

SOURCES AT THE END OF THE CUNEIFORM ERA

**Tero Alstola, Paola Corò, Rocío Da Riva, Sebastian Fink, Michael Jursa,
Ingo Kottsieper, Martin Lang, M. Willis Monroe, Laurie Pearce,
Reinhard Pirngruber, Kai Ruffing & Saana Svärd¹**

*University of Helsinki, Ca' Foscari University of Venice,
University of Barcelona, University of Innsbruck, University of Vienna,
Westfalian Wilhelm's University of Münster / the Academy of Science at
Göttingen, University of Innsbruck, University of British Columbia,
University of California, University of Vienna, University of Kassel &
University of Helsinki*

The aim of this article is to discuss several groups of sources which are of special interest regarding the question of Mesopotamian identities after 539 BCE, towards the end of the use of cuneiform writing. In this late period, several languages and scripts were in use in Mesopotamia; therefore, groups of Akkadian, Aramaic, Greek, and Sumerian texts are discussed. The scripts used are Aramaic letters, cuneiform, and the Greek alphabet. A scholar who is interested in late Mesopotamian identities needs to take all these documents into account. This article aims at giving a brief overview on available textual material and where to find it. The topics of these texts vary from administrative documents to highly literary texts. The authors discuss Aramaic inscriptions, legal and administrative cuneiform texts, the astronomical diaries, the Seleucid Uruk scholarly texts, the late Babylonian priestly literature, Emesal cult-songs from the Hellenistic period, the Graeco-Babyloniaca (clay tablets containing cuneiform and Greek), and finally Greek inscriptions from Mesopotamia.

This article is a collaborative product of the workshop “Construction of Identities and late Mesopotamian archives (after 539 BCE)” which took place on March 12–13, 2020, at the University of Helsinki. Organized by the Centre of Excellence “Ancient Near Eastern Empires,”

¹ The names of authors are presented in alphabetical order. In practice, Sebastian Fink and Saana Svärd wrote Section 1, “Introduction” as well as edited the article. Ingo Kottsieper wrote Section 2 “Selected editions of Aramaic texts from the Achaemenid empire,” Tero Alstola wrote Section 3 “Legal and Administrative Texts from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods,” Paola Corò and Laurie Pearce wrote Section 4 “The Legal texts in the Hellenistic Uruk Archives,” Reinhard Pirngruber wrote Section 5 “The Astronomical Diaries,” M. Willis Monroe wrote Section 6 “Seleucid Uruk Scholarly texts,” Rocío Da Riva wrote Section 7 “The Late Babylonian Temple Ritual Texts,” Michael Jursa wrote Section 8 “Late Babylonian Priestly Literature from Babylon,” Sebastian Fink wrote Section 9 “SBH – the last Emesal Archive,” Martin Lang wrote Section 10 “Graeco-Babyloniaca,” and finally Kai Ruffing wrote Section 11 “Greek Inscriptions in Mesopotamia (and Babylonia).” Svärd and Alstola gratefully acknowledge the funding from Academy of Finland (decision numbers 312051, 312052, 312053, 336673, 336674, and 336675).

the workshop aimed at presenting and discussing available “archives,” or perhaps better defined as “source-corpora,” for the late period of Mesopotamian history and evaluating their potential for an analysis with the methods of digital humanities. While some of the evidence that is discussed in this article forms rather coherent groups, other sources were grouped by language, as for example the Aramaic and Greek texts which come from varied locations and time periods. The article is not meant to be an exhaustive presentation of all the sources at the end of the cuneiform era. For example, it does not include Greek historiography (on which see Fink & Droß-Krüpe 2019 with further literature) but it aims at providing the reader—be they an Assyriologist, Classicist, Egyptologist—with an overview of what kind of sources are available and how to find them.

INTRODUCTION

In his volume *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents and Archives* (2005), Michel Jursa has described the text types and archives of the Neo-Babylonian period. The work is an excellent and comprehensive survey of legal and administrative documents and if we were only interested in the archives treated in this monograph, this article could just summarize the findings of Jursa. However, we aim to give a broader overview of the source material from the historical time roughly between the rise of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the end of cuneiform writing. The article presents cuneiform material that is not included in the above-mentioned volume as well as an overview of Greek and Aramaic sources. Besides numerous cuneiform sources, Greek and Aramaic texts also provide us with important information regarding events, ideology, and Mesopotamian identities—the topics on which the workshop focused.

Research on textual sources from this period is shared between many different fields of study (classical studies, ancient history, Assyriology, Egyptology, Persian studies) and various ancient languages. Additionally, the sources themselves differ greatly in material and nature, for example, coins, cuneiform tablets, rock inscriptions, Greek literary sources, the Hebrew Bible, and so forth. Therefore, we feel that there is much to be gained by collaboration between experts from different fields. The aim of this article is to provide the reader with a useful resource for mining these late Mesopotamian text corpora for different purposes. Some authors dealt with large corpora, like Tero Alstola who described the continuation of the Neo-Babylonian archives into the Persian period; others dealt with small, but important corpora, like Martin Lang in his section on the Graeco-Babyloniaca.

All authors were asked to write a short description of the text material they dealt with and were asked to start their section with information on seven concise topics: 1) Find spots, 2) Number of texts, 3) Material/external appearance of the texts, 4) Text types, 5) Chronology, 6) Central persons and institutions, and 7) Availability as digital and online resources. The authors were also asked to provide a list of abbreviations and bibliography on the sources. These bibliographies are kept separate and introduced at the end of each section in order to make things as comfortable as possible for the reader. Within this article, we have organized the individual topics according to their scope. Many of the contributions do not deal with archives in a strict sense, but rather with sets of sources that have some common features like script, language, topic, or attribution to some historical period.

The first section, written by Ingo Kottsieper, deals with the Aramaic material. It covers a huge area, outlines the number and character of Aramaic texts from different regions and different time periods, and is therefore discussed first. We then move on to the somewhat more

homogeneous cuneiform material. Tero Alstola presents the legal and administrative texts from the long sixth century (626–484 BCE) and the later Persian period (484–330 BCE) in Babylonia, the long sixth century being one of the best-documented periods in the cuneiform record. The other sections deal with the sources from Mesopotamia between 484 BCE and the start of the common era. Paola Corò and Laurie Pearce deal with the 700 legal texts from Hellenistic Uruk (c. 315–125 BCE) and M. Willis Monroe describes a corpus of circa 700 scholarly texts from the same city in the Seleucid period (312–129 BCE).

Much of material from the latter half of the first millennium BCE comes from Babylon. Large numbers of texts had emerged there from illicit digs. The first legal excavations by the Germans uncovered material from the Esangil-temple of Babylon. Later excavations proved that the earlier material (from illicit digs) must have come from this area as well (see Clancier 2009). Texts from Babylon are discussed in four sections. Reinhard Pirngruber discusses the approximately 450 tablets known as Astronomical Diaries (c. 650–60 BCE) from Babylon (Esangil). Rocio Da Riva and Michael Jursa deal with two partly overlapping corpora, both of them defined by the content of the texts, the late Babylonian Temple Rituals and late Babylonian Priestly Literature from Babylon respectively (4th–1st century BCE). Finally, the texts described by Sebastian Fink are Emesal lamentations and date to the second and first century BCE (c. 130–80 BCE).

Martin Lang further discusses the nature of the small but famous corpus of Graeco-Babyloniaca (original find context unknown), which is usually seen as the last phase in the use of cuneiform (difficult to date, but to some point between 300 BCE and 300 CE). Finally, Kai Ruffing describes 20 Greek language inscriptions from Mesopotamia, roughly dateable to 300 BCE – 100 CE. Approximate chronological scope of the text collections discussed in this article is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

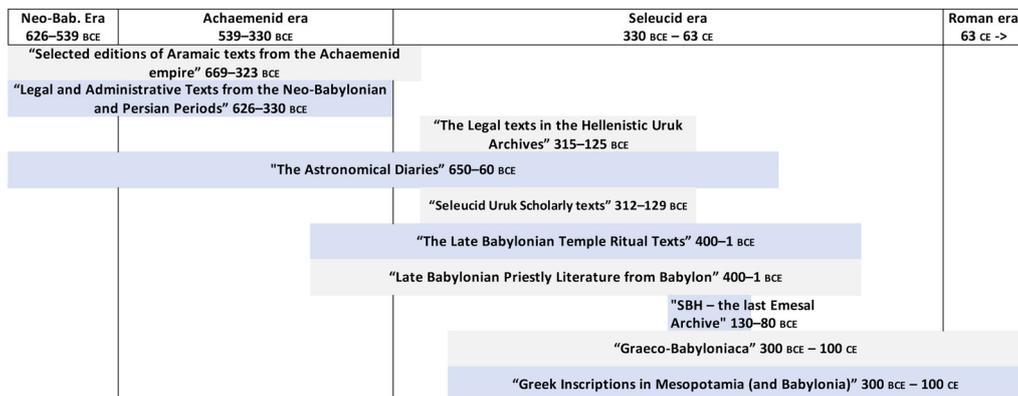


Figure 1 Approximate chronological scope of the text collections discussed in this article.

Bibliography

- CLANCIER, Philippe 2009. *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du Ier millénaire av. J.-C.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 363) Münster: Ugarit.
- FINK, Sebastian & Kerstin DROß-KRÜPE 2019. Assyrians and Babylonians in Classical Sources. In: R. DA RIVA, M. LANG & S. FINK (eds), *Literary Change in Mesopotamia and Beyond and Routes and Travelers between East and West: Proceedings of the 2nd and 3rd Melammu Workshop* (Melammu Workshops and Monographs 2): 135–153. Münster: Ugarit.
- JURSA, Michael 2005. *Neo Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents and Archives.* (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 1) Münster: Ugarit.

SELECTED EDITIONS OF ARAMAIC TEXTS FROM THE ACHAEMENID EMPIRE

Find spots	Various places in the Achaemenid empire.
Number of texts	Thousands
Material/external appearance of the texts	Ostraca, papyri, inscriptions, coins, notes on cuneiform tablets
Text types	Various
Chronology	Various
Central persons and institutions	-
Availability as digital / online resources	< http://cal.huc.edu/ >

Extending its power to the west up to Anatolia and as far south as the southern border of Egypt, the Achaemenid Empire and its extensive administration had to find ways to allow easy communication throughout its vast territory to exchange information between the distant parts. Already in the first half of the first millennium BCE, Aramaic had gained the status of a trans-regional written language used in Syria, Mesopotamia, and adjacent areas. This language was written in an easy-to-learn offspring of the Phoenician script and was used there not only for official inscriptions but also for letters and administrative texts. The Achaemenids adapted it as an official language for use in their administration especially, but not exclusively, outside the Achaemenid heartlands. Thus, one finds texts using Aramaic all over the empire from Bactria in the northeast to the west of Anatolia as far as Mysia and down to Elephantine in south Egypt.

