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ALEXANDER DATES IN LYDIAN INSCRIPTIONS*

Summary: LW 3 and 50, the two Lydian inscriptions mentioning the Macedonian king Alexander in the date formula, have been dated 330/29 and 323/2 BC in the past on the basis of the dates in Babylonian cuneiform documents. Thanks to new insights in the Babylonian evidence, it is now clear that the cuneiform documents were dated to Alexander's Macedonian regnal years. The dates of the Lydian inscriptions LW 3 and 50 have therefore to be shifted to 333/2 or 332/1 BC and 325/4 or 324/3 BC. As a result, no posthumous dates for Alexander the Great are attested in the Lydian documentation.

Seven Lydian inscriptions mention the name of a king in the date formula: LW[1] 1, 2, 41, 71 and a recently published text from the Kaystros valley[2] mention *artakśassa-*[3] (Artaxerxes), with the regnal years 10, 15, 16 and 17 and in LW 3 and 50 *alίksã/antru-* (Alexander) appears, with the regnal years 5 and 12. Artaxerxes could be either Artaxerxes I Makrocheir (465–424/3 BC), Artaxerxes II Memnon (405/4–359/8 BC) or Artaxerxes III Ochus (359/8–338 BC). Arta-

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The Babylonian date formulas will be abbreviated under the form "king.year.month.day", e.g. AlexIII.07.08.09 = 9 Arahsamnu (= month VIII) of the seventh year of Alexander (III) the Great. The abbreviated (royal) names are: Alex = Alexander; Antig = Antigonus; Art = Artaxerxes; Phil = Philip; SE = Seleucid Era. – The abbreviations used in the following are listed at the end of the article.

1 The texts are cited after the collection in R. Gusmani, Lydisches Wörterbuch mit grammatischer Skizze und Inschriftensammlung, Heidelberg 1964 and R. Gusmani, Lydisches Wörterbuch mit grammatischer Skizze und Inschriftensammlung. Ergänzungsband Lieferung 3, Heidelberg 1986.

2 R. Gusmani and Y. Akkan, Bericht über einen lydischen Neufund aus dem Kaystrostal, Kadmos 43 (2004) 139–149.

3 In LW 71 probably *artakśaśśa-* (see Gusmani–Akkan, Bericht 147). In the new inscription of the Kaystros valley Artaxerxes is written *artakśaerśa-*. According to the editors (Gusmani–Akkan, Bericht 147) this writing might be influenced by the writing of the name of Xerxes as was the case with Greek Artaxerxes.

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xerxes IV (or Arses[4]) is no option because he only ruled for two years (338–336/5 BC). In general Artaxerxes III is preferred, but for LW 1 Artaxerxes II is proposed now because of the decoration of the stele[5]. Since Artaxerxes is not the focus of the present article, I do not go into detail as far as this problem is concerned. For *aλiksã/antru-* on the other hand there are theoretically two possible interpretations: Alexander (III) the Great or his son Alexander IV.

B. Haussoullier, the original editor of LW 50[6], identified *aλiksã/antru-* with Alexander the Great and he dated Alexander's first year in 334/3 BC, when he conquered Asia Minor after his victory at the Granikos. He therefore dated LW 3 in 330/29 BC and LW 50 in 323/2 BC. Apart from some month names[7] the Lydian calendar is completely unknown to us. Since however Alexander the Great died on June 11 323 BC[8], the chances are relatively high that this date in 323/2 BC was posthumous. It all depends on the New Year date in use in Lydia at the time and on the place of *kanlela-*, the month mentioned in LW 50, in the calendar. Since there are no data available for the Lydian calendar it is not possible to go beyond theoretical observations here. Whatever it may be, a posthumous date for Alexander the Great does not necessarily have to be a problem. When Alexander died in Babylon on June 11 323 BC, a political crisis was born because there was no apparent heir for the new world empire. It was only after hard deliberations (with quite some pressure of the army of common soldiers) that Alexander's generals finally decided to accept Alexander's mentally handicapped half-brother Arrhidaeus and his unborn child, if this turned out to be a son, with his wife Roxane, as legal heirs to the throne[9]. How long these negotiations took exactly is not known. It is therefore quite well possible that LW 50 was composed at a time when Alexander was already dead,

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4 On the identification of Arses with Artaxerxes IV, see e.g. P. Briant, Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre (Achaemenid History 10), Leiden 1996, 1037–1038.

