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THE LITERARY PATTERNS OF THE BABYLONIAN EDICT OF CYRUS

I

The significance of the Babylonian edict of Cyrus has already been recognized by historical research long ago.¹ The clay cylinder with an inscription of 45 lines on it, discovered by A. H. Rassam in 1879, even in spite of its damaged state, is a historical document of great importance which, besides throwing light on the policy followed by Cyrus towards Babylon and the peoples of the Babylonian Empire and being an expressive evidence of the internal situation in Babylon at the time of the Persian conquest, represents at the same time also a significant work of late Babylonian literature and first official manifestation of the Persian «Great King», the ruler of the Old Persian Empire, assuming definite outlines by the conquest of Babylon. This historical position of the edict includes an interesting duality, as on the one hand it points back to the historical past of Babylon and on the other hand it points ahead at the different phenomena of the later Old Persian Empire.

This can be observed already in the literary form of the edict. The inscription is clearly divided into two parts, *viz.*: part 1 1st to 19th line, part 2 20th to 45th line. The first part describes the antecedents and events of the conquest of Babylon from the viewpoint of the god Marduk, *viz.*: it was he who, enraged by the deeds of Nabûna'id, selected Cyrus to rule over the Universe and helped him to win, and who saved Babylon from the devastations of war. The second part begins with the royal protocol of Cyrus, then Cyrus in first person tells the events from his own point of view. From the viewpoint of the subject there is a full harmony between the two parts, and even identical,

¹ See *e.gr.* G. B. GRAY: Cambridge Ancient History. IV¹. Cambridge 1926. IV⁶. Cambridge 1960. 13. A. T. OLMSTEAD: The History of the Persian Empire. Chicago 1948. 51 foll. For earlier literature cf. F. H. WEIßBACH: Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden. Leipzig 1911. XI. I quote the Babylonian text of the inscription on the basis of the edition by WEIßBACH but in a transliteration according to W. VON SODEN—W. RÖLLIG: Das akkadische Syllabar.² Roma 1967. Compared to the earlier interpretations, the translation by A. L. OPPENHEIM (Ancient Near Eastern Texts.² Princeton 1955. 315 foll.) represented an advance on some points. I published a new restoration and translation of the text of the cylinder in: Ókori Keleti Történeti Chrestomathia (Chrestomathy for the History of Ancient East). Budapest 1964. 306 foll.

parallel sentences can be observed in them, as *e.gr.* part 1 line 14 *d.marduk bēlu rabū ta-ru-ū nišē.meš-šu ip-še-e-ti ša dam-qa-a-ta ū lib-ba-šu i-ša-ra ip-pa-al-li-is* «Marduk, the great Lord, the defender of his people, looked with rejoice at his pious deeds and true heart» and part 2 line 26 *a-na ip-še-e-ti-[ia] d.marduk bēlu rabū-ū iḫ-di-e-ma* «at my deeds rejoiced Marduk, the great Lords», or part 1 line 16 *um-ma-ni-šu rap-ša-a-tim . . . kakkē.meš-šu-nu ṣa-an-du-ma i-ša-ad-di-ḫa* «his widespread troops . . . packing away their weapons marched» and part 2 line 24 *um-ma-ni-ia rap-ša-a-tim i-na qī-rib DINTIR.ki i-ša-ad-di-ḫa šu-ul-ma-niš* «my widespread troops in Babylon peacefully marched», etc. These parallel, almost literally identical, passages show that the edict is a uniform work, and the formal difference to be observed between its first and second part is not the consequence of an independent drafting of the two parts (*i.e.* that *e.gr.* the first part would have been drafted by the Marduk priests and the second by the royal chancellery), but it is connected with the literary genre of the inscription.

Examining the later Old Persian inscriptions,² we find that from the formal points of view two types can be distinguished. In one of the types the royal protocol stands in the beginning of the inscription, and thereafter the king tells the text of the inscription in first person. The great Bistun inscription (DB), as well as the inscriptions DPe, DBa and DSj can be ranged with this type. In the case of the other type the text of the inscription is divided into two parts. The first part contains the eulogy of Auramazdā (*baga: vazraka : Auramazdā* etc. «A great god is Auramazdā», etc.). Then it describes briefly the most important deed of the deity, *viz.* he made Dārayavauš (or Xšayāršā) king. The second part begins with the royal protocol, whereafter the king tells in first person the say of the inscription. To this type belong among other things inscriptions DNa, DSf, DZc and DE of Darius and inscriptions XPa, XPb, XPc, XPd, XPf, etc. of Xerxes.

It can hardly be doubted that this second type of the Old Persian inscriptions represents the same literary genre as the Babylonian edict of Cyrus. At the most the first part became in the Old Persian inscription shorter and more schematic. However, the connection between the contents of the first and the second part can be observed also in these, inasmuch as the second part always refers to the fact that the ruler is indebted for his kingdom to Auramazdā. Thus the Babylonian edict of Cyrus, with regard to its literary form, can be considered as the antecedent of one of the types of the Old Persian inscriptions. This type plays an important role already under Darius, and at the times of Xerxes it definitely prevails.

