

ASPECTS OF SELEUCID ROYAL IDEOLOGY: THE CYLINDER OF ANTIOCHUS I FROM BORSIPPA*

PREFACE

A major contention of our book *Hellenism in the East*¹ was that the most profitable way for making progress in understanding the Achaemenid and Seleucid empires was to try to evaluate, sensitively, the very disparate types of evidence within their own social and cultural contexts, however difficult this might be in practice. In the case of the Antiochus I cylinder we are confronted by an inscribed object whose significance lies as much in its physical form as in the content of the text it bears. These aspects are inextricably intertwined as part of a tradition specific to Mesopotamian culture—object and text combined are the physical representation of a major, longstanding, socio-political institution for which a mass of earlier evidence exists. It is all too understandable that Greco-Roman scholars, who have been the primary students of the hellenistic world, should find it hard to know how to approach such material emanating from an unfamiliar cultural milieu. Yet, for once, this text is *not* fragmentary—it is a long, well-preserved document, easy to read and readily accessible in translation which in itself demonstrates an acknowledgment by hellenistic historians of the potential importance of this non-Greek text for understanding Seleucid history. At the same time, the minimal amount of commentary that the text has received amply illustrates the inherent problems raised for Greco-Roman historians when trying to deal with evidence from such an alien and apparently impenetrable culture. This is in stark contrast to the Ptolemaic empire, where considerable progress has been made in setting the Ptolemies into their non-Greek, traditional Egyptian context. In this article we would like to show by what methods a specific Seleucid document may be placed in its indigenous socio-political setting, as scholars have been doing in the case of Ptolemaic Egypt, and to demonstrate how it may serve to modify substantially received views of Seleucid interaction with their non-Greek subjects. This study is intended to complement the material in chapters one to three of *Hellenism in the East*², and exemplify the process involved in unravelling the problems presented by such a text.

A. EARLIER INTERPRETATIONS

When discussing the evidence for Seleucid activity and interest in Babylonia in his *Social and economic history of the hellenistic world* Rostovtzeff considered the Antiochus cylinder only briefly but drew from it the following conclusion:-

Antiochus I never did any work on Esagila³; he confined himself to Ezida⁴—he says so in his inscription (from there). No texts or remains testifying to the activity of Alexander or Antiochus (in Babylon) have been found, and the reconstruction of Alexander is not mentioned by excavators in their report.⁵

* Photographs reproduced by courtesy of Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, British Museum

¹ A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White (eds), *Hellenism in the East: aspects of the interaction of Greeks and non-Greeks from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander* (London/Berkeley 1987).

² i.e. Sherwin-White, 'Seleucid Babylonia: a case-study for the installation and development of Greek rule', *Hellenism* 1-31; Kuhrt, 'Berossus'

Babyloniaka and Seleucid rule in Babylonia', *ibid.* 32-56; R. van der Spek, 'The Babylonian city' *ibid.* 57-74.

³ Name of the sanctuary of the Babylonian god Bel-Marduk in Babylon.

⁴ Name of the sanctuary of the Babylonian god Nabû in Borsippa.

⁵ M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and economic history of the hellenistic world*² (Oxford 1951) iii 1427.

This view fits well with a prevailing opinion expressed by a number of influential scholars, which tends to diminish the role and character of the Seleucids as imperial rulers: according to this approach, the Seleucids were not actively interested in the eastern areas of their empire and had little regard for their various non-Greek subjects;⁶ their realm consisted of a motley collection of peoples whom they exploited as conquerors but with whom they scarcely interacted in other respects;⁷ their residence was typically in north-west Syria, remote from the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia, but close to the Mediterranean, specifically the Aegean, where the 'real scene of the action' is felt to be centered in the hellenistic period.⁸

One would have thought that the text under discussion—a text of traditional Babylonian form using the old Akkadian language and cuneiform script, and found in Babylonia—might have resulted in modifications of such a characterisation of Seleucid imperial attitudes. But even in this instance any real royal involvement with or patronage of non-Greek cultural and religious values has normally been denied: emphasis was, instead, placed on the fact that Antiochus I says (I,10) that he made the bricks for the Borsippa temple 'in Hatti' = i.e. an older Mesopotamian term for north Syria;⁹ obviously, therefore, it is implied, he did not go himself to Babylonia at any stage of the building, but merely gave the building a vague blessing from afar.

Further, it has usually been considered to be a fact of major importance that the text concerns exclusively the sanctuary of Nabû (Ezida) in Borsippa. This, it was thought, confirmed Seleucid disregard for 'native' Babylonian sentiment which would only have been appeased by major work on the Esagila temple in the old city of Babylon. In such activity, however, the Seleucids had no interest, and they deliberately expressed their contempt for such local feelings by building Seleucia-Tigris as a new royal centre designed to 'degrade' Babylon and encourage its gradual abandonment.¹⁰

That is, broadly, how the cylinder has been interpreted: acknowledgement of its potential importance for Seleucid attitudes to local cults is represented by the inclusion of the cylinder in Austin's sourcebook,¹¹ but given its, to classical scholars, unfamiliar style¹² it has remained, perhaps understandably, underused. What we propose to do in this paper is first to set it in its context, then consider its function and, finally, to suggest that a re-evaluation of it as a positive source for Seleucid history, royal ideology and policy in relation to Babylonia is inevitable.

⁶ See, e.g., F. W. Walbank, *The hellenistic world* (London 1981) 125.

⁷ cf. Walbank *loc.cit.*; more cautious and stressing the difficulties of evidence and interpretation, D. Musti 'Syria and the East' *Cambridge ancient history*² vii.1: *The hellenistic world* (Cambridge 1984), 216–18. For a more positive image, cf. D. Musti, 'Il regno ellenistico' in R. Bianchi Bandinelli (ed) *Storia e civiltà dei Greci* vii (Milan 1977) 244, 246 and, briefly, E. J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge MA 1988) 99 (but contrast *ibid.* 126). For the view that the persistence of local cultures was one of the factors leading to the disintegration of the Seleucid empire, see J. Oelsner, *Materialien zur babylonischen Gesellschaft und Kultur in hellenistischer Zeit* (Budapest 1986) 62–63.

⁸ Musti, 'Syria' 175, 179, 210; Oelsner,

Materialien 59, 131 (although he stresses the continued importance of Seleucia-Tigris and Babylon). On the limitations of this view see Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, *Hellenism*, esp. i–iii.

⁹ cf. J. D. Hawkins, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* (= *RIA*) iv.2/3 (Berlin, New York 1973) 152–9 s.v. Hatti.

¹⁰ e.g. S. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu 1978) 5; A. Mehl, *Seleukos Nikator und sein Reich i. : Seleukos' Leben und die Entwicklung seiner Machtposition* (Louvain 1986) 68.

¹¹ M. Austin, *The hellenistic world from Alexander to the Roman conquest: a selection of ancient sources in translation* (Cambridge 1981) no.189.

¹² cf. Austin, *Hellenistic world*: 311, n.1: 'contrast the style and terminology of this cuneiform inscription with the many Greek texts in this chapter'.

B. THE TEXT

Although the text is written in Akkadian (with which most readers of this journal will be unfamiliar) neither the language nor script present major difficulties, though their use is, of course, highly significant. The well-preserved text is not, in fact, particularly hard to read or translate and translations are readily available;¹³ in fact, it is considerably more difficult to find a cuneiform copy of it.

