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The social world of the Babylonian priest

Still, Bastian Johannes Ferdinand

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Author: Still, Bastian Johannes Ferdinand

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3

Silver Lending

Introduction

In this chapter I will investigate the practices of silver lending in the priestly community of Borsippa. In the previous chapters of this study I have drawn on a wide range of documents kept by the sacerdotal families, including marriage and dowry contracts, sales of property, and documents related to the management of urban and rural property. However, a large part of the corpus is made up of debt notes of silver and related receipts.

Existing studies of lending practices focus mainly on the technicalities of the Babylonian debt note (*u'iltu*).⁴³² Composed in an abstract and versatile phraseology, this type of document enabled the Babylonian scribe to record a wide range of transactions.⁴³³ In her recent article on the Neo-Babylonian credit system, C. Wunsch identified no less than fourteen different transactions that could be rendered through the *u'iltu*.⁴³⁴ from the investment of money for business ventures and the deferred payment of acquired property to rents of fields and houses, and genuine loans of money or in kind.⁴³⁵ As to silver loans, one can distinguish three general types. The

⁴³² Despite its age the most important study on the legal issues of loans in first millennium Babylonia is still Petschow 1956. More recent studies include, Oelsner 2001, Jursa 2002, Wunsch 2002, Oelsner, Wells & Wunsch 2003: 949-953, Jursa 2004d: 451-454, Jursa 2005: 41-42. More general surveys of moneylending and the role of silver in Neo- and late-Babylonian society, include Bongenaar 1999, Powell 1999, Varygas 2000, van Driel 2002, Jursa 2009, and Jursa et al. 2010: 240-245.

⁴³³ The operative clause in these debt notes reads: (object) *ša A ina muhhi B*, '(object) is owed by B to A'. Receipts read simply: (object) *A ina qāt B eṭir (mahir)*, 'A has been paid (has received) (object) from B'. Cf. Oelsner 2001: 290-292, Wunsch 2002: 229-234 and Jursa 2005: 41-42.

⁴³⁴ Derived from the verb *e'ēlu* (CAD E, p. 40 meaning 2: 'to bind') it has been rendered as 'binding obligation'.

⁴³⁵ Wunsch 2002: 224-229.

interest-free loan usually involved modest sums of silver to be repaid on a set date; this can be considered a ‘friendly’ loan. The interest-bearing loan usually charged a rate of 20% *per annum*, which, although high to modern standards, was the norm during the Neo-Babylonian period.⁴³⁶ Finally, loans secured by a pledge ensured that the creditor could retrieve his capital even in the event of non-payment. Slaves, houses, fields and prebends are the most frequently found pledges. Creditors could also be allowed antichretic usage of the property in lieu of interest. In archival studies these different loans are usually dealt with in synoptic terms.⁴³⁷ Besides an attempt to assign individual debt notes to existing dossiers, these texts are commonly reduced to tabulated summaries.

What is still largely outstanding is an investigation of the individuals and families who interacted with each other in this domain and under what conditions. A pioneering study in this respect was M. Jursa’s 1999 monograph on the archive of Bēl-rēmāni, a priest who worked in the Ebabbar temple of Sippar in the early Persian period. Jursa used debt notes and receipts to examine the social field of this man’s lending activities. It turned out that the majority of his loans were contracted with individuals who were not enrolled in the temple organisation and who thus stood outside of his intimate social network. In the following pages I will apply this methodology not to one man but to a cross-section of the Borsippean priesthood. My focus will be on silver loans; advancements in kind (normally dates or barley) are left to future research, as such transactions arose first of all from agricultural and prebendary activities.⁴³⁸

Crucial to the following analysis is the division of families into priestly and non-priestly categories. Did a certain debtor/creditor belong to a prebendary family of Borsippa or was he or she a descendant of a non-priestly ‘outsider’? While Borsippa’s priests kept their marriage system closed to outsiders, interaction with non-priestly families was more commonplace in the domain of land management and property sales, as we have seen. Determining the social pattern of silver lending will tell us in

⁴³⁶ Jursa *et al.* 2010: 490-500. Interest is expressed in the sources by saying that per mina (= 60 shekels) of silver, one shekel accrues per month, i.e. twelve shekels per mina per year. Higher and lower interest rates are attested.

⁴³⁷ E.g. Joannès 1989: 103-104, 114-118, Kessler 1991: 118-120, Wunsch 1993: 56-57, Waerzeggers 2000/2001: 115-125, Baker 2004: 77-82, Frame 2013: 68-70.

⁴³⁸ This also stands to some degree for silver loans, see Jursa *et al.* 2010: 522-524.

which circumstances and to what degree priestly families of Borsippa adhered to the boundaries of their prebendary in-group or whether they interacted with a greater section of society in the domain of moneylending.

Before I will start my investigation, some words of caution are in place. In view of the versatile nature of the debt note, it is notoriously difficult to determine whether or not a debt note represents a genuine silver loan.⁴³⁹ I will not provide a ready solution for this problem in the present chapter but in order to keep the data-set as clean as possible I left out all the credits that were part of existing contracts and agreements like tenancy, dowry transfer, *harrānu*-enterprises or refer to a previous transaction such as the acquisition of property or any other type of object.

3.1. Temple-enterers

Let us start with the credit operations of the Ea-ilūtu-banis, a family of temple-enterer status.⁴⁴⁰ The family archive contains a total of twenty-two silver loans. They date from the second generation, in the 640s, until the sixth and final generation in the early fifth century BCE. In this timespan, members of the Ea-ilūtu-bani family are attested fourteen times as debtors and eight times as creditors of an amount of silver.⁴⁴¹ I will start with the former operations.

The creditors of the Ea-ilūtu-banis belonged to priestly as well as non-priestly families, but whereas only four of them had no apparent connections to the temple institution,⁴⁴² ten of them did.⁴⁴³ More specifically, it appears that the Ea-ilūtu-banis

⁴³⁹ E.g. Joannès 1989: 1-3-104, 114-118, Kessler 1991: 7, Wunsch 1993: 7, Joannès 1995: 1476-1477, Jursa 1999: 111-125, Waerzeggers 2000/2001: 115-125, Wunsch 2002, Jursa 2002, Baker 2004: 77-82, Frame 2013: 68-70.

⁴⁴⁰ For this family see Ch .0.7.1.

⁴⁴¹ Here follows the lists of silver loans in chronological order. As debtor: A 127 (Nbk 00), F 6 (Nbk 09), L 1661 (Nbn 03), NBC 8407 (Nbn 11), TuM 2/3 116 (Nbn 11), A 108 (Nbn 16), TuM 2/3 55 (Cyr 6), BM 94501 (Cam x), TCL 12 202 (Dar 02), TuM 2/3 61 (Dar 04), TuM 2/3 120 (Dar 08), A 130 (d.l.), A 165 (d.l.), TuM 2/3 62 (Dar 28).

As creditor: BM 95091 (Kan 07), TCL 12 41 (Nbk 27), YBC 9631 (Nbk 29), BM 94839 (Ner 00), TuM 2/3 115 (Nbn 6), NBC 8342 (Cyr 02), TuM 2/3 54 (Cyr 04), L 1657 (Nbk IV 01).

⁴⁴² Abunāya (or Adnāya), Patāya (2x) and Sin-šadūnu families, the latter two being represented by female members; F 6 (Nbk 09), L 1661 (Nbn 03), A 108 (Nbn 16), TuM 2/3 55 (Cyr 06).

preferred to appeal to fellow temple-enterer clans and kin when in need of cash: three loans came from the Ahiya'ūtu, Arkāt-ilāni-damqā and Nūr-Papsukkal families, and five from within the Ea-ilūtu-bani clan itself.⁴⁴⁴ In short, members of this family only rarely turned to 'outsiders' for silver loans but rather appealed to peers. Moreover, most of these loans were either small and interest-free or secured by a pledge.

