Greek as Travellers in Near Eastern Sources

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The present article aims at addressing the issue of Greek travellers in the Near East during the first millennium BC.[1] The topic is multi-faceted and the task to address challenging. Approaching it entails taking into account different problems. First is the idea of traveller and mobility, and second is that of identifying Greeks in Near Eastern sources, which involves on the one hand finding a consensus on the idea of 'Greekness', and additionally verifying if and how Greeks are represented in the sources.[2] Third comes the combination of the two: indeed, the next step is to verify the possibility of drawing a profile of Greek travellers, examining the available evidence, if any, on the routes they followed, how they moved, and why they travelled, in order to evaluate the characteristics and implications of their mobility.

Given the size of the topic addressed, for the purpose of the present article I shall limit myself to exploring the last key issue, namely drawing a profile of Greeks as travellers in Near Eastern sources. After defining the ideas of mobility and travelling, I will thus explore the sources with the aim of identifying the specificities and characteristics of the mobility of the Greeks that are recorded in them. In doing so, I will however not reexamine the idea, the identity and the occurrences of the Greeks in Near Eastern sources (for which the reader is referred to the results of the many studies on the topic that have been published in the last decades). Rather, I shall use the term in its broader sense, to include people originating 'from the far-removed Aegean region, where Greek-speaking elements are likely to have constituted an essential component',[3] as well as those individuals, mainly of Macedonian origin, who appear in the sources after Alexander's conquest of Babylonia. These latter are usually excluded from ordinary analyses since, as has been suggested, either 'they are no longer classified as foreigners at this time' or they are not considered Greek *strictu sensu*.[4] Thus, for the period between the eighth century BC to Alexander's conquest, I will rely on the (few) sources

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[2] For the debate on the topic see, e.g., Rollinger, 2001 and Monerie, 2012 and 2014, with earlier bibliography.

[3] Rollinger, 2009: 33, following Boiy, 2004 and Joannès, 1997.

[4] On the problem of the debated Greek origin of the Macedonians, see e.g. Horrocks, 2010: 79. On the origins of Alexander and the Seleucids as they are recognised in the Babylonian sources see also Del Monte, 2001.

that scholarship recognises as the first examples of the occurrence of Greeks in cuneiform, reexamining them with mobility as a focus.[5]

I will then move on to the ideas of mobility and travelling as applied to the individuals of 'Greek' origin, who appear in the sources after Alexander's conquest of Babylonia, focussing in particular on the mobility of the reigning king and his entourage, and of the group identified in the sources as 'the citizens' (*puliṭ/puliṭānu*, Gr. πολῖται), despite its rare occurrence. Individuals bearing Greek names are frequently attested in the sources, especially from Uruk; however, these sources will not be taken into consideration here, both because they mainly do not provide information on their movements, and because bearing a Greek name is not *per se* an indication that these individuals were in fact Greek.[6]

1. Mobility and the idea of travelling

According to modern dictionaries a traveller is 'a person who is travelling or who often travels'. A look at the synonyms helps to get a better idea of the semantic range of the noun: travellers are in fact 'tourists, trippers, tourers, journeyers, voyagers, excursionists, holidaymakers, sightseers, visitors, globetrotters, jet-setters'.[7] Still the definition remains unsatisfactory and requires that we look at it from a different perspective. If a traveller is in fact one 'who travels', the question arises what travelling means. The definition offered for the verb is in this respect somewhat more conclusive, as travelling is described as '(to make a) journey, usually of some length'.[8] Travelling thus implies two different dimensions, one concerned with space, i.e. mobility, and one with time, i.e. the duration.

The idea of travelling is in general conveyed in the sources by the verb *alāku* 'to go', whose extensive semantic domain refers to the movement of persons and animals, including the movements of messengers, those of the king, and of the gods' images. The means of transport (including e.g. ships) may vary, while the direction or purpose of the travel are in general specified using the verb in idiomatic expressions (with the accusative object or with a preposition), conveying specific meanings such as 'to make a business trip' or 'a military campaign', 'to take flight', 'to march in front/stay beside/alongside', 'to lead the way' etc.[9] Also the idea of 'traveller' (*ālik harrāni, ālikanu; allāku*) is linked to the verb *alāku*. Different nuances focussing on a specific direction or characteristic of the mobility are conveyed by the antonym pair of verbs *aṣû* 'to go out/down' and *elû* 'to go up', which are also recorded in the sources in connection to the idea of travel-

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[5] For a synthesis see Rollinger, 2009 with earlier bibliography.

[6] See most recently Monerie, 2014: esp. 72–107 and the contribution by Van der Spek, 2009.

[7] The English Oxford Living Dictionaries online, s.v. traveller (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com, last accessed 21.10.2017).

[8] Ibid., *s.v.* 'to travel' (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com, last accessed 21.10.2017).

[9] CAD A1, s.v. *alāku*.

ling.[10]

The negative characterisation of mobility in Near Eastern imagery, as reflected by the Sumerian proverb 'beer is a good thing, travelling is a bad thing', underlines, as Streck pointed out, the dangers and difficulties of travelling in the Ancient Near East, mainly due to the absence of infrastructure and the risks connected with attacks by robbers and nomads. Although sometimes conceived as an 'unpleasant necessity', journeys were frequently undertaken by the Mesopotamians for many different practical reasons, including, among others, the need to acquire raw materials and goods, diplomacy, business ventures.[11]

The information on roads and mobility is especially rich in the first millennium BC, when the achievements of the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians ruling over Mesopotamia in developing the extensive network of roads[12] essential to imperial expansion are largely celebrated in the inscriptions and the king's ability to make communication and rapid movements of troops between the capitals and the distant provinces more effective becomes a leitmotiv of the royal propaganda.[13]

At the same time, sources abound of information on the travels pursued by officials and troops at the king's order,[14] as well as on the joint ventures of businessmen and merchants, travelling either on their own initiative or as temple or private agents.[15]

Also relevant are the descriptions of the journeys of the gods,[16] detailing the travel's length in connection with the itinerary followed, its speed and the means of transportation used, as well as the food provisions supplied for them.[17] Indeed,

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[10] CAD E, s.v. *elû*, 'to go up' also with the idea of 'embarking, to put on a boat, to load on boats, to haul up (and drag a boat overland)', and CAD A2, s.v. *aṣû*, 'to leave, depart, go out', (also with the idea of 'to attack'), usually referring to the gods leaving the sanctuary on a procession.

