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Abhandlung

Caroline Janssen*

Address Behaviour in Eight Unpublished *ana bēlīja* Letters from the Late Old Babylonian Ur-Utu Archive: Close Relatives Through a Distant Mirror?

<https://doi.org/10.1515/za-2018-0011>

Abstract: One of the common forms of address, in Old Babylonian letters, is ‘to my lord’ (*ana bēlīja*). If letters come from clandestine digs, it is hard to know who is hiding behind this title. In the context of the Ur-Utu archive, there is one unknown variable less. The addressee is the archive’s owner. It occurred to me that in eight *ana bēlīja* letters from this collection, the senders bore names identical to those of Inanna-mansum’s sons (Ur-Utu, Kubburum, Ili-iqīšam and Ḫuzālum) and Ur-Utu’s wife Rā’imtum. Can it be confirmed that the sender and the correspondent of these letters are indeed close relatives, and that the *ana bēlīja* format was used to address a father, brother or spouse? If so, what does this practice tell us about the address ‘my lord’, as a social habit?

I The art of addressing a chief lamentation priest

I.1 Between the lines

Letters are a genre that allows us to study the natural disposition of people, their realities, relations and interactions. They give us impressions of the social construct and the texture of life. There is more to letters than the message they convey: ways to address the addressee, self-designation, greetings, politeness (or the lack of all this) inform us about the relation between the correspondents, as conceived or real. The framing of facts, requests, instructions, questions, reproaches and exhortations tells us about the society in which these letters originated and the relations between its people.¹ Sallaberger’s ‘Wenn Du mein Bruder bist, ...’, on the greeting formulae, interaction and text composition (Textgestaltung) of Old Babylonian letters, is an in-depth study about these interactions and their expression and has become a standard in the field.

Its primary goal was to reconstruct the system of language use. It was a study about the choices an Old Babylonian letter writer had at his disposal, and from which he could choose the appropriate form in a given context.²

It was an unfortunate circumstance for Sallaberger that most of the published Old Babylonian letters came from clandestine digs. Thus, they had been robbed of their material and archival contexts. There was no solid chronological framework for the study of the historical development of address behaviour. Moreover, the possibility of interpreting the social context in which the address behaviour occurred was limited. When titles of address replace the name of the addressee, or when the address section is absent, it is impossible to retrieve the addressee’s identity and position in society unless one knows in whose archive the letters were found; we need archaeological records about the find.³ These preconditions are met for the letters found as part of the Ur-Utu archive.⁴

¹ The standard abbreviations used are those of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary.

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² I want to express my gratitude to W. Sallaberger for his valuable comments and good suggestions when proof-reading my manuscript.

³ Veenhof (1996, 33) rightly observes that the loss of the archaeological context and the scattering of letters over collections world-wide has had a dramatic impact on their interpretability.

⁴ The archive was excavated in the framework of the Belgian Archaeological Expedition to Iraq, Tell ed-Dēr, under the directorship of L. De Meyer. The collaboration between H. Gasche and M.-J. Steve (see Gasche 1989, 1 n. 2) in the field has been very fruitful. Gasche (1989) gives an overview of the evidence and main results of these excavations. The publication of the archive itself is still work in progress. As

This creates an opportunity for us to investigate address behaviour in a more tangible context and shed more light on the social practices of the late Old Babylonian Sippar region and Babylon.

1.2 Letters from the Ur-Utu archive

Ur-Utu's sizeable collection of 204 letters was part of a much larger archive. Some 2500 cuneiform tablets and fragments were inventorised during the excavations. A substantial part of this archive had been left behind by its owner after the house's destruction by fire.⁵ The majority of the tablets were found in two rooms. Ur-Utu had built a new archive room ('room 17') in the beginning of Ammi-šaduqa 18, only a few months before the house burned down. He was still in the process of sifting through his documents and transferring tablets from the old to the new archive room, when this happened. Seeing the end coming, the family tried to save some of the most valuable pieces from the new archive room, while dropping other tablets – among which many letters – on the floor. The old archive room 22, too disorganised to be effectively searched, was left untouched (Gasche 1989, 28–33 provides the archaeological evidence for the archive rooms and other places where tablets were found).

Although we refer to this archive as the Ur-Utu archive, we must keep in mind that it included a part of his father Inanna-mansum's archive as well. It was Inanna-mansum who had acquired the house in Ammi-ditana 28. When he moved into it, in Ammi-ditana 29, he took with him all the documents that seemed to be relevant at the time, after which the archive kept growing organically.⁶ There is no indication that he moved in with his old correspondence

though. Hence, with no evidence to the contrary, it is assumed that the letters were received by Inanna-mansum and Ur-Utu over a span of nearly three decades, between Ammi-ditana 29 and the summer of Ammi-šaduqa 18. As datable elements are a rare commodity, we can only rarely make the distinction between letters sent to Inanna-mansum and those sent to his son Ur-Utu. This does not jeopardise this investigation though, as their position in society is very similar. Inanna-mansum was the chief lamentation priest (*kalamāḫum*) of the goddess Anunītum in Sippar-Amnānum from Ammi-ditana 1 until Ammi-šaduqa 4, at the end of which he was succeeded by his son Ur-Utu. Both were subsequently heads of the house, the *bītum*, which included relatives and slaves. In every-day life, Inanna-mansum may have had more prestige than his son, because of his age, experience and his connections with Babylon.⁷ Ur-Utu's position may have been weaker because it was contested for some time, as a result of a feud with his brothers, especially Kubburum, as unfolded in Janssen (1992), or because of his personality. But there is no reason to believe that this would fundamentally change the more conventionally determined relation between sender and addressee.

1.3 The eight *ana bēlija* letters

This contribution is focused on the address behaviour in one specific group of letters. Eight *ana bēlija* letters (letters 'to my lord') drew my attention because the senders bore the same names as Inanna-mansum's four sons (Ur-Utu and Kubburum, Ili-iqīšam and Ḫuzālum) and Ur-Utu's wife Rā'imtum. If the senders are indeed the addressee's closest relatives, it would mean that the title *bēli*, which as we know is used to address officials, and even the king, is also considered to be an/the appropriate form to address a father, first brother or husband. The confirmation of the identity of these senders is not unproblematic though. We have no patronymics in the address section and no envelopes for these letters. The main identifier being absent, we have to come up with other strategies to look for evidence to ascertain their identities. Our working hypothesis that they are close relatives is based on the contents of these letters as well as the combined presence of these names in the limited group of *ana bēlija* letters from

for the letters mentioned in this contribution, most are still unpublished (PhD C. Janssen). Their publication is scheduled for 2018–19. The following letters from the archive have been published in MHET I: Di 208 = no. 89; Di 210 = 71; Di 211 = 72; Di 212 = 68; Di 214 = 70; Di 217 = 74; Di 221 = 92; Di 223 = 80; Di 225 = 90; Di 226 = 75; Di 227 = 87; Di 228 = 88; Di 230 = 73; Di 231 = 76; Di 232 = 79; Di 233 = 84; Di 234 = 77; Di 234 = 81; Di 282 bis = 100; Di 283 = 86; Di 285 = 91; Di 289 = 93; Di 291 = 69; Di 292 = 78; Di 293 = 85; Di 727 = 83; Di 728 = 8. Also published are: Di 976, Di 1668, Di 1771 (copies of Samsu-iluna letters, published by Janssen 1991a, 4–8; 35f.; 37f); Di 167, Di 1194 (Janssen 1992, 20–24); Di 1285 (Janssen 2012, 286–89), Di 175 (De Meyer 1982a, 31f), Di 525 (De Meyer 1989a, 41).

⁵ Many valuable and still valid documents were left behind. Although at least one of Inanna-mansum's sons, Ḫuzālum, is known to have survived the catastrophe, he must not have been able to retrieve the archive (Gasche 1989, 114, n. 287).

⁶ See Janssen [e.a.] (1994, 121f.). Tanret (2004, 251f.) gives arguments for dating the beginning and end of the house's occupation.

The impact of the successive moves and the construction works on the composition of the archive are discussed by Tanret (2004, 249f.).

⁷ He was installed in his office on the first day of reign of king Ammi-ditana, shortly after he had married a wealthy *qadištum* of Mar-duk from Babylon.

the Ur-Utu archive. They represent 8 out of 19 *ana bēlija* letters whose sender is known. But how does this address behaviour make sense, as a social habit? In order to shed light on this question, we first inventorise and analyse the greeting and address behaviour in this corpus. Secondly, we explore the semantic range of the term *bēlum*. Thirdly, the contents of the eight letters are analysed and placed in the context of what we know already about the chief lamentation priest's household.⁸ How well does the new evidence fit the picture, when we interpret these letters against this background?

II Address behaviour in the late Old Babylonian Ur-Utu archive

II.1 How is the chief lamentation priest addressed?

The chief lamentation priest's high status is reflected by the fact that some senders, when referring to him in the body of the text or in quotations, describe him as *awilum kalamāḥum* (literally 'the gentleman the chief lamentation priest').⁹ However, this does not mean that all of the letters he received were addressed *ana awilim* ('to the gentleman'). In fact, all of the standard titles of address found in Old Babylonian letters were used to address him. The archive's incoming correspondence included letters *ana awilim* ('to the gentleman'), *ana bēlija/bēlini* ('to my lord'/'to our lord'), *ana abija* ('to my father'), *ana aḥija* ('to my brother'), *ana šāpirija/ni* ('to my/our overseer'), and a royal letter addressed *ana* [GALA.MAḥ] *Anunitum* ('to [the chief lamentation priest] of Anunitum'). Remarkably though, neither Ur-Utu nor his father was ever addressed by name.¹⁰ Their position must have blocked this possibility.

⁸ I am grateful to have been able to use a preliminary transcription of documents from the archive, prepared by L. Dekiere, and M. Tanret's prosopographical 'Sippar database'. I also thank him for proof-reading the manuscript and making valuable suggestions.