Ba. *Circumstances of discovery*

The cylinder, in its original position, was found by H. Rassam (funded by the British Museum) in 1880 at the site of Birs Nimrud, the modern name of ancient Borsippa,¹⁴ situated 12 miles southwest of Babylon (*cf.* plan). It was a particularly prominent site because of the considerable height to which its ziggurat was preserved.¹⁵ For some time it was even thought to be the site of Babylon itself¹⁶ with the ziggurat remains representing part of the biblical 'Tower of Babel'.¹⁷

Its precise findspot was the main temple-complex, known as Ezida, situated in the centre of the city and dedicated to the god Nabû, who from around 1100 BC on appears as the patron-deity of Borsippa.¹⁸ He was closely related to Marduk, chief god of Babylon and head of the Babylonian pantheon—indeed he was often described as his son and played a central role in the important New Year Festival at nearby Babylon whither he was conducted by the king using a special processional canal (see plan [FIG I]).¹⁹ When Rassam made the find he was simultaneously engaged on work at two other sites so that the thoroughness of his excavations at Borsippa suffered. Though

¹³ Text publications: J. N. Strassmaier, *Verhandlungen des 5. Internationalen Orientalistenkongresses* (Berlin 1882) ii.1, Beilage zu I 14: 139ff.; T.G. Pinches, *Cuneiform inscriptions of Western Asia v* (London 1884), pl.66. Transliteration and translation: F. H. Weissbach *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (Leipzig 1911), 132-5; translation only (apart from Austin above): J.B. Pritchard (ed) *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament*³ (= ANET) (Princeton 1969) 316-17.

¹⁴ *cf.* H. Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod* (Cincinnati 1897) 268ff.; for the position of the cylinder as found ('encased in kiln-burnt bricks covered with bitumen' in 'doorway') *cf.* discussion by J. Reade in his re-analysis of Rassam's excavations using the British Museum records, 'Rassam's excavations at Borsippa and Kutha, 1879-82' *Iraq* xlviii (1986) 105-16: 109. For a general discussion of the site in the hellenistic period, *cf.* Oelsner, *Materialien*, 110-11 (for the cylinder *ibid.* 226).

¹⁵ 47 m. high according to R. Koldewey *Die Tempel von Babylon und Borsippa* (Leipzig 1911) 57; for an earlier description recording the traces of colour of the different stages of the ziggurat *cf.* H.C. Rawlinson, 'On the Birs Nimrud', *JRAS* xviii (1861) 1-32; for a Late Babylonian poetic description of Ezida that lists the same colours *cf.* F. Köcher, 'Ein spätbabylonischer Hymnus auf den Tempel Ezida in Borsippa' *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* (= *ZA*) liii (1959), 236-240. The ziggurat has been the focus of new Austrian excavations at the site under the direction

of H. Trenkwalder, *cf.* *Iraq* xlvii (1985): 219 and xlix (1987): 236-7—the latter notice also contains details of a planned publication on their work to reconstruct the ziggurat.

¹⁶ See Joan Oates, *Babylon* (London 1979) (rev.ed: 1985) 143.

¹⁷ *cf.* S. A. Pallis, *The antiquity of Iraq* (Copenhagen 1956) for excavations; E. Unger, *RIA* i (1928), 402-429 *s.v.* Borsippa for full discussion of history, topography and bibliography of excavations (add to the last now R. Ellis, *A bibliography of Mesopotamian archaeological sites* (Wiesbaden 1972) 17 *s.v.* Borsippa and Trenkwalder, above); for a survey of Rassam's work see Reade, 'Rassam's Babylonian collection: the excavations and the archives' in E. Leichty *Catalogue of the Babylonian tablets in the British Museum vi: Tablets from Sippar* (London 1989) xiii-xxxvi as well as Reade, 'Rassam's excavations'.

¹⁸ Unger, *RIA* 405-6; *cf.* J. A. Brinkman, *Materials and studies for Kassite history i: a catalogue of cuneiform sources pertaining to specific monarchs of the Kassite dynasty* (Chicago 1976) 255 (R.5.3).

¹⁹ Discussed in some detail by J.A. Black, 'The new year ceremonies in ancient Babylon: "taking Bel by the hand" and a cultic picnic', *Religion* xi (1981) 39-59; *cf.* Kuhrt, 'Usurpation, conquest and ceremonial: from Babylon to Persia' in D.N. Canadine and S. R. F. Price (eds) *Rituals of royalty: power and ceremonial in traditional societies* (Cambridge 1987) 20-55, 33.

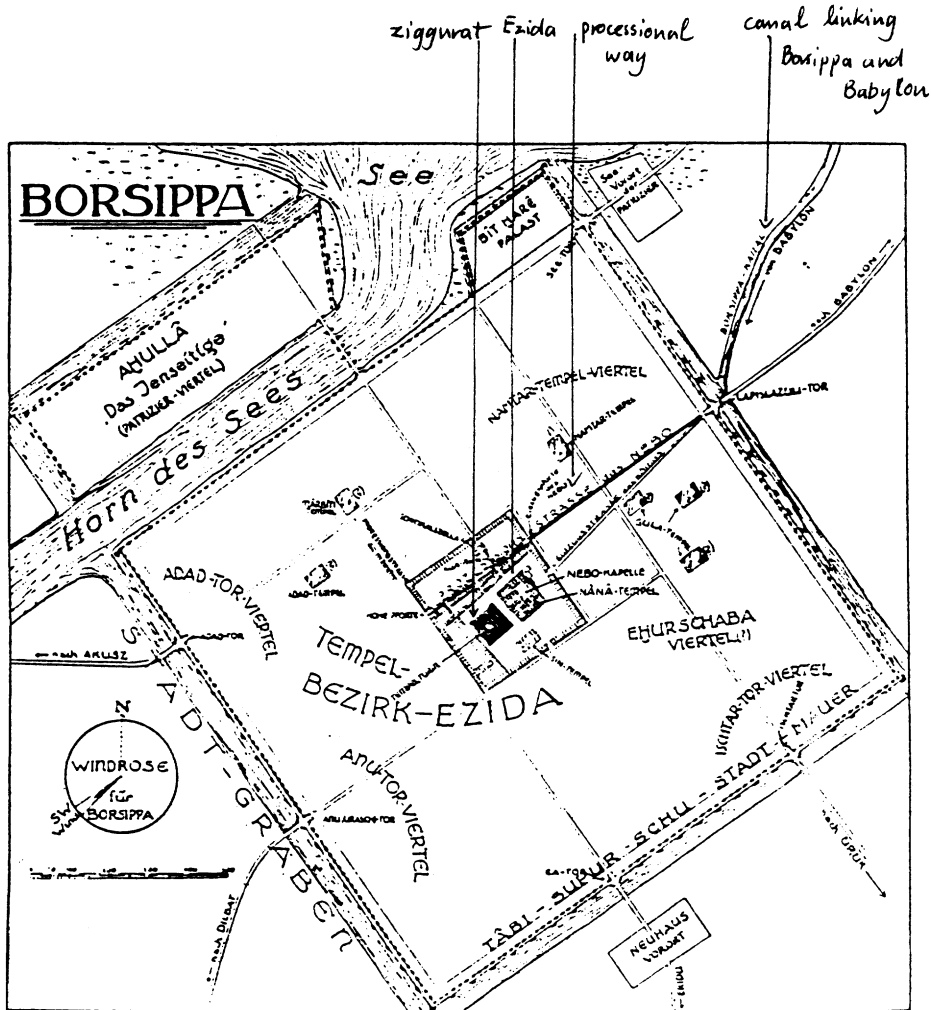


FIG. I. PLAN OF BORSIPPA

Koldewey, who excavated Babylon early this century, did some work at Borsippa²⁰ a full and detailed study of the temple-complex remains to be undertaken.

Bb. *The cylinder and Mesopotamian tradition* (see PLATE II(a) = photo of cylinder)

The text is inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform on a barrel-shaped clay cylinder—a highly traditional shape for foundation texts in Mesopotamia²¹ and this fact in itself makes it of tremendous significance for the hellenistic period. Such texts were deposited exclusively in the foundations or walls of structures of major public importance and temples *par excellence*, which emphasises the cylinder's *public* character. This particular form of foundation document is found in considerable quantity from the second millennium BC on and continued to be used throughout the Neo-Assyrian (ninth to seventh centuries BC), Neo-Babylonian (626–539) and Achaemenid periods (539–330).²² Most often the texts record the building activity of the reigning king himself, although occasionally

²⁰ See Koldewey, *Das wiedererstehende Babylon* (Leipzig 1913) as well as *Tempel*.

²¹ For a full discussion see R. S. Ellis, *Foundation deposits in ancient Mesopotamia* (New Haven) 108–25.

