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van der Spek, R.J.

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COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PERSIAN EMPIRE: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RESPONSES

R. J. van der Spek (VU University Amsterdam)

INTRODUCTION

The Persian Empire was one of the greatest empires in history, and as such it had a deep impact on history. It encompassed a vast territory reaching from modern Turkey and Egypt in the west to Afghanistan in the east and held the greater part of this area during two full centuries, 539 to 331 B.C.E. In some respects, the empire was a continuation of earlier empires of the Near East, viz. the Neo-Assyrian and the Neo-Babylonian Empires, which had their centers in northern and southern Mesopotamia, respectively, and also encompassed a great part of the Near East. The Persians borrowed much from their predecessors in terms of administration, art, architecture, and the use of royal inscriptions. They borrowed from the diverse civilizations under their sway. Aramaic was to become the major administrative language, and Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian (see ch. 9 by Melanie Wasmuth) were regarded as the main languages next to their own Old Persian language, for which a new cuneiform script was developed. It is interesting to see that Greek did not acquire that status, although I assume that a version of the Bisotūn inscription was available in Greek, which Herodotus could have read or have heard about.

In many respects the empire also constituted a break. For the first time, a Near Eastern Empire ruling Mesopotamia had its center outside Mesopotamia, namely in Iran. It did not impose its religion as the royal religion, Akkadian stopped being the language of the empire (a process that had started already under the Assyrians and Babylonians to the benefit of Aramaic), and the resources of empire no longer were arrogated to Mesopotamia, but to Iran. A new god was introduced as an imperial or, in

any case, a royal deity, and the teaching of Zarathuštra somehow entered the scene.

This had an impact on all facets of daily life of the Near East and beyond (the Greco-Roman world), during their rule and after. The Greek view of the Persians influenced how the East is seen to this day. Major developments in the religious concepts of the Judeans took place in the Persian period, which in turn shaped religious beliefs and practices in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions, such as views on kingship, the all-powerful notion of God, and eschatological ideas, to name a few. It was also one of the first (not the first, admittedly) big, multi-cultural empires which could be studied in some depth.

The interplay of the impact of empire and its reception can, in my view, best be summarized as “coming to terms with the Achaemenid Empire.” What we have learnt in this volume is that there was no single way to understand or interpret foreign rule, and its imprint on society even after the demise of the empire. This is not surprising. When Germany developed into a huge power in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, people reacted in diverse ways. Some hailed the Germans as providers of a new and stronger society in a rotten world, others resisted as much as they could, but most people tried to continue their lives in a “normal” way. Let us take some examples from the Netherlands, which was occupied from May 14, 1940 to May 5, 1945. Some people joined the openly pro-German NSB (Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging), others joined commando groups and committed assaults against the German occupation. Some people betrayed Jews to the German authorities; others hid them to avoid their deportation; many people looked the other way. Some people did their “duty” so that the trains left on time, even if it was in the direction of a concentration camp. The “Joodsche Raad” (Jewish Council) was an institution of the German government to organize and rule the Jewish community. It carried out German policies such as the deportation of Jews, which it tried to mitigate at the same time as giving it a sort of legal flavor. The leaders of the “Joodsche Raad” were Abraham Asscher and David Cohen (professor of Ancient History at the University of Amsterdam from 1926 until February 1941, when he was fired because of his Jewish background). In September 1943, the members of the Jewish Council were themselves deported, and the Council was dissolved. Asscher and Cohen survived. Some mayors cooperated with the Germans (NSB party members), others resigned out of principle, and many stayed in office hoping to do damage control. The expression “wartime mayor” has become a standard expression in modern

Dutch to indicate the intricate position of taking responsibility between collaboration and resistance. The “Nederlandsche Unie,” founded on 24 July 1940 by Louis Einthoven, Johannes Linthorst Homan, and Jan de Quay, tried to choose a position in the middle. It was their objective to build up Dutch society in recognition of the new political reality and in collaboration with the German and Dutch authorities. They did not like the German occupation *per se* (although Homan thought that Germany was a welcome buffer against the Soviet Union), but they argued that it should be accepted. The Unie accepted that an “arrangement” for Jewish refugees was necessary, but they rejected measures against Dutch Jews. Jews were members of the Unie, and the Unie never accepted rejection of Jewish membership. Despite this, De Quay opened negotiations with the pro-German “Black Front” of Arnold Meijer and declared a dislike of democracy and the free market. Nonetheless, the Nederlandsche Unie was finally banned by the German authorities when it did not support the German attack on the Soviet Union, and the three founders were placed in an internment camp for prominent Dutch members of society in Sint Michielsgestel in North-Brabant. Despite their dubious attitude during the German occupation, all three had a successful career in Dutch politics after the war. Jan de Quay was minister in the first post-war cabinet, and even prime minister from 1959 to 1963. Einthoven became head of the BVD (National Security Service) until his retirement in 1961, and Homan was active on behalf of the Netherlands in several European organizations which were forerunners of the European Union. It shows how ambivalent Dutch society was towards the “political memory” of Nazi Germany. Many people continued to hate Germany and avoided going there on vacation; many admired the *Wirtschaftswunder* of Germany. German was and remained an obligatory language in Dutch secondary schools (next to English and French). Soccer matches between Germany and Holland were excessively agitated because of the memory of the war, although for later soccer fans the Dutch defeat in the world cup final of 1974 was perhaps a greater trauma than WWII.

Comparable stories can be told for other European countries. I would like to add one example from modern Iran about coming to terms with the major world power of the modern era, the United States of America. Some Iranians are strict Muslims who hate the decadent infidel empire; others long for an American way of life. But even people who yell during demonstrations in the streets of Teheran that the United States is the Great Satan and must be eradicated use a pre-Islamic concept coined in the

Achaemenid Empire (Satan), shout in English, wear American jeans, and use American cellphones. The relationship with the Achaemenid Empire itself is equally ambivalent. The Shah of Persia considered himself to be a direct successor to the Achaemenid Empire, and the *Cyrus Cylinder* as an almost holy object, of which a copy was offered to the United Nations in 1971 as “the first declaration of human rights,” although the regime itself could hardly be regarded as a defender of human rights. For Iranian exiles the cylinder is still a major symbol. In the present Islamic Republic, the situation has changed somewhat, but not completely. For strict Muslims, the Achaemenid Empire is not very important, because it dates from the time of “ignorance” and the Achaemenids prayed to wrong gods. Nevertheless, President Ahmadinejad considered the *Cyrus Cylinder* to be a national monument that should “return” to Iran (although the cylinder was found in present day Iraq), and he personally opened an exhibition in Teheran in 2010 where it was exhibited. Coming to terms with one’s past is a complicated matter indeed.

These short histories of the Netherlands and Iran demonstrate that it is impossible to depict “the attitude” of “the Dutch” towards the Third Reich, or the opinion of “the Iranians” of America or the Achaemenid Empire. It seems to me that a “collective memory” is often difficult to identify. We have to face the same problems when we study the political memory of the Persian Empire in Babylonia, Egypt, Judaea, Lydia, and elsewhere. We have testimonies, but we should not fall into the trap of the “positivist fallacy” (or, better, the “empiricist fallacy”) that the sources (in this case; opinions) we have at our disposal are a sufficient and representative rendering of ancient thought.

When we have studied the present volume, we see that the situation then was as complicated as it is today. In older discussions the situation has often been simplified too much. For too long we learnt that “the” Babylonians detested their last king Nabonidus and hailed the new conqueror Cyrus, and that Jews were pro-Persian because they were allowed to return from exile. Nevertheless, Alexander was welcomed in Egypt and Babylonia, because he freed these countries from Persian occupation. Others argued that the indigenous population resisted the new Greek rulers in the Hellenistic period.¹ And so forth. But the truth is that there

1. Samuel K. Eddy, *The King Is Dead: Studies in Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334–31 B.C.* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1961).

is no single Babylonian, Judaeian, Egyptian, or Greek opinion of the Achae-menids, during its existence or after its fall. We shall discuss this for the various regions.

