

IRANIAN HISTORY: MEDIAN DYNASTY

Cyaxares: Media's Great King in Egypt, Assyria & Iran

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I Cyaxares in the sources, and their "refutation"

THE CLAIMS OF CLASSICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY:

"He [Phraortes] began to subdue all Asia, going from people to people, until, in his campaigning, he came against the Assyrians, and especially those of the Assyrians who held Nineveh. These Assyrians had formerly ruled all of Asia but were now quite isolated, all their allies having dropped away from them. But in them-selves they were as strong as ever, and when Phraortes fought them, he himself was killed. /

Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes, [...] drew together under his own rule all Asia beyond the Halys. Then, collecting all his subject peoples, he attacked Nineveh. [...] He had defeated the Assyrians in battle; but then, when he was beleaguering Nineveh, there came upon him a great host of Scythians, whose leader was their king, Madyes. /

The Medes also took Nineveh [...] and they made the Assyrians their subject, except for the province of Babylon". (Herodotus, *The History*, I: 102/103/106.)

ASSYRIOLOGY'S "REFUTATION" OF CLASSICAL HISTORIANS:

"In Assyrian and Babylonian records and in the archaeological evidence no vestiges of an imperial structure [of the Medes; G.H.] can be found. The very existence of a Median empire, with the emphasis on *empire*, is thus questionable. / I would suggest [...] that the *Medikos Logikos*, as we have it, is essentially a Greek product".

(Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988, 212 / Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1994, 55.)

"Only 20 years ago, the existence of a Median 'Empire' that had immediately succeeded the fall of Assyria, and ruled, for half a century, large parts of the Near East until Cyrus — as a supposed vassal of Astyages, the last king of Media — had defeated his overlord and inherited his empire, was regarded as a safe historical fact. / The archaeological heritage does not offer the slightest hint for the formation of a Median Empire. / Classical historiography [...] can be regarded [...] as refuted". (Rollinger 2005, 1/3.)

II Cyaxares and the stratigraphy of Old-Akkadians and Mitanni

In quite a few Near Eastern sites, e's.g. Billa, Gawra, Chagar Bazar, Nuzi etc., Old-Akkadian levels — or Chabur pottery from the same stratigraphic depth — of the -23rd century are found immediately, *i.e.* without intervening windblown layer, beneath Mitanni/Hurrian levels of the -16th/-15th century. In Tell Brak, David and Joan Oates have, for purely chronological reasons, labelled the Chabur levels 9-8, found under the Mitanni levels 6-2 (with 7 somewhat unclear), as "Old-Babylonian" (Oates et al. 1998) though no Old-Babylonian material whatsoever was found in that stratum. They have learnt that chronologically the Old Babylonian precede the Mitanni by five centuries. Yet, nowhere was ever dug up a tell where one can find Mitanni texts and material remains several strata above Old-Babylonian texts and material remains. Stratigraphically, the Old-Babylonian strata follow the Mitanni ones.

Despite the contingency of these two levels, excavation reports separate them by a time span of some 700 years. This lacuna, this author claims, is a pseudo-hiatus that results from the different dating methods that are used for Old-Akkadians and Mitanni. The former are dated by counting backwards from Hammurabi, who is dated via a Bible-fundamentalist date for Abraham the Patriarch. For many decades, Abraham's contemporary "King Amraphel" (*Genesis* 14:1), was

identified as Hammurabi, the Martu/Amorite Babylonian king.

From the +2nd century up to the 1950s, Abraham was explicitly mentioned in chronological overviews. Since it is now understood that the Abraham sagas date from the Achaemenid period, such references are omitted from modern history books. Yet, Hammurabi's absolute date, frequently changing but always in range of Abraham's year -2000, was not changed to the Achaemenid period, too.

The Mitanni were never dated via Abraham. Because the main texts relating to them were found in Egypt's Amarna of the "New Kingdom", the Mitanni are dated to the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE by the Sothic retro-calculation of modern Egyptology. From a purely archaeological point of view, Akkadian and Mitanni strata are continuous. The material culture of the lower stratum is carried on in the upper one. Of course, new items – especially glass and ceramics (Nuzi ware etc.) – are added to the traditional ensemble. The 700 year gap, thus, turns out not to be a genuine dark age but a modern invention.

III From Old-Akkadians and Hyksos as stratigraphic bedfellows to the Mitanni=Medes

This author has identified the Old-Akkadians of Naram-Sin and Sharkalisharri as the first 'world power' of Ninos (Nimrod in Hebrew) and Sardanapalus/Sharakos which is called "Assyria" by Greek historians and Berossus (Heinsohn 1989): "When the Assyrians had held sway over Upper Asia for five hundred and twenty years, the first to begin the revolt against them [ca. -630; G.H.] were the Medes" (Herodotus, *The History* I: 95).