[11] As Streck (2006: 128) underlines, the difficulties of the journeys were exacerbated by the rarity of paved streets, usually confined within the cities or in their vicinities, while for the rest only old tracks, always in poor condition, were available; and also by the need to cross the rivers, and especially the raging mountain streams, for which special infrastructure like wooden bridges had to be built.

[12] Streck, 2006: 128.

[13] On the roads in the Neo-Assyrian period see Parpola, 1987: xiii–xiv; Kessler, 1980 and 1997; Fales, 1990: 98–99; on the Babylonian roads Jursa, 1995; on the network of roads in the Persian empire Briant, 2002: 357–364.

[14] Favaro, 2007: 5–49.

[15] The routes of inner-Babylonian communication and the exchange of goods are examined in Jursa, 2010: 62–150, where the role of the capital as the seat of government and as a religious centre, attracting people and goods from outside, that made it the hub of an interregional network of intensive exchange, is amply documented.

[16] Pongratz-Leisten, 1994; Linssen, 2004: 78–86 and 217–237.

[17] On the itineraries and their significance in the Ancient Near East, see RlA 5, s.v. *Itinerare* (Edzard, 1977: 216–220); recently Fales, 2006: 105–108; on the means of transport:

the movement of people (kings, troops, craftsmen, diplomats and messengers etc.), and gods was a typical feature of the Near Eastern society.[18]

2. Greek travellers or Greeks travelling in the sources from the Neo-Assyrian to the Achaemenid period

Sources dated to the Neo-Assyrian period do not offer many details for reconstructing the profile of Greek travellers in the east. As has been often underlined, the documents of this period referring to the *Greeks* focus more on the Assyrian king and the role he plays against his enemies (i.e. the Greeks), than on the characterisation of the enemies proper. Greeks (here translating 'Yamnāya') are, however, represented as 'westerners from afar, acting as marauders and pirates' who, as Rollinger points out, seem 'to have been fairly mobile'.[19] In fact, in the well-known letter of Qurdi-Aššur-lāmur,[20] if the description of the activity of the *Greeks* is restricted to their 'giving battle' (probably against two cities on the Phoenician coast), their mobility is, conversely, characterised by three elements: a pair of verbal antonyms 'to appear' (*alāku*, here with the ventive suffix conveying the idea of motion towards the speaker, lit. 'to come') vs. 'to disappear' (*halāqu*) and the action of fleeing (*elû*; but note that only the first verbal form is preserved, the last two being restored): 'The Greeks (lit. 'Ionians') came (*i-tal-ku-ni*) …; … when they saw my troops they embarked (*e-te-li-ú*) their boats and fled (*ih-tal-qu*) into the midst of the Sea …' (SAA 19 25: obv. 3 and 10–13).[21]

The 'Greeks' move by boat in the midst of that Sea that is considered their place of origin. There is no interest in further specifying the identity of these individuals,[22] nor in the itinerary they followed, expect for underlining that as

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Fales, 1995; Streck, 2006: 127–129, with relevant bibliography; also, for the Neo-Assyrian period, Favaro, 2007: 73–91 (with bibliography). On pilgrimages and festivals in Greece and Anatolia see e.g. Rutherford, 2004, 2013 and 2016. On the 'food dimension' of the journeys of the gods see the contributions by Selz, Milano, Pomponio, Michel and Corò in Milano (ed.) 2004. On travel provisions in a 'secular' context, Janković, 2008.

[18] See Fales, 2006: 107 and Favaro, 2007: esp. 1–6 and 93–98.

[19] See for example Rollinger, 2009: 33–34. On the limited role of Greek piracy see, however, Lanfranchi 2000.

[20] SAA 19 25, with fn. 25 for full bibliography. For the significance of this source in the context of the 'dialogue' between Greece and Mesopotamia, see recently Haubold, 2013: 100–102. Despite the anomalous spelling of his name (which appears here as Qurdi-ili-lāmur), the sender of the letter is likely to be identified with Qurdi-Aššur-lāmur, the governor of Ṣimirra (see Luukko, 2012: 32, commentary to SAA 19 25, obv. 2, with previous bibliography). For the prosopography and career of Qurdi-Aššur-lāmur see G. Van Buylaere in PNA 3/1: 1021–1022 and Yamada, 2008.

[21] For this letter see also Rollinger, 2001: 237, fn. 20.

[22] According to Rollinger, 2001: 238–239, Qurdi-Aššur-lāmur may have met these plunderers previously, having had bad experiences with them, so that the ethnonym identified a well-known entity in his eyes and needed no further explanation.

quickly as they show up, they 'vanish' at the sight of the Assyrians.

