may be neutral, as the words “resident” or “inhabitant” are neutral with respect to personal status.

An example is *YOS* 7, 186, recording Eanna’s order to grind flour to help meet the demands of the Achaemenid king with which the temple was charged.⁶³ The obligation to deliver flour (*qēmu ša šarri*) was possibly part of the “table of the king” tax, the obligation to supply the itinerant Achaemenid court with food-stuffs. Eanna, as a landowner, was charged with the delivery of a certain amount and could pass on a part of this duty to people who lived on Eanna’s land. Tax obligations are the background as well in text Jursa 1995, no. 43 (work done by *aššābus* as their *ilku* and *urāšu* tax obligation under the responsibility of a temple farm worker on Ebabbar’s holdings in Syria) and *YOS* 7, 114 (collection of empty vats from temple farm-hands [*ikkarātu*] and *aššābū*). “Houses of the residents located in front of the city” (of Uruk) are mentioned as an estate border in *TCL* 13, 223; and *TCL* 13, 215 tells us that a man was a “resident of a house of his own” (*aššābu ina bīti ša ramānišu*). The texts mention *aššābū* and *ikkarātu*, the temple’s dependent farm-hands, as separate groups.⁶⁴ Thus, *aššābus* were in this case not the temple’s dependent agricultural laborers. Possibly, the sharecropping tenants of the temple, the *errēšu* (see below), were recruited from among these “residents”. We can infer that peasants designated as *aššābus* in the temple archives were not necessarily personally dependent on the temple, as *širkus* were. On the other hand, it is also not excluded that *širkus* who resided in the countryside were subsumed under this term (*širkus* who were not farm-hands (*ikkaru*), but, e.g., fishermen).

To sum up, *aššābus* were peasants residing in villages lying on someone else’s land, in our documentation often temple land. We have little information about their personal status, but it is possible that a free poor peasant population was subsumed under this term, while the semi-free and unfree may not have been excluded.⁶⁵ When a temple was the landlord, its *aššābus* were subjected to tax obligations administered by the temple.

2.3. *Aštapīru* “Servants, Personnel”

Aštapīru (SAG.GEMÉ.İR), a word for servants as a collective, is a loanword in Akkadian, possibly from Hurrian. It appears infrequently from the Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian periods onwards. The *CAD* holds that in Mesopotamia the term refers to slaves while in references from Alalah and Boghazköy the word is used for “personnel, servants, retinue of a ruler or official”.⁶⁶ However, when

⁶³ See Kleber 2008: 81f. for this text and the *qēmu ša šarri* tax.

⁶⁴ Jursa 1995: 8.

⁶⁵ Van Driel 2002: 208 treated *aššābu* together with *najjālu* because of the related literal meaning of the terms, “those who ‘sit’ and those who ‘lie’ on the estate of others”. This is correct but I believe that the restrictions placed upon the female *najjālus* of *Dar.* 43 cannot be generalized as restrictions pertaining to all *aššābus/najjālus*, see below under *najjālu* (2.6.).

⁶⁶ *CAD* AII: 474. See also Dandamaev 2009²: 96 for *aštapīru* “slaves in the collective sense”.

Nabonidus claims to have equipped the Egipar in Ur with fields, orchards, personnel (SAG.GEMÉ.İR) and animals, the *aštapīru* are not chattel slaves but either temple dependents (*širku*) or peasants (*aššābu/najjālu*).⁶⁷ Therefore the term must be neutral with respect to juridical status in Mesopotamia as well. The term is rare in Neo-Babylonian legal texts. As in royal inscriptions, it can refer to “personnel” in a broader sense there.⁶⁸ Individual slaves can also be summed up as *aštapīru*.⁶⁹

2.4. *Lamutānu/latānu* “Valet/Handmaid”, “Domestics”

Lamutānu, sometimes shortened to *latānu*, designates a person in a servile position. It is a collective noun which was also used in the singular. Because the term is not attested before the Neo-Babylonian period, Albright suggested that *lamutānu* is an Aramaic loanword in Akkadian.⁷⁰ This is problematic as such a word does not turn up in any Aramaic dialect.⁷¹ The CAD holds that a *lamutānu* “could belong to individuals as well as to institutions. He is carefully differentiated from the *qallu*- (and *qallatu*-) slaves who do not do the menial work (digging canals, harvest work, transporting wool, etc.) performed by the l.-slaves”.⁷² A careful analysis of the attestations shows that the interpretation of *lamutānu* as slaves who perform mainly hard menial work does not hold ground. On the contrary, *lamutānus* were often used as personal assistants. While in many contexts *lamutānu* can be read as a mere synonym for *qallu* or *amēluttu*, Nbk. 72 indeed makes a difference between a male slave (*qallu*) and a female *lamutānu* (both pledged as security for the loan). I believe that the word carries the nuance of nearness. It designates personal servants, valets and handmaids, who worked in close proximity to their lord or mistress, or slaves who acted as agents in the owner’s business or official duties. This corresponds well to the etymology of the word – *lamutānu* is best interpreted as deriving from either Akkadian *lamû* “to surround, encircle” or Aramaic *lwy* “to accompany”.⁷³

⁶⁷ Schaudig 2001: 374–377 (2.7 II11, En-nigaldi-Nanna cylinder). The word also turns up in the text “King of Justice” (Schaudig 2001: 581; P2.II12’) alongside *nišû* and *amēluttu*: *ni-šu-tu á[š-ta]-pi-ri* ‘LÚ¹-ti.

