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BABYLONIA I. HISTORY OF BABYLONIA IN THE MEDIAN AND ACHAEMENID PERIODS

i. History of Babylonia in the Median and Achaemenid Periods

I. Political history.

Babylonia came into being early in the second millennium B.C. and lasted until it was conquered by the Persians in 539 B.C. For the early history of Babylonia see ASSYRIA and ELAM.

In 729 B.C. Babylonia was taken by the Assyrians and, with a few brief interludes, remained dependent for a century. A revolt against Assyrian domination flared up in 626, headed by Nabopolassar, who had been appointed governor of the southern part of the country. Nabopolassar revitalized the traditional alliance of the Chaldean tribes of southern Babylonia with Elam. In November, 626, he was crowned in Babylon, thereby founding the Chaldean, or Neo-Babylonian, dynasty. There followed a protracted war between Babylonia and Assyria, with the advantage shifting from one side to the other and back again. No clear result emerged until 614, when Assyria was attacked by the Medes. The Medes, under their king Cyaxares, first seized the Assyrian province of Arrapha. Then, in the autumn of the same year, and after a fierce battle, they gained control of Assyria's

ancient capital, Assur. Nabopolassar brought his Babylonian army and joined the Medes after Assur had fallen. The Medes and the Babylonians formed an alliance and cemented it through the marriage of Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar to Cyaxares' daughter Amytis. Greek tradition derived from the Babylonian historian Berossus records that behind his palace in Babylon, on terraces cut to look like natural hills, Nebuchadnezzar constructed the famous hanging gardens, in imitation of the mountain gardens of Media, so that Amytis would not pine for the scenery of her homeland. (See E. Unger, *Babylon. Die heilige Stadt nach der Beschreibung der Babylonier*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1970, pp. 217-21; W. Nagel, "Wo lagen die "Hängenden Gärten" in Babylon?" *MDOG* 110, 1978 pp. 19-28.)

In August 612 the combined forces of the Medes and the Babylonians took Nineveh, the greatest city in Assyria, though the remnants of the Assyrian army did manage to make their way through to the city of Harran in Upper Mesopotamia. Necho, the pharaoh of Egypt, sent troops to aid the Assyrians. Apparently Nabopolassar then turned to the Medes for further assistance. In November, according to the *Babylonian Chronicle*, an army of Umman-manda fought on the side of the Babylonians against the Assyrians. From the evidence of a letter of prince Nebuchadnezzar it would seem that these Umman-manda were Medes: the text states that "the king departed for Harran; substantial Median forces went with him" (F. Thureau-Dangin, "La fin de l'empire assyrien," *RA* 22, 1925, pp. 27-29). The Medes routed the Assyrians and took Harran. Babylonians also participated in the storming of the city, but in a minor capacity. (See I. M. D'yakonov [Diakonoff], *Istoriya Midii*, Moscow and Leningrad, 1956, p. 315.)

In 607 Nabopolassar handed over command of the army to his son Nebuchadnezzar, who in the spring of 605 crossed the Euphrates and attacked the city of Carchemish, annihilating its Egyptian garrison. In 604, the greater part of Syria and Palestine then capitulated to the Babylonians. Soon after Nebuchadnezzar II became king following the death of Nabopolassar in August 605, he seized the Phoenician cities as well. (See D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, Oxford, 1985, pp. 25-29.)

In 598 Jehoiachin, king of Judah, was coaxed by Necho into seceding from Babylonia. Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, in 597. Greek sources state that in the campaign against Jerusalem Nebuchadnezzar requested aid from Cyaxares, king of Media (G. G. Cameron, *History of Early Iran*, New York, 1936, p. 220). Judah again rebelled, and in 587 Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem

and removed thousands of its inhabitants to Babylonia in captivity.

During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the culture and economy of Babylonia flourished. Mighty fortifications were erected in order to protect the country from future attacks. Nebuchadnezzar was wary of an over-powerful Media, and he well understood that sooner or later Media would change from the ally into a dangerous rival. For this reason he willingly accepted political refugees from Media, and Babylonian texts of the period 595-570 mention that Median refugees were allocated provisions from the royal stores. The same texts also mention the issue of provisions to seven hundred and thirteen Elamites and to three men from "the land of Parsumash," that is, to Persians (E. F. Weidner, "Jojachin, König von Juda, in babylonischen Keilschrifttexten," in *Mélanges syriens offerts à René Dussaud*, Paris, 1939, pp. 929-30). One letter addressed to Nebuchadnezzar indicates that in 591 relations between Media and Babylonia became strained. The letter states that a number of Babylonians fled to Media. A messenger from the king arrived with the order for them to return, but they refused to comply (R. P. Dougherty, *Archives from Erech, Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods*, New York, 1933, no. 395). However, if Herodotus is to be believed, relations between Babylonia were still tolerably good in 585 when Media and Lydia concluded a peace-treaty through the agency of Syennesis, king of Cilicia, and a certain "Labynetos" of Babylonia (Herodotus, 1.74). The latter is usually but erroneously identified as the future king Nabonidus, see W. Röllig, "Erwägungen zu neuen Stelen König Nabonidus," *ZA* 56, 1964, p. 239.