The 'maritime' nature of these people, also connoting their mobility, emerges again, later on, from Sargon II's inscriptions, which are usually considered in the literature as the next occurrence of the Greeks in the eastern sources. But apart from the metaphor equating Greeks with fish captured in the sea by the Assyrian king,[23] they play a purely passive role in these texts, only featuring as the object of the king's conquest. Sargon's claim that he had to travel 'in the midst of Sea, by boat' in order to defeat them, must imply that they also had to follow a similar (opposite) itinerary from their place of origin to there and back, but no details are offered, the focus being solely on the Assyrian king and his ability.[24] An ability that, it is worth stressing, is striking when one considers that it refers to achievements on the sea, against a naval power like the Greeks, of a king (like the Assyrian) who ruled over a typically inland empire. [25]

More details are available in the description of Sennacherib's sixth campaign in the Annals, where the king describes how Tyrian, Sidonian and 'Greek' sailors, his captives, embarked on the Tigris at Nineveh to reach Opis:

> "… I gave orders to sailors of the cities of Tyre (and) Sidon, (and) the land Ionia, whom I had captured. They (my troops) let (the sailors) sail down the Tigris river with them, downstream to the city of Opis. Then from the city of Opis, they lifted them (the boats) up onto dry land and dragged them on rollers to Sippar[?] and guided them into the Arahtu canal …". (RINAP 3/II 46: ll. 57–62).

As the use of the causative form of the verb clearly shows, the *Greeks* in this passage are not moving by their own initiative: they follow an itinerary designed for them by the Assyrian king. Travelling by boat is described as their job and is thus a typical feature of theirs, which is characterised in a positive way (since, at least, it is useful from the Assyrian king's perspective). The document offers the details of the route they followed that led southwards from Nineveh to Opis on the river Tigris, by boat; there the boats were put on chariots towards Sippar,

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[23] On the fish motif in the characterisation of conquered people see Ceccarelli, 1993: esp. 39–42.

[24] Fuchs, 1994: 34 and 290; also Lanfranchi, 2000: 14. On the ideological implications of this texts and their connections to the earlier tradition see Rollinger, 2001: 239–240.

[25] According to Schaudig, 2008: 543, the development of the maritime power of Near Eastern empires like the Babylonian and Persian empires is to be connected to their interest in the Phoenician colonies in North Africa and Spain. From the Levantines they learnt the know-how of building ships (*sapīnatū*) to cross the sea and not just the rivers (on a river-boat, *eleppu*). On the idea that for their expeditions in open sea the Assyrians relied on the Phoenician shipwrights and sailors and that the 'clientship on technical bases' may well have been a 'non-negligable factor' in shaping the status of the Phoenician city-states as 'allies' see recently also Fales, 2017: esp. 212.

whence they proceeded via the Euphrates[26] and beyond (towards the Persian Gulf). One should bear in mind that this itinerary reflects the choice of the Assyrian king, not a voluntary trip.[27]

Later occurrences of the Greeks in the sources mainly provide references to the names and/or the professions of individuals of (perhaps) western origin. Be they deportees, artisans employed in the royal building projects, or (the alleged) Greek soldiers employed as mercenaries in the Neo-Assyrian and/or Neo-Babylonian armies, it is only the fact that they are 'foreigners' that hints at their having travelled from their places of origin to the east, as the sources provide no direct information on these trips.[28]

Similar is the case of the sources from the Achaemenid period referring to the specialised activities of people from the east. We know that at this time *westerners* were part of the *ḫaṭru* system, but they appear now incorporated in the textual record at a point where their mobility is not the focus. Thus we have evidence of how they were organised as a group, but not on how they travelled to the east.[29] The documentary situation changes at the time of Alexander's conquest, when the kings of Macedonian origin became the rulers of Babylonia. Precisely at the point when, according to some authors, *Greeks* become no longer foreigners in Babylonia,[30] the sources begin to focus on the characteristics of their mobility.

3. The Seleucid period: the king, the city and the temple

3.1. One-way: entering or leaving the city and the temple

Most informative in this respect are the Astronomical Diaries, whose historical sections refer to the movements of the Hellenistic kings on many occasions. The typical setting for the king's mobility is represented by the city and its temple: the

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[26] The designation Arahtu river, originally identifying the western branch of the Euphrates, is used in the first millennium BC as the name of the Euphrates: George, 1992: 351.

[27] On the significance of this source, Rollinger, 2001: 242–243 and recently Monerie, 2012: 351. On the ability of the Assyrians in river navigation see recently Fales, 2017: 209–215 (with earlier bibliography).

[28] On the Greek soldiers in the east see Rollinger/Korenjak, 2001, with previous bibliography. The idea that Greek mercenaries, such as the brother of the Greek poet Alcaeus, served routinely in the Neo-Babylonian army has been recently questioned by Fantalkin/Lytle, 2016, who conclude that the evidence on it is insufficient and therefore they reject it.

[29] See in general Rollinger, 2009: 36–43 and Monerie, 2012: 352–358; also Joannès, 1997 and Del Monte, 2001. The *ḫaṭru*s were small fiscal units, connected to the land-for-service system, consisting of rural settlements belonging to individuals or families with the same ethnic (sometimes, professional) background, whose owners owed service to the crown. The *ḫaṭru*-system is attested in several Babylonian archives during the fifth and sixth centuries (see e.g. Stolper 1985 and more recently the synthesis by Jursa, 2010: 247, with bibliography).

