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Broad-scale Patterns in the Distribution of Ethnic Names in the Neo-Babylonian Oracc Corpus

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Abstract

In this paper I investigate the broad-scale distribution of ethnic terms in a large corpus of digitized Neo-Babylonian texts. I take up the same guiding questions and methodology that were used in an earlier study of Neo-Assyrian texts. I also present some points of comparison in the distribution of ethnic terms within the Neo-Assyrian versus Neo-Babylonian corpora.

Keywords: Digital Assyriology; Akkadian; Ethnicity; Babylonia; Neo-Babylonian; Digital Humanities; Quantitative Analysis.

Introduction

In this paper, I investigate the broad-scale distribution of ethnic terms in a large corpus of digitized Neo-Babylonian texts. I follow the same methodology used in an earlier study of Neo-Assyrian texts and will occasionally present points of comparison between the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian corpora.² The guiding questions for the current study are given below:

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² Matthew Ong, “Broad-Scale Patterns in the Distribution of Ethnic Names in the Neo-Assyrian Oracc Corpus (forthcoming),” *Studia Orientalia Electronica* (2026).

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1. How are ethnic terms distributed relative to other lexical classes, and what does that indicate about how such terms were used in the text? For instance, how many of them appear as substantives as opposed to adjectival modifiers of another noun? How many of them appear as items in a fixed list of names and are treated as a composite entity within a sentence, as opposed to appearing in isolation from other names and having more prominence in the sentence? How many of them co-occur with a variety of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, suggesting a wider array of roles — and therefore richer conceptualization — in the mind of the scribe who wrote the texts?
2. What effect does text genre have on the distribution and patterning of ethnic terms? This means not just which ethnic terms appear in which genres, but also how their usage and meaning vary.
3. What role do determiners (or lack thereof) play in the distribution of ethnic terms? To what degree are the various ways of writing a given ethnic term with different determiners a result of scribal error or idiosyncrasy, as opposed to a more stable contextual influence?

The main difference between the guiding questions here and those used in the Neo-Assyrian case is that for the Neo-Babylonian corpus, the quantitative diachronic analysis has been dropped in favor of a rough qualitative evaluation. This is because, while some portions of the corpus are precisely dated (such as the astronomical diaries and many administrative texts), the encoding of this information in the text metadata is currently either not standardized or not present, and thus not amenable to quantitative analysis. Standardizing this data remains a desideratum. In the Neo-Assyrian case, much of the corpus (particularly



the royal inscriptions and texts from the royal archives) was dated by ruler and encoded in the metadata in a consistent format.

The concept of ethnicity used in this paper is likewise carried over from the earlier study. To summarize: ethnicity is a cognitive category prototypically specifying one's origin, especially by birth. It functions within an individual or group as an ascriptive marker rather than an objective description of the world, and divides people into an inner and outer group as far as their interactions go.³ More important for this study than the theoretical definition of ethnicity, however, is a practical definition of 'ethnic term' that leverages the part-of-speech tagging already present in the Oracc texts within the corpus. Here, I define an ethnic term (or 'EN term') as a word in Oracc to which editors have assigned the EN part-of-speech tag. As the Oracc annotation guidelines indicate, such words are considered a type of proper noun and are distinct from other proper noun subcategories such as divine name (DN), settlement name (SN), royal name (RN), personal name (PN), geographical name (GN), and watercourse name (WN). Among these subcategories, EN terms are the only words that can refer to a class of entities rather than a specific individual. Morphologically speaking, they are usually derived from place names or names of population groups, and often have the nisbe suffix -ayu/-aya.⁴ Syntactically, they function as adjectives that can modify common nouns or serve as substantives in their own right. When used as substantives, they refer to people. These linguistic facts show how EN terms refer to a property of people prototypically involving a place name or population group. This justifies taking the Oracc EN label as a

³ See Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Little, Brown and Company, 1969); Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman, and Peter Stamatov, "Ethnicity as Cognition," *Theory and Society* 33, no. 1 (2004): 31–64; Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Harvard University Press, 2006); and Johannes Siapkas, "Ancient Ethnicity and Modern Identity," in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Jeremy McInerney (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 66–81.

⁴ See Frederick Mario Fales, "Ethnicity in the Assyrian Empire: A View from the Nisbe, (I): Foreigners and "Special" Inner Communities," in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, ed. David Vanderhoof and Abraham Winzter (Penn State University Press, 2013), 47–74: 52.

general lexical indicator of ethnic identity in the corpus.

Corpus

The corpus investigated in this paper is roughly defined as Babylonian texts from the first millennium BCE. It consists of two parts. The first consists of all Oracc projects containing lemmatized texts from first-millennium Babylonia. Specifically, this includes sections from the following projects (qualified in parentheses):

- ribo: Royal Inscriptions of Babylonia online (corpora 2-8 and 10)⁵
- adsd: Astronomical Diaries Digital (sub-projects 2-4,6)⁶
- babcity: Archival texts of the first millennium BCE that concern urban properties in Babylonian cities⁷
- borsippa: Archival texts from the Ezida temple in Borsippa⁸
- hbtin: Cuneiform texts dating to the Hellenistic period in Babylonia⁹

⁵ Based primarily on the following print publications: Grant Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157-612 BC)*, RIMB 2 (University of Toronto Press, 1995); Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)*, The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4 (Eisenbrauns, 2011); Rocío Da Riva, “The Nebuchadnezzar Rock Inscription at Nahr El-Kalb,” in *Le Site Du Nahr El-Kalb*, ed. A.M. Afeiche, Bulletin d’archéologie et d’architecture Libanaise 5 (Ministère de la Culture, 2009), 255–302; Rocío Da Riva, *The Twin Inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar at Brisa (Wadi Esh-Sharbin, Lebanon): A Historical and Philological Study*, vol. 32, Archiv Für Orientforschung (Inst. für Orientalistik der Univ. Wien, 2012); Rocío Da Riva, *The Inscriptions of Nabopolassar, Amel-Marduk and Neriglissar, Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records* (De Gruyter, 2013); and Jamie Novotny and Frauke Weiershäuser, *The Royal Inscriptions of Amēl-Marduk (561–560 BC), Neriglissar (559–556 BC), and Nabonidus (555–539 BC), Kings of Babylon, Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire 2*, Penn State University Press, 2020); Jamie Novotny and Frauke Weiershäuser, *The Royal Inscriptions of Nabopolassar (625–605 BC) and Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BC), Kings of Babylon, Part 1, Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire 1/1* (Eisenbrauns, 2024).

⁶ Based on volumes 2-4 and 6 of Hermann Hunger and Abraham J. Sachs, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia* (Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 1998-2006).

⁷ Bibliography of sources used can be found on the project's bibliography page: <https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/babcity/>.

⁸ Based on Caroline Waerzeggers, *The Ezida Temple of Borsippa: Priesthood, Cult, Archives* (Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2010) (AchHist 15).

⁹ Bibliography of sources used available on the project's bibliography page: <https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/hbtin/>.



- suhu: Inscriptions from the rulers of the early first-millennium kingdom of Suhu¹⁰
- balt: Babylonian administrative and legal texts from the Neo-Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic periods¹¹

In addition, a large number of automatic lemmatizations are derived from transliterations supplied by various other sources.¹² These sources include J.J. Glassner's edition of the Babylonian chronicles,¹³ various letters, legal texts, and administrative texts from private and temple archives edited by Johannes Hackl, Bojana Janković, Michael Jursa, and Martina Schmidl,¹⁴ legal and administrative texts from Sippar, the Eanna archive at Uruk, the Murašu archive at Nippur, and other administrative texts originally published by Strassmaier.¹⁵ Finally, there are automatic lemmatizations of the letters from southern Babylonia originally published in State Archives of Assyria (SAA) 22, digitized by me.¹⁶ Although these letters are “Assyrian” in the sense that they are part of the Neo-Assyrian royal

¹⁰ Based on Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*.

¹¹ Based Waerzeggers, *Marduk-Remanni: Local Networks and Imperial Politics in Achaemenid Babylonia* (Peeters, 2014) (OLA 233); Yuval Levavi, *Administrative Epistolography in the Formative Phase of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, Dubsar 3 (Zaphon, 2018); and transliterations by János Everling of texts from AnOr 8, CT 49, GCCI 1–2, Nbk, TuM 2/3, UCP 9/1, UCP 9/3, UCP 9/12, VS 3, and YOS 1. For more information, see the Babylonian Administrative and Legal Texts (BALT) project resource page: <https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/balt/>.

¹² The automatic lemmatizations and part-of-speech tagging were done with a version of the BabyLemmatizer 2.0 model trained on the set of manually lemmatized first-millennium Babylonian texts on Oracc. See Aleksi Sahala et al., “BabyLemmatizer: A Lemmatizer and POS-tagger for Akkadian,” ed. Tomaž Erjavec and Maria Eskovich, *CLARIN Annual Conference Proceedings* (CLARIN ERIC, 2022), 14–18.

¹³ Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, ed. Benjamin R. Foster (Society of Biblical Literature, 2004) (henceforth Chronicle).

¹⁴ Based on Jursa, *Das Archiv des Bel-Remanni* (Peeters Publishers, 1999); and Michael Jursa, Johannes Hackl, and Martina Schmidl, *Spatbabylonische Privatbriefe*, vol. 1, AOAT 414 (Ugarit Verlag, 2014).

¹⁵ J. N. Strassmaier, *Inscriptions von Darius, König von Babylon (521–485 v. Chr.)*, vol. 10–12, *Babylonische Texte* (E. Pfeiffer, 1889); and J. N. Strassmaier, *Inscriptions von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529–521 v. Chr.)*, vol. 9, *Babylonische Texte* (E. Pfeiffer, 1890). The transliterations of these last texts were provided by researchers at the Achemenet project. For a complete list of print sources for these texts, see the documentation in the following Zenodo repository: Alstola et al., “Linguistically Annotated Achemenet Babylonian Texts,” Zenodo, November 19, 2025, <https://zenodo.org/records/17651786>.

¹⁶ This volume has not yet been published on Oracc.

archives and are written primarily by and for Assyrians, the events they deal with are thoroughly situated in southern Babylon, and the EN terms occurring in them predominantly refer to groups in the south.

The above projects amount to 8,237 texts and define what I shall henceforth call the “Neo-Babylonian corpus”.¹⁷ It is “maximal” in the sense that it includes all Neo-Babylonian texts publicly available online, and is approximately the same size as the Neo-Assyrian corpus ($\approx 600,000$ meaningful words). It also includes texts from many of the same genres as the latter (royal inscriptions, letters, economic and administrative texts), and thus allows for meaningful comparison at a general level.

In what follows, I will provide an overview of the distribution of EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus, looking at the counts (i.e., number of attestations) of these terms as well as what kinds of words they collocate with. Then, I will proceed to examine the distribution across various text genres and the kinds of determiners the EN terms are written with. The argument is that the text genre, geography, and chronology all strongly influence the distribution. This influence is expressed in several ways. First, the variety of EN terms appearing in a text, as well as the number of attestations. Second, whether the EN terms predominantly refer to individuals or groups. Third, how richly a text elaborates on the characteristics of an EN term instead of treating it as a semantically opaque referring expression. Ultimately, we will see that texts vary in the degree to which ethnic identity is a relevant identifying feature of the entities they discuss. Both content and genre play a significant role here.

Overview of the Distribution

¹⁷ Data files used in the analysis of this corpus are available on Zenodo.



Figure 1 shows the counts, or number of attestations, of all the EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus. The majority of the 580 counts of all EN terms come from only a dozen or so names. Of the eighty-two EN terms attested in the corpus, thirty-four are attested only once, eighteen terms are attested two or three times, and eleven terms are attested four to nine times. The remaining seventeen are attested ten or more times. This indicates that while there are a large number of groups in and around Babylonia that the scribes designate with EN terms (which is suggestive of great ethnic diversity there), only a limited number of those groups are mentioned more than a handful of times. This lop-sided distribution is similar in shape to what is found in the Neo-Assyrian corpus, save that the latter is larger in both absolute numbers (having about 440 EN terms attested 4,100 times) and the number of sparsely attested EN terms (about 300).

Table 1 gives a closer look at the top end of the distribution of EN terms. It shows the counts of the top twenty EN terms in the corpus along with their C/P ratios (discussed below). One may be surprised by the relative lack of EN terms corresponding to major Babylonian cities besides Babylon and Uruk. While Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN¹⁸ falls squarely within the middle third of the list and Barsipaya[Borsippean]EN is at the bottom, no other EN term referring to a core Babylonian city appears in the list. Rahi-ilaya[of- Rahi-ilu]EN refers to the settlement of Rahi-ilu on the Euphrates and appears in the inscriptions of the rulers of Suhu.¹⁹ Instead of ancient Babylonian settlements, most of the frequently occurring EN terms in the corpus refer to social groups not defined by cities, whether they are semi-nomadic/pastoral groups (Puqudu[Puqudean]EN, Armaya[Aramean]EN, Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN), inhabitants of large

¹⁸ Throughout this article, EN terms will be cited in the form they are encoded in the corpus, i.e. Lemma[Meaning]EN. Within text citations, EN terms are normalized.

¹⁹ Ran Zadok, *Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes: Geographical names according to New- and Late-Babylonian texts*, vol. 8, Tubinger Atlas Des Vorderen Orients (Dr Ludwig Reichert, 1985), 258 (henceforth RGTC 8).

territories (Ela-
Mişiraya[Egyptian]EN), or a literary term for barbarian hordes (Umman-
manda[Barbarian]EN).²⁰

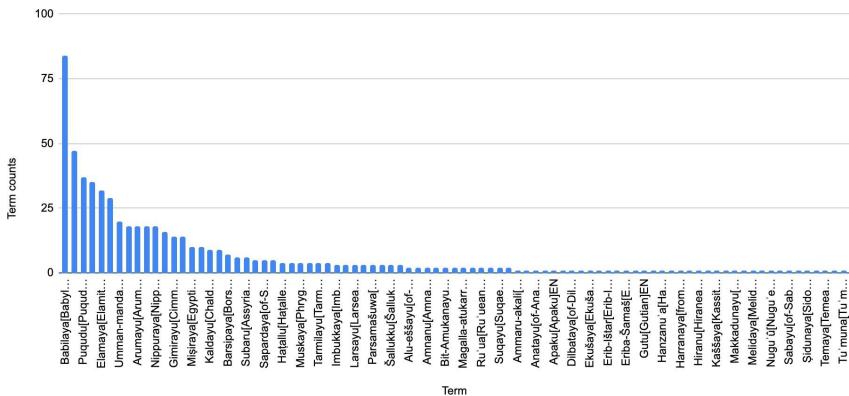


Figure 1. Counts of all EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus.

EN term	Count	C/P ratio
Babilaya[Babylonian]EN	86	6/4
Urukaya[Urukean]EN	58	6/4
Puqudaya[Puqudean]EN	36	0/10
Arbaya[Arab]EN	35	6/4
Elamaya[Elamite]EN	32	6/4
AŠšuraya[Assyrian]EN	28	7/3
Umman-manda[Barbarians]EN	20	9/1
Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN	19	10/0
Armaya[Aramean]EN	18	4/6
Arumaya[Arumaya]EN	18	1/9
Indumaya[Indian]EN	18	1/9
Gurasimmya[Gurasimmean]EN	16	9/1
Gimirraya[Cimmerian]EN	14	3/7
Rahi-ilaya[of-Rahi-ilu]EN	14	8/2
Mişiraya[Egyptian]EN	10	2/8
Sarugu[1]EN	10	3/7
Yamanaya[Greek]EN	10	4/6
Kaldul[Chaldean]EN	9	4/6
Akkadu[Akkadian]EN	6	9/1
Barsipaya[Borsippae]EN	6	5/5

Table 1. Counts of the top twenty EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus, along with their C/P ratios.

²⁰ For more on the Umman-manda, see Selim Adali, *The Scourge of God: The Umman-manda and Its Significance in the First Millennium BC* (Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2011).

The term Akkadu[Akkadian]EN in Table 1 is used by the scribes to refer to Babylonians in general, and reflects a combination of the two categories mentioned above (city vs. non-city). It refers to a territory even as that territory is characterized by the old cities of southern Mesopotamia, above all, Babylon itself. The fact that the term can denote cultural features associated with that territory is shown by two instances in which it is used to describe a type of bed and table.²¹ It is used once as a substantive to refer to a certain number of Babylonians.²² Nevertheless, the small number of attestations of Akkadu[Akkadian]EN in comparison to city-based EN terms like Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN, and Urukaya[Urukean]EN indicate that the sources primarily identify Babylonians by the city they come from rather than simply the whole region of Babylonia.²³

The overall lopsided distribution of EN terms between those derived from a few prominent Babylonian cities and others not based on Babylonian cities is not a mechanical reflection of source provenience. Of the approximately 8,200 texts in the corpus, about 2,400 come from Babylon, 2300 from Uruk, 1500 from Sippar, 750 come from Nippur, 380 from Borsippa, 40 from Kutha, and 40 from Ur. While the relative prominence of Babylon, Uruk, and Nippur in this list correlates with the relative prominence of the EN terms derived from these cities, there is the exception of Sippar, for which there is only one clear attestation of the EN term associated with that city.²⁴ One likely reason for this exception is the

²¹ Strassmaier, Darius 301, 3 (Akkadian bed *eršu akkaditū*) and 4 (Akkadian table *paššuru akkadū*). In addition, the Oracc corpus encodes five instances of *akkadū* as a common adjective (Aj) instead of an EN term. These instances are all used to describe beds or sheep. See RA 97, 96–97, 136 (BM 54646) P522446, OLA 233, 75 P550635, and Strassmaier, Darius 297.

