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*“From Nabonidus to Cyrus”*

REINHARD KRATZ

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REINHARD KRATZ Göttingen

## From Nabonidus to Cyrus

### 1. Historical Evidence and Ideology

The transition from Nabonidus to Cyrus in the year 539 BCE was a date of utmost historical significance. Not only did Babylon find itself for the first time under a foreign rule which did not succumb to Babylonian culture. But even more, the change took place to a certain extent over night: A new system of government, the Persian multi-nation-state, was developed, which following the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses reached

its peak in the reign of Darius I and thereafter received its ideological foundation in the inscriptions of the Persian kings.

We are comparatively well informed about the circumstances surrounding these events: For a long time our main source has been the Greek history writers, above all Herodotus.<sup>1</sup> Supplementing these writings are the cuneiform primary sources discovered in the excavations of the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>2</sup> In light of

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus I 188-199 (cf. also III 150-160); Xenophon, *Cyrop.* III 3, 9-VII 5,36 (esp. VII 4, 16-5, 36); Ktesias in the excerpts from Photius, Diodorus and others on the Medo-Persian background (FGH III C, 688, p. 419ff.; AfO.B 18, 1972); Megasthenes in the Abydenos excerpt of Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* IX 41 and the Armenian Chronicle (FGH III C, 685, 6, p. 405ff.); Berossus (by way of Polyhistor) in the excerpt of Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I 20 §§ 145ff.; *Ant.* X 11,2 §§ 229ff. as well as in the excerpt of Polyhistor (FGH III A, 273,79ff., p. 109ff.) and Abydenos (FGH III C, 685, p. 398ff.) and by way of Josephus in Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* IX 41 and the *Arm. Chron.* (FGH III C, 680, 9-10, pp. 392-394). Exhaustive treatment of the Greek sources: R. P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar. A Study of the Closing Events of the Neo-Babylonian Empire* (YOR 15; New Haven 1929); further: H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Achaemenid History II. The Greek Sources* (Leiden 1987); A. Kuhrt, "Assyrian and Babylonian Traditions in Classical Authors: A Critical Synthesis," in H.-J. Nissen and J. Renger (eds.), *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* (Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Berlin 1978; Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 1, Berlin 1982), 539-553; eadem, "Survey of Written Sources Available for the History of Babylonia under the Later Achaemenids," in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (ed.), *Achaemenid History I* (Leiden 1987), 147-157; eadem, "Achaemenid Babylonia: Sources and Problems," in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg/A. Kuhrt (ed.), *Achaemenid History IV* (Leiden 1990), 177-194 (consult further lit. there).

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<sup>2</sup> Nabonidus Inscriptions: S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB IV; Leipzig 1912). Harran Inscriptions (Nab 9 = H 1 and H 2): B. Landsberger, "Die Basaltstele von Eski-Harran," in *In memoriam Halil Edhem I* (Ankara 1947), 115-151; C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus," *AnSt* 8 (1958), 35-92; W. L. Moran, "Notes on the New Nabonidus Inscriptions (Style and Composition H 1 B - H 2, A and B)," *Or.* 28 (1959), 130-140; W. Röllig, "Erwägungen zu neuen Stelen Nabonids," *ZA* 56 (NF 22, 1964), 218-260. Nabonidus Chronicle: A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5; Locust Valley 1975), 21-22, 104-111. Cyrus Cylinder: W. Eilers, "Der Keilschrifttext des Kyros-Zylinders," in idem (ed.), *Festgabe deutscher Iranisten zur 2500-Jahrfeier Irans* (Stuttgart 1971), 156-166; P. R. Berger, "Der Kyros-Zylinder mit dem Zusatzfragment BIN II Nr. 32 und die akkadischen Personennamen im Danielbuch," *ZA* 64 (1974), 192-234; R. Borger in *TUAT I/4* (Gütersloh 1984), 407-410. Persian Verse Account: S. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (London 1924), 27-97; B. Landsberger and Th. Bauer, "Zu neuveröffentlichten Geschichtsquellen der Zeit von Asarhaddon bis Nabonid," *ZA* 37(NF 3, 1927), 61-98, 88f.; A. L. Oppenheim in *ANET*, 312-315; E. Rapp in *TGI* (1. Aufl. 1950), 66-70. Dynastic Prophecy: A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical Literary Texts* (TSTS 3; Toronto 1975), 24-37. Royal Chronicle: W. G. Lambert, "A New Source for the Reign of Nabonidus," *AfO* 22 (1968), 1-8. Questionable is the assessment of W. G.

these and other sources from all regions of the Persian empire,<sup>3</sup> also the OT witnesses of early Judaism<sup>4</sup> appreciate again in value. Together with the 5th century Aramaic documents found in Egypt,<sup>5</sup> the OT writings seem to fit perfectly into the course of events conveyed by Herodotus and the Neo-Babylonian documents.<sup>6</sup>

The main interest of research has been and remains the historical evaluation of the sources. Best suited for this purpose is the Babylonian Chronicle as well as a number of dated letters and business documents which provide precise information about important occurrences and their chronology.<sup>7</sup> They testify to the transition in a quite unspectacular fashion: From one day to the other the dating

changes from being based upon Nabonidus to the first year of Cyrus.

In contrast to this are the literary texts from Babylon, the Greek historians and the OT. Here the occurrences are rendered in dramatic form and placed in a wider historical context. The problem is that the sources contain disparate information. The main difference consists in that the Neo-Babylonian texts speak of a peaceful Babylonian capitulation, while Herodotus and the OT report a violent capture of the city. This and other details, which either do not stand up to the reliable archaeological data or are inconsistent with each other, create the most problems for the historical reconstruction.

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Lambert, "Nebukadnezar King of Justice," *Iraq* 27 (1965), 1-11, belonging to this is perhaps Grayson, TSTS 3, 87-92 (vgl. P. R. Berger, *ZA* 64, 1975, 222 n. 51). Exhaustive treatment of the cuneiform sources including the economic documents and letters: Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*; R. P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*; E. N. von Voigtlander, *A Survey of Neo-Babylonian History* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1963); P.-A. Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556-539 B. C.* (YNER 10; New Haven and London 1989); further: A. L. Oppenheim, "The Babylonian Evidence of Achaemenian Rule in Mesopotamia," in *CHI* 2 (Cambridge 1985), 529-587; A. Kuhrt, "Babylonia from Cyrus to Xerxes," in *CAH* IV (Cambridge, Second Edition 1988), 112-138, esp. 112-119; eadem, *Achaemenid History* IV, 177ff.; R. H. Sack, *Cuneiform Documents from the Chaldean and Persian Period* (Selingsgrove, London and Toronto 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. G. Kratz, *Translatio imperii. Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld* (WMANT 63; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1987), 212ff., 246ff.; P. Frei, "Zentralgewalt und Lokalautonomie im Achämenidenreich," in P. Frei and K. Koch, *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich* (OBO 55; zweite stark erweiterte Auflage Freiburg/CH and Göttingen 1996), 5-131.

