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"AND HE SHALL BE MY SON!" ADOPTION IN THE ARAMAIC PAPYRI FROM ELEPHANTINE

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ABSTRACT

Elephantine has been a flourishing multicultural society for centuries and protected the southern Egyptian border. Egyptians, Persian, Greeks, Arameans and many others lived together, but each had its own legal system. Having so many cultures living alongside each other must have brought legal problems and situations with it. So how can you solve this legal puzzle with so many systems next to each other? This thesis highlights one small aspect, namely adoption in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine. The Jews, originally from the northern Levant, used Official Aramaic, a language closely related to the Akkadian language, yet they lived in an Egyptian society. The question here is: how does the procedure of adoption develops itself in this multicultural society?

The three major texts regarding adoption – the Adoption Document, the Testamentary Manumission and the Story of Aḥiqar – will be researched in comparison to their Egyptian and Near Eastern counterparts. The lack of Egyptian sources is a curse to this research, since it makes diachronic study impossible. In the first chapter the content of the three documents is revised, and compared to the content of sources. In the second chapter the lexical part is examined. Specific clauses regarding adoption are illustrated and further evaluated by comparing them with Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian sources. The overall conclusion is that Near Eastern influences are more prominent, but some Egyptian influences seeps in on a low level.

CONTENT

ABBREVIATIONS

AASSOR	The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ABL	Assyrian and Babylonian Literature - Robert F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature: Selected Translations* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904).
ARM	Archives Royales de Mari
CAD	Chicago Assyrian Dictionary
CDD	Chicago Demotic Dictionary
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
EP	Eduba Prism
Hoftijzer-Jongeling	Jacob Hoftijzer and Karel Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (Handbuch der Orientalistik. 1. Abt.: Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten 21/1-2; Leiden: Brill, 1995).
HSS	Harvard Semitic Series - Harvard University, & Harvard College. (1912). *Harvard Semitic Series*.
JAAS	Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
KAJ	Keilschrifttexte aus Assur - Ebeling, E. (1927). *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur juristischen Inhalts* (Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur. E, Inschriften ; 4). Leipzig: Hinrichs.
LH	Laws of Hammurabi
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PBS	Publications of the Babylonian Section, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania
PN	Personal name
Pret	Preterite
S	Singular
TAD	Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt

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INTRODUCTION

Taking care of and nurturing children not your own is a social act which has stood for ages. Not only has it served as a gratifying and rewarding action for barren couples, it also served many purposes on various aspects of cultural interaction: economic, political and even religious reasons can be presented as motives for adoption. On the ancient Egyptian island of Elephantine three Aramaic documents were obtained that shed light on this process in the multicultural society. However, as always, there is a catch to it. As Botta expresses it:

> "At Elephantine, language, religious customs, and legal practices were a synthesis of inherited traditions and new influences in a dynamic and fluid process of assimilation and differentiation."[1]

This sentence, part of the introduction of his 'The Aramaic and Egyptian Legal Tradition at Elephantine: An Egyptological Approach', is a perfect beginning for this paper. Botta reminds us that one has to keep in mind that no culture stands alone: it is always subjected to foreign stimuli. In the utmost south of Egypt, on the border with Sudan, at the beginning of the first cataract, the small but vibrantly multicultural island of Elephantine flourished.[2] The importance of Elephantine began as a defensive military bastion against the threats from the south. Midway 1st millennium BCE an Aramaic community was active on the island, leaving an imprint on many facets of daily life. If not for the Aramaic Elephantine Papyri, we would have not known the full extent of their influence on their surroundings.

The Elephantine Papyri, as a written remnant of the once flourishing Aramaic society, comprise many legal contracts.[3] These do not only include legal deeds among Aramaic speaking citizens themselves, but also in contact with other ethnicities. Native Egyptians and Persians are the most

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[1] Alejandro F. Botta, *The Aramaic and Egyptian Legal Traditions at Elephantine: An Egyptological Approach* (Library of Second Temple Studies 64. London: Clark, 2009), 1.

[2] Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui 22. Leiden: Brill, 1996), 12-27.; Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).; Botta, *Legal Traditions*, 8-19.; Ian Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 77.

[3] Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 1-12.

mentioned among the other parties, aside from the Jews themselves. However, this causes three historically different law systems to work alongside one another on a small geographical area. As much as it is a hot topic today, so it was in the Persian period: how to solve the legal puzzle in a multicultural society? I will not mingle myself into this modern-day, ominous discussion, but one should remember that we can learn from the past. Where our forefathers made mistakes, we search another way, and where they found a solution, we perfect it. This may and does sound naïve, since the many wars in the past prove this wrong, but many multicultural societies have found somewhat of an understanding. In this paper I want to highlight a small, yet meaningful legal act: adoption.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this research is twofold: the first aim is to examine the process of adoption in the Jewish society of 1st millennium Elephantine, Egypt. The second enquiry is the reflection of this process in linguistics, more specifically relating to word usage and legal formulae. The aim is to perceive whether the process of adoption is more closely related to the Egyptian way of life or the Near Eastern[4] one.

The Roman saying 'locus regit actus' is the centre idea of this research.[5] Literally translated it means "the place rules the act". It is a juridical term indicating that the law of the place where a legal act unfolds should be applied. Only keeping the legal situation of a specific region in mind and leaving every notion of social background of the people involved, is in theory a simple idea. But in reality it is complicated. 'Locus regit actus' reminds us that no matter which background a certain ethnic group may have, they have to adapt to a certain degree to the law system of the country they live in.[6] French Egyptologist Revillout is the first to remember the Roman saying 'locus regit actus' and applied it to his

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[4] The term Near Eastern will be used in this thesis as a collective term for every culture that ever existed on the Near Eastern area (Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, …).

[5] Bryan A. Garner, ed., *Black's Law Dictionary (8th ed.)* (Saint Paul: West Group, 2004), 959-960.

[6] I will deliberately leave out any mention to modern situations, since this is a moral question and unconnected to the subject at hand.

study.[7] He recapped the principle as that "qu'ont absolument mis en oubli tous ceux qui, jusqu'ici, se sont occupés des papyrus égypto-araméens récemment découverts à Eléphantine".[8]

Even though the Aramaic sources from Elephantine are found in Egypt, they were most often researched as parallel to the Near Eastern and Levantine sources.[9] This approach can be justified when applied to historical ethnicity: the Jews from Elephantine (most probably) originate from the region south of Syria.[10] This region is part of the Levant, which has been subjected to Near Eastern influences through the ages, whether these were naturally grown or imposed influences. Sources on the Near Eastern and Levantine law systems are very elaborate and well known. Unfortunately, the Egyptian laws are not as well known.[11] A complete, first hand Egyptian law code has not been found yet. What is known about the Egyptian laws is mostly derived from legal deeds, legal letters and other literary documents. A second argument pro-Near Eastern/Levantine parallel research is linguistics: it leaves no doubt that Aramaic is more closely related to Near Eastern and Levantine languages than the Egyptian languages.[12] However, both families are united under the bigger language family denominator Hamito-Semitic or Afroasiatic.[13] It is possible that at the end of this thesis, we will find not only stylistic similarities of the documents, but also semantic resemblances within word usage.

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[7] Eugène Revillout, *Les Origines Égyptiennes du Droit Civil Romain: Nouvelle Étude faite d'après les Textes Juridiques Hiéroglyphiques, Hiératiques et Démotiques, rapprochés de ceux des Assyro-Chaldéens et des Hébreux, avec un Premier Supplément sur les Contrats Égypto-Araméens d'Eléphantine, un Index Alphabétique des Questions Juridiques, Économiques et Historiques, un Index Alphabétique des Noms Propres et des Addenda* (Paris: Geuthner, 1912), 52.
The supplement of this book 52-60 is the most importance for this study.

[8] Revillout, *Origines Égyptiennes*, 52.

[9] Botta, *Legal Traditions*, 19-32.

[10] Cyrus H. Gordon, "The Origin of the Jews in Elephantine," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14 (1955): 56-58.

[11] Raymond Westbrook, *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law* (Handbuch der Orientalistik. 1. Abt.: Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten 72. Leiden: Brill, 2003): 5-11. Especially page 8, footnote 9.; Botta, *Legal Traditions*, 12-16.

[12] Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (trans. J. Elwolde; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-28.

[13] Joseph H. Greenberg, "Studies in African linguistic classification: IV. Hamito-Semitic," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 6 (1950): 47-63.

DEFINITION OF ADOPTION

When thinking of 'adoption', many hold the modern and most used definition: adoption of a child. In this thesis, the definition will be enlarged a bit. I will define adoption as an 'artificial creation of a family by taking in a not directly blood-related person into the nuclear family'. The people belonging to the nuclear family are parents and children. Grandparents and other relatives will not be included in this survey as part of the nuclear family; they are be considered extended family.

CORPUS AVAILABLE

The famous Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine will be taken into account. These were created midway 1st millennium BCE and contain all sorts of documents: legal deeds, literary works, ostraca and letters.[14] The 'Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt', otherwise known as TAD and written by Porten-Yardeni, will be used as a basis for the Aramaic texts mentioned in this paper.[15] More specifically, there are only three texts which can be taken into consideration regarding adoption: TAD B3.9 (aka the Adoption Documents), TAD B3.6 (aka Testamentary Manumission) and TAD C1.1 (aka the Words of Aḥiqar). These texts will be revised on two separate facets: content and lexis. Each will be reviewed in a separate chapter.

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[14] Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 12-27.

[15] See Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (The Hebrew University Jerusalem. Department of the History of the Jewish People. Texts and studies for students) (Jerusalem: Hebrew university, 1996-1999). These four volumes each are dedicated to a specific domain of literature: 1) Letters, 2) Contract, 3) Literature, Accounts and Lists, 4) Ostraca and Assorted Inscriptions. In 1996, Porten translated and analysed many of the documents found in Elephantine (Porten, Bezalel. *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*. Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui 22. Leiden: Brill, 1996.).

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON ADOPTION IN THE ARAMAIC LAW OF ELEPHANTINE

Even though the Papyri were already known for quite a while, the first translations were published by Euting in 1903.[16] Subsequently more and more pieces were published and released to the public.[17]

The study on adoption on Elephantine begins with the publication of Kraeling's 'The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri' (1953).[18] In a 10-page long chapter he studied the process of adoption from a Near Eastern point of view, with similarities found in Near Eastern formulae. Years later, Yaron wrote a section on adoption in his 'Introduction to the Law of the Aramaic Papyri' (1961).[19] This was a recapping of the Adoption Document (Kraeling 8) and gave no new information. Porten did not research adoption as a topic on itself, but reviewed it briefly in his book (1968) and translation and commentary (1996).[20] The first work is a comprehensive introduction to the Aramaic Archives. It treats many facets of the daily life as portrayed in the Documents. The other work holds the translations and commentaries on the texts. These comments, found in the footnotes, are focused on the linguistic side of the story. It also correlates many of the mutual characteristics found in the texts. These two aspects of this book will be of great value to this research.

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[16] See Julius Euting, (1904). *Notice sur un papyrus égypto-araméen de la Bibliothèque impériale de Strasbourg / Par J. Euting* (Mémoires présentes par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de l'Institut de France. 1: Sujets divers d'érudition 11,2,4); Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1904).

[17] For the publication history, see: Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 12-27.

[18] Emil G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri: New Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. from the Jewish Colony at Elephantine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 224-234.

[19] Reuven Yaron, *Introduction to the Law of the Aramaic Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).

[20] Porten, *Archives*, 219-225.

CONCEPT OF ADOPTION THROUGHOUT TIME

Research into the procedure of adoption can only be conducted through literary sources. When comparing the Elephantine Papyri with Egyptian or Ancient Near Eastern documents, it is imperative to have a notion on the subject in these contexts. In this chapter the definition of adoption will be clarified and its concept through time. In particular, the Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern sources will be reviewed. The Elephantine Papyri are found in Egypt, but are made up in the language from the Persian (Near Eastern) heartland, namely Official Aramaic.[21] This polarization – Egyptian versus Near Eastern – is the reason for this research.