[30] Most recently, Rollinger, 2009: 33.

king is either recorded entering, leaving, or even observed not to be entering. [31]

Entering the city (e[ki] ku₄, 'to enter Babylon') and its temples (é *temple name* ku₄, 'to enter the temple *temple name*') to offer sacrifices is the typical act carried out by kings and court officials of the Seleucid and Parthian periods when they officially visited the Babylonian cities.[32] The Astronomical Diaries of the period are particularly rich on details of this and other aspects of the king's mobility, such as his own and his delegates' participation in the traditional rituals and ceremonies of the Babylonian liturgical calendar, that, as Del Monte states: 'significava naturalmente accettare, almeno agli occhi degli abitanti della Mesopotamia, l'ideologia della regalità babilonese, il concetto del re buon pastore del suo popolo, sulla cui condotta vigilano gli dèi che ogni anno gli confermano (ma possono anche togliergliela) la legittimità a governare'.[33] In this framework, the idea of entering the city and its temples (*erēbu*) assumes a clearly positive connotation.

Thus, in the Diary relating Alexander III's conquest of Babylon, the king's proclamation that he would not violate their houses is described as a promise on his part 'not to enter' (*ul erēbu*) them. The same idea (and verb) is therefore used to refer to a(n avoided) negative form of mobility that would have not been in line with the Diaries's tradition of depicting the king as 'the victor' who 'respects the cult of Marduk'.[34]

Alexander's official entry into Babylon, after the Greeks of his army paid tribute to the temple, is recorded, in the same diary, only after the king's proclamation, and must have happened a few days later when, as the title 'king of the universe' (*šar kiššati*) used to refer to his royal status suggests, he was already officially recognised as the legitimate king. It is remarkable that here again the act of entering (the city) is characterised as positive, not as a violation.[35]

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[31] On the increased abundance of information about the Seleucid kings and their entourage in the Diaries (especially from the time of Antiochus I), in connection to their increased participation in the official rites of the Babylonian temples, see Del Monte, 2001: esp. 148–154.

[32] AD1 No. -273B: obv. 11. itu bi ˡᵘgal *ú-qu* 2-*ú šá* lugal *ina* kur uru[ki] *ú-man-nu-ú a-na* e[ki] ku₄ (…); 'on that day, the new general, which the king had appointed in the land of Akkad, entered Babylon (…)'. On the idea that the first official visit to Babylon of a court official in the Seleucid and Parthian periods included offerings to the temple see Del Monte, 2001: 152 and id., 1997: 74 (with a list of contexts and earlier bibliography).

[33] Del Monte, 2001: 151–152.

[34] Van der Spek, 2003: esp. 299.

[35] AD1 -330: rev. 7' ([x x] *a-na* é[meš]-*ku-nu ul er-ru-ub*; 'I will not enter your houses') and rev. 11' ([x x x] *a-lik-sa-an-dar-ri-is* lugal šú *ana* e[ki] k[u₄?]; 'Alexander, king of the universe, entered Babylon'). On the interpretation of this source see Del Monte, 1997: 4–5, Van der Spek, 2003, and Boiy, 2004. Tolini, 2012: 277–288 connects it to the tradition of the Nabonidus Chronicle and thinks it is used to legitimize the new power. For the relationship between the Babylonian temples and the king see, recently, Clancier/Monerie, 2014.

The policy of the kings towards the maintainance of the temples was clearly of special concern for the priestly community. It thus comes as no surprise that the Diaries, which typically reflect the narrow interests of those who compiled them, offer some background information on the interaction of this community with the king (especially with respect to the upkeep of the temple and its cult), while the passages referring to the king and his entourage leaving the city (ta *city name aṣû*/è) are more laconic.

Thus, while the poor conditions of AD2 -251 prevent us from understanding why the diarist recorded the piece of news referring to Antiochus (II) leaving Seleucia on the Tigris (^{I}*an-ti-'u-uk-su* lugal ta ^{uru}*si-lu-ki-'a-a* è^{ša}),[36] the military setting of the king's mobility is clearer in AD2 -249 which, despite the lacuna, reads '(the king) mustered his troops and his chariots and (went) out from Antiochia'.[37]

A similar (unclear) military setting characterises the mobility of the Greek soldiers appointed with the defence of the palace of Babylon, who are recorded leaving the palace against the royal garrison in the context of otherwise unknown internal rebellions: 'the troops from the palace **came out** (ta é.gal *ki* è-*ni*) and with the guard troops of the king …'.[38]

3.2. Itineraries between cities and within the city

In addition to the generic, one-way action of 'entering' or 'leaving' the city or the temple, exemplified above, the Diaries record a number of cases of a more articulated mobility, where the 'in' and 'out' represent the extremes of an itinerary taking place within the boundaries of a city or extending between different centres, and often including various intermediate stages. The journey may develop, in its simplest form, as a movement between two places, as in AD1 -273B, where the king is recorded leaving Sardis to move in the direction of Transeuphratene (*ana e-ber* íd … du^{ik}), to fight against the Egyptians: 'That year, the king left his troops$^{!?}$, his wife and a high$^{!?}$ dignitary in Sardis … and **went** to Transeuphratene …' (AD1 -273B: obv. 29′–30′).

More often, however, it takes the form of a 'back and forth' trip, as in the case of the diary entry describing the movement of the satrap of Akkad and the king's dignitaries in 36–37 SE: '(…) the satrap of Akkad and the king's dignitaries who in year 36 (SE) **had gone** (du$^{u'}$) to Sardis towards the king, **came back** (gur^{meš}-*ni*) to Seleucia, the royal seat, which is on the Tigris … ' (AD1 -273B: rev. 34–35).