² I quote the OP inscriptions on the basis of R. G. KENT: *Old Persian. Grammar. Texts. Lexicon.*² New Haven 1953. 116 foll.

II

Of course, we cannot think of the possibility that the literary form of the edict of Cyrus was created by the Old Persian royal court or the chancellery. The text of the inscription was not only written in Babylonian but it also contains so many characteristic Babylonian elements that its literary prototypes can only be looked for in Babylon. If for this purpose we examine the New Babylonian royal inscriptions, we arrive at the striking conclusion that from the literary point of view we do not find among them any parallel to the edict of Cyrus. The inscriptions and edicts of the New Babylonian rulers, Nabûapalušur, Nabûkudurriušur, Nergalšarušur and Nabûna'id,³ in almost every case begin with the royal protocol, thus their literary form could not serve as a pattern for the Babylonian edict of Cyrus. It can be observed in only one case, in one of the early inscriptions of Nabûapalušur, reporting on the reconstruction of the Etemenanki that the royal protocol is preceded by a dedication and eulogy addressed to Marduk. This dedication form (*a-na d.marduk*, etc.), at the time, was considered by S. Langdon to be without any parallel,⁴ and this is also true inasmuch as in the New Babylonian royal inscriptions we really do not find any more example on it. The isolation of this literary form in the New Babylonian period creates the impression that here we are faced with such a literary tradition, the influence of which still asserted itself in the beginning of the reign of Nabûapalušur, *i.e.* in the beginning of the New Babylonian period, later on, however, perhaps consciously it was given up and a new literary form asserting itself in all the other inscriptions was evolved.

And actually, if we go back to the times preceding the New Babylonian period, in one of the groups of the inscriptions of Aššurbānapli (the so-called «Prunkinschriften»⁵) we can really find the literary form looked for. From the viewpoint of the literary form, these inscriptions can be ranged with two types. One of the types begins with the royal protocol, and the other with a dedicatory formula and the eulogy of the deity, followed by the royal protocol and the report of the king in first person. The inscriptions L6 and P2, as well as the dedicatory inscriptions prepared for Nabû, Ninlil, Marduk, Ningal, and Aššur and Marduk belong to the latter type. L6 and P2 are also dedicatory inscriptions consecrated to Marduk. A common characteristic of the whole group of inscriptions is that all items belonging here are of Babylonian relation. All describe the royal inauguration of Šamašsumukīn in Babylon and the building activity of Aššurbānapli in Babylon and Borsippa. In accordance with this part of the inscriptions came to light in Babylon and Sippar, several

³ See S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. Leipzig 1912. J. C. GADD: The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus. *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958) 46 foll.

⁴ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 61.

⁵ See M. STRECK: Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's. II. Leipzig 1916. 226 foll.

specimens of them were written in archaic Babylonian or New Babylonian or eventually in mixed Assyro-Babylonian script.⁶ It seems to be likely that originally all the inscriptions had specimens written in both archaic Babylonian and New Babylonian script in Babylon and in different cities of Babylonia.

On the basis of all this it seems to be doubtless that in Babylon in the temple of Marduk and in his archives, during the reign of Nabûapalušur and later the texts of the dedicatory inscriptions caused to be prepared still by Aššurbānapli were at the disposal of the Marduk priesthood. The fact that these literary texts and the literary and cultural tendencies represented by them had a lasting influence, is clearly shown by the New Babylonian renaissance⁷ of the Old Babylonian culture and script. At any rate, the inscriptions caused by Aššurbānapli to be prepared for Babylon and written in archaic Babylonian script show that he was the actual initiator of this renaissance, and the New Babylonian rulers simply followed this trend, which seemed to be advantageous also for them from the viewpoint of their internal policy. Thus it is also comprehensible, if in the beginning of the reign of Nabûapalušur his dedicatory inscription addressed to Marduk was drafted by the Marduk priests in the literary form evolved still under Aššurbānapli. It seems, however that later on Nabûapalušur and his successors consciously gave up this form, and just because of this the question can be raised even more sharply, how was it still possible to go back to this form at the drafting of the edict of Cyrus.

III

In order to answer this question, first of all it must be realized that the literary form is not the only element of the edict of Cyrus which can be traced back to the period of Aššurbānapli. From this point of view it is very interesting to examine the royal protocol more closely: part 2 line 20 *a-na-ku m.ku-ra-áš šār kiš-šat šarru rabû šarru dan-nu šār* DIN.TIR.ki *šār kur.šu-me-ri u ak-ka-di-i šār kib-ra-a-ti ir-bi-üt-tim* (line 21) *mār m.ka-am-bu-zi-ia šarri rabî šār uru.an-ša-an mār mār m.ku-ra-áš šarri rabî šār uru.an-ša-an lip lip m.sî-iš-pi-iš šarri rabî šār uru.an-ša-an* (line 22) *zêru da-ru-ú ša šarru-ú-tu ša d.bêl u d.nabû ir-a-mu pa-la-a-šu a-na tu-ub lib-bi-šû-nu iḥ-si-ḥa šarru-ut-su* «I (am) Cyrus, king of the Universe, the great king, the mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Šumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world, son of Cambyses, the great king, king of the city of Anšan, grand-son of Cyrus, the great king, king of the city of Anšan, great-great grandson of Teispes, the great king, king of the city of Anšan, of an ancient royal family, whose reign is liked by Bêl and Nabû, they desired his kingship to the delight of their hearts».