⁹ Examples are found in letters *ana awilim* and *ana abija* (Di 350:18, Di 372:5, Di 435:22, Di 459:13, Di 1748: Rev. 16'). In Di 628 Nabium-našir, who is in charge of prisoners, refers to him as 'my lord and beloved Sir' (*bēlija u awilum rā'imum*) (Di 628 Lo.E. 13'). There are also examples without *awilum* (Di 453 Rev. 5', *ana bēlija*; Di 457 3', *ana awilim*).

¹⁰ As could be expected in a late Old Babylonian archive, there was a substantial number of *zehpums*, quadrangular letters with rounded corners, some with and some without address. Address sections are skipped on copies of outgoing letters (Janssen 2017, 2).

As for the distribution of these titles, according to Sallaberger, in the Old Babylonian period the title of address *ana bēlija* was less frequent than the use of the name (c. 60 %) or the address *ana awilim* (c. 10 %). As he indicates (1999, 33 f.), depending on the collection, *ana bēlija* ranks before or after *ana abija* (both c. 5–6 %).¹¹ He comes to the conclusion that addressing the recipient by name is the 'unmarked form' and can hide different types of relations. The absence of this unmarked and most common form in the chief lamentation priest's correspondence is noteworthy, even if we take into account that in the late Old Babylonian context the use of titles of address was *bon ton*.¹² As Sallaberger's corpus comprised the entire Old Babylonian period, different statistics can be expected for our corpus. The most frequent title of address in the late Old Babylonian Ur-Utu archive is *ana awilim* (c. 35 %), followed by *ana abija* and unaddressed letters. The *ana bēlija* letters are less frequent than these but they still represent c. 11 % of the letters found in the archive (23/204).

II.2 Greeting and address behaviour in the Ur-Utu archive

The greeting formulae found on letters from the Ur-Utu archive range from short to long ones, and include both standard (ABCDE, A-var.)¹³ and non-standard formulae (R). The non-standard formulae contain very specific religious contents linked to the religious environment in which the chief lamentation priest was active (release of the *e'iltum*, appeasement of angry gods, the passage from darkness to light).¹⁴ The variety we see in the titles of address and greeting formulae reflects that Inanna-man-sum and Ur-Utu had contacts, in writing, with people embedded in different contexts, who positioned them-

¹¹ I rounded the numbers which are slightly different according to the collection that is used.

¹² Sallaberger (1999, 37. 55) observes that the use of appellatives or titles of address in the address section is rare in early texts but became more widely diffused in the later Old Babylonian period.

¹³ In the Ur-Utu archive, the late Old Babylonian standard greeting is most often found in a highly standardized form: A: *Šamaš u Marduk dāriš ūmī liballiṭūka*; B: *lū šalmāta lū baṭṭāta*; C: *ilum nāširka reška ana damiqtim likil* (= Sallaberger 1999 C₂); D *ana šulmika ašpuram* (= Sallaberger 1999 D₂, first part); E: *šulmika maḥar Šamaš u Marduk lū dari* (= Sallaberger 1999 D₂, second part). I used the codes ABCDE in my PhD (unpublished, 1992) and maintain this system here for practical reasons. Sallaberger's D₂ is split into two parts because D and E are not always found combined. A-var GN *lilabbirka* is found on several *zehpums*.

¹⁴ More details about these greeting formulae will be given in a separate publication.

selves differently vis-à-vis the chief lamentation priest of Anunītum. The full standard option (ABCDE), in most cases with the gods Šamaš and Marduk, is found in many of these letters, and is sometimes even followed by other non-standard formulae. Those with a short selection from the standard range (e.g. A, AB, ABE, ...) tend to be concise (e.g. A: GN *liballīka*, or B: *lū šalmāta* only). Some letters do not contain a greeting section at all, as is the case on

a number of *zehpums* (13 out of 41), royal letters, the two *ana šāpirīja/ni* letters and a number of letters addressed *ana bēlīja/ni* (15 out of 24). The ‘Adressengruß’, a blessing following the addressee’s name, is present in 22 letters of this corpus. Apart from the standard one, with the god Marduk (M), exceptionally other deities appear and customized formulae (R) are also found in the ‘Adressengruß’, as is shown in the table below:¹⁵

	‘Adressengruß’	Greeting + number of attestations	Title in a greeting (G), the body of the text (T) or a well-being clause (W)
unaddressed <i>zehpums</i>	n.a.	– (13) ¹⁶	None: Di 324. Di 525. Di 602. Di 641. Di 743. Di 760. Di 985. Di 1221. Di 1612. Di 1685 <i>aḫī atta</i> : Di 554 (T) 5. 8. 19; + <i>aḫūtka lūmur</i> Rev. 16. Di 520 (T) 1. 6. Rev. 12. 16 (= the addressee?) <i>abī/abī atta</i> : Di 1883 (T) 1. 4. 6 (<i>abī atta</i>); Rev. 9. 14 (<i>abī</i>); + <i>abūtām ... lūmur</i> Rev. 14
	n.a.	A-var (3)	None: Di 883 <i>aḫī atta</i> : Di 403 (T) Rev. 13. Di 521 (T) 12
	n.a.	A-varR (3)	None: Di 428 <i>abī atta</i> : Di 606 (T) 13 <i>abī/abī atta</i> : Di 175 (G) 7. (T) 9. 10. Rev. 16. 17. 22. 24 (<i>abī atta</i>) (T) 25. 26 (<i>abī</i>)
	n.a.	R (5)	None: Di 401. Di 604 <i>aḫī atta</i> : Di 344 (T) U. E. 25. Di 469 (T) U. E. 23. Di 1098 (T) 7. Rev. 13
	n.a.	R-BC...(1) broken/- (2)	None: Di 982 None: Di 839 <i>bēlī/bēlī atta</i> : Di 627 (T) 2’. 4’ (<i>bēlī atta</i>); (T) Lo.E. 8’. 12’. 18’ (<i>bēlī</i>). N.B. <i>bēlī kalamāḫum</i> 14’
<i>ana awīlim</i>	–	...R (1)	None: Di 1672 <i>zehpum</i>
	–	A (1)	None: Di 517 (female sender: Iltani)
	–	ABE (1)	None: Di 450

¹⁵ The following letters have been excluded from the table:

1. Copies of outgoing letters (Di 167, Di 212, Di 364, Di 371, Di 495, Di 661, Di 1194)
 2. Outgoing letters that accidentally ended up in the archive (Di 214, Di 291, Di 642)
 3. Three late Old Babylonian copies of a letter issued by Samsu-iluna (Di 976, Di 1668, Di 1771)
 4. Three late Old Babylonian royal letters (Di 1353, Di 1542, Di 1736; the last letter is not addressed to the chief lamentation priest but to other officials)
 5. A letter to Ipiq-Nin..., which was a discarded letter (Di 2233)
 6. A letter *ana awīlē* (Di 1285)
- A letter to a female member of the household (Di 372)

¹⁶ In the short note Di 743 (a letter?) and in the exceptional letter Di 525, which contains a ‘letter to a goddess’, the third person is used to refer to the addressee.

ana abīja ana abīja ¹⁹	–	ABCE (2)	None: Di 390 <i>zehpum</i> . Di 551
	–	ABCDE (47+)	None: (44x) ¹⁷ ; + <i>athūtka lūmur</i> Di 446 Rev. 36. Di 2198+2201 Rev. 7'-8'; <i>abī atta</i> : Di 224 (T) Rev. 27. Di 282 (T) Rev. 8'. 10'. Di 352 (T) Rev. 10'
	–	ABCDER(5)	None: Di 374. Di 375. Di 451. Di 1748. + <i>athūtka lūmur</i> Di 454 Rev. 36.
	M	A (1)	None: Di 924
	M	AB (5)	None: Di 292. Di 477. Di 918. Di 1744. Di 1747
	M	AE (1)	None: Di 522
	M	ABE (2)	None: Di 505. Di 618
	M	ABCE ¹⁸ (1)	None: Di 605 <i>zehpum</i>
	M	ABCDE(2)	None: Di 380. Di 1352
	M	R(?) (1)	None: Di 668
	–	–	None: Di 649
	–	A (3)	None: Di 289 <i>abī atta</i> : Di 478 <i>zehpum</i> (G) 4 (T) Rev. 13. <i>abī .../ abī atta</i> : Di 790 (G) (<i>abī ...</i>); (T) 7 (<i>abī atta</i>)
	M	AB (1)	None: Di 383
		ABE (1)	<i>abī/ abī atta</i> : Di 1737 <i>zehpum</i> (G) 5 (T) Rev. 9 (<i>abī atta</i>); 5 (<i>abī</i>).
		ABCE (1)	<i>abī/ abī atta</i> : Di 402 <i>zehpum</i> (G): 4. 6. 7 (T) 8. rev. 13. 20 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 5 (<i>abī</i>)
	–	ABCDE (13)	None: Di 662 <i>abī</i> : Di 229 (G) 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9, (T) badly damaged. Di 378 (G) 4. 5. 6. 8. 9. Di 437 (G) 1'. 2'. 3'. 4' (T) 6'. 8'. 14'. Lo.E. 15'. Di 452 (G) 3'. 4'. 6'. 7'(?).
			<i>abī atta</i> : Di 299 (T) Rev. 4'. U. E. 15' <i>abī/ abī atta</i> : Di 228 (G) 5. 7. 9. 10 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 6 (<i>abī</i>); Di 381 (G) 5. 9. 10 (T) 12 (<i>abī atta</i>); (T) U. E. 32 (<i>abī</i>). Di 622 (G) 5. 6. 10 (T) 17. Rev. 25. 32 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 7. 9 (T) 20 (<i>abī</i>). Di 227 (T) Rev. 23 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 5. 9. 10 (T) 13. Rev. 27 (<i>abī</i>); Di 282 bis (G) 5 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 4. 6 (<i>abī</i>). Di 354 (G) 5. 7. 10 (T) 12. Rev. 21. 24 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 6. 9 (T) rev. 19. U. E. 34 (<i>abī</i>). Di 504 ²⁰ (G) 5. 6 (<i>abī atta</i>); 7. 9 (T) Rev. 4'. 6'. 8'. U. E. 12' (<i>abī</i>). Di 659 (G) 4. 6. 10 (T) 13. Rev. 19. 25 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 7. 9 (<i>abī</i>); 29 (<i>abī ...</i>)
	M	ABCDE	<i>abī</i> : Di 384 (G) 4. 5. 6. 8. 9. (T) none <i>abī atta</i> : Di 449 (G) 5. 6. 7. 10 <i>abī atta/ abī ...</i> : Di 1023 (G) 4. 5. Rev. 19. 24 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 6. 8. 9 (T) 12 (<i>abī ...</i>)
	–	AR	<i>abī atta/ abī</i> : Di 349 (T) Rev. 1'. 5' (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 9 (<i>abī</i>)
	–	ABCDER (1)	<i>abī atta</i> : Di 321 (G) 4 (T) 10 <i>abī atta/ abī</i> : Di 435 (G) 4. 5. 6. 8. 9, 11 (T) 13. rev. 35. 30. 37. 39. Left E. 52. 53 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 6 (<i>abī</i>)