<sup>4</sup> Prophecy on Babylon, Isa. 13-14; 21; Jer. 50-51; the Second Isaiah, Isa. 40-55(66); Hag.; Sach.; Mal.; 1 and 2 Chron. and Ezra-Nehemiah; Daniel 1-6; 4QOrNab.

<sup>5</sup> A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C.* (Oxford 1923, repr. Osnabrück 1967); B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* I-III (The Hebrew University

Department of the History of the Jewish People Texts and Studies for Students, Jerusalem 1986-1993); G. R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B. C.* (Oxford 1957).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. E. Meyer, *Die Entstehung des Judentums. Eine historische Untersuchung* (Halle 1896; repr. Hildesheim, Zürich and New York 1987); idem, *Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine* (Leipzig 1912); K. Galling, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels im persischen Zeitalter* (Tübingen 1964), esp. "Politische Wandlungen in der Zeit zwischen Nabonid und Darius," *ibid.*, 1-60; W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein (eds.), *CHJI* I (Cambridge 1984); P. Frei and K. Koch, *Reichsidee*.

<sup>7</sup> Apparently in expectation of the Persian invasion were the gods (statues) transported from various cities to Babylon. In the month Tashritu/Tishri, the seventh month of the same year (Oct. 539 BCE) the Persian troops penetrated from the North and struck the "Host of Akkad" at Opis on the Tigris. On 14, VII (Oct. 10, 539) they took Sippar and on the 16, VII (Oct. 12), Babylon. On the 3rd of the month Arachsamnu/Marcheshvan (3, VIII = Oct. 29, 539) Cyrus invaded Babylon. Still on 15, VII (Oct. 11), one day after Sippar and before Babylon, the business in Sippar were dated according to the years of Nabonidus and, as far as we know, not until the 19, VII (Oct. 15), two days after the invasion of Babylon, they were dated according to the accession year of Cyrus; in Uruk they were dated until 17, VII (Oct. 13) according to Nabonidus, and afterward according to Cyrus. See R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B. C. - A. D. 75* (Brown University Studies 19; Providence 1956), 13f.; Beaulieu, *Reign*, 219ff., esp. 230-232.

Commonly one attempts to correlate the mutual points and the particularities – to some extent the highest common denominator of the data from all extent sources – and then handles them as brute facts. The remaining inconsistencies are attributed to errors, the *Tendenz* of the sources, or later legend formation and exaggeration.<sup>8</sup> This methodology is completely legitimate, as long as the harmonization is not forced. The only problem is that the literary character of the sources and their ideological standpoints, which are by no means only responsible for their divergences, is disregarded. The literary texts were not composed to inform the modern historian, but rather to indoctrinate or instruct their contemporary readers. Not the facts per se, but rather the ideological standpoints of the sources give the events their historical significance. The historical worth of a

source is to be measured not only according to its direct or indirect information on the course of events, but also, if not even more, according to its ideology.

For the Jewish version in the OT, the influence of ideology on its presentation of history is widely admitted, but in this regard also the Babylonian and Greek sources are no exceptions.<sup>9</sup> And thus in the following I would like to examine the various versions not (once again) according to their historical information, but rather according to their interpretations of history, their *Tendenzen*. One after another I will go through the cuneiform, Greek and Jewish texts and consider each as witnesses of the history of ideas in the ancient world, and how they illuminate one and the same historical date from their ideological viewpoints and in this way confer to it intercultural significance.

<sup>8</sup> Beside the studies from Dougherty, Galling, von Voigtlander, and Beaulieu cf. J. v. Prášek, *Geschichte der Meder bis zur makedonischen Eroberung* (Handbücher der Alten Geschichte I, 5; Vol. I, Gotha 1906), 173ff.; A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago and London 1968); M. A. Dandamaev, *Persien unter den ersten Achämeniden* (Beiträge zur Iranistik 8, Wiesbaden 1976), 94ff.; idem, *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire* (Leiden 1989), 10-30, 39-65; R. N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran* (HAW Abt. 3, Teil 7, München 1984); M. Mallowan, "Cyrus the Great," in *CHI* 2 (Cambridge 1985), 392-419; D. J. Wiseman, *CAH* III/2 (Cambridge 1991), 229ff.; as an example of an uncritical view also W. G. Lambert, "Nabonidus in Arabia," in *Proceedings of the Fifth Seminar for Arabian Studies held at the Oriental Institute, Oxford 22nd and 23rd September, 1971* (London 1972), 53-64. The reflection on the individual character of the sources is however increasing, cf. A. Kuhrt, *CAH* IV, 112ff.; P. Briant, *Histoire de L'Empire Perse. De Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris 1996), 14-18, 24-26, 50-55.

<sup>9</sup> For the cuneiform literature see W. von Soden, "Kyros und Nabonid. Propaganda und Gegenpropaganda," in H. Koch and D. N. MacKenzie (eds.), *Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit*

*und ihr Fortleben* (AMLE 10, Berlin 1983), 61-68, repr. in idem, *Aus Sprache, Geschichte und Religion Babyloniens*, ed. by L. Cagni and H.-P. Müller (IUO, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, Series Minor 23, Neapel 1989), 285-292; further R. H. Sack, "The Nabonidus Legend," *RA* 77 (1983), 59-67. For Herodotus see W. Baumgartner, "Herodots assyrische und babylonische Nachrichten," in idem, *Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Leiden 1959), 282-331, esp. 314ff.; R. Rollinger, *Herodots Babylonischer Logos. Eine kritische Untersuchung der Glaubwürdigkeitsdiskussion* (IBKW.S 84, Innsbruck 1993), esp. 19-66; H.-G. Nesselrath, "Herodot und Babylon. Der Hauptort Mesopotamiens in den Augen eines Griechen des 5. Jhs. v.Chr.," in J. Renger (ed.), *Babylon: Focus mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege früher Gelehrsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne* (Colloquien der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft 2, Saarbrücken 1999), 189-206, esp. 202ff. R. H. Sack enquires about "folkloristic elements" of the tradition in "Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus in Folklore and History," *Mesopotamia* 17 (1982), 67-131. The later Greeks (Xenophon, Ktesias etc. except for the Berossus excerpts) have always been considered as historically untrustworthy and have thus been subjected to the suspicion of ideology.

