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# **Melammu**

**The Ancient World in an Age of Globalization**

Edited by Markham J. Geller

(with the cooperation of Sergei Ignatov and Theodor Lekov)

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## **Preface: The Globalization of Knowledge in the Ancient Near East**

*J. Renn*

This volume on the Globalization in the Ancient Near East offers a unique collection of insights into the exchange processes connecting different parts of the Western Eurasian world of the First Millennium BCE. These processes range from military conquest and trade relations to the spread of religious, artistic or scientific ideas. The Assyrian Empire, founded at the beginning of the millennium, was the first major empire in this part of the world, extending from the Levant in the West to the Persian gulf in the East. It was the heir of the great Mesopotamian civilizations and, in the second half of the millennium, was in turn followed by the Achaemenid Persian Empire which eventually reached Egypt in the West and the Indus valley in the East.

Globalization in this period involved political, economic and cultural dimensions and had long-lasting effects, some of which can be recognized even today, among them, the use of the alphabet and coin money. It becomes evident that the histories of the many regions and civilizations that are touched upon in this volume, extending from the Mediterranean world via Mesopotamia and Anatolia to Persia and India, cannot be considered in isolation but are much more intertwined than has hitherto been apparent.

Among the many strands of globalization described in the studies here assembled, we also recognize a distinct history of the globalization of knowledge. This history takes place against the background of numerous cultural achievements that had become a common property of many cultures in this part of the world by the outset of the First Millennium, among them agriculture, pottery, architecture with stone and brick, metal working, water management, urbanization and statehood including warfare, sophisticated administration, writing, literature, art and the beginnings of science. The globalization processes described in this volume build on these achievements.

In spite of extensive warfare and periods of destruction and decline, such as the so-called Dark Ages of Ancient Greece from 1200 to 800 BCE, the knowledge behind these achievements was spreading in a way that eventually contributed to their long-term stabilization and further evolution. Indeed, when one empire or state collapsed, many of its traditions and achievements were nevertheless con-

tinued by newly emerging power structures or by local residues that were less affected by the central power. Trade networks, local forms of social organization, as well as local technological and artistic traditions turned out to be much more resilient than the empires themselves. Globalization was due both to extrinsic processes carrying new forms of societal cohesion (such as that of an empire by force and violence) into new areas and due to intrinsic processes that are marked by the voluntary adaptation and transformation of local resources (such as literary traditions) into more universal cultural assets.

We can thus observe processes of sedimentation of knowledge in the sense of a gradual accumulation of collective action potentials embodied in technologies and artifacts, social institutions including empires, as well as networks of trade relations or legal frameworks, writings and oral traditions. Some of these representations of shared knowledge have the potential to be reactivated, even after long periods of interruption and oblivion, eventually giving rise to “renaissances” of seemingly forgotten or marginalized traditions, which are then profoundly transformed in the process. Others may be definitively lost with the breakdown of the specific knowledge economy on which they depended, or they simply survived in isolated niches from which they could then later be reactivated, albeit with an altered appearance.

The globalization of knowledge in the Ancient Near East during the First Millennium, however, was not just an intermittent cumulative process of the exchange and diffusion of local developments within a much wider sphere of circulation, connecting for instance the literary world of India with the cuneiform traditions of Mesopotamia, or the Anatolian cult of the Great Goddess with Greek religious traditions. These exchange processes also involved an active appropriation of the transferred cultural achievements on the part of the “receivers,” characterized by their transformation and recontextualization. This process not only gave rise to cultural hybridizations, as has often been emphasized, but also to profoundly new forms of cultural abstractions, many of them still with us today, from the idea of a democratic state, via a universalist religion, to coin money and alphabetic writing (with roots in the preceding millennium). All of these achievements, essential to the modern world, result from the translation and recontextualization processes that took place in the Ancient Near East.

The First Millennium may therefore be characterized as a period of the secondary globalization of knowledge. Indeed, after the globalization of primary technologies and cultural techniques that took place after the Neolithic and urban revolutions, we now witness societal experiments recombining these resources to create new forms of social cohesion, such as the democratic Greek polis or the monotheist transformation of Judaism. These have not emerged in isolation, but rather constituted creative reactions both to intrinsic developments and to external

influences and challenges, such as the “Oriental” influences at the beginning of the Greek polis, or the Assyrian threat to the Jews at the end of the eighth century.

Living through a collective history and looking back on it through the available cultural memory offers a society the possibility to position itself within a historical continuum. This may also stimulate learning processes and give the option to change this history in the future. The intrinsic development of a society may thus give rise to a reflective dimension that is intimately connected to its means of cultural expression and of cultural memory. In the First Millennium, the availability and spread of writing, of literary and artistic traditions that covered not only one’s own but also other people’s history, had become an important component of this cultural memory. Taking the option for change, however, was and is typically the reaction to an external challenge provoking the mobilization of these internal resources.

A striking example is the emergence of monotheism as a response to the challenges of Judaism embodied in the physical threat and ideology of the Assyrian Empire. Another striking example is the emergence of the Greek polis from a transformation of Near Eastern models of urbanization under the influences of the early Greek colonization and the expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The realization of such innovations, finally, is dependent on the freedom to sustain them for some time, undisturbed by the prevailing power structures. They thus typically emerge at the margin of such structures rather than at their center.

The history of the Ancient Near East in the First Millennium BCE comprises several turning points of human history, in particular the rise of the first large empires and of the first world religions. The present volume makes evident the extent to which these turning points are the product of an early globalization of knowledge.

Jürgen Renn, Berlin, 9 June 2014





## **Introduction to Melammu: Early Globalization**

*M. J. Geller*

The idea of the “first globalization” was chosen as the topic of the sixth Melammu symposium, all of which dealing with Mesopotamia in its broadest geographical and chronological extensions, both actual and metaphorical.<sup>1</sup> The present conference was hosted by the Rector of the New Bulgarian University, Prof. Sergei Ignatov (now Bulgarian Minister of Education), and Prof. Teodor Lekov, head of the Institute of Egyptology of that University, and held in Sofia September 1–3, 2008.<sup>2</sup>

It was the Persian period which was chosen as the key period, since the mid-first millennium BCE witnessed both unification under a single hegemony (Persia) in the Near East and the vast unplanned spread of Greek colonies in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, representing contrasting examples of globalization. It was this period which produced great leaps in scientific knowledge, particularly astronomy and mathematical astronomy, geometry, and medicine, accompanied by a general re-evaluation of man’s place in the cosmos, and these new approaches to knowledge continued well into the Hellenistic and Roman periods.<sup>3</sup> The momentum of globalization under Persian rule in the Near East increased geometrically under Greco-Roman rule in Western parts of the region, such as Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, although the Parthian empire in Mesopotamia and Iran mostly resisted Hellenization, with some exceptions (for example, Bactria). Let us examine the situation in more detail.

We begin with Mesopotamia, from whence we have the richest documentation of economic and administrative texts from the sixth century BCE, covering the Neo-Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic periods, according to the very latest survey of these periods (Jursa 2010). Although everyday business affairs throughout Mesopotamia are recorded in great detail, information relevant to globalization turns out to be rather scarce, in terms of economic activity. The picture which emerges from cuneiform sources is that most trade and commerce was conducted between cities which were immediately neighbors along the great rivers

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<sup>1</sup>The idea of Melammu was conceived by Simo Parpola of Helsinki and it continues to influence interdisciplinary approaches to antiquity. Details of previous Melammu volumes is to be found on <http://www.aakk1.helsinki.fi/melammu>.

<sup>2</sup>The conference theme was originally the suggestion of Florentina Badalanova Geller.

<sup>3</sup>See (Renn 2012).

and canals, with little data from the texts shedding light on more far-reaching exchanges of goods and services which might indicate foreign contacts.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this may be that basic commerce consisted of trade in low-value bulk commodities between cities, such as wool, grain, common agricultural products, and manufactured goods such as textiles (Jursa 2010, 1–61), or even silver, while globalization might have influenced trade in higher value products and services such as *materia medica*, medical expertise, perfumes and exotic spices, and so forth. This pattern of exchange of goods was predominantly stable and largely unaffected by political changes under Persian rule.

Nevertheless, on other levels the Persian Empire did bring large-scale changes to the Near East, occasioned by the extent of the new political unity. The Persian state demanded heavy tribute from its subject peoples, although the information is best documented in Greek sources (Briant 1996, 399ff.). Taxes paid by citizens of Babylonia would probably at first have been comparable to previous regimes, although new tax regimes were introduced under Persian officials and tax offices (Briant 1996, 424–425), and the increasing burden of taxation in the Persian Empire probably had a deleterious effect on economic activity (Jursa 2010, 60). In any case, tribute represented capital flows of wealth between regions and no doubt involved contacts between officials in various regions of the empire.

Since we are unlikely to find much evidence of economic globalization during the Persian period, other areas of investigation may prove more promising, such as comparative law, since contracts and laws are often subject to political changes under new regimes. For example, Aramaic documents from Elephantine in Egypt (Porten and Yardeni 1987) or Afghanistan (Naveh and Shaked 2012) show the official presence of minority communities within this vast empire, united both by official regulations and language, namely Aramaic. The Jewish military colony at Elephantine kept extensive Aramaic records of property transactions within the community (including marriage), as well as correspondence with co-religionists in Judea; their use of Aramaic probably reflects their own vernacular (and not Hebrew), rather than any lingua franca. The Aramaic documents from Elephantine have been analyzed extensively from both contemporary Akkadian and Demotic analogues (Muffs 2003; Botta 2009), and although Akkadian parallels are more convincing (in the present writer's view), these results are significant: they indicate that Aramaic contracts from Elephantine are comparable to both Neo-Babylonian and Demotic contracts, with similar clauses in both languages. One inference to be drawn is that Aramaic contract formulae within the Persian empire were beginning to reflect somewhat standardized practices throughout the Near East, hence an aspect of globalization. Never-

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<sup>4</sup>Examples of such documents are discussed in the present volume by Kabalan Moukarzel.

theless, the usual pattern is one of conservatism and traditional practices versus change afforded by new political realities and conditions, and Elephantine papyri reflect both approaches. On one hand, Aramaic contracts generally reflect Neo-Babylonian legal clauses but were probably also influenced by the new legal environment in Egypt in which these documents were found. Globalization, therefore, can partially be attributed to altered circumstances occasioned by demographic changes.

Ptolemaic Egypt, in fact, offers many more opportunities for international contacts, both internally and externally, than does Mesopotamia. The prevalence of Demotic, Greek, and Latin sources in great quantities of papyri makes Egypt a primary source for studies of globalized contacts between cultures, with one additional feature which sets Egypt apart from contemporary Mesopotamia. Egypt was colonized by Greeks after Alexander and later became integrated into the Roman Empire, while Mesopotamia mostly remained beyond the reach of Hellenization and Greek science, in many ways resistant to Western thought. The contrast between Egypt and Mesopotamia was fundamental in this respect, since we are unlikely to find any treasure trove of Greek papyri, “an Oxyrhyncus,” in Mesopotamia, since Greek was hardly spoken in the local population. A good example of the difference comes from the Bible itself, which was translated into Greek in Alexandria, but no contemporary Septuagint is known from the Jewish or Christian community in the Parthian or Sassanian empires, because no one would have read this text.<sup>5</sup> Even closer to home, Babylonia shows no real evidence of a major Syriac-Greek bilingual scholastic centre equivalent to Edessa in Syria, and Jews and Manichaeans in Babylonia were not directly impressed by Greek learning. Globalization had its limits.

Egypt affords the possibility of accurate assessment of relationships between ethnic groups within society based upon their use of languages as reflections of social hierarchies. The evidence is complex, however, since schooling and acquired linguistic expertise (in Greek) often enhanced one’s chances of success, although villagers remained predominantly illiterate (Lewis 1983, 82). Major changes in society also took place after the Roman conquest of Egypt, during which time decisions governing Egypt’s economy and law courts were entirely dependent upon directives from Rome or its appointed officials, which also lead to conflict between Rome and the Greek-speaking population of Egypt, including

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<sup>5</sup> The Septuagint itself is a good example of literary globalization, since Bible stories were suddenly able to circulate throughout the Mediterranean region in Greek translation, and many narratives became popular (Barclay 1996); Moses, for instance, gained a reputation in this period as a wonder-worker and magician, and reactions to biblical narratives in Egypt (although preserved in Greek), such as Manetho, attest to proliferation of biblical accounts; Josephus records the debates in great detail in *Contra Apionem*.

Jews (Lewis 1983, 185–207). The case for globalization in Egypt is abundantly self-evident.

The relatively haphazard spread of Greek colonies also offers many important models for globalization, reflected in widespread commercial ties as well as the eventual spread of Greek language and literature to an astonishing extent.<sup>6</sup>

The significant point about Greek colonies is that prior to the establishment of Alexander's vast empire, they did not reflect any central planning or scheme promulgated by older cities on the Greek mainland. As Irad Malkin explains, the numerous Greek cities that we call, for lack of a better term, "colonies" were founded during the Archaic period as independent entities along the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. There were a great variety of "mother cities" (that is, home communities recognized as the initiators of settlement), but they rarely had political control over the new settlements. These were largely independent, sovereign entities with ritual ties to the *metropolis* (lit. mother city). In fact, this was not just a Greek but a Mediterranean phenomenon: the Phoenicians had set out to found city-states in the western Mediterranean and North Africa, and the Etruscans, influenced by both the Greeks and the Phoenicians, likewise developed a city-state civilization and maritime activity (Malkin 2004, 347).

The *oikoumene* inhabited by the Greeks was itself multilingual and multinational, and like the Phoenicians, they used their language as a unifying medium for exchange of commodities, manufactured wares, and ideas. Certain features of Greek culture took the world by storm, such as refinements in ancient architecture and the new aesthetic realism of Greek sculpture, which virtually replaced the static figures of Near Eastern art, in addition to the revolutionary artistic qualities of Greek vases; nevertheless, these characteristic features of Greek art were originally inspired by motifs originating in the Near East (Martin 2000, 91).<sup>7</sup> The Greek polis differed from Mesopotamian cities in several key aspects, especially in having an *agora* as the primary public space instead of the city or temple gates, and the scale of Greek temples was relatively small compared with temples in the Near East; there was no Near Eastern counterpart to Greek theatre. Nevertheless, the most important common feature of all these societies was the urban setting itself, which provided the environment for many of the significant intellectual and artistic developments contributing to globalization (Sinclair et al. 2010, 172–183). The city provided the merchants, schools, law courts, governance, and religious institutions which defined these civilizations.

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<sup>6</sup>Demographic changes that we see in Greece began taking place in the seventh century BCE, which classical scholars refer to as the "archaic period," despite corresponding to the Neo-Assyrian empire period in Mesopotamia, which is far from being archaic.

<sup>7</sup>It is then interesting to note that Greek art later inspired the art and architecture of Persepolis, see the work of Margaret Cool Root (1985).

The processes of Hellenization in Ptolemaic Egypt after Alexander's conquest is most obvious to see in the area of laws and contracts, and the search for globalization of legal norms renders surprising results. In fact, relatively little changed within Hellenistic law in terms of actual contract law, even in bilingual societies such as Egypt in which both Greek and Demotic contracts proliferated, for some two centuries after the founding of Alexandria.<sup>8</sup> Immediately after Alexander, both Greek and Demotic contracts continued to be used in Egypt as valid legal forms until the second century CE, hence well into the Roman period (Yiftach-Firanko 2009, 542, 555). Prior to this in the early periods of Hellenization, Greeks and Egyptians could resort to separate legal courts to settle disputes, but by the second century BCE the system had broken down and Greek judges appear to have predominated, with Demotic contracts being translated for their benefit (Yiftach-Firanko 2009, 547). Greek officialdom, in the form of the *agoranomos*, played an increasingly important role in regulating economic and legal functions governed by the state, both in Egypt proper and probably in its territories further afield, as in Judea.<sup>9</sup> Although the tendency over time was for Greek documents to be used instead of Demotic contracts, especially after the Romanization of Egypt, this did not mean that Egyptian disappeared, since the Romans introduced a legal concept known as the "law of the Egyptians," recognizing certain ethnic legal norms which still had force in law (Yiftach-Firanko 2009, 550–552). Nevertheless, the pattern appears to be that actual globalization or fusion of legal procedures and contracts resisted diversion from traditional practices for most of Hellenistic Egypt prior to the Roman period, after which Greek contracts eventually replaced Demotic ones; Roman law itself had relatively little impact, except in matters of succession. Hence, the pattern of standardization of contract law shows slow but steady process in the Hellenistic period, but with the most obvious changes occurring during Roman domination of Egypt. This pattern probably reflects similar conditions throughout the Roman Empire, that is, in the Levant as well.

Although narratives and religious motifs can cross borders quite easily, they do not often tell us a great deal about the nature of these exchanges, since reli-

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<sup>8</sup>In the 1980s a series of seminars and conference was held at University College London on Hellenistic Law, with the idea of comparing legal contracts from Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Egypt, to chart any innovations introduced through Hellenization. The results were published (Geller and Maehler 1995), providing many examples of legal contracts in Akkadian, Greek, and Demotic, although the volume did not include any summary of results, since the idea was that the collection of discussed materials would stimulate further comparative studies which could point to general conclusions. This hope has not yet been realized.

<sup>9</sup>The Zenon Papyri clearly shows how Egyptians conducted business in Greek with its colony in Judea, with Greek having replaced Aramaic as the language of commerce, and the widespread use of Greek in ancient Palestine was probably the result of being colonized by Egypt in the third century BCE.

gious beliefs and practices and literary tropes can easily reflect shared ideas which can obscure the exact nature of any borrowings. The pioneering works of Cyrus Gordon (1962) and Walter Burkert (1998) made important contributions to the awareness of contacts between societies in the Near East, including Greece, but the actual mode of transmission remains unclear. The nature of exact sciences, on the other hand, is more precise, which makes it much easier to trace the spread of scientific reasoning and results between societies, a process which is well-documented in the Persian period. Here we return again to Mesopotamia and relations between Babylonian and Greek science, which are crucial reflections of globalization in the Persian period.

To begin with the most exact of sciences, mathematics, K. Muroi has recently concluded that the so-called “Pythagorean triples” (solving the area of a trapezoid) was known already in a Babylonian mathematical tablet (Muroi 2010, 155). Similar recognition of the reliance of Greek mathematics upon Babylonian precedents, and especially pre-Pythagorean mathematics in Babylonia, had already been established (Damerow 2001), although it is likely that Babylonians were responsible for practical uses of mathematics among Greeks but had little influence upon more theoretical writings (Asper 2009, 128–129). While the influence of Babylonian astrology on the Greeks has been known since the early days of Assyriology (Boll 1911), the influences of Babylonian science has been recently documented (Rochberg 2010, 1–18); Pliny, for instance, refers to three famous Babylonian *mathematikoi* by name (Rochberg 2010, 8). Francesca Rochberg gives a brief survey of how historians (before Otto Neugebauer) viewed Babylonian science, in which any scientific ideas before the Greeks were considered to represent technology and religion, but not actually science (Rochberg 2004, 15–20); nevertheless, the fundamental contributions of Babylonian astronomy to Indian, Arabic, and Greek astronomy have now been widely accepted, even if often qualified by reservations regarding the level of Babylonian command of theory, compared to Ptolemy and others. What is beyond doubt is the nature of scientific borrowings of precise detailed observations and calculations of celestial phenomena which originated in Babylonia and were then used by their neighbors, hence representing concrete examples of globalized knowledge originating in the Persian Period. As Gerd Graßhoff has recently observed,

It is now clear that, during the Babylonian period, knowledge was disseminated to all neighboring cultures without undergoing change; its superiority was incontrovertible. (Graßhoff 2010, 47)

Concrete confirmation of such influence has also been recognized in a small group of astronomical papyri from Egypt which are clearly based upon Babylonian calculations (Jones 2009, 350).

As for divination, there is little doubt that divinatory sciences were more highly developed in Mesopotamia than anywhere else in the Near East. There is little evidence of divination in general from Egypt, and although prognoses and oracles were known to the Greek world, there is little evidence from Greece of Babylonian-style divination. Nevertheless, it is the melting pot of the Roman world which alerts us to the spread of knowledge of divination; Rochberg has drawn attention to Cicero's argumentation in his *de Divinatione* as partially reflecting Babylonian thinking (Rochberg 2010, 411), but in fact Cicero, in the late first century BCE, turns out to be surprising well-informed in general on the tenets of various kinds of Babylonian omens, including extispicy. It seems likely that Cicero's own sources and informants, such as Diogenes of Babylon, were responsible for the awareness of Babylonian divinatory practices within Roman intellectual circles, to an extent not yet fully realized in modern scholarship. This pattern may also be repeated within ancient medicine, since prescriptions recorded by Celsus in the first century CE resemble the type of recipe-based medicine best known from Mesopotamia and not as well attested in the Hippocratic corpus.

Finally, Gebhard Selz argues further that Mesopotamian science was globalized precisely because of its empirical approach to knowledge, based upon observation and hermeneutics, and introduced the notion of divinely-inspired higher order of knowledge which lead to revelation and Holy Scripture elsewhere (Selz 2011, 64). The present Melammu volume will present evidence for the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods as the crucial era for the spread of Mesopotamian technical knowledge, in the form of legal forms and scientific methods, into other societies in the Near East. Although it is important to search for knowledge transfer among the myriad of economic and administrative documentation of this period, we are most likely to find Babylonian technical thinking competing to a certain extent with Greek wisdom, which itself owed much to its Near Eastern antecedents. At the same time, there is no reason to look exclusively to the West for the spread of knowledge, since globalization spread to other regions as well, including Urartu, Persia, and India, as will be presented here. The further afield one ventures, however, the more varied are the results. What has been discussed above are areas of knowledge transfer which are relatively secure, while the purpose of the present volume is to push back the frontiers of globalization. There is much work remaining to be done in this area.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Globalization of Religion:**

### **Jewish Cosmology in its Ancient Near Eastern Context**

*Simo Parpola*

The cosmology of the Hebrew Bible is basic not only to Judaism but also to Christianity, and its central features are accordingly well known to all of us. Our familiarity with the subject has a drawback, however. It necessarily makes us view the components of the underlying belief structure as received facts and articles of faith, against which the cosmologies of other religions are often found as alien and, consciously or not, often regarded as primitive and inferior. Studies and presentations of Jewish cosmology are usually written by specialists in Judaism and are hence not necessarily free of bias, especially when comparisons are made with other religions and cosmological systems.

Today I would like to turn the tables and consider the subject from the viewpoint of other cultures of the Ancient Near East, especially Mesopotamia of the first millennium BCE, which is my specialty. To make it easier to follow my argument, I will first in a very cursory and condensed way outline the main features of the Jewish cosmological system. This overview is necessarily an abstraction; it does not take into consideration all cosmological concepts and themes attested in Judaism over its 3000-year history, but essential features of the Jewish system will stand out more clearly in such a simplified overview, stripped of unnecessary detail. I will then proceed to a more detailed discussion of the fundamentals of Jewish cosmology from the perspective of Mesopotamian religion.

#### **1.1 The Main Features of the Jewish Cosmological System**

The first thing to say about Jewish cosmology is that it is not interested in the physical properties of the cosmos *per se* but only in relation to the fate of man, and hence is decidedly anthropocentric in its outlook. It views the universe, created by God, dualistically as consisting of two opposite elements, heaven and earth. Heaven, the spiritual world, is the diametrical opposite of earth, the material world: it is a world of light, perfection, goodness, wisdom and eternal life, whereas the earth is a world of darkness, imperfection, wickedness, ignorance and

death. Heaven is inhabited by spiritual beings created by God. The earth with its lowest part, the underworld, is the abode of man and death. The salt-water oceans surrounding the earth are separated by a fixed-star firmament from the waters of life above, conceived as an infinite ocean of light surrounding and engulfing the physical universe.

Man, created of spirit and matter in the image of God, originally lived sinlessly in a state of innocent ignorance. However, tempted by a woman, he committed the mortal sin of transgressing a limit imposed by God, thereby losing his perfection, and was banished from the heavenly garden to the earth, where he lost his immortality and was gradually deprived to his present condition.

His situation is not hopeless, however. One perfect man, Enoch, was taken to heaven after he had all his life walked with God. Moreover, when God, frustrated with the sinfulness of mankind, decided to wipe it out by a devastating flood, He spared a righteous man, Noah, the only blameless man of his time, with whom He was pleased. Thus virtuous life according to the will of God is the key to man's salvation. The fate of Enoch teaches that perfectly righteous and pious men will not die but will live forever with God.

God's will is manifested to humans in a myriad ways, for heaven and earth are interconnected, although separate. God speaks to man directly through His Holy Spirit manifested in prophets, and the wise can understand and interpret the dreams, visions and portents sent by Him. Man's behavior is monitored from the heavens, and the deeds of the just and the wicked are recorded in the Book of Life. The prayers of the pious reach God's throne, and the spirits of prophets and morally and ethically perfect men can ascend to heaven and learn God's plans and divine secrets. At a moment known only to God, the present world order comes to an end, the books are opened, the living and the dead are called to the Last Judgment and sentenced according to their deeds, the just to eternal life and the wicked to eternal damnation.

God has revealed Himself to Moses and the patriarchs, and has chosen Israel out of all nations for His presence in the world. His temple rises on the Holy Mountain of Zion, the earthly counterpart of His celestial abode in the heights of the heavens. The people of Israel, the community of the just surrounded by a gentile world, is punished for its transgressions, but never forsaken by God. At the end of days, a god-sent Messiah-King will break the power of Satan and establish God's eternal realm of peace upon the earth.

Considered as a whole, this is a view of the world in which physical reality is perceived and judged almost exclusively in terms of spiritual values, so that physical reality becomes largely irrelevant in comparison with the metaphysical cosmos, perceived as the ultimate reality and the only true existence. It is a shamanistic conception of the cosmos, with the mount of Zion situated in the

*axis mundi* and mystically coalescing with the “mountain of God” in the zenith, which could be ascended in spirit. As such, it is not just a philosophical construct explaining the origin, structure and end of the universe, but also and above all the basis of the Jewish ethics and the Jewish doctrine of salvation. This aspect of Jewish cosmology is firmly anchored in the Bible and remains unchanged until the present day.

Such a view of the cosmos is, however, not unique to Judaism. Any specialist in Ancient Near Eastern civilizations will easily find numerous parallels to it in sources of his or her specialty. In my own field of expertise, the Assyrian civilization of the first millennium BCE, the available parallels are so numerous and consistent that it can be claimed that the Assyrian cosmological system was essentially identical with the contemporary Jewish one. And I would go even farther than that: not only were these two cosmological systems essentially the same in their structure, but they were also teleologically analogous: *The Assyrian perception of the cosmos was likewise primarily morally and ethically oriented, and aimed at the salvation of man through spiritual perfection.*

This is not to say that there were no differences. On the contrary, Mesopotamian sources are replete with details specific to that particular culture and not found in Jewish Scripture, so that it is difficult for a non-specialist in Mesopotamian religion and culture to recognize their underlying meaning and their points of contact with the Scriptures. This is natural since the relevant sources are products of a different (albeit related) culture with a different historical, religious and literary frame of reference. In order to recognize the essence of the Mesopotamian cosmological system, we must penetrate behind the screen constituted by these culture and context specific layers, which in the final analysis are secondary for the understanding of the underlying thought.

Let me now look at the building blocks of Jewish cosmology more closely in the light of Mesopotamian parallels. I have to review quite a few issues, some of which are quite complicated, but this review is necessary before I can proceed to my concluding remarks.

## 1.2 Mesopotamian Parallels

### 1.2.1 Creation of the World

I begin with the Mesopotamian creation myth, *Enūma eliš*,<sup>1</sup> which is much longer than the condensed account in Genesis, but essentially parallel in its main lines. The myth ascribes the creation of heaven and earth to Marduk, king of the gods,

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent edition is (Talon 2005).

who, like the biblical God, also creates the sun and the moon and the stars, separates the cosmic waters from each other, and rests after his work (Tablet VI 70–75). Before creation, he slays the cosmic dragon and its retinue, an event that has been omitted from Genesis but is repeatedly referred to elsewhere in the Bible and other ancient Near Eastern cosmologies.

### 1.2.2 Creation of Man

In the myth, Marduk also commissions the creation of man, assigning the task to Ea, the god of wisdom. The creation of man is also related or alluded to in many other Mesopotamian myths, and in each case the account is similar, although a little different. In *Atrahasis*, man (*lullû*) is designed by Ea but actually created by the mother goddess Belet-ili. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the term *lullû* applies to Enkidu, the wild man created as a counterweight to Gilgamesh. Here the creation is commissioned by the divine council headed by Anu, the god of heaven, and executed by the mother goddess, Aruru; only the name of Enkidu, which means “Ea created,” reveals that the god of wisdom here too designed the man.<sup>2</sup> The multiplicity of gods participating in the creation process reflects the fact that in first-millennium Mesopotamian religion, all manifest gods were understood as powers of a single transcendental deity, who unified all of them in his being and is hence often referred to as *Ilāni*, “the gods,” but was himself not directly involved in the affairs of the cosmos. The name *Ilāni* is formally plural but construed as a singular noun, and is thus an exact equivalent of the name of God (*Elōhîm*) in the biblical story of creation.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of the Mesopotamian parallels, we can understand why God in this context enigmatically refers to Himself in the plural, saying, “Let us make man in our image and likeness,” [Gen. 1: 26] and later, “The man has become like *one of us*, knowing good and evil [Gen. 3: 22].”

While the motif of breathing the breath of life into man’s nostrils [Gen 2: 7] at first sight seems to be lacking in Mesopotamia, this central feature of the Biblical creation story is in fact encoded in all Mesopotamian creation myths. The mother goddess, who was an aspect of Ištar, the goddess of love, and the source of life of all living beings, was associated with the dove, the Jewish and Christian symbol of the divine spirit, and definitely plays the role of the spirit of god in Mesopotamian prophecy.<sup>4</sup> As we shall see, she also played the role of the human soul in the myth of the *Descent of Ištar to the Netherworld* and the associated sacred marriage ritual.

<sup>2</sup>See (Parpola 1998, 318).

<sup>3</sup>See (Parpola 1993b, 187 n. 97; Parpola 2000, 162–172).

<sup>4</sup>See, in detail, (Parpola 1997, xxvi–xxix).

### 1.2.3 The Fall of Man

The Sumerian myth *Inanna and Šukalletuda* (ETCSL 1.3.3<sup>5</sup>) explains why the fall of man is in the Bible placed in a garden, which in the ancient Near East generally was a place for lovemaking and amorous encounters. Šukalletuda, son of the god Igisigisig,<sup>6</sup> is a man charged with watering a garden plot. One day, the storm-wind blows dust into his eyes. Rubbing them, he sees gods in the horizon, and realizes he is looking at “perfect divine powers” and “the fate of the gods” (lines 101–106). He then finds the goddess Inanna asleep at the foot of a shady poplar tree,<sup>7</sup> removes the belt of divine powers on her lap, and has intercourse with her and kisses her. For this sacrilegious act, he is, like Adam, driven from the garden (lines 231–238) and punished with death (lines 295–297). We see that “eating the fruit of the tree” in the biblical account indeed was an allegory for sexual intercourse, as already noted by rabbinical commentators. In other Mesopotamian contexts, the garden is, as in the Song of Songs, associated with heavenly weddings and bliss. As in Jewish mysticism, it is also found as a metaphor for the tablet house as a place of heavenly bliss derived from the exegesis of religious literature (Lapinkivi 2004, 217–218 and 227).

Apart from *Inanna and Šukalletuda*, the motif of the Fall is also encountered in other Mesopotamian myths. In the *Gilgamesh Epic*, Enkidu, the primitive man created by the gods, initially lives a life of blissful innocence with animals of the steppe. He is, however, seduced by a harlot, and after the intercourse suddenly becomes, like Adam, conscious of his animal state.<sup>8</sup> The woman then dresses him up and leads him away from the steppe “like a god.”<sup>9</sup>

In the *Etana myth*, the fallen soul is an eagle nesting at the top of a tree, who swears an oath of eternal brotherhood to a snake nesting at the root of the tree. However, coveting the young of the snake, he breaks his oath and eats the offspring of his brother. For this sacrilegious deed, he is punished and cast wingless into a deep pit. Through repentance and grace of god, he finally regains his wings and can ascend to heaven (Parpola 1993b, 195–199). In the *Descent of Ištar*, the goddess herself plays the role of the fallen soul. Coveting the rule over the

<sup>5</sup>See <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.1.3.3#>. See the discussion in (Lapinkivi 2004, 220–226).

<sup>6</sup>Defined as the “chief gardener of the god of heaven” in the god list An-Anum (Litke 1998, 30 i 92).

<sup>7</sup>Compare the rabbinical tradition preserved in 3 Enoch 5 (Gruenwald 1980, 50), “From the day when the Holiness expelled the first Adam from the Garden of Eden, Shekhinah was dwelling upon a Keruv under the Tree of Life... And the first man (was) sitting outside the gate of the Garden to behold the radiant appearance of the Shekhinah.”

<sup>8</sup>Gilg. I 196–202 (George 2003, I 551). Note George’s comments on line 199 (George 2003, II 798), establishing a definite link between Adam’s and Enkidu’s fall as a result of illicit sexual intercourse.

<sup>9</sup>It is worth pointing out that the word “steppe” is in this context consistently written with the Sumerogram eden.

netherworld, she leaves her heavenly home, descends through the seven gates of the netherworld, loses her garments and powers, falls sick and dies, but is revived through the grace of her divine father, the god of wisdom, and can start her ascent to heaven, in the course of which she regains her lost robes and powers. This myth lives on in the myth of the fall of Sophia in Gnosticism and in the figure of the “lower Shekhinah” in Jewish mysticism.<sup>10</sup>

Both woman and snake are thus well attested in Mesopotamia in roles paralleling those of Eve and the serpent in Genesis. They symbolize forbidden things and divinely imposed taboos. Revealingly, the Akkadian word for “whore,” *harimtu*, literally means “forbidden woman.”<sup>11</sup>

#### 1.2.4 The Flood

We now leave the subject of creation and move on to the Flood story, which has long since been recognized as a loan from Mesopotamia. The same is true of the list of antediluvian patriarchs in Genesis 5, which has an obvious parallel and antecedent in the Sumerian king list (Kvanvig 1984, 161–178). The incredibly long lifetimes of the antediluvian patriarchs served to illustrate the quasi-divine longevity of the human race before its deprecation, which caused the Flood. This point is made even clearer by the lifetimes of the Mesopotamian kings, which lasted up to 43,200 years before the Flood, but were drastically shortened after it.

The Flood story is attested in Mesopotamia since Sumerian times and is included in two Akkadian myths, *Atrahasis* and *Gilgamesh*. Both closely parallel the biblical story. The Mesopotamian Flood hero, Ziusudra/Utnapishtim, is saved because of his wisdom and piety, while mankind is wiped away because of its “noise,” which is a metaphor for sinfulness and corruption.<sup>12</sup> As in the Bible, the gods repent the destruction of mankind, and the mother goddess bitterly weeps the fate of her creatures, vowing to never let it happen again.<sup>13</sup>

This image of the weeping goddess played an important role in Mesopotamian religion, and resurfaces in Jewish mysticism in the form of the weeping Shekhinah, the female aspect of God, who is often referred to as suffering for the sins of the world.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup>See (Parpola 1997, xxxi–xxxvi; Lapinkivi 2004, 166–194).

<sup>11</sup>Akkadian *harāmu*, “to seclude, separate,” is a cognate of Hebrew חרם “to seclude, put under ban, taboo.” Breaking a divine taboo meant committing a mortal sin. That is why Gilgamesh, in contrast to Šukalletuda, chose to resist the temptation to marry the goddess Ištar, whose Sumerian epithet *nu-gig* means “the tabooed one” (Zgoll 1997) and whose holiness and virginity are constantly stressed in Mesopotamian sources.

<sup>12</sup>See (Parpola 1997, 16 *ad* ii 19).

<sup>13</sup>Gilg. XI 117–124 (George 2003, 164–171; II 711 and 715).

<sup>14</sup>See (Parpola 1997, xxviii with n. 88, and xxxiv–xxv with nn. 141–44).



In the creation myth *Enūma eliš*, Ištar appears as the bow by which Marduk slays the raging sea-dragon, Tiamat. Later Anu, the god of heaven, kisses the bow, calls it daughter, and sets it as rainbow in the sky, just as God in Genesis sets His bow in the cloud after the flood. Thus Ištar, the goddess of love, is the “deluge-bow” by which the supreme god destroys the wicked but saves the just. The rainbow’s brilliant spectrum of colours symbolized the divine powers converging in the god of heaven and his daughter, the goddess of love, while its arc formed a bridge between heaven and earth.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.2.5 The Ascent to Heaven

The stairway reaching from the earth to the heavens, on which Jacob in his dream saw angels go up and down, has a striking parallel in the myth of *Nergal and Ereshkigal* (Hutter 1985), where divine messengers commute between heaven and earth by “the long staircase of heaven.”<sup>16</sup> The idea of a stairway leading to heaven derives from the Mesopotamian temple tower, whose seven stages painted in different colors associated it with the seven-staged descent and ascent of Ištar. Each of the seven stages of the ziggurat corresponded to a different heavenly palace, through whose gate the descending and ascending soul-goddess had to pass (Parpola 2000, 199). Mystical ascent through these heavens and palaces to the throne of god forms the subject of many Mesopotamian myths, for example, *Etana* and *Adapa*,<sup>17</sup> and is a commonplace in the Jewish mystical literature.

### 1.2.6 The Heavenly Council

As described in Psalm 82 and elsewhere, the biblical God sits on His throne in heaven and gives judgment in the midst of the gods, exalted far above all gods in the divine council. This image has an exact counterpart in the Mesopotamian divine council, which directed the cosmos and judged the acts of humanity like a court of law.<sup>18</sup> Its members, the great gods, correspond to the seven archangels of apocalyptic Judaism and the Sefirotic powers of Kabbalah. Each of them ruled over a planet and represented a specific aspect of the transcendental God.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup>See (Parpola 1997, xci n. 114; Parpola 2000, 200).

<sup>16</sup>Col. i 16, 53; iv 26; v 13, 42; cf. (Hutter 1985, 159).

<sup>17</sup>See (Parpola 1993a, xix).

<sup>18</sup>See (Starr 1983, 56–59).

<sup>19</sup>See (Parpola 1995, 171 and 180–181).

### 1.2.7 The Messiah and the Last Judgment

The Messianic king of the apocalypses corresponds to Ninurta/Nabû, the Mesopotamian cosmic saviour and the celestial paragon of the human king (Annus 2002, 187–192). Several myths describe his battles against monsters symbolizing the forces of chaos, darkness, disease, sin and death, his triumphal return to heaven in his chariot of war, and his elevation to almightiness beside his father, the divine king (Parpola 2001). Seated on the throne of heaven, he directs the universe and holds “the tablet of destinies,” also called “the tablet of sins” (Finkel 1983) and “the book of life” (*lē’u ša balāḫi*; Paul 1973, 351). He is magnified to cosmic dimensions; stars, constellations and other gods become his limbs (Annus 2002, 59–161 and 205–206). He returns to the world whenever the divine world order is under threat, and establishes a new world in an eschatological judgment scene, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked for their deeds.

The Ninurta mythology stresses his heaven-like perfection, which was the precondition of his elevation, but at the same time also his identity with the human king. On the one hand, he is one of “the gods, his brothers,” and is admitted to the assembly of gods and given access to divine secrets; on the other hand, he receives eternal life for his fate, which makes sense only if he is human (Parpola 2001, 186). As defender and upholder of the divine order in heaven and on earth, he personifies the cosmic tree uniting heaven and earth, and is equated with it in numerous contexts (Annus 2002, 156–159).

### 1.2.8 The Tree of Life

As Ninurta in human form, Mesopotamian kings were since earliest times likewise equated with the cosmic tree. In the Sumerian myth *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, the messenger of the Sumerian king says of his lord: “My king is a huge mes tree, the son of Enlil; this tree has grown high, uniting heaven and earth; its crown reaches heaven, its trunk is set upon the earth.”<sup>20</sup> And a hymn to Šulgi tells the king: “You are as strong as a poplar tree planted by the side of a watercourse. You are a sweet sight, like a fertile *mes* tree laden with colourful fruit. You are cherished by Ninegala, like a date palm of holy Dilmun. You have a pleasant shade, like a sappy cedar growing amidst the cypresses.”<sup>21</sup>

The king’s equation with the tree is also implicit in the name of Gilgamesh, which in its first-millennium orthography can be interpreted to mean “he equalled the tree of balance” (Parpola 1998, 323–325). The original Sumerian name, Bilga-mes, means “the shoot of the *mes* tree,” and thus likewise connects this

<sup>20</sup>Lines 519–523 (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr1823.htm>).

<sup>21</sup>Šulgi D 32–35 (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.2.4.2.04#>).

“perfect king” with the cosmic tree. However, *mes* also meant “man” in Sumerian, and the name could thus also be understood as “the scion of man.”<sup>22</sup> “Palm tree, tree planted near streams of water, righteous shoot,” and “the son of man” are, of course, all well-known designations of the Davidic Messiah and the perfect man in the New Testament.

A man equated with a tree is also found in Jewish mysticism. He is Adam Qadmon, the heavenly Adam, whose spiritual structure, represented in the form of a tree diagram, was believed to contain the key to man’s original perfection. This esoteric diagram is explicitly linked with the biblical Tree of Life, of which it is said in Genesis 3: “And the *Lord* God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; what if he now reaches out his hand and takes fruit of the tree of life, eats it and lives for ever?”

I have argued for years that the Kabbalistic tree is derived from the Mesopotamian cosmic tree understood as representing the spiritual structure of the Mesopotamian ideal king (Parpola 1993a). The perfection of the king resides in the divine powers, which he shares with the supreme god and which are represented in Mesopotamian iconography as fruits distributed on the trunk and branches of the tree. These divine powers correspond to the Sefirot of the Kabbalistic tree, and their distribution on the tree reflects the order in which the goddess Ištar, the archetypal soul, lost her powers and virtues during her descent from heaven.<sup>23</sup> Both the king and the goddess are explicitly equated with the palm tree, which is the most frequent rendition of the cosmic tree in Assyrian iconography.

Apart from its significance to the royal ideology, the tree played an important role in the cult of Ištar as a *mandala* outlining the path of the soul to spiritual salvation and eternal life.<sup>24</sup> In line with the *Descent of Ištar*, the devotees of the goddess were envisaged as virgins preparing themselves for heavenly weddings with the celestial redeemer Tammuz, equated with the king.<sup>25</sup> A large corpus of Mesopotamian love lyrics closely paralleling the biblical Song of Songs confirms that mystical union with God was the main goal of the cult (Nissinen 2001; Lapinkivi 2004). In actual practice, it was extremely ascetic in character and involved mortification of flesh, and study and contemplation of sacred texts.<sup>26</sup> Ecstatic prophets functioned as mouthpieces of the goddess, as in ancient Israel.

<sup>22</sup>In Akkadian, “shoot” (*pir’u*) could also mean “son, descendant offspring.” See also (Annus 2001).

<sup>23</sup>See (Parpola 2000, 197–198).

<sup>24</sup>Cf. (Parpola 1997, xxxiv and xcv n. 134).

<sup>25</sup>See (Lapinkivi 2004, 155–206).

<sup>26</sup>See (Parpola 1997, xlv–xlvi).

### 1.3 Conclusions

Time forbids continuing this survey, which unfortunately ended up being much more shallow and less comprehensive than I had originally planned. I hope, however, that even the few cases discussed have made clear the point I am trying to make: despite all the superficial differences, Mesopotamian cosmology is very much in line with the Jewish one. When one eliminates the culture-specific layer resulting from the different frames of reference, one can say that essentially we are dealing with the same cosmology and the same associated imagery. And this applies not only to the system as a whole but to its details as well. If we were dealing with isolated detail parallels or general similarities, it could be argued that the parallels are to be dismissed as fortuitous. But this is not the case. The observed similarities are too numerous, detailed and complex to be due to mere chance; they form an interlocking system, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle or words of a crossword puzzle.

I refer here in particular to such complex interlocking parallels as the deluge story combined with the rainbow motif and the fall of man combined with the tree of life. Flood stories are known from many other cultures, but none of them follows the Mesopotamian account as closely as the biblical one, and none of them shares the complex symbolism of the rainbow common to the Mesopotamian and Jewish traditions. Similarly, while the cosmic tree is a cosmological symbol attested almost everywhere, the Jewish tree with its multi-layered symbolism is clearly a copy of the Mesopotamian one.

It is important to underline that the fundamentally moral and ethical orientation of Jewish cosmology is also characteristic of Mesopotamia. This is not only evident from the structural similarity of the two systems but also from the overwhelmingly moral and ethical undertone of Mesopotamian mythology and scholarly, religious and philosophical literature, as well as from the religious aspect of Mesopotamian kingship. It is a mistake to read Mesopotamian myths superficially, ignoring their spiritual layers of meaning, or to think that the Mesopotamians were only concerned about material values and fertility and did not care about life after death.

Against this background, I find it hard to subscribe to often repeated view—for example in the recent seventh edition of the *New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*—that “Judaism was the first religion to make [the creation of the world by God] a central principle of its faith and a basis for its system of ethics” (Wigoder 1992, 241 s.v. *cosmogony and cosmology*). It seems to me that given the great similarity of the Mesopotamian and Jewish cosmological thought and the great antiquity of the former, such a claim is unsubstantiated and should be withdrawn.

The closeness of Jewish and Mesopotamian cosmologies is, of course, in no way surprising, considering the geographical proximity and manifold contacts of the two cultures. The entire Levant had since the third millennium BCE been under Mesopotamian cultural influence; Israel and Judah were Assyrian provinces or dependencies for more than a hundred years, with their elites in constant contact with Assyria; large parts of the Hebrew Bible were written or edited in the Babylonian exile; most of Rabbinic and Gaonic literature was written in Babylonia; and the roots of the Kabbalistic doctrines are also to be sought in Babylonia. The Jews returning from the exile under Ezra and Nehemia had been in Babylonia for 250 years and had meanwhile been thoroughly Mesopotamianized. This does not mean that they had given up their Jewish identity or culture, but simply that they had received and internalized many cultural impulses from Mesopotamia. Notice that Josephus believed the Jews to be descendants of the Chaldeans and that Palestinian Jews of the rabbinical period called the eastern Jews “Babylonians.”

While many parts of Jewish cosmology thus can be certainly traced back to Mesopotamia, it would be totally wrong to say that it as a whole was just a loan from Mesopotamia. Cultures with their cosmologies, religions and philosophies are like languages, which constantly update themselves in line with scientific and technological advances, but nevertheless retain their independence and distinctive features. They borrow new words without inhibitions but always adapt them to their own phonological and morphological systems, so that they are no longer recognized as loanwords but felt as parts of the native vocabulary; while old words keep falling out of use or acquire new, updated meanings and senses. Cultures and ideologies behave in the same way. They respond to the changing world by constantly assimilating new ideas, often without noticing it, but always adapting them to the existing overall system. A case in point is the vision of Ezekiel by the Kebar river, which despite its thoroughly Mesopotamian imagery and cosmology remains distinctly Jewish. It is precisely this ability to adapt to cultural change that has helped Jewish cosmology to survive virtually unchanged to the present day, despite the by now radically altered scientific view of the universe. Moreover, cultural change is always a two-way or multilateral process. Throughout their history, the ancient Jews received impulses from many cultures, not only from Mesopotamia, and so did the ancient Mesopotamians. Thus the parallelism of the Mesopotamian and Jewish cosmologies belongs rather under the heading of “cultural exchange” than “cultural borrowing.”

It is fascinating and instructive to follow the history of Jewish cosmology from this perspective. The system as a whole remains fundamentally unchanged, but things are emphasized differently in different situations and circumstances. Thus apocalypticism and messianism, which are built-in components of both

Mesopotamian and Jewish cosmology, become really dominant in Judaism only after the abolishment of the Davidic monarchy. The phenomenon is comparable to the rebirth of the cult of Jahwe in an emphatically monotheistic, aniconic form in post-exilic Judaism in response to the destruction of the First Temple and impulses received from Mesopotamia, which are reflected in the post-exilic name of God, Elohim. My intention in this paper has simply been to draw attention to the fundamental parallelism of the Jewish and Mesopotamian intellectual traditions, which is easily obscured by the numerous surface differences resulting from the different frames of reference of these two traditions. Having myself drawn considerable profit from a study on Jewish mysticism in my own work, I find that these two parallel traditions complement and elucidate each other, and cannot be fully understood in isolation.

### Acknowledgements

An earlier version of this paper was presented at Johns Hopkins University as the 2005 Potts Memorial Lecture, aiming to compare scientific and traditional Jewish views of cosmology. Since many of the matters touched upon here are common knowledge, footnotes have been kept to a minimum and are mainly intended to guide non-Assyriologists to specialized Assyriological studies, where details can be found.

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Global Monotheism: The Contribution of the Israelite Prophets**

*Baruch A. Levine*

In his recent book, *The Post-American World* (2008), Fareed Zakaria explains that after the end of the Cold War there was a brief “American interlude,” when the United States enjoyed a uni-polar status of unrivaled dominance, but that this phase has already come to a close. For about a half century, US-Soviet *détente* had produced a bi-polar, international power structure, whereas the present growth of markets and finance, of production and communications, has come to be known as “globalization,” a network that embraces new power-centers. Globalization not only sets the agenda of current political and economic discourse, but it also permeates virtually all areas of culture and expands the human horizon of identification. In the effort to understand what is transpiring before our very eyes, Zakaria cites a statement by the historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, written in the years just prior to World War II:

Growth takes place whenever a challenge evokes a successful response that, in turn, evokes a further and different challenge. We have not found any intrinsic reason why this process should not repeat itself indefinitely, although a majority of civilizations have failed, as a matter of fact.<sup>1</sup>

Applied to the present global situation, Toynbee’s dictum, filtered through Zakaria’s discussion, means that, in principle, what we are witnessing has happened in the past, and will predictably recur in the future. It represents an unending process of growth, even with downturns such as we are now experiencing (winter-to-spring, 2009). As an historian, Toynbee displayed a deep interest in exploring the causes for the rise and failure of civilizations in the past, depending on whether or not they had responded effectively to new challenges. In this quest, he placed great importance on the power of ideas, utilizing insights afforded by the myths and narratives of diverse cultures. He was no stranger to

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<sup>1</sup> See (Zakaria 2008, Frontwork).

the narratives of the Hebrew Bible, or to the chronicled imperial history of the ancient Near East, as known in his day. It is my purpose here to apply Toynbee's "challenge–response" hypothesis to the emergence of global (often called "universal") monotheism in ancient Israel. The present study is the latest in a series of inquiries into the history of Israelite religion.<sup>2</sup>

Although some repetition will be necessary for purposes of review, I hope to say more on this occasion about the earlier phases of Israelite religion, namely, the transitions from what I would call "selective polytheism" to henotheism (late ninth to early eighth centuries BCE), and subsequently, from henotheism to global monotheism (late eighth to early seventh centuries BCE). This background of religious change is essential for an understanding of the ultimate triumph of monotheism. By "global monotheism" I refer to the concept, expounded in parts of the Hebrew Bible, that there is only one God, Yahweh, God of Israel, who rules over all nations. It follows that claims to divine power pressed by the exponents of other religions are to be regarded as false. It will be argued here that in expanding the Israelite God-idea in this way, biblical prophets of the mid-to-late eighth century BCE, were responding with urgency to the challenge of changing power alignments in the larger Near East. They were proclaiming a God-idea broad enough to stand up to the singular power and prestige of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and its successors.

In contemporary Assyria, during the reign of Sennacherib, we witness the exaltation of Aššur at the expense of Marduk, the venerable god of Babylon, in sync with that king's aggressive policy toward Babylonia. This development, usually referred to as a "reform," was paralleled in Israel by the universal configuration of Yahweh, expounded by First Isaiah of Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, Sennacherib's contemporary. The new Israelite doctrine proclaimed that Yahweh ruled over empires, and directed their fortunes. It is this conviction that ultimately enabled the Israelite-Jewish people to survive both the Assyrians and the Babylonians. An important corollary of the prophetic doctrine is a policy of submission to imperial rulers who, in the prophetic view, had been commissioned by the God of Israel, variously to punish, or to protect and restore Israel as part of his plan for all the earth.

The term "monotheism," as just defined, is to be differentiated from "henotheism," a belief system that legitimates the worship of only a single God, the God of the group, but which acknowledges the existence and power of other gods, most notably the gods of other nations. Some scholars prefer the term "monolatry" because it incorporates the Greek verb *latrueō* "to serve the gods, to

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<sup>2</sup>See the listing in Reference Bibliography, under (Levine 2003a; 2003b; 2005; 2007; 2009). An abridgment of the Arnold Toynbee's history, in 2 volumes, was utilized (Toynbee 1951; 1957).

worship,” thereby concretizing the practical application of the doctrine.<sup>3</sup> I will employ the term “henotheism” for the sake of symmetry, while remaining aware of the particular nuances and the different histories of the two terms in modern scholarship. Be it understood that I am seeking to locate the inception of these religious movements, to identify the earliest promulgation of their respective ideologies, conceding all the while that it takes generations and more, for new belief-systems to unseat earlier ones, and to be accepted and institutionalized.

## 2.1 On Methodology

### 2.1.1 The Political Approach

In surveying the many studies on the origins of Israelite monotheism it became clear to me that new methods were needed to address the political aspects of this complex problem. A political approach to the history of religious ideas proceeds on the theory that developing conceptions of the divine cannot be explained solely as the consequence of the innate human urge to seek after truth, and to comprehend the universe and the mysteries of life. Whereas an awareness of the unity of the cosmos was early in coming, attribution of a global, terrestrial domain to chief deities, ruling over all nations and lands, was fairly late in coming. To sense the unity of the cosmos one had only to look up at the heavens. In contrast, the terrestrial horizon only expands in rhythm with social horizons of identification, as the units of social and political organization grow progressively larger, from tribes and city-states, to nations and kingdoms, all the way to world empires. It was thus that the global horizon was, appropriately, a feature of state religion in the imperial, Neo-Assyrian period, when a uni-polar, international power alignment actually existed.

In ancient Israel, evolving biblical conceptions of Yahweh show him to be a national deity with a tribal background, who became a universal deity. The Israelite national agenda was realized in the establishment of two monarchies after the Israelites gained hegemony over large parts of Canaan. This agenda later morphed into a supra-political vision, but it was not a vision of an Israelite empire, nor did it conceive of Yahweh as an imperial deity, as was true of the god Aššur in Assyria. Yahweh is rather configured as a transcendent divinity, whose power nullified the presumed power of other gods, in effect denying their existence as such, while predicting the downfall of empires that ruled in their name. The people of Israel, with their national capital in Zion, would enjoy a

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<sup>3</sup>See the entry “Henotheism,” by Michiko (Yusa 1987), and bibliography cited, on the usage of this term in modern scholarship. Also note the periodization adopted by (Knauf 2003), who refers to “*residueller Polytheismus*,” and “*programmatischer Henotheismus*.”

special place in the hoped-for world order, to be sure, but not as a result of military dominance, or territorial conquests. “For instruction shall go forth from Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2: 3).

In Israel, the credibility of the nationalist God-idea had run its course in the Neo-Assyrian period, because in terms of military might, withstanding the Assyrian onslaught was impossible. Yahweh as national God had come through on his promise by enabling the Israelites to secure victory over Philistines, Midianites, even Arameans, but not over the Assyrians! Viewed in this manner, monotheism, as a new religious idea, represented a response to the challenge of Assyrian power, and it remains the task of the historian to evaluate the effectiveness of that response.

In my previous studies, I favored this political approach to the study of monotheism over thematic interpretations, such as had been espoused by Simo Parpola in his Introduction to the volume on Assyrian prophecies from the reign of Esarhaddon, Sennacherib’s successor (Parpola 1997, xii–cviii). I now realize, more clearly than before, that the two approaches, the political and the thematic, are necessary complements of each other, and that they do not conflict with each other. As I understand Parpola, he seeks to reveal the inner process by which Aššur came to be conceived as *gabbi ilāni* “the totality of gods,” the ultimate source of power. The other deities were “conceived of as powers, aspects, qualities, or attributes of Aššur.” Aššur’s unity “mirrored the structure of the Assyrian empire—a heterogeneous multi-national power directed by a superhuman, autocratic king, who was conceived of as the representative of God on earth” (Parpola 1997, xxi). As Parpola notes with respect to the role of the powerful goddess Ištar: “the identities of Aššur and Ištar blend in an unexpected and absolutely baffling way” (Parpola 1997, xix). In effect, Parpola is describing the dynamic of the inner process, with its theological, mythological and cosmic implications, as he points to the political consequences of these processes.

The methodology of Mark S. Smith in investigating the background of Israelite monotheism, applied in his work *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism* (2001), parallels Parpola’s thematic approach to religion in the Neo-Assyrian Empire in important ways. Smith describes models of West-Semitic conceptualization, especially those at Ugarit, which determined the rank, station and functions of deities of the pantheons. In so doing, he has, indeed, documented his own sub-title: “Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts.” Like Parpola’s characterization of the god Aššur, Smith analyzes the inner process by which attributes of many gods and goddesses were absorbed and synthesized in the divine nature of Yahweh. Smith’s tracing of this process complements the political approach to religious development being pursued here. In his earlier work, entitled *The Early History of God* (1990), Smith had pursued an essentially his-

torical methodology, with some attention to phenomenology. His major chapters explore the interaction of Yahweh with other gods known in Canaan, yielding separate treatments of El, Baal, and Asherah.

It has been my goal to connect developments in religious thought directly to proximate events and changing challenges in the political sphere. The Hebrew Bible lacks the kinds of original, datable documents available from Mesopotamia and from the West-Semitic sphere, especially from the Middle Euphrates and coastal Syria, but it is uniquely rich in response literature. Israelite authors and compilers—priests, prophets, royal chroniclers, and other narrators—endeavored to make sense of Israelite political fortunes in conflicts with warring nations in Canaan and the Transjordanian interior, and later—in confronting the Assyrian threat. They sought to canonize certain versions of past history and current experience in writings to be transmitted to future generations.

### 2.1.2 The Problem of Evidence

Recourse to the Hebrew Bible as primary evidence raises serious methodological issues, especially in the current scholarly climate, where the historicity of the biblical record on pre-exilic Israel is being discounted in a virtually nihilistic manner. We are being led to question whether it is valid to adduce biblical sources as evidence in reconstructing the history of ideas, not to speak of historical events. I have been questioned on this matter repeatedly, making it necessary to respond in greater detail. I concede that we have no way of knowing for certain when, for example, Isaiah (10: 5–19, 11: 1–9, or 14: 24–27), which I regard as central statements on Israelite monotheism, were composed, or their contents known in any form. Nor can we ascertain for whom they speak. I am aware that Isaiah 1–39 contain substantial interpolations that are properly dated to the exilic and post-exilic periods on the basis of language and content. Critical biblical scholarship, represented early on by George Buchanan Grau (1912), and more recently by Anton Schoors (1997), has been able to differentiate credibly between these later passages and those that ring true for the period of reference.

Precisely because I advocate a political approach to the emergence of Israelite monotheism it might be helpful to inquire how a politically oriented historian would evaluate the reliability of prophetic texts taken from the Hebrew Bible. We are most fortunate in having Mario Liverani's recent work, *Israel's History and the History of Israel*, which includes a chapter entitled: "The Impact of the Assyrian Empire (740–640)" (Liverani 2005, 143–164). Based on Assyrian (also Egyptian) and also biblical sources, both narrative and prophetic, Liverani is able to profile the events of the period in question, and in so doing, to cite passages from the major prophets of the period, even highlighting First Isaiah. Liverani

locates the so-called eighth century prophets where the Hebrew Bible, itself, positions them. What is more, Liverani treats certain religious issues historically, speaking of “debate” on the question of the *bamot*, the local cult-installations. He examines the motif of divine abandonment, which was expounded by both Assyrian and Israelite authors, and refers to the famous speeches of the Assyrian Tartan (2 Kings 18), best understood as Judean reflexes of Assyrian propaganda. He makes one reference to monotheism in his discussion of Josiah’s reforms, near the close of the seventh century BCE, thereby reflecting the prevalent current view that universal monotheism is, at the earliest, a response to the Babylonian threat, as confronted by Jeremiah. At one point he mentions Isaiah’s famous declaration: “Ah, Assyria, rod of my wrath!” (Isaiah 5:10), but offers no further comment. Liverani does not take up the ideological response to Assyrian imperialism that I am proposing here, but his treatment of the period of 740–640 BCE factors-in biblical sources in reconstructing what he calls the “normal” history of that critical time.

So much for what is arguably the best-documented period in ancient Near Eastern history. It is another matter to identify in time and circumstance the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the authors and redactors of biblical texts that refer to earlier periods of Israelite history. These include the “heroic” literature of Judges and 1 Samuel, and the early strata of Pentateuchal sources, usually known as the Jahwist (J) and the Elohist (E), which preserve versions of the Patriarchal Narratives. Liverani classifies the tradition of an early period of governing “Judges” as an invention of the Achemenid period, and similarly, regards the saga of the Patriarchs, as imagined (Liverani 2005, 250–307). Because I will attach importance to both of these literary frameworks in the discussion to follow, it would be useful to address the issue of their realism at this point.

There is, first of all, a critical difference between the two biblical collections. The notion that the Israelites of Iron Age I were descendants of settlers who had inhabited Canaan at an earlier period, but had later departed, is transparently imagined. The critical task is to attempt to locate in time when the relevant Pentateuchal sources were composed; to identify for whom they speak and to decode their message. Classifying a literary tradition as “invented” does not mean that it lacks any historical context at all; it merely means that its literary *mise en scène*, and the claims made for it, are fictive. In fact, the depiction of Israelite religion in the imagined Patriarchal age, by J and E, as redacted by priestly authors, may tell us something of importance about the first phase of Israelite religion.

In contrast, the period of reference of core-Judges, although admittedly reaching back quite far, still falls within the historical limits of Israelite societal formation in Canaan. In his chapter entitled: “The Formative Process (1050–930)” Liverani (2005, 77–103) speaks of Gideon and Abimelekh as real

leaders, and regards the recorded wars with other peoples of Canaan and with neighboring peoples as historical. As will become apparent, I disagree with Liverani's judgment that the heroic tradition of Judges lacks an historical basis. In this instance, Liverani may have understated the realism of the warrior class, the *gibbôrîm*, while overestimating the redacted structure of the Book of Judges, which is largely the "invention," if you will, of the Deuteronomist (Levine 2009).

## 2.2 The Three Phases of Israelite Religion

The canonical arrangement of biblical books and their contents is hardly chronological in its particulars, so that when one proposes that first Isaiah was the first Israelite spokesman to proclaim global monotheism, this conclusion is based on critical methods for dating biblical texts. In the present case, it means that in no biblical text that can reliably be dated prior to the mid-to-late eighth century BCE, does one find similar expressions of global monotheism. The consequence of such literary sequencing is that when we study First Isaiah's pronouncements against the background of earlier, biblical conceptions of God, we can point to three, progressive phases in the development of Israelite religion, each a response in its time to a particular set of challenges.

### 2.2.1 Phase I: Selective Polytheism: The Challenge of Integration in Canaan

In attempting to define the phases of Israelite religion, it would be well to state my "take" on the nature of the Israelite presence in Canaan during the early Iron Age. I hold to the view that the Israelites were not native Canaanites, but rather West-Semites who originated outside of Canaan, probably in parts of Syria. They did not arrive in Canaan in a wave, or waves of invading armies, but in waves of immigration, part of the extended population shifts that occurred in the eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia after 1200 BCE. The battles that we read about in the Hebrew Bible, with Canaanites, Philistines, Midianites and others, ensued when the immigrant populations grew to the point that they threatened, or "crowded" the native population in the Canaanite city-states, as well as rival groups of settlers. This reconstruction would obtain in large part even if one held to the unlikely view that the Israelites were just another Canaanite group.

The relevance of positing the sequence: (a) settlement (b) war, is brought out by Biblical reports on the beginnings of Israelite life in Canaan. These narratives, infused with later, priestly input, depict the first settlers (= "the Patriarchs") as El worshipers, who were, at the same time, worshipers of Yahweh, the Israelite national God. This pattern is recorded without disapproval, as part of a portrait

of Israelite co-existence with Canaanites, and other more established immigrant groups, such as the so-called Hittites, before the wars began. The “Patriarchs” enacted treaties with Canaanites, and joined alliances with them, and did business with them over rights to property. Correspondingly, the biblical narratives depict selective polytheism as a feature of this socio-political and economic integration. It is ironic when we consider that these Israelites were guilty of just about everything the Deuteronomic School, aggressive in its attitude to the other peoples inhabiting Canaan, would later condemn!

In the late ninth to early eighth century BCE, to which period I would assign the early strata of the so-called Patriarchal Narratives, cults of some West Semitic deities were localized, but at the same time transnational, cutting across political and demographic boundaries. As a result, certain cults were shared by Israelites with Canaanites and neighboring peoples. Identifiably “foreign,” national gods and goddesses, such as Kemosh of the Moabites, Milkom of the Ammonites, and Ashtoreth of the Sidonians, were probably disqualified from the outset. Internally, there is an additional contrast to be drawn between biblical attitudes toward Baal worship and El worship on the part of early Israelites, as recorded. Biblical references to past Baal worship are invariably disapproving, which is significant. It is worth mentioning, however, that Baal names were referenced in biblical sources without disapproval until the generation of Saul’s son and grandson.<sup>4</sup>

To return to the same Patriarchal Narratives, we note that Abram feasted with Melchizedek, the Canaanite priest of El Elyon, and that he was allied with Canaanite petty-kings in war (Genesis 14). “El of Bethel,” introduces himself to Jacob at Beth-El, formerly Luz (Genesis 31: 13), and Jacob dedicates a cultic stele to him, and contributes to an El temple. This deity is elsewhere identified as El Shaddai (Genesis 17: 1, 28: 3, 35: 11, 43: 14, 48: 3). There is never any disapproval expressed over this cultic behavior. Instead, it appears that some biblical authors and redactors camouflaged the transition from El worship to exclusive Yahwism. Genesis (14: 19) has the Canaanite petty-king invoking “El-Elyon, creator of heaven and earth” (*ēl -‘elyôn qōnēh šāmāim wā’āres*) whereas when Abram responds, he takes an oath in the name of “Yahweh, the supreme God, creator of heaven and earth” (*YHWH ‘ēl ‘elyôn qōnēh šāmāim wā’āres*—Genesis 14: 20). In effect, divine names have become epithets of Yahweh! As is well known, this complex of epithets is paralleled in Phoenician, in the Azatiwada inscription where we read: *b<sup>c</sup>l šmm w’lqn’rs* “Baal of the heavens, and El, creator of earth.” Closer to home, an ostrakon discovered in the upper city of Jerusalem

<sup>4</sup>In addition to the name *Yerubba’al*, itself, note the following Baalist names: *‘Ešba’al*, son of Saul (2 Sam 2:8, *et cetera*, with the derogatory substitution of *bōšet* “shame,” and see 1 Chron 8:39), and *Meriba’al*, son of Jonathan (1 Chron 9:40, written as *Mepibōšet* in 2 Sam 4:4, *et cetera*).



by Nachman Avigad, and dated to the late eighth to early seventh century attests the divinity: *ʾlqnʾrs* “El], creator of earth.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Exodus (6: 3) has Elohim saying to Moses that he appeared to the Patriarchs by the name of El Shaddai, without revealing his true name, Yahweh. These statements express what has been called the “the El-Yahweh synthesis.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, El (and the designations Shaddai and Elyon) merely identify Yahweh by different names, and in the process, Yahweh assumes the attributes of El.

To add to the complexity of the Patriarchal Narratives, we note that the pre-henotheist report of Jacob’s theophany at Bethel functions positively as a *hieros logos* of the cult-site of Bethel (Genesis 28: 3, 35: 7, 11, 48: 3). In Exodus (32) we have, in contrast, a later, henotheist polemic against reversion to the worship of El, materialized in the image of a golden bull-calf, targets the Northern-Israelite cult initiated at Beth-El by Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12: 26–33). It is also important to recall that the cult of Yahweh was aniconic from the outset, and although Jacob erected a cultic-stele to El, he never has recourse to iconic representations of El, the likes of the golden bull-calf. It is an iconic El cult, after all, that is being denounced in Hosea (8: 5–6), which refer to “the bull-calf of Samaria” and in Hosea (10: 5), referring to “the calves of Beth El” (cf. Hosea 6: 8, 12: 12). It is reasonable to suggest that in narrating the cultic activity of the Patriarchs, biblical authors stopped short of accusing them of outright idolatry!

There is pre-henotheist El literature in the Torah itself. In my Anchor Bible commentary to Numbers I hypothesized that the poetic orations of Balaam speak for what I am here calling Phase I. In these poems, El, Shaddai, and Elyon are to be understood as the proper names of deities of the West Semitic pantheon, not as epithets of Yahweh, as they were later interpreted in the blatantly monotheistic prose rubric of the Balaam Pericope. It was powerful El who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and Shaddai and Elyon shared divine knowledge of things to come with Balaam in the encounter with Moab. The name of Yahweh is repeated a few times in these poems, where, indeed, powerful Yahweh is acknowledged, fighting at the side of Israel, his people (Levine 2000, 225–233). This mentality can be compared with the predicates of the Jerubbaal-Gideon narrative of Judges 6–8 (see further). At the moment of his conversion, the hero declares that he has heard about Yahweh’s great acts on Israel’s behalf at the Exodus, but he is not yet a confirmed Yahwist. Contrast such statements with what we read in Deuteronomy (32: 12): “Yahweh alone guided him, with no alien god at his side.”

The discovery of the Deir ʾAlla inscriptions at a site just east of the Jordan on the Jabbok/Zerqa river opens a window onto the currency of El worship in Gilead near the close of the ninth century BCE. Although it remains uncertain as to

<sup>5</sup>For text, bibliography and notes see (Ahituv 2008, 40–42).

<sup>6</sup>See the pioneer study by Otto Eissfeldt (1956, 25–37).

who authored these poetic texts which mention Balaam, son of Beor, it is entirely possible that they were composed by Israelites, even though the name of Yahweh is thus far unattested in them. In any event, they correct for the mistaken notion that the cult of elderly El was no longer practiced in Canaan or Transjordan.<sup>7</sup>

As regards Baal worship on the part of Israelites, there are only tangential references in Torah literature, associated with locales such as Baal-Peor, as an example (Numbers 25). There is no suggestion that Baal worship was an enduring societal phenomenon, only a record of sinful incidents resulting from engagement with non-Israelites. To learn about the status of Baal worship among the early Israelites, we turn to the Yahwist authors of Judges-Samuel-Kings, who report disapprovingly on the currency of Baal worship to the point of obsession. The closest we come to a glimpse of Israelite Baal worship in the early settlement period is in the narrative of Jerubbaal-Gideon, already referred to above. Jerubbaal is a Baalist name meaning; “Baal has raised, reared.” The hero was instructed to tear down the Baal altar and its accompanying Asherah image, or post, maintained by none other than his own father, Joash (a Yahwist name meaning: “Yahweh has strengthened”) prior to doing battle with the Midianites (Judges 6). We have a curious situation where an Israelite with a Yahwist name maintains a Baal altar and an Asherah in connection with it, while his son, bearing a Baalist name, destroys these cultic accoutrements, sacrifices to Yahweh, and takes up the sword with Yahweh at his side. Such narratives about “charismatic leaders” were intended, apart from recording the fortunes of war, to endorse the henotheist doctrine, and to explain the breakaway from the regional pantheon at a critical juncture in the wars fought by the Israelites.

It remains to explain the difference between the respective fates of El and Baal in biblical religion of the pre-henotheist period, since both deities were, in fact, widely worshiped by Israelites, and were shared with Israel’s neighbors. As we know from countless extra-biblical sources, most prominent among them the Ugaritic myths, both El and Baal were “good” deities, one old and the other young. Baal triumphed over evil forces like Yamm, and Baal Shameim was worshipped as a benevolent chief god by the early Phoenicians. Why then was El synthesized in the biblical ethos, made into a common noun, an epithet, so that it remained prominent in Israelite personal names, and in the name of the people, itself, whereas references to Baal worship were consistently disapproving? As I have speculated in previous studies, it may be a matter of timing. It seems that the Baal cult posed a serious threat to the henotheist movement, especially in Northern Israel, at the time of its inception in the late ninth century BCE. Ahab, with some help from his queen, Jezebel, had persecuted the prophets of Yahweh

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion of the overall relevance of the Deir ‘Alla inscriptions for an understanding of Israelite religion see (Levine 2000, 241–275, “Comment 5: The Balaam Inscriptions from Deir ‘Alla.”).

and actively sponsored the Baal cult, which situation produced the confrontation between Elijah and the priests/prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). When Jehu, son of Nimri, subsequently staged his palace revolution, he went after the Baal priests (2 Kings 9). It is interesting that for First Hosea (Hosea, chapters 1–3), a product of the ninth century BCE, the target was Baal worship, whereas the target for Second Hosea (6: 8, 12: 12) of the eighth century had become the discredited El cult of the Northern Kingdom, of its dependency, Gilead in Transjordan.

The Hebrew Bible also attests to the persistence of the cult of Asherah among the Israelites, which raises the question of the status of goddesses in the pre-henotheist phase. The goddess Asherah is best known at Ugarit as El's consort, a mother-figure in the pantheon, creator and queen of the goddesses. As we have seen in the Jerubbaal-Gideon narrative, Asherah is associated with Baal, not El in biblical literature. Some have suggested that Asherah was configured as Yahweh's consort. This is different from affirming the currency in ancient Israel of the cult of Asherah as Baal's consort! The closest we come to seeing Asherah as Yahweh's consort is in the Hebrew blessing inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, a caravan site on the southern border of Judah, and dating to the end of the ninth century BCE, possibly a bit later. They preserve the following repeated statement, with variations: "I have commended you for blessing to Yahweh of Samaria and to his goddess" (*lyhwh šmrn wl'šrth*). A variant at Kuntillet 'Ajrud has the toponym Teiman instead of Samaria, and at Khirbet el-Qom (Maqqedah) the preserved version of the same blessing lacks mention of any locale, between the words *yhwh* and *wl'šrth*. This more or less confirms that the antecedent of the genitive, pronominal suffix *-h* is masculine: *wela'ašērātōh* "and to his goddess," namely to Yahweh's goddess. It would be imprecise, however, to identify the proper name, Asherah, in these formulas, because what we have are declined forms of an originally divine name, which had been generalized, and made into a common noun, meaning "goddess." (Proper names are not declined in Biblical Hebrew). So, whereas we cannot be certain that reference is to Asherah, specifically, we can say that the authors of these blessings, who invoked Yahweh's name, believed that he had a consort, most likely Asherah.

I close the review of selective polytheism by citing the remarkable theophanic hymn from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, that addresses both Baal and El. The opening verse of the hymn is broken, but probably reads: "When El shines in the firmament]." Further we read clearly:

To bless Baal on the day of battle, To (bless) the name of El on the day of battle.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>For annotated texts, see (Ahituv 2008, 313–329 (Kuntillet 'Ajrud); Ahituv 2008, 220–232 (Khirbet el-Qom (Makkedah)). Also see (Ackerman 2006) and bibliography cited, especially the monograph (Olyan 1988).

The above epigraphic evidence also impacts our understanding of the eventual rejection of Asherah, formerly exalted in the West-Semitic pantheon, in the henotheist phase of Israelite religion. In my view, that policy requires an independent explanation; it is not an inevitable consequence of Yahwist henotheism. The fact that at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom, Yahweh is addressed as a deity who has a consort, whether specifically Asherah or not, means that Yahweh was not configured as a "bachelor" deity. Nor is there validity to the suggestion that the cult of Asherah was rejected because it was depraved in some way, just because the goddess bespoke fertility. The elimination of the goddess might be attributable to the patriarchy so dominant in the Israelite ethos, so that when Baal was cast off, Asherah, was, as well. Inevitably there is something that we fail to comprehend about Israelite attitudes in this regard.

What is needed is a comprehensive phenomenological analysis of Yahweh's *persona*, if one may use that term. Such an investigation, along the lines of Mark Smith's treatment, would trace the synthesis of divine traits in Yahweh, including the female element represented by Asherah. It has been the purpose here to deal with the political realities that stimulated this synthesis in the henotheist period, a process which, in turn, helped to compensate for the rejection of the West-Semitic pantheon.

### **2.2.2 Phase II: Yahwist Henotheism and the Israelite Wars: The Challenge to Identity**

The religious policy of Phase I, representing the first response to the challenge of Israelite life in Canaan, soon ran into trouble as a result of continuing wars with other nations residing in Canaan and Transjordan—Canaanites, "Amorites," Philistines, Amalekites, and Ammonites, Midianites, Edomites, Moabites, Arameans, and undoubtedly others. I posit that leading spokesmen for Israelite religion were determined to break away from the regional pantheon, and to endorse a henotheist belief system. The Israelite wars in Canaan and Transjordan had the effect of identifying even the shared, common deities of the West-Semitic pantheon, like El and Baal, directly with the enemies of the Israelites. Moreover, it was feared that continued affiliation with the regional, West-Semitic pantheon would threaten the loyalty and cohesion of the embattled Israelites at times when unity was indispensable. This challenge reverberates in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), where those who failed to answer the call to battle against the Canaanites, issued in Yahweh's name, were either chided or cursed. There are similar indications, including records of early internecine wars, as between Gileadites and Ephraimites, for instance (Judges 12).

To maintain national unity it was claimed that Yahweh, alone, can grant the Israelites victory over their enemies, and entitle them to the lands they had settled. Thus, Elijah, confronts the cult prophets of Baal at the Muhraqa, an event referenced to the reign of Ahab during the ninth century BCE (1 Kings 18). The prophet demands that local Israelites choose between Yahweh and Baal, and cease their prolonged “hedging,” implying that his Israelite audience did not share the prophet’s sense of urgency, and had felt no need to choose. Gideon and the Israelites required signs from Yahweh, and had to be aroused to action against the Baal cult. Note that the Israelites of Ophrah were aggrieved over Gideon’s destruction of the Baal altar and its Asherah (Judges 6: 26–31).

With escalating aggressiveness, the Israelite prophets, starting with the cult prophet, Samuel, attributed victory to Yahweh, alone. In 1 Samuel 7 we are told how the Ark had been captured in battle by the Philistines twenty years earlier, when, for reasons unexplained at the time, its power had failed to assure the Israelites of victory over the Philistines. Now the people yearned for Yahweh to rescue them from the Philistines. Here is what the prophet had to say, in words of a later time:

Then Samuel spoke to the entire House of Israel as follows: If with all your heart you are returning to Yahweh, remove the foreign gods from your midst, and the Ashtoreth-images, and direct your heart to Yahweh and worship him alone. He will rescue you from the power of the Philistines. Thereupon the Israelites removed the Baal-images and the Ashtoreth-images and worshiped Yahweh alone. (1 Samuel 7: 3–4)

The Deuteronomic school went territorial, prohibiting worship of any god except Yahweh even by non-Israelites who inhabited the land, God’s country. This ideology did not prevail until the near-exilic period in Judah, and in effect, the Hebrew Bible, if read with a magnifying glass, documents the long, internal struggle over strict henotheism. We ought not to underestimate the hold exercised by the earlier cultic pattern, which at least partially accounts for the stern efforts undertaken in mid-to-late seventh century BCE Judah to put an end to local cult sites.

Henotheism is proclaimed in the second commandment of the Decalogue: “You shall have no other gods in my presence” (Exodus 20: 3; Deuteronomy 5: 7). Yahweh is identified in the first statement of the Decalogue, as the God who liberated the people from Egypt. Yahweh will not countenance the worship of any other deity at his cult sites; he will not share the stage. The call to the Israelites likewise proclaims the singularity of Yahweh: “Give heed, O Israel! Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is the single God” (*YHWH`ehhād*—Deuteronomy 6: 4). Biblical

narratives of the Egyptian saga, telling of Israelite bondage and liberation, the defeat of the Egyptians and the punishment of their gods, likewise epitomize the henotheist mentality. Although Egyptian power was a chronic factor in Israelite history, it presented a different kind of challenge from that posed by Assyrian power, both in objectives and strategy.

The existence of the gods of Egypt is never denied in the henotheist phase, where it is emphasized that they are mighty and powerful. And yet, we read in the Song of the Sea “Who is comparable to you among the gods, Yahweh?” (Exodus 25: 11). The Egyptian agenda in biblical literature requires further study, but it can be said at this point that the treatment of the Exodus saga well expresses the henotheist agenda.

In summary, the first call to Yahwist henotheism was a response to the ongoing power struggle over hegemony in Canaan, and it preceded the Assyrian threat by quite a spell. It was an ideology of victory over nearby, national enemies. But, the henotheist belief system lost its credibility in the late eighth to early seventh century BCE as a result of disastrous encounters with Assyrian power, demonstrated by the failure of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance, and the consequent fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria in 721 BCE.

Before proceeding to the third phase, a word is in order about the phenomenology of Yahwist henotheism. If the challenge of national unity explains the rejection of the traditional West-Semitic pantheon, it may have been the Egyptian cult of Aten under Pharaoh Akhenaten of the Amarna period that provided an empirical model for the henotheist cult of Yahweh in Israel. At the very least, the aniconic character of the cult of Yahweh from its inception may reflect the same concept as the aniconic cult of Aten. Notwithstanding different time-frames and changing political situations, but given the ongoing contacts between Canaan and Egypt, the phenomenological resemblance between the two cults argues for a cultural connection between them, as anyone reading Psalm 104 alongside the Hymn to Aten might conclude. It is my view, however, that the Egyptian factor has usually been misplaced. It relates more properly to the earlier, henotheist phase, rather than to Israelite monotheism, as subsequently conceived.

### **2.2.3 Phase III: Global Monotheism as Response to the Challenge of Empire**

In my study entitled “Assyrian Ideology and Israelite Monotheism” (Levine 2005), I read the message of First Isaiah of Jerusalem, *ex eventu*, as a response to Sennacherib’s blockade of Jerusalem in 701 BCE. The sparing of Jerusalem was regarded as a sign of divine providence. For a taste of what Isaiah would have been responding to, here is a passage from the annals of Sennacherib:

Sennacherib, the great king, the powerful king, king of the entire world (*šar kiššāti*), king of the land of Assyria, king of the four quarters [... pietistic titular]; consummate warrior, valiant man, foremost among all of the kings, the great king who swallows up those who do not submit, who strikes the wicked with lightning—Aššur, the great mountain, has handed over to me unrivaled kingship [<sup>d</sup> *Aššur šadû rabû šarru-ut la ša-na-an ú-šat-li-ma-ni-ma*] over all who dwell in palaces; he has increased [the power of] my weapons. From the upper sea of the west to the lower sea of the east, all of the black-headed creatures has he placed under my feet, and powerful kings feared my onslaught.<sup>9</sup>

When we compare this passage from Sennacherib's annals to corresponding passages crediting divine powers for world domination, such as are found in the earlier annals of Tiglat-Pileser III and Sargon II, we read that Aššur shares credit with other gods, especially Šamaš and Marduk. Here, there is only mention of the god Aššur, who had been the empowering god of Assyrian military might at least since the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, mandating successive Assyrian kings to enlarge the empire through conquest. But, as we now know, it was the thrust of Sennacherib's so-called "reform" to demote Marduk, the patron deity of Babylon, and to exalt Aššur, a religious policy reflecting his extraordinary militancy toward Babylonia, between 705 and 689 BCE. In my study, I surveyed numerous indicators of this shift, many brought to light by Hayim Tadmor (1989), and more recently reviewed by Eckart Frahm (1997, 220–229).

Beginning with First Isaiah, and anticipated to a degree by his contemporaries, Amos, Micah, and Hosea, the prophetic horizon expanded to global proportions in response to the immediate threat of a world empire, against which military resistance was futile. Implicit in the prophetic response is the conclusion that global monotheism would most likely emerge in a uni-polar imperial age, since it is the hypostasis of the *kosmo-krator* "world ruler," in the Assyrian tradition, *šar kiššāti* "king of the entire inhabited world," Sennacherib's own title. And if you ask: How is it that the Assyrian king, who worships Aššur, rules over the inhabited world, while the king of Judah, who devotedly worships Yahweh, has seen his land ravaged, and his capital, Jerusalem, blockaded? Here are parts of Isaiah's answer, in words ascribed to Yahweh:

a) Isaiah 10: 5–7 (with omissions):

Ah, Assyria, rod of my rage! He is an arm-staff of my wrath! I mobilize him against an ungodly nation, I deploy him against a people

<sup>9</sup>Cited from (Luckenbill 1924, 23–24, Oriental Institute Prism, H2, lines 1–16). Also see (Frahm 1997, 102–105).

who provoke me. To take spoils and seize booty, And to subject it to trampling, like the mire of the streets. But he does not perceive it thus, nor does he so comprehend; For it is in his heart to destroy, to terminate nations, more than a few.

b) Isaiah 14: 24–27:

As I have devised, so is it happening; as I planned, so shall it come about. To break Assyria in my land; to crush him on my mountains. His yoke shall be removed from him; And his tributary burden removed from their back. This is the plan devised for all the earth; And this is the arm outstretched over all the nations. For Yahweh of the heavenly hosts has devised it, who can foil it? And his outstretched arm—who can stay it?

Assyria has been granted victory over Israel because Israel needed to be punished for its sins, as is declared in Isaiah, chapter 1. Being an empire built on conquest, Assyria was the best possible weapon of Yahweh's wrath at Israel. But, Assyria's king does not comprehend that he is only an instrument of Yahweh's grand design; that just as Assyria tramples Israel now, so will it be crushed in due time. Reference to "the yoke of Assyria" is a tell-tale resonance of Assyrian diction in First Isaiah. The prophet counsels patience, for Yahweh will surely bring down even the greatest empire. In the interim, says Isaiah to Hezekiah, do not rebel. Submit to the king of Assyria, unnamed, who was Sennacherib. A century later, Jeremiah would similarly counsel Zedekiah to submit to Nebuchadnezzar II, but his refusal to do so made the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the Judean exile inevitable. Ultimately, Second Isaiah (45: 1–7) would regard Cyrus the Great as Yahweh's very anointed, commissioned to restore his people, Israel. Yahweh rules over empires, and their kings are his servants, even when they do not realize as much.

Until quite recently, I regarded the prophetic doctrine of relying on Yahweh as wide-eyed and unrealistic. That was before I realized that First Isaiah and his contemporaries were in the process of redefining power concepts; of divorcing divine power from political and military might. In the heroic tradition, preserved primarily in the books of Judges and Samuel, and in some early Hebrew poetry, prowess in battle and victory in war materialized for leaders who were infused with *rûah YHWH* "the spirit of Yahweh," which overtakes them and increases their strength. But in the post-exilic Zechariah 4, we find: *rûah* standing in direct opposition to "force" and "military might," as we read: "Not by military might and not by force, but rather by my spirit, says Yahweh of Hosts."<sup>10</sup> It is my con-

<sup>10</sup>See the discussion of *rûah YHWH* "the spirit of Yahweh" in (Levine 2009).



tention that the spiritualization of power, so basic to Israelite monotheism in the long term, is heralded in First Isaiah (Isaiah 11: 2–5, and following), where we are given a profile of the ideal Judean king:

The spirit of Yahweh shall alight upon him; A spirit of wisdom and insight. A spirit of courageous counsel; A spirit of enlightenment and reverence for Yahweh. He shall sense the truth through his reverence for Yahweh, So that he shall not judge by what his eyes see, Nor decide by what his ears hear. He shall judge the poor equitably, And decide fairly for the lowly of the land. He shall strike down to the earth by ‘the rod’ of his speech, By the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the girdle of his waist, And faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

Sennacherib, so we have read, strikes the wicked like lightning, with invincible weapons, whereas the ideal Judean king uses no weapons and fights no battles. The heroic vocabulary is transacted to another dimension of power. The king’s war-belt signifies his sense of justice and his wisdom. His faithfulness and reverence for Yahweh empower him to strike down the wicked by the words of his mouth, by his command, thereby eliminating the need for physical attack. Parpola has called attention to the resonance between the vision of international peace in Isaiah 2/Micah 4, calling for the arbitration of international disputes, with a passage in what he calls “Prophecies for the Crown Prince Assurbanipal.”

[The kings] of the lands shall say to one another: “[Come, let us] go to Assurbanipal! The king has witnesses! [Whatever the god]s decreed for our fathers and forefathers [let him now] arbitrate between us. (Parpola 1997, 38)

It would appear that both in Judah and in Assyria there were prophets who acknowledged the limits of military power and political hegemony. In retrospect, First Isaiah’s monotheism must be adjudged an effective Israelite response. A diminished Judah endured for another century, allowing the kingdom to survive.

### 2.3 A Closing Reflection

Overall, I regard Mario Liverani’s study of Israelite history (Liverani 2005) as a paradigm of contextual method, and I have utilized it here as a benchmark in assessing the validity of biblical sources as evidence. I am not entirely comfortable, however, with Liverani’s bifurcation, whereby he distinguishes systematically between “normal history” and “invented history.” If by “invented” he means

“exceptional,” namely, what would not qualify for inclusion in a history of events, socio-political developments and economic trends, representing “the view from above,” then I agree in principle, if not in every instance. The Israelites, later Jews, created in the Hebrew Bible a narrative, some of it realistic and historical, other parts of it imagined, and virtually all of it ideological, reflecting “the view from below;” recording what was of primary concern to them. In my opinion, the transitions on which I have focused here constituted real turning points in the history of Israelite religion. Most of all, what the Hebrew Bible places in the mouth of First Isaiah was a remarkable religious response to the threat of the Assyrian empire, whose king’s patron was the god Aššur. Both king and deity were unrivaled! The prophetic response initiated the expansion and redefinition of the Israelite God-idea, yielding a policy that would resonate about a century later in the prophecies of Jeremiah. So it is that, allowing for a degree of disagreement, I find valuable insight in a statement from Mario Liverani’s Foreword:

While the real but normal history had no more than a local interest, the invented and exceptional one became the basis for the foundation of a nation (Israel), and of a religion (Judaism) that would have an influence on the subsequent history of the whole world. (Liverani 2005, xvii)

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## Chapter 3

### Globalization and Imperialism:

### Political and Ideological Reactions to the Assyrian Presence in Syria (IXth–VIIIth Century BCE)

*Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault*

#### 3.1 Introduction

When discussing globalization and imperialism in antiquity and in the Ancient Near East, it is usual to turn to structures, images and quotations from the ideological discourse generated by the elites of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the first half of the first millennium BCE, if one wishes to go beyond the condemnation expressed by classical Greek sources of the model and memory of the Persian Empire, which dared to threaten western democratic Europe. Displayed in European museums since the end of the nineteenth century, the iconography of the sculpted slabs adorning royal Assyrian palaces are not only witnesses to biblical events, but have also made the Neo-Assyrian concepts of power and world domination known even within the popular culture (Matthiae 1996). In comparison with Persia, Assyrian civilization seems far enough from us to avoid the risks of a hasty judgement, retaining at the same time the connotation both of its successful program to control the whole world and of the extreme violence and oppression characterizing its management.

There is a kind of agreement on this point: The formation and the expansion of the Assyrian state constitute a good historical example of a resolute national aristocracy led by a king who has decided to run the rest of the world by means of a straightforward military conquest and, later, with a coherent administration and exploitation.<sup>1</sup> From this point of view, the Assyrian empire can easily be compared with the Roman empire, which is closer to our understanding, but with quite an important difference: While Rome exported everywhere an unsurpassed model of civilization, superior to the local cultures it came to dominate, unifying its contemporary world and determining its evolution—in that way giving something back in exchange for what it took—it was apparently not the case with Assyria, which disappeared shortly after its maximal expansion, leaving nothing—or

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<sup>1</sup>See (Oates 1968, 27–66; Liverani 1988, 777–846; Fales 2001).

not much—after its collapse. It evolved from a city to a state, to an Empire, and then to nothing: This seems to be the way to explain the natural path taken by most of the well organized urban based Mesopotamian societies, as described not only in modern research, but also in the texts of the cuneiform tradition (Yoffee 1988a; 1988b). Ancient Mesopotamian languages do not have a word which can be precisely translated as “Empire”, but the imperialistic ideology supporting, or even triggering, this kind of cyclic evolution is expressed through a spatial concept, the domination of the universe, of the four regions of the world (Seux 1967, 305–315; Fales 2001, 20–24).

