

Cyrus the Great' Cylinder

TRANSLITERATION & TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT
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Cyrus the Great' Cylinder
(Picture courtesy of the British Museum)

For the Persian version of the text translated
by Dr Shahrokh Razmju please [CLICK HERE](#) (in PDF format)

<i>Language:</i>	Akkadian
<i>Medium:</i>	clay cylinder
<i>Size:</i>	23 cm long 11 cm wide
<i>Length:</i>	40+ lines of writing (although broken)
<i>Date:</i>	538 BCE
<i>Cyrus the Great' reign:</i>	557–529 BCE
<i>Place of Discovery:</i>	Nineveh (nowadays Iraq)
<i>Date of Discovery:</i>	1879
<i>Discoverer:</i>	Hormuzd Rassam
<i>Current Location:</i>	British Museum
<i>Inventory number:</i>	BM WAA 90920 (BM = British Museum; WAA = Western Asiatic Antiquities)
<i>Alternative Designation:</i>	V R 35 (Rawlinson 1909: pl. 35)

	TRANSLITERATION (Rogers 1912:380-84)	TRANSLATION (Adapted from Rogers 1912:380-84)
1	[.....]-ni-Šu	[.....] his troops
2	[.....]-ki-ib-ra-tim	[..... four] quarters of the world
3	[. . .]-ka gal ma tu-û i Š-Šak-na a-na e-nu-tu ma-ti- Šu	[. . .] a weakling was established as ruler over his land

4	<i>Ši-[. ta-am]-Ši-li ú- Ša-aŠ-ki-na ġi-ru-Š u-un</i>	and [.] a similar one he appointed over them,
5	<i>ta-am-Ši-li É-sag-ila i-te-[. -ti]m a-na Uri^{ki} ù si-it-ta-tim ma-ĥa-za</i>	like Esagila he made [. . .] to Ur and the rest of the cities,
6	<i>pa-ra-aš la si-ma-a-ti- Šu-nu ta-[.]i ú-mi-Šá-am-ma id-dī-ni-ib-bu-ub ù ana na-ak-ri-tim</i>	a command dishonouring them [.] he planned daily and in enmity,
7	<i>sat-tuk-ku ù-Šab-ti-li ú-ad-[di iŠ]-tak-ka-an ki-rib ma-ĥa-zi pa-la-ĥa^{ilu} Marduk Šar ilāni [Šá]-qi- Še a-Šu-uŠ- Šu</i>	he caused the daily offering to cease; he appointed [. . .] he established within the city. The worship of Marduk, king of the gods [. . .]
8	<i>li-mu-ut-ti ali-Šu [i-te]-ni-ip-pu-uŠ &circ-mi-Šá-am-ma na-[. . . niŠe] i-na ab-Ša-a-ni la ta-ap-Š ú-úĥ -tim ú-ĥal-li-iq kul-lat-si-in</i>	he showed hostility toward his city daily [. . .] his people; he brought all of them to ruin through servitude without rest.
