

with particular species; and that in i 6.9 ὄβρα are truffles in general, the ἄσχιον perhaps a particular type of truffle, and the οὐγγιον not a fungus at all. In general, it seems that some of the differences between Athenaeus and Theophrastus are errors resulting from careless quotation and perhaps also from over-compression; elsewhere the variation may be a deliberate and conscious reflection of the particular interests of the Athenaeus passage. In the former case, if we are to use Athenaeus' statements as evidence to help in the identification of the plants concerned, we cannot escape asking whether—even when what he was writing was a careless mis-reporting of Theophrastus—he was conscious of its implications and concerned with whether it made sense, or not. And finally, it is interesting how often in the discussion of this material useful insights can still be obtained from commentaries and discussions dating from before 1830.

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Ritual for a Seleucid king at Babylon?*

A. K. Grayson's valuable volume, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*,¹ contains not only a rich collection of historiographic writing from the period before the Macedonian conquest, but has also added several new fragments to the Babylonian Chronicles series for the early hellenistic period, in addition to a useful re-edition of the *Chronicle of the Diadochoi*.² These fragments constitute what survives (or is known at present to survive) from the apparently last chronicles of the corpus which began in the reign of Nabonassar (747–34 BC) and continued down to and into the early Seleucid period.³ When precisely (and why) the corpus came to an end is at present unknown. The new post-Alexander fragments are probably all from the third century BC, nos 11 and 12 from the early third century, while nos 13 and 13b are of later third century date.⁴

This note is concerned with no. 13b, a text of considerable interest for the history of Seleucid policies towards Babylonian temples and cult in the third century BC. Grayson has provided transliteration, translation and notes for the surviving bottom portion of a clay tablet from Babylon which Pinches had cited

* In discussion of this text I have benefited from the remarks of Dr I. Finkel, Dr M. Geller, Dr S. Hornblower, Miss G. R. Hart and Prof. D. J. Wiseman.

¹ Texts from Cuneiform Sources v (Locust Valley, NY 1975) (hereafter 'Grayson').

² Grayson no. 10.

³ See Grayson 8–28 and 'Assyria and Babylonia', *Orientalia* xlix (1980) 140–94, at 173–5.

⁴ See Grayson 26–8, for discussion of the dating of no. 11, concerning Antiochus the Crown Prince, probably Antiochus I; no. 12 is securely dated to the end of the reign of Seleucus I from the reference in the 2nd section of the obverse, line 3, to the 30th year of the Seleucid era (282/1 BC). On the problems of dating no. 13, possibly to the reigns of Seleucus II and III, see Grayson 27–8. On 13b see below.

briefly and partially translated nearly ninety years ago.⁵ The preserved portion contains 15 lines of which 13 can be deciphered. A new entry begins in line 3 (the first legible line) with a new regnal year, and records at some length arrangements by an important temple official, the *shatammu* of the temple of Esagil,⁶ for the sacrifices for one day of the Akitu festival, the New Year festival at Babylon. Grayson's text and translation from line 3 to the beginning of 8 are reproduced here for convenience:

- 3 [M]U LX(?)XXVIII^{kám} mSi-lu-ku šarri iti Nisannu(bar)
ITI BI UD VIII^{kám} iltēn^{em} mār Bābili ki lúšā-tam É-sag-gil
4 [X] X šá É-sag-gil ina pí šarri lib-bu-ú^{kušši-piš-tum} šá
šarri šá ina pāni-ma iš-šá-a
5 [X G]IN KÙ.BABBAR ultu bīt šarri ultu bīt ram-ni-šú XI
alpē^{bi-ā} ma-ru-tu I ME lahṛē(u.)
6 [m]a-ru-tu XI^{mušen} paspasē(uz.tur) ma-ru-tu a-na
nindabē ina lib-bi [É-sag-gil]
7 a-na^d Bēl u^d Bēlti(gašan)-ia u ilāni^{mcs} rabūti^{mcs} ù a-na
dul-lu šá mSi-[lu]-ku [šarri]
8 u mārē(a)^{mcs}-šú il-ta-kan

(3) The eighty-eighth year of Seleucus, the king: in the month Nisan, that same month, the eighth day, a Babylonian, the *shatammu* of Esagil,⁷ (4) established, according to the command of the king, precisely in accordance with the parchment letter which the king had sent before, as [the offer]ing of Esagil (5) [N] shekels of silver from the house of the king, from his own house, eleven fat oxen, one hundred fat ewes, (6) eleven fat ducks for the offering, within Esagil, (7) to Bel (Lord), Beltia (Mistress), and the great gods and for the ritual of Seleucus, the king, (8) and his sons.