After the death of Nebuchadnezzar II in 562 Babylon entered a period of political crisis caused partly by the conflict between Chaldean and Aramaic tribes, who had long been numerous in Mesopotamia, and partly by the tensions between priestly and military factions. Priestly interference in politics extended even to the deposition of kings thought to be unsuitable or unamenable. There was a succession of three kings in a few brief years until Nabonidus seized power in May, 556. Unlike the other Neo-Babylonian kings he was an Aramean, not a Chaldean. (See R. H. Sack, "The Nabonidus Legend," *RA* 77, 1983, pp. 59-67.)

Around 552, when Median troops were recalled from Harran during the war between Media and Persia. Nabonidus reinstated the temple of the moon god Sin in Harran. The revival of this shrine was an integral part of a program of major religious reforms which Nabonidus gradually put into effect. His aim was that precedence should go to the cult of Sin, which would eclipse the cult of the supreme Babylonian deity Marduk. These reforms brought Nabonidus

into conflict with the priests of Marduk in Babylon. For ten years he himself stayed out of Babylon, handing over the administration of the territory to his son Belshazzar. Nabonidus spent these ten years at the oasis of Tema in the northern part of Central Arabia, where he appropriated extensive territories.

By 543 the long rivalry between Babylonia and Egypt had eased, as both countries had to prepare for imminent war with the Persians. Babylonia, however, was without allies. Only the pharaoh of Egypt, Amasis, might have provided aid, but he remained on the sidelines. Furthermore, the Babylonian army had been worn down by years of war on the Arabian peninsula, yet it had to do battle with the massive and well equipped Persian army which had already conquered many lands as far as the borders of India. And in Babylonia itself the position of Nabonidus was precarious. Influential sections of the priesthood were so dissatisfied with Nabonidus' policies that they were prepared to assist any external enemy of his. Besides this, Babylonia housed many thousands of assorted non-Babylonians who had been forcibly removed from their homelands and who viewed the Persians as their liberators. Nevertheless, the Persians still faced the task of breaching the mighty defensive fortifications within whose protective perimeter of one hundred and fifty kilometers lay such major towns as Sippar, Cutha, Babylon, and Borsippa. Babylon was especially well fortified. It was ringed by a double wall of dried and baked brick. The outer wall was 7.8 m high, 3.72 m thick, and 8 1/3 km in circumference. The inner wall, built 12 m from the outer wall, was 11-14 m high, 6.5 m thick, and 6 km in circumference. On top of the walls, at intervals of 20 m, there were fortified towers from which one could shoot down on attackers. In front of the outer wall was a deep moat. (See D. E. Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon*, Copenhagen, 1942, pp. 16-38.)

According to the *Babylonian Chronicle*, in the spring of 539 the Persian army set out on its campaign and started to move down the valley of the river Dīāla, where it was joined by Ugbaru, governor of the region of Gutium (probably Media). Nabonidus, concerned that the towns outside the fortifications might defect to the enemy, ordered that the idols of the gods be removed from them to Babylon. The point of this gesture was to make the outlying towns more dependent on Babylon both politically and in matters of religion. In August, 539, near the town of Opis on the Tigris, the army of Belshazzar was routed by the Persians. After the fall of Opis there were no major battles. The Persians crossed the Tigris to the south of Opis and surrounded Sippar, whose defense was supervised by Nabonidus himself, but which capitulated after token

resistance, on October 10. Nabonidus fled to Babylon. Two days later the army of Ugbaru entered Babylon unopposed and Nabonidus was taken prisoner. Archeological evidence supports the assertion of the *Babylonian Chronicle* that the capital surrendered without a fight: no traces of fires and no signs of the violent destruction of houses have been uncovered in the layer for the period of the Persian invasion (O. Reuther, *Die Innenstadt von Babylon (Merkes)*, WVDOG 47, 1926, pp. 34-36). On 29 October 539 Cyrus himself entered Babylon and the people laid on a triumphal welcome for him (A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Locust Valley, N.Y., 1975, pp. 109-10). The independence of Babylonia was lost forever.

The Babylonian historian Berossus presents Cyrus as having a rather more hostile attitude to the captured city: Cyrus apparently ordered that the outer walls of Babylon be destroyed so as to render the city less formidably impregnable (F. Jacoby, ed., *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* III C, pp. 108-09). Yet other sources paint a wholly different picture of the fall of Babylon. Herodotus and Xenophon relate that the Babylonians did resist Cyrus and that the capital was taken only after fierce fighting. Herodotus (1.188-91) tells of how the Babylonians carefully prepared themselves for the siege, stocking up supplies to last several years; but the Persians demolished one of the dikes and diverted the waters of the Euphrates at the point where it entered Babylon; they then took the city by surprise, entering into it along the dried-out riverbed just as the inhabitants were relaxing in celebration of some festival. Herodotus also calls the Babylonian king Labynetos. According to Xenophon, the Persians dug a large trench around Babylon, along the outer wall; at night, while the citizens were celebrating one of the festivals, the attackers diverted the Euphrates into this trench and entered the capital along the old riverbed; they then disposed of the palace guards, penetrated to the inner rooms, and killed the (unnamed) Babylonian king (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.5.7-32, 58).

The *Book of Daniel* (chaps. 3-5) also gives an account of the last stage of the fall of Babylon: during a feast in his palace Belshazzar saw a fiery hand trace cryptic words on the wall, signifying that he was soon to perish.