A similar arrangement is found in the eight silver loans that the Ea-ilūtu-banis extended to others.⁴⁴⁵ The majority of their debtors came from families belonging to the ranks of temple-enterers or from kin (e.g. Ēdu-ēṭir, Ilī-bāni).⁴⁴⁶ Only once did the debtor come from a non-priestly family (i.e. Iddinā). The evidence of the known credit operations from the Ea-ilūtu-bani archive is summarised in the following table:

Table 1: silver loans of Ea-ilūtu-bani archive (kin 8x)

Distribution of silver loans ⁴⁴⁷	No interest	With interest	Interest + Pledge or Antichresis	Total:
Prebendary fam.	10	3	4	17
Non-prebendary fam.	2	1	2	5

The two most striking features one can observe in this graph are, first, the fact that the Ea-ilūtu-bani family mainly dealt in (smaller sized) loans without interest or

⁴⁴³ A 127 (Nbk 00), NBC 8407 (Nbn 11), BM 94839 (Ner 00), TuM 2/3 116 (Nbn 11), TCL 12 202 (Dar 02), TuM 2/3 61 (Dar 04), TuM 2/3 120 (Dar 08), A 130 (d.l.), A 165 (d.l.), BM 94501 (Cam [-]), TuM 2/3 62 (Dar 28).

⁴⁴⁴ The two remaining loans were extended by members of the Ilia and the Ašlāku respectively.

⁴⁴⁵ BM 95091 (Kan 07), YBC 9631 (Nbk 29), BM 94839 (Ner 00), TCL 12 41 (Nbk 27), TuM 2/3 115 (Nbn 06), NBC 8342 (Cyr 02), TuM 2/3 54 (Cyr 04), L 1657 (Nbk IV 01).

⁴⁴⁶ One loans was taken out by a individual of the Gallābu family (prebendary barbers).

⁴⁴⁷ The layout of the following tables is borrowed from Jursa 1999: 125. For sake of convenience loans which the archive-holders borrowed as debtors and extended as creditors, are merged. The purpose is to give a general overview of the type of families (priestly/non-priestly) involved in the lending partners of Borsippean priest and under what conditions silver was being loaned. For example: three interest-bearing loans were contracted between the Ea-ilūtu-banis and priestly families, only one with non-priestly outsiders.

security, and, second, the fact that temple-based families prevailed in this sphere of their business. Seventeen out of the total twenty-two silver loans (77%) were contracted between the Ea-ilūtu-banis and individuals from local priestly families. And taking a closer look at the professional identity, it appears that in fourteen cases the family can be classified as temple-enterer, i.e. as belonging to the same professional group as the archive-holders.⁴⁴⁸

The evidence we have for the credit operations of other temple-enterer families from Borsippa suggests that the predisposition to engage with kin and temple families of equal rank was not confined to the Ea-ilūtu-banis, but that it constitutes a practice shared more widely in this group. The first family to be discussed is the Ilī-bāni family, which was associated to the Ea-ilūtu-bani clan by marriage.⁴⁴⁹ Of the twelve silver loans recovered from their archive, at least seven were contracted with kin or members of temple-enterer families (e.g. Nūr-Papsukkal, Arkāt-ilāni-damqā, and Ea-ilūtu-bani).⁴⁵⁰ Moreover, the fact that some of these loans concerned substantial amounts of silver at a reduced interest rate is suggestive of a sense of solidarity within this professional group.⁴⁵¹

The next family is that of Nanāhu.⁴⁵² Six loans involving members of the Nanāhu family have been recovered, in all of which they appear as debtors.⁴⁵³ Examining the background of the creditors reveals the same pattern as before: twice a loan was received from the Ahiya'ūtu family (temple-enterer and brewer family, on both

⁴⁴⁸ Many of which however came from the Ea-ilūtu-bani clan itself.

⁴⁴⁹ For this family see Ch. 0.7.1.

⁴⁵⁰ A 152 (Nbk 04), YOS 17 327 (Nbk 11), A 84 (Nbk 18), YBC 9154 (Nbk 26), A 89 (Nbk 28), A 91 (Nbk 31), L 4731 (Nbk 41), BM 94818 (Nbn 07), BM 94885 (Nbn 08), TuM 2/3 52 (Nbn 13), TuM 2/3 57 (Cyr 07), TuM 2/3 60 (Cam 06), TuM 2 122 (Dar 32). Of the remaining five loans, three are contracted with women (twice of the Bā'iru family, once with a woman lacking a family name), one with an individual of the Patāya clan (same creditor is found in Ea-ilūtu-bani archive) and twice with two members of the Balātu clan. Note that the latter two loans were due to a father and his son. In L 4731 (Nbk 41), a receipt dated some fifteen years after YBC 9154 (Nbk 26), only the son is mentioned as debtor. Both documents probably concern the same loan and might well be related to the running of a business venture.

⁴⁵¹ E.g. A 152 (four minas, 10% interest), YOS 17 327 (two minas, 10% interest), A 89 ([x] shekels, 12,5% interest).

⁴⁵² For this family see Ch. 0.7.1.

⁴⁵³ L 1641 (Cam 02), A 119 (Dar 15), A 120 (Dar 17), NBC 8405 (Dar 18), A 123 (Dar 23), BM 94549 (Dar [-]).

occasion from a woman), and four times from within the Nanāhu family.⁴⁵⁴

The last piece of evidence that should be evaluated here concerns the Iddin-Papsukkal (B) family.⁴⁵⁵ This small archive of a temple-enterer of Mār-bīti and Ištar contains five debt notes.⁴⁵⁶ In at least four of the loans contracted by the archive holder, the silver was due to a fellow temple-enterer or kinsman.⁴⁵⁷ A note of caution should however be sounded. As has been observed before by M. Jursa (2005: 85), the loans found in this small text group are likely to have their background in the prebendary sphere, based on the fact that for three loans prebendary income was pledged as security or interest.

To sum up, there are strong indications that the temple-enterers of Borsippa exhibited an inward-looking mentality in terms of silver lending: they preferred to ask silver from, and lend silver to, the extended kin-group and individuals from within the same prebendary group. It is likely that this pattern stems from a sense of solidarity towards the in-group, which also transpired from their agricultural collaboration (Ch. 2).

3.2. Brewers

Our main source on prebendary brewers is the archive of Marduk-šumu-ibni//Ilia (A).⁴⁵⁸ This man only rarely engaged in money lending, his archive containing only thirteen silver loans. Six of these mention Marduk-šumu-ibni as debtor.⁴⁵⁹ The amounts range from sixteen to sixty-six shekels, mostly interest bearing and at least once secured by a pledge. Taking the identity of the creditors into account, an interesting pattern emerges. Marduk-šumu-ibni contracted all of these loans from families who were either married to his own clan (i.e. Gallābu, Iddin-Papsukkal, Ilšu-

⁴⁵⁴ The loans are generally high, between twenty-seven shekels and two minas of silver, and usually extended under interest and security.

⁴⁵⁵ For this archive, see Jursa 2005: 85.

⁴⁵⁶ BM 85448 (Dar 23), BM 85443 (Dar 27), BM 85375 (Dar 31), VS 4 187 (Dar x), BM 85562 (Dar 22).

⁴⁵⁷ In BM 85562 the family name of the creditor is not given.

⁴⁵⁸ For this individual see Ch. 0.7.2.