BABYLONIA

As we pointed out in the introduction, the Persian conquest inaugurated an important new episode in the history of Babylonia. It is impossible for us to know how the average Babylonian felt about this event. Many will have expected business as usual, but the practices of their own imperial past (deportation of conquered people and imposition of heavy tributes) did not set a comfortable precedent. What we can do is study a number of scholarly texts and observe the political situation. It is clear that many people were prepared to resist. If we believe the *Nabonidus Chronicle* from Babylon (but see the discussion by Caroline Waerzeggers in ch. 5 and below n. 9), the Babylonian army tried to resist the invasion in the battle of Opis in October 539 B.C.E., but was defeated. It was only after this defeat that the cities of Sippar and Babylon could be taken without battle on 10 and 12 October and that Cyrus, on 9 November, could enter in person. The fact that there was no battle for these cities does not mean that the people welcomed the conqueror. After the defeat they had no choice. According to Herodotus (1.190–191), the Babylonians feared Cyrus very much and prepared for siege.² Cyrus took the city by a stratagem (diverting the Euphrates) rather than through fighting. Herodotus adds the well-known detail that the people in the center did not notice its capture, due to the size of the city and the fact that a festival was going on, a detail that we find again in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.5, and in Dan 5. The chronicle declares that Cyrus ordered peace and the continuation of the cult, but it was of course an imposed peace, a *pax Cyriaca*. That at least not all Babylonians were happy about Persian rule is further demonstrated by many revolts, two in the first years of Darius I, two in 484 B.C.E. under Xerxes, the latter with horrible effects for the local clergy, as was demonstrated by Waerzeggers.³

2. In spring, which is at odds with a battle and capture of the city in October. See also below at nn. 6 and 7.

3. Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes and the ‘End of Archives,’” *AfO* 50 (2003/2004): 150–73.

Apart from resistance there were certainly all kinds of cooperation or acceptance. A hotly debated question is whether or not the clergy of Babylon was fed up with Nabonidus, because he would have promoted the moon god Šin (to what extent is also debated) and neglected the New Year's festival for ten years, and so welcomed Cyrus as a restorer of order. The main issue in this is how we have to value our main sources: the *Cyrus Cylinder*, the *Verse Account*, and the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, all this in combination with Greek and Biblical evidence.

Let us first of all get rid of a concept of “the” Babylonian clergy. We have no evidence that the Babylonian temple officials were uniformly opposed to or in favor of anyone. It may well be that certain parts of the clergy were indeed critical of Nabonidus. His neglect of the Akītu (New Year) festival was apparently a point of discussion at least, as is also demonstrated by many other chronicles that pay attention to this festival (see below). The *Verse Account* is another exemplum of criticism.⁴ It is much too easy to dispose of this document as a piece of propaganda ordained by the new king. It is a satirical literary document that involves in-depth knowledge of cuneiform documents like the royal inscriptions of Nabonidus, the Enūma Anu Enlil texts, and other literary texts.⁵ This cannot have been conceived by any Persian official; it must have come from learned circles. The former temple officials from the time of Nabonidus were not dismissed at the accession of Cyrus. We know that the high officials Zēria (*šatammu*, “chief temple administrator”) and Rēmūt (*zazakku*, “chief secretary”) stayed in office and hailed Cyrus, if we follow Waerzeggers's reconstruction of this part of the *Verse Account* (5.8–28).⁶ Nevertheless, we have no reason to assume that Zēria and Rēmūt had not been loyal to Nabonidus. In any case, they surrendered and somehow came to terms with the new regime.

4. Cf. Amélie Kuhrt, “Nabonidus and the Babylonian Priesthood,” in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World* (ed. M. Beard and J. North; London: Duckworth, 1990), 119–55.

5. Text: Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften. Textausgabe und Grammatik* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), P1 “Strophengedicht,” 563–78. Interpretation: Peter Machinist and Hayim Tadmor, “Heavenly Wisdom,” in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (eds. M. E. Cohen, D. C. Snell, and D. B. Weisberg; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1993), 146–51.

6. Caroline Waerzeggers, “Very Cordially Hated in Babylonia? Zēria and Rēmūt in the Verse Account,” *AoF* 39 (2012): 316–20. Cf. Kristin Kleber, “Zēria, *šatammu* von Esangila und die Entstehungszeit des ‘Strophengedichts,’” *NABU* 2007/52.

The same holds true for the *Cyrus Cylinder*.⁷ This document is more likely to have been produced at Persian instigation as can be surmised from the openly propagandistic tone, specific expressions as “King of Anšan” and the genealogy of Cyrus. But also this document cannot have been written without the help of Babylonian scholars and scribes (although the scribe of this document seems to have been second rank in view of his many errors and mediocre Akkadian). These scholars, as Waerzeggers elsewhere observes, expressed their hopes that Cyrus would take his duties as king of Babylon and protector of the temple cult more seriously than his predecessor. These hopes, however, were soon destroyed. Cyrus (or his son Cambyses) only once took part in the New Year festival (if at all) and Babylonia became one of the many provinces of the Persian Empire.⁸

The *Nabonidus Chronicle* (ABC 7)⁹ is a different story. It has long been accepted (by me, among others) that this chronicle dates to the years immediately after the Persian conquest. Most scholars treat this as an example of the Babylonian chronicle genre, which is characterized by a detached treatment of historical facts, which I do too. Others consider it to be a part of pro-Cyrus propaganda, a point of view I reject. Caroline Waerzeggers (ch. 5 herein) gives a lengthy *status quaestionis*. She now offers a very intriguing new view of the chronicle: it is neither contemporary, nor a typical chronicle, nor a piece of propaganda. It is rather a document from the Hellenistic period (probably the period of Berossus), in which

7. For a discussion and a translation of the *Cyrus Cylinder* see: R. J. van der Spek, “Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations,” in *Extraction and Control. Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (ed. M. Kozuh et al.; SAOC 68; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 233–64 (with a translation 261–63); for an edition see Schaudig, *Inschriften*, 550–56.

8. *Nabonidus Chronicle*: see n. 9. Caroline Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period: Performance and Reception,” in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (ed. J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers; BZAW 478; Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming). The participation in the New Year rituals can only be derived from a damaged part of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* (see below), where we may read that Cyrus (or Cambyses) made offerings (?) “before Bēl and the son of B[ēl (=Nabû) ...]” (ABC 7:3.28 and the following lacuna).

9. A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5; Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1975), no. 7 (ABC 7); Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (SBLWAW 19; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), no. 26. Cf. also web edition http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/abc7/abc7_nabonidus1.html, based on Grayson’s edition but with additions and corrections.

the scribe comes to terms with the Achaemenid Empire, and in particular the founder of that empire, as a response to Greek views on Cyrus. It is written in “an intertextual web” in “dialogue” with other Babylonian and Greek writers. It emerged in the circle of scholars who wrote astronomical diaries and chronicles (see *BCHP*), and were acquainted, like Berossus, with Greek historiographers such as Herodotus, Xenophon, and Ctesias. Although the document is not dated, the script points to the Hellenistic period, as do the circumstances of the recovery of the tablet as part of the late Achaemenid / early Hellenistic Esagil archive. The Esagil archive contained many copied / reworked / composed epics and chronicles of the past when Babylonian kings such as Nebuchadnezzar I and Nabopolassar successfully fought against foreign kings (cf. also ch. 4 by De Breucker). Hence, the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is not a reliable recording of facts from the recent past, nor is it a propaganda text, but a historiographical view on the Persian conquest of Babylon for a Hellenistic readership. All this is certainly a startling new approach. Waerzeggers rightly observes that the script and some of the points discussed suggest composition or redaction in the early Hellenistic period. The points discussed, such as the death of queens, point to a Hellenistic rather than early Persian interest. The *Nabonidus Chronicle* may have interacted with Herodotus’s account of the death of Cyrus’s wife Cassandane (2.1). The sequence of Cyrus’ conquests from Media, via Lydia to Babylonia, which it shares with Herodotus, may be intentional as a response to Herodotus (cf. Waerzeggers, n. 79), although it may also be accidental as it simply was the order of the campaigns.

