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Administration of the Eanna Temple as Reflected in Letters
Case Study of a Letter Corpus from the Late Reign of Nebuchadnezzar II to the
End of the Reign of Nabonidus

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The work with this letter corpus and the Eanna Archive more broadly showed me the joy, fun and enormous potential of studying the lives of real people from the past and the merit of retelling their stories.

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1 Introduction: The Eanna Archive

The Eanna Temple is a temple dedicated to the Goddess Ištar located in the center of Uruk. The temple precinct dates back to the Late Uruk Period, when it was originally built as a sanctuary for the Sumerian Goddess Inanna.¹ During the first millennium BCE, as Uruk's prominence grew, the Eanna Temple district became an important administrative center, connecting the priestly elites and local population in terms of craft production.² These and many other activities pertaining to bureaucratic practices conducted in Eanna were documented in the form of numerous administrative and legal texts, which can today be referred to as the “Eanna-Archive”.

The Eanna Archive is the second largest temple archive of the Neo-Babylonian Period consisting out of around 8000 published and unpublished texts.³ Interest in this material existed since the 19th century, most notably through the travels and “excavations” conducted in Uruk by W. K. Loftus.⁴ The majority of the clay tablets from Eanna were found by illicit excavations and were distributed to Western museums by the antiquities' trade in the early 20th century.⁵ Today, pertinent tablets are housed in numerous different collections, foremost the Yale Babylonian Collection, the Princeton Theological Seminary, the British Museum, the Louvre, and the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin.

The first systematic excavations in Uruk, financed by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, started in the winter of 1912-13 under the leadership of J. Jordan and C. Preusser.⁶ After the First World War the focus was set on the Eanna District, with A. Falkenstein being the designated epigrapher.⁷ By this time, the site was already destroyed by looting pits, making it difficult to conduct proper archaeological excavation. Due to this, many of the tablets recovered during this period also lack detailed information on their primary archaeological context. It was only after the Second World War that H. Lenzen conducted a systematic survey and excavation at the site of Eanna, allowing for a better understanding of the temple complex.⁸ Still, the documentation for what tablet finds were made is often less than perfect.⁹

¹ See e.g., van Ess 2019: 205–212.

² Van Ess 2019: 210 f.

³ Jursa 2005: 138.

⁴ For an overview of excavations in Uruk with further bibliography see Payne 2007: 4ff. For a recent overview see van Ess 2019: 75–82.

⁵ See Nissen 2024 (<https://cdli.earth/articles/cdlj/2024-1>).

⁶ Payne 2007: 4ff.

⁷ Payne 2007: 4ff.

⁸ Payne 2007: 4ff.

⁹ Nissen 2024 (<https://cdli.earth/articles/cdlj/2024-1>).

The German Archaeological Institute (DAI) continued excavating in Uruk throughout 20th century, regularly publishing excavation reports in the UVB-Series (Vorläufiger Bericht über die von dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut und der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft aus Mitteln der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft unternommenen Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka). Additional studies on stratigraphy and finds were published in the AUWE-Series (Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka, Endberichte).

The tablets from Eanna cover a period of roughly two centuries from the time of Kandalānu up to the reign of Darius I.¹⁰ The majority of the material belongs therefore to the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods. What we refer to as the Eanna Archive was with high likelihood a so-called “dead archive”, meaning that these tablets were discarded in antiquity after no longer being deemed important.¹¹

1.1 Aims and goals

The contents of these tablets provide valuable insights into the bureaucracy and administration of these periods, both on the local level and beyond, within the framework of the large empires to which Uruk in the 6th century belonged (this being the Neo-Babylonian and the Achaemenid empires). A corpus that is especially rich in this regard are the letters from the Eanna Archive. Despite their remarkable potential, Neo-Babylonian letters have long been an underused resource, primarily owing to their reputation as being difficult to read and understand. Recent advances in our understanding of the language¹² and broader social and economic structures¹³ of this period have made researching these documents much more accessible. Material used for this and previous studies on Babylonian epistolography (see Chapter 2) were collected under the auspices of the NFN ‘Imperium and Officium’ project funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), in particular part 3 ‘Epistolography in Babylonia (1st Millennium BC)’ led by Michael Jursa.

The aim of this thesis is to produce a case study on Eanna’s administration by analyzing the contents of the letter corpus dating to the second part of the Neo-Babylonian period – from the second half of Nebuchadnezzar up to the end of Nabonidus’ reign. This consists of work on ca. 200 letters, which are being newly edited by Michael Jursa (and will be featured

¹⁰ See Janković 2013: 28 f., Levavi 2018: 23 f.

¹¹ Jursa 2004, 148 f.

¹² E.g. Streck 1995, Hackl 2021.

¹³ E.g. Kleber 2008, Janković 2013, Aarslev 2022 on topics of administration, agriculture and animal husbandry respectively.

sporadically here), who is the supervisor of this thesis. My thesis was written as part of the WP 10 of the research project “DigEanna: a digital reconstruction of the Eanna Archive”, which aims to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the material from the Eanna Archive. This will be achieved through the study of the topics of correspondence, such as administration, agriculture, irrigation, workforce, etc. as well as the role of officials and their internal networks of correspondence. Special attention will be given to the mechanisms of administrative practices described in the letters. Furthermore, especially frequently mentioned individuals will be a subject of a dedicated study. These dossiers will be studied in order to better define the scope of influence and responsibility of individual officials.

Particular relevance of this study lies in the time period it encompasses. Beginning with the mid-reign of Nebuchadnezzar, in particular the period after the archival break in Eanna, this period follows that which was the subject of Y. Levavi’s study on early Neo-Babylonian epistolography.¹⁴ The rationale for dividing the corpora in such manner is based on the administrative changes undertaken by Nebuchadnezzar during this period, characterized in part by tightening imperial control in peripheries as well as efforts towards greater initialization, in an attempt to consolidate his vast empire.¹⁵ These changes were reflected in the organization and administration of temples, as will be discussed in more detail below in chapter 4. From the end of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, a series of short-reigning monarchs ruled in Babylon. With the accession of Nabonidus, large-scale changes in temple administration were implemented, which is reflected especially clearly in the documentation from Eanna.¹⁶ By studying the letters of officials shortly before and during this period, it will be possible to draw conclusions pertaining to the broader consequences of these reforms. The socio-economic problems surrounding the last monarch of the Neo-Babylonian empire - eventually leading to its downfall, can likewise be studied through this corpus.

Furthermore, the letter corpus offers valuable insight into the work of the middle-ranking officials (see chapter 4.2) within the temple, which have not yet received a dedicated study. By studying their activities within Eanna it will be possible to compare the findings with other localities in Babylonia, such as Borsippa.¹⁷ Topics such as agriculture and animal husbandry will also be further explored through the lens of this letter corpus. For individuals featured in many different letters, it is possible to reconstruct micro-histories detailing their

¹⁴ Levavi 2018.

¹⁵ See Sandowicz 2012, 45–49; Levavi 2018: 14 f; Jursa and Gordin 2018.

¹⁶ Kleber 2008: 12–17.

¹⁷ Waerzeggers 2010.

responsibilities and area of influence. The last aspect which will be considered is the relation to the crown, as reflected in this corpus. This concerns mostly the correspondence of Nabonidus and Belshazzar with the temple officials and is of great importance for understanding the dynamic role which the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire (and his son) played in the structure of Eanna's administration.

2 History of Research

Out of the previously mentioned more than 8000 texts, around 700 are letters.¹⁸ Together with the rest of the archival material, these were originally published in form of hand copies (with some of them still awaiting primary publications). The most notable publications of Neo-Babylonian letters include the Yale Oriental Series (YOS), in particular the 3rd and 21st volumes, published by A. Clay and E. Frahm and M. Jursa respectively, the first volume of the Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collections of James B. Nies (BIN 1) published by E. Keiser, as well as the 9th volume of Textes cuneiforms, Musées du Louvre (TCL) by G. Contenau.

Based on the early copies of these letters, E. Ebeling published two volumes of transliterations and translations of these letters, in 1930-34 and 1949 respectively. The letters retrieved by the German excavations in Uruk were published by E. Gehlken in AUWE 5 in 1990.

Ebeling's editions in particular, although pioneering for their time, have long been outdated and an updated version based on new, collated readings is necessary for any further research of their contents.¹⁹ For this reason, despite the original publications, these letters received little attention in the field of Neo-Babylonian studies for a long time. This changed recently starting with a new publication of a volume of copies from the Yale Babylonian Collection.²⁰ What followed was an organized effort funded by research projects directed from Vienna to re-edit and publish Neo-Babylonian letters in a cohesive series of editions called Spätbabylonische Briefe (*SbB*), edited by M. Jursa (see also chapter 1.1).

The first of these, focusing on private letters, was published in 2014 by J. Hackl, M. Jursa and M. Schmidl. In 2018, Y. Levavi published a second volume focusing on the administrative letters from the period of Nabopolassar and the first half of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. M. Schmidl completed her dissertation on letters from the Achaemenid Period in 2019, and this work is set to be published as the third volume in the series in 2026. The present work will be part of the fourth volume of this series - alongside the letter-editions done by M. Jursa, closing the chronological gap between the two previous volumes.

¹⁸ Levavi 2018: 22.

¹⁹ Jursa in Hackl et al. 2014: 2.

²⁰ Frahm and Jursa 2011 = YOS 21.

3 Methods and Limitations

Using letters as the basis for historical research of this period produces immediate limitations through the fact that one basic information about these documents is almost always missing – the date. As such, one is left to rely on other context clues in order to chronologically contextualize these documents. For this purpose, a prosopographical analysis is of great importance. Unfortunately, this directly leads us to the second limitation posed by the nature of the letter corpus: the senders and recipients of the letters are in most cases addressed only by their first names. The lack of patronyms and/or familial affiliations can often lead to uncertainties regarding the person’s identity. For this reason, one is often left to rely on context clues provided through the context and rhetoric of the letter.

Each letter consists of three fundamental parts:²¹

- 1) Introduction, consisting of the formal address naming both parties (sender and recipient) and establishing their hierarchical relationship (top-down, bottom-up or (near) equal) and a greeting formula, which is a highly standardized phrase invoking deities that are often related to the sender’s origin or institutional affiliation (in case of our corpus, we find most often Ištar (or Lady of Uruk) and Nanaya, or Bēl and Nabû, or Nabû and Marduk).
- 2) Body of the letter containing the actual information on the purpose of the letter. This part is much less standardized than the introduction, though it consistently uses standardized phrases to emphasize senders’ intentions.
- 3) Conclusion, consisting of a closing formula. This part can be omitted and displays less variation than the introduction.

This structure can be exemplified based on the following letter (YOS 21, 157):²²

²¹ For a detailed study and discussion of formal parts of letters see Schmidl 2014: 4–16 and Levavi 2018: 38–64.

²² Full editions and commentaries of all letters featured in this thesis were done by Michael Jursa and made available to me in order to contextualize this study when necessary. They are set to be published in the fourth installment of the series *Spätbabylonische Briefe* together with adapted parts of this study.

introduction	Obv <i>tup-pi</i> ^l numun-ia <i>a-na</i> ^{ld} +en-na-din-a ad-ia ^d gašan šá unug ^{ki} <i>u</i> ^d na-na-a šu-lum 5 <i>u tin šá ad-ia</i> <i>liq-ba-a</i> ₄	¹⁻⁶ Letter of Zēria to Bēl-nādin-apli, my father. May the Lady of Uruk and Nanaya ordain my father's health and vigor.
body	<i>ki-i aq-bak</i> ^{ka} -ku-nu-šú <i>mam-ma ul iš-man</i> ^{an} -ni <i>en-na a-mur</i> LoE (uninscribed) Rev 10 ^r še ^l .bar <i>gab-bi</i> <i>hi-ra-at</i> <i>lu-ú ti-i-de</i> <i>a-ki še.bar</i> <i>ta-qa-at-ta</i> 15 ^{lu} a.kin-ka <i>en li-šá-al</i>	⁷⁻¹⁷ When I talked to you, no one listened to me. Now look, all the barley has been prepared. Let the lord ask your messenger whether the barley is about to run out.
conclusion	<i>kap-du</i> <i>ṭè-me</i> UpE <i>šá en lu-uš-me</i>	¹⁷⁻¹⁹ I hope to hear quickly (my) lord's order.

When trying to identify the individuals mentioned in a letter, the formal structure must be considered. The internal relationship between the two individuals can oftentimes be induced through the formal address alone. If an individual addresses the recipient as his “father” or “lord” (such is the case in the example above), one can logically deduce that the relationship between the two is that of a subordinate writing to a superior. However, in other cases caution must be observed. When considering cases where one individual refers to the other as his “brother”, it cannot automatically be assumed that they are of the same social status. Rather, this only excludes the possibility of the sender being of a lower hierarchical status than the recipient.²³ An actual superiority of the sender masked by conventional or polite affectation of

²³ See Schmidl 2014: 22 ff.

equality to the recipient cannot be ruled out – but would be in need of further confirming evidence to be considered present.

For this, the body of the letter must be considered. It is usually possible to differentiate between letters containing instructions (written by the superior to his subordinate) or reports (written by subordinates to their superiors), especially as reports often include a petition for further instructions. Likewise, the content of a letter oftentimes allows for recognizing when two individuals are of similar hierarchical status, as they often lack any direct orders or an appellation for them, a characteristic regularly observed in letters written by and to persons of vastly differing positions in Eanna's hierarchy.

Circling back to the introduction, the greeting formula should also not be neglected. In cases where the letter is written by an individual from outside of Uruk (for the present corpus this mostly pertains to officials from Larsa), this can be recognized through the use of that person's local deities, such as Šamaš, who is rarely invoked in Uruk (in terms of greeting formulas, oaths to Šamaš within the body of a letter are fairly frequent).

In cases where titles are used in addition to the personal name, the identification of the individual is almost always possible. Unfortunately, these cases are very rare. Much more often, only the title, excluding the personal name, is used to designate the sender and/or the recipient. In such cases the identification of the specific official intended is often difficult. Nevertheless, certain context clues pertaining to internal organization of Eanna can point to an approximative dating. For example, the title of the Royal Overseer (*ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti*) can definitively be dated to the reign of Nabonidus (see chapter 4.1). Other titles cannot offer such insights into dating, unless the high officials are listed together as senders or recipients. When this is the case, it is important to consider which official – mostly the Royal Resident (*qīpu*) and the High Priest (*šatammu*) – is listed first, as the hierarchical relationship between these two officials varied in the second half of the Neo-Babylonian period (see chapter 4.1).

Other than this, the relationship between individuals as known from other administrative and legal documents can sometimes be directly connected to those named in letters, such as in case of the so-called Basia dossier²⁴, which is discussed in chapter 6.2.

Keeping these limitations in mind, it is nevertheless possible to make suggestions for the identification of most of the senders and recipients featured in the present corpus. Many of these can be considered (near) certainties, but others are what one might call educated guesses. From these identifications the relative dating of the letters can be deduced. The dating based

²⁴ Hackl et al. 2011.

on prosopography relies on the activity of pertinent individuals as documented in the non-epistolary part of the archive – where they are named with patronymic and familial affiliation most often. It should be noted that although the sheer size of the Eanna Archive provides abundant attestations of most of its officials, the temporal range of these attestations does not necessarily correspond to the time span in which these men appear in the letters. Nevertheless, unless there is reason to assume otherwise, this dating method will be used throughout.

Similar caution should be applied when dealing with individuals connected to specific titles. While it is reasonable to assume that many high officials held their highest titles until their death, this cannot be considered a given for any of the officials mentioned in this corpus. Cases such as the High Priest Zēria being appointed to this office on two separate occasions underline this point.²⁵ The same caution must be exercised in the other direction as well. Mention of a known high official by their personal name does not inherently imply they were the holders of a specific title at the time of writing. While theoretically possible, it is certainly unlikely that a high official writes an administrative letter after retiring or being deposed from their position; we have in any case found no reason to assume this was the case for one of our letters. On the other hand, it is much more probable that officials may show up in the correspondence before ascending to the top ranks in the administration for which they are best known. As will be argued later, there is reason to believe that a series of letters addressed to Nabû-šarru-ušur, who rose to the top of Eanna's hierarchy as the Royal Overseer during the reign of Nabonidus, were written during the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar, when Nabû-šarru-ušur appears as a royal courtier. Similarly, as will be shown in chapter 5, the change of status of several mid-ranking employees of the temple can be ascertained.

All these limitations need to be kept in mind when constructing the prosopographical grid structuring this letter corpus and deciding on the relative dates of each letter. Whenever possible, it was nevertheless the goal to try and assign each letter as well as people featured in it to a specific chronological and social context.

²⁵ See in Kleber 2008: 33 f.

4 Eanna Temple: Chronological and Historical Background

Before analyzing different aspects of Eanna's administration, it is useful to give a brief overview over the historical development of Eanna temple in the period covered by this thesis, as well as giving necessary background information on the political and social aspects influencing Eanna's administration.

As was stated in the introduction, the time period covered by the letters which will be the basis of this study encompasses the second half of the Neo-Babylonian period: from the archival break in the mid-reign of Nebuchadnezzar²⁶ until the end of the reign of Nabonidus. As opposed to the stability introduced during the long reigns of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar, the subsequent rulers reigned for short periods, giving way for instability within the empire. These grand dynamics happening in Babylon also reflected in the power-dynamics in Uruk, influencing Eanna's administration in particular.²⁷

The structure of the Neo-Babylonian institutional infrastructure was presented by Michael Jursa²⁸ as consisting out of three main elements:

- 1) the household officials, bearing direct ties to the crown, sometimes dispatched outside of the royal household to exercise the state domination in important economic centers,²⁹
- 2) notables or aristocrats, ascending to their offices through the privileges of their social class,³⁰
- 3) clerks, low- or middle-ranking officials recruited from the priestly families, appointed to run administrative tasks.³¹

When considering this structure within a Babylonian temple such as Eanna, the first two groups can therefore be categorized among the high officials, while the third group, depending on their status and scope of responsibility, falls right under the first two groups. Such is the relationship, which can be observed in the letter corpus, and which will be discussed below.

Before discussing the letter corpus, a brief overview of posts and offices attested in Eanna throughout the Neo-Babylonian period will be presented.

²⁶ See page 3.

²⁷ This topic was studied in Kleber 2008, see pages 9–18 for a general overview.

²⁸ Jursa 2017: 52–62.

²⁹ Jursa 2017: 54 ff.

³⁰ Jursa 2017: 56–60.

³¹ Jursa 2017: 60.

4. 1 High Officials

Similarly to other temples of Babylonia, Eanna's administration, was based on a stable hierarchy of offices whose internal relationship changed only occasionally. The three main officials at the top of the temple's hierarchy were the Royal Resident (*qīpu*), the High Priest (*šatammu*) and the Temple Scribe (*tupšar ajakki*). Later, the office of the Royal Overseer (*ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti*) was added to this constellation.

While the role of these officials and their sphere of influence varied over time to some degree (see below), their original purpose at the administrative headquarters of the temple remained constant. Thus, we can generally differentiate between officials who were appointed by the king and whose role was therefore to represent the crown's interest on the one hand, and the members of the local elites, whose families occupied high offices for generations. Officials of the first category, corresponding to Jursa's household officials (see above), most notably the Royal Resident and later the Royal Overseer, were usually brought in from the 'outside', as is expected for royal officials, their fathers' and family names are but rarely attested.³² While it is plausible to assume that these officials hailed from elite families, these families had certainly no connection to Uruk prior to their appointment by the king.³³ Such officials had no active role in cultic activities of the temple.³⁴

On the other hand, the office of the High Priest was given by the king to members of the priestly elite, and they originally oversaw much of the internal matters concerning the religious responsibilities as well as the temple administration.³⁵ To fully understand the nature of this position, we must first consider its historical development. In the early Neo-Babylonian period, the crown tried to expand its hold over the temple institutions by encouraging the settlement of priestly families from Babylon in provincial cities and promoting members of these 'new' family to positions of power, such as to that of the High Priest. However, the status of these officials in the temple hierarchy began to change over time. The last person to enjoy the full power originally associated with this position was the High Priest Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin, whose period in office spanned from 4 until 19 Nbk.³⁶ During his incumbency, tensions arose between him and the Royal Resident Ninurta-šarru-ušur, apparently leading to the ousting of Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin's entire family from their privileged position in Uruk.³⁷ This event also

³² Kleber 2008. See also Jursa 2011b.

³³ Jursa and Gordin 2018: 49.

³⁴ Van Driel 2002: 39.

³⁵ Kleber 2008: 5.

³⁶ Levavi 2018: 96.

³⁷ Jursa and Gordin 2018.

marked a shift in royal politics regarding temple hierarchy, as from this point onward, royal officials gain considerable more influence in temple administration compared to priests.³⁸

Temple Scribes also hailed from the upper strata of the local society, and some are even sometimes known to become High Priest in the course of their careers.³⁹ Their exact role within the temple administration is hard to pin down, apart from their acting as actual scribes. They will have been the functionaries overseeing much of the temple's routine business on a day-to-day basis. During the reign of Nabonidus, more than one person held this title at any single time.⁴⁰

The general outline of temple administration of the Neo-Babylonian empire was adopted from the model of their predecessors, the Neo-Assyrian empire.⁴¹ At the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian period, under Nabopolassar, the triad of the Royal Resident (*qīpu*), High Priest (*šatammu*) and the Temple Scribe (*tupšar ajakki*) topped the temple's hierarchy, in that exact order of seniority.⁴² With some necessary flexibility owing to the occasional absence of certain office holders, this hierarchy persisted until the reign of Nabonidus. This king personally visited Uruk and Larsa at the beginning of his reign and oversaw the creation of a new office – that of the Royal Overseer and the official in charge of the (king's) cash box of Eanna.⁴³ During the regency of Nabonidus's Belshazzar, the Royal Overseer (*ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti*) managed both the majority of administrative matters, as well as the direct communication with the king's son, essentially covering the duties of both *šatammu* and *qīpu*. After Nabonidus' return from Tayma, another turnover of officials is attested. The new reform saw the reinstatement of the Royal Resident and the High Priest at the top of Eanna's administration, while the position of the Royal Overseer was demoted to the bottom of this triad. This constellation was adapted by Cyrus after his conquest.⁴⁴

Within the present letter corpus, a small group of high officials is consistently featured. In order to make it easier to keep track of their respective incumbencies, these will be presented in the following table:⁴⁵

³⁸ Jursa and Gordin 2018.

³⁹ Kleber 2008: 6.

⁴⁰ Kleber 2008: 35.

⁴¹ Jursa 2017.

⁴² Kleber 2008: 7.

⁴³ Kleber 2008: 12. The translation of the second title follows Kleber 2008: 7.

⁴⁴ Kleber 2008: 18 f.

⁴⁵ In the following table and throughout this thesis, a prosopographical convention will be used to designate a person's patronym and family/clan: Personal Name/Patronym//Family Name. For a full list of Eanna temple's high officials see Kleber 2008: 30–40.

Royal Resident (<i>qīpu</i>)		Royal Overseer (<i>ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti</i>)	
Sîn-iddin	26.IV.30 Nbk ⁴⁶ – 1 Ner ⁴⁷	Nabû-šarru-ušur	2.III.1 Nbn – 2.III.13 Nbn ⁴⁸
		Ilī-rēmānni	4.III.14 Nbn – 7.XII.16 Nbn ⁴⁹

Table 1. List of royal officials featured in the present study, based on Kleber 2008: 30–40.

High Priest (<i>šatammu</i>)		Temple Scribe (<i>tupšar ajakki</i>)	
Marduk-bēlšunu (/Marduk-šāpik- zēri//Rab-banê)	24.IV.24 Nbk – 3.XIIb.23 Nbk ⁵⁰	Nabû-aḥḥē- bullit (/Ša-Nabû-šū)	11.XII.26 Nbk – 2.III.1 Nbn ⁵¹
Zēria (/Ibnāya//Egibi)	I.2 Ame – 28.III.1 Ner ⁵² (1 st term)		
	3.XI.11 Nbn – 2.V.16 Nbn ⁵³ (2 nd term)		
Bānia (/Tabnēa/Bāʾiru)	14.XI.[] Ner – 18.IV.1 Nbn ⁵⁴		
Kurbanni-Marduk (/Zēria/Sîn- damāqu)	12.X.13 Nbn – 7.XII.16 Nbn ⁵⁵		

Table 2. List of Urukian officials featured in the present study based on Kleber 2008: 30–40.

⁴⁶ Kleber 2008: 31.

⁴⁷ See chapter 5.2, originally suggested by Kümmel

⁴⁸ Frame 1991: 38 ff, Kleber 2008: 36.

⁴⁹ Kümmel 1979: 144, Kleber 2008: 36.

⁵⁰ Kümmel 1979: 142, Kleber 2008: 33.

⁵¹ Kümmel 1979: 144, Kleber 2008: 35.

⁵² Kümmel 1979: 142, Kleber 2008: 33.

⁵³ Kümmel 1979: 142, Kleber 2008: 33.

⁵⁴ Kleber 2008: 34.

⁵⁵ Kümmel 1979: 143, Kleber 2008: 34.

4.2 Mid-Ranking Administration

Below these offices, which made up the highest echelon of Eanna's hierarchy, a large and heterogenous group of priests, overseers, and courtiers existed, whose role and influence in the temple administration is comparatively less understood than that of those at the very top. This state of research is unwarranted, as the documentary material offers much more information on the activities of these individuals than it does on the high officials. When considering the present letter corpus, only several letters concern royal correspondence, with the majority concerning the high officials as well as featuring individuals of the middle rank or lower. This allows for an in-dept study of these officials' activities and responsibilities within the temple administration.

When it comes to understanding the social and economic activities of those active below the rank of the highest officials, it is important to consider the nature of their positions, as it pertains to their scope of activities. In an extensive study on Babylonian economic history edited by Michel Jursa,⁵⁶ it was possible to establish patterns of so-called 'business profiles' reflected in Babylonian archives. According to Jursa two main 'types' of economic activity boil down to what he defines as 'rentiers' and 'entrepreneurs'.⁵⁷ As these categories help understand the social status of individuals discussed in this thesis, the primary distinctions and characteristics of these two types will be summarized.

Jursa (2010: 282–286) defines rentiers as those primarily dependent on possessions, rather than their activities. This is due to rentiers belonging to a social class characterized by social prestige and (inherited) land ownership. Rentiers can be almost exactly equated to priests. Coming from old priestly families, a Babylonian priest enjoyed inherent high standing within the society, reflected in the possession of a priestly office or prebend. While prebends provided secure and constant sources of income, they were probably not particularly profitable for their holders beyond being a sign of prestige. Rather, the economic value for the Babylonian priesthood resided in their land ownership. While the amounts vary, it was normal for a priestly family to own houses and date groves, which they were able to rent out and accumulate considerable profit. Priests and their activities within Eanna will be the subject of Chapter 5, where their roles within the prebendary system will be further examined.

The entrepreneurs, on the other hand, are described by Jursa (2010: 286–293) as dependent by their activities, rather than their possessions, at least at the start of their business

⁵⁶ Jursa 2010a.

⁵⁷ Jursa (2010a: 282).

pursuits. This is due to the fact that, unlike members of the priesthood, entrepreneurs, while often, but by no means always, from well-to-do families, do not start their careers with very strictly circumscribed expectations attached to them. Often, they start their business by dealing in smaller commodities connected with the land of others, be it private or institutional. Jursa (2010: 288–290) defines three distinguishing characteristics of Babylonian entrepreneurship:

- 1) Frequent links to institutional, esp. temple households, working at the interface between the institutional economy dominated by (priestly) rentiers and the non-institutional sector of the economy.
- 2) a lesser importance landownership than seen amongst the rentier class, esp. the priesthood, due to the entrepreneurs' (relative) lack of inherited social status.
- 3) connection to business economy, as exemplified especially by active engagement in agricultural contracting.

All this highlights a dichotomy of economic activity that is predicated on the social milieu these individuals find themselves in. It is important to highlight, however, that, unlike the priests, whose social roles are determined by their families, the entrepreneurs enjoy an element of choice when it comes to their line of work.⁵⁸

An outlier in this dichotomy are the apparently socially mobile temple dependents, who while acquiring profit and status nevertheless never leave their position as temple workers.⁵⁹ Due to the temple's role in their career developments, meaning the potential lack of their agency, they cannot be classified as entrepreneurs.

The following study will examine both of the following groups by first delving deeper into the individuals belonging to priestly families working within Eanna. Ten such individuals (§5.1.1–5.1.10) and their roles (administrative and cultic) will be discussed based on primarily the epistolographic, but also other administrative and legal documents, with a view towards reconstructing not only their agency within the temple, but also the change of their status throughout time.

The second part of this thesis will examine the so-called entrepreneurs – individuals whose familial origins (if known) are not particularly distinguished, yet who managed to amass large influence during the last few decades of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, leading them to feature heavily in the letter corpus. Compared to their priestly counterparts, the entrepreneurs experience a rather turbulent rise and a more-or-less swift fall, owing to vast accumulation of

⁵⁸ Jursa 2010a: 289 f.

⁵⁹ Jursa 2010a: 291.

debt. This will be illustrated based on two particular case studies: the agricultural overseer Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim (§6.1) and the notorious rent farmer Šumu-ukīn of the Basia family, as well as his nephew and successor Kalbāya (§6.2).