Two questions require further discussion: (i) problems arising from the date of 13b, and (ii) the significance of lines 5–8. First the date, year 88 of the Seleucid era (henceforth SE), i.e. 224/3 BC. The formula for the Seleucid year date is incompletely preserved at the beginning of line 3, where the left-hand edge is slightly broken and the signs for *mu* (year), the usual start of a new entry, are only partially preserved. The signs for 28 (10 + 10 + 8) are clear and agreed by both Pinches⁸ and Grayson. Grayson added traces of another stroke, not another *winkelhaken*, just visible on the tablet before the first of the two *winkelhaken* making up 20.⁹ Of the Seleucid kings called Seleucus to whose reigns the document could be dated, Seleucus IV (SE 125–137), the last Seleucid king of that name to rule Babylonia, can be excluded. Epigraphically the figure 100 + 28 = (SE) 128 is not admissible and the figure

⁵ T. G. Pinches, 'Rough notes on some texts of the Seleucidae', *Bab.Or.Rec.* vi (1892–3) 35–6 at 36; Grayson 283–4 no. 13b (plates xi, transcript, xxvi, photo) with discussion also at 277–8. The tablet is BM 35421.

⁶ On the functions of the *shatammu* in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods see M. San Nicolò, *Beiträge zu einer Prosopographie neubabylonischer Beamten der Zivil- und Tempelverwaltung*, SBAW München (1941) 25–6 n. 37, 26 n. 40; M. A. Dandamayev, 'State and Temple in Babylonia in the 1st Millennium BC', in E. Lipinski, ed., *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East ii*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* vi (1979) 589–96.

⁷ The conventional translation of *shatammu* as 'bishop' of Esagil has the wrong connotations.

⁸ Pinches (n. 5) 36 and see Grayson's remarks 284 on line 3.

⁹ I owe thanks to Mr C. B. F. Walker of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities in the British Museum for kindly checking (and confirming) the reading of these numerals in this line.

60 + 60 + 28 = (SE) 148 would be chronologically impossible.¹⁰ The only other eligible years, 68 and 78 from the reign of Seleucus II, can also be excluded because they would be written with too few signs.¹¹ Hence 'the only plausible possibility is one upright preceded by *mu* thus giving *mu* 88' (SE 88 = 224/3BC),¹² the second year of the reign of Seleucus III, the elder of the two sons of Seleucus II. SE 88 emerges as the only date compatible both with the reading of the signs and with the king's designation.

There is one as yet unnoticed problem about the date. Lines 7–8 refer to the *dullu* for King Seleucus and his sons. Seleucus III was a young man when he came to the throne in 225 BC (νέος: Polyb. iv 48.7).¹³ His assassination, soon after, in 223 BC, left his younger brother Antiochus (III), then in Babylon,¹⁴ heir to the throne.¹⁵ Seleucus III seems to have been childless. He is not known to have married after his accession and no sons, legitimate or illegitimate, are recorded in the Greek and Latin sources.¹⁶ Polybius' description of Antiochus III's accession does not mention any sons of Seleucus III.¹⁷ These considerations, plus the fact that Seleucus' army on his death turns first to Achaeus, a royal kinsman, who 'keeps the throne for Antiochus', Seleucus' brother (Polyb. iv 48.10), have led to the inevitable conclusion that Seleucus III was without legitimate sons.¹⁸ There are alternative explanations for a reference in lines 7–8 to King Seleucus and his sons in the reign of Seleucus III. Possibly the chronicler has made a slip in recording the *shatammu*'s written instructions for the king, though that may seem unlikely. Or is it that the instructions for the New Year festival, which are being implemented under King Seleucus (III), are orders of King Seleucus II? Unlike Seleucus III, Seleucus II had two sons, the future kings Seleucus (III) and Antiochus (III), to fit the reference in line 8. Moreover, the text (line 4) shows that time had lapsed since the king had originally sent his letter to the *shatammu*. We certainly have evidence from Seleucid Babylonia of the implementation of a previous king's rulings under his successor without

explicit affirmation of the (reigning) king's formal confirmation of the old ruling.¹⁹ This solution answers the otherwise problematic reference in line 8 to King Seleucus and his sons who, on my hypothesis, are Seleucus II and his sons. The implementation in SE 88 of Seleucus II's arrangements for 8 Nisan of the New Year festival at Babylon produced an anachronism in lines 7–8.