Since it functioned as an official, highly standardized written language, the texts from one area show no or only minor linguistic variations. Furthermore, the variants between texts from distant areas of the empire are not grave and often reflect only the difference between local terminologies. In fact, any decent scribe in the Achaemenid Empire could master this language and read the texts of his colleagues. In the realm of the Achaemenid administration, one finds typical administrative genres such as accounts, juridical texts, letters, and orders. But Aramaic was also used for spreading propagandistic texts as the Aramaic version of the Behistun inscription shows. It was used in cultic contexts as well, especially when the Achaemenid administration was involved (cf. esp. below Anatolia). Besides this official use, Aramaic served local purposes such as small notes, messages and private letters and of course contracts of loans, sales, or marriages. Those genres one can find both in areas like Bactria where Aramaic probably was the first common written language and Egypt where it was used especially in non-Egyptian groups.

Finally, it was used for literature (cf. esp. below Egypt). The high status that Aramaic gained is illustrated by the fact that, after the decline of the Achaemenid Empire, in Syria and Mesopotamia in particular, it was kept as a written language besides the traditional local written languages still

used, especially for traditional texts and in the context of cult. Aramaic also took over as a common spoken language step by step, a process which obviously had begun already in the Achaemenid period. In the east, Aramaic still served in Hellenistic times as an optional inscriptional language (as shown by the inscriptions of Ashoka) and provided the basis for later local scripts like Brahmi or Karoshti. Because of the great diversity and scope of these sources, we will next present a brief overview of the material area by area, followed by an annotated bibliography.

Mesopotamia: Hundreds of mostly economic texts, dockets on clay tablets and short notes on cuneiform tablets; bricks (but cf. also Egypt). Status: Already established official written language; increasingly spoken Aramaic dialects.

Persepolis: The same as in Mesopotamia (circa 1,000 texts), additionally circa 165 inscriptions on cultic objects for the haoma-ritual; hints of texts on leather. Status: New official written language.

Bactria: 48 texts on leather and wood; letters mostly from the satrap Akhvamazda to the governor Bagavant; labels for goods; wooden tallies. Status: New (and probably first) written language used by the new elites.

Parthia and other eastern provinces: Only indirect evidence by later use of Aramaic. Status: New (and probably first) written language used by the new elites.

Anatolia: Coins and circa 35 inscriptions mainly from the realm of the Achaemenid administration; often bilingual or trilingual beside Greek and indigenous languages. Status: Written language of the Achaemenid administration and eastern people.

Egypt: Hundreds of texts on papyri (except some letters sent from Babylonia or Susa written on leather) and ostraca; all kind of economic, administrative and private texts (letters, small notes); literature (Ahiqar, Tale of Bar Pawenesh; Sheikh Fadl inscription; post-Achaemenid also Pap. Amherst 63). Status: Written language of non-Egyptian, Semitic people, often as representatives of the Achaemenid administration; probably also spoken dialects of Aramaic, at least as secondary language.

Palestine: Circa 40 documentary texts (contracts, papyrus) from Wadi ed-Daliyeh; thousands of ostraca (mainly economic) from Judea and Idumea. Status: Spoken Aramaic dialects increase.

Bibliography

Most texts are digitized (mostly linguistically tagged, but without translation) and are made accessible by the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project (CAL, <<http://cal.huc.edu/>>). The user can find texts according to different areas by searching the CAL lexical and textual database with the following options: “Text Browse” then choosing “Imperial/Official Aramaic.” The database also provides a comprehensive bibliography.

The texts published before 2004 are also accessible in print with a short bibliography and indication of genre in:

SCHWIDERSKI, Dirk 2004. *The Old and Imperial Aramaic Inscriptions, II: Texte und Bibliographie*. (Fontes et Subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes 2) Berlin: De Gruyter.

SCHWIDERSKI, Dirk 2008. *The Old and Imperial Aramaic Inscriptions, I: Konkordanz*. (Fontes et Subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes 4) Berlin: De Gruyter.

For texts from Persepolis see:

BOWMAN, Raymond A. 1970. *Aramaic Ritual Texts from Persepolis*. (Oriental Institute Publications 91) Chicago: UCP.

Other texts partly accessible on the web pages of the Persepolis Fortification Archive: <<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/persepolis-fortification-archive>>.

The new texts from Bactria (already in CAL) are published in:

NAVEH, Joseph & Shaul SHAKED 2012. *Aramaic Documents from Ancient Bactria (Fourth Century BCE)*. London: The Khalili Family Trust.

For the texts from Anatolia see the web pages of the Achemenet project:

<<http://www.achemenet.com/fr/tree/?/sources-textuelles/textes-par-langues-et-ecritures/arameen>>.

For the texts from Egypt see also the following publications:

LOZACHMEUR, H  l  ne 2006. *La collection Clermon-Ganneau, ostraca,   pigraphes sur jarre,   tiquettes de bois*, I–I. Paris: de Boccard.

MOORE, James D. 2022a. *New Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine in Berlin*. (Studies on Elephantine 1) Leiden: Brill <<https://brill.com/downloadpdf/title/61396>>.

MOORE, James D. 2022b. New Phoenician and Aramaic Labels and Ostraca from Excavations at Syene and Elephantine between 2010–2015. *Semitica* 64: 71–130.

PORTEN, Bezalel & Ada YARDENI 1986. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English: Letters*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press.

PORTEN, Bezalel & Ada YARDENI 1989. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English: Contracts*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press.

PORTEN, Bezalel & Ada YARDENI 1993. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English: Literature, Accounts, Lists*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press.

PORTEN, Bezalel & Ada YARDENI 1999. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English: Ostraca and Assorted Inscriptions*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press.

See also the new edition of Pap. Amherst 63 (not yet in CAL):

VAN DER TOORN, Karel 2018. *Papyrus Amherst 63*. (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 448) M  nster: Ugarit.

For the texts from Idumea (only partly published in CAL) see:

PORTEN, Bezalel & Ada YARDENI 2014–2018. *Textbook of Aramaic Ostraca from Idumea*, I–III. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

YARDENI, Ada 2016. *The Jeselsohn Collection of Aramaic Ostraca from Idumea*. Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TEXTS FROM THE NEO-BABYLONIAN AND PERSIAN PERIODS

Find spots	Primarily Sippar, Uruk, Babylon, Borsippa, and Nippur, but small numbers of tablets come from Cutha, Dilbat, Isin, Kiš, Ur, and some other locations
Number of texts	More than 50,000
Material/external appearance of the texts	Written in the Neo- or Late Babylonian dialect of Akkadian on clay tablets
Text types	Legal and administrative texts, primarily from temple and private archives
Chronology	The great majority of texts (more than 50,000) were written in 626–484 BCE and less than 3,000 texts in 484–330 BCE.
Central persons and institutions	The Ebabbar temple in Sippar, the Eanna temple in Uruk, the Egibi family in Babylon, the Murašû family in Nippur, and many others
Availability as digital / online resources	Circa 5,000 transliterated texts are available at Achemenet and the metadata and paraphrases of some 3,000 texts at NaBuCCo. The number of linguistically annotated texts at Oracc is presently small. CDLI provides metadata for over 14,000 texts.

The long sixth century (626–484 BCE) in Babylonia is one of the most richly documented periods in the history of cuneiform writing (Jursa 2005). Temple and private archives of that period have yielded more than 50,000 legal and administrative texts, supplemented by other genres such as letters and ritual texts. The state archives of the Babylonian Empire (626–539 BCE) have not been found, however, and the number of extant Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions is much smaller than that of Neo-Assyrian inscriptions (Pedersén 2005; Da Riva 2008). Consequently, our view of Babylonia in the long sixth century is primarily that of the archive-owning families and the temple administration. These documents provide us with a great amount of economic and prosopographical information that allows us to study the social and economic history of this period in detail (e.g., Jursa 2010; Waerzeggers 2014; Still 2019).

The Persian conquest of Babylonia in 539 BCE does not have an effect on the number of extant cuneiform sources, but the second year of King Xerxes (484 BCE) marks a stark change (Waerzeggers 2003/2004; 2018). Only a few Babylonian archives cover the period before and after 484 BCE, but the last preserved documents in many archives were written in that year or just before. The dramatic change in the number of active Babylonian archives can be seen in Figure 2. The end of the archives is related to the revolts of Šamaš-erība and Bēl-šimānī against Xerxes in Babylonia in 484 BCE. These revolts seem to have resulted from the increasing tax burden, economic difficulties, and dissatisfaction with the Persian rule among the Babylonian urban elite.

This group—people attached to temples and other traditional city-based institutions—supported the rebels in northern Babylonia, and the failure of the revolts resulted in reprisals against them. It seems likely that many people had to leave their offices in temples or otherwise suffered from the reprisals, and they sorted their archives and disposed of the tablets that no longer had any value. Property deeds and other documents with long-lasting value were kept and they have not come down to us. Not all Babylonians supported the revolts, however, and the reprisals did not touch the whole society. Archives in southern Babylonia and the archives of people who collaborated with the Persian Empire continue after the second year of Xerxes. Nevertheless, the number of active archives drops drastically, and the cuneiform documentation from 484 BCE to the beginning of the Hellenistic period is meager in comparison with the long sixth century: less than 3,000 tablets are dated between 484 and 330 BCE.

The majority of available documents were excavated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in both legal and illegal excavations. The British Museum acquired tens of thousands of Babylonian documents, but the Yale Babylonian Collection, Penn Museum, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, Vorderasiatisches Museum, and Iraq Museum also have significant tablet collections from this period (Jursa 2005). Tablets from the Ebabbar temple in Sippar constitute the single largest group of tablets from the long sixth century (*c.* 35,000 tablets; Bongenaar 1997; Da Riva 2002), followed by the Eanna temple in Uruk (*c.* 8,000; van Driel 1998; Kleber 2008; Kozuh 2014), and the private archive of the Egibi family with its Nūr-Sîn annex from Babylon (*c.* 1,700; Wunsch 1993; 2000; Abraham 2004). The great majority of archives and extant tablets originate from Sippar, Babylon, Borsippa, and Uruk, but small numbers of tablets come from Dilbat, Isin, Kiš, Nippur, Ur, and some other locations. After 484 BCE, the Kasr archive from Babylon (*c.* 1,000 tablets; Pedersén 2005, 144–184; Stolper 2007) and the Murašû archive from Nippur (*c.* 750; Stolper 1985) are the largest archives available while all the other archives are substantially smaller. The distribution of texts changes after 484 BCE, as there are no large temple archives, and no archives from Sippar have been identified. The findspots of archives are more evenly distributed between Babylon, Borsippa, Cutha, Kiš, Nippur, Ur, and Uruk.