Nevertheless, I have a somewhat different view as regards the nature of this text. Even if I accept that the document was written in the Hellenistic period (of which I am not certain: the queens do get attention in chronicles, as Waerzeggers admits, the particular mention of Nabonidus’s mother is not strange in view of her prominent place in history and in inscriptions of Nabonidus, while other parallels are simply due to the fact that they reflect historical reality), I do not accept that it is a completely new composition of this period. Waerzeggers assumes that the author’s sources were the *Cyrus Cylinder*, the royal inscriptions of Nabonidus, the “*Royal Chronicle*” (which is not a chronicle, but a pro-Nabonidus propaganda text),¹⁰ and perhaps

10. Editions: Wilfred G. Lambert, “A New Source for the Reign of Nabonidus,” *Afo* 22 (1968/1969): 1–8; Schaudig, *Inschriften*, 590–95. According to Lambert in Seleucid-Parthian script. Probably part of the Esagila archive (see Waerzeggers, ch. 5, at n. 57).

the *Verse Account*, all of which were available to these scholars. This may be true, but that does not account for the numerous specific dates for events, which do not exist in these texts for his entire reign. So I believe that it is a necessary assumption that there was some “proto-Nabonidus Chronicle.” In addition, though the script may be Hellenistic or at least Late Babylonian, as may be assumed from the way the plural sign MEŠ is written, certain signs are certainly *not* Hellenistic such as the use of *ša* instead of *šá* in *ABC 7: 2.2* and 21 in the expression DINGIR.MEŠ *ša* GN, “the gods of GN,” which we also encounter in the *Babylonian Chronicle ABC 1: 3.1, 2* and 29, dated to the reign of Darius (I). This chronicle ends with the accession year of king Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (669 B.C.E.). It was written in the twenty-second year of Darius, and it expressly said that it was “the first section,” suggesting that it was followed by a second section, and perhaps even third section, that may have continued into the early Persian period, as Waerzeggers admits. It also explains why Cyrus could be described as “king of Parsu.”

In my discussion of the chronicles with the help of a “ladder” of characteristics classifying historiographical texts in the widest sense, I have argued that chronicles deviate from true historiography in the fullest sense as they are “not narrative; there is no story, no plot, no introduction or conclusion, nor is there any attempt to explain, to find causes and effects, to see relations between recorded events.”¹¹ According to Waerzeggers “none of this applies to the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. It narrates, it values, it compares, it explains and it argues. Its format may be that of a chronicle, but it breaks free of the limitations of the genre.” This I can hardly follow. It may be a matter of taste, but I still find this a dull enumeration of facts, year-by-year; to call this “narrative” implies a very wide definition of storytelling. I agree, of course, that objectivity does not exist: the selection of the recorded facts is the choice of the author who shapes the information, and the concerns of the Hellenistic period will have shaped the choices, and I agree that omission of facts colors the information. I still maintain that the text gives no value judgments, nor arguments, nor explanations. We do not find any judgments such as “the king brought evil to the land,” nor is any cause given: there are no words such as “because” or “consequently.” Commentators of chronicles

11. R. J. van der Spek, “Berossus as a Babylonian Chronicler and Greek Historian,” in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society Presented to Marten Stol on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (ed. R. J. van der Spek; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 2007), 280, quoted by Waerzeggers.

often mistakenly assume that sentences are meaningfully connected, but usually this is not the case. Every new sentence may be regarded as new information with no relation to the preceding sentence. Explicit mention of the anger of a god or king, as frequently used in royal inscriptions, is missing. Though I admit that the chronicle has an interest in comparing Nabonidus with Cyrus, I see no value judgments. Thus the text, even if Hellenistic in final redaction, sticks to the genre of the chronicle by abstaining from value judgments. The reader may make his or her own judgment. It is true that it is reported that the Akītu festival did not take place, but this derived easily from the fact that the king was in Tayma. No value judgment is given that the king was in Tayma. A king on campaign can also be positively evaluated, especially as he had organized the government well in Babylon and had the *šešgallu* (high priest) oversee the ritual “properly” (*kī šalmu*¹²) as far as was possible in absence of the king. When Nabonidus returned, the Akītu festival in its entirety was conducted “properly,” that is, according to the rules (*kī šalmu*, 3.).

The repetitious recording of the absence of the Akītu festival indeed demonstrates the interest of chroniclers, as this topic is recorded in many other chronicles, such as the *Akītu Chronicle* (ABC 16), the *Esarhaddon Chronicle* (ABC 14), the *Šamaš-šuma-ukīn Chronicle* (ABC 15) and the *Religious Chronicle* (ABC 17). ABC 7 thus stands in a firm chronicle tradition. Our author may have seen the *Ehulhul Cylinder* of Nabonidus, but he probably did not use this source for naming Cyrus king of Anšan (KUR *An-šá-an*, 2.1 and 4), as it was written KUR *An-za-an* (I 27) there. The chronicler may have seen a copy of the *Cyrus Cylinder*, but he did *not* take his information from that document concerning Nabonidus’s removal of the gods of Marad, Kish, and Hursagkamma, with the note that the gods of Borsippa, Cuthah and Sippar were not deported (3.8–12). Cyrus reports that he brought back the statues of the gods of Aššur, Susa, Akkad, Eshnunna, Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der, and Gutium (30–32) and refers to the gods that were removed by Nabonidus only as “the gods of Sumer and Akkad,” with a value judgment indeed (“to the anger of the gods,” 33), an addition that is conspicuously missing in the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. There is no reason to assume that the chronicler valued the removal of the gods to Babylon as bad. As was observed by Beaulieu and myself, the removal may

12. Grayson’s translation: “*as in normal times*” (emphasis original) is unwarranted. Glassner follows this translation (without italics).

be regarded a pious deed, as it defends the statues against the attacks of the enemy, and in so doing the king hoped to acquire the support of these gods.¹³ If the chronicler used the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the *Verse Account* and wanted to depict Nabonidus in dark colors, he would certainly mention the latter's preference for Šin, which is not the case.¹⁴

Another point of interest is the report on the death of two important women, the death of the mother of Nabonidus (2.13–15) and the wife of Cyrus (3.22–24). The fact that these women get so much attention may indeed be due to Hellenistic influence, as Waerzeggers observes. We see this interest in many Greek inscriptions and in the Ezida inscription of Antiochus I, mentioning his wife Stratonice. On the other hand, as Waerzeggers admits, deaths of queens were mentioned earlier in chronicles, and especially the death of the mother of Nabonidus, who even had set up a stela in her own name¹⁵, must have had impact. So indeed, Hellenistic zeitgeist may well be present, but again difficult to prove. And again I can detect no value judgement. Both queens are appropriately mourned. One might even argue that Cyrus imitates Nabonidus in this. Everything still fits in with the interest of chronicle composers, which lies in the interpretation of omens. Thus the issues of the chronicles concur with the issues of the omens: accessions and deaths of kings (and queens), battles, plagues, and some cultic events as the Akītu festival. All this we have in the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. The method is that of the authors of the astronomical diaries (possibly the same persons) who recorded the “events” in the sky. They also made their choices what to record and what not, but what they recorded, be it lunar eclipses or movements of planets in the sky, is reliable. This also explains the use of archaic geographical terms in chronicles, such as Elam, Umman-manda, Hanī, Hatti, Subartu, Amurru. It is used because of their occurrence in omens, and it makes these designations timeless. That it is not negative is exemplified by the fact that, e.g., the Umman-manda come to the aid of Nabopolassar (*ABC* 3:59 and 65) and Ugbaru is the governor of Gutium and the Gutians protect the temple (*ABC* 7:16–18). Even though it is *not* historiography in the fullest sense, the related facts

13. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “An Episode in the Fall of Babylon to the Persians,” *JNES* 52 (1993): 241–61; van der Spek, “Cyrus the Great,” 254.