⁴⁵⁹ The silver loans in which Marduk-šumu-ibni acts as debtor: BM 102311 (Nbn 10), BM 102342 (Cyr 04), BM 94640 (Cam 00), BM 17651 (Cam 01), VS 4 75 (Cam 04³), VS 4 101 (Dar 04).

abūšu)⁴⁶⁰ or who belonged to his direct temple associates.⁴⁶¹

Marduk-šumu-ibni is himself attested seven times as creditor of silver.⁴⁶² The amounts of these loans were rather small, rarely exceeding five shekels of silver.⁴⁶³ His debtors belonged to a somewhat wider and less homogeneous circle. Twice he extended a loan to kin (i.e. descendants of the Iddin-Papsukkal and the Ilia families; the latter his paternal cousin) and once to a family of temple-enterers (i.e. Aqar-Nabû). The remaining loans were contracted by individuals with no apparent temple background. The evidence of the credit operations of Marduk-šumu-ibni is summarised in the following table:

Table 2: silver loans of Marduk-šumu-ibni//Ilia (A) (8x kin)

Distribution of silver loans	No interest	With interest	Interest + Pledge or Antichresis	Total:
Prebendary fam.	6	2	1	9
Non-Prebendary fam.	2	1	1	4

It is clear from this table that Marduk-šumu-ibni most often contracted loans from fellow prebendary families (69%). Moreover, eight out of these nine individuals were related to Marduk-šumu-ibni either by blood or marriage. The high presence of fellow priests and kin involved in the loans of Marduk-šumu-ibni is comparable to what we have seen among temple-enterers. There I suggested that it could point to an attitude

⁴⁶⁰ E.g. at one point or another, ^fAmtia//Ilšu-abūšu (creditor in BM 102342) became his sister-in-law. Nabû-zêru-līšir//Ilšu-abūšu was the brother-in-law of the original debtor and cousin of Marduk-šumu-ibni, whose debt he pays off in VS 4 101.

⁴⁶¹ Nabû-uballit/Nabû-šumu-iddin/Ilšu-abūšu is a well-known temple brewer (e.g. BM 96504, BM 96508 = AH XV no. 55). He was also present at the stipulation of the *ēpišānūtu*-contract between Marduk-šumu-ibni and his great-nephew Bēl-iddin (BM 102033 = AH XV no. 17). Nabû-zêru-līšir//Ilšu-abūšu (mentioned above) and his brothers were associates of Marduk-šumu-ibni and the Ilia family in the cult (e.g. BM 24480, BM 102308 = AH XV no. 18, BM 29441 = AH XV no. 50).

⁴⁶² Loans that Marduk-šumu-ibni extended: BM 17640 (Nbn 11), BM 94922 (Nbn 14), BM 27899 (Nbn 17), BM 17676 (Cam [-]), VS 4 83 (Cam [-]), BM 26723 (Dar 15²), BM 26708 (Dar 10⁺).

⁴⁶³ With the exception of a one-mina loan recorded in BM 17676.

of group solidarity, and this might equally be the case for Marduk-šumu-ibni. Perhaps even more so since the latter seems to have suffered from a chronic lack of liquid cash, i.e. silver.⁴⁶⁴ It is therefore not surprising that Marduk-šumu-ibni turned to individuals who were likely to be more mindful to his needs and abilities, i.e. temple colleagues and members of the extended family (two of which were women).

There are eight more silver loans involving individuals of the wider Iliā kin group. These include two loans of Marduk-šumu-ibni's father Šulā,⁴⁶⁵ two loans of his great-nephew Bēl-iddin/Iliā (B),⁴⁶⁶ one loan of Nabû-ētir/Iliā (C)⁴⁶⁷ and three loans of the Iliā (D) family.⁴⁶⁸ Except for Šulā, who contracted both of his loans from women of non-prebendary families, all other members dealt with fellow priests (on two occasions within the group of brewers), bringing the total distribution of credit partners of the Iliās to 12:8, in favour of temple-based families. It seems that the evidence of the wider Iliā clan is only roughly in line with the lending pattern

⁴⁶⁴ As the first son from a second marriage, Marduk-šumu-ibni (together with his two younger siblings) saw the paternal estate being divided in favour of the offspring of his father's first marriage, who received a 2/3-share. Even though not all the family possessions are mentioned in these documents (e.g. no mention of silver is made), there is further evidence that suggests that Marduk-šumu-ibni was not particularly loaded in terms of cash. In order to improve his inherited estate Marduk-šumu-ibni most frequently resorted to exchange. The few acquisitions found in the archive were minor and probably bought with the money from his wife's dowry (LB 874). The paucity of silver is further suggested by the compositions of the dowries of his daughters. At one occasion, Marduk-šumu-ibni converted five minas of silver belonging to his daughter's dowry into real estate (BM 26483). There is so far no evidence that he spent any silver on the dowries of his two other daughters. Moreover, as a whole, the texts of Marduk-šumu-ibni contain only very few payments made in silver (exceptions are: forty-five shekels for *qaštu*-tax in BM 27779 = AH XV no. 25; and again sixty shekels for *qaštu*-tax in BM 102031). Finally, it is worth pointing out again that the amounts of silver Marduk-šumu-ibni borrowed were higher than the credits he extended himself. Marduk-šumu-ibni's monetary situation has already been investigated in an unpublished study of C. Waerzeggers on which this overview relies.

⁴⁶⁵ BM 94604 (Nbk [x]³, no family name) and BM 102286 (Nbk 27, Adad-šumu-ēreš). I do not think that the 80 shekels debt Šulā had to pay to the *rēš-šarri šá kurummāt šarri*, qualifies as a genuine loan (BM 25858).

⁴⁶⁶ JCS 39 (Cam 06, Babāya) and BM 102257 (Dar 18, Nūr-Papsukkal).

⁴⁶⁷ BM 17656 (Nbk 38, Ea-ilūtu-bani). The slave taken as antichresis belonged to the dowry of Nabû-ētir's wife.

⁴⁶⁸ BM 94624 ([Dar³] 05, Šikkūa), BM 94714 ((Dar 12), Suhāya; for the restoration of debtor's filiation see Sandowicz 2012: 340-341) BM 87315 (Dar 20, Iliā).

observed for Marduk-šumu-ibni. Yet, the evidence pertaining to these other members is scant and less forceful from a quantitative point of view. The same stands for the information on silver lending for other brewers from Borsippa. There is only one loan from the Ahiya'ūtu,⁴⁶⁹ three from the Ilšu-abūšu (B),⁴⁷⁰ one from the Kudurrānu,⁴⁷¹ two from the Lā-kuppuru,⁴⁷² and three from the Mannu-gērūšu archives.⁴⁷³ Integrating the heterogeneous evidence on moneylending among the brewers from Borsippa, one arrives at the following figures:

Table 3: silver loans of all brewer archives (Ilia (A-D), Ahiya'ūtu, Ilšu-abūšu (B), Kudurrānu, Lā-kuppuru and Mannu-gērūšu)

Distribution of silver loans	No interest	With interest	Interest + Pledge or Antichresis	Total:
Prebendary fam.	10	3	4	17
Non-Prebendary fam.	6	4	4	14

⁴⁶⁹ Nabū-ana-mērehti//Ahiya'ūtu once gave out a loan of fifty shekels according to Amherst 246//RBC 734 (Xer 01). The debtor came from the Kidin-Sin family who pledged his cultic storeroom (*bī-šutummi*) against the silver.

