5

Grasping the righteous sceptre: Nabu, scholarship and the kings of Babylonia

I argued in Chapter 3 that the Assyrian scholarly community was heavily invested in the cult of Nabu, god of wisdom, from at least the early first millennium BC. Throughout the empire, in imperial capitals and provincial centres alike, men of learning put their 'trust in Nabu' and exhibited that faith through naming practices, invocations in letters and colophons, and dedications to the deity in his temple. Only in the late eighth century did king Sargon and his descendants follow their advisors' lead, with the royal patronage of Nabu reaching its apogee during the reign of Ashurbanipal. After the decline and death of this unusual scholar-king, his weak successors in the last decades of the seventh century could only pay lip service to a cult, and concomitant intellectual culture, in terminal decline. In this chapter I trace the parallel relationship between king, god and scholar in first-millennium Babylonia and discover some striking differences.

However, as the nature of the Babylonian evidence is very different from that of the Neo-Assyrian empire we cannot directly compare like with like. There are substantial holdings of tablets from family businesses and temples – especially Šamaš's Ebabbar in Sippar and Ištar's Eanna in Uruk – but almost no palace archives (Fig. 5.1).[1] Further, with some exceptions the large majority of those assemblages come from informal or illicit excavations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some groups of tablets were removed from the ground by official expeditions with little regard to context, as for instance the 'Babylon' and 'Sippar' collections of the British Museum. In other cases, such Woolley's expedition to Ur, Langdon's to Kish and Koldewey's to Babylon, documentation has since been lost or proved inadequate.[2] Tablets were also dug up

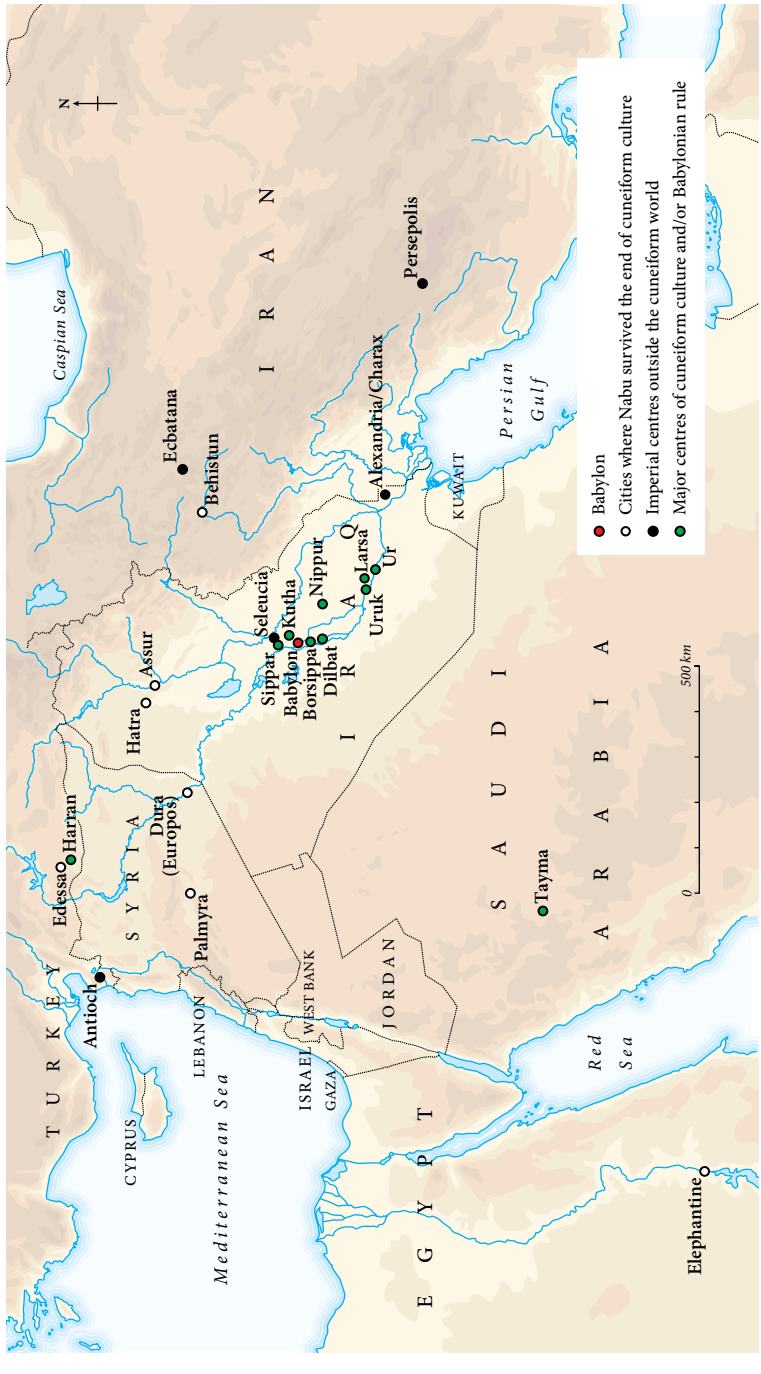

Figure 5.1: Map of the major cities mentioned in this chapter. Source: Martin Brown.

specifically for sale to local and international antiquities traders, often from identical or adjacent locations to formally excavated finds. Looters could reopen archaeological trenches; archaeologists could investigate looters' pits. Michael Jursa has provided an invaluable guide to the complexities of this material but hitherto there has been no systematic publication programme comparable to the State Archives of Assyria project.[3] On the other hand, Babylonian royal inscriptions, king lists, chronicles and observational diaries have in the main been well published and carefully analysed, providing an essential chronological and political framework for the period.[4] Nevertheless, we must remain alert to the fact that the chronicles, especially, exist primarily in manuscripts made many decades, even centuries, after the events described in them; and in many cases they are more faithful reflections of current concerns than of the periods they purport to document.[5] Finally, as for Assyria, we need to be aware of the increasing use of alphabetic scripts on perishable media, even if this is difficult to quantify or account for. In particular, it is highly likely that the Neo-Babylonian court, as indeed its non-Babylonian royal successors, depended far more on Aramaic than on Akkadian for correspondence and administration.[6]

I begin by considering Babylonian monarchs' views of cuneiform scholarship, and in particular its most important divine manifestation, the god Nabu, both before and after the Assyrian occupation. Next I consider the anti-Persian revolts and their consequences in the decades around 500 BC, just a generation or two after the Achaemenid conquest of Babylon. I shall argue that these events, also known to historians as 'the end of archives', constitute as significant a watershed for cuneiform scholarship as the collapse of the Assyrian empire a century or so earlier. To mark the break, I shall refer to the centuries before 484 BC as the Neo-Babylonian period and the following half-millennium as the Late Babylonian. In the final section, I examine some literary responses to the ruptured relationship between kingship and scholarship, through selected writings from Late Babylonian Uruk.

Babylonian royal attitudes to Nabu

The independent Babylonia that emerged from the collapse of the Assyrian empire in the late seventh century BC was not solely a successor state but had a long-standing, deep-rooted identity of its own. Several different dynasties had ruled from Babylon over the half-millennium before Tiglath-pileser III's conquest of Babylonia in 728.[7] Unfortunately there

are relatively few surviving royal inscriptions from this long period, many of which survive only in later copies.[8] Instead, one of the most informative datasets for this early Neo-Babylonian period consists of the so-called *kudurrus*: records of royal grants of land, income or other long-term entitlements to favoured individuals and their descendants, inscribed on objects that were usually commissioned by the beneficiary.[9] They were designed to be enduring witnesses to endowments set up in perpetuity, and were thus carved into stone, or baked into terracotta. These small-scale monuments could be deposited in temples for safekeeping as well as (or instead of) on the boundaries of the gifted territory and they often survive because of their very monumentality. Later scholarly writings also make many references and allusions to earlier Babylonian political history. Some of these, as we shall see, are more useful as retrospective images of that period than as primary historical witnesses. Yet they also highlight how much has been lost from that time, and caution us not to mistake the paucity of surviving evidence for a lack of royal activity or interest in Nabu.

Our evidence begins in the late twelfth century BC (Table 5a; cf. Table 3a). Nebuchadnezzar I (Nabu-kudurri-uṣur, 'O Nabu, protect my heir!', r. 1126–1104) was the first Babylonian king to take a throne name that invoked Nabu. A further nine kings followed his example over the next 300 years, almost equalling the eleven Babylonian rulers with the national god Marduk in their names.[10] The first extant royal inscription dedicated to Nabu describes Marduk-šapik-zeri's (r. 1081–1069) restoration of the Ezida temple in Borsippa.[11] It is also the earliest dateable evidence that the temple no longer belonged to Marduk. The following king, Adad-apal-iddina (r. 1068–1047), complemented his predecessor's building work by giving Nabu 'a sash of red gold which is adorned with precious stones and rampant wild bulls in four directions'.[12]

Neither ruler, though, seems to have been much interested in Nabu as a god of wisdom. For Adad-apal-iddina, for instance, Nabu was 'he who makes secure the throne, the sceptre and the crown, who establishes a reign, who decrees kingship'.[13] These epithets appear to allude to Nabu's role in in the new-year *akītu*-festival in Babylon, in which Marduk annually renewed the king's right to rule.[14] If Nabu could not leave Borsippa to visit Marduk at his temple in Babylon, the *akītu* could not take place and the king and cosmos were left vulnerable to the forces of chaos until the following year.[15] So crucial was the *akītu* to dynastic stability that the Chronicles record the rare occasions on which political disruption prevented it happening, especially in the turbulent years of the late eleventh and early tenth centuries, as a sign of divine disfavour.[16] Few details are

Table 5a: Developments in Babylonian and post-Babylonian royal attitudes to Nabu and cuneiform scholarship.

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
Nebuchadnezzar I (r. 1125–1104) (gap of twenty-three years)	Two military raids into Assyria; and into Elam, resulting in the recapture and return to Babylon of Marduk's cult statue, which had been taken some years earlier		First Babylonian king to take a throne-name invoking Nabu (Nabu-kudurri-uṣur, 'O Nabu, protect my heir!)	Later tradition traces some Babylonian scholarly works to the king's *ummânu* Saggil-kinam-ubbib
Marduk-šapik-zeri (r. 1081–1069)	Good relations with Assyria; repels repeated raids by Aramean tribes	Earliest extant royal inscription dedicated to Nabu, recording restoration of Ezida in Borsippa		
Adad-apla-iddina (r. 1068–1047) (gap of twenty-two years)	Perhaps conducts a marriage alliance with Assyria; repels repeated raids by tribal forces		Earliest known allusions to Nabu's role in new-year *akītu*-festival	Grants (prebendary?) land to *āšipu* in Babylon; later tradition traces the omen series *Sakikkû* to the king's *ummânu* Esangila-kin-apli
Simbar-šipak (r. 1025–1008)	Restores cult of Šamaš at Sippar, disrupted by earlier raids		First attestation of Nabu's temple E-niggidru-kalama-suma in Babylon	Grants land in Babylon to a *bārû*; his successor installs him as *šangû*-priest in Sippar

(*Continued*)

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
(gap of *c.* 150 years)				
Nabu-apla-iddina (r. *c.* 888–855)	Good relations with Assyria under Ashurnasirpal II			Gives leadership of 3,000 troops against Assyria to a *bārû*; grants prebend in Eanna temple to an *āšipu*; installs *bārû* as *šangû*-priest in Sippar
Marduk-zakir-šumi I (r. *c.* 855–819)	Alliance with Assyrian king Shalmaneser III against rebels	Grants tax exemptions to people of Babyon and Borsippa; allows Shalmaneser to make offerings to Nabu, Marduk and Nergal		Grants prebend in Eanna to a *kalû* in Uruk
(gap of *c.* sixty years)	Assyria invades Babylonia multiple times			
Nabu-šumu-iškun (r. 760–748) (gap of twenty years)	Assyria invades Babylonia multiple times	City governor repairs Ezida instead of king; king breaks priests' purity code	Fails to perform *akītu*-festival or to let Nabu return to Borsippa	

(*Continued*)

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
Tiglath-pileser III and Shalmaneser V (r. 728–722)	Assyria conquers Babylonia; Babylonia never fully accepts Assyrian rule		Tiglath-pileser performs *akītu*-festival on accession to Babylonian throne	
Marduk-apla-iddina (r. 721–710, 703)	Reclaims Babylonian independence			
Sargon II (r. 710–705)	Sargon regains Assyrian control of Babylonia; rules from Babylon	First known king to adopt epithet 'provider for Esangila and Ezida' in royal inscriptions	Performs *akītu*-festival on accession to Babylonian throne	Hymns to Sargon in Babylonian script found at Nineveh
Sennacherib, Bel-ibni, other vassal kings and rebel rulers (r. 704–681)	Sennacherib struggles to control Babylonia; sacks Babylon in 688	Borsippa neglected but not directly attacked?	No *akītu*-festival for eight years; Marduk (but not Nabu?) held captive in Assur	
Esarhaddon (r. 680–669)	Gradually restores Babylon; names Šamaš-šumu-ukin as Babylonian crown prince	Restores Nanaya's temple in Uruk in hope she will advocate for him to Nabu	Returns Marduk from Assur after twelve years; no *akītu*-festival meanwhile; restores E-niggidru-kalama-suma	Babylonian scholarly captives put to forced copying work in Nineveh in 675 BC

(*Continued*)

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
Ashurbanipal, Šamaš-šumu-ukin (r. 668–648) and Kandalanu (r. 647–627)	Civil war 652–648; Babylon sacked again. Ashurbanipal installs vassal ruler	Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin jointly rebuild city wall and repair temple	*Akītu*-festival resumes on Šamaš-šumu-ukin's accession; halts during civil war	Wholesale removal of scholarly tablets to Nineveh on Ashurbanipal's victory
Nabopolassar (r. 626–605)	Son of Assyrian loyalist governor of Uruk; starts war for Babylonian independence in 630; founder of Chaldean dynasty	Proclaims himself to have been 'protegé of Nabu and Marduk' in early life	No *akītu*-festival in accession year	Probable revival of Babylonian court and temple scholarship
Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 604–562) (gap of six years)	Former *šatammu* of Eanna in Uruk; increases reach of Babylonian imperial power to Mediterranean coast	Massive building programmes encompass work on Ezida and a new processional barge for Nabu	Performs *akītu*-festival in accession year; restores E-niggidru-kalama-suma	Evidence of *āšipus* at court

(*Continued*)

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
Nabonidus (r. 555–539) and crown prince Belshazzar	Usurper from Harran, perhaps of Assyrian descent; favours clergy of Ur over Chaldean-linked temples of Uruk and Babylon; spends a decade in Tayma oasis while Belshazzar rules	Repairs Ezida	'Grasps the righteous sceptre' of Nabu on accession; ten-year hiatus in *akītu*-festival; celebrated 'as in normal times' in 539	Removes pro-Chaldean temple elites from office; uses *bārûtu* to assert will over Ebabbar temple in Sippar; uses dreams to rebut scholarly authority on celestial divination; *āšipus* at crown prince's court
Cyrus II (r. 539–530)	Conquers Babylon and incorporates it into nascent Persian empire; courts Babylonian northern elites	Cuneiform inscriptions in his name declare devotion to Marduk and Nabu, Esangila and Ezida	Cyrus performs *akītu*-festival; Cambyses takes sceptre from Nabu as crown prince	Anti-Nabonidus, pro-Cyrus cuneiform inscriptions show strong support for new king from northern Babylonian elite

(*Continued*)

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
Darius I (r. 522–486); Nebuchadnezzar III and Nebuchadnezzar IV (r. 522, 521)	Usurper who has to quash many revolts on accession, including two temple-backed, pro-Chaldean insurgencies; Behistun inscription and Old Persian cuneiform assert authority; from 499 mostly occupied with subduing rebellions in Ionia and Asia Minor			Support for rebel kings from (at least) Ebabbar temple in Sippar and Eanna in Uruk; removal of senior officials in aftermath; further rebellions plotted on tributary journeys to king's new palace in Susa
Xerxes I (r. 486–465); Bel-šimanni and Šamaš-eriba (r. 484)	Quells two Babylonian revolts early in his reign, with harsh reprisals in Babylon and beyond; reconfigures Babylonian society and economy to favour loyalists; repeated invasions of Ionia			So-called 'end of archives' in 484 marks end of many pro-Chaldean temple communities in northern Babylonia and Uruk; Esangila disempowered; Reš and Irigal temples establish themselves in Uruk

(*Continued*)

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
(gap of 135 years)				
Alexander the Great (r. 330–323) (two kings in twelve years)	Conquers Babylon and incorporates its territories into nascent empire; on sudden death in Babylon leaves major power vacuum			Engages seriously with cuneiform scholarship, especially divination; allows performance of Substitute King Ritual; orders repairs to Esangila and Etemenanki
Seleucus I Nicator (r. 311–281)	Former general of Alexander, establishes stable dynasty with major seat at Antioch, 850 kilometres from Babylon			
Antiochus I Soter (r. 281–261)	Based in Babylon as co-regent; but later moves Greek community to nearby Seleucia and taxes Babylon heavily to fund war against Egypt	Commemorates minor work on Ezida and Esangila with last-known cuneiform royal inscription in 268 bc		Berossus of Esangila dedicates his Greek-language *Babloniaca* to the king, according to much later testimony

(*Continued*)

Ruler of Babylon	*Significant political developments*	*Attentions to Nabu and Ezida in Borsippa*	*Attentions to Nabu, E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the* akītu*-festival in Babylon*	*Relations with cuneiform scholarship and temple communities*
Antiochus II Theo (r. 261–246)	Primarily occupied with war against Egypt in Syria and rebellions in Persia	Endows significant tax-exempt land and income rights to Ezida and Esangila		Late in the reign, Uruk city governor Anu-uballiṭ Nikarchus begins building work on Reš, invoking king's name
(gap of twenty-four years)				
Antiochus III (r. 222–187)	Primarily occupied with wars in Syria, Asia Minor and Persia		Performs *akītu*-festival in 205 BC to celebrate military victory	Uruk city governor Anu-uballiṭ Kephalon undertakes building work on Reš, in king's name
(gap of *c.* forty-five years)				
Hyspaosines (r. *c.* 141–124)	Former local governor of the Sealand, who declares independence from weak Seleucid rule and captures Babylon in 127 BC	Fragmentary Diary reference to entering Borsippa on conquest of Babylon	Fragmentary Diary reference to interrupted rites in *akītu*-temple (now restored?)	A *ṭupšar Enūma Anu Ellil* from Esangila in attendance at court: the last attested Babylonian court scholar

known about the festival in the early first millennium, but in the later Neo-Babylonian period there was a preamble in which Nabu, as Marduk's son (and with the unexplained epithet *ša harê*), ceremonially handed the regalia of kingship to the current ruler's nominated successor, perhaps every year, perhaps only on the crown prince's nomination.[17] This ritual took place in the purpose-built E-niggidru-kalama-suma temple ('House which bestows the Sceptre of the Land') in Babylon, which stood just north of Marduk's ziggurat Etemenanki on the central Processional Way.[18] A Seleucid chronicle about ominous occurrences in late eleventh-century Babylon reports a panther swimming in the Euphrates behind this important site of dynastic succession.[19] Whether or not we believe this much later testimony to the temple's existence at this early date, Adad-apal-iddina's inscription suggests that Nabu was already central to the divine sanctioning of dynastic succession.