⁶⁸ E.g. in *Camb.*349, an exchange of a complete estate including “field, house and personnel” (A.ŠA É *áš-ta-pi-ri*).

⁶⁹ E.g. in the Hellenistic slave sale document VS 15, 3. The slaves’ hands were tattooed.

⁷⁰ Albright 2006 [reprint of 1942]: 204 with fn. 43.

⁷¹ Abraham / Sokoloff 2011: 39 are skeptical, stating that no “no such word is known in any Aram[ae] dialect”.

⁷² CAD L, 77f. (“a type of slave, male or female”). Although the dictionary adds that “in certain instances” *lamutānu*-slaves “act for their masters as do the *qallu*- and *ardu*-slaves”, it sees the hierarchy of tasks opposite to what is suggested here. For the term see also Dandamaev 2009²: 95f. with a critical remark on CAD’s interpretation.

⁷³ Albright 1919: 184 thought that the word is an Aramaic loanword from the West-Semitic root *lwy*, see also Albright 1953: 204 with fn. 43. Von Soden 1966: 14 likewise suggested a derivation from Aramaic (*lwā*) because the feminine *t* before *-ān* is rare in Akkadian. Cf. Abraham / Sokoloff 2011: 39.

There is plenty of evidence that *lamutānus* could be chattel slaves: they were sold, pledged and their hands could be tattooed with the name of their owner.⁷⁴ They appear as household slaves⁷⁵ and personal assistants of private businessmen.⁷⁶ High officials used *lamutānus* as agents for tasks that led them further away from their residence.⁷⁷ As trusted personal servants they served as messengers and therefore moved around without being guarded.⁷⁸ Occasionally *lamutānu* are said to have gone to do harvest work.⁷⁹ This is not surprising in view of the fact that every hand was needed during that busy time of the year. That does not mean that *lamutānu* were usually doing menial work.

There are only few attestations for this word from the Eanna archive⁸⁰ and from the Ebabbar archive. They are inconclusive with respect to juridical status. CT 55, 644 is a list of 15 *lamutānus* “of the storehouse” (²⁹)^{LÚ}la-mu-ta-nu (³⁰)šá É.GUR^{MEŠ}), “laborers who perform work for Ebabbar” (¹)^{LÚ}ERÍN^{MEŠ} šá [dullu ²)ina]

⁷⁴ *Lamutānu*-slaves were sold in, e.g., YOS 6, 73; Nbk. 207; 368 and pledged in, e.g., Nbk. 72 and Holt 1911, no. 20 (p. 221). The latter text records that the name of the owner was written on the slave’s hands. The antichresis clause refers to them as *a-me-lut-tu* “servants” according to the standard formula.

⁷⁵ E.g. YOS 3, 160, line 13f.: šu-lum ina é ù ^{LÚ}la-mu-ta-nu “The house and the *lamutānu*-slaves are well”; CT 22, 139 = Hack / Jursa / Schmidl 2014: 111, Rs. 5’f.: [ina muh-h]i é u ^{LÚ}la-mu-ta-nu [ŠEŠ]-¹ú¹-a la i-še^l-lim “My brother should take good care of the house and the *lamutānu*-slaves”. CT 22, 10 = Hack / Jursa / Schmidl 2014: 23, line 5f.: ¹nu-up-ta-a ù la-mu-ta-nu it-ti-ka* a-mah²*-¹ra*¹ ina muh-hi é la ta-še[l-la] “I will meet Nūptāja and the *lamutānu*-slaves with you. Take good care of the house!”

⁷⁶ According to Dar. 362 two *lamutānu* received dates on order of their lord (ina našpar-ti). The sender of the letter CT 22, 214 demands kap-du KASKAL a-na GİR šá ^{LÚ}la-mu-ta-nu šu-kun man-ma it-ti-iá [ia-a]-nu “Let the *lamutānu* depart swiftly – I have nobody here!”, i.e., he has no assistance in carrying out his tasks. *Lamutānu* also act as personal messengers of the sender of YOS 3, 193. He demands their departure as soon as they get the wool from the house of the sender (ki-i ^{LÚ}la-mu-ta-ni-ia SÍK^{HLA} ul-tu é it-ta-šu-nu KASKAL a-na GİR^{II}-šú-nu šu-kun).

⁷⁷ VS 3, 35 mentions *lamutānus* of the *zazakku*, a high state official. According to YOS 6, 246 two men, *lamutānu* of the “governor” (*bēl pihāti*), are responsible for work on a canal.

