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UN-il_2 ("Menials") as a Serflike Social Stratum during the Ur III Period

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Abstract: This article addresses social stratification during the Ur III period (ca. 2100–2000 BCE), particularly in southern Babylonia. The social strata are analyzed as Weberian orders (*Stände*), also known as status groups. More specifically, this article focuses on UN-il_2 as a serflike order in comparison to free citizens and enslaved people. While UN-il_2 can be translated as "menial(s)," which is preferrable to how they are sometimes translated as "carrier(s)," the term may literally mean "people supporter(s)." UN-il_2 were distinguished socially and economically from citizens and slaves, while sharing features with both. Like citizens, they were legally free, worked and probably lived with their families, and were compensated better than slaves and sometimes certain citizens. Like slaves, they were subjected to full-time mandatory work with often low compensation. Overall, they had less economic autonomy and stability than citizens but more so than slaves. As such, they can be considered serflike but not fully enslaved and are therefore a compelling example of people with statuses between citizens and slaves, economically and legally. While this article examines a variety of features regarding UN-il_2, their economic conditions are the most understood. Extensive details concerning subsistence and tenant lands are provided, especially their sizes and yields for citizens and UN-il_2. Unsurprisingly, citizens were allotted more subsistence land on average than UN-il_2 were allotted. The plots citizens were allotted also tended to have better yields. Surprisingly, there is one known example of a wealthier UN-il_2 renting tenant land, which was otherwise rented by mostly citizens. Based on these data, it is evident that citizens could generally sustain themselves and accumulate wealth, whereas most UN-il_2 were impoverished, though not as much as slaves.

Keywords: Ur III period; Umma; social stratification; citizens; UN-il_2; slaves

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1 Introduction

The Ur III society[1] (ca. 2100–2000 BCE), especially in southern Babylonia, consisted of mainly three social strata: free citizens, serflike UN-**il**$_2$, and enslaved people.[2] People belonging to these strata were distinguished according to their shared rights and privileges or lack thereof. Based on these distinctions, these strata can be described as Weberian orders (*Stände*). Citizens were legally free and generally experienced economic autonomy and stability, whereas slaves were legally unfree and therefore deprived of economic autonomy and stability. Economic autonomy is understood here as the ability to make voluntary economic choices, especially with regard to work but also in terms of managing property or possessions. Economic stability is considered here as having enough resources to sustain oneself or one's family and acquire wealth over time. UN-**il**$_2$, meaning "menial(s)" or perhaps literally "people supporter(s)," shared features with both citizens and slaves without being either. Like citizens, they were legally free, worked and probably lived with their families, and they could be compensated better than slaves and sometimes certain citizens. Like slaves, they were subjected to full-time mandatory work with often low compensation. As such, they can be considered serflike but not fully enslaved and are therefore a compelling example of people with statuses between citizens and slaves, economically and legally.

It is important to recognize the debate about distinguishing between serflike and enslaved people in the ancient Near East, which is addressed well by Laura Culbertson (2024: 243):

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1 Text citations and readings as well as line numberings follow BDTNS, unless otherwise stated. For collations (abbreviated as "coll."), see Table 7 in the Appendix. Abbreviations follow CDLI, though "JNER" and "SA" there are "*JANER*" and "ŠA" here. "GN" refers to a "Geographic Name." "~" indicates that a number is approximated. Approximated numbers less than ten or that are percentages are rounded to the hundredths place, whereas other approximated numbers are rounded to the ones place. For measurements and their metric equivalents, see Molina 2016.

2 While it is not further addressed in this article, citizens were probably the most prevalent and slaves were likely the least prevalent. For a fuller treatment on citizens, UN-**il**$_2$, and slaves during the Ur III period, see Pottorf 2022. This article is a revised summary of its analysis of UN-**il**$_2$. Some of the new material presented here includes the use of Weberian orders instead of more-generic strata and updated data and discussions regarding terminology, donated individuals, occupations as well as the sizes and yields of subsistence and tenant lands. While subsistence and tenant lands are highlighted here, additional discussions and extensive citations are provided in Pottorf forthcoming, which shares similar content with this article. Although this article focuses on southern Babylonia, particularly Umma, there was also an order of *muškēnū*, especially in northern Babylonia, royal estates, and the periphery of the Ur III state (Bartash and Pottorf in this issue). Unless otherwise stated, all Ur III texts are from Umma.

> In any historical context, "slavery" can refer to a legal status, various types of coerced labor, or a broad metaphor for subjugation and exploitation; slavery can be an institutionalized phenomenon or a relative situation (see Engerman 2000: 480). … For example, one could consider slavery a single, unique category of servility, if a "porous" one (after Tenney 2017: 719). On the other hand, scholars could view all forms of forced and obligatory labor as variegated forms of slavery. In other words, slavery is either a narrow part of a range of servile categories, or an inclusive term for many. The answer is consequential. The former picture means slavery is a fairly negligible aspect of societies and suggests we employ a broader range of translations ("serf," "servant," etc.); the latter means slavery was endemic and widespread.

My approach is the former, which views slaves as legally owned in contrast to serflike UN-**il**$_2$, who were not legally owned as property though they were subjected to full-time and often poorly compensated mandatory work.[3] While it cannot be pursued further here, UN-**il**$_2$ were similar to *širkū* and *širkātu* from mainly the Neo-Babylonian period, who were donated to temples and regarding whom Kristin Kleber (2011: 101) writes:

> *Širku*s are often characterized as temple slaves, and it is generally held that their fate was better than that of other kinds of slaves because the temple gods, as owners, did not directly exercise rights of ownership. I argue that *širku*s were not slaves, in fact, but are better understood as institutional dependents whose limited freedom, in comparison with free citizens of a Babylonian town, was a result of their social subordination to an institutional temple household. …
> In fact, these persons were never designated as temple "property" (*makkūru*), but were subordinate members of the temple households owing labor and services to the temple.

The fact that UN-**il**$_2$ could be donated to temples makes this comparison particularly relevant. Bartash (in this issue) likewise argues that individuals donated to temples in third-millennium Babylonia were not slaves but rather "servants" of the deities.

In order to clarify the serflike qualities of the UN-**il**$_2$, I further articulate the nature of these Weberian orders and then compare distinctions between the orders, including their terminology, origins, family lives, housing, legal rights, and economic conditions. Due to the nature of the evidence, the distinctions between citizens, UN-**il**$_2$, and slaves are mostly apparent based on their economic conditions. This section addresses their occupations and employment arrangements, which involves estimating their incomes in order to approximate their sustenance based on barley. Overall, this study focuses on textual data from Umma, which is representative of southern Babylonia to some extent but not exhaustively.

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3 For the debate on using the term "serf(s)" for individuals during the Ur III period, see Pottorf 2022: 54–55. Recently, Vitali Bartash (2020: 44) and Michael Jursa (2010: 27) use "temple serfs" and "serfs," respectively, as descriptions for individuals who were neither citizens nor slaves like UN-**il**$_2$. "Serflike" is not intended here to closely align UN-**il**$_2$ with serfs from Medieval Europe, of course.

2 Weberian Orders during the Ur III Period: Citizens, UN-il$_2$, and Slaves

There are many ways that social stratification can be understood, and a Weberian approach works well for distinguishing between citizens, UN-**il**$_2$, and slaves during the Ur III period. Specifically, these distinct groups can be classified as *Stände*, which Max Weber (1978, II: 932 [originally published in 1921–1922]) defines as follows:

> In contrast to classes, *Stände* (*status groups*) are normally groups. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined "class situation," we wish to designate as *status situation* every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*. This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. … But status honor need not necessarily be linked with a class situation. On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Identifying *Stände* is challenging for several reasons, however, including debates about the meaning of honor and related terminology as well as the kinds of groups that can share statuses, such as castes and occupational groups, among others (Omodei 1982). Rather than basing *Stände* directly on shared honor, R. A. Omodei (1982: 199–200) provides a nuanced definition that is utilized here:

> A *status group* can be defined as a group of people, who within a political community, may be distinguished by a shared level of access to valued rights and privileges, that is, they are a group of people who share similar status situations. *Status situation* refers to the *configuration* of rights and privileges, the positive or negative benefits of which are effectively claimed. The claim is 'effective' as long as it is socially legitimate, that is, secured or enforced by law or by custom, by the operation of structural or ideological factors.
> There is a logical connection between status, so defined, and prestige. Members of a status group may come to share the same social estimation of 'honour' – to the extent that this is determined by status situation – and the same access to, or exclusion from restricted goods and services. This shared prestige or honour is derivative, not primary.

According to this definition, which builds on Weber's, Ur III citizens, UN-**il**$_2$, and slaves can be described as *Stände* because the individuals belonging to each of these *Stände* shared claims to rights and privileges or the lack thereof, which were all maintained by laws or customs.

The translation of Weberian *Stände* is likewise complicated and disputed, however. Thomas Burger (1985: 37 n. 5), for example, discusses its translation accordingly:

> Weber's term '*Stand*' (estate) has usually been translated as 'status group'. This translation is defensible although there are no really strong reasons for preferring it to 'estate'. If the common meaning of the latter is considered too misleading or restrictive to cover adequately the range of

phenomena to which Weber refers (Bendix, 1960:85; Dahrendorf, 1959:6–7), then the most appropriate English equivalent would appear to be the old-fashioned term 'order', as in the expression 'people of all orders and descriptions'.

Given these terminological challenges, the term "orders" is the best option for this treatment, and it is a term suggested as an alternative to "social classes" by Hervé Reculeau (2013: 998) for the *awīlû*, *muškēnū*, and *wardū* in the Laws of Hammurabi.

3 Distinctions between the Citizen, UN-il$_2$, and Slave Orders

3.1 Overview

The distinctions between citizens, UN-**il$_2$**, and slaves can be summarized according to essential features presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Features of the citizen, UN-**il$_2$**, and slave orders during the Ur III period.

