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SOME IMPORTANT SELEUCID AND PARTHIAN DATES
IN THE BABYLONIAN GOAL-YEAR TEXTS*

The late Professor Józef Wolski's numerous publications on the Seleucid and Parthian histories in the past seventy years stand as a testament to his mastery of these two disciplines. As pointed out by him in his book on the *Seleucids*, Wolski was the first to recognise the inadmissibility of Arrian's account of the inception of the Arsacid dynasty and, despite its somewhat hasty abridgement by Justin, promote Trogu Pompeius' scheme.¹ This marked a turning point in our understanding of the early Arsacid chronology and laid the groundwork for further research by Wolski himself and other scholars and students. In this small contribution to a volume dedicated to the memory of Professor Wolski, I shall outline and briefly examine the historical significance of a series of dates in a special class of Babylonian astronomical records from the Seleucid and Arsacid epochs. It is hoped that in spite of its shortcomings, this will encourage other students to explore the possibilities these dates offer and further exploit their chronological and genealogical implications.

Professor Abraham J. Sachs, in his groundbreaking paper in 1948 classified the Non-Tabular Astronomical Texts from Babylonia as follows: Almanacs, Normal-Star (NS) Almanacs, Goal-Year Texts (GYTs) and Diaries.² Of these, the latter have already been published in three outstanding volumes entitled *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia* (ADRTB) by A. J. Sachs and H. Hunger in 1988, 1989 and 1996. Together with the 2001 edition by Hunger of the Lunar and Planetary Texts in ADRTB 5, the Diaries have already vastly improved our knowledge of the Babylonian astronomical practices and, thanks to their "Historical Notices", also clarified for us many obscure and uncertain chronological and historical points in the period 6th-1st century BC. Owing to Professor Hunger's efforts, the ADRTB series has now been further enriched by the publication of a 6th volume in 2006 presenting some 178 dated and also "undated" (i.e. all useful dates lost and therefore un-datable) GYTs from the period 76–256 SEB (236/5–56/5).³

* I am grateful to the Soudavar Foundation for supporting my work.

¹ Wolski 1999: 29–30 n. 1.

² Sachs 1948: 271–290.

³ All dates are in BC unless stated otherwise.

I am indebted to Professor Hunger for giving me the opportunity to preview the manuscript of the GYT_s in two occasions prior to its publication. This enabled me to compile a list of some 200 secure date-formulas, including 16 fully and partially preserved colophon-titles, that may be used in historical reconstruction. I should, nevertheless, add that given the information in other Babylonian cuneiform texts from the Seleucid and Parthian epochs, several extensively damaged dates in the edited GYT_s could be restored. However, in order to eliminate ambiguity and maintain clarity, I have decided to exclude the heavily reconstructed date-formulas from further consideration.

The secure dates may be found in GYT_s 2, 3, 6–11, 14–16, 18, 20, 22, 23, 27, 31, 32, 35–37, 39–41, 45–48, 50, 53–55, 57, 58, 60, 62–64, 67–69, 71–79, 81–83, 85–88, and 91–93. The earliest of these is from the 4th year (314/3) of Antigonus Monophthalmus (317–301) and the latest is dated 247 SEB (65/4) in the reign of the Parthian ruler Phraates III (69–58).⁴ Unfortunately, compared with around 1900–2000 date-formulas⁵ that we could theoretically have had from the period 76–256 SEB, covering the GYT_s in ADRTB 6, the preserved examples amount to about ten percent of the original number. Even so, one date-formula⁶ has already enabled us to fix the inception and terminal dates of the reigns of Seleucus II (246–225) and his two sons, Seleucus III (225–222) and Antiochus III (222–187) while others have shed a fresh light on some difficult early Parthian issues.⁷

Having discussed with Professor Hunger the historical implications of some of the approximately 200 secure dates in the published GYT_s, he recommended that while he would highlight them at appropriate points in ADRTB 6, it would be helpful if I examined their chronological relevance in a separate publication. This note attempts to show that several “anomalous” date-formulas in the edited GYT_s are not necessarily scribal errors and that they agree with independent references in the extant classical literature. However, before discussing these special cases, I should stress that the date-lines at the beginning of planetary paragraphs in GYT_s suffer from a drawback: Unless other evidence justifies their extrapolation to earlier or later months, they do not automatically cover all the months in each section except the one immediately following the date-formula. This is borne out by the following examples some of which also improve the Seleucid inception and terminal dates quoted elsewhere:⁸

1. Obv. 1, GYT 41 (149–151 SEB): The 1st Saturn paragraph begins with: [Year 90 SEB], King Antiochus (III), month II, around 22nd (28/9 May 222) ..., and covers dates as late as 18.IX (17/18 Dec.) in the same year. Several independent Babylonian records as well as references in the classical literature confirm that Antiochus III was firmly

⁴ Hunger/Sachs 2006: 20–21 and 358–359, respectively.