⁷⁸ That some of them exploited their unguarded movement in order to escape is recorded in BIN 1, 15. The letter is a jittery reaction of the sender upon his superior’s (the *šatammu*) notice that a *lamutānu* (which he probably had sent to the *šatammu*) has absconded (lines 5–23): a-na muh-hi ^{LÚ}la-mu-ta-nu šá EN iš-pu-ru a-di la ^{LÚ}A.KIN šá EN-ia am-ma-ru ¹mar-ša-ak¹ ^{DEN} u ^{DAG} ki-i te-iq-tú a-na EN-ia ¹a¹-pu-lu lú-ú ma-a-da la ¹mar-ša-ak¹ ^{DEN} a-na muh-hi-iá EN ú-šal-li¹ ki-i ^{DEN} ši²-ba²-a¹ iš-šab-ta 4 ^{LÚ}la-mu-ta-nu bab-ba-nu-tú a-na EN-ia a-šap-pa-ra “Regarding the *lamutānu*-slave about which my lord wrote me: Until I see the messenger of my lord, I will feel bad. May Bēl and Nabû know that I will certainly feel terrible until I have redressed the misbehavior to my lord. My lord may pray to Bēl for me. Bēl ‘willing’¹, he will be caught. I shall send four good *lamutānus* to my lord.”

⁷⁹ CT 22, 213 = Hack / Jursa / Schmidl 2014, no. 100. The letter implies that the *lamutānu* usually work with the senders of the letter (that is, in the administration of the harvest), not as harvesters or farm-hands.

⁸⁰ GC 1, 85. The text records the receipt of barley for the ration (or: for the bread) of the *lamutānus*. The small amount shows that this was not a regular monthly ration.

É.BABBAR.RA *ip-pu-uš*). These may have been menial laborers but they worked in a trusted position. They received one or two liters (of flour, presumably) each which tells us that they were not *širkus* who worked for the sanctuary on a regular basis because the latter were remunerated by monthly rations. Nevertheless, the legal status of the *lamutānus* in this case remains unclear.⁸¹ The other few attestations from the Eanna archive possibly refer to *lamutānus* of the “governor” (*bēl pīhāti*), probably the *bēl pīhāt Esangila*.⁸² In the reign of Nabonidus *lamutānu* of the *bēl pīhāti* were responsible to supervise (not carry out!) work on a certain canal.⁸³ Two letters may pertain to the same canal construction or maintenance work, or to a similar occasion: *TCL* 9, 118 is addressed to a certain Nādin who is accompanied by his *lamutānus* who are called his servants.⁸⁴ The sender promises to send five iron spades to the Sealand province so that they can do the work. This Nādin may be the same person who is said to work for the governor (*bēl pīhāti*) in *BIN* 1, 33. He was obviously a lower-rank official who supervised work in the countryside.⁸⁵ The sender of that letter also demands that the *lamutānus* should depart, possibly with messages. They do not seem to be menial workers but assistants to low-tier officials who supervise tasks for which a higher official is ultimately responsible.

To summarize, *lamutānu* were personal servants who worked in trusted positions, either in close physical proximity (valets, handmaids, domestics) or in responsible duties mandated by their master. The servile nuance is inherent in the term but otherwise it may be neutral with respect to legal status. In practice, however, most *lamutānus*, especially those used by private businessmen, were presumably chattels.

2.5. *Mār bīti* “Son of the House”

A *mār bīti* (DUMU É) is a man in a subordinate position who normally acts as a trusted agent for families of private entrepreneurs.⁸⁶ The phrase is followed by the name of the head of the household (*mār bīti ša PN*). However, a *mār bīt šarri* (DUMU É LUGAL) renders Iranian *vīsapuθra*, an Achaemenid prince.⁸⁷ It is possible that *mārē bīti* designate sons of slave concubines by their owners.⁸⁸ They

⁸¹ They may well have been private slaves that were hired by the temple from their owners for a specific task. But the term may also be neutral with respect to legal status.

⁸² See Jursa 2010: 68f. for this official.

⁸³ *YOS* 6, 246: ^{LÚ}*la-mu-ta-nu šá* ^{LÚ}*EN.NAM šá ina UGU^{ID}[...] paq-du* “the *lamutānu* of the governor who are appointed over the [...]canal”. These two men received dates. The other recipients of dates were the temple’s farm-hands (*ikkarātu*) who actually dug the canal.

⁸⁴ *TCL* 9, 118, lines 6f: *a-du-ú* ^{LÚ}*la-mu-ta-nu* ^{IR^{MEŠ}}*-ka šá [a-gan]-na-ka* “Now, the *lamutānu*, your servants, who are there with you...”.