## 2. Nabonidus

As did his predecessors so has Nabonidus presented himself in the form of royal inscriptions.<sup>10</sup> They treat the usual topics: the divine legitimation of the reign and the king's deeds. Yet even the traditional form of the self-portrayal manifests certain peculiarities. They are even more noticeable when one follows the inscriptions according to their chronological sequence: As Tadmor and Beaulieu have shown, the moon-god Sin of Haran gradually assumes the position of the chief god, ousting thereby the Babylonian Marduk.<sup>11</sup> Another peculiarity is the unusual number of historical reminiscences, which present the Assyrian and Babylonian kingdoms as two manifestations of one and the same kingdom. In that they aim at an Assyrian-Babylonian symbiosis, they are evidence of a developing historical consciousness.<sup>12</sup>

Both peculiarities are based upon the origins of Nabonidus and his mother, Adadguppi, who came from Harran. Presumably during the destruction of the city in 610 BCE they were taken as captives to the Babylonian court where they attained positions of eminence.<sup>13</sup> The inscriptions presuppose the experience of an historical rupture – the loss of home and history, – which in light of the actual events – the accession to the throne in

Babylon – take on a new meaning and thus are *ex eventu* theologically interpreted. Vice versa, the activities of the king – the renovation of the Sin temple, Eḫulḫul, in Harran as well as his military operations in the West and in the Arabian desert – take on a new, deeper meaning in light of this theological interpretation. While personal factors and power struggles may have been his primary motivations, the inscriptions show that Nabonidus and his mother saw themselves more and more as instruments of Sin for the implementation of a divine plan. All the events appear therefore as a work of the highest god and are best understood within the realm of his plan.

In the same way Cyrus and his military activities in the North, with its long-term aim of conquering Babylon, are also interpreted. The main source for this is the Cylinder inscription Nab 1. This is a new version of the older, strongly theologically influenced inscriptions of Nabonidus and his mother about the building of the Eḫulḫul in Harran (Nab 8 and H 1 and 2).<sup>14</sup>

In the older text (Nab 8) we read of the legitimation of the usurpator, Nabonidus, whom Marduk commands to rebuild the Sin temple in Harran as seal and crown of his historical plan. Also the inscriptions H 1 and 2 have an apologetical

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the editions above, n. 2 as well as P. R. Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (AOAT 4/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973), 108-112; H. Tadmor, "The Inscriptions of Nabonid: Historical Arrangement," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday April 21, 1965* (AS 16; Chicago 1965), 351-364; Beaulieu, *Reign*, esp. 1-42. The numbering follows Langdon, *VAB* IV and Gadd, *AnSt* 8.

<sup>11</sup> Beaulieu, *Reign*, 43-64, 209-214.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-115, 137-147.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-86; cf. Landsberger, *In memoriam Halil Edhem* I, 149ff.; Röllig, *ZA* 56, 234ff.

<sup>14</sup> Nab 8; H 1 = Nab 9; H 2; fragments 1-3 at Beaulieu, *Reign*, 32f., 239-241; on the relationship of the texts *ibid.*, 104ff., 205ff., 209ff. The historical harmonization (*ibid.*, 241) does not take into consideration the relationship of the traditions proven by Beaulieu and is therefore purely speculative.

*Tendenz*. Their main focus is the building project, which is connected with all the activities of Nabonidus' reign, especially with his decade-long residence in Tema. The plan of Marduk here becomes the work of the moon-god Sin.

Both versions are presupposed and reworked in the Cylinder text Nab 1. The latter strikes the balance and interprets the building project in Harran in light of the current threat of Cyrus during the fi-

nal years of Nabonidus' reign after his return from Tema, probably in the thirteenth year of his reign.<sup>15</sup> To the objection that the Uman-Manda (the Medes) control the city Harran, Nabonidus receives an oracle, a *vaticinium ex eventu*, from Marduk and Sin that promises the victory of Cyrus over Astyages and the liberation of Harran from the Medes in the third year of Nabonidus' reign.<sup>16</sup> The oracle is not concerned with the legiti-

<sup>15</sup> The inscription presupposes at least the Cyrus' campaign against the Medes in the third or sixth year, resp. (see n. 16), the restoration of the Ziqqurat in Sippar at the same time as the restoration of the Ebarra temple in Larsa in the tenth year (Nab 3 I 54; Nab 4 I 65; cf. Beaulieu *Reign*, 30f., 34), as well as the campaign of Cyrus in the North in the ninth (Nabonidus Chronicle II 15-18). Only the command to rebuild Harran and the removal of obstacles are dated to the third year; the date determined by the gods in which this command was to be executed remains however unfixed (Nab 1 I 50f.). There is much that speaks for the solution that it was not until the last phase after the return from Tema, i.e., in the time period from the 13th to the 17th year (543-539 BCE), which H 2 states expressly, and that Nab 1 was composed thereafter. That Adadguppi in H 1 II 12 maintains to have "seen" (*āmur anāku*) the completion of the building project during their lifetimes, i.e., before the ninth year of Nabonidus (H 1 III 5ff.; Chronicle II 13-15), doesn't mean anything: It corresponds to the *Gattung* of the burial inscription that the pious woman who heeds the word of Sin (H 1 II 11f.), was rewarded for this. Tadmor's recommendation, *Studies Landsberger*, 357 n. 36, to take *āmur anāku* together with the preceding *atta'idma* as a Hendiadyoin and to translate it as "I honored attentively" is neither correct nor necessary (Beaulieu, op. cit., 209). The compression and theological idealization of the events with bypassing of the Tema residence (so H 1 and Nab 1 corresponding to the commission in Nab 8) can be more easily derived from H 2 and an enterprise that was indeed interrupted than vice versa the interruption of the building enterprise by the Tema residence in the *apologia vitae* H 2 from H 1 and Nab 1 (see n. 16). Cf. to this question Gallig, *Studien*, 12; von Voigtlander, *Survey*, 172ff.; Tadmor, op. cit., 351-358; Beaulieu, op. cit., 34f. and to the framework dates *ibid.*, 149ff., 205ff. Alternatively, Moran, *Or.* 28, 130-135, who postulates an older, common *Vorlage* for H 2 and Nab 1 in order to be able to date the event earlier; Röllig, *ZA* 56, 243ff., 256ff. Also the projection of the dream of Nab 1 to the beginning of the reign and the identification with the appear-

ances in Nab 8 (Beaulieu, op. cit., 108f., 113) explains the fiction of the late version as an historical fact. The interrupted speech Nab 8 VI 36(ff.) repeats perhaps only the interpretation of the face in lines 9-10 (cf. l. 27f.), whoever calls Nabonidus by name (Nebuchadnezzar, the man from l. 6, Marduk?).