MODERN TIMES

According to a research of the United Nations on adoption, different types of adoption exist in this modern era.[22] The most practiced adoption is the one where "the adopted child (is equated) with a legitimate offspring of the adoptive family and terminated all ties between the adopted child and his or her birth family".[23] This is a closed adoption. In open adoptions the ties between adoptee and birth family are not severed. Most adoptions concern themselves with children, although the adoption of adults is not rare either.

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[21] With the Persian supremacy, the official administration in Egypt got a whole new make-over and was turned into the Persian example, with Official Aramaic as the standard administrative language. In Egypt there is quite a corpus to find of official documents made up in Official Aramaic. The corpus ranges from personal letters to small inscriptions on ostraca to real literary works. And here too, the process of intercultural influence and change was part of the story. For example, Persian and Egyptian loanwords are abundant. The most common name for the Aramaic in this time period is Imperial Aramaic, which is both too constrictive in time and area. The Japanese researcher T. Muraoka gave the Aramaic from the Persian period the name Egyptian Aramaic. However, beside some dialect forms and usages and Egyptian loan words, it does not differ from the Aramaic from mainland Persia. While the term Egyptian Aramaic is too restrictive in area, the term Achaemenid Aramaic is too restrictive in time. Aramaic used in the standard administration of ancient Persia, is seen throughout more periods than just the Persian era. (Takamitsu Muraoka, *An Introduction to Egyptian Aramaic* (Lehrbücher Orientalischer Sprachen. Section 3: Aramaic 1; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 15-16.) In this thesis I chose to use the term Official Aramaic since it is used as the official communication language between different cultures and does not imply a time-related issue.

[22] United Nations. Department of Economic Social Affairs, Population division. *Child Adoption: Trends and Policies* (New York: United Nations, 2009).

[23] United Nations, *Child Adoption*, 15.

The main reasons of adoption in modern society are the creation of a new family due to bareness or newly formed families. In his article 'Adoption in Ancient Assyria and Babylonia', Paulissian states that "producing an heir" is the main reason for adoption in modern times as well in ancient ones.[24] In modern times, having an heir is only beneficial in certain social classes (eg. hereditary monarchies). In contrast to what Paulissian suggests, the main reason for adoption today is to provide barren parents with a child wish with a child. In older times having an heir was indeed more important, certainly with the belief in patriarchy. As we will see, in ancient times adoption takes on an even wider range: children as well as adults can be adopted for help in old age or hereditary reasons. A minor part are adopted due to religious reasons. Providing childless couples with a child as a result from a child wish seems to be a minor motive, though not impossible.

ANCIENT PERIODS

Laws regarding adoption are not abundant.[25] Here follows a small introduction to the adoption practice in Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt and other cultures. The most prominent adoption sources will be used as examples.

I.   ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

Ancient Mesopotamia is a treasure trove for law codes.[26] Not only are there multiple examples of law codes, also many legal deeds and documents are found referring to known and unknown law codes. The most famous law code is the Codex Hammurabi.[27] The diorite stela with Old-Babylonian script surfaced at the end of the 19th century at the site of ancient Susa. Reigning in the first half of the

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[24] Robert Paulissian, "Adoption in Ancient Assyria and Babylonia," *JAAS* 13(2) (1999): 5.

[25] Amin A. Abdel-Aziz, "The Adoption Law Codes in Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt," in *The Horizon: Studies in Egyptology in Honour of M.A. Nur el-Din (10 - 12 April 2007)* (ed. B. S. El-Sharkawy and A. H. Nur el-Din; Cairo: Supreme Counsil of Antiquity, 2009), 13-22.

[26] As seen in the many chapters and examples found in Westbrook, *A History*.

[27] For a translation and discussion on the entire text of Hammurabi's stela, see Mervyn E. J. Richardson, *Hammurabi's Laws: Text, Translation and Glossary* (The Biblical Seminar 73. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

2nd millennium BCE, Babylonian King Hammurabi wrote one of the first exhaustive codes of its time. The law code encompasses many subjects and explains not only someone's rights and obligations but also the penalty for harming them. Specifically for adoption we need to look at the laws on lines 185–194:

[185] If a man adopt a child and to his name as son, and rear him, this grown son cannot be demanded back again.
[186] If a man adopt a son, and if after he has taken him he injure his foster father and mother, then this adopted son shall return to his father's house.
[187] The son of a paramour in the palace service, or of a prostitute, cannot be demanded back.
[188] If an artisan has undertaken to rear a child and teaches him his craft, he cannot be demanded back.
[189] If he has not taught him his craft, this adopted son may return to his father's house.
[190] If a man does not maintain a child that he has adopted as a son and reared with his other children, then his adopted son may return to his father's house.
[191] If a man, who had adopted a son and reared him, founded a household, and had children, wish to put this adopted son out, then this son shall not simply go his way. His adoptive father shall give him of his wealth one-third of a child's portion, and then he may go. He shall not give him of the field, garden, and house.
[192] If a son of a paramour or a prostitute say to his adoptive father or mother: "You are not my father, or my mother," his tongue shall be cut off.
[193] If the son of a paramour or a prostitute desire his father's house, and desert his adoptive father and adoptive mother, and goes to his father's house, then shall his eye be put out.
Table I. Excerpt from the Codex Hammurabi (lines 185 - 192)

Figuratively reading between the lines from other laws, more regulations concerning adoption can be deduced. Before the Codex Hammurabi a few other legal codes already reported on the acts regarding adoption.[28] They do not differ much from the above selection.

As seen from the above excerpt, laws concerning adoption were well thought about – leaving out the gruesome bits of course. The process of adoption began when a child or consenting adult was taken in by an *awilum*, a free man[29] accepting the adoptee as his/her own child and where both agree on the terms and penalties.

Next to the law codes many adoption documents were found in various Near Eastern cities. One major difference with the law codes is that these documents do not only act upon parent-child adoption but also sibling-adoption.[30] Another difference is that women also seem to adopt; it is rather rare, but it is possible.[31]

The most common reason for adoption was not having an heir.[32] This reason is twofold: the main reason is for help in old age and keeping the burial rites, whereas some documents reason with inheritance as primary motive. Another important task for the heir is the honouring of the ancestral cults. Normally this is the duty of the eldest son. Religious reasons are also a reason for adoption.

II.   ANCIENT EGYPT

As already said, Egyptian law codes are not known, but this does not purport that they did not exist.[33] The existence of adoption in Egyptian law can only be supported by evidence from legal written

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[28] The oldest reference is found in the Sumerian Ana Itiššu. For the translation of this series, see Benno Landsberger, *Die Serie 'ana ittisu'* (Rome, Italy: Sumptibus Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1937).

[29] Paulissian, 1999, pp. 110.

[30] See the adoption case of Bel-kagir in Appendix.

[31] See the adoption case of Amminišina in Appendix.

[32] Jack M. Sasson, ed., Civilizations *of the Ancient Near East* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 491-492.

[33] Westbrook, *A History*, 5-11. Research into the law of ancient Egypt is mostly conducted on basis of legal deeds, letters and other literary sources. The 'Legal Code of Hermopolis' has some linguistic features which suggest that a law code literary tradition has existed. The Greek author and historian Diodōros of Sicily wrote a section on the law of Egypt. In his magnus opus '*Bibliothèkè Historikè*' he lists six persons responsible for the building up of historical law codes in Egypt (Menes, Sasychis, Sesostris, Bocchoris, Amasis and Darius). Nonetheless, the list only mentions the most remarkable decrees, consequently no mention is made towards a law regarding adoption as it is only a minor part of social law.

sources. Though, there is a catch: up until this moment there is no deed which documents adoption before the 19th dynasty.[34] It leaves no doubt that is should have existed before this period, but evidence is lacking.

The most prominent manuscript to document adoption is known as the (Egyptian) 'Adoption Papyrus', or as Gardiner liked to call it the 'Adoption Extraordinary'.[35] This document is unique in its composition and attests three different kinds of adoptions. The first part confirms a 'wife-daughter'-adoption of the Egyptian musician of Seth Nenufer (subsequently Rennufer) by her husband Nebnufer. Nebnufer resorts to this adoption since they did not have children of their own. The second part plays out after the death of Nebnufer, showing the adoption of the three children of a handmaiden by the widow Nenufer. With this adoption the three children are lifted out of slavery. Together with them she adopts her brother Padiu as well.

Another remarkable source is the adoption of Nitocris I by Shepnupet II, the Divine Consort of Amon.[36] The Nitocris Adoption Stela states that the pharaoh's daughter was 'given' to the college of priestesses at Karnak by her father Psamtik I. There she will eventually succeed the supreme status of God's Wife of Amon.[37] This status was hereditary, but the heiress to this position always seemed to be an adopted daughter.[38] Where previous studies presumed that this hereditary status implied celibacy, Teeter assumes the theory that celibacy cannot be proven as a part of this cult.[39] She emphasized the

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[34] Westbrook, *A History*, 276.

[35] See full translation in Appendix 1. Alan H. Gardiner. "Adoption Extraordinary," *JEA* 26 (1941). In this article Gardiner gives his translation of the text with some linguistic footnotes and a small comment, but leaves the bulk of the comment on the text itself to professor de Zulueta.

[36] See partial translation in Appendix 1. The position of 'Divine Consort of Amon' is more commonly known as the God's Wife of Amon. More on the God's Wife of Amon, see: Anthony Leahy, "More light on a Saite Official of the God's Wife of Amun," *JEA* 74 (1988): 236-239.; Tiamoyo T. Karenga, "The Office of the Divine Wife of Amen in the 25th and 26th Dynasties: A Study of Women and Power in Ancient Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., California State University, 2007).

[37] James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the earliest Times to the Persian Conquest. Coll., Ed. and Transl. with Comment. by James Henry Breasted* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1906), 477-488.; Ricardo A. Caminos, "The Nitocris Adoption Stela," *JEA* 50 (1964): 71-101.

[38] Emily Teeter, "Celibacy and Adoption among God's Wives of Amun and Singers in the Temple of Amun: A Re-examination of the Evidence," in *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente*. (Ed. E. Teeter and J.A. Larson; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003): 403-414.

[39] More on the discussion on the hereditary position, see: Aidan Dodson, "The Problem of Amenirdis II and the Heirs to the Office of God's Wife of Amun during the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty," *JEA* 88 (2002): 179-186.

fact that some of the God's Wives were married and maybe even had children. Moreover, no written sources were found affirming that this office ensued celibacy. However, it leaves no doubt that it was a sacred status, and thus the foremost reason for adoption was religious. Conversely, it appears that political reasons for this kind of adoption were not far off either: Nitocris' father, initially king of Lower Egypt, established his daughter in Thebes, which shows that he gained political power in Thebes, Upper Egypt. Another adoption documents which attests the adoption of a girl to be heiress of the God's Wife of Amon is found in the adoption of Ankhnesneferibre, daughter of Psamtek II, by Nitocris I.[40]

It is clear from these scarce literary examples that direct lineage heritage is very important to Egyptian culture. In the article 'Adoption Extraordinary' professor de Zulueta states testamentary succession as the main motive to adoption.[41] The 'wife-daughter'-adoption of Nenufer by her husband, illustrates that adoption can be quite controversial in comparison to the Near Eastern process of adoption.[42] Of course, the finding of this papyrus may have been pure coincidence that this papyrus was found and may be one of few in existence that attests the wife-daughter adoption. However, it seems that this procedure was not seen so controversial in the Egyptian society, reasoning that it does not get opposition in the letter itself. Religious adoption as seen in the Nitocris adoption is the same as in Mesopotamia, where priests/priestesses cannot have children due to cultic reasons.[43] And one should keep in mind: political motives are not always far off.[44]

III.   OTHER PROMINENT NEAR EASTERN DOCUMENTS ON ADOPTION

Not many other cultures in the Ancient Near East have reported on adoption. For example, in the Hittite Empire there is no evidence for adoption.[45] Even though an explicit example of the process of

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[40] Anthony Leahy, "The Adoption of Ankhnesneferibre at Karnak," *JEA* 82 (1996): 145-165.
[41] Gardiner, "Adoption Extraordinary," 27.
[42] Christopher J. Eyre, "The Adoption Papyrus in Social Context," JEA 78 (1992): 207-221.
[43] Abdel-Aziz, "Adoption Law Codes," 14-15.
[44] Ibid., 17.
[45] Sasson, *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 573.

adoption is nowhere to be found in the Hebrew Bible, it is clear that the act of adoption is present.[46] Paul researches the instances where God calls the offspring of Abraham His own children in the light of Mesopotamian adoption cases. Other instances are present in the story of the orphaned woman Esther[47] and the story of the barren Sarah[48].