14. Note that chronicle BHP 5 reports that Antiochus, the crown prince, visited two temples of the moon god Sin, Egišnugal and Enitenna, and performed regular offerings, also without value judgment.

15. Two Adad-Guppi Stelas from Harran, Schaudig, *Inschriften*, 500–13.

are reliable.¹⁶ Thus, it is very difficult to glean opinions about the Persian Empire from this chronicle. About Cyrus and Nabonidus both negative and positive notations are made. Cyrus proclaims peace to the Babylonians (3.18–20) and the rituals in the temple are not disturbed (3.16–18), but before he had slaughtered the people of Akkad (3.13), and later he made his son, dressed in Elamite robes, king of Babylon, which may have disturbed the chronicler, although he does not say so. The “proto-chronicler” may have cherished the same hopes as the author of the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the *Verse Account*, that Cyrus would respect Babylon’s traditions. The same will have been the attitude of early Hellenistic Babylonian scholars. Babylonians in the Persian period were soon disappointed. Alexander made similar promises as Cyrus (and much earlier, Sargon II),¹⁷ but here again the Babylonians were probably not satisfied, though they could see more promising measures. Alexander intended Babylon as his new capital (the Persians never did that) and at least tried to rebuild the temple tower. He had the army level the ground at the tower complex at his return in 323 B.C.E. Antiochus I again made an effort (*BCHP* 6) and he apparently ordered restorations of Ezida and Esagil and in 268 B.C.E. buried the last known royal cylinder in the foundations of Ezida to commemorate this.¹⁸ Alexander, however, did not provide the necessary resources; private donations of Babylonians had to finance it.¹⁹ Babylonia was for a time the core of the Seleucid Empire, but Babylon suffered much from the war for the hegemony over Asia between Seleucus and Antigonos in the years 311 to 308 B.C.E. (*Diadochi Chronicle*, *BCHP* 3) and the city finally was degraded to a second rank position after the founding of Seleucia. This was still in

16. More about this in van der Spek, “Berossus,” 277–87.

17. For a comparison of the ceremonial entries of Sargon II, Cyrus, and Alexander in Babylon see: Amélie Kuhrt, “Alexander and Babylon,” in *Achaemenid History 5: The Roots of the European Tradition* (ed. H. W. A. M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. W. Drijvers; Leiden: NINO, 1990), 121–30.

18. Photographs, transliterations, translations and commentary by Marten Stol and Bert van der Spek online at http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/antiochus_cylinder/antiochus_cylinder1.html.

19. R. J. van der Spek, “The Size and Significance of the Babylonian Temples under the Successors,” in *La Transition entre l’empire achéménide et les royaumes hellénistiques (vers 350-300 av. J.-C.): Actes du colloque organisé au Collège de France par la « Chaire d’histoire et civilisation du monde achéménide et de l’empire d’Alexandre » et le « Réseau international d’études et de recherches achéménides »* (GDR 2538 CNRS), 22–23 novembre 2004, (eds. P. Briant and F. Joannès; Paris: De Boccard, 2006), 269–72.

Babylonia, and it marked Babylonia as a more important province than Persis, the former center of empire, but it was not good for the prominence of the old city. In addition, Syria, with Antioch on the Orontes, gradually turned into the main center of the empire.

What remains is the interesting and important observation that the chronicle might have been produced, or rather adapted, in a later period than is usually assumed, just as the book of Jeremiah was once adapted (Jer 36:32). The same is true, for instance, for the Akitu ritual text.²⁰ The first editor, Thureau-Dangin,²¹ postulated that the document probably dates to the Hellenistic period, and Zimmern²² argued already in 1922 that this document might well be a free conceptualization of the New year festival ritual for the priesthood of the Esagil temple in Babylon in the Seleucid-Parthian period, a point of view all too often ignored in later studies of the Babylonian Akitu ritual. It is interesting to note the important role of the *šešgallu* in this ritual, which is also at issue in the Nabonidus chronicle (see above).

Another point that may point to a late date for the Nabonidus chronicle is the number of details in the description of some entries, as the chronicles of the Hellenistic period become increasingly more detailed. The same is true for the historical sections of the *Astronomical Diaries*. This may reflect a growing interest in history *per se*. The interactions with Herodotus, the *Dynastic Prophecy*, and Berossus are certainly worth considering, but we must at the same time be wary of reading too much of our own concerns into these texts. Actually, texts like the *Dynastic Prophecy* are more suitable for learning about views on Persian kingship. In this document Nabonidus is valued negatively (2.16: “He will plot evil against Akkad”), while Cyrus is valued positively (2.24: “During his reign Akkad [will live] in security”²³). How the author thought of the Macedonians is

20. Marc J. H. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practises*, (Cuneiform Monographs 25; Leiden: Brill-Styx, 2004), 215–37; for the date: *ibid.*, 11.

21. François Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1921), 127–54.

22. Heinrich Zimmern, “Über Alter und Herkunftsort des babylonischen Neujahrsfestrituals,” *ZA* 34 (1922): 192.

23. For my reading of this line as a positive judgment of Cyrus cf. R. J. van der Spek, “Darius III, Alexander the Great and Babylonian Scholarship,” in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (ed. W. F. M. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 13; Leiden: NINO, 2003), 319–20; van der Spek,

more difficult to establish due to serious lacunae in the tablet. The least one can say is that it is an exhortation to the new rulers to respect old rights of tax exemptions (*zakûtu*) for ancient religious centers in Babylonia, a time honored theme indeed.

As has been pointed out by Waerzeggers,²⁴ the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus inaugurated a period in which Babylon would never again be a leading city and central to the empire. The people, especially Babylonian scholars and scribes, had to deal with this. They had a few things to go on. In whatever kind of foreign rule, the best thing one could hope for (apart from recovering independence) is recognition of privileged status, including tax exemption, respect for Marduk as supreme god (at least for Babylonia, but possibly more), respect for religious practices, especially the New Year Festival, and at least some special status as preferential center of power and interest. Waerzeggers also demonstrated that not much came of this and that disappointment was the result.

In their scholarly literature, scribes tried to find comfort in the past, just as Greek intellectuals did in the Roman Empire.²⁵ They liked to write chronicles about kings who defeated foreign enemies. They stressed the importance of the god Marduk and collected and commented upon documents that promoted his status as supreme god, especially since the days of Nebuchadnezzar I (cf. ch. 3 by Nielsen). The importance of the god is also indicated by the fact that Marduk may use foreign countries to punish Babylonia temporarily. Marduk is depicted as the god who called upon Elam to punish Babylon and who even willingly left Babylon, finally to be returned by Nebuchadnezzar I. It is part of the motif of “divine abandonment,” described at length by Morton Cogan,²⁶ and also well-known from the Hebrew Bible, where God uses Assyrian and Babylonian kings to punish Israel and Judah and even allows Jerusalem and its temple to be destroyed and the treasures to be taken to Babylon. Such a motif we find back in the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the *Verse Account*, where the foreign king Cyrus reinstalls Marduk as supreme deity. The startling reality of 539

“Cyrus the Great,” 251, n. 147. Cf. the, in my view, mistaken interpretation of this line as evidence of a negative view on Cyrus by Wilson, ch. 13, p. 274 at n. 5.

24. Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period.”

25. For this, see ch. 12 by Alesandr Makhlaiuk, at n. 19.

26. Morton Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries b.c.e.* (SBLMS 19; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974), 9–21.

B.C.E. is that now a king of Elam is chosen by Marduk as restorer of the godly order. Though Cyrus is not called king of Elam in so many words, it does not alter this fact. He is called King of Anšan, which had been a major city of Elam for millennia. Cyrus might well be of Elamite extraction, as his name is probably Elamite.²⁷ So, in 539 B.C.E., he was actually the king of Elam. As in Nebuchadnezzar I's days, Elam was an instrument in the hands of Marduk, but different: "the relationship with Persian rule could be expressed as a positive or a negative depending how the tradition was utilized," as Nielsen (ch. 3 herein) rightly observed. As pointed out above, a geographical name like "Elam" need not in itself have negative connotations, though readers might read it in them.

Another point is kingship. The above interpretation of Cyrus is a new coming-to-terms with Achaemenid kingship. It was a way of accepting the new situation. Although Cyrus was a foreign king, he was also accepted as king of Babylon. Many kings are called "king of Babylon" in their official royal titles, and the Persian kings figure in the king lists, just as do their Macedonian successors (see ch. 4 herein by De Breucker). At the same time we see that kingship in itself lost importance in the Babylonian literature. Religious offices and scribal tradition gradually became more important next to and perhaps even instead of kingship. This can be derived from the list of sages and kings, where sages became as important as kings in the early Seleucid period.²⁸ We see it also in the more important role of the priesthood, or at least the *šešgallu* (or: *ahu rabû*, "high priest," lit. "big brother" = "highest colleague"). In the *Nabonidus Chronicle* (ABC 7 ii 8) as well as in the *Religious Chronicle* (ABC 17 ii 5) it is this officer who takes care that the ritual goes on *kî šalmu*, "properly."

We also see that the *šatammu*, the head of the temple administration, gradually becomes the most important local official, a situation most clearly apparent in the Seleucid period when Babylon was governed by the *šatammu* and the *kiništu* ("temple council," related to Hebrew *knesseth*) of Babylon, a situation not much different from the rule of Jerusalem by the high priest and the Sanhedrin.²⁹ In addition, there was a governor (*pāhatu*

27. Wouter F. M. Henkelman, *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts* (Achaemenid History 14; Leiden: NINO, 2008), 55–57. See also ch. 17 by Jason Silverman, n. 13.

28. Alan Lenzi, "The Uruk List of Kings and Sages and Late Mesopotamian Scholarship," *JANER* 8 (2008): 137–69.

29. Cf. R. J. van der Spek, "The Babylonian City," in *Hellenism in the East: The*

or *šaknu*), just as there was a governor (*pehāh*) in Jerusalem. From the time of Antiochus IV, this person was the head of the Greek community in Babylon. The supremacy of Babylon in Babylonia ended, so that in Uruk Anu could rise to the position of major deity with a new temple (in this book discussed by De Breucker, ch. 4). The new political situation had a deep impact on political and religious thought in Babylonia, but it led to very diverse reactions.

JUDAH

In Judah similar developments took place. Judaeen kingship in the line of David came to an end with the Babylonian captivity (587/6 B.C.E.). Some people will have longed for a return of the dynasty. Some will have put their expectations in the deposed king Jehoiachin, who was promoted at the court of Babylon during the reign of Amēl-Marduk (Evil-Merodach),³⁰ but nothing came of it. After the fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, some put their hopes in Cyrus. The author of Deutero-Isaiah is the most prominent of them. He even calls Cyrus the “messiah,” the anointed for Judaeen kingship, just as David once was anointed (Isa 45:1). Cyrus is called a “shepherd” (Isa 44:28), a notion that is found twice in the Cyrus Cylinder.³¹ In the strong language Isaiah uses (esp. 45:11–13), one may learn

Interaction of Greek and Non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander (ed. A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White; London: Duckworth, 1987), 57–74; van der Spek, “The Theatre of Babylon in Cuneiform,” in *Veenhof Anniversary Volume: Studies Presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. W. H. van Soldt et al.; Leiden: NINO, 2001), 445–56; van der Spek, “Ethnic Segregation in Hellenistic Babylon,” in *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1–4 July 2002* (ed. W. H. van Soldt; Leiden: NINO, 2005), 393–408.

30. 2 Kgs 25:27–30 and Jer 28:4. Cf. Irving L. Finkel, “The Lament of Nabû-šumakîn,” in *Babylon: Focus mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege früher Gelehrsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne* (ed. J. Renger; CDOG 2; Saarbrücken: SDV, 1999), 323–42.

31. See Cyrus Cylinder, lines 14 and 25 (in the translation by van der Spek, “Cyrus the Great,” 261–64. In line 25 Irving Finkel translates *áš-te-’-e* as “I sought (the safety),” from *še’û*, “to seek”; see Irving Finkel, *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia’s proclamation from Ancient Babylon* (London: Tauris, 2013), 4–7, but I prefer to take it from *re’û*, “to shepherd”) following CAD R, s.v. *re’û*, 3b 2’, 302 [contra CAD Š III, s.v. *šalimtu* 1b, 245], because “the safety” (*šalimtu*) is not the object of the verb (the text has *ina šalimti*, “in safety” or “in wellbeing”), and also in view of the many parallels CAD R s.v. *re’û* adduces.

that his point of view met with resistance (see ch. 13 herein by Wilson). Others may have hoped that surviving scions from the house of David; Sheshbazzar, possibly son of Jehoiachin, the “prince” (*nasi*) of Juda (Ezra 1:8) and Zerubbabel, son of Sealthiel, son of Jehoiachin, who was the appointed governor of Judah (Hag 1:1), would restore the line of David. Note that even these people (perhaps due to court life with Jehoiachin) bear Babylonian names: Zēr-Bābili, “Seed of Babylon,” and Šamaš-abušur, “Shamash, protect the father.” The expectations were especially cherished by the prophets Haggai (2:20–3) and Zechariah (6:9–15). The promised “Branch” in Zech 6:12 may refer to a branch from the tree of David, who would rule “with royal honors” together with the high priest. But it all did not happen and the prophets and scribes realized that it would not happen. Zerubbabel is warned not to trust in his own power (Zech 4:6) and some interpreters see the one who was killed (Zech 12:10) as a reference to an elimination of Zerubbabel, possibly at Persian instigation. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel disappear from the scene. If there was a revolt, its memory is successfully suppressed.

Thus the people in Judah had to accept the new reality, or rather the continuing reality, that the house of David would not be reinstated. This had several consequences. First, the Persian kings seem to have been recognized as legitimate kings in Judah (see herein chs. 13 by Wilson, 14 by Mitchell, and 17 by Silverman). Wilson describes Cyrus as a kind of Davidide. Ezra and Nehemiah are obedient servants of the Persian king. Even so, it should be noted that obedience is first of all dictated by acceptance of the omnipotence of the king, rather than by genuine sympathy (see ch. 16 herein by Foroutan), we also read an ambiguity of loyalty and fear in the Ahiqar story from the Jewish colony in Elephantine (see ch. 10 herein by Bledsoe).³² It goes too far, to my mind, to state that “Cyrus’s otherness is consistently blurred” (Wilson, ch. 13 herein, quoting with endorsement

32. This entails criticism on the power and whims of the king, as we observe in so many stories (e.g. Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel) and in Eccl 10:20. Mitchell (ch. 14, p. 310) rightly notes that the king in the Ahiqar story (Sennacherib) is not a good judge who hears both parties. Ideally the king does so, as is claimed by Darius I in his “Testament” (DNa: 21–24) and he will not listen to secret gossip: “Let not what is spoken to you in secret (lit. in your ears) seem best; hear also what is spoken openly” (DNa 52–55). Nearly the same characteristic of a righteous (Davidic) king we read in Isa 11:3 “He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear,” quoted by Silverman, ch. 17, 359.