²² So far only cylinders of Cyrus are attested for

the Achaemenid period, the most famous of which is the 'Cyrus Cylinder' in the British Museum; translations: Weissbach, *Keilinschriften* 2–9; *ANET* 315–316; P.-R. Berger, 'Der Kyros-Zylinder mit dem Zusatzfragment BIN II Nr.32 und die akkadischen Personennamen im Danielbuch' *ZA*

public building works carried out by a local governor acting on behalf of a king were commemorated in a similar way. What is important to note is that, in such an instance, it is absolutely clear that the builder is *not* the king himself. An example of precisely this type of building inscription exists from a slightly later date in the hellenistic period: it comes from Uruk where a local official (*šaknu ša Uruk*), bearing both an Akkadian and a royally granted Greek name (Anu-uballit/Nikarchos), carried out building work on the chief sanctuary in 244 BC 'for the life of the kings Antiochus and Seleucus'.²³

Bc. *The text and its structure* (transliteration and translation: A. Kuhrt)

Transliteration:

Col. I

1. ¹an-ti-'u-ku-us šarru (LUGAL) rabu-ú (GAL)
2. šarru (LUGAL) dan-nu šar (LUGAL) kiššati (ŠÁR) šar (LUGAL) bābili (E^{ki}) šar (LUGAL) mātāte (KUR.KUR)
3. za-ni-in é-sag-íl ù é-zi-da
4. aplu (IBILA) ašarēdu (SAG) ša ¹si-lu-uk-ku šarri (LUGAL)
5. ^{lu}ma-ak-ka-du-na-a-a šar (LUGAL) bābili (E^{ki})
6. a-na-ku i-nu-ma a-na e-pi-iš
7. é-sag-íl ù é-zi-da
8. libbi (ŠÀ) ub-lam-ma libittu (SIG₄^{hi.a})
9. é-sag-íl ù é-zi-da
10. i-na māt (KUR) ha-at-tim ina (AŠ) qate-ia (SU^{ll}) el-li-ti
11. i-na šaman (Ī.GIŠ) ru-uš-ti al-bi-in-ma
12. a-na na-di-e uš-šú šá é-sag-íl
13. ù é-zi-da ub-bi-il (?) ina (AŠ) arhi (ITI) addari (ŠE) umi (U₄) 20^{kam}
14. šatti (MU) 43^{kam} uš-šú šá é-zi-da
15. bīti (Ē) ki-i-ni bīt (Ē) ^{dingir}nabû (AG) šá qí-rib bar-sìp^{ki}
16. ad-di-e uš-šú ^{dingir}nabû (AG) aplu (IBILA) ši-i-ri
17. igigal-la (IGI.GÁL) ilāni (DINGIR.MEŠ) muš-tar-hu
18. ša a-na ta-na-da-a-ti
19. šit-ku-nu aplu (IBILA) reš-tu-ú
20. ša ^{dingir}marduk (AMAR.UTU) i-lit-ti ^{dingir}e₄-ru₆-ú-a
21. šar-rat pa-ti-qát nab-ni-ti
22. ha-diš nap-li-is-ma
23. i-na qi-bi-ti-ka ši-ir-ti
24. ša la in-nin-nu-ú qi-bit-su
25. šú-um-qu-ut ma-a-ti a-a-bi-ia

lxiv (1975), 192-234 at 194-203; *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments* i.4: *Historisch-chronologische Texte* i (Gütersloh 1984) 407-10. Less frequently cited, being neither as long nor as well preserved, is a cylinder from Ur virtually certainly to be attributed to Cyrus, see C.J. Gadd, L. Legrain and S. Smith *Royal inscriptions I* (Ur Excavation Texts (= UET) i) (London 1928) no.307; cf. Kuhrt, 'The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid imperial policy' *Journal for the study of the Old Testament* xxv (1983) 83-97, 89.

²³ Published by A. T. Clay, *Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian collection* (New Haven 1915) no.52; cf. A. Falkenstein, *Topographie von Uruk i: Uruk zur Seleukidenzeit* (Leipzig 1941) 4-5. Other examples: a) Sin-balassu-iqbi, governor of

Ur, reign of Assur-bani-pal (669-c.630), who dedicated his work 'for the life of Assurbanipal' cf. UET i nos.168 & 170 and E. Sollberger, *Royal Inscriptions* ii (UET viii) (London 1965) no.102, cf. discussion by J. A. Brinkman, 'Ur: 721-605 BC' *Orientalia* (= *Or.*) xxxiv (1965) 241-258 at 248-253, and 'Ur: the Kassite period and period of the Assyrian kings' *Or.* xxxviii(1969) 310-348 at 336-342; b) officials at Uruk, reign of Nabu-nasir (747-734), cf. J.A. Brinkman, 'The Akitu inscriptions of Bēl-ibni and Nabû-zēra-ušabši' *Welt des Orients* vi (1969) 39-50; c) Anu-uballit/Kephalon, *ša reš ali* of Uruk, recorded his building in 201 'for the life of Antiochus, the king, my lord' on bricks, cf. Falkenstein, *Topographie* 6-7.

26. *ka-šá-du er-ni-it-ti-iá*
27. *eli (UGU) na-ki-ri ú-šú-uz-zu i-na li-i-ti*
28. *šarru (LUGAL)-ú-tu mi-šá-ri pa-li-e*
29. *bu-a-ri šanate (MU.AN.NA.MEŠ) tu-ub libbi (ŠÀ)*
30. *še-bi-e lit-tu-tu lu ši-ri-iq-ti*

Col.II

1. *šarru (LUGAL)-ú-ti šá¹an-ti-'u-ku-us*
2. *ù si-lu-uk-ku šarri (LUGAL) mari (DUMU)-šu*
3. *a-na da-ra-a-ti māru (DUMU) ru-bi-e*
4. ^{dingir}*Nabû (AG) apil (IBILA) é-sag-íl*
5. *bu-kur^{dingir} marduk (ASAR.RI) riš-tu-ú*
6. *i-lit-ti^{dingir} e₄-ru₆-ú-a šar-rat*
7. *a-na é-zi-da bīti (É) ki-i-ni*
8. *bīt (É)^{dingir} a-nu-ti-ka šú-bat tu-[ub] libbi (ŠÀ)-ka*
9. *i-na hi-da-a-tú ù ri-šá-a-tú*
10. *i-na e-ri-bi-ka i-na qi-bi-ti-ka*
11. *kit-ti ša la us-tam-sa-ku li-ri-ku u₄-mi-iá*
12. *li-mi-id šanāti (MU.AN.NA)-iá*
13. *li-kun kussu (GIŠ.GU.ZA)-ú-a li-il-bi-ir*
14. *pa-lu-ú-a i-na hat-ta-ka ši-i-ri*
15. *mu-kin pal-lu-uk-ki šamê (AN)-e u ersetim (KI-tim)*
16. *i-na pi-i-ka el-li liš-tak-ka-nu*
17. *du-un-qi-iá mātāte (KUR.KUR.MEŠ) ištu (TA*) ši-it^{dingir} šamši (UTU-ši)*
18. *a-di e-ri-ib^{dingir} šamši (UTU-ši) lik-šú-du*
19. *qātē (ŠU^{II})-a-a man-da-at-ti-ši-nu lu-us-ni-iq-ma*
20. *a-na šuk-lu-lu é-sag-íl*
21. *ù é-zi-da lu-bi-il^{dingir} nabû (AG)*
22. *aplu (IBILA) ašaredu (SAG) a-na é-zi-da*
23. *bīti (É) ki-i-ni i-na e-ri-bi-ka*
24. *damiqtim (SIG₅-tim) an-ti-'u-ku-us šar (LUGAL) mātāte (KUR.KUR)*
25. *¹si-lu-uk-ku šarri (LUGAL) māri (DUMU)-šu*
26. *^faš-ta-ar-ta-ni-ik-ku*
27. *hi-rat-su šar-ra-at*
28. *da-mi-iq-ti-šu-nu*
29. *li-iš-šá-kin i-na pi-i-ka*

Translation:-

Antiochus, the great king, the mighty/legitimate king, king of the world, king of Babylon, king of lands, caretaker of Esagila and Ezida, first son of Seleucus, the king, the Macedonian, king of Babylon, am I.