¹⁷ Di 210, Di 211, Di 217, Di 223, Di 226, Di 230, Di 231, Di 232, Di 233, Di 234, Di 283, Di 293, Di 316, Di 350, Di 351, Di 353, Di 356, Di 357, Di 358, Di 446, Di 457, Di 459, Di 461 (address *a-na a-...*, *awilim* restored based on contents), Di 494, Di 501, Di 502, Di 503, Di 506, Di 516, Di 518, Di 523, Di 584, Di 585, Di 586, Di 611, Di 612 (two senders), Di 615, Di 616, Di 619, Di 728, Di 731, Di 1364, Di 2198+2201, Di 2199. We should probably include here Di 283 (AB...), Di 665 (ABC...), Di 727 (ABCD...).

¹⁸ B and C slightly variant (*lu šalmāta lu dariāta; ilum nāšir napištika ...*).

¹⁹ To these we should add the following letters: Di 660 *abī atta* in (T) Obv. 3'; Di 664 ...CDER, *abī (...)* in (G) 4', *abī atta* in (T) 11'. 13'. 16', Rev. 3'. 8'. 10'. 11' 13', Left E 1'.

²⁰ Greeting ABCD...; probably also Di 1631 (ABC...); the body of this text is lost.

	–	R (5)	None: Di 455 <i>abī</i> : Di 448 (G) 8; (T) Rev. 23 <i>abī atta</i> : Di 838 (T) 7'. Rev. 26. Di 614 (T) Rev. 27 <i>abī/abī atta</i> : Di 519 <i>zehpum</i> (T) 17 (<i>abī atta</i>); (G) 5. 6 (T) Rev. 16. 20. 23 (<i>abī</i>); <i>abī atta</i> : Di 379 (T) 9. Rev. 28 <i>aḥī atta</i> : Di 345 <i>zehpum</i> (T) 10. Rev. 18 (female sender) None: Di 444 (female sender) <i>aḥī atta</i> : Di 373 (T) Rev. 3' (female sender) None: Di 361 (female sender) None: Di 208. Di 434. Di 617 (female sender). Di 799. Di 1246 <i>zehpum</i> <i>bēlī</i> : Di 225 (T) 6. 17. Rev. x+14. Di 447 (T) 6. 11. Di 613 (W) 5. (T) 6. Rev. 14. 18. Di 666 (T) 4. 10 <i>bēlī atta</i> Di 620 (T) 9. 12. 18. Rev. 27 <i>bēlī/bēlī atta</i> : Di 315 (T) 4. 10. 15. Rev. 22 (<i>bēlī atta</i>); 14 (<i>bēlī</i>). Di 391 <i>zehpum</i> (T) 12. 13. 15. Rev. 19. 20. 21. 22. 24 (<i>bēlī atta</i>); 6. 7. 8. Rev. 25. 27. 30. Left E. 33 (<i>bēlī</i>); Rev. 20 (<i>bēlī...</i>). Di 453 (T) 19 (<i>bēlī atta</i>); 15. Rev. 12' (<i>bēlī</i>); Rev. 18' (<i>bēlī ...</i>). Di 663 (T) Rev. 19 (<i>bēlī atta</i>); 5. 10. Rev. 17 (<i>bēlī</i>) None: Di 410 <i>zehpum</i> <i>bēlī atta</i> : Di 507 (G) 4. 8. (T) 9. Rev. 35. 36 <i>bēlī atta</i> : Di 376 (G) 7. 10. 14. Di 667 (G) 6. 9. text damaged; <i>bēlī/bēlī atta</i> Di 377 (G) 7 (<i>bēlī atta</i>); (G) 4 (<i>bēlī</i>) (letter from Ur-Utu to Inanna-mansum) <i>bēlnī</i> : Di 636 (T) Rev. 7'
<i>ana aḥīja</i>	<i>bēltī lštar</i> M	R (1) ABCDE (1) – AR (1) [<i>bēlī u bēltī</i>] (R) AR (1) <i>bēlī u bēltī</i> (R) R (1) – (14)	
<i>ana bēlija</i> ²¹			
		AB (1) AB(!) ²² (1) R (3)	
<i>ana bēlinī</i> 2 senders <i>ana šāpirīja</i>		– (1)	<i>šāpirī/šāpirī atta</i> : Di 476 (T) Rev. 17 (<i>šāpirī atta</i>); (T) 4. 14. 15. Rev. 19. 23. 24. 25 (<i>šāpirī</i>); Rev. 28 (<i>šāpirī ...</i>). <i>šāpirnī atta/šāpirnī</i> : Di 253 (T) 5. 6. 11. U.E. 32 (<i>šāpirnī atta</i>); Rev. 27. Left E. 34. 35 (<i>šāpirnī</i>)
<i>ana šāpirīnī</i> 3 senders <i>Broken</i> ²³		– (1) (15)	

When reading the texts, it can be observed that there is a relation between the choice of the title of address and the contents and purpose of the letter. There is also a correlation between the address and the choice of greeting

formulae. E. g., intercessions on behalf of third parties are typically found in *ana awilim* letters; they mostly have long standard greeting sections, occasionally enriched with customized religious formulae. Hence, we can confirm that the status of the addressee, the chief lamentation priest in our case, is not the only determinant for the choice of a title of address or greeting formulae. The sender's background and the relationship between sender and addressee are important factors as well. As Sallaberger (1999, 39) convincingly argues, the title of address reflects *das vom Emittenten intendierte Verhältnis*, the way the sender conceives his relation towards his correspondent. In *zehpums*, the sender is spoken to as *aḥī* (my brother), *abī* (my father) or *bēlī* (my lord), i. e., the *zehpum* format is not limited to one specific context or relation.

Titles of address are also found in the greeting section (G), the body of the text (T) and in well-being clauses (W). Sometimes they are emphatically repeated throughout

²¹ To these we should probably add the following letters (address lost): Di 285 (T) *bēlī* (l. x+3); Di 363 (T): *bēlī* (04'. 08'. Left E.); Di 367 (T) *bēlī* rev. 19' (does it refer to the addressee?): Di 382.

²² Di 507: B-var: *mu-ti-ir gi-'mil-li'-ia be-li at-ta lu da-ri-a-ta*. In view of the positive context I translate 'returner of my kindness, you, my father, may be ever lasting' rather than 'avenger'. So far this use was attested in personal names (CAD M II, *mutir gimilli*, 299a). Obviously, such a personal name must have been rooted in every-day language use.

²³ Di 221 ...CDE; Di 355 A...; Di 362; Di 411, ABCDE, text badly damaged; Di 460; Di 463, ABCDE; Di 475, in all probability a letter *ana awilim*; Di 479; Di 500, address broken, Adressengruß (M), ABCDE; Di 628; Di 648, ...E; Di 657 ...BCDE; Di 962 ...BCE; Di 2202 ABCDE; Di 2223 greeting ABCDE.

the text. Thus, the sender underlines the bond between himself and the addressee. The polite distance created by the use of a title of address can be counterbalanced by using a pronoun which draws the addressee nearer to his correspondent (e. g., *bēli atta*, ‘you, my lord’). By the repeated use of *abī atta* and *bēli atta* the sender appeals to the addressee’s sense of honour and tries to influence his behaviour.²⁴ Sometimes also explicit reference is made to the nature of the relation (*athūtum/abūtum*, ‘brotherhood’, ‘fatherhood’), for the same reason. Other expressions of connection (*aššumija*, references to personal gods, prayers, ...) are frequently found in letters in which the personal relation is stressed.

The practice of adding personal pronouns before the verb – ‘die höflich-nahe Anrede’ – is typical of the late Old Babylonian context (Sallaberger 1999, 50 and 55) and the letters from the Ur-Utu archive contain many examples. As can be seen in the table above, forms in the third person and the second person with *atta* often alternate within the same letter. The ‘polite-close address’ is found in all the categories listed, both in letters with short and long greeting sections but tends to be most frequent when the ties are close. It is occasionally found in letters *ana awilim*, where the tension between the poles closeness and distance is most outspoken; here, the title of address, if used, is *aḫi atta*. This form of address, in *ana awilim* letters, is definitely marked. In the late Old Babylonian letters, it can be observed that *atta* is added when the sender expresses the urgency or importance of his requests; we find it especially in reproaches, admonitions, threats, promises, well-wishing, or when requests are repeated. The form without *atta* is more frequently found in neutral factual statements (e. g., a sentence about sending tablets), which corroborates the idea that the sender uses it to underline the bond between himself and the addressee, and all the obligations connected to it. This is not only the case when relatives address the chief lamentation priest, but examples can be found – to a lesser extent – even in letters to officials. In Di 1194, we observe that the third person *bēli* turns into *bēli atta* when Ur-Utu’s emotions take the better of him: he uses it when he implores his lord to verify his

version of the facts with the *kalûm*-priests (l. 27) and to put his brothers into manacles (l. 43); the request to issue a royal tablet (l. 37) does not stir up similar feelings, and here we find *bēli* alone.