<sup>16</sup> Nab 1 I 18-33; the preceding destruction during the reign of Sanacherib with the Medes as covenantal partners Nab 8 II 14ff.; X 12-15. The dating (*ina šalulti šatti ina kašādi* Nab 1 I 29 and Verse Account II 17) does not pass together with the information from the Nabonidus Chronicle, II 1-4, which date the same event to the sixth year. Tadmor, *Studies*, 353f. for this reason interprets the dating "in the third year" not literally, but rather in a metaphorical sense – e.g. "as the time was fulfilled." Yet this is philologically untenable; cf. R. Borger, *OLZ* 63 (1968) 27-34, Sp. 32; also *idem*, *Die Inschriften Assarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (AfO.B 9, Osnabrück 1967), 5 (V 27f.); E. A. Speiser, "Word Plays on the Creation Epic's Version of the Founding of Babylon," *Or.NS* 25, 317-323, 321. Von Voigtlander, *Survey*, 174 and similarly Beaulieu, *Reign*, 109 consider the third year as the beginning and the sixth year as the end of the same events, yet they simply harmonize the conflicting information. In the inscription it seems that the Medes episode has been transferred to the third year in order to avoid a temporal overlapping with the Tema residence, which was bypassed, and to allow the command and its execution to follow directly upon each other. The reaction of Nabonidus to the Cyrus oracle and its fulfillment as well as the following movement of the troops (Nab 1 I 35ff.; cf. H 2 III 17-21) aim at the building of Eḫulḫul and thus can only relate to the departure from Tema or Babylon to Harran. They replace to a certain extent the departure to Tema, in the third or fourth year, which continues the campaigns of the first three years (Chronicle I, cf. von Voigtlander, *Survey*, 235-240). The combination of H 2 I(!) 14 and III 17 from Moran is thus not original in H 2 (or the supposed *Vorlage*), but is rather secondary in Nab 1 in order to place the military enterprises of Nabonidus from the beginning in the service of Sin and his historical plan.

mation of the kingdom, nor is it an apology or religious programme. Its intention is rather to convey a certain view of the political state of affairs. It gives the impression as if Cyrus, the young servant of the Medes,<sup>17</sup> were actually a vassal who functions for the well-being of Babylon in the service of the Babylonian gods and kings. One could and should then conclude that he is not a threat, even when he pillages and plunders in the North.

### 3. The Marduk Priests of Babylon

Nabonidus made a grievous mistake in his assessment of the current political situation. Cyrus was no faithful subject, but rather head and shoulders above him. In 539 BCE the time was right: Cyrus made his advance from the North, struck the forces of Nabonidus at Opis on the Tigris, occupied Sippar first, and then

And this was not just the case at the beginning, but also at the end of Nabonidus' reign,<sup>18</sup> which could have been the reason for Nabonidus' return from Tema, which followed shortly thereafter, for the takeover and active reformation of the administration in Babylon, which the crown prince, Belshazzar, had previously managed,<sup>19</sup> and for the completion of the building project in the northern city of Harran.

finally Babylon.

The Nabonidus sources do not of course say anything about this. In its stead we have a whole series of texts composed by the Marduk priests or from closely associated circles. These sources, the Chronicle of Nabonidus, the Cyrus Cylinder and the so-called Verse Ac-

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H 2 is an attempt to excuse the Tema residence and the building delay that arose due to it, and it makes the revolts of the Babylonians responsible for it (I 14ff.); Nab 1 ignores the interruptions and dresses up the story according to theological and current political requirements. If the third year in Nab 1 clearly ideologically motivated (contra Galling, *Studien*, 13), then the Chronicle has the correct date (cf. Tadmor, *Studies*, 356f. contra Röllig, *ZA* 56, 257f.). That in both places *Tendenz* plays a role is noticeable from the subtle and usually disregarded distinction that while Cyrus is the aggressor in the inscription in order to fulfill the oracle of the gods, in the Chronicle – so long as the gap of col. I does not contain anything to the contrary – Astyages takes the initiative, which leads to mutiny and the handing over of Astyages, in order to remove every taint from Cyrus.

<sup>17</sup> *İR-su = aradsu* “his servant” in l. 29 cannot refer either to Marduk (Langdon, *VAB* IV, 221 and the majority opinion) or to Astyages (Galling, *Studien* 13 Anm. 1) or to Nabonidus, but rather to the previously mentioned, and collectively termed, “Mede” (<sup>16</sup>*Um-mān-man-da*, cf. AHW 1413b, with suffix and pers. pronoun of 3rd p. sg. in l. 25 and 27). The “word of Marduk (and Sin)” (I 34) ends with l. 27 (cf. Landsberger, *In memoriam Halil Edhem*, 147 n. 1), subject of the pl. (not sg.! Beaulieu, *Reign* 110) *u-šat-*

*bu-niš-šum-ma* “and they aroused him” in l. 28 probably are Marduk and Sin (l. 18. 34). Cf. M.-J. Seux, “Cyrus Serviteur de Marduk?,” *RB* 67 (1969) 228-229 with reference to C. F. Lehmann, *ZA* 5 (1890) 81-84; D. Baltzer, “Harran nach 610 ‘medisch’? Kritische Überprüfung einer Hypothese,” *WO* 7,1 (1973/74) 86-95, 92f.; K. Hecker in *TUAT* II/2 (Gütersloh 1988) 494f.; R. Rollinger, “Zur Lokalisation von Parsu(m)a(š) in der Fars und zu einigen Fragen der frühpersischen Geschichte,” *ZA* 89 (1999) 115-139, 127-136.

<sup>18</sup> 553 or 550 (see above, n. 16) and 547/6 BCE (Chronicle I 28-33), usually identified with the campaign against Kroisos of Lydia (Herodotus I 75ff.), yet this is by no means certain. Cf. Rollinger, *Babylonischer Logos*, 188-197; on the role of the crown prince in this situation cf. von Voigtlander, *Survey*, 193ff.; Beaulieu, *Reign*, 198f., 200f.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. von Voigtlander, *Survey*, 192ff., esp. 198; Beaulieu, *Reign*, 160-165, 203-205; on Belshazzar's administrative activities *ibid.*, 185-197. The measures, mainly exchanging officials, correspond to the practice of the first years; cf. von Voigtlander, *op. cit.*, 183ff.; Beaulieu, *op. cit.*, 115-117, 124-127. Whether there were frictions with Belshazzar, whom at least the late inscriptions include in the intercession (Nab 4 and 5), is difficult to say.

count of Nabonidus,<sup>20</sup> which must have been completed after the invasion, contain apologies for the Persian king. They all refer – directly or indirectly – to the propaganda of the Nabonidus inscriptions and present the final Babylonian king in such an unfavourable light that Cyrus appears as a liberator and defender of the Babylonian orthodoxy, and therefore as the legitimate successor to the Babylonian throne.