The first 'world ruler' has the following territories assigned to him: "The first about whom history provides us with stories of his outstanding deeds is Ninos, king of the Assyrians. / Easily he defeated the inhabitants of Babylonia [and] / the Armenians. // Eventually he began to subdue the nations of Asia. And, indeed, within 17 years he was master of them all — with the exception of India and Bactria. / He subjugated Egypt and Phoenicia, Coele-Syria, Cilicia, Pam-phyliia, and Lycia (Ctesias as preserved in Diodorus Siculus 2, 1: 4-8; // 2, 2: 1/3.)

If Ninos is the *alter ego* of Naram Sin, Classical historiography of the Ancient Near East can no longer be blamed as a "product" or an "invention" (Vlaardingerbroek 2005, 232): "Naram-Sin, the mighty, king of the four quarters [first mentioning of such title], victor in nine battles in one year. / Conqueror of Armanum, Ebla, and Elam. / [He campaigned in] the land of Subartum on the shores of the Upper Sea, and Magan, along with its provinces" (Frayne 1993, 112/167/163).

The Old-Akkadian strata, in this author's stratigraphy based view of Ancient Near Eastern history, provide archaeological proof for the power defeated – in the late -7th and not the -23rd century – by the fragile alliance of Medes, Scythians (Guti/Qutheans in cuneiform) and Chaldea (Kalam in its own language but, since 1868, misnamed Sumer by modern scholars): "Assyrii principes omnium gentium rerum potiti sunt, deinde Medi, postea Persae, deinde Macedones" (Aemilius Sura, 2nd century BCE).

If the Old-Akkadians are an *alter ego* of the pre-Median Assyrian superpower, the Mitanni strata – sitting right on top of Old-Akkadian strata – must belong to the so far undiscovered period of Median rule over Assyria. In Egypt, the power immediately preceding the Mitanni period is not Biblically dated but is tied to Sothic retro-calculation. Therefore, its kings – or just Chabur pottery items – are not dated to the -23rd century like the Old-Akkadians but to the -16th century. These rulers are called the Great Hyksos. They are enigmatic Semites who take control of Egypt. The close material relationship between the Hyksos – with Sharek (Salitis) as prominent ruler – and Old-Akkadians – with Sargon in the same role – was seen long ago. Stratigraphically, both empires immediately precede the Mitanni. They share glyptique, script, weapons (scimitars), glacis walls, pottery etc. (Heinsohn 1991). Therefore, the Hyksos are another *alter ego* of the pre-Median Assyrians from the Classical sources. This reconstruction gives the following imperial sequence of the Mesopotamia excavated since the 19th century as seen through Classical sources (Greek, Armenian, Latin).

Formalized stratigraphy of Assyria/Syria

Assyria's three pre-		Assyria's periods known
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Hellenistic strata groups excavated since the 19 th century		to Greeks of the -5 th to -2 nd century (this author regards strata I to III on the left as archaeological confirmation of Greek historiography)
Hellenism/Parthians	=	Hellenism/Parthians
[I] Middle to Late Assyrians*	=	Achaemenid Satrapy Athura (Assyria)

**Nowhere, there are levels with Achaemenid material several strata above typical Late Assyrian remains.*

The Medes, that are so frequently mentioned in the Late Assyrian texts, are the Medes that time and again challenge the rule of their Achaemenid overlords.

[II] Mitanni's Shaushatra of Nineveh**

Media's King Cyaxares

(Hurrian cuneiform and Sothic date) or Nineveh of Shamshi-Adad** = in the Median Satrapy Assyria

(Assyrian cuneiform and Biblical

(Greek language and date of Hammurabi date)

(Classical authors)

***Nowhere, there are levels with Mitanni material several strata above Shamshi-Addad remains.*

[III] Old-Akkadians*** of Naram Sin Assyria of Ninos/Nimrod and Sharkalisharri = and Sardanapalus/Sharakos

(Cuneiform Akkadian, Biblical dates)

(Greek language and date of or Hyksos*** with Sharek/Salitis Classical authors)

(Egyptian language, Sothic dates)

****Nowhere, there are levels with Hyksos material several strata above Old-Akkadian remains*

IV Cyaxares as Shaushatra in Egypt

In the Amarna correspondence, the names of Mitanni/Maitani rulers are not translated but merely written in cuneiform as heard by the scribes. Therefore, it is possible for modern scholars to identify the Mitanni as Indo-Aryan kings and famous horse breeders. In that aspect – as well as in the very size of their empire – they strikingly resemble the Medes. The empire of the latter is regarded by modern historians as a “phantom” (Rollinger 2005) without archaeology and texts. Like Ninos – as the first world ruler thriving not before the -8th/-7th century – is seen as “a Greek invention” (Vlaardingerbroek 2005, 232), so are the imperial Medes.

