



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## The social world of the Babylonian priest

Still, Bastian Johannes Ferdinand

### Citation

Still, B. J. F. (2016, February 11). *The social world of the Babylonian priest*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/37767>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/37767>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/37767> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** Still, Bastian Johannes Ferdinand

**Title:** The social world of the Babylonian priest

**Issue Date:** 2016-02-11

# 4

---

## Circles of Trust and Intimacy

### Introduction

The previous chapters of this study were devoted to social interactions in which the priests from Borsippa and their families engaged on a more or less regular basis. Far from happening at random, we have seen that marriage alliances, professional affiliation, kinship ties, and family background, among possible other factors, played an important role in configuring these interactions, even if it would go too far to suggest that Borsippa's priestly actors were deprived entirely of choice.

This chapter studies the priests' personal networks, more precisely, their circles of trust and intimacy. Which individuals belonged to their immediate entourage, whom did they trust and bring along to important transactions, or whom did they choose as business partners? It seems reasonable to suggest that in these intimate and confidential matters priests enjoyed much more freedom from social convention and custom than in any of the interactions studied so far. Exploring these relationships of trust and intimacy, perhaps even friendship, will provide a unique insight into their most immediate social environment.

Apart from a handful of short proverbs, no diaries, letters, poems or other textual sources bearing a personal account on friendship were composed during 3,000 years of Mesopotamian history.<sup>521</sup> Neither is there a Babylonian equivalent of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle's most famous work on ethics, which provides us with a philosophical exegesis on the different forms of friendship (φιλία; *philia*), according

---

<sup>521</sup> See e.g. Alster 1997: SP 2.33, SP 2.62, SP 3.16, SP 3.17, SP 3.64, SP 3.159, SP 4.9, SP 9 Sec. E 5 and UET 6/2 276 among others, for Sumerian sayings concerning friends (ku.li) or friendship (nam.ku.li).

to a prominent Athenian intellectual in the fourth century BCE.<sup>522</sup> Even if friendship represents a major leitmotif in the celebrated epic of Gilgamesh,<sup>523</sup> no expressions of amity have entered the business archives of the Borsippian priesthood.<sup>524</sup> One might therefore rightfully ask whether it is at all possible to capture ties of intimacy, let alone friendship, in the administrative texts, which are the products of conservative legal practice and scribal conventions. Moreover, we have to bear in mind that the written record represents only a small proportion of the transactions that took place in actual daily life, and that meeting one's friends surely did not require a written testimony.

Hence, how can ties of 'friendship' in this ancient priestly community be reconstructed? Following notions found in the socio-anthropological literature, friendship could be paraphrased in the most basic terms as 'a more or less informal social relationship, based on choice, trust and voluntariness'.<sup>525</sup> Research into these ties, how they materialise and structure society, has a long tradition in the social sciences. Among the pioneering studies that focus on intimacy and friendship in the urban setting one should mention Lazarsfeld & Merton 1954, Laumann 1966, Verbrugge 1977, Fischer *et al.* 1977, and Fischer 1982. These studies remind us of the fact that friendship comes in many forms and intensities and may vary from person to person, context to context, and place to place. Yet, they also reveal that besides psychological characteristics commonly associated with friendship, one can find structural features that form the basis for, or alternatively, result from intimate relationships such as friendship. Thus, leaving aside psycho-emotional aspects, which transcend the scope of our legal documentation, I will approach the issue of friendship in Borsippa through the structural features evident in the corpus.

---

<sup>522</sup> E.g. Irwin & Fine 1996, Cooper 1980.

<sup>523</sup> Sallaberger 2008: 69-72, George 2003: 140-142.

<sup>524</sup> The term found in the Borsippa corpus that comes closest to expressing an attitude of intimacy or friendship is *ahu*, brother. Besides referring to someone's sibling, i.e. a son of the same father, the term was at times also applied, fictively, to individuals of different parents. Yet, as has been shown by C. Waerzeggers (2010: 85-90), in Borsippa the latter use was reserved for individuals belonging to the same paternal family, the so-called *bī-abi* (see below), and is thus far only found in the context of prebend transfers.

<sup>525</sup> This definition is adopted from Beer 2001, an overview article on the anthropology of friendship.

The principal concept in this respect is that of the ‘strength’ of ties, introduced most clearly by the sociologist M. Granovetter. In his seminal 1973 article on the strength of weak ties, Granovetter proposed that ‘the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie’.<sup>526</sup> Even if he left a more precise definition for future research, many subsequent scholars (most notably among network analysts) have since integrated the concept of tie strength in their analysis and expanded the list of its dimensions, with among other, structural, emotional and social factors.<sup>527</sup>

One of the most basic and commonly applied indicators for tie strength is the frequency of interaction: do actors have contact daily, weekly, monthly, or do they meet only once in a blue moon? Even if contiguity cannot be taken as an absolute yardstick for friendship or intimacy, repeated contact between individuals does facilitate the process to convert from strangers into acquaintances, and from acquaintances into friends.<sup>528</sup> Moreover, it is a fact that we tend to spend relatively more time with our closest friends. Hence, by examining the people who figure most frequently in the archives of Borsippa’s priests it will be possible to get an elementary idea of who belonged to their intimate circles. The following investigation will start off with a purely quantitative approach, which will inform us on a general level about possible structural differences and similarities between the personal networks of priests.

Yet, results gained from an analysis based solely on frequency can be misleading. The inclusion of, for instance, stubborn debtors or tax collectors will contaminate the results,<sup>529</sup> while the strength of ties between close kin are bound to be overestimated.<sup>530</sup> Even if there is no doubt that priests will have enjoyed intimate (and perhaps even their strongest) relationships with immediate kinsmen, the ‘strength’ of

---

<sup>526</sup> Granovetter 1973: 1361.

<sup>527</sup> For some of the older studies that have invoked the concept, see Granovetter 1982. Cf. Gilbert & Karahalios 2009 for a brief overview of different factors of ‘strength’, with special relevance to its application in modern social media.

<sup>528</sup> E.g. Verbrugge 1977: 577-578, Fischer *et al.* 1977, *passim* (especially Ch. 3), Scott 1991: 44-46, and Wasserman & Faust 1994: 44-45.

<sup>529</sup> A similar observation has been made by C. Waerzeggers 2014: 12.

<sup>530</sup> See Marsden & Campbell 1984 for the problems of using frequency as a measure of tie strength.

such ties are based more on specifics of family demography and division of property than anything else. Moreover, kin relations are, so to speak, given to – rather than chosen by – a person. Following the notion of friendship as a relationship based on choice, close relatives should be set apart from the discussion.<sup>531</sup> This requires a more qualitative appraisal. In the second part of this chapter I will therefore zoom in on the individuals who occur most frequently in the archives and examine which of them were involved in relations of trust and intimacy by introducing additional factors of tie strength. These include:

*Duration.* The notion of duration refers to the possible time spent on a relationship. Even if the duration of a relationship cannot automatically be taken as benchmark for its strength, prolonged contact does increase the probability of forming an intimate relationship.<sup>532</sup> Moreover, it has been noted that over a prolonged period of interaction individuals will develop more efficient ways of communication, thus raising the intrinsic value of their relationship, provided it is a positive one.<sup>533</sup> Hence, in the following investigation a relationship sustained over a long period of time can be considered stronger and more robust than a short-lived one with a similar degree of frequency.<sup>534</sup>

*Multiplexity.* This refers to the idea that interpersonal ties are stronger if they involve different forms (and different contexts, see Ch. 4.2).<sup>535</sup> In essence, multiplexity is a measurement of the diversity of shared activity. This means that an individual who, for example, only acts as somebody's witness does not enjoy an

---

<sup>531</sup> This does not apply to more distant (consanguine and affinal) relatives who cannot be linked immediately to the protagonists and certainly came from outside the latter's household.

<sup>532</sup> E.g., Fischer *et al.* 1977: Ch. 3, Fischer 1982, and Marsden & Campbell 1984.

<sup>533</sup> E.g. Hruschka 2010: 156-159.

<sup>534</sup> One has to realise that an intimate relationship like friendship is not static but in a continuous process of change (e.g. Lazaresfeld & Merton 1954, Hruschka 2010). At the particular moment when we capture intimate relations in the sources, some might still be in the early stages of formation, while others might be already well established or even on the way towards dissolution. While it need not be the case, whenever the evidence for such a relation breaks off, it could point to the dissolution of the bond.

<sup>535</sup> For the concept of multiplexity (earlier also known as *multi-strandedness*) see, Fischer *et al.* 1977, *passim* (especially Ch. 3), Verbrugge 1979, Fischer 1982: 139-144, Scott 1991: 65-67, Prell 2012: 138-140, Hruschka 2010: 157. See now also Waerzeggers 2014, who did a similar investigation of interaction frequency and multiplexity for the Sipparian priests-entrepreneur Marduk-rēmani.

equally strong relationship as someone who acts as creditor, guarantor, scribe and witness. Rather than requiring a new contact for every new transaction, a multiplex relationship between two individuals makes it possible to fulfil a much broader range of needs and can thus be seen as indicative of interpersonal intensity. As opposed to other kinds of relationships, ties of friendship are usually more multiplex, a quality that is often built up over time.

*Intensity.* While this dimension of tie strength usually refers to emotional aspects, it is more important for us to take notice of the exact nature and context of interaction. There is a difference between people living in the same neighbourhood who enjoy a ‘nodding’ relationship in passing, and people who acted as each other’s groomsman; while the former might see each other much more often, the relationship that existed between the latter is far more ritualised and emotionally charged, and hence more intensive. In the second part of this investigation I will pay special attention to important, personal events of Borsippa’s priests like marriage, adoption and property sales, and other momentous transactions including substantial loans and business enterprises.

In the end, a strong tie should be understood as the result not of a high degree in any single one of these dimensions, but rather as the cumulative result of all these criteria together. While the application of tie strength will deeply refine our appraisal of the circles of trust and intimacy, it will equally enable us to reconstruct parts of the network that were not captured adequately by straightforward quantitative analysis.

#### 4.1. Formal quantification of personal networks

I will start this chapter with a quantitative appreciation of the sources from Borsippa. The purpose of this investigation is to see whether a purely quantitative analysis of the priestly archives can tell us more about the personal networks of trust and intimacy as well as the general (interactional) attitude of the protagonists. The underlying idea is that lifestyle correlates with specific social networks or, conversely, that specific network properties reflect particular modes of behaviour. Hence, the more conservative and inward-looking attitude of a priest translates into an ego-network with less individuals but a higher number of frequent contacts, compared to the network of an out-going and entrepreneurial merchant, which consists of a larger (and more diverse) set of contacts yet holds a smaller number of frequent contacts.<sup>536</sup> Moreover, the network of the merchant will on the whole be less dense than that of the priest, secluded in his thigh-knit temple community where everybody knows everybody.<sup>537</sup>

The focus will be on the main protagonists of the Ea-ilūtu-bani (including Ilī-bāni and Nanāhu), Iliā (A), Bēliya'u, Rē'i-alpi and Atkuppu family archives. It has been noted that the structures of these archives differ greatly. Whereas the documents of the Ea-ilūtu-bani and the Atkuppu archives are distributed more evenly over the long-sixth century and often report on the activities of contemporary siblings and in-laws, thus providing a broader but less dense account, the Bēliya'u, the Iliā (A) and the Rē'i-alpi archives on the other hand have been classified as single-generation archives since the great majority of their texts were produced by one, or in the case of the Rē'i-alpis, two consecutive individuals. We will see that the latter archives are most suitable for this ego-centred examination. The Ea-ilūtu-bani and the Atkuppu archive, on the other hand, lack a similar density of information, making quantification less meaningful. In order to incorporate them into the following analysis some arbitrary measures are in order. The Ea-ilūtu-bani archive cluster, for example, will be taken as one single unit; for the Atkuppu archive the focus will be on the fourth generation, represented by the four sons of Marduk-šumu-ibni, who carried out much of their business collectively.

<sup>536</sup> A convincing example from Sippar has been presented by Waerzeggers 2014: 10-14.

<sup>537</sup> In the SNA, 'density' measures how many ties (between the actors) of all the ones possible are actually present in the network. In the words of C. Waerzeggers 2014b: 212 'a dense network is indicative of a cohesive world where everybody knows everybody'.



Let us start with fleeting contacts. The vast majority of the individuals mentioned in the archive are attested only one time. There is little doubt that the archive holders actually met some of these contacts more than once (especially those with whom they entered into a formal contract),<sup>538</sup> yet the figures are consistent between the archives and seem to present a fair reflection of reality. Of the 810 individuals mentioned in the network of Marduk-šumu-ibni//Iliā (A), 658 (or 81%) are attested only once.<sup>539</sup> A very similar figure is found in the network of Rēmūt-Nabû//Rē'i-ālpi in which 497 (or 79%) of his 627 contacts appear not more than once. Also Šaddinnu//Bēliya'u, who otherwise displayed a more entrepreneurial attitude compared to his fellow priests, had the same percentage of fleeting contacts (1013 out of 1248 individuals, or 81%). The only ego-network that deviates from this pattern is that of Nabû-mukīn-zēri//Rē'i-ālpi; only 70% of his contacts occur once. In other words, almost as much as one-third of all individuals mentioned in his texts reappear, which might indicate that Nabû-mukīn-zēri conducted his business in a somewhat more restricted and perhaps more intimate circle. Even if the full implications of this result remain unclear in the present state of research, the Rē'i-ālpis did exhibit a noticeable attitude of solidarity towards their own clan and a number of related families in other settings, which might serve as a partial explanation.