### **3.2 Assyrian Imperialism: The Ideology**

The Assyrian empire and imperialism are the heirs and one of the latest manifestations, of an ancient Mesopotamian tradition and concept of power, elaborated during—or immediately after—the Akkadian period. From then on, political power—identified as kingship—was considered to exist, have a function and act in history. While, in the far away past, after descending from the heavens, it was supposed to wander from city to city, and from one dynasty to another without any particular reason, in later periods kingship is described as having settled down in one geographical place: Akkad (Cooper 1993). From that moment on, its movements, formerly represented as linear segments, became a succession of concentric waves, expanding in all directions starting from the centre, its effects and final aims being to integrate and to unify the entire world represented as an endless periphery (Michalowski 1993; Mieroop 1999, 59–76). In this system, since there can be only one centre at a time, there can only be one (real) king/emperor in the world, without any rivals, and with whom the gods maintain a special, exclusive relationship. So, when, for the needs of administration and organized exploitation, new authorities must be imposed in lands far from the imperial centre, they can only represent the king’s rule, as lieutenants or governors of their provinces.

Expected to accept imperial structures, peoples living in the periphery were bound to be integrated naturally to the civilization developed within the heart of the empire—eventually enriching it with their own culture and diversity. But the programme of annexation being a strictly political one (Postgate 1992), it never demanded, at least in Assyrian times, an assimilation of the Assyrian culture or religion—though obviously within the limits established by the needs of a correct administration. People were expected to become “as Assyrians”, mainly in their position of “taxpayers,” formal providers for the god Assur’s cult, but noth-

ing more.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, elites of the Assyrian empire willingly copied and integrated foreign models, for example in art and architecture (Masetti-Rouault 2005), and Assyrian intellectuals and technocrats kept well in mind their dependency on Babylonian culture, to mention only one example (Machinist 1984–1985). The image of the maximal globalization expressed by the Assyrian ideology was not “only one world,” but a system of countries unified within a network of exchanges of information, raw materials and manufactured goods, controlled by a pivotal centre. In another perspective, a metaphysical one, its teleological aim was conceived as a cosmic integration of nature and culture under the authority of the king. He fights and kills not only his barbaric, chaotic enemy when he refuses integration and threatens the borders, but the lion, too—the wild forces of nature (Weissert 1997; Maul 1999).

In a discussion about imperialism it seems relevant to note that, as a specific aspect of Assyrian ideology, the centrifugal force emanating from the king’s residence towards the periphery—war—is presented in the royal inscriptions as well as in state rituals and ceremonies such as coronations. It is also considered to be the consequence of the right, positive answer given by the legitimate king to the command given by the national god Assur, to “enlarge the country.” The order to unify all lands under the Assyrian rule—that is, to conquer them—has in turn to be understood as an actualization of a traditional, Old Babylonian theological concept perhaps elaborated and described in the myth called *Atrahasis*, the story of the Flood. Myths show that the human society was created to work, to organize and to transform the natural world, in order to serve the pantheon, and to provide for the gods’ vital needs. With this background, the vocation of Iron Age II Assyrian kingship to rule the world was explained by the royal chancelleries as the historical way of rationalizing the administration of human societies, in order to improve and amplify the quality and the quantity of the services owed collectively to the gods who happen to dwell in the Assyrian temples. This service is due by all peoples and nations, without exception, even if they do not share this knowledge. Only if Assyrians kings succeed in their mission of globalization of the world’s activities and production, did they do the right thing and save the world. In satisfying the gods’ needs, they would gain their approval and blessing: Rain would fall at the right time, agrarian production would be guaranteed, peace would triumph, everybody would be happy (Liverani 1979).

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<sup>2</sup>With some exceptions, cf. the case of Sargon II, expecting all the nation to speak “in the same language,” see the Cylinder Inscription: “Peoples of the four regions of the world, of foreign tongue and divergent speech, dwellers of mountains and lowland made them of one mouth,” (Luckenbill 1926, 64–65; Mieroop 1999, 74–76).

### 3.3 Empire and Imperialism in History and Historiography

Well known to us, this “religious”, metaphysical discourse gives a context to the Neo-Assyrian imperial ideology, elaborated explicitly only in the royal Assyrian inscriptions and literature, for the imperial elite’s internal use and consumption. As far as we can say, it never circulated as such in the different parts of the empire and its social strata, for example through the cult of the god Assur, which was never exported or imposed in the periphery. Possibly, the message was transmitted, in a limited and partial way, by the texts and iconography of the steles erected by Assyrian kings “at the borders of the world”, or in the palaces of the newly conquered countries (Morandi 1988), but what neighboring societies actually saw and understood of the Assyrian power was probably something different. However, this explanation of Assyrian imperialism, if ever it circulated, could theoretically have sounded quite familiar to a Syro-Mesopotamian audience because, as already mentioned, it had been developed from an ancient and classic narrative theme. The growing expansion of the original territory of a state under the guidance of charismatic leaders, in order to form a new and better adapted political entity, is described as a totally legitimate political behavior already in the inscriptions of the Akkadian kings, considered by modern historians as the founders of the first real empire in human history, uniting for a short period the urban states of Northern and Southern Mesopotamia, as well as Syria (Larsen 1979).

For once, a modern judgement corresponds to an ancient opinion: The Old Akkadian empire’s political experience has been evaluated and kept as the model of an ideal and perfect rule, by politicians of later Mesopotamian states as well, and the reasons of its crisis have been extensively studied and meditated over. Proposing an administration having as its horizon the whole world, the Old Akkadian imperial project continued to appeal to the political programs of the states formed in Mesopotamia after its collapse. It provided them not only with an ideological and institutional base, but also with a military and strategic agenda. This is true of the Ur III kings and later, for some of the Amorite states, during the Middle Bronze Age II. After the collapse of the Mitannian federation, the Assyrian elites recreated an independent state, and started to build the Middle-Assyrian empire, adding new territories to the City and Land of Assur, mainly in the West. They conquered and then colonized Northern Syria, up to the Middle Euphrates Eastern bank, and finally attacking Babylonia as well.

At the beginning of the first millennium BCE, following the crises associated with the formation of Aramean and Syro-Hittite states in the same area, the construction of a Neo-Assyrian empire was launched in Assyria, as if there were no other political alternatives. It followed the same ideological and geographical direction as the Middle Assyrian empire, but on its way it now found as oppo-



nents new autonomous political formations, like the “Aramean” states. Since the ninth century, Neo-Assyrian kingship had carried out its program to unify progressively almost the totality of the Syrian and Mesopotamian territories, including Egypt. These countries constituted the largest ancient Near Eastern Empire, until the Achaemenid period.

### 3.4 History, Archaeology and Geography

In the course of time, after the first Akkad episode, the real extension, the social composition, the administrative and economic structure of all these Mesopotamian states has obviously largely varied, and often quite quickly. However, these kingdoms have been coherently interpreted and historically recognized as “empires”, partially because of their own identification as such in the discourse developed by their leaders and in official communications—texts and art. A successful management of centripetal and centrifugal forces in the economic exchange system was definitely not enough, as they could depend, for example, on well developed commercial structures connecting markets. To have an empire, you need a conscious “imperial” project: This is the case with Assyrian kingship, supported by a well documented imperial archives administration, from the eighth century on (Postgate 1979; Fales 2001, 96–178).

While specialists of the texts have often been easily satisfied with the rhetoric of Akkadian ideology, archaeologists in general seem to be more circumspect about the criteria with which to recognize an empire on the ground, for example on the basis of the diffusion and distribution of different typologies of material culture or technology. However, through the analysis of the natural landscapes of ancient Mesopotamia, archaeologists have often helped to find historical justifications for the appearance and evolution of empires and imperialism, explaining the political behavior of these first empires from an economic point of view, and as natural and logic phenomena, under the circumstances. In this perspective, need is the trigger: The limited production and productivity of a land, determined by its geography and climate, is often presented as the reason why a community or a nation, determined to survive—and then to expand and improve its quality of life—organizes the conquest of other countries, other peoples and of their production.<sup>3</sup> If modern historical critic has highlighted and even denounced the real functions and meaning of Assyrian imperial ideology, ancient imperial phenomena can still be explained mainly as “regular” dynamics of power, imposed by an active centre on a passive periphery, which, in a way, deserved to be conquered and exploited, as it never managed to organize itself and resist.

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<sup>3</sup>See, for example, (Oates 1968, 52–58; Grayson 1976).

Following this line of reasoning—almost parallel to the development of the ideological discourse of the Neo-Assyrian royal chancelleries itself—archaeological research should be able to find, anywhere in the countries and regions controlled by the imperial administration, signs and structures corresponding to this endless exploitation project, following the military conquest. It is not clear to what extent the growth of the areas under imperial rule was associated with a real program of colonization (Postgate 1995). However, the presence in the different provinces of the empire of a military and bureaucratic system—connected with the extraction of riches, the control of local production, its transportation towards the centre, the management of the work forces—should be perceptible, visible in some way, having left its marks on the landscapes as well as on the culture and the societies submitted, that is, beyond the destruction levels created by conquest. At least since the end of the eighth century, the Assyrian texts and archives—but also specific archaeological materials—found in the ruins of the Assyrian capitals seem to document and describe the expansion and the articulation of the empire in all the Near Eastern countries, with administrative structures capable of concentrating the world's production inside the Assyrian capitals, but at the same time, it is less easy to recognize the reality of this system in the archaeological data and materials known from the same areas (Parker 2001). It is obviously true that the role and the interest of Assyrian elites were not the distribution and the selling of Assyrian production abroad, on foreign markets. However, the paradigm of imperial rule and of a military and administrative presence supposes a certain diffusion of the Assyrian material, intellectual and artistic culture, eventually producing a reaction in the impact, the encounter with local mentalities.

When investigating the remains of a Neo-Assyrian administrative system in a given area, the historical patterns connecting the imperial centre with the exploitation and economic and social control of the periphery, apparently satisfying from a heuristic point of view, does not seem to be useful or precise enough to understand the complexity of the evidence found in the conquered areas, or to define the reality of the formation of the imperial structure. To give an example of the problems encountered while trying to follow the evolution of the Assyrian provincial administration, but also of its ideological aspects, I will now present and discuss the situation of the Syrian Lower Middle Euphrates Valley during Iron Age II (Masetti-Rouault 1999).

### 3.5 The Lower Middle Euphrates Valley

Since 1997, the French archaeological mission working in the Syrian site of Terqa, modern Ashara, on the western bank of the Lower Middle Euphrates valley, directed by O. Rouault, began a survey in the region (Figure 3.1).

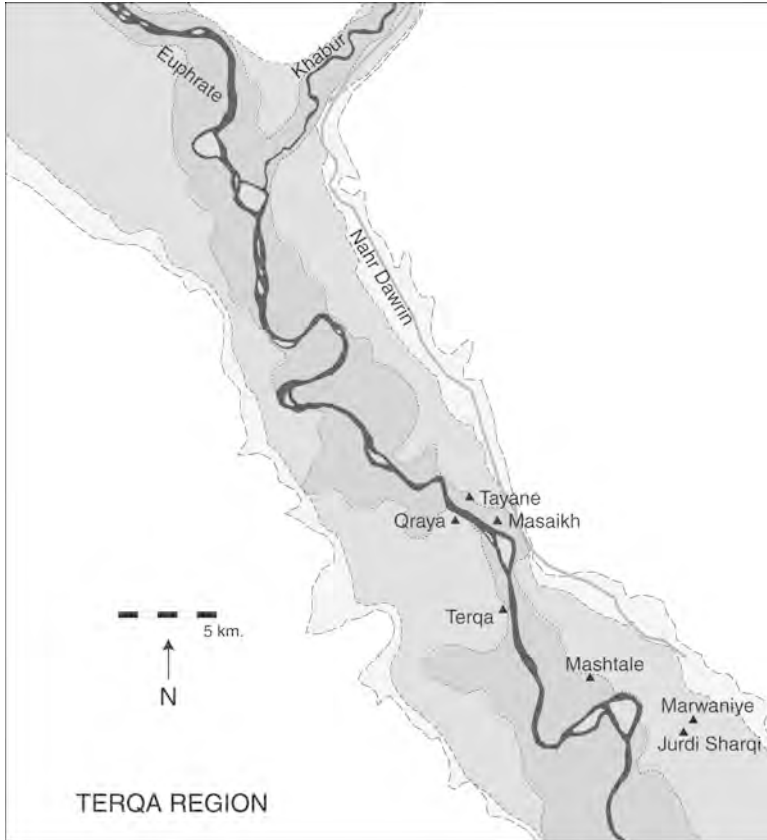


Figure 3.1: The Terqa-Ashara Area (Rouault 1998)

We were trying to find remains of the Iron I–II Aramean occupation in the region, called the Laqê country, but instead we found evidence, for the first time, of an Assyrian presence during the ninth to eighth century. This part of the valley used to correspond to the Mari Amorite state—Terqa is 60 kilometres upstream

of Mari—and, after its destruction, it became the centre of the Khana kingdom, during the Late Bronze Age, with Terqa as its capital (Rouault 2001). While no Iron I–II sites had ever been identified there (Geyer and Monchambert 2003, 260–266), descriptions of this part of the valley found in the royal inscriptions of ninth century Assyrian kings, such as Adad-nirari II and Tukulti-Ninurta II, list a series of towns and palaces visited by these kings, among which Terqa, now written Sirqu (Geyer and Monchambert 2003, 140–144). The Assyrian kings crossed quite peacefully the Khabur and Lower Middle Euphrates valley, trying to establish a political relationship with the Aramean sheikhs ruling the area—which, by the way, at least downstream the mouth of the Khabur river, had never yet been a part of the Middle Assyrian Empire, even if Khana is quoted among the lands annexed to the Middle-Assyrian empire after the conquest of Babylon, at the very end of the late Bronze Age.

At the beginning of Iron II age, the Assyrians tried to enter the Laqê political organization in a natural way, perhaps offering military help to the lords of the cities of the valley engaged in permanent conflicts with partially settled tribes in the steppe. This category of the local population could have interfered, as was usually the case, with the circulation of goods along the Euphrates and on the tracks connecting not only Southern and Northern Mesopotamia, but also, on an East-West axis, connecting Arabia with Eastern Syria, the Jazireh and the Tigris valley (Deblauwe 1991; Liverani 1992a). This information derives from the interpretation of a monument, a basalt stele, found some fifty years ago in Terqa (Masetti-Rouault 2001, 89–114). It is for the moment, the best but also the only evidence which documents the presence of a non-Assyrian, complex local culture in the region—at the same time quoting Assyrian kings' names, Tukulti-Ninurta and Adad-nirari. The iconography is slightly earlier, classic tenth century Syrian, North-Aramean style (Figure 3.2), and it represents a version of the ancient Syrian Storm God Addu, possibly in its local epiciclesis Mer/Wer, fighting against the primeval, chaotic Snake in the presence of a king—or maybe it is the ancient city god Dagan? The inscription concocted and later added to the stele by the Sirqu palace chancellery as a diplomatic message of submission, gives a fantastic new interpretation of the scene, “Assyrianizing” it. The cuneiform text understands it as a representation of the Assyrian king, choking the treacherous people of the steppe, with the assistance of his dead father and of an *apkallu* priest, whose representation was surely added on the stele at the same time as the cuneiform inscription. Admittedly, the *bricolage* was not perfect, as the local knowledge of Assyrian royal ideology and mentality was limited, but it was a good try. It could have been an attempt to establish good feelings with the Assyrians, if Tukulti-Ninurta had not died shortly after his Middle Euphrates expedition. He left his son and successor, Assurnasirpal II, to organize the control of this area, probably



Figure 3.2: The Terqa Stela

not important and useful for its crops but for trade and business, connecting Arabian markets with the North Syrian and Levantine ones, and from then on with the Assyrian one.

The inscriptions of Tukulti-Ninurta II tell how willingly Laqê leaders accepted to assist the Assyrian expedition. They gave sheep, grain, bread, beer, straw and fodder for the use of the army, but, as a present and a tribute to the king, they gave quantities of silver, gold, tin, bronze, oil, purple wool, antimony and myrrh. These goods had been amassed in their palaces not only through local production, but above all thanks to the strong commercial trade crossing this area, well detailed in the lists of their tributes in the royal inscriptions. No political integration in the Assyrian state is mentioned in these contexts for Sirqu and Laqê. The situation changed during Assurnasirpal II's reign. As a regular tribute was clearly expected in the Assyrian capital from Laqê rulers, it could be a first sign that a kind of "imperial" structure had already appeared and taken form. To establish and to verify his authority, the king went on a campaign in the Khabur and in the Euphrates valley, collecting the tributes himself. He stopped his march in Anat, in the Suhu region, downstream of Laqê, where he clashed with Babylonian-"Kassite" troops. But this simple manifestation of power, detailed in his inscription and recorded by one of the decorated reliefs of his throne room in his palace in the new capital Calah (Matthiae 1996, 61–74), was not enough to affirm the new "world" order. The heavy economic pressure imposed on populations and markets by the Laqê kings in order to extract the tribute due to the Assyrians, triggered a series of upheavals and revolts, aimed at organizing a resistance against the new Assyrian expansion tendency, with the support of other Northern Syrian Aramean countries, eager to maintain the freedom of circulation along the Euphrates. The result was yet another military intervention of the Assyrian king in the Lower Khabur and Middle Euphrates valleys, bringing havoc and destroying towns and fields.

Even if local powers did not seem to be able to properly serve the Assyrian interests in the area and some Aramean leaders were actually chased and deported by the king, there is no evidence that Laqê, at that time, had been transformed into a province. However, we do not have any evidence, archaeological or epigraphic, to document the situation and the culture of local societies which resisted to the Assyrian pressure. A further step was then taken to settle the Assyrian presence in the region: The inscription declares that before going home, the king founded two new towns, calling them Kar-Assurnasirpal and Nebarti-Assur—to mark in some way the "new border" of Assyria in the West (Grayson 1991, 216, III, ll. 49b–50a). The chosen toponym (Pongratz-Leisten 1997), "Port of Assurnasirpal" and "Place where Assur crosses (the river)" clearly underlines the king's intention of checking traffic on the Euphrates—maybe establishing a toll system—and also of creating a crossing point connecting the Jazireh and the Khabur valley, now considered to be on the Assyrian side, whereas the West bank was possibly still "Aramean" country. Traditionally, assyriologists have identified these founda-

tions as the Halabiye and Zenobiye late Roman period sites overlooking the narrows of the Euphrates, upstream of modern Deir-er-Zor (Liverani 1992b, 71–72, and no. 238). Our survey and our works in Tell Masaikh, on the eastern bank, opposite Tell Graya, five kilometers upstream from Sirqu, have shown that the twin towns were in the heart of Laqê itself, midway between the Khabur mouth and the border of the Babylonian influence area which started around Hindanu where caravans arrived from Arabia. Not only archaeological but also epigraphic evidence supports our identification, but it must be remarked that all this area, important enough for the growth of Assyrian business, is completely absent from the official and military records of the royal inscriptions after Assurnasirpal II's time, and only appear again later, and only marginally, in other Neo-Assyrian texts.

Kar-Assurnasirpal was founded on an ancient tell, today called Masaikh, which is formed by the remains of Halafian, Obeid-Transitional, Middle Bronze II and III Amorite and Khana period levels,<sup>4</sup> while Nebarti-Assur should be found at Greya, a village just facing it, on the West bank of the Euphrates. Tell Masaikh, with a surface covering more than 20 hectares, is formed on the West side toward the river bank, by a small hill, an acropolis where we have found the remains of a typical Assyrian royal palace, and in its Eastern part, by a rectangular lower town, both of which are encircled by a huge urban wall (Figure 3.3). Apparently, the site was abandoned when the first colony was founded. Excavations have shown that the Assyrian occupation level which includes the palace does not correspond to Assurnasirpal's foundation, but that the town is later. In fact, after having cut and leveled out the first colony buildings of the mid-ninth century, the Assyrian settlement was completely reorganized at the very beginning of the eighth century, during the reign of king Adad-nirari III, and probably under the orders of Nergal-eresh, the governor of the Rasappa/Western Jazireh province.

He chose the site of the Assyrian harbor on the Euphrates to serve as his own "almost royal" residence, a symbol of his personal power, signaled by a palace closely imitating the one in Calah, implicitly defying in this way the imperial ideology (Figure 3.4). Under Nergal-eresh's authority, the new Kar-Assurnasirpal seems to have changed its function in the area. It became a political and economic centre, from which the Assyrian administration developed and controlled a new project of exploitation of this part of the valley. The project was based on the construction of a very long canal on the left bank, parallel to the river and taking its water from the Khabur river. Nowadays, it corresponds more or less to the layout of an early Islamic time irrigation structure called *Nahr Dawrin*. This canal, over

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<sup>4</sup>See (Masetti-Rouault 2010). Preliminary reports about the archaeological excavations in Tell Masaikh are regularly published, annually since 2001, by M.G. Masetti-Rouault, in *Athenaeum. Studi di Letteratura e di Storia dell'Antichità*, Pavia.

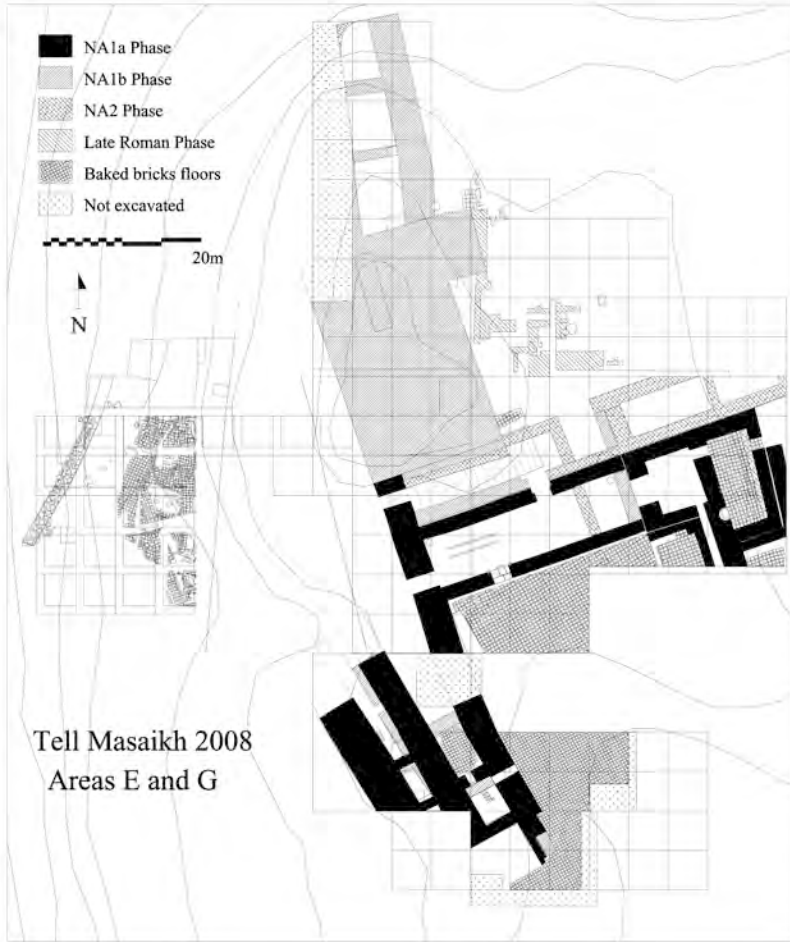


Figure 3.3: Plan of Tell Masaikh

120 kilometers in length, was undoubtedly used to irrigate fields on the Jazireh side of the valley, but it also allowed easy communication and trade transportation (Geyer and Monchambert 2003, 199–217) from the borders of the Hindanu area to the Khabur valley Assyrian towns and from there directly to Assyria itself, through the steppe and along the wadi al-Agig tracks (Kühne 1995).





Figure 3.4: Western part of the palace

The palace and the town were built in a location close to the point where the layout of the canal had been cut into the rocks of the Pleistocene terrace, to avoid destruction because of the meander formation of the Euphrates. Our survey has revealed a string of very small Iron II hamlets along the canal banks, close to Tell Masaikh, where the Assyrian administration had settled the local semi-nomadic population, or deportees from other conquered countries, to work in the new fields obtained by irrigation, and to take care of the canal itself. Now the empire seems to show up: The valley has a new colonial landscape, created by a brilliant exploitation project, bound to make the Assyrian elite and maybe also the king, richer—even if it forever destroyed the traditional dimorphic, local ways of managing the river valley, sharing equally land and water between agricultural and pastoral activities (Masetti-Rouault 2008). It would not be surprising if the material culture of the colony followed, in its general lines, the contemporary Assyrian pattern, not only in the urban architectural organization of the settlement, but also in its ceramic technology, in the glyptic and writing traditions. A close analysis of these materials, still in progress, is also beginning to reveal different,

foreign elements, for example in the style of the iconography of some cylinder seals, or in certain ceramic forms. This situation could confirm the function of the site as a central point in a commercial trading system, but it can also show both the resistance and the resilience of the local Aramean society, or the presence of deportees coming from different parts of the empire. The Assyrian town had apparently accepted, absorbed and integrated all these influences from different, sometimes unknown, origins, without formal criteria of exclusion.

So, as far as empire and imperialism go, things are not quite clear and linear in Kar-Assurnasirpal. First of all, from the very beginning, Assyrian kingship is strangely absent from this project. Even if Assurnasirpal II gave his name to the colony on the river, the inscriptions do not mention the foundation of a palace, or of any other kind of military or administrative structure. Moreover, after his short passage, no more involvement on behalf of the Assyrian administration or of the Crown in this area of the Euphrates valley is ever mentioned in the royal texts. Nergal-eresh, on his part, is adamant, insisting, in his own inscriptions—but attributed to his king—of the fact that he worked under the command of Adad-nirari III (Grayson 1996, 211, ll.13–20). He describes his mission as a new organization of the previous settlement system in his province, including old towns like Dur-katlimmu, and, to be sure, no canal work is alluded to in these contexts. A pale reference to the hydraulic project might be found in a decree Adad-nirari III wrote to establish the control of the governor of Rasappa on the Hindanu area, which was to be added to his province (Grayson 1996, 214–216). That would have been useful to Nergal-eresh, if indeed the great canal's southern terminal was there. While Assurnasirpal II had certainly built a canal to irrigate the area surrounding his new capital Calah (Oates 1968, 45–47), no Assyrian king had yet carried out such an important and ambitious building and hydraulic project as the Iron II *Nahr Dawrin*. Like other powerful governors of that period, Nergal-eresh wrote his own inscriptions on steles in his province, just as kings do, but later his texts were erased, considered to be a crime of “*lèse majesty*” (Grayson 1996, 209–210). Beyond an obvious “hubris” ideological sin, it is not evident where exactly the problem resided. In what concerns his relation with state and kingship, Nergal-eresh's projects radically changed the aspect of a long term depressed area of the East bank of the Lower Middle-Euphrates. Measuring it through usual archaeological indicators, such as the sum of built surfaces, that period was one of the best ever attested in the region, since it lasted quite a long time, witnessing a real economic “boom,” with a important demographic growth.

The study of the stratigraphic sequence and of the changes in the architecture of the palace of Kar-Assurnasirpal has shown an unexpected—but maybe parallel—turn in the story of the local elite as well. Quite soon after its foundation, the structure of the building was greatly modified, erasing its most evident



Figure 3.5: Terrace over the palace

Assyrian layout and decoration, as a manifestation of Nergal-eresh's own culture and personal project. For example, the monumental "throne room" north of the *babānu* courtyard was cut in two, while the private apartments corresponding to the northern part of the palace were filled up and sealed by the construction of a mud brick platform, higher than the original roofs (Figure 3.5). Completely eroded nowadays, another building, maybe a tower, was founded on this terrace, accessible from the main courtyard and the throne room through an elegant ramp. It is not impossible that at that point the acropolis looked a lot like one of the Aramean Middle Euphrates fortified settlements. This was the palace which was destroyed by the Assyrian army, probably in the era of Tiglat-Pileser III. Ritually buried in the filling covering the original floor of the throne room of Nergal-eresh's time palace, and sealed by a new but very poor earth floor, built after the destruction, we have found a large fragment of an aniconic stele, with a cuneiform inscription, which can prove useful to understand the meaning of the structural changes we have identified not only in the acropolis area, but also downtown in the Lower town. The text, still unpublished, starts as a dedication and a hymn to the god Nabu, extolled not in the usual Neo-Assyrian manner, as the Great Administrator, divine scribe or heir to the celestial throne, but as a merciful, sav-

ing god, much more like the Babylonian Marduk. The donor is a Mr. Adad-bel, who must have been, at a certain point, the lord of the town. The inscription, just before an intentional break, where the narrative historical section starts, mentions “Kar-Assurnasirpal, on the bank of the Euphrates,” as well as Adad-nirari III and Nergal-eresh” names, situating the stratigraphic sequence of the palace in the chronology of the Assyrian empire.

So, Kar-Assurnasirpal, founded for the second time by Nergal-eresh as the centre of his domain, was later transformed by his local successors, maybe Assyrians who had become natives. They started a process of decolonization and developed a “creolized” culture, showing through their choices in architecture and their religious and literary tastes, their difference (maybe their pro-Babylonian feelings) and their respectful dissociation from the imperial civilization. The corresponding local dynasty’s policy must have been understood as a political and economic affirmation of autonomy by the central government of the empire, which reacted and stroke back, probably under the rule of Tiglat-pilezer III. Kar-Assurnasirpal was then attacked, the palace destroyed, all the symbols of local lords’ authority condemned to an evident *damnatio memoriae*. A new, monumental official residence, replacing the old one, was built in a close location on the acropolis, displaying all the signs of the imperial *reconquista*. The material associated with this new occupation is possibly even more Assyrian than before, and the painted decoration of the walls of the new residence, abandoning the local fashion of contrasting black and white lines and surfaces, became largely polychromous, as in the other Assyrian palaces (Poli 2008). We do not yet know exactly when the town was abandoned, maybe with the fall of Assyria or during the Neo-Babylonian period. The tell was only reoccupied over half a millennium later, when a late Roman village covered the last remains of the palaces.

### 3.6 Conclusions

The reappearance of a society in Kar-Assurnasirpal in the realm of the Assyrian province system, documented by archaeological evidence and confirmed by scanty mentions of the Laqê land in Sargon II’s archives (Parpola 1987, 176–177), should not be considered too hastily as the triumph of the empire in the area. On the contrary, some almost contemporary texts from the Suhu and Anat region, downstream Hindanu—royal inscriptions, once again imitations of Assyrian models but composed by a local dynasty ruling the area in the second half of the eighth century—describe Laqê as a weak unorganized region under Assyrian rule (Cavigneaux and Ismail 1990; Frame 1995, 275–329). These inscriptions tell how after being exposed to the attacks of Aramean troops coming from Northern Syria, the Laqê country would have been abandoned to its fate by the miserable

Assyrian officer in station there, who was not at all supported by the army of the more powerful and upgraded Rasappa governor, if the noble Ninurta-kudurri-ušur, lord of Suhu and Mari, had not graciously accepted to intervene and save the Assyrian property, chasing away the barbarians. The text continues with telling the glorious story of the same ruler's attack of a caravan coming from Arabia, showing that traffic and exchanges worked well in that period. Some letters found in a Nippur archive, dated to the same period, once again give an image of the Lower Khabur and Middle Euphrates region as a marketplace for iron probably coming from Anatolia, and independent from the Assyrian monopoly control—a smugglers' connection in the heart of the empire (Cole 1996).

The reconstruction of the organization of the Syrian Lower Euphrates Valley during Iron Age obviously needs more evidence and still a lot of work, in order to improve our understanding of the contacts and reciprocal influences between the Assyrian civilization and the local Syrian Aramean cultures. Beyond the mechanisms described by the Neo-Assyrian imperial ideology—and also by some modern economic models of ancient imperialism—which seem to present the ancient near Eastern world as unified under the Assyrian cultural paradigm, it is evident that the reality and the evolution of the Assyrian empire, and its impact on local cultures, are complex phenomena to study and to represent. Differently accepted and understood in the various countries controlled by imperial power and pressure, and obviously also depending on the level of the social structures documented and analyzed in every case, the Assyrian patterns carried by colonization, or simply shown around by the military and administrative presence, generated new responses, new solutions and new cultural reactions. Some of them stemmed from an internal evolution of the colonies themselves, as it is the case in Tell Masaikh, and others from the resistance of local societies that were able to reorganize and reshape themselves after the impact, adapting themselves to the situation and generating creolized cultures.

Also, the nature of the final aim and meaning of the Assyrian occupation—straight exploitation of local materials and production—can be questioned. In the case of Kar-Assurnasirpal, the Assyrian elite with their colonist attitude, had to make important investments, like building the canal system, in order to get profit either from a specialized and very intensive agriculture, or through commercial long-distance trade, or both. For the moment, it is not clear in which way, and up to what point, these activities, production and profits were related to, or controlled by, the royal administration, and by it alone. The cultural and material evidence seems to show, at least for a time, the importance and the role of the colonial elite in the management of the region, which balanced its inner tendency towards autonomy from the empire possibly improving its level of integration in the local society of the Lower Middle Euphrates. One cannot but admit the un-

bearable nature of the imperial structures and the degree of exploitation imposed in countries submitted through violence. However, we also have to consider and take into account the resilience of these new local societies and the coherence of their own economic and business projects, for which we often only have indirect documentation, if we want to understand Mesopotamian history in its continuity.

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## Chapter 4

# The Tale of the Wild Man and the Courtesan in India and Mesopotamia: The Seductions of Ṛśyaśṛṅga in the Mahābhārata and Enkidu in the Epic of Gilgamesh

*Tzvi Abusch and Emily West*

### Abstract

The seduction of Enkidu in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* bears strong resemblances to the Sanskrit account of the seduction of Ṛśyaśṛṅga as it appears in *Mahābhārata* 3.110–113. This paper attempts to understand the relationship of the Babylonian and the Indian accounts, and to trace the stages of development of the Sanskrit tale. The paper concludes that the tale most likely originated in Mesopotamia and migrated to the Indian subcontinent, and that the Indic version of the tale found in the *Mahābhārata* is the oldest extant version found in India.<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Introduction

Elsewhere, the Akkadian account of the seduction of Enkidu by the courtesan in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* has been subjected to a detailed analysis and its stages of development traced (Abusch 2005). The preserved versions, but especially a reconstructed earlier version that centered solely on the wild man and the courtesan and did not include the hunter, show strong resemblances to the Sanskrit story of the seduction of Ṛśyaśṛṅga as it is found in the *Mahābhārata* and, to a lesser degree, as it occurs in other compositions. Like Enkidu (in Tablets I–II of the Standard Babylonian version and the Pennsylvania Tablets of the Old Babylonian version),<sup>2</sup> Ṛśyaśṛṅga is an unworldly innocent with animal characteristics

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<sup>1</sup>Versions of this paper were read to the American Oriental Society, San Antonio, in 2007 and to the Melammu conference in Sophia, Bulgaria, in 2008. Please note throughout that due to a difficulty in obtaining proper fonts, diacritics on the Sanskrit velar *n* and the Akkadian uvular *h* have been omitted throughout the paper.

<sup>2</sup>We wish to call attention to two works which we were not able to incorporate into our argument. One is Y.V. Vas[s]ilkov, “Zemledel’českij mif v drevneindijskom epose: Skazanie o Riš’jašringe,” an article which we were unable to obtain. The other is Daniel E. Fleming and Sara J. Milstein, *The Buried Foundation of the Gilgamesh Epic: The Akkadian Huwawa Narrative* (Brill, Leiden 2010),

who, as a result of a crisis in the civilized world, must be tamed and civilized by a prostitute and brought to the city to take a position of power beside the king. The strong resemblance of the *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga* account to the Enkidu story has been previously noticed. Some scholars have even suggested the dependence of the Indian versions upon the Near Eastern account.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the last century there have been scholars who have regarded the remarkable similarity between the two episodes as ample justification for the belief in a connection between the two tales. But in some scholarly circles, parallels are viewed with skepticism, and the existence of any form of connection may even be denied. We therefore feel it is necessary to revisit the topic of the relationship of the Babylonian and the Indian accounts. To this end, we will first describe the two tales and set out a *précis* of our understanding of the development of the *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga* tale. This will be followed by several detailed treatments: 1) an identification and explication of points of similarity between the Enkidu and *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga* tales; 2) an analysis of the many variants of the *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga* tale that may be found throughout the literature of India, evaluating the various narratives for evidence regarding the development of these variants to determine which of them may represent the earliest phase of the tale; and 3) a reconstruction of the stages of development of the *Mahābhārata* tale itself, which we believe to be the earliest recorded Indic version. Finally, we set out our understanding of the re-

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which appeared only after we submitted this paper. We should mention, however, two aspects of their discussion that are relevant to the present work: the first is their argument that a distinction be drawn between the Enkidu of the OB Penn tablet // SB tablets I–II (who is a wild man), on the one hand, and the Enkidu of the Huwawa episode of the OB Yale tablet // SB tablets III ff. (who is a herdsman), on the other. This distinction, which we find persuasive, does not affect our present argument, for our wild man corresponds in the main to the character of the wild man found in that part of the epic that comes before the Huwawa episode. Furthermore, in composing our study we were already aware of some of the tensions between the parts, see (Abusch 2005, 430–433). The second is their contention that the superimposition of the story of the wild man and prostitute (found in the Penn tablet) upon the story of the prostitute and the herdsman (found in the Yale tablet) is responsible for the creation of the first part of the OB epic. For the significance of this point for our argument, see below fn. 53.

<sup>3</sup>This opinion was first expressed by Jensen (1913, 528): “Edvard Lehmann hat Greßmann auf die Analogie zwischen der indischen Geschichte von *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga* und der “Hierodulen”-Episode des *Gilgamesch*-Epos aufmerksam gemacht und Greßmann erwähnt dies auf Seite 95 seines Buchs. Weder Lehmann noch Greßmann denken natürlich an mehr als eine bloße Analogie, obwohl die Analogie zwischen beiden Episoden schon allein für sich eine historische Abhängigkeit doch wohl mehr als nahelegt. Greßmann’s Anmerkung mußte mich nun aber dazu veranlassen, die *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga*-Geschichte ins Auge zu fassen. Und das Ergebnis war: Auch die indische *Rāmāyaṇa*-Sage, durch die *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga*-Geschichte eröffnet, geht in der Hauptsache letztlich auf das *Gilgamesch*-Epos mit der “Hierodulen”-Episode in seinem Anfangsteil zurück, ebenso aber vor allem diejenigen Stücke des *Mahābhārata*, die diesem mit dem *Rāmāyaṇa* gemein sind.” See also, e.g., (Albright 1920, 331): “But it is very probable that our story goes back eventually to a Mesopotamian origin; in no other case that I have seen is the likelihood so great.” (Williams 1925–1926, vol. 1, 30–31; Schlinghoff 1971, 58–60 (our thanks to Oskar von Hinüber for this reference); Schlinghoff 1973, 303–305; Panaino 2001, 152–153, 170.) Also cf. (Abusch 2005, 425 n.23).

relationship of the Indian and the Mesopotamian tales. We hope to contribute to an understanding of the Sanskrit tale and its evolution and to explore the cultural and historical implications of a connection between the Near Eastern and Indian tales.

## 4.2 The Story of Enkidu

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is an ancient Mesopotamian account of the deeds and struggles of Gilgamesh, a king of the city-state Uruk in the land of Sumer. This Akkadian epic was probably originally composed during (but certainly no later than) the Old Babylonian period, some time around the eighteenth century BCE; the later standard version comes to us in a twelve-tablet format.<sup>4</sup>

The epic recounts how Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, exhausts his subjects by his unceasing demands upon them to participate in a constant round of activities. The people complain to the gods, who realize that Gilgamesh's enormous energy must find a different channel. To relieve the people, the gods create Enkidu, a wild man whose strength is equal to that of Gilgamesh, to serve as a companion who can be Gilgamesh's equal and companion in the various activities that he is driven to undertake. Enkidu is humanized by a prostitute, who then acculturates him and leads him to Uruk. There, Enkidu prevents Gilgamesh from participating in a wedding ritual. Gilgamesh and Enkidu then do battle and, as a result, become fast friends. The two friends undertake adventures (most notably, and originally, an expedition against Huwawa in the Cedar Forest) that cause them to run up against the will of the gods. The gods decide that Enkidu must bear the punishment for the friends' acts of hubris. Enkidu dies, but Gilgamesh cannot accept the death. He is devastated by Enkidu's death, both because of the grievous loss of his dearest friend and because he now fears his own death mightily. He leaves Uruk and travels the world in search of immortality. In the twelve-tablet version, Gilgamesh's quest is defined as a search for the secret of immortality held by Utnapishtim, the hero who survived the Flood and was granted immortality by the gods. When Gilgamesh reaches Utnapishtim, the latter disabuses him of his illusion, demonstrating by story (the account of the Flood) and by action (a test of Gilgamesh's ability to remain awake, a test that he fails) that immortality is no longer attainable, even by Gilgamesh. Tablet XI ends with Gilgamesh's return

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<sup>4</sup>The transcriptions of the Akkadian text of the Old Babylonian (OB) and Standard Babylonian (SB) versions of the Gilgamesh epic are based upon the transliterated text in (George 2003); the translations are his as well.

to Uruk, whereupon he signals his acceptance of reality by pointing out to the boatman the architectural wonders of the city that he had built.<sup>5</sup>

The tale of the wild man and courtesan is known in both Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian versions.<sup>6</sup> The episode as told in the first tablet of the Standard Babylonian version runs as follows: In response to the complaint of the people of Uruk against Gilgamesh, the gods create Enkidu, a powerful wild man, to engage Gilgamesh and thereby provide relief to the populace. He roams with the animals and feeds with them. He frustrates a hunter's attempts to catch animals. The hunter's father advises him to go to Uruk and to take a courtesan from there to seduce the wild man, thereby causing the animals to reject him. The hunter goes to Uruk and is given the same advice by Gilgamesh. He then leads the courtesan Shamhat to the wild. Upon the appearance of Enkidu, he tells the courtesan what steps to take in order to seduce Enkidu. She successfully carries out her mission. They have intercourse for a week; afterwards Enkidu tries to return to the animals, but they reject him. He returns to the courtesan, who advises him to accompany her to civilization. She leads him to Uruk, where he and Gilgamesh meet and become fast friends.

Unfortunately, this episode is only partially preserved in the Old Babylonian version. But even so, we can establish that in that version the wild man did not attempt to rejoin the animals after his sexual encounter with the courtesan<sup>7</sup>; for in that version, after their lovemaking, the courtesan asks Enkidu why he wants to go back to nature, and in fact he does not. It is not the animals that reject Enkidu; rather, it is Enkidu who immediately turns his back on nature as a consequence of his experience with an urbane woman. He rejected the natural world in favor of civilization, for lovemaking caused him to forget the place of his birth. Animals are unimportant in this early recension, as is apparently the hunter, if he even appears (Abusch 2005, 422–425). The absence of the hunter in the earliest forms of the tale is important and will be referred to again later.

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<sup>5</sup>Tablet XII contains the end of a different account of Enkidu's death. On an errand for Gilgamesh, Enkidu descends into the netherworld. He is seized by the netherworld and cannot escape death; he returns only as a shade in order to describe to Gilgamesh the state of the dead.

<sup>6</sup>The episode is now also known from a tablet provisionally dated to the beginning of the Middle Babylonian period; see (George 2007, for the dating see p. 63).

<sup>7</sup>As far as we can see, nothing in the new "Middle Babylonian" version (cited above, fn. 6) contradicts this statement.

### 4.3 The Tale of R̥śyaśṅga in the *Mahābhārata*

We will now discuss the tale as it occurs in the *Mahābhārata*, in the epic's third section, the "Book of the Forest Teachings."<sup>8</sup> This book details part of the thirteen-year period of exile undergone by the heroes of the epic, the five Pāṇḍava princes and their joint wife, Draupadī. Having lost their kingdom through treachery at the dicing table, they leave their palace, allies, and children behind and resign themselves to a period of forest-dwelling asceticism. Exile is a devastating blow, but the heroes spend comparatively little time in recrimination. They turn instead to spiritual betterment, most notably in the form of a tour of various sacred bathing areas (*tīrthas*), and the epic itself turns to "the manifold narratives to which their sojourn in the forest gives occasion" (van Buitenen 1973–1975, vol. 2, 174). As the heroes make their tour, they are regaled with the stories associated with each *tīrtha*.

One of these is the "Story of R̥śyaśṅga," narrated at *MBh.* 3.110–113.<sup>9</sup> The tale runs essentially as follows: A fearsome ascetic, Vibhāṇḍaka, is bathing in a lake when the sight of a celestial nymph causes him to spontaneously ejaculate. The semen is consumed by a doe that subsequently gives birth to a human son. The boy, R̥śyaśṅga, is born with an antelope horn in the middle of his forehead and is raised in the hermitage. The young ascetic's innocent life is disrupted when King Lomapāda of Anga commits unspecified atrocities that result in the desertion of his Brahmins (including his *purohita*, the household priest) and in a subsequent falling out with the gods. On the advice of a different brahmin, Lomapāda decides to bring R̥śyaśṅga to the court as his new *purohita*. Devising a plan to have the youth seduced by prostitutes, he finds a procuress willing to undertake the scheme and sends her to the hermitage on an elaborately equipped barge. When Vibhāṇḍaka leaves the hermitage to gather food, the procuress sends in an attractively-dressed courtesan, who is mistaken by the boy for a fellow ascetic. R̥śyaśṅga is so unworldly that he does not even understand that the prostitute is a woman but is enchanted by her very different "ascetical practices" and by the delicious food and liquor with which she plies him. The innocent boy quickly falls desperately in love with her, but she slips away to her barge before Vibhāṇḍaka comes home. Upon his return, Vibhāṇḍaka gives R̥śyaśṅga stern warnings against women. But when the courtesan makes a second visit, the boy begs to go away with her. The prostitutes take R̥śyaśṅga away on their barge

<sup>8</sup>In regards to the *Mahābhārata*, all passages cited here are from the Critical Edition (Sukthankar 1942), and all translations are EBW's. In regard to the composition of the epic, we concur with others that the epic was assembled slowly over an extended period, roughly between 400 BCE and 400 CE; see (van Buitenen 1973–1975, vol. 1, xxv) or (Brockington 2003, 116).

<sup>9</sup>A complete translation of the R̥śyaśṅga episode may be found in (van Buitenen 1973–1975, vol. 2, 431–441).

and deliver him to the king, who installs him in the royal harem and gives him his daughter Śāntā in marriage. When the father discovers that his son has decamped to the palace, he follows the boy with the intention of burning the king and all his subjects by means of the power of his austerities. King Lomapāda, however, is able to avert disaster by instructing the herdsmen along Vibhāṇḍaka's path to plow up the roads in order to obstruct his progress and to inform him that all the lands and herds along the way now belong to R̥śyaśṅga. By the time Vibhāṇḍaka reaches the city and meets his new daughter-in-law, he is pleased and malleable, and the tale ends happily for all concerned.

The above re-telling, however, only describes the central portion of the tale as it occurs in the epic. This central portion is that part found at *MBh.* 3.110.30–113.10 and is hereafter referred to as the “body” of the piece.<sup>10</sup> Appended to the front of the tale is a brief preamble (*MBh.* 3.110.1–10) in which the narrator, Lomaśa, attempts to loosely summarize the story and the eldest Pāṇḍava brother, Yudhiṣṭhira, responds with a set of leading questions. The relationship of the preamble to the rest of the *Mahābhārata*'s narrative will be discussed below in Section 4.10, “Internal Analysis of the *Mahābhārata*'s R̥śyaśṅga Account.”

#### 4.4 Anomalies in the Tale of R̥śyaśṅga

At the end of the nineteenth century, Heinrich Lüders (1897) attempted to explain a number of puzzling anomalies in the “Story of R̥śyaśṅga,” as narrated at *MBh.* 3.110–113. The “body” of the narrative, as we have sketched it out above, is quite straightforward, but a closer study of the body in conjunction with the preamble reveals a number of irregularities and contradictions; body and preamble simply do not seem to refer to the same story. Lüders carefully analyzed various versions of the tale for comparison and concluded that the discrepancies in the *Mahābhārata* were the result of a series of editorial re-workings performed to align the *Mahābhārata*'s version with certain other variants. Though the preamble introduces a number of details or motifs that do not agree with the body of the tale, Lüders emphasized one particular issue: where the body describes R̥śyaśṅga's seduction by the prostitute and subsequent marriage to a princess, the preamble states quite clearly that it was the princess who first seduced him and makes no mention of a prostitute. To solve the problem of this contradiction, Lüders envisioned a three-stage process of development (Lüders 1897, 13–15) in which:

<sup>10</sup>It is the narrative contained in the body of the *Mahābhārata*'s tale of R̥śyaśṅga to which we refer whenever we discuss the *Mahābhārata*'s version in general terms. See below, Section 4.11. “Narrative Layers in the *Mahābhārata*,” for our division and characterization of the sections of the final text.

1. The *Mahābhārata* originally had a version which featured princess Śāntā as the seductress;
2. The Bengali Recension of the *Padma-Purāṇa* added the role of the prostitute in order to spare an innocent princess from the shame of being a seductress;
3. Finally, a later redactor of the *Mahābhārata*, familiar with the *Padma-Purāṇa*'s version, altered the body of the *Mahābhārata*, but neglected to change the opening verses.

While this solution has apparently been accepted by some,<sup>11</sup> others have felt that the idea is unnecessarily cumbersome and that Lüders' reasoning is unsound at a number of points.<sup>12</sup>

While we concur with Lüders on the importance of the preamble/body textual problem, we do not accept his conclusions regarding the story's developmental trajectory. Lüders regarded the identity of the seductress as the primary key to understanding the evolution of the tale, a bias which, in our view, severely limited his ability to take other even more significant disparities between preamble and body into account, disparities regarding, *inter alia*, the power of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, the righteousness of King Lomapāda, the god Indra's fear of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, the nature of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's actions in ending the drought, whether Ṛṣyaśṛṅga "lived as a deer," and details of his conception (each of these points will be discussed in detail below). While the preamble addresses some motifs not utterly dissimilar to those in the body of the tale, it is our contention that the preamble was initially created for a different story about a character named Ṛṣyaśṛṅga.<sup>13</sup> This figure, Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, the son of Vibhāṇḍaka, is known from quite early Hindu sources, including the *Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa* (III, 40), the *Vaṃśabrāhmaṇa* (2), and the *Ārṣeyabrāhmaṇa* (VI, 5).<sup>14</sup> In our view, the form of the Ṛṣyaśṛṅga tale that originally occupied this spot in the *Mahābhārata* was a standard variation of the myriad of tales concerning the irascible *ṛṣis* ("seers," ascetic holy men) and their conflicts with kings and gods. A vestige of this tale remains at the beginning and end of the Ṛṣyaśṛṅga story that is found in the epic, in the accounts of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's conception and of Vibhāṇḍaka's appeased wrath. But the body of

<sup>11</sup>Cf., e.g., (Winternitz 1962, 351–353).

<sup>12</sup>Dahlmann disagreed strongly with Lüders' method for tracing the history of the story (Dahlmann 1899, 283–287). Later scholars who present arguments against Lüders' conclusions about the nature of the original story include (Panaino 2001; Pauly 1987–1988; Schlinghoff 1973; Williams 1925–1926, 34).

<sup>13</sup>Thus we agree with Lüders regarding the originality of the preamble; however, in contrast to Lüders who sees the *Mahābhārata* tale as essentially a coherent whole which underwent a few contradictory revisions, we maintain that the present body of the tale (*MBh.* 3.110.30–113.10) is a later addition.

<sup>14</sup>These are listed at (Lüders 1897, 1) as well.

the tale is, in our opinion, a transplant or borrowing that derives from outside the subcontinent, and it is this possibility that we would like to explore here.

We believe that at some early point in history the Mesopotamian tale of Enkidu (or, more precisely, the Mesopotamian tale of a wild man and courtesan) passed into India and began to circulate in a Hindu milieu. Perhaps because of Enkidu's animal characteristics and his association with antelope, the story was eventually attached to the pre-existing character of R̥śyaśṛṅga and incorporated into the *Mahābhārata*, though with some contradictions remaining between the transplanted tale and the pre-existing preamble to which it was attached. Eventually this new composite tale, whether directly from the *Mahābhārata* or at some remove, began a second life in India, where the long-standing tradition of oral composition and verbatim preservation and recitation allowed wide circulation of stories without the use of written texts. The story was apparently able to circulate widely and underwent various modifications as it was taken up by different religious and cultural communities. Thus, in later versions, numerous variations were introduced, regarding the number of seductions in the tale, the nature of the crisis at the center of the plot, the name and nature of R̥śyaśṛṅga himself, and the nature of the transformation that seduction effects upon him.<sup>15</sup>

Our solution to the mystery of the mismatched preamble differs, therefore, from that of Lüders. Whereas we believe that the present tale of R̥śyaśṛṅga was created by the superimposition of a Near Eastern borrowing upon an earlier Indian story with native sub-continental or Indo-European roots, he envisioned a multi-step process of revision and redaction. First, we do not think that his line of argumentation takes account of the dramatic similarity of the *Mahābhārata* to the Enkidu tale, which similarity others have found so compelling as well.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, it seems to us that a redactor setting out to harmonize the *Mahābhārata* with the *Padma-Purāṇa* would have also re-written our preamble to bring it in line with the body of the tale. Lüders' redactor is mainly concerned with harmonizing; our redactor, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with bringing in new material—for him, harmonization would have been a secondary goal. Furthermore, while we agree with Lüders that a princess was probably the love interest in the earliest tale to occupy this spot in the *Mahābhārata*, we do not subscribe to the view that the original princess played a role functionally equivalent to that of the prostitute

<sup>15</sup>The R̥śyaśṛṅga tale as it occurs in the *Mahābhārata* may not be the direct progenitor of other variants of the tale in India, but we believe it to be the earliest version of the tale of the seduction of the wild man in India for two reasons: First, because the other tales all contain elements that appear to be alterations of the *Mahābhārata*'s version, and second, the *Mahābhārata* contains the evidence of superimposition. For further analysis of the variations in the tales see (West 2010).

<sup>16</sup>In 1897, when Lüders published "Die Saga von R̥śyaśṛṅga," the story of Enkidu and the prostitute might not yet have been widely known, but the story had been translated and re-told, for example, in (Jeremias 1891, 16–18).



in the *Mahābhārata*'s tale; rather, in that tale she was simply a young woman with whom R̥śyaśṅga fell in love. This and other more detailed pieces of evidence will be examined below in context, beginning with our assessment of the shared features of the Indian and Mesopotamian tales.

#### 4.5 Parallel Elements in the Stories of Enkidu and R̥śyaśṅga

We note the following fourteen parallel elements in the two texts. These elements suggest the existence of a relationship between the two episodes. While many tales may share common elements and themes, these stories are composed of nearly identical sets of motifs that form the fundamental building blocks of both tales. Even more significant is the fact that this set of motifs is a heterogeneous collection in that the individual motifs generally do not lead inevitably to the ones which follow them. Thus, their appearance *en masse* in two otherwise-unrelated traditions strains the likelihood of coincidence.

##### 4.5.1 The Wild Man's Miraculous Birth

Both wild men are the product of miraculous births, and both births are "typical" within their respective canons. Enkidu is created by Aruru from a pinch of clay, just as the first humans were created. R̥śyaśṅga is conceived when the hermit Vibhāṇḍaka has a spontaneous ejaculation at the sight of Urvaśī, a prominent celestial nymph (*apsaras*), and the ejaculate is consumed by a doe that becomes pregnant with Vibhāṇḍaka's child. These two types of birth are thus functionally equivalent, for in Indian literature an ascetic's spontaneous ejaculation is a common mechanism employed to mark out a birth as unusual or auspicious<sup>17</sup> and would be a natural substitution for a motif of birth by divine creation imported from another tradition.

##### 4.5.2 The Wild Man has an Animal Appearance

Both wild men are represented as being a combination of animal and human and as having a connection to wild deer.<sup>18</sup> Enkidu's animal nature is reflected in his

<sup>17</sup>See, for example, the similar conceptions of Satyavati (*MBh.* 1.57), Agastya and Vasiṣṭha (*Matsya Purāṇa* 61, 20–32), Droṇa (*MBh.* 1.121), and Kṛpa (*MBh.* 1.120).

<sup>18</sup>In this section, we refer to R̥śyaśṅga's animal characteristics as they are portrayed in the body of the tale, not to the use of *mṛgabhūtasya* in the preamble at 3.110.8. As stated in Section 4.10.5, "R̥śyaśṅga's Life as a Deer," we believe the use of *mṛgabhūtasya* in the preamble relates to the class of tales within the *Mahābhārata* in which an *r̥ṣi* assumes, or appears to assume, deer-form. *R̥ṣis* with animal characteristics such as those exhibited by R̥śyaśṅga in the body of his tale are not a standard type in the epic (cf. *MBh.* 1.109), supporting the idea that his animal-*r̥ṣi* character is largely a borrowing from elsewhere.

hairiness and in the fact that he lives with the gazelle herds and protects them. Using excessive hairiness as the defining characteristic of a wild man would be problematic within the *Mahābhārata* tradition, at least as a distinguishing trait, for long matted hair is a standard characteristic of many holy men,<sup>19</sup> as is suggested by the name of the ascetic who escorts them around the sacred fords and narrates the story to them (Lomaśa, “Hairy”) and by the description of Vibhāṇḍaka at *MBh.* 3.111.19, as “covered with hair to his nail-tips” (*praveṣṭito romabhīrā nakhāgrāt*).<sup>20</sup> Instead, Ṛśyaśṅga’s animal origin is exhibited by the antelope horn he wears on his head, *tasya ṛśyaśṅgam śīrasi* (*MBh.* 3.110.17).<sup>21</sup>

### 4.5.3 The Plot Precipitated by the Actions of a Hubristic King

Though they are a part of the natural world, the wild men are actually linked to the human social order. In both narratives, the wild man’s very existence, certainly his role, is necessitated by a crisis brought about by offenses on the part of the king. Both stories preserve a similar ambiguity regarding the king’s character and manner of rule. The significance of this parallel is deepened by the fact that both kings are eventually rehabilitated.

### 4.5.4 The King’s Offenses are Unclear and Possibly Sexual

In both narratives, the nature of the king’s misdeeds is obscure. As noted above, in the Sanskrit, we are told that *tena kāmaḥ kṛto mithyā brāhmaṇebhya iti śrutih*, “the report is that [Lomapāda] improperly forced his desires on the brahmins” (*MBh.* 3.110.20), an ambiguous statement that could be understood to have sexual overtones. *Kāma*, “desire” has obvious and well-known sexual overtones, but it is also frequently used in more innocent contexts, especially with the verbal root *kr-*. Similarly, the adverb *mithyā* (wrongly, improperly) in itself is not necessarily sexual, but the *mith-* root from which it is derived carries a wide variety of aggressive and sexual connotations. The combination of the *mith-* root and *kāma* in such proximity suggests that the two may (at least at one point) have added up to

<sup>19</sup>Cf., e.g., the terrifying matted hair of Vyāsa at *MBh.* 1.100.5.

<sup>20</sup>Williams also finds Vibhāṇḍaka’s hairiness provocative, and reaches conclusions similar to ours: “That there should be *two* beast-men, father and son, in this legend seems at first peculiar. They may indicate a coalescing of two traditions, or rather the development of an original story of the seduction of a partly beast-like hero of fertility into a legend containing two hermits.” (Williams 1925–1926, 33)

<sup>21</sup>Remnants of the motif of hairiness may exist elsewhere in the tale, however. The name of the Sanskrit story’s king, Lomapāda, “he whose feet are covered in body hair,” is somewhat suggestive, though certainly not definitive. We observe here, in anticipation of later discussion, that nearly all of these references to animal characteristics are lost in other versions of the tale.

more than the sum of their parts, with the implication that the king may have sexually mistreated his priests. Such an action would be close to unthinkable within the *Mahābhārata*. The text is willing to discuss many questionable acts, but male rape is outside its pale. We suggest that *MBh.* 3.110.20 either attempts to blur or gloss over a piece of the story that the editors felt they were unable to report fully but were reluctant to omit entirely, or, more likely, preserves a faint linguistic vestige of the story's past.

The account of Gilgamesh's offense is equally cloudy. Is it simply that he is demanding of his subjects that they devote themselves completely to his athletic or building activities or is he making excessive sexual demands on them? It is likely that this ambiguity reflects a development in the text: apparently the description of Gilgamesh's "oppression" of his people in the epic is modeled on the Sumerian "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld," where Gilgamesh and his people seem to be fully engaged in athletic activities<sup>22</sup>; subsequently, in the epic the situation was changed to one where Gilgamesh's demands were no longer athletic but seem to have been sexual. But this new orientation—at least in our presently fragmented text—has not yet been articulated clearly.

#### 4.5.5 The King's Offenses Require the Intervention of the Gods

In both tales, the king's actions have cosmic repercussions. Lomapāda's misbehavior angers the gods and causes them to withhold the rains, leading to the suffering of his people. As for Gilgamesh, his tyranny becomes oppressive to the point that his people cry out to the gods; thus, the gods become involved and ask Aruru to create Enkidu.

#### 4.5.6 The Wild Man is an Innocent

In direct contrast to the king, the wild man is innocence personified. Not only is he ignorant of sexual matters, he is entirely without political consciousness. Enkidu lives among the animal herds and is completely unfamiliar with fundamental characteristics of human life:

[š]u 'ur šārta kalu zumrišu  
 uppuš pēretu kīma sinništi  
 itqī<sup>23</sup> pērtišu uhtannabā kīma<sup>d</sup> Nissaba

<sup>22</sup>For the athletic activities in "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld," cf., e.g., (Klein 2002, 187–201). These activities are no longer evident in the Akkadian, where instead such lines as SB tablet I 76–77 suggest that his demands are sexual. This would agree with the nature of the situation that occasioned the encounter and battle of Gilgamesh and Enkidu (SB tablet II 100–115, OB P cols. iv–vi).

<sup>23</sup>Text: *itq*; cf. I 60.

*lā īde nišī u mātamma  
 lubušti labiš kīma<sup>d</sup> Šakkan  
 itti šabātamma ikkala šammī  
 itti būli mašqā itepper  
 itti nammaššē mé iṭāb<sup>24</sup> libbašu  
 (Gilgamesh SB tablet I 105–112<sup>25</sup>)*

All his body is matted with hair,  
 he is adorned with tresses like a woman:  
 The locks of his hair grow as thickly as Nissaba's,  
 he knows not at all a people nor even a country.  
 He was clad in a garment like Šakkan's,  
 feeding on grass with the very gazelles.  
*Jostling at the water-hole with the herd,*  
 he enjoys the water with the animals.

Similarly, Ṛśyaśṛṅga lives a simple existence in the forest. The text mainly emphasizes his state of perfect and uncompromised celibacy:

*na tena dṛṣṭapūrvo 'nyah pitur anyatra mānuṣaḥ  
 tasmāt tasya mano nityam brahmacarye 'bhavan nṛpa.  
 (MBh. 3.110.18)*

He had never before seen any other person than his father  
 and because of this, his mind was always that of a *brahmacarin*, Oh  
 King.

Ṛśyaśṛṅga's innocence is so profound that he is not even aware that the courtesan is female: his subsequent lengthy description of her to Vibhāṇḍaka presumes, to comic effect, that she is male:

*dvau cāsya piṇḍāvadhareṇa kañtham  
 majātaromau sumanoharau ca.  
 vilagnamadhyasca sa nābhideśe  
 kaṭiśca tasyātiktṛtapramāṇā.  
 (MBh. 3.112.3–4)*

<sup>24</sup>Others *iṭīb*. Von Soden and Röllig (1991, p.18\* s. 293) retracted the value *iṭāb* for DAB, which von Soden had earlier based on our text; however, because of the durative forms in the preceding lines, we believe that von Soden (1959, p.222, and p. 58 s. 293, of the original *Syllabar*) was right to have read *iṭāb* in our passage, in spite of the variant *i-ṭi-bu* in the parallel lines SB tablet I 173 and 177. Note that in the translation we have replaced George's "enjoyed" with "enjoy."

<sup>25</sup>Cf. (George 2003, 545).

And he had two round globes below his throat,  
 hairless and charming.  
 And he was slender-waisted in the region of his navel,  
 and his hips were exaggerated in size.

#### 4.5.7 The King Arranges for a Courtesan to Seduce the Wild Man

The hallmark of both tales, the sexual seduction of the wild man by the courtesan, is carried out at the suggestion of the beleaguered kings. In both cases, the creature's transformation from animal to human is accomplished by means of arousing his sexual interest. In the R̥śyaśṅga story, the courtesan knows her task is accomplished when she sees that he has been *vikṛtam* (transfigured, changed) by her attentions (*MBh.* 3.111.17). In the epic of Gilgamesh, the wild man is dramatically changed by the sexual encounter - in the SB version, the change is both physical and mental: "Enkidu was diminished, his running was not as before, but he had *reason*, he [was] wide of understanding";<sup>26</sup> in the OB version, his definition of his place in the world has changed: "The two of them were making love together, he forgot the wild where he was born."<sup>27</sup>

#### 4.5.8 The Seduction Occurs Adjacent to Water

Both seduction scenes take place beside a body of water. Enkidu is first spotted by the hunter, and later seduced by Shamhat, at the water-hole to which he accompanies the herds. In the *Mahābhārata*, Vibhāṇḍaka's hermitage is on the shore of a great lake (*mahāhrada*, possibly the lake's proper name, 3.110.12, 13), in which he is bathing when R̥śyaśṅga is conceived. The seduction of R̥śyaśṅga by the prostitute (*veśyā*) takes place there. Moreover, a barge specially equipped for the prostitutes serves as a blind from which the *veśyā* approaches her quarry and on which she carries him off.

#### 4.5.9 The Transformation is Cultural as Well as Sexual

Once existentially transformed, Enkidu is then led to a camp of shepherds where he is introduced to the ways of human society:

*akalam iškunū maharšu*  
*iptēqma inaṭṭal u ippallas*  
*ul īde<sup>d</sup> Enkidu akalam ana akālim*

<sup>26</sup>SB tablet I 201–202: *umtaṭṭu<sup>d</sup> Enk[īdu u] kī ša pāni lasānšu / u šū īši [ēma r]apaš hasīsa* (George 2003, 551).

<sup>27</sup>OB P col. ii 46–47: *ur[ta<sup>''</sup>]amū kilallūn / šēram imtaši ašar iwwaldu* (George 2003, 175).

šikaram ana šatēm lā lummud  
 harīmtum pīša īpušamma  
 issaqqaram ana <sup>d</sup>Enkidu  
 akul aklam <sup>d</sup>Enkidu simat balātim  
 šikaram šiti šīmti māti  
 īkul aklam <sup>d</sup>Enkidu adi šebēšu  
 šikaram ištiam sebe assammī<<m>>  
 ittapšar kabtatū inangu  
 īliš libbašuma pānūšu ittamrū  
 ultappit gallābum šu'uram pagaršu  
 šamnam iptasašma awīliš īwi  
 ilbaš libšam kīma muti ibašši  
 ilqe kakkašu lābī ugerre  
 (Gilg. OB P col. iii 87–112<sup>28</sup>)

They put bread before him,  
 he *watched intently*, gazing and staring.  
 Enkidu did not know how to eat bread,  
 how to drink ale he had never been shown.  
 The harlot opened her mouth,  
 saying to Enkidu:  
 “Eat the bread, Enkidu, the thing proper to life;  
 drink the ale, the lot of the land.”  
 Enkidu ate the bread until he was sated,  
 he drank the ale, seven jugs (full).  
 His mood became free, he was singing,  
 his heart became merry and his face shone bright.  
 The barber treated his body so hairy,  
 he anointed himself with oil and became a man.  
 He put on a garment, becoming like a warrior,  
 he took up his weapon to do battle with the lions.

Just as Shamhat cares for Enkidu, so the prostitute offers R̥šyaśṛṅga food (*bhakṣān mahārḥān*, *MBh.* 3.111.13), alcohol (*pānāni cāgryāni*, *MBh.* 3.111.14), and fine clothing (*citrāṇi vasāmsi ca bhānumanti*, *MBh.* 3.11.14),<sup>29</sup> as well as sex, completing his transformation from animal to human. But while the Gilgamesh

<sup>28</sup>Cf. (George 2003, 177).

<sup>29</sup>Shamhat provides clothing for Enkidu by dividing her garments in two and sharing them with Enkidu. The greater preparations made for the capture of R̥šyaśṛṅga obviate the need for a similar action on the part of the *veśyā*, as the barge has been equipped to provide for him. We do, however, find the motif of the divided garment elsewhere in the *Mahābhārata*, and in close textual proximity to the story of R̥šyaśṛṅga. Immediately preceding the Pāṇḍavas' decision to tour the sacred fords,

story makes the culture/nature contrast explicit—Enkidu does not even know *how* to eat bread or drink ale—R̥śyaśṛṅga’s story conveys this through a stylized exchange which is part of the seduction. In Gilgamesh the food is a symbol of transformation and acculturation but not a part of the seduction itself. But in both cases, the action is not merely seduction and entrapment; it is the awakening of a human consciousness within an animal.

#### 4.5.10 The Wild Man is Taken Willingly

Though the purpose of the mission in both texts is to capture the wild man, in both stories the creature himself is more than willing to be taken away to the city following his consciousness-raising encounter with the woman. So Enkidu in SB tablet I 205ff. // OB P col. ii 51ff.; R̥śyaśṛṅga begs the *veśyā* to take him away with her when she returns after her three-day absence (*MBh.* 3.113.7). Both wild men express enthusiasm for the human life to which they have been exposed, and both are eager to learn more.

#### 4.5.11 The Wild Man’s Transformation Sparks Alienation from his Former Life

After his awakening to human consciousness, Enkidu is rejected by the herd he lived with, at least in the SB version. R̥śyaśṛṅga’s interest in the prostitute ignites the wrath of his father, Vibhāṇḍaka, who lectures his son on the dangers of succumbing to feminine wiles (*MBh.* 3.113.1–4).

#### 4.5.12 Interaction with Herdsmen Marks the Transition from Country to City

Enkidu and Shamhat spend time with herdsmen after his seduction but before his departure for Uruk. R̥śyaśṛṅga himself does not do so, for he is taken straight to the city on the barge and installed in the harem. However, Vibhāṇḍaka does interact with the herdsmen when he himself goes to the city looking for his son. Instead of R̥śyaśṛṅga, it is the father, Vibhāṇḍaka, who is fed and housed by the herdsmen (*MBh.* 113.16–18). The simple reassignment of a motif or action from one character to another is a common practice within the evolution of narrative. In the tale of R̥śyaśṛṅga, the herdsman have been carefully coached by King

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they listen to a recitation of the story of Nala, another king who lost his kingdom through addiction to dicing. Eventually, reduced to nakedness, Nala must share the single garment of his wife, Damayanṭī (*MBh.* 3.59.1–5). Initially, the two wrap themselves in it together. But Nala’s story takes an even more tragic turn when he secretly cuts the garment in two after Damayanṭī falls asleep and then abandons her in the forest (*MBh.* 3.59.12–26).

Lomapāda to inform the angry father that all their lands and herds belong to his son, a ruse designed, as used in “Puss-in-Boots,” to induce good humor and pliability in the character being so deceived. This portion of the tale has a decidedly Indo-European flavor, and there is no equivalent section in the story of Enkidu. It is our reading, therefore, that while the visit to the herdsmen probably originated with the Near Eastern tale, the coaching of the herdsmen either originated with the pre-existing tale, or was a modification made to the borrowed Near Eastern story after it was included in the epic.

#### 4.5.13 City/Country Dichotomy Echoes King/Wild Man Dichotomy

At its heart, the tale of the wild man and courtesan is about the union of opposites: male and female, animal and human, rural and urban, wild man and king, natural innocence and royal misconduct. In the epic of Gilgamesh the dichotomies are made explicit; in the case of the Sanskrit version, less so, though of course the union of opposites is a mainstay of Hindu thought. The Ṛśyaśṅga story is not as overtly pious in theme or content as many of the other tales from the sacred fords, but perhaps its inclusion in this section indicates that it may have been these themes of dichotomy that resonated with the composers and compilers of the Indian epic.

#### 4.5.14 The Wild Man and the King Complete One Another

Enkidu becomes Gilgamesh’s dearest companion and counterpart, and Ṛśyaśṅga becomes Lomapāda’s *purohita*, his household priest and intercessor to the gods, a more formal, but equally indispensable role.<sup>30</sup>

As Ṛśyaśṅga’s story comes to a close, its similarity to Enkidu’s decreases. The narrative reverts to the earlier story, roughly as introduced in the preamble: Ṛśyaśṅga is married to Śāntā, forgiven by his father, and ordered to return to the hermitage with his bride when he has “granted the king all the favors he asks” (*MBh.* 3.113.21). The tale closes with references to six iconic mythological marriages (*MBh.* 3.113.22–24).

### 4.6 Summary of the Comparison of the Two Narratives

In view of the overwhelming number of shared motifs, there can be little doubt that the two stories are related.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, in our view, acceptance of the relationship leads inexorably to the conclusion that the Near Eastern tale is the older.

<sup>30</sup>Schlinghoff identifies a Jain reflex of the tale in which the wild man is actually the king’s long-lost brother (Schlinghoff 1973, 302–305.)

<sup>31</sup>See above fn. 2 for a selected list of scholars who support this conclusion.



Certainly the age of the Gilgamesh epic suggests this initially, but other factors support it as well. The idea that the tale of the wild man and the courtesan is an Indo-European story that made its way to the Near East seems unlikely, as there are no other identifiable Indo-European reflexes of the tale (at least, none that are known to us). Thus, while it is not reasonable to suppose that the shared tale originated in India and was carried over to Mesopotamia, it does seem more than reasonable to assume that the shared tale originated in Mesopotamia.

Our case is strengthened by a recent analysis of the Enkidu episode (Abusch 2005), for that analysis suggests that earlier versions of the Enkidu story may have resembled the story of a seduced Indian hermit even more closely than do the later versions. Although a hunter plays a role in the present episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, it is likely that a form of the episode of the wild man and courtesan existed independently of the epic and did not contain the hunter. Critical analysis suggests that originally the main characters in the episode were the courtesan and the wild man and that the courtesan seduced Enkidu without any involvement on the part of the hunter; the hunter was not part of the original tale, but was added to the text at a later stage of its development (Abusch 2005, 425–428; 2008). The reconstructed version involving only the wild man and the courtesan almost certainly took form separate from and independent of the larger Gilgamesh epic and would likely have been the form of the episode when it was first incorporated into the Gilgamesh epic (Abusch 2005, 428–429). Only after that episode was introduced into the Akkadian epic would the hunter have been added. Given the form of the Indian story, the present R̥śyaśṛṅga story would agree even more with a Mesopotamian version without a hunter than with the standard version of the epic.<sup>32</sup> Certainly, the putative existence of a version without the hunter strengthens the evidence from parallelism and our contention of relationship. But, all the same, we should reiterate that even if the reconstruction of a version without a hunter turns out to be mistaken, the agreements with the standard version suffice for our argument.

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<sup>32</sup>As an aside, we may mention that the dependence of the secondary layer of the R̥śyaśṛṅga story on a Mesopotamian prototype thus also provides further—though perhaps circular—proof of the existence of a form of the wild man-courtesan account without a hunter in Mesopotamia. Here, we may also note that the fact that the capture of the wild man by the courtesan is carried out at the suggestion of the king in both stories further supports the notion that the hunter was not part of the original Near Eastern story and that the hunter's father's suggestion was a duplication of Gilgamesh's idea that he take along a courtesan and not the original source of the plan. That the suggestion originated with Gilgamesh and was then carried over to the hunter's father, see (Abusch 2005, 425–428, 432–433 n. 45).

#### 4.7 Description of the Various Indic Versions of the Tale

There is, however, one obstacle to this otherwise straightforward identification of a parallel: the *Mahābhārata*'s version of the story is only one of many Indian variants, and other versions of the tale are far less similar to the story of Enkidu. The compositional date for these variants cannot be conclusively determined, for the texts were composed within broad and overlapping time periods (see fn. 8, above) and endlessly revised and edited. Generations of retellings of various tales resulted in a complex web of borrowings, influences, and counter-influences among various pieces of Indian literature. The oral preservation of narratives and the eventual commission of narratives to text are processes governed by the need to employ those narratives for new religious or ideological purposes; every re-telling will preserve hallmarks of the tale, but it will also update the story in ways that serve the narrator's own ends. In the case of the tale of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, we believe that analysis of the differences among the various versions offers a number of clues to each one's place in the tale's developmental trajectory, and we will now proceed to discuss these variants.

The story has been productive in India, and variants are found in both Hindu and Buddhist sources. In Hindu versions a prostitute seduces the innocent youth, while in the Buddhist sources princesses and a celestial nymph play the role of seductress. Extant versions of the tale in Sanskrit and Pali include the following:<sup>33</sup>

##### *Mahābhārata*, 3.110–113

As related above. At just over 100 verses, this is the longest of the Sanskrit versions; in this Hindu version of the tale a prostitute figures as the primary seductress in the body of the tale.

##### *Rāmāyaṇa*, I, 8–10

This Hindu version, also in Sanskrit, is roughly equivalent to that found in the *Mahābhārata*, though much abbreviated. Its sole deviation from the *Mahābhārata*, other than minor omissions, is that a group of prostitutes carries out the seduction. The interest value of this version is minimal since it is only told in order to establish the *bona fides* of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, who is called in to officiate at a horse sacrifice for Rāma's father, Daśaratha. It is quite short, just under 50 verses.

<sup>33</sup>Two additional sources make brief mentions of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, placing him as one element in a list of unusual births: the *Skanda Purāṇa* (III.iii.19.65) and the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghōṣa (IV: 19).

### **The Bengali Recension of the *Padma Purāṇa***

This third Sanskrit Hindu version differs from the *Mahābhārata* at only a few points: Rṣyaśṅga's mother is an enchanted princess in the form of a deer; the ruse of the herdsmen is not employed, instead Rṣyaśṅga himself goes out to implore his father not to destroy the city. At 78 verses, this is not quite as rich and detailed as the *Mahābhārata*'s version, but is longer than the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s.

### **The *Mahāvastu*'s *Jātaka* of *Nalinī***

In this Sanskrit Buddhist version the king's dilemma is the lack of an heir, rather than a conflict involving his priests. Accordingly, he sends his daughter Nalinī to "Ekaśṅga" to entice the boy into love and marriage; afterwards, it is revealed that the two have been married for a thousand previous lives. However, they have no sexual contact before the solemnizing of the union. In spite of his name, Ekaśṅga lacks a corresponding animal characteristic, though this is the only Sanskrit version in which the character interacts with animals after his birth, and it even contains a speaking role for Ekaśṅga's mother, the doe.

### ***Naḷinikā-Jātaka*, no. 526, Bk. XVIII of the *Jātakas***

In this Pali Buddhist version it is the innocent king who has been unwittingly embroiled in conflict between the gods and the holy man (the exact opposite of the *Mahābhārata*'s version). The holy man is now called Isisinga, and the god Sakka, threatened by his powerful meditations, causes a drought. When the king prays for a means of resolution to ease the suffering of his people, he is told that the boy must be seduced by the king's daughter Naḷinikā. She accomplishes this by impersonating another type of ascetic. When Isisinga's father discovers that he has been compromised, he explains to the boy how to resume the path of righteousness. There is no departure for the city, no anger of the father, and no marriage.

### ***Alambusā-Jātaka*, no. 523, Bk. XVII of the *Jātakas***

This second Pali Buddhist version contains a second story in which the powerful asceticisms of Isisinga have again caused celestial havoc. This time Sakka himself sends the nymph Alambusā to disrupt these austerities, but the seduction, though a short-term success in that it puts Isisinga into a coma-like sleep for three years, ultimately fails when he wakes and recalls his father's advice about women. The nymph departs, chastened, and reports back to Sakka who thanks her graciously.

The story is similar to the *Mahābhārata*'s tale of Viśvāmitra and Menakā,<sup>34</sup> and may well owe more to that tradition than to the Rśyaśrngā story.

The variants, though diverging widely in some respects, conform to certain observable trends of type and presentation, many of which involve motifs found elsewhere in Indian literature. It is therefore necessary to address the variants with an eye to understanding their relationship to one another and establishing a possible chronology of the story's evolution. The transformations, and therefore the versions which contain them, can be plotted along a gradient which moves from the unusual (in an Indic context) to the typical; in our estimation, the nature of the alterations provides valuable clues as to the direction of change.

#### 4.8 Assessment of the Relative Ages of the Variants of the Tale

The issue of priority among the versions was, of course, the primary focus of Lüders' 1897 study, which study has stood as the flashpoint of the discussion on chronology for some time. Lüders concluded, as discussed above, that the *Mahābhārata*'s story originally employed a princess as the seductress,<sup>35</sup> but was revised to reflect the Bengali Recension of the *Padma-Purāna*, which was, in his view, the originator of the prostitute-variation. Moreover, though he considered the existing Buddhist versions to have a "jüngere und schlechtere Form" (Lüders 1897, 126) of the tale than the Hindu versions, Lüders thought that they preserved an earlier element of the story, specifically: the princess as seductress. It is our contention that the prostitute is the original seductress in the tale, and that the character of the seductress is only one among a number of important factors in determining the priority of the versions. We will now address some of the transformations observable in the versions and their implications regarding the history and development of the narrative in India, with reference to Lüders' arguments where applicable.

##### 4.8.1 The Nature of the Seductress

The seduction of the youth is performed by one or more prostitutes in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in the Bengali Recension of the *Padma Purana*, and in the

<sup>34</sup>As told to Duḥśanta by Śakuntalā at *MBh.* 1.65.20–66.10.

<sup>35</sup>Others who disagree about the nature of the original seductress include (Pauly 1987–1988, 304–305): "Though Lüders has shown that two of the brahmanical versions of the legend (in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*) have substituted a courtesan for the princess of their own earlier versions, it cannot be taken for granted that a courtesan was not originally the seductress in the story. The two versions existed along with each other for a long time, and our texts do not permit us to decide which of the two versions is original in this respect." (Panaino 2001, 151 n.20; Schlinghoff 1973, 302–303; Williams 1925–1926, vol. 1, 34.)

*Mahābhārata*,<sup>36</sup> but by the princess Naḷinikā in the *Naḷinikā Jātaka* and in the *Mahāvastu*'s *Nalinika Jātaka*. In Lüders' analysis, as noted above, the princess is the original seductress, and the prostitute a later revision first introduced by the Bengali Recension of the *Padma-Purāṇa* and subsequently copied by the epic tales. Even if this sequence were not militated against by numerous other points to be discussed below, Lüders' reading, in and of itself, would still be untenable. On the basis of our reading of the tale in the *Mahābhārata* and the other variants, we feel that a prostitute must have been the original seductress. The alteration of a common motif (princesses abound in the *Mahābhārata*) to one less common (prostitutes) is simply not consonant with the standard trends of oral literature. The addition of a prostitute, in particular, is also in no way in character with the *Mahābhārata* as a whole; there is, in fact, only one other use of the word (*veśyā*) in the entire epic.<sup>37</sup> The use of a prostitute as the seductress thus seems to be a motif equally foreign to both Hindu and Buddhist traditions and unlikely to have been a later revision. Logically, the idea of a story independently evolving away from culturally accepted norms to become nearly identical with a foreign story (without the direct influence of that story) is not credible; the reverse is far more likely. Lüders' analysis also does not take account of (and even fails to allude to) the nymph-as-seductress of the *Alambusā Jātaka*, whose very existence provides strong evidence that the Buddhist versions were willing to tolerate more flexibility than the Hindu. Finally, the several name changes that the female protagonist undergoes (Śāntā, Nalinī, Naḷinikā, Alambusā) support the idea that her role was very much in flux.

#### 4.8.2 The Number of Seductions in the Tale

Lüders regarded the identity of the seductress as the key to understanding the evolution of the tale, a bias which, in our view, severely limits his ability to take other even more significant variations (such as the number of seductions) into account. There are three distinct acts which might be termed "seductions" in the *Mahābhārata* and *Padma-Purāṇa*: 1) Vibhāṇḍaka is seduced by the sight of the celestial nymph; 2) R̥śyaśṅga is seduced by the prostitute; and 3) Princess Śāntā marries R̥śyaśṅga (this will be discussed at length under Section 4.10, "Internal Analysis of the *Mahābhārata*'s R̥śyaśṅga Account"). This multiplicity of seductions contrasts sharply with the presence of only one seduction in the other versions, a seduction structurally equivalent to R̥śyaśṅga's seduction by the prostitute. This

<sup>36</sup>We remind the reader once again that when we talk of the tale of R̥śyaśṅga in the *Mahābhārata* in our comparison of the Indian variants we are referring to the body of the *Mahābhārata* tale at *MBh.* 110.30–113.10.

<sup>37</sup>This occurs at *MBh.* 3.231.10: *śakāṭāpaṇaveśyās ca yānayugyaṃ ca sarvaśaḥ*, a description of the camp-followers of an army.

superabundance suggests that the tale is a compound, the product (as we believe) of the combination, via borrowing, of two tales into one story, a combination created by the superimposition of one upon the other.

The first of the *Mahābhārata* and *Padma-Purāṇa*'s seductions is brought about by Vibhāṇḍaka's arousal and ejaculation at the sight of the celestial nymph Urvaśī. This version of the conception of the boy has been omitted in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and carefully de-sexualized in the three Buddhist versions: the production of the father's semen is either explained away as the result of a rich meal, as in the *Mahāvastu*, or not explained at all, as in the *Jātakas*. Significantly, this form of seduction (arousal at the sight of a nymph) is not so very different from the seduction of Isisinga in the *Alambusā Jātaka*, in which Alambusā is sent by the god Sakka to disrupt Isisinga's meditations.

The tale's second seduction, the primary narrative element of the tale, is that performed in the Hindu versions by the prostitute (*Mahābhārata* and *Padma-Purāṇa*) or prostitutes (*Rāmāyaṇa*). In the Buddhist versions, the prostitute has been removed: in the *Mahāvastu*, her role is taken over by the princess who marries Rṣyaśṅga; the *Naḷinikā* and *Alambusā Jātakas* go one step further and omit the marriage entirely and replace the seducing prostitute with, respectively, a princess and a nymph.

Our assessment of the *Alambusā* and *Naḷinikā Jātaka* versions, therefore, is that the *Mahābhārata*'s seductions of father (by nymph) and son (by prostitute/princess) were first conflated, and then split into separate stories. The two *Jātaka* tales clearly reference one another without providing any evidence of a shared temporal sequence, essentially acknowledging that they are two halves of a previous whole, with no attempt made to reconcile the different versions. This reinforces the idea that during the period of the composition of the *Jātakas* the tale was being revised for a new milieu and changing mores.

#### 4.8.3 The Name of the Wild Man

The changing name of the wild man (Rṣyaśṅga, Ekaśṅga, Isisinga) should be taken into account in the evaluation of priority. It is true that inexplicable name changes are not that uncommon in Indian literature, but, in this instance, the change in the wild man's name is, in our estimation, a critical issue in determining the time sequence of the tales. The name of Rṣyaśṅga (lit. "antelope-horn"), son of Vibhāṇḍaka, appears (though not in association with the specific narrative we have here) in quite early Hindu sources—the *Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brahmaṇa* (III, 40), the *Vaṃśabrāhmaṇa* (2), and the *Ārṣeyabrāhmaṇa* (VI, 5)—which almost certainly pre-date the earliest Buddhist occurrences of the character. Thus, it is likely that "Rṣyaśṅga" was the earliest name of the character to whom the

story was attached in India, and accordingly that the versions of the story in which the character's name is R̥śyaśṛṅga have the greater claim on being the original versions as well.

Further evidence that the Buddhist versions reflect later developments lies in the fact that the main character's name does not remain static, but alters over time, becoming "Ekaśṛṅga" (lit. "one-horn") in the *Mahāvastu*, and "Isisinga" (lit. "seer-horn") in the *Naḷinikā* and *Alambusā Jātakas*. Finally, in the *Digha Nikāya* Commentary (ii.370) and the Bharhut Tope, we find yet another version of the name: "Migasingi," the Pali version of Mṛgaśṛṅga, "deer-horn."

The "Isisinga" form is of particular interest to us, as it actually reflects a misunderstanding of the meaning of the original Sanskrit name, no doubt arising from the similarity of the words for "seer" (*r̥ṣi*), and "antelope" (*r̥śya*). In Pali, Sanskrit's vocalic *r* becomes *i* in word-initial position, both *ś* and *ṣ* become *s*, and *yo* goes to *ss*. Thus, the expected result from *R̥śyaśṛṅga* would be *Issasinga*, but the tales give us "Isisinga"; that is, *r̥śya* (antelope) is changed to *r̥ṣi*, and his name is no longer "antelope-horn" but "seer-horn." While it is within the realm of possibility that the reverse of this proposed sequence occurred, namely, that the names *Ekaśṛṅga* and/or *Isisinga* arose in legend or folktale earlier than the name *R̥śyaśṛṅga*, and that it is *R̥śyaśṛṅga* that is therefore either the corrupted form of the name or an unrelated character assimilated to the others on the basis of similarity in the names, our proposed sequence seems to be a better reading of the evidence.

#### 4.8.4 The Nature of the Crisis

In the *Mahābhārata*, the *Padma-Purāṇa*, and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as in *Gilgamesh*, it is offensive on the part of the king that require that the wild man be seduced and brought to the town. The Buddhist versions, however, have transformed the crisis in such a way as to exonerate the king. In the *Mahāvastu*, for example, the problem is the king's lack of a son, and the king himself has committed no wrong. In the *Naḷinikā Jātaka*, the king is a benevolent character, and the adversarial role has been transferred to the god Sakka, who, intimidated by Isisinga's flawless virtue, conceives of a plan to disrupt the *r̥ṣi*'s asceticism. The jealous god causes a three-year drought, and when the people suffer, the king arranges the seduction of the ascetic to appease the god. The *Alambusā Jātaka* eliminates both the king and the conflict; Sakka alone arranges the disruption of Isisinga's meditations.

#### 4.8.5 The Wild Man's Animal Characteristics

The texts' attention to the wild man's animal characteristics also varies. The three versions which utilize prostitutes also mention that *R̥śyaśṛṅga* possesses a horn

that gives him his name, while the horn goes unmentioned in the three Buddhist versions (though it seems to be present in some of the relevant Buddhist art depicting the tale).<sup>38</sup> The epic and puranic versions also contain a reference to hairiness through the king's name, Lomapāda or Romapada, "He whose feet are covered in body hair," though only the *Mahābhārata* describes Vibhāṇḍaka as hairy as well.

#### 4.8.6 The Nature of the Wild Man's Transformation

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for the direction of the tales' evolution lies in the shifting presentation of the transformation that the boy undergoes as a result of the seduction. In the *Mahābhārata*, the seductive powers of women may be an unwelcome distraction from the acquisition of spiritual potency, but they do not cause spiritual corruption. R̥ṣyaśṅga's awakening is not a fall from grace: ignorance is changed to understanding, not to bitterness or regret. In the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, and *Padma-Purāṇa*, the only negative consequence of R̥ṣyaśṅga's awakening is a sort of generational conflict with his father, and the seduction does absolutely nothing to compromise R̥ṣyaśṅga's virtue. In the *Mahāvastu*, we are in something of a middle ground: the piece is primarily a love story, the *ṛṣi*'s spiritual powers are of no importance because he is merely being recruited as a son and heir, and while the seduction causes him no spiritual setbacks, it is also not a physical seduction. In the *Jātakas*, on the other hand, consonant with a greater emphasis on the ascetic lifestyle as more rule-bound and result-oriented, the seduction has become an act of deliberate corruption and damaging sabotage.<sup>39</sup> This is particularly true in the *Alambusā Jātaka*, while in the *Naḷinikā Jātaka* the overall effect is softened somewhat by the altruistic motives of the princess. If the tale had originated in a Buddhist milieu, it seems unreasonable to imagine that a redactor would have replaced the harsh moral lessons of the *Jātakas* with the spiritually positive outcomes of the seduction of R̥ṣyaśṅga found in the *Mahābhārata*.