⁶ M. STRECK: Assurbanipal. I. XL foll.

⁷ Regarding the New Babylonian «Renaissance» cf. among others A. DÁVID: Acta Ant. Hung. 4 (1956) 34.

Comparing this royal protocol with the later Old Persian one we find surprisingly few common elements in them. Among the royal titles only *šarru rabû* «great king» can be identified with the Old Persian title *xšāyaθiya vazraka* «great king», while the others have no equivalents. But in the protocol of Cyrus we do not find such elements either, which could be identified with the Old Persian titles *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām* «king of kings», *xšāyaθiya dahyunām* «king of the countries», *xšāyaθiya Pārsaiy* «king in Pārsa». The question can be raised with justification, whether we can presume at all an already evolved Old Persian royal protocol at this time. There is a high internal probability to the effect that Cyrus, after the defeat of the Median ruler Astyages, adopted at least the royal titles of the latter. Thus we can count by all means with the title *xšāyaθiya vazraka* «great king», which in Old Persian is also otherwise of Median origin, and the adoption of the title *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām* is also possible, inasmuch as the use of this by the Median kings is likely, because according to one of the inscriptions of Nabûna'id they had vassal kings (*šarrāni.meš a-lik i-di-šu*).⁸ Besides this it cannot be disregarded either that in the Babylonian documents only one title of Cyrus is used, viz. *šār mātāti* «king of the countries»,⁹ which just for this reason seems to be official, and which is obviously the Babylonian equivalent of the Old Persian title *xšāyaθiya dahyunām* «king of the countries».

Thus, finally we come to the conclusion that on the one hand the most essential elements of the later Old Persian royal protocol must have existed already at this time, but on the other hand we have to state that the royal protocol of the Babylonian edict of Cyrus was not drafted on the basis of this. This surprising result is supported also by the examination of the further part of the protocol. At the enumeration of the ancestors of Cyrus the Babylonian compiler of the edict naturally relied upon the statements of the Persian royal court. Thus it is possible that not only the names, but also the title *šarru rabû* - *xšāyaθiya vazraka* originates from a Persian source. In reality this title of Median origin could hardly be borne by the Achaemenids preceding Cyrus the Great. The title *šār uru.an-ša-an* of the predecessors of Cyrus is in any case a characteristic Babylonian feature. This title is used in connection with Cyrus himself also by Nabûna'id in one of his inscriptions relating to the time preceding the overthrow of the Median Empire (*m.ku-ra-aš šār kur.an-za-an*).¹⁰ However, we know from one of the inscription fragments¹¹ of Aššurbānapli that Cyrus I, grand-father of Cyrus the Great, was king of *Parsumāš* (= *Pārs-

⁸ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 220 (inscription no. 1 of Nabûna'id, col. I. 27).

⁹ Regarding the use of this title see M. A. DANDAMAYEV: Иран при первых Ахеменидах. Moscow 1963. 113.

¹⁰ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 220 (inscription no. 1. of Nabûna'id, col. I. 29).

¹¹ See E. F. WEIDNER: AfO 7 (1931—1932) 1 foll.

va > Pārsa) (*šār kur.par-su-ma-āš*). Whatever our judgement about the relationship to each other of the geographical positions of Anšan and Parsumaš may be, the report of the Assyrian royal chancellery relies upon the mission of the son of Cyrus I, thus it can very likely be regarded as authentic. Therefore, the predecessors of Cyrus bore the title «king of *Pārsva (> Pārsa)». Its original Old Persian linguistic form is not known so far, but at the time when Cyrus marched against Babylon it might have been already replaced by the form *xšāyaθiya Pārsaiy*. This could then be rendered by the Babylonian compiler of the edict with the phrase *šār uru.an-ša-an*.

The phrase *zēru da-ru-ú ša šarru-ú-tu* «of an old royal family» from the material point of view is very likely the equivalent of the sentence *hacā : paruviyata : hyā : amāxam : taumā : xšāyaθiyā : āha* (I.8) «our family have been kings long since» (*bab.ul-tu abu-tú zēr-ú-ni šarrāni.meš šú-nu*).¹² However, from the linguistic point of view it can hardly be imagined that it could be its translation (the corresponding sentence of the Babylonian version of the Bistun inscription quoted above is considerably diverging). The exact equivalent of the phrase can be found in the inscriptions of Aššurbānapli, viz.: Rasm-Cyl. X. 112 *zēru da-ru-u ša šarru-ti*.¹³ Thus, finally it can be traced back to the Late Assyrian royal ideology.

