

The Babylonian chronicles

The chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa in a comparative perspective

Mariëtte Wessels

s1023039

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Table of contents

	Page
Abbreviations	3
Periods	4
Introduction and method	5-9
Introducing the corpus	10-12
Periods and dynasties in the chronicles	13-16
Subjects in the chronicles	17-25
Places in the chronicles	26-32
Kings in the chronicles	33-40
Timespan of the chronicles	41-43
Reoccurring sentences in the chronicles	44-46
Gods and religion in the chronicles	47-50
Appearance of the chronicles	51-54
Conclusion	55-56
Bibliography	57-62

Abbreviations

ADRT I	Hunger, H. and Sachs A.J. (1988). <i>Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia</i> , volume I. Vienna.
BM	British Museum
Glassner, <i>MC</i>	Glassner, J. (2004). <i>Mesopotamian Chronicles</i> . Atlanta.
Grayson, <i>ABC</i>	Grayson, A.K. (1975). <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . New York.
Van der Spek, <i>BCHP</i>	Van der Spek, R.J. (2004). <i>Babylonian Chronicles from the Hellenistic Period</i> . http://www.livius.org/babylonia.html .

Periods¹

Akkad Dynasty	2334-2154
Third Dynasty of Ur	2112-2004
Larsa Dynasty	2025-1763
First Dynasty of Isin	2017-1794
Old Assyrian Period	ca. 1900-1750
First Dynasty of Babylon	1894-1595
First Dynasty of the Sealand	unknown
Middle Assyrian Period	ca. 1300-1100
Kassite Dynasty	1374?-1155
Second Dynasty of Isin	1157-1026
Second Sealand Dynasty	1025-1005
Bazi Dynasty	1004-985
Elamite Dynasty	984-979
Uncertain Dynasties	978-748
Neo-Assyrian Dynasty	744-612
Neo-Babylonian Dynasty	626-539
Persian Empire	538-331
Macedonian Rulers	330-307
Seleucid Dynasty	305-65 BCE
Arsacid Dynasty	250 BCE-228 CE

¹ Information retrieved from: Oppenheim 1964: 335-347; Van de Mieroop 2007: 302-317.

Introduction and method

In first millennium BCE Babylonia, a group of scholars compiled texts that are now known as chronicles. The documents they left behind give valuable insights in how these scholars viewed their history and understood contemporary events. The corpus of chronicles can be viewed as a distinct genre of Babylonian historiography². The chronicles narrate events from the time of Sargon onwards, this means that the chronicle that portrays the oldest event is about the period 2334 to 2279 BCE³, and the chronicle that describes the latest event is about the period 123 to 88 BCE, this is in the Parthian period, during the reign of Mithradates II⁴. The Babylonian chronicles thus narrate a period of more than 2000 years. In a 2012 article by C. Waerzeggers it has been proven that the chronicles do not solely come from Babylon, but that there are also chronicles from Borsippa⁵. In the field of Assyriology it has been assumed for a long time that all the chronicles originated in Babylon; as Babylon was the capital of Babylonia, and the provenance of these texts was unknown. However, Borsippa was the sister city of Babylon, and an important city for scholars, as Nabû - scribal god and son of Marduk - was the patron deity of Borsippa. In the scholarly world of Assyriology, there has been a vibrant discussion on the chronicles since the publication of the first chronicle onwards⁶. Assyriologists do not seem to agree on the place of publication, the meaning of the texts, the historical accuracy, or how they should be interpreted. In this thesis, light will be shed upon these discussion points.

The chronicles do not only come from different cities, but also from a different time, the chronicles from Borsippa were written in the Neo-Babylonian period (626-539) while the chronicles from Babylon were mostly written during the Hellenistic (330-65 BCE) and Parthian periods (250 BCE-228 CE), which are the periods in which the library of the Esagil temple flourished. Hence, there is a difference in the place where the chronicles were written, but also a difference in time. The research question for this thesis is: 'As both Babylon and Borsippa published chronicles, do the cities belong to the same chronicle tradition or is there more than one chronicle tradition in Babylonia?' This question gives the possibility to explore

² Next to chronicles as historiographic material, king lists, epics, and annals can also be distinguished.

³ Chronicle ABC 20A

⁴ Chronicle BCHP 20

⁵ Waerzeggers 2012

⁶ The first chronicles were published by S. Smith in 1924: *Babylonian historical texts*.

and compare the chronicles from both cities in full respect. If similarities can be found in the chronicles from both cities that would indicate that there were no - or little - changes in time and space. Similarities in the chronicles would mean an ongoing tradition spanning several hundred years. If there are no - or little - similarities in the chronicles from both the cities this would indicate that the scribal tradition had changed over the decades, or that there are differences between the cities. Local diversity and changes over time could be discovered in the chronicles.

There are presently 44 Babylonian chronicles, 29 of these chronicles come from Babylon and fifteen chronicles originated in Borsippa. The 29 chronicles from Babylon are mostly written in the Esagil temple, only two of these chronicles do not have a clear provenance⁷. Since it has been proven that there are two scribal centers, it should be stressed that the Babylonian Chronicle Series, as introduced by A.K. Grayson, is no longer viable. He suggested that chronicles ABC 1-7 are excerpts from one series, as can be seen in the fact that the seven chronicles complement each other⁸. However, the so-called series cannot be a series as the chronicles come from different cities and were probably written in a different time. MC 16, MC 17⁹ and ABC 7 came from Babylon, while ABC 2-6 originated in Borsippa. While the chronicles from Babylon have mostly been found in the Esagil temple¹⁰, the chronicles from Borsippa come from private archives owned by priests from the Ezida temple. Because there was no overarching temple archive in Borsippa, a collection of private archives can be found throughout the city. Four of the private archives contained chronicles: the Re'i-alpi, Ilia, Atkuppu and Beliya'u archives. In this thesis, they are subdivided into two groups, the Re'i-alpi group, which contains the Re'i-alpi, Ilia and Atkuppu archives and consists of four chronicles and the Beliya'u group, which consists of eleven chronicles. The reason for the subdivision into two groups is - as Waerzeggers pointed out - that the Re'i-alpi group contains chronicles that

⁷ Waerzeggers 2012: 288, these chronicles are MC 16 and MC 17.

⁸ Grayson 1975: 8-9.

⁹ MC 16 and MC 17 are the ABC 1 chronicles, Grayson treated ABC 1A, B and C as one chronicle, while Glassner considered ABC 1A+C and ABC 1B to be two different chronicles.

¹⁰ Clancier 2009: 447-448. This does not apply to MC 16 and MC 17, whose precise archeological finding place is unknown, though it is certain that it originated in Babylon as can be seen in the colophon.

are more inclined to write from a religious perspective, while the chronicles from the Beliya'u group tend to narrate detailed information about historical and current events¹¹.

In order to be able to give an answer to the research question, a short explanation of the term 'chronicles' is needed. Over the years, Assyriologists have used several definitions to explain 'chronicle'. However, there is not one accepted definition¹². The definition of chronicle that will be applied in this thesis is: a historiographic document, with as main feature chronological order. Other features that can be found in chronicles are: it is written in prose in the third person, the chronicler had to be as precise as possible, and brevity was the norm¹³.

As the definition of 'chronicle' is now established, the corpus can be introduced. As was already mentioned earlier, the corpus consists of 44 chronicles, 29 originate in Babylon, and fifteen come from Borsippa. In the appendix every chronicle that is important for this thesis can be found. The Borsippian chronicles have already been introduced by Waerzeggers in the article 'The Babylonian Chronicles: Classification and Provenance'. The chronicles from Babylon have been published in several books and articles. The most recent publication is by J. Glassner in 2004, 'Mesopotamian Chronicles'¹⁴. In 1975, the first comprehensive book with all the available chronicle literature was published by A.K. Grayson¹⁵. R.J. van der Spek¹⁶ published 20 chronicles in 2004 that were Late Babylonian in nature. Whenever a chronicle is mentioned, the abbreviation of the first publication is used.

In her 2012 article, Waerzeggers mentions that: "A more thorough study of literary patterns, narrative style, and ideology is needed to identify the existence of further differences, if any, between the two sub-groups"¹⁷. This is in part what this thesis will be about. The two groups from Borsippa will be compared with each other, and with the chronicles from Babylon. The discovery that there are two centers of writing provides a way of looking at the two cities

¹¹ Waerzeggers 2012: 293-295

¹² Brinkman 1990: 76 n.18; Waerzeggers 2012: 287. Even though this is a problem in the field of Assyriology, it will not be solved here.

¹³ Glassner 2004: 37-49

¹⁴ Glassner 2004: *Mesopotamian Chronicles*

¹⁵ Grayson 1975: *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*

¹⁶ Van der Spek 2004: <http://www.livius.org/babylonia.html>

¹⁷ Waerzeggers 2012: 295

through a different lens and the fact that the Babylonian Chronicle Series is no longer applicable to these documents supplies a new way to examine them. In the appendix an overview of the chronicles that are used for comparison can be found. There are several themes that are important to answer the research question. Based on these themes, there are several sub-questions that make the research question more comprehensible. Every time a theme is introduced, it has a sub-question that has the same structure, namely: How is the theme - as mentioned in the chronicles from both cities - different or similar to each other?' The first theme is about the period or dynasty in which the chronicle takes place. This theme determines which periods the scholars found more interesting. The second theme is about the subjects the chroniclers wrote about. This theme will give an overview of whether or not there were specific issues that the chroniclers found worthy to record. The third theme is about the places that are mentioned in the chronicles, this theme will provide a way to look at how chroniclers viewed their own cities - Babylon and Borsippa - but also what cities they found more important to discuss. The fourth theme is about kings who are mentioned in the chronicles, this theme will give insight in specific kings whose tales were extraordinary or worth writing down. The fifth theme is the timespan of the chronicle, this theme is added because chroniclers could have been more interested in longer timespans, or shorter timespans. The sixth theme is about re-occurring sentences in the chronicles. As Grayson¹⁸ has made clear in his extensive research on chronicles, there are several sentences that occur more often in different chronicles. This theme will investigate as to why these specific sentences are used more frequently and how that came to be. The seventh theme is about gods and goddesses and whether or not they occur in a chronicle and what role they played overall. This theme will give insight into the role of gods: whether or not it changed over time, if either Borsippans or inhabitants of Babylon were more inclined to write about religion than the other city, and why this preference might have existed. The eighth theme is about the number of lines on a tablet, this could give insight into the amount of information on a chronicle and the brevity of a document. The ninth theme is how many columns there are on one tablet. The final theme is the size of the tablet. The final three themes have one overarching sub-question, namely: 'How does the appearance of the chronicles from both cities differs or is similar to one another?' In the appendix there is a separate box in the tables to describe if the chronicle is broken, and if so, where it is broken and how badly. This is added because it could determine what and how much might be missing.

¹⁸ Grayson 1975

The goal of the thesis is to provide a clear understanding of how the scribal activities concerning chronicles in Babylon and Borsippa were different or similar to each other. The chronicles provide a unique insight in comprehending how chroniclers looked at Babylonian history. The differences and similarities in the scribal traditions of the two cities have never been examined, the goal is to have that examined in depth.

To conclude this chapter: the method that will be used in this thesis is the division of the chronicles in themes that are relevant for the research question and the goal of the thesis. The conclusion will give a comprehensive overview of the discussed themes and the contents of the chronicles. It will give the final results of what the differences and similarities are between the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa.

Introducing the corpus

The following table is an overview of the chronicles that are used for this thesis. The names of the chronicles are the same names as used when they were first published. The publication number, museum number, and acquisition number of the tablets are provided to be as precise as possible. The chronicles are divided up in the groups in the same way as in the database. The division for Borsippa is based on the groups as explained in the introduction. The first chronicle in the group -in both Babylon and Borsippa- is the chronicle that describes the oldest event and the last chronicle describes the latest event. The division for Babylon is based on two groups, the first group consists of MC 16 and MC 17, these chronicles cannot be assigned to the Esagil temple with certainty. The second group in Babylon is composed of the chronicles that are found in the Esagil temple.

