

Inheritance Feuds in the Ur-Pabilsağa Archive from Old Babylonian Nippur

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Abstract

The study of an inheritance division is usually limited by its isolated recording, which leads to an incomplete interpretation of the division's influence on the status and/or financial position of the family members involved. Inheritance divisions found in the so-called Ur-Pabilsağa Archive from Old Babylonian Nippur not only enable inclusive interpretations of the divisions' influence on the status and/or financial position of the family members involved but also reveal their social and financial networking with two other families. The influence of Nippur's interrelated social institutions restricted the family members in securing beneficial allocations of their inheritances due to conflicting needs and the consequences of economic disparity. Consequently, family feuds developed. The circumstances and events described in the recordings undermined the advantages that could have been gained from the social and financial networking between the interconnected families.

Keywords: Old Babylonia; Nippur; Ur-Pabilsağa Archive; Old Babylonian legal recordings/texts/cuneiform records; Old Babylonian division of inheritance; Old Babylonian family

Introduction

The so-called Ur-Pabilsağa Archive¹ (hereafter Archive) from OB Nippur, regarding those recordings that involve Ur-Pabilsağa, covers a time-span of at least 45 years, from

¹ Traditionally, cuneiform tablets were catalogued by museums throughout the world and typologically included under topics such as “letters, legal and administrative documents” (Jacquet 2013, 70; Charpin 2014, 26–30). Jacquet (2013, 70) states that only when an archive is seen as a whole do we gain a better understanding of the records. In recent years the ARCHIBAB project (www.archibab.fr), an

circa 1784–1739 BCE.² The recordings which make up the Archive involved members of three interconnected patrilineal lineages—the Ubārum, Imgū’a, and Narāmtum families—whose affairs became intertwined by means of various agreements, including inheritance divisions (hereafter division/s), court/dispute settlements, sales, exchanges, marriage arrangements, and adoptions.³ The recordings contain a common denominator—an event or situation reflecting a change of ownership that permanently affected the status and/or financial position of the family members involved and thus necessitated the preservation of the recording as proof and protection against future claims.⁴

I focus on six of the recordings that are divisions: ARN 118; ARN 113; ARN 112, regarding Ubārum’s estate; ARN 41; BE 6/2 23, regarding Narāmtum’s estate; and OIMA 1 20 concerning the estate of Ubārum’s grandson. Usually, the study of a division is limited to its isolated recording, which leads to an incomplete interpretation of the division’s influence on the status and/or financial position of the family members involved. Fortunately, the Archive provides an indication of the divisions’ influence on the family members’ social and financial networking with two other families. I investigate the family members’ attempts to secure beneficial allocations of their inheritances and the subsequent feuds within my wider interpretation of events described in the recordings.

First, I present an outline of the three interconnected families involved in the Archive. An introductory sketch is then given of the placement of the interconnected families within the structure of OB Nippur’s interrelated social institutions. I then present three timelines that reflect on the different aspects of the Archive’s appraisal: the timeline by

open-access database, was developed by Dominique Charpin and Antoine Jacquet and directed by Charpin with the intention of publishing OB documents identified as part of an archive on a digital database platform to fill the lacunae of widely dispersed recordings.

² All dates referred to in this article occurred before the Common Era. For ease of reading I do not include the abbreviation BCE. I use the following abbreviations in the article: OB = Old Babylonia/n; division = family inheritance division from a deceased estate in Old Babylonia.

³ Cf. Goddeeris (2016, 356) surmises that in “this complex archive” the “three lineages strengthen their mutual ties through adoptions and marriages,” the reason being “to by-pass the doom scenario of complete fragmentation of the family estates enhanced by the system of partitive inheritance.” Goddeeris’s approach (2016) to the Archive was to study the “siblings of Damiq-ilīšu” from the Ubārum family focussing on transactions of Iddin-Enlil (Ubārum’s brother) and his brothers (p. 356–357), the Narāmtum family (p. 357), Ur-Pabilsağa’s estate and his siblings (p. 358–359), as well as the loans of Nabi-Šamaš from the Imgū’a family (p. 360). Goddeeris (2016, 361–366) considered the main characters in the Archive to be Narāmtum, Alī-aḫātī (Imgū’a family), Narubtum (Narāmtum and Ubārum families), Ur-Pabilsağa, and Damiq-ilīšu (Ubārum family).

⁴ Jacquet (2013, 24–58) and Charpin (2014, 27–30) surmise that the recordings hold an “unlimited validity.” This is in contrast to recordings that have a “limited validity” that became obsolete after a period of time and were either recycled, discarded as waste, or used as building materials,” e.g. bookkeeping, loans, and letters (Jacquet 2013, 24–58; Charpin 2014, 27–30).

Stone (1991, 21), an alternative re-ordering, and then my preferred re-ordering of the records. The recordings in the Archive are superficially placed within phases of events to ease the investigation of the divisions' influence in my overall interpretation of the Archive's recordings.

Outline of the Three Interconnected Families

Three interconnected patrilineal lineages (families) are reflected in the Archive, the Ubārum family, the Imgū'a family, and the Narāmtum family (see schematic representation in Figure 1).

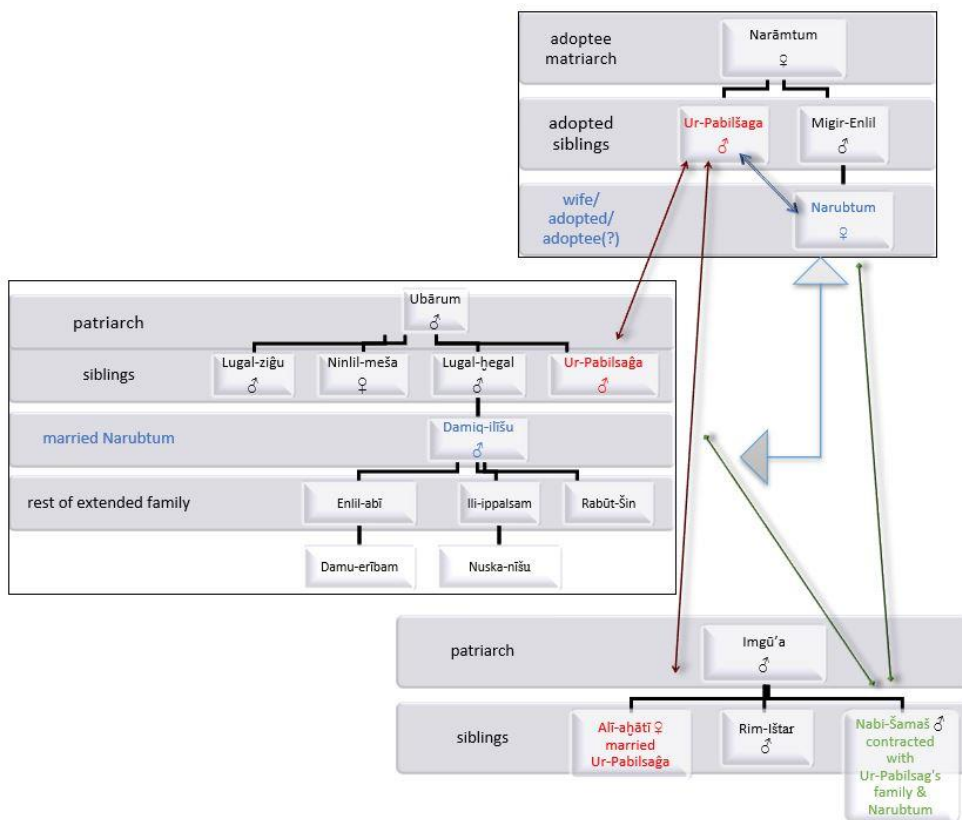


Figure 1: Schematic representation of the three interconnected families

(1) The Ubārum family (hereafter in brackets [Ubārum])

Ubārum, the patriarch, had three sons, Lugal-ziġu (the eldest), Lugal-ĥeġal, and Ur-Pabilsaġa (the youngest), as well as a daughter, Ninlil-meša, who was a *nadītu* of Ninurta. Lugal-ĥeġal's son, Damiq-ilīšu, had three sons and two grandsons. Damiq-ilīšu was married to Narubtum and she was connected to her husband's uncle, Ur-Pabilsaġa.

Narubtum's husband, Damiq-ilīšu, was involved in business transactions with Ur-Pabilsaġa's brother-in-law, Nabi-Šamaš [Imgū'a].