The use of *târu* (gur) in the second case, with the meaning of returning to the place of origin, adds the idea of circularity to the satrap's itinerary, with the city of Seleucia on the Tigris representing both the point of departure and the final

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[36] AD2 -251: ri.e. 3: 'Antiochus, the king, left Seleucia'.
[37] AD2 -249: rev. 6.
[38] AD1 -237: obv. 13′: ^{lú}erin$_{2}$^{meš} ta é.gal ki è-*ni* ki ^{lú}erin$_{2}$^{meš} lugal šá en.nun^{meš}… .

destination of the travel (Fig. 1b), while the king's mobility in the first example is described as a 'linear' trip between two points, as exemplified in Fig. 1 a):

Sardis ⟹ Transeuphratene
a)

SE 36
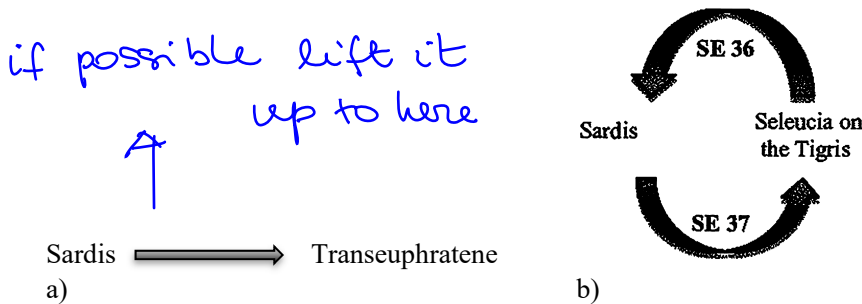Sardis   Seleucia on the Tigris
SE 37
b)

Fig. 1. Schematization of the king's trips. a) Linear trip. b) Circular trip 1.

A different phraseology, implying the sequence 'entering – exiting – heading to' (*ana* CITY$_1$ *erēbu* … ta CITY$_1$ *ana* CITY$_2$ *aṣû*), may also be used to refer to a circular itinerary (Fig. 2) when the departure and arrival points overlap, as is the case for the descriptions of the movements of the generals who, visiting Babylon sacrificed there before going back to Seleucia on the Tigris where they resided.[39]
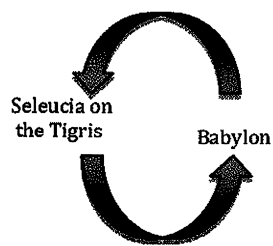
Seleucia on the Tigris   Babylon

Fig. 2. Schematization of the king's trips. Circular trip 2.

In a different order, the same set of verbs describes a complex itinerary developing among different cities or locations, and over different stages: 'exiting – entering – heading to' (ta é.gal **è-ni** … *a-na* é ud.1.kám **ku₄** ... ta CITY *a-na* GN) is used to record Antiochus III's visit to Babylon on the occasion of his participation in the New Year's Festival in April 205 BC:

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[39] It is reasonable to assume, with Del Monte, that the official residence of the generals was in Seleucia, and that this is why they are often recorded entering Babylon (from Seleucia), and exiting it towards Seleucia: '(…) questi generali sembrano non risiedere a Babilonia ma a Seleucia: "entrano" a Babilonia, dove vengono festeggiati per poi "uscirne" ed andare a Seleucia' (Del Monte, 1997: 55).

That month, on the day 8, king Antiochus and … **went out** from the palace (ta é.gal **è-*ni***); (description of offerings). (They/He?) **entered** the First Day temple (*a-na* é ud.1.kám **ku₄**), (description of offerings for the life of the king); **from** (ta) Babylon **towards** (*a-na*) Elymais(?) … (AD2 -204: rev. 14–Up.e.2)

The king's journey originates within the city, in the royal palace, whence the king moves in the direction of the New Year temple for the sacrifices and continues outside of Babylon, when Antiochus leaves the city, heading to a different place (probably Elymais).[40]
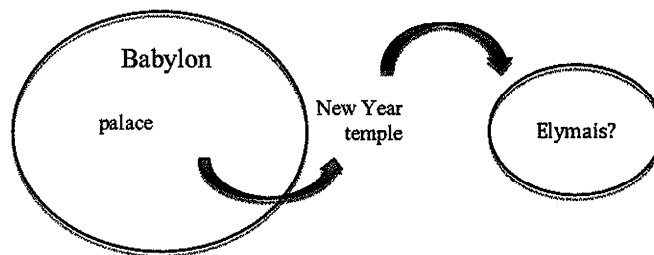

Fig. 3. Schematization of the king's trips. Complex itinerary.

Antiochus III's travels in Babylonia are even more richly described in AD2 -187, recording the 'propagandistic journey', undertaken by the king to reaffirm his royal legitimacy in the region after the defeat he suffered at Magnesia in 188 BC. The detailed report recorded in the historical section of this diary permits a reconstruction of the different stages of an itinerary lasting over ten days. It took the king from Babylon to Seleucia on the Tigris via Borsippa, including a number of stop-overs in the city's temples to celebrate the appropriate rites for the life of the royal family, and for the king to receive presents from the local authorities and carry on the sacrifices:[41]

'(partially broken; *description of the events that took place on day 4? in Babylon, including offerings for the life of the royal family*) he entered (**ku₄ᵘᵇ**); on the same day at the Pure Gate, the Gate of Esangila (*description of the offerings and official salutations*); the same day, he went up (**e₁₁)** to

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[40] For the interpretation of this passage see Del Monte, 1997: 61–63. It is unclear whether the trip itself terminates when the king leaves the city or if this is just the reflection of the fact that the following part of the text is fragmentary. The king's procession during the New Year festival in Babylon is described, e.g., in the ritual for the first New Year Festival: see Linssen, 2004: esp. 82–83.

[41] On the reasons for Antiochus' presence in Babylonia at this time and the significance of the offerings and celebrations recorded in the diary, see Del Monte, 1997: 68; also Boiy, 2004: 155–157 (with further bibliography) and Clancier/Monerie, 2014: 208–209. Recently also Haubold, 2017.

