

LINGERING OVER WORDS
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THE BABYLONIAN
CHRONICLE REVISITED.

Grayson in his principal edition combines the three texts of Chronicle 1 into a single version and gives a conflated transliteration based on all three. This arrangement, however, while duly noting variants, tends to obscure distinctive features especially of Chronicle 1B.⁴³ The editorial conflation presents little difficulty for the reverse of these texts, where events of the seventh century are dealt with and surviving portions of Chronicles 1B and 1C closely parallel the text of Chronicle 1A. But it poses serious problems for the obverse (surviving only in 1A and 1B), where events of the eighth century are narrated and the texts, especially in column i, diverge more often than they agree. It is particularly instructive to compare column i of Chronicle 1B with parallel materials in Chronicle 1A:

stantially longer version here in Chrs. 1B and 1C may, however, have to be considered at some point in the future.)

⁴¹I have been unable to detect internal textual indications in Chrs. 1A, 1B, or 1C that would provide a clue to place of origin. The use of ventive verb forms in the chronicles occasionally gives a sense of direction toward the scribal point of reference. Note the use of *ūrdam(ma)*, "he came down" (to Babylonia) [Chr. 1A i 3, 20, ii 27] vs. *ūrid(ma)*, "he went down" (to Elam) [Chr. 1A ii 37, iii 10], *išqā*, "he came upstream" [Chr. 1A iii 40, cf. *išqi*, "he went upstream," Chr. 3:3], *illikūnim(ma)*, "they came" (from Elam to Agade) [Chr. 1A iv 18], *ūšūnim(ma)* ... *iterbūni*, "they came out (from Assur) and entered (Babylon)" [Chr. 1A iv 36; cf. Chr. 14:36, Chr. 16:6-7]; cf. "Nabu and the gods of Borsippa came (*ittalkūni*) to Babylon" [Chr. 16:8]. Use of the ventive in Chronicle 15 is especially striking: *illikam*, "(it) came" [line 4], *ušēbilam*, "(he?) brought it" (to Babylon) [line 5], *iterba*, "he entered (here)" [line 6], *išbatamma* ... [*ib*]ukam [line 10], *ilqā*, "he took (it)" (to the king of Babylon) [line 18], *issanqa*, "(the enemy) pressed" [line 19]. Note also the third person plural ventive written as *-ūnu* which occurs occasionally in Chr. 2: *ittardūnu*, "they came down" [line 10], *illikūnu*, "they came" [line 11], vs. *ittalkūni*, "they came" [line 19]; cf. *ūšū*, "they went out" (from Babylon) [Chr. 2:12] and also apparently similar writings in Chr. 3: *iḫabūnu* [line 7], *ištallūnu* [line 8], *itabkūnu* [line 8]. The frame of reference, however, sometimes seems to lie outside Babylon. Note that Nabu sometimes "goes" (*illiku*) from Borsippa to Babylon [Chr. 14:33; Chr. 15:22; Chr. 16:18, 20, 27; Chr. 17 iii 5, 8, 14, 15—is this final *-u* an unpronounced, overhanging vowel or the equivalent of any vowel for final *-a* at this time? it is unnecessary, but very commonly present], whereas Bel "comes out" (*ūšū*) from Babylon [Chr. 16:19, 21, 22, 23, 27; Chr. 17 iii 9, 14, 15]. The use of the ventive in the Babylonian chronicles is not consistent, but often fits in with older classical usage and can be translated as such. It might repay detailed study.

⁴²And about the relationship between Chronicles 1A and 1C, which could theoretically represent a single recension. At present, as mentioned above, there are no parallel passages in the extant portions of Chronicles 1B and 1C.

⁴³Grayson is aware of the substantial differences between Chronicles 1A and 1B (CRA 17 162 n. 3), though he downplays this factor in the introduction to his primary edition (*Chronicles*, p. 69).