(2) The Imgū'a Family (hereafter in brackets [Imgū'a])

Imgū'a, the patriarch, had two sons, Rim-Ištar and Nabi-Šamaš, as well as a daughter, Alī-aḫātī. The sons were involved in business transactions with the other two families, while Alī-aḫātī's involvement was through marriages and adoptions. Alī-aḫātī's first husband, Migir-Enlil, was connected, through adoption, as the adopted son of Narāmtum and as the adoptee brother of Ur-Pabilsaġa [Ubārum]. Alī-aḫātī and Migir-Enlil had only one child, Narubtum. She married Damiq-ilīšu, who was the nephew of Ur-Pabilsaġa. Later, after the death of Narubtum's father, Migir-Enlil, her mother, Alī-aḫātī, married the uncle of Narubtum's husband: Ur-Pabilsaġa.

(3) The Narāmtum Family (hereafter in brackets [Narāmtum])

Narāmtum, the matriarch and a *nadītu*, adopted Ur-Pabilsaġa on the death of his father. Years before, Narāmtum adopted Migir-Enlil. The latter's daughter, Narubtum, was the adoptee granddaughter of the matriarch, the wife of Ur-Pabilsaġa's nephew, and later, after the death of her father, Ur-Pabilsaġa's stepdaughter. Both Ur-Pabilsaġa (Ubārum's son) and Narubtum (Imgū'a's granddaughter) received inheritance awards from their adopted family [Narāmtum], while being involved with all three families, via marriages, adoptions and business transactions.

Interrelated Social Institutions of OB Nippur

The socio-economic and political circumstances of the city-state of OB Nippur serve as a barometer for the motivations of the parties involved in the recordings.⁵ Three interrelated social institutions, namely the patrilineal lineages, the temple office group, and the priestess group, influenced the relationships between the members of the three interconnected families in their contractual choices.⁶

⁵ Cf. Stone (1987, 13–4); Ellickson and Thorland (1995, 324–327, esp. 329). Stone (1999, 204) mentions that the city-states were a “network” of neighbouring states, which although independent, shared a “common culture, belief system and status symbols.” Nevertheless, they competed for resources, territory, and trade routes. Zagarell (1986, 415–420) outlines the debate regarding Mesopotamian society, economy and trade throughout the different periods and the roles of the temple economy, private ownership, and other public institutions. Complex social relations of production changed in time, which influenced the “various modes of production, consumption and distribution” (Zagarell 1986, 416; Stone 1987, 13–28).

⁶ Cf. Stone (1987, 17–19).

(1) The Patrilineal Lineages

The three families in the Archive formed part of the patrilineal lineages, the earliest social grouping in OB Nippur based on kinship relationships (Stone 1982, 52).⁷ The description of the properties' values reveals that all three families formed part of the upper strata of OB Nippur society.

(2) The Temple Office Group

The temple office group was originally based on kinship ties, and was involved in agricultural production. The temple group provided remuneration for state personnel in terms of rations or pay, or through the assignment of land (De Graef 2002, 143; Stone 1982, 55). In the recordings relating to the Ubārum family, the middle brother, Lugal-ḥegal,⁸ was a professional singer; while Ur-Pabilsaġa, the youngest, was the holder of several temple offices, including an office of a temple musician. As a temple office holder, Ur-Pabilsaġa would have received rations as a lifetime income.⁹ The temple and its properties are explicitly referred in most records including ARN 35, ARN 118, ARN 113, PBS 8/1 81 and PBS 8/1 82.

(3) The Priestess Group

The priestess group¹⁰ was a combination of the lineages (families) and the temple group, serving both the lineages and temple group by holding property to the advantage of their family members and the priestess group (Stone 1981, 18; Zagarell 1986, 425). In the Archive, three priestesses played an active part in the transactions:¹¹

⁷ Cf. Stone (1982, 52) regarding the interrelatedness of the three groups.

⁸ See reference to Lugal-ḥegal as a singer in PBS 8/11 81, line 5, published by Chiera (1914, 59–60).

⁹ The “office of the temple musician” secured a steady income for the holder, who received a share in the proceeds of the sacrifices or other income from the temple (Stone 1977, 276, 284). There were different temple offices in the various temples. The office could be held for an agreed number of days in the year and was alienable and inheritable (Stone 1977, 270). Stone (1977, 270) surmises that there are no recordings from OB describing the temple offices’ “rights, privileges and duties” because they were “common knowledge.”

¹⁰ There was a similar priestess group in OB Sippar. The *nadiātu* in OB Nippur lived in a secluded area. The *nadiātu* had in common that they were not allowed to have children, although some groupings could marry (Stone 1982, 55). Cf. Van Wyk (2015, 95–122).

¹¹ The scope of this article does not allow for a focused study of the three priestesses’ influence on the continued social and financial position of their family members. A further study of interpretations gleaned from the Archive may reveal the priestess group’s possible contribution to the decline and destitution of the patrilineal lineages in OB Nippur.

- (1) Ninlil-meša, a *nadītu* of Ninurta,¹² transacted with her brothers regarding divisions from their father Ubārum’s estate.
- (2) Narāmtum, as a *nadītu*,¹³ played a part in her role as the adopted mother of Ur-Pabilsaġa [Ubārum] and Migir-Enlil, as well as in her position as the grandmother of Narubtum by means of an adoption (married into the Ubārum family). Goddeeris (2016, 356) surmises that while Stone (1991) and Kraus (1949) considered Ur-Pabilsaġa as the proponent in the archive, it was the matriarch Narāmtum that “organized the flow of the assets,” leaving the descendants of Damiq-ilīšu, Ur-Pabilsag’s nephew [Ubārum], as the “ultimate beneficiaries.”
- (3) Narubtum, a woman of cultic status,¹⁴ was involved as the wife of Damiq-ilīšu [Ubārum], and in her position as the adopted granddaughter of Narāmtum, she later became the stepdaughter of Ur-Pabilsaġa, who was also her uncle-in-law [Ubārum].

With Hammurabi’s conquest in 1763, OB Nippur underwent drastic economic changes which affected the political and economic stability of the institutions, especially the patrilineal lineages’ minor branches.¹⁵ The minor branches lodged disputes against their leaders, crippling the lineages’ power structure. This is noticeable in the Ubārum family. In 1762, the siblings were involved in family dispute settlements (BE 6/2 11 and 23) regarding their inheritance property awards from their father’s estate (Stone 1987, 26). The *nadīātu* institution became less important in their inter-lineage connection with their family. The increase of taxes and rentals further weakened the economy, notwithstanding Hammurabi’s assistance to the minor branches. Samsuilina, who succeeded Hammurabi, was also incapable of managing the economic decline. In 1739, the OB Nippur lineages were destitute and sold their properties for less than they were

¹² Ninlil-meša is mentioned in ARN 113 as the *nadītu* of Ninurta. See discussion by Stone (1991, 14n25). The name of the main temple of Ninurta is *ki-lukura-ra*. It was a secluded area where the *nadīātu* of the god Ninurta lived (Westenholz 1987, 97–98).

¹³ Narāmtum is referred as a *nadītu* of the god Lagalaba (a temple cult) in her adoption record of Ur-Pabilsaġa (Goddeeris 2016, 43–45). She is also mentioned as *nadītu* in the re-division of the familial estate between Ur-Pabilsaġa and Narubtum (HS 2213/TMH 10 6). According to Goddeeris (2016, 362) she is the only *nadītu* in the known cuneiform records who was assigned to the god Lagalaba, and this *nadītu* group could have been similar to the Marduk *nadītu* group. In the majority of marriage agreements, the latter entered into bigamous marriages, in which the *nadītu* was the first wife and the second wife a liberated slave, who would have to bear children for the husband (Goddeeris 2016, 362–363).

¹⁴ Narubtum could have been a priestess. Her name is usually that of a woman of special status (*kulmašītu* or a *nadītu*). Cf. Harris (1975, 327; 1962, 10). Narubtum married Damiq-ilīšu, with a liberated slave, Amertum, who Narubtum adopted as her sister. This also indicates that Narubtum had some cultic status (Goddeeris 2016, 361, 364).

¹⁵ Stone (1987, 26) observes that Hammurabi was “suspicious” of the potential power structures in Nippur and encouraged the minor branches to lodge disputes in order to cause friction, thereby hastening the lineages’ demise.

worth to wealthy outsiders, and relocated to other towns (Stone 1987, 27). In the last two events recorded in the Archive, in 1739, the descendants of Damiq-ilīšu [Ubārum], after the division of their inheritance (ARN 136), liquidated some of their properties (OIMA 1 18). By that time, Nippur was half abandoned, and only regained its status from 1730 to 1720. From 1720 tensions existed between the patrilineal lineages and the temple group in obtaining control over vast fields and consequent income. The social role of the *nadiātu* in Nippur was also extinguished with Nippur's own decline. Nippur was finally abandoned between the 31st and 32nd year of the reign of Samsuiluna (Stone 1987, 27; 1981, 18; 1982, 55).¹⁶

The Recordings Within a Timeline of Events

Stone (1991, 11–12) identified twenty-five recordings of which ten are duplications.¹⁷ Poebel (1909, 20–21, 24–27) and Schorr (1913, 263–264) commented on one recording (BE 6/2 23), while the writings of Kraus (1949, 143–148) and Stone (1991, 11–19) take cognisance of most of the Archive's records. Goddeeris (2016) re-arranged the Archive's recordings within the Hilprecht Collection "according and chronologically within this typological arrangement" (cf. p. 7) and provided some of the recent transliterations and translations.