Esangila and prostrated himself; the same day he entered (**ku₄**^{ub}) the New Year Temple (*description of the offerings*)… ; he came out (**è**) of the sacristy; crossed (**ebēru**) the royal garden which is on the west bank. On that same day he entered (**ku₄**^{ub}) his palace. (…) On day 13 he entered (**ku₄**) Borsippa (…) on day 14 at the ziqqurat of Ezida (*fragmentary decription of cultic activities*). On day x, the king entered Babylon from Borsippa (ta ^{uru}*bar-sìp*^{ki} [*ana*] e^{ki} ku₄$^{[ub]}$) went (e₁₁) to Esangila … that same day, in the afternoon, the king went out from Babylon to Seleucia on the Tigris (ta e^{ki} ˹*ana* ^{uru}˺*si-*[*lu-ki-'a-a*] è), the royal city' (AD2 -187: rev.4′–18′).

The journey consists of three main parts: the first leg takes place in the city of Babylon and its immediate vicinity where, presumably on day 4, the king 'enters' an unknown cultic location to make offerings for the life of his family; it continues, on the same day, at the Main Entrance (Ka-sikilla) of Esangila,[42] where he receives golden presents from the local authorities (the temple administrator, the temple assembly and the city governor), before entering (lit. 'going up to') the temple; then, moving out of the city walls, (probably on the procession road) the trip goes on to the *akītu* temple and through the royal gardens on the west bank of the Euphrates, back to the king's palace (which must therefore have been located on the same east side of the Euphrates as the *akītu* temple).[43] The passage does not explicitly mention crossing the river. However, as Van der Spek suggests, since the New Year temple and the palace were situated on the eastern side of the Euphrates, while the gardens were on the western side, clearly the king must have crossed it to go back to the palace. The verb *ebēru* with a direct object is usually associated with the idea of crossing water (a river, the sea, or a canal, especially in contexts involving the king). Its use without an object, with the meaning 'to come over to', is in general combined with a preposition+genitive.[44] It may well be that the otherwise anomalous use of *ebēru* with 'garden' as an object here is owed to the fact that, although the scribe did not explicitly mention the action of crossing the Euphrates, he implied it, thus constructing the verb as if he did. Even if this hypothesis proves true, it remains impossibile to determine how Antiochus crossed the Euphrates, whether on boats or via a bridge, and where exactly he moved through.[45].

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[42] For the identification of Ka-sikilla as the main entrance to Esangila, see George, 1992: esp. 491–492, with earlier bibliography.

[43] On the location of the Euphrates channel, the New Year temple, the palace and the royal gardens in the Hellenistic period see Van der Spek, 1995: 476–477 and Boiy, 2004: 79. For the topography of Babylon and in particular the Gates of Esangila see George, 1992: 89–98. also Pederśen, 2011. See also the synthesis by Boiy, 2004: 81–86.

[44] CAD E, s.v. *ebēru* A.

[45] An inscription of Neriglissar (NeglB/B2) mentions the king's minor repairs 'at the river bank and the bridge' (Da Riva, 2013: 30); reference courtesy R. Da Riva.

The second part of the journey begins on day 13, when the king reaches the city of Borsippa where, on the following day, he visits the Ezida.

The third consists of the trip back to Babylon, on an unknown day, where the king makes offerings in the Esangila and from there moves towards the royal residence at Seleucia on the Tigris.

The itinerary in Babylon, lasting one day, is conceived as circular: although the departure point is not explicitly indicated, it is likely that the journey began at the palace and proceeded through different locations within the city (including the temple's main entrance and the main temple), in a northern direction, out of the city wall to the *akītu* temple, to terminate again in the palace via the royal gardens. We may expect the king to have used the Procession Street to move from Esangila to the New Year's temple (i.e. the *akītu*) and on the way back, crossing the river, having reached the royal gardens, located on the other side of the Euphrates, to go back again to the palace from there.[46]

The second leg of the journey, taking place a few days later, is devised as a sequence of entering/leaving/entering, and lasted probably two days. Although the text is not explicit, it is conceivable that the starting point and the final destination overlap, so that the trip can be understood as a back and forth one. No information is offered on how the king moved from one place to the other. However, it is clear, despite the poor conditions of the tablet, that the return journey took place on a different day from his visit to the temple.

Conversely, the visit to Babylon described as the final leg of the trip is short-lived: on the day of his arrival Antiochus III visited the Esangila, leaving the city in the direction of his palace in Seleucia in the afternoon; no information is provided by the source on the king's arrival in the royal capital. It is interesting that the king moves from Borsippa to Babylon before going back northwards to Seleucia on the Tigris. The very short distance between the two cities, and the well-known connections between their main temples, raises the question whether such a choice was dictated by the conditions of the network of royal roads linking the three cities or by the ceremonial calendar, requiring the king to attend to the rites in Borsippa first, and then in Babylon.[47]

That the movements of the kings through Babylonia played a big role in the Babylonian imagery follows from the fact that the compiler of AD3 -163C bothers to record, in an otherwise very fragmentary passage, the transit of people carrying the corpse of Antiochus IV at the end of year 164 BC. While clearly an indirect reference to the (last!) trip of a Seleucid king, this piece of news shows the importance of recording the king's mobility through Babylonia during the time of Seleucid domination.[48]

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[46] Boiy, 2004: 79.

[47] On the connections between Babylon and Borsippa see Waerzeggers, 2010: 4–6; for the routes linking the two cities, Jursa, 2010: 77–79, with bibliography.

[48] On corpses and their symbolic value see e.g. Richardson, 2007 and Jursa, 2007.