²² See Dubsar 3, 48 rev. 1, P311607 and commentary to that line.

²³ The sender of Dubsar 3, 48 (the governor of the Sealand, in the far south of Babylonia) may have used the term Akkadu[Akkadian]EN to describe the group of Babylonians because they came from different cities or he did not know which cities they came from.

²⁴ Dubsar 3 194, line 20, P386785. There, the form LÚ.UD.KIB.NUN[.KI-a-a] appears in broken context.

genre of the texts from that place (see Table 2). Almost all the Sippar texts in the corpus come from the Ebabbar temple archive and the Bel-remanni archive, and primarily concern administrative and legal matters.²⁵ They do not generally reflect city-wide or regional political events, the description of which can involve EN terms linked to cities or groups operating between them. Thus, we would expect that temple or private archives provide fewer EN terms than other types of texts, such as royal inscriptions, royal letters, and astronomical diaries. Indeed, for Uruk, there are twenty-two instances of EN terms in the 525 texts from the Eanna temple archive,²⁶ while for Sippar, there are seven instances of EN terms in the nearly 1,500 texts from the Ebabbar and Bel-remanni archives.²⁷ Among the 529 texts in the corpus from the private Egibi archive, only five contain EN terms.²⁸ Other text genres from locations besides Sippar show a higher proportion of EN terms. For example, SAA 22 is a collection of letters from the Assyrian royal archives that address political affairs in Uruk, Ur, and other southern Babylonian cities. Those 163 letters have 113 instances of EN terms (twenty-two of which are Urukaya[Urukean]EN). Similarly, among the twenty-seven royal inscriptions from the state of Suhu, there are sixty-seven instances of EN terms, with sixteen of them in one large inscription with over 1,100 words.²⁹

It should also be noted that the Murašu archive from Nippur is exceptional among private archives represented in the corpus in its relatively high

²⁵ M. Jursa, *Das Archiv des Bel-Remanni*, 1 and 126 argues that although likely housed within the Ebabbar temple, the Bel-remanni archive should be considered a private archive.

²⁶ Specifically, thirteen instances in Dubsar 3, six from YOS 7, and three from UCP 9/1.

²⁷ Specifically two from CT 55 and 5 from Strassmaier.

²⁸ These are Strassmaier Darius 361, Darius 457 (twice), Darius 458, and Cambyses 208. All instances of EN terms modify a personal name. While Cambyses 208 has Miširaya[Egyptian]EN, the other texts have Imbukkaya[Imbukkaean]EN, which is likely of a non-Semitic origin (Zadok, *Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes*, 180).

²⁹ RIMB 2 Ninurta-kudurri-ušur 2, Q006212.



number of EN terms. Among the 772 texts from the archive, there are 104 instances of EN terms. The distribution covers a wide range of names, including eighteen instances of Arumaya[Arumaean], sixteen instances of Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN, four of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, four of Muškayu[Phrygean]EN, and four of Arbaya[Arab]EN. As will be argued in the section on administrative and legal texts, the exceptional status of the Murašu archive stems from a major land allotment practice in use at the time (the *hatru* system).

Overall, Table 1 shows that among the most frequent EN terms in the corpus, a few refer to major cities in Babylonia, while the greater number are not defined by such entities. These latter groups include foreigners from other lands (Egypt, Elam, the Greek West, and Assyria), mobile pastoral groups such as the Cimmerians, Puqudeans, and Arameans, as well as hostile forces (the Umman-manda). This situation is paralleled by what is found in the Neo-Assyrian corpus. Indeed, there the number and variety of non-city base EN terms is much greater. The division of EN terms in Table 1 reflects sources that primarily involve the residents of Babylon and Uruk, but which also frequently deal with groups beyond those city limits.

In summary, this first look at the distribution of EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus reveals a sharp distinction between terms based on city and non-city entities. Most of the EN terms in Table 1 are based on names for regions outside Babylonia or mobile pastoral groups such as the Cimmerians, Puqudeans, and Arameans. A literary EN term for mobile hostile forces (Umman-manda[Barbarians]EN) is also used. There are only a handful of terms based on core Babylonian city names that appear more than a few times. Yet two of these city-based terms (Babilaya[Babylonian]EN and Uruk[Urukean]EN) are the most widely attested EN terms overall. A third (Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN) appears with much less frequency. While one may argue this distinction is an

artifact of the provenience of the surviving sources, a quantitative look at the distribution of EN terms according to major Babylonian cities shows this is at least partially false. Residents of Babylon and Uruk are highly salient social groups within the Neo-Babylonian corpus, whereas those from Nippur and Borsippa are less visible. Most of the other frequent EN terms stem from non-city based entities whose origin or characteristic features are quite varied, including one (Umman-manda[Barbarians]EN) of a literary nature. To the degree that these EN terms reflect conceptions of ethnic identity in the sources, that conceptualization encompasses a fair number of ethnic groups, but not as many as in the Neo-Assyrian sources.

C/P Ratios

Besides the counts for the top twenty EN terms, Table 1 also shows the C/P ratios of these terms. As explained in the study of the Neo-Assyrian corpus,³⁰ the C/P ratio is a rough measure of the degree to which an EN term occurs in syntactic combination with common nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs versus proper nouns and adjectives. To determine the C/P ratio of a given EN term e , one first determines the n words w_1, \dots, w_n (different from e) in the corpus which have the highest PMI-scores with e (the so-called ‘top ten list’ for that EN term). The PMI-score of two words a and b is a measure of the probability of finding a and b together in the corpus within a distance of m words.³¹ In both the current and previous study, n was set to ten and m to five. Once w_1, \dots, w_n are determined, one considers the part of speech of each word w_i , classifying it either as

³⁰ Ong, “Broad-Scale Patterns in the Distribution of Ethnic Names in the Neo-Assyrian Oracc Corpus (forthcoming).”

³¹ Aleksi Sahala and Krister Linden, “Improving Word Association Measures in Repetitive Corpora with Context Similarity Weighting,” in *Proceedings of the 12th International Joint Conference on Knowledge Discovery, Knowledge Engineering and Knowledge Management, IC3K*, vol. 1 (SCITEPRESS Science and Technology Publications, 2020), 48–58.



Common (i.e. common noun, common adjective, verb, adjective, or other particle) or Proper (proper nouns and proper adjectives). The ratio of the sizes of the two groups is the C/P ratio for *e*. A high C/P ratio for an EN term means that term often occurs around verbs, common nouns, and common adjectives. It generally indicates that EN term often plays a semantic role in verb phrases or is modified by common adjectives or common nouns in genitival constructions, and thus that the semantic associations of the EN term are richer or more concrete in virtue of such syntactic relations. A succinct way to refer to this situation is to say the EN term is highly semantically elaborated. A low C/P ratio, on the other hand, indicates the EN term frequently occurs around proper nouns and adjectives (usually other EN terms), most frequently in lists of names. The semantic roles or attributes the EN term may gain by proximity to such items is much more limited (as they can be syntactically related only by coordination), and hence the associations of the EN term derived from those syntactic relations are fewer or less concrete. We can thus say the EN term is less semantically elaborated. With this said, it should be remembered that the C/P ratio is a quick estimate of the semantic associations an EN term acquires by virtue of the lexical classes it syntactically combines with. Semantic information implied by the term's involvement in more complicated grammatical constructions, or by more particular features of a given lexical item (e.g., the social background of a particular PN), are not tracked.

A discussion of some of the terms in Table 1 with varying C/P ratios may help illustrate what is entailed by semantic elaboration. In particular, EN terms with a middle to high C/P ratio have a greater chance of appearing in contexts signaling distinctive traits vis-à-vis other EN terms. Such distinctions might be considered weak markers of ethnic identity from the perspective of the sources.

Two EN terms from Table 1 with a low C/P ratio are Arumaya[Arumeen]EN and Indumaya[Indian]EN. These terms refer to groups of Iranians that appear in Achaemenid-era administrative and legal texts within the Murašu archive. Indumaya[Indian]EN appears exclusively in the phrase *Bagazušta šaknu (ša) Indumaya* ‘Bagazušta, foreman of the Indumaya (*hatru*)’,³² usually as a part of a list of names. Arumaya[Arumeen]EN also appears in this configuration save with multiple names, in addition to identifying individuals or land-plots belonging to a *hatru* of the Arumaya.³³ The low C/P ratio for both these EN terms accurately reflects the restricted syntactic environments where they appear, surrounded by other PN’s, appearing in list-like environments, and having no clear semantic role from any verb, adjective, or grammatical construction save the collective land for service relation indicated by a genitive construction headed by *šaknu* or *hatru*. Thus, at the crude level of syntactic distribution, the sources fail to distinguish the Arumaya[Arumeen]EN and Indumaya[Indian]EN in ways the scribe would consider suggestive of ethnic identity. This does not mean that the sources do not contain such distinctions at all, only that the C/P ratio does not identify it.³⁴

³² See e.g. TuM 2/3, 190 P551351 and IMT 36. A *hatru* refers to a type of corporate land-holding unit in the Achaemenid state, then by extension to the holders of that land unit. Initially born of the need by early Achaemenid rulers to secure military control of a region and establish a source of manpower for future armed expeditions, a *hatru* consisted of parcels of land allotted to a group of individuals in return for military service or other labor service to the crown. While the military aspect of the *hatru* system is amply reflected in the names for the land plots assigned to individuals (e.g. ‘bow land’ *bit qašti* and ‘chariot land’ *bit narkabti*), a *hatru* was viewed just as much as a productive economic unit as a military one. The management of these parcels and collection of taxes on them lay in the hands of a foreman (*šaknu*), who sometimes owned the *hatru* but just as often merely worked for a proprietor or higher manager. *Hatrus* were sometimes part of a larger estate, whose proprietors could belong to the imperial court. For more on the management of *hatrus*, see Matthew W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire: The Murašu Archive, the Murašu Firm, and Persian Rule in Babylonia* (Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985), 70-103.

³³ See, for example, Stolper no. 37 (CBS 5153 = CDLI P261345) lines 4-5.

³⁴ The Murašu texts do allow us to determine more information about these two EN terms when we look at the particular proper nouns appearing with them. While all instances of Indumaya[Indian]EN in that archive are used to identify one Bagazušta as a foreman of a *hatru*, the instances of Arumaya[Arumeen]EN are used to describe more than one entity, including two foremen of *hatrus* of the Arumaya[Arumeen]EN (BE 10, 86 and BE 10, 111), a certain bow-land within such a *hatru* (BE 10, 111), and certain individuals belong to those *hatru*-collectives (PBS 2/1, 51 and PBS 2/1, 116). At least one Arumaya-*hatru* is located in Bit-Tabalaya in Anatolia (see TuM 2/3, 186 and I. Eph'al, “The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th-5th Centuries B.C.: Maintenance and Cohesion,” *Orientalia* 47, no. 1 [1978]:



The terms *Miṣiraya*[Egyptian]EN and *Sarugu*[Sarugean]EN have slightly higher C/P ratios, though their distributions are of different natures. *Miṣiraya*[Egyptian]EN appears most often in administrative or legal texts as the direct modifier of PN's or as a substantive in the lineage formula *mār Miṣiraya* “(PN) son of the Egyptian”.³⁵ It also appears in the phrase *ālu Miṣiraya* “Egyptian village”³⁶ and *bīt qašti ša kiṣri ša Miṣiraya* “bow land of the cohort of the Egyptian”.³⁷ The last two examples associate the EN term *Miṣiraya*[Egyptian]EN with village settlement and collective service to the state,³⁸ even as the remaining examples modify PN's which by themselves contribute minimal semantic associations. Overall, one may count these instances as providing slightly more semantic elaboration for *Miṣiraya*[Egyptian]EN than in the cases of *Arumaya*[Arumean]EN and *Indumaya*[Indian]EN. For its part, *Sarugu*[Sarugean]EN occurs only in the royal inscriptions of Suhu, specifically in the passages describing raids which that group and others conducted against the ruler *Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur* (r. mid. 10th century). The EN term occurs within a few fixed phrases that are repeated multiple times. The main instances are PN *nāgir Sarugu* “PN, herald of the Sarugu” and *2000 Hatallu ultu Sarugu adi Luhuayya ... iphurūma* “2000 men of the Hatallu, from both the Sarugu and Luhuayya, gathered and ...”.³⁹ While the narrative within which *Sarugu*[Sarugean]EN occur contains a fair variety of vocabulary items and is overall quite fluid, the only information we gather about the Sarugu themselves is that they have a herald (*nāgiru*) and some of their members gather alongside another group to engage in military actions. As with *Miṣiraya*[Egyptian]EN, this seems to provide slightly more semantic

80).

³⁵ The proper adjective in this kind of formula is sometimes labeled LN (lineage name) by the Oracc editors.

³⁶ Strassmaier, Darius 368 rev. 4'.

³⁷ Strassmaier, Cambyses 84 obv. 3.

³⁸ Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 113.

³⁹ RIMB 2 *Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur* 2 i, 9 Q006212. The Hatallu are a group of Arameans dwelling east of the land of Laqe. See Bagg, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der neuassyrischen Zeit. Teil 2. Heft 1: Zentralassyrien und benachbarte Gebiete, Ägypten und die arabische Halbinsel*, vol. 7, Tübinger Atlas Des Vorderen Orients (Reichert, 2017), 220-221.

elaboration than what is available for Arumaya[Arumean]EN and Indumaya[Indian]EN.

Here, it should be pointed out that the C/P ratio of an EN term is not an infallible indicator of the degree of semantic elaboration. Certain issues can confound results. One is that rare lexemes that appear in the vicinity of an EN term can fail to contribute to the C/P ratio for that term. This has to do with details in the algorithm used to calculate the PMI-scores upon which the C/P ratio is based.⁴⁰ Another confounding factor is that the C/P ratio reflects the collocations characteristic to a given EN term rather than ones involving all EN terms as a class. For example, it may be that all the EN terms in a corpus are sometimes found near a particular verb *v*, and therefore we know something about the semantic properties of all those EN terms because of the semantic role they all take with *v*. But the verb *v* may not contribute to the C/P ratio of a particular EN term *e* since that ratio reflects co-occurrences particular to *e* and not the other EN terms.

The term Puqudu[Puqudean]EN is a good illustration of this. Although it has a C/P ratio of 0/10, the term actually appears most often in SAA 22 (letters from southern Babylonia), in a variety of syntactic environments dealing with raiding, livestock management, and travel. For instance, one letter states *ālāni ša Gurasimmu Puqudu u Māt-Tāmti iħtabtū* “The Puqudu and Sealand have plundered cities of the Gurasimmu.”⁴¹ In another letter, servants of King Ashurbanipal describe how they told one refugee Nuhanean: *Puqudaya hitip piliq-ma šarri bēlāni wardūssu epša* “Destroy and slaughter the Puqudu, and then do obeisance before the king our lord.”⁴² Based on these two passages alone, one might suggest that the verbs like *habātu* “to plunder”, *hatāpu* “to destroy”, and *palāqu* “to slaughter” are

⁴⁰ Sahala and Linden, “Improving Word Association Measures in Repetitive Corpora with Context Similarity Weighting,” 5.

⁴¹ SAA 22 78, obv. 7-8.

⁴² SAA 22 84, 17-18.



words that are characteristically associated with Puqudu[Puqudean]EN. However, within the Neo-Babylonian corpus, *habātu* appears quite frequently with a variety of other subjects and objects and does not co-occur with Puqudu[Puqudean]EN itself to a distinctive degree.⁴³ The verbs *hatāpu* and *palāqu* actually appear only once in the Neo-Babylonian corpus (in the passage above). But the overall high number of attestations of Puqudu[Puqudean]EN in the corpus (thirty-seven) leaves these hapaxes out of consideration for computational reasons.