The Nabonidus Chronicle, which is composed in the unemotional style of the Babylonian chronicles, has been rightly identified as a *Tendenzwerk* by von Soden, with reference to Landsberger and Bauer.<sup>21</sup> It has a definite interest: the uninterrupted celebration of the Marduk cult in Babylon, especially the Akitu festival, which could not take place without the king. Under these conditions, the long absence of the Babylonian king during his Tema residence became a problem. The central festival in Babylon had to be cancelled for ten years, and this is inexorably stressed in the Chronicle.<sup>22</sup> Yet the *Tendenz* follows also from the arrangement. As common in this and similar *Gattungen*,<sup>23</sup> only selected events are noted within the framework of the stereotypical presentation, whereas im-

portant events are depicted more comprehensively. The latter goes also for the transition from Nabonidus to Cyrus in the 17th year, the date with which the brief entries in the sixth and ninth years as well as, – from what has been preserved – the Chronicle as a whole, culminate. We do not know what followed and to what period the preserved text belong. Yet both the fact that the Chronicle continues as well as its date of completion – presumably during the reign of Darius I<sup>24</sup> – testify strongly that the pivotal point of the work – also of its continuation – was the transition from the Neo-Babylonian to the Persian era, and that the legitimation of the Persian dynasty on the Babylonian throne was its *Tendenz*.

It is quite clear that the Cyrus Cylinder and the so-called Verse Account of Nabonidus were drafted along these same lines. Both texts begin with the prehistory and characterize the reign of Nabonidus as a blasphemous rule. Cyrus' invasion of Babylon is praised on the other hand as the beginning of a glorious age.

That the Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account are indeed tendentious literature, is indisputable. Even though they have more to report about the transition

<sup>20</sup> Editions above, n. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Von Soden, "Kyros und Nabonid," 61; in Landsberger and Bauer (above, n. 2) I have not found anything pertaining to this.

<sup>22</sup> The model is the so-called Akitu Chronicle (Grayson, *Chronicles*, Nr. 16, pp. 131-132), which covers the time period from the destructions in Babylon during the reign of Sannacherib to Nabopolassar accession to the throne. Grayson (ibid., 34f.) sees in this a purely historical document without any *Tendenz*. The restriction to the questionable time, the textual references to other chronicles which Grayson has shown, and the one-sided focus on interruption of the Akitu festival prove exactly the opposite. It is the time to Nabonidus in Nab 8 refers in order to prove himself as the legitimate successor of Nabopolassar. The Nabonidus Chronicle suggests that Nabonidus is

to be seen not in continuity with Nabopolassar, but rather with the Assyrian reign of terror. And as the Akitu Chronicles culminates in Nabopolassar, so does the Nabonidus Chronicle culminate in Cyrus, the renewer of the Babylonian cult. Cf. A. Kuhrt, "Usurpation, Conquest and Ceremonial: from Babylon to Cyrus," in D. Cannadine and S. Price (ed.), *Rituals of Royalty* (Cambridge 1987), 20-55.

<sup>23</sup> The diaries that record sky and weather phenomena for individual years, months and days (cf. Nabonidus Chronicle I 9), cultic order and historical events, and occasionally curiosities are related. Cf. H. Hunger and A. J. Sachs, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia* (DÖAW.PH 195, 210 and 246; Wien 1988, 1989, 1996).

<sup>24</sup> Von Voigtlander, *Survey* 204 n. 45.



from Nabonidus to Cyrus, one must be cautious when it comes to historical reconstructions. Especially the Verse Account is based upon a free combination of motifs and statements from Nabonidus' inscriptions (esp. H 2 and Nab 1), and it therefore possesses little intrinsic worth as a historical source.

As for the much discussed question of the chronology of the rebuilding of Eḫulḫul and of the residence in Tema, one should recognize that even the inscriptions of Nabonidus are dominated by different ideological points of view.<sup>25</sup> The Verse Account mixes everything together and gives it its own rhyme, yet entangles itself at the same time in contradictions.<sup>26</sup>

As for the massive reproaches of concrete interventions in the Babylonian cult regulations, including the reproach of worshipping foreign gods that the Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account raise against Nabonidus, a certain amount of scepticism is here too in order. In these texts, statements have been taken from the inscriptions of Nabonidus and have been expanded and distorted. The dated business texts and letters – as far as we

can be certain at this point – know nothing of the far reaching cult reforms in the final year.<sup>27</sup>

What we have here with these documents are thus highly individual historical constructs that repeat by and large what everyone knew and what can be deduced from the Nabonidus Chronicle. The details are however independently combined, yet not in order to ascertain the true course of events, but rather to defame Nabonidus and to confirm the Persian reign in Babylon. All three texts – the Nabonidus Chronicle, the Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account – offer each in its own way an apology of Babylon's *status quo* in the Persian period.

Yet what necessitated the Babylonian priests in the Persian period to make this strong invective against the already deposed Nabonidus? The apology can be explained from the circumstances of foreign reign and the continuing national efforts in Babylon to regain her sovereignty. Both of the revolts during the reign of Darius I, which are reported in the Behistun inscription, provide us a

<sup>25</sup> Nab 8 announces the restoration of Eḫulḫul without mentioning the Tema residence; the 54 years of destruction (Nab 8 X 12ff.), beginning with 610 BCE, dates to the accession year of Nabonidus. H 1 connects the call of Nabonidus to be king expressly with the building project in Harran. H 2 brings together the plan and execution of the rebuilding with the Tema residence for the purpose of justifying the disruption with the rebellion of the Babylonians. Nab 1 finally places the building project together with foreign political situation and makes the commission (at the beginning of reign) and its execution (at the end of the reign) to follow directly upon each other in order to interpret the threatening presence of Cyrus in the North in light of the divine oracle. On the historical reconstruction cf. the references above n. 15-16. Rölliḡ, *ZA* 56, 241-243 holds the revolts of the Babylonians that H 2 mentions for apologetical reasons with reference to the polemic of the later Verse Account of Nabonidus for historical, yet grants that

there are no trustworthy witnesses for it and that the documents tend to say the contrary.

<sup>26</sup> The structure suggests the following course of events: chaotic conditions in Babylon – rebuilding of Eḫulḫul – Tema – political self-over-reliance (with allusions to the Cyrus oracle in Nab 1) and sacrilege in Babylon. That this cannot be correct and that the events overlap each other is to be seen from the Verse Account itself (col. II 11): Between the plan and the execution of the rebuilding comes – the many years of – the interruption of the Akitu festival (cf. the Nabonidus Chronicle), which means the Tema residence (cf. H 2).