⁵ Each GYT comprises 2 paragraphs for Jupiter, 1 each for Venus, Mercury and Saturn, 2 for Mars and 2 for Moon plus the colophon-titles. These are occasionally augmented by extra paragraphs for one or more of the planets. For the date of each paragraph with respect to the colophon-date (Goal Year) cf. Hunger/Sachs 2006: IX.

⁶ Assar 2007: 49–53.

⁷ Assar 2006b: 31–33.

⁸ Parker/Dubberstein 1956: 21–24.

on the Seleucid throne throughout his first regnal year.⁹ We may, therefore, confidently extend Antiochus' kingship from 22.II through to 18.IX in the same Saturn paragraph. However, this does not apply to the whole of month I of 90 SEB (8/9 Apr.–6/7 May 222) because the colophon of BM 116690, an unpublished contract text from Uruk, shows that Seleucus III was acknowledged in Babylonia sometime during the first ten days of I.90 SEB (day-number of the colophon-title in the Uruk text is broken off but was probably not larger than 10).¹⁰

2. Obv. 2, GYT 61 (185 SEB): The 2nd Jupiter paragraph begins with: [Year 102] King [Antiochus (III)], month VI, night of ... This agrees with VS 15, 48, dated 17.V.102 SEB (7/8 Aug. 210) and Diary –209A (I-[?].102 SEB), both assigned to Antiochus III alone. If, as Hunger has suggested, the latter fragment is part of Diary –209D, then the Seleucid king is securely attested from Babylon as late as VI.102 SEB (21/2 Aug.–19/20 Sep. 210). However, Rev. 4–5 of BKL confirm that Antiochus III appointed as joint king his son, also called Antiochus, in 102 SEB and OECT 9, 41 affirms their co-regency on 15.I.103 SEB (27/8 Apr. 209). These show that the date-formula at the beginning of the 2nd Jupiter paragraph in GYT 61 may not be extended beyond month VI because we do not know the precise moment of the joint reign of the two rulers in late 102 SEB.

3. Obv. 27, GYT 71 (198 SEB): The 1st Mars paragraph is dated: [Year 1]19, Kings Antiochus (III) and his son Antiochus, month I, around until the 1st (16/17 Apr. 193)..., and continues to month III (Jun./Jul.). We also find the same date-formula in Obv. 5, GYT 74 (202 SEB), at the beginning of the 2nd Jupiter section which extends to 10.IX.119 SEB (18/19 Dec.). Excluding Diary –192C whose date 21.XII.119 SEB is quite uncertain, the following records confirm that 10.IX.119 SEB in GYT 74 is indeed covered by the date-formula at the beginning of the corresponding Jupiter paragraph: VS 15, 32, dated 21.X.119 SEB (27/8 Jan. 192) to both kings, and Obv. Col. II, 12 of ADRTB 5, 78 reporting that the news of the death in Mesopotamia of the junior ruler reached Babylon in XII.119 SEB (7/8 Mar.–4/5 Apr. 192). However, the above two date-formulas in GYTs 71 and 74 may not be extended beyond the end of XI.119 SEB (6/7 Mar. 192) since we do not know on which day of month XII the scribe heard that the junior ruler had died. What is certain is that the colophon-titles of MLC 2652 (YOS 20, 60) and MLC 2655 (YOS 20, 61) confirm Antiochus III as the sole ruler on 11.XII.119 SEB (17/18 Mar. 192). Accordingly, the end of the co-regency of Antiochus III and his elder son may be narrowed down to the period 1–10.XII.119 SEB.

4. GYT 35 (140 SEB): The 2nd Moon paragraph in Rev. Col. I, 14 and Col. II, 9 opens with: Year 122, King Antiochus (III) and spans the periods 14.V (23/4 Aug. 190) through to 14.XI (20/1 Dec.) and 15.I (27/8 Apr. 190) through to 15.XII (18/19 Mar. 189), respectively. We then have Obv. 5, GYT 50 (168 SEB) starting off the Mercury paragraph with the same date-formula and covering the period 2.I (14/15 Apr.) up to at least 23.VII (31 Oct./1 Nov. 190). However, VS 15, 38 is dated 6.IX.122 SEB (12/13 Dec.) to Antiochus III alone and the date-formula at the beginning of Diary –188 confirms his joint reign with Seleucus IV as early as 1.I.123 SEB (2/3 Apr. 189). These place Antiochus' second

⁹ Rev. 2 of BKL places Antiochus' accession in 90 SEB and BM 30120 in Oppert/Ménant 1877: 314 confirms him on 21.IX.90 SEB (20/1 Dec. 222).

¹⁰ Assar 2007: 51.

co-regency in the period 6.IX.122–1.I.123 SEB and thus prevent extrapolation of the above three date-formulas in GYTs 35 and 50 beyond the date of VS 15, 38.

5. Obv. 14, GYT 53 (171 SEB): The Mercury section begins with: Year 125, Kings Antiochus (III) and his son Seleucus (IV), month I, the 25th through to 12.XII (5/6 May 187–13/14 Mar. 186). Yet, according to Rev. 6–8 of BKL, it was heard in Babylon that Antiochus III died on 25.III.125 SEB (2/3 Jul. 187) in Elam and that his son, Seleucus IV, ascended the throne in the same year (confirmed by the colophon-title of BRM 1, 88, dated 11.IV.125 SEB (18/19 Jul. 187) to Seleucus IV only). This restricts the date-formula at the beginning of the Mercury section in GYT 53 to the period 1.I–25.III.125 SEB.