Apart from showcasing the contrast between these two ‘classes’ of society, this study hopes to show that entrepreneurship, such as for example ventures into animal husbandry business, at least in the final stages of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, became more popular even amongst priesthood, possibly due to a simultaneous rise of entrepreneurs and their prominence in Uruk. Nevertheless, such business measures were decidedly less risky for the otherwise well established and financially secure members of the Urukian elite.

5 Clerks and Priests: Eanna's mid-ranking administration

This chapter investigates the identities of a group of mid-ranking officials appearing frequently in the present letter corpus. The term mid-rank is used to designate a group of officials in direct communication with the high officials, mostly when these were absent from Uruk. In the previous chapter, their general status and background were explained. While these individuals were noted as appearing in certain administrative roles before, they were routinely referred to as 'scribes' in a general sense of their duties, without considering each of their precise roles within Eanna.⁶⁰ Their correspondence in the letters from the Eanna archive prompts the question of their active role(s) in temple's internal affairs, as reflected in their rich correspondence amongst each other and with their superiors, mostly focused on, but by no means limited to, the organization of the cult.

The term priest in this context follows the definition outlined by C. Waerzeggers in relation to her study on the priesthood of the Ezida temple in Borsippa.⁶¹ According to her, the Babylonian priest is identified through three main characteristics:⁶²

- 1) participation in temple worship
- 2) possession of a required legal title
- 3) ritual qualifications

Waerzeggers points out that the core element amongst these three is the possession of the title, which is to be understood in terms of a 'prebend'.⁶³ These priests, through their affiliation with a temple, differ from other religious figures associated with divination and prophecy. Their jobs, appearing to be at first mundane tasks, such as brewing and baking, are inherently connected to the serving of the divine realm, thus distinguishing them from normal bakers and brewers, even if their jobs, in reality, did not fundamentally differ from one another.⁶⁴ The individuals holding these titles were normally members of prominent families, a phenomenon which is only further made easier by the prebends being inherited from father to son.⁶⁵

In terms of the priestly hierarchy in Borsippa, apart from the High Priest (who occupied the highest position, the Babylonian priesthood) consisted out of the temple enterers (*ērib bītis*), a group of priests directly associated with performing religious duties inside the sanctuaries,⁶⁶

⁶⁰ See most recently Tarasewicz 2025: 230 ff.

⁶¹ Waerzeggers 2010, in particular 34–38.

⁶² Waerzeggers 2010: 34.

⁶³ Waerzeggers 2010: 34.

⁶⁴ Waerzeggers 2010: 35.

⁶⁵ Waerzeggers 2010: 36 f.

⁶⁶ See Waerzeggers 2010: 46 with further references.

followed by brewers, bakers, and butchers.⁶⁷ This group of priests can be defined loosely as the ‘food preparers’, as their responsibility revolved around preparing meals for daily offerings for the gods.⁶⁸ Other priestly groups, such as the fishermen, oil-pressers and date gardeners, normally followed in the hierarchical order, according to cultic personnel lists.⁶⁹ Apart from the priests, who prepared daily offerings for the deities, a group of priests dealing with services surrounding and enabling these core responsibilities. According to Waerzeggers, these include the gate-keepers, barbers, measurers and scribes, a group of priests ranked independent of the formerly mentioned food preparers.⁷⁰ She goes on to outline three different hierarchies of priests based on a long list of temple personnel from the Ebabbar temple of Sippar, whereas while the first two hierarchies exist parallel to each other, the third one is subservient to the first two.⁷¹

- 1) liturgical: king, temple enterers and food preparers => direct priestly activity
- 2) support staff: head of the institution (*šangû*), temple scribe and the measurer => facilitating the flow of commodities
- 3) minor artisans: builders, potters, reed workers => making and upkeep of cultic equipment

While some artisans, as specified in the last group here, might rank lower than the first two categories of priests, other craftsmen, such as goldsmiths and carpenters enjoyed a more privileged position, closer to that of the temple enterers.⁷²

Although the appointment and initiation of these priests was mostly done by the temple itself, the king still retained the right to influence and even straight-out make these decisions.⁷³ This right was retained by the king as means of control.⁷⁴ The temples were thus linked to the king by virtue of legitimization in the same way the king depended on divine favor in return.⁷⁵

The royal interference with the cultic and administrative aspects of the temple is attested throughout the Neo-Babylonian Period.⁷⁶ One of the most incisive cases, certainly the most relevant for the present study, is that of the reforms undertaken by Nabonidus upon his

⁶⁷ This constellation is based on the order of appearance in lists of cultic personnel (Kessler 1991: 71, Waerzeggers 2010: 47).

⁶⁸ Waerzeggers 2010: 47.

⁶⁹ Waerzeggers 2010: 48.

⁷⁰ Waerzeggers 2010: 49.

⁷¹ Waerzeggers 2010: 49.

⁷² Waerzeggers 2010: 49.

⁷³ Waerzeggers 2010: 53 f.

⁷⁴ See Jursa 2017: 58.

⁷⁵ Jursa and Gordin 2018: 49.

⁷⁶ See for eg. Jursa 2023. For a more general overview of royal interference in Eanna see Kleber 2008: 255–311.

accession. In the following case study the entanglement of two Eanna priests in internal politics and its repercussions will be shown.

Excuse: Royal Intervention in Priestly Affairs

Royal interference in temple affairs can be illustrated in Eanna by the actions undertaken by Nabonidus, shortly after his ascent to the throne, while he was in Larsa. YOS 6, 10⁷⁷ records a royal order issued by Nabû-dīnī-īpuš, the Chief of Seals (*rab unqāti*) to the Royal Overseer Nabû-šarru-ušur, as follows:

- 1) Based on the model established at Esagil (of Babylon) and the Ezida (of Borsippa), regular offerings are to be given to brewers (*sirāšû*) and the bakers (*nuḫatimmu*). Additionally, land plots are to be given to prebendary gardeners (*rab banê*) of Eanna.
- 2) Ram breasts from the morning sacrifice are to be put in the king's box.
- 3) Six ram breasts and the flour from the regular offerings are to be given to the temple enterers (*ērib bītis*). Nabû-šumu-līšir, son of Ibni-ili, should likewise receive a shoulder cut.
- 4) The double-doored gate (*bīt muterrēti*) of Eanna should be plastered (just as it was in the time of Nebuchadnezzar).
- 5) The brothers Nabû-bān-aḫi and Balātu, sons of Arad-Nabû, descendants of Šāhit-ginê are not to enter Eanna anymore and their prebends are to be transferred to a prebendary gardener.
- 6) Barley income (*pappasu*) of the royal prebends in Eanna should be collected.
- 7) Ten additional fishermen should be granted prebends in Eanna.
- 8) The ration of the king's daughter should be allocated to the king's box.

The pertinent passages of the text show an interesting snapshot of royal intervention in administrative work of the Eanna temple. The background of this, as well as other reforms in the priestly sphere undertaken by Nabonidus at the start of his reign, such as raising the rations given to bakers and brewers of Eanna,⁷⁸ are to be connected to Nabonidus' interest in winning over the Urukean priesthood after taking the throne under questionable circumstances.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Edited in San Nicolò 1941: 66–70, Beaulieu 1989: 119 and Frame 1991. The contents have been summarized in Kleber 2008: 297 ff. See also <https://nabucco.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/archiv/tablet/detail/4704> (last accessed 05.05.2026) for a paraphrase by M. Young upon which the following summary is based on.

⁷⁸ BM 114555 and BM 114552, see Jursa 2022: 83 f.

⁷⁹ See Jursa 2022: 84.

This decree mentions the priestly office of two brothers, Nabû-bān-aḫi and Balāṭu of the Šāḫit-ginê family, being removed on the order of the king himself. This begs the question: what did the two brothers do to warrant such drastic action and what happened to them afterwards?

Before we tackle this question head-on, a brief overview of the family history of these two brothers is warranted. The Šāḫit-ginê family is well attested in several cities of the 6th and 5th century Babylonia.⁸⁰ Much like other priestly families of this period, the Šāḫit-ginês were originally from Babylon, resettling in different cities during the first couple decades of the Neo-Babylonian period.⁸¹ One protagonist of this family, Marduk-rēmanni, a prominent member of the Sippar branch, was the subject of an in-depth study by C. Waerzeggers from 2014. Here, Waerzeggers (2014: 35–39) also briefly discussed the Uruk branch of the Šāḫit-ginê family.⁸² As she points out, the family originally came from Babylon, the Uruk branch mostly originating from Arad-Nabû, who probably migrated to Uruk from Babylon during the early reign of Nebuchadnezzar.⁸³ His two sons, Nabû-bān-aḫi and Balāṭu, assumed important position within Eanna temple's priesthood, leading them to tumultuous careers, as Nabonidus' decree suggests.

Nabû-bān-aḫi's attestations are scattered between different domains. His earliest attestation is in Sack CD, 21 (14 Nbk), where he withdraws sesame oil for the oil presser prebend. Later, in NCBT 817 (41 Nbk) we see him withdraw barley for regular offerings, validating his status as a priest. In AUWE 5, 109 (prosopographically dated to 33–36 Nbk)⁸⁴ he is named with his patronym as the messenger of Marduk-šumu-iddin, most probably the son of Nabû-balāssu-iqbi of the Gimil-Nanaya family, a prominent figure in Eanna's affairs before becoming the governor of Uruk in 1 Ner.⁸⁵ In BIN 1, 124 (36 Nbk) we see him deliver to Babylon large amounts of lapis lazuli for the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin.

Balāṭu, on the other hand, is attested fairly regularly as a scribe and witness in various temple, and private documents from 17 Nbk⁸⁶ onwards. He features especially often as a scribe of document relating to estate management.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Waerzeggers 2014: 27 ff.

⁸¹ See Waerzeggers 2014: 27–39.

⁸² Waerzeggers 2014: 35–39.

⁸³ Waerzeggers 2014: 35 f.

⁸⁴ Gehlken 1990.

⁸⁵ Kleber 2008: 12.

⁸⁶ YOS 17, 15.

⁸⁷ See NCBT 691 (27 Nbk), FLP 1558 (1 Ner), GCCI 1, 389 (1 Nbn).

It would seem that Nabû-bān-aḫi (presumably the older of the two) inherited the family's prebend of the oil presser, while his brother pursued the career as a scribe in the temple's priestly domain. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the two brothers do not stand out from amongst other priestly families appearing in numerous temple documents. The first instance of them receiving special treatment can be found in YBC 7420, written in the accession year of Neriglissar, where we see the two brothers receive a royal gift in form of land:

Obv	a.šà šá ^l gi- ^d amar-utu a-šú šá ^l din-su a ^l aš.sur re-mut lugal šá qa-bal-ti uru da bàd ù ká.gal ^d ka-ni-sur-ra šá it-ti ^{ld} +ag-dù-šeš u ^l ba-la-tu dumu ^{meš} šá ^l ir- ^d +ag a ^{lú} i.sur-gi.na
5	it-ti a-ḫa ^{meš} a-ḫa-a-ta ú-za- 'i-zu 1 me 28 ina 1 kùš šid-du e-lu-ú da bàd a-na ugu ká.gal ^d ka-ni-sur-ra ḫa.la šá ^l gi- ^d amar.utu a-šú šá ^l tin-su a ^l aš.sur 88 ina 1 kùš šid-du šap-lu-ú da a.šà
10	lib-bi a.šà a.šà šá ^{ld} +ag-dù-ùru u ^l ba-la-tu dumu ^{meš} šá ^l ir- ^d +ag a ^{lú} i.sur-gi.na ^l (t:sur)
Rev	ḫa.la da bàd šá ^{ld} +ag-dù-šeš u ^l ba-la-tu 1 me ina 1 kùš sag.ki ki.ta da é-a-ta šá ^l gi- ^d amar.utu a-šú šá ^l tin-su a ^l aš.sur
15	1 me ina 1 kùš sag.ki ki.ta da a.šà lib-bu-ú a.šà a.šà šá ^{ld} +ag-dù-šeš u ^l ba-la-tu dumu ^{meš} šá ^{lú} i.sur-gi.na ^{lú} mu-kin-na ^{ld} amar.utu-numun.dù a-šú šá ^l e-tel-lu a ^l e-gi-bi ^{ld} +en-šeš ^{meš} -su a-šú šá ^{ld} +en-nigin-ir a a ^l ar-rab-tu ₄ ^{ld} +en-tin-iṭ a-šú šá ^{ld} bad-mu a ^l lú- ^d bad
20	^l ki-na-a a-šú šá ^l ba-la-tu a ^l e-gi-bi ^{ld} +ag-ibila-mu a-šú šá ^{ld} +ag-ga-mil a ^{lú} gal-dù ^{lú} umbisag ^l i- ^d amar.utu a-šú šá ^{ld} +ag-en-šú-nu
UpE	unug ^{ki} iti apin ^{ud} 5 ^{kam} mu sag.nam.lugal.la

^du.gur-lugal-urù lugal tin.tir^{ki}

(¹)Field of Mušallim-Marduk, son of Balāssu, descendant of Ēdu-ēter, (²)royal gift (*rīmūt šarri*) of the (land in the) middle of the city, bordering the wall (³)and the gate of Kanisurra (*abul Kanišurra*), which together with Nabû-bān-aḫi (⁴)and Balātu, sons of Arad-Nabû, descendants of Šāhit-ginê, (⁵)they divided mutually in equal shares.

(⁶)128 cubits of the upper length bordering the wall (⁷)at the top (lit. head) of the great gate of Kanisurra is the share (⁸)of Mušallim-Marduk, son of Balāssu, descendant of Ēdu-ēter.

(⁹)88 cubits along the lower length bordering the field, (¹⁰)inner part of a field – the field of Nabû-bān-aḫi and Balātu, (¹¹)sons of Arad-Nabû, descendants of Šāhit-ginê, (¹²)is the share bordering the wall of of Nabû-bān-aḫi and Balātu.

(¹³)100 cubits is the lower width bordering the house (¹⁴)of Mušallim-Marduk, son of Balāssu, descendant of Ēdu-ēter.

(¹⁵)100 cubits is the lower width bordering the field within the field, which is the field (¹⁶)of Nabû-bān-aḫi and Balātu, descendants of Šāhit-ginê.

(¹⁷)Witnesses:

Marduk-zēru-ibni, son of Etellu, (¹⁸)descendant of Egibi,

Bēl-aḫḫē-erība, son of Bēl-upaḫḫir, descendant of Arrabtu,

(¹⁹)Bēl-uballiṭ, son of Ea-iddin, descendant of Amīl-Ea,

(²⁰)Kināya, son of Balātu, descendant of Egibi,

(²¹)Nabû-aplu-iddin, son of Nabû-gamil, descendant of Rab-banê.

(²²)Scribe: Na'id-Marduk, son of Nabû-bēlšunu. (²³)Uruk. 8th month, 5th day, the accession year of (²⁴)Neriglissar, king of Babylon.

While, as Jursa points out, the Šāhit-ginê family does not belong to the group of the old Urukean families, but rather the northern Babylonian settlers brought to Uruk by the early Neo-Babylonian kings,⁸⁸ the particular favour granted to the family by Neriglissar might suggest the family's bond to this particular royal. In this light, the decision of Nabonidus to strip the

⁸⁸ Jursa 2021: 148; see also Jursa and Gordin 2018.

two brothers of their prebends as one of his earliest orders as king regarding Uruk makes perfect sense: As Nabonidus had come to power through a coup against Neriglissar's son and heir Lâbâši-Marduk, the Šāhit-ginês' proximity to Neriglissar would have made them, as a minimum, suspect to the new king (or possibly to his local supporters who acquainted the king with the state of local affairs).

The effects of the king's order on the family's fortune seem to have been swift: only two months after Nabonidus' order, we see one of the two brothers, Balātu, dealing with consequences of his accumulated debt to the temple, for which reason he is required to pledge a house. In a document he himself wrote (GCCI 1, 389) the scribe pledges the house of Gimillu, son of Nergal-tēši-ēṭir of the Šangû-Šamaš family for the debt he (Balātu) owes: the fortunes of the family seem to have taken a turn to the worse quite abruptly after the accession of Nabonidus. Yet this royal decision did not spell the definitive end of that family's record in Eanna's priestly circles. A decade after his apparent banishment from Eanna by wish of Nabonidus himself, Balātu can be found amongst the recipients of barley as sacrificial commodities and priestly remuneration (*maššartu*), seemingly having kept, or or having been reinstated into, his priestly status (GCCI 1, 387). The family continues to appear in the Eanna record until at least the reign of Cyrus (TCL 13, 131), though far less frequently compared to their attestations during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

Whether this means that Nabonidus went back on his decision, or the brothers were demoted instead of completely thrown out of Eanna, is impossible to know for certain. Nevertheless, the case of the Šāhit-ginê brothers shows the interconnection of Eanna's priestly families surpassed the range of Urukian societies, but rather that Eanna's priesthood partake in active contact with the crown and even suffered severe consequences for their loyalties in times of political instability.

5. 1 Identifying the Priests

Returning to the letter corpus, most of which covers the period prior to and during the reign of Nabonidus, this chapter will attempt to examine the evidence for Eanna priests such as the Šāhit-ginê brothers within a specifically epistolary context and against a wider administrative background. Given the prosopographical limitations outlined in chapter 3, it was necessary to determine clear and diagnostic factors in order to identify these individuals. The term used to identify the pertinent individuals with priestly offices was in most cases allotment for sacrificial commodities and priestly remuneration (*maššartu*), which they can be seen receiving in administrative and legal documents (see the example YBC 3740 below). In many cases, the nature of their prebend is also specified. In this chapter, the role of these priests within the Eanna administration will be examined, as well as compared with studies on other Babylonian priests from the Neo Babylonian period.

While their common Urukian names (in the absence of filiations) make the individuals in question difficult to identify, their presence in the letter corpus as senders and recipients of numerous missives can be made highly plausible, due to the context and more or less fixed groups they appear in. This is owed to the fact that the corpus offers the opportunity to identify these individuals by examining their appearances in correlation to their contemporaries. In the following chapter, it will be shown how these individuals and their professions as priests and scribes can be identified, after which their individual attestations within the letter corpus and beyond will be discussed.

Apart from appearing as single senders or recipients of letters, a well-circumscribed group of men (with a certain degree of internal variation) appears consistently as recipients of letter from the high officials of Eanna. As mentioned above (chapter 4.1), a considerable portion of the high officials' incumbency was spent overseeing building projects outside of Uruk, warranting frequent communication with lower temple officials. While away from the Eanna, these high officials tended to communicate with a group of men working in Eanna in form of longer letters with differing subject matters, presumably relying on the recipients to each attend to their own duties as outlined in the letter. In this chapter, the priestly status of these individuals in relation to the subject matter of the letters as well as the rest of archival material pertaining to their activities will be examined. Their roles in Eanna, whether as scribes, clerks and priests, will be determined. In the following table, an overview of these letters addressed to multiple recipients (appearing in more or less consistent groups based on identity of the sender) is given:

letter	sender(s)	recipient(s)/address	Content
YOS 3, 182	Sîn-iddin	Gimillu, Šamaš-udammiq and Nabû-muṣētiq-uddû	Sîn-iddin forwards a royal order for Aplāya, son of Balātu to be brought under guard.
		‘my brothers’	
YOS 3, 63	Sîn-iddin	Bēl-nādin-apli, Iṣtarān-zēru-ibni, Nabû-ikṣur, Bānia and Innin-zēru-šubši	Sîn-iddin writes to the group complaining about things not being done well when he’s away from Uruk and instructing them to give back the oxen to Eanna, which they had given to Nabû-uṣuršu, son of Nadnāya.
		‘my brothers’	
YOS 21, 132	Sîn-iddin	Gimillu, Muṣēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Bēl-nādin-apli, Šamaš-udammiq, Iṣtarān-zēru-ibni and Nabû-bān-aḫi	Sîn-iddin writes to the group about offering service for Eanna. He further mentions taking silver from Nabû-aḫḫē-bullit, and urges the recipients to deliver wool to him for this reason.
		‘my brothers’	
YOS 21, 133	Sîn-iddin	Gimillu, Muṣēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Šamaš-udammiq, Iṣtarān-zēru-ibni, Bēl-nādin-apli, Innin-zēru-ibni, Balātu, Marduk	Sîn-iddin writes to the group to request they give silver to two individuals who had issued wool to another person for temple shepherds performing military service.
		‘my brothers’	
AOAT 25, 46	Sîn-iddin	Bēl-nadin-apli, Innin-zēru-uṣabši	Sîn-iddin writes to the group about delivering iron pegs.
		‘my brothers’	

Durand EHE 163	Bēl-nādin-apli, Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Marduk-šumu- iddin, Ibnāya	Marduk-nādin-zēri, Ištarān-zēru-ibni, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēl- nādin-apli, Innin-zēru- ušabši	Bēl-nādin-apli, Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Marduk-šumu-iddin and Bānia write to the group informing them that the Royal Resident took 1,5 minas of silver from a royal courtier and gave it to them for their expenses and drew up a promissory note in their name. They have sent said promissory note to Uruk and are expecting the recipients to settle the account.
		‘our brothers’	
BIN 1, 57	[...]	[Nād]in, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Bēl-nādin- apli, Innin-zēru- ušabši, Balātu	Someone writes to the group on matters relating to silver. He complains about not having received a reply to previous letters. The sender informs the group of having given 20 minas of silver to the Royal Resident and a further one mina to man called Nabû-zēru-līšir for alum, for which he (i.e. the sender) had drafted a debt note and sent it to the recipients. He also sent them 8 minas of silver via a man named Tarībi and inquires whether they need the remaining silver sent to them, in which case Tarībi would be ordered to see this done.
		‘my fathers’	
Durand EHE 166	Nabû-šumu- ukīn, Ištar- mukīn-apli(?)	Gimillu, Bēl-nadin- apli, Šamaš-udammiq, Mušēzib-Bēl, Ištarān- zēru-ibni, Ištar-zēru- ušabši	Nabû-šumu-ukīn and Ištar-mukīn- apli(?) inform the group that Zēria, son of Nergal-aḫu-iddin has made gypsum pass harbor customs and

		‘our fathers’	ask the recipients to note this in their ledger.
YOS 3, 75	Arad-Gula, Bēlšunu, Innin-zēru- uṣabši, Bānia	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	The group writes to Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim in great urgency asking for sheep for the offerings, as their supply has been interrupted.
		‘our brother’	
YOS 3, 61	Arad-Gula, Bēlšunu, Bānia, Innin- zēru-uṣabši	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	The group complains about not having received the orders of the Royal Resident and the High Priest from Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, who went to see them in Babylon, and was supposed to return with barley for offerings.
		‘our brother’	
YOS 21, 134	x (Marduk- bēlšunu?)	Mušēzib-Bēl, Nabû- erība, Nādin, Nādin and Šamaš-udammiq	A high official writes to the group reminding them to carry out food offerings at Eanna. He then informs them of having received payment in silver from a certain Silim-Bēl. He asks the recipients to reimburse him (Silim-Bēl) in wool. The last part of the letter requires recipients to send quiver.
		‘my brothers’	

BIN 1, 25	Marduk-bēlšunu	Lišīru, Mušēzib-Bēl, Balāssu, Nādin, Nādin	Marduk-bēlšunu reprimands the group about ‘outsiders’ entering the temple storehouses and spoiling the wool. He also states that the king is near and inquires as to why the deliveries of offering baskets to him were interrupted. Then he asks about a complaint from a man named Iqīšāya and his brother, ordering the recipients to give the brothers their complete salaries in kind. The High Priest also addresses the issue of sacrificial animals. He inquires as to why the group is slaughtering sheep for the offering basket of the king at the same time as they are slaughtering for their own needs. He insists that they focus on slaughtering sheep for the offerings and the king rather than their own needs. Lastly, he complains about overseers being taken away without his permission.
		‘my brothers’	
BIN 1, 33	Marduk-bēlšunu	Līšīru, Mušēzib-Bēl, Balāssu and Nādin	Marduk-bēlšunu writes to the group on matters of offerings, temple enterers, salaries for oblates, as well as written documents he requests be obtained and sent to him. He appoints a person to inspect their work and instructs them to organize the impost of dates. The sender is

		‘my brothers’	clearly agitated because of not receiving updates on their work.
BIN 1, 32	Nabû-šarru-ušur	Mušēzib-Bēl, Nādin, Šamaš-udammiq, Innin-zēru-ušabši	Nabû-šarru-ušur writes to the group instructing them on the building work on the Ezida temple.
		‘my brothers’	
BIN 1, 85	Nabû-šarru-ušur	Mušēzib-Bēl, Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Šamaš-aḫu-iddin and Innin-zēru-ušabši	Nabû-šarru-ušur writes to the group instructing them to pay a messenger in wool and reassuring them he’ll give silver to the agents.
		‘my brothers’	
YOS 21, 90	Nabû-šarru-ušur	Madānu-aḫḫē-iddin, Nabû-ēter-napšāti, Nādin, Bāniya, Innin-zēru-ušabši, Eanna-šumu-ibni, Nabû-aḫu-iddin, Nūrea	Nabû-šarru-ušur instructs the group to send wool for the šalḫu garment for Adad, as per request from Karkara. He further inquiries about the number of sheep that a man named Šūzubu has taken from Eanna. Lastly, he requests baskets be sent to him.
		‘my brothers’	
YOS 21, 82	Nabû-kibsu-šarri-ušur	Gimillu, Mušēzib-Bēl, Šamaš-udammiq and Innin-zēru-ušabši	Nabû-kibsi-šarri-ušur informs the group that he entrusted 4 sheep for them and instructing them to offer them to Šamaš.
		‘my brothers’	

Table 3. Letters written to and by a group of individuals operating on administrative and cultic matters within Eanna.

As shown in this table, there are many different combinations of recipients and topics of correspondence present in these letters. The main senders can be identified with high officials active during the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign: the Royal Resident of Eanna, Sîn-iddin, his homologue from Larsa, Nabû-kibsu-šarri-ušur, the High Priest of Eanna Marduk-Bēlšunu, Nabû-šarru-ušur, who – following the chronology of other senders and recipients (shown

below) – was in these cases probably not yet the Royal Overseer, but rather a ‘simple’ royal courtier (*ša rēš šarri*).

Based on the senders of the letters the recipients can be grouped in the following matter:

sender	Recipients (frequency)
Marduk-bēlšunu	Mušēzib-Bēl (3), Nādinu ⁸⁹ (3), Līširu (2), Balāssu (2), Šamaš-udammiq (1)
Sîn-iddin	Gimillu (3), Šamaš-udammiq (3), Ištārān-zēru-ibni (3), Bēl-nādin-apli (3), Innin-zēru-ušabši (2), Mušēzib-Bēl (2), Bānia (1) Balātu (1), Bēlšunu (1), Nabû-bān-aḫi (1), Nabû-mušētiq-uddi (1), Nabû-kāšir (1), Marduk (1).
Nabû-šarru-ušur	Innin-zēru-ušabši (3), Mušēzib-Bēl (2), Bānia (1), Bēlšunu (1), Eanna-šumu-ibni (1), Gimillu (1), Madānu-aḫḫē-iddin (1), Nabû-aḫu-iddin (1), Nabû-eṭēr-napšati (1), Nādinu (1), Nūrea (1), Šamaš-aḫu-iddin (1), Šamaš-udammiq (1)

Table 4. List of recipients of letters from high officials based on frequency (given in brackets: 1–3 letters).

As mentioned above, it is clear from the subject matter of these letters that they were written at a time when the high officials in question were absent from Uruk and needed to manage refer to lower-ranking colleagues to see after the temple’s affairs. Thus, sending longer letters to a group of temple employees serves as practical means of addressing multiple matters in a single letter. While identifying these individuals strictly based on their personal names might seem at first difficult, a comparison with the legal corpus of Eanna sheds valuable light on their identities. Fortunately, most of the mentioned individuals appear in similar clusters in witness lists, allowing us to identify their patronyms and family names. Using further information found in administrative and legal texts, it is possible to ascertain the roles of these individuals as prebendaries of Eanna, each responsible for a different aspect of daily service and/or administration, especially, as it turns out, in times when important temple officials were away from Uruk.

Thus, in order to identify the said individuals, let us consider the following witness lists:

⁸⁹ Note that there are at least two individuals bearing this name based on BIN 1, 25 and YOS 21, 134.