⁸⁵ *BIN* 1, 15 lines 25–28: *ki-i* ^M*na-din šá É* ^{LÚ}*EN.NAM la qer-bi mim-ma ma-la te-pu-uš-šá-a* ^M*MU-GI it-ti-ku-nu li-mur* “Šumu-ukīn should inspect everything that you have done if Nādin from the house of the governor is not nearby”. Lines 35f.: *KASKAL a-na Gi^{IR}II šá* ^{LÚ}*la-mu-tu₄ šu-kun^I-a* “Let the *lamutānus* depart!”.

⁸⁶ *CAD* B: 295 translates “administrator within a household”.

⁸⁷ Stolper 1985: 21.

⁸⁸ The Old Babylonian term *wilid bītim* “houseborn (slave)” is not comparable, as these

were not legitimate heirs but family members, and they took over trusted positions in the family's business. Texts make a distinction between the *mār bīti* and the household's slaves, indicating that *mārē bīti* did not have slave status.⁸⁹

2.6. *Najjālu* “Resident, Peasant (on Someone Else's Land)”

Najjālu, being derived from *nālu* “to lie”, is closely related to *aššābu* (see above) from (w)*ašābu* “to sit”. Both are designations for “residents” who dwell on land which is not their own, peasants in the countryside. *Dar.* 43, line 10' is so far the only attestation for *najjālu* from the Neo-Babylonian period.⁹⁰ Unfortunately the break in the text does not allow us to reconstruct what was going on. It lists a number of people, primarily widows with their children, but also the canal manager Marduka who is explicitly called *širku*. At the end of the document they receive the appellation *najjālu ša Šamaš*. It is possible that the temple authorities settled these people at a new place. The adult women take on the responsibility to deliver three garments to the Ebabbar temple as their labor obligation (*iškaru*). Furthermore, they are subjected to limitations in their personal freedom: they may not move to another town, they may not live in the household of a free man and they cannot give a child in adoption to a free family. This shows that these *najjālus* were subjected to the same restrictions as *širkus* were. Van Driel (2002: 208) surmised that “there is not much difference in status between the *aššābu* ... and the *naiiālu*”. I agree with him, but I doubt that the limitations of the personal freedom of these people is due to their being *najjālus*, “residents” on temple land. *Aššābus* are always kept apart from dependent temple farm-hands (*ikkaru*), and there is no logical reason to assume the existence of two categories of dependents who were subjected to the same limitations. I rather believe that the curtailment of the personal freedom of these widows and their children is owed to their (newly acquired?) *širkūtu*-status. Possibly they also became *najjālus*,

people clearly had slave status and could be sold. They were offspring of the household's slave women but not necessarily children fathered by the owner of a female slave. The designation “houseborn” here serves to indicate that these slaves were not owned by anyone else before and therefore the likelihood of claims by third parties was smaller, see Westbrook 2003: 382.

⁸⁹ E.g. BE 9, 69: ^{LÚ}DUMU^{MES} É^{MES}-ka ^{LÚ}a-lik na-āš-par-ti-ka u ^{LÚ}IR^{MES}-ka “your houseborn (sons), your agents and your slaves”.

⁹⁰ The translation of *Dar.* 43 reads: “Marduka, the temple dependent (*širku*) of Šamaš, canal manager (*gugallu*) [entrusted], Bazītu, [Nan]aja-piqid, the widow Idintu, her sons Šamaš-iddin and Šamaš-nāšir, Eṭirtu and her daughter Ajaštu, the widow Miztaja, her daughter Aja-qarrat, (also) a widow, Inšabtu, daughter of [... rest of the obverse broken]; rev.: On the 1st of Tašrītu of the second year, excluding 19 able-bodied men (*itbāru*) to Šamaš-iddin [...], the women (*amīltu*) must not dwell in the house of a *mār banē*, they must not give [a child] in adoption to a *mār banē*. Among them Idintu, Miztaja and Bazītu shall yearly give three *gulenu*-textiles (as) their labor obligation to Šamaš out of their own accord. They must not dwell in another place. If anyone among (them) [should go] to [another place], Šamaš-ahu-iddin [...] another [...]. [They are] residents (*najjālu*) of Šamaš ([^{LÚ}]na-a-la-a ša ^{UTU}[šunu]).”

See Ragen 2006: 218ff. for a full edition of the text and discussion. He also argues that these women may be *širkatus* “though nothing in the text indicates this specifically”.

“residents” after their (re)settlement but they may also have been *najjālus* before, wives and children of male *aššābus/najjālus* dwelling on temple land. After their husbands had died they had no means to survive. The document does not explicitly call them temple dependents (*širkus*) but makes them subject to the same status-related restrictions, probably in return for the protection and maintenance they would henceforth receive. That they were peasants (*najjālus*) dwelling on temple land is merely an additional piece of information. The term probably does not refer to a juridical status.