However, neither Adad-apal-iddina's nor Marduk-šapik-zeri's inscription is preserved in its original form. The first was written out by a member of the Huṣabu family of prebendary brewers of Borsippa's Ezida temple in 633 BC (see Chapter 6), while the second survives in a copy made by the *āšipu* Urad-Gula of the powerful Gabbu-ilani-ereš dynasty of Assyrian royal scholars, who served in Esarhaddon's court around 670 BC (see Chapter 4).[20] Their survival tells us as much about the importance of Nabu's cult in the seventh century BC as it does about the late second millennium.

Although it appears that early Neo-Babylonian rulers valued Nabu more as a king-maker than as a patron of learning, Nabu's human counterparts were regularly members of the royal entourage. The monuments known as *kudurrus* reveal scanty but clear information about the sorts of scholars who were close to the king in the late second and early first millennium: those who were honoured with endowments and those who were entrusted with drawing up or witnessing the necessary legal documentation (online Table B1). *Asûs, bārûs* and *kalûs* – but no *āšipus*, so far as is known – all served from time to time as witnesses to royal grants, while *bārûs* could also function as scribes. Surviving endowments to scholars include land granted to a *bārû* in thirteenth-century Nippur; land and prebendary rights given to a *bārû* in late eleventh-century Sippar; and land and prebendary rights assigned to a *kalû* and an *āšipu* in ninth-century Uruk (Fig. 6.1).[21] An Assyrian royal inscription of 878 BC also tells us that the Babylonian king Nabu-apal-iddina (r. *c*. 888–855 BC) counted a *bārû* amongst his commanding officers, leading 3,000 troops.[22]

Likewise, little is known about the relationships between Babylonian kingship and scholarship in the period immediately following, except

when abnormal occurrences allow us to infer something of normal conditions by contrast to the events reported. For instance, an inscription on a clay cylinder, discovered in Borsippa's Ezida temple, describes the restoration of a storeroom in the temple during the reign of Nabu-šuma-iškun (r. 760–748).[23] The work and inscription were commissioned not by the king, as might be expected, but by Nabu-šuma-imbi, the city governor. He acknowledges Nabu as '[endowed with(?)] wisdom and deliberation, evaluator of omens', the earliest known acknowledgement in a Babylonian official inscription of Nabu's scholarly status.[24] As Nabu-šuma-imbi notes, the mid-eighth century was a time of 'disorder, disturbances, revolt and turmoil in Borsippa, city of truth and justice', which had greater consequences for Nabu than the governor taking over the royal role as patron of building works.[25] A sixth-century chronicle, probably also written in Borsippa, notes that, 'in Nabu-šuma-iškun's 5th and 6th years Nabu did not go out for Bel's (i.e. Marduk's) (*akītu*) procession'.[26] In a similar vein, a fragmentary scholarly text from early Seleucid Uruk claims that this same king 'kept Nabu in Babylon' after the *akītu*-festival instead of letting him return to Borsippa, and made the priesthood of Ezida break their purity code by forcing them to eat leeks.[27] Finally, during this period of urban unrest two secondary deities of Ezida endowed a temple position for a relative of the city governor's. Given that this was normally the king's prerogative, the gods (and their human servants) were presumably acting at the governor Nabu-šuma-imbi's behest in the absence of Nabu and Nabu-šuma-iškun respectively.[28] In short, when kingship was so weak that neither king nor god could travel to perform the duties normally expected of them, local political power, and local deities, stepped in to ensure the maintenance of the cult. Ezida was not entirely dependent on royal patronage, in other words, but could also rely on local dynasts for their support. In return, they gained further familial influence in the form of temple endowments.

As we saw in Chapter 3, Assyria first gained political control over Babylonia in 728 BC and held on to it, more or less, in the face of much native opposition – and several substantial periods of native rule – until Nabopolassar's foundation of the Chaldean dynasty in 626 BC. However, the Assyrian kings did not assimilate Neo-Babylonian Nabu into the already well-developed Assyrian deity (who was in turn, as we have seen, a local outgrowth of his Middle Babylonian incarnation) but maintained their quite discrete identities.[29] From the mid-ninth century onwards, Assyrian kings on campaign in northern Babylonia had typically taken a pilgrimage route through Babylon, Borsippa and Kutha in order to receive the *rēhtu*-leftovers of the meals offered to the gods

Marduk, Nabu and Nergal respectively.[30] After Tiglath-pileser's conquest of Babylonia 728 BC, he and his successors also participated in the *akītu*-festival whenever they could, in order to establish themselves as true Babylonian kings.[31] Then, at the end of the eighth century, Sargon dropped the worship of Nergal at Kutha in favour of increased attention to the other two members of the divine trio.[32] He made Babylon his residence city for four years, as we saw in Chapter 3, and was the first known king to adopt the epithet *zānin Esangila u Ezida* 'provider for Esangila and Ezida'.[33] He guaranteed the supply of sacrificial animals to the two temples by imposing a livestock tax on a northern Babylonian tribal settlement, which he renamed Dur-Nabu ('Fort Nabu'), and heavily promoted Nabu in Assyria too.[34]

By contrast Sargon's son, the virulently anti-Babylonian Sennacherib, virtually ignored Nabu and Borsippa in his inscriptions, venting all his rage against Marduk and the capital city (Chapter 3). To what extent did he include Borsippa in his all-encompassing destruction of Babylon or exempt it from retributions? The answer can be inferred from the inscriptions and correspondence of his son and successor Esarhaddon that relate to the subsequent reconstruction process.[35] It appears that Sennacherib's army had hardly touched Borsippa and Ezida. Esarhaddon proudly lists many new zoomorphic adornments for the temple, all in precious metal and designed to ward off evil. But he says nothing about repairs to the building's infrastructure, which suggests that it had no need of fixing.[36]

Letters to Esarhaddon from his scholar and political agent Mar-Issar give the same impression.[37] In one missive he reports on the dedication of a new tiara for Nabu, inscribed with the king's name, then goes on to reveal deep-seated corruption within the Borsippan priesthood. Even the *šatammu* himself – the most senior official in the hierarchy – is implicated in the misappropriation of sacrificial animals. Mar-Issar urges the king to restore regular offerings *ša* [*ina*] *labīri* 'as [in] the past'.[38] In another letter he requests permission to improve a pontoon bridge across the canal next to Ezida using labour from the temple workforce; but it appears that no work is needed on the building itself.[39] In sum, it seems that the decay in physical and ethical standards that Mar-Issar found was not the result of any targeted destruction campaign by Sennacherib but rather the outcome of royal neglect. While kingly attention was elsewhere, the moral fibre of the temple had decayed more than its material infrastructure. Esarhaddon's programme of conspicuously lavish refurbishment was as much a reassertion of royal power over the temple and its human personnel as it was an act of homage to the god of wisdom.

In Babylon too, Esarhaddon took care of Nabu, by rebuilding E-niggidru-kalama-suma, the tiny temple in which the god bestowed the Sceptre of the Land on the new crown prince (Fig. 5.2).[40] For the king and his entourage there must have been parallels with the *akītu*-suite in Nabu's Assyrian temples (see Chapter 3).[41] However, although Esarhaddon's E-niggidru-kalama-suma and the Assyrian Ezidas served similar functions, their layouts and sizes are significantly different. We saw in Chapter 3 that the Assyrian temples of Nabu were distinguished by twin, long-axis cellas with ante-cellas, one each for Nabu and Tašmetu, plus a secondary *akītu*-suite that included a pair of smaller shrines and an adjacent throne room. In Nabu *ša harê*'s temple in Babylon, however, both god and goddess inhabited short-axis shrines, without antechambers but accessed directly from a courtyard. The cella of Nanaya, Tašmetu's Babylonian counterpart (Room 23), was considerably smaller than Nabu's (Room 9), tucked away in the southeastern corner of the building and without direct communication to her spouse's suite.[42] Nor, apparently, was any area of the temple specifically designed as a throne room – but this is unsurprising given that the building's primary ritual

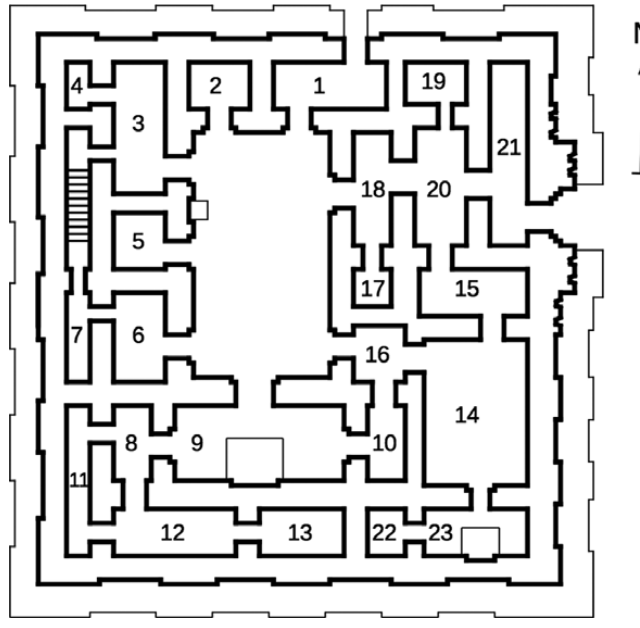

Figure 5.2: Plan of Nabu's temple E-niggidru-kalama-suma in Babylon by excavator Daniel Ishaq, oriented north. Maximum dimensions *c*. 25 × 25 metres. Drawing by the author after Cavigneaux (2013: 67).

function was not to serve ruling monarchs but to bestow the right to reign. And, at just 25 metres square, the E-niggidru-kalama-suma could have fitted into the Kalhu Ezida five times over. It is clear, then, that Esarhaddon's refurbishment did not impose Assyrian concepts of Nabu onto the architecture of E-niggidru-kalama-suma but almost certainly aimed to maintain continuity with established Babylonian practice.

We might expect a Babylonian temple dedicated to Nabu to have contained substantial holdings of scholarly tablets, as they did in the Assyrian royal cities. But there is no evidence of this in Babylon. Esarhaddon's building was decommissioned during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (Nabu-kudurri-uṣur, 'O Nabu, protect my eldest son!', r. 604–562), when it was emptied of its fittings and furniture in preparation for rebuilding.[43] Only a few remnants of scholarly tablets were left behind, along with perhaps as many as 1,500–2,000 fragmentary school exercises, abandoned on the floors and even trampled into them, in and around the northern stairwell (west of Room 5).[44] On the obverse of these large, square multi-column tablets were the typical products of the most elementary phases of Neo-Babylonian scribal education.[45] Short or long extracts from one or more of half a dozen standard elementary works were often combined with brief passages from ad hoc and 'non-curricular' exercises – for instance metrology, personal names, place names, professional designations, lexical lists – and/or literary works, proverbs and administrative formulae. But there is no archaeological evidence for a scribal school on the premises: no recycling bins, fresh clay or broken styluses.[46] What, then, were these tablets doing in the otherwise empty temple?

On the reverse of many of the exercise tablets are long, tripartite colophons which were often pre-prepared for the novice scribes by their teacher or a more advanced trainee.[47] They typically begin with a short prayer to Nabu *ša harê* or Nabu *ša nikkassī* 'of accounts', then give a list of wishes for the welfare of the scribe and his family, followed by an appeal to the tablet itself to intercede with Nabu on the dedicator's behalf.[48] Some of the more complex colophons reveal that these *ṭuppī meṣḫerūti*, 'tablets of childhood', were made from clay from a 'holy place' (*ašru ellu*) or 'the orchard of the Apsu' (*kirê apsî*), which seems have been to have been a garden area within the precinct of Marduk's temple Esangila.[49] Other colophons tell us that they were handed to the temple doorkeeper (*kannik bābi* or *kannāk bābi*) to be deposited in special receptacles (*gunnu*) in the temple, perhaps at an appropriate point in the new year's *akītu*-festival or the autumn *kislīmu*-festival (Fig. 5.3).[50] Almost all cuneiform tablets turn from top to bottom – that is, the text on the reverse is upside down in relation to the obverse. By contrast, many of these were written so that they

Figure 5.3: A large exercise tablet (*c*. 170 × 130 millimetres), dedicated to Nabu in the temple E-niggidru-kalama-suma in Babylon, *c*. 600 BC. The obverse contains very simple writing exercises while on the reverse a student named Belšunu son of Nabu-nadin-apli asks for many types of divine favour in return for this offering, given 'to the gatekeeper for the tablet-receptacle' (Gesche 2001: 650–2). BM ME 77665, reproduced with the permission of the British Museum.

turned left to right like a book, perhaps so that they could be displayed and read on both sides.[51] They were, then, no ordinary school tablets but sacred objects which must have been accumulating over a long period of time in the temple. They were kept not for the knowledge or ideas they contained, but as evidence of personal piety and reminders to Nabu *ša harê* of the prayers he must answer. While they were not worth saving for the newly reconstructed temple, neither could they be thrown away like secular rubbish, so were left as fill for the foundations.[52]

Similar tablets, with similar colophons, suggest that juvenile scribes also made votive offerings to Šamaš and/or Nabu in the Ebabbar temple in Sippar, and perhaps also to deities in other temples of Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur and Uruk in the Neo-Babylonian period.[53] In this light, we can now understand his son Ashurbanipal's dedication of scholarly tablets to Nabu in the Nineveh Ezida (see Chapter 4) as a particularly elaborate and showy instance of the same phenomenon.

Esarhaddon's restoration of Nabu *ša harê*'s temple in Babylon might have been motivated by his elaborate succession arrangements, designed to secure the dual reign of his sons Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin. But whether or not his intentions were for Šamaš-šumu-ukin to receive the Sceptre of the Land in E-niggidru-kalama-suma, it is probable that this never happened. The so-called *Akītu Chronicle* reports that, 'for [8] years under Sennacherib, for 12 years under Esarhaddon: for 20 years Bel (i.e., Marduk) dwelt in Assur [and so] the *akītu*-festival was called off'.[54] Marduk arrived back in his home city only in 669 BC, to mark Šamaš-šumu-ukin's succession to the Babylonian throne. Marduk and Nabu then resumed their annual *akītu* duties, while Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin worked in tandem to support Nabu's cult in Borsippa. Matching steles celebrate their jointly sponsored renewal of the Ezida. Ashurbanipal repaired the city wall while Šamaš-šumu-ukin restored the temple's *šutummu*-storehouses. One or both rulers also procured new equipment for Nabu's processional barge.[55] In all of these inscriptions, though, care was taken to preserve Marduk's primacy: Babylonian Nabu was never allowed to forget that he was merely the son of the national god and, unlike his human counterparts, destined never to inherit the throne.[56] However, Assyrian reverence for Nabu's wisdom was not completely repressed: for Ashurbanipal he was 'carrier of the gods' Tablet of Destinies, who is in complete control of omens', while Šamaš-šumu-ukin expressed similar sentiments.[57]

Civil war between the royal brothers again prevented the regular renewal of kingship in 652 BC.[58] Assyria definitively lost control of Babylonia just a few years after Ashurbanipal's death in 630 BC. The leader of the uprising, and first native king for three generations, was

one Nabopolassar (Nabu-apal-uṣur, 'O Nabu, protect the heir!', r. 626–605). His inscriptions portrayed him as the 'son of a nobody', a tabula rasa with no prior political entanglements, but in reality he belonged to an elite northern Babylonian family who had held significant power in the southern city of Uruk for several centuries.[59] His grandfather Nabu-naṣir had been *šatammu* of the Eanna temple of the goddess Ištar during Esarhaddon's reign; then his father (Nabu-)Kudurru(-uṣur) had served as governor of Uruk under Sin-šarru-iškun.[60] Repudiating this long-standing Assyrian patronage, Nabopolassar nevertheless appointed his eldest son, the future king Nebuchadnezzar II, as *šatammu* of Eanna, a position which he held until at least 617 BC. He in turn named a son Eanna-šarra-uṣur ('O Eanna, protect the king!'), suggesting that the Chaldean dynasty's links with Uruk remained strong. Given the close but complex relationship between Babylonian temples and scholars, discussed further in Chapter 6, it is highly likely that members of the new royal family were enthusiastic supporters of literate scholarship.

Indeed, the Neo-Babylonian kings' support for Nabu himself is clearly visible in their inscriptions and building works. Rocio Da Riva lists the titles and epithets used by Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus (Nabu-naʾid, 'Attentive to Nabu', r. 555–539) to describe themselves in official inscriptions.[61] When kings express a relationship between themselves and one or more deities or temples, over half the time they invoke the pairing Marduk and Nabu (e.g. Nabopolassar's *muṭīb libbi Nabu u Marduk*, 'he who pleases Nabu and Marduk') and/or Esangila and Ezida (e.g. the ubiquitous *zānin Esangila u Ezida*, 'provider for Esangila and Ezida').[62] However, there is no particular divine favouritism beyond this classic pairing and neither Nabu nor any other god tends to stands alone in relation to the king. It is only Nebuchadnezzar who expresses 90 per cent of his divine relationships in terms of Nabu, Marduk or the two combined.