⁴⁷⁰ In VS 4 153 (Dar 20) Nabū-uballit//Ilšu-abūšu (B) is found as a debtor of an interest-free loan of twenty shekels, borrowed from the Ibnāyas, a family of prebendary butchers.⁴⁷⁰ Nabū-uballit extended loans on two occasions: in BM 29038 (Dar 12) a sum of fifty shekels to his kinsman from the Ilšu-abūšu family, and in BM 28994 (Dar [-]) a loan of four minas to a member of the Ir'ani family. There is, so far, no evidence that the Ir'anis belonged to the prebendary ranks of Borsippa.

⁴⁷¹ In Nbk 34 Nabū-ahhē-iddin//Kudurrānu provided ten shekels of silver, the interest of a principal loan of one mina (BM 29103). The silver was due to a minor and his mother, neither of whom bore a family name.

⁴⁷² Nabū-ušallim (aka. Šullumā)//Lā-kuppuru is found twice involved in silver lending: VS 4 173 (Dar 27) and A 160 ([-]). The first was contracted at Babylon and was interest bearing. The second concerns a short-term, interest-free loan of about twenty shekels. None of the credit partners seem to have belonged to the prebendary circle of Borsippa

⁴⁷³ As debtor Nabū-ahu-ittannu//Mannū-gērūšu contracted two loans of around ten shekels: VS 4 179 (Dar 23) and Amherst 245 (Xer 01).⁴⁷³ The first was borrowed without interest from a couple that lacked family names. The second was extended by fellow brewer of the Ilia clan and was interest-bearing. As creditor Nabū-ahu-ittannu once issued an interest-bearing loan of one mina of silver to a descendant of the non-priestly Širikti-Marduk clan.

Carefully summarising this information, it seems that the remaining evidence of the Ilia and other brewer clans is only partly in line with the lending pattern observed so far. Moneylending with non-priestly members of the community more often than not assumed the form of an interest-bearing or collateralised debt obligation, whereas loans within the prebendary group were often extended under more lenient conditions, which betrays an attitude of mutual support towards the sacerdotal in-group. If so, it should not come as a surprise that brewers preferably called on (extended) kin and fellow brewers when in need of cash, though again, the idea that these loans could have a background in the cultic logistics should not be dismissed altogether. There are in total twelve loans extended between kin and fellow temple brewers. Yet on the whole, compared to the temple-enterers, the reliance on these people is less numerically significant among brewers. Of the total of thirty-one loans, fourteen were contracted with outsiders, and only slightly more than half (i.e. 55%) between prebendary families.

3.3. Bakers

The largest and most important source pertaining to the bakers of Ezida is the archive of Šaddinnu//Bēliya'u.⁴⁷⁴ Because the archives of other baker families, such as the Kidin-Sîn, Nabû-mukīn-apli, Šēpê-Ilia and the Esagil-mansum, still need to be recovered, the lending patterns of this group can only be reconstructed partially. Moreover, while the evidence on Šaddinnu's credit operations is relatively generous, it seems that he might have behaved differently in this domain than his fellow bakers did.

The archive contains a total of twenty-six loans of silver.⁴⁷⁵ One finds Šaddinnu extending credit twenty-two times, whereas he took out loans on only four occasions. According to the archival practices of the time, paid debt notes were returned to the debtor as proof of his or her discharge of obligation.⁴⁷⁶ There might be various explanations for the relatively high number of loans in which Šaddinnu acted as creditor,⁴⁷⁷ but in his case it can probably be taken as an approximate reflection of

⁴⁷⁴ For this individual see Ch. 0.7.3.

⁴⁷⁵ See Jursa *et al.* 2010: 243 for an overview of these loans.

⁴⁷⁶ Jursa *et al.* 2010: 241.

⁴⁷⁷ E.g. these debt notes might have been written off as 'bad loans', i.e. losses, or else, Šaddinnu could simply have kept copies for administrative purposes.

actual practice. His financial position was such that he could afford to lend money more often than he needed it for himself⁴⁷⁸ and presumably he engaged in moneylending as a business pursuit.

Let us have a closer look at the four loans that Šaddinnu contracted as debtor. The first two were borrowed from non-prebendary families, Imbu-īnia and Rē'û, and amounted to twenty-two and thirty-three shekels of silver respectively.⁴⁷⁹ Both were short-term loans without interest or security. The two other loans were obtained from Bēl-iddin//Ibnāya and his brother Bēl-ušallim.⁴⁸⁰ These brothers might have engaged in the moneylending business on a more professional basis as well, acting as creditors in other archives too. The first loan amounted to one mina of silver and was interest-bearing. The second loan, slightly below five minas of silver, required repayment within the month. We do not know what the consequences were for Šaddinnu in case of default. It is however interesting to note that some time earlier, Bēl-iddin//Ibnāya bought a field from Šaddinnu. Under what circumstances this field was sold is not clear, but that this Bēl-iddin was a strict moneylender can be deduced from the fact that he extended loans in return for pledges that were automatically forfeitable on due date (i.e. *Verfallspfand*).⁴⁸¹

Let us now turn to the twenty-two loans that were extended by Šaddinnu.⁴⁸² The amounts range from less than ten shekels to more than 300 shekels of silver.⁴⁸³ There are only two instances in which Šaddinnu lent money at interest. More frequent are the 'friendly' loans on short term (11), and loans that were covered by a pledge or lent

⁴⁷⁸ Note that his four debts had to be repaid on short term, which means that Šaddinnu was able to raise the silver on short notice.

⁴⁷⁹ BM 29174 (Cam 03), BM 96266 (Dar 09). Note that the former might have resulted from a house sale, BM 29019 (Dar 06³).

⁴⁸⁰ BM 96150 (Dar 21), BM 29116 (Dar [-]).

⁴⁸¹ BM 26650//BM 27857 (Dar 13), a silver loan from the Rē'i-alpi archive in which the creditor, Bēl-iddin//Ibnāya, holds a field of the Rē'i-alpi family as a *Verfallspfand*.

⁴⁸² VS 4 64 (Cyr 07), BM 29190 (Cam 0), BM 96177 (Cam 06), BM 28973 (Cam [-]), BM 96334 (Dar 09), BM 29494 (Dar 09), VS 4 130 (Dar 10), BM 29484 (Dar 12), BM 96248 (Dar 12), BM 96187 (Dar 12), BM 29716 (Dar 14), BM 29416 (Dar 15), BM 28988 (Dar 15), BM 96271 (Dar 15), BM 28912 (Dar 21), BM 29433 (Dar 21), BM 25644 (Dar 25), BM 96234 (Dar 26), BM 96331 (Dar 30), BM 28864 (Dar 34), BM 28931 (Dar 36), BM 29010 (Dar [-]).

⁴⁸³ Six times the amount was sixty shekels or more, five times between twenty and sixty shekels, and six times less than twenty shekels of silver.

under antichresis (9).

Dividing Šaddinnu's debtors in the two familiar groups yields the following figures: twelve of the twenty-two loans (55%) were taken out by individuals of local prebendary clans.⁴⁸⁴ The remaining loans were contracted by non-prebendaries.⁴⁸⁵ Cooperation with fellow priests was clearly limited compared to the brewers and, especially, the temple-enterers. Moreover, most of the loans Šaddinnu extended to prebendary families were secured with a pledge.⁴⁸⁶ The following table summarises the silver loans found in the Bēliya'u archive:

Table 4: silver loans of Šaddinnu/Bēliya'u (4x kin)

Distribution of silver loans	No interest	With interest	Interest + Pledge or Antichresis	Total:
Prebendary fam.	6	2	7	14
Non-Prebendary fam.	8	1	2	12

More revealing aspects of Šaddinnu's attitude towards his immediate environment become apparent once we take a closer look at the identity of the families concerned. In the first place, kin and affinal relatives played only a minor role in his lending activities. They appear in only four (15%) of the twenty-six silver loans preserved in the archive. Twice, a loan was extended to a member of the Bēliya'u family: first a sum of sixteen shekels and second the staggering sum of 320 shekels of silver, for which a kettle and a field were taken as pledge respectively.⁴⁸⁷ The remaining two

⁴⁸⁴ I.e. Kidin-Nanāya, Eppēš-ilī, Naggāru, Lā-kuppuru, Bēliya'u (2x), Ilī-bāni, Itinnu (2x), Ilšu-abūšu, Allānu, Esagil-mansum.