2.7. *Niše būti* “(Subordinate) Household Members”, “Servants”, “Retainers”

The “people of the house”⁹¹ are household members, usually not the (legitimate) nuclear family of the pater familias,⁹² but it cannot be excluded that these were never meant when this term was used. *Nišū* in general can mean “family”.⁹³ In Neo-Babylonian documents the term often refers to slaves, for example in sale contracts and in pledge clauses.⁹⁴ The term can be used as a synonym to *amēluttu* “domestics, servants”⁹⁵ but is neutral with respect to the nature of the servile status. Also temple personnel (*širkus*) could be called *niše būti*.⁹⁶ GC 1, 307 indicates that subordinates who were connected to a private household on the basis of a contract were not subsumed under the term. The text records an interdiction to do business “with the people of the house of Nabû-šarru-ušur or those who are (otherwise) connected to his household, the shepherds and herdsmen” (¹¹)*it-ti* ^{LU}UN^{MES} É ŠÁ ^{MD}AG-LUGAL-URU ¹²)*ti-pu šá it-ti É-šú ʔe-pu-ú* ¹³)*it-ti* ^{LU}SIPA-ú u ^{LU}na-qí-du).

3. Other Designations of Laborers

3.1. *Gardu* “Servant”, “Retainer of the Royal Family”

Babylonian *gardu* is a loanword from Iranian **grda*. The same word appears as *grd*’ in Achaemenid Aramaic texts from Egypt and in the Elamite Persepolis texts as *kurtaš*.⁹⁷ In the Bisotun-inscription, the Old Persian word *māniya* “domestic servant” is rendered by Elamite *kurtaš* but the exact implications remain unclear.⁹⁸ *Gardus* are workers whose labor is remunerated by rations or subsist-

⁹¹ An earlier treatment of this term can be found in Dandamaev 2009²: 96–98.

⁹² At least this is indicated by pre-Neo-Babylonian attestations, e.g. those from Nuzi in CAD N: 287 where wives and children are listed apart from the “people of the house”.

⁹³ *Nišūšu* “his people” can refer to family members of a pater familias, see CAD N: 289.

⁹⁴ E.g. *Nbn.* 40; *Dar.* 340.

⁹⁵ E.g. *TCL* 13, 193.

⁹⁶ CT 56, 572 for the dependents of Ebabbar in contrast to corvée laborers (*urāšu*) and hirelings. The “people of the divine household” were also mentioned by Esarhaddon’s Babylonian agent Mār-Issar in SAA 10, 359: UN^{MES} ŠÁ É.DINGIR^{MES} “people of the temple”.

⁹⁷ W. Henning cited in Stolper 1985: 56 and Dandamaev 2009²: 572. For the *kurtaš* in Persepolis, see Briant 2002: 429–439; Dandamaev 2009²: 573–584 and the contribution by M. Tamerus in the present volume.

⁹⁸ DB I. 65 = OP § 14 / Elam. And Akk. § 13 (Bae 2001: 103f.; I am grateful to W. Henkelman whose unpublished Elamite transliteration and its translation I could consult). The context is Darius’ restoration of everything that Gaumāta had “taken away” from

ence fields. Most of the Babylonian evidence comes from the Murašû archive where *gardus* possess fields within the “land-for-service” system. Their overseers are called *šaknu*, just as the overseers of other retainers in the stateland administration, but occasionally the Iranian term *gardupatu* (corresponding to *kurdabattiš* in Elamite texts) turns up.⁹⁹ In Babylonia *gardus* are always connected with the king, the royal family or their estates. The fact that the term *garda* is attested in Babylonia and Egypt points to an administrative situation that is closely related to imperial administrative structures. *Gardu* in Babylonia and *grd'* in the context of the Aršama-archive does not denote a special legal status. I would suggest that these workers are referred to by an Iranian word because they were the retainers of noble Iranians, and the estate owners will likely have referred to them as their *garda*. They were bound to work on landed domains of the Persian nobility that lay outside of the Iranian heartland and they were “under the surveillance of a crown agency”.¹⁰⁰ Their juridical status was presumably no different from that of other retainers/feudatories in the “fief”-system, the *šušānu* in Babylonia. In the Iranian heartland **grda-/kurtaš* may likewise designate workers dependent on the state¹⁰¹ but it is not excluded that the term had a wider meaning there. Further investigations are needed; for now an overview is provided by Mark Tamerus in the present volume.

3.2. *Ikkaru* (^{LÜ}ENGAR) “Farm Laborer, Ploughman” versus *errēšu* “Sharecropping Ploughman/Cultivator”

Ikkaru (^{LÜ}ENGAR, pl. *ikkarātu*) and *errēšu* are the two major designations for people farming arable land. They refer to plowmen or farm laborers. M. Jursa