In terms of social distance, Sallaberger considers *bēli* to be more distant than *abī* and *aḫi*, but closer than *šāpiri* (my overseer) or *awilum* (gentleman).²⁵ This is in agreement with our findings in the letters from the Ur-Utu archive: the ‘lord’ is not a truly distant figure but only a person seen through a distant mirror. He can be drawn nearer by the use of *atta*, and this is frequently the case. But can he be a father, a first brother or a husband?

III The semantic range of the title *bēlum*: closeness and distance

The word *bēlum* is a common word whose semantic spectrum includes a broad range of connotations which play a role in the choice of this title of address. In letters with female senders, it has been observed that a woman could use the title *bēli* to address her husband, the *bēl aššatim*, as shown by Veenhof (1991, 298 and *ibid.* n. 22); indeed, in an Assyrian text we find *kīma mutija u bēlija*, ‘as my husband and lord’ (CAD M, s. v. *mutu*, 1b, 314a) which confirms that the title could be used between wife and husband. But the evidence from the Ur-Utu archive shows that gender is not the only determining factor. If our working hypothesis is correct, the *bēlum* can also be the sender’s father or first brother. How does this metaphor make sense?

Let us first free ourselves from our preconceptions and see what it means to be a lord. Our main association with the word ‘lord’ is possibly one of power and authority; the English word suggests nobility and rank as well. In tribal societies where prestige is connected to honour, the ability to protect the weak and to take good care of one’s people and belongings are important aspects of being a lord.²⁶ It is known that the noun *bēlum* is used in different contexts: to address a king (CAD B, s. v. *bēlu*, 1b, 194 f.) or a deity, or to replace the divine name (*ibid.* 1a, 193 f.);

²⁴ Sallaberger (1999, 227–234; 240; 264). He gives many examples from which it is clear how these arguments were built. Scattered references to what it means to be a lord can be found in the AbB collection. The sender of AbB 2, 86 begs his lord to provide him with a cow in replacement of oxen that had been stolen by the enemy. His lines include ‘you, my lord, will find obedience wherever you order, by the order of Marduk, the god who created you. Nobody will refuse you anything, my lord’ (ll. 14–17); there is reciprocity: ‘I, your slave, can fulfill the wish of you, my lord’ (ll. 29–30).

²⁵ The closeness is also apparent in early Babylonian letters, where *bēli* (but not *šāpiri*) is found in formulaic conditional sentences “when you (really) are my brother/father/lord/the ‘lord of my life’/friend...” or “when you are my father and lord” (Sallaberger 1999, 185–191).

²⁶ Very insightful, though relating to another culture, is the study of Dresch (1989) on the tribes of Yemen. Even today, in tribal societies, the head of the clan offers protection, guarantees safety and is bound by a code of honour towards those who are dependent on him. This can be a permanent relation (relatives, slaves) or a temporary one (guests).

the address *bēli* can be used for private persons as well as officials (*ibid.* 1c-d, 195 f.). The *bēl bītim* is the head of the house (van der Toorn 1996, 10–xxx). Similarly, the female counterpart *bēltum* is used for goddesses, queens and private persons. It means ‘lady’ as well as ‘owner’, and it can refer to the lady of the house (CAD B, s. v. *bēltu*, 187–xxx). The Old Babylonian *bēlum* is not unlike the Roman *pater familias* so that this concept might shed light on the Babylonian context as well.²⁷ According to Saller (1999, 182–193), the *pater familias* was the oldest living male in a direct line of ascent. In the Roman world, he was the manager of the estate and the head of the household. He had the right to own houses, land, slaves, furniture, equipment, He supervised the cultivation of fields, construction works, he kept the accounts, ... In a narrower sense of the word, the *pater familias* was the testator, who helped build the patrimony and took care of his descendants. To his slaves, the *pater familias* was supposed to be ‘soft like a father’. He was expected to be respectable and responsible, both financially and morally. Being a *pater familias* was not – or at least not in the first place – about parenting. Next to him, there was the *mater familias*, who could also be influential.²⁸ Along similar lines, we see that the terms *bēlum* and *bēltum* are used in relation to property (fields, houses, slaves, domestic animals, silver, merchandise, etc) and that being called a lord goes hand in hand with certain expectations.²⁹ Indeed, when we study the use of this title in letter writing, semantics are not the whole story; pragmatics come into play as well. The conventional meaning of the word and its connotations are enriched by the specific context of letter writing and the social interactions. The context of the utterance, such as the sender’s intent, his expectations, his relation with the addressee and his feelings at the time of writing influence his language behaviour.

Sallaberger (1999, 38) indicates that the title of address *bēli*, like *abī*, is already attested in letters from the times of Hammurapi; to some extent the two titles are interconnected, although they seem quite different to a modern reader unfamiliar with the Babylonian context.

The title *bēli* suggests an inequality of rank while *abī* conjures up a father-son relationship: unequal, but ‘tied by blood’.³⁰ Sallaberger (1999, 32) mentions that these titles are occasionally combined, and this is not devoid of interest for our investigation. In Hammurapi’s code lordhood is compared to fatherhood: Hammurapi defines himself as the *bēlum ša kīma abim wālidim ana niši ibaššū* ‘the lord, who is like a birth-father to his people’ (CH xli 20–xxx). In one instance *bēli* is used in apposition with *aḫī*, my brother, which suggests that there does not have to be a difference in generation, or inequality.³¹ Interesting too is Sallaberger’s observation (1999, 58 f.) that in AbB 7, 130 *aḫātija*, ‘my sister’, is erased and overwritten by *bēltija* in the address section, as indicated by Kraus in AbB 7 108 n. 130. The title *bēlum/bēltum* is at least in some cases interchangeable with both *abum/ummum* (father/mother) or *aḫum/aḫātum* (brother/sister).³² In this light, the idea that a seemingly distant appellative refers to a close relative, is most plausible.

The self-designation ‘your slave’ is found in many *ana bēlija* letters. Like the lordship, this slavehood is not a social reality. In Old Assyrian letters, even vassal kings call themselves slaves (Eidem 2008, 278). In the palace of Mari, the self-designation ‘slave’ was used by high officials (Charpin 2004, 250 and *ibid.* n. 1279). Sallaberger (1999, 44) labels the attitude that its usage reflects as ‘*Dienstbereitschaft*,’ the readiness to be of help. The reciprocity is eloquently expressed in AbB 12, 175 where the sender declares: ‘If you are truly my father and my protector (*bēl napištija*, literally ‘lord of my life’), help me out in this matter and then let me be your slave in perpetuity! Please!’ The lord is put on a pedestal: he has prestige and influence and deserves gratitude; his counterpart, the slave, is humble and subservient. This, again, is framing.

²⁷ Note that the original Roman term is closer to the *bēlum* than some modern connotations – the *pater familias* as a severe and tyrannical patriarch – suggest. As Saller (1999, 182 f.; 193) argued, this term cannot be used as “a short-hand description of Roman family values or social behavior.”

²⁸ There was one important legal difference between the *pater* and the *mater familias*: only the male had legal authority (*potestas*) over his descendants (children, grandchildren, ...) and other members of the household (see Saller 1999, 188).

²⁹ Similarly, the verb *bēlum* is not only to exercise rulership, but also to be in authority over people and property (CAD B, s. v. *bēlu*, 199).

³⁰ In the context of letter writing or addressing people, this does not have to correspond to a biological reality. Even today, in the Near East, one could address an elderly man as ‘my father’ or a younger person as ‘my brother’.

³¹ As Sallaberger (1999, 58) explains: ‘Traditionell am nächsten steht die Anrede als *abi* “mein Vater”, wie Adressen an *abi* u *bēli* (VI. 49, IX 93) oder *abbūja* u *bēlūja* (V 239) zeigen, oder die Bezeichnung als *abi* u *bēl napištija* “mein Vater und ‘Herr meines Lebens’” in einem Brief an [*bēli*] (XII 175). Einmalig ist die Steigerung am Ende eines Bittbriefes *bēli aḫī kâta* “meinen Herrn, Dich, meinen Bruder” (IX 175).’

³² For the *ummi-bēlti* connection see examples from Old Assyrian, CAD B, s. v. *bēltu*, 1b, 190a.

IV The eight *ana bēlīja* letters

A close reading of the eight *ana bēlīja* letters will allow us to determine whether they were indeed written by people from the inner circle. The table below gives an overview of the main characteristics of these letters:

Text	Sender	Greeting	<i>warad-ka</i>	well-being clause	The addressee's Contents where-about
Di 377	Ur-Utu	R	+	-	Report about temple affairs
Di 617	Rā'imtum	-	-	oxen and girls (<i>ṣeḫḫerētum</i>)	Babylon Request and complaint
Di 613	Ḫuzālum	-	+	Oxen, house and youngsters (<i>ṣeḫḫerūtum</i>) of the <i>bēlum</i>	Babylon Report about household affairs
Di 391 <i>zehpum</i>	Ilī-iqīšam	-	+	-	comes and goes Request and complaint
Di 208	Kubburum	-	-	Oxen, house	Defensive letter (answer to complaints)
Di 620	Kubburum	broken	+	-/?	Defensive letter
Di 799	Kubburum	-	-	-	Report about payment
Di 1246 <i>zehpum</i>	Kubburum	-	-	-	Report about intercession

Note that only Kubburum is represented by more than one letter.³³

IV.1 Ur-Utu's letter (Di 377)

The name Ur-Utu appears as sender in two letters from the archive (Di 377 and Di 229). Only the first is a letter *ana bēlīja*. Ur-Utu's Sumerian name was rare in Sippar. There may have been name-sakes and chances are that the sender of Di 229 is one of them;³⁴ however, in view of

the combined presence of the names of Inanna-mansum's sons in the subgroup of *ana bēlīja* letters, it is likely that the sender of Di 377 is Ur-Utu the chief lamentation priest.