Nebuchadnezzar's devotional priorities are reflected in the number of building works he ordered for Nabu in both Babylon and Borsippa. He completely rebuilt E-niggidru-kalama-suma, improved Nabu's processional ways in both cities and commissioned a new processional barge for the god's journeys between them along the Arakhtu canal.[63] Not least, Nebuchadnezzar also repaired Ezida and its ziggurat in Borsippa. The Neo-Babylonian Ezida was built to the same basic plan as Esarhaddon's E-niggidru-kalama-suma, but on a much larger scale – or perhaps, rather, the latter was a tiny version of the former. With maximum dimensions 100 × 100 metres, it was some sixteen times bigger than the temple in Babylon (Fig. 5.4).[64] Here too Nabu's short-axis cella (A3) was off the

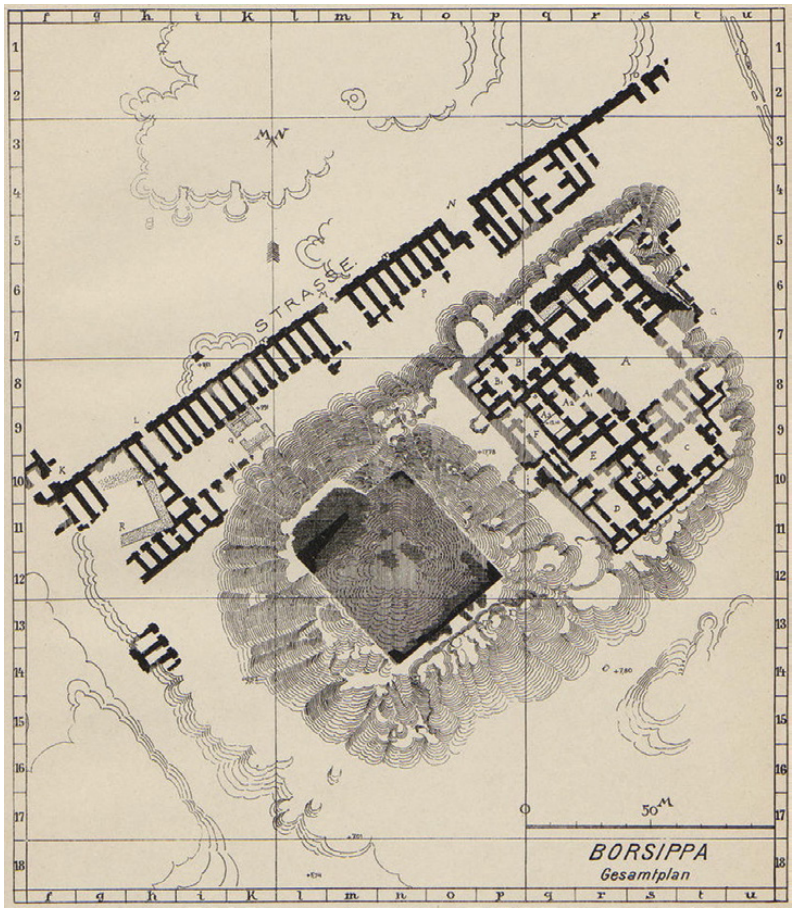

Figure 5.4: Plan of Nabu's temple Ezida in Borsippa in the Neo-Babylonian period, with Nabu's shrine (A3) located far from Nanaya's (C2). The temple itself, some 100 × 100 metres in area, is located to the northeast of the ziggurat. Both are enclosed by a precinct bordered by *šutummu*-warehouses in which the temple personnel stored their tablets and cultic equipment (Koldewey 1911: Taf. XII). Public domain.

main courtyard (but accessed via two large antechambers), while Nanaya occupied a similar but smaller suite of rooms off a separate courtyard to the southeast (C2). Again, the excavated portion of the building contains no obvious throne room, but two adjacent courtyards to the northwest of Nabu's shine look as though they serviced a series of chapels for minor deities in Nabu's entourage (B, B1).

The chronicles for this time report no problems with the *akītu*-festival after the accession year of Nabopolassar, until Nabonidus's still mysterious ten-year sojourn in the Arabian oasis settlement of Tayma.[65] This hiatus in royal residence in Babylon meant that for a decade, *c*. 553–543 BC, 'Nabu did not go to Babylon, Bel did not go out, the *akītu*-festival was called off', although 'the sacrifices in Esangila and Ezida to the gods of Babylon and Borsippa were offered as normal'.[66] Indeed it was Nabu's role as bestower of kingship that Neo-Babylonian rulers highlighted above all. They invoked his scholarly aspects only when commemorating works on temples.[67] Compare, for instance, two building inscriptions of Neriglissar (r. 559–556). On clay cylinders that celebrated the completion of canal works in Babylon, he is described as the king 'in whose hands Nabu, the supervisor of all heaven and earth, placed the just sceptre, the rightful staff for making all subjects prosper' – a clear reference to Nabu's function in E-niggidru-kalama-suma.[68] By contrast, on another clay cylinder marking repairs to the ziggurat of the god Šamaš in Sippar, the same king calls himself 'the beloved of Nabu, the judicious one, full of wisdom', before noting that Šamaš 'speaks justly in lawsuits and divinations'.[69]

Nabonidus had a rather more complex relationship with Nabu, according to Paul-Alain Beaulieu.[70] As a usurper from an Assyrian background, who had overthrown the infant king Labaši-Marduk to gain the crown, he had to work hard to prove his legitimacy.[71] One obvious obstacle was that he had not received the Sceptre of the Land from Nabu in E-niggidru-kalama-suma. He rectified that omission early in his reign, according to an inscription that describes him entering the E-niggidru-kalama-suma so that Nabu could 'make (him) grasp the righteous sceptre'.[72] He also ordered improvements to Ezida and its boundary wall.[73] However, he also drew on theological traditions that syncretised Nabu (as well as Anu) with the moon-god Sin, the primary deity of his home city Harran of whom his mother had been a particular devotee. Sin gained Nabu's powers to bestow kingship, while Nabu's symbolic stylus appeared in place of Sin's crescent moon on an important stele erected in Harran.[74] Thus did the new king attempt to align the object of his particular devotions with the traditional dynastic deities of Babylonia. But, as we shall see, just as Assyrian kings' tampering with theology had offended the temple elites of Assur, Nabonidus's promotion of Sin and his sanctuary at Ur, combined with organisational reforms of Eanna and removal of its key office-holders, upset the Babylonian aristocracy that was so closely allied to his immediate predecessors in Uruk and the north.[75]

There were close structural parallels between the way the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian palace households were organised, probably arising from the Chaldean royal family's closeness to the Assyrian court.[76] Given this, and the dynasty's origins in the elite northern Babylonian community that served the Eanna temple in Uruk, we might expect to find substantial numbers of scholars at court in Babylon, perhaps predominantly from the extended royal family. However, due to the extreme paucity of Neo-Babylonian royal archival material there is little evidence of a scholarly retinue barring a few scattered references to *āšipus*.[77] The royal inscriptions give some clues; indeed, their very existence presupposes the presence of literati at court who were involved in their composition. As we saw, the Neo-Babylonian dynasts invoked different deities to different degrees depending on the context.[78] The same is true of their references to cuneiform scholarship. For instance, the only known official context in which Nabopolassar mentions divinely inspired scholarship is in the inscription describing repairs to Etemenanki, Marduk's ziggurat in Babylon:

> By the cleverness of Ea, the intelligence of Marduk, the wisdom of Nabu and Nisaba, by means of the capacious mind with which the gods who created me supplied me, I deliberated in my great sagacity and I commissioned wise experts. The surveyor measured the measurements with a 1-rod reed. The master-builder stretched out the rope, established the boundaries. I performed a divination of Šamaš, Adad, and Marduk and, wherever my mind deliberated and I pondered the measurements, the great gods revealed (them) to me by the performance of divination. Through the work of *āšipūtu*, the wisdom of Ea and Marduk, I purified that place and established its foundation platform on its former base.[79]

Nabonidus's inscriptions mention scholarship much more frequently than his predecessors', but do so in highly constrained contexts. The two extant references to *āšipūtu* both relate to the purification of temples or temple personnel.[80] The king obtains a confirmatory *bīru* 'act of divination' in two types of circumstance: first, to establish his own right to rule and to confirm the appointment of his daughter Ennigaldi-Nanna as high priestess of Sin at Ur; second, to gain divine (and human) support for rebuilding selected temples.[81] Closest to his heart was Sin's Ehulhul temple in Harran, so it was particularly important to demonstrate divine

support for that project. In Babylonia, Nabonidus consulted Šamaš as *bēl bīri* 'lord of the divinatory act' only when Šamaš's interests were directly at stake: before work on his Ebabbar temples in Larsa and Sippar, and the adjacent E-ulmaš of Ištar-Annunitu in Sippar. We do not know whether it was palace or temple *āšipus* and *bārûs* who performed the actual rituals for, obeying the usual conventions of royal inscriptions, the scholars themselves are not mentioned.[82] As illustrated by the extract from Nabopolassar's inscription above, they are simply portrayed as a means of communication between god and king; their individuality and agency in the transaction is erased from the royal record.

However, that does not mean that all scholars passively did the king's bidding. In one inscription describing the creation of a new tiara for the sun-god Šamaš, Nabonidus gives an extraordinarily elaborate description of the series of extispicies he has commissioned, including full reports of the omens observed in the final set of rituals, as verification that he is indeed complying with the god's wishes.[83] The sequence of repetitions, followed by the need for full justification, suggests that scholarly opinion was not entirely with him. There was also some debate over the interpretation of the lunar eclipse that supposedly signalled Sin's desire for a new priestess at Ur. Nabonidus's own inscriptions tell it his way, of course, but the somewhat later Royal Chronicle suggests that the king forced his own interpretation on the scholars.[84] He tried to back this up by taking confirmatory extispicies – but even by his own account, it took three attempts to get the desired answer. Nabonidus found other means of circumventing scholarly directives too. On one occasion he simply dreamed of a favourable alignment of heavenly bodies, with his predecessor Nebuchadnezzar on hand to explain their meaning in the same vision.[85] Thus he bypassed the living scholars' observations and interpretations altogether and trumped their authority with that of the dead king to whom many were perhaps still loyal.[86]

In short, the major feature of Babylonian royal attitudes to Nabu is that from the late second millennium he came to be treated as a major deity, crucial to the annual renewal of kingship in his role as Marduk's son, rather than as god of scholarship. His cult centres remained – so far as we know – the Ezida in Borsippa; the special-purpose E-niggidru-kalama-suma in which crown princes were inaugurated; and a secondary shrine within Marduk's temple Esangila in Babylon. Individual high-status scholars were close enough to royal circles to act as legal witnesses to acts of kingly favour and could even sometimes be on the receiving end of such acts of generosity. That suggests that they were serving the king

directly, perhaps like their counterparts in Assyria, but it is hard to draw more detailed conclusions than that.

A fight for survival: The 'end of archives' and the end of royal patronage

Just as Nabopolassar had maintained continuity with Assyrian imperial practices while presenting himself as an untainted new beginning, in 539 BC the Persian conqueror of Babylon, Cyrus (r. 539–530), was portrayed as the antithesis of the allegedly heretical Nabonidus, whom he had just defeated.[87] The famous Cyrus Cylinder denigrates the defeated Chaldean for 'repeatedly doing evil against Marduk's city' and thereby inviting divine wrath. Cyrus, by contrast, is described there as *ša Bel u Nabu irâmū* 'he whom Bel (i.e. Marduk) and Nabu love'.[88] On his cylinder seal, Cyrus likewise uses the epithet *rā'im Esangila u Ezida* 'lover of the Esangila and Ezida temples'.[89] The so-called Nabonidus Chronicle, which displays the same pro-Cyrus rhetoric, even describes how Darius's heir Cambyses received the Sceptre of the Land from Nabu in the E-niggid-ru-kalama-suma and thereby became Babylonian crown prince.[90]

But we must read these statements and actions in large part as motivated by the simple political expedience of courting the trust, favour and collaboration of the northern Babylonian elite, who were so necessary to the smooth running of local society and economy.[91] Indeed, given that they were written in cuneiform, in traditional media and formats, it is highly likely that they were not only addressed to the northern Babylonian literati but also composed by one or more members of that small community.[92] Nabonidus's slighting of this group's needs and interests, through his patronage of the moon-god Sin at Ur at the perceived expense of the cults of Uruk and Babylon, made it particularly tempting to portray Cyrus as their pro-Marduk saviour who would restore the Chaldean status quo of a generation before. Yet it is impossible to tell whether these cleverly designed rhetorical moves reflected concrete support for real people. We know almost nothing about the presence of Babylonian scholars at the early Achaemenid court – but we should expect those scholars to have ranked below the Persians' own *magi* in status and to have had to compete for attention and patronage with intellectuals from other cultures too.[93]

Relations between Persian royalty and the northern Babylonian elite began to sour on the death of king Cambyses (r. 530–522 BC). In short order two different men claimed power over a newly independent Babylonia, each taking the throne name Nebuchadnezzar

(now conventionally numbered III and IV) and claiming descent from Nabonidus. Each lasted only a few months before capture and execution by the Persian army under the new king Darius (r. 522–486). But both garnered support for their actions in the Babylonian temples: the scribes of both Eanna in Uruk and Ebabbar in Sippar chose to acknowledge the pretenders' reigns in the way that tablets were dated.[94] The authorities of Eanna even took the opportunity to investigate and remove from temple office a corrupt associate of the satrap of Babylon.[95] The Persian administration responded with a wholesale replacement of Eanna's senior personnel and a thorough reorganisation of procedures and practices which soon led to institutional collapse.[96]

Back in Persepolis, Darius commissioned an official new script for writing the Old Persian language, an innovation that must have been interpreted – and perhaps was intended – as a direct snub to the Babylonian cuneiform literati. The sign system bore a superficial resemblance to traditional Mesopotamian cuneiform but functioned much more like an alphabet with just a handful of logograms. One of its first and most spectacular uses was for a monumental rock carving, engraved on a cliff some 100 metres above the town of Bagastana (modern Bisutun or Behistun) on the royal road between Babylon and the old Median city of Ecbatana, now a Persian royal capital.[97] Under a huge bas-relief sculpture of Darius dominating ten captured rebels, some 500 lines of text in Old Persian cuneiform describe how he quashed numerous revolts – including those of the two Nebuchadnezzars – early in his reign. Parallel versions in Akkadian and the local Elamite language were appended in traditional cuneiform script. The Akkadian version, in a dialect far removed from the elegant Standard Babylonian of scholarly writings, would have grated on the ear of any well-trained reader: another deliberate cultural assault? In Babylon, a bespoke stela was also set up, whose image and (Akkadian cuneiform) text focused only on the parts of the narrative concerning the capture of the Babylonian rebels.[98] The message was unequivocal: the old order was over and Achaemenid Persia now dominated Babylonia both militarily and culturally.

When Xerxes came to the throne in 486 BC, Persian–Babylonian relations deteriorated even further. In the winter of that year crown finance officers withheld prebendary income from the priests of Ezida in Borsippa, for reasons that are not yet clear.[99] In Xerxes' second regnal year, two more pretenders to the throne independently stoked rebellion in the towns of northern Babylonia.[100] It is possible that Darius's gloating stela in Babylon was smashed to pieces as part of this mood of revolt.[101] At about the same time, Xerxes may have ordered a divine statue to be

removed from Marduk's temple Esangila, in an incident in which one priest allegedly died. He also demolished the staircases of Marduk's ziggurat Etemenanki, effectively decommissioning it.[102] Third, Xerxes did away with the post of *šākin ṭēmi*, provincial governor, of Babylonia, as well as the temple posts of *šatammu* and *qēpu*, which had long been sinecures for wealthy elites.

The chronological sequence of events is still unclear: did Xerxes' actions provoke the revolts, or react to them? Whatever the answer, the outcome was devastating for the cuneiform-literate urbanites of northern Babylonia. The elite families of Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar, Dilbat and Kish were all were removed from positions of power – and maybe worse.[103] Trusted supporters of the crown stepped in to fill their roles where institutional continuity was needed, directly benefiting from the end of the old social order. But this did not happen everywhere: Šamaš's Ebabbar temple in Sippar, and Ištar's Eanna in Uruk, failed to make the transition and gradually wound down. As we saw, the latter had already been perceived as a major threat under Darius thanks to its close connections to the Chaldean dynastic line.[104] As Karl-Heinz Kessler showed, families with northern Babylonian names disappear from Uruk's historical record at this time, as did its small Assyrian community.[105] Meanwhile southerners, who seem to have played no part in the uprising, gradually turned their economic and religious attentions to Anu's Reš temple and Ištar's Irigal instead (see below and Chapter 6).[106]

This so-called 'end of archives' does not therefore represent a complete cessation of Babylonian economic, religious and literate activity, and its effects were felt differently in different parts of the country. Nevertheless, it marks a significant and traumatic social and theological rupture which must have had as direct and devastating an impact on cuneiform scholarship, its practitioners, patrons and clientele as the collapse of the Assyrian empire just over a century before. As I argued in Chapter 3, Assurbanipal's unsustainable collecting habits removed a great deal of written knowledge from circulation in the mid-seventh century BC and ultimately deprived many individuals of royal patronage as the system failed. In the final sack of Assyrian royal cities just a few decades later, tens of thousands of tablets and writing-boards were buried in the rubble, sometimes with their unfortunate owners: any Assyrian manuscript known to modernity through archaeological recovery was, by definition, lost to later readers in antiquity. A similar process took place during the reigns of Darius and Xerxes, so that over the course of less than two centuries we might estimate that the human and textual dimensions of cuneiform culture both halved and halved again. Borrowing a

phrase from population biology, I have elsewhere suggested that we should think of these episodes as 'survival bottlenecks' which – especially in the latter case – could equally have played out as extinction events, had circumstances been slightly different.[107]

Not least, the revolts of 484 BC and their aftermath marked the effective end for royal patronage of cuneiform culture. No evidence at all survives of late Achaemenid support for traditional Babylonian learning. The very absence of cuneiform royal inscriptions from this period onward is telling (as is the one exception that we shall return to shortly). When Alexander the Great (r. 330–323) definitively defeated Persia it first appeared that he might engage much more directly with Babylonian scholarship than his Achaemenid predecessors had, despite having his own Greek intellectuals in his retinue. Babylonian scholarly activity around and about the Macedonian conqueror is well documented, in both cuneiform and classical sources.[108] Chronicles and Diaries were kept, and omens taken, on the key events in Alexander's brief reign, and the Substitute King Ritual (see Chapter 3) was performed to ward off the evil portended by a life-threatening eclipse.

The Greek historian Callisthenes, meanwhile, was charged with writing an account of the king's victories, now lost, but which must form the basis of surviving classical accounts.[109] It has often been stated that Alexander's former tutor Aristotle requested Callisthenes – to whom he was related – to send him Babylonian astronomical data.[110] But this anecdote stems only from the sixth-century AD commentator Simplicius, writing nearly 1,000 years after the event.[111] We should probably not take Simplicius' account as a reliable historical source but rather as a reflection of late antique preoccupations with astrology.[112] For it turns out that Alexander's court kept Babylonian scholars at arm's length, just as its late Achaemenid predecessor had.