<sup>27</sup> Beaulieu, *Reign*, 219. On the reforms of the first years cf. von Voigtlander, *Survey*, 168-172; Beaulieu, *Reign*, 119ff., 127ff.; in general cf. A. Kuhrt, "Nabonidus and the Babylonian priesthood," in M. Beard and J. North (ed.), *Pagan Priests. Religion and Power in the Ancient World* (Ithaca, New York 1990), 117-155.

perspective on these developments.<sup>28</sup> As evidenced by the names, the insurgents refer to Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus, thus keeping the memories alive of the last Neo-Babylonian king and his political programme. The anti-Babylonian polemic turns the tables on these efforts to regain national sovereignty. It brings a national Babylonian standpoint into harmony with the Persian foreign reign, accusing meanwhile Nabonidus of estrangement from the Babylonian roots and turning to a foreign cult. Not Nabonidus, but rather Cyrus is the one chosen to complete the historical plan of the gods in succession to the Assyrian and Babylonian kings.<sup>29</sup>

#### 4. The Greek Historians

The Dynastic Prophecy shows that the Nabonidus tradition had not died out in the Hellenistic Age. That and how it was transmitted to the Greek-speaking world is illustrated by the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus, for which Alexander Polyhistor

A later response to these conflicts is to be found in the so-called Dynastic Prophecy published by Grayson.<sup>30</sup> It reveals that the history of the Nabonidus tradition, which begins with the inscriptions from the Neo-Babylonian period and continues in the Babylonian anti-propaganda from the Persian era, does not end with the Hellenistic Age. Yet the ideological aspects, determined by the flux and flow of the times, have changed. Not only Nabonidus,<sup>31</sup> but also Cyrus come under the verdict of oppressing the land. That is the image also conveyed by the Greek history writers.

made an epitome that served as a source for the Jewish historian Josephus, the pagan historian Abydenos and the Christian chronicler Eusebius, who also transmitted passages from Abydenos.<sup>32</sup> Berossus himself is dependent upon the cuneiform

<sup>28</sup> DB I 71ff.; II 1ff. = § 15-20; III 76ff. = § 49-51, 52-53. Pers. version: R. G. Kent, *Old Persian* (AOS 33, New Haven 1953), 118ff., 126ff.; R. Schmitt in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* Part I, Vol. I, Texts I (London, 1991) 29ff., 38ff. and 54ff., 67ff.; Babyl. version: E. N. von Voigtlander in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* Part I, Vol. II, Texts I (London 1978), 18ff., 37ff. and 55f., 60; German translation and synopsis: R. Borger and W. Hinz in *TUAT* I/4 (Gütersloh 1984), 419-450, here 427-429, 439-443. On the corresponding business documents cf. Parker and Dubberstein, *Chronology*, 15f.; Rollinger, *Babylonischer Logos*, 46f., 214-217.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the mention of Assurbanipal, the restorer of Babylon, in the Cyrus Cylinder and Nebuchadnezzar II in the Verse Account. Nabonidus and his mother, Adadguppi, refer to both of them (Nab 8 V 14ff.; VI 12ff.; X 32ff.; Nab 1 I 47f.; H 1 I 29ff.; II 26, 40-43). Moreover, the form of the Cyrus Cylinder is not Babylonian, but rather Assyrian. Thus, the Babylonian authors, for the sake of Cyrus, make use of the same means as the spurned Nabonidus, who did the same not least owing to his Assyrian tendencies.

<sup>30</sup> Edition above, n. 2.

<sup>31</sup> The polemic is barely different from that of the Persian period. In addition to it the Dynastic prophecy only has a remark on the fate of Nabonidus after his imprisonment. That the older sources say nothing about this was the occasion for later speculations, not least because of the self-named "successors" and "sons" during the reign of Darius I (see above, n. 28): Nabonidus lives further in another land (Dynastic Prophecy); the land receives the name Karmenia, where Nabonidus assumes the role of governor until Darius takes the province from himself (Berossus). The version that Xenophon reports goes in a different direction: Nabonidus, just as the rebels in the reign of Darius I, was put to death immediately after his capture. Presumably, we have in both cases traditions which are originated in the time of Darius.

<sup>32</sup> F. Jacoby, *FGH* III C, 680, 9-10 (Leiden <sup>2</sup>1967), 392ff.; P. Schnabel, *Berossos und die Babylonisch-Hellenistische Literatur* (Leipzig 1923; repr. Hildesheim 1968); S. M. Burstein, "The Babyloniaca of Berossos," *SANE* 1/5 (1978), 143-181.

sources, some, but not all of which we can identify. Therefore, it is not always easy to determine the origins of details that are unique to his work. In the case of Nabonidus and Cyrus, the details have their own accent: They tend to be pro-Nabonidic, whereas Cyrus pardons Nabonidus after capturing him, but – for the first time in the Babylonian sources known to us – is made responsible for destructions, namely, the razing of the outer wall in Babylon. Wherever Berossus got this information, it must have originated in Babylonian circles. Here is an anti-Persian version of the transition from Nabonidus to Cyrus that we have also witnessed in the revolts during the reign of Darius I and the Dynastic Prophecy. Cyrus is not the liberator, but rather the destroyer of Babylon. The national *Tendenz* has been perfectly adapted to the intention of the whole work: Berossus has not desired to simply write history, but rather to mediate the wisdom of the Babylonians to the Greeks.<sup>33</sup>

The same tradition that comes to light by way of the Babylonian Berossus seems already before his time to have influenced Greek historiography. And only in this tradition is the conception to be found that deviates from all the cuneiform sources, namely, that Cyrus took the city by force, be it merely with siege and craftiness (Herodotus I 190-91), or be it also with final destructions in the

city and the execution of the king (Xenophon, *Cyrop.* VII 4-5).

What the Greeks report is not, however, pure fiction. Although Herodotus does not even know anymore the names of the Babylonian kings, whom he all calls Labynetos (=Nabynetos-Nabonidus),<sup>34</sup> he does somehow know that the place Opis had played an important role (I 188). He mentions it to be sure only in passing; the battle that took place there is relocated before the gates of Babylon. Xenophon (*Cyrop.* IV 5 and VII 6), on the other hand, knows of a certain Gobryas, which brings to mind two functionaries from the time of Cyrus who are witnessed in inscriptions: Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium and general, who was the first to enter Babylon with the troops of Cyrus and died soon thereafter; and Gubaru, whom Cyrus installed as governor in Babylon.<sup>35</sup> Of course what Xenophon says of this Gobryas does not have much in common anymore with these figures.

In both cases we have examples of vague memories of historical details, yet not more than this.<sup>36</sup> What Herodotus and Xenophon report in addition to this are either elaborations of patterns, which we encounter exactly or at least similarly in the same work and in those of others, or they are free adaptations of the same accounts in literary dependency upon each other.

<sup>33</sup> Burstein, "Babyloniaca," 6f.

<sup>34</sup> I 74, 77, 188, whereby it is fully uncertain how the two or three persons with the same name relate to each other. Cf. Baumgartner, *Zum Alten Testament*, 311f., 324f.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Nabonidus Chronicle III 15, 22 (Ugbaru), III 20 (Gubaru) and the commentary from Grayson, *Chronicles*, 109f. On the problem Beaulieu, *Reign*, 226ff., who to be sure strives to hard to harmonize. Gobryas in Xenophon incidentally brings to mind Zopyros in Herodot III 153ff., who belongs to a family of "turncoats" (III 160).