An environment more reflective of the characteristic collocations for Puqudu[Puqudean]EN itself come from the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 604-562), in a few fixed but repeated passages such as the following:

*rabûtu ša māt Akkadi Ea-dayyān šakin māt tāmti Nergal-šarru-usur
simmagir Nādin-ahi ša Tu- pliaš Bēl-šumu-iškun ša Puqūdu Bibēa mār
Dakkūri Nādin-ahi šanga Dēr Marduk-šarru-uşur ša Gambulu*

The magnates of the land of Akkad: Ea-dayyan, governor of the Sealand; Nergal-šarru-uşur, simmagir-official; Nadin-ahi of the the land Tupliyaš; Bel-šumu-iškun of the land of the Puqudu; Bibea, member of the Dakkuru, Nadin-ahi, priest of Der; Marduk-šarru-uşur of the land of the Gambulu,⁴⁴

Indeed, this passage features two of the terms appearing in the top ten list for Puqudu[Puqudean]EN (Bel-šumu-iškun[governor-of-Puqudu]PN and Tupliyaš[Tupliyaš]GN).⁴⁵ When we compare this passage to the examples

⁴³ Instances of subject-object pairs for *habātu* include the Hatallu plundering the land of Laqe (Ninurta-kudurru-uşur 2 i, 16 Q006212), the people of Arabia plundering Babylonians (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 47 i, 45 Q005444), hostile Arameans and Suteans plundering Sippar (RIMB 2 Simbar-Šipak 1, 10-11 Q006279), the king of Assyria plundering the Babylonian settlements of Rabbilu and Hamranu (Glassner, Chronicle 16 i, 3), Sennacherib plundering the land of Merodach-baladan II (Chronicle 16 ii, 22), the troops of Nabopolassar plundering the settlements of Mane, Sahiri, and Balihu (Chronicle 22, 7), and an unclear agent plundering the Greek citizens of Babylon (*pulitānu*) who were in the countryside (ADART 3 -162 rev. 13 X301620).

⁴⁴ All normalization and translation of quoted text is done by me; RINBE 1/1 Nebuchadnezzar II 11 vi 19'-26', Q005482.

⁴⁵ Tupliyaš is a region in southwestern Iran, west of the city of Der. See Zadok, *Répertoire géographique des textes*

above about raiding and destruction, we see that while the latter may be properties of the Puqudu, they are also common to groups like the people of the Sealand. What distinguishes the Puqudu is that there is a named magnate over them listed among other magnates of territories within Babylonia.

Among the EN terms in Table 1 with high C/P ratios, Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN is the most extreme (10/0). Fifteen out of the nineteen attestations of this term are in legal and administrative texts from the Murašu archive. There, the term functions as a substantive ('the Nippureans') referring to participants in various legal transactions and commercial exchanges. It does not appear within a list of other EN terms or proper nouns, but is associated with the words *pa’išu* "vacant(?)",⁴⁶ *ālik našparti* "commissioned agent",⁴⁷ and *wardu* "slave". All of these terms are common in texts dealing with property management. The appearance of Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN in the Murašu texts as a reference to unspecified Nippureans is not unusual, given the role the residents of that city played in the Murašu clan's business activities as likely holders of *hatrus*⁴⁸ and purchasers of commodities.⁴⁹ We may summarize the term's distribution by saying that it is largely restricted to economic contexts in the Murašu archive.

The relatively high C/P ratios for Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN, Yamanaya[Greek]EN, and Gurasimmu[Gurasimmean]EN all reflect the fact that these terms tend to appear in prose passages apart from other EN terms. Such an environment allows the EN term to occupy more semantic roles, achieve more semantic elaboration than long list-like contexts, and possibly reflect basic ethnic distinctions. This is clearest for Umman-

cunéiformes, 315 and 386.

⁴⁶ The term is used in the Murašu archives to describe an administrative status of land. See CAD P s.v. *pa’išu* a).

⁴⁷ Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 79.

⁴⁸ Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 28.

⁴⁹ Adali, *The Scourge of God*, 43-74.



manda[Barbarian]EN, which mainly appears in the inscriptions of Nabonidus (r. 556-539) as a word for the Medes. This group overall plays a negative role in those texts. For instance, Nabonidus makes the Umman-manda the direct instrument of Sin's wrath against the city of Harran as a consequence of its impiety:

*eli āli u bīti šāšu libbašu īzuz-ma Umman-manda ušatbām-ma bīti šuāti
ubbit-ma ušālikšu karmūti*

His heart grew angry at that city and the temple, and so he caused the Umman-manda to rise up and plunder the temple, and turned it into ruins.⁵⁰

Later in the same inscription, Nabonidus describes how the Umman-manda are scattered by a small force under Cyrus:

*ina šalulti šatti ina kašādi ušatbāniššum-ma Kuraš šar Anšan arassu
šeħri ina ummānišu wišūti umman-manda rapšāti usappih*

When the third year arrived, his young servant Cyrus king of Anšan was brought up against him and he scattered the wide Umman-manda with his small army.⁵¹

Such passages reflect basic traits of the Umman-manda that distinguish them from the native residents of Babylonia. The Umman-manda are overall hostile to the Babylonians, can serve as instruments of divine punishment against them, and must be driven away by military might. These features also draw on the broader use of Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN as a literary term for eastern barbarians.⁵² Because of this, we can say that Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN is a richly elaborated term in the corpus.

⁵⁰ RINBE 2 Nabonidus 28 i 11-12, Q005425.

⁵¹ i 26-28.

⁵² Adali, *The Scourge of God*, 43-74.

The case of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, the most frequently occurring EN term in the corpus, is interesting because while its C/P ratio is not as high as many others, the particular words most commonly occurring with it provide very specific connotations of the term. Three of the words in the top ten list for Babi- laya[Babylonian]EN are *Esagil* (the chief temple in Babylon, devoted to Marduk), *šatammu* “chief temple administrator,” and *kiništu* “council, assembly” (especially of temple personnel in the Esagil). Collocations involving these terms are frequent in the Late Babylonian astronomical diaries, which often mention administrative affairs of the Esagil temple in Babylon. For instance, the following diary dated to 76 BCE states:

ūmi šuāti šatam Esagil u Bābilāyī kiništu ša Esagil [ištēn alpa] u šina nīqī
ina Bāb-mār-rubē ša Esagil nindabē ana pīhāt Bābili šuāti ušazzizzū

That day the chief temple administrator of the Esagil and the Babylonians, as well as the assembly of the Esagil, provided [one bull] and 2 sheep sacrifices at the Gate of the Son of the Prince in the Esagil as offering for that governor of Babylon.⁵³

In Late Babylonian passages like the one above, Babilaya[Babylonian]EN refers to the long-standing residents of Babylon under the authority of the *šatammu* alongside the ruling council (*kiništu*).⁵⁴ In terms of legal status, these Babilaya[Babylonian]EN were distinguished from the Greek citizens (Greek *politai*, Akkadian *pulītē/pulītānu*), who were under the authority of a governor (*pīhātu*) appointed by the king.⁵⁵ They likely were also distinguished from royal slaves of the king, temple servants, and the

⁵³ ADART 3 -77A obv. 27'-28', X300771.

⁵⁴ See G.F. Del Monte, *Testi dalla Babilonia ellenistica*, vol. 1, Testi cronografici (Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1997); Tom Boij, *Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Peeters, 2004).

⁵⁵ Exactly how Greek the *pulītānu* were is uncertain, although they likely had some knowledge of the Greek language. It is possible long-standing residents of Babylon could become a Greek citizen or vice versa. See R.J. van der Spek, “Multi-Ethnicity and Ethnic Segregation in Hellenistic Babylon,” in *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition*, ed. T Derkx and N Roymans, Amsterdam Archaeological Studies (Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 107.



‘people of the land’ who lived in the countryside.⁵⁶ The astronomical diaries also distinguish the Greek citizens from the Babilaya[Babylonian]EN by cultural practices, noting the former anoint themselves with olive oil (a likely reference to exercising in the gymnasium).⁵⁷

As elements in the top ten list of Babilaya[BabylonianEN], the words *Esagil*, *šatammu*, and *kiništu* connote much information about the EN term. Most common nouns and adjectives appearing in the top ten lists of other EN terms with high C/P ratio, like *Nippuraya*[Nippurean]EN or *Umman-manda*[Barbarian]EN, are not as semantically distinctive. The top ten list for the latter EN term includes *kamûtu*[bondage]N, *sahru*[turned]AJ, *puggulu*[strong]AJ, and *sapāhu*[scatter]V, all of which when paired with *Umman-manda*[Barbarian]EN have more general semantic connotations than Babilaya[BabylonianEN] with *Esagil*, *šatammu*, and *kiništu*. This is an indication that while the C/P ratio is useful as a broad assessment of EN terms, the degree of semantic elaboration provided by specific collocations can vary greatly.

In summary, the C/P ratio can be considered a weak measure of ethnic distinction from the sources’ perspective. It is a quick way to estimate the amount of information the sources provide about a particular EN term (or, in fact, any word) on the basis of part of speech alone. EN terms with a high C/P ratio generally allow us to deduce more characteristics of this ethnic identity due to the particular verbs, common adjectives, or common nouns that collocate with them. EN terms with a low C/P ratio do not allow this as much, unless we know more about the proper nouns and adjectives that collocate with them. About half of the terms in Table 1 have a mid- to high C/P ratio, a few of which were examined in more

⁵⁶ van der Spek, “Multi-Ethnicity and Ethnic Segregation in Hellenistic Babylon”, 108.

⁵⁷ van der Spek, et al., *Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period* (SBL Press, 2025) (henceforth BCHP) no. 14. See also van der Spek, “Multi-Ethnicity and Ethnic Segregation in Hellenistic Babylon,” 108.

detail. One example where the specific words in the top ten list for an EN term significantly distinguish that term from others is *Babilaya*[Babylonian]EN. In combination with that EN term, the words *Esagil*, *šatammu*, and *kiništu* provided more detailed information on how late Babylonian scribes distinguished the community of long-standing Babylonian residents from the newer Greek citizens living there.

Analysis by Genre

The discussion in the preceding section already shows that text genre plays a role in explaining what kind of EN terms we see in the corpus, as well as how those terms are distributed. This motivates a more detailed study of EN terms according to genre. Table 2 shows the distribution of the top twenty EN terms according to five major text categories (inscriptions, letters, administrative texts, legal texts, and astronomical texts), plus a remainder category. Each of these five text categories will be discussed in turn.

Term	Inscription	Letter	Administrative	Legal	Astronomical	Other
Babilaya[Babylonian]EN	7	5	15	2	46	11
Urukaya[Urukean]EN	2	25	4	19	3	5
Puqudu[Puqudean]EN	4	32				
Arbaya[Arab]EN			6	1	26	2
Elamaya[Elamite]EN	3		1		28	
Aššuru[Assyrian]EN	25	3		1		
Ummamanda[Barbarian]EN	16				1	3



Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN			1	16	1	1
Armaya[Aramean]EN	11		1	1		5
Arumaya[Arumean]EN			18			
Indumaya[Indian]EN			9	9		
Gurasimmu[Gurasimme an]EN	1	15				
Gimiraya[Cimmerian]EN			10	4		
Rahi-ilaya[of-Rahi-ilu]EN	14					
Miṣiraya[Egyptian]EN			8	2		
Sarugu[Sarugean]EN	10					
Yamanaya[Greek]EN				1	6	3
Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN	4	2				3
Barsipaya[Borsipporean]EN	3		1		2	
Akkadu[Akkadian]EN		1	2	2	1	

Table 2. Counts by genre for the top twenty EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus.

Royal Inscriptions

Table 2 indicates that the term Aššuru[Assyrian]EN is primarily attested within the inscriptions. Within this genre, Aššuru[Assyrian]EN describes the Assyrians as a group in their political and military relations with Babylonia. The term first appears in the inscriptions of Ninurta-kudurri-usur, the tenth-century ruler of Suhu, which portray Assyrians as

inhabitants of a hostile border kingdom.⁵⁸ Its last appearance among the inscriptions is with Nabopolassar, with reference to that ruler's insurrection against the Assyrian empire.⁵⁹ Not all attestations of Aššuru[Assyrian]EN in the Babylonian inscriptions are negative, though, as the Sealand ruler Simbar-Šipak (late eleventh century) notes how the Assyrians rescued the property of the god Enlil from the hands of raiding Arameans, and stored it in Aššur.⁶⁰

Table 2 shows there are other EN terms from the corpus that are attested primarily in inscriptions, including Armaya[Aramean]EN, Sarugu[Sarugean]EN, Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN, and Rahi-ilaya[of-Rahi-ilu]EN. As in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, the instances of Armaya[Aramean]EN in Neo-Babylonian inscriptions describe the Arameans as enemies of the state. In the Babylonian case, however, they are portrayed as fearsome raiders of the local population and significant challengers to local sovereignty. The Sarugu[Sarugean]EN appear in the inscriptions of Ninurta-kudurri-uşur as yet another group threatening the stability of Babylonian rule. Finally, the Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN appear as an anachronistic term for the Medes in the inscriptions of Nabonidus, where the Babylonian king recounts the history of his dynasty. The term Elamaya[Elamite]EN appears within the royal inscriptions only under Nebuchadnezzar I, first as the oppressors of Babylonia and later the victims of the king's own conquests. The term Rahi-ilaya[of-Rahi-ilu]EN is almost entirely restricted to inscriptions of the Suhu ruler Ninurta-kudurri-uşur,⁶¹ concerning a population once hostile to, and then subjugated by, both Ninurta-kudurri-uşur and his father.

⁵⁸ See RIMB 2 Ninurta-kudurri-uşur 3, Q006213.

⁵⁹ See e.g. RINBE 1/1 Nabopolassar 3, Q005362.

⁶⁰ RIMB 2 Simbar-Šipak 1, Q006279.

⁶¹ It also appears twice in two inscriptions of an unidentified ruler of Suhu, namely RIMB 2 Unidentified Suhu 1001, Q006227 and Unidentified Suhu 1002, Q006228.



The distribution of EN terms within the royal inscriptions also varies through time. Table 3 shows the distribution according to major sub-corpora of the first-millennium ribo corpus. The number of texts in each sub-corpora is indicated in parentheses. The suhu corpus belongs to the early first-millennium BCE rulers of Suhu. The babylon2-5 corpora cover a set of rulers of Babylonia, including the Second Dynasty of Isin (1157-1024), the Second Dynasty of the Sealand (1025-1005), the Bazi Dynasty (1004-985), and a brief Elamite Dynasty (984-979). The babylon6 corpus includes later tenth to eighth century rulers of uncertain origin, as well as Neo-Assyrian rulers who left inscriptions in Babylonia. The babylon7 corpus covers the Neo-Babylonian Chaldean dynasty ruling ca. 626-539, and in the table, it has been divided according to three major rulers (Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar II, and Nabonidus). The babylon8 and babylon10 corpora cover the Achaemenid rulers (539-330) and the Seleucid rulers (ca. 305-64 BC).⁶²

Table 3 shows how the variety and total number of EN terms in inscriptions belonging to a particular Babylonian dynasty decrease with time. The inscriptions of the state of Suhu contain more than sixty instances of sixteen EN terms, whereas the Chaldean dynasty (babylon7) has twenty-six instances of six EN terms. The Achaemenid and Seleucid inscriptions have only two instances of two EN terms. This pattern is likely due to several reasons. On the one hand, it reflects the fact that certain groups of people appearing in early inscriptions are no longer relevant to the concerns of later ones. The term Aššuraya[Assyrian]EN no longer appears after the inscriptions of Nabopolassar because after that ruler the Assyrians stop being a military threat, even though a portion of their population continues living in the north.⁶³ The term Elamaya[Elamite]EN

⁶² More information on these corpora can be found on The Royal Inscriptions of Babylonia online (RIBO) project page, <https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ribo/>.

⁶³ See Sarah C. Melville, “A New Look at the End of the Assyrian Empire,” in *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded*, ed. G. Galil, M. Geller, and A. Millard (Brill, 2010), 179–201; Florian Janoscha Kreppner, “The Aftermath of the Assyrian Empire as Seen from the Red House Operation in Dur-katlimmu,”

appears in the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125-1104) because the Babylonian king undertook a significant military campaign against the Elamites during his reign. The king frames this campaign as revenge for earlier attacks by Elamites against Babylon.⁶⁴ The later Chaldean kings did not undertake campaigns against the Elamites. The term Habha[of Habha]EN in the suhu corpus refers to a people in the central Taurus mountains.⁶⁵ Such a term is less likely to appear in the later inscriptions from the Chaldean, Achaemenid, and Hellenistic dynasties, which focus on events further south. The foreign Achaemenid and Hellenistic dynasties initially maintained certain practices of Mesopotamian rulers, but supported Babylonian temples and their attendant elite scribal culture to a far smaller degree. Documents were increasingly written in Aramaic and Greek on parchment, and most rulers did not have their military and building activities preserved in cuneiform inscriptions.⁶⁶ This means that whatever EN terms that would have appeared in such military or building activities of such rulers were much less likely to be recorded in cuneiform inscriptions. Finally, some of the early EN terms attested only a few times in the early inscriptions may have dropped out of use by the latter half of the first millennium, particularly in light of the population transfers undertaken by the Assyrians and arrivals of new groups under the Achaemenids and Seleucids.

in *The Provincial Archaeology of the Assyrian Empire*, ed. John MacGinnis and Dirk Wicke (Ziyaret Archaeological Trust, 2016), 177–187; and Stefan Hauser, “Post-Imperial Assyria,” in *A Companion to Assyria*, ed. Eckart Frahm (Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 229–246.