When I decided to build Esagila and Ezida, the bricks for Esagila and Ezida I moulded with my pure hands (using) fine quality oil in the land of Hatti and for the laying of the foundation of Esagila and Ezida I brought (them). In the month of Addaru, on the twentieth day, year 43, the foundation of Ezida, the true temple, the house of Nabû which is in Borsippa I did lay.

(O) Nabû, lofty son, wise one of the gods, the proud one, worthy of praise, most noble son of Marduk, offspring of Erua,²⁴ the queen, who formed mankind, regard

²⁴ Erua is another name of Sarpanitu, divine consort of Marduk of Babylon.

(me) joyfully and, at your lofty command which is unchanging, may the overthrow of the countries of my enemies, the achievement of my battle-wishes against my enemies, permanent victories, just kingship, a happy reign, years of joy, children in satiety, be (your) gift for the kingship of Antiochus and Seleucus, the king, his son, for ever.

Prince Nabû, son of Esagila, first-born of Marduk, noble child of Erua, the queen, on your entry to Ezida, the true house, the house of your Anu-ship²⁵, the dwelling which pleases your heart, with rejoicing and jubilation, may—at your true command which cannot be denied—my days be long, my years many, my throne firm, my reign long-lasting, under your lofty sceptre which sets the boundary between heaven and earth. May my good fortune be in your pure mouth, may I conquer the countries from sunrise to sunset, may I gather their tribute with my hands and bring (it) for the perfection of Esagila and Ezida.

(O) Nabû, first son, when you enter Ezida, the true house, may favour for Antiochus, king of lands, (and) favour for Seleucus, the king, his son, (and) Stratonice, his consort, the queen, be in your mouth.

The main elements that make up the internal structure of the text can be broken down as follows:-

i) I, 1-6: the first lines give a list of the titles of the king—quite a long one, preceded by Antiochus' name and presented in the form of a statement in the first person: Antiochus—titles—am I (a form attested in many earlier Mesopotamian royal inscriptions²⁶). Among the titles the term 'he who cares (*zaninu*) for Esagila and Ezida' and 'Macedonian' should be particularly noted.

ii) I, 6-16: describe Antiochus' activities in relation to the building and here it is significant to note that he connects the building of Esagila in Babylon with that of Ezida. According to his statement, he was inspired to build them *both*; he then formed the special bricks for *both* of them in Syria and brought them *himself* for the laying of the foundations of *both* temples. This is followed by the exact date (28 March 268) of the laying of the foundations of Ezida only—which is perfectly appropriate as this particular document was, of course, drawn up for deposition in Ezida itself.

iii) I, 16-II, 29: the remaining 43½ lines contain a lengthy prayer addressed to the god Nabû, the rebuilding of whose temple is being commemorated. Antiochus prays for the defeat of enemies, victory over opponents, long life for the dynasty and for himself, stability in his kingship and conquest of the world. In return the king promises that the tribute from such successes will be used for the continuing beautification of Esagila in Babylon and Ezida at Borsippa. Included in the prayer for blessings is Antiochus I's son and co-regent, Seleucus, who was in fact executed approximately one year later²⁷ and his wife, Stratonice, who is described by an archaic term (*hīrtu*) meaning 'equal/principal wife'²⁸ and her description as *šarratu* 'queen' also represents a literary usage rather than

²⁵ Anu, though in some ways an 'otiose' deity, nevertheless held the highest rank in the Mesopotamian pantheon; hence 'Anu-ship' is a way of praising a god by assigning him the function and rank of the highest god, cf. *The Assyrian dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (= CAD) A II s.v. *anutu*.

²⁶ A good example is the Cyrus Cylinder, cf. J. Harmatta, 'The literary pattern of the Babylonian edict of Cyrus', *AASH* xix (1971) 220ff.

²⁷ Last attested date is April 267, cf. T. G. Pinches and J. N. Strassmaier, *Late Babylonian astronomical and related texts* (= *LBAT*) prepared for publication

by A. J. Sachs with the co-operation of J. Schaumberger (Providence 1955) 1220 + *1221 (Mercury observations); for references to his treason cf. *OGIS* 220:13 and Trogus *prol.* 26; earliest dating by the new co-regent, Antiochus: SE 46, cf. R. A. Parker and W. Dubberstein, *Babylonian chronology 626 BC—AD 75* (Providence 1956) 21.

²⁸ cf. CAD H s.v. *hīrtu*: used of human beings only in the Old Babylonian period (first half of second millennium BC); later usage of the term is normally restricted to goddesses ie. divine consorts—the only other instance known to us is a text inscribed near the doorway possibly leading to the

the regular title for queen in the first millennium BC.²⁹ This is perhaps in keeping with the use of some archaising cuneiform sign forms going back to the second millennium BC; but it may also be connected with a more specific significance in Stratonice's appearance in the text which will be discussed in more detail below (see section G2).

C. ANALYSIS

The text reproduces perfectly the traditional form of Babylonian building inscriptions which begin with the royal titulature, continue with an account of the ruler's pious decision to build and his setting this in motion, and conclude with the king's prayer for beneficence from the god of the temple under construction.³⁰ This inscription thus continues Babylonian tradition not only in the choice of its material form, language and script but also in its literary content and formulations. The titulary alone reveals a standard political programme: Babylonian claims to universal rule—*šar kiššati*: king of the world; *šar mātāti*: king of lands—and of the might and legitimacy of the ruler—*šarru dannu*: strong/legitimate king;³¹ *šarru rabū*: great king. The ideology revealed can be traced back via the Achaemenid kings to older Babylonian expressions of kingship which the Persian conquerors, too, had found it politic to adopt, the chief example being the Cyrus Cylinder from Babylon which, interestingly, also included Cyrus' son and temporary co-regent, Cambyses, in the prayer section.³² The prayer to Nabû articulates an ideal picture of the king's socio-political functions: in external relations, the conquest of enemies and enduring superiority, internally, justice, peace, a long reign and a stable succession. The king's wish towards the end concerning the tribute resulting from conquest expresses a traditional Babylonian tenet that booty is gained for the

women's quarters of Sennacherib's palace, in which the king refers to his principal wife, Tashmetum-sharrat, as his *hirtu narāmtu* 'beloved wife' (cf. J. Reade, 'Was Sennacherib a feminist?' in J.-M. Durand (ed) *La Femme dans le Proche-Orient Antique* (Paris 1987) 139-45, 141.

²⁹ Note that the term *šarratu* is used of the goddess Erua/Sarpanitu in the cylinder; for its general restriction to divinities cf. M.-J. Seux, *RLA* vi.1/2 (1980) s.v. Königtum 159-60. The term in regular use for the chief wife of the reigning monarch in the Neo-Assyrian empire was *MĪ-GAL*: its precise rendering in Akkadian is disputed, *ša-ēkalli* = 'she of the palace' has been generally used, but strong arguments for reading it (*is*)-*su-ēkalli* = 'wife of the palace' have been put forward, see J. N. Postgate, 'On some Assyrian ladies', *Iraq* xli (1979) 95, n.9; the suggestion has been followed and developed by S. Parpola ('The Neo-Assyrian word for "queen"', *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* ii.2 (1988) 73-7) who suggests reading **sēgallu/i*. For continued use of the term in the Babylonia of the Persian period (= *SAL saĒ .GAL*) cf. M. W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and empire: the Murasû archive, the Murasû firm and Persian rule in Babylonia* (Leiden 1985) 62. (N.B. Laodice, wife of Antiochus II, who is mentioned in a later Babylonian document (cf. van der Spek, *Grondbezit in het Seleucidische Rijk* (Ph.D. diss. Amsterdam 1986) 241ff., obv.

7 and 8, rev. 2) concerning some land, is not given a title, but only called *DAM-šū* = 'his (sc. Antiochus) wife'; cf. also the occurrences in the newly published astronomical diaries, A.J. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical diaries and related texts from Babylon ii: Diaries from 261 BC to 165 BC* (Vienna 1989) nos. -247, -181 where the queen is always called 'wife of the king'; unclear is the appellation given to Stratonice on the occasion of her death in Sardis, late 254: *MĪ.LUGAL* (? 'royal woman', 'woman of the king'), Sachs and Hunger *Diaries* ii no. -253.

