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Judeans in Babylonia : a study of deportees in the Sixth and Fifth Centuries BCE

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3 JUDEAN MERCHANTS IN BABYLONIA AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LONG-DISTANCE TRADE

3.1 Introduction

According to the Hebrew Bible, Judeans in Judah and Babylonia remained in touch with each other after the deportations.⁴⁹¹ Jeremiah 29 describes how letters were sent from Judah to Babylonia and back, and, later in chapter 51, Jeremiah writes prophecies against Babylon on a scroll that would be sent with a Judean royal official to Babylon. Ezekiel 33:21–22 refers to a Judean refugee who brings the news about the destruction of Jerusalem to the exiles. Whatever the historicity of these accounts, it is interesting that their ancient authors took the possibility of communicating between Judah and Babylonia for granted.

Later in the first millennium CE, the exchange of thoughts, goods, and people between the Jewish communities in Palestine and Babylonia is well documented.⁴⁹² These contacts were not only driven by social and religious concerns but also by commercial ambitions, and Jewish businessmen engaged in trade along the Silk Road.⁴⁹³ However, long-distance trade between the Eastern Mediterranean and Babylonia flourished already a millennium earlier in the Neo-Babylonian period. Babylonia had fertile soil, but it was poor in natural resources, which had to be obtained by means of tributes, taxes, and trade. Metal, wood, and luxury items were imported from different parts of the Near East, which offered opportunities for traders of non-Babylonian descent.⁴⁹⁴

The present chapter focuses on Judean merchants in Babylonia, their social networks, and their business activities. I argue that these people were integrated into the commercial sphere of Babylonian society and that they had native Babylonian merchants as well as traders of foreign origin among their acquaintances. Furthermore, because travelling and the transportation of goods are an integral part of commercial activity, Judean merchants provide an example of people who could have maintained connections between the communities in Judah and Babylonia. The chapter begins with an overview of Babylonian trade and traders in the first millennium BCE. This is followed by a case study of the descendants of Arih, a family of Judean royal merchants in Sippar. In order to situate them in the right socio-economic context, I study the community of traders in Sippar more generally and explore the evidence of other Judean merchants in Babylonia. Finally, I discuss the role of Judean merchants in long-distance trade.

⁴⁹¹ This chapter has previously been published as a journal article in *Die Welt des Orients* 47 (Alstola 2017). I am grateful to the publisher for the kind permission to use the article in my thesis. Small revisions have been made in order to accommodate the article to the present study. I wish to thank the Trustees of the British Museum for their kind permission to study and cite from tablets in their care.

⁴⁹² See Oppenheimer 2005, 417–432; Hezser 2011, 311–364.

⁴⁹³ Utas 1993, 27–28; Dignas and Winter 2007, 208–209; Hezser 2011, 325–332.

⁴⁹⁴ On Babylonian long-distance trade, see Oppenheim 1967, 236–254; Graslin-Thomé 2009.

3.2 Trade and Traders in Babylonia

Trade in first-millennium Babylonia was not a state-monopolised business, and a diverse group of people engaged in mercantile activities.⁴⁹⁵ On the one hand, some people were explicitly identified as *tamkāru* ('merchant') or *tamkār (ša) šarri* ('royal merchant'). On the other hand, urban families played a central role in local trade in agricultural staples and some even engaged in long-distance trade, although these people are never called *tamkāru* or *tamkār šarri* in the documents.⁴⁹⁶

The title *tamkāru* is attested in cuneiform documentation from the Old Akkadian period onwards,⁴⁹⁷ and the term was used both in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. In the first millennium, *tamkāru* probably denoted the specific status of a professional merchant, but it is unclear if *tamkārus* were exclusively royal officials. The close connection between *tamkārus* and the royal administration is evident in the Neo-Assyrian period, and many *tamkārus* worked for the king and his high officials.⁴⁹⁸ However, Laetitia Graslin-Thomé argues that this view is skewed by the nature of the available evidence and that not all *tamkārus* worked for the state, as some of them could have been independent actors.⁴⁹⁹

In the Neo-Babylonian period, some *tamkārus* bore titles describing the type of trade they were specialised in,⁵⁰⁰ and some played a role in long-distance trade.⁵⁰¹ Many luxury products – such as gold, incense, and dyes – were of foreign origin and could be obtained only via extensive trade networks covering the whole Near East.⁵⁰² *Tamkārus* were also involved in the temple economy: they bought staples from the temple and acquired luxury products for that institution.⁵⁰³ In addition to *tamkārus*, royal merchants, *tamkār (ša) šarris*, are attested in Babylonian sources. Even though it is clear that royal merchants were somehow affiliated with the palace, there is not enough evidence to determine whether or not they were royal officials.⁵⁰⁴ Furthermore, the terminological difference between *tamkāru* and *tamkār šarri* is not clear and the terms may have been interchangeable.⁵⁰⁵

It is important to note that *tamkārus* did not monopolise Babylonian domestic or long-distance trade, and people who are never identified as *tamkārus* engaged in various trading activities. Prosperous entrepreneurial families, such as the Egibis of Babylon and the Murašûs of Nippur, played a central role in the transportation of staples from the

⁴⁹⁵ On trade and merchants in first-millennium Babylonia, see Oppenheim 1967; Dandamayev 1995, 523–530; Joannès 1999, 175–194; Heltzer 2006, 347–351; Graslin-Thomé 2009; Graslin-Thomé 2014, 603–628; Jursa 2010a, 214–228.

⁴⁹⁶ Dandamayev 1995; Jursa 2004a, 130–131; Jursa 2010a, 224–225.

⁴⁹⁷ CAD T, 125.

⁴⁹⁸ Elat 1987, 233–254; Radner 1999, 101–126.

⁴⁹⁹ Graslin-Thomé 2009, 384–390.

⁵⁰⁰ Sheep and date merchants are explicitly mentioned in the archives. See Joannès 1999, 179.

⁵⁰¹ Dandamayev 1995, 527; Joannès 1999, 177–178.

⁵⁰² Oppenheim 1967; Joannès 1999, 184–189; Graslin-Thomé 2009, 179–338.

⁵⁰³ Joannès 1999, 177–178; Jursa 2010a, 580–581.

⁵⁰⁴ See Dandamayev 1995; Joannès 1999, 178; Jursa 2004a, 129–130; Heltzer 2006; Graslin-Thomé 2009, 397–398, 400–402.

⁵⁰⁵ Jursa 2004a, 130; Jursa 2010a, 580. However, Dandamayev 1995; Joannès 1999, 177–179; and Graslin-Thomé 2009, 401–402 take *tamkāru* and *tamkār šarri* as two different categories.

countryside to cities and their retail sale to urban customers. Entrepreneurs bought crops from farmers, thus providing them with a channel to sell their products and a means to pay taxes.⁵⁰⁶ Long-distance trade was only a minor interest for these wealthy families.⁵⁰⁷ Nevertheless, some Babylonian businessmen – such as Iššar-tarībi, son of Bunene-ibni – actively participated in long-distance trade, even though they are not referred to as *tamkārus*.⁵⁰⁸

The existence of people like Iššar-tarībi, who earned his living from trade but did not bear the title of *tamkāru*, illustrates the complex meanings of the designations discussed above. *Tamkāru* was not a blanket term referring to anybody involved in domestic or long-distance trade, but it denoted rather a certain status or affiliation. As it appears that the *tamkāru* of the Neo-Assyrian period and the *tamkār šarri* of the Neo-Babylonian period were closely connected with the royal administration, it is possible that an institutional connection underlay the Neo-Babylonian term *tamkāru* as well. This does not necessarily mean that *tamkārus* were dependent on the palace or temple; such an institution could be seen more as a client or, alternatively, an employer. Be this as it may, it is safe to conclude that both *tamkārus* and *tamkār šarris* were professional merchants in the Neo-Babylonian period, with the latter group being employed by the state in one way or another.⁵⁰⁹

Many merchants who engaged in long-distance trade were evidently of foreign origin, as A. Leo Oppenheim suggested already in 1967.⁵¹⁰ Several royal merchants from the sixth century indeed bear non-Babylonian names,⁵¹¹ and in Nebuchadnezzar's *Hofkalender* the official in charge of royal merchants (*rab tamkārī ša šarri*) bears the West Semitic name Hanūnu.⁵¹² The exact duties of this official are unknown, but his title and appearance among other royal officials in the *Hofkalender* emphasises the close connection between *tamkār šarris* and the royal administration. There are no other certain attestations of *rab tamkārī ša šarri* in Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian documents. In contrast, persons identified as *rab tamkārī* ('the chief of merchants') appear in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts.⁵¹³ It is plausible that they worked for an institution

⁵⁰⁶ Stolper 1985, 27–28; Wunsch 1993 vol a, 19–55; Wunsch 2007, 238–239; Jursa 2010a, 214–220.