At the other edge of the spectrum we find the archives of the Atkuppū archive. Slightly over 90% of the 355 individuals attested in the documents of the fourth generation occur only once. However, as the sample taken from this archive is the smallest of our corpus (consisting of only 83 documents) and as it moreover concerns the affairs of four brothers it is likely that this high percentage is a result of the scarcity of information rather than reality. Somewhat less pronounced but still higher than the figures from the single-generation archives, is the number of fleeting contacts found among the Ea-ilūtu-banis and their connected families. Of the total 1320 individuals, 1138 (or 86%) appear only once. Again, this should probably not be taken as a good reflection of reality since this figure is derived from a multi-generational archive lacking adequate ego-networks. Still, it might reveal a more

<sup>538</sup> Remember that the textual evidence at our disposal is far from complete. Moreover, the widespread use of nicknames in Borsippa makes it inevitable that some individuals have escaped correct identification.

<sup>539</sup> Not included in this and the following numbers are those individuals whose name are damaged and cannot be identified with any certainty.

structurally inherent feature of the family. Taking only the texts of Mušēzib-Bēl/Zēr-Bābili/Ea-ilūtu-bani, who with sixty-five attestations is the best-documented protagonist in this archive cluster, we arrive at the same 86%.<sup>540</sup> Very similar figures are found for some of his relatives.<sup>541</sup>

Let us now move on to the most frequently attested contacts. I used  $\geq 5$  attestations as cut-off point for intimate contacts.<sup>542</sup> As could be expected, in contrast to the high number of one-timers, we find only a very small number of intimates in the archives under investigation. The highest figures are found in the networks of Marduk-šumu-ibni/Iliā (4%, or 29 out of 810) and Nabû-mukîn-zēri/Rē'i-alpi (3,5%, or 24 out of 688). While this seems high at first, in the case of Marduk-šumu-ibni many of these contacts represent close relatives. Leaving these out of the analysis reduces his intimate network to merely 2,2% or eighteen individuals. This group is slightly more diverse for Nabû-mukîn-zēri, including only three close relatives (but still a relatively large number of clan members, see below). In contrast, with 2% (13 out of 627) this number is somewhat smaller for the latter's son, Rēmût-Nabû – this becomes even smaller (1,4%) if we leave out his close relatives. A slightly higher figure is found in the network of Šaddinnu/Bēliya'u, where 2,5% (or 30 out of 1248) qualifies as intimate contacts. He does not seem to have relied much on close kin.

Turning to the final two archives one finds, again, the smallest figures. In the documents of the Atkuppus' fourth generation only four individuals are attested five times or more (1,2%). And, even if the number seems higher in the collective network of the Ea-ilūtu-bani cluster (2,5%), it turns out that many of these close contacts can be identified as one of the many archive holders; once we leave them out, barely 1% qualifies as a close contact.

<sup>540</sup> 232 of his 270 contacts occur only once.

<sup>541</sup> Mušēzib-Bēl's father, Zēru-Bābili/Nabû-šumu-ukîn/Ea-ilūtu-bani, is attested forty-six times; of the total of 174 contacts found in his documents, 154 (88,5%) occur one time only. 87% for Nādin (aka. Dadia)/Ilī-bāni; 84% for Ahušunu/Nanāhu; 86% for Zēru-Bābili/Šumā/Ea-ilūtu-bani. However, these latter three men are poorly attested.

<sup>542</sup> The cut-off point of five or more attestations, which is also used by Waerzeggers 2014: 10-14 in a similar analysis, seems to offer a suitable middle ground. Lowering the cut-off point to four attestations drastically inflates the number of individuals involved, making our dataset a questionable tool for studying circles of trust and intimacy, let alone networks of friendship. Raising this point above five attestations, on the other hand, would have nearly excluded the Atkuppū archive, which mentions only three individuals more than five times.

As I said earlier, the figures from the latter two archives should not be taken at face value, as they are possibly a result of a lack of information. The figures established for the other archives seem, however, more reliable, and these ego-networks can be compared more adequately with one another on a quantitative level. The relatively higher presence of intimate contacts in the network of Marduk-šumu-ibni could point to a particular reliance on family. Equally interesting is the contrast between the networks of Nabû-mukîn-zēri and his son, Rēmût-Nabû. With a relatively low frequency of fleeting contacts (70%) and a relatively high number of close contacts (3,5%), the former seems to have maintained a closer grip on his social environment compared to his son (75% fleeting and 2% close contacts). Whereas Nabû-mukîn-zēri's business activities are marked by prosperity and property acquisition, Rēmût-Nabû faced times of austerity and crisis. One wonders whether their respective networks can account for these events; that is to say, whether their different levels of connectivity could be linked to their prosperity and hardship respectively.

Before we investigate the identity and contexts of the closest contacts of the Borsippean priesthood in a more qualitative manner, let us briefly turn to a recent study on an influential man from Sippar and his social environment by C. Waerzeggers (2014: 10-14). In this archival study of the entrepreneur-priest Marduk-rēmanni//Šāhit-ginê, she begins her investigation by submitting this man's archive to a similar quantification. Marduk-rēmanni, whose recent ancestors had migrated from the capital of Babylon, was both active in the temple and on the harbour of Sippar, and he had contacts all over Babylonia. Waerzeggers showed that this man's ego-network reflects his broadly connected and dynamic lifestyle by comparing it with the contemporary network of Bēl-rēmanni, a more conventional priest of Šamaš. The network of Marduk-rēmanni was relatively less dense (84% fleeting and only 2% close contacts) than the one of his co-resident, Bēl-rēmanni (74%, against 4%). How exactly these figures relate to the networks from Borsippa remains unclear, as the latter seem to oscillate between the two. While affinity between the networks of Bēl-rēmanni and Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Rē'i-alpi seems right on an intuitive level, the fact that we have similar figures for Marduk-šumu-ibni//Ilia and the entrepreneur Marduk-rēmanni is surprising to say the least.

**Table 7: contacts in Borsippa archives vs. Sippar archives**

	Ilia (A)	Bēliya`u	Nabû-mukîn-zēri //Rē`i-alpi	Rēmūt-Nabû //Rē`i-alpi	Marduk-rēmanni	Bēl-rēmanni
1x contacts	81%	81%	70%	79%	84%	74%
≥5 contacts (figures without close-kin) <sup>543</sup>	4% (2,2%)	2,5%	3,5% (3%)	2% (1,4%)	2%	4%
	Ego-networks from Borsippa				Ego-networks from Sippar	

Not much can thus be said based on this rudimentary quantification. While the Ea-ilūtu-bani and the Atkuppū archives do not provide us with ideal data sets, the remaining archives generate nearly identical results. Besides a few general observations, the numbers do not seem to reveal any clear differences in terms of social behaviour of individual priests, nor do they help us to pinpoint their position in this community more precisely. Having said that, all ego-networks belong to priests, and even if different attitudes or mentalities have been observed in previous chapters, they essentially shared very similar social positions and lifestyles. Hence, homogeneity must be expected rather than heterogeneity. It is clear that much more work is needed on Babylonian ego-networks before we can fully grasp the meaning of these figures. Ideally, one should be able to compare these priestly ego-networks with the non-priestly networks from Borsippa with similar parameters (i.e. archive size, chronology etc.).<sup>544</sup> Moreover, I believe that it is necessary in the future to examine how factors like time-span of the archive, size of the archive, text genre and perhaps even community size influence the nature of these ancient networks.

<sup>543</sup> Note that the figures given for Bēliya`u, Marduk-rēmanni and Bēl-rēmanni do not include close kin.

<sup>544</sup> The only non-priestly archive from Borsippa that might be used to carry out a comparative study is the Gallābu archive. The texts from Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Gallābu contain 89% fleeting contacts against 1,6% ≥5 contacts. The fact that these figures resemble the results gained from the Atkuppū and Ea-ilūtu-bani archives supports the idea that they are linked to the limited size of the archives.

#### 4.2. Qualitative analysis of tie strength and friendship

The formal quantitative analysis of the previous part helps us to delineate, at least in preliminary form, the priests' networks of trust and intimacy as they supply us with the names of their most regular contacts. Following the order of the subsequent discussion, these networks consisted of thirty-one individuals in the Ea-ilūtu-bani archive cluster, twenty-nine for Marduk-šumu-ibni//Ilia (A), thirty for Šaddinnu//Bēliya'u, twenty-four and thirteen for Nabû-mukīn-zēri and his son Rēmūt-Nabû//Rē'i-alpi respectively, and four for the Atkuppū brothers. These figures, however, include close members of the family and individuals whose relationship with the protagonist cannot be qualified as one based primarily on voluntariness or involving intimacy. Even if frequency of interaction is an important dimension of the strength of ties, it is clear that these numbers give at best a very crude representation of the actual networks of friendship. Hence, in the following I will present a more qualitative appreciation of the circles of trust and intimacy by introducing the additional factors of tie strength: duration, intensity, and multiplexity. While the first two dimensions do not need further explanation, some words need to be said about multiplexity in our sources. As we will see in the following, individuals attested most frequently in the personal networks of our priests can only rarely be described as being highly multiplex in terms of roles, as they usually appear in only one or two functions on a regular basis. While the traditional sense of multiplexity will be applied in our investigation, I would like to introduce a further notion that might be more useful in our case, namely that of multiplexity of context. In the following survey I have divided the activities of our priests according to socio-economic contexts: temple-related activities including prebendary management, agricultural management, family affairs, property sales and acquisition, money-lending, housing management, *harrānu* business enterprises, and taxation. While some of these overlap – for example, was the transfer of a prebend within the Rē'i-alpi clan a matter of cultic management, a property acquisition, a family affair, or indeed all three of them? – these social settings were to a certain extent structurally (and sometimes also culturally) circumscribed areas of activities, which may be associated with specific physical settings, as with agricultural or temple affairs, and with specific sets of people, such as colleagues, kin, tax collectors, tenants, etc. Hence, the relationship between an individual who accompanied someone to a wide range of contexts can be qualified as more robust and involving a higher degree of trust and intimacy, than a

relationship that is found in a range of contexts only. Even if these contexts were not isolated social worlds, I believe that this additional notion of ‘multiplexity of context’ can offer us an informative dimension of tie strength in Borsippa.

The following investigation adopts a descriptive approach, evaluating the individuals most frequently attested in the networks in terms of the various dimensions of tie strength. However, in light of the size of some of these personal networks reconstructed through quantification (some of which consisting of around thirty individuals), it would be impractical and rather needless to discuss all of them in full length. Instead, for each network I will focus on a couple of individuals who seem to have enjoyed a particularly close relationship with the archive holder. These accounts should give us a good idea about the types of trust and intimacy that transpire from our sources, offering us the most likely cases of friendship among individuals of this priestly community. All the information about the multiplexity of roles, contexts and duration of interaction will be summarised in tabulated form at the end of each section.<sup>545</sup> Rather than an attempt to rank individuals in absolute terms, these tables will serve as a convenient overview of the relations of trust and intimacy, and place them only on a very relative scale. Finally, while these tables are made for the larger single-generation archives of the Ilia (A), Bēliya’u and Rē’i-alpi, they are lacking for the Ea-ilūtu-bani and the Atkuppū archives. The information in these archives is simply not adequate enough to warrant such an overview, either because the number of frequent contacts is too small or because the protagonists are found in only a handful of different contexts.

#### **4.2.1. Ea-ilūtu-bani**

While the make-up of the Ea-ilūtu-bani archive cluster was not ideally suited for the quantifying analysis, it is still useful to take a closer look at the identity, attestations and roles of the close contacts of these temple-enterer families. In the following I will look at the various archive holders and their intimates individually.

---

<sup>545</sup> I will include some additional individuals in these tables, which have not been discussed in this study. Their inclusion will help to give a more complete picture of the personal networks but may also serve as examples of individuals that are well attested yet enjoyed an overall weaker connection to the protagonists in terms of tie strength.

Let us start with Nabû-šumu-iškun/Puhuru from the third generation of the Ea-ilūtu-bani family, who lived roughly between the 610s and 560s BCE.<sup>546</sup> There is relatively little information on this protagonist and only one of his contacts deserves a closer look. Although **Nabû-šumu-iddin//Ahiya'ūtu** is attested only four times, and always as a scribe, the variety of events that he recorded seems to mark him out as an intimate contact. Besides an ordinary debt note for vats,<sup>547</sup> he composed the inheritance division between Nabû-šumu-iškun and his two brothers,<sup>548</sup> a sale contract of *hanšû* land,<sup>549</sup> and a record pertaining to the marriage arrangements of Nabû-šumu-iškun's son.<sup>550</sup> In view of the fact that scribes of such documents usually represent intimate relations in other archives, Nabû-šumu-iddin//Ahiya'ūtu can be considered a close contact, even if the number of attestations falls under the threshold applied elsewhere in this study.

Nabû-šumu-iškun's son, Zēru-Bābili//Ea-ilūtu-bani, appears to have had only one contact who appears more than five times in the available sources.<sup>551</sup> **Nabû-lē'i/Marduk(a)/Ur-Nanna** is attested eight times as a witness between 565-558 BCE.<sup>552</sup> The majority of these transactions took place in an agricultural context, once even in a village outside of Borsippa.<sup>553</sup> He also witnessed a work contract for the manufacture of bricks (i.e. taxation),<sup>554</sup> a loan of silver,<sup>555</sup> and a house rent contract for Zēru-Bābili.<sup>556</sup> That he enjoyed an intimate relationship with Zēru-Bābili might be further deduced from the fact that he usually appears as first witness in his records.

<sup>546</sup> For more information on this individual, see Joannès 1989: 31-35.

<sup>547</sup> BM 94819 (Nbk 08).

<sup>548</sup> TuM 2/3 5 (Npl 16).

<sup>549</sup> A 98 (Nbk 08); Nabû-šumu-iškun bought the land from the same clan.

<sup>550</sup> TuM 2/3 48 (Nbk 25). It concerns silver from the dowry of his daughter-in-law that was still due to him.

<sup>551</sup> For more information on this individual who can be followed in the documentation between roughly 580-540 BCE, see Joannès 1989: 35-36.

<sup>552</sup> A 88 (Nbk 40) and NBC 8378 (Ner 02).

<sup>553</sup> TuM 2/3 156 (Ner 02) is an *imittu* text written in Bāb-kirāti. Other texts include A 88 (Nbk 40), L 4735 (Nbk 41) and TuM 2/3 80 (Nbk 42).