Text	context	witnesses (and sometimes scribes (S))
GCCI 1, 231 (21+x Nbk)	Promissory note for date-impost	Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Bēl-nādin-apli/Zēr-Bābili//Ile [?] i-Marduk, Šamaš-udammiq/Iqišāya//Rēi-alpī, Ištarān-zēru-ibni/Sīn-iddin.
NCBT 191 (30 Nbk) ⁹⁰	Promissory note for silver and barley owed to Eanna	Balātu/Šumāya//Iddin-Papsukkal, Gimillu/Zēria//Šigua, Bēl-uballiṭ/Bēl-aḥḥē-erība//Ša-ṭābtīšu Nabû-ēreš/Zabidāya. S: Bānia/Tabnēa//Bā [?] iru.
GCCI 1, 113 (35 Nbk)	Promissory note for cattle owed to Eanna	Gimillu/Zēria//Šigua, Bānia/Tabnēa//Bā [?] iru, Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi, Šamaš-udammiq/Iqišāya//Rē [?] i-alpī, Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Nabû-bān-aḥi/Ibnāya//Ekur-zākir.
GCCI 1, 236 (35 Nbk)	Promissory note for silver for wool taken from Eanna	Balātu/Šumāya//Iddin-Papsukkal, Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi, Šamaš-udammiq /Iqišāya//Rē [?] i-alpī.
GCCI 1, 237 (35 Nbk)	Promissory note for reed from Eanna	Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi, Šamaš-udammiq/Iqišāya//Rē [?] i-alpī, Nabû-ētīr-napšāti/Bēl-iqīša//Bēl-aplu- uṣur; Nādinu/Aplāya//Aḥḥūtu.
ARRIM 7, 45 (36 Nbk)	Promissory note for garments taken from Eanna	Gimillu/Zēria//Šigua, Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi, Šamaš-udammiq/Iqišāya//Rē [?] i-alpī, Nabû-bān-aḥi/Ibnāya//Ekur-zākir, Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu//Dā [?] iqu.

⁹⁰ Siehe Kleber 2017: No. 97.

GCCI 1, 262 (37 Nbk)	Promissory note for silver for wool owed to Eanna	Marduk-šumu-iddin/Nabû-balāssu-iqbi//Gimil-Nanaya, Gimillu/Zēria//Šigûa, Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi, Šamaš-udammiq/Iqīšāya//Rēi-alpī. S: Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu
BM 114507 (37 [?] Nbk) ⁹¹	Promissory note for silver for wool owed to Eanna	Marduk-šumu-iddin/Nabû-balāssu-iqbi//Gimil-Nanaya, Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Gimillu/Zēria//Šigûa, Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu.
PTS 2738 (38 Nbk) ⁹²	Promissory note for silver for wool owed to Eanna	Marduk-šumu-iddin/Nabû-balāssu-iqbi//Gimil-Nanaya Gimillu/Zēria//Šigûa, Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi, Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Šamaš-udammiq/Iqīšāya//Rē'i-alpī.
GCCI 1, 95 (40 Nbk)	Promissory note for silver for wool owed to Eanna	Gimillu/Zēria//Šigûa; Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi; Balātu/Arad-Nabû//Šāhit-(ginê) Marduk/Marduk-nāšir//Gimil-Nanaya S: Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu.
BM 114469 (41 Nbk) ⁹³	Promissory note for silver for cattle owed to Eanna	Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Bēl-nādin-apli/Zēr-Bābili//Ile'i-Marduk, Ištarān-zēru-ibni/Sin-iddin, Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu, Marduk/Marduk-nāšir//Gimil-Nanaya.
GCCI 1, 248 (41 Nbk)	Promissory note for date-impost	Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Šamaš-udammiq/Iqīšāya//Rēi-alpī, Bēl-nādin-apli/Zēr-Bābili//Ile'i-Marduk.

⁹¹ Siehe Kleber 2017: No. 110.

⁹² Siehe Kleber 2017: No. 117.

⁹³ Siehe Kleber 2017: No. 71.

PTS 2627 (42 Nbk) ⁹⁴	Promissory note for sesame for wool owed to Eanna	Marduk-šumu-iddin/Nabû-balāssu-iqbi//Gimil-Nanaya, Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Bēl-nādin-apli/Zēr-Bābili//Ile'i-Marduk.
GCCI 1, 189 (42 Nbk)	Promissory note for silver for wool owed to Eanna	Gimillu/Zēria//Šigûa, Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi, Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu(//Dā'iqu).
PTS 2061 (1 Ame)	Guarantee before the Royal Resident	Gimillu/Zēria//Šigûa, Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu, Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi.

Table 5. Attestations of individuals in similar constellations to Table 1 in legal texts, including their familial affiliations.

These witness lists, spanning roughly the last 15 years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, show consistent overlap with the majority of individuals mentioned – with the exception of Innin-zēru-ušabši and Nabû-bān-aḥi, who more frequently appear as scribes. Notably, the names appear in different combinations, without a proclivity for a certain fixed order, however still showing preferences, in that certain individuals are always being named before others. The identification of the pertinent individuals follows this method of connecting the groups of witnesses as they appear as recipients of above-mentioned letters. These individuals were members of well-known Babylonian priestly families and thus appear frequently in administrative record with their patronyms. To illustrate this point, let us consider the following document:

YBC 3740 (1 Ame)⁹⁵:

Obv 1/2 ma.na 7 gín kù.babbar šám 32 gur še.bar
šá a-na maš-šar-ti šá^{iti} ab a-na^{lú} lūnga^{meš}
u^{lú} mu^{meš} sum-na-ta šá^{Id} ag-ri-man-ni a-šú
šá^{Id} en-šeš^{meš}-su {a-šú šá^{Id} en-šeš^{meš}-su} a^{lú} nagar
 5 *ina ugu^{Id} an^o.gal* -numun-dù a^{Id} 30-mu*
^lgi-mil-lu a-šú šá numun-ia a^lši-gu-ú-a
^{Id} en-šú-nu a-šú šá^{Id} ag-šeš^{meš}-mu a^le-gi-bi

⁹⁴ Siehe Kleber 2017: No. 133.

⁹⁵ Edited in Sack 1977: 48 f = ZA 67 48 f.

^{1d}+ag¹-dù-šeš a-šú šá ¹ib-ni-a a ¹é.kur-za-kir
^{1d}+in]nin. ¹na¹-numun-til a-šú šá ¹tin-su ina ^{iti}še
 LoE [kù.babbar šá] ina 1 gín bit-qa ta é.an.na
¹i¹-nam-di-nu-²u ki-i ina ^{iti}še
 Rev la it-tan-nu a-ki-i kù.babbar šá ina ^{iti}še
 a-na síg^{hi.a} i-nam-šu-nu sík^{hi.a} ¹ina^{*} ^{iti}gu⁴ ^{*}
 ta é-an.na i-nam-di-nu 1-en pu-ut
 15 2-i na-šu-ú ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{1d}30-mu
^{lú}qí-i-pi šá é-an.na ¹na-din
 a-šú šá ¹a-a a ¹šeš-²ú^{*} ¹numun-du
 a-šú šá ¹tab-ni-e-a a ¹ba-si-ia
^{1d}+innin-na-šeš^{meš}-mu a-šú šá ¹ri-mut
 20 u ^{lú}umbisag ¹é-an.na-mu-dù a-šú šá
¹šeš^{meš}-šá-a unug^{ki} ^{iti}gan ^{ud}20^{kam}
 UpE ^{mu}1^{kam} ^{lú}-^damar.ud lugal tin.tir^{ki}

½ minas and 7 shekels of silver, the purchase price of 32 kor of barley, which were given as allotment for sacrificial commodities and priestly remuneration (*maššartu*) of the month of Ṭebētu (10th month) for brewers (*sirāšû*) and bakers (*nuhatimmu*), of Nabû-rīmānī, son of Bēl-aḥḥē-erība, descendant of Nagāru, owed by

Ištarān-zēru-ibni, son of Sîn-iddin,

Gimillu, son of Zēria, descendant of Šigua,

Bēšunu, son of Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin, descendant of Egibi,

Nabû-bān-aḥi, son of Ibnāya, descendant of Ekur-zākir,

Innin-zēru-ušabši, son of Balāssu.

In the month of Addaru (12th month) they will [de]liver (lit. give) [silver, in which] 1/8 (of alloy) per shekel is contained, from Eanna. If they do not deliver (it) in the month of Addaru, then they will give him wool from Eanna ¹in the month of Ayyāru (2nd month) ¹corresponding to the silver (price) which they will receive for wool in the month of Addaru. One guarantees for the other.

Witnesses:

Sîn-iddin, the Royal Resident of Eanna,

Nādinu, son of Aplāya, descendant of Aḥu

Zēru-ukīn, son of Tabnêa, descendant of Basia

Innin-aḥḥē-iddin, son of Rīmūt.

Scribe: Eanna-šumu-ibni, son of Aḥḥēšaya.

Uruk, 20th day, Kislīmu (9th month) of the first year of Amēl-Marduk, king of Babylon.

As can be ascertained from the date given at the end of the document, this promissory note was written roughly three months before the silver amount is due (from the 10th to 12th month) – directly corresponding to the length of the *maššartu* period in Eanna.⁹⁶ The subject matter of this document concerns the procurement of barley needed for the daily offerings by the food preparers – here specified as brewers and bakers. Due to the temple not being able to supply this barley from its own reserves, it makes a contract with Nabû-rīmānī right before the allotment period (last three months of the year) to facilitate the continuation of daily offerings. The list of priests named in lines 5–9 of the obverse refers to the brewers and bakers receiving the barley. As we learn from the continuation of this debt note on the reverse, the temple promises to repay the barley either through its worth in silver or – and more probable – through wool. The witness list includes the high officials, most notably the Royal Resident of Eanna Sîn-iddin.

Through this document, the identity of several individuals from the letters can be put into context. Rather than being scribes or clerks of middle rank,⁹⁷ at the time of writing (1 Ame), these persons were priestly brewers and bakers of Eanna. While these priests come from well attested priestly families, this does not mean that their families had been in Uruk for a long time. The Eanna temple in this period was dominated by two – possibly competing – groups: old Urukeans and northern settlers, who mainly came to Uruk during the first couple of decades after Nabopolassar's conquest.⁹⁸ Through resettling families from Babylon throughout the important cities outside of the capital, Neo-Babylonian monarchs managed to infiltrate the local centers of Babylonia with officials who represented the crown's interests.⁹⁹ When looking at the priestly families attested in table 5, it should be noted that, with the exception of the Aḥūtu family, no other family is attested in Uruk after the Babylonian rebellions against Xerxes in 484 BCE. As has been shown elsewhere, the dissolution of priestly families after this date indicates their origin in the North of Babylonia, as these families chose to ally with their relatives in Babylon during the rebellion against the Persian king, leading to

⁹⁶ Freydank 1971: 35 f.

⁹⁷ Jursa 2017: 60.

⁹⁸ Jursa and Gordin 2018: 49 f.

⁹⁹ Jursa 2010b: 136 f.

their disappearance from the record after the rebellion was defeated.¹⁰⁰ This means that the rest of the families all belong to the class of priests stemming not from Uruk, but rather the north of Babylonia, probably from Babylon. That these families were promoted ahead of the older Urukean families should not be surprising, as their loyalties made them better candidates for these high offices. This fact, even if irrelevant for their priestly activity, might shed some light on their correspondence with the high officials of Eanna, possibly explaining why these particular constellations of individuals appear together in the letter corpus. In the following parts of the chapter, the identities and roles of each of these priests will be examined.

¹⁰⁰ Kessler 2004; Waerzeggers (2003/2004).

5.1.1 Gimillu/Zēria/Šigua

This chapter will begin with an individual who features the most prominently in the letter corpus (Table 3). Notably absent from the letters sent by the High Priest Marduk-bēlšunu, Gimillu's presence increases in the correspondence of the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin. He leads the list of recipients in three letters sent by this official (YOS 3, 182; YOS 21, 132; YOS 21, 133) featuring instructions on a variety of topics (see below).

Gimillu is otherwise abundantly attested during the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁰¹ GCCI 2, 90 (1 Ame) records withdrawal of barley, where Gimillu receives (withdraws) barley as his allotment for sacrificial commodities and priestly remuneration (*maššartu*). The previously mentioned text YBC 3740 allows for an identification as a priestly food preparer. He also acts as scribe in AUWE 11, 224 (39 Nbk). He is the father of the overseer of the brewers Madān-aḥḥē-iddin, who is the sender of AUWE 8, 82,¹⁰² as well as one of the recipients of the letter YOS 21, 90 from Nabû-šarru-ušur.

The administrative record gives the usual shadowy outline of his activity profile. Apart from being named as witness in numerous documents, he owes a substantial amount of barley in FLP 1532 (16 Nbk) and TCL 13, 222 (date lost) together with other priests; in FLP 1538¹⁰³ (23 Nbk) he receives provisions for a feast.

When it comes to his correspondence, he is most likely one of recipients of YOS 3, 182, where Sîn-iddin writes to him, Šamaš-udammiq and Nabû-mušētiq-uddû forwarding a royal order to arrest Aplāya, son of Balātu. YOS 21, 132, which Gimillu (among others) receives from the Royal Resident, begins with instructions relating to the offering service in Eanna:

ina ugu en.nun-^rti šá é¹.an.na
la ta-šel-la-a₄ ninda.ḥi.a
10 *lu-ú ba-^rni kaš¹.ḥi.a*
lu-ú ta-a-bu udu.níta
kab-ru-tu gi-nu-ú
šá-lam a-na^d gašan šá^r unug^{1ki}
u^d na-na-a li-r[u]-ub

¹⁰¹ His earliest secure attestation is in Nbk 16 (FLP 1532 and PTS 2500) and the latest one mentioning his *maššartu* allotment in 2 Nbn (YOS 19, 152), which is also his only attestation later than the 1st year of Amel-Marduk.

¹⁰² Kümmel 1979: 151.

¹⁰³ Published in Dillard 1975.

- LoE 15 ma.na kù.babbar {ʿšá¹}
- 16 *a-na sík.ḫi.a*
(erasure)
- Rev *a-ki-i ki.lam šá unug^{ki}*
ina šu^{II} Id+ag-pab^{me}-tin a-šú šá¹a-a
- 20 *at-ta-šá-a[?] ù*
ú-ìl-tì ina ugu-ia
i-te-[?]-el u₄-mu ši-pir-ta-a
ta-mu-ru nu-bat-ti
la ta-bi-it-ta
- 25 *šá kù.babbar a₄ 15 ma.na a-ki-i*
ki.lam šá unug^{ki} sík.ḫi.a
a-na¹at-ta-ta-le-e-^d+en
in-na-a[?] nu-bat-ti
la i-ba-a-ta kaskal^{II}
- 30 *a-na gír^{II}-šú šu-kun-n[a]*
u ú-ìl-tì šá ina ug[u-ia]
i-i[?]-i-lu i-šá-[a[?]-ma]
ina é.an.n[a ter-ra]
- UpE [ʔ]è-me₄ [u šu-lum šá šeš^{meš}-iá]
- 35 [lu]-uš-[me x x (x)]
[x x] šá^{lú}[x x x (x)]
- LeE ʿa-na¹ 1 gun kù.babbar šu-bi-la-nu u udu.níta^{meš} ʿšá¹ [x x]
id-din mim-ma(tablet: ku) *ki-i šá 1 gun sík.ḫi.a šá ina ʿugu¹-i[á]*
a-na¹at-ta-ta-le-e-^d+en in-na-a[?] ši-pir-ta i-ʿna e^{ki}
- 40 *lid-din-nu*

⁸⁻¹⁴Do not neglect your service in Eanna. The bread should be good, the beer should be excellent, the food offerings for the greeting feast for the Lady of Uruk and Nanaya should be presented.

¹⁵⁻³³I took 15 minas of silver for wool according the going rate in Uruk from Nabû-ahḫē-bullit, son of Aplāya, and he issued a debt note against me. As soon as you see my letter do not waste time, give wool for these 15 minas of silver according

to the going rate in Uruk to Attā-tale^{??}i-Bēl. Get him on his way, and take the debt note, that he (Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit) issued against [me] and [return it] (to me) in Eanna.
³⁴⁻⁴⁰I hope to hear [my brothers'] report [and news of their wellbeing ... (gap) Have [...] for one talent of silver brought to me, and as for the sheep which [...] gave – give everything just as the one talent of wool that I owe to Attā-tale^{??}i-Bēl. They should hand over the letter in Babylon.

The letter further gives instructions on issuing wool to one Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit corresponding to the amount of silver, he gave to the Royal Resident in Babylon (where he is currently). After having given the wool, Gimillu, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Bēl-nādin-apli, Šamaš-udammiq, Ištarān-zēru-ibni and Nabû-bān-aḥi are to retrieve the debt note, which Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit had issued against the Royal Resident and give it to him (Sîn-iddin) directly. The issue of wool against silver, for a transaction the Royal Resident orchestrated while away from Uruk is likewise the subject matter of the third letter featuring Gimillu (YOS 21, 133). Due to both of these letters naming many recipients, it is impossible to say, which part directly relates to Gimillu's activity in Eanna.

Apart from silver management, these temple employees seem to have been accountable for overseeing merchandise arriving in Uruk via ships. Durand EHE 166 is written by Nabû-šumu-ukīn and Ištar-mukīn-apli to Gimillu, Bēl-nādin-apli, Šamaš-udammiq, Mušēzib-Bēl, Ištarān-zēru-ibni, Ištar-zēru-ušabši to inform them of gypsum passing the harbor customs and asking the recipients to make a note of this in their ledger.:

a-mur ga-aš-ši šu-ú

10 4 me níg.ga ^diⁿanna šá unug^{ki}
 ^Inumun-ia a-šú šá
 ^Id^u+gur-šeš-mu
 ul-te-ti-iq

Rev ina ugu ^{giš}da-ku-nu

15 en^{meš} liš-tur-u?
 (seal impression)
 iti.kin ud.14.kam
 mu.41.kam

⁹⁻¹⁸As you can see, Zēria, son of Nergal-aḥu-iddin, has made 400 (*kurru*) of gypsum belonging to Ištar of Uruk pass through harbour customs. Let (our) lords write (this) into your ledger.

(seal impression)

14th of Ulūlu, year 41 (of Nebuchadnezzar).

The variety of Gimillu's responsibilities within Eanna can be made further clear through the subject matter of a letter sent by Nabû-šarru-ušur, whether in his capacity as a courtier or Royal Overseer (BIN 1, 85, see in chapter 5.1.2) – the only letter featuring the cluster of recipients where Gimillu isn't the first recipient listed. Here the first name is that of Mušēzib-Bēl (discussed in next chapter), who was possibly the senior of the two when it comes to wool management on Eanna's behalf.

Another letter in which Gimillu features in a group of recipients (YOS 21, 82) was sent by the Royal Resident of Ebabbar in Larsa Nabû-kibšī-šarri-ušur.¹⁰⁴ In this letter, the high official turns to Gimillu, Mušēzib-Bēl, Šamaš-udammiq and Innin-zēru-ušabši because he was forced to give up all but 4 sheep to the overseer of the animal tax. Nabû-kibšī-šarri-ušur makes clear that he needs more sheep in order to prevent an interruption in the offering cycle in Ebabbar.

In the last two letters mentioned, apart from dealing with wool and silver accounting, the recipients are connected to animal husbandry. They are expected to participate in branding cows as well as facilitate sheep deliveries to Larsa. This means that the employees of Eanna, apart from tending to their offering duties and managing accounts for the high officials were also expected to take up an active role in management of temple's animal husbandry sector, possibly because of its relevance for and connection to the offerings.

¹⁰⁴ See Boivin 2024: 34.

5.1.2 *Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu*

Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Aplāya, not to be confused with the smith of that name,¹⁰⁵ is attested during the second half of Nebuchadnezzar's reign until the 1st year of Amēl-Marduk.¹⁰⁶ In GCCI 2, 91 (1 Ame) he appears in a *maššartu* list, though the nature of his prebend is unknown. Prior to this, he is also attested as having transported barley and wheat to Eanna in NCBT 145 (31 Nbk) and NCBT 101 (35 Nbk).

While the letters in which he appears alongside the brewer Gimillu were mentioned above, his earliest secure attestations in the letter corpus from Eanna is as one of a collective of recipients of a letter sent by the High Priest Marduk-bēlšunu. In total, two, possibly three letters are sent by this official to similar constellations of individuals. Two definite cases (definitely sent by the High Priest), BIN 1, 25 and BIN 1, 33 in particular have almost the exact same list of recipients in the exact same order, the only difference being that the former lists an additional man named Nādinu at the end. These recipients are: Līširu, Mušēzib-Bēl, Balāssu, Nādinu (and Nādinu). Of the two, BIN 1, 33 is the friendliest one, relatively speaking. Here, Marduk-bēlšunu firstly instructs the group to take care of offerings, then moves on to instructs them on giving salaries to oblates, requesting they produce a written conformation and send it to him (i.e. Marduk-bēlšunu):

20 *ki-i šuk.ḫi.a ʿa¹-na*
 lú¹ši-ra-ka ta-ʿnam-din-na¹
 ʿta-ki-it*-tu⁴-šú liš-šu-ú-ma¹*
 liš-pur-ú

²⁰⁻²⁴If you give salaries in kind to the oblates let them take *a confirmation* for this fact and send it.

Marduk-bēlšunu goes on to say that if a certain Nādin from the household of the governor is not there, they should have a certain Šumu-ukīn inspect their work. From the last part of the letter, it is clear that the High Priest does not fully trust these temple employees in Uruk to do the work as instructed:

mi-nam-ma mim-ma ma-la
te-ép-pu-uš-šá-a[?]
ši-pir-ta-ku-nu a-na ugu

¹⁰⁵ See Levavi 2018: 130 ff.

¹⁰⁶ His earliest attestation is as witness in YOS 17, 33 (19 Nbk) and the latest one in GCCI 2, 91 (1 Ame).

*ul am-^lmar^l**

³¹⁻³⁴Why is it that I don't get any letter of yours about what you are doing.

This sentiment is further strengthened in BIN 1, 25, where the High Priest criticizes the group more harshly. Upon learning that certain 'outsiders' were allowed to enter the temple storehouses, causing the wool to spoil(?), Marduk-bēlšunu expresses strong frustration with the group:

[a-še]*m*[?]-*me-e-ma* ^{lú}erín^{meš}
na-[ak-r]*u-tu a-na é ka-re-e*
ir^l-^lru^l-*bu ù* ^lsík^{*l}.^{hi}.a *ša* ^dgašan *ša* unug^{ki}
*ú-ḥa-a[t-t]**u-ú mi-na-a*
10 *lib-bu-^lú é šá*^l ^{lú}pa *u* ^{lú}en *pi-qit-ti-šú*
ia-a-nu ép-še-tu-nu

⁶⁻¹¹I hear that outsiders are entering the storehouses and are spoiling the wool of the Lady of Uruk. Why are you acting like a temple household that has neither supervisor nor officials?

He further accuses the recipients of not regularly delivering offering baskets to the king and taking a portion of slaughtered sheep meant for offerings and the king for themselves. The High Priest also inquires as to why overseers are being taken away without his permission. This letter paints a picture of High Priest's great dissatisfaction with the work being done in Uruk while he is not there.

YOS 21, 134, written by a high official, possibly also Marduk-bēlšunu (or alternatively Sîn-iddin), is sent to Mušēzib-Bēl, Nabû-erība, Nādinu, Nādinu and Šamaš-udammiq. It begins by reminding the priests to take care of the food offerings in Eanna. The official has taken silver from an individual while away from Uruk and asks the priests to reimburse this person in wool.

Mušēzib-Bēl can further be identified as one of the recipients of BIN 1, 32 from Nabû-šarru-ušur regarding building work on the Ezida temple. Nabû-šarru-ušur, who at the time of writing bore the title of *ša rēš šarri* alone (not yet the Royal Overseer), writes to Mušēzib-Bēl, Nādin, Šamaš-udammiq, and Innin-zēru-ušabši instructing them on the building work on the Ezida temple. He mentions that Eanna has been assigned a "portion" of the ziqqurra (*mešḫu ina ziqqurrati*). This letter attests to Eanna's role in the building of the ziggurat of Ezida temple

in Borsippa, which was constructed around 33 Nbk.¹⁰⁷ Mušēzib-Bēl, alongside Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Šamaš-aḫu-iddin and Innin-zēru-ušabši, is also one of the recipients of BIN 1, 85 from the same official who instructs the recipients to pay a messenger in wool:

10	<i>ina muḫ-ḫi</i> ¹ en.nun-ta ¹ <i>ša</i> ¹ é ¹ .an.na
LoE	¹ la ta ¹ -šel-la-a ₄ 1 gú.un ¹ sík.ḫi.a ¹
Rev	<i>bab-ba-né-</i> ¹ e-ti ¹
15	<i>a-na</i> ^{lú} a.kin <i>ša</i> ^{ld} 30-sig ₅ -iq <i>in-na-a</i> ² <i>a-mur</i> <i>a-na-ku</i> 1/3 gín kù.babbar <i>a-na</i> ^{lú} mu-saḫ- ¹ ḫir-e ¹
20	<i>a-nam-din</i> kù.babbar a ₄ 1/3 gín <i>a-na</i> ¹ muḫ ¹ -ḫi ^{lú} mu- ¹ saḫ-ḫir ¹ -e <i>šu-ut-[r]a</i>
25	¹ 2 ¹ <i>ina lib-bi-</i> ¹ šu-nu ¹
UpE	¹ li ¹ -li-[ku] ¹ ki ^{1*} tab- ¹ né-e ¹ -[a]
LeE	<i>u</i> ^{lú} gal ¹ <i>bu-ú-lu</i> * ¹ áb ¹ .gal ^{meš} <i>niš-mi-ti</i>

¹⁰⁻²⁹Do not be negligent regarding your duty for Eanna. Give one talent of good wool to the messenger of Šamaš-udammiq. You can be certain that I will give 20 shekels of silver to the agents. Note these 20 shekels of silver down against the agents. Two of them should go. We should mark the cows together with Tabnēa and the chief of flocks.

In this letter, Nabû-šarru-ušur requests the recipients send one talent of wool to the messenger of Šamaš-udammiq (notably not listed among the recipients). The royal official goes on to inform the group about planning to give 20 shekels of silver to the agents sent to him and asks

¹⁰⁷ Kleber 2008: 161.

them to note down this silver against the agents. Nabû-šarru-ušur also mentions needing to mark the cows together with the recipients and the chief of flock.

5.1.3 Šamaš-udammiq/Iqīšāya//Rē'i-alpī

Šamaš-udammiq (^{Id}utu.kal) was another temple employee active during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, in particular during the incumbency of Sîn-iddin. He belonged to the well-known Rē'i-alpī¹⁰⁸ family. His son, Sîn-ibni, was as a priest and agrarian entrepreneur from 40 Nbk until 2 Cyr.¹⁰⁹ Šamaš-udammiq is attested as witness in promissory notes to the benefit of the temple from ca. 35 Nbk until at least 41 Nbk, where he appears next to a more or less fixed group of individuals belonging to the well-known Urukean families (see Table 5).¹¹⁰ Apart from this, we find him receiving honey and beer for a feast together with a Nabû-šumu-ukīn in 36 Nbk.¹¹¹ Šamaš-udammiq is also attested as a scribe in a promissory note BM 114493¹¹² and in YBC 9449, a document appointing Nabû-bēlšunu as the new *rab širki* after the death of his predecessor.¹¹³ Due to these attestations, it is quite possible that Šamaš-udammiq belonged to the group of scribes of priestly origin, as outlined above.

He appears within the aforementioned group of recipients seven times (Table 3). Additionally, he can be tentatively identified as the sole sender and recipient of several other missives regarding Eanna temple's administration (see below). His correspondents are high officials and courtiers of Eanna – Royal Resident Sîn-iddin, Royal Overseer Nabû-šarru-ušur and courtier Ištar-ālik-pāni as well as the Royal Resident of Ebabbar in Larsa Nabû-kibsu-šarri-ušur. He is also mentioned in a letter from the High Priest Kurbanni-Marduk to the plough chief (*rab epinni*) Etellu (YOS 3, 24).

When featured in a group of recipients of letters from the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin, he is consistently listed after Gimillu and Mušēzib-Bēl (cf. Table 3)¹¹⁴, a trend which can likewise

¹⁰⁸ Note that the family name sometimes omits the sign GUD.

¹⁰⁹ Kümmel 1979: 82 f, 132; Janković 2013: 201-202. The document YOS 7, 79 records attribution to two members of the Rē'i-alpī family of a prebend of a “dairyman” (*mār-rē'ūt šizbi*), which had previously belonged to Sîn-ibni, son of Šamaš-udammiq (see Beaulieu 2003: 164 f). According to Kümmel 1979: 83 this document shows that the family was no longer directly connected to animal husbandry.

¹¹⁰ See GCCI 1, 113, 231, 236, 237, 248.

¹¹¹ GCCI 1, 162.

¹¹² See Kleber 2017: 66.

¹¹³ Edited in Beaulieu 2005: 56 f.

¹¹⁴ The exception being Durand EHE, 166, where he is listed after Gimillu but before Mušēzib-Bēl.

be observed in witness lists (cf. Table 5).¹¹⁵ His correspondence in a group of priests correspondence was treated above, under the dossiers of Gimillu and Mušēzib-Bēl respectively.

Apart from this, his correspondence includes further instances of him communicating with different officials. Šamaš-udammiq's activity as a scribe can most clearly be seen in a letter he receives from Nabû-šarru-ušur (BIN 1, 65):

Obv	im ^{ld} +ag-lugal-ùru a-na ^{ld} utu-kal šeš-ia ^d +ag u ^d amar.utu a-na šeš-ia <i>lik-ru-bu</i>
5	{x} gur zú.lum.ma <i>ma-la</i> {x x x x x} {x x} ^l mu-šal-lim- ^d amar.utu a ^l ir- ^d +ag <i>ir-re-šu-ka in-na-áš-šú</i> [ú]-il-tì
LoE	^l lib ^l -bu-ú
Rev	kur u un ^{meš} <i>ina muḥ-ḫi-šú</i> <i>e-e²-il</i> zú.lum.ma
15	<i>bab-ba-nu-tu</i> <i>in-na-áš-šú</i>

¹⁻⁴ Letter of Nabû-šarru-ušur to Šamaš-udammiq, my brother. May Nabû and Marduk bless my brother.