Since most of the adoptions in other Near Eastern documents are very indirectly mentioned and obscured, these will not be taken into account. If they are directly mentioned they do not offer sufficient information to work with in this thesis.

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[46] Shalom M. Paul, "Adoption Formulae: A Study of Cuneiform and Biblical Legal Clauses," *Maarav* 2(2) (1979): 173-185.
[47] See Book of Esther.
[48] See Book of Genesis, the story of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 19).

ARAMAIC ADOPTION DOCUMENTS ON ELEPHANTINE

In this chapter we will have a closer look at the adoption process as portrayed in the Aramaic Elephantine Documents. In total, three documents qualify for this research: TAD B3.9 (the Adoption Documents), TAD B3.6 (Testamentary Manumission) and TAD C1.1 (the Words of Aḥiqar).[49] Each document will get a separate objective description. The lexical aspect will be studied in the next chapter.

In his research on adoption in Babylonian Sippar, Suurmeijer makes a difference between explicit reference to adoption and implied indication to adoption.[50] Implied adoption is merely a minor side note in a larger story, which means the mention of adoption is an auxiliary process. Applied to this study, TAD B3.9 can be categorized as an explicit reference and the other two as implied adoptions.

LEGAL CONTRACTS

I.   THE ADOPTION DOCUMENT (TAD B3.9 – 416 BCE)

The main Elephantine document concerning adoption is without a doubt TAD B3.9 (Kraeling 8), nicknamed 'Adoption Document'.[51] It is dated on the 22nd September/October 416 BCE, and is part of the Ananiah Archive. Uriah, son of Maḥseiah, adopts a slave boy who goes by the name Jedaniah son of Takhoi, handmaiden of Zakkur son of Meshullam.

Date	[1]On the 6th of Tishri, that is day 22 of Payni, year 8 of Darius the king, then in Syene the Fortress,
Parties	said [2]Uriah son of Maḥseiah, an Aramean of Syene, before Vidranga, the Guardian of the Seventh, the Troop Commander of Syene, to Zakkur son of Meshullam, [3]an Aramean of Syene, before Vidranga the Guardian of the Seventh, the Troop Commander of Syene, saying:

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[49] The texts found in the TAD from Porten-Yardeni will be used as basis. Every mention to objective summarizing of the excerpts are based on the description found in Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*.

[50] Guido Suurmeijer, "'He took him as his Son.' Adoption in Old Babylonian Sippar," *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 1 (2010): 9-10.

[51] Porten & Yardeni, *TAD*, 84-85.; Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 234-236.

Non-Enslavement and adoption	Jedaniah by name son of Takhoi, [you]r la[d] **4**whom you gave me and a document you wrote for me about him – I shall not be able, I, Uriah, or son or daughter of mine, brother or sister of mine, or man **5**of mine, he (shall not be able) to press him (into) slave(ry). My son he shall be. I, or son or daughter of mine, or man of mine, or another individual do not have the right **6**to brand him. I shall not be able – I, or a son or daughter of mine, brother or sister of mine, or man of mine – we (shall not be able) to stand up to make him a s[lave] **7**or brand him.
Penalty	Whoever shall stand up against that Jedaniah to brand him or make him a slave shall give you a penalty of silver, **8**thirty karsh by the weight of the king, silver zuz to the ten,
Reaffirmation	And that Jedaniah, my son he shall be likewise. And an individual does not **9**have the right to brand him or make him a slave, but my son he shall be.
Scribe	Wrote Raukhshana son of Nergal(u)shezib at the instruction of Uriah.
Witnesses	**10**The witnesses herein: (2nd hand) Attarmalki son of Kilkilan; (3rd hand) Sinkishir son of Shabbethai; (4th hand) Saharakab son of Cepha; **11**(5th hand) Nabushillen son of Bethelrai; (6th hand) Eshemram son of Eshemshezib; (7th hand) Varyazata son of Bethelzabad; **12**(8th hand) Ḥeremnathan son of Paḥo; (9th hand) Eshemzabadzabad son of Shawyan. (ENDORSEMENT MISSING)

The 30,5 by 36 cm document is nearly complete, only missing out the endorsement. As much as it is a fortunate find that only the endorsement is missing, it is also a curse on this research. The endorsement encloses a short description or the exact term of content of the document. The missing part of TAD B3.9 may have contained the specific Official Aramaic word for adoption.

Jedaniah used to be a slave belonging to the household of Zakkur son of Meshullam (TAD B3.9: 2-4). Slaves were the lowest class of humans in Near Eastern Society, with a status similar to chattel.[52] They had to go through the process of branding, which was the ultimate sign of their status: the visible brand[53] was exactly like the tag cattle wears. [54] However, in the Adoption Document there is no mention of Jedaniah bearing a mark. Mendelsohn suggests that this absence may be contributed to the fact that he may have been a house slave and was of a 'tender' age. The statement where Uriah states the 'non-(re-)enslavement'-clause and calls Jedaniah "his son", not 'his slave', demonstrates that he is lifted out of slavery. A slave on Elephantine was like a possession which could be bought and sold, and apparently also be given away.[55] Zakkur son of Meshullam 'gives' the boy to Jedaniah as if he were a present.[56]

Jedaniah's name is affiliated with his mother's name Takhoi which is Egyptian in origin. However, his own name is of Aramaic descent, which meant he was born in a Jewish household and raised as a Jew. The exact age of Jedaniah is difficult to discern, but then again since Uriah is adopting him as a son, a considerable age-difference should be apparent. Porten surmises that the boy can be positively identified as a slave by his metronymic name, because children born to slave women are named with the name of their mother.[57] Dunn states that in Egyptian society "the birth of a child to a slave mother, whether or not the father was free, resulted in slavery for the child", but does not give any

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[52] Isaak Mendelsohn, *Slavery in the Ancient Near East: A Comparative Study of Slavery in Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, and Palestine from the Middle of the Third Millennium to the End of the First Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949),42-50.; David, *Die Adoption*, 48-54. The hierarchy in the Near East was built upon wealth just like in modern western countries, not race or birth as in modern India.

[53] On Elephantine the brand is found on the right hand. See TAD B 3.6:3 and TAD B2.11:4+6.

[54] Ancient Babylonian sources report other outward characteristics for slavery: a shaved head (completely or just the front lock) and in a few cases they had to carry a clay seal around their neck or ankle. If a slave ran away, he/she would get an extra mark on the face. Manumission out of slavery was signified by the 'act of the cleansing of the forehead'. (Mendelsohn, *Slavery*, 42-50.)

[55] Porten, *Archives*, 203. In TAD B2.11 reports on the apportionment of slaves in the Mibtaḥiah household. On line 7 and 12 they explicitly say that her children "may give them (= the slaves) to whomever (they) desire".

[56] More on the term 'to give' in adoption-context in the next chapter.

[57] Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 200. See footnote 13.; Porten, *Archives*, 205. Children born to free people were named patronymic. If a slave did have a patronymic name, it meant that they were born free but due to reasons had to turn to slavery.

verification.[58] Price bases his assumption on the principle that "one must assume that there is some special reason for a person to be identified solely by his/her mother's name, even if that reason cannot be explained".[59] He cannot explain why the boy in this particular situation is called by his metronomic name. Beyond this document neither the boy nor his mother are known.

- Comparable sources

An Egyptian equivalent can be found in the second part of the Nenufer-adoption document. The Egyptian freewoman Nenufer adopts the three children of her handmaiden and cherished them as her own. In both cases the child(ren) of a female slave are bought by a free person: Dinihetiri is the mother of three children, while Takhoi is the mother of Jedaniah. In the Egyptian case the adopter knows the mother Diniḥetiri as she is a handmaiden to Nenufer, while it is not clear if Uriah knew the mother of Jedaniah.

II. TESTAMENTARY MANUMISSION (TAD B3.6 – 427 BCE)

TAD B3.6 (Kraeling 5) is an indirect document of adoption: the adoption is secondary to the testament of Meshullam. Meshullam promised his Egyptian handmaiden Tamet (TAD B3.3:3; TAD B3.6:2-4) and her daughter[60] Jehoishma freedom in return for their allegiance as adoptive daughters. Hence the name 'testamentary manumission'.

	RECTO
Date **Parties**	[1]On the 20th of Sivan, that is day 7 of Phamenoth, year 38 of Artaxerxes the King Then [2]said Meshullam son of Zakkur, a Jew of Elephantine the fortress of the detachment of Iddinnabu, to the lady Tapemet by name [3]his handmaiden, who is branded on her right hand like this: "(Belonging) to Meshullam," saying:

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[58] Jimmy Dunn, "Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Egypt," *Tour Egypt*, October 24 2011, http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/slaves.htm.

[59] Jonathan J. Price, "On Jewish Metronymics in the Graeco-Roman Period," in *Zutot: Perspectives on Jewish Culture* (ed. S. Berger, M. Brocke and I. Zwiep; Springer Book Archive, 2002), 12.

[60] Tamet and her husband Ananiah also had a son named Pilti (TAD B3.3, written on 9 August, 449 BCE), who does not appear in this adoption document. He too used to be a slave in the Meshullam household. In the aforementioned Document of Wifehood (TAD B3.3) Pilti was already manumitted to Ananiah. Nonetheless, this resolution had an underlying reason: if Ananiah ever were to divorce Tamet, Meshullam were to get every right back on Pilti as a slave, and so, Ananiah would lose not only his wife, but also his son.

Testamentary Manumission **No-Reenslavement**	I thought of you [4]in my lifetime. (To be) free I released you at my death and I released Jeh(o)ishma by name, your daughter, whom [5]you bo(r)e me. Son of mine, or daughter/or brother of mine or sister, near or far, partner-in-chattel or partner-in-land, [6]does not have right to you or to Jeh(o)ishma your daughter, whom you bore me; does not have right to you [7]to brand you or TRAFFIC WITH you (for) PAYMENT of silver.
Penalty	Whoever shall stand up against you or against Jeh(o)ishma your daughter, [8]whom you bo(r)e me, shall give you a penalty of silver, 50 karsh by the stone(-weight)s of the king,
Reaffirmation of Manumission **Obligation of Support**	And you [9]are released from the shade to the sun and (so is) Jeh(o)ishma your daughter and another person does not have right [10]to you and to Jeh(o)ishma your daughter but you are released to God. [11]And said Tapemet and Jeh(o)ishma her daughter: We, we shall serve you, (a)s a son or daughter supports his father, [12]in your lifetime. And at your death we shall support Zakkur your single son like a son who supports his father, as we shall have been doing, [13]for you in your lifetime. We, if we stand up, saying: "We will not support you as a son supports [14]his father, nor Zakkur your son after your death,"
Penalty	We shall be obligated to you and to Zakkur your son (for) a penalty of [15]silver, 50 karsh by the stone(-weight)s of the king, pure silver, without suit or without process.
Scribe / Place **Witnesses**	Wrote Haggai [16]this document in Elephantine at the instruction of Meshullam son of Zakkur. And the witnesses herein: (2nd hand) Atrpharna son of Nisaya, [17]a Mede; (3rd hand) witness Micaiah son of Ahio; (4th hand) witness Berechiah son of Miptah; (5th hand) Dalah son of Gaddul.
Endorsement	**VERSO** [18][Document] (sealing) of withdrawal which Meshullam son of Zakkur wrote for Tamet and Jeh(o)ishm(a).

Tamet was the Egyptian handmaiden of Meshullam. According to Porten, Tamet had an "elevated position in the inner circle of Meshullam's household", based on the occurrence of the two designations *prypt* (TAD B3.12:11)[61] and *gwꜥ* (TAD B3.12:24)[62]. [63] He suggests this is the reason why she got manumitted. Even though Tamet was married to Ananiah with consent of Meshullam (TAD B3.3), Meshullam keeps reminding that Jehoisma is 'born to him' by Tamet (line 5+6). In ancient times it was not strange that a free man had a slave girl who bore him a child.[64] This does not seem to be the case in here, since Ananiah is the biological father of Jehoishma (TAD B3.5:34-35).