The rulers of multi-national empires are necessarily “Kings of Kings” (*i.e.*, emperors) and, therefore, known under different names written in different languages and even alphabets. The names of Austro-Hungarian emperors, for example, were written in German, Latin, Italian, Hungarian and five Slavic idioms. The literal meanings of their names – or just one of their many territorial titles – could be translated into other languages. Yet, it was also possible that their names were written as heard, albeit with some changes to make them sound acceptable in the other languages. In such a process the royal names lose the literal meaning they may have in their native language. Thus, example given, future excavators could find in Vienna a larger number of imperial names written in different languages and alphabets. Unless they knew something about Austro-Hungarian history, future archaeologists might well be led astray, *i.e.* they might put the different royal names into a chronological sequence with different nations ruling in the Danube metropolis, even though these rulers all come from the same nation and stratum.

Excavating in different cities of that empire, future diggers could come to the conclusion that only those imperial names written in German belonged to the emperors whereas in reality the texts in

those imperial names written in German belonged to the emperor whereas in reality the texts in question may have merely circulated among members of the German speaking minority of, e.g. Budapest, Trieste or Prague. Thus, in a provincial city of any multi-national empire one may find the emperor's name in his native tongue, as well as written differently in other idioms. Thus, whenever one does research on the Median, Achaemenid, Seleucid and Parthian empires, one has to look for their royal names not only in their native tongue (or sound) but also in the many languages of their subject nations. When it comes to the identifications of deities, the same problems pertain. Without knowledge of Christianity, e.g., it is not easy to recognize the "Mother of Jesus", the "Queen of Heaven", the "Mother of God", "Mary", the "Holy Virgin", the "Madonna" etc. as one and the same Jewess Miriam. One Mary, therefore, could be expanded into a full blown pantheon.

If the Mitanni are the thus far missing Medes – misdated by pseudo-astronomical Sothic retro-calculations of modern Egyptology (Heinsohn 1993a) – it is easy to identify Media's imperial rulers Cyaxares and Astyages in the Amarna correspondence. They are Shaushatra – who, like Cyaxares, is on record for conquering and plundering the city of Assur – and Tushratta, who is in charge of Nineveh (Heinsohn 1988, 109). The latter slowly sees his empire eroded by Aziru the Martu very much in the same way as Cyrus the Mardian takes over the realm of Astyages.

By providing Ancient Egypt with the Median-Mitanni chronological benchmark, Pharaoh Akhnaten, the famous correspondence partner of the Mitanni=Medes – with a Sothic date in the -14th century – is identified with Necho II of the Greek sources with a date of -610 to -594 (for details see Heinsohn/Illeg 2001, 367).

If the Mitanni strata belong to the Medes, one may ask now how rulers of this power – immediately succeeding the Old-Akkadians stratigraphically – are called in the languages of their new Semitic subjects. Since the Old-Akkadians are dated by counting back from Hammurabi, one has to ask what Assyrian Great King on the throne of Nineveh has not only been dated by the same scheme but also explicitly claims to be a direct successor of the Old-Akkadian kings. Is there a candidate whose Assyrian archaeological heritage was found right on top of Old-Akkadian remains?

V Cyaxares as "Old-Assyrian" Shamshi-Adad in Assyria

Shaushatra=Cyaxares and Tushratta=Astyages are extremely powerful kings. They are ranked as high as Egypt's pharaohs or even higher, as can be learnt from the tone of their letters to Amarna. They are undoubtedly not only in control of Nineveh but also of Assur (Derksen 2004, 157). Yet, they have never ceased bewildering modern researchers because there is a total "lack of Mitanni royal inscriptions" (Charpin 2004, 378), i.e. of inscriptions in the Hurrian language of the letters to Amarna. This author identifies the Hurrian/Hurrite language as the language of the Araratian/Armenian partners of the Medes (Heinsohn 1993c) who had been subjugated by Ninus/Naram Sin ("Armanum").

But let us not forget that the Mitanni=Medes as rulers over Assyria are Sothic-dated. If we want to find their inscriptions in the language and stratigraphy of Assyria, we have to look for Abraham-Hammurabi-dated rulers in Assyria whose strata immediately follow Old-Akkadian levels. A ruler fulfilling these requirements is well known. His name is Shamshi-Adad (also Shamshi-Addu). He is seen as the founder of a new dynasty in Assyria, labeled "Old-Assyrian" by modern Assyriologists. There is no doubt that he is not an Assyrian (Grayson 1985, 9 ff.; Yamada 1994, 11 ff.) but from "Amorite descent" (Charpin 2004, 375). The Amorites (Mardu), coming from a "nomadic" background (Edzard 2004, 91), still defy identification. Though they left some 40.000 tablets in Semitic cuneiform (Akkadian), their own language is not known (Haldar 1971, 1 ff.).