The second problem is what the 'ritual' for King Seleucus and his sons (7–8) means. Lines 4–8 detail the silver and animals given by the king for sacrifice to the Babylonian gods and for the '*dullu* of King Seleucus and his sons'. Grayson takes this to show that 'the royal cult created by the Seleucids was, among other places, practised at Babylon'.²⁰ If this is right, the text opens up a significant new chapter in Seleucid royal cult practice. No. 13b would, for example, antedate by three decades the earliest evidence of a centrally organized cult of the Seleucids; furnish rare evidence of Seleucid methods in a non-Greek area, no less than the insertion of the cult of the king and his sons, at royal command, into a local pantheon to be celebrated on a thoroughly Babylonian religious occasion, the great New Year festival; and finally it would provide explicit documentation of the king's personal role in organizing whatever was organized concerning his cult.

There is no evidence of a centrally organized cult of the reigning king before Antiochus III, who in 193 BC added, through the satrapies of the Seleucid empire, a cult of his queen, Laodice, to join that of the king and of the *progonoi* of the dynasty.²¹ As is well known, this centrally organized cult has always to be distinguished from local 'spontaneous' cults for hellenistic kings.²² This distinction is equally relevant for Babylonian towns and for the new city foundations in the middle

¹⁰ Cf. the 'decree' of 75 SE (236 BC, reign of Seleucus II), 'promulgated' by the *shatammu* of Esagil, with the Babylonian assembly, to record the land grants made from royal land, previously held in fief, to the towns of Babylon, Borsippa and Cuthah in the reign of Antiochus II, and preserved on a copy of SE 139 (173/2 BC): C. F. Lehmann, *Zeits. Assyriol.* vii (1892) 328–34 at 330–2; G. K. Sarkisian, 'City Land in Seleucid Babylonia', in I. M. Diakonov, ed., *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Moscow 1969) 312–35, at 321–3. See J. Oelsner, 'Ein Beitrag zu keilschriftlichen Königs-titulaturen in hellenistischer Zeit', *Zeits. Assyriol.* xxii (1964) 262–74, at 268–70, for the change in Babylonian titulare from the reign of Seleucus II on, when *šarru* (king) became the usual title of Seleucid kings on documents and the title *šar māṭāte* (king of lands) was dropped.

²⁰ Grayson 278, 284 on line 7, citing E. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*, *Bibl. arch. et hist.* xxvi (Paris 1938) 236–57 and S. K. Eddy, *The King is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism 334–31 BC* (Lincoln, Nebraska 1961) 118 and n. 39; cf. G. J. P. McEwan, *Priest and Temple in Hellenistic Babylonia*, *Freiburger altorient. Stud.* iv (Wiesbaden 1981) 161–2. Bickerman does not support Grayson's thesis since his whole discussion rests on the recognition that the royal cult was not imposed on autonomous cities, whether Greek *poleis*, or places such as Babylon and Uruk which enjoyed local autonomy in the Seleucid period. Eddy also acknowledges that the king was absent from the pantheon of Uruk. The only (cuneiform) text from Babylonia cited here by Eddy (A. T. Clay, *Legal Documents from Erech Dated in the Seleucid Era (312–65 BC)* [New York 1913] 33–4 no. 53.3–5) does not in fact attest a Seleucid royal cult but simply the private dedication at Uruk of a girl slave 'for the sake of the king' (on this formula see below) to work in the 'House of the Gods'. The text is of the Parthian period: see Clay 13.

²¹ See Bickerman (n. 20) ch. 7; L. Robert, 'Inscriptions Séleucides de Phrygie et d'Iran', *Hellenica* vii (Paris 1949) 5–29; *id.*, *CRAI* 1967, 281–96.

²² E. Bickerman (n. 20) 236–57.