⁵⁻¹⁶ {erasure} *kurru* dates, as much as {erasure} Mušallim-Marduk, son of Arad-Nabû, is going to ask of you – give (them) to him. Write a note of obligation against him according to the common practice of the land and the people. Give him good dates.

¹¹⁵ With the exception of GCCI 1, 113, where he is listed after Gimillu but before Mušēzib-Bēl. One possible explanation for this might be the subject matter of the promissory note: animal husbandry. As exemplified in this chapter, it is possible that Šamaš-udammiq was more influential than Mušēzib-Bēl in this particular sector.

Here, the subject matter concerns allocating dates from the property of Eanna to one Mušallim-Marduk, son of Arad-Nabû as a loan. Šamaš-udammiq is further asked to write (lit. bind) a promissory note against him. While this corresponds to what one would expect from a temple scribe, Šamaš-udammiq's correspondence with Nabû-šarru-ušur sheds more light on his responsibilities within Eanna. In YOS 3, 97, the high official requests workers to be sent to do earth works:

5	20 ^{giš} <i>mar-ri</i> ^{!meš} <i>u</i> 20 ^{lú} <i>it-ba-ar-ti</i> <i>a-na pa-ni-ia</i> <i>a-na é <^l>^d+ag-si-lim</i> <i>ḥa-an-tiš</i>
LoE	<i>lik-šu-du-^rnim-ma¹</i>
Rev	<i>meš-ḥi</i>
12	<i>lu-šá-aš-bit-šú-nu-tú</i> <i>u a-na-ku</i> <i>it-ti</i>
15	1 [<i>kask</i>]al- ^r bu ¹ <i>u₄-mu</i> <i>a-na unug^{ki}</i> <i>lu-ru-bu</i> (remainder of the rev. uninscribed)

⁵⁻¹⁷Twenty spades and twenty workers should quickly come to me at the House of Nabû-silim; I want to make them take up the digging work; as for myself, I want to return to Uruk before sunset.

It is clear from the context that the work and Nabû-šarru-ušur himself are stationed outside of Uruk.¹¹⁶ He instructs Šamaš-udammiq directly to facilitate the delivery of spades and workers to him. It is possible that these were assets of the temple, with Šamaš-udammiq being the person to whom their management was delegated during the time in which his superiors were absent from Uruk.

¹¹⁶ Note also BIN 1, 65, in which Nabû-šarru-ušur instructs Šamaš-udammiq to give dates to Mušallim-Marduk and write a note of obligation.

Apart from Nabû-šarru-ušur, there are further instances of high officials writing solely to Šamaš-udammiq. Nabû-bān-aḫi, most probably to be identified with the chief of oblates¹¹⁷, writes to Šamaš-udammiq in the letter YOS 21, 100 instructing him to allocate oblates for hauling boats and afterwards send one boatman with flour and an ox herder. Similarly to the case of YOS 3, 97, Šamaš-udammiq is asked to tend to matters seemingly outside of his sphere of responsibility, yet again, in connection to construction work outside of Uruk. Nabû-bān-aḫi, son of Aḫu-lūmur, was promoted to the office of the Chief of oblates in 26 Nbk during his work on the construction of the North Palace of Nebuchadnezzar, a position which he held until his death only a year later.¹¹⁸

Šamaš-udammiq is the author of three letters within our corpus. In a letter order YOS 21, 144, which he writes together with Balātu¹¹⁹ to Bēl-aḫḫē-iqīša¹²⁰ asking for goat hair to be given until they¹²¹ can pay the price in silver.

The remaining two letters from him deal with matters of animal husbandry. Mušēzib-Bēl¹²² and Šamaš-udammiq write to Innin-zēru-ukīn (YOS 21, 60) asking him why he was cutting grass, which was supposed to be used as fodder for their animals. That these animals were part used for priestly ritual activities can be ascertained from the letter order which Šamaš-udammiq writes to Nabû-tukulti and Nabû-aḫu-iddin (GCCI 2, 388) about there not being enough bird-fodder for offerings, specifically meant for birds used for sacrificial offerings within Eanna:

Obv ^{Id}utu-kal šu-lum
 šá ^{Id}+ag-tukul-ti
 u ^{Id}+ag-šeš-mu šeš^{me}-šú
 i-šá-a-lu ki-is-sat
 5 šá mušen.ḫi.a šá ta ud.2.kam

¹¹⁷ Nabû-bān-aḫi/Aḫu-lūmur, who was a supervisor of various building projects of Eanna from 16 Nbk onwards, not to be confused with the Temple Scribe of the same name.

¹¹⁸ Kümmel 1979: 72 Fn. 152, Levavi 2018: 180 f.

¹¹⁹ This is the son of Šumāya of the Iddin-Papsukkal family, based on his frequent appearance as witness next to Šamaš-udammiq.

¹²⁰ He appears only this once within our corpus. He must have enjoyed prestige in Eanna; Šamaš-udammiq and Balātu address him as “father”. He can tentatively be identified with Bēl-aḫḫē-iqīša, son of Mušēzib-Marduk of the Egibi family, the father of the later temple scribe Nādinu (Kümmel 1979: 129 with note 153). That man appears sometimes in witness lists of the time together with Šamaš-udammiq and other men of his circle (e.g., PTS 2985, *AnOr* 8, 16).

¹²¹ Note that although the letter names two senders, it is written in the first-person singular.

¹²² This is probably Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Aplāya, of the Arrabtu family, see Table 2 for his attestations with Šamaš-udammiq.

	<i>šá iti.še a-di pa-ras</i>
LoE	<i>i-qa-at-tu-ú</i>
Rev	<i>a-na ^{ld}inanna-re-šu-ú-a</i> <i>in-na-a?</i>
10	<i>ù 2 gur zú.lum.ma</i> <i>ninda u kaš.ḫi.a šá e-lat</i> <i>gíd.da^{me} a-na te-lit</i> <i>ú-še-lu-ú a-na</i>
UpE	<i>^lgi-mil-lu in-na-a?</i>

¹⁻⁴Letter of Šamaš-udammiq enquires after the well-being of Nabû-tukulti and Nabû-aḫu-iddin, his brothers.

⁴⁻¹⁴There is not enough fodder for the birds from the second day of Addāru up to the moment of the selection of the offerings. Give (what is missing) to Ištar-rēšû'a. Also give Gimillu 2 kor of dates, bread and beer which he spent over and above (what is noted in) the receipts.

Šamaš-udammiq is the recipient of YOS 21, 42, which chronologically differs from the previously discussed letters. Here, the courtier Ištar-ālik-pāni informs Šamaš-udammiq, who seems to be his superior, about several cases of debt owed to Eanna. The debtors include the rent farmer Kalbāya, nephew of Šumu-ukīn, and Nergal-nāšir, son of Nanaya-ibni.¹²³ This letter implies that Šamaš-udammiq continued managing Eanna well into the reign of Nabonidus, possibly alongside Nabû-šarru-ušur, with whom Šamaš-udammiq had collaborated before the latter was promoted to the rank of Royal Overseer for Eanna.¹²⁴

¹²³ For Kalbāya see Hackl et al 2011: 178 f.; Janković 2013: 186–200. For Nergal-nāšir see Janković 2013: 151–158. Both were active during as rent farmers during the reign of Nabonidus.

¹²⁴ This also implies that Šamaš-udammiq's son Sîn-ibni was emancipated and could pursue an active career already during the life-time of his father (Kümmel 1979: 105-106).

5.1.4 Balātu/Šumāya/Iddin-Papsukkal

Balātu can be identified as the member of the prominent Iddin-Papsukkal family through his attestations in witness lists in promissory notes (see Table 5). His earliest activity can be traced back to 9 Nbk, where he acts as one of the witnesses in a promissory note YOS 17, 26. Apart from being featured as witness in both temple and private documents, he appears in a debt note purchasing goats¹²⁵ and as a recipient of bronze vessels intended for the presentation of offerings.¹²⁶ He can be identified as a prebendary baker also based on YOS 19, 137 (5 Nbn), where he (without family name) is listed in a large group of bakers (*nuḫatimmu*) receiving dates for sacrificial commodities and priestly remuneration (*maššartu*).¹²⁷

As shown in Table 3, he is featured alongside Gimillu, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Šamaš-udammīq, Ištarān-zēru-ibni, Bēl-nādin-apli, Innin-zēru-ibni, and Marduk as one of the recipients of YOS 21, 133 (see chapter 5.1.5) from Sîn-iddin and BIN 1, 57 from an unknown sender to him alongside Nādin, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Bēl-nādin-apli and Innin-zēru-ušabši:

	<i>am-me-ni</i>
	3 4-ta ši-pir-e-tú
10	áš-pu-rak-ku-nu-šim-ma
	<i>gab-ri ši-pir-ti-iá</i>
	<i>la a-mur kù.babbar a₄</i>
	1/2 gú.un šá ul-tu
	ʽéʼ.gal áš-šá-a 20 ma.ʽnaʽ
15	<i>ina lib-bi^{lú} qí-i-pi</i>
	<i>[i]t-ta-šú 1 ma.na</i>
LoE	<i>[a-n]a^{na4} ga-bu-u</i>
	<i>[a]-na^{ld}+ag-numun-giš</i>
Rev	ʽatʽ-ta-din u ú-ʽil-tiʽ
20	<i>ul-te-bi-lak-ʽkuʽ-[nu-ši]</i>
	<i>a-mur 8 ma.ʽnaʽ [kù.babbar]</i>
	<i>ina šu^{ll} ʽta-r[i-bi]</i>
	<i>ul-te-bi-lak-[ku-nu-ši]</i>

¹²⁵ YBC 4120 (17 Nbk), edited in Kleber 2017: No. 65.

¹²⁶ YOS 17, 351 (12 Nbk); *ana qur-ru-ú nap-ta-nu* stands for *ana qurrub naptāni*.

¹²⁷ The tablet is very damaged, only other legible names are: Nabû-ēṭir/Aplāya, Innin-šumu-ušur/A- [...], Nabû-bēlšunu/[...], Madānu-aḫḫē-iddin, Arad-Innin/Ibni-Ištar, and Ki- [...] according to the following paraphrase by M. Adelhofer: <https://nabucco.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/archiv/tablet/detail/5064>.

	1 ma.na 10 gín kù.babbar
25	<i>ki-i ḫi-šiḫ-t[a-ku-nu]</i> <i>i-ba-áš-šú-ú lu-¹uš-šam¹-ma</i> <i>lu-še-bi-lak-ku-nu-šú</i> <i>ia-a-nu-ú šup-ra-[nim]-ma</i> <i>kù.babbar i-šá-a⁴ ¹ta-[ri]b*</i>
30	<i>šá il-lik nu-bat-tu₄</i> <i>la i-ba-a-tú šit-tú</i> <i>¹kù¹ [babbar liš-šá]-¹a¹ kaskal^{II} a-na</i> <i>[gìr^{II}-šú šuk]-na-a⁷ ¹é*.níg*.ga*^{1me}</i>
UpE	[(broken)]
35	[(broken)]
LeE	<i>[š]á-nam-ma ina 10-ú ú-paḫ-ḫ[a-ar/ru]</i> <i>[kap]-¹da¹ kaskal^{II} ¹a¹-na gír^{II}-šú¹[šuk-na-a⁷]</i>

⁸⁻¹²Why did I send three, four letters to you without receiving a response to my letter?

¹²⁻²⁰As for that half talent of silver that I brought away from the palace, the Royal Resident has taken 20 minas thereof, and one mina I have given to Nabû-zēru-līšir for alum, and I have sent you the debt note (for this).

²¹⁻²⁹As you can see, I have sent you 8 minas [of silver] via Tarībi. And if you need (the remaining) 1 mina 10 shekels of silver, I shall take them and have them brought to you. Otherwise send and take the silver (yourselves).

²⁹⁻³⁷Let Tarībi, who came (to you) not waste any time, [he should b]ring (you) the remainder of the silver. Send him on his way. The storehouses [(gap) ...] He/they/I will gather another [...] from the tithe. Quickly [send him] on his way.

The subject matter of both letters concerns silver management, the only difference being that the first letter was written by their superior (Royal Resident) and this other one by a subordinate of the group.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ The letter begins by referring to the group as ‘my fathers’-

5.1.5 *Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḫē-iddin//Egibi*

Bēlšunu appears as witness in promissory notes, sales of wool, documents about land acquisition by Eanna and different transactions by Eanna officials such as Sîn-iddin mostly during the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar until the early reign of Nabonidus.¹²⁹ Similarly to Balātu, son of Šumāya, Bēlšunu is named as baker (*nuḫatimmu*) in YBC 9155 (5 Nbn), in YOS 19, 138 (Nbn), where he appears in a long list of bakers receiving Dilmun dates for sacrificial offerings, and in YOS 19, 205 (2 Nbn), where he withdraws commodities for sacrificial services.

In the Eanna letters, Bēlšunu is one of the recipients of a letter by Sîn-iddin (YOS 21, 132, see chapter 5.1.1). The first part of the letter has an exhortation to take proper care of the offerings of food and drink in Eanna that appears also in other letters featured in this dossier. However, this is not obligatory: in another letter to a group consisting of Gimillu, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Šamaš-udammīq, Ištārān-zēru-ušabši, Bēl-nādin-apli, Innin-zēru-ibni, Balātu and Marduk (YOS 21, 133), Sîn-iddin makes no reference to offerings. Rather, his letter entirely revolves around silver accounting:

1/2 ḡú¹.[un sík.ḫi.a]
 ḡa¹-na ḡ5/6¹ ma.na 5 gín [kù.babbar]
 10 ^{Id}innin-mu-giš u ḡi^d-in[ni]n
 a.me šá¹é.kur-za-kir
 a-na šuk.ḫi.a šá^{lú}s[ip]a.me
 ina ma-dak-ti a-na
 LoE [ḡi]na-sùḫ-sur
 15 [ḡi]t-ḡtan-nu¹
 Rev u ú-il-ḡti¹ ina muḫ-ḡḫi-ni²¹
 i-te-²e-el
 a-mur ú-il-tì
^{lú}a.kin šá¹ ^{Id}innin-mu-giš
 20 u ḡi^d-innin ḡi¹-[na-áš-ša-ak-ku-nu-ši]
 ḡkù.babbar¹ a₄ 5/6 ḡma.na¹ [5 gín]
 eṭ-ra-áš

¹²⁹ His earliest attestation is in 23 Nbk (YBC 3543, YBC 9230) and latest in 2 Nbn (YOS 19, 205).

⁸⁻²²In the camp, Innin-šumu-līšir und Naʾid-Ištar, descendents of the Ekur-zākir family, have given to Ina-tēšī-ēter half a talent of wool for 5/6 of a mina and five shekels of silver, for the provisioning of the shepherds, and he has issued a promissory note against us. As you can see, a messenger of Innin-šumu-līšir and Naʾid-Ištar is taking the promissory note [to you], pay him the 5/6 of a mina and [five shekels] of silver.

This is similar to the subject matter of BIN 1, 85, in which Nabû-šarru-ušur writes to Mušēzib-Bēl, Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Šamaš-aḫu-iddin and Innin-zēru-ušabši instructing them to pay a messenger in wool and reassuring them he'll give silver to the agents (see chapter 5.1.2). He is also one of the senders of Durand EHE 163 to Marduk-nādin-zēri, Ištarān-zēru-ibni, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēl-nādin-apli, Innin-zēru-ušabši and one of the recipients of BIN 1, 57 alongside Nādin, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēl-nādin-apli, Innin-zēru-ušabši, Balātu.

Bēlšunu is also attested in a different group of individuals, namely Arad-Gula, Bānia and Innin-zēru-ušabši, together with whom he writes two letters to Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim in YOS 3, 61 and YOS 3, 75. Other protagonists of this correspondence are most likely to be identified Bānia/Tabnēa//Bāʾiru, who would become the High Priest during the reign of Neriglissar,¹³⁰ and Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu//Dāʾiqu, a widely attested scribe during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.¹³¹ Arad-Gula is more difficult to identify. A possible candidate is Arad-Gula/Ašarēdu/Nuḫatimmu, who is attested as a scribe in three documents,¹³² however due to his otherwise lacking connection to other priests in this dossier, this identification is difficult to prove with certainty. The recipient of both letters, Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim, is with all likelihood to be identified with the agricultural overseer, also dealing with animal husbandry possibly as part of his private enterprise.¹³³ The subject matter of the first with animals for offerings. Although none of the named priests belong under the group of food-preparers dealing with sheep offerings, it seems that it was their responsibility nevertheless to facilitate such deliveries: in YOS 3, 75, the senders inform Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim about an interruption in the supply of sheep for their offerings:

a-na udu.níta^{me}

10 *šá-kin ki-i*

¹³⁰ Kümmel 1979: 142, Kleber 2008: 33.

¹³¹ See chapters 5.1.10 and 5.1.9 respectively as well as Table 1.

¹³² Kümmel 1979: 110.

¹³³ Janković 2013: 91; See chapter 6.1.

	<i>na-kut-ti</i>
	<i>ni-il-¹tap-rak¹-ka</i>
LoE	¹ 50 ¹ 1+š <i>u</i>
Rev	udu.níta ^{me}
15	en <i>lis-pur-an-na-a-šú</i>
	<i>ù^{lú}sipa-ka</i>
	<i>it-ti-šú-nu</i>
	<i>l[i]l-li-ku</i>
	<i>ia-a-nu-ú</i>
20	<i>baṭ-la iš-šak-kan</i>

⁹⁻²⁰There is an interruption in (the supply of) sheep (for the offerings). We have now written to you in a situation of great urgency. Let the lord send to us 50 or 60 sheep and let a shepherd of yours come with them. Otherwise there will be (definitely) an interruption (in the sheep offerings).

The other letter (YOS 3, 61) establishes that both the Royal Resident and the High Priest are stationed at Babylon at the time. The senders ask for barley from Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim, which they need for the offering service. It is clear from the context that Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim was supplying Eanna with both barley and sheep for the offering ceremonies, as well as that the individuals sending the letter were priests tasked with preparing the daily meals for the goddess.

5.1.6 *Nādin/Aplāya/Aḥūtu*

Like his peers, Nādin is attested in archival texts during from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar up until that of Nabonidus.¹³⁴ He is attested as baker (*nuḥatimmu*) in AUWE 8, 47¹³⁵ and AUWE 8, 73, neither of which are dated, as well as in VS 20, 54 (1 Ame). In BIN 1, 170 (3 Ner) he is listed as one of the individuals receiving dates for his priestly remuneration (*maššartu*).

He features frequently as one of a group of recipients of letters from officials. These include a letter probably predating the rest in our corpus, YOS 21, 63, sent by the High Priest Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin asking the addressees (Nabû-šumu-ukīn, Tabnēa, Nādin, Innin-zēru-šubši and Nabû-kuṣranni) to collect sesame oil for Eanna (for context see chapter 5.1.9). A problem when identifying persons with such a common name as Nādin in our letter corpus can be exemplified by letters YOS 21, 134 and BIN 1, 25, both of which list two individuals named Nādin as recipients. The following example is from BIN 1, 25 (for the remainder of the letter see chapter 5.1.2):

- 1 [im ^{ld}amar.u]tu-en-šú-nu a-na
 [^lli-ši-ru] ^lmu-še-zib-^d+en
 [^ltin-s]u ^lna-din u ^lna-din
 [šeš-e-a] ^rd+ag¹ u ^damar.utu
 5 [a-na šeš-]^{meš}-a lik-ru-bu

¹⁻⁵[Letter of Mardu]k-bēlšunu to [Līšir], Mušēzib-Bēl, Balāssu, Nādin and Nādin,
 [my brothers]. May Nabû and Marduk bless my brothers.

At least one of these is probably to be identified with our baker. Within our corpus, he is more heavily featured in the earlier correspondence, notably with the High Priests Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin and Marduk-Bēlšunu, while being completely absent from letters sent by the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin.

Another letter featuring him is YOS 21, 90 from Nabû-šarru-uṣur requesting Madānu-aḥḥē-iddin, Nabû-ēṭer-napšāti, Nādin, Bāniya, Innin-zēru-ušabši, Eanna-šumu-ibni¹³⁶, Nabû-aḥu-iddin and Nūrea to send wool for the *šalḥu* garment for Adad, as per request from Karkara. The royal official also inquires as to how many sheep were taken from Eanna and asks for

¹³⁴ His earliest attestation is TEBR 49 (8 Nbk) and the latest one in BM 114485 (8 Nbn).

¹³⁵ Here he is seen executing the service of another prebendary baker (*ana rāsinūtu*), see Kessler 1991: 81 f.

¹³⁶ A scribe responsible for Eanna's agricultural production, who was active from the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar and throughout Nabonidus' reign (Janković 2013: 208, note 738).

baskets to be sent to him. He possibly appears in a similar constellation as the author of the letter order YOS 21, 111 to the scribe Eanna-šumu-ibni, where he requests sesame oil be given to Madānu-aḥḥē-iddin.

Nādin appears as the first in a long list of recipients (Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Bēl-nādin-apli, Innin-zēru-ušabši, Balātu) of BIN 1, 57, whose sender is unknown, yet notably addresses the group as ‘my fathers’. The letter urges the recipients to send silver to cover the loan, which the Royal Resident and another man had taken from the sender (see chapter 5.1.4).

5.1.7 *Bēl-nādin-apli/Zēr-Bābili/Ile²i-Marduk*

Bēl-nādin-apli of the Ile²i-Marduk family is attested exclusively as witness in various legal documents from Uruk especially regarding wool trade (see Tablet 3).¹³⁷ He is attested as scribe once, in a private document from 40 Nbk (YBC 3739) detailing a contract between Bēl-nādin-apli and Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, the agricultural overseer. It is an agreement about pasturing donkeys and sharing its offspring between the two parties. Although we don’t see him receiving *maššartu* as we do with the other priests in this dossier, it is highly likely that Bēl-nādin-apli was a priest, as his frequent appearance next to priests in witness lists and in collectives of addressees of letters. Furthermore, he is named as the first witness in a text detailing the opening of the inner cella of Ušur-amāssu. This text exemplifies Bēl-nādin-apli’s active role in cultic aspects of Eanna’s administration, allowing us to place him into the priestly category.

One should, however exercise caution when identifying this Bēl-nādin-apli within the letter corpus. As is exemplified in Durand EHE 163, which Bēl-nādin-apli, Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Marduk-šumu-iddin and Ibnāya send to Marduk-nādin-zēri, Istarān-zēru-ibni, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēl-nādin-apli and Innin-zēru-ušabši, there are (at least) two Bēl-nādin-aplis, who were active at the same time:

Obv	im ^{Id} +en-na-din-a ^r gi ¹ -mil-lu ^I en-šú-nu ^I d ^{amar} .utu-mu-mu u ^I dù-iá a-na ^{Id} amar.utu-mu- ^r mu ¹ ? 5 ^I an.gal-numun-dù ^I mu-še-zib- ^d +en ^{Id} +en-na-din-A u ^{Id} in-nin-numun-pab
-----	---

¹³⁷ His earliest attestation is as a witness in 37 Nbk (YBC 4059) and latest in a debt-repayment document from 9 Nbn (YOS 19, 223).

šeš^{meš}-i-ni ^d+ag u ^damar.utu
a-na ^ʾšeš^{meš}-e-ni lik-ru-bu

¹⁻⁸Letter of Bēl-nādin-apli, Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Marduk-šumu-iddin and Bānia to Marduk-šumu-iddin, Ištaran-zēru-ibni, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēl-nādin-apli and Innin-zēru-ušur, our brothers. May Nabû-and Marduk bless our brothers.

This letter states that the sender Bēl-nādin-apli went to the Royal Resident, who was in Tyre at the time:

a-na ^{uru}Šur-ru a-na igi
10 ^{lú}qí-i-pi¹ ki-i ni-il-lik
1 1/2 ma.na kù.[babbar] ina šu^{II}
^{Id}+ag-šu-zib-an-^ʾni ^{lú}sag.lugal¹
a-na ni-is-*ḫu* ki-i iš-šá-a[?]
it-tan-na-an-na-šú
15 u ú-íl-tì ina ugu-i-ni
i-te-[?]i-il
a-mur ú-íl-tì
šá ina muḫ-ḫi-ni i-[?]i-il
a-na a-kan-na-ku-nu
20 nu--te-bil-lak-ku-nu-<šú>
LoE a-ki-i ú-íl-tì
ta-ma-ra-nim-ma
ina iti.še a-na
^{lú}qí-i-pi šu-bi-la-^ʾa-ni¹
25 ina ugu la ta-šel-la-a₄
kù.babbar ki-i nu-bu-ú
ul ni-ik-šu-ud
^{lú}qí-i-pi kù.babbar
a-na ni-is-*ḫu*
30 ^ʾki-i¹ iš-šá-a[?]
[it-tan]-^ʾnu-na-a¹-šú
^ʾkù.babbar i-šá¹-nim-ma in-na-a[?]
10 gín a-na ^{lú}qí-i-pi

la tu-ḥaʔ-apʔ-pa-naʔ-a-šú

⁹⁻³⁴When we went to Tyre to the Royal Resident, he took 1.5 minas of silver from Nabû-šūzibanni, the royal courtier, for expenses, and gave it to us. He also drew up a promissory note against us. As you can see, we have had the promissory note that he drew up against us brought to you there. You will make an examination (of the facts?) according to (the wording of) the promissory note; have (the silver?) brought to the Royal Resident by the month of Addāru. Do not be negligent in this matter. We looked for silver but could not get any, (so) the Royal Resident got (some) for expenses, and they gave it to us. Get silver and give it (to him). Do not fail to honour our obligation to the Royal Resident down to the (last) 10 shekels.

According to Kleber, this letter belongs to the so-called later Tyros-dossier, documenting building activities in Tyre from 35 until 42 Nbk, which would make Sîn-iddin the Royal Resident in question.¹³⁸

As already seen, the letter establishes the activity of two individuals named Bēl-nādin-apli: one who was a high-ranking temple official, this being the same Bēl-nādin-apli, descendant of Ileʔi-Marduk, whom we find abundantly attested in temple's archival record. We assume him to be the author/recipient of the majority of the letters in our corpus. Such is the case with YOS 3, 63, where he is one of recipients of a letter from the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin regarding cattle distribution. Similarly, he appears next to Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Innin-zēru-ušabši and Balātu as recipient of BIN 1, 57 detailing matters concerning silver accounting. This Bēl-nādin-apli is likewise to be identified with the sender of BIN 1, 93, a letter to the king (Nebuchadnezzar) denouncing criminals and murderers.¹³⁹

While the identity of the lower ranking Bēl-nādin-apli is impossible to determine with any certainty, it is possible that he is to be identified with the sender of GCCI 2, 389 to Nabû-bān-aḥi asking him to take dates at his (i.e. Bēl-nādin-apli's) and give them as *kišru* payment to the treasury.

¹³⁸ Kleber 2008: 145 ff.

¹³⁹ See Jursa 2003: 171.

5.1.8 Ištarān-zēru-ibni/Sîn-iddin

Ištarān-zēru-ibni is yet another priest mentioned as receiver of the allotment for sacrificial commodities and priestly remuneration (*maššartu*) for the brewers (*sirāšu*) and bakers (*nuhatimmu*) in YBC 3740 (see above). Though there is no other evidence distinguishing whether he was a brewer or baker, due to him being named as the first one in the list, right after the brewer Gimillu, it can be assumed that Ištarān-zēru-ibni was likewise a brewer. A further interesting aspect of this priest is his parenthood. He can securely be identified as the son of the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin according to PTS 2562 (40 Nbk), where the high official is mentioned explicitly with his title as Ištarān-zēru-ibni's father. The pertinent witness list is as follows:

^{lú}*mu-kin*₇ ^l*ba-la-tu* a-šú šá ^l*mu-a-a* [a x x]
^{Id}*utu-kal* a-šú šá ^l*ba-ša-a* *dumu* ^{lú}*sipa-gu*₄
^l*ir*^{-d+} en a-šú šá ^l*a-a* a ^l*ár-rab-ti*
^{Id+} en-*na-din*-ibila a-šú šá ^l*numun-tin*.*tir*^{ki} a ^l*da*^{-d}šú
^{Id+} en-šú-*nu* a-šú šá ^{Id}+ag-šeš^{me}-*mu* a ^l*e-gi-bi*
^{Id}*an.gal-numun-dù* a ^{Id}*30-mu* ^{lú}*qí-i-pi* šá é-an.na
^{Id+} ag-*tu-kul-ti* ^{lú}*qa-la* šá ^{lú}*qí-i-pi*
^{lú}*umbisag* ^{Id}*in-nin-numun-gál*^{ší} a-šú šá ^l*tin-su*

Apart from YBC 3740 (1 Ame), he only appears once more in archival texts with this patronym – in BM 114469 (41 Nbk).¹⁴⁰ This means that, unlike the others in this dossier, Ištarān-zēru-ibni did not in fact come from a well-established family but was rather able to attain his status through his father.¹⁴¹

He is featured in a group of recipients of three letters – two of them connected to his father. Firstly, he is listed as one of the recipients of YOS 21, 132, instructing Gimillu, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēlšunu, Bēl-nādin-apli, Šamaš-udammiq, Ištarān-zēru-ibni and Nabû-bān-aḫi on offering service and silver accounting. In Durand EHE 163 he and Marduk-nādin-zēri, Mušēzib-Bēl, Bēl-nādin-apli and Innin-zēru-ušabši are informed by Bēl-nādin-apli, Gimillu, Bēlšunu, Marduk-šumu-iddin and Ibnāya about these men's trip to Tyre, where they would meet the Royal Resident, i.e., Sîn-iddin. Lastly, he is the recipient of Durand EHE 166 from two subordinates informing the priests about merchandise passing the harbor customs.