⁶⁴ See RIMB 2 Nebuchadnezzar I 6 rev. 16 (Q006246), 7 obv. 14 (Q006247), and 8 23 (Q006248).

⁶⁵ See Levine, RIA Habhu.

⁶⁶ Early Achaemenid and Seleucid rulers did produce cuneiform inscriptions. Thus, the Cyrus Cylinder of Cyrus the Great (Irving Finkel, ed., *The Cyrus Cylinder: The Great Persian Edict from Babylon* [Bloomsbury Academic, 2022]), the Akkadian section of Darius I’s Bisitun Inscription (Elizabeth N. Von Voigtlander, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum: Pt. 1, Inscriptions of Ancient Iran; Vol. 2, the Babylonian Versions of the Achaemenian Inscriptions; 1, Texts, the Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great, Babylonian Version* [Humphries, 1978]), and the Antiochus Cylinder of Antiochus I (Spek et al., *Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period*, 989). However, the number of (Akkadian) cuneiform inscriptions they produced is much less than that of earlier Mesopotamian rulers.



suhu (27)	babylon2-5 (49)	babylon6 (126)		
Alu-eššayu[of-Alu-eššu]EN	2	Armaya[Aramean]EN	2	Assyrian rulers (100)
Amatu[1]EN	2	Aššuraya[Assyrian]EN	1	Ešarhaddon (41)
Anatayu[of-A nat]EN	1	Babilaya[Babylonian]EN	2	Babilaya[Babylonian]EN
Armaya[Aramean]EN	5	Elamaya[Elamite]EN	3	Šamaš-šuma-ukin (7)
Aššuraya[Assyrian]EN	21	Kaššu[Kassite]EN	1	Ammanu[Amnanean]EN
Habba[of-Habba]EN	1	Subaru[Subarean]EN	1	Ashurbanipal (39)
Hanzanu'a[1]EN	1	Sutu[Sutean]EN	1	Gurasimmya[Gurasimmean]EN
Haṭalayu[of-Hataleean]EN	4			Others (13)
Luhuayu[1]EN	1			Southern rulers (26)
Mim'u[1]EN	1			Nabu-šuma-iškun (2)
Rahi-ilayu[of-Rahi-ilu]EN	14			Armaya[Aramean]EN
Saba'ayu[of-Saba]EN	1			Babilaya[Babylonian]EN
Sarugu[Surgean]EN	10			Barsipaya[Borsippae]EN
Suhay u[of-Suhu]EN	1			Dilbataya[of-Dilbat]EN
Tema'ay u[of-Tema]EN	1			Kaldu[Chaldean]EN
Tu'manu[1]EN	1			Kutaya[Kuthean]EN
babylon7 (214)				Others (24)
Nabopolassar (15)				Subaru[Subarean]EN
Aššuraya[Assyrian]EN	3	Makkadunayu[Macedonian]EN	1	Urukaya[Urukean]EN
Subaru[Subarean]EN	2	Ummman-manda[Barbarians]EN	1	
Nebuchadnezzar II (116)				
Puqudaya[Puqudean]EN	4			
Nabonidus (68)				
Gutu[Gutian]EN	1			
Ummman-manda[Barbarians]EN	15			
Urukaya[Urukean]EN	1			
Amel-Marduk (6)	-			
Neriglissar (9)	-			

Table 3. Count of EN terms in royal inscriptions according to major sub-corpora. Number of texts in parentheses.

More prominent than these factors, however, is the fact that later inscriptions may continue to talk about roughly the same set of people as earlier inscriptions, but in indirect ways. In particular, earlier inscriptions may have reason to refer to a certain people via an EN term, whereas the later ones speak of the place those people come from. For instance, in the Suhu inscriptions, Ninurta-kudurri-uşur mentions raiding a caravan of Sabeans (*Saba'ayu*) and Temans (*Tema'ayu*) from Arabia that was traveling through his territory.⁶⁷ The narrative focuses on the people as caravan traders in the king's land rather than individuals from particular settlements (although they are said to be from distant Arabia). The later king Nabonidus, however, was specifically interested in the location of Tema. In his inscriptions, he does not speak of the Temans per se, but he does mention the settlement of Tema when describing his sojourns abroad.⁶⁸ Similarly, an inscription of Nabu-šuma-iškun (r. ca. 760-748)

⁶⁷ RIMB 2 Ninurta-kudurri-uşur 2, iv 27', Q006212.

⁶⁸ Tema the settlement appears three times in Nabonidus' inscriptions: RINBE 2 Nabonidus 17 ii' 7 (Q005414), 47 i 24,

states that the king burned a number of Kutheans at the Gate of Zababa in Babylon.⁶⁹ The focus again is on a certain number of Kutheans rather than their city as a whole. This stands in contrast to the later Nebuchadnezzar II, who mentions establishing temple offerings in the city of Kutha and repairing its temples and walls.⁷⁰

Although the above examples deal with two different types of historical events (exercises in state violence or military campaigns versus cult renovation and building projects), one can also see the stronger influence of traditional Babylonian compositional style in the later inscriptions. Later kings were not less active militarily than their predecessors. Both Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus undertook numerous military campaigns, but their inscriptions largely speak about other activities.⁷¹ While Mesopotamian inscriptions can cover military or building activities of a ruler, Assyrian inscriptions are known for devoting significant time to the former whereas Babylonian ones concentrate on the latter. With respect to the information in Table 3, this tendency is best represented by Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus.⁷² While both kings undertook

and iii 4 (Q005444).

⁶⁹ See Steven W. Cole, "The Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabû-šuma-iškun," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 84, no. 2 (1994): 230 = RIMB 2 Nabu-šuma-iškun 1, rev iii 12', Q006302. The two texts in the corpus categorized as inscriptions of Nabu-šuma-iškun are unusual in the sense that neither was produced under the authority of that king himself. One text (RIMB 2 Nabu-šuma-iškun 2001) is a cylinder inscription made by Nabu-šuma-imbi, a governor of Borsippa. It concerns the restoration of the Ezida temple and covers events during the reign of Nabu-šuma-iškun. The other text (Nabu-šuma-iškun 1) is represented by a Late Babylonian manuscript from Uruk and is highly critical of the king's rule. It has been termed a literary or historical-literary text (Cole, "The Crimes and Sacrileges," 220) and is included among Glassner's chronicles, even as it has also traditionally been included among royal inscriptions (Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*, 117). In this article, it is treated as both.

⁷⁰ For instance, Nebuchadnezzar II 100, ii 89 and iii 3.

⁷¹ Nebuchadnezzar II's Wadi Brissa inscription discusses the king's military activities in the Levant, though even there its focus is on domestic cult and building activities. See Da Riva, *The Twin Inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar at Brisa*. In his Harran Stele, Nabonidus mentions his defeat of Arabs who raided Babylonia and desecrated its temples (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 47 i 45 - ii 2, Q005444). However, even here the violence is spoken of in metaphorical terms, as the god Nergal breaks the weapons of the Arabs and they bow down to Nabonidus' feet (*ina amat Sin Nergal kakkišunu ušabbi-ma napharšunu iknušū ana šepēya*). Nabonidus himself or his army is never said to undertake any military campaign against the Arabs.

⁷² The argument would also hold true for inscriptions of the other Chaldean rulers Amel-Marduk (561–560) and Neriglissar (559–556). However the number of inscriptions by these kings in the corpus is relatively low, and they do not feature any EN terms.



numerous military campaigns during their reign, their royal inscriptions are largely devoted to their building and cult activities. Both rulers conscientiously promoted themselves as pious Babylonian kings who attended to or expanded the cults of the gods and maintained the people in well-kept cities.⁷³ In the description of such activities, the emphasis is on the king himself performing a duty at a particular place for the benefit of certain gods.⁷⁴ In their adherence to old formulas and tropes, the inscriptions refer to the populations involved in or affected by these activities in very broad terms, such as *nišū* “people” or *ṣalam qaqaadī* “black-headed ones”, or sometimes *ummānu* “(work)-force”. They do not use more specific terms referring to a particular city or territory in EN terms. Of the four instances of *Puqudaya*[*Puqudean*]EN in Nebuchadnezzar II’s inscriptions, three refer to the territory of the Puqudeans as areas under control of the king,⁷⁵ while one speaks of the territory of the *Puqudu* as the area of responsibility for a high official assigned to supervise building work.⁷⁶ Nabonidus is somewhat exceptional in that the EN terms within his inscriptions all occur in long passages concerned with the historical background to the focus of the text, the king’s current building and cult activities. The terms *Guti*[*Gutian*]EN and *Umman-manda*[*Barbarians*]EN refer to the Medes, who are said at one time to have been an instrument of Marduk to help Nabopolassar establish his Chaldean dynasty,⁷⁷ but otherwise to have destroyed temple cults that Nabonidus wishes to restore.⁷⁸ Thus the EN terms in Nabonidus’

⁷³ Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros’ des Grossen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik* (Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 66–69; Da Riva, *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction* (Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 110–112; Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *A History of Babylon, 2200 BC - AD 75* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 229–237.

⁷⁴ In the 116 inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II within the corpus, there are 693 references to names of settlements or cities. In the 68 inscriptions of Nabonidus, there are 206. In contrast, in the 15 inscriptions of Nabopolassar, there are 35.

⁷⁵ Nebuchadnezzar II 27 ii 54 Q005498, 28 ii 2' Q005499, and 83 ii 18' Q005554 (sources for this last inscription listed in Da Riva, *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions*, GMTR 4 C041).

⁷⁶ Nebuchadnezzar II 11 vi 23 Q005482.

⁷⁷ Nabonidus 3 ii 3', Q005400.

⁷⁸ See e.g. Nabonidus 3 ii 14' and x 14' (*Umman-manda*), iv 21 (*Guti*).

inscriptions refer neither to the specific people recruited for, or benefiting from, the king's building activities, nor to specific peoples as the enemies of his own military campaigns.⁷⁹

One can also see the influence of the Babylonian compositional tradition on the distribution of EN terms in inscriptions in the babylon6 corpus written by Neo-Assyrian kings or their puppets in Babylonia. Discussion of military activities is absent, and EN terms are used rarely, even though the building and cult activities of these rulers did affect residents of Babylonian cities. The babylon6 corpus contains inscriptions from Sargon II (709-705), Sennacherib (704-703 and 688-681), Bel-ibni (702-700), Esarhaddon (680-669), Ashurbanipal (668), Shamash-shumu-ukin (667-648), and Ashur-etel-ilani (ca. 630).⁸⁰ Of the 126 texts in babylon6, 100 stem from the Assyrian rulers of Babylon or their representatives. Yet within these 100 texts, there are only three EN terms, which are used a total of seven times. All four instances of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN can be considered exceptional in that they occur in the same phrase within Esarhaddon's inscriptions, where the king explains how he rehabilitated Babylon after its devastation by Sennacherib in 689. Besides discussing the rebuilding of temples, gardens, walls, and other city infrastructure, Esarhaddon notes how he restored enslaved or refugee residents of Babylon to their special legal status (*kidinnu*), and ultimately "counted them as Babylonians" (*ana Bābilāyī amnu*).⁸¹ While the inscription follows the ancient Babylonian pattern of highlighting the king's care for his subjects, the term Babilaya [Babylonian]EN is used because the rehabilitation the king engages in is directly tied to the subjects' status as residents of Babylon. Amnanu[Amnanean]EN occurs in an inscription

⁷⁹ The passage Nabonidus 47 i 45 - ii 2 mentioning Arabs subdued by the god Nergal for raiding Babylonia is exceptional in that it implies military violence or coercion. But Nabonidus and his army are never mentioned as the agents of this act.

⁸⁰ The years in parentheses reflect when the ruler controlled Babylon and are based on Babylonian King List A (see Beaulieu, *A History of Babylon*, 2200 BC - AD 75, 195).

⁸¹ See RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 104 v 20 Q003333, 105 vii 23 Q003334, 111 vi 2' Q003340, and 114 iv 33 Q003343.



from Sippar as title of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, *šar Amnāni* “King of Amnanu.” It is based on an Old Babylonian term for the settlement Sippar-Amnanu and can just as easily be interpreted as a place name instead of an EN term.⁸² Finally, Gurasimmaya[Gurasimmean]EN occurs in an inscription by one Sin-balassu-iqbi, who commemorates his restoration of a well in the area of Ur. The man describes how he was appointed by Ashurbanipal as governor of Ur, Eridu, and the Gurasimmean people.⁸³

Apart from Esarhaddon’s discussion of the rehabilitated Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, the inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian rulers in the babylon6 corpus make only sparing use of EN terms, and when they do, the terms describe named individuals.⁸⁴ In stark contrast to this stand the inscriptions of Nabu-šuma-iškun, the eighth-century Chaldean ruler of Babylon, whose reign witnessed a significant outbreak of violence among multiple parties in Borsippa. An inscription from the Ezida temple of Borsippa states:

ina Barsipa ăl kitti u mišari ešāti dalhāti sihi u sahmašāti ina palē Nabu-šuma-iškun šarri mār Dakkūri Bābilāyū Barsipāyū Dutēti kišād Puratti gabbi Kaldī Aramī Dilbatāyī ūmī mādūti ana libbi ahāmeš kakkīšunu išelli ahāmeš urassapū u itti Barsipāyī ina muhhi eqlētišunu ippušū sūlāti

In Borsippa, city of truth and justice, there was confusion, disturbance, revolt, and uprising during the reign of King Nabu-šuma-iškun of the Dakkuri tribe. Babylonians, Borsippaeans, the town of Duteti, and all the Chaldeans, Arameans, and Dilbateans sharpened their weapons against each other for many days and

⁸² See Zadok, *Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes*, 271.

⁸³ RIMB 2 Ashurbanipal Babylonian 2015 9, Q003854.

⁸⁴ The sole instance of Subaru[Subarean]EN occurs in an inscription of Merodach-baladan II, Chaldean ruler of Babylon from 721-710, as a term for the enemy Assyrians (RIMB 2 Marduk-apla-iddina II 1 9, Q006305). The one instance of Urukaya[Urukean]EN appears in an inscription of Nabonassar recording the renovation of the Akitu temple in Uruk by two individuals, Bel-ibni and Nabu-zera-ušabši, sons of Bulluṭu the Urukean (*Urukaya*). See RIMB 2 Nabu-naṣir 2001, Q006304.

fought one another. They did battle with the Borsippeans over their fields.⁸⁵

The EN terms here are the central words of the passage. They are not used as secondary identifiers of named individuals in a context where the focus is on a building, temple, or city, but rather refer to groups of people engaged in killing one another. While Neo-Assyrian inscriptions often use EN terms to describe a coalition of peoples arrayed against the Assyrian king and his army, the king and his forces are portrayed as superior. Here, the EN terms refer to groups of people approximately equal in importance and power (although the Borsippeans are distinguished by defending their own land).

One may see behind this passage the limited power of the Babylonian king to secure his kingdom, as well as the multiplicity of groups seeking to establish their own control of various localities in the absence of central authority. As the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar I and Nabonidus show, narratives of such turmoil in the past and the EN terms that come with them can appear in inscriptions dedicated to cult renovation or building projects, if that historical background highlights the significance of the present dedication and is acceptable to the current regime's political ideology.⁸⁶

In summary, the distribution of EN terms in the royal inscriptions reflects the influence of geographical location, compositional style, and political history. The inscriptions in the suhu corpus stem from central Mesopotamia, and some of the EN terms in these inscriptions cease to be of relevance in the later Chaldean, Achaemenid, and Hellenistic inscriptions centered on Babylon. Secondly, the inscriptions of

⁸⁵ RIMB 2 *Nabu-šuma-iškun* 2001 i 15'-21', Q006303.

⁸⁶ Thus in presenting the historical background to his renovation of Babylon, Esarhaddon does not attribute the devastation of that city to either his father Sennacherib or the Assyrians, but rather to the chief Babylonian god Marduk, who decided to punish the Babylonians for abandoning their traditional gods and consorting with Elam (see e.g. RINAP 4 *Esarhaddon* 104 i 18-33, Q003333).



Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus exemplify the Babylonian tradition of emphasizing the king's attention to temple cults and the well-being of his subjects over military campaigns against foreign enemies. Such a style tends to avoid using EN terms when referring to the people recruited for building projects or those who benefit from them. Instead, it refers to the places those activities occur or to people in very generic or poetic terms. Finally, political history is relevant to the use of EN terms in the inscriptions in three ways. First, some EN terms like Aššuraya[Assyrian]EN are closely associated with a political entity, such as a city or state. When that political entity dissolves (such as the Assyrian state), the associated EN term drops out of use insofar as the EN term serves to designate that state. In Babylonian inscriptions that do not focus on military activities, EN terms can appear in narratives about the past deemed relevant to a particular renovation or building project and acceptable ideologically. As the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar I, Nabu-šuma-iškun, Esarhaddon, and Nabonidus show, such background narratives are motivated by the course of Babylonian history in the first half of the first millennium, as central authority repeatedly waxes and wanes and certain rulers are in a position to view their cult restoration or building projects as rehabilitation of what was destroyed by various groups (such as Elamites, Assyrians, and Medes). Finally, after Babylon fell to the Achaemenids and Seleucids, there was little incentive for elite cuneiform scribes to produce royal inscriptions for such foreign rulers, who no longer patronized Babylonian temple institutions or the cuneiform scribal culture associated with it to the same degree as their predecessors. Whatever Akkadian EN terms one might use in describing those rulers' military and building exploits were not preserved in cuneiform.