the army/people. Old Persian: *ābicariš gaiθāmcā māniyamcā viθbišcā* “ābicariš (debated: “pasture” or “servant”), cattle, *māniya*-servants and ‘those (under the command) of houses’”. Elamite: *lu-taš a-ak āš a-ak* ^{DIŠ}*kur-taš a-ak* ^{HUL-HI}^{MEŠ} *mar-da²-nu²-ip¹-ma* “lu-taš (unclear), cattle, *kurtaš*-servants and ‘those (under the command) of houses’”. The Akkadian and Aramaic versions do not run strictly parallel here: Akkadian: *GU⁴HIL^A UDU^{HIL^A} A.ŠA^{MEŠ} LÜ^{HUN}.GÁ^{MEŠ} É qa-šá-a-tú* “cattle and (small) livestock, fields, hired workers and bow-fiefs”; Aramaic: [...] *nksyhwm wbythm* [...] “[...] their property and their houses [...]”. The Akkadian version is not idiomatic. *Agru* “hireling” is far from an appropriate translation; hirelings cannot be taken away like property (although Stolper 1985: 57 is right when he states that it was presumably intended to express the notion “(generic) laborer” by *agru*). **Māna* and *viθ* are both Iranian words for “house” which can be understood literally as a domestic structure or a (royal) domain in the sense of a landed estate. “Those (under the command) of houses” could therefore be simply domestic servants or servile workers on landed estates. It is likely that both types of “houses” and their personnel were meant here but in what order? And does the Elamite version render them correctly? A *māniya/kurtaš* may originally have been a “servant on estates” and later *kurtaš* developed an even wider semantic range “dependent laborer”.

⁹⁹ Stolper 1985: 57; Dandamaev 2009²: 571f. with fn. 24.

¹⁰⁰ Stolper 1985: 58 with reference to a royal official designated as *ahšadrapanu* in connection with *gardus*.

¹⁰¹ This is the opinion of the majority of scholars, see Stolper 1985: 56f with older literature.

(1995: 7f.) was the first to clarify the difference between the two terms,¹⁰² showing that *ikkaru* served as the professional designation ‘farm laborer’ while an *errēšu* is a “sharecropper”, the latter being a legal-functional and professional term.

Errēšu: “tenant farmer, cultivator” (according to CAD E: 304) designates a person who has leased land from a landowner. This can be a private landowner but as most of our attestations come from temple archives most pertain to tenants of temple land. In the Eanna archive, the term *errēšu* is only used for sharecroppers leasing arable land, not for gardeners (*nukurribu*) who had taken orchards on sharecropping terms as well.¹⁰³ Therefore *errēšu* can be seen as a professional designation “ploughman, cultivator” with the specific legal-functional meaning “sharecropper”. In contrast to *ikkarus* who perform agricultural work for rations, sharecroppers were entitled to a fixed percentage of the harvest.¹⁰⁴ The harvest shares appear as *zittu*, simply meaning “share” (as a general term), or as *šibšu*, a more specific designation of the “harvest share” payable by the sharecropper.¹⁰⁵ The percentage of the yield which sharecroppers paid varied in accordance with the labor input that was needed; often we encounter a share of 50%.¹⁰⁶ *Errēšus* had to provide their own tools. On the temple domain, land was leased to *errēšus* where the temple’s own agricultural workforce was insufficient to work all the available land. This may have been the rule rather than the exception.¹⁰⁷ The sharecroppers were included in the same management scheme as the temple farm-hands, the *ikkarus*. *Errēšu* is not a status designation. Presumably these cultivators were most often free landless men; free men owning small farms who were able to take on more work may occasionally have been among them.¹⁰⁸

Ikkaru: the sign ENGAR is identical with the sign APIN “plough” (G¹⁸APIN = *epinnu*). That *ikkaru* is written ^{LÜ}ENGAR is, according to Janković (2013: 29), indicative of the fact that ploughing is the “most time-consuming, work-intensive, and hence the most typical activity” of an agricultural laborer.

¹⁰² Previous scholarship is summarized by Dandamaev 2009²: 585–591. After Jursa 1995 who drew his conclusions primarily from Sipparian evidence, the newest and most comprehensive treatment of *ikkaru* and *errēšu* can be found in B. Janković’s dissertation on the agriculture of Uruk (Janković 2013). The passage here is based mainly on these two works.

¹⁰³ Janković 2013: 62.

¹⁰⁴ Jursa 1995: 7, 82; Janković 2013: 62–66, both with previous literature.

¹⁰⁵ In the Eanna archive, the term *šibšu* is used exclusively for the share in winter crops (sesame, *cuscuta*), according to Janković 2013: 62.

¹⁰⁶ Jursa 1995: 81; Janković 2013: 64.

¹⁰⁷ Janković 2013: 64. Jursa 1995: 84 infers from lists of incoming yields that two-thirds of the arable land around the town Āl-Šamaš was cultivated by sharecroppers. Sharecroppers were occasionally also working on land that was cultivated by the temple’s own workforce but we do not know how exactly they distributed the work and the income (Janković 2013: 65).

¹⁰⁸ It was not even excluded that temple farm-hands lease temple land. Jursa 1995: 12 mentions three lease contracts in which the lessee was an *ikkaru* but he assessed those contracts as exceptional.