⁴⁸⁵ i.e. Mudammiq-Adad, Sīn-tabni (2x), Ea-ibni, Idinnāya, Bābūtu, Sīn-damāqu, Šillāya, Sīn-šadūnu.

⁴⁸⁶ VS 4 64 (Cyr 07), BM 96177 (Cam 06), BM 29716 (Dar 14), BM 29416 (Dar 15), BM 28912 (Dar 21), BM 96331 (Dar 30), BM 28864 (Dar 34). The pledged properties, which, as far as I can judge, were of equivalent value as the borrowed sums, ranged from houses and fields to slaves, kettles and at least once a garment of a god (presumably derived from a domestic shrine).

⁴⁸⁷ BM 29716 (Dar 14) and BM 28912 (Dar 21). Note that the second debtor, Nabū-ahhē-iddin/Nabū-mukīn-apli, was Šaddinnu's nephew, see Waerzeggers 2010: 732. Nabū-ahhē-iddin also occupied the position of *gugallu* of Borsippa around Dar 18 (BM 21965).

loans were taken out by clans who were connected to the Bēliya'us through marriage: Kidin-Marduk (alias Kidinnu)//Šillāya, a well-known scribe in the archive, borrowed the sum of thirty-six shekels,⁴⁸⁸ and Mār-bīti-ahhē-iddin//Esagil-mansum received a loan of twenty shekels.⁴⁸⁹ The limited appearance of relatives in Šaddinnu's moneylending contrasts strongly with the practices observed among temple-enterers and brewers, where the majority of the loans were contracted with kin and temple families, especially from the same prebendary profession.

This brings us to the second peculiarity of Šaddinnu's moneylending practices: the absence of fellow bakers. According to the available documentation, Šaddinnu contracted only one loan with an individual of a baker family. It concerns the loan taken out by Mār-bīti-iddin//Esagil-mansum, mentioned above. It is remarkable that neither the Nabû-mukīn-aplis, nor members of the prominent Kidin-Sîn and Šēpê-ilia families, figure in these interactions, especially given the significant role played by fellow priests among the more senior prebendary groups. Could there be a specific reason behind the absence of interaction?

It seems that the bakers of Ezida were divided in two opposing camps: the Kidin-Sîn and Šēpê-ilia families represented an older group, while the Bēliya'u and Esagil-mansum families represented a younger group.⁴⁹⁰ That these families constituted two distinct groups is seen, first of all, in the fact that while marriages were settled between Kidin-Sîn and Šēpê-ilia, and between Bēliya'u and Esagil-mansum, there is so far no evidence for alliances established between these two family clusters.

Additional evidence is found in a series of property sales. In a short period during the early years of Darius I (probably years 3 and 4) at least five important transactions were negotiated between these two groups: three sales of prebends and two sales of real estate.⁴⁹¹ On four occasions property was sold by the Kidin-Sîns to the Bēliya'u family; once the Bēliya'us sold a prebend to the Šēpê-ilia clan. That these sales did not always run smoothly is demonstrated by the acquisition of a plot of land by the Bēliya'us, which required a further (*mukinnūtu*) document preventing the alienating

⁴⁸⁸ BM 96271 (Dar 15). He probably also sold a field to Šaddinnu (BM 29404//BM 28914, Dar 16), as well as a slave (VS 5 85, Dar 08²).

⁴⁸⁹ BM 29010 (Dar [-]). He also owed Šaddinnu dates from the harvest estimation (VS 3 91, Dar 02).

⁴⁹⁰ See Ch. 0.7.3.

⁴⁹¹ Prebend sales: BM 96286 = AH XV no. 75, BM 96163 = AH XV no. 77 and BM 96194. Sales of real estate: BM 25589 and BM 96218.

family to contest this transaction in the future. A more compelling testimony transpires from the fact that the acquisition of the prebend by the Šēpê-ilia was eventually nullified by the Bēliya'u clan, who successfully reclaimed their cultic rights.⁴⁹²

It is hard to determine how the various parties perceived these sales, but Šaddinnu's reluctance to loan silver to members of the opposing camp is further evidence of a lack of solidarity, trust and inner-group collaboration among the bakers of Ezida. If their relationship can indeed be described as antagonistic, the situation seems to have deteriorated over the years, culminating in Dar 33, when two high-profile lawsuits were filed against Šaddinnu. In the first case, a member of the Kidin-Sîn contested the sale of a housing plot, a field and a baker's prebend to Šaddinnu – the matter was settled to the latter's advantage.⁴⁹³ The second case, adjudicated some five months later by the same judge, deals with the rights to prebendary income and was decided in favour of the Šēpê-ilia clan.⁴⁹⁴

A possible explanation for this 'rift' may be sought in the background of Šaddinnu's family. The Bēliya'us were part of the larger group of families that moved from the capital of Babylon to the burgeoning provincial towns during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II.⁴⁹⁵ This meant that Šaddinnu and his relatives were left out of much of the local social organisation that had been evolving since at least the eighth century BCE.⁴⁹⁶ Consequently, it can be argued that the Bēliya'u clan was not tied to the same customary rights, obligations and moral restrictions, as were the indigenous priestly families. Presumably, Šaddinnu and his kin could act more independently from this close-knit priestly community, and thus also deviate more easily from the established social norms in pursuit of their fortunes. Not only does the near absence of kin and fellow bakers families in Šaddinnu's lending practice become less surprising,

⁴⁹² That Šaddinnu seemed to have had a personal hand in this affair is clear from the fact that he acquired half of the prebend in the course of these events.

⁴⁹³ BM 25629. Note that a member of the Purkullu family joined the claimants.

⁴⁹⁴ BM 25633.

⁴⁹⁵ See Ch. 0.7.3. It is not unlikely that Šaddinnu's forebear only settled in Borsippa as late as Nbk 33 (BM 28904). For similar immigrant families in Sippar, see Waerzeggers 2014.

⁴⁹⁶ I have argued earlier that local landownership (Ch. 2.1.2) as well as the marriage system (Ch. 1.5) went back several centuries before our documentation and brought with it various side effects in the social organisation of this community.

Šaddinnu's family background and social position in this community could also explain, at least in part, his active engagement in entrepreneurial activities, such as the acquisition of (vacant or dilapidated) urban plots, with the aim of renting them out.⁴⁹⁷ There is no doubt that Šaddinnu's involvement in this sector can to a large extent be ascribed to his personal entrepreneurial mentality, but it might have been his lack of deep roots in Borsippa's sacerdotal community that allowed him to pursue this line of work on an 'un-priestly' scale.