Feature		Order		
		Citizen	UN-**il$_2$**	**Slave**
Native terminology[a]	Male	**dumu dab$_5$-ba** ("conscripted son"), **(dumu/guruš) eren$_2$** ("[child / working adult male] troop member"), **dumu** GN**/uru(ki)** ("son of GN / the city"), **(guruš) dumu-gir$_{15}$** ("[working adult male] citizen"), **(guruš) eren$_2$ gal(-gal)** ("[working adult male] mature troop members"), **(guruš) eren$_2$ tur(-tur)** ("[working adult male] young troop members")	**(dumu/guruš)** UN-**il$_2$** ("[child / working adult male] menial"), **(guruš)** UN-**il$_2$ gal-gal** ("[working adult male] mature menials"), UN **guruš/**PN ("menial working man / PN"), UN-**il$_2$ nita** ("male menial"), UN-**il$_2$ tur(-tur)** ("young menials")	**(guruš) arad$_2$** ("[working adult male] slave"), **sag-rig$_7$** ("gifted one")[b]
	Female	**dam eren$_2$** ("wife of a troop member"), **(geme$_2$/munus) dumu-gir$_{15}$** ("[working adult female / female] citizen")	**geme$_2$ (**UN-**il$_2$)** ("working adult female [menial]"), UN-**il$_2$ (munus)** ("[female] menial")	**geme$_2$ (sag-rig$_7$)** ("[gifted] slave woman"), **sag-rig$_7$** ("gifted one")

Table 1: (continued)

Feature		Order		
		Citizen	**UN-il$_2$**	**Slave**
Origins		Birth (typically from a citizen mother), native population, former prisoners of war	Birth (typically from an **UN-il$_2$** mother), donation (?), impoverishment (?), punishment (?)	Birth (typically from an enslaved mother), debt slaves from impoverished citizens, chattel slaves from criminals, former prisoners of war, and interregional slave markets
Family lives		Nuclear and extended families	Nuclear and extended families	Limited familial connections
Housing		Privately owned or perhaps rented	Uncertain (perhaps housed by donors and supervisors or privately owned/rented)	Housed by owners
Legal rights	General	Fullest extent	Probably limited	Least extent
	Salability	Salable as debt slaves (resale abroad could be restricted)	Unsalable (?)	Salable as chattel slaves
	Manumission	Possible (more frequent than chattel slaves)	N/A (?)	Possible (less frequent than debt slaves)
Economic conditions	Occupations	Any possible occupation	Most occupations except for most cultic and high-ranking administrative and managerial occupations	Resource extraction, construction and manufacturing as well as services, including domestic work
	Typical Employment Arrangements	Part-time conscription (male individuals only), hiring, self-employment	Full-time conscription, minimal self-employment	Full-time slave labor (could be similar to conscription)
	Sustenance	Allotments of barley, wool, etc., subsistence and tenant lands, profits, wages	Allotments of barley, wool, etc., subsistence and minimal tenant lands	Allotments of barley, wool, etc.

[a]The translations for these terms are mostly literal and given in the singular unless they are only used as plurals. Note that "son" in **dumu dab$_5$-ba** and **dumu** GN/**uru(^{ki})** is figurative and indicates that they were citizen members. The use of "son" here is the same as in **dumu-gir$_{15}$** (literally "native child/son"). For how "son" indicates citizen membership, see Bartash and Pottorf in this issue. **guruš** and **geme$_2$** literally mean "working man" and "working woman," respectively, though **geme$_2$** also usually indicates subordination as a servant or slave. These meanings are usually conveyed literally in these translations but not when **geme$_2$** means "slave woman." For more on **guruš** and **geme$_2$**, see 3.2 Terminology.
[b]This term is discussed by Bartash (in this issue).

3.2 Terminology

The reading and meaning of UN-**il$_2$** are uncertain and not addressed fully here. The term is usually translated as "carrier(s)" and "menial(s)," but it may literally mean "people supporter(s)" or "those who support the people." **il$_2$** alone should be translated as "carrier(s)," however, and UN-**il$_2$** performed a wide range of tasks besides carrying.[4] "Menial(s)," which is based on its Akkadian equivalent, *kinattu*(*m*), works and is used here.[5] The suggested literal meaning, "people supporter(s)" or "those who support the people," is based on reading this term as a **dub-sar** formation, meaning that UN ("land" [read as **kalam**] or "people" [read as **un**]) would be the object of the verb **il$_2$** (literally "carry" or figuratively "support"), so that it is analogous to **ab-(ba-)il$_2$** ("father supporter(s)") and **ama-il$_2$** ("mother supporter(s)").[6] Since these individuals were temporarily exempted from conscription to support their elderly and likely ailing parents (Steinkeller 2018), perhaps UN-**il$_2$** were permanently conscripted to support the people or land more generally – given the personal nature of **ab-(ba-)il$_2$** and **ama-il$_2$**, supporting the people is preferred to the land here. It may be pertinent

4 **il$_2$** is rarely used for "carrier(s)" during the Ur III period with regard to men (**guruš [lu$_2$] il$_2$** [MVN 13: 760; SAKF 63 [**il$_2$** may be **dusu**]; SET 262 [ditto], **guruš il$_2$-še$_3$** [BCT 2: 47], meaning possibly "men working as carriers"), women (**geme$_2$ il$_2$** [Nippur texts NATN 130; TMH NF 1–2: 152; 291]), people (**lu$_2$ il$_2$** [MVN 13: 760]), and specific individuals (PN **il$_2$** [UCP 9-2-1 100 rev. ii 22′, 30′]). For various kinds of carriers, which are numerously attested, see n. 6.

5 Pascal Attinger (2021: 1103) defines UN-**il$_2$** as "**uĝ$_3$-ga$_6$-ĝ** s. Travailleurs subalterns assignés de manière plus ou moins permanente à une maison (household)," and Mark Cohen (2023: 690) defines it as "uĝ$_3$-il$_2$ *kinattu* 'menial.'" Despite their agreement about its meaning, they read the signs differently. For a fuller discussion on the debates about the reading and meaning of UN-**il$_2$**, see Pottorf 2022: 97–106. Though there are uncertainties, UN-**il$_2$** is the preferred reading given the perhaps phonetic attestation of UN-**il** in BPOA 6: 1481 (Steinkeller 2013: 404) and its possible parallels to **ab-(ba-)il$_2$** and **ama-il$_2$**. The most-convincing evidence to the contrary is the attestation of UN-**ga$_6$-ga$_6^{ga}$** in Debate between Copper and Silver 101′, but the reduplicated **ga$_6$** following UN is only attested here, so this instance is not necessarily conventional. Even if this sign is read as **ga$_6$**, it may not change the meaning proposed here.

6 There are numerous occupations involving **il$_2$** structured according to the **dub-sar** formation. See, for example, Alexander Uchitel's (1992: 319, 321) discussion of various carriers in certain Ur III texts:

> One of the most common professions mentioned is that of the "carriers" (*-íl*) of various kinds. Apart from the "clay-carriers" [**im-il$_2$**], there were: *gi-íl* ("reed-carriers"), *zì-íl* ("flour-carriers"), *sig$_4$-íl* ("brick-carriers"), *giš-ma-nu-íl* ("ash-tree-carriers"), *in-bul$_5$-bul$_5$-íl* ("chaff-carriers"), *esír-íl* ("bitumen-carriers"), *duḫ-íl* ("bran-carriers"), *ú-íl* ("hay-carriers"), *ar-za-na-íl*.

Besides these examples, there are other such occupations, like beer carriers (**kaš-il$_2$**), bread carriers (**ninda-il$_2$**), milk carriers (**ga-il$_2$**), oil carriers (**i$_3$-il$_2$**), soil carriers (**sahar-il$_2$**), and water carriers (**a-il$_2$**), among others. According to BDTNS, **il$_2$** in these occupations is sometimes read as IL$_2$ due to its uncertain reading, but this does not impact their meanings.

that all three of these terms are abbreviated the same way: **ab** PN for an **ab-(ba-)il$_2$** PN, **ama** PN for an **ama-il$_2$** PN, and UN PN for an **UN-il$_2$** PN.[7] This interpretation also has the same meaning as an epithet of Ninlil with the same signs, concerning which W. G. Lambert and Ryan Winters (2023: 98) write: "The ordinary meaning of UN-il$_2$ in older texts (il$_2$ could also be read ga$_6$) is 'worker,' but it could also be here interpreted as an epithet 'the one who carries the people/the land.'" However, this much-later epithet for Ninlil may not have had any similarity to **UN-il$_2$** as a social term. Given the uncertainty about this term, however, this is admittedly speculative, but it is striking in any case that ^{d}**UN-il$_2$** is an epithet for Ninlil.

Male **UN-il$_2$** considered to be adults (probably at least thirteen years old) can be referred to as **guruš UN-il$_2$**, rarely **(guruš) UN-il$_2$ gal-gal**, **UN guruš**, UN PN, or **UN-il$_2$**. **UN-il$_2$** boys can be identified as **UN-il$_2$ tur(-tur)** in contrast to **(guruš) UN-il$_2$ gal-gal** and perhaps once as **dumu UN-il$_2$**. Male **UN-il$_2$** are called **UN-il$_2$ nita** once in contrast to female **UN-il$_2$** called **UN-il$_2$ munus**, which indicates that **UN-il$_2$** could also be gender neutral. Nevertheless, **UN-il$_2$** is overwhelmingly used for male individuals. Female **UN-il$_2$** considered to be adults (also probably at least thirteen years old) are occasionally described as **geme$_2$ UN-il$_2$**.[8] They are rarely referred to as simply **UN-il$_2$**. In the Girsu text MVN 6: 308 obv. ii 3, 7, 9, 11, and 14, a few women are conscripted to be **UN-il$_2$** of various locations.[9] In the Puzriš-Dagān text Ontario 2: 190 obv. 6–10 and 12, a woman is conscripted with her father and brothers, and they are all seemingly called **UN-il$_2$**. This may be focusing on the male **UN-il$_2$**, and they are also categorized as **guruš UN-il$_2$** and **geme$_2$** (obv. 17–18).[10] Otherwise, **UN-il$_2$** women are labeled as **geme$_2$**, and the **UN-il$_2$** order of their children is not usually specified. Unfortunately, given the use of

7 While many examples can be cited for these phenomena, all three are attested in Organisation administrative, Diss. 1, p. 202 Talon-Vanderroost 1 obv. i 10′ (UN PN), rev. ii 20 (**ab** PN), and viii 26 (**ama** PN [coll.]). There are dozens of other PNs in this text with the abbreviation UN, and a few other individuals with the abbreviations **ab** and possibly **ama** (obv. iv 15′, vii 40, rev. ii 11, iv 21′, 35′, vii 46, viii 1, ix 7).