The texts were written in the Neo- or Late Babylonian dialect of Akkadian on clay tablets. The legal and administrative texts in temple and private archives contain text types such as lists, receipts, leases, promissory notes, sales documents, inheritance divisions, and marriage agreements. Some of these archives also contain letters, literary texts, and texts belonging to various other genres. A small number of tablets contain short Aramaic inscriptions that often seem to summarize the main contents of the text. In addition to Akkadian, Aramaic was used both as a spoken and written language in this period, although Aramaic documents written on perishable materials have not survived to us (Jursa 2012; Hackl 2018).

A significant number of texts from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods were published as cuneiform copies in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but their systematic study and the reconstruction of ancient archives started only in the late twentieth century. Since the 1980s, thousands of texts have been made available in transliteration in books and journals. Moreover, the availability of texts and their metadata in a digital format is constantly increasing. The Achemenet project (<<http://www.achemenet.com>>) is making texts available in transliteration, and, as of February 2023, some 5,000 texts were available online. The NaBuCCo project is creating a database of Babylonian cuneiform tablets, providing metadata and paraphrases of their contents. The database covered circa 3,000 tablets in June 2021. The number of linguistically annotated texts is presently very small, but the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires aims to increase this number substantially (Sahala et al. 2022). As of February 2023, the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI, <<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/>>) provides metadata for more than 14,000 legal and administrative texts from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.

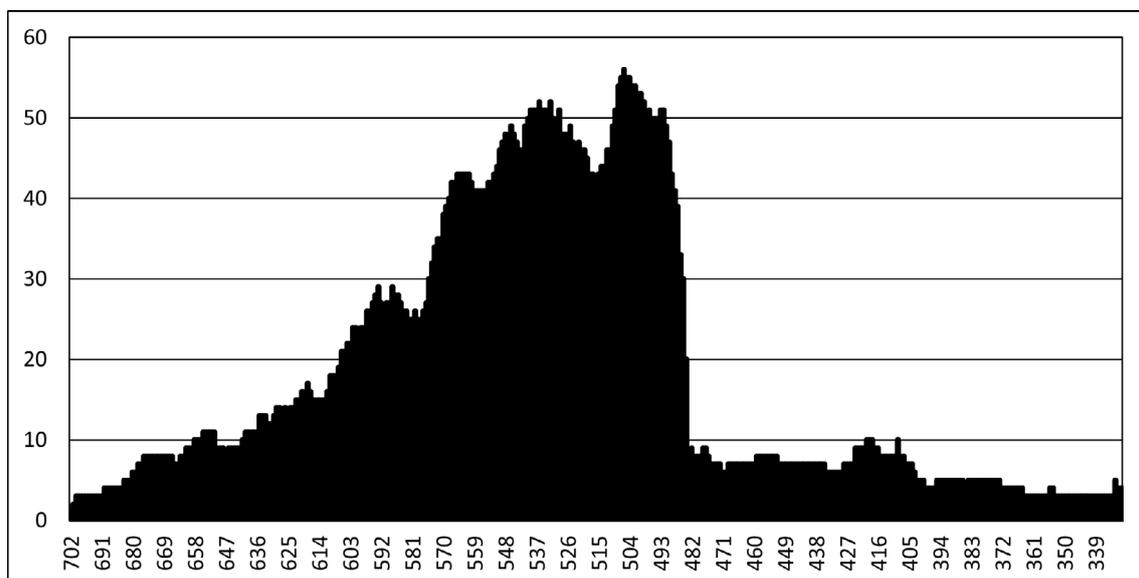


Figure 2 Chronological distribution of active cuneiform archives in Babylonia, 702–330 BCE. (based on the appendix in Waerzeggers 2018).

Bibliography

ABRAHAM, Kathleen 2004. *Business and Politics Under the Persian Empire: The Financial Dealings of Marduk-nāšir-apli of the House of Egibi (521–487 BCE)*. Bethesda: CDL Press.

- BONGENAAR, A.C.V.M. 1997. *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar: Its Administration and its Prosopography*. (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archäologisch Instituut te Istanbul 80) Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2002. *Der Ebabbar-Tempel von Sippar in frühneubabylonischer Zeit (640–580 v. Chr.)*. (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 291) Münster: Ugarit.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2008. *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction*. (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 4) Münster: Ugarit.
- VAN DRIEL, Govert 1998. The “Eanna Archive.” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 55: 59–79.
- HACKL, Johannes 2018. Zur Sprachsituation im Babylonien des ersten Jahrtausends v.Chr.: Ein Beitrag zur Sprachgeschichte des jüngeren Akkadischen. In: S. FINK, M. LANG, M. SCHRETTNER (eds), *Mehrsprachigkeit: Vom Alten Orient bis zum Esperanto* (dubsar 2): 209–238. Münster: Zaphon.
- JURSA, Michael 2005. *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents and Archives*. (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 1) Münster: Ugarit.
- JURSA, Michael 2010. *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC: Economic Geography, Economic Mentalities, Agriculture, the Use of Money and the Problem of Economic Growth*. (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 377) Münster: Ugarit.
- JURSA, Michael 2012. Ein Beamter flucht auf Aramäisch: Alphabetschreiber in der spätbabylonischen Epistolographie und die Rolle des Aramäischen in der babylonischen Verwaltung des sechsten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. In: G. LANFRANCHI, D. MORANDI BONACOSSO, C. PAPPI & S. PONCHIA (eds), *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*: 379–397. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- KLEBER, Kristin 2008. *Tempel und Palast: Die Beziehungen zwischen dem König und dem Eanna-Tempel im spätbabylonischen Uruk*. (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 358) Münster: Ugarit.
- KOZUH, Michael 2014. *The Sacrificial Economy: Assessors, Contractors, and Thieves in the Management of Sacrificial Sheep at the Eanna Temple of Uruk (c.625–520 BC)*. (Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations 2) Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- PEDERSÉN, Olof 2005. *Archive und Bibliotheken in Babylon: Die Tontafeln der Grabung Robert Koldeweys 1899–1917*. (Abhandlungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft) Saarbrücken: Saarländische Druckerei und Verlag.
- SAHALA, Aleksí, Tero ALSTOLA, Jonathan VALK & Krister LINDÉN 2022. BabyLemmatizer: A Lemmatizer and POS-tagger for Akkadian. In: T. ERJAVEC & M. ESKEVICH (eds), *CLARIN Annual Conference Proceedings, 2022, Prague, Czechia*: 14–18.
- STILL, Bastian 2019. *The Social World of the Babylonian Priest*. (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 103) Leiden: Brill.
- STOLPER, Matthew W. 1985. *Entrepreneurs and Empire: The Murašû Archive, the Murašû Firm, and the Persian Rule in Babylonia*. (Uitgaven van het Nederlands historisch-archaeologisch instituut te Istanbul 54) Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut.
- STOLPER, Matthew W. 2007. Kasr Texts: Excavated – but not in Berlin. In: M ROTH, M.T.W. FARBER, M.W. STOLPER & P. VON BECHTOLSHEIM (eds), *Studies Presented to Robert D. Biggs* (Assyriological Studies 27): 243–283. Chicago: The Oriental Institute.
- WAERZEGGERS, Caroline 2003/2004. The Babylonian Revolts Against Xerxes and the “End of Archives.” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 50: 150–173.
- WAERZEGGERS, Caroline 2014. *Marduk-rēmanni: Local Networks and Imperial Politics in Achaemenid Babylonia*. (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 233) Leuven: Peeters.
- WAERZEGGERS, Caroline 2018. The Network of Resistance: Archives and Political Action in Babylonia Before 484 BCE. In: C. WAERZEGGERS & M. SEIRE (eds), *Xerxes and Babylonia: The Cuneiform Evidence* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 277): 89–133. Leuven: Peeters.
- WUNSCH, Cornelia 1993. *Die Urkunden des babylonischen Geschäftsmannes Iddin-Marduk: Zum Handel mit Naturalien im 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Cuneiform Monographs 3a–b). 2 vols. Groningen: Styx.
- WUNSCH, Cornelia 2000. *Das Egibi-Archiv 1: Die Felder und Gärten*. (Cuneiform Monographs 20a–b). 2 vols. Groningen: Styx.

THE LEGAL TEXTS IN THE HELLENISTIC URUK ARCHIVES

Find spots	Uruk: the Irigal and Bīt Rēš, temples of Ištar and Anu, respectively; illegal excavations.
Number of texts	Circa 700–750
Material/external appearance of the texts	Large and thick rectangular clay tablets mostly landscape oriented. Generally written in a very clear hand, with the signs much more “vertical” than in the preceding periods.
Text types	Legal texts (contracts), the majority of which record sales of real estate and prebendary income. A small number of texts dealing with slaves and division of real estate.
Chronology	4th to 2nd centuries BCE
Central persons and institutions	Primarily individuals belonging to the most prominent families of the urban elite of Uruk who bear an interest in the affairs of the temples of Ištar and Anu, as well as groups of <i>homines novi</i> (especially professionals of different kinds) not belonging to the traditional families of the city, but who operate within their social circles.
Availability as digital / online resources	Digital editions of nearly 500 of the 700 texts are available at < http://oracc.org/hbtin >. The corpus is being actively edited and updated, and it will soon include the transliterations and translations published by P. Corò (2018).

The approximately 700 cuneiform legal texts constitute about one-half of the entire cuneiform corpus from Hellenistic Uruk. The remaining texts are scholarly, literary, historical, and scientific. The legal clay tablets are well-shaped, comparatively large rectangles; most are laid out in landscape orientation. Their average dimensions (8.5–11 mm width × 7.5–9.8 mm height) exceed those of most legal texts from the preceding Neo-Babylonian (626–605 BCE) and Achaemenid (539–484 BCE) periods. The obverse surfaces of these texts are flat, and the reverse surfaces are less curved than those of the legal and administrative texts of the preceding periods. The Hellenistic Uruk tablets are particularly thick (on average 2.5–3.5 mm) and all four of their edges bear captioned, largely anepigraphic, seal impressions, the outlines of which reflect the shape of the rings used in the sealing process. The right edge is reserved for the principals’ seal impressions. Physical features and layout of the text on the tablets are further described by P. Corò (2018: 27–34).

