Old Iranian Names

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Introduction

When the Teispid king Cyrus conquered Babylonia in 539 BCE, Mesopotamia found itself governed by two Iranian dynasties (Teispids and Achaemenids) for more than two centuries. This foreign rule has led to the presence of many Iranian names in texts drafted in the local vernacular, Babylonian.

The new rulers spoke Old Persian, a language belonging to the Old Iranian family. In fact, Old Iranian is the global name for a group of languages, of which Old Persian and Avestan are the best-known ones, others being Median and Old Eastern Iranian (Avestan). Avestan is the language in which the sacred books of the Zoroastrian religion were written. Accordingly, the textual corpus of this language is relatively extended, but, despite the large number of Avestan texts, the language itself has no importance for the current article, as there are practically no Avestan names and/or elements in Babylonian texts.

Old Persian is a southwest Iranian language (Schmitt 2004, 739; Isebaert and Tavernier 2012, 299) and most likely the mother tongue of the Achaemenid elite. It is the principal language of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the other languages being Babylonian, Elamite, Egyptian, and Aramaic. Accordingly, Old Persian was the royal Achaemenid language par excellence. It was written by means of a deliberately designed cuneiform writing system, containing thirty-six phonemic signs, eight logograms, two-word-dividers, and various number symbols (Schmitt 2004, 719; Isebaert and Tavernier 2012, 304).

Finally, the Median dialect is a northwest Iranian language (Schmitt 2004, 717). It is exclusively attested in the Achaemenid royal inscriptions and in the reconstructed Old Iranian material from the '*Nebenüberlieferung*' (i.e., reconstructed Iranian proper names and loanwords; Tavernier 2007, 4). There are no extant Median texts, so it remains impossible to know with

which writing system it would have been written. Interestingly, most Iranian names in Babylonian appear in a Median shape (e.g., *Bṛziya-* and not Old Persian Bṛdiya-, *Miθrapāta-* and not Old Persian *Miçapāta-*). An explanation for this may be that the Babylonians adopted the Assyrian manner of rendering Iranian names. This Assyrian manner was the direct result of the contacts between Median people and the Neo-Assyrian Empire which had no linguistic contacts with the Persian-speaking tribes situated more to the south (Brandenstein and Mayrhofer 1964, 12).

This chapter will discuss the Old Iranian names in Babylonian texts from the Neo-Babylonian, Achaemenid, and post-Achaemenid periods. Quite expectedly, the major part of Old Iranian names occurs in texts dated to the Achaemenid period, when Babylonia was in Iranian hands. Currently, the chronological distribution of the names is as follows, though we must bear in mind that new texts will reveal more Iranian names and, because of this, the numbers presented herein will certainly be modified in the future.

- In pre-Achaemenid Babylonian texts a total of fifteen Old Iranian names are attested, two of which are Median (Cyaxares, Astyages) and two Teispid (Teispes, Cambyses I). Most names are recorded in tablets written under the Neo-Babylonian Empire; only one name is attested in the period when Babylonia was under Neo-Assyrian rule.
- In Achaemenid Babylonian texts, we find 393 complete Old Iranian names and four hybrid names.
- In post-Achaemenid Babylonian texts, a total of sixty-one Old Iranian names are attested, of which twenty-three date to the Alexandrine and Seleucid period and thirty-eight to the Arsacid period.

From a methodological point of view, this chapter will use Tavernier's categorisation of Old Iranian personal names in Babylonian documents (Tavernier 2007, 3–5). This categorisation divides the names into five groups, of which the most important ones are:

- Directly attested names: this category consists of anthroponyms attested in the Babylonian versions of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions. As we know the Old Iranian original name through the Old Persian version of these inscriptions, it is easy to compare the original form of the name and its rendering in Babylonian. An example of a directly attested name is Dādṛšiš, a derivation from

darš- 'to dare', which is written *d-a-d-r-š-i-š* in Old Persian and [I]*da-da-ar-šú* in Babylonian.[1]

• Semi-directly attested names: this category is closely connected with the previous one and contains two sub-groups. The first group appears in texts other than the Babylonian versions of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions (e.g., documentary texts) and thus lacks a direct Old Iranian equivalent. The Achaemenid royal names, occurring on many documentary texts and written in one of the target languages, are a good example of this category. Accordingly, it is possible that the same name or word belongs to both categories one and two. The second group consists of anthroponyms, of which an Iranian original is attested in the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, but which show slight differences with that original. Such a difference is mostly a dialectal one (e.g., Old Persian R̥tavardiya- [category 1] vs. Median *R̥tavarziya- [category 2]), but also con-tracted equivalents of forms of category 1 are attested (e.g., OP Vahyazdāta- [category 1] vs. *Vēzdāta- [category 2]).

The directly and semi-directly transmitted Iranica provide the key to the transpositional systems between the source language (Old Iranian) and the target language (Babylonian). The largest group, however, are the indirectly attested Iranica ('*Nebenüberlieferung*') – that is, personal names that are reconstructed based on their reflections in Babylonian. As they are reconstructed names, the semi-directly and indirectly attested anthroponyms are marked conventionally with an asterisk (*). In this chapter the names are rendered in their Old Iranian shape, not in their Babylonian denotation. In general, Old Iranian names appear in their 'naked' form (without any case endings), but sometimes it is necessary to list them in their nominative form, as this nominative is what the Babylonian spellings render and is different from the 'naked' form. For instance, *Suxra- is the 'naked' form of *Suxra; Cincaxriš and *R̥tā(h)umanā are the nominative forms of, respectively, Cincaxri- and *R̥tā(h)umanah-. 'Naked' forms are always accompanied by a hyphen, whereas nominative forms appear without a hyphen. Unless otherwise stated, text references to the name attestations can be found in Tavernier 2007.