6. Rev. Col. I, 1 of GYT 39 (144 SEB) and Rev. Col. I, 1 of GYT 40 (144 SEB) are dated: [Year] 125, King Seleucus (IV), and [Year 125], King Seleucus (IV), respectively, both covering months VII–XII (5/6 Oct. 187–30/1 Mar. 186). However, these may not be extrapolated back to the beginning of year 125 SEB because, as mentioned in no. 5 above, Antiochus III reigned jointly with Seleucus IV until 25.III.125 SEB.

7. Obv. 4, GYT 82 (225 SEB): The 2nd Jupiter paragraph begins with: Year 142, Kings Antiochus (IV) and his son Antiochus, month I, night of the 18th (20/1 Apr. 170) and continues to 6.X (30/1 Dec.) in the same year. We also have, in agreement with the date of Diary –169, this same co-regency attested from II.142 SEB (2/3–31 May/1 Jun. 170) in Rev. 16, GYT 73 (201–202 SEB) at the beginning of the Saturn paragraph. The latter includes dates as late as 7.XI.142 SEB (30/1 Jan. 169). Finally, the joint kings are found on 28.IV.142 SEB (27/8 Jul. 170) in Rev. Col. I, 3–4 at the head of the Moon section in GYT 46 (160 SEB) with dates up to and including 29.X.142 SEB (22/3 Jan. 169). Given that Rev. 12 of BKL records the execution of the co-ruler in V.142 SEB (30/1 Jul.–27/8 Aug. 170), the aforementioned three date-formulas in GYTs 46, 73, and 82 cannot be extrapolated beyond the end of IV.142 SEB.

8. Obv. 6, GYT 45 (158 SEB): The Venus paragraph is dated: Year 150, King Antiochus (V), month I through to 29.X (4/5 Apr. 162–24/5 Jan. 161). The same date-formula also appears at the beginning of the 2nd Moon paragraph in Rev. Col. II, 1 of GYT 48 (168 SEB) and Rev. Col. I, 14, and II, 1 of GYT 50 (168 SEB), covering 13.I to XI (16/17 Apr. 162–25/6 Jan. 161), 14.V to 29.XI (13/14 Aug. 162–22/3 Feb. 161), and 13.I to 14.IX (16/17 Apr.–10/11 Dec. 162), respectively. Given that the latest extant records from the reign of Antiochus V are BRM 2, 40, dated 18.VII.150 SEB (15/16 Oct. 162) and Diary –161A₁₋₃, extending the latter date to 30.VII.150 SEB (27/8 Oct.), it is not immediately clear whether Antiochus' reign could be extrapolated to the end of XI.150 SEB (24/5 Feb. 161). The earliest attestations of the next ruler, Demetrius I, are in the following records: (a) the colophon-title of the unpublished NS-Almanac LBAT *1031 dated 151 SEB (161/0), (b) the date-formula in Obv. 29, GYT 71 (198 SEB) at the beginning of the 2nd Mars paragraph, covering 22.VI.151 SEB (8/9 Sep. 161), wrongly given by PD as 22.II (following Kugler¹¹), to at least 9.XII.151 SEB (22/3 Mar. 160), and finally (c) the historical note in Obv. 2, Diary –160A, dated VII.151 SEB (16/17 Oct.–14/15 Nov. 161). These, unfortunately, entail a gap of more than half a year, overlapping with the end of the reign of Antiochus V as well as the accession of Demetrius I. They thus fail to

¹¹ Kugler 1924: 334.

ascribe the above given latest dates in GYTs 45, 48, and 50 correctly. To clarify the ambiguity, we ought to determine the date of reign-change in Babylon in late 150 or early 151 SEB from the extant material.