For nearly two decades, this author has identified the Mardu as a Mesopotamian *pars pro toto* name for Iranians that was derived from the tribe of the Mardoi (Mardians/Amardians; Heinsohn 1988, 68 ff.). Located around Susa, they were famous for their metal products, and feared as the best archers in Iran. The Amorites only become a massive presence during the IIIrd Dynasty of Ur (Strecker 2004, 313). These Abraham-dated "Sumerians" (-2100) – known as people of Kalam in their own language – are identified by this author as the Chaldeans of the late -7th century who help the Medes and the volatile Scythians defeat Assyria seen by Classical authors as mankind's first world power. Since the Ur III-"Sumerians" stratigraphically follow the Old Akkadians in Southern Mesopotamia in the same manner that the Amorite Shamshi-Adad follows them in Assyria, it has

to be expected that a larger number of Amorites will not be found before the date assigned to Ur III.

Does a descent from Iran provide a clue to Shamshi-Adad's origins? His own capital is called Ekallatum. This city was never excavated or even located in Assyria though one may see it on maps produced by modern Assyriologists, who place it somewhere between Assur and Nineveh. Yet, hundreds of excavators have searched this area in vain. If Ekallatum is just another Semitic rendering for Ekbatana, a political center of Cyaxares' in Iran, it is located in Media and cannot possibly be excavated in Assyria. It has already been sensed that the city of Assur may have served as a "religious capital" of Shamshi-Adad whereas enigmatic Ekallatum was in a similar position "politically" (Charpin 2004, 381). That would fit Ekbatana quite nicely.

Though not being an Assyrian, Shamshi-Adad calls himself "King of Akkad" (Charpin 1984, 44 f.). He also carries the title "King of the Whole" (other translation "King of All"). This title has been in use since Old-Akkad's King Sargon supposedly preceding Shamshi-Adad by half a millennium. Yet, Shamshi-Adad's regnal dates (recently put at -1809[or -1813] to -1781) are not calculated in accordance with stratigraphy. He is dated in connection with Hammurabi, whose Bible-fundamentalist Abraham date was derived from "King Amraphel" (*Genesis* 14:1). The assumed synchronism between Shamshi-Adad and Hammurabi is an indirect one and, therefore, controversial. Yet, beyond doubt is the fact that "Shamshi-Adad thought of himself as the successor of the empire of Akkad and its universal-imperial rulership" (Westenholz 2005, 14).

How is Shamshi-Adad positioned stratigraphically? To be Cyaxares in Assyrian garb, he has to follow Sharkalisharri (-2217 to -2193), Akkad's last king, as immediately as Cyaxares follows Sharakos, pre-Median Assyria's last king. Shamshi-Adad's building activity in Nineveh is directly connected to Old-Akkadian buildings. He repairs the Old-Akkadian temple Émenuè in the district of Émashmash. The lowest of the six levels (stratum VI) of Nineveh's Ishtar temple (90 x 45 meters) was assigned by the excavators to Manishtusu of Akkad (-2269 to -2255) and Shamshi-Adad albeit the two are supposedly separated by 450 years (Thompson/Hamilton 1932, 58; Tenu 2005, 28).

Stratigraphically, Shamshi-Addad follows the Old-Akkadians in Nineveh in the same way as elsewhere the "Mitanni" strata sit right on top of the Old-Akkadian strata – with a pseudo-hiatus of 700 years in between. From the Classical authors we learn that the Medes follow the Assyrians of Nineveh as Shamshi-Adad follows the Old-Akkadians in the same city: "At last Cyaxares and the Medes invited the greater number of the Scythians to a banquet, at which they made them drunk and murdered them, and in this way recovered their former power and dominion. They captured Nineveh [...] and subdued the Assyrians. [...] Then Cyaxares died, after a reign [...] of forty years. He was succeeded by his son Astyages (Herodotus, *Histories* I:106).

Shamshi-Adad is cursed by modern Assyriologists for his "patent falseness" and "obvious falsification" (Westenholz 2005, 12, 14). His immediate succession to the Great Kings of Akkad does not fare any better: "The direct line of kingship from Akkad to Shamshi-Addu is projected here with force and it provides a clever double claim, for, along with descent from the Akkadian idea of kingship, if nothing else, comes the claim to the throne of the city of Assur" (Michalowski 1993, 86). But is Shamshi-Addad's claim really a "pious forgery" so proudly revealed by modern Assyriologists (e.g., Westenholz 2005, 14)? This author is not inclined to join the accusations against him. After all, it is not only stratigraphy that bears him out. Shaushatra of "Mitanni" as well as his Median *alter ego* Cyaxares are on record for conquering and plundering the city of Assur. If Shamshi-Adad is Cyaxares in Assyrian garb, modern Assyriologists may be much closer to the very crime for which they indict the king. After all, it is not Shamshi-Adad who dates himself four centuries after Sharkalisharri, the last Old-Akkadian king whom this author identifies with Sharakos, the last pre-Median king of Classical historiography. This stretching of time between Old-Akkadians and the "King of All" is the work of modern Assyriologists who – albeit unknowingly – turn their own confusion into a verdict against their subject of research.