The Hellenistic Uruk legal texts come from legal excavations and the antiquities market. The majority of the excavated tablets were excavated by the Germans in the temple of Ištar and belong to the so-called “Irigal archive.” Two groups were found in Anu’s temple, the Bīt Rēš. One group was located near the gate-room at the northeast entrance of the temple precinct, forming part of the so-called “Rēš A archive”; the other group (the so-called “Rēš B archive”) comes from the southeast gate building of the temple precinct. In addition, 8 tablets were excavated by Loftus in Warka near the “Parthian Palace.” All the remaining tablets, housed in different collections in the USA and in Europe, come from the antiquities market. It is generally assumed that they come from the same findspots as the excavated ones, and in particular from the area which housed the “Rēš A archive.” Olof Pedersén (1998: 206–210) gives details on the archives and their findspots (see also Doty 1977: 31–48; Oelsner 1986: 146–149 and 152–162; Jursa 2005: 139–140; different labels for the archives are used by Monerie 2018: 12–15). Paola Corò (2018: 21–24) details the origins of the tablets housed in the British Museum collections.

The majority of the legal texts from Hellenistic Uruk record sales of real estate and prebendary income. Those texts for which find locations are known show that these tablets were deposited in temple archives, and thus, while they record private transactions, they are not private archives in the strict sense of the word. A very small number of texts deal with slaves (primarily dedications) and division of real estate. Texts recording legal transactions end with a witness list. Below the witness list, the scribe appended his name, and the place and date on which he wrote the tablet. These dates are expressed in years of the Seleucid Era, with year 1 of the Seleucid Era being retroactively calculated to 312/311 BCE.

On average, the texts record the presence and/or participation of 12–20 persons, including the principals in the transaction (seller, buyer, guarantor, neighbors), witnesses, and scribe. Seleucid kings' names appear in the date formula and as a descriptor of the currency (staters) used to pay the price of the transaction. The names of the individuals in the texts are given in the formula “Personal Name (son of) Father’s Name (occasionally adding: son of Grandfather’s Name).” The phrase “descendant of (named) Eponymous Ancestor” may be appended to the name formulae of individuals belonging to the most prominent families of the urban elite. This practice was already well established in the Neo-Babylonian period (late 7th century BCE).

Not all individuals are identified by clan affiliations and this omission usually indicates an individual outside the urban elite. However, the omission of clan name may also be a scribal decision, perhaps due to limitations of space. For example, numerous individuals appear as neighbors of properties sold in real-estate transactions, and clan names might have made the text very long and cumbersome. Thus, the absence of a clan name cannot be taken as a firm indicator that an individual did not belong to the urban elite. Slaves also do not bear clan names. A number of individuals bear professional designations, including baker, barber, builder, clay-worker, fisherman, leatherworker, member of the council of the temple of the gods of Uruk, palace servant, parchment scroll scribe/preparer, porter, potter, reed-cutter, or a scribe of the property of Anu. The corpus preserves a clear bias in recording the activities of members of the urban elite (traditionally associated with the temple cult and economy), and those in their social circles.

Bibliography

Primary text editions

- BEAULIEU, Paul-Alain 1989. Textes administratifs inédits d’époque hellénistique provenant des archives du Bīt Rēš. *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale* 83: 53–87.
- BOIY, Tom 2003. RIAA² 293–300: Hellenistic Legal Documents from Uruk in the Royal Museums of Art and History (Brussels). *Akkadica* 124: 19–64.
- CLAY, Albert T. 1912. *Babylonian Business Transactions of the First Millennium BC*. (Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan 1) New Haven: YUP.
- CLAY, Albert T. 1913. *Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan, II: Legal Documents from Erech Dated in the Seleucid Era (312–65 BC)*. (Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan 2) New Haven: YUP.
- CONTENEAU, Georges 1929. *Contrats néo-babyloniens, II: Achéménides et Séleucides*. (Textes cunéiformes, Musée du Louvre 13) Paris: Geuthner.
- CORÒ, Paola 2005. *Prebende templari in età seleucide*. (History of the Ancient Near East/ Monographs 8) Padova: Sargon.
- CORÒ, Paola 2012. “By the Written Order of the *rab ša rēš āli ša Uruk*”: Towards an Understanding of the *bīt ritti* System in Hellenistic Uruk. In: G.B. LANFRANCHI, D. MORANDI BONACOSSO, C. PAPPI & S. PONCHIA (eds), *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*: 149–160. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

- CORÒ, Paola 2018. *Seleucid Tablets from Uruk in the British Museum: Text Editions and Commentary*. (Antichistica 16; Studi orientali 6) Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari.
- DOTY, Timothy & Ronald WALLENFELS (eds) 2012. *Cuneiform Documents from Hellenistic Uruk*. (Yale Oriental Series 20) New Haven: YUP.
- DURAND, Jean-Marie 1981. *Textes babyloniens d'époque récente*. (Recherche sur les grandes civilisations 6) Paris: Editions A.D.P.F.
- FUNCK, Bernd 1984. *Uruk zur Seleukidenzeit*. (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Orients 16) Berlin: Akademie.
- JOANNÈS, Francis 1982. *Textes économiques de la Babylonie récente*. (Éditions recherche sur les civilisations 5) Paris: Editions A.D.P.F.
- JURSA, Michael 1997. Neu- und spätbabylonische Texte aus den Sammlungen der Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. *Iraq* 59: 97–174.
- McEWAN, Gilbert J.P. 1980. A Seleucid Augural Request. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 70: 58–69.
- McEWAN, Gilbert J.P. 1982a. *Texts from Hellenistic Babylonia in the Ashmolean Museum*. (Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts 9) Oxford: Clarendon.
- McEWAN, Gilbert J.P. 1982b. *The Late Babylonian Tablets in the Royal Ontario Museum*. (ROM Cuneiform Texts 2) Toronto: ROM.
- OELSNER, Joachim 1970. Eine Rechtsurkunde aus dem seleukidischen Uruk in der Hilprecht-Sammlung Vorderasiatischer Altertümer. *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena* 19: 905–991.
- OPPERT, Julius & Joachim MÉNANT 1877. *Documents juridiques de l'Assyrie et de la Chaldée*. Paris: Maisonneuve.
- RUTTEN, Mille 1935. Contrats de l'époque séleucide conservés au Musée du Louvre. *Babyloniaca* 15: 2–249.
- SARKISIAN, Gagik K. 1955. Частные клинописные контракты селевкидского времени из собрания государственного Эрмитажа [Private Cuneiform Contracts of the Seleucid Era from the Collection of the State Hermitage Museum]. *Вестник древней истории* [Vestnik drevnej istorii] 4: 136–162.
- SARKISIAN, Gagik K. 1974. New Cuneiform Texts from Uruk of the Seleucid Period in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. *Forschungen und Berichte, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* 16: 15–76.
- SARKISIAN, Gagik K. 1978. Bruchstücke von seleukidischen Wirtschaftstexten aus Uruk in den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. *Altorientalische Forschungen* 5: 81–89.
- SCHROEDER, Otto 1916. *Kontrakte der Seleukidenzeit aus Warka: Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der königlichen Museen zu Berlin*. (Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Museen zu Berlin 15) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs Buchhandlung.
- SPEELERS, Louis 1925. *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Asie antérieure des Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire à Bruxelles*. Brussels: Vanderpoorten.
- WEISBERG, David 1991. *The Late Babylonian Texts of the Oriental Institute Collection*. (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 24) Malibu: Undena Publications.
- WALLENFELS, Ronald 1998. *Seleucid Archival Texts in the Harvard Semitic Museum: Text Editions and Catalogue Raisonné of the Seal Impressions*. (Cuneiform Monographs 12) Groningen: Styx.
- WALLENFELS, Ronald 2015. Seleucid Babylonian “Official” and “Private” Seals Reconsidered: A Seleucid Archival Tablet in the Collection of the Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina. *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 2: 55–89.

Seal impressions

- LINDSTRÖM, Gunvor 2003. *Uruk: Siegelabdrücke auf hellenistischen Tonbullen und Tontafeln*. (Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte 20) Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern.
- WALLENFELS, Ronald 1994. *Uruk: Hellenistic Seal Impressions in the Yale Babylonian Collection*. (Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte 19) Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern.
- WALLENFELS, Ronald 2016. *Hellenistic Seal Impressions in the Yale Babylonian Collection: Ring-bullae and other Clay Sealings*. (Catalogue of the Babylonian Collections at Yale 5) Bethesda: CDL Press.

Archival studies

- DOTY, Timothy 1977. *Cuneiform Archives from Hellenistic Uruk*. PhD dissertation, Yale University.
- JURSA, Michael 2005. *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents and Archives* (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 1) Münster: Ugarit.
- MONERIE, Julien 2018. *L'économie de la Babylonie à l'époque hellénistique (IV^{ème} – II^{ème} siècle avant J.C.)*. (Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records 14) Berlin: De Gruyter.
- OELSNER, Joachim 1970. Eine Rechtsurkunde aus dem seleukidischen Uruk in der Hilprecht-Sammlung Vorderasiatischer Altertümer. *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena* 19: 905–991.
- PEDERSÉN, Olof 1998. *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East, 1500–300 BC*. Bethesda: CDL Press.

THE ASTRONOMICAL DIARIES

Find spots	Babylon (illicit excavations)
Number of texts	Circa 450
Material/external appearance of the texts	Clay tablets; occasional references to writing boards/wax tablets
Text types	Observational records
Chronology	Circa 650–60 BCE
Central persons and institutions	Esangil temple complex
Availability as digital / online resources	Currently, ADART volumes I–III (i.e., the Astronomical Diaries themselves) are available online at http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/adsd/ . The publication of volumes V–VI containing related texts (Goal-Year Text, Almanacs, etc.) are now also available.

The term “(Astronomical) Diaries” was coined by A. Sachs (1948) in a first sighting of extant astronomical texts from the Seleucid and Parthian periods. In his classification, the Astronomical Diaries are a subgroup of the non-tabular astronomical tablets. They are observational records registering a wide variety of phenomena on a day-to-day basis. While the lion’s share of a typical Astronomical Diary is usually dedicated to astronomical observations, and in particular the path of the moon through the ecliptic (measured by its distance from normal stars), the scope of these tablets goes beyond astronomical concerns. Hence the more neutral Babylonian designation *nasāru ša ginê*, meaning “regular observation” is more descriptive. The texts furthermore contain a wide variety of climatic, ecological, and economic occurrences, and provide accounts of historical events. Among the latter, the report of the battle of Gaugamela and Alexander the Great’s subsequent entry into the city of Babylon has attracted particular attention (already Kuhrt 1990). The Astronomical Diaries are indeed the single most important source for Late Achaemenid, Seleucid and Parthian Babylonia. As such, they have played an important role in the reconstruction of aspects of the history of the Middle East in the second half of the first millennium BCE.

