

Meanings of PARIS in Neo- and Late Babylonian Akkadian

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[This paper describes the meanings of the verbal form PARIS in Neo- and Late Babylonian Akkadian. Our analysis reveals that the PARIS form not only retains its original functions, but also expands its usage in two directions: (1) PARIS tends to become the only way to express the passive voice of transitive verbs, superseding the N-stem forms, and (2) after the verb *išû* ‘to have’ fell out of use, a new category — PARIS of possession — emerged for a group of transitive verbs never attested in the PARIS form at earlier stages of the Akkadian language.]

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1. Introduction

The PARIS verbal form is sometimes described in literature as “stative” (e.g., GAG §77a-d, Kouwenberg 2010:163) or “permansive” (e.g., Rowton 1962, Buccellati 1996:409). For G-stem verbs it is formed by adding person, gender and number endings (*āku, āta, āti, Ø, at, ānu, ātunu, ātina, ū, ā*) to a stem of the shape *CaCiC*.¹ Historically PARIS is apparently a nominal form which has come to be synchronically included in the verbal paradigm.² The inflected PARIS form can refer to past, present or future without morphological differentiation.

The general evolution of the meanings and functions of PARIS with special attention to Old Babylonian is described in Kouwenberg 2010 and in Arkhipov et al. 2021. However, the development of the semantics of PARIS in the later periods of Babylonian has been investigated in its own right only by Streck (1995: 177-189). The goal of the present paper is to treat the use of PARIS in the Neo- and Late Babylonian language and describe the new functions of this verbal form.

In all periods, the basic grammatical function of PARIS is the expression of state (GAG §77e, Streck 1995:166, Kouwenberg 2010:163-176). As noted by Kouwenberg (2010:163): “it is used indiscriminately for all kinds of states, whether permanent or transient, whether a ‘pure’ state or a state resulting from a previous event”. More precisely, as stated by Huehnergard (2011:393), PARIS has three main functions: (1) descriptive for stative verbs, such as ‘I’m ill’, (2) resultative for active intransitive verbs, such as ‘I’ve escaped’, and (3) passive for transitive verbs, such as ‘It was built’.

1. See for details and the particularities of the formation Kouwenberg 2010:161-163.

2. For detailed discussion with regard to the verbal or nominal nature of PARIS see Streck 1995:177-189 (esp.186-189), Buccellati 1996, Kouwenberg 2000, Kouwenberg 2010:164.

In this paper, we give an overview of all the functions of PARIS in Neo- and Late Babylonian Akkadian. We start with stative verbs, after that we analyse the use of PARIS for resultative verbs, and finally we study a group of transitive verbs which beside the original use of PARIS for passive meaning shows the emergence of a new value for this form, which we will label the PARIS of possession. Such a description will be useful for the philological interpretation of Neo- and Late Babylonian texts.

2. Corpus

For the present study and the analyses of the Neo- and Late Babylonian use of PARIS we took a corpus consisting of all published Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian letters. The Neo-Babylonian corpus includes SAA 17 and SAA 18, i.e., 410 letters of the 8th-7th c. BC. The Late Babylonian corpus (7th-4th c. BC) includes the following editions: Ebeling 1930, Ebeling 1949, MacGinnis 1995, and Jursa et al. 2014 (1025 letters), as well as unpublished material cited in CAD, Streck 1995, and Hackl 2007. Thus the entire Neo- and Late Babylonian corpus contains ca. 1750 letters.

As opposed to 1st millennium Akkadian texts of other genres (primarily administrative), which contain a large number of fossilized formulae and many Standard Babylonian features, epistolary texts reflect the spoken language relatively well. The latest date at which Akkadian still remained a spoken language in Babylonia is now considered to be the 2nd century BC (see Beaulieu 2006, Popova 2016, Hackl 2018, Hackl 2021 for discussion).