This seems confirmed by the fact that when the king or his representatives do not show up in Babylon, the fact is not only recorded but also labelled as unexpected: '(…) that month, the commander of Akkad that fled (**záh**) from Seleucia on the Tigris and on the King's canal, was not seen … as (?) before' (AD3 -162, rev. 16–17).

In the context of the fights occurring in Babylon probably at the time of the accession of Antiochus V, the general of Akkad (i.e., the satrap of Babylonia) is described moving from Seleucia but unexpectedly never reaching Babylon ('he was not seen *as before*'). The regular mobility that consisted of leaving Babylon to reach the royal city is not only turned upside down here, with Seleucia representing the point of departure for the general, but it is also described as a one-way trip instead of a journey connecting two cities: interrupting an expected back and forth itinerary, the trip shapes up as a flight, as is clear from the use of *halāqu* (záh) to label it. Interestingly, the troubles described in this episode had consequences on the regular mobility within the city at many levels, as the Diarist records: "the governor of Babylon and (…) the *rab sikkati* did not exit on the street for the fear of …" (ᵍⁱˢ̌kak *la-pàn puluhtu šá …*), affecting also the 'Greek citizens' (AD -162: rev. 14–15).

4. Greek 'citizens' in Babylonia: the *puliṭē*'s movements

From the 2ⁿᵈ century BC on a group identified in the Babylonian sources by the Akkadian *puliṭē* or *puliṭānu* for the Greek word πολῖται ('citizens') begins to appear in the cuneiform sources. Apparently the term was used to identify the Greeks living in Babylon.[49] Despite the scanty evidence, the Diaries offer the possibility of examining a few explicit contexts where their mobility is described.[50]

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[49] According to Del Monte the *puliṭē/puliṭānu* (πολῖται) were one of the three groups that populated the city of Babylon (Del Monte, 1997: 86–87; note that according to Van der Spek, 2009: 108 more groups may be identified). Boiy (2004: 206–209) who defines them as 'citizens by Greek law', identifies the first mention of the πολῖται in a fragmentary Diary dated to 187 BC, thus dating the introduction of the Greek community in Babylon to the reign of Antiochus III (2004: 204–205). Van der Spek, elaborating on a previous idea of his (Van der Spek, 1986 and 1987) recently argued on the basis of new evidence that the Greek community was established in Babylon by Antiochus IV; its members, the πολῖται, enjoyed a special political status and the related privileges (Van der Spek, 2009: 107–110). On the 'Greekness' of the individuals making up the community, see Boiy, 2004: 206–207 and Van der Spek, 2009: 107. The relative political weight of the Greek and Babylonian communities in Babylon is discussed in Sciandra, 2012: 239–241. On the 'poliadisation' of Babylon see, conversely, Clancier, 2012, 320–326; Clancier/Monerie, 2014: 211–220 and recently the synthesis by Clancier, 2017.

[50] The *puliṭē* are also mentioned in two fragmentary Chronicles, namely *BCHP* 13 and *BCHP* 14 (Finkel / Van der Spek, Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period, forthcoming; on-line preliminary edition available at http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles), but no explicit information is provided there on aspects related to their mobility (except

The earliest reference is AD3 -162: rev. 11–13. Here a distinction is made between the citizens who resided in Babylon and those who lived in the countryside: the first group is seen leaving Babylon en masse (ta e^{ki} è^{ú}), with their women and their 'people', pushed by the fights following the death of Antiochus IV (mentioned above; rev. 11–12); those from the countryside (rev. 13) apparently did not move but were robbed.

Interestingly, the flight of the Greek citizens is recorded with the neutral expression 'leaving the city', i.e. the one usually adopted to describe the king's trips between Babylon and the royal city; conversely, the general's departure from Seleucia on the Tigris, noted a few lines below, is referred to by the Diarist as a flight using *halāqu* (ta ^{uru}*si-lu-ki-'a-a šá ana* ugu ^{id}idigna *u* ^{id}lugal **záh**; 'he fled from Seleucia on the Tigris and the King's Canal'), probably, as shown above, in order to underline how the action deviates from the norm.[51]

The πολῖται used to convene in the theatre of Babylon on the occasion of the reading of official letters from the king: although we have no evidence as to how they were summoned there by the local authorities and how they reached it, it is clear that when the Greek community gathered in the *bīt tāmarti* some kind of inner mobility within the city took place.[52]

Finally, special movements of the πολῖται between the city of Babylon and the Arsacid king's encampment, which can probably be explained in the context of the military events connected to the war against Antiochus VII, are recorded in the Diary entry for 130 BC.[53] The action is again here described as 'exiting' (*scil.* from the city) in the direction of the encampment (*a-na ma-dak-tu* lugal è^{ú}; 'the king went out in the direction of the encampment'), while the opposite movement of the satrap of Akkad, leaving the camp, is described as 'entering the city from the king's encampment'. The introduction of a new destination for the trip originating in Babylon, represented by the camp (instead of another city or a temple), in addition to the fact that in both cases it is prompted by a written order issued by the king (*ina* ^{kuš}*si-piš-tú šá* lugal), characterise what is otherwise apparently a regular journey as an official summons, in a time of war.[54] The same elements (leaving the king's camp, entering the city of Babylon and a written order issued by the king) characterize the description of the official appointment of 'one of the

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for a reference in lacuna to the fact that they entered in Babylon at the command of Antiochus).

[51] On this episode and the 'dangerous and frightful' situation in Babylon at the time it occurred see Van der Spek, 2009: 111.