5 R. Gusmani, Lydisches Wörterbuch, Ergänzungsband Lieferung 1, Heidelberg 1980, 16–17.

6 B. Haussoullier, in W. H. Buckler, Lydian Inscriptions. A Collection of the Texts in Lydian Script found at Sardis and elsewhere (Sardis. Publications of the American Society for the Excavation at Sardis vol. VI/2), Leyden 1924, 68–72.

7 *bakilli-*, *cuvelli-* and *kanlela-* or *kanlala-*.

8 See L. Depuydt, The Time of Death of Alexander the Great: 11 June 323 B.C. (–322), ca. 4:00–5:00 PM, Welt des Orients 28 (1997) 117–135.

9 For a general overview of the situation after Alexander's death, see E. Will, Histoire politique du monde hellénistique. Tome I: De la mort d'Alexandre aux avènements d'Antiochos III et de Philippe V, Nancy 1979², 20–22.

but that the text still mentions him because no solution to the royal crisis was available yet.

Moreover, Haussoullier refers to the Babylonian evidence which proves, according to his source Oppert[10], that the Babylonians did not mention the regnal years of Alexander's successor Philip Arrhidaeus in the contemporary legal and administrative documents. Because they stuck to Alexander in the date formulas, a sort of Alexander Era emerged that started, still according to Oppert[11], on 1 Nisannu of Alexander's first regnal year after Babylonia's conquest or April 330 BC. Oppert mentions four tablets from the British Museum that were posthumously dated to Alexander: two texts are dated AlexIII.08, one AlexIII.09 and one AlexIII.10. Only for the first text Oppert presents a translation and some explanation because this tablet illustrates according to him the use of the Alexander Era. For the date formula he reads "au mois d'Ab, le 10^{e} jour, l'an 8 d'Alexandre, après Alexandre le roi". The addendum "after king Alexander" proves according to Oppert that Alexander was already dead at the time the tablet was written (August 323 BC) and the appearance of AlexIII.09 and AlexIII.10 in the other tablets shows that Alexander's regnal years were used long after his death when Philip Arrhidaeus was already widely accepted as successor. Though he admits that in later times the reign of Philip Arrhidaeus was acknowledged in Babylonian documents from his first year onwards (astronomical tablets from the Arsacid period are mentioned as evidence), the contemporary legal and administrative documents never mentioned Philip and kept dating to Alexander. The Alexander Era therefore was the first era used in contemporary legal and administrative documents, several decades older than the well-known Seleucid Era[12].

Gusmani[13] recently followed this date by Haussoullier on the basis of Babylonian parallels presented by Oppert. The study of Babylo-

[10] J. Oppert, Alexandre à Babylone, CRAIBL 1898, 418 and n. 1.

[11] J. Oppert, CRAIBL 1898, 419 n. 1.

[12] When Seleucus assumed the royal title in 305/4 BC and predated his rule to the moment he reconquered Babylonia (311 BC) the new dating method was not yet an era, but rather a system counting the years when Seleucus ruled in Babylonia (first as satrap and later as king) as was the tradition in Babylonia for already a millennium. It is not until 281 BC, when Antiochus I decided to continue the count of the satrapal/regnal years of his father instead of starting all over again with his own regnal years, that it can be called an era (see e.g. A. Mehl, Seleukos Nikator und sein Reich. I. Teil: Seleukos' Leben und die Entwicklung seiner Machtposition (Studia Hellenistica 28), Lovanii 1986, 140).