Va Mysterious gaps in the stratigraphies of Nineveh and Assur

Within the only carefully established stratigraphy of Nineveh, the Kuyunjik Gully Sounding of 1989 and 1990 (McMahon), no remains directly

Minorsky: Stratigraphy of the Kuyunjik Gully

NINEVEH: STRATIGRAPHY OF THE KUYUNJIK GULLY

(McMahon, 1998, merely names the periods plus half millennia and millennia. She intentionally avoids the fine tuned dates usually applied within the millennia. The dates given here follow the conventional mainstream chronology.)

I	Parthian	+1st/+2 nd
II	Parthian	-
III	Parthian	-2nd
IV	PARTLY PARTHIAN	-3 RD C
	&	
	PARTLY "MIDDLE ASSYRIAN"	-13 TH C
V	Painted Khabur ware	-2000
VIA	Late Ur III period	-2030
Vib	Ur III period	-2070
VII	Old-Akkadian to Early Ur III	-2120
VIII	Old Akkadian	-2150
IX	Early Old-Akkadian period	-2200
XA	Late EDIII/Early Old-Akkadian, Ninevite V	ca.
XB	Late EDIII, Ninevite V pottery	ca.
XI	Early Dynastic / Ninevite V pottery	ca.
XII	Early Dynastic / Ninevite V pottery	ca.
XIII	Early Dynastic / Ninevite V pottery	ca.

* Though the Achaemenids precede the Parthians, the excavator is not surprised about the absence of a stratum for Achaemenid Nineveh. At least, however, she is stunned by the absence of remains for the time of Sennacherib ("704-681") who had built such a masterful palace in the city: "The apparent absence of Middle and especially Neo-Assyrian remains in the area of our excavation is odd, given that Area KG was well within the limits of the Neo-Assyrian mound and close to other excavated areas within known Neo-Assyrian remains. It is unlikely that this area was unused during that period; it would seem instead that subsequent Parthian occupation involved deep foundation trenches and surface levelling, which removed the Neo-Assyrian remains in our excavation area" (McMahon 1998, 19).

** *Augusta McMahon (1998, 16, fn 38) omits precise dates because of the "difficulty associated with assigning historically derived labels to archaeological data; the transition between the Akkadian and the Ur III periods is as difficult to pin down, archaeologically, as is the Early Dynastic to Akkadian Period transition. [...] Another approach is exemplified by the basic descriptive term of Wilkinson & Tucker [1995] who lump the period from Ninevite 5 to Khabur under 'later 3rd millennium'.*

attributable to Shamshi-Addad have been found. Levels VII and VIb are the most appropriate candidates. Nineveh, once again, bewilders archaeologists for its mysterious scarcity of levels for the two millennia from -2000 to +/- 0. With ten levels (XIII to VIA) for a maximum of half a millennium before -2000, some forty levels had to be expected for the following 2000 years. Yet, only three levels (IV to II) have come to light. To this author, such a discovery does not come as a surprise. Nineveh's levels XIII to V are indirectly Abraham-dated. The Middle-Assyrian elements of level IV are Sothic dated. The dates for the Parthian material follow the chronology of Classical historiography. Thus, levels VIa to IV (Middle-Assyrian elements) belong to the Achaemenid rule over Assyria. Sennacherib ("704-681") is Darius II (423-404) in the garb of his most wealthy satrapy (Heinsohn 2000, 131-169): "In power the land of Assyria counts as one third of all Asia. Rule over this country - which rule is called by the Persians a satrapy - is of all the satrapies by far the greatest" (Herodotus, *The History* I: 192). That is why the Hebrews, too, called Achaemenid rulers "King of Assyria" (*Ezra* 6: 22).

Outside of Nineveh and Assur, it is difficult to attribute significant strata to the decades of Shamshi-Adad's power over his widespread empire. Yet, if he is an *alter ego* of Cyaxares of Media, one has to add the "Mitanni" strata of Northern Mesopotamia and Syria to accommodate the first Amorite/Martu "King of the Whole". At Nineveh proper, the supposedly non-retrievable "Mitanni" remains are the finds attributed to Shamshi-Adad

remains are the finds attributed to Shamshi-Adad.

Yet, occasionally “Old-Assyrian” pottery and Mitanni pottery, to the bewilderment of the excavators, are found in one and the same stratum. This even is the case in the city of Assur which serves as a stronghold of Shamshi-Adad’s “Old-Assyrians” but is also on record – in the Amarna correspondence – as a center of Shaushatra’s Mitanni. Mysteriously, however, the powerful Mitanni are blamed for having left no strata in Assur. Still, the German excavations of 2000 and 2001 provided some surprises.