Diodorus Siculus (fl. *c*. 60–*c*. 30 BC) reports that as Alexander was returning to Babylon in 323 BC, 'Chaldean' scholars foresaw 'through divination of the stars … the coming death of the king in Babylon'.[113] But their leader, one 'Belephantes' (presumably a form of the Babylonian name Bel-apal-iddina), was unable to obtain a direct audience with Alexander and had to report instead to one of the king's army officers, Nearchus. The scholar warned that to make amends to the angered gods Alexander should avoid the city and instead rebuild 'the tomb of Belus' – probably Marduk's ziggurat Etemenanki whose staircase Xerxes had dismantled almost two centuries before.[114] Initially, the story goes, Alexander followed Belephantes' warnings. He pitched camp outside the city instead of entering it directly, and both classical and cuneiform

accounts agree that work started to clear the rubble from Etemenanki, albeit paid for by the temple's own tithes.[115] However, says Diodorus, Greek philosophers in Alexander's entourage soon persuaded him to change his mind: the king entered Babylon and abandoned the building works. The scholars thus had no option but to instigate a Substitute King Ritual to protect Alexander, initially without his knowledge or involvement. But on discovering the ritual in progress Alexander 'put the man to death in accordance with their [i.e. the Babylonian scholars'] judgement, so that the portended troubles would be turned upon that man'. Diodorus reports that Alexander 'started to find fault with the philosophers who had persuaded him to enter Babylon, and began to admire the skill of the Chaldeans'. But this change of heart apparently came too late to avert the gods' wrath and the king's death.[116] In this account, then, the intellectual battle between the Greek court philosophers and the Babylonian scholars was won by the former – but at the cost of Alexander's life.

In the messy aftermath of the conqueror's death it took a decade or so for a new state to coalesce. Eventually Alexander's former general and eventual successor Seleucus I Nicator (r. 311–281 BC) managed to create a stable dynasty, which was to last around 170 years. Seleucid royal engagement with Babylon and Babylonian scholarship remained fitful at best.[117] Sporadic attempts at clearing the site of Etemenanki for rebuilding continued over the following half-century but, ironically, the only tangible outcome was a rubble mound on the other side of the city (known now as Homera) which later formed the foundation of a Greek-style theatre.[118] The ziggurat was never rebuilt and even the temple itself was at some point abandoned, at least in part.[119] Meanwhile Seleucus founded two new capital cities: Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, 65 kilometres to the north of Babylon, named after himself; and Antioch-on-the-Orontes (near modern-day Antakya) 850 kilometres northwest up the Euphrates, named after his father. Antioch became the Seleucid kings' primary base as their attentions increasingly focused on the western regions of the empire.

However, when Seleucus' son, also called Antiochus, became co-regent in 293 BC he spent a lot of time in Babylon, perhaps even dwelling there.[120] Three or four fragmentary Chronicles, as well as brief passages in the Diaries, report on Antiochus' attentions to temples in Babylon, and to Nabu's temple Ezida in Borsippa.[121] As king Antiochus I Soter (r. 281–261 BC), he famously commemorated preparations for repairs to Esangila and to Ezida with the only known cuneiform royal inscription in Babylonia since the reign of Cyrus nearly three centuries before (Fig. 5.5). As recent analysis shows, the so-called 'Borsippa Cylinder' or

Figure 5.5: The so-called Antiochus Cylinder is the latest surviving cuneiform inscription written on behalf of a king of Babylon. It was designed in the traditional barrel-shaped format of a foundation inscription. In 268 BC it was buried in the foundations of the Ezida temple in Borsippa (under the threshold of the doorway between Court A and Room A1: Fig 5.4) during the building works it commemorates (Stevens 2014). BM ME 36277, reproduced with the permission of the British Museum.

'Antiochus Cylinder' attempts to present a classic image of Babylonian kingship but is hardly a glowing testament to an unbroken scholarly tradition, as previously thought.[122] However, what it does have in common with its Neo-Babylonian predecessors is its emphasis on Nabu as *bukur Marduk rēštû* 'Marduk's firstborn son' and *aplu ṣīru* 'exalted heir' rather than as divine patron of scholarship.[123] It is the last attested act of royal favour on Nabu's now ancient temple, however meagre.

Yet Antiochus' relationship with the native inhabitants was not entirely supportive. A close reading of the Antiochus Cylinder shows that he was not actually present in Babylonia for the temple building works but merely ceremonially moulded bricks for it 'in the land of Hatti' (northern Syria).[124] He relocated the Greek community in Babylon to Seleucia, more or less leaving Babylon to its own devices, while regularly imposing heavy taxes on it to pay for the new Greek city.[125] Berossus (Babylonian Bel-reʾušunu or Bel-reʾušu), a self-styled contemporary of Alexander and

'priest of Belus' (Marduk) in Babylon,[126] supposedly dedicated his Greek-language historical work *Babyloniaca* to Antiochus. But this testimony is given only by the early Christian theologian Tatian, writing in the second century AD – that is, some 400 years later – and so, as Geert de Breucker points out, 'there is no reason to suppose that he [i.e. Berossus] was a member of the Seleucid court'.[127]

Evidence for Antiochus' successors' involvement in Babylonian intellectual culture is even more sparse; their attention was almost always elsewhere. There were some highlights, however: in 236 BC the *šatammu* and *kiništu*-assembly of Esangila recorded that Antiochus II (r. 261–246) had granted tax-exempted royal land 'for the upkeep of Esangila, Ezida and Emeslam', with the right of disposition, in perpetuity; now the temple planned to commission a stone stele recording that fact, perhaps concerned that this donation might otherwise be forgotten or rescinded.[128] It may even have been this gift that enabled the *šatammu* and *kalûs* of Esangila to continue to make sacrifices to the life of the king in absentia until at least the early first century BC.[129] As Lucinda Dirven notes, on the rare occasions that the Seleucid kings and officials made offerings themselves, 'these offerings were not always undertaken out of generosity': the Chronicles and Diaries show that they were often followed in short order by removal of, or greater control over, the temple's dwindling assets.[130]

Exceptionally, Antiochus III the Great (r. 222–187 BC) participated in the *akītu*-festival in 205 BC to celebrate a major military victory – the first time that a king had done so, according to the surviving evidence, in around three centuries.[131] Those who had last performed it in full had died out generations ago; but Babylonian scholars had presciently kept detailed instructions for just this eventuality.[132] He also returned to Babylon for at least a fortnight during the last year of his reign.[133] He or his grandson Antiochus IV Epiphanes (r. 175–164 BC) formally reintroduced a Greek population into Babylon but the incomers remained administratively, culturally and intellectually very segregated from the native inhabitants. The latter were represented politically to the Greek authorities by the *šatammu* of Esangila (a position that had been restored in the late Achaemenid period), who also continued to provide sacrifices on behalf of kings and generals.[134] Yet, even if the secular powers had long abandoned cuneiform high culture, we shall see in Chapter 6 that the temple was still a focus of Babylonian scholarly activity as well as civic life, until at least the first century BC.

Finally, there is no evidence at all of Babylonian scholarly interaction with court life after the Parthians' capture of Seleucia and the

Babylonian cities in 141 BC.[135] But there is a tantalising suggestion of engagement with one of its local rivals. Under Antiochus IV, the last of the Seleucids, the governor of Characene, the southern marsh region at the head of the Gulf, had developed increasing levels of autonomy and eventually created a small (semi-)independent polity under the Parthians.[136] In 127 BC, when this king Hyspaosines (r. *c.* 141–124 BC) conquered Babylon itself, the Esangila temple dispatched one of its *ṭupšar Enūma Anu Ellil*, Itti-Marduk-balaṭu, to take up the same role at the palace. The initiative seems to have been the temple community's – the *kiništu* record mentions 'Itti-Marduk-balaṭu whom we sent', *ša nišpuru* – but he was accepted into the royal entourage and paid *ina hišihti ša bāb šarri* 'from the resources of the king's gate' *u enna agâ ibašši* 'and is still there'.[137] Itti-Marduk-balaṭu's appointment may have been a statement of Hyspaosines' commitment to maintaining Seleucid (or Parthian) forms of rule or a deliberate attempt to stand apart by affirming long-lapsed royal obligations to support local knowledge practices; in the absence of further documentation it is impossible to tell. Either way, Itti-Marduk-balaṭu is the last known royal scholar in Babylonian history. We shall return to him in Chapter 6.

Loss of royal favour: The view from Uruk

How did scholars respond to the loss of royal patronage? In Chapter 6 we shall consider the question from a pragmatic point of view: where they worked and how they supported themselves financially. Here, though, I shall consider some of the intellectual responses from Late Babylonian Uruk, not only to the contemporary absence of kingly favour but also to perceived injustices of the Chaldean era centuries before.

If Babylon was cut off from access to royal favour and power from the late fifth century BC, then Uruk, some 200 kilometres further south, was even more isolated from the political elite. Matthew Stolper states that 'Iranian personal names are absent from late Achaemenid texts from Uruk, and they remain absent from post-Achaemenid texts': Persians did not mix with southern Babylonian cuneiform-literate society.[138] Similarly, in Seleucid times, Cameron Petrie argues that 'no decisive evidence exists for a [separate] Greek community at Uruk': no public inscriptions, no public buildings, such as 'palace, agora, theatre [or] gymnasium'.[139] There was, however, a degree of Grecophile aspiration amongst members of the local community – the piecemeal adoption of Greek names, the imitation of Greek domestic ceramics, a

high-status burial outside the city walls.[140] Greek taxation officials operated in the city from at least the mid-third century, while a city governor, Anu-uballiṭ of the Aḫutu family, boasts of having been given the Greek name Nikarchus by Antiochus (I or II).[141] Given what we have seen of Antiochus I's at least partial interest in Babylon, this earlier king is probably meant. That boast is made in a building inscription of 244 BC that commemorates work on the great Reš temple of Anu and Antu, by now a major centre of cuneiform learning (Chapter 6). That identification means, however, that the royal favour had been granted at least fifteen years before, Antiochus I having died in 261 BC. And significantly, it is Anu-uballiṭ Nikarchus himself who has commissioned the work and the inscription, not the current ruler, although the governor states that he has 'built and completed (the temple) for the life of Antiochus and Seleucus the kings'.[142]

We are reminded here of Nabu-šuma-imbi, the eighth-century governor of Borsippa discussed earlier in this chapter, who undertook restoration of the Ezida temple in the absence of a strong royal lead. And perhaps we are not the only ones to recall that precedent, for the scholarly work now known as *Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabu-šuma-iškun* that details the breakdown in eighth-century Babylonian rule is known only from a tablet found in a late fourth-century context in Uruk.[143] It was almost certainly owned by a member of the Ekur-zakir family, close scholarly associates of the Anu-uballiṭ's Aḫutu clan.[144]

In fact, Anu-uballiṭ Nikarchus's building inscription has very little to say about kingship, or the lack of it. Neither does it say anything significant about the gods who are to inhabit the temple he has commissioned. It is all about the magnificence of the building itself:

> He built and completed the Lofty Gate, the great gate, pedestal of Papsukkal, entrance to the Reš temple; the Great Gate, pedestal of Nusku, entrance gate – 2 gates that open on the south side – (and) the Gate of Plenty, gate that allows the bounty of the land to enter: total 3 gates that open onto the outside, 7 courtyards are located next to the courtyard of the Dais of Destinies; the enclosure wall of the Reš temple, the service buildings, the shrines of the great gods and their courtyards.[145]

We know relatively little about what these structures looked like because a generation later another Anu-uballiṭ of the Aḫutu family did further major work on Reš, and it is his rebuilding that is documented in the modern archaeological record.[146] He did not commemorate his achievements

on a traditional clay cylinder buried in the foundations, as Anu-uballiṭ Nikarchus (and Antiochus I in Borsippa) had done. Instead he had them hand-inscribed on the horizontal surface of baked bricks, equally invisible in the walls of the building. The text varies slightly from brick to brick, and the bricks themselves are now very damaged, but a composite reconstruction runs like this:

> Anu-uballiṭ, whose second name is Kephalon, son of Anu-balassu-iqbi, *rab ša rēš āli* (lit. 'chief of the city leaders') of Uruk:
>
> Enamena, the cella of Anu, and Egašananu, the shrine of Antu, of the Reš temple that previously Oannes … had built,[147] had become dilapidated, so I demolished (it) and on day 2 of Nisannu (Month I) of year 110,[148] for the sake of the life of Antiochus (III), king of the lands, my(?) lord, I extended its ancient foundations and I applied gypsum (plaster) to them.
>
> I built and I completed the interior(?). I brought cedars from Mahdaru(?), the strong mountain, and I built a roof with them. I installed strong cedar doors at the gates of their (i.e., the gods') shrines.[149]

In both inscriptions, the Anu-uballiṭs dedicate their building works to their respective kings – but in neither do they claim any direct royal involvement. Indeed, had these works been royal commissions we would expect to find inscriptions in the king's name, not the local rulers'.[150] In this we are reminded of how Bel-tarṣi-ilumma, governor of the Assyrian capital city Kalhu, dedicated his construction of Nabu's temple to king Adad-nerari III in about 800 BC (Chapter 3). By depicting bold acts of independence as statements of deference to both king and deity, such dedications purported to confirm local obedience to royal power, but in fact they equally asserted equality, perhaps even supremacy, as well as financial autonomy.

Indeed, the sheer bulk of the Anu-uballiṭs' Reš and its associated ziggurat were unequivocal statements of local wealth and independence. At around 210 × 160 metres around the external perimeter, the temple dwarfed even the precinct of Marduk's ziggurat Etemenanki in Babylon, whose Neo-Babylonian phases, not comprehensively restored for many centuries and possibly now in ruins, measured only around 170 × 130 metres.[151] Likewise, the base of Anu's ziggurat was some 110 metres square, about 20 metres more than the long-abandoned Etemenanki.[152] Even if no Uruk scholar ever travelled to Babylon to see Marduk's temple complex for himself, a collection of mathematical exercises which used

the dimensions of Etemenanki and the courts of Esangila gave a sense of its scale. The one surviving copy was owned by an Anu-belšunu of the Ahʾutu family – possibly even Anu-uballiṭ Kephalon's brother of the same name.[153] The tablet was made for him in 229 BC by Anu-belšunu [1] of the Sin-leqi-unninni family (online Table B.12) from a Borsippan original and may well have been kept in the Reš temple.[154] Indeed, a much smaller and anonymously composed tablet, excavated from a storeroom of Reš, is composed in a similar but more simplified style and may well be a direct response to it.[155] Compare the first two sections of each:

> The Great Court of Esangila: its measurement is 1 (*ikû*) area. … Enlarge the Great Court by 2½ *mūšaru*, the pillar of Ubšukkinnakku. … The length of the Great Court is 11;23 30 (rods, *c*. 68.4 metres), the width of the Great Court is 9 (rods, *c*. 54 metres). 11;23 30 times 9 is 1 42;30 (*mūšaru*). … It is 1 (*ikû*) 2½ *mūšaru* area in seed-measure by the large cubit (*c*. 3,700 m^2), the measurement of the Great Court.
>
> The shrine of Reš: its length is 150 cubits (*c*. 75 m), its width 260 cubits (*c*. 130 m). Its seed-measure is 1 (*pānu*) 1 (*sūtu*), 1 *qā* (*c*. 9,750 m^2).[156]

As the two texts use different measurement systems it is difficult at first glance to compare like with like. But looking at the modern equivalents the comparison becomes clear: Anu's inner sanctum is nearly three times the size of Marduk's main courtyard. And the shrine of Ištar's Irigal temple next door, the Uruk text continues, is almost double that size again.

Indeed, Claus Ambos argues that the very name Reš – literally 'head', but also 'beginning', 'origin' – is itself significant, projecting an image of deep antiquity even though the use of the Akkadian language, rather than the traditional Sumerian of temple names, betrays its relatively recent origin.[157] Indeed both of the Anu-uballiṭs' inscriptions hark back to earlier times. Nikarchus makes an allusive final reference to re-establishing offerings *kīma mahrîmma* 'as formerly'; while Kephalon states quite explicitly that he has demolished the remains of a temple constructed by Oannes the antediluvian sage.[158]

These hints of fierce local independence, and the insistence on ancient antecedents, could easily be construed as coincidental, were they merely isolated occurrences. But as we shall see, this was not the case. There are at least five ways in which the scholars of Late Babylonian Uruk articulated their strong sense of local identity and independence from royal support.