Stone (1991, 11–19) examines the Archive from the vantage point of the adoption institution in OB Nippur and considers Ur-Pabilsaġa, the youngest son of Ubārum, an opportunist who ingeniously utilised the adoption institution to acquire and retain property, despite the dynamics and interplay of the three social institutions in OB Nippur.¹⁸ Whilst, Goddeeris (2016, 356) considers Narāmtum's transactions to have the

¹⁶ Most of the recordings were created in a time of environmental, economic, political, and social distress. The scope of this article does not permit discussion of these aspects and circumstances. See Ellickson and Thorland's (1995, 352) discussion of how the flooding, excess irrigation, and changes to channels contributed to the abandonment of Nippur. See Stone's (1977, 267–290; 1981, 26–28) discussion of the political motives and influence of Hammurabi and Samsuiluna on the further abandonment of Nippur. For instance, Samsuiluna changed the flow of the Euphrates to the river's western branches and consequently reduced the water supply to Nippur and Isin, which were already experiencing a water shortage. See Stone's (1977, 285) discussion regarding an economic crisis that ensued during Samsuiluna's eleven-year reign, which further contributed to the later abandonment of Nippur. What factors brought about the eventual decline of Nippur is still debated; see Stone (1982, 52, 69; 1977, 285).

¹⁷ The duplication of a recording is indicated with an equals (=) sign, i.e., ARN 35=Ni 1922; HS 2362a=2395=Ni 9220; ARN 118=Ni 9266; ARN 113=Ni 2164; ARN 112=Ni 1897; Ni 9309=ARN 52; ARN 41=Ni 1923; BE 6/2 23=ARN 76; ARN 136=OIMA 1 20. See discussion by Stone (1991, 11–12). For ease of reading, I did not include the duplicate reference with its corresponding recording; however, I did make references to the HS numbers that Goddeeris (2016) typologically arranged.

¹⁸ Stone (1991, 11) conjectures that Ur-Pabilsaġa used his adoption to gain property, thus overcoming the limitations set by OB Nippur's social institutions that prevented him from gaining property outside of the family.

greater influence, I focus on Ur-Pabilsaĝa's relationships within his biological and adoptive family, as well as his in-laws, as the common denominator in the family feuds involving especially the inheritance divisions.

Kraus (1949, 143–148) discusses and places some of the recordings in sequence while Stone (1991, 11–19) makes a deliberate attempt to place the recordings within a timeline of events. I differ to an extent with Stone's (1991, 12) classification and propose two timelines with the reservation that the ordering of the first nine recordings remains problematic. One of the alternative timelines is contentious, and the re-ordering reveals some aspects in the reappraisal of the Archive. I opt for a minor variation on Stone's (1991, 12) timeline. I address part of Goddeeris's (2016) placement and discussion of the Archive's recordings. Included in Table 1, is an outline supporting my discussions of the three timelines.

The three classifications differ in where they place the first nine recordings before the first dispute settlement (PBS 8/1 81). The problem with the classification lies mainly with the three undated divisions (ARN 118, 113 and 112) and an undated sales agreement (Ni 9232).

Stone (1991, 11, 14) opines that it is uncertain whether the undated sales agreement (Ni 9232) took place before, during or after the divisions in ARN 118, 113 and 112. Stone (1991, 12–14) asserts that the Archive's timeline started when four brothers and a sister (Ninlil-meša) inherited their father Ubārum's estate in ARN 118, followed by two other divisions of inheritance: ARN 113 and ARN 112. Then the youngest of the brothers utilised his inheritance to buy temple income (ARN 35) which would have featured as part of his marriage arrangements (Ni 9220). He sold a property (Ni 9232) after which a *nadītu* adopted him (HS 2213). The *nadītu* sold her property (Ni 9309), and after her death her adopted family agreed to a division of their inheritance (ARN 41).

The alternative timeframe is gleaned from the witnesses' clauses and the recordings' provisions. The timeline of events starts in 1784 with a sale (ARN 35). The youngest son of Ubārum obtained an income. It is possible that Ubārum financially assisted his youngest son to obtain an office to secure an income or at least rations, because, as the youngest, he would have received a lesser inheritance award than his eldest brother.¹⁹ This could constitute a *terḫatum* as financial assistance for the youngest brother's marriage arrangements.²⁰ If so, then the crucial re-dating of the first division (ARN 118)

¹⁹ See footnote 9 (above) explaining the office and its possible advantage for its holder.

²⁰ Paragraph 166 of the Law Collections (Law Code) of Hammurabi refers to a division when a "minor" brother did not take a wife and his other brothers agreed to set aside a portion of money as a "purchase price" (*terḫatum*) for him to secure a wife. This also occurred in an OB Nippur division dated in the 26th year of Rim-Sîn. O'Callaghan (1954, 137–138) transliterated and translated the recording; categorised as NBC 8935 (Collection of James B. Nies).

is to 1777, followed by the other two divisions (ARN 113 and 112). Furthermore, from the reading of the second dated dispute settlement—PBS 8/1 82—it can be deduced that it was the sister Ninlil-meša who is said to have lived for 15 years in the residence of the division in the first division (ARN 118). In PBS 8/1 82 “my sister” can mean Ninlil-meša and not some other sister, and thus that the period of residence mentioned began with the division in ARN 118. If this point is valid, then the first event will be the buying of an income from a temple office by the youngest brother in 1784 (ARN 35), followed five years later by the marriage arrangements (Ni 9220) and then, a year later in 1778, the adoption (HS 2213). After Ubārum’s death, the first division (ARN 118) took place in 1777 whereby the sons of Ubārum decided to depart from their co-ownership in the inheritance to obtain sole-ownership for the continuation of each of their core families’ financial survival within the family group.

My proposed timeline corresponds with Stone’s timeline regarding the placement of the three divisions regarding Ubārum’s estate. I differ with Stone’s immediate placement of the undated sale (Ni 9232). In the undated sale, the youngest son’s status is referred to as the son of Ubārum and not the son of his adoptive mother. Stone places the sale (Ni 9232) *before* the youngest’s adoption (HS 22132), while I place the undated sale (Ni 9232) *after* the youngest regained his status as the son of the Ubārum family upon the death of his adoptive mother. Thus, the undated sale occurred after the division of the adoptee’s estate (ARN 41).

The remainder of the recordings are dated. Hence, from the first dispute settlement (PBS 8/1 81) onwards, the timelines correspond.

Table 1: Comparison of the Different Timelines of the Archive

Alternative time-line			Stone's time-line			My time-line		
Date formula		Transaction	Date formula		Transaction	Date formula		Transaction
ARN 35	1784/10	Ur-Pabilsaġa buys a temple office	ARN 118	No date	Division: siblings of Ubārum	ARN 118	No date	Division: siblings of Ubārum
Ni 9220	1779	Marriage: Ur-Pabilsaġa & Ali-ahātī	ARN 113	No date	Division: siblings of Ubārum	ARN 113	No date	Division: siblings of Ubārum
HS 2213	1778	Narāmtum adopts Ur-Pabilsaġa	ARN 112	No date	Division: 2 of the 4 siblings of Ubārum	ARN 112	No date	Division: 2 of the 4 siblings of Ubārum
ARN 118	1777	Division: siblings of Ubārum	ARN 35	1784/10	Ur-Pabilsaġa buys a temple office	ARN 35	1784/10	Ur-Pabilsaġa buys a temple office
ARN 113	No date	Division: siblings of Ubārum	Ni 9232	No date	Ur-Pabilsaġa sells property	Ni 9220	1779	Marriage: Ur-Pabilsaġa & Ali-ahātī
ARN 112	No date	Division: 2 of the 4 siblings of Ubārum	Ni 9220	1779	Marriage: Ur-Pabilsaġa & Ali-ahātī	HS 2213	1778	Narāmtum adopts Ur-Pabilsaġa
Ni 9309	No date	Narāmtum sells property	HS 2213	1778	Narāmtum adopts Ur-Pabilsaġa	Ni 9309	No date	Narāmtum sells property
ARN 41	1768/8	Ur-Pabilsaġa & Narubtum: division	Ni 9309	No date	Narāmtum sells property	ARN 41	1768/8	Ur-Pabilsaġa & Narubtum: division
Ni 9232	No date	Ur-Pabilsaġa sells property	ARN 41	1768/8	Ur-Pabilsaġa & Narubtum: division	Ni 9232	No date	Ur-Pabilsaġa sells property
PBS 8/1 81	1762/6	Lugal-ziġu & Ur-Pabilsaġa settle a dispute						
PBS 8/1 82	1762/7	Lugal-ziġu in dispute with his brothers in protecting his sister's interest in a house						
BE 6/2 11	1758/9	Damiq-ilišu & Narubtum exchange houses with Nabi-Šamaš (and sell a courtyard to him) ¹						
BE 6/2 23	1746/10	Narubtum & Ur-Pabilsaġa involve in a division settlement and a quasi-adoption ²						
ARN 136	1739/-	Damu-eribam, Nuska-nišu & Rabūt-Sin agree to a division of the inheritance from Damiq-ilišu's estate						
OIMA 1 18	1739/10	Damu-eribam & Nuska-nišu sell a field to Ur-dukuga						
Notes								
1. Stone (1991, 12, Table 4) does not mention the courtyard								
2. Stone (1991, 12, Table 4) mentions in contrast that Narubtum and Ur-Pabilsaġa inherit from Miġir-Enlil.								