9	<i>a-na ta-zi-im-ti-Ši-na^{ilu} Ellil^{lil} ilani iz-zi-iŠ i-gu-ug-ma [. . .] ki-su-úr-Šú-un ilāni a- Ši-ib lib-bi-Š ú-nu i-zi-bu ad-ma-an- Šú-un</i>	On account of their complaints, the lords of the gods became furiously angry and left their land; the gods, who dwelt among them, left their homes,
10	<i>i-na ug-ga-ti Šá ú- Še-ri-bi a-na ki-rib Babil^{ilu} Marduk ti-[.] li-sa-aĥ-ra a-na nap-ĥar da-ád-mi Šá in-na-du-ú Šú-bat-su-un</i>	in anger over his bringing into Babylon. Marduk [. . .] to all the dwelling places, which had become ruins,
11	<i>ù niŠe^{mát} Šú-me-ri ù Ak-ka-dī^{ki} Š a i-mu-ú Ša-lam-ta-aŠ ú-sa-aĥ-ĥi-ir ka- [.]- Ši ir-ta-Š i ta-a-a-ra kul-lat ma-ta-a-ta ka-li- Ši-na i-ĥ i-it ib-ri-e-Šu</i>	and the people of Sumer and Akkad, who were like corpses [.] he turned and granted mercy. In all lands everywhere
12	<i>iŠ-te-'e-ma ma-al-ki i- Ša-ru bi-bil lib-bi Šá it-ta-ma-a ĥ qa-tu-uŠ-Šú^m Ku-ra-aŠŠar ali An-Šá-an it-ta-bi ni-bi-it-su a-na ma-li-ku-tim kul-la-ta nap- ĥ ar iz-zak-ra Šú-[ma- Š u]</i>	he searched; he looked through them and sought a righteous prince after his own heart, whom he took by the hand. He called Cyrus, king of Anshan, by name; he appointed him to lordship over the whole world.
13	<i>^{mát}Qu-ti-i ġi-mir Um-man Man-da ú-ka-an-ni-Ša a-na Š e-pi-Šu ni Še ġal-mat qaqqadu^{du}Ša ú-Š á-ak-Ši-du ka-ta-a-Šu</i>	The land of Qutu, all the Umman-manda, he cast down at his feet. The black-headed people, whom he gave his hands to conquer,
14	<i>i-na ki-it-tim ú mi-Š a-ru iŠ-te-ni-'e-Ši-na-a-tim^{ilu} Marduk belu rabu ta-ru-ú niŠ e- Šu ip-Še-e-ti Šá dam-qa-a-ta ù lib-ba-Šú i-Šá-ra ĥa-di-i Š ip-pa-al-li-is</i>	he took them in justice and righteousness. Marduk, the great lord, looked joyously on the caring for his people, on his pious works and his righteous heart.
15	<i>a-na ali-Šú Bab-ilani^{hi} a-la-ak-Šú ik-bi ú- Š a-aš-bi-it-su-ma ĥar-ra-nu Babil^{il} ki-ma ib-ri ú</i>	To his city, Babylon, he caused him to go; he made him take the road to Babylon, going as a