The Astronomical Diaries published in volumes I–III of the *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts* series comprise circa 450 tablets and fragments (joined together from more than 700 registered pieces). With the exception of a handful of tablets—mainly in Berlin and the Louvre—they are at present housed in the British Museum. All of them originate from illegal excavations and were acquired on the antiquities market. More than 90% of the material was bought in a span of five years between 1876 and 1881. It is nevertheless certain that the Diaries come from the city of Babylon, and more specifically were an integral part of the literature and knowledge production centered on the city’s central sanctuary, the Esangil temple.

Following a statement of Berossus, the Astronomical Diaries were thought to start during the reign of Nabonassar in the mid-eighth century BCE, but the bulk of the tablets date to the period between circa 400 and 60 BCE. Only in a few instances (dating to the fourth century BCE), do the tablets have a colophon and the compilers are consequently usually anonymous. However, it is revealing to see that the Astronomical Diaries with colophon were written by members of the Mušēzib family, a rather well-documented family of astronomers active in the ambience of the Esangil over several generations.

The periods recorded in a Diary fluctuate between a few days in the case of preliminary records (Mitsuma 2015) and a whole year; most commonly, observations for six months are recorded. Monthly sections were separated from one another by means of horizontal rulings. The occasional presence of catch-lines shows that at least some Astronomical Diaries were conceptualized as a running series. Dating was an important concern to the compilers, in particular in the case of Diaries recording periods of one month or longer. In addition to giving the current year and reigning king's name in the first line on the obverse, the top, bottom and left edges frequently also contain a date formula. The practice of having the dates on the edges of the tablet as well may have originated in storage practice and served to facilitate retrieval of documents.

Bibliography

- ADART = SACHS, A. & H. HUNGER, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, 7 vols, all published by Austrian Academy of Sciences Press. I: 652–262 BC, Vienna 1988; II: 261–165 BC, Vienna 1989; III: 164–61 BC, Vienna 1996; IV: Undated Diaries and Addenda, Vienna 2022; V: Lunar and Planetary texts, Vienna 2001; VI: Goal Years Texts, Vienna 2006; VII: Almanacs and Normal Star Almanacs, Vienna 2014.
- CLANCIER, Philippe 2009. *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du 1er millénaire av. J.-C.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 363) Münster: Ugarit.
- HAUBOLD, Johannes, John STEELE & Kathryn STEVENS (eds) 2019. *Keeping Watch in Babylon: The Astronomical Diaries in Context.* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 100) Leiden: Brill.
- HUNGER, Hermann & David PINGREE 1999. *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia.* (Handbuch der Orientalistik I/XXIV) Leiden: Brill.
- KUHRT, Amélie 1990. Alexander and Babylon. In: H. SANCISI-WEERDENBURG & J.W. DRIJVERS (eds), *The Roots of the European Tradition: Achaemenid History V*: 121–130. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut Voor Het Nabije Oosten.
- MITSUMA, Yasuyuki 2015. From Preliminary Diaries to Short Diaries: The First and Second Steps in the Compilation Process of the Late Babylonian Astronomical Diaries. *Sciamus* 16: 53–73.
- PIRngrUBER, Reinhard 2017. *The Economy of Late Achaemenid and Seleucid Babylonia.* Cambridge: CUP.
- PIRngrUBER, Reinhard 2019. The Museum Context of the Astronomical diaries. In: J. HAUBOLD, J. STEELE & K. STEVENS (eds): 186–197.
- ROBSON, Eleanor 2008. *Mathematics in Ancient Iraq: A Social History.* Princeton: PUP.
- SACHS, Abraham 1948. A Classification of the Babylonian Astronomical Tablets of the Seleucid Period. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 2: 271–290.
- SHAYEGAN, M. Rahim. 2011. *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia.* Cambridge: CUP.

SELEUCID URUK SCHOLARLY TEXTS

Find spots	Uruk (Bīt Rēš and private house in section Ue XVIII), also unprovenient texts acquired from the antiquities market assumed to be looted from Uruk.
Number of Texts	Circa 700 scholarly texts from Late Babylonian Uruk.
Material / external appearance of the texts	Clay tablets, many references to writing boards which are now lost.
Text types	A wide range of scholarly material encompassing traditional genres of knowledge (divination, rituals texts, medicine) as well as new forms of mathematical astronomy.
Chronology	Achaemenid through Parthian periods, 425–136 BCE.
Central persons and institutions	The well-known families of Achaemenid and Seleucid Uruk all figure heavily in this corpus; their association with the Bīt Rēš is well understood.
Availability as digital / online resources	Can be downloaded from the ORACC CAMS/GKAB resources, some texts are also available on the CDLI.

The scholarly material from Uruk can be closely linked to a core set of families which through closely tied apprenticeships and relations maintained and developed cuneiform knowledge in Uruk during the late Achaemenid and Seleucid periods. A large proportion of the tablets were scientifically excavated from the so-called “House of the āšipus” as well as the Bīt Rēš area. Because of this, and the seemingly Urukian practice of carefully recorded colophons (Clancier 2009: 114), the timeline and scribes involved in the corpus is well understood. In particular, Matthieu Ossendrijver has produced an excellent overview of the families and scribes and the dense network of their interrelations (Ossendrijver 2011).

The major families in Uruk seem to have held on to key roles in the temple infrastructure and used these and other business activities to maintain their wealth while supporting the scholarly activities of some of their members. The scribes had a clear system of apprenticeship where junior (*šeḫru*) scribes would work under a senior scribe until they themselves graduated to the senior status. This practice crossed family lines which contributed to the dense network of scholarly activity. While each family might have focused on the scholarly texts necessary for their official duties within the temple administration they also copied and composed texts outside their core discipline, resulting in a wide range of tablets representing many different forms of cuneiform scholarly knowledge.

Bibliography

Major text corpora (references taken from cams/gkab)

- CLAY, Albert T. 1923. *Epics, Hymns, Omens and Other Texts*. (Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan 4) New Haven: YUP.
- VAN DIJK, Johannes J.A. & Werner R. MAYER 1980. *Texte aus dem Rēš-Heiligtum in Uruk-Warka*. (Baghdader Mitteilungen Beiheft 2) Berlin: Mann.
- HUNGER, Hermann 1976. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*, I. (Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte 9) Berlin: Mann.
- NEUGEBAUER, Otto 1955. *Astronomical Cuneiform Texts*. 3 vols. Berlin: Springer.
- THUREAU-DANGIN, François 1922. *Tablettes d’Uruk à l’usage des prêtres du temple d’Anu au temps des Séleucides*. (Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre 6) Paris: Geuthner.

- VON WEIHER, Egbert 1982. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*, II. (Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte 10) Berlin: Mann.
- VON WEIHER, Egbert 1988. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*, III. (Ausgrabungen der Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte 11) Berlin: Mann.
- VON WEIHER, Egbert 1993. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus dem Planquadrat U 18*, IV. (Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte 12) Mainz: P. von Zabern.
- VON WEIHER, Egbert 1998. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus dem Planquadrat U 18*, V. (Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte 13) Mainz: P. von Zabern.

Comprehensive and secondary studies

- CLANCIER, Philippe 2009. *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du Ier millénaire av. J.-C.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 363) Münster: Ugarit.
- CLANCIER, Philippe 2011. Cuneiform Culture's Last Guardians: The Old Urban Notability of Hellenistic Uruk. In: K. RADNER & E. ROBSON (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture: 752–773*. Oxford: OUP.
- LINSSEN, Marc J.H. 2004. *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practice*. Leiden: Brill.
- LIVINGSTONE, Alasdair 1986. *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- McEWAN, Gilbert J.P. 1981. *Priest and Temple in Hellenistic Babylonia*. (Freiburger altorientalische Studien 4) Wiesbaden: Steiner.
- OELSNER, Joachim 1986. *Materialien Zur Babylonischen Gesellschaft und Kultur in Hellenistischer Zeit*. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem.
- OSSENDRIJVER, Mathieu 2011. Science in Action: Networks in Babylonian Astronomy. In: E.C. CANCIK-KIRSCHBAUM, M. VAN ESS & J. MARZAHN (eds), *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident/ Science Culture Between Orient and Occident*: 213–221. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- PEDERSEN, Olof 1998. *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East, 1500–300 BC*. Bethesda: CDL Press.
- PROUST, Christine & John STEELE (eds) 2019. *Scholars and Scholarship in Late Babylonian Uruk*. Cham: Springer.
- REINER, Erica & David PINGREE 1985. *Babylonian Planetary Omens, II: Enuma Anu Enlil Tablets 50–51*. (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 2) Malibu: Undena Publications.
- REINER, Erica & David PINGREE 1998. *Babylonian Planetary Omens, III*. (Cuneiform Monographs 11) Leiden: Brill.
- REINER, Erica & David PINGREE 2005. *Babylonian Planetary Omens, IV*: (Cuneiform Monographs 30) Leiden: Brill.
- ROBSON, Eleanor 2008. *Mathematics in Ancient Iraq: A Social History*. Princeton: PUP.
- ROBSON, Eleanor 2019. *Ancient Knowledge Networks: A Social Geography of Cuneiform Scholarship in First-Millennium Assyria and Babylonia*. London: UCL Press.
- WEIDNER, Ernst F. 1941–1944a. Die astrologische Serie Enûma Anu Enlil. *Archiv für Orientforschung* 14: 172–195.
- WEIDNER, Ernst F. 1941–1944b. Die astrologische Serie Enûma Anu Enlil. *Archiv für Orientforschung* 14: 308–318.
- WEIDNER, Ernst F. 1954–1956. Die astrologische Serie Enûma Anu Enlil. *Archiv für Orientforschung* 17: 71–89.
- WEIDNER, Ernst F. 1967. *Gestirn-Darstellungen auf babylonischen Tontafeln*. Vienna: Hermann Böhlau.