Cyrus spared the life of Nabonidus but had Belshazzar killed. Soon the whole country was in Persian hands. The Persian administration put out meticulously coordinated propaganda: several contemporary Babylonian texts present Cyrus as the liberator of the land from its oppression under Nabonidus, while Nabonidus is said to have despised even the gods of his own

country, to have committed crimes against the temples, and to have plundered the possessions of others (W. von Soden, "Kyros und Nabonid, Propaganda und Gegenpropaganda," *AMI*, Ergänzungsband 10, 1983, pp. 61-68). The *Cyrus Cylinder* relates that Marduk ordered Cyrus to enter Babylon and entrusted the country to him so as to guarantee its people peace and prosperity. The same claim is made in an inscription of Cyrus from Ur (C. J. Gadd, L. Legrain, and S. Smith, *Royal Inscriptions. Ur Excavations. Texts* I, London, 1928, p. 58, no. 198). The author of the *Book of Isaiah*, a witness to the Persian conquest of Babylon, seems to have been well acquainted with Cyrus's broad political aims, and whole chapters are written in a mood similar to that of the Babylonian texts which stress the piety of Cyrus while condemning Nabonidus. Josephus Flavius states that extracts from the *Book of Isaiah* dealing with Cyrus's conquest of Babylon were read aloud in Cyrus's presence (E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible*, New York, 1967, p. 62).

Yet all these texts are propagandistic in character. They were compiled by Babylonian priests on the orders either of the king or of his servants, and they were modeled on the earlier inscriptions of Assurbanipal. In his own inscriptions Nabonidus claims that Babylonia flourished under his rule. Several thousand administrative and private legal documents from the time of Nabonidus bear witness to the continuing economic prosperity of the country. (For these texts see M. A. Dandamaev, *Slavery in Babylonia*, DeKalb, Illinois, 1984, pp. 10-13.)

On Cyrus's orders the idols which had been brought to Babylon under Nabonidus were now dispatched back to the temples where they had previously resided. The images of foreign gods which earlier Babylonian kings had appropriated from Susa and the cities of northern Mesopotamia, were likewise returned to their old shrines. The run-down temples of Babylonia and of the former territory of Assyria were restored. Cyrus instructed Ugbaru to provide Babylon with defense against looters and to protect the sacred places. Foreigners who had been brought to Babylonia by force were now permitted to return home. Cyrus did not formally dismantle the Babylonian kingdom, nor did he tamper with the social structure. Instead he established his rule in the form of a personal union with the Babylonians, taking the official title "King of Babylon, King of the Countries." This title was retained by his successors down to the time of Xerxes. Babylon became one of the Achaemenid residences. In its economic life there are no perceptible changes before the beginning of the fifth century. The civil servants of the old regime

kept their places in the bureaucracy, and the Persian administration accepted Babylonian law and the traditional methods of Babylonian government. (See M. A. Dandamaev, *Persien unter den ersten Achämeniden*, Wiesbaden, 1976, pp. 99-100.)

After Darius I seized the throne in 552 the Babylonians, with others, rose up in rebellion against him. According to the Bīsotūn inscription a certain Nidintu-Bel, son of Ainaira, took power, styling himself Nebuchadnezzar (III) and claiming to be the son of Nabonidus. On October 3 he was proclaimed king. Documents from Babylon, Borsippa, and Sippar name him as the current ruler. Darius took personal command of the campaign against the rebels. The first battle took place by the Tigris on 13 December 522. Five days later Darius won a second victory in the area of Zazana on the Euphrates. Nidintu-Bel fled to Babylon, where he was captured and executed.

When Darius was busy quelling revolts elsewhere, the Babylonians rebelled again. If the Bīsotūn inscription is to be believed, they were led by Araxa, son of Haldita, an Armenian who claimed to be Nebuchadnezzar (IV), son of Nabonidus. Araxa managed to gain control of the entire country, as witnessed by documents from Babylon, Sippar, and Borsippa in the north, and from Uruk in the south, all dated according to his reign. The earliest of these documents was written on 16 August 521. In order to pacify the Babylonians Darius sent an army under the command of Vindafarna, a Persian. On 27 November 521 Araxa was defeated, and subsequently executed. Herodotus (3.150-60) also gives an account of the Babylonian revolt against Darius. He writes that after taking Babylon Darius ordered that three thousand leading citizens be executed and that the walls of the city be demolished. Archeological excavations confirm that the outer wall of Babylon was indeed demolished, though references to the inner wall continue to be found in documents long after the rebellion was crushed. (See F. Wetzel, E. Schmidt, and A. Mallwitz, *Das Babylon der Spätzeit*, WVDOG 62, 1957, p. 70; F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl, “Die babylonischen Prätendenten zur Anfangszeit des Darius I,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 25, 1968, pp. 150-53.)