Perhaps the most overt manifestation of scholarly localism can be seen in the frequent use of the self-description 'Urukean', native of Uruk. In the late Achaemenid and early Hellenistic periods, scholars of the Šangu-Ninurta and Ekur-zakir families called themselves 'Urukeans' every now and again, in about 12 per cent of their tablets with surviving colophons.[159] It is typically amongst the last pieces of information given about the owners of tablets and can occur in relation to any type of work, whether copy, commentary or new composition. By the mid-Seleucid period, however, all twenty or so of the best attested owners and/or scribes from all four known scholarly families (Ahʾutu, Ekur-zakir, Hunzu, Sin-leqi-unninni) regularly identify themselves as 'Urukeans'.[160] It was clearly majority practice in Uruk by this time, although scholars from other Seleucid cities rarely labelled themselves as a 'Babylonian', 'Borsippan' or the equivalent.[161]

Second, it seems that local identity could assert itself more subtly, through the everyday habits of cuneiform literacy. Digital edition and quantitative orthographic analysis of samples of Late Babylonian scholarly texts from Uruk are beginning to suggest a remarkable consistency

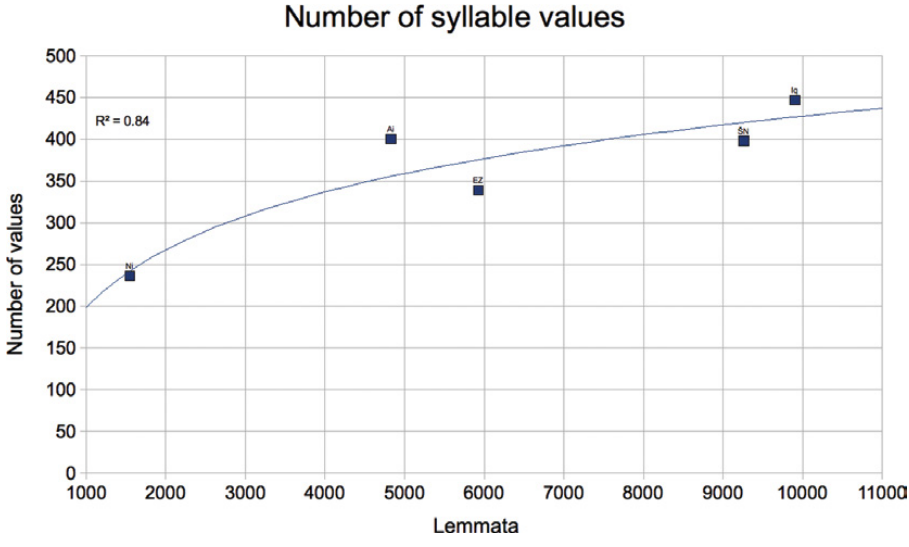

Figure 5.6: Late Babylonian scribal families used a consistent number of syllabic values in their cuneiform repertoire: the larger the number of words (lemmata) in the corpus analysed, the closer the number reached 450. Ni = Nippur; Ai = Anu-ikṣur of Uruk; ŠN = other members of the Šangu-Ninurta family of Uruk; Iq = Iqišaya of Uruk; EZ = other member of the Ekur-zakir family of Uruk. Source: author.

in sign choice, across families, professions and centuries, that is significantly different even from nearby Nippur. Pilot studies for the Assyrian and Babylonian Scholarly Literacies project in late 2012 suggest that Late Babylonian scholars consistently drew on a repertoire of around 450 Akkadian syllable values, deployed across a range of genres (Fig. 5.6).[162] That was far more than strictly necessary and thus offered the scribes a wide range of spelling choices. For instance, one could choose whether to write closed syllables – those which start and end with a consonant – with one closed-syllable sign (such as *bat* or *din*) or two open-syllable ones (*ba-at, di-in*). Indeed, a common elementary exercise was to practise writing Akkadian verbs using both of these styles (*iṣ-ba-at, iṣ-bat* 'he seized', *id-din, id-di-in* 'he gave').[163] Strictly speaking one could write syllabic Akkadian perfectly correctly using only open syllables – and over the long history of cuneiform many literates did just that – but one gained both elegance and efficiency by using closed values too. Statistical analysis shows that the *āšipus* of Late Babylonian Uruk were extraordinarily consistent in their syllabic spelling habits. Across three centuries from the late Achaemenid to the Seleucid period, they always used slightly more closed than open syllable values, in a ratio of about 8:7. Their near neighbours in Nippur, meanwhile, preferred open to closed syllables in a ratio of 3:2 – a dramatic difference.[164] The Uruk scholars do not appear to have found the Nippur spelling habits distasteful, however, as they incorporated these tablets into their own collections.[165]

Third, Urukean scholars were fascinated by local ancestors and ancient heroes. There is a clear case of an invented tradition for the *āšipus*, in a frequently discussed list of the priestly families of Seleucid Uruk.[166] The list begins by naming seven ancestral *āšipus*: Gimil-Anu, Hunzu, Ile"i-Marduk, Ekur-zakir, Nagaraya, Iddin-Ellil and Parakki-Marduk. As Martin Kümmel pointed out decades ago, the first and last of these names are not attested at all in Neo-Babylonian or late Achaemenid Uruk, the third is not documented in relation to prebendary professions, and the remainder were associated instead with other types of priesthood.[167] In the Seleucid period itself, solely the families of Ekur-zakir, Hunzu and Gimil-Anu are currently known to have produced *āšipus*.[168] Iddin-Ellil is the other family name on the list to appear in the cuneiform documentation at this time. The ancestral names Ile"i-Marduk and Parakki-Marduk had disappeared with Xerxes' purge of northern Babylonians from Uruk; and Nagaraya is not (yet) attested at all.[169] The fact that the ancestors number seven is also significant, as this quantity is highly meaningful in the practice of *āšipūtu*.[170] Most tellingly, as Wilfred Lambert noted over half a century ago, the text is a scribal exercise, which begins to repeat itself on the reverse

of the tablet.[171] It is not a factual roster of the prebendary professions of Hellenistic Uruk but rather a reimagining of a mythical past.

In a similar fashion, the *kalûs* of Seleucid Uruk consolidated around the family name Sin-leqi-unninni. Earlier in the millennium the Hunzu and Iddin-Ellil clans had also produced Urukean *kalûs*, but although the families survived into the Hellenistic period, their association with *kalûtu* did not (online Tables B1, B5, B9). Sin-leqi-unninni, of course, was renowned as the long-ago editor of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the legendary king of Uruk.[172] The *Epic* itself continued to be copied in the city until at least the early Hellenistic period, although there are no surviving manuscripts of it by members of the Sin-leqi-unninni family themselves.[173] Another literary composition, now called *Adapa and Enmerkar*, links the sage Adapa-Oannes (whom we have already met above, invoked by Anu-uballiṭ Kephalon as the first builder of Reš) with a second legendary king of Uruk. Enmerkar is best known in modern times through a cycle of four Sumerian literary works from the early second millennium BC, in which he defeats the mythical Iranian city of Aratta, but he had a much more enduring legacy than that.[174]

Oannes and Enmerkar, Gilgamesh and Sin-leqi-unninni all reappear in an Uruk list of ancient kings and their *apkallus* 'sages' or *ummânus* 'master-scholars'.[175] It was drawn up by the *kalû* Anu-belšunu [2] of the Sin-leqi-unninni family (online Table B12) in 165 BC and excavated from the Reš temple in the late 1950s. As Alan Lenzi has shown, the list is highly Urukean in character and intent.[176] It is divided into three sections. The first seven lines list seven antediluvian kings and their *apkallu*-sages, starting with the pair Ayyalu and Oannes – note the reappearance of the number seven. After a horizontal ruling the textual pattern is broken, in order to devote four lines to the installation of a bronze kettle-drum (the *kalûs*' ritual instrument par excellence) in Anu's temple during Enmerkar's reign. Following another horizontal ruling the listing resumes, with eight postdiluvian kings and their *ummânu*-scholars, from Gilgamesh and Sin-leqi-unninni to Esarhaddon and one Ṭupšar-Ellil-dari, also known by the Aramaic name Ahiqar.[177] Other than Gilgamesh, all six extant kings' names are historically attested, even though their scholars are not. Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid rulers are conspicuously absent, a fact we shall return to shortly. The next and final name is that of Nikarchus, who, Lenzi argues, must be none other than the Anu-uballiṭ-Nikarchus who had been city governor of Uruk eighty years before. However, no scholar is named with him.[178] The contents of this text are in stark contrast to the straightforwardly pragmatic *Uruk King List*, excavated from the same locale, which systematically enumerates the reign lengths of all rulers of

Babylonia from Ashurbanipal to Seleucus II, like many others of the same genre.[179] Read against this second, highly practical document the political intent of Anu-belšunu's list is clear: Uruk has been supported by kings, served by sages and master-scholars, since the time before the flood, but in recent centuries the bond between royalty and scholarship has been broken and the local, temple-based community of *āšipus* and *kalûs* is now forced into self-reliance.

Similar sentiments about the unworthiness of kings are expressed in the so-called *Uruk Chronicle*, known only from a single clay tablet copied from a wooden writing-board in 251 BC.[180] Its scribe was Anu-balassu-iqbi [2] of the Ekur-zakir family, who made it for his father Anu-ah-ušabši [1], *āšipu* and high priest of Reš just prior to, or just at the start of, Nikarchus' renovations of the temple (online Tables B12, B13). The colophon tells us the tablet was destined for deposit in the Reš but it was in fact found in the upper levels of the *āšipus*' house nearby (Chapter 6).[181] An extract from a longer chronicle, now mostly missing, it describes how Šulgi, long-ago ruler of Ur (r. 2094–2047 BC), abetted by his *ummânu* Lu-Nanna, 'removed the rites of Anu, the ordinances of Uruk, the scholars' treasure, in an undestined manner'.[182] Šulgi claimed all of Uruk's cultural heritage for his own dynastic deity, the moon-god Sin, and falsified the written record accordingly. Anu revenged himself, perhaps by inflicting some sort of bodily suffering on the guilty king (the passage is somewhat damaged).[183] The chronicle may also have painted unflattering portraits of Šulgi's immediate predecessor and successor, kings Ur-Namma and Amar-Suen; only fragments survive.[184] Through its obvious parallels with Babylonian king Nabonidus's favouritism towards Ur it implies, even more forcefully than the *List of Kings and Sages*, that Uruk is better off without certain sorts of royal intervention.

The Uruk Chronicle also draws attention to the fourth feature of Uruk localism in the Late Babylonian period: the celebration of Anu's cult as the revival – or perhaps in Urukean eyes, continuation – of an age-old practice. The Sumerian god An had been worshipped in Uruk since at least the late fourth millennium BC. Yet by the Neo-Babylonian period, if not before, his temporal power had been eclipsed by Ištar and the wealth of the Eanna temple. Now Ištar moved to the magnificent new Irigal temple after the collapse of Eanna and the bilingual *Exaltation of Ištar* continued to be copied in Uruk well into the Seleucid period.[185] At the same time, as we have already seen, local southern scholars gave Anu's previously minor sanctuary Reš renewed importance, presenting it as the 'original' temple, although it was at most perhaps a few centuries old. This fifth-century, post-Xerxean theological reconfiguration thus represented a return to origins, planned on scholarly principles.

Table 5b: Changes in the hierarchy of Uruk deities from Neo-Babylonian Eanna to Late Babylonian Reš.

	Neo-Babylonian Eanna (Beaulieu 2003b: 73)	*Late Babylonian Reš (Beaulieu 1992: 55–6)*	*The god list* An = Anu *(Litke 1998; cf. Beaulieu 1992: 57–8)*
1	**Ištar**-of-Uruk and Bel	Anu (^{d}60)	Tablet I, ll. 1–95: Anu and Antu
2	**Nanaya** and Nabu	Antu	Tablet I, ll. 148–370 (end): Ellil
3	**Belet-ša-Reš**	Ellil (^{d}50)	Tablet II, ll. 1–128: Belet-ili
4	**Marduk** (once Sin)	Ea (^{d}40)	Tablet II, ll. 129–422 (end): Ea
5	Uṣur-amassu and Urkayitu	Sin (^{d}30)	Tablet III, ll. 1–96: Sin
6	Gula	**Šamaš** (^{d}20)	Tablet III, ll. 97–205: Šamaš
7	^{d}IGI.DU	Adad (^{d}10)	Tablet III, ll. 206–83 (end): Adad
8	Belet-Eanna and ^{d}IGI.DU of Udannu	**Marduk**	(Marduk in Ea's entourage, Tablet II, ll. 185–289)
9	Divine Chariot	Papsukkal and Amasagnudi	(both in Anu's entourage, Tablet I, ll. 41–54)
10	*Bīt hilṣi*	**Ištar** (^{d}15)	Tablet IV, 1–294 (end): Ištar
11	Nergal	Belet-ṣeri	
12	Ninurta	**Nanaya**	
13	Nusku	**Belet-ša-Reš**	
14	**Šamaš** and Aya of Larsa	Šarrahitu	

Paul-Alain Beaulieu has convincingly shown that the new divine regime was programmatically constructed from the seven-tablet god list *An = Anu*, which had been used in scribal pedagogy since at least the mid-second millennium (Table 5b).[186] Where previously Ištar and Nanaya – and their northern Babylonian royally sanctioned spouses Bel and Nabu – had been the focus of Eanna's offerings regime, in Reš it was the local deities Anu and Antu who were now the focus of ritual attention. Marduk was demoted and Nabu removed altogether.[187]

There are three known manuscripts of *An = Anu* from late Achaemenid Uruk, more or less contemporary with that theological reformulation, one of which was copied by the junior *āšipu* Anu-ikṣur for his father Šamaš-iddin.[188] In the same spirit, in 235 BC one Illut-Anu, a *kalû* of the Sin-leqi-unninni family (online Table B12), wrote a commentary on the names of Antu for his relative and fellow-*kalû* Anu-uballiṭ.[189] Moreover, the hymns and rituals for performance in Reš unequivocally reflect the new Anu-centric regime.[190] Indeed the very fact that they were formally recorded suggests that they needed to be documented: not, as in the case of the Hellenistic *akītu*-festival in Babylon, because it was no

longer a living tradition, but rather because this was a tradition in the course of invention (Chapter 2).

Even if we are wrong to infer that the literary figure of Šulgi was a metaphor for Nabonidus in particular, he was clearly a paradigm of bad kings past. And nor was he the only one. Some time in the early second century BC, Šamaš-eṭir of the Ekur-zakir family (online Table B11) copied a set of detailed ritual instructions for the daily feeding and care of the gods of Reš. The colophon asserts that it was written:

> in accordance with the wording of tablets that Nabopolassar, king of the Sealand, carried off from Uruk, and then Kidin-Anu the Urukean, the *āšipu* of Anu and Antu (and) descendant of Ekur-zakir, the high priest of the Reš temple, saw those tablets in the land of Elam, and during the reign of Seleucus and Antiochus, the kings, copied (them) and brought (the copies back) to Uruk.[191]

In other words the founder of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, Nabopolassar (r. 626–605 BC), had stolen Uruk's ritual heritage, which was only reclaimed in the early third century by Kidin-Anu, Šamaš-eṭir's kinsman and predecessor as chief priest of Reš, over three centuries later.[192] We do not know to what extent this claim is based on historical fact: Šamaš-eṭir was chief priest of Reš in 193 BC, about 100 years after the purported return, and so this can hardly be an eyewitness account, whenever he wrote it. But for our purposes, the validity of his claims is unimportant: what matters is the message, now somewhat familiar, that a past king of Babylonia desecrated the shrines of Uruk and order was restored only by the initiative and resourcefulness of a leading member of the city's educated elite.

Further, this colophon spells out what was only implicit in the list of kings and their scholars discussed above: that the rot set in not with the Achaemenids, as we might expect, but with Nabopolassar, son of the last governor of Uruk under the Assyrian empire and founder of the newly independent Babylonian state upon Assyria's collapse.[193] Did the native Urukeans blame the long-ago northern Babylonian community in Uruk, so closely associated with the defunct Eanna temple, for the withdrawal of royal patronage from the south? It is easy to imagine that the Neo-Babylonian kings had favoured members of northern families over southerners for courtly positions, while a generation or two later the northerners' abortive rebellions against Darius and Xerxes had led to the irreversible end of royal patronage of Babylonian scholarship in around 500 BC. In this light, the absence of the Chaldean dynasty from the *List of*

Kings and Sages starts to make more sense: in Late Babylonian scholarly eyes, the rot had set in even then.

Finally, the southern scholars' ambivalence, even hostility, to northern Babylonian kingship can be seen too in their relations with the god Nabu – or, rather, in their lack of them. As we saw in Chapter 3, throughout early first-millennium Assyria the educated elite had put their 'trust in Nabu' long before, and much more consistently than, the royal family ever did. This intimate relationship with the god of scholarship manifested itself through personal names, invocations in letters and on colophons, and votive offerings in Nabu's several temples. In Babylonia, by contrast, we have seen in this chapter that Nabu was the subject of royal attention from at least the late second millennium BC, primarily because he was the son of Marduk, the king's personal god. Babylonian Nabu was the crown prince's divine counterpart first, the embodiment of scholarly knowledge second, the mirror image of his conceptualisation in Assyria. Thus Nabu remained a predominantly northern Babylonian deity even under the Chaldeans: the geographical distribution of personal names, epistolary blessings and invocations in colophons is more or less confined to the cities of Babylon, Borsippa and Sippar along with the north-Babylonian scholarly community in Uruk. In Nippur and Ur, and amongst the southerners of Uruk, scholars associated themselves more closely with local deities such as Ellil and Ninurta, Ningal and Sin, and Nanaya and Ištar the Lady-of-Uruk respectively (Table 5c).[194]

After the anti-Persian revolts and their consequences, not only did the cuneiform-literate community of Uruk remove him from the pantheon, as we have already seen, but they also stopped naming their children after Nabu. Nor did they ever invoke him in Late Urukean scholarly colophons.[195] This was a highly localised phenomenon for, as Francesco Pomponio noted many years ago, the cult of Nabu spread far and wide in the late first-millennium Middle East, from Elephantine and Syene in Egypt to the northern desert cities of Palmyra, Edessa, Hierapolis, Dura-Europos and post-imperial Assur.[196] In this light, Nabu's absence from Seleucid Uruk is even more striking and seems a deliberate snub.

The Urukean intelligentsia did not entirely despair of ever having a good king to rule over them, however. A set of four alternative public rituals to be performed by *kalûs* in the event of a lunar eclipse includes, somewhat optimistically, a final version in which the king participates.[197] The so-called *Uruk Prophecy*, known from a single anonymous manuscript found in early Hellenistic Uruk, predicts that after ten successive unjust rulers, a worthy king – a local king – will arise to found a dynasty that will rule fairly in perpetuity and worship in Tirana, Uruk's temple district:

Table 5c: Protective deities invoked in colophons of Assyrian and Babylonian scholarly works, in chronological order.

Deity / Collection	*Kalhu Ezida temple*	*Huzirina*	*Aššur Baba-šumu-ibni family*	*Sippar E-ulmaš temple*	*Uruk Šangu-Ninurta family*	*Uruk Ekur-zakir family*	*Uruk Reš temple*	*Parthian Babylon*
Number in sample	3	15	11	4	16	16	16	10
Adad		x				x		
Ea	x							
Ea and Nabu		x						
Lugalirra		x						
Marduk			x	x				
Nabu		x	x	x				x
Nabu and Marduk		x	x	x				
Nabu and Nisaba			x					
Šamaš	x	x	x					
Zababa		x						
Adad and Šala						x	x	
Anu and Antu					x	x	x	
Anu and Ištar					x			
Anu, Ellil and Ea						x	x	
Gula							x	
Ellil and the gods of Ekur							(x) Nippur	
Bel and Beltiya								x
Marduk and Za-rpanitu					(x) Babylon			
Šamaš and Marduk								x

> He will judge the lawsuits of the land. He will decide the legal cases of the land. He will establish the rites of Anu inside Tirana …. He will rebuild the temples of Uruk. He will return the gods' temples to their proper condition. He will renew Uruk. He will build Uruk's city gates with lapis lazuli. He will fill the watercourses and meadows with abundance and plenty. After him a king, his son, will arise inside Tirana and rule over the Four Quarters. He will exercise rule and kingship inside Tirana. His dynasty will be permanent forever. The kings of Uruk will exercise rule like gods.[198]

In other words, the mythical glory days of the Urukean culture-heroes Enmerkar and Gilgamesh will one day come again.

Conclusions

The relationship between Nabu and the kings of Babylonia stayed remarkably stable over half a millennium or more, until at least the fall of the last native dynasty in the mid-sixth century BC. However, in contrast to Assyria it was Nabu's status as Marduk's son that mattered more than his identity as god of scholarship. Even Assyrian kings who ruled Babylonia upheld native practices and did not force their own ideas onto tradition. Every spring equinox Nabu assisted his divine father in renewing the king's right to rule, by means of the *akītu*-festival, and, further, bestowed the Sceptre of the Land on the heir apparent in the purpose-built E-niggidru-kalama-suma temple in Babylon. It was also in that temple that budding scribes and scholars offered the first fruits of their literate labour to Nabu in the hope that he would nurture their health and talents. Whether or not this practice is as old as the temple or started only in the seventh century with Esarhaddon's rebuilding, we can perhaps now understand Ashurbanipal's dedication of tablets to Nabu in Nineveh (see Chapter 3) as a hybrid of Assyrian royal attitudes and Babylonian scribal practice.