<sup>38</sup>See (Schlinghoff 1973, 305–306) for examples.

<sup>39</sup>Albright (Albright 1920, 330) also asserts that the corruptive power of the seduction is a Buddhist contribution to the tale: "The hermit relates the experience to his father, who admonishes him, and draws him back to his ascetic career; the last is naturally a Buddhist modification, quite foreign to the original tale."



#### 4.9 Summary and Conclusions Regarding the Chronology of the R̥śyaśṅga Story

The motif of the tempted or besotted ascetic occurs in many forms in Indian literature,<sup>40</sup> and clearly commanded considerable interest from audiences and composers alike, making this tale a magnet for revisions and variations on this theme. On the basis of our assessment of the variations noted above, but especially the form of the name, we conclude that the existing R̥śyaśṅga story in the *Mahābhārata* is the oldest Indic version of the tale and the others are later variations. The Buddhist versions appear to have evolved by reverting to stereotypical story patterns, especially regarding the king's character, the seductress, and the nature of the change wrought in R̥śyaśṅga. What we have attempted to display by means of this analysis of the variations in the tale is that the tale in the *Mahābhārata* is the closest one to an "original" Indic version and that the other versions are derivative. Accordingly we believe that the R̥śyaśṅga tale presently found in the *Mahābhārata* is the oldest Indic version of the tale of the wild man and the courtesan.

#### 4.10 Internal Analysis of the *Mahābhārata*'s R̥śyaśṅga Account

Finally, we must turn to one more issue with which Lüders' analysis was also concerned, that is, the issue of the preamble-body disconnect, and then to an analysis of the relationship between *Mahābhārata*'s preamble and the versions of the story. Thus far, in discussing the *Mahābhārata*'s narrative, we have treated only the central portion of the tale as it is found there (essentially that part found at *MBh.* 3.110.30–113.10, and referred to in this article as the "body" of the piece).<sup>41</sup> As stated above, appended to the front of the tale is a brief preamble (*MBh.* 3.110.1–10) in which the narrator, Lomaśa, loosely summarizes the story and the eldest Pāṇḍava brother, Yudhiṣṭhira, responds with a set of leading questions. The "body" of the narrative, as we have discussed it above, is quite straightforward, but a closer study of the body in conjunction with the preamble indicates that the body and preamble do not match and points to the existence of a number of irregularities and contradictions. Whereas Lüders saw these discrepancies as the result of a series of editorial re-workings designed to harmonize an original *Mahābhārata* version featuring a princess with the Bengali recension of the *Padma-Purāṇa*, we consider them to be the result

<sup>40</sup>In the *Mahābhārata* alone we have Viśvāmitra (1.65–66), Cyavana (3.122), Sunda and Upasunda (1.201–204), Triśiras (5.9). In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, cf. Māṇḍakarmī 3.11. The motif is particularly fascinating because it can be associated with a variety of positive or negative outcomes for *ṛṣi*, temptress, and any potential offspring.

<sup>41</sup>See Section 4.11 "Narrative Layers in the *Mahābhārata*," for an explanation of our terminology.

of a borrowing from an external source. Thus we do not agree with Lüders' conclusions; moreover, while we concur with Lüders on the importance of several of the textual problems he identified (Lüders 1897, 88–92), we feel that he did not take account of several significant issues. Let us now examine the preamble itself. It runs as follows:

*lomaśa uvāca*  
*eṣā devanādī punyā kauśikī bharatarṣabha*  
*viśvāmitrāśramo ramyo eṣa cātra prakāśate 1*  
*āśramaś caiva punyārvayaḥ kāśyapasya mahātmanaḥ*  
*ṛśyaśṅgaḥ suto yasya tapasvī samyatendriyaḥ 2*  
*tapaso yaḥ prabhāvena varṣyāmāsa vāsavam*  
*anāvṛṣṭaryāṃ bhayādyaśya vavarṣa balavṛtrahā 3*  
*mṛgyāṃ jātaḥ sa tejasvī kāśyapasya sutaḥ prabhuh*  
*viṣaye lomapādasya yaś cakārādbhutaṃ mahat. 4*  
*nivartiteṣu sasyeṣu yasmai śāntāṃ dadau nṛpaḥ*  
*lomapādo duhitaraṃ sāvitṛṃ savitā yathā 5*  
*yudhiṣṭhīra uvāca*  
*ṛśyaśṅgaḥ kathaṃ mṛgyāṃ utpannaḥ kāśyapātmanajaḥ*  
*viruddhe yoniśamsarge kathaṃ ca tapasā yutaḥ. 6*  
*kimarthaṃ ca bhayāc chakras tasya bālasya dhīmataḥ*  
*anāvṛṣṭaryāṃ pravṛttāyāṃ vavarṣa balavṛtrahā. 7*  
*kathaṃ rupā ca śāntābhūd rājaputrī yatavratā*  
*lobhayāmāsa yā ceto mṛgabhūtasya tasya vai. 8*  
*lomapādaś ca rājarsir yadāśrūyata dhārmikāḥ*  
*kathaṃ vai viṣaye tasya nāvṛṣṭatpākaśāśanaḥ. 9*  
*etan me bhagavan sarvaṃ vistareṇa yathātatham*  
*vaktum arhasi śuśrūṣor ṛśyaśṅgasya ceṣṭitam. 10*  
*(MBh. 3.110.1–10)*

Lomaśa said:

1. This, O Bull of the Bhāratas is the divine sacred river Kauśikī; and here shines forth the charming hermitage of Viśvāmitra,
2. And also, O Great-Souled One, the hermitage called Punyā, of Kāśyapa's son, Ṛśyaśṅga, powerful, and of controlled senses,
3. Who, by the power of his *tapas*, caused Vāsava to rain in a drought; from fear of him the slayer of Bala and Vṛtra rained.
4. That *ṛsi* was conceived upon a deer, the powerful son of Kāśyapa. He performed this great wonder in the kingdom of Lomapāda.
5. When the crops had been restored, the king gave Śāntā to him—Lomapāda [gave] his daughter as Savitṛ did Sāvitrī.

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

6. How was Ṛṣyaśṅga, the son of Kāśyapa, born from the deer in prohibited sexual congress, and how was he engaged with *tapas*?
7. Why, out of fear of the boy, endowed with wisdom, did Śakra, the slayer of Bala and Vṛtra, rain in the ongoing drought?
8. How great was the beauty of the strict-vowed princess Śāntā, she who seduced his consciousness, when indeed he was living as a deer?
9. It has been heard that Lomapāda was a dharmic royal *ṛṣi*— Why indeed did the Chastiser of Pāka not rain in his kingdom?
10. Lord, all of this to me carefully as it happened you ought to tell; I want to hear the ways of Ṛṣyaśṅga.

In contrast to the body of the story, the tale anticipated by this preamble is one in which Lomapāda is a law-abiding king, both Ṛṣyaśṅga and Śāntā play active roles, the gods involve themselves, and fear generated by Ṛṣyaśṅga's powers is a critical element. All of the above hallmarks of the preamble are absent from the body of the story in the *Mahābhārata*. Introductory question-and-answer exchanges are not uncommon in the beginning of an embedded narrative, but they are typically restricted to a few pertinent (and accurate) questions about the nature of the tale to come or about some background information not handled in the body of the story.<sup>42</sup> In this case, the exchange in the preamble is not only especially long and detailed, but is also unusual in that it contains material that inaccurately represents, or even contradicts, the storyline of the body. Elements found in the preamble that do not agree with the story are as follows.

#### 4.10.1 Ṛṣyaśṅga Was Extremely Powerful (śl. 2, 3)

The body of the tale contains no suggestion of Ṛṣyaśṅga's power whatsoever. If anyone in the tale generates fear, it is Vibhāṇḍaka, not the harmless and gentle Ṛṣyaśṅga. Śl. 6 of the preamble also asks "how was he engaged with *tapas*?" another issue that is never really adequately addressed by the tale.

#### 4.10.2 Indra Was Afraid of Ṛṣyaśṅga

Indra's fear is expressed twice in the preamble, in śl. 3 (Indra rained "out of fear of [Ṛṣyaśṅga]") and śl. 7, Yudhiṣṭhira's second question ("Why did Śakra, slayer

<sup>42</sup>Cf. the various other preambular statements attached to the front of stories in this section: *Agastya* 3.94.2–3; *The Meeting of the Vṛṣṇis and Pāṇḍavas* 3.119.1–2; *Cyavana* 3.121.20–25; *Māndhātara* 3.125.23, 126.1–4; *Jantu* 3.127.1; *Aṣṭāvakra* 3.132.1–5; *Bharadvāja* 3.135.9–11. None of these exceed five verses, and none contain material that contradicts the story about to be told.

of Bala and Vṛtra, out of fear of the wise boy, rain in the ongoing drought?”).<sup>43</sup> These statements anticipate a tale that describes some form of interaction or an ongoing relationship between Rṣyaśṅga and Indra. However, no mention is made of Indra’s fear of the boy in the body of the tale, where Indra’s role is nearly nonexistent (only one verse at *MBh.* 3.113.10).

#### 4.10.3 Rṣyaśṅga’s Power Ended the Drought

*Śloka* 3 of the preamble specifically says that it was “by the power of [Rṣyaśṅga’s] *tapas* he caused Vāsava [Indra] to rain.” This does not accord with *MBh.* 3.113.10, in the body of the tale, where there is no further mentions of Indra’s fear, and no actions on the boy’s part are ever narrated. Indra simply sends the rain as soon as Rṣyaśṅga has been installed in the women’s quarters. Similarly, the preamble’s assertion in *śl.* 4 that Rṣyaśṅga “performed a great wonder,” also suggests more activity on the boy’s part than merely being abducted and locked up as a kind of talisman.

Rṣyaśṅga’s apparently passive role in the bringing of the rains also ties in with a general imbalance in the import of the drought as it is presented in the preamble and in the body. Though the drought is the central issue of the preamble and looms large in the opening of the tale, by the conclusion of the narrative it has been largely replaced by the issue of the pacification of the irate *rṣi*, and the actual account of its resolution at *MBh.* 3.113.10 occupies only half a verse.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4.10.4 Antelope/Deer Alteration

Rṣyaśṅga’s name, “Antelope-Horn,” raises an interesting issue in respect to a slight irregularity regarding the narrative’s use of the words *mṛga* “deer” and *rṣya* “male antelope.” The terms are to some degree interchangeable in Sanskrit (that is, all *rṣyas* are *mṛgas*, but not all *mṛgas* are *rṣyas*), but their use in this story is sharply delineated. *Rṣya*, the more specific term, is used only in the character’s name and in the explanation of the name at *MBh.* 3.110.17: *tasya Rṣyaśṅgam sirasi*, “on his head was an antelope horn.” Every reference to the doe that bore him understandably employs the far more common *mṛga* (3.110.4, 6, 14, 16). Thus

<sup>43</sup>Note also that the Indra’s relationship to the drought and rain is also constructed differently in the *MBh.* preamble than it is in the Buddhist versions that contain a drought; in the Buddhist tales the drought, not the rain, is caused by Indra’s fear of the ascetic’s powers, whereas the *MBh.* preamble claims that Indra sends the drought as punishment for the king’s lack of sacrifices and rains out of fear of Rṣyaśṅga.

<sup>44</sup>Schlinghoff (1973, 304–305), too, felt that the drought and its resolution seem extraneous to the tale; in order to provide a motivation for the abduction, he adduces the Jain tale of Valkalacīrin, which he believes to be cognate with the Rṣyaśṅga story and which features a wild man seduced and brought to the city by prostitutes because he is the king’s long lost brother.

far, the irregularity may simply be an issue of venery and reflect the alteration of the terms for buck and doe. Less clear, however, is 3.110.8 in the opening summary, where Ṛśyaśṅga himself is referred to as a *mṛga*:

*kathaṃ rupā ca śāntābhūd rājaputrī yatavratā.  
lobhayāmāsa yā ceto mṛgabhūtasya tasya vai.  
(MBh. 3.110.8)*

How great was the beauty of the strict-vowed princess Śāntā,  
she who seduced his consciousness when indeed he was living as a  
*mṛga*?

But the alteration of terms is only one facet of the difficulties we encounter in 3.110.8, and below we continue a discussion of this problematic verse.

#### 4.10.5 Ṛśyaśṅga's Life as a Deer

While the body of the Sanskrit tale reports in detail that Ṛśyaśṅga, though horned, lives in the style of an ascetic, *MBh.* 3.110.8, claims that Ṛśyaśṅga was seduced, literally “while his being was that of a deer,” (*mṛgabhūtasya*<sup>45</sup> *tasya vai*), in apparent contradiction to the rest of the narrative. Elsewhere, the story never indicates that Ṛśyaśṅga lived in either the form or the manner of a deer; rather, it emphatically states that he lived as an ascetic, though possessed of an antelope's horn. Thus, we read this reference to his life “while his being was that of a deer” as an indication that these opening questions were originally intended to accompany either a story in which an ascetic lives in the *manner* of a deer (*mṛgacāriṇī*), as Yayāti's daughter Mādhavī does at *MBh.* 5.118.7 and 5.119.20, 24, or, perhaps, in the *form* of a deer (*mṛgo bhūtvā*, “having become a deer”), as is the form of the *ṛṣi* who curses Pāṇḍu for killing him as he mates with his doe at *MBh.* 1.109.<sup>46</sup> The suggestion that Ṛśyaśṅga lived in deer-shape grounds the

<sup>45</sup>Mss Ś<sub>1</sub>, K<sub>1</sub>, and K<sub>2</sub> read *mṛgarūpasya*, “in the form of a deer,” a variant equally far removed from the actual content of the body of the tale.

<sup>46</sup>In a similar passage at *MBh.* 3.139.1–10, an unwitting son sees his ascetic father wrapped in a black antelope skin walking at night in the hermitage and, mistaking him for an actual antelope, kills him with an arrow. There are profound and widespread associations between *ṛṣis* and antelope/deer, from their propensity to assume deer form to the black antelope skins that formed part of the standard accoutrements of a *ṛṣi* (as in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1:1:4:11: “He now takes the black antelope skin, for completeness of the sacrifice. For once upon a time the sacrifice escaped the gods, and having become a black antelope roamed about. The gods having thereupon found it and stripped it of its skin, they brought it (the skin) away with them”). This issue of *ṛṣis* living as deer may perhaps even be one of the details that precipitated the adoption and modification of the tale; the transplanted wild man character may very well have fallen into the role of an *ṛṣi* because of this longstanding association between *ṛṣis* and antelopes.

preamble of the tale in story-patterns found elsewhere in the epic, heightening the contrast between preamble and body.

#### 4.10.6 Princess Śāntā Was the Seductress

Another crux to be found in the introduction to the story regards the seduction of Ṛśyaśṛṅga. *MBh.* 3.110.8 suggests that it was the princess Śāntā who first lured the ascetic: “she who seduced his consciousness.”<sup>47</sup> This is, of course, the line that led Lüders to his conclusion that the *Mahābhārata* had originally contained a version closer to that of the *Mahāvastu* or the *Naḷinikā Jātaka*. However, the rest of the tale is emphatic in its assertion that the seduction was performed by the nameless *veśyā* (“courtesan”) who first appears when she is selected by the procuress:

*tato duhitaraṃ veśyā samādhāyetikṛtyatām  
dṛṣṭvāntaraṃ kāśyapasya prāhiṇodbuddhisammatām  
sā tatra gatvā kuśalā taponityasya saṃnidhau  
āshramaṃ taṃ samāsāḍya dadarśa taṃ ṛṣeḥ sutam  
(MBh. 3.111.5–6)*

Then the [chief] *veśyā*, having considered what needed to be done, seeing the departure of Kāśyapa, dispatched her daughter known for her intelligence.

The clever girl, having gone there, to the vicinity of the ascetic, having entered the hermitage, she saw the *Ṛṣi*’s son.

The contradiction between 3.110.8 and 3.111.5–6 cannot be resolved. It forms a significant crux and provides clear evidence of a disconnect between the preamble and the body of the episode.<sup>48</sup> The seduction by the prostitute takes up the bulk of the story and is, in fact, the entire point of the tale. The preamble’s attribution of the seduction to Princess Śāntā cannot be reconciled with the rest of the text. Indeed, within the context of *Mahābhārata* as a whole, the seduction by the *veśyā* is a glaring anomaly. However, the *Mahābhārata* does have many stories of princesses who take an active role in finding husbands or who cause men to fall in love with them through more demure behavior. It may well be that in an earlier phase of the development of this tale, Princess Śāntā seduces his heart in a manner not unlike that in which Śakuntalā seduces Duṣanta’s (*MBh.* 1.65–66), Sukanyā Cyavana’s (*MBh.* 3.122–123), or Sāvitrī Satyavan’s (*MBh.* 3.277–

<sup>47</sup>Buitenen (1973–1975, vol. 2, 443) renders *cetas* here with the more contextually conventional “heart,” but “consciousness” is the more common meaning.

<sup>48</sup>As noted earlier, Lüders (1897, 100) recognized the difficulties presented by this verse.

283), making the alleged seduction simply another slightly unusual *svayamvara* (bridegroom-choice).

#### 4.10.7 Lomapāda Was a Just King (śl. 9)

Though Lomapāda has apparently redeemed himself by the end of the tale, disrespectful treatment of Brahmins is a serious crime. As discussed above in Section 4.5, “Parallel Elements in the Stories of Enkidu and R̥śyaśṅga,” the body of the narrative even contains a faint suggestion that the king’s mistreatment of his priests was of a sexual nature.

#### 4.10.8 Vibhāṅḍaka Had Intercourse with the Deer

Śl. 6 has Yuddhiṣṭhira ask “How was R̥śyaśṅga, the son of Kāśyapa, born from the deer in prohibited sexual congress?” Every other version of the tale is scrupulous in eliminating any possible suggestion of sexual contact between Vibhāṅḍaka and the deer; and in the body of this version the deer is impregnated by the accidental ingestion of semen, rather than via sexual contact. However, the phenomenon of ascetics in deer form engaging in sexual activity is far from unknown (as described above in Section 4.10.5) and may well have been a part of the *Mahābhārata*’s tale in an earlier phase of this narrative’s development.

#### 4.10.9 The Desertion of the Brahmins

The Sanskrit story contains an interesting crux at the point of the narrative when the king’s problem is discussed. At *MBh.* 3.110.20, the brahmins desert Lomapāda in response to his behavior. Among those who have deserted the king, so the next verse reveals, is the royal *purohita*, the absence of whose sacrifices angers the gods and causes them to withhold the monsoon so that the people suffer. Lomapāda’s reaction to the brahmins’ abandonment is to consult brahmins, and this second group of priests assists him in formulating a plan. One of their number advises him to capture R̥śyaśṅga, and the king accepts the suggestion and begins to make amends for his previous misdeeds:

*etacchrutvā vaco rājan kṛtvā niṣkṛtim ātmanah  
sa gatvā punar āgacchat prasanneṣu dvijātiṣu  
rājānam āgatam dr̥ṣtvā pratisamjagrhuḥ prajāh  
(MBh. 3.110.27)*

Upon hearing these words the king performed expiation for himself,  
Having gone away again, he returned when the brahmins were satis-

fied,

Having seen the king returned, the subjects took him back.

The presence of two sets of brahmins seems excessive. Where does the second group of Brahmins come from? To be sure, nothing in the narrative is irresolvable, but it is unnecessarily cumbersome as it stands.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, though *MBh.* 110.21 refers to the subjects' misery, it does not anticipate the suggestion at *MBh.* 3.110.27f. that the subjects may actually have been on the brink of rebellion as well.

Prominent among the above irregularities are a number of elements that are portrayed differently in the preamble and in the body of the story (dharmic Lomapāda/unjust Lomapāda, dynamic Rśyaśṅga/passive Rśyaśṅga, *mṛga/rśya*, living as a deer/living as a brahmacārin, Princess Śāntā/nameless courtesan), with the result that the summary not only fails to accurately foreshadow the contents of the narrative, but actually contradicts them.

In our opinion, the issue of the preamble's difficulties is also connected to a similar awkwardness at the ending of the tale. While the body forms a seamless whole with no internal contradictions, after *MBh.* 3.113.11 the ending of the episode undergoes another puzzling shift. Rśyaśṅga is whisked off to the harem, and the focus shifts to Vibhāṇḍaka's journey to the city and the abatement of his wrath. We are never given any particulars about the resolution of the drought or Rśyaśṅga's role in stopping it, issues that are rather important in the Buddhist versions.

#### 4.11 Narrative Layers in the *Mahābhārata*

We believe that the best way to explain these discrepancies is to assume that the present text is made up of two accounts, the later superimposed upon the earlier. In our reconstruction, the story of a wild man seduced by a prostitute at the command of a scandal-embroiled king has been grafted onto a pre-existing tale, whose remnants we see in the preamble: the story of a powerful ascetic and his conflict with Indra. From the conclusion of the current story, we may also infer that this ascetic, or his son, marries a princess and produces a male child. We therefore analyze the structure of the existing story in the *Mahābhārata* as follows:

##### 110.1–15 Preamble and Opening

This section includes the opening questions plus the establishment of the locus of the tale and is a vestige of the original Indian tale in the *Mahābhārata*. It contains

<sup>49</sup>As Lüders (1897, 90) remarks: "Wie kann der König die Brahmanen um Rat fragen, von denen eben gesagt ist, daß sie ihn im Zorn verlassen haben!"



no reference to any of the motifs found in the wild man/prostitute story that we identify with the body of the tale. The converse of this is also true: aside from the necessary details of R̥śyaśṅga's parentage, the only parts of the story that the preamble anticipates correctly are those that occur at the ending of the tale.

### **110.16–29 First Transitional Area**

Here, the two narrative layers are spliced together, resulting in minor redundancies: the two sets of Brahmins, as well as the uncertainty as to whether the subjects are also in revolt.

### **110.30–113.10 Body**

Here, the story of a wild man who is seduced by a prostitute has been incorporated and adapted to its new cultural milieu. This adaptation includes, for example, a more stylized scene of seduction, and the conversion of the wild man into an ascetic, as well as the humorous presentation of R̥śyaśṅga as charmingly ignorant of human gender.

### **113.11–113.18 Second Transitional Area**

Here, the visit to the herdsmen (which originated in the body) and the father's wrath (which came from the original underlying tale) are combined, and the father visits the herdsmen instead of his son.

### **113.19–113.24 Ending**

Here, the text retains the climax and resolution of the original underlying tale—the marriage to the princess—now attached to the story of the wild man and the courtesan.

The suggestion that the body of the R̥śyaśṅga story is a borrowing is also generally supported by the context in which the tale is found in the *Mahābhārata*, the section referred to as the *Tour of the Sacred Fords* (*Tūrthayātrāparvan*). A number of the tales found in this section are Vedic in origin;<sup>50</sup> others appear to be folktales or local legends.<sup>51</sup> The opportunity for the exchange of stories and information has always been an attractive feature of pilgrimage sites; the *Tour* is thus a logical clearinghouse for a wide variety of borrowings or accretions.

<sup>50</sup>E.g., Agastya (*MBh.* 3.94–108), Sukanyā (*MBh.* 3.121–125).

<sup>51</sup>E.g., the irascibility of Mt. R̥ṣabha (*MBh.* 3.109).

Situating the tales at the fords is likely a tacit acknowledgement of their varying provenances; we shall later revisit the issue of what might constitute acceptable sources for borrowing.

#### 4.12 The Relationship of the Preamble to Other Versions of the Tale

We cannot leave this part of our discussion of the R̥śyaśṛṅga tale and take up the question of borrowing before raising and discussing the issue of whether or not the preamble might simply reflect other versions of the R̥śyaśṛṅga story, which, as we have seen, in some cases stray quite profoundly from the tale as it is found in the body of the *Mahābhārata*'s version. If so, this might contradict our results and suggest that these other versions are earlier.

In fact, some of the elements in the preamble are quite reminiscent of those in the other tales. For example, the assertions in *śl.* 2–3 that R̥śyaśṛṅga was extremely powerful would be an accurate description of the character as he appears in the *Naḷinikā and Alambusā Jātakas*. The preamble's statement that the princess was the seductress is appropriate to both the *Mahāvastu* and the *Naḷinikā Jātaka*, excepting that her name in the other versions is not Śāntā, but Naḷinī or Naḷinikā. Also, the assertion that Lomapāda was a just king, in *śl.* 9, is far more descriptive of the kings in the Buddhist versions (the *Mahāvastu* and the *Naḷinikā Jātaka*) than it is of Lomapāda.

However, other elements featured in the preamble are equally out of place in the other versions, including the idea that R̥śyaśṛṅga's power was somehow directly instrumental in ending the drought: *śl.* 3 declares that "from fear of him the slayer of Bala and Vṛtra rained," which is at odds with the *Naḷinikā Jātaka*'s account, in which it is the *breaking* of R̥śyaśṛṅga's power that satisfies the god; and the *Mahāvastu* and the *Alambusā Jātaka* contain no drought at all. The statement that R̥śyaśṛṅga was seduced "while his being was that of a deer," is also not found in any of the other versions of the tale, nor is the idea that Vibhāṇḍaka may have had intercourse with the deer; in fact, every other version of the tale is careful to explain away any possibility of sexual contact between ascetic and deer (both these issues were discussed in greater detail above under "Internal Analysis of the *Mahābhārata*'s R̥śyaśṛṅga Account").

Therefore, in view of the fact that every narrative element shared between the Buddhist versions and the preamble is a fairly common and typical motif of Indic literature, we feel that the resemblances are best explained as a consequence of the assimilation by the Buddhist derivatives to other typical Indian tales and the absorption of those typical features. That is, their evolution caused them to become less, rather than more, unique: the Buddhist versions of the tale took on

a semblance of uniformity with the typical Indian tale that formed the original preamble version.

### 4.13 Origins and Transmission of the Tale

Especially in view of the absence (as far as we know) of an Indo-European or earlier Indic version of a wild man prostitute story, the composite nature of the R̥śyaśṛṅga story and its present location in the *Mahābhārata* (a tale-within-a-tale in the storehouse of disconnected material) suggest that the body of the present R̥śyaśṛṅga story is a borrowing. In view of, first, our conclusion that the R̥śyaśṛṅga story drew its wild man-courtesan layer from elsewhere and second, the obvious relationship of the accounts in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, it is evident that the wild man account in the *Mahābhārata* derives—though perhaps at some remove—from a Mesopotamian source. In fact, there are other episodes in the “Tour of the Sacred Fords” with possible Near Eastern relations,<sup>52</sup> and it may be that their proximity to one another is evidence of their common Near Eastern background.

The Mesopotamian source of the R̥śyaśṛṅga tale is probably some form of the Enkidu story known from the Epic of Gilgamesh. But the form is not yet certain, for while it is possible that both the R̥śyaśṛṅga and the Enkidu stories derive from a common Near Eastern ancestor, the Indian tale may derive from a form of the Epic of Gilgamesh itself. But given the absence of a hunter both in the R̥śyaśṛṅga tale and in the original form of the Mesopotamian wild man tale, it is likely that the R̥śyaśṛṅga story derives from an independent story of the Wild Man and the Prostitute that existed either prior to the latter’s incorporation into the Epic of Gilgamesh or that continued to circulate alongside the epic after the incorporation. Of course, there is no objection to assuming that it derived from the epic itself after the tale was incorporated into it, but then this derivation would likely have taken place before the hunter became part of the epic.

Two final questions remain to be addressed: first, when was the story incorporated into the *Mahābhārata*, and second, how and when was the story transmitted from the Near East to India? The following sections will treat these issues separately.

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<sup>52</sup>Matsya (*MBh.* 3.185), which has pronounced similarities to the Mesopotamian Flood story, and the “Colloquy of the Brahmin and the Hunter” (*MBh.* 3.198–206), which resembles a great deal of Near Eastern wisdom literature.

#### 4.14 The Tale's Incorporation into the *Mahābhārata*

We have already discussed at length the evidence that we perceive for the existence of “layers” in the Indian tale. Whatever the time period of the tale’s introduction to India, our reconstruction of the story’s layering supports the idea of a late addition of the Near Eastern overlay onto the pre-existing story in the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>53</sup>

As was noted earlier in Section 4.11, “Narrative Layers in the *Mahābhārata*,” a number of the tales found in this section of the *Mahābhārata* are Vedic, though others appear to be folktales or local legends; by situating the tales at a pilgrimage site, the compilers may have been acknowledging the varied sources of their material. But, though the tales may range widely in origin, it seems likely that at the time of their adoption all of them must have already circulated in Hindu society for quite some time; inclusion in the epic supports this, and a conceit of the *Tīrthayātrāparvan* is that its stories are equivalent to the Vedas in merit. The populist-yet-conservative ethos of the book is expressed in repeated assertions that the merit of bathing at the fords and of hearing their associated tales is accessible to those unable to afford expensive sacrifices. Thus, folktales would be a logical and acceptable vehicle for relaying the merit that can be awarded to a pilgrim, but obvious borrowings from abroad would seem unlikely to have been deemed acceptable to the compilers of the section. This suggests that a Near Eastern tale would have had to have circulated in India for some time before it would have been considered eligible for inclusion in the epic. On the face of it, this supports an earlier date for the borrowing, but whether this

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<sup>53</sup>See below under “Mode and Time of Transmission” for chronological parameters. Fleming and Milstein (*The Buried Foundation of the Gilgamesh Epic*) contend that the story of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and Huwawa is the nucleus around which the OB epic of Gilgamesh was created. They think that the prostitute was used in the original Huwawa narrative to bring Enkidu to Gilgamesh in Uruk; but this Enkidu was a herdsman and not a wild man, and therefore no process of humanization and acculturation was involved. Upon this earlier narrative was imposed the new construction that we find in the OB epic. This new construction that highlighted Enkidu the wild man and Shamhat the prostitute who humanizes him involved (among other things) the introduction of the tale of seduction and acculturation presently preserved in the OB Penn tablet. As for the harlot, though she originally served in the Akkadian Huwawa narrative to bring Enkidu to Gilgamesh, her role underwent a major expansion with the creation of the OB epic and the imposition of the new Enkidu character upon the older one. We find Fleming and Milstein’s argument convincing. More to the point, we believe that their argument supports our argument, and ours theirs, for we have argued that the *Mahābhārata* version underwent a similar transformation and that the wild man and prostitute were superimposed upon an earlier tale of a sage, king, and princess. Accordingly, parallel developments seem to have taken place in both the Mesopotamian and Indian spheres. While this may be only an interesting coincidence, the fact that literary developments along the same lines took place in this story in both Mesopotamia and India is generally supportive of the developments we have posited.

process of being absorbed and accepted by Hindu culture would have been the work of decades or of centuries remains unclear.<sup>54</sup>

#### 4.15 Mode and Time of Transmission

The matter of the tale's arrival on the subcontinent is a thorny one. While it is possible that a folktale version simply diffused from West to East in a slow overland crawl, more direct contact may also be suggested. Two broad possible periods for transmission between Mesopotamia and India suggest themselves, the first sometime roughly between 2400–1700 BCE, and the second from 500 BCE–200 CE.<sup>55</sup> We will explore both scenarios, beginning with the later one.

##### 4.15.1 Later Scenario: Approximately 500 BCE–200 CE

This scenario carries the advantage of allowing ample opportunity for the story to move from the Near East to India; for the period from the Achaemenid domination of Gandhara to the final phases of the assemblage of the *Mahābhārata* provides a generous span of time during which there was plenty of documented contact and political interaction between the two cultural areas.<sup>56</sup> On the surface, this appears to be the more reasonable choice, though the specifics of the transmission must then remain at the level of broad and rough conjecture. But we should note that this scenario carries hidden pitfalls. As discussed above in the section treating the story's incorporation into the *Mahābhārata*, one difficulty is the identification of a path and timetable that might bring the story to India early enough for it to become properly Hinduized.

To our minds, however, a more serious obstacle to transmission within this time period is the issue of the figure of the hunter in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. As discussed above (Section 4.6, “Summary of the Comparison of the Two Narratives”), we believe the absence of a hunter in the Indian version strongly suggests that the Indian tale was drawn either from a free-standing folktale without a hunter or from the *Gilgamesh Epic* prior to the inclusion of the hunter. Therefore, we are

<sup>54</sup>It is the hope of the authors that closer examination of the other possible Near Eastern borrowings from “The Tour of the Sacred Fords” (as described in fn. 52) may shed further light on this matter.

<sup>55</sup>As noted above (fn. 7), the *Mahābhārata* seems to have been assembled and edited between the fourth century BCE and the fourth century CE. Here, we have chosen the date 200 CE as a *terminus ante quem* for the entry of the tale into India, on the basis of the evidence of the *Physiologus* (Schlinghoff 1973, 301), for that Greek text was composed circa 200 CE, and it already incorporates elements borrowed from our Indian story. Hence, the last date for the entry of the tale into India cannot be later than 200 CE, though of course the tale could have entered the *Mahābhārata* even later than it was taken up by the *Physiologus*.

<sup>56</sup>For contact and borrowing during the first millennium BCE, see, e.g., (Pingree 1998, 127–128, 130–132).

somewhat uneasy about deriving the Indian tale directly from the Near Eastern epic during this later period.

Written versions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* are known from numerous first millennium BCE copies, but there is no reason to believe that a version of the epic without the hunter existed during that millennium. There remains the possibility that the tale of the wild man and the courtesan may perhaps have been transmitted even during the first millennium BCE as an independent tale, for, to be passed to India sometime after the middle of the Sixth Century BCE, the tale of the wild man and the courtesan would have had to have continued to circulate in the Near East. Unfortunately, we have no direct evidence that such an independent tale circulated either orally or in writing during the first millennium BCE. Perhaps it did not, for had the story remained in circulation during the first millennium BCE, it seems probable that it would have resurfaced at some point in Near Eastern literature, if not in a Greek or Latin borrowing or in an aggregative source such as Herodotus or Athenaeus.<sup>57</sup> It is therefore possible that the tale passed out of circulation at all points west of the Indus Valley, at least until the Indic variant resurfaced in the West as the Unicorn legend.<sup>58</sup>

These two factors (the absence of a hunter figure in the Indian version and the lack of evidence that the tale without a hunter was still in circulation in the Near East) make us wonder about this later time-frame for transmission. However, given the speculative nature of this part of our reconstruction, these difficulties are not of the magnitude to invalidate this later time-frame. But these difficulties do exist, and there is also an argument to be made for an earlier transmission of the tale.

#### 4.15.2 Earlier Scenario: 2400–1700 BCE

Contact between Mesopotamia and the civilizations of the Indus Valley at Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, and similar sites is well-documented during the latter part of the third millennium and into the Old Babylonian period.<sup>59</sup> Since an early

<sup>57</sup>But note that Moran (1991, 121–127) makes a case that a passage in Ovid may reflect the ancient Near Eastern tale's central philosophical idea of sexual love as a civilizing/humanizing force. According to Moran, Ovid's description of primitive man and his humanization derives from an earlier tradition of acculturation through sex in which the participants are a man and his wife, rather than a man or wild man and a prostitute. The tale of Enkidu and the prostitute may well have had its roots in similar Near Eastern tales of the civilizing of early man (cf. Abusch 2005, 429).

<sup>58</sup>See, e.g., (van Buitenen 1973–1975, vol. 2, 188–1939; Schlinghoff 1971, 51–64; Panaino 2001).

<sup>59</sup>See, e.g., (Parpola 1993, 57–64), who gives a general survey of comparable elements in the two societies; cf. also (Dalley 1998, 14–15): "Contact deduced from goods found within Mesopotamia has been traced in the form of etched carnelian beads, stamp and cylinder seals featuring elephants and characteristically Indian cattle. There are no *bullae* of clay impressed with cylinder seals from the Indus, or terracotta cone mosaics, and it appears as if the contact between the two regions was

form of the Mesopotamian tale of the wild man and the courtesan would have existed prior to the composition of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in the Old Babylonian period, the borrowing may have occurred while the Indus Valley civilization still flourished, some time between 2400–1700 BCE, thus perhaps even prior to the composition of the Old Babylonian version of the epic. Merchants, or even traveling storytellers, could have introduced the story into the Indus Valley, and the fact that the two cultures seemed to have been receptive to one another's influence on at least some levels<sup>60</sup> increases the likelihood that the tale would have been embraced and preserved.<sup>61</sup>

Though the advanced level of society represented at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro eventually went into decline, folktale is known for its remarkable durability in the face of cultural and political upheaval. The tale may well have enjoyed its own life on Indian soil for well over a millennium before being incorporated into the great epic.

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both later in time and of a kind different from that which is traceable in Egypt and along the upper Euphrates. It seems to have lasted from around 2500 BCE until the Indus cities were destroyed after some 700 years of splendor, with textual evidence from the cities of lower Mesopotamia in particular revealing that textiles and foodstuffs flowed eastwards. Just as happened earlier, some of the ideas and skills of Mesopotamian society were adopted in an area which had already become quite cultured, but the resulting development looked very different from the form it took elsewhere.”

<sup>60</sup>For example, Akkadian-style cylinder seals with Akkadian-style carving have been found in the Indus Valley, and the two cultures were avid trade partners. The archeologist W. A. Fairservis believed that a seal showing a male figure overpowering two tigers reflected a Gilgamesh motif imported from Mesopotamia (Fairservis 1971, 275). Note again the quote from Dalley, above.

<sup>61</sup>This hypothesis may even be supported by material evidence. It is difficult to resist the temptation to connect the tale's theme of the horned *brahmacarin* with the famous Indus Valley seals depicting horned and ithyphallic figures seated as if in meditation (such as DK 12050 from Mohenjo-daro, currently in the Islamabad Museum, NMP 50.296). Another seal depicts the meditating figure surrounded by an assortment of wild beasts, much as Enkidu was prior to his awakening to human consciousness (the “Proto-Shiva Seal,” M-304A, National Museum, New Delhi). A similar figure, and another with a similar headdress but bearing the body of a tiger, appears in several other contexts as well. All the above seals are discussed and pictured in (Aruz 2003, 402–408). Although these figures all have what appear to be two or more horns, the “unicorn,” a single-horned bull-like animal, is also popular, appearing on a total of 1,156 seals, more than half of all seals found. Our single-horned *ryi* may represent a later conflation of these two distinctive motifs of the Indus civilization. It is important to acknowledge here that if the presence of such motifs in the Indus Valley can be used in support of the hypothesis that Indus Valley culture was the conduit of transmission from West to East, then it is equally possible that the tale originated in the Indus Valley and the role of the traveling merchants was to transmit it from East to West. Nevertheless, the only argument in favor of this is logical deduction. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we continue to favor the theory that the tale originated in the Ancient Near East on the basis of its entrenched position in *Gilgamesh*.

#### 4.16 Conclusion

In summary: the tale of the wild man seduced by the courtesan originated in the Ancient Near East and eventually became an integral part of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Through contact between the Near East and India, the story passed into the Indian subcontinent. Once established as oral narrative, the story circulated in India, perhaps even for centuries. As a folktale, it might easily resurface at a pilgrimage site and thereafter be deemed worthy of inclusion in the subcontinent's great epic within the corpus of legends that makes up the "Tour of the Sacred Fords." Having been thoroughly adapted to a Indian cultural and literary milieu, it was taken up by the *Mahābhārata*; but, rather than taking an independent place in the epic, it was introduced as a sort of overlay upon another story about an ascetic who lives as a deer, this one culminating in marriage to a princess and a mollified father. However, the combined version retained the structure of the tale of the wild man and his seduction by the prostitute. Of course, the integration of the two tales was not entirely seamless, but passable enough to escape further revision.

Our explanation for the similarities between the wild man tale in the epic of Gilgamesh and the *Mahābhārata* is speculative, but it is in fact, the simplest explanation of the evidence that we have. Hypotheses based upon the contact of civilizations are tricky, but such contact, where discernible, is of enormous significance for the history of cultural development. And it is surely edifying, especially for scholars like ourselves who specialize in the study of individual cultures, to witness the transformations that may take place when cultures borrow and adapt materials from each other.

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## Chapter 5

### Globalization in Literature: Re-Examining the Gilgamesh Affair

Cynthia Jean

#### 5.1 Introduction

In his recent edition of the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, A.R. George wrote a chapter about the “life” of Gilgamesh after and outside the cuneiform tradition (George 2003, 54–70). This paper intends to re-examine the influences and the transmission of Gilgamesh—as an epic and as a character—in the Near Eastern World and beyond, and try to find out how to confirm or deny these resemblances from a theoretical point of view.

Some characters, such as Alexander the Great, Gilgamesh and antediluvian sages, have an extremely prolific afterlife in literature and many Near Eastern (in its broadest sense) cultures rewrote their stories at the crossroads of history and mythology. Regarding “the Gilgamesh affair,” many scholars, mainly Classicists or Assyriologists, wrote about similarities between the Epic of Gilgamesh and other epics, folk tales or philosophical texts.<sup>1</sup> George made a harsh criticism of these statements and analyzed the question “*of the extent to which the Epic of Gilgamesh made a mark on later literature*” (George 2003, 54), following two lines of enquiry: the relationship between the Homeric poems and the Epic of Gilgamesh, and the legacy of Gilgamesh to the post-cuneiform literary world. His conclusions are clearly overcautious, since from his point of view, as far as we know, the Epic of Gilgamesh itself was not transmitted outside the cuneiform tradition and did not survive the death of cuneiform writing.

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<sup>1</sup>For a bibliography on the subject, see references given by T. Abusch (2001, 1 (footnotes 1–9)), by M.L. West (1997, 334–437) and of course by A.R. George (2003, 54–69 *passim* in footnotes).

## 5.2 Homer and Gilgamesh

For George, the Homeric Epic and the Gilgamesh Epic are rather distant relatives, the similarities<sup>2</sup> owing to the epic genre and motifs, and to imagery imported in Greece from the East, and not to direct influences (George 2003, 57).

## 5.3 Continuity in Other Tales

George admits continuity of religion, traditional sciences and folk tales after the death of cuneiform literature, because this knowledge was, to sum up, “*sufficiently valuable that it survived to live on in other cultures*” (George 2003, 59) and because folk tales, being in essence oral and popular, are “*easily transmitted from culture to culture.*”<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, he considers that literature was too close to a socio-cultural world and died out with its writing, leaving few survivors. Of course we must bear in mind that we know virtually nothing of the Aramaic and Levantine literatures, that a large part of Berossus’ work is now lost—as George pointed out himself—and that George’s analysis is a response to some overoptimistic studies. However, George considers as irrelevant the similarities found in different cultures and literary styles, such as (George 2003, 60–68):

- Gnostic references where both Gilgamesh and Humbaba became antediluvian evil giants corrupting mankind (*glgmyš* and *hwbbš* in the *Book of Giants* from Qumran and Manichean writings, *Jiljamiš* in Arabic conjurations);
- Similar episodes and motifs (for example, the Tale of Buluqiya in the *Arabian Nights*);
- Pseudo-historic stories written by the Nestorian author Theodor Bar Konai (where two Gilgamesh appear in his list of the twelve postdiluvian kings) and by classical authors (the miraculous survival of Gilgamesh in Aelian’s *On the Nature of Animals* and the story of Combabos and the king Seleucos in Lucian’s *De Dea Syria*).

After reading this criticism, we may wonder what kind of occurrence but a translation would be worth the label of “survival” according to George’s analysis. One characteristic of ancient literature, both during classical and oriental

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<sup>2</sup>The main similarities are the wanderings of Gilgamesh and Odysseus, the separation by death of two friends (Gilgamesh and Enkidu vs. Achilles and Patroclus) and a talk with deceased loved ones (Enkidu’s speech about the Netherworld and Odysseus interviewing his mother and other dead persons, known as the *Nekyia*).

<sup>3</sup>A.R. George gives the example of the *Poor Man of Nippur*, whose success is, according to him, linked with his oral transmission. The theme of the *Poor Man* is found in the *Arabian Nights*; (George 2003, 60).

Antiquity and to a certain extent, even in Western Middle Ages, is the rewriting of old ideas, oral motifs and well-known themes. As C. Grottanelli put it in a previous *Melammu Symposium* about the story of Combabos (Grottanelli 2001, 27), their success depended on their adaptation in a new literary form matching the new culture from a socio-political and aesthetic point of view. In this process, the core of the “*materia remota*” was often masked and the author’s skill was his ability to combine traditional elements into a new story.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, even when translated, ancient texts were largely distorted because of the translator’s interpretation (willingly or not), of the religious *interpretatio*, or because of the need of adapting foreign words or concepts. We know only few cases of sheer translations whose texts, original and translation, are both preserved in contemporary manuscripts. One of them is the *Legend of Tefnut*, whose Demotic and Greek versions were preserved on papyri.<sup>5</sup> This translation of the Myth of the Sun’s eye is quite close and both the scripture and the register—using rare words and translating accurately technical terms (for example plants and animals) and philosophical concepts—betray the work of a scholar. Of course, some parts of the legend were altered by *interpretatio* (for example Thot is Hermes, Râ is Zeus, and so forth) and by the translator’s editorial work.<sup>6</sup>

From a theoretical point of view, what may be considered as the influence, the survival and the globalization of a literary text? What elements are necessary to put a text into the dynamics of tradition of a literary masterpiece? Several specialists of ancient and modern literatures have pinpointed the problem of survival within an imitative literary tradition. In Ph. Hardie’s study on the successors of Virgil’s *Aeneid*<sup>7</sup> (Hardie 1993) and D. Davis’s analysis of the relationship between classical Greek poetry and novels, and Persian poetry (Davis 2002), both scholars agree that some conditions are essential to reach the conclusion that two texts are connected. If the necessary elements of the self-conscious “imitation-text” are of course the fundamental motifs and themes of the “original,” some extra features are required:

1. These motifs, themes and psychological dynamics must come in the same order;

<sup>4</sup>On *imitatio* in Western Medieval literature, see, e.g., (Busby 1989, 77–79).

<sup>5</sup>The Demotic version is Papyrus I, 384 (Leiden) and the Greek translation, dating from the third century CE, is P. Lit. Lond. 192 (London, British Museum).

<sup>6</sup>Some parts were deleted or paraphrased, such as Egyptian proverbs probably unknown to a Greek audience. The references to Egyptian myths were adapted in a Greek style, for example a Hellenized description of a griffon. For further information, see my forthcoming article on Greek novels inspired by Egyptian tales.

<sup>7</sup>The successors of Virgil are Lucan (*Bellum Civile*), Statius (*Thebaid*), Valerius Flaccus (*Argonautica*) and Silius Italicus (*Punica*).

2. Characters must display the same functions, as V. Propp defined the concept<sup>8</sup>;
3. Characters or places should be connected by the onomastic;
4. Last but not least, both texts must share several details and/or places.

In this perspective, George is quite right when he says that the Epic of Gilgamesh itself has no Near Eastern successors in the texts that passed down to us. The Homeric Epic is from this point of view the best child we can find for Gilgamesh's quest.

However, as George and T. Abusch pointed out, Gilgamesh is an epic hero, but also a man, a king, and a god (George 2003; Abusch 2001, 2). If the Epic itself found only distant echoes in later tradition, the character of Gilgamesh is what we may call a good example of globalization in Eastern literature. George distinguished between the written and the oral tradition (unknown to us) of the Gilgamesh Epic. On the basis of the epic tradition but most probably of the oral tradition as well, the several identities of Gilgamesh evolved in a certain way in and outside Mesopotamia—see above the references quoted by George from Gnostic, Arabic, Syriac and Greek sources—and these developments are in my opinion worth tracking.

From Egypt to Persia and from Greece to Babylonia, Gilgamesh was known as a great king or as a magical power and divine judge of the Netherworld. These roles are already attested in Assyrian and Babylonian sources featuring a Gilgamesh who is slightly different from the hero of the canonized version of the Epic. Among the top-ranking scholars of the Neo-Assyrian court<sup>9</sup> or in the Babylonian literary tradition,<sup>10</sup> the hero Gilgamesh was living his life as a king of ancient times and as a ruler and judge of the Netherworld in the realm of rituals, omens, literature, and theology.<sup>11</sup> If we take this new path of investigation, others sources such as folk tales, novels, and syncretic texts may yield new occurrences of Gilgamesh's influence on "Mediterranean" literature. These so-called popular texts have often been regarded by modern scholars as parts of lesser literature, especially among classicists. However, we must bear in mind that if these texts were considered interesting enough to be inked on papyrus or written in clay, it is precisely because they were also worth of interest for literate persons, taking into account that not everyone could read in Antiquity. Folk tales, texts labelled as "non-canonical," and fragments of novels, when found in libraries of

<sup>8</sup>Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action (Propp 1977, 21). It doesn't matter which character performs it and how.

<sup>9</sup>See, e.g., SAA 10, 274, r. 5: the exorcist Nabû-nadin-sumi mentions the use of a small statue of Gilgamesh in a *Maqlû* ritual.

<sup>10</sup>For example in the well-known Letter of Gilgamesh; cf. STT 40–42 and (George 2003, 117–119).

<sup>11</sup>"Literary, Historical and Religious Traditions about Gilgamesh," in (George 2003, 91–137).

Mesopotamian scholars or in collections owned by Egyptian priests, were perhaps not that “popular” (in the etymological sense). This is why, being in essence living memories of ancient times, medieval and modern Near Eastern tales are definitely a corpus to investigate.<sup>12</sup>

In another literary genre, gnostic and esoteric writings are often known to preserve ancient traditions when power and politics passed to another cultural group, exactly as romances and novels have a tendency to reveal an interest in foreign patterns. For example, the above-mentioned translation of the *Legend of Tefnut* is considered as a literary product of the hermetism. Another interesting text preserved on a Graeco-Egyptian papyrus<sup>13</sup> mixed different traditions in a gnostic fashion to rewrite an episode of the *Myth of Horus*. This mythological story is inspired by the struggle between Horus and Seth, resembling the famous ones found on papyri preserved in the Demotic collection of Berlin. The Greek contribution to this story—unfortunately badly preserved—is of course the language, the introduction of Giants and the *interpretatio* (Isis is called Aphrodite). The role of Giants in the *Horus* is explained by a chapter of Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris*, 25), who considers that wars between Titans and Giants are similar to the stories of Osiris and Typhon, that is, Seth,<sup>14</sup> and have the same meaning.

In this syncretic myth of Horus, a tricky sentence has a Mesopotamian touch:

[Ο]πάτηρ ἐτήρ[ει τὸ?] ὄρος τῶν κέδ[ρ]ων κ[αὶ ἀπεκτίεν] τὸν μέγαν  
γί[γ]αντα τὸν φον[έ]α τοῦ π[ατρὸς αὐτοῦ]

The father watched the Mountain of the Cedars and killed the big Giant, the slayer of his own father. (P. Jena 1, Myth of Horus, col. II, lines 24–26)

The father should be Horus and the Big Giant, Seth, the slain father being of course Osiris. Horus is never called “the father” in Egyptian versions of the myth. As cedars do not grow in Egypt, the detail must come from a Levantine or Mesopotamian motif and the mention of the “Cedar Mountain” is reminiscent of

<sup>12</sup>About a Near Eastern epic still sung today, see in this volume N. Lamassu’s paper “Gilgamesh’s Plant of Rejuvenation and Qāfīne’s Sīsīsāmbur.”

<sup>13</sup>The papyrus comes from Edfou (P. Jena 1, preserved in Jena at the Friederich Schiller Universität). This long fragmentary codex of papyrus has two texts: on the verso the fifth book of Irenaeus’s *Against Heresies* (copy dating from the late third / early fourth century CE) and on the recto, a syncretic story based on the myth of Horus (copy dating from the third century CE). The copyist of Irenaeus’s *Against Heresies* used the whole papyrus on the recto-side, then turned the volumen and found three columns of a “pagan” text on the verso. However, he kept on copying Irenaeus after the older text. This is quite unusual because the first text inked on a papyrus is normally written on the recto, i.e., along the fibres of the papyrus. There is no obvious link between the two texts.

<sup>14</sup>This association between Typhon and Seth is known in Greek literature since classical times; see, e.g., Aeschylus, *The Suppliants*, v. 559–560.

the famous episode in the Gilgamesh Epic. This small fragment shows us, I hope, that a new investigation of gnostic and syncretic material should provide us with new distant offsprings of the success character of Gilgamesh. Just as the Epic of Gilgamesh found its way to Homer, I think that the memory of Gilgamesh, as a king or as a supernatural power, undoubtedly found a place in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern imaginary.

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## Chapter 6

### **Gilgameš's Plant of Rejuvenation and Qāṭīne's Sīsīsāmbur**

*Nineb Lamassu*

Although the latest Gilgameš tablet dates to the first or second century BCE, and the latest cuneiform reference to Gilgameš is from the second century (Tigay 2002, 251), this timeless epic naturally aroused and continues to arouse excitement.

Right from its very discovery and decipherment, connections were seen between it and the Biblical story of Noah. Soon after that parallels were observed between Gilgameš and classical Greek literature. It is now also clear that the name "Gilgameš" survived beyond the cuneiform culture and passed into Mandaic literature, the Book of the Giants and in the Syriac writings of Theodor Bar Konai (ibid. 252). Recently, scholars have perceived traces of Gilgameš in such literary works as the story of Combabos (Parpola 1997, XCVI), and the story of Buluqiya (Dalley 1991, 1–17; 1998a, 47). George on the other hand, despite reaching the conclusion, "[...] the epic we know died with the cuneiform writing system, along with the large proportion of the traditional scribal literature that was of no practical, scientific or religious use in a world without cuneiform," (George 2003, 70), continues to state that traditions pertaining to Gilgameš may have been handed down on Aramaic papyri and as oral tales, which survived in a transformed form in later Greek, medieval Jewish and Arabic literature. However, he argues:

In any reconstruction of how the ancient corpus of Babylonian literature could inform the literary creativity of the other civilizations it is necessary (a) to allow for existence of common narrative patterns and motifs and (b) to postulate intermediate landing stages in Aramaic, Phoenician, Hellenistic Greek. (George 2003, 70)

It is suggested that the postulated intermediate landing stage in Aramaic should be sought in the orally transmitted folk traditions of the modern Assyrians, an area which has not received sufficient attention, and has not been subjected to thorough scholarly and scientific research (Donabed 2007, 352). Scholars would have a better chance in finding this landing stage in this oral tradition than in the

mostly lost Mesopotamian Aramaic literature, where we would expect to find it along with *Šamaš-šum-ukīn*'s revolt, and the stories of *Aḥīqar* and *Tobit*.

Until recently, the modern Assyrians maintained a rich and vivacious oral literature, especially the mountain Assyrians of Hakkari, who "[...] have known how to keep their own folklore intact from Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish or Persian influences" (Pennachietti 1985–1986, 40). Their semi-independent governing system was a primary factor in maintaining an undiluted culture (Aboona 1999, 250; 2008, 9). However, the tragic modern history of these people has caused their forced migration and resettlement in such environments where this rich oral culture has no opportunity to organically prosper and be preserved. Consequently the modern Assyrian oral tradition is slowly being lost to oblivion, which means, as scholars, "[...] we are obligated to devote all our resources to collecting information on the existing spoken dialects before they disappear" (Hoberman 1990, 79; Pennachietti 1985–1986, 40), thus leaving aside any comparative literary research. Another difficulty presented by these peoples' tragic modern history is the fact that this originally rich tradition has not been documented in genuine surroundings but in marginal areas and distant localities (Pennachietti 1985–1986, 40) thus divorcing it from the very environment that influenced its development. The consequences of this are made manifest in the now lost nuances of many terms and expressions, and the abolition of cultural environment that helped maintain it.<sup>1</sup>

The most significant part of this oral folklore and what is of concern here is "Zmīrta D'Qāṭīne," an oral epic in a prosimetrum style told by a village minstrels and semi-professional troubadours. Thus it is a composition where short prose intervals are used to bind the verses together. This literary oral epic was first reduced to writing by Rabi William Daniel, an excellent poet and musician, whose contribution to modern Assyrian poetry, folk and classical music remains unparalleled. However, his version which encompasses 6,000 verses published in three volumes as "Qāṭīne Gabbara" between 1946–1983,<sup>2</sup> does not conform to the epic as it is orally maintained. Although the sources of Daniel's version are the oral versions of Qāṭīne as maintained by the Hakkari, Plain of Nineveh, and Urmi Assyrians, it is evident that he has employed artistic license to create his version, turning it into a hybrid wrapped in modern concepts of ideology and national awakening and emancipation (Donabed 2007, 343). Therefore it is necessary to distinguish it from "the Assyrian cultural consciousness or collective folk memory that pervades the song of the unsung bard, the singer of traditional

<sup>1</sup>This writer struggled to find the meaning of 'Šəwarta,' until he traveled to Iraq and recorded an elderly villager in the Assyrian village of Deregni, and learned that it is used to refer to a passage located on the peak of a mountain.

<sup>2</sup>See (Odisho 1985–1985; Dinkha 1991; Daniel 1961, 1974, 1983).

stories who rarely becomes famous” (ibid. 350); not only because Qāṭīne of the collective folk memory is a product of an organically evolved cultural literature, but because it has more in common with our Epic of Gilgameš.

## 6.1 The Genre of Qāṭīne

The Assyrians do not seem to have differentiated between Qāṭīne and any other normal song. This heroic tale is always referred to as “Zmīrta D’Qāṭīne,” that is, The Song of Qāṭīne. However, it is clearly not a normal song and does not quietly fit within the known Assyrian folk songs and such genres as *Rawe*, *Diwani*, *Šeddule*, *Lilyana* and *Zmīryāta D’Kuša*.<sup>3</sup>

The village minstrel or the troubadour would take four to seven consecutive nights—depending on the individual—to complete the epic. Unlike other short heroic songs, the minstrel would stop singing the verses, at certain dramatic points, only to continue with the story through prose narrations. These prose intervals are used to create special moments of suspense. Contrary to other heroic songs, Zmīrta d-Qāṭīne is not danced to; all gather around the minstrel with anticipation to learn what is to unfold next.

Although Donabed’s thorough study demonstrates that Zmīrta D’Qāṭīne is worthy of the title ‘epic’ and see it befitting of the genre (Donabed 2007), one must be careful and recognize that the modern Assyrians only apply the terms “*Mšūhat-gabbare*” or “*Humasa*,” which would mean “Heroic Poem” and an “Epic” respectively—to the three volumes of Daniel, and never to the orally preserved version, known only as “Zmīrta D’Qāṭīne.” Similarly, Gilgameš was also known to the Babylonians as “Zamartu,” with epic being a conceptual modern term that we ascribe to it.

## 6.2 The Language of Qāṭīne

The minstrels of Zmīrta D’Qāṭīne employ the Modern Assyrian language as their medium to communicate it to their audience.

The Modern Assyrian language is often referred to as “Neo-Syriac” or “Neo-Aramaic.” However, if one delves deeper into this remarkable language, one would realize its origins do not stem from Syriac, the liturgical language of the Christian Assyrians (Maclean 2003). Some of its features prove to be much more archaic than Syriac, and much of it “can be traced to antiquity in the Akkadian language” (Khan 2007, 7). Nor is it purely of Aramaic origin as is usually believed, based on the notion that Aramaic replaced the language of the Assyrian empire

<sup>3</sup> Assyrian literary oral traditions have not yet been subjected to a study from a literary perspective, therefore there are no agreed English translations of the terms.

toward the last phase of its rule. Parpola assertively argues that what is believed to have replaced the Assyrian language during the late Neo-Assyrian period “was not the language spoken by the ethnic Arameans but a creation of (Assyrian) Empire” (Parpola 2004, 15). Rather than the notion of Aramaic replacing Assyrian, Fales views this as a process which formed an Assyrian/Aramaic symbiosis (Fales 1986, 46), and postulates the possibility of this language continuing even after the fall of the empire. The language of *Zmīrta D'Qāḫīne* confirms Fales' conclusions as a language that survived the fall of the empire. Thus it should be referred to by its cultural character, that is, Modern-Assyrian or Assyrian-Aramaic as is often argued by modern Assyrian scholars (Ashitha 2007; Lamassu 2007; Odisho 2003).

Early scholarship erroneously advanced the idea that Assyrian was first written down by Rev. Justin Perkins, a missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the winter of 1834–1835 (Stoddard 2004, 3). Murre-Van De Berg, however, has correctly argued for an earlier period and pinpoints this to the late sixteenth century (Murre-Van de Burg 1998). Ashitha on the other hand is convinced that this was done much earlier, relying on an Assyrian manuscript dating to the earlier fifteenth century, and he goes as far as postulating a much earlier beginning, based on the findings of alphabetical Assyrian inscriptions appearing on potsherds dating to the Sassanian Period, and now in the possession of the Iraqi Museum (Ashitha 2007, 107).

### 6.3 The Name Qāḫīne

Hozaya believes the name Qāḫīne is derived from the Akkadian word *qātu*, which can mean both hand and scepter in modern Assyrian (Hozaya 1996, 71). This folk-etymology is an implausible assertion and fails to demonstrate the logic behind such an association. Donabed (2007, n. 351) on the other hand correctly recognizes it as deriving from the Semitic trilateral root “qṭn”<sup>4</sup> but fails to explain the rationale behind the cultural psyche which named our hero as such. The modern Assyrian dictionaries define Qāḫīne<sup>5</sup> to mean frail, weak, meagre, and petite (Payne-Smith 1903; Ashitha 1997; Audo 1979), but how can one explain this if our hero is described in the *Zmīrta* as:

<sup>4</sup>Which would mean: small/thin. See (Orel and Stolbova 1994).

<sup>5</sup>In modern Assyrian dictionaries, Qāḫīne—a cognate of Akkadian *qatānu* and Hebrew קטן—is found under *qṭn*, as *qatḫīna* with a *pāxā* vowel causing the gemination of the “ṭ”. The change of the short *pāxā* vowel to a long *zqāpā* vowel, and the loss of gemination is a phenomenon of the modern Assyrian language, see (Murre-Van de Burg 1999), see also (Hozaya 1999, 20).

Qāṭīne qāṭe ṭūre  
 Kūl sanbūlte pampūlte  
 'u-kūl sanbūlte ḥa drā'ā

Qāṭīne the mountain leaper  
 Each (side) of his moustache is a cubit  
 And (a cubit) each of his shoe, and boot  
 (Adam 2001, Audio Recording)

ānā wēn gūra m-gūre  
 petwānī<sup>6</sup> zā'ed l-ḥūre

I am the (ideal) warrior among warriors  
 The width of my chest extends the height of poplars  
 (Qasrani and Daresh 1998, Audio Recording)

This can only be explained if one realizes that the name Qāṭīne is nothing but a pun referring to the mortal aspect of a mortal possessing supernatural powers.

#### 6.4 The Zmīrta D'Qāṭīne

Qāṭīne's paternal lineage is not known and the bare mention of his father is avoided, while a prominent emphasis is made on his maternal pedigree.<sup>7</sup> Qāṭīne's mother is of royal blood and she is the king's sister. How exactly she falls pregnant is not clarified, but the king has been warned about the birth of his nephew and he fears Qāṭīne—who demonstrates extraordinary deeds right from his birth—for he is warned that he will grow to usurp his throne. Therefore he plots to kill him but Qāṭīne is miraculously saved by wild animals. Then Qāṭīne ends up in the court of another king, T'ūma, who is also his uncle but is unaware of this fact despite the affinity he feels toward him. Other than having been asked to dig wells in rocky mountains, an almost impossible task, immediately after Qāṭīne's success, King T'ūma, lobbied by the city elders, presents him with a series of daring challenges:

<sup>6</sup>In a private conversation with Rabi Daniel Dawed Bet Benjamin, the chief editor of *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies'* Assyrian section, he suggested that "petwānī" should be understood as "the distance of my leap" and not as "the width of my chest." To me they both seem plausible and they both emphasize the physical abilities of Qāṭīne.

<sup>7</sup>This brief outline is based on the recordings of the following minstrels: Mr. Khnanya Qasrani (Wellington, NZ), Mr. Taoma d-Wela (Dohuk, Iraq), Mrs. Regina Tawar (LA, California), Mr. Dawed Adam (Stockholm, Sweden), Mrs. Awigo Sulaqa (London, UK), and Mr. Delman Givargisov (Tiflis, Georgia). I would like to recognize the assistance of Prof. Geoffrey Khan, Mr. Jorje Darash, and the Assyrian Academic Society of Tehran for furnishing me with some of these recordings.

Tū T'ūma tū Qāṭīne  
 Tīwēna ḥālā 'u-štāyā  
 Ban bahāse bedrāya  
 Aydīle gāwra m-gūre  
 'u-petwāne zā'ed l-ḥūre  
 Šāwērre bāzā d-šwērri  
 Šātēle qadḥa d-štēli  
 'u-gūrūte maḥ dā-dīyī  
 'u-raḥmūte maḥ dā-dīyī

T'ūma sat, so did Qāṭīne  
 They are sitting, eating and drinking  
 Talking of heroic deeds  
 Who is (an ideal warrior) among warriors  
 whose chest extends the height of poplars  
 To leap the jump which I have leaped  
 To drink the chalice I have drunk  
 Whose manhood is my equal  
 Whose friendship<sup>8</sup> equals mine  
 (Qasrani and Daresh 1998, Audio Recording)

Qāṭīne accepts the challenges and always seeks the counsel of his mother and sister before embarking on his heroic journeys:

Way yemmī pīlī zwāde  
 Way ḥāfi wūdli kāde  
 ḥdā 'ūrḥa mpelta l-bālī  
 mḥūzdāwēn l-T'ūma ḥālī

Oh mother, bake me supplies  
 Oh sister prepare me cakes  
 My mind is set on a journey  
 I have been challenged by my uncle T'ūma  
 (Qasrani and Daresh 1998, Audio Recording)

The challenges are numerous. Perhaps the most significant would be Qāṭīne's battle with Yū'ānis the Armenian who had eloped with his beautiful aunt, and the battle with Lēlīta accompanied by Xūlikkū, his other uncle whom

<sup>8</sup>This can also be translated as “whose sexual performance,” “whose libido” equals mine. The noun is derived from the root *rḥm*, which can mean to love, to befriend, to be merciful, but in Assyrian oral literature, especial the Rāwe genre, sexual connotation is always implied, thus *rḥīmalī* would mean “I made love to her” rather than “I befriended her” or “showed her compassion.”

is captured in the forest mountain by Lēlīta, the evil creature. In the labyrinth of Lēlīta, Qāṭīne is to find the special plant said to open the eyes of the blind and rejuvenate the the aged:

'ayma-le gawra d-gūre  
 d-šāwērre gāre gāre  
 pā'ed men peṭḥa l-peṭḥa  
 šātēle demmā w-qadḥa  
 'āsēq l-karma d-Lēlīta  
 Lēlīta mazdānīta  
 'āwēd bāqā d-rēḥāne  
 dāre b-'īda d-pātyāne  
 'āyne gūhre pātēḥ lay  
 mīte d'-qawrq mnaḥem-lay

Who is (an ideal) warrior among warriors  
 To leap from rooftop to rooftop  
 Cross from meadow to meadow  
 Drink the blood and the chalice  
 Climb up to Lēlīta's orchard  
 The fearsome Lēlīta  
 To grab a bunch of basil  
 And hand it to those laying (on their deathbed)  
 So it opens the eyes of the blind  
 And raises the dead from the grave  
 (Hozaya 1996, 78)

On his way to Lēlīta, Qāṭīne is approached by a rabbit proposing to befriend him.<sup>9</sup> He utterly refutes her proposal. Once Qāṭīne reaches Lēlīta's orchard, he challenges her to a fight: Lēlīta is to strike first and she does this with her daglock "kāla",<sup>10</sup> which she pulls out from her hindquarters. Qāṭīne manages to jump up as high as the heavens just in time and Lēlīta's daglock misses him and lands where Qāṭīne was standing creating a great chasm. This leads Lēlīta to think she has destroyed Qāṭīne, leaving not a single trace of him, but Qāṭīne lands back and kills her.

Many challenges are placed before Qāṭīne by his uncle T'ūma, but all of T'ūma's plots fail and Qāṭīne always comes out as the victorious hero. However, the wounded Lēlīta curses Qāṭīne just before her death. Lēlīta's curse is for Qāṭīne

<sup>9</sup>Again the same verb "rḥm" is used, which could also have sexual connotations.

<sup>10</sup>Mesopotamian sheep have fatty tails. Their feces, especially during the winter periods, get stuck on the wool of their tails and eventually form a sizable rock-like ball.

to die as a young unwedded bachelor. The curse is fulfilled when Qāṭīne is wounded when a shepherd shoots an arrow in his back as he was about to set off on another challenge.

### 6.5 Parallels, Points of Contact and Influences

As already indicated in this chapter, this marvelous oral epic of Qāṭīne has not been fully documented, and what has been presented here is based on the few recordings this writer has managed to gather over the last few years. It is through these few incomplete recordings that we have managed to render a brief comparative overview of both Qāṭīne and Gilgameš, and the parallels presented below. The present writer is confident that once Qāṭīne is fully documented and a more comprehensive study has been made, more of these parallels will surface, but for now the similarities presented below suffice to draw our attention to the importance of this rather neglected oral epic.

- Zmīrta D'Qāṭīne, like Gilgameš, is a sung epic and every minstrel's version is different, although the overall themes are preserved.
- Qāṭīne's birth is identical to that of Gilgameš as mentioned in Aelian's works: the miraculous birth that is feared by his uncle, the king who intends to have him killed, but the child is saved by an animal (George 2003, 61).
- There is resonance in many passages that seem to be in agreement almost verbatim, for example:

Who is the finest among men?  
 Who the most glorious of fellows?  
 Gilgameš is the finest among men!  
 Gilgameš the most glorious of fellows!  
 (George 1999, 54)

ʾaynile gawra m-gūre  
 ʾaynile berya m-gūre  
 ʾāna-wēn gawra m-gūre  
 ʾāna-wēn berya m-gūre

Who is man amongst men  
 Who is born of men  
 I am man amongst men  
 I am born of men  
 (d'Wila 1988, Audio Recording)



If we restore the fragmentary line of 127 from the Standard Babylonian Version of Gilgameš as:

*ina ku-bur zib-ba-ti-šú [ka]-bu-us-su [id-di]*<sup>11</sup>

And, like the CAD, translate the passage as: “with the thick part of his tail he flicked his excrement,” we will then have both Xumbaba and Lēlīta using the daglock of their tails to strike their opponents.

- Qāṭīne battles with Yû'ānis, the Armenian, whose name may be a play on words referring to Ayanis, the Urartian capital situated on Lake Van, which is within the vicinity of where the Noah's ark is generally believed to have landed. With further documentation this may prove to be a reference to the flood story. The causes of Qāṭīne's battle with Yûḫānis, and Qāṭīne's death, bear clear resemblance to the Odyssey. Qāṭīne and Xūlikkū's adventure in the mysterious orchard of the fearsome Lēlīta also corresponds well with Gilgameš, and Enkidu's adventure of Xumbaba in the cedar forest.
- Gilgameš is approached by Ištar whom he refutes just as Qāṭīne refutes the Rabbit's proposal to befriend/love her. Rabbit's fertility is taken to represent the mother goddess in many cultures, and Qāṭīne's Rabbit is none other than Gilgameš's Ištar.
- Other than opening passages in the mountains, and digging wells in the uplands like Gilgameš, Qāṭīne also seeks a special plant called Kerīta, Sīsīsāmbur or Reḫāna. The various names of this special plant depend on the minstrel and the region of her/his origin, also reiterate our argument. Reḫāna, which means basil, itself being a noun based on the trilateral root “rwḫ” may be a pun too, for “rwḫ” could mean both breath or life (Audo 1979; Payne-Smith 1903). Sīsīsāmbur on the other hand is a fragrant wild plant (Audo 1979), which grows around water streams and is borrowed from the Greek “Sysimbrium.”<sup>12</sup> The opting of this Sīsīsāmbur does not seem to be accidental either for it is believed to mutate and change form upon aging (Poortman and Drossaart Lulofs 1989, 60, 106). All this resonates well with Gilgameš's plant, which he names as “Old man grown young,” thus the mutation of the plant is seen as a mark of something old turning young. As for Kerīta, it is probably a description of the same thing for it is based on the noun Kerya, which means stream, exactly where

<sup>11</sup> This restoration is adopted by the CAD, Parpola (1997, 31, 93) and Dalley (1998b, 81). George, however, is skeptical and believes that restorations put forward by other scholars are also plausible (George 2003, 841).

<sup>12</sup> The modern Assyrian dictionaries give the following meanings: water-mint (Audo 1979); the same meaning is given in Mandaic (Drower 1963), and Persian (Akbar 1955). The Latin dictionary gives the following: “a fragrant herb sacred to Venus: wild thyme, or mint” (White 1876).

Sīsīsāmbur is said to grow and where Gilgameš is said to have lost his plant to the snake.

These similarities between Qāṭīne, Gilgameš and the classical Greek literature should not be perceived simply as literary topos. The opinion proposed here is that they should be construed as plausible intermediate landing stages, which may explain the many parallels between our epic of Gilgameš and Homeric literature. Sīsīsāmbur as a loanword could also postulate two way traffic in terms of influence, possibly something similar to the legend of Aḥīqar which influenced later Greek and Latin literature in terms of Aesop, only to be borrowed back into Assyrian as Syntipas (Brock 1979, 7).

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## Chapter 7

### Some Observations about “Foreigners” in Babylonia during the VI Century BCE

*Kabalan Moukarzel*

Since the beginning of its history, the Mesopotamian world was closely connected with the surrounding lands and cultures, part of the Ancient Near East. A multitude of economic, cultural, ethnic and political factors helped this interconnect-edness and constituted an ongoing process of Globalization, evidenced by documented sources to a greater or lesser degree for almost all political periods of Ancient Mesopotamia.<sup>1</sup>

The first millennium BCE introduces a brand new element into the developing Globalization processes, clearly evident in the social policy of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires. This is the integration of large groups of “foreigners” within the framework of Mesopotamian economy and society. This integration was heavily influenced both by the conducted mass deportation policy of the empires, and by different economic factors such as urbanization.

The Neo-Babylonian period, between 626–539 BCE, is rich in sources concerning the social integration of various groups of “foreigners” within the framework of Babylonian society. Regardless of the different cultural and political factors for the development of the Globalization, it can be assumed that its economic parameters, and among them the factor of the social integration, play an important role in the implementation of the Globalization process itself. We will concentrate on several observations concerning the “foreigners” in Babylonia during the indicated period, in the context of their social integration and the ways of organization of their communities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In the present paper the term “Globalization” is used as *terminus technicus*. Akkadian lacks a word with similar meaning. The term is modern and because of its contemporary meaning, the term’s application with the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia is debatable. In the present article the term is used with the mentioned limitation. I am indebted to Prof. St. Zawadzki, who drew my attention to this important issue.

<sup>2</sup>A selected bibliography about the problems related to “foreigners” in Mesopotamia until 1979 can be found in (Zadok 1979, 174–181).

## 7.1 Sources and Some General Problems

Without doubt, every study of the “foreigners” in Babylonia meets some major problems. The first is the dispersion of the various pieces of information in the different groups of cuneiform source, most often of casual character. For example texts with administrative, legal and business character. Every mentioned type of cuneiform sources gives us information about a different aspect of the social realization of particular “foreigners.”

The second problem stems from the fact that the source data do not uniformly represent the whole territory of Babylonia. At the moment the most information about the “foreigners” are available for the regions of Nippur, Uruk, Babylon and Sippar. The available data from the regions Ur, Der, and Borsippa is considerably limited.

The third main problem demonstrates the diachronicity of the source groups in relation to their data about “foreigners.” This problem is related to the accepted chronological borders in the Assyriology of the different periods in the history of ancient Mesopotamia. As a whole, the main criteria for chronological definition of some historical period were influenced by the analysis of the political process,<sup>3</sup> or by the philological analysis of dialectic development of the Akkadian language.<sup>4</sup>

Source data about “foreigners,” however, are attested mainly in texts of economic and administrative character, that is, in texts related to the social and economic life in Mesopotamia. On the other hand, the events from the two mentioned realms have a chronological span and logic different than those defined by pure political or linguistic tenet. Thus, for example, the fall of Babylon under Persian rule in 539 BCE does not lead to significant changes in the economic and social system of Babylonia. In many cases, the chronological boundaries of the periods related to the development of the socioeconomic processes in Mesopotamia do not coincide with the development periods of the political or linguistic processes. Namely, in similar situations the problem with the diachronicity of sources arises, because some social or economic process known from earlier periods are better attested in sources from a later period.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Although the concrete chronological framework of each of the periods in the political history of Mesopotamia is disputable, the fundamental elements that justify them are concrete political events, as for example the rule of the First Babylonian Dynasty around 1894–1595 BCE.

<sup>4</sup>The main element in the periodization by linguistic principle is the development of the Akkadian language and its dialects, e.g. Middle Babylonian, attested in the cuneiform sources from the period around fifteenth–sixteenth c. BCE. It must be noted that also in this type of chronological ordering there are disputable boundaries between the separate periods.

<sup>5</sup>Thus, for example, the term *hadru* used for designation of “community of foreigners” is known mainly from the Achaemenid period, despite the fact that such communities existed in the Neo-Babylonian period. See (Beaulieu 1988).

We should note also the existence of a fourth, mostly theoretical problem, and that is who was considered as “foreigner” in Babylonia during the sixth century BCE? The cuneiform sources do not give a definitive answer, with exception of those cases in which the “foreigners” are directly stated by their third names, predominantly. Thus, for instance, in the country during that time, there were different groups of Arab tribes whose members, even though settled in or around the cities, were still addressed to with an ethnic term in the same way that an ethnic term was used for the Egyptians, that is, for people who were not connected with closer regions to the Babylonian cities but rather with different country.

This situation attests to a clear distinction in the mentality of the Babylonians between themselves as natives and the “foreigners” as people belonging to or connected with another culture or land, and also about the distinction between Babylonians and “foreigners” belonging to the different tribal communities inhabiting the country during the Neo-Babylonian period. Without doubt, such a mental picture for the distinction between themselves and “foreigners” resulted from a perception formed in the framework of a traditionally urban culture such as that in Mesopotamia.<sup>6</sup> It must be noted that such a perception had its own social dimension which is connected with the city elite dominated by prominent families whose members held almost all key positions within the “Great Institutions,” the Palace and the Temple, within the city’s popular assemblies, and even within the businesses.<sup>7</sup>

It is interesting to note that the word *nakru* in the meaning of “foreigner” or “enemy” is almost unused in the sources of legal, administrative or business character during the Neo-Babylonian period. It is possible that the reason for this situation is not just the forms of the mentioned types of documents, which demanded maximum specificity in the mentioning of the names of different persons, but also the expansion of the geographical knowledge of the Babylonians about the

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<sup>6</sup>About the mentioned perceptions of the differences, see (Brinkman 1984, 12), where the author points out that the dichotomy between diverse populations in Babylonia was not based on place or type of residence, urban vs. rural, sedentary vs. non-sedentary, but on social or socio-political organization, tribal vs. non-tribal. Another view is explained in the research of Pongratz-Leisten, where the major elements in the Mesopotamian concepts of diversity are described as 1. city versus countryside, 2. sedentarism versus nomadism, 3. homeland versus enemy, see (Pongratz-Leisten 2001, 195). In fact, the positions of both authors about the concept of the Babylonian urban population supplement each other. Defining each of the mentioned author’s position depends on the types of cuneiform sources used by both authors in their research. The “foreigner” is mentioned in a certain way and for a particular purpose in the royal inscriptions and chronicles, and in another way and with another purpose in the administrative and economic texts.

<sup>7</sup>About the social realizations of the free citizens and the urban elites within the main institutions see (Dandamayev 1988, 65–69), and (Zawadzki 1990). An example for social realization of prominent citizens in the sphere of the business is the famous family Egibi, whose trade house played an important role in the economic life of Babylon during the Neo-Babylonian period. See (Martirosian 1989, 10–27).

world around them. In a familiar world, the “foreigner” is someone different, not necessary someone hostile. Possibly that was the world of the Babylonians when they created their first and last empire in their history, an empire which spanned the lands from the Persian gulf to the Mediterranean coast and the city of Madina.

From known sources about the period between 626–539 BCE most informative texts concerning the “foreigners” belong to the follow three groups:

1. Legal documents
2. Administrative documents
3. Business texts.<sup>8</sup>

Each of the mentioned groups of sources has different forms which depend on the purpose for composing the text.<sup>9</sup> The first group consists of different texts related to the activities of the judicial system, like marriage agreements, legal decisions of various types, and so forth.<sup>10</sup> The second group is the largest and consists of texts as promissory notes, deposit records, administrative letters, different transactions, lists of workmen, receipts, etc. The third group of sources, that of business texts, consists of numerous service contracts, documents for lease and sales, apprenticeship contracts, and so forth.

The texts that containing information about “foreigners” can be divided in three groups not only according their purpose of writing and their outline, but also according to their origin namely:

1. Texts belonging to the temple archives
2. Texts belonging to the private archives, and
3. Texts belonging to the royal (or court) archives.

It is important to note that the texts belonging to the third group are rather few.<sup>11</sup> Probably most variable by their character are the texts belonging to the temple archives, specifically these from the temples Eanna and Ebabbar in Uruk and

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<sup>8</sup>The present article will not consider the data from the literary sources from the period, because they do not contain important information concerning social state of the “foreigners.” An exception will be made for some references in the royal inscriptions of Nabû-na`id that differ by their content and historical information from the inscriptions of the other Neo-Babylonian kings. For more about the style and contents of the Neo-Babylonian inscriptions, see (Grayson 1980, 160–171), and for the main characteristics of Nabonidus inscriptions, see (Schaudig 2001, 28–80).

<sup>9</sup>The main characteristics of the forms of the stated source groups and their typology for the Neo-Babylonian period are well summarized in (Jursa 2005, 9–49).

<sup>10</sup>The present article will not delve in detail over the texts giving data about “foreigners” coming from the group of legal documents, because the legal status of “foreigners” in these documents is depicted in (Cardascia 1958).

<sup>11</sup>See (Jursa 2005, 60–61), where there is data about the texts coming from the royal archive, part of which are the important ration-lists.



Sippar.<sup>12</sup> The importance of the texts belonging to the temple archives is defined by the degree of the importance of the temple itself as key social and economic institution within the Babylonian society, an institution through which large groups of people of the land, belonging to different social strata, were connected in many ways. Without doubt, the type of cuneiform source, defined on the basis of its character and formulation, and also its origin, are elements that have significance in texts giving information about the social integration of “foreigners.”

The main characteristic of all mentioned groups of texts is their specificity: all of them were composed on the basis of a concrete occasion and with clearly defined aim. Thus, the data about the “foreigners” in the sources refer to exact persons, and very rarely to groups of “foreigners.” This situation is the reason that “foreigners” are mentioned with different degrees of detail. For example, some texts are more informative, because some “foreigner” is mentioned therein as one of the principal parties related to the purpose of composing the text. Some other documents describe the occupation of a “foreigner” together with his name.<sup>13</sup> Other groups of texts mention only the name of the “foreigner” without giving any specific data about the person. Usually, these are texts which mention the “foreigners” only as witnesses to the text’s composition.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of the differences in their degree of detail, the sources’ data allow us to summarize some observations concerning the social integration of the “foreigners” in the Neo-Babylonian society.<sup>15</sup>

Groups of cuneiform sources mentioned thus far were part of the functioning of more diverse processes within the Mesopotamian society and its economic system. Within Assyriology, discussion about the main tenets of how the economic

<sup>12</sup>General data about the texts from the two mentioned archives are available in (Jursa 2005, 138–139, 116–118).

<sup>13</sup>Usually, the texts belonging to the groups of legal and business documents give information about “foreigners” as a party in a legal case or business transaction. An example about such information is found in GCCI, I, 260 where one of the two principal parties in the transaction is a person of Egyptian origin. A discussion over this text will be provided later. An example of a text mentioning the name of the “foreigner” and his profession is given by (Strassmaier 1889a, Nbn. 67), composed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Nabû-na’id, in Uruk, where the Egyptian *Marduk-erība apil-šu ša Rimut apil Miširāya*, a scribe, is mentioned.

<sup>14</sup>Examples of “foreigners” mentioned only as witnesses in some documents are these in (Strassmaier 1889b, Nbk. 135: 38), dated from the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of Nabû-kudurri-ušur, composed in Babylon, in which Nabû-da apil-šu ša Nādin apil Miširāya, an “Egyptian,” is mentioned as witness, and text (Strassmaier 1889b, Nbk. 314), composed in Babylon, in the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurri-ušur, in which an Arab, Nabû-apla-iddin apil-šu ša Arrabi (written (lú)*ar-ra-bi*), is mentioned among the witnesses. See (Strassmaier 1889b, 85–87, 185; Strassmaier 1889b, Nbk. 135: 38; Strassmaier 1889b, Nbk. 314: 12).

<sup>15</sup>It is worth pointing out the diversity and the multitude of texts belonging to the three mentioned groups. The sources’ diversity is not only one of the biggest riches of Mesopotamian civilization, but also of the whole ancient world, which is, as Van De Mieroop marks, “virtually unparalleled” (Mieroop 2004, 54).

life within the ancient civilization was organized are still in progress.<sup>16</sup> The economic system of Mesopotamia in some instances was very different from today. The system was realized within a society in which multiple social strata and multiple types of interrelations among them are attested by sources. For instance, there are several types of social and economic dependence of some persons known in respect to institutions like the temple and the palace, or in respect to private persons. Moreover the state of dependence had different economic, legal, and maybe political parameters depending on different groups of persons.

In addition, the institutions as the Temple and the Palace exercised an important role in the economic life of Mesopotamia, a role characterized by strongly developed and very complex redistributive systems.<sup>17</sup> These details are necessary because the present article uses the expression “social integration,” which must be not understood exactly in its contemporary meaning. The expression “social integration” should be interpreted as the possibility for persons with “foreign” origin to be able to find social realization within different occupations, according to the complex “vertical” and “horizontal” social structures of the Neo-Babylonian society.

## 7.2 The “Foreigners”

In the texts coming from the period reviewed, “foreigners” appear in two main types. The first type states the first (proper) name of some “foreigner” and more rarely his second (father’s) and finally, a third name.<sup>18</sup> In these cases, the origin of a “foreigner” can be defined on the base of onomastics.<sup>19</sup> The second type describes mainly the “foreigner’s” third name as “foreign” more frequently determined by the name of some foreign country or some tribe.<sup>20</sup> The first two names of some person, which are predominantly Babylonian, are more frequently stated,

<sup>16</sup>This article will not dwell in detail over the main controversial questions and the hypotheses related to them. A summary of the major positions in the different hypotheses can be found in (Snell 1997, 145–158). A critical view of some specific questions and the attitudes towards them expressed in the three main theories, these of the Marxists, the Primitivists and the Modernists, can be found in (Mieroop 2004, 55–62), and also (Renger 1994, 163–168).

<sup>17</sup>More about the redistributive systems as an element in the Mesopotamian economy is found in (Renger 1994, 176–180).

<sup>18</sup>An example about such type of mentioning can be found in a text from the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of Nabû-kudurri-ušur, composed in Hursagkalamma (Strassmaier 1889b, Nbk. 408), where *Ba-ri-ki-ili* is mentioned. See the text in (Strassmaier 1889b, 242–243, Nbk. 408: 7). The name Bariki-ili is Judean and was used predominantly by people belonging to this ethnical group. For this and other Judean names see (Clay 1904 (2010), xiii–xiv, 19–21).

<sup>19</sup>An example of onomastic study dedicated to the Arabian names can be found in Zadok (Zadok 1981, 44–57).

<sup>20</sup>An example about this type can be found in text dated from the 33<sup>rd</sup> year of Nabû-kudurri-ušur, composed in Babylon (Strassmaier 1889b, Nbk. 261), where the scribe *Marduk-sākin-šumi apil-šu*

in this type. It can be assumed that persons with a first Babylonian name had come to Babylonia soon before the composing of texts in which they are mentioned. The persons with first and second Babylonian names more probably were second or third generation migrants to the country. However, this is not certain.<sup>21</sup> The main reason why Babylonians gave their first names to some “foreigners” for most of the cases remains unclear as well as why they preserved the proper first names of other “foreigners” in the texts.

Based on the specific information from the sources, we can distinguish several groups of “foreigners” from Neo-Babylonian period.

The first group consists of people who had most often Babylonian given names and ethnic, geographical or tribal terms stated as third (family) names. They were thoroughly integrated into Babylonian society during sixth century BCE and appear to have been members of families who settled in the country since the time of the Assyrian domination during eighth–seventh centuries BCE. The ancestors of the people who belonged to this group originated in Egypt, Asia Minor, Syro-Palestinian region or from other regions near Mesopotamia. Certainly, many people belonging to this group of “foreigners” came to Babylonia as a result of the policy of mass deportations conducted by the Assyrian Empire, as for example the Egyptians.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the Assyrian royal inscriptions do not give more detailed information about the process of the dispersion of Egyptians relocated by them in the lands outside of proper Assyria.<sup>23</sup> It is known that with resources acquired during the campaigns in Egypt, Babylonian temples were rebuilt.<sup>24</sup> The latter supposes that prisoners of war or deported people were used for the building works. During the eighth–seventh century BCE. Assyria already had a well-developed administrative and social system related to the integration of deported groups of people. The system was even proclaimed as propaganda

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*ša Bēl-šumu apil Miširāya*, of Egyptian origin, is mentioned. The text can be found in (Strassmaier 1889b, 156–157, Nbk. 261: 18–19).

<sup>21</sup>According to Dandamayev, “foreigners” who were enslaved received Babylonian names (Dandamayev 1974, 70). If the data from the Book of Daniel–Dan. 1; 6–7 is considered, then it can be concluded that the deported people received Babylonian names too. It is certain, however, that such observations can be applied only to a part of the “foreigners” stated in the texts.

<sup>22</sup>The main Assyrian campaigns against Egypt that were conducted by *Aššur-aḫ-iddina*, and after him *Aššur-bān-apli* in 671, 667 BCE, finished with mass deportations of Egyptians to the lands of Assyria and her dependent territories (Wiseman 1966, 154).

<sup>23</sup>An example about data in the Assyrian royal inscriptions about relocated persons from Egypt, which state that the relocated people were brought to Assyria, but not mentioning other regions, can be found in the inscription of *Aššur-bān-apli*, the so-called Rassam Cylinder, Col. II in (Oppenheim 1969, 295). See also the data about *Aššur-aḫ-iddina*’s policy in Egypt in tablet belonging to the series of “Babylonian Chronicles” Col. IV, the data about the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the king in (Oppenheim 1969, 302–303).

<sup>24</sup>See (Brinkman 1984, 75 n. 368).

by Assyrians with political purposes.<sup>25</sup> In the Neo-Babylonian period, the people from this group had a different social status.

The second group consisted of people deported to Babylonia after 626 BCE–(lú)galītu or (lú)ulteglū, as a result of the conquest policy of the Neo-Babylonian kings.<sup>26</sup> For instance, Jews were deported in the period of the wars of Nabû-kudurri-ušur between 597/6 and 587/6.<sup>27</sup> The deported inhabitants of Ḫumê after Nabû-na’id’s campaign around 556–555 BCE.<sup>28</sup> We could add some Egyptians to this group, who came to the country as prisoners of war because of the major combat between Babylonia and Saite Egypt during the years 605, 601, 588/7 BCE.<sup>29</sup>

Part of that group of “foreigners” were also the people deported by Babylonians in different regions of the empire, out of Babylonia herself. Example of such situation are the relocated people from “the land of Ḫatti” and “the land

<sup>25</sup>See more details in (Diakonoff 1952, 93). Similar deportations took place also in conjunction with population groups, relocated from the regions of Elam, Anatolia, Syria and Northern Arabia, in which military campaigns conducted by Assyrian army took place. An example can be found in the data about the campaigns of Aššur-bān-apli against Arab tribes after the quell of the revolt of Šamaš-šum-ukīn. In cylinder inscription of Aššur-bān-apli the campaign of the king against the tribes of Qidari and Nabayatu was conducted around 645 or 641–639 BCE. The campaign ended with the deportation of a part of the population of both mentioned tribes. See the text Cylinder C, Col. IX, in (Oppenheim 1969, 299). Concerning the problems around the dating of the campaign and its political background see (Eph’al 1982, 155–170), and (Brinkman 1984, 103–104).