THE LATE BABYLONIAN TEMPLE RITUAL TEXTS

Find spots	Babylon (Esangil temple complex area; Merkes; indeterminate); Uruk (Rēš temple; living quarters (Ue XVIII I) private archives; indeterminate).
Number of texts	Between 60 and 100 (incl. small unclassified fragments and unpublished texts).
Material / external appearance of the texts	Cuneiform clay tablets, mostly multi-column.
Text types	Temple ritual and associated texts.
Chronology	Circa fourth to first centuries BCE (Seleucid and Parthian periods); some texts are much earlier (Eturkamma rituals of the Divine Love Lyrics).
Central persons and institutions	Uruk temples and families Ekurzakir, Sîn-lēqe-unnīni, Hunzû and Ahûtu (Uruk); Esangil temple complex and associated temples (Babylon and associated cult centers).
Availability as digital / online resources	Some available in ORACC cams/gkab and CDLI. See http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/cams/gkab/ .

These tablets have been heuristically defined as temple rituals, for they refer to the worship in the sanctuaries of Late Babylonian cities, offering insight into different aspects of the cult and the religious calendar, such as the famous Babylonian New Year festival, offerings and purifications of various kinds, processions, divine journeys, etc. In many cases, however, these texts cannot be regarded as documents of religious practice, for they do not always provide instructions for the performance of the rites; rather, they register some elements of the ceremonies taking place in the temples and in other sacred spaces in a descriptive way. The precise circumstances in which these texts were created, and their function and purpose are difficult to appraise.

The archaeological context is not very helpful, since only some of the tablets were found in the course of controlled and well-documented digs (Clancier 2009). On stylistic and linguistic grounds, they can be dated to Hellenistic and Parthian Babylonia, and indeed the evidence suggests that at least some of them were creations of this period referring to old religious practices that were no longer carried out. As no precursors of these texts have been found, it is doubtful we are dealing with copies of older documents, but rather with creations of the priests (Debourse 2022; 2023). In this regard they are linked to the so-called Late Babylonian Priestly Literature (Jursa & Debourse 2020) produced in the temple environments of the Late Babylonian cities at a time when the priests needed to emphasize their social and cultic function.

Textual and archaeological evidence suggests that religious practice in Late Babylonian temples was profoundly affected by the transformations that occurred in Babylonia during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Monerie 2018). And, although the temples maintained their role as guardians of culture and tradition during this period, they became marginal as socio-political institutions. In these conditions, the production of the temple ritual texts embodied a discourse grounded in nostalgia for Babylonia's past that served to preserve scholarly traditions and cultural identity in a context of changing political dynamics. Late Babylonian ritual texts are part of this historiographical literature, but this does not rule out the existence of ritual practices in the Babylonian temples in the Hellenistic and Parthian periods—not as described in these documents, but present nonetheless.

Bibliography

- AMBOS, Claus 2004. *Mesopotamische Baurituale aus dem 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* Dresden: ISLET.
 ÇAĞIRGAN, Galip 1976. *The Babylonian Festivals*. PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham.

- ÇAĞIRGAN, Gapil & Wilfred G. LAMBERT 1991/1993. The Late Babylonian Kislîmu Ritual for Esagil. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 43/44/45: 89–106.
- CLANCIER, Philippe 2009. *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du Ier millénaire av. J.-C.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 363) Münster: Ugarit.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2017. A New Attestation of Habigalbat in Late Babylonian Sources. *Welt des Orients* 47: 259–264.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2018. Addendum to A New Attestation of Habigalbat (WdO 47/2 (2017) 259–264). *Welt des Orients* 48: 96–98.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2019. The Angry Ištar of Eturkamma: BM 32482+ and the Conservation of Cultic Traditions in the Late Babylonian Period. *Iraq* 81: 87–105.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2021a. Music and Ritual in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Evidence from the Late Babylonian Temple Festivals. In: R. EICHMANN & D. SHEHATA (eds), *Studien zur Musikarchäologie 12: Music Beyond Cultural Borders* (Orient-Archäologie 43): 1–30. Rahden: Verlag Marie Leidorf.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2021b. forthcoming. In and Around the Court of Bēl and the Cultic Topography of Esagil according to Late Babylonian Ritual Texts. In: S. GORDIN & U. GABBAY (eds), *Person, Place, and Society in the Ancient Near East, Fs. R. Zadok*: 177–220. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- DA RIVA, Rocío & Gianluca GALETTI 2018. Two Temple Rituals from Babylon. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 70: 189–227.
- DA RIVA, Rocío & Nathan WASSERMAN forthcoming. *The Divine Love Lyrics*.
- DEBOURSE, Céline 2022. *Of Priests and Kings: The Babylonian New Year Festival in the Last Age of Cuneiform Culture*. Leiden: Brill.
- DEBOURSE, Céline 2023. The New Year Festival in Seleucid Babylon: A Historical Assessment. In: R. DA RIVA, A. ARROYO & C. DEBOURSE (eds), *Ceremonies, Feasts and Festivities in Ancient Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean World: Performance and Participation. Proceedings of the 11th Melammu Workshop, Barcelona, 29–31 January 2020*: 85–114. Münster: Zaphon.
- EDZARD, Dietz-Otto 1987. Zur Ritualtafel der sog. “Love Lyrics.” In: E. REINER & F. ROCHBERG-HALTON (eds), *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies presented to Erica Reiner*: 57–67. New Haven: American Oriental Society.
- FINCKE, Jeanette 2013. Another Fragment of the “Love Lyrics” from Babylon (BM 47032). *NABU* 2013/76.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 1992. *Babylonian Topographical Texts*. (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 40) Leuven: Peeters.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 1995. The Bricks of E-Sagil. *Iraq* 57: 173–197.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 1996. Studies in Cultic Topography and Ideology. *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 53: 363–395.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 2000. Four Temple Rituals from Babylon. In: A.R. GEORGE & I. FINKEL (eds), *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W.G. Lambert*: 259–299. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 2006. Babylonian Texts from the Folios of Sidney Smith, Part Three: A Commentary on a Ritual of the Month Nisan. In: A. GUINAN (ed.), *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty*: 173–185. Leiden: Brill.
- JURSA, Michael & Céline DEBOURSE 2020. Late Babylonian Priestly Literature from Babylon. In: P. DUBOVSKÝ & F. GIUNTOLI (eds), *Stones, Tablets, and Scrolls*: 253–281. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- KRUL, Julia 2018. *The Revival of the Anu Cult and the Nocturnal Fire Ceremony at Late Babylonian Uruk*. Leiden: Brill.
- LAMBERT, Wilfred G. 1959. Divine Love Lyrics from Babylon. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4: 1–15.
- LAMBERT, Wilfred G. 1975. The Problem of the Love Lyrics. In: H. GOEDICKE & J.J.M. ROBERTS (eds), *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*: 98–135. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP.
- LAMBERT, Wilfred George 1997. Processions to the Akītu-House. *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 91: 49–80.
- LF = Lambert Folios: The Notebooks of W.G. Lambert. <<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/contrib/lambert/>>.
- LINSSEN, Marc 2004. *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practice*. Leiden: Brill.
- MONERIE, Julien 2018. *L'économie de la Babylonie à l'époque hellénistique (IV^eme – II^eme siècle avant J.C.)*. (Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records 14) Berlin: De Gruyter.
- PONGRATZ-LEISTEN, Beate 1994. *Ina šulmi īrub: Eine Kulttopographische und Ideologische Programmatik der Akītu-Prozession in Babylonien und Assyrien im I. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern.

LATE BABYLONIAN PRIESTLY LITERATURE FROM BABYLON

Find spots	Babylon (Esangil temple complex area; indeterminate).
Number of texts	More than 100 (including fragments and unpublished texts).
Material / external appearance of the texts	Cuneiform clay tablets, mostly multi-column.
Text types	Historical-literary compositions, temple rituals (please note the overlap with the corpus presented in Section 7 of this article), chronicles, one calendar treatise. The Astronomical Diaries (Section 5) belong here as well, from the viewpoint of intentionality and institutional context, as do the late astronomical texts from Babylon. However, these are not included in the bibliography of this section.
Chronology	The bulk of the texts should be dated to the period between the late fourth and the second centuries BCE (Seleucid and Parthian periods), but there are outliers.
Central persons and institutions	Esangil temple complex and associated temples (Babylon and associated cult centers), Mušēzib family.
Availability as digital / online resources	A few are available in ORACC cams/gkab and CDLI; online editions by Y. Bloch, C. Debourse, M. Jursa, I. Kamil, and N. Wasserman will be made available in 2023. See further, http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/cams/gkab/ and http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/lovelyrics/ .

Late Babylonian Priestly Literature (LBPL) is a label proposed for a range of literary works extant only in manuscripts from the library of the Esangil temple in Babylon dating to the Hellenistic and Parthian periods. These texts, rather than being simply late copies of older compositions, as was often assumed, are creations of the period to which their manuscripts date and reflect the contemporary interests of their priestly authors. The represented genres include historical-literary compositions, including pseudo-epigraphic letters, chronicles referring to the remote and the more recent past as well as to their authors' present, a prophecy, rituals, a unique calendar text, as well as a few other erudite compositions. Also, the astronomical diaries (as well as the remainder of Esangil's vast 'astronomical' output) have their origin in the context of the priests responsible for the LBPL.

All genres of LBPL aim at situating the priestly community within its contemporary context. They do so principally by engaging with the imagined or remote past as well as with more immediate history and with the priests' expectations and aspirations for the present and the future. Historical-literary compositions reflect the priests' take on ancient Babylonian history; chronicles and chronicle-like texts deal with the more tangible past and the present. Hopes and ambitions for the present and the future are principally expressed by ritual texts and prophetic writing.

The motifs of LBPL draw on the dynamics of a triangle whose vertices are the priest, Esangil and Marduk, and the king. The priest, not the king, is the unambiguous defender of religious standards and cultic normality. The king is a more ambiguous figure: we have the good king who defends the temple, but also the bad king, who does not, and the repenting king who understands the error of his ways and bows to Marduk. Priests, who are the guardians of traditional written lore, possess the wisdom that is the principal yardstick for evaluating behavior that is acceptable to Marduk. In order to fulfill their regulatory function, the priests can and must aspire to royal recognition, but they also have the right and the duty to oppose the (foreign) king when the values of the religious system demand it. The persistence of these motifs in LBPL shows that these texts emerged from the coherent intellectual, political, and socioeconomic setting of Hellenistic Babylon.