Finally, Šaddinnu's implication in the housing business might help to elucidate further aspects of his lending practice. If we compare the families who contracted loans from Šaddinnu with the families who appear in the housing dossier, there seems to be some overlap: e.g. Kidin-Nanāya, Imbu-īnia, Eppēš-ilī, Ea-ibni, Šigūa, Sîn-šadūnu all appear in both dossiers. In some cases it concerns the same individuals. For example, Bēl-ēṭir//Šigūa, one of Šaddinnu's most trusted contacts,⁴⁹⁸ collected some of his rents⁴⁹⁹ but also contracted a loan from Šaddinnu.⁵⁰⁰ Libluṭ/Nabū-ušebši, an individual who leased rights to temple revenue to Šaddinnu, at least once took out a loan. In return he pawned his house to Šaddinnu, who consequently cashed in the house rent.⁵⁰¹ Yet, in most cases the overlap is only in the families concerned and not in the individual persons. Still, it seems not too far-fetched to suggest that some of the loans have their background in Šaddinnu's housing business. Some of the moderate-sized loans that were extended on short term and without interest might actually represent house rents. If nothing else, his activities as multi-landlord must have brought him in contact with various tenants, their neighbours and families, who were likely to appeal to a propertied man, a patron, like Šaddinnu when in need of cash.

Summarising, Šaddinnu's peculiar moneylending practices can be explained in their proper context. Disunity among the ranks of Ezida's bakers divided them in two seemingly opposing camps. While collaboration in the cult was inevitable, their interaction outside the temple was marked by mutual exclusion (in marriage and silver lending) and discord (in property sales and lawsuits). Even if Šaddinnu was able to maintain more intimate relationships with members of the Kidin-Sîn family, I

⁴⁹⁷ Jursa *et al.* 2010: 170f.

⁴⁹⁸ See Ch. 4.2.3.

⁴⁹⁹ BM 25690 (Dar 21).

⁵⁰⁰ BM 25644 (Dar 25).

⁵⁰¹ BM 29433 (Dar 21).

will show in the next chapter that such ties were completely absent with the Šēpê-iliās. I argued that some of this could be related to the fact that Šaddinnu and his family were not indigenous to Borsippa. There is no question that Šaddinnu took part in the local priestly community, indeed quite successfully, but his lack of deep roots meant that he was less thoroughly embedded in it, and perhaps more importantly, not restrained by the social norms that indigenous families tended to respect.

3.4. Oxherds

Counting well over four hundred documents, the Rē'i-alpi family archive informs us in great detail about the family's main occupation as cultic oxherds.⁵⁰² The majority of the documents concern Nabû-mukīn-zēri/Aplāya and his son Rēmūt-Nabû of the third and fourth generation respectively. The family was obviously rich and there is ample information on the acquisition of property as well as on moneylending. Together, Nabû-mukīn-zēri and Rēmūt-Nabû appear in no less than eighty-three silver loans (a further seven being contracted by Rēmūt-Nabû's son, Bēl-ittannu), making it the largest dataset on lending in the Borsippa corpus.

Let us start by evaluating the silver loans of Nabû-mukīn-zēri and his son individually. Of the ninety loans found in the archive, thirty-four belong to Nabû-mukīn-zēri (nineteen as debtor, fifteen as creditor).⁵⁰³ He tended to borrow modest sums of silver (ten times under twenty shekels), while himself extending more substantial ones (eight times over sixty shekels of silver). Nabû-mukīn-zēri did not usually pay interest or provide pledges to his creditors, yet he did receive such benefits from his own debtors on multiple occasions. On the whole, Nabû-mukīn-zēri's financial situation seems to have been favourable.

There are forty-nine loans contracted by his son, Rēmūt-Nabû (thirty-one as

⁵⁰² For an overview of this archive see Ch. 0.7.4.

⁵⁰³ Loans Nabû-mukīn-zēri contracted as debtor: BM 102320 (Ner 03), BM 94824 (Nbn 02), VS 4 38 (Nbn 04), BM 25856 (Nbn 05), BM 94841 (Nbn 08), BM 94830 (Nbn 08), BM 17664 (Nbn 09), BM 94811 (Nbn 10), BM 94730 (Nbn 12), BM 82678 (Nbn 12), BM 82778 (Nbn 14), BM 94758 (Nbn 16), BM 94873 (Nbn [-]), Smith Coll. 82 (Cyr 02), BM 26664 (Cyr 06), BM 26608 (Cyr 06), VS 4 111 (Dar 06), BM 82627 (Dar 07) (this loan was later cancelled), BM 26490 (Dar 11). Loans Nabû-mukīn-zēri extended as creditor: BM 94698 (Nbn 14), BM 94977 (Cyr 01), VS 4 70 (Cyr 01), BM 102028 (Cyr 02), BM 94689 (Cyr 03), BM 102013 (Cam 01), VS 4 76 (Cam 04), BM 94718 (Cam 04), VS 4 100 (Dar 01), BM 102003 (Dar 01), BM 27858 (Dar 04), BM 26697 (Dar 06), BM 101994 (Dar 08), BM 94648 (Dar 09), BM 102018 (Dar [-]).

debtor, eighteen as creditor).⁵⁰⁴ However, Rēmūt-Nabû's lending pattern differs from that of his father. He tended to borrow substantial sums of silver: he asked for amounts between twenty and sixty shekels on twelve occasions, but at least as often for more than one mina of silver. His creditors usually demanded security. The loans he extended were modest in comparison: only three out of eighteen loans exceeded thirty shekels of silver. At least half of these were interest-bearing or secured by a pledge. This suggests that Rēmūt-Nabû tried to make a profit on the small amounts of silver at his disposal. On the whole, however, his finances were unbalanced: he borrowed at a far greater speed than he was able to raise money. This situation clearly derailed in Dar 20 when Rēmūt-Nabû was charged with paying close to one talent of silver (BM 26576). One possible explanation for Rēmūt-Nabû's financial difficulties is tax pressure.⁵⁰⁵

Let us now turn to the individuals and the families with whom the Rē'i-alpis engaged in moneylending. Nabû-mukīn-zēri contracted most of his loans with fellow temple-based families (ca. 70%).⁵⁰⁶ Rēmūt-Nabû, by contrast, turned more often to

⁵⁰⁴ Loans Rēmūt-Nabû contracted as debtor: BM 26680//BM 26754 (Cam 06), BM 82787//BM 82653 (Dar 08), BM 102254 (Dar 09), BM 26654 (Dar 09), BM 82728 (Dar 09), BM 94667 (Dar 09), BM 26642 (Dar 09), BM 25717 (Dar 10), BM 26542 (Dar 11), BM 26490 (Dar 11), M. 403 (Dar 12), BM 26650 (Dar 13), BM 26547 (Dar 14), BM 26678 (Dar 14), BM 26584 (Dar 15), BM 26554 (Dar 17), BM 27793 (Dar 17), BM 82625 (Dar 18), BM 26618 (Dar 18), BM 26617 (Dar 19), BM 94685 (Dar 19), EAH 225 (Dar 21), BM 94708 (Dar 21), BM 26534 (Dar 26), KVM 60 (Dar 28), BM 26521 (Dar [-]), BM 82701 (Dar [-]), BM 26486 (Dar [-]), BM 25668 (Dar [-]), BM 82694 (d.l.), BM 102014 (d.l.).

Loans Rēmūt-Nabû extended as creditor: VS 4 107 (Dar 05), BM 17693 (Dar 06), BM 26696 (Dar 08), BM 82727 (Dar 08), BM 26622 (Dar 10), BM 94872 (Dar 13), BM 25724 (Dar 13), BM 26581 (Dar 13), BM 27845 (Dar 15), BM 26529 (Dar 16), BM 25844 = AH XV no. 189 (Dar 16), BM 27873 = AH XV no. 190 (Dar 16), BM 94808 (Dar 19), BM 82730 (Dar 20), BM 29413 (Dar 21), EAH 226 (Dar 24), BM 94687 (Dar 26), BM 26555 (Dar 28).