	<i>tap-pi-e it-tal-la-ka i-da-a-Šu</i>	friend and companion at his side.
16	<i>um-ma-ni-Šu rap- Ša-a-tim Šá ki-ma me-e nari la &uacute;ta-ad-du-ú ni-ba-Š&uacute;un kakke-Š ú-nu sa-an-du-ma i-Šá-ad-di- ha i-da-a-Šú</i>	His numerous troops, in unknown numbers, like the waters of a river, marched armed at his side.
17	<i>ba-lu qab-li ù ta-ha-zi ú- Še-ri-ba-aŠ ki-rib Babili ala- Šú Bab-ilani^{ki} i-ti-ir i-na Š ap-Šá-ki^{m, ihu} Nabu-na'id Šarru la pa-li-hi-Š ú ú-ma-al-la- a qa-tu-u Š- Šu</i>	Without battle and conflict, he permitted him to enter Babylon. He spared his city, Babylon, a calamity. Nabonidus, the king, who did not fear him, he delivered into his hand.
18	<i>niŠe Babili ka-li- Šú-nu nap-har^{mat} Š ú-me-ri u Ak-ka-dí^{ki} ru-bi-e ù Š ak-ka-nak-ka Šá-pal-Š ú ik-mi-sa ú-na-aŠ -Š i-qu Še-pu-u Š- Šú ih-du-ú a-na Š arru-ú-ti- Šú im-mi-ru pa-nu-uŠ - Šú-un</i>	All the people of Babylon, Sumer, and Akkad, princes and governors, fell down before him and kissed his feet. They rejoiced in his sovereignty; their faces shone.
19	<i>be-lu Šá i-na tu-kul-ti- Šá ú-bal-li-tu mi-tu-ta-an i-na bu-ta-qu ú pa-ki-e ig-mi-lu kul-la-ta-an ta- bi-iŠ ik-ta-ar-ra-bu- Šu iŠ-tam-ma-ru zi-ki-ir-Š ú</i>	The lord, who by his power brings the dead to life, who amid destruction and injury had protected them, they joyously blessed him, honoring his name.
20	<i>a-na-ku^m Ku-ra-aŠ Šar kiŠ-Š at Šarru rabu Šarru dan-nu Š ar Babili Šar^{mat} Š ú-me-ri ú Ak- ka-di Šar kib-ra-a-ti ir-bit-tim</i>	I am Cyrus, king of the world, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world,
21	<i>mar^m Ka-am-bu-zi-ia Šarru rabu Šar alu An-Š á-an mar mari^m Ku-ra-aŠ Šarru rabu Šar alu An-Š á-an ŠA.BAL.BAL^m Š i-iŠ-pi-iŠ Š arru rabu Šar alu An-Š a-an</i>	son of Cambyses, the great king, king of the city of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, the great king, king of the city of Anshan; great-grandson of Teispes, the great king, king of the city of Anshan;
22	<i>ziru da-ru-ú Ša Šarru-ú-tu Ša^{ihu} Bel u^{ihu} Nabu ir- a-mu pa-la-a-Š ú a-na tu-ub lib-bi- Šú-nu i h-Ši- ha Šarru-ut-su e-nu-ma a-na ki-rib Babili e-ru- bu sa-li-mi-i Š</i>	eternal seed of royalty whose rule Bel and Nabu love, in whose administration they rejoice in their heart. When I made my triumphal entrance into Babylon,
23	<i>i-na ul-ši ù ri- Š á-a-tim i-na ekal ma-al-ki ar- ma-a Š ú-bat be-lu-tim^{ihu} Marduk belu rabu lib- bi ri-it-pa- Š ú Šá mare Babili ú . . . an-ni-ma ú- mi- Šam a-Š e-'a pa-la-ah- Šú</i>	I took up my lordly residence in the royal palace with joy and rejoicing; Marduk, the great lord, moved the noble heart of the residents of Babylon to me, while I gave daily attention to his worship.
24	<i>um-ma-ni-ia rap-Ša-tim i-na ki-rib Babili i-Šá- ad-di-ha Šú-ul-ma-niŠ nap-har mat [Šu-me-ri] ù Akkad^{ki} mu-gal-[l]i-tim ul ú- Šar-Ši</i>	My numerous troops marched peacefully into Babylon. In all Sumer and Akkad I permitted no enemy to enter.
25	<i>dannat Babili ù kul-lat ma-ha-zi- Šu i-na Šà-li-</i>	The needs of Babylon and of all its cities I