<sup>554</sup> L 1632 (Nbk 40).

<sup>555</sup> L 1625 (Nbk [x])

<sup>556</sup> NBC 8378 (Ner 02).

**Iqīša-Marduk/Šumu-ukīn/Ea-ilūtu-bani** was a distant relative and frequent contact of Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Zēru-Bābili//Ea-ilūtu-bani.<sup>557</sup> Besides acting as a witness for Mušēzib-Bēl on four occasions (twice as first witness),<sup>558</sup> he also exchanged land with him.<sup>559</sup> Moreover, one year after the exchange he took out a loan of silver from Mušēzib-Bēl.<sup>560</sup>

The last protagonist of the Ea-ilūtu-bani clan to be discussed here is Zēru-Bābili/Šumā, who is frequently identified as a temple-enterer of Nabû.<sup>561</sup> In the ca. twenty-five documents that have entered the archive, most of which dealing with the management of his agricultural property, there is one individual who stands out: **Šulā/Arad-Nabû/Ea-ilūtu-bani**. Attested some ten times between ca. 584-562 BCE, he is Zēru-Bābili's best-attested witness (usually as first witness).<sup>562</sup> In this capacity he accompanied him to eight *imittu* harvest estimates,<sup>563</sup> a sales contract for a donkey,<sup>564</sup> and a debt note for silver resulting from a work obligation.<sup>565</sup> Moreover, according to TCL 12 52 (Nbk 35) Šulā's slave was to deliver the harvest from a field belonging to Zēru-Bābili, presumably by virtue of his activities as tenant. This last piece of evidence indicates that Šulā and Zēru-Bābili enjoyed a more complex relationship. Finally, although Šulā's exact patrilineal connection to the family is not elucidated in the present state of the documentation, it is interesting that he shows up in connection with other protagonists of the archive: once in connection with Nabû-

<sup>557</sup> See Joannès 1989: 39-45, for more information on this protagonist who is found in the texts between ca. 560-510 BCE.

<sup>558</sup> TuM 2/3 6 (Nbk IV 00), TuM 2/3 166 (Dar 07), NBC 8376 (Dar 07), and A 165 ([-]).

<sup>559</sup> NBC 8366 (Cam 07) is a debt note of silver referring to the earlier exchange of land with Mušēzib-Bēl.

<sup>560</sup> L 1657 (Nbk VI 01).

<sup>561</sup> For more on this individual, whose texts date between ca. 587-550 BCE, see Joannès 1989: 36ff. As Joannès shows (following an earlier observation by San Nicolò 1947: 155) he should not be equated with Zēru-Bābili/Nabû-šumu-iškun, in spite of the onomastic similarities.

<sup>562</sup> His earliest and latest attestations are, respectively: YBC 9194 (Nbk 21<sup>+</sup>) and TuM 2/3 112 (Nbk 42).

<sup>563</sup> E.g. YBC 9194 (Nbk 21<sup>+</sup>), TuM 2/3 152 (Nbk 28), YBC 9158 (Nbk 32), TuM 2/3 155 (Nbk 40).

<sup>564</sup> A 90 (Nbk 30).

<sup>565</sup> TuM 2/3 112 (Nbk 42).



šumu-iškūn/Puhhuru,<sup>566</sup> and three times with Luši-ana-nūr-Marduk/Aplā/Ilī-bāni.<sup>567</sup> Moreover, Šulā's son, Nabû-nādin-ahi, is frequently attested as scribe (see below).

Shifting our focus to the Ilī-bāni family branch and its first protagonist, Lūši-ana-nūr-Marduk/Nabû-mukīn-zēri,<sup>568</sup> it turns out that his closest contact, **Marduk-šākin-šumi/Bēl-šunu/Rē'anu**, is also found in documents of Zēru-Bābili/Šumā (see above). In the relatively short period of twelve years,<sup>569</sup> Marduk-šākin-šumi wrote ten documents of the archive – six for Lūši-ana-nūr-Marduk<sup>570</sup> and four for Zēru-Bābili/Šumā<sup>571</sup> – all related to the management of agricultural holdings or silver debts. Admittedly, this contact seems not to have been particularly influential (neither in terms of roles nor in terms of contexts in which he appears), and apart from the fact that he was connected to various protagonists of the archive, not much can be said about him.

We learn a great deal more about the close associates of Nādin (aka. Dadia), son of Lūši-ana-nūr-Marduk//Ilī-bāni,<sup>572</sup> most notably about the three scribes **Nabû-kāšir/Itti-Marduk-balāṭu/Ea-ilūtu-bani**, **Nabû-nādin-ahi/Šulā/Ea-ilūtu-bani** and **Nabû-mukīn-apli/Nabû-nādin-ahi/Gahal**. While the majority of the texts written by Nabû-kāšir (12),<sup>573</sup> Nabû-nādin-ahi (6)<sup>574</sup> and Nabû-mukīn-apli (4)<sup>575</sup> represent run-of-the-mill documents such as debt notes, receipts and harvest estimates (which, however, required them to be on location in the countryside), they were all involved in more significant family events. Nabû-kāšir, for example, wrote the marriage

<sup>566</sup> TuM 2/3 75 (Nbk 15).

<sup>567</sup> NBC 9189 (Nbk 19), A 93 (Nbk 30), and TuM 2/3 127 (Nbk 35). Note that according to this last documents he sold sheep to Lūši-ana-nūr-Marduk.

<sup>568</sup> For more information on this individual, see Joannès 1989: 49-50.

<sup>569</sup> Between TCL 12 56 (Nbk 30) and TuM 2/3 81 (Nbk 42).

<sup>570</sup> TuM 2/3 128 (Nbk 37), TuM 2/3 77 (Nbk 38), TCL 12 55 (Nbk 38), L 4725 (Nbk 40), L 4731 (Nbk 41), TuM 2/3 81 (Nbk 42).

<sup>571</sup> TCL 12 56 (Nbk 30), A 180 (Nbk 40), TuM 2/3 155 (Nbk 40), TuM 2/3 101 (Nbk 40).

<sup>572</sup> See Joannès 1989: 50-56 for more information on this individual, who was active in the reign of Nabonidus (ca. 555-539 BCE).

<sup>573</sup> E.g. TuM 2/3 84 (Nbn 02), MLC 381 (Nbn 04), A 101 (Nbn 05), BM 96263 (Nbn 08) written in bīt-Apkallu, L 1637 (Nbn 09) written in Nuḥšānitu, and A 178 (Nbn [x]).

<sup>574</sup> E.g. TuM 2/3 158 (Nbn 09), NBC 8357 (Nbn 15), and NBC 8367 (Cam 01) written in Sūr-Amēlūtu.

<sup>575</sup> E.g. A 174 (Nbn 02), BRM 1 58 (Nbn 05), BM 94885 (Nbn 08), and BM 96263 (Nbn 08) written in bīt-Apkallu.

agreement between Nādin and his wife <sup>f</sup>Kabtā//Ilī-bāni in Nbn 06, where Nabû-mukīn-apli was present as a witness.<sup>576</sup> Nabû-nādin-ahi wrote the sales contract of a date grove, sold by Nādin and his brother to a distant relative,<sup>577</sup> as well as a proceeding of Nādin's business venture.<sup>578</sup>

The last of Nādin's contacts who should be mentioned here is **Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti/Šumā/Ea-ilūtu-bani**, possibly the brother of the temple-enterer Zēru-Bābili/Šumā (see above). In only a very short period of five years he is mentioned eight times as first witness in Nādin's business transactions. Like the three scribes, he is mainly found in documents related to agricultural management,<sup>579</sup> with one important exception: he was present at the drafting of the same marriage contract as Nabû-kāšir and Nabû-mukīn-apli. His presence in what might have been Nādin's most personal record marks him out as an intimate contact.

The final protagonist who deserves a closer examination is Ahušunu/Nabû-muṣētiq-uddi (aka. Bazuzu)/Nanāhu.<sup>580</sup> The first individual who stands out as an influential associate is **Nabû-ahhē-iddin/Nabû-zēru-ibni (aka Kalbā) /Nanāhu**. His involvement, which spanned over fifteen years, is remarkable and can only stem from a particularly robust relationship. Firstly, he lent Ahušunu the sum of one mina of silver in Dar 13.<sup>581</sup> Secondly, in Dar 17 he stood surety for a debt of two minas of silver drawn against Ahušunu.<sup>582</sup> Thirdly, between Dar 17 and Dar 29 he repeatedly paid (*ina qātān*) taxes on behalf of (*ana muhhi*) Ahušunu.<sup>583</sup> And finally, Nabû-ahhē-

<sup>576</sup> Tum 2/3 1.

<sup>577</sup> NBC 8395 (Nbn 15).

<sup>578</sup> TuM 2/3 86 (Nbn 08) documents the receipt of eleven *kur* of dates paid by Nādin//Ilī-bāni to Iddin-Nabû//Ēdu-ēṭir and Nabû-mukīn-zēri//Amēl-Ea. It then mentions another debt, said to be the debt note of the business venture (*u'iltu ša harrānu*) of two other individuals, who have to hand it over to Nādin.

<sup>579</sup> This required him to accompany Nādin on at least three trips outside of the city walls: TCL 12 85 (Nbn 05) written in Sūr-Amēlūtu; BM 96263 (Nbn 08) written in bit-Apkallu; L 1637 (Nbn 09) written in Nuhšānitu.

<sup>580</sup> See, Joannès 1989: 59-64, for this individual who can be traced in the documentation between ca. 522-492 BCE.

<sup>581</sup> A 123.

<sup>582</sup> A 120.

<sup>583</sup> TuM 2/3 169 (Dar 17), A 173 (Dar 18), L 4720 (Dar 25), L 1651 (Dar 27).

iddin was present at both of Ahušunu's marriage contracts as witness.<sup>584</sup> Few individuals in the Borsippa corpus are known to have maintained such a marked relationship, but, as the genealogy of the Nanāhus is still badly known, this bond might have existed by virtue of being close relatives.

In closing this section, there is one individual who remains to be mentioned. Even though he seems not to have been linked to one protagonist in particular, **Nidinti-Bēl/Bēl-ahhē-iddin/Bēl-eṭēru** is a good example of an individual who, while being mentioned relatively rarely, seems to have enjoyed a close relationship with the various branches of this family cluster. While he is first attested in Dar 18 as the scribe of an unremarkable debt note for Bēl-uballiṭ/Ili-bāni,<sup>585</sup> some months later Nidinti-Bēl also recorded the inception of a *harrānu* business venture for him.<sup>586</sup> In the following years he seems to have remained in close touch with the family: the next time we meet him in Dar 26 he was married to <sup>f</sup>Amat-Sutīti, daughter of Nādin/Ili-bāni and cousin of Bēl-uballiṭ, who was formerly married to Mušēzib-Bēl/Ea-ilūtu-bani.<sup>587</sup> Two years later we find him as first witness at the marriage agreements of his stepdaughter, Lurindu/Ea-ilūtu-bani and Ahušunu/Nanāhu mentioned above.<sup>588</sup> The latter was, finally, also present as a witness at Nidinti-Bēl's second marriage in Dar 35.<sup>589</sup>

The majority of the contacts discussed above either belonged to the same clan (e.g. Ea-ilūtu-bani, Nanāhu) or to fellow temple-enterer families (e.g. Ahiya'ūtu). Relatives and members from the own professional group clearly assumed an important role in the relations of trust and intimacy among these families, a trend that also emerge strongly from other types of interaction. Even so, individuals from families that cannot be linked to the priestly circle of Borsippa can be found in the personal networks, too (i.e. Gahal, Rē'anu, Ur-Nanna). Even if this point to the fact that ties of friendship in Borsippa were not fully restricted by concerns of professional affiliation, one thing is clear: individuals lacking family names are entirely absent. This holds for the following priests as well.

<sup>584</sup> NBC 8410 (Dar 18), TuM 2/3 2 and part-duplicate BM 94577 (Dar 28),

<sup>585</sup> TuM 2/3 96. For more information on Bēl-uballiṭ, see Joannès 1989: 56-58.

<sup>586</sup> BM 94492.

<sup>587</sup> BM 94608.

<sup>588</sup> TuM 2/3 2 (Dar 18) and part-duplicate BM 94577.

<sup>589</sup> L 1634.

#### 4.2.2. Iliā (A)

Of the circa 810 individuals mentioned with Marduk-šumu-ibni/Iliā (A), nearly 4% met him five times or more. Compared to other priests under investigation, Marduk-šumu-ibni has the largest number of close contacts. If we take a closer look at the identity of these  $\geq 5$ -contacts it turns out that the great majority bore temple-based family names (ca. 81%). Equally important is the observation made earlier that more than half of these individuals (15) were allied to the Iliās by marriage or blood and no less than eleven belonged to Marduk-šumu-ibni's immediate kin, i.e. brothers, cousins, nephews, father, wife and son. Since this last set of ties are so to speak 'given' and not based on choice or voluntariness, I have left Marduk-šumu-ibni's close relatives out of the following survey.

The first individual who should be mentioned is **Nabû-ušuršu/Nabû-ahhē-iddin/Šēpē-ilia**. He is attested twenty-seven times in the period between 516-493 BCE.<sup>590</sup> Notwithstanding his frequent occurrence, there are only two instances in which he assumed an active role. According to BM 109875 (Dar 10) and BM 94666 (Dar [x]) he is one of Marduk-šumu-ibni's partners in the production of beer for the cult of Nabû and perhaps for retail.<sup>591</sup> In general his involvement in the affairs of Marduk-šumu-ibni was of a much more passive nature. He witnessed no less than twenty-five transactions (often as first witness), usually relating to agricultural<sup>592</sup> or prebendary management,<sup>593</sup> but he also witnessed at least one silver transaction,<sup>594</sup> a house rental,<sup>595</sup> and a family event.<sup>596</sup> Since this last transaction records the marriage negotiations of Marduk-šumu-ibni's daughter, <sup>f</sup>Amat-Nanā, his presence can be taken

<sup>590</sup> See BM 102336 (Dar 06) and BM 26500 (Dar 28) for his earliest and latest secured attestations, respectively.