⁵⁰⁷ Jursa 2004a, 130–131; *pace* Dandamayev 1995, 528.

⁵⁰⁸ On the available evidence of long-distance trade in private archives, see Jursa 2010a, 224–225. On Iššar-tarībi, see section 3.4.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Jursa 2010a, 580.

⁵¹⁰ Oppenheim 1967, 253–254. He is followed by Jursa 2004a, 131. On the situation in the Neo-Assyrian period, see Nissinen 2014, 288 + n. 101.

⁵¹¹ See Zadok 2004, 112–113; Heltzer 2006; Bloch 2014. Add also text no. 17 from the Neirabian archive (Dhorme 1928; see Tolini 2015, 84 + n. 83).

⁵¹² Da Riva 2013, col. vi*: 18'. On the name, see Zadok 2004, 114.

⁵¹³ ND 2684: 9 (Kalhu, the reign of Sargon II?, edited in Parker 1961, 43); possibly in SAA 7 9 obv. col. ii:20' (Nineveh, the reign of Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal); CT 55 823:2 (Sippar, 21-V-13 Nbn); *Camb* 384:11 (Humadēšu?, 1-IX-7 Camb; for this and the following text, see Zadok 1976, 67–74); Pinches 1892a, 134: 9 (Humadēšu?, 17-X-7 [Camb]); Cameron 1948, no. 85:3 (Babylonia?, 25-IX-20 Dar); MacGinnis 1995, no. 118:6 (Sippar, 5-I-Dar).

Nbn 464:6 (Sippar, 13-X-10 Nbn) reads ^{lú}gal ^{lú}dam.meš [...], but Bongenaar 1997, 138–139, 406, completes the text as ^{lú}gal ^{lú}dam.<gàr>.meš [šá lugal]. Dandamayev 1971, 74; and Heltzer 2006, 348, understand the text similarly, but cf. MacGinnis 1994, 205 + n. 38.

and were responsible for the management of their employer's traders or trading operations.⁵¹⁴

3.3 Judean Royal Merchants in Sippar

3.3.1 Sources

Six cuneiform tablets pertain to the descendants of Arih, a family of Judean royal merchants in Sippar. In 1989, Martha T. Roth published a marriage agreement (BM 65149) between the Judean bride Kaššāya/Amušê and the Babylonian groom Guzānu/Kiribtu/Ararru from the fifth year of Cyrus.⁵¹⁵ Another version of the marriage agreement (BM 68921), not a duplicate, was discussed by Roth in 1989 but published in full by Michael Jursa only in 2001.⁵¹⁶ In 2007, Jursa identified an additional three tablets relating to the bride's family.⁵¹⁷ The present author collated these three tablets (BM 68420, 74411, and 75434) in the British Museum in July 2014. Yigal Bloch added yet another tablet (CT 4 21a) to the group in his article in 2014.⁵¹⁸ Bloch's article presents an edition of all the six tablets and a discussion of their contents and relevance for the study of Judeans in Babylonia. Because of their recent publication, there is no need to edit any texts here, but some emendations to Bloch's readings are suggested. The numbering of the tablets follows Bloch 2014.

The earliest text of the group is no. 3, written in Sippar in the tenth year of Nabonidus (BM 75434, 18-II-10 Nbn, 546 BCE). It is a promissory note for half a mina of silver, owed by the royal merchant (*tamkār šarri*) Basia, son of Arih, to Marduka/Bēl-īpuš/Mušēzib. Unlike his creditor, Basia is not known from other sources, and he was not a member of the urban Babylonian social stratum bearing family names.⁵¹⁹ Judging by his patronymic, he was instead of foreign origin.⁵²⁰ His creditor Marduka was a well-known tithe farmer (*ša muhhi ešrī*) of the Ebabbar temple in Sippar.⁵²¹ Because it is unlikely that the royal merchant Basia owed tithes to Marduka, the transaction was perhaps connected to the resale of agricultural produce. It is noteworthy that the tablet was written at the time of the barley harvest and repayment was to take place a month

⁵¹⁴ See Elat 1987, 253–254; Bongenaar 1997, 138; Radner 1999, 101 n. 3.

⁵¹⁵ Roth 1989, no. 26 (= BMA 26).

⁵¹⁶ Jursa 2001.

⁵¹⁷ Jursa 2007a.

⁵¹⁸ Bloch 2014.

⁵¹⁹ The use of family names (i.e. three-tier genealogies) is a feature that distinguishes a number of Babylonian families from the rest of the population and generally suggests their elevated social standing. See Nielsen 2011.

⁵²⁰ The meaning and etymology of Arih is not clear. See Zadok 2004, 108–110; Bloch 2014, 128–129; PNA 1/I, 131. Add OIP 122 15, a sale of slaves written in Biranatu in 24 Nbk (580 BCE), to Zadok's list of people named Arih in Babylonia (see Jursa 2006, 453–454; Jursa 2007a, n. 4). In this text, a certain Šadiku/Arih is the buyer of the slaves. Jursa 2006, 453 suggests a possible connection between this text and the text group from Sippar, but this remains hypothetical due to the lack of any other evidence than the occurrence of the name Arih.

⁵²¹ Bongenaar 1997, 429–433; Jursa 1998a, esp. 49–52.

later. Professional merchants customarily bought dates from the Ebabbar temple,⁵²² and a purchase of barley might have been behind this promissory note.

Two more tablets pertaining to the descendants of Arih were written in the eleventh and twelfth years of Nabonidus. They are similar in their contents, both referring to house rental payments and trade in gold. The more complete tablet of the two is no. 5 (BM 74411, 30-II-12 Nbn, 544 BCE), a receipt of sale which originates from the Ebabbar temple, even though the temple or the place of writing is not explicitly mentioned.⁵²³ The transaction did not take place between two individuals; only the name of the seller of gold, Amuše/Arih, is referred to. The purchaser remains anonymous, and neither the scribe nor the witnesses of the document are mentioned. However, the origin of the capital required for the purchase is specified in detail. The silver component was partially taken from a storehouse, part of it originated as house rental payments, and a substantial part of the price was paid in 100 *kurru* of dates, the equivalent of 3 minas of silver. The value of the transaction was not negligible: Amuše sold 42 shekels of gold for 5 minas and 36 shekels of silver.⁵²⁴ These features point towards an institutional background of the transaction, in this case the Ebabbar temple.

Text no. 4 (BM 68420, III-11 Nbn, 545 BCE) is broken, but a comparison with no. 5 helps to understand its contents. It was written in Sippar and originated in the Ebabbar administration, as the property of Šamaš is referred to on line 4. The structure of the text follows no. 5: information on house rental payments is combined with a reference to gold received from Marduka, son of Arih. A certain Marduka is also attested on line 1, but he seems to be one of the suppliers of silver and not identical to Marduka/Arih. Judging by the similarities between texts 4 and 5, it is reasonable to suggest that no. 4 pertains to a sale of gold to Ebabbar by Marduka, son of Arih. Two points are of interest here. First, gold was a rare metal in ancient Babylonia, used solely for luxurious or cultic purposes, and silver was used as the medium of exchange.⁵²⁵ Second, trade in gold was the business of professional merchants,⁵²⁶ which strongly supports the conclusion that both Amuše and Marduka were *tamkārus*, if not royal merchants (*tamkār šarri*).

A number of comments on and corrections to Bloch's edition of the texts are in order here. According to Bloch, the operative part of text no. 4 continues from the obverse to the reverse and there is no witness list before the name of the scribe.⁵²⁷ Only the last

⁵²² Jursa 2010a, 580–584.