Assur: Stratigraphy of Area 2/2000 (Bär/Hausleiter 2006):

I	Parthian	at the earliest
Mysterious chronological hiatus albeit archaeology is continuous (same situation in areas 1/2000, 3/2000, 1/2001, 3/2001 und 4/2001)		
II	Neo-Assyrian (late)	
III	Neo-Assyrian (late)	
IV	Neo-Assyrian	
V	Neo-Assyrian (early)	
Va	Neo-Assyrian but mysteriously also “Middle-Assyrian” though both epochs still lack a chronological connection	
Via	Middle-Assyrian	
Vlb		
Vlc		
VII/VIII	Middle-Assyrian but, also “Streifenkeramik” of Shamshi-Adad’s Old-Assyrian Period (in tombs) as well as Nuzi pottery of Shaushatra’s Mitanni period	
IX	brickwall [„Middle-Assyrian(?)“]	

An explanation of the hiatus of four centuries between stratum II and stratum I is not even attempted. After stratigraphies at Nineveh (see above) or Nippur (see below) exhibit the same anomalies, these gaps are regarded as a mysterious fatum excavators can do nothing but humbly accept. At least, the coincidence of Late- and Middle-Assyrian remains in stratum Va looks strange to the excavators. Already in “Area 1/2000”, the had found in a late Neo-Assyrian house of -620 clay tablets with the name of “Adad-nirari I (1307-1275 BC)”. The excavators are not aware that the Middle-Assyrians are dated – counting forward from Amarna – by Egyptology’s Sothic scheme whereas the Late-Assyrians are dated Biblically by counting back from Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, the do not know that both dating approaches are not only unscholarly but also incompatible.

The Amorite Adad-Nirari I, founder of the “Middle-Assyrian” Empire and conqueror of Babylon, has been identified as Cyrus the Great – founder of the Achaemenid Empire and conqueror of Babylon – in the garb of his richest, i.e. Assyrian, province. The texts describing Adad’s conquest of Taidu in Asia Minor provide a cuneiform confirmation of Classical historiography which reports Cyrus’s conquest of Hyde (Sardes) in Asia Minor (Heinsohn 2000, 130). The Neo- or Late-Assyrian strata are found immediately beneath Parthian strata because they are the Assyrians of the final stage of the Achaemenid satrapy Athura (Assyria) which is taken over by Macedonians and Parthians.

Vb Mitanni and Old-Assyrian golden Ishtar statues from Ninive

As if the simultaneousness of Old-Assyrian and Mitanni pottery was not enough of a disturbance, it appears to repeat itself for the famous Ishtar of Nineveh which figures so prominently in the Amarna correspondence. In the Amarna letters the deity carries the name “Ishtar of Ninveh” (Amarna letter 23). It is a “statue [...] of pure gold” (Amarna letter 24). Supposedly, no information on such precious idols is available in – Sothic-dated – -14th century Assyria. Yet, Shamshi-Adad is on record for having commissioned such gold statues. In a letter, he even gives the weight of “20 minas of gold” for a statue of Bêlet-Agade destined for the city of Assur (Charpin 2004, 380). Thus, the statue of the Ninevite Ishtar send by Tushratta to Egypt to heal Amenophis III was sent by his

alter ego in “Old-Assyrian” garb, Shamshi-Adad’s son Ishme-Dagan. In a way this identity has been sensed when Shamshi’s Ishtar of Nineveh is perceived as “a prefiguration of the great Mitannian goddess Ishtar of Nineveh” (Westenholz 2005, 16). Thus, Shamshi-Adad’s Old-Assyrians and Shaushatra’s Mitanni do not only share stratigraphic depth, „Streifenkeramik” and Nuzi pots but also the healing powers of their masterly golden statues.

Ishme-Dagan is the last ruler from Shamshi-Adad’s line. Still during his father’s lifetime he is made king of Ekallatum. From there, Ishme-Dagan is slowly losing his Assyrian domain to another branch of Martu/Amorites. In this he resembles very much Astyages, Media’s last Great King residing in Ekbatana, who is losing his satrapy Assyria to Cyrus from the Persian tribe of the Mardoi/Amardians. Of course, one has to look for yet other royal names of Cyaxares and Astyages. After all, they ruled over many peoples. Yet, in Assyria Shamshi and Ishme look like prime candidates. Yet, who is Cyaxares’ alter ego on his Iranian home turf?

VI Cyaxares as Kutik-Inshushinak in Iran

Iran exhibits some of the most meticulous stratigraphies of the Ancient Orient. Yet, chronologists are time and again stunned that — after numerous levels reaching from far back up to around 2000 BCE — very little is left for the next two millennia for which they expect all the action described by Classical historians.