<sup>591</sup> It should be noted that in the domain of beer production the line between business partnerships (beer for the public market) and *ēpišānūtu* contracts (beer for cultic use) is not very clear and might well have gone hand in hand.

<sup>592</sup> E.g. BM 95187 = AH XV no. 32 (Dar 15), BM 26751 (Dar 15), BM 95198 (Dar 17), BM 101999 (Dar 18), VS 5 86 (Dar 19), VS 3 121 (Dar 16 or 19).

<sup>593</sup> BM 94632 = AH XV no. 36 (ca. Dar 18), BM 17695 = AH XV no. 38 (Dar 22), BM 26758 = AH XV no. 39 (ca. Dar 23), BM 26726 = AH XV no. 40 (Dar 25).

<sup>594</sup> BM 26708 (Dar 10<sup>+</sup>).

<sup>595</sup> BM 94731 ([ - ]).

<sup>596</sup> BM 26483 (Dar 14).

as a sign of intimacy between Nabû-ušuršu and Marduk-šumu-ibni.<sup>597</sup> Finally, there are three more documents that should be mentioned here as they provide an extra dimension to the relationship between Nabû-ušuršu and Marduk-šumu-ibni. Towards the end of his career Marduk-šumu-ibni functioned as notary scribe in Borsippa and the archive holds at least eight property deeds written (some also sealed) by him.<sup>598</sup> As far as we can see, these documents were composed for individuals with no obvious ties to the notary (presumably for the sake of neutrality), but it seems that the latter could bring his own confidants to the transaction. As it turns out, Nabû-ušuršu accompanied Marduk-šumu-ibni in this capacity on at least three occasions.<sup>599</sup> Holding no stakes in these transactions, their co-occurrence can only be understood as the result of personal volition and trust.

Another partner of Marduk-šumu-ibni, who seems to have enjoyed a more substantial relationship with the Iliā, is **Rēmūt-Nabû/Nabû-bāni-zēri/Bēliya'u**. While he owed Marduk-šumu-ibni a small number of vats on two occasions<sup>600</sup> – presumably used for the production of beer for retail – he recorded (11) and witnessed (4) a range of transactions well beyond this sphere between 546-522 BCE.<sup>601</sup> Most notably he seems to have accompanied Marduk-šumu-ibni regularly on trips to the countryside for the purpose of harvest estimates and the management of rural property.<sup>602</sup> Finally, he also wrote an important property deed recording the transfer

<sup>597</sup> Nabû-ušuršu witnessed at least one transaction of the Iliā (A) archive at which Marduk-šumu-ibni was not personally present. BM 26629 (Dar [x]) is a cultivation contract of Marduk-šumu-ibni's daughter and was possibly written after the former's death.

<sup>598</sup> For an article on the function and the sealing practice of the Neo-Babylonian notary scribes, see Baker & Wunsch 2001. Tablets that have entered the Iliā (A) archive by virtue of his activity as notary include among others, BM 26511 = AH XV no. 35 (Dar 16), BM 27746 (Dar 27), BM 26503 (Dar 27) BE 8 115 (Dar 27), BM 26500 (Dar 28).

<sup>599</sup> BM 87289 (Dar 19), BE 8 115 (Dar 27), and BM 26500 (Dar 28). The only exception being **Itti-Nabû-balāṭu/Nabû-tabni-ušur/Kidin-Sîn**, who is attested 6 times in connection with Marduk-šumu-ibni between 514 – 494 BCE, including BM 26500 and BM 109363, a related to Marduk-šumu-ibni's notary activities written by Itti-Nabû-balāṭu.

<sup>600</sup> Ten vats of good beer in BM 27875 (Cam 01) and another ten in VS 6 111 (Cam 03).

<sup>601</sup> BM 102311 (Nbn 10) and BM 26673 (Bar 01).

<sup>602</sup> A 82 (Nbn 10<sup>+</sup>) and BM 94842 (Nbn 11) written in Bīt-ša-Nabû-damqā; BM 102267 (Cam [x]) and BM 82806 ([–]) written in Birit-ašunê; BM 21159 (Cam 00) and BM 26673 (Bar 01) written in Til-būri.

of prebends between Marduk-šumu-ibni and his close relatives, and is found as witness in another.<sup>603</sup>

A final colleague of Marduk-šumu-ibni who deserves a closer look is **Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti/Tabnēa/Kudurrānu**. In addition to his single attestation as Marduk-šumu-ibni's cultic colleague and employer,<sup>604</sup> Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti acted frequently as scribe (8) in the archive between 545-507 BCE.<sup>605</sup> Of particular interest is his involvement in the redistribution of property after Šulā's death.<sup>606</sup> That Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti enjoyed a durable and intimate relationship with Marduk-šumu-ibni is revealed most clearly by the fact that he also recorded the marriage negotiations of his daughter in Dar 14.<sup>607</sup>

The next individual to be examined is **Nabû-bēlšunu/Mušēzib/Itinnu**. He is attested twenty-four times in connection with Marduk-šumu-ibni in the period between 547-521 BCE,<sup>608</sup> either as scribe (13) or witness (11). In these capacities he was present at various transactions relating to agricultural management,<sup>609</sup> beer production,<sup>610</sup> prebendary administration,<sup>611</sup> taxation,<sup>612</sup> and a range of miscellaneous transactions.<sup>613</sup> More important was his repeated presence at family affairs after the death of Marduk-šumu-ibni's father during the reign of king Nabonidus.<sup>614</sup> He was present at, and wrote, at least three documents dealing with the re-division of the

<sup>603</sup> VS 5 37 (Cyr 02) and BM 26569 = AH XV no. 14 (Cyr 03).

<sup>604</sup> BM 94699 = AH XV no. 43 ([-]). Unlike the previous two individuals who were employed by Marduk-šumu-ibni, perhaps we should see Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti as the superior party since he recruited Marduk-šumu-ibni to perform his cultic obligations.

<sup>605</sup> His earliest and latest attestation in connection with Marduk-šumu-ibni are BM 17640 (Nbn 11) and BM 95187 = AH XV no. 32 (Dar 15), respectively. Note, however, that he is already mentioned earlier together with Šulā/Ilia BM 27879 (Nbn 05).

<sup>606</sup> BM 26731 (Nbn 12), BM 17657 (Nbn 13), BM 26532 ([Nbn 13]), BM 26569 = AH XV no. 14 (Cyr 03).

<sup>607</sup> BM 26483.

<sup>608</sup> Earliest and latest attestations: BM 27890 (Nbn 08) and VS 6 119 (Dar 01).

<sup>609</sup> BM 102289 (Nbn 12), BM 94882 (Cyr 07), and BM 94729 ([-]).

<sup>610</sup> BM 94744 (Cyr [x]).

<sup>611</sup> BM 102313 = AH XV no. 15 (Cyr 06).

<sup>612</sup> BM 17654 (Nbn [x]), BM 17717 (Cam 06), VS 6 119 (Dar 01).

<sup>613</sup> E.g. BM 87332 (Nbn 10) is a debt note for dates; BM 95007 (Nbn 11) is a receipt of pegs and dates; BM 26099 (Cyr 02) is a receipt of wages for the manufacture of a bronze kettle.

<sup>614</sup> See Waerzeggers 2010: 378-381 for a brief overview of the family history.

patrimony between the four sons,<sup>615</sup> the management of outstanding debts,<sup>616</sup> and the transfer of property between relatives.<sup>617</sup> We can conclude that even if his role in the archive of the Ilias was not very multiplex, the fact that he made an appearance at most of the family arrangements, that took place in periods crucial for the development of the family, either as witness or as scribe, qualifies him as an intimate contact of Marduk-šumu-ibni and his family.

An individual who enjoyed a similar connection to the family is **Nabû-mukîn-zēri/Taqīš-Gula/Siātu**. Although with only ten attestations the frequency of encounter is relatively limited, the intimacy of his connection transpires, again, from the events he attended. Like Nabû-bēlšunu/Itinnu, he witnessed no less than five of the re-divisions of property between the Iliā brothers.<sup>618</sup> On top of that Nabû-mukîn-zēri was also present at Šulā's last will and testament in Nbn 02.<sup>619</sup> Nabû-mukîn-zēri together with Nabû-bēlšunu, seem to have been the only individuals who enjoyed such an intimate relationship with the entire nuclear family. He is attested one final time in a receipt of silver of Marduk-šumu-ibni dated to Dar 02, more than thirty years after his first appearance in the archive.<sup>620</sup>

Even though frequency of attestation has been a good indication of intimacy so far, there is at least one example to warn us that this is not always the case. Between 529-505 BCE, **Nabû-ušuršu/Bēl-ahhē-iddin/Šilli-ahi** is attested no less than fourteen

<sup>615</sup> BM 17657 (Nbn 13) and BM 26532 ([Nbn 13<sup>2</sup>]) are redivisions of a date grove between the four brothers; BM 94587 (Nbn 13) is a redivision of property (field and houses) in Tīl-būri between the three younger brothers.

<sup>616</sup> BM 27890 (Nbn 08) is a debt note for silver between Marduk-šumu-ibni and his older brother; in BM 26731 (Nbn 12) he pays a sum of silver to his sister-in-law (presumably from her dowry), which his father still owed her; BM 27899 (Nbn 17), is a debt note for silver between Marduk-šumu-ibni and his cousin, perhaps related to the property exchanged in BM 25664, which was also written by Nabû-bēlšunu.

<sup>617</sup> BM 25664 (Nbn 16) is an exchange of two date groves between Marduk-šumu-ibni and his cousin, written by Nabû-bēlšunu; VS 5 37 (Cyr 02) is a donation of a door-keeper's prebend to Marduk-šumu-ibni (and his nephew) by his cousin; BM 82695 = AH XV no. 19 (Cam [x]) is a transfer of a prebend to Marduk-šumu-ibni, written by Nabû-bēlšunu.

<sup>618</sup> BM 26731 (Nbn 12), BM 17657 (Nbn 13), BM 26532 ([Nbn 13<sup>2</sup>]) BM 94587 (Nbn 13), BM 94617 ([-]).

<sup>619</sup> BM 26498.

<sup>620</sup> BM 102020.

times, making him one of the most frequently attested contacts in the archive.<sup>621</sup> However, he is only attested in two spheres of Marduk-šumu-ibni's business affairs: agriculture and housing. Nabû-ušuršu was a tenant of Marduk-šumu-ibni during the reigns of Cambyses and Darius I, working his estates in the area of Tīl-būri.<sup>622</sup> Moreover, probably living in close vicinity to this village, he witnessed various documents related to the administration of property held by Marduk-šumu-ibni and his family in the countryside. Instead of identifying this relationship as an intimate one, between equals, it is can better be understood in terms of 'employer and employee' or 'patron and client'.<sup>623</sup>

In conclusion, even if Marduk-šumu-ibni's reliance on fellow temple brewers is limited – besides members of the Iliā clan there are only two individuals from the Allānu and Kudurrānu families, respectively – he found many of his closest contacts among local prebendary families (e.g. Bēliya'u, Šēpē-ilia). Still compared to the temple-enterers discussed above, there are relatively many individuals from non-priestly families in Marduk-šumu-ibni's personal network (e.g. Itinnu, Siātu, Mušēzib), some of which seem to have been on intimate terms with his entire family. Again, entirely absent are individuals who lack family names or established pedigrees.

---

<sup>621</sup> His earliest attestation is BM 25832 (Cam 00); his latest is BM 27992 (Dar 16).

<sup>622</sup> BM 95194 (Cam/Cyr 01), Amherst x (Cam 02), BM 94659 (Cam [x]), Berens 108 (Dar [x]).

<sup>623</sup> This does however not rule out the existence of friendship according to the cross-cultural record. Anthropologists usually refer to these friendships between individuals of different (social) status as 'lop-sided friendships', see e.g. Rezende 1999, Hruschka 2010: 66.



Table 8:<sup>624</sup> tie strength of Marduk-šumu-ibni/Ilia (A) (ca. 553-493 BCE)

Indiv.	Attestation	Role	Duration in Years	Temple	Agri.	Fam.	Prop. sale	Silver	House	Harrānu	Tax
Nabū-ušuršu/Nabū-ahhē-iddim/Šēpē-ilia	27	witness / brewing partner	23	++	++	+	(+) <sup>625</sup>	+	-	+	
Nabū-bēšumu/Mušēzib/Ītinnu	24	scribe / witness	26	+	+	++	+	+	-	-	+
Rēmūr-Nabū/Nabū-bāni-zēri/Bēliya'ū	17	scribe / witness / brewing partner	24	(+) <sup>626</sup>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Nabū-ušuršu/Bēl-ahhē-iddim/Šilli-ahi	14	tenant / witness	24		++				++		
Nabū-ētir-napšāti/Tabnēa/Kudurrānu	11	scribe / witness / prebendary owner	38	+	-	+	+	+			
Nabū-mukīn-zēri/Taqiš-Gula/Siātu	10	witness	32			++	++	-	-		-

<sup>624</sup> Table index: ++ = strong presence; + = normal presence; - = limited presence.<sup>625</sup> His presence in the contexts is placed in brackets ( + ), because he is only attested in property-deed that were written by Marduk-šumu-ibni in his capacity of notary scribe, and do not pertain to his private property.<sup>626</sup> It is not entirely clear whether his activity in the beer brewing business of Marduk-šumu-ibni was situated in a prebendary or *harrānu* context; as one does not exclude the other, his presence in the temple contexts is placed in brackets ( + ).