¹⁴⁰ Edited in Kleber 2018: No. 71.

¹⁴¹ See more on this in § 5.2.

5.1.9 Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu//Da'iqu and his brother Nabû-mušētiq-uddê

Innin-zēru-ušabši is a widely attested scribe (*tupšarru*) in many legal documents from Eanna during Nebuchadnezzar's reign¹⁴² as well as being named as one of the brewers (*sirāšu*) and bakers (*nuhatimmu*) receiving *maššartu* in YBC 3740 (see above). He is also featured at the bottom (!) of several witness lists for the same period.¹⁴³ Apart from this, possibly later, he seems to have been connected to animal husbandry, as two texts connect him with livestock.¹⁴⁴ According to Kümmel he belongs to the Da'iqu/Damiqu family¹⁴⁵ and is the brother of Nabû-mušētiq-uddê, who is also listed right above Innin-zēru-ušabši in YOS 6, 130 (9 Nbn).¹⁴⁶ This text can be summarized as follows:¹⁴⁷

Tabular summary of the results of an inspection (*amirtu*) of 1,319 cattle of Ištar and Nanāya assigned to the Eanna herds:

- Innin-šarru-ušur/Nergal-ušallim has 110 cattle at his disposal.
- Iqīša/Nanāya-ēreš/Marduk-erība has 607 cattle at his disposal, which belong to his father Nanāya-ēreš/Marduk-erība; 9 bull and 3 three-year-old bulls are for the livestock tax (*šibtu*).
- Mannu-kī-dādu/Nabû-zabad has 165 cattle at his disposal.
- Nabû-mušētiq-uddi/Balāssu has 183 cattle at his disposal.
- 194 cattle belong to Innin-zēru-ušēbši/Balāssu and are at the disposal of Rēmūtu and his brothers.
- Ibni-Ištar/Šumu-ukīn has 60 cattle at his disposal

Besides the two brothers, other individuals which can be identified are the chief of flock Innin-šarru-ušur, son of Nergal-ušallim, descendant of Sîn-lēqe-unninnī,¹⁴⁸ herdsman Iqīša, son of Nanāya-ēreš, descendant of Marduk-erība,¹⁴⁹ Mannu-kī-dādu, son of Nabû-zabad, whose title is unknown, but who is the father of two herdsmen,¹⁵⁰ and Ibni-Ištar, son of Šumu-ukīn,

¹⁴² In total he is attested as scribe in 10 documents, his earliest attestation is as the scribe being YBC 4122 (0 Nbk) and latest BM 114505 (42 Nbk).

¹⁴³ In total, he is attested in 13 documents, earliest being YBC 3856 (28 Nbk) and latest PTS 2885 (4 Nbn).

¹⁴⁴ Kümmel 1979: 62. He is attested in a list of livestock herders in YOS 6, 130 (9 Nbn) and GCCI 2, 346 (undated).

¹⁴⁵ The only attestation with his family name is PTS 2859, edited in Kleber 2017: No. 126. Otherwise he is mostly named as Innin-zēru-šubši, son of Balāssu.

¹⁴⁶ Kümmel 1979: 115.

¹⁴⁷ Edited in San Nicolò 1949: 304 ff. The following is a paraphrase made by M. Young under the auspices of the DigEanna project: <https://nabucco.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/archiv/tablet/detail/4737> (accessed: 06.11.2025).

¹⁴⁸ Aarslev 2023: 284 f.

¹⁴⁹ Aarslev 2023: 285 f. Note that only a year after this document was written, Iqīša is attested with the title chief of ten. The texts in which he is attested as a herdsman are comparatively older (1 Nbn).

¹⁵⁰ Aarslev 2023: 310.

descendant of Ekur-zakir, who later became the chief of flocks under Cyrus.¹⁵¹ His family name is also attested in one witness lists.¹⁵² Like his brother, Nabû-mušetiq-uddî¹⁵³ was both a scribe and active in animal husbandry.¹⁵⁴ Kümmel also suggests Innin-zēru-ušabši to be the father of Innin-mukīn-apli, whom he tentatively identifies to be nicknamed Kīnāya¹⁵⁵

If Innin-zēru-ušabši and Nabû-mušetiq-uddî are to be understood as brothers, then it is possible that the letter BIN 1, 75 is addressed to the both of them. A problem arises when we consider that the sender of the same letter is another individual named Innin-zēru-ušabši. From the subject matter, we learn that the sender of the letter is away from Uruk, promising to inform the High Priest of whichever information he gathers while away.

According to BIN 1, 84 Innin-zēru-ušabši oversaw the digging of a canal. This letter can be identified as corresponding to the building works described in letters No. 115, 116, 117, 118 and possibly recipient of No. 114 published by Levavi.¹⁵⁶ The work he is referring to is either in Opis or Babylon and it can also be inferred that this letter was most probably written to the Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin, who features heavily in his other correspondence. His connection to this High Priest can also be observed in YOS 21, 63, where Innin-zēru-ušabši features as one of the recipients of that letter from the High Priest in which he asks the addressees to collect sesame oil for Eanna. Similarly, he features as one of recipients in YOS 21, 133 from the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin, about silver and wool accounting. In YOS 21, 90 Nabû-šarru-ušur writes to Madānu-aḥḥē-iddin, Nabû-ēter-napšāti, Nādin, Bāniya, Innin-zēru-ušabši, Eanna-šumu-ibni, Nabû-aḥu-iddin and Nūrea requesting they to send him wool and garments. Sîn-iddin also writes to a group including Nabû-mušetiq-uddî in YOS 3, 182 forwarding a royal order to arrest an individual. In a letter order (YOS 21, 39) he orders dates to be issued to an individual and to record the transaction on the writing board of the Lady of Uruk.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Aarslev 2023: 283.

¹⁵² PTS 2859 (39 Nbk).

¹⁵³ Not to be confused the rent farmer of the same name (see Janković 2013: 202 f; Kümmel 1979: 68).

¹⁵⁴ Siehe Kümmel 1979: 62, 120

¹⁵⁵ Kümmel 1979: 129.

¹⁵⁶ See Levavi 2018: 363–369.

¹⁵⁷ For the use of writing boards in Neo-Babylonian administration see Levavi 2018: 65 f.

5.1.10 *Bānia/Tabnēa//Bā'iru*

Last person discussed in this dossier, though definitely not least, is a priest who would rise through the ranks and become the last person to hold the title of the High Priest of Eanna before the office was abolished for ten years during the reign of Nabonidus. He got the title sometime during the reign of Neriglissar and held it until the first year of Nabonidus.¹⁵⁸

His early activity during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar is attested within the corpus, where he appears next to Arad-Gula, Bēlšunu, and Innin-zēru-ušabši as the sender of YOS 3, 61 and YOS 3, 75 to Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim regarding the orders he obtained in Babylon and requesting sheep for offerings. He also appears next to Bēl-nādin-apli, Ištarān-zēru-ibni, Nabû-ikṣur, and Innin-zēru-ušabši in a letter from Sîn-iddin (YOS 3, 63) regarding distribution of oxen. His connection with these men can also be ascertained from other archival texts. Apart from his frequent appearance with them as witness,¹⁵⁹ there is also direct evidence of him being a prebendary of Eanna. In AUWE 5, 85 he is listed as receiving barley for his priestly remuneration (*maššartu*) in 37 Nbk. In NCBT 191 (30 Nbk) he appears as a scribe.

His correspondence dating to his time in office is mostly connected to the Basia family.¹⁶⁰ A particularly favorable picture of their relationship is painted by the letter YOS 21, 18, where the High Priest expresses gratitude towards Šumu-ukīn concerning a previous favor.¹⁶¹ Together with the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin he writes to Šumu-ukīn asking him to deliver a payment in dates for the regular offering of Šamaš (YOS 3, 102).¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Kümmel 1979: 142, Kleber 2008: 33.

¹⁵⁹ YBC 6849 (29 Nbk), NCBT 191 (30 Nbk), NCBT 192 (30 Nbk), YBC 6849 (33 Nbk), YBC 4119 (34 Nbk), GCCI 1, 113 (35 Nbk), YBC 6849 (Ame 0a).

¹⁶⁰ See Hackl et al 2011.

¹⁶¹ Hackl et al 2011: 188.

¹⁶² Due to the two incumbencies not overlapping, the letter was probably written at the beginning of the reign of Neriglissar (Hackl et al 2011: 2015).

5. 2 Role of High Officials: The Case of Sîn-iddin

Apart from considering the role of clerks in the administration of Eanna, another valuable consideration can be made by examining the senders of these letters. As seen in Table 1 above, the high officials dominating the correspondence with individuals in Eanna are Marduk-bēlšunu, Sîn-iddin and Nabû-šarru-ušur. All three of these bear different titles, that of the High Priest, Royal Resident and Royal Overseer respectively, yet the contents of these letters and the areas of activity they address do not vary significantly between them. While one traditionally assumes the post of Royal Resident to be that of a controlling entity on behalf of the crown, counterbalancing the influence of the High Priest, these officials are not usually seen tending to administrative inner-workings of the temple.¹⁶³ While the more active role of the Royal Resident is normally explained by the absence of the High Priest in Uruk (due to overseeing construction work elsewhere, for example), this letter corpus, however, offers a different picture of Royal Resident's activity, as Sîn-iddin, the official in question, is seen sending instructions on administrative and cultic matters while himself being absent from Uruk. It is noteworthy that within our corpus, we see either the High Priest (Marduk-bēlšunu) or a royal official (Royal Resident/Royal Overseer) seem to be the ones issuing orders at a given time – as Marduk-bēlšunu's incumbency ends in 28 Nbk and Sîn-iddin's begins in 30 Nbk. Between these two, a shift can be seen, at least when it comes to official correspondence in Eanna, from the milieu of internal administration to the royal oversight. The tension between the High Priest and the Royal Resident is otherwise known from Sîn-iddin's and Marduk-bēlšunu's predecessors, Ninurta-šarru-ušur and Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin.¹⁶⁴ The power struggle between these two high officials was documented extensively in the letter corpus published in SbB 2, and might have even prompted royal intervention.¹⁶⁵ What emerged in the aftermath of this conflict was a wholly different internal structure of Eanna, as not a single High Priest is attested by name after Marduk-bēlšunu until 2 Ame.¹⁶⁶ Within this structure, it was the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin, who emerges as the most influential figure in Eanna from the latter reign of Nebuchadnezzar up until the first year of Neriglissar.¹⁶⁷ According to Kleber (2008: 10), this is possibly due to the High Priest and the Temple Scribe having been absent from Uruk,

¹⁶³ See e.g. Kleber 2008: 6.

¹⁶⁴ Treated in Levavi 2018: 134–140.

¹⁶⁵ Kleber 2008: 123.

¹⁶⁶ Kleber 2008: 33.

¹⁶⁷ According to YBC 4012 (acc. Lab), see especially lines 16–19, contrary to Kleber 2008: 31, where his last attestation is dated to 2 Ame.

due to overseeing building projects in Opis and Sippar.¹⁶⁸ However, as will be shown through the following letter dossier, the same can be said for Sîn-iddin, yet we still see him managing Eanna's administration while away from Uruk. Furthermore, the High Priest Marduk-bēlšunu managed the same during his incumbency. Therefore, the unmissable absence of a High Priest from Eanna's correspondence during this period cannot simply be explained by reference to Nebuchanezzar's ambitious building program. It is more likely that the increased bureaucratic and epistolographic footprint of the royal official in Eanna was a result of a conscious effort by the ruler to establish a clear hierarchy in the temple with his own man at the top, thus avoiding any internal rivalries, such as the one exhibited between Ninurta-šarru-ušur and Nabû-aḫḫē-iddin. This tendency would subsequently be strengthened under Nabonidus by the installment of the office of the Royal Overseer. It is for this reason that a closer look into Sîn-iddin's activities within this letter corpus warrants a dedicated case study.

5.2.1 Background

Sîn-iddin differs from other royal officials in other regards as well. Apart from not having the diagnostic */-šarru-/* element in his name, which would give him a typical 'Beamtenname' and connect him intrinsically to the king he serves (as is the case for most other Royal Residents)¹⁶⁹, he is also exceptional in that the archive attests also his family, specifically, his son, Ištārān-zēru-ibni, who was treated above (chapter 5.1.9). This can give us some insight into Sîn-iddin's origins. It is a well-known fact that the royal officials in general, and especially Royal Residents, do not belong to the local population of the communities they serve in.¹⁷⁰ This is understandable as their primary loyalty is always to the crown, contrary to native Urukeans, who might want to steer the temple's administration towards the interest of their own family.¹⁷¹ However, where exactly these royal officials do come from, if not from the place where they end up serving, is not normally clear, as these officials almost exclusively appear without a patronym and/or a familial affiliation. This is also the case with Sîn-iddin. However, the fact that his son bears the theophoric element Ištārān could point to his own origins being in Dēr.¹⁷²

Not only does Sîn-iddin create a patrimony of his own (see chapter 5.1.9), but he even manages to include his son into the ranks of Urukean priesthood, a status usually reserved for

¹⁶⁸ Kleber 2008: 10 f.

¹⁶⁹ See in Kleber 2008: 30 ff.

¹⁷⁰ Jursa 2008: 159 ff.

¹⁷¹ See e.g. Jursa 2015.

¹⁷² Lambert 1980: 2011.

the local elites. All this points to Sîn-iddin being potentially an outlier in the role of what Jursa describes as the household official.¹⁷³

As discussed above, unlike his predecessors, Sîn-iddin assumed a monopoly over the temple administration. To date the only study dedicated to his incumbency specifically is the 1976 article by Ronald H. Sack in *ZA* 66. The texts published here allow important insight into Sîn-iddin's activity in and outside of the temple. While the details of Sîn-iddin's parentage remain unknown, some of his private affairs are reflected in documents from the Eanna temple. For example, NCBT 178 concerns the leasing of his house in Babylon.¹⁷⁴ That Sîn-iddin would own a house in Babylon is hardly surprising, as the high official spent substantial time there overseeing building projects. BIN 1, 124 records a delivery of lapis lazuli to him in Babylon. Similarly, YOS 21, 132 places the Royal Resident in the capital, as he asks for a letter to be handed to him there.

5.2.2 Correspondence with Eanna and the Issue of Chronology

His active role within the temple administration is reflected in the present corpus mostly in terms of supervision. E.g., in two letters addressed to a group of individuals (YOS 21, 132 and 133), Sîn-iddin informs the recipients about various transactions in wool and silver which he facilitated, asking them to finish the transactions by settling these accounts. In YOS 3, 63 he complains to partly the same men about work only being done well when he is there to supervise it (these letters were likely written during his absence from Uruk).

The Royal Resident's connection to the king is illustrated in letters such as YOS 3, 182, where he is transmitting a royal order for an individual to be brought under guard. He is further referenced in Durand EHE 163, while he was stationed in Tyre¹⁷⁵, where it is noted that he withdrew silver for the expenses of officials accompanying him there.

He reprimands Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim about failing to supervise the work in the irrigation district in YOS 3, 84.¹⁷⁶ He similarly urges the rent farmer Šumu-ukīn in YOS 3, 102 to deliver dates to Ebabbar for the regular offering of Šamaš:¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Jursa 2017: 54.

¹⁷⁴ Published in Sack 1967: 284 f.

¹⁷⁵ See Kleber 2008: 145–150, especially 149 with note 426.

¹⁷⁶ See also YOS 3, 42, where he is not named directly, but it is highly likely that the Royal Resident mentioned is in fact Sîn-iddin. See also § 6.1.

¹⁷⁷ Edition from Hackl et al 2011: No. 26.

Obv [im ^{ld}]30-mu
[u ^lba-n]i-ia a-na
[^lmu-g]i.na šeš-i-ni
^d+ag u ^damar.utu
5 a-na šeš-i-ni
lik-ru-bu 1 me 20 gur
zú.lum.ma ina zú.lum.ma
šá é ^ldi-ra-a-a
a-na sá.dug₄
10 šá ^dutu
a-na é.babbar.ra
en lid-din
LoE (uninscribed)
Rev kap-du kaskal^{II}
a-na gír^{II}
15 šá ^{ld}utu-tak-lak
šu-ku-un

¹⁻⁶[Letter of] Sîn-iddin and [Bān]ia to [Šumu]-ukīn, our brother. May Nabû and Marduk bless our brother.

⁶⁻¹⁶Let (our) lord pay 120 *kurru* of dates to Ebabbar from the dates of Bīt-Dērāyī for the regular offering of Šamaš. Send Šamaš-taklāk on his way quickly.

This letter in particular poses some chronological problems connected to Sîn-iddin's incumbency, in that he seems to be attested here to hold office contemporaneously with the High Priest Bānia. Following the reading adopted in Hackl, Janković and Jursa (2011), the problem arises when we consider that Bānia's predecessor is attested in this office until 28.III.1 Ner.¹⁷⁸ The pertinent document is NBC 4897¹⁷⁹, an account of cattle naming Zēria as the High Priest and, notably Amurru-šarru-ušur as the Royal Resident, who is otherwise attested once before in OIP 122, 74 (9.III.1 Ner).¹⁸⁰ While it was shown above that Sîn-iddin's incumbency lasted into the beginning of Neriglissar's reign, it is nevertheless difficult to explain how Amurru-šarru-ušur's predecessor (i.e. Sîn-iddin) and Zēria's successor (i.e. Bānia) could have written a letter together, at least in the capacity of a Royal Resident and High Priest

¹⁷⁸ Kleber 2008: 33.

¹⁷⁹ See most recently Aarslev 2023: 46–50 with further references.

¹⁸⁰ Kleber 2008: 31.

(the combination which such administrative letters usually follow). To sum up, by 28.III.1 Ner Sîn-iddin was already replaced in office and Bānia was not yet a High Priest. If we still follow the collation made in Kaskal 8 article¹⁸¹, we must assume that this letter was written before Bānia became the High Priest.¹⁸² The possibility of Sîn-iddin having a second incumbency as the Royal Resident after that of Ammuru-šarru-ušur (meaning the period of 1 month between the last attestation of Ammuru-šarru-ušur in 14.II.2 Ner and the first attestation of Mušēzib-Marduk as Royal Resident in 15.III.2 Ner¹⁸³) is low: the time window is short and furthermore, the hypothesis is impossible to prove due as long as the actual beginning of Bānia's incumbency remains uncertain.¹⁸⁴

Chronological issues aside, Sîn-iddin's correspondence shows him in a leading role pertaining to Eanna's internal and external affairs. It is notable that after him, no other Royal Resident can be identified in the present letter corpus with certainty.¹⁸⁵ This is certainly due primarily to the prominence of Nabû-šarru-ušur within Eanna and later Nabonidus' creation of the office of Royal Overseer that made much of Royal Resident's area of activity redundant. What remains unclear, however, is what necessitated the creation of this new office under Nabonidus in the first place, as it functionally does not seem to differ much from what we see the Royal Resident do up until the incumbency of Nabû-šarru-ušur as the Royal Overseer. In general, the total presence of Sîn-iddin the Royal Resident in Eanna's documentation (beyond just letters) is astonishingly sparse given that his incumbency lasted for more than 12 years. Why Nabonidus saw fit to create a new office instead of simply promoting Nabû-šarru-ušur to

¹⁸¹ hier das Foto von der Tafel hinzufügen.

¹⁸² For Bānia's activity in Eanna before assuming the office of the High Priest see §5.1.10.

¹⁸³ Kleber 2008: 31.[] Ner based on YBC 11647. Apart from this his earliest attestation is in 5.III.2 Ner according to Kümmel 1979: 142. Thus it seems that K. Kleber expected the date of YBC 11647 to be set in 1 Ner. If correct the second incumbency of Sîn-iddin would theoretically be possible, though still unlikely.

¹⁸⁴ Kleber 2008: 33 writes 14.XI.

¹⁸⁵ The only mention of Ammuru-šarru-ušur within the corpus is in the letter YOS 3, 36, in which mentions an individual with this name receiving 200 *kurru* of barley in year 17 (presumably of Nbk). If this individual is to be identified with the future Royal Resident, the letter in question almost certainly predates his incumbency. The few references to Mušēzib-Marduk seemingly refer to individuals other than the Royal Resident of Eanna. Thus, the sender of YOS 3, 155 to Šumu-ukīn, was identified by J. Hackl, B. Janković and M. Jursa as the Royal Resident of Larsa (see Hackl et al. 2011, 212 (Nr. 21)). Another Mušēzib-Marduk is the recipient of YOS 3, 181 from Nergal-nāšir, who issues an order for a delivery of dates. The context of this letter, as well as Nergal-nāšir addressing Mušēzib-Marduk as "my brother" make the identification of this individual as the Royal Resident unlikely. Similar logic is followed when identifying the sender of GCCI 2, 390, who refers to Nabû-mušētiq-uddû as "his father". The only ambiguity appears in the letter YOS 3, 152, where two individuals with this name are named as senders alongside Marduk-ēter, Kīnāya, Nabû-šumu-ibni, and Nabû-uballit informing the High Priest, the Temple Enterers, and the priestly college of Eanna that Addāru (of that year) is to be intercalary. Although uncertain, it is likely that the senders of this letters were not officials of Eanna, which is the reason why neither of the two senders with the pertinent name were identified as the Royal Resident. There are no positive reasons to assume that one of them might hide behind the unnamed Royal Resident receiving YOS 3, 90. Other letters are addressed to either *šatammu* and *qīpu* (YOS 21, 3) or to *qīpu*, *šatammu* and *ṣupšar bīti* (YOS 21, 152) are not likely to be dated to the reign of Nabonidus, as the *bēl piqitti* is not mentioned.

the role of Royal Resident is puzzling and may have more to do with Nabû-šarru-ušur no longer being an ‘outsider’ by the time of his promotion, as is usually the case with Royal Residents (who are rarely attested in Eanna before being appointed) than with the realities of his duties and scope of influence.

5. 3 Discussion

Whether due to the changing nature of his post, or his own connection to Eanna's priesthood via his son, Sîn-iddin's activity as outlined in the letter corpus and beyond shows that he was invested and responsible for differing aspects of Eanna's administration, especially while absent from Uruk. As was shown previously, this pattern will be followed by other royal officials, such as Nabû-šarru-ušur, although Sîn-iddin remains an outlier when it comes to having his own offspring join Eanna's priesthood. The letters presented in this chapter reveal a network of lower-level employees active within Eanna's administration, responsible for a variety of tasks, from facilitating the offering cycles, managing the in- and outflow of silver and other goods, allocating oblates, as well as drafting and issuing documents such as debt notes.

In this chapter, ten of these temple employees and their roles within Eanna's administration have been identified, a broader picture of their joint activity in Eanna, as reflected in our letter corpus can be given. The difficulties of identifying these priests in letters in which they do not appear together with their priestly peers were discussed above. This makes it difficult to gauge their activities outside of correspondence with their superiors. Likewise, the legal and administrative texts offer little additional information on these individuals, as they are mostly featured as witnesses or scribes in legal texts and as recipients of the *maššartu*-allotments in the administrative ones. This makes the letter corpus compiled in Table 3 perhaps our best guide to the realities of such offices.

While the responsibility of upkeeping the cultic standard of the temple is referred to in letters as one topic among others, as in letters by Sîn-iddin (e.g., YOS 21, 132) and Marduk-bēlšunu (e.g., BIN 1, 33), and represents the main subject of YOS 3, 75 and 61, it is far from the sole or even the most frequently featured topic of their correspondence. Rather, as seen in Table 1, the priests are mostly mentioned as a collective receiving orders from high officials regarding repayment of their (official's) transactions.

It is clear from the phrasing of these letters that the high officials are stationed outside of Uruk at the time of writing. While away, they are still making transactions on behalf of the temple. For example, Durand EHE 163 records the Royal Resident taking out a loan of 1,5 minas from a royal courtier, in YOS 21, 132 Sîn-iddin himself informs the group of having taken silver from Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit. In BIN 1, 85, Nabû-šarru-ušur asks the group to pay a messenger in wool, promising a later repayment of the wool amount in silver. Such transactions surely also involved bookkeeping. BIN 1, 57 mentions a debt note being sent to the recipients

as form of proof of the transaction, while in Durand EHE 166 the senders ask the recipients to register merchandise passing through harbor customs in their ledger. Similarly, in BIN 1, 33 the recipients are asked to forward written documents to the High Priest. Such matters lay far from the ‘traditional’ responsibilities of the priesthood, as it is described in Waerzeggers 2010. Rather, the documentation shows the recipients of the letters as facilitators of the high officials who sent the letters, especially with respect to accounting.

Within the structural division of actors in a Neo-Babylonian temple household, this puts these men, as they appear in the correspondence, principally rather into the group of mid-ranking clerks.¹⁸⁶ While the clerks do not need to be priests themselves by definition, this study has managed to prove an eventual priestly status for the majority of these clerks in Eanna. The case of Bānia (§5.1.10) in particular showed the potential of social mobility of these priests, as their high social status allowed them to rise to the top of temple’s administrative hierarchy. For the majority of them, however, a slightly less dynamic career path can be reconstructed. This group of priests, connected through both their appearance together in witness lists and letters, shows a snapshot of administrative reality of Eanna during the second part of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.

Due to numerous building projects, the high officials were often away from Uruk.¹⁸⁷ Such arrangements required a strong clerical infrastructure both to support the long-distance transactions and to manage locally ritual and administrative routine within Eanna. It is clear in this case, that such clerks were not only members of priestly families, but also priest themselves. However, in this regard, there is one further point in need of discussion.

The witness lists shown in Table 5 show a chronological timeline between ca. 30 Nbk and 1 Ame. When looking at individual attestations (see § 5.4), the majority of attestations as witnesses in legal documents date indeed to the second half of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Their attestations in archival documents from the reign of Amēl-Marduk onwards are very sparse and mention them almost exclusively in connection with *maššartu*-allotments. The only two outliers in this are Nādin and Bānia, who both appear once receiving a *maššartu*-allotment prior to the reign of Amēl-Marduk.¹⁸⁸ As for the rest, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, they can only be seen in the role of a scribe, but never directly connected to priestly offices. The chronology suggested by their appearances in the letter corpus likewise indicates a time frame

¹⁸⁶ Jursa 2017: 60.

¹⁸⁷ For an in-depth study of royal building projects during this period see Kleber 2008: 140–173.

¹⁸⁸ Nādin in NBC 4684 (32 Nbk) and Bānia in AUWE 5, 85 (37 Nbk).

from 24 Nbk¹⁸⁹ until 2 Ame¹⁹⁰. The only possible outlier in this chronology is Nabû-šarru-ušur, whose career begins as a courtier in the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar and culminates in the office of the Royal Overseer under Nabonidus.¹⁹¹ Following the usual methods of prosopographical research outlined in chapter 3, one would assume his letters to be written during the period of his being the Royal Overseer. However, evidence suggests that already as a ‘mere’ courtier he wielded quite substantial influence over Eanna, as we see him granting rights to farm lands belonging to Eanna and in one instance even threatening workers with the death penalty.¹⁹² Substantial evidence for dating his correspondence prior to his appointment as the Royal Overseer comes from BIN 1, 32¹⁹³, which features a reference to Eanna’s contribution to the building of the ziggurat of Ezida in Borsippa that can be dated to ca. 33 Nbk.¹⁹⁴ Due to this, it is not unreasonable to suggest that both BIN 1, 85 and YOS 21, 90 – letters concerning deliveries of wool – were written during the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar and not during the reign of Nabonidus, when Nabû-šarru-ušur was Royal Overseer.

Now that the question of chronology has been settled, allowing us to place the clerical activity of these individuals in the second half of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, further considerations can be made. As Jursa pointed out, temple clerks are selected from the ranks of priestly families, without necessarily being priests themselves.¹⁹⁵ Might we assume however, that there existed a correlation, if not even causation between the two posts? Is it a coincidence, that almost all clerks featured in the above-mentioned correspondence almost exclusively appear as witnesses and scribes during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, only for their attestations to switch to the *maššartu* allocations from the 1st year of Amēl-Marduk onward? Whether a matter of direct causation or mere convenience, it seems that these ‘priests’ spent the first half of their careers working (part- or full-time) as administrative clerks for Eanna’s high officials. Later, we see their career switch to those of traditional food-preparing priests. Perhaps, this clerical work can be seen as a sort of right-of-passage for members of priestly families to acquire the coveted status of a prebendary, which they will eventually inherit from the senior members of their families.

One might counter such argument by pointing to changing circumstances within temple administration, perhaps showing evidence for restructuring of Eanna’s administration under

¹⁸⁹ Beginning of Marduk-bēlšunu’s incumbency as High Priest (Kümmel 1979: 142, Kleber 2008: 33).