Name	Publication number	Museum number	Acquisition number
Borsippa: Beliya'u group			
Short excerpt from a Babylonian chronicle 1	Fs. Grayson 1	BM 22115	96-4-9, 220
The chronicle of early kings B	ABC 20B, MC 40	BM 96152	1902-4-12, 264
Short excerpt from a Babylonian chronicle 2	Fs. Grayson 2	BM 29440	98-11-14, 73
Short excerpt from a Babylonian chronicle 3	Fs. Grayson 3	BM 29297	98-11-12, 473
Esarhaddon chronicle	ABC 14, MC 18	BM 25091	98-2-16, 145
Shamash-shuma-ukin chronicle	ABC 15, MC 19	BM 96273	1902-4-12, 385
Chronicle concerning the early years of Nabopolassar	ABC 2, MC 21	BM 25127	98-2-16, 181
Fall of Nineveh chronicle	ABC 3, MC 22	BM 21901	96-4-9, 6
Chronicle concerning the later years of Nabopolassar	ABC 4, MC 23	BM 22047	96-4-9, 152
Chronicle concerning the early years of Nebuchadnezzar	ABC 5, MC 24	BM 21946	96-4-9, 51
Chronicle of the third year of Neriglissar	ABC 6, MC 25	BM 25124	98-2-16, 178
Borsippa: Re'i-alpi group			
The chronicle of early kings A	ABC 20A, MC 39	BM 26472	98-5-14, 290

Name	Publication number	Museum number	Acquisition number
Chronicle of the Kassite and Isin II dynasties	ABC 25, MC 46	BM 27796	98-7-11, 61
An eclectic chronicle	ABC 24, MC 47	BM 27859	98-7-11, 124
The Akitu chronicle	ABC 16, MC 20	BM 86379	99-6-10, 109
Babylon: Chronicles from Babylon that do not come from the Esagil temple			
Chronicle concerning the period from Nabonassar to Shamash-shuma-ukin	ABC 1A + 1C, MC 16	BM 92502 + BM 75977	84-2-11, 356 + 83-1-18, 1339
Chronicle concerning the period from Nabonassar to Esarhaddon	ABC 1B, MC 17	BM 75976	83-1-18, 1338
Babylon: Chronicles from the Esagil temple			
Chronicle of market prices	ABC 23, MC 50	BM 48498	81-11-3, 1209
Fragment of a chronicle of ancient kings	ABC p.192, MC 42	BM 38284	80-11-12, 166
Chronicle P	ABC 22, MC 45	BM 92701	82-7-4, 38
Religious chronicle	ABC 17, MC 51	BM 35968	Sp. 3, 504
Nabonidus chronicle	ABC 7, MC 26	BM 35382	Sp. 2, 964
Chronographic document concerning Nabonidus	MC 53	BM 34167, BM 34375, BM 34896, BM 34995	Sp. 281, Sp. 492, Sp. 2, 407, Sp. 2, 519
Chronicle of Artaxerxes III	ABC 9, MC 28	BM 31450	76-11-17, 1177
Chronicle fragment of the Achaemenid period	ABC 8, MC 29, BCHP 1	BM 36304	80-6-17, 30
Chronicle concerning Alexander and Arabia	BCHP 2	BM 41080	81-4-28, 627
Alexander and Artaxerxes fragment	MC 31, BCHP 4	BM 36613	80-6-17, 343
King list of the Hellenistic period	Grayson 1980 p.98, MC 4	BM 35603	Sp. 3, 113
Chronicle concerning the Diadochi	ABC 10, MC 30, BCHP 3	BM 34660+	Sp. 3, 143+
Ruin of Esagila chronicle	BCHP 6	BM 32248+	76-11-17, 1975+
Juniper garden chronicle	BCHP 8	BM 32266	76-11-17, 1994
Chronicle fragment of the Seleucid period	ABC 13A, MC 36, BCHP 7	BM 32310+	76-11-17, 2039+

Name	Publication number	Museum number	Acquisition number
Chronicle concerning Antiochus the crown prince	ABC 11, MC 32, BCHP 5	BM 32440+	76-11-17, 2176+
Chronicle concerning the end of the reign of Seleucus I	ABC 12, MC 33, BCHP 9	BM 32235+	76-11-17, 1962+
Judicial chronicle	MC 37, BCHP 17	BM 47737	81-11-3, 442
Chronicle of the Seleucid period	ABC 13, MC 34, BCHP 10	BM 32171	76-11-17, 1898
Ptolemy III chronicle	BCHP 11	BM 34428	Sp. 551
Chronicle concerning Seleucus III	ABC 13B, MC 35, BCHP 12	BM 35421	Sp. 2, 1008
Politai chronicle	BCHP 13	BM 46120	81-7-6, 572
Gold theft chronicle	BCHP 15	BM 32510	76-11-17, 2251
Greek community chronicle	BCHP 14	BM 33870	Rm 4, 432
Arsacid king chronicle	BCHP 19	BM 34124	Sp. 226
Chronographic document concerning Bagayasha	BCHP 18 A/B	BM 35229+	Sp 2, 791+
Euphrates chronicle	BCHP 20	BM 35031	Sp. 2, 559

Periods and dynasties in the chronicles

Most of the chronicles from Babylon are probably written in the Seleucid and Parthian periods. In these periods the library of the Esagil temple flourished. Most of the chronicles from Babylon originate in this temple, therefore it can be assumed that the chronicles were affiliated with the Esagil temple and its archives¹⁹. The Borsippian chronicles, on the other hand, are mostly written in the Neo-Babylonian period. However, the chronicles do not solely discuss these periods. All of the chronicles from Borsippa combined give a selected overview of the history of Babylonia from the Akkad dynasty (2334-2154) onwards²⁰.

Borsippa:

Periods and Chronicles	Beliya'u Group	Re'i-alpi group	Total of the Beliya'u and Re'i-alpi group
Akkad Dynasty	0	1	1
Third Dynasty of Ur	1	1	2
Larsa Dynasty	1	0	1
First Dynasty of Isin	1	1	2
Old Assyrian Period	0	1	1
First Dynasty of Babylon	3	0	3
First Dynasty of the Sealand	1	0	1
Middle Assyrian Period	0	2	2
Kassite Dynasty	1	1	2
Second Dynasty of Isin	0	2	2
Second Sealand Dynasty	0	1	1
Bazi Dynasty	0	1	1
Elamite Dynasty	0	1	1
Uncertain Dynasties	1	1	2
Neo-Assyrian Dynasty	3	2	5
Neo-Babylonian Dynasty	5	1	6

¹⁹ Waerzeggers 2015: 109-110

²⁰ Waerzeggers 2012: 297

As can be seen in the table, the Re'i-alpi group discusses more periods and dynasties than the Beliya'u group, even though the Re'i-alpi group consists of only four chronicles and the Beliya'u group of eleven chronicles. From the figures in the table it can be deduced that the writers of the Re'i-alpi chronicles had more historical interest than the chroniclers who wrote the Beliya'u chronicles. Only one of the chronicles in the Re'i-alpi group mentions the Neo-Babylonian period, while this is probably the period in which the chronicles were written. The Re'i-alpi chronicles instead have an interest in ancient history. The chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group narrate most of the periods only once, they also mostly narrate only one reign from that specific period or dynasty. The chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group thus write about a large amount of periods and dynasties, only they do not write about these periods and dynasties extensively. The chronicles from the Beliya'u group show a different perspective. Almost half of the chronicles from this group are about the period in which the chroniclers lived: the Neo-Babylonian period. In contrast to the Re'i-alpi group the Beliya'u group shows more interest in contemporary events than in historical affairs. The Beliya'u group portrays three dynasties more elaborately than the rest. The First Dynasty of Babylon might have interested chroniclers because of Hammurabi, a king who ruled in this dynasty and whose deeds were considered great. The Neo-Assyrian Dynasty might have been of interest because it preceded the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty. When the Re'i-alpi and Beliya'u groups are combined, they give a thorough overview of Babylonian history, they complement each other. The Re'i-alpi group has a more elaborate overview of Babylonian history, while the Beliya'u group focuses on more specific periods and elaborates on current events.

Babylon:

Periods and Chronicles	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total of chronicles from Babylon
First Dynasty of Babylon	0	1	1
Middle Assyrian Period	0	1	1
Kassite Dynasty	0	2	2
Second Dynasty of Isin	0	2	2
Uncertain Dynasties	2	1	3
Neo-Assyrian Dynasty	2	0	2
Neo-Babylonian Dynasty	0	2	2

Persian Empire	0	4	4
Macedonian Rulers	0	5	5
Seleucid Dynasty	0	14	14
Arsacid Dynasty	0	4	4

The two groups that can be distinguished in Babylon do not give as complete an overview of historical events as the chronicles from Borsippa. The only difference between the two groups from Babylon is that the chronicles from the Esagil temple do not mention the Neo-Assyrian period, instead the chronicles mention the period of Uncertain dynasties -before the Neo-Assyrian period- and continue to write about the Neo-Babylonian period. This is while MC 16 and MC 17 mention the Neo-Assyrian period elaborately. The chronicles from Babylon do not discuss as many periods and dynasties as the chronicles from Borsippa. The periods that are discussed are mostly the periods in which the Esagil temple flourished, or periods directly before that. The library of the Esagil temple started to flourish around 383 BCE, which can be deduced from the fact that the astronomical diaries can be dated from this year onwards to 99 BCE²¹. The year 383 BCE is at the end of the Persian empire, and the year 99 BCE is the end of the Seleucid Dynasty and the middle of the Arsacid Dynasty. Because most of the periods that are discussed in the chronicles are about contemporary events, it indicates that even though Babylon is the capital of Babylonia - and it could have been expected that the chroniclers were interested in the ancient history of their land - they were not as interested in Babylonian history as chroniclers from Borsippa²². They mostly wrote about contemporary events, and only some chronicles are about older periods and dynasties. The Arsacid Dynasty is an important period for the library of the Esagil temple, nevertheless, this period is only discussed in four chronicles. However, this can be attributed to the fact that the corpus of astronomical diaries gradually evolves over time. In the late Persian empire and Seleucid dynasty, not even half of the astronomical diaries had a historical section, in the Arsacid Dynasty, this evolved to almost three quarters of the astronomical diaries. The historical sections in the diaries also became longer. This is a notable observation as the chronicle genre is slowly disappearing in the Arsacid dynasty. Only three chronicles -BCHP 18-20- are from the period after 160 BCE. Historical sections in older astronomical diaries were inserted in the

²¹ Clancier 2009: 410-447

²² Waerzeggers 2012: 297

astronomical and meteorological sections, while in the fourth century BCE, the historical events became more important and gained a section of their own²³.

To conclude; there are inherent differences in the chronicles from both cities. The periods and dynasties that occur in both cities are: First Dynasty of Babylon, Middle Assyrian Period, Kassite Dynasty, Second Dynasty of Isin, Uncertain Dynasties, Neo-Assyrian Dynasty, and the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty. The reason that these periods and dynasties are mentioned in chronicles from both cities, is that these periods brought about great leaders, great unrest, or changes, all these events were remembered and passed down through the generations. The chronicles from Borsippa provide an overview of important historical events, while the chronicles from Babylon mainly focus on current affairs and mention only some events of the early history of Babylonia. Another quite large difference is that more than half of the chronicles from Babylon focus on their own dynasty, which is in stark contrast to the chronicles from Borsippa that do not extensively narrate the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, while the chroniclers lived during this period.

²³ Pirngruber 2013: 200-205

Subjects in the chronicles

The subjects that are discussed in the chronicles are of a diverse nature. This chapter will research whether the chroniclers showed interest in specific subjects. The subjects in the chronicles could have to do with contemporary affairs, or the writers might have been interested in historical affairs, questions that arise are: why were the chroniclers interested in these affairs, and: why did they choose to write down these specific events? This chapter will hope to find out if there is one overarching topic under which the various subjects of the chronicles can be categorized.