[13] R. Gusmani, Lydisches Wörterbuch, 18 and Zwei lydische Neufunde aus Sardis, Kadmos 24 (1985) 79.

nian cuneiform documents from the Hellenistic period has however progressed enormously during the century since Oppert's publication and our knowledge of chronology and dating methods of this period has especially increased in recent years[14]. It is therefore necessary to return to the British Museum tablets cited by Oppert. Although he does not give us the museum numbers of the cuneiform tablets he mentions, his translation of the first text shows that it probably is BM 61745, published by M. Stolper as AION Suppl. 77 95[15]. Oppert's expression "Year 8 of Alexander, after king Alexander" turns out to be "mu-8-kam ^{m}*a-lek-sa-an-dar* [lugal] a ^{m}*a-lek-sa-an-dar*" or "Year 8 of [king] Alexander, son of Alexander"[16]. This means that not Alexander the Great is mentioned, but his son Alexander IV. For the three other texts it is not possible to retrace the exact wording of the Babylonian tablet, because I was not able to identify the data mentioned by Oppert with tablets from the British Museum presently known[17]. We can therefore not be sure if these tablets mention the reign of Alexander the Great or Alexander IV.

At the moment several administrative and legal documents from AlexIII.08–10 have been identified, viz. TCL 13 247 from AlexIII.08, CT 49 5 from AlexIII.09 and CT 17 12–13 from AlexIII.10. There are even documents from the years Alex.11–13 that can be attributed

[14] See e.g. T. Boiy, Dating Methods during the Early Hellenistic Period, Journal of Cuneiform Studies 52 (2000) 115–121.

[15] M. W. Stolper, Late Macedonian, Early Macedonian, and Early Seleucid Records of Deposit and Related Texts (AION Suppl. 77), Napoli 1993, 92–95. Compare Oppert's translation "deux cors de blé, pour la nourriture des forgerons, pour l'an 8 d'Alexandre le roi, et que Nabukusursu le forgeron a reçu des mains de Bel-zirut, pour la nourriture. Au mois d'Ab, le 10^{e} jour, l'an 8 d'Alexandre, après Alexandre le roi. Ongle de Nabu-kusursu" with Stolper's "Nabû-kuṣuršu, the brewer, son of Bēl-zēr-līšir, has received 3 *qû* of barley, part of the brewers' rations for year 8 of King Alexander, from the (stores of?) rations. Month V, day 20, year 8, Alexander [the King], son of Alexander. Ring of [Nabû]-kuṣuršu".

[16] For similar date formulas that preserve the complete date formula, see e.g. CT 49 18: 7–9 and CT 49 22: 11–12.

[17] The tablet dated Alex.08.12.11 according to Oppert might be BM 42469 (published as AOAT 252 228) although it is actually dated Alex.08.12.14. The tablet dated Alex.09.10.11 by Oppert might be BM 47536 (published as CT 49 7). For this last tablet only Alex.09 is certain because day and month are only partially preserved on the tablet. On the basis of these traces the date Alex.09.06.21 is at present accepted for CT 49 7 (see M. W. Stolper, Records of Deposit, 20 n. 5). It is not impossible though that Oppert read here Alex.09.10.11 instead. The main reason why CT 49 7 could have been the tablet that was meant by Oppert here is the reading for Alexander. Oppert mentions *a-lek-sa-an-du* instead of the normal writing *a-lek-sa-an-dar* and this exceptional way to write Alexander's name can be read clearly in CT 49 7: 20.

with certainty to Alexander the Great: AION Suppl. 77 69 from AlexIII.11, CT 44 83 from AlexIII.12 and AION Suppl. 77 71 from AlexIII.13. This does however not mean that these texts were all dated posthumously after Alexander's death and that the Babylonians used an Alexander Era instead of the regnal years of Philip Arrhidaeus. In my view the Babylonians did not start Alexander's first year in April 330, or 1 Nisannu (= Babylonian New Year) following his conquest of Babylonia after Darius' III defeat at Gaugamela in October 331 BC. They simply followed Alexander's Macedonian regnal years and therefore started AlexIII.07 on 3 April 330 BC[18]. A first indication for this is the lack of documents dated to AlexIII.01–06[19]. This means that in Oppert's reconstruction almost no tablets from the lifetime of Alexander the Great survived and almost all known tablets are posthumously dated to his so-called Alexander Era. If the Macedonian regnal years were used on the other hand, the tablets from Alexander's reign start from the moment he conquered Babylonia until he died in Babylon and none of the dates preserved is posthumous. The first six years of Alexander simply do not exist because at that time he had not yet reached Babylonia and the Babylonian tablets of that time reflect Darius' rule there. An additional argument for this chronological reconstruction is the astronomical tablet AD 5 66 (= LBAT 1397), which contains observations of the planet Jupiter for every single year from 362/1 until 324/3 BC. In AD 5 66: rev. V 16–37 the observations dated to DariusIII.05 are followed by observations during AlexIII.07, AlexIII.08, AlexIII.09 and AlexIII.10. Since every single year is mentioned in AD 5 66, this clearly shows that the Babylonians used Alexander's Macedonian regnal years. A last argument in favour of the use of Macedonian regnal years for Alexander the Great by the Babylonians is, despite Oppert's claim that the Babylonians ignored Philip Arrhidaeus in the date formulas of legal and administrative tablets in the years immediately following the death of Alexander the Great, the appearance of Philip's early