The fact that the sender calls himself Ur-Utu helps us narrow down the time-frame in which this letter can have been written. Ur-Utu first appears in the sources under his original name Bēlānum, less than a year before he became a chief lamentation priest (Di 691, Aš 04/05/07) and it is most likely that the new name was given at the moment of the 'transmission of the scepter', which took place a few months before his father's disappearance from the sources, i. e., in the course of the year Ammi-šaduqa 5.³⁵ If

³³ Six of the eight letters have been found in the newly installed archive room 17, where they were filed in the last months of the house's occupation. Of these, Di 377 must have arrived in the house during Inanna-mansum's lifetime, which means that it was over a decade old when it was filed there. Two of Kubburum's letters (Di 799 and Di 1246) were still lying about in room 22 (Gasche (1989, 31 and pl. 4). They probably would have been transferred if Ur-Utu had been able to complete his work. Letters that indicate that they were sent when the addressee was out of town must have been taken home.

³⁴ We know of one other Ur-Utu, 'Ur-Utu the elder', who lived in early Babylonian times, and was remotely related, if not in direct line

(Dekiere 1994, 126) but this does not mean that there were no other Ur-Utu's. Inanna-mansum, who also had an exceptional name, had a name-sake who was a *kalūm* priest (cf. a.o. MHET I, 53:1 and 60:3). Note that the *ana abīja* letter, unlike Di 377, contains the late Old Babylonian standard greeting ABCDE.

³⁵ The most recent document mentioning Inanna-mansum in office is the harvest labour contract Di 1110, dated Aš 4/12 diri/15. The first text in which Ur-Utu is referred to as chief lamentation priest is Di 990 (Aš 4/12 diri/30). Only a fortnight separates this document from the last official document issued by his father, as discussed by Tan-

this is true, Ur-Utu was already a chief lamentation priest when he wrote his letter. As for the addressee, the presence of Di 377 in the Ur-Utu archive is best explained by the fact that he had sent it to his elderly father, who lived under the same roof, in the months preceding his death. Ur-Utu uses a customized greeting in which he expresses his constant devotion for the addressee. No fewer than six gods are invoked, starting with Šamaš, the god who appears in Ur-Utu's name and on his religious seal (see De Graef/Tanret 2001, 7). Note that the last to be mentioned is 'my mistress Anunitum', which is additional evidence for determining the sender's identity:

(4) ¹ik¹-ri-ib a-na be-lī-ia ak-ta-na-ra-¹bu¹ (5) u₄-mi-ša-am ma-ḥar
⁴UTU ⁴ŠKUR ⁴a-a ⁴bu-¹ne¹-(ne) (6) ¹ma-mu ù be-el-ti-¹ia¹ an-nu-
 ni-tum (7) a-¹na¹ be-lī-ia ka-ta li-ib-ba-šu-ú

May the prayer that I keep praying for my lord, day after day, before Šamaš, Adad, Aja, Bunene, Mamu and my mistress Anunitum, be effective, for you, my lord

Ur-Utu's wishes may be more than just a greeting formula used by a man of religion. When Inanna-mansum transmitted the scepter, he had been in office for over four decades and was probably ailing.³⁶ The reference to prayer may well be a heart-felt expression of his love, devotion and hope that the gods may save his old father. We also see that in spite of his high rank, Ur-Utu humbly calls himself his addressee's 'slave/servant' (*warad-ka*). We understand that he honours his father in his role of *pater familias*, as the eldest male in the household. As far as we can judge, the letter was written to inform the addressee that baskets of silver, gold and precious stones that belonged to the Edikudkalama (had disappeared?). Similar events are described on copies of outgoing letters (Janssen 2017, 20, 27 f.), all of which corroborates the hypothesis that this is a letter by the chief lamentation priest Ur-Utu.

III.2 Rā'imtum's letter (Di 617)

Rā'imtum's name appears on a list from which we deduce that she was to Ur-Utu what Ilša-ḫegalli was to Inanna-mansum: his wife.³⁷ Before she comes to the point,

she states that 'the oxen and the girls are well', i.e., she inserts a clause about the household's well-being. After these introductory words, the tone of this unfortunately damaged letter changes abruptly. She complains that she is not treated with due respect by Ḫuzālum whom we can identify as her brother-in-law:

(6) a-na é ú-ul si-in-ni-ša-ku-ma (7) ḫu-za-lum a-na ki-ma pí-ka
 iš-mu (8) ¹x¹[...]ra it-ta-di ia-a-ti (9) ⁴MARDUK ¹ù¹ dum.u.meš
 ká.dingir.ra^{ki} li-ša-di-ma (10) a-na-ka-ma ia i-di na-ak-ra-ku
 (11) i-na pa-ni-ia i-na ká.dingir.ra^{ki} aš-ba-ta (12) [...]xx¹
 e-li-ka la 'xx¹

Am I not a woman to the house?! As soon as Ḫuzālum heard your words he has rejected ... As for me, let Marduk and the inhabitants of Babylon reject me, but here, he should not know!³⁸ Am I a stranger?! You are staying in Babylon on my account; (The ... is) not on you!

She threatens to go to her father's house: *a-na é a-bi-ia lu-ut-ta-la-¹ak¹* (l. 13). What is going on in this household? Apparently, there is a claim against her which must be the reason why her husband was in Babylon: 'the brothers ... claimed from me' (*a-ḫu 'xx¹ i-ba-aq-¹ru-ni¹-[in-ni]*, Lo.E. 19). After some damaged lines, she complains that she does not know whether 'he (who?) will die or live' (*i-ma-at ù i-ba-al-¹lu¹-[u¹] ú-ul i-di*, Rev. 23–24), a reality which may be connected to the *e'iltum*, a potentially life-threatening 'binding' occurring in legal contexts, which, as shown by Janssen (1991b), is a recurrent theme in the chief lamentation priest's correspondence. Her husband is supposed to be attending court sessions but fails to keep in touch with his wife who writes 'what you are doing all the time I would not know!' (*ša te-te-né-pu-šu a-na-ku 'ú-ul i¹-de-e*, Rev. 28–29). She calls him a pauper while at the same time expressing her respect for his father ('I came to a beggar's house! I always respected your father', *'a-na¹ é 'la-ap-ni al-li¹-[ik...]* [*a¹-¹na-ku¹ qā-qā-ad a-bi-ka 'ú¹-ka-bi-it*, ll. 31–33). At the end of the letter she urges her correspondent to send her a quick response. While we did not find a letter containing his answer to her, he did take her letter home and filed it upon his return.

Note that contents of the letter are in sharp contrast with the framing of the address. While Rā'imtum calls her husband respectfully 'my lord', she is furious and full of

ret (2012, 585 n.2). Note that Ur-Utu appears twice under his original name after he had assumed his office (AbB 11, 107 and Di 2189, dated Aš 5/6/6, here possibly for administrative reasons).

³⁶ Inanna-mansum probably died before the end of Ammi-šaduqa 5, unless he was mentally impaired and not able to act when his wife's lost tablet recording his donation to her had to be 'revived' (Di 1804); see Janssen (2017, 5 n. 30).

³⁷ Di 725 (MHET I, 42), ll. 1–6. Amounts of barley are followed by

the names of Inanna-mansum, Ilša-ḫegalli, Ur-Utu, Rā'imtum, Lamassāni and Ili-iqīšam – all members of Inanna-mansum's nuclear family. This list is dated in the year Ammi-šaduqa 5 and contains references to other people close to the household as well.

³⁸ Following a valuable suggestion made by A. Cavigneaux, for which I am particularly grateful, the signs are interpreted as *anna-kam-ma* ('here', i.e., in Sippar-Amnānum), in opposition with Babylon.

contempt. The letter documents a marital crisis of which we do not know the end, but one thing is sure: the fact that she uses the *ana bēlija* format does not reflect in any way how she feels about her correspondent.

IV.3 Ḫuzālūm's letter (Di 613)

Ḫuzālūm is a frequently attested name (> 190 references in the Sippar database) throughout the Old Babylonian period.³⁹ It is the combined presence of the names of all of Inanna-mansum's sons and the contents of Di 613 which make us believe that this letter was written by Ur-Utu's brother.⁴⁰ In enumerations in the documentary texts from the archive, Ḫuzālūm is mentioned after his brothers Kubburum and Ili-iqīšam (Di 837:13; rev. 21; Di 1194: 12–16; Di 1784:11'–12'; after Ili-iqīšam: Di 1762:14–15); he may have been the youngest of the brothers. The evidence gathered by Janssen (1992, 50) and Dekiere (1994, 136 and n. 108) shows that the proximity and economic dependency on Ur-Utu is apparent. We saw that he is mentioned in Rā'imtum's letter as someone who was close to Ur-Utu. Ḫuzālūm was active as a lamentation priest (*kalūm*), as several of his ancestors had been (Di 1646:13 dated Ammi-šaduqa 12/4/10); like his brother he was a man of religion. A text from outside the archive attests that he was still alive and involved in a *paršum* ritual as late as Samsu-ditana 4, when a new chief lamentation priest named Marduk-muballit had taken Ur-Utu's place (CT 48, 45).

³⁹ Even within the limited context of the Ur-Utu archive, we find several Ḫuzālūms who were active in the late Old Babylonian period, all of whom, at some point, crossed paths with the chief lamentation priest. Source: Sippar database.