⁵⁰⁵ Tax payments are amply documented in the archive: e.g. BM 94970 (Dar 05), BM 94620 (Dar 10), BM 94545 (Dar 11), BM 102259 (Dar 13²), HSM 1899.2.145 (Dar 15), BM 82666//BM 102010//BM 102262 (Dar 16), BM 82716 (Dar 18), VS 6 150 (Dar 27), BM 26557 (Dar 29). Note that Rēmūt-Nabû contracted at least four loans with members of the Naggāru family (below); the fact that a certain Nabû-balassu-iqbi//Naggāru was the 'ziqpu' of the Rē'i-alpis, i.e. the person in charge of their tax-group (Jursa & Waerzeggers 2009: 244ff.), supports the idea that at least some of Rēmūt-Nabû's loans had their background in taxation.

⁵⁰⁶ Priestly: Arkāt-ilāni-damqā (2x), Atkuppū, Ea-ilūtu-bani (2x), Gallābu, Iddin-Papsukkal (2x), Ilia (3x), Kidin-Sîn, Kudurrānu, Lā-kuppuru, Nūr-Papsukkal, Rē'i-alpi (6x), Šāhit-ginē. Non-priestly:

non-priestly families (ca. 43%), especially when in need of larger sums of silver.⁵⁰⁷ Another point of interest is that he appealed to a number of families more than once, which could indicate particular relations of trust between him and these families.⁵⁰⁸ Turning to the loans he provided as creditor, it seems that here Rēmūt-Nabû's practices resembled more those of his father: six loans went out to non-priestly families, whereas twelve to priestly families.⁵⁰⁹

Finally, Bēl-ittannu, Rēmūt-Nabû's son, engaged in seven silver loans, always as creditor.⁵¹⁰ None of the loans exceed half a mina of silver. Most of his debtors belonged to the Rē'i-alpi family (4) or to other priestly families (2).⁵¹¹ He once extended a loan to an individual from the lowest stratum of the community, i.e. a *širku* of Nabû.

Combining the data of the ninety silver loans from the Rē'i-alpi archive the following figures emerge:

Adad-nāšir, Bā'iru, Damēqu, Mallāhu, Maššār-abulli, Rēš-ummāni, Sippē, Šagimmu, Šamaš-ilāni Zērūtia. The Rēš-ummāni is so far not attested as prebendary of Ezida and the family is in this study usually classified as non-priestly. Note, however, that in this debt note the debtor Nabû-nādin-ahi/Rēš-ummāni pledges his rights to twelve pieces of meat belonging to a (butcher's?) prebend before the god Sin (BM 94977).

⁵⁰⁷ Creditors from priestly families: Arkāt-ilāni-damqā (2x), Ea-ilūtu-bani (2x), Esagil-mansum, Ibnāya (2x), Ilia (2x), Ilī-bāni, Kudurrānu, Naggāru (2x), Rē'i-alpi (2x). Creditors from non-priestly families: Amēl-Ea, Balātu, Banē-ša-ilia, Ea-imbi, Dannēa (3x), Imbu-īnia, Mallāhu, Rīšāya, Šangū-Ninurta, Šarrahu (2x).

⁵⁰⁸ These relations might have originated with his father who had dealings with the same (priestly) families.

⁵⁰⁹ Priestly: Ahiya'ūtu, Allānu, Gallābu, Ilšu-abūšu (2x), Naggāru (2x), Nūr-Papsukkal, Rē'i-alpi (3x). Non-priestly: Adad-šamē, Balātu, Dābibī, Rēmūt-Ea, Sīn-šar-ilāni,

⁵¹⁰ BM 94553 (Dar 34), BM 26541 (Dar 35), BM 94690 (Dar 35), BM 102026 (Dar 36), BM 26599 (Xer 01), BM 94626 (Xer 01), BM 26646 (Xer 02).

⁵¹¹ I.e. the Ahiya'ūtu and the Arkāt-ilāni-damqā families.

Table 5: silver loans of Rē'i-alpi archive (kin 28x)

Distribution of silver loans	No interest	With interest	Interest + Pledge or Antichresis	Total:
Prebendary fam.	22	14	25	61
Non-Prebendary fam.	14	7	8	29

With a ratio of 2:1, the Rē'i-alpis engaged most often with individuals from fellow priestly families. While the social patterns of moneylending becomes less centred on the prebendary in-group the further down we move in the temple hierarchy, the high over-all number of priestly families in the credit operations of the Rē'i-alpis resembles the practices observed among the Ea-ilūtu-banis and other temple-enterers more than those of the middle-high ranking brewers or bakers.

The Rē'i-alpis share another feature with their more senior temple colleagues: a strong reliance on kin. Twenty-eight of their lending partners can be identified as relatives. Of these, fifteen individuals belonged to the Rē'i-alpi clan, the others were related by marriage. Taken together, close kin and extended family members accounted for 30% of the loans contracted by Nabû-mukīn-zēri, his son, and grandson. If one includes indirect marriage partners nearly half of all their loans were contracted with kinsmen.

Solidarity within the Rē'i-alpi clan transpires from the many and, at times, favourable loans extended to each other. Many loans were non interest-bearing (e.g. BM 94626), extended under a reduced interest rate (e.g. BM 17664), or interest-free until default (e.g. BM 94689). Moreover, after the crisis of Dar 20, Rēmūt-Nabû turned mostly to his own kin for financial support.⁵¹² Kith and kin clearly functioned as an ultimate safety net.

3.5. Reed-workers

The final case study of this chapter concerns the lending practices of the lowest-ranking group of prebendaries available in the corpus – the prebendary reed-

⁵¹² E.g. BM 94708 (Dar 21), BM 26534 (Dar 26), KVM 60 (Dar 28).

workers.⁵¹³ Most of the evidence from the Atkuppū archive pertains to Marduk-šumu-ibni's sons Nabû-šumu-ušur, Nabû-iddin, Murānu and Iqīšaya.

Together, the four brothers contracted twenty-five silver loans, primarily as debtors.⁵¹⁴ Even though they preferred to borrow modest sums of silver,⁵¹⁵ all but two loans – received from their two closest moneylenders, see below – were interest-bearing or covered by a pledge. This picture corroborates the idea that their financial situation was not particularly strong.

While most of their creditors are known from the archive or are attested elsewhere in Borsippa, two families were particularly closely associated to the Atkuppū: the Rēš-ummāni family who provided four loans, and the Ahiya'ūtu family who provided three. On two occasions the brothers turned to their in-laws from the Nappāhu family for financial support,⁵¹⁶ and once even to each other.⁵¹⁷ The remaining loans were received from individuals who were not closely associated to the Atkuppū: Agru, Banê-ša-ilia, Ea-bāni, Ea-ilūtu-bani, Gallābu, Ibnāya (2x), Sīn-imittu. The ratio between priestly and non-priestly families seems to have been more or less equal. The same applies to the loans in which the Atkuppū brothers acted as creditors.⁵¹⁸ Sums are usually modest,⁵¹⁹ and prebendaries and non-prebendaries are more or less equally represented among their debtors.

Four loans contracted by earlier generations of Atkuppū should be mentioned briefly here. Two interest-bearing credits of circa ten shekels of silver were lent by

⁵¹³ For this family see Ch. 0.7.5.

⁵¹⁴ VS 4 97 (Dar 03), BM 26655 (Dar 06), BM 29678 (Dar 11), BM 102309 (Dar 14), VS 4 140 (Dar 14), BM 26665 (Dar 18), VS 4 150 (Dar 18), VS 4 149 (Dar 18), BM 102256 (Dar 19), BM 94733 (Dar 19), VS 4 156 (Dar 20), BM 87282 (Dar 24), BM 26649 (Dar 25), BM 26724 (Dar 26), BM 102314 (Dar 27), BM 87297 (Dar [-]), BM 102252 (Dar [-]). Note that BM 94722 (Dar 27) records the loan between two of the brothers.