Ehud Ben Zvi at n. 65). Isaiah wants to stress this otherness by noting that Cyrus does not know YHWH (Isa 45:4). Christine Mitchell thus rightly concludes that the Persian kings are only acceptable as kings of Judah where Achaemenid and Judean ideologies overlap.

Second, it is accepted that a governor will rule the province of Judah in the name of this king (Nehemiah). Ezra, the scribe was sent by the Persian king to introduce and impose local law.³³ Third, a much more prominent role is assigned to the high priest, and the priesthood in general. Even if there were to be a new king, he should rule alongside the high priest (see above). That the relationship between high priest and governor was not always cordial is exemplified by many passages in Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The high priest was increasingly seen as the head of the Judean community and this remained so until the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (and its cult) in 70 C.E. There was very often competition with worldly powers, such as the Tobiad family and Roman governors. The Hasmonean Kingdom witnessed the exceptional situation that the king was also the high priest, a situation resented by some (cf. Silverman, ch. 17, n. 51 herein). The high priest was served by a council, variously indicated as *gerousia* or *sanhedrin*, well-known from Josephus and the New Testament. As we have seen above, there is a marked parallel with the situation in Babylon.

Fourth, the view on kingship in general changed because of all the foregoing. The memory of the Israelite and Judean kingship of former days was cherished, but with important reservations. Kingship was an institution that was permitted by God, but actually resented, as is clear from 1 Sam 8 and Deut 17:14–20. Ideally, the king has to obey the priesthood and the law and he may not behave like a true king with royal paraphernalia (more on this in ch. 13 herein by Wilson). The description of the kings who did rule was far from positive. All kings of the kingdom of Israel and most kings of Judah were condemned as disobedient to God's commands and the law. Only few, such as David, Hezekiah and Josiah, could stand such scrutiny. Finally, Israel and Judah had to succumb to the superpowers of the day, due to the disobedience of kings. Kingship might better be deferred to the coming of an eschatological Messiah and the written law became, as it were, the new ruler of Israel (ch. 17 herein by Silverman).

33. Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 248–51.

Finally, the political memory of the Persian world empire also had impact on Israel's view on God. Now, the Judaeen king was replaced by a "king of the world", Israel's god became the god of the world, and Israel's law would become universal. Isaiah summarizes this eloquently:

Foreigners will follow me. They will love me and worship in my name; they will respect the Sabbath and keep our agreement. I will bring them to my holy mountain, where they will celebrate in my house of worship. Their sacrifices and offerings will always be welcome on my altar. Then my house will be known as a house of worship for all nations.³⁴

If indeed the authors of the book of Chronicles knew texts like the Bīsotūn inscription (see chs. 14 by Mitchell and 16 by Foroutan herein), they might have learnt how the god of the king was a universal god, a god of the world. And, just as all the foreign nations bowed to the king, they will bow finally to the god of Israel.³⁵ This development paved the way for Christianity. So, in a sense, it was not only the Roman Empire that provided for a *praeparatio evangelica*, but the Persian Empire as well.

But, as is usually the case, this is not the only voice. The books of Ezra (Ezra 10) and Nehemiah (Neh 13:23–29) greatly advocate ethnic purity for the people of Israel. Marriages with non-Jews were expressly prohibited and even dissolved. Lisbeth Fried (ch. 15 herein) discovers a remarkable and really intriguing parallel in a law of Pericles (451/0 B.C.E.) that stipulated that Athenian citizens should have both an Athenian father and mother. I think that in both cases it was inspired by the prerogatives of the community: of citizenship (Athens) or membership of the Jewish community, where the voice of the returnees from exile now dominated, rather than fiscal policy, as Fried assumes.³⁶ In this a remarkable parallel from

34. Isa 56:6–7 (CEV); see also Isa 49:1, 6, 7, 22–23; 51:4–5; 55:4–5 (deliberate conflation David-Cyrus?); 56:3.

35. All this did not come out of the blue. Mario Liverani sees a connection between the rise of monotheism and the Assyrian Empire in the time of Josiah: Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (Translated by C. Pieri and P. R. Davies; London: Equinox, 2005), 204–8.

36. I do not see how Ezra and Nehemiah are in any sense "Persian citizens," as the concept of Persian citizen did not exist in Persia. I also fail to see how the exclusion of non-Jews would help to prevent local rulers from taking possession of royal property, as if Jews were not capable of this. Finally the measure seems to be particularly Jewish, as it is not attested in other parts of the empire. Thus it is not imperial policy.

Dutch history of the mainly Protestant revolt against the Catholic Spanish Empire comes to mind. This revolt, that started c. 1567, led to the exile of many Protestant inhabitants from Holland to Britain and Germany. When it was safe to return, the returnees behaved as if they were the truly “reformed” persons and tried to impose more strict rules for membership of the Reformed Church and for marriage, as is exemplified in a study of the city of Edam in North-Holland.³⁷

The strict rule of the law isolated the people of Judah from the world around, an isolation that was later regretted by Hellenizing Jews in the Hellenistic period (1 Macc 1:11). It is an irony of history that, in 445 B.C.E., Pericles could not marry Aspasia, who came from Miletus. Ethnic purity was not the only strategy that was advanced in the Persian period. The author of the book of Ruth expressed serious doubts: was not the Moabite woman Ruth an ancestor of David? All this exemplifies the complexity of coming to terms with a large empire. It is the same controversy we see in modern times as a reaction to globalization. Some embrace international cooperation or welcome the blessings of the European Union; others fear losing their identity and incline to nationalism. We even see adherents of European unification at the same time stressing provincial background as more important than national bonds. There is no single answer to the challenges of a changing and globalizing society.

EGYPT

Egypt shared the vicissitudes of conquest by the Persian Empire with Babylonia, Judah, and other parts of the Near East. There are differences though. Egypt had had a long history as a strong and wealthy country (in this it differed from Judah), and it was situated at the fringe of the empire (in this it differed from Babylonia). Assyria was the first empire able to conquer it, but it experienced great difficulties in really subduing it. The Persians were more successful, but they had to face many problems as well. After Cambyses had conquered it in 525 B.C.E., there were several insurrections and, for a long time, Egypt was independent again (404–343 B.C.E.), while the last phase of Achaemenid rule before the conquest by Alexander (343–334 B.C.E.) again witnessed political turmoil. Kaper (ch.

37. Elizabeth Geudeke, *De Classis Edam, 1572–1650. Opbouw van een nieuwe kerk in een verdeelde samenleving*. Dissertation VU University Amsterdam 2008 (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis, 2010), 118–20.

6 herein) counts five revolts, and they were sometimes more successful than the sources allow us to know. Kaper demonstrates that the memory of some of these revolts was obliterated deliberately, viz. those by Psamtek III (the Psammenitos of Herodotus 3.10–15) under Cambyses and Petoubastis IV under Darius I. It was archaeology that helped to extract more information on these political disturbances. This warns us against arguing from silence. As discussed above, it may well be that the role of Zerubbabel in Judah may also have been more important than the more or less pro-Persian sources of Nehemiah, Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah allow us to know.