<sup>26</sup>We must note that because of temple administrative or business character of our Neo-Babylonian texts, terms as *galītu* or *ulteglū* are not frequently mentioned. More probably the both terms were mentioned in texts belonging to the groups of the royal (state) archives.

<sup>27</sup>Our main sources about the conducted deportations are Biblical. They are summarized in Jer. 52: 28–30. It must be noted that mass deportations of Judeans took place after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 BCE. Sources about late deportation which cover the lands of Judah in addition to the lands of the neighboring Ammon, Moab and Edom, during the Babylonian campaign in 582/1 BCE, are given in Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae*, X 9, 7 and Jer. 52: 30.

<sup>28</sup>Main sources about the campaign is the statement in the “Babylonian Stelae” of Nabû-na’id, that he devoted to the temples of Marduk, Nabû and Nergal, 2800 prisoners of war from Ḫumê, to be used in building works—*ana zabālu tuššikku*. See (Langdon 1912, 284, Nabonid Nr. 8, Col. IX: 31–41).

<sup>29</sup>Eight Egyptian prisoners of war who are mentioned with their first name only in ration-lists, are known from two texts from Sippar composed during the reign of Nabû-kudurri-ušur around 602 BCE—BM 57337 and BM 49785, see (Wiseman 1966, 156–157, plate XLIV). Our main sources about the wars between Babylonia and Egypt are the tablets belonging to the series of “Neo-Babylonian Chronicles.” In BM 21901, obv. 10 the first data about battle with Egyptians in the region of the Middle Euphrates in 616 BCE are given. In BM 21946, obv. 1–8, the data about the battles in Carhemish and Hamat in 605 BCE are given. In BM 21946, rev. 5–7 the data about the war in Sinai in 601–600 BCE are given. The stated sources can be seen in (Wiseman 1956, 54–55, 66–69, 70–71). The fragmentary text (Strassmaier 1889b, Nbk.329) must be added to the above-mentioned texts. It is dated around the sixties of the sixth century BCE. See the translation of this text in (Oppenheim 1969, 308). Analysis of the Egypto-Babylonian relations during the period can be found in (Spalinger 1977). None of the mentioned source data contains a direct reference to Egyptians taken as prisoners of war.

of Akkad” in North-Western Arabia during the Nabû-na’id’s stay there, around 551/0–540/39 BCE.<sup>30</sup>

Information from different sources, as late as Early Islamic period, about the existing Jewish communities in the oases conquered by Nabû-na’id—the biggest one among them being Taima—testify of the accomplished deportations.<sup>31</sup> Deportations, whose character was related to the processes of relocation as well as the processes of urbanization. It must be noted that similar actions undertaken by the Neo-Babylonian kings did not have the dimensions of the ones during the Neo-Assyrian period. Besides, the information about such kind of relocations, during the Neo-Babylonian period, is sparse.

In this group of “foreigners” who belonged to the conquered by the Neo-Babylonian kingdom peoples can be included those whose labor was used by the Babylonian administration in connection with different building works, more probably for a definite period of time. It is possible that the “foreigners” under question could have been called up by the system for corvee duties—*dullu ša šarri*.<sup>32</sup> As the Biblical data states, the Neo-Babylonian kingdom exercised mass deportations selectively. From the dependent territories, besides political opponents, representatives of local elite and soldiers, Babylonians preferred to relocate also skilled workers—different types of craftsmen.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Major sources about the conquest of the lands in North-Western Arabia, and about the deportations of people from “the land of Ḫatti” and “the land of Akkad” conducted there, is Nabonidus’ Stela from Harran. See text H 2 A, B, Col. I: 22–27, Col. II: 6–10 in (Gadd 1958, 58–61). More details about the oases conquered by the ruler, and the problems related to their identification see (Gadd 1958, 79–89). Because in that part of Arabia there are no systematic archaeological excavations performed, there are many obscurities in relation to the Babylonian presence.

<sup>31</sup>An interesting late source about the participation of Judeans in the deportations conducted by Nabû-na’id in Arabia, is the fragment called “Nabonidus’ Prayer,” found in Qumran, and composed around the first half of the first century BCE. The text mentions that the ruler took treatment in Taima (BTYMN) by a Judean soothsayer. Transcription and translation of the text can be found in (Amusin 1958, 104–106). Analysis of the sources’ data and the main problems connected with them can be found in (Amusin 1958, 106–117).

<sup>32</sup>Two specific statements in the Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions are the main reason for the assumption that the “foreigners” in question were called up in connection with a specific purpose, for example the reconstruction of some temple, something presuming a limited period for their stay in Babylonia. The first statement is found in inscription of Nabû-kudurri-ušur, see (Langdon 1912, 146–147, Nebukadnezar Nr. 17, Col. II: 1–37), where it is stated that for the reconstruction of the zigurat E-temenanki and some other temples, the king called up many people “from the Upper sea to the Lower sea” together with the people from the “country of Akkad”—*mātu Akkadī(ki)*. The second statement can be seen in the Harran Stela of Nabû-na’id, H 2 A, B, Col. III: 18–22, where it is stated that the king called up people from “the Upper sea to the Lower sea” and from “the land of Ḫatti to the border with Egypt,” together with the people of “the country Akkad” for the reconstruction of Sin’s temple in Harran—Eḫulhul, see (Gadd 1958, 64–65).

<sup>33</sup>According to the Old Testament data in II Kings 25: 12–16, after the first siege of Jerusalem in 597 BCE, Nabû-kudurri-ušur deported to Babylonia woodworkers, smiths, builders and artisans, in addition to the deported members of the royal family, the members of the Judean elite and the de-

Old Testament data describing the deported Judeans, testifies that the Neo-Babylonian kingdom used the method of deportations politically, socially and economically selectively, not en masse.

The persons from this second group had also various social status, but most of them probably belonged to the dependent groups of the population connected mainly with the institution of the Palace and its military, economic and administrative structures.

The third group consisted of members of various tribes on the territory of Babylonia as the Arameans, the Chaldeans, and Arabs which settled the country during the end of the second and the first half of the first millennium BCE.<sup>34</sup> The tribal communities of the mentioned three groups enjoyed political autonomy, and until the forties of the seventh century BCE, the largest of them, namely of Arameans and Chaldeans, played an important political role in the country.<sup>35</sup> Their relations with Babylonian cities in political and economic aspect were multifarious, but members of the mentioned three tribal communities gradually became part of the existing social system in Babylonia. They settled in the cities or in villages controlled by the central power and its administration; they changed their way of life and gradually integrated themselves within the society.<sup>36</sup> Their integration during the Neo-Babylonian period possibly resulted mainly from the urbanization process which developed.<sup>37</sup> To this could be added a small group

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ported soldiers. The source give two totals—7 000 and 10 000. The Old Testament data about the number of the deported Judeans are unclear. According to Jer. 52: 28–30, during the two sieges of Jerusalem, in 597 and 587/6 BCE. Babylonians deported 3023 and 832 people. During the campaign of Nabuzardan in 582/1 BCE other 745 people were deported, as the source states that the total number of deported Judeans was 4600, possibly with the exception of children and women. The reasons for the discrepancy in the numbers given in the II Kings and Jeremiah remain unclear.

<sup>34</sup>For more about the settlement of the Arameans and Chaldeans in Babylonia and about their tribal organizations see (Brinkman 1984, 11–15). About the Arab tribes which start to settle Mesopotamia around eighth century BCE see in (Eph’al 1974, 108–110) and (Zadok 1981, 57–63, 66–68).

<sup>35</sup>Some of the Aramean and more specifically Chaldean tribal communities were among the strongest opponents of Assyrian influence over Babylonia, which is evidenced by the data concerning the numerous campaigns of the Assyrian kings against both tribal communities. See for instance the information about the policy of Šarru-kēn II (722–705 BCE) in (Brinkman 1984, 45–54).

<sup>36</sup>The process of gradual sedentarization, which took place among Aramean, Chaldean and Arab tribes in the period before 627/6 BCE, probably realized more successfully the model studied by Rowton in Mari during the second millennium BCE. The main social characteristics of the whole sedentarization process are summarized in (Rowton 1973, 253–258).

<sup>37</sup>It is important to note that probably because of the Assyrian policy in the second half of the seventh century BCE, the political role of the Aramean and Chaldean tribal communities during the Neo-Babylonian period was weakened. The issue is illustrated in (Brinkman 1984, 106–111). Moreover, during the Neo-Babylonian period there is no information concerning political conflicts between the tribal communities and the central (royal) power. It remains unclear which was the reason for this situation: some kind of political compromise between the tribal communities and the king, or the weaker political position of the tribal communities as part of the process of their sedentarization. Perhaps, the developing process of urbanization during the Neo-Babylonian period played an important role,

traders or residents of different regions of Iran and Anatolia, who settled in the country because of economic reasons. The persons belonging to this group also had a different social status.<sup>38</sup>

Of course such categorization could be prone to weakness and it must be interpreted critically.<sup>39</sup> For us, it is important to note that different types of cuneiform texts from the Neo-Babylonian period point to the existence of different social and ethnic origins of people who we would call today “foreigners” because of a part of their names attested in the sources.

### 7.3 The *Ḥadru* Communities

The persons belonging to the three groups of “foreigners” just outlined, are often mentioned as residents of settlements or neighborhoods around the large cities, written as *ālu ša* + ethnonym/toponym—gentilic adjective referring to tribe or country, for example as *ālu ša Miširāya*—“the city of Egyptians.”<sup>40</sup> The sources, however, occasionally also use the term *ḥadru* or *ḥaṭru*. According to CAD, the term means ‘a collegium or association of feudal tenants,’ and is also used for communities of “foreigners.”<sup>41</sup> In his research, Eph’al notes the important meaning of the *ḥadru* communities as an administrative and social element within the lives and activity of the “foreign” communities in Babylonia.<sup>42</sup>

According to their structure, the *ḥadru* communities were headed by a *šaknu*, who was sometimes chosen among the residents by a council of elders—*šībūtē*.<sup>43</sup>

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when the settled area of the cities grew as result of the enormous building activities of the Babylonian kings, for example, these conducted by Nabû-kudurrī-ušur in and around Babylon. Unfortunately, presently there is no research conducted which summarizes the archaeological data about Babylonian cities from the Neo-Babylonian period.

<sup>38</sup>The groups in question here are traders or seasonal hired workers from Iran and Elam, who for various reasons worked in Babylonia. See the examples of such cases concerning “foreigners” of both mentioned countries in (Zadok 1978a, 61–67), and (Dandamayev 1983, 137).

<sup>39</sup>The group categorization proposed here is open for discussion. Dandamayev proposes in his research a different categorization, which outlines the following social-defined groups of “foreigners”: 1. Privately owned and temple slaves and also various groups of state (palace) workmen; 2. Military colonists of the king; 3. State officials of foreign origin; 4. Persons who arrived in Babylonia and lived there permanently for reasons unknown to us (Dandamayev 1983, 136–137).

<sup>40</sup>Example for mentioning of such community, connected with Arabs can be found in text BE VIII/1. 50: 15 composed in the <sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id (547/6) in settlement called *Bīt sîn ālu ša Arbāya*—written as Bīt (d)30 URU ša (lú)Ar-ba-a-a (Eph’al 1982, 189; Dandamayev 2000, 36, n.14). We note that in the document the term *ḥadru* is not mentioned.

<sup>41</sup>See CAD, vol. 6: 24.

<sup>42</sup>See (Eph’al 1978, 78–80, 82–83). See also the notes about the *ḥadru* communities in (Wiseman 1985, 76–77).

<sup>43</sup>The meaning of the terms *šaknu* and *šībūtē* in connection with different administrative prerogatives is available: for *šaknu* - CAD, Š part I: 180–190, and for *šībūtē*—CAD, Š part II: 392–402.

As is recognized, the council consisted mainly of residents of a specific community. Such a structure offered a de facto limited administrative self-rule of the communities regarding their internal affairs, for instance, some legal proceedings, and together with that provided the necessary administrative and social ties of these communities with the central power and numerous branches of the Babylonian economy.

Apart from the fact that the communities were formed according to an “ethnic” attribute, they were distributed in the suburbs of many cities. Thus, for example, *ḥadru* communities of Egyptians called *ālu ša Miširāya* settled along the cities of Babylon, Nippur, Uruk, Sippar and Borsipa.<sup>44</sup> Texts from various Babylonian cities present evidence of many other *ḥadru* communities consisting of Sidonians, Tyrians, Arabs, Philistines and others. At the moment we have the most researched information from the region of Nippur.<sup>45</sup> Probably during the sixth century BCE, the Babylonian economy had a well developed system of social integration of the “foreigners” here under discussion in different regions of the country.

We note that we still know very little of the functioning and the internal affairs of the *ḥadru* communities in terms of the governor (*šaknu*), and the council of elders, because of the casual character of the sources. We still lack the information how exactly these two institutions defended the economic and other interests of residents of a given community within the Babylonian economy. An interesting fact is that the *ḥadru* communities of deported people had an identical structure to the *ḥadru* communities resulting from the urbanization processes.

In a social plan, the residents of these communities belonged to various social strata. Thus, for illustration, it is known that part of the Jewish elite, deported by Nabû-kudurrī-ušur, preserved its privileged social status in the Jewish communities in Babylonia.<sup>46</sup> The information from the cuneiform sources points out that the communities were comprised by both rich and poor people who belonged to the temple and state administration, to different economic branches of, trade, agriculture, farming, commerce and so forth. However, not all sources mentioning “foreigners” refer to the *ḥadru* communities as their residence, and consequently during the Neo-Babylonian period different groups of “foreigners” were already residents of the large cities in the country.

The limited self-government of the *ḥadru* communities played an important cultural role for the “foreigners” which resided within their boundaries. From one

<sup>44</sup>See (Eph'al 1978, 79).

<sup>45</sup>The main source of our information about the region of Nippur comes from the texts written during the Achaemenid rule, and belongs to the Murašû archives. For the disposition of different *ḥadru* communities around Nippur see (Zadok 1978b, 290, Table No. 1, and 296–298, Table No. 2).

<sup>46</sup>See, for example, the mention of ‘elders of the exiles’ and the elders of Judah and of Israel’ in Babylonia in Jer. 29: 1, Ezek. 8: 1, 14: 1.



side, it helped the adoption of the achievements of the Babylonian culture by the inhabitants of the communities, and from other side, it allows the inhabitants to preserve their cultural and ethnic self-awareness. Probably the best example for the realization of these two processes is demonstrated by the data about the deported Judeans during the rule of Nabû-kudurri-ûsur. “The Babylonian Captivity” that started after 597 BCE was not only a period in the development of the political history of the Judeans, but also an important stage in the rationalization and realization of the Judean culture. As the Old Testament data states the deported Judeans had a possibility to preserve their self-consciousness and to support their religious and cultural institutions in the lands of Babylonia.<sup>47</sup> The activities of the prophet Ezekiel are not the only evidence. Three more examples can be stated about the activities of the Judean scribes.<sup>48</sup>

The first one is related to the calendar used by Judeans, in which during the Captivity, names of the months were influenced by those known from the Babylonian Calendar.<sup>49</sup>

The second example concerns the writing of some historical books of the Old Testament during the sixth century BCE—the Chronicles I and II, and Kings I and II.<sup>50</sup> Without doubt, the composing of these books was part of the internal dynamics in the development of the Judean literature, and after that the result of the direct contact with the historical tradition of Mesopotamian civilization as, for example, the series “Babylonian Chronicles.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>The first groups of deported Judeans in 597/6 BCE were settled in the regions of Babylon and Nippur. Probably the ones settled in Babylon were related mainly to the political elite of Judea, since the “ration-lists” found in Babylon state that the deported Judean king—Jehoiachin and persons connected with him, received maintenance from the Palace around 592 BCE. See the texts according Weidner’s publication, B. Babylon 28178 (VAT 16283), Vs. II: 38–40, and C. Babylon 28186 (VAT 16387), Vs. II: 17–21 in (Weidner 1939, 925–926), as also (Mitchell 1991, 418–420). The data about the region of Nippur mentions several places with Judean settlements, but their exact localization is problematic (Ezek. 1: 3, 3: 15; Mitchell 1991, 420–422). The cuneiform texts from the Achaemenid period state that deported Judeans were settled in other regions of Babylonia, including more places around Nippur. These texts, however, are diachronistic compared to the period reviewed.

<sup>48</sup>The activities of the deported Judean scribes were connected with the literary traditions realized by the prophetic schools in Judea herself, before the “Babylonian Captivity.” Deported members of such schools continued their activities during the Captivity (Mitchell 1991, 445–446).

<sup>49</sup>The problem concerning the calendrical systems used in seventh and sixth centuries BCE by Judeans is serious, because of the several calendrical systems simultaneously used in different books of the Old Testament. Observations about such important political events as the first siege of Jerusalem in 597 BCE can be found in (Malamat 1968, 137–150). One of the earliest known Judean calendars is the one from Gezer. See (Albright 1969, 320). For the Babylonian influence over the Judean calendar see also Mitchell (Mitchell 1991, 441).

<sup>50</sup>For the dating of the composition of the Old Testament’s historical books, see (Mitchell 1991, 446).

<sup>51</sup>Regardless of the similarities in the objectives of the narrative of the Old Testament’s historical books and for example the series “Neo-Babylonian Chronicles,” there are also serious differences in relation to their structure and contents. The most probable reason for this is the fact that Judean

The third example about the activities of the Judean scribes during the Captivity, which testifies of the combination of Babylonian influence with the inner dynamics of Judean literary traditions, is the Book of Daniel, probably composed during the sixth or the fifth century BCE.<sup>52</sup> Some parts of the book according to their contents testify for similarities with familiar genres of Akkadian literature, for instance the Akkadian Prophecies.<sup>53</sup> Other parts of the book, mainly in Dan. 1–6, contain important historical data about the Captivity, also influenced by some Babylonian traditions like, for instance, the tradition of dream interpretation, something attested in some of the royal inscriptions of Nabû-na’id.<sup>54</sup> The Book of Daniel has the important statement that Judean youths from influential families were trained in Babylonian schools, something which helped with their acquaintance with the Babylonian culture and the rationalization of its achievements within the boundaries of the Judean literary traditions.<sup>55</sup>

These examples suggest that the Judeans had the possibility to preserve their religious and cultural traditions during the time of the Captivity. Of course, it must be kept in mind that Mesopotamian cultural influence on the Judeans preceded the epoch of Captivity. Moreover the literary richness of both cultures demonstrates that probably as far back as ninth–eighth century BCE, they had many similar elements, reflected in their literary traditions.<sup>56</sup>

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culture interacted with the other Ancient Near Eastern cultures in a way which adopted effectively some foreign cultural influence and which transformed it into a part of the Judean literary tradition. About the similarities and differences between Old Testament’s historical books and “Babylonian Chronicles” see (Mitchell 1991, 442–443), and for the main features of the structure in the books “Chronicles” and “Kings” see (Seters 1980, 167–183).

<sup>52</sup>The dating of the composition of the Book of Daniel is still debatable. According to some authors, the book was composed around the middle of the second century BCE, but according to the opinion of other authors, the book was composed during or soon after the time of the events described in it, around sixth or fifth century BCE. See the main arguments of both groups of authors summarized in (Waltke 1976, 319–325).

<sup>53</sup>The parts in question are Dan. 7–12, where different prophecies are narrated. It must be noted that the Akkadian Prophecies by their meaning are *vaticinia ex eventu*, something which differentiates them from the Biblical prophecies. See more over this question in (Baldwin 1979, 77–80, 92–99).

<sup>54</sup>More specifically it is about the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar interpreted by Daniel in Dan. 2: 16–45, 4: 6–24. For the data in Dan. 1–6 see (Millard 1977, 68–73; Wiseman 1985, 87–98). Statements about dream interpretation connected with Neo-Babylonian ruler can be found only in some of the royal inscriptions of Nabû-na’id. In the “Babylonian Stela” the king mentions two of his dreams, see (Langdon 1912, 278–279, 284–286, Nabonid Nr. 8, Col. VI: 1–36, Col. X; 1–12), and in the “Royal Chronicle” from Ur, it is stated that the king consulted the dream interpretation series Enûma-Anu-Enlil, see (Lambert 1968, 4, 6, obv. III: 1–5).

<sup>55</sup>See Dan. 1: 3–7, 17, 20. The education of youths from prominent families was used as a method with political objectives by all empires in the Antiquity. Possibly, this method played an important cultural role for the adaptation of Babylonian cultural influence in Judean literary traditions.

<sup>56</sup>Such similar elements can be observed in texts belonging to the group of wisdom literature. Thus, the literary motive connecting the building of some edifices with the possession of wisdom expressed in skills and knowledge is reflected as element in royal inscriptions from Mesopotamia and in different

It is also worth noting that the specific structures of the realization of the cultural role present in the *hadru* institutions remains unclear. For example, cuneiform texts so far known do not confirm the existence of such important institutions as schools within the *hadru* communities. The concrete parameters of the Babylonian cultural influence remain unclear. So does the cultural autonomy within the communities of other deported “foreigners” like Phoenicians, Philistines, or inhabitants from Anatolian regions. The dynamics in the process of cultural assimilation of “foreigners” in relation to the *hadru* communities remains unclear as well.

We will not dwell more on the important cultural role concerning the preservation of the national identity that these *hadru* communities had. It is sufficient for us to note that through and with their various structures, Babylonian economy and society found an effective model through which it integrated the “foreigners,” regardless of the specific reasons of their presence in the country.

#### 7.4 The Scope of Social Integration

The cuneiform sources give numerous examples of the integration of “foreigners” in different areas of the Babylonian society. We will dwell on some example related to the issue.

The famous “Court list” (or Court Calendar) composed as part of a royal inscription during the reign of Nabû-kudurri-ušur, around the nineties or seventies of the sixth century BCE, mentions many high-ranking officials of the court.<sup>57</sup> Among the mentioned is the chief royal sailor, *rāb tamkār ša šarri Ḥanunu*.<sup>58</sup> The name is of West-Semitic origin, probably Phoenician, and it should be connected to the important role trade played by the Phoenician cities during that time.<sup>59</sup>

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Biblical texts (Leuwen 2007). Similar elements can be found in the Old Testament’s accounts of the Creation and the Deluge and in numerous Mesopotamian myths. It is appropriate to add that in their meaning the Biblical and Mesopotamian accounts had also serious differences (Heidel 1963, 82–140), where different problems connected with the Old Testament parallels of different Mesopotamian myths are reviewed.

<sup>57</sup>The dating of the source’s composition is disputable. It is known that the text is a part of a royal inscription composed in connection with the opening of the palace built by the Babylonian ruler, an event to which many high-ranking officials and dependent kings were invited. For the discussions about the composition of the text, around 590 or 570 BCE, see (Beaulieu 2002, 99–101).

<sup>58</sup>See the translation of the source in (Oppenheim 1969, 3007–308).

<sup>59</sup>See (Oppenheim 1967, 252–253). Probably the important merchant role played by Tyre was the reason, after long siege, for the city not to be destroyed by Nabû-kudurri-ušur. Tyre did not share the fate of Jerusalem, because Tyre was an important redistributive center for trade with some metals and many other commodities from the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean. Important information about the trade partners and the exchange of merchandise of Tyre during the sixth century BCE can be found in Ezek. 27: 2–36.

Regardless of the circumstances around the ‘presence’ of Ḫanunu in the royal administration, it is important that a “foreigner” serves a high government position directly related to the economic system of Babylonia.

Information from the “ration-lists” dated from 592 BCE mentions the existence of a military squad of 713 Elamites under the command of a Babylonian officer.<sup>60</sup> It is known that during the Neo-Babylonian period there was a military formation which consisted of people recruited from the Babylonian dependent territories or of mercenaries, that is, consisting of “foreigners.”<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the “foreigners” were able to find professional realization in this important institution.<sup>62</sup> There is one more example related to Elamites. This is the archive of Elamite settlers, found in Niniveh in the archaeological levels dated after 612 BCE most of whom were specialized in the area of agriculture.<sup>63</sup> It is known also from different texts that there existed an Elamite *hadru* community around Babylon called *ālu ša Šušan*, and information from various Babylonian cities demonstrate that Elamites with different social status participated in the economic life of the country.<sup>64</sup>

We will dwell more specifically over the data related to two other groups of “foreigners.” The first group consists of Egyptians, that is, of “foreigners” whose origin was connected culturally and geographically with a different civilization. The second group consists of the Arabs in Babylonia, that is, of “foreigners” connected with the tribal communities that existed within the cultural and geographical borders of Mesopotamia. The information about the Arabs is much larger because the Arab population of Babylonia was relatively large compared to the Egyptians. Most of the texts mention the “foreigners” by indicating their third

<sup>60</sup>See the mention in (Weidner 1939, 929, text B. Babylon 28178 (VAT 16283), Rs. I: 5, Rs. II: 13–14). The presence of the Elamites in the mentioned lists is related to the problem of the suzerainty over Elam during the Neo-Babylonian period. There are two main hypotheses of this problem. According to the first one, supported by Zadok and Diakonoff, Elam or her western half, Susiana, was a part of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom at least through 585/4 or through 539 BCE. For a more detailed position of both authors see (Zadok 1978a, 61–62) and (Diakonoff 1985, 23–24). The hypothesis is criticized by Wiseman, see (Wiseman 1956, 36; 1985, 34, 78, 81). According to the second hypothesis supported by Zawadzki, Elam had been a dependent state of Media ever since the end of the seventh century BCE. More details are available in (Zawadzki 1988, 133–143). The political context of the mentioned information about the Elamites in the lists remains unclear, and the data could not be used as an argument in support of the hypothesis of the Babylonian suzerainty over Elam.

<sup>61</sup>See (Beaulieu 1989, 188–193), the information concerns the reign of Nabonidus.

<sup>62</sup>Possibly the social system related to the army during the Neo-Babylonian period was similar to the one of Assyria and Urartu, but there is no general research of the problem to the present time. See Diakonoff (Diakonoff 1952, 93–99) about major characteristics of social organization of deported military staff in the lands of Assyria and Urartu. Information that the Babylonians systematically deported military staff from the dependent territories is contained in II Kings 24: 14, 16, whereas the information is related to 597–596 BCE.

<sup>63</sup>See (Dalley 1993, 144–145).

<sup>64</sup>See the data in the study of (Zadok 1978a, 61–67).

name. Many legal, administrative and business documents mention persons of Egyptian origin. One text belonging to the group of “ration-lists” dated from the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-uşur, mentions eight Egyptians.<sup>65</sup> The Egyptians are mentioned only by their first names and most probably they were prisoners of war in charge of the supervision of a boat house (*bît sâpînâti*) and *qêpu*’s office. Generally, 46 captured Egyptian shipbuilders are mentioned in the “ration-lists” and all of them are mentioned only by their first names—that is, evidence that they had come to Babylonia not long before the composition of the texts.

During the period, Saite Egypt had a strong navy and was an important naval force in the Eastern Mediterranean sea.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, in Egypt as well as in Mesopotamia, river navigation was well developed because the big rivers—Nile, Euphrates and Tigris, which together with their systems of canals were used as the main line of communication. Therefore, the skills of the Egyptian boatmen were evaluated in Babylonia as important and necessary.

Text GCCI I; 260, composed in Uruk from the 31<sup>st</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-uşur is a record of bailment and belongs to the temple archive of Eanna. It mentions *Šamaš-aḥ-iddin apil-šu ša Mār-Esagila-nibbi apil Miširāya* (written (m.d)mi-šir-a-a), as a guarant of a person who owed the temple administration payments of dates, and who was imprisoned.<sup>67</sup> Even though the text does not clearly mention the social status of the “Egyptian,” it becomes clear from the contents that he acted the way every free Babylonian citizen acts. It is possible that the “foreigner” mentioned could have been second or third generation settler in the land.

Text Strassmaier, Nbk. 328, composed in the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-uşur, with unknown localization of composition, mentions two “Egyptians” as witnesses.<sup>68</sup> The text is a receipt, and the “Egyptians” mentioned are *Bēl-uballit apil-šu Šulâ apil Miširāya* (written mi-šir-a-a) and *Bēl-uballit apil-šu ša Bēl-šum-iškun apil Miširāya* (written mi-šir-a-a). The document testifies that the persons mentioned had first and second Babylonian names and therefore it can be inferred that they were second or third generation settlers in Babylonia. Unfortunately, such kinds of mentioning are not informative enough.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See the source in Weidner 1939, 930, text C. Babylon 28186 (VAT 16378) Vs. I: 18–19). See also (Wiseman 1966, 155–156).

<sup>66</sup> According to Herodotus, the Egyptian fleet was strong enough to participate during the reign of Apries (or Uah-ib-Re) in the war against the fleet of Tyre, see Herodotus, *Historiae*, II, 161. Similar information is presented also by Diodorus, which mentions that the pharaoh fought with the Phoenician fleets from Sidon and Cyprus, see Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, I, 68.1. Analysis of these information can be found in Spalinger (1977, 234–236).

<sup>67</sup> See (Dougherty 1923, 24–25, plates XXXV–XXXVI, No. 260: 1–2).

<sup>68</sup> See (Strassmaier 1889b, 193–194, Nbk. 328: 13–14).

<sup>69</sup> Another example about an “Egyptian” mentioned as a witness can be found in (Moldenke 1893, 41–44, text No. 26: 19), where some *Balāšu apil-šu ša Miširāya* is mentioned. The text, a receipt

Text Strassmaier, Nbk. 359, from the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurri-uşur, composed in Hurasgkamma, mentions the “Egyptian” scribe *Šamaš-nāšir apil-šu ša Bēl-ušallim apil Miširāya* (written (m.d)*mi-šir-a-a*).<sup>70</sup> The text is administrative and the mentioned “Egyptian” therein held this authoritative profession. He was probably second or third generation settler in Babylonia.

Text YOS VI, 2 was composed in *šattu rēš šarrūti* of Nabû-na’id in Uruk. The text is a judicial document related to the adoption of a slave’s child. An “Egyptian” slave—*Nabû-ina-kāri-lūmur*—(lú)*qallu ša Miširāya* (written (lú)*mi-šir-a-a*) is mentioned in it, and is stated not only as a witness, but also as a participant in the agreement.<sup>71</sup> The “Egyptian” mentioned was a private person’s slave.

Text YOS VI, 148, was composed in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id in Uruk. The text is a court decision given by the administration of Eanna. It mentions the temple slave—(lú)*širku ša (d)Nergal*, the “Egyptian” *Nergal-nūri’ ālu Miširāya* (written (lú.uru)*mi-šir-a-a*).<sup>72</sup> The decision affirms the accusations and finds the slave guilty of illegal fishing and illegal cutting in the temple’s real estate. The person was convicted to compensate the damages thirtyfold. The penalty imposed coincides with the recommended one in Paragraph 8 from the Law Code of Hammurabi.

Two other texts present an interesting problem. Texts Strassmaier, Nbn. 679 and Strassmaier, Nbn. 634, were composed in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id, in Babylon. The texts are a business document and a receipt. Both mention the scribes (written lú.umbisag): *Nabû-apla-iddin apil-šu ša Nammuru apil Miširāya* and *Nabû-eššiš apil-šu ša Nammuru apil Miširāya*.<sup>73</sup> Most probably, both mentioned scribes were brothers, which is evidenced by their coinciding second and third names. The scribe mentioned in Nbn. 679 is attested also in other documents from Babylon, again as a scribe.<sup>74</sup> Here, the possibility that two persons from the same family were scribes is a compelling example of social realization.

In a text from Larsa—YOS XIX, 70, dated in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id, written with the purpose of a land contract, some *Nabû-mukīn-apli apil-šu ša Pir’u apil ša Miširāya* (written *mi-šir-a-a*) is both witness and the scribe.<sup>75</sup> In

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for loaned money guaranteed with a mortgaged house, was composed in Babylon in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id.

<sup>70</sup>See (Strassmaier 1889b, 211–212, Nbk. 359: 15–16).

<sup>71</sup>See (Dougherty 1920, plate I, No. 2: 3, 14, 19).

<sup>72</sup>See (Dougherty 1920, plate L, No. 148: 2–3). Translation and analysis of the text can be found in (Dandamayev 1974, 314).

<sup>73</sup>See (Strassmaier 1889a, 405–406, 375–376, Nbn. 679: 12–13, Nbn. 634: 10–11).

<sup>74</sup>See (Strassmaier 1889a, 592–593, 627, Nbn. 1031: 16–17 and Nbn. 1110: 14).

<sup>75</sup>See (Beaulieu 2000, plate XXXIV, No. 70: 18–19).

this case, the scribe mentioned was a part of the administrative personnel of the temple Ebabbar in the city.

In a text from Borsipa, YOS XIX, 47, dated in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na'id, representing a receipt and belonging to the archive of an influential family Ea-ilûta-bani, some *Nabû-aḥḥe-bullit apil-šu ša Nabû-aḥḥe-iddin apil ša Miširāya* is mentioned as the person who paid back an owed quantity of dates (Beaulieu 2000, plate XXV, No. 47: 2,7). Probably this is regarding one kind of commodity credit extended in Babylonia that was interest free and used primarily by farmers. The text does not directly mention the profession of the person, but it becomes clear from the contents that he was a farmer.

Text Peek No. 17, composed in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses (525 BCE) in Babylon mentions “Egyptians” too. The text is a business contract for sale of slaves.<sup>76</sup> In this case, a Babylonian sells his slaves—(*qallassu*), some Nanâ-ittīja—“Egyptian” (written (kur) *mi-šir-i-tu*), and her three-month-old child for the price of two minas of silver. It is stated that both were the booty of his bow—*hubūt qašī-šu*. Probably the person mentioned in the text participated in the campaign of Cambyses against Saite Egypt in 525 BCE that ended with subjugation of the country to the Persians. The text testifies that naming with Babylonian names was realized soon after the capture of some “foreigner.” The Egyptians in Babylonia were occupied in different occupations and were part of various social strata, as is demonstrated by the examples. They were also physicians, diviners, dream interpreters, singers, craftsmen, peasants, slaves and temple slaves.<sup>77</sup> In almost all cases they carry their Babylonian given first names, and for us it remains unclear what part of the mentioned Egyptians moved to Babylonia before, and what part after the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian period around 627/6 BCE.

Unlike Egyptians, another group of “foreigners,” namely Arabs, did not settle around of the Babylonian cities mainly as a result of mass deportations, but as a result of the ongoing process of urbanization in Babylonia and sedentarization of the tribal communities.<sup>78</sup> Here are some examples of their social integration.

Text GCCI, I, 184, composed in the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrī-ušur in Uruk is a receipt for payment belonging to the temple archive of Eanna.<sup>79</sup> The text mentions, together with other persons, *Nanâ-aḥ-iddin apil-šu ša Arrab* (written *ār-rab*), who was in charge of the delivery of *rēḥātu* in the Palace, and who was paid for the accomplished work. It is known that *rēḥātu*—leftovers, were deliv-

<sup>76</sup>The text in transliteration, translation and cuneiform copy can be found in (Pinches 1888, 73–77, No. 17: 2–4).

<sup>77</sup>See (Eph'al 1978, 76–79; Zadok 1979, 172–173; Wiseman 1966).

<sup>78</sup>See the detailed study of the Arab presence in Babylonian lands during the Neo-Babylonian period in (Zadok 1981, 66–84).

<sup>79</sup>See (Dougherty 1923, 31, plate XXIV, No. 184: 2–3).

ered regularly to the Palace during the period, and were used as “ritual food” by the kings.<sup>80</sup> The “Arab” mentioned is known also from another document.

Text GCCI, I, 238 is a receipt, composed in the 26<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-ušur again in Uruk (Dougherty 1923, plates XXXI–XXXII, No. 238: 10). It mentions *Nanâ-aḥ-iddin apil-šu ša Arrab* (written *ár-rab*), but this time he was in charge of the delivery of foods and other provisions for the Palace. The delivery was sent by the temple to the Palace. It remains unclear if the person mentioned was part of the temple personnel, or if he was a Palace official. The former is more probable.<sup>81</sup> With certainty, the person who carried out the duties played some role in connection with the relations between both institutions and the “Arab” belonged to the social strata connected with their administrations.

Text GCCI, I, 80, composed in the 30<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-ušur, in Uruk and belonging to the temple archive is a list of workmen (written *(lú)ummā-nu*). In it, among the mentioned people there is also some *Arrab apil-šu ša Bēl-upaḥḥir* (written (m.d)*ár-rab*), (Dougherty 1923, plate XII, No. 80: 6). In this case, it is interesting that the ethnonym is mentioned as a first name of some person. It is possible, though there is no mentioning of his third name, that he was with an “Arab” origin. In this case the person is acknowledged just as a worker.

Text Strassmaier, Nbk. 287 dated in the 35<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-ušur, with no preserved locality is a receipt according to which a quantity of sesame sold to *Arbâ* (written *(lú)ar-ba-a*) was paid for with the sum of 1 mina of silver. The Arab mentioned in the text was probably a merchant.<sup>82</sup>

Text GCCI, II, 211 was composed in the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-ušur in Uruk. The text is a receipt concerning silver dispensed for various purposes and belongs to the Eanna’s archive. In there, together with other people, *Arrabi* (written (m.d) *ár-ra-bi*) (*(lú)rāb karāni*) is mentioned.<sup>83</sup> In this case, the person is mentioned only by his first name, but there is a statement about the functions performed by him—namely wine master. It remains unclear if the mentioned functions are connected to the administration of the temple’s wine-cellar, or they were connected to the trade with wine.<sup>84</sup> It is evident that this “foreigner” participated

<sup>80</sup>About the term *rēḫatu* see CAD, R: 340. The term is used in different texts from the archive of Eanna, in relation to the “ritual food” supplied in Taima for the king Nabû-na’id during his stay in Arabia (Beaulieu 1989, 157–159).

<sup>81</sup>The reason for this assumption is the fact that the “Arab” mentioned is known from text GCCI, I, 255, dated in the 19<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-kudurrî-ušur. The text is composed in Uruk and is a receipt for a given quantity of grain, in which is mentioned Nanâ-aḥ-iddin as receiver (Dougherty 1923, plate XXXIV–XXXV, No. 255: 8). It is known that the temple gave to his employees different quantities of grain as maintenance.

<sup>82</sup>See the text in (Strassmaier 1889b, 170; Nbk. 287: 15) and (Eph’al 1982, 188), where can be found other examples for Arab traders in cuneiform sources.

<sup>83</sup>(Dougherty 1933, plate XXXIV, No. 211: 9–10).

<sup>84</sup>About the obscurities in the meaning of the term see CAD, K: 206.



in the activities of the temple institution too, although not as part of the temple’s lower personnel.

Text YOS XIX, 111 was found in the temple archive of Eanna in Uruk, and was composed in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Nabû-na’id. The text is a list of workers, different people hired to carry dates. Among the mentioned are also three Arabs (written (m.d) *ár-rab*), who are stated as a soldier (lú)*šābu*, a craftsman (lú)*ummānu* and a sack-maker (lú)*šaqqāyu*.<sup>85</sup> The text does not mention the names of the three persons, but their realization in the fields of the mentioned professions is indicative of the level of their social integration. It remains unclear if the two mentioned craftsmen were part of the temple’s personnel or they were just hired for the case.

Text YOS XIX, 75, was composed in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Nabû-na’id in Uruk. The document is a list of estimated yields of barley fields. There are two “Arabs” — (lú) *ár-rab* mentioned, without explicit statement of their names, who are stated as farmers—(lú)*ikkaru*.<sup>86</sup> The text is a part of the temple archive and the mentioned farmers therein, probably belonged to the social group of the temple’s dependent population. The temple’s *ikkaru* could be leased, together with the lands cultivated by them.<sup>87</sup> This social group was neither a part of the free citizen’s group of Babylonia, nor a part of the slaves’ group.<sup>88</sup>

Text YOS VI; 59 is dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id, from Uruk. The text is a business contract. It points that *Innin-šum-uššur apil-šu ša Šamaš-nāšir apil Arbâ* (written *ar-ba-a-a*) sells a house, owned by him, in that city.<sup>89</sup> The text evidences that in this case the mentioned Arab was a resident of the city and not of the respective *hadru* community, which is a good example for sedentarization and social integration.

Text YOS XIX, 173 was composed in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id in Uruk. The text belongs to the temple archive and by its form is a receipt for a quantity of beer received. The receiver in it is an “Arab” carpenter—(m.d) *ár-rab* (lú)*nagāru*.<sup>90</sup> Because the person under question is mentioned only by his first

<sup>85</sup>See (Beaulieu 2000, plate LIV, No. 111: 12–13). For the meaning of *šaqqāyu* as sack maker see CAD, S: 168. It must be noted that the cuneiform copy of the text is not clear enough in the lines quoted. The sign MEŠ after the ethnic name is missing.

<sup>86</sup>See (Beaulieu 2000, plate XXXVI, No. 75: 19, 23).

<sup>87</sup>An example about a similar situation can be found in text YOS VI, 11 composed in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Nabû-na’id in Larsa. The text is a contract for lease of land between temple’s administration and two private persons. In it, line 4 states that together with the land there are also 400 *ikkarē* leased to the leaseholders. See the text in (Dougherty 1920, plate III–IV, No. 11: 4).

<sup>88</sup>A detailed analysis about the social conditions of the dependent farmers *ikkaru*, as social group related to the institutions of the Temple and the Palace can be found in (Dandamayev 1974, 341–365).

<sup>89</sup>See (Dougherty 1920, plate XX, No. 59: 3–4).

<sup>90</sup>See (Beaulieu 2000, plate LXXX, No. 173: 2).

name and profession, most probably he was part of the temple’s craftsmen and consequently, he was known to the temple’s scribes.

Text Moldenke, No. 17, was composed in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id in Babylon. The text is a contract for loaned money. The person in it who receives the loan is some (m.d) *A-ra-bi* (lú) *qallu*—a slave of the person who gave the loan—Iddin-Marduk from the famous “house” of Nūr-Sîn.<sup>91</sup> Although the mentioned “Arab” was a slave, and the loan’s conditions were quite unfavorable, such loan would not have been made if the recipient did not have any kind of property in the form of *peculium*—the text makes no mention about it directly. Such types of loan, in which the master gives some sum of money to his slave were made only if the slave had a *peculium*.<sup>92</sup>

Text Strassmaier, Nbn. 372, was composed in Babylon in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Nabû-na’id. The text is a receipt, mentioning among its witnesses *Ša-pî-kalbi apil-šu ša Arrabi apil ša Šangû-Nanâ-Bābili*.<sup>93</sup> There is no other information about the person in the text. Two things in his name draw attention. His first name was frequently given to foster children, and his second name is an ethnonym.<sup>94</sup> His third name is connected with influential Babylonian family which probably adopted the person in his childhood years.

Text YOS XIX, 115, was composed in Uruk under the reign of Nabû-na’id, but its exact date is not preserved. The text is a list of workmen assigned to the watch of Eanna, and belongs to the temple’s archive. There, together with other persons, *Ilu-dannu-ahhē-šu-ibni apil-šu ša Arrabi* (written (m.d) *ár-rab-bi*) (lú) *išparu*—a weaver—is mentioned.<sup>95</sup> Because such a watch was performed by people belonging to the temple’s personnel, in this case too, probably the mentioned “Arab” was a temple’s craftsman.<sup>96</sup> There are no other data about the person and his social position. It remains unclear if he were a part of the temple’s dependent personnel, or he was a part of the group of temple slaves.

As can be seen from the examples during the Neo-Babylonian period the Arabs are widely acknowledged in the sources, in the context of data belonging

<sup>91</sup> The text in transliteration, translation and cuneiform copy can be found in (Moldenke 1893, 19–21, Text No. 17: 2, 1–4).

<sup>92</sup> More observations of similar situations related to *peculium* are available in (Dandamayev 1974, 188–203).

<sup>93</sup> See (Strassmaier 1889a, 224, Nbn. 372: 7–8).

<sup>94</sup> Regarding the usage of the name *Ša-pî-kalbi* primarily with adopted children see (Dandamayev 1974, 67–68).

<sup>95</sup> See (Beaulieu 2000, plate LVII, No. 115: 9). The text is not well preserved.

<sup>96</sup> Text mentioning the watch of Eanna is GCCI, II, 103, composed in Uruk in the year of accession of Cambyses. In the text, however, there are only temple slaves mentioned as watches. See the text in (Dougherty 1933, plate XVIII, No. 103: 1, 5).

to various areas of the economic activity.<sup>97</sup> Like the Egyptians, the Arabs found work in different spheres: they were acknowledged as merchants, soldiers, middle class administrators and royal servants, farmers, scribes, slaves and temple slaves.

The information regarding other “foreigners” in Mesopotamia from the same period is similar in its character.<sup>98</sup>

## 7.5 Conclusions

During the Neo-Babylonian period, the economic system was flexible enough to provide the realization of different by their social and ethnic origin “foreigners.” The stated examples are evidence of the variety of the professional realization of the “foreigners” in the spheres of production such as agriculture and handicraft, and also in the non-production spheres such as the administration. Each of the stated examples exposes a specific social situation, a part of the life of Babylonian society, with all the variety of activities and types of relations.

In economic and social spheres however there is clear evidence of wide integration both horizontally, and vertically within the structure of Babylonian society. The “foreigners” in Babylonia could work professionally in almost all areas to which “regular” Babylonians had access. The fact that in the sources the “foreigners” were only recognized by a part of their name, or more concrete, often by their third name, is evidence not only of their strictly professional rights but also of the lack of discrimination which would put them on an unequal footing. The probable existence of a “foreigner” in the higher royal administration is one more proof in this case.

Of course, such social integration was aligned with the characteristics of Neo-Babylonian society, and more clearly, to the characteristics of its complex social structure. The examples here confirm this observation. The “foreigners” and their heirs belonged to the familiar strata of slaves, dependent people and the free citizens. Besides, the cuneiform sources mentioning “foreigners” describe them as participants in diverse social situations within the boundaries of each strata. The variety of the reflected situations is in itself an important informative element of the social conditions of the “foreigners” and their interrelations with Babylonian people and institutions.

With this background, the social and cultural role of the *hadru* communities deserves special attention, in spite of the problems related to their study.

<sup>97</sup>More information can be found in (Dandamayev 2000, 137–139; Zadok 1981, 80–84; Eph’al 1974, 111–115).

<sup>98</sup>See the information about groups of “foreigners” from Phoenicia, Philistine, Asia Minor and Syria in the region of Nippur in (Eph’al 1978, 80–83; Zadok 1979, 164–169), for Iranians (Zadok 1978a, 64–67; 1979, 169–172), where there is bibliography of the research concerning different groups of “foreigners.”

Namely, by means of these structures, part of the “foreigners” were integrated into the economic system of the country and together with that the possibilities of restricted self-rule and of preserving their national identity was given to them, in parallel to the process of their cultural assimilation reflected in their Babylonian given names. The latter is evidence of an ongoing process of cultural assimilation, whose wide parameters remain unclear.

In the dawn of the Mesopotamian civilization during the third millennium BCE, there was a tradition according to which the biggest part of the “foreigners” captured after some conflict was murdered, and the other prisoners of war were enslaved. Two monuments from the same city but from different periods reflect this. The first is the “Stela of Vultures,” from Tello, dated from the Third Early Dynastic Period. In one of the stela’s fragments there is a display of god Ningirsu killing caged prisoners of war. The second monument is from the Akkadian period, the “Stela of Rimush,” dated in the twenty-third century BCE. In the preserved part of the monument there is a clear depiction of soldiers killing unarmed prisoners, probably “foreigners.”

In contrast with these images, the sources from the first millennium BCE give examples of a very different and very altered attitude towards the “foreigners.” During the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, different texts from Babylonia reflect an interesting cultural phenomenon. Families in which both parents bear Babylonian names give their children Iranian and Egyptian names, whereas families in which both parents bear Iranian names give their children Babylonian names.<sup>99</sup> This situation is indicative not only of the level of social and cultural integration of the “foreigners,” but also of the change in the attitudes towards them within the Mesopotamian civilization, which is evident in the sources from the Neo-Babylonian period. The level of social integration of “foreigners” in Babylonia from this period can be accepted as further evidence for the existence of effective globalization in Mesopotamia during the first millennium BCE. We can add to this conclusion that there is no more visible and clear sign of globalization than the level of the social integration of “foreigners.”

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<sup>99</sup>The examples and their sources can be found in (Dandamayev 1983, 137–139).

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## Chapter 8

### The Religious Reform of Nabonidus: A Sceptical View

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#### 8.1 Introduction

Modern scholars often ascribe to Nabonidus an attempt to introduce some sort of “religious reform.” Three documents were particularly important in the creation of modern views on the reign of the last ruler of independent Babylonia—“The Verse Account of Nabonidus” (hereafter quoted as the *Verse Account*), “The Cyrus Cylinder” and “The Chronicle of Nabonidus.” The hypothesis that Nabonidus was a “religious reformer” was based mainly on information from the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder and was born with the first translations of these documents in the nineteenth century; subsequently, in the early twentieth century, it permeated the general notions on the reign of Nabonidus. Throughout the twentieth century this theory has remained indisputable for the majority of Assyriologists; however it was modified in some important details.

The two main sources which gave birth to the hypothesis about the “religious reform”—and especially the Verse Account—raise many questions in connection with the nature of the texts, with their historical value and with the methods used in their analysis. The present article attempts a re-examination of these documents and some of the associated modern views, trying to examine the predefined models in some studies. It considers three different sets of problems. In the first place, the Verse Account is analyzed as a literary text with its own purpose and meaning, and as main instrument in the creation of the standard image of Nabonidus in modern studies. The first modern investigations on the reign of the last Babylonian king are examined in the second place, and especially the role of Sidney Smith’s study in shaping the image of Nabonidus as “the religious reformer.” The study of Smith in the early twentieth century not only incorporated the first detailed presentation of the “religious reform” theory, but also had a significant impact on all further work on the subject. The subsequent evolution of this theory in the twentieth century is reviewed in the third place together with the additional arguments raised by some scholars and claiming to support it in one way or another. Some methods of textual and historical analysis are also discussed in connection

with the arguments promoted in these later publications. Examination of all studies about the issue is not among the purposes of the present paper.

## 8.2 The Verse Account of Nabonidus

The text of the Verse Account is preserved on a tablet in the British Museum, BM 38299. Despite the impairments on the tablet, the narrative is comparatively well preserved, particularly in columns II and V, and somewhat worse in columns III and IV. The document has been investigated, translated and commented by many authors.<sup>1</sup> The most authoritative analysis was made by S. Smith. With his translation and theoretical approach, Smith was the first to define many of the arguments common in the later treatment of the subject.

The most important question posed by this document is whether we can accept its historical value as a source of reliable information, comparable for example with the Chronicle of Nabonidus. The answer demands an examination of the literary style of the text, of its inherent sense and the objectives of its message. The Verse Account was composed in Babylonia in the late sixth century BCE The beginning of the Cyrus' rule being the usual *terminus post quem* accepted for its composition (Smith 1924, 27; Kuhrt 1990, 142; Schaudig 2001, 47–48). The date has a crucial importance for the definition of the purposes of the text.

The style of the document can be described as negatively polemic, it has a belletristic form. In this respect the Verse Account differs considerably from the Chronicle of Nabonidus, its statements being evidently open to partiality. The structure of the text is marked by the use of many literary devices. The sentences in column I for example are openly hostile to Nabonidus, and most of them take the shape of accusations against various injustices committed by the former king.

I.2. [...] <sup>[bu]</sup>*šaḥ-ḥu-u i-na-a-ri ina (giš)kakki*  
 [...] the weak he killed with the sword.

I.3. [...] (lú)*tam-kar ip-ta-ra-as a-lak-tam*  
 [...] for the merchant, he blocked the road.<sup>2</sup>

Lines 22–30 of column I describe the rebuilding of the temple in Harran by the king and are an exception to this predominant scheme. Column II uses in lines 2–11 another literary skill—direct speech. The main purpose of this device is to

<sup>1</sup>For the text of the Verse Account, see (Smith 1924, 27–97, plates V–X). More recent translations were made by (Oppenheim 1969, 312–315) and (Schaudig 2001, 565–572, Propagandetexte, P. 1. Stropchengedicht). Schaudig (2001, 563) also provides a full bibliography about the source.

<sup>2</sup>See (Smith 1924, 83, 87 and plate V). For recent transliteration and translation see (Schaudig 2001, 565, 572).

convince the reader (or listener) in the veracity of the “words” said by the king. The verbal forms used here are mostly in the first person.

II.4. *lu-ub-ni bīt-su lu-ub-šim-ma šu-bat-su*  
I shall build his house, I shall construct his dwelling.<sup>3</sup>

Between lines 12 and 32 however the description of the king’s deeds is carried on with verbs in the third person singular.

II.18. *ka-ra-aš ip-te-qid ana riš-tu-u bu-kur-šu*  
A camp he put into the charge of his eldest child.<sup>4</sup>

Column V is particularly interesting. It starts with new “denunciations” against Nabonidus, again given in direct speech.

V:10 *mi-ḫi-iš qān tuṭ-pi ūl i-di a-ta-mar.*  
I see one who knoweth not the imprint of the stylus.

The direct speech of the king occupies lines 7–12; lines 19–20 and 27 further down present again direct speech, but this time of two high officials. The narrative in column VI describes events related to Cyrus. The style here is openly eulogistic, depicting Cyrus as a “creator of justice.”

VI.6. [...] *ilāni(meš) i-la-ab-bi-in ap-pa.*  
[...] (before) the gods, he touched the nose.<sup>5</sup>

The literary accomplishments used in the realization of the narrative are undoubtedly intended to produce an expected effect. The style of the Verse Account and the poetic tone of the text suppose its public reading. The polemic purpose of the narrative is achieved by literary skills which have an old tradition in Mesopotamian literature but are used here in a very original manner. The specific literary form is only a device for the conveyance of the meaning of the document and the realization of its objectives. If we want to establish the historical value of the Verse Account, its text should evidently be compared with other contemporary documents. The most relevant comparison would be that with the text of the Chronicle of Nabonidus, a tablet belonging to the series of the “Babylonian Chronicles” (Wiseman 1956, 1–3; Grayson 1975a, 104–111, Chronicle No.

<sup>3</sup>See (Smith 1924, 84, 88 and plate V). I think that a better normalization would be “*lubni bīssu lubšim-ma šubassu.*” Cf. (Caplice and Snell 1988, 89–91). For recent transliteration and translation see (SchauDIG 2001, 567, 574).

<sup>4</sup>See (Smith 1924, 84, 88). For recent transliteration and translation see (SchauDIG 2001, 568, 574).

<sup>5</sup>See (Smith 1924, 86, 90, plate X). For recent transliteration and translation see (SchauDIG 2001, 569, 571, 576–577).

7; Smith 1924, 98–99). The juxtaposition of the facts mentioned in the Chronicle of Nabonidus and in the Verse Account can be summed up in the following table:

BM 38 299: The Verse Account	Column, lines	BM 35382: The Chronicle of Nabonidus	Column, lines
1. Unjust rule	I. 1–16	Not mentioned	
2. Creation of a false god called by the king “Sîn”	I. 18–23	Not mentioned	
3. Creation of an image and a crown for this god	I. 24–30	Not mentioned	
4. The king declared his plan to build a temple in Harran	II. 4–10	Not mentioned	
5. Suspension of the Akītu festival until the end of the building works in Harran.	II. 11	The festival was temporarily suspended because the king was in Taima.	II. 6–7, 11–12, 20–21, 24–25
6. The building of the temple in Harran.	II. 12–17	Not mentioned	
7. The king entrusted the royal power to his son.	II. 18–20	Mentioned	II. 5, 10, 19, 23
8. Campaign across the country Amurru against Taima.	II. 21–24	Mentioned	I. 15–22
9. The capture of Taima.	II. 25–26	Mentioned	II. 5, 10, 19, 23
10. The royal building works in Taima.	II. 27–29	Not mentioned	
11. Robbery and plundering committed there by the king.	III. 3–8	Not mentioned	

BM 38 299: The Verse Account	Column, lines	BM 35 382: The Chronicle of Nabonidus	Column, lines
12. The vainglory of Nabonidus.	V. 2–13	Not mentioned	
13. Confusion of rituals by Nabonidus.	V. 14	Not mentioned	
14. Nabonidus pronounced blasphemy against Esagila.	V. 15–20	Not mentioned	
15. The king changed the emblem of Esagila.	V. 21–22	Not mentioned	
16. Two high administrators supported the king.	V. 23–28	Not mentioned	
17. Cyrus proclaimed peace in Babylon.	VI. 2–3	Mentioned	III. 19
18. Cyrus returned images of gods to their shrines.	VI. 12–16	Mentioned	III. 21–22
19. Cyrus destroyed the symbols of the rule of Nabonidus.	VI. 17–24	Not mentioned	

Table 8.1

The main differences in the information come from the peculiar literary styles of the texts and their specific objectives. We can assess these differences by separating the events described only in the Verse Account from those mentioned in both documents.

Group 1 demonstrates the propensities of the information in the Verse Account and Group 2 expresses the attitude of its text towards some well-known facts from the reign of Nabonidus. Group 2 is important for the understanding of the objectives of the text. We can discern the manipulative purposes of the document in the presentation of these well-known events. They are mentioned in an interpretative manner; each event is presented as a logical part of the narrative and is deliberately discredited as a result. We can find a good example of

Group 1. Information only mentioned in the Verse Account of Nabonidus	Group 2. Information mentioned in both the Verse Account and the Chronicle of Nabonidus
1. Unjust rule	The king entrusted the royal power to his son Bēl-šaru-ušur
2. The king was abandoned by his <i>šēdu</i>	The king's campaign in the country Amurru against Taima
3. Creation of a false god called by Nabonidus "Sîn"	Cyrus entered the city and proclaimed peace in Babylon
4. The rebuilding of the temple in Harran by the king	Cyrus returned to their different shrines the images of gods collected by Nabonidus in Babylon
5. Suspension of the Akītu festival in Babylon until the end of the building works in Harran	
6. The vainglory of the king and his blasphemy against Esagila	
7. The king performed cruelties in Taima	
8. Two high administrators supported the king	
9. A confusion of rituals made by the king	
10. The king undertook building works in Taima similar in their magnitude to those in Babylon	
11. Cyrus destroyed the symbols of the rule of Nabonidus	

Table 8.2

this calculated procedure in the presentation of the fact that the king gave some of his authorities to his son before his departure to Taima. The Verse Account implies that the king was reluctant to fulfill his royal duties. The key phrase here is "*iptaqissu šarrūtam*"—"he entrusted the kingship to him" (Smith 1924, 84, 88, plate VII, Col. II: 20). No contemporary Babylonian source confirms however that Bēl-šaru-ušur assumed the functions of king. Many texts attest that he executed some of the prerogatives of the kingship, but evidently he was not in-

vested with full royal authority and he was never referred to with the royal title in cuneiform texts (Beaulieu 1989, 186–197).

The text of the Verse Account explains this transfer of royal prerogatives as some kind of “royal madness” and an “evil deed.” In the logic of the narrative this is closely connected with the expedition of Nabonidus to Taima and his activities there. The text emphasizes that the king committed cruelties in Taima.<sup>6</sup> The text contains a moral denunciation of the deeds of a Babylonian king unique in that age, even if we take into account that it was pronounced *post eventum* with the evident purpose of idealizing by contrast the new king—Cyrus. The glorification of Cyrus with which the text ends seems thus a logical conclusion in the development of the narrative.<sup>7</sup>

The manner of presentation of the events of Group 2 in the Verse Account (Group 1) attests most clearly the manipulative character of the whole document. Instead of directly falsifying, denying or hiding publicly known facts, the text displays them in a premeditated misinterpretation. This artifice is used throughout the text of the Verse Account. Based on well known facts, these manipulative interpretations gain more weight, and their tendency is clear.

The same artifice is used in the presentation of well-known events in Group 1, and here the level of manipulation is even higher and more straightforward. We can clearly observe this at several places in the text. A notable example is offered by the account of the events connected with the restoration of the temple of the god Sîn in Harran–Eḥulḥul.<sup>8</sup> The rebuilding of this temple and maybe of the whole city which had suffered destruction around 610–609 BCE was among the most important projects of Nabonidus and is mentioned as such in his earliest royal stela (Langdon 1912, 282–285, Nabonid Nr. 8, col. X: 1–31). The inscription is dated at the beginning of the reign of Nabonidus, see (Beaulieu 1989, 21–22). The family of the king had its origins in the city of Harran, but his decision to restore the Eḥulḥul temple must have been motivated by a number of economical and political factors, not only by cultic considerations. In column II of the Verse Account this undertaking is qualified as an “abomination, the work of no-sanctuary.”<sup>9</sup> There could hardly be a more severe incrimination against a Mesopotamian king than the one of sacrilege and blasphemy. This libel in column II stands as a logical continuation of the more expanded and consequential accusations already mentioned in column I—that Nabonidus created something “no-sanctuary.” something that “no one in the land ever saw” and “he called its name Sîn.”<sup>10</sup> The implications and purposes of this plot are self evident. We can

<sup>6</sup>The Verse Account, col. II: 25–26, col. III: 3–5.

<sup>7</sup>The Verse Account, col. VI: 2–28.

<sup>8</sup>The Verse Account, col. II: 4–17.

<sup>9</sup>The Verse Account, col. II: 17.

<sup>10</sup>The Verse Account, col. I: 19, 21, 23.

observe how the text of the document manipulates a real fact, and here the level of misinterpretation is quite immoderate, presenting the renovation of a famous ancient temple as an act of sacrilege.

Another example is offered by the account of the interruption of the New Year festival—Akītu. The Verse Account places this event in direct relation with the king's project for the rebuilding of the temple of Harran.<sup>11</sup> The Chronicle of Nabonidus however offers a more detailed account,<sup>12</sup> describing in its formulaic style the performance of some incomplete version of the usual rituals of the Akītu festival in the absence of the king from the capital. The text mentions explicitly: “*niqé ina é.sag.gil u é.zi.da ilāni šūt Bābili(ki) u Barsip(ki) kī šalmu nadnū urigallu išruq-ma bītā iblil*”—“Offerings were made to the gods of Babylon and Borsippa in Esaila and Ezida as is correct. The Urigallu priest made a libation and besprinkled the temple.”<sup>13</sup>

It is possible that after the year of a king's accession his presence at the Akītu festival was not obligatory, as was observed by (Kuhrt 1990, 140). The importance of Akītu for Babylonian society, for its cults and for the calendar excludes the possibility of completely omitting the celebration. This is the reason why there seems to have existed some kind of more compact ceremony approved by tradition and appropriate in the cases when the king was absent from the capital. The tablet BM 86379 offers a fair proof, mentioning the celebration of Akītu in the accession year of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and then its “omission” in a time of active warfare between Babylonia and Assyria (Smith 1924, 22–26, plate IV, and especially BM 86379, obv. 5–8, 18, rev. 1–3, 7). The absence of Nabonidus from Babylon was evidently due to his prolonged sojourn in Taima. But the Verse Account suggests that the king was absent because he had vowed not to celebrate Akītu until he had finished the building of the “no-sanctuary” temple in Harran. It should be noted that this explanation of the interruption of the Akītu festival and of the absence of the king from Babylon has been transferred directly from the Verse Account into modern historiography. The Verse Account underrates intentionally the great distance from Babylon to Taima as well as the inherent difficulties of the imposition of Babylonian power in the oases of north-western Arabia, in order to impose its explanation of the king's absence with his blasphemous activities in Harran. Thus, the Verse Account creates in its treatment of the events in Group 1 a logical system of allegations based on the misinterpretation and distortion of well-known facts. This system can be presented in part like this:

<sup>11</sup>The Verse Account, col. II: 11.

<sup>12</sup>The Chronicle of Nabonidus, col. II: 6–8, 10–12, 19–21, 23–25.

<sup>13</sup>See (Smith 1924, 111, 115) and the Chronicle of Nabonidus II: 7–8, 11–12, 20–21, 24–25.



1. The Events	2. The Interpretations in the Verse Account
1. Nabonidus rebuilt the Eḫulḫul temple in Harran as the cult centre of Sîn	1. Nabonidus was abandoned by his <i>Shedu</i> and in a state of madness built “an abomination, something no-sanctuary”
2. The king was absent from the Akītu festival in Babylon, because he was in Taima	2. The king vowed not to celebrate Akītu until “the work” (the rebuilding of the temple in Harran) was finished
3. The king undertook a campaign against Taima and remained there for several years	3. The king set out on a far journey with his army to rob and plunder and to build a palace similar to the one in Babylon

Table 8.3

It is evident that the text of the Verse Account contains a premeditated and detailed system of manipulative misinterpretations of the facts suitable to its main objective: to discredit king Nabonidus. At the core of the whole scheme stands a statement, the importance of which was remarked by Amélie Kuhrt (1990, 141). In the text of column I: 18 among other direct accusations against Nabonidus we find the sentence “[...] -*šū it-te-kir-šū še-e-du*.”<sup>14</sup> Kuhrt pointed out that this statement was meant to lay the foundation of the document’s logic: “The text states that Nabonidus was abandoned by his *Shedu*, his protective deity, thus causing his own downfall through a series of blasphemous acts and bringing the country to ruination” (Kuhrt 1990, 141–142). More arguments could be brought forward in favour of this suggestion. Starting from the assumption that the term “*šēdu*” designated an evil power and not a protective spirit, Smith translated the sentence as: “[...] an evil demon altered him” (Smith 1924, 87, and his argument on p. 93, note 17). This view however contradicts the more usual positive meaning ascribed to *šēdu* as a protecting deity and a part of the human soul “embodying the vital forces of the individual.” according to Oppenheim (1980, 205). It can be proposed as other version for the translation of this sentence either “[...] he was in enmity with his *šēdu*” or “[...] he was estranged from his *šēdu*.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup>See (Smith 1924, 83). For recent transliteration and translation see (Schaudig 2001, 566, 573).

<sup>15</sup>In the sentence we have this construction: *itekīr*–3 p. sing. masc. Perfect (or Preterite in Gt Stem), from *nakāru* in the sense of “be in enmity” “be estranged from” see (Caplice and Snell 1988, 71, 51–52), *šū*—pronominal suffix 3 p. sing. masc. acc.; *šēdu*—the noun. Smith’s translation of the verb in the sense of “altered” is disputable.

The passages presented in the Verse Account as direct speech deserve special attention. These are to be found in col. II: 2–11 and col. V: 6–13, 19–22, 27.<sup>16</sup> The text in column II refers to the rebuilding of the temple in Harran, and lines 5–13 in column V contain threats, probably aimed at Cyrus; in both cases it is implied that these are the words of Nabonidus himself. In lines 19–22 of column V Nabonidus states his intention to change the symbol of Esagila.<sup>17</sup> The text of V: 27 presents an explanation offered by two high temple administrators, Rimut and Zeriya. These passages in direct speech are undoubtedly the most difficult part of the text; their analysis leads to the formulation of three distinct questions: are the words ascribed to the king authentic and to what degree; what meaning would they have conveyed to a Mesopotamian audience; and what purpose their inclusion in the narrative served in the context of its main objectives.

The first question cannot be answered directly, and has three hypothetical solutions. The possibility that these words were really said by Nabonidus and the Verse Account just quotes them seems small given the evident prejudice of the source and its use of literary skills. The suggestion that the Verse Account quotes real statements out of context, modifying them according to its purposes in the form of well-arranged quotations, seems more probable, but could be true for only some of the passages in question, for example the declaration of the king's plans for the rebuilding of the temple in Harran. But it seems inconceivable that, for example, the statement voicing the king's resolve to interrupt the celebration of Akītu could be a true quotation; in this and other cases the text evidently manipulates with facts. Thus it is the third variant which seemingly has the highest degree of probability—notably that the quotations imputed to Nabonidus are completely false and invented with the intention of manipulating the reader or listener, or at least modified from actual statements of the king, “corrected” so as to suit the purposes of the text. In his stela from Babylon Nabonidus describes his plans about the rebuilding of Eḫulḫul, but the expressions used in this actual document have nothing in common with the phraseology of the Verse Account.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately we do not possess other similar documents which could permit us to establish the degree of veracity (or rather, of falsification) of the statements attributed to the king in the other instances under consideration; it should be stressed however

<sup>16</sup>See the passages in transliteration and translation in (Schaudig 2001, 567, 569–570, 574, 576–577).

<sup>17</sup>This passage is of crucial importance about the theory for “religious reform” of the king, the Verse Account (V: 18–22) “u<sub>4</sub>.sakar é.sag.il iṭ-ḫul-ma i-šal-lal šu.min-šú, ú-paḫ-ḫi-ir mārē(meš) [um]-man-nu i-ta-mi it-ti-šú-un, bīta e-pu-uš a-na man-nu an-nu-ú ši-mi-is-su, lu-ú ša (d.)Bēl šu-ú mar-ri še-mi-it-ma, (d.)30 u<sub>4</sub>.sakar-šú il-te-mi-it bīr-su”—“At the crescent of Esagila he looked and with his two hands he carried it off, he assembled the sons of the scholars, he argued with them: The temple was built by that whose sign is this. If it belong to god Bel, then the spade is his sign. God Sīn has his crescent marked (on) his temple” (Schaudig 2001, 570, 577).

<sup>18</sup>See (Langdon 1912, 282–285, Nabonid Nr. 8, col. X: 1–31) and the Verse Account col. II: 2–11.

that no other extant text contains even a hint of threats addressed by Nabonidus at Cyrus, or of any intention to change the symbol of Esagila.

The second main question is related to the understanding of the phrases in direct speech and the appraisal of their eventual meaning to the Mesopotamian audience for which they were intended, notwithstanding whether authentic or falsified. We must recognize that we cannot understand fully and adequately their real meaning and possible connotations. Being able to conventionally translate them or analyze their grammar does not mean that we can really understand them in the way the ancient Mesopotamians did.<sup>19</sup> The problem concerns the interpretation of any ancient texts, but is particularly evasive and delicate in the case of this short utterances in direct speech, with all the possible duplicity and hypocrisy involved in their use in the document as implied by its foregoing analysis.

When appraising the degree of reliability of the statements attributed to Nabonidus in the Verse Account, the main consideration should be the purpose of the text. This was evidently of a propagandistic character, aiming to discredit the former king and to glorify his successor, the invader Cyrus. The text of the Verse Account as a whole and the phrases in question in particular were not written in the sixth century BCE with the intention of documenting one or another event for posterity, but in order to achieve some specific and politically motivated contemporary aims which justified the premeditated falsification of historical events. Another argument against the easy attribution of earnest historical value to these passages is that they do not find any corroboration in the other literary monuments of this age. We will adduce a comparison between the information offered by the Verse Account and that in another contemporary document frequently cited in its support—the Cyrus Cylinder.<sup>20</sup>

Some modern works have noted both the propagandistic purposes of the text of the Cyrus Cylinder and its relation to Mesopotamian literary traditions.<sup>21</sup> Despite the differences in the literary form of the Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account there is also an obvious coincidence of political intention behind them. But if we restrict ourselves to the comparison of the relevant information found in the two texts, we shall easily conclude (as Table 4 demonstrates) that the most seri-

<sup>19</sup>For instance the passage in direct speech in the Verse Account col. V: 18–22, where is stated that Nabonidus changes some emblem on Esagila, which is named “crescent”—u<sub>4</sub>.sakar (*uškāru*). He did this because according to the source, the king accepted the crescent as symbol of god Šin. See the passage in (Schaudig 2001, 579, 577). It is known that the crescent was symbol of Šin, but it remains obscure regarding his symbolic and functional role over the temple of Marduk. If the temple had a crescent over it, then what was the difference between this crescent and the crescent of the god Šin?

<sup>20</sup>See the text of the source in transliteration and translation in (Schaudig 2001, 550–556, K2.1. Kyros-Zylinder), also the translation in (Oppenheim 1969, 315–316). For the main elements regarding the text’s narrative, see (Kuhrt 1983, 85–87).

<sup>21</sup>See (Harmatta 1971, 217–231; Kuhrt 1983, 88–93; and d’Agostino 1995, 172–175), who notes the relation of the text with the propagandistic tradition of the Nabonidus’ inscriptions.

The Verse Account	Column, Lines	The Cyrus Cylinder	Lines
1. Nabonidus rebuilt the temple in Harran as part of his adoration of a fake god, called by him “Sin”	I. 18–30, II. 4–10	No information about the king’s religious activities in Harran or the rebuilding of the local temple	
2. The king was abandoned by his <i>Shedu</i>	I. 17	No information on the subject	
3. The king cancelled the festival of Akītu in Babylon	II. 11	No information about the cancellation of the festival	
4. Description of the campaign against Taima	II. 25–29	No information about the campaign	
5. Statements of Nabonidus in direct speech	II. 2–11, V. 5–7, 9–13, 16, 20	No information about any statements of the king	
6. Nabonidus entrusted the kingship to his eldest son.	II. 18–20	No information about a transfer of the kingship	
7. Nabonidus committed blasphemous acts against Esagila	V. 16–22	Nabonidus committed blasphemies against Marduk	7–9, 15, 33–34
8. No information about tributes received by Cyrus.		Cyrus received tribute from different kings	29–31
9. Cyrus returned to their various shrines the statues of different gods which Nabonidus had collected in Babylon.	VI. 13–16	Nabonidus collected in Babylon statues of gods as a blasphemous act, Cyrus returned them to their various shrines.	9–10, 33–34

Table 8.4

ous accusations against Nabonidus found in the Verse Account are not mentioned in the text of the Cyrus Cylinder, despite its partiality against the king.<sup>22</sup> The

<sup>22</sup>The differences in literary form are result of the different purposes of the two texts. Documents like the Cyrus Cylinder were intended to present a king’s deeds before the gods and future kings, usually

implications about the untrustworthiness of the Verse Account and its arbitrary manipulation with facts are obvious; but the comparison of the two documents also brings forth new questions. Why does the Cyrus Cylinder, although accusing Nabonidus of blasphemy against Marduk, fail to mention anything about the temple in Harran or the cult of Sîn there? Why does it pass in silence over even such an important fact as the expedition of Nabonidus in Arabia? If the Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account had the same propagandistic intentions, then why does the former refrain from using the same artifices as the latter, and even omits to mention some of the real facts and arguments relevant to its case?

All that has been said so far can be summed up in several conclusions about the Verse Account and its value as a historical source. It is a well-composed text, with consistent logic and intent in the pursuit of its concrete purposes. It differs from the Chronicle of Nabonidus in not being a mere collection of facts, and from the Cyrus Cylinder in lacking detailed eulogy of the subsequent ruler and the commendation of his devotion and building doings to the gods. The Verse Account expresses a definite point of view and promotes its political cause through the adept use of literary skill. As S. Smith has phrased it, “The document is indeed a polemic piece of political propaganda aimed at securing an appreciation of the new foreign ruler for his piety” (Smith 1924, 231). The propaganda character of the text is also acknowledged by other authors—von Soden (1983, 66–68), Beaulieu (1989, 4, 206–207), Kuhrt (1990, 141), Schaudig (2001, 2). It is therefore clear that the Verse Account should not be given credit as a source of important historical information on the rule of Nabonidus, except possibly as a piece of evidence on the use of political propaganda in late sixth-century Achaemenid Babylonia. The text is known from a single copy found in Babylon, and does not seem to have been widely disseminated; therefore it was not a part of the established literary tradition (Smith 1924, 31–32). It does not belong to any of the traditional types of literary composition known from Mesopotamia, although its style has something in common with so the Babylonian Historical Epic (Grayson 1975b, 43).

But although the historical value of the Verse Account seems thus to be insignificant or controversial, it has exerted an extremely strong influence on the shaping of the vision of the age of Nabonidus in modern historiography, and notably in the emergence of the theory about his “religious reforms” of which it is the cornerstone.

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placed at the base of some temple. The Verse Account with its emotional style and poetic language must have had another intended purpose, notably to explain the king’s deeds before the people.

### 8.3 Early Theories about the “Religious Reforms” of Nabonidus

The theory about the “religious reforms” of Nabonidus appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and had a great influence on all later perception of the events of the period between 556 and 539 BCE. Morris Jastrow, although he did not dedicate a specialized study to the subject, tackled it in his general work on the religion of Assyria and Babylonia. For example, in connection with the rebuilding of the temple Ebabbar, Jastrow mentions: “[...] Nabonnedos feeling the end of his power to be near, undertakes, as one of the last resorts, the restoration of this edifice, in the hope that by thus turning once more to the powerful Shamash, he might secure his protection, in addition to that of Marduk [...]” (Jastrow 1898, 70). The statement of Jastrow, probably based on the then recent discovery of a cylinder of Nabonidus in Sippar,<sup>23</sup> contains the interesting assertion that the rebuilding of the temple was occasioned by the king’s presentiments of the impending end of his power. It is difficult to agree with this view; Jastrow seems to ignore the old Mesopotamian tradition which made the rebuilding of temples one of the duties of the king. Until the battle near Upi (Opis) in October 539 BCE, the actions of Nabonidus do not show any signs that he might be expecting an imminent end to his reign. On the contrary, his actions were energetic and well-premeditated, and he must have had hopes for victory, when he decided to offer the battle. The whole conception that Nabonidus would have raised the cult of Šamaš to be equal with that of Marduk, hoping through his protection to escape his doom, seems a clear example of over-interpretation of the data in the relevant sources. By undertaking the building works at the sanctuary in Sippar, Nabonidus was doing no more than his royal duty; and we know today that the works in Sippar must have started early in his reign and not at its very end.<sup>24</sup>

Further in his exposition, Jastrow brings his considerations to a logical end with the suggestion that “in the closing days of the Babylonian monarchy a more serious attempt, it would appear, was made to displace Marduk. Nabonnedos formed the design of replacing both Marduk and Nabu by the cult of Shamash. He incurred the ill-will of the priests by paying much more attention to the restoration of the various Shamash temples in Babylonia than would appear to be consistent with devotion to Marduk” (Jastrow 1898, 240–241). Thus from the mere fact of the rebuilding of a temple, Jastrow has evidently come too far, suggesting a deliberate attempt at the “replacement” of the cult to Marduk in what could be seen

<sup>23</sup>The author does not mention which of the cylinders from Sippar he has in mind. It would be the cylinder published as Nabonid Nr. 1 by (Langdon 1912, 218–229). See a translation of the text in (Sayce 1892, 168–176). More about the nomenclature of inscriptions from Sippar, see (Beaulieu 1989, 20–42).

<sup>24</sup>For more detailed account about the date of the rebuilding of the temple in Sippar by Nabonidus see (Beaulieu 1989, 132–137).

as no less than a “religious reform.” His speculation finds no confirmation in the sources however, for we have no single Babylonian text criticizing the rebuilding works made by Nabonidus in Sippar.<sup>25</sup> The assertion that the rebuilding of Šamaš temple led to discontent among the priests also finds no direct backing in contemporary sources, and Jastrow does not quote any ancient text in support of it, although he mentions it once more further in his work (Jastrow 1898, 647). He seems to accept unconditionally the singular assertion of the Cyrus Cylinder that Nabonidus did not worship Marduk, disregarding the political bias of the source, and looks for evidence in support of it in the records of the building works of the king. The main elements in Jastrow’s reconstruction of events could be summed up as follows:

1. The king replaced the cult to Marduk with that to Šamaš;
2. This led to discontent among the priests of Marduk;
3. The king lost his throne because of this opposition and the lost battle at Upi against Cyrus.

The views of Morris Jastrow represent a stage in the development of Assyriology, and from this early stage some problems connected with the methods of research are clearly outlined. The first and foremost among these is the over-interpretation of the ancient sources. The earlier discovery of the Cyrus Cylinder, in which the image of Nabonidus as a “blasphemous king” is a key element, has evidently made an overwhelming impact on the interpretation of subsequent finds, in this case the Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus. Jastrow undervalued the propagandistic character (and therefore the restricted historical value) of the Cyrus Cylinder, and gave it credence as a reliable main source of information. At the same time he typically over-interpreted the Sippar Cylinder, a traditional votive list of a king’s deeds, in order to turn it into a piece of supporting evidence for his hypothesis. At the end of the nineteenth century, enough was known about the building activities of Mesopotamian kings to make the whole operation of presenting the Sippar inscription as proof of the “heresy” of Nabonidus inadmissible. The alleged “discontent of the priests” offers a different case, as there is practically no evidence to this effect in the sources, and even the text of the biased Cyrus Cylinder does not imply that the priests of Marduk were in any way opposed to Nabonidus (in fact, they are not mentioned there at all).<sup>26</sup> The whole idea that the cult of Marduk was in any way “replaced” by the cult of Šamaš (or that a deliberate attempt to this effect was made by Nabonidus) is not supported

<sup>25</sup>Compare for example the two texts most adverse to Nabonidus—the *Verse Account* and the *Cyrus Cylinder*.

<sup>26</sup>See the translation of the text in (Oppenheim 1969, 315–316).

by other texts and seems thus founded only on a vague and biased assertion in a hostile source like the Cyrus Cylinder.

The development of Assyriology in the early twentieth century was stimulated by the publication and analysis of a number of new source documents. Among these there were some of specific interest for the study of the reign of Nabonidus, including an important inscription from Harran.<sup>27</sup> This new stage in the investigation of Nabonidus and his age is best presented in the works of (Smith 1924; Smith 1940). We will examine his conclusions and arguments mainly as expressed in his book (Smith 1924, 27–124). This was the first publication to offer good reproductions, transliterations and translations of the main sources for the problems under discussion, namely the Verse Account and the Chronicle of Nabonidus (Smith 1924, 27–98, for the Verse Account, and 98–124, for the Chronicle of Nabonidus). Smith was the first modern author to present a coherent general overview of the reign of Nabonidus based on all sources known at the time. He put forward a consistent theory of the “religious reform” of Nabonidus based mainly on his analysis of the Verse Account, the propagandistic character of which he was fully aware of, noting the desire of its author to present the king in the most unfavourable light (Smith 1924, 31).

One of the assertions of Smith is that Nabonidus was unpopular among the Babylonian priesthood; his argument is based on the very existence of the Verse Account, which he qualifies as a “posthumous revenge of the priesthood” (Smith 1924, 32). The relevant sources from the period 556–539 BCE however offer no indication of any religious “deviation” on the part of Nabonidus, neither of any cultic opposition against him by either the priesthood of Marduk or that of any other Mesopotamian deity.<sup>28</sup> The idea of hostility or resistance on the part of the priests seems therefore to derive not from contemporary sources but exclusively from texts created after 539 BCE and connected by political and propagandistic aims which S. Smith obviously underestimated.

Commenting on the one of the Sippar Cylinders of Nabonidus, Smith states: “This position of Šin as the supreme deity for whom Marduk acts as an intermediary, is not the ordinary Babylonian belief [...]” (Smith 1924, 45). This conclusion springs from his analysis of the reverential epithets used for Šin in the text. Smith however overlooks the very similar epithets used in the same document for Marduk, and pays no attention to the structure of the text in which the exaggerated praise of Šin is only met in a section devoted to the rebuilding of his temple in Harran, while the other passages in which he is mentioned contain only the usual

<sup>27</sup>For more on the inscriptions from Harran and their nomenclature, see (Gadd 1958, 35–92).

<sup>28</sup>The term *šangē* used in the Harran inscription of Nabonidus (H2 A, B), col. I: 14–17 in the description of some kind of internal problems, has rather the sense of “administrators” than “priests.” Cf. the discussion in (Kuhrt 1990, 137–138, 146–154).



epithets appropriate to Šin's position as the "father" of Šamaš in Mesopotamian mythology.<sup>29</sup> Smith restricts his analysis to the epithets of Šin in the document, but those used for Marduk, Šamaš or Anunit are no less elevated.<sup>30</sup> If we consider the structure of the text, we shall easily establish the fact that the use of this type of elevated epithets is restricted to the description of the rebuilding of the temples of these gods in Sippar and Harran. The one notable exception is the similar glorification of Marduk, which is not connected with the description of any building activities related to his cult. The text thus places Marduk in a particularly reverential position, not Šin.

The position taken by S. Smith is evidently dominated by his trust in the information of his preferred sources—the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder, at the expense of the more trustworthy data of the Chronicle of Nabonidus which he underestimates. This is seen in his treatment of the passages mentioning two high administrators of Esagila, Rimut and Zeriya, supporters of Nabonidus according to the Verse Account.<sup>31</sup> His assertion is against what we have come to know from various Babylonian sources about Rimut and Zeriya who were both Babylonians by birth and occupied high temple offices not only before, but also after the Persian conquest.<sup>32</sup>

The question of the New Year festival—Akītu also takes an important place in the theory of Smith. In accordance with the information of the Verse Account that Nabonidus failed to participate in the festival and accepting its explanation of the king's reasons, Smith concludes that "Nabonidus did not regard the festival with the same favour as every other Babylonian monarch did" (Smith 1924, 48). The conclusion could seem acceptable only as far as we remain restricted to the information of this questionable text, but becomes very doubtful once we set it against the other available information. The beginning of the Chronicle of Nabonidus is not well preserved, but the Babylonian stela of Nabonidus contains the assertion that he participated in the Akītu celebrations after the year of his accession (Langdon 1912, 282–283, Nabonid Nr. 8, IX: 3–7). We would underline in this statement the explicit mention of the year—the first year of the reign of Nabonidus. We could assume that in the Neo-Babylonian period (626–539 BCE) the king's presence at the Akītu festival was not obligatory after his "accession

<sup>29</sup>For the "genealogy" of the god Shamash, see (Saggs 1998, 246–247).

<sup>30</sup>See the text of the inscription in (Sayce 1892, 168–176), (Langdon 1912, 218–229, Nabonid Nr. 1) and for recent transliteration and translation see (Schaudig 2001, 409–440, 2.12. Eḫulḫul-Zylinder). It must be noted that the inscription has many exemplars from different sites, see (Schaudig 2001, 409–414).

<sup>31</sup>The Verse Account, col. V: 23–27. Commenting on the Cyrus Cylinder, Smith qualifies them as "foreign officials appointed by the king" and adds that they were "very cordially hated in Babylon" (Smith 1924, 47).

<sup>32</sup>See the information about both officials in (Beaulieu 1989, 216–217), with interesting remarks about their careers both before and after 539 BCE.

year” (*rēš šarrūti*), an opinion also shared by other scholars.<sup>33</sup> A tablet in the series of the “Babylonian Chronicles” for example mentions the participation of Nebuchadnezzar in the festival in the year of his accession (Wiseman 1956, 69, BM 21946, obv. 14), and despite his long reign there is no other explicit mention of his personal participation in Akītu, till 594–593 BCE, when the information on the tablet ends, because of destructions.

We will point out two details. The first is the exact manner in which the main historical source—the Chronicle of Nabonidus—mentions several times the king’s absence from the celebration of Akītu in Babylon.<sup>34</sup> Besides noting the king’s absence, the text mentions explicitly that “offerings were made as is correct” in the temples of Marduk and Nabu. This could mean only one thing—that despite the king’s absence the festival was celebrated, if in some kind of shortened ritual form. Such a shortened form of the New Year ceremony must have been usual at times when the king was absent from Babylon, and part of an ancient tradition, known to the Chronicle of Nabonidus. A complete omission of the Akītu festival could have happened only at times of real distress—in the case of war or other disasters.<sup>35</sup> The form of the statement in the Chronicle of Nabonidus has direct parallels in the document BM 86379 and was evidently an established literary formula before Nabonidus accession.<sup>36</sup>

It is another problem why the Chronicle of Nabonidus is so insistent on remarking scrupulously every absence of the king from the Akītu festival, but it is doubtful that the answer would come from the Verse Account. The reason for the absence of Nabonidus from Babylon is adequately explained in the Chronicle of Nabonidus with his stay in Taima, but Smith ignores this fact in order to offer as his alternative explanation: the king’s cult for Sīn and the rebuilding of Eḫulḫul in Harran. His opinion is based again on the evidence of the Verse Account that after the beginning of the building works in Harran Nabonidus suspended all public festivals, including the New Year festival, until the restoration of the temple of Sīn would have been finished; this imposed by the king “public mourning” was presumably accepted with bad feeling by the Babylonians (Smith 1924, 48–49). Thus Smith is again giving priority to the dubious suggestions of the Verse Account, at the expense of alternative evidence from a source with bigger historical value.

<sup>33</sup>See (Kuhrt 1990, 40) and the remarks about the public character of the festival in (Thureau-Dangin 1921, 127–150).

<sup>34</sup>The Chronicle of Nabonidus II: 5–8; 10–12; 19–21; 23–25.

<sup>35</sup>See (Smith 1924, 22–27), where the document BM 86379 describes such a situation and the failure to celebrate the festival.

<sup>36</sup>See (Smith 1924, 22–27). See also the Chronicle of Nabonidus II: 5–8, 10–12, 19–21, 23–25 and compare with BM 86379 obv. 4, 18, rev. 1–3, 7.

Two other texts mention a public mourning during the reign of Nabonidus. One of the Harran inscriptions (Gadd 1958, 52–53, H1, B, III: 5–43) suggests this was on the occasion of the death of the king’s mother Adda-Guppi and the period of mourning was seven days and seven nights. The other text is the Chronicle of Nabonidus,<sup>37</sup> which gives the same reason—the death of Adda-Guppi, but sets the period of mourning at only three days. The two texts differ also in other details of the description of the ceremonies accompanying the burial of Adda-Guppi. The funeral and mourning are dated in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Nabonidus, that is, 548–547 BCE, when the king was in Arabia. Smith ignores this information, although the Chronicle is by far the most authoritative historical source for the period.<sup>38</sup> He also evades the reason for the public mourning in Babylon suggested by these two texts—the death of the king’s mother, as well as their alternative indications of its length. Instead of trying to compare and verify all extant pieces of information about a public mourning in the time of Nabonidus, he readily accepts the doubtful construction of the Verse Account and disregards any alternative evidence from other sources. It could be added that the Verse Account does not mention the death of the king’s mother at all.

A similar procedure is used by S. Smith in his treatment of the question of the “confused rituals.” This is another hostile allegation of the Verse Account, namely that Nabonidus “confused the rituals and upset their ordinances.”<sup>39</sup> This assertion is accepted literally by the author, who adduces in support the statement of the Cyrus Cylinder that Nabonidus suspended all regular offerings.<sup>40</sup> He also tries to find additional arguments in a number of passages in the inscriptions of Nabonidus mentioning the restoration of ancient ritual activities in rebuilt or repaired sanctuaries (Smith 1924, 55–59). Smith interprets the “restored rituals” as imposed religious reforms, accepted unfavorably by the Babylonian priesthood, following in this surmise the hostile attitude of the Verse Account. But in this case both the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder are very unspecific in their general incriminations, and the quoted passages from the inscriptions of Nabonidus are examined by Smith out of context. In fact the formulaic phrase about “restored rituals” belongs to a long cuneiform literary tradition of dedicatory inscriptions offered on the occasion of the restoration of sanctuaries and mentioning the resumption of ritual activities. There is practically nothing in the inscriptions of Nabonidus that contradicts in any way what we know about Mesopotamian re-

<sup>37</sup>The Chronicle of Nabonidus II: 13–15.

<sup>38</sup>The Harran inscriptions are written in the literary style typical of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, which was intended to serve definite religious and political purposes. As a source of historical information, they are inferior to a source of the rank of the Chronicle of Nabonidus.

<sup>39</sup>The Verse Account V: 14.

<sup>40</sup>See (Smith 1924, 54–58) as also the Verse Account V: 14, and the Cyrus Cylinder line 7.

building tradition, which was an important part of the royal duties and which dates back to Sumer (Saggs 1998, 270–275).

The accusations in the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder that Nabonidus confused or suspended the sacred rituals contradict a group of important contemporary sources—the administrative texts from the temple archives of Ebabbar in Sippar and of Eanna in Uruk and Larsa. The importance of these texts is emphasized by their strictly administrative character; Smith however has failed to make use of them in his work. A tablet from the Uruk archives found in Larsa–YOS VI, 10—contains the text of a disposition of Nabonidus regarding the ritual offerings in the temple of Eanna (Beaulieu 1989, 118–119, YOS VI., 10, obv. 9–12, 17). The document contains information on different details of the ritual practices, three points being particularly worth notice. First, the temple personnel is advised to observe the regular ritual offerings. Second, the ritual offerings are supposed to follow the order established during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. And third, it is prescribed that the Eanna offerings should follow in quantity the rations usual in Esagila and Ezida. It should be noted likewise that other texts in the Eanna archives also contain instructions by king Nabonidus on religious matters and they are all consistent with the Babylonian traditions.<sup>41</sup> So if we return to the text of the YOS VI, 10 tablet and keep in mind the fact that it was a document of the temple administration and not of the king’s propaganda, we shall have to conclude that both the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder offer false *post eventum* evidence about the “rituals” for Nabonidus neither suspended their implementation (despite the accusations of the Cyrus Cylinder), nor “confused” them (as professed in the Verse Account). The text of the Eanna tablet presents Nabonidus rather as a follower of tradition in the matters of cult.