The position is similar also in connection with the phrases *ša d.bēl u d.nabû ir-a-mu pa-la-a-šu* «whose reign is liked by Bēl and Nabû» and *a-na tu-ub lib-bi-šú-nu iḫ-ši-ḫa šarru-ut-su* «they desired his kingship to the delight of their hearts». The parallel of the first phrase can be found in one of the inscriptions of Nabūna'id, viz.: No.8, IX.23 -26 *a-na d.bēli d.nabû u d.nergal ilāni.meš ra-bu-ti ra-'i-im pal-e-a* «to Bēl, Nabû and Nergal, the great gods, who like my reign».¹⁴ However, the stylistic variant of both phrases occurs in one of the inscriptions of Babylonian relation of Aššurbānapli discussed above: L4 r, II.12 *ru-bi-e lú.šu-ut-rēšu bēlu-u-ti iḫ-šu-ḫu i-ra-mu e-peš šarru-ti-ia* «my reign was desired by the great ones and the generals, they like the exercise of my kingship».¹⁵ This points to the fact that the source of these phrases has also to be looked for in the Babylonian inscriptions of Aššurbānapli.

IV

Returning to the titles of Cyrus used in the edict, after these it is perhaps not surprising, if their origin is looked for also in the royal protocol of Aššurbānapli used on his Babylonian inscriptions. In fact it is doubtless that the royal protocol of the New Babylonian rulers is of entirely different character.

¹² F. H. WEIßBACH: Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden. 11.

¹³ M. STRECK: Assurbanipal. II. 90.

¹⁴ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 284.

¹⁵ M. STRECK: Assurbanipal. II. 260.

The titles of the comparatively highest level are found in the inscriptions of Nabûapalušur, viz.: No.3,I.1 – 5 *d.na-bi-um-aplu-u-šu-ur šarru dannu šar KÁ.DINGIR.RA.ki šar kur.šu-me-ḫír-im ù ak-ka-di-i* «Nabûapalušur, the mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Šumer and Akkad». ¹⁶ This is essentially identical with the royal protocol of the Assyrian viceroys of Babylon, thus *e.gr.* with that of Šamaššumukîn (*šar bābili šar kur.šumeri ù akkadī*). ¹⁷ Nabûapalušur, after his coming to power, very likely adopted first the titles of the earlier Assyrian viceroys, who had been the rulers of Babylon. However, after the final overthrow of the Assyrian power it seems that he changed the royal protocol. Thus on certain inscriptions he already omits the title *šar kur.šu-me-ḫír-im u ak-ka-di-i*, and the later New Babylonian rulers do not use it at all. The more modest title *šakkanak kur.šu-me-ri u ak-ka-di-i* «governor of Šumer and Akkad» occurs only on one occasion on one of the inscriptions of Nabûkudurrišur (No.16,I.3). ¹⁸ Otherwise the New Babylonian royal protocol is very rich and — bombastic. However, even the flow of the beautifully sounding titles as *e.gr. ru-ba-a-am na-a'-dam* «respectful prince», *na-ra-am d.marduk* «favourite of Marduk», *qar-ra-ad qar-ra-di-e* «hero of heroes», *šar mi-ša-ri-im* «king of justice», ¹⁹ etc. cannot conceal the fact that the international power position of the New Babylonian rulers, reflected in their royal protocol, is very modest as compared with that of the Assyrian kings, especially with that of Aššurbānapli.

It is not difficult to find out the reason for this. In the course of the last century of the New Assyrian Empire there was no great power in the Near East comparable to it. Thus Aššurbānapli could use the titles *šar kiššati* and *šar kibrāt irbitti* «king of the Universe» and «king of the four quarters of the world», respectively, with some justification. However, the New Babylonian Kingdom, in the shadow of the mighty Median Empire, which entirely crushed the Assyrian power within the lapse of a few years, became a power of secondary rank, the rulers of which, fearing the Median threat, could not think of the adoption of titles violating the Median great power ambitions. For this reason Nabûkudurrišur, standing in dynastic relations with the Median rulers but still constructing a mighty fortification system against them, gives up even part of the royal titles of Nabûapalušur. This reflects well the change of the power relations in ancient Near East. After the destruction of Assyria the political centre of gravity was shifted to the Iranian territories, and the threads of future development were already woven in the Median and Persian royal courts.

The New Babylonian royal protocol transgresses the modest frames of the title «king of Babylon» in only one case, viz. in the inscription of Nabûna'id

¹⁶ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 64.

¹⁷ M. STRECK: Assurbanipal. I. CCLVIII.

¹⁸ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 140.