Letters

Letter	Sender	Receiver	EN Terms
Dubsar 3, 2	<i>tupšarru</i>	šatammu	Urukaya
Dubsar 3, 7	PN	<i>tupšarru, šatammu</i>	Urukaya
Dubsar 3, 8	Governor of Uruk	<i>qīpu, tupšarru, šatammu, others</i>	Urukaya
Dubsar 3, 48	Governor of Sealand	PN	Akkadu
Dubsar 3, 52	Deputy of the Sealand	šatammu	Urukaya
Dubsar 3, 67	PN	Nebuchadnezzar II	Urukaya
Dusbar 3, 125	PN ₁ and PN ₂	šatammu	Urukaya
Dubsar 3, 133	Unknown	<i>qīpu</i> ⁸⁷	Larsua, Babilaya
Dubsar 3, 152	PN	šatammu	Urukaya
Dubsar 3, 159	Nabonidus ⁸⁸	šatammu	Arbaya, Urukaya

Table 4. EN terms within the Eanna letters (šatammu = chief temple administrator, *tupšarru* = scribe of the temple, *qīpu* = royal representative)

The set of letters in the Neo-Babylonian corpus is divided into those belonging to a certain number of temples or private archives, and those belonging to the southern Babylonian letters from the royal Assyrian archives. Both subgroups feature the use of EN terms, though to different degrees. The temple archives and private letters use EN terms quite

⁸⁷ See Levavi, Dubsar 3, 390 for arguments about the identity of the receiver.

⁸⁸ See Levavi, Dubsar 3, 423 for arguments that the sender is the future Babylonian king.



sparingly, containing only twenty-one instances among 1,058 texts. Thirteen of these instances come from letters in the Eanna archive at Uruk, nine of which are Urukaya[Urukean]EN.

The Eanna archive features a relatively high number of EN terms because of interactions between the temple and the governor of Uruk, the governor of the Sealand, the Babylonian king, or the royal representative (*qipu*).⁸⁹ Table 4 lists the Eanna letters containing EN terms along with descriptions of the sender and recipients. Of these ten letters, five are sent or received by a governor or their deputy, a royal representative, or a king. Dubsar 3, 159 is likely sent by Nabonidus, the future king. In that letter, he handled silver payments involving Uruk, an Arab chief, and some Babylonian military officers. Given the large administrative responsibilities of such government officials, letters involving them would understandably often concern groups of people who could be referred to by EN terms. Dubsar 3, 67 is from one Mukīn-Marduk (of unclear background) to King Nebuchadnezzar II concerning military deserters hiding among the residents of Uruk,⁹⁰ while Dubsar 3, 8 is from the governor of Uruk to the royal representative and other high temple officials regarding a royal decree exempting Urukeans from a certain labor service.⁹¹ Some of the letters between temple officials or private individuals also concern groups of people denoted by EN terms. Dubsar 3, 125 involves testimony by a group of one hundred Urukeans in a dispute about land usage,⁹² while Dubsar 3, 152 discusses the traditional bow-service imposed on Urukeans.⁹³

⁸⁹ For more on the role of *qipu* in the temple as well as other high temple officials, see A. C. V. M. Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar: Its Administration and Its Prosopography* (Nederlands Historisch-Archeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1997) and Waerzeggers, *The Ezida Temple of Borsippa*, 42-43.

⁹⁰ Dubsar 3, 67 obv. 5, P294812.

⁹¹ Dubsar 3, 8 rev. 38, P470098.

⁹² Dubsar 3, 125 rev. 25, P309817.

⁹³ Dubsar 3, 152 rev. 22, P386767.

In Dubsar 3, 2, and 7, however, EN terms are used to identify an individual involved in smaller affairs. Dubsar 3, 2 says:

*tuppi Marduk-šakin-šumi ana šatammi ahiya Nabu u Marduk šulum
balāti ša ahiya liqbû Innin- keširat Urukēti ahātiya ši ul nakašta ši ahūka
qātēšu ina muhhišu iltakan ina Bābili ultēšibšu*

Letter of Marduk-šakin-šumi to my brother, the chief temple administrator. May Nabu and Marduk proclaim the well-being of my brother! Innin-keširat the Urukean is my sister. She is not a stranger. Your brother seized her and settled her in Babylon.⁹⁴

In this letter, Marduk-šakin-šumi identifies his sister Innin-keširat as Urukean, possibly to disambiguate her from other individuals with the same name. But he also does so to highlight a point of commonality between his sister, himself, and the letter recipient, and appeal to the recipient's sympathy in light of the impropriety of settling her in Babylon.⁹⁵

Because the Eanna archive has ten other royal letters which do not feature any EN terms,⁹⁶ we can only speak of a weak tendency for those sent or received by outside officials to contain EN terms, relative to non-royal letters in the temple and private archives.

In contrast to the temple and private archives, the royal Assyrian letters from southern Babylonia have a much higher number of EN terms (113 terms among 163 letters). Table 5 shows the top ten EN terms occurring in these letters. This high number of EN terms is due to the political nature of the letters, which are largely concerned with reporting to the distant Assyrian king about conflicts between the various communities in southern Babylonia, legal disputes, or intelligence regarding members

⁹⁴ Dubsar 3, 2 obv. 1-9, P291495.

⁹⁵ Levavi, Dubsar 3, 146.

⁹⁶ See Levavi, Dubsar 3, 167 for the list of royal letters in the Eanna archive.



from these groups, and details of military campaigns involving them. The most common EN terms in the letters are Urukaya[Urukean]EN, Puqudu[Puqudean]EN, and Gurasimmu[Gurasimmean]EN, and indeed, these three terms overall are more likely to be found in the royal Assyrian letters than elsewhere in the Neo-Babylonian corpus. Of the twenty-five attestations of Urukaya[Urukean]EN in the letters overall, fifteen stem from letters written to or by Neo-Assyrian officials stationed around Uruk. Similarly, all but five of the attestations of Puqudaya[Puqudean]EN stem from these southern letters, with four of the others coming from inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II and one from an economic document dated to that king's reign. All but one attestation of Gurasimmu[Gurasimmean]EN stem from the southern letters, the one exception belonging to a Babylonian inscription written under Ashurbanipal.⁹⁷

EN term	Count
Puqudaya[Puqudean]EN	32
Gurasimmya[Gurasimmean]EN	15
Urukaya[Urukean]EN	15
Urayal[of-Ur]EN	6
Kissikaya[Kissikean]EN	4
Aššuraya[Assyrian]EN	3
Māt-tamtimūya[Sealander]EN	3
Parsamašuwa[Persian]EN	3
Pillatu[Pillatean]EN	3

Table 5. Top ten EN terms appearing in SAA 22.

The prominence of Puqudu[Puqudean]EN and Gurasimmu[Gurasimmean]EN directly relates to the main concern of the letters: the rebellion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his Babylonian supporters against his brother Ashurbanipal. The Puqudu (along with the Sealanders) vigorously participated on the Babylonian side in this war and posed a significant threat to Assyrian forces in the south. The Gurasimmu were initially loyal to the Assyrians but eventually switched sides. Two letters illustrate how EN terms are used to convey this information. One is from

⁹⁷ RIMB 2 Ashurbanipal Babylonian 2015 9, discussed in the section dealing with royal inscriptions.

the residents of Ur and Šat-iddina informing the Assyrian king of depredations by the Puqudu against both them and the Gurasimmu:

...šanāti aga maššarti š [a šar]ri bēlīni nittašar alāni ša Gurasimmu
Puqudu u Māt-tāmti iħtabtū ālu ašbu ina libbi īānu alla Ur Kissik Eridu
u Šat-iddina ...

Puqudu ebūru [...] u ša nūnī itta[šū ...] u enna ina muhhi suluppīni ša
Tišri aga ša rahšāni kī suluppa ittašū usammūnaša u māti la-qātē šarri
ušellū

Over these years we have kept watch for the king, our lord. The Puqudu and the Sealanders have raided the settlements of the Gurasimmu. There are no more inhabited settlements there except for Ur, Kissik, Eridu, and Šat-iddina ...

The Puqudu have ta[ken] the harvest of [...] and of fish. As for our dates from this month of Tishri that we depend on, if they take the dates they will cause us trouble and make the land hostile to the king.⁹⁸

Another letter indicates that for want of aid from the Assyrians, the Gurasimmu decided to join the coalition against them:

Gurasimmu š [a ittī]ni ušuzzu nakru ana muhišunu k[ī]llikū aššu
imurū-ma tēmu ša Māt-Aššur la-pānišunu irīqu u mamma ina pīhāti ana
kitrišunu lā illikū qātē ana nakri ittannū

adū Gurasimmu gabbi ittikrū ...

adū Māt-tāmti Puqudu u Gurasimmu deki ana muhhīni iddekūni ...

⁹⁸ SAA 22 78, obv. 5-11 and rev. 2'-8'. All text citations from SAA 22 are based on Grant Frame and Simo Parpola, eds., *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part II: Letters from Southern Babylonia*, 1st edition (Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2023), with normalization and translation by me.

When the enemy went against the Gurasimmu who were stationed with us, they defected to the enemy because they saw counsel from Assyria was not coming and none of the governors were going to their aid ...

Now all the Gursimmu have become hostile...

Now the Sealand, the Puqudu, and the Gurasimmu have raised forces against us.⁹⁹

On the other hand, Uruk had traditionally been an Assyrian stronghold during Assyria's rule over Babylonia.¹⁰⁰ Because of this, not only do instances of Urukaya[Urukean]EN in SAA 22 involve the civil war, but they also address more general social problems in Uruk resulting from it. An example is SAA 22 3, a petition from the residents of Uruk to King Ashurbanipal concerning murders by a Babylonian named Sin-ibni:

... *Sin-ibni ina qaqqar ... ša Uruk Urukaya idūkū u hubussunu iħbutū šarru bēlia dāmšu ša ardišu lā umaššar libbū agānim-ma šaddaqad Sin-ibni Uraya kī idūkū mamma ana muhhi šarri bēlia ušakšidu Eriduyā kī idūku mammaya ana šarri bēlia ul iqbi u enna Urukaya idduk*

The ... of Sin-ibni plundered and killed Urukeans in the area ... of Uruk. May the king, my lord, not forget the blood of his servants! Similarly, last year when Sin-ibni killed an Urean (resident of Ur), no one sent him before the king, my lord, and when he killed an Eriduan (resident of Eridu) no one spoke to the king, my lord. Now he has killed an Urukean!¹⁰¹

These instances of EN terms are similar to those found in the inscriptions of Nabu-šuma-ukin in that they identify people from different

⁹⁹ SAA 22 79, obv.9'-13', 16', and rev. 7-8.

¹⁰⁰ Frame and Parpola, *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part II*: xvi.

¹⁰¹ SAA 22 3 rev. 1'-11'.

communities set in opposition to another. Names of individuals are not of primary importance to the king. Even in SAA 22 3, which deals with a named individual accused of murdering several people, those victims are referred to by EN terms signaling the city they come from.

The relative lack of EN terms in Babylonian letters from the temple and private archives is noticeable compared to those in the royal Assyrian letters. The pattern is strengthened when we consider other Neo-Assyrian letters written to or from Babylonia (which belong to other SAA volumes and were considered as part of the Neo-Assyrian corpus). Within the letters of Esarhaddon and Sennacherib involving Babylonia (SAA 17 and 18), there are nineteen attestations of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, seven of Urukaya[Urukean]EN, five of Barsipaya[Borsipporean]EN, and eleven of Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN. These numerous references occur among the equally if not more numerous EN terms referring to northern groups that are also attested in the Neo-Assyrian letters.

Acknowledging the weak tendency for letters to or from high temple officials to feature EN terms due to the broad scope of their administrative concerns, the reason for the relative paucity of such terms in temple or private archives as opposed to royal Assyrian correspondence would seem to be the assumed common circle of acquaintances, and relevance of those acquaintances, to the matters discussed in the letters. The temple archives illustrates this situation well. These letters are typically written between two temple functionaries (often family members) dealing with small business or personal matters.

More broadly, we might thus say that, as a matter of genre, EN terms play a smaller role in identifying the various entities in the Neo-Babylonian letters as compared to the Neo-Assyrian letters. While the state Assyrian letters also refer to individuals by profession, the Babylonian letters more often do so, making it sufficient to refer to them by personal name. In the latter case, EN terms may either serve to disambiguate individuals or



assert an additional quality about them relevant to the main point of the letter. The use of Urukaya[Urukean]EN in the section of Dubsar 3, 2 discussing Innin-keširat is likely an example of this.

Administrative and Legal Texts

The distribution of EN terms among administrative and legal texts of the corpus is significantly shaped by the Murašu archive. In the overview of the distribution, it was noted that the Murašu archive differs from the other temple and private archives in the corpus in that it contains a high number of EN terms (104 among 772 texts). In terms of their etymology, only two terms refer to people from Babylonian cities (Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN and Babilaya[Babylonian]EN), one refers to residents of a region in Babylonia (Akkadu[Akkadian]EN), and the rest refer to other social groups such as residents of foreign territorial units, foreign cities, or members of mobile pastoral groups.¹⁰² Most of the instances of these terms identify the holders of a *hatru*, a collective land-holding unit briefly discussed above (C/P Ratios).¹⁰³ For instance, BE 10 86, 4 speaks of the *hatri Arumaya* “the *hatru* of the Arumayans”. Many *hatrus* are actually named after a profession, work location, or personal name.¹⁰⁴ As Stolper notes, although the name of a *hatru* does not necessarily describe the profession or social background of the land-holders, the fact that foreign personal names appear among the holders of *hatrus* named after foreign EN terms suggests that *hatru* names still partly describe the background of their holders, even as the presence of many Babylonian names indicates a process of assimilation.¹⁰⁵ The early function of the

¹⁰² One EN term Šarrabanuya[of-Šarrabanu]EN is derived from the West-Semitic tribe of Šarrabanu, which also became the name of a settlement near Larak. See Ran Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods: An Onomastic Study*, Rev. version (H.J. & Z. Wanaarta, 1978), 10.

¹⁰³ For a complete list of the attestations, see Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 72–79.

¹⁰⁴ For instance, BE 10 63, 3: *hatri ša kaškadinni* “*hatri* of the pastry-cooks”.

¹⁰⁵ Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 72.

hatru-system to garrison soldiers or resettle subjects from different parts of the Achemenid empire also supports this claim.¹⁰⁶

All this indicates that, to some degree, the foreign EN terms appearing as *hatru* names reflect foreign ethnic identities, with the most salient social distinctions being geographical origin and perhaps language. Note that all instances of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, Akkadu[Akkadian]EN, and all but two instances of Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN in the Murašu archive refer to people outside the context of the *hatru* system, with many of them modifying the personal names of witnesses.¹⁰⁷

The special nature of the Murašu archive vis-à-vis EN terms becomes more apparent when we compare it to four other archives in the corpus, described in Table 6.¹⁰⁸ While the Eanna and Ebabbar archives belong to the temple institution as a whole, the Egibi archive represents the business activities of the Egibi family through the sixth and early fifth centuries BCE. Based in Babylon, the family engaged in numerous activities, including land acquisition and sales, slave sales, rental housing, silver loans, trade in agricultural products, and tax farming.¹⁰⁹ The Bel-remanni archive belongs to an Ebabbar priest from the late sixth and early fifth century, who oversaw the prebendary of the temple bakers. Most of the texts in this archive concern business activities involving Bel-remanni himself (with a small number involving his family), and deal with prebend allotments, dowries, land purchases, silver loans, and other personal transactions.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ The Achemenid *hatru* system was employed not just in Mesopotamia, but in Anatolia and Egypt as well (Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 71).

¹⁰⁷ There are two possible instances of Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN referring to a *hatru*: BE 9 65, 3 and TuM 2/3 145, 2. See Guillaume Cardascia, “Les Archives Des Murashu” (PhD diss., Université de Paris, 1951), 102, 158 n. 2; Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 79.

¹⁰⁸ These archives were chosen on the basis of available texts within the corpus and associated text metadata.

¹⁰⁹ See Cornelia Wunsch, *Das Egibi Archiv*, 2 vols. (STYX Publications, 2000) and Jinyan Wang, “Taxation and Tax Farming in the Egibi Archive,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 50, no. 2 (2023): 257–270.