3. PARIS of stative verbs

In our Neo- and Late Babylonian corpora, at least the following stative verbs are attested in PARIS: *adāru* ‘to be(come) dark’, *aqāru* ‘to be(come) expensive, precious’, *arāku* ‘to be(come) long’, *bakū* ‘to complain tearfully’, *balātu* ‘to live’, *banū* ‘to be(come) good; to be(come) pleasant’,³ *baṭālu* has two meanings: ‘to be(come) inactive’ and ‘to come to an end’, *be’ēšu* ‘to be(come) bad’, *hadū* ‘to be(come) joyful’, *kabāru* ‘to be(come) thick, solid’, *mādu* ‘to be(come) numerous’, *malū* ‘to be(come) full; to fill up with’,⁴ *marāšu* ‘to be(come) ill’, *mašū* ‘to be(come) able’; ‘to be(come) equal; to be(come) sufficient’, *maṭū* ‘to be(come) little’, *nakādu* ‘to be(come) anxious; to be in a dangerous situation’, *qatū* ‘to come to an end’, *qerēbu* ‘to be(come) close’,⁵ *ra’ābu* ‘to be(come) angry, furious; to tremble’, *rabū* ‘to be(come) big’, *rēqu* ‘to be(come) distant’, *riāhu* ‘to remain’, *riāqu* ‘to be(come) empty; to be without work’, *samū* ‘to be(come) hesitant; to be undecided’, *sanāqu* ‘to be in need’, *šapālu* ‘to be(come) deep; to be(come) low in quality or quantity’, *ṭābu* ‘to be(come) good’, (*w*)*ašābu* ‘to live’.

For these verbs, prefixed forms express the start of the state in question (ingressive), whereas PARIS is the default way of expressing stative meaning *per se* as in routine exx. 1-3 (present) and 4 (past). Such usage does not differ from the Old Babylonian standard (Buccellati 1996:412).

3. The meaning ‘to be pleasant’ for *banū* emerges in NB; later, in LB, this meaning is restricted to the collocation with *panu*, lit. ‘your/his face is pleasant’.

4. In all periods of the Akkadian language, the verb *malū* is a labile verb meaning both ‘to be full’ and ‘to fill up with’.

5. The meaning ‘to approach’ is rarer for this verb, although consider the example from our corpus: [*itt*]i PN *an[a šarri] a-q[ar-r]u-bu* ‘I will arrive in the presence of the King together with PN’ (AOAT 414/1 233:12).

- (1) PN *bēliani* **ba-liṭ** *u ardāni ša šar māt Aššur anīni*
Our lord PN **is (still) alive** and we are (therefore) subjects of the king of Assyria (ABL 576:16)
- (2) *atta tīde ša alla išten* túg.kur.ra *ina pania yānu u mar-ša-ka* túg.kur.ra *la na-šá'-a'-[ku]*
You know, I have just one garment-*tukkura* and I **am sick** (and) I **am not bringing** a garment-*tukkura* (AOAT 414/1 228:8-12)
- (3) *u anāku šatta šanāti agâ mar-ša-ak na-ak-da-ak*
As for me, these two years I **have been sick** (BIN 1 83:18-21)
- (4) *ša ana muhhi bēliya lā alliku Nabû lū idû kī lū māda lā mar-ša-ku mala alāku ma-ša-ku-ma*
The fact that I have not come to my Lord (is because): may Nabû know: I **was very sick** (and) I **was unable** to travel (AOAT 414/1 233:32-35)

For several verbs of this group, namely *baṭālu* ‘to come to an end’, *qerēbu* ‘to be close’, and (w)*ašābu* with *mukinnutu* ‘to be ... for testimony’, the PARIS forms can be translated with the help of the existential predicate ‘to be’ or ‘to be not’. Consider exx. 5-8.

- (5) *šīpātu takiltu ba-aṭ-il*
There **is no** purple wool (CT 22 13:12)
- (6) *kaspu mala ina pan bēliya qer-bi rukussu kunuk*
Prepare and place under seal whatever silver **is available** to my lord. (AOAT 414/1 30:10-11)
- (7) *sahlē ina bīt qé-rib*
The cress **is** in the house (AOAT 414/1 19:14-15)
- (8) *an[āku] ina Bābil^{ki} ana^{lú} mukinnutu ina libbi áš-ba-ka*
I **was** in Babylon for testimony (AOAT 414/1 240:17-19)

4. Resultative PARIS

The second standard use of PARIS gives resultative meaning in intransitive verbs, and is restricted to telic events (Kouwenberg 2010:169). However, PARIS forms from these verbs are poorly represented in our corpora: the only example is provided by the verb *halāqu* ‘to escape’⁶. Consider ex. 9 for resultative PARIS, and note the use of the perfective IPTARAS form from this verb in a similar, although not identical context (ex. 10).

6. Buccellati (1996:409-410) and Kouwenberg (2010:169) rightly note that the difference between resultative PARIS and stative PARIS is not always clear. The verb *halāqu* in particular is discussed by Buccellati (1996:409), who alternatively proposes to understand it as a stative verb ‘to be(come) missing’. According to Streck (1995:166-167), sentences with PARIS and with IPRUS/IPTARAS should have different interpretation: PARIS expresses static semantics without reference to a precedent action, whereas IPRUS/IPTARAS express a result of a precedent action.