¹⁹ Cf. S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 102, 66, 100 etc

on the reconstruction of the temple of Sîn at Ḥarrān. The royal protocol of this is as follows: *a-na-ku d.na-bi-um-na-'i-id šarru ra-bu-ú šarru dan-nu šār kiš-ša-ti šār* DIN.TIR.ki *šār kib-ra-a-ti ir-bīt-ti*, etc. «I (am) Nabûna'id the great king, the mighty king, king of the Universe, king of Babylon, king of the four quarters of the world»,²⁰ etc. As regards the essential points, this protocol exactly agrees with the royal protocol of Aššurbānapli, and thus also with that of Cyrus, and similarly to those, claim to domination of the world manifests itself in it. This ambitious New Babylonian royal protocol is the product of a given historical moment. The reoccupation of Ḥarrān and the reconstruction of the temple of Sîn was rendered possible for Nabûna'id by the circumstance that Cyrus revolted against the Median regime and after heavy fights overthrew the Median kingdom. Nabûna'id took advantage of the opportunity offered and reoccupied Ḥarrān. Very likely he judged the situation so that after the victory of Cyrus the dissolution of the Median Empire would follow and Babylon would regain the leading role of a great power among the minor Iranian kingdoms. He must have formulated his new royal protocol in this conviction, adopting the royal titles of Aššurbānapli, but the use of the new royal protocol did not last for a long time. Nabûna'id had to realize very soon that the place of the Median Empire was occupied by an even more powerful world power, in the presence of which at the most the use of the title «king of Babylon» was left for him.

From all this it follows that the royal protocol of Cyrus occurring in the Babylonian edict essentially can be traced back to the royal protocol of Aššurbānapli. We can hardly think of the possibility that the Marduk priesthood would have transferred to Cyrus the royal protocol of the hated Nabûna'id, occurring on one occasion in his inscription boasting just with the reconstruction of the temple of Sîn in the rival Ḥarrān. Thus, finally, we arrive at the conclusion that the Babylonian inscriptions of Aššurbānapli served for the Marduk priesthood as a literary pattern of the Babylonian edict of Cyrus. A further observation enables us to delimit more accurately the group of inscriptions serving as patterns.

V

In the inscriptions of Aššurbānapli connected with Babylon two variants of the royal protocol occur. The first variant is the characteristic of those inscriptions, which begin with the royal protocol, cf. *e.gr.* L2 1–2 m.d.*aššur-bān-apli šarru rabû šarru dan-nu šār kiššati šār kur.aššur šār kib-rat irbitti.ti šār šarrāni.meš*, etc. «Aššurbānapli, the great king, the mighty king, king of the Universe, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters of the world, king of

²⁰ S. LANGDON: *op. cit.* 218 (inscription no. 1. of Nabûna'id, col. I. 1–2).

the kings», etc.²¹ The other variant is characteristic of those inscriptions, the literary form of which agrees with that of the Babylonian edict of Cyrus, *i.e.* it consists of two parts and only the second part contains the royal protocol, cf. *e.gr.* L6 3 *a-na-ku m.d.aššur-bān-apli šarru rabū šarru dannu šar kiššati šar kur. aššur šar kib-rat irbitti.ti*, etc. «I (am) Aššurbānapli, the great king, the mighty king, king of the Universe, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters of the world», etc.²²

The difference between the two variants is conspicuous. The first version contains the title *šar šarrāni.meš* «king of kings» and the phrase *anaku* «I (am)» is found at the end of the protocol. The second variant, on the other hand, begins with the word *anaku* and the title *šar šarrāni.meš* is missing from it. The royal protocol of Cyrus in the Babylonian edict agrees with this second variant, and since this variant occurs exactly in those Babylonian inscriptions of Aššurbānapli, the structure of which also agrees with the literary form of the edict of Cyrus, this double agreement renders it doubtless that at the formulation of the edict of Cyrus the Marduk priests used these Babylonian inscriptions of Aššurbānapli as a pattern. And since among these first of all the dedicatory inscriptions addressed to Marduk contain the royal protocol in its full form, obviously these can be regarded as the literary patterns of the Babylonian edict of Cyrus. Thus, it becomes now also comprehensible, why is the Babylonian equivalent of the Old Persian title *xšāyathiya xšāyathiyānām* «king of kings» missing from the royal protocol of the edict. Since the Babylonian author of the edict transferred the titles of Aššurbānapli to Cyrus, and substituted only the phrase «king of Assyria» with the title «king of Babylon, king of Šumer and Akkad» of the earlier Babylonian kings Šamašsumukīn and Nabūapalušur, thus the Babylonian equivalent *šar šarrāni.meš* of the Old Persian title could not be taken up in the royal protocol, because it was not contained by the royal protocol of the inscriptions of Aššurbānapli, addressed to Marduk and taken as patterns either.

VI

The examination of the Babylonian edict of Cyrus and its Babylonian literary patterns raises two further problems, *viz.*: on the one hand the relation of Cyrus to the cult of Marduk and the Marduk priesthood, and on the other hand the judgement of Aššurbānapli as a historical figure from the viewpoint both of the Marduk priesthood and of Late Babylonian historical aspect altogether. These two questions jointly lead to a third one, *viz.*: why was Cyrus attached by the historical view of the Marduk clergy exactly to the figure of Aššurbānapli?