Borsippa:

Subjects	Beliya'u group	Re'i-alpi group	Total of Borsippa chronicles
Wars and campaigns	10	4	14
Akitu festival	1	1	2
Wall of Babylon	1	2	3

As can be seen in the table, the topics that are mentioned in the chronicles do not show much variation. The chroniclers from Borsippa wrote down specific events concerning wars and campaigns. Fs. Grayson 3 is the only chronicle that does not mention either a war or a campaign. The fact that wars and campaigns apparently were important to the chroniclers raises several questions: why did they chose these specific wars? Why did they not write about other events? In the periods they chose to write about, was this the only story to tell? The first answer might have to do with a word that appears on two chronicles from Borsippa. The word is 'GIGAM.GIGAM' or 'GIGAM.DIDLI' and it occurs on ABC 14 and on ABC 20A, it may be translated as 'battles', 'conflicts', or 'struggles'. It is either written down at the end of the text, or in the margin. All the chronicles from Borsippa have to do with either battles, conflicts, or struggles, therefore it could be possible that 'GIGAM.GIGAM' or 'GIGAM.DIDLI' might have been the word that the chroniclers from Borsippa used to describe the chronicles²⁴. It might therefore also affect the contents of the chronicles and cover the tradition in which the chronicles were written.

A second answer to the questions might be about a pattern that can be detected when the chronicles are closely examined. In the chronicles that are not about the Neo-Babylonian

²⁴ Glassner 2004: 38

dynasty chaos is abundantly present: gods are taken from the Esagil temple, there are foreign powers working against Babylonia, the Akitu festival did not take place, and rebellions happen. When the Neo-Babylonian dynasty arrives, there is still war, but it is oriented from a Babylonian point of view, which means that it is against the periphery and subject population. The only chronicle which is critical of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty is ABC 16: in this chronicle the Akitu festival still does not take place²⁵, even though the Neo-Babylonian dynasty has started. In the other chronicles that mention the Neo-Babylonian period, the king mostly executes campaigns and destroys cities²⁶, which is seen as a positive deed. The chroniclers could have been biased by their own era, as the Neo-Babylonian kings barely do anything wrong in the written events.

The Akitu festival is an important festival for the Babylonians. The origins of the festival can perhaps be found in early Sumerian times. In the beginning it was celebrated as an agricultural harvest feast, performed twice a year: in the months Nisan and Tashrit. As the festival evolved, it became a celebration of the new year, and it was only performed in Nisan. In the first millennium BCE, it was not only a festival of the new year, but it also acquired political prominence. It might even have become a propagandistic tool: to promote state ideology²⁷. During the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty the festival achieved its final form, it might have lasted up to twelve days in this dynasty. If either Marduk or the king could not be present during the festivities, the celebration did not take place. When this was the case, the chronicles often make mention of it; for example in ABC 14, ABC 7, ABC 15, and ABC 17²⁸. An important aspect of the Akitu festival was that Nabû had to be present in order to let it be commemorated in a orderly fashion. This could have appealed to Borsippians, as Nabû was the patron deity of Borsippa.

A striking aspect of the chronicles from Borsippa is that the wall of Babylon is mentioned in three chronicles: ABC 25, ABC 24, and Fs. Grayson 3. The wall of Babylon is well known, as can be seen from the fact that it is described by Greek authors as Herodotus, Ctesias, and Cleitarchus. The circuit of the walls of Babylon is probably around 18 kilometers²⁹. The king

²⁵ See lines 1-4, 17-23 and 27

²⁶ This concerns the following chronicles: ABC 2, ABC 3, ABC 4, ABC 5, and ABC 6.

²⁷ Bidmead 2002: 1-3

²⁸ Bidmead 2002: 1-3

²⁹ Reade 2008: 115

was responsible for the maintenance of the city walls. They were the first line of defense when a city was under attack³⁰. The walls of Babylon were thus very important for the city, and when a king made repairs to the walls, it was meaningful enough to write down.

In the chronicles from Borsippa there are several events that could have been interesting to inhabitants of Borsippa. First of all, the rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562) as described in ABC 5. The rebellion was led by Borsippians³¹. Another event that could have appealed to inhabitants of Borsippa specifically is the reign of Nabû-shuma-ishkun as described in ABC 15. His reign was perceived as bad, and therefore the Borsippians might have felt the need to write it down³². In ABC 24 a clash between Babylon and Borsippa might have been narrated, however, the passage where it would be mentioned is extremely fragmentary, ABC 24, reverse 17 mentions the name of Nabonassar, but it cannot be said with certainty if this is what is described³³. In ABC 24 two kings, namely: Eriba-Marduk and Marduk-zakir-shumi, are mentioned. They acted sympathetic toward Borsippa by granting tax exemptions and restoring their property³⁴. Furthermore, ABC 24 takes place in the eleventh century, this was an important century for Borsippa because in this period it became the host of the Nabû cult, when this was established the city gained more political significance³⁵. A final clue as to how the chronicles from Borsippa are appealing to Borsippians is the Akitu festival and the role the inhabitants of Borsippa ascribed to Nabû. The scribal god Nabû was an important participant in the Akitu festival, however, the scribes from Borsippa attributed a more active role to him than the Babylonian scribes did: the chronicles from Babylon accredit the king a big role during the festival³⁶. This could explain the interest of the scribes from Borsippa in the Akitu festival³⁷. Overall, the conclusion can be drawn that the chroniclers from Borsippa were not particularly interested in local themes, although they did write about

³⁰ Openheim 1964: 127-128

³¹ Waerzeggers 2012: 296-297 and footnote 73.

³² The reason his reign was perceived as bad was because he did not celebrate the Akitu festival, see Waerzeggers 2012: 294.

³³ Waerzeggers 2012: 296-297

³⁴ Waerzeggers 2012: 296. See ABC 24 line 2-5: "[during his (Marduk-shapik-zeri) reign, the people of the country] enjoyed [abundance] and prosperity

³⁵ Waerzeggers 2012: 296

³⁶ See for example ABC 7, where the blame for not letting the Akitu festival continue is placed on king Nabonidus. See lines 5-8, 10-12, 19-21 and 23-25.

³⁷ Waerzeggers 2012: 296

subjects that could have been particularly interesting for inhabitants of Borsippa. The chronicles from Borsippa show a specific interest in wars and campaigns of kings. This might have to do with the word GIGAM.GIGAM or GIGAM.DIDLI. If the chroniclers used this word to describe the chronicles, it might have affected the contents of the chronicles. The chronicles from Borsippa highlight important historical events, some with specific links to the past of Borsippa.

Babylon:

The chronicles from Babylon often write about more than one topic, which is also what is incorporated in the table.

Subjects	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple
Wars and unstable conditions	2	12
Market prices	0	1
Akitu festival	0	2
Other festivals	0	3
King list/accessions	0	2
Restoration of a temple/ rubble is cleared away	0	4
Offerings	0	6
Judicial proceedings	0	3
Unclear	0	5

In comparison to the chronicles from Borsippa, the chronicles from Babylon show more variation. However, the most common subjects are war and unstable conditions. These chronicles show a very clear break with what the chronicles from Borsippa have to offer. The chronicles write about more localized events. Often these chronicles show a Babylon centered worldview, whereas the expectation could have arisen that the Babylon chronicles show a wider worldview than the Borsippa chronicles because Babylon was the capital of Babylonia and they might have more sources or events from outside of Babylonia to write about. Some of the events that are written down, such as the judicial proceedings, or the offerings, take place in Babylon and are about specific people that committed the crimes, or performed the offerings. The two chronicles from Babylon that have no clear provenance -MC 16 and MC 17- write about the unstable period that precedes the Neo-Assyrian Period. Both of these

chronicles cover the wars of Babylonia and Elam against Assyria, the death of kings, and uprisings that took place in the countries.

Whereas the chronicles from Borsippa only mention the Akitu festival whenever they mention a festival, the chronicles from Babylon also solely write down the word 'festival', without an explanation of which festival they implied. This could be an indication that a Seleucid festival was celebrated. If a Seleucid festival was celebrated and the chroniclers found it worthy to write about, this might raise several questions, such as: 'were the chroniclers Babylonian, or Seleucid?' and 'What kind of festival is celebrated here?' The chronicles that mention the Akitu festival are: ABC 7, ABC 17, and ABC 8, the chronicles where another festival is probably celebrated are: ABC 13B³⁸, and BHP 15³⁹. The chronicles where the Akitu festival is mentioned are chronicles that write about relatively early periods; whereas the chronicles where probably a different festival is celebrated all take place in the Seleucid dynasty. As all the chronicles from the Esagil temple can be linked to the temple and thus to the scholars who worked in the temple, it can be said almost certainly that most of the chroniclers had to be Babylonians. Cuneiform had to be taught from a young age onwards otherwise it would have been nearly impossible to learn. The festivals were celebrated under Seleucus III and Antiochus V, by this time the Seleucid dynasty was well established. The beginning of ABC 13B is about the Akitu festival and silver from the royal treasury was used to buy offerings for the festival⁴⁰. However, at the end of the chronicle another festival is mentioned. There is only one Greek festival known in Babylonian sources - the *puppē* festival - this festival was probably celebrated after the victory of Antiochus IV over the Egyptian campaign of 169 BCE⁴¹. However, this festival is probably not the festival the chronicles ABC 13B and BHP 15 write about. The festival as mentioned in BHP 15 could be the Akitu festival, however, this cannot be said with certainty. The fact that the Day-One-Temple is mentioned could also indicate a festival for the beginning of the new month⁴². This leads to a striking aspect, namely that the Seleucid rulers might have continued celebrating the Akitu festival. Whereas in the chronicles that describe earlier times the Akitu festival is mentioned often when it is not celebrated, the

³⁸ This festival is simply described as: "A festival [was held in the land]". Reverse, line 15.

³⁹ This festival is described as: "That day into the Day-One-Temple they made it enter (and) they put it there. A festival they held". Obverse, line 4-5.

⁴⁰ Van der Spek 2004L

⁴¹ Linssen 2004: 119-120

⁴² Van der Spek 2004O

chronicles from the Seleucid era do not mention this festival specifically, instead it might be assumed that the Akitu festival was celebrated, but not on a regular basis, and thus the scholars did not write down when it did, or did not, take place.

Another important note about the subjects that the chroniclers wrote down is that the chronicles that write about the older periods⁴³ tend to write more about wars and campaigns, whereas chronicles from the Achaemenid period onwards, are more concentrated on Babylon as city. The climate in Babylon might have become less hostile, even though there are still uprisings, as can be seen in BCHP 14, where a battle took place between the governor and the people of the land. The people of the land is a specific distinction in citizen groups, they probably are part of the indigenous - Babylonian - population, and they lived in the countryside⁴⁴. They had a lower status than the Greek community, even though the Greek community had come to Babylon in the reign of Antiochus IV, and this chronicle is from one reign later. The reason that the indigenous population revolted against these people was that they were not indigenous Babylonian and got more rights than they had, an uprising is thus not difficult to comprehend. The reason as to why chroniclers tended to write less about wars and campaigns might have to do with the fact that when Seleucus I ascended the throne in Babylonia, he made a new capital city: Seleucia-on-the-Tigris⁴⁵. This city was mainly inhabited by Greeks, the Babylonians stayed in Babylon, as did the scholars. The Esagil temple thus was no longer the most important place where new information was written and stored. This could be an explanation as to why the chronicles began to write mostly about localized events, because that was the information they had at their disposal⁴⁶. Whereas the scholars in the Esagil temple first had all the information about the Babylonian empire within reach, they were now limited to the information that was either already stored in the Esagil temple, or new information that took place in their direct surroundings. The wars and campaigns that are present in the chronicles that write about earlier periods could be explained by this reasoning, as Babylon was no longer the capital of the country, the hostilities of foreign countries was no longer directed towards them.

⁴³ These chronicles are: ABC p.192, ABC 22, ABC 17, ABC 7, MC 53 and ABC 9.