The status of Jehoishma in the household of Meshullam before she got adopted is easier to read. Jehoishma was born to her mother Tamet and biological father Ananiah after they were married (TAD B3.7). Even though Jehoisma is the daughter of a free man, Meshullam has every right to her as a slave (TAD B3.6: 4-5). This is in conflict with the Codex Hammurabi stating that children born out of such marriage are free and the master of the slave-parent cannot lay claim on them for service (law 175).[65] However, as Garroway comments, this law only pertains a marriage between a free woman and a slave man, while in this situation it is reversed: the mother is a handmaiden and the father is a free man.[66] Therefore she suggests that in the latter situation, the status of the mother as slave is projected on the child. Dunn suggests this is an Egyptian custom: if this was indeed an indigenous custom, the child becomes the property of the person to whom the parent belongs.[67]

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[61] Jacob Hoftijzer and Karel Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (Handbuch der Orientalistik. 1. Abt: Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten 21/1-2. Leiden: Brill, 1995), 937. *Prypt* is a word of uncertain meaning. Porten & Yardeni give the possible explanation of 'main-beloved', while Ginsberg prefers 'freed woman'. Rabinowitz refers to a Greek connection to , which is "a female slave bred in the house".

[62] Bezalel Porten and Henri Z. Szubin, "The Status of the Handmaiden Tamet: A New Interpretation of Kraeling 2 (TAD B3.3)," *Israel Law Review* 29(1-2) (1995): 50. This is a word of uncertain meaning. Porten and Szubin interpret it as "(one belonging to) the inner (chamber of Meshullam)".

[63] Porten and Szubin, "Status of the Handmaiden Tamet," 43-64.

[64] Westbrook, *A History*, 327.

[65] Mendelsohn, *Slavery*, 56.

[66] Kristine S. H. Garroway, "The Construction of "Child" in the Ancient Near East: Towards an Understanding of the Legal and Social Status of Children in Biblical Israel and Surrounding Cultures" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 2009), 230-236.

[67] Dunn, "Slaves and Slavery".

Because they were elevated from handmaiden/slave[68] to adoptive daughters with an obligation, their status after the adoption was somewhere between a slave and a free person.[69] Porten accurately describes their situation as a "form of service obligation"[70], an obligation not only to Meshullam but also to his son Zakkur (line 11-13). Their status outside this service obligation is similar to a free person. Evidence lies in the fact that their master forbids anyone to brand and re-enslave them (line 6-7). The fact that Meshullam used a no-reenslavement statement indicates that they were lifted out of slavery. The clause "you are released to God" is a common statement in Israelite and Babylonian society when freeing a slave.[71] They were to be treated like actual daughters of Meshullam and sisters of Zakkur, but they would only be really free when they fulfilled their obligation. Even after Meshullam dies, they had to sustain their adoptive brother Zakkur.[72] After his father died, Zakkur 'inherited' Jehoishma and thus also had rights over her. Evidence is found in the marriage of Jehoishma (TAD B3.8): when she married, it was Zakkur who accepted the suitor and got the bride's *mohar* (=bride-price), not her biological father as it normally should happen.

In conclusion: the main reason for this adoption is sustenance in old age for Meshullam and sustenance for Zakkur in his lifetime. In order to accomplish this, Meshullam made Jehoishma and her mother Tamet his adoptive daughters. Should either of them declare "we will not support you as a son supports his father" (line 13-14), the contract would be dissolved. This is the same as if they would say "You are not my father", the regular dissolving clause in Near Eastern documents.[73] This means a unilateral breaking of the contract; when these clauses are said out loud, the adoption ends. Slaves,

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[68] Tamet certainly had the position of handmaiden, but her daughter's position was not clarified. However, since she has to abide to the same rules as her mother, she must have had a similar job in the Meshullam household. To stay on the safe side Jehoishma's status will be defined as a house slave.

[69] Even though Jehoishma was born as a daughter to a free man and a slave woman, she was still a slave and belonged – just like her mother – to Meshullam. Any outward signs of her being a slave (eg. brand on her left hand) are not confirmed. (Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 211. Footnote 24.)

[70] Porten, *Archives*, 203.; Klaas R Veenhof, "Old Assyrian and Anatolian Evidence for the Care of the Elderly," in *The Care of the Elderly in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Stol and S. P. Vleeming; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 119-160.

[71] Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley [etc.]: University of California Press, 1968), 220.

[72] Bezalel Porten and Henri Z. Szubin, "The Status of a Repudiated Spouse: A New Interpretation of Kraeling 7 (TAD B3.8)," *Israel Law Review* 35(1) (2001): 46-78.

[73] Westbrook, *A History*, 673. More on this formula in the next chapter.

adopted and manumitted with the obligation of sustenance, wanting to unilaterally dissolve the contract, had to pay a price in order to leave.[74] Tamet and Jehoishma's penalty to pay "silver, 50 karsh by the stone(-weight)s of the king, pure silver" (line 13-15) if they revoked their promise proves that their position is almost the same as a free person.

- Comparable sources

An Old Babylonian Contract of Inheritance[75] (553 BCE) reports about a mother Gugua dividing her inheritance among her sons. The eldest son got the biggest share of the lot, on the condition that he "shall give, from the income of his money, food and a living to Gugua, his mother". If he would not comply with these terms, he would not inherit. The same condition applied to Tamet and Jehoishma: if they did not act like daughters to Meshullam or like sisters to Zakkur, they would not be released.

No similar case on testamentary manumission has been found in Egyptian sources. However, this document does have one thing in common with Egyptian sources: Egyptians would go through great lengths to keep property in the family.[76] The wife-daughter adoption is one example.[77] Jehoishma's husband happened to be the nephew of Zakkur, which – according to Eyre – cannot be coincidence.[78] He argues that Zakkur wanted to make sure that whatever Jehoishma would inherit from her biological father Ananiah, would remain in his family. In the Egyptian Adoption Papyrus, the man Nebnufer takes his own barren wife Nenufer as a daughter to make sure that "all profit that I (= Nebnufer her husband) have made with her, [...] will (be) bequeath(ed) to Nenufer". Turin 2021, another Egyptian adoption papyrus, accounts of a man making his second wife his "daughter just like the children of his first wife".[79] Next to these wife-daughter adoption, other extreme adoptions are found. In the second part

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[74] Ibid., 674-675.
[75] See Appendix.
[76] Sasson, *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 372.; Eyre, "The Adoption Papyrus," 207-221.
[77] The difference is that Renufer was a free woman, in contrast to Tamet and Jehoishma who were slaves. Another difference is that the Egyptian woman was married to the one who adopted her, while Tamet and her daughter were handmaidens to Meshullam and Zakkur.
[78] Eyre, "The Adoption Papyrus," 214.
[79] Schafik Allam, "Papyrus Turin 2021: Another Adoption Extraordinary," in *Individu, Société et Spiritualité dans l'Égypte Pharaonique et Copte: Mélanges Égyptologiques offerts au Professeur Aristide Théodoridès* (ed. C. Cannuyer and J.-M. Kruchten; Ath: Association Montoise d'gyptologie, 1993), 27.

of the Adoption Papyrus, Nenufer adopts her own brother in order for him to marry her eldest (adoptive) daughter, with the intent of him being the pater familias of the house and the heir to her possessions:

> "And if I have fields in the country, or if I have any property in the world, or if I have merchandise(?), these shall be divided among my four children, Padiu being one of them. And as for these matters of which I have spoken, they are entrusted in their entirety to Padiu, this son of mine."

Nenufer, being the mater familias after her husband-father died, wanted to arrange the inheritance for her newly-founded, yet not biological family in a legal document. The existence of this document indicates that these ways were indeed legal. Eyre deduces that "although the social situation of this community (=Elephantine) may have been special, the forms of adoption and marriage they undertook to provide heirs are unlikely to have been outside the norms of the country".[80] The Nitocris Adoption Stela and the Adoption Stela of Ankhnesneferibre reinforce the fact that adoption was a way to confirm and fortify power and possession. Both these Egyptian princesses were given to the God's Wife of Amun in Thebes to be the successor. Not only did this adoption serve as a religious token to the god Amun, but it also strengthened the power their fathers (Psamtek I and Psamtek II respectively) had on Egypt.

One could reason that these extreme situations of adoption have nothing to do with the adoption of Jehoishma by Meshullam. Indeed, Zakkur could not have been plotting Jehoishma's marriage to his nephew from the moment she got adopted by his father. However, it is him who decided who she would marry, not her biological father. This purports that she was not yet free from the obligation to serve Zakkur, meaning she was still part of the family of Meshullam and Zakkur. Everything she owned would be and remain in this family.

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[80] Eyre, "The Adoption Papyrus," 215.

Mesopotamian sources are not really that far-going on the manner of inheritance. When a wife does not give her husband a male heir, he found other ways to maintain his possessions. Sale-adoptions, otherwise known as false adoptions, were one way. Pritchard concludes that "sale-adoption was a legal device used in Nuzi whereby a landowner could circumvent the law prohibiting the sale of land outside the family by going through the form of adopting the purchaser".[81] This is the case in a Contract of Adoption (544BCE), in which Bel-kagir wanted his adoptive son to be his heir to his revenues and property, but Bel-Kagir's father forbade it and ordered him to adopt his own brother.[82]

III. LITERATURE: WORDS OF AḤIQAR (TAD 3 C1.1)

The Story of Aḥiqar is the only literary work found among the many other written sources on Elephantine.[83] Early on, scholars deduced that this was an old version of the famous 'Wisdom of Aḥiqar'. The story has endured the edge of time and the tale was widely spread in Antiquity, with remnant stories in the Bible book of Tobit and the Arabian Story of Haiqar and Nadan. It is a rare and fortunate occasion that this story is so well preserved, since the preservation of the Aramaic papyrus is everything except good: almost every line is broken, reconstruction is abundant and many columns of the original story are missing. The Aramaic Story of Aḥiqar is by far the oldest version of the story, with many offshoots in Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Old Turkish, Greek and Slavonic languages.[84] By comparing and deducing the similarities between the different versions the general outline of the story can be construed: Aḥiqar is somewhere in his sixties, was married[85] and had lived a virtuous life. However, he did not have an heir, neither male nor female.

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[81] James B. Pritchard and John A. Wilson, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1950), 219. Footnote 47.
[82] Translation in Appendix.
[83] Seth A. Bledsoe, "Wisdom in Distress: A Literary and Socio-Historical Approach to the Aramaic Book of Ahiqar" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2015).
[84] Frederick C. Conybeare, James R. Harris and Agnes S. Lewis. *The Story of Ahikar from the Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Old Turkish, Greek and Slavonic versions* (Cambridge (Mass.): University press, 1913).
[85] In the Slavonic version he married only once, while in the Arabic, Syriac tradition Aḥiqar married sixty women.

The Aramaic story of the Assyrian scribe and counsellor Aḥiqar contains two sections: Words/Story of Aḥiqar and Proverbs of Aḥiqar. For this research, the Story of Aḥiqar is most important. This section is a three column wide piece where Aḥiqar himself explains his social situation in which Proverbs should be placed. In short: Aḥiqar adopts Nadin, the son of his sister as his own son, who later on betrays him. Below, only the part concerning the adoption of Nadin will be taken into consideration.