In June or July, 484, a fresh rebellion broke out in Babylon, headed by a certain Belshimanni. The rebels managed to capture Borsippa and Dilbat as well as Babylon itself. But they were easily defeated by Xerxes, king of Persia, possibly in the course of the mere two weeks during which documents were dated by the reign of Belshimanni. Nevertheless, in August, 482, the Babylonians rebelled yet again, this time led by Shamash-eriba. Major

successes came quickly. The insurgents took Babylon, Borsippa, Dilbat, and other cities. Megabyzos, a relative of Xerxes, was given the task of suppressing the rebellion. His siege of Babylon lasted several months, probably until March, 481 (F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl, "Die babylonischen Prätendenten zur Zeit des Xerxes," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 19, 1962, pp. 110-14), and he exacted stern justice in his eventual victory. The city walls and other fortifications were razed to the ground. A number of priests were executed. Esagila, the main temple, was badly damaged. Many objects from the temple's treasury, objects donated by the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, were carried off to Persepolis (E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis* I, Chicago, 1953, pp. 174, 179; II, 1957, pp. 56-67). The gold statue of the god Marduk was also removed, so that nobody could now claim to be the rightful king, since, by Babylonian tradition, a new ruler was obliged to receive his authority from the hands of Marduk in the Esagila temple during the festival of the new year. Thus Xerxes put an end even to the notional existence of the Babylonian kingdom. The old title of the Achaemenid rulers, "King of Babylon, King of the Countries," was now rendered meaningless. From Xerxes onwards the title became simply "King of the Countries." Babylonia was reduced to the level of an ordinary satrapy. Babylon itself forfeited forever its political significance. It also ceased to be a holy city. It did, however, manage to recover some of its status as the economic center of the country, and indeed Babylonia as a whole remained rich and prosperous through to the fourth century, as is clear from Xenophon's *Anabasis* (1.5.10, 2.4.21, etc.).

After the battle of Gaugamela on 1 October 331, Alexander the Great moved on Babylon, and the satrap Mazaios surrendered the city to him without a struggle. Alexander intended to make Babylon the capital of his empire, but the project was abandoned after his death in 323. In 321 Babylonia came under the rule of Seleucus I, one of Alexander's generals and the founder of the Seleucid state which included Mesopotamia, Media, Persia, Northern Syria, and part of Asia Minor. In 312 Seleucus founded the city of Seleucia-on-Tigris, which was formally declared the capital in 275, in the reign of Antiochus I Soter. Thenceforth Babylon was doomed to a gradual extinction. Mithradates I (ca. 170-139), founder of the Parthian empire, captured from the Seleucids Media and Babylonia up to the Euphrates. In the interminable wars between the Parthian kings and the Seleucids, Babylonia was devastated. There were nine changes of ruler in Babylon between the years 161 and 122. By the start of the second century A.D. the city was completely empty of inhabitants. Nothing was left of Babylon but its ruins. Mesopotamia became part of the

Sasanian empire (224-651). (See S. A. Pallis, “The History of Babylon 538-93 B.C.,” in *Studia Orientalia Ioanni PedersenDicata*, Copenhagen, 1953, pp. 275-94.)

II. The Persian satrapy.

Supreme administrative power in Babylonia belonged to the Persian satrap. The first governor of the city of Babylon was Cyrus’s general, Ugbaru, who in effect held power over the whole of Mesopotamia. Ugbaru died three weeks after the capture of Babylon. In 538 Cyrus appointed his own son, Cambyses, as king of Babylonia, keeping control of the rest of the empire for himself. The true extent of Cambyses’ rule was in fact even more limited than it sounds: he was king only of the city of Babylon and of the northern part of the country, while central and southern Babylonia remained in the hands of Cyrus and his agents. Furthermore, Cambyses reigned for no more than about nine months. In 537, for unknown reasons, Cyrus removed him from his post. (See M. San Nicolò, *Beiträge zu einer Prosopographie neubabylonischer Beamten der Zivil- und Tempelverwaltung*, Munich, 1941, pp. 51-54; M. A. Dandamaev, *Politicheskaya istoriya Akhemenidskoĭ derzhavy*, Moscow, 1985, pp. 45-48.)

Cyrus retained as governor of Babylonia a native Babylonian, Nabu-ahhe-bullit, who had held the post before the Persian conquest, under Nabonidus. In 535, however, he created a single province comprised of Mesopotamia and the countries to the west of the Euphrates (Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine), and he appointed as satrap a Persian, Gubaru, who held this position until at least 525. The province itself, which included practically the entire territory of the former Neo-Babylonian empire, was designated Babylonia and Beyond the River. By March, 520, its governor was Ushtani, another Persian. But about 516 Darius I split the satrapy into two: Ushtani became governor of Babylonia, while Beyond the River was allocated to Tattenai, though Ushtani still ranked higher than Tattenai in the administration. In Herodotus’s list of the satrapies of the Persian empire (3.91-92) the divided province appears as two distinct satrapies: Babylonia and the “rest of Assyria” constitute the ninth satrapy, and Beyond the River is the fifth. The Babylonian satrapy also included the heartland of old Assyria. Herodotus (3.155 etc.) does not differentiate between Assyria and Babylonia: he calls Babylon the capital of Assyria, and sometimes he styles the Babylonians themselves “Assyrians.” (See O. Leuze, *Die Satrapieneinteilung in Syrien und im Zweistromlande von 530-320*, Halle, 1935, repr. Hildesheim, 1972, pp. 4-42; A. T. Olmstead, “Tattenai, Governor of “Across the River”,” *JNES* 3, 1944, p. 46; M. San Nicolò, *Beiträge*, pp. 54-64.)