²¹ M. STRECK: Assurbanipal. II. 228.

²² M. STRECK: *op. cit.* II. 236.

According to the narration of the first part of the edict (11–13) the relationship of Cyrus with Marduk can be traced back to a time much before the conquest of Babylon, viz.: «(Marduk) examined, inspected the totality of all his countries, he looked for a just prince to his hear's content, who holds his hand (in the new year's ceremony). Cyrus, king of the city of Anšan, he told his name, he announced his name to rule over the whole universe. He threw the Guti country, the totality of the umman-manda before his feet». Thus, according to the representation of the Marduk priests, Cyrus was the choice of Marduk long since, and he was helped by Marduk already to the victory over the Medians. This can simply be the propaganda of the Marduk priesthood, but the historical fact can also be hidden behind it that Cyrus had had good connections with the Marduk priests already at the time of the revolt against the Medians.

This latter assumption is, to a certain extent, supported by the historical circumstances. According to the opinion generally spread in scholarly literature, the revolt of Cyrus against the Medes took place in alliance with Nabûna'id.²³ Although this view is not based on a direct source, it is actually supported by the inscription of Nabûna'id reporting on the reconstruction of the temple of Sîn at Harrân, in which he relates the victory of Cyrus over Ištumegu. At any rate, the exact familiarity of Nabûna'id and the coordination of the reoccupation of Harrân with the revolt of Cyrus point to the circumstance that there must have been some relation between Cyrus and Babylon. In this context becomes interesting the fact that the above mentioned inscription of Nabûna'id in connection with Cyrus uses the phrase *m.ku-ra-áš šâr uru. an.za-an arad-su ša-ah-ri*, according to the interpretation by S. Langdon «Cyrus, king of the city of Anšan, his (viz. Marduk's) young servant».²⁴ If this interpretation proves to be correct — Langdon refers the pronoun *šu* to the subject of the sentence, viz. to the gods and first of all the speaking Marduk, but perhaps one may also refer it to *lu.umman-man-da* occurring in the preceding sentence as it was done by Olmstead²⁵ — then, of course, we could think about the propaganda of the Marduk priests also in this case and interpret this phrase as a stylistic idiom without any historical background. However, it would be difficult to understand, why this would have been necessary, when Cyrus was still the insignificant king of Anšan, and the fate of the Marduk priests did not depend at all from him. Besides this, the role of the Marduk priests is also rather unlikely in this inscription of Nabûna'id praising Sîn and other non-Babylonian gods. It would also be difficult to find a reason for the invention of the phrase in the circle of Nabûna'id either. The tenor of the inscription would rather justify the connection of Cyrus with Sîn. If, therefore, the inter-

²³ A. T. OLMSTEAD: The History of the Persian Empire. 36.

²⁴ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 220.

²⁵ A. T. OLMSTEAD: The History of the Persian Empire. 36.

pretation by Langdon proves to be correct, it seems likely that behind this phrase the fact of some connection between Cyrus and the Babylonian Marduk priests is hidden, already at the time of his revolt against the Medes.

It is a well-known fact that the Achaemenids strived to win the priests of the respected places of cult for themselves. Thus Cyrus had obvious relations with the Branchidae, the priests of Apollo's oracle near Miletus, and Darius and Xerxes with Delphi, *i.e.* with the priests of the Apollo's oracle there. On the basis of this it seems to be likely that Cyrus, already before his revolt against the Medes, strived to ensure the good-will of the most significant place of cult in Babylon, *i.e.* the support of the Marduk priests. It is not impossible either that the permanent titles *iršu* «wise», *bēlu* «lord», *apkal ilāni.meš* «sage of gods» of Marduk made it possible to identify him with Auramazdā, the «Wise Lord» in the *interpretatio Persica*. The phrase *ardu* «servant» can eventually point also to the circumstance that Cyrus sent systematically presents to the Babylonian Marduk sanctuary.

At any rate the legend of Cyrus of Median origin described by Herodotus has also preserved a slight echo of the fact that in his coming to power the supporting of the religious ideology also played a role. Harpagus, majordomo of the Median king, in the letter in which he wants to persuade Cyrus to the revolt, writes to him among other things: *σὲ γὰρ θεοὶ ἐποιοῦσι* «because the gods are choosing you». ²⁶ This sounds like a distant echo of the edict of Cyrus, *viz.*: Marduk also holds a review and chooses Cyrus to reign. It seems that the conception of the choice by the gods of Cyrus was widespread with the Medes and Persians, as well as in Babylon. Since, according to the narrative of Herodotus, the formation of the fate of Cyrus was followed by the magi with a hostile attitude, it is not likely that the establishment of his rule by the means of the religious ideology would have originated from them. It is much more obvious to think about the role of the Babylonian Marduk priesthood, the most respected religious centre of Mesopotamia, in the evolving of the Cyrus legend. The fact that this did not happen so as a result of a mere accident is proved by the data mentioned above, which point to the fact that Cyrus had established relations with the Babylonian Marduk sanctuary already before the revolt against the Medes and endeavoured to win the support of the Marduk priesthood.