Udjahorresnet is an example of the other attitude we experience in the sources. He was an Egyptian official who co-operated with the Persian overlords under Cambyses and Darius. His position may attest to a more liberal policy of the Persians, as is advocated by K. Smoláriková (ch. 7 herein), but he may well be an example of Egyptian co-operation in the sense of the Dutch wartime mayors, or the members of the *Nederlandsche Unie*, while other Egyptians detested the Persians and dreamt of revolt.

That the conquerors may have a high opinion of the conquered is another thing to be reckoned with. This is attested in many imperial states. We know that Assyrian kings respected Babylonian traditions, that Macedonian kings emulated the Greeks, and that Roman boys learned Greek at school. King Darius might indeed have considered Egypt a premium and respected prize of war. He had already acknowledged several languages as more or less official languages, as we know from the Bīsoṭūn inscription. Elamite and Persian can be viewed as the local languages at the center of the Empire, both of which shaped the Persian identity,³⁸ but Babylonian was added as well, and Egyptian seems also to be recognized as one of these major languages. Aramaic, not Persian, was chosen as the administrative language for the empire, while Greek probably served as such in Asia Minor, though it seems that it did not receive the same status as Egyptian. Egyptian royal paraphernalia even played a role in Persian royal iconography. Of special interest is a silver stater found at Susa depicting Artaxerxes III in Persian court-dress, but with an Egyptian double crown. Behind the back of the king we read the name of the god Baal of Tarsus (*B'l Trz*, Wasmuth, ch. 9, fig. 2 and n. 61). The reverse depicts a crouched lion. This is a nice example of ethnic diversity in iconography, which continued

38. Henkelman, *Other Gods Who Are*, 39–57.

after the demise of the Persian Empire. Both god and lion we see on staters from Babylon struck in the reign of Alexander the Great. The choice for Baal of Tarsus on Alexander coins is mostly attributed to the new satrap Mazaios, who was satrap of Cilicia under the Persians (whose name is on some coins), but we see that there is an Achaemenid precedent. The same holds true for the lion staters of Seleucus I.³⁹ Lions were used by the Achaemenid kings as royal symbol (Wasmuth, ch. 9, n. 69).

When empires fall, the victor takes all, but the deposition or execution of the last king needs justification. This is usually found in unfaithfulness to the gods, oppression of the people, or illegitimate rule. So, Cyrus had Nabonidus portrayed as an upstart and sacrilegious, Alexander could claim that he would take revenge of the sack of Athens in 480 B.C.E., and the Ptolemies in Egypt had to depict the Persian occupation as unlawful and ruthless, making use of well-known Greek prejudices. The tomb of Petosiris dating from the early period occupation shows, however, the same complexities of how people had to come to terms with the occupations with all the positive and negative aspects of daily life. His biography criticizes the turmoil of the Persian occupation, but at the same time he is well inclined to adopt Persian motifs in forms of art (see ch. 8 by Colburn herein). We can observe the same attitude in the architecture of Nabataea, which exhibits many typical Achaemenid features (ch. 2 by Anderson herein) which need not entail explicit admiration or subjection. The Hasmonean kings, whose kingdom arose in revolt against the Seleucid Empire, issued coins adopting the typical Seleucid anchor motif, a motif we encounter again on a prutah issued in the modern state of Israel in 1949. Political memory can be bizarre indeed.

LYDIA

Lydia provides another example of the difficult relations between collaboration and resistance. Herodotus (1.154) reports that Cyrus, after the defeat of Croesus, installed a Persian governor (Tabalos) and a Lydian treasurer

39. Otto Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage from the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–186 B.C.)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48–49. Frédérique Duyrat, “The Circulation of Coins in Syria and Mesopotamia in the Sixth to First centuries BC,” in *A History of Market Performance from Ancient Babylonia to the Modern World* (ed. R. J. van der Spek, B. van Leeuwen, and J. L. van Zanden; London: Routledge, 2015), 375–78.

(Paktyes) in Sardis. With good reason (Tabalos is a local, rather than a Persian name) Eduard Rung (ch. 1 herein) assumes that both were Lydians. We may have here again an example of the suppression of memory. Herodotus, perhaps following local opinion, adds that the Lydians, led by the Lydian Paktyes, revolted against the Persians Tabalos and Cyrus (1.153), and so makes it a patriotic revolt of Lydians against Persians. As we have seen in other cases, real life does not fit so easily this dichotomy. The same holds true of the later so-called Ionian revolt of Greek tyrants against Darius I in Western Asia Minor. They owed their position to Persian support, were internally divided, and may have had all kinds of reasons for revolt, other than a nationalistic Greek rebellion against her Persian overlords.

GREEKS AND ROMANS

The book does not pay much attention to the Greek perception of the Persian Empire, and with good reason. The attitude of the Greeks towards the Persians has been discussed in a myriad of publications, often in combination with general Greek perceptions of the “barbarians.” Allow me to discuss it briefly. The attitude of the Greeks is characterized by the same complexity as we observed in the regions discussed above. The disdain of the Greeks for the Persian “barbarians” is well attested. As a matter of fact, the word acquired its negative connotation only after the Persian wars in which the Greeks were successful. Herodotus is nevertheless capable of discussing Persian practices in neutral terms, an approach which fits into the genre of Greek ethnographic literature. The complexity is also apparent in Greek behavior. Although the Persians were detested as enemies and defamed as effeminate Orientals, they were also admired. The Spartan King Pausanias, who defeated the Persians at Plataea in 479 B.C.E., later adopted Persian customs and dress. Themistocles, the victor at Salamis, ended his life as a Persian governor of Magnesia in Asia Minor. It has been argued that the Athenians were inspired by the Apadana in Persepolis when they built the Parthenon,⁴⁰ by the tent of Xerxes when they built the Odeion,⁴¹ and by other Persian tents for the Tholos (a round building

40. A. W. Lawrence, “The Acropolis and Persepolis,” *JHS* 71 (1951): 111–19; Margaret C. Root, “The Parthenon Frieze and the Apadana Reliefs at Persepolis; Reassessing a Programmatic Relationship,” *AJA* 89 (1985): 103–20.

41. Plutarchus, *Pericles*, 13; Oscar Broneer, “The Tent of Xerxes and the Greek

that served as dining place of the *prytaneis*, the executives of the *Boulē*, the Council of 500).⁴² Many Athenians visited the court of the Persian kings.⁴³ The situation in the fourth century was not very different, when Greeks sought the aid of Persian kings in their mutual conflicts, as is exemplified by the “King’s Peace” of 387 B.C.E. Products of art also exhibit a mixture of disdain and admiration. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones concludes in a study of fourth-century B.C.E. Greek attitudes towards Persia in texts and images: “When we accept that the process of history can be filtered through non-historical texts and images, we must acknowledge that the Greeks were capable of, and enjoyed, creating a sophisticated interplay with the Persian past.”⁴⁴

It is opportune to pause on the use of political memory of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great and the Seleucids. Alexander the Great’s conquests were no more than the conquest of one empire, viz. the Persian Empire. So, he was the direct successor to the Achaemenid kings. Pierre Briant refers to him as “the last of the Achaemenids,” as this empire fell apart after Alexander’s death.⁴⁵ The attitude of Alexander himself was not so straightforward, and he had to choose between diametrically opposing demands of the time. By posing as Persian king, he irritated the Macedonians and the Greeks, by conceding too much to Macedonian and Greek preferences, he could not well act as Persian king. For the Greeks he had to be anti-Persian, as his campaign was justified by the wish to take revenge of the sack of Athens in 480 B.C.E. Persia was the wretched enemy, and he could not pose as a new Achaemenid king. Yet he *was* the new king of the Persian Empire and the successor to the Achaemenids. So he paid reverence to Cyrus (not too embarrassing, as Cyrus had been valued positively

Theater,” *University of California Publications in Classical Archaeology* 1.12 (1944): 305–12; Margaret Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth century B.C.: A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 218–42.