Column 1	RECTO
Caption	¹ [These are the] words of Aḥiqar by name, a wise and skilful scribe, which he taught his son. And [a son ²he ¹did not have ²but] he said, saying, "I will have a son."
Aḥiqar's Titles *Adoption, Instruction and Installation of Nadin*	Before his words, Aḥiqar became [gr]eat and [he was] co[unselor of Assyria, all of it, ³and be]arer of the seal of Sennacherib, king of Assy[ria. And he said], saying, "I, I do not [have] sons [but on my counsel] ⁴and words had Sennacherib, King of Assyria, (relied)." T[hen, Se]nnacherib, Kin[g of Assyria, died and] ⁵Esarhaddon by name, his son, ⁴[arose] ⁵and was king in Assyria suc[ceding Sennacherib] his father … […] ⁶old […] the son of [my/his] sister [… to establish him/instruct him/after his death …] ⁷… […]… to/for Esar[haddon, King of Assyria…] ⁸K[i]ng of Assyria. Then, I […] my son […] and I taught him the good (=good things) [I] g[ave hi]m. [I estab]li[shed him in the gat]e of the palace with m[e to serve the king in the midst of] ¹⁰his chiefs. I presented him before Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, and he taught him (OR: and wisdom) … […] ¹¹[wh]ich he asked him. Then, Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, loved him and said, "A[bundant] life [may there be for you …]… ¹²the wise [sc]ribe, counsellor of Assyria, all of it, who established his son, though not [his] son [(but) the son of] his [si]ster … ¹³[… "T]hen, I bowed and prostrated myself, INDEED (I) Aḥiqar, before Esarh[addo]n, [King of] Assyria, ¹⁴ […
Nadin Successor to Aḥiqar	I, A]ḥiqar, when I saw the face of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, good (=favourable), I answered and [said], ¹⁵["…]… I [served Sennach]erib the [K]i[ng], your father [w]ho was king [before you] ¹⁶[…] […]
Column 2	¹⁷I am old. I will not be able to serve in the gate of the palace [… ¹⁸Beho]ld/[Whe]n Nadin by name, my son, has grown up and he will succeed me (as) a [wise and skilful scribe, [counsellor of Assyria, all of it. And (OR: all of it, and) he] ¹⁹will be [bea]rer of a seal for you. Moreover, my wisdom and [my] couns[el I taught

Treachery of Nadin	him. "Then, Esarhaddon, [20]Kin]g of Assyria, [19]answered [20]and said to me, saying, "Thus shall (it be). [Your] s[on, a wise and skilful scribe, [21]shall be [20]my counsellor of Assyria, all of it, and bearer of a seal] [21]succeeding you. Your work he shall do [and you, go to your house and you shall be at rest." Then, when I heard [22]the word g]iven, I went away to my house [and I was at rest.
Then Nadin my son, who is not my son/son of my sister, [23]whom] I [reared] and established in the gate of the palace [before Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, in the midst of] [24]his [chiefs] – I said, "He, the good [for me] will seek [… " Then, [25]the son of] my [si]ster whom I reared thought about [me evil (thing)s…], [26]saying, "[…]…[…] [27]to/for Sennacher[i]b the King, your father […] [28]is a wise [27][scribe] [28]and on his counsel and wo[rds had all Assyria (relied). Then, Esarhaddon, King of Assyria], [29]will be abundantly (=very) agitated (when) words he hears [… " …] [30]that my son who is not my son invented [against me (this tale) …] [31]… […

The advantage of having a literary example of adoption is that the social dimension of adoption is clearer than the ones of the legal documents. Each story has a background on which the mainframe is build, presenting the social and ethical dimensions of the main character. The disadvantage is that the juridical part is mostly left out. There are some hints towards the legal formulae, but in this story this is mostly missing.

The development of what happens after the concluding of an adoption. First of all, we see that Aḥiqar's plans for his adoptive son are to succeed him as scribe and counsellor of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (line 17). Similar to the Hammurabi law line 188 "If an artisan has undertaken to rear a child and teaches him his craft, he cannot be demanded back", Aḥiqar taught Nadin the art of writing and counselling, training him in his own expertise. It seems that he even pushed his influence forward to let the young Nadin witness and learn first-hand at the court (line 8-11). Ultimately, Aḥiqar's actions took fruit and Nadin was accepted by the king as new scribe and counsellor (line 20-22). Whether or not Nadin could actually return to the house of his biological parents in case Aḥiqar could not teach him his expertise, remains a question.

For those only reading the Aramaic version of the story, it is a mystery why Aḥiqar adopted the son of his sister. The simplest answer would be that his sister died, which left her child Nadin an orphan. Or did he want a successor for his position, as seen in line 20-22? Or did Aḥiqar wish for an aid in old age, just like Meshullam does? As in some cases, the simplest answer is not the answer needed. Since other versions of this story are known the question on the reason for Nadin's adoption can be solved.[86] [87] The versions agree on the motive for adopting his nephew is having an heir. Bledsoe is comfortable with the premise of "Ahiqar's desire to pass on his wisdom and install a successor".[88] This correlates to the fact that Near Eastern adoptions mostly resolve around the adoption in order to obtain an heir and job-successor.

Not only the good aspects of adoption are clarified. The consequences of mistreating the adoption terms are clear. When Aḥiqar learned of the betrayal, he did not want to call Nadin his own son anymore (line 30). This makes it clear that dissolution of adoption is not without consequence: a person will no longer be the adopter's child. After line 45 it seems as if Aḥiqar wanted to forgive his treacherous son. Nonetheless, the story ends with the unfortunate saying on Nadin's account: "he who sets up traps shall be caught in them".[89]

CONCLUSION

From the content of these documents many aspects on the process of adoption can be deduced. First of all, the question on who can adopt. In the three cases the adopter was a free man. Whether or not a non-free person could adopt, cannot be researched.

The status of the person to be adopted is a point of divergence. In the Aḥiqar Story the boy Nadin was adopted as a free person. In both the Adoption Document and the Testamentary Manumission

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[86] The Ethiopian account only record the Words of Aḥiqar, not his Story. So this story will be left out here.
[87] We have to keep in mind that later versions are prone to adaptations and variations of the older version. Only the similarities and differences that matter will be discussed.
[88] Bledsoe, "Wisdom in Distress," 101.
[89] This is the ending of the Arabic version

slaves were adopted, each under a different clause. While the reason for the adoption of Jedaniah is not clear, Tamet and Jehoishma are put under obligation to serve their adoptive father and brother as long as they both live.

A derived question is the status of the adoptee after the adoption. Nadin was a free person, so there was no change in his status. Jedaniah, Tamet and Jehoishma were slaves, and through adoption they got manumitted. Jedaniah got release without any further commotion. Tamet was a handmaiden, Jehoishma's position was not sure but she was a slave in the household of Meshullam. They were both manumitted with an obligation, which means they first had to fulfil the obligation before they could be free. Nonetheless, in status they were free women, since no one was to re-enslave them.

In every text Egyptian or Near Eastern influences are apparent. The Egyptian influence seeps in through the extreme, yet apparently legal actions under which an adoption could take place. Zakkur used his adoptive sister and married her of to his nephew to keep everything in the family. One could reason that this could also happen to a biological sister and that Zakkur could not have been plotting this from the moment his father set up this contract. However, it was not her father, but her adoptive brother who decided who she would marry, which means that she was still under his supervision and that her obligation to serve him has not ended yet. The Mesopotamian rule of teaching your adoptive child your profession, is kept in honor with Nadin following in his adoptive father's footsteps.

LEGAL ADOPTION FORMULAE IN DIFFERENT TRADITIONS

This part of the thesis will highlight the lexical part of the research: the main phrases concerning adoption will be presented and compared to their Near Eastern/Levantine/Egyptian counterparts.[90] Yaron states that the Aramaic papyri show the greatest affinity with deeds from second millennium Levant.[91] This will be supported with the abundance of evidence for comparison dating back to the Old Babylonian period. However, Botta and Muffs show that Egyptian influences are also found in the papyri.[92]

This part of the study will focus on the legal documents. The literature text of Aḥiqar will be revised to compare with the knowledge of the Aramaic legal documents. Only a few sentences from this literary text are usable for comparison since few contain a clause used in legal deeds. This does not take away the value of the literary documents: they show mostly what was generally accepted in the local tradition.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, we will briefly look at the general formulae found in every legal document. These formulae are what (almost) every document has in common with others. This part will not be extensively researched, since it does not hold importance for the process of adoption other than proclaiming it as an official process that needs to be attended in a legal deed. The main research will follow the specific formulae from the adoption documents.

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[90] Respectively these dictionaries will be used: as general Semitic language dictionary Hoftijzer-Jongeling, *Dictionary*.; for the Aramaic language Stephen A Kaufman, *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, Text Entry and Format Manual*. *Publications of The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project* (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1987). Online edition, see: http://cal.huc.edu/.; for Egyptian language Raymond O. Faulkner. *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).; For Demotic language *The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. (2001). Chicago: University of Chicago. Oriental Institute. Online edition, see: https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/demotic-dictionary-oriental-institute-university-chicago.; for the Akkadian/Assyrian language *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental institute of the University of Chicago*. (1956). Chicago: University of Chicago. Oriental institute. Online edition, see: https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/assyrian-dictionary-oriental-institute-university-chicago-cad.

[91] Yaron, *Introduction*, 114-128. Next to the Near Eastern languages, Yaron also involves Persian, Egyptian, Greek and the later Aramaic and Jewish traditions. Muffs noticed that there are some Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian legal formulae found in the papyri. (Yochanan Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (Studia et Documenta: ad Iura Orientis Antiqui Pertinentia VIII; New York: KTAV Publishing House Inc., 1973), 187-188.

[92] Botta, *Legal Traditions*.; Muffs, *Studies*.

GENERAL COMPOSITION

The general and objective formulae are clauses found in every legal document, which it official.[93] These clauses form the abstract framework for the more subjective operative middle section, the biggest section of the document. General formulae are found in every legal system of every society but can differ from one system to another. In this chapter, we will specify on the Elephantine Aramaic documents. The general framework consists of the following components: date and place, names of people involved and the endorsement. The component 'date and place' is self-explanatory.[94] In most cases these appear at the beginning of the document, in a few others they are placed at the end, and in some the date and place appear at both the beginning and the end of the contract. The people directly involved with the legal deed are explicitly mentioned.[95] Most prominent are both parties central for the case: the one who is imposing an obligation and the one who on who the obligation is imposed. The scribe states his own name near the end of the document followed by the witnesses who are mentioned by name. Dead last, the endorsement affirms in just a few words what the complete document is about. Botta claims that the placement of the components mentioned above are Egyptian in origin.[96]

Not only in the objective part there are influences from the Egyptian tradition. As noticed by Yaron and Muffs, there are a few Demotic characteristics on the subjective part of the legal documents in Elephantine legal deeds.[97] First of all, they observe a tendency to use the more subjective first person than the third person use the Akkadian deeds prefer. Both perceived that the opening sentence with schema "Date: on that day, A said to B: I have sold/given/…" is in contradiction to the Akkadian tradition and is found in contemporaneous Demotic documents.

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[93] Botta, *Legal Traditions*, 44-55.; Yaron, *Introduction*, 121.
[94] Ibid., 45-51.
[95] Ibid., 51-55.
[96] For the complete research, see: Botta, *Legal Traditions*, 44-56.
[97] Yaron, *Law*, 110.; Muffs, *Studies*, 173-194. One has to be aware that Demotic has a unique notarial system, with characteristics taken over from the earlier hieratic sources and others which are new.

ADOPTION FORMULAE

Adoption deeds consist of several specific formulae. The aim of this paper is to discern which legal tradition the Aramaic society of Elephantine is more closely related to: the Near Eastern or the Egyptian custom. Thus it is imperative that the Aramaic adoption formulae available are to be compared to these counterparts. However, not much explicit research has been done on the Egyptian adoption formulae. As said before, the Egyptian sources all post-date the 19th dynasty (1292-1198 BCE) and are few in total.[98] Since the sources are rare and diverse in time and content, it is difficult to simply construct a schema to which every text relates. Yet, with the available texts it is possible to form a general outlook on the legal formulation of adoption.

Each of the sentences regarding adoption in the Elephantine Aramaic documents will be presented individually and examined with their equivalents.

I. ADOPTING A PERSON

M. David concluded that an Old Babylonian adoption clause consisted of two different clauses: a solemn declaration and the actual expression of adoption.[99]

The actual expression of adoption is where the legal status of a person changes to the status of an adopted person. In cuneiform documents it is the first sentence of the subjective middle part.[100] Few scholars, like David, Suurmeijer and Paul, have researched the cuneiform legal adoption clauses.[101] They revised the alternate phrasing of adoption sentences. Whereas Suurmeijer only considered a text an adoption document when either *ana marūti leqûm* or *ana marūti nadānum* are mentioned[102], Paul found in total eight standard verbal clauses establishing an adoption (the two mentioned by Suurmeijer included), each with its variations. These variations can range from usage of different, but semantically

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[98] Westbrook, *A History*, 276.
[99] Ibid., 44-47.
[100] Ibid., 44-46.
[101] David, *Die Adoption*.; Shalom M. Paul, "Adoption Formulae: A Study of Cuneiform and Biblical Legal Clauses," *Maarav 2*(2) (1979): 173-185.; Suurmeijer, "Adoption".
[102] Suurmeijer, "Adoption," 9.

related words to the negative phrasing of the more prominent adoption sentence given by Suurmeijer. In each of these situations it is the adopter who adopts without interference of someone outside (eg. "to make as a son"; "to establish for the status of heir" …).