As Sachs has pointed out,¹² the contents of the Babylonian Almanacs and NS-Almanacs are predictive in nature. This suggests that they were not necessarily compiled and dated at or about the start of the year for which the predictions had been conducted. It is possible that some NS-Almanacs and Almanacs were dated several weeks or even months after the beginning of their intended years. In fact, when compared with the colophon-title of Almanac LBAT 1137, the one in the unpublished NS-Almanac LBAT *1045+*1046 strongly indicates that it was dated some months later. These two texts correspond to early 183 SEB (129/8) and therefore come from an uncertain period in Babylonia. We know that in about mid-summer of 182 SEB, Mesopotamia temporarily fell to Antiochus VII (138-129) who was probably still wintering in Ecbatana, the Parthian capital in Media, in spring 183 SEB. Given that the Seleucid forces were first engaged on the Iranian plateau, it is highly likely that the news of Parthian counter-attack led to a short period of political confusion in Babylonia and so disturbed the current dating practices. Judging from the contemporary Babylonian evidence and later literature, the Parthians ultimately defeated and slew Antiochus VII in late summer of 183 SEB.¹³ We also know that despite its subscription to King Arsaces (Phraates II), the colophon of LBAT *1045+1046 uncharacteristically bears a single Seleucid era date (similar to LBAT 1137) rather than the usual double Arsacid and Seleucid dates. These strongly indicate that LBAT 1137 was completed and dated when Babylonia was still under Seleucid jurisdiction in early 183 SEB. Conversely, LBAT *1045+*1046 was finalised a month or so later when the political outcome in Babylon was less certain. It was thus dated by the Seleucid year of completion first, excluding the royal name and title, and subsequently assigned to King Arsaces following the Parthian victory and re-imposition of Arsacid power in Mesopotamia about the beginning of autumn 183 SEB. In fact, the unfinished date-line in Diary –227 suggests that at times of war or dynastic strife, the Babylonian scribes may have intentionally kept their date-formulas incomplete because of political uncertainty. This particular Diary corresponds to 228 during which year Antiochus Hierax launched an attack on Babylonia while his brother, Seleucus II, was busy fighting the Parthians in north-eastern Seleucid territories. Its partial date-formula, inscribed on the lower edge of the tablet, reads: [Year] 84, “royal name excluded”. It thus shows that the scribe impressed on the wet clay after the year-number, the usual masculine determinative preceding the royal names. Yet he left the colophon title unfinished because he was probably unsure of the outcome of the struggle between the two Seleucid brothers, intending to amend it later by adding the appropriate name and epithet.

The examples just mentioned indicate that although the colophon-title of NS Almanac *1031 confirms Demetrius I in Babylon in 151 SEB, it does not prove that he occupied the Seleucid throne in the first month of that year (24/5 Mar.–21/2 Apr. 161). Nor could the accession of Demetrius be decided accurately from the uncertain terminal date and reign-length of Antiochus V. As quoted above, the last Babylonian record

¹² Sachs 1948: 287.

¹³ Assar 2006a: 99–105.

attesting the latter is from 30.VII.150 SEB while Antiochus' reign-length is differently given as 1 year and 6 months as well as 2 years by Eusebius, and 2 years by Josephus (*Ant. Jud.*, 12.390). However, we may safely exclude the 1.5 years in Eusebius. The dates in BibMes 24, 27 (19.XI.148 SEB = 3/4 Feb. 163),¹⁴ and Diary –161A₁₋₃ (27/8 Oct. 162) alone entail a reign in excess of 1 year and 9 months for Antiochus V.¹⁵ This revised figure may, nevertheless, be improved using information in other cuneiform texts. Firstly, Rev. 14 of BKL records the arrival at Babylon in IX.148 SEB (19/20 Nov.–17/18 Dec. 164) of the news of the death of Antiochus IV. It is not impossible that Antiochus' demise was also announced in Antioch in the same month and so led to the enthronement of his son (cf. Obv. 18, Diary –163C₂, mentioning, in a broken context, “Antiochus son of Antiochus” in X.148 SEB). This naturally brings the reign-length of Antiochus V closer to the above quoted 2-year in Eusebius and Josephus. Secondly, the joint statements of Polybius (31.12.11–13) and Josephus (*Ant. Jud.*, 12.389) strongly suggest that Demetrius I occupied Tripolis on the Syrian coast in about late summer of 150 SEB, in agreement with the date 151 SEM in I.Maccabees (7.1). Finally, we have a rather vague reference to a King Antiochus in the “Scroll of Fasting”, extant in the Talmud, who, upon receiving some bad news, withdrew from Jerusalem on the “28th of Shevat” and died shortly afterwards. Given Antiochus' 2-year reign in Eusebius and Josephus, and the scanty inscriptional and literary records, we may assume that Demetrius I eliminated Antiochus V about XII.150 SEB (24/5 Feb.–23/4 Mar. 161), after a reign of 2 years and *c.* 3 months, and took the Seleucid crown in that same month. This unattested accession date agrees with Demetrius' 12-year reign in Eusebius, given as Ol. 154.4 (161/0) to Ol. 157.4 (149/8), and Syncellus. It also allows us to extend to the end of XI.150 SEB the above date-formulas at the beginning of the Venus paragraph in GYT 45 and those starting off the 2nd Moon sections in GYTs 48 and 50.

9. Obv. 10, GYT 77 (207 SEB): The Mercury paragraph is dated: [Year 161], King Demetrius (I) and covers the period 21.I (23/4 Apr. 151) to at least 7.XII (29/30 Mar. 150). Although PD give Louvre AO 17265 tablet (dated 30.II.161 SEB = 31 May/1 Jun. 151) as the latest extant record from the reign of Demetrius I,¹⁶ the latter is attested in Rev. 8 of Diary –149A as late as III.162 SEB (20/1 Jun.–18/19 Jul. 150). The corresponding historical commentary probably reports the decisive battle between Demetrius I and Alexander Balas in which, according to our classical sources, Demetrius was defeated and slain. This reference, therefore, confirms Demetrius in Babylon throughout 161 SEB and extends his reign beyond both the date of the Louvre tablet and the date-formula at the beginning of the Mercury section in GYT 77. However, there appears to be some ambiguity concerning the *terminus post quem* of the reign of Alexander Balas in Babylonia. PD report that he was acknowledged as early as 5.VII.162 SEB (20/1 Oct. 150) (MLC 2161 = YOS 20, 82, duplicate of HSM 913.1.8), and the unpublished BM 114406 tablet confirms him as early as 2.IV.162 SEB (20/1 Jul 150). Yet, assuming that the year-number in the colophon-title of A3698 tablet (BibMes 24, 12) is correct, the Seleucid

¹⁴ After Del Monte 1997: 240–241.