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[1] Tavernier 2007, 15 no. 1.2.13; Zadok 2009, 188 no. 240. For the sake of completeness, we should also mention the Aramaic rendering of this name (*ddrš*) and the Elamite rendering (*da-tur-ši-iš*).

Iranian Name Material in the Babylonian Sources

Text Corpora

The Iranian names occur in two large text corpora. First, there are the Babylonian versions of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions (containing names of categories 1 and 2, discussed earlier). The majority of the Iranian names, however, can be found in the numerous Babylonian documentary texts. In that context, one must mention the Murašû archive, an archive of a Babylonian family that had business relations with the Persian overlords. Not surprisingly, their texts contain many Iranian names (cf. Zadok 2009, 66). Only a few names, such as Ištumegu (Astyages), are attested in literary texts (e.g., chronicles).

Typology of Names

The large number of Iranian names in Babylonian sources enables us to draw a detailed typology of these names. This is what Ran Zadok did in his study of Iranian names in Babylonian texts (Zadok 2009, 54–63). Nevertheless, it seems useful to present a simpler typology of the names under discussion. The Iranian names are either single-stem full names (58 names), two-stem full names (168 names), prefixed names (26 names), full names composed of three elements (6 names), patronymic names (19 names), or hypocoristic names (shortened names; 116 names).

Single-Stem Full Names (58 Names)

This category consists mainly of nominal forms (55 names). These names morphologically belong to the various stem classes attested in Old Iranian. The largest group is the *a*-stems (42 names), where one finds, inter alia, animal names (e.g., *Varāza- 'Boar'), relationship names (*Kāka- 'Uncle'), colour names (e.g., *Suxra- 'Red'), adjectival names (e.g., Vivāna- 'Brilliant'), and superlatives (e.g., *Masišta- 'The greatest'). The second largest group is the *u*-stems, with five names, one of which is again an animal name (*Kr̥gu- 'Cock'). The other four names are basic substantives and adjectives: *Bāmu- 'Lustre', *Mr̥du- 'Soft', *Parnu- 'Old', and *Xratu- 'Wisdom'. Next to that, there are names belonging to *i*-stems (three names, e.g., Dādr̥ši- 'Brave'), *h*-stems (two names, e.g., *Aujah- 'Strong'), and *n*-stems (two names, e.g.,

*Ṛšan- 'Hero').[2] This group also contains three verbal forms as personal names: *Dāraya- 'He who holds', Frāda- 'He who furthers', and *Fradāta- 'Furthered'.

Two-Stem Full Names (168 Names)

The names belonging to this very productive name type have two elements: for example, *Bagapāta- 'Protected by God', where *baga-* means 'God' and *pāta-* means 'Protected' (past participle of *pā-). The elements themselves may belong to various classes, such as divine names (e.g., Baga, Miθra-, etc.), adjectives (e.g., *arba- 'Swift', *haθya- 'Truthful', etc.), substantives (e.g., *aspa-* 'Horse', *farnah-* 'Divine glory'), and verbal forms (e.g., *jāma-* 'Leading', *vinda-* 'Finding', etc.).

It may be interesting to have a closer look at the names with divine elements. Divine names occur in no fewer than sixty-nine cases[3] and function preferably as the first element. They occur in the following constellations:

- Adjective + divine name (3 names): *Arbamihra- 'Young through Mithra', *Arbamiθra-, *Haθēbaga- 'Truthful through Baga'.
- Divine name + divine name (1 name): *Bagamihra- 'Baga-Mithra'.
- Divine name + adjective (9 names): *Bagāma- 'Strong through Ama', *Ṛtarēva- 'Rich through Arta', *Tīryāvauš 'Good through Tirya', etc.
- Divine name + non-participial verbal form (11 names): Bagabuxša- 'Rejoicing Baga', *Miθravasa- 'Mithra willing', *Ṛtaviša- 'He who is occupied with Arta', etc.
- Divine name + past participle (13 names): *Amadāta- 'Given by Ama', *Bagadāta- 'Given by Baga', *Miθradāta- 'Given by Mithra', *Rauxšnapāta- 'Protected by Rauxšna', etc.
- Divine name + substantive (31 names): *Agnifarnah- 'Glory of Agni' (in Neo-Assyrian sources), *Miθrapāna- 'Having the protection of Mithra', *Ṛtabānu- 'Having the splendour of Arta', etc.
- Substantive + divine name (1 name): *Bāzubaga- 'Baga's arm'.

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[2] The Old Iranian names often appear in their nominative form in Babylonian: [1]*ši-in-šá-aḫ-ri-iš* renders the nominative Cincaxriš (of Cincaxri-), the name of Xerxes (Xšayaršan-) appears in its nominative form Xšayaršā, etc.

[3] Adjectives occur in 48 names, substantives in 114 names (the most productive category) and verbal forms in 67 names. Note also the unique Old Persian name Cincaxri- 'Effectuating something', composed of a pronoun and a verbal form.