Although the evidence for Neo-Babylonian court scholars is extremely scanty – there are just a few scattered references to *āšipus* – there are likely to have been substantial numbers of them, perhaps dominated by the Urukean families of northern Babylonian descent given the dynasty's roots in Eanna. By contrast, at the Achaemenid court, which was more often resident in Persia than it was in Babylonia, the cuneiform

literati are likely to have been in fierce competition for the king's patronage, with Zoroastrian *magi* at the top of the pecking order of advisors and scholars from other parts of the empire further down the courtly hierarchy. We cannot know what Babylonian court scholars thought of Nabu, as we have no direct evidence of what they thought about anything. However, Nabu remained a predominantly northern deity throughout this period. That regionality is probably largely attributable to Nabu's association with the royal family: scholars further away from the Neo-Babylonian court, whether socially or geographically, were perhaps more likely to associate him with novices and apprenticeship or (as perhaps in Hellenistic Uruk) to reject him entirely.

Babylonian rebellions against kings Darius and Xerxes in the decades either side of 500 BC saw the effective end of royal patronage of cuneiform scholarship. Darius's heir Cambyses was, so far as we know, the last crown prince to 'grasp the righteous sceptre' of Nabu in 539 BC. Yet the scholars themselves never quite gave up hope of rekindling the relationship. Alexander the Great's defeat of the Achaemenids in the late fourth century saw Babylonian intellectuals almost succeed in gaining his trust but in the end his own advisors won the day. Fifty years later Antiochus I and II both flirted with support of Esangila and Ezida, but whether that also involved courtly patronage of the temples' learned personnel it is impossible to know. However, the marked absence of cuneiform literacy, so bound up in Babylonian scholarly identity, from late first-millennium courtly culture is itself highly suggestive of the low regard in which it was held by non-Babylonian royalty. Nevertheless, throughout the Seleucid period, scholars in Babylon maintained instructions for performing key royal rituals, in expectation – rarely fulfilled – of kingly involvement. Meanwhile the temple community of Uruk, deeply proud of its antiquity and heritage, expressed its dissatisfaction with the current lack of royal attention while enumerating past exemplars of bad kingship, hoping against hope for the return to a time when rulers respected and needed cuneiform learning.

How, in this light, should we interpret the independent king of Characene, Hyspaosines, receiving the *ṭupšar Enūma Anu Ellil* Itti-Marduk-balaṭu from Esangila in Babylon in the late second century BC? Was this a speculative venture on the temple's part, as the sole piece of somewhat damaged testimony – now lost – seems to suggest? Was every king open to such approaches, despite what the scholars of Uruk imply, or was Hyspaosines uniquely attempting a Babylonian cultural revival to counter centuries of neglect? In the absence of further evidence, it is hard to judge. Whatever the facts of the matter, it shows the incredible

resilience of cuneiform scholarship, and its continued attraction for a few kings at least, some 400 years after the devastating loss of Achaemenid royal support. In the following chapter I consider how, and where, Babylonian intellectual culture managed to survive for so long on its own resources.

Notes

1. Only fifty-four members of the 300-tablet archive excavated in 1908 from one of the vaulted rooms of Nebuchadnezzar's South Palace can now be identified, very few of which have yet been published. For useful overviews see Pedersén (2005: 111–27) and especially Jursa (2010b).
2. The Ur Online Project at the British Museum and Penn Museum (2012–16) digitised the finds and field notes from Woolley's excavations in the 1920s and 1930s in order to reunite them online (http://www.ur-online.org, last accessed August 2018). The Field Museum in Chicago carried out a similar project for Kish in 2004–6, on a smaller scale and sadly excluding the cuneiform tablets (http://archive.fieldmuseum.org/kish/, last accessed August 2018). Pedersén (2005) reunites the scattered tablets from Koldewey's excavations in Babylon of 1899–1917. Pedersén (1998: 181–212) and Robson and Stevens (2019) survey collections of scholarly tablets from first-millennium Babylonia.
3. Jursa (2005). An online version is under development, directed by Kathleen Abraham at Leuven University (https://nabucco.arts.kuleuven.be, accessed 3 August 2018).
4. Royal inscriptions: Frame (1995); Schaudig (2001); Da Riva (2008); *Royal Inscriptions of Babylonia* online (http://oracc.org/ribo, accessed August 2018). King lists and chronicles: Glassner (2004); van der Spek and Finkel (2004–); Waerzeggers (2012); observational diaries (more often known as astronomical diaries though that is not all they contain): Hunger and Sachs (1988; 1990; 1996); van der Spek (1993; 1997/98); Pirngruber (2013); now online at *Astronomical Diaries Digital* (http://oracc.org/adsd, accessed June 2019).
5. Waerzeggers (2012).
6. Jursa (2014).
7. Cf. Brinkman (1968).
8. Cf. Frame (1995: 3).
9. Paulus (2014).
10. Pomponio (1998–2001: 19).
11. Frame (1995: B.2.7.2).
12. tug_2 ib_2-la_2 ku_3-sig_{17} huš-a na_4 kal-la mi_2-zi-de_3-eš dug_4-[ga] ; né-bé-eh hu-ra-ṣi ru-uš-ši-i šá ina ab-ni a-qar-ti […] ; igi gir_3-peš-bal-a am u_3-na-gub-bu ugu-bi ma-ʳan⁷-gub⁷ʳ | ù ana TU_{15} 4-ti ri-mu kàd-ru-tu e-liš na-zu-uz-zu (BM 79503, ll. 9–10, Frame 1995: B.2.8.5).
13. mu-šar-šid ku-us-se-e ù-luh-hi ú-ma-ni | mu-[kin⁷ pa⁷-le⁷]-e na-bu-u šar-ru-ti (BM 79503, ll.3–4, Frame 1995: 56, no. B.2.8.5).
14. E.g. Grayson (1970); Glassner (2004: no. 20). The *akītu* of Marduk and Nabu is first attested in the Old Babylonian period (Cohen 2015: 390) and was but one of many such festivals in Babylonia from the third millennium onwards (Cohen 2015: 99–106, 389–408).
15. Sommer (2000). On the *akītu*-festival in general see most recently Ambos (2014: 329–32) with earlier literature; on the Seleucid version, Ristvet (2014; 2015: 153–210).
16. Brinkman (1968: 171–2); Pomponio (1978: 117); Glassner (2004: no. 51)
17. Pongratz-Leisten (1994: 103); George (1996: 378–85). It is still unclear whether this was an annual ritual or a one-off investiture of the crown prince. Cavigneaux (1999: 385 n3) presents a brief discussion of the epithet *ša harê*; in his opinion *harû* probably means some sort of offering vessel.
18. Cavigneaux (1999: 386).
19. The panther was killed and then dragged out onto dry land: ina $^{iti}DU_6$ U_4 25-KÁM nim-ru bal-ṭu | ÍD iq-qé-lep-pu-ma ina ku-tal É.GIŠ.GIDRU.KALAM.MA.[SUM.MA] | i-du-ku-šu-ma ana ta-ba-li ú-še-lu-niš-ša (Glassner 2004: no. 51 ii 9–11).

20. We shall return to the question of the prebendary professions in Chapter 6.
21. We shall return to these grants in Chapter 6, when considering the relationship between scholarship and priesthood in first-millennium Babylonia.
22. 'I captured 50 cavalrymen together with the troops of Nabu-apla-iddina, king of Karduniaš (i.e. Babylonia), Zabdanu his brother with 3,000 fighting men, (and) the *bārû* Bel-apla-iddina, their commanding officer' 50 pit-hal-lu a-di ÉRIN-MEŠ «šá» ša ^{md}NÀ–A–SUM^{-na} MAN ^{kur}kar-du-ni-áš | ^{m}za-ab-da-a-nu ŠEŠ-šú a-di 3 LIM ÉRIN-MEŠ ti-du-ki-šú-nu ^{m}EN–A–AŠ ^{lú}HAL a-lik pa-an ÉRIN-HI.A-MEŠ-šú-nu it-ti-šú-nu ina ŠU ú-ṣab-bi-ta (Grayson 1991: A0.101.1, iii 19–20).
23. Found during Rassam's excavations for the British Museum in 1879 (Reade 1986b: 108–9).
24. […] ˹né˺-me-qí ù ši-tul-ti muš-ta-bi-li te-re-e-ti (Frame 1995: B.6.14.2001 I 5').
25. i-na BÁR.SIPA^{ki} IRI kit-ti ù mi-šá-ri e-šá-a-ti dal-ha-a-ti si-ti | ù sah-ma-šá-a-ti i-na BALA^{-e} ^{d}PÀ–MU–iš-kun (Frame 1995: B.6.14.2001 I 16'–17').
26. MU 5 MU 6 ^{d}NÀ–MU–GAR^{-un} ^{d}NÀ ana È ^{d}EN NU DU^{-ku} (Glassner 2004: no. 19 l. 22).
27. ^{d}NÀ ina TIN.TIR^{ki} ik-le-e-ma … GAR.RAŠ^{sar} ik-kib É.ZI.DA ˹ana? É˺ ^{d}NÀ | ú-˹qar˺-rib u KU$_4$–E-MEŠ ul-ta-kil (Frame 1995: B.6.14.1 ii 9, 17–18; cf. Cole 1994: 228–9).
28. Thureau-Dangin (1919: 141–4); Waerzeggers (2011b: 739–44); Paulus (2014: no. 67).
29. Porter (1997).
30. Pomponio (1978: 68–72); cf. Brinkman (1984: 22 n19).
31. Porter (1993: 78 n180).
32. We might, then, be tempted to trace the Kuthean ancestors of the Huzirina scribes (Table A15) to pre-Sargonic raids-cum-pilgrimages to this city; but this conjecture can be no more than speculative on current evidence.
33. Pomponio (1978: 77–8).
34. The letter that Pomponio (1978: 77 n3) attributes to Sargon's reign, describing the enlargement of Nabu's canal in Borsippa, has now been reassigned to Esarhaddon's courtier Mar-Issar and re-dated to 669 BC on the basis of astronomical observations reported at the end (SAA 10: no. 364).
35. Porter (1993: 62–3).
36. Leichty (2011: no. 58, rev. 10b–16a).
37. SAA 10: nos. 347–70; SAA 16: no. 171.
38. ša [ina la]-bi-ri (SAA 10: no. 353, obv. 17).
39. SAA 10: no. 364.
40. Cavigneaux (1999: 386); Leichty (2011: Esarhaddon 113, ll. 20–4).
41. As proposed already by Pongratz-Leisten (1994: 102). However, her argument is overly reductive, as George (1996: 377–85) already suggests; a further problem that neither addresses is the dramatic disparity in size and layout of the different temples.
42. On Nanaya's relationship to Nabu see most conveniently Stol (1998–2001: 150); for later periods Ambos (2003).
43. Cavigneaux (1980; 1981; 1999; 2013).
44. Cavigneaux (1999: 386, 388, 391).
45. Gesche (2001: 61–171).
46. E.g. Cavigneaux (1999: 390).
47. Gesche (2001: 153–7).
48. The tablets for Nabu *ša nikkassī* were offered, according to their colophons, in the E-gišla-anki 'Temple of the Auditor of Heaven and Earth' (Cavigneaux 1981: 37). The location of this building has not yet been ascertained but the fact that school tablets were moved from there to the E-niggidru-kalama-suma strengthens the argument that the tablets were votives that could not be otherwise disposed of. Charpin (2017: 132) suggests that E-gišla-anki was the earlier name of the same temple, renamed E-niggidru-kalama-suma by Nebuchadnezzar. But this cannot be correct, as Esarhaddon (Leichty 2011: Esarhaddon 113, ll. 20, 24) names this temple twice as E-niggidru-kalama-suma.
49. Maul (1998: xiv).
50. Cavigneaux (1999: 390); Maul (1998: xvi). E.g. BM 77665 (Fig. 5.2; Gesche 2001: 650–2).
51. Gesche (2001: 157).
52. Cavigneaux (1980); George (1986: 12–16).
53. Gesche (2001: 164–5). The practice dates back to at least the Old Babylonian period (Charpin 2017: 114–15).

54. [8] MU-MEŠ ina ^{md}30–[ŠEŠ–SU] | 12 MU-MEŠ <ina> ^{m}AN.ŠÁR–[ŠEŠ–ŠUM] | 20 MU-MEŠ ^{d}EN ina BAL.TIL^{ki} a-[šib-ma] | i-sin-nu a-ki-tú ba-ṭi-[il] (Glassner 2004: no. 20 ll. 1–4). The tablet is not dateable.
55. Frame (1995: B.6.32.13–14, B.6.33.3–5).
56. As the Neo-Assyrian kings' attitudes to, and relationships with, Babylonian scholars are covered extensively in Chapter 3 I shall not revisit them here.
57. na-šu-u ṭup-pi NAM-MEŠ DINGIR-MEŠ šá gu-um-mur te-re-e-ti (Frame 1995: B.6.32.13 l. 2; cf. B.6.33.4 1–5).
58. Glassner (2004: no. 19 ll. 38–40; no. 20 ll. 5–8).
59. DUMU la ma-am-ma-na-ma a-na-ku-ma (A Babylon 11 i 8: Al-Rawi 1985: 3; Da Riva 2008: 4; cf. Kessler 2004).
60. Jursa (2007). In this light, the presence of a *qēpu*-inspector in Eanna with the Assyrian name Aššur-bel-uṣur in the period 665–648 BC is no longer remarkable (cf. Beaulieu 1997; Frame 1997).
61. Da Riva (2008: 99–107). I exclude Da Riva's (2008: 103–4) data on Neriglissar (r. 559–556) because the numbers of attestations are so small as to be statistically meaningless for our purposes.
62. mu-ṭib ŠÀ ^{d}NÀ u ^{d}AMAR.UTU a-na-ku (A Babylon 11 ii 7: Al-Rawi 1985: 3); for za-nin/za-ni-in É.SAG.GÍL u É.ZI.DA see e.g. Schaudig (2001: 695).
63. Pomponio (1978: 101–2).
64. See Waerzeggers (2010: 65–76) for an exhaustive prosopography of the senior officials of the Neo-Babylonian Ezida in Borsippa, including the posts of city governor, *šatammu* and *ērib bīti*.
65. Beaulieu (1989: 149–85).
66. ^{d}NÀ ana E^{ki} nu DU^{-ku} ^{d}EN NU È$^{-a}$ EZEN a-ki-tú ba-ṭil SÍSKUR-MEŠ ina É.SAG.GÍL u É.ZI.DA DINGIR-MEŠ ša TIN.TIR^{ki} u BAR.SIP^{ki} ki šal-mu SUM^{-na} (Glassner 2004: no. 26 ii 6–8, 11–12, 20–1, 24–5).
67. Further to the examples presented here, see e.g. Nebuchadnezzar's hymns to Nabu within building inscriptions (Foster 2005: 846–7).
68. šá NÍG.GIDRU i-ša-ar-ti uš-pa-ri ki-nim | ša ^{d}NÀ pa-qí-id ki-iš-[ša]-at | ša-mé-e ù er-ṣe-ti | a-na šu-um-mu-hu ba-aʾ-ú-la-a-ti | [ú]-ša-at-mi-ih qá-tu-uš-šu (Da Riva 2013: 121, NeglC22 i 7–11).
69. na-ra-am ^{d}na-bi-um | mu-uš-ta-lam a-hi-iz né-me-qí; i-na di-i-ni$_7$ ù bi-ri ^{d}[UTU] | i-ša-ri-iš i-dá-ab-bu-bu (Da Riva 2013: 141, NeglC022 i 5–6, ii 4'–5').
70. Beaulieu (2007).
71. Cf. Mayer (1998).
72. a-na É.NÍG.GIDRU.KALAM.MA.SUM.MA | e-ru-ub-ma ina ma-har ^{d}NÀ | … | ú-šat-mi-hu ŠU-MIN-ú-a (Schaudig 2001: no. 3.3a VII 23–4, 29).
73. Probably near the beginning of his reign: Schaudig (2001: no. 2.10).
74. Harran Stele (Schaudig 2001: no. 3.1); Beaulieu (2007: 148–9).
75. See Kleber (2008: 12–16) on Nabonidus's reforms of Eanna.
76. Jursa (2010b); Da Riva (2014: 101–4).
77. On the basis of five surviving letter-orders, Beaulieu (1989: 6–12; followed by MacGinnis 1995: 162–3; Rochberg 2004: 224–5) also argues that Nabonidus sent scholars (*ummânu*) from Babylon to Ebabbar in Sippar to excavate the temple's foundations and look for ancient inscriptions there. However, Bongenaar (1997: 367–9) presents a large number of ration-list entries from Ebabbar as evidence to suggest that in fact these *ummânu* were 'specialist craftsmen', such as *kutimmu*-goldsmiths and *kabšarru*-jewellers, who regularly travelled to Ebabbar in the late spring – perhaps in order to carry out delicate repairs to the gods' adornments – over a period of at least sixty years (*c.* 585–525 BC). Rochberg (2004: 225–6) notes that Nabonidus's inscriptions conspicuously fail to make explicit mention of court scholars, even in contexts such as royal divination – but as this elision of agency is typical of Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions too, as Chapter 3 showed, we should perhaps not read too much into this omission. On the other hand, the 'scholars' mentioned in Nabonidus's royal inscriptions probably, in both instances, refer to men associated with the Ebabbar and Eanna temples respectively, rather than the royal court in Babylon: the UKKIN DUMU-MEŠ UM.ME.A 'assembly of scholars' looking for the foundations of the Sippar Ebabbar were presumably members of that temple's priesthood, while equally the *um-man-nu mu-du-ú a-šar-ša* 'scholars who knew the location' of

the dais of the Larsa (not Sippar!) Ebabbar were far more likely to have been local men than courtiers (Schaudig 2001: nos. 2.9 I 36, 2.11 II 56).