⁵²³ See Bloch 2014, 147 n. 64, 158.

⁵²⁴ Line 10 concerning the amount of silver is broken, which leaves some room for different interpretations. The first readable sign must be either 1/2 or 5/6, followed by *ma.na 6 gín kù.babbar*. The amount of silver is thus x minas and 36 or 56 shekels. Line 11 reads *[a-n]a 5/6 ma.na 2 gín kù.gi ki-i pi-i 8.kam*. Accordingly, gold was exchanged for silver at a ratio of 1 to 8. Based on the information on line 11, Jursa (2010a, 524 n. 2856) multiplies 52 shekels of gold by 8, which makes 6 minas and 56 shekels of silver. However, as it appears that the origin of the silver is described on the preceding lines, Bloch (2014, 156–58) arrives at a different conclusion. If the broken numeral at the beginning of line 7 is 1, the sum of the payments is 5 minas and 36 shekels of silver. Because the cuneiform signs for 2/3 and 5/6 closely resemble each other, Bloch suggests that 5/6 minas should be taken as a scribal error for 2/3 minas on line 11. This fits the ratio of 1 to 8 (42 shekels of gold for 5 minas and 36 shekels of silver). Considering the transaction as a whole, Bloch's suggestion is to be followed.

⁵²⁵ Jursa 2010a, 474 + n. 2584, 508, 524.

⁵²⁶ Jursa 2007a.

⁵²⁷ Bloch 2014, 154–156.

two or three signs of the first four lines of the reverse are visible, and according to my collation of the tablet at the British Museum, they most likely present the remnants of a witness list. The beginning of the reverse can be reconstructed as follows:

- 8) [^{lu}mu-gin PN1 a]-šú šá
- 9) [PN2 a ^{lu}sanga-s]ip-par^{ki}
- 10) [PN3 a-šú šá ^l]su-^damar.utu⁵²⁸
- 11) [a ^{lu}sanga-^dinanna-tin.t]ir^{ki} ⁵²⁹
- 12) [^{lu}umbisag ^{ld}ag?]-mu-si.sá a-šú šá
- 13) [^lx?]-ba?-[x] a ^{lu}sanga-^dinanna-tin.tir^{ki}

[Witnesses: PN1, son] of [PN2, descendant of Šangû-S]ippar; [PN3, son of] Erība-Marduk, [descendant of Šangû-Ištar-Bāb]ili. [Scribe: Nabû?]-šum-līšir, son of [Balassu?], descendant of Šangû-Ištar-Bābili.

Two sequences of names with three-tier genealogies fit the available space and the remnants of the signs perfectly. Moreover, the families of Šangû-Sippar (Šangû-Šamaš) and Šangû-Ištar-Bābili played a central role among the priesthood of Ebabbar and they are frequently attested in the documentation from the temple archive.⁵³⁰ The person mentioned on lines 10–11 was probably one of the sons of Erība-Marduk/Marduk-zēr-ibni/Šangû-Ištar-Bābili.⁵³¹ As Bloch's copy of the tablet shows, the last three signs of the personal name on line 12 are at least partially visible. The remnants of the sign before 'si.sá' suggest reading 'mu', resulting in a personal name ending with 'šum-līšir'. From the Šangû-Ištar-Bābili family, only one such man, Nabû-šum-līšir/Balassu, is known to me, but reconstructing his patronymic on line 13 causes difficulties.⁵³²

On line 2 in text no. 5, one should read '1 me gur zú.[lum.ma]' ('100 *kurru* of da[tes]'), instead of '1 me gur ina ^{giš}ban'' ('100 *kurru* by the *sūtu* measure').⁵³³ A reference to the type of produce makes the most sense in this context, and the price of 1.8 shekels of silver per 1 *kurru* of dates fits well with the range of date prices at Ebabbar in the twelfth year of Nabonidus.⁵³⁴ Jursa has convincingly shown that Ebabbar could not set the cost of dates independently, as market mechanisms determined the prices.⁵³⁵ Because the price paid for gold is also not exceptional, Bloch's conclusion that Ebabbar was 'able to bend the prices in its favour' appears to be mistaken.⁵³⁶ The last two signs on line 2 should perhaps be read as 'é gur⁷' ('storehouse'). Moreover, '1/3 gín' on line 6 is not a mistake, but a common way of referring to 1/3 mina in Neo-Babylonian economic

⁵²⁸ According to Bloch 2014, 155, 'The signs at the end of l. 10 are slightly deformed.' However, instead of 'máš-šú^l' (Bloch 2014, 154), the signs quite clearly present the sequence '^damar.utu'.

⁵²⁹ The reading '[t]ir^{ki}' fits the preserved signs better than Bloch's (2014, 154) reading 'e⁷-eh^l'.

⁵³⁰ Zawadzki 1990, 17–25; Bongenaar 1997, 12–15, 435–463; Waerzeggers 2014a, 28–29.

⁵³¹ See Bongenaar 1997, 436 with further references.

⁵³² One sign of the patronymic is visible on line 13. Bloch reads it as 'i', but I only see three horizontal wedges. The sign might thus be 'ba', but there is not enough space to insert '*lat-su*' in the break after the sign. On Nabû-šum-līšir/Balassu/Šangû-Ištar-Bābili, see Bongenaar 1997, 439–440.

⁵³³ See Jursa 2010a, 534.

⁵³⁴ Jursa 2010a, 593.

⁵³⁵ Jursa 2010a, 590–591.

⁵³⁶ Bloch 2014, 131. On the prices which the Eanna temple of Uruk paid for gold, see Joannès 1982a, 242–244.

texts.⁵³⁷ In texts 4 and 5, Bloch systematically translates *ina qāt* (*ina šu^{II}*) as ‘under the charge of’, referring to a commodity at someone’s disposal. However, *ina qāt* should often be translated simply as ‘from’, pointing to the payer or supplier of the goods in question.⁵³⁸ This seems to be the correct translation, at least in no. 5 where part of the dates and silver for the purchase are supplied by Kīnā and Bakûa.

Basia and Marduka both had Babylonian names,⁵³⁹ but Amuše’s name points to his non-Babylonian origin. *A-mu-še-e* is the Babylonian spelling of *Hwšē* (‘Hosea’ or ‘Hoshea’), a name which is attested several times in the Hebrew Bible.⁵⁴⁰ The significant differences in the spelling result from the characteristics of Babylonian, in which the West Semitic *h* could not be accurately presented and *w* was customarily written as *m* or left completely out.⁵⁴¹ According to Zadok, Hosea ‘is an exclusively Hebrew name’.⁵⁴² This statement finds support in the few attestations of the name in Neo-Babylonian sources: only three different individuals used the name, and two of them had blood relatives with Yahwistic names.⁵⁴³ Moreover, a longer theophoric form of this name, Amuš-Yāma, is attested in three documents from the surroundings of Yāhūdu.⁵⁴⁴

Arih is a rare foreign name in Babylonian sources. It is thus striking that three sons of Arih are attested in the economic sphere of the Ebabbar temple within a period of three years. Furthermore, Basia is explicitly called a royal merchant, whereas Amuše and Marduka also appear in a context related to trade. This evidence alone may not be strong enough to confirm that the three men were brothers, but two marriage agreements corroborate their family relationship and Judean background. Bēl-uballit (son of Amuše), his unnamed brother, and their mother Gudadadītu gave their sister and daughter Kaššāya in marriage in the fifth year of Cyrus (no. 2, BM 68921⁵⁴⁵, II-[5 Cyr], 534 BCE). The groom was Guzānu, son of Kiribtu, whose family name of Ararru betrays his Babylonian descent. For an unknown reason, the marriage agreement of Kaššāya and Guzānu was drafted again a month later (no. 1, BM 65149, 11-III-5 Cyr).⁵⁴⁶ The witnesses had changed somewhat, but the contract remained almost the same. The only major difference seems to be the absence of the unidentified brother, who, together with his brother and mother, gave Kaššāya in marriage in no. 2. Two brothers of the bride, Šamaš-iddin and

⁵³⁷ Lorenz 2005/2006, 248–251.

⁵³⁸ CAD E, 404; CAD Q, 192.