Bibliography

- ÇAĞIRGAN, Galip 1976. *The Babylonian Festivals*. PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham.
- ÇAĞIRGAN, Gamil & Wilfred G. LAMBERT 1991/93. The Late Babylonian Kislīmu Ritual for Esagil. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 43/44/45: 89–106.
- CLANCIER, Philippe 2009. *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du 1er millénaire av. J.-C.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 363). Münster: Ugarit.
- DA RIVA, Rocío & Gianluca GALETTI 2018. Two Temple Rituals from Babylon. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 70: 189–227.
- DA RIVA, Rocío 2019. The Angry Ištar of Eturkalamma: BM 32482+ and the Conservation of Cultic Traditions in the Late Babylonian Period. *Iraq* 81: 87–105.
- DA RIVA, Rocío & Nathan WASSERMAN forthcoming. *The Divine Love Lyrics*.
- DEBOURSE, Céline 2022. *Of Priests and Kings: The Babylonian New Year Festival in the Last Age of Cuneiform Culture*. Leiden: Brill.
- DEBOURSE, Céline 2023. The New Year Festival in Seleucid Babylon: A Historical Assessment. In: R. DA RIVA, A. ARROYO & C. DEBOURSE (eds), *Ceremonies, Feasts and Festivities in Ancient Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean World: Performance and Participation. Proceedings of the 11th Melammu Workshop, Barcelona, 29–31 January 2020*: 85–114. Münster: Zaphon.
- DE BREUCKER, Geert 2015. Heroes and Sinners: Babylonian Kings in Cuneiform Historiography of the Persian and Hellenistic Period. In: J.M. SILVERMAN & C. WAERZEGGERS (eds), *Political Memory in and after the Persian Empire*: 75–94. Atlanta: SBL.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 1992. *Babylonian Topographical Texts*. (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 40) Leuven: Peeters.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 1995. The Bricks of E-Sagil. *Iraq* 57: 173–197.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 1996. Studies in Cultic Topography and Ideology. *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 53: 363–395.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 2000. Four Temple Rituals from Babylon. In: A.R. GEORGE & I. FINKEL (eds), *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W.G. Lambert*: 259–299. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- GEORGE, Andrew R. 2006. Babylonian Texts from the Folios of Sidney Smith, Part Three: A Commentary on a Ritual of the Month Nisan. In: A. GUINAN (ed.), *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty*: 173–185. Leiden: Brill.
- JURSA, Michael & Céline DEBOURSE 2017. A Babylonian Priestly Martyr, a King-like Priest, and the Nature of Late Babylonian Priestly Literature. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 107: 77–79.
- JURSA, Michael 2020. Wooing the Victor with Words: Babylonian Priestly Literature as a Response to the Macedonian Conquest. In: K. TRAMPEDACH & A. MEEUS (eds), *The Legitimation of Conquest: Monarchical Representation and the Art of Government in the Empire of Alexander the Great* (Studies in Ancient Monarchies 7): 165–177 Stuttgart: Steiner.
- JURSA, Michael & Céline DEBOURSE 2020. Late Babylonian Priestly Literature from Babylon. In: P. DUBOVSKÝ & F. GIUNTOLI (eds), *Stones, Tablets, and Scrolls: Periods of the Formation of the Bible*: 253–281. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- LAMBERT, Wilfred G. 1959. Divine Love Lyrics from Babylon. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4: 1–15.
- LAMBERT, Wilfred G. 1975. The Problem of the Love Lyrics. In: H. GOEDICKE & J.J.M. ROBERTS (eds), *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*: 98–135. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP.
- LAMBERT, Wilfred G. 1997. Processions to the Akītu-House. *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 91: 49–80.
- LINSSSEN, Marc 2004. *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practice*. Leiden: Brill.
- REYNOLDS, Frances 2019. *A Babylon Calendar Treatise: Scholars and Invaders in the Late First Millennium BC*. Oxford: OUP.
- WAERZEGGERS, Caroline 2015. Facts, Propaganda or History? Shaping Political Memory in the Nabonidus Chronicle. In: J.M. SILVERMAN & C. WAERZEGGERS (eds), *Political Memory in and after the Persian Empire*: 95–124. Atlanta: SBL.

SBH – THE LAST EMESAL ARCHIVE

Find spots	Babylon (acquired from the antiquities market)
Number of the texts	86
Material / external appearance of the texts	Clay tablets, mostly multi-column
Text types	Emesal songs with Akkadian interlinear translations and performative indicators. Many of the tablets contain colophons.
Dating	Circa 130–80 BCE
Central persons and institutions	Three <i>kalû</i> -priests from the Sin-ibni family
Availability as digital / online resources	Available as lemmatized text in ORACC blms and eISL

Emesal, the only known variant of Standard-Sumerian, was a language closely connected to lamentation in Mesopotamia. Despite the fact that Sumerian died out as a vernacular around 2000 BCE, Emesal continued to be used for lamentations. Different genres of Emesal-lamentations existed, and they were performed on a regular basis in the first millennium. As was often the case in antiquity, the texts and the knowledge about their content, language and performance were a family business—a fact that can be established from the surviving colophons. The texts edited by George Reisner in *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit* (SBH) in 1896 demonstrate that in the second and first century BCE Emesal-texts were still copied and, to the best of our knowledge, also performed.

Bibliography

- COHEN, Mark E. 1988. *The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 2 vols. Potomac: Capital Decisions.
- GABBAY, Uri 2015. *The Eršemma Prayers of the First Millennium BC*. (Heidelberger Emesal- Studien 2) Heidelberg: Harrassowitz.
- GABBAY, Uri 2014. *Pacifying the Hearts of the Gods. Sumerian Emesal Prayers of the First Millennium BC*. (Heidelberger Emesal-Studien 1) Heidelberg: Harrassowitz.
- HUNGER, Hermann 1968. *Babylonische und Assyrische Kolophone*. (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 2) Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker.
- REISNER, George 1896. *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit*. Berlin: W. Spemann.

GRAECO-BABYLONIACA

Find spots	Unknown, some of the fragments may come from Babylon (library of Esangil).
Number of texts	16
Material/external appearance of the texts	Clay tablets inscribed with Greek transliterations of Sumero-Akkadian scholarly texts, mostly with the original texts in cuneiform script on the obverse.
Text types	The extant texts mirror the milieu of Late Babylonian cuneiform learning and the respective repertoire of scholarly genres.
Chronology	Late, but basically unclear. The time frame of suggested dates comprises the second century BCE to the first century CE.
Central persons and institutions	Students of cuneiform script from a slightly advanced to a more advanced level.
Availability as digital / online resources	Some of the tablets are available in CDLI.

In a wide sense the Graeco-Babyloniaca can be defined as all that remains of Babylonian languages within the Classical Greek tradition (e.g., Scholz 1978; Kessler 2014). However, in Assyriology the term Graeco-Babyloniaca is commonly used for a sample of 16 cuneiform tablets, mostly heavily damaged, inscribed with texts composed in the Sumerian and/or Akkadian language, but transliterated into Greek script. Most of them bear a cuneiform inscription on the obverse, and a transliteration into Greek on the reverse. Three tablets were demonstrably inscribed with a Greek transliteration of a Babylonian text only (Oelsner 2013: 159).

The archival context is unclear. At least the tablets from the British Museum can be ascribed to certain circumstances of acquisition, therefore they allow an attribution to Babylon, more exactly to the library of Esangil as the alleged findspot (Clancier 2009: 248 and *passim*). Although the find context is not explicit, the content and the *Sitz im Leben* of the tablets is fairly clear. Almost all the texts are situated in the milieu of cuneiform learning (Gesche 2001: 184–185; Oelsner 2013: 148–149) from a slightly advanced to an advanced level of education. Genres represented in the sample include lexical lists, scholarly and ritual texts (e.g., *Babylonian Šamaš-hymn*, fragments of the series *Uttukū Lemnūtu*) and, literary (i.e., dedicatory) colophons that attest to a certain familiarity with the time-honored cuneiform tradition and scholarly self-image. The colophons even offer a superficial glimpse into the prosopography of the authors (Clancier 2009: 252).

The Graeco-Babyloniaca emerge from a multilingual and multilateral milieu, in which Sumero-Akkadian texts had still been handed down and performed within the social framework of the late Babylonian temples. Aramaic and Greek were living languages at the time and perhaps the Greek alphabet with its phonetic character seemed suitable to represent the correct pronunciation of the scholarly texts. The Akkadian language in the extant texts shows the characteristics of Late Babylonian dialect. The Greek transliterations, however, offer some deep insights into phenomena like formation of syllables, loss of final vowels, segolization and anaptyctic vowels (Lang 2021). Due to the “frozen” character of the genres (lists, scholarly texts, hymns), they do not mirror a living Akkadian language; rather, they reveal on the one hand certain archaisms (Westenholz 2007: 281) and on the other hand certain changes of the pronunciation, possibly influenced by Aramaic (Knudsen 1989–1990).

An exact dating is impossible, as there are no confirmed known archival contexts or date indications in colophons. Attempts to date the tablets by means of epigraphic dating have hitherto led to a dating around the beginning of the common era (Geller 1997 *passim*; Westenholz 2007: 274). That means that our documents must have been written in the Parthian period (141 BCE to 224 CE). The most recent attempt at dating situates the tablets in the early part of the suggested time-range, that is in the late second or early first century BCE (Stevens 2019: 141). A systematic evaluation is still a desideratum.

Bibliography

- BLACK, Jeremy A. & Susan M. SHERWIN-WHITE 1984. A Clay Tablet with Greek Letters in the Ashmolean Museum and the “Graeco-Babyloniaca” Texts. *Iraq* 46: 131–140.
- GELLER, Markham J. 1997. The Last Wedge. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 87: 43–95.
- GESCHE, Petra D. 2001. *Schulunterricht in Babylonien im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 275) Münster: Ugarit.
- KESSLER, Karlheinz 2014. Lukian und Babylon. In: M. KREBERNIK & H. NEUMANN (eds), *Babylonien und seine Nachbarn in neu- und spätbabylonischer Zeit: Wissenschaftliches Kolloquium aus Anlass des 75. Geburtstags von Joachim Oelsner, Jena, 2. und 3. März 2007.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 369): 95–112. Münster: Ugarit.