Chronicle 1BChronicle 1A

i	(lacuna of at least seven lines at beginning) ⁴⁴	not present
i 1'	(end of entry, apparently mentioning suspension of the New Year's festival)	not present
i 2'-6'	accession of Tiglath-pileser III in Assyria; his first campaign into Babylonia	i 1-5
—	not present	i 6-8 (Babylon's battle against Borsippa)
i 7'-8'	accession of Ummanigaš in Elam	i 9-10
i 9'-10'	further episode mentioning Tiglath-pileser III	not present
i 11'	broken entry ending in x KUR 'ur'-ra-du	not present
i 12'	broken entry ending in x x LU	not present
i 13'	broken entry ending in 'NAM' GAR/šá	not present
i 14'-15'(+)	broken entry, the first line of which ends in KI	not present

The difference between the 1B and 1A versions is especially striking here. 1B has at least eight lines of text before 1A begins and, of its 15 preserved lines in col. i, only 7 are paralleled in 1A.⁴⁵ If one includes in the statistics the lacuna (at least seven lines) before the first partially preserved line of 1B, only 7 of those 22 lines in 1B i would be shared with 1A i.⁴⁶ On the other hand, 1A has three lines (i 6-8) which are not in 1B.⁴⁷ Clearly these two recensions differ more than they coincide, and it is difficult to speak of a common text here in any meaningful sense.

Comparison of the second column of the two versions is more problematic, since the pertinent portions of both tablets are heavily damaged. Chronicle 1B seems to have had much more material in its first column, since—after a lacuna of at least seven lines at the beginning of column ii—its first partially preserved line corre-

⁴⁴The size of the lacuna can be gauged from the length of the subsurface clay preserved on the tablet before the beginning of the first preserved line in column ii. See the photo in Grayson, *Chronicles*, pl. XIV and King's copy in *CT* 34 44. I have estimated the size of the lacuna from the tablet itself (June 1987), based on the average height of lines in columns i-ii. See also note 60 below.

⁴⁵Note particularly the short entries in Chr. 1B i 9'-14'.

⁴⁶This percentage of shared lines would only be further decreased if it can be demonstrated that still more of the tablet is now lacking beyond the 7-line minimum estimated from surviving clay at the beginning of column ii.

⁴⁷Note the atypical form of this entry. It begins *ana tarši RN*, "at the time of RN" rather than with the precise date formula *MU.N(KAM) RN*, "Nth year of RN," used elsewhere in the chronicle. What is the implication of the phrase *ul šatir* "is not written" in the sentence *šaltu ša Nabû-ndšir ana libbi Barsip ipušu ul šatir*? Was the entry taken from oral tradition, or does the statement mean that there was no (detailed) written record of the hostilities?

sponds to 1A i 39.⁴⁸ Of the twenty-one lines in column ii of 1B, the following are the correspondences to 1A.

<u>Chronicle 1B</u>	<u>Chronicle 1A</u>
ii (lacuna of at least seven lines at beginning) ⁴⁹	?
ii 1'-2' (end of entry, corresponding to the death of Ummanigaš and the accession of his nephew)	i 39-40
ii 3' beginning of entry, mentioning the sixth year and Ass[yr]ia	not present
ii 4'-6' continuation of entry, summarizing length of hostilities between Babylonia and Assyria	i 41-42
ii 7'-8' tenth year of Merodach-baladan II	i 43-44 (?—very little actually preserved here)
ii 9'-14' twelfth year of Merodach-baladan II	ii 1-5 (very little preserved)
ii 15'-21' four entries covering the thirteenth through seventeenth years of Sargon II	too little preserved for comparison, but traces do not seem to match Chronicle 1B ⁵⁰

Thus the examination of column ii of Chronicle 1B must be considered inconclusive. But, if Sennacherib's second year is mentioned in Chronicle 1A ii 10, there would be only four lines available in that text (ii 6-9) to accommodate entries which would have to cover not only the material in eight lines of Chronicle 1B (ii 15'-22') but also the accession of Sennacherib. It therefore seems likely that the coverage of 1A and 1B again diverged at this point, with 1B providing fuller detail.