In the decisive publication covering the time spans of Ancient Near Eastern history – *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology: Third Edition* (Ehrich 1992) – the reader will be surprised with chapter headings like “The Chronology of Mesopotamia, ca. 7000-1600 B.C.” (Porada et al. 1992, 77), or “The Chronology of Iran, ca. 8000-2000 B.C.” (Voigt et al. 1992, 122). Since, e.g. in Susa/Ville Royale, the two millennia from -2000 to the Parthian period have only two strata against the sixteen strata attributed to the millennium lasting from -3100 to -2000, he may understand that such a short stratigraphy does not justify a separate chapter for the more recent two millennia.

And yet, any reader would like to know why there are so few strata for the 2000 years much closer to him. After all, he has already learnt that the master stratigraphies of other areas, e.g. Nippur for Babylonia and Nineveh for Assyria, also suffer from a similar scarcity of material for the very same 2000 years. Nobody tells him that the period up to -1700 is Biblically dated after Abraham the Patriarch whereas Achaemenids and Parthians still carry the dates assigned to them by Classical historiography. The excavators themselves are not aware of the basis of the chronology they confidently employ.

In Egypt, the search for Cyaxares arrives at Shaushatra. Stratigraphically he follows, in Northern Mesopotamia/Syria, the Hyksos as immediately as Shamshi-Adad follows their Old-Akkadian *alter ego* in Nineveh and Assur. Who follows, in the same stratigraphic sequence, the Old-Akkadian period in Susa, Iran’s most important metropolis? It is Kutik-Inshushinak. In his Akkadian inscriptions he calls himself Puzur-Inshushinak.

Iranian Stratigraphies of Tepe Yahya (left; lowest level is VIID; cf. Voigt et al. 1992; with slightly different dates Potts 2004), and Susa (Ville Royale; middle; lowest level is 18; cf. Voigt et al. 1992). For comparison, Babylonia’s stratigraphy of Nippur’s Inanna Temple on the right (lowest level is XX; Hansen/Dales 1962, Gibson/Hansen/Zettler 2001). [Abraham-derived Biblical dates are employed from -3rd millennium up to levels IVA, 3, and III (Sothic date in II) respectively]

Tepe Yahya	Susa			Nippur*
	Parthians (+100)			“Lacuna”
I	(+200)			
II	(-275)	1		
III	(-500)	2	Early Achaemenid	(-500)

<i>Enigmatic lacuna in all stratigraphies</i>				
IVA	(-1900)	4-3	Susa VB = Late UR III	(-1900)
IVB1	(-2300)	6-5	Susa VA Kutik-Inshushinak	(-2200)
IVB4-IVB2	(-2400)	8-7	Susa IVB = Old-Akkadians	(-2400)
IVB5	(-2500)	12-9	Susa IVA = Early Dynastic III	(-2700)
IVB6	(-2700)	15-13	Susa IIIC = Early Dynastic II	(-2800)
IVC	(-3100)	18-16	Susa IIIB	(-3100)
VA2-VA1				
VB				
VC				
VIB2-VIA				
VIIID-VIIA				

**Keall and Ciuk (1991) have shown that pottery of Nippur's Old-Babylonian level III and pottery of the Parthian period are clearly continuous and even partly identical though supposedly up to 2000 years apart. Stratigraphically, Nippur's levels III to I – now stretched over 1800 years – belong to the period of Achaemenids whose Nippur activities are beyond doubt (banking etc.). Nippur's stratum I is safely dated to Esarhaddon identified by this author as the Achaemenid Great King Arsakes/Artaxerxes II in Assyrian garb. Esarhaddon's mother Sakutu (cuneiform sources) is the alter ego of Artaxerxes' mother Par-Syatis (Greek sources). Esarhaddon's vassal in Cyprus, Eresusar (cuneiform sources), is the alter ego of Artaxerxes' vassal in Cyprus, Euagoras (Greek sources). Esarhaddon's Egyptian opponent, Tachos (cuneiform sources), is the alter ego of Artaxerxes' Egyptian opponent, Tacharka (Greek sources; in detail Heinsohn 2000, 83-91)*

Kutik-Inshushinak is not a native from Susa. Yet, he manages to conquer that strategic city. Kutik's political ambitions are permanently challenged by an enigmatic power called Guti in the cuneiform sources (formerly also read as Qutheans). His realm is under intermittent attack from the declining Old-Akkadians and the rising Guti, alternating with periods of peace and diplomatic approaches. However, after taking Anshan – located in the area of the Mardians/Amardians identified by this author as the Martu/Amorites of the cuneiform sources – Kutik is able to subdue the Guti, throw off the yoke of the Akkadians, and unite all of Iran under his rule. This achievement brings more than seventy towns and cities “under his feet” (Hinze 1983, 388).

With these deeds, Kutik looks very similar to Cyaxares, whose unification of Iran is time and again disrupted by a declining Assyria and the treacherous Scythians: “Tradition holds that at the end of Phraortes' [father of Cyaxares] reign there was a major invasion of Western Iran by nomadic Scythians who then held political power in the region from 653 to 624 BC. Herodotus reported that Cyaxares (625-585 BC) drove the Scythians out and re-established Median royal power” (Cuyler Young Jr. 1980, 147). Nearly two decades ago, this author has identified the Qutheans/Guti of the cuneiform sources as the Scythians of Classical Historiography (Heinsohn 1998, 110).

cuneiform sources as the Scythians of Classical historiography (Herodotus 1900, 110).