The methodological fault of Smith’s attitude is demonstrated in his treatment of one other problem. This is the information that before the attack of Cyrus, Nabonidus collected in Babylonia the images of many gods taken from their shrines in different cult centers across Babylonia. Three main sources contain information about this development—the Chronicle of Nabonidus, the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder.<sup>42</sup> The Chronicle remarks that the divine images of three cities—Cutha, Sippar, and Borsippa—were not brought to Babylon; the same line contains the announcement of the battle of Upi. According to S. Smith this was a certain indication that “the priests and the population” of the three cities refused to send their divine images as an expression of their discontent with the king (Smith 1924, 61). But the text of the Chronicle of Nabonidus does not imply

<sup>41</sup>For more information about these temple archives see (Beaulieu 1989, 118–125 (for documents from Eanna) and 132–137 (for documents from Ebabbar).

<sup>42</sup>The Chronicle of Nabonidus III: 9–12, the Cyrus Cylinder lines 10, 32–35, the Verse Account VI: 12–13.

directly anything of the kind; the following mention of the battle of Upi makes it much more reasonable to suggest that what was meant was simply that the three cities did not have enough time to send their divine images to Babylon. All three were situated near the capital, and the preceding enumeration suggests that the evacuation of the images had started from the distant cities.<sup>43</sup>

We should be fully aware that the action of Nabonidus in collecting the cult statues from the temples was in line with the traditional duties of a Mesopotamian king in times of enemy invasion. The evident purpose was to save the divine images from being captured by the enemy.<sup>44</sup> The Chronicle of Nabonidus only mentions the event, while the Cyrus Cylinder lists it with its accusations against Nabonidus as one of his “blasphemous acts.”<sup>45</sup> Smith eventually uses the assertion of the Cyrus Cylinder as his main starting point, neglecting well-known facts about Mesopotamian traditions of long standing. It is interesting to note that even the Verse Account does not use this fact as an incrimination against Nabonidus, mentioning it only as a part of the glorification of Cyrus. To draw from this event conclusions about some kind of political opposition of the “priests and people” against king Nabonidus, seems an over-interpretation of the sources.

The predisposition of S. Smith to the Verse Account and its prejudiced account is exemplified most clearly if compared to his treatment of the Chronicle of Nabonidus (Smith 1924, 98–124). In his analysis of the Chronicle he practically tries to adapt its information to that of the Verse Account. This could be demonstrated clearly with his treatment of the statement in the Chronicle I: 7 that Nabonidus crushed a revolt in his first regnal year, for which Smith finds no better use than as a confirmation of the accusations of the Verse Account against the king’s injustice (Smith 1924, 100). Comparing the information from the two texts, Smith consistently and gives priority to the Verse Account. It remains a mystery why he should have preferred an evidently biased text to a factually precise and trustworthy document like the Chronicle. The results of his choice are however consequential, especially in the establishment of the standard conception of Nabonidus as a “religious reformer.”

It would be interesting lastly to analyze the use S. Smith has made of Biblical and Greek sources in support of his hypothesis. The existing evidence on the age of Nabonidus in the works of ancient Greek authors is scarce; it is also late in date and written from the standpoint of a different cultural tradition. Although he has diligently collected the relevant passages of Herodotus, Xenophon, Josephus Flavius and the quotations from Berossus in the work of the latter,<sup>46</sup> Smith fails to

<sup>43</sup>The Chronicle of Nabonidus III: 9–11.

<sup>44</sup>See (Beaulieu 1989, 222–225) with further literature on this problem.

<sup>45</sup>The Cyrus Cylinder, line 10.

<sup>46</sup>The relevant passages are Hdt. I.71, 75–77, 79–91, 124–130, 178, 188–191; Xen. Cyr. I.5, 2–3, IV.6, V.2–3, VII.1–30; as also Joseph. C. Ap. I.21 with the quotations from Berossus.

note that none of these sources contains any information about the “blasphemous acts” of Nabonidus against Marduk. It should be said to his credit that, unlike many of his predecessors, he has at least not tried to adapt the information from the Babylonian sources to these Greek texts.

The attitude of S. Smith to the Biblical texts is however somewhat different.<sup>47</sup> In his examination of the Verse Account he puts forward the hypothesis that in the Book of Daniel the image of Nebuchadnezzar comprises characteristic features which could be attributed to Nabonidus (Smith 1924, 36–37). Starting from the image of Nabonidus in the Verse Account, Smith looks for analogies in the hostile characterization of Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel. He suggests for example that the reincarnation of Nebuchadnezzar in animal shape alleged by Daniel could be a Biblical reflection of the assertion in the Verse Account that Nabonidus was seized by a Demon (Smith 1924, 46). He takes up literally the accusation of the Cyrus Cylinder that Nabonidus appointed “unknown people” to high administrative positions, and associates it with the information of Daniel about the appointments of Jews by Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>48</sup> Smith makes also other parallels between the image of Nabonidus described in the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder and the image of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel. He suggests for example that the dream of Nebuchadnezzar described by Daniel was a reminiscence of a dream of Nabonidus mentioned in some of his inscriptions; and that the story about Nebuchadnezzar creating an idol and making everybody kneel before it was a definite reflection from the image of Nabonidus and his “religious reform.”<sup>49</sup>

The hypothesis of Smith is objectionable in several ways. He starts his comparisons from that image of Nabonidus which he has taken uncritically from the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder, and which is artificial, literary, and prejudiced. Then he proceeds to look conscientiously for analogies in the Book of Daniel that could sustain his premeditated idea, disregarding everything else that does not serve his purpose and not bothering to consider the general character and specific attitudes of the compared texts. The establishment of a number of situational parallels in the compared texts is therefore of little value. There is not a single mention of the name of Nabonidus in the Old Testament, and this makes the attempt to substantiate the presence of his “image” there ambiguous. The most important critical argument is however related to the image of Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel. Although bearing the name of the real Babylonian king, the Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel is not based on the logic of historical fact, but on that of the message of the Biblical tradition. This image has little in common with the

<sup>47</sup>Daniel II: 48–49, III: 1, V: 1–4, 31, Jeremiah LI. 39: 57.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Daniel II: 48–49 with the Cyrus Cylinder lines 3–4.

<sup>49</sup>Daniel III:1 and (Smith 1924, 107–108).

great king we know from cuneiform historical sources. Daniel's Nebuchadnezzar needs no historical authenticity and is not a historical personage in the strict sense of the word; he is rather an allegoric literary figure created according to a definite purpose and intended to embody the spiritual might of the message of God. It is therefore no wonder that the Daniel's image of Nebuchadnezzar undergoes a subjective development leading, through a number of ordeals, to his acceptance of the One God. There is little evidence of the historical king of Babylon in the biblical figure of Nebuchadnezzar except the name, and of course the well known facts of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews to Babylonia.

In his final remarks on the "religion of Nabonidus" S. Smith formulates four main conclusions (Smith 1924, 62–63):

1. Nabonidus imposed a new cult based in Harran;
2. the king introduced changes in the religious practices of sanctuaries across Babylonia;
3. these changes were reformist in character and were dissembled under the euphemism of "ritual restoration"; and
4. these changes were rejected by various priests—"the guardians of Babylonian tradition."

The last three of these conclusions are particularly questionable. The restoration of the temple and of the ritual activities in the cult centre of Sîn in Harran is attested independently in the inscriptions of Nabonidus and therefore seems a credible fact; but that is not what we learn from the Verse Account. The question here is whether, when we choose a source and give it credence and priority over other sources, should we not rather believe it to the end, and not selectively? Smith seems to be neglecting the initial text on the "new" cult in Harran in the first column of the Verse Account, which reads:

[...] *ina māti lā īmuruš manmān* [...] *kigalla ušarmē ilu Sîn ittabi zikir-šu.*

[...] which nobody had ever seen in the land [...] he placed it on a pedestal, he called its name Sin.<sup>50</sup>

These phrases describing the activities of Nabonidus in Harran do not accuse him of *restoring* the cult of Sîn or *imposing* it over other cults; they accuse him of creating something new, something "unheard of" and "an abomination." which had nothing to do with the traditional cult of Sîn except that Nabonidus called it by that name. The Verse Account therefore does not describe Nabonidus as

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<sup>50</sup>*The Verse Account* 1.21–23.

a religious reformer imposing the cult of Šin, but rather as a madman imposing non-existing deity.

In his concluding remarks about the Verse Account, Smith states that it is one of the main historical sources for the age (Smith 1924, 82–83). He has no hesitations about the great historical value of the text. After all that has been said above, we feel justified to reiterate the scepticism of A. Kuhrt: “There can be no doubting the propagandistic nature of the text, nor the fact that it was composed and circulated after Cyrus’ victory in 539 BCE, as Smith was careful to emphasize. But does it have the historical value that Smith imputed to it?” (Kuhrt 1990, 142).

The main problem is one of method, not of detail. The analyses of Sidney Smith are usually restricted to passages of source text taken by themselves and not checked systematically against all other existing evidence; other texts are introduced very selectively only when they can offer the desired support to the elaborated speculation. The method is potentially unsafe because it can easily lead to haphazard and over-interpretative results.

Sidney Smith was the first modern investigator to elaborate theoretically the hypothesis of the “religious reform” of Nabonidus and to work systematically both into its details and components and into the methods of its verification. The importance of his work, besides the translations, is in the influence it has exerted on several generations of scholars. Most subsequent investigations on this period have been influenced in some degree by the ideas of Smith, and most later scholars have more or less sincerely accepted his basic theory of the “religious reform.”<sup>51</sup>

#### **8.4 Some Later Theories about the “Religious Reforms” of Nabonidus**

Among the authors who have worked on the reign of Nabonidus after Smith, C. J. Gadd should be mentioned for his important study on the royal stelas found in Harran (Gadd 1958, 35–92). On the basis of the text of the double inscription H2 A and B, Gadd advanced a new hypothesis explaining the reason for the long stay of Nabonidus in Arabia. In his words, “To this, the new inscription H2 gives, upon the face of it, a clear answer: the king withdrew before a mutiny of his subjects dwelling in the great cities of Babylonia, led by their priests” (Gadd 1958, 88). The arguments of Gadd for this conclusion are serious: the text of the inscription mentions civil disorders in a number of Babylonian cities, defined in the source

<sup>51</sup>For example, (Olmstead 1925, 47–55; Gadd 1958, 88; Dandamayev 1974, 24–25; Beaulieu 1989, 43–65, 184–185; Saggs 1998, 121–126).



as “an uprising against the divinity of Sîn” (Gadd 1958, H2 A and B, I: 14–22, 56–59).<sup>52</sup>

This piece of evidence is important. But Gadd underestimated two important factors—the characteristic features of the royal inscriptions as a literary type, and the need to compare the information drawn from this text with the data from other accessible cuneiform sources from the same period. The reliability of the specific information in such documents as royal inscriptions is usually difficult to assess, and without careful comparison with data from other sources there is always a risk of over-interpretation. In the present case, if we give credit to the evidence of the text, we will have to accept the conclusion that the country went through a phase of large-scale internal turmoil before the king’s march into Arabia. But this assumption finds no support in any of the Babylonian cuneiform sources from the period prior to 539 BCE. Neither the Chronicle of Nabonidus, nor any of the royal inscriptions and cylinders or any other administrative texts mention any civil unrest or social opposition against the rule of Nabonidus.<sup>53</sup> The text from Harran stands therefore very much alone in its affirmation.

If we concentrate our attention on the analysis of the text in which the inscription describe the event, we will easily conclude that it creates the definite impression of substantial organized resistance in most of the bigger cities of Babylonia. Due to its large scale, however, such a political crisis would not have remained unnoticed by all the remaining historical sources for the period. It should be underlined that even the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder fail to accuse Nabonidus of suppressing an important rebellion in a number of major cities (six are mentioned by name in the text).<sup>54</sup> It could also be expected that an event of such a scale would have made a considerable impact on the political life of the country and would therefore have left some traces in the administrative texts from the temple archives in Uruk and Sippar. As far as we know however there are no documents containing any information about civil unrest or an economic crisis caused by political disturbances in this period. The paragraph discussed by Gadd raises several important questions about the reasons which sent Nabonidus for a long time in Arabia. The most adequate question in this situation would be: why would Nabonidus have described in his Harran inscriptions (H2 A and B)

<sup>52</sup>For recent transliteration and translation of the Harran stela of Nabonidus see (Schaudig 2001, 486–499, 3.1. *Harrān-Stele*).

<sup>53</sup>Cf. the texts of the Chronicle of Nabonidus, the Babylonian stela of Nabonidus in (Langdon 1912, 270–288, Nabonid Nr. 8), and the so called “Royal Chronicle from Ur” in (Lambert 1968, 1–8). For administrative texts, cf. (Beaulieu 1989, 116–127, 163–166), and for an example of a cylinder text see (Schaudig 2001, 397–409, 2.11 *Larsa-Zylinder*).

<sup>54</sup>The cities mentioned are Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Ur, Uruk and Larsa, cf. H2 A and B, I: 14–15. See also (Schaudig 2001, 488–489, 496–497).

something which is not mentioned in other sources, not even in his other royal stelas?

At first glance the complaints of Nabonidus in the text of H2 A and B that “the priests and people of the cult-centers of Akkad” had forgotten their duty and had offended Sîn, may seem a fair proof of the accusations in the Verse Account. The words used in the passage are “*šangē*(meš)” and “*mārē*(meš),” the first of which Gadd translates as “priests.” Amélie Kuhrt however has later examined in detail the use and meaning of the term “*šangē*,” concluding that it stands rather for “administrators.” not “priests.”<sup>55</sup> The content of the passage fits well in the main composition framework of the twin stela H2 B intended to glorify Sîn and his temple. The text of the other couple of stelas from Harran–H1, dedicated in the name of the king’s mother Adda-Guppi, shows that the king was personally devoted to the Moon god, maybe in accordance with the Mesopotamian tradition of personal devotion.<sup>56</sup> The introduction of some kind of serious problems which the king has successfully overcome is a technique typical for this genre of literary composition; that in this case the problems should have been presented as affecting Sîn is in perfect compliance with the singular occasion for the dedication of the Harran stela. This seems the probable answer to the question formulated above, offering a plausible explanation for the motives of Nabonidus to present in the H2 A and B stelas an exaggerated picture of large scale turmoil in the country, something not mentioned at all by any other sources.

As this paragraph precedes in the text of the inscriptions the information about the expedition of Nabonidus in Arabia, Gadd easily decided that this was the real reason for his long stay there; the inference was in line with the “religious reforms” theory which he accepted.

Another relevant question raised by this singular passage of the Harran inscriptions is about the eventual participants in the supposed “mutiny” against the king. If there were really some mass disturbances during the reign of Nabonidus, these would not have been caused by the personal devotion of the king for Sîn, but rather by interests beyond the theology of Mesopotamian cults, political and economic interests practically affecting numbers of people of different social and political status mainly belonging to the élite. In this respect it would be interesting to cite the opinion of A. Kuhrt that the opposition against Nabonidus would have been caused by his usurpation of the throne rather than his religious policy (Kuhrt 1990, 138). That Nabonidus was an usurper of the royal power is a fact, and although the assumption of Kuhrt finds as little support in other sources as

<sup>55</sup> See (Kuhrt 1990, 137–138). For the translation of the term as “administrators.” cf. (Oppenheim 1969, 562).

<sup>56</sup> See H1 A and B, II: 35–37 in (Gadd 1958, 50–51). For the tradition of personal devotion, cf. (Jacobsen 1995, 182).

that of Gadd, it adds an optional solution to the problem, which evades the tenets of the “religious reforms” theory.

Some authors have advanced the idea that the “religious reforms” of Nabonidus were intended to consolidate the West-Semitic Aramean tribes in Mesopotamia and the whole of the Near East under Neo-Babylonian dominance. In sixth century BCE the Arameans would have constituted significant ethnical element in Mesopotamia, and Harran was situated in an area where their presence was particularly felt.<sup>57</sup> The family of Nabonidus was a part of the local élite in Harran which incorporated Aramean origin and Assyro-Babylonian cultural affinities. H. Saggs and M. Dandamaev have suggested that through his “religious reform” which elevate the cult of Šîn, Nabonidus tried to impose an acceptable religion for all the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, both those with local and those with Aramean origin. Saggs and Dandamaev have both adopted the “religious reform” hypothesis, but have preferred to study its regional dimensions in the context of the Aramean-Mesopotamian environment.<sup>58</sup>

The Aramaic cultural and linguistic environment in Harran in the age of Nabonidus is a historical fact, and the family of the king was certainly part of that environment (Beaulieu 1989, 67–96). Following their migration between the 11th and ninth centuries BCE, the Aramean tribes gradually became the largest population group in Mesopotamia. The process was of course a long and complex one and went through different stages, with often various results even inside one and the same small geographical area. The ruling elites of Assyria and Babylonia did not have a standard approach to the Arameans, sometimes fighting against their tribal or state confederations, sometimes seeking their partnership; trying either to drive them away completely or to subordinate them by force in the regions where they had settled or to integrate them peacefully. The relationship between the local elites and the Arameans were thus complicated and often controversial.<sup>59</sup> In many areas of the Near East, the Aramean presence resulted gradually in cultural and political integration. S. Moscati has pointed out that Aramean culture was largely acquired and imitative in its character, depending on the regions where the different Aramean tribes had settled down (Moscati 1960, 171–181; Pitard 1998, 224–225); their language and script was among their few original innovations.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup>On the West-Semitic origin of the Aramean tribes and their migration in the Ancient Near East, started in the end of twelfth century BCE, see (Pitard 1998, 207–210).

<sup>58</sup>(Saggs 1998, 121–127, 247; Dandamayev 1997, 246–261; Oppenheim 1980, 155, 380).

<sup>59</sup>On the history of the Aramean states in Syria, and Aramean tribes in Mesopotamia as also their relations with Neo-assyrian and Babylonian empires during eleventh–sixth century BCE see (Pitard 1998, 210–224).

<sup>60</sup>But with important cultural consequences for the entire Ancient Near East, see (Pitard 1998, 226–228).

The hypothesis asserted by Saggs and Dandamaev seems however to ignore these processes of cultural and religious (cultic) integration among the local traditions. After the Aramean migration, the traditional cults of the previous population in the areas where Arameans settled were adopted, together with their own nomadic and West-Semitic cults. Aramaic inscriptions state, that the preeminent deity among the Arameans, mainly in Syria, was Hadad. Among other main deities of Arameans there, were also El, Sîn from Harran, Rakib-el, Shamash and Reshep (Pitard 1998, 225–226). This information confirms the observation that the cult of Sîn in Harran was locally important, but had no central role in the Aramean pantheon. The cult could not be an important factor in the process of consolidation of the Neo-Babylonian empire's power over the the region of Fertile Crescent and its dominated by Arameans western parts, for the sake of its local character. The idea that through his “religious reform” the king tried to impose an acceptable religion for the inhabitants of Mesopotamia with Aramean and non-Aramean origin seems doubtful, because it underestimates the polytheistic traditions of the Aramean tribes, and it overrates the importance of the cult of Sîn from Harran within the borders of the Neo-Babylonian empire.

Other recent studies bearing on the “religious reform” theory have focussed on the analysis of the divine epithets used for Sîn in the inscriptions of Nabonidus. This trend is represented in the works of H. Tadmor and P.-A. Beaulieu (1965, 351–364; 1989, 43–67). Focussing their attention on the information from the royal inscriptions, they have both taken a critical attitude towards the Verse Account and have admitted its propagandistic character. One of their important arguments is the assertion that Nabonidus started the implementation of his “religious reform” gradual and late in his reign, which they suggest can be deduced from the text of some of the royal inscriptions (Beaulieu 1989, 62–65). The relevant inscriptions are (according Beaulieu's publication) No. 13, No. 14, and particularly No. 17, all dated in the late years of Nabonidus.<sup>61</sup> These three are the inscriptions in which the most exalting epithets of Sîn are used, and No. 17 glorifies only Sîn (Beaulieu 1989, 44–45, Table 3 with the used epithets). It is suggested that all three inscriptions were composed after the king's return from Arabia, an event which Tadmor and Beaulieu date to the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Nabonidus (Tadmor 1965, 358–361; Beaulieu 1989, 203, 164–166).

It is true that these texts use extremely reverential epithets of Sîn. The authors however analyze their specific content without reference to the Mesopotamian literary environment in this age, and their approach warrants several objections both of general and specific character. This theory underes-

<sup>61</sup>Tadmor (1965, loc. cit.) gives a different numeration of the inscriptions, No. 25, No. 16, and No. 5; cf. (Beaulieu 1989, 32–34, 35–37), where the respective numbers of the inscriptions are No. 13, No. 14, and No. 17.

timates the power of the local Mesopotamian cult tradition and its reflection in written texts. Inscription No. 13 is the one on the Harran stela H2 A and B, which were intended for the temple of Sîn in Harran. Why should we expect that anyone would not use the most exalting epithets of Sîn in a dedication made in his very temple? The situation with inscription N<sup>o</sup> 17 is similar. This is a building cylinder inscription which was laid in another temple of Sîn, that in Ur. (Kuhrt 1990, 139). In the polytheistic religious environment of Mesopotamia, each local deity was regarded as the main god of the pantheon. The imposition of centralized political authority did not lead to the imposition of a centralized cult system over the local cults. On the contrary, Mesopotamian kings usually demonstrated their respect to the local main deities which they worshiped according to the local cult traditions during their visits in different cities. In the light of the ancient local cult traditions, we can not expect to find in an inscription placed in the temple of Sîn a specific gradation of epithets giving priority to Marduk.

None of the epithets of Sîn used in the three inscriptions discussed was specially invented by Nabonidus; they were all part of the habitual cult usage. Epithets of Sîn like “*nūr tēnīšei*”—“Light of the mankind” or “*bēl bēlē*”—“Lord of the lords” were traditional in their use and are mentioned in texts from the cult centers of Sîn and even out of them in some literary compositions.<sup>62</sup>

Among the specific objections to the arguments of Tadmor and Beaulieu one concerns the date of the mentioned cylinder from Ur, inscription No. 17. Tadmor has suggested (and Beaulieu has accepted) a date after the return of Nabonidus from Arabia (Tadmor 1965, 361; Beaulieu 1989, 35–36), but Kuhrt pointed out, that this contradicts the traditional attribution of this cylinder to the beginning of his reign.<sup>63</sup> Of course, the date of the inscription is not a crucial problem, but even if we should accept the dating of Tadmor and Beaulieu, we cannot agree with the logic of their reasoning that the text on a cylinder placed in a temple of Sîn and glorifying this god could contain more exalted epithets of Marduk than the ones associated with Sîn. The Nabonidus Cylinder describes the rebuilding of the ziggurat Elulgagasisa, a part of the temple complex Egišnugal in Ur which was devoted to the cult of Sîn.<sup>64</sup>

Objections can be raised also to the treatment by Beaulieu of inscription No. 14 (Beaulieu 1989, 32–34). Almost the entire text of the inscription is lost

<sup>62</sup>Examples can be seen in sources connected with god Sîn in (Jastrow 1898, 75–79, 212–220 and the text on 303–304). Cf. (Jacobsen 1995, 142–150).

<sup>63</sup>See (Kuhrt 1990, 138–139). The cylinder is dated in the beginning of the Nabonidus’ reign by Berger, see (Berger 1973, 355–359, Nbn. Zyl. II: 2). Almost all Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions do not contain internal evidence for dating and are undated.

<sup>64</sup>See the text of the cylinder inscription in transliteration and translation in (Schaudig 2001, 350–353, 2.2. Elulgalmagasisa-Zylinder).

with the exception of one small portion, in which Šin is mentioned as “the One who governs the growth of prosperity in Akkad.” The inscription is a fragment of a stela and only its sculptured top is well preserved.<sup>65</sup> The similarity between this paragraph and a similar paragraph in the inscriptions H2 A and B was the main argument of Tadmor and Beaulieu to date it after the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus (Tadmor 1965, 356, 360–361; Beaulieu 1989, 33). The main problem here is that we do not know where exactly the inscription was found in Babylon or out of the city; it appeared in the early nineteenth century in the British Museum.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, of the three inscriptions presented in support of the hypothesis for a “gradual religious reform” of Nabonidus, two were found in temples of Šin and one is of unknown finding place. The epithets used in the inscriptions dedicated by Nabonidus in the temples of Šin have a traditional character and offer no proof, by their meaning or their form, for any “religious reform.”

The hypothesis of Tadmor and Beaulieu is influenced by the ideas of Sidney Smith. While Smith was mainly dependent on the propagandistic information of the Verse Account, Tadmor and Beaulieu have used more precise and reliable methods of research involving the constructive and critical analyses of a number of sources, the detailed study of many aspects of sixth century Babylonian society, and a singular emphasis on the importance of the documents from the Mesopotamian temple archives. But this hypothesis overestimates the value of the divine epithets used in the royal inscriptions dedicated to the sanctuaries of Šin. It must be noted that the biggest part of the king’s inscriptions are traditional in their content and form, like the other standard Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions.<sup>67</sup> This hypothesis underestimates also the archaeological context of the inscriptions stated as proof for Nabonidus’ “religious reform.”

## 8.5 Conclusions

The first summary hypothesis about the “religious reforms” of Nabonidus—that of M. Jastrow—was presumably affected by the lack, in the late nineteenth century, of sufficient and reliable historical sources for the period between 556 and 539 BCE. For a long time the Verse Account was seen as the main source of infor-

<sup>65</sup> See the text of the source in transliteration and translation in (Schaudig 2001, 531–532, 3.4. Tarif-Stele). The sculptured top of this royal stela is well preserved and depicts the king standing with scepter, tiara and three astral symbols of Šin, Šamaš and Ištar, see monument BM (WA) 90837.

<sup>66</sup> See the information about the finding-spot of the inscription in (Berger 1973, 382, Nbn. Stelen-Fragment I), and (Schaudig 2001, 530).

<sup>67</sup> The peculiarities of style of the king’s inscriptions are observed mainly in his stelae, and in passages in some of his cylinder inscriptions. For the style of the inscriptions see (Schaudig 2001, 49–65, 75–80). Example for standard Neo-Babylonian inscription of Nabonidus from Babylon can be seen in (Schaudig 2001, 345–350, 2.1. Imgur-Ellil-Zylinder).

mation for this period and its historical value was overestimated. The comparison between the ideas of Jastrow and Sidney Smith reveals not only the predominant influence of the same sources, but also some common methodological weak sides. Texts like the Verse Account were used uncritically from historical point of view, without sufficient historical analysis. The latter evidently cannot be substituted adequately by the translations of the texts and the philological commentaries on them, even when these were executed most professionally. As a result these documents were overvalued and over-interpreted. This attitude is best exemplified by the attitude of S. Smith to the Verse Account. He failed to analyze critically the evidence and character of this document and ignored its inherent contradictions with the major part of the remaining historical sources for the period as well as the fact that this text was composed *post eventum* and with evident propagandistic purposes. Smith practically “translated” in modern language the accusations of the Verse Account and built around them his reconstruction of the reign of Nabonidus.

Another common problem is the regular use of selective positive parallels and analogies for the “verification” of one or another proposition, creating an easy appearance of certainty through the accumulation of “matching” instances, to the expense of the often much more important information to be gained from the negative comparisons with other texts where the relevant facts are either missing or denied. One of the obvious results has been the persistence of the “religious reform” theory, which such one-sided analyses could not bring under consistent critic.

Other flaws of method and approach have often been added to these. Having both accepted a priori the “religious reforms” theory, Saggs and Dandamaev for example have tried to adapt the explanation of its causes to their general views and conceptions on the expansion of the Arameans; they have however undervalued the local religious and political traditions and the inherent political and religious divisions between the Aramean tribes. Tadmor and Beaulieu on their part have put forward very definite and straightforward textual studies, but have disregarded the local usage in the composition of inscriptions and the inherent habitual employment of specific divine epithets.

Today the historical sources available for research on the Neo-Babylonian period are much more adequate than they were in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and their investigation has advanced considerably. As a result we are much better placed now to judge not only the historical processes in sixth century Mesopotamia, but also the source texts themselves with their inherent problems as well as the points of view and hypotheses of our predecessors in their investigation. The hypothesis that Nabonidus, the last Neo-Babylonian ruler, was a “religious reformer” is just one of these. Like all hypotheses, it should have

been put continuously to the test of critical analysis and scrutiny in the light of all available knowledge in order to test its integrity and veracity. As we have tried to show, this has not always been the case, and with very few exceptions (like the work of A. Kuhrt) the “religious reform” theory has rather become a universally accepted paradigm, shaping the views on the reign of Nabonidus for a considerable length of time. On careful examination however a lot of arguments of this hypothesis seem unreliable, or problematical. The question whether or not Nabonidus was a “religious reformer” therefore remains pending and undecided and should be open for future investigation and deliberation, eventually in the light of new source texts and more comprehensive text-critical analyses.

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## Chapter 9

### New Light on George Smith's Purchase of the Egibi Archive in 1876 from the Nachlass Mathewson

*Strahil V. Panayotov and Cornelia Wunsch*

#### Introduction

The present article publishes newly discovered texts belonging to the largest Neo-Babylonian private archive of the Egibi family. As an introduction a brief history of the purchase of the Egibi tablets in 1876 by George Smith will be provided. It bases itself mainly on unpublished materials kept in British Museum and in archives in Bulgaria.

#### 9.1 Peter Mathewson and George Smith

The texts edited here are housed in a village named Kotel, situated in the East Balkan Mountains of Bulgaria. In accordance with the present volume's theme, the history of these texts bears witness to the globalization of the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Four well-preserved tablets and a broken one arrived in Kotel from Baghdad, brought there by George Smith's last assistant, Peter Mateev, better known as Mathewson in the study of Sheila M. Evers in 1993, dealing with the Egibi Tablets and George Smith. She collected the material from the British Museum and the British Library.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the letters and diaries kept in London additional information was discovered recently by Panayotov in Kotel's "Panteona" Museum, which possess an unpublished biography of Mathewson.<sup>2</sup> The five Egibi tablets, which Mathewson donated to the city some time before his death in 1940, are housed in the same museum.<sup>3</sup>

Mathewson accompanied Smith during his last ill-fated Orient journey; Smith died during the final part of this journey in Aleppo on August 19, 1876 at

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<sup>1</sup>See (Evers 1993, 107–117).

<sup>2</sup>The manuscript was edited by Veliko Jordanov the Chief Librarian of the National Library of Sofia in 1943. The citations here are made after an English translation from the Bulgarian text.

<sup>3</sup>Four tablets will be published here, the fifth one with a well-preserved seal of Kabti-ilāni-Marduk from the Suhaja family will be published elsewhere.

6 pm in the house of the British Consul Skene.<sup>4</sup> In his youth Mathewson went to study in Malta and afterwards in Robert College in Constantinople. Later, he found work in the British Post Office in the City of Sultans. Being an official with access to telegraph maps and knowledge of several languages, he was introduced to different people as dragoman and assistant. When George Smith was in Constantinople in 1875/6, Mathewson was asked to join Smith's expedition as an assistant and dragoman; he accepted. Mathewson functioned as translator and intermediary with the different authorities. Such a position required a certain social status within the Ottoman Empire, which Mathewson did not possess, but the English General Consul and Supreme Court Judge in Constantinople, Sir Philip Francis,<sup>5</sup> supported him by helping to arrange an English passport for the Bulgarian Mathewson.

I learnt that Mr Smith would probably let you conduct the excavations.<sup>6</sup> Being Bulgarian you will not have the influence needed for the authorities. It is in your interest to be taken for an English citizen, so we can arrange it at the consulate to enroll you as a British subject and the necessary passport will be issued but there is an obstacle—the ending of your name can give you away in front of the Turkish authorities so it is good to change it with Mathews or Mathewson. I chose the second and became an absolute British subject and an Englishman for the people.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Smith's death is described in telegrams and letters in the British Museum as well as in the Biography of Mathewson in Kotel, and in documents kept in the National Library in Sofia. The exact time of Smith's death is mentioned in a letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. "Alphée" August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14A Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)]. The British Museum was informed in various ways about the death of Smith. See, for example, a telegraph from Mathewson: Post Office Telegraphs in [(BM OP 51 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 4 Sept. 1976)]. Mr. Skene, the British Consul in Aleppo, informs the authorities through the Post Office & Submarine Telegraphs [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 5 Sept. 1876 No. 4435)] and a letter to John Winter Johnes of the British Museum two days after the death of Smith: Aleppo August 21, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 9 Sept. 1876 No. 4495)]. See for secondary literature also (Sayce 1876; Evers 1993, 108). For a description of his grave see (Sánchez 2006, 275f.).

<sup>5</sup>On the English Consulate-General and the influence of Sir Philip Francis, see (Berridge 2009, 90ff.).

<sup>6</sup>Reference for that plan can be found in a letter from Smith to his wife May as well: "If I am successful this year I will come home in July and leave the excavations in charge of my assistant who is a very good and likely party." (Letter of G. Smith to his wife May. Dated in Constantinople, March 5, 1876). Another clue is to be found in a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. "Alphée" August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14A Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)].

<sup>7</sup>From the biography of Peter Mateev.

The main goal of Smith's last expedition was, first of all, another excavation in Nineveh with the goal of finding more cuneiform artefacts.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Smith was informed that Michael Marini, a antiquities dealer in Baghdad, was offering cuneiform tablets to the British Museum.<sup>9</sup> These tablets would later turn out to belong to the Egibi archive. This is one of the reasons why Smith first went to Baghdad and not to Mosul.<sup>10</sup>

Smith's purpose was to dig up the ruins of ancient Nineveh, but he was ordered to go to Baghdad in order to examine a collection of clay tablets with cuneiform script about the existence of which the British Museum had been informed. He was supposed to buy them if they were worth buying.<sup>11</sup>

In order to reach Baghdad, both companions travelled with a steamer down the Euphrates River. They took the ship from a location on the Euphrates River parallel to Aleppo. Smith and Mathewson arrived in Baghdad on April 20, 1876. Smith was very anxious and impatient about the tablets. He went the very same day to search for Marini in order to inspect and buy the tablets.

Although hungry and tired on our arrival at Baghdad, so impatient was he, that as soon as we had a wash, we went in search of Marini to see and arrange about buying the antiquities, which he should have had store for him. He [Smith] would constantly and completely disregard his bodily wants, but never for a moment would be put off the looking at anything with cuneiform on it.<sup>12</sup>

After examining the tablets offered by Marini in Baghdad Smith realized their significance. He bought ca. 800 of them.<sup>13</sup> That day can be understood as the birth of the modern study of Egibi tablets.

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<sup>8</sup>For the earlier excavations of Smith, see (Smith 1875, vii–viii). See also (Reade 1993, 51).

<sup>9</sup>See (Evers 1993, 107f.; Wunsch 2000, 1f.). There were not only Egibi tablets among the acquired texts in 1876. Smith bought, for example, also a Babylonian manuscript of Gilgamesh Tablet XII from Marini, see (George 2003, 416). See also (Clancier 2009, 125ff.).

<sup>10</sup>The land road to Mosul from Aleppo was taken by another scholar who accompanied Smith and Mathewson until Aleppo. This was the Finnish pioneer, Karl Fredrik Eneberg. See (Aro and Mattila 2007, 7ff.). Smith did not get along with Eneberg, and his travel to the Orient was “not at Smith's will.” From the Biography of Peter Mateev.

<sup>11</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev.

<sup>12</sup>From a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. “Alphée” August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14A Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)].

<sup>13</sup>From a Letter of George Smith to J. Winter Jones The Principal Librarian, Baghdad, May 17, 1876 [(BM OP 51 5 Aug. 76 (Stamp: BM 14 Jun 1876 No. 3024)].

The collection of tablets in Baghdad, found somewhere in the area of Babylon, was examined and bought out by Mr Smith. They were 5,6,7 centimetres long and 4 to 5 centimetres wide which turned out to be mostly contracts for purchases and sales—the English call them tablets, the French savonnettes as they looked like little bars of soap—about a thousand pieces [...] The contracts on these tablets were of a special value. They had the name of the king, the year, the month and the day of his reign. It was very useful for solving the gaps in the order and chronology of the reign of kings. These contracts had been sealed by the trader and a mark from the nail of the illiterate person or a seal.<sup>14</sup>

While both companions were in Baghdad the political situation of the country was getting worse and riots were causing regular trouble. In 1876 the Ottoman Empire was in turmoil. Smith and Mathewson faced difficulties as well, while waiting for permission to excavate at Nineveh. Although Smith had a firman from Constantinople, he had to wait for the decision of the English Consul General in Baghdad. Therefore, Smith had to leave Baghdad for 10 days, from the 28 April to the 8 May. He went to Kurnah to speak with the Consul General about the planned excavation.<sup>15</sup> Besides the riots, another wave of cholera outbreak made the conditions in the country impossible for excavating. After returning from Kurnah Smith knew his mission had failed and that he had to leave the country soon. He wrote to his wife May (Mary): “I am glad to say I am coming home [...] This country is going all to smash.”<sup>16</sup> All together, Smith stayed for about a month in Baghdad, during which period he devoted himself completely, in a manic manner, to the study of the tablets. As Evers pointed out, the information in the notebooks of Smith, which he wrote during this time in Baghdad, provided essential aid to the first paper on the Egibi tablets by Boscawen (Evers 1993, 108).

In Baghdad while proving over the tablets, making out a complete list of them [...] and making notes on the more interesting ones, he would get up and walk about the room, shaking all over, at these time he would always take some brandy, which would steady his, I may say already shattered nerves. Again he would sit down, but only for

<sup>14</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev.

<sup>15</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev. See (Evers 1993, 107). Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. “Alphée” August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14A Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)]. See also the Letter of Smith to Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Baghdad May 17, 1876 [BM OP 51 5 Aug. 76 (Stamp: BM 14 Jun 1876 No. 3024)].

<sup>16</sup>From a letter of Smith to his wife, May 17, 1876 Baghdad. On that day Smith wrote also to John Winter Johnes, The Principal Librarian of the British Museum, see above.

a few minutes, to get up and say that his head was anything but right, but that an hour's walk in the garden would set him up again. We go into the garden but scarcely have we walked for five minutes, when he would say, "I feel better, let us go in and give another trials at the tablets." We go in and in a minute he is convinced that his head will not help him. This would happen a dozen times in a day. At times he would feel better especially in the morning after a good night's rest, then he would go over many tablets. The way he used to go to work was: he would sort all the tablets, into the different reigns and again into number of years each reign contained. He would then say there are so many days work for me, dividing them also. When however he felt better, he would not stop after his self-allotted work is done, but would go on doing the next and the next. At these [...] times it would take him a couple of days and more to do one day's work. When he finished all, he would want to look again at one or two particular tablets, and in looking for them, he would go over the whole lot, finding sometimes a few missing. His excuse would be: "Never mind Peter, we have nothing to do, this is an amusement for me, we will soon be in the saddle and then all your troubles and mine will be over [...]" he worked very hard to study them, the tablets, and make as many notes as he could. Another reason was, to satisfy his own curiosity as to what they may contain new to him.<sup>17</sup>

On May 26, Smith received an official statement that he had to leave the country.<sup>18</sup> Smith and Mathewson had to take a ship from Basra and proceed to the Suez Channel. There were several factors that prevented this plan. Firstly, Smith and Mathewson had to stay under quarantine in Kurnah. There, the unbearable heat and the bad conditions during the quarantine worsened the health of Smith.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the political state of the Empire was getting ever worse. On May 30, during their stay under quarantine at Kurnah, the old sultan Abd Al-Aziz was forced to commit suicide. The new sultan Murad V remained in his position for only three months.<sup>20</sup> Crucially, the export of the antiquities was banned during this time. While staying near Kurnah on a ship, Smith and Mathewson understood that the tablets had not passed customs. Smith did not want to go back without

<sup>17</sup>From a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. "Alphée" August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14A Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)].

<sup>18</sup>Information from his diaries see (Evers 1993, 107).

<sup>19</sup>"The quarantine at Gournah brought him down to a very low state of health, his return to Baghdad revived him somewhat." From a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board of the S.S. "Alphée" August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14A Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)].

<sup>20</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev.

the tablets. Therefore, both companions had to return to Baghdad, from Kurnah, in order to resend the tablets:

Our [first] arrival in Baghdad caused the delay of the excavations. The Resident opposed the endeavour [for excavation]. The country was engulfed by riots, a revolt in Bosnia-Herzegovina flared up and war was being expected [...] Mr. Smith had to obey. I arranged the tablets wrapped with cotton wool in two trunks and we were ready to return through Basra and the Suez Canal. We handed over the trunks to the Resident – Colonel Nixon<sup>21</sup> to transfer them through the customs and send them with the first ship after our departure. During our stay Baghdad was struck with plague. We found an English ship and were put under ten-day quarantine in the ship itself. A ship came, then another but the trunks did not arrive, our quarantine was over and Mr. Smith said he would not go back without the trunks, the only acquisition from this expedition. When we returned to Baghdad we realised the Resident had tried to carry the trunks through the customs but in vain – taking out antiques was forbidden.<sup>22</sup>

After returning to Baghdad to send the trunks again, Smith was informed that Marini was offering newly acquired tablets. Smith had the chance to inspect them. He bought ca. 2600 additional tablets.<sup>23</sup> The acquired tablets were packed, sealed in trunks, and sent through the Custom House again. This was made possible because of the “friendship” of Mathewson with the Customs Director.<sup>24</sup>

I went to the Customs Director, a travel companion from Aleppo to Baghdad, started to shout that the trunks did not contain anything else but stones, so he ordered the officer to examine them, which he did in the most carefree manner, thus they passed unimpeded. I had them loaded in the ship travelling to Basra and from there to the British Museum in London by naval ship.<sup>25</sup>

On June 18, 1876 the tablets from both purchases were sent with a ship to the British Museum.

<sup>21</sup>The Resident stayed in his position during the next year as well (Makiya 1969, 43).

<sup>22</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev.

<sup>23</sup>See also (Evers 1993, 107f.; Wunsch 2000, 1ff.).

<sup>24</sup>Their friendship started on the steamer to Baghdad. Mathewson prepared the good relations with hunting birds and rabbits on the steamer's stops. Mathewson used to slaughter the animals in proper manner for the Custom Director and give him the proper meat.

<sup>25</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev. The description at the end is not detailed enough. It refers to the shipping of the old and the newly acquired tablets, which is evident from the other materials.



Regarding the three boxes (cases) with the antiquities: On June 17, I got the Pacha's order to the Chief of the Custom House, to allow the antiquities in three cases to pass. Next day Sunday 18, I passed them through the custom house and delivered them into the hands of Mr. Cobrough's man, and saw them placed in their storeroom, ready for shipment to Bassorah, to be there again shipped, by Mr. Cobrough's principals, for London. I paid freight to Bassorah and insurance to London to Mr. Cobrough. Mr. Cobrough promised to get the bills of lading for the three cases from Bassorah and send them to Mr. Smith, to English Consul, Aleppo. At Aleppo<sup>26</sup> I enquired for the letter, which should have contained them, but none had arrived. The boxes were sealed in Baghdad, very carefully, with the parcel post seal of the Consular Post office. The seals were sunk in the wood at the opening of the lid. The boxes were also sealed or fastened each by a leader Custom house seal [...] The address on the boxes is as follows "Chief Librarian British Museum London. This side up." The antiquities are carefully packed each piece or fragment separately in cotton. In one of the boxes is the lion Mr. Smith had brought two years previous.<sup>27</sup>

After resending the previously acquired tablets with the recently purchased tablets Smith and Mathewson took the land road to Aleppo. During the stay in Baghdad Smith decided not to go back by ship from Basra but to proceed to Aleppo over land. One important reason for taking the land road was Smith's wish to try excavating in Nineveh again. Another reason was the climate in the South and the quarantine in Kurnah. They were so bad that Smith did not want to go through them again. Therefore, Smith decided to go back to Aleppo on horses. Unfortunately, this would turn out to be a fatal decision. Such a journey during that time of the year was possible only by traveling at night and resting during the day.

The heat was unbearable, the flies and mosquitoes were a real punishment. Mr. Smith decided that we should go back by land. Undoubtedly, not only had he a secret desire to visit the mounds of ancient Nineveh but he also hoped to find favourable conditions to undertake excavations.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup>This has happened after the death of Smith.

<sup>27</sup>From a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. "Alphée" August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)].

<sup>28</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev.

After Smith decided to take the land road, he informed his wife about the new matters with a letter:

You will be surprised to hear that I have returned to Baghdad, I might have been half way home by now, but I tried to go South to India and from there to Egypt and then home but there was quarantine to keep at the most pestilential place in the whole country. I would not stand it and after a week took advantage of the offer of some more antiquities here to return and purchase them. I am now going North to Mosul and from there home in that direction there is quarantine so I shall have to endure 2 weeks there before getting on. I start Friday June 17 [...].<sup>29</sup>

The second quarantine of 15 days was at Kifri in the Diyala district.<sup>30</sup> Both companions had to stay there after exiting Baghdad. The conditions there exhausted Smith<sup>31</sup> and formed “another great trial of his health.”<sup>32</sup>

On his way back to Aleppo, Smith was concerned that the shipped tablets would be stuck in customs again. Letters to the British Museum show his concern. Smith wrote two letters to the Principal Librarian; on July 16 from Mosul and the on August 2 from Diyarbakir. From Mosul he wrote:

My Dear Sir, I arrived here (in Mosul) two days ago on my way back, I have obtained permission to export the purchases and passed them through the Custom House, I must delay my report on my proceedings and on them until my return [...].<sup>33</sup>

From Diyarbakir:

There are three cases marked “Principal Librarian British Museum” which I expect will arrive in England before me. They contain my collection but I have not yet had notice that they are shipped and do not know how to advise you about them. In any case if they arrive they had better wait until I arrive when I will see to them.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup>From a Letter of George Smith to his wife May, Baghdad June 14, 1876.

<sup>30</sup>From a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. “Alphée” August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)]. See also (Evers 1993, 107f.).

<sup>31</sup>See also the Biography of Peter Mateev.

<sup>32</sup>From a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. “Alphée” August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)].

<sup>33</sup>From a Letter of Smith to J. Winter Jones The Principal Librarian, Mosul July 16, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 28 Aug. 1876 No. 4334)].

<sup>34</sup>From Letter of George Smith to J. Winter Jones The Principal Librarian, Diarbakir August 2nd 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 28 Aug. 1876 No. 4335)].

The death of George Smith was caused by his weakness and exhaustion resulting from the night journeys from Baghdad to Aleppo. The main reason for taking the land road was the return from Kurnah to Baghdad, in order to resend the purchased tablets. By returning to Baghdad to resend the Egibi tablets to the British Museum, and subsequently by choosing the land road to Aleppo, it cost Smith his life. Smith turned out to be a victim of his own interests. Things might have gone differently, but in Baghdad Smith found no support from the authorities: "Mr. Smith lingered so long in Baghdad, because anything but assistance was given him there [...]".<sup>35</sup> Mathewson blamed the British Resident Colonel Nixon in Baghdad for the failed passage of the tablets through custom. According to Mathewson's report, this was the main reason for what happened to Smith:

I pointed out that Mr. Smith had become a victim of the carelessness and clumsiness of the Resident (Colonel Nixon) in Baghdad. If he had sent the trunks and we had received them during the quarantine, we would have continued our journey by ship through the Suez Canal so that Mr. Smith would not have to be exposed to the long and tiring way by land.<sup>36</sup>

## 9.2 The Cuneiform Tablets in Kotel

The four tablets published here are well preserved. It remains unclear why Mathewson chose them. It seems that he just took some tablets from Baghdad as a souvenir. KT 1463 and KT 1464 are made from very similar or the same grey clay. KT 1465 is made from brown clay and KT 1466 from light grey clay. The format of the four tablets is the wide spread 'pillow-shape'.<sup>37</sup>

### 9.2.1 No. 1

KT (=Kotel) 1463 = 5,3×6,8×1,9 cm. CDLI No. P431321<sup>38</sup>

obv.	1	MA.NA KŪ.BABBAR šá <sup>md+</sup> AG-ŠEŠ <sup>meš</sup> -MU A-šú šá <sup>m</sup> šu-la-a
	2	A <sup>m</sup> e-gi-bi ina UGU-ḫi <sup>m</sup> SUM-nu-nu A-šú šá
	3	<sup>md+</sup> AG-na-šir A <sup>m</sup> man-di-di šá ITI ina UGU-ḫi 1 ma-ni-e

<sup>35</sup>From a Letter of Mathewson to the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, Mersina, On board the S.S. "Alphée" August 26, 1876 [BM OP 53 C 14 Oct. 76 (Stamp: BM 11 Sept. 1876 No. 4512)].

<sup>36</sup>From the Biography of Peter Mateev.

<sup>37</sup>Photographs of the texts are provided through open access in CDLI: <http://cdli.ucla.edu>. On the format see (Jursa 2005, 4f.).

<sup>38</sup>The place on obv. 9 is not really broken. The signs seems more to be filled with hard-packed dirt.

	4	1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR <i>ina</i> UGU- <i>hi-šú i-rab-bi É-su</i>
	5	<i>šá</i> DA É <sup>m</sup> MU- <sup>d+</sup> AG ù <sup>m</sup> <i>ni-qu-du</i>
	6	DUMU <sup>me</sup> <i>šá</i> <sup>m</sup> ŠEŠ-MU- <sup>d</sup> AMAR.UTU <i>u</i> <sup>md+</sup> AG- <i>i-na-ka-a+ri-lu-mur</i>
	7	<sup>lú</sup> <i>qal-la-šú maš-ka-nu šá</i> <sup>md+</sup> AG-ŠEŠ <sup>meš</sup> -MU
	8	<sup>lú</sup> TUK-ú <i>šá-nam-ma ina</i> UGU- <sup>ʿ</sup> <i>hi` ul i-šal-laṭ</i>
	9	<i>a-di</i> UGU- <i>hi šá</i> <sup>md+</sup> AG-ŠEŠ <sup>meš</sup> -MU <sup>ʿ</sup> KÙ.BABBAR- <i>šú</i>
	10	<i>i-šal-li-mu i-`na` a-šá-bi šá</i> <sup>f</sup> <i>kaš-šá-a</i> DAM- <i>šú</i>
	11	DUMU.SAL- <i>su šá</i> <sup>m</sup> BA- <i>šá-a</i> A <sup>m</sup> <i>man-di-di</i>
rev.	12	<sup>lú</sup> <i>mu-kin-nu</i> <sup>m</sup> <i>šu-la-a</i> A- <i>šú šá</i> <sup>md+</sup> EN-ŠEŠ-MU
	13	A <sup>m</sup> <i>tu-na-a</i> <sup>m</sup> <i>gi-mil-lu-</i> <sup>d</sup> ME.ME
	14	A- <i>šú šá</i> <sup>m</sup> NUMUN- <i>ia</i> A <sup>lú</sup> ŠITIM <sup>m</sup> KI- <sup>d</sup> UTU-TIN
	15	<sup>ʿ</sup> A- <i>šú šá</i> <sup>md+</sup> AG-NUMUN-SI.SÁ A <sup>m</sup> <i>e-gi-bi</i>
	16	<sup>ʿ</sup> <sup>lú</sup> DUB <sup>ʿ</sup> .SAR <sup>md+</sup> AG-ŠEŠ <sup>meš</sup> -GI A- <i>šú šá</i> <sup>m</sup> BA- <i>šá-a</i>
	17	A <sup>&lt;m&gt;</sup> <i>ir-a-ni</i> TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup> <i>iti</i> APIN
	18	UD 5.KAM MU 9.KAM <sup>md+</sup> AG-I
	19	LUGAL TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup>

## Translation

One mina of silver, owed to Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin, son of Šulâ from the Egibi family, by Iddinunu, son of Nabû-nāšir from the Mandidi family. Per month, one šiqu of silver grows on one mina (that is, 20% interest per annum) at his debit. His house adjacent to the house of Iddin-Nabû and Nīqūdu, the sons of Aḥḥē-iddin-Marduk, and Nabû-ina-kāri-lūmur, his slave, are the pledge of (= pledged to) Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin. Another creditor will not have the right to dispose thereof until Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin is satisfied (with regard to) his silver.

In the presence of Kaššâ, his (that is, the debtor's) wife, daughter of Iqīšâ from the Mandidi family.

Witnesses: Šulâ/ Bēl-aḥ-iddin// Tunâ, Gimil-Gula/ Zēriya// Itinnu, Itti-Šamaš-balātu/Nabû-zēr-līšir//Egibi

Scribe: Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim/Iqīšâ//Ir'anni

Babylon, month Araḥsamna (viii), fifth day, year nine of Nabonidus, king of Babylon (547 BCE).

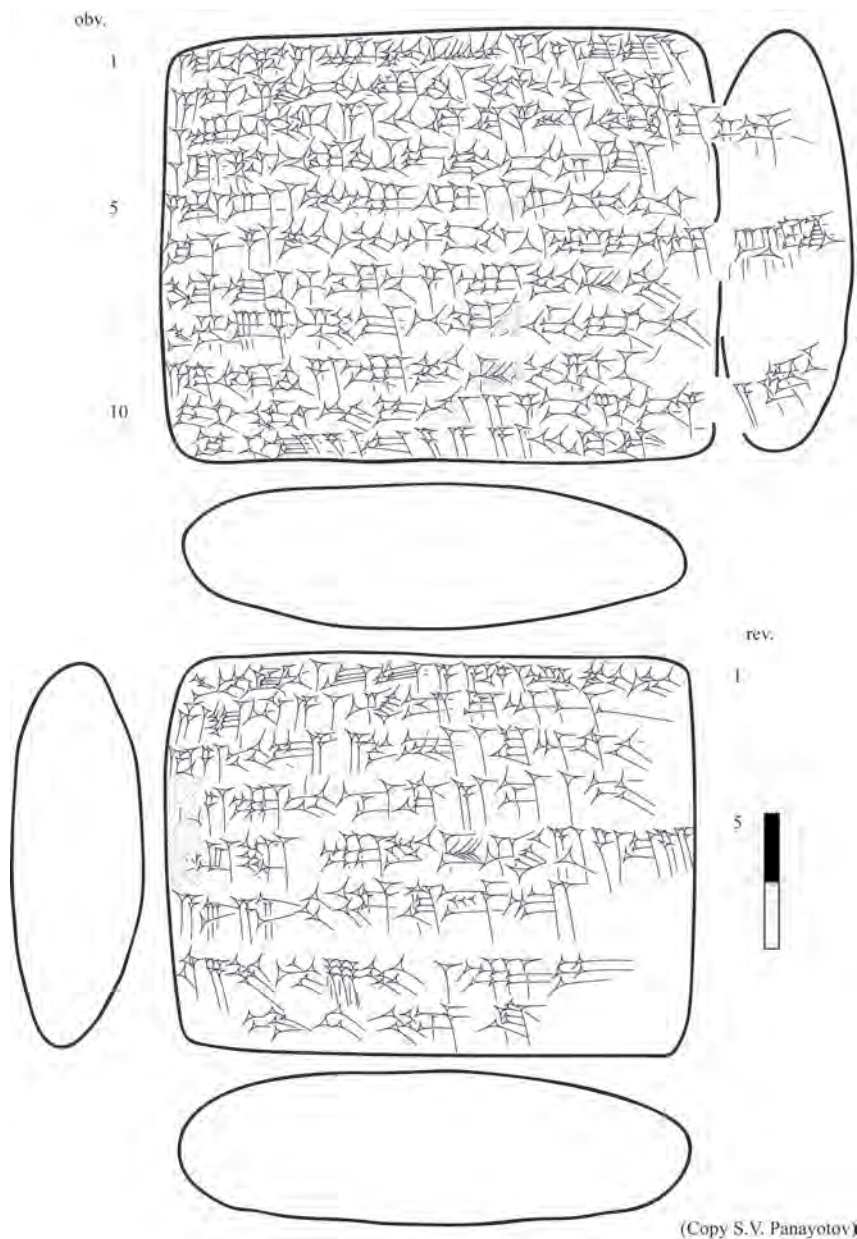


Figure 9.1: KT 1463 = 5,3×6,8×1,9 cm. CDLI No. P431321

## Commentary

In this record Nabû-aḥḫē-iddin, head of the best-known branch of the Egibi family in the second generation, appears as a creditor of the considerable amount of one mina (ca. 500 gs.) of silver in 547 BCE. The debtor, Iddinunu, is known from one other document (Camb. 328, dating to the sixth year of Cambyses, twenty-three years later) wherein he acts as a witness to a debt note for seven minas of silver owed to Nabû-aḥḫē-iddin's son. The fact that Iddinunu rarely emerges within the realm of the Egibi archive as it is known so far indicates that he is not one of their regular business partners but, rather, that the Egibis only on occasion financed some of his transactions. In 547 BCE Iddinunu may have been in his early career, although the pledge of a house and a slave suggest that he either came from a propertied background or had been successful in previous business. A secured loan at 20% interest per annum reflects ordinary business terms in the Neo-Babylonian period and we may therefore surmise that the Egibis did not have a stake in Iddinunu's business deals. Close business partners, by comparison, operated on different terms in general. In such cases we tend to find short-term interest-free loans and *ḥarrānu* arrangements where a silent partner provides capital to the acting partner and shares profits as well as losses.

The record follows the formula of an *u'iltu* (*Verpflichtungsschein*, rendered as an IOU, debt note or promissory note in English). Such abstract documents rarely name the purpose of the loan and, as in the present case, do not reveal anything about the reasons why the amount was owed or had been spent. There is no other record in the Egibi archive about the pledged objects; apparently the debtor was under no duress and did not have to sell house nor slave in forfeiture to pay his creditor.

At least one of the assets, be it house or slave—or both—seems to have been part of Iddinunu's wife's dowry or Iddinunu had transferred them as property to her in compensation for dowry silver that he had spent, a customary practice that can be regularly observed in private archives and has been described as “dowry conversion.” This fact transpires through the wife's presence as a witness to the contract, introduced by the *ina ašābi* “in the sitting (= presence) of ” formula that sets her apart from normal, male witnesses (<sup>lū</sup>*mukinnū*). Both wife and husband come from the Mandidi family. The name is attested in all important Neo-Babylonian cities and originally derived from the prebendary office of “measurer” who supervises the commodity deliveries to and issues within the temple. Such intra-clan marriages are common among the propertied urban circles, especially for younger siblings. The exact degree of their relationship cannot be determined.

The three witnesses are attested in other Egibi documents while the scribe does not seem to have belonged to their realm.

## 9.2.2 No. 2

KT 1464 = 5,5×3,4×1,5 cm. CDLI No. P431322

obv.	1	$\frac{1}{3}$ MA.NA 8 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR 21 GUR ZÚ. 'LUM'.MA
	2	NÍG.GA <sup>d+</sup> AG <i>šá</i> <sup>m</sup> ri-mut- <sup>d+</sup> EN A-šú <i>šá</i>
	3	<sup>md+</sup> EN-NUMUN-DÙ A <sup>m</sup> <i>šá-am-ma'</i>
	4	<i>u</i> <sup>m</sup> gu-za-nu A-šú <i>šá</i> <sup>m</sup> ri-mut A <sup>m</sup> ÌR- <sup>d</sup> GIR <sub>4</sub> -KÙ
	5	<i>ina</i> UGU- <i>hi</i> <sup>m</sup> MU-GIN A-šú <i>šá</i> <sup>m</sup> <i>šá-d+</i> AG-šu-u
	6	<i>ina</i> <sup>iti</sup> DU <sub>6</sub> KÙ.<BABBAR> <sup>'</sup> $\frac{1}{3}$ MA.NA 8 GÍN
	7	21 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA <i>i-nam-din</i>
	8	ŠE.NUMUN-šú <i>zaq-pi u pi-i šul-pu</i>
lo.e.	9	<i>šá</i> UGU- <i>hi</i> <i>šá</i> ÍD <i>bar-sip</i> <sup>ki</sup> <i>maš-ka-nu</i>
	10	<i>šá</i> <sup>m</sup> ri-mut- <sup>d+</sup> EN <i>u</i> <sup>m</sup> gu-za-nu
rev.	11	<sup>lú</sup> <i>mu-kîn-nu</i> <sup>m</sup> <i>ki-na-a</i> A-šú <i>šá</i> <sup>md+</sup> EN-SU
	12	A <sup>m</sup> <i>dan-ni-e-a</i> <sup>md+</sup> EN-TIN- <i>iť</i> A-šú <i>šá</i>
	13	<sup>md</sup> IM- <i>ú-še-zib</i>
	14	<sup>lú</sup> UMBISAG <sup>md+</sup> EN-TIN- <i>iť</i> A-šú <i>šá</i> <sup>m</sup> ŠU- <sup>d</sup> ME.ME
	15	A <sup>m</sup> <i>e-gi-bi</i> TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup> <sup>iti</sup> KIN
	16	UD 13.KAM MU 15.KAM <sup>md+</sup> AG-I
	17	LUGAL E <sup>ki</sup>

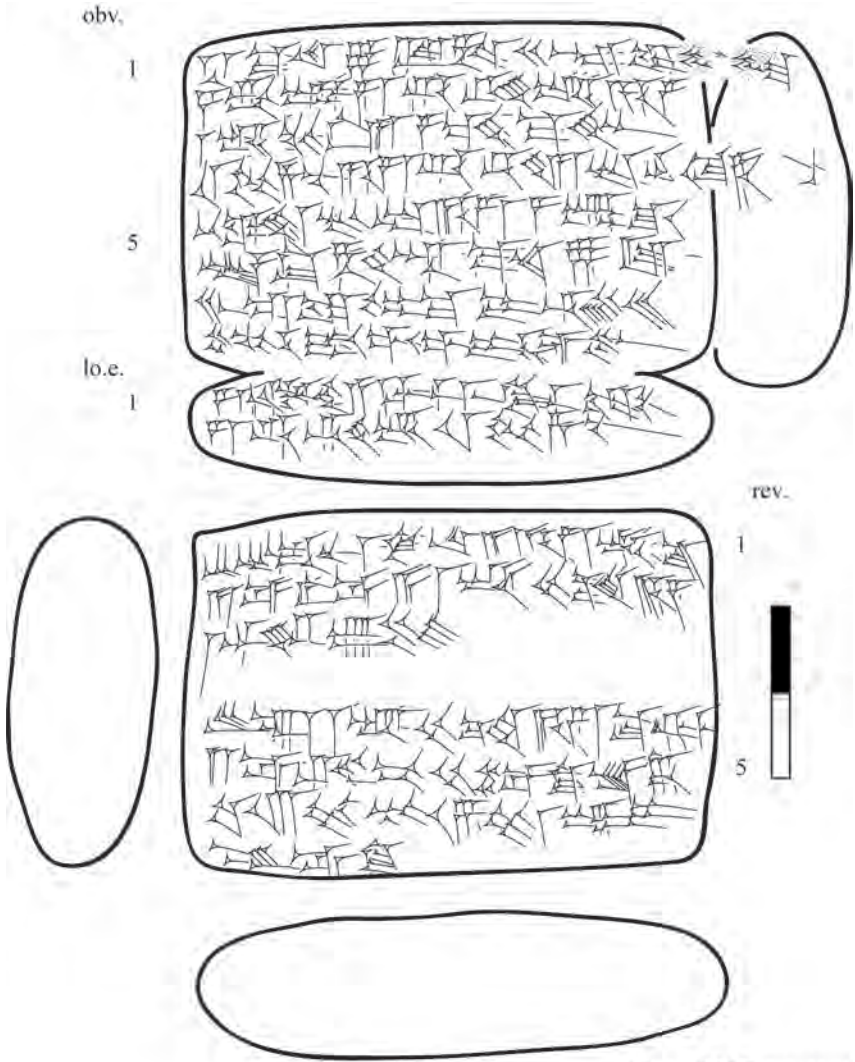
## Translation

Twenty-eight šiqu of silver (and) 21 kur (ca. 3780 litres) of dates, property of (the temple of) Nabû, are owed to Rīmūt-Bēl, son of Bēl-zēr-ibni from the Šammā family, and Gūzānu, son of Rīmūt from the Arad-Nergal family, by Šum-ukīn, son of Ša-Nabû-šū. In the month Tašrit (vii) he will pay these twenty-eight šiqu of silver (and) 21 kur of dates. His field, planted (with date palms) and cultivated (with grain), at the Borsippa canal is the pledge of (= pledged to) Rīmūt-Bēl and Gūzānu.

Witnesses: Kīnā/Bēl-erība//Dannēa, Bēl-uballit/Adad-ušēzib

Scribe: Bēl-uballit/Gimil-Gula//Egibi

Babylon, month Ulūl (vi), thirteenth day, year fifteen of Nabonidus, king of Babylon (541 BCE).



(Copy S.V. Panayotov)

Figure 9.2: KT 1464 = 5,5×3,4×1,5 cm. CDLI No. P431322



## Commentary

In this record there is no member of the main Egibi branch or their close relatives mentioned (the scribe comes from a different branch of this widely-spread family). Nevertheless, it can be attributed to their activities and, therefore, certainly derives from their archive. The document from the fifteenth year of Nabonidus (541 BCE) records a short-term debt of nearly one-half mina of silver and twenty-one kur of dates owed by an owner of agricultural land that is to be repaid within the next month, at the time of the date harvest. It may reflect a pre-paid purchase of dates, but it could also derive from a bridge loan that helped the debtor either pay fees and taxes on time, or purchase necessary equipment (such as tools or a draft animal). Again, the terse character of the *u'iltu* hides the actual cause.

The debtor Šum-ukīn who pledges his field (which is partly planted with trees where it borders the Borsippa canal as its irrigation source and has arable land behind it) is known from other records. In 558 BCE, seventeen years prior to this tablet, he appears in Ner. 43 as a witness to a record of Iddin-Marduk, the father-in-law of Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin's son Itti-Marduk-balāṭu that was drafted in Šaḥrīnu at the Borsippa canal, according to which two persons owe Iddin-Marduk more than one and one-half minas of silver for a purchase of onion seed (to be repaid in onions after the harvest) and pledge their field as a security. Ner. 43 clearly is connected to Iddin-Marduk's whole-sale activities in the rural area between Babylon and Borsippa from where he shipped barley and dates to Babylon, thereby encouraging market production, especially of fringe commodities such as oniony vegetables. Šum-ukīn may have been a neighbor of the debtors. The fact that he owned land in the same area transpires from two other records: In Nbn. 103 from 553 BCE, his field is mentioned as the neighboring plot in a debt record of Iddin-Marduk issued in Šaḥrīnu at the Borsippa canal. The debtors, a woman and her son, owe one mina of silver because Iddin-Marduk had credited their *rikis qabli* obligation to the king. In view of the fact that fields that were subject to such military obligations usually had been allocated in larger units of adjacent plots we may surmise that Šum-ukīn (or his ancestors) had received his share under similar conditions of land for service.

According to Nbn. 4 (556 BCE, two years after Ner. 43 and fifteen years prior to our document) he had pledged his own field as a security for a previous debt to Iddin-Marduk's *ḥarrānu* business partner, and continued to do so. In another debt note (CM 3 371, date lost) he credited the obligation on dates that someone else owed to Iddin-Marduk. The commodities are said to be partly tithes originally owed to the temples of Nergal and Bēlet-ilī which Iddin-Marduk had bought up in advance. In a similar vein, according to the present document, Šum-ukīn's current obligation was owed to the treasury of Nabû, that is, either a local

sanctuary devoted to this deity or, rather more likely, to the Ezida in Bosippa and attests to these temples' rights to receive a tithe share from the yield in this region.

In the present record not Iddin-Marduk but Rīmūt-Bēl from the Šammā' (also spelled Šambā', Šappā or Ammā') family and Gūzānu from the Arad-Nergal family appear as the nominal creditors. For Rīmūt-Bēl's connection with the Egibi family two records are indicative: According to CM 3 356, he owed three minas and forty-eight shekels of silver to Iddin-Marduk. Although the date is broken, the same amount is mentioned in Nbn. 755 and, therefore, both tablets were issued around 542 BCE. The latter shows Itti-Marduk-balātu from the Egibi family as recipient of the aforementioned silver from Rīmūt-Bēl in the presence of his father Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin as the proxy (*ina našparti*) of his father-in-law Iddin-Marduk. Itti-Marduk-balātu was to keep the sum as it counted as part of the dowry that Iddin-Marduk's daughter brought into the Egibi family. As a result of this union, the Egibis gained access to Iddin-Marduk's profitable business network at the Borsippa canal. Rīmūt-Bēl acted as one of Iddin-Marduk's agents there (see, for example, CM 3 219). Gūzānu appears as witness, guarantor and debtor in similar business transactions for Iddin-Marduk.

The two witnesses and the scribe cannot be traced in other Egibi documents. The scribe, however, appears in records from the Nappāḥu archive from Babylon which otherwise has little overlap with the Egibi archive, despite the fact that their members were contemporaries who acted in the same city. Apparently they moved in different circles.

### 9.2.3 No. 3

KT 1465 = 5,2×4×1,6 cm. CDLI No. P431323

obv.	1	1(=60)+10 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA šá <sup>m</sup> KI- <sup>d</sup> AMAR.UTU-TIN
	2	A-šú šá <sup>md+</sup> AG-ŠEŠ <sup>meš-</sup> MU A <sup>me-gi-bi</sup>
	3	<i>ina</i> UGU- <i>ḥi</i> <sup>md+</sup> EN-SUM.NA A-šú šá <sup>m</sup> ri-mut
	4	<i>ina</i> <sup>iti</sup> AB <i>i-nam-din</i>
rev.	5	<sup>lu</sup> <i>mu-kin-nu</i> <sup>m</sup> EN-šú-nu A-šú šá
	6	<sup>md+</sup> EN-ŠEŠ <sup>meš-</sup> MU A <sup>md</sup> 30- <i>i-mit-tu</i> <sub>4</sub>
	7	<sup>md+</sup> AG- <i>it-tan-nu</i> A-šú šá <sup>md</sup> U.GUR-ŠEŠ-MU
	8	A <sup>m</sup> ŠIPA-ANŠE.KUR.RA
	9	<sup>lu</sup> UMBISAG <sup>md+</sup> AG-MU-MU A-šú šá <sup>m</sup> <i>na-din</i>
	10	A <sup>m</sup> ŠEŠ- <i>ia-ú-tú</i> TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup> <sup>iti</sup> APIN
	11	UD 23.KAM MU 3.KAM <sup>m</sup> <i>ku-ra-áš</i>
	12	LUGAL TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup> LUGAL KUR.KUR

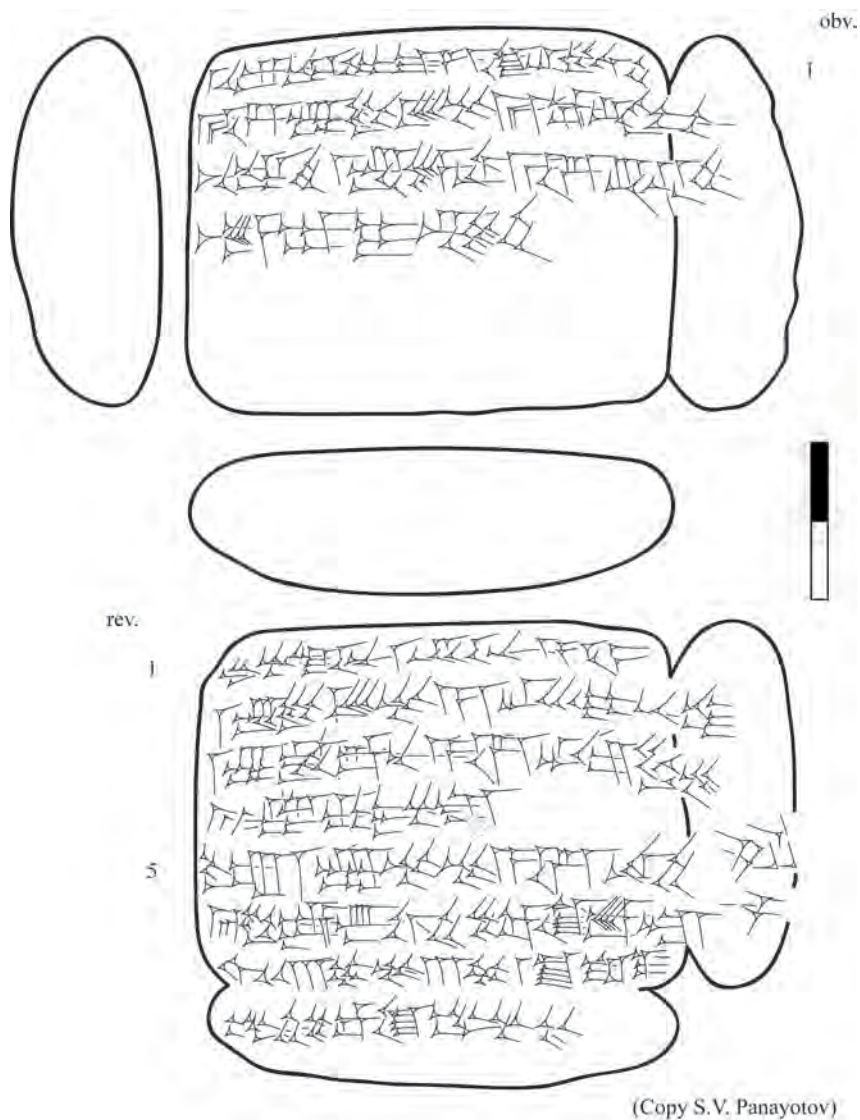


Figure 9.3: KT 1465 = 5,2×4×1,6 cm. CDLI No. P431323

## Translation

Seventy kur (ca. 12600 litres) of dates are owed to Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, son of Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin from the Egibi family, by Bēl-iddin, son of Rīmūt. In the month Ṭebēt (x) he will deliver.

Witnesses: Bēlšunu/Bēl-aḥḥē-iddin//Sîn-imittu, Nabû-ittannu/Nergal-aḥ-iddin//Rē' i-sīsī

Scribe: Nabû-šum-iddin/Nādin//Aḥiyaūtu;

Babylon, month Araḥsamna (viii), twenty-third day, year three of Cyrus, king of Babylon (and) king of the lands (536 BCE)

## Commentary

This debt note about 70 kur (ca. 12.600 liters) of dates is owed to Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, the head of the Egibi family in the third generation. He gradually took over his father's business from about 549 BCE when the latter served the prestigious and certainly time-consuming office as a royal judge. As the eldest son he managed the affairs after Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin's death in 543 BCE on behalf of all the heirs for at least seven years. Around 536 BCE, when this record was drafted, the inheritance division was well under way.

The background of the present debt note again is to be sought in the commodity trade. The debtor promises at the time of the date harvest to deliver the produce by the tenth month, that is, at least two months later. It is possible that the owed amount (which is worth over one mina of silver at the 'ideal' conversion rate of silver and dates) relates to the yield from his own grounds but he might as well have been involved as a local agent in the process of collection, storage, guarding and shipping of the date harvest on behalf of the Egibis and thereby helped to spread out the task beyond the seasonal peak. Again, the terse character of the record does not reveal much.

The debtor's name is given as Bēl-iddin, son of Rīmūt, without any family affiliation and his identity, therefore, is difficult to verify. The absence of a family name in this context speaks against an identification with another contemporary person of the same patronymic who bears an ancestor name, namely Rīmūt from the Dēkū family, who is known as a neighbor of an Egibi house (for example, Nbn. 184, Cyr. 177, CM 20 10, Dar. 265+).

The first witness is well known as a *ḥarrānu* business partner of both Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin and Itti-Marduk-balāṭu between 569 and 527 BCE, that is, over forty-two years of joint business during which Bēlšunu acted as the junior partner. Inventories (CM 20 54, 56; Nbn. 787) and the final division record (TCL 13 160, CM 20 60) attest to the highly profitable nature of their venture. It did not only

comprise the trade in commodities but also date beer production (hundreds of vats are inventorised) and their delivery to the governor of Babylon, among others.

The scribe is also attested as a witness in Nbn. 1047, a debt note about the important amount of six minas of silver owed by Itti-Marduk-balātu as a result of his father's acting as a depositary for funds held in escrow.

#### 9.2.4 No. 4

KT 1466 = 5×3,9×1,9 cm. CDLI No. P431324

obv.	1	$\frac{1}{2}$ MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR šá <sup>m</sup> KI-d(bar!) AMAR.UTU.TIN A-šú
	2	šá <sup>md+</sup> AG-ŠEŠ <sup>meš</sup> -MU A <sup>m</sup> e-gi-bi
	3	ina UGU <sup>md+</sup> AG-EN-šú-nu A-šú šá <sup>m</sup> DUB.NUMUN
	4	A <sup>md</sup> IM-še-e-a šá ITI ina UGU
	5	1 ma-ni-e 1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ina UGU-ḫi-šú
	6	i-rab-bi e-lat ú-il-ti
	7	šá 12 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA
	8	šá ina ki-is-kir-ra-ni-e-šú
	9	in-ni-iṭ-ṭi-ir-ri ù e-lat
lo.e.	10	ú-il-ti šá 3 GUR 1(PI) 4(BÁN) ŠE.BAR
	11	maḫ-ri-e-ti
rev.	12	lú <sup>lú</sup> mu-kin-nu <sup>m</sup> ri-mut A-šú
	13	šá <sup>m</sup> A-ṛ <sup>a</sup> DUMU <sup>m</sup> ÌR-d GIR <sub>4</sub> .KÙ
	14	<sup>md</sup> AG-ŠEŠ <sup>meš</sup> -bul-liṭ A-šú šá <sup>m</sup> ina-SÙḫ-SUR
	15	DUMU <sup>m</sup> bi-ib-bu-ú-a u <sup>lú</sup> UMBISAG
	16	<sup>m</sup> MU-d <sup>+</sup> AG A-šú šá <sup>md</sup> AMAR.UTU-EN-NUMUN
	17	DUMU <sup>m</sup> ú-šur-a-mat-dÉ.A
	18	TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup> iti ŠU UD 27.KAM
	19	ṛ <sup>MU</sup> 12.KAM <sup>md+</sup> AG-I LUGAL TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup>

#### Translation

One-half mina of silver are owed to Itti-Marduk-balātu, son of Nabû-aḫḫē-iddin from the Egibi family, by Nabû-bēlšunu, son of Šāpik-zēri from the Adad-šē'a family. Per month, one šiqu of silver grows on one mina (that is, 20 % interest per annum) at his debit.

(This is) apart from a debt note for 12 kur of dates that have been paid from (what he owes according to) his ledgers, and apart from a previous debt note of 3;1.4 kur (ca. 600 litres) of barley.

Witnesses: Rīmūt/Aplâ//Arad-Nergal, Nabû-aḫḫē-bullit/Ina-tēšê-eṭir//Bibbū'a  
 Scribe: Iddin-Nabû/Marduk-bēl-zēri//Uṣur-amāt-Ea;  
 Babylon, month Dûzu (iv), day twenty-seven, year twelve of Nabonidus, king of  
 Babylon (544 BCE).

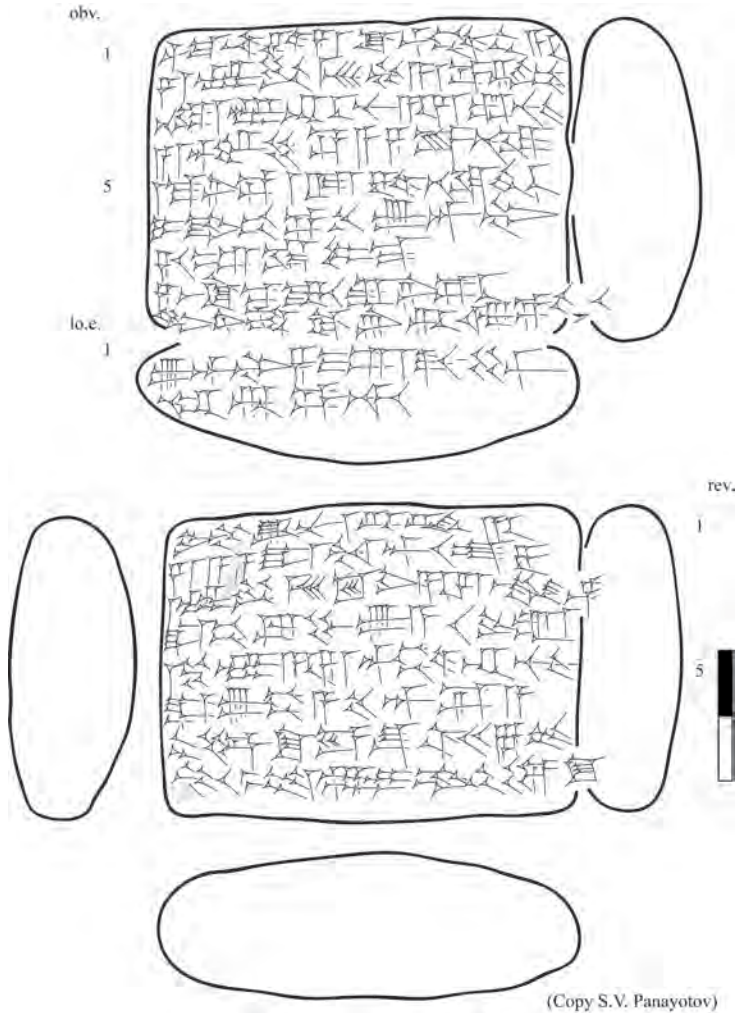


Figure 9.4: KT 1466 = 5×3,9×1,9 cm. CDLI No. P431324

## Commentary

This is a debt note about half a mina of silver owed by Nabû-bēlšunu from the Adad-šē'a family at the ordinary interest rate of twenty per cent per annum. Note-worthy is the term *kiskirru* "income or dues registered in a special ledger or list on a wooden tablet" (CAD K p. 424 s.v. 2) that mostly occurs in the context of temple records, for example, in connection with prebendary income. Whether or not the present debt has something to do with Nabû-bēlšunu's obligations as a prebendary is not clear. He only re-appears as a witness in two additional unrelated records from the Egibi archive of the same year: Nbn. 600 is a promissory note for a large-scale delivery of beer and Nbn. 679 records a statement regarding an escaped slave woman.

The *elat* clause which refers to previous debts owed by the same person that are not covered by the present document indicates that Itti-Marduk-balātu has advanced credit for some of Nabû-bēlšunu's obligations at least during the twelfth year of Nabonidus.

Both witnesses are known from other Egibi texts. The scribe did not only during the same month issue the document Nbn. 616 for the Egibis (where the second witness also appears) but he is also known as a scribe from CTMMA 3 17, a tablet that belongs to the Esagilaya archive from Babylon.

## 9.3 Index of Personal Names

a. = ancestor of; d. = daughter; f. = father of; s. = son of; ∞ = spouse of.  
/ (= A-šú šá: patronym follows; // (A or DUMU): family name follows.

Adad-šē'a (<sup>m</sup>dIM-šē-e-a)

a. Nabû-bēlšunu/Šāpik-zēri KT 1466 (no.4): 4

Adad-ušēzib (<sup>m</sup>dIM-ú-šē-zib)

f. Bēl-uballit KT 1464 (no.2): 13

Aḫḫē-iddin-Marduk (<sup>m</sup>ŠEŠ-MU-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU)

f. Iddin-Nabû KT 1463 (no.1): 6

f. Nīqūdu KT 1463 (no.1): 6

Aḫiyaūtu (<sup>m</sup>ŠEŠ-ia-ú-tú)

a. Nabû-šum-iddin/Nādin KT 1465 (no.3): 10

Aplā (<sup>m</sup>A-a)

f. Rīmūt//Arad-Nergal KT 1466 (no.4): 13

Arad-Nergal (<sup>m</sup>IR-<sup>d</sup>GIR<sub>4</sub>.KÙ)

a. Gūzānu/Rīmūt KT 1464 (no.2): 4

a. Rīmūt/Aplā KT 1466 (no.4): 13

- Bēl-aḥ-iddin (<sup>md+</sup>EN-ŠEŠ-MU)  
 f. Šulâ/Tunâ KT 1463 (no.1): 12
- Bēl-aḥḥē-iddin (<sup>md+</sup>EN-ŠEŠ<sup>meš</sup>-MU)  
 f. Bēlšunu//Šîn-imittu KT 1465 (no.3): 6
- Bēl-erība (<sup>md+</sup>EN-SU)  
 f. Kīnâ//Dannêa KT 1464 (no.2): 11
- Bēl-iddin (<sup>md+</sup>EN-SUM.NA)  
 s. Rīmūt (debtor) KT 1465 (no.3): 3
- Bēl-uballiṭ (<sup>md+</sup>EN-TIN-*it*)  
 s. Adad-ušēzib (witness) KT 1464 (no.2): 12  
 s. Gimil-Gula//Egibi (scribe) KT 1464 (no.2): 14
- Bēl-zēr-ibni (<sup>md+</sup>EN-NUMUN-DŪ)  
 f. Rīmūt-Bēl//Šammā KT 1464 (no.2): 3
- Bēlšunu (<sup>m</sup>EN-šú-*nu*)  
 s. Bēl-aḥḥē-iddin//Šîn-imittu (witness) KT 1465 (no.3): 5
- Bibbū'a (<sup>m</sup>*bi-ib-bu-ú-a*)  
 a. Nabû-aḥḥē-bulliṭ/Ina-tēšē-eṭir KT 1466 (no.4): 15
- Dannêa (<sup>m</sup>*dan-ni-e-a*)  
 a. Kīnâ/Bēl-erība KT 1464 (no.2): 12
- Egibi (<sup>m</sup>*e-gi-gi-bi*)  
 a. Bēl-uballiṭ/Gimil-Gula KT 1464 (no.2): 15  
 a. Itti-Marduk-balātu/Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin KT 1465 (no.3): 2; KT 1466 (no.4): 2  
 a. Itti-Šamaš-balātu/Nabû-zēr-līšir KT 1463 (no.1): 15  
 a. Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin/Šulâ KT 1463 (no.1): 1
- Gimil-Gula (<sup>m</sup>ŠU-<sup>d</sup>ME.ME; <sup>m</sup>*gi-mil-lu-dME.ME)  
 s. Zēriya//Itinnu (witness) KT 1463 (no.1): 13  
 f. Bēl-uballiṭ//Egibi KT 1464 (no.2): 14*
- Gūzānu (<sup>m</sup>*gu-za-nu*)  
 s. Rīmūt//Arad-Nergal (creditor) KT 1464 (no.2): 4,10
- Iddin-Nabû (<sup>m</sup>MU-<sup>d+</sup>AG)  
 s. Aḥḥē-iddin-Marduk (neighbor of pledged house) KT 1463 (no.1): 5  
 s. Marduk-bēl-zēri//Ušur-amāt-Ea (scribe)KT 1466 (no.4): 16
- Iddinunu (<sup>m</sup>SUM-*nu-nu*)  
 s. Nabû-nāšir//Mandidi (debtor) KT 1463 (no.1): 2 (∞ <sup>f</sup>Kaššâ/Iqīšâ//Mandidi)
- Ina-tēšē-eṭir (<sup>m</sup>*ina-SUḥ-SUR*)  
 f. Nabû-aḥḥē-bulliṭ//Bibbū'a KT 1466 (no.4): 14



Iqīšâ (<sup>m</sup>BA-šá-a)

f. <sup>f</sup>Kaššâ//Mandidi KT 1463 (no.1): 11

f. Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim//Ir'anni (scribe) KT 1463 (no.1): 16

Ir'anni (<<sup>m</sup>>ir-a-ni)

a. Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim/Iqīšâ KT 1463 (no.1): 17

Itinnu (<sup>lu</sup>ŠITIM)

a. Gimil-Gula/Zēriya KT 1463 (no.1): 14

Itti-Marduk-balāṭu (<sup>m</sup>KI-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU.TIN)

s. Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin//Egibi (creditor) KT 1465 (no.3): 1; (creditor) KT 1466 (no.4): 1

Itti-Šamaš-balāṭu (<sup>m</sup>KI-<sup>d</sup>UTU-TIN)

s. Nabû-zēr-līšir//Egibi (witness) KT 1463 (no.1): 14

<sup>f</sup>Kaššâ (<sup>f</sup>kaš-šá-a)

d. Iqīšâ//Mandidi (*ina ašābi* witness) KT 1463 (no.1): 10 (∞ Iddinunu/  
Nabû-nāšir//Mandidi)

Kīnâ (<sup>m</sup>ki-na-a)

s. Bēl-erība//Dannêa (witness) KT 1464 (no.2): 11

Mandidi (<sup>m</sup>man-di-di)

a. Iddinunu/Nabû-nāšir KT 1463 (no.1): 3

a. <sup>f</sup>Kaššâ/Iqīšâ KT 1463 (no.1): 11

Marduk-bēl-zēri (<sup>md</sup>AMAR.UTU-EN-NUMUN)

f. Iddin-Nabû//Ušur-amāt-Ea KT 1466 (no.4): 16

Nabû-aḥḥē-bullit (<sup>md</sup>AG-ŠEŠ<sup>meš</sup>-bul-liṭ)

s. Ina-tēšê-eṭir//Bibbū'a (witness) KT 1466 (no.4): 14

Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin (<sup>md+</sup>AG-ŠEŠ<sup>meš</sup>-MU)

s. Šulâ//Egibi, (creditor) KT 1463 (no.1): 1,7,9

f. Itti-Marduk-balāṭu//Egibi KT 1465 (no.3): 2; KT 1466 (no.4): 2

Nabû-aḥḥē-šullim (<sup>md+</sup>AG-ŠEŠ<sup>meš</sup>-GI)

s. Iqīšâ//Ir'anni (scribe) KT 1463 (no.1): 16

Nabû-bēlšunu (<sup>md+</sup>AG-EN-šú-nu)

s. Šāpik-zēri//Adad-šē'a (debtor) KT 1466 (no.4): 3

Nabû-ina-kāri-lūmur (<sup>md+</sup>AG-i-na-ka-a+ri-lu-mur)

slave of Iddinunu/Nabû-nāšir//Mandidi KT 1463 (no.1): 6

Nabû-ittannu (<sup>md+</sup>AG-it-tan-nu)

s. Nergal-aḥ-iddin//Rē'i-sīsī (witness) KT 1465 (no.3): 7

Nabû-nāšir (<sup>md+</sup>AG-na-šir)

f. Iddinunu//Mandidi KT 1463 (no.1): 3

Nabû-šum-iddin (<sup>md+</sup>AG-MU-MU)

s. Nādin//Aḥiyaūtu (scribe) KT 1465 (no.3): 9

Nabû-zēr-līšir (<sup>md+</sup> AG-NUMUN-SI.SÁ)

f. Itti-Šamaš-balātu//Egibi (witness) KT 1463 (no.1): 15

Nādin (<sup>m</sup>*na-din*)

f. Nabû-šum-iddin//Aḫiyaūtu KT 1465 (no.3): 9

Nergal-aḫ-iddin (<sup>md</sup>U.GUR-ŠEŠ-MU)

f. Nabû-ittannu//Rē'i-sīsī KT 1465 (no.3): 7

Nīqūdu (<sup>m</sup>*ni-qu-du*)

s. Aḫḫē-iddin-Marduk (neighbor of pledged house) KT 1463 (no.1): 5

Rē'i-sīsī (<sup>m</sup>SIPA-ANŠE.KUR.RA)

a. Nabû-ittannu/Nergal-aḫ-iddin KT 1465 (no.3): 8

Rīmūt (<sup>m</sup>*ri-mut*)

s. Aplā//Arad-Nergal (witness) KT 1466 (no.4): 12

f. Bēl-iddin KT 1465 (no.3): 3

f. Gūzānu//Arad-Nergal KT 1464 (no.2): 4

Rīmūt-Bēl (<sup>m</sup>*ri-mut*-<sup>d+</sup>EN)

s. Bēl-zēr-ibni//Šammā (creditor) KT 1464 (no.2): 2,10

Sîn-imittu (<sup>md</sup>30-*i-mit-tu*<sub>4</sub>)

a. Bēlšunu/Bēl-aḫḫē-iddin KT 1465 (no.3): 6

Šammā (<sup>m</sup>*šá-am-ma*-')

a. Rīmūt-Bēl/Bēl-zēr-ibni KT 1464 (no.2):

Ša-Nabû-šū (<sup>m</sup>*šá*-<sup>d+</sup>AG-*šu-u*)

f. Šum-ukīn KT 1464 (no.2): 5

Šāpik-zēri (<sup>m</sup>DUB.NUMUN)

f. Nabû-bēlšunu//Adad-šē'a KT 1466 (no.4): 3

Šulā (<sup>m</sup>*šu-la-a*)

s. Bēl-aḫ-iddin//Tunâ (witness) KT 1463 (no.1): 12

f. Nabû-aḫḫē-iddin//Egibi KT 1463 (no.1): 1

Šum-ukīn (<sup>m</sup>MU-GIN)

s. Ša-Nabû-šū (debtor) KT 1464 (no.2): 5

Tunâ (<sup>m</sup>*tu-na-a*)

a. Šulā/Bēl-aḫ-iddin KT 1463 (no.1): 13

Ušur-amāt-Ea (<sup>m</sup>*ú-šur-a-mat*-<sup>d</sup>É.A)

a. Iddin-Nabû/Marduk-bēl-zēri KT 1466 (no.4): 17

Zēriya (<sup>m</sup>NUMUN-*ia*)

f. Gimil-Gula//Itinnu KT 1463 (no.1): 14

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## Chapter 10

# Phrygian Bronzes in the Greek World: Globalization through Cult?

*Maya Vassileva*

### 10.1 Introduction

Gordion, the Phrygian capital city, was a major bronze-producing center in the first millennium BCE Anatolia and has yielded thousands of bronze objects. Several categories of objects became very popular in the Greek world by the seventh century BCE, mainly as votives in the sanctuaries. Phrygian or Anatolian/Oriental phialae and cauldrons found their way to the East and mainland Greek sanctuaries.<sup>1</sup> Fibulae are the most numerous items among Phrygian bronzes found both in Phrygia and in Greece. They were prestigious dress decorations and probably items of aristocratic gift exchange. Bronze belts are the other category of elite decorations that often occurred as votives. This paper will investigate the possible reasons for their popularity in Greek milieu and the features of ‘fashion,’ thus ‘globalization’ suggested by their provenance.