The other classes (adjectives, substantives, and verbal forms) are easily combinable with each other. The most frequent constellations are:

- Adjective + substantive (18 names): *Āsuraθa- 'Having a fast chariot', Vahyazdāta- 'Having the better law', Vaumisa- 'Longing for the good', etc.
- Verbal form + substantive (11 names): *Jāmāspa- 'Leading the horses', *Vindafarnah- 'Finding glory', Xšayaršan- 'Ruling over heroes', etc.
- Substantive + substantive (26 names): Aspacanah- 'Delighting in horses', Haxāmani- 'Having the mind of someone allegiant', Ṛšāma- 'Having a hero's strength', etc.
- Substantive + verbal form (18 names): *Ciθrabṛzana- 'Exalting his lineage', Gaubar(u)va- 'Devouring cattle', *Uštapāna- 'Protecting happiness', etc.

Prefixed Names (38 Names)
A smaller category of Iranian names in Babylonian texts also consists of two-element names, but here the first element is a prefix. Although various prefixes are used in anthroponyms, the adjectival prefix *hu-/u-* is overwhelmingly dominant in this respect. No fewer than twenty-seven names begin with this element. Some examples are *(H)ufrata- 'Good and excellent', *Humāta- 'Good thoughts', *(H)urāna- 'The good warrior', and Utāna- 'Having a good offspring'. Mostly, this prefix is followed by a substantive; only three times is *(h)u- constructed with an adjective, and two times with a participle.

The other prefixes occurring in this group of names are *ā-* 'to, towards' (2 names: *Āmṛda- 'He who crushes' and *Ārāšta- 'Equipped with truth'), *abi-* 'to' (1 name: *Abisaukā- 'Shining'), *ati-* 'beyond' (1 name: *Atikāma- 'Beyond wish'), *hadā-* 'with' (1 name: *Hadābāga- 'With a share', i.e., 'Wealthy'), *ham-/han-* 'co-' (2 names: *Hambāzu- 'Co-arm', i.e., 'Embracer' and *Hantu(h)ma- 'Co-exerting', i.e., 'Striving'), *pati-* 'to, towards, thereto; against' (3 names, e.g., *Patināša- 'He who supports'), and *upa-* 'under' (1 name: Upadarma- 'He who is under right conduct').

Names Composed of Three Elements (5 Names)
This small category is composed of only five names, three of which contain the infix -(h)u- 'good': *Bagā(h)uvīra- 'A good man through God', *Razmahuarga- 'Well-worthy in battle', and *Ṛtā(h)umanā 'Having a good mind through Arta'. The only name of this type without this element is *Astašēbarva- 'Cherishing his homestead'.

Patronymic Names (19 Names)
Nineteen anthroponyms take a patronymic suffix, either -*āna*- (15 names, e.g., *Haθyāna- 'Son of *Haθya-', *Vištāna-, *Zangāna-) or -*i*- (4 names: *Farnaini-, *Gausūri-, *Gundaini-, and *Xšēti-).

Hypocoristic Names (116 Names)
One of the larger groups consists of names that take a hypocoristic suffix:

- On -a (6 names; especially used with names having a divine element): *Amâ-, *Aspâ-, *Bagâ-, *Miθrâ-, *Ṛtâ-, *Tīrâ-
- On -aica-/-ēca- (8 names): *Humēca-, *Mazdaica-, *Zātaica-, etc.
- On -aina-/-ēna- (18 names): *Bagaina-, *Nāfēna-, *Xaraina-, etc.
- On -āta- (8 names): Gaumāta-, *Miθrāta-, *Vanāta-, etc.
- On -ca- (1 name): *Ṛtapātacā-
- On -ima- (1 name): *Ṛtima-
- On -ina- (1 name): *Āθrina-
- On -ita- (3 names): *Ṛšita-, *Sakita-, Xšaθrita-
- On -(i)ya- (26 names): *Bṛziya-, *Kṛgaya-, *Miθraya-, etc.
- On -ka- (36 names): *Aspaka-, *Jīvaka-, *Raudaka-, etc.
- On -uka- (2 names): *Ṛtuka-, *Zānuka-
- On -va- (3 names): *(H)uvārava-, *Paršava-, *Šībava-
- Two-stem hypocoristics (4 names): *Baga-x-aya-, *Ṛta-b-a-, *Ṛta-xš-ara-, *Ṛta-xš-ī- (< *Ṛtaxšiya-)

Hybrid Names
The Babylonian textual material has four hybrid names. It should, however, be noted that there is no certainty on the language behind the Sumerograms. It is probably Babylonian, but the possibility that the Sumerograms conceal an Iranian lexeme cannot be excluded.

- ᴵAD-*ar-ta-*ʔ: rendering of *Abṛta- 'Having Arta as father', a hybrid form of Babylonian *abu* 'father' and Iranian *ṛta- 'Arta' (Tavernier 2007, 472 no. 5.2.1.2; cf. Zadok 2009, 127 no. 120)
- ᴵ*a-te-*ʔ-ᵈEN, ᴵ*a-ti-*ʔ-ᵈEN, ᴵ*ḫa-ti-*ᵈEN: most likely a rendering of *Haθya-Bēl 'True through Bēl' (Tavernier 2007, 512 no. 5.4.2.10; Zadok 2009, 128 no. 126a–c)
- ᴵDINGIR.MEŠ-*da-a-ta*: this may be a rendering of *Ildāta- or of *Bagadāta-. In the latter case, it is not a real hybrid name (Tavernier 2007, 472 no. 5.2.1.6; Zadok 2009, 193 no. 251)
- ᴵᵈ*mi-it-ri*-AD-*u-a*: *Miθra-abūa- 'Mithra is my father' (Tavernier 2007, 472 no. 5.2.1.6; Zadok 2009, 270 no. 367)

Elements in Names

Old Iranian names contain various elements, both theophoric and others. In this section, the most frequent ones will be presented.