⁵³⁹ Even though the etymology of both names is disputed, they are typical of the Neo-Babylonian onomasticon. See PNA 1/II, 276; PNA 2/II, 704; Streck 2001, 116; Bloch 2014, 129, 153; Pearce and Wunsch 2014, 44, 65; Nielsen 2015, 58–59, 206, 208–209.

⁵⁴⁰ Zadok 1979a, 26–27; Jursa 2007a; Bloch 2014, 145–146. An alternative spelling of the name in Babylonian was *Ú-še-eh* (PBS 2/1 60), for which see Stolper 1976, 26 n. 10; Zadok 1979a, 26. For some attestations of the name in the Hebrew Bible, see 2 Kings 17–18; Hosea 1. Cf. the Neo-Assyrian attestations of this name in PNA 1/I, 238; PNA 3/II, 1421.

⁵⁴¹ von Soden 1969 § 8, 21, 23, 25, 31. See also Coogan 1973, 189–190; and Bloch 2014, 122.

⁵⁴² Zadok 1979a, 26.

⁵⁴³ Amuše (*Nbn* 1); Amuše/Arih (no. 5; as a patronymic in nos. 1, 2, and 6); Mattan-Yāma/Amuše (Stolper 1985, no. 113; written as *Ú-še-eh* in PBS 2/1 60).

⁵⁴⁴ B3; C34, 45. See Pearce and Wunsch 2014, 39.

⁵⁴⁵ The text has been previously edited in Jursa 2001. See also Roth 1989, 94–95.

⁵⁴⁶ The text has been previously edited as BMA 26. See also Jursa 2001; Jursa 2004b, 90–91. Bloch 2014, 132, suggests that the contract was drafted again because ‘some difficulties arose with the marriage of Kaššāya’.

Nabû-ittannu, and a brother of the groom, Lâbâši, are among the witnesses of both documents. Amušê, the father of the bride, was absent on both occasions.

The patronymic of Amušê is not mentioned in the marriage agreements, but some of the numerous witnesses establish a link between the bride's family and the three sons of Arih discussed above. Both marriage agreements were witnessed by four royal merchants: Ahu-Yāma/Arih, Arad-Gula/Šamri-Yāma, Niqūdu/Mušallammu, and Šamaš-aplu-ušur/Rapê. As in the previous three documents, people engaged in professional trade play a major role here. Moreover, they all have West Semitic names or patronymics, two of which are Yahwistic.⁵⁴⁷ The key person here is the first witness, Ahu-Yāma/Arih, who must have been a brother of Basia, Marduka, and Amušê. Arih is a rarely attested non-Babylonian name, but it appears four times as a patronymic of professional merchants in Sippar within a period of 12 years. This leaves little room for doubt. Accordingly, Kaššāya's father must be the same person as Amušê/Arih in text no. 5. The Yahwistic name of Ahu-Yāma and the distinctly Judean name Amušê confirm the immigrant background of this family, which appears to consist of Judean royal merchants living in Sippar.⁵⁴⁸

The three documents pertaining to Basia, Marduka, and Amušê originated in the administration of the Ebabbar temple and may thus belong to the temple archive. Alternatively, they were handed over to the merchants after the transactions were completed and the debts were paid back.⁵⁴⁹ The marriage agreements between Kaššāya and Guzānu are not related to the temple, and, together with the three other documents, they may be the remnants of the private archive of the descendants of Arih. The documents belong to the 82-9-18, AH 82-9-18A, and AH 83-1-18 collections of the British Museum, which are predominantly comprised of Ebabbar texts but also contain documents from private archives.⁵⁵⁰ It is likely that the private archives were unearthed together with the temple archive.⁵⁵¹ Most of the private archives found in the vicinity of Ebabbar relate to people who held prebends and might have kept their private documents on the temple premises.⁵⁵² At the same time, some private archives – such as the archive of the non-prebendary trader Iššar-tarībi – were deposited in the vicinity of the Ebabbar material because of their connection to the archive of Marduk-rēmāni.⁵⁵³ The main protagonist of this archive, Marduk-rēmāni, was an influential man both in the temple and in the trading communities of Sippar. The parties of the present marriage agreements belonged to the Sipparean trading community and knew people in Marduk-rēmāni's circles,⁵⁵⁴ but nothing suggests that a connection to the archive of Marduk-rēmāni brought these texts into contact with the Ebabbar archive. However, the discovery of other

⁵⁴⁷ On Mušallammu, see Abraham 2005/2006, 216; on Rapê, see PNA 3/1, 1032–1033. On both names, see Bloch 2014, 133.

⁵⁴⁸ For the family tree of the descendants of Arih, see Bloch 2014, 127.

⁵⁴⁹ Promissory notes were usually handed over to the debtor when the debt was paid back; however, this was not always the case. See Jursa 2005a, 42.

⁵⁵⁰ Reade 1986, xxxiii–xxxiv; Leichty and Grayson 1987, 143, 233, 247; Leichty et al. 1988, 4, 34 (note that BM 75434 is catalogued as a receipt for a sheep); Waerzeggers 2014a, 145.

⁵⁵¹ Waerzeggers 2014a, 16 + n. 6.

⁵⁵² Bongenaar 2000, esp. 91–92. See also Jursa 2005a, 120–29; Waerzeggers 2014a, 15–22, 144–46.

⁵⁵³ Waerzeggers 2014a, esp. 19–22, 86–89.

⁵⁵⁴ See section 3.3.2.

– also non-prebendary – private archives at Ebabbar confirms that the documents pertaining to the descendants of Arih do not necessarily belong to the temple archive, but they may constitute the remnants of the private archive of the Judean family.

Even though the bride's family was of Judean origin, the marriage agreements comply with the standard features of such documents from sixth-century Babylonia.⁵⁵⁵ As customary, the dowry given by the bride's family is described in detail: it included jewellery worth 20 shekels of silver,⁵⁵⁶ earrings worth one shekel of gold, an Akkadian bed, five chairs, a table, a goblet, and a bronze platter. Kaššāya's family could afford to provide their daughter with some dowry, but it is noteworthy that no silver, real estate, or slaves were included. These items normally constituted the most valuable part of the dowry and were of primary interest to the husband's family, whereas jewellery, furniture, and household utensils were intended for the personal use of the bride and for housekeeping.⁵⁵⁷

The small size of the dowry may lead to two different conclusions: either Kaššāya's family could not afford to give anything else or they did not need to. The stipulations about divorce and adultery may indicate that the families of Kaššāya and Guzānu were not very wealthy. In the case of divorce, Guzānu was to pay six minas of silver and let his wife return to her paternal house.⁵⁵⁸ If Kaššāya was found with another man, she would die by the iron dagger.⁵⁵⁹ The 'iron dagger' clause is attested in marriage agreements with a small dowry or none at all, but which include a stipulation about a payment from the husband to his wife in case of divorce. According to Cornelia Wunsch, this implies that economic factors dictated the choice to include these stipulations in the marriage agreement.⁵⁶⁰ If the bride's family could afford to give a substantial dowry, the economic consequences of losing the dowry due to divorce were serious. Accordingly, no stipulations about compensatory payment were necessary. A wife's adultery must have been severely punished in these marriages as well, even though this is not made explicit in the agreements. In the marriage agreements of less wealthy people, however, clauses about a large compensation and death by the iron dagger emphasised the serious consequences of divorce and adultery.

Caroline Waerzeggers understands the social context of the iron dagger clause differently, and her interpretation fits better with the available evidence.⁵⁶¹ She notes that the connection between poverty and the iron dagger clause is not consistent and that the clause was also used in some marriage agreements involving a dowry. The clause is never found in marriage agreements between parties who bore family names, but it is always attested in marriage agreements between parties who did not bear family names. In marriage agreements between parties from different social backgrounds, the status of the bride was decisive. If she bore a family name, the iron dagger clause was not included. It thus appears that the usage of the iron dagger clause was related to the social background

⁵⁵⁵ See Roth 1989; Abraham 2015, 45.

⁵⁵⁶ $\frac{1}{3}$ gín šu-kut'-tu₄. As in no. 5, $\frac{1}{3}$ gín refers here most likely to $\frac{1}{3}$ mina (i.e. 20 shekels of silver). Wunsch 2003a, 4 n. 14; Jursa 2004b, 91.