On the other hand, the Egyptian adoption sentence is more or less a fixed clause: "PN made PN as a son/daughter".[103] It is found in the Adoption Papyrus (line 4 + 26) and the Papyrus Turin 2021. Below is the phrase in hieroglyphic script taken from the Papyrus Turin 2021:[104]
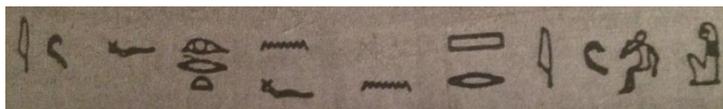
iw.f irt.n.f n šriwt

He made (me) for himself as a daughter

The Egyptian verb *iri*, 'to do; to make' is used here in the sense to transfer someone from one status to the other.[105] The Adoption Papyrus states that Nenufer "made her (=oldest adoptive daughter) a freewoman of the land of Pharaoh". This illustrates that the clause is used in a wider range. In the Ankhnesneferibre Stela "there was made her titular as noblewoman, great of kindness, great of praises, lady of grace, sweet of love, mistress of all women, god's wife, divine adoratress".[106] While in English one would say all these titles were *given* to her, in Ancient Egypt you say that someone was *made* into these titles.

The adoption sentence in the Adoption Document is found on line 4: *zy thbt ly*, "whom you have given to me". The verb used here is the Official Aramaic *yhb*. Previously mentioned schemas by Paul and Suurmeijer list the Akkadian equivalent of the verb *yhb*, namely *nadanu*.[107] An exact equivalent is found in PBS 7 94:22 *warad ta-ad-di-na-ma*, "the slave you gave me". Even though that in Official Aramaic the verb *ntn*, 'to give' does exist, here the more prominent variant *yhb* is used.[108] Both *ndn*

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[103] Allam, "Papyrus Turin 2021," 27-28.
[104] Picture taken from Allam, "Papyrus Turin 2021," 27.
[105] Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary*, 25-27.
[106] Leahy, "Adoption of Ankhnesneferibre," 148-149.
[107] Suurmeijer, "Adoption," 9.; Paul, "Adoption Formulae," 117.
[108] Margaretha Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 68; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 621-648.

and *yhb* are used in the G(t)-binyan.[109] In the Egyptian Nitocris Adoption Stela the same verb has been used, on line 4 *rdỉ·ỉ n·s s*, "I will give her to her". *Rdỉ* is the base-form and, just like the Aramaic and Akkadian variant, is translated as "to give".

In conclusion we can say that all these verbs – *yhb*, *ndn* and *rdỉ* - in context of adoption can be translated in the sense of 'to assign a person to someone else' just as the CAD lists.[110] The difference being that in the Egyptian source a free person is given away, while in the Aramaic and Near Eastern documents here presented a non-free person is given. It cannot be deduced from the Egyptian or Elephantine sources if the verbs apply to only free, respectively non-free persons. The lack of evidence is again the culprit.

The solemn declaration is the other part of the adoption clause.[111] In this clause the adoption is finalized: it is where the adopter officially recognises the adoptee as his/her own blood. Mainly this is where the adopter literally says that a person is 'his/her son/daughter'.[112] This is the clause that appears in many adoption cases, in the positive or negative fashion. In his research, David found multiple ways of writing this solemn declaration.[113] This declaration is like a statement or an exclamation. An Egyptian solemn declaration cannot be found.

Specifically applied to the Elephantine Documents, we see that the solemn declaration is closely related to the Near Eastern equivalents. The declaration of the Adoption Document is *bry yhwh*, "and he shall be my son" (line 5). It should be mentioned that this clause is not to be taken lightly. By calling him his son, Uriah lifts Jedaniah out of slavery. The legal weight of this clause can be proven by a case described on the Eduba Prism[114] where a man Iblatum adopted a boy named Aḫuni: "Iblatum will call

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[109] Richard Caplice, Introduction to Akkadian (Studia Pohl. Series Maior 9; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2002). When searching for the Near Eastern *ndn* in accordance with a substantive of adoption, such as *mārūtu* (CAD, 319-320. 'sonship; status of a natural or adopted son or daughter') and *martūtu* (CAD, 306. : 'status of an adopted daughter'), the verb is found in the G-stem (eg. *iddin* (G pret 3rd S) in AASOR 16 30:1 & HSS 5 57:1; *taddin* (G pret 2nd S) in ARM 10 95:5) or the Gt-stem (eg. *ittadin* (Gt pret 3rd S) in HSS 19 88:1 & HSS 19 90:1).
[110] CAD, 46. Nadānu 1d.
[111] David, Die Adoption, 46-47.
[112] Ibid., 79.
[113] Ibid., 47-48 & 79-80.
[114] Spada, "Eduba'a," 241-242.

him 'my child' and will not say him any more 'my slave'; he has sworn by the na[me of the kin]g accordingly" (EP iv. 14'-35').[115] This passage shows that it is more than just an affirmation of adoption; it is also the confirmation that Jedaniah was not a slave anymore. He would be a free person, with the same rights of a free man.

The sentence *br' l' hwh lh w'mr br' lm yhwh ly*, "And a son he did not have but he said, saying: 'I will have a son.'" (line 2-3) is the adoption formula in the literature text of Aḥiqar.

II.   ADOPTION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The terms to which the adoptee has to abide, are not revealed in the two legal deeds. The reason for Jedaniah's adoption is quite obscure, but the adoption of Tamet and her daughter is clear: they have to sustain Meshullam and Zakkur. The terms and penalties for the persons not specifically named in the document, are explicitly mentioned. Both documents mention closely related people to the adopter "son or daughter of mine, brother or sister of mine or man of mine […] or another individual" as seen in B3.9 (line 4-6) and "son or daughter of mine, or brother of mine or sister of mine, near or far, partner-in-chattel or partner-in-land" as listed in TAD B3.6 (line 5), in TAD B3.9 Uriah also lists himself. No one will be able to press Jedaniah, Tamet or Jehoishma in slavery again nor brand them (TAD B3.9: 4-7; TAD B3.6: 5-7). This branding is named specifically because it used to be an outward sign of slavery: the brand is found on a visible place showing to whom the person belongs. Tamet carries the brand of her (former) master Meshullam on her right hand (TAD B3.6:3).

III.   ADOPTION DISSOLUTION PENALTIES

Dissolution of an adoption could be done when one of both sides declares "You are not my father/mother" or "You are not my son/daughter" respectively.[116] In other words, the negative solemn

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[115] Text and translation, see: Appendix.
[116] Westbrook, *A History*, 673. ; David, *Die Adoption*, 47-48 & 79-80.

declaration affirms the closure of a contract. An Old-Babylonian example is found in KAJ 3 (Old Babylonian Adoption Contract):[117]

| (5) ᶠAm-me-ni-ši-na mārat Arad^{ilu}še-ru-a (6) um-ma-ša ᶠA-ḫa-at-qu-ra-at (7) mārat Be-la-at-sú-nu ma-ra-as-sa (8) šu-ma ᶠAm-mi-ni-ši)na a-na ᶠA-ḫa-at-uq-ra-at (9) ul mār-ti at-ti (10) i-qa-bi 2 ma-na kaspa i-lal-e (11) šu-ma ᶠA-ḫa-at-uq-ra-at mārat Be-lu-sú-nu ul um-mi at-ti (12) a-na f Am-mi-ni-ši-na i-qa-bi (13) 2 ma-na kaspa i-lal-e | (5) Amminišina, die Tochter der Arad-šerua, ist ihre Mutter, Aḫat-uqrat, die Tochter des Belassunu, ist ihre Tochter. Wenn Amminišina zu Aḫat-uqrat "nicht meine Tochter bist du" (10) sagt, wird sie 2 Minen Silber darwägen. Wenn Aḫat-uqrat, die Tochter der Belassunu "nicht meine Mutter bist du" zu Amminišina sagt, wird sie 2 Minen Silber darwägen. |

In the Testamentary Manumission a variation on the dissolution-clause is found: *lʾ nsblnk kzi ysbl br lʾbwhy wlzwr brk ʾḥry mwtk*, "We will not support you as a son supports his father, nor Zakkur your son after your death" (line 13-14).

The penalties for outsiders defying the terms of adoption are similar: they will pay an amount of silver to the adoptee. In the case of Jedaniah the amount is specified at "30 karsh by the weight of the king, silver zuz to the ten" (TAD B3.9:7-8), for Tamet the total is higher at "50 karsh by the stone(-weight) of the king" (TAD B3.6:8). The Eduba Prism (EP ii. 1'-27') confirms that a free person or a manumitted slave must pay a forfeit.

From the Egyptian sources we do not know much about the penalties for defying an adoption. Only the Egyptian Adoption Papyrus mentions a rather controversial, yet colorful penalty: "may a donkey copulate with him and a donkey with his wife, whoever it be that shall call any of them a servant". Gardiner illustrates that this "obscene conditional curse is not uncommon in oaths of the Ramesside

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[117] Text and translation, see Appendix.

period and later".[118] Frandsen agrees that the threat of a donkey violating a potential culprit seems to be a standard feature in curses from the late 2nd millennium till the first half of the 1st millennium BCE.[119] In modern times one would laugh at such a curse, but back then it was serious business.

IV.   SUSTENANCE IN OLD AGE: *PLḤ* VS *SBL*

Where the Adoption Document and the story of Aḥiqar both have a real solemn declaration, the Testamentary Manumission does not. Since the manumission of Tamet and Jehoishma take priority over the adoption, there is not much of literal adoption sentence in the text. The manumission can only take place if they both have accomplished their obligation of support. The idea of 'sustenance in old age' in the Testamentary Manumission is found in line 11-12 *ʾnḥn yplḥnk zy ysbl br wbrh lʾbwhy bḥyyk*, "we shall serve (< *plḥ*) you as a son or daughter supports (< *sbl*) his father, in your lifetime". Herein, both Tamet and Jehoishma declare themselves as daughters of Meshullam in exchange for support. Two verbs are used here to portray this 'support of elderly people': *plḥ* and *sbl*.

The verb *plḥ* is commonly translated as 'to serve'.[120] In the context of adoption the verb is used in cases where a person is adopted in order to fulfil wish of care in old age, whether this person was free or enslaved.[121] The Akkadian cognate is *palāḫum*. In the original, religious denotation it should be interpreted as 'to revere, to adore', but in later times it got the implication 'to serve and take care of the elders'. In context of adoption one must keep the Akkadian connotation 'sustaining the elders' in mind. A very good example is found in KAJ 1 where Azukija must honour and support his adoptive parents as long as they live:[122]

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[118] Gardiner, "Adoption Extraordinary," 25.; Wilhelm Spiegelberg, "Die Tefnachthosstele des Museums von Athen," *Rec. de Trav.* 25 (1903): 190-198.

[119] Paul John Frandsen, *Incestuous and Close-kin Marriage in Ancient Egypt and Persia: An Examination of the Evidence* (CNI Publications 34; Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2009), 43-44.; For an extensive research on curses in ancient Egypt, see: Scott Morschauser, *Threat-formulae in Ancient Egypt: A Study of the History, Structure, and Use of Threats and Curses in Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore: Halgo, 1991).

[120] Hoftijzer & Jongeling, *Dictionary*, 914-915.

[121] Jonas C. Greenfield and Shalom M. Paul, *Al Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 915.

[122] Text and translation, see Appendix.

a-di bal-ṭú-ni i-pal-la-aḫ-šu-nu it-ta-na-bal-šu-nu	For as long as they live, he shall serve and honour them

Manumitting a slave could be done without conditions but in most cases an obligation to sustain the owner during his/her lifetime was established.[123] Ancient Near Eastern examples are ample: an example is found in KAJ 1, where Azukija must honour and support his adoptive parents as long as they live.