VII

In the examination of the other problem, the figure of Aššurbānapi and his role played in Late Babylonian historical view, we must go back to the time, when the inscriptions of Aššurbānapi of Babylonian connections came into existence. It is a doubtless fact that the new foundations of the Babylonian

²⁶ Herodotus I. 124.

Marduk cult were laid down by Aššurbānapli, when in the beginning of his reign he brought back the statue of Marduk to Babylon, regulated the order of the cult and ensured the financial basis of the systematic sacrifices: *ina palé-e-a bêlu rabû d.marduk ina ri-ša-a-ti a-na bābili.ki i-ru-um-ma ina é-sagila šá du-ra-a-ti šu-bat-su ir-me sat-tuk-ki é-sagila ù ilāni.meš bābili.ki ú-ki-in* «under my reign the great lord, Marduk marched to Babylon in the midst of jubilation, in the Esagila he occupied his residence for ever. I have fixed the systematic sacrifices for the gods of the Esagila and Babylon» — he says in one of his inscriptions (L6 10–12).²⁷ This fact was never forgotten in the circle of the Marduk priesthood. In fact the inscriptions eternizing this were obviously available in the sanctuary and in their archives at all times. However, the revolt of Šamaššumukīn, and then its defeat very likely influenced the judgement of the reign of Aššurbānapli adversely. At any rate, it can hardly be considered possible that the total destruction of Assyria would have ever been raised in the circles of the Marduk priests or the leaders of Babylon. The purpose of Nabûapalušur's fight against the Assyrians could hardly be anything else than to have himself be recognized as king of Babylon. The struggle going on between Assyria and Babylon, even according to the Babylonian Chronicle, was rather balanced as long as the Medes did not interfere.²⁸

The role of the Medes in the fights against Assyria is presented by the official historical interpretations of the New Babylonian kings, as if they had been the means of the divine administration of justice in the hands of Nabûapalušur and would have taken vengeance for Babylon, when they destroyed all the cities and places of cult of Assyria. In reality the Babylonian king was only a clever supernumerary on the stage of history, the course of the events was determined in a decisive way by the Medes. It shows the political discernment of Kyaxares that he recognized the possibility offered by the Assyro-Babylonian war for the annihilation of the Assyrian power, which threatened Media in the first place. Thus, after all, the coming into existence of the Median Empire was promoted by Nabûapalušur and the destruction of Assyria prepared also the fall of Babylon.

But very likely not much after the destruction of Assyria, the Babylonian circles recognized that the total annihilation of the Assyrian power was a serious mistake. Babylon became the neighbour of a much stronger world power, which could attack her at any time, and even if she was relieved from the supremacy of Assyria, beside the Median Empire she could only play the role of a power of secondary rank. Obviously, at this time the positive appraisal of the historical role of Assyria and her last great ruler Aššurbānapli could already begin. The Babylonian ruling circles looked back with nostalgia upon

²⁷ M. STRECK: Assurbanipal. II. 236.

²⁸ This was correctly seen by A. MOORTGAT (A. SCHARFF — A. MOORTGAT: *Ägypten und Vorderasien im Altertum*. München 1950. 445).

the great past of Babylon and Assyria, and this is also reflected in a great degree in the flourishing of the renaissance of Old Babylonian culture and script initiated by Aššurbānapli.

The shock-like fear of the Medians and the nostalgia for the great past organically lead from Nabûkudurriuşur's building of fortifications for the protection of Babylon and from his works carried out for the reconstruction of the great witnesses of the past, the old famous sanctuaries, to the sanctuary excavations of Nabûna'id carried out with an archaeological thoroughness, in the course of which he offered up sacrifices with devotion over the foundation-stone and foundation inscription of his «royal fathers» (No.1,II.7 *šarrāni.meš ab-bi-e-a*), Aššurnāşirapli and Aššurbānapli.²⁹ Now Aššurbānapli becomes an ideal, who in his dedicatory inscription to Marduk says about himself (PI 12, r 15-17) as follows: *a-na ud-du-uš ma-ĥa-zi za-na-an eš-ri-[e-ti] . . . d.[marduk ú-ma-'i-ra-ni-ma]* «for the reconstruction of the places of cult, for the supply of the sanctuaries . . . I was ordered by Marduk».³⁰ The same programme is echoed by the inscriptions of Nabûkudurriuşur and Nabûna'id: *a-za-an-na-an ma-ĥa-zi ud-da-áš eš-ri-e-ti* «I supply the places of cult, I reconstruct the sanctuaries» proclaims Nabûkudurriuşur (No.19,VIII.44),³¹ (*d.marduk*) . . . *za-na-nu-ut ma-ĥa-za ud-du-šu eš-ri-e-ti ú-mal-lu-ú* «(Marduk) . . . entrusted to me the supply of the places of cult, the reconstruction of the sanctuaries» Nabûna'id says about himself (No.7,I.18).³² The Marduk priesthood very likely had a significant part in the keeping of this royal task on the agenda.