A great number of the Phrygian fibulae were found in the tombs, but also in significant numbers in all levels of the Gordion City Mound, while the belts were exclusively found in burials.

### 10.2 Phrygian Belts

Probably the most exquisite belts are the three ones from Tumulus P, a child’s burial at Gordion (Figure 10.1: Young 1981, TumP 34–36). Five complete or almost complete belts and more fragments of hooks, catch-plates and belt buckles were discovered at the Gordion City Mound (Figure 10.2: a total of 16 inventory numbers, listed by Kohler 1995, 209). Most of them come from a late eighth or early seventh century BCE structure called ‘South Cellar’ (DeVries 2005, 37–40)

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<sup>1</sup>Ephesos: (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 137, Nos. 817–818); Samos: (Jantzen 1972, 54–55, Taf. 50); Assos: (Bischof 2006, 216–219, Nos. 1–9); Lindos: (Blinkenberg 1931, 223, No. 749, Pl. 31); Olympia: (Mallwitz 1999, Taf. 48.6, 51); Perachora: (Payne 1940, 152–155, Pl. 55; Muscarella 1970).

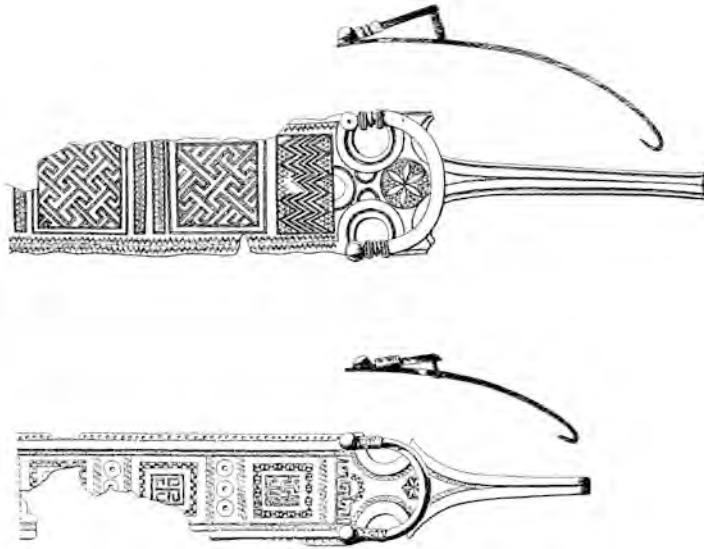


Figure 10.1: Two bronze belts from Tumulus P at Gordion (Young 1981, TumP 35–6, Figs. 10–11)

which possibly contained a special deposit. Fragments of a belt come from one of the Ankara tumuli (Özgük and Akok 1947, Figs. 23, 25–26). Two beautiful silver belts of the same type was discovered in Tumulus D at Bayındır, in ancient Lycia (E. Özgen and I. Özgen 1988, 33, Fig. 48).

These belts consist of solid bronze bands with small holes running along both long sides, probably for sewing them to leather or tissue. A set of parallel incised lines also borders both long sides. Often they run along the two edges of the hook. Sometimes the bronze band is covered with geometric incised design. The belt buckle is of a Phrygian fibula type, covering the base of a long hook. It has no functional meaning, so the fibula itself must have been important. The catch plate is a rectangular open-work piece with a rounded end, usually riveted to the band. The hook is cut out of the same bronze sheet and comes out of two semi-circular cut-outs. Sometimes it is also decorated with meander or guilloche incised patterns. Compass drawn rosette is found at the base of the hook on some items.

Another type of belt, which will not be discussed here, was found in the so-called “Midas Mound” (TumMM), the biggest tumulus containing the richest

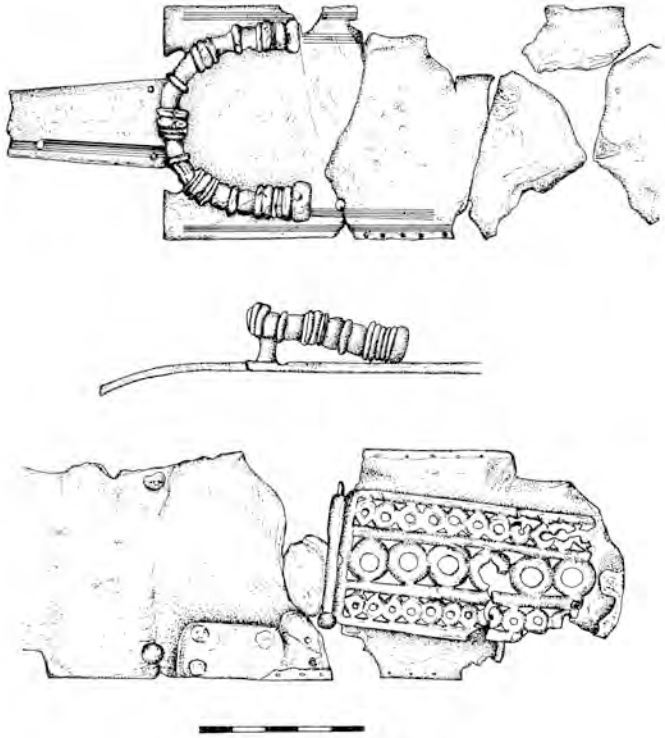


Figure 10.2: Bronze belt from the Gordion City Mound: B 1605, M6C, South cellar. Courtesy The Gordion Project

burial at Gordion. They are composed of open-work rectangular plaques and big studded discs with thick leather backing (Young 1981, TumMM 170–180). A similar belt originates from Tumulus W (Young 1981, TumW 25). Fragments of such a disc were found in Tumulus J, in addition to appliqué designs that might also have been parts of belts (Kohler 1995, 65–6, TumJ 22–9). If so, this would be the only case of a belt associated with a warrior burial at Gordion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>See (Kohler 1995, 57, 66); however, another function of the appliqué is also possible.

### 10.3 Visual Representations of Belts. Parallels

Some analogies of the Phrygian bronze belts, though not very close, can be found in the Near Eastern visual representations. Most of the visual data is provided by the Neo-Assyrian reliefs. Since ninth and eighth centuries BCE a new type of belt has been developed which ends fastened with hooks (Calmeyer 1971, 690). However, some similarities in the rounded shape of the belt ends and the fastening can be observed on some Syrian and Hittite representations: an example is the warrior on the relief of the King's Gate at Hattussa/Boğazköy (Moorey 1967, 84; Seeher 1999, 75–78). The same features can be found later in the Neo-Hittite representations on stone: on a relief from Carchemish, from the “Royal Buttress,” young Kamanis, introduced by his regent Yariris, wears a wide belt ending with a triangular open-work piece, which might be a knitted work as well.<sup>3</sup> A sword is hanging over his belt. It is worth noting that Kamanis is known through his dedicatory inscriptions for the building of Kubaba's temple and setting up her cult statue (Hawkins 2000, KARKAMIŞ A 31 and B 62a). Narrower belts of the same type can be seen on a relief from Zincirly, worn by musicians, probably in a ritual ceremony (Luschan 1902, Taf. LXII; I. Özgen 1982, 57–59). All these Neo-Hittite representations are dated to the late ninth and throughout of the eighth century BCE and defined as being of Assyrianizing style. Other images on Neo-Assyrian reliefs of the eighth century BCE, also show hooks that fit into rings on the opposite end and geometrical design of the plate (Hrouda 1965, 47–48; Taf. 7, 20–23; Calmeyer 1971, 690–691).

Although a genetic relation of these belts to the Phrygian and Ionian ones has been denied (Calmeyer 1971, 691), in view of king Mita's (Midas') political activity in southeastern Anatolia in the late eighth century BCE (Hawkins 1997, 272; Vassileva 2008), some contacts and exchange could possibly be considered. The political involvement of Midas in southeastern Anatolia has also been the explanation of the Phrygian type fibula and a belt with rectangular geometric decoration worn by the Tabalian king Warpalawa (c. 738–709 BCE) on his relief at Ivriz (Muscarella 1967b, 83–84; Boehmer 1973, 150–156).

The Near Eastern belts were part of the warrior's attire, and as such, were also king's attributes in his representations as a warrior. Weapons are extremely rare in Phrygian tombs and we can hardly associate the Phrygian belts with a warrior's costume. We cannot doubt, however, their aristocratic or royal contexts. The very few Phrygian representations of human figure are not very informative about this dress accessory.

<sup>3</sup>See (D. Hogarth 1914, Pl. B.7; Akurgal 1949, 35, Taf XLVIIa; Orthmann 2002, 278); Figure 10.3.





Figure 10.3: The Carchemish relief showing young Kamanis led by his regent Yariris (Hogarth 1914: Pl. B.7)

#### 10.4 Belts and Fibulae Dedicated at Greek Sanctuaries

Besides vessels, cauldrons and phialae, Phrygian belts and fibulae were dedicated in many Greek sanctuaries and temples. Entire belts of Phrygian type, or parts of them, were excavated at many Greek, mostly East Greek, sanctuaries: on Samos, Chios, at Ephesos, Didyma, Old Smyrna and Erythrai.<sup>4</sup> Two complete belts were found in the Artemision at Ephesos in addition to numerous other belt fragments that would have amounted to at least 18 belts (Figure 10.4). They were found under the so-called B and C cult bases. Recent excavations at Miletos revealed a sanctuary of Aphrodite Oikos at Zeytintepe, where fragments of about 40 belts were found (Senff 2003). All of these were votives and often come from poorly stratified contexts. The best dated seem to be those from the Harbor Sanctuary on Chios starting from the early seventh century BCE and continuing to the end of the century (Boardman 1961/1962, 183; Boardman 1967, 217). The bronzes originating from Ephesos and Miletos are dated to the seventh–sixth century BCE (see the above quoted bibliography). Fragments of a bronze band decorated with a metope-like design of bosses recovered at Isthmia, at the sanctuary of Poseidon, might have originated from a belt, as the small sewing holes preserved on some pieces suggest (Raubitschek et al. 1998, Nos. 209–213). They resemble the appliquéés discovered in the stone cap of Tumulus J at Gordion (Kohler 1995, 65–66, TumJ 22–27).



Figure 10.4: Bronze belt from Ephesos (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, Nos.711)

<sup>4</sup>21 pieces: (Jantzen 1972, 49–53, Taf. 44–48; Boehlau and Habich 1996, 124, Abb. 3), Chios (Lamb 1934–1935, 149, Figs. 32–3; Boardman 1961/1962, 179–189; Boardman 1966, 193–194; Boardman 1967, 205–221), at Ephesos (D. G. Hogarth 1908, Plate 19, 1–2; Bammer 1991/1992, 37–43, Abb. 28–33; Bammer and Muss 1996, 78, Abb. 93–94; Klebinder 2001, 111–122; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 93–103, Nos. 710–60), Miletos (Donder 2002, 3, Abb. 4), Didyma (R. Naumann and Tuchelt 1963/1964, 47–48, Taf. 31, 2–4), Old Smyrna (Boardman 1961/1962, Fig. 21b), and Erythrai (Caner 1983, G18, G21, Taf. 79; Akurgal 1993, Fig. 93d).

In mainland Greece belt buckles were found in Delphi and Olympia (Perdrizet 1908, 130, Fig. 485–486; Völling 1998, 243–252). A number of these belts, as well as some of the Phrygian fibulae, dedicated at the sanctuaries are Greek imitations (Donder 2002, 3; Klebinder 2001, 115–117; Klebinder 2002, 78–79; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 103–106).

Phrygian type fibulae in particular, or Phrygian-inspired items, are even more widely spread in the Greek world. They were so popular that an image of such a fibula appeared on a sixth century BCE electrum coin from East Greece, while two among the very few excavated stone moulds for casting such objects originate from Smyrna/Bayraklı (Boardman 1999, 88, Fig. 96; Muscarella 1967a, 49, Fig. 83–84) and Milet (Bilgi 2004, 31; recently one clay mould was found at Kaman Kalehöyük and a stone one at Bayındır, Lycia). Again, the greatest number come from the Ionian sanctuaries: in the Artemision at Ephesos, at Miletos, on Samos, Chios and Larisa.<sup>5</sup> Recent excavations provided numerous Phrygian-type fibulae from the Assos necropolis as well (Bischof 1996, 143–154, Nos. 8–44). Significant numbers of Phrygian fibulae were discovered in mainland Greece and on some of the islands.<sup>6</sup>

Phrygian fibulae with double pins and detachable lock-plates (or shields) were exquisitely manufactured dress accessories. Most of the known examples were found in Tumulus MM at Gordion (Young 1981, MM185–194). The plates that cover the double pins are decorated with studs, incised lines or cut-outs. Some of the designs on the plates resemble the patterns on the belts, either on the bronze band or on the catch-plate. It is just this kind of double-pin fibula that Warpalawa wears on the Ivriz relief (with studs on the arc: XII.9 type: (Caner 1983, Taf. 67, No. 1170) confirming its high-status value, probably as a king's diplomatic gift. Such fibulae are only rarely found in Greek sanctuaries: one example from the Heraion on Samos (Jantzen 1972, 48–49, No. 1513; Ebbinghaus 2006, 208, Abb. 6), one lock-plate from the Artemision at Ephesos (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 66–67,

<sup>5</sup>Around a hundred pieces: (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, Nos. 106–218), at Miletos (Donder 2002, 3–4, again around a hundred fibulae), on Samos (Jantzen 1972, 49–49, Taf. 44), Chios (Boardman 1967, Fig. 138), and Larisa (Boehlau and Schefold 1942, Taf. 10.25).

<sup>6</sup>For Phrygian fibulae found in the Greek world see (Muscarella 1967a, 59–63). Among the numerous bronzes dedicated at Olympia there is a variety of Phrygian fibulae (Philipp 1981, Nos. 1115–1125). They were also found at Delphi (Perdrizet 1908, 78, Fig. 270), Pherai (Kilian 1975, 151–154, Nos. 1725–1730), at Tegea, Arcadia (Voyatzis 1990, 213–214, B256), at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta (Dawkins 1929, 198–99, Pl.LXXXIII,c, LXXXIV, b, d, f, g), in the Argive Heraion (Waldstein 1905, 247–48, Pl. 87), at Perachora (Payne 1940, Pl. 17.10, 12, 19; Pl. 73.21, 24, 27), at Isthmia (Raubitschek et al. 1998, 53, No. 200, Pl. 36) as well as on Rhodes (Blinkenberg 1931, 88–89, Nos. 110–121; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, Nos. 1619–1626A.B.; 1632–1636A; 1674–1677; 1696), Aegina (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, Nos. 1651–1656, 1689), Lesbos (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, Nos. 1637–1640), Paros (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, Nos. 1629, 1649–1650), Thassos (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, No.1678) and Samothrace (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, Nos. 1657).

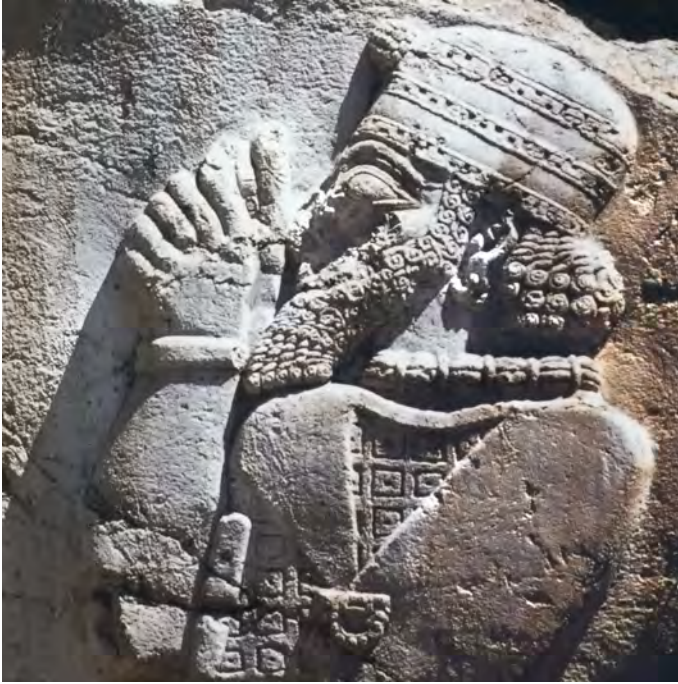


Figure 10.5: Detail from the Ivriz relief of Tabalian King Warpalawa

No. 215, Taf. 16 and one more peculiar Ionian innovation: 70, No. 218), and one from Thassos (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, 128, No. 1678, Taf. 53; Figs. 5, 6 and 7). On the Samos piece traces of silver foil are detectable on the plate. All three of them are considered Phrygian imports (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 67). Thus, they would have been among the elite votives in the sanctuaries.

These highly decorative dress accessories probably gave rise to Greek imitations of fibulae with fixed plates (cast together with the arc or riveted to it); sometimes two crossing bars within the bow, or a second plate/bar, parallel to that connecting both ends of the bow appear.<sup>7</sup> These plates/bars are often studded. Such fibulae were also used as belt-buckles for Phrygian-inspired belts produced in Greek workshops.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Samos: (Jantzen 1972, No. 473); Ephesos: (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 48, No. 108); Troad: (Caner 1983, No.1174); Olympia: (Philipp 1981, No. 1109–1110).

<sup>8</sup>See the one at Delphi, for example: (Perdrizet 1908, 130, Fig. 486).

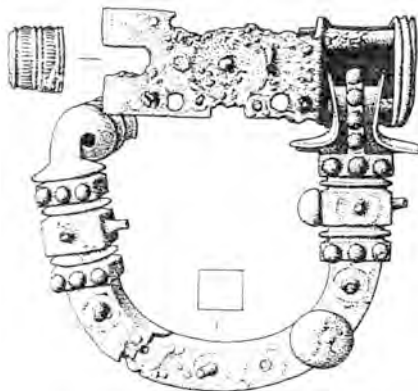


Figure 10.6: Double-pin fibula from Tumulus MM (Gordion)  
(Caner 1983, No. 1070)

Following the development of the Phrygian belts, one can conclude that the Greeks accepted some of the later, more advanced shapes (Klebinder 2001, 117; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 103–105). Lion's heads as finials of the fibula-type belt buckle look like an Ionian innovation, unknown in Phrygia.<sup>9</sup> A lion's head is placed within the fibula bow on three gold examples from the Ephesian Artemision, and a plastic rosette on a third one (Bammer and Muss 1996, 82–83, Abb. 99–100; Seipel 2008, 144–145, Nos. 59–60). In general, more Phrygian-type fibulae and belts of precious metals are found outside Phrygia, in the Greek world.

The peak of dedications of Phrygian belts and fibulae was in the seventh century BCE. They lasted till mid-sixth century BCE, or, in some cases until the end of that century. Not surprisingly, the earliest types of fibulae dedicated in Greek sanctuaries come from Samos and from Lindos on Rhodes.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the Greek imitations from the Phrygian imports. Often the Greek production is quite obvious, and sometimes only a general Phrygian inspiration can be detected. Recently, it has been stated that only few genuine Phrygian imports can be found among the bronzes at Ephesos and Miletos (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 40, 105–6). Still, why then such a production of imitations?

<sup>9</sup>See (R. Naumann and Tuchelt 1963/1964, 47, Taf. 31, 2–4; Boardman 1966, 193, Pl. 64; Boardman 1967, 217, No. 293; Caner 1983, 198, G21; Klebinder 2002, 79; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 100, Nos. 711.1, 730, 731).

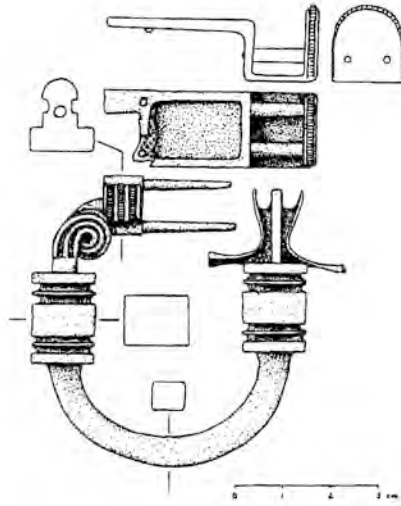


Figure 10.7: Double-pin fibula from Samos (Ebbinghaus 2006, Abb. 6)

It is generally agreed that the east Greek workshops were responsible for the spread of most of the Phrygian objects, genuine or imitations, in the Greek mainland. Some of the Ionian sanctuaries, like Samos, reveal impressive votive collections of Near Eastern and Egyptian objects (Ebbinghaus 2006). Delphi and Olympia were pan-Hellenic and international sanctuaries where votives of various origins occurred. Literary evidence documented the votive practice of foreign kings and tyrants, most famous of whom were the Phrygian Midas and the Lydian Croesus (Hdt. 1.14). Croesus dedicated precious objects at Delphi, at Thebes in Beotia, in the sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios in Ephesos, to Athena Pronaia, to Amphiaraios, as well as at Miletos (Hdt. 1.14; 92). Among other objects, belts and fibulae were royal or aristocratic gifts in the East Greek sanctuaries. East Greek nobles, tyrants in first place, were in their turn probably responsible for the distribution of “exotic” eastern votives further west in mainland Greek sanctuaries. However, the Phrygian ‘deposits’ can hardly be assigned to the mere aspiration to exotic elite items or occasional foreign visitors of the sanctuaries. The significant number of Phrygian votives suggests certain pattern of dedications (Ebbinghaus 2006, 207).

### 10.5 Purpose and Symbolism

Most of the Phrygian belts and the fibulae of East Greek provenance were found in sanctuaries of goddesses: that of Artemis in Ephesos, a goddess was worshipped at the Harbour Sanctuary on Chios (Boardman 1961/1962; Osborne 2004, 5), Hera in Samos (Boardman 1961/1962, 189), Aphrodite at Zeytintepe, Miletos (Donder 2002, 3; Senff 2003), a goddess at Old Smyrna. Apollo was worshipped together with his twin sister Artemis at Didyma (Boardman 1961/1962, 189; Boardman 1966, 194); there is an epigraphic evidence for a sanctuary of Artemis (Günter 1988, 316). Similar distribution can be observed in the rest of the Greek world. The belt fragment from Delphi originates from the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia in Marmaria, although a temple of Artemis is also a possibility (Völling 1998, 250; Diod. 22.9.5). The others come from the sanctuaries of Aenodia at Pherai (Kilian 1975, 151), of Athena Alea at Tegea (Voyatzis 1990), of Artemis Orthia at Sparta (Dawkins 1929, 399–406), from the Argive Heraion (Waldstein 1905), of Hera Limenia and Akraia at Perachora (Payne 1940). On Rhodes Phrygian fibulae were found at three sites, all of them sanctuaries of Athena: Lindos, Yalissos and Kamiros. They also come from the sanctuaries of Aphaia at Aegina and Artemis on Thassos (see the respective catalogue entries in Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978). However, mainland Greece gives more examples of Phrygian bronze objects dedicated in temples of male deities compared to western Anatolia. According to their find places the belt buckles and fibulae in Olympia seem to be associated rather with Zeus than with Hera (Philipp 1981, 307–314; Völling 1998, 245–246). It was the sanctuary of Poseidon where Phrygian-type belts and fibulae were discovered (Raubitschek et al. 1998, XXXIII–IV). On Lesbos they come from graves, on Paros—from the Delion, and on Samothrace—from the ‘Hall of Votive Gifts.’<sup>10</sup>

It is known from literary sources and epigraphic data that the Greek women dedicated their belts to Hera or Artemis before marriage, or as an offering for a successful childbirth.<sup>11</sup> It has been noted that Artemis received the most numerous dedications of clothes according to the written evidence (Günter 1988, 233–237). It has been supposed that not only the Phrygian belts, but the entire dresses or garments were dedicated at the Greek sanctuaries (Jantzen 1972, 53; Boehmer 1973). As early as the epics, goddesses and immortal women wore belts whose sexual meaning has long been acknowledged (see Circe; Bennett 1997, 125, 157–159). However, this might not be the case with the Phrygian belts.

The evidence from the Phrygian burials suggests that the belts were mostly associated with men. Where anthropological analysis is possible, it was male

<sup>10</sup> See the respective catalogue entries in (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978).

<sup>11</sup> See (Rouse 1902, 249; Günter 1988, 233; Losfeld 1991, 313, 324–325).

individuals that had been buried with belts.<sup>12</sup> A female burial is suspected in Tumulus D at Bayındır, Lycia, where the two silver belts were deposited (Mellink 1990, 140), but the excavations are not yet fully published. A young woman was buried with as much as 14 Phrygian-type fibulae in Assos, c. 600 BCE (Bischof 1996, 144). Together with the fibulae, they were special grave offerings of great value and not only adornment of the deceased. The bronze belts from the Gordion citadel are the only ones that do not come from burials (see above). The concentration of seven belts in one construction, the so-called “South Cellar”, could hardly be a coincidence. Bearing in mind the type of the City Mound itself, a royal citadel, I would assume a special ritual deposit (or re-deposit) for the belts from this context; those in the pits could have possibly had a similar fate. Maybe the situation in the “South Cellar” comes closer to that at the Greek sanctuaries.

Similarities between the geometric decorative designs on some of the belts, the patterns on the Phrygian rock-cut façades and on wooden inlaid furniture from the Gordion tombs have long been discussed (Simpson 1988, 34–35; Simpson 1998, 636; Vassileva 2001, 59–60). They are considered to have been related to the symbolism of Kybele’s cult and the goddess’ role in Phrygian burial custom has been acknowledged (Buluç 1988, 22; Roller 1999, 102, 104, 111–112). The rosette that appears on the belts, on the rock-cut façades and the wooden stands is also considered to be a goddess’ attribute/symbol.<sup>13</sup>

I would suggest that the bronze belts and the fibulae as shorthand for belts, were goddess’ attributes and were worn by the dead kings/aristocrats, put as grave offerings or dedicated as a mark of a special relation to the Mother goddess and her cult. Could they possibly be marks of initiation and their different number—a sign for different stages of initiation? As we know from the Greek literary sources, king Midas was a priest (or considered the son) of the Great Mother-Goddess and founder of her mystery rites.<sup>14</sup> The literary evidence for his dedicating his throne in Delphi has often been quoted, as well as the text about Croesus dedicating his wife’s belts at Delphi (Hdt. 1.14; 51). Some scholars even suppose that Midas made dedications in other Greek sanctuaries where Phrygian objects were found.<sup>15</sup>

The choice of Phrygian objects, imports or imitations, strongly suggest a relation with a goddess of rather Anatolian nature. This is more obvious in the case of belts and fibulae, but other objects, like phialae, cauldrons, figurines,

<sup>12</sup>In TumMM, W, J and most probably in P and S at Gordion: (Young 1981, 101, 196–197; Kohler 1995, 57, 95).

<sup>13</sup>Of Ishtar, Kubaba, and of Kybele: (Simpson 1998, 636–638).

<sup>14</sup>Plut. Caes. 9.3; Hygin. *Fab.* 191.1; 274.6; Arnob. *Adv. Nat.* 2.73; Clem *Protr.* 2.13. 3; Ps.-Hesiod fr. 251 (47) Rzach (Vassileva 1997, 16–18; Vassileva 2005, 82–85).

<sup>15</sup>See (Boehmer 1973, 166; Völling 1998, 251–252; Prayon 2004, 617); on the relation of Midas and the Phrygians with the Greek world: (Muscarella 1989).



etc. might as well be considered in the same context. Artemis is the best Greek ‘translation’ of the Anatolian Great Goddess. Scholars suggest a worship of an indigenous female deity in earlier times with whom Artemis was later identified at Ephesos (Morris 2001b, 2001a; Işık 2008, 55–56). The features of the female statuettes of precious metals and ivory found in the Artemision suggest similarities and connection with the Phrygian cult of Kybele.<sup>16</sup> The building of the monumental marble temple of Artemis there is associated with the Lydian king Croesus (Bammer and Muss 1996, 46; Bammer 2005, 180). Similarly to Phrygia and the Neo-Hittite kingdoms Lydian kings were intimately involved with the cult of the Goddess (most recently Munn 2006). In addition, there is both literary and archaeological evidence for the worship of Demeter and of celebration of Thesmophoria at Ephesos (Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 18).



Figure 10.8: Two gold fibulae from the Artemision at Ephesos (Bammer and Muss 1996, 82, Abb. 99, and Muss 2008, 196, Abb. 168)

In mainland Greece it seems that most of the Phrygian objects occur at sanctuaries of Hera and Athena, besides those of Artemis. It is worth noting that usually these were cults of goddesses with special local epithets. It has long been noted that in later inscriptions Artemis Orthia at Sparta was mentioned only by her epithet (Dawkins 1929, 401–402). The meaning of Orthia, “upright, straight,” referring to cult practices and the goddess’ function, has also provoked discussion (Dawkins 1929, 403–404). A hint could possibly be provided by the lead male ithyphallic figurines found at the sanctuary. A parallel with Samothrace could be suggested, where a Phrygian fibula was also found. The epithet Akraia of

<sup>16</sup>See (Işık 2001, 97–98; Işık 2008, 39–40; Roller 1999, 104–105; Muss 2008, 104–105).

Hera at Perachora could possibly imply worship at a higher (mountainous) place. Rock-cut sanctuaries of Phrygian affinity are known in the vicinity of most of the Ionian sanctuaries discussed.<sup>17</sup> The Ionian somewhat eclectic combination of lion's heads and rosettes on the gold fibulae from the Artemision betray their association with the Phrygian Mother Goddess (Figure 10.8).

## 10.6 Conclusions

The above observations show that belts and fibulae, objects of special value for the Phrygian kings and aristocrats, for noble male personages, were dedicated in Greek sanctuaries, mainly of Goddesses. This practice had nothing to do with the Greek women dedicating their belts at marriage or successful childbirth. But these objects were important in the cult of the Phrygian Mother-Goddess and accompanied Phrygian royalty and nobles in their graves. Probably they occurred as royal or aristocratic gifts and offerings first in the Ionian and East Greek sanctuaries of Artemis, Hera and Athena to be further spread in mainland Greece. The majority of objects in mainland sanctuaries were East Greek imitations. Their original form and meaning became gradually elusive and thus Phrygian fibulae appeared in sanctuaries of male deities. It was probably Phrygian and Ionian nobles that were responsible for the initial spread of these votives further west. The peak of this “Phrygian fashion” was from the seventh until mid-sixth century BCE. Greeks knew certainly about Phrygian Kybele by the sixth century BCE and her cult was officially accepted in Athens in the fifth century BCE (Roller 1999, 162–169; Munn 2006). They were not just fascinated by exotic foreign accessories, but borrowed some major traits of Phrygian cult symbolism, thus producing “hybrid” results in cult practices. Phrygian objects and their imitations in Greek sanctuaries betray the Greek way of adaptation of an old Anatolian/Phrygian cult of the Great Goddess. The Greek adaptation and “hybridization” included transfer of metal wealth from graves to sanctuaries and sometimes change of gender positions: female versus male divinities, and male versus female burials. Could we speak about a ‘globalization through cult’ in the seventh century BCE Greek world?

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<sup>17</sup>At Ephesos (at Panayırdağ and Bülbüldağ: (F. Naumann 1983, 214–216; Soykal-Alanyalı 2004; Bammer and Muss 2006), at Phocaea (Öyzigit and Erdogan 2000, 16–23), on Chios (Rubensohn and Watzinger 1928; Boardman 1959, 195–196).

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## Chapter 11

### Power and Ritual in the Achaemenian Royalty

*Antonio Panaino*

The Achaemenian power system developed a number of complex and elaborated ritual patterns, which contributed to emphasize the role of public ceremonies as a means of social control and ideological fascination. The same construction of Persepolis, with its indisputable ceremonial functions, shows the importance given to royalty and its legitimization, which can only in part be imagined in the light of the splendid reliefs there still preserved. The capacity to assimilate Mesopotamian royal language with many Assyrian, Babylonian, Elamite and Egyptian patterns and symbols demonstrates that such a new dynasty was not simply copying its forerunners but that it was able to produce a kind of synthesis, although an unpredictable melange, which at least in the East of the Mediterranean area, offered some support to the later phenomenon of Hellenistic culture.

Unfortunately, the ceremonial aspects which distinguished the external (that is, public) and internal (that is, private) life of the Achaemenian family have raised a lot of questions and sometimes produced a number of false problems, obscuring many other extraordinary points. In particular, the special position attributed to the king has been the controversial object of discussions about his presumed divinization, which actually never occurred, producing additional misunderstandings about the Sassanian period.

In the limits of this short contribution, I would like only to focus on some aspects of the superior dimension of kingship which have nothing to do with a process of divinization, but which could be simplistically associated with such a kind of phenomenon. For this reason, I will not underline well known facts, as for instance, that the king is never called *baga-*, that his image has never been represented with horns, or that his name in the Babylonian version of the Achaemenian inscriptions was neither written with the Akkadian determinative for the gods [*ilu*] which, however, was regularly used in the case of the Iranian gods.

In addition, the Babylonian origin of the *proskynesis* and the Avestan tradition concerning the importance of the ancestors' souls, to which we will come back, do not involve the same phenomena emerging in the Hellenistic context, although their presence can raise some improper comparisons and inferences.

Contrariwise, we may note that, according to the Plutarch's *Life of Themistokles*, XXVIII, 3, Artabanos declared that his king was "like an image of god" (ὡς εἰκόνα θεοῦ),<sup>1</sup> to whom a special devotion (the *proskynesis*, and so forth) was due.<sup>2</sup> The image of the king mirrors that of god, but such a statement does not mean that he was a god. All the Achaemenian documents, in fact, underline the role of the king as the person chosen by Ahuramazdā; it is reasonable to assume that the king was considered as a living image of a superior power, his representative on the earth. Similarity, thus, is not identity. We can add that Huff (2008, 39) recently noted that, for instance, in the Sassanian framework of Firuzabad, "king and god stand on equal footing and only by his gesture of respectful salute does the king acknowledge the superiority of the god." But Huff has also insisted on the comparison with the Achaemenian context, where the difference between these two levels was much stronger, a fact that clearly denies any process of royal divinization in early Persia. At the end of the Sassanian period, under Xusraw II, the king actually became the main figure in the scene, although he was not divine at all. It is more probable that Sassanian kings also actually never presumed to be divine, but that their image was an earthly *speculum divinitatis* as it was also for the Achaemenians; simply they increased the *kosmokratic* function of the king as it happened in the Byzantine context.

Another apparently negative witness, which could be used in favor of the royal divinization, is attested in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (IV, 1, 24); here Cyaxares with reference to Cyrus says that "he himself would never leave the noblest and best of men, and what was more than all, a man descended from gods" (οὐκ ἀπολεμείτο ἀνδρός καλλίστου καὶ ἀρίστου, καὶ τὸ μέγιστου, ἀπὸ θεῶν γεγονότος). It is to be noted that this sentence is only an homage to the generosity of Cyrus and it cannot be considered *per se* as consistent evidence of his divinization, in particular if we consider that the present speech was delivered when Cyrus was not yet king. I do not think we can take literally (or better politically and institutionally) a formula like ἀπὸ θεῶν γεγονότος as an official mark of Persian royalty.

I would also like to mention that the Achaemenian king as well as the Sassanian one was initiated into the "secrets" or "mysteries" of sacred royalty<sup>3</sup> and, for this reasons, he also endorsed the living image of the divine power. If in Sassanian times, the *šāh* became the centre of a complex court's ritual, which made of him a *kosmokrator*, we may suppose that all the rituals taking place within the framework of Persepolis gave to the king the same function; in particular, they

<sup>1</sup> See (Panaino 2003, 269; Panaino 2007, 123 with detailed bibliography).

<sup>2</sup> And this could explain, according to (Calmeyer 1981, 58), the representation on the winged sun of a man with a horned "polos," which perhaps represents the deceased king.

<sup>3</sup> According to Agathias (*Historiae*, II, 26, 2–3) the king Ardaxšīr was initiated to religious mysteries.



underlined his centrality in the empire. Furthermore, we cannot forget the importance attributed to the ritual of royal initiation (connected with the investiture and the legitimacy of the new king, as mentioned by Plutarch, *Life of Artaxerxes*, III, 1–2), a fundamental ceremony which was regularly organized in Pasargadae. This is what Plutarch wrote with reference to Artaxerxes II, son of Darius II: “A little while after the death of Darius, the new king made an expedition to Pasargadae, that he might receive the royal initiation at the hands of the Persian priests. Here there is a sanctuary of a warlike goddess whom one might conjecture to be Athena (2). Into this sanctuary the candidate for initiation must pass, and after laying aside his own proper robe, must put on that which Cyrus the Elder used to wear before he became king; then, he must eat of a cake of figs, chew some turpentine-wood, and drink a cup of sour milk. Whatever else is done besides this is unknown to outsiders.”

Such initiatory access to royalty does not involve any kind of divinisation, but it represents an esoteric tradition based on the exaltation of the founder of the empire, Cyrus, with whom the new king probably entered in spiritual contact assuming his robe. But with regard to this particular subject I would like to draw attention to the fact that Cyrus’ robe was what he used to wear *before* he became king, and not what he was wearing as full king; this symbolically means that the new king, at his first step, assumed some external qualities that made Cyrus able to ascend the throne; in other words, the first part of the ritual is a preparation of the new king, and not yet his royal transformation. Once robed, Cyrus had to eat and drink and, only then, must he pass a series of rituals that were kept secret for uninitiated. We must remark that this rituals probably took place in a temple dedicated to Anāhitā, if, as is probable, the reference to Athena has to be interpreted this way; this piece of news is of relevant importance, since Anāhitā doubtless has been a goddess strongly linked with various Iranian royal families from the Achaemenians till the Sassanians; also among the Kušānas we can find the same tradition regarding such a goddess. The fact that the royal initiation took place in the sacred space of Anāhitā’s temple does not happen by chance.<sup>4</sup>

Before concluding this short contribution, I would like to mention the important attempt offered by Taylor (1931, 247–255) to emphasize the divinity of the Achaemenian king; although an old work and some of its results cannot be now accepted, it still deserves to be considered. Presently, we can maintain the focus attributed to the dynastic cults (for instance of Cyrus the Great), in particular in the case of the dead king seen as an *artāvan-* and with regard to the worship to be offered to his soul (probably his *frauuašī*), as well as to the importance of the royal person (dead or alive) in official ceremonies. As I have already noted in other contributions (Panaino 2009b; Panaino 2009c), Taylor (1927) assumed in

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<sup>4</sup>See (Panaino 2009b).

particular that the king's δαίμων should correspond to the Av. *frauuāši*, a solution that was strongly criticized by Tarn (1928, 207–210). But, in this case, we must remark that Taylor's basic idea concerning the existence of a kind of sacrifice dedicated to the soul of the Achaemenian living king (a fact denied by Tarn), may be sound; for instance, the worship of the *uruuan-* and of the *frauuāši* belonging to living beings or to dead ones (and sometimes also to persons who are not yet born) is well known in Avestan sources.<sup>5</sup> Contrariwise, the conclusions suggested by Taylor that the offerings to the δαίμων corresponded to a *divine* cult of the Persian king do not take into consideration the negative evidence that every person can offer a sacrifice in favor of his own soul or to that of any living or dead person. For instance, sacrifices in honor of ancestors are well attested also in the framework of the great inscription of Šābuhr (ŠKZ); in this framework, the ritual was offered to kings and their relatives, but also to minor persons. The same tradition is confirmed with reference to the cults dedicated to the soul of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae. In fact, a short passage of Arrian's the *Anabasis* (VI, 29, 7), originally belonging to a lost work by Aristobulos of Cassandrea, mentions the office performed by the Magi in honor and memory of Cyrus the Great: a sheep a day, a fixed amount of wheat and wine, and a horse each month. Such a triad is not isolated, but it appears also in Elamite tablets of Persepolis, and corresponds to the same pattern later attested in the sacrifices that Šābuhr I ordered (ŠKZ) to prepare (one lamb and one and a half *modius* of bread, four *pās* of wine) in favor and in memory of his own soul, of those of his relatives and ancestors, but also of his own and their friends and officers.<sup>6</sup> What is also very interesting concerns the esoteric potential dimension of this sacrifice; in fact, in the so-called vision of the high priest Kirdīr, which presents some esoteric aspects, he saw “bread and meat and wine” in presence of the golden throne and of God Wahrām. We can probably have an idea of how the Mazdean clergy symbolically interpreted the result of the sacrificial offerings, in particular those *pad ruwān*. The mention of such a triad in presence of the golden throne and of God Wahrām appears to be a kind of celestial “reification” of the sacrifice, the new food of the paradise. What men will offer to the gods and *pad ruwān* in life but also afterlife (by means of their own descendents) will be found again in paradise and distributed in happiness.<sup>7</sup> The consistence of this simple but seminal idea, which probably inspired also those who ordered the ritual in memory of Cyrus the Great, seems to be confirmed by some additional Greek sources mentioning the practice of honoring the king's δαίμων at banquets (Taylor 1927, 54–55). Theopompus, in his *Philippica* quoted

<sup>5</sup>See (Panaino 2004, 66–75).

<sup>6</sup>See in particular (Panaino 2009a).

<sup>7</sup>As Boyce (1968, 270) underlined, many modern Zoroastrian rituals “are accompanied by offerings of food and drink, which are afterwards partaken of by the living in communion with the dead, the soul being invited back to join its kinsmen and friends, not in grief but in companionable happiness.”

by Athenaeus (VI, 60), noted that the Persians, every day [καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν], prepared a separate table for the δαίμων of the king (Taylor 1927, 55).<sup>8</sup> As I underlined before, Taylor's connection (1927, 54) of this homage to the δαίμων of the *living* king with the daily offerings to Cyrus mentioned by Arrian seems to be very seminal, although her general conclusions about the Achaemenian kingship cannot be accepted. In any case, the mention of banquets in honor of the royal δαίμων offers a direct connection between food and spirit; a daily terrestrial banquet celebrates the incorporeal being of the king. I cannot say that this custom was (*ante litteram*) a kind of dinner or of supper *pad ruwān*, but it is clear that good food and a nice table opened the door of the “paradise” (in every possible meaning) to the king (but also to his relatives and *obviously* “obedient” servants).

Then, it would be a cultural mirage to explain all these offerings as an example of divinization in a strict Hellenistic sense.

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<sup>8</sup>The frequency of references to a daily ceremony must be carefully considered.



## Chapter 12

# Religious Ontology and Taxonomic Structures in Indo-Iranian Oral Poetry

*Velizar Sadovski*

### 12.1 Cataloguing the Universe – (Re-)creating the Universe: Arrangement of Conceptual Lists and Their Items in Indo-Iranian Ritual/Magic Poetry

0. Since the beginning of the last century, researchers of oral literature and religious studies have been discussing the connection between *sacred words* and *sacred rites* in ancient cultures—between *speech* and *performance* in religious and magic ritual. One of the pertinent subjects in this regard was and is the literary genre of *catalogues* and *lists* in sacred poetry,<sup>1</sup> in prayer and cult. In fact, both speech acts and ritual actions share a common feature: If priests and poets systematize the universe in the form of extensive lists, they are believed to exercise magical influence on it. By *cataloguing* the universe, worshippers try to find an underlying matrix system—but also to *re-shape* and *re-create* it magically over and over again. That is why the *logic* of arrangement of conceptual *catalogues* and their items in Indo-Iranian ritual poetry can shed light on the religious ontology and the systems of values and priorities of the worshippers and societies concerned.

0.1. The interest in this subject started in Near Eastern studies, due to the abundance of lists and catalogues in Sumerian, Akkadian and Hebrew sources: In the 1930s, Wolfram von Soden apostrophized such forms in Semitic as ‘list scholarship,’ *Listenwissenschaft*<sup>2</sup>—not without a (negatively) judgmental connotation: He claimed that while Old Semitic poetry and science consisted mainly in lists, (Aryan,) Indo-European literature was much more ‘sophisticated’ in its expressive forms and devices. But this strong opinion completely ignored the fact that

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<sup>1</sup>For a characterization of lists of divine names as a (cross-cultural) form of religious poetry, see (Sadovski 2007, esp. 38–47; Panaino 2002, 15–24, 107ff.).

<sup>2</sup>See (W. von Soden 1936, 555ff.); for the analysis of the (philological and extra-philological) background of his theses, see (Veldhuis 1997, 6f., 137–139); on the assessment of Mesopotamian catalogues from an epistemological perspective, cf. also (Oppenheim 1977, 248; Oppenheim 1978, 634ff. Larsen 1987, esp. 210, 218).

precisely *Indo-Iranian* ‘ritual literature’ operates to a large extent with *list forms* as basic structural units. This is valid not only for analytic, scholarly texts (Sūtras etc.) but especially for ritual poetry: Rough empirical statistics concerning Old Indian and Old Iranian corpora show that various types of lists and catalogues form e.g. about 25% of the contents of the Atharvaveda (Śaunaka and Paippalāda versions), and up to 30% of the Avesta—proportions that speak for themselves.

**0.2.** Comparative and contrastive studies of the literary genre of catalogues increased in the last decades, after the discovery of new materials in Egyptian and Ancient Mesopotamian but also in Indo-European contexts<sup>3</sup> as well as on the border between various traditions.<sup>4</sup> Authors like Jack Goody developed entire ‘theories of lists’;<sup>5</sup> lists of objects in decorative art<sup>6</sup> have been compared to lists in literature<sup>7</sup> (scriptural and oral!). After multiple discussions during the *Melammu* conference in Sofia (2008), a number of research projects gave rise to an interdisciplinary forum on multilingualism, *linguae francae* and the history of knowledge in different linguistic and chronological contexts—the *Multilingualism Research Group*, which culminated in a series of annual meetings that have been taking place in recent years and have regularly included workshops on problems of classification and systematization of knowledge (among others, in the form of lists and catalogues): The research group unites partners from the University of Oslo (Jens E. Braarvig), the TOPOI Cluster at the *Freie Univer-*

<sup>3</sup>The connection between representation of knowledge in forms of catalogues and mnemonical/pedagogical practice in ancient Mesopotamia has been investigated by Niek Veldhuis in a series of articles (e.g. Veldhuis 1999; 2006a; 2006b) and a special monograph (*idem* 1997; cf. also Veldhuis 2004); on the implications of this text genre for hermeneutics and historiography of knowledge see (Kühlmann 1973) and recently (Selz 2007, 2011).

<sup>4</sup>On lists in Ancient Greek and Graeco-Egyptian magic see Richard Gordon’s contributions (Gordon 2000, 250–263), on archaic and classical lists, as well as *ibid.* (263–275), on cross-culturally influenced Hellenistic lists; cf. also (Gordon 2002); for a metanalytical point of view on Ancient Indian lists in grammar and ritual and their Buddhist correspondents in the plurilingual conditions of Indian, Central Asia and Chinese Turkestan see (Braarvig et al. forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup>(Goody 1977, esp. 74–111), modified in (Goody 1986; 1987) as well as, generally, (Gordon 2000, 244f., 250), and (Braarvig 2000, with lit.), on the heuristic value of Goody’s ‘Grand Dichotomy’ concept.

<sup>6</sup>See recently (Eco 2009). One has to recall that this semiotic monograph on lists was intent to accompany—but, in a certain sense, has itself been accompanied by—a concomitant exposition of classical and modern pictures representing ‘catalogues’ of various spheres of life—styled by the Italian scholar at the Musée du Louvre as a kind of super-list which, moreover, went hand in hand with its own analytical meta-list in a kind of transcendental, ultra-Goedelian (or proto-Münchhausen-ian?) attempt of a system to find a meta-language about itself.

<sup>7</sup>See (Spufford 1989). From the flood of works on catalogues in classical works of oral poetry like the ones by Homer and Hesiod, I shall quote here only (Deichgräber 1965) and (West 1985), each one emblematic for the research accents of its period, characterized by high-level intrinsic comparison and giving certain extrinsic, comparative perspectives—but almost completely lacking contrastive interest in typological parallels in non-‘Classical’ (in the [Indo-]Euro-centric sense of this term) languages and literatures.

sität and the *Max-Planck-Gesellschaft* in Berlin (Florentina Badalanova Geller, Markham J. Geller), the University of Bologna (Antonio Panaino), of the *Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität* of Munich (Olav Hackstein, Peter-Arnold Mumm), the DARIOSH Project at *L'Orientale* University of Naples (Adriano Rossi) and the University of Viterbo (Ela Filippone), *La Sapienza* University of Rome (Maria Carmela Benvenuto, Flavia Pompeo), the University of Verona (Paola Cotticelli), the University of Vienna (Gebhard Selz and his team, in communication with the European project group *Classifiers*), and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (V. Sadovski). Several thematic conferences and panels on the role of classification in the history of knowledge took place in Athens,<sup>8</sup> Vienna (2009,<sup>9</sup> 2010,<sup>10</sup> 2011<sup>11</sup>), Berlin (2010,<sup>12</sup> 2011<sup>13</sup>), Marburg,<sup>14</sup> and Münster,<sup>15</sup> a seminar on multi-

<sup>8</sup>*Multilingualism, Linguae Francae, and the Global History of Religious and Scientific Concepts*. An international conference, Norwegian Institute at Athens, April 2–5, 2009, convenors: Jens E. Braarvig and Malcolm Hyman†.

<sup>9</sup>*Classification as a Hermeneutic Tool*. A Workshop at the Oriental Institute, Vienna University, November 2, 2009, convenor: Gebhard Selz. Cf. [http://www.univie.ac.at/orges/hp/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Classification\\_plakat.pdf](http://www.univie.ac.at/orges/hp/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Classification_plakat.pdf) (accessed June 10, 2014). See also (Selz forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup>*Multilingual Lists, Catalogues, and Classification Systems*. A workshop within the Interdisciplinary Conference *Multilingualism in Central Asia, Near and Middle East from Antiquity to Early Modern Times*, organized by the Institute of Iranian Studies and the International Relations Department of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, March 1–3, 2010, convenors: Bernhard Plunger, Velizar Sadovski, Florian Schwarz. Cf. [http://www.oew.ac.at/iran/german/konferenz\\_multilingualism.html](http://www.oew.ac.at/iran/german/konferenz_multilingualism.html) (accessed June 10, 2014).

<sup>11</sup>*Lists, Catalogues, and Classification Systems from Comparative and Historical Point of View*. A workshop of the Multilingualism Research Group, held in the framework of the Interdisciplinary Conference *Multilingualism and History of Knowledge in Asia from Antiquity till Early Modern Times*, Vienna, November 3–5, 2011, organized by the Institute of Iranian Studies and the International Relations Department of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, November 3–5, 2011; convenors like in Fn. 10.

<sup>12</sup>*Crossing Boundaries: Multilingualism, Lingua Franca and Lingua Sacra*, TOPOI conference, Berlin, November 8–10, 2010, convenor: Markham J. Geller. Cf. <http://www.topoi.org/event/crossing-boundaries-multilingualism-lingua-franca-and-lingua-sacra/> (accessed June 10, 2014).

<sup>13</sup>Problems of lists in magical and medical texts have been discussed in a series of papers on the TOPOI Conference *Knowledge to Die For: Transmission of Prohibited and Esoteric Knowledge through Space and Time*, Berlin, May 2–4, 2011, convenor: Florentina Badalanova Geller. Cf. <http://www.topoi.org/event/knowledge-to-die-for-transmission-of-prohibited-and-esoteric-knowledge-through-space-and-time/> (accessed June 10, 2014); in preparation is a joint publication of Geller, Badalanova Geller, and Sadovski for the materials discussed in the framework of the two Berlin meetings at the *Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science*.

<sup>14</sup>*Organization of knowledge in Asian cultures: Lists, catalogues and classification systems between orality and scriptuality*. Panel in the framework of the 31st German Congress of Oriental Studies, Marburg, September 20–24, 2010, convenors: Jens E. Braarvig, Markham J. Geller and Velizar Sadovski. Cf. [https://archive.today/o/QKkC6/http://www.dot2010.de/index.php?ID\\_seite=5](https://archive.today/o/QKkC6/http://www.dot2010.de/index.php?ID_seite=5).

<sup>15</sup>*Multilingualism and Social Experience in Pre-Modern Societies of Ancient Eurasia: Socio-Economic, Linguistic, and Religious Aspects*. Panel in the framework of the 32nd German Congress of Oriental Studies, Münster, September 23–27, 2013, convenors: Velizar Sadovski and Gebhard J. Selz. Cf. <http://www.dot2013.de/en/programm/abstracts/panel>

lingualism in Chinese Turkestan was organized at the University of Munich in the Summer Semester 2009. Volumes with a selection of relevant proceedings have appeared in the *Sitzungsberichte* of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna as well as in the publication series of the *Max-Planck-Gesellschaft* in Berlin (cf. Braarvig et al. 2012, 2013).

**0.3.** My specific research interest concerns the comparative Indo-Iranian perspective:<sup>16</sup> In the last five years, I have been intensely co-operating with the Leiden project of a critical edition of the Atharvaveda-Paippalāda fragments, initiated by Michael Witzel and continued by Alexander Lubotsky who kindly gave me access to the new manuscript materials.<sup>17</sup> The result so far comprises four comparative publications on aspects of ritual poetry and pragmatics—two appeared 2008 and 2009 in the *Festschrift Fagner* and *Festschrift Eichner*, respectively, and two further studies are in press in the proceedings of the *Fifth Vedic Workshop*<sup>18</sup> and of the Marburg panel *Systematization of Universe* of the Congress of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*.<sup>19</sup> Further (so far, nine) papers, given e.g. at the 12th World Sanskrit Conference (Delhi, 2009), the European Conferences of Iranian Studies in Vienna, Salamanca and Cracow (2007–11), two Vedic Workshops in Bucharest (2010–11) as well as in seminars on Indo-Iranian language and cultural history in Leiden (2007–11), have been presenting pertinent material for a monograph in preparation on various spheres of life as reflected in ritual texts containing lists and catalogues. Beyond analysis of figures of speech on a formal, esp. syntactic level (as published in Sadovski 2006 and Sadovski 2007), I have engaged in comparative and typological investigations of stylistic repetition, *Textgestaltung*, and form variation in the Avesta and Veda on the level of major text units—among them, diverse categories of *lists and enumerations*. The major topics of Indo-Iranian catalogues can be seen in Table 1, arranged in a sort of a ‘list of lists’:

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-multilingualism-and-social-experience-in-pre-modern-societies-of-ancient-eurasia-socio-economic-linguistic-and-religious-aspects/, accessed June 10, 2014.

<sup>16</sup>Abbreviations of texts used: (a) Vedic: *RV* = Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā. – *AVŚ* = Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā (Śaunaka branch); *AVP* = Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā, Paippalāda branch; *Kauś* = Kauśika-Sūtra. – *YV(S/B)* = Yajurveda(-Saṃhitā/-Brāhmaṇa), esp.: *Black YV: TS* = Taittirīya-Saṃhitā. *TB* = Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa. *BaudhŚS* = Baudhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra. *ĀpŚS* = Āpastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra. *White YV*: Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā; *ŚB* = Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa. (b) Avestan: text strata – *GAv.* = Gāthic Avestan. *YAv* = ‘Young(er)’ Avestan; text corpora – *Y.* = Yasna; *Yt.* = Yašt; *Vd.* = Vīdēvdād.

<sup>17</sup>For relevant texts edited and/or examined so far in the framework of this project, cf. e.g. (Witzel 1985 (AVP and AVŚ); Witzel 1997; Zehnder 1993 (AVP, Kāṇḍa 1); Zehnder 1999 (Kāṇḍa 2); Lubotsky 2002 (Kāṇḍa 5); Griffiths 2002, 2003, 2004 (AVP and Kauś.), 2007, 2009 (Kāṇḍa 6 and 7), Lopez 2010 (Kāṇḍa 13 and 14), and Lelli 2009 (Kāṇḍa 15)).

<sup>18</sup>Edited by S. Bahulkar, Jan Houben, Michael Witzel and Julieta Rotaru, to appear 2015.

<sup>19</sup>Included in the materials collected in the volume (Braarvig et al. forthcoming).



## A. Semantic features of list items, e.g.:

1. ‘*Cosmo*-logical’ lists.
2. ‘*Anthropo*-logical,’ esp. ‘*physio*-logical’/‘*somato*-graphical’ lists.
3. ‘*Glotto*-logical’ lists.
4. ‘*Numero/arithmo*-logical’ lists.
5. ‘*Socio*-logical’ lists.
6. ‘*Chrono*-logical’ lists.
7. ‘*Topo*-logical’ lists.
8. ‘*Axio*-logical’ lists.
9. ‘*Genea*-logical’ lists.
10. *Akolouthiai*: Lists of routines and (ritual[ized]) procedures.
11. ‘*Theo*-logical’ lists.
12. Complex structures.

## B. Structural features of lists, e.g.:

- Intradependency (within list):
  - (α.) Dimensionality: linear vs. non-linear structures.
  - (β.) Coordination and subordination of items: head-initial, head-final, multi-headed list(s) etc.
  - (γ.) Order of items and directionality within list(s).
  - (δ.) Correlativity of items within list(s).
  - (ε.) Variability of items within list(s).
  - (ζ.) Cyclicity vs. openness of list(s).
- Interdependency (between lists):
  - (ζ.) Repetitiveness and recursivity.
  - (η.) Hierarchy between lists, within ‘super-list(s)’
  - (θ.) ‘Meta-lists of/about lists.’

The first table (A.) summarizes aspects of the semantic variety of list contents: Here we find ‘*cosmo*-logical’ lists including items of the *macro-cosm*, and lists of *anthropo*-logically relevant elements, of the (human) *micro-cosm*: e.g. the ones concerning the *physio*-logical sphere or mapping of the human body (the ‘*somato*-graphical’ lists of healing spells or poetical descriptions of heroes, warriors, of beloved beings, and even of gods depicted in ‘anthropomorphic’ ways). Other types comprise ‘*glotto*-logical’ structures: *phono*-logical plays, entire *morpho*-logical paradigms, embedded in *etymo*-logical games of magic character, even meta-lists of linguistic items. Many enumerative sequences exhibit

*numero*-logical regularities. Further components of the anthropological sphere are registered, e.g. by lists of ‘*socio*-logical’ elements and features with relevance for the community. *Chrono*- and *topo*-logical lists display measures of time and spatial representations. ‘*Axio*-logical’ lists explicitly valorize concepts of spiritual life and the surrounding macro- and microcosm. Various forms of *genea*-logies represent the idea of continuity (in the form of lists): in the regular case, we have to do with *lists of names* (onomastic catalogues) *sensu lato*, very often of sacral character.<sup>20</sup> And finally, higher themes of spiritual character are subject of theo-logical lists and complex structures like catalogues of theogony, speculative hymns, prophecies and eschatological visions. The second table (B.) regards structural features. In this framework, we can discuss selected aspects of list types 1–3 in a more detailed way; the groups 4–10 are subject to two further studies, to appear in (Braarvig et al. forthcoming) and in a volume of the series *Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse*, respectively.

## 12.2 Structure of Poetic/Magic Lists and Their Contents: Internal and External References

1. If we go directly to the material, in both branches of Indo-Iranian sacred poetry we can discover a whole ‘*cosmo-logia magica*’: Mantras and prayers list the Universe in magic catalogues of cosmological concepts—regularly arranged in axiological manner—starting from sacred components of the *macro-cosm*, going via ritual as intermediary between God and men, to end up focusing on sacred components of the *micro-cosm*:

1.1. A common Old Indo-Iranian form of such lists appears in magic hymns for *purification* of the Universe, like the one in Atharvaveda-Paipalāda 9,25. The main mantra here is in Pāda 1d: ‘Let (Soma,) the one who *purifies* himself, *purify me!*’ What follows, is a series of characterizations of the universal reach of the act of purification by listing elements of the cosmos, varying in a ‘vertical’ manner, stanza by stanza:

- (1a) *sahasrākṣaṃ śatadhāraṃ*  
 (1b) *ṛṣibhiḥ pavanaṃ kṛtam |*  
 (1c) *tenā sahasradhāreṇa*  
 (1d) *pavamānaḥ punātu mā ||*  
 (2a) *yena pūtam antarikṣaṃ*

<sup>20</sup>Cf. (Panaino 2002; Schmitt 2003; Sadovski 2007), e.g. on the Indian ‘name-praising hymns,’ *nāma-stotras*.

- (2b) *yasmin vāyur adhi śritah* | [...]  
 (3a) *yena pūte dyāvāpṛthivī*  
 (3b) *āpah pūtā atho s<sub>u</sub>vah* | [...]  
 (4a) *yena pūte ahorātre*  
 (4b) *diśah pūtā uta yena pradeśāḥ* | [...]  
 (5a) *yena pūtau sūryācandramasau*  
 (5b) *nakṣatrāṇi bhūtakṛtaḥ* | [...]  
 (6a) *yena pūtā vedir agniḥ*  
 (6b) *paridhayaḥ* | [...]  
 (7a) *yena pūtaṃ barhir ājyam atho haviḥ* | [...]  
 (8a) *yena pūto yajño vaṣaṭkāra utāhutih* | [...]  
 (9a) *yena pūtau vrīhiyavau*  
 (9b) *yābhyāṃ yajño adhinirmitah* |  
 (10a) *yena pūtā aśvā gāvo*  
 (10b) *atho pūtā ajāvayaḥ* |  
 (10c) *tenā sahasradhāreṇa*  
 (10d) *pavamānah punātu mā* ||

1. Of (a) thousand eyes, of (a) hundred streams  
the purification (has been) made by the seers;  
by means of this one of (a) thousand streams  
let (Soma,) the one who purifies himself, purify me.
2. By which Intermediate Space (is/has been) purified  
on which Wind dwells [...].
3. By which (both,) Heaven-and-Earth (have been) purified,  
Waters (have been) purified, also Sun [...].  
soll mich der sich Läuternde (S. Pavamāna) läutern
4. By which (both,) Day-and-Night (have been) purified,  
Heavenly Regions (have been) purified and by which Earthly  
Regions [...]  
soll mich der sich Läuternde (S. Pavamāna) läutern;
5. By which (both), Sun-and-Moon (have been) purified,  
Nakṣatra-s, Bhūtakṛt-s [...].
6. By which the Vēdi, the Fire(-Altar) (have been) purified,  
the Paridhi-s [...].
7. By which the Barhiṣ, the Ājya(-oblation), the Haviṣ(-oblation)  
(has [= have] been) purified [...].

8. By which Sacrifice/Ritual, the Vaṣaṭ-exclamation, and Libation (has [= have] been) purified [...].
9. By which (both), Rice-and-Barley (have been) purified, by both of which Sacrifice/Ritual has been ‘measured into shape’/ fixed [...].
10. By which horses, cows (have been) purified, also goats-and-sheep (have been) purified, by means of this one of (a) thousand streams let (Soma,) the one who purifies himself, purify me.

**1.1.1.** The list structure is (stereo)typical. The main predication is constant (‘*X* is purified’), the formulaic context is repeated in each stanza—while only *specific items change*, forming *simple list(s)* with *one variable* or a group of variables. The list exhibits internal correspondence in a unidimensional, here ‘vertical,’ way, between the varying (groups of) items; this can be summarized by the scheme:

- ‘*Y* (is) *X* [...]; by which **A** & **B** are *Y*-ed / by which **C** & **D** are *Y*-ed / by which **E** & **F** are *Y*-ed ..., let the *Y*-ing-oneself *Y* me.’

**1.1.2.** The list contains the most important cosmological elements—mostly presented in [natural] pairs, often as ‘dual *dvandva*’ compounds.<sup>21</sup> When pronouncing each one of these ritual formulae, the Brahman symbolically purifies the parts of the cosmos concerned.

- It starts with nature deities and their domains, such as the Intermediate Space (*antarikṣa-*) with the Wind (*vāyu-*, stanza 2, verses *ab*), the ‘Heaven-and-Earth’ (*dyāvā-prthivī*, stanza 3*a*), the Waters (*āpah*), the Sun[light] (*sūvār*, both 3*b*) and the Day-and-Night (*aho-rātre*, 4*a*).
- Then, the list evokes further structures of the macrocosm: the regions of heaven and of earth (4*b*), cellular bodies / divinities: the Sun-and-Moon (*sūryā-candramasau*, 5*a*), Asterisms: *nakṣatras* and *bhūtakṛts* (both 5*b*);<sup>22</sup>
- They are followed by basic components of Vedic ritual: sacrificial ground (*vedi-*); *agni-* [here “fire altar”; both 6*a*], sacrificial materials: the *paridhis* (6*b*), the *barhiṣ-*, oblations like *ājya-* and *haviṣ-* etc. (7*a*–8*b*), as well as
- the central sacrificial plants—rice and barley (*vṛthi-yavau*, 9*a*, with a specification concerning their function in ritual, 9*b*)—and the most important

<sup>21</sup>I refer to the analysis of the formation of the compounds and the ‘natural’ character of the connections between their elements (like in the case of ‘rice-and-barley’) in (Sadovski 2002, 358–361, with notes 387–389).

<sup>22</sup>For more cosmological lists, mainly in the YV(Br), and their structures, see the choice of texts in (Klaus 1986).

domestic and sacrificial animals<sup>23</sup>—cows and horses (10a, also in TB. outside compounds, as *simplicia*), goats-and-sheep (10b, also in TB. in a *dvandva* compound).

The elements of the list are arranged:

- partly in accord with the increasing length of the sound complex (Behaghel's law)—cf. e.g. in § 1.1.3. below (*bahv-*)*ajāvīkā-* (2-syllabic *aja-* + 3-syllabic *avīka-*), (*bahu-*)*dāsa-pūruṣá-* (2-syllabic *dāsa-* + 3-syllabic *pūruṣa-*),
- partly in decreasing gradations (anticlimax): e.g. from *horse/cow* to smaller cattle (*goats, sheep*), with form variation between lists regarding the order of the first elements: *horse-cow* or *cow-horse*, mostly depending on the social perspective—obviously, cows being the animals consecrated to priests (as their primordial *dakṣiṇa-*), and horses belonging to kings [-and-warriors] (*kṣatriya-*). For similar gradations in parallel lists in Avestan (*male camel-male horse-bull-cow*) see § 1.3.2.3.

**1.1.3.** The same groups of concepts of the triad *macro-cosm-ritual-micro-cosm* also appear in Yajurveda mantras, such as the one (in TB. 3,8,5,2–3, BaudhŚS 15,5,209, ĀpŚS 20,4,3) referring to the benediction of the king during the great inaugural horse sacrifice. On its structure cf. (Sadovski 2002, 359): Listed are, first, the valuable animals, above all, cows/cattle, horses, then uncloven-hoofed herd-animals, followed by the most important crops, precious metals and ivory (“elephants” perhaps to be understood here as a metonymy), and, finally, a summary through the general concepts of “wealth” and “blooming/prosperity.”

TB. 3,8,5,2–3: [...] hótā /  
 paścāt prān tīṣṭhan prókṣati /  
 anénáśvena médhyleneṣtvā /  
 ayám rájāsyái viśáh//  
*bahugvái bahvaśvāyai bahvajāvīkāyai /*  
*bahuvrīhiyavāyai bahumāṣatīlāyai /*  
*bahuhiranyāyai bahuastīkāyai /*  
*bahudāsapūruṣāyai rayimātyai púṣṭimatyai /*  
*bahurāyaspoṣāyai rájāstv íti/*

<sup>23</sup>Noteworthy, the same formulaic sequences of domestic animals occur in the purification/lustration formula of TB. cited below, § 1.3.

[...] the Hotar sprinkles [the horse] standing on the West [facing] to the East with these words: ‘By means of the sacrifice “with” / of this horse (= after/while one sacrifices this horse), which is fit for sacrifice, may this (king) be (the) king of this settlement, which has many cows, many horses, many goats-and-sheep, much rice-and-barley, much beans-and-sesame, much gold, many elephants, many slaves-and-servants, which has wealth, which has prosperity, which has much wealth-and-prosperity.’

1.2. This form of ritual-poetic expression is Indo-Iranian. Also in the Avesta we can observe such lists in identical rituals of *purification of universe* by Haoma, the Iranian counterpart of Soma. Thus, Zaraθuštra lists all relevant concepts of the *macro-* and *micro-cosm* in the typical form of questions and answers: ‘How shall I purify the *house*, how the *fire*, how the *water*, how the *earth*, how the *cow*, how the *plant* [the *stars*, the moon, the sun, and so on]?’ Ahura Mazdā’s answer is that already the mere uttering of the *purification formula* brings *purification!* Speech acts and ritual acts of purification coincide, in a unity of mantras and ritual actions; theoreticians of linguistic pragmatics like John Austin and John Searle would call this a ‘performative speech act.’—Cf. Vd. 11,1–2:

[...] kuθa nmānəm yaoždaθāni  
kuθa ātrəm kuθa āpəm  
kuθa zqm kuθa gqm kuθa uruuarqm  
kuθa narəm ašauuanəm kuθa nāirikqm ašaonīm  
kuθa strēš kuθa māḡhəm  
kuθa huuarə kuθa anaγra raocā  
kuθa vīspa vohu mazdadāta ašaciθra  
āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā:  
yaoždāθrəm srāuuaiiōiš zaraθuštra  
yaoždāta pascaēta bun nmāna  
yaoždāta ātrəm yaoždāta āpəm  
yaoždāta zqm yaoždāta gqm yaoždāta uruuarqm  
yaoždāta narəm ašauuanəm yaoždāta nāirikqm ašaonīm  
yaoždāta strēš yaoždāta māḡhəm

yaoždāta huuarā yaoždāta anayra raocā  
 yaoždāta vīspa vohu mazdādāta ašaciθra

‘[...] How shall I purify the house,  
 how the Fire, how the Water,  
 how the Earth, how the Cow, how the Plant,  
 how the *aša*-ous Man, how the *aša*-ous Woman,  
 how the Stars, how the Moon,  
 how the Sun, how the beginningless Lights  
 how all the Good, the Mazdā-created, the *aša*-originated?’  
 Thus spake Ahura Mazdā:  
 ‘You should *let the purification* (formulae) *be heard*, Zaraθuštra,  
 then the houses will become purified,  
 the Fire (will become) purified, purified the Water,  
 purified the Earth, purified the Cow, purified the Plant,  
 purified the *aša*-ous Man, purified the *aša*-ous Woman,  
 purified the Stars, purified the Moon,  
 purified the Sun, purified the beginningless Lights  
 purified all the Good, the Mazdā-created, the *aša*-originated.’

Furthermore, in a rain spell + purification mantra (Vd. 21) we find more complex configurations of multiple list types, incl. elaborate *parallelismus membrorum*.

**1.3.** In such ritual lists, we can observe various structures, starting from the simple to more complex schemes: They are characterized by repetitiveness and correlation of items within lists and between them.

**1.3.1.1.** The structure of the *simple list type* is similar to the one in § 1.1.1., with *one variable* or a group of variables. Scheme: **ABCDEFX** / **ABCDEYF** / **ABCDEZF** ... (the variables being set in italics).

One of the most important sorts of simple lists in mantras of the Yajurveda and Atharvaveda is the list of ‘identifications-and-consequences (± praise/invocation)’—schemes e.g.: “**X**<sub>noun</sub> **x**<sub>verb-s</sub>, **X**<sub>noun</sub> may **x**<sub>verb</sub> me(, hail!)”; “**X** is **Y**, **X** may give **Y**(, hail!)” (core mantra of the expanded version in § 1.1.1.); with invocation: “You are **A**, you may give **A**(, hail!); you are **B**, you may give **B**(, hail!) ...,” or, with a syllogism-like, consecutive relationship, “**X** is **Y**; **X** being **Y**, should do **Z**, (hail!/come!/go forth! etc.)” This is the typical form of praises, prayers, invocations, and request spells, where the variables regularly contain entire lists of capacities and vital forces (often closed—tetradic, pentadic etc.—,

conventional catalogues of senses, powers, abilities etc.).—AVŚ. 2,17:

*ójo* ᵃ<sub>s</sub>y *ójo* me *dāḥ svāhā* //1//  
*sáho* ᵃ<sub>s</sub>i *sáho* me *dāḥ svāhā* //2//  
*bálam* asi *bálaṃ* me *dāḥ svāhā* //3//  
*áyur* as<sub>y</sub> *áyur* me *dāḥ svāha* //4//  
*śrótram* asi *śrótraṃ* me *dāḥ svāha* //5//  
*cákṣur* asi *cákṣur* me *dāḥ svāha* //6//  
*paripāṇam* asi *paripāṇaṃ* me *dāḥ svāha* //7//

1. *Force* art thou; *force* mayest thou give me: hail!
  2. *Power* art thou; *power* mayest thou give me: hail!
  3. *Strength* art thou; *strength* mayest thou give me: hail!
  4. *Life-time* art thou; *life-time* mayest thou give me: hail!
  5. *Hearing* art thou; *hearing* mayest thou give me: hail!
  6. *Sight* art thou; *sight* mayest thou give me: hail!
  7. *Protection* art thou; *protection* mayest thou give me: hail!
- (Whitney and Lanman 1905, vol. 1, 61)

**1.3.1.2.** An expanded variant of the scheme shows one main variable consisting of *items grouped pairwise*. This form is more complex than the one in § 1.1.1 (Scheme: ABCDEF(±G) / ABCDEF'(±G') / ABCDEH(±I) / ABCDEH'(±I')..., the *variables* being set in underlined italics), with regard to the categories of items and includes concepts of *cosmo-*, *theo-* and *socio-*logical significance. The *constants* in this catalogue of abilities (the *nomina praedicati*: *force*; *power*; *strength*; *heroism*; *manliness*) form a *pentadic* group and are largely identical with the variables of the last example AVŚ 2,17 in § 1.3.1.1.!

This format appears in magic lists of the type present in the Śaunakiya-Atharvaveda (AVŚ 10,5,1–2.6), where the basic mantra sounds like this:

- ‘Indra’s *force* are you; Indra’s *power* are you; Indra’s *strength* are you; Indra’s *heroism* are you; Indra’s *manliness* are you; with X-junctions I join you.’

In this sequence of elements—a typical Indo-Iranian *pentadic* group (*pañkti*)—, only the last term changes, stanza by stanza, forming a couple every two stanzas: *bráhmaṇ-* and *kṣatrá-* (stanzas 1–2)—the pair represents the eponymous qualities of two higher social groups (*brahmán-* ‘brahmin’ and *kṣatriya-* ‘king[and-warrior]’),—*indra-* and *sóma-* (3–4), king’s *power* and *manliness* (5 to 6).



índrasya <sub>a-</sub> -ója sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>sáha</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>bálam</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>vīryàlṃ</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>ṛmṇám</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> / jiṣṇáve yógāya <b>brahmayog</b> aír vo yunajmi //1//	U = X's A, U = X's B, U = X's C, U = X's D, U = X's E ... with <b><u>K</u></b> I join you.
índrasya <sub>a-</sub> -ója sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>sáha</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>bálam</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>vīryàlṃ</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>ṛmṇám</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> / jiṣṇáve yógāya <b>kṣatrayog</b> aír vo yunajmi //2//	U = X's A, U = X's B, U = X's C, U = X's D, U = X's E ... with <b><u>L</u></b> I join you.
índrasya <sub>a-</sub> -ója sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>sáha</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>bálam</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>vīryàlṃ</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>ṛmṇám</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> / jiṣṇáve yógāya <b>endrayog</b> aír vo yunajmi //3//	U = X's A, U = X's B, U = X's C, U = X's D, U = X's E ... with <b><u>M</u></b> I join you.
índrasya <sub>a-</sub> -ója sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>sáha</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>bálam</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>vīryàlṃ</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>ṛmṇám</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> / jiṣṇáve yógāya <b>somayog</b> aír vo yunajmi //4//	U = X's A, U = X's B, U = X's C, U = X's D, U = X's E ... with <b><u>N</u></b> I join you.
índrasya <sub>a-</sub> -ója sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>sáha</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>bálam</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>vīryàlṃ</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>ṛmṇám</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> / jiṣṇáve yógāya <b>apsuyog</b> aír vo yunajmi //5//	U = X's A, U = X's B, U = X's C, U = X's D, U = X's E ... with <b><u>O</u></b> I join you.
índrasya <sub>a-</sub> -ója sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>sáha</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>bálam</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>vīryàlṃ</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> -i ndrasya <i>ṛmṇám</i> sth <sub>a-</sub> / jiṣṇáve yógāya <b>viśvāni</b> mā <b>bhūtāny</b> úpa tiṣṭhantu yuktá ma <b>āpa</b> sth <sub>a-</sub> //6//	U = X's A, U = X's B, U = X's C, U = X's D, U = X's E ... let all <b><u>P</u></b> wait upon me; joined to me are you, <b><u>Q</u></b> .

1. Indra's *force* are ye; Indra's *power* are ye;  
 Indra's *strength* are ye; Indra's *heroism* are ye; Indra's *manliness* are ye;  
 unto a conquering junction (yoga-) with **brahman**-junctions I join you.
2. Indra's *force* are ye; Indra's *power* are ye;  
 Indra's *strength* are ye; Indra's *heroism* are ye;  
 Indra's *manliness* are ye;  
 unto a conquering junction, with **kṣatra**-junctions I join you.
3. Indra's *force* are ye; Indra's *power* are ye;  
 Indra's *strength* are ye; Indra's *heroism* are ye;  
 Indra's *manliness* are ye;  
 unto a conquering junction, with **indra**-junctions I join you.
4. Indra's *force* are ye; Indra's *power* are ye;

Indra's *strength* are ye; Indra's *heroism* are ye;  
 Indra's *manliness* are ye;  
 unto a conquering junction, with **soma**-junctions I join you.

5. Indra's *force* are ye; Indra's *power* are ye;  
 Indra's *strength* are ye; Indra's *heroism* are ye;  
 Indra's *manliness* are ye;  
 unto a conquering junction, with **water**-junctions I join you.

6. Indra's *force* are ye; Indra's *power* are ye;  
 Indra's *strength* are ye; Indra's *heroism* are ye;  
 Indra's *manliness* are ye;  
 unto a conquering junction; let all existences wait upon (*upa-sthā*) me; joined to me are ye, O waters.<sup>24</sup>

**1.3.2. Intra-textual correlation:** More complex list types exhibit *item variation* not simply of one variable element (group)—like in § 1.1.[1.] and § 1.3.1.—but of *at least two variable item groups* per list with internal correlation both between the individual variables *A* and *a* within each formula ('horizontally,' § 1.3.2.1.)—scheme: *AXYZaXYZ*—and between the variables (*A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*..., *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*) of the different formulae within the list, on the 'vertical' axis: Scheme: *AXYZaX'YZ / BXYZbX'YZ / CXYZcX'YZ...* (§ 1.3.2.2.). In the list structure, the predication, again, is constant, the formulaic context is repeated—specific items vary, forming this time *complex list(s)* with both internal correspondence and correlation between *at least two variable* groups of items *within one textual unit* (hymn, incantation)—i.e. *intra-textual correlation*.

**1.3.2.1.** Thus, in the hymn AVP. 7,14 the magic formula for giving life mystically unites *cosmo*-logical elements of the higher, *theo*-logical sphere, with their inherent counterparts in nature: Fire and wood, Sun and sky etc.—The basic mantra sounds:

- '*A* is full of life: he is full of life due to *a*. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life'—

e.g. AVP 7,14,1: *agnir āyusmān ' sa vanaspatibhir āyusmān | sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛnotu 'Agni/Fire is full of life: he is full of life (by means) of/with/due to the trees/lords of the forest. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.'*

**1.3.2.2.** On the vertical axis, within the list AVP. 7,14 we find a first *pañkti*- (pentadic group) of internally correlating items in stanzas 1–5. It includes five nature deities, which take the position of the *first variable* element (*A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*): *Fire*, *Wind*, *Sun*, *Moon*, *Soma*. The *second variable* (*a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*) contains the natural environments of these natural deities: *trees* for the Fire, *space* for

<sup>24</sup>Cf. (Whitney and Lanman 1905, vol. 2, 579).

the Wind, *sky* for the Sun... In the middle (stanza 6) we find the deified *Ritual* (*Yajña*). Then, another *five* deities are listed as a second *pañkti*- (Stanzas 7–11): *Indus*, *Brahman*, *Indra*, the *Viśve Devāḥ*, *Prajāpati*. I have isolated similar schemes e.g. in the Seventh book of Atharvaveda-Paippalāda: ‘A is X; he is X due to a; being X, let him make me X. B is X; he is X due to b; being X, let him make me X.’

*Agni/Fire* is full of life (or: life-giving, *vivificans*): he is full of life by (means of)/with/due to the **lords of the wood** (the *trees*). (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*Vāyu/Wind* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **intermediate space**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*Sūrya/Sun* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **sky**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*Candra/Moon* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **asterisms**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*Soma* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **plants**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*Yajña/Sacrifice (Ritual)* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **sacerdotal fees**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*The Confluence (Indus/Ocean?)* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **rivers**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*Brahman / the formula(ion)* is full of life: it is full of life by/with the **brahmacārins**. (So,) full of life, let it make me full of life.

*Indra* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **potency**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

*The (All-)Gods* are full of life: they are full of life by/with the **amṛta**-. (So,) full of life, let them make me full of life.

*Prajāpati / The Lord of (Pro-)Creation* is full of life: he is full of life by/with the **(pro)creations/progenies/descendants**. (So,) full of life, let him make me full of life.

AVP. 7,14 (ed. Griffiths 2009, ad loc.; transl. partly modified):	Scheme:
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<i>agnir</i> āyusmān ' sa <i>vanaspatibhir</i> āyusmān   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   1	<u>A</u> is X; he is X due to <u>a</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
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<i>vāyur</i> āyusmān ' so 'ntarikṣeṇāyusmān sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   2	<u>B</u> is X; he is X due to <u>b</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
--	---

<i>sūrya</i> āyusmān ' sa <i>divāyusmān</i>   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   3	<u>C</u> is X; he is X due to <u>c</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
<i>candra</i> āyusmān ' sa <i>nakṣatrair</i> āyusmān   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   4	<u>D</u> is X; he is X due to <u>d</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
<i>soma</i> āyusmān ' sa <i>oṣadhībhir</i> āyusmān   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   5	<u>E</u> is X; he is X due to <u>e</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
yajña āyusmān ' sa <i>dakṣiṇābhir</i> āyusmān   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   6	<u>F</u> is X; he is X due to <u>f</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
<i>samudra</i> āyusmān ' sa <i>nadībhir</i> āyusmān   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   7	<u>G</u> is X; he is X due to <u>g</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
<i>brahmāyusmat</i> ' tad <i>brahmacāribhir</i> āyusmat   tan māyusmad āyusmantam kṛṇotu   8	<u>H</u> is X; it is X due to <u>h</u> ; as X, let it make me X.
<i>indra</i> āyusmān ' sa <i>vīryeṇāyusmān</i>   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   9	<u>I</u> is X; he is X due to <u>i</u> ; as X, let him make me X.
<i>devā</i> āyusmantas ' te 'mrtenāyusmantaḥ   te māyusmanta āyusmantam kṛṇvantu   10	<u>J</u> is X; he is X due to <u>j</u> ; as X, let them make me X.
<i>prajāpatir</i> āyusmān ' sa <i>prajābhir</i> āyusmān   sa māyusmān āyusmantam kṛṇotu   11	<u>K</u> is X; he is X due to <u>k</u> ; as X, let him make me X.

1.3.2.3. In the same way, we find double-list structures with parallelism of two variables—again, in purification rituals—both in the Atharvaveda (Śaunaka / Paippalāda) and in the Avesta—, for instance with lists of socio-logically relevant concepts of the kind:

- ‘You should *purify* *A* (in exchange) for *a*, B (in exchange) for *b*, C (in exchange) for c.’

Here, the variable element X represents persons of high social circles in *decreasing* enumeration / gradation: a *priest* (*A*), a ‘*country*-lord of a *country*’ (B), a ‘*clan*-lord of a *clan*’ (C), a ‘*settlement*-lord of a *settlement*’ (D) a ‘*house*-lord of a *house*’ (E)—a sequence containing a stylistically marked, continuous paronomastic structure with etymological relation between its elements (cf. Sadovski

2006, 531–535). The variable element Y comprises the *dakṣiṇas* for purification of these persons, arranged in *decreasing* axiological order of appearance: *camel/horse/bull/cow*:

Vd. 9,37: <i>āθrauuuanəm</i> yaoždaθō	Purify an <i>A</i>
<b>dahmaiīāt</b> parō <b>āfritōit</b>	for an <i>a</i> (in exchange).
<i>daiyhēuš daiyhu.paitīm</i> yaoždaθō	Purify a <i>B-lord of B</i>
<b>uštrahe</b> paiti <b>aršnō ayriiehe</b>	for a <i>b</i> [ <b>male</b> ] <b>top-animal</b> .
<i>zanṭēuš zanṭu.paitīm</i> yaoždaθō	Purify a <i>C-lord of C</i>
<b>aspahē</b> paiti <b>aršnō ayriiehe</b>	for a <i>c</i> [ <b>male</b> ] <b>top-animal</b> .
<i>vīsō vīspaitīm</i> yaoždaθō	Purify a <i>D-lord of D</i>
<b>gēuš</b> paiti <b>uxšnō ayriiehe</b>	for a <i>d</i> [ <b>male</b> ] <b>animal</b> .
<i>nmānahe nmānō.paitīm</i> yaoždaθō	Purify a <i>E-lord of E</i>
<b>gēuš</b> paiti <b>aziīā</b>	for an <i>e</i> [ <b>fem.</b> ] <b>animal</b> .

You should purify a *priest*  
 for a **dahma-ful blessing**;  
 you should purify a *country-lord of a country*  
 for / against a **male camel** of top/extreme (value);  
 you should purify a *clan-lord of a clan*  
 for / against a horse, a **stallion (a “horse-stallion”)** of extreme (value); you should purify a *settlement-lord of a settlement*  
 for / against a [**male**] **cow, a bull (a “cow-bull”)** of extreme (value);  
 you should purify a *house-lord of a house*  
 for / against a **cow, a fertile cow**.

**1.3.2.3.1.** For the figure ‘*settlement-lord of a settlement*,’ Avestan *vīsō vīspaiti*, we can find good parallels in Vedic, RV. 9,108,10b *viś-pāti- viśām*—cf. also ‘cow-herd of cows’ in RV. + *go-pāti- gāvām (gónām)*, and in Greek (Hom.+) (ἐπι)βου-κόλος βόων, so-to-say, ‘cow-boy of cows’ (!), as opposed to lexicalized βου-κόλος ὑών ‘cow-herd of pigs’ (Hom.+). For evidence of Mycenaean, Homeric, Archaic and Classical expressions (like ἵπποι [...] βου-κολέοντο ‘the horses were shepherded’ in Iliad 20,221f. or ἵππο-βουκόλος ‘horse-shepherd,’ actually “horse-cowboy,” in Sophokles), I refer to (Panagl 1999), esp. 439–443, with my addendum (*ibid.*, p. 442) on parallel Indo-Iranian material in expressions like *áśvānām gópati-* ‘cow-lord of horses [quasi ‘ἵππο-βουκόλος’]’ beside *gávām gópati-* ‘cow-lord of cows’ (in RV. 1,101,4a *yó áśvānām yó gávām gópatir vaśí*).

Compare the lexicalization of Engl. *shepherd*, which is not necessarily related by synchronic language speakers with the original etymological domain of Late Old Engl. *scēap-hierde* ‘sheep-herd’<sup>25</sup> but is largely used in generic sense of ‘*Hirte*’ since the 18th century.

**1.3.2.3.2.** In cases like Yt. 13,150, we find the same Ilr. ‘hierarchy of social structures,’ this time in *increasing* enumeration (gradation): *house* (E)—*settlement* (D)—*clan* (C)—*country* (B; the symbol letters here correspond to the ones of the first list in § 1.3.1.). The variables here concern *chrono*-logical dimensions: **past, future, present**:

paoiriiṇ ṭkaēšṣ̄ yazamaide <u>nmānanṇmca</u> <u>vīṣṇmca</u> <u>zantunṇmca</u> <u>daṣīiunṇmca</u>	We worship X of <u>E</u> and of <u>D</u> and of <u>C</u> and of <u>B</u>
yōi <b>āṅharə</b> :	who [ <b>BE-past</b> ].
paoiriiṇ ṭkaēšṣ̄ yazamaide <u>nmānanṇmca</u> <u>vīṣṇmca</u> <u>zantunṇmca</u> <u>daṣīiunṇmca</u>	We worship X of <u>E</u> and of <u>D</u> and of <u>C</u> and of <u>B</u>
yōi <b>bābuuarə</b> :	who [ <b>BE-prospective</b> ]
paoiriiṇ ṭkaēšṣ̄ yazamaide <u>nmānanṇmca</u> <u>vīṣṇmca</u> <u>zantunṇmca</u> <u>daṣīiunṇmca</u>	We worship X of <u>E</u> and of <u>D</u> and of <u>C</u> and of <u>B</u>
yōi <b>həṅti</b> .	who [ <b>BE-present</b> ].

We worship the first teachers  
of the houses and of the settlements  
and of the clans and of the countries  
which **were / have been** (there).

We worship the first teachers  
of the houses and of the settlements  
and of the clans and of the countries  
which **will be** (there).

We worship the first teachers  
of the houses and of the settlements  
and of the clans and of the countries  
which **are** ([being] there).

<sup>25</sup>Cf. (Panagl 1999, 443, with lit., 445, n. 20).

**1.3.3. Inter-textual correlation:** Still more complex list types include *correlations between varying lists*—not only within one textual unit (hymn, incantation)—like in § 1.3.2.[2.] and § 1.3.3.1 (Scheme: AXYZaX'YZ / BXYZbX'YZ / CXYZcX'YZ...)—but also *between several textual units* (§ 1.3.3.2.).<sup>7</sup> Once more, yet again, the predication is constant, the context is repeated: specific items vary, forming complex list(s) with both internal correspondence and correlation between at least two variable groups of items—in this case, however, not only with *intra*-textual but also with *inter*-textual correlation of lists:

**1.3.3.1.** The basic component here is an *intra*-textually correlative list (consisting, for its part, of sub-elements of simpler shape, as described in § 1.3.2.1.). In the hymn AVŚ. 2,19, for instance, the structure is: X, A<sub>noun</sub> A<sub>verb</sub>Y / X, B<sub>noun</sub> B<sub>verb</sub>Y / X, C<sub>noun</sub> C<sub>verb</sub>Y ...—items varying and internally correlated within the list, from stanza to stanza. The *pentadic list* contains the invocational spells: ‘O, **Agni**, what your *heat* is, heat by/with it [*our hater*]; what your *flame* is, *flame* by it; what your *beam(ray)/gleam/glare* is, *beam/gleam/glare* by it.’ So, the *intra*-textual variation goes on through *five* stanzas, in which the deity addressed by listing its main attributes (essentially correlated with one another) is constantly the Fire-god:

Invoc. Mantra: ‘O, X (= Fire), what your ABCDE<sub>noun</sub> is, do ABCDE<sub>verb</sub> it against that one who hates us, whom we hate’.