⁴⁴ Van der Spek 2004N

⁴⁵ Oppenheim 1964: 404

⁴⁶ Even though there is evidence of communication between the Seleucid and Babylonian community, the chroniclers might have chosen to write about localized events because that information was useful or because the astronomical diaries had increasingly larger historical sections by this time.

Offerings are mentioned five times in these chronicles. The chronicles in which offerings are given to gods all take place in the Seleucid era. In ABC 11 Antiochus I is still crown prince and he offers a sheep. Even though the Babylonian scribe used the word ‘crown prince’ to describe the title of Antiochus I, the translation of co-ruler might have been more appropriate. In the chronicle Antiochus I paid special attention to Sîn, the moon god. A reason as to why he pays special attention to Sîn is unknown⁴⁷. In BCHP 6 and ABC 12, a Greek offering is presented, this could have to do with food that was eaten after the offering ceremony, the food might have belonged to the actual offering ceremony. In the eyes of the scribe who recorded the events, this might have been an ‘offering in the Greek fashion’⁴⁸. The offerings as described in ABC 13B are mainly for a festival that was celebrated under Seleucus III. This festival might also have to do with juridical proceedings, as the priest who was responsible for the leftovers distributed the food among other lamentation priests, and himself. This should not happen, as the leftovers of the food offering should be distributed among prebend holders. The king might have gotten angry at the priest, because he now made double profit as the priest received money from the king to buy offerings, and the meat offerings flowed back to the temple⁴⁹. In BCHP 19 a food offer to Bel and Beltiya was made, but also to the life of the king. This is a normal Babylonian practice⁵⁰. The final chronicle where an offering is mentioned is BCHP 18 A/B, in this text, the context of the offer is rather unclear. There was a food offering for Bel, provided at the Sikilla gate. Later on, there is another food offering for Bel and Beltiya at the Sikilla gate.

There are two chronicles that could have been influenced by astronomical diaries. These are ABC 23 and ABC 17, the first chronicle covers markets prices over a long time, while the latter chronicle describes ominous occurrences and festivals in Babylon. The topics that are mentioned in these chronicles often occur in astronomical diaries. Even though there might be a possibility that these chronicles were influenced by astronomical diaries, it would be impossible to say that all chronicles have a dependency on astronomical diaries. The ‘Babylonian Chronicle Series’ is definitely not influenced by astronomical diaries. While MC 16, MC 17 and ABC 7 originate in Babylon, ABC 2 until ABC 6 come from Borsippa. Since no

⁴⁷ Van der Spek 2004E

⁴⁸ Van der Spek 2004F

⁴⁹ Van der Spek 2004L

⁵⁰ Van der Spek 2004S

astronomical diaries have been found in Borsippa, it would be impossible for these chronicles to have any dependency on astronomical diaries⁵¹.

A subject that occurs twice in the chronicles from Babylon are accessions. An entire Seleucid king list, MC 4, can be found among the Babylonian chronicles. This king list starts with Alexander the Great and ends in the Parthian era with Demetrius II. A chronicle that mentions Seleucid accessions is ABC 13. In contrast to MC 4, ABC 13 does not only mention accessions of kings, but also tells part of the stories of the kings.

The final topic about which the chronicles of Babylon write more than once are judicial proceedings. The chronicles that write about these topics again come from the Seleucid period. The events as described in ABC 13B were already discussed above. In MC 37 several people were accused of committing a crime, and they received the punishment of being burnt with fire. BHP 15 is on the theft of gold. First a festival was celebrated, but thieves stole money and afterwards were burnt with fire. The punishment the thieves received seems quite harsh: however, they stole temple property. As in modern law, the punishment for an offense could vary from a simple fine, to the death penalty, depending on the gravity of the crime⁵². However, the normal penalty for the theft of temple property in the Neo-Babylonian period was a fine that was equal to thirty times the amount that the thief had stolen. In the Seleucid era, the only sources that deal with theft of temple property are the chronicles that are discussed here⁵³.

To conclude, the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa show some similarities when it comes to the subjects that are mentioned on the tablets. The wars, campaigns, and overall unstable conditions is something the chronicles from both cities have in common. However, whereas the chronicles from Borsippa mostly narrate stories about wars and campaigns, the chronicles from Babylon often narrate what happens in their home town, especially from the Seleucid era onwards. This would indicate that the chronicles from Babylon have a more Babylon centered worldview, in contrast to the chronicles from Borsippa, which demonstrate knowledge of what is going on in the realm. Even though the chronicles show some similarities, the differences are big. The chronicles from Borsippa could be indicated with the

⁵¹ Waerzeggers 2012: 297-298

⁵² Westbrook 2003: 81-82

⁵³ Oelsner, Wells, and Wunsch 2003: 962-963

word 'struggles' or GIGAM.GIGAM, while this term would only be applicable to half the chronicles from Babylon.

Places in the chronicles

This chapter will try to find out if the chronicles from Borsippa and Babylon have a special interest in specific locations. Moreover, it will seek to find out if the chroniclers might have been biased by their own city. The questions that arise when looking at place names that occur in chronicles are: 'why are so many place names mentioned in Borsippa?', 'why do kings of Babylonia are being referred to as 'kings of Akkad?' and 'are there place names mentioned more often that have no special status, and if so, why are these place names mentioned?'

Borsippa:

The table below shows the most important and most mentioned place names in chronicles from Borsippa, in which group they are used, how often they are mentioned, and between brackets in how many chronicles they are mentioned.

Place name	Beliya'u group	Re'i-alpi group	Total of Borsippa chronicles
Akkad	77 (7)	15 (4)	92 (11)
Assyria	40 (4)	19 (4)	59 (8)
Babylon	33 (9)	14 (4)	47 (13)
Euphrates	14 (5)	1 (1)	15 (6)
Egypt	13 (4)	0 (0)	13 (4)
Elam	9 (4)	1 (1)	10 (5)
Nippur	7 (2)	3 (2)	10 (4)
Baltil	6 (3)	3 (2)	9 (5)
Tigris	8 (3)	0 (0)	8 (3)
Der	5 (3)	2 (2)	7 (5)
Sealand	6 (3)	1 (1)	7 (4)
Borsippa	2 (1)	5 (2)	7 (3)
Sippar	2 (2)	4 (2)	6 (4)
Esagil	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)
Ezida	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)

As can be seen in the table, Akkad, Assyria, and Babylon are the most used place names. The chronicles from Borsippa mention in total 83 different place names. The reason many different place names are mentioned has to do with the numerous campaigns and wars that these chronicles describe. Whenever a king underwent a campaign, the chroniclers were so

precise as to write down what the destination of the campaign or war was and the cities that they encountered on the way. The reason Akkad is mentioned 92 times is because the king was referred to as 'King of Akkad'. The title that is used is LUGAL URI^{ki}, this title has been used throughout Mesopotamian history⁵⁴. Akkad is not only mentioned as title for the kings of Akkad. It is also mentioned as designation for the place name Akkad. Assyria is mentioned as geographical designation in eight chronicles, the reason it is mentioned often is because of the hostile environment the chronicles write about, which is also the reason that Baltil is mentioned in five chronicles⁵⁵. Another hostile force in the chronicles from Borsippa is Elam, the Elamites were responsible for uprisings in the Babylonian empire. The final hostile force in the chronicles from Borsippa is the Sealand. There are thus four unfriendly forces mentioned in the chronicles from Borsippa, while there are a lot more place names mentioned. This is an interesting observation, since in the previous chapter it can be seen that most of the chronicles from Borsippa mention hostile events, however these events were not solely brought about by opponents of the Babylonian empire, but also events initiated by the Babylonian kings, such as campaigns.

In thirteen chronicles there is a reference to Babylon, Babylon thus occurs in most of the chronicles from Borsippa. It is not referenced as much as Assyria or Akkad. That it occurs in most chronicles shows once again that the chroniclers from Borsippa were not interested in writing history for their city, but for Babylonia as country. Borsippa is only mentioned in three chronicles, and only seven times in total, which is very little when considered that the writers were probably Borsippean and the chronicles originated in Borsippa. Even if the chroniclers wanted to write about Babylonian history and not about Borsippa history, the archives that the chroniclers had to their disposal must have contained an astonishing amount of documents referring to the history of Babylonia.

The two most important temples in Babylon and Borsippa are the Esagil and Ezida. The Esagil is the temple of Marduk in Babylon⁵⁶, while the Ezida is the temple of Nabû at Borsippa⁵⁷. Surprisingly enough the Ezida is only mentioned once in all the chronicles from Borsippa, while the Esagil is mentioned three times in three chronicles. This again shows a worldview

⁵⁴ For more information see: Zadok 1985: 223-226; Seux 1967: 302.

⁵⁵ Baltil is a designation for the Assyrian capital Assur, see: Zadok 1985: 33-35 and 64.

⁵⁶ George 1993: 139-140

⁵⁷ George 1993: 159-160

from the Borsippean chroniclers that does not revolve around Borsippa. The Euphrates and the Tigris are mentioned quite often, kings had to cross these rivers -especially the Euphrates- whenever they went on campaign.

There are several place names that occur more often in the chronicles, but are not as well known as the other place names. The first place name is Der, this is the border town between Babylonia and Elam⁵⁸. Whenever Der is mentioned in the chronicles it is about rebellion or unrest, as gods were transported. The second location is Egypt. In the chronicles it is mentioned a lot in connection with their army, but also when the kings marched on Egypt, the pharaoh and a massacre are mentioned once. The third location is Nippur, which is mentioned in a variety of contexts. Nippur is the provincial capital in the heart of Babylonia⁵⁹. The final place name is Sippar, this town is a provincial capital in the North of Babylonia⁶⁰. It is mentioned twice when gods are involved, it is also destroyed twice, and the king went from Assyria to Sippar twice, and the king of Assyria, Tukulti-Ninurta I, conquered Sippar. As far as can be researched, there is no specific reason as to why these geographical locations are mentioned more often than different places, other than that they simply played a larger role in the political geography of Babylonia. To conclude, the chroniclers from Borsippa are not biased by their own city. All the places that are discussed in the Borsippa chronicles are mentioned because the chroniclers wanted to be as precise as possible.

Babylon:

The table below shows the most important and most mentioned place names in chronicles from Babylon, in which group they are discussed, how often they are mentioned, and between brackets in how many chronicles they are mentioned.

Place name	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total of Babylon chronicles
Babylon	32 (2)	108 (24)	140 (26)
Elam	49 (2)	9 (2)	58 (4)
Esagil	0 (0)	54 (16)	54 (16)
Assyria	45 (2)	7 (1)	52 (3)

⁵⁸ Zadok 1985: 117-118

⁵⁹ Parpola and Porter 2001: 10

⁶⁰ Parpola and Porter 2001: 10

Akkad	21 (2)	27 (6)	48 (8)
Borsippa	2 (1)	14 (6)	16 (7)
Tigris	0 (0)	11 (7)	11 (7)
Euphrates	0 (0)	8 (7)	8 (7)
Sealand	2 (2)	6 (3)	8 (5)
Nippur	7 (2)	2 (2)	8 (4)
Uruk	6 (1)	2 (1)	8 (2)
Ezida	0 (0)	7 (4)	7 (4)
Sippar	2 (1)	5 (3)	7 (3)
Seleucia on the Euphrates	0 (0)	6 (2)	7 (2)
Egypt	4 (1)	1 (1)	5 (2)
Guti	0 (0)	4 (3)	4 (3)
Juniper garden	0 (0)	4 (3)	4 (3)
Seleucia on the Tigris	0 (0)	4 (3)	4 (3)
Sidon	2 (2)	2 (1)	4 (3)
Der	3 (1)	1 (1)	4 (2)

The chronicles from Babylon mention 113 different place names, this is more than the chronicles from Borsippa mention, however, the Babylon group consists of more chronicles. Moreover, most of the place names are mentioned in chronicles that write about earlier periods. The large amount of place names thus can be ascribed to the same reason as the large amount of place names mentioned in chronicles from Borsippa: the campaigns and wars that are described.