(9) *bēlu lū īdu* ^{M1}*lamu[tānu]* *ša bēliya ša hal-qa-ti ana Bābili ana bāb ēkalli abkat*
 (My) lord should know: the slave girl of my lord, who had **run away**, is being led to Babylon, to the palace gate. (AOAT 414/1 233:22-25)

(10) ^{L1}*qallata šīti kī ta-hal-liq akannaka ina pan PN₁ u PN₂ ^{L1}kullu²ū*
 After that slave girl of mine **ran away**, (she is) there with Bānūnu and Haddāya, the *kullu²u*-dancers (AOAT 414/1 137:5-9)

Ex. 11 with the intransitive verb *qabū* ‘to speak’ can perhaps be treated in the same way.

(11) *adi muhhi bēlu ul qa-ba-a[?]*
 Until now (my) Lord did not **speak** to me (CT 22 193:6)

5. Passive PARIS of transitive verbs

Transitive verbs can be divided into several groups according to the meaning of their PARIS form.

Transitive verbs for which PARIS simply expresses passive semantics are the following: *abāku* ‘to lead away’, *amāru* ‘to inspect’, *dagālu* ‘to see, to look’, *hāru* ‘to prepare’, *kalū* ‘to detain, to hold’, *kanāku* ‘to seal’, *kullu* ‘to hold’, *lapātu* ‘to touch’, *maḥāru* ‘to receive’, *makāku* ‘to spread’, *nadānu* ‘to give’, *nadū* ‘to throw down, to lay down’, *nasāku* ‘to throw (down)’, *našū* ‘to take, to carry (away)’, *pasāmu* ‘to veil; to cover; to hide’, *pašāru* ‘to release, to free’, *patāhu* ‘to puncture, to pierce’, *paṭāru* ‘to release’, *petū* ‘to open’, *qalāpu* ‘to peel’, *rašū* ‘to acquire, to get’, *ṣabātu* ‘to seize’, *ṣahātu* ‘to press, to squeeze’, *ṣarāpu* ‘to fire (bricks); to burn’, *šakānu* ‘to put’, *šamātu* ‘to mark’, *šapāru* ‘to send’, *šaṭāru* ‘to write’, *tabālu* ‘to take away’, *zaqāpu* ‘to fix; to plant’.

For all periods of the Akkadian language, PARIS as a passive form from transitive verbs competes with the N-stem.⁷ As noted by Huehnergard (2011:361-362), the semantic difference between PARIS and N-stem is that the finite N-stem forms may connote a process, whereas PARIS (a “verbal adjective” in Huehnergard’s terminology) rather connotes the condition or state resulting from the action of the G-stem. Of course, this fine line between the two meanings is not always traceable in practice (Kouwenberg 2010:169-170).

In Neo- and Late Babylonian, N-stem forms are rare. For the present tense, N-stem IPPARRAS is still attested several times (ex. 12), but for the past tense, there are two attestations in the same text in Neo-Babylonian⁸ and the only instance with N-stem IPPARIS found in the Late Babylonian corpus is ex. 13. A much more common expression of the passive is PARIS (ex. 14-17).

(12) *amur UD.X.[KÁM] ni-ip-pa-ṭar*
 See, on the [x]th day **we will be released** (YOS III 27:14)

7. There are two main ways to express the passive voice of transitive verbs in the Akkadian language: N-stem forms (GAG §90e) and PARIS. The corpora study by Arkhipov et al. 2021, shows that in Sargonic Akkadian, only PARIS is used, whereas N-stem passive is not attested at all. In OB and OAss, N-stem and PARIS coexist (see also examples in Kouwenberg 2010:294-300), although without clear distribution. In the *MB corpus and in the NB Nineveh corpus*, passive is expressed by PARIS for the past and by IPPARRAS (N-stem form of IPARRAS) for the non-past passive.