In the third and fourth columns on the reverse, the three texts match more closely. Chronicle 1B iii 1'-21' is almost a verbal parallel to Chronicle 1A iii 3-22. But there are various minor omissions in Chronicle 1A,⁵¹ the addition of a summary sentence about the length of reign of Nergal-ušēzib in Chronicle 1A iii 5-6,⁵² slightly longer wording describing the removal of Ḫallušu in Chronicle 1A iii 7 (vs. Chroni-

⁴⁸The average line in 1A contained somewhat more material than the average line in 1B, and a ratio of about 1.2:1 can be established on the basis of parallel passages.

⁴⁹See note 44 above.

⁵⁰Both texts are extensively damaged at this point.

⁵¹Chr. 1A omits: KUR before NIM (Chr. 1A iii 7 vs. Chr. 1B iii 4'), MEŠ after GAZ (Chr. 1A iii 8 vs. Chr. 1B iii 5'), masculine personal determinative before *Mušēzib-Marduk* (Chr. 1A iii 12 vs. Chr. 1B iii 10'), *u* between KUR NIM and KUR URLKI (Chr. 1A iii 16 vs. Chr. 1B iii 15'), ÉRIN before KUR *aš+šur* (Chr. 1A iii 17 vs. Chr. 1B iii 17'), the dividing line after the entry relating to the battle of Ḫalulē (Chr. 1A iii 18-19 vs. Chr. 1B iii 18'-19'), KÁM after MU.4 (Chr. A iii 19 vs. Chr. B iii 19').

⁵²MU 1 6 ITI.[MEŠ d]U.GUR-ú-še-zib LUGAL-ut TIN.TIR.KI DÙ-uš.

cle 1B iii 4', though the latter is heavily damaged),⁵³ varying days in Abu 692 for the death of the Elamite king Kudurru (Kudur-Nahhunte),⁵⁴ and orthographic variants. The beginning sections of the few lines preserved of the third column of Chronicle 1C also match the corresponding part of Chronicle 1A,⁵⁵ except for the omission of a determinative.⁵⁶

In the fourth column, just a few signs remain in Chronicle 1B; and the only apparent deviation from Chronicle 1A is an orthographic variant.⁵⁷ The fourth column of Chronicle 1C is better preserved; and there is only one significant difference, the insertion of a line (iv 3') that is not in Chronicle 1A: [šallas]su šallat ilānišu itabkū, "they took away its (Egypt's) [booty] and the booty of its gods" (which corresponds to a place just after line 25 in Chronicle 1A iv). There are also a series of mostly orthographic or other minor variants,⁵⁸ and one apparent deviation in the edited text is not supported by the original tablets.⁵⁹

Thus a reasonable case, based largely on the contents of the obverse of these tablets, can be made for distinguishing at least two major recensions of this chronicle, 1B and 1A, or perhaps Long and Short versions respectively. The coverage of 1B begins earlier than that of 1A, and it is possible that 1B extended before the beginning of the reign of Nabonassar.⁶⁰ It is also possible that the coverage of 1B may have

⁵³Where Chronicle 1B iii 3'-5' has 'hal'-[lu-šú] LUGAL KUR NIM UN.MEŠ'-šú is-ḥu-šú-'ma' x [] GAZ.MEŠ'-šú, Chronicle 1A iii 7-8 has hal-lu-šú LUGAL NIM UN.MEŠ'-šú is-'ḥu-šú' (...) K]Á ina IGI-šú «šú» ip-ḥu-ú GAZ-šú.

⁵⁴Day 17 (Chr. 1A iii 13), day 8 (Chr. 1B iii 11'); see Grayson's commentary in *Chronicles*, p. 80.

⁵⁵Chr. 1C iii 2'-7' = Chr. 1A iii 41-44.

⁵⁶KUR between LUGAL and NIM in iii 4' (vs. Chr. 1A iii 42). This variant should be added to the critical apparatus in Grayson, *Chronicles*, p. 82.

⁵⁷[di]-i-ku (Chr. 1B iv 5') for GAZ.MEŠ (Chr. 1A iv 2).