<sup>36</sup> That the strife had to do with the Akitu festival belongs also to these vague memories. A topos has been developed from this in the tradition according to which the taking of the city took place during a festival – which illustrates the cunningness of Cyrus (Herodotus I 191; Xenophon, *Cyrop.* VII 5; Dan. 5). Historically is this detail fully worthless. Cf. Rollinger, *Babylonischer Logos*, 34f., 38f. The same goes for the reminiscence of the role of the queen mother, Adadguppi, in the form of Nitokris, the mother of the final Labynetos in Herodotus I 185-187.

What is striking is that much of Herodotus' and Xenophon's material with regard to Cyrus is repeated once again during the reign of Darius I in Herodotus' work. This could be an indication of the origins of the *topoi*. When one recalls the Babylonian rebellions in the time of Darius I and the anti-Persian stance connected with them, it does not seem unlikely that the negative image of Cyrus in the Greek historiography<sup>37</sup> originated in these circles of insurgents or their sympathizers. It seems perfectly reasonable to believe that those who called themselves Nebuchadnezzar and pretended to be the sons of Nabonidus were also capable of pinning violent crimes against Babylon on Cyrus as they were pinned on Darius. Just as with Berossus and in Dynastic Prophecy, so also in the Greek historiography a destruction of Babylon has been construed, at first only during

the reigns of Darius and Xerxes (Herodotus I 181-83; III 150ff.),<sup>38</sup> and then finally also during the reign of Cyrus himself (Xenophon *Cyrop.* VII 5).

That the Greeks embraced this point of view for the most part and not another, say the anti-Nabonidian (Persian),<sup>39</sup> is likewise due to their own interests in the Babylonian-Persian history. With the pathos of the historian that gave Herodotus the title of honor, *pater historiae* (Cic. *leg.* 1,1,5), they pursue the *Tendenz* to seek out the historical connections and, where necessary, to fabricate them not for the sake of historicity, but rather for the sake of human truth. And this moreover owes not least to the programme that Herodotus outlined in his prologue, namely, to describe the fundamental contrast between Hellenes and barbarians, which constitutes his own identity.<sup>40</sup>

## 5. The Hebrew Bible

Not more and not less than the Greek historiography does the OT version consist of scattered vague memories of the

Babylonian-Persian history, which somehow have flown into it and have been moulded and developed from the Jewish

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Herodotus I 190 the Babylonians' opinion of Cyrus. The brutality increases in the course of the tradition as the comparison of Herodotus I 187ff. (III 150ff.) and Xenophon, *Cyrop.* VII shows. The recommended derivation of the tradition does not notably mean that the destructions during the reigns of Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes that are portrayed by Herodotus and other Greeks were identical with the rebellions which are evidenced in the inscriptions. Cf. Rollinger, *Babylonischer Logos*, 46ff.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Ktesias in the excerpt of Photius §§ 17, 21 (F. W. König, *AfO.B* 18, 8f., 10); Diod. II 9 (AfO.B 18, 142f.); Arrian, *Anab.* III 16; VII 17; Strabo XVI 1,5. For this cf. Rollinger, *ibid.*, 44-66.

<sup>39</sup> It is, however, presumably to be found in the fragment of Megasthenes in the excerpt of Abydenos in Eusebius (*FGH* III C, 685, 6, p. 405ff.) which Eusebius connects with Dan. 4:25ff. Cf. E. Schrader, "Die Sage vom Wahnsinn Nebukadnezar's," *JPTH* 7 (1881), 618-629; Kratz, *Translatio*, 102-103. Nebu-

chadnezzar does not appear to Nabonidus in the dream (Nab 8), but rather himself has a divine vision in which he at the pinnacle of his success witnesses the destruction of his empire. He makes the "mule Perses" (Cyrus) in league with his own gods responsible for this. Equally guilty is the "son of the Median woman" and "pride of the Assyrians" (Nabonidus), whom he curses to the desert (Tema).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Rollinger, *ibid.*, 167-187; furthermore D. Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot* (UALG 9, Berlin - New York 1971). On Xenophon cf. S. W. Hirsch, *The Friendship of the Barbarians. Xenophon and the Persian Empire* (Hanover and London 1985), 61ff; idem, "1001 Iranian Nights: History and Fiction in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," in *The Greek Historians, Literature and History. Papers presented to A. E. Raubitschek* (Stanford 1985), 65-85; J. Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction. On the Education of Cyrus* (Princeton 1989).

historical viewpoint. Incidentally, at about the same time and under comparative conditions in which the Assyrian-Babylonian historical consciousness took root this Jewish historical viewpoint also came into being.<sup>41</sup>

How exactly the memories of the transition from the Babylonian to Persian period found their way to the Jews can be imagined with the help of the Prayer of Nabonidus found in Qumran (4QOr Nab).<sup>42</sup> This text is actually a Jewish variant of the account of Nabonidus' residence in the Arabian desert city of Tema and his return to Babylon to complete the building of the Sin temple Eḫulḫul. The original, Nabonidic version glimmers through in many passages:<sup>43</sup> The "man" who explains the dream to Nabonidus and Nebuchadnezzar's attendant who appears to Nabonidus in the dream of inscription Nab 8 is according to this text a Jew. Likewise, the moon-god Sin, whom the king worships as the highest god, is, as expected, the Jewish God,

Yhwh. The presupposition of this text is the belief in the universal reign and uniqueness of the Jewish God. Its goal and aim is to demonstrate the attractiveness of this God for the pagan ruler who embraces the Jewish faith and demonstrates benevolence to the Jews. In keeping with its *Tendenz*, the text follows the Nabonidic version of the account but does not share its national stance. With regard to this question, it is closer to the anti-Nabonidic polemic of the Babylonian priests, yet it does not play Marduk off against Sin, but rather in like manner Yhwh ousts both Marduk and Sin.

Closely related with the Qumran text are the Daniel narratives, Dan. 1-6, especially the story of the fall and rise of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 4 as well as the story of the end of the Babylonian empire during the reign of Belshazzar in Dan. 5-6.<sup>44</sup> The role of Nabonidus has been transferred to Nebuchadnezzar, and the positive and negative characteristics

<sup>41</sup> The Assyrian-Babylonian symbiosis intended by Nabonidus and propagated in the inscriptions (Nab 8 and H 1) brings to mind the Deuteronomist's and Chronicler's ideal of a unified kingdom of Israel and Judah during the reigns of David and Solomon, which according to Deuteronomistic doctrine split after the cultic impurity of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12). Also here are two geographically and ethnically related monarchies which were later conceived as an unity, and the opposition of the monarchies was interpreted as an exceptional condition in order to seek reaffiliation – genealogically, dynastically or, in another way, ideologically defined – for the future. A predecessor of this historical concept is the Synchronic Chronicle (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 51-56.157-170), which of course does not propagate the unity of Assyria and Babylon, but rather the demarcation defined in treaties of both monarchies during the Assyrian period of predominance.