The verb plḥ shows exactly what Meshullam wishes from Tamet and Jehoishma: he wanted them to take care of him as daughters in his old age. And with this clause the girls assure him that they accept this adoption and will act as good daughters. With it, they gladly consent to the ultimate outcome: manumission out of slavery. So the principal words in this text are *brh* (daughter) and *plḥ*. Together they form the affirmation and answer to the question and terms set up by Meshullam: the women agree to the adoption which will end in manumission.

On the other hand, there is the verb *sbl*, 'to bear; to carry'.[124] According to Hoftijzer-Jongeling the pa'el form has the meaning "to support, to sustain, to provide for". Porten states that this verb is used for a biological child taking care of the parents.[125] He also mentions that s*bl* is related to the verb *nšʾ*, "to carry". The Akkadian interdialectal variant *našû*, "to bear"[126] sheds more light on the translation "to provide for" from the Aramaic *nšʾ*. One of the minor semantic aspects of *našû* is "to support; to sustain a person".[127]

The semantic fields of both verbs are coherent to each other. But why would the scribe use both verbs in one sentence, and not one of the subsequent verbs? Porten reasons that the verb *plḥ* can be used in the general sense of 'supporting the elderly', while *sbl* is more specific for the support of one's

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[123] Westbrook, *A History*, 667.
[124] Hoftijzer & Jongeling, *Dictionary*, 774-775. The verb's primary translation is 'to carry', but the substantive is translated as 'support, sustenance'.
[125] Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 222. Footnote 25 & 26. See this use in TAD B3.10:17 and B535:4.
[126] The semantic field of the verb našû is wide as seen by the multi-page explanations in the CAD, see: CAD-n2, 80-112.
[127] CAD-n2, 95-97. Našû A 2f.; Muffs, *Studies*, 39. Footnote 4.

parents.[128] When looking at the use of these two words in the Testamentary Manumission, we see indeed that Tamet and Jehoishma use *plḥ* for themselves as adoptive daughters, while they use *sbl* when referring to a biological son/daughter taking care of 'his father'.

Since the semantic connection of the verbs *plḥ* and *sbl* with their Akkadian equivalents is very clear in this case, it is suitable to conclude this part of adoption is Near Eastern-minded, and not Egyptian in origin.

Excursus: No Egyptian adoption for sustenance?

According to McDowell, resorting to adoption for sustenance in Egyptian society was only an extreme measure to a problem which they could solve in many other ways.[129] There is a difference between the hierarchic classes on how to solve the problem for support in old age.

High officials (eg. nomarchs, soldiers with important military positions…) were not simply replaced when they reached an old age; instead the Pharaoh appointed a 'staff of old age', an assistant for the elderly official. This job guaranteed inheritance to the position when the older official died. Other sources of income for officials were sinecures and donations to temples. These sinecures were offices which provided a salary and/or privileges, but did not require official duties. Temple donations were another way of securing income. McDowell summarizes this method as: "a citizen founded a cult by donating land, slaves, herds and/or other property to a royal statue. The king then appointed the donor as the prophet of the cult, which meant he retained control of the estate and enjoyed a share of the income from the property in the form of a reversion of offerings."[130] In other words, this was a way to convert official property in private property.

For lower officials (scribes, foremen, …) these previous solutions were not suited. From evidence in Deir el-Medina we learn that they got a pension, with the same salary as when they were working. Normal workmen in Deir el-Medina were not so fortunate. In many cases they did not have a lot of

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[128] Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri*, 222. Footnote 25 & 26. See this use in TAD B3.10:17 and B535:4.

[129] Andrea Mcdowell, "Legal Aspects of Care of the Elderly in Egypt to the End of the New Kingdom," in *The Care of the Elderly in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Stol and S. P. Vleeming; Leiden: Brill, 1998): 199-221.

[130] Ibid., 204.

land. They have to resort to the generosity of their family. Most often this stipend in the form of rations was given by the son(s), but other relatives could also jump in to help their elders.

In conclusion: Egyptians did not adopt for support in old age. They either could count on the state to support them financially, the lesser fortunate people had to rely on their family for stipends.

However, the Adoption Papyrus does record an adoption and sustenance in the same text, but it is not an adoption *in exchange for* sustenance. In the second part of the Adoption Papyrus – the adoption of Padiu by his own sister – appears to be an adoption as a reward sustenance. The sentence "who dealt well with me when I was a widow and when my husband had died" reports of a woman who is glad that her brother took care of her when she most needed it. As a reward and to secure her possessions she adopted him in order to be her heir, just like her three other adoptive children. Padiu had one extra privilege: he would become the pater familias and have the rights over his siblings after his adoptive mother died.

V.   FREEDOM AS A GIFT?

In his 'Studies in the Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine', Muffs took a closer look at the structure of a document with gifts.[131] He made a difference between the documents that were meant for sale and documents that recorded the giving of a present. The conclusion was that the Neo-Babylonian *ina ḫūd libbišu iddin*, "he gave in the joy of his heart" semantically relates to the Aramaic *ʾnh ʿstt lky bḥyy*, "I thought of you in my lifetime". The cuneiform *ḫadû*, "to rejoice" was a customary way to express volition in legal deeds and stands at the beginning of the document. As Muffs says it so exquisitely: "the rather poetic introduction is (…) a legal formula which expresses the eternal and uncoerced will of the donor".[132]

This sentence appears only once in the three selected texts: *ʾnh ʿstt lky bḥyy*, "I thought of you in my lifetime" (TAD B3.6:3-4). Even though Muffs mentioned the use of this clause in another text (TAD

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[131] Muffs, *Studies*, 128-135.
[132] Muffs, *Studies*, 131.

B3.8), he did not comment on the use of this clause in the Testamentary Manumission. Most probably, he did not refer to this document because there is no 'physical gift' presented to Tamet and Jehoishma. The whole point of this volition clause is to give a physical present. Yet, in TAD B3.6 the clause is used as a phrase of volition: their master Meshullam granted them their freedom, which is one of the greatest gifts one can offer a slave. Meshullam did this on his own accord. This is where the clause has its value in the volitional domain. The fact that he asks sustenance in return for both him and his son is a let-down on the use of this volition clause, but the ultimate result remains the same: they will get their freedom out of slavery.

CONCLUSION

The lack of Egyptian sources makes it impossible to conduct a diachronic study of the use of adoption words and clauses used in the Aramaic Elephantine Papyri and deduce to which tradition they lean to. However, it is possible to see whether or not certain clauses and words are used in both the Egyptian and the Near Eastern documents.

The general objective framework of the legal deeds is built upon the Egyptian document as well as the subjectivity in the main part of the documents. The fact that many clauses and words have semantic or etymological roots in the Near Eastern tradition, argues that most of the procedure's legal aspects could be Near Eastern in origin. Some wordings are seen also in the Egyptian sources, like the verb 'to give', which is used in the three languages in the same context. A diachronic study could indicate which tradition is original for each formulae. However, one should keep in mind that parallel language evolution could also play a part in this process.

CONCLUSION

The three documents studied in this thesis revealed more on the process of adoption on Elephantine than one could guess at first sight. Not only the content of the documents gave away information on this process, but also semantic and etymological research on specific words and clauses revealed more than meets the eye. The objective viewpoint from the legal deeds give information on how the process developed itself on that time and how it was related to other cultures. The Story of Aḥiqar did not uncover much regarding the process of adoption, but gave an unique view on what happened after the adoption. The Story is literary fiction, but even fiction gives information about what is commonly accepted and what not.

One of the main questions is how the process of adoption progressed. The procedure of adoption can be reconstructed for both slaves and free persons. For slaves it begins with the manumission out of slavery. They get the status of a free person, but can be put under an obligation which they have to fulfil in order to be fully manumitted. This was the case for Tamet and Jehoishma, unlike the boy Jedaniah who was manumitted directly. Also free people can get this obligation, as is the case for Nadin, adoptive son of Aḥiqar. The main reason on Elephantine for adoption is sustenance in old age. The adopter guarantees their rights as free person by putting penalties on whoever wants to re-enslave them. This penalty consisted of a price in silver. The contract could be dissolved unilaterally, but this was discouraged. If the adoption were to be broken, penalties were put in place. The Testamentary Manumission places a price in silver to be payed to the adopter.

This procedure is similar in both Near Eastern as in Egyptian sources. The only difference being how far the Egyptians would go to keep property in the family which results in rather constructive adoption situations. In Egypt, having an heir for the material possessions is crucial. This heir preferably had to come from the family, and if that was not possible, they would resort to adoption outside the family. Zakkur used Jehoishma to ensure that everything she owned or would inherit would remain in his family.

The other part of the research question is whether the semantics and etymology of the words used in these legal deeds are related to either Near Eastern tradition or Egyptian tradition. Unfortunately, the estimated conclusion to see which in which tradition the legal formulae and wordings originate could not be complied to. A diachronic study could not be conducted since the Egyptian sources for comparison are too scarce. Yet, it was possible to study whether or not a certain clause or word was also used in the Egyptian legal deeds. Thus, the modus operandi for this part of the thesis was mainly based on the comparison between the Mesopotamian and Elephantine sources and the outcome was reflected back on the Egyptian sources. Some similarities and differences were found. Some persons were 'given' into adoption and each tradition used the same semantic word with the meaning "to give". In the Adoption Document Jedaniah is given to Uriah by Zakkur, which is shown in the Official Aramaic verb *yhb*. The Egyptian *rdỉ*, "to give" and the Akkadian *ndn*, "to give" are used as variants for the Official Aramaic verb. It cannot be said with certainty if it is derived from the Egyptian or Akkadian tradition due to the lack in comparison material in Egyptian sources. There is only one Egyptian source mentioning this word in combination with adoption, namely the Nitocris Adoption Stela.

Taking care of the elders is an important act in every society. In the Egyptian society one could count on the family or the government for sustenance in old age, while Mesopotamian cultures leaned towards adoption. Sustenance in old age could be received by the biological children or adopted children. The semantic opposition between the verbs *plḥ* and *sbl* is small yet significant for this study. Both have the general meaning of supporting the elders. But *sbl* is specific for helping and sustaining your parents, while *plḥ* - used in an adoption context – is support in old age for adoptive parents. Both verbs have roots in the Semitic language.

A few clauses have been studied up close: the actual adoption phrase, the solemn declaration, the terms and conditions, and the volition sentence. Each has been found to be Mesopotamian in origin.

The phrasing of the actual adoption clause can vary from document to document. Whereas the Near Eastern clause can vary in wording, the Egyptians use fixed declarations to make the adoption clear: someone not just 'is' an heir, but (s)he is *iri*, "made" into the status of an heir.

The solemn declaration is definitely derived from the Near Eastern counterparts, since there is no such phrase found in Egyptian sources. Every clause that can be translated as "PN is my son/daughter" or "PN is my father/mother", with some variations on it, is seen as the declaration that finalizes the adoption. The negative version of the clause is the clause to dissolve the contract.

The terms and conditions are found in both Near Eastern and Egyptian sources. The penalties are a point of divergence: where the Mesopotamian sources presented a fine or physical alteration as a reimbursement of the adoption, the only Egyptian text stating a penalty is a quite colourful, yet threatening curse.

A peculiar clause to be found in the Testamentary Manumission is the clause of volition "I thought of you in my lifetime". Normally, this phrase is used when one wants to give a present to someone else. It shows that the benefactor had decided to give something of value out of free will. In the case of Tamet and Jehoishma, this is their freedom, something every slave desires. However, it is a poisoned gift: they will only be free after they have supported both Meshullam and his son Zakkur.

The general outcome can be concluded that the adoption documents have most in common with the Near Eastern deeds, with a few hints of the Egyptian social and written culture. It is beyond the possibility of this thesis to determine the amount of influence the Egyptian society had on the legal system of the Jews on Elephantine. Should there be more Egyptian sources on adoption, it would have been possible to venture further into the diachronic study and derive to which tradition the usage of the words and clauses originally belonged or if there had been parallel evolutions at work.