¹⁰ For the chronology of Seleucus IV see A. J. Sachs and D. J. Wiseman, 'A Babylonian King List of the Hellenistic Period', *Iraq* xvi (1954) 202–12, at 208, 210; R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 BC–AD 75*, *Brown U. Stud.* xix (1956) 22–3.

¹¹ Information kindly supplied by Mr C. B. F. Walker. This is presumably why Grayson does not mention Seleucus II in his discussion.

¹² Grayson 277 and 284 on line 3.

¹³ For the chronology of Seleucus III see Sachs and Wiseman (n. 10) 207, 210; H. H. Schmitt, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Antiochos' des grossen und seiner Zeit*, *Historia Einzels.* vi (1964) 2–3, 27–8.

¹⁴ Euseb. *Chron.* i p. 253 (Sch.); Hieron. in *Dan.* xi 10, 'exercitus qui erat in Syria Antiochum fratrem eius cognomento Magnum de Babylone vocavit ad regnum. . . Antiochus Magnus venerit de Babylone in Syriam'. Schmitt (n. 13) 109, thinks Antiochus' place of accession must be Seleucia-Tigris, not Babylon, and adds (*ibid.* n. 1) 'vielleicht ist Babylonia statt Babylon zu verstehen'. This may be right, though all that the text indicates is Antiochus' presence at Babylon at the time of his call to the throne.

¹⁵ Cf. App. *Syr.* 66; Euseb. *Chron.* i 251, 253 (Sch.); Justin, *Hist. Phil.* xxix 1.3. See the discussion of Schmitt (n. 13) 27–8 (with previous bibliography).

¹⁶ See Schmitt (n. 13) 27–8.

¹⁷ v 40.4–7; see also iv 2.5, 48.9–10; v 34.2.

¹⁸ Cf. F. Stähelin, *RE* ii.A 1 (1921) 1241–2 no. 5; Schmitt (n. 13) 27–8. The alternative, a uniquely 'secure' cover up by Antiochus III's supporters of the suppression of any sons of Seleucus III, is not convincing.

east. Antioch-Persis and Seleucia-Tigris had municipal cults of the Seleucid dynasty and reigning king.²³ The Greek inscription, *OGIS* 253, whether from Babylon, Seleucia-Tigris or some other *polis* of hellenistic Babylonia, attests a municipal cult of Antiochus IV during his reign.²⁴ But whatever is going on in no. 13b is clearly distinct from the municipal cults, both in the purely Babylonian character of the cult setting and in the king's supervisory role.

Strong arguments have been invoked against accepting the practice of a Seleucid state royal cult in Babylonian temples; for example, the total absence from cuneiform documents of Babylon and Uruk of the eponymous priesthoods of the royal cult, and the absence of the Seleucid kings from the local pantheon in Babylonian towns such as Uruk.²⁵ Yet Rostovtzeff, whose authority is naturally influential, commented 'that it was more than probable that the Seleucids instituted a cult of the kings in some form in temples in Babylonia and Elam'.²⁶ For Babylonia the 'evidence' consists of cuneiform tablets from Uruk, which refer to offerings before images of the kings on days of regular sacrifices.²⁷ But it is uncertain whether the kings, who are not named, are the Seleucid kings, or ancient Babylonian kings. The extraordinary perpetuation of this Babylonian tradition is usually illustrated in the manuals by reference to Neo-Babylonian texts which mention, for example in the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses, veneration of the image of Sargon of Akkad.²⁸ The practice is in any case not generally thought to imply actual deification of the king.²⁹ The

only evidence cited for Elam is the cult centre of west Iranian type at Shami, in the Baktiari mountains, near the plain of Malamir in ancient Elam.³⁰ As the sanctuary (and associated necropolis) is of the Parthian period, even if it housed a dynastic cult, which is uncertain, it is irrelevant as evidence of the *Seleucids'* installation of a royal cult in a local sanctuary.³¹

There is little support for the idea that the Seleucids introduced a ruler cult in Babylonian temples. No. 13b can be explained differently. The king and his sons are not included alongside the Babylonian gods as recipients of sacrifice. Whatever was to be done for, or by, them is described in a separate phrase (lines 7–8) and could be a separate operation. *Dullu*, meaning 'work', has a wide application in secular and sacred contexts.³² Although Pinches translated it simply as the 'work of King Seleucus', without elaboration,³³ Grayson's 'ritual' is right for the cultic context, where *dullu* can mean an offering.³⁴ Contextually the word alone does not help very much in understanding what is being done for, or by, the king and does not automatically imply actual cult of King Seleucus and his sons. Again, the centralized Seleucid cult in the period for which it is best attested, the reign of Antiochus III, did not include the king's sons, only the *progonoi* and ruling king (and queen).