Discussion of the Recordings in Phases of Events

The main identified recordings are classified superficially into ten phases to simplify the differentiation of the various types of transactions and the subsequent financial and status consequences for the parties from the three interconnected families involved. Table 2 is an outline in support of my discussion of the phases.

Table 2: Outline of the Phases of Events

Recording	Transaction	Date	Yr ¹	Family	Status in family
Phase 1: Divisions					
ARN 118	Division	No date	-	Ubārum	Deceased estate owner: Ubārum Eldest son Lugal-ziĝu, Lugal-ḥeĝal, youngest son Ur-Pabilsaĝa, priestess daughter Ninlil-meša
ARN 113	Division	No date	-	Ubārum	Deceased estate owner: Ubārum Eldest son Lugal-ziĝu, Lugal-ḥeĝal, youngest son Ur-Pabilsaĝa, priestess-daughter Ninlil-meša
ARN 112	Division	No date	-	Ubārum	Deceased estate owner: Ubārum Eldest son Lugal-ziĝu and middle son Lugal-ḥeĝal
Phase 2: Growth of Estate					
ARN 35	Sale	1784	0	Ubārum	Youngest son of Ubārum: Ur-Pabilsaĝa
Phase 3: Marriage arrangement, Interconnection and Stability					
Ni 9220	Marriage "antenuptial"	1779	5	Ubārum, Imĝū'a	Youngest son of Ubārum: Ur-Pabilsaĝa Daughter of Imĝū'a: Ali-aḥātī
Phase 4: Adoptions, Interconnection and Stability					
HS 2213	Adoption	1778	6	Narāmtum Ubārum, (Imĝū'a)	Adopter: Narāmtum Adoptees: Ur-Pabilsaĝa (youngest son of Ubārum) Migir-Enlil father of Narubtum
Phase 5: Reduction of Estate					
Ni 9309	Sale	No date	-	Narāmtum	Priestess and matriarch of family
Phase 6: Division and Reduction of Estates					
ARN 41	Division	1768	16	Narāmtum	Deceased estate owner: Narāmtum Youngest son of Ubārum: the adopted Ur-Pabilsaĝa Daughter of adopted Migir-Enlil: Narubtum
Ni 9232	Sale	No date	-	Ubārum	Youngest son of Ubārum: Ur-Pabilsaĝa
Phase 7: Dispute and Settlement					
PBS 8/1 81	Litigation settlement	1762	22	Ubārum	Eldest brother: Lugal-ziĝu Youngest brother: Ur-Pabilsaĝa
PBS 8/1 82	Litigation settlement	1762	22	Ubārum	Eldest brother Lugal-ziĝu, Lugal-ḥeĝal, youngest brother Ur-Pabilsaĝa, <i>naditu</i> sister Ninlil-meša
Phase 8: Reduction and reshuffling of estates					
BE 6/2 11	Exchange and sale	1758	26	Ubārum Narāmtum	Youngest son of Ubārum, Ur-Pabilsaĝa Daughter of adopted Migir-Enlil and niece-in-law of Ur-Pabilsaĝa: Narubtum
Phase 9: Division due to a dispute					
BE 6/2 23	Division-cum- adoption	1746	38	Ubārum Narāmtum	Ur-Pabilsaĝa: youngest son of Ubārum, adopted son of Narāmtum, uncle-in-law of Narubtum Narubtum: daughter of adopted Migir-Enlil, granddaughter of adoptee grandmother Narāmtum, niece of Ur-Pabilsaĝa
Phase 10: Division and Reduction of an Estate					
ARN 136	Division	1739	45	Ubārum	Deceased estate owner, husband of Narubtum and the nephew of Ur-Pabilsaĝa: Damiq-ilišu Siblings of Damiq-ilišu: Damu-erībam, Nuska-nīšu and Rabūt-Sin
OIMA 1 18	Sale	1739	45	Ubārum	Siblings of Damiq-ilišu: Damu-erībam, Nuska-nīšu
Notes					
1. This column is the calculation of years from the first dated transaction in the Archive in 1784.					

Phase 1: Divisions

Divisions ARN 118, ARN 113, and ARN 112 are recorded financial arrangements between the children of the late Ubārum regarding the division and management of their shared inheritance.²¹

Generally, a division was a complex agreement which entailed lengthy discussions and negotiations between family members before they finally agreed on the terms of the division (Claassens 2012,1:59–62). The division started upon the death of the original estate owner. The beneficiaries (co-heirs) became co-owners of the shared inheritance. At a certain stage, which could occur days, months, or even years later, the co-owners might decide that all or some of the shared inheritance should be divided into certain portions. Each co-owner, who now became a contractual party, negotiated the division of the shared inheritance and became the sole owner of specific awards (Claassens 2012,1:83–84; Cf. Van Wyk 2013a, 432–439; 2013b, 146–147; 2014a, 195–236; 2014b, 443–483).

ARN 118: Division

In ARN 118 the children of Ubārum—the eldest brother, Lugal-ziġu, the middle brother, Lugal-ḫegal, the youngest brother, Ur-Pabilsaġa, as well as the *nadītu* sister, Ninlil-meša—entered into a division of their inheritance after the death of their father.²² All three brothers and their *nadītu* sister were actively involved in the extensive division of the large estate (Stone 1991, 41).²³

Lines 1–2 on the reverse side of the tablet indicate that the father’s entire house and the income from an office of the temple musician were awarded to the *nadītu* sister as a quarter share.²⁴ This is an irregular provision, since in OB Nippur a *nadītu* sister did not actively partake in the division of an inheritance (Van Wyk 2014b, 443–483).²⁵

²¹ Cf. Goddeeris’s (2016, 355ff) placement of the divisions and circumstances.

²² ARN 118 is poorly preserved, and most parts are illegible, but at least such a deduction can be made. See transcription online at ARCHIBAB: Babylonian Archives (20th–17th Centuries B.C.), “Reproduction of ARN 118,” <http://pix.archibab.fr/4Dcgi/16287Z1302.pdf>. Accessed February 2, 2016. I agree with Stone’s (1991, 14) birth order which makes Lugal-ziġu the eldest, followed by Lugal-ḫegal, and the youngest Ur-Pabilsaġa on account of Stone’s inference from the later family dispute where Lugal-ziġu, possibly as the eldest, assisted his sister by defending her against the claims of her other siblings.

²³ Stone (1991, 14) observes that only a small fragment of the tablet survived, and I agree that the original recording concerned a large estate.

²⁴ Cf. Kraus (1949, 145–146) regarding the *nadītu* sister’s allotments.

²⁵ Cf. remarks by Stone (1991, 14n25). Van Wyk (2014a, 195–236) discussed the maintenance construction in OB Sippar. In OB Sippar the award was notarised in the division, to which the sister may be party, while in OB Nippur the brothers notated the maintenance reward in a separate agreement after the recording of the inheritance division. In OB Nippur the sister was not a party to the division

Given that Ninlil-meša received a quarter share (as can be determined from the legible section which mentions a house and an office of the temple musician),²⁶ by implication each brother's quarter share should have consisted of a house and an office of the temple musician. Read in the context of the divisions and dispute settlements contained in the Archive, each of the four siblings additionally received a quarter share in a garden (ARN 113), household goods/utensils (ARN 112 and PBS 8/1 82), and a field (ARN 112).