8 Since adulthood probably began around thirteen, any individual at least this old is referred to as an adult. Note that age brackets are discussed in Pottorf 2022: 180–86. For examples of **guruš UN-il$_2$** and **UN guruš**, see Nisaba 24: 31, for **(guruš) UN-il$_2$ gal-gal**, see BPOA 6: 931 and the Girsu text MVN 6: 240, for examples of UN PN, see Organisation administrative, Diss. 1, p. 202 Talon-Vanderroost 1, for examples of **UN-il$_2$**, see *ASJ* 11, p. 182, for examples of **UN-il$_2$ tur(-tur)**, see CUSAS 39: 156 and Nisaba 34: 284, for **dumu UN-il$_2$**, see the Girsu text TUT 101, for **UN-il$_2$ nita** and **UN-il$_2$ munus**, see the Nippur text BBVO 11, p. 271 6N-T190+, and for examples of **geme$_2$ UN-il$_2$**, see the Girsu text *ASJ* 20, p. 110 8.

9 For a discussion on the construction X-**še$_3$** (obv. ii 7, 14), see Pottorf 2022: 161–62.

10 This family, including the father, sons, and daughters (another one is mentioned in the following texts), is also attested in the Puzriš-Dagān texts *CDLJ* 2007 (1): 13 obv. 1–7 and TRU 301 obv. 1–7.

geme$_2$ for female slaves, it may be impossible to differentiate many female **un-il$_2$** and slaves unless they had explicitly **un-il$_2$** sons.[11]

It should be pointed out that terms **guruš** and **geme$_2$** have been debated with regard to whether they refer to serflike or enslaved people (Culbertson 2024: 244). In Ur III texts, **guruš** is used for one or more men performing mandatory or sometimes hired work (Table 3) without specifying their orders. If it was important for administrative reasons to specify their orders, citizens can be **guruš dumu-gir$_{15}$** or **guruš eren$_2$**, **un-il$_2$** can be **guruš un-il$_2$** or **un guruš**, and slaves can be **guruš arad$_2$**.[12] **geme$_2$** is likewise utilized for one or more women performing mandatory or rarely hired work, and they were mostly **un-il$_2$** and slaves since citizen women were usually self-employed in domestic work.[13] However, in the Girsu text HLC 3: 374 pl. 141, citizen women subjected to penal labor are called **dam eren$_2$** (rev. i 18), **dumu-gir$_{15}$** (obv. ii 20), and **geme$_2$ dumu-gir$_{15}$** (rev. ii 3), but they are also summarized as **geme$_2$** (rev. ii 6) along with **geme$_2$ a-ru-a** (rev. ii 5) and **geme$_2$ lu$_2$** (rev. ii 4). The **geme$_2$ a-ru-a** ("donated working woman" in the singular) were mostly or only **un-il$_2$** (3.3 Origins), and the **geme$_2$ lu$_2$** (literally "working woman of a person" or contextually "slave woman of a person" in the singular) were personal slaves.[14]

3.3 Origins

Individuals belonging to all three orders could inherit their orders at birth from their mothers (Pottorf 2022: 112–14), but the other reasons why individuals became **un-il$_2$** are less certain. The most likely origin is that they were impoverished families of the native population, perhaps for several preceding generations. They may have developed as an order from carriers and related individuals who were likewise serflike during the Early Dynastic period, and they are first clearly attested during the Sargonic period.[15] Many donated (**a-ri-a** / **a-ru[-a]**) individuals were **un-il$_2$**, but it

11 See, for example, the Girsu text TUT 159 obv. i 23′, ii 10′, 20′, iii 12′, and rev. ii 2′. Some of the women in this text without explicitly **un-il$_2$** sons may have been **un-il$_2$** because these **un-il$_2$** families did not always have explicitly **un-il$_2$** sons.

12 Although *muškēnū* are not discussed here, there is one attestation of **guruš maš.en.kak** in the Garšana text CUSAS 6: 1580, which is probably functioning the same way.

13 Piotr Steinkeller (2015: 23) suggests that these rarely hired women were "loaned by their home institutions to other temple households in exchange for wages."

14 For discussions of this text, see Bartash in this issue; Pottorf 2022: 90–91 n. 94, and 248–50.

15 For a brief summary of these Early Dynastic individuals that resembled **un-il$_2$**, see Pottorf 2022: 270–71. There is limited and questionable evidence of **un-il$_2$** during the Early Dynastic IIIb period (every attestation could be a PN), but **un-il$_2$** existed during the Sargonic period (Pottorf 2022: 100).

is unclear whether this was causal or not.[16] Otherwise, there is some possible evidence that citizens could become UN-**il**$_2$ as a punishment (Pottorf 2022: 116–20). For example, *ASJ* 9, p. 315 4 may document a citizen named Lu-Šara who was penalized with work as an UN-**il**$_2$ because another UN-**il**$_2$ named Šaraisa fled from his custody.[17] If this is true, it is not clear how long this punishment lasted.[18]

3.4 Family Lives

While there are some uncertainties about UN-**il**$_2$ families, male and female UN-**il**$_2$ worked or were at least registered with their nuclear and extended families of the same gender, though sons sometimes worked or were registered with their mothers (and possible sisters). Unfortunately, it is not always clear whether sons who worked or were registered with their mothers were UN-**il**$_2$ or slaves because of the ambiguity of the term **geme**$_2$. Some sons may have been registered with their mothers because they were very young. However, young sons were mostly registered with their fathers because it was expected that they would work with their male relatives when they were old enough. Other sons may have worked or been registered with their mothers perhaps because their fathers were deceased or otherwise disconnected from their families (maybe as fugitives). This is especially the case if the sons were considered adults, which is rare.[19] Even if UN-**il**$_2$ men did not have fathers, most of them worked with male citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ because of the

16 In Pottorf 2022: 119 and 323–27, it is estimated that between 45 and 70 percent of named male individuals that were donated in Umma texts were known UN-**il**$_2$. Many of the other donated individuals were probably also UN-**il**$_2$. This analysis does not count individuals in CDLI P235514; Nisaba 34: 1197 obv. iii 7, and rev. 11, however. CDLI P235514 is unfortunately fragmentary, and every extant instance of **ru** in **a-ru-a** (CDLI transliteration) looks improperly formed since they all lack the typical horizontal base. Nevertheless, the phrase could be **a-ru-a** based on syntax and context, and a possibly improved reading is not given here. Due to the fragmentary nature of the text and its otherwise limited details, it is also difficult to determine the orders of any individuals that may have been donated. The donated male individual in Nisaba 34: 1197 obv. iii 7 was an explicit UN-**il**$_2$. The order of the donated father and son in rev. 11 is not specified because they were substituted (rev. i 6, 9), but they could have been UN-**il**$_2$. Despite the absence of these texts from the original estimate, they do not significantly impact the overall conclusion.

17 I am indebted to Eric Aupperle and Taha Yurttaş for their interpretation of this text.

18 Another uncertain example is given in Pottorf 2022: 117–18.

19 See the Girsu texts CDLI P210013 obv. 8–9; HLC 3: 238 pl. 113 obv. ii 5–9, iii 14–19; TUT 159 obv. i 22′–23′, ii 9′–10′, 18′–22′, iii 8′–14′, and rev. ii 1′–5′, among other possible examples. Note that sons in HLC 3: 238 pl. 113 are not explicitly UN-**il**$_2$ like the sons in these other texts.

kind of work they were conscripted to perform. Some male UN-**il**$_2$ were identified with matronymics rather than patronymics for possibly similar reasons, which was more common for them than for citizens. There is also rare evidence that daughters could work or be registered with their fathers, again for maybe similar reasons.[20] Based on the sizes of families of male UN-**il**$_2$ only, their entire immediate families appear to have averaged between four and six individuals, which is about the same for citizens. It is difficult, however, to find evidence that male and female UN-**il**$_2$ lived together as families, but it is assumed that they did. One kind of indirect evidence is that mostly male UN-**il**$_2$, like male citizens, could be temporarily exempted from conscription to support their elderly and perhaps ailing fathers and mothers. This was an important exemption from conscription that was probably not available to slaves, and it is demonstrative of how citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ could maintain families in a way that slaves could not (Pottorf 2022: 122–36, 196).[21]

3.5 Housing

There is no clear evidence of how UN-**il**$_2$ were housed. It is possible that they were housed by their donors if they were donated (Bartash in this issue). Some Early Dynastic and Sargonic texts indicate that individuals conscripted full time could live with or near their supervisors or where they worked. Interestingly, Debate between Winter and Summer 209 mentions the building of houses for UN-**il**$_2$, but this is not very helpful because it may not be relevant and does not indicate who owned these houses. Whether they could own or rent private housing or were housed by those upon whom they were dependent, their typical housing was probably smaller and overall worse than the typical housing for citizens (Pottorf 2022: 148–50). This is because most UN-**il**$_2$ were impoverished (Table 6), but a few UN-**il**$_2$ had incomes large enough to probably afford housing similar to or even better than what citizens generally owned (Graph 1).

20 See the Puzriš-Dagān texts *CDLJ* 2007 (1): 13; Ontario 2: 190 obv. 6–10; and TRU 301 obv. 1–7, which all refer to the same family discussed in n. 10.

21 Female individuals supporting their mothers, who were perhaps UN-**il**$_2$, are attested in the Girsu texts CDLI P210013 obv. iv 2 (possibly) and MVN 22 18 obv. iii 19′. For two potential exceptions of male slaves supporting their mothers, see MVN 21 229 obv. 13 and rev. 4 as well as the Girsu text Nisaba 33 1044 obv. 3, 8, 11, and rev. 2. In MVN 21 229, these individuals may have been servants rather than slaves, which is an ambiguity discussed in Pottorf 2022: 78 and 87–88. In Nisaba 33 1044, one or both individuals were UN-**il**$_2$, but they were also identified as **arad**$_2$, which is very rare (n. 23).

3.6 Legal Rights

The legal rights of UN-**il**$_2$ are likewise uncertain. They are not mentioned in the Laws of Ur-Namma, and they are not explicitly identified in legal texts. Their absence in the Laws of Ur-Namma could be because they were understood to be legally free, but these laws were neither comprehensive nor a completely accurate codification of laws during the Ur III period.[22] They may have had more rights than slaves but perhaps less than citizens. In comparison to slaves, they could have had substantially more possessions, at least in terms of barley. Their full-time conscription meant that they lacked mobility like slaves. There is no clear evidence that they were salable, but further prosopographical analyses could indicate otherwise (Pottorf 2022: 157).[23] Bartash (in this issue) draws attention to the fact that donated individuals could not be sold, which was perhaps the case for UN-**il**$_2$, especially if they were donated.