⁴⁰ Ḫuzālūm is explicitly referred to as Inanna-mansum's son in six texts: Di 837:13. Di 872:3. Di 1646:13. Di 1762:15. Di 1784:12', and, outside the Ur-Utu archive, in CT 48, 45 (Dekiere 1994, 125–26 n. 101). In Di 1194:15, Inanna-mansum is said to have described him, while angry, as 'the son of a (female) renter of a lodging of a (female) slave of the *šangūm* of Šarpanitum'. This is a cumbersome and mocking way to refer to his birth mother, according to Barberon (2005, 94–5; *eadem*, 2012, 226–7). Nevertheless, he is also attested as Ilša-ḫegalli's son (Di 1804:12). His house, next to his mother's (Di 1804: 13–14, Aš 5/[1]/2), was situated between the same lanes as Ur-Utu's house, as shown by Janssen [e.a.] (1994, 92f.). According to Di 872, he received barley from Ur-Utu to buy oil, as an advance to his share of the inheritance ('U₄-mi 'DUB-pī' ḫA.LA-šu iš-ša-tá-ru ... "the day the tablet of his share will be written, ...", Lo.E. 8–9). This text was written in several years before the final settlement of the inheritance dispute in Ammi-šaduqa 12 (Di 932). In Di 1762, the shares of Ili-iqīšam and Ḫuzālūm are defined (Kubburum merely appears as a witness in this text). Ur-Utu rented out a field to Ḫuzālūm and Utul-Ištar, the *abi šābim*, in Ammi-šaduqa 12, thus allowing him to invest in crops (Di 1646: 9–17, Aš 12/04/10).

In the *ana bēlija* letter Di 613 Ḫuzālūm calls himself his correspondent's 'slave.' Before coming to the point, he inserts a well-being clause, referring to the household: 'the oxen, the house and the youngsters of my lord are well' (GU₄^{h1.A} É ù še-eḫ-ḫe-ru-tum ša be-lī-ia ša-al-mu, ll. 4–5) which confirms the proximity between the sender and the addressee. The latter, we learn, was absent from town, which is the reason why a letter was written to communicate:

(6) iš-tu U₄-mi be-lī KÁ.GAL ú-šú-ú (7) 'GU₄^{h1.A} 'KÁ'.GAL ú-ul ú-šú-ú
Since the day my lord left the city gate, the oxen did not leave the city gate

Like Rā'imtum's letter, Di 613 must have been taken home and filed upon the addressee's return. The text proceeds stating that at a given date a person named Ibni-Sin son of Marduk-mušallim and the 'mistress of Sippar' may ordain that Utu-mansum -possibly the *kalūm* priest known by this name – 'will assist.' The meaning of this passage is not entirely clear but it seems more than plausible that this sentence refers to a ritual context.⁴¹ Ḫuzālūm expresses the hope that the lord will be able 'to go out.' The text then shifts to agriculture (the text is damaged but 'the field in the meander' is mentioned). The letter included multiple topics and had been written to inform the lord: 'I wrote so that my lord would know' ([a-na] 'še'-me-e be-lī-ia [aš]-pu-ra-am, ll. 18–19, end of the text). The contents of this letter are in agreement with the interpretation that the sender is Ur-Utu's brother. Note that here, he seems to get along well with his correspondent, which, according to Janssen (1992) has not always been the case.

IV.4 Ili-iqīšam's letter (Di 391)

The name Ili-iqīšam is relatively frequent (> 90 references in the Sippar-database, most of them late OB; attestations from Hammurapi onwards). But there seems to be little doubt that the sender of Di 391 is a member of the household.⁴² As for his status and age, he is the third son

⁴¹ The aforementioned Ibni-Sin son of Marduk-mušallim is known from a document in the archive, in which he appears as a performer of the *ḫarimūtum* rites. His hand was 'withdrawn' from the remainder of the debt related to the performance of these rites (Di 755:8 (Aš 13/10/xx)). For these rites see Tanret [e.a.] (1993).

⁴² There are two letters whose sender is Ili-iqīšam. Only one is a letter *ana bēlija* (Di 391). The other is a letter *ana abija* (?) (Di 289 = MHET I, 93); for this letter, there is no evidence that it was written by Ur-Utu's brother. This fragmented letter has a standard greeting formula GN *liballit-ka* (one god, whose name is lost). The preserved part refers to a message about people linked to the Adad temple. The

mentioned in enumerations. In letters from the archive, a person named Ili-iqīšam renders services to the chief lamentation priest.⁴³ In Di 391, Ili-iqīšam calls himself the sender's 'slave' and is clearly dependent on the lord. He portrays himself as a loyal relative who, apart from asking assistance against harassment, warns his lord that his possessions are at risk. One wonders: is he warning him against his brothers? The letter opens with a statement that the sender had fervently hoped for the return of his lord so that his life would become better. Note that the title of address *bēli atta/bēli* is used emphatically throughout the text, which can be linked to the sender's neediness:

(4) 'a¹-[di] i-na-an-na a-na e-re-eb be-lī-ia ka-ta (5) 'uz¹-na-ia ib-ba-ši-a (6) 'um-ma¹ a-na-ku-ma ar-¹hi¹-iš be-lī i-ir-ru-ba-am-ma (7) 'na¹-pī-iš-ti ba-la-ti-im be-lī i-qī-iš-ša-am (8) [i¹]-¹na¹-an-na i-nu-ma be-lī a-na ba-la-ti-im (9) 'te¹-ru-ba-am (10) [mī]-¹nam-ma¹ a-na ša pa-na 'i-ra¹-da-du-nim (11) 'na¹-pī-iš-tum 'i¹-ti-ba-am (12) be-lī at-ta ta-aš-ta-a-la-an-ni (13) 'gu¹-mu-ur li-ib-bi-ia a-na be-lī-ia ka-ta (14) ū-ul ad-bu-ub (15) 1 LÚ ša li-ib-bu be-lī-ia ka-ta (Lo.E. 16) [ša]-¹ak¹-nu (Rev. 17) [...] li-ir-ru-dam-ma (18) 'gu¹-[mu]-¹ur¹ li-ib-bi-ia¹ lu-ud-bu-ub-šum-ma (19) a-na be-lī-ia 'ka-ta¹ [...] 'li¹-id-bu-ub-ma (20) mi-im-mu-ū be-¹lī¹-[ia ... la] i-ḥa-al-li-¹iq¹ (21) ar-¹hi-iš be-lī 'at-ta¹ [šu-up-ra]-¹am lu¹-ul-li-¹ma¹ (22) ar-ki be-lī-ia 'ka-ta xx¹ lu na-di-a-ku-¹ma¹ (23) 'a-mi-ru¹-ia ma-ḥar¹ UTU ū¹ marduk (24) 'a-na¹ be-lī-ia 'ka-ta¹ li-ik-ru-bu

Up to now, my full attention was directed to the entrance into the house of you, my lord. I told myself: "Let my lord enter quickly, so that my lord gives me a life to live." But now, when my lord came, for life, what does it mean that life has become good to those who used to harass me? You, my lord, keep asking me questions, (but) I did not speak wholeheartedly to you, my lord. (Let my lord) ... send man in whom you, my lord, has put your trust, so that I can fully confide in him, and that he can speak to you, my lord ..., so that the possessions of my lord will not get lost. Write quickly, you (who are) my lord, so that I

can come to Babylon!⁴⁴ After you(r departure), my lord, I have become ... dejected. Let those who see me pray for you, my lord, to Šamaš and Marduk!

The role of the lord is as described in our framework: he is capable of offering protection and livelihood. Ili-iqīšam urges his lord to act quickly. But he is concerned that the lord will not be inclined to help him:

(25) *ma-ti-ma ki-ma i-na-¹an-na be-lī li-ib-ba-šu* (26) *'ū¹-ul¹ 'ū¹-ra-ab-bi-a-am* (27) *mi-in-di be-lī ki-a-am i-qā-ab-bi um-ma be-lī-ma* (28) *aš-šum ŠUKU KÁ na-ad-nu 'pu¹-uš-šu-uh*

Never my lord has made his heart so large for me as now. Perhaps my lord will say: "Because of the fact that the provisions of the gate are given he will be appeased."

He insists that the 'provisions of the gate' are not what he hopes for; he wants the support that his lord had earlier assigned to him (these lines are partially damaged, but what can be read is 'the maintenance that my lord assigned to me' (ŠUKU *ša be-lī ū-ki-in-nam*', l. 30). Otherwise, he risks to starve to death ('so that I do not die', *la a-ma-at*, l. 32). He seems to be in a weak position in every respect. We already knew from the inheritance saga that the Inanna-mansum family was at times dysfunctional and this letter just seems to confirm this. Whether the tense atmosphere is related to the incidents following Inanna-mansum's death cannot be confirmed. But there is no doubt that this letter was written by someone intimately connected to the household. As for the addressee (Inanna-mansum or Ur-Utu), he comes and goes.

IV.5 Kubburum's letters

In the archive there are five letters whose sender bears the name Kubburum. Four of these are *ana bēlija* letters (Di 208, Di 620, Di 799 and Di 1246).⁴⁵ Inanna-mansum's

name Ili-iqīšam is attested with several different patronymics and professions, even within the Ur-Utu archive (Source: Sippar database). Apart from the documents discussed above (Di 1762, Di 1784), Ili-iqīšam son of Inanna-mansum is found in two more documents (Di 1692 and Di 1769). According to Di 1769 (Aš xx/3/[]), Ili-iqīšam had inherited land in Paḥūšum which he leased to Kubburum (ḥa. LA *li-ir-ru-šā-am* DUMU ⁴INANNA-MA.AN.SUM *šu-šu-ut ku-ub-bu-rum* DUMU ⁴INANNA¹-MA.AN.SUM). It is the latter who rented it out to Ur-Utu, in his lieu (*ana qabē Kubburum*). This text is discussed and partially transcribed and translated in Tanret/Janssen (1992, 64). Inanna-mansum, when angry, is said to have referred to Ili-iqīšam's birth mother as the 'son of a of a sister of the daughter-in-law of Ku...' (Di 1194:14); see Janssen (1992, 22) and Barberon (2005, 94 f.).

⁴³ The sender of Di 384, Ina-esagila-zērum, mentions that Ili-iqīšam and the 'boys' brought tablets to Babylon on behalf of the chief lamentation priest; this Ili-iqīšam transmitted greetings from the family: 'Ili-iqīšam informed me that "well-being and life" was received from you' (*li-ir-ru-šā-am ū-ša-aš-mi-a-an-ni-ma 'ša-la¹-mu ū ba-la-tū ma-ḥi-ir-ku-nu-ti*, ll. 49–50). In Di 208 Kubburum sends a person named Ili-iqīšam with wooden beams to the *bēlum*'s house.