ARN 113: Division-cum-Maintenance/Support

In ARN 113²⁷ the children of the deceased Ubārum—the *nadītu* sister and her three brothers—impressed their seals on the tablet, indicating that they had alienated a part of their shared inheritance.²⁸ Stone (1991, 14n25) argues that the *nadītu* sister, Ninlil-meša, received, as part of a division, a garden (orchard) and rights to rations from her brothers. Kraus (1949, 147) holds that lines 5–8 read together with line 9 on the reverse side reflect a simple purchase note (Stone 1991, 14n25). I agree with Stone (1991, 14n25) that this was not a sale but an inheritance division. In general, a division involved a sale, donation or exchange of inheritance property or the portions thereto among the beneficiaries (Van Wyk 2013, 146–171). Notwithstanding large parts that are illegible, the recording suggests that the sister, by means of a division, in line 4 on the reverse, agreed to an exchange of the allotted inheritance. Thus, the division entailed two of the three division mechanisms²⁹—a *sale* of the inheritance with an *exchange* as a lifetime of maintenance support for the sister, Ninlil-meša.³⁰

The maintenance support awarded to the sister consisted of income, from a garden (orchard) with trees, and an unspecified quantity of rations for her immediate daily maintenance needs. From the recording and in keeping with OB Nippur practice,³¹ the sister was entitled to lifelong maintenance from the income and/or fruits of the inherited

regarding her maintenance although in the recordings it appears that she was represented and protected by a senior male member in the instance of a family feud regarding her maintenance claim (Van Wyk 2014b, 467–80).

²⁶ Also mentioned in PBS 8/1 81.

²⁷ Kraus (1949, 146–147) gives a transcription of ARN 113 and added some remarks. See also transcription online at ARCHIBAB: Babylonian Archives (20th–17th Centuries B.C.), “Reproduction of ARN 113,” <http://pix.archibab.fr/4Dcgi/16276D1942.pdf>. Accessed February 2, 2016.

²⁸ Unfortunately, the type of transaction is uncertain due to the poor quality of the tablet, especially lines 5–8 regarding certain objects or goods, and, on the reverse, from line 9 regarding the type of transaction. Cf. Kraus (1949, 147).

²⁹ The other mechanism is a donation (Van Wyk 2013, 152–154).

³⁰ Van Wyk (2014b, 467–480) discusses the maintenance construction in OB Nippur where the brothers agreed in favour of a *nadītu* sister to provide for a lifetime of maintenance. The maintenance portions in OB Nippur recordings were usually allotted in specific amounts of commodities such as wool and oil.

³¹ Cf. Van Wyk (2014, 467–480).

garden and the offices of the temple musician. As a rule, a *nadītu* sister received only allotments as a beneficiary of her maintenance property. The patrilineal family was the ultimate owner, with the *nadītu*'s brothers as the representative owners of her maintenance property. After her death the brothers would have been relieved of the restraints of the maintenance interests, gaining full ownership of the inheritance properties (Van Wyk 2014b, 471–474). In ARN 113, the brothers alienated their income from the inherited garden and the offices of the temple musician. In addition, if the placement of the alternative timeline is followed then, in context of the dispute settlement (PBS 81/82), their *nadītu* sister was entitled to live in the inherited house. The brothers then also alienated their habitation and use of the house. Thus, in summary, the brothers alienated most of the properties' income from which they could have received rations for their own daily maintenance needs. At this stage, the brothers only gained the use of household utensils and the income from a field.

From the context of the recording, Ninlil-meša acted in her dual role as member of the family group but also as a *nadītu*. Thus, it seems that the interrelated social institutions, especially the priestess group/institution, contributed to the enforced divisions' provisions and to placing a burden on the brothers—consequently to their financial detriment.

ARN 112: Division

In ARN 112³² the bargaining within the Ubārum family continues and the eldest brother, Lugal-ziġu, sells a field to his brother Lugal-ḫegal.

The tablet contains the seal impression of Lugal-ziġu, who alienated his property in exchange for the selling price of a certain amount of silver and barley in favour of his brother, Lugal-ḫegal. No date is given. It is thus uncertain if this agreement was reached before or after the death of their father, Ubārum. However, if their father was still alive, he would have witnessed the agreement.³³ The brothers previously agreed to the division of a substantial inheritance and this field could have been one of the divided properties. In effect, Lugal-ziġu alienated and reduced his estate while his younger brother, Lugal-ḫegal, expanded his estate.

³² See Kraus (1949, 145) who makes mention of this recording. A transcription is available online at ARCHIBAB: Babylonian Archives (20th–17th Centuries B.C.), “Reproduction of ARN 112,” <http://pix.archibab.fr/4Dcgi/16274X4106.pdf>. Accessed February 2, 2016.

³³ Lugal-ḫegal's son, Damiq-ilīšu, was one of the three witnesses to the agreement. The other two witnesses were a scribe who recorded the agreement, and a first-ranking witness whose brother was a witness in ARN 35, in which Ur-Pabilsaġa bought a temple income; both instances show that there was a close connection between the families.

The following recordings reveal the connection of Ur-Pabilsağa from the Ubārum family with the Imgū'a family (by means of marriage) and the Narāmtum family (by means of adoption).

Phase 2: Growth of Estate

Before Ur-Pabilsağa's marriage to the widow of Migir-Enlil (his adoptee brother), Ur-Pabilsağa expanded his estate buying a field from a *nadītu* (HS 2399/TMH 10 45).³⁴ Then he bought temple offices (TMH 10 56).³⁵ In 1784,³⁶ Ur-Pabilsağa, obtained another source of income to meet his maintenance needs (ARN 35).³⁷ Ur-Pabilsağa bought from Ĝirini-isa an unknown income³⁸ of an office of the temple musician for a certain amount of silver.³⁹ In later years, Ur-Pabilsağa also bought a small plot and garden (TMH 10 32),⁴⁰ and later a field from another *nadītu* (HS 2176a/TMH 10 47).⁴¹

Phase 3: Marriage, Interconnection and Stability

In 1779, Ur-Pabilsağa made marriage arrangements with Alī-aḥātī,⁴² reflected in recording Ni 9220.⁴³ The recording contains both their seal impressions portraying Ur-Pabilsağa as the son of Ubārum and Alī-aḥātī as the daughter of Imgū'a (Stone 1991, 14–15).⁴⁴ Alī-aḥātī brought in two fields as her dowry. It could be that at the time of the

³⁴ Cf. Transcription and translation by Goddeeris (2016, 124–125).

³⁵ Cf. Transcription and translation by Goddeeris (2016, 139).

³⁶ The year formula reveals that the sale was recorded during King Rim-Sîn's 37th year of reign; the date is thus 1784, in the tenth month of that year.

³⁷ See transcription online at ARCHIBAB: Babylonian Archives (20th–17th Centuries B.C.), "Reproduction of ARN 35," <http://pix.archibab.fr/4Dcgi/16058B7168.pdf>. Accessed February 2, 2016.

³⁸ As indicated in lines 9–12. However, Kraus (1949, 143n22) conjectured that line 3 suggests the sale of the temple income concerning only rations of bread and fat. See summarised discussion by Kraus (1949, 143). A certain Lugal-êšta, in his official capacity from the office of the temple musician, and in service of the gods Amurru and Lugalaba, authorised, or at least recognised, the sale transaction between Ur-Pabilsağa and the singer, Ĝirini-isa. Five witnesses are named, and their status noted. See transcription online at ARCHIBAB: Babylonian Archives (20th–17th Centuries B.C.), "Reproduction of ARN 35," <http://pix.archibab.fr/4Dcgi/16058B7168.pdf>. Accessed February 2, 2016. See also Goddeeris (2016, 139).

³⁹ The recording is sealed by the seller's seal, that is, Ĝirini-isa, who alienated his property in favour of Ur-Pabilsağa.

⁴⁰ Cf. Transcription and translation by Goddeeris (2016, 106–107).

⁴¹ Cf. Transcription and translation by Goddeeris (2016, 127–128). See Goddeeris (2016, 358–359).

⁴² A few years before (in HS 2388) Alī-aḥātī and her previous husband, Migir-Enlil, gave their daughter, Narubtum in marriage to Damiq-ilīšu. See transcription and translation by Goddeeris (2016, 38–39).

⁴³ See transcription in Çig, Kizilyay and Kraus (1952, 37) and recent transcription and translation of HS 26264/Ni 9220 by Goddeeris (2016, 40–41).

⁴⁴ Stone (1991, 14–15) argues that it is uncertain whether the recording was done after an already concluded marriage and thus previous arrangement. It is plausible that the recording was a new financial arrangement to accommodate Ur-Pabilsağa's adoption by the *nadītu*, Narāmtum, making

marriage she was not of childbearing age, because Ur-Pabilsaĝa paid far less silver than usually attributed to such a dowry. She and her first husband Migir-Enlil gave their daughter in marriage to Damiq-ilīšu, the nephew of Ur-Pabilsaĝa (Goddeeris 2016, 363).