	<i>im-tim a Š -te-'e mare Babi[li . . .] ki ma-la lib-[. . .]-ma ab- Š a-a-ni la si-ma-ti-Šu-nu Š ú-bat-su-un</i>	gladly attended to. The people of Babylon [and . . .], and the shameful yoke was removed from them. Their dwellings,
26	<i>an-ḥu-ut-su-un ú-pa-a Š -Ši-ḥa ú-Š á-ap-ti-ir sa-ar-ba- Šu-nu a-na ip- Še-e-ti-[ia] ^{ilu}Marduk belu rabu ú-ih-di-e-ma</i>	which had fallen, I restored. I cleared out their ruins. Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced in my pious deeds, and
27	<i>a-na ia-a-ti ^mKu-ra-a ŠŠarru pa-li-ih-Š u ù ^mKa-am-bu-zi-ia mari š-i-it lib-bi-[ia ù a]-na nap-ḥar um-ma-ni-ia</i>	graciously blessed me, Cyrus, the king who worships him, and Cambyses, my own son, and all my troops,
28	<i>da-am-ki-iŠ ik-ru-ub-ma i-na Ša-lim-tim ma-ḥar-Š a ta-bi-iŠ ni-it-ta-['-id i-lu-ti- Šu] šir-ti nap-ḥar Šarri a- Ši-ib parakke</i>	while we, before him, joyously praised his exalted godhead. All the kings dwelling in palaces,
29	<i>Ša ka-li-i Š kib-ra-a-ta iŠ-tu tam-tim e-li-tim a-di tam-tim Šap-li-tim a-Ši-ib kul-[. . .] Šar-rani mati A-mur-ri-i a- Ši-ib kuŠ-ta-ri ka-li-Š u-un</i>	of all the quarters of the earth, from the Upper to the Lower sea dwelling [. . .] all the kings of the Westland dwelling in tents
30	<i>bi-lat-su-nu ka-bi-it-tim ú-bi-lu-nim-ma ki-ir-ba Babili ú-na-aŠ-Š i-qu Še-pu-ú-a iŠ-tu [. . .] a-di alu A ŠŠur^{ki} ù Šu-Š an^{ki}</i>	brought me their heavy tribute, and in Babylon kissed my feet. From [. . .] to Asshur and Susa,
31	<i>A-ga-de^{ki} mâtu E Š -nu-nak ^{alu}Za-am-ba-an ^{alu}Me-túr-nu Deri^{ki} a-di pa-aṭ mât Qu-ti-i ma-ḥa-za [Šá e-bir]-ti ^{nar}Diqlat Š á i Š-tu ap-na-ma na-du-ú Šú-bat-su-un</i>	Agade, Eshnunak, Zamban, Meturnu, Deri, with the territory of the land of Qutu, the cities on the other side of the Tigris, whose sites were of ancient foundation—
32	<i>ilâni a-Ši-ib lib-bi- Šu-nu a-na aŠ-ri-Šú-nu ú-tir-ma ú-Šar-ma-a Š ú-bat da-er-a-ta kul-lat niŠe-Šu-nu ú-pa-aḥ -ḥi-ra-am-ma ú-te-ir da-ád-mi-Šu-un</i>	the gods, who resided in them, I brought back to their places, and caused them to dwell in a residence for all time
33	<i>ù ilâni mât Šú-me-ri ù Akkad^{ki} Š á ^{m, ilu}Nabu-na'id a-na ug-ga-tim bel ilâni ú- Še-ri-bi a-na ki-rib Babili i-na ki-bi-ti ^{ilu}Marduk belu rabû i-na Š á-li-im-tim</i>	And the gods of Sumer and Akkad—whom Nabonidus, to the anger of the lord of the gods, had brought into Babylon—by the command of Marduk, the great lord,
34	<i>i-na maŠ-ta-ki- Šu-nu ú-Še-Ši-ib Šú-ba-at tu-ub lib-bi kul-la-ta ilâni Š a ú-Še-ri-bi a-na ki-ir-bi ma-ḥa-zi- Šu-un</i>	I caused them to take up their dwelling in residences that gladdened the heart. May all the gods, whom I brought into their cities,
35	<i>û-mi-Ša-am ma-ḥ ar ^{ilu}Bel ù ^{ilu}Nabu Š a a-ra-ku ume-ia li-ta-mu-ú lit-taŠ-ka-ru a-ma-a-ta du-un-ki-ia ù a-na ^{ilu}Marduk beli-ia li-iq-bu-ú Ša ^mKu-ra-aŠ Šarri pa-li- ḥi-ka u ^mKa-am-bu-zi-ia mari-Šu</i>	pray daily before Bêl and Nabû for long life for me, and may they speak a gracious word for me and say to Marduk, my lord, "May Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son,

36	<i>da [. . .] ib-Šu-nu lu-ú [. . .] ka-li-Ši-na Š ú- ub-ti ni-ih-tim ú-Še- Ši-ib [. . .] paspase u TU.KIR.HU [. . .]</i>	their [. . .] I permitted all to dwell in peace [. . .]
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NOTES



Esagila — the temple of Marduk



Marduk — the patron god of Babylon



King of Anshan — a small kingdom in what is now southern Iran



land of Qutu —



Nabonidus —



Cambyses —



Upper Sea & Lower Sea —



Bêl — an epithet of the god Marduk (see Jeremiah 50:2; 51:44)



Nabu — the Babylonian god of writing and wisdom (see Isaiah 46:1)

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