Babylon is mentioned the most in these groups, which is not surprising as these chronicles originate in Babylon. However, that Elam is mentioned most after Babylon is remarkable, nevertheless this can be explained by the fact that it is mentioned often in the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles. In these chronicles Elam plays a very large role as hostile force. The Esagil temple is the most important temple in Babylonia, the place where Marduk resides. As most of the chronicles were written in the Esagil temple, it is thus - again - not surprising that this location is also mentioned quite often. Assyria is one of the hostile forces in the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles, in the Esagil temple chronicles it is only seen as a hostile force in one chronicle, namely: ABC 22. Akkad is -not surprisingly- again used throughout the chronicles, however, none of the chronicles from Babylon refer to the kings as 'king of Akkad', which is a big

difference with the chronicles from Borsippa. In Babylon, the place name Akkad is mentioned so much simply because it is discussed quite often. Borsippa is a place name which is discussed more in the chronicles from Babylon than in the chronicles from Borsippa. There is not one overarching theme that can be found when Borsippa is discussed, moreover it is not discussed as a sister city, but most of the time mentioned as a regular city where kings went. In only two chronicles it is mentioned together with the Akitu festival, which is striking as the Akitu festival is important to Babylonians, and it could not take place without Nabû, who had to come from Borsippa.

The Tigris and the Euphrates both occur in seven chronicles. The rivers are mentioned when they are crossed, either by hostile forces or by the Babylonians. The Tigris is mentioned more often than the Euphrates, which is striking as the Euphrates is referred to more often in the chronicles from Borsippa. However, in the chronicles from Borsippa the kings frequently went on campaigns to the West, they thus had to cross the Euphrates on a regular basis. A reason as to why the Tigris is discussed more often than the Euphrates in the chronicles from Babylon is that, when the Tigris is mentioned it is mostly to indicate cities that are on the banks of the rivers. In the chronicles that narrate later periods the Euphrates is used to state that a city is far away because it is beyond the Euphrates⁶¹.

The Sealand borders the Arabian Persian Gulf⁶². In the chronicles from Borsippa, the Sealand is seen as a hostile force⁶³. However, in the chronicles from Babylon there is only one instance in which the Sealand could be seen as a threat. In MC 42 the god Marduk cursed the Sealand, however, this chronicle is very broken and it is thus almost impossible to comprehend what is happening, and how the Sealand is seen from the perspective of the chronicler. In two instances, MC 16 and ABC 7, the governor of the Sealand is mentioned. In MC 16 the governor first sets up camp before Ur, but later flees from the Assyrians. In ABC 7, the Sealand is mentioned in a broken context. In MC 17 it is mentioned that the gods of the Sealand had returned to their sanctuaries, in the same year as epidemics raged in Assyria. The gods might have been returned because of the epidemics, in the hope that they will pass. The final chronicle in which the Sealand occurs is in BHP 19, unfortunately the context is very difficult

⁶¹ In ABC 13B and ABC 13A.

⁶² Zadok 1985: 226-227

⁶³ See ABC 20B, Fs. Grayson 3, ABC 14, ABC 15 and ABC 24.

to understand due to the poor condition of the tablet. However, the sentence could indicate that the Sealand was conquered by the Arsacid king.

Nippur is the second city that is mentioned more often in the chronicles. On three occasions Nergal-ushezib is mentioned together with Nippur. He was a Babylonian king around 693 BCE. In all but one instance when Nippur is mentioned it is about battle in or near Nippur, or deportation of specific people or the inhabitants of the city. In the last instance -in ABC 17- a temple in the district of Nippur is mentioned. The Ezida temple is mentioned in four different chronicles, mostly together with offerings, and with other temples that are of importance. Sippar is also mentioned in four chronicles, there is not one overarching reason as to why this city is mentioned. A Greek city, Seleucia-on-the-Euphrates, is mentioned in two different chronicles, it is referred to as 'the royal city'. Another Greek city, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, the capital of the Seleucid empire from Seleucus I onwards, is mentioned in three different chronicles. Even though when these chronicles were written, Babylon was no longer the capital of Babylonia, it is still striking that these places are not mentioned more often. There was probably a lot happening in the Greek cities, founded by the Hellenistic inhabitants of Babylonia, however, the scribes stayed in Babylon and did not write anything unusual about the Greek cities. Egypt is mentioned four times in the MC 16 chronicle, in all the instances when it is mentioned the circumstances are hostile. Gutu is designated with the determinative 'KUR', for country in three chronicles: ABC 7, ABC 8 and ABC 10. Gutu might not be seen as a place name in ABC 7, it might be seen as a point on a compass, in this case, it refers to everything that is east⁶⁴. Even though it might be a place on a compass, the chronicles mention an army of Gutu, and a town of Gutu. The Juniper Garden is an important location in Babylon, which is mentioned quite often in Late Babylonian texts. In the garden there were several buildings of importance, such as the council house of the *shatammu*, and the *kinishtu*⁶⁵. The Juniper Garden is not mentioned with one overarching reason, however, it is mentioned once when people had stolen property from Bel in the garden. Sidon is mentioned in three different chronicles, all the instances in which it is mentioned have to do with plundering and chaos in the city. The final town that will be discussed is Der, it is mentioned in two different chronicles, however, the reason as to why it occurs more often is simply because it was destroyed once, and the gods were carried away.

⁶⁴ Hallo 1957: 718

⁶⁵ Van der Spek 2004H

To conclude this part of the chapter; the chronicles from Babylon show a clear Babylonian worldview, the chroniclers continue to write about Babylonia as the only civilization in the empire. The Babylonian writers clearly wrote more about affairs that took place closer to home, an explanation for this might be that they simply did not know enough about what was going on in the rest of the empire, due to the fact that they were no longer living in the capital, and that they might not be first-class citizens anymore, as they were during the time of Babylonian rule.

To conclude, if the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa are compared, there is a great difference in both cities. Whereas the chroniclers from Borsippa are generally not biased by Borsippa and only write their place name down when it is relevant for the writing of history, the chroniclers from Babylon write most of the chronicles from a Babylon perspective. This might be due to the fact that there is a great difference in time and place, when the chronicles from Borsippa were written, the Babylonian empire still was in place, which gave the chroniclers from Borsippa plenty of information about the specific details of the campaigns of kings. The chroniclers from Babylon wrote about events that took place in their neighborhood. The biggest difference between the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa and the places they mention is thus that the chronicles from Babylon write from the perspective of an inhabitant of Babylon during the Seleucid era, while the chroniclers from Borsippa write about a lot of places that are relevant for the writing of history.

Kings in the chronicles

This chapter will try to find out if the chronicles from Borsippa and Babylon have a special interest in specific kings. Questions that arise when thinking about the kings mentioned in the chronicles are: in which Borsippa group are more kings mentioned, and why? To which kings is paid more attention, and why? This chapter will give an answer to these questions.

Borsippa

The table below shows the most important and most mentioned kings in the chronicles from Borsippa, in which group they are mentioned, and in how many chronicles they appear. The chronicles from Borsippa mention 75 different people. In the Beliya'u group 43 persons can be distinguished, while in the Re'i-alpi group 40 different persons can be found.

Person	Beliya'u group	Re'i-alpi group	Total of Borsippa chronicles
Adad-apla-iddina (1067-1046)	0	2	2
Apil-Sîn (1830-1813)	2	0	2
Enlil-bani (1860-1837)	1	1	2
Erra-imitti (1868-1861)	1	1	2
Esarhaddon (680-669)	1	1	2
Marduk-shapik-zeri (1080-1068)	0	2	2
Nabopolassar (626-605)	4	1	5
Nebuchadnezzar (604-562)	2	0	2
Sennacherib (704-681)	1	1	2
Shamash-shuma-ukin (668-648)	2	1	3
Shulgi (2094-2047)	1	1	2
Sîn-shar-ishkun (622-612)	2	0	2

The kings who are mentioned more often are mostly well-known kings. They will be discussed in alphabetical order⁶⁶. The first king who will be discussed is Adad-apla-iddina (1067-1046), he is mentioned in ABC 24 and 25. He was a particularly important king for Borsippa. When he reigned the Nabû cult and the Ezida temple, and thus Borsippa as a city, gained more political importance. There are two inscriptions that state the commemoration of the dedication of a gold belt to Nabû, which was given by Adad-apla-iddina. These inscriptions are exceptional because they were copied, and copied again, even when the first millennium had begun⁶⁷. The second king of the list is Apil-Sîn (1830-1813), he is mentioned in Fs. Grayson 2 and 3. The majority of his reign was dedicated to strengthening the defense system⁶⁸. The third king is Enlil-bani (1860-1837), he is mentioned in chronicles ABC 20A and 20B. His story is extraordinary as he became substitute king but managed to survive, this story is what is written down in both the chronicles in which he is mentioned⁶⁹. The fourth king is Erra-imitti (1868-1861), he is also mentioned in ABC 20A and 20B. He was replaced by Enlil-bani, however, he died while Enlil-bani was substitute king and thus never got his throne back⁷⁰. Esarhaddon (680-669) is mentioned in ABC 14 and ABC 16. The most important event that took place during his reign was the invasion of Egypt. Even though Esarhaddon was a good king for the Babylonians -as he began reconstructing, redeveloping, and resettling exiled Babylonians in the country after the devastating war- in the chronicles his image is not a positive one. His mistake -according to the Babylonian chronicles- was that he did not celebrate the Akitu festival⁷¹. Marduk-shapik-zeri (1080-1068) is mentioned in ABC 24 and 25, in both these chronicles it is specified that he rebuilt the wall of Babylon and that the people of the country prospered. In ABC 24, one of the most important events from his reign was discussed, namely that he concluded a peace treaty with the king of Assyria⁷². Marduk-shapik-zeri was also an important king for the population of Borsippa, because in a building inscription it is stated that he restored the Ezida temple⁷³. Nabopolassar (626-605) is

⁶⁶ Even though Neriglissar (559-556) has an entire chronicle (ABC 6) devoted to him, he only occurs in one chronicle and therefore he will not be discussed.

⁶⁷ Waerzeggers 2012: 296

⁶⁸ Leick 1999: 18

⁶⁹ Leick 1999: 53

⁷⁰ ABC 20A: line 31-36, ABC 20B line 1-6.

⁷¹ Leick 1999: 57-58

⁷² ABC 25 line 27-28, ABC 24 line 2-5.

⁷³ Waerzeggers 2012: 296

mentioned in five chronicles: ABC 2, ABC 3, ABC 4, ABC 5, and ABC 16. ABC 2-5 are about his consolidation of power, his campaigns when he is in power, and at the end the change of power from him to his son. In ABC 16 he does not play a considerable role, it is only mentioned that in the year of his accession troubles took place in Assyria and Akkad. Nabopolassar is an important Babylonian king, he began restoration works throughout Babylonia, he established well-guarded frontiers, and defeated opponents, most notably the victory over Assyria⁷⁴. Because he is a well-known king and was of great importance for the prosperity of the Babylonian empire it is not surprising that his story is written down in such a manner. Nebuchadnezzar (604-562) is mentioned in chronicles ABC 4 and 5. In these chronicles, his time as crown prince and young king are documented. He mainly continues the work of his father. He was a very well known king, this had to do with the fact that his reign was one of the longest in Babylonian history, when this is considered, it is surprising that he does not occur more often in the chronicles. However, most of the restoration that took place during his reign took place in Babylon⁷⁵, and the chroniclers from Borsippa might thus not have had access to the information necessary to write it down. Sennacherib (704-681) is mentioned in chronicle ABC 14 and ABC 16. In both the chronicles the same sentence mentioning his name occurs. In this sentence it is mentioned that the Akitu festival did not take place during his reign⁷⁶. Since Sennacherib was an Assyrian king this might have been a way to place blame on him and other Assyrian rulers. Shamash-shuma-ukin (668-648) is mentioned in three chronicles: ABC 14, ABC 15, and ABC 16. In ABC 14 it is only mentioned that it was the first year of his reign, in ABC 15 there is nothing specifically mentioned about his reign except that he went on campaign in the seventeenth year of his reign. Shamash-shuma-ukin was an important king in the history of Babylonia, he tried to stand up against Assurbanipal in favor of the Babylonian population. In the chronicles it is mentioned that during his reign at least two Akitu festivals took place⁷⁷. Shulgi (2094-2047) is mentioned in ABC 20A and Fs. Grayson 1. He is a well-known king in Babylonian history, he had one of the longest reigns, he restructured the entire Babylonian bureaucratic system, and he went on many campaigns. In Fs. Grayson 1 his campaigns are mentioned, while in ABC 20A it is narrated that he provided food for Eridu, but carried away booty from the Esagil and Babylon. The final king that will be discussed for the chronicles from Borsippa is Sîn-shar-ishkun

⁷⁴ Leick 1999: 112-113

⁷⁵ The wall of Babylon, Ishtar-gate, ziggurat, and the Etemenanki are all located in Babylon.