³⁰ Closest are the Babylon texts of Assurbanipal, Cyl. L¹ and L² (= M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrische Könige bis zum Untergang Ninivehs* (Leipzig 1916) ii 226-232), and the Neo-Babylonian ones, cf. S. Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (Leipzig 1912) Nbp.3; Nbk. 1,3,4, 6-17, 20, 23; Ngl. 1-2; Nbn. 1-3, 5-7; for analysis of their literary structure cf. Berger, *Die Königsinschriften des ausgehenden babylonischen Reiches (626-536 v.Chr.)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973) 32-59.

³¹ cf. *CAD* D s.v. *dannu* 2. and 3., for the meaning 'legitimate' as well as 'mighty'.

³² cf. Harmatta, 'Literary pattern'; Berger, 'Kyros-Zylinder'; van der Spek, 'Cyrus de Pers in assyrisch perspectief,' *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* xcvi (1983), 1-27; Kuhrt, 'Cyrus Cylinder'.

greater glory and profit of the gods.³³ The general picture is of a moral but energetic and imperialistic monarchy devoted to, and dependent upon, the Babylonian gods.

D. THE BUILDING CEREMONY

The totally Babylonian character of the text is also reflected in Antiochus's brick-making and foundation-laying. This was a ceremonial procedure of which there is considerable knowledge from earlier royal building texts that refer to it, from pictorial evidence reaching back to the mid-third millennium BC,³⁴ and from texts preserved in copies from the hellenistic period which prescribe the ritual to be followed by one of the religious experts in this connection.³⁵

First the decision to build had to be taken for which omens were sought and reported to the king before the order to start could be made:³⁶ gods and king had to be in accord on this point, and it was the gods who both equipped the king with the superior wisdom and imagination to envisage the feat,³⁷ as well as demonstrating their approval of him by allowing him to proceed with the endeavour. On the day thus formally determined, a diviner offered a lamb on the king's cloak and read the entrails; if the omens were good then the work of demolishing the old brickwork and rebuilding would be favourable for the king and his country.³⁸ This was followed by elaborate sacrifices and ritual lamentations performed and sung by a lamentation-singer during a propitious night and day; offerings were made to the chief deities of the pantheon as well as the god, goddess and 'spirit' (Akk. *lamassu*) of the temple to be rebuilt. Subsequently, someone called the 'builder', dressed in special robes, placed a tin bracelet on his arm and took a lead axe with which he removed the previous foundation-brick from the old temple and set it aside. The lamentation-singer then made offerings before it to the 'god of foundations', bewailed the fate of the old temple, smeared the old brick with cream, honey, beer and oil and recited a hymn itemising all the divine acts of creation which made the building-act possible: the list included mankind (to carry out the labour), the brick-god who enabled bricks to be successfully made and, most interestingly, the king to be the 'caretaker' of the temple, using precisely the term (*zāninu*) listed as one of the titles of Antiochus in the cylinder.³⁹ All these rituals continued until the new foundations were

³³ One of the clearest examples occurs in the inscription of Nabonidus where the king mentions the gift of 2850 prisoners-of-war from his Cilician campaign to sanctuaries of Marduk, Nabû and Nergal (Langdon, *Königsinschriften*: Nbn. 8, col. ix, 38-41)

³⁴ See PLATE II(b) (Assurbanipal with basket of bricks on his neck); further illustrations of this royal act: Ellis, *Foundation deposits*, figs. 19, 22-25 (dating between 2200 and 1800 BC); E. Strommenger and M. Hirmer, *The art of Mesopotamia* (London 1965) pl. 73 (dating c. 2500 BC)

³⁵ F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens* (Paris 1921), transliteration and translation of AO 6472, O 714, BE 13987: 34-47; cf. ANET 339-342.

³⁶ Enormous numbers of examples of this practice exist (cf. further Kuhrt, 'Alexander and Babylon' in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J.-W. Drijvers (eds) *Achaemenid History vii: the roots of the European tradition* (Leiden 1990) 121-30, 127). One of the nicest, however, is Esarhaddon (R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, König von Assyrien* (Graz 1956) §11:15 Fassung b:B) who mentions the

fact that Marduk had decreed that Babylon should lie in ruins after its destruction in 689 for 70 years (= (in Akkadian) $\Upsilon\Delta$, ie. 60 + 10 in the sexagesimal system); but when Esarhaddon (681-669) was anxious to rebuild the city, the god relented and graciously reversed the signs thus: $\Delta\Upsilon = 10 + 1 = 11$ years, indicating thereby that he favoured Esarhaddon as the one to carry out the task.

³⁷ e.g. Sargon II, cf. Ellis, *Foundation deposits* 7.

³⁸ For the delicate situation raised by having effectively to 'destroy' the old temple in order to rebuild it, cf. Ellis, *Foundation deposits* 13; for the Seleucid period lamentations cf. M.E. Cohen, *The canonical lamentations of ancient Mesopotamia* (Potomac, MD 1988) 24-27.

³⁹ For a clear formulation of the Babylonian concept of the sharp physical and mental distinction that existed between ordinary mankind and the king, see W. R. Mayer, 'Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs', *Or.* lvi (1987) 55-68.

laid. These were dug on a propitious day followed by more elaborate sacrifices and laments during the night and early morning. Then the sacrificial items were broken and the foundation-laying began. When completed, ceremonies of consecration took place.

The close, personal involvement of the king in all this is quite evident and has been emphasised by scholars.⁴⁰ It is the *king* who takes the decision to build in the first place, the gods grant favourable omens to *him personally*, the entrails for determining the start of work are read on *his* cloak; and it is certainly he who made special bricks with precious ingredients which he himself carried ceremoniously to the site in a basket borne 'on his neck' (see PLATE II(b)). At what point in the proceedings these bricks were laid is not certain, but it seems clear that the king laid them himself. One may speculate (although specific evidence is lacking) that at some stage during the ceremonies the prayers recorded on the cylinder were formally recited, before the document was deposited, to an assembled gathering of citizens who were the main beneficiaries of the temple-building being undertaken and were all closely involved in the ceremonial processes: butchers, bakers, shepherds, oil-pressers, unguent-preparers supplied the ingredients for the innumerable sacrifices and offerings; weavers and launderers would have been involved in supplying the linen towels with which the hands of the gods were dried before and after their meals, as well as in preparing special garments worn by gods and men for some of the rituals; smiths would have had to supply the tin bracelet and lead axe for the builder, to say nothing of the diviners and astrologers, lamentation-singers and other musicians needed to determine auspicious days, sing the correct hymns and laments, play the kettledrums and consecrate the building—in fact, one obtains from this a profile of the varied members of a Babylonian city-community as it existed both earlier and at this time.⁴¹

The fact that Akkadian was no longer a living, spoken language would have mattered relatively little: it carried with it the authority and sonority of old-established learning, and was the language in which it was appropriate to address the traditional gods. The same attitudes are reflected by the archaizing form of the script which represents a deliberate harking back to the past. The laments sung during the ceremonies were in Sumerian—an even older language that had not been spoken for nearly two thousand years; some of the other hymns were in Akkadian as, of course, were the ritual instructions to which we owe all this information (and which would otherwise be lost). The use of Akkadian in this ceremonial, formal context are thus somewhat analogous to the use of Latin in the church long after its demise as a spoken language: some standard phrases would be known generally, the various specialists such as the lamentation-singers would know their part; beyond that, a number of scholars continued to study the language, read its literature, make copies of older works and compose chronicles, literary texts, astronomical observations and diaries and some legal documents in it.⁴²

⁴⁰ cf. Ellis, *Foundation deposits* 20-26; more recently, Sherwin-White, *Hellenism* 28-9.