CHAPTER 4

Indiv.	Attestations	Role	Duration in Years	Temple	Agri.	Fam.	Prop. sale	Silver	House	<i>Harrānu</i>	Tax
Nabū-zēru-iqīša/Kabtia/ Mušēzib	7	scribe / witness	26		+						+
Nabū-nādin-ahi/Nabū- nā'iq/Naggāru	7	witness	2		+				+		
Itti-Nabū-balātu/Nabū- tabmi-ušur/Kidin-Sîn	6	scribe / witness	20	-	+		+				

### 4.2.3. Bēliya'u

Of the 1248 individuals mentioned in the archive of Šaddinnu/Bēliya'u, thirty individuals (2,5%) qualify as  $\geq 5$ -contacts. Roughly two thirds of these individuals bore local priestly family names, and at least half (15) were prebendary bakers, i.e., Šaddinnu's immediate temple colleagues. This does, however, not apply to the most frequently attested contact, **Bēl-ēṭir/Guzānu (aka. Nādin)/Šigūa**. He appears over forty times in the period between ca. 506-496 BCE.<sup>627</sup> His primary role in the archive of Šaddinnu was that of scribe (31).<sup>628</sup> He wrote a great variety of texts and his services were clearly not restricted to one specific sphere of Šaddinnu's affairs. He composed documents related to agricultural administration (e.g. *imittu*, cultivation contract<sup>629</sup>), which occasionally required him to be on location outside of the city walls,<sup>630</sup> and he also wrote temple-related texts, usually recording the disbursement of prebendary income to Šaddinnu's cultic collaborators.<sup>631</sup> Bēl-ēṭir also authored documents of greater personal significance to the archive holder: property deeds,<sup>632</sup> protocol texts,<sup>633</sup> and the two documents settling the arrangement with Bēl-iddin/Kāšir,<sup>634</sup> whose old-age maintenance Šaddinnu had assumed in return for property rights.<sup>635</sup> Last but not least, Bēl-ēṭir was also involved in *harrānu* business ventures. He wrote documents related to silver loaning, and work contracts for the

<sup>627</sup> His earliest attestation is BM 29416 (Dar 15<sup>2</sup>), his latest in BM 96234 (Dar 26).

<sup>628</sup> E.g. BM 28981 (Dar 17), BM 96167 (Dar 18), BM 29447 (Dar 19), BM 29057 (Dar 20), BM 25653/25630 (Dar 20), BM 96190 (Dar 20), VS 3 128 (Dar 21), BM 96373 (Dar 22), BM 29092 (Dar 23), BM 25644 (Dar 25), BM 96234 (Dar 26), BM 96193 (Dar [-]), BM 96346 (Dar [-]).

<sup>629</sup> For a cultivation contract see, BM 96190 (Dar 20); for *imittu*-texts see, e.g. BM 28983 (Dar 17), BM 29089 (Dar 21), BM 96299 (Dar 22).

<sup>630</sup> VS 3 128 (Dar 21) is composed in Ṭābānu and BM 96299 (Dar 22) in *tamirtu* Sippuli(?). For these toponyms, see Zadok 2006: 402 and 444.

<sup>631</sup> For so-called *idū ša maššarti* documents, see e.g. BM 29514 (Dar 19), BM 29057 (Dar 20), BM 29092 (Dar 23). In this context should also be mentioned the various texts from the so-called Apamū-dossier (Waerzeggers 2010: 127-128): BM 29447 (Dar 19) and BM 96167 (Dar 18<sup>3</sup>) published in Zadok 2003a. They record the leasing of rights to cultic leftovers by Šaddinnu.

<sup>632</sup> Agricultural plots: BM 29666 (Dar [x]), BM 96193 (Dar [x]). Slave: BM 21978 (Dar 24).

<sup>633</sup> Both texts agree on the bailment of individuals that have to be brought before Šaddinnu on set date: BM 28981, Dar 17) BM 96205, Dar 25)

<sup>634</sup> Bēl-iddin might have been a retired baker. Note that he is only mentioned once before these transactions, as witness in a document dealing with prebendary income BM 29512 (Dar 10).

<sup>635</sup> BM 25653/25630 (Dar 20) and BM 21979 (Dar 20).

production of beer, as well as the formal conclusion of a joint venture. However, his involvement in Šaddinu's business affairs was deeper than simply that of scribe. There is at least one instance when he was required to deliver 100 vats of beer, suggesting that he was responsible for running parts of this enterprise himself.<sup>636</sup> More evidence of his personal investment can be found in BM 25714 (Dar 20), which informs us that Bēl-ēṭir (and Nabû-ušuršu/Bā'iru) owed Šaddinnu's son, Nabû-uballiṭ, the relatively high sum of 140 shekels of silver.<sup>637</sup> Even if the text does not specify the background of this debt, the amount of silver and the identity of the co-debtor suggest that we are dealing with the organisation of a business venture.<sup>638</sup> The house rented by Bēl-ēṭir from Šaddinnu in BM 29036 (Dar 25) may also feature in this context. There is at least one occasion on which he collected house rent presumably on behalf of Šaddinnu.<sup>639</sup>

To conclude, even if Bēl-ēṭir/Guzānu/Šigūa is only attested for a relatively short period of ten years, he can be identified as one of the most influential contacts of Šaddinnu during the second half of Darius I's reign. This is not only suggested by the high contiguity with Šaddinnu, but also by the active role he assumed on various occasions. As a scribe he wrote texts pertaining to a disparate range of social settings, from run-of-the-mill receipts of silver and dates to important property-deeds and long-term arrangements. Besides his scribal activities, he is attested as witness (usually as

---

<sup>636</sup> BM 28893 (Dar 21).

<sup>637</sup> There is one further text that mentions Nabû-uballiṭ/Bēliya'u and Bēl-ēṭir/Šigūa and seems to be dealing with silver for *harrānu* purposes but unfortunately BM 28962 (Dar 24) is highly damaged.

<sup>638</sup> For the co-debtor Nabû-ušuršu/Rēmūt/Bā'iru, see Zadok 2008: 76<sup>+3</sup>. Apart from BM 25714, he is mentioned at least six more times in the Borsippa corpus: BM 27813 (Dar 13), BM 25732 (Dar 21), BM 27870 (Dar 22), BM 25647 (Dar 22), BM 25686 (Dar 23), BM 25655//BM 25648 (Dar 23). Even if Šaddinnu or his son are not mentioned in these texts they must have entered the Bēliya'u archive through his connection with Bēl-ēṭir/Šigūa and their joint *harrānu* enterprise with the family. In BM 25732 (Dar 21), for example, we find Nabû-ušuršu concluding a joint venture with a certain Sîn-ibni/Kalbā. While no mention is made of the Bēliya'us the contract was drawn up by Bēl-ēṭir. It seems that Nabû-ušuršu was also active in Babylon. Interestingly, two of the three texts written at the capital inform us that he coordinated building contracts for private houses. It is probably not a coincidence that both he and Šaddinnu were active in the housing sector and one might expect a link between their enterprises.

<sup>639</sup> BM 25690 (Dar 21).

first witness<sup>640</sup>), but more importantly he also acted as Šaddinnu's business partner in the production of beer and perhaps the renting of housing plots. Moreover, his association to Šaddinnu bridged generations as he is found running a business with Nabû-uballiṭ, the former's son. Nor was Bēl-ēṭir a stranger to Šaddinnu before his first appearance in the documentation. Their relationship can be traced back to at least 519 BCE (Dar 03), when Guzānu//Šigūa, the father of Bēl-ēṭir, acted as a witness to Šaddinnu's acquisition of a housing plot.<sup>641</sup> Far more momentous in this respect is the fact that only six months later Guzānu bought a house adjoining Šaddinnu's property,<sup>642</sup> making him and presumably his son the new next-door neighbours.<sup>643</sup> The relationship between Šaddinnu and Bēl-ēṭir can thus be characterised as frequent, diverse, long lasting, and based on trust and intimacy – many of the aspects one might associate with friendship.

Another important individual in Šaddinnu's circle is **Nabû-bullissu (aka. Nabû-balassu-iqbi)/Mār-bīti-iqbi/Kidin-Sîn**. Attested some thirty times between 519-491 BCE,<sup>644</sup> he is by far the most frequently attested witness in the archive. While mainly found in documents written in the prebendary sphere<sup>645</sup> and in texts recording agricultural exploitation,<sup>646</sup> he accompanied Šaddinnu to a much wider range of settings. We find him in documents related to the running of *harrānu* ventures<sup>647</sup> and silver loaning,<sup>648</sup> but also in the contexts of house letting<sup>649</sup> and property

<sup>640</sup> Texts in which he acts as witness to Šaddinnu's business affairs, e.g. BM 29024 (Dar 18), BM 29408 (Dar [19]), BM 28966 (Dar 20), BM 28899 (Dar 20).

<sup>641</sup> BM 25589 (Dar 03).

<sup>642</sup> VS 4 98 (Dar 03). Even though, Šaddinnu's full filiation is not provided he can beyond doubt be identified as Šaddinnu/Bēliya'u.

<sup>643</sup> Guzānu is further attested as witness (4 out of 6 times as first witness), e.g. house lease contract: VS 5 67 (Dar 05); receipt of rations for Carians: BM 29488 (Dar 06); cultivation contract: BM 29004 (Dar 10<sup>3</sup>); receipt of a 'gift' in silver from Šaddinnu's wife to the temple authorities: BM 28913 (Dar 25<sup>3</sup>). He once extended Šaddinnu a loan in dates: BM 29452//YBC 11289 (Dar 12).

<sup>644</sup> See, BM 96374 (Dar 03) and VS 3 151 (Dar 31) for the earliest and latest attestation respectively.

<sup>645</sup> E.g. BM 96320 (Dar 15), BM 29034 (Dar 16), BM 21962 (Dar 26), BM 29460 = AH XV no. 97 (Dar 27).

<sup>646</sup> E.g. BM 96374 (Dar 03), VS 3 111 (Dar 11), BM 96190 (Dar 20), VS 3 151 (Dar 31).

<sup>647</sup> E.g. BM 95861 (Dar 16), BM 28927 (Dar 20).

<sup>648</sup> E.g. BM 29716 (Dar 14<sup>+</sup>), BM 22105 (Dar 16), BM 96150 (Dar 21).

<sup>649</sup> VS 4 137 (Dar 13).

acquisition.<sup>650</sup> Twice he was present at the settling of (legal) disputes;<sup>651</sup> on one occasion this required him to go up to the capital of Babylon. While he is represented in almost as many different contexts as Bēl-ēṭir, his activities and roles were more restricted and passive. In fact, there is only one instance in which he acted in a capacity other than that of witness, namely when Šaddinnu hired him to do some kind of work.<sup>652</sup> Although it is difficult to evaluate this relationship, based on frequency and multiplexity of context and role, it seems that Nabû-bullissu's association with Šaddinnu was of a less intimate kind compared to that of Bēl-ēṭir, even if it can be traced over a much longer period of time.

There are many more individuals who occur relatively often in the archive of Šaddinnu and who might for reasons of frequency be classified as important, intimate contacts. However, compared to the previous two, their involvement is usually restricted to a single, specific setting. This includes people like **Nabû-ah-ittannu/Hašdāya/Šillāya**: a distant relative of Šaddinnu's wife, <sup>f</sup>Nanāya-damqat//Šillāya, he acted eighteen times as a witness for Šaddinnu between 506-497 BCE.<sup>653</sup> With a few exceptions,<sup>654</sup> his presence was restricted to proceedings in the prebendary and agricultural spheres.<sup>655</sup> His repeated attestation as first witness could indicate a more intimate connection to Šaddinnu. The fact that he is often found in texts with Bēl-ēṭir//Šigûa – most notably in BM 28962 (Dar 24), concerning a *harrānu* venture of Bēl-ēṭir and Šaddinnu's son – may also be of interest. Another kinsman of Šaddinnu's wife is **Kidin-Marduk (aka. Kidinnu)/Nabû-uballiṭ (aka.**

<sup>650</sup> VS 5 79 (Dar 15<sup>o</sup>).

<sup>651</sup> BM 96218 (Dar 04<sup>o</sup>), and BM 25626 (Dar 25). The last document, written in Babylon, records a contestation of a plot of land more than ten years after the deed.

<sup>652</sup> Unfortunately the operative clause in BM 96388 (Dar 11) is illegible, making the identification of the requirement of this job difficult. However, the archive holds one text of Nabû-bullissu in which he advanced an amount of barley that was to be repaid in loaves of bread (BM 96328). Even if Šaddinnu was not present at that transaction, I am tempted to link BM 96388 to the same line of work, presumably located in the (prebendary?) bread-making sector.

<sup>653</sup> Earliest attestation: BM 29034 (Dar 16); latest attestation: BM 28962 (Dar 24).

<sup>654</sup> A *harrānu*-related text: BM 95861 (Dar 16); a land sale: BM 29666 ([-]); a documents related to the Bēl-iddin//Kāšir arrangement: BM 25653//BM 25630 (Dar 20).

<sup>655</sup> Prebendary: BM 29034 (Dar 16), BM 96253 (Dar 17), BM 29514 (Dar 19), BM 96288 = AH XV no. 91 (Dar 19), BM 29057 (Dar 20), BM 28936 (Dar 20). Land exploitation: BM 96322 (Dar 18), BM 29473 (Dar 19), BM 96190 (Dar 20), BM 96211 (Dar [x]).