¹⁵ The remaining 10/11 days in month XI and the two months XII and XII₂ (intercalary) in 148 SEB plus 19 months up to the end of VII.150 SEB. Counting in terms of Julian calendar, the corresponding period would be about a week short of 21 months.

¹⁶ Parker/Dubberstein 1956: 23.

usurper must have been recognised in Uruk in I.162 SEB (22/3 Apr. 150). This agrees with Rev. 6–8 text of Diary –149A, attesting both Kings Alexander and Demetrius in early summer 162 SEB, and at the same time places the inception of the reign of Alexander some two months before the date of his final battle against Demetrius I.

10. Obv. 18, GYT 88 (245 SEB): The date-formula at the beginning of the 1st Mars paragraph reads: Year 166, King Alexander, month I, around until the 10th (16/17 Apr. 146) ..., and extends to 25.III (29/30 Jun 146). Given that our latest record mentioning Alexander Balas is BRM 2, 50, dated 20.VIII.166 SEB (20/1 Nov. 146), we are assured of his authority in Babylonian in month III of that same year. However, the date of Alexander's defeat and death is not preserved in our extant Babylonian material. Nor do we have any reference to Demetrius II in the latter part of 166 SEB. These prevent us from extending the date-formula at the start of the 1st Mars paragraph in GYT 88 beyond the date of BRM 2, 50. As the next entry suggests, it is possible that Demetrius II overcame Alexander before the beginning of 167 SEB.

11. Obv. 10, GYT 54 (175 SEB): The Venus paragraph is dated: Year 167, King Demetrius (II), month I, night of the 21st (16/17 Apr. 145), and continues to 24.XII₂.167 SEB (8/9 Apr. 144). According to Obv. 14 of Diary –144, we have a possible reference to [King] Demetrius on 17.VI.167 SEB (7/8 Sep. 145) and then a positive attestation in Obv. 35 from month VII (20/1 Sep.–19/20 Oct.) in that same year. The latest extant record from the 1st reign of Demetrius II and before the capture of Mesopotamia by the Parthians in III.171 SEB (10/11 Jun.–8/9 Jul. 141) is Diary –141F whose colophon covers months VI₂ through to XII of 170 SEB (17/18 Sep. 142–11/12 Apr. 141). However, having collated the traces of cuneiform signs in Obv. 1 of Diary –140A with assistance from Dr. I.L. Finkel and Mr. C.B.F. Walker of the British Museum, I believe it is highly likely that month I of 171 SEB (12/13 Apr.–10/11 May 141) was dated to King Demetrius and not King Arsaces. This agrees with the following evidence: (a) Antiochus II died about month V of 66 SEB (30/1 Jul.–28/9 Aug. 246) and Seleucus II took over immediately. Yet I.66 SEB (3/4 Apr.–2/3 May) in Diary –245A was subscribed to King Antiochus and not King Seleucus (also confirmed by the colophon-title of Diary –245B). (b) following the Parthian victory in Babylonia in III.171 SEB, month IV (9/10 Jul.–6/7 Aug. 141) of that year in Diary –140A was dated to King Arsaces in order to register the change of reign. We are, therefore, assured by the references in Diaries –144, –141F and –140A that Demetrius II was recognised in Babylonia during VII.167 SEB–III.171 SEB (20/1 Sep. 145–8/9 Jul. 141). However, lack of dated cuneiform material from the period after 20.VIII.166 SEB (20/1 Nov. 146) (BRM 2, 50) and up to 20.I.167 SEB (before the date of Venus section in GYT 54) prevents us from deciding the accession date of Demetrius II accurately. Unfortunately, the contradictory figures in the literary sources on the reign-length of Alexander Balas too lend little help in computing the terminal date of his usurpation. Eusebius gives four different figures: 5 years, 9 years and 10 months, 10 and 15 years, while Syncellus quotes 5, 9, and 10 years and Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* 13.119) ascribes to Alexander a 5-year reign. However, I.Maccabees (11.20) reports that Demetrius II was on the throne in 167 SEM (autumn 146–autumn 145) and Eusebius places the death of Alexander Balas in Ol. 158.4 (145/4). Assuming that the news of the defeat and death of Balas took no more than two weeks to reach Babylon and thus induce a reign-change, it is possible that Demetrius II took the diadem sometime in the last month of 166 SEB

(Mar. 145) or the first week of 167 SEB (Apr. 145). This agrees rather well with both Eusebius and Syncellus who give Demetrius a 3-year reign (rounded down) before Diodotus Tryphon ousted him from Antioch and usurped the Seleucid throne around the middle of 170 SEB (Aug.–Oct. 142).