3.7 Economic Conditions

3.7.1 Occupations

While occupations were largely dependent on gender and parentage, orders also impacted individuals' occupations. Citizens could have any possible occupation, but slaves were limited to mostly arduous occupations involved in resource extraction, such as cultivation, construction and manufacturing, such as cereal grinding and weaving, as well as services, such as boat towing. Slaves in private households also performed a range of domestic tasks. UN-**il**$_2$, however, could have many of the same occupations as citizens, but they were not known to have had many cultic and high-ranking administrative and managerial occupations (Pottorf 2022: 162–73). The percentages of conscripted citizen and UN-**il**$_2$ men according to these occupational categories, as attested in Umma inspections and related texts are given in Table 2.[24]

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22 For discussions on the natures and purposes of law collections in the ancient Near East, see, for example, Roth 1997: 4–7 and Yoffee 2012.

23 There are a few instances of male UN-**il**$_2$ also called **arad**$_2$ in BPOA 1 645 obv. 1–2 and Nisaba 23 2 obv. ii 23 as well as the Girsu text Nisaba 33 1044 obv. 3, 8, 11, and rev. 2 (the latter individual may not have been an UN-**il**$_2$). It is not clear if these are rare instances of UN-**il**$_2$ who were also enslaved or functioned as servants (n. 21).

24 This table condenses data from Tables 5.13 and 5.14 in Pottorf 2022: 217–18 ("Services" are "Nonproductive Activities" there) with the additions of *ASJ* 11, p. 182 obv. iv 35, rev. i 22, 24, ii 41, 44; Nisaba 23: 2 obv. iii 11; and 34: 1197 obv. i 1. *ASJ* 11, p. 182 obv. i 29 is also now counted as 132 rather than 12 – this follows Snell 1989, 183, which makes sense based on the damaged space and the following amounts of children. Individuals with cultic occupations, which are categorized as services or administrative and managerial, are not counted in Table 2 because they were not conscripted in these kinds of texts and may not have been conscripted in the same manner as others.

Table 2: Percentages of conscripted citizen and $_{UN}$-il_2 men according to occupational categories in Umma inspections and related texts.

Occupational category	Order	
	Citizen	$_{UN}$-il_2
Resource extraction	~60.89 %	~59.01 %
Construction and manufacturing	~17.45 %	~27.74 %
Services	~8.9 %	~9.52 %
Administration and management	~12.76 %	~3.73 %

Adults counted here were probably between the ages of thirteen and fifty or so, and they were notated as full time ($_{AŠ}$) or half time ($½_{c}$).[25] Overall, it is clear that most $_{UN}$-il_2 were engaged in resource extraction, which was often the least compensated, whereas they were rarely conscripted for administrative and managerial occupations, which were usually the most compensated (Pottorf 2022: 229–31). Whether they were citizens or $_{UN}$-il_2, individuals involved in construction and manufacturing as well as services experienced a wide range of compensations depending on their specific occupations. For example, in terms of construction and manufacturing, potters were compensated with ~3.73 times less subsistence land on average than brewers, and, with regard to services, snake charmers were compensated with ~6.55 times less subsistence land on average than physicians (Pottorf 2022: 230).

3.7.2 Employment Arrangements

3.7.2.1 Overview

There are five kinds of employment arrangements detailed in Table 3, including conscription, penal labor, and slave labor, which are mandatory, as well as hiring and self-employment, which are voluntary.[26] Employers were usually institutional, specifically provincial and temple, households and large, especially royal, private households with personnel, which are called administrative households for simplicity's sake, or smaller private households, which may have included one or more slaves. The details of these employment arrangements are particularly dependent on Umma texts.

25 For more on these notations, their associated age bracket of about thirteen to maybe fifty, and their use in inspections and related texts, see Pottorf 2022: 11, 179–86, and 216–19. Note that individuals notated as full time in inspections did not necessarily work full time for an entire year (Pottorf 2022: 201–19).

26 For further discussion, see Pottorf 2022: 174–78.

Table 3: Employment arrangements in Ur III Umma.

Requirement	Employment arrangement	Employer	Workers	Scheduling	Compensation
Mandatory	Conscription	Administrative households	Usually male citizens	Regularly part time, temporary exemption for parental support	Minimum or above-minimum allotments, depending on occupation
			UN-il_2	Regularly full time, temporary exemption for parental support	
	Penal labor	Administrative households	Any individual	As desired (?) or regularly full time	Usually minimum allotments
	Slave labor	Administrative households	Usually female slaves and sometimes their enslaved male children	Regularly full time	Usually minimum allotments
		Private households	Slaves	As desired or regularly full time (?)	Probably minimum allotments
Voluntary	Hiring	Probably only citizen households (administrative and private) and individuals	Probably only citizens (mostly male)	As desired	Wages better than conscription allotments but often nonnegotiable
	Self-employment	Workers employ themselves	Probably only citizens (others in minimal amounts)	As desired	Variable profits or uncompensated benefits

3.7.2.2 Mandatory Work: Conscription, Penal Labor, and Slave Labor

Most male citizens with the exception of individuals with certain cultic and high-ranking administrative and managerial occupations were conscripted along with all UN-il_2.[27] When citizens were conscripted, they typically received fifteen days off every

27 With regard to cultic occupations, see n. 24. As for high-ranking administrative and managerial occupations, the highest-ranking individuals were not conscripted in the typical fashion, though they were nevertheless required to serve the king. Some high-ranking individuals, among others, may have been able to provide substitutes, but the evidence is limited and unclear. BIN 5: 272 rev. ii 1′–2′

month, unless they were conscripted for cultivation when they only had these days off for three to four months a year.[28] It is possible that some of their workdays were actually festival days, which they may have had regularly throughout the year.[29] Overall, they were conscripted part time and therefore experienced significantly more economic autonomy than UN-**il**$_2$ and especially slaves. UN-**il**$_2$ were conscripted full time – female UN-**il**$_2$ usually received five to six days off each month, if not more in rare circumstances, whereas male UN-**il**$_2$ received three days off each month, but only during the same months that citizens received fifteen days off. Like citizens, some of their workdays may have been festival days. It is important to note that while male citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ had fewer days off when conscripted for cultivation, they could be assigned different work from year to year, which would have limited their most-demanding work. As mentioned before, usually male citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ could be temporarily exempted from conscription to support their parents, which was probably not a possibility for those subjected to penal labor or slave labor (Pottorf 2022: 201–16).

Any individual could be subjected to minimally compensated penal labor for a variety of reasons. For example, though female citizens were not usually

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and SAT 2: 749 obv. 1–3 document the slave Urmes who appears to have provided 200 days of conscription over a year on behalf of his owner, Lugalezem, though Urmes was deceased in Organisation administrative, Diss. 1, p. 202 Talon-Vanderroost 1 rev. iv 13′. While it is highly speculative, Lugalezem may have been a household administrator who owed 200 days of conscription like other high-ranking individuals in MVN 15: 390 obv. i 32–33, viii 8–9, and rev. iv 13–14. If this is not plausible, it may still have been the case that Lugalezem could provide Urmes as a substitute for a substantial amount of conscription (Pottorf 2022: 244–47).

28 Some citizens with high-ranking administrative and managerial occupations may have had fewer days off throughout the year, but they were certainly better compensated for their conscription. The conscription patterns for citizens functioning as servants on large private estates requires further study. For this possibility, see Pottorf 2022: 78 and 87–88. In some instances, citizen and mostly UN-**il**$_2$ potters could be conscripted annually without documented days off. In these cases, they appear to have been conscripted on the basis of production quotas rather than time, which they surpassed, and those with barley allotments were usually compensated more than expected. While further analysis beyond this discussion is needed, they may have had undocumented days off if they could produce more than what was required (Pottorf 2022: 206–208). Moreover, in *ASJ* 11, p. 182, citizen potters could be half time (rev. i 23, iii 19) or full time (obv. vi 15) for an unknown conscription period (n. 25).

29 In Edubba D 22–25 (Civil 1985: 70, 72), a scribal student states that there were three days off a month and three festival days a month, leaving twenty-four workdays in the school in a thirty-day month. While it is debatable how relevant this text is, it could indicate that festival days were neither days off nor regular workdays. If festival days were not days off, they could have been counted as workdays in Ur III administrative texts, especially accounts, which do not indicate whether festival days were days off or workdays. Although Walther Sallaberger (1993: 72 and n. 317, 96 and n. 418) indicates that some days off could correspond to festival days, this may not have been true in every case. Given that male citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ could be conscripted for months without days off, it seems likely that some of their workdays were actually festival days. This is admittedly speculative and needs to be addressed further elsewhere.

Table 4: Typical monthly allotments of barley for male and female individuals performing mandatory work in administrative households according to their age brackets in Umma.

Approximate age bracket	Monthly allotment of barley (in $sila_3$) according to gender	
	Male	Female
0 to 6	10/15/20	10/15
6 to 13	20/30/40	20/25
13 to 50	60/75	30/40
50+	40/50	20

conscripted, they could be subjected to penal labor when their male relatives did not fulfill their obligated conscription (n. 14). These citizens would have been deprived of their economic autonomy and stability, at least temporarily. The details of slave labor in private households are not well attested, but female slaves and their children in administrative households were subjected to slave labor alongside conscripted female UN-il_2. In these cases, they also received the same number of days off (Pottorf 2022: 208–10, 248–51).

When individuals were compensated with allotments by administrative households for mandatory work, they could have been allotted barley monthly and wool or garments annually, in addition to other commodities. Otherwise, they were allotted shares of subsistence land (**[gan_2] šuku**) that yielded barley annually, in addition to other commodities. The typical monthly allotments of barley (in **$sila_3$** [~1 L]) for male and female individuals according to their age brackets in Umma are provided in Table 4.[30] While these allotments were typical, there were other amounts as well, and individuals subjected to penal labor could be allotted less than usual.