Theophoric Elements

Not surprisingly, several deities occur in the names discussed here. Note that they do not automatically reflect purely Zoroastrian divinities and/or concepts. The first deity, Agni-, is only attested in one name from the Neo-Assyrian period, *Agnifarnah- 'Having the glory of Agni'. Interestingly, this deity is not an Iranian one, but an Indian one, more precisely the Vedic fire god. His Iranian equivalent, Ātṛ-, occurs in seven names (e.g., *Ātṛbānu- 'Having the lustre of Ātṛ', *Ātṛciθra- 'Originating from Ātṛ' and *Ātṛfarnah- 'Having the glory of Ātṛ').

The most frequent divine element is *Baga- 'God', which occurs in thirty names. Examples are Bagābigna- 'Having the attacking power of Baga', Bagabuxša- 'To whom Baga bestows benefit', *Bagadāta- 'Given by Baga', and *Bagavinda- 'Finding Baga' (only in Neo-Babylonian sources). The names with the element Ṛta- 'Truth' (e.g., *Ṛtabāna- 'Having the lustre of Arta' [in Arsacid texts] and the royal name Ṛtaxšaça- 'Whose kingdom is based on Arta') are only one less than those with Baga. Sixteen names have an element Mithra (e.g., *Miθradāta- 'Given by Mithra' and *Miθrapāna- 'Having the protection of Mithra'). The other deities occurring in anthroponyms are A(h)ura- 'Lord' (1 name), Ama- 'Strength' (3 names), Ārmati- 'Piety, Devotion' (1 name), Hauma- 'The divine *haoma*-plant' (1 name), (H)uvar- / Xvar- 'Sun' (6 names), Māhi- 'Moon' (1 name), Mazdā- 'Wisdom' (4 names), Rauxšna- 'Light' (2 names), and Tīra-/Tīrī-/Tīrya-, the god of rain and writing (10 names). The latter element is nearly exclusively attested in names belonging to the Aramaic and Babylonian '*Nebenüberlieferung*' that usually transliterate Median names. This could indicate a Median origin for this divinity.

Iranian names prefer to have the divine name as first element, contrary to Babylonian names where the place of the divine element is not fixed. There are only six exceptions to this rule: *Arbamihra- 'Young through Mithra', *Bagamihra- 'Baga-Mithra', *Bāzubaga- 'Arm of Baga', *Farnahuvara- 'Having the glory of Huvar' (in Seleucid texts), *Haθyabaga- 'Truthful through Baga', and *Raznamiθra- 'Following Mithra's command' (in Seleucid texts).

Toponyms

The toponyms, as they occur in the corpus of names, are all ethnonyms and they all refer to lands rather than to cities. Most of them are hypocoristics. The only non-Iranian region is India. The land names are Arya- 'Iranian' (e.g., Aryāramna- 'Who creates peace for the Aryans' and *Aryaušta- 'Iranian happiness'), Daha- 'Dahian' (e.g., *Dahaka-), Hindu- 'Indian' (e.g., *Hinduka-), Kṛmāna- 'Carmanian' (*Kṛmāniya- [in Seleucid texts]), Māda- 'Median' (ᶠMādumītu, the Babylonian feminised form of *Māda-), Pārsa- 'Persian' (*Badrapārsa- 'The happy Persian'), Parθava- 'Parthian' (*Parθava-), and Skudra- 'Skudra' (*Skudrava-).

Frequent Elements

Clearly, Iranian name-giving practices preferred some elements more than others. What follows is a list of the most frequent elements in Iranian names attested in Babylonian sources.

- Aspa- 'horse' (16 names): Aspacanah-, *Aspastāna- (in Arsacid texts), Vištāspa-, etc.
- Dāta- 'given' (14 names): this element is usually combined with a divine name (e.g., Baga-, Miθra-) or a divine concept (e.g., *farnah-*, *hauma-*)
- *Farnah- 'divine glory' (15 names): *Ātṛfarnah- 'Having the glory of Ātṛ', *Farnaka-, Vindafarnah- 'Finding glory' (also in Seleucid and Arsacid texts), etc. This element appears in its nominative singular *farnā* in the Babylonian records
- Gau-/gu- 'cattle' (9 names): Gaubar(u)va- 'Devouring cattle', Gaumāta-, *Īsgu-, etc.
- Kāma- 'desire, wish' (8 names): *Bagakāma-, *Kāmaka-, *Tīrakāma-, etc.
- Ṛšan- 'hero' (7 names): Ṛšāma-, *Ṛšita-, Xšayaršā, etc.
- Šāta- 'prosperous' / šāti- 'prosperity' (7 names): *Paurušāti-, *Šātaka-, *Šātibara-, etc.

Spelling and Normalisation

Generally, the Babylonian scribes rendered the (in their eyes) foreign Iranian names quite accurately; they wrote what they heard. Only final vowels can appear as (C)u in Babylonian, due to the tendency to use the Babylonian final nominative vowel.[4] The use of *u*, however, is probably

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[4] See also the Appendix to this chapter.

a scribal convention, since Babylonian final vowels were no longer pro-
nounced in the Achaemenid period, just like their Iranian counterparts.