There has been a long discussion about the status of the *ikkarus*. Scholars either assumed that *ikkaru* was also a legal status designation that can be set apart from the status of a *širku*, a “temple dependent”, or that all *ikkarus* were temple dependents. We can now be certain that neither was the case: *ikkaru* is purely a professional designation without legal implications.¹⁰⁹ The translations “plowman, farm laborer” in *CAD* I: 49 fit the Neo-Babylonian evidence best. As most attestations come from temple archives, the majority of the *ikkarus* in our texts were dependents of the temples whose legal status was *širkūtu* “temple dependency”. There were also *ikkarus* of state land in which case the farm laborers had the status of a *šušānu* “state dependent”.¹¹⁰ Some texts mention an *ikkaru* of an individual person. Presumably a person who “has” a farm laborer was simply an owner of land. In our records it is often a lessee of land.¹¹¹ In this case the status of the farm worker remains unknown. It could be a legally dependent person, in particular if the leased land is temple or state land, but he could also be a poor freeman who does the work of a ploughman for the owner or lessee of a field.¹¹² The temple itself, as an owner of land, sometimes hired farm-hands for a wage in silver. Thus, the *ikkarus* who worked for the temple were not necessarily all of the same status.¹¹³ Nevertheless the majority were presumably temple dependents, and therefore the temple would often simply use the term *ikkaru* “farm laborer” (without the specification “of Eanna / the Lady of Uruk”) when it referred to its own, dependent agricultural workforce.

The farm laborers mentioned in temple archives worked on temple land that was administered by the temple in (more or less) direct exploitation. During the time of the general rent farm, the temple conceded a fixed number of plough-teams consisting of the temple’s agricultural workforce to the rent farmer.¹¹⁴ The

¹⁰⁹ Jursa 1995: 7 “‘*ikkaru*’ ist eine echte Berufsbezeichnung”; Janković 2013: 30: “There is no such thing as an ‘*ikkaru*-status’ ... the *ikkarus*’ dependency on the temple stems from their *širkūtu*-status”.

¹¹⁰ Examples of *šušānu-ikkarus* are given by Dandamaev 2009²: 616.

¹¹¹ Dandamaev 2009²: 617–619; Janković 2013: 33. *Contra* Dandamaev’s translation, these *ikkarus* were not necessarily “owned” by the person whose land they ploughed as *ikkaru ša* PN simply means “farm-hand/ploughman of PN” and does not imply legal ownership.

¹¹² Also rent farmers who had leased temple land could hire free men to perform the hard work of ploughing (Janković 2013: 31f.) in addition to the dependent *ikkarus* whose working capacity the temple let to the rent farmer together with the land.

¹¹³ Janković 2013: 32f. See, as an example, *GC* 2, 246 (edited and discussed in Janković 2013: 30) according to which the temple hired ploughmen called *DUMU^{MEŠ} šá^{MTIN-SU} LU^{ENGAR} šá^{MDEN-SU}*, “the sons of Balāssu, the ploughman of Bēl-erība”.

¹¹⁴ The term “general rent farm”, “Generalpacht” in German goes back to “ferme générale”, a term coined by D. Cocquerillat 1968, 37–104. In this type of lease contract the temple leases very large tracts of its land, a number of ploughs along with ploughmen and animals to an entrepreneur against the payment of a fixed sum of barley and dates. The temple, however, did not give up control entirely. The rent farmer, for his part, had to invest and manage the work; it was not merely the lease of the right to collect the revenue against a fixed sum (Jursa 1995: 85). Eanna’s general rent farm has now been treated comprehensively by Janković 2013: 145–264. See Jursa 1995, chapter 7 for Sippar.

entire yield produced by the *ikkarus* belonged to the temple or to the rent farmer respectively. A temple farm-hand received rations in kind. This is made explicit by YOS 6, 103 (the *Edict of Belšazzar*).¹¹⁵ Ration lists normally do not mention farm-hand's rations because they were not distributed in the same way as rations to temple dependents working outside the agricultural sector. Naturally, rations for the farm laborers were subtracted immediately before the yield was collected and taken to the temple's storehouses.

The *ikkarus* were organized in plough teams (*epinnu*, ideally four adult men) who were subordinated to an overseer, called either *rab ešerti* "decurio" or *rab epinni* "overseer of plough(teams)".¹¹⁶ In this formation they also performed their corvée duties, for instance canal maintenance or work on royal building projects in the context of the temple's tax obligations. The plough teams' agricultural work was managed either by the general rent farmer, or by an "overseer of the farm laborers" (*rab ikkarāti*) who was appointed to supervise the agricultural management and to serve as an intermediary between the farm laborers and the temple administration.¹¹⁷

3.3. *Itbāru* "Man Fit for Work"

*Itbāru*¹¹⁸ turns up in particular in lists of dependent temple personnel such as farm workers and gardeners. It designates men who were considered productive workers. In records of physical examinations of temple personnel only men who were too old to work (*šību*) and children up to four, sometimes five years of age were excluded. It seems that children from the age of five or six onwards were reckoned among the *itbārus*. Occasionally the logogram GURUŠ (KAL) is used to designate a worker in these lists; it is therefore likely that the sign was read *it-bāru*.¹¹⁹ *Itbāru* is thus neither a status nor a professional designation but a functional term for a male who was able to work.