78. Da Riva (2010).
79. NaplC31 II 9–36: i-na me-re-šu ša ^{d}é-a | i-na IGI.GÁL$^{-ú-tu}$ ša ^{d}AMAR.UTU | i-na ne-me-qu ša ^{d}na-bi-um ù ^{d}NISABA | i-na li-ib-bi-im šu-un-du-lu | ša DINGIR ba-ni-ia | ú-ša-ar-ša-an-ni | i-na pa-ak-ki-ia ra-bí-im | ú-ša-ta-ad-di-im-ma | DUMU-MEŠ UM.ME.A e-em-qú-tim | ú-wa-a^{ʾ} -ir$_4$-ma | a-ba-aš-lam i-na GI.NINDA$_2$.NA-kum | ú-ma-an-di-id mi-in-di-a-tam | ^{lú}ŠIDIM.GAL^{-e} | iš-ta-ad-dú-um eb-le-e | ú-kin-nu-um ki-su-úr-ri-im | àr-ka-at ^{d}UTU ^{d}IŠKUR ù ^{d}AMAR.UTU | ap-ru-us-ma | e-ma li-ib-ba-am | ú-uš-ta-ad-di-nu | ú-ka-ṣi-pu mi-in-di-a-tim | DINGIR GAL.GAL i-na pa-ra-si à-ar-ka-tim | ú-ad-du-nim | i-na ši-pí-ir KA.KÙ.GÁL$^{-ú-te}$ | né-me-qá ^{d}é-a ù ^{d}AMAR.UTU | à-aš-ri-im ša-a-te | ú-ul-li-il-ma | i-na KI.GAL^{-e} re-eš-ti-im | ú-ki-in (Da Riva 2013: 82–4, 88).
80. Ennigaldi-Nanna Cylinder II 9: i-na ši-pí-ir INIM.KÙ.GÁL$^{-ú-ti}$ i-ši-ip-pu-ut-su e-pú-uš-ma a-na É.GI$_6$.PÀR ú-še-ri-ib 'by the work of *āšipūtu* I purified her (Ennigaldi-Nanna) and had her enter the Gipar' (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.7); Ehulhul Cylinder 11 I 43 (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.12).
81. Royal appointments: Harran Stele 2 III 12, 22–24 (Schaudig 2001: no. 3.1); Larsa Stele II' 1–3 (Schaudig 2001: no. 3.5); Ennigaldi-Nanna Stela I 14–23 (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.7). Temple works: Larsa Cylinder II 41–8 (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.11); Ebabbar Cylinder I 26–30 (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.9); Tiara Cylinder II 2–33 (Starr 1985: 127–9; Schaudig 2001: no. 2.8a); Ehulhul Cylinder 11 I 42, II 60 (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.12); Stele Captions 2 II 52–6 (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.14). See also Babylon Stela XI (Starr 1985: 129–31; Schaudig 2001: no. 3.3a), though it is not clear exactly what these particular extispicies relate to, as the stela is badly damaged. They may refer back to confirmation of Nabonidus's rule (cf. Harran Stele, Larsa Stele, above) or to the rebuilding of Ehulhul in Harran (cf. Ehulhul Stele above).
82. The few passing references to *ummânus*, 'scholars' or 'experts', all refer to temple personnel (Schaudig 2001: nos. 2.9 I 36, 2.11 1 II 56).
83. Tiara Cylinder II 2–33 (Starr 1985: 127–9; Schaudig 2001: no. 2.8a).
84. Reiner (1985: 7–10); Beaulieu (1989: 127–8); Ennigaldi-Nanna Cylinder I 8–10 (Schaudig 2001: no. 2.7). Royal Chronicle III 2'–5': ṭup-pi-MEŠ ÉŠ.GÀR U$_4$ AN ^{d}EN.LÍL.LÁ | ^{gi}pi-sa-an ul-tu TIN.TIR^{ki} a-na nap-lu-su | ^{lú}DUB.SAR ú-bil-lu-nu ma-har-šú la še-mu | la i-di lib-bu-uš ba-ala qa-bé-e-šú 'the scribes brought him a basket of tablets of the series *Enūma Anu Ellil* from Babylon to consult. There was no understanding, no knowing their contents without his instruction' (Glassner 2004: no. 53).
85. Beaulieu (1989: 110–11); Babylon Stele VI 4–36 (Schaudig 2001: no. 3.3a).
86. These tussles for power were part of a bigger battle between king and temple over the control of the temples' very substantial financial assets; see most conveniently Fried (2004: 20–4).
87. Beaulieu (2007); Kuhrt (2007a). The pro- and anti-Nabonidus factions also presented very different images of that king's intellectual prowess. The so-called *Verse Account of Nabonidus* (Schaudig 2001: no. P1) satirises his 'pretensions to divine knowledge' and his devotion to the moon god by having him miswrite *iškāru enūma* 'the series *Enūma (Anu Ellil)*' as U$_4$.SAKAR = *uskāru* 'crescent moon' instead of the correct ÉŠ.GÀR U$_4$ (Machinist and Tadmor 1993: 147). Conversely, the *Epic of Nabonidus* (Schaudig 2001: no. P4), known only in a much later manuscript, presents the king as having 'a virtuosity in all the needed scribal skills and erudition – extispicy, astrology, priestly instructions – and an ability to use one to check the others … a virtuosity … unmatched by the scribes around the king, who are unaware of the issues at hand and/or unable to read the texts relevant to them' (Machinist and Tadmor 1993: 151).
88. ša ^{d}EN u ^{d}NÀ ir-a-mu (Schaudig 2001: no. K.2.1 l. 22).
89. ra-a^{ʾ}-im | É.SAG.ÍL u É.ZI.DA (Schaudig 2001: no. K.1.1 ll. 1–2).
90. The reading of George (1996: 380) of this passage is to be preferred over that of Glassner (2004: no. 27 ll. 24'–28').
91. There are no extant chronicles, or political comments in the so-called astronomical diaries, for the early Achaemenid rulers, and their court in Babylon left no extant records. The royal inscriptions from the Persian's homeland in Fars not surprisingly make no mention of Babylonian-style scholarship, and nor does the documentation from other parts of the Achaemenid empire (Kuhrt 2007b). Parpola (1993: XXIX) suggests that an anecdote in Herodotus' *Histories* VII.15 and 17 about Artabanus playing at being Xerxes, although 'properly speaking not an instance of the Substitute King Ritual … contains all the elements of it' and 'if Herodotus heard this anecdote from Persian informants, it would certainly imply that the Substitute King Ritual

was regularly practiced in the court of Xerxes.' However, see note 108 below for the problems of reading too much historicity into Herodotus' accounts of scholarship at the Achaemenid court.

92. There has been much debate recently about the chronology of their composition (e.g. van der Spek 2014; Waerzeggers 2015); but whether written at the time or generations later, the same point holds, namely that they were produced and consumed in northern Babylonia for the local cuneiform-literate elite and do not necessarily represent official imperial inscriptions.
93. On scholarly healers in the Persian court see most conveniently Kuhrt (2007b: 586–7 §12.12), noting (587 n1) that 'our one-sided information ascribes a prominent place to Greek doctors' such as Democedes of Croton, a Greek physician who supposedly came to Darius I's court as a prisoner of war and became one of his 'table-companions' (Kuhrt 2007b: 658 §13.38; Herodotus, *Histories* III.132). However, note Davies's (2010) thorough unpicking of Herodotus' account of Democedes. It is, he concludes, 'from start to finish a tissue of folk-tale motifs from which one cannot extract one or two details and privilege them with historic status', with suspiciously close parallels to another Herodotian anecdote about the healing of an Egyptian pharaoh. Its basic purpose is to recount how 'the omnipotent and potentially violent eastern despot is outwitted by the cunning and resourceful Greek' (Davies 2010: 39). Ctesias, who served as personal physician to Artaxerxes II (r. 404–359 BC) for the first several years of his reign, wrote a twenty-three-book history of the Persian empire and its Assyrian and Median predecessors, which survives now only in fragments and summaries by others. The remnants of this *Persika* have been edited most recently by Lenfant (Ctesias 2004), while Tuplin (2004) has considered its scholarly and medical content in considerable detail. A useful reassessment of *Persika*'s reliability as a historical source has been made by Colburn (2011), who concludes that 'regardless of ancient or modern opinions of Ctesias' merits as a historian, it is clear that his work cannot be read literally as a straightforward historical account that faithfully reproduces the events … and personalities of the Achaemenid court in the early fourth century' (Colburn 2011: 92). While cautioning us that 'all epitomes … are likely to remove the most interesting things' from their originals (Tuplin 2004: 306), the latter shows that Ctesias' intellectual world is entirely Hippocratic, both in its philosophical approach and in the disease entities and medical personnel that populate it. Any Babylonian members of the Persians' scholarly retinue, such as there were, and whether Ctesias originally wrote about them or not, have long vanished from the historical record. The Greek sources also mention Egyptian healers at the Persian court but no Babylonian ones; however, 'it is extremely likely that the *magi*, with their extensive knowledge of plants, were the chief court doctors' (Kuhrt 2007b: 587 n2 with full references). Herodotus (*Histories*, VII.37.2–3) describes one of Xerxes' *magi* misreading a solar eclipse as a favourable portent, which hints that he had at least a rudimentary knowledge of cuneiform-style scholarship. But as Rollinger (2000: 69) points out, the misreading of ominous signs is a common trope in Herodotus, presenting those who neglect or misread portents 'either as a tragic figure or an evil-doer'. He also notes that the account of the eclipse 'does not accord with the calculations of modern astronomers', further undermining its historicity in favour of its moral value to ancient readers.
94. Zawadzki (1994).
95. On this well-documented affair, see e.g. Jursa (2004); Holz (2013: 147–71); Kozuh (2014: 171–5).
96. Van Driel (1998: 67–8); Kleber (2008: 25, 343); Frahm and Jursa (2011: 23).
97. Harmatta (1966); Zawadzki (1994); Huyse (1999); Beaulieu (2006a: 201–6). See Kuhrt (2007b: 135–58 §5.A.1) for a convenient translation and discussion of the whole text.
98. Seidl (1999); Beaulieu (2006a: 204–5).
99. Jursa (2013); Robson (2017).
100. Waerzeggers (2003/4). See also Kessler (2004); Oelsner (2007); H.D. Baker (2008).
101. Seidl (1999: 113–14).
102. George (2010). But see Kuhrt (2010; 2014) for rebuttals of Waerzeggers' and George's arguments.
103. Waerzeggers (2003/4: 155–7); Kessler (2004); Baker (2008).
104. Kose (1998: 10); Kessler (2004).
105. Kessler (2004); see also Beaulieu (1997).
106. Robson (2017).
107. Robson (2018).
108. Van der Spek (2003); Beaulieu (2006a: 23–5).
109. Fragments of that history survive in ninety-five short passages quoted by others (Rzepka 2016).

110. Fotheringham (1928: 303); van der Waerden (1984: 119); and still propagated, for instance on *Livius* (http://www.livius.org/articles/person/alexander-the-great/alexander-3.6-last-days/, last accessed August 2018) despite e.g. Bosworth (1970: 410–11). Burstein (1984) argues that there is no prima facie case for disbelieving the story, but Steele (2004; 2011b) shows that the Babylonian observation data known to the Greeks was a set of eclipse reports covering the period 747–315 BC and which therefore cannot have been translated and transmitted during Alexander's lifetime. See Romm (1989) for a critical assessment of Alexander's supposed patronage of scientific work and the nature of his relationship with Aristotle.
111. (Rzepka 2016, FgrH 124 T3).
112. In a similar vein, Papathanassiou (1999) shows that Alexander's birth horoscope, given in one manuscript of pseudo-Callisthenes' third-century AD *Historia Alexandri Magni*, is in fact for a client born in Alexandria on the night of 2–3 November 149 BC. In other words, historical vignettes about Babylonian-style celestial scholarship seem to have clustered around the culture-heroic figure of Alexander for a long period after his death. For a similar argument on late antique sources for the life of Pythagoras – another Greek supposedly heavily influenced by Babylonian scholarship – see Burnyeat (2007).
113. *Bibliotheca Historica* 17.112.2. Here I follow the translation of Welles (1963: 450–1) with corrections by Kathryn Stevens (pers. comm. 2012).
114. See George (2005/6: 89–91) for more detail on the variant classical accounts of this episode.
115. George (2005/6: 91–2); van der Spek (2006: 269–72).
116. *Bibliotheca Historica* 17.116.4 (see note 111). Plutarch (*c*. 46–120 AD), writing some 400 years after the event, gives a shorter account in his *Life of Alexander* (73–4), which begins with the scholars' meeting with Nearchus, and continues with the observation of terrestrial and sacrificial omens – dead ravens, a lobe-less liver, a lion killed by a donkey – and Alexander's accidental encounter with a furtive Substitute King Ritual, which ends with him 'put[ting] the man out of the way, as the seers directed' (Plutarch 1919: 428–9).His slightly younger contemporary Arrian (*c*. 86–180 AD) gives a much longer report of the same events in *Anabasis Alexandri* ('Alexander's Expedition', VII.16–18, 24) that is broadly similar in outline. It differs in that the Babylonians came to Alexander directly with their fears for his life but he rebuffed them and suspected them of trying to hide the fact that they were misappropriating temple funds (Arrian 1983: 263–9, 287–9).
117. That is not to deny Kuhrt's (1996: 44) assertion that 'the Seleucid kings interacted with Babylonia substantially'; it is rather to make the more modest claim that they did not directly patronise Babylonian scholarship. For a rather different take on this topic, see Clancier (2011: 759–62).
118. Van der Spek (2001); George (2005/6: 92); Potts (2011).
119. Hauser (1999: 222–7); Dirven (2014: 16).
120. Van der Spek (2006: 272).
121. Van der Spek and Finkel (2004–: nos. 5–8); van der Spek (2006: 272–5, 290–9).
122. Stevens (2012; 2014); Beaulieu (2014); new edition at http://oracc.org/cams/selbi/Q004179 (last accessed August 2018).
123. IBILA ṣi-i-ri (l. 16); bu-kúr ^{d}ASAR.RI reš-tu-ú (l. 35).
124. SIG$_4$-HI.A | É.SAG.ÍL ù É.ZI.DA | ina ^{kur}ha-at-tì ina ŠU-MIN-ía el-le-ti | i-na Ì.GIŠ ru-uš-ti al-bi-in-ma 'I moulded bricks for Esangila and Ezida in the land of Hatti with my own pure hands, with best oil' (ll. 8–11).
125. Van der Spek and Finkel (2004–: no. 5 rev. 6–10); Hunger and Sachs (1988: no. –273B rev. 30'–32', 36'–38'); van der Spek (2006: 272; 2009: 107).
126. But van der Spek's (2000: 439) proposal to identify him with a particular Bel-re'ušunu who was *šatammu* of Esangila in 258–253 BC is probably to be rejected on chronological grounds (de Breucker 2011: 637). However, given Late Babylonian habits of papponymy (naming firstborns after their grandfathers; H.D. Baker 2002), it is entirely possible that van der Spek's Bel-re'ušunu was descended from, or otherwise closely related to, Berossus.
127. De Breucker (2011: 637). Even later, Eusebius (early fourth century AD) suggests that it was dedicated to Antiochus II. The most recent edition, with commentary, of the extant fragments of *Babyloniaca* as preserved by Tatian, Eusebius and others is by de Breucker (2010). In scientific and scholarly cultures worldwide, there are many instances of speculative dedications to potential patrons, by no means all of which were successful (e.g. Pumfrey and Dawbarn 2004; Brentjes 2008: 308).

128. ana e-pe-šú šá É.SAG.GÍL É.ZI.DA u É.MES.LAM | [i]-na-an-din-nu ù šá-la-ṭu id-din-na-šú … ana da-riš iz-ziz, MMA 86.11.299 ('Lehmann Text'), obv. 10–11, 13: Wallenfels and van der Spek (2014) with further corrigenda and an updated translation by van der Spek at https://www.academia.edu/27745534/ (last accessed August 2018).
129. E.g. Hunger and Sachs (1990: no. –229B obv. 5–11); van der Spek (2016); latest attested: Hunger and Sachs (1996: no. –77B rev. 15).
130. Dirven (2014: 11–12).
131. Hunger and Sachs (1990: no. –204 ll. 14–19); Kuhrt (2010: 492).
132. See most conveniently Boiy (2004: 277–80) for a summary of those tablets.
133. Hunger and Sachs (1996: no. –187 rev. 3'–18'); van der Spek (2009: 263).
134. Van der Spek and Finkel (2004–: no. 14); van der Spek (2009: 108); Dirven (2014).
135. The *šatammu* of Esangila nevertheless continued to pay for offerings for the life of Parthian kings, officials and generals (Dirven 2014: 12).
136. On Characene see e.g. Schuol (2000) with useful reviews by Boiy (2001); Hauser (2001); and Sommer (2002) with subsequent discussion; Kosmin (2013).
137. Unfortunately the tablet is now lost and therefore impossible to check, but according to its late nineteenth-century edition it appears to say: ^{m}KI–^{d}ŠÚ–DIN … | … $^{<lú>}$UMBISAG U_4 AN.NA ^{d}EN.LÍL.LÁ A ≪LÚ≫ šá ^{m}MU–^{d}EN | šá i-na IGI-ma a-na Á as-pa-si-né-e LUGAL | ⌜ni$^{?}$-iš$^{?}$-pu^{1}-ru šá hi-ših-ti ina KÁ LUGAL | [in-na-din-nu]-⌜ú^{1} u en-na a-ga-a i-ba-áš-ši (BOR 4: 132 obv. 9–14 = Pinches 1896; McEwan 1981: 17–18; van der Spek 1985: 550; cf. Joannès 2000: 700 n12; Stolper 2006: 231–2).
138. Stolper (2006: 238).
139. Petrie (2002: 105).
140. Boiy (2005); Petrie (2002).
141. Taxation officials: Lindström (2003: 58–62). ^{md}60–TIN^{-it} DUMU šá ^{md}60–ik-ṣur A ^{m}ŠEŠ$^{-u-ú-tú}$ | ^{lú}GAR^{-nu} šá UNUG^{ki} šá ^{m}an-ti-i$^{'}$-i-ku-su LUGAL KUR.KUR-MEŠ | ^{m}ni-ki-qa-ar-qu-su MU-šú šá-nu-ú iš-kun-nu 'Anu-uballiṭ, son of Anu-ikṣur, descendant of Ah$^{'}$utu, governor of Uruk, to whom Antiochus king of the lands gave the second name Nikarchus' (Clay 1915: no. 52, ll. 1–3).
142. ana bul-ṭu šá ^{m}an-ti-i$^{'}$-i-ku-su u ^{m}si-lu-ku LUGAL-MEŠ DÙ$^{-uš}$-ma ú-šak-lil (Clay 1915: no. 52, l. 15).
143. SpTU 3: 58 from the so-called *āšipus*' house, discussed further in Chapter 6; Frame (1995: B.4.16.1).
144. For instance, in SE 91 (221 BC) Nidinti-Anu, son of Anu-belšunu, descendant of Ekur-zakir, copied a chapter of *Bārûtu* for Anu-balassu-iqbi, chief of the city leaders (*rab ša rēš āli*) of Uruk, son of Anu-aha-ittannu, descendant of Ah$^{'}$utu (TCL 6: 1; Koch 2005: no. 13).
145. Clay (1915: no. 52, ll. 5–11); new edition at http://oracc.org/cams/selbi/Q004181 (last accessed August 2018).
146. Kose (1998: 116–21).
147. The illegible lacuna is possibly to be restored with the name a-da-pà (van Dijk 1962: 47) or perhaps UM.ME.A = *ummānû* 'scholar'.
148. Probably 30 March 202 BC or possibly 26 July of the same year; the month name as written (^{iti}BÁRA.NE.GAR) is a hybrid of ^{iti}BÁRA.ZAG.GAR (Nisannu, month I) and ^{iti}NE.NE.GAR (Abu, month V). All things being equal, a ceremonial entrance during the spring *akītu*-festival seems more likely than in the blazing heat of summer, during a month that had little ritual significance.
149. Based on Falkenstein (1941: 6–7); new edition at http://oracc.org/cams/selbi/Q004180 (last accessed August 2018).
150. Cf. Schaudig (2010: 142).
151. Wetzel and Weissbach 1938: (14, 23). Boiy (2010: 212–13) lists several tablets recording tithe payments for the rebuilding of Babylon during Alexander's reign but notes that 'it is not known if anything was done apart from collecting the money'; see also van der Spek (2006: 266–75); Dirven (2014: 209).
152. Downey (1988: 16); George (2005/6: 75).
153. The two men share a patronym and the dates are commensurate: cf. Doty (1988: 100, 102).
154. TCL 6: 32 (George 1992: no. 13); and see also SpTU 4: 220 (George 1995).
155. BagM Beih. 2: 96.
156. TCL 6: 32 obv. 1–2, 5–7; BagM Beih. 2: 96 obv. 1–3.
157. Ambos (2013: 63; 2019).