⁷⁶ ABC 14 line 34-38, ABC 16 line 1-7.

⁷⁷ In the first and sixteenth year.

(622-612), he occurs in ABC 2 and ABC 3, in the chronicles he does not play a big part, it is simply said that he fled with his garrison⁷⁸ and that he died⁷⁹.

The previously discussed kings are mostly well-known kings, or had provided special attention for Borsippa. Nabopolassar and Shamash-shuma-ukin stand out as they are mentioned respectively five and three times. The chroniclers wrote about kings that did not always play a large role in Babylonian history, but were important for Borsippa. Nabopolassar stands out, as there are chronicles specifically dedicated to him, however, his story might have been well-known as it happened in or directly before the lifetime of the chroniclers.

Babylon

The following table⁸⁰ shows the most important and most mentioned kings in the chronicles from Babylon, and in which group they are mentioned. The chronicles from Babylon mention 100 different people. In the chronicles that do not come from the Esagil temple 31 distinct people can be recognized, while in the chronicles from the Esagil temple 69 different persons can be found. There is not one single person that is mentioned in both the groups. In the table there will thus not be a 'total' column, as there is no need for it.

Person	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple
Alexander the Great (330-323)	0	4*
Antiochus I (281-260)	0	5*
Antiochus V (164-162)	0	2
Arsaces (250-248)	0	3*
Hallushu-inshushinak I (698-693)	2	0
Humban-nikash I (743-717)	2	0
Humban-nimena (691-689)	2	0
Kudur-nahhunte (692)	2	0
Kurigalzu II (1332-1308)	0	2
Merodach-baladan II (721-710 and 703)	2	0

⁷⁸ ABC 2 line 3.

⁷⁹ ABC 3 line 44.

⁸⁰ *These kings are also mentioned in MC 4, however, because this is a king list it will not be specifically explained when the kings are discussed.

Mushezib-Marduk (692-689)	2	0
Nabonassar (747-734)	2	0
Nabonidus (555-539)	0	2
Nergal-ushezib (693)	2	0
Sargon II (721-705)	2	0
Seleucus (epistates)	0	2
Seleucus I (305-281)	0	4*
Seleucus II (245-226)	0	3*
Seleucus III (225-223)	0	3*
Sennacherib (704-681)	2	0
Shutruk-nahhunte II (716-699)	2	0
Tiglath-pileser III (744-727)	2	0

The kings who are mentioned more often are not necessarily well-known. The Elamite kings that are mentioned in the chronicles that do not originate in the Esagil temple have not left a big mark on Babylonian history. The period in which they ruled is filled with chaos and constant warfare. The kings who are mentioned more often in the chronicles that originate in the Esagil temple are mostly well-known kings.

The first king that will be discussed is Alexander the Great (330-323). He was a well-known ruler. He occurs in four different chronicles, in two of those chronicles he is the protagonist. In ABC 8 his role is unclear. However, in the beginning of the chronicle -which is broken- the battle at Gaugamela is mentioned⁸¹. BHP 2 is very broken. However, in the chronicle he received gifts from the Babylonian population, which could indicate that he could be seen as a favorable ruler. The third chronicle in which Alexander the Great is mentioned is MC 31, this chronicle is heavily damaged and the role of Alexander the Great is difficult to establish, however, the document might be about the Babylonian population. They were mourning for Alexander. Even though most of the chronicles in which Alexander the Great is mentioned are very broken, a general tendency of hospitality towards Alexander the Great can be found; which can be seen in the mourning and the presenting of gifts.

Antiochus I (281-260) was the second ruler in the Seleucid Dynasty. He was a well-known

⁸¹ Van der Spek 2004A

ruler and often occurs in the chronicles with the title crown prince⁸². In BHP 6, he oversees repair work to the Esagil temple, apparently there is an omen sign when lightning strikes the Eridu⁸³, however, it is uncommon to translate IZI ŠUB with lightning strike, the sentence is thus probably 'fire broke out in Eridu'. In this case there is no attestation of an omen. In ABC 13A, Antiochus I inspected a temple and he engaged in battle. In ABC 11, he performs both good and bad deeds for the Babylonians, which shows an image of duality. On the one hand he instituted regular offerings for Šîn, and bows to him. On the other hand, he settles Macedonians in Babylon and raises taxes on native Babylonians. In MC 37, Antiochus I is mentioned because during his time as crown prince there was a judicial trial in which people were burnt with fire.

Antiochus V (164-162) was the ninth king of the Seleucid dynasty. It is possible that in BHP 15, his murder is written down. However, the part of his murder is badly damaged, and it thus cannot be said with certainty. In BHP 14 the Greek community in Babylon is mentioned, this community was established during the reign of Antiochus IV, the predecessor of Antiochus V. The chronicle specifically mentions uprisings between the Greek community and 'the people of the land'. This could indicate that his reign was not seen as positive by the chroniclers from Babylon.

Arsaces (250-248) was the first king of the Arsacid dynasty. In BHP 19 a food offering is made for him and the great gods: Bel and Beltiya. In BHP 18 A/B the name of Arsaces is written down at the end of the document to indicate regular observations during his reign. However, this document is probably not from his reign, but only writes down, exceptionally detailed, observations that took place during his reign. The chronicles do not share details about his life.

Hallushu-inshushinak I (698-693), Humban-nikash I (743-717), Humban-nimena (691-689), Kudur-nahhunte (692) and Shutruk-nahhunte II (716-699) were all Elamite kings who are mentioned in MC 16 and 17. They do not play a particular big role in the chronicles. They are mentioned whenever there are uprisings or if one of them dies. The chronicles mention them because they are of significance for the period in which the chronicles takes place, not because

⁸² Although co-ruler might be a better translation.

⁸³ Van der Spek 2004F

the chroniclers from Babylon had a special interest in them. This is the period where a lot of wars took place.

Kurigalzu II (1332-1308) was a King in the Kassite dynasty. In ABC 23 his name is specified to note specific market prices during his reign. A reason as to why his reign was chosen might have something to do with that there was only information available about his reign. In ABC 22 he is the protagonist of the epic that is written down in the chronicle⁸⁴. His kingship is also the subject of several later Babylonian epics⁸⁵.

There are several Babylonian and Assyrian kings who played an important part in the history of Babylonia, but were only mentioned in the MC 16 and 17 chronicles. These kings are Merodach-baladan II (721-710), Mushezib-Marduk (692-689), Nabonassar (747-734), Nergal-ushezib (693), Sargon II (721-705), Sennacherib (704-681) and Tiglath-pileser III (744-727). Most of these kings had an impact on the ending of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian empire. It is thus strange that they only occur in these chronicles and there is no mention of them in the chronicles that come from the Esagil temple. A reason for this remains unclear, however, it could be that this story was widely known, and since the MC 16 and 17 chronicles are very elaborate there was no reason to write this story down. The chroniclers from the Esagil temple might thus may have been aware of the MC 16 and 17 chronicles.

Nabonidus (555-539) was the last king of the Babylonian empire, in the library of the Esagil temple there are many documents dedicated to him. There is a possibility that Nabonidus was not seen as either a good or a bad ruler in ABC 7 or MC 53, but that scholars of this time granted special attention to him because he was the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire, they might have written about him to create an image -neither positive nor negative- of the last Babylonian ruler⁸⁶.

The role of Seleucus the epistates is unclear. In BCHP 11 the troops of Seleucus the epistates were slaughtered when he arrived in Babylon. An epistates was a governor, according to BCHP 11, he was the governor of Seleucia.

⁸⁴ ABC 22 is an unusual chronicle, because it starts out as a chronicle, however, in the middle it becomes an epic with Kurigalzu II as protagonist.

⁸⁵ Leick 1999: 95

⁸⁶ Waerzeggers 2015: 118-119

Seleucus I (305-281) was the first king of the Seleucid era. He is mentioned in three chronicles. In ABC 10 the beginning of the Seleucid empire is recorded. The diadochi fight with each other and Seleucus I established control over Babylonia. In ABC 13A it is mentioned that he had gone beyond the Euphrates on a military campaign, perhaps in India⁸⁷. In ABC 12 another mention is made of a military campaign, the death of Seleucus I is also written down in this chronicle. He died while trying to gain control over Macedonia⁸⁸. Seleucus I was an important figure in the history of Babylonia and the transition from Babylonian to Hellenistic power.

Seleucus II (245-226) was the fourth king of the Seleucid era. During his reign the Seleucids lost a lot of land because of the Third Syrian War⁸⁹. Even though this was of great importance, the chronicles do not mention this event. MC 37 is about judicial consequences, while ABC 13 is about accessions during the Seleucid era.

The last king of importance for the chronicles from Babylon is Seleucus III (225-223). He was the fifth king of the Seleucid era. In ABC 13 his succession is simply mentioned, however, ABC 13B is entirely dedicated to him. The chronicle itself is about food offerings.

The chronicles from Babylon do not have a specific interest in particular kings. Alexander the Great, Antiochus I and Seleucus I stand out as they are mentioned more often. However, they are kings who are well-known and whose role in the Hellenistic period was of great importance. The chroniclers had no specific interest in kings who were of great importance for the earlier history of Babylonia.

To conclude: the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa differ in that they mention other kings. The kings who are mentioned more often in the chronicles from Borsippa, do not play a big role in the chronicles from Babylon. There are several kings that stand out, however, these kings are well-known and their stories stand out.

⁸⁷ Van der Spek 2004G

⁸⁸ Leick 1999: 142

⁸⁹ Leick 1999: 142

Timespan of the chronicles

This chapter will try to find out if the chronicles from Borsippa and Babylon describe events over longer periods of time or in shorter periods, and the reason as to why there might have been a preference for a shorter or longer timespan.

Borsippa

The table below shows the timespan of the chronicles from Borsippa, and in which group they are mentioned.

Timespan	Beliya'ū group	Re'i-alpi group	Total of Borsippa chronicles
300 years or more	1	2	3
Between 100 and 299 years	0	1	1
Between 40 and 99 years	2	1	3
Between 30 and 39 years	1	0	1
Between 10 and 19 years	3	0	3
Between 1 and 9 years	4	0	4

As can be seen in the table the chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group have a tendency to describe longer periods of time. The chronicles from the Beliya'ū group on the other hand discuss most of the time one reign, part of a reign, or the transition of one reign to the next; the only exception is ABC 20B. The chronicles from the Beliya'ū group are more detailed than the chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group, because they mention short periods of time. All the chronicles of the Re'i-alpi group discuss more than one reign, they have a long timespan.

When the two groups are compared there is a clear distinction between the Re'i-alpi and Beliya'ū group. As was mentioned in the introduction, the chroniclers from the Beliya'ū group tend to narrate specific information about historical and current events. The chroniclers from this group tend to write their chronicles more detailed, it explains the short periods of time these chronicles discuss. A reason as to why the chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group describe longer periods of time is difficult to establish. It might have to do with the fact that all the chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group come from different archives and were therefore inclined

to narrate longer periods of time, so the archive would have at least one document that describes a longer period of time.