In so thoroughly Babylonian a context it is sensible to look to Babylonian practices for illumination. Several are relevant: (i) sacrifices offered by the king; (ii) the practice of offering prayers, dedications or sacrifices to the gods 'for the life (health) of the king' (ana bul-tu ša-šarri):³⁵ e.g. a document from Uruk attesting a gift of land to Ishtar 'for the life of Šamaš-šum-ukin, king of Babylon' (667–48 BC).³⁶ There are several examples from the Seleucid period too. The clay cylinder foundation inscription of Anu-uballiṣ Nikarchos (244 BC), *šaknu* (governor) of Uruk in the reign of Seleucus II, describes his building for the new temple of Anu and Antum and refers to his ceremonial dedication of a gold bolt and gold ring (for gates of the temple) 'for the life of Antiochus and Seleucus, kings'.³⁷ A later building

²³ For Seleucia-Tigris see C. Hopkins, *Topography and Architecture of Seleucia on the Tigris* (Ann Arbor 1972) 24–5, pl. V (R. M. McDowell, *Stamped and Inscribed Objects from Seleucia on the Tigris*, U. Mich. Stud. xxxvi [Ann Arbor 1935] 258, cf. R. P. Mouterde, *Mél.U.St.Jos.* xix [1935] 119–20; C. Hopkins, *ibid.* xxxvii [1961] 237–46). For Antioch-Persis see *OGIS* 233 (205 BC) 2–5.

²⁴ See S. M. Sherwin-White, 'A Greek ostrakon from Babylon of the early third century BC', *ZPE* xlvii (1982) 51–70 for discussion of the uncertain provenance of *OGIS* 253.

²⁵ A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoires des Séleucides* (Paris 1913) 471; Bickerman (n. 20) 248, 251, 255–6; M. Rutten, *Contrats de l'époque Séleucide conservés au Musée du Louvre*, *Babyloniaca* xv (Paris 1935) 51–2; Eddy (n. 20) 118; C. Préaux, *Le Monde hellénistique* i (Paris 1978) 261. For the Uruk pantheon in the Seleucid period see Rutten 25–52; see also the useful survey of R. North, 'Status of the Warka Excavations', *Orientalia* xxvi (1957) 185–253.

²⁶ *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*² (Oxford 1953) 437.

²⁷ O. Schröder, *Kontrakte der Seleukidenzeit aus Warka*, *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler* xv (Leipzig 1916) no. 16 (SE 100+x). Rutten (n. 25) 52, cited this text to qualify Bouché-Leclercq on the absence of any trace of Seleucid royal cult in Babylonian religious life, though the practice it may attest is thoroughly Babylonian, as Bickerman (n. 20) 256 noted; cf. Rostovtzeff (n. 26) 437, Eddy (n. 20) 118, Préaux (n. 25) 261. On this Babylonian custom of offerings before the images of ruling and deceased kings see R. Labat, *Le Caractère religieux de la Royauté assyro-babylonienne* (Paris 1939) 369 ff.; H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago 1948) 302–6. Schröder (n. 27) vii was tentative about connecting his text with this Babylonian practice. The reading is uncertain. But for another cuneiform text from Uruk, of the Seleucid period, which refers to offerings on the table of the image(s) of the kings, see L. T. Doty, *Cuneiform Archives from Hellenistic Uruk*, U. Microfilms International (Michigan 1981) 136.

²⁸ See e.g. A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (rev. ed. Chicago 1977) 358 n. 19, citing J. P. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cyrus König von Babylon (538–529 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig 1890) Cyr. 250. 9. Cam. 150.4.

²⁹ Cf. Labat and Frankfort (n. 27).