**Bibānu)/Šillāya.** He is attested some eighteen times, usually as scribe in transactions related to prebendary matters,<sup>656</sup> but he also wrote at least one debt note for silver,<sup>657</sup> a receipt for house rent,<sup>658</sup> and a payment of wages.<sup>659</sup> However, by Dar 15 Kidin-Marduk seems to have accumulated considerable debts and we find Šaddinnu compensating his creditor and taking possession of the pledged property.<sup>660</sup> Whether this came to the relief of Kidin-Marduk is not clear, however, it turned out to be a complicated affair,<sup>661</sup> and his relatives later contested the acquisition.<sup>662</sup>

Several temple colleagues appear frequently in the archive. For instance **Nabû-gāmil/Nabû-šumu-ukīn/Bēliya’u** and his son **(Ina-)Qībi-Bēl**, distant relatives of Šaddinnu, who are both mentioned some fifteen times, as cultic collaborators. At first Nabû-gāmil can be found alone (Dar 09-13),<sup>663</sup> after which he is supported by his son (Dar 17-20),<sup>664</sup> who eventually took over his father’s responsibilities in full (Dar 29).<sup>665</sup> Both are very occasionally found in texts outside of the prebendary sphere.<sup>666</sup> Another example is **Lābāši/Rēmūt/Kidin-Sīn**: he performed (parts of) Šaddinnu’s cultic service between 516-489 BCE.<sup>667</sup> Lābāši’s brother, Marduk-šumu-ibni//Kidin-Sīn (or perhaps Lābāši under his full name?) set up a joint venture with Šaddinnu according to BM 96246 (Cyr 06).<sup>668</sup>

Finally, we briefly need to consider the association of Šaddinnu with members of other baker clans, in particular the Kidin-Sīns and the Šēpê-īlias. In the previous chapter I advocated that the relationship between these two families on the one hand

<sup>656</sup> E.g. BM 29532 (Dar 09), BM 29749 (Dar 09), BM 29512 (Dar 10), BM 29034 (Dar 16), BM 96350 ([-]).

<sup>657</sup> BM 29494 (Dar 09).

<sup>658</sup> VS 5 80 (Dar 15).

<sup>659</sup> BM 28996 (Dar 15).

<sup>660</sup> BM 29420.

<sup>661</sup> Apparently some of the legal documents had gone missing, BM 29404//28914 (Dar 16).

<sup>662</sup> BM 25626 (Dar 25).

<sup>663</sup> BM 29749 (Dar 09), BM 29051 (Dar 12), VS 5 124 (Dar 13).

<sup>664</sup> BM 96253 (Dar 17), BM 29024 (Dar 18), BM 29057 (Dar 20).

<sup>665</sup> BM 82642 = AH XV no. 98 (Dar 29). Note that in this last text Šaddinnu is not mentioned.

<sup>666</sup> BM 96374 (Dar 03), BM 96312 (Dar 07) BM 22105 (Dar 16), BM 28966 (Dar 20).

<sup>667</sup> For the earliest and latest attestation as Šaddinnu’s cultic collaborator, see BM 96413 (Dar 06) and BM 28916 (Dar 33).

<sup>668</sup> For this text, see Zadok 2003b.

and the Bēliya'us and the Esagil-mansums on the other hand could best be characterised in terms of discord and mutual exclusion. However, Šaddinnu was in repeated contact with a number of members of the Kidin-Sîn family. While most of these contacts were restricted to only one or a very few social settings, as was the case with Lâbâši//Kidin-Sîn,<sup>669</sup> his relationship with Nabû-bullissu//Kidin-Sîn was clearly more robust. Even if this seems to contradict the portrayal of the local bakers as being in a state of conflict and disunity, it should be pointed out that members of the Šēpê-ilia clan are conspicuously absent from Šaddinnu's circle of trust and intimacy. Moreover, those members of the Kidin-Sîn family attested  $\geq 5$  in Šaddinnu's network were absent from his more momentous and personally relevant transactions. Hence, no member of either the Kidin-Sîn or the Šēpê-ilia families was present at the donation and old-age arrangements of Bēl-iddin//Kāšir.<sup>670</sup> And the same is true for the marriage agreement of Šaddinnu's son, Bēl-uballiṭ, and <sup>f</sup>Amat-Nanāya, daughter of Marduk-šumu-ibni//Ilia (A).<sup>671</sup> While a member of both the Šēpê-ilia and the Kidin-Sîn families can be found as witness in this transaction, the former was a well-known contact of Marduk-šumu-ibni,<sup>672</sup> and the second is so far not attested in any other document known to us, and could have been a particular contact of both or none of the parties.<sup>673</sup>

<sup>669</sup> Others include Nabû-tāriṣ/Marduk-ušallim/Kidin-Sîn (6x), Gimil-Nabû/Šāpik-zēri/Kidin-Sîn (6x), and Nabû-balassu-iqbi/Nabû-ahhē-iddin/Kidin-Sîn (5x).

<sup>670</sup> BM 25653//25630 (Dar 20) and BM 21979 (Dar 20). Instead we find other intimate contacts such as Bēl-ēṭir//Šigûa (40x), Nabû-ahu-ittannu//Šillāya (16x), and Nabû-ittannu//Nappāhu (11x), see the table below.

<sup>671</sup> BM 26483 (Dar 14).

<sup>672</sup> Nabû-ušuršu/Nabû-ahhē-iddin/Šēpê-ilia (see above).

<sup>673</sup> Nabû-ušuršu/Bēl-kēšir/Kidin-Sîn. He be attested in a cultivation contract from the Bēliya'u archive, BM 29004 (Dar 10<sup>2</sup>), but the family name is broken off.



Table 9: tie strength of Šaddinnu//Bēliya'u (ca. 536-484 BCE)

Indiv.	Attestations	Role	Duration in Years	Temple	Agri.	Fam.	Prop. sales	Silver	House	Harrānu	Tax
Bēl-ētir/Guzānu/Šigūa	40 <sup>+</sup>	scribe / witness / partner / agent	10	++	++	+	+	+	+	++	+
Nabū-bullissu/Mār-bīti-īqbi/Kidin-Sîn	30	witness / employee	28	+	+		+	+	+	-	+
Kidin-Marduk/Nabū-uballiṭ/Šillāya	18	scribe / debtor	10	+	-		+	+			
Nabū-aha-itnamu/Hašdāya/Šillāya	16	witness	9	+	+	-	-	-		-	
Ina-qībi-Bēl + Nabū-gāmil/Nabū-šumu-ukīn/Bēliya'u	15 / 14	<i>ēpišānūtu</i> / witness	13 / 23	++	-		-	+			-
Ina-qībi-Bēl/Nabū-ētir-napšāti/Kidin-Sîn	12	scribe / witness / guarantor	9	-			+	-	-		+
Lābāši/Rēmūt/Kidin-Sîn	14	<i>ēpišānūtu</i> / witness	27	++						(+) <sup>674</sup>	
Nabū-mukīn-zēri/Kidin-Nabū/Kidin-Sîn	13	scribe / witness	34	-			+	+	-	-	+

<sup>674</sup> Presence placed in brackets ( + ), because it was probably his brother, Marduk-šumu-ibni who set up a business with Šaddinnu, but the possibility remains that he should be equated with Lābāši.

## CHAPTER 4

Indiv.	Attestations	Role	Duration in Years	Temple	Agri.	Fam.	Prop. sales	Silver	House	Harrānu	Tax
Nabû-ušallim/Nabû-šumu-ibni/Esagil-mansum	12	scribe	16		++		-	-			
Nabû-nādin-ipri/Šumā/Bēliya'u	11	witness / seller	20		-		+	-	-	-	+
Nabû-itanmu/Nabû-ēṣir-napšāti/Nappāhu	11	witness / debtor	27	+	+	+	+	-			
Nabû-tabni-ušur/Bēl-kāšir/Balātu	10	scribe / witness	10	-	+		+	-			-

#### 4.2.4. Rē'i-alpi

Of the circa 1315 individuals mentioned in the texts of Nabû-mukīn-zēri//Rē'i-alpi and his son Rēmūt-Nabû, thirty-seven are attested five times or more – ca. 3,5% of the father's contacts and ca. 2% of the son's contacts.<sup>675</sup> The vast majority of these men (32) belonged to temple-based families, while almost half (18) were members of the Rē'i-alpi clan itself or of families affiliated by marriage. As one can see from the table below, many acted in a variety of roles and contexts. While this suggests that the family maintained overall stronger relationships in terms of tie strength compared to other archive holders, the answer should be sought elsewhere. First, the multiplexity of roles usually applies to people from the Rē'i-alpi clan who in addition to their activity as witnesses or scribes acted as donors (or sellers) of prebends and cultic partners. Since the ownership of the clan's prebendary patrimony was constantly changing hands in order to satisfy both demographic and cultic needs, and because the family held a near monopoly on the oxherd prebend, the only individuals who could donate a prebend or act as cultic collaborator were obviously kinsmen. Secondly, the relatively high multiplexity of contexts is due, in part, to the fact that in the Rē'i-alpi archive transactions can often be interpreted as pertaining to a number of contexts simultaneously, e.g. the sale of a prebend is a property sale belonging to a prebendary context, but in the case of the Rē'i-alpi it also represents a family matter.

Let us start with the most frequently attested contact in the archive, **Nabû-mukīn-zēri/Zēru-Bābili/Nappāhu**. He is found twenty-nine times in the period between 534-510 BCE.<sup>676</sup> His primary role in the archive is that of witness (18, often as first witness), followed by that of scribe (9). He is found in all domains of Nabû-mukīn-zēri's (and to a lesser extent, Rēmūt-Nabû's) business affairs: prebendary,<sup>677</sup> agriculture,<sup>678</sup> property acquisition,<sup>679</sup> moneylending<sup>680</sup> and taxation.<sup>681</sup> Particularly

<sup>675</sup> As one can see in the table below, some of these contacts were shared by both protagonists.

<sup>676</sup> For the earliest and latest attestation respectively, see BM 17670 (Cyr 05) and BM 102259 (Dar 12)

<sup>677</sup> E.g. BE 8 106 = AH XV no. 180 (Dar 05), BM 26552 = AH XV no. 188, (Dar [x]<sup>+</sup>)

<sup>678</sup> E.g. various debts of barley and dates such as, BM 26701 (Dar 02), BM 17663 (Dar 03), BM 25834 (Dar 03<sup>+</sup>). Note however that none of these documents clearly specify that the goods come from the harvest. Nabû-mukīn-zēri//Nappāhu is furthermore present at various acquisitions of landed estates.

<sup>679</sup> E.g. BM 102276 = AH XV no. 166 (Cam 06), BM 82628 (Cam 06), BM 94546 (Dar 00), BM 94676 = AH XV no. 171 (Dar 01), BM 82619 (Dar 04), BM 94662 (Dar 04).

<sup>680</sup> E.g. BM 82644 (Dar 03), VS 4 100 (Dar 04), BM 102274 (Dar 04), BM 94711 (Dar [x]).

noteworthy is his involvement in a highly sensitive family affair. In Dar 05, Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Rē'i-alpi arranged the transfer of a significant share of property to his daughter, grandchildren and cousin. Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Nappāhu appears in four documents recording this transfer, twice as a witness and twice as the scribe.<sup>682</sup> Even though this endowment meant that Rēmūt-Nabû was disinherited by his father,<sup>683</sup> it did not cause a major dent in the relationship of Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Nappāhu with Nabû-mukîn-zēri or, more importantly, with the latter's son. When Rēmūt-Nabû undid his father's action in Dar 06 and 07, reclaiming full possession over his property, Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Nappāhu was called upon to act as a witness again.<sup>684</sup> Afterwards Nabû-mukîn-zēri can still be found in Rēmūt-Nabû's documents, showing that his presence in the transactions of Dar 06 and 07 was not based on legal requirement alone.<sup>685</sup> Moreover, the fact that Nabû-mukîn-zēri's brother and sons also appear in documents of Rēmūt-Nabû further underlines the close relationship between these two households.<sup>686</sup> The strength of Nabû-mukîn-zēri's relationship with the Rē'i-alpis is reflected by its duration, cross-generational durability and the variegated contexts in which he appears, rather than by the multiplexity of roles he assumed in their affairs (either witness or scribe). However, there are two important exceptions. Both Rēmūt-Nabû and his father relied on him to buy property in their names: in Cam 06 (BM 82628) he bought a slave for (*ana našê šibûtu*) Rēmūt-Nabû, and in Dar 04 (BM 94662) he acquired a plot of land for (*ina našparti*) Nabû-mukîn-zēri. Even if a comprehensive study on such sales is outstanding and the exact rationale behind the

---

<sup>681</sup> E.g. BM 17670 (Cyr 05), BM 26657 = AH XV no. 167 (Cam 06), BM 82700 (Dar 07), BM 82634 (Dar 07), BM 102259 (Dar 12). Note that the first three belong to the dossier dealing the production of bricks by prebendary oxherd's for the temple, which can be seen as belonging to the temple sphere as well. For more detail on the obligation of prebendary groups to manufacture bricks for Nabû, see Waerzeggers 2010: 337-345.

<sup>682</sup> Nabû-mukîn-zēri//Nappāhu present as witness in EAH 213 (Dar 05) and BM 28872 = AH XV no. 179 (Dar 05); he is the scribe of BM 26514 (Dar 05) and BM 101980+ (Dar 05).

<sup>683</sup> For a detailed account of this 'crisis between father and son', see Waerzeggers 2010: 561-562.

<sup>684</sup> BM 26492//BE 8 108 (Dar 06) and BM 26494//BM 26496//BM 26485//BM 26512//BM 109861 = AH XV no. 183 (Dar 07).