Vowels

Most inaccurate writings occur when Babylonians noted down Iranian
vowels, especially short vowels, although in general a renders /a/, i /i/, and
u /u/. Vowel harmony is rare in Babylonian renderings of Iranian names.

Long vowels may be rendered by explicit vowel signs, for example, *ᴵḫu-ú-
ma-a-ta-ʾ* for *Humāta- 'Having good thoughts' or the element data- 'Given
by', which nearly always appears as *da-a-tV* in Babylonian cuneiform texts.
However, these vowel signs can also denote a short vowel, which has led
some scholars (Justeson and Stephens 1991–3, 32) to believe that the cunei-
form writing system was developing into an alphabetic system. There are
only four examples of this phenomenon, three of which are renderings of the
divine element *Miθra-, suggesting that scribal convention played a role here.[5]
The fourth one, in reality the best example, is not a name but a loanword:
*hamārakara- 'accountant', spelled *am-ma-ri-a-kal*, *am-ma-ri-a-ka-ri*, and
am-ma-ru-a-kal. This is the nicest example, as one could argue that the
signs RI and RU function as a rendering of the consonant /r/, not of
the syllables /ri/ and /ru/. Nonetheless, the extremely low number of such
cases strongly pleads against any alphabetic features in the Mesopotamian
cuneiform writing system.

Consonants

One can only admire the Babylonian scribes for their accuracy in noting
down the Old Iranian consonants. Only a couple of errors occur, such as
mistakes against the distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants,
a distinction that is nevertheless present in both Babylonian and Old
Persian/Median. Here follows an overview of these errors:

- /b/ = -p- (2 examples): *Bagakāna- (ᴵ*pa-ga-ka-an-na*) and *Ṛtabānu-
  (ᴵ*ar-ta-ap-pa-nu*)
- /d/ = -t- (2 examples): *Tīhūpardaisa- (ᴵ*ti-ḫu-par^{ar}-ta-ʾ-is*) and
  Vindafarnā (ᴵ*ú-mi-in-ta-pa-ar-na-ʾ* and ᴵ*ú-mi-in-ta-par-na-ʾ*)

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[5] *Miθradāta-, spelled ᴵ*mi-tir-ri-a-da-da-ʾ* (note also the scribal error against the distinction between
voiceless and voiced stop); *Miθrāta-, spelled ᴵ*mi-ti-ri-a-ta*; *Miθravasa-, spelled ᴵ*mi-tir-ri-a-ma-a-su*.

- /g/ = -k- (2 examples): *Bagasravā (^I*ba-ak-ka-su-ru-ú*) and Gaubar(u)va-(^P*ku-bar-ra*).
- /k/ = -g- (2 examples): *Jīvaka- (^I*zi-ma-ga-ʾ* and ^I*zi-ma-ga*) and *Zabrakāna- (^I*za-ab-ra-ga-nu*)
- /t/ = -d- (10 examples): *Aspazanta- (^I*as-pa-za-an-da-ʾ*), *Bagadāta- (^I*ba-ga-da-du* and ^I*bag-da-da*), *Bagapāta- (^I*ba-ga-ʾ-pa-da* and ^I*ba-ga-pa-da*), *Bagapitā (^I*ba-ga-pi-du*), *Bagavanta- (^I*ba-ga-ʾ-un-du*, ^I*ba-ga-un-du*, and ^I*ba-gu-un-du*), *Dātafarnā (^I*da-da-a-pa-ar-na-ʾ* and ^I*da-da-par-na-ʾ*), *Davantāna- (^I*du-un-da-na-ʾ*), *Miθradāta- (^I*mi-tir-ri-a-da-da-ʾ*), *Sravanta- (^I*su-ru-un-du*) and *Šātaina- (^I*šad-da-a-a-nu*)

These errors occur in both royal inscriptions and documentary texts. The stops most sensitive for abandoning the distinction voiced/voiceless are the dentals, while velars and labials appear more accurately. The explanation for the higher number of errors when dentals are involved is not hard to find, as Babylonian itself contains some rare equivalent variations: for example, *ba-aḫ-ma-a-du* and [*ba-a*]*r-ma-tú*, plurals of *barumtu* 'coloured wool' (Zadok 1976, 217 no. 1.51), *galādu* and *galātu* 'to tremble', *dudittu* and *tudittu* 'dress-pin' (GAG, 35). The direction of error is mostly that Iranian voiceless consonants are rendered by their Babylonian voiced equivalent (twelve out of eighteen examples), except for the labials. Remarkably, of the ten examples where Babylonian d renders Iranian /t/, four have the error after /n/ (*Aspazanta-, *Bagavanta-, *Davantāna-, and *Sravanta-). Three are errors in the rendering of the element *data-. As a last remark on the rendering of Iranian stops in Babylonian, one can point to the increased use of signs with ṭ in the denotations of an Iranian voiceless dental /t/, for example, ^I*mi-it-ra-a-ṭu* for *Miθrāta- (a name always written with T-signs in Achaemenid texts).