⁴¹ For the Babylonian city communities see van der Spek, *Hellenism* 60-65 and 70-74; for the various professional groups and families in hellenistic Uruk see L.T. Doty, *Cuneiform archives from hellenistic Uruk* (Yale diss. 1977) *passim*; for Babylonia generally, G.J.P. McEwan, *Priest and Temple in hellenistic Babylonia* (Wiesbaden 1982); Kuhrt, 'Nabonidus and the Babylonian priesthood' in M. Beard and J. North (eds) *Pagan priests* (London 1990) 119-55 at 150-54.

⁴² The compilation of the six published chronicle fragments must certainly be dated to the Seleucid period cf. A. K. Grayson *Assyrian and*

Babylonian chronicles (= ABC) (Locust Valley, NY 1975) nos.10-13b; the most striking literary text definitely composed in this period is the 'Dynastic Prophecy' published by A.K. Grayson, *Babylonian historical-literary texts* (Toronto 1975) 24-37; for the astronomical diaries compiled in this period see now A. J. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical diaries and related texts from Babylon i 652 BC—262 BC* (Vienna 1988) and ii (1989, for details see note 29 above); for a complete list of these as well as copies of other astronomical texts, see *LBAT*; for documents and letters cf. the exhaustive overview by J. Oelsner *Materialien* 146-61, which includes a complete survey of all the scholarly, cultic and literary texts (many of them copies of earlier works) as well

That the king himself would not have understood fully the wording of his formal proclamation and was unlikely to be capable of reading it, seems very probable but is neither problematic nor unprecedented: the Cyrus Cylinder relating to that ruler's building in Babylon was also in Akkadian despite the fact that Cyrus did not speak it. Such texts are merely the tangible, preserved expression of a complex process the purpose and significance of which were fully understood by the king who initiated it—he certainly did not need to be able to read or understand the language of the text to know what he had done.⁴³

E. REBUILDING BABYLON'S TEMPLE: SELEUCID PATRONAGE OF BEL-MARDUK'S CULT

Having established Antiochus' physical presence and participation in the work at Borsippa, let us look at some of the further implications of the text. From the references in I.6-15, as well as the title 'caretaker of Esagila and Ezida', it seems reasonable to infer that Antiochus undertook building in Babylon on the great Marduk temple as well. Work on the Babylon sanctuary is, in fact, referred to, *pace* Rostovzoeff, in 322/1,⁴⁴ 320/19,⁴⁵ 311/10,⁴⁶ 309/8,⁴⁷ and 308/7⁴⁸, as well as during the time that Antiochus was the heir-designate (*mār šarri*), probably from 305/4 until 292, before becoming co-regent with his father, Seleucus I (between late 292 and 281).⁴⁹ Further, a brief notice in 274⁵⁰ records the baking of bricks for Esagila—suggesting that work started in Alexander's reign was nearing completion at this date. Given the very close ritual interconnections which existed between Babylon, the city of Marduk, and Borsippa, the city of his 'son', Nabû, a closeness particularly well-documented for the occasion of the Babylonian

as the extant transliterations into Greek of Akkadian and Sumerian in chapter 3; for the latter *cf.* also J. A. Black and S. Sherwin-White, 'A clay tablet with Greek letters in the Ashmolean Museum, and the "Graeco-Babyloniaca" texts' *Iraq* xlvi (1984) 131-40. For some penetrating observations on how very differently language and writing may function in other cultural contexts, *cf.* M. Bloch 'Literacy and enlightenment' in K. Schousboe and M. T. Larsen (eds) *Literacy and society* (Copenhagen 1989) 15-38.

⁴³ Comparable examples are, of course, the Aramaic edicts of Persian kings contained in Ezra; but note also the close involvement (physical presence of government officials as well as supply of financial resources) of the British Government in India with Hindu temples quoted by M. Boyce, 'The religion of Cyrus the Great' in Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg (eds) *Achaemenid history iii: Method and theory* (Leiden 1988) 26. On the misconceptions surrounding the question of the use of different languages in multi-lingual empires, see Sherwin-White, *Hellenism* 4-8.

⁴⁴ Astronomical diary: *LBAT* 212 = Sachs and Hunger, *Astronomical diaries*: 226-7, no. -321, l.14; note also *ibid.* 178-9, no. -330 rev. which mentions Alexander and Esagila together in an unfortunately broken context. It is also worth noting that 'gold for making the tiara of Bel' (which would probably have required royal authorisation) is referred to in August 325, suggesting some refurbishing of the cult-statue of Marduk, see Sachs and Hunger

Diaries i: no. -324.

⁴⁵ *ABC*, no.10:6.

⁴⁶ *ABC*, no.10: rev.13.

⁴⁷ *ABC*, no.10: rev.33.

⁴⁸ BM 78651 = D. Kennedy, *Cuneiform texts from Babylonian tablets in the British Museum* 49 (London 1968) (= *CT* 49), no. 5 (dated 25 December 308) and BM 78707 = *CT* 49, 6 (24 January 307). This last is a corrected copy of the text published in translation only by J. Kohler and A. Ungnad, *Hundert ausgewählte Rechtsurkunden aus der Spätzeit des babylonischen Schrifttums von Xerxes bis Mithridates II (485-93 v.Chr.)* (= *HAU*) (Leipzig 1911) no.89. *Cf.* also F. Joannès 'Les successeurs d'Alexandre le Grand en Babylonie', *Anatolica* vii (1979-80), 99-116 at 105-6.

⁴⁹ *ABC*, no.11: obv. 2; *cf.* for the role of Antiochus as *mar sarri* Sherwin-White, 'Babylonian chronicle fragments as a source for Seleucid history' *JNES* xlii, 265-270 at 265-6 and 265, n.2. Note also the reference to the 113 talents of silver and 2 talents of gold 'of Nabû' in connection with craftsmen in Borsippa in late 303, *cf.* Sachs and Hunger *Diaries* i:- 302.

⁵⁰ S. Smith, *Babylonian historical texts relating to the capture and downfall of Babylon* (= *BHT*) (London 1924) 155/157, l.19 (part of astronomical diary); Austin, *Hellenistic world*: no.141; van der Spek, *Grondbezeit* 211-213. The full text (with all the astronomical data) is now available, Sachs and Hunger, *Astronomical diaries*: no.-273, rev.38.

New Year festival⁵¹—a festival definitely still being celebrated under royal patronage in the 220s⁵²—it would indeed have been somewhat odd if Antiochus I had decided to restore Borsippa while hastening the ruination of its close neighbour Babylon. This conclusion is, of course, extremely important because of the continued denial of any Seleucid royal activity at Babylon⁵³ as a result of the supposedly devastating effects of the founding of Seleucia-Tigris, forty miles away to the north-east (as far as Athens is from Thebes) and on a different river system.⁵⁴ Reading Antiochus' cylinder in its Babylonian setting, combining it with other pieces of evidence and thus giving it its full weight, makes such a position quite untenable.

F. THE FOUNDING OF SELEUCIA-TIGRIS AND MESOPOTAMIAN TRADITION

With respect to this one should also reconsider the story given in Appian *Syriake* 58, concerning the founding of Seleucia-Tigris—a story usually taken to demonstrate the negative effect its foundation had on the status of Babylon. The scene portrayed is of Seleucus deciding to build his new city, gathering his soldiers in readiness for its construction and waiting patiently for the diviners to give him the sign to go ahead. The latter wait for the omens when suddenly the soldiers are divinely galvanised into action, without reference to the diviners. Although Appian appends a long explanation designed to show that the omens were being deliberately delayed because the diviners feared that Seleucia's existence would threaten Babylon's position, the true point of the story is the emphasis on the gods' blessing for the king and all his enterprises: he is pious and does everything possible to follow the correct, prescribed procedure; his project pleases the gods so much that they themselves shortcircuit the usual media and inspire the soldiers' limbs directly, thus frustrating completion of the usual ritual by sending a differently formulated and dramatic omen. If one detaches the later explanatory section, it becomes clear that the story fits into the category of royal *logoï*, designed to demonstrate the superior wisdom and farsightedness of the king as well as his closer connection with the divine sphere. It is further possible to compare this with col. I, ll.6–7 of the Antiochus cylinder, where stress is placed on the fact that: 'I conceived the idea for the building'—which encapsulates the king's responsibility and initiative, and is sometimes expressed in other Mesopotamian texts of this type as 'I, in my superior wisdom with which the gods have endowed me, decided to build . . .'.⁵⁵

The conclusions to be drawn so far may be summarized as follows:-

1. the physical context of the cylinder explains the emphasis which is placed on the god Nabû and his temple in Borsippa. But both ritual considerations, as well as references within the text combined with other bits of evidence, make it extremely likely that Antiochus I was closely involved in temple rebuilding in Babylon as well.
2. the form of the document as well as its content make it clear that the king was personally involved in the symbolically significant initial stages of the building.