The vast majority of citizen men were allotted shares of subsistence land that sustained themselves and their families, and the rest were allotted barley monthly. Some citizen women who held cultic occupations or were in high-ranking families were also allotted subsistence land.[31] Interestingly, the Nippur text *AuOr* 40, p. 259 10

30 This table summarizes Table 5.1 in Pottorf 2022: 181–82, which includes all known allotment amounts of barley and wool or garments. For the age brackets, see Table 5.4 in Pottorf 2022: 184. The upper limit for the age bracket of thirteen to fifty is rather approximated

31 For subsistence land allotted to citizen women, which is included in Graph 1, see BDTNS 059327 obv. iii 32; BIN 5: 277 obv. iii 8, 15 (both CDLI); Nebraska 37 obv. iv 20, 23, 26; Nik. 2: 236 rev. ii 4, 6; Nisaba 23: 46 obv. ii 23, 26, iii 7; OrSP 47–49: 481 obv. i 3; SAT 3: 2157 obv. 5; Studies Postgate 562 E rev. i 8′; ŠA 135 (LXXIV) rev. 6; TCL 5: 6047 obv. i 12; and TCS 1: 365 obv. 3 (?). *ASJ* 18, p. 163 6 also details land plots under the possession of one or more women, including the wife of the governor of Umma, but it is not clear whether these plots were functioning as subsistence land. Even if they were, they are not included in Graph 1 because of their exceptionally large sizes.

details an **ereš-dingir** priestess who rented her subsistence land as tenant land. Only about half of UN-**il$_2$** men were also allotted subsistence land for themselves and their families, whereas the rest of the UN-**il$_2$** and all slaves were allotted barley monthly (Pottorf 2022: 180–83, 219–27). The subsistence-land sizes (in **iku** [~0.35 ha]) for most citizens (excluding exceptional individuals like the governor) and UN-**il$_2$** in Umma are visualized in Graph 1.[32]

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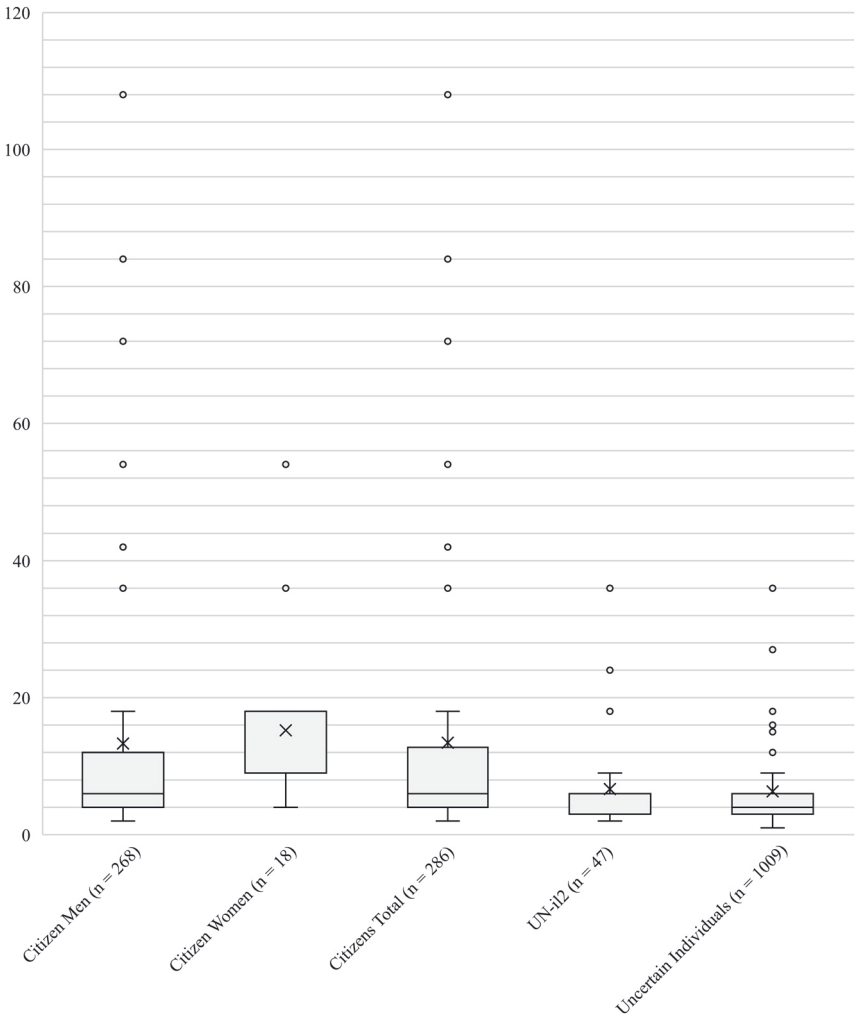
32 This graph updates Graph 5.1 and Table A7.1 in Pottorf 2022: 228 and 368–74. This box-and-whisker plot graphs the lower and upper extremes and quartiles, the arithmetic mean, the median, and the outliers. "n" in "(n = X)" is the number of individual people. Some of the same individuals are counted in different contexts, but duplicated or nearly duplicated texts are counted once. However, texts or portions of texts that are duplicates or nearly so are counted once. Note that *Orient* 21, p. 2 is included though it was previously excluded due to damage causing uncertainty about differentiating subsistence- and tenant-land sizes. This uncertainty has been resolved, and it clearly records subsistence land in rev. ii 31–vi 27′, whereas the preceding text documents tenant land. AnOr 7: 374; BCT 2: 58; BPOA 2: 2476; Nisaba 23: 46 obv. iii 19, rev. i 4, 7; OrSP 47–49: 481 obv. i 1; TCL 5: 6047; 6058; and TCS 1: 365 are also included. Additionally, Nisaba 34: 240 is included. It is a uniquely structured text that lists tenant land distributed as subsistence land (**a[pin]-la$_2$ šuku-še$_3$ ha-la** [rev. iv 9′]). While there are a handful of other examples of tenant land used this way (some are noted below), this entire text documents land used this way. It also provides the tenants whose land was repurposed as well as their rents, referred to as **še-ba u$_3$ kaš**. This phrase, which is translated by Miguel Civil (1994: 203) as "(barley for) grain rations and beer," is attested a few dozen times in only Umma texts in reference to barley from domain land (**gan$_2$ gu$_4$**) used for gods (sometimes referred to as their subsistence land) or from tenant land – in either case, it was barley used for allotments or beer. As such, the land sizes are counted as subsistence land. The rents are mostly 150 or 200 **sila$_3$**/**iku**, which are standard (Table 5). Since it is unclear why these rents applied or how they were paid, they are not counted in Table 5. BDTNS 059327 rev. iii 6; BPOA 6: 1179 obv. 6; CUSAS 39: 138 rev. iii 31′; and OrSP 47–49: 197 obv. 3 are omitted for various reasons. UTI 3: 2124 rev. 2; 6: 3516 rev. 10, and 14 are omitted because they appear to detail subsistence land that was rented as tenant land. As such, they are added to Graph 3. However, the obverse of UTI 6: 3516 appears to detail subsistence land, which was previously regarded as tenant land, but damage makes this difficult to confirm. Ontario 2: 270 obv. 1 was also previously considered to be tenant land but is counted here as subsistence land allotted from tenant land. The same applies to SAT 3: 2125, which is formatted like *Orient* 21, 2 rev. iii 11–13, 31–32, iv 7–9, v 7–9, and vi 23′–25′. BDTNS 059327 obv. iv 17, rev. i 1, 29, ii 15; BIN 5: 277 rev. ii 2 (CDLI); CUSAS 39: 138 obv. iii 2′, vi 6′, rev. iv 19′; and ŠA 135 (LXXIV) obv. 7′ are collated. CUSAS 39: 139 obv. ii′ 4′ is not collated but assumed to be 3 **iku** based on context. Nik. 2: 236 rev. i 12 is not collated but assumed to be 3 **iku**. This is due to the general regularity of subsistence-land sizes and yields in its context and to the discrepancies regarding the totals. Whereas the total amount of barley (rev. ii 20) is consistent with the individual amounts, there are 6 more **iku** in the total amount of subsistence land (rev. ii 19 [coll.]) than there is based on the individual amounts, including the assumption about rev. i 12. Since the difference may be 6 **iku**, this could be a scribal error based on an extra EŠE$_3$ sign. If it is not a scribal error, it is unclear how to resolve this discrepancy any further based on the copy. *Orient* 21, p. 2 rev. v 3 and 5 are not collated but assumed to be 4 and 6 **iku**, respectively. For the former, see MVN 21: 342 rev. i 1–2. Some other corrections and updates are made regarding the orders of a few individuals or their subsistence-land sizes.



Graph 1: Subsistence-land sizes (in **iku**) for most citizens and UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ in Umma.

Although these data are reliable to some extent, the vast majority of sizes were for individuals with unknown orders. The middle 50 percent of citizen men and UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ were allotted 4 to 12 **iku** and 3 to 6 **iku**, respectively. It is probably the case that many of the uncertain individuals allotted 3 **iku** were UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ and those allotted 6 **iku** were citizens. While it is difficult to precisely account for this, it can be roughly estimated that the middle 50 percent of citizen men and UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ were allotted 6 to 12 **iku** and 3 to 4

iku, respectively. As these data indicate unsurprisingly, UN-**il**$_2$ were allotted significantly less than citizens, though it is remarkable that they could be allotted as much as 36 **iku**. The few UN-**il**$_2$ with larger subsistence-land sizes would have had more economic autonomy than most UN-**il**$_2$, at least in terms of managing their possessions. Although UN-**il**$_2$ were allotted about twice as less on average than citizens, this was probably because they tended to have low-compensation occupations rather than because they were UN-**il**$_2$.