⁵¹⁵ Only two loans exceeded one mina of silver (seventy and seventy-eight shekels), fourteen loans ranged between three and twenty shekels of silver.

⁵¹⁶ Nabû-šumu-ušur was married to a daughter of the Nappāhu family.

⁵¹⁷ BM 94722 (Dar 27)

⁵¹⁸ BM 17680 (Dar 05), BM 17698 (Dar 05), BM 26605 (Dar 06²), BM 26631 (Dar 10), BM 26693 (Dar 12), BM 26704 (Dar 15), VS 4 174 (Dar 28). Note that BM 26631 (Dar 10) involves onions and two debtors which could indicate that this was part of the management of a *harrānu* ventureship; BM 26693 (Dar 12) involves the payments of tax to the *rab-hanšē* for a third party.

⁵¹⁹ Only twice exceeding twenty shekels of silver

Nabû-mušētiq-uddê, great-grandfather of the Atkuppū brothers, to individuals of the Ša-haṭṭu-ēreš and the Mallāhu families. Their grandfather, Nabû-ēṭir, once extended a minor loan of one shekel to an individual of the Mudammīq-Marduk clan and his wife, for which they pawned their house. And finally, their father Marduk-šumu-ibni is attested once as debtor of two shekels in return for which the creditor of the Pahhāru family received his field as pledge.

The evidence can be summarised as follows:

Table 6: silver loans of Atkuppū archive (3x kin)

Distribution of silver loans	No interest	With interest	Interest + Pledge or Antichresis	Total:
Prebendary fam.	4	6	3	13
Non-Prebendary fam.	2	6	8	16

The pattern of silver lending observed in this archive confirms the correlation between temple rank and reliance on temple-based families that I have observed earlier in this chapter. The Atkuppū relied relatively less on temple relations in terms of moneylending than did the temple-enterers, brewers, bakers and oxherds. Moreover, they also relied less strongly on kin.⁵²⁰ Also in other aspects of their interaction (most notably in marriage and tenancy) it has been shown that the Atkuppū family relied less on priestly families, compared to their more senior colleagues.

⁵²⁰ Of the twenty-nine silver loans, only three (10%) were contracted with relatives. The two loans for which both amount and terms are preserved, suggest that there was no particular trust or solidarity between the parties. The ten shekels borrowed from the in-laws of the Nappāhu family were extended in return for the usufruct of their house; Nabû-šumu-ušur once lent his younger brother, Murānu, five shekels of silver – this amount, however, bore an above-average interest rate of 25% per annum.

Conclusion

In this chapter I investigated the pattern of silver lending in the sacerdotal community of Borsippa. My primary aim was to examine the extent of the priests' social field in this area of interaction: did they abide strictly to the boundaries of the prebendary in-group, or did they turn to a larger segment of the community when in need of cash? Secondly, is it possible to reconstruct a typical lending practice shared by all priests? These questions have proven difficult to answer. Not only are there many pitfalls in using the highly versatile genre of the Babylonian debt note as primary source, this investigation has made it clear that a range of social factors influenced the way in which Borsippa's priests lent and borrowed, leading to divergent credit profiles.

Hence, Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Rē'i-alpi's favourable monetary circumstances, for example, allowed him to extend large sums on many occasions and borrow only modestly himself, while Marduk-šumu-ibni//Ilia's chronic lack of silver made him contract loans primarily with his closest relatives and temple colleagues, while keeping his overall involvement in moneylending limited at the same time. Solidarity and co-operation did not only enable the Rē'i-alpi family to successfully manage its prebendary patrimony, but also motivated Rēmūt-Nabû to appeal to his innate network of kin and in-laws for financial support after his crisis in Dar 20, this network functioning both as a community of interest and ultimate safety net. Finally, I argued that the Bēliya'u family's immigrant background, if not also a reason for other indigenous bakers to dissociate themselves from this family, may have led Šaddinnu to pursue a more active career as entrepreneur and moneylender besides his obligations as priest of Nabû.

While other examples could be provided to illustrate the influence of personal circumstances and family background in this area of interaction, another factor that seems to have patterned the practices of moneylending in significant ways, albeit on a more general level, is professional affiliation. In fact, the available evidence reveals a faint correlation between temple rank and lending pattern. Priests on the higher echelons of the temple hierarchy adhered to a more inward-looking lending practice, geared towards fellow prebendary families and kin (i.e. Ea-ilūtu-bani and others), while families located on the lowest fringes of the temple institutions engaged with a much more diverse set of families and relied less on fellow prebendary clans (Atkuppū). This development could be traced from the temple-enterers, to the brewers, the bakers and the reed-workers. Only the Oxherd family, with its strong

sense of solidarity and close collaboration with fellow priests, deviates from this trend.

Still, this observation has been important for a couple of reasons. Not only does it indicate that with the reed-workers we are indeed reaching the outer fringes of the temple community, but at the same time it provides additional support for my working hypothesis that the temple fabric loses its influence on its participants the further one descends in the temple hierarchy.

Moreover, the fact that priests adopted a lending practice that was, overall, geared towards the prebendary in-group, becomes clear once all the loans incorporated in this study are added together. Dividing the lending partners into priests and non-priestly 'outsiders', the grand total is 138:80, in favour of the former. This means that out of the 218 silver loans found in the archives of Borsippa's priests, 63% were contracted with individuals from temple-based families.

The preponderance of priestly families should perhaps not surprise us. Many lending partners will have met in the temple on a daily basis. Besides, loans contracted within the prebendary in-group often took the form of modest interest-free loans; one cannot fully dismiss the possibility that they were extended to cover prebend-related expenses and were therefore part of the cultic organisation, although the absence of temple colleagues in the credit operations of Šaddinnu//Bēliya'u speaks against this. Moreover, in contrast to what has been observed in the organisation of tenancy, most of the debtors and creditors of silver loans resurface outside of these encounters. Among the twenty-six lending partners of Šaddinnu, for example, four remain unattested; one is found elsewhere in the corpus while the rest is known from his archive in other capacities. Of the forty-two credit partners of Rēmūt-Nabû who are identified by a three-partite filiation, no less than thirty reoccur in the RĒ'i-alpi archive. The same stands for Marduk-šumu-ibni; only three of his thirteen partners remain otherwise unknown, the rest is either attested in the Ilia (A) archive or elsewhere in the corpus. All this suggest that moneylending took place in a restricted geographic space and that the priests from Borsippa found their lending partners in their immediate environment.

Perhaps more remarkable, then, is the relatively high involvement of non-prebendary families (37%). There could be many reasons why priests engaged with 'outsiders', one simple explanation is that priestly and non-priestly families inhabited the same neighbourhoods, presumably those closes to the temple area (see Ch. 6, for

more on residential patterns). Nonetheless, the high participation of these members of the community in moneylending contrasts strongly with their near exclusion in the hypergamous marriage system. Whereas marriage was something that was planned well in advanced, the motives underlying individual credits are far more convoluted. Many of the loans must have been contracted in moments of crisis or on an *ad hoc* basis.

It should be clear that more work is needed to fully unravel the social dimensions of silver lending in ancient Babylonia. It remains extremely difficult to qualify loans, let alone establish their correct background. While I have been careful to only use credits that make no reference to existing contracts, agreements, sales etc., perhaps a finer methodology is advisable for future research. Perhaps a more fruitful approach would be to focus primarily on advancements involving lower sums, as they are more likely to represent genuine loans than credits of several minas of silver. Finally, it remains to be seen in the future how patterns of loans in kind relate to silver loans.