Babylonia was the richest satrapy under Achaemenian rule, paying one thousand talents (about thirty tons) of silver to the Persian kings annually, as well as five hundred boys to serve at court as eunuchs. In addition, the Babylonians were required to maintain the army stationed in their country, and for four months of the year to provide provisions for the king and his entourage (Herodotus, 1.192, 3.92). On the Persepolis reliefs the Babylonians are depicted among the tributary peoples, bringing woven garments, vases and other vessels (G. Walser, *Die Völkerschaften auf den Reliefs von Persepolis*, Tehraner Forschungen 2, Berlin, 1966, pp. 77f.).

The Achaemenids spent part of the year in Babylon. They laid out gardens with pavilions, and in 345 Artaxerxes III ordered the construction of the *apadāna*. Fragments of trilingual inscriptions of Persian kings have also been found (F. Wetzel, E. Schmidt, and A. Mallwitz, *Das Babylon der Spätzeit*, pp. 48-49).

Although there was no sudden break in the local administrative, economic, and juridical traditions, nevertheless significant changes did gradually occur both in the structure of government itself and in the terminology of officialdom. Babylonian texts thus contain many administrative, juridical, economic, and military terms borrowed from Old Persian: *ahšadarapannu* (satrap), *arazapanatašu* (vineyard-keeper), *ardabu* (a measure of capacity), *aštabarru* (lance bearer), *bāra* (tax), *dāta* (law), *dātabara* (judge), *ganzabara* (treasurer), *hāmārakara* (bookkeeper), *iprasakku* (investigator), *pardēsu* (paradeisos), *umarzanapāta* (city governor), and many others (W. Eilers, *Iranische Beamtennamen in der keilschriftlichen Überlieferung*, Leipzig, 1940).

Under the Achaemenids Babylonian private law reached the peak of its development, providing the general model for the juridical norms among the countries of the Near East. In its dealings with the population of Babylonia the Achaemenid government observed local law, as did those Persians who began to participate in the administrative life of the country. Throughout the Achaemenid period private law and documentary conventions underwent no fundamental change, although Iranian influence did reach many state institutions, and private law was to some extent affected by the reforms in economic and state management introduced at the beginning of the reign of Darius I (G. Cardascia, *Les archives des Murašû*, Paris, 1951, pp. 5-8).

Soon after the Persian conquest of Babylonia, texts already refer to “judges of Cyrus” or “royal judges.” Under Darius I and his successors there are also

frequent references to Persian judges. For example, the late fifth-century documents from Nippur regularly mention Ishtubazanu, a judge from the district of the Sin canal. Ishtubazanu subsequently handed on his office to his son Humardatu. Under Darius I a contract between two Babylonians concerning a loan was drawn up in the presence of the Persian judge Ummadatu, son of Udunatu, while another text from the same period mentions a Persian judge Ammadatu (*Textes cunéiformes, Musée du Louvre* XIII, Paris, 1929, no. 193; J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius, König von Babylon*, Leipzig, 1892, no. 435).

Members of the royal family and certain Persian magnates with extensive land-holdings in Babylonia had recourse to their own legal and administrative apparatus, as may be seen from the case of Queen Parysatis, wife of Darius II: Parysatis retained in Babylonia a judge, who was styled in documents "judge of the estate of Parysatis" (*The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania*. Series A: *Cuneiform Texts* X, Philadelphia, 1904, nos. 97 etc.).

After the capture of Babylonia, and after the many rebellions had been put down, the Achaemenids confiscated part of the land from the local population, split it into large estates, and distributed these estates among members of the royal family and Persian nobility as their unencumbered and hereditary possessions. The fields around the city of Nippur, for example, were divided among Persian magnates. Many of the owners are mentioned in documents from the well-known business house of Murashu. In 429 Bagavira, a Persian, son of Mithradates, leased to Murashu for a period of sixty years his own field and land which had passed to him on the death of his father's brother Rushundatu. Both fields were close to Nippur, by the side of two canals, next to the field of another Persian, Rushunpati. At the same time Bagavira also leased out "residential buildings" near Nippur. The lessee paid in full when the contract was issued, a total of 1,800 hectoliters of dates (*The Babylonian Expedition* IX, 1898, no. 48). Also close to Nippur, and also leased to the house of Murashu, were the fields of Queen Parysatis (*Publications of the Babylonian Section, University of Pennsylvania* 2/1, Philadelphia, 1912, nos. 50, 60, 75, etc.). According to Xenophon (*Anabasis* 2.4.27), Parysatis owned in addition "villages" situated six days away from the town of Opis. The Persian princes too had large land-holdings near Nippur and elsewhere.

Part of the land was in effect the property of the king. Indeed, the royal holdings became significantly more extensive than they had been in the previous period. Like the fields of the royal family, the king's lands were

normally leased out. In 420, for example, a representative of the house of Murashu requested the overseer of the king's grain-fields along a number of canals near Nippur to lease him one field for three years. In return the lessee undertook to give an annual payment of thirty-three thousand liters of barley, three thousand liters of wheat, one and a half thousand liters of emmer, as well as one bull and ten sheep (*Texte und Materialen der Frau Professor Xilprecht Collection* II/3, Leipzig, 1933, no. 147). *Paradeisoi* (parks with fruit and other trees) of the Persian kings were located near the cities of Sippar, Nippur, and Uruk (M. Dandamayev, "Royal Paradeisoi in Babylonia," in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin Emerito Oblata*, Acta Iranica 23, Leiden, 1984, pp. 113-17).