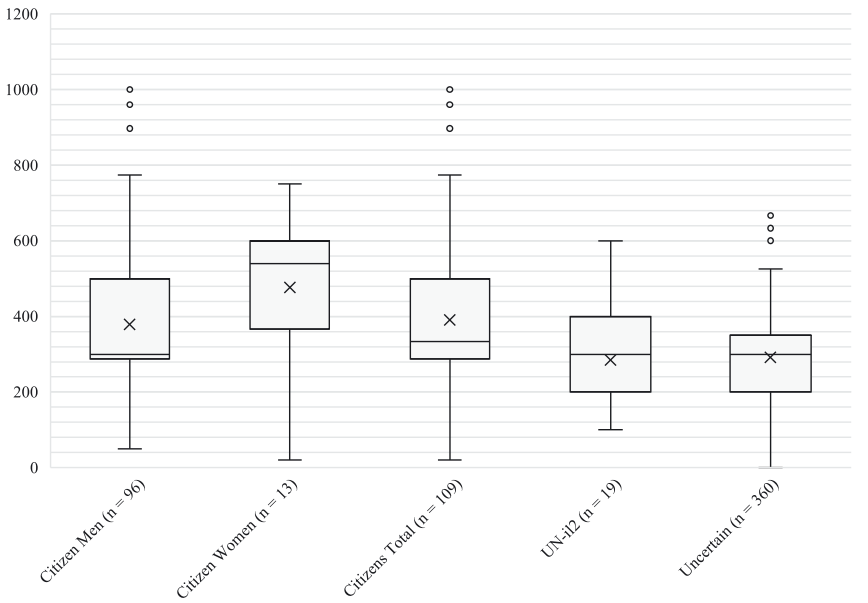
Besides determining the sizes of subsistence-land shares that citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ were usually allotted, it is important to consider their yields (in **sila**$_3$**/iku**). At Ur III Girsu-Lagaš, the average yield for subsistence land was under ~333 **sila**$_3$**/iku** (Maekawa 1986: 116). Noemi Borrelli (2013: 27) states the following about this yield average in comparison to the higher yield average for domain land:

> The cultivation of sustenance plot[s] was conducted with the equipment granted by the institutions, which provided the plowing team and the seeds. The productivity level of the šuku plots of the household of Namhani was lower than the one retrieved for the domain land and it seems to be usually lower than 20 gur per bur$_3$ [~333 **sila**$_3$**/iku**]. Whether or not there was an implicit practice of assigning land with low productivity level to temple personnel is still under debate.

Though there may have been several reasons for this difference in yield averages, perhaps a significant reason is that the subsistence-land yields were probably artificial if they were calculated after factoring in cultivation costs, such as animal fodder, equipment, and seeds, among others. This means that they would not have been the actual yields of the fields but administratively reduced yields. It may have also been the case that these artificial yields were altered based on individuals' orders, occupations, or other circumstances. For simplicity's sake, these possibly artificial yields are hereafter referred to as simply yields. Otherwise, it would also make sense to assign more-productive land to be domain land so that some of its yield could be used to cover the cultivation costs of subsistence land. Either way, it is assumed here that the recipients of subsistence land were allotted the entirety of their reported yields without any deducted costs.

As for citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ in Umma with known subsistence-land sizes, it is possible to compare their yields, as seen in Graph 2.[33] While the data are unevenly spread, the median yields for everyone but citizen women are 300 **sila**$_3$**/iku** or a little less, which fits well with the average yield of under ~333 **sila**$_3$**/iku** at Ur III Girsu-Lagaš. It is difficult to detect reliable trends based on these uneven data, but it seems that citizens generally had better yields than UN-**il**$_2$. The few citizen women with subsistence land apparently had higher yields on average, probably due to their privileged positions

33 Note that AnOr 7: 374 obv. iv′ 11′; BDTNS 059327 obv. iii 3, iv 21, 25, rev. i 3, 21, ii 17, and 19 are collated.



Graph 2: Subsistence-land yields (in **sila$_3$/iku**) for most citizens and **UN-il$_2$** in Umma.

described above. It is possible that occupations played a significant role in whether yields were above or below the median. For example, the median yield for scribes or individuals with scribal training (Steinkeller 2017b: 53–54) was 500 **sila$_3$/iku**, and the highest yield was ~774 **sila$_3$/iku**.[34] They and other individuals with administrative and managerial occupations probably tended to have the highest yields overall. If the middle 50 percent of citizen and **UN-il$_2$** men had conservative yields of 300 to 450 **sila$_3$/iku** and 200 to 350 **sila$_3$/iku**, respectively, then these citizen men could have received 1,800 to 5,400 **sila$_3$** of barley annually, whereas these **UN-il$_2$** men could have received 600 to 1,400 **sila$_3$** of barley annually.

3.7.2.3 Voluntary Work: Hiring and Self-Employment

Citizens, especially male individuals, were able to hire themselves out when they were not conscripted, but perhaps **UN-il$_2$** and especially slaves could not do so. When citizen men were hired, they were usually paid daily wages of 6 **sila$_3$** in barley, though they could probably have been paid more when demand was higher for harvests or if they were hired for highly skilled work, such as craftworking (Pottorf

34 For each yield, see BDTNS 059327 obv. iv 3, 5 (500 **sila$_3$/iku**), 8 (200 **sila$_3$/iku**); Nebraska 37 rev. iii 12′ (600 **sila$_3$/iku**), 15′–17′ (260 **sila$_3$/iku**), 20′ (600 **sila$_3$/iku**); Nisaba 23: 46 rev. ii 1 (60 **sila$_3$/iku**), 7, 9 (~633 **sila$_3$/iku**); *Orient* 21, p. 2 rev. iii 24 (~774 **sila$_3$/iku**); and UTI 6: 3515 obv. 7′ (157.5 **sila$_3$/iku**).

2022: 251–56). If they were paid 6 **sila$_3$** daily, it was three times the daily amount of the monthly allotment of 60 **sila$_3$** many men received while conscripted. Although it is difficult to know how often citizen men would have hired themselves out a year, it could have been between 30 and 120 days a year. This estimate assumes that they could have hired themselves out half a thirty-day month minus five days for festival days and days off for as few as three months or as much as a whole twelve-month year.[35] If so, they could have been paid between about 200 and 750 **sila$_3$** annually, which are both rounded up to account for possibly higher wages in some cases. It is not certain how many male citizens per family hired themselves out and what wages younger individuals may have earned, so this is probably a conservative estimate. It is possible that female citizens could hire themselves out, but this needs further study.

Self-employment is significantly less attested than the other employment arrangements, given the nature of the evidence, though it was ubiquitous. Female citizens were usually self-employed when they engaged in crucial domestic work, including childcare, cooking, and textile work, among other duties. Although it was not often profitable, it did result in uncompensated benefits. While individuals from other orders could engage in domestic work for themselves, they would have been far more restricted by their limited time and resources. Female UN-**il$_2$** and slaves could have used some of their days off for domestic work, especially since they had more days off than male UN-**il$_2$**. Female citizens could also be self-employed in various occupations, such as midwives, physicians, priestesses, sex workers, and tavern keepers, among others (Steinkeller 2022).[36] Male citizens could be self-employed as merchants, for example. The profits from any of these occupations are difficult to ascertain, however.

Perhaps the best-attested form of self-employment was renting tenant land (**[gan$_2$] apin-la$_2$**), which required tenants to invest their own resources in order to gain profits that generally amounted to about maybe a third or nearly half their tenant-land yields. Tenant land producing various kinds of crops or for pasturage could be rented, but barley was the most significant and assumed in this discussion.[37] Most individuals who rented tenant land were citizen men, but some citizen women

35 Three rest days are factored in to match the rest days that male UN-**il$_2$** were usually given, but these citizens could have been productive these days in various possible ways, including hiring themselves out. Note that administrative years were either 360 or 390 days.

36 Although Steinkeller (2022: 11–12) suggests that the sons of some sex workers were UN-**il$_2$**, they may have been citizens because UN-**il$_2$** women were probably too restricted in terms of their work to be sex workers (Bartash and Pottorf in this issue).

37 For an example of sesame tenant land, see Farmer's Instructions 8.3.2 (briefly discussed in Pottorf and Deloucas 2024: §2.2.4.1 and n. 14). For pasturage, see Steinkeller 1981: 131–35.

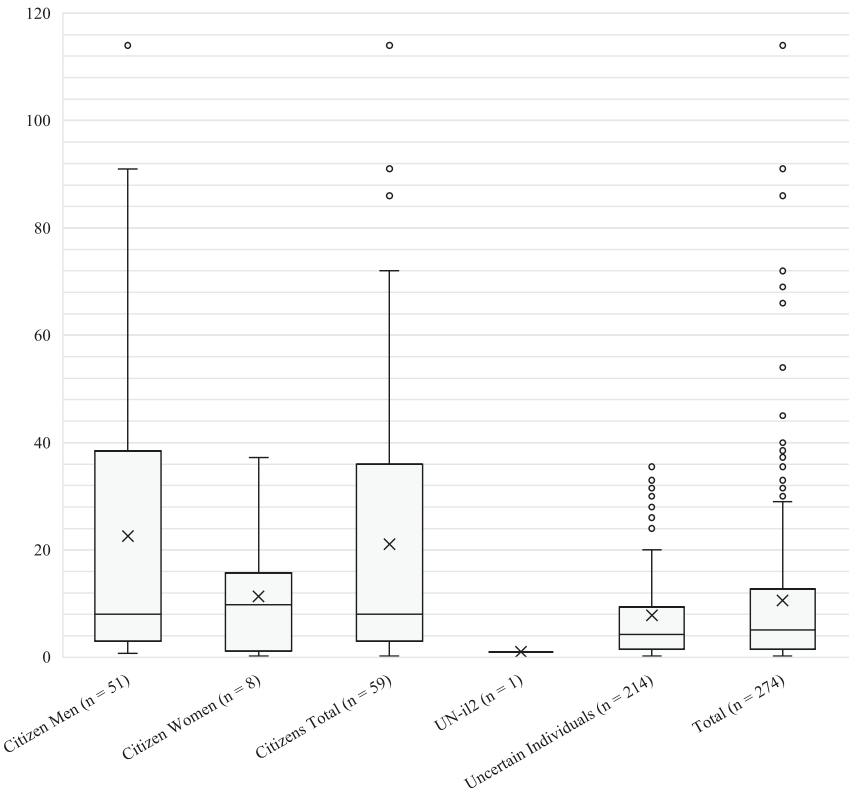
could rent tenant land. There is also one possible instance of an UN-**il**$_2$ renting tenant land. In *Orient* 21, p. 2 obv. iv 19′–20′ and rev. iv 10–11, there is an animal fattener named Bida who rented 1 **iku** of tenant land yielding 200 **sila**$_3$**/iku** before deducting cultivation costs, rent, and taxes and who was allotted 9 **iku** of subsistence land yielding 200 **sila**$_3$**/iku**. Due to the text's damage, it is possible that he rented more tenant land. This Bida appears to have been an UN-**il**$_2$ based on OrSP 47–49: 483 and probably CUSAS 39: 129. While this singular instance of a possible UN-**il**$_2$ renting tenant land indicates that other UN-**il**$_2$ may have been able to rent tenant land, this individual was allotted more subsistence land than most UN-**il**$_2$, and he rented a small amount of tenant land with a below-average yield according to the extant text.