Babylon

The table below shows the timespan of the chronicles from Babylon, and in which group they are mentioned.

Timespan	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total of Babylon chronicles
600 years or more	0	1	1
Between 100 and 200 years	0	2	2
Between 50 and 99 years	2	1	3
Between 10 and 16 years	0	5	5
Two or three years	0	4	4
One year	0	14	14

As can be seen in the table the chronicles from Babylon describe mostly very short periods of time. The chronicle that has the longest timespan is ABC 23, unfortunately this chronicle is damaged. Moreover, it is a chronicle that describes a period long before the chroniclers started writing in the Esagil temple. A shorter timespan for a chronicle indicates that it is probably about a contemporary event, as all the chronicles that describe one, two, or three years are from the Achaemenid and Seleucid periods. The chroniclers had information about this event and could thus describe details, however, they lacked information about events that happened a long time ago. The final three columns in the table -23 chronicles in total- are about chronicles that describe one reign or part of a reign, this is another indication that the chroniclers were not able to get as much information about the past of Babylonia, as Babylon was no longer the capital. However, this cannot be said with certainty. The later chronicles might be part of another school or tradition of chronicle writing.

To conclude: the timespan discussed in the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa differs greatly. The chronicles from Borsippa describe longer periods of time and entire reigns or the transitions of one reign to the next; the chronicles from Babylon mainly focus on specific parts of reigns. The chroniclers from Borsippa probably had more information about the Neo-Babylonian empire at their disposal, and they were able to describe events about the not so

recent past, while the chroniclers from Babylon probably did not have an elaborate archive at their disposal and preferred to write about contemporary events. The little information they had about the history of Babylonia was gathered and described in several chronicles with extremely long timespans.

Reoccurring sentences in the chronicles

In this chapter identical sentences that reoccur in various chronicles will be discussed. These sentences appear in different groups from all the cities. This chapter will investigate which chronicles have overlapping sentences, and how the possible exchange could have taken place.

Borsippa:

In the Beliya'u group there are four chronicles that contain sentences that are duplicated or have variations in other chronicles. Out of these four chronicles ABC 14 is unusual; it contains duplicated sentences or sentences with variations that can be found in other chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa. There is a large amount of sentences in ABC 14 that are also present in MC 16 and MC 17; this could indicate that one of the chroniclers copied from the other chronicle. A reason for this could be that MC 16, MC 17 and ABC 14 shared the majority of their material, because they write about the same period, there might be a realistic possibility that these chronicles had a common source⁹⁰. As several chronicles have sentences that emerge in the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles, it could be that these chronicles had an overarching aspect, other chronicles could have used this specific chronicle as an example chronicle that contained the recent history of Babylonia. If this was the case it would explain why other chronicles contain information that is frequently written down on MC 16 and MC 17. ABC 14 and ABC 15 have one sentence that occurs with slight variations in other chronicles, this sentence is: "Nabû does not come, and Bel does not come out". This sentence might be a fixed expression, which would explain why it occurs in both chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa. This specific sentence does not occur in the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles, it thus cannot have been copied and re-copied from this chronicle.

Other chronicles in the Beliya'u group that contain reoccurring sentences or variations on sentences are Fs. Grayson 1 and ABC 20B. Both the chronicles have duplicated sentences from chronicle ABC 20A. Fs. Grayson 1 only has a small variation in a sentence, while ABC 20B has an entire section duplicated from ABC 20A. Because these chronicles all come from Borsippa, it could be possible that the chroniclers had access to other archives in town, and thus were able to copy or read other chronicles. Further evidence for this theory stems from the fact that ABC 20A and ABC 20B succeed each other. The last seven sentences of ABC 20B are exactly the

⁹⁰ Brinkman 1990: 88-95. This is not only the case for chronicles MC 16, MC 17 and ABC 14, it might also be true for other chronicles, as most of the chronicles from this period have repetitious passages and verbal similarities.

same as the first seven sentences of ABC 20A, thus providing a means to let these specific chronicles continue each other.

The Re'i-alpi group provides one chronicle that is especially interesting: ABC 16. It contains sentences that also occur in MC 16 and MC 17. ABC 16 has lines that occur in two chronicles from the Esagil temple, these chronicles are ABC 17 and ABC 7, however these lines are standard lines to indicate that the Akitu festival did not take place and that neither Bel nor Nabû went out, as was mentioned earlier. Because ABC 16, ABC 17 and ABC 7 are all interested in the Akitu festival and the appearance of Bel and Nabû, it could be deducted that the chronicles were probably not related to each other, but were writing down fixed expressions to indicate that the Akitu festival would not continue.

The different archives that can be found in Borsippa were probably all in contact with each other. The biggest evidence is that ABC 20A and ABC 20B are from different groups but still complement one another.

Babylon:

The MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles are similar to each other⁹¹. MC 17 is almost the same as MC 16. It is worth noting that there are no duplications or variations of MC 16 and MC 17 in the Esagil temple archives. As discussed previously, the chronicles from Borsippa and MC 16 and MC 17 have overlapping sentences. In the chapter on periods and dynasties an explanation can be found: because MC 16 and MC 17 and the Esagil temple chronicles discuss different periods, it would not have made sense to have reoccurring sentences from the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles in the Esagil temple archive. MC 16 and MC 17 might be a summary chronicle to cover the period of Assyrian domination⁹².

Most of the chronicles from the Esagil temple that have duplications or variations in other chronicles, have these duplications and variations with other chronicles from the Esagil temple. This does not apply to ABC 17 and ABC 7, these chronicles also have sentences that are formulated the same way in the Re'i-alpi and Beliya'u groups⁹³. The other chronicles from the Esagil temple are all chronicles from the Seleucid period. The chronicles about the

⁹¹ See Brinkman 1990: 88-95

⁹² Van der Spek 2008: 281

⁹³ This sentence is: "Nabû does not come, and Bel does not come out". As discussed above, this sentence might be a fixed expression.

Seleucid period often are about the same subjects, therefore the chroniclers probably used the same sources to write down events, which explains the duplications and variations. Out of the seventeen chronicles that make up the documents about the Seleucid period there are eight chronicles that have duplications or variations⁹⁴. Even though some of these documents are about the same rulers or events, most of the subjects that are discussed in the chronicles from the Esagil temple are not related to each other. There are thus two types of intertextuality in the chronicles from Babylon, in the chronicles from the Seleucid period the chroniclers often write about the same subjects and shared material, while the second form of intertextuality is the use of the same formulation to describe different events.

In the chronicles from Babylon four distinct groups can be recognized. The first group consists of the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles, these chronicles have overlaps with each other and with chronicles that come from Borsippa. The second group consists of the ABC 17 and ABC 7 chronicles, they contain reoccurring sentences with each other and with two chronicles from Borsippa that have the reoccurring sentence about Bel and Nabû. The third group consists of the Seleucid chronicles that contain duplications and variations with other chronicles from the Seleucid period. The last group consists of the chronicles that do not have duplicates or variations within other chronicles.

In conclusion; there are both differences and similarities in the chronicles from Borsippa and Babylon. In the chronicles from Borsippa, it can be seen quite easily that the archives in this city were in contact with each other, moreover, they cooperated and shared their work. This can be seen in the many reoccurring sentences, but above all, in the ABC 20B and ABC 20A chronicles, which share a large part of their chronicle. The chronicles from Babylon do not share these similarities, a clear distinction in groups can be made. The MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles are an important key in the chronicle story. It is quoted quite often in the chronicles from Borsippa, it might suggest that this chronicle was an example chronicle for the chaotic period it describes, which could be the reason that it is referred to in the chronicles from Borsippa.

⁹⁴ These chronicles are: ABC 10, BCHP 6, ABC 13A, ABC 11, ABC 12, MC 37, BCHP 11 and BCHP 15. See the database for which lines are duplicated.

Gods and religion in the chronicles

This chapter will give insights in the differences of the role of religion in Borsippa and Babylon. Questions that arise when looking at this subject are: ‘are there differences in which gods are mentioned in the chronicles?’ and ‘are there differences in the role that the gods play in the chronicles?’ A distinction can be made concerning the role that gods play in the chronicles, an active role denotes that a god is a participant in the chronicles, while a non-active role denotes that a god is mentioned in the chronicle but not performs an activity himself.

Borsippa

Gods	Beliya’u group	Re’i-alpi group	Total
Enlil	1	1	2
Anu the Great	2	0	2
Gods of Akkad	2	1	3
Bel/Marduk	8	13	21
Nabû	5	7	12
Gods of Borsippa	1	1	2

Role of the gods	Beliya’u group	Re’i-alpi group	Total
Not active	7	3	10
Not present	4	0	4
Active	0	1	1

In the chronicles from Borsippa, more gods are mentioned than can be seen in the table, however they are only mentioned once and are not examined here, as they do not play an important role. As can be seen in the table, Bel/Marduk and Nabû are the gods who are mentioned the most in the chronicles. This is no surprise, as Nabû is the most important god in Borsippa, and Marduk is the most important god in Babylonia. The gods who are mentioned more often in the chronicles are usually mentioned when they either leave or enter a city, although Enlil is mentioned when his temple was desecrated and when a throne was made for him⁹⁵. Bel/Marduk and Nabû are usually mentioned when they leave or enter a city, although

⁹⁵ See chronicle ABC 20B and ABC 24.

temple restoration and new furniture are also mentioned occasionally. The one chronicle where a god is an active participant is when Marduk becomes angry at Sargon, this happens in ABC 20A. Sargon builds a counterpart of Babylon next to Agade. Later in the chronicle, Bel becomes angry again at Shulgi because he took away property of the Esagil.

It appears as though the gods play a bigger role in the chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group. Both Marduk/Bel and Nabû are mentioned more often in these chronicles, and there is one chronicle where Marduk/Bel is an active participant. Moreover, there are four chronicles in the Beliya'u group where no gods are mentioned. The Re'i-alpi group has a more religious approach than the chronicles in the Beliya'u group.

Babylon

Gods	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total
Gods of Uruk	3	0	3
Bel/Marduk	3	28	31
Gods of Akkad	1	2	3
Sîn	0	12	12
Shamash	0	6	6
Adad	0	3	3
Great Gods	0	6	6
The Gods	0	3	3
Nabû	0	18	18
Beltiya	0	5	5

Role of the gods	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total
Not active	2	14	16
Not present	0	10	10
Active	0	3	3

In the chronicles from Babylon more gods are mentioned than are shown in the table, however, only the gods who are mentioned more than two times will be discussed. Marduk/Bel is mentioned the most, as he is the most important god of Babylon this comes as no surprise. Nabû is mentioned the most after Marduk/Bel, this is also not surprising as Nabû is

the son of Marduk/Bel. Sîn is mentioned twelve times, however in ABC 11 he is mentioned six times because Antiochus as crown prince enters his temples and bows before Sîn. In MC 53 Sîn is mentioned four times, in this chronicle the commandment of Sîn was read aloud and Nabonidus decided to dedicate his daughter to him. Shamash is mentioned six times, but in MC 53 he is mentioned five times, it thus might give a biased indication of the importance of Shamash. This chronicle is about the reign of Nabonidus, and Shamash played a big role during his reign. The designation 'Great Gods' is used six times, a striking aspect of this term is that it is used throughout the chronicles, it occurs in BCHP 19, a chronicle that writes about the Arsacid dynasty; but also in ABC p.192, which writes about an early period⁹⁶. Because the chronicles write about different periods, it cannot be said who these gods are. Beltiya is mentioned five times, she was the spouse of Bel, she is only mentioned in contact with Bel. Adad has an active role in ABC 17, in this chronicle he growls⁹⁷. In the other chronicles he does not play a big role. The designation 'the gods' is used three times, this designation is used in two chronicles from the Seleucid period, in these documents, the gods that the Seleucids worshipped could be meant, especially in BCHP 11. In this chronicle, it is mentioned that the gods were not feared by the Haneans. In ABC 17 an offering table was made for them and sacrifices were given, in this chronicle the gods of the temple in which the sacrifices were given are probably meant. In none of the chronicles the gods play an active role. The Gods of Uruk are only mentioned in MC 16, in this document they are moved around from Assyria to Uruk. The Gods of Akkad are mentioned in two chronicles, MC 16 and ABC 7, their role is not active, they are moved around.