Having established the accuracy as well as the limitations of the date-formulas in GYTs, we may proceed with the historical implications of several “anomalous” cases.

The first of these relates to the co-regency of Antiochus I and his son Antiochus II. Insofar as the extant evidence is concerned, Antiochus I appointed his elder son, Seleucus, as joint ruler in 32 SEB. This is attested in the colophon-titles of OECT 9, 7, dated 24.IX.32 SEB (3/4 Jan. 279); CT 49, 103, dated 8.X.32 SEB (16/17 Jan. 279); and BM 104805, dated 28.XI.32 SEB (6/7 Mar. 279). According to a series of later date-formulas, including the following cases in the published GYTs, this initial co-regency is attested as late as 21.I.45 SEB (15/16 Apr. 267):

GYT 20 (118 SEB): Year 34, Kings Antiochus (I) and Seleucus.

GYT 15 (106 SEB): Year 35, Kings Ant[iochus (I) and] Seleucus.

GYT 20 (118 SEB): Year 35, Kings Antiochus (I) and Seleucus.

GYT 20 (118 SEB): Year 39, Kings Antiochus (I) and Seleucus.

GYT 23 (122 SEB): [Year 39], Kings Antiochus (I) and Seleucus.

GYT 7 (91 SEB): Year 45, Kings Antiochus (I) and Seleucus. Month I, the 21st...

We also have the colophon-title of BM 55437, dated 4.V.46 SEB (13/14 Aug. 266) and reporting the triple-regency of Antiochus I, Seleucus, and Antiochus II.¹⁷ However, Seleucus must have been put to death, on orders from his father,¹⁸ sometime before 13.VII.46 SEB (20/1 Oct. 266), i.e. the colophon-date of CT 49, 115 which is ascribed to Kings Antiochus (I) and his son, Antiochus (II) only. Yet we find the following from the same year (Rev. 13, 2nd Mars paragraph):

GYT 8 (94 SEB): Year 46, Kings Antiochus (II) and Seleucus. Month XII, night of the 24th (27/8 Mar. 265)...

It may be argued that Seleucus is simply a scribal error for Antiochus (II) in this particular date-formula. However, as shown in the following examples, there are also two “anomalous” cases from the period before the death of Antiochus I on 16.II.51 SEB (1/2 Jun. 261) (Obv. 10 of BKL). These are found in GYTs 9 and 10 from 95 and 96 SEB, respectively:

GYT 15 (106 SEB): [Year] 47, Great King Antiochus and [his son], King Antiochus.

GYT 20 (118 SEB): [Year 47], Kings Antiochus and his son Antiochus.

GYT 8 (94 SEB): [Y]ear 48, [Kings] Antiochus and [his son] Antiochus.

GYT 18 (107 SEB): [Year 48], Great King [Antioch]us and his son, King Antiochus.

GYT 9 (95 SEB): [Year 4]9, Kings Antiochus and Seleucus.

GYT 10 (96 SEB): [Year 49], Kings Antiochus and Seleucus.

GYT 10 (96 SEB): [Year 50], Great King Antiochus and his son, King Antiochus.

GYT 27 (129 SEB): Year 50, Great King Antiochus and his son, King Antiochus.

¹⁷ Stolper 1993: 46–49, No. 15.

¹⁸ Trogus Pompeius (*Prologue* 26) and John of Antioch (*Fragment* 55).

Surprisingly, this apparent name interchange, thus far the only instance from the entire period of Seleucid presence in Babylonia, is not limited to the co-regency of Antiochus I and Antiochus II. As shown below, it is also attested from the sole reign of Antiochus II in 59 SEB:

- GYT 31 (135 SEB): Year 52, King Antiochus.
 GYT 32 (135 SEB): [Year 5]2, King Antiochus.
 GYT 35 (140 SEB): Year 57, King Antiochus.
 GYT 14 (105 SEB): [Year] 58, King Antiochus.
 GYT 15 (106 SEB): [Year 59], King Antiochus.
 GYT 20 (118 SEB): Year 59, King Seleucus.
 GYT 36 (142 SEB): Year 59, King Antiochus.
 GYT 2 (79 SEB): Year 60, King Antiochus.
 GYT 15 (106 SEB): [Year] 60, King Antiochus.
 GYT 2 (79 SEB): Year 61, King Antiochus.
 GYT 2 (79 SEB): Year 61, King Antiochus.
 GYT 16 (107 SEB): [Year 61], King Antiochus.
 GYT 35 (140 SEB): Year 61, King Antiochus.
 GYT 39 (144 SEB): [Year 6]1, King Antiochus.
 GYT 37 (142 SEB): [Year 63], King Antiochus.
 GYT 31 (135 SEB): Year 64, King Antiochus.
 GYT 32 (135 SEB): [Year 6]4, King Antiochus.