8. As shown by M. Kalinin in Arkhipov et al. 2021, in SAA 17 21:8-12.

- (13) *ina šilli ša ili dullu ša bēliya in-ni-ip-šú*
Under the divine protection the duty of my Lord **is done** (CT XXII 53:9)
- (14) *PN ša ina kār Eanna paṭ-ra šupra*
Send to me PN, who **is released** (from duty?) in the Eanna quay (TCL 9 91:18)
- (15) *[en]na adāna [an]a UD.25.KAM ulūlu šak-na*
Now the time limit **was fixed** for 25th day of Ulūlu (AOAT 414/1 41:16-18)
- (16) *enna uṭṭatu ša ina libbi erēšu gabbi na-šá-a-ta*
Now all the grain that I have grown **is taken away** (AOAT 414/1 162:18-20)
- (17) *NIN.MEŠ ka-la-²a man-ma ul ir-ru-bu*
Women **are retained**, nobody will come (UET IV 191:21-22)

Detailed statistics are needed, but it is very likely that PARIS gradually superseded the N-stem in the course of the evolution of Akkadian. In particular, PARIS became the basic expression for the passive in the 1st millennium BC.

6. Active past PARIS of transitive verbs

A special case is constituted by those rare instances where the PARIS of transitive verbs is used for the active past tense with an animate subject, i.e., the PARIS forms occasionally take on the normal function of IPTARAS and IPRUS.⁹ Consider exx. 18-19 (where PARIS is used alongside IPTARAS, both expressing active past), and ex. 20. This use of PARIS in our corpora is documented at least for *maḥāru* ‘receive’, *našū* ‘take, carry (away)’ and *šabātu* ‘to seize’.

- (18) *bītā ištēn biltu kaspu ubbal u ana magānu na-áš-ši (...)* *bītā akī pirki ta-at-ta-ši*
My house is worth one talent of silver, but he **has taken** it (= my house) for nothing (...)
You **have taken** my house wrongfully (UET 4 192:14-18).
- (19) *eqlēti ina libbi im-ta-har u mimma in libbi ul mah-rak*
He **has received** fields from it but I **have got nothing** from it (ABL 912:11-13)
- (20) *harrānu agā ša ahhūtu ša abua ittiya ša-ab-tu*
(Regarding) this common journey that my father **has taken** with me (AOAT 414/1 124:6-8)

This phenomenon has already been noted by Buccellati (1996:409-410) and Kouwenberg (2010:170-171) for Old Babylonian and other varieties of Akkadian. Both authors propose to translate such PARIS predicates (Kouwenberg labels these verbal forms “active stative”) with the help of various paraphrases.

9. In the Akkadian of the 1st millennium, IPTARAS became the default form for the past tense in positive main clauses or in interrogative clauses without a question word, whereas IPRUS was used for the past tense in subordinate clauses, in clauses with negation, and in interrogative clauses with a question word (Kouwenberg 2010:153-154).

Strictly speaking, examples with active past PARIS may be much more numerous than is traditionally thought. If the agent is not expressed in the clause (this is chiefly the case for the 3rd personal pronouns ‘he, she, it, they’, which are normally omitted in non-emphatic position) and the agent and the patient are of the same grammatical gender and number, there is no formal way to discriminate whether the patient is the subject or the object of the PARIS predicate. See ex. 21 for an ambiguity of this kind.

- (21) *mimma ša pirki na-šú-u lušamma lud[da]kkunuši*
All that **was taken/he took** illegally, may I provide and give you (AOAT 414/1 161:12-15)

7. PARIS of possession

In earlier stages of Akkadian, possession could be expressed in two ways. The standard construction is with the prefix conjugation of the verb *išú* ‘to have’ (ex. 22). The second construction is with the PARIS form of the verb *našú* ‘to carry’ (ex. 23). The possessive construction with *išú* seems to be more frequent at least in Old Babylonian and is perhaps more archaic than the possessive construction with *našú*, although further statistical evaluation is needed.

- (22) U₈.UDU.HI.A *mala ti-šú-ú turdam*
Send me as many sheep as you **have** (OB, CT 29 21:21)

- (23) 1 *alpum ... simmam na-ši*
One bull **has** a wound (OB, YOS 2 71:7)

The possessive verb *išú* ‘to have’ decays by the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. If in the Neo-Babylonian corpus, in texts from SAA 17 and SAA 18, we still have three attestations of the verb *išú* (ex. 24), in our Late Babylonian corpus it is not attested at all. Instead, the PARIS model of possession expands: besides *našú* ‘to carry’ (ex. 25 for NB and ex. 26 for LB), several transitive verbs, never attested in PARIS at the earlier stages of Akkadian, acquire PARIS with the specific semantics of possession in Late Babylonian. These are *dagālu* ‘to see, to look’ (ex. 27-28), *kalû* ‘to detain, to hold’ (ex. 29), *kullu* ‘to hold’ (ex. 30), *rašû* ‘to acquire, to get’ (ex. 31).

