



BARRA

BARRA, or *Bāru*, an Iranian loanword designating a tax in Babylonian texts, borrowed from Old Iranian *bar-* “to carry” (cf. Gk. *phóros*). The word appears nearly seventy times between 442 and 417 B.C. in the archives of the house of Murāšu in different spellings (*bar-ra*, *ba-a-ri*, *ba-ar-ra*) intended to indicate the long vowel. It occurs almost exclusively in tax receipts, in enumerations of the following kind: “x minas of silver, y measures of beer, barley, or flour, total taxes: the soldier of the king, the flour of the king, the *bāru*, and all sorts of payments for the house of the king.” The context and the fact that taxable lands were always fiefs attest that the *bāru* was an obligation for military purposes, payable in kind but especially in silver, and that it was probably the least important of the three mentioned taxes. Aside from the receipts there exists a suspension of tenancy for nonpayment of “the flour of the king and of the *bāru*.”

Despite the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (s.vv. *al-lāku*, *bāru*, and *zabālu* 1, b) and W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden, 1959- (s.v. *bāru*), the homonym *bāru*, cited in H. H. Figulla (p. 48 lines 2, 4, 7, 10, 14; and p. 49 lines 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 16), refers to a “litter” carried at royal succession ceremonies and must be another Iranian loanword (also from the base *bar-* “to carry”).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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H. H. Figulla, *Ur Excavation Texts 4*, Philadelphia, 1949, p. 12.

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