158. Nikarchus: gi-nu-ú sat-tuk-ku | ki-ma mah-ri-im-ma ú-kin-in-ni qé-reb-šú 'inside it I established *ginû*-offerings and *sattukku*-offerings, as formerly'(ll. 18–19); Kephalon: ^{é}SAG šá ⌜i-na mah-ri⌝ | ^{m}U$_4$–^{d}60 DA x x ⌜ME⌝ E⌜⌝ i-pu-uš-šú | i-te-ni-ih-ma 'I destroyed the Reš temple that formerly Oannes … had built' (ll. 6–8).
159. The Šangu-Ninurta men always write ^{lú}qaq-qar–^{d}60$^{-ú}$ or ^{lú}KI–^{d}60$^{-ú}$ (Šamaš-iddin: SpTU 1: 48; SpTU 3: 69, 84; SpTU 5: 254; Anu-ikṣur: SpTU 1: 45; SpTU 3: 99; Rimut-Anu: SpTU 4: 152; unknown *āšipu*: SpTU 3: 111). Iqišaya, by contrast, writes simply UNUG$^{ki-ú}$ or TIR.AN.NA$^{ki-ú}$ (SpTU 1: 94, 139; SpTU 2: 38; unknown member of the Ekur-zakir family, presumably Iqišaya: SpTU 2: 39).
160. In about forty tablets – nearly half of those with surviving colophons. The scholars concerned are as follows, with texts in which their names are restored in square brackets (all tablet owners unless otherwise noted; see online Tables B11–B13):
    - Ahu'tu: Anu-balassu-iqbi [1] (TCL 6: 1); Anu-belšunu [3] (TCL 6: 32);
    - Ekur-zakir: Anu-ah-ušabši [1] (BRM 4: 7–8; TCL 6: 19); Anu-ah-ušabši [2] (scribe for Nidintu-Anu [3]: BRM 4: 13; TCL 6: 2–4, 7, 35); Anu-ah-ušabši [3] (scribe for Anu-ab-uter: [ACT 161]); Anu-uballiṭ [4] (scribe for Anu-ab-uter: [ACT 702]); Ina-qibit-Anu [1] (ACT 101); Nidintu-Anu [1] (BRM 4: 12; SpTU 2: 33; TCL 6: 2, 4–5, 7, 16, 35; scribe for unknown owner: TCL 6: 10); Šamaš-eṭir (ACT 163, 171, 601; scribe for Anu-uballiṭ [1]: TCL 6: 39); Ša-Anu-iššu (scribe for Anu-ah-ušabši [1]: SpTU 4: 157);
    - Hunzu: Anu-uballiṭ [1] (TCL 6: 39; scribe for Nidintu-Anu [1]: BRM 4: 12; TCL 6: 16); Nidintu-Anu [2] (TCL 6: 11, 31);
    - Sin-leqi-unninni: Anu-ab-uter (ACT [161], [174], 194 = TCL 6: 25, 702; [BagM Beih. 2: 86]; scribe for Anu-belšunu [1]: ACT 135+200 = TCL 6: 24+26; Weidner 1967: 45; scribe for Šamaš-etir: ACT 162, 171, 600 = TCL 6: 28); Anu-balassu-iqbi [3] (scribe for Anu-ab-uter: BagM Beih. 2: 6); Anu-belšunu [1] ([BagM Beih. 2: 12], BRM 4: 11; TCL 6: 12, 24+26 = ACT 135, 220); Anu-belšunu [2] (BagM Beih. 2: 89); Nidintu-Anu [3] (TCL 6: 56–7); Nidintu-Anu [4] (BRM 4: 21).
161. The only exception, so far as I know, are the men from Der, who identify themselves as Dereans on five of their six surviving tablets, namely BRM 4: 18; Figulla (1959: no. 12); the 'Converse Tablet' (Lambert 1971); SpTU 4: 125, 185. The practice is also sporadically attested in Neo-Assyrian Assur (Hunger 1968: nos. 194, 264). Tablets are rather frequently said to have been produced in a particular place – usually given just before the date at the end of the colophon – or copied from originals from a named location (e.g. Hunger 1968: 157–8). But that is a rather different phenomenon from an individual's self-identification with a city.
162. That is, plotting syllabic range against sample size, counted by lemmata (individual words), the line of best fit tends logarithmically to 450 syllable values with a coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.86$, indicating a very good fit. The programming was undertaken by Chris Martin and Greta Van Buylaere, to Greta Van Buylaere's research design and overseen by Steve Tinney. Statistical analysis was by Eleanor Robson. The project was generously funded by the Leverhulme Trust, 2011–12.

    Five samples were taken from the CAMS/GKAB corpus: (1) five tablets from late Achaemenid–early Hellenistic Nippur and found in the *āšipus*' house in Uruk (SpTU 2: 29, 36, 43; 3: 101; 5: 260) amounting to 1,551 lemmata and using 236 different syllabic values; (2) seventeen tablets written by Anu-ikṣur of the Šangu-Ninurta family in late Achaemenid Uruk (SpTU 1: 28, 31, 32, 38, 45, 47, 49–51, 56, 59, 60, 72, 126; 3: 99; 5: 241, 248), amounting to 4,826 lemmata and using 400 different syllabic values; (3) twelve tablets by other named members of the Šangu-Ninurta family (Anu-ikṣur's father, brother and nephew) (Friberg et al. 1990; SpTU 1: 43–4, 55; 3: 90, 100, 116; 4: 151–2, 174; 5: 231), amounting to 9,259 lemmata and using 398 different syllabic values; (4) twenty-eight tablets written by Iqišaya of the Ekur-zakir family in early Hellenistic Uruk (BRM 4: 20; SpTU 1: 14, 90, 94, 96, 139; 2: 18, 21, 25, 32, 34–5, 37–8, 43–4; 3: 65, 97, 104–5; 5: 150, 158–9; 162; 188; TCL 6: 9, 17, 50), amounting to 9,902 lemmata and using 447 different syllabic values; (5) eleven tablets by other members of the Ekur-zakir family in early Hellenistic and Seleucid Uruk (BRM 4: 7; SpTU 2: 33; 4: 147; TCL 6: 2–3, 10, 15, 19, 27, 35, 39), amounting to 5,924 lemmata and using 339 different syllabic values. Logographic values were not counted as these are much more determined by generic conventions than syllabic writings are.
163. Gesche (2001: 103–24).
164. Numbers of different syllable values in the samples described in note 30 above (open/closed): (1) 142/94; (2) 190/210; (3) 186/212; (4) 188/259; (5) 152/176. Pearson's chi-square test

results with four degrees of freedom (looking at proportions of V, CV, VC, CVC and other syllable signs): (1)–(4): $\chi^2 = 21.75$ (statistically significant to a likelihood of 0.001 error); (2)–(3): $\chi^2 = 3.88$; (2)–(4): $\chi^2 = 4.34$; (3)–(5): $\chi^2 = 1.9$; (4)–(5): $\chi^2 = 4.26$ (all statistically insignificant). See Oakes (1998: 24–2) for the use of this method in corpus linguistics.

165. These results, if suggestive, are highly provisional. A much more detailed programme of further research into cuneiform literacies is planned for the near future.
166. Schroeder (1916: no. 1); transliteration online at http://oracc.org/hbtin/P342454 (last accessed August 2018).
167. Kümmel (1979: 156–7).
168. See Boiy (2012) for a family tree of the Seleucid Ekur-zakir kin-group.
169. E.g. BRM 2: 3; Weisberg (1991: no. 36); Sarkisian (1955: no. 1); Doty (2012: no. 8); see http://oracc.org/hbtin/qpn-x-lineage/, (last accessed August 2018). Iddin-Ellil is sometimes read as Iddin-Amurru.
170. As the smallest integer that is sexagesimally irregular (co-prime to sixty) it was associated with the uncanny, the difficult and the non-human (Robson 2008a: 179); in Uruk the *āšipus*' prebends were divided into sevens (Corò 2005a).
171. Lambert (1957: 3).
172. Beaulieu (2000); George (2003: 28–33).
173. SpTU 4: 122 (*Gilgamesh* I), SpTU 2: 30 (*Gilgamesh* II), SpTU 3: 59 (*Gilgamesh* V) and SpTU 5: 251 (a fragment mentioning Gilgamesh) were all found in the early Hellenistic level II of the *āšipus*' house. SpTU 4: 123 (*Gilgamesh* III) and SpTU 4: 124 (*Gilgamesh* IV), recovered from fill in level IV, may be late Achaemenid or early Hellenistic in date.
174. The ambiguous find context of SpTU 1: 4 (see also Foster 2005: III.21.b) during Season 27 of the excavation of the *āšipus*' house means that it may be either late Achaemenid or early Hellenistic in date. For the Sumerian Enmerkar cycle, see Vanstiphout (2003).
175. BagM Beih. 2: 89.
176. Lenzi (2008b).
177. As we saw in Chapters 3–4, the names Ṭupšar-Ellil-dari (sometimes read Aba-Ellil-dari) and Ahiqar (better, Ahi-iaqar) are not attested amongst the retinue of Neo-Assyrian court scholars in the cuneiform record, although there is a rich Aramaic tradition about the latter from about 500 BC, as well as a reference to him in the apocryphal *Book of Tobit*, set in late eighth-century Nineveh but probably composed in the second century BC (Lindenberger 1983; Contini and Grottanelli 2005; Niehr 2007).
178. Lenzi (2008b: 163).
179. BagM Beih. 2: 88; Grayson (1980–3: 97–8).
180. SpTU 1: 2 (Glassner 2004: 288–92; Cavigneaux 2005).
181. [ina UNUG]^{ki} u ^{é}re-eš É EN$^{-ú-tú}$-šú ú-kin 'he deposited it [in Uruk] and Reš, temple of his (i.e. Anu's) lordship' (SpTU 1: 2 rev. 9').
182. GARZA ^{d}60$^{-ú-tú}$ GIŠ.HUR-MEŠ šá UNUG[^{ki}] | [ni]-ṣir-ti ^{lú}um-man-nu šá la ši-mat ú-nak-[ki-ru] | [ši]-pir ^{d}30 be-lu ŠEŠ.UNUG^{ki} iš-ṭur (SpTU 1: 2 obv. 13–15).
183. […] GI zu-mur-šú ú-lab-biš 'he covered his body in … ' (SpTU 1: 2 obv. 20).
184. The first line of the composition looks like the closing formula of an earlier section of the text, as it summarises Ur-Namma's reign: […] ^{m}UR–^{d}NAMMA LUGAL MU 18 IN.AK '[…] Ur-Namma served as king for 18 years' (SpTU 1: 2 obv. 2) . Likewise the final line summarises Amar-Suen's: [^{m}AMAR]–^{d}SUEN.NA MU 10-LÁ-1 […] LUGAL$^{-ú-tú}$ i-pu-[uš] '[Amar]-Suena exercised the kingship for 9 years […]' (SpTU 1: 2 rev. 4'). The preceding lines, now missing or badly damaged, presumably gave a fuller account of that king's (mis)rule.
185. Tablet IV was copied by Iqišaya of the Ekur-zakir family in 316 BC, on a tablet unearthed in the early twentieth century (Hruška 1969: source F). A manuscript of Tablet I was found in the early Hellenistic levels of the *āšipus*' house but its colophon mentions one Ištar-šum-ereš, *kalû* of Anu and Antu, son of Balaṭu and thus presumably not a member of the Ekur-zakir family, who were all *āšipus* (SpTU 2: 28). Two Seleucid duplicates of Tablet III come from illicit excavations in Uruk, including one owned by Anu-ab-uter of the Sin-leqi-unninni family (online Table B12) (TCL 6: 51–2; Hruška 1969: sources A–B).
186. Beaulieu (1992: 57–9); edition of the first-millennium text by Litke (1998). An Old Babylonian version begins with the divine couple Enki and Ninki and does not mention An(u) until obv. i 31 (de Genouillac 1930: no. 10).
187. Beaulieu (1992); compare the Eanna offerings lists of Beaulieu (2003a: 73) with the Reš offering ritual TCL 6: 38 (Linssen 2004: 227–32).

188. SpTU 3: 126+ (Tablet III; colophon of Anu-ikṣur); SpTU 4: 182; SpTU 4: 183.
189. MLC 1890 (Beaulieu 1995b).
190. Frank (1933); Linssen (2004).
191. ki-i pi-i ṭup-pi-MEŠ | šá ^{md}NÀ–A–URI$_3$ LUGAL KUR–tam-tì TA qé-reb UNUG^{ki} iš-lu-lu-ma i-nu-uš ^{m}ki-din–^{d}60 ^{lú}UNUG^{ki}-a | ^{lú}MAŠ.MAŠ ^{d}60 u an-tu$_4$ ŠÀ.BAL.BAL ^{m}É.KUR–za-kir ^{lú}ŠEŠ.GAL^{-i} šá ^{é}SAG ṭup-pi-MEŠ MU-MEŠ | ina ^{kur}ELAM.MA^{ki} ip-pal-lis-ma ina BAL^{-e} ^{m}si-lu-ku u ^{m}an-ti-$^{\text{'}}$i-i-ku-su LUGAL-MEŠ | iš-ṭur-ù-ma a-na qé-reb UNUG^{ki} ú-bi-il (TCL 6: 38 rev. 46–50).
192. Linssen (2004: 227–32); Boiy (2010).
193. See above and Jursa (2007).
194. Pomponio (1978: 106–12); Kessler (2004); Fadhil and Hilgert (2008: 184).
195. The Uruk legal documents known to me mentioning individuals with Nabu-names are: Weisberg (1991: no. 40), date missing: Nabu-ušallim (^{md}rNÀ–GI^{1}), son of Kudurru; seal Wallenfels (1994: no. 660B); McEwan (1982: no. 2), SE 11.viii.02: Amat-Nabu (^{f}GEME$_2$–^{d}NÀ), daughter of Nabu-zabaddu (^{md}NÀ–za-bad-du), wife of Nidintu-Anu; Schroeder (1916: no. 23), SE 33.vii.10 and McEwan (1982: no. 10), SE 41.iii.30: ^{m}DAM-U, son of Iddin-Nabu (^{m}MU–^{d}NÀ); Corò (2005b: 220–2, 222–3), SE 37.viii.11: Bel-ereš, son of Nabu-naṣir (^{md}NÀ–PAP). Likewise in nearby Larsa: L83.6 (Joannès 2001), Philip 3.xi.17: Ina-qibit-Anu, son of Nabu-he-si-i$^{\text{'}}$(^{md}NÀ–he-si-i$^{\text{'}}$); BRM 2: 51, Philip 6.–.6: Nabu-ittannu (^{md}NÀ–MU^{-nu}), son of Šamaš-kaṣir; McEwan (1982: no. 26), SE 86.xii.10?: (a different) Nabu-ittannu (^{md}NÀ–MU^{-nu}). Patronyms suggest that these are men and women of northern stock; but the names of their spouses and offspring imply that they have married locally, integrating into the local community by, *inter alia*, giving their children southern names.
196. Pomponio (1978: 218–33; 1998–2001: 20–3); see also Dirven (1997; 2014) and e.g. Müller-Kessler and Kessler (1999: 73–5) for the survival of Nabu (with other northern Babylonian deities) amongst the Mandaeans of late antique Iraq.
197. BRM 4: 6; Brown and Linssen (1997); Linssen (2004: 109–17, 306–16).
198. EGIR-šú LUGAL ina qé-reb TIR.AN.NA^{ki} E$_{11}$-ma di-i-na KUR i-da-a-nu EŠ.BAR KUR KU$_5^{-as}$ | GARZA ^{d}a-nu-ú-tu ina qé-reb TIR.AN.NA^{ki} … | … É.KUR-MEŠ šá UNUG^{ki} DÙ$^{-uš}$ É-MEŠ DINGIR-MEŠ ana KI-ši-na GUR$^{-ár}$ | UNUG^{ki} ud-da-áš KÁ.GAL-MEŠ UNUG^{ki} šá ^{na_4}ZA.GÌN DÙ$^{-uš}$ ÍD-MEŠ GARIM-MEŠ ṭuh-du u HÉ.GÁL ú-mal-li | ^{r}EGIR^{1}-šú LUGAL DUMU-šú ina qé-reb TIR.AN.NA^{ki} E$_{11}$-ma kib-rat er-bet-ti i-bé-el | [be-lu]-ú-tu ú LUGAL$^{-ú-tu}$ ina qé-reb TIR.AN.NA^{ki} DÙ$^{-uš}$ a-di ul-la BALA-šú i-ka-a-nu | [LUGAL]-^{r}MEŠ^{1} ša UNUG^{ki} ki-ma DINGIR-MEŠ ip-pu-šú be-lu-ú-tu (SpTU 1: 3 rev. 11–18). There have been extended discussions as to which historical king this passage refers to (e.g. Beaulieu 1993 with earlier literature; Cavigneaux 2005; Neujahr 2012: 50–8). Beaulieu (1993: 49) argues that Antiochus I was probably intended, perhaps an oblique target for royal patronage of Reš.