3.4. *Šābu* (ERÍN) "Men, People, Workers, Soldiers, Troop"

Neo-Babylonian has retained the large semantic range for *šābu* that this word already had in earlier periods. It often designates men who are to perform labor or military duties but it can also refer to the population of a city or country. Women and children may be included. The CAD Š: 46–55 lists examples for the various meanings. *Šābu* is often used as a collective but it also appears in the singular, for example in *šāb šarri* "royal soldier".

¹¹⁵ Cocquerillat 1968: 37 and 108. The latest translation and discussion is Janković 2013: 37–39 (with further references).

¹¹⁶ Janković 2013: 36f.

¹¹⁷ Janković 2013: 114f. Šumu-ukīn, one of the general rent farmers of Eanna, also bore the title *rab ikkarāti*.

¹¹⁸ This passage is based on Jursa 1995: 8f. and van Driel 2002: 209.

¹¹⁹ Jursa 1995: 36. Other logograms are KU.LI.LI and KU.LI.ZI (CAD I: 294).

3.5. *Urāšu* “Corvée Laborer”

An *urāšu* is a corvée laborer, i.e., someone who performs labor services for the state as a tax obligation.¹²⁰ Many of those who owed *urāšu*-service did not perform the labor themselves but hired a substitute corvée laborer who served as their *urāšu*, or paid a monetary compensation to an official who was in charge of the administration of the labor duty.¹²¹ The compensation then was also called *urāšu*; the term therefore assumed the meaning “tax for corvée labor”.

Urāšu-laborers stand in contrast to hirelings (*agru* = ^{LÜ}HUN.GÁ). The latter sell their labor against a wage, normally paid in silver, occasionally in kind. Corvée laborers received rations while they worked for the state. The costs to maintain corvée laborers were much lower than the wages that hired laborers could claim. Institutions were therefore keen to conscribe all the corvée laborers that were available to them.¹²²

Urāšu-duties can be diverse. Laborers were put to work at royal building projects, the maintenance of canals, for agricultural work and for transport duties.¹²³ However, it was always civic. Military service was not called *urāšu*. The state properties (“fiefs”) were encumbered with military service and corvée labor (*urāšu*). When *qaštu* “bow” became a general word for taxes owed on the basis of the possession of a bow-fief, *urāšu* appears as a part of that tax obligation.¹²⁴

Urāšus also worked for the temples. According to van Driel (2002: 265) the state made *urāšu*-workers available to them for building projects. In fact, the temple had access to corvée laborers because certain *mār banê* paid taxes to the temple as an institution (of the state) that organized and implemented public building projects.¹²⁵ But when the dependents of the temples (*širkus*) performed corvée labor, they could also be designated as *urāšu*.¹²⁶ Only occasionally texts distinguish between *urāšus*, temple personnel (*nišê bīti*) and hirelings who were all employed at the same building project.¹²⁷ In this case, the term served to distinguish between temple personnel (working as the temple’s “own” *urāšus*), corvée laborers hired by those who chose not to perform themselves (called *urāšu* here) and wage laborers that were hired by the temple directly. Hence, the term occasionally assumes two slightly different but related meanings: first, it was a corvée laborer who performed the work either as a substitute for a tax payer or on his own account as a tax payer (or on account of his juridical status, e.g. a *širku*). Second, it can mean a substitute tax laborer who was hired by a tax payer or by

¹²⁰ See Jursa 1995: 121, fn. 234; van Driel 2002: 264–268; Kleber 2008: 103f.; Jursa 2009: 258–262.

¹²¹ Jursa 2011: 434, 438.

¹²² Kleber 2008: 103f.

¹²³ Jursa 1995: 121, fn. 234 for work on the irrigation system; Jursa 2009: 258–262 for other duties, including agricultural work on royal estates.

¹²⁴ Jursa 2009: 258.

¹²⁵ Kleber 2008: 103–106; Jursa 2011: 434.

¹²⁶ Jursa 1995: 121, fn. 234 mentions CT 56, 792 where dependent farm-hands, gardeners, shepherds and craftsmen were subsumed under the header *urāšu*. More evidence can be found in letters, see Kleber 2008: 105f.

¹²⁷ Jursa 1995: 121, fn. 234 (CT 56, 572).

the institution with the money that the tax payer had paid. The person who performs this labor was a hireling with respect to the tax payer, but vis-à-vis the state it was an *urāšu* worker. The state only paid “rations”. The difference between the rations and the actual costs of the hire were borne by the tax payer who chose not to perform the work himself.

Hence, *urāšu* is a functional designation for a corvée laborer, not a status or professional designation. Among the *urāšu*-performers were a) men who sold their labor (possibly beyond their own tax obligation), b) slaves who were sent as substitutes by their owners who owed taxes, c) free men who owed taxes but could not afford to hire a substitute, and d) dependents who performed corvée duty for the household to which they belonged.

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