¹⁹⁰ End of Sîn-iddin’s incumbency as the Royal Resident (Kümmel 1979:141; Kleber 2008: 31).

¹⁹¹ Frame 1991: 66–79, Kleber 2008: 36.

¹⁹² See Janković 2005.

¹⁹³ Edited in Kleber 2008: 161 ff.

¹⁹⁴ Kleber 2008: 161.

¹⁹⁵ Jursa 2017: 60.

the new young king. In any case, it would be unwise to ignore the evidence, or rather lack thereof, for these individuals being priests prior to 1 Ame. Whether their positions as clerks were substituted by royal courtiers or rendered useless by the hands-on approach of Nabû-šarru-ušur, cannot be said for certain. What is certain, however, is that the activity of these individuals belonging to elite families during the period in question points to mostly administrative tasks, rather than those we might expect from ‘traditional’ priesthood.

5. 4 Lists of Attestations in Administrative and Legal Texts¹⁹⁶

Gimillu/Zēria/Šigua

text	date	context
BM 114442	12? Nbk	witness
FLP 1532 ¹⁹⁷	16 Nbk	Debtor (barley)
PTS 2500 ¹⁹⁸	16 Nbk	withdrawal of silver
PTS 2213	20(?) Nbk	witness
FLP 1536 ¹⁹⁹	21 Nbk	witness
BM 114488	21 Nbk	witness
YOS 17, 193	21 Nbk	withdrawal (cult)
FLP 1538 ²⁰⁰	23 Nbk	withdrawal of offerings
BM 114663 ²⁰¹	24 Nbk	witness
BM 114461 ²⁰²	25 Nbk	witness
YBC 9151	27 Nbk	scribe
YBC 9313	27 Nbk	witness
NCBT 191 ²⁰³	30 Nbk	witness
NBC 4765	31 Nbk	payment in wool
YNER 1, 6	33 Nbk	witness
NCBT 487 ²⁰⁴	32 Nbk	‘scribe of the work’ in Raqqat Šamaš
YBC 4119	34 Nbk	witness
YBC 9149 ²⁰⁵	34 Nbk	witness
AnOr 8, 15	35 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 113	35 Nbk	witness
ARRIM 7, 45	36 Nbk	witness

¹⁹⁶ All attestations of pertinent individuals contain only those in which they are named with at least their patronym. Where they appear in witness lists also their family/clan name is attested. Otherwise, especially in *maššartu* lists, they only appear with their patronym. As there is neither a suspicion that more than one combination of pertinent personal names with matching patronym existed at the same time, nor was there a suspicious chronological problem encountered in this method, the attestations can be assumed to correspond to the individuals mentioned above with high certainty.

¹⁹⁷ Dillard 1975: No. 14.

¹⁹⁸ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 30.

¹⁹⁹ Dillard 1975: No. 17.

²⁰⁰ Dillard 1975: No. 19.

²⁰¹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 63.

²⁰² Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 64.

²⁰³ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 97.

²⁰⁴ Edited in Kleber 2008: 171 f.

²⁰⁵ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 98.

BIN 1, 124	36 Nbk	witness
PTS 2245 ²⁰⁶	36 Nbk	witness
PTS 3174 ²⁰⁷	36 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 262	37 Nbk	witness
YBC 4056	37 Nbk	witness
BM 114507 ²⁰⁸	37(?) Nbk	witness
PTS 2738 ²⁰⁹	38 Nbk	witness
YBC 9223	39(?) Nbk	witness (cult)
YBC 3729	40 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 95	40+ Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 189	42 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 213	42 Nbk	allocation of oil
YBC 4122	Nbk	witness
PTS 2061 ²¹⁰	1 Ame	witness
GCCI 2, 90	1 Ame	barley for <i>maššartu</i>
YBC 3740 ²¹¹	1 Ame	barley for <i>maššartu</i>
YOS 19, 152	2 Nbn	barley for <i>maššartu</i>
BM 114491	2 (?)	witness
AUWE 11, 236	-	wool withdrawal
NBC 4779	-	payment in silver
NBDMich. 72	-	payment in silver
PTS 2398	-	unclear

²⁰⁶ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 104.

²⁰⁷ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 106.

²⁰⁸ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 110.

²⁰⁹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 117.

²¹⁰ Frame 2002: 100ff.

²¹¹ ZA 67, 48f.

Mušēzib-Bēl/Aplāya//Arrabtu

text	date	context
BM 114442	12(?) Nbk	witness
YOS 17, 33	19 Nbk	witness
YOS 17, 38	21 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 231	21+ Nbk	witness
YOS 24, 232	24 Nbk	witness
BM 114493 ²¹²	28 Nbk	witness
NCBT 145	31 Nbk	withdrawal of barley
GCCI 1, 236	35 Nbk	witness
NCBT 101	35 Nbk	measuring wheat
PTS 2245 ²¹³	36 Nbk	witness
YBC 9171 ²¹⁴	36 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 262	37 Nbk	witness
PTS 3467	37 Nbk	witness
BM 114507 ²¹⁵	37(?) Nbk	witness
PTS 2738 ²¹⁶	38 Nbk	witness
PTS 2849 ²¹⁷	-	witness
BM 114469 ²¹⁸	41 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 248	41 Nbk	witness
PTS 2448 ²¹⁹	42 Nbk	witness
PTS 2627 ²²⁰	42 Nbk	witness
PTS 2134	43 Nbk	witness
GCCI 2, 385	? Nbk	witness
GCCI 2, 91	1 Ame	wheat for <i>maššartu</i>
PTS 2061 ²²¹	1 Ame	witness

²¹² Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 66.

²¹³ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 104.

²¹⁴ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 103.

²¹⁵ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 110.

²¹⁶ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 117.

²¹⁷ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 44.

²¹⁸ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 71.

²¹⁹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 134.

²²⁰ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 133.

²²¹ Frame 2002: 100ff.

YBC 3740²²²

1 Ame

barley for *maššartu****Šamaš-udammiq/Iqišāya//Rē'i-alpī***

text	date	context
YOS 17, 276	6 Nbk	scribe
YBC 9170	20 Nbk	scribe
GCCI 1, 231	21+ Nbk	witness
AnOr 8, 12	28 Nbk	debtor (barley)
BM 114493 ²²³	28 Nbk	scribe
YBC 9316 ²²⁴	33 Nbk	scribe
BM 113411	35 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 236	35 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 237	35 Nbk	witness
PTS 2209	35 Nbk	witness
PTS 2383 ²²⁵	35 Nbk	witness
ARRIM 7, 45	36 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 162	36 Nbk	withdrawal of syrup for <i>eššešu</i> fest
YBC 9171 ²²⁶	36 Nbk	witness
AnOr 8, 16	37 Nbk	witness
YBC 3715	40 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 248	41 Nbk	witness
PTS 2143 ²²⁷	41 Nbk	witness
YBC 9226	41 Nbk	pledge witness

²²² Sack 1977: 48f.²²³ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 66.²²⁴ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 96.²²⁵ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 100.²²⁶ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 103.²²⁷ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 129.

Balāṭu/Šumāya/Iddin-Papsukkal

text	date	context
YOS 17, 26	9 Nbk	witness
YOS 17, 323	12 Nbk	witness
YOS 17, 351	12 Nbk	withdrawal of bronze objects
YBC 3952	17 Nbk	witness
YBC 4120	17 Nbk	debtor
YOS 17, 32	19 Nbk	witness
NCBT 191 ²²⁸	30 Nbk	witness
YNER 1, 6	33 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 236	35 Nbk	witness
PTS 2969 ²²⁹	38 Nbk	witness
PTS 3015 ²³⁰	41 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 340	8 Nbn	silver management
YOS 19, 137	9 Nbn	dates for <i>maššartu</i>
NBC 4826	-	silver management

²²⁸ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 97.

²²⁹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 115.

²³⁰ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 132.

Bēlšunu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi

text	date	context
YBC 3543	23 Nbk	witness
YBC 9230	23 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 237	35 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 236	35 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 113	35 Nbk	witness
BM 113411	35 Nbk	witness
AnOr 8, 15	35 Nbk	witness
NCBT 172 ²³¹	35 Nbk	witness
YBC 9176 ²³²	35 Nbk	witness
ARRIM 7, 45	36 Nbk	witness
BIN 1, 124	36 Nbk	witness
PTS 2427 ²³³	36 Nbk	witness
PTS 3174 ²³⁴	36 Nbk	witness
PTS 2738 ²³⁵	38 Nbk	witness
PTS 2969 ²³⁶	38 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 261	38 Nbk	witness
YBC 9530	39 Nbk	witness
YBC 9223	39(?) Nbk	witness (cult)
GCCI 1, 95	40+ Nbk	witness
PTS 3439 ²³⁷	41 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 189	42 Nbk	witness
YBC 9155	42 Nbk	debtor
PTS 2061 ²³⁸	1 Ame	witness
YBC 3752	0a Ner	witness
YOS 19, 205	2 Nbn	something for <i>maššartu</i>
YOS 19, 138	Nbn	dates for <i>maššartu</i>

²³¹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 101.

²³² Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 102.

²³³ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 105.

²³⁴ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 106.

²³⁵ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 117.

²³⁶ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 115.

²³⁷ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 130.

²³⁸ Frame 2002: 100ff.

PTS 2989

-

witness

Nādin/Aplāya//Aḥūtu

text

date

context

NBC 4684

32 Nbk

barley for *maššartu*

GCCI 1, 237

35 Nbk

witness

NCBT 1004

36 Nbk

creditor?

GCCI 1, 198

39 Nbk

textile delivery(?)

GCCI 1, 245

39 Nbk

allocation of dates

BM 114505²³⁹

42 Nbk

witness

GCCI 1, 218

43 Nbk

allocation of dates

PTS 3029

Nbk

allocation of reed

PTS 2989

Nbk

witness

VS 20, 54

1 Ame

dates and wheat for *maššartu*

BIN 1, 170

3 Ner

dates for *maššartu*

PTS 2690

3 Ner

debtor

AUWE 8, 10

4 Nbn

debtor

BM 114485

8 Nbn

allocation of silver

TEBR 49

8 Nbk

dates for *maššartu*

BM 114514

11 Nbn

delivery of dates

AnOr 8, 28

12 Nbn

witness

YOS 19, 213

13 Nbn

debtor

AUWE 8, 73

Nbn

prebend contract

AUWE 8, 47

-

prebend contract

FLP 629

-

allocation of dates

YBC 4001

-

list of PNs

VS 20, 111

-

rations

²³⁹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 81.

Bēl-nādin-apli/Zēr-Bābili/Ile'i-Marduk

text	date	context
PTS 2213	20? Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 231	21+ Nbk	witness
YBC 4056	37 Nbk	witness
YBC 9223	37+ Nbk	witness
PTS 2697 ²⁴⁰	38 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 233	38 Nbk	witness
AnOr 8, 17	38 Nbk	debtor
PTS 2859 ²⁴¹	39 Nbk	witness
YBC 9530 ²⁴²	39 Nbk	witness
PTS 2562	40 Nbk	witness
YBC 3715	40 Nbk	witness
YBC 3729	40 Nbk	witness
YBC 3739	40 Nbk	private pasture contract and scribe
GCCI 1, 248	41 Nbk	witness
BM 114469 ²⁴³	41 Nbk	witness
PTS 2143 ²⁴⁴	41 Nbk	witness
PTS 2456 ²⁴⁵	41 Nbk	witness
PTS 2105 ²⁴⁶	43 Nbk	witness
YBC 11647	Ner	witness
YOS 19, 223	9 Nbk	debtor

²⁴⁰ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 113.

²⁴¹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 126.

²⁴² Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 124.

²⁴³ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 71.

²⁴⁴ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 129.

²⁴⁵ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 131.

²⁴⁶ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 72.

Ištarān-zēru-ibni/Sîn-iddin

text	date	context
GCCI 1, 231	21+ Nbk	witness
PTS 2562	40 Nbk	witness
BM 114469 ²⁴⁷	41 Nbk	witness
PTS 2387 ²⁴⁸	42 Nbk	delivery of leather
BM 114505 ²⁴⁹	42 Nbk	witness
YBC 3740 ²⁵⁰	1 Ame	barley for <i>maššartu</i>
OIP 122, 63	1 Ame	list of his cattle

Innin-zēru-ušabši/Balāssu//Dā'iqu

text	date	context
YBC 6910	9 Nbk	scribe (private)
FLP 1530	15 Nbk	scribe
YBC 4120	17 Nbk	scribe
PTS 2213	20(?) Nbk	scribe
YBC 9571	24 Nbk	scribe
VS 20, 15	25 Nbk	silver receipt
FLP 1541	27 Nbk	scribe
YBC 3856	28 Nbk	witness
NCBT 693	33 Nbk	guarantee (cattle)
PTS 2976	33 Nbk	witness
YBC 4119	34 Nbk	scribe
NCBT 172 ²⁵¹	35 Nbk	witness
PTS 2427 ²⁵²	36 Nbk	witness
PTS 3174 ²⁵³	36 Nbk	scribe
YBC 9172	36 Nbk	witness
AnOr 8, 16	37 Nbk	witness

²⁴⁷ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 71.

²⁴⁸ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 57.

²⁴⁹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 81.

²⁵⁰ Sack 1977: 48f.

²⁵¹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 101.

²⁵² Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 105.

²⁵³ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 106.

BM 114507 ²⁵⁴	37(?) Nbk	witness
PTS 2738 ²⁵⁵	38 Nbk	witness
PTS 2859 ²⁵⁶	39 Nbk	witness
PTS 2562	40 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 95	40+ Nbk	scribe
BM 114469 ²⁵⁷	41 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 86	41 Nbk	withdrawal of barley (cult)
BM 114505 ²⁵⁸	42 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 189	42 Nbk	witness
PTS 2448	42 Nbk	witness
YBC 4122	Nbk	scribe
YBC 3740 ²⁵⁹	1 Ame	barley for <i>maššartu</i>
PTS 2885	4 Nbn	witness
YOS 6, 130	9 Nbn	cattle list
GCCI 2, 346	-	sale of cattle
YOS 6, 143	10 Nbn	division of estate

²⁵⁴ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 110.

²⁵⁵ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 117.

²⁵⁶ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 126.

²⁵⁷ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 71.

²⁵⁸ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 81.

²⁵⁹ Edited in Sack 1977: 48f.

Nabû-mušētiq-uddî/Balāssu//Dā'iqu

text	date	context
BM 114679 ²⁶⁰	35 Nbk	scribe
NCBT 1255 ²⁶¹	37 Nbk	delivery of silver
NCBT 798	38 Nbk	receipt for royal prebend(!)
BM 114681	38 Nbk	creditor
BIN 1, 101	40 Nbk	creditor
PTS 2171 ²⁶²	42 Nbk	debtor
TCL 12, 58	43 Nbk	debtor
BM 114616	2 Ner	payment for slaves
BM 114668	1 Nbn	creditor
BM 114670	2 Nbn	creditor
YOS 19, 215	2 Nbn	purchase of cress for Eanna
YOS 6, 73	5 Nbn	purchase of slaves
FLP 1572 ²⁶³	6 Nbn	witness
GC 1, 317	7 Nbn	silver allocation
PTS 2269	Nbn 8	tax collection
YOS 6, 130	9 Nbn	cattle list
YOS 19, 2	9 Nbn	purchase of date grove
YOS 6, 143	10 Nbn	division of estate
YOS 6, 194	10 Nbn	<i>imittu</i> debt
YBC 7377	-	witness
GCCI 2, 342	-	scribe

²⁶⁰ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 36.

²⁶¹ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 69.

²⁶² Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 136.

²⁶³ Frame Fs. Wunsch.

Bānia/Tabnēa//Bāiru

text	date	context
NCBT 691	27 Nbk	agriculture contract
YBC 6849	29 Nbk	scribe
MAH 15873 ²⁶⁴	30 Nbk	scribe
NCBT 191 ²⁶⁵	30 Nbk	scribe
NCBT 192	30 Nbk	scribe
YNER 1, 6	33 Nbk	witness
YBC 4119	34 Nbk	witness
GCCI 1, 113	35 Nbk	witness
AUWE 5, 85	37 Nbk	barley for <i>maššartu</i>
YBC 3722	40 Nbk	slave sale to Eanna
YBC 4038 ²⁶⁶	0a Ame	witness
YBC 3710 ²⁶⁷	1 Ame	witness
GCCI 2, 85	1 Ame	delivery of royal garment
PTS 2214	2 Ame	witness
JCS 24	3 Ner	delivery of person
YBC 11647	Ner	protocol

²⁶⁴ Zadok 2018: 270f.

²⁶⁵ Edited in Kleber 2017, No. 97.

²⁶⁶ Edited in Sack 1977: 43.

²⁶⁷ Edited in Sack 1976: 284f.

6 Entrepreneurship in the Agricultural Sector

Agriculture, alongside animal husbandry, was the backbone of Eanna's (and Mesopotamian, broadly speaking) economy.²⁶⁸ The cultivation of cereals and dates were therefore the most important areas of production in Uruk. In order to enable large scale cultivation, irrigation systems needed to be in place. While the sowing process in Mesopotamia was made considerably more efficient with the invention of the so-called seeder-plough in the 2nd Millennium BCE, harvesting and managing irrigation canals required a large workforce. To accommodate this, the temple relied on both its dependents, who were working for the temple full-time, according to its needs, as well as on the hired workers, consisting out of free men, who worked seasonally for a fixed salary.²⁶⁹ These workers, called ploughmen (*ikkarū*), therefore occupied the lowest level of agricultural labor force, as they were the ones doing the actual manual labor.²⁷⁰

Apart from owning and having access to land and labor, the other most important aspect of agricultural production was the means of production. This concerns the access to ploughs as well as oxen used to drag said ploughs, as well as instruments used for harvesting the grains and digging the canals.²⁷¹ Temples provided the means of production to their workers. If and when the temple was not able to meet the demand of its vast land by means of its own workforce and means of production, it turned to so-called sharecroppers (*errēšū*).²⁷² Sharecroppers were free individuals in possession of their means of production and were therefore allowed to keep a portion of the crop (a 'share') for themselves, after delivering the pre-agreed upon amount of produce to the temple.²⁷³ Although not frequently attested in the Eanna Archive,²⁷⁴ one letter in particular details the situation in which the share-croppers were needed in Eanna. In YOS 3, 84²⁷⁵ the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin writes to the agricultural overseer Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim, mentioning wanting to assign the excess land (i.e. that which cannot be covered by Eanna's plough teams) to the sharecroppers:

²⁶⁸ For a general overview of Mesopotamian agriculture see Postgate 1994, Potts 1997, Liverani 1998, Jursa 2010a, Jursa and Moreno García 2015. For Uruk see Cocquerillat 1968 and Janković 2013. See also Janković 2013: 27²³ for systematic overview of previous literature on the subject.

²⁶⁹ Janković 2013: 29 f. On the role of temple oblates in temple agriculture see also Jursa 1995: 7, Dandamayev 1984: 590 ff. and Ragen 2006: 143 ff.

²⁷⁰ Janković 2013: 29–33.

²⁷¹ See Janković 2013: 34 f.

²⁷² Janković 2013: 62 f.

²⁷³ Janković 2013: 62.

²⁷⁴ Janković 2013: 62.

²⁷⁵ Edited in Cocquerillat 1968: 136 and Joannès 1982: 127 f. Also mentioned in this context in Janković 2013: 64.

ù šá al-la

dul-li-šú a-tar

LeE *a-na^{lú}er-re-še-e lu^{*o}-šá^o-aš^o-*

bit^o ina ugu la ta-šel-li

^{31–34}I want to assign what land is in excess of (the ploughmen's) abilities to sharecroppers. Do not be negligent in this matter.

The overseeing of temple's ploughmen was a job of a conveniently named overseer of the ploughmen (*rab ikkarāti*).²⁷⁶ Two individuals bearing this title feature prominently in the letter corpus, though not necessarily for reasons one would hope for. Firstly, the responsibilities and challenges surrounding work in agricultural sector will be discussed based on the example of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, after which the business ventures of his predecessor, the well-documented rent farmer Šumu-ukīn will be revisited in light of his correspondence from the Eanna Archive.

²⁷⁶ Janković 2013: 114

6. 1 The Case of Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, son of Nabû-udammiq²⁷⁷

Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim is a well attested agricultural overseer and entrepreneur. He can be securely attested as the overseer of ten (*rab ešerti*) in YBC 4000 (34 Nbk) and later as the overseer of the ploughmen (*rab ikkarāti*) in BIN 1, 123 (acc Ner), a title which he held until the 1st year of Nabonidus at the latest, when the office passed to Šumu-ukīn of the Basia family.²⁷⁸ However, it is highly likely he became the chief of the ploughmen even earlier, as he is addressed with this title in a letter sent by the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin, who was in office from 30 Nbk until 2 Ame (see below). He is also attested in the context of animal husbandry as early as 27 Nbk.²⁷⁹ It is unclear whether this activity was borne out of his private business ventures or as part of his responsibility in the animal husbandry sector, perhaps also as part of his job as the overseer of ten.²⁸⁰

Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim is attested in fourteen letters either as sender or as recipient. As will be shown below, the subject matter of these letters paints a picture of an important overseer, as he is oftentimes seen corresponding with high officials. Perhaps the most straight-forward description of his responsibilities is given – rather bluntly – in a letter he receives from the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin. YOS 3, 84 opens with a direct critique of Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim by the high officials, who poses a question: “What kind of chief of ploughman is he who neither attends (his) duty nor visits the irrigation districts under his responsibility?” Sîn-iddin continues with his critique asking: “Why do you not have twenty oxherds with you, nor have you given (a corresponding number of men) to any of your colleagues?” As we learn, this oversight had caused a shortage of workers needed to gather water in the irrigation districts. The Royal Resident then moves on to the main point of the letter – which is to order Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim to assign ploughmen to the irrigation districts belonging to Eanna, so that these might till the land. Finally, Sîn-iddin remarks that the land which cannot be managed by the temple’s ploughmen (presumably due to their limited numbers) was to be assigned to sharecroppers (see above).

²⁷⁷ The career of Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim has been concisely discussed as a case study in Janković 2013: 116 f. The present study will only partially rely on the said study, taking into account only the attestations in which Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim appears with a patronym, as the evidence suggests, drawing from attestations of this individual presented in Janković 2013: 94, that there was a man named Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, who was a ploughman (*ikkaru*) in VS 20 134 (26 Nbk) and then again in PTS 2312 (1 Ner). As we know that Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, son of Nabû-udammiq had the title of the overseer of ploughmen in the accession year of Neriglissar (BIN 1, 123), it is highly unlikely that he is the same individual as the ploughman attested only a year later. I thus propose here to treat the ploughman Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim for whom no patronym is known and who was active between (at least) 26 Nbk and 1 Ner, as a different individual from the agricultural overseer Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, son of Nabû-udammiq who is discussed here.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Janković 2013: 117³⁵².

²⁷⁹ Frazer 2020: 163 f.

²⁸⁰ Cf. Janković 2013: 83²⁵¹.

This letter tells us that the main task of a chief of the ploughmen was to manage the irrigation districts and plough teams responsible for tilling the land. Keeping these responsibilities in mind, the rest of the dossier pertaining to Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim can be examined.

Letter YOS 3, 142 elaborates on the dissatisfaction of certain high officials with Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim's work. This letter is addressed to him by the Temple Scribe Nabû-bān-aḫi, a high official working alongside Sîn-iddin.²⁸¹ From this letter we learn that it was not only the Royal Resident who was dissatisfied with Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, but also the Temple Scribe, who apparently requested spades and ox hides from him, but had not received them. To an intercession on Nabû-bān-aḫi's behalf, the Royal Resident reacts literally with "words of shit" ([*dib*]*bī zē*), i.e., with strong displeasure:

- 5 *a-na* ^{lú}*qí-ṛi¹-pu a-qab-bi*
 um-ma ^{Id+ag}*-šeš^{meš}-gi*
 il-tap-ṛa¹ um-ma a-na
 ḫu-da-da u é ^{lú}*ḫal*
 ki-i al-lik mim-ma šá
- 10 *e-pe-šu ina lib-bi ia-a-nu*
 a-mur a-na ^{garim}*ru-da-a-a*
 e-te-bir a-na ugu
 10-ta mar an.bar^{meš}
 il-tap-ra en liq-bi-ma
- 15 *10-ta mar an.bar^{meš}*
 ṛlu-še¹-bil-a[n-ni]
- LoE [*dib*]-*bi ze-ṛe¹*
 ṛi¹-ta-pal-an-ni
- Rev *ṛir¹-^d+ag {ṛpab¹}*
- 20 *1-en šá a-na* ^l*numun-ia*
 a-šú šá ^{Id+ag}*-mu iš-pu-ra*
 um-ma ab-kaš-šim-ma
 níg.ka₉ it-ti-šu lu-pu-uš
 um-ma ^l*numun-ia i-qab-bi*
- 25 *um-ma a-mur a-na pa-ni*

²⁸¹ Sack 1977: 42 f, Janković 2005: 170, Levavi 2018: 124.

lú sa-ga-ni-ia at-ta-lak
ʿluʾ ti-i-de dib-bi ze-e*
ul-tar-ra-a at-ta let-ka

⁵⁻¹⁶I said to the Royal Resident as follows: ‘Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim wrote to me as follows: ‘I went to Ḫudadu and Bīt-bārê and there was nothing to do there. So, as you can see, I crossed over to Rudāya.’ He wrote about ten iron spades, (that) the lord (i.e., the Royal Resident) should give an order that he (Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim) should send these ten iron spades to me (Nabû-bān-aḫi).

¹⁷⁻¹⁸(To this) he (the Royal Resident) gave me a spectacularly bad reply (literally: answered me with words of shit).

¹⁹⁻²⁸A certain Arad-Nabû, who had written to Zēria, son of Nabû-iddin as follows: ‘bring him (Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim) to me so that I might settle accounts with him,’ (is telling me) as follows: ‘Zēria tells me as follows: ‘as you can see, I had to go to my supervisor (to achieve this).’ You should know he has started being seriously annoyed (literally: has started (speaking) words of shit).

Circling back to Sîn-iddin’s own letter to Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, it is easy to understand why the Royal Resident might show frustration upon repeated problems surrounding Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim’s work. Furthermore, we learn that others also complained about him. A certain Arad-Nabû wrote to the sharecropper Zēria, son of Nabû-iddin (see above) about bringing Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim to him, so that he might settle accounts with him, to which Zēria responded that he had to appeal to his supervisor to achieve that.

Although he enjoyed a relatively privileged position within the temple hierarchy during his career, the available record alludes to many misfortunes befalling Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim. Two texts (YBC 3941 and YBC 3819), dating to 38 Nbk and 42 Nbk respectively, record legal proceedings following a theft of cattle and precious goods from the house of Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim.²⁸² The culprit – Zēru-ibni son of Iltar-abī – was caught, a record of stolen goods was made (YBC 3941) and, some four years later, he and his accomplices were legally ordered to return the stolen goods to Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim. Another complication connected to Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim’s house is the subject matter YOS 3, 148. Despite this letter’s fragmentary nature, it is clear that the sender – Nabû-šumu-ušur – writes to Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim about a house in Uruk which had been sold to a certain Marduk-šumu-ibni through Bēl-nāšir and Ardāya. The problem is that Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim claims the house was his, and that he had previously bought

²⁸² Payne 2013.

it from a man called Nabû-bēlšunu. The real reason for writing is stated at the end of the letter: Nabû-šumu-ušur denies being a witness on any such sale contract or guarantor against a contesting claim to the house.

The reason for Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's misfortunes might lie in his involvement in animal husbandry. As previously stated, he seems to have begun his career in this sector, possibly causing him to accumulate debt early on, as happened to many others working in this area²⁸³. His activities connected to animal husbandry can be surmised from the letter he received from Innin-šarru-ušur, the heard supervisor (*rab būli*) of Eanna (YOS 3, 25). The letter begins by the hear supervisor reprimanding Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim about not working on the Great Canal (?) and thereby being negligent towards the king himself. What follows is a detailed order on how to allocate animals for the offerings of the month of Addaru:

- Rev ud.25.kam gu₄
- 21 u udu.níta a-na unug^{ki}
li-ir-ru-bu ud.1.kam
šá ka-šu u₄-mu^{udu} sila₄.sar^{meš}
šá ud.2.kam i-din ud.2.kam
- 25 šá nam-ma-ru gu₄ 2(tablet: lagab)-i^{meš}
šá al-tu-ru-ka a-pu-tu₄
šu-uz-ziz šá ka-šu u₄-mu * šá * ud.2.kam
17 sila₄.sar^{meš} šá ud.3.kam
ina a-ki-tú i-din ud.3.kam ina kaskal.gíd u₄-mu
- 30 5^{gu₄} ninda^{me} šá ši-zib
ù 5 sila₄.sar^{meš}
i-din ud.5.kam áb.nigin
a-na ḥa-re-e i-din
ud.2.kam 30^{udu} bar.gal
- 35 a-bu-uk a-na lú^{lú} umbisag^{meš}
i-din

²⁰⁻³⁶Cattle and sheep should enter Uruk on the 25th day in the way I will (now) point out to you. Deliver the lambs for the 2nd day on the evening of the 1st day. Please have ready at first light of the 2nd day the two-year-old bulls about which I wrote. On the evening of the 2nd day, deliver 17 lambs for the 3rd day to the *akītu*(-temple). At the first

²⁸³ See Aarslev 2023: 238 ff.

double hour of the 3rd day, deliver 5 suckling bull calves and 5 lambs. On the 5th day, deliver a heifer for the *ḥarû*-offering. On the 2nd day, bring 30 *parru* lambs and deliver (them) to the scribes.