⁵⁵⁷ Roth 1989/1990, esp. 1.

⁵⁵⁸ On divorce in Babylonian marriage agreements, see Roth 1989, 12–15; Oelsner et al. 2003, 935–936.

⁵⁵⁹ On the iron dagger clause, see Roth 1988, 186–206; Wunsch 2003a, 3–7; Waerzeggers 2016.

⁵⁶⁰ Wunsch 2003a, 3–7.

⁵⁶¹ Waerzeggers 2016.

of the parties involved, not primarily to their wealth. In the case of Kaššāya and Guzānu, the non-Babylonian background of the bride, not her poverty, prompted the inclusion of the iron dagger clause in the marriage agreements.

Moreover, not only property was transferred in marriage. The families of the husband and bride also shared each other's prestige and social networks. That is why the wealthy Egibis, for instance, were able to give their daughters in marriage with relatively small dowries. Becoming a member of the family was already profitable in a socio-economic sense.⁵⁶² Kaššāya's small dowry indicates that her husband's family placed a high value on marriage ties to a family of royal merchants and that they were satisfied with a dowry consisting only of jewellery and household goods. A daughter of royal merchants was a highly prized bride, even if her family was of foreign origin. Accordingly, Kaššāya's small dowry is hardly indicative of the modest wealth of her family.

Before addressing the social status and networks of the descendants of Arih in more detail, two more documents have to be discussed. Text no. 6 (CT 4 21a, 5-I-19 Dar, 503 BCE) was drafted in Sippar 31 years after the marriage agreements.⁵⁶³ The document is a lease of 30 *ḥašbattu* vessels, which were probably used in a beer brewing and tavern business by the lessee Šamaš-uballit/Nādin/Bā'iru.⁵⁶⁴ The lessor was someone called Rīmūt/Šamaš-zēr-ibni, and the third witness was a certain Bēl-iddin/Amušê. The document belongs to the private archive of Bēl-ittannu/Šamaš-uballit/Ša-nāšišu.⁵⁶⁵ As will be shown below, prosopographical evidence connects this document closely to the marriage agreements, and Bēl-iddin must have been a brother of Kaššāya.

A second document (*Nbn* 1) belongs to the Ebabbar archive and was written in the accession year of Nabonidus (18-III-0 Nbn, 556 BCE). It is a partially broken list of people, kur.ra textiles, and small amounts of silver. The garments were most likely distributed to the workers of the temple, and the value of each garment in silver is given on the list.⁵⁶⁶ The recipients are listed without their patronymics, and a certain Amušê is mentioned on line 13. Even though he was a contemporary of the sons of Arih and attested in Sippar, he appears to have been a member of the temple personnel and thus different from the (royal) merchant Amušê. In any case, he was probably of Judean origin, given the rarity of the name and its connection with Yahwistic names in Babylonian sources.

3.3.2 Social Network

To have a better understanding of Kaššāya and her family of royal merchants, it is necessary to study the other people who appear in the documents discussed above.⁵⁶⁷ The extensive research done on Sipparean cuneiform documentation over the past 25 years

⁵⁶² Roth 1991, 19–37.

⁵⁶³ BM 78391. The tablet was acquired for the British Museum by E. A. W. Budge, and it belongs to the Bu 88-5-12 collection. See Walker 1988; Leichty et al. 1988, 152.

⁵⁶⁴ On the connection between *ḥašbattu* vessels, beer, and taverns, see Joannès 1992; Tolini 2013.

⁵⁶⁵ The Ša-nāšišu B archive in Jursa 2005a, 126–127.

⁵⁶⁶ On kur.ra textiles and their distribution to temple personnel, see Bongenaar 1997, 39–40; Zawadzki 2010, esp. 412–414; Spar and Jursa 2014, 67.

⁵⁶⁷ Some aspects of this social network are studied in Waerzeggers 2014b, 140.

allows me to locate the descendants of Arih and their acquaintances in a wider social context.⁵⁶⁸ However, before mapping out the social networks, it is helpful to focus briefly on the city of Sippar in the sixth century BCE.

The city of Sippar on the banks of the Euphrates was ideally located for trading purposes. The courses of the Euphrates and the Tigris were closest to one another near Sippar, and the trading routes to the Iranian plateau beyond the Tigris and to the Levant beyond the Euphrates met naturally in Sippar. In addition, the state strongly invested in the Sippar region in the sixth century BCE, and royal projects created a boom in agriculture and trade.⁵⁶⁹ Consequently, a vibrant community of local businessmen, foreign traders, and royal merchants arose around the harbour of Sippar. On the other hand, Sippar was an important cult centre of the sun god Šamaš, whose temple Ebabbar stood in the middle of the city. The priests of Ebabbar formed their own closed community, and they rarely took part in trading activities as private persons, even though the temple itself traded regularly with outsiders. The communities of priests and traders can thus be seen as two distinct groups in Sipparean society.⁵⁷⁰ The international character of the Sipparean trading community is also reflected in the marriage agreements of Kaššāya and Guzānu. In addition to Amušê's brother Ahu-Yāma, three other royal merchants witnessed the marriage agreements, and they all bore West Semitic patronymics. This corroborates the well-established view that people of foreign origin played a key role in professional trade in Babylonia.

The descendants of Arih knew people from both the temple and the trading communities of Sippar. In their business transactions with the Ebabbar temple, Basia, Marduka, and Amušê came into contact with a well-known tithe farmer of the temple and with members of the most important priestly families in Sippar.⁵⁷¹ These transactions are important in showing that merchants of Judean origin customarily traded with the temple and met people working for the institution and belonging to priestly families. However, these encounters were professional in nature, and they tell nothing about the friendship or family ties of the Judean family. When it comes to their private circles, it is more fruitful to study the people attested in the marriage agreements.

An evident point of departure for this discussion is the family of Kaššāya's husband Guzānu/Kiribtu/Ararru. The family name Ararru ('miller') is very rare in the Neo-Babylonian sources, and only seven certain attestations of the name are known to me.⁵⁷² Two of these documents – namely, the present marriage agreements – come from Sippar, four from Babylon, and one probably from Babylon or Sippar. The earliest document from Babylon records the sale of an unbuilt plot in the city from the sixth year of

⁵⁶⁸ The most important studies for the present discussion are Bongenaar 1997; Waerzeggers 2014a. See the latter for further literature on Sippar.

⁵⁶⁹ Woods 2005, 37–40; Jursa 2010a, 64, 84–86, 322–359; Jursa and Baker 2011, 533–537; Waerzeggers 2014a, 2–4.

⁵⁷⁰ On the priests of Ebabbar, see Bongenaar 1997. Sipparean society is studied in Waerzeggers 2014a, 119–126.

⁵⁷¹ See section 3.3.1.

⁵⁷² I am grateful to Cornelia Wunsch for her substantial help in gathering the evidence. See also Tallqvist 1905, 67; CAD A/2, 233; Wunsch 2014, 303; Nielsen 2015, 36. There are three other documents that may mention the family name Ararru: *Dar* 411:13 (but according to Abraham 2004, no. 119, the sign should be read as šitim, 'Itinnu'); OECT 10 295; Thureau-Dangin 1922, 85:14 (= RINAP 4 126).

Esarhaddon (20-V-6 Esarh, 675 BCE). The seller was Bēl-ēreš//Ararru and the buyer a certain Ea-qayal-išemme.⁵⁷³ The tablet was unearthed in the Ninurta temple in Babylon, where the Sîn-ilī archive was found.⁵⁷⁴ As the tablet is older than the archive, they may be unrelated. It is also possible that the tablet was kept in the archive to record the ownership history of the plot, which was later bought by the Sîn-ilī family.⁵⁷⁵

Two tablets from Babylon belong to the Egibi archive, the first one being a promissory note that concerns a house rental payment (*Nbk* 137, 21-IV-23 Nbk, 582 BCE). Bēl-iddin/Balassu/Ararru is listed as the second witness. The other document from the Egibi archive is also a promissory note (*Nbn* 600, 5-III-12 Nbn, 544 BCE), which records a debt of 23 *kurru* (4,140 litres) of dates to be paid back with 25 vats of good beer. The creditor was Itti-Marduk-balātu/Nabû-ahhē-iddin/Egibi and the debtor Balātu/Marduk-nāšir/Ararru.