Old Iranian fricatives did not pose a problem for the Babylonian scribes, despite the lack of specific graphemes in the Mesopotamian cuneiform writing system that could express Old Iranian /f/ and /θ/. The first phoneme (a voiceless labial glide) is expressed using the signs otherwise indicating the Babylonian voiceless labial stop /p/. The Old Iranian voiceless interdental glide /θ/ is expressed by signs which render the Babylonian dental stops. The Babylonian scribes mostly wrote the Iranian voiceless velar glide /x/ with a sign feathering ḫ used to render its Babylonian equivalent. The only exception to this transposition rule is the cluster /xš/, where the glide /x/ can also be rendered by a K-sign (Zadok 1976, 217 no. 1.45).

The Old Iranian sibilants are rendered in a logical way in Babylonian and only a few exceptional transpositions exist. One of them appears just one time: Iranian /š/ is rendered by an S-sign in *Šātibaxša- (^I^*šá-ta-ba-ak-su*). Once, a Z-sign renders Old Iranian /s/ (*Satamēša-, ^I^*za-at-tu-me-e-šú*). In another name (*Mazduka-, ^I^*maš-du-ku*), /z/ is rendered by a Š-sign.

Iranian glides did not pose a problem for the Babylonian scribes either. The glide /w/ may be expressed in three ways: by M-signs, by U-signs, or not at all. The last manner is only attested in expressions beginning with /wi-/. The choice for M- and U-signs is not surprising. In Babylonian, /m/ and /w/ are relatively close to each other, as a result of which Babylonian /w/ is expressed by M-signs from the mid-second millennium onwards. The use of U-signs (e.g., U, Ú, and UN) may be the result of Aramaic influence, where *wāw* has a double function as an indication of /w/ and as a mater lectionis for /u/.

For the rendering of Iranian /y/, Babylonian generally uses its sign for the glide /y/. In some cases, /y/ is not explicitly indicated but is implied by the sequence of two vowels.

Consonant Clusters

In general, there are four systems used by the Babylonian scribes to denote Old Iranian clusters of two consonants. These systems are listed here. The first one is the most frequent one, the last one the least frequent.

- Ir. C_1C_2 = Bab. VC_1-C_2 V: ^I^*as-pa-ši-ni* = Aspacanā, ^I^*ši-in-šá-aḫ-ri-iš* = Cincaxriš, ^I^*ip-ra-da-a-ta* = *Fradāta-, etc.
- Ir. C_1C_2 = Bab. C_1 V-C_2 V: ^I^*si-ṭu-nu* = *Stūnā-, ^I^*šá-ta-ri-ta* = *Xšaθrita-, ^I^*ú-ru-da-a-tú* = *(H)uvardāta-
- Ir. C_1C_2 = Bab. C_1 V-VC_2: ^I^*pa-ar-mar-ti-iš* = Fravarti-, ^I^*ra-za-am-ár-ma* = *Razmārva-
- Ir. C_1C_2 = Bab. C_1VC_2: ^I^*par-ta-am-mu* = *Fratama-, ^I^*ši-tir-an-taḫ-mu* = *Ciθrantaxma-

Two personal names show a more complicated system: Ir. C_1C_2 = VC_1-VC_2-C_2 V (^I^*u-pa-da-ar-am-ma-ʾ* = Upadarma-) and Ir. C_1C_2 = VC_1-C_1 V-C_2 V (^I^*is-si-pi-ta-am-ma* = *Spitāma-).

Socio-Onomastics of Iranian Names in Babylonian Sources

One of the most conspicuous aspects of Iranian names in Late Babylonian sources is that the functions of persons bearing Iranian names reflect the political situation of that time. This pattern can be traced in cuneiform

documents from the Neo-Babylonian, Achaemenid, Alexandrinian, Seleucid, and Arsacid periods.

The oldest attestation of an Iranian non-royal name in a Babylonian document is that of *Agnifarnah- who, in the middle of the seventh century, was an official of the Neo-Assyrian king Assurbanipal (PNA 1/I, 56). Unfortunately, no more information is available on this person. In the Neo-Babylonian period, not that many individuals bearing Iranian names are attested. In addition, not much is known of them. Ethnographically interesting is that *Bagadēna- 'Possessing the religion of Baga' is called an Elamite (Babylon 28178 B r. ii 7, 592/591 BCE; in Weidner 1939, 929 and Pl. 3). The same goes for *Marza- 'Frontier area' (Babylon 28178 B r. ii 14). The unfortunately broken name *[…]zāta- is also interesting, as this person, attested in a text from c. 595/594–569/568 BCE (reign of Nebuchadnezzar II), is called an 'envoy of Parsumaš' (VAT 16287:28′). Finally, in 539 BCE, not long before Cyrus' conquest of Babylon, *Bagayāza- (name for a child born during the *bagayāza*-feast) is a royal official of Nabonidus (YOS 6 169:20, 231:24). A female slave named *Amatavāta- 'Having the strength of Ama' is sold by Rakal to Iltabiya, two persons with Semitic names, in a document from 561 BCE (ROMCT 2 3:2; reign of Amīl-Marduk).