AVŚ. 2,19:			
<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>tápas</b> téna tám práti <b>tapa</b> yò 'smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   1	Agni,	what your <i>heat</i> is, <b>heat</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>háras</b> téna tám práti <b>hara</b> yò 'smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   2	Agni,	what your <i>flame</i> is, <b>flame</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>ágne</i>	yát te 'rcís téna tám práti, <b>arca</b> yò 'smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   3	Agni,	what your <i>beam (ray)</i> is, <b>beam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>śócís</b> téna tám práti <b>śoca</b> yò 'smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   4	Agni,	what your <i>gleam</i> is, <b>gleam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]

<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>téjas</b> téna tám <b>atejúsaṃ kṛṇu</b> yò 'asmān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   5	Agni,	what your <b>glare/splendour</b> is, <b>make/render</b> Y <b>splendourless</b> by it [...].
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1.3.3.2. However, this list *itself* is part of a complex ‘list of lists’: In Atharvaveda 2, hymns 19–22, the *pañkti* of *five* stereotypic invocations is itself repeated *five* times, with variation of address to *five* gods, the ‘usual suspects’ of mantras of cosmological lists: **Fire, Wind, Sun, Moon, Waters**. This is the ‘*inter*-textual variation’ par excellence: Items vary and correlate not only within the list (= § 1.3.3.1.) but also correlate within a complex of 5 lists in total, represented by 5 hymns arranged one after the other:

Invoc.	Mantra: O, <b>XYZVW</b> (= Fire, Wind, Sun...), what your <b>ABCDE<sub>noun</sub></b> is, do <b>ABCDE<sub>verb</sub></b> it against that one who hates us, whom we hate!
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AVŚ. 2,19:			
<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>túpas</b> téna tám práti <b>tapa</b> yò 'asmān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   1	Agni,	what your <b>heat</b> is, <b>heat</b> by it <b>against</b> Y [...]
<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>háras</b> téna tám práti <b>hara</b> yò 'asmān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   2	Agni,	what your <b>flame</b> is, <b>flame</b> by it <b>against</b> Y [...]
<i>ágne</i>	yát te 'rcís téna tám práti, y <b>arca</b> yò 'asmān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   3	Agni,	what your <b>beam</b> is, <b>beam</b> by it <b>against</b> Y [...]
<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>sócis</b> téna tám práti <b>soca</b> yò 'asmān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   4	Agni,	what your <b>gleam</b> is, <b>gleam</b> by it <b>against</b> Y [...]
<i>ágne</i>	yát te <b>téjas</b> téna tám <b>atejúsaṃ kṛṇu</b> yò 'asmān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   5	Agni,	what your <b>glare/splendour</b> is, <b>make/render</b> Y <b>splendourless</b> by it.



AVŚ. 2,20:	
<i>vāyo</i> yāt te <b>tāpas</b> téna tám práti <b>tapa</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   1	Vāyu, what your <b>heat</b> is, <b>heat</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>vāyo</i> yāt te <b>hāras</b> téna tám práti <b>hara</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   2	Vāyu, what your <b>flame</b> is, <b>flame</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>vāyo</i> yāt te 'rcis téna tám práti; y <b>arca</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   3	Vāyu, what your <b>beam</b> is, <b>beam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>vāyo</i> yāt te <b>śocis</b> téna tám práti <b>śoca</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   4	Vāyu, what your <b>gleam</b> is, <b>gleam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>vāyo</i> yāt te <b>téjas</b> téna tám <b>atejāsam kṛṇu</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   5	Vāyu, what your <b>glare/splendour</b> is, <b>make/render</b> Y <b>splendourless</b> by it [...]

AVŚ. 2,21:	
<i>sūrya</i> yāt te <b>tāpas</b> téna tám práti <b>tapa</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   1	Sūrya, what your <b>heat</b> is, <b>heat</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>sūrya</i> yāt te <b>hāras</b> téna tám práti <b>hara</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   2	Sūrya, what your <b>flame</b> is, <b>flame</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>sūrya</i> yāt te 'rcis téna tám práti; y <b>arca</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   3	Sūrya, what your <b>beam</b> is, <b>beam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>sūrya</i> yāt te <b>śocis</b> téna tám práti <b>śoca</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   4	Sūrya, what your <b>gleam</b> is, <b>gleam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>sūrya</i> yāt te <b>téjas</b> téna tám <b>atejāsam kṛṇu</b> yò 'smān dvēṣṭi yām vayām dviṣmāh   5	Sūrya, what your <b>glare/splendour</b> is, <b>make/render</b> Y <b>splendourless</b> by it [...]

AVŚ. 2,22:		
<i>cándra</i>	yát te <b>tápas</b> téna tám práti <b>tapa</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   1	Candra what your <b>heat</b> is, <b>heat</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>cándra</i>	yát te <b>háras</b> téna tám práti <b>hara</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   2	Candra what your <b>flame</b> is, <b>flame</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>cándra</i>	yát te 'rcís téna tám práti, y <b>arca</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   3	Candra what your <b>beam</b> is, <b>beam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y
<i>cándra</i>	yát te <b>śócís</b> téna tám práti <b>śoca</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   4	Candra what your <b>gleam</b> is, <b>gleam</b> by it <i>against</i> Y [...]
<i>cándra</i>	yát te <b>téjas</b> téna tám <b>atejásam kṛṇu</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   5	Candra what your <b>glare/splendour</b> is, <b>make/render</b> Y <b>splendourless</b> by it [...]

AVŚ. 2,23:		
ápo	yád vas <b>tápas</b> téna tám práti <b>tapata</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   1	Waters, what your <b>heat</b> is, <b>heat</b> by it against Y [...]
ápo	yád vo <b>háras</b> téna tám práti <b>harata</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   2	Waters, what your <b>flame</b> is, <b>flame</b> by it against Y [...]
ápo	yád vo 'rcís téna tám práti, y <b>arcata</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   3	Waters, what your <b>beam (ray)</b> is, <b>beam</b> by it against Y [...]
ápo	yád vaḥ <b>śócís</b> téna tám práti <b>śocata</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   4	Waters, what your <b>gleam</b> is, <b>gleam</b> by it against Y [...]
ápo	yád vas <b>téjas</b> téna tám <b>atejásam</b> <b>kṛṇuta</b> yò 'a smán dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   5	Waters, what your <b>glare/splendour</b> is, <b>make/render</b> Y <b>splendourless</b> by it [...].

Represented as a summarized list structure:

AVŚ. 2,19: <i>ágne</i> + Mantra A./Fire (5 items)	AVŚ. 2,20: <i>váyo</i> + Mantra V./Wind (5 items)	AVŚ. 2,21: <i>sūrya</i> + Mantra S./Sun (5 items)	AVŚ. 2,22: <i>cáandra</i> + Mantra C./Moon (5 items)	AVŚ. 2,23: <i>ápo</i> + Mantra [Pl.] Áp./Waters (5 items)
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**1.3.3.3.** As a result, we have a *multi-dimensional* list, with both “horizontal” and “vertical” relations *within* and *beyond* the individual list(s): the ultimate form of stereometric, multi-dimensional representation of the Universe.

2,19	2,20	2,21	2,22	2,23	→ Complex list ↓
Invoc.	Invoc.	Invoc.	Invoc.	Invoc.	Mantra: ‘what your X is, do X’ with it against that one who hates us, whom we hate’
<i>ágne</i>	<i>váyo</i>	<i>sūrya</i>	<i>cáandra</i>	<i>ápo</i>	yát te <i>tápas</i> téna tám práti <i>tapa</i> yò ’ <sub>a</sub> smān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   1
<i>ágne</i>	<i>váyo</i>	<i>sūrya</i>	<i>cáandra</i>	<i>ápo</i>	yát te <i>háras</i> téna tám práti <i>hara</i> yò ’ <sub>a</sub> smān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   2
<i>ágne</i>	<i>váyo</i>	<i>sūrya</i>	<i>cáandra</i>	<i>ápo</i>	yát te ’ <sub>a</sub> <i>rcís</i> téna tám práti, <i>y arca</i> yò ’ <sub>a</sub> smān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   3
<i>ágne</i>	<i>váyo</i>	<i>sūrya</i>	<i>cáandra</i>	<i>ápo</i>	yát te <i>śocís</i> téna tám práti <i>śoca</i> yò ’ <sub>a</sub> smān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   4
<i>ágne</i>	<i>váyo</i>	<i>sūrya</i>	<i>cáandra</i>	<i>ápo</i>	yát te <i>téjas</i> téna tám <i>atejásam kṛṇu</i> yò ’ <sub>a</sub> smān dvéṣṭi yám vayám dviṣmáh   5

- In the Avesta, a similar form of intertextual communication occurring between Yašts (5, 9, 10, 12, 15...) is achieved by the common presence of stylistically repeated formulae in these texts. The internal correspondence of these formulae is based on *chronological*, *genealogical* (and even *eschatological*) principles: Each list stereotypically includes sacrificial

activities in honor of a deity exercised by most prominent protagonists (and adversaries) of Mazdayasnm, in generational order culminating with Zraθuštra. What then changes from one Yašt to another is the name of the honored deity. Taken together, these lists form one of the strongest cohesive elements of the corpus of the Yašts, just like their introductory formulae,<sup>26</sup> which, in a very direct sense, can also be read as *pentadic lists*—each one consisting of five parts, parts 1–3 and 5 of which exhibiting a generally constant character, part 4 changing according to the part of the day (*chronological axis*) and the deity worshipped in the hymn (*theo-logical axis*).

**1.3.3.4.** Both Indo-Iranian traditions know the type of *multiple* (triple/ triadic, quadruple/tetradic etc.), expanding lists. The sophisticated Avestan instance in Yt. 3,7–16 displays three, *successively expanding* lists of spells; such complex forms of ritual curses have remarkably similar structure to Vedic mantra lists in spells against demons:

- The first list (Yt. 3,7–9) contains a general survey of adversaries of Zoroastrianism, of diseases and daēuuic creatures, addressing them directly, in an ‘exorcist’ manner.
- The second list (Yt. 3,10–13) represents an expanded form that subsumes the same creatures within an appeal to kill ‘thousands and ten thousand times ten thousands’ of them.
- The third turn (Yt. 14–16) contains a complex list of the same creatures, in positive and superlative form, within a lament of Aŋra Maiñiiu about their elimination by Aša.

**2. ‘Physio-logia.’** Another genre of catalogues can be designated as ‘*physiological*,’ ‘*physio-graphical*,’ or better, ‘*somato-graphical*’ lists. They contain stylistically arranged *enumerations of body parts* and organs, very often displayed ‘from [the top of the] head to toe.’

**2.1.** In Indo-Iranian poetry, *body-depicting* lists are regularly present in healing spells; ritual chants consisting of *body part enumerations* serve to achieve (ritual) completion and perfection. Moreover, they can represent the universe (in anthropomorphic form or as an anthropomorphic metaphor)—in the framework of philosophic, speculative hymns like the Puruṣa-Sūkta of Ṛgveda concerning the creation of the cosmos from the body parts of a ritually dismembered ‘*Ur-Mensch*’; the Atharvanic variants of this hymn are employed in magic practices

<sup>26</sup>On these as well as on the conclusive formulae of the Yašts (in their relationship with the Nyayišn corpus) cf. (Darmesteter 1892, 331–334; Lommel 1927, 8ff.) and most recently (Panaino forthcoming).

that show that the performance of such a list can also aim at *re-creation* of the cosmos in a way controlled by the *brahmán* (or by the magician) for various reasons: of manipulation, defense, destruction—or of healing and purification.

**2.1.1.** The Avesta as well displays highly elaborate lists of body-parts ‘from head to toe,’ or rather: ‘from the top of the head till the end of the heel’—like the *thirty-fold one* within the great *purification ritual* for persons that have had contact with a dead body, in Vd. 8,40–72:

- The main formula can be extrapolated from the sequence Vd. 8,41ff., cf. Vd. 8,41–42:

dātarə gaēθanəm astuuaitinəm ašāum  
yezica āpō vaṇuhīš  
*barəšnūm vaγdanəm* pourum paiti.jasaiti  
kuua aēšəm  
aēša druxš yā nasuš upa.duuąsaiti:  
āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā:  
paitiša hē hō.nā *aṇtarāt naēmāt bruuat.biiqm* aēšəm  
aēša druxš yā nasuš upa.duuąsaiti.  
42. dātarə gaēθanəm astuuaitinəm ašāum  
yezica āpō vaṇuhīš  
paitiša hē hō.nā *aṇtarāt naēmāt bruuat.biiqm* paiti.jasaiti  
kuua aēšəm  
aēša druxš yā nasuš upa.duuąsaiti:  
āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā:  
pasca hē *vaγdanəm aēšəm*  
aēša druxš yā nasuš upa.duuąsaiti.

O Creator of the ‘bony’ / material world, thou Aša-ful One!  
When the good waters  
first arrive to the [*body part A*, here:] top of the head,  
whereon of them [= of persons that have had a contact with a corpse]  
does the Druj, the Nasu [the mortiferous epidemy witch/ demon],  
move?

So spoke Ahura Mazda:  
‘Upon the [*body part B*, here:] *inner part between their eyebrows*  
the Druj, the Nasu, moves.’

42. O Creator of the ‘bony’ material world, thou Aša-ful One!  
When the good waters  
arrive up to the [*body part B*, here:]

*inner part between their eyebrows,*  
 on which place of them  
 does the Druj, the Nasu, move?  
 So spoke Ahura Mazdā:  
 ‘Upon the [*body part C*, here:] *backside of their head*  
 the Druj, the Nasu, moves.’

- The list has complex, *spiral* organization. We can call it ‘triple directionality’: the process develops (1) from the *upper* body part to the *lower* one, (2) from *front* to *back side*, and (3) from *right* to *left*, always recursively, step-by-step:

– Vd. 8,41:	<i>A = top of the head; B = space between the eye-brows</i>
– Vd. 8,42:	<i>B = space between the eye-brows; C = backside of the head</i>
– Vd. 8,43: [...]	<i>C = backside of the head; D = the upper part of the face, etc. [...]</i>
– Vd. 8,62:	<i>P = right knee; Q = left knee</i>
– Vd. 8,63:	<i>Q = left knee; R = right shin</i>
– Vd. 8,64:	<i>R = right shin; S = left shin</i>
– Vd. 8,65:	<i>S = left shin; T = right ankle</i>
– Vd. 8,66:	<i>T = right ankle; U = left ankle</i>
– Vd. 8,67:	<i>U = left ankle; V = right fore-foot</i>
– Vd. 8,68:	<i>V = right fore-foot/instep; W = left fore-foot/instep</i>
– Vd. 8,69:	<i>W = left fore-foot; X = under the sole of the foot</i>
– Vd. 8,70:	<i>X = right sole; Y = left sole</i>
– Vd. 8,71:	<i>Y = left sole; Z = Ø, i.e.: the Druj Nasu disappears</i>

At the end of the sequence, at the left sole, the witch disappears—the purification is completed, the danger of infection is stopped, the outbreak of epidemy banned and the contamination ritually healed.

**2.1.2.** Vedic purification, exorcism, and healing spells are generally arranged in similar form:

**2.1.2.1.** Lists with body-part groupings (and often with easily comprehensible classificatory organization) are represented by Vedic hymns like the one against the *yákṣma* disease in AVŚ. 2,33:

akṣ́ibhyāṃ te nāsikābhyāṃ  
 kárṇābhyāṃ chúbukād ádhi |  
 yákṣmaṃ śírṣaṇyāṃ mastiṣkāj  
 jihváyā ví vṛhāmi te ||1||  
 grīvābhyas ta usñihābhyah  
 kíkasābhyo anūkiyāt |  
 yákṣmaṃ doṣaṇyāṃ áṃsābhyāṃ  
 bāhúbhyāṃ ví vṛhāmi te ||2||  
 hṛdayāt te pári klomnó  
 hálíkṣṇāt pārs\_u vābh\_iyāṃ |  
 yákṣmaṃ mátasnābhyāṃ plīhnó  
 yaknás te ví vṛhāmasi ||3||  
 āntrébhyas te gúdābh\_iyo  
 vaniṣṭhór udárād ádhi |  
 yákṣmaṃ kukṣ́ibh\_iyāṃ plāśér  
 nābhiyā ví vṛhāmi te ||4||  
 ūrúbhyāṃ te aṣṭhīvādbhyāṃ  
 pārsṇibhyāṃ prápādābh\_iyāṃ |  
 yákṣmaṃ bhasadyāṃ śróṇibhyāṃ  
 bhāsadaṃ bhāmsaso ví vṛhāmi te ||5||  
 asthíbhyas te majjābh\_iyah  
 snāvabhyo dhamánibh\_iyah |  
 yákṣmam pāṇibhyāṃ aṅgúlíbhyo  
 nakhébhyo ví vṛhāmi te ||6||  
 áṅge-aṅge lómni-lomni  
 yás te párvani-parvani |  
 yákṣmaṃ tvacasyāṃ te vayāṃ  
 kaśyápasya vībarhéṇa  
 víṣvañcaṃ ví vṛhāmasi ||7||

1. From<sup>27</sup> your *eyes*, from [your] *nostrils*,  
 from [your] *ears*, from [your] *chin*,  
 from [your] *brain*, from [your] *tongue*,  
 I tear away for you the *yákṣma* who is in the *head*.
2. From your *neck*, from the nape of [your] *neck*,  
 from [your] *vertebrae*, from [your] *spine*,  
 from [your] *shoulders*, from [your] *forearms*,  
 I tear away for you the *yákṣma* who is in the *arm*.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. (Zysk 1998, 15f.).

3. From your *heart*, from [your] *lungs*,  
from [your] *hálīksṇa*, from [your] *two sides*,  
from [your] two *mátasnas*, from [your] *spleen*,  
from [your] *liver*, we tear away for you the *yákṣma*.
4. From your *bowels*, from [your] *intestines*,  
from [your] *rectum*, from [your] *stomach*,  
from the *lateral parts* of [your] *abdomen*, from [your] *plāśi*,  
from [your] *navel*, I tear away for you the *yákṣma*.
5. From your *thighs*, from [your] *kneecaps*,  
from [your] *heels*, from the front of [your] *feet*,  
from [your] *haunches*, from [your] *bhāmsas*,  
I tear away for you the *yákṣma* who is in the *backside*.
6. From your *bones*, from [your] *marrows*,  
from [your] *tendons*, from [your] (*blood*) *vessels*,  
from [your] *hands*, from [your] *fingers*,  
from [your] *nails*, I tear away for you the *yákṣma*.
7. By means of Kaśyapa's exorcising spell,  
we tear completely away  
the *yákṣma* who is of your *skin*,  
who is in your *every limb*,  
*every hair* [and] *every joint*.

**2.1.2.2.** In the magic spell from the RV. 10,163,1ff. *all body parts* concerned (among them: *various* internal organs, bones/joints, hair etc. [stanza 1–5]) are first listed *individually*, in the framework of a voluminous *enumeratio*. After this, they are summarized by three *generic terms* (*āṅgād-āṅgāl, lómno-lomno, párvāṇi-parvāṇi* in stanza 10,163,6ab quoted below), which, in forming simultaneously a distributive *geminatio* [distributive ‘Āmreḍita’]), subsume the individual body parts under categories: *limbs, hair, and joints*. At the end, the generic terms themselves are once again recapitulated by the generalisation *sárvasmād ātmānas* ‘the whole body/trunk.’—RV. 10,163,6:

*āṅgād-āṅgāl lómno-lomno*  
*jātām párvāṇi-parvāṇi /*  
*yákṣmaṃ sárvasmād ātmānas*  
*tām idām vi vṛhāmi te //*



From *each limb*, from *each hair*,  
 the emaciation born/arisen in *each joint*,  
 from the *whole (body) trunk*,  
 this one I pull off from you now/here.

**2.1.3.** As is well known, we have to do with a common Indo-European topos of *healing lists*. Parallels in Germanic, related not only typologically but also genealogically to the Indian ones, have been described at the dawn of comparative Indo-European philology by Adalbert Kuhn.<sup>28</sup> They occur in the famous *Merseburger Zaubersprüche*, constantly re-edited and re-assessed ever since the mid-nineteenth century—most recently in the proceedings volume<sup>29</sup> of a colloquium in Halle 2000:

Phol and Wodan were riding to the woods, when Balder's foal sprained his foot. Bechanted it Sinhtgunt, (and) the Sun her sister; bechanted it Friya, (and) Volla her sister; bechanted it Wodan as best he could. Like *bone-sprain*, like *blood-sprain*, like *joint-sprain*: *bone to bone, blood to blood, joint to joint*: so be they glued.<sup>30</sup>

Cf. Mantras from the Atharvaveda-Śaunaka 4,12,2–6:

yát te riṣṭám yát te dyuttám  
 ásti péṣṭraṃ ta ātmáni /  
 dhātá tád bhadráyā púnaḥ  
 sám dadhat páruṣā páruḥ //2//  
 sám te majjā majñā bhavatu  
 sám u te páruṣā páruḥ /  
 sám te māmśásya vísrastaṃ  
 sám ásthīy ápi rohatu //3//  
 majjā majñā sám dhīyatām  
 cārmaṇā cārma rohatu /  
 ásṛk te ásthi rohatu  
 māmśám māmśéna rohatu //4//

<sup>28</sup>Cf. (Kuhn 1864, 49ff.).

<sup>29</sup>(Eichner and Nedoma 2000–2001(b)), esp. in the essay (Eichner and Nedoma 2000–2001(a)). Cf. also the divergent interpretative proposals by Wolfgang Beck in Part 2 of the same volume.

<sup>30</sup>(West 2007, 336); for modifications cf. the comm. by (Eichner and Nedoma 2000–2001(b), ad loc.).

*lóma lómnā sám kalpayā*  
*tvacá sám kalpayā tvácam/*  
*ásṛk te ásthi rohatu*  
*chinnám sám dheh<sub>1</sub>y ośadhe //5//*  
*sá út tiṣṭha préhi*  
*prá drava ráthaḥ sucakráḥ /*  
*supavíḥ sunábhiḥ*  
*práti tiṣṭh<sub>a</sub> urdhváh //6//*

2. What of thee is torn, what of thee is broken,  
(or what) of thee crushed—  
let Dhātar (put) it auspiciously  
put that together again, joint with joint.
3. Together be (thy) *marrow with marrow*,  
together (thy) *joint with joint*;  
together thy *flesh's* sundered [part],  
together let thy *bone* grow over.
4. *Marrow with marrow* together be set;  
*skin with skin* let grow;  
thy *blood, bone* let grow,  
*flesh with flesh* let grow.
5. *Hair with hair* fit (thou) together;  
with *hide together fit hide*;  
thy *bone with bone* let grow;  
set the severed together, O herb.
6. So stand up, go forth, run forth,  
(as) a chariot well-wheeled,  
well-tired, well-naved.  
Stand firm upright!<sup>31</sup>

Cf. also the additional interpretations of the hymn by (Eichner and Nedoma 2000–2001(b)). —A somewhat divergent, important parallel appears in the new fragments of the Paippalāda—AVP. 4,15,1–4. It has been edited by (Bhattacharya 1997) and re-assessed and commented upon by Griffiths and Lubotsky<sup>32</sup> and is, by now, the best preserved parallel to the Germanic formula:

<sup>31</sup>Cf. (Whitney and Lanman 1905, vol.1, 167; Watkins 1995, 522f. West 2007, 336f.).

<sup>32</sup>(Griffiths and Lubotsky 2000–2001), see also p. 209 with a photograph of the ms. Ku 1, fol. 78r.

saṃ *majjā majjñā* bhavatu  
 saṃ u te *paruṣā paruḥ* |  
 saṃ te *rāṣṭrasya* visrastam  
 saṃ *snāva* saṃ u *parva* te ||1||  
*majjā majjñā* saṃ dhīyatām  
*asthnāsthīy* \*api rohatu |  
*snāva* te saṃ dadhmaḥ *snāvnā*  
*carmaṇā carma* rohatu ||2||  
*loma lomnā* saṃ dhīyatām  
*tvacā* saṃ kalpayā *tvacam* |  
*asṛk* te *asnā* rohatu  
*māṃsaṃ māṃsena* rohatu ||3||  
 rohiṇī saṃrohiṇīy  
 \**asthnaḥ* śīrṇasya rohiṇī |  
 rohiṇyām ahni jātāsi  
 rohiṇīy aṣīy oṣadhe ||4||

1. Let *marrow* come together with *marrow*,  
and your *joint* together with *joint*,  
together what of your *flesh* has fallen apart,  
together *sinew* and together your *bone*.
2. Let *marrow* be put together with *marrow*,  
let *bone* grow over [together] with *bone*.  
We put together your *sinew* with *sinew*,  
let *skin* grow with *skin*.
3. Let *hair* be put together with *hair*.  
[Rohinī-plant ('Grower')], fit together *skin* with *skin*.  
Let your *blood* grow with *blood*;  
let *flesh* grow with *flesh*.
4. Grower [are you], healer,  
grower of the broken *bone*.  
You are born on the Rohinī day,  
you are grower, o plant.

2.2. Other forms of body part lists include depictions of clothing, regalia and armaments of the deity. I analyzed such lists in a book published 2007 and will avoid repeating them here. For illustration, I shall cite only the instance of Yt. 15,57, with the depiction of Vaiiu starting from his head-decoration on (the figure being a repetition figure, *symplokē*, with a *complex anaphora*: **A B C D** /

**A B E D / A B F D / A B G D ...**), in which the context on both sides remains constant, the mid-term of the construction containing the only variable element with reference to clothing and armament:

vāēm zaraniiō.*xaodəm* yazamaide  
 vāēm zaraniiō.*pusəm* yazamaide  
 vāēm zaraniiō.*minəm* yazamaide  
 vāēm zaraniiō.*vāṣəm* yazamaide  
 vāēm zaraniiō.*caxrəm* yazamaide  
 vāēm zaraniiō.*zaēm* yazamaide  
 vāēm zaraniiō.*vastrəm* yazamaide

We worship Vaiiu, the one with the golden *head decoration*,  
 We worship Vaiiu, the one with the golden *diadem*,  
 We worship Vaiiu, the one with the golden *necklace*,  
 We worship Vaiiu, the one with the golden *chariot*,  
 We worship Vaiiu, the one with the golden *wheel*,  
 We worship Vaiiu, the one with the golden *weapon*,  
 We worship Vaiiu, the one with the golden *robe*/*vestments*'.

**2.3. Body as list:** Under this rubric, we observe the highly interesting metaphoric type characterized, first, by the ritual *pronouncement* of cursing spells *on body parts of a figurine* (a voodoo-like doll or [schematic] statue).

**2.3.1.** I comment on lists in formulae of rites of ritual *binding*, *burying* and *piercing* of figurines in Vedic and beyond in (Sadovski 2012). Here I present only two illustrative examples of body part enumerations. The first one concerns enumerative *binding spells* in maledictions:

**2.3.1.1.** In Indo-Iranian tradition, the basic mantra structure is represented by binding formulae like the one of AVŚ. 7,73[70], 4–5: 'I [am] bind[ing] X [']s body (parts a, b, c etc.)':

ápāñcau ta ubháu *bāhú*  
 ápi nahyām;y *ās,yàm* |  
 agnér devásya manyúnā  
 téna te 'vadhiṣam havih̥ ||4||  
 ápi nahyāmi te *bāhú*  
 ápi nahyām;y *ās,yàm* |  
 agnér ghorásya manyúnā

téna te 'vadhiṣam havīh ||5||

Turned back/behind are your two *arms*.

I bind (your) *mouth*.

With the wrath of god Agni

I destroyed your oblation.

I bind your *arms*,

I bind (your) *mouth*.

With the wrath of terrible Agni

I destroyed your oblation.

**2.3.1.2.** Parallels from other (Indo-European) traditions come from Greek magic spells, where we find the same basic structure—and the same form of arranging the spells in *increasing* order of the terms (again, ‘Behaghel’s law’)—e.g. on a cursing plate from Attica, beginning of the 4th century BCE:

*Side A:* (1) I bind down Theagenes, his *tongue* and his *soul* and the *words* he uses;

(2) I also bind down the *hands* and *feet* of Pyrrhias, the cook, his *tongue*, his *soul*, his *words*; [...]

(8) I also bind down the *tongue* of Seuthes, his *soul*, and the *words* he uses, just like his *feet*, his *hands*, his *eyes*, and his *mouth*;

(9) I also bind down the *tongue* of Lamprias, his *soul*, and the *words* he uses, just like his *feet*, his *hands*, his *eyes*, and his *mouth*.

*Side B:* *All these* I bind down, I make them disappear, I bury them, I nail them down (Graf 1997, 122).

On evidence for such practices in Indo-Iranian see (Sadovski 2012, 334ff.); since the RV Khilas and esp. in the Kauśika-Sūtra and texts of the (Black) YV, we have scattered evidence for such rites of *burying figurines* or other objects (*kṛtyā-*) and treating (binding, piercing, shooting at) such objects systematically, limb by limb, to damn a person (just like in Graeco-Egyptian magic rites described by Graf 1997, 134ff.). There is a huge literature about Greek and Graeco-Egyptian, but also earlier Egyptian and ancient Mesopotamian traditions of binding and burying spells, apparently without any reference to Indo-Iranian parallels. We even possess little sculptural representations, like the following instances:

**2.3.2.** *Verba concepta*—mantras of blessing or curse—can exercise their effect not only when being recited: a further projection of their performative force is

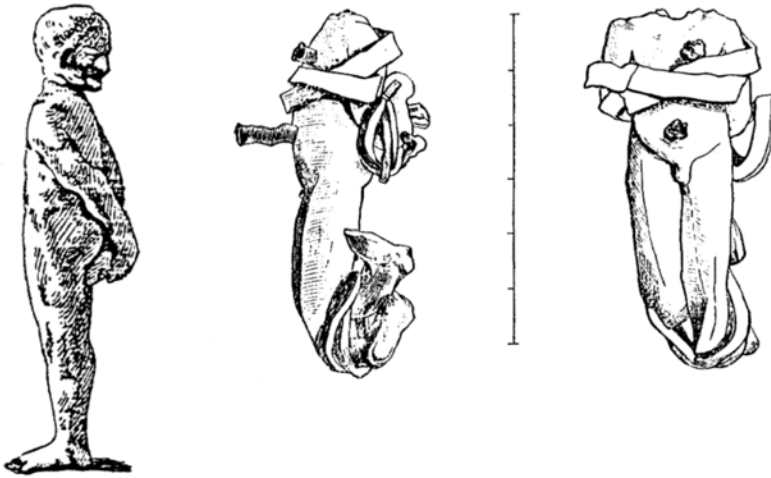


Figure 12.1: Left side: Lead figurine from Athens, first published in *Mélusine* 9, 1898–1899, 104, fig. 2. Right side: Decapitated lead figurine from Athens (cf. Faraone 1991, fig. 6–7, 2001), first publ. in *Philologus* 61, 1902, 37.

achieved by *writing* sacred syllables of such spells *on body parts* (verbally and/or on a figurine/statue/doll).

Such practices do not concern exclusively the sphere of ‘black magic’; there is also the positive version of the ‘*body as list*’ type: This is the case of the special genre of *benedictions* written on a statue or picture of the body of a divine being. A literally eloquent example is contained in the pictures of the Hindu deity Hanuman with Devanāgarī mantras of benediction written on his limbs, published by Fritz Staal in (Alper 1989, 55).

**3. ‘*Glotto-logia*’:** Among what I subsume under ‘*glotto-logical lists*,’ there are elaborated sequences of language items and metalinguistic analogies. It is about ‘linguistic mannerisms’ on various levels of poetical language—plays with objective language items, *ana-logiae*, meta-linguistic issues and idiolectal, nonce

formations used by the poets on a range scale between *glosso-lalein*<sup>33</sup> and ‘*glosso-logein*.’

**3.1. Syntaxis:** To start with higher levels of rhetoric and stylistics, we often meet variations of *inflexional elements*, esp. in the *esoteric declension* of a divine epithet or name:

**3.1.1.** In case of variation of *nominal case-forms* with different case desinences, classical rhetoric theory speaks of a *polyptoton*. On this figure of speech see (Klein 2000, 133ff.) and (Sadovski 2006, 529f., esp. § 2.1.1.2) in which cf. examples like TS 4,5,1–2, with *six different forms* of the divine epithet *śívá-* (*śívátamā*, *śívám*, *śívā*, *śívā́*, *śívām*, *śívēna*) and RV. 4,7,11ab, with three different forms within only one hemistich (*ṛṣú*, *ṛṣúnā*, *ṛṣúm*):

- TS 4,5,1–2:

*yā* ta iṣuḥ **śívátamā**  
**śívám** babhūva te dhānuḥ /  
**śívā́** śaravyā yā táva  
 táyā no rudra mṛḍaya // (b)  
*yā* te rudra **śívā́** tanūr  
 ághorápāpakāśinī // (c) [...]  
**śívām** giritra tām kuru [...] (d)  
**śívēna** vācasā tuvā  
 gírīśāchā vadāmasi / [...] // (e)

That arrow of thine which (is) the most gracious/propitious,  
 what is thy propitious bow,  
 what (is) thy propitious arrow(-missile),  
 with this (one), Rudra, be thou mild/merciful to us. [...]  
 That body of thine, Rudra, which is propitious,  
 not formidable, not of bad/evil look [...]  
 make it, o mountain-guardian, (a) propitious (one) [...]  
 With a propitiatory speech  
 we speak to you, (o) mountain-dweller [...].

- RV. 4,7,11ab:

**ṛṣú** yád ánnā **ṛṣúnā** vavákṣa  
**ṛṣúm** dūtām kṛṇute yahvó agnīḥ /

<sup>33</sup>On the notion of *glosso-lalia* see (Güntert 1921, 23–54, esp. 30f.) and cf. (Sadovski 2012) on concepts of the sphere of laletics and their Indo-Iranian dimensions (*japa-*; *vipra-* language etc.).

Wenn er gierig die Speisen (verzehrend) mit der gierigen (Flamme) wächst, so macht der jüngste Agni den gierigen (Wind) zu seinem Boten (Geldner 1951–1957, 1, ad loc.).

- *Eight variants of four different case-forms of the name of the Fire-god agni- appear at the ‘locus classicus’ RV. 1,1a-5a.6b-7a.9b,<sup>34</sup> with identical stem-vowel / case-ending complexes in different morphological sandhi-forms each—contracted; elided; with or without accent; with -ḥ vs. -r etc.*

**3.1.2.** In the specific case which I will call “*pam-ptoton*,” we discover a remarkable later mantra listing a complete paradigm of all eight (= 7+1) case forms of Rāma’s name, in order of a nominal paradigm as taught by Pāṇini (+Voc.):

Rām.-Mahātmyam 1,1 (cf. Deeg 1995, 59; Liebich 1919, 14f.):	Singular	
śrīrāmāḥ śaraṇaṃ samastajagatām,	Nom.	The venerable Rāma [Sing. Nom.] is the refuge of all beings.
rāmam vinā kā gatī,	Acc.	Which road/way [is] without Rāma?
rāmeṇa pratihanyate kalimalam,	Instr.	By Rāma, the stain of the Kali epoch is averted.
rāmāya kāryam namaḥ;	Dat.	It is to Rāma veneration has to be done/offered.
rāmāt trasyati kālabhīmahujago,	Abl.	In front of Rāma, the snake Kālabhīma trembles.
rāmasya sarvaṃ vaśe,	Gen.	In Rāma’s power is “(the) all” / entire (universe).
rāme bhaktir akhaṇḍitā bhavatu –	Loc.	Let the devotion/dedication to Rāma be uninterrupted,
me rāma tvam evāśrayaḥ	– Voc. –	to me, o Rāma, be you support!

**3.2. Morpho-logia:** On this level, we find, for example, lists of concepts in all ‘gender’ forms, like the ones in masculine/feminine/neuter, *pumams- – strī- – na(strī)pumsaka-*, in the Paippalāda-Samhitā:

<sup>34</sup>See (Sadovski 2006, 530).



AVP. 6,8:	Gender	
<b>sahasva</b> <i>yātudhānān</i>	Masc.	Suppress the <i>sorcerers</i> ,
<b>sahasva</b> <i>yātudhān,yah</i>	Fem.	suppress the <i>sorceresses</i> ,
<b>sahasva</b> <i>sarvā rakṣāmsi</i>	Neut.	suppress <i>all demons</i> :
<b>sahamānā</b> <sub>s,y</sub> oṣadhe	Generalization	you are suppressing, o Plant!

**3.3.** And for what regards the ‘*Phono-logia magica*’ in mantras, we see harmonic *sequences of phonological elements* distributed in proportional and (numerically) rational, quantifiable ways, in sound ‘symmetries.’<sup>35</sup> Peter Raster discovered such ‘symmetries’ of *sound classes* for Rigveda, where groups of consonant and vowel phonemes form *integral multiples of the lucky number Eight*; see figures, e.g. in RV 1,1:

- *Consonants* in the first hymn of the RV exhibit statistically significant occurrence frequencies: they seem to be distributed in four classes, according to the features ‘voiced’ vs. ‘voiceless’ and ‘aspirated’ vs. ‘unaspirated,’ in the following way:

1	voiceless unaspirated consonants	<i>k</i> (4), <i>c</i> (3), <i>t</i> (32), <i>p</i> (8), <i>ś</i> (6), <i>ṣ</i> (7), <i>s</i> (20)
2	voiceless aspirated consonants	<i>ch</i> (1), <i>h</i> (7)
3	voiced unaspirated consonants	<i>g</i> (13), <i>ṅ</i> (2), <i>j</i> (4), <i>ñ</i> (2), <i>d</i> (2), <i>n</i> (1), <i>d</i> (17), <i>n</i> (21), <i>m</i> (22), <i>y</i> (16), <i>r</i> (25), <i>v</i> (35)
4	voiced aspirated consonants	<i>dh</i> (5), <i>bh</i> (7), <i>h</i> (4)

The occurrence frequencies of all the four classes are *integral multiples of 8*:

- Relation between the frequencies of the voiced and voiceless consonants: 176: 88 = 2 : 1.
- Relation between the frequencies of the aspirated and unaspirated consonants: 24 : 240 = 1 : 10.

<sup>35</sup>See (Raster 1992, 22).

	voiced	voiceless	total sum	[1] voiceless unaspirated consonants	80 = 10 x 8
aspirated	16	8	24	[2] voiceless aspirated consonants	8 = 1 x 8
unaspirated	160	80	240	[3] voiced unaspirated consonants	160 = 20 x 8
total sum	176	88	264	[4] voiced aspirated consonants	16 = 2 x 8

- Similar proportions can be established for vowels, too, according to four specific classes. Also here, the occurrence frequencies of all the four classes are *integral multiples of 8*.

### 3.4. *Semasio-logia* vs. *onomasio-logia*:

3.4.1. On poetic uses of *paronomasia*, Vedic / Avestan parallels have been collected by (Gonda 1959, 232ff. Klein 2000) and (Klein 2006) (appellatives), and (Sadovski 2007) (epithets / *nomina propria*), both last studies being presented for the first time in: (Pinault and Petit 2006), before being then included in larger monographs of their authors. — Here only one key example, analysed in (Sadovski 2007, 533) from the perspective of *paronomasia*, taken now in its relevance with regard to forms of phonologically marked lists:

- Specific item(s) remain[s] constant; general context varies and form (complex) list(s)—RV. 5,40,1c-4b, with *soma*-cult attributes, epiclipsis and epithets of Indra:

*vṛṣ*ann indra *vṛṣ*abhir *vṛ*ttrahantama //1//  
*vṛṣ*ā grāvā *vṛṣ*ā mádo  
*vṛṣ*ā sómo ayám sutáh /  
*vṛṣ*ann indra *vṛṣ*abhir *vṛ*ttrahantama //2//  
*vṛṣ*ā tvā *vṛṣ*añam huve  
vájriṅ citrābhīr ūtibhīḥ /  
*vṛṣ*ann indra *vṛṣ*abhir *vṛ*ttrahantama //3//  
ṛjīṣī vajrī *vṛṣ*abhás turāṣāt  
chuṣmī rájā *vṛ*ttrahá somapāvā /

- [...] (o) **bull** Indra, with the **bulls**, you (great)est **Vṛ**tra-killer!  
 2. **Bull**(-like) is the pressing-stone, **bull**(-like) the intoxication,  
**bull**(-like) this Soma, (when) pressed-out,  
 (o) **bull** Indra, with the **bulls**, you (great)est **Vṛ**tra-killer!  
 3. (As a) **bull**, I (am) call(ing) you, the **bull**,  
 o Vajra-bearer, with (your) wonderful helps/favors,  
 (o) **bull** Indra, with the **bulls**, you (great)est **Vṛ**tra-killer!  
 4. Marc-drinking, vajra-bearing, a **bull**, overcoming the powerful,  
 a courageous king, a **Vṛ**tra-killer and soma-drinker [...]!

**3.4.2. Etymo-logia magica:** Beyond the *semasio*-logical word-plays in **3.4.1**, I would like to underline two types of esoteric lists: The first are *etymo*-logical or pseudo-etymological associations in mantras per analogiam. The magic (creative or destructive) of ‘etymological’ (= etymologically right or wrong!) associations include the following aspects:

**3.4.2.1.** Explicative ‘*etymologisation*’ of epithets, for exegetic purposes: Evidence of the relation between so-called ‘semantic etymologies’ and magic in the Veda has been investigated e.g. by (Oldenberg 1919, 221ff.; Deeg 1995, 58ff., 75ff.; Bronkhorst 2001, 147ff.). See further following two instances of *esoterical* plays with divine epithets like the name of *Viṣṇu* or the appellative for ‘yoke,’ *dhūr-*, in invocations—from AVP 6,9,2ab [= TB 2,4,7,1(2)ab]:

*viṣuvān viṣṇo* bhava  
 t<sub>u</sub>vam yo nṛpatir mama

O *Viṣṇu*, be the culminating point (*viṣuvánt-*),  
 thou who art my lord. (cf. ed. Griffiths)

or from TS. 1,1,4,1de:

*dhūr* asi; *dhūrva* tám yò ’<sub>a</sub>smán *dhūr*vati  
 tám *dhūrva* yám vayám *dhūr*vāmas

Thou art the *yoke*. *Injure* him who *injures* us,  
*injure* him whom we *injure*.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup>See (Keith 1914, 1, 4; Deeg 1995, 65).

as well as in the typical Indo-Iranian genre of what I call ‘auto-doxological hymns’ (“self-praises” of a deity, cf. the Avestan Yašts 1 and 15 with the Vedic *ātmastutis*, like e.g. in RV. 10,48 and 10,49) such as the one of Vaiiu speaking of himself in Yt. 15,43 of the Avesta<sup>37</sup>:

<i>vanō.vīspā</i> ṇama ahmi [...]	<u>A-B C D</u>
auuṭ <i>vanō.vīspā</i> ṇama ahmi	<u>E A-B C D</u>
yaṭ uua ḍama <i>vanāmi</i>	<u>F G A'</u>
<i>vohuuaršte</i> ṇama ahmi [...]	<u>H-I C D</u>
auuṭ <i>vohuuaršte</i> ṇama ahmi	<u>E H-I C D</u>
yaṭ <i>vohū vərəziāmi</i>	<u>F H I</u>

I am ‘*All-Vanquisher*’ by name,  
 Therefore I am ‘*All-Vanquisher*’ by name  
 because I *vanquish* both creations,  
 I am ‘*Good-Doer / Bene-factor*’ by name,  
 Therefore I am ‘*Good-Doer / Bene-factor*’ by name  
 because I *do good / bene-fit*.

**3.4.2.2.** Not only *verba sacra* stand for *res sacrae*—but also *res sacrae* occur because of *verba sacra*: This phenomenon concerns the ‘inverse’ influence of word and sound structures on ritual actions by association chains. We can cite e.g. the method of choosing ritual plants (only) on the basis of their names—like the ones of the exemplary list of AVŚ. 8,8,3 (cf. Bloomfield 1897, 117f., 583f.):

amūn *aśvattha* niḥ *śṇṇṇi*  
*khādā*mūn *khadirā*jirám |  
 tājád*bhāṅga* iva bhajantām  
 hánt<sub>v</sub> enān *vadhako vadhāih* ||3||

Tear as under those (enemies), o *Aśvattha* (*ficus religiosa*)!  
 devour (*khāda*) them, o *Khadira* (*acacia catechu*)!  
 Like the *Tājadbhāṅga* (*ricinus communis*) they shall be broken  
 (*bhaj*)!  
 May the *vadhaka*-(tree) kill them with (its) weapons (*vadha*-).

<sup>37</sup>Details in (Sadovski 2006, 534f.).

**3.4.3.** *Polysemics* can be involved as a device in ritual poetry especially in the case of mystical associations of divergent meanings of a sound complex—cf. the associative play with polysemantic words like *suvarṇa*—are to be found throughout Indian poetical tradition, also in post-Vedic times, like in the beautiful ‘manneristic’ example of Rāmāyana 5,32,45:

*suvarṇasya suvarṇasya*  
*suvarṇasya* ca bhāvinī /  
 rāmeṇa prahitaṃ devī  
*suvarṇasyā*ṅgurīyakam

Rāma sends you, fair princess, this ring,  
 made of gold [*suvarṇa*-], of beautiful colour [*suvarṇa*-]  
 and well-engraved [*suvarṇa*-] letters and weighing a *suvarṇa*.<sup>38</sup>

Highlights of other types of catalogues and enumerations (as given above in the list in § 0.3., Table A) are discussed in two further studies to appear in the Proceedings of the Meetings of the Multilingualism Research Group. For what concerns the given matrix, a combined comparative and typological approach to the literary gender of lists and catalogues of Veda and Avesta indeed turns out to be heuristically fruitful—and to enrich our knowledge about the ways of reflection on the structures of the Universe and of the human microcosm in Indo-Iranian ritual poetry.

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<sup>38</sup>Cf. (Gonda 1959, 332), after H. R. Diwekar.

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## Chapter 13

### Elements of “Globalization” in Ancient Iranian Numismatics

*Andrea Gariboldi*

#### 13.1 The Exchange of Numismatic Patterns between East and West

In a recent contribution Joe Cribb has shown the importance of Greek culture as a source of coinage tradition in Central Asia (Cribb 2007). The distinctive nature of such a long monetary history originates from the Greek world that facing the nomadic and the Iranian cultures, slowly modified itself, still maintaining after many imitative issues its primitive marker of Greek continuity for over a thousand years.

The soldiers who followed Alexander carried with them many Greek coins (Rtveladze 2007, 195–198), and the subsequent foundation of Greek colonies in Central Asia also facilitated the diffusion of Greek monetary types, although Greek coins were mostly minted in the East after Alexander’s death, by his successors. Such posthumous issues continued for a long time some typical iconographic models, such as the portrait of the deified Alexander wearing a lion scalp, in the guise of a young Heracles, soon adopted by Seleucus I. These coins usually represent the king’s bust with divine attributes, on the obverse, and, on the reverse, a full-figure deity closely associated with the ruler or his dynasty, like Zeus, Athena, Heracles or Apollo. Heracles, in particular, was considered to be an ancestor of the Argead dynasty, but he was also an ideal protector of the king, since Heracles was first human and later an immortal god, thus forming a perfect link between man and god. On some Hellenistic coins of Bukhara and southern Sogdiana we find Heracles as well as Heracles and Zeus (Zejmal 1983, 244–246; Cribb 2007, 363–364, respectively).

The debated problem of the ontological status of the Hellenistic rulers, whether they were considered or considered themselves divine beings, at first arose with Alexander, and later it also deeply influenced the Iranian conception of kingship. Alexander, to tell the truth, was well conscious of his human nature and, according to Plutarch, he used to say that in his veins ran blood, not ichor (that is, the gods’ fluid, in *Alex.* 28, 2–3). However, with the Barbarians, he behaved as if he really were “of divine descent” (*ek theou geneseōs*). It is

important to stress that this formula is closely echoed in the well known (but still puzzling) *ek genous theōn* of the Greek version of the famous Šābuhr's royal inscription, that clearly was a sentence of Hellenistic derivation, targeting the Greek people living in the Persian empire (Panaino 2009, 209–256). Alexander's propaganda, in fact, was so rooted in Iran that it never disappeared (Gnoli 1995, 175; Gignoux 2007; Di Branco 2011). The myth of Alexander was resumed again during the Roman campaigns in the Near East in the third century CE, even affecting the self-representation of the Sassanians, who chose to use Dārā (Darius) to counter the incessant Roman propaganda focusing on Alexander. In the *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, for instance, we may note the curious epithet of *Dariardaxar* referred to Ardašīr I (Daryae 2007, 91–92; Gnoli 2003, 46–47). The emperor Caracalla considered himself a descendant of Alexander and openly imitated him during his Parthian campaigns,<sup>1</sup> as well as the first Sasanian monarch could claim that Dārā was his ancestor. This pseudo-historical tradition was probably contained in the lost *Xwadāy-nāmag*, "The Book of the Lords," that seems to be the source of Ardašīr's genealogy as stated by the Pahlavi text *Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān*, "The Deeds of Ardašīr son of Pābag," where Ardašīr I said to stem from the parentage of Sāsān and "from the lineage of king Darius" (*nāf ī dārāy šāh*) (Huyse 2003, 68; KAP III 19; Daryae 2002, 4–5).

The habit to assume some divine characteristics was maintained by Alexander's followers. Ptolemy I, for instance, as Alexander's successor in Egypt, wears the goatskin mantle of Zeus, and his coins in name of Alexander show the bold Macedonian ruler with an elephant scalp, adorned with the horn of Zeus Ammon, to celebrate his conquest of India. Seleucus I and Demetrius Poliorcetes bear the bull's horns, whilst Lysimachus carries the ram's horns of Zeus Ammon. All these attributes clearly evoke Alexander's visit to the temple of Zeus in Egypt (331 BCE), where he was recognised as son of this god.<sup>2</sup>

Actually, the exchange of communications between East and West was not restricted to royal ideology and iconography. In fact, we could say that the ancient economy also tended to a sort of "globalization". Thus the weight-system of the Hellenistic coins was the Athenian one, and it was maintained and locally adapted both by Alexander and by the Seleucids. It was even used as weight standard by the Parthians. Another important borrowing from the Seleucids was the adoption on Parthian coins of the Greek legend (in vertical lines), in order to identify the issuing authority, although on the first coins of Arsaces Aramaic inscriptions also

<sup>1</sup>See (Espinosa 1990, 45–46). The *Historia Augusta*, for example, clearly states that Caracalla *Alexandro Magno Macedoni aequandum putabat... eiusque gesta in ore semper habuit* (HA Car. II 1–2).

<sup>2</sup>See (Fleischer 2002, 59–61; Bosworth 2004, 383–385 Strab. 814 = FGhR, F 14).

appear. Furthermore, coins became an important means of transmission for the kings propagandistic messages (Dąbrowa 2008, 29–30). In occasion of the fifth Melammu Symposium held in Innsbruck (October 2002), I focused on the case of the royal title *Theopator* on Seleucid and Parthian coins, as a significant example of ideology of sacral kingship and as political propaganda message. The title *Theopator*, “one who has a father who is a god,” was specifically invented to legitimate Alexander Balas (150–145 BCE) as Seleucid king and son of the great Antiochus IV, hence this name probably inspired the titling of Phraates II, as son of Mithradates I *Theos*<sup>3</sup> and Artabanos I. This supervised use of the power of the images and of the words, was a basic innovation of Hellenistic politics reflected on coinage. Each monetary system, in fact, is merely a convention and there is no compelling reason that a coin should be a round metal object, showing designs on both faces. In Mesopotamia, for example, before the Achaemenid time, people adopted silver bracelets as coins, bars or plain globules of metal; in Afghanistan circulated silver bent bar-shaped coins with non pictorial impressions, these latter coins were also employed in the Gandhāra region. These bars inspired the beginning of the Indian currency (Bopearachchi 1999, 83–85).

Thus, we may say that the importance of Alexander’s legacy is great also in the field of Iranian coinage. In relation to the monetary system of Central Asia can we talk about a “Greek globalization,” which started with Alexander? This question is only apparently modern, for we use the word “globalization,” a word invented by social science that was later misused by economists, from the 1980s onwards. But Plutarch, in his *de Alexandri fortuna* (*Moralia* 331E–332D), attributes to Alexander the noble wish of unifying the world of the Barbarians with the Greek one, following the Greek model of peace and justice, and the Macedonian also expresses the will to spread Greek philosophy as far as India. Alexander, according to Plutarch, even felt the need to “strike new coins and to forge (*paracharattein*) the pieces of the Barbarians with the mark of the Greek government.”<sup>4</sup> So the biographer of Cheronea seems sure that Alexander intended to “globalize” the world through Greek culture. This pattern of historiography became a *topos* starting from Droysen (1877), who stressed Alexander’s supposed *Verschmelzungspolitik*, “policy of fusion.”<sup>5</sup> This idea persists until modern times:

<sup>3</sup>See (Assar 2004, 88; Fig. 3: 18 = S 10.17), considers the first Parthian coins with the inscription *Theopator*, as a special issue of Mithradates I to honour his deified father, Phriapatius. Cf. (Gariboldi 2004b, 374–377).

<sup>4</sup>Plut. *Mor.* I 10, 332D. Briant 2003, 267 underlines that Alexander is presented in Plutarch as the unifier of a divided world, the inspiring principle of universal harmony, always moved by his virtue. See also (Le Rider 2003, 338–340).

<sup>5</sup>Cf. (Bosworth 1980, 14), writes that the evidence of this policy of fusion, so far produced, is “little or nothing.” On the construction of the ethnic identity between Greeks and “Barbarians,” see (Sánchez

but does it really correspond to Alexander’s will? Or maybe the diffusion of Hellenism was a phenomenon on which Alexander himself had no control?

The analysis of the coins, as it has been underlined by Le Rider (2003), reveals that Alexander actually never imposed his coin types, which were created in the West, on the Barbarians. In fact, no new mint was opened in Babylon or East of the Tigris, and darics were still issued, in continuity with the local tradition. Moreover, Athenian or pseudo-Athenian coins amply circulated in the Eastern provinces of the Achaemenid empire, accepted by weight (Schlumberger 1953).

In this prudent monetary policy it is recognizable the same pragmatism that suggested to Alexander to behave in Persia as “friend” of Cyrus,<sup>6</sup> and to promote the cult of the founder of the Achaemenid empire, after the restoration of his royal tomb in Persepolis.<sup>7</sup> Alexander followed a political continuity that provided for the natural transmission of the power from the Achaemenids directly to the Greeks. As soon as he came to Babylon, even though he was preceded by very bad *omina* from the Chaldeans (they said that a criminal was sitting on the throne of Babylon (Panaino 2000, 42) he tried to substitute himself for Darius, assuming the late Achaemenid titling of “King of the Lands” (LUGAL KUR.KUR) and “King of the Universe” (LUGAL ŠÚ), according to some astronomic Babylonian tablets which refer to Alexander’s early achievements against Darius.<sup>8</sup>

### 13.2 Two International Coinages: “Owls” and “Archers”

Before Alexander only two coinages were diffused at an “international” level: on the one hand, the Athenian coins with the typical representation of Athena’s head, on the obverse, and the owl, on the reverse (Le Rider 2001, Pl. 8, 7); on the other hand, the darics carrying the image of the Great King as archer (Carradice 1987, Type IIIb; Le Rider 2001, Pl. 5, 13). Athens, following the creation of the first Delio-Attic league in 477 BCE, forced its allies to use the Athenian coinage, in order to increment its economic and fiscal revenues. But the diffusion of the “owls” (*glaukes*) implied also a strong assertion of self-identity.

2009, in part. 39). For a balanced opinion on Alexander’s universalism, see (Musti 1990, 739; Lane Fox 2007; Muccioli 2012, 193–209).

<sup>6</sup>Arr. *Anab.* III 27, 5.

<sup>7</sup>See (Bosworth 2004, 214). See also (Strab. 730; Arr. *Anab.* VI 28, 4–8).

<sup>8</sup>See (Monte 1997, 4–8), and note 24. The curious title of “King (coming) from West,” LUGAL šá TA KUR *ha-ni-i*, on a tablet dated to 329/8 BCE, literally “the King (coming) from the land of *hanû*” to indicate the lands to the West of the Euphrates, is very rare and it was likely intended to remark the extraneousness of Alexander to the local culture. Obviously, the nobles and the priests of Babylon, attached to the privileges depending from the Temple of Marduk, bestowed the titles of the former Babylonian kings to Alexander, on condition that he did not interfere too much with the Temple’s life. See also (Monte 2001, 140–148; Muccioli 2004, 111–113).

The Persians were the first ones to recognize the importance of the propagandistic significance of the coins, and soon introduced a monetary tradition which lasted for centuries. The idea was simple but effective: Darius I, around 510 BCE, ordered his form/image (*charakter*) be struck on lenticular globules of pure metal, in place of the zoomorphic figures of Croesus’ coins (560–546 BCE).<sup>9</sup> There were no inscriptions on Achaemenid coins, but the mighty image of the Great King of the Persians circulated everywhere. The king was represented crowned, with the regal vest and carrying bow and arrows; he looked, therefore, quite menacing. The Greeks were afraid of these “archers” (*toxotai*), both on the battlefield and as economic rivals. The image of the royal archer is present also on provincial and dynastic coins of Asia Minor.

It seems to me interesting to remark that the Persians learned to use coins from the Lydians, but they were soon able to invent the first imperial monetary system in history. Darius’s reform was extremely important, because it was introduced a kind of bimetalism, based on a fixed ratio of exchange between gold and silver (1:13). In fact, one daric equals 20 shekels, and 6000 shekels make a talent. The division of the Persian talent into 6000 shekels was close to the Attic talent of 6000 drachms and this similarity caused a swift assimilation of the shekel to the drachm. The oldest mention of gold darics is an Athenian inscription, dated to 429/28 BCE, which contains the accounts of the temple-treasury of Athena Parthenos.<sup>10</sup> In Athens one gold stater of Darius was exchanged for 20 silver drachms. The international fame of the daric survived till the IV century CE, as the Latin poet Ausonius testifies (*Ep.* V 23), who refers to Roman *solidi* as *darii*.

Alexander, during the pillage of the treasure of Susa, found as many as 9000 gold talents bearing the *charaktēra dareikon*, the “mark of Darius”<sup>11</sup>, and he did not have any scruples to use these coins, even though they belonged to his worst enemy. Thus the daric was the principal coin adopted by Alexander soon after the death of Darius III, in 330. The Macedonian commander, under the fortified walls of a Sogdian citadel on the rock, where the sons of the king Oxyartes (among them there was also Roxane, his future wife) took refuge, promised 300 darics to the first gallant warrior who could cross the town walls.<sup>12</sup> The Greeks not only used Persian coins, but they even coined new darics and double-darics, after 323. This issue was again characterized by the running image of the Persian king, which was not modified with respect to the earlier pattern (Le Rider 2003, 357; Pl. 7,

<sup>9</sup>See (Carradice 1987, 73–78; Alram 1996; Le Rider 2001, 123–164; Gariboldi 2004a, 134–138).

<sup>10</sup>See (Carradice 1987, 75–76; Alram 1996, 36; Le Rider 2001, 145 (IG, I<sup>3</sup>, 383)).

<sup>11</sup>Diod. XVII 66, 1–2.

<sup>12</sup>Arr. *Anab.* IV 18, 7; Strab. 517; (Le Rider 2003, 324–325).

11). Only the addition of some Greek letters on the obverse, and a different incuse wavy punch on the reverse, betrays its Greek fabrication.

In this variegated framework of cultural relations, it could also happen the opposite, in fact the Persians coined Athenian types, too. Many imitations of Athenian coins circulated in Bactria, Sogdiana and Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> Some pseudo-Athenian tetradrachms curiously bear the same control mark or signature (STA-MNA), which is present on some Eastern-mint double darics, perhaps coined by the satrap Stasanor.<sup>14</sup> The phenomenon of the imitations is surprisingly widespread throughout the Near East, especially in Egypt, where the Athenian tetradrachms occupy a relevant place in coin hoards, between the fifth and the fourth century BCE. Modern numismatists generally believe that actually a lot of Athenian coins were locally imitated in Egypt during the fourth century, probably to pay Greek mercenaries, or simply because people were accustomed to conduct their business by means of Athenian tetradrachms.<sup>15</sup> When Artaxerxes III Ochos conquered Egypt in 343, he struck a series of pseudo-Athenian tetradrachms substituting the normal ethnic AΘE with his name and title: “Artaxerxes Pharaoh” (*rthššš pr-c*), written in Demotic.<sup>16</sup> These Athenian imitations continued, adopting the Aramaic language, under the local rule of Sabakes (*swyk*) and Mazakes (*mzdk*), the last two satraps in Egypt during the reign of Darius III.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, we may argue that there was a strict control of the Persian authorities over the empire-wide monetary policy. In Achaemenid Babylonia, for example, even small quantities of “silver” (*kaspu*) were checked on the basis of a predetermined standard, called *ginnu* in cuneiform texts, and this customary marked silver was protected by the king’s law (Zournatzi 2000, 256–259; Vargyas 1999). Herodotus reports that Aryandes, the governor of Egypt under Darius I, wishing to emulate his monarch, ordered to strike pure silver coins and therefore Darius put him to death for being a rebel.<sup>18</sup> Clearly it was considered a crime of *lèse-majesté* to mint coins without royal permission.

The capacity to conform decisions to local situations is one of the most relevant qualities adopted by the Achaemenid policy. For instance, the above mentioned Mazakes, was even rewarded by Alexander for surrendering the province without fighting, by being appointed as the new governor of Babylon, where he

<sup>13</sup>See (Nicolet-Pierre and Amandry 1994; Boppearachchi 1999, 87). It is not always easy to determine if these imitations were coined before or after Alexander the Great.

<sup>14</sup>See (Nicolet-Pierre and Amandry 1994, 52–53; Le Rider 2003, 279–282).

<sup>15</sup>See (Buttrey 1982; Figueira 1998, 528–533; Le Rider 2003, 220–224, with further bibliography).

<sup>16</sup>See (Mørkholm 1974; Kraay 1976, 216; 294–295; Alram 1986, 117 n. 370 (Pl. 12)).

<sup>17</sup>See (Nicolet-Pierre 1979; Alram 1986, ns. 371; 372; 376 (Pl. 12), 117–118; Briant 2003, 76–77).

<sup>18</sup>Hdt. IV 166. About the fiscal implications of the silver of Aryandes, see Descat (1989, 85–87).



continued to coin pseudo-Athenian tetradrachms under his name.<sup>19</sup> Tissaphernes (400–395 BCE), satrap of Sardis and Karanos under Artaxerxes II, also coined a series of imitative bronze and silver Athenian coins, but he placed on the obverse a male bearded head, wearing a soft hat with earflap and diadem above (probably his idealized portrait; Le Rider 2001, 182 Pl. 8, n. 9), instead of Athena’s head. The type of headdress is similar to the soft hats worn by the early Arsacids (Curtis 2007, 8–9). On the reverse of a bronze coin, we see the classic owl, with the abbreviated Greek legend BA(*sileōs*), “of the King,” in place of the ethnic.

### 13.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, Athenian coin types were present from the Mediterranean area to Central Asia, and the same was for the darics, which have been found especially in Asia Minor, Greece, Cyprus and even in Sicily, at Avola (Carradice 1987, 79). To conclude, a paradox is worthy of a mention: Alexander used darics in Babylon and Central Asia, and the Greeks coined new Persian-style coins after his death. The Achaemenid kings coined pseudo-Athenian coins from Egypt to Bactria. This sort of interplay or “globalization” of ancient monetary systems was an important medium for sharing goods, images and cultural identities. However, Alexander did not really try to substitute the Barbarian coins with the Greek ones, as one could think following Plutarch’s text,<sup>20</sup> but it was a spontaneous phenomenon, generated by pragmatic and time-serving acts of the rulers to manage economic problems. As a matter of fact, Alexander, as legitimate successor to Darius, also took possession of his coins. This event might have been less surprising for his contemporaries than it appears to us, living in the problematic globalization era, which nevertheless is still the result of business interests.

<sup>19</sup>See (Le Rider 2003, 284–290; Alram 1986, 119, n. 378 (Pl. 12)).

<sup>20</sup>In Plutarch the “globalization” is presented as a socio-cultural *koinonia*, “community” (Plut. *Alex.* 47, 5).

**Illustrations**



Figure 13.1: Athenian Tetrachm (c. 440–430 BCE)



Figure 13.2: Gold Daric (c. 480 BCE)



Figure 13.3: Gold Daric. Mint of Babylon (c. 331–311 BCE)



Figure 13.4: Pseudo-Athenian Tetradrachm of Artaxerxes III (343–338 BCE).

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## Chapter 14

### The Spread of the Cuneiform Culture to the Urartian North (IX–VII Century BCE)

*Mirjo Salvini*

Among the first Assyrian texts interpreted at the time of the deciphering of the cuneiform script, during the second half of the nineteenth century, we have those from the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad (Fuchs 1994, 407–409). The kingdom of Urartu stands out among the enemy countries of the Assyrian empire. Its syllabic writing *Ur-ar-tu* or *Ú-ra-ar-tu*, has enabled philologists to restore the phonetic value and original pronunciation of the name which the Bible has passed down to us as Ararat (André-Salvini and Salvini 2003), a term which today indicates the highest mountain of eastern Turkey, near the border with Armenia and Iran (Fig 14.1).



Figure 14.1: Mount Ararat, from the south (all photos by Mirjo Salvini)

The “Babylonian Mappa Mundi” on a cuneiform tablet of the eighth-seventh century BCE in the British Museum, puts Urartu among the most important places of the Ancient World (Horowitz 1988). In the trilingual inscription by the Achaemenid King Darius at Bisutun, the twentieth satrapy is named Uraštu in the Babylonian text and Armina (Schmitt 1980) in the Persian one. This is the earliest mention of the country and the ethnos of Armenia and goes back to the year 521 BCE (Malbran-Labat 1994, §6, 23, 24). This correspondence enables us to consider the history of Urartu as the beginning of the history of Armenia (Fig 14.2).



Figure 14.2: Darius' relief and inscription at Bisutun

In Eastern Turkey, along the coast of Lake Van, we find the ruins of Tušpa (Fig 14.3), the ancient capital of the Urartian kingdom. This old Urartian name survives in the appellation of Thospitis lacus by the classical authors (Ptolemaios, Plinius) and the mediaeval Tosp. The site of Van Kalesi with its monumental ruins was known in the Armenian tradition as Shamiramakert, the city of Semiramis.

#### 14.1 The Discovery of the Urartian Capital

The memory of the magnificent Urartian capital city has stayed alive since the end of the Urartian state, in the second half of the seventh century BCE. The Armenian tradition was established at a very early date by the historian Moses





Figure 14.3: South side of Van Kalesi, site of the Urartian capital Tušpa

Khorenatsi, who lived during the fifth century CE. He tells of the building of Shamiramakert, the “City of Semiramis,” by the legendary Assyrian queen whom classical tradition attributes with all kinds of grandiose architectural projects.

This tradition opened the way to the historical research and archaeological discoveries which have continued for almost two centuries now. When, in 1827, the young philosophy professor, F.E. Schulz, arrived in Van to study the ruins of Shamiramakert, he took with him the history of Armenia by Khorenatsi.

I quote now some passages from chapter 16, demonstrating through the example of certain figures the precise topographical and archaeological references found in this text: How after the death of Ara, Semiramis built the city and the aqueduct and her own palace (Khorenatsi 2006, fn. chap. 16).

[...] passing through many places, she arrived from the east at the edge of the salt lake [= Lake Van]. On the shore of the lake she saw a long hill [= Van Kalesi] whose length ran toward the setting sun [...] To the north it sloped a little, but to the south it looked up sheer

to heaven, with a cave in the vertical rock. [...] first she ordered the aqueduct for the river to be built in hard and massive stone [Fig. 14.4] [...] on the side of the rock that faces the sun [...] she had carved out various temples and chambers and treasure houses and wide caverns [Fig. 14.5] [...] and over the entire surface of the rock, smoothing it like wax with a stylus, she inscribed many texts, the mere sight of which makes anyone marvel [Fig. 14.6]. And not only this, but also in many places in the land of Armenia she set up stelae and ordered memorials to herself to be written with the same script.

Such a precise description must be based on reports of ancient travelers or dwellers rather than the works of the classical authors, as some scholar states.



Figure 14.4: Sustaining wall of the “Semiramis Canal,” built by King Minua, south of Van



Figure 14.5: The mausoleum of Argišti I on the south side of Van Kalesi with the “Khorchor”-Annals



Figure 14.6: Detail of Argišti I's Annals

I would like to provide a short sketch of Urartian history,<sup>1</sup> describing the cuneiform epigraphical sources beginning with the monumental complex of Shamiramakert (today's Van Kalesi, the Rock of Van).<sup>2</sup> From this center begun the diffusion of cuneiform writing over the Armenian Plateau. The various chronological phases of the Urartian settlement and the remains of some official buildings show the construction of Urartian power and the enlargement of the kingdom.

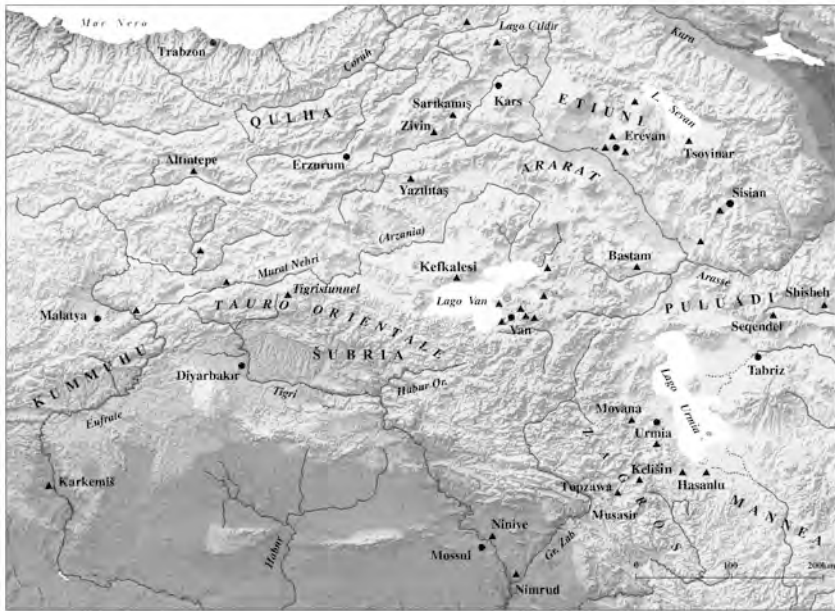


Figure 14.7: Distribution of the Urartian inscriptions

It is from this place, from Van Kalesi, that, from the end of the ninth century onwards, military expeditions of the Urartian kings set off to conquer an immense territory, stretching as far as the Euphrates in the west, Mount Sabalan in the east (in Iranian Azerbaijan), the basin of Lake Sevan in today's Armenia, and—

<sup>1</sup> See (Salvini 1995). In the Appendix, see the Urartian Chronology with the Assyrian synchronisms.

<sup>2</sup> See (Salvini 1986; Salvini 2001a).

beyond the mountain ranges of Taurus and Zagros—the modern region of Iraqi Kurdistan<sup>3</sup> (Fig 14.7).



Figure 14.8: The “Sardursburg” and one of the inscriptions of Sarduri First

The oldest building in Van Kalesi which we can date is the so-called “Sardursburg,” defined thus by Lehmann-Haupt who worked there at the end of the nineteenth century (Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 19ff.). This structure is so solid that, still today, it is in an excellent state of conservation. It is attached to the western slopes of Van Rock, not far from the shores of the lake. It consists of a few rows of great, well-squared limestone blocks, so large as to merit the definition of Cyclopaean wall<sup>4</sup> (Fig 14.8). Six cuneiform inscriptions are carved into these blocks in Assyrian language and Neo-Assyrian ductus. They are all duplicates of the text of Sarduri I, the founder of the Urtian capital Tušpa.

<sup>3</sup>Map 1:2.000.000, by TAVO B IV 12, *Östliches Kleinasien. Das Urtäerreich* (9. bis 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.), 1992; (Porter 2001).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. the measurements of the blocks by M. Salvini (2001d, 302–304).

Inscription of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, great king, powerful king, king of the universe, king of Nairi,<sup>5</sup> king without equal, great shepherd, who does not fear the fight, king who represses rebels. Sarduri says: I have brought here these foundation stones from the city of Alniunu, I have built this wall.<sup>6</sup>

With this written document, which was discovered in 1827 by Schulz, the pioneer of Urartian research, we have the beginning not only of the history of the Urartian kingdom, but also of written documentation for the entire, immense mountainous region stretching across what are now Eastern Turkey, Armenia and Iranian Azerbaijan. Sarduri, who was defeated by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III in the year 832 BCE (Seduri, the Urartian) (Grayson 1996, especially the “Black Obelisk,” 69), may be considered as the founder of the Urartian state and its capital Tušpa, even though the name of the city itself does not appear in the document.

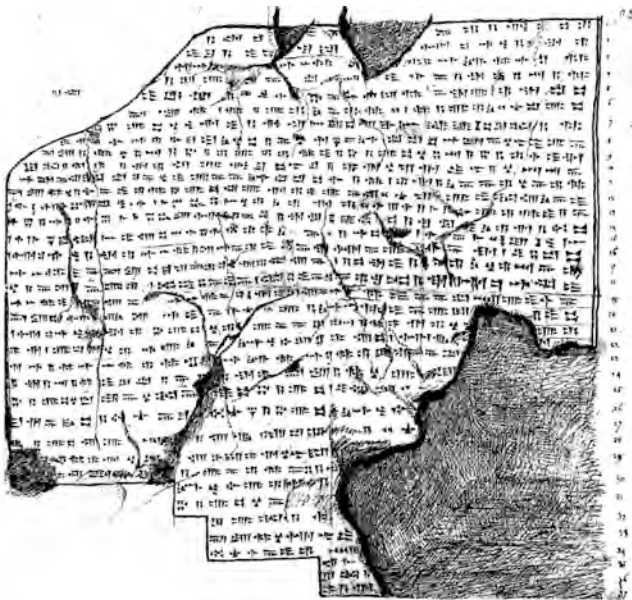


Figure 14.9: Original copy by F.E. Schulz of the first column of Argišti’s Annals (Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

<sup>5</sup>About the tradition of the toponym Nairi, see (Salvini 1998, 87–91).

<sup>6</sup>Analysis and translation: (Wilhelm 1986, 95–113; Salvini 2008, A 1-1a-f).



Figure 14.10: The rock inscription (top) of Xerxes in Van Kalesi and the original copy (bottom) made by Schulz in 1827

The most important achievement of Schulz has been the discovery and autography of 42 cuneiform inscriptions on the Rock of Van and in its vicinity (Fig 14.9), which were published posthumously in 1840.<sup>7</sup> He identified the trilingual inscription of Xerxes in Van Kalesi (Fig. 14.10), and distinguished his ductus from that of the other, older (at that time incomprehensible) inscriptions of an unknown mighty people. I would like to underline the fact that these inscriptions reached Europe many years before the discovery of the Assyrian capitals of Nineveh and Khorsabad, and 30 years before the deciphering of cuneiform.

The architecture of “Madir Burçu” differs from all the other Urartian fortifications known to us. Its position does not even enable us to identify it as a fortress. I have already put forward the hypothesis<sup>8</sup>—supported moreover also by other scholars—that it was, instead, a port structure such as a quay or wharf, presuming that the lake water level at the time of its construction was a few meters higher than today (fairly rapid increases and decreases in the water level have been noted in various eras). The Rock of Van could be partially surrounded by waters like a peninsula. The shore of the lake is so near that we can also imagine the existence of an ancient canal connecting the structure of the “Sardursburg” with the great water. The “Sardursburg” also served as a propyleum giving access to the higher levels of the Rock, that is to say, the citadel.

We have no other written records signed by Sarduri Ist documenting his deeds, but the very fact that he fought against the powerful Assyrian King Shalmaneser III demonstrates a certain political importance and military power. Thus he was the first founder of the Urartian kingdom. On the top of Van Rock there exists however a ruined rock niche with some traces of cuneiform writing (Fig 14.11). The text is incomplete and full of gaps, so that no name is preserved, neither of a king nor of a god. It is a sacral text listing animal sacrifices. In the mid of this niche there is a square hole for a stela, which is not preserved. Both language and ductus of this inscription are neo-assyrian, like the text on the “Sardursburg,” and the ductus is very similar. It must be therefore contemporary to Sarduri Ist. Here arises the problem of the provenance of cuneiform script in Urartu. Diakonoff’s theory of its derivation from the cuneiform ductus of the old Mittannian chancellery (D’jakonov 1963) based mostly on the linguistic connection between the Hurrian and Urartian languages.

However it cannot be accepted, because there is a huge chronological hiatus between the fourteenth and the ninth century. There are indeed no written records on the Urartian highlands during those five centuries. While the Hittite and the Mittannian empires of the second millennium used a Babylonian cuneiform *koine*, the northern states contemporary with the Assyrian empire were influenced by the

<sup>7</sup>See (Schulz 1840, 257–323).

<sup>8</sup>See above fn. 2.





Figure 14.11: Assyrian rock inscription on the south side of Van Kalesi

Assyrian script. See, e.g., the short approximative inscriptions of King Kapara of Guzana/Tell Halaf.

Before the foundation of the Urartian state with capital Tušpa many Assyrian campaigns were directed to the north of the Taurus Range, and already Tiglath-pileser I in the eleventh century and Shalmaneser III in the ninth century let written records on the border of the Urartian territory, like the famous reliefs and inscriptions on the “Tigristunnel”<sup>9</sup> (Fig 14.12). Tiglath-pileser Ist inscribed his name even in the hearth of the Nairi lands, on a rock near modern Malazgirt, north of Lake Van.<sup>10</sup>

The use of Assyrian at the Urartian court continued also by Sarduri’s successors besides the indigenous Urartian language. Sarduri’s son Išpuini introduced the use of the indigenous Urartian language, the language of the dynasty. He left us some building inscriptions which commemorate the construction of a system

<sup>9</sup>RIMA 2, N° 15 (Tiglath-pileser I); RIMA 3, N° 21–24 (Shalmaneser III). See also the discussion about the topographical position of the different inscriptions and reliefs by (Salvini 1988, 270–281).

<sup>10</sup>RIMA 2, N° 16.



Figure 14.12: Relief and inscription of Tiglath-Pileser Ist in the “Tigris tunnel,” near Lice (East Turkey, October 1984)

of fortresses around Van (Anzaf, Zivistan) and dedications to his “Lord,” god Haldi. Very soon he involved his son and heir apparent Minua in his military expeditions, directed to distant countries such as the region north of the Araxes and south of Lake Urmia. King Išpuini (end of the ninth century BCE) achieved the final unification into one state of all the peoples settled over a wide territory of the Armenian highland, and also the annexation of the territory east of the Zagros mountains, the modern territory of Iranian Azerbaijan.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately we have no idea of the ethnic composition of the new state or of the nature of the peoples settled there. The only information is given by the cuneiform documents which, from Išpuini on, are mostly redacted in the Urartian language. All we can say for the Urartian ethnic element, which was the driving force and center of the state, is that, according to their language, they were neither Semites nor IndoEuropeans. They are related only to the Hurrians who are attested from the end of the third to the beginning of the first millennium BCE in many regions of the Near East. However, the element binding the peoples unified in the Urartian kingdom was not only the use of the Urartian language in substitution of the Assyrian one.

<sup>11</sup> The sources are the texts of Išpuini (Salvini 2008, A 2) and those, more important, of Išpuini and Minua (Salvini 2008, A 3).

Išpuini was the first Urartian king who knew how to exploit the religious element, which would become the basis of the state.



Figure 14.13: Bilingual stela of Kelišin by Išpuini and Minua *in situ* (August 1976)

There are two major written documents testifying to this policy. The first is the Kelishin stela (Fig. 14.13), (Götze 1930; Salvini 1980a), erected on the 3000m. high pass of the Zagros range, which deals with a pilgrimage by Išpuini and his son Minua around 810 BCE to the temple of god Haldi in Muşaşir. The Kelišin stela shows that the city-state and international sanctuary of Muşaşir, situated in today's Iraqi Kurdistan, was controlled by the Urartians around 820–810 BCE, the period to which we must date the numerous joint inscriptions of Išpuini and Minua. The central role played by the cult of the national god Haldi emerges from all the elements of historical-epigraphic evidence today at our disposal.



Figure 14.14: Rock niche of Meher Kapısı, near Van, with the sacral inscription of Işpuini and Minua

As further proof of this situation we must remember that, in the Assyrian text of the “Sardursburg” by his father Sarduri Ist, there is no mention of God Haldi, nor in the other Assyrian sacral inscription in Van Kalesi quoted above which belongs to the same period. I am therefore convinced that the cult of Haldi, who was not an old Hurrian-Urartian god (unlike the weather god and the sun god), was introduced by Işpuini as the official cult of the state. The most meaningful and famous evidence of this is the open-air sanctuary of Meher Kapısı near Van, with its rock inscription (Fig. 14.14), (Salvini 1993–1997; Salvini 1994). This rock niche is covered by a long sacral inscription fixing the whole Urartian pantheon headed by the supreme triad, the national god Haldi, the weather God Teisheba and the Sun God Shiuini. It is a list of animal sacrifices offered to a long list of male gods, followed by the goddesses, which is connected with the seasonal works of the agriculture. It is clear that the presupposition for such a monument and its ideology was the conquest and the establishment of a protectorate over the city state and the sanctuary of Haldi in Muşaşir. Işpuini, introducing the cult of the national god Haldi, must be considered as the second founder of the Urartian state on a theocratic basis.

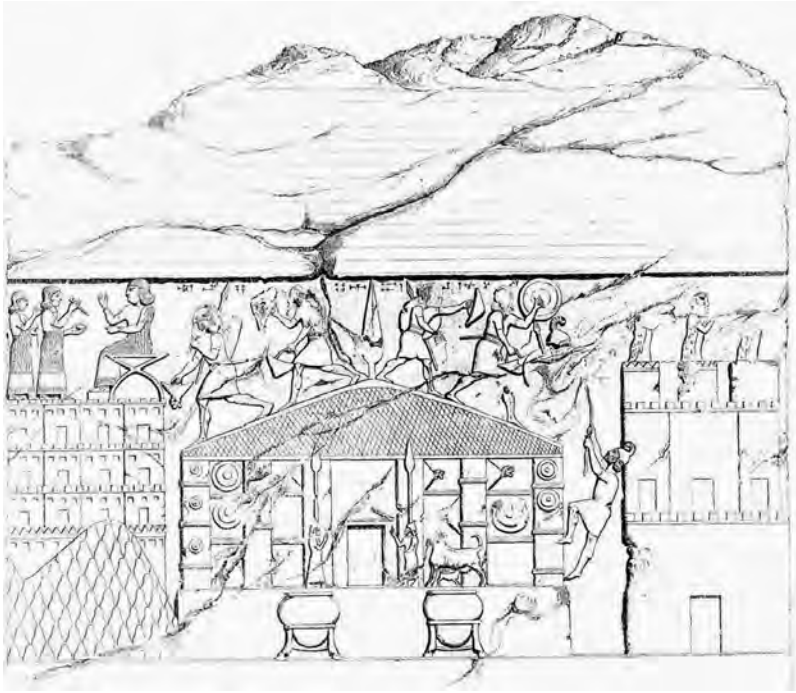


Figure 14.15: Looting of the Muşasir temple by the Assyrians in 714 BCE.  
Drawing by E. Flandin (Botta and Flandin 1846–1850, Pl. 142)

The Urartians, in fact, gave enormous importance to Haldi's temple at Muşasir, the major cult centre of the national god, from Işpuini up to the time of Rusa I at least, when the final clash with the Assyrians took place: I refer to the famous Eighth Campaign of Sargon and the sack of Muşasir in the year 714 BCE (Fig 14.15), (Thureau-Dangin 1912).

## 14.2 The Traces of King Minua in the Ancient Capital City of Tuşpa

The north wall of the citadel of Van Kalesi reveals four different phases (Fig 14.16). Whilst the upper two are of the Seljuk and Ottoman periods (excluding modern restorations), the two lower parts date to the Urartian era. The great size and quality of the squared-off limestone blocks at the base of the wall show similarities with the “Sardursburg” and must date back to the time of Sarduri I (ca. 840–830 BCE). The second phase consists of smaller blocks

of friable sandstone, but also dates back to the Urartian period. This is shown by the inscribed stones which are inserted here, even though they are not in their original position (Fig 14.17), (Salvini 1973). A study of these stones has shown that they are fragments of a lengthy inscription by Minua, son of Išpuini, which must have covered the façade of a dismantled building. The text I could reconstruct is a duplicate of an inscription (Salvini 1980b; Salvini 2008, A 5–2A-F.) celebrating Minua’s conquests over the lands north of the Araxes, in modern Armenia. The best-preserved example decorated the façade of a tower temple in Körzüt. The most important civil achievement of Minua is the 60 km long canal, which is still in function and the millenary tradition calls “Canal of Semiramis” (Fig 14.18).



Figure 14.16: North wall of the Urartian citadel on Van Kalesi (September 1969)

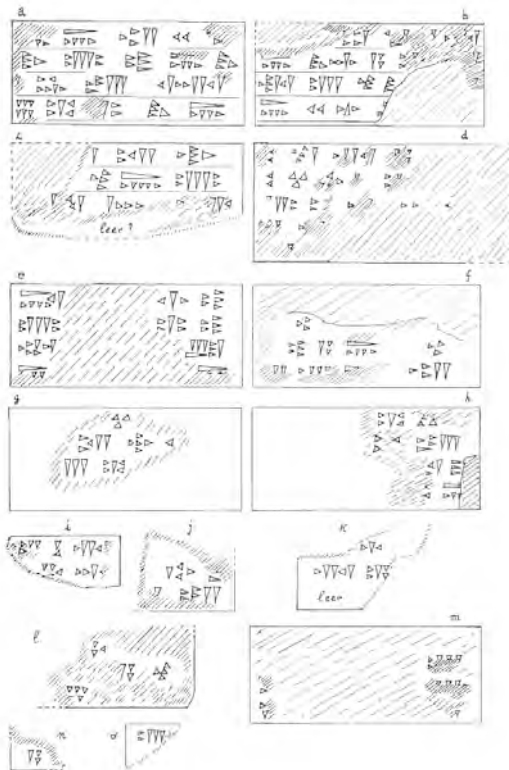


Figure 14.17: Fragments of an inscription by Minua reemployed in the citadel wall (from Salvini 1973, Abb. 5)

Various examples show the numerous different applications of the Urartian cuneiform script on Van Kalesi. On the northern slope of Van Kalesi there is a rectangular rock chamber with the following measurement: it is more than 20 meters long and nine meters wide, but only 2.5 meters high. The entrance is more than 8 meters wide. It is self-evident that this could not have been either as a tomb or a dwelling. The solution is provided by the inscription at the entrance: “Minua, son of Išpuini, has made this place a *siršin*” (Salvini 2008, A 5–68). In the cursing formula there is an explanation of this term and, thus, of the purpose of this space. “Minua speaks: he who takes the oxen from here ... he who takes the herd from here may the Gods destroy him.” Clearly we are dealing with Minua’s royal stables, cut into the living rock.



Figure 14.18: Inscription of Minua's wife Tariria and the sustaining wall of Minua's canal

And I would also add what I call the “Fountain of Minua,” declared to be such by the three epigraphs that mark this site along the north foot of Van Rock (Salvini 2008, A 5–58A-C). Its name is *taramanili* (*plurale tantum*), connected the Hurrian word *tarmana* (Salvini 1970) whose meaning of “fountain” can thus be precised.

The Urartian capital must have had other installations of this practical kind. The presence of a small rock inscription by Minua only a few meters away from the Sardursburg indicates a secondary use of this structure as a grain silo. The text, in fact, celebrates the foundation of a building called *'ari*, that is to say a silo



with a capacity of 23,100 kapi, which corresponds to 583 cubic meters (Salvini 1973).

### 14.3 Argišti I's Records

On the south-western slope of Van Kalesi it is possible today for anyone to visit the rock chambers of Horhor, the main monument left to us by Argišti I (see Fig. 14.5). The long inscription of his annals, decorating the entrance of this rock Mausoleum, is the most extensive document in Urartian cuneiform epigraphy<sup>12</sup> (Fig 14.19). The inscription was badly damaged by the wars and sieges suffered by the Fortress in Ottoman times. I quote a passage (Salvini 2008, A 8–1 Vo 1–13):

({ald}i went out (to a military campaign) with (hi)s weapon, he (de-  
feated) the country of Etiuni, he (defeated) the land of the city of  
Qihuni, he threw (them) to Argišti's feet. Haldi is powerful, Haldi's  
weapon is powerful. Through Haldi's greatness Argišti, son of Minua  
went out (to a military campaign). Haldi went ahead. Argišti says:  
I conquered the country of the city of Qihuni, which lies(?) by the  
lake (= Lake Sevan). I reached the city of Alištu. I deported men and  
women.

During the same years Argišti began the construction of the city of Er(e)buni, (Salvini 2008, A 8–1 Vo 13–22) which corresponds to the hill of Arin-berd, on the outskirts of Erevan. For this, troops were transferred from the western borders (6600 soldiers from the regions of Կhate and Տupa, the classical Melitene and Sofene),<sup>13</sup> with the clear aim of reinforcing control over the territory that today constitutes Armenia. Or are we instead dealing here with deportees employed in building the new residence? These two interpretations are still both possible. This shows how large the dominions of the Urartian kingdom were during the eighth century BCE and how well organized the state was.

<sup>12</sup>First copied by F.E. Schulz in 1827 (see above fn. 7) [Schulz II-VIII]. Translated by Arutjunjan (1953); collated by (André-Salvini and Salvini 1992).

<sup>13</sup>See (Salvini 1972, 142–144, 279–287). After collation of the badly damaged rock inscription of Rusa II in Kaleköy near Mazgirt (Salvini 2008, A 12–6), I could read <sup>KUR</sup>ṣju-pa-a, which confirms the position of the Urartian Տupa(ni), being the oldest quotation of the classical Sofene.



Figure 14.19: Argišti I's Annals on the rock of Khorkhor

#### 14.4 The Rock Terrace of Hazine Kapısı by Sarduri II



Figure 14.20: Hazine Kapısı (Gate of the Treasury). Rock monument on the north slope of Van Kalesi

On the north-eastern sector of Van Kalesi, there is an about 40 meters wide terrace cut in the rock (Fig 14.20). This is known as the “Gate of the Treasury” (Hazine Kapısı; Salvini 1995, 143–145) due to the two great niches cut in the rock there. Originally they both held inscriptions, but only in the niche to the right are these partially preserved. This is the famous text of the Annals of Sarduri II, son of Argišti, which was unearthed during the excavations by Marr and Orbeli in 1916<sup>14</sup> (Fig 14.21). Schulz could see and copy the upper, visible part of the inscription, cut in the rock (Schulz XII = Salvini 2008, A 9–3 I).

This king reigned between 755 and 730 BCE, exactly at the time of the foundation of Rome. Among his military expeditions I quote the conquest of the southern shore of Lake Sevan in today’s Armenia and the military confrontation with the Assyrian empire in the west, on the Euphrates. In both cases we have a correspondence with local rock inscriptions.

<sup>14</sup>See (Marr and Orbeli 1922). Unfortunately the stela and the basalt basis with the main text of the annals were broken in pieces by the vandalistic action of the local people.