Phase 4: Adoptions; Interconnection and Stability

From 1778 onwards—a year after the conclusion of the marriage arrangement—Ur-Pabilsaĝa entered a further period of social obligations and entitlements. In 1778, Narāmtum—a *nadītu*—adopted Ur-Pabilsaĝa in HS 2213⁴⁵ (Stone 1991, 15). I propose that prior to the adoption, Ur-Pabilsaĝa had agreed with his siblings to divide their father’s estate, because in those divisions his status was given as the son of Ubārum. Thus, at the time of the adoption, Ubārum, the patriarch, was already deceased and his children—three sons and a priestess daughter—inherited a large estate. This enhanced Ur-Pabilsaĝa’s prospects for a *nadītu* like Narāmtum to adopt him as financial security for her old age.⁴⁶ Then again, after the loss of his father, Ur-Pabilsaĝa could have obtained through the adoption the emotional support of an older parental figure. In the adoption agreement, Narāmtum assigned property to her adopted son, Ur-Pabilsaĝa, which she had acquired from an inheritance division⁴⁷ with her brothers. It was a sizable estate that included a house, field, garden and slaves. In return Ur-Pabilsaĝa agreed to provide for a lifetime of support to his adoptee mother consisting of rations of barley, oil and wool (Goddeeris 2016, 78–80, 357, 361–363). Thus, for both Narāmtum and Ur-Pabilsaĝa, the mutual advantage of the adoption was at least the strengthening of their financial situation and political power through the lineage, temple, and *nadītu* institutions.

provision for the financial consequences of the adoption, especially for Ur-Pabilsaĝa’s wife. Stone surmises (1991, 14–15) that irrespective of whether the recording represented the original marriage agreement or a later agreement, Ur-Pabilsaĝa’s financial position as the adoptee of the *nadītu* would have featured strongly during the outcome of the agreed provisions. Goddeeris (2016, 359) transcription and classification of the clay tablet TMH 10 4 shows that it was indeed a marriage arrangement.

⁴⁵ See the recent and completed transcription and translation by Goddeeris (2016, 43–44).

⁴⁶ In the OB Sippar recordings the *nadītu* acted as adopters to secure their financial security in old age (Stone 1982, 61–62n31).

⁴⁷ See Goddeeris’s (2016, 78–80) transliteration and translation of the division (HS 2400/TMH 10 15).

Narāmtum previously adopted Migir-Enlil.⁴⁸ Narāmtum enlarged the estate of Migir-Enlil's daughter, Narubtum, by donating a slave girl to her (HS 2234/TMH 10 24).⁴⁹

Phase 5: Reduction of Estate

Ni 9309⁵⁰ involves the Narāmtum family's estate of her adopted children—Ur-Pabilsağa [Ubārum] and Migir-Enlil. The transcription of Ni 9309 is largely illegible; however, I could ascertain the following: (1) the seal impression reflects the name and family status of Narāmtum; (2) lines 6–7 reveal that Narāmtum liquidated some of her property to the “children of Ubārum” but unfortunately due to the illegibility of the tablet I could not ascertain the children's names; and (3) the sale took place after the death of Ubārum. The alienation and reduction of Narāmtum's estate would have had consequences for her adopted children—Ur-Pabilsağa and Migir-Enlil, as well as their descendants—who, upon her death, would have received a lesser-valued estate.

Phase 6: Division and Reduction of Estates

During phase 6—10 years, after Ur-Pabilsağa was adopted by Narāmtum, Ur-Pabilsağa and Narubtum entered into a division of Narāmtum's estate and Ur-Pabilsağa sold some property.

ARN 41: Division

The division of Narāmtum's estate⁵¹ was recorded during the 53rd year of Rim-Sîn's reign, in 1768. The Narāmtum family then consisted of Narāmtum, the matriarch who adopted Ur-Pabilsağa after the death of his father, and who also previously adopted Migir-Enlil. The latter's daughter, Narubtum, was married to Ur-Pabilsağa's nephew.

⁴⁸ There is no record of this adoption and Migir-Enlil's adoption is inferred in a later re-division of the Narāmtum family's estate. Kraus (1949, 143–48), Poebel (1909, 21–22) and other scholars (see discussion in Phase 9 below) differ from Stone (1991, 11–18) regarding the gender of Migir-Enlil. However, Goddeeris's (2016, 357–366) recent re-assessment of the Archive shows that Migir-Enlil is the adopted relative of Ur-Pabilsağa and Narāmtum and also the biological father of Narubtum and the first husband of Ur-Pabilsağa's wife. In Narāmtum's bequest (HS 2234) to Migir-Enlil's daughter she refers to Migir-Enlil as her son (Goddeeris 2016, 24). Goddeeris (2016, 363) argues that given Narāmtum's status as a *nadītu* with a sister wife that would bear her children, it could have been that Migir-Enlil was the natural son of her husband; however, there is no recording indicating it as such.

⁴⁹ Cf. Goddeeris (2016, 357, transliteration and translation 96).

⁵⁰ See transcription in Çig, Kizilyay and Kraus (1952, 52).

⁵¹ Kraus (1949, 143) refers to the duplicate Ni 1924 from the ARN Catalogue and Stone (1991, 16n29) discusses ARN 41. See transcription online at ARCHIBAB: Babylonian Archives (20th–17th Centuries B.C.) “Reproduction of ARN 41,” <http://pix.archibab.fr/4Dcgi/16070S8211.pdf>. Accessed February 2, 2016.

Ur-Pabilsağa exchanged a slave named Ali-aḥuša (line 1) worth one-third *mina* of silver with Narubtum for a considerable number of fields.

The seal impressions of both parties who agreed to the alienation of their property included their status but led to some controversy. The first seal impression refers to Narubtum as the daughter of Migir-Enlil.⁵² It is plausible, as suggested by Stone (1991, 15–16) that the recording’s reference to Narubtum as the daughter of Ur-Pabilsağa does not reflect a real adoption but rather re-instated the connection between Ur-Pabilsağa and Narubtum’s parent, Migir-Enlil, who was also Ur-Pabilsağa’s adopted relative. Ur-Pabilsağa’s seal impression shows his status as the son of Ubārum, but Ur-Pabilsağa had already been adopted 10 years earlier, in 1778, by Narāmtum. Ur-Pabilsağa’s connection with his biological family was confirmed in that two of his biological family members acted as witnesses, but in return they were also connected to Narubtum: Lugal-ázida, was his nephew’s son and possibly Narubtum’s son, and Lugal-ḥegal, was his brother and Narubtum’s father-in-law. The presence of these family members seems to affirm a kinship relationship, because Narāmtum and Migir-Enlil were already deceased.⁵³ Twenty-two years later, Ur-Pabilsağa and Narubtum would be involved in a dispute that necessitated the re-division of their inheritance awards (BE 6/2 23).

Thereafter, Ur-Pabilsağa bought two more temple offices in TMH 10 58/59 that would have provided some income to him.⁵⁴

Ni 9232: Sales

Ni 9232⁵⁵ shows that Ur-Pabilsağa liquidated some of his property, reducing the value of his estate.⁵⁶ The tablet includes a seal impression of Ur-Pabilsağa, indicating his status as the son of Ubārum. It seems that Ur-Pabilsağa alienated certain property when he regained his biological status, after the death of his adoptive mother, Narāmtum.

⁵² Cf. Kraus (1949, 144).

⁵³ Lugal-ḥegal acted as a witness in his son’s marriage agreement with Narubtum and as a witness for his brother, Ur-Pabilsağa, in the latter’s marriage agreement with Alī-aḥāfī. Also, Lugal-ḥegal witnessed the adoption of his brother Ur-Pabilsağa by Narāmtum.

⁵⁴ See transcription and translation of Goddeeris (2016, 143–146).

⁵⁵ See transcription in Çig, Kizilyay and Kraus (1952, 38). Goddeeris (2016, 131) mentioned that HS 2476a may be joined to Ni 9232. If that is the case, then the sale would have taken place in Phase 8’s reduction and reshuffling of the estate, before the reappraisal of the Narāmtum family estate division, in Phase 9.

⁵⁶ The dispute settlement was recorded in Hammurabi’s 31st year of reign (Çig, Kizilyay and Kraus 1952, 38). Although the date formula is not included, Çig, Kizilyay and Kraus (1952, 38) place the recording during King Rim-Sîn’s reign.

Phase 7: Dispute and Settlement

Phase 7 took place at a time during which OB Nippur underwent drastic economic changes, and the minor family branches started to lodge disputes against their patrilineal lineage. In 1762, Ur-Pabilsaĝa, was involved in two dispute settlements regarding the previously mentioned divisions of the inheritances from the estate of his father.