⁵⁸KUR inserted before *mí-šir* in Chr. 1A iv 25; *me-'em'-pi* (Chr. 1C iv 3') vs. *me-em-pí* (Chr. 1A iv 26); UN.MEŠ (Chr. 1C iv 7') vs. UN.'MEŠ-šú' (Chr. 1A iv 28); *ḥab-tu* (Chr. 1C iv 7') vs. *'ḥab'-ta* (Chr. 1A iv 28); *id-duk* (Chr. 1C iv 10') vs. *'id'-du-uk* (Chr. 1A iv 29); compare *ina* (Chr. 1A iv 25) for *šá* (Chr. 1C iv 2').

⁵⁹Chr. 1C iv 6': [DUMU].M'EŠ ŠEŠ-šú ina ŠU^{II} ša-ab-tu; Chr. 1A iv 27: DUMU.'MEŠ' [...] (collated). The traces following DUMU in Chr. 1A are not as clear as copied by King in *CT* 34 50; and Grayson's transliteration does not indicate the extent of the damage. The supposed bottom wedge in 'šú' (King) could well be a subcutaneous scratch. There is no reason to presume divergence here, although it cannot be excluded. Esarhaddon's Zenjirli inscription claims that many more members of the Egyptian royal family were captured (Taharqa's wives, crown prince, and other sons and daughters); neither brother nor nephews are mentioned (Borger, *Esarh.*, p. 99 §65 Mnm. A rev. 43-44).

⁶⁰Chr. 1B itself had at least eight lines at the beginning of column i before its entry for Nabonassar's third year, which raises the possibility that not all these lines (and their missing precursors) dealt with the beginning of Nabonassar's reign. There could also have been several more lines, if Chronicle 1B after the end of the preserved portion of column ii roughly corresponded with the text of Chronicle 1A; if Chronicle 1B had a fuller text than Chronicle 1A after that point, the lacuna at

ended before that of 1A.⁶¹ Should one classify Chronicle 1A and Chronicle 1B as two separate chronicles?⁶² One could make a strong case in favor of that alternative, if one wished to stress divergent rather than common features. It is plain that Chronicle 1A iv has much more in common with the Esarhaddon Chronicle [Chronicle 14]⁶³ than Chronicle 1A i has in common with Chronicle 1B i. It remains to be seen whether the contrast between Chronicles 1A and 1B reflects merely a difference of scribal schools or whether it could have had geographical or ideological significance.⁶⁴ As historiographic research on the chronicles proceeds, one should investigate the possible relevance of geographical particularism and varying ideologies even in chronicles for which only a single text is known.⁶⁵

the beginning of Chronicle 1B i could be still larger. Either of these alternatives would make it still less likely that Chronicle 1B began only with the reign of Nabonassar.

⁶¹Unless the missing portions in Chronicle 1B at the end of column iii and at the beginning of column iv contain more material than is in the corresponding entries of Chronicle 1A (and the reverse sections of these texts elsewhere closely parallel each other), there should be only between 4 and 7 lines missing at the end of Chronicle 1B iv—hardly enough to parallel the remaining 33 lines of text and 6 lines of colophon in Chronicle 1A after the last preserved entry in Chronicle 1B.

⁶²Prescinding for the moment from the question how Chronicle 1C, of which very little is preserved, is related to these two documents.

⁶³Especially the better preserved portions, e.g., Chr. 14:10–39 with Chr. 1A iv 1–38. These texts are compared more fully below.

⁶⁴It is unfortunate that reexamination of the evidence for provenience of Chronicles 1A, 1B, and 1C (see note 33 above) does not support distinguishing a “Babylon” from a “Sippar” recension.

⁶⁵E.g., Chronicle 15 was written by a scribe known to have been active at Borsippa (see note 13 above). Note W. G. Lambert’s remarks on varying perspectives at Uruk and Babylon on first-millennium history in *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: Athlone Press, 1978), pp. 11–12 and n. 17.