Figure 14.21: The Annals of Sarduri II in Hazine Kapısı, at the time of the Russian excavations in 1916 (from Marr and Orbeli 1922)



Figure 14.22: The rock inscription of Sarduri II on the left bank of the Euphrates (1973)

I mention here only the expedition against Malatya, recalled in the annals, which was recorded on the rock overlooking the Euphrates at Habibuşağı (Fig. 14.22), (Salvini 2008, A 9–4). Beyond the Euphrates, in the region of Commagene (Assyrian Qummuhi, Urartian Qumaha), one of the greatest struggles between the Assyrians and the Urartians took place in the year 743 BCE.<sup>15</sup> The Annals of Tiglath-pileser III relate the Assyrian victory in the battle of Commagene, pushing the Urartians back to the east of the river which marked the western frontier of the Urartian kingdom (Salvini 2008, A 9–1, 2, 3).

A considerable quantity of cuneiform records enable us to reconstruct the historical geography and local history of many regions of Armenia in Urartian times. The conquest of the Sevan region, for instance, which continued to progress throughout the whole eighth century; was the work of three sovereigns: Argišti I, Sarduri II and Rusa I. After Rusa I (see the rock inscription of Tsovinar (Salvini 2008, A 10–2) on the south shore of Lake Sevan) (Fig 14.7) there are no more records coming from—or relating to—the region of Lake Sevan.

But Rusa I is known in the cuneiform literature mostly as the adversary of Sargon. The long Assyrian-Urartian war took place in the territory of North-West Iran between 719 and 714, and ended with the famous sack of Muşaşir. In recent times two new cuneiform stelae have been discovered in Iranian Azerbaijan, which add some elements to the Urartian version of the facts, namely the conflict with the rebel Urzana, king of Muşaşir.<sup>16</sup>

His successor Argišti II, from the firm base provided by the consolidated possession of that north-eastern frontier, turned his expansionist aims eastwards, against countries lying both north and south of the Araxes. The new conquests are recorded the stele from Sisian (now in the Museum of Erebuni),<sup>17</sup> which shows the Urartian advance towards the Nagorno Karabakh, and on the three rock inscriptions of Razliq, Nashteban and Shisheh in Iranian Azerbaijan (Salvini 2008, A 11–4, 5, 6, with previous literature).

The following period is marked by the reign of Rusa II, the last great Urartian sovereign. During this period, military enterprises were less important than an intense artistic and architectural activity, the greatest testimony to which on Armenian territory is the extraordinary site of Karmir-blur (Piotrovskij 1970; Arutjunjan 1966), and the contemporary cities of Bastam (Kleiss 1979; Kleiss 1988) in Iranian Azerbaijan and of Ayanis (Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 2001) near Van. The perfectly preserved temple inscription of Ayanis demonstrates the es-

<sup>15</sup>See (Astour 1979; Salvini 2011).

<sup>16</sup>See (André-Salvini and Salvini 2002), with previous literature; (Salvini 2008, A 10–3, 4, 5).

<sup>17</sup>KUKN 411 = (Salvini 2008, A 11–3); (Haroutiounian 1982). See also the new edition of the Reverse (Gajserjan 1985, 67–79) and (Salvini 2009).

thetic function of cuneiform writing, besides an original inlay decoration of the cellar (Fig 14.23).



Figure 14.23: Façade of the *susi* temple of Ayanis during excavations (1997)

The Urartians wrote also on different kinds of bronze objects (Salvini 2001c), and even on golden objects mostly with dedications to god Haldi. Difficult to explain is the fact that writing on clay (tablets and bullae) was used only during the seventh century, the last period of Urartian history. Furthermore, both on bronze and on clay, a different kind of script appeared, besides cuneiform (Salvini 2001b; Seidl 2004).

Two distinct local hieroglyphic or linear systems were used, one of them incomprehensible, the other very elementary (Fig 14.24), which can be interpreted thanks to parallel cuneiform notations.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup>See my deciphering in (Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 2001, 293–303).



Figure 14.24: Cuneiform (left) and hieroglyphic (right) bullae from Ayanis, seventh century BCE

The kingdom of Urartu was destroyed in the second half of the seventh century, probably before the fall of Nineveh and Assyrian power.<sup>19</sup>

With the fall of the centralized Urartian state the cuneiform writing disappeared completely and forever from the Armenian highlands, with one exception: one and half centuries later the Achaemenid King Xerxes, son of Darius let incise his trilingual inscription on the south side of the Van rock, about 40 meters high in an inaccessible position. Although the message of this text is generic, it confirms on the very place of the old capital Tušpa that the former Urartian territory, inhabited henceforth by Armenians, formed part of the Persian Empire as the satrapy of Armina, as the Bisutun trilingual of Darius stated. The spread of the Cuneiform writing in Urartu and specially the presence of rock inscriptions all over a great territory as a sign of a big centralized state did perhaps inspire the Achaemenid monarchy (Seidl 1994).

<sup>19</sup>Robert Rollinger (2008, 51–75), maintains that the Urartian state survived long after the fall of Assyria, and continued to exist as an independent political entity until the conquest by Cyrus the Great.



Assyrian kings	Synchronisms <sup>1</sup>	Urartian kings
Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE)	quotes Ar(r)amu the Urartian (years 859, 856, 844)	[no written records]
Shalmaneser III (ca. 840–830)	quotes Seduri, the Urartian (year 832)	= [written records of:]Sarduri I, son of Lutibri* [* no written records of him]
Shamshi-Adad V (823–811)	quotes Ušpina (year 820)  [no synchronism]	= Išpuini, son of Sarduri (ca. 830–820) coregency of Išpuini and Minua (ca. 820–810) Minua, son of Išpuini (ca. 810–785/780)
Shalmaneser IV (781–772)	quotes Argištu/i (year 774)	= Argišti I, son of Minua (785/780–756)
Ashur-nirari V (754–745)	is quoted by (year 754)	Sarduri II, son of Argišti (756–ca. 730)
Tiglath-pileser III (744–727)	quotes Sarduri, Sardaurri (years 743, 735?)	= Sarduri II
Sargon (721–705)	quotes Ursā / Rusā (years 719–713 <sup>2</sup> ) quotes Argišta (year 709)	= Rusā I, son of Sarduri (ca. 730–713) = Argišti II, son of Rusā (713–?)
Sennacherib (704–681)	[no synchronism]	
Esarhaddon (681–669)	quotes Ursā (year 673/672)	= Rusā II, son of Argišti (first half of the VII cent.)  Erimena ( <sup>LÚ</sup> ašuli ?) <sup>3</sup>
Ashurbanipal (669–627)	quotes Rusā (year 652) <sup>4</sup>	= Rusā III, son of Erimena  Sarduri ( <sup>LÚ</sup> ašuli ?), son of Rusā III
Ashurbanipal	quotes Ištar/Issar-dūrī (year 646/642)	= Sarduri III, son of Sarduri

Table 14.1: Urartian Chronology

### Notes in Table 13.1

<sup>1</sup> For the Assyrian synchronisms, see (Fuchs 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The date 713 for Rusa I's death, instead of the traditional one, 714, is proven by the Annals of Sargon, year 9: see (Fuchs 2012, 419; Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990, SSA V, p. XXVII).

<sup>3</sup> We have also to take into consideration the new dendrochronology following which Rusahinili Eidurukai (Ayanis) was built in the second half of the 670s: (Manning et al. 2001, 2534; Çilingiroğlu 2006, 135).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. my attempt to interpret the seal of Erimena and the chronological problems concerning the seventh century (Salvini 2007).

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## Chapter 15

# India and World Trade: From the Beginnings to the Hellenistic Age

*Klaus Karttunen*

### 15.1 Introduction

The great significance and varying conditions of international trade are one of the central issues in the modern discussion of globalization, but it is also equally important for the present theme. In the first millennium BCE and even earlier, the regular network of international trade included South Asia, Iran, the Near East with Egypt and the Greek West. As far as India is concerned, most of this has been already discussed by me in my book in 1989,<sup>1</sup> but now it is time for an up-to-date survey.

To begin with, we must consider the geographical aspect. There are two possible routes for the Western trade of ancient India: Land and Sea. Both involved some difficulties. The most direct land-route from the Indus to the West was practically impossible because of the waterless deserts of Makran. Then there was the much longer route via Bactria and a flourishing caravan trade probably developed at an early date on this route. The short-cut via Kandahar and Seistan was a third alternative. The land-trade did not necessarily mean direct contact; probably the merchandise passed through a number of middlemen, and in any case, a caravan can only carry a restricted amount of merchandise. It has been rightly observed that the sea was the only feasible way of long-distance transport on a large scale before the railways.

Even the sea had its restrictions: The ancient mariners were unused to the open sea and the preferred way of sailing was to keep the coast always in sight and to spend every night safely on dry land.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the early ships could take only so much cargo. This and the risks of storm and pirates made the long-

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<sup>1</sup> See (Karttunen 1989, 11ff.), on the early Hellenistic period (Karttunen 1997, 328ff.).

<sup>2</sup> To avoid the dangers of the open sea, caused by the almost non-existent means of navigation, some sailors used to keep land birds such as crows and pigeons in cages. If the ship was carried into the open sea, the bird was freed, hoping that it would instinctively strike a course for the nearest coast. There is evidence for this custom in cuneiform sources, in the Bible and in Indian literature. See (Freedman 1973).

distance trade a risky business which was only taken on in the hope of large profits. Therefore, only cargoes of valuable luxuries were shipped and the whole enterprise concerned only the uppermost classes of society.

## 15.2 Early Period: Indus and Sumer

The first evidence of contacts between South Asia and the Near East goes back to the Neolithic period or even beyond. From archaeological evidence, we know that the spread of agriculture, then that of pottery, took place from West to East. Some plants (millets?) and animals perhaps came to the West. There are also examples of long-distance trade even in the prehistoric period, but this is not my speciality and the details must be left to archaeologists.

Mesopotamian sea trade seems to have started in the very beginning of Sumerian civilization. It has been claimed that the earliest (and rather close) contacts between Egypt and Mesopotamia in the late fourth millennium were perhaps by sea, around the Arabian Peninsula. On a lesser scale, a great amount of evidence testifies to the lively trade relations in the Gulf and the Arabian Sea in the late third millennium.<sup>3</sup> It was both direct and transit trade. The main stations were the Sumerian ports in Southern Mesopotamia, then Dilmun, Makan, and Meluhḫa, or with modern names, Bahrain, Oman with Eastern Iran and the ports of the Harappan civilization. In addition to Mesopotamian and Indus sites (the port of Lothal), Failaka in Kuwait, the island Bahrain, Umm an-Nār in Abu Dhabi, Tell Abraq in Umm al-Qaiwain, Ra's al-Junayz on the east coast of Oman and Tepe Yahya in Eastern Iran have yielded important evidence for this early trade. The existence of this trade was established in the 1930s, less than ten years after the first knowledge of the existence of the Harappan civilization itself. I need not mention here all the details of earlier research since it was summarized in Karttunen 1989. The monograph of Ratnagar 1981 is still useful as an introduction. Daniel Potts' important monograph *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity* (Potts 1990) appeared only in 1990, some months after my own book.<sup>4</sup>

What was traded? Textual evidence is important here as some of the goods do not survive for archaeologists to excavate and many do not reveal their origin. Timber was imported into Mesopotamia, but it is much later that we can clearly define the species. Copper came from Oman, gold and silver from the North-East, steatite from Eastern Iran, several kinds of precious and semi-precious stones from their various places of origin. The lapis lazuli of Badakhshan and Iran and

<sup>3</sup>More precisely: in the period between the Akkadian and Ur III States of Southern Mesopotamia (Potts 2007, 122).

<sup>4</sup>Some pertinent articles are also found in the first part of (Reade 1996).

agates and carnelians from India were particularly important.<sup>5</sup> Ivory came from India, and even multicolored birds—perhaps peacocks<sup>6</sup>—are mentioned as imports. Hump-backed cattle and fowl were apparently introduced in this period from India.

There are some illustrations of merchant ships on seals and works of art—both in India and in Mesopotamia. The excavated site of Lothal by the Gulf of Cambay was a port of the Harappan civilization. The excavations at Ra's al-Junayz on the east coast of Oman yielded some meagre remains—bitumen slabs—of third millennium boats, according to Cleuziou (1994), probably used in the Indian trade. The same site also produced a sherd with a Harappan inscription (Tosi 1986, 105f.).

Sometimes optimistic scholars have seen too many contacts, even where the evidence is clearly negative. Thus, the Ancient Egyptians did not know India, and what few Indian products can be seen in the late pharaonic period usually came via South Arabia or Mesopotamia. There is no evidence of any contacts of Phoenicians with India and the ships of Hiram bringing the gold and other products of Ophir, as related in the Old Testament, probably did not go as far as that, but rather to South Arabia or North-East Africa.<sup>7</sup> However, we may note that the Egyptian accounts of the Punt expeditions, wherever it was exactly located, and the less-detailed evidence of the Phoenician activity at least show the existence of a trade connection in the Red Sea area. In the seventh century, Pharaoh Necho had a fleet on the Red Sea. As one recent author put it, there was Red Sea trade at least from the time of Solomon to Darius and later, carried out by Egyptians, Phoenicians and especially Arabians.<sup>8</sup>

The early commerce between Mesopotamian and India slowed down in the second millennium. It did not come to a complete stop as was earlier supposed, but apparently the goods arrived through middlemen so that the very knowledge of their origin was forgotten. Even the terms were given new meaning: *Makan* and *Meluhha* were now located in or close to the Red Sea. We can perhaps understand why the trade diminished. In South Asia, the Indus Civilization withered, the towns were almost emptied and apparently the population was drastically diminished. The Aryans came to fill the vacuum with their nomadic tribal system. In this situation, there was little need for imports and trade as business probably disappeared for a while, to return only with the second period of Indian urbanization in the first millennium. However, the excavations at Tell Abraç in Umm al-Qaiwain show continuous contact with the Central Asian–Indian area from c.

<sup>5</sup>On agates and carnelians, see (Allchin 1975), on lapis lazuli, (Tosi 1974) and (Casanova 1994).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. (Potts 2007, 123).

<sup>7</sup>See again (Karttunen 1989).

<sup>8</sup>See (Salles 1996, 255). But are we really entitled to speak of Solomon as a dated historical figure? In any case, the legend of the Queen of Sheba refers to existing caravan trade.

2600 BCE until the early centuries CE (Potts 1994). In India, the main area of the Aryan culture long remained inland, far from the sea, and we know hardly anything of what happened in the coastal regions.

Speaking of the Aryans, we can note that they laid the foundation for trade becoming important in much later ages. They introduced the horse into India and thus established the basis of the importance of horses in Indian warfare. But as the tropical climate is badly suited to the breeding of good horses, the country has ever since been dependent on the import of horses. First, they came mainly from the north-west, from Iran and western Central Asia; in the Middle Ages, they also came by ship from Arabia.

### 15.3 Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Old Persian Period

After 1000 BCE, a new direct contact was made between Mesopotamia and North-West India. Both the Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians were involved. Animals like hump-backed cattle, monkeys, domestic fowl and peacocks and plants (pepper?) started to arrive and some were also naturalized in the West.<sup>9</sup> Both the sea route and the land route were already used in Assyrian times. The Bactrian camel depicted on the obelisk of Shalmaneser III clearly points to the use of the land route. The import of the lapis lazuli of Badaḥšan (and some from Iran) in Mesopotamia had already started in the third millennium. For the sea-trade, Salles (1996, 256) summarizes: “Soft stones and copper from Oman, precious woods and black wood from Oman, Makran and India, parrots, precious stones, pearl, bdellium, and so forth.”<sup>10</sup>

It is more difficult to say what were Indian imports in the first millennium BCE. Some pottery has been found, in India and in the various steps along the trade-route, but pottery as such was hardly profitable enough to make the transport pay. The real merchandise was probably packed in those jars, but we do not know what it was. Pearls and coral were probably part of the trade. The pearl fisheries of the Gulf were already in use in the third millennium and much lauded in several classical texts such as Theophrast (*de Lapidibus* 36), the *Periplus* (35) and Pliny (*Hist. nat.* 6, 28, 10). The Mediterranean red coral, according to Vidale (2005), started to appear in North-West India as early as the late second millennium.

The rise of Media and Persia changed the political map of the Near East, but the existing trade relations continued. An important new feature was the Persian

<sup>9</sup>I have discussed these in (Karttunen 1989, 25ff.). On peacocks see also (Rybatzky 2008), on monkeys, (Barnett 1973) and (Mendleson 1983).

<sup>10</sup>I wonder whether he is not operating on too slight evidence. Is the trade in parrots only founded on the *Bāveruḷātaka*? Considering the importance of the local pearl fisheries of the Gulf, did they really import pearls from India? And he seems to have forgotten ivory.



expansion in the east, although very defectively known.<sup>11</sup> In any case, Bactria soon developed into an important eastern centre of Achaemenid power, certainly at least partly because of the caravan trade. This trade led both to the North-East, via Sogdiana to Siberia, and to the South-East, the Kabul and Indus Valleys.

But we must not exaggerate the importance of Achaemenids. Long ago, Wheeler saw them as the great bearers of civilization to Central Asia and India who brought irrigation, iron technology, urbanization and other things. Later research has shown that all these existed much earlier. The urbanization in Bactria and North-West India started in the early first millennium,<sup>12</sup> and before the middle in the Gangetic basin.

The Achaemenid presence in what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan is well established in literary sources—Greek and Old Persian.<sup>13</sup> To this can be added some numismatic evidence. Achaemenid coinage, first issued by Darius at the end of the sixth century, has been found, in addition to stray finds, in the Tchamoni-Hazouri hoard near Kabul and at the Bhir Mound in Taxila. There are also a number of Greek coins, not only the Athenian owls for which local forgeries have been suggested, but also coins of several Ionian, Greek and Macedonian towns. For the history of trade, it is interesting to note that Achaemenid sigloi are often found in association with Indian-style bent-bar and punch-marked coins.<sup>14</sup>

It is likely that the very idea of coinage was brought by the Achaemenids to North-West India. This and other cultural influences can be seen in a number of Old Persian loan words in Sanskrit: *karṣa* and *kārṣāpaṇa*, a silver weight and the corresponding coin, *mudrā* “seal”, and *lipi* “writing” (Morgenstierne 1974, 273f. Baghbidi 2006). Moreover, the presence of the Aramaic language in the Pakistan-Afghanistan area is attested by the Aramaic versions of Aśokan inscriptions and the development of the Aramaic-based Kharoṣṭhī script.

There is also some evidence of the growing maritime activity of the Achaemenids. Herodotus (4, 44) tells of the expedition sent by Darius, participated

<sup>11</sup>Arrian (*Indica* 1, 3) claims that even the Assyrians had conquered parts of Afghanistan, but there is hardly any evidence for this. (Kločkov 1990) describes an eye-stone with a cuneiform inscription of Esarhaddon (680–669), but its provenance is unknown. It comes from the Kabul antiquarian market, and Kločkov thinks it must be of local origin. The story of the Indian campaign of Queen Semiramis is wholly legendary, though often mentioned in Greek literature (Daffinà 1990).

<sup>12</sup>In Taxila, the beginnings of urbanization seem to be around 1000 BCE (Dani 1986, 36ff. and 81) and according to (Magee et al. 2005, 715f.), Charsadda was also occupied as early. The main subject of (Magee et al. 2005) or the ancient town of Akra, situated in Bannu Basin is of interest. It seems to have had close connections with Arachosia and was a very important centre in the Achaemenid period.

<sup>13</sup>E.g., Herodotus, Ctesias and Arrian; DB. The Kabul Valley, Greek Paropamisadae, is also mentioned in the Avesta.

<sup>14</sup>The numismatic history was briefly discussed in (Karttunen 1989, 30f.). See also the summary in (Bopearachchi and Rahman 1995, 21ff.).

in and described by Scylax of Caryanda. They went to the east using the land-route via Bactria, built a navy and sailed from the Kabul and Indus rivers down to the sea and, following the coasts, up to Suez.<sup>15</sup> Herodotus further says that as a consequence of this expedition, the Indus Valley was conquered by Darius and adds that he also opened the sea for ships. In the Suez stele, Darius boasted of the reopening of the canal to the Nile and sending a fleet to Persia.

The epigraphical evidence from Susa mentions a number of imported goods: ivory from Kush and India and wood from Carmania, Gandhara and Makran. Gold came from Bactria, carnelian and lapis lazuli from Sogdiana (DSf). There is the famous case of the hard-wood *Dalbergia sissoo*, identified by Gershevitch in his well-known article.<sup>16</sup> The Apadana relief shows us Indians and Gandharans bringing various products. Cotton was known to Herodotus and rice to Sophocles.<sup>17</sup> Around 400, Ctesias saw a number of Indian products at the Persian court (elephants, peacocks, swords, precious stones, drugs and poisons, dyes, even cheese and wine). More or less at the same time, pepper became known in Greece as the Indian or Persian medicine. Imports came both via Bactria—Ctesias speaks of Bactrian merchants—and by sea.

In this period, another trade route was opened. Literary sources lead us to conclude that Indian or Arabian seafarers had rather early learnt to put aside their traditional fear of the open sea and to use the regular monsoon winds to cross the Arabian Sea. This is connected with the early flourish of spice trade. Cassia and cinnamon have their origin in South India and Sri Lanka (originally perhaps in South-East Asia), but as early as before the mid-first millennium BCE, they started to arrive in the West via South Arabia. This is attested as early as Sappho (F 44) and the Old Testament (*Ex* 30:23, *Prov.* 7:17, *Cant.* 4:14), and both are also in Herodotus (3, 111). In the Near East, the spice-trade was part of the Arabian caravan and sea trade connecting the Mediterranean coast with South Arabia. We, of course, note immediately that from South Arabia there was a sea connection to India, but in the ancient West, the real origin of spices remained hidden. Even in the Roman period, it was commonly supposed that cinnamon grew in South Arabia or North-East Africa (Karttunen 1989, 19ff.).

<sup>15</sup>The fantasies of (Panchenko 1998)—Scylax starting at the Ganges and sailing around South India—are certainly to be rejected. I have myself discussed Scylax in (Karttunen 1989, 65ff.).

<sup>16</sup>See (Gershevitch 1957), see also (Maxwell-Hyslop 1983).

<sup>17</sup>Herodotus 3, 106 on cotton in India. At least in the end of the fourth century, cotton was also cultivated in Bahrain, as we learn from Theophrast, *Hist.* 4, 7, 7. On rice, Sophocles F 607 Nauck. Note (Potts 2007, 128), on the possibility of the early introduction of rice into Mesopotamia.

## 15.4 Alexander and Hellenism

Let us turn back to the Gulf route. The political upheaval caused by Alexander does not seem to have much altered the patterns of trade (Salles 1996, 257). When Alexander reached the delta of the Indus in 325, he was able to find pilots for the coastal waters of Gedrosia, who then guided the navy of Nearch. In the region of Ormuz in Carmania, they even found a pilot who spoke Greek.<sup>18</sup> Greek historians generally give the impression that Patala in the Indus Delta was a rather primitive place, but this seems to be misleading. Onesicritus was here able to obtain information about Taprobane (Sri Lanka) and the ways of sailing there, which indicates that Patala had far-reaching trade relations. Sri Lankan traditions put the original home of the Sinhalese in Eastern India (Orissa), but linguistic peculiarities of the Sinhalese language clearly point to an origin in Western India. Obviously, contact was still kept between the two in the late fourth century.<sup>19</sup>

Alexander fell in love with war elephants and his successors also much esteemed these ancient tanks. This gave the Seleucids an advantage as they could import elephants from India. The famous agreement between Candragupta Maurya and Seleucus involved the transfer of 500 elephants,<sup>20</sup> which became a great advantage in subsequent wars. The importation of elephants naturally made use of the land-route. Before Alexander, the Achaemenids also had some war elephants.<sup>21</sup> The Ptolemies soon developed their own supply of African elephants, but for a while the word “Indian” was a professional term for “mahout” (in the *LXX*, Polybius, and so forth).

Indian goods are occasionally encountered in texts of early Ptolemaic Egypt.<sup>22</sup> There is a reference to Indian dogs in a third century papyrus,<sup>23</sup> and the description of the triumphal procession includes both men and animals from India (Athenaeus 5, 200f.). Probably they did come to Egypt from the caravan trade, but if so, was it with Mesopotamia or with South Arabia?

<sup>18</sup>Strabo 16, 3, 7 (cf. Arrian, *Indica* 27).

<sup>19</sup>The information of the Pāli chronicles about the Orissan origins—there were certainly contacts—hail from the beginnings of the CE.

<sup>20</sup>Appianus 11, 9, 5, Justinus 15, 4.

<sup>21</sup>It remains open whether the Assyrians imported elephants. There are some early pictures of Indian-type elephants, but they may also be Syrian elephants, not yet extinct in Assyrian times. See (Karttunen 1989, 24). Ctesias saw elephants in Persian service and they took part in the battle of Gaugamela.

<sup>22</sup>We can safely eliminate here the so-called “Buddhist” or “Sumerian” heads from Memphis. When these terracotta figurines were found by Flinders Petrie, they were dated to the Achaemenid period or even before (Petrie 1908) and this idea has been carried into much later studies (Nayar 1971). But as early as 1939, Gordon placed them on stylistic and historical grounds in the first century CE (Gordon 1939). See also (Harle 1992).

<sup>23</sup>Indian dogs were already mentioned by Ctesias and Xenophon in the pre-Alexander period. See (Karttunen 1989, 163ff.).

It seems that in the early Hellenistic period, the Seleucids maintained sea trade with India from the Gulf. There were ports such as the island of Failaka on the western side and the Alexandria founded by Alexander east of the Shatt el-Arab. However, this trade faded away with the rise of Parthia: Failaka was abandoned c. 150 BCE (Salles 1996, 252) and Alexandria/Antiochia developed into the Parthian Spasinou Charax. The Greek sources show that Bahrain (Greek Tylus or Tilus) continued as an important entrepôt and they tell of the commercial activity of the Arabic Gerrhaeans. Before his sudden death, Alexander was preparing a campaign to the Arabian Gulf Coast—one motive was certainly to get full control of the trade. Of the role of Oman, little is known before the first century CE.

Our knowledge of the sea trade of the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea in this period is almost completely founded on Greek and Latin literature. There are thousands of South Arabian inscriptions, but unfortunately they completely ignore any international relations (Salles 1996, 251). The Greek and Roman sources are usually late, and it is often difficult to decide what refers to the Hellenistic and Roman period and what to earlier times. At least in Hellenistic times, the island of Soqatra (Dioskorida of the Greeks) was an important market, perhaps even earlier.<sup>24</sup> Agatharchides, in the mid-second century BCE, stated that ships from Potana (Patala in the Indus Delta) arrived there.<sup>25</sup> Cosmas (3, 65) claimed that the island had been colonized by the Ptolemies so that the islanders still spoke Greek in his time (early sixth century CE).

In India, the urbanization in the South came relatively late and its early history is very defectively known. On the eastern side, the new excavations in 1989–92 (Begley) at the famous site of Arikamedu show the occupation starting with a Megalithic Phase A, from c. 250 to 150 BCE, but only Phase B, c. 150 to 100, shows the first Rouletted Ware (imitating Mediterranean).<sup>26</sup>

The joint excavations of the University of Kerala and the British Museum at Pattanam near the Keralan coast are currently revealing what appears to be the famous port of Muziris, mentioned both in classical sources and in early Tamil poetry. But here the situation is similar, the earliest levels go back to the Megalithic phase, but Western trade starts only in the first century.<sup>27</sup> Other famous markets of the Indian west coast (Bharukaccha, Supara, etc.) are unexcavated, as

<sup>24</sup>See (Salles 1996, 255). In later times, at least, there was an Indian colony on the island and the very name Soqatra is probably derived from Sanskrit *sukhataradvīpa*.

<sup>25</sup>Agatharchides F 105ab, also mentioned by Salles (1996).

<sup>26</sup>See (Begley 1996). Briefly mentioned in (Salles 1996, 262). See, however, (Schenk 2006) on the interpretation of the Rouletted Ware.

<sup>27</sup>My information on Pattanam excavations hails from two papers, read by members of the team at the *South Asian Archaeology* conferences in London (2005) and Ravenna (2007), the first by V. Selvakumar, P.K. Gopi and Roberta Tomber, the second by P.J. Cherin, K.P. Shajan and V. Selvakumar.

they are either situated under more recent settlements or still unlocated. In several periods of history, from Harappan times on, there certainly were important ports in the Indus Delta, but the geologically unstable character of the area makes it rather unlikely that any remains are preserved. We must also note that until recent times, Indian archaeology has mainly concentrated on prehistoric sites and our knowledge of the early historical period is therefore very imperfect.

Quite a lot has been written on the history of Indian shipping, but nevertheless our knowledge of the early period is scanty, indeed. The earliest illustrations of ships, beside those of the Harappan civilization, are found on Sātavāhana coins of the early centuries CE.<sup>28</sup> Indian texts have very little to say, except that the sea trade was at the same time very lucrative, but also very dangerous and was better avoided by the wise. Stories of sea monsters, shipwrecks, and marvelous adventures in distant islands were popular entertainment, but there is very little actual information to be culled from these texts. The *Bāverujātaka* testifies to Mesopotamian trade, but the exact date is problematic (Karttunen 1989).

The story of the shipwrecked Indian sailor rescued in the Red Sea and then piloting Eudoxus of Cyzicus on his two voyages to India (and the unsuccessful third attempt around Africa)<sup>29</sup> during the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (145–116) already heralds a new age in the history of international commerce and cannot be discussed here.

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<sup>28</sup>On Sātavāhanas, see (Ray 1986).

<sup>29</sup>Poseidonius in Strabo 2, 3, 4–6. On Eudoxus, see Thiel (1966).

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## Chapter 16

### Ancient Near Eastern Polities and the Greek Polis: Secondary States, Structural Similarities and the Problem of Diffusion

*Kristoffer Momrak*

#### 16.1 Introduction

The Greek city-state or polis emerged in the first millennium BCE. Earlier polities in Greece were palace societies like that at Mycenae or Pylos. The most powerful polities contemporary with the polis in the Mediterranean were empires like that of the Assyrians or Persians. From about 650 BCE there is literary and archaeological evidence from Greece of urbanized political communities where the citizens ruled themselves through collective organs of decision making. The polis was born. Apparently, something unique had happened. Power was in the hands of the citizens, not in the hands of a despotic ruler or a closed oligarchy. The polis is a comparatively late development compared to the ancient city-states of Mesopotamia or Syria. How does the Greek polis fit into the political developments of the Ancient Near East?

Herodotos tells a story that he warns some Hellenes will find hard to believe. The seven Persians that led the revolt against Cambyses held council to discuss how the country should be run now that they had dethroned the king. Otanes warns against a new monarchy, and argues that power should be in the hands of the people. Monarchy leads to uninhibited authority and will corrupt the ruler, just like what happened to the deposed king Cambyses. Instead, Otanes lauds rule by the people, what he calls equal rule, isonomia. It is characterized by offices being drawn by lot, officers being held responsible, and that all decisions are taken after common deliberation. A second Persian, Megabyxos, proposes oligarchy. He warns against the dangers of mob rule, and prefers the rule of the best men among the Persians. The third of the rebels to propose a new constitution for the Persians is Dareios. He argues that monarchy is to be preferred before all other constitutions, because oligarchy leads to strife among the rulers, whereas democracy leads to corruption of the citizens and power to demagogues or tyrants. Monarchy is the best form of constitution, then, given that the perfect ruler is king (Hdt. 3.80–84).

Aristotle, discussing kingship and its different types, claims that there is a peculiar kind of kingship found among non-Greeks, where the king has powers approximating that of a tyrant. The reason is that non-Greeks are more slavish than Greeks, and the Asians are more slavish than the Europeans, so that they tolerate master-like rule without resentment (Arist. *Pol.* 1285a16–1285a29).

From these sources, it seems pretty clear that the polis does not fit into the political traditions of the Ancient Near East at all. The Greeks believed that Asians were natural slaves and hence unable or unwilling to rule themselves. Political thinking was a reserve of the Greeks; all others were slaves to kings.

The episode of the Persian constitutional debate is taken by all historians as a fantasy. This conversation that never took place is intriguing for what it tells us about our own expectations of cultural roles. The Persians can not possibly have discussed politics in this way, only the Greeks knew political thought. Herodotos had no problems imagining Persian noblemen discuss politics like in Greece, although he points out that Greeks may well not believe it. By the time of Aristotle, it was apparently a widely held opinion that Asians were natural slaves. What lies behind this perceived difference between Greeks and all others? The Archaic Greek polis was established in the same period as the violent expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the eighth century BCE. The Classical Greek polis was born in the flames of the Persian invasion in the early fifth century BCE. Despotism was to the Classical Greeks what characterized Near Eastern rulers most of all. The end of the Archaic period was a time when new borders were drawn between the Greeks and the others. The Greeks came to view their own political traditions as unique, all other people were natural slaves. Arguably, this negative view of the outside world as in many respects inferior to the Greeks was a product of historical circumstances. It was not always thus.

The Archaic age was not only a time of war and conquest. The Phoenician city states of the Levant were eager to trade with Greeks. Colonies were established around the Mediterranean basin and the Black Sea. Important innovations took place in Greece in the Archaic period. Greece was a periphery to the Ancient Near East, and developed new cultural traits under its influence. The Phoenician alphabet was adapted for the writing of Greek. The orientalizing style in Greek art was invented. There was an explosion in new motifs for decoration on pottery, in metal and in textiles. The list goes on. Is it not a paradox that the development of the Greek polis had nothing to do with this process of cultural changes?

## 16.2 Methodological Considerations

The political economy of the Mycenaean Late Bronze Age palace society was characterised by the mass of the population being agricultural producers whose

surplus was redistributed by a restricted elite and a palace centred bureaucracy, a so called agro-literary society. The polis society of the Archaic and Classical period was characterised by independent farmers who were citizens and soldiers of their community and ruled their own city in collective institutions of decision making, a so called citizen state. Ian Morris emphasises that the citizens of Greek communities of the Iron Age held the citizen assembly as their highest authority (I. Morris 1997, 100–102). The Mycenaean Bronze Age palace society is hardly recognisable in the polis society of Iron Age Greece. With the rise of the polis, a citizen state evolved out of an agro-literary society. How is this change to be understood? Was it an internal development in Greece or part of a larger process of cultural changes?

An internal development of the polis would need an explanation based on evolution. Neo-evolutionary theory and the concept of the Early State have been used as a framework to understand the developments of polities in the ancient world for at least three generations of scholars. This step-ladder theory of successive levels of societal complexity places much emphasis on hierarchy and the horizontal divides in society (Fried 1967). Neo-evolutionism has been criticized, however, for being a theory of classification, and not of social change (Yoffee 2005, 31). The neo-evolutionary theory has been challenged by approaches to state formation that emphasise the role of vertical solidarity between different economic groups in society and the semiautonomous functioning of lower level sub-systems over hierarchy (Stone 1997, 16). A weakness of neo-evolutionism and the Early State model is that because of their focus on relations of domination and subordination, they do not explain city-states such as the polis.

In order to understand ancient societies beyond the Early State model, scholars have started to discuss the concept of a duality of the so called corporative and elitist strategies for social integration in ancient societies. The elitist strategy is characterized by exclusive access to prestige goods, a patrimonial view of society, divine rulership, and imperialism. Power is usually in the hands of monarchs or councils with restricted access. The corporative strategy, on the other hand, is decentralized regarding prestige-goods systems and sources of power in general. It is characterized by reflexive communication, which involves accountability of the ruler. Power is organized as a form of commonwealth government (Blanton 1998, 144–145). The dual-processual theory, developed by Richard E. Blanton and his colleagues, involves a discursive analysis of the ways power is distributed, exercised and expressed by actors and groups in society, according to two main strategies, viz. the elitist and the corporative strategy (Blanton et al. 1996, 2). This approach is useful for a comparative study of ancient polities, because it focuses on human action, not theoretical typology.

Thus, the change from palace to polis can well be analyzed as an internal change, from the domination of an elitist strategy to that of a corporative strategy. However, as will be argued, under this method of analysis, it becomes evident that the polis shared several traits with Ancient Near Eastern city-states that fall within the categories of both the corporate and the elitist strategy. The polis does not appear unique, but as an extreme subtype of a city-state dominated by the corporative strategy. This opens up for a comparative study of the polis and other city-states.

The polis is a so called secondary state formation, formed long after the earliest, or pristine, state formations of the Near East. These pristine state formations were city-states. Thus, the city-state was not a Greek innovation. The last decades have seen a wealth of new research on the polis and city-states, not least the publications of the Copenhagen Polis Centre and their comparative study of city-state cultures (Hansen 2000). Yet, for all their merit, the methodological individualism of the separate investigations overshadows the comparative approach, and the result is more a catalogue of city-state cultures than a comparative study.

There is sufficient evidence to argue that the Greek polis was not formed in a vacuum. Were there any outside influences that contributed to the development of the polis? The structures of some Ancient Near Eastern city-states share traits with the structure of the polis. Therefore, a role for Ancient Near Eastern city-states in the development of Greek political culture should not be ruled out. Diffusion is an approach that has largely fallen out of favor with scholars today, and for good reasons. Most cultural traits do not simply diffuse from a place of origin. The involvement of human actors who negotiate the terms under which foreign customs and traditions are received must be taken into consideration. A useful approach to the cross-influences of cultures in the ancient world is the concept of hybridization, a term coined by Peter van Dommelen (1997). It describes a process where foreign and indigenous cultural traits influence each other and create new traditions. As will be argued in this paper, the political changes in Greece were part of international developments in the Mediterranean and beyond. The structural similarities between Greek and Ancient Near Eastern city-states have indeed been pointed out long ago. There has, however, long been a tendency to treat the Greeks as fundamentally different from any other culture of the ancient world.

### **16.3 Eastern and Western Assemblies**

Athens, the most famous of ancient democracies, was not alone among the polities of the Ancient world in having a powerful assembly in its political structure. Such collective organizations of power are typical of a corporate strategy of power that

was arguably at work in polities in Greece as well as in the Ancient Near East. There is a tendency, however, to contrast the primitive and tribal background of Ancient Near Eastern assemblies with the modernity and humanism of Greek assemblies. Collective forms of local self-rule in Mesopotamia are interpreted as dead-end survivors of antediluvian times, whereas Athenian democracy is lauded as the beginning of Western civilization.

The division into two fundamentally different interpretations of collective power in ancient societies goes back to the essays of Thorkild Jacobsen (1943) and Geoffrey Evans (1958) on “primitive democracy” in Mesopotamia. They both investigated the role of assemblies in Ancient Near Eastern states, and their articles were seminal in spreading an awareness of the existence of power outside the confines of the palace in Ancient Near Eastern societies. Jacobsen, Evans and later writers have been sure, however, that any role played by assemblies was a remnant from the times of tribal society, when the elders and the assembly held power before the rise of kings.

The rise of kingship out of the basis of an egalitarian society is familiar. It is the neo-evolutionary explanation of the development of politics: from an egalitarian band evolves the chieftdom, and from the chieftdom evolves the Early State. The Early State model allows little room for collective organs of decision making and an integration of these institutions into the political structure. Since the important divisions in society are horizontal, the ruler and his administration are separated from the general population.

As will be seen, councils and assemblies of Near Eastern city-states were urban in nature, and have no real link to tribal or nomadic society. Although there are similarities between tribal assemblies and city-assemblies, the urban tradition should be regarded as a separate development. It is difficult to explain why an urban assembly should be in any way a remnant of the past, since tribal groups continue to exist throughout Near Eastern history. It is equally difficult to explain why such assemblies should be gathered in a city, unless a mass migration of tribal people into the city can be proven. Quite the contrary, assemblies in the Ancient Near East are attached to urban features.

In the Ancient Near Eastern city-states, the city-gates were a place of business as well as judgement. *Bābtum* in Akkadian is known as a kind of district authority where the elders judged in cases concerning the locals. This is known from the *Codex Hammurapi* (126, 142 and 251) and contemporary documents of the Old Babylonian period (*VS VII 16*, *VS VII 56*). In Late Bronze Age Ugarit, there was a judiciary authority seated in a gate: the treaty *RS 18.115* was made by king Initešub between Karkemiš and Ugarit, and concerns murder of merchants from either city. If the sons of Karkemiš do not succeed in apprehending the murderers of a merchant of Ugarit, the sons of Ugarit together with their men of the

gate (*mārū māṭ āl Ugarit qadu amīlī ša bābišunu*) are to go to Karkemiš where they are to swear to the loss of their brothers' goods and be reimbursed by the sons of that city.

The judiciary capacity of institutions at the gate is reflected in Ugaritic legend. In the legend of Aqhat, Aqhat's father Danel is some kind of ruler that judges at the gate (Smith 1946–1947). He resides in a palace (*hkl*) with a court (*hgr*) (KTU 1.19 IV 10). His duty is among other things to act as judge. He regularly sat at the opening of the gate (*b'ap šgr*) at the threshing floor (*bgrn*) and judged (*yšpt*) the cause of the widow and tried the case of the orphan (KTU 1.17 V 6–8; KTU 1.19 I 19–25).

A council of elders passing sentences in the city-gates (*baša'ar*) is found in the *Old Testament*, for example, the *Book of Ruth* where Boas goes to the elders to solve a problem of inheritance of land (*Ruth* 4.1–4). Though this is a rather late source (perhaps fifth–fourth century BCE), the institutions they describe are probably ancient. The function of the council of elders is to witness an agreement, and this is done in a public space, in the city-gates. There are many instances of courts being seated in the gates, which also served as the market place. In the *Old Testament*, appeals go out not to tread on the wretched in the city-gates (*Pr.* 22.22; *Amos* 5.7, 12–15), which is a warning against denying justice to the poor.

In the Greek polis, the assembly was also tied to certain physical features of the city. In Homer, there are references to councils and assemblies in an urban context. The Trojans are ruled by a king and a council of seven elders, who meet by the city-gates (*heiato dēmogerontes epi Skaiēisi pylēisi*; *Il.* 3.149). In Troy, both young and old participate at the assembly by the doors of Priamos (*Il.* 2.785). The similarity with the Ugaritic and Hebrew sources are obvious. The city-gates and palace gates were public places.

In Archaic Greece, the assembly is tied to life in the city. Alkaios in exile on Lesbos around 600 BCE complains to a friend that “I, poor wretch, live with the lot of a rustic, longing to hear the assembly being summoned, Agesilaidas, and the council” (Alkaios 130B). Throughout Greek history, the word polis referred to both the community of citizens and to the city in which they live. Alkaios is one of the earliest sources where the two terms are contrasted: “Cities are not stones or timbers or the craft of builders, but wherever there are men who know how to defend themselves, there are walls and cities” (Alkaios 426). There is no denying that the Archaic polis was regarded as a city by the Greeks, qualitatively different from the countryside, and provided with urban features such as walls of stone and timber.

It has been argued that the Greek polis is different from anything in the Ancient Near East because Greek poleis had an *agora*, an open space for public meetings, whereas Near Eastern cities lacked such spaces. According to R.J. van

der Spek, the Babylonian city was different from the polis to the extent that even in the Hellenistic period, Greeks in Babylon and other Near Eastern cities had their own separate communities, and no *agora* was established. The temple remained the focus of the city-life of the indigenous people (Spek 1987, 74). The gates of Near Eastern city-states and Troy can be argued to fill the function of the *agora*, and thus to obviate the importance of this objection to similarities between Greek and Near Eastern city-states. It is sometimes emphasized by scholars of Greek history that the polis was not a city, but a community, a way of thinking in terms of a society that was a collective of equals. However, as obvious from Alkaios, the Greeks were well aware that the polis was a city.

The two different assessments of collective means of decision making in Near Eastern and Greek traditions rest on two assumptions. The first is that of an Early State in Mesopotamia with no place for corporative power strategies; thus, assemblies and councils can only be explained as primitive and tribal. The second is that of a non-urban Greek polis where the corporate power strategy is not tied to a specific urban locality; thus, democracy is a way of thinking, and not an application of practical solutions to problems of life in the city-state. Both these assumptions tend to obscure any attempt at comparison between the city-state cultures of Greece with those of the Near East.

## 16.4 The Late Bronze Age Background

The Greek polis had structural parallels in city-states of the Ancient Near East, but the background for its culture must also be sought in the Greek past. Greek society in the Iron Age must be studied with the Late Bronze Age as a background. The first complex societies in Greece that may be termed city-states are the so called palatial societies of Crete and the Greek mainland, the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations. The Mycenaean palaces of the mid-second millennium BCE were all destroyed around 1200 BCE, the end of the Late Bronze Age. A Dark Age followed the collapse, of which little can be said, except that there took place an overall decline of civilization in Greece. There was a continuation in language and religion, however. Ian Morris points out that the “second-generation” of Greeks after the collapse of the “first-generation” society “had only distorted memories of the first, but these notions of a lost heroic age were central to second-generation culture” (I. Morris 2003, 2). Certain features, especially local institutions of power, probably survived the Dark Age.

The Late Bronze Age society of Greece was an agro-literary society on the margins of a larger civilization of societies that had its origins in Mesopotamia. The palace and the temple were the administrative and political centers of these polities. Surrounding the palaces and temples were urban centers, which makes

it possible to characterize these polities as city-states. In the Late Bronze Age, the palace was the most important institution in several of these city-states. The Mycenaean palaces were in contact with the Ancient Near East, especially Syria and Egypt, but also Anatolia. They were known to the Hittites as Ahhiyawa, and one Ahhiyawa king was included as peer of the most powerful of Late Bronze Age monarchs (Niemeier 2002, 297).

An influential model for Ancient Near Eastern city-states of the Late Bronze Age is that of a two-sector economy. Michael Heltzer has popularized the image of a powerful palace at the top of society and a large mass of free peasants outside the palace sector that were sometimes enlisted for work for the palace (Heltzer 1988). Those directly employed by the palace as professionals were in a sense not free, because they did not own the means of production they used, but were given these by the palace. On the other hand, peasants were poor and illiterate, and gave up much of their produce to the palace. The peasants owned land, some of which was held in communal plots. Towards the end of the Late Bronze Age, the professionals or dependents of the palace were increasingly given land as property by the king. According to Mario Liverani, the royal dependents became feudal lords in a sense, with their own base of power. This process ushered in the collapse of the palaces (Liverani 1975, 161). At the end of the Late Bronze Age, several palaces collapsed almost simultaneously, which may indeed indicate a common structural weakness or systems crisis. However, not all scholars agree to a two-sector model.

The two-sector model has been attacked recently and from two sides. One line of criticism argues that the model is nothing but a variety of the Marxist term Asiatic despotism. David Schloen offers instead a model based on Weber's ideal types; to describe the Ancient Near Eastern state as a patrimonial household (Schloen 2001, 50–53, 221–254). A different line of criticism emphasizes the role played by collective institutions of governance among the peasants over the absolute power of kings, as in the recent work of Daniel E. Fleming on the city Mari in the Old Babylonian period (Fleming 2004, 174–180).

It may be argued that both the two-sector economy and the patrimonial household model are varieties of the Early State model that emphasize the divide between rulers and ruled. Elizabeth C. Stone argues for the use of the term “consensual society” in analyzing ancient polities, and points out that the Greek polis and the Mesopotamian city-states are hardly “compatible with models used by anthropologists to describe state society that stress coercion as the primary source of social cohesion” (Stone 1997, 15). This view is supported by the approach of Fleming that stresses the duality of the corporate and the elitist strategy for power in ancient polities (Fleming 2004, 177–179). The corporate strategy of the citizens of ancient polities, such as the collective organization of



judicial assemblies, can be interpreted as in opposition to the elite strategy of the rulers, such as privileged access to the gods. Both strategies determine what life was like in the societies under question. What can be learned about the social structure of the Mycenaean polities?

The only literary sources to Mycenaean society are the Linear B tablets. These are lists of rations and supplies left behind by scribes, and provide a glimpse into a brief period in LH IIIB when these clay documents were accidentally preserved in fires of destruction. Cynthia Shelmerdine emphasizes that in Mycenae “the real power of the king and his administrators was to harness the diverse resources of a Mycenaean state, both human and material, to the distinct advantage of themselves” (Shelmerdine 2006, 84). The rise of palaces on the Greek mainland can be viewed as a result of a process where an elite managed to allocate important resources to itself, building up a basis of power through redistribution. This led to a centralization and concentration of power; although Ian Morris points out that the palace did not control the whole society, since there are references to property outside palatial control (I. Morris 2003, 4). Nevertheless, a striking feature of the Linear B tablets is the emphasis on hierarchy.

The *wa-na-ka* or *wanax*, regularly translated king or ruler, was the highest authority in the Mycenaean states. There were also local leaders. Carol G. Thomas points out that central authority was not absolute, and local leaders possessed impressive holdings (Thomas 1995, 351–352). One kind of local leader was the *qa-si-re-u* or *basileus*. They were responsible for the distribution of bronze to local smiths. Pierre Carlier suggests they may have been leaders of a local *gerousia*, or council of elders (Carlier 1995, 362–363). Life in the village communities is largely unknown from the Linear B sources. Alexander Uchitel points out the existence of two terms, *da-mo* and *do-e-ro*, in Linear B and suggests that “the category of population called *da-mo* largely remains outside the control of the central authority of Pylos” (Uchitel 1985, 28). Thus, the impression of absolute hierarchy in the Linear B tablets may be a result of the nature of the sources, being administrative texts from the palace.

Mycenaean society has been interpreted as polarized into a central palace and an independent rural population. Scholars such as Cynthia Shelmerdine emphasizes the exploitative nature of the palaces (Shelmerdine 2006). This is recognizable as a variety of the two-sector model for Ancient Near Eastern societies. However, an analysis of society that only focuses on patterns of domination and subordination ignores other aspects of social integration in the polity. How different was the palace from the polis? The exact meaning of Mycenaean political terms is difficult to assess. It is beyond doubt that some of these terms survived into the language of polis society. In the Homeric epics, and later Greek language, *basileus* is the most common word for king. *Anax* is used in the sense of lord or

master. The *da-mo* or *damos* is recognizable in *demos*, the people. A continuity of some decentralized Mycenaean social institutions into the Dark Age is likely. However, it is not possible to reconstruct Mycenaean society from later Greek usage of terms found in Linear B. The tablets simply give too little information, because they are administrative lists, and not political treatises.

There is more information available for other Late Bronze Age polities. For Ugarit, Alalah and Byblos in Syria and Lebanon textual evidence give the impression of a pyramidal hierarchy with the king in his palace at the top of society. However, the villagers are organized in communities that govern themselves, and collective judiciary institutions played an important role (Heltzer 1976, 77–79). In the Late Bronze Age in Syria, community self rule existed alongside conceptions of power that were focused on absolute and godlike control of society on part of the king. Certain city-state communities actually killed their king, or drove him into exile. Hanoch Reviv points out that in the city of Byblos in the Late Bronze Age the inhabitants discussed political issues in assembly meetings (Reviv 1969, 284). Another example of a city-state with a restricted form of kingship is the city of Emar, where the king played no important role in ritual, whereas the council of elders was powerful (Fleming 1992). These examples show that the corporate strategy of power could influence the society of Ancient Near Eastern city-states. It is not possible to tell whether this held true for the Mycenaean palaces as well. However, the structural similarities between the societies of Ugarit and Mycenae or Pylos are obvious.

Of course, the Aegeans did not sit on the beach and wait for sailors from Ugarit to bring them the gospel of urbanism. Yet, the participation of the Aegean palaces in a wider cultural field that included Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt is acknowledged by all scholars. Although the degree of Mycenaean direct diplomatic contacts with the Great powers of the Late Bronze Age is disputed, the connection is proven beyond doubt (Jasink 2005, 59–60). This could explain the similarities between Mycenaean polities and those of the Ancient Near East. The international world of the Late Bronze Age collapsed around 1200 BCE, and although there was a continuity of life in some places, notably the Levantine city-states, the world of the Iron Age was decidedly different. It was a more regional world, more closed in on itself than in the preceding period.

In the Iron Age, after the fall of the palaces, the polis developed in Greece. The palaces did not survive the collapse, but the memory of important places did. In the eighth century, sanctuaries were established at Mycenaean sites and elements of Mycenaean architecture were copied in the Archaic age. The epics of Homer and Hesiod give us the first written texts in Greek after the Dark Age. Epic society can be interpreted as the survival of village communities in the aftermath of the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces. However, it also represents

something new. It has many traits in common with the polis. Although it clearly was an aristocratic society, the councils surrounding leaders had much influence in politics. The people were also included in the meetings of the assembly. In the *Iliad*, the inhabitants of Troy are regularly being summoned to assemblies, and communal institutions of power existed alongside kingship. The development of the polis may be interpreted as the domination of the corporate strategy for power over the elitist strategy of the kings. The polis developed into a citizen state. However, this development did not happen in a vacuum.

### 16.5 The Levantine City-States and the Polis

Around 1200, the complex societies of the Eastern Mediterranean were struck by catastrophe. Ugarit and other important cities were burnt and abandoned. In Greece, the Mycenaean palaces were destroyed and never rebuilt. All documentation stopped, and Linear B was forgotten. Little can be said with certainty about the history of Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean from 1200 to 800 BCE, and so, it is called a Dark Age. It was not, however, completely dark. There was a continuity of life at some sites, notably the Phoenician city-states in the Levant. Also, there was some exchange between Greece and the Near East, as evident from the excavations at Lefkandi on Euboea (Lemos 2003, 212–217). The Levantines are likely to have provided the first outside impulses to the development of Greek culture in the Iron Age, in the period that the polis emerged.

The written sources to the Levant are few for the Early Iron Age. One source that is often cited is the tenth century BCE story of the Egyptian traveller Wen-Amun. The other sources are later. The Neo-Assyrian annals are an important source to the history of the Levant, but they begin in the eighth century. Homer mentions the Phoenician cities and their inhabitants. Phoenician sources are mainly short inscriptions. Some Levantine cities were survivors of the catastrophe of 1200 BCE. Thus, information on the Levantine city-states in the Iron Age may be inferred from the Amarna letters, the correspondence of Pharaoh Amenophis IV, better known as Akhenaten, with his colleague kings and his vassals in Syria in the Late Bronze Age (Moran 1992, xxxi–xxxiii). Among the surviving Levantine cities that later became a famous Phoenician city was Byblos, whose ruler, Rib-Hadda, is well known from the Amarna letters.

From the letters of the Syrian vassal king Rib-Hadda to Akhenaten, it is known that Byblos was ruled by a king in the Late Bronze Age (*EA* 102–138 in Moran 1992). The inhabitants of his city, however, made political decisions on their own and were organized as a council of elders and an assembly (*EA* 102–138 Moran 1992).

In the Egyptian text *The Journey of Wen-Amun to Phoenicia* (Pritchard 1969, 25–29), the Egyptian emissary Wen-Amun tells of negotiations with Zeker-Ba'al, the king of Byblos, and of decisions taken by popular assemblies. The text is dated to the early eleventh century.

In a treaty between the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE) and Ba'al I, king of Tyre, the elders of Tyre are mentioned as a council giving advice, and the ships of the people of Tyre are mentioned together with the ships of the king (Pritchard 1969, 533–534).

The structure of power in Byblos that is met in the story of Wen-Amun or the Assyrian treaty is not much different from that of the Amarna letters. Evidently, parts of the social and political structure of the Levantine city-states survived the destruction at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Together, the texts give an impression of the political organization of the Levantine city-states that is arguably not dissimilar to the Greek polis. What is interesting here is that there is a survival of polities on the Levantine coast with a corporate strategy of power through the Dark Ages to the Archaic Greek period. Just like the Mycenaeans had been involved in Syria, so too were the Greeks of the Archaic period no strangers to the Levant. The Levantines or Phoenicians are frequently mentioned in the Homeric epics.

The Phoenicians act as traffickers and travellers in the Homeric eighth century. They are encountered a couple of times by Odysseus, and have a wide-ranging sphere of action. Odysseus claims to have come to Ithaca from Crete as a passenger on board a Sidonian ship (*Od.* 13.271–286). Another time, he was taken from Egypt to Phoenicia and entertained as a guest in the house of a rich merchant. After a while, the Phoenician insisted he needed assistance on a journey to Libya, whereas he actually intended to sell Odysseus into slavery. But off Crete they suffered shipwreck and Odysseus drifted to Thesprotia (*Od.* 14.280–315). Phoenician traders sold Eumaios, the swineherd of Odysseus' father Laertes, as a slave. He was actually a prince, but was kidnapped by a runaway serving-woman who fled with some visiting Phoenicians (*Od.* 15.414–483). A rather different view of the Phoenicians is given when Telemachos, the son of Odysseus, and his companions visit Menelaos in Sparta. Menelaos shows them the treasures he gathered on his extensive travels back from Troy (*Od.* 4.71–91). He gives a golden-rimmed silver bowl he had received from the hospitable Sidonian king Phaidimos to Telemachos as a parting gift (*Od.* 4.611–619; 15.111–119). Concerning trade, Odysseus is insulted by Euryalos the Phaiakaeon for being a trader, plying the seas on the lookout for gain (*Od.* 8.159–164). The type of the greedy trader is contrasted with the honorable sportsman, and is incompatible with an elite lifestyle. The Homeric view of the Phoenicians is split; they are both dis-

honest merchants and members of a wealthy elite, with whom the Greeks have ties of friendship.

The negative view of the Phoenicians soon became the predominant one, and after the Persian wars, the Phoenicians were thrown in with the other cowardly Asians. Thucydides claims that Greek colonists supplanted Phoenicians who had settled on Sicily. Phoenicians had settled along the coast on promontories and islets for trade with the indigenous population, but withdrew to a limited number of sites after the arrival in force of Greeks from across the sea (*Thuc.* 6.2).

The negative Greek view of the Phoenicians belies the Near Eastern background for much of Greek culture. The Archaic period saw the adaptation of the Phoenician alphabet to the writing of Greek. Also, the orientalizing style in Greek art was much indebted to Near Eastern motives. Contacts between Greeks and Near Eastern peoples led to a process of hybridization, of cultural change through the adoption and adaptation of foreign elements into a new whole. New technologies such as alphabetic writing influenced city life. Temple decorations and new motives in the arts also re-formed the urban environment in Greece, under the influence of the city cultures of the Near East. Contacts between Greeks, Near Eastern merchants and the city-states of the Levant in the Archaic age thus influenced the development of the polis.

Arguably, a corporative strategy of power was prevalent in Levantine city-states. The Phoenicians did not tell the Greeks to organize themselves with a city-assembly, a council and a leader that answered to the community of citizens. However, the Greeks visited and spent time in the Levantine city-states in a period when there was little or no urbanization in Greece. Just as the Greeks were no doubt impressed by these cities, their political organization probably did not go unnoticed.

The Phoenician city-states had kings and collective institutions of decision making. Likewise, some Greek poleis had kings or tyrants, as well as collective institutions of decision making. The elitist strategy of the rulers was confronted by the corporative strategy of the citizens. The dominance of a corporative strategy for power that characterized the Greek polis was not unique to Greek political thinking; it was a possibility in polities of the Ancient Near East. The similarities between Greek and Ancient Near Eastern political traditions have been pointed out long ago. Should these similarities be regarded as structural similarities, or is it possible to establish a connection between these city-state traditions?

## 16.6 The Problem of Diffusion

The nature of Greek interaction with the Ancient Near East has been much debated. Walter Burkert (1992) coined the process the Orientalizing revolution, and

placed most of the action in the Archaic period. Itinerant craftsmen are the main suspects in bringing new impulses to the Greeks. Some place the Near Eastern influences on Greek culture earlier. Martin Bernal (1991) has tried to breathe life into Greek myths about Egyptian origins of Greek culture in the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Sarah P. Morris (1992) also sees an early start to the process of Near Eastern and Greek interaction, and includes the whole Mediterranean in a broad vista of cross-cultural influences, especially through seafaring. The dynamics of diffusion are difficult to pinpoint. David Small (1997) argues for an important role for the elite in cross-cultural contacts and innovations. Aristocratic houses played a multiregional role in the poleis, and the lack of integration of the economy into politics meant that trade and expeditions was mostly in the hands of the wealthy elite. Especially sanctuaries played a role in the network of contacts within the elite. Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier (2001) also argues for the aristocracy as transmitters of intellectual issues and political ideas in the period in which the Greek polis and its institutions were shaped and refined, a view shared by Kurt Raaflaub (2004).

No doubt the elite were not alone on their travels. Settlement abroad in the period of Greek colonization from the eighth to the sixth century BCE brought heterogeneous groups of Greek settlers into contacts with other cultures. The culture of the indigenous population of Sicily, as analyzed by Peter van Dommelen, is an example of hybridization (Dommelen 1997). The Greek colonists may have been influenced by similar experiences, not only in encounters with the indigenous population, but also in their meetings with traders like the Phoenicians, who established stations abroad.

From the end of the Archaic to the Classical period, there is a contrast between Herodotos and the story of the Persians discussing politics, and the natural slavishness of Asians in Aristotle. The development of the Archaic Greek city-state was influenced by Near Eastern contacts, whereas the Greeks in the Classical period saw a need to distance themselves from the East. On the other hand, Spartan and Athenian politics in the fifth century were very much influenced by Persian gold. The Greeks were more involved with, and indeed more similar to, the Persians than they would have liked to admit. The Melian dialogue in Thukydides reveals that Athens herself became the monster from which she sought to protect the Greek world, as the Athenians insist that might makes right, and empire demands further conquest (5.85–113). Greek identity in the fifth century BCE was defined in opposition to the Persians and the Ancient Near East. Opposition was born from confrontation. The Persians attacked the Greeks in 490 and 479 BCE in what were to them insignificant border skirmishes, whereas Marathon, Salamis and Plataea became the proudest moments in Greek history. The development of anti-oriental sentiments may also be read as a backlash from the favourable view

of the East that apparently was prevalent in the seventh century. The Classical age of Greece was a period where the Greeks distanced themselves from their neighbors.

## 16.7 Conclusion

The polis has several origins. There is a continuity of Greek culture from Mycenaean times to the Archaic period, although much of what happened in the Dark Age is unknown. The Late Bronze Age world of the Ahhiyawa, peers of the Great kings of the Near East, disappeared around 1200 BCE. The connection to the East Aegean and the Levant was soon re-established. The polis took form in Greece in the course of the Archaic period, that was characterized by an intensification of contacts between the Near East and Greece.

The indigenous Greek contribution to the polis should of course not be underestimated. However, there are two things that point to Near Eastern influences on the development of the polis, and that is the secondary character of Greek urbanism, and the circumstantial evidence of the so orientalizing elements in Archaic Greek culture. The Greek polis was a kind of city-state with thousands of years of predecessors in the Ancient Near East. Life in the polis had an urban character, where leisure time and political participation were signs of status. Public places, buildings and monuments united the community. Several early poleis were ruled by tyrants, but the assembly of the people was also important. Thus, a struggle between corporate and elitist strategies of power can be seen in the polis, between people's power and exclusive leadership.

The developments of the Archaic Greek world were in part the results of Greek contacts with Near Eastern peoples, of which the Phoenicians are the prime example. The adaption of the Phoenician alphabet by Greeks in the eighth century and the profound influence of Near Eastern motifs in Greek arts from the seventh century show the degree to which the societies of the early poleis were part of a larger cultural field. This is not least a result of the Greek colonization movements in the Archaic period, but also of the expansion of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the migration and trading ventures of peoples in Syria and the Levant. Elite networks of exchange, trade and colonization urged the re-establishment of urban centers in Greece. The polis must be explained within the framework of a larger Mediterranean environment both spatially, chronologically and culturally.

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## Chapter 17

# Seeing Otherwise: On the Rules of Comparison in Historical Humanities

*Amar Annus*

### 17.1 The Two Views of History

In humanistic disciplines, there is no set of rules for the generation of comparisons. Even worse, there are no exact controls for the validity of comparisons. This is because in absence of an explicit methodology, the components of historical systems cannot be analyzed into “elements,” and the understanding of what consists a meaningful historical entity often depends on intuitive assessments. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the comparative enterprise in humanities can bear very fruitful results and widens the horizons of knowledge. The question is—how to think about comparison in humanities with more rigidity?

To answer this question, the present paper sets out to investigate the two views paradigm of history, taking its inspiration from recent advances in cognitive neurosciences. This paradigm distinguishes between local and global views of culture, and posits that history can be studied from both vantage points. According to the two views of history paradigm, the local level of cultures consists of its discrete units: the facts, handicraft skills, art and technology inventions. The global level contains the social narratives, ideologies and general theories.

Adding a narrative to the factual data entails a presence of some kind of global theory of how the historical facts might belong together. This binding narrative organizes the factual content of history into top-down patterns, which represents a certain global theory of the meaningful development or cultural evolution. The two views paradigm assumes that the human history is a vast continuum from facts to narratives. Among the innumerable ways to study history, I will describe the four typical approaches, which also correspond to the four basic types of cultural comparisons.

The comparison as cognitive process does not occur without a cognitive agent. In a very influential essay, Jonathan Z. Smith has emphasized the psychological background of comparative investigation in humanities:

[...] for the most part, the scholar has not set out to make comparisons. Indeed, he has been most frequently attracted to a particular datum by a sense of its uniqueness. But often, at some point along the way, as if unbidden, as a sort of *déjà vu*, the scholar remembers that he has seen “it” or “something like it” before [...] This experience, this unintended consequence of research, must then be accorded significance and provided with an explanation (Smith 1988, 22).<sup>1</sup>

Comparison in humanist research arises from subjective experience, and therefore has a psychological character. This fact, however, does not in any way invalidate the potential of comparison in organizing data. In the following, I will argue that *comparison is another word for pattern*, and comparing as a cognitive process is identical to noting patterns. The leading Cambridge psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen calls this activity of brain “systemizing”:

Systemizing is the ability to analyze changing patterns, to figure out how things work. Information changes happen in the world all day every day and are either random or nonrandom. If change is non-random, there is a pattern to it, and the human brain is tuned to notice patterns. Pattern is another word for repetition: we notice that a sequence of information has occurred before. How well we notice patterns is something that varies in the population.<sup>2</sup> (Baron-Cohen 2011, 104)

In order to discover patterns, a brain is wired to compare and patternize the data. According to Baron-Cohen’s *emphathizing-systemizing* psychological theory, the cognitive process of “systemizing” is neurological. It can occur in the human brain without any volitional effort or trying, “just as a spider cannot help but spin webs—that is what they are evolved to do” (2008, 69). The “Systemizing Mechanism” consists of these parts of the brain that perceive patterns in changing information, which enables to figure out how things work and predict the future. Baron-Cohen has defined seven settings of the Systemizing Mechanism, a single mechanism tuned from low to high in different individuals (2011, 112–115).

<sup>1</sup>J. Z. Smith continues: “In the vast majority of instances in the history of comparison, this subjective experience is projected as an objective connection through some theory of influence, diffusion, borrowing, or the like. It is a process of working from a psychological association to an historical one; it is to assert that similarity and contiguity have causal effect.” I disagree with his preliminary notion that “comparison appears to be more a matter of memory than a project for inquiry” (Smith 1988, 22). I don’t think that any kind of inquiry is possible without a working memory, even if the purpose is descriptive only.

<sup>2</sup>Pattern is another word for repetition, also in behavioral sense. Through repetitive actions the pattern is induced into the world from outside, with a volitional effort. This insight can be helpful in understanding the significance of rituals.

Thus, the process of comparing as pattern thinking is not even “psychological” in character, it is based on a neurological mechanism.

Simon Baron-Cohen’s empathizing-systemizing theory, which is designed to explain the clinical condition of autism, represents the recent advances in cognitive neurosciences, which compellingly suggest that human brain has not a single, but two parallel cognitive systems. These two systems normally blend in a human mind more or less perfectly. Only the failure of one reveals the existence of the other in a way that would otherwise be difficult to discern (Badcock 2009, 11). This research has established that

[...] human beings have evolved two parallel ways of thinking. One, which you might call *people-thinking, mentalistic cognition*—or more simply mentalism—is wholly concerned with understanding human beings, their minds, motives, and emotions; the other, which by contrast you could call *things-thinking or mechanistic cognition* is concerned with understanding and interacting with the physical, non-human universe of inert objects. (Badcock 2009, 15)

In other words, the social brain works entirely differently from the mechanistic thinking, using other neural pathways altogether. In my two views of history paradigm, the local level corresponds to the mechanistic type of cognition, whereas the global level corresponds to “social intelligence” or mentalistic cognition. These two cognitive systems become cognitive styles or preferences for thinking and acting in certain ways, if one of the two prevails over the other (cf. Sadler-Smith 2009). Psychiatrists and psychologists have developed a range of research methods and terminology to describe the same spectrum between the mechanistic and mentalistic cognitive styles. One of the terms describing this difference in cognition is so-called “central coherence” account, which was originally designed to explain weaknesses of the local processing style. However, besides weaknesses, it also found strengths:

‘Weak central coherence’ refers to detail-focused processing style proposed to characterize autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The original suggestion of core deficit in central processing resulting in failure to extract global form/meaning, has been challenged in three ways. First, it may represent an outcome of superiority in local processing. Second, it may be a processing *bias*, rather than deficit. Third, weak coherence may occur alongside, rather than explain, deficits in social cognition. (Happé and Frith 2006, 5)

We can describe the typical representatives of the two cognitive styles as follows. Somebody with global/mentalistic cognitive style shows better narrative

skills, (s)he has strong central coherence with the focus on the big picture. A person with local/mechanistic cognitive style is a good systemizer of objects and facts, (s)he has weak central coherence, but remarkable attention and memory to detail. As many researchers assume, there is a continuum of cognitive style in the general population from strong coherence and global focus to weak coherence and detail focus. The first means a tendency to miss details and concentrate on gist, and the other to focus on patterns and details on the local level (Booth and Happé 2010, 390).

The main consequence of the mechanistic-mentalistic view of history is that it puts the limits to the social understanding of history as consisting of only narratives and intercourses between individuals, groups and societies. The social approaches have become very fashionable in historical humanities during the recent decades. By pointing out that the social thinking controls only one of the two cognitive networks of brain, the historical impact of the other cognitive system is too often left out of the consideration. As the mechanistic type of thinking also has a great impact on history, it would be wrong to claim that the social reasoning is the primary one in history to a degree that makes it the key component of all possible human undertaking. In activities related to obtaining, sharing and preserving the knowledge about the facts, things, techniques, etc., the social aspect is clearly of secondary importance.

This difference in cognition is consistent with the distinction made above between the local and global views of history. The facts as discrete units are the building material for a bigger picture in culture, which represents a centrally coherent system, a social narrative. The mechanistic thinking style, which can show a weak central coherence bias, must be recognized as legitimate form of cognition throughout the history. Therefore, the local views of history are as legitimate as global narratives of the social kind, which can be biased globally.

## 17.2 Comparison Types

According to the two views of history paradigm, there are four basic sets of rules to be followed when making comparisons in historical humanities, two for each view. First, the comparison from fact to fact, from feature to feature (Ll). Second, the inductive comparison from fact to fact in search for a larger pattern into which the discrete facts could fit (Lg). Third, the deductive comparison of facts within the frame of a general theory (G1). Fourth, the comparison of the systems, ideologies or narratives to one another (Gg).

The local and global levels can be distinguished in every subset of humanities—the history of culture, ideology, mythology, religion, literature etc. The *global view* is concentrated on the central features of a system, which articulate

its basic agenda and intend to invest all its local components with a specific context. The *local view* of historical systems is focused on details in the given system, regarding it independently of global context. The global view of history concentrates on eras, nations, imperia, ideologies etc., while the local view deals with specific cultural features. For example, the local cultural features are technical inventions like the use of scripts, wheel, sundial, Pythagoras theorem, seal-cutting, etc. The occurrence of these kinds of local elements may or may not be dependent on developments on the global cultural level. When the use of a specific local feature is not dependent on the top-down global implementation, its presence in the culture is contextually independent. It means that the presence of this local component in the system is unexplainable in the global terms. Following only the top-down hierarchy lines of the global structure, its presence in the system is not even detectable.

A global type of comparison designates the comparison of systems or parts of the systems to one another to find the patterns of similarities and differences in them. The global comparison can be carried out in two distinct ways: globally or locally.



Figure 17.1: Ebbinghaus Illusion

1) *Local type of global comparison* (GI) is the top-down comparison of system features in their context. It is able to study local elements in systems in contextually dependent manner. If GI finds patterns on the local level in one, two or more closed systems, it regards these features in their respective contexts. The fact that the local components are compared does not alter its global nature, because the local components are heuristically viewed with the holistic picture of the

system in mind. If the patterns of similarities are found in a single global system (just like two kidneys in one human body), they still remain contextually different, despite their commonalities. Therefore, the local type of global comparison (G1) serves better for finding patterns of differences rather than of similarities, because the contextual perspective make the commonalities look and feel different. To illustrate this, one has to glance at the famous Ebbinghaus illusion, which is a size perception illusion, where one central circle looks smaller than the other, while the two are actually the same size (17.1). In global type comparison, the context ultimately defines the meaning and function of its local parts.

2) Two or more global systems can also be compared globally, from top to top. The *global type of global comparison* (Gg) is able to find patterns in a set of general categories, while in accordance with its nature, it is more a comparison of differences, not similarities. However, there can be top-to-top similarities in different global systems that the Gg type of comparison is able to point out.

Both types of global comparison (G1 and Gg) are tuned to find out general similarities of the *phenomenological kind* between individual systems, which may contain differences in details. However, these phenomenological similarities can sometimes also be related “morphologically” or by common descent. This can be ascertained by the following local level analysis of special features. The difference of Gg from G1 is that of the focus. E.g. Maoism can be compared to Leninism under the global category of Communism, which represents the G1 approach. They both can also be taken as global categories and compared to one another as such, which is the Gg type of comparison.

The local type of comparison is tuned to explore the patterns of differences and similarities between systems on the local level. It is contextually independent and aspectual, concentrating on details in closed systems. Again, the comparison on the local level can be conducted either globally or locally.

3) The *global type of local comparison* (Lg) is the bottom-up approach to local data. It is able to detect patterns of both similarities and differences in systems’ parts and to identify similar details in the confines of two and more systems, independently of their context. The bottom-up reasoning resulting from this kind of comparison helps to point out that despite of the differences, the two parts of one or more systems can be called with the same name because of their similar functions—like two kidneys in one human body.

4) The last remaining comparison type is the *local type of local comparison* (L1), in which the small system parts are compared from bottom to bottom. This cognitive process is similar to error-checking and proofreading, as it is useful for detecting similarities and differences in detail. In principle, this kind of comparison is effective in analyzing small parts of the closed systems. It does not



yield general conclusions, although the functions of small parts in the systems undoubtedly influence their global operations.

One can illustrate the differences between these four comparison types using the terms of “fact” and “social narrative” instead of “local” and “global” respectively. The type L1 analyses and compares the facts to one another and is not interested in the social narratives into which they may belong. The Lg compares the factual data, and surmises that these may belong to a coherent theory or narrative, assuming the forest behind the trees. In contrast, the G1 type already has a theory, and relates the facts to one another in the context of a grand narrative. G1 describes the narrative construction process, in which a human agent selects and discards the characters and actions for a suitable plot. The Gg type does not compare the discrete facts at all, only the ideologies, the narratives to one another. The Gg is essentially a confrontation of big ideas and grand narratives. It is advisable not to compare the local and global features to one another, unless some isomorphic features appear on both levels.

### 17.3 The Validity Problems

The patterns formed by comparison in humanist studies can be judged for their accuracy using one’s knowledge of data as well as the sense of verisimilitude. In the interpersonal context, the consensus is usually constructed according to a social agreement, in which a particular cognitive style usually predominates. Given the lack of exact measurability of historical data in every aspect, the cognitive style of leading experts or schools is often the force behind, which builds the consensus about the validity of a certain type of comparisons. Such cognitive styles can be biased in a global or local manner, which leads to the acceptance or rejection of either the G or L type of comparisons.<sup>3</sup> The patterns of the Gg and G1 types seem more sensible to the corresponding cognitive style G, and the Lg and L1 types of patterns are more acceptable to the L type of cognition. The G style is more tuned to point out patterns of differences, because it systemizes the material in contextually dependent way, while the L style is able to find small-scale similarities in many global contexts. This stylistic difference has often resounded in the rhetorical question in regard to comparison: which are more important, similarities or differences?

The main problem of a comparison’s validation is how to “translate” results found on one level to another, e.g. how to contextualize the L level comparisons

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<sup>3</sup>It seems entirely clear that history operates both on global and local levels, and different cognitive styles have existed in all historical periods. The groups and individuals have carried the traditions that are convenient with their styles. Accordingly, the modern scholar has to try to accommodate his/her personal style to historical situations under scrutiny.

with the G type of processing, and how to verify the G type of patterns on the local level. A difference found by the G type of comparison between the systems can contain precise similarities of the L type. And *vice versa*, similarities found by the L type of processing may be situated in very different contexts, globally speaking.

The emergence of a challenge can be described as follows: the local components that appear in different systems show up a pattern of similarities, however specific or striking. In the first instance, the scholar would like to describe them only as such, but subsequently (s)he may make an attempt to an explanation. Should we assume that these components are somehow historically related to one another, because they have identical “morphological” component (of Lg type)? Or, are the similarities just phenomenological ones and contextually different (of Gl type)? Such locally processed data that are present in many closed systems can sometimes be difficult to contextualize globally. The result of such a contextualization can be written with the formula  $G\{l_1, l_2 \dots l_n\}$  in which the  $l_n$  components refer to the local similarities in different systems, and the G refers to the global theory, the cross-contextual framing, which accommodates all these local similarities.

In many cases, the global network for local comparisons is already suggested by a separate theory. One can give the celebrated example of comparative linguistics, in which local level comparisons between various roots and words are explainable under the global concept of historical relatedness and contacts between distinct languages.<sup>4</sup>

If the scholarship lacks a theory for explanation, one should try to re-conceptualize the local similarities within a newly formulated global theory. Such new theories resulting from global explanations of local similarities can easily transcend the boundaries of the existing academic disciplines. The challenge can also be posed for the existing terminology—there is no name for the new concept. Given the historically contingent nature of academic disciplines, re-conceptualizing of the borders of traditional fields may yield a new type of knowledge. Accordingly, the transformation of the L type of comparison into G type of general theory is often an interdisciplinary process, able to open new domains of scholarship—both real and fanciful. However, a serious truth-seeking

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<sup>4</sup>E.g., the Swedish word *bruka* is related to the German word *brauchen* in many ways that are obvious—the two words have very similar meaning and sequence of phonemes. When saying that the Swedish word *bruka* is related to German *brauchen*, one does not need to explain it with the top-to-top generalization that Swedish = German. The global contextualization of this locally processed information is made by the reference to the academic discipline of etymology. In the case of comparative linguistics, etymology serves as an established framework that is able to conceptualize locally processed data without difficulties. However, the existence of a global theoretical theory should not blind anyone to assume that every local comparison made within this framework is valid.

scholar should not be afraid of a challenge to the existing classification of knowledge in humanities, given that many successful re-conceptualizing efforts have advanced the human knowledge over time.<sup>5</sup>

J. Z. Smith in his treatment of comparison points to the distinction made by the British nineteenth century biologist Richard Owen (1804–1892) between “homology” and “analogy” (Smith 2004, 24). Homology is characterized by resemblances explained by common descent, which are “real.” They are the genealogical kind of comparisons favored by historians in order to demonstrate filiation, contact, or diffusion with a theory. Analogies, by contrast, are “ideal.” They are mental constructions, resting on postulated relations stipulated with respect to particular points of interest (Smith 2004, 24).

In my terminology, “analogies” are phenomenological commonalities found by the G type of comparison, while “homologies” are found by L type of processing, and are possibly historical. For example, etymologically unrelated words in different languages, which cover the same semantic area, can be called “analogies”, while those with common etyma are “homologies.” However, the truth is that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate “homologies” from “analogies.” In order to make sense of the comparisons that seem to misconceive the structural domains of historical humanities, one has to re-conceptualize the borders of the disciplines and form the new ones in order to improve the social understanding of how history works—both on global and local level. J. Z. Smith calls a similar process “rectification of academic categories” as the final stage of comparative enterprise (2000, 239). Accordingly, the re-conceptualization of the L type comparisons on the G level may involve a change in the global categories. In contrast, while making sense of the G comparisons on the L level, one will bring more preciseness to the sub-categories of disciplines. Therefore, a valid comparison is inherently neither the G nor the L type of pattern—if translatable, it can be both.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The recent account of the “thick comparison” (Niewöhner and Schaffer 2010) also attempts at the many-sided theoretical approach to comparative method.

<sup>6</sup>In contrast, J. Z. Smith formulates four normative operations for the comparative enterprise. These are description, comparison, redescription and rectification (Smith 2000, 239; Smith 2004, 29). In my classification, this process is the contextually dependent comparison type G1. According to Smith, the “description” locates two or more comparanda within the rich texture of their environments and reception history; then the “comparison” is undertaken with respect to some category, question, theory, or model, which “redescribes” the exempla each in light of another; the final “rectification” takes effect in relation to the academic categories to which they have been imagined (Smith 2000, 239; Smith 2004, 29). In my view, Smith describes how to evaluate a comparison that has already been found out, and gives no attention to how a pattern was formed. In Smith’s understanding no sustainable credit is given to other patterns of comparison besides the contextually dependent G1. However, the local type of patterning is often the real resource of new knowledge both in sciences and humanities.

## 17.4 A Test Case

In order to show, how a comparison can be analyzed in regard to my theoretical reconsiderations in the present paper, I take a random example from the recent publication by Simo Parpola. Being a renowned Assyriologist, the author has also the reputation as a comparativist. The test case compares aspects from the Neo-Assyrian political treaty ceremony to the Last Supper scene in the Christian gospels.<sup>7</sup> The quotation runs as follows:

The conclusion of a treaty involved a ceremonial banquet, in the course of which a cup was emptied (SAA 6, 153–156) and a spring lamb was slaughtered and eaten by the oath-taking party (SAA 2, 2 i 10–21). A ceremonial banquet involving the drinking of a mnemonic cup and strongly reminiscent of Mt. 26, 26–29, Mk. 14, 22–25 and Lk. 22, 17–19, likewise plays a prominent part in the conclusion of the divine covenant described in SAA 9, 3: 4. (Parpola 2011, 44)

All the pieces, from which Parpola puts together his pattern, are the local elements of comprehensive rituals, occurring in their respective contexts. However, this comparison is contextually independent, of the Lg type. How to conceptualize the global framework in which this cultural pattern occurs? In other words, how to transfer the Lg comparison type into the G1 one? One faces a challenge, because there does not exist, as yet, any umbrella category for drinking a mnemonic cup both in the Assyrian treaty rituals and in the Christian Last Supper ceremony. The notion of the ancient Mesopotamian “world view” (*Weltanschauung*), cherished by the Pan-Babylonian school is not helpful (Smith 1988, 26–27), because it is too general and does not explain these particularities. Thus, a rectification of academic categories is in order to make sense of Parpola’s comparison. The making of the political and religious treaty is viewed by this comparison as the historically re-occurring pattern of intercultural kind, coming across in different contexts. Both examples—the ancient Near Eastern treaty ceremony and the Christian Last Supper—are testimonies to this pattern. It is a matter of differences in the cognitive style and taste, which allow to accept this local pattern either as historically conceivable or not. However, there is a danger of misunderstanding: one should not interpret this comparison in the top-to-top manner—it does not follow that the Assyrian treaty ritual is the “same” or has exactly the same meaning as the Christian Last Supper. What one can say is that there is a persistent

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<sup>7</sup>The example is chosen from the point of view of interests of the Melammu Project. However, any comparison in historical humanities is analyzable according to the model presented in this paper. On the recent evaluations of the pan-Babylonian school, see (Smith 1988, 26–29); cf. (Parpola 2004).

cultural pattern on local level, which begs to be interpreted in terms of a global context.

This comparison poses the question of more general assumptions about cultural processes: is the history liable to preserve its cultural patterns multi-locally in many global systems? If yes, what defines the “sameness” of these local patterns in different contexts, which invest them with a new meaning? It is often difficult to explain such patterns through contiguity, which would necessitate the researcher to show the “bridges” between the different pieces of evidence, and the ways of transmission from one place to another. The fact is that scholars are very often short of historical evidence, working in the realm of hypotheses. How certain situations may have evolved historically is very often beyond our epistemic reach. However, this fact should not serve as the excuse for not exploring the problems of importance. Instead, it is more sensible to try to study these local patterns and to assume, that certain developments are possible. In the test case, the scholar gathered pieces of the local evidence that seem to make sense from a global perspective, although the theory is not articulated. Such procedure must be considered legitimate as the only possible one in many cases. Needless to say, it is often difficult to find a common denominator for a complicated cultural pattern and to know the exact ways of historical transmission. Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his comments to Frazer’s *Golden Bough*, has made a very similar point, while discussing the hypothetical nature of historical explanation:

An historical explanation, an explanation as an hypothesis of development, is only *one* kind of summary of the data—of their synopsis. We can equally well see the data in their relations to one another and make a summary of them in a general picture without putting it in the form of an hypothesis regarding the temporal development. (Wittgenstein 2010, 8e)<sup>8</sup>

One question still emerges: if there are no details available for the historical explanation on how a cultural pattern persisted over time, are we at least to label a theory of this general picture, which embraces the comparative data on the local level? I think that in some cases the pattern can be valid even without an explication effort. Putting a theoretical label comes close to an explanation, and often scholars are in short of a general category. This kind of situation should not be regarded as embarrassing. In some cases, our contemporary language is incapable to describe accurately the complicated patterns that existed only in history. The ancient reality cast into the terms of modern terminology may give an

<sup>8</sup>Elsewhere in the same collection, Wittgenstein argues for the superiority of description over explanation: “Compared with the impression that what is described here makes on us, the explanation is too uncertain. Every explanation is an hypothesis” (Wittgenstein 2010, 3e).

impression of being seriously distorted, which it actually may not be. Therefore it might sometimes be wise to avoid both theoretical and historical interpretations. The most scholarship can often do is to present the evidence for an historical pattern, in which the manner of presentation serves as the temporary framework, a substitute for theory. For the sound scholarship, it is enough to arrange the factual material in the global perspective, in order to have a clear overview of it. This understanding of a valid comparison comes very close to L. Wittgenstein's inquires, who in the following quote calls the global perspective "übersichtliche Darstellung" and the local similarities "intermediate links" (*Zwischenglieder*). He argues:

For us the conception of a global presentation is fundamental. It denotes the representation form, the way in which we see things. [...] this global presentation mediates the understanding, which consists just in the fact that we "see the connections." Hence the importance of finding *intermediate links*. But in this case an intermediate link is not meant to do anything except draw attention to the similarity, the connection, between the *facts*. As one might illustrate the internal relation of a circle to an ellipse by gradually transforming an ellipse into a circle, *but not in order to assert that a given ellipse in fact, historically, came from a circle* (hypothesis of development) but only to sharpen our eye for a formal connection.<sup>9</sup>

There is always a mismatch between the epistemological limits and what we would like to know in historical humanities. This discrepancy continuously triggers the epistemological efforts, which transcend the conventional maps of the scholarly disciplines. Therefore, it is certainly not fair to call comparison a "magic," if the use of this word does not contain an encouraging message—designating an act of the epistemic effort towards unknowable.

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<sup>9</sup>The text in the original German: "Der Begriff der übersichtlichen Darstellung ist für uns von grundlegender Bedeutung. Er bezeichnet unsere Darstellungsform, die Art wie wir die Dinge sehen. [...] Diese übersichtliche Darstellung vermittelt das Verständnis, welches eben darin besteht, dass wir die "Zusammenhänge sehen." Daher die Wichtigkeit des Findens von *Zwischenglieder*. Ein hypothetisches Zwischenglied aber soll in diesem Falle nichts tun, als die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Ähnlichkeit, den Zusammenhang, der *Tatsachen* lenken. Wie man eine interne Beziehung der Kreisform zur Ellipse dadurch illustrierte, dass man eine Ellipse allmählich in einen Kreis überführt; *aber nicht um zu behaupten, dass eine gewisse Ellipse tatsächlich, historisch, aus einem Kreis entstanden wäre* (Entwicklungshypothese), sondern nur um unser Auge für einen formalen Zusammenhang zu schärfen" (Wittgenstein 2010, 9).

## 17.5 Conclusions

The main purpose of the present paper was to describe the rules for the four types of comparison, which are all equally legitimate in humanist research. These comparison types represent different methods of finding patterns in historical evidence. Because the patternizing or systemizing is a function of brain according to some recent psychological theories, the use of patterns and comparison has always been the inherent component of human reasoning. Moreover, the modes of behavior and the patterns of thinking tend recur on both local and global levels of history, just because the human mind is naturally inclined to use these patterns, which already have a significance. In anthropological terminology, a set of the recurring cultural patterns can be called a stream of tradition. Such a tradition can be observable on the local level of many cultures and historical periods; the detailed analysis of its different parts is often able to suggest, if a pattern is the historical one or only of the phenomenological nature.

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## Abbreviations

<i>AA</i>	Archäologische Anzeiger
<i>AJA</i>	American Journal of Archaeology
<i>AJNES</i>	Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Aramazd), Yerevan
<i>AnatSt</i>	Anatolian Studies
<i>ANET<sup>3</sup></i>	Ancient Near Eastern Texts
<i>ARAMAZD</i>	Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies
<i>AuOr</i>	Aula Orientalis. Revista de estudios del Próximo Oriente Antiguo
<i>BM OP</i>	British Museum Original Papers
<i>CAD</i>	Oppenheim, A. L. & Reiner, E. et al. (eds.). (1956–2010.). <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago</i>
<i>Camb.</i>	Strassmaier, J. N. (1890). <i>Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529–521 v. Chr.): von den Thontafeln des Britischen Museums</i> . Babylonische Texte, Heft 8–9. Leipzig
<i>CDLI</i>	The Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative <a href="http://cdli.ucla.edu">http://cdli.ucla.edu</a>
<i>CM 3</i>	Wunsch, C. (1993). <i>Die Urkunden des babylonischen Geschäftsmannes Iddin-Marduk. Zum Handel mit Naturalien im 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.</i> Cuneiform Monographs 3a and b. Groningen
<i>CM 20</i>	Wunsch, C. (2000). <i>Das Egibi-Archiv. I. Die Felder und Gärten</i> . Band II. Cuneiform Monographs 20B. Groningen
<i>CT</i>	Coffin Texts
<i>CTMMA 3</i>	Spar, I.; von Dassow, E. (eds.). (2000). <i>Corpus of Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art 3</i> . Private Archive Texts from the First Millennium B.C. New York
<i>CTU</i>	M. Salvini, <i>Corpus dei testi urartei. Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia (Documenta Asiana VIII, three volumes)</i> , Rome 2008
<i>Cyr.</i>	Strassmaier, J. N. (1890). <i>Inschriften von Cyrus, König von Babylon (538–529v. Chr.)</i> . Babylonische Texte, Heft 7. Leipzig

<i>Dar.</i>	Strassmaier, J. N. (1897). <i>Inschriften von Darius, König von Babylon (521–485 v. Chr.)</i> . Babylonische Texte, Heft 10–12. Leipzig
<i>EV</i>	Epigrafika Vostoka
<i>GMTR</i>	Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record
<i>IstMitt</i>	Istanbuler Mitteilungen
<i>JA</i>	Journal Asiatique, Paris
<i>MBh.</i>	Hindu Mahabharata epic
<i>Nbn.</i>	Strassmaier, J. N. (1889). <i>Inschriften von Nabuchodonosor, König von Babylon (604–561 v. Chr.)</i> . Babylonische Texte, Heft 5–6. Leipzig
<i>Ner.</i>	Evetts, B. T. A. (1892). <i>Inscriptions of the Reigns of Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar and Laborosoarchod</i> . Babylonische Texte, Heft 6, B. Leipzig
<i>OB</i>	Old Babylonian
<i>RIMA</i>	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian Periods, Toronto
<i>RIA</i>	Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie, Berlin
<i>SAA</i>	State Archives of Assyria
<i>SAA V</i>	G.B. Lanfranchi—S. Parpola, <i>The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II. Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces</i> , (SAA V), Helsinki 1990
<i>SB</i>	Standard Babylonian
<i>STT</i>	Sultantepe Texts
<i>SMEA</i>	Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici, Rome
<i>TAVO</i>	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Wiesbaden
<i>TCL</i>	Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre, Paris

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