¹¹⁰ See M. Jursa, *Das Archiv des Bel-Remanni*, 3.



Apart from what has been said about EN terms within the Eanna archive on the overview of the distribution, the prominence of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN and Urukaya[Urukean]EN in this set of texts also stems from the fact that the Eanna convened its own court whose presiding body was the ‘assembly of the Babylonians and Urukeans’ *puhur Bābilāyī u Urukāyī*.¹¹¹ Three instances of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN and Urukaya[Urukean]EN each follow this usage.¹¹² At the same time, such use of EN terms reflects the selective nature of temple archives, which focus on personnel issues within the temple institution or on interactions with individuals in the community.

The Bel-remanni archive features no instances of EN terms, whereas all but one of the instances in the Egibi archive are Imbukkaya[Imbukkaean]EN. This term is of unknown origin and is mainly used in the Egibi archive to refer to witnesses in loan and dowry agreements.¹¹³ The sole instance of Miširaya[Egyptian]EN occurs in Darius 512 obv. 6 and describes a witness to a transaction involving silver.

All four of the archives discussed here date to the sixth and fifth centuries and concern the management of agricultural labor and property. In this context, the exceptional distribution of EN terms in the Murašu archive stems from the fact that the Murašu family’s business primarily involved land management within the Achaemenid *haṭru* system. Indeed, the activity of the Murašu archive is confined entirely to the latter half of the fifth century, well within the Achaemenid period. Besides owning their own bow-lands within that system, the Murašu family also leased land and water from property owners and then subleased them to tenants. In addition, they made silver loans to land owners with the land held as

¹¹¹ Shalom Holtz, *Neo-Babylonian Court Procedure*, vol. 38, Cuneiform Monographs (Brill, 2009), 267–300.

¹¹² See YOS 7 7, 125, and 149.

¹¹³ The witnesses described as Imbukkaya[Imbukkaean]EN appear in Strassmaier, Darius 361 (date purchase receipt), Darius 457 (apprenticeship contract), and Darius 458 (silver loan). The creditor of Darius 458 is also described as Imbukkaya[Imbukkaean]EN.

security.¹¹⁴ Records of these land management operations cite the name of the *hatru* in which they occurred, and because the *hatru* is a collective land-holding unit, its name derives from the social group originally assigned to hold it. While some of these groups were defined by profession or military function, many others represented groups of soldiers, workers, or subjects from other parts of the empire resettled in the Nippur area by the crown. This is the source of most of the EN terms in the Murašu archive.

In contrast, the Eanna, Ebabbar, Egibi, and Bel-remanni archives do not involve the *hatru* system. Indeed, the word *hatru* is almost entirely restricted to the Murašu archive, appearing in only five texts outside the archive but contemporary with it.¹¹⁵ Bel-remanni is not the owner of a *hatru*, and his land management transactions occur within the temple institutions to which he himself belongs.¹¹⁶ While his archive contains texts that speak of bow-service (*qaštu*) owed to the king, these involve the supply of a certain number of named individuals under him and his associates for labor obligations (or silver payments as a substitute).¹¹⁷ The Egibi family bought and sold property primarily in the environs of Babylon, and the terminology used to identify the land parcels is not connected to the *hatru* system.¹¹⁸ The Ebabbar archive contains texts dealing with leases of farming land and houses, but this property belongs to the god Šamaš (i.e., temple institution itself), and could not in

¹¹⁴ Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 27.

¹¹⁵ See Stolper, 71 no. 5 and Cardascia RLA Haṭru. The Egibi archive has a fragmentary text dealing with silver in which it is possible to reconstruct the form [...ha]-at-ri ^{lā}ba-ah-ta-ni 'hatru of the Bahtani(?)' (Strassmaier, Darius 477 rev. 5).

¹¹⁶ M. Jursa, *Das Archiv des Bel-Remanni*, 97–98.

¹¹⁷ See M. Jursa, 100–101 for examples.

¹¹⁸ See Wunsch, *Das Egibi Archiv*, 21–26; and Cornelia Wunsch, "The Egibi Family," in *The Babylonian World*, ed. Gwendolyn Leick (Routledge, 2007), 235.



Achaemenid times be part of a *hatru*.¹¹⁹ This situation also seems to hold true for the Eanna archive.¹²⁰

While the naming conventions within the *hatru* system explain why a large number of EN terms appear in the Murašu archive compared to the other archives, we should note that all the archives reflect the importation of foreigners into Babylonia during the late Chaldean and Achaemenid dynasties. Both dynasties transferred foreign war captives to the interior of their empire, and the three instances of Miširaya[Egyptian]EN in the Ebabbar archive refer to temple dependents likely captured in war.¹²¹ Beyond the origin as military contingents, mercenaries, craftsmen, or settlers in some of the groups behind the EN terms in the Murašu archive, the Achaemenids also recruited private Babylonians to support foreigners such as Carians and Egyptians.¹²² Finally, one should note that the Achaemenid *hatru* system was ultimately under the control of the crown. Decisions by the latter regarding population transfer or recruitment to Babylonia could work easily under the creation of new *hatrus*.

¹¹⁹ See Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar*, 23; Michael Jursa, *Die Landwirtschaft in Sippar in neubabylonischer Zeit* (Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 1995).

¹²⁰ See G. Van Driel, “The ‘Eanna Archive’,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 55, nos. 1–2 (januari – april 1998): 64 no. 7, 67.

¹²¹ See A. Bongenaar and B. Haring, “Egyptians in Neo-Babylonian Sippar,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 46 (1994): 64–65; Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Carians of Borsippa,” *Iraq* 68 (2006): 1.

¹²² Waerzeggers, “The Carians of Borsippa,” 5.

EN term	Count	EN term	Count
Arumaya[Arumaya]EN	18	Akkadu[Akkadian]EN	1
Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN	17	Hamqaduya[Hamqaduean]EN	1
Indumaya[Indian]EN	13	Ašši'aya[Aššian]EN	1
Gimirraya[Cimmerian]EN	10	Haṭalaya[Hatalaya]EN	1
Babilaya[Babylonian]EN	6	Mar-dariaya[of-Der]EN	1
Magullaya[Magullaya]EN	5	Milidaya[Melitenean]EN	1
Sapardaya[Sardian]EN	5	Miširaya[Egyptian]EN	1
Arbaya[Arab]EN	4	Parsaya[Persian]EN	1
Muškaya[Phrygean]EN	4	Şurraya[Tyrean]EN	1
Tarmilaya[Tarmilaya]EN	4	Şarrabanuya[of-Şarrabanu]EN	1
Urašṭaya[Urartian]EN	4		
Bannešaya[Carian]EN	3		
Šumutkunayu[Šumutkunaean]EN	1		

Table 6. Counts of EN terms in the Murašu archive.

Eanna (547 texts)		Ebabbar (1124 texts)		Egibi (529 Texts)		Bel-remanni (155 Texts)	
EN Term	Count	EN Term	Count	EN Term	Count	EN Term	Count
Babilaya	5	Arbaya	2	Imbukkaya	7	-	-
Urukaya	13	Miširaya	3	Miširaya	1		
Arbaya	2						
Miširaya	1						
Akkadu	1						
Larsaya	1						

Table 7. Counts of EN terms in four other Babylonian archives.

Astronomical Texts

The genre with the largest number of attestations of EN terms is the astronomical texts, which, in the case of the Neo-Babylonian corpus, means astronomical diaries.¹²³ An astronomical diary consists of several entries recording observed atmospheric or celestial phenomena on a given number of nights. At the end of such a series of entries, there is often a coda summarizing local political, economic, or cultic events that happened during the period of astronomical observation. These events are usually centered on the places that produced the bulk of the diaries, Babylon and Uruk.

The relatively large number of EN terms in this 'historical' section of the astronomical diaries is notable, as it is not mirrored in the overall distribution of texts by genre. Out of the 8,237 texts in the corpus, approximately 1,500 are astronomical diaries, 450 are royal inscriptions, more than 3,000 are administrative, 2,000 are legal texts, and 480 are letters. Yet as Table 2 shows, the number of EN terms in the astronomical diaries is equal to or greater than what is found in other genres. This is largely due to the kind of events the diaries record, from what time period they are produced, and from whose perspective the events are described. This is clearest in the case of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN. Most of the diaries stem from the Hellenistic and Parthian periods (332 BCE-1st century CE), during which time royal patronage of the main Babylonian temples decreased, and management of the community of long-standing residents in Babylon (the Babilaya[Babylonian]EN) fell to a council of Esagil temple functionaries (*kiništu*) whereas the newer community of Greek citizens fell under the authority of a crown-appointed governor. Directives from the king towards the traditional Babylonian community were usually

¹²³ Other types of texts that can be considered astronomical include astral omen compendia, mathematical tablets concerning astronomical phenomena, reports by royal scribes concerning astral omens, and hymns to astral deities. The only astronomical texts in the current Neo-Babylonian corpus are astronomical diaries.

mediated by the *kiništu*. After the construction of Seleucia on the Tigris around 300 BCE, the royal capital was no longer in Babylon, and the connection between the traditional Babylonian community and the seat of imperial power weakened.

In such a situation, the internal affairs of the traditional residents of Babylon, how those residents as a whole community or via their council spokespersons communicated with royal representatives or even the king himself in Seleucia, as well as how the community was treated by outsiders, all became a natural item of concern for the temple-centered diaries. A few examples can illustrate this. A diary dated to 274 BCE states:

ūm 12 mārī Bābili ana Selukua uṣū warhi šuāti muma[”]ir māt Akkadi
zēr[ī...] ša ina šatti 32 ina ṭēmi ša šarri ana kurummāti Bābilāyī
Nippurāyī u Kutāyī iddinū

On the 12th day, traditional residents of Babylon went out to Seleucia. That month, the governor of Babylonia ... the fields which had been given in year 32 at the command of the king for sustenance of the people of Babylon, Nippur and Kutha.¹²⁴

van der Spek argues that these traditional residents of Babylon who went to Seleucia were likely members of the *kiništu* ordered to appear in Seleucia to greet the governor of Babylonia and respond to certain parchment letters written to them earlier.¹²⁵ Under this interpretation, the mere act of communication between royal authorities and the traditional Babylonian community is worthy of note, as it involves sending representatives from Babylon to Seleucia.¹²⁶ While the diary's viewpoint is centered on Babylon, the traditional Babylonian community

¹²⁴ ADART 1 -273B rev. 35'-37', X102732.

¹²⁵ R.J. van der Spek, "The Astronomical Diaries as a Source for Achaemenid and Seleucid History," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 50 (1993): 97-98.

¹²⁶ Other examples of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN appearing in the context of receiving a message or directive from the royal authorities include ADART 2 -241 9' (X202410), ADART 2 -249B rev. 15' (X202492), and ADART 3 -93A obv. 25 (X300931).



is passive, being ordered to go to Seleucia rather than having royal authorities come to Babylon.

Discussion of temple-internal business often involved reference to Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, since the chief temple administrator (*šatammu*) of the Esagil was also the head of the traditional Babylonian community. For instance, an entry dated to 169 BCE states:

warhi šuāti bušē širūti ša ina bīt bušē labīri ša ina kir[i burāši] šaknu ša kum šatam Esagil u Bābilāyī kiništi ša Esagil ša bīt bušē ešši ša ina igār šadī [ša buš]ē šuāti ušāšî

That month, the representative of the administrator of Esangil and the Babylonians as well as the assembly of Esangil, took out much property of the temple which had been placed in the old treasury in the [juniper ga]rden, and which belongs to the new treasury which is on the east wall of that [treas]ury.¹²⁷

Finally, the diaries made reference to Babilaya[Babylonian]EN when discussing royal directives affecting not just the traditional Babylonian community, but the entire region. Thus, an entry from 143 BCE states:

warhi šuāti ina qibî ša Ardaya rab uqi māt Akkadi minūti [...] ša Bābilāyī wardī šarri pulitē ša ina Bābili u Selukia imannû

That month, at the command of Ardaya the general of Babylonia, they made a counting [...] of the traditional residents of Babylon, the servants of the king, and the Greek citizens who were in Babylon and Seleucia.¹²⁸

In contrast to the term Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, the EN terms Arbaya[Arab]EN and Elamaya[Elamite]EN frequently occur in the diaries due to larger political events which originate outside the Babylonian

¹²⁷ ADART 2 -168A rev. 19'-20', X201681.

¹²⁸ ADART -144 obv. 36'-37', X301440.

community even as they still affect it. The instances of Arbaya[Arab]EN in the diaries often reflect the movements and predations of Arab nomads in Babylonia due to the lack of a strong central authority towards the end of the Hellenistic era.¹²⁹ Thus, an entry dated to 125 BCE states:

*warhi šuāti Arbaya kīma mahrī ihbutū hātu Arbaya kīma mahrī ina māti
ṣīru*

That month, the Arabs plundered as before; there was much panic
of the Arabs in the land as before ...¹³⁰

The “land” here (*māti*) refers to the whole region around Babylon. Perhaps because the Arab raids affected all or most of the people in the area, the diaries do not use the term Babilaya[Babylonian]EN to describe the object of the attacks. Nevertheless, the diaries do mention how the city of Babylon itself was once a target of their attack,¹³¹ and the “people” of Babylon once went out to the countryside in the absence of hostile Arabs.¹³² Because of their sole role as aggressor in the diaries, the term Arbaya[Arab]EN can be said to function there more like a reference to one of the enemies of the king in the royal inscriptions. Nevertheless, this connotation of Arbaya[Arab]EN is not constant through the whole Neo-Babylonian corpus, as named individuals described as Arab do appear in private economic documents without any sense of hostility.¹³³

Similarly, all twenty-eight instances of Elamaya[Elamite]EN in the diaries refer to hostile Elamite forces opposing the ruling Hellenistic or Parthian kings. Eleven of these instances may actually refer to the land of Elam, as

¹²⁹ Out of the twenty-six instances of Arbaya[Arab]EN in the diaries, fifteen can plausibly be interpreted as referring to Arab raids or hostilities towards Babylonians. The fifteen positive instances are found in ADART 3 -108A, -111B, -118A, -119A, -122D, -123A, -124A, -124B, and -125A. The remaining eleven occur in unclear context.

¹³⁰ ADART -124B obv. 21', X301242.

¹³¹ ADART 3, -124A rev. 5' (X301241).

¹³² *nišū ištu Bābili ana nārī u sērī ša la Arbaya uṣū* “the people went out from Babylon to the rivers and countryside where there were no Arabs” (ADART 3 -118A A22, X301181).

¹³³ See e.g. Strassmaier, Cambyses 211, Darius 162, and YOS 7 92.



they are expressed by the phrase KUR NIM.MA.KI “land of Elam/Elamites”.¹³⁴ However NIM.MA.KI can be used to express Elamaya[Elamite]EN, as the following example demonstrates:

Kammaškiri šar Elam ina ālāni u nārī ša māt Akkadi šaltāniš ittalak ... hubtu ... šuāti ihabbatū- [ma] šilāssunu išallalū nišū māti nikkassīšunu umānišunu ina gilitti ša Elamaya(NIM.MA.KI) šuāti ana Bāb[ili ušēlū] hātu u gilittu ina māti [ibši]

Kammaskires, king of Elam, marched around victoriously among the cities and rivers of Babylonia. They plundered them ... and carried off as spoil. The people of the land took their property and animals up in[to Babylon] for fear of that Elamite. [There was] panic and fear in the land.¹³⁵

The degree of antagonism expressed in the diaries towards the Elamites is greater than the Arabs, as many of the instances of Elamaya[Elamite]EN occur with the modifier *nakru* “foreign, enemy”. Such a sentiment may stem from the ancient Babylonian enmity and fear of the Elamites in the late second millennium, whose attacks on Babylonian soil were now recurring in the late first millennium.

The overall conclusion for the astronomical diaries is that although the number of attestations of EN terms in this genre is high, the distribution of the attestations is centered on a small number of EN terms and reflects a sharp division between the long-time residents of Babylon and newer residents in the city, as well as other groups in the region. In the Neo-Assyrian period, the term Babilaya[Babylonian]EN referred to the residents of Babylon as a major center of Mesopotamian culture and city of favored status under the Assyrians.¹³⁶ During the Neo-Babylonian

¹³⁴ In ADART 3 -124B obv. 19' the phrase is *limit* NIM.MA.KI “area of Elam/Elamites.”

¹³⁵ ADART 3 -144 rev. 21-22, X301440.

¹³⁶ H. Reviv, “Kidinu: Observations on Privileges of Mesopotamian Cities,” *JESHO*, no. 31 (1988): 286–295.

period, the city served as the capital of a major empire. With the shift to foreign rule in Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and Parthian periods, the term Babilaya[Babylonian]EN lost its earlier associations with political prestige, as the traditional residents of Babylon were organized into a distinct community under the Esagil priests, who in turn were the representatives of the community before the royal authorities. One can contrast these connotations of late instances of Babilaya[Babylonian]EN with the connotations of Aššuru[Assyrian]EN in late Neo-Assyrian texts. There, Aššuru[Assyrian]EN denoted the privileged residents in the core of the Assyrian empire rather than peripheral subjects. One finds in the diaries a somewhat simplified set of oppositions between the Babilaya[Babylonian]EN as the “inner” group and the Arbaya[Arab]EN, Elamaya[Elamite], and even the Yamnaya[Greeks]EN as an “outer” group.”