The fourth tablet from Babylon is a promissory note for 6 *kurru* of dates (VS 3 53, 4-III-11 Nbn, 545 BCE), written by a scribe called Arad-Marduk/Bēl-[...]/Ararru. The names of the creditor and debtor are both peculiar, the former being Nabû-ahhē-bullit/Aššur-mutaqqin-dīn(?) and the latter *Mil-ki-šu-mu-lugal-ùru/Ha-am-[ma?]-ta-a-a*. Names containing the theophoric element Aššur are rare in Babylonia,⁵⁷⁶ and *mlk* is not an Akkadian root but a common West Semitic one.⁵⁷⁷ If Hammatāya is the correct restoration, the patronymic means ‘the Hamathean’.⁵⁷⁸ The tablet cannot be assigned to any known archive. Yet another text concerning the Ararru family most likely originates from Babylon or, alternatively, from Sippar. The unpublished tablet BM 77945 (19 Nbk?, 586 BCE?) mentions PN/Aplā/Ararru among the witnesses of a lawsuit.⁵⁷⁹

There is no prosopographical evidence to demonstrate that the descendants of Ararru were all members of a single family. However, several interesting conclusions can be drawn from the seven texts discussed above. First of all, nothing suggests that the Ararrus held prebends at Ebabbar or any other temple in Babylonia. Even though they bore a family name and thus belonged to the upper social stratum in Babylonian society, their profile appears more mercantile than priestly.⁵⁸⁰ Whereas the private life of prebendary families was turned towards the priestly in-group,⁵⁸¹ Guzānu took a wife from a Judean family of merchants and the Ararrus of Babylon had contacts with people of non-Babylonian origin. The fact that they engaged in beer brewing and were connected to the wealthy business family of Egibi indicates that they were involved in business activities in Babylon. Finally, the Ararrus originated from Babylon rather than from Sippar. The marriage agreements of Kaššāya and Guzānu are the only certain attestation

⁵⁷³ Jakob-Rost 1970, no. 4. Note that according to Jakob-Rost’s translation of the broken passage, the seller was Ea-qayal-išemme and the buyer Bēl-ēreš. See Pedersén 2005a, 239.

⁵⁷⁴ Pedersén 2005a, 228–232, 239. On the Sîn-ilī archive, see Jursa 2005a, 69–71.

⁵⁷⁵ Pedersén 2005a, 228–231.

⁵⁷⁶ See Tallqvist 1905, 16–17.

⁵⁷⁷ See PNA 2/II, 750–753.

⁵⁷⁸ Zadok 1977, 12, 20–21, 248.

⁵⁷⁹ Personal communication with Cornelia Wunsch. She suggests that the tablet probably originates from Babylon. Cf. Leichty et al. 1988, 121. According to Walker 1988, xi–xiv, the tablet was acquired from a private person and it possibly originates from Babylon or Sippar.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Bloch 2014, 145.

⁵⁸¹ Still 2016.

of the Ararrus in Sippar, whereas there are four or five separate documents from Babylon. This is noteworthy because several families moved from Babylon to Sippar in the sixth century, including the Šāhit-ginês, a branch of the Ša-nāšišus, and the Arad-Nergals. Royal investment and the booming economy made Sippar attractive for newcomers, some of whom achieved great success in their new hometown. Even though some members of these families were able to make their way into the priestly circles of Ebabbar, the community of newcomers was geared towards trading activities.⁵⁸² It is much easier to fit the family of Guzānu into this mercantile community than into the old, established elite of Sippar and the priestly circles of Ebabbar.

Some of the witnesses with Babylonian names, patronymics, and family names can also be identified as members of the Sipparean mercantile community. The business profile of these people becomes apparent from the documents belonging to the archive of Marduk-rēmāni/Bēl-uballit/Šāhit-ginê and its satellite archives. Marduk-rēmāni's family originated in Babylon but moved to Sippar in the sixth century, and Marduk-rēmāni became a member of the local trading community. At the same time, he succeeded in gaining a strong foothold in the priestly circles of Ebabbar, and his archive is an indispensable source of information on the life of these two distinct communities.⁵⁸³ Neither Marduk-rēmāni nor members of his family appear in the documents pertaining to the descendants of Arih, but they shared several common acquaintances. A witness of both marriage agreements, Nabû-iddin/Bānia/Pahhāru, was related to two business agents of the Šāhit-ginê family.⁵⁸⁴ Another link to the Šāhit-ginê family was Bānia/Bēl-nāšir/Arad-Nergal. He belonged to a family which had moved from Babylon to Sippar at the same time as the Šāhit-ginês and had become part of the Sipparean trading community.⁵⁸⁵ Another interesting witness in the earlier marriage agreement is Šūzubu/Zababa-ah-iddin/Ile'i-Marduk, who acted several times as a scribe in documents in Marduk-rēmāni's archive.⁵⁸⁶ Finally, a certain Guzānu/Kiribtu is a witness in a promissory note belonging to the archive of Marduk-rēmāni, and it is possible that this Guzānu was the groom of Kaššāya.⁵⁸⁷

Prosopographical data connects text no. 6 with the marriage agreements and the family of Kaššāya, even if Bēl-iddin/Amušê, the third witness of no. 6, is not attested in the marriage agreements. A direct link between the earlier marriage agreement no. 2 and text no. 6 is (Nabû-)Bān-zēri/Rīmūt-Bēl/Isinnāya, who witnessed both documents. Interestingly enough, he is the only witness of the marriage agreements to have held a prebend at the Ebabbar temple.⁵⁸⁸ The profiles of the lessee and surety in no. 6 indicate that the text originated in the same social setting as the five earlier documents. The lessor Rīmūt/Šamaš-zēr-ibni cannot be definitively identified in other extant documents, but the lessee Šamaš-uballit/Nādin/Bā'iru participated in a *harrānu* business venture with a

⁵⁸² On these families, see Waerzeggers 2014a, 45–49, 119–124.

⁵⁸³ Waerzeggers 2014a, esp. 15–30, 61–93, 113–125.

⁵⁸⁴ Waerzeggers 2014a, 81–82, 214; MR 8, 25.

⁵⁸⁵ Waerzeggers 2014a, 45–49.

⁵⁸⁶ MR 23, 24, 69, 85, 86, 171.

⁵⁸⁷ Waerzeggers 2014a, 214; MR 39.

⁵⁸⁸ He held a baker's prebend; see Bongenaar 1997, 173.

member of the Ša-nāšišu family in BM 74469.⁵⁸⁹ The Ša-nāšišu family, which had also migrated to Sippar from Babylon, was a part of the Sipparean mercantile and priestly communities.⁵⁹⁰ Another member of this family, Bēl-ittannu/Šamaš-uballit/Ša-nāšišu, acted as a surety in text no. 6, a document which belongs to his private archive.⁵⁹¹ Bēl-iddin/Amušê must have been familiar with these people and their businesses. It is likely that his father Amušê was the father of Kaššāya: the descendants of Arih and the lessee and surety of text no. 6 shared an interest in entrepreneurial activities, Amušê is a rare name in Babylonian sources, and a brother of Kaššāya could still have been alive 31 years after the marriage agreements were drafted. However, it is impossible to know if Bēl-iddin was the unnamed brother in the earlier marriage agreement.⁵⁹²

Prosopographical research shows that the descendants of Arih were closely connected with the community of merchants in the city of Sippar. As royal merchants, they traded with the Ebabbar temple, but only one of the witnesses in the marriage agreements was a priest holding a prebend.⁵⁹³ The family of the groom had a mercantile rather than a priestly profile, and the witnesses of the marriage agreements were predominantly royal merchants or belonged to families which participated in trading activities. The international character of Sipparean traders is also quite apparent in the texts, and people of both West Semitic and Babylonian origin were among the acquaintances of the Judean family. In this connection, it is important to note that some members of the Sipparean trading community participated in long-distance trade from Syria and the Levant to Babylonia.⁵⁹⁴ Accordingly, the family of Arih was rooted in two distinctively international realms of Babylonian society. On the one hand, they were part of the state apparatus as royal merchants;⁵⁹⁵ on the other hand, they were members of the multi-ethnic community of traders at the quay of Sippar.