<sup>685</sup> For example in BM 27795//BM 94645 (Dar 07), BM 102259 (Dar 12)

<sup>686</sup> Itti-Šamaš-balāṭu/Zēru-Bābili/Nappāhu is first witness in BM 82622 (Dar 15<sup>3</sup>). Two of Nabû-mukîn-zēri's sons, Nabû-ušuršu and Arad-Bēl, are first and second witness in BM 26554 (Dar 17).

use of a proxy still eludes us, these acts imply a degree of trust between the proxy and the actual purchaser.<sup>687</sup>

The next individual to be considered is **Rēmūt-Nabû/Nabû-šumu-ušur/Šarrahu**, who is attested over twenty times in the period between 539-504 BCE.<sup>688</sup> Married to Nabû-mukîn-zēri's daughter, <sup>f</sup>Ibnā,<sup>689</sup> he is by far the most active in-law found in the archive.<sup>690</sup> Having written at least twelve documents pertaining to a variety of social contexts, his first and foremost role in the archive of the Rē'i-alpi was that of scribe.<sup>691</sup> In addition to his scribal activity he is also attested as witness six times. The most meaningful occasion was undoubtedly the marriage of Rēmūt-Nabû/Rē'i-alpi and <sup>f</sup>Ahatu/Arad-Ea, where Nabû-šumu-ušur/Šarrahu, Rēmūt-Nabû's father, was present too.<sup>692</sup> Rēmūt-Nabû is also found in a more active role. Twice he collected debts on behalf of Nabû-mukîn-zēri,<sup>693</sup> and once he extended a loan of forty-five

<sup>687</sup> Most of the proxy sales from Borsippa are found in the Rē'i-alpi archive and include: BM 25627 (Nbn 00) with Nabû-ahhē-iddin//Arkāt-ilāni-damqā as proxy; BM 26499 (Nbn 01), via Nabû-ahhē-šullim//Nūr-Papsukkal; BM 94562 (Nbn 04) and BM 25712 (Nbn 04), with <sup>f</sup>Ṭabātu/Nabû-šumu-ukîn/<sup>f</sup>Maqartu as proxy or initial buyer (note that she is the cousin of Nabû-mukîn-zēri/Rē'i-alpi, who eventually bought this property); BM 94653 = AH XV no. 160 (Cam 01), with Nabû-ahhē-bulliṭ/Rē'i-alpi as proxy (he is a known scribe and witness in the archive); BM 94676 = AH XV no. 171 (Dar 01), with the same proxy; and BM 26623 + BM 82619 (Dar 04), via Bēl-uballiṭ//Atkuppū. Other proxy sales from Borsippa include, from the Ibnāya archive: BM 29478 (Nbn 02), in which Nabû-mukîn-apli//Šikkūa, later known as the *šatammu* of Ezida, acted as proxy. Ilia (A): BM 94567 = AH XV no. 33 (Dar 15), with Nabû-zēru-ušebši//Ardūtu as proxy. Unassigned: Amherst 242 (Dar 30<sup>o</sup>), with Nidinti-Bēl//Ēdu-ēṭir as proxy (he is known from the Rē'i-alpi and the Ilia (A) archives).

<sup>688</sup> BM 26652 = AH XV no. 154 (Nbn 16) and KU 14 (Dar 18) are his earliest and latest attestations respectively.

<sup>689</sup> He is first attested as her husband in Dar 05 (BM 101980//BM 82607), but the marriage clearly predates this date as they already had two children at this time.

<sup>690</sup> In contrast, none of the in-laws of Rēmūt-Nabû's two marriages are mentioned in the archive.

<sup>691</sup> While most of his texts were written for Nabû-mukîn-zēri (e.g. BM 26652 = AH XV no. 154 (Nbn 16), BM 94663 (Cyr 04), BM 94653 = AH XV no. 160 (Cam 01), BM 82767 (Cam 02), BM 94682 (Dar 08)), he wrote at least three for Rēmūt-Nabû (i.e. BM 27795//BM 94645 (Dar 07), BM 26639 (Dar 08<sup>o</sup>), and BM 26572 = AH XV no. 187 (Dar 10)). It should also be noted that many texts were important property deeds.

<sup>692</sup> BM 82609 (Dar 01) = Roth 1989: no. 22. Note that Nabû-šumu-ušur/Šarrahu was also present at the dowry negotiations of Rēmūt-Nabû's first marriage to <sup>f</sup>[x]-Sutīti//Ardūtu in Cam 04 (BM 29375).

<sup>693</sup> BM 94814 (Cam 05) and BM 82779 (Dar 05). Even though Nabû-mukîn-zēri was present on neither of these transactions, the idea that Rēmūt-Nabû was actually acting on his behalf transpires from the

shekels of silver to Rēmūt-Nabû/Rē'i-alpi.<sup>694</sup> Before we move on, it should be noted that the family crisis of Dar 05 and the (later cancelled) endowments to Rēmūt-Nabû/Šarrahu's children does not seem to have had a great impact on the relationship between the two brother-in-laws.

A final individual from a somewhat different background who deserves closer evaluation is **Nabû-erība/Nabû-mukīn-zēri/Rē'i-alpi**. Although he bears the same patronymic as Rēmūt-Nabû, C. Waerzeggers has argued that they were not brothers, but in fact belonged to two different branches of the Rē'i-alpi clan (2010: 564). Nabû-erība is attested twenty-two times in the period between 527-490 BCE.<sup>695</sup> His primary role in the archive is that of cultic colleague of Rēmūt-Nabû. While he sold various days of the oxherd prebend to Rēmūt-Nabû early in the reign of Darius I, around 504 BCE he is found taking over the ritual obligations of a large share of the temple service again.<sup>696</sup> He remained in Rēmūt-Nabû's service until after the latter's death, when we find him in the service of his sons.<sup>697</sup> Besides his role in the cult, he wrote at least eight documents for Nabû-mukīn-zēri and Rēmūt-Nabû and witnessed a further five transactions, ranging from important property deeds to minor debt obligations and harvest estimates.<sup>698</sup> Even though the nexus of Nabû-erība's and Rēmūt-Nabû's relationship is located in the cultic sphere, it was certainly not confined to prebendary matters alone.

---

fact that in both cases the commodities were to be delivered in the 'measurement of Nabû-mukīn-zēri' (*mašīhu ša NMZ*).

<sup>694</sup> BM 26678 (Dar 14). The background of this debt is not specified but it took place at a time when Rēmūt-Nabû seems to have been short of cash, see Ch. 3.

<sup>695</sup> BM 26480 = AH XV no. 163 (Cam 05) and EAH 229 (Dar 32).

<sup>696</sup> BM 26737 = AH XV no. 176 (Dar 02), BM 94579 = AH XV no. 182 (Dar 06); BM 26509//BM 94563//BM 94571 = AH XV no. 191 (ca. Dar 18).

<sup>697</sup> BE 8 117 = AH XV no. 197 (Dar 32).

<sup>698</sup> Property deeds written by Nabû-erība include: BM 94680 (Cam 05), BM 82686 = AH XV no. 162 ([Cam] 05), BM 94712 = AH XV no. 172 (Dar 01). Harvest estimate: BM 94675 (Dar 18). He is found as witness in: BM 26671 (Dar 00), EAH 212 (Dar 02), BM 86290 (Dar 05), BM 17693 (Dar 06), and BM 82627 (Dar 07).

Table 10: tie strength of Nabû-mukîn-zêri//Rê'i-alpi (ca. 558-504 BCE) &amp; Rēmût-Nabû//Rê'i-alpi (ca. 528-492 BCE)

Indiv.	Attestations (NMZ / RN)	Role	Duration in Years	Temple	Agri.	Fam.	Prop. sales	Silver	Tax
Nabû-mukîn-zêri/Zêru- Bâbili/Nappāhu	21 / 5 <sup>699</sup>	witness / scribe / proxy	24	+	+	++	++	++	++
Rēmût-Nabû/Nabû-šumu- ušur/Šarrahu	17 / 8	scribe / witness / creditor (close kin)	35	-		++	++	++	++
Nabû-erība/Nabû-mukîn- zêri/RA	7 / 12 <sup>700</sup>	witness / scribe / seller / <i>ēpišānūtu</i>	37	++	+	-	+	+	
Šamaš-iddin/Nabû- mušētiq-uddi/RA	14 / 8	scribe / witness / <i>ēpišānūtu</i>	23	+	+	++	++	+	
Nabû-ahhē-šullim/Nabû- šumu-ušur/RA	15 / 2	witness / donor preb. / adoptive father / debtor	20	+	-	+	+	+	
Iddin-Nabû/Nādin/RA	11 / 5	scribe / preb. owner / witness	24	+		-	++	+	
Nabû-ahhē-iddin/Nabû- zêru-ušēbši/Ilia	11 / 3	witness / scribe (creditor ?)	18	+		+	+	+	+

<sup>699</sup> He is found in three more documents acting on behalf of the archive holders, without them being present at the transactions.

<sup>700</sup> He is found in three more documents acting on behalf of the archive holders, without them being present at the transactions.

Indiv.	Attestations NMZ / RN	Role	Duration in Years	Temple	Agri.	Fam.	Prop. sales	Silver	Tax
Rēmūt-Nabū/Nabū-ēṭir- napšāti/RA	11 / 1	preb. donor / witness / scribe / guarantor	34	++			+		
Marduk-šumu-ušur/ Mušēzib-Marduk/ Ahiya'ūtu	9 / 1	witness / seller (land) / neighbour (land)	50	+	+	-	+	+	
Nabū-ahihē-bullit/Tabnēa/ RA	8 / 4	scribe / proxy / exchange prop. / witness	37	+	-		+		
Nabū-šumu-ukīm/Mušēzib -Marduk/RA	8 / 3	witness / donor preb. / scribe / co- debtor (close kin)	between 15-23 <sup>701</sup>	+		+	+	-	
Dadīa/Bunanu/Ibni-Adad	5 / 3	seller (land via proxy) / debtor / witness	12		++		+		
Ašarēdu/Nabū-ēṭir/Iddin- Papsukkal	8 / -	scribe	31		-		+	-	

<sup>701</sup> Note that the date on the property deed BM 26231 (Cyr [X]) is damaged. His first attestation in relation to Nabū-mukīn-zēri/Re' i-alpi could thus date between 538 and 530 BCE.



#### 4.2.5. Atkuppū

As we have said previously the Atkuppū archive is not particularly suited for the present investigation. The available information for this family is limited in size, coherence and depth. In order to counter some of these drawbacks I have taken only the texts from the fourth and penultimate generation. Covering the period between ca. 534-494 BCE, it is represented by Nabû-šumu-ušur/Marduk-šumu-ibni, and his three younger brothers Nabû-iddin, Murānu and Iqīšaya. However, with just over eighty texts for a period of roughly forty years, there is still much left to be desired in terms of information density, especially since it lacks important family documents or property deeds. In spite of that, close contacts can still be found in the records of the Atkuppū brothers.

Let us start with the most frequently attested individual, **Gimil-Nabû/Mušēzib-Bēl/Šēpē-ilia**. Mentioned seven times between 517-494 BCE, his primary role in the archive is that of scribe.<sup>702</sup> His most noteworthy contribution in this capacity was the recording of the dissolution of the *harrānu* enterprise between two of the Atkuppū brothers, Nabû-iddin and Murānu. Besides a promissory note for barley from the temple income (*maššartu*),<sup>703</sup> he mostly wrote debt notes for silver, some of which could have a background in *harrānu* ventures.<sup>704</sup>

The next individual who needs examination is **Iddin-Nabû/Nabû-šumu-ukīn/Rēš-ummāni**. Attested between 517-496 BCE,<sup>705</sup> he assumed more diverse and active roles than Gimil-Nabû. Found for the first time as scribe of a debt note for silver in Dar 05 (at which Gimil-Nabû was present as witness),<sup>706</sup> he repeatedly acted as creditor of the Atkuppū brothers – one loan amounting to one mina of silver and secured with a pledge.<sup>707</sup> In Dar 26, Iddin-Nabû took it upon himself to settle two accounts with the *gugallu* of Borsippa on behalf of the Atkuppū brothers.<sup>708</sup> Even though these last two transactions might infer a degree of trust, it is hard to decide whether Iddin-Nabû acted as an agent or a patron here. In the light of the various (secured) loans he extended to the Atkuppū, I prefer the latter option. Moreover,

<sup>702</sup> Earliest and latest attestation, respectively: BM 17680 (Dar 05) and VS 4 174 (Dar 28).

<sup>703</sup> VS 3 84 (Dar 07).

<sup>704</sup> BM 29678 (Dar 11), BM 26666 (Dar 19<sup>3</sup>), VS 4 156 (Dar 20), VS 4 174 (Dar 28).

<sup>705</sup> Earliest and latest attestation, respectively: BM 17680 (Dar 05) and BM 17707 (Dar 26).

<sup>706</sup> BM 17680.

<sup>707</sup> I.e. VS 4 156 (Dar 20). The other two debt obligations are: VS 4 140 (Dar 14<sup>3</sup>) and BM 94733 (Dar 19).

<sup>708</sup> Both written on the same day in Dar 26, BM 17707 deals with the payment for two hirelings and BM 26702 with the tax obligation for ‘work on the royal docks’ (*dullu ša kāri ša šarri*).

the brothers' joint venture was deployed in the agricultural sector (onions being part of their business assets), and the fact that at least one of Iddin-Nabû's loans was to be repaid from the surplus of their harvest suggests that he was in a formal business relationship with the brothers, presumably as the stronger, investing partner.<sup>709</sup>

Another individual who shows up in the inner circle of the Atkuppis is **Nabû-uballiṭ/Nabû-ēfir-napšāti/Gallābu**. Mentioned five times between 517-496 BCE,<sup>710</sup> Nabû-uballiṭ's primary role was that of witness. He first appears in Dar 05 in a debt note where Gimil-Nabû and Iddin-Nabû were present as well.<sup>711</sup> After taking out a loan of the Atkuppis in Dar 05,<sup>712</sup> and witnessing a similar transaction a year later,<sup>713</sup> it takes twenty years before Nabû-uballiṭ reappears in the archive. In Dar 26, he witnessed the two transactions with the *gugallu* of Borsippa mentioned above. This shows that he was not only connected to the Atkuppis but also to their business partners or patrons. Another individual who should be mentioned in this respect is **Nabû-bēl-zēri/Mušēzib-Marduk/Aškāpu**. Even though he is mentioned only three times between Dar 05 and Dar 06 (twice as debtor, once as scribe), he always appears in connection with the Atkuppis' intimate contacts: his debt in BM 17680 (Dar 05) was recorded by Iddin-Nabû, and witnessed by Gimil-Nabû and Nabû-uballiṭ; BM 26605 (Dar 06), another promissory note drawn up against him was also witnessed by Nabû-uballiṭ; and finally, he recorded a debt due from Nabû-uballiṭ. Although not much can be said about Nabû-bēl-zēri, his case does add evidence to the fact that the Atkuppis brothers and their close contacts formed a close clique. Even if the full extent of their relationship remains uncertain, it seems to have revolved around the running of business enterprises in the local countryside.<sup>714</sup>

<sup>709</sup> Note also that Iddin-Nabû's brother, Mušēzib-Marduk, also acted as a creditor of the brothers. BM 26724 (Dar 26) records a loan of silver for which part of the patrimony was taken as pledge.