Given that Seleucus III and Antiochus IV were respectively called Alexander and Mithradates before they assumed the diadem, I have argued that the above “anomalous” date-formulas suggest that Antiochus II too may have had Seleucus as his first name.¹⁹ This agrees with Justin (41.4.9–10) that at some point in time after the foundation of Parthia, Arsaces I scored a momentous victory against “King Seleucus” which was regarded by the Parthians as their day of freedom from Seleucid tutelage. Given that the epoch of the Arsacid Era, 1 Nīsānu 65 SEB (14/15 Apr. 247), falls in the reign of Antiochus II, it is possible that as “King Seleucus”, he was indeed defeated by the Parthians before his death about V.66 SEB (Aug. 246).

The second “anomalous” case, found in Obv. 27, GYT 74 (202 SEB) at the beginning of the Saturn paragraph, suggests a hitherto unattested co-regency between Antiochus IV and Antiochus V:

[Year 1]42, month XII₂. Year 143, Kings Antiochus (IV) and his son Antiochus, month I (Apr./May 169) ...

This clearly disagrees with the following extant material, showing that Antiochus IV ruled unassisted throughout the remaining years of his reign after he executed in V.142 SEB (Aug. 170) his son and associate-king Antiochus (the older brother of Antiochus V):

143 SEB:

Diary –168A (I.V–29.VIII = 17/18 Aug.–12/13 Dec. 169); ARRIMP 4 (16.VI = 1/2 Oct. 169); OECT 9, 58 (26.VIII = 9/10 Dec. 169); VS 15, 34 (2/3.XI = 11–13 Feb. 168); VS 15, 17 (21.XI = 2/3 Mar. 168), all subscribed to King Antiochus (IV) only.

¹⁹ Assar 2006/2007: 27–30.

144 SEB:

NCBT 1957 = YOS 20, 70 (11.I = 20/1 Apr. 168); VS 15, 30 (25.III = 2/3 Jul. 168); TCL 13, 245 (12.IV = 19/20 Jul. 168); unpublished BM 114415 (25.IV = 1/2 Aug. 168), all subscribed to King Antiochus (IV) only.

145 SEB:

VS 15, 33 (13.XII = 2/3 Mar. 166), subscribed to King Antiochus (IV) only.

146 SEB:

Diary –165A (month I = Apr./May 166); LBAT 1029 + 1030 (early in the year); unpublished BM 116692 (23.IV = 7/8 Aug. 166); VS 15, 13 (7.XI = 13/14 Feb. 165), all subscribed to King Antiochus (IV) only.

147 SEB:

MLC 2169 = YOS 20, 73 (13.I = 19/20 Apr. 165); BaM Beiheft 2, 89 (10.II = 15/16 May 165); Diary –164B+C (month VII = Oct. 165), all subscribed to King Antiochus (IV) only.

The colophon-date 202 SEB places GYT 74 in the reign of Mithradates II of Parthia (121–91 BC). It thus precludes the possibility of confusion between the two Seleucid rulers and the reigning Parthian monarch. However, the statements in II.Maccabees (9.23–25) indicate that Antiochus IV may have installed his young son, Antiochus V, as his heir before invading Egypt in early 143 SEB (Apr./May 169). The corresponding passages report an alleged letter Antiochus IV wrote from his death-bed in autumn of 146 SEB (Sep./Oct. 166). He reminded the insurgent Jews in Jerusalem that his father, Antiochus III, had appointed a successor before his eastern expedition into Parthia, Bactria and India during 209–205, “so that if anything contrary to expectation occurred or any unforeseen difficulty arose, the people at home, aware that the affairs of state had been entrusted to someone, might not be disturbed”. As mentioned in no. 2 above, the colophon-titles and date-formulas in VS 15, 48, Diaries –209A, Rev. 4–5 of BKL, and OECT 9, 41 confirm that prince Antiochus was promoted by his father Antiochus III to share the throne sometime after VI.102 SEB and before 15.I.103 SEB. A similar situation is narrated by Herodotus (7.2) concerning the appointment of Xerxes I (486–465) to receive the Achaemenid Empire before Darius I (522–486) set out on his Egyptian campaign sometime during 510–492. In his “letter” to the Jewish rebels Antiochus IV confesses that because his kingdom is constantly threatened by the neighbouring rulers, he has installed his young son as his successor and also emphasises that he often entrusted and commended prince Antiochus to his subjects before moving into the Upper Provinces (Eusebius reports that Antiochus was 12 years old when appointed king after which his father lived for 1.5 years). Given the historical reference in Obv. A₁₅ of Diary –168A dated V.143 SEB, confirming Antiochus IV in Egypt, and II.Maccabees (9.23–25), it is possible that the above “anomalous” date-formula in GYT 74 registers the appointment of Antiochus V as his father’s heir before the senior king left Antioch for Egypt in early 143 SEB.