⁵¹ Black, 'New Year ceremonies'; Kuhrt, 'Usurpation'.

⁵² ABC, no.13b: 3–9; cf. Sherwin-White, 'Ritual for a Seleucid king at Babylon?' *JHS* ciii (1983) 156–9. It is also very probably a performance of the New Year festival with royal participation that is referred to in the broken passage of Sachs and Hunger *Diaries* ii, –204.

⁵³ For example, the rather negative assessment by McEwan, *Priest and temple* 193–194.

⁵⁴ Full discussion of this by Sherwin-White, *Hellenism* 18–19. A clear illustration of the way in

which the cities controlled different routes as a result of their situation on different rivers is the separate despatch from the two centres of resources for the army to Syria in 274, cf. *BHT* 154/156, ll.11–13, Sachs and Hunger, *Diaries* i no. –273, rev.30–32.

⁵⁵ A particularly good example is the cylinder of Sargon II (721–705) relating his building of the new city Dur Sarrukin: Luckenbill, *Ancient records of Assyria and Babylonia* ii (Chicago 1927), §119: '(but I), in my all-embracing wisdom which at the command of Ea, lord of the abyss, was made rich in understanding and filled with cleverness . . .'

3. the royal ideology expressed in the text is a totally Babylonian one, already adopted earlier by the Persian conquerors and, as is becoming increasingly evident, by Alexander too.⁵⁶

G. NON-BABYLONIAN FEATURES OF THE CYLINDER

Having stressed the purely Babylonian character of the cylinder and the ideology it projects, the two elements in it that do not fit with this cultural conservatism should now be considered.

G1. *The Macedonian element.*

First, the epithet 'Macedonian' which appears among the titulary near the beginning. Such ethno-dynastic appellations are not typically Babylonian and for this reason its appearance here has been considered the product of Greek/Macedonian concepts of a *Herrenvolk*⁵⁷ ruling over 'oriental natives'.⁵⁸ Such a view ignores the stereotypes at play here: ethnic identity was particularly stressed in the genealogical self-definitions used by the Persian emperors in their royal inscriptions.⁵⁹ A more plausible interpretation, therefore, would be that Antiochus' Macedonian identity follows the models set by the Achaemenids' statement of their Persian origins: it is an imperial usage demonstrating a development by the Seleucids of the titulary of their Persian predecessors, whose imperial style was so influential in the formation and articulation of the hellenistic monarchies.⁶⁰ It would also be wise to bear in mind Antiochus' parentage and upbringing; as Bernard has so aptly put it when speaking of Antiochus' appointment as co-regent: '(at this point) Asia received a king who had never known Greece and whose tastes and concerns were probably marked by the 'Greek-Oriental' ambience in which he had lived.'⁶¹

G2. *Stratonice the queen.*

The other unusual element in the text is the mention of Stratonice. This is remarkable in a Mesopotamian building text and certainly no queen is ever mentioned in an Old Persian royal inscription.⁶² This would, then, appear at first sight to be a real innovation reflecting hellenistic royal practice where queens figure so prominently in letters to, and decrees of, cities and in dedications.⁶³ Should this then be seen as a specifically Greek innovation? It is possible that that is, indeed, the right interpretation, but another approach might be tried: for such a very Babylonian document one might instead seek parallels in other texts from this cultural milieu rather than the Greek one.

⁵⁶ cf. Kuhrt, 'Usurpation'.

⁵⁷ F. E. Adcock, 'Greek and Macedonian kingship', *Proc. Brit. Acad.*, xxxix (1953), 163-180.

⁵⁸ For cogent arguments against such a view cf. already E. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris 1938) 6-7.

⁵⁹ See R. G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, texts, lexicon* (New Haven 1953) for the royal inscriptions; cf. M. Dandamaev, *Persien unter den ersten Achämeniden* (Munich 1976) 210-214 for the deliberate emphasis placed on the Persian character of the Achaemenid empire after Darius I's successful seizure of the throne.

⁶⁰ e.g. P. Briant, 'Des Achéménides aux rois hellénistiques: continuité et rupture', *Rois, tributs et paysans* (Besançon 1982) 291-330; Musti, 'Syria':

179; Sherwin-White, *Hellenism* 7-8; M. Colledge, 'Greek and non-Greek interaction in the art and architecture of the hellenistic east', *Hellenism*, 142-144.

⁶¹ P. Bernard, 'Les traditions orientales dans l'architecture gréco-bactrienne', *Journal Asiatique* cclxiv (1976) 245-75 at 257.

⁶² See H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'Exit Atossa: images of women in Greek historiography on Persia' in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds) *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London 1983) 20-33 at 22.

⁶³ e.g. Stratonice: OGIS 222, 229; Laodice (wife of Antiochus III) G. Pugliese-Carratelli, *ASAA* xxix-xxx (1967-8) 445-453, P. Herrmann, *Anadolu* ix (1965) 34-36, L. Robert, *Hellenica* 7(1949) 5-22.

Although some later Babylonian building inscriptions exist,⁶⁴ the queen is never named in these so that Stratonice's mention in this text genre remains at present unique.⁶⁵ There are, however, three earlier Mesopotamian royal women who figure, unusually, in the inscriptions of their sons who had become kings.⁶⁶ In the case of two it is clear that the reason for their apparent prominence is directly linked to the fact that their sons had come to the throne in unusual circumstances. The reason for the importance of the third, who is the historical figure around whom the legendary *persona* of Semiramis was elaborated, is unknown,⁶⁷ but given the rarity of mentions of female members of the royal family in formal inscriptions one would presume here, too, that it was her role in maintaining the dynastic succession that led to her name being commemorated and gave rise to the enormous number of legends associated with her name.⁶⁸

Similarly, it may well be the *exceptional* position of Stratonice that is being stressed here rather than a regular role performed by hellenistic queens. As is well known she was the daughter of the famous Phila (herself the daughter of Antipater, widow of Craterus and Demetrius Poliorcetes' long suffering wife, cf. Plutarch *Demetr.* 14; 22; 32; 37; 45), who was married as part of a political deal to Seleucus I (Plut. *Demetr.* 31.5) and to whom she bore a child (Plut. *Demetr.* 38); and she was later passed on to become the wife of Seleucus' son, co-regent and designated successor, Antiochus. The extraordinary circumstances of her history generated popular tales in considerable number.⁶⁹

To sum up, then, the character of Stratonice's role is indicated by the following features: first, the analogy with the earlier Mesopotamian examples; second, the nature of her mention in this text *and* at this time when Seleucus I's vast realm was being consolidated—one aspect of which must surely have been the extensive rebuilding in Babylon and Borsippa after the massive ravages wrought there by Antigonos' forces between 311–308;⁷⁰ third, the many tales told about her. From this one may conclude that Stratonice as the daughter of a king, who married one of the most powerful of the

⁶⁴ Such as those referred to (above, Bb) from Uruk.

⁶⁵ An apparent exception is the document, dated SE 139 (Antiochus IV) in which the *satammu* of Esagila refers to a gift of land made by Antiochus II to Laodice and his two sons (see above note 29). However, this is not a formal royal decree, but a record of the history of land gifted to Babylonian cities presented by a representative of the Babylonian urban communities; as already said (n.29), Laodice is simply described as Antiochus II's 'wife'; also not comparable are the historical references in the astronomical diaries, cf. above note 29.