- (24) *šarru bēlūni iqabbi umma dullu ippušú ragāma ʾul i-šú-úʾ*
The king, our lord, will say “They shall do the work! They shall **have** no claim!” (SAA 17 120:r30)

- (25) PN₁ *rab bīti* u PN₂ *mutir tēmu ša* PN₃ *ša* ^{URU}*Bīt-dakkuri kaspi mādu ina qātēšunu*
na-šú-ú-ni
PN₁, the major-domo, and PN₂, the information-officer of PN₃ from Bīt-Dakkuri,
Have a lot of silver on them. (SAA 18 056:3-6)

- (26) 8 *gín ina qatē* PN *na-šú-a-ka*
I **have** (lit.: I have carried) 8 shekels (of silver) from the hands of PN (AOAT 414/1 231:10-12)

- (27) *u mamma ul dag-la-ka ša ittahūa izzizu*
And I **have** nobody (lit.: I haven’t seen) who will stand with me (AOAT 414/1 45:4-5)

- (28) *alla 3 me uṭṭati ul iddin umma uṭṭatu ul dag-lak*
He gave only 300 (measures) of barley, saying: ‘I **have** no (lit.: I haven’t seen) barley’ (YOS 3 13:11)
- (29) GN *lū īdi ka-al-la-ka*
May GN know: I **have** (lit.: I hold) (the field...) (BIN 1 94:12-13)
- (30) *enna kul-la-ni umma uṭṭati binni*
Now we **have** (lit: we are holding) (the following words): ‘Please, give (us) barley!’ (AOAT 414/1 168:9-10)
- (31) *mimmu ina muhhi abiya ul ra-šá-tu-nu*
You (pl.) do not **have** (lit: you didn’t get) a claim against my father (TCL 12 14:9)

The exact semantic differences between possessive constructions with the aforementioned verbs can hardly be established on the basis of the available data. But it is interesting that the possessive PARIS from *dagālu* ‘to see’ is restricted to negative sentences (“I did not see” = “I do not have”, ex. 25-26), whereas other verbs can be used in both positive (ex. 27-28) and negative (ex. 29) contexts or are attested only in positive sentences (*kullu* ‘to hold’).

The process of emergence and expansion of the PARIS of possession for *dagālu*, *kalû*, *kullu* and *rašû* can be clearly traced in our corpora. We first observe the emergence of the use of PARIS that can be called “PARIS of possession” only in the Late Babylonian period. In the Neo-Babylonian period, the verb *išû* ‘to have’ is still used, and there are no examples of PARIS for *dagālu* and *rašû*, two examples of the passive PARIS of *kalû* and one active PARIS of *kullu*¹⁰ (ex. 32).

- (32) *enna PN qurbūtu u mār šiprānīšu kul-lu-na-ši umma bilāt kaspi amahharkunūši*
But now PN the bodyguard and his messengers are **holding us**, saying: “I am to Receive from you ten talents of silver” (SAA 18 114:7-9)

So the appearance of PARIS forms for *dagālu*, *kalû*, *kullu* and *rašû* is dated to the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods, and the expression of possession by means of this form is a Late Babylonian innovation. In the Late Babylonian corpus, possessive PARIS forms of such verbs as *dagālu* ‘to see, to look’ and *kalû* ‘to detain, to hold’ become even more frequent (about thirty examples in studied corpora) than constructions with *našû* (less than ten examples).

8. Conclusion

All functions of PARIS in Neo- and Late Babylonian Akkadian have been examined above. We can conclude that all the basic functions of PARIS were retained, namely expression of state for stative verbs, expression of resultative for intransitive telic verbs, and expression of passive for transitive verbs, as well as the infrequent (but already documented in Old Babylonian) active use of PARIS with transitive verbs.

10. It is to be noted that in all the examples in our corpora the PARIS of *kullu* introduces direct speech.

The use of PARIS for the passive meaning of transitive verbs became more common over time, to the extent that in this function PARIS can be seen gradually superseding the N-stem forms in Neo- and Late Babylonian.

After the possessive verb *išû* ‘to have’ became obsolete in Late Babylonian, the model of PARIS of possession with *našû* ‘to carry’ was expanded onto several new verbs, namely *dagālu* ‘to see, to look’, *kalû* ‘to detain, to hold’, *kullu* ‘to hold’, and *rašû* ‘to acquire, to get’.

It can be seen that the PARIS form is more widespread in Akkadian of the 1st millennium BC than at earlier stages of the language, superseding some other verbal forms.

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