With the arrival of Iranian dominance in Mesopotamia, this pattern continues and the attested persons with Iranian names reflect the society of that time. For instance, several Achaemenid princes appear in the archive of the Murašû family with whom they did business, including *Haxiyabānu- (420–419 BCE), *Arbarēva- (419 BCE), *Ṛšita- (421–417 BCE), and the well-known prince Ṛšāma-, who was satrap of Egypt during the reign of Darius II and who also appears in Aramaic and Egyptian texts (Stolper 1985, 64–7). Most Iranians attested in Babylonian sources belong to the higher social strata and could also own slaves, as demonstrated by *Ārmati-, the owner of a slave named Nabû-ikṣur (TMH 2/3 171:6). Many Iranians are only known because they are mentioned as the father of a contracting party or of a witness. Some servants or slaves with Iranian names are also mentioned: *Arbamiθra- (FuB 14 17–18 no. 7:3, u.e. 2), servant of *Šātibṛzana- (Iranian name); *Īsgu- (BE 9 13:4), slave (*qallu*) of *Ṛtabara- (Iranian name); *Armaka- (AMI NF 23 175:2), servant of Tattannu (Babylonian name).

Some of the high-ranking individuals with an Iranian name attested in cuneiform texts from the Achaemenid period can be identified with people figuring in Greek classical works. For instance, Ctesias (*apud* Photios, §§ 38, 39, 46, and 48) tells us about Menostanes, son of Artarios. This Artarios was satrap of Babylon and brother of Artaxerxes I. When Artaxerxes I died,

Menostanes, who had served the late king, became commander for the throne claimant Sogdianus, but when Darius II finally took power, Menostanes died shortly afterwards. This Menostanes can easily be identified with *Manuštāna- from the Babylonian Murašû archive; his father Artarios appears as Artareme (*Ṛtarēva-) in the same archive (Stolper 1985, 90–1).

An interesting case is *Ṛtaxšara-, who occurs in thirteen texts (443–418 BCE) of the Murašû archive (Stolper 1985, 91–92) and who is probably identical to the Paphlagonian eunuch Ἀρτοξάρης, who supported Darius II and became an influential person at his court. That he occupied a high rank within Babylonian society is clear from the fact that eight subordinates of him occur in the Murašû archive: Bazuzu (son of Bēl-bullissu), Bēl-ittannu, Il-yadīn (son of Yadaˁ-Yāma), Lâbâši (son of [. . . -it]tannu), Marduk-ibni, Nergal-aḫu-ittannu, Nidinti-Šamaš (son of *Kṛtaka-), and Pamūnu. Mostly these persons are called *ardu* of *Ṛtaxšara-, but some of them also have other titles. Two were foremen (*šaknu*) of a so-called *ḫaṭru*: Bazuzu was foreman of the 'scouts of the left flank' and possessed a seal as well as a golden signet ring, whereas Pamūnu was foreman of the '*šušānu*s of the storehouse/treasury'. He too owned a seal and a golden signet ring. Marduk-ibni was an accountant of *Ṛtaxšara-. In two instances Nidinti-Šamaš is called a *paqdu* (bailiff). In any case, all but one of the subordinates of this high-ranked official also bore the title *ardu* 'servant, subordinate'. Only Itti-Bēl-abni, attested in a text from 443 BCE (BE 9 4), was a slave (*qallu*). Nevertheless, they nearly all had a seal, which again corroborates their rather high social position.

Within one family, people could have names belonging to different languages. In BE 10 59, a certain Bēlšunu (Babylonian), son of *Dēfrāda- (Iranian), appears. The inverse direction is found in BE 9 39, where *Hadābāga- is the son of Iddin-Nabû. In the text *Camb*. 384 a person with an Iranian name, *Naryābigna- 'Having the attacking power of a hero', is described with an Elamite gentilic (ˡᵘ*e-la-mu-ú*).

One late-Achaemenid, imprecisely dated document (K 8133; in Stolper 1994, 627) has a very large concentration of individuals bearing Iranian names who did not make up an isolated community but who engaged in transactions with Babylonians (or, at least, people with a Babylonian name). Not fewer than twelve Iranian names occur in this lease of oxen to a person named Iddin-Nabû. The lessor has an Iranian name. The other Iranians are witnesses, together with at least two Babylonians. It is interesting to see that one witness with a Babylonian name (Nidinti-Bēl) has

a father with an Iranian name (*Gauniya-, a hypocoristic of *Gauna-'Hairy'). Possibly the father had adopted an Iranian name in the hope of a career in the Achaemenid administration.

As can be expected, the number of Iranian names drops significantly after the conquest of Babylonia by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE. In the Alexandrinian Empire as well as in the following Seleucid period, Greco-Macedonian political power reduces the number of officials with Iranian names. Some officials are attested: for example, *Nababṛzana- 'Furthering his family', a chiliarch (CT 49 6:2; 327 BCE); *Vindafarnah- 'Finding divine glory', a governor (308–307 BCE); *Aryapā- 'Protecting the Aryans', a commander (AD -144:16´; 145 BCE). A high military commander – a general, in fact – was *Ṛtaya-, who organised a census in Babylon and Seleucia in 145 BCE (AD -144:36´).

People with an Iranian name and a Babylonian patronym also appear in the Seleucid period. In 262 BCE, *Kṛmāniya-, son of Iddināya, appears in a letter from Bēl-ibni, the chief administrator (*šatammu*) of the Esagil temple in Babylon (CT 49 118:6).