42. Dorothy B. Thompson, “The Persian Spoils in Athens,” in *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman on the Occasion of her Seventy-fifth Birthday* (ed. S. S. Weinberg; Locust Valley, N.Y.: J.J. Augustin, 1956), 281–91.

43. Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 27, 89, 109–33.

44. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, “The Great Kings of the Fourth Century and the Greek Memory of the Persian Past,” in *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras: History without Historians* (ed. J. Marincola, L. Llewellyn-Jones and C. Maciver; Edinburgh Leventis Studies 6; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 346.

45. Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 876.

by Xenophon) and to the deceased king, Darius III. He also tried to introduce some court ceremonies, such as the *proskynēsis*, but was thwarted in this. Another point is royal court-dress. In this he chose a middle way. He used a diadem instead of the royal tiara but used the royal Persian robe with the royal sash on occasion. His solution to the problem was that he did not pose as king of Persia, but rather as king of Asia or king of the world. Fredericksmeyer concludes that Alexander's kingship in Asia was a unique creation of Alexander himself,⁴⁶ but in dialogue of course with the Persian past. This practice was continued by the Seleucids, whose realm was also indicated as Asia.⁴⁷ It is not entirely new though, as there was an Achaemenid precedent. The Persian kings were called "king of the lands" = king of the world. Note the Babylonian translation of the title of Antigonos Monophthalmus, *stratēgos tēs Asias*, as "general of the lands" (𐎠𐎵𐎠𐎫𐎠𐎢𐎽𐎢𐏁 in Babylonian administrative documents.⁴⁸ Coming to terms with the Persian Empire was a nearly unsolvable task. Alexander's main solution was by way of warfare, to garner recognition through continuing military successes; a time-honored method.

In this book the political memory of Persia in the Roman Empire is discussed by Alesandr Makhlaiuk (ch. 12). The Romans stand further apart in time and place from the Persian Empire, and it is clear that their information is solely derived from Greek literature and thus easily adopts the Greek prejudices. The Romans hardly had opportunities to check Greek sources, but they also had no desire to do so. The writing of history in general has a purpose of discussing or mirroring contemporary issues in the world of the historiographer. This is not only true of Greek and Roman historiographers; modern historians often all too easily follow this. For Roman authors, the Persian Empire was a mirror for their own empire. It was effeminate and degenerate and, as such, a warning for their own time. It fitted in with habitual warnings against the decadence and luxury that supposedly proliferated in the Roman society. Although these concepts are taken from Greek literature, it is sobering to note that the Romans

46. Ernst Fredericksmeyer, "Alexander the Great and the Kingdom of Asia," in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (ed. A. B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 136–66, esp. 165.

47. The evidence is nicely collected by Paul J. Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 121–25.

48. CT 49 34: 24.

themselves often looked down on soft Greek habits that were compared to Roman militancy, and so did the Athenians vis-à-vis their Ionian kinsmen, who lived in Asia Minor. It seems as though one common trait is that effeminacy comes always from the east.

INVENTED TRADITION

So far, I have not paid much explicit attention to the fact that much of the political “memory” is not memory at all, but constructed memory for the benefit of local and later interests. These views do tell more about the authors who depict the Persians than about the Persians themselves. The Cyrus Cylinder reveals more about a desired attitude of the Persian conqueror (desired by the Babylonian temple elite and for propagandistic purposes granted by Cyrus) than the real behavior of Cyrus. The Satrap Stela of Ptolemy I, describing repatriation of spoilt divine statues, does not give reliable information about Persian policy as regards the treatment of gods. The authors of Isaiah and Nehemiah present a rather Judeo-centered view of the King’s interests and plans. The Greek and Roman view of the Persian barbarians tells us more about Greeks and Romans than about Persians.

Benedikt Eckhardt (ch. 11 herein) pays specific attention to this issue. He describes a few later, small kingdoms that explicitly use the memory of the Persian kingdom to either advance their own dynasty with a Persian flavor (in the case of the dynasties of the kings of Commagene and of Pontus and the Fratarakā dynasts in Persia) or to adduce the Persians as an example of the wretched enemy, as in the case of the Hasmonean kings, in whose time probably the book of Esther was produced. The Persian king Ahasveros is a kind of alter ego of Antiochus IV and is depicted as persecutor of Jews, disregarding the right of the Jews to live according to their ancestral laws (Esth 2:8–9). Thus, where Isaiah and Ezra-Nehemiah stress the wish of the Persian king to observe Jewish rights, it is now a Persian king that does the opposite. It is perhaps not coincidental that they used Xerxes (if Ahasveros stands for Xerxes, and not Artaxerxes, as is done in the Septuagint and Josephus), who had a really bad reputation in the Greek world. The author of Daniel used another bad guy, a Babylonian this time, viz. Nebuchadnezzar, as a model of Antiochus IV. It is to be noted that both repented, thus giving Antiochus a way out. Whatever the stories are, they only illustrate the intentions and concerns of the authors.

CONCLUSION: THE IMPACT OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

When we review the uses of the political memory of the Achaemenid Empire it is difficult to draw general conclusions as to how this memory was shaped. Many different memories were created that suited the needs of the day and that suited the authors of texts and the artists. So we often see contradictory memories of the Persians at the same time. The interest of the beholder is what matters. This could be a way of living and working under the sway of the Persians, or the view of outsiders who had to cope with them in wartime, trade, and negotiations, or had to deal with them as part of their history. The memory was more fragmentary than collective, although certain prejudices prevailed.

This does not mean that all history writing concerning the Persians can be discarded as unreliable. Historiography may give reliable facts, but these facts (even if they are correct *per se*) betray the interest and the world view of the author. That was so in antiquity just as it is today. The Persian past may also be used for making completely invented stories, such as the book of Esther. Modern historians have to treat these texts and works of art always taking into account the five W's: Who wrote (made) what, where, when, and why?

Allow me, finally, as a modern historian, to make a few remarks about the impact of the Persian Empire and the memory of it on the present world. In the first place, the Persian Empire was the neighbor and partly ruler of the Greek world. It was the United States of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., and it is evident that Greek civilization was shaped by the interaction with that neighbor, be it by learning from it or by being challenged to behave in antithesis. The mainstream Greek view of the Persians as effeminate, slavish, and irrational Orientals has shaped the European view of the East for centuries. The impact of the Persian Empire was *a fortiori* strong on the Hellenistic empires that emerged on the soil of their Persian predecessor. The Hellenistic empires, in their turn, were a challenge for the Romans. The Romans overcame these empires, which nevertheless left their imprints as examples of empire when the Roman monarchy came into being. The imprint of the Roman Empire on European civilization is seldom contested.

As we have seen, the Persian Empire also helped to make the religion of Israel become a more general religion with a universal god who ruled the world in the manner of an Achaemenid king and had some resemblance with Ahura Mazda. Here, Zoroastrian influences may be at work, though

this is difficult to prove (cf. ch. 16 by Foroutan herein). Many books of the Bible received their final redaction in the Persian period and were the result of coming to terms with the Achaemenids. Although the Jews and Zoroastrians (Farsis) themselves finally chose to close their community by marriage restrictions and purity laws, the idea for a universal religion was taken up by Christians and Muslims.

In the modern world the Persian Empire is still part of modern political debate. This is especially apparent in the discussion about the significance of the Cyrus Cylinder. The political memory of the empire is still at work in the various ways in which it is studied and described. Modern historians sometimes still have difficulty in coming to terms with the Persian Empire.

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