<sup>42</sup> Editio princeps J. T. Milik, "Prière de Nabonide," *RB* 63 (1956), 407-411; the first thorough treatment by R. Meyer, *Das Gebet des Nabonid* (SSAW.PH 107/3, Berlin 1962); Lit. and variants in J. A. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palastinian Aramaic Texts* (BibOr 34, Rom 1978), 179f.; K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*

(Göttingen 1984), 223f.; Kratz, *Translatio*, 99f.; new edition J. J. Collins, *DJD* 22 (Oxford 1996) 83-93.

<sup>43</sup> The "seer, a Jewish man from the exile in Babylon," who gives the interpretation (4QOrNab fr. 1-3, Z. 4f.), and in Dan. 4 is called Daniel and has become a dream interpreter for Nebuchadnezzar, brings to mind the "man" (Nab 8 VI 6 l. 1-en eṭ-lu = ištēn eṭlu) as well as the attendant of Nebuchadnezzar (Nab 8 VI 15, 17 l. 1-en <sup>16</sup>GĪR.SĪ.GA(-i) = ištēn gerseqqū) in the visions of Nabonidus, Nab 8 VI (for the correct readings cf. Oppenheim in *ANET*, 310; Beaulieu, *Reign*, 110); structure and motifs are reminiscent of H 2 and the Verse Account. Cf. Meyer, *Gebet*, 34ff.53ff.; W. Röllig, "Nabonid und Tema," in *CRRAl* 11, 1962 (Leiden, 1964), 21-32; Kratz, *Translatio*, 101ff.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. W. von Soden, "Eine babylonische Volksüberlieferung von Nabonid in den Danielerzählungen," *ZAW* 53, 1935, 81-89, repr. in idem, *Bibel und Alter Orient*, ed. by H.-P. Müller (BZAW 162, Berlin and New York 1985), 1-9; Kratz, *Translatio*, 99-111, 121-124; K. Koch, "Gottes Herrschaft über das Reich des Menschen. Dan 4 im Licht neuer Funde," in A. S. van der Woude (ed.), *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (BETHL 56, Leiden 1993), 77-119.

from the pro- and anti-Nabonidic polemic have been distributed to father (Nabonidus-Nebuchadnezzar) and son (Nabonidus-Belshazzar). The transition from Nabonidus to Cyrus is carried out in the succession of the three empires (Babylon-Media-Persia) which are represented by the ruling pair Nebuchadnezzar-Belshazzar, which has been derived from the Nabonidus tradition, Darius, who has been predated and been transformed into a Mede and finally Cyrus.<sup>45</sup> As in the Prayer of Nabonidus (4QOr Nab), the Vorlage of Dan. 4-5, there are also several details to be found here that we encounter – in the same way or similarly – either in the cuneiform or Greek tradition or in both.<sup>46</sup> They have neither been composed with our aims of historical reconstruction in mind, nor are they suited to this purpose. They all have their origins in a Jewish milieu and have been formulated for the conceptional framework of the collection of Daniel narratives. The transition from the Babylonian to Persian era serves here as an example for the manifestation of the kingdom of God which abolishes national differences and makes the Babylonian with the Medo-Persian kings representatives of

the divine reign on earth, provided they declare their faith in the Jewish God and protect the Jewish Golah.

The Prayer of Nabonidus (4QOrNab) and the Daniel narratives are however only the most prominent witnesses to Jewish adaptation of the Neo-Babylonian Nabonidus tradition. Also the prophetic texts such as the Babel oracle in Isa. 13-14 and 21; Jer. 50-51 and especially the Cyrus oracle in Second Isaiah Isa. 40-48<sup>47</sup> are based directly or indirectly on the inner-Babylonian treatment of Nabonidus and the Persian occupancy of the Babylonian throne. In a way this adaptation continues in the work of the Chronicler (1 and 2 Chron., Ezra-Neh.), namely in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, which treat expressly the Persian period and begin with the famous Cyrus decree in Ezra 1 (cf. Ezra 6).<sup>48</sup> As in the Greek historiography and in the work of Berossus, yet from a different ideological perspective, the available sources have been here copied, supplemented with scattered memories and brought into an historical context, not for the sake of increasing knowledge, but rather for the purpose of instruction.

<sup>45</sup> On the three/four-kingdom doctrine cf. Kratz, *Translatio*, 198ff., 217ff.

<sup>46</sup> Belshazzar as the final king before the accession of Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian (Dan. 5-6); Nebuchadnezzar-Nabonidus and Belshazzar as father and son (Dan. 4-5, esp. 5:2,11,13,18ff.); the feast (5:1-4); the role of the queen-mother (5:10ff.); the murder of Belshazzar (5:30); some see in the literary device “Darius the Mede” a response to Ugbaru/Gubaru, the governor of Gutium and the first prefect of Babylon, who entered the city before Cyrus.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. R. G. Kratz, *Kyros im Deuterocesaja-Buch* (FAT 1, 1991), esp. 163-167, 183-191; idem, “Babylon im Alten Testament,” in J. Renger (ed.), *Babylon: Focus mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege*

*früher Gelehrsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne* (Colloquien der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft 2, Saarbrücken 1999), 477-490.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Kratz, *Kyros*, 189f.; idem, “Reich Gottes und Gesetz im Danielbuch und im werdenden Judentum,” in A. S. van der Woude (ed.), *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (BETHL 56, Leiden 1993), 435-479; idem, “Die Suche nach Identität in der nachexilischen Theologiegeschichte. Zur Hermeneutik des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes und ihrer Bedeutung für das Verständnis des Alten Testaments,” in J. Mehlhausen (ed.), *Pluralismus und Identität* (Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie 8, Gütersloh 1995), 279-303.

## 6. Conclusion

Taking a look back on our discussion, we notice that the tradition possesses for the most part an amazing consistency. That does not however have anything to do with the historical trustworthiness of the sources, but rather with the interdependency of the tradition as far as it concerns the patterns and *Tendenz* of the portrayal of the transition from Nabonidus to Cyrus, which assumed ever greater importance. The factual event has created history in two respects: On the one hand, it became for many an occasion to contemplate one own's history and, in this way, to fabricate history according to the various perspectives. On the other hand, it produced an history of the tradition which encompasses the time

from the Neo-Babylonian period to the Hellenistic age, as well as later ages and cultures.

Whether the texts present the Nabonidic reign in the name of Sin and legitimate it, whether they defame it in the name of Marduk in order to legitimate Cyrus and the Persian reign over Babylon, whether they focus on the history itself and discover in it the contrast between Greeks and barbarians, or whether they make the Jewish faith their criterion and construct historical connections according to it, – in each case it is tangible that history does not determine ideology, but rather ideology determines history, namely, the interpretation of history and the history of tradition.