Other Texts

The column in Table 2 labeled “Other” is largely concerned with the Babylonian chronicles (Neo-Babylonian and later). These texts record, in a fairly dry, succinct, and chronological fashion, major political, military, and cultic events in Babylonia.¹³⁷ They feature only a limited number of EN terms, shown in Table 8. Most of the EN terms in the chronicles are restricted to appearing either in texts covering the earlier part of the first-millennium Babylonian history or in texts covering the later part of that history. The terms Ummān-manda[Barbarian]EN, Armaya[Aramean]EN, Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN, Kutaya[of-Kutha]EN, Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN, and Sutu[Sutean]EN occur in texts dealing with the late Kassite and early Neo-Babylonian periods (12th-7th century), a time of turmoil in which Babylon endured as an independent but embattled state until being

¹³⁷ See A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, vol. 5, Texts from Cuneiform Sources (J. J. Augustin, 1975), 1-29 for a full discussion of the contents of the chronicles.



conquered by Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria (r. 745-727).¹³⁸ After this, Babylon undertook intermittent rebellions against the Assyrians until Assyria fell in 626. Akin to what was seen in Nabu-šuma-iškun's Ezida inscription with its narrative of the mass violence around Borsippa, the chronicles covering the chaotic conditions of these times use EN terms to refer to groups rather than specific individuals. Usually, these groups are hostile to or at odds with the people of Babylon. This is evident in the chronicle covering Nabu-šuma-iškun's reign, which describes the evil actions he committed against his subjects. The text states:

ina ištēn ūmi 16 Kuthaya ina abul Zababa ša qereb Bābili ina išāti iqlū

In one day he burned sixteen Kutheans at the Gate of Zababa in Babylon.¹³⁹

as well as:

nišišu mala bašū ana Kaldi u Aramu ana šulmānūti ubil

He carried off all his people to the Chaldeans and Arameans as gifts.¹⁴⁰

Similarly, other chronicles covering this early period use the EN term Babilaya[Babylonian]EN to identify the Babylonians as just one actor among many fighting for dominance:

ina warah Tašrīti 12 ummān māt Aššur ana muhhi Bābili kī illikūnu ina ūmi šuāti Bābilāyū ištu Bābili kī uṣū ṣāltu ana libbi ummān māt Aššur īpušū-ma dabdē ummān māt Aššur madiš iškunū hubussunu iħtabtū

¹³⁸ John Anthony Brinkman, *Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia (1158-722 BC)* (Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1968), 236; Beaulieu, *A History of Babylon*, 2200 BC - AD 75, 194-218.

¹³⁹ Glassner, Chronicle 52 12'-13'. All text citations of Babylonian chronicles are from Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (henceforth Glassner) or Spek et al., *Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period* (BCHP) unless otherwise noted. Normalization and translation are by me.

¹⁴⁰ 26'-27'.

On the twelfth day of Tešrit, when the army of Assyria came to Babylon, then the Babylonians went out from Babylon and fought with them. They inflicted a great defeat on the army of Assyria and plundered them.¹⁴¹

The chaotic nature of this battle can be seen in the fact that the chronicle uses Babilaya[Babylonian]EN to refer to the force of Babylonians that attacks the Assyrians. Normally, when the chronicles refer to military actions by Babylonian forces, they speak of the army of Akkad (*ummān Akkad*) or speak metonymically of the current ruler of Babylon leading those forces.¹⁴² In the passage just cited, it is possible that Nabonassar was not leading the Babylonian forces, and the residents of Babylon had to take their own initiative.¹⁴³

EN term	Count
Babilaya[Babylonian]EN	7
Armaya[Aramean]EN	5
Yamanaya[Greek]EN	3
Hanū[Hanean]EN	3
Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN	3
Ummān-manda[Barbarian]EN	3
Kutaya[Kuthean]EN	1
Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN	1
Sutu[Sutean]EN	1

Table 8. Count of EN terms in the Babylonian Chronicles.

In the later chronicles dealing with rule under the Achaemenids and Greeks, one finds only the EN terms Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, Yamanaya[Greek]EN, and Hanū[Hanean]EN. The term Hanū[Hanean]EN is an anachronistic word in the late Babylonian chronicles used to refer to

¹⁴¹ Glassner, Chronicle 21 10-13.

¹⁴² For instance, in describing the rule of King Nabonassar (r. 747-734) Chronicle 16, 6 states *šāltu ša Nabonašir ana libbi Borsippa ipušu ul šatir* 'the battle which Nabonassar fought against Borsippa was not recorded'. When describing the Assyrian civil war between King Ashurbanipal and his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin, ruler of Babylon, Chronicle 20, 13-15 states *Addaru 27 ummān māt Aššur u ummān Akkadi šālti ina Hirītu ipušū-ma ummān Akkadi ina tāhāzi šēri ibbalkitū-ma dabdēšunu mādīš šakin* 'On the twenty-seventh day of Addaru, the army of Assyria and the army of Akkad joined battle at Hirītu. The army of Akkad ran away from the battle, and a great defeat was inflicted on it'.

¹⁴³ This was a tumultuous set of years for Babylon. Kandalanu, the Assyrian-appointed ruler of the city, had died in 627 and left the Babylonian throne unoccupied for much of the year 626. Only from the eighth month of that year does Chronicle 21 regard Nabopolassar as official ruler of Babylon (Beaulieu, *A History of Babylon, 2200 BC - AD 75, 223*).



the Macedonians and Greeks. It originally referred to a people in the second millennium living in northwestern Mesopotamia.¹⁴⁴ One may also note that, although it is not an EN term, the anachronistic toponym Gutium is used in the late chronicles to refer to areas east of the Tigris, particularly western Media in Iran and northeastern Mesopotamia.¹⁴⁵ While the chronicles use the contemporary term Yamanaya[Greek]EN to refer to the Greeks and Macedonians,¹⁴⁶ there is no EN term used to refer to Achaemenids, Persians, or Iranian-language speakers in general. One reason for this is that, like royal inscriptions, the chronicles are primarily concerned with the actions of the current king or power-holder ruling over Babylonia. In such texts, the ruler is assimilated to the role of a traditional Mesopotamian dynast, being referred to by name or simply as “the king”.¹⁴⁷ Such a situation usually precludes the need to speak of Achaemenids or Persians as rulers of Babylonia. In those limited instances when the Persians (or Greeks) are described as an invading force rather than a ruling one, the chronicles focus on the leader of the force or use anachronistic Mesopotamian terms for the army.¹⁴⁸

The use of the anachronistic term Hanû[Hanean]EN in the late chronicles is notable because the late Babylonian scribes also use the more contemporary term Yamanaya[Greek]EN to refer to the Macedonians and Greeks. The usage of the former term reflects the antiquarian spirit of late

¹⁴⁴ See CAD H s.v. *hanû* c, also Pierre Briant, “De Samarkand à Sardes et de La Ville de Suse Au Pays Des Hanéens,” *Topoi* 4, no. 2 (1994): 464.

¹⁴⁵ See Mark van de Mieroop, “Gutians”, in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. 11 (2002), 408–410.

¹⁴⁶ See Karen Radner and Alexander Vacek, “The Settlement of Yauna, ‘Ionian’ Identity, and the Greek Presence on the Syrian Coast in the Second Half of the 8th Century BC: A Re-Assessment of Two Letters from the Nimrud Correspondence,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (2023): 65–99.

¹⁴⁷ For instance, the fragmentary chronicle recording the fourteenth year of Artaxerxes III (345–344 BCE) refers to the king as *Umasu ša Artakšatsu* [šumšu] ‘Umasu, whose (name) is Artaxerxes’ (Glassner, Chronicle 21 1–2).

¹⁴⁸ Thus the Nabonidus Chronicle speaks metonymically of Cyrus clashing with the army of Akkad (i.e., Babylonians) at Opis (Chronicle 21, iii 12’), and later of the shield-carriers of Gutium (i.e., Iranian forces from the east) besieging the Esagil (line 17’). When Alexander conquers Babylon, the chronicles call his forces the ‘army of Haneans’ *ummān Hanē* (Chronicle 29, 6’).

Babylonian cuneiform culture, in which elite scribes would employ obscure or long-forgotten terms in their texts as a sign of erudition, arcane prestige, and connection to a mythic scribal tradition significantly at odds with the foreign influences of the present.¹⁴⁹ While Hanû[Hanean]EN is used in the chronicles, it is absent from the diaries. This reflects the fact that, as a genre, the chronicles are overall more subject to antiquarian influences than the astronomical diaries.¹⁵⁰

As with the astronomical diaries, the fact that the late Babylonian chronicles use only a few EN terms reflects the more limited set of concerns the latter texts deal with. In particular, the late chronicles discuss smaller-scale events of primary interest to the traditional residents of Babylon, such as proceedings within the temple assembly (*kiništu*) or dealings with foreign administrators. Examples include the Judicial Chronicle (Chronicle 37) and the Gold Theft Chronicle (BCHP 15), which cover trials and punishments of thieves of temple property. The Politai Chronicle (BCHP 13) and the Greek Community Chronicle (BCHP 14) cover the founding of the Greek colony in Babylon. Within these chronicles, the attestations of Ya- manaya[Greek]EN occur in fragmentary contexts and are sometimes reconstructed. They may either refer to individual named Greeks¹⁵¹ or to Greeks as a single group.¹⁵² Like the diaries, the chronicles distinguish the traditional residents of Babylon (*Babilaya*) from the Greek citizens (*pulitē/pulitānu*) as social groups with different authorities and social customs.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “Antiquarian Theology in Seleucid Uruk,” *Acta Sumerologica* 14 (1992): 47–75; Gonzalo Rubio, “Scribal Secrets and Antiquarian Nostalgia: Tradition and Scholarship in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Reconstructing a Distant Past: Ancient Near Eastern Essays in Tribute to Jorge R. Silva Castillo*, ed. Diego A. Barreyra Fracaroli and Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Aula Orientalis Supplements* 25 (Ausa, 2009), 155–182; also Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*: 13.

¹⁵⁰ Some texts in the chronicle genre are concerned with establishing mythic pasts or explaining current circumstances in Babylonia in terms of the ancient past. See Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 263–289 for examples. In contrast, the astronomical diaries consist of astronomical observations recorded in a dense but effective scribal shorthand. The historical remarks in the diaries are similarly succinct, without anachronistic terminology.

¹⁵¹ For example, “[...]-ut-tu-da-a ^{lī}E-man-na-a[-a...]-uṭṭūda the Greek” (Chronicle 32 rev. 2').

¹⁵² See e.g. Chronicle 36 obv. 7' and rev. 2'.

¹⁵³ See BCHP 13 and 14, as well as van der Spek, “Multi-Ethnicity and Ethnic Segregation in Hellenistic Babylon,” 108.



Term	Total	KUR	LU	None	MUNUS	DIS	DINGIR	Other
Babilaya[Babylonian]EN	85	0	79	5	1	0	0	0
Urukaya[Urukean]EN	57	0	29	28	0	0	0	0
Puqudaya[Puqudean]EN	36	4	0	32	0	0	0	0
Arbayal[Arab]EN	35	0	35	0	0	0	0	0
Elamaya[Elamite]EN	32	0	12	20	0	0	0	0
Aššuraya[Assyrian]EN	28	0	21	7	0	0	0	0
Umma-man-mandal[Barbarians]EN	20	1	8	11	0	0	0	0
Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN	19	0	18	1	0	0	0	0
Armaya[Aramean]EN	18	0	13	5	0	0	0	0
Arumayu[Arumayu]EN	18	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
Indumaya[Indian]EN	18	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
Gurasimmya[Gurasimmean]EN	16	0	1	15	0	0	0	0
Gimirrayal[Cimmerean]EN	14	0	14	0	0	0	0	0
Rahi-ilayu[of-Rahi-ilu]EN	14	0	14	0	0	0	0	0
Miṣiraya[Egyptian]EN	10	0	9	1	0	0	0	0
Sarugul[Sarugean]EN	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0
Yamanaya[Greek]EN	10	0	9	1	0	0	0	0
Kaldu[Chaldean]EN	9	0	4	4	0	0	0	1
Akkadu[Akkadian]EN	6	0	2	4	0	0	0	0
Barsipaya[Borsippaean]EN	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0

Table 9. Count of the top twenty EN terms and which determiners they appear with.

None=No determiner, DIS=male individuals, MUNUS=female individuals), DINGIR=divinities.

In summary, the distribution of EN terms in the chronicles reflects what we have seen in earlier Babylonian inscriptions and in astronomical diaries. Along the chronological dimension, the use of EN terms varies from the early to the late first millennium, reflecting changes in the political fortunes of Babylon as well as the social status of its long-time residents. The chronicles dealing with the late Kassite to early Neo-Babylonian periods use multiple EN terms to refer to various groups of people competing for dominance in Babylonia, in particular the Babilaya[Babylonian]EN, Armaya[Aramean]EN, and Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN. Later chronicles dealing with Achaemenid and Greek rule see a reduction in the number of EN terms used, with Armaya[Aramean]EN, Kutaya[of-Kutha]EN, Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN, Umma-manda[barbarian], and Sutu[Sutean]EN dropping out while Yamanaya[Greek]EN and Hanū[Hanean]EN come into use. This shift reflects the overall change in the political landscape of Babylon. In the early first millennium, Babylon was an independent state

suffering predation by other groups in the region, but from the fifth century BCE onwards, it was effectively a colonized city within an empire whose foreign rulers made their seat of rule elsewhere. EN terms are not used in the chronicles to describe these foreign Persian or Greek rulers (or even previous Mesopotamian rulers) because the chronicles only view those people in terms of their role as a Mesopotamian dynast (referring to them either by personal name or as ‘the king’). The fact that the chronicles use *Yamanaya*[Greek]EN (or *Hanû*[Hanean]EN) to refer to all Greeks regardless of their origin in the west may indicate that such distinctions were less salient or relevant to the Babylonians.

Use of Determiners

As with the Neo-Assyrian corpus, the study of EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus can be extended to consider not just the syntactic distribution of those terms, but their orthography as well. Determiners are an interesting feature to examine, as they traditionally serve as semantic classifiers of the base words they modify and can be easily identified in an automated corpus search. When the base word is a term for a social group (such as an EN term), the choice of determiner can imply something about how that group was conceived of by the scribe.

Table 9 shows the top 20 EN terms ranked by the various determiners they may use. There is only one possible instance in the corpus of an EN term appearing with the MUNUS determiner (which signals an individual or specific group of females).¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, the only time in the corpus where the scribe signals a female referent behind an EN term morphologically is in Dubsar 3, 2 obv. 5 (first discussed earlier in the

¹⁵⁴ In the phrase LÚ.E.KI.MEŠ MUNUS.E.KI.MEŠ ‘Babylonian men and Babylonian women’ found in line 2 of the Chronicle 37 (Judicial Chronicle), both LÚ and MUNUS can be taken as either as determiners or as logograms representing independent nouns. Slight evidence for the former is that when appearing alone, LÚ.E.KI.MEŠ is usually read as one word (*Babilaya*).



letters section). This is a letter from Marduk-šakin-šumi, chief temple administrator of the Eanna, to his brother, in which the administrator calls his sister Innin-keširat a female Urukean (*Urukēti*). Here, the letter writer uses the form URUK.KI-*e-ti*, writing out the feminine suffix for the EN term but not using the determinative MUNUS marking females.

The near absence of the MUNUS determiner with EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus can be seen as a reflection of the kinds of texts the corpus contains. While the corpus's many administrative and legal texts from temple or private archives can involve females, these are cases of individuals referred to by personal name, family relation (daughter, wife, or mother of some male), and/or job (e.g., female slave or singer). Such identifiers are sufficient for the fairly specific roles females can play in such documents, such as loan or dowry recipients, or participants in property transfer and slave sales. The letters from such archives usually involve correspondents known to each other or individuals within the community, for whom name, family relation, or profession are adequate identifiers. While EN terms are used as modifiers to personal names in the witness lists of these texts, females do not appear in them.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, the astronomical diaries, chronicles, and royal inscriptions deal with affairs of concern to the community as a whole or the king. They refer either to high status individuals or to large groups of people (such as “the Babylonians” *Babilaya* or “the Elamites” *Elamaya*) who would rarely be all female.¹⁵⁶

This situation contrasts with the Neo-Assyrian corpus, which has about a dozen references to females using an EN term written with a MUNUS sign.

¹⁵⁵ Eva von Dassow, “Introducing the Witnesses in Neo-Babylonian Documents,” in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, ed. R. Chazan, William W. Hallo, and L. H. Schiffman (Penn State University Press, 1999), 16.