⁶⁶ These are Sammuramat, mother of Adad-nirari III (810–783): for details of the texts cf. W. Schramm, 'War Semiramis assyrische Regentin?' *Historia* xxi (1972), 513–521; Naqi'a-Zakûtu, mother of Esarhaddon (681–669): for the texts see Borger, *Asarhaddon*, 115–6: §86; Adda'guppi (not herself a queen), mother of Nabonidus (556–539): for texts cf. C.J. Gadd, 'The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus', *AnSt* viii (1958), 35–92: Nab.H1B. A possible fourth that should now be included is Tashmetum-Sharrat, who was at one time the MIEGAL of Sennacherib and who is attested in an inscription in which Sennacherib commemorates the building of a section of the palace for her. It is speculated that her prominence is due to her status,

at that time, as mother of the designated successor, Ashur-nadin-shumi, who was installed as ruler of the Assyrian subject-territory of Babylonia between 700 and 694. He was removed from the throne in the course of an Elamite raid and died or was executed in captivity. The text is very short and Tashmetum-Sharrat does not, on present evidence, seem to have ever occupied as exceptional a position as the other three. Cf. Reade (n.28). Different again are the recently discovered texts (April and August 1989) accompanying the burials of Assyrian queens found at Nimrud, which are more in the nature of short funeral notices; the texts will be published in the next issue of *Baghdader Mitteilungen* by A. Fadhil and K. Deller.

⁶⁷ cf. Grayson, 'Assyria: Ashur-dan II to Ashurnirari v (934–745 BC)' *Cambridge Ancient History*³ iii.1 277; Schramm, 'Semiramis'.

⁶⁸ See W. Eilers, *Semiramis, Entstehung und Nachhall einer altorientalischen Sage* (Vienna 1971).

⁶⁹ Plutarch *Dem.* 38; Appian *Syr.* 59; Lucian *de dea Syria* 17–18; note esp. the extraordinary story of Stratonice's romantic adventure (while married to Seleucus) with the eunuch Kombabos at Hierapolis contained in Lucian *de dea Syria* 18–25; also, the brief but significant allusion by Lucian at 23 to numerous variants of the story.

⁷⁰ ABC, no.10: rev. 14–23 and left edge, 1–2; cf. Sherwin-White, *Hellenism* 15–16; Kuhrt, *ibid.* 51.

successors and was then passed on to the crown-prince to secure a smooth succession, was an unusually powerful political figure inasmuch as she fulfilled the important function of what Goody has aptly termed a 'stakeholder' in the delicate business of transferring power over an enormous, newly-formed empire.⁷¹ And it is these exceptional circumstances that explain her mention in this context, and possibly also dictated the specific choice of titles she bears in the cylinder: both *hīrtu* = 'principal wife' and *šarratu* = 'queen' are, in fact, limited in their use to designate female divinities in this period—a translation of 'divine consort' for the former and 'heavenly queen' for the latter might get close to rendering some of the nuances of meaning (*cf.* Bc above).

H. FUNDING OF THE TEMPLE BUILDING

One final question which needs brief consideration is the funding of the temple-building: there is no direct reference to finances in this or the later texts from Uruk. But it would be a serious mistake to rule out Seleucid funding of such major public works—indeed it is difficult to see how such large-scale projects could have been achieved without a special allocation of financial and other resources. Other instances, including the amply attested Seleucid funding for Greek temple building, may provide the appropriate model for what went on in Babylonia. Apart from a direct grant from the treasury such as Cyrus is supposed to have made for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple (Josephus *AJ* xi 7) or the expenses of temple worship borne by a king from his own revenues as in the case of Seleucus III⁷² as well as Seleucus IV (*II Macc.* 3. 3), kings could either allocate a place's tribute payment for the purpose⁷³ or new tithes could be granted (or restored) as Antiochus III (*AJ* xii 138) did at Jerusalem. There is, in fact, one Akkadian text dating to January 307 which records a tithe payment (of about one pound of silver) by a Babylonian slave for the purpose of clearing work at Esagila.⁷⁴ Although the question cannot at present be fully answered, the possibilities and likelihood of active royal involvement in funding certainly exist.

CONCLUSION

The significance of the Borsippa cylinder for Seleucid history is immense: it illustrates the cultural continuity in the region, the manipulation of traditional Babylonian forms and development of Achaemenid imperial ones by the Seleucids and what this involved in terms of their personal participation. It indicates their active interest in the Babylonian cities and is one of the best examples, apart from Jerusalem, of Seleucid benefaction and patronage of non-Greek cult-centres which were the foci of the local communities.⁷⁵ It would also be wrong simply to see such activity 'as a one-way system enabling only the king to make his rule as palatable as possible. The traditional duties of a Babylonian

⁷¹ J. Goody, *Succession to high office* (Cambridge 1966) 10–12.

⁷² For Seleucid royal funding of the New Year Festival at Babylon, see *ABC*, 13b: 4–6, *cf.* Sherwin-White, 'Ritual', van der Spek, 'The Babylonian temple during the Macedonian and Parthian domination', *Bibliotheca Orientalis* xlii (1985) 541–562 at 557–561.

⁷³ e.g. Cyrus at Jerusalem: I *Esdras* 2.8; *Ezra* 1.4–6.

⁷⁴ *CT* 49, 6 = *HAU*, no.89 (*cf.* note 48 above); note also *CT* 49, 5 in which five individuals present silver for the clearing work of Esagila.

⁷⁵ In this connection Lucian's close association of Stratonice with the building of the temple at Hierapolis is also significant; at the very least it reflects a tradition of Seleucid involvement with yet another non-Greek cult.

king, in temple-building, cult, as provider of peace and prosperity—in fact, the all-responsible ruler—equally gave his subjects, or the more powerful among them, a set of expectations of how a good king should rule and a basis for the exercise of pressures on the king. Just as in the case of Greek sanctuaries, where Seleucid patronage has been traced to the pressure from influential Greeks at court,⁷⁶ so in Babylonia their temple-patronage, strikingly illustrated by this cylinder, may at times also have been elicited by Babylonian groups and individuals'.⁷⁷

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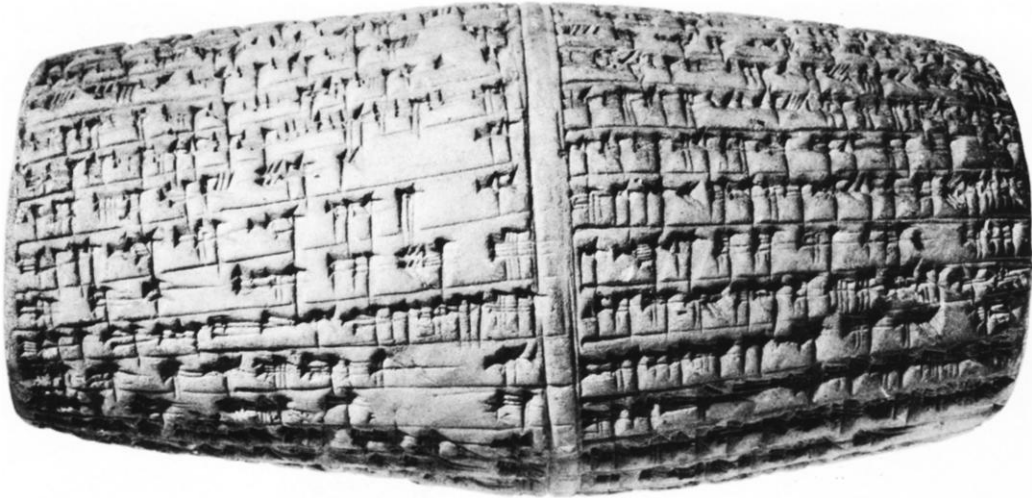
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⁷⁶ As demonstrated by J. and L. Robert, 'Plinie vi 49, Démodamas de Milet et la reine Apamée' *BCH*

cviii (1984) 467-472.

⁷⁷ Sherwin-White, *Hellenism* 9.



(a) Clay barrel cylinder from Borsippa with inscription of Antiochus I (BM 36277; photograph courtesy of British Museum).



(b) Stele of king Assurbanipal of Assyria (668–627 BC), probably from Babylon, shown in the traditional role of temple-builder. He is wearing the Assyrian crown and carrying on his head a basket containing bricks for the construction of the temple. (BM 90864; photograph courtesy of the British Museum).