The king also owned many large canals, which were normally leased out by his managers. The royal canals around Nippur were leased to the house of Murashu, which in turn sub-leased them to smaller landowners. Thus in 439 seven landowners made a contract with three lessees of a royal canal. One of the lessees was the house of Murashu. This contract stipulated that the sub-lessees had the right to irrigate their fields with water from the canal for three days each month. In return they were obligated to pay the lessees one third of the harvest from the irrigated fields in "water tax," as well as a specified sum of money for each measure of land (*The Babylonian Expedition* IX, no. 7).

In Babylonia under the Achaemenids the king would allot portions of land to his soldiers. The soldiers settled on such allotments would work the land communally, in groups, part of whose military service was to pay a levy in money and kind. Such holdings were called allotments of the bow, allotments of the horse, and allotments of the chariot, and their holders were obliged to serve as archers, cavalrymen, and charioteers respectively. In time of war the allotment-owners (who included both Babylonians and non-Babylonians) had to present themselves together with the appropriate equipment. The system of military allotments first started to be introduced in the 530s, in the reign of Cambyses. Despite the fact that most of our information about it derives from documents produced in Nippur in the late fifth century, it did become a feature of Babylonia as a whole (G. Cardascia, "Lehenswesen in der Perserzeit," *RIA* 6, 1983, pp. 547-50). These lands were inalienable: they passed to the soldiers' descendants in the male line. Only if there were no such descendants did the land revert to the state.

During the Achaemenid period there were major changes in the policies towards the Babylonian temples. The temples were substantial owners of land

and of slaves, as well as operating as traders and usurers. The Chaldean kings and their families had paid the temples an annual tithe in gold, silver, cattle, grain, dates, and the like. The Achaemenids, though they preserved the tithe as a compulsory tax on their subjects, ceased to pay it themselves. The Chaldean kings had rarely meddled directly in the affairs of the temples. Only a minimal portion of the state's income was derived from the temples, whereas the temples received royal gifts of land and slaves. Yet under the Achaemenids the temples were obliged to pay to the state large taxes in kind: in cattle, sheep, goats, grain, etc. For example, in the second year of the reign of Cambyses shepherds of the temple of Eanna in Uruk had to bring two hundred head of suckling lambs and kids "for the king's table in the palace in the city of Amanu." In the same year the temple of Eanna also provided the same palace with eighty "large sheep," with spices, and other goods. Two years later the temple of Eanna was obliged to deliver one hundred and fifty tons of firewood, again to the same palace. In addition, temples performed certain tasks for the state, sending slaves to work in the palaces of Babylon and other cities. To ensure that the temples did actually fulfill their commitments to the state, that taxes were paid on time and that duties were performed, royal and fiscal agents were installed in the temple administration. Royal agents were also delegated to keep a check on temple possessions, and inspections were frequent (M. Dandamayev, "State and Temple in Babylonia in the First Millennium B.C.," *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East* 2, Leuven, 1979, pp. 589-96).

III. Links with Iran.

There were cultural and commercial links between Babylonia and Iran well before the Medes and Persians had established their states on the territory of Iran (P. Calmeyer, "Mesopotamien und Iran im II und I Jahrtausend," *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn*, ed. H.-J. Nissen and J. Renger, Berlin, 1982, pp. 339-48). From the twelfth to tenth centuries B.C. Babylonia had close ties with the countries to the east of the Tigris. During this period the Babylonians held sway in Namar, a region in the middle reaches of the river Dīāla, and their influence extended to western Iran (J. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia*, Rome, 1968, p. 200). As early as the twelfth century the Babylonians also set their sights on the colonization of areas bordering on Media, and one finds Babylonian influence in artifacts from western Iran (P. Calmeyer, *Reliefbronzen in babylonischem Stil*, Munich, 1973, pp. 227-32).

Among items of Luristan bronze there have been found thirty-eight pieces of

weaponry (daggers, arrowheads, etc.) inscribed with the names of Babylonian kings who reigned from 1135 to 940. This may have been votive weaponry dedicated to Babylonian temples and subsequently captured by troops from Iran on their incursions into Mesopotamia. Yet it has also been suggested that the weapons were gifts presented for loyal service, from Babylonian rulers to troops from Iran (G. Dossin, "Bronzes inscrits du Luristan de la collection Foroughi," *Iranica Antiqua* 2, 1962, pp. 149-64; P. Calmeyer, *Datierbare Bronzen aus Luristan und Kirmanshah*, Berlin, 1969, pp. 161-74). The names of private individuals also appear on several of the Luristan bronzes, inscribed in cuneiform, in the Akkadian language, yet many of these inscriptions are in fact merely copied from older Babylonian oddments (mainly seals) by illiterate Luristan artisans (P. R. S. Moorey and W. G. Lambert, "An Inscribed Bronze Vessel from Luristan," *Iran* 10, 1972, pp. 161-63). Three Akkadian inscriptions have been found in Western Iran. One of them, cut on two sides of a bronze plate, was discovered not far from Hamadān and probably dates from the tenth or ninth century B.C. It refers to a king Shilisruh (we do not know of what country) who apparently released his subjects from certain taxes in kind (I. M. Diakonoff, "A Cuneiform Charter from Western Iran", in *Festschrift Lubor Matous* I, Budapest, 1978, pp. 51-68). The other two inscriptions were unearthed in excavations at Ḥasanlū. One of them may be dated paleographically to the ninth century, or perhaps earlier. It mentions the palace of Bauri, who seems to have been governor of the land of Ida. Ida, as Assyrian inscriptions show, was located in Zamua, one of the districts of western Iran (see assyria). The second inscription contains the name of Kadashman-Enlil, a Babylonian king of the Kassite dynasty, and it dates from the fourteenth or thirteenth century (both inscriptions in R. H. Dyson, "The Hasanlu Project 1961-67," in *The Memorial Volume of the Vth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology* I, Tehran, 1972, pp. 49-50). Since no texts in the Median language have been found, though literacy certainly did exist in the Median state, it is likely that the Medians used Akkadian cuneiform script and the Akkadian language. During the second millennium B.C. the Akkadian language and script were used sporadically, but widely, in southwestern Iran (see elam).