³⁰ Rostovtzeff (n. 26) iii 1428 n. 237. See A. Stein, *GJ* xcii (1938) 324–6; *id.*, *Old Routes of Western Iran* (London 1940) 130–4, 141–59 (figs 46–50, 52–3; pls iv–vi, xxvii.21); A. Godard, 'Les statues Parthes de Shami', *Athar-e Iran* ii (1937) 285–305; K. Schippmann, *Die iranischen Feuerheiligtümer* (Berlin/New York 1971) 227–33; S. A. Mathieson, *Persia: an Archaeological Guide* (London 1973) 162–3; M. Colledge, *Parthian Art* (London 1979) 41–2, 47, 82, 86. For association of the site with a Seleucid dynastic cult see Stein, *Old Routes* 155; Rostovtzeff (n. 26) iii 1428 n. 237; R. Ghirshman, *Persian Art: The Parthian and Sassanian Dynasties 249 BC–AD 651*, *Arts of Mankind* iii (London 1962) 19–21; Préaux (n. 25) 261.

³¹ For fuller discussion see my forthcoming article, 'Shami, the Seleucids and dynastic cult: a note', *Iran* xxii (1984).

³² See *The Assyrian Dictionary* iii (Chicago 1959) 173–7, s.v. *dullu*; W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* i (Wiesbaden 1965) 175.

³³ *Loc. cit.* (n. 5).

³⁴ Cf. von Soden (n. 32) 175, s.v. *dullu*.

³⁵ Cf. *The Assyrian Dictionary* ii (Chicago 1965) 311–12, s.v. *bulu*.

³⁶ E. W. Moore, *Neo-babylonian Business and Administrative Documents* (Ann Arbor 1935) 16–19 no. 13, 1–2. See also W. von Soden (n. 32) 175, for *dullu* for king and country.

³⁷ A. T. Clay, *Yale Oriental Series* i (New Haven 1915) 81–4 no. 52 (Nisan SE 68 = 244 BC), A. Falkenstein, *Topographie von Uruk i: Uruk zur Seleukidenzeit*, *Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka* iii (Leipzig 1941) 1–5 (transliteration, translation); cf. R. S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, *Yale Near Eastern Researches* ii (New Haven 1968) 114. Note the

inscription of Anu-uballit Kephalon commemorates his 'foundation' of the Anu temple 'for the life of Antiochus the king, my ruler' (201 BC).³⁸ Comparably an hellenistic cuneiform contract from Uruk records the dedication of a slave girl 'for the life of the king'.³⁹ This form of dedication clearly has a long Babylonian history. (iii) The Babylonian practice of offerings to the images of the reigning kings and their predecessors. (iv) Another possibility is a reference to some traditional role played by the king on this day of the New Year Festival, a guess that cannot be checked because of the non-survival of the ritual for 8 Nisan at Babylon, and one which is improbable since the sons of the kings have no known function in the Akitu festival.⁴⁰

There are good reasons for dissociating this text from the centrally organized royal cult of the Seleucids. First, the state cult of the reigning Seleucid king is not attested until considerably later than the date of no. 13b and is not known to have included the king's sons. Secondly, this cult was Greek in ritual and not otherwise attested in Babylonian cities. Of the Babylonian practices discussed here, the appearance in the text of both the king and his sons can be accommodated by taking *dullu* to refer to a royal offering of some type, or to an offering and/or prayers made 'for the life of the king and his sons' in a traditional Babylonian style. There is, unfortunately, no way to choose between these possibilities, though the most plausible in the specific context is that the king is underwriting for 8 Nisan both customary sacrifices to the Babylonian gods and a formal offering by the king.⁴¹

No. 13b has considerable positive value. In the Babylonian context, as Grayson has observed, the text is the first direct evidence of the continuing celebration of the Akitu festival at Babylon under the Seleucids.⁴² On the question of the methods and impact of Seleucid rule this, with other texts from Babylonia, shows the close interplay between king and top Babylonian officials of the cities and temples, who appear as linch-pins of Seleucid rule outside the Greek cities of Babylonia and

anachronism in the dedication 'for the life of' of the reference to the joint reign of Antiochus II (d. 246 BC) and Seleucus (II). On the Seleucid period building in the sanctuary, of thoroughly Neobabylonian style, see North (n. 25) 228 ff.

³⁸ Falkenstein (n. 37) 6-8 line 10 (ana muḫ-ḫi bul-tu ša an-ti' -i-ku-su sarri be-ēl-ia).

³⁹ See n. 20.