¹⁵⁶ From this point of view, the reference in line 2 of Chronicle 37 (Judicial Chronicle) to both Babylonian men and Babylonian women (LÚ.E.KI.MEŠ MUNUS.E.KI.MEŠ) involved in temple theft, would be an exception. Perhaps the phrase is used to emphasize that all individuals involved in the crime, of either gender, were tried and punished.

The Neo-Assyrian corpus differs from its Babylonian counterpart in having palace archives, where EN terms referring to females of a variety of social positions can arise. These archives include ration lists for foreign female musicians and other female palace personnel receiving rations,¹⁵⁷ as well as political letters referring to females of high and low rank. In one letter, Sargon II speaks with a servant who engaged in political intrigue in the land of Habha, seeking to install a woman from Urartu on the throne there. Sargon states, “an Urartian female shall not sit on the throne (of Habha)” (*Urarītu ina kussī lā tušab*).¹⁵⁸ Another letter is addressed to Esarhaddon by “your servants, the Borsipporean serving women” (*amātēka amēlāte Barsipayāte*).¹⁵⁹ SAA 18 113 is a letter to the king from a servant tasked with gathering and overseeing a population of Zanakeans. The servant informs the king that a certain guard had taken a female Zanakean (*Zanakītu*, rev. 5') as a wife, which is against local customs. As these examples show, letters to or from the king can cover a wide range of subjects which can involve females. In such cases, unless the females are of high rank (such as a queen), they are unlikely to be identified by name, and unless the issue at hand involves their profession, they are likely to be identified by where they come from or what kinship group they belong to. EN terms prototypically describe such cases.

Equally distinctive in Table 9 is the fact that the KUR determiner is hardly ever used. The exceptions are *Puqudu*[*Puqudean*]EN and *Umman-manda*[*Barbarian*]EN. The single instance with *Umman-manda*[*Barbarian*]EN occurs in a Babylonian chronicle and is seemingly anomalous.¹⁶⁰ The instances with *Puqudu*[*Puqudean*]EN, on the other hand, are cases where the *Puqudu* are conceived as a location rather than

¹⁵⁷ See SAA 7 24, P335671.

¹⁵⁸ SAA 5 108, rev. 24, P31345.

¹⁵⁹ SAA 16 153, P314035.

¹⁶⁰ Chronicle 22, 59.



a (mobile) group of people. For instance, an administrative tablet from the Eanna archive states:

3 sūt qēme [] ana Bēl-nadin-apli Šamaš-šumu-iddin u Ibni-Ištar [ša] ana
muhhi kaspi ešru ša Nergal-šarru-uşur ana Puqudi(^{kur} pu-qu-du) šapru
Ina-ṣilli-Nergal mahir ...

Ina-Ṣilli-Nergal received 3 seahs of ... flour for Bel-nadin-apli, Šamaš-šumu-iddin, and Ibni- Ištar, [who] were sent to the Puqudu for the silver tithe of Nergal-šarru-uşur.¹⁶¹

This document has a formulaic structure found in other texts within the Eanna temple archives (e.g., GCCI 1, 54 and GCCI 2, 140). The term *šapru* indicates that a person or persons mentioned at the beginning are sent to a particular location, such as a city (URU). In the case of the text quoted above, the scribe was probably thinking of the territory that the Puqudu inhabited rather than the people themselves. Thus, he used the KUR determiner.¹⁶²

Table 9 shows that the main variation in determiners for EN terms involves LÚ and None, with the former generally preferred to the latter. Exceptions to this include Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN, Kal-daya[Chaldean]EN, Akkadu[Akkadian]EN, and Barsipaya[Borsipporean]EN. The attestations of Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN are largely concentrated in the royal inscriptions of Nabonidus, where the scribe uses this archaic EN term to refer to the Medes as they enter Mesopotamia and subsequently ravage temples there.¹⁶³ Nabonidus' preference for this

¹⁶¹ GCCI 2, 149 1-10, P294263.

¹⁶² The other instances of Puqudu[Puqudean]EN with KUR occur in two royal inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II. One attestation is in a list of Babylonian magnates the king recruited for his renovation work (RINBE 1/1 Nebuchadnezzar II 11 vi 19', Q005482). The list consists of a series of genitive constructions that give the name of a magnate and then the place he governs. The second attestation occurs in a list of the domains and peoples the king rules over and is able to call on for his work projects (Nebuchadnezzar II 27 ii 45, Q005498). Here Puqudu[Puqudean]EN appears among place names all spelled with the KUR sign.

¹⁶³ RINBE 2 Nabonidus 3, 28, 29, and 46.

archaic term instead of a more contemporary one is another reflection of late Babylonian antiquarianism, as this Babylonian king was well-known for his interest in the remote past and efforts to resurrect it in the present.¹⁶⁴ Although some attestations of Umman-manda[Barbarian]EN are reconstructed, the remaining instances show the scribe writes Umman-manda without LÚ in the phrase šar Umman-manda “king of the Umman-manda”. Outside of this construction, when the scribe spells the term with a logogram (ERIM-man-da), he uses LÚ, whereas when spelling it syllabically (um-man-man-da), he uses no determiner.¹⁶⁵

The term Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN is found within a few letters in SAA 22 as well as the two inscriptions describing Nabu-šuma-iškun’s reign discussed earlier (RIMB 2 Nabu-šuma-iškun 1 = Chronicle 52 and RIMB 2 Nabu-šuma-iškun 2001). The fact that LÚ is used both in the letters and one of the inscriptions (Nabu-šuma-iškun 1) indicates Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN was normally written with LÚ, although the remaining instance surprisingly uses URU:

gabbi Kaldi(^{uru}_{kal-di}) Arami(^{lú}_{a-ra-mi}) Dilbatāyī^{lú}
 (DIL.BAD.KI.MEŠ) ūmī ma'dūti ana libbi ahāmiš kakkīšunu išelli

All the Chaldeans, Arameans, and Dilbateans sharpened their weapons against one another for many days.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ In particular, Nabonidus’ royal inscriptions show an antiquarian interest in the Old Akkadian kings of the late third millennium and Hammurabi dynasty of the early second. See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “Antiquarianism and the Concern for the Past in the Neo-Babylonian Period,” *Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 28 (1994): 37–42; Rubio, “Scribal Secrets and Antiquarian Nostalgia: Tradition and Scholarship in Ancient Mesopotamia,” 161–168; and David B. Weisberg, “The ‘Antiquarian’ Interests of the Neo-Babylonian Kings,” in *Leaders and Legacies in Assyriology and Bible: The Collected Essays of David B. Weisberg* (Penn State University Press, 2013), 61–71.

¹⁶⁵ There is only one example in Nabonidus’ inscriptions of ERIM-man-da outside of the phrase šar Umman-manda without a determiner (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 3 x 14'). One instance of ERIM-man-da does appear in this genitive construction and it lacks the LÚ determiner (Nabonidus 46 i' 14'). All other instances of ERIM-man-da appear in Nabonidus 28, where scribal idiosyncrasy may be a factor.

¹⁶⁶ RIMB 2 Nabu-šuma-iškun 2001 i 19'-20', Q006303.



The use of LÚ for the other two groups in this quotation (Arameans and Dilbateans) makes the use of URU for the Chaldeans strange.

Instances of Barsipaya[Borsippean]EN without determiner are mainly found in the above text, where they all refer to Borsippeans in general. This may be related to that text's unusual use of URU with Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN. On the other hand, the remaining instance of Barsipaya[Borsippean]EN without determiner occurs in a letter from Borsippa, perhaps as a shorthand.¹⁶⁷

Finally, the uses of Akkadu[Akkadian]EN with LÚ versus no determiner fall neatly into cases where the EN term refers to people versus objects, including furniture and language/script.¹⁶⁸

On the other hand, we find that all of the instances of Urukaya[Urukean]EN without determiner refer to people (where they function as substantives or modify named individuals). The same is true for Babilaya[Babylonian]EN¹⁶⁹ as well as for Aššuru[Assyrian]EN. The instances of Armaya[Aramean]EN without determiner are also mostly substantives or refer to named individuals, save for an instance of LÚ.UMBISAG *ar-ma-a* “Aramean scribe.”¹⁷⁰

Overall, the variation of determiners with EN terms in the Neo-Babylonian corpus is more limited, especially when compared with the Neo-Assyrian corpus. This seems to be a function of content. The Neo-Babylonian corpus does not feature long lists of EN terms or other names referring to members of a military coalition (as do the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions), and instances of such lists revolving around building projects are rare. The syntactic and semantic parallelism of these “list-like” environments can

¹⁶⁷ AOAT 414/1, 130 obv. 8.

¹⁶⁸ See Strassmaier, Darius 301 (furniture) and Cambyses 143 (writing).

¹⁶⁹ Two of these instances actually come from two Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 104 and 111). These inscriptions, however, are also categorized as Babylonian texts within Oracc.

¹⁷⁰ AchHist 15 220, 17 P521671.

influence the choice of determiner for EN terms. But in the Neo-Babylonian corpus, we mainly find short sequences of two or perhaps three EN terms like Urukaya[Urukean]EN, Puqudu[Puqudean]EN, Kaldaya[Chaldean]EN, or Armaya[Aramean]EN, which reflect events involving fewer distinct groups. There is only one instance in the corpus where an EN term that usually appears with the LÚ sign (namely Puqudu[Puqudean]EN) now appears with a KUR sign once it occurs in a list of place names also written with a KUR sign. This occurs in RINBE 1/1 Nebuchadnezzar II 27 ii 45, where Nebuchadnezzar boasts about recruiting people from all the regions of his empire to renovate the Etemenanki in Babylon. That such a list of recruited laborers appears in the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II is not surprising, as that king was notably ambitious within the Chaldean dynasty in marshaling many groups of people for his building projects.¹⁷¹

Conclusion

In asking what the distribution of EN terms within the Neo-Babylonian corpus tells us about how those sources conceived of ethnic identity in Babylonia, it is more reasonable to say that certain genres, locations, and time periods within the corpus have greater or lesser concerns with representing ethnic identity rather than that they testify to greater or lesser degrees of ethnic diversity overall. This is because the genre that the scribe writes in, the geographical location, and time period they live in all heavily influence not just what people they focus on, but what linguistic forms they use to identify them.

¹⁷¹ Olof Pedersen, "Foreign Professionals in Babylon: Evidence from the Archive in the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II," in *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1-4 July 2002* (Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2005), 267-272.



The distribution shows this at multiple levels. Only a small portion of the EN terms appearing in the corpus are attested more than a handful of times, and among these terms, only a few denote residents of a major Babylonian city (Babylon, Uruk, Nippur, and Borsippa). Indeed, the EN term for the traditional residents of Babylon (*Babilaya*) is the most salient one in the corpus. The rest divide into those representing major kingdoms around Babylonia, certain well-known nomadic groups like the Arameans and Arabs, and newer arrivals to Babylonia, such as the Medes, Greeks, and Indo-Iranian groups from further east. The distribution of these terms is not solely a function of the sources' geographical distribution, but also reflects the influence of genre and time period.

Taking advantage of the fact that the corpus was tagged for part of speech, I presented the C/P ratio for an EN term as a crude but simple way to gauge how well the corpus distinguished that term from others via verbal or adjectival descriptors. Acknowledging the issues that come with using this ratio, I pointed to Nippuraya[Nippurean]EN, Ummamanda[Barbarians]EN, and Babilaya[Babylonian]EN as EN terms that had fairly concrete and distinctive attributes and that thus were distinguished in many ways as social groups by the sources. These terms were contrasted with EN terms like Arumaya[Arumean]EN and Indumaya[Indian]EN, which have a low C/P ratio, and on the basis of their syntactic distribution do not receive rich, concrete description. If one is willing to look at the specific words most closely associated with a given EN term as determined by the PMI-similarity score, then more fine-grained semantic distinctions among EN terms become apparent.

Genre was the major lens through which the distribution of EN terms was examined. Here, it was found that different genres show significant variation in the variety of EN terms, the number of attestations, and whether EN terms were used to describe named individuals or groups of people. The crude pattern observed was that the smaller the scale of the

affair that a text dealt with (e.g., personal business, issues within a single city), the less likely it was to have EN terms. When the source deals with regional issues or assumes the reader is far away, EN terms become more prevalent. When a text is less focused on a central figure like the king and instead deals with multiple actors of equal importance, EN terms again become more prevalent.

As a matter of compositional style, Babylonian royal inscriptions focus on a king's building and temple cult activities, with military campaigns largely left out. Although many people are recruited for or affected by those activities, they are not identified via EN terms. Instead, the concern is with the city itself (as a metonym for the people living there), the territory or locality a group comes from, or with 'the people' as a whole (often identified with classic poetic tropes). When EN terms do appear, they usually occur in historical background sections discussing past raids and violent outrages committed by outsiders against Babylonian inhabitants. Such passages serve to glorify the king's current temple-building cult project by showing how he is acting to remedy past outrages committed by enemies against the gods and people. In this sense, the historical passages actually do find it important to identify specific groups of people via EN terms, whereas the main body of the inscription, as a matter of style, suppresses this.

The earlier royal inscriptions covering the late second millennium to the eighth century are an exception to what was said above, insofar as Babylon at this time was fairly weak and vulnerable to outside depredations. The inscriptions from the state of Suhu also fall into this period and can be discussed in the same vein. These inscriptions describe smaller-scale scenes of local raiding or civil strife involving multiple groups of people who must be distinguished from one another. Ninurtakudurri-uṣur speaks of attacking a group of Sabean and Arab raiders in his territory, while Nabu-šuma-iškun in his Ezida inscription speaks of



Borsippans, Chaldeans, Dilbateans, and others who fight each other over land in the vicinity of Borsippa. In later centuries, such chaos is rarer, and the inscriptions from them focus on the traditional activities of a powerful Babylonian monarch.

Letters, administrative texts, and legal texts involve different issues regarding the distribution of EN terms. The Murašu archive differs from other archives in that it features a large number of EN terms. This is because it primarily deals with *haṭru* land-owning system used during the Achaemenid dynasty. This system features a large number of collective land-holding units named after groups denoted by EN terms (such as the *haṭru* of the Arumaya). While largely losing its ethnic connotations in later years, the *haṭru* system initially reflected the presence of new ethnic groups in Babylonia whose identity was partially but not totally forgotten during the active years of the Murašu archive. Other archives, both temple and private, show that EN terms are rarely present in letters or administrative documents dealing with very local issues involving temple-internal personnel or individuals known within the same city. This is because such descriptive terms are not necessary to identify the relevant individuals, nor are they relevant to the issue of the text. Letters and administrative documents involving a larger scope of business or higher-level official (such as those in the Eanna archive involving a governor or the king) do show a higher likelihood of containing EN terms. This correlation between the scope of affairs and the frequency of EN terms is supported by the southern Babylonian letters in the royal Assyrian archives (SAA 22), as those letters feature a high number of EN terms and deal with political matters around Uruk during the time of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's revolt. The distance of the king from events on the ground, and the fact that people from multiple communities or nomadic groups are involved, practically requires the use of EN terms to identify who is doing what.

The astronomical diaries (along with the late chronicles) reflect perhaps the most specific sense of an EN term within the corpus. The *Babilaya* of these texts are identified as one community within a city with its own ruling authorities and customs in distinction to another (the Greek *pulitāni*). In issues going beyond the city walls, the *Babilaya* are contrasted with only a limited number of other entities denoted by EN terms, such as the Yamanaya[Greek]EN, Elamaya[Elamite]EN, and Arbaya[Arab]EN. The diaries can be said to deal with 'small-scale' events insofar as they are mainly interested in affairs that affected the traditional residents of Babylon, rather than Babylonia as a whole. The fact that they feature a large number of EN terms is consistent with the above observation that texts dealing with small-scale issues tend not to use EN terms because the central group of concern to the diaries (the *Babilaya*) is itself so well-defined and contrastive with others. The priests of the Esagil in the Achaemenid or Hellenistic periods may write many administrative texts and letters which deal with temple-internal affairs and have no need for EN terms, but the diaries are interested in what affects the *Babilaya* as a whole.

An examination of how EN terms co-occur with determiners shows that the amount of variation is much less than in the Neo-Assyrian corpus, and the degree to which syntactic environments influence the choice of determiner is also less. This last difference is at least partly attributable to the lack of detailed military narratives in the Neo-Babylonian corpus, as the long lists of EN terms and other proper names representing military coalitions, defeated victims, or even recruited labor groups in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions are environments where parallelism in the use of determiners is strong.

One may also note that while EN terms using the MUNUS determiner are hardly present in most genres of texts, the Neo-Assyrian palace archives feature quite a few of them. Their appearance in this text type represents



the confluence of two factors. The palace supports or intakes a large body of personnel from many different places of the empire, making their origin a salient form of identity. It is one of the few places supporting large numbers of women primarily identified not by kinship but by job. EN terms with the MUNUS determiner (or simply EN terms in the feminine form) find a natural home here.