[18] The previous year 331/0 BC was DarIII.05 for the Babylonians. For the period between Darius' defeat at Gaugamela and the start of the new year, the Babylonians followed the local practice of the so-called Accession Year (see T. Boiy, The "Accession Year" in the Late Achaemenid and Early Hellenistic Period, in Fs. Walker, 25–33).
For examples of AlexIII.07, see CBS 7345 and Fs. Huot 263.

[19] Oppert mentions Bu 88-5-12, 619 (= BM 78707, published as CT 4 39c) as an example of a text dated to AlexIII.06. The text was later re-edited as CT 49 6 and the original reading turned out to be a mistake: the text is actually dated to AlexIII.09.

years in the date formulas: Phil.01 in TBER 9 (AO 6015), Phil.02 in Fs. Walker 120 and Phil.03 in CT 49 9.

If we stick to Haussoullier's method of Babylonian parallels and if we use the modern interpretation for dating LW 3 and 50, this means that LW 3 should be dated, depending on the unknown New Year date[20], in 333/2 or 332/1 BC (AlexIII.05) and LW 50 in 325/4 or 324/3 BC (AlexIII.12). AlexIII.05 did not exist in the Babylonian sources because Babylonia was at that time still a part of the Achaemenid empire, but for Lydia it is no problem at all: after Alexander's victory at the Granikos (Spring 334 BC), Lydia's capital Sardes was his first goal and soon he conquered the whole of Asia Minor. 324/3 BC for LW 50 means that the date of this inscription is not posthumous anymore, but that it was inscribed at the end of Alexander's lifetime.

The second theoretical possibility to date the Lydian inscriptions mentioning Alexander is to identify *αλiksã/antru-* with Alexander IV instead of his father Alexander the Great. Neither Buckler[21] nor Haussoullier (cf. supra) took this possibility into consideration. Although Alexander IV was theoretically king together with Philip Arrhidaeus according to the reconstructions of the classical authors, he never appears together with Philip in the date formulas of the contemporary Babylonian, Egyptian and Idumaean sources. It was not until Philip was murdered on the orders of Olympias that Alexander IV is mentioned in the date formulas of the oriental sources and even then it happened with quite some delay: in Egypt documents were dated posthumously to Philip for several months (Philip died in October 317, the last papyrus mentioning Philip dates to Hathyr Phil.08 = January/February 316 BC[22] and the first with Alexander IV in the date formula was written on 2 Mecheir AlexIV.01 = 10 April 316 BC[23]) and in Babylonia the period when documents were still dated posthumously to Philip Arrhidaeus lasted a full year (the youngest document is dated Phil.08.07.18 = 9 October 316 BC[24]). This means that AlexIV.01 was 317/6 BC in the Egyptian sources and 316/5 BC in the cuneiform documentation. The difference is due to the different

[20] See below on the New Year date in Egypt.
[21] W. H. Buckler, Lydian Inscriptions, 8.
[22] Bibliothèque Nationale 219; see T. C. Skeat, The Reigns of the Ptolemies (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 39), München 1954, 27 and P.Dem.Bad. pp. 41–43.
[23] P.dem.Loeb 27; see T. C. Skeat, The Reigns of the Ptolemies, 27.
[24] AION Suppl. 77 79.

New Year date at that time (at the end of the Julian year in Egypt and in spring in Babylonia).