In its ethnic composition, Achaemenid Babylonia became increasingly mixed, and one can observe an emerging syncretism of the cultures and religious beliefs of its various peoples. This occurred partly because the Achaemenids founded ethnically heterogeneous military colonies in Mesopotamia. Often their administrative appointees were also of non-Babylonian origin. Babylonia

thus came to contain a fair number of Egyptians, Lydians, Phrygians, Carians, and others. In the documents from the house of Murashu for the second half of the fifth century, about one third of all personal names are not Babylonian. There are dozens of Iranian names, mostly belonging to Persians, Medes, Sakai, and Areians, though some bearers of Iranian names were not actually of Iranian stock (R. Zadok, "Iranians and Individuals bearing Iranian Names in Achaemenian Babylonia," *Israel Oriental Studies* 7, 1977, pp. 89-138).

Persians took an ever more active part in local transactions, usually working through their agents who were for the most part Babylonians, Arameans, Egyptians, etc. Even Cambyses, while prince, became involved in usury, making loans through his steward (J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cyrus, König von Babylon*, Leipzig, 1890, no. 177). Partammu, a Persian, bought a house in the center of Babylon (J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius*, no. 410). In Borsippa Arbatema the Persian leased out his secure storehouses (M. San Nicolò and A. Ungnad, *Neubabylonische Rechts- und Verwaltungsurkunden* I, Leipzig, 1929-37, no. 138). In 423 the house of Murashu paid for the lease of a field belonging to the Persian Uhejagam, son of Parnak. The field was near Nippur, though its owner lived in Babylon, to where the payment had therefore to be sent (not, as was normal, in kind, but in money) (*Publications of the Babylonian Section* II/1, no. 5). One legal document was drawn up in Dilbat during the reign of Darius I in the presence of several civil servants among whom was a Persian named Ahsheti, son of Kamakka (San Nicolò and Ungnad, *Neubabylonische*, no. 702).

Many Persians fell gradually under Babylonian influence. In fifth-century Nippur, for example, the Persians Artabarri, Bagadatu, Ishtubazanu, and others gave their sons typically Babylonian names such as Nidintu-Bel and Bel-ibni (*The Babylonian Expedition* IX, nos. 14, 76, 82, etc.). Conversely, Babylonians started to give their children foreign names. Thus the sons of Ninurta-eṭir, Bel-ibni, and others were given names like Tiridatu, Shatabarzana, Adabaga, or Aspabar (*The Babylonian Expedition* IX, nos. 39, 69, 74, etc.). Such onomastic borrowing frequently occurred in the context of mixed marriages, as in the case of the Persian Mithradates and his Babylonian wife Esagil-belit, who gave their son the Iranian name of Bagavira (*The Babylonian Expedition* IX, no. 48). Since all the cited Babylonian and Iranian names derive from the names of deities ("Ninurta the god-saved," "given by the god Mithra," etc.) it is likely that their bearers worshipped the foreign deities as well as their own. One might note in this context a building

excavated in Uruk and thought to be a shrine of Mithra. A clay image of Mithra killing a bull has been found there (*Vorläufiger Bericht über die . . . in Uruk-Warka unternommenen Ausgrabungen* XIV, Berlin, 1958, pp. 18-20). Persian influence can also be detected in Babylonian seals of the Achaemenid period.

Medes, too, were deeply involved in Babylonian affairs. Early in the reign of Darius I a Median family living in Babylonia, Kakia and his wife Uhija, leased a house from one Babylonian dealer while from another they hired equipment and a slave-girl (Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius*, no. 51). Another Mede, Ninakku, a resident of Borsippa, pawned his slave-girl to a Babylonian (San Nicolò and Ungnad, *Neubabylonische*, no. 677).

Babylonian texts frequently mention *gimirrāya* (literally "Cimmerians"). The reference is probably to members of the Saka (Scythian) tribes of Central Asia, who spoke one of the Old Iranian dialects. In Achaemenid Babylonia they served in the king's army. Among the Sakai in the Persian army in Babylonia were those whose job it was to guard the boats carrying official cargoes by order of the Persian administration. A document of the year 524 mentions Scythians with the Iranian names Usukaya and Tattakkaya (M. A. Dandamayev, "Saka Soldiers on Ships," *Iranica Antiqua* 22, 1982, pp. 101-02).