APPENDIX

EGYPTIAN ADOPTION SOURCES

- <u>Egyptian Adoption Papyrus - Adoption of Nenufer by her husband Nebnufer</u> (English translation by Alan H. Gardiner in his article Adoption Extraordinary – to be dated around the year 1099 BCE)

  The extra text between brackets (…) is either already inserted into the original translated text or is a footnote translated by Gardiner.

  Year 1, third month of Summer, day 20 under His Majesty the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Raᶜmesse-Khaᶜemwese-miamun (= Ramesses XI), the god, ruler of Heliopolis, given life to all eternity. On this day, proclamation to Amun of the shining forth of this noble god, he arising and shining forth and making offering to Amun.

  Thereupon Nebnufer, my husband, made a writing for me, the musician of Sētekh (=Seth) Nenufer, and made me a child of his (lit.: for himself as a child), and wrote down unto me all he possessed, having no son or daughter apart from myself. 'All profit that I have made with her, I will bequeath it to Nenufer, my wife, and if <any of> my own brothers or sisters arise to confront her at my death tomorrow or thereafter and say "Let my brother's share be given (to me)…".

  Before many and numerous witnesses: the stable-master Rir, the stable-master Kairisu, and the stable-master Benereeduanufer; before the stable-master Nebnufer, son of ᶜAnrokia; before the Sherden Pkamen; before the Sherden Satamenin and his wife ᶜAdjedᶜo. Behold I have made the bequest to Rennufer, my wife, this day before Ḥuirimu my sister.'

  Behold I have made the bequest to Rennufer, my wife, this day before Huy-irymu, my sister.'

  Year 18, first month of Inundation, day 10, under His Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Lord of the Two Lands, Menmaᶜreᶜ-setpenptaḥ, the son of Rēᶜ, the Lord of Diadems, Raᶜmesse-Khaᶜemwese-miamun, the god, ruler of Heliopolis, given life to all eternity. On this day, declaration made by the stable-master Nebnufer and his wife the musician of Sētekh (=Seth) of Spermeru Rennufer, to wit: 'We purchased the female slave Diniḥetiri and she gave birth to these three children, one male and two female, in all three. And I (i.e. Rennufer) took them and nourished them and brought them up, and I have reached this day with them without their doing evil towards me, but they dealt well with me, I having no son or daughter

except them. And the stable-master Padiu entered my house and took Taamenne, their elder sister to wife, he being related to me and being my younger brother. And I accepted him for her and he is with her at this day.

Now behold, I have made her a freewoman of the land of Pharaoh, and if she bear either son or daughter, they shall be freemen of the land of Pharaoh in exactly the same way, they being with the stable-master Padiu, this younger brother of mine. And the children shall be with their elder sister in the house of Padiu, this stable-master, this younger brother of mine, and today I make him a son of mine exactly like them.'

And she said: 'As Amun endures, and the Ruler endures, I (hereby) make the people whom I have put on record freemen of the land of Pharaoh, and if any son, daughter, brother, or sister of their mother and their father should contest their rights, except Padiu this son of mine – for they are indeed no longer with him as servants, but are with him as younger siblings, being freemen of the land <of Pharaoh> - may a donkey copulate with him and a donkey with his wife, whoever it be that shall call any of them a servant.

And if I have fields in the country, or if I have any property in the world, or if I have merchandise(?), these shall be divided among my four children, Padiu being one of them. And as for these matters of which I have spoken, they are entrusted in their entirety to Padiu, this son of mine, who dealt well with me when I was a widow and when my husband had died.'

Before many and numerous witnesses: the stable-master Setekhemḥab, the musician of Sētekh Teuḥrai, the farmer Suᶜaweamun, before Taymaunofre and the musician of ᶜAnti Tentnebtḫo.

- Egyptian Adoption Stela of Nitocris I (English translation by Breasted, *Ancient Record of Egypt*, 481-488.)

The Adoption Stela of Ankhnesneferibre, the successor of Nitocris I as a God's Wife of Amun, contains the same sentences and is almost equal in content. That is why only one of both is cited here. The complete text is too extensive for this thesis, so only the part concerning adoption will be quoted.

"I am his son, first of the favour of the father of the gods, offering to the gods; whom he begat for himself, to satisfy his heart. I have given to him my daughter, to be Divine Consort, that she [may invoke protection for the king] more than those who were before her; that he may indeed be satisfied with her prayers, and that he may protect the land of him who gave her to him."

"Lo, I have now heard saying, a king's-daughter of Taharka, triumphant, is there whom he gave to his sister to be her 'Great Votress'. I am not one to expel an heir from his place, for I am a king who loves truth; my particular abomination is lying; (I am) a son protecting his father, taking the inheritance of Keb, uniting the two portions as a youth. Hence I give her to her, to be her 'Great Daughter' as her father (once) conveyed her to (his) sister."

"Then they bowed to the ground, they gave thanks to the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Wahibre, living forever; and they said: 'Abiding and enduring through eternity? Thy every command shall abide and endure. How beautiful is this which the god doeth for thee! How excellent is that which thy father doeth for thee! […]

He loves to remember thy ka, and he rejoices at the mention of thy name, O Horus, 'Great-of-Heart', King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Psamtik (I), living forever. He has done this as his monument for his father, Amon, lord of heaven, ruler of gods. He hath given his beloved eldest daughter, Nitocris, whose 'beautiful name' is Shepnupet, to be Divine Consort, to play the sistrum before his (Amon's) beautiful face."

The rest of the text summarizes the voyage of Nitocris to Thebes: her belongings are summed up, the people who accompanied her and also a short account on how she was received in Thebes. After that the text list 'all of the property given to her in the towns and nomes of the South and North'.

NEAR EASTERN SOURCES

In the thesis many Near Eastern sources have been named. Below, a small revision of the most important documents found, that support the most important arguments and facts.

- Old Babylonian Contract: Manumission by Adoption of a Slave (EP ii. 1'-27'. – Spada, "Eduba'a," 237-238.)

… [Ibni-Amurru] has established his (= of Ili-imitti) free[dom] (lit. his return to [his] mother), he has redeemed him from his slavery and he has given to him his sealed tablet (referring to his) manumission. If in the future Ili-imitti says to Ibni-Amurru, his father: "You are not my father", he will go back to his slavery [and if Ibni-Amurru], his father, says [to Ili-imitti, (his son)]: "You are not my son", he will weigh 1⁄3 mina of silver; they have sworn mutually by the name of the king…

- <u>Old Babylonian Contract of Adoption </u>(EP iv. 14'-34'. – Spada, "Eduba'a," 241-242.)

One (child) (who had been) thrown into a kiln, named Aäuni, son(?) of Sˇu-Esˇtar, from Sˇu-Esˇtar, his father, Iblatum has adopted, and he has established him as his heir; 1 and 1⁄3 shekels of silver for (the expenses incurred in) raising the child he (= Iblatum) has wei[ghed to him] [*5 lines lost*]. Iblatum will call him "my child" and will not say him any more "my slave"; he has sworn by the na[me of the kin]g accordingly.

- <u>Old Babylonian Seal of Adoption</u> (KAJ 1; David, Adoption, 101.)

(1) [kunuk] ^mA-zu-k[i-ia] (2) ^mA-ni-ia mār ^{ílu}Šamaš-a-me-ri (3) i-na mi-ig-ra-at ra-mi-ni-šu (4) ^mGi-mi-la mara-šu (5) a-na mA)su-ki-ia mār ^{ílu}Šamaš-a-me-[ri a-bi-šu] (6) a-na mār ú-ut-ti id-din-šu (7) ^mA-zu-ki-ia a-bu-šu ú [… um-m-šu] (8) a-di bal-ṭú-ni i-pal-la-aḥ-[šu]-nu (9) it-ta-na-bal-šu-nu (10) eqla ú libba a-lim (11) ša pa-la-ḥi-šu-nu e-pa-aš (12) i-na ut-ki-ti i-na a-lim (13) i-na [Etwa 6 Zeilen sind abegrochen] (20) [inuma (?) māri^{meš}i-]ra-šu-ni (21) […] mār bitim rabū 2 qa-ta (22) i-laq-qi-ma ^mGi-mil-lu (23) iš-tu aḥḥe^{meš}-šu ṣiḥrūti (24)qa-ta mi-it-ḥa-ar (25) ša i-na be-ri-šu-nu i-pa-si-lu-ni (26) 5 ma-na šar-pa i-ḥi-at	(1) Siegel des Azukija. Anija, der Sohn des Šamašameri hatte mit seinem eigenen Willen den Gimillu, seinen Soh, (5) an Azukija, den Sohn des Šamaš-ameri, seines Vaters, zur Adoption gegeben. Azukija ist sein Vater und … seine Mutter. Solange sie leben, wird er sie ehren und sie versorgen. (10) Außerhalb und innerhalb der Stadt (d.h. überall) wird er ihnen Ehrfurcht erweisen. In Zukunft in der Stadt, in… [Etwa 6 Zeilen sind abgebrochen] (20) Wenn sie Söhne bekommen werden, so wird … der älteste Haussohn 2 Anteile erhalten, während Gimillu mit seinen jüngeren Brüdern in bezug auf den Anteil gleichgestellt ist. (25) Wer unter ihnen vertragsbrüchig wird, wird 5 Minen Silber darwägen.

- <u>Old Babylonian Seal of Adoption</u> (KAJ 3; David, Adoption, 103.)

(1) ^fAm-me-ni-ši-na mārat Arad^{ílu}še-ru-a (2) i-me-gi-ir-ma i-na mi-ig-ra-ti-ša (3) ^fA-ḫa-at-uq-ra-at mārat Be-lu-sú-nu (4) a-na ma-ru-ti-ša il-	(1) Amminišina, die Tochter des Arad-šerua wollte es; mit ihrem willen hat sie die Aḫat-uqrat, die Tochter des Belassunu zur Adoption

qi (5) ᶠAm-me-ni-ši-na mārat Arad^{ilu}še-ru-a (6) um-ma-ša ᶠ A-ḫa-at-qu-ra-at (7) mārat Be-la-at-sú-nu ma-ra-as-sa (8) šu-ma ᶠ Am-mi-ni-ši)na a-na ᶠ A-ḫa-at-uq-ra-at (9) ul mār-ti at-ti (10) i-qa-bi 2 ma-na kaspa i-lal-e (11) šu-ma ᶠA-ḫa-at-uq-ra-at mārat Be-lu-sú-nu ul um-mi at-ti (12) a-na f Am-mi-ni-ši-na i-qa-bi (13) 2 ma-na kaspa i-lal-e	genommen.(5) Amminišina, die Tochter der Ara-šerua, ist ihre Mutter, Aḫat-uqrat, die Tochter des Belassunu, ist ihre Tochter. Wenn Amminišina zu Aḫat-uqrat "nicht meine Tochter bist du" (10) sagt, wird sie 2 Minen Silber darwägen. Wenn Aḫat-uqrat, die Tochter der Belassunu "nicht meine Mutter bist du" zu Amminišina sagt, wird sie 2 Minen Silber darwägen.

- Contract for Adoption (544 BCE –

  online source, see: https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/mesopotamia-contracts.asp)

Bel-kagir, son of Nadinu, son of Sagillai, spoke thus to Nadinu, his father, son of Ziri-ya, son of Sagillai: "to Bit-turni you did send me and I took Zunna as my wife and she has not borne me son or daughter. Bel-ukin, son of Zunna, my wife, whom she bore to her former husband, Niqudu, son of Nur-Sin, let me adopt and let him be my son; on a tablet record his sonship, and seal and bequeath to him our revenues and property, as much as there is, and let him be the son taken by our hands." Nadinu was not pleased with the word Bel-kagir, his son spoke to him. Nadinu had written on a tablet, "For the future any other one is not to take their revenues and property," and had bound the hands of Bel-kagir, and had published in the midst, saying: "On the day when Nadinu goes to his fate, after him, if a son shall be born from the loins of Bel-kagir, his son shall inherit the revenues and properties of Nadinu, his father; if a son is not born from the loins of Bel-kagir, Bel-Kagir shall adopt his brother and fellow heir and shall bequeath his revenues and the properties of Nadinu his father to him. Bel-kagir may not adopt another one, but shall take his brother and fellow-heir into sonship on account of the revenues and properties which Nadinu has bequeathed." [Text too broken to reconstruct] at Babylon in the ninth year of Nabonidus.

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