Although it is difficult to know the full sizes of tenant-land plots because individuals could rent tenant land from multiple areas, their known minimum sizes with regard to barley land for citizens and UN-**il**$_2$ are given in Graph 3.[38] Whereas the order of most tenants is not certain, they were overwhelmingly citizens. The minimum sizes of 0.25 **iku** were especially small and were likely pieces of larger rented amounts. While the middle 50 percent for the total amount is 1.5 to ~13 **iku**, it can be rounded up to at least 2 to 14 **iku** since these amounts were based on known minimums. Unsurprisingly, individuals with occupations that were better compensated during conscription tended to rent more, but even individuals with low-compensation occupations could rent tenant land (Pottorf 2022: 262).

As for tenant-land yields, they are difficult to calculate given the variety of texts. A few texts detail tenant-land yields prior to the deduction of cultivation costs presumably as well as any rent paid in barley and irrigation tax paid in silver, which are given in Graph 4.[39] Though there are fewer data for these yields than for subsistence-land yields, tenant-land yields were typically larger. The middle 50 percent of the total yields ranges from 240 to 485 **sila**$_3$**/iku**, whereas the middle 50 percent for all subsistence land is 200 to 400 **sila**$_3$**/iku**. The average yield for citizen women is

38 This graph updates Graph 5.5 and Table A7.3 in Pottorf 2022: 261 and 388–83. BCT 2: 55 obv. 6′–7′; BIN 5: 266 (obv. 4–6 according to CDLI); CDLI P341990; Nisaba 11: 34 rev. i 19–ii 5; and SAT 3: 2207 are included here. It is unfortunately difficult to distinguish 0.5 and 18 **iku** as well as 1.5 and 6 **iku**, as can be seen in BIN 5: 266 obv. 4–6, for example. In this case, there is a total that can be used to confirm every size. CDLI P341981; Farmer's Instructions 8.3.1 obv. 7; 8.3.2; Nisaba 33: 521 obv. i 12; UTI 3: 2124 obv. 1, rev. 2; 5: 3381 obv. 3, and rev. 2 are omitted for various reasons. AnOr 1: 49 obv. i 31, ii 21, rev. i 7′; MVN 4: 3 obv. 9; Nisaba 33: 126 obv. 4–6, rev. 3–4; 521 obv. i 1, 6, 8, ii 1; *Orient* 21, p. 2 obv i 7′; OrSP 47–49: 481 obv. i 16, 18, 20, and 22 are collated. *Orient* 21, p. 2 obv vi 7′ is collated so that it lists a scribe named Atu. Based on this collation, his minimum tenant-land size of 35.5 **iku** is recorded in obv. ii 22′, vi 7′, and probably rev. ii 1. For other updates, see n. 32.

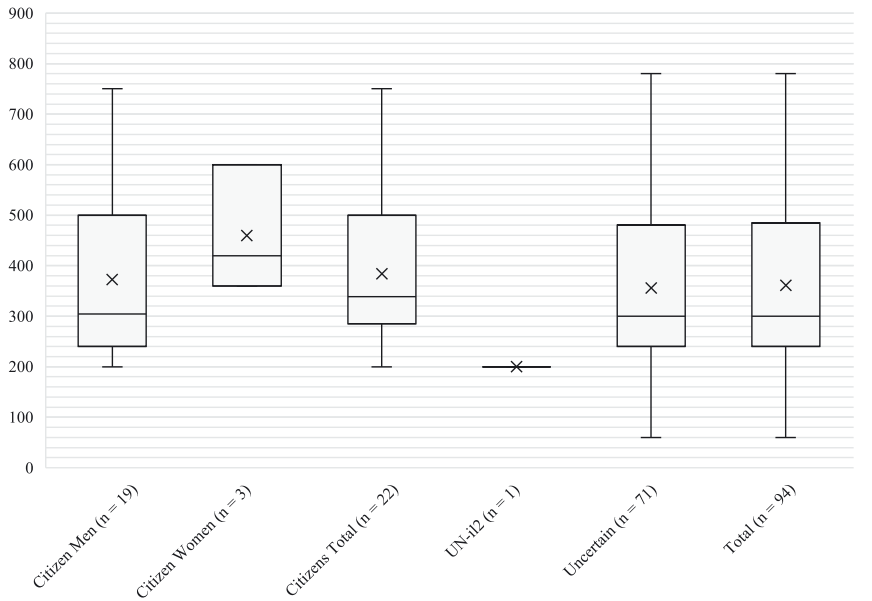
39 For the barley rent and silver tax of tenant land during the Ur III period, especially at Girsu-Lagaš, see Maekawa 1977; Neumann 2004; and Steinkeller 1981. The texts utilized in Graph 4 include MVN 4: 3; Nisaba 11: 34 rev. i 19–ii 6; *Orient* 21, p. 2 obv. i 3′–rev. ii 25; and OrSP 47–49: 481. Note that Nisaba 11: 34 rev. i 21 and OrSP 47–49: 481 obv. ii 2 are collated.



Graph 3: Minimum tenant-land sizes (in **iku**) of barley land for citizens and **UN-il$_2$** in Umma.

similarly larger than for all others, again perhaps due to their privileged positions. The yield for the one known **UN-il$_2$** is unsurprisingly low. While it is possible to speculate about the motives of landlords and tenants in improving tenant-land productivity, this requires further study to account for other factors, such as annual variances. More importantly, these yields did not factor in cultivation costs, but it is not known who cultivated tenant land and how its costs were paid. Although it is admittedly simplistic, perhaps tenant-land yields were virtually equal to or just a little higher than subsistence-land yields after deducting cultivation costs. For example, the cost of seeds and animal fodder may have been about 25 **sila$_3$/iku**, which were not the only costs, of course.[40]

40 Kazuya Maekawa (1984: 78, 87) estimates that the barley-seed cost was about 16 ⅔ **sila$_3$/iku** during the Ur III period, which was perhaps double that of the fodder cost.



Graph 4: Tenant-land yields (in **sila$_3$/iku**) of barley land for citizens and **UN-il$_2$** in Umma.

In addition to the few texts that document tenant-land yields before the deduction of the barley rent and silver tax, there are a few texts that record the barley rents of tenant land according to whether various plots had silver taxes or not. Most texts involving tenant land from Umma do not specify whether silver taxes were paid or not unfortunately, but the barley amounts appear to be rents. For the sake of brevity, the middle 50 percents of the barley-rent rates in all these texts are provided in Table 5.[41]

The middle 50 percent of barley-rent rates for tenant land with silver taxes was much higher than those for tenant land without silver taxes because the latter was less productive. When there were silver taxes, they ranged from 10 to 20 **še** (~0.46 to ~0.92 g) per **iku**. The middle 50 percent for the barley-rent rates of all tenant land is 76.25 to ~230 **sila$_3$/iku**, which fit well with the yields of 240 to 485 **sila$_3$/iku** since the barley-rent rates at Ur III Girsu-Lagaš tended to range between one third and one

41 The texts indicating whether tenant-land plots had silver taxes or not in addition to barley rents are Farmer's Instructions 8.3.1; Nisaba 32: 25; and SNAT 508. The texts that do not specify silver taxes yet possibly include barley rents are AAICAB I/3 Bod. S 307 obv. 1–8; AnOr 1: 49; *ASJ* 9, p. 247 24; p. 248 25 obv. 1–8; BCT 2: 55; CDLI P341990; P342088; MVN 4: 4; 14: 212; 568; Nisaba 33: 126; 521 obv. i 1–rev. i 2′; SNAT 364; Texts in the Carnegie Museum, Diss., p. 180 65 rev. ii 2′–7′; UTI 3: 2124; 4: 2887; 5: 3381; 6: 3515 rev. 5, 7; and 3516 rev. 2–19. Besides these texts, BIN 5: 266 and SAT 3: 2207 appear to document tenant land but without yields or rents. Nisaba 33: 521 obv. ii 2; SNAT 508 obv. 1, 8, 12, and rev. 16 are collated.

Table 5: Middle 50 percents of barley-rent rates of tenant land for citizens and possibly others in Umma.

Tenant-land type	Middle 50 percent of barley-rent rates (in $sila_3$/iku) per order				
	Citizen			Uncertain	Total
	Men	Women	Total		
With silver tax	150 (*n* = 2)	–	150 (*n* = 2)	~151 to 240 (*n* = 11)	150 to ~239 (*n* = 13)
Without silver tax	–	–	–	36.5 to 60 (*n* = 5)	36.5 to 60 (*n* = 5)
Unspecified silver tax	121.5 to 195 (*n* = 24)	~51 to 420 (*n* = 4)	~114 to 218.75 (*n* = 28)	75 to 240 (*n* = 106)	78.75 to ~234 (*n* = 134)
Total	123.75 to 185 (*n* = 26)	~51 to 420 (*n* = 4)	~118 to 206.25 (*n* = 30)	75 to 240 (*n* = 122)	76.25 to ~230 (*n* = 152)

half the yields (Steinkeller 1981: 126–27). If the yields of the middle 50 percent were about 200 to 400 **$sila_3$/iku** after cultivation costs, the profits before tax for the middle 50 percent could range from roughly 125 to 175 **$sila_3$/iku**. If the silver-tax range is averaged to 15 **še/iku**, it could be equivalent to about 25 **$sila_3$/iku** based on the typical equivalency of 1 **gin_2** of silver to 300 **$sila_3$** of barley (Cripps 2017). While this silver tax would only apply for some of the tenant land, it can be conservatively applied to the entire profit range established above, resulting in a range from 100 to 150 **$sila_3$/iku**. Moreover, it is important to note that the rent may have varied beyond the estimates here in various circumstances regarding the relationship between the landlord and tenant. Given the adjusted middle 50 percent of 2 to 14 **iku**, the middle 50 percent of tenants perhaps earned profits of 200 to 2,100 **$sila_3$** of barley annually. The larger end of this range may have required further cultivation costs to account for hired workers, however. Given the conservative estimates here, this amount is still plausible perhaps. Overall, the nearly exclusive access that citizens had to voluntary work granted them significantly more economic autonomy and stability than **UN-il_2** and especially slaves.