It seems that, due to Innin-šarru-ušur's absence from Uruk, it falls on Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim to make sure the animals are delivered on time to be offered. Similarly to previous letters, the sender regards Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim with a dose of diffidence, whether warranted or not, even stating that the letter itself shall serve as witness that the instructions were given, and that, should the animals not be delivered correctly, the blame should be placed solely on Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim.

Further complaints connected to work on canals are expressed in YOS 3, 30, a letter sent by Balātu. The sender urges Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim to dam the Takkīru canal and inquires as to why this was not done before. Balātu wishes for a certain Nabû-ēreš to collaborate with Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim in irrigation work, especially at the opening of the Rudāya canal. The Rudāya offshoot of the Takkīru canal seems to have been the primary area of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's agricultural activity.

On certain occasions Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim was also responsible for delivering goods used in food offerings. A group of Eanna priests write to him on two occasions. In YOS 3, 61 they request dates and barley for food offerings. From this letter we learn that Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim went to Babylon, where he met the Royal Resident and the High Priest. The group of priests underline that the two high officials instructed them to take the goods from Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, as to prevent an interruption in the offering cycle. The same subject matter is addressed by the priests in YOS 3, 75, only this time they are requiring sheep be sent for the offerings, as there has been an interruption in the (normal) supply. The second letter indicates that Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim was not a regular direct supplier of Eanna, but rather was asked to step in when there was a shortfall that could not be covered out of the storehouses in Uruk.

6.1.1 Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's shortcomings as described by his subordinates

The corpus demonstrates that not only high officials such as the Royal Resident Sîn-iddin and Temple Scribe Nabû-bān-aḥi feel the need to criticize our protagonist, but, interestingly, also several of his subordinates. Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's shortcomings as supervisor led to several problems directly resulting in his subordinates not being able to do their work.

Two letters sent to Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim by a certain Tarībi are a case in point. YOS 3, 48 begins with (an apparently quite frustrated) Tarībi quoting "his father" Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's promise back to him, reminding him of a guarantee that Tarībi would not experience a shortfall of men. This was obviously not the case, as we see Tarībi requesting workers be sent to him:

Obv im ^lta^o-ri-bi a-na
 Id₊ag-šeš^{meš}-gi ad-^lia^l
 ^dgašan šá unug^{ki} u ^dna-na-a
 šu-lum u tin šá ad-ia
 5 liq-ba-^la⁴ a-ga-a⁴
 qa-bu-ú šá a-kan-na
 taq-ba-a[?] um-ma lib-ba-ka
 lu ta-ab-ka
 al-la a-ga-a⁴
 10 ^{lú}erín^{meš} ma-tu-tu
 ul tam-mar en-na a-mur
 Id₊ag-mu-še-tiq-ud.da
 LoE al-tap-rak-ka
 Id_iinnin-na-numun-dù
 Rev u ^{lú}erín^{meš} a⁴
 16 šal-mu-tu it-ti-šú
 šu-pur a-kan-na-ka
 la iz-za-zi
 ^d+en ki-i ia-a-nu-ú
 20 a-di a-na mam-^lma^l ^{lú}gal-ú
 a-na ugu a-qab-bu-ú
 ki-i ^{lú}erín^{meš}
 ta-šap-pa-ru
 šu-pur u šu^{II} tad-ku-ú

¹⁻⁵Letter of Tarībi to Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, my father. May the Lady of Uruk and Nanaya decree my father's wellbeing and vigour.

⁵⁻¹¹This is what you told me here: "Be confident, you will not experience a shortfall of men beyond what is already the case."

¹¹⁻²⁵Now, as you can see, I have sent you Nabû-mušētiq-uddê. Send me Innin-zēru-ibni and (all) the able-bodied workers with him. They should not stay there. By Bēl, I shall surely talk to some else who is powerful should this not happen. Write whether you will send the workers or whether you will not do anything.

To further underline this point, Tarībi warns that he will talk to someone 'powerful' if his request is not fulfilled. He also asks Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim write him back stating whether he will send said workers, possibly to have a written guarantee of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's promise or alternatively a clear sign for having to turn to someone else, in case Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim decides not to do anything.

Another letter (YOS 3, 70) by Tarībi to "his father Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim" complains again about things not being done as requested. This time it is not the workers, but rather matters concerning barley and cress that are the problem:

[^de]n* *lu-ú i-de*
ki-i a-di-i
muḥ-ḥi šá en-na
tu-sad-dir-ma
10 *kaskal^{II} a-na gír^{II}-iá*
ta-áš-kun-nu
mi-na-a a-na-ku
ù 20 ^{lú}erín^{meš}
u^{lú} ma-la-ḥe-e
LoE *baṭ-la-ka*
Rev *še.bar u saḥ-le-e*
mam-ma kaskal^{II} a-na gír^{II}-iá
ul iš-kun-nu

⁶⁻¹⁸Bēl surely knows: until now you did not arrange matters to be done as I require. Why do I have to be idle, together with twenty men and some boatmen? No one has done what I require with respect to the barley and the cress.

Tarībi urges Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim to write (an order), so that the barley of Bēl-šarru-ušur and of

Kār-Eanna can be accordingly managed. Tarībi further complains about not having received barely and cress from Innin-zēru-ušabši, as was previously ordered by Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim. This letter shows some of the range of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's responsibilities: Overseeing the agricultural work such as irrigation and ploughing clearly implied also the duty of seeing after the workers' provisioning.

A similar subject matter is addressed in YOS 3, 12, a letter written by one Šamaš-aḥu-iddin to Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim. The sender complains about being chased away from his field by a certain Bēl-uballit, resulting in barley becoming spoilt. The same man also prevented Šamaš-aḥu-iddin from taking cress intended for a third party. It is apparently a matter of balancing claims made by the temple with the rights of Bēl-uballit and Šamaš-aḥu-iddin. The latter relies on Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim to instruct him on how to resolve the situation.

6.1.2 Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim and Ibni-Ištar(s)

A small sub-corpus within Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim's correspondence consists of letters to and from a man, or men, called Ibni-Ištar. The identification of the latter proves difficult. The most natural choice would be to attribute all attestations to Ibni-Ištar, son of Nabû-šumu-ibni, an estate manager and chief of ten (see below). However, a problem arises when we consider letter YOS 3, 9 sent by Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim to Ibni-Ištar. Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, himself having travelled to Babylon for the festivities of the month of Addaru, instructs Ibni-Ištar on several matters:

- 1) irrigating the ploughmen's fields;
- 2) taking silver from the temple on Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim's behalf (to be given as tax to the governor of Esangila) and sending it with oxen and ploughmen.
- 3) tending to oxen, which are to be sacrificed in Nisānu, as well as sheep of Mušēzib-Bēl;
- 4) forbidding anybody to take dates from Šamaš-erība, the oil-presser before Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim's returns;
- 5) not to mind words he heard about Ibni-Ištar, son of Nabû-šumu-ibni, as there is no truth in them.

The last part of this letter excludes Ibni-Ištar, son of Nabû-šumu-ibni from the list of possible recipients of YOS 3, 9. While Ibni-Ištar was by no means an uncommon Urukian name (even within our corpus (YOS 21, 33) another letter written by Ibni-Ištar refers to yet another Ibni-Ištar – both without a patronym), many of them cannot be taken to be the recipient of our letter, be it due to their attestations not overlapping chronologically with Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim or their area of activity being completely different. Before a guess can be made, let us consider a letter, whose subject matter is closely related to that of YOS 3, 9. YOS 3, 76 shows the same sender and recipient, where Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim informs and instructs Ibni-Ištar on several matters:

- 1) Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim withdrew silver for barley and gave it to the High Priest;
- 2) Order to send 50 lambs so that Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim may repay his creditors. Ibni-Ištar is to send trusted men with them and even escort the party himself for a portion of the journey;
- 3) Order to tend to the donkey of Nanaya-iddin;
- 4) Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim requests the debt note of Arad-Nanaya be sent to him, so that he may collect silver from him (while they are both in Babylon);
- 5) Order to collect tax from Nabû-ušallim for his lambs;

6) Order to irrigate the land of Innin-zēru-ušabši.

This letter contains a mixture of personal matters, such as Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's debt repayments and professional ones, such as tending to animals and tax collection.

Another letter (YOS 21, 33), this time written by a man named Ibni-Ištar, urges Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim to levy corvée workers, as he is being held back for this reason by Amurru-mukīn-apli, who is likely to be identified as the estate manager of the governor of Sealand.²⁸⁴ The sender especially asks for the corvée workers to be recruited from Ibni-Ištar and Silim-Bēl, who are probably to be identified as chiefs of ten Ibni-Ištar, son of Nabû-šumu-ibni (already referenced in YOS 3, 9) and Silim-Bēl, son of Aplāya, both of which are attested with this title in 34 Nbk.²⁸⁵ At the end of the letter, the sender inquired about how Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim could have foregone giving a document and workers to Marduk, who is likely to be identified with another the estate manager of the governor of Sealand.²⁸⁶ The sender of the letter is probably engaged in irrigation work in Sealand, which is ultimately being overseen by Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim.²⁸⁷

It is clear from the context of these letters that this/these Ibni-Ištar(s), highly unlikely to be identified as the agricultural overseer Ibni-Ištar, son of Nabû-šumu-ibni, was a/were subordinate(s) of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, responsible for 1) overseeing his domain when Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim is away from Uruk and 2) overseeing irrigation work outside of Uruk on behalf of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim.

²⁸⁴ Janković 2013: 59; 124.

²⁸⁵ Janković 2013: 83.

²⁸⁶ Janković 2013: 120.

²⁸⁷ Janković 2013: 59 f.

6.1.3 Attestations in Eanna's letter corpus

letter	sender	recipient	subject matter
YOS 3, 148	Nabû-šumu-ušur	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's claim to a house in Uruk.
YOS 3, 25	Innin-šarru-ušur	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Accusation of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim being negligent and instructions on when to send he send oxen, sheep, and lambs to Uruk for a religious ceremony.
YOS 3, 30	Balātu	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Instruction to dam the Takkīru canal and reprimands him for not doing it sooner and sends one of his own men to collaborate on the project.
YOS 3, 61	Arad-Gula, Bēlšunu, Ibniya, Innin-zēru-ušabši	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Inquiry about the orders Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim received while being in Babylon. They refer back to a letter from the Royal Resident and the High Priest instructing them take as much barley as they need from Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim.
YOS 3, 75	Arad-Gula, Bēlšunu, Innin-zēru-ušabši, Bāniya	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Request for sheep for the offerings, as their supply has been interrupted.
YOS 3, 48	Tarībi	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Request for more workmen and complaint that Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim had reassured him previously that his workforce will suffice, however this was not the case. At the end of the letter Tarībi threatens that he'll talk to powerful people about this, in case his request is not fulfilled.
YOS 3, 70	Tarību	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Frustration due to not having received barley and cress.
YOS 3, 12	Šamaš-aḥu-iddin	Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim	Complaint about Bēl-uballit, who is preventing the sender of managing barley.

YOS 3, 9	Nabû-aḥḥē- šullim	Ibni-Ištar	Instruction to Ibni-Ištar that he needn't come to a festival, as the sender will make sure to pray for him and he should continue on with his work. Further instruction to collect oxen-revenue from the ploughmen for Esangila. Reference to the dates of Šamaš-erība, as well as some gossip of Ibni-Ištar.
YOS 3, 76	Nabû-aḥḥē- šullim	Ibni-Ištar	Withdrawal of silver corresponding to barley for the High Priest. Request that Ibni-Ištar sends lambs and trustworthy men and go to the Gate-of-the-Storehouse. Further request to get a debt note from a man in Borsippa as well as lambs from Nabû-ušallim, the Laḥitean to be taken as tax.
YOS 21, 33	Ibni-Ištar	Nabû-aḥḥē- šullim	Request for corvée workers to be sent in order to continue his work.
OIP 122, 162	Nabû-šarru- uṣur	Nabû-aḥḥē- šullim	Complaint about there not being enough silver to pay the wages of hired men.
YOS 21, 68	Nabû-aḥḥē- šullim	Nabû-bān-aḥi	Order to bring vessels from a potter's house.

Table 6. Letter Dossier of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim.

6. 2 The Case of the Basia Family²⁸⁸

Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, son of Nabû-udammiq is the first individual attested with the title overseer of the ploughmen (*rab ikkarāti*) in Uruk.²⁸⁹ Whatever the circumstance surrounding his disappearance, be it old age, debt or the inability to conduct his work to his superior's satisfaction, from the 1st year of Nabonidus onward, this title is held by another man of interesting origins, Šumu-ukīn, son of Bēl-zēri.²⁹⁰ Similarly to his predecessor, Šumu-ukīn features heavily in the Eanna correspondence.

The so-called 'Basia-Archive' refers to a group of over 40 private documents concerning the family found within Eanna.²⁹¹ The present archive is probably to be understood as a remnant of the actual family's archive, which was eventually confiscated together with their belongings by the temple due to the family's accumulated debt around 7-8 Nbn.²⁹²

The main business ventures of the family were conducted by Šumu-ukīn, who resettled to Uruk and started a lucrative rent farming business. Although his two brothers, Iqīša and Silim-Bēl, can be identified at certain points with high probability within Šumu-ukīn's correspondence, it is impossible to identify them with certainty as senders or recipients of their own letters. Apart from Šumu-ukīn, the only other family member featuring prominently in Eanna documents is his nephew Kalbāya, son of Iqīša, who seems to have inherited Šumu-ukīn's business due to him not having any male children.²⁹³

²⁸⁸ The Basia family and their business ventures were studied most recently in Hackl et al 2011 and Janković 2013: 158–200 with respect to their letter correspondence and attestations in legal and administrative text respectively. See these references for older literature. The following chapter will add new evidence to his letter correspondence and contextualize it with regard to previous research.

²⁸⁹ Janković 2013: 114.

²⁹⁰ Janković 2013: 114.

²⁹¹ Hackl et al 2011: 178, Janković 2013: 165.

²⁹² Hackl et al 2011: 178, Janković 2013: 184.

²⁹³ Janković 2013: 186.

6.2.1 Šumu-ukīn

Šumu-ukīn was the first large-scale rent farmer in Eanna.²⁹⁴ Although his exact origins are unknown, his earliest attestations stem from Babylon during first half of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.²⁹⁵ During his early career he was also active in Nippur, before relocating to Uruk during the beginning of Neriglissar's reign, where he is even referred to as the *bēl piqitti* of Neriglissar.²⁹⁶ By this time, Šumu-ukīn had already held a great authority as he is seen leasing out Eanna's own land, normally a prerogative of the temple's highest functionaries.²⁹⁷

YOS 6, 11 and its two duplicates TEBR 37 and VAT 8418²⁹⁸, record a royal grant in form of a rent contract to Šumu-ukīn and his nephew Kalbāya by Nabonidus in the first year of his reign, issued in Larsa, a day after YOS 6, 10, a decree making several changes to Eanna's administration.²⁹⁹ Here, the two members of the Basia family are granted 6000 *kurru* (cubits) of arable land, together with 400 plowmen, 400 oxen, and 100 cows, with temple expecting an annual revenue of 25 000 *kurru* (liters) of barley, and 10 000 *kurru* of dates. Regarding the calves, they are to be marked as Eanna's property, but to be left at the disposal of Šumu-ukīn and Kalbāya. The document further stipulates that the temple will deliver 3000 liters of barley seed and 10 talents of iron to them in the first year, in order for them to be able to begin their business venture. Thanks to this document, it is clear that Šumu-ukīn became the rent-farmer of Eanna at the beginning of Nabonidus' reign, even though he was already involved in renting out temple's arable land during the reign of Neriglissar.

Most of his correspondence in Eanna was already treated by Hackl, Janković and Jursa (2011). In the present chapter, some additional letters will be treated, with a focus on Šumu-ukīn's agricultural activities especially in connection to the Eanna temple before and after becoming the rent farmer.

When identifying Šumu-ukīn in Neo-Babylonian letters, it is tempting to see the prominent rent farmer in nearly any letter mentioning that name. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised, especially as according to TCL 9, 125, there was at least one other prominent man of the same name present in Uruk during the reign of Nabonidus, who seems to have been

²⁹⁴ Janković 2013: 158.

²⁹⁵ Hackl et al 2011: 179.

²⁹⁶ Janković 2013: 173.

²⁹⁷ Janković 2013: 173.

²⁹⁸ Edited in Joannès 1980: 136–141, Cocquerillat 1968: 38 f.

²⁹⁹ See page 19.

a royal official.³⁰⁰ Therefore, any letter not strictly mentioning the agricultural sector will not be included in this study.

6.2.1.1 Work on irrigation canal(s)

Šumu-ukīn writes several letters to Eanna's highest officials. YOS 3, 110 is a letter addressed to the High Priest – either Bānia or Zēria – written most likely prior to Šumu-ukīn's post as a rent farmer. Here, Šumu-ukīn reports on the work he and one Bēl-īpuš have been delegated, even noting they are responsible for part of gardeners' land. The tone of the letter suggests Šumu-ukīn is not particularly happy about having to cover such large plots of land. Šumu-ukīn's work on irrigation canals features heavily in his correspondence and seems to be a subject he discussed with temple's highest officials. Thus, in YOS 21, 152, he complains to the Royal Resident, High Priest and Temple Scribe (three of the highest authorities in Eanna) about problems he encountered when levying the men for the work on the Takkīru canal, causing the work to stop.³⁰¹

	<i>ina līb-bi iti šá iti.šu</i>
	<i>di-i-ki a-na ugu ^{íd}tak-kīr</i>
10	<i>ki-i ad-ku-u līb-bu a-ga-a</i>
	<i>la dib-bi it-ti-ia</i>
	<i>ki-i id-dab-bu-ub í[d (šá)] ^rdgašan šá¹ [unug^{ki}]</i>
	<i>dul-lu ma-la i-pu-[šú]</i>
	<i>gab-bi it-ti š[á-a-rī]</i>
15	<i>it-te-ti-i[q 0]</i>
	<i>[0] a-na līb-bi [a-ga-a]</i>
LoE	<i>[l]a ik-ki-[i]</i>
	<i>íd šá 1 me ku₆.[hī.a]</i>
Rev	<i>ub-ba-lu ul [ad-din]</i>
20	<i>u še.numun ina šu^{II} ^{lú}e[r-re-še-e]</i>
	<i>ki-i áš-šá-a[?] a-na</i>
	<i>^{lú}engar^{meš} at-ta-din</i>
	<i>ù dib-bi a-ga-a</i>

³⁰⁰ Jursa 2011: 21.

³⁰¹ Edition from Hackl et al. 2011: No. 2.

⁸⁻¹⁷When I levied (workers) during the month of Du²ūzu for work on the Takkīru canal and people then said untoward things to me for that reason, then the entire work on the canal of the Lady of Uruk that they had done was lost. I am really upset about this.

¹⁸⁻²⁵I did not [give (them)] a canal that produces 100 (units) of fish; rather, I took the land from the sharecroppers and assigned it to the (temple) ploughmen. When they heard this, they refused to cooperate.

The problem seems to be that the workers said untoward things to Šumu-ukīn. He also encountered problems when attempting to take away land from sharecroppers and give it to temple's ploughmen, now relying on a written order from the high officials in order to rectify the situation.³⁰² YOS 21, 153, addressed to the Temple Scribe mentions once again the work on a canal, with Šumu-ukīn expressing further frustration due to high officials' silence to his previous letters. It is highly likely that the work mentioned here is connected to Šumu-ukīn's work on the Takkīru canal mentioned in YOS 21, 152. If the Temple Scribe receiving YOS 21, 153 is thus to be understood as the same one receiving YOS 21, 152 together with the Royal Resident and High Priest, it is likely that the Temple Scribe in question is Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit, son of Ša-Nabû-šū, who held this position from 26 Nbk until 1 Nbn.³⁰³

Work on irrigation canals evidently caused numerous problems for Šumu-ukīn. It is difficult not to see a parallel here to Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's own struggles as the overseer of the ploughmen. As was mentioned above, Šumu-ukīn's first attestation with this title dates to the 1st year of Nabonidus, yet we don't see Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim as one after the accession year of Neriglissar.³⁰⁴ The similarities between the two officials' duties (and problems) suggests that (at least) the three letters discussed above concern Šumu-ukīn's activity in his capacity as the overseer of the ploughmen. Despite the comparatively later date of his attestations as such, the data from the letters (mentioning of the titles abolished under Nabonidus), suggests that he might have assumed the position prior to Nabonidus' reign – likely already under Neriglissar. Also the letters written to Šumu-ukīn by his subordinates give us information about his involvement in irrigation work. YOS 21, 143 includes a report on the work on irrigation canals. In YOS 21, 41 a man named Iṣṣūru asks Šumu-ukīn to send ploughmen in order to dam a canal.

³⁰² For a discussion about the relationship between the sharecroppers and temple's ploughmen see Hackl et al 2011: 185 f.

³⁰³ Kleber 2008: 35.

³⁰⁴ See Janković 2013: 114.

In YOS 3, 189, a certain Ḫaḫḫuru informs him that the work at the irrigation canals going well. Similarly, YOS 3, 197, written by Šumu-ukīn's subordinate Na'id-Ištar, informs him of a barley shipment set to be sent to the Takkīru canal. It is evident that Šumu-ukīn was an active agent in Eanna's irrigation work not only through his work as an overseer but also in his capacity as the rent farmer producing barley.

6.2.1.2 Relationships with Eanna's high officials

Within his letter corpus, we see Šumu-ukīn correspond with several high officials. Unlike the letters treated above, where he sends complains to them addressing them to their titles rather than names, another part of our corpus can be distinguished by a seemingly turbulent relationship between the rent farmer and Eanna's highest officials.

A rather friendly exchange can be observed in a letter Šumu-ukīn receives from the High Priest of Eanna (YOS 21, 18), which begins fairly unremarkably, with the high official asking him to load a boat with straw. However, the High Priest Bānia continues the letter expressing gratitude towards Šumu-ukīn saying:³⁰⁵

5 *a-mur^{giš}e-lep-pu*
 it-ti^lsi-lim^{-d+en}
 u^lkal-ba-a
 al-tap-par
 di-lip-ma
 10 *ti-ib-ni*
 mul-li-ma
 šu-bi-il-^lla^l
 Rev *ta-ab-t[u₄ šá]*
 a-na muḫ-ḫi
 15 *^{Id+ag}šeš^{meš}-bul-liṭ*
 a-na muḫ-ḫi-ia
 ta-ad^o-da-an-nu
 a-na šeš-ú-tu-ka
 ta-ab-ba-at

³⁰⁵ Edition from Hackl et al. 2011: No. 19.

20 ^d+ag šu-ú lu-ú i-^lde¹
 ki-i a-di-i
 1^{en} 10 na-áš-par-<ta>-ka
 a-na lib-bi
 [a]l-la-ku

⁵⁻¹²As you can see, I have sent a boat with Silim-Bēl and Kalbāya. Make an effort to load it (quickly) with straw and have it sent (back to me).

¹³⁻²⁷The favor that you did regarding Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit on my behalf is a worthy demonstration of your friendship (to me). Nabû himself surely knows I am prepared to return the service ten times over.

The sender of this letter was the High Priest Bānia, whose incumbency spanned between the beginning of Neriglissar's reign until 1 Nbn, making it likely that this letter was written before Šumu-ukīn got his rent contract in Eanna. This can be further strengthened if one accepts that Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit referenced in the letter is likely to be identified the Eanna Scribe active until 1 Nbn,³⁰⁶ to whom Šumu-ukīn wrote YOS 21, 153.³⁰⁷ One might even venture a step further and speculate as to whether the repaying of said favour influenced Šumu-ukīn's acquisition of the rent farming contract with the Eanna temple. According to B. Janković, the mention of Silim-Bēl and Kalbāya in the first part of the letter YOS 21, 18 might be a reference to Šumu-ukīn's own brother and nephew respectively.³⁰⁸

Another interesting letter written by the Royal Resident and High Priest of Eanna (YOS 3, 102) asks Šumu-ukīn to deliver a large amount of dates from the dates of Bīt-Dērāyī to Eabbar (Larsa) for regular offerings to Šamaš. What is striking about this letter is not so much the request, but rather the address the two senior officials use to speak to Šumu-ukīn. They refer to him as 'lord' (*bēlu*) – showing that Šumu-ukīn enjoyed respect from these two important officials – something that couldn't be said for Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, who was the recipient of several highly unpleasant letters from the same official (Sîn-iddin). Based on the incumbencies of the senders of this letter, it can likewise be dated prior to 1 Nbn, thus referring to Šumu-ukīn's responsibilities prior to becoming

³⁰⁶ Kleber 2008: 35.

³⁰⁷ Identified as such in Hackl et al. 2011: 180.

³⁰⁸ Janković 2013: 130.

the rent farmer. A similar letter asking for goods to be delivered to Larsa is YOS 3, 155, sent by the Royal Resident of Ebabbar of Larsa Mušēzib-Marduk.

The official featuring most prominently in Šumu-ukīn's correspondence is Nabû-šarru-ušur, with whom our protagonist exchanged three letters. As was frequently the case with Nabû-šarru-ušur, here too caution must be exercised when deciding on the date of the letter. While one tends to assume the letters were written during the incumbency of Nabû-šarru-ušur as the Royal Overseer of Eanna, as was shown in previous chapter, there is reason to believe that some of his correspondence from Eanna predates this, and is to be dated to his role as courtier, who nevertheless exercised authority normally reserved to higher ranking officials.³⁰⁹ This can be strengthened by the example of the letter TCL 9, 122 written by a certain Nadnāya to Nabû-šarru-ušur complaining about Šumu-ukīn preventing the measuring of his (i.e., Nadnāya's) plot of land. Before that, however, Nadnāya complains to Nabû-šarru-ušur about the High Priest of Eanna causing problems for him saying: 'The High Priest went and made things difficult [for me]'. This makes it possible to date this letter between 1 Ner and 1 Nbn, probably either before Nabû-šarru-ušur became the Royal Overseer or during a brief, less than a month long period of there being both a Royal Overseer and the High Priest in Eanna during the first year of Nabonidus.³¹⁰

Thus, a letter such as YOS 3, 151, written by Nabû-šarru-ušur, in which he reassures Šumu-ukīn of believing him regarding a dead worker, does not allow for an exact dating in either direction. In YOS 21, 91, the same official informs Šumu-ukīn about land yet to be cultivated, imploring him to levy the workers and begin working there. BIN 1, 55 is written from Šumu-ukīn to Nabû-šarru-ušur, expressing complaints about additional work expenses he (i.e. Šumu-ukīn) encountered while working in Kār-Eanna. Šumu-ukīn insists that he has done nothing to warrant such a treatment, pleading with Nabû-šarru-ušur to commence the measuring at the Takkīru canal and to have additional workers sent to assist him. He also asks Nabû-šarru-ušur not to summon him based on idle gossip being spread about him.

³⁰⁹ For dating these letters during the reign of Nabonidus see Hackl et al. 2011: 183.

³¹⁰ According to Kleber 2008: 33; 36, Bānia's last attestation as High Priest dates to 18.IV.1 Nbn, whereas Nabû-šarru-ušur is attested as the Royal Overseer already in 2.III.1 Nbn. A date after the reinstatement of the office of the High Priest is not considered, due to the disappearance of Šumu-ukīn from the archival record prior to 11 Nbn, see Hackl et al. 2011: 162.

Perhaps the most interesting letter in this corpus is YOS 19, 105. While not written by or sent directly to Šumu-ukīn, the subject matter concerns him directly. The sender, Innin-šumu-ušur, writes to the Royal Overseer Nabû-šarru-ušur about a messenger of Šumu-ukīn, whom the king's son has had condemned to death. The letter implies that the son of Innin-šumu-ušur, a certain Anu-iqīša,³¹¹ is being implicated in the matter. Innin-šumu-ušur goes so far to accuse Nabû-šarru-ušur of neglecting his own reputation by not intervening on the matter. Unfortunately, despite its very interesting subject matter, this letter is very difficult to understand in full.

6.2.1.3 Correspondence with subordinates

The largest part of Šumu-ukīn's correspondence consists out of letters he receives from his subordinates including junior members of his own family. These letters contain information on agricultural activity and organization.

YOS 21, 160 is written by Zēria, who was already identified as Zēria, son of Nabû-iddin, a sharecropper in the region of Ḥarru-ša-Nadnāya³¹² from the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar onwards and later became an agent (*bēl piqitti*) of Šumu-ukīn.³¹³ He informs his superior of having sent Kalbāya (presumably Šumu-ukīn's nephew) to him (i.e. to Šumu-ukīn)³¹⁴, so that he can bear witness for one Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin, noting that Kalbāya should return to work as soon as possible. Zēria also mentions a cattle delivery to Šumu-ukīn, complaining about being left all alone for this purpose.