For some two decades, Kutik has a presence in Susa (Biblically dated between -2240 and -2220, but also around -2100). Then, he is on record for a gigantic move that is not yet comprehensible for modern Assyriology. He depicts himself as conqueror of Mesopotamia. In an Akkadian inscription (Hinz 1983, 388), he lets the world know that the power over the “Four Quarters” now rests with him.

The Old-Akkadian royal title “King of the Four Quarters (Universe)” indicates Kutik’s rule over a vast empire. But from where does he rule it? Here, the sources fall silent. It is definitively not Susa. Yet, if Kutik moves into a capital suiting his new empire, we may look for him at Nineveh. There, the post-Akkadian “King of All” is an Amorite invader known under the Assyrian throne name of Shamshi-Adad.

Before leaving Susa for good, Kutik creates a linear script (Vallat 1978, 194). It is called “Elamite” because the very same territory has texts of Proto-Elamite and cuneiform Elamite. Only the latter can be read. Linear “Elamite” consists of 80 symbols. It is written in vertical columns running from top to bottom and left to right. After some twenty years, i.e. after the departure of Kutik to his empire of the “Four Quarters”, this new script is not further developed and goes out of use.

Modern historians are convinced that from the “assumed imperial space [of the Medes] not a single written document has been preserved”. If anybody still wants to claim the veracity of the Median Empire he would have to admit, that the Medes “would have created the only empire without writing skills in the 3000 years of Ancient Near Eastern history” (Rollinger 2005, 3).

However, if Kutik is the Iranian original for Cyaxares of the Greek sources such accusations of primitivism would turn out to be blatantly false. After all, Cyaxares=Kutik does not only publish inscriptions in Akkadian but also modernizes Iranian writing by introducing a very advanced linear script. Moreover, as Shamshi-Adad as well as Shaushatra, Cyaxares employs his subjects of Assyrian and Hurrian descent to use their cuneiform scripts for his correspondence and royal inscriptions. How much more could be demanded from a ruler who, admittedly, takes over the Near East as a martial invader?

Was the peculiar linear “Elamite” language written for twenty years under Kutik the language of the Medes? The Median language is almost entirely unknown (Schmitt 2003). If Linear Elamite was close to Avestan (McAlpin 1975) or Scythian is, therefore, difficult to decide. On the other hand, Linear Elamite developed by Kutik cannot yet be sufficiently read. Therefore, it may be premature to rule out that this “Elamite” – other than Proto-Elamite and cuneiform Elamite (used by the Achaemenids side by side with Persian and Akkadian) – was the Median language in written form. One must not forget that at the beginning of decipherment, cuneiform Elamite was called Median by Grotfend, Rawlinson, Westergaard etc. Only in 1874, Archibald Henry Sayce (1845-1933) suggested “Elamite”. Yet, nobody has proven thus far that Linear Elamite belongs to the same language as cuneiform Elamite.

VII Cyaxares, a truly imperial monarch

The Medes and their imperial reaches are saved from modern attempts to annihilate them from the book of history. The moment, non-scholarly dating schemes are excluded from the work of historiography, the stratigraphic location where one has to look for the Median Empire becomes clear. It is the stratum immediately below the Achaemenids who succeed them.

The 1500 or so years that separate Kutik-Inshushinak from the Achaemenids in Tepe Yahya and Susa are due to a pseudo-hiatus. The stratigraphy is clearly continuous. The stratigraphy based overview below, therefore, provides no less clear information that Media’s greatest king, Cyaxares, is respected in the vast territory from Egypt to Iran.

Cyaxares in historiography and stratigraphy:

Greek historiography	Egyptian sources and/or strata	Assyrian sources and/or strata	Ira
Macedonians	Ptolemies	Hellenism/Parthians	He

Old Persian (Aryan)	Old Persian (Aryan)	Old Persian (Aryan)	Old Persian (Aryan)
(I) Achaemenids	Ramessides*	Middle Assyrians** to Late Assyrians	Ac
(II) Cyaxares	Shaushatra	Shamshi-Adad	Ku
"No strata"	Mitanni strata (on Akkad strata)	Post-Akkad strata	Pc
-625 to -585	Sothic date	Bible-derived date	Bil
(III) Ninos-Assyrians	Hyksos with strata	Old-Akkadians with strata	OI str

* Achaemenid Satrapy Mudraya=Egypt; ** Achaemenid Satrapy Athura=Assyria. The Medes, that are so frequently mentioned in the Late Assyrian texts, are the Medes that time and again challenge the rule of their Achaemenid overlords.

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