Also Alexander IV was murdered (in 310 or 309 BC) and in his case posthumous dates were used for an even longer period of time: because the Argead dynasty came to an end with the death of Alexander IV, there was no apparent heir and the Hellenistic rulers tried to hide the monarch's death and continued to use the name of the deceased king Alexander IV in the date formulas. It was not until 306 or 305 BC, when all Hellenistic rulers followed the example of Antigonus Monophthalmus and his son Demetrius Poliorcetes and assumed the royal diadem and title for themselves, that they also abandoned the fictional chronology according to a long before deceased king and started to date in their own name. A date Alex.05, as in LW 3, is therefore no problem for Alexander IV because he was still alive in 313/2 BC or 312/1 BC and it is effectively attested in Idumaea (EN.111 = AL.89[25]) and probably also in Egypt (P.dem. Brux. 2 10). Alex.12 is also still possible for Alexander IV because it is the end of the period of posthumous dating to Alexander IV (306/5 BC in Egypt, 305/4 BC in Babylonia) and in Egypt it is effectively attested (P.Loeb 3). Though AlexIV.12 is not attested in Babylonia this date is also there theoretically possible because 305/4 BC is the year when Seleucus started to date in his own name and therefore the beginning of the year might have been dated AlexIV.12[26].

The situation for Alexander IV in date formulas in Babylonia, Idumaea and Egypt can however not be simply transferred to date formulas in Lydian inscriptions. The reason for this is that the whole of Asia Minor, including Lydia, was ruled at that time by the Successor Antigonus Monophthalmus. This Successor was not only the first to take the royal title himself, he was also the first to ignore the official king in the date formulas of documents: he introduced his own

[25] Attribution to Alexander IV by EN, p. 17; see also P. V. Wheatley, The Year 22 Tetradrachms of Sidon and the Date of the Battle of Gaza, ZPE 144 (2003) 274. A. Lemaire, Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée au Musée d'Israël (Transeuphratène Supplément 3), Paris 1996, 42–45 thinks that Alexander the Great is meant.

[26] There are no date formulas of administrative or legal texts from this year preserved (the oldest date formula mentioning king Seleucus is CT 4 29d dated SE.08.01.03 = 16 April 304 BC), but several tablets mention the equation year 7 = year 1 of king Seleucus (AD 5 67: 'flake' II' 12', Iraq 16 pl. 53: obv. 6 and LBAT 1218: obv. 4). The first part of the equation is the predated start of Seleucus' rule, the reconquest of Babylonia by Seleucus in 311 BC, later known as the Seleucid Era. This means that 305/4 BC was the year when Seleucus assumed the royal title for himself.

name in the date formulas with his title "strategos"[27] a decade before he assumed the royal title: in Babylonia the date formulas bearing his name were introduced between June/July 315 BC and December/January 315/4 BC BC and in Idumaea his name appeared in the ostraca from July 315 BC onwards. It was not until the reconquest of Idumaea by Ptolemy and Babylonia by Seleucus that the official king Alexander IV was reintroduced in the date formulas there. Unfortunately we do not have any date formula from Asia Minor dating to this period[28] and the key question is of course if Antigonus applied the same dating method in Lydia and Asia Minor as he did in Babylonia and Idumaea. I think it is likely that Antigonus used the same system in all the regions he controlled, but until inscriptions mentioning his name in the date formula are found this remains of course a mere hypothesis. If he did, AlexIV.05 could not appear in Lydian inscriptions because we know from Babylonia and Idumaea that Antigonus had already introduced his own name in the date formulas in 313/2 or 312/1 BC, following the Egyptian or Babylonian example which depends on the unknown New Year date for Lydia. The same is of course true for the AlexIV.12 date.

If Antigonus did however not change the traditional dating system and kept dating to the regnal years of Alexander IV as all the other Hellenistic rulers did before they assumed the royal title themselves, AlexIV.05 is a perfectly normal date for a Lydian inscription. AlexIV.12 on the other hand is even in this situation still a problematical date: AlexIV.12 is either 306/5 or 305/4 BC and for these dates the problem concerning the moment when Antigonus Monophthalmus and Demetrius Poliorcetes assumed the royal title enters the debate. Antigonus proclaimed himself and his son Demetrius jointly kings immediately after Demetrius' decisive naval victory over Ptolemy at Salamis on Cyprus (see e.g. Diod. 20.53.2). The Salamis naval battle can be dated to June 306 BC[29] and the assumption of kingship by Antigonus must therefore have happened in June or July.