PBS 8/1 81: Dispute settlement

In PBS 8/1 81⁵⁷ the brothers Lugal-ziĝu (oldest) and Ur-Pabilsaĝa (youngest) [Ubārum] were in dispute over the control of properties deriving from all or at least some of the divisions in ARN 118, 112 and 113. The litigation settlement arranged for the involvement of the temple and specifically an office of the temple musician with the religious support of the god Amurru. In prior recordings the office of the temple musician featured as an acquired property (bought by Ur-Pabilsaĝa in ARN 35) and as inheritance allotments (to the children of Ubārum in ARN 118 and to the *nadītu* sister in ARN 112).

The brothers settled for the “different accounts of old and new property,” omitting the minute details of what this entailed. The appearance and presence of an office of the temple musician with the god Amurru served as a validation in retaining the brothers’ agreed position in the future. Lugal-ḫegal, the other brother, and one of his grandsons acted as witnesses, reflecting the Ubārum-family’s involvement in the settlement.

PBS 8/1 82: Court Case Settlement

In ARN 112, Lugal-ziĝu, the oldest brother, protected his *nadītu* sister’s interests and consequently held some degree of control over her property (Stone 1982, 60).

The recording does not clearly identify any of the individuals concerned. However, the recording was numbered consecutively with PBS 8/1 81,⁵⁸ both concerning Lugal-ziĝu, recorded at about the same time, and containing a shared witness, pointing to the activities of Lugal-ziĝu (Stone 1982, 60).⁵⁹

Notwithstanding the almost illegible recording, in lines 14–15 it appears that the other brothers of Ninlil-meša sued her because she tried to sell the inheritance, the income of which was awarded to her. Lugal-ziĝu’s action reflects an obligation practice of senior

⁵⁷ See transcription and translation by Poebel (Chiera 1914, 108).

⁵⁸ See transcription and translation by Poebel (Chiera 1914, 61–62).

⁵⁹ Lugal-ziĝu in PBS 8/1 81 is known from other recordings (ARN 112, 113, 118), one of which (ARN 113) indicates that Lugal-ziĝu did have a *nadītu* sister called Ninlil-meša. Stone (1982, 60–62; 60n29) mentions that the recording does not specifically identify the sister, Ninlil-meša, as a *nadītu*; however, we may assume she was a *nadītu* for her activities were those which we associate with a *nadītu*, and she had a typical *nadītu* name.

male members at Nippur, in which first the father and then the brothers represented their *nadītu* sister in protecting her interests in property transactions—even against her own family.⁶⁰ The family feud can also be an indication that the *nadītu* sister’s lifelong income was not enough to support her or that she sought to make a profit to the detriment of her brothers.

Phase 8: Reduction and Reshuffling of Estate

In 1758—four years after the disputes among the children of Ubārum—the exchange in BE 6/2 11⁶¹ was recorded.

Damiq-ilīšu [Ubārum] and his wife Narubtum exchanged houses with Nabi-Šamaš [Imgū’a].⁶² Nabi-Šamaš was the brother-in-law of Ur-Pabilsağa and the uncle of Narubtum (on her mother’s side). The houses that they exchanged were of equal value and Nabi-Šamaš bought a courtyard for one shekel of silver.⁶³ Two seal impressions represent the parties who alienated their property, Nabi-Šamaš, the son of Imgū’a, and Damiq-ilīšu and Narubtum. Narubtum is referred to as Damiq-ilīšu’s wife.

A few year later, Ur-Pabilsağa was involved with Nabi-Šamaš, and borrowed 1500 litre of barley, with interest, to repay the loan at harvest (TMH 10 71) (Goddeeris 2016, 359).

At the same time, Damiq-ilīšu and his wife, Narubtum, also experienced distress. A court case record (TMH 10 104/HS 2073)⁶⁴ mentioned that the second wife, Amertum, “discredited” her husband and as punishment her “unkept har” was shaved off. This happened two years prior to Phase 9. Nabi-Šamaš was again involved here and served as one of the judges. Then in another court settlement (Phase 9), Nabi-Šamaš, was a first-ranking witness.

Phase 9: Division as a Result of a Court Dispute/Settlement

In 1746, 22 years after the agreed division of Narāmtum’s estate between her adopted son, Ur-Pabilsağa, and her granddaughter, Narubtum (via adoption), a dispute occurred; it resulted in the reappraisal and redistribution of the inheritance awards. Hence,

⁶⁰ Lugal-ḫegal—the son of Ubarum and brother of Ur-Pabilsağa—acted as a witness.

⁶¹ Transcription and translation of BE 6/2 11 by Arno Poebel (1909, 17–18). The translation of the recording, albeit in less detail, also appears in Kohler and Ungnad (1910, 49) under no. 982.

⁶² Cf. Stone (1987, 49n37, 41–50; 1982, 62).

⁶³ Imgū’a is the neighbour of one of the houses.

⁶⁴ See transcription and translation by Goddeeris (2016, 192–193).

BE 6/2 23⁶⁵ reflects an exceptional re-division of inheritances, involving the two deceased estates of Narāmtum and Migir-Enlil.⁶⁶

The scribe divided the recording into three distinctive sections.⁶⁷ The first section consisted of the awards in favour of Narubtum, the daughter of Migir-Enlil. The second section contained awards in favour of Ur-Pabilsağa.⁶⁸ Both award sections, in context of the provisions, derived from the estates of Narāmtum and consequently Migir-Enlil. Both parties acquired a house and garden as well as female and male slaves to assist them in the maintenance and the preservation of the properties. In the third section, Ur-Pabilsağa and Narubtum agreed to an equal division of unspecified properties from the “one-third of the estate” of Narāmtum, referred to as the mother of Migir-Enlil.⁶⁹

The apparently agreed-upon nature of the division is called into question when we take cognisance of a witness,⁷⁰ named Ṭāb-wašabšu, who held the occupation of an *uku-uš lugal*: the king’s runner.⁷¹ Usually this official appeared as a witness for the king in litigations concerning *nadīatu* women.⁷² The re-division was rather the end product of litigation which possibly ensued because of the final devolution of the deceased Migir-Enlil’s estate. Not only were Ur-Pabilsağa and Narubtum involved, but also Ur-Pabilsağa’s brother-in-law, Nabi-Šamaš, who as the first-ranking witness would have taken cognisance of the settlement to protect his family and his own interest, deriving from a prior dealing of exchange (BE 6/2 11) involving Narubtum and her husband, the nephew of Ur-Pabilsağa.

⁶⁵ The transcription by Schorr (1913, 263–264) is complete and contains the witnesses and date formula. Goddeeris (2016, 86–89) provides a recent transliteration of the tablet, which includes the date, witnesses and seal impressions.

⁶⁶ Cf. Poebel (1909, 20). Later, Schorr (1913, 263–264) published, transcribed and translated a more complete version of the clay tablet. Further, the recording is classified under no. 23 from the Catalogue of the Babylonian Museum of the University of Pennsylvania and the Babylonian Collection of the Musée Imperial Ottoman in Constantinople, first published, transcribed and translated by Poebel (1909, 21–22). Cf. Çig, Kizilyay and Kraus (1952, 19). A recent transliteration and translation was done by Goddeeris (2016, 86–89), classified under museum no. HS 2132/2074.

⁶⁷ See Poebel (1909, 24–25) for an explanation of the different sections, especially of the first two.

⁶⁸ Çig, Kizilyay and Kraus (1952, 19) refer to his status as the son of Ubarum.

⁶⁹ Narubtum’s status is given as the daughter of Migir-Enlil, while Ur-Pabilsağa’s is indicated as the son of Ubarum. In context with the previous recordings, Ur-Pabilsağa regained his position as biological son of Ubarum after the death of his adoptive mother, Narāmtum.

⁷⁰ Ten witnesses testified to the conclusion of the division, including two scribes and a seal engraver. Seven of the ten witnesses’ names and family statuses are given as “X son of X.” Another anomaly concerns the other witness, who is named Ibgatum, and whose status is only given as “his brother.”

⁷¹ Translated by Harris (1975, 130). However, Goddeeris (2016, 88) translates the profession as a “soldier of the king.”

⁷² This type of OB profession as a witness appeared in an inheritance during King Apil-Sîn’s reign and in other recordings from Hammurabi’s reign. In three case studies, the official summoned litigants to court/the king or acted as the king’s representative (Harris 1975, 130–131).