<sup>710</sup> Earliest and latest attestation, respectively: BM 17680 (Dar 05) and BM 17707 (Dar 26).

<sup>711</sup> BM 17680.

<sup>712</sup> BM 17698 (Dar 05).

<sup>713</sup> BM 26605 (Dar 06<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>714</sup> There are at least two more individuals who may be relevant in this respect. 1) Šamaš-iddin/Silim-Bēl/Sîn-imiti is mentioned four times (3x as creditor, 1x as witness): VS 4 149 (Dar 18), BM 94733 (Dar 19), BM 26710 (Dar 19), and BM 26666 (Dar 19<sup>2</sup>). 2) Nabû-uballiṭ/Nabû-šumu-iddin/Ea-ibni is only mentioned twice, but each time in significant contexts: in Dar 06 as first witness in the dissolution contract of the Atkuppis brothers' *harrānu* (BM 17683); in Dar 10 as payer of taxes on behalf of Iddin-Nabû/Atkuppis (BM 102330).

### Conclusion

In this chapter I tried to reconstruct the networks of intimate social relationships in the priestly community of Borsippa. Besides psycho-emotional aspects most commonly associated with intimacy and friendship, it has been shown in the social sciences that intimate relationships can be identified and reconstructed based on structural features. This idea is captured most clearly by the concept of tie strength, which postulates that the intensity or robustness of a relationship can be determined using objective (interactional) criteria. The most basic and widely used yardstick in this respect is the amount of time two individuals spend together, i.e. frequency of contact; other criteria, also incorporated in the present study, include duration of contact, multiplexity of roles (and context), and intensity of encounters. Since intimate relationships such as friendship tend to be among the strongest ties in our lives they usually involve relatively high degrees of tie strength.

The first part of this chapter was devoted to a formal quantitative analysis of the data, based exclusively on the frequency of attestations. The underlying idea is that an individual's lifestyle and specific modes of behaviour vis-à-vis the social environment are reflected in his or her ego network, and vice versa. Hence, the aim of this initial investigation was to find out more about the structure of the personal networks in Borsippa and the interactional attitudes of local priests.

I started by assessing the contacts that occur only once. As expected, this was the case for the vast majority of individuals mentioned in our corpus. Percentages range from 70% in the archives that contain adequate, that is, data-rich ego networks such as Ilia (A), Bēliya'u and Rē'i-alpi, to 90% in the more sparsely documented archives of the Ea-ilūtu-bani and the Atkuppū families. On the other side of the spectrum, only a very small number of individuals occur  $\geq 5$  times. Ranging between 4% and 2% in the single-generation archives to around 1% in the archives of the Atkuppū and the Ea-ilūtu-banis after close relatives and protagonists have been left out of the quantification.

The fact that the figures found in the latter two archives were consistently larger and smaller, respectively, seems to be related primarily to the paucity of information and should not be taken as reflecting reality. The results gained from the single-generation archives with a much higher density of information and adequate ego

networks, are probably more representative. Unfortunately the figures in these archives turned out to be too similar to make a meaningful comparison between them.

The question that imposed itself was whether diverging networks and distinct attitudes were to be expected in our analysis? All ego networks belong to priests, and even if different compartments and business strategies have been observed in previous chapters, this quantitative procedure was probably not sensitive enough to pick up on these details.

Finally, while a comparison between the figures found in our archives and the one found in Sippar by C. Waerzeggers, is not particularly helpful for gaining more information about typical priestly behaviour or networks, it does warn us of one thing: evidence from one city cannot automatically be held as representative for other cities, even if the individuals involved are from a similar socio-economic background and own comparable archives. It should be clear that much more work is needed on Babylonian ego networks before we can fully grasp the meaning of the figures found in the priestly archives of Borsippa. It will be particularly helpful in the future to investigate exactly how and which factors influence the nature of these ancient networks.

In the second part I presented a more qualitative appreciation of the data. Zooming in on the group of individuals attested  $\geq 5$  times, I assessed their relationship with the protagonists by introducing additional dimensions of tie strength: intensity, multiplexity and duration. What did this analysis tell us about the circles of trust and intimacy and the formation of friendship in the priestly community of Borsippa? Let us start with a general but important observation, which concerns the social background of the people involved. The great majority of the intimate relationships found in the archives of priests materialised with individuals from fellow priestly families. While this reconfirms my notion of the priesthood as maintaining a generally inward-looking attitude, it assumed even more rigid dimensions in the domain of friendship. The evidence suggests that in this priestly community relations of trust and intimacy occurred exclusively within the high social stratum marked by the use of family names. Moreover, the only possible exception I could find in the entire corpus

seems to prove this rule. Between ca. 544-540 BCE,<sup>715</sup> a certain Ana-bītīšu/Nūh-ilī is found four times as witness in the archive of Nabû-zēru-ukīn//Gallābu: twice in a debt note of silver, once in a debt note of silver and vats, and once in a receipt of silver resulting from a property sale. It is very likely that the same Ana-bītīšu also received disbursements of flour in BM 85966 (not dated).<sup>716</sup> Admittedly, neither in terms of frequency, duration, or multiplexity does Ana-bītīšu seem to have been a particularly intimate contact of the protagonist. Yet, it is telling that the only instance in which a ‘commoner’ might have enjoyed such a relationship, is found in a non-priestly archive. Even though Nabû-zēru-ukīn//Gallābu descended from a family that traditionally performed the duties of the prebendary barber (*gallābūtu*), the archive does not place the protagonist in a prebendary context and references to the temple institution are entirely missing.<sup>717</sup> Even if individuals from lower strata are found in the archives of priests, no more than two such individuals are mentioned more than five times (≥5), and neither of them represent intimate relationships.<sup>718</sup>

Even if factors like spatial proximity and legal convention might have contributed to the formation of this strict (segregational) pattern, I do not think it could have taken this clear-cut shape without the existence of a strong collective preference and conscious choice on behalf of the priests. Of course to some extent such configuration was to be expected. Socio-anthropologists have long since noticed that friendships tend to be maintained among status or social equals.<sup>719</sup> Moreover, people can select friends only from among other people available to them, and that pool is shrunken tremendously by the social contexts in which people participate. Still, the degree to which this trend manifests itself in the community under investigation is striking to say the least. It strongly suggests that the priests from Borsippa perceived of

<sup>715</sup> See BM 85643 (Nbn 12) and BM 85610 (Nbn 16), for the earliest and latest attestation, respectively. Note however that the date of Smith Coll. no. 97 is damaged (Nbn 30-II-[x]) and BM 85966 is not dated at all.

<sup>716</sup> See for a summary of this text, Zadok 2009: 28.

<sup>717</sup> Jursa 2005: 82-83.

<sup>718</sup> The first exception being <sup>f</sup>Tutubu-esu, a Caro-Egyptian mother who, together with her son, received rations from Marduk-šumu-ibni//Iliā (A), see Waerzeggers 2006. The second is Liblūt/Nabû-ušebši, a person in charge of the ration of the king (later the rations of Queen Apamū), who leased this income to Šaddinnu//Bēliya`u on several occasions, see Waerzeggers 2010: 127-129.

<sup>719</sup> E.g. Lazarsfeld & Merton 1964, Verbrugge 1977, McPherson *et al.* 2001, and Hruschka 2010: 65-66.

themselves as a discrete and socially exclusive unit, and actively sought to maintain this. This observation is of great significance for the ultimate reconstruction of this community and we will come back to this more extensively in the following chapters.

Let us now turn to the relations of trust and intimacy proper and take a closer look at their general features. What was the role of intimate contacts in the archives? In this study a person's status of intimacy depended on four dimensions of tie strength: frequency, duration, intensity and multiplexity. While the first three could be applied fairly straightforwardly, the notion of multiplexity with its traditional emphasis on diversity of roles, befitted our study much less. Individuals who scored high on the first three dimensions of tie strength did usually not fulfil a high diversity of roles or functions in the available documentation; they are predominantly found as scribe and witness. On a more general level it seems that, apart from temple colleagues and tenants, individuals who entered in formal contract with priests do not frequently reappear in the archive. Parties tended to engage in business once or a limited number of times only. Rather than concentrating on the multiplicity of roles, I therefore focused my attention more on the range of social settings in which individuals appeared, i.e. the multiplexity of context. This allowed me to better assess the relationship of intimate contacts even if the range of functions they assumed was limited. But there are some notable exceptions. Take for instance Nabû-ahhē-iddin//Nanāhu, the best-known contact of Ahusunu//Nanāhu: besides being present at both of Ahusunu's weddings, he also lent him money, stood surety for a heavily secured debt, and repeatedly paid taxes on his behalf. Another example can be found in the Bēliya'u archive: Bēl-ēṭir//Šigûa is attested over forty times in the documents of Šaddinnu//Bēliya'u. While he is most frequently attested as scribe and witness, he also acted as business partner and as agent, and presumably grew up as Šaddinnu's next-door neighbour. Notwithstanding these and other examples, intimate contacts in this community are found predominantly in passive roles of scribe and witness and only seldom assumed a more active role, let alone engaged as contracting parties. The adage not to do business with one's friends seems very much in evidence here – or did friends simply not need to record their dealings in formal contracts?

This investigation also sheds more light on the presence of witnesses and scribes in the Neo-Babylonian documentation. Far from being selected at random, their presence can best be understood as a result of their association to one of the contract parties. While it has already been observed that individuals appear repeatedly as

witnesses in Neo-Babylonian private archives,<sup>720</sup> this investigation made it clear that Babylonians, or more specifically Babylonian priests, relied on a small number of individuals to witness and record their transactions and accompany them on their day-to-day business in town and in the countryside. Among this retinue one finds the priests' most intimate contacts.

It is well known that being a witness (or a scribe for that matter) was not simply a passive function but carried responsibilities. While specific individuals could be present at a transaction for a number of reasons (e.g. consent), the presence of witnesses served in the first place to authenticate the transaction and the accompanying legal contract.<sup>721</sup> More important was the fact that they could be called upon to testify in case of litigation.<sup>722</sup> It goes without saying that it was of prime importance that one was able to call on someone who could be summoned on short notice and trusted to provide unconditional support to one's claim, indeed whether it was false or as per agreement. By bringing their most trusted and intimate contacts along to transactions priests made sure they could always rely on the right support in case necessary.

Finally, while it should be clear that the presence of witnesses in legal contracts was often based on their connection to one of the parties, clear guidelines for their selection have eluded us so far, that is, if any existed to start with. However, a glimpse of what might have been the customary, perhaps even ideal, set-up can be gleaned from BM 26483 (Dar 14), mentioned earlier. This marriage agreement between the daughter of Marduk-šumu-ibni//Iliā (A) and the son of Šaddinnu//Bēliya'u is one of the few documents from Borsippa that involves protagonists of two known archives, offering us the unique opportunity to examine the list of witnesses from both sides. As expected, intimate contacts of both parties were present. Apart from the brother of the bride, two of Marduk-šumu-ibni's best-known contacts attended the transaction, Nabû-ušuršu//Šēpê-ilia as witness and Nabû-ētir-napšāti//Kudurrānu as scribe. While the entourage of the Iliās was slightly bigger, presumably because the agreement was concluded at their place, the Bēliya'us did not come without backup. On the side of the groom we find Nabû-ittannu//Nappāhu, a

<sup>720</sup> E.g. Von Dassow 1999b: 6-7.

<sup>721</sup> Von Dassow 1999b.

<sup>722</sup> See Lambert 1996: 100-101 for an interesting passage on the charge (or rather the burden) to function as witness in a Babylonian court.

known witness from the archive of Šaddinnu. Apart from these trusted and familiar individuals there are three further witnesses who do not seem to have maintained a particularly strong relation with either of the parties. While this could simply be due to the accident of documentary recovery, they might have been invited to join the arrangements as neutral parties. This transpires also from Marduk-šumu-ibni's activities as notary scribe. There is so far no evidence that he was acquainted with any of the parties mentioned in the transactions that he recorded in this official capacity. This suggests that the involvement of a neutral party at important transactions, especially those involving the transfer of property, was desirable if not requisite.

In conclusion, the circles of trust and intimacy I reconstructed in this chapter emerged from the highly formalised contexts of the legal documents. As a result, the information gained from this analysis was obviously biased and fairly static in nature. We all know from our own experiences that in reality these relationships are more multifaceted, more complex, and come in a multitude of gradations and variations. Making more generalised statements about intimacy and friendship as it existed in this ancient community of priests would therefore be misleading. This brings us back to our initial question: is it, in this case, valid to talk about friendship? While I have used terms such as circles of trust, intimacy and friendship interchangeably throughout this chapter, the use of the last term is certainly open to discussion. Still, I believe that I was able to show that the relationships examined in this chapter were strong in terms of tie strength. Many of the people concerned knew each other and their families for many years, sometimes decades, kept close and repeated contact and presumably lived in close proximity. They witnessed and recorded each other's investments, weddings and other family affairs, travelled together into the countryside and surrounding cities for business, and at times assumed significant responsibility by standing surety, setting up joint ventures, discharging cultic duties or buying property on each other's behalf. While certainly not all of these relationships represented friendships, it stands to reason that such intimate bonds were formed, maintained and terminated among this very set of relations.

The investigation offered here was obviously exploratory in nature and it should be clear that much more work still needs to be done on this topic. It should be possible and perhaps desirable to devise a simple algorithm allowing us to rank relations more absolutely in terms of tie strength. Moreover, from a network analytic perspective it would be interesting to substantiate these claims by looking closer into the influence



and the positions these individuals occupy in the overall networks. Finally, it would also be worthwhile for future research to investigate whether more dimensions of tie strength could be extracted from our sources, such as reciprocity or other notions commonly associated with intimacy and friendship.