[27] ^{lú}*rab uqu/i* or ^{lú}gal eren$_2$ in Babylonian cuneiform tablets.

[28] For the early Hellenistic period in Asia Minor I only know of dated Greek inscriptions during the reign of Philip Arrhidaeus originating from Caria, see Ch. Habicht, Literarische und epigraphische Überlieferung zur Geschichte Alexanders und seiner ersten Nachfolger, in Akten des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Griechische und Lateinische Epigraphik (Vestigia. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte 17), München 1972, 374 n. 36 and E. Varinlioğlu, A. Bresson, P. Brun, P. Debord and R. Descat, Une inscription de Pladasa en Carie, REA 92 (1990) 59–78.

[29] See P. Wheatley, The Antigonid Campaign in Cyprus, 306 BC, Anc. Soc. 31 (2001) 133–156 and J. C. Yardley, W. Heckel and P. Wheatley in their forthcoming translation of and commentary on Justin 13–15.

It is of course only logical that Antigonus, fully in agreement with traditional dating systems, used his own name in dating formulas once he was king himself: Antigonus could not have allowed posthumous dating after a king who deceased long before once he was installed himself. The Babylonian example for AlexIV.12 in LW 50 (305/4 BC) is therefore clearly out of the question. Also 306/5 BC for AlexIV.12, as in the Egyptian documents, is practically impossible because it presupposes a New Year date at the end of the Julian year (autumn?), again a moment when Antigonus was already king in his own name.

We can conclude that the dates for LW 3 and LW 50 proposed by Haussoullier – AlexIII.01 = 334/3 BC after Alexander's victory at the Granikos with AlexIII.12 as a posthumous date – on the basis of the Babylonian parallels are not possible because of the new insights in these Babylonian date formulas. AlexIV.12 is impossible as a date for a Lydian inscription because Antigonus Monophthalmus was at that time king himself and the posthumous dating to Alexander IV must have come to an end. AlexIV.05 for LW 3 is only possible if Antigonus for some mysterious reason chose to stick to the traditional dating techniques mentioning the name of the king in Asia Minor and Lydia whereas he replaced Alexander IV with his own name and title in the date formulas of the cuneiform tablets in Babylonia and the Aramaic ostraca of Idumaea. I therefore propose to link the Alexander dates in the Lydian inscriptions again to the dating system in use in the Babylonian documents as we know it now, which means Alexander's Macedonian regnal years. Depending on the unknown New Year date in Lydia, LW 3 must therefore be dated to 333/2 or 332/1 BC and LW 50 to 325/4 or 324/3 BC.

Abbreviations

AD = A. Sachs and H. Hunger, Astronomical Diaries and related Texts from Babylonia (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Phil.-hist. Klasse. Denkschriften 195/210/247/299), Wien 1988–

AION = Annali dell'Instituto Orientale di Napoli

AL = A. Lemaire, Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée. Tome II (Transeuphratène Supplément 9), Paris 2002

AOAT = Alter Orient und Altes Testament

BM = British Museum (museum number)

CBS = Collections of the Babylonian Section (museum number University Museum, Philadelphia)

CRAIBL = Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
CT = Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
EN = I. Ephʿal et J. Naveh, Aramaic Ostraca of the fourth Century B.C. from Idumaea, Jerusalem 1996
Fs. Huot = C. Breniquet and C. Kepinski (edd.), Études mésopotamiennes. Fs. J.-L. Huot (Bibliothèque de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iraq 10), Paris 2001
Fs. Walker = C. Wunsch (ed.), Mining the Archives. Festschrift for Christopher Walker on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday (Babylonische Archive 1), Dresden 2002
LBAT = T. G. Pinches, J. N. Strassmaier, A. J. Sachs and J. Schaumberger, Late Babylonian Astronomical and Related Texts (Brown University Studies 18), Providence 1955
TBER = J.-M. Durand, Textes babyloniens d'époque récente (Recherche sur les grandes civilisations. Cahier n° 6), Paris 1981
TCL = Textes cunéiformes du Louvre.