- KNUDSEN, Ebbe E. 1989–1990. Akkadian in Greek Orthography: Evidence of Sound Change in an Ancient Traditional Pronunciation. *Orientalia Suecana* 38–39: 71–80.
- KNUDSEN, Ebbe E. 1990. On Akkadian Texts in Greek Orthography. In: E. KECK, S. SØNDERGAARD & E. WULFF (eds), *Living Waters: Scandinavian Orientalistic Studies Presented to Professor Dr. Frede Løkkegaard on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday, January 27th 1990*: 147–161. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- KNUDSEN, Ebbe E. 1995. The Ashmolean Museum Incantation in Greek Orthography. In: M. DIETRICH & O. LORETZ (eds), *Vom Alten Orient zum Alten Testament: Festschrift für Wolfram Freiherrn von Soden zum 85. Geburtstag am 19. Juni 1993* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 240): 135–140. Kevelaer: Butzer & Bercker.
- LANG, Martin 2021. Akkadian and the Greek Alphabet (Graeco-Babyloniaca). In: J.-P. VITA (ed.), *History of the Akkadian Language* (Handbook of Oriental Studies: Section 1 The Near and Middle East 152): 102–125. Leiden: Brill.
- MAUL, Stefan 1991. Neues zu den “Graeco Babyloniaca.” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 81: 87–107.
- MAUL, Stefan 1995. La fin de la tradition cuneiforme et les “Graeco Babyloniaca.” *Cahiers du Centre Gustave-Glotz* 6: 3–17.
- SCHILEICO, Woldemar G. 1928–1929. Ein babylonischer Weihetext in griechischer Schrift. *Archiv für Orientforschung* 5: 11–13.
- SCHOLZ, Bernhard 1978. *Akkadisch-griechische und griechisch-akkadische Transkriptionen: Mit Zusammenfassung*. PhD dissertation, University of Graz.
- SOLLBERGER, Edmond 1962. Graeco-Babyloniaca. *Iraq* 24: 63–72.
- STEVENS, Kathryn 2019. *Between Greece and Babylonia: Hellenistic Intellectual History in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: CUP.
- WESTENHOLZ, Aage 1991. The Phoneme /o/ in Akkadian. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 81: 10–19.
- WESTENHOLZ, Aage 2007. The Graeco-Babyloniaca Once Again. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 97: 262–313.

GREEK INSCRIPTIONS IN MESOPOTAMIA (AND BABYLONIA)

Find spots	Various
Number of texts	Less than 20
Material/external appearance of the texts	Mostly stone inscriptions
Text types	Inscriptions
Chronology	From the third century BCE onwards
Central persons and institutions	-
Availability as digital / online resources	< https://epigraphy.packhum.org/regions/1535 >

The campaign of Alexander III and the following creation of the Seleucid Empire caused a broader use of the Greek language for inscribed documents in Mesopotamia and beyond.² Moreover, the rise of the Parthian Empire and the following Roman presence in Mesopotamia brought the use of Greek inscriptions as a medium for self-representation.³ Nevertheless, there

2 On the transformation of the Achaemenid Empire after Alexander III and the study of the “Hellenistic” Seleucid “kingdom” see Strootman 2020: 7–13 and 20–26. See also Mairs 2014: 6–7 on the use of Greek inscriptions and Mairs 2014: 10–11 on the use of the Greek language in Hellenistic Bactria; Coloru 2009: 287–292 with a collection of Greek inscriptions from Hellenistic Bactria. The Greek inscriptions of Iran and Central Asia are collected in CII II.1, which is labeled as *I. Iran/Asie centrale in the Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*: see SEG LXII 1568.

3 See Schmitt 1998: 168 on the use of Greek inscriptions within the Parthian realm. See further Schmitt 1998: 195. See further Thommen 2010: 444–491 with a collection of Greek inscriptions (as well as parchments and papyri) from the Arsacid Empire.

are only a comparatively small number of Greek inscriptions to be found beyond the Euphrates. The Greek inscriptions from the region which stretches from the left bank of the Euphrates to India and from Armenia to Yemen are usually summarized under the heading “Inscriptions from the Greek Extreme Orient” (Bérard, Feissel, Laubry, Petitmengen, Rousset & Séve 2010: 85). Currently, these inscriptions are collected in two volumes.

In 2004 Filippo Canali de Rossi published a collection which is part of the series *Inscriptiones Graecae* *Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*. Among the inscriptions published in this volume are inscriptions stemming from other regions of Mesopotamia (i.e., the Upper Euphrates Valley and its tributaries on the left bank as well as the Upper Tigris Valley, IK 65/24–74), of Babylonia (i.e., from the Persian Gulf to a line north of Bagdad, IK 65/75–145), and of the Mesene/Charakene (i.e., the region between the Tigris and the Shatt al Hai, IK 65/146–165). Most of the texts from the Mesene/Charakene region originate from Palmyra and give information about Palmyrene traders doing their business there. The second volume is an anthology by Reinhold Merkelbach and Josef Stauber in which inscriptions from Mesopotamia are published and commented (Merkelbach & Stauber 2005: No. 501–516). Thanks to the PHI-Project, some of the Greek inscriptions are also accessible in digital form (<<https://epigraphy.packhum.org/regions/1535>>).

The chronological distribution of these inscriptions is rather broad. The Greek epigraphic tradition begins in the third century BCE and ends towards the last decennium of the sixth century CE. Since for the present purpose only the texts from the third century BCE to the first century are of interest, the overall number of inscriptions is quite small since there are less than 20 Greek inscriptions from Mesopotamia, if minor texts such as amphora stamps or stamped bullae or inscribed weights are excluded (to the weights collected in IK 65, SEG LXII 1569 is to be added).

Bibliography

Catalogue of texts

In this tentative list, only texts actually found in Mesopotamia and dated between the third century BCE and the first century CE are included. Also excluded are inscriptions found elsewhere the texts of which have a content which is related to Mesopotamia. Amphora stamps and other minor texts were not included either. Only the major editions are mentioned.

1. IK 65/25 = CIG III 4670 (I/II cent. CE/Edessa): Bilingual (Syriac/Greek) funerary inscription of Amassameses, wife of Saredos, son of Mannos.
2. IK 65/64 = Merkelbach/Stauber 501 = SEG VII 37 = SEG XLVIII 1838 (I cent. CE /Nineveh): Dedication of Apollonhanes in honor of the strategos Apollonios.
3. IK 65/65 = Merkelbach/Stauber 502 (Parthian era/Nineveh): Dedication of the archon Apollonios to the polis.
4. IK 65/66 = Merkelbach/Stauber 503 = SEG XLVIII 1838 (I/II cent. CE (?)/Nineveh): Statue of Heracles dedicated by Sarapiodoros, son of Artemidos which was made by a certain Diogenes.
5. IK 65/76 = Merkelbach/Stauber 505 (after 209 BCE/Seleucia on the Tigris): List of priests and magistrates which was part of a document of unknown character.
6. IK 65/84 (Parthian era/Seleucia on the Tigris): Fragmentary funerary epigram.
7. IK 65/97 = Merkelbach/Stauber 511 = SEG XXXII 1400 (third cent. BCE or 63 BCE/Babylon): Ostrakon mentioning payments of 249 drachmai to Ballaros and Artemon and their men, soldiers of the garrison of Babylon.
8. IK 65/98 (242 or 222 BCE/Babylon): Fragmentary funerary epigram.
9. IK 65/100 = Merkelbach/Stauber 515 = SEG XXXIII 1218 (III/II cent. BCE (?)/Babylon or Uruk): Funerary inscription of Aristestas, alias Ardibelteios.

10. IK 65/102 = Merkelbach/Stauber 510 = OGIS 254 (Seleucid era (?)/Babylon): Dedication of the polis in honor of the strategos Democrates.
11. IK 65/103 = Merkelbach/Stauber 509 = SEG XXXVI 1724 (166 BCE/Babylon?): Dedication of Philippos during the reign of Antiochus IV who bears among others the title savior of Asia (σωτήρ τῆς Ἀσίας).
12. IK 65/106 = Merkelbach/Stauber 514 = SEG VII 40 (121 BCE/Babylon): Fragment mentioning the Parthian king Arsaces IX Mithridates II.
13. IK 65/107 = Merkelbach/Stauber 513 = SEG VII 39 (110 BCE/Babylon): List of epheboi and winners of an agon.
14. IK 65/112 = Merkelbach/Stauber 512 (I/II cent. CE/Babylon): Building inscription of Dioscurides regarding the building of the theater and the stage.
15. IK 65/139 (Seleucid or Parthian era/Uruk): Fragmentary funerary epigram(?).
16. IK 65/140 = Merkelbach/Stauber 516 = SEG XVIII 596 (110 CE/Uruk): Honorary inscription of the community of the Dollameni for Artemidoros, son of Diogenes, alias Minnanaios, son of Tuphaios who dedicated a village named Daiameina to the god Gar.

Abbreviations

CIG III	BOEKH, August & Johannes FRANZ (ed.) 1853. <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum volumen tertium</i> . Berlin: ex officina academica.
CII II.I	ROUGEMONT, Georges (ed.) 2012. <i>Inscriptions grecques d'Iran et d'Asie centrale</i> . (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum II(1)) London: School of Oriental and African Studies
IK 65	CANALI DE ROSSI, Filippo. (ed.) 2004. <i>Iscrizioni dello estremo oriente greco: Un repertorio</i> . (Inschriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 65) Bonn: Rudolf Habelt.
Merkelbach/Stauber	MERKELBACH, Reinholt & Josef STAUBER 2005. <i>Jenseits des Euphrat: Griechische Inschriften: Ein epigraphisches Lesebuch</i> . München: K.G Saur.
OGIS	DITTENBERGER, Wilhelmus (ed.) 1903. <i>Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae: Supplementum Sylloges Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . Leipzig: Lipsiae S. Hirzel.
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> , Leiden 1923 ff.

Bibliography

- BÉRARD, François, Denis FEISSEL, Nicolas LAUBRY, Pierre PETITMENGEN, Denis ROUSSET & Michel SÈVE 2010. *Guide de l'épigraphiste: Bibliographie choisie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales*. Paris: Editions Ulm.
- COLORU, Omar 2009. *Da Alessandro a Menandro: Il regno greco di Battriana*. (Studi Ellenistici 21) Pisa: Fabrizio Serra editore.
- MAIRS, Rachel 2014. *The Hellenistic Far East: Archaeology, Language, and Identity in Greek Central Asia*. Oakland: UCP.
- MERKELBACH, Reinhold & Josef STAUBER 2005. *Jenseits des Euphrat: Griechische Inschriften. Ein epigraphisches Lesebuch*. München: De Gruyter.
- SCHMITT, Rüdiger 1998. Parthische Sprach- und Namenüberlieferung aus arsakidischer Zeit. In: J. WIESEHÖFER (ed.), *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse: Beiträge des Internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin (27.–30. Juni 1996)* (Historia Einzelschriften 122): 163–204. Stuttgart: Steiner.
- STROOTMAN, Rolf 2020. *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires: The Near East After the Achaemenids, c.330 to 30 BCE*. Edinburgh: EUP.
- THOMMEN, Lukas 2010. Griechische und lateinische Texte. In: U. HACKL, B. JACOBS & D. WEBER (eds), *Quellen zur Geschichte des Partherreichs: Textsammlung mit Übersetzungen und Kommentaren*, II: 1–491. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.