As early as the seventh century B.C. the Scythians had mounted raids on Western Asia, and a Scythian influence on Babylonian armor is noticeable even before the Persian conquest of Mesopotamia. The soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus were often equipped with Scythian bows, Scythian bronze- and iron-tipped arrows, and various other Scythian items including Scythian harnesses for their horses. In the pre-Persian levels at Babylon archeologists have found bronze arrowheads of the Scythian type. These technological borrowings occurred because the Scythian bows were vastly superior to the Babylonian in their ballistic qualities (M. A. Dandamayev, "Data of the Babylonian Documents from the 6th to the 5th Centuries B.C. on the Sakas," in *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta, Budapest, 1979, pp. 95-109). Among Babylonia's military colonists of Iranian extraction can also be found Areians (*arumāya*), who came originally from Haraiva in what is now Afghanistan.

A document from Babylon dated 508 B.C. mentions among the slaves of the business house of Egibi a girl from Gandara on Iran's border with India. In Sippar in 511 a Babylonian sold a slave-girl of Bactrian origin (T. G. Pinches, "Babylonian Contract-Tablets with Historical References," *Records of the Past*

IV, London, 1890, pp. 104-06).

The population of Babylonia also included many Elamites. They are frequently mentioned in business transactions either as contracting parties or as witnesses. Under Darius I, for example, a man with the Elamite name of Sammannapir gave his daughter to an Egyptian in marriage. In addition, Elamites often traveled for seasonal employment in Babylonian temples (M. A. Dandamayev, "Connections between Elam and Babylonia in the Achaemenid Period," in *The Memorial Volume* I, pp. 258-64; R. Zadok, "On the Connections between Iran and Babylonia in the Sixth Century B.C.," *Iran* 14, 1976, pp. 61-78). In a number of cases foreigners, and the military colonists in particular, occupied regions of Babylonia in groups substantial enough and homogeneous enough to have their own popular assemblies which acted as organs of local self-government alongside the assemblies of the Babylonian cities. The function of these assemblies of ethnic minorities was to resolve internal disputes. Thus a document from the time of Cambyses refers to the "assembly of the Elders of the Egyptians" in Babylon, which pronounced its verdict on some fields belonging to Egyptian colonists (M. A. Dandamayev, "The Neo-Babylonian Elders," in *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of I. M. Diakonoff*, Warminster, 1982, p. 41). It would seem, therefore, that the *politeumata*, those popular assemblies of ethnic minorities, normally thought to be a purely Hellenistic institution, in fact made an embryonic appearance under the Achaemenids. For the most part, however, foreigners in Babylonia were dispersed throughout the country, living side by side with the local population, coming into contact through business and through intermarriage. The foreigners gradually became assimilated in their adopted land. They took Babylonian names, spoke Aramaic (which had become the standard spoken language of Mesopotamia), and in turn exerted a degree of their own cultural influence on the Babylonians. Akkadian, which was supplanted in oral communication by Aramaic, remained the language of literature, of religion, of some juridical documents, and, together with Old Persian and Elamite, of the royal inscriptions of the Achaemenids. During the Achaemenid period Old Persian borrowed a number of words from Akkadian, as, for example, *aguru* (kiln-fired brick), *maškā* (skin), and, via Elamite, *dipī* (inscription).

The administrative and economic expertise of the Babylonians, acquired over many centuries, was useful to and much used by the Persian kings in their government. Babylonians worked in the state bureaucracy in the late-sixth

and early-fifth centuries, even in southwestern Iran. For example, the Babylonian Beleṭir was responsible for the delivery of the state post between Persepolis and Susa. Hitibel was a royal messenger. Marduka controlled a royal flour depot in the region of Liduma (R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, Chicago, 1969, nos. 81, 1381, etc.). Babylonian scribes on parchment, in groups of between three and thirty-one, also worked in Persepolis and in other cities of Iran, as did considerable numbers of Babylonian artisans (Hallock, *Persepolis*, nos. 868, 1807, 1810, 1811, 1821, 1828, etc.). At the construction of the palace of Darius I at Susa Babylonians were involved in earthworks, brick-molding, and in cutting the reliefs (Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 142). Susa, capital of the Achaemenid empire, was home to many Babylonians. A document in Akkadian written at Susa in 447 mentions several people with Babylonian names, both as witnesses and as one of the contracting parties (M. Rutten, "Tablette No. 4," *Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique en Iran* 36, Paris, 1954, pp. 83-85). A slave sale contract written at Persepolis in Babylonian during the reign of Darius I has been preserved, in which the contracting parties as well as the witnesses, the scribe, and the slave himself, to judge from their names, were Babylonians (M. W. Stolper, "The Neo-Babylonian Text from the Persepolis Fortification," *JNES* 43, 1984, pp. 299-310).

In the Achaemenid period close trading links were established between Iran and Babylonia. In the late sixth century members of the house of Egibi and others traveled regularly to southwestern Iran to sell barley and clothing and to purchase slaves and various Elamite export wares (Dandamayev, "Connections," p. 259). Soon after the Persian conquest of Mesopotamia, Babylonian businessmen started traveling to Ecbatana, capital of Media, and to other cities in northwest Iran, for trade (Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cyrus*, nos. 60, 227, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text. See also *Camb Hist. Iran* II, esp. chaps. 3, 5, 10.