3.3.3 Identity, Integration, and Socio-economic Status

Analysis of the social network of the descendants of Arih shows that the Judean family had found a place among the community of merchants in Sippar. In the following discussion, I study how this is reflected in their identity and how deeply they were integrated into Babylonian society. These questions have been studied in detail by Bloch,⁵⁹⁶ and I thus limit my discussion to some new aspects and interpretations of the evidence.

The majority of the names of the descendants of Arih are Babylonian.⁵⁹⁷ Only two of his sons, Ahu-Yāma and Amušê, had distinctively Judean names. The names borne by the third generation are fully Babylonian, and three different gods – Bēl (Marduk), Nabû, and Šamaš – are referred to in the theophoric elements. At first sight, the naming practices

⁵⁸⁹ Jursa 2005a, 126 + n. 968.

⁵⁹⁰ On the Ša-nāšišus, see Waerzeggers 2014a, 46, 72–74, 124–125.

⁵⁹¹ The Ša-nāšišu B archive in Jursa 2005a, 126–127.

⁵⁹² Cf. Bloch 2014, 160–161.

⁵⁹³ Cf. Bloch 2014, 141.

⁵⁹⁴ Bongenaar 2000, 86; Waerzeggers 2014a, 85–89.

⁵⁹⁵ See Jursa 2015b on the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic character of the Babylonian state administration.

⁵⁹⁶ Bloch 2014, 127–135.

⁵⁹⁷ See Bloch 2014, 127–130.

of this Sipparean family are in stark contrast to the figures derived from the Judean communities in the countryside. A significantly higher number of identifiable Judeans in the Murašû archive bear Yahwistic names, and the same applies to Judeans in Yāhūdu and its surroundings.⁵⁹⁸ The descendants of Arih were certainly quite different from the Judeans in the countryside, but the available data is somewhat misleading as well. Judeans can be normally identified only on the basis of Yahwistic or other distinctly Judean names possessed by them or their relatives. This skews the overall picture in favour of those who bore traditional Judean names.

The relationship between theophoric names and religious practice is complex, and a theophoric name devoted to a certain deity does not exclude its bearer's worship of other gods. Therefore, it cannot be argued that Ahu-Yāma revered Yahweh and Bēl-iddin worshipped Marduk. However, the readiness to use Babylonian theophoric names indicates that the descendants of Arih were at home in the religious environment of Babylonia.⁵⁹⁹ This is visible also in Kaššāya's and Guzānu's marriage agreements, in which Marduk, Zarpanītu, and Nabû were customarily invoked in the curse section. This is noteworthy in light of Kathleen Abraham's argument that the stipulations of a marriage agreement were negotiated by the parties and not dictated by the scribe.⁶⁰⁰ Accordingly, the invoking of Babylonian gods could not have been an abomination to the Judean family. Judean cultural-religious traditions are visible in the names of Ahu-Yāma and Amušê, but Yahweh's importance for the descendants of Arih remains unknown.

The names of the descendants of Arih reflect the environment they were living in. As members of the Sipparean trading community, they had people of Babylonian and foreign origin in their intimate circles. Close contact with Babylonians accelerated their integration and adoption of local naming practices. Their professional life as merchants naturally played a role in this process, but a desire to advance trade relations with the Ebabbar temple was hardly the main reason for it.⁶⁰¹ Contact with Babylonians was not a decisive factor in the adoption of Babylonian names or culture, as the example of Ahīqam, son of Rapā-Yāma, from the village of Yāhūdu shows. This Judean was in close contact with Babylonians (C14, 17, 18) and even traded in Babylon (C44, 45), but he did not give Babylonian names to his sons.⁶⁰² The nature and intensity of contact were likely important, as collegial and friendship ties are often more influential than business relationships.⁶⁰³

Several aspects of Kaššāya's marriage agreements exhibit a high level of integration into Babylonian society. These include her marriage into a Babylonian family, the Babylonian witnesses of the contract, and its conformity to the standard legal practices of its time. An interesting detail of the dowry is the Akkadian bed (^{giš}ná *ak-ka-di-i-tu*), which stands out from the list of jewellery, furniture, and household utensils. Kaššāya is

⁵⁹⁸ On the Murašû archive, see Bickerman 1978, 15; Bloch 2014, 124–125. A similar picture arises when Bickerman's method is applied to the prosopographical data from Yāhūdu and its surroundings (see the prosopographical index in Pearce and Wunsch 2014, 257–300). See also Pearce 2015, 19–22, 29.

⁵⁹⁹ See Bloch 2014, 129–130.

⁶⁰⁰ Abraham 2015, 33–57.

⁶⁰¹ Cf. Bloch 2014, 132.

⁶⁰² See his family tree in Pearce and Wunsch 2014, 8.

⁶⁰³ This relates to the concept of tie strength in social network analysis. See Granovetter 1973, 1360–1380.

one of three brides in Neo-Babylonian sources who received such a bed as a part of their dowry. Another bride, Habašinnatu (*Nbn* 258), came from the Kāšir family and married into the Rab-banê family; in her case, the Akkadian bed was one of four beds given as a dowry. The family names confirm that the marriage was established between native Babylonians. A third bride, Tahê-[...], not only received an Akkadian bed but also an Akkadian table, according to the marriage agreement BMA 23 (= *Dar* 301). Both Tahê-[...] and her husband Paṭmiustû were of Egyptian origin,⁶⁰⁴ which makes this case comparable to the marriage agreement of Kaššāya. Even though the nature of an Akkadian bed is unknown, it must have been somehow different from the ordinary beds of the period.⁶⁰⁵ It is tempting to perceive the Akkadian bed as a device which these two immigrant families used to emphasise their integration into Babylonian society.⁶⁰⁶ The Akkadian bed was a product of their new homeland and thus loaded with symbolic value, not a mere piece of furniture.

The previous observations about their integration, social networks, and status as royal merchants indicate that the descendants of Arih had a relatively good social standing in Sippar. Intuitively, one would like to suggest that professional merchants like the family of Arih were wealthy, but the scanty information on their possessions does not allow easy conclusions. First, the transactions of Basia, Marduka, and Amušê are silent on the profits which the brothers made from their trade. Only the marriage agreements reveal something about the wealth of the family, but, as noted above, the picture is somewhat unclear. The bride indeed received some jewellery for personal use and furniture and kitchen utensils for running the new household, but the dowry lacked any truly valuable items such as silver, real estate, or slaves. However, a modest dowry was not always indicative of financial constraints, and it cannot be reliably used to estimate the wealth of the bride's family. Given their profession, social networks, and success in marrying their daughter to a man from the Ararru family, the descendants of Arih belonged to the better-off segment of Babylonian society.⁶⁰⁷

3.4 Other Judean Merchants in Babylonia

In addition to the descendants of Arih, three other Judeans were involved in trading activities in Babylonia in the sixth century BCE. The documents concerning these people relate to long-distance trade, which helps to contextualise the transactions of the Judean royal merchants in Sippar. The earliest attestation of a Judean trader in Babylonia is dated in the fortieth year of Nebuchadnezzar II (21-IV-40 Nbk, 565 BCE). The document was written in Opis, an important hub of Babylonian foreign trade in the sixth century. Even though the town was located in north-east Babylonia on or near the Tigris, it also functioned as a station of Trans-Euphratian trade.⁶⁰⁸ In *Nbk* 361, a certain Aia-ahâ, son of Šani-Yāma, appears as a party in a court case concerning trade goods or capital (*mēreštu*)

⁶⁰⁴ Abraham 2015, 40–44; Hackl and Jursa 2015, 162–163, 165.

⁶⁰⁵ This is made clear in *Nbn* 258:8–9. In addition to the three dowries, an Akkadian bed is also included in a list of furniture and household utensils in *Nbk* 441:1.

⁶⁰⁶ Personal communication with Caroline Waerzeggers.

⁶⁰⁷ See Waerzeggers 2014b, 140; Abraham 2015, 45, 48.