Kalbāya writes to his uncle directly in YOS 21, 44, about barley for cattle which is supposed to be registered in the storehouse of the Eanna Temple. As proposed by Hackl, Janković and Jursa, BM 116697 could likewise have been written by another one of Šumu-ukīn's nephews, namely Nabû-šumu-iddin.³¹⁵ If this interpretation is correct, this would make the son of Šumu-ukīn's brother Silim-Bēl. The subject matter concerns water being drawn from a canal. He then goes on to complain to Šumu-ukīn, noting that he is powerless and can only trust in Šumu-ukīn. Regrettably, the exact context of this emotional message is unclear.

³¹¹ Otherwise not attested in Uruk.

³¹² See Zadok 1985: 154.

³¹³ Hackl et al 2011: 183; Janković 2013: 90 note 269.

³¹⁴ According to Hackl et al 2011: 186 Kalbāya is likely to have been sent to Babylon for this purpose.

³¹⁵ Hackl et al 2011: 182.

Another interesting letter, AfO 44/45, 165, was proposed by Hackl, Janković and Jursa to have been written by Šumu-ukīn's other nephew, son of Silim-Bēl.³¹⁶ Although tempting, this identification is problematic. Firstly, the letter in recounts a royal letter to the Royal Resident and the High Priest regarding Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, who is likely the agricultural overseer active right before Šumu-ukīn.³¹⁷ Considering Šumu-ukīn's activity as well as the presence of the title of High Priest, the *terminus ante quem* for this letter is the first year of Nabonidus. While Marduk-šumu-ušur, son of Silim-Bēl does appear a couple of times in Eanna's administrative documents, it is worth pointing out that both of his attestations in this context date to the reign of Cambyses.³¹⁸ So while he does appear in documents predating this period, such as YBC 3750 (2 Ner) and NBC 4534 (0a Lab), in both of these documents he only features as witness in what was quite likely Šumu-ukīn's private archive.³¹⁹ Thus, there is in fact no direct evidence of Šumu-ukīn's nephew Marduk-šumu-ušur holding a high administrative position in Eanna at any given time, such as one which would give him insight into the correspondence between the king and the temple's two highest officials, nor is there reason to believe he held any official position at the temple at the time this letter was written. Therefore, we must assume that the AfO 44/45, 165 letter was written by some other official active in Eanna at the time, although his close connection to Šumu-ukīn is admittedly very obvious. Nevertheless, this letter gives us important insight into the events surrounding the title of the overseer of ploughmen being transferred from Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim to Šumu-ukīn. Marduk-šumu-ušur recounts the following events:³²⁰

ši-pir-ti erín^{meš}
šá^{lú} qí-i-pi u^{lú} šà.tam
10 *a-na muḥ-ḫi^{Id+ag-šeš^{meš}-gi}*
a-na lugal iš-pur-ra
ši-pir-ti šá lugal a-na
pa-ṛⁿⁱ ^{lú}qí-i-pi
ṛ^{ta}-at-tal-ka um-ma
15 *mim-ma šá^d gašan šá unug^[ki]*

³¹⁶ Hackl et al. 2011: 181.

³¹⁷ As was already noted in Hackl et al. 2011: 186.

³¹⁸ BM 113431 (2 Camb) and YOS 7, 113 (1 Camb).

³¹⁹ See the discussion about the Basia archive within the Eanna temple with further references in § 6.2.

³²⁰ Edition from Hackl et al. 2011: No. 8.

[x] 'x x' [x x x]

⁸⁻¹⁵Regarding the letter about the workers that the Royal Resident and the High Priest sent to the king with respect to Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, a letter of the king has arrived for the Royal Resident, as follows: ‘all that belongs to the Lady of Uruk [...] (large gap)

As was evident from letters discussed in chapter 6.1, Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim’s work overseen primarily the ploughmen working on irrigation canals left much to be desired. High officials especially showed great displeasure with his work. It is therefore possible that they went so far as to complain about it to the king himself, resulting in Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim’s eventual removal and appointment of Šumu-ukīn.

Other letters written by Šumu-ukīn’s subordinates to him include mainly information on deliveries of barley and other goods to various parties (see YOS 3, 177, YOS 3, 162, YOS 3, 197, YOS 21, 114, PTS 2015 and YOS 21, 143).

6.2.1.5 Attestation in Eanna's letter corpus

(1) Šumu-ukīn as sender		
letter	recipient	topic
YOS 3, 110 ³²¹	<i>šatammu</i> (Bānia or Zēria)	Digging of irrigation canals, which Šumu-ukīn and Bēl-īpuš are overseeing. Šumu-ukīn further vouches on behalf of a ploughman.
YOS 21, 152 ³²²	<i>qīpu, šatammu</i> and <i>ṭupšar bīti</i>	Complaints about work on the Takkīru canal, which is in a standstill because the workers refuse to cooperate.
YOS 21, 153 ³²³	<i>ṭupšar bīti</i>	Complaint about being ignored by Royal Resident and the High Priest and assuring the Temple Scribe that he'll come to measure barley as soon as a canal is finished.
BIN 1, 55 ³²⁴	Nabû-šarru-ušur (<i>ša rēš šarri (bēl piqitti)</i>)	Complaint about additional work expenses in Kār-Eanna. Šumu-ukīn pleads with Nabû-šarru-ušur to have additional workers assist him. He also complains about some gossip about him.
Fs. Hewett Tafel XX, A ³²⁵	Šulāya	Order to give barley to a certain Arrabi.

Table 7. Letter Dossier of Šumu-ukīn (1).

³²¹ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 4.

³²² Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 2.

³²³ Kleber 2008: 35. This can be deduced through Šumu-ukīn's presence in Uruk only from the reign of Neriglissar onwards and Nabonidus' removal of the title of the High Priest in his first regnal year.

³²⁴ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 1.

³²⁵ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 27.

(2) Šumu-ukīn as recipient		
YOS 21, 18 ³²⁶	Bānia (<i>šatammu</i>)	Request to load a boat with straw and expression of gratitude for a favor Šumu-ukīn did for him (i.e. Bānia).
YOS 3, 102 ³²⁷	Sîn-iddin, Bānia (<i>qīpu, šatammu</i>)	Request to deliver dates for the regular offering of Šamaš.
AfO 44/45 ³²⁸	Marduk-šumu- ušur	Recounting a royal letter to the Royal Resident and Royal Resident's words about Šumu-ukīn and something about measuring the dates.
YOS 3, 155 ³²⁹	Mušēzib-Marduk (<i>qīpu</i>)	Request for goods to be sent to Ebabbar in Larsa.
YOS 3, 151 ³³⁰	Nabû-šarru-ušur (<i>ša rēš šarri (bēl piqitti)</i>)	Confirmation about providing a substitute for a dead man working under Šumu-ukīn.
YOS 21, 91 ³³¹	Nabû-šarru-ušur (<i>ša rēš šarri (bēl piqitti)</i>)	Cultivating land, for which Šumu-ukīn is to levy the workers. Further warning that the sesame fields are drying out.
YOS 21, 26 ³³²	Bēl-šarru-ušur	Request for additional land to be given to him.
YOS 21, 160 ³³³	Zēria (s. of Nabû-iddin)	Kalbāya was sent to Šumu-ukīn in order to be a witness, information about cattle management and outstanding silver payment.
YOS 21, 44 ³³⁴	Kalbāya (s. of Iqīša)	Barley for cattle is supposed to be registered in the storehouse of Eanna.
BM 116697 ³³⁵	Nabû-šumu-iddin (s. of Silim-Bēl)	Retrieving water from a canal and appellation to Šumu-ukīn because a problem, but the details are unclear.

³²⁶ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 19.

³²⁷ Edited in Hackl et al 2011: No. 26.

³²⁸ Edited in Hackl et al 2011: 8.

³²⁹ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 21.

³³⁰ Edited in Hackl et al 2011: No. 24.

³³¹ Edited in Hackl et al 2011: No. 23.

³³² Edited in Hackl et al 2011: No. 20.

³³³ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 16.

³³⁴ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 7.

³³⁵ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 11.

YOS 3, 162 ³³⁶	Nabû-ēter	Completion of the tasks he was given and mentions Dilmun dates at the end.
YOS 3, 177 ³³⁷	Nabû-šēpē-šuzziz (slave of Šumu-ukīn)	Barley delivery Adad-aḥḥē-iddin.
YOS 3, 189 ³³⁸	Ḥaḥḥuru	Work in the irrigation district and deliveries of flour and travel provisions for Šumu-ukīn.
YOS 3, 197 ³³⁹	Na'id-Ištar	Barley delivery to messenger of Milkia and to the Takkīru canal.
YOS 21, 114 ³⁴⁰	Na'id-Ištar	Deliveries of flour, barley, straw, and silver.
PTS 2015 ³⁴¹	Bēl-...]	Postponing an impost.
YOS 21, 143 ³⁴²	Šamaš-mukīn-apli	Courtier holding back a date delivery and updates on irrigation work.
YOS 21, 41 ³⁴³	Iššūru	Disagreement regarding the quality of cattle and work on the canal, asking for more workers.

Table 8. Letter Dossier of Šumu-ukīn (2).

³³⁶ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 18.

³³⁷ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 1.

³³⁸ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 5.

³³⁹ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 19.

³⁴⁰ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 12.

³⁴¹ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 17.

³⁴² Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 14.

³⁴³ Edited in Hackl et al. 2011: No. 6.

(3) Mentions of Šumu-ukīn			
TCL 9, 122	Nadāya	Nabû-šarru-ušur (ša rēš šarri (bēl piqitti))	Complaint about the High Priest's accusations against the sender. Further claim that Šumu-ukīn prevented his plot of land from being measured.
YOS 19, 105	Innin-šumu-ušur	Nabû-šarru-ušur	Šumu-ukīn's messenger being condemned to death by the king's son.
YOS 21, 110	Nādinu	Balāssu	Damaged ship and a silver and wool transaction with Šumu-ukīn.

Table 9. Letter Dossier of Šumu-ukīn (3).

6.2.2 Kalbāya³⁴⁴

Though Kalbāya is already mentioned in the rent contract between his uncle and Eanna in the first year of Nabonidus, he only begins to take an active role in his uncle's business from ca. 7 Nbn.³⁴⁵ Unfortunately for him, his increased presence in his uncle's business affairs coincides with intense problems in the family business leading to accumulation of great debt to the temple. Once Šumu-ukīn withdrew from his role, both the responsibilities as well as the debt fell onto Kalbāya.

For as long as his attestations go back, Kalbāya was connected to his uncle, possibly due to his father's early death.³⁴⁶ During the early years of his uncle's and his rent farming enterprise, Kalbāya seems to have taken the back seat, only becoming more involved in the business from ca. 7 Nbn, possibly in part due to Šumu-ukīn's advanced age and/or worsening health.³⁴⁷

When identifying Kalbāya, it is important to be aware of a contemporaneous individual of the same name, namely a scribe Kalbāya, son of Nabû-rēmāni, who was similarly active as a measurer on Šumu-ukīn's rent farm.³⁴⁸

6.2.2.1 Accumulation of Debt

Coincidentally, it is from this exact year that we see an increase in debt notes ascribed to the two men.³⁴⁹ The accumulation of debt to the temple followed Kalbāya consistently after he took over his uncle's rent farming business. It is also a topic often mentioned in the correspondence surrounding him. The most famous example of this is a royal letter YOS 3, 2 sent by Nabonidus to the High Priest Kurbanni-Marduk and the Royal Overseer Ilī-rēmāni. In this letter the king personally stands up for Kalbāya, ordering the two high officials not to harass him over debt. By this time (ca. 14–16 Nbn based on incumbencies of the two high officials), the matter had obviously become serious enough to warrant royal intervention. However, other attempts at collecting Kalbāya's debt were made on a smaller scale. One such

³⁴⁴ The career of the rent farmer Kalbāya was studied in Janković 2013: 186–200.

³⁴⁵ Hackl et al 2011: 179.

³⁴⁶ Janković 2013: 186.

³⁴⁷ Janković 2013: 188.

³⁴⁸ See YOS 6, 63 (5 Nbn); YOS 6, 167 (Nbn). To this scribe I assigned letters YOS 3, 113; TCL 9, 79; PTS 2004; potentially also YOS 21, 45 and YOS 21, 55.

³⁴⁹ Janković 2013: 189.

letter is YOS 21, 42, written by Ištar-ālik-pāni, a courtier and oblate of the Eanna temple³⁵⁰, to Šamaš-udammiq, possibly a priest³⁵¹, mentioning among other things the debt Kalbāya has accumulated against the Eanna temple:

5 *a-mur diš+et ʾú¹-il-tì*
 šá 10 gín kù.babbar šá muḥ-ḥi
 ¹*kal-ba-a ká-ti 2/3 ma.na kù.babbar*
 ki-i lúqí-i-pi i-paṭ-ṭar-ru-uš
 en l[i]-ʾiq]-ba-áš-ši
 10 *um-ma šá^d gašan šá unug^{ki}*
 lid-din

⁵⁻¹¹As you can see, regarding the debt note for 10 shekels of silver at the expense of Kalbāya, the remainder of 2/3 mina of silver – even if the Royal Resident releases him, let the lord tell him: you should give what belongs to the Lady of Uruk.

A similarly unpleasant letter is YOS 3, 169. This letter is sent to Kalbāya by Nabû-šarru-ušur, the Royal Overseer and Zēria, the High Priest of Eanna (based on whose incumbencies the letter can be roughly dated to 11–13 Nbn). In it, the two high officials reprimand Kalbāya about outstanding agricultural goods he was obliged to deliver:

5 *ta-qab-an-na-a-šú*
 um-ma 7 me gur še.bar
 ¹*ba¹-ab*-tu 4 lim gur {x}*
 ^[z]*ú.lum.ma a-nam-dak-ku-nu-šú*
 ^{1d}*utu¹-šeš-mu it-ti-ka*
 10 *ni-ip-te-qí-id mi-na-a*
 ta-qab-bi um-ma
 ^{1d}*+ag¹-lugal-ùru u¹ numun-ia*
 iq-ta-bu-nu um-ma
 še.bar a-na^{1d} utu-šeš-mu
 15 *la ta-nam-di-in*
 en-na še.bar ʾa²¹.[an[?]]
 Rev *7 me gur ʾa¹-[na]*

³⁵⁰ He is otherwise known to have delivered goods from Kalbāya's farm to the temple in 9 Nbn according to YOS 6, 209 (see Kleber 2008: 47, note that the year mentioned in the book contains typo: 15 Nbk is actually meant to be 15 Nbn).

³⁵¹ See § 5.3.1.

^{Id}utu-šeš-[mu *i-din*]
 1 *qa la* ^ʿ*ta-kil*^ʿ-[*li*]
 20 *ul-tu muḥ-ḥi*
šá tal-li-ku mi-nu-ú
taš-šá-aʿ kap-du
kaskal^{II} a-na gir^{II} šá ^{Id}utu-šeš-mu
šu-kun še.bar a-na
 25 *ku-tal la ta-kil-li*

⁵⁻²⁵You are saying to us: ‘I will give you 700 *kurru* of barley as a partial payment of the outstanding 4000 *kurru* of dates.’ We have appointed Šamaš-aḥu-iddin to work with you. Why do you say: ‘Nabû-šarru-ušur and Zēria told me: do not give the barley to Šamaš-aḥu-iddin.’? Now [give] these 700 *kurru* of barley to Šamaš-aḥu-iddin; do not hold back a single *qû* (litre). Since you left, what did you deliver? Quickly see to it that Šamaš-aḥu-iddin might do what he needs to do. Do not hold back any barley.

The letter makes it clear that the two high officials are dissatisfied with Kalbāya’s failure to deliver barley, which was meant to cover the outstanding amount of dates. While Kalbāya did a moderate job of controlling the situation almost a decade after inheriting his uncle’s debts, it nevertheless resulted in eventual confiscation of his properties.³⁵²

³⁵² Janković 2013: 188 f.

6.2.2.3 Attestation in Eanna's letter corpus

letter	Sender(s)	Recipient(s)	Subject matter
YOS 3, 2 ³⁵³	King (Nabonidus)	Kurbanni- Marduk, Ilī- rēmāni (<i>šatammu, bēl piqitti</i>)	Not to harass Kalbāya because of his debt.
YOS 21, 42	Ištar-ālik-pāni (<i>ša rēši</i>)	Šamaš-udammiq	Collection of Kalbāya's debt to the Eanna temple. Outstanding debt of Nergal-nāšir, son of Nanaya-ibni and Nabu-ban-aḫi. Promise to deliver a turban and informs that the carpenter didn't come.
YOS 3, 169	Nabû-šarru- uṣur, Zēria (<i>bēl piqitti, šatammu</i>)	Kalbāya	Reminder to deliver barley for an outstanding amount of dates he owes.
YOS 3, 35	Bānia	Nabû-šarru-uṣur (<i>bēl piqitti</i>)	Judge's order to hold back Kalbāya's silver until a contract and a debt note is drawn.
YOS 21, 89	Nabû-šarru- uṣur (<i>bēl piqitti</i>)	Kalbāya	Relaying Šumu-ukīn's message about a royal order regarding him. Mention of a large amount of barley but it is unclear why.

Table 10. Letter Dossier of Kalbāya.

³⁵³ Edited in Cocquerillat 1968: 96 and Beaulieu 1989: 118.

6.3 Discussion

Compared to the previous chapter dedicated to the prebendaries, the letters treated here offer much more in terms of expression and interpersonal dynamics. Rather than giving straightforward instructions and occasional critiques, these letters vary from addressing everyday orders to subordinates to royal intervention. The contrast reflects the nature of these individuals' careers. While the prebendaries of Eanna held their fair share of responsibility within the administrative and cultic apparatus of the temple, the entrepreneurs were the ones producing and overseeing the basic necessities needed in order for the temple to function properly. Thus the pressure placed on these individuals, as it is reflected in their correspondence, by far outweighs the one seen in letters treated in the previous chapter.

Though both individuals treated in this chapter held the title of overseer of the ploughmen (*rab ikkarāti*), most likely subsequently, their careers differ greatly in scope and areas of influence. The more modest of the two is certainly Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim, as is also clear from the fact that we never learn his familial affiliation, due to him only ever appearing with the patronym Nabû-udammiq. While the identification of him with the temple oblate of the same name acting as a ploughman (*ikkaru*), proposed by Janković (2013: 116), was rejected here due to the attestation in question not containing a patronym, the actual background of Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim is still uncertain and his status as an oblate is not improbable, albeit difficult to prove. The letter corpus, especially the letters written by Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim's subordinates are highly unusual due to the harshness of language expressed towards a figure of authority. One might assume that this manner of expression might be owed to a familiarity between the sender and recipient, one that might have existed between two oblates prior to one of them being promoted to a higher office. The displeasure expressed in the letter of Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim's subordinates is mirrored and even worsened in the letters he receives from the high officials. Though it is generally not very surprising for the subject matter of letters to consist out of complaints (one might even argue that this is the inherent purpose of administrative correspondence), the letters addressed to Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim still express a degree of harshness seldom seen in such frequency. It is also due to this that one might be tempted to search for reasons for Nabû-aḥḫē-šullim's failings. While humble beginnings might be one way to explain his inability to manage such tasks, the letter dossier of Šumu-ukīn reflects similar trends when it comes to problems arising in irrigation districts. The reality is that the responsibility of a large-scale agricultural overseer must have been tremendous and difficult to manage. The

hydrographical landscape of Uruk³⁵⁴ posed regular challenges to work on the canals, as is evident in both Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's and Šumu-ukīn's correspondence. As the highest agricultural overseer, it is not surprising that any and all complaints in relation to work on irrigation canals and its consequence for agricultural production were directed to none other than him.

Apart from his post within Eanna, Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim's business ventures encompassed the domain of animal husbandry. It is possibly due to this that he eventually accumulated assets such as at least two houses (according to YBC 3941 and YOS 3, 148). In fact, one might even see his entrepreneurial ventures as a precursor for his later success in the temple administration, as his earliest attestations connect him to the sector of animal husbandry rather than that of agriculture.

While Šumu-ukīn continued the post of the overseer of ploughmen (arguably with not too much more success than predecessor), it would be erroneous to put the two men in the same category, as the latter's business ventures by far outshone those of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim. Unlike him, Šumu-ukīn also possessed a family name and a record (albeit sparse) of his activity prior to settling in Uruk, identifying him as a free man. Though Šumu-ukīn certainly enjoyed royal favor under Neriglissar, he became truly prominent under the king Nabonidus, whose royal protection his nephew Kalbāya also enjoyed. Their rent farming business, through its connection with the temple economy, allowed for lucrative rewards and reflected itself in the rising prominence of the Basia family under Nabonidus. Unlike Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim, Šumu-ukīn enjoyed respect from his peers, most notably from Eanna's high officials, as is reflected in his correspondence. Although letters detailing work on irrigation canals point to well-known problems such as lack of manpower and tools, the correspondence concerning his rent farming business, such as delivery of agricultural products to Eanna follows a rather polite pattern, far from the demeaning words used towards Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim. These letters thus allow us to detect a difference in status between the two men, neither of whom belong to elite families or hold prebend, yet who managed to attain different levels of respect from their contemporaries.

When it comes to Kalbāya, the matter becomes slightly less clear, as the status of the family business starts to weaken. Yet despite the pressure of the officials, Kalbāya's status within Uruk is made clear by the royal order of king Nabonidus (YOS 3, 2) not to harass the

³⁵⁴ See Cocquerillat 1968, Adelhofer forthcoming.

rent farmer. Therefore, even if the family's fortunes started to dwindle, Kalbāya still managed to keep the business afloat for a while.

What connects the Basia family and Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim is the eventual accumulation of debt. Kalbāya's official correspondence almost exclusively concerns this subject matter, as the high officials become more demanding towards the family. This point is especially interesting, as it something we do not see the priestly families go through. While some, such as the two Dā'iqu brothers (§ 5.1.9) seem to have likewise dabbled in animal husbandry, there is no evidence of them accumulating comparable debt. This is likely due to the priestly families not having to rely on entrepreneurship for their livelihood.

The entrepreneurs studied in this chapter offer an insight into the other side of Eanna's apparatus. While the administrative work of clerks turned priests shows us meaningful tasks done within Eanna, the job of Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim and Šumu-ukīn in particular show us what was happening outside of the temple complex. While Eanna controlled a sizeable amount of Urukian economy through its large assets, it nevertheless depended on outsiders to deliver goods needed to supply the daily offering for the deities. Within this framework, rent farmers such as Šumu-ukīn and his nephew Kalbāya held an important role, one that offered much in terms of material assets and upwards social mobility, but also meant risking it all if the business went awry, as it inevitably did.

7 Concluding Remarks

The present study was an attempt to broaden the knowledge of the administrative and social history of the Eanna temple during the ‘long sixth century’. While many of the topics mentioned here were in some capacity treated in earlier scholarship, the new treatment of the letter corpus dating to the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar up until the end of the Neo-Babylonian empire, including the new edition compiled by my supervisor Michael Jursa, enabled me to work with a lot of fresh material, which in turn opened new avenues for researching this particular time period.

Although in total, this study covered less than 40 years, it was particularly turbulent period during which five different kings reigned, with less than smooth transitions between their reigns. The period between the end of Nebuchadnezzar’s and beginning of Nabonidus’ reign is especially important, as the turbulent nature of this period is comparatively poorly understood. This is in no small part due to the fact that many of the administrative and legal texts from this period that are currently stored in the Yale Peabody Collection are still unpublished. This has left gaps in our understanding of even the most basic things, such as the incumbencies of the most important officials in Uruk. This study has attempted to rectify the situation to some degree, by consulting said unpublished material. However, as the focus of this study was the analysis of the administrative letters rather than other archival documents, this was kept to a minimum due to pragmatic reasons. It is nevertheless possible that the findings of this study will be supplemented or even challenged once the complete archival material pertaining to this historical period is published.

Nevertheless, due to the generally well-documented and well-studied nature of the Neo-Babylonian archives, it was possible to build on already existing scholarship in many aspects. Thus, the core idea of dividing the study between the priests (‘rentiers’) and businessmen (‘entrepreneurs’), as was discussed in chapter 4.2, was born out of the hypothesis posited by Michael Jursa, in which the mid-ranking personnel of Neo-Babylonian temples were divided based on their social status as well as their activity within the temple domains.³⁵⁵ For Eanna’s priesthood, many details concerning their role within the temple’s administration and career trajectories were unknown, owing to a lack of pertinent scholarship. Through studying the letters and comparing them to other archival documents, it was possible to shed new light on

³⁵⁵ Jursa 2010a: 286–293.

these matters, as well as reassess this division by looking at the careers of temple clerks and smaller (as well as larger) scale agricultural overseers.

By contextualizing the letters through prosopography and information given in them, it was possible to compare the data with the remainder of the archival material pertaining to them. The result was the conclusion that the letters feature many men who are otherwise known as priests in administrative or, as it were, clerical roles. However, the prosopographical data suggest that these men were in fact not active as priests at the time the letters were written. This means that the letters from this corpus allowed us to see what the members of priestly families did prior to obtaining their prebends.

In contrast to this, the letter of dossiers so-called entrepreneurs, meaning prominent individuals without an elite family affiliation, were examined. The agricultural sector, which both case studies concerned, was a dynamic workplace owing to the vast hydrographical landscape of Uruk. The letter corpus of the two subsequent overseers of ploughmen allowed for a better understanding of practicalities and problems connected to this job. Furthermore, the letters allowed us to follow the rent farming business of the Basia family and the ensuing debt, especially through the perspective of Eanna's administrators, whose manner of correspondence with the family changed from very friendly to the opposite.

The aim of this thesis was to consider different aspects of Eanna temple's administration through considering the letters from the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar up to the end of Nabonidus' reign. This period saw the rise of many trends which would continue into the Achaemenid empire, such as many reforms beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's reforms in the animal husbandry sector and ending with Nabonidus, who undertook changes in Eanna's administration at two different periods of his rule. Most of the individuals treated in this thesis live throughout this entire period and we see their careers change with (and sometimes even be affected by) the larger politics of the Neo-Babylonian kings, as was seen in the case of the two brothers of the Šāhit-ginê family.

In conclusion, the case studies presented here offer insight into different areas of Eanna's administration, dealing with individuals of both elite origins, as well as newcomers and people without meaningful familial affiliations, who nevertheless managed to become some of the most influential people of their time in Uruk and the realm of the Eanna temple.

8 Abbreviations

AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AUWE	Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte
BIN	Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies, Yale University
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BM	British Museum
CD	Sack, R. H. Cuneiform Documents from the Chaldean and Persian Periods
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
EHE	Documents cunéiformes de la I ^{re} section de l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes
FLP	Free Library of Philadelphia
GC	Goucher College Cuneiform Inscriptions
GMTR	Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
NBC	Tablets in the Nies Babylonian Collection (at Yale University)
NBDMich	E. W. Moore, <i>Neo-Babylonian Documents in the University of Michigan Collection</i> (Ann Arbor 1939)
NCBT	Tablets in the Newell Collection of Babylonian Tablets (at Yale University)
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
PIHANS	Publications de l'institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
PTS	Princeton Theological Seminary
RA	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale
TCL	Textes cunéiformes. Musée du Louvre
TEBR	Joannès, F. <i>Textes économiques de la Babylonie récente</i> . (Paris 1982)
UCP	University of California Publications in Semitic Philology
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
YBC	Tablets in the Yale Babylonian Collection (at Yale University)
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
YOS	Yale Oriental Series
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie

Kings (Abbreviations used in this work)

(Nbk) Nebuchadnezzar II	605–562 BCE
(Ame) Amēl-Marduk	561–560 BCE
(Ner) Neriglissar	559–556 BCE
(Lab) Lâbâši-Marduk	556 BCE
(Nbn) Nabonidus	555–539 BCE

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Abstract (German)

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht verschiedene Aspekte der Verwaltung des neubabylonischen Eanna Tempels in Uruk anhand ausgewählter Briefe aus der zweiten Hälfte dieser Zeitperiode.

Der erste Teil der Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit einer Priestergruppe mittleren hierarchischen Ranges, die zuerst mithilfe administrativer Texte und Rechtsurkunden identifiziert wurde und deren Tätigkeiten im Rahmen der Tempelverwaltung durch das Briefkorpus danach näher erklärt wurde.

Im zweiten Teil der Arbeit werden die landwirtschaftlichen Beamte und ihre Verbindung zur Tempelverwaltung analysiert. Dabei werden zwei ausgewählten Dossiers hinsichtlich ihrer Tätigkeit und Verantwortung sowie ihre Beziehungen zu ihren Vorgesetzten und Untergebenen diskutiert.

Darüber hinaus werden verschiedene zugrundeliegende sozio-ökonomische Aspekte behandelt, die sich aus den Briefen ergeben, um einen Beitrag zum Verständnis der sozialen Landschaft der neubabylonischen Zeit zu leisten.

Abstract (English)

This master's thesis examines different aspects of the administration of the Neo-Babylonian Eanna Temple in Uruk through a selection of letters from the second half of this time period.

The first part of the thesis focuses on a group of mid-ranking priests, which were first identified through administrative and legal texts and whose activity within the temple administration was then further clarified through the letter corpus.

In the second part of the thesis, agricultural officials and their connection to the temple administration are analysed. In this context, two selected dossiers were discussed with a focus on their activity and responsibilities, as well as their relationships to their superiors and subordinates.

Furthermore, this thesis examines different underlying socio-economic aspects reflected in the letters in order to contribute to a better understanding of the social landscape of the Neo-Babylonian period.