However, the figure of Aššurbānapli as the new establisher of the cult of Marduk could really become actual, when Nabûna'id placed the cult of Šin in the foreground as compared with the Marduk cult, left Babylon for a long time, making by this impossible the most important festivity of the Marduk cult, the New Year's ceremonies, used the resources of the country for the reconstruction of Ĥarrān, for his Arabian campaign, and if we can trust the edict of Cyrus, he discontinued even the systematic sacrifices. In this situation not only the figure of Aššurbānapli could become very positive in the historical view of the Marduk priesthood, but at the same time all those documents became of decisive importance, which related to the reestablishment of the Marduk cult by Aššurbānapli and to the financial benefits given to the Marduk clergy.

²⁹ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 222.

³⁰ M. STRECK: Assurbanipal. II. 280.

³¹ S. LANGDON: Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften. 172.

³² S. LANGDON: *op. cit.* 262.

VIII

After these it is not difficult to answer the third question raised. The Marduk priesthood could not expect the improvement of its position and the restoration of the rights and financial bases of the Marduk cult from Nabûna'id or from his son. Thus against the New Babylonian rulers, in his historical view Aššurbānapli became the only positive figure, and his inscriptions the legal ground, to which the Marduk priests could refer. At the same time they could expect the improvement of their position and the restoration of the rights and financial bases of the cult of Marduk, ensured by Aššurbānapli, only from Cyrus, who was in contact with them long since and who could establish a world power of the ancient world within hardly one decade, unprecedented up to that time. In this historical situation the Marduk priesthood could look forward to the marching in of Cyrus to Babylon, as that of the future re-establisher of the Marduk cult, with whom, in his historical view, only Aššurbānapli, the last great ruler of the previous century, could be compared. Thus at the time of the marching in of Cyrus, at the compilation of his edict, the Marduk priesthood could necessarily take only the inscriptions of Aššurbānapli on the Marduk cult for his basis. These offered a suitable literary form and contained such a royal protocol, which was worthy of the mighty Persian king, and referred to all those rights and financial benefits which could be expected by the Marduk priests from Cyrus. As a result of this recognition, the Babylonian edict of Cyrus was drafted in the circle of the Marduk clergy, using the literary form of the dedicatory inscriptions of Aššurbānapli to Marduk and transferring the royal protocol of the Assyrian ruler to Cyrus. Thus the Babylonian edict of the great Persian ruler shows the fullest recognition of his historical importance on part of the Marduk priesthood.

Budapest.

Additional note. — A summary of this paper was presented in a lecture entitled „The Edict of Cyrus from Babylon” at the International Congress of Iranian Studies on the «Continuité de la civilisation et de la culture iraniennes» in Shiraz in the plenary meeting of the morning on the 15th October 1971. The main thesis of my paper effecting great astonishment in Shiraz (*viz.* that the literary patterns of the Edict of Cyrus are to be found in the Babylonian inscriptions of Aššurbānapli and at that mainly in L6) was manifestly proved somewhat later. In a letter dated from the 21st December 1971 Dr. C. B. F. Walker (London, British Museum) has kindly informed me about the fact that Dr. P.-R. Berger (Münster, University) has succeeded to discover a new fragment of the Cyrus Cylinder in the Babylonian Collection of the Yale University and that the text of this new fragment explicitly refers to a Babylonian in-

scription of Aššurbānapli. Dr. Walker also enclosed the proofs of his short paper containing a preliminary announcement of this discovery. On the basis of the informations given by Professor R. D. Barnett (London, British Museum), he already refers to the thesis of my paper read at the Congress in Shiraz. I thank very much Dr. Walker for his valuable informations and instead of further expositions I quote the following passage from his paper:

«The text of the new fragment refers to additional offerings (presumably in the temple of Marduk) instituted by Cyrus and to his restoration of the fortifications of Babylon. Among other works (the passage is still incomplete) he lists the inner city-wall, named Ingur-Enlil, the brickwork of the bank of the moat, perhaps also the outer city-wall, Nimit-Enlil, and gates with decorative ornament, threshold and pivots in bronze and copper. Most interestingly he adds, «In it (i.e. in the gateway?) I saw inscribed the name of my predecessor King Ashurbanipal.» This must be an allusion to the discovery of an earlier building inscription, almost certainly the cylinder L6 (translated in D. D. Luckenbill, *A.R.A.B.* II §§ 963-4) of Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria 668-627 B.C., which commemorates his restoration of Ingur-Enlil, Nimit-Enlil and the gates of Nimit-Enlil. It is interesting to see Cyrus thus continuing the antiquarian interests of his enemy and predecessor Nabonidus, if the allusion is not motivated simply by a desire to be seen to respect local traditions. The reference to Ashurbanipal is of particular significance as I understand that Professor Harmatta is to publish in a forthcoming volume of *Acta Orientalia* a study of the Cyrus Cylinder in which he demonstrates that in literary form its closest parallels are the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal rather than Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions.»