⁶⁰⁸ Jursa 2010a, 80–84, 120–121.

worth 2½ minas of silver.⁶⁰⁹ In Neo-Babylonian business documents, the word *mēreštu* refers to trade goods that were imported to Babylonia or to silver capital that was invested to acquire such goods.⁶¹⁰ In the context of the present document, it seems likely that the dispute concerned the capital of a *harrānu* trading venture, which the investor Nabû-naʿid had put at the disposal of his agents Aia-ahâ and Barûhi-il.⁶¹¹ Since the word *mēreštu* belongs to the terminology of long-distance trade and Opis was a starting point for such overland trading missions, it is reasonable to suggest that the venture of Aia-ahâ and Barûhi-il was directed towards an area outside Babylonia proper.

Two other documents on Judean merchants or business agents in Babylonia belong to the archive of the Sipparean trader Iššar-tarîbi, son of Bunene-ibni.⁶¹² Iššar-tarîbi's business profile was rather unusual, as he was a non-institutional merchant taking part in long-distance trade. This is indicated by the fact that Opis and the Iranian town of Humadêšu are mentioned in his archive, the latter in a clear trade context.⁶¹³ Iššar-tarîbi was a member of the trading community of Sippar⁶¹⁴ and shared common acquaintances with the descendants of Arih.⁶¹⁵ Another important feature of Iššar-tarîbi's archive is the great number of people with non-Babylonian names,⁶¹⁶ an element which strengthens the idea that Iššar-tarîbi participated in long-distance trade, in which people of foreign origin played a central role.

The first document concerning Judeans in Iššar-tarîbi's archive was written in Sippar in the seventh year of Cambyses (26-X-7 Camb, 522 BCE).⁶¹⁷ A certain Mannu-kî-Bānîtu, son of Bêl-ab-uşur, sold a donkey to Iššar-tarîbi. The contract defines that the donkey was delivered to Mannu-kî-Bānîtu by a third man called Tagabi-Yāma in Humadêšu.⁶¹⁸ As Weszeli points out, the scribe obviously made a mistake in the section concerning the delivery of the animal: the recipient of the donkey should naturally be its buyer, Iššar-tarîbi.⁶¹⁹ Humadêšu was not in the vicinity of Sippar, but it was located in

⁶⁰⁹ The document belongs to a group of judicial texts written by Nabû-ahhê-iddin/Šulā/Egibi in Opis, where he – in close contact with people in Prince Neriglissar's retinue – was pursuing a career as court scribe in the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. Nabû-ahhê-iddin does not seem to have had any personal interests in this court case, and, as van Driel suggests, the document must have ended up in the Egibi archive because Nabû-ahhê-iddin kept copies of some of the documents he wrote in Opis. See van Driel 1985–1986, 54–59; Wunsch 2000b, 98–102; Wunsch 2007, 237.

⁶¹⁰ Oppenheim 1967, 239–240; van Driel 1986, 16–17 + n. 40; Tolini 2009, 249; Jursa 2010a, 93, 505–506.

⁶¹¹ On *harrānu* partnerships, see Jursa 2009, 53–68; 2010a, 206–214.

⁶¹² The texts in the archive of Iššar-tarîbi are dated to the second half of the sixth century BCE (8 Cyr–23 Dar). There is no thorough study of Iššar-tarîbi and his archive. For short overviews, see Bongenaar 2000, 89–90; Jursa 2005a, 124; Jursa 2010a, 220–221, 224–225; Waerzeggers 2014a, 86–89. On his contacts with Judeans, see Waerzeggers 2014b, 140.

⁶¹³ *Dar* 149 and Weszeli 1996 no. 2, respectively. See Jursa 2010a, 224–225.

⁶¹⁴ Waerzeggers 2014a, 19–22, 86–89.

⁶¹⁵ Nabû-iddin/Bānia/Pahhāru witnessed the marriage agreements of Kaššāya and Guzānu, and his nephew Nabû-iqīša is a witness in a promissory note from Iššar-tarîbi's archive (unpublished BM 74460; see Waerzeggers 2014a, 21 n. 33).

⁶¹⁶ Il-hanan in Weszeli 1996 no. 2, and Barīkia in Jursa and Weszeli 2000, 82–84, to name but a few. See Zadok 1977, 88, 122–123, respectively.

⁶¹⁷ Weszeli 1996 no. 2.

⁶¹⁸ On the name Tagabi-Yāma, see Zadok 1996, 727.

⁶¹⁹ Weszeli 1996, 473.

Iran, near the site where Persepolis was later built.⁶²⁰ There must have been a special reason for a journey to Humadēšu, and in this case, long-distance trade appears to be the most probable explanation. Iššar-tarībi was a businessman, and the evidence of a businessman buying a pack animal in a foreign locality points strongly towards trading activities.⁶²¹ Unfortunately, there is no way to know whether Tagabi-Yāma was a servant of the seller or buyer, or their colleague or acquaintance. However, judging from his Yahwistic name, he was a Judean – and a man involved in long-distance trade outside Babylonia proper.

In addition to Tagabi-Yāma, another Judean, the son of Gamar-Yāma, is attested in the archive of Iššar-tarībi. This man, whose name is broken, witnessed a document concerning the sale of a Bactrian female slave. Drafted in Sippar in the tenth year of Darius I (18-II-10 Dar, 512 BCE),⁶²² this sale contract emphasises the international nature of Iššar-tarībi's social circles: none of the witnesses bore a family name, three of them had a non-Babylonian name or patronymic,⁶²³ and the Bactrian slave had alphabetic writing tattooed or burned on her neck. Tagabi-Yāma and the son of Gamar-Yāma lived in this world of traders, non-Babylonians, and speakers of Aramaic. It cannot be ascertained whether the son of Gamar-Yāma was a merchant himself, but his connection to the circles of Iššar-tarībi is suggestive of such a profile.

3.5 Conclusion: Long-Distance Trade and Judean Merchants

It is beyond doubt that some Judeans participated in Babylonian long-distance trade. Tagabi-Yāma's actions in Humadēšu (Iran) took place in an obvious trading context, and all aspects of Aia-ahâ's court case suggest a connection to an overland trading mission. The son of Gamar-Yāma was not perhaps a merchant himself, but he knew people who certainly participated in long-distance trade. In the case of the descendants of Arih, several features of their business activities are indicative of their participation in long-distance trade. Gold had to be imported to Babylonia, which means that the family had, at the very least, contacts with people who took part in the importation of the precious metal. Being stationed at Sippar, they were well positioned to either acquire gold from their local contacts or embark on trading missions along the Euphrates. As royal merchants, they belonged to the group of professional traders who undertook such missions to fulfil the needs of the palace, temples, and elite in Babylonia. Finally, people in their social circles in Sippar were involved in local and long-distance trading operations.

It is well known that people of foreign origin played a central role in Babylonian long-distance trade, and it is not surprising that Judeans participated in it as well. The commercial sphere of Babylonian society was open to immigrants, who had some advantages over their Babylonian peers when it came to long-distance trade. One important factor was their ability to reduce the transaction costs of trade: existing

⁶²⁰ Henkelman 2008, 338.

⁶²¹ See Zadok 2002, 31; Jursa 2010a, 225 + n. 1311.

⁶²² Jursa and Weszeli 2000, 82–84.

⁶²³ Zadok 2002, 31–32.

networks and knowledge of local languages, products, and trading practices gave immigrants easier access to the markets in their native country.⁶²⁴

Judeans participated in Babylonian long-distance trade, and documented evidence shows that some of them travelled as far as Iran for this purpose. There is no evidence that their trading missions reached Syria and the Levant, even though people in their surroundings participated in Trans-Euphratian trade. Judean merchants are attested in Opis and Sippar, which were important stations of trading missions to the west. The descendants of Arih were deeply integrated into the Sipparean trading community, some members of which were involved in trade from Syria and the Levant to Babylonia. Therefore, it is possible that some Judean merchants – such as the descendants of Arih and their colleagues – also travelled to the Levant, perhaps as far as Judah, for the purpose of trade.⁶²⁵ This would also make them good candidates for having been intermediaries between Judeans living in Judah and Babylonia. News and messages easily travel along with trade goods over long distances.

⁶²⁴ On brokers in cross-cultural trade, see Curtin 1984. On immigration and its impact on modern international trade, see Gould 1994, 302–316; Rauch and Trindade 2002, 116–130; Law et al. 2013, 582–606.

⁶²⁵ See Waerzeggers 2014b, 132.