⁴⁴ For the meaning 'to go to Babylon', for *elūm*, see Sallaberger (2012, 14).

⁴⁵ One is an *ana abija* letter (Di 838), probably sent by another Kubburum, as not only the address but also the relation between the correspondents is different. Di 838 includes a greeting formula referring to the release of an *e'iltum*. From the text it is clear that Kubburum had met the addressee before because of a field that had been vindicated by the chief lamentation priest of Marduk. Kubburum gives him the instruction to let him take it and promises silver for the purchase of the field. He also admonishes the addressee not to be negligent about what he has written about barley. There is no sign of dependency. Several Kubburums were active in late Old Babylonian Sippar, a.o. a judge with whom the chief lamentation priest had several interactions (Source: Sippar database). The judge is mentioned in Di

son is found in three documentary texts from the Ur-Utu archive.⁴⁶ We also find him outside the Ur-Utu archive, in two texts from the British Museum. In one of these, he is no more than a witness (MHET II/4 no 543), but the other (MHET II/4 no 525) tells us that in Ammi-šaduqa 11/3/24, i. e., a year before the final settlement of Inanna-mansum's inheritance, he rented a house from a person named Awil-Sin. Tanret (2005, 2) notes that the house was small, and wonders whether the lack of proper housing was one of the reasons why he opposed Ur-Utu so vehemently. That he was suffering from financial strains is also apparent in Di 208, discussed below.

Ur-Utu's brother Kubburum appears as the most headstrong and independent of the brothers, at least in spirit. It is in the letters that he gets his full colours. We learn that after Inanna-mansum put Ur-Utu in charge of everything, he felt wronged. According to Ur-Utu, he offered his wife's golden earrings (i. e., not silver that he had earned himself) to an official in order to force his father to divide his inheritance and did not shun away from breaking into one of his dead father's houses. He conspired with temple officials and managed to remove his brother from his office, at least temporarily, as can be read in Di 167 and Di 1194, letters published and interpreted by Janssen (1992). He also raised a claim against his mother Ilša-ḫegalli (MHET I, 69:1–3). Did he have a reason to have a grudge? Whence his entitlement? We do not know. Judging by the contents of the letters, of all of Ur-Utu's brothers, he was the one who bore most responsibilities and who was held accountable when something went wrong. Obviously, it is possible that Kubburum had a reason to feel wronged by his family and grew bitter and resentful over time.⁴⁷

IV.5.1 Kubburum's letter Di 208

In Di 208 (= MHET I, 89), Kubburum assures the addressee that 'the oxen and the house' are well, which can count as evidence that this Kubburum is close to the chief lamentation priest's household. This letter contains four different topics which reveal that there were regular contacts and mutual expectations. Several of them are responses to the addressee's criticism:

(5) *aš-šum* ¹*ša*¹ *ta-aš-pu-ra-am um-ma at-ta-ma* (6) *ṭe₄-em ē-ia ša bu-uz-zu-ḫu ú-ul ta-aš-pu-¹ra¹-[am]*

As for what you wrote, saying: "You did not send me a message about my house that was raided."

Kubburum assures his addressee that he took the matter in hand. He reports that, after inspection, he established that ½ kor of barley and 11 liters of oil had disappeared but that for the rest all the property was intact. He points an accusing finger at the 'hostels' or 'taverns' (*aštammātum*) near the temple (ll. 5–14). We know that Ur-Utu accuses his brothers of robbing many more items from Inanna-mansum's house in Sippar-Jahrurum after his father's death (Di 1194: Lo.E. 23- Rev.26; 32–24). The second topic is cattle. Here too we find a response to a letter displaying discontentment, because the addressee had written:

(16) ¹*GU4*¹_{bl.A} *ša uru^{ki} a-na mi-nim GI*¹_{bl.A} ¹*i-ik¹-ka-lu* (17) ¹*GU4*¹_{bl.A} *nu-ut-tum ¹a¹-na mi-nim* (Lo.E. 18) *GI*¹_{bl.A} ¹*la¹ i-ik¹-ka-lu*

Why are the cattle of the town eating reed? Why are our cattle not eating reed?

Note the opposition between the cattle of (the rest of?) the town and 'our cattle', i. e. family livestock for which Kubburum was held responsible. Kubburum counters the criticism by pointing out that this neglect is the addressee's own fault, because he had failed to give him the means:

(19) *ki-ma li-ib-ba-ka i-du-ú* (20) *ŠUKU É ITU DIRIG ŠE.GUR₁₀.KU₅ ú-ul ta-aš-ku-un* (Rev. 21) *ú ni-nu i-na bu-bu-tim ni-ma-a-at*

As you know well enough you did not supply the provisions for the household for the intercalary month; what about us, should we starve to death?

As K. Van Lerberghe ([e.a.] 1991, 134) pointed out, cattle eat reed in winter, when barley is scarce. But in this case not only the cattle are hungry. Kubburum complains that his own family has barely enough to eat because the addressee had not provided food. Under the circumstances, he argues, he cannot pay the hired workers for the reed; they wanted food as well, not silver (ll. 22–26). The third topic also reflects that there were tensions. The addressee had warned Kubburum that the president of

371:6'. Di 602: rev. 18. Di 291: 4 (=MHET I, 69) (all letters) and Di 846 (Aš 13/04/20) and would be a good candidate to be the sender of this letter, who gives legal instructions.

⁴⁶ In Di 1762 he is a witness, in Di 1769 he replaces his brother Ili-iqīšam, and in Di 1784 he appears in a settlement of an inherited debt, as listed by Dekiere (1994, 135–6). Di 1784 was discussed by anret (2012, 588).

⁴⁷ According to Ur-Utu, Inanna-mansum angrily called Kubburum 'the son of Warad-Mamu, the servant of Esagila-mansum, the ...', referring to his birth father (N.B. not his birth mother, as was the case with his brothers). According to Barberon (2005, 94 f.) Ur-Utu and his brothers were adopted by their mother. Tanret (2012, 587) speculates that the fact that he had another father may have given him a sense of vulnerability. Note however that Barberon doubted whether Inanna-mansum, as chief lamentation priest, would have had biological children (2012, 227 n. 1237). Maybe in his case the insult was stronger because of his father's lower position.

the assembly in Sippar-Jaḥrurum would be displeased. He had given him silver for buying poultry that had to be paid to the fowler's daughter-in-law. Kubburum retorts that he kept going to Sippar-Jaḥrurum to search 'for them' (the fowler's family) but could not find them. What could he do about it?

(38) [ū a]-¹na¹-ku i-na ^{UD.KIB}1.NUN^{ki} ia-aḥ-ru-rum (39) ¹mi¹-nam e-ep-pu-uš-ma (40) a-wi-lum li-ib-ba-ti-ia ma-li
What then shall I do in Sippar-Jaḥrurum? (So) the gentleman will be angry with me!

After this line, which can be read as a simple conclusion or a 'see if I care!', he comes to his final point. He sends Ilī-iqīšam (most probably his younger brother) with wooden beams that lay in the house. We see how intertwined and at the same time disturbed the relation between Kubburum and his correspondent is. Kubburum was dependent on the *bēlum* and there were mutual expectations. The *bēlum* is in charge of the estate, payments, cattle and sustenance. There are multiple interactions; but there is distrust. Barley had disappeared; oxen that had not been fed; poultry that had not been paid for. Kubburum shifts the blame on the correspondent or somewhere else. There is little doubt that this Kubburum is Inanna-mansum's son. The atmosphere is very similar to what is described in the inheritance saga (as described by Janssen 1992) from which we know that he had a strained relation with his brother. In view of the sender's attitude towards his addressee, it seems likely that this is a letter addressed to Ur-Utu rather than to his father. As in Rā'imtum's letter, the choice of the respectful *ana bēlija* format reflects the nature of the relation between the correspondents but not the sender's actual feelings.

IV.5.2 Kubburum's letter Di 620

Di 620 is a defensive letter, but the tone is different. The text is in a bad condition but it is clear that property from the paternal estate and two oxen went missing. Kubburum asserts that they are not 'in his hands':⁴⁸

⁴⁸ This verb belongs to the so-called *naparraru* group. The N-stem of this group differs from the regular N-stem (Kouwenberg, 2010, 301–305). We note that Di 620:18, the plural appears as *ittaparrarū*, not as **ittaparrarū*, as indicated, with a question mark, in Kouwenberg's table. Kouwenberg (2010, 302f.) explains that the shift from a doubled second to a doubled third root letter before a vocalic ending is only attested for the imperfective, and wonders whether or not it means that this phenomenon was restricted to the imperfective. He indicates (2010, 303) that von Soden had postulated that doubling

(15) *mi-im-ma ša 'qā-ti-šu-ma'* (16) *i-na É A.BA el-qū-ú* (17) *it-ta-pa-ar-(ra)-'ru'* (18) 2 GU^{hi-a} *ša be-lī at-ta ta-'xx'* (Lo.E. 19) *i-na qā-ti-ia ú-ul aš-ba-at* (20) *it-ta-pa-ar-ra*

What was in his hand and I had taken from the paternal estate: they have dispersed; two oxen which you, my lord, ... I did not take into my possession. They have dispersed."

Kubburum obviously tries to mollify his correspondent. He adds a blessing in the text in which he refers to Ninsianna as 'the god who created you' (context damaged). Ninsianna, the male version of Ištar, is an astral god with special importance to the chief lamentation priest/Ur-Utu.⁴⁹ By displaying these signs of respect and by adopting a god-fearing attitude, he tries to convince the addressee of his integrity, it seems. This is the only letter in which Kubburum calls himself the addressee's [slave] (the word is broken but the *-ka* remains). There seems to be no doubt about the identity of this Kubburum. Whether it is a letter to his father or to his brother (in an early stage of the events) cannot be determined.