The last provision, the so-called “adoption clause,”⁷³ lends itself to different transcriptions and translations. Kraus (1949, 144)⁷⁴ opines that Migir-Enlil was Ur-Pabilsaġa’s wife and, upon Migir-Enlil’s death, Ur-Pabilsaġa adopted Narubtum. However, recent translations reflect that Migir-Enlil was Ur-Pabilsaġa adopted brother and the biological father of Narubtum; Ur-Pabilsaġa’s wife, Alī-aḥātī, was Narubtum’s mother. Kohler and Ungnad’s (1910, 799), Poebel’s (1909, 21–22) and Schorr’s (1913, 263–264) translations only reflect that a wife of Ur-Pabilsaġa died and that Ur-Pabilsaġa consequently adopted Narubtum. Stone (1991, 17)⁷⁵ holds that it was Migir-Enlil (the brother of Ur-Pabilsaġa) whose wife died, and because Migir-Enlil had no heir, necessitated him to adopt Ur-Pabilsaġa (Stone 1982, 61–62n31).⁷⁶ Goddeeris (2016, 87–89) refers to the proposal made by Meinhold that it was Narāmtum who adopted Ur-Pabilsaġa after the death of Narāmtum’s husband. For this explains why, in the last section, both Narubtum and Ur-Pabilsaġa are the “rightful heirs of Narāmtum” (Goddeeris 2016, 89). I agree to an extent with Goddeeris (2016, 89). Ur-Pabilsaġa and Narubtum were the heirs of Narāmtum and consequently also those to Migir-Enlil’s estate—by means of marriage and adoptions. However, in this recording a *sui generis* adoption-inheritance division was forced upon the parties by means of litigation. Both were already in their advanced years; thus, a real adoption had no advantage for kinship nurturing and support. The final outcome was to secure financial stability for the parties by ensuring that the inheritance awards should devolve to the surviving party following the death of the other.⁷⁷ Thus, as surmised by Goddeeris (2016, 89), the remainder of the interconnected family estate assets ultimately devolved to the descendants of

⁷³ The scope of this article does not allow for a thorough discussion of the adoption clause. However, I address this in a forthcoming article, provisionally titled “Keeping ‘Home and Hearth Together’: A Scribe’s Adaptation of Adoption and Inheritance Division Templates from Old Babylonian Nippur Scribal Schools.”

⁷⁴ Stone’s transliteration of the recording differs, and Stone opines that there is no reason why Ur-Pabilsaġa would have inherited from the estate of Migir-Enlil, or why Ur-Pabilsaġa should have chosen to adopt Narubtum. She is further of the opinion that Ur-Pabilsaġa would have no claim against Migir-Enlil’s estate (1991, 17n310). In Claassens (2012, 1:144–151) I held the same position as Kraus; however, my inferences regarding the recording have changed as will be discussed in detail in the forthcoming article mentioned in the previous footnote.

⁷⁵ Stone (1991, 17) states that in adoption recordings the adoptee usually precedes the adopter. In BE 6/2 (ARN 100 and 267), it was the *nadiātu* who were the adopters. Charpin (1994, 95) observes that most of the discussed cases contained only the seal of the adopter and that the contract was drawn up for, and given to, the adoptee, thus serving to protect the adoptee.

⁷⁶ Van De Mierop (1993, 127) opines that because Ur-Pabilsaġa was the youngest son he was “cut off from property and influence among his kin.” However, with his adoption by the *nadītu* Narāmtum, Ur-Pabilsaġa acquired property and thus gained control over Migir-Enlil’s daughter, Narubtum, and was thus able to challenge his older brother’s influence in his own family. Cf. Obermark (1993–1994, 106–109).

⁷⁷ I address this in detail in my forthcoming article, provisionally titled “Keeping ‘Home and Hearth Together’: A Scribe’s Adaptation of Adoption and Inheritance Division Templates from Old Babylonian Nippur Scribal Schools.”

Damiq-ilīšu [Ubārum], who was the husband of Narubtum and the nephew of Ur-Pabilsaġa.

Phase 10: Division and Reduction of Estates

The Archive ends with two events in 1739 BCE at a time when the OB Nippur lineages were destitute and had to sell their properties. In ARN 136 the descendants of Damiq-ilīšu (the nephew of Ur-Pabilsaġa) agreed to divide their inheritance assets.⁷⁸ The last event ends with OIMA 1 18, wherein the grandchildren of Damiq-ilīšu—Damu-erībam and Nuska-nīšu—sold a field to Ur-dukuga to obtain liquid assets for the satisfaction of their immediate financial needs.⁷⁹

Summary

The Archive consists of recordings involving the Ubārum, Imġū'a, and Narāmtum families who were interconnected mainly through the artificial constructs of adoption and marriage (cf. Goddeeris 2016, 356). The families' status and financial position as well as their contractual choices were influenced by the interrelated social institutions of OB Nippur, i.e. the patrilineal lineage, temple, and priestess groups. The social institutions placed a person in a defined position, and regulated a person's needs and allocated resources to the different kinds of needs, while within the patrilineal lineages an inheritance division's beneficial allocation of awarded inheritances would have ensured stability and financial security for the involved family members.

This overview of the Archive's recordings, with special reference to the divisions' chosen provisions, reveals the divisions' influence on the status and financial position of the interconnected families within their social and financial networking.

Three divisions evolved from the estate of the patriarch, Ubārum. In one division the three brothers and the *nadītu* sister each received a quarter share in various properties (ARN 118). In another division, the brothers alienated their income from a garden and certain musicianship offices in favour of their *nadītu* sister (ARN 113). In the end the brothers only gained the use of household utensils and income from a field while the *nadītu* sister—as a lifetime-support—received the income and use of most of the inheritance properties. The interrelated social institutions, especially the priestess

⁷⁸ Transcription online at ARCHIBAB: Babylonian Archives (20th–17th centuries B.C.), “Reproduction of ARN 136,” <http://pix.archibab.fr/4Dcgi/16322K3746.pdf>. Accessed February 2, 2016. OIMA 1 is published in Stone and Zimansky (1976). The recording is badly damaged, and I could not assess the specific awards to Damu-eribam. However, I could at least ascertain to a degree that Nuska-nīšu and Rabut-Sîn inherited in equal part various properties which included for each a built house, house, empty house plot, fields, gardens, and wooden objects (maybe a doormat and a door).

⁷⁹ The seal impressions were those of the surviving son (of the three brothers), Rabut-Sîn, and the grandsons Damu-eribam and Nuska-nīšu. Rabut-Sîn was a witness, the son of Damiq-ilīšu, and the uncle of the two brothers Damu-eribam and Nuska-nīšu.

groups, contributed to the enforced provisions and consequently placed a burden on the brothers. In another division (ARN 112), the eldest brother alienated and reduced his estate by selling his portion of the field to his middle brother. Thereafter the negotiation of further agreements took place—changing ownership—that included a marriage arrangement, an adoption, exchanges, sales, dispute settlements and other divisions. First, Ur-Pabilsaġa, the youngest of three brothers, obtained income from various sales and gained some degree of security and social standing from his adoption by Narāmtum (HS 2213), influencing his financial arrangements with his wife Ali-aḡati and his relationship with his in-laws (Ni 9220). Narāmtum liquidated some of her property and thereby reduced the family’s estate—directly affecting her adopted children (Ni 9309). After Narāmtum’s death, Ur-Pabilsaġa regained his biological status and alienated (Ni 9232) certain property, but still attempted to retain his connections with his adoptive relatives by entering into a division of the estate of his deceased adoptive mother, Narāmtum (ARN 41).

The decline of the lineages’ power structure, conflicting needs, and economic disparity brought about family feuds among the biological family of Ubārum (PBS 8/1 81, 82) and their adoptive relative, Narubtum (BE 6/2 23). The brothers from the Ubārum family were in dispute over the control of properties deriving from all or at least some of the divisions (ARN 118, 112 and 113). The family feud can also indicate that the *nadītu* sister’s maintenance allotments were insufficient or that she sought to make a profit to the detriment of her brothers. In another family feud, Ur-Pabilsaġa and Narubtum—at an advanced age—were forced to re-divide the estates of their adoptive family and to create an adoption-inheritance division construction to secure each party’s financial stability (BE 6/2 23). The Archive ends with two events in 1739, at a time when the OB Nippur lineages were destitute and had to sell their properties. The grandchildren of Damiq-ilīšu [Ubārum], after the division of their inheritance (ARN 136), liquidated some of their properties (OIMA 1 18).

The Archive’s recordings reveal that the interconnected families were restricted by the interrelated social institutions to secure beneficial allocations of their inheritances. Inheritance feuds then ensued. The settlement of disputes was temporary in easing the conflicting needs and economic disparity between the family members involved. Not even the interconnected family relationships, mainly created by means of adoption and marriage, could prevent the slow demise of the families’ financial position. Rather, the divisions contributed to their destitution by destabilising the social and financial networking of the members between the three interconnected families—the Ubārum, Iḡū’a, and Narāmtum families.

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