In most of the chronicles from Babylon the gods do not play an active role. The chronicles in which the gods are not present are mostly about later periods. The reason that gods are not mentioned as often in these chronicles is probably not because chroniclers had less attention for these gods but because celebrations as the Akitu festival did not take place on a regular basis and the Seleucid rulers did not solely celebrated their festivals at Babylon. The three chronicles where gods have an active role are all chronicles that write about the Neo-Babylonian period or periods before that. In the chronicles from Babylon a distinction in three subdivisions can be made, the first subdivision consists of the chronicles from the Seleucid period, the second subdivision is composed of the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles, and the final

⁹⁶ Perhaps the first or second Sealand dynasty.

⁹⁷ This is indicative of a thunderstorm.

subdivision is the group of chronicles that do not fit within the first two subdivisions. In these three subdivisions different gods are mentioned, and the gods play a different role.

To conclude, the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa are not very different from each other. Even though in most of the chronicles the gods do not play a big role, they are present. This shows that the chroniclers were not indifferent to the gods⁹⁸. The chroniclers might also have thought that every event that took place was divinely ordained⁹⁹, which might explain why gods are not mentioned in every chronicle, it might also explain why the chronicles from both cities are not very different from each other. In both Babylon and Borsippa Bel/Marduk and Nabû are the most important gods, next to the designation 'gods of Akkad' they are the only gods that are mentioned in both cities. The role of the gods and the fact that Nabû and Marduk are equally important are similarities. However, there are also differences in the cities: the role of the gods, and the gods who are mentioned are different in the cities, nevertheless these differences can be attributed to the different times and perhaps a different tradition in which the chronicles were written.

⁹⁸ Van der Spek (2008:284) argues that gods do not play a role in the chronicles, however, this is not true.

⁹⁹ Drews 1975: 45

Appearance of the chronicles

This chapter will focus on the physical appearance of chronicles: the length of the chronicles, whether or not the tablet was divided in columns and the size of the tablet. The discussion of columns will begin in the part about the chronicles from Babylon as the chronicles from Borsippa are all single column chronicles.

Borsippa

Lines of the chronicle	Beliya'u group	Re'i-alpi group	Total
4-8	3	0	3
24-28	3	1	4
37-49	4	3	7
78	1	0	1

As can be seen in the table, the chronicles from Borsippa show a variety in length. The shortest chronicle is only four lines long, while the longest chronicle has 78 lines. Both these chronicles are from the Beliya'u group. The Beliya'u group contains four chronicles that are shaped like Neo-Babylonian business documents¹⁰⁰. The Beliya'u group is quite diverse when it comes to the amount of lines the chroniclers use to describe the events on the chronicles. The Re'i-alpi group is very different, the chronicles in this group are all quite long. Moreover, the amount of lines on the chronicles ranges from 27 to 38, this means that they are all approximately the same length. The table shows quite clearly that the chroniclers had a preferred amount of lines to write down a story: between 24 and 49 lines.

Size	Beliya'u group	Re'i-alpi group	Total
2.8x3.7 cm	1	0	1
Between 4.2x5.6 and 4.5x6.2 cm	2	2	4
Between 5x3.4 and 5.5x7.6 cm	4	1	5
Between 5.7x4.3 and 5.9x8.5 cm	3	1	4
13.2x6.9 cm	1	0	1

As can be seen in the table, there are two chronicles in the Beliya'u group that are either really

¹⁰⁰ These chronicles are: ABC 15, ABC 2, ABC 4 and ABC 6.

small, or really big. The chronicles are all approximately the same size, except for the smallest and largest tablet. The tablet with the least amount of lines¹⁰¹ also has the smallest size, and the tablet with the most lines¹⁰² has the biggest size. All the chronicles in between have different sizes, according to the amount of lines that the chroniclers wanted to write down.

The chronicles from the Re'i-alpi and Beliya'u group do not differ greatly from one another. The one exception is the long chronicle and the three smaller chronicles in the Beliya'u group. The rest of the chronicles contain more or less the same amount of lines and have the same size.

Babylon

Lines on the chronicle	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total
1-10	0	3	3
11-20	0	7	7
21-30	0	6	6
31-40	0	5	5
41-70	1	2	3
71-90	0	3	3
101+	1	1	2

The chronicles from Babylon do not show a great variety in lines. The chronicles that have less than 40 lines are mostly chronicles that write about the later periods, while the chronicles that have more than 40 lines write about earlier periods. MC 16 and MC 17 have a lot of lines. MC 16 contains 184 lines, this is the chronicle with the most lines. ABC 9 is the chronicle with the least amount of lines: 8. A clear distinction can be made: the chronicles with the least amount of lines all narrate events that take place in later periods, while the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles and the chronicles from the Esagil temple that write about earlier periods are all relatively long.

¹⁰¹ This tablet is Fs. Grayson 3, it contains six lines, even though Fs. Grayson 1 has four lines of chronicle, there are 26 lines in total on the tablet.

¹⁰² ABC 3

Size	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total
Between 3x4.5 and 4.9x6.5 cm	0	2	2
Between 5x3 and 5.7x7 cm	0	7	7
Between 6x3.8 and 6.6x10 cm	0	5	5
Between 7x7.2 and 7.8x15 cm	0	4	4
Between 8x6.5 and 8.5x11 cm	1	4	5
Between 11x5.5 and 14x14 cm	0	3	3
Between 17x11 and 19.3x15.8 cm	1	2	3

The chronicles from Babylon differ to a large extent when it comes to the size of the tablet. Moreover, there is no correlation between the number of lines on a tablet and the size. Some chronicles only have 20 lines but can still have a large size and the other way around. MC 16 and MC 17 are quite big, but they contain a lot of lines. In the Esagil temple chronicles most of the chronicles are between 5x3 and 8x11 centimeters, this seems quite big for the amount of lines that are written down on these chronicles. There are several possibilities as to why this happened. First of all, the chronicles from Babylon -when compared to the chronicles from Borsippa- are probably written in a later period, and the chroniclers might have needed more space to write the documents. Secondly, the writing style might have changed over the decades. Thirdly, conventions on writing might have changed.

Columns	Chronicles from Babylon with no clear provenance	Chronicles from the Esagil temple	Total
1	0	22	22
4	2	5	7

The columns on the chronicles show an interesting perspective. MC 16, MC 17, ABC 22, ABC 17, ABC 7, MC 53 and ABC 10¹⁰³ are all four column tablets. These chronicles write about earlier periods, moreover the documents have many lines. The reason that these chronicles

¹⁰³ Van der Spek 2004C: ABC 10 is probably a four column chronicle.

might have four columns while the other chronicles only have one column might simply be due to the fact that these chronicles are longer than the other chronicles.

The MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles and the chronicles from the Esagil temple differ greatly in size, lines on the tablets and columns. However, this can be easily explained by the fact that the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles have more information on the tablets than the other chronicles from Babylon.

In conclusion, when the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa are compared there is quite a big difference. First of all, the amount of lines on tablets from Babylon differs more than the lines on the chronicles from Borsippa. The size of the tablets also differs greatly per city, there might be several reasons for the differences between the cities: style or conventions might have changed over the decades, there might also be a possibility that the profession of chronicler was in decline, or professional chronicler writing had become more intertwined with the writing of astronomical diaries. There are six chronicles from Babylon that have four columns, whereas Borsippa does not have any chronicles with multiple columns. To conclude, the differences from the chronicles in Babylon and Borsippa are so great that it might point to a completely different chronicle genre.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to provide an understanding of how the scribal activities concerning the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa were different or similar to each other, and to find out if there was one century long tradition or multiple traditions within the chronicle genre. If there are similarities in the chronicles it would indicate that there were either little or no changes in space and time, whereas if differences can be found in the chronicles it would indicate that the scribal tradition had changed over the decades, or other differences are present in the cities.

The two groups in Borsippa show clear differences. The two groups together give a combined overview of Babylonian history. In the themes on places, subjects, and appearance the two groups do not differ a lot from each other. However, in the theme on periods and dynasties the Beliya'û group focuses more on current events while the Re'i-alpi group has a more elaborate overview of Babylonian history. In the theme on kings the Re'i-alpi group gives more attention to kings who performed great deeds for Borsippa, while the Beliya'û group documents mostly action of kings who are in power during their time, especially Nabopolassar. In the theme on the timespan of a chronicle the Re'i-alpi group has in general longer timespans than the chronicles from the Beliya'û group. As was to be expected, the Re'i-alpi group has a more religious approach in the theme on gods and religion than the Beliya'û group¹⁰⁴.

The themes that are discussed show that the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa have a completely different style. The difference in style is so obvious it might point to a completely different genre. The same term - chronicle - might not be applicable. In the chapter where periods and dynasties were discussed it showed that the chroniclers from Borsippa focused on historical affairs, whereas the Babylonian chronicles focused mostly on current affairs. This difference became more clear in the chapters where the different subjects and places that the chronicles write about were discussed. As Babylon was no longer the capital in the Seleucid empire, the chroniclers mostly had information at hand that was delivered through royal correspondence, which meant that they no longer had first hand information, but were kept updated via letters. As a consequence they wrote more about localized events. The chronicles from Borsippa, on the other hand, wrote about affairs that happened in the whole empire and about historic events. Another big difference can be found in the fact that chronicles from

¹⁰⁴ As was already mentioned in the introduction the chronicles from the Re'i-alpi group have a more religious perspective than the chronicles from the Beliya'û group.

Babylon often have shorter timespans than chronicles from Borsippa, which usually write about longer periods of time. The chapter about re-used sentences shows many clear differences between Babylon and Borsippa. In Borsippa it can be seen that the archives in the city worked together and probably exchanged material. In Babylon three distinct groups that share material can be recognized: the MC 16 and MC 17 chronicles, the chronicles from the Achaemenid period, the Seleucid era and the Arsacid dynasty, and the chronicles about the older periods. The chapter about the physical appearance of the chronicles does not give an answer to the question as to what was a normal size for a chronicle, or about the number of lines on a tablet that was normal. In this chapter there were many differences between Babylon and Borsippa, but differences within the cities could also be found. The two writing centers are not very different when it comes to the themes about kings and gods in the chronicles. However, when it comes to kings, both centers of writing have no specific interest in any king. A reason as to why there are not many differences in the gods and religion chapter might be that the chroniclers thought that every event was divinely ordained.

The research question can be answered as follows: there is not one century long tradition spanning the different times in which the archives of Babylon and Borsippa were written. Where the chronicles from Babylon are closely affiliated with the astronomical diaries, the chronicles from Borsippa are not affiliated with an other genre of writing. There is thus more than one chronicle tradition in Babylonia. The differences between the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa are large, even though both the centers of writing have delivered chronicles, a distinction between chronicles from Babylon and chronicles from Borsippa should be made. The chronicles from Borsippa have a wider world view, the chronicles describe the oldest events and mention the highlights of Babylonian history, whereas the chronicles from Babylon mostly narrate contemporary events. Chroniclers from Borsippa had access to archives all over their city - and probably to some extent also had material at their disposal that was in Babylon at some point - and thus had the opportunity to write down events from the time of Sargon onwards. The chroniclers from Babylon, on the other hand, had no such material at their disposal. Babylon was no longer the capital of the empire in the Seleucid era and they were thus limited to writing down localized and contemporary events. As the chronicles from Babylon come from a later period it might also be that the function of writing historical events might have changed. The genre of chronicles might be applicable to the documents from both the cities, however, the chronicles from Babylon and Borsippa should be divided into a sub-genre for chronicles from Borsippa, and a sub-genre for the chronicles from Babylon.

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