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Six distinct chronicles and one fragment have been recovered for the period after the capture of Babylon in 539 B.C. by Cyrus, a period which is called "Late Babylonian" in this discussion. The term "series," which was used for the previous group of chronicles, has also been employed here. There can be little doubt, as shown earlier, that all these texts belong to one series which was a continuation of the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series.<sup>143</sup> Although the preserved texts do not appear to begin before the reign of Xerxes I (485-465) it is safe to assume that this series picked up where the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series came to an end, c. 539 B.C., and continued at least as far as the reign of Seleucus II (245-226 B.C.). Indeed, there is really no break in 539 B.C. or any other time. The two categories, the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series and the Late Babylonian Chronicle Series, are really the same series. When the Babylonians lost their political independence to Cyrus in 539 B.C. they still

retained their ancient culture. In the conservative learned circles the literary traditions were maintained and scribes continued to compose and copy texts in the Akkadian and Sumerian languages although Aramaic was the common tongue. Among these scribal traditions was the running account of Babylonian history already discussed in connection with the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series. The Late Babylonian Chronicle Series is a group of extracts from this running history the same as the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series was an extract from the earlier sections of the same source. However, over the years minor changes took place so that these later chronicles exhibit certain peculiarities not evident in the earlier texts. In particular the singular phrase "MN, that same month" which is found in the Seleucid Chronicles and is probably derived from astronomical diaries<sup>143</sup> is to be noted. It is, in part, because of these minor changes and because of the gap of more

<sup>141</sup> iv 8f.

<sup>142</sup> This is despite the fact that, due to the fragmentary condition of these tablets, in no case is a catch-line preserved that is also found as the first line of the subsequent tablet as in the case of Chronicles 3-5. In fact only one catch-line is apparently preserved. The traces on the left edge of the Chronicle Concerning the Diadochi may well be the remains of a catch-line. Chronicle 9, like Chronicles 1 and 6, has no catch-line.

<sup>143</sup> References to ITI BI in the chronicles are: Chronicle 11:3, r. 12, 16; Chronicle 12:3, r. 8; Chronicle 13:12, r. 9 (?). Note that the passages in astronomical diaries which deal with market prices, flood levels, political events, etc. regularly appear for each month after a description of astronomical phenomena and are introduced by ITI BI. In extracting information for these late chronicles the scribe simply copied both the name of the month and the introductory phrase "that same month", omitting what had appeared in between.†

than half a century between the last preserved portion of the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series (539 B.C.)<sup>144</sup> and the first preserved portion of the Late Babylonian Chronicle Series (c. 485 B.C.)<sup>145</sup> that appear in the later period that it has been deemed advisable to subdivide the series into the two groups.†

What has been stated concerning the text of the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series applies to these texts as well, including the fact that in this study the component parts of the series will be treated as one text. Throughout this discussion it must be kept in mind that the text is very fragmented with many gaps. It is divided by horizontal lines into sections of unequal length. Each section deals with the events of a single year of the monarch's reign.<sup>146</sup>

As with the authors of the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series, the authors of this text have presented Babylonian history in an objective and reliable manner. Thus one finds, in a broken passage, the description of the ravage of Babylonia by Antigonos.<sup>147</sup> One of the documents, Chronicle Concerning the Diadochi, is sufficiently preserved to be compared to a foreign source, Diodorus Siculus, and the comparison has shown that the Babylonian chronicle is far more reliable than the Greek author.<sup>148</sup> Perforce there is a certain broadening of the Babylonian historian's horizon. This was inevitable in a time when there were major events in the ancient world that affected all parts of it, including Mesopotamia. Thus events that took place far away from Babylonia, such as in Macedonia or Bactria, are mentioned. This is a natural

development and it must be borne in mind that even the earlier chronicles included such far away events as the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.).<sup>149</sup> There is, then, no basic change in the outlook of the Babylonian historians. They still narrate only those events of immediate concern to a Babylonian but, due to the changed situation, those events might have taken place far from Babylonia. There is certainly no evidence that they omitted any major events that fall within the scope of their outlook. Thus one may conclude that these are impartial and reliable documents. The purpose of writing this history is the same as the purpose behind the Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series. The scribes wished to record, to the best of their ability, the gradual unfolding of Babylonian history. Similarly the documents from which these chronicles were extracted are probably identical with astronomical diaries.<sup>150</sup>

There are chronological gaps in the series which are to be attributed partly to the fragmentary nature of the documents and partly to the complete absence of texts in some cases, particularly during most of the Achaemenid period.<sup>151</sup> In fact, for the period of Achaemenid Persian control in Babylonia only two texts are preserved, Chronicles 8 and 9. Chronicle 8 is only a fragment which apparently mentions Xerxes I (485–465). Chronicle 9 is a very small text which deals with the fourteenth year of Artaxerxes III (345/4 B.C.). Then there is a gap until the next chronicle, Chronicle Concerning the Diadochi, picks up the narrative at least as early as the fourth year of Philip III (320/19 B.C.) and continues at least as far as the ninth

<sup>144</sup> Chronicle 7.

<sup>145</sup> Chronicle 8 may deal with Xerxes I (485–465).

<sup>146</sup> Since Chronicle 9 concerns only one regnal year there are no dividing lines. The tiny fragment Chronicle 13a is so badly preserved that no lines are visible except for a line at the end which may mark the end of the text and the beginning of a colophon or catch-line.

<sup>147</sup> Chronicle 10 r. 21ff.

<sup>148</sup> Smith, BHT, pp. 129–138. On the unreliability of Diodorus also see T. W. Africa, "Herodotus and Diodorus on Egypt," *JNES* 22 (1963), pp. 254–258.

<sup>149</sup> Chronicle 5:1–8.

<sup>150</sup> The absence of scribal errors in these chronicles is to be attributed to the fragmentary state of preservation of most of them.

<sup>151</sup> It seems unlikely that the original running account was ever seriously interrupted due to political disorder for it is with just one of these chaotic periods that one of the texts, Chronicle Concerning the Diadochi, is concerned. Also note the Nabonidus Chronicle which belongs to the same tradition and covers the period of Cyrus' conquest of Babylonia.

year of Alexander IV (308/7 B.C.). With the remaining four chronicles, all of which deal with the Seleucid period, there is considerable uncertainty as to chronology. Chronicle 11 may describe the period, or part thereof, of the coregency of Seleucus I and Antiochus (294/3 B.C. – 281/0 B.C.). In Chronicle 12 the thirtieth year (282/1 B.C.) of the Seleucid Era and perhaps the thirty-first year (281/0 B.C.) are mentioned. It is possible, but by no means certain, that the reigns of Seleucus II (245–226 B.C.) and Seleucus III (225–223 B.C.) are described in Chronicle 13. The chronological position of the fragment, Chronicle 13a, is extremely uncertain. Chronicles 11–13 are fragments of three different tablets while Chronicle 13a may belong to any of them or come from yet another tablet.†