⁴⁰ Cf. Grayson 278, who notes the survival of the ritual for 8 Nisan at Uruk where offerings to Anu play a major role. See F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituel Accadiens* (Paris 1921) 89-96, where at line 23 the priest sprinkles water on king and people. For the ritual texts for the Akitu festival see Thureau-Dangin; cf. J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*³ (Princeton 1969) 331-4 (Seleucid period copy of ritual for Nisan 2-5 at Babylon). For recent discussion of the king in the Akitu see A. K. Grayson, 'Chronicles and the Akitu', *Actes de la XVII^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale 1969* (Comité belge de Recherches en Mésopotamie 1970) 160-70.

⁴¹ See Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies iii (Toronto 1975) 19-20, n. 29, and Grayson (n. 1) 278 n. 2, for useful collections of the considerable evidence on Seleucid patronage of Babylonian cults; cf. (in the present context) the offerings of Antiochus, crown prince (probably Antiochus I), to Sin of the temple of Egishnugal (no. 11, obv. 6-9). For earlier attestation of rituals for both king and son see *ANET*³ 626; for reference to daily prayers in Babylonian cities for the long life of the reigning king and son see *ANET*³ 316.

⁴² Grayson 278.

as intermediaries between king and local population. The Seleucids' role as benefactors of Babylonian religious life, even if sometimes sporadic in reality,⁴³ seems integral to any assessment of how Seleucid rule in Babylonia worked and was experienced and is one factor relevant to the Babylonians' comparatively peaceful toleration of Seleucid rule. The text is also relevant to the wider study of the treatment by Seleucid kings of non-Greek cults and temples in their domains. This and certain other Babylonian texts do seem to reflect one contemporary and Babylonian image of the king—not, it should be stressed, the only image presented by Babylonian material. The restoration of traditional religion through the retrieval of lost sacred books,⁴⁴ the renewal of royal subventions for sacrifices cut down during Achaemenid rule,⁴⁵ the repair and rebuilding of temples at Babylon and Uruk with royal blessing and in Babylonian style, present a coherent image of the Seleucids in which the king is no foreign enemy, but a ruler in harmony with Babylonian gods⁴⁶ and as pious and caring as any right-thinking Babylonian king of the past. The king's actions are shaped to a thoroughly Babylonian mould. It may well be that the king left his image-making in religious matters to Babylonian authorities.⁴⁷ Certainly such texts as these reflect, directly or indirectly, an ideal image of Seleucid kings, one which fits Babylonian tradition and is comfortingly assimilated to Babylonian concepts and needs. Like all images it tells us little of the practical realities, agreeable and disagreeable, of Seleucid empire.

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⁴³ See Grayson (n. 40) 161-4, 164 n. 2, for discussion of the problem of the apparently infrequent mention of the Akitu festival in the Chronicles series. If the Akitu festival is mentioned only when something abnormal or special occurs, as Grayson suggests, it would follow that Seleucid benefaction of it was not automatic.

⁴⁴ Cf. *ANET*³ 343-5 (cf. F. Thureau-Dangin [n. 40] 62 ff., 74 ff.) at 345, for Kidinanu of Uruk, mašmašu-priest of Anu and Antum, who found and copied 'in the land of Elam, in the reigns of Seleucus (I) and Antiochus (I),' tablets listing the daily sacrifices for the city gods carried off as plunder by Nabopolassar, king of the Sea Land.

⁴⁵ See n. 41. See Dandamayev (n. 6) 593-6, for Achaemenid treatment of, and taxation of, the temples of Babylonia.

⁴⁶ Best attested in the cuneiform cylinder foundation inscription of Antiochus I as restorer of the temples of Esagil and Ezida: F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilschriften der Achämeniden*, Vorderasiatische Bibl. iii (Leipzig 1911), 132-5; *ANET*³ 317; Ellis (n. 37) Appendix A no. 42. This text illustrates a Seleucid sensitivity to Babylonian traditions which required the king to be personally involved in the rituals concerning temple building, even in manual work; cf. Ellis 20-6. The text attests Antiochus' symbolic brick-making, in true Mesopotamian style, and his direct participation in laying the foundation in the new building of Ezida at Borsippa.

⁴⁷ Cf. M. C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art. Essays in the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, Acta Iranica ser. 3 ix. 19 (Leiden 1980) 123, for the probable role of Egyptian temple authorities in the presentation of the Achaemenid king as true pharaoh in temple reliefs.