The third “anomalous” date-formula is in Obv. 2, GYT 78 (207 SEB) at the beginning of the 2nd Jupiter paragraph. It reads: Year 124, King Antiochus (III), month XI, night of the 29th (11/12 Mar. 187) ..., with no earlier or later dates. Conversely, we have, at the head of the 2nd Lunar paragraph in Rev. Col. I, 5–6 of GYT 37 (142 SEB): [Year 124], Kings Antiochus (III) and his [son] Seleucus (IV) ..., with all useful dates lost,

and also in Rev. Col. II, 9–10 of the same GYT: Year 124, Kings Antiochus and [his son Seleucus ..., covering 14.I (4/5 May 188) in Col. II to 14.IX (27/8 Dec. 188) in Col. IV. Given that the short Diary –188 is dated 1–10.I.123 (2–12 Apr. 189) SEB to Kings Antiochus and Seleucus, and that Rev. Col. II, 1–2 of GYT 37 begins the 1st Moon section with [Year 123] Kings Antiochus and [his son] Seleucus, it is possible that the above date-formula in GYT 78, mentioning only King Antiochus in 124 SEB, is a scribal error. This, however, presupposes that the colophon-title in the original Diary, perhaps –187A, covering VII–XII.124 SEB (16 Oct. 188–11 Apr. 187), had remained intact until 207 SEB (the compilation date of GYT 78). The preserved text on the upper edge of Diary –187A reads: Diary [from month VII to the end of mo]nth XII of year 124, [Kings] Antiochus and [Seleucus, his son] ..., with the loss of the name of co-ruler Seleucus. Although the damage to this fragment may well be fairly recent, it is not impossible that the colophon-title of the original tablet from which the lunar data for GYT 78 was extracted had already been partially destroyed and thus lost the second royal name by 207 SEB (105/4). Given that the primary objective of the scribes of GYTs was to record earlier planetary and lunar data and not historical notices, an incomplete colophon-title, missing one or more royal names but retaining the compilation date, would not have deterred them from using the corresponding text. It is, therefore, possible to attribute the above “anomalous” date-formula in GYT 78 to a partially preserved colophon-title that had reached the scribes in 207 SEB.

The fourth case involves the date-formula in Obv. 11, GYT 92 (247 SEB) at the beginning of the Mercury section. It reads: [Year] 201, “King” Arsaces ... and covers the period 4.I (13/14 Apr. 111) to about 30.III (7/8 Jul. 111). The restoration “King” rather than “King of Kings” agrees both with the colophon-title and upper edge text of the unpublished NS Almanac LBAT **1059 for 201 SEB, giving King Arsaces, and a date-formula with unknown provenance attesting the same title in 202 SEB.²⁰ According to the upper edge text of Diary –108A+B, the *terminus post quem* for the adoption of the epithet “King of Kings” by Mithradates II is VII.203 SEB (12/13 Oct.–9/10 Nov. 109).

The fifth and final “anomalous” date-formula is in line 3, GYT Flake 93 (247 SEB) at the beginning of the 2nd Mars paragraph: [Year 200], King of Kings Arsaces ..., covering at least 25.IX (6/7 Jan. 111) to XII (Mar./Apr. 111). However, the colophon-title of CT 49, 145 confirms “King Arsaces” on 26.XII.200 SEB (5/6 Apr. 111) and, as mentioned above, the earliest attestation of the title “King of Kings” in the reign of Mithradates II is from VII.203 SEB. On the other hand, the date-formula in Obv. 1–2 of ADRTB 5, 30, reporting the lunar eclipse of 14.IX.246 SEB (28/9 Dec. 66), styles Phraates III as “King of Kings Arsaces”. We also find the same epithet in the colophon-title of the Almanac LBAT 1183 (joined to BM 33485 and an unnumbered Rm fragment) from 248 SEB (64/3) as well as the upper edge text of Diary –62, dated 249 SEB (63/2) (the partial colophon-title in Rev. 5 of this Diary too gives [LUGAL LUG]AL.MEŠ = King of Kings). These confirm Phraates III as “King of Kings” during 246–249 SEB and suggest that the scribe in 247 SEB was influenced by the epithet of the reigning Arsacid monarch and mistakenly ascribed the year 200 SEB of the 2nd Mars paragraph to Mithradates II.

²⁰ Strassmaier 1893: 111.

ABBREVIATIONS

ARRIMP 4	McEwan (1986)
BaM	Beiheft 2 Van Dijk/Mayer (1980)
BibMes 24	Weisberg (1991)
BKL	Sachs/Wiseman (1954)
BRM 1	Clay (1912)
BRM 2	Clay (1913/1920)
CT 49	Kennedy (1968)
HSM	Harvard Semitic Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
LBAT	Sachs (1955)
MLC	Morgan Library Collection, Yale University, New Haven
NCBT	Newell Collection of Babylonian Tablets, Yale University, New Haven
OECT 9	McEwan (1982)
PD	Parker/Dubberstein (1956)
SEB	Seleucid Era of the Babylonian calendar (epoch = 1 Nīsānu (2/3 April) 311 BC)
SEM	Seleucid Era of the Macedonian calendar (epoch = 1 Dios (6/7 October) 312 BC)
TCL	Contenau (1929)
YOS 20	<i>Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts</i> . New Haven (forthcoming)
VS 15	Schroeder (1916)

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