[52] On the theatre of Babylon in the cuneiform sources see in particular Van der Spek, 2001: 445–456. On the Babylonian correspondence of the Seleucid and Arsacid kings and its significance see Sciandra, 2012.

[53] Del Monte, 1997: 131.

[54] AD3 -129 A$_1$: obv. 6'–8'.

πολῖται living in Babylon' as governor of the city.[55]

It is noteworthy that, parallel to the introduction in the Arsacid-period sources of the king's camp as one of the points from and to which the mobility of the Greek citizens and the king's representatives develop, the references to the king's mobility towards and within the city of Babylon disappear: this may well be interpreted as a reflection of the disengagement of royal interest in the temples, especially from the third century onwards, when the king is replaced by the royal administrators of the new Greek πόλεις.[56]

5. Conclusions

To conclude, let us return back briefly on the terminology used in the sources to describe the mobility of the Greeks, as discussed so far (a synthesis is offered in Table 1, below). As the Table shows, this is rather poor, the journeys being mainly described as a sequence of entering and exiting from a limited number of places. Both elements (restricted terminology and places) do not however represent a limitation of the analysis, especially when we examine them in combination. In fact, depending on their spatial dimension, the journeys may either represent isolated episodes of one-way mobility (with individuals leaving a place, or entering another), or more or less detailed examples of articulated travels. These may include different stages and develop through different locations that, according to their extent, take the form of inner mobility, within the city, or of outer mobility, when one extreme of the trip is located in the city and the other outside of its boundaries.

Going in and out of a place may be described as a neutral action, but it can also bear positive or negative connotations: thus, on the occasion of the proclamation of the new king, his entering the city (and temples of Babylon) is framed positively, as a 'pious' act to be performed in the stream of tradition (especially when connected to the act of making offerings to the Babylonian gods). Similarly, avoiding to do so can be acclaimed as positive when doing it in an untimely manner could have been perceived as a potential threat by a conqueror.

Especially important in connoting apparently neutral actions such as 'leaving a place towards another' is the destination of the trip: the meaning of the sentence is different when the destination is one of the places that the king usually attends in the context of his regular movements in Babylonia (the temple, the palace or the king's seat) from when it is an enemy or an enemy's outpost and moving out of a place in the direction of another is connoted in the sense of 'attacking'.

When the destination of a journey is associated with its point of departure, this is always described first, both when the trip is meant to be an outward travel (ta GN₁ *ana* GN₂ *aṣû*, 'to leave from GN₁ to GN₂') and an inward (ta GN₁ *ana* GN₂ *erēbu*,

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[55] AD3 -129 A₂: obv. 16'–17'.

[56] On Babylon as a πόλις see Clancier, 2017 (with bibliography). On the impact that the crisis that resulted from the disengagement of royal interest towards the temples had on the literary production of the time see Jursa/Debourse, in press, with bibliography.

'to enter from GN_1 to GN_2'). Also, complex journeys including a departure, a destination and an intermediate stage are described exactly in the order they took place (from → to → towards). Only circular trips, where the point of departure overlaps with the final destination, may be described omitting the indication of the point of departure and applying the verb *târu* to the description of the final destination: 'to move in the direction of GN_2 to come back to GN_1'.

The spatial dimension of the Greeks' mobility is typically Babylonia-centered: point of departure, intermediate stages and destination of the journeys are mainly confined to the few focal points represented by the Babylonian cities of Babylon, Sippar and Borsippa, the Babylonian temples, the royal city of Seleucia on the Tigris and the king's palace (replaced, from the Parthian period on, by the king's camp). Such a limited geographical dimension of the texts reflects the narrow scope and world-view of the priestly community which produced these documents: it is therefore not purely coincidental that the trips extending beyond the traditional boundaries of the Babylonian spatial imagery are so rare and their descriptions so poor in details.[57]

Term	Translation and use
alāku (+ ventive)	to come
elû (e_{11})	to leave (or flee); to go up
halāqu (záh)	to vanish, disappear; to flee
neqelpû	to sail downstream
ebēru	to cross (water?)
ana GN *erēbu* (ku_4) / *ul erēbu*	to enter / not enter
	– official proclamation of the king
	– city will not be violated
ana GN *alāku* (du)	to move in the direction of …
ta GN *aṣû* (è)	to leave from GN
	– neutral
	– in military contexts starting point of a journey for the king, the general, and the troops moving against the enemy
ta GN_1 *ana* GN_2 *aṣû* (è)	to leave from GN_1 to GN_2
ta GN_1 *aṣû* (è) … *ana* GN_2 *erēbu* (ku_4) …	to leave from ~~from~~ GN_1 … to enter GN_2
ta GN_1 *ana* GN_2 *erēbu* (ku_4) *ana* GN_3 e_{11}	to enter GN_2 from GN_1 towards GN_3
ana GN_2 *alāku* (du) … *ana* GN_1 *târu*	to move in the direction of GN_1 … to come back to GN_2
ana GN_1 *erēbu* (ku_4) … ta GN_1 *ana* GN_2 *aṣû* (è)	to enter GN_1 … to exit from GN_1 towards GN_2

Table 1. Terminology of mobility

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[57] Joannès, 1997.

Abbreviations

AD1   Sachs, A.J. / Hunger, H., 1988: *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia, Vol. I. Diaries from 652 B.C. to 262 B.C.* Wien.

AD2   Sachs, A.J. / Hunger, H., 1989: *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia, Vol. II. Diaries from 261 B.C. to 165 B.C.* Wien.

AD3   Sachs, A.J. / Hunger, H., 1996: *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia, Vol. III. Diaries from 164 B.C. to 61 B.C.* Wien.

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SAA 19   Luukko, M., 2012.

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