3.7.3 Sustenance

The resources that would have sustained individuals and families during the Ur III period varied widely, but barley was an important staple for their diets and bartering. In terms of diet, it is difficult to determine how much any individual would have consumed daily, but it is assumed that adults needed at least 1 **$sila_3$** with extra for bartering (Pottorf 2022: 267). Based on the data presented so far, it is possible to estimate annual barley-income ranges for five hypothetical families. The first and

second were citizen families of six with two daughters aged zero to six and six to thirteen as well as two sons of the same age brackets, which would have been on the larger end of the average range. Both families were allotted subsistence land according to the middle 50 percent, though the first earned tenant-land profits according to the middle 50 percent, whereas the second earned wages. Since it is not clear how citizens used their days off to hire themselves out or rent tenant land, these hypothetical families only engaged in one of these options each. Actual families may have blended these options, however. The third and fourth families were UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ of the same structure as the citizen families. The third family was allotted only barley monthly, and the fourth received a combination of monthly barley allotments and an annual subsistence-land share according to the middle 50 percent. The fifth family was an enslaved family in an administrative household, including a mother and two daughters aged zero to six and six to thirteen, which was only allotted barley monthly. As such, the annual barley-income ranges and daily barley-amount ranges per individual for these families are enumerated in Table 6.

Although the daily amounts per individual could be more finely tuned to account for differences between adults and children, clearly all the families except for the citizen families would have struggled to have or maintain economic stability. As for the citizen families, some may have earned little more than the UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ families, but their earning potentials were vastly higher. The UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ family allotted only barley monthly would have had little flexibility, but the UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ family with subsistence land

Table 6: Annual barley-income ranges and daily barley-amount ranges per individual for hypothetical citizen, UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$, and enslaved families in Umma.

Family type	Annual barley-allotment range (in $sila_3$)	Annual subsistence-land barley-yield range (in $sila_3$)	Annual tenant-land barley-profit range (in $sila_3$)	Annual barley-wages range (in $sila_3$)	Total annual barley-income range (in $sila_3$) and daily barley-amount range per individual (in $sila_3$)
Citizen families of six	–	1,800 to 5,400	200 to 2,100	–	2,000 to 7,500 ~0.93 to ~3.47
	–	1,800 to 5,400	–	200 to 750	2,000 to 6,150 ~0.93 to ~2.85
UN-$\mathbf{il_2}$ families of six	1,800 to 2,580	–	–	–	1,800 to 2,580 ~0.83 to ~1.19
	720 to 960	600 to 1,400	–	–	1,320 to 2,360 ~0.61 to ~1.09
Enslaved family of three	720 to 960	–	–	–	720 to 960 ~0.67 to ~0.89

could have been significantly wealthier if their yield was greater than the estimate used here or if they were allotted well above the average. At least more than 9 **iku**, if not less, was an outlier for them, however. The enslaved family was the most impoverished, of course, and there was little flexibility in how much they could earn annually. It is important to add that families could have obtained other kinds of tenant land and commodities, including privately owned orchards (Steinkeller 1999: 294). All these families were also allotted wool or garments as well as other commodities for their sustenance, as mentioned above.

4 Conclusions

UN-**il**$_2$ were a serflike order distinguished by their in-between status in comparison to the citizen and slave orders especially with regard to their economic conditions. Like slaves, UN-**il**$_2$ usually lacked economic autonomy and stability because they were conscripted full time all year and typically held poorly compensated occupations. However, like citizens, they could be compensated with subsistence land, sometimes significant amounts depending on their occupations, and they could perhaps rarely rent tenant land. Nevertheless, only the few wealthier UN-**il**$_2$ with better-compensated occupations would have experienced some autonomy and stability. Moreover, typically male UN-**il**$_2$, like male citizens, could be temporarily exempted from conscription to support their parents, which was likely not a possibility for slaves. Their terminology could distinguish them clearly if they were male, but female UN-**il**$_2$ and slaves were usually described as simply **geme**$_2$. Their origins are poorly detailed, but many of them were likely impoverished natives who inherited their order from previous generations of serflike individuals, such as carriers documented during the Early Dynastic period. While it is difficult to reconstruct their family lives, many of them probably maintained nuclear and extended families similar to citizen families. Their housing and legal rights are the least understood, unfortunately. They may have been housed by those upon whom they were dependent, but if they could afford housing, it was probably lower in quality on average than the housing for citizens. While they were legally free like citizens, they lacked mobility due to their full-time conscription. Although UN-**il**$_2$ are best attested during the Ur III period, they are indicative of a larger phenomenon of individuals that were neither as free as citizens nor as unfree as slaves, economically and legally, in the ancient Near East.

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Appendix

Collations are given in Table 7, and the collated signs are underlined unless they are omitted.

Table 7: Collations.

Text	Line	Transliteration with underlined collations
AnOr 1: 49	obv. i 31	**0.0.0 ½ gan$_2$ 0.1.0 Lu$_2$-kal-la ⌜aga$_3$-/us$_2$⌝**
	obv. ii 21	**0.0.1 ½ gan$_2$ 1.1.0 gu[r]**
	rev. i 7′	**0.0.4 ½ ⌜¼ gan$_2$ 4⌝.2.3 gur**
AnOr 7: 374	obv. iv′ 11′	**0.0.2 gan$_2$ 1.2.3 gur**
BDTNS 059327	obv. iii 3	**0.1.0 gan$_2$ ⌜4⌝.0.0 gur**
	obv. iv 17	**0.1.0 gan$_2$ 6.0.0 gur**
	obv. iv 21	**0.1.0 gan$_2$ ⌜6⌝.0.0 gur**
	obv. iv 25	**0.0.2 gan$_2$ 2^{i}(3).0.0 gur**
	rev. i 1	**0.0.2 gan$_2$ 1+[1.0.0 gur]**
	rev. i 3	**0.0.2 gan$_2$ 2.[0.0 gur]**
	rev. i 21	**0.1.0 gan$_2$ 3.0.0 gur**
	rev. i 29	**0.0.3 gan$_2$ ⌜1⌝.2.3 gur**
	rev. ii 15	**0.0.3 gan$_2$ 3.0.0 gur**
	rev. ii 17	**0.0.2 gan$_2$ 2.0.0 gur**
	rev. ii 19	**0.0.2 gan$_2$ 2.0.0 gur**
BIN 5: 277	rev. ii 2 (CDLI)	**0.1.1 ¼ gan$_2$ 6.3.0 gur**
CUSAS 39: 138	obv. iii 2′	**0.0.3 gan$_2$ ⌜6⌝.0.0 ⌜gur⌝**
	obv. vi 6′	**0.0.1 ½ gan$_2$ 3.0.0 ⌜gur⌝**
	rev. iv 19′	**0.0.1 ½ gan$_2$ 1.2.3 gur**
MVN 4: 3	obv. 9	**0.0.2 ¼ gan$_2$ 2.0.0 gur-ta**
Nik. 2: 236	rev. ii 19	**šu-nigin$_2$ 5.2.5 ½ gan$_2$**
Nisaba 11: 34	rev. i 21[a]	**0.0.3 gan$_2$ 0.3.2-ta sahar** UD
Nisaba 33: 126	obv. 4	**0.0.1 ½ gan$_2$ 0.1.1 Ur-sukkal sipa**
	obv. 5	**0.0.0 ½ ¼ gan$_2$ 0.2.1 5 sila$_3$ Lu$_2$-/^{d}Šara$_2$ dumu Da-zi-gi$_4$-na**
	obv. 6	**0.0.0 ½ gan$_2$ 0.0.4 5 sila$_3$ Lugal-/ma$_2$-gur$_8$-re**
	rev. 3	**0.0.0 ½ gan$_2$ 0.1.3 Ab-ba-sig$_5$ / dumu Gu$_2$-ru**
	rev. 4	**0.0.0 ½ gan$_2$ 0.2.3 Puzur$_4$-^{d}Šara$_2$**
Nisaba 33: 521	obv. i 1	**0.0.1 ½ gan$_2$ še-ba u$_3$ kaš / 0.2.3**
	obv. i 6	**0.0.0 ½ gan$_2$ 0.2.0 Lugal-inim-ge-na / dumu Ša$_3$-ku$_3$-ge**
	obv. i 8	**0.0.0 ½ gan$_2$ 0.1.0 Ur-^{d}Ba-u$_2$**
	obv. ii 1	**0.0.1 ½ gan$_2$ 0.⌜1⌝.3 ⌜Šu?-x-x⌝**
	obv. ii 2	**0.0.0 ½ gan$_2$ 0.2.⌜3 x-x(-x)⌝**

Table 7: (continued)

Text	Line	Transliteration with underlined collations
Organisation administrative, Diss. 1, p. 202 Talon-Vanderroost 1	rev. viii 26	**AŠ ama Lu$_2$-uru-mu**
Orient 21, p. 2	obv. i 7′	**5.0.1 gan$_2$ 1.3.2-ta**
	obv. vi 7′	**A-tu ˹dub˺-[sar]**
OrSP 47–49: 481	obv. i 16	**0.0.2 ½ gan$_2$ 0.4.0-ta**
	obv. i 18	**0.0.4 ½ gan$_2$ 0.4.0-ta**
	obv. i 20	**0.0.4 ½ ¼ gan$_2$ 0.4.0-ta**
	obv. i 22	**0.0.4 ½ ¼ gan$_2$ 0.4.0-ta**
	obv. ii 2	**0.0.4 ½ gan$_2$ 0.˹4˺.0-ta**
SNAT 508	obv. 1	**0.2.2 gan$_2$ še-ba u$_3$ kaš 7.0.0 gur [maš tuku]**
	obv. 8	**0.0.3 gan$_2$ 1.2.3 gur maš tuku**
	obv. 12	**0.1.0 gan$_2$ 3.0.0 gur maš tuku**
	rev. 16	**šu-nigin$_2$ še-bi 48.2.[0 gur]**
ŠA 135 (LXXIV)	obv. 7′	**0.1.0 gan$_2$ 6.0.0 gur […]**

[a]**sahar UD** is uncertain, but that is how these signs are currently read according to BDTNS and CDLI.

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