IV.5.3 Kubburum's letter Di 799

Di 799 is a *zehpum* with an *ana bēlija* address section. The text is damaged and sentences are incomplete, but we understand that there was a problem with a payment of a *ḥarimtum* (a woman linked to the *ḥarimūtum* ritual)⁵⁰ for which Kubburum and the other people included in the 'us' were apparently detained. The detention only makes sense when the sender is closely connected to the addressee:

(4) [...] *xx-ša-ti* ⁴IŠKUR-*mu-ša-lim* (5) [...] *x ki-ma* KÙ.BABBAR MUNUS.KAR.KID *ma-aḥ-ri-ka ub-lam* (6) [...] *x-ma KĀ.GAL ú-ša-ši-an-ni-a-ti* (7) [...] 7 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *i-na É [xxxx ...]*
... Adad-mušallim ... as soon as he had brought the silver of the *ḥarimtum* to you, ... let us go out of the gate. ... 7 shekel of silver in the temple/house of ...

the third root letter before a vocalic ending was obligatory and that the second root letter was not doubled when this was the case. He accepts this theory with hesitation 'until a form appears that proves the contrary'. We now have an attestation that would induce us to revise von Soden's postulation and revise the form given in the table (Di 620:18). Note that on line 17, the scribe seems to be struggling with the verb and forgot a(n unstressed) syllable.

⁴⁹ In Ur-Utu's archive, a prayer from Ur-Utu to Ninsianna was found. The special meaning of this god to Ur-Utu is discussed by Tanret (2011, 284 f., with references). See also De Meyer (1982b, 274 f., based on Di 261; and *idem* 1989b, 213–222).

⁵⁰ The word *ḥarimtum* is commonly translated as a prostitute. These women played a role in the rites of Anunitum. Tanret/Van Lerberghe (1993, 441) maintain that for the Old Babylonian context there is no evidence that the rites had a sexual nature.

There is a document from the archive about the non-payment of a debt which could possibly shed light on this text (Di 1784).⁵¹ Unfortunately, the letter is in a bad shape. The purpose of the letter is clear: to inform the lord about a financial problem that had been solved.

IV.5.4 Kubburum's letter Di 1246

Di 1246 is a *zehpum* addressed *ana bēlīja*. Kubburum informs the addressee about a woman named Zizî. She intended to go the 'Opening of the Gate' (the name of a festival) with her girls. But when the day came, she had nothing at all:⁵²

(4) *i-na ITI KIN. 4².INNIN U₄.KAM* (5) *ṣe-zi-zi-i mi-im-ma ba-ši-a-am*
(6) *a-na qā-ti-ša ú-ul ir-x*

um-ma ši-ma qā-du ṣe-eḫ-ḫe-re-ti-ia a-na pi-ti ká a-al-la-ak

In the sixth month, the fourth day, Zizî did not have anything left at her disposal. She said: "With my girls I will go to the 'Opening of the Gate.'"

Kubburum reports that he and Awil-lštar had turned to Ipqu-Nabium, and that an oath had been taken. Apparently, this was necessary to solve the problem because after the intercession of the *awilum* Ipqu-Nabium (probably the *gallābūm* who is mentioned in several letters from the archive), she was free to go. Who is Zizî? A woman by this name appears in Di 721 (MHET I, 37), an undated list about a large amount of barley that was milled and on different dates of the tenth and eleventh month. There is

⁵¹ According to Di 1784, Šamuḫtum, Adad-mušallim's wife, filed a complaint against Ur-Utu and his brothers. Inanna-mansum owed her 7 shekels of silver for performing the (unspecified) *paršum* rites, but the old chief lamentation priest had died. She now claimed this silver from his four sons. Kubburum, Ili-iqīšam and Ḫuzālum however retorted that Inanna-mansum had put Ur-Utu in charge of everything, so that he was the one who should pay the debt. The document states that Ur-Utu then paid the seven shekels from the inheritance. If the seven shekels mentioned in the letter are related to the same case, we understand that Kubburum had been detained because the silver had not been paid yet; or perhaps it simply had not been paid in full. On the reverse, there is mention of a fourth of the silver and the remainder of the silver, as specified by contract. Had Ur-Utu initially only paid his own share? For this document see Janssen (1992, 35). Dekiere (1994, 135–6). Di 1784 was also discussed by Tanret (2012, 588).

⁵² References to this monthly festival during which purification rites were performed (CAD P, s.v. *pīṭum* A, 446 2.2') are found in AbB 14 19 (= TCL 1 19). It is listed by Cohen (1993, 362) as the third month in Susa, but in our text the sixth month is mentioned, like in ABL 496:10 (Neobabylonian). Landsberger (1915, 112) mentions that the great 'Opening of the Gate' took place on the fourth day of this month, i.e., the same day as mentioned in Di 1246.

mention of flour for the maintenance of the house, of the *awilum*, for the cult, ... On this list, a person called Kubburum is mentioned once (without patronymic) and Zizî is named twice as well (on different days). Both their names are preceded by the signs 'ŠU TI.A' 'received'. The name appears in the list Di 546 (Ammi-šaduqa 1) as well, where Zizî receives a considerable amount of barley. We understand from Di 1246 that Zizî belonged to the people who received sustenance from the chief lamentation priest and that she fell under his protection. Kubburum wrote to inform the *bēlum* about her case and to explain how he had solved the problem. The Kubburum of Di 1246 was clearly connected to the lord's house.

IV.6 An intimate view of family life: the relation with other texts

Of all the genres, letters provide us with the best chance to catch a glimpse of the realities of every-day life. A group of letters discussed in Janssen (1992; see also Janssen 2017, 12 n. 48) showed that Inanna-mansum's sons had serious issues with each other after an elderly Inanna-mansum had decided to pass on his scepter to his son Ur-Utu and to put him in charge of everything. Things got even rougher after his death and we have the impression that during the seven years it took to solve this matter, the family was utterly dysfunctional. Serious infractions took place and Ur-Utu pointed an accusing finger at Kubburum, depicted as the instigator. At a certain point the property deeds and the chains of transmission of all of the brothers had to be shown to the judges.⁵³ Ur-Utu asked the authorities to put his brothers in manacles and take them to Babylon. But at the same time, the brothers needed each other. They had to cooperate to manage the estate, to settle bills and inherited debts (as discussed in Tanret 2012), to run their households and to survive. This is the image that appears in documents and also in the eight *ana bēlīja* letters, which are clearly linked to the household. Ur-Utu seems to have been deeply attached to his father. Even in his old days, he kept him informed about temple affairs and prayed for him. Ḫuzālum, though involved in the inheritance dispute, appears to have been close and loyal to Ur-Utu at other times. Ili-iqīšam was suffering from the intrigues that plagued the family and did not dare to

⁵³ MHET I, 68:15'. A chain of transmission is a dossier of documents recording the origin and subsequent transfers of real estate, from one owner to the next. The basic concepts of the system can be found in Janssen (1996) and a monography about this theme is in preparation (Tanret/Janssen).

speak up. Kubburum carried many responsibilities but he was distrusted. Both he and Ili-iqīšam depended on the lord for their sustenance and if the expected support did not materialise they went hungry. Rā'imtum felt that she was not treated with due respect by Ur-Utu and she disliked her brother-in-law Ħuzālum for being too close to her husband and divulging unwanted information about her. She felt much respect for her father-in-law but not for her husband Ur-Utu.

V Conclusion: what can be learned from eight *ana bēlija* letters

We can now confirm that in the eight letters that were the object of this investigation, about address behaviour in the late Old Babylonian Ur-Utu archive, *bēli* is used for a spouse, a father or a first brother. Close relatives are seen through a distant mirror. While the title 'lord' expresses respect, its use is a matter of convention. At the same time, the sender could express his or her frustration or contempt for the addressee in the course of the text. Thus, the contents of the letter can be diametrically opposed to the format. In view of the family dynamics, the most heated letters were probably directed to Ur-Utu.

As imagined, the lord is put on a pedestal, and the self-designation 'your slave', which is found in several of these letters, is added to underline the sender's inferiority *vis-à-vis* the addressee. The insertion of the self-designation is a matter of choice; it depends on the occasion. Kubburum, the disgruntled one, only used it in one of his four letters, when he tried to underline his piety and integrity.

The absence of greeting formulae in most of these letters, which is a striking feature in the late Old Babylonian context, should also be seen as a matter of polite distance. The late Old Babylonian arsenal of standard greetings is used among equals, not between a 'slave' and his 'lord'. Only Ur-Utu, a chief lamentation priest like his father had been, includes a greeting section in his letter to his old man, but he stays far from the standard formulae. His greeting has the character of a prayer. Ur-Utu calls himself his addressee's slave. Inanna-mansum's retirement from his office did not alter their relation as correspondents. His father, the oldest male member of the household, is treated with due respect.

The bond between sender and addressee is permanent and two-sided in these letters. The senders write to their lord when they are in need, or in order to keep him informed about current affairs, financial matters, cattle, the estate and so on. The use of the title is not only a

way of showing one's respect, but also an appeal to the lord's sense of honour, and the expectations connected to it, which is why the title of address is often repeated emphatically throughout the letter. *Noblesse oblige*, or so the senders hope.

Obviously, this bond between the sender and the addressee is not always of the same nature; the relation of lord and slave is not necessarily intrafamilial, as in these eight letters, and if they are, the correspondents are not necessarily so closely related (here our research is hampered by the fact that we do not have much information about the family's side-branches for Ur-Utu's generation). In Ur-Utu's outgoing letters, *bēli* is used for an official who could offer support and protection, which is in accordance with Sallaberger's observations (1999, 56). The relationship is that of a protector and a protégé. Even the king, when called *bēli*, is not addressed as an authoritarian despot but rather as a protector of the land and its people; as Hammurapi eloquently expressed it, he cared for his subjects as if he were their birth father. This lord – like the *pater familias* – is the person whom they would turn to when in need. It is in this sphere that the *bēlum* emerges in the *ana bēlija* letters of the Ur-Utu archive, whether intrafamilial or extrafamilial.

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