In the Arsacid period the number of Iranian names attested in cunei-form Babylonian texts rises again, when the Iranian-speaking Arsacids take control in Babylonia. Many of the Iranian names, however, are names of kings or members of the royal family. Interestingly, the son of the king of Elymais also bears an Iranian name: *Varya- (spelled ^{I}*ur-ʾ-a* and ^{I}*ur-ri-ʾ-a*; AD -124 B:21´; 132–125/124 BCE). Military officials appear sometimes – for example, three generals: *Miθradāta-, 'Given by Mithra' (AD -107 r. 15´; 107 BCE), *Miθrāta- (AD -90:15´, 32´; 91 BCE), and *Aspastāna- 'He whose place is with horses' (AD -87 C r. 32´; 87 BCE). Interesting also is the high priest *(H)urauda- 'Having a beautiful growth', who appears in a document dated to 107 BCE (LBAT 1445:2–3).

In the post-Achaemenid period, contrary to the Achaemenid period, various double names are attested. An example is *Bagâ, 'whose other name is Nikanōr' (BaM 15 274:12; Zadok 2009, 137 no. 167).

Appendix: Transposition Tables

The following tables offer an overview of how Babylonian scribes rendered the sounds of the Old Iranian language in their script.

1. Vowels

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
/a/-	(C)a	-/i/-	(C)a
/a/-	(C)u	-/i/-	(C)e
-/a/-	(C)a	-/i/-	(C)i
-/a/-	(C)i	-/ī/-	(C)e
-/a/-	(C)u	-/ī/-	(C)i
/ā/-	(C)a	/u/-	(C)u
-/ā/-	(C)a	-/u/-	(C)a
-/ā/-	(C)u	-/u/-	(C)i
-/ē/-	(C)e	-/u/-	(C)u
-/ē/-	(C)i	-/ū/-	(C)u

2. Consonants

2.1 *Stops*

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
/b/-	b	/k/-	k
/b/-	p	-/k/-	g
-/b/-	b	-/k/-	k
/d/-	d	/p/-	p
/d/-	t	-/p/-	p
-/d/-	d	/t/-	d
-/d/-	t	/t/-	t
/g/-	g	-/t/-	d
/g/-	k	-/t/-	t
-/g/-	g	-/t/-	ṭ
-/g/-	k		

2.2   *Fricatives*

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
/f/-	p	/x/-	ḫ
-/f/-	p	-/x/-	ḫ
/θ/-	t	-/x/-	k
-/θ/-	t		

2.3   *Laryngeals*

Old Ir.	Babylonian
/h/-	Ø
/h/-	ḫ
-h-	Ø
-h-	ʾ
-h-	ḫ

2.4   *Sibilants (Dental and Palato-Alveolar Fricatives)*

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
-/ç/-	ḫs	-/š/-	š
-/ç/-	s, ss	-/š/-	s
-/ç/-	š	-/š/	š
-/ç/-	ts	/z/-	z
/s/-	š	-/z/-	š
-/s-	s	-/z/-	z
-/s/-	z	-[ž]-	š
/š/-	š		

2.5 *Affricates*

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
/c/-	š	-/c/-	z
-/c/-	s	/j/-	z
-/c/-	š	-/j/-	z

3 Sonorants

3.1 *Glides*

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
/w/-	m	-/y/-	(C)e-a(C)
/w/-	u	-/y/-	(C)e-a-a(C)
-/w/-	Ø	-/y/-	(C)e-e-a(C)
-/w/-	m	-/y/-	(C)i-ʔ-a(C)
-/w/-	(C)u(C)	-/y/-	(C)i-a(C)
/y/-	i(a)	-/y/-	(C)i-e(C)
-/y/-	ʔ	-/y/-	(C)i-i-a(C)
-/y/-	(C)a-e(C)	-/y/-	i(a)
-/y/-	(C)a-i(C)	-/y/-	Ø
-/y/-	i(C)-ʔ-a(C)		

3.2 *Liquids*

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
-/l/-	l	-[r̩]-	AR
/r/-	r	-[r̩]-	RA
-/r/-	l	-[r̩]-	RE/RI
-/r/-	r	-[r̩]-	RU
[r̩]-	AR		

3.3   *Nasals*

Old Ir.	Babylonian	Old Ir.	Babylonian
/m/-	m	/n/-	n
-/m/-	m	-/n/-	n

Further Reading

Grammatical overviews of the Old Persian language are numerous. The most important ones are those from Roland G. Kent (1953), Wilhem Brandenstein and Manfred Mayrhofer (1964), Rüdiger Schmitt (2004), and Lambert Isebaert and Jan Tavernier (2012). The Old Iranian names as attested in Old Iranian (i.e., Avestan and Old Persian) sources were collected and analysed by Manfred Mayrhofer in the prestigious series *Iranisches Personennamenbuch* (1979). One later publication also discussed the Old Persian anthroponyms, but for the Avestan names Mayrhofer's volume remains indispensable. This later publication is the Old Persian dictionary by Rüdiger Schmitt (2014). An onomastic study of the Old Iranian names in general (including those attested in Greek sources) has not yet been undertaken.

The Old Iranian name material in Babylonian documents was brought together for the first time by Walther Hinz (1975; review by Ran Zadok 1976). As many new texts came to light after the publication of this volume, new studies were quickly needed. This lacuna was tackled by the author, who collected all Old Iranian names in non-Iranian texts from the Achaemenid period (Tavernier 2007), leaving out the pre- and post-Achaemenid periods. In his 2009 volume on Iranian anthroponyms in Babylonian sources, Ran Zadok did include both periods. This volume (published in the *Iranisches Personennamenbuch* series) should be consulted together with the review by Jan Tavernier (2015). Ran Zadok (1976) offers the first study of the renderings of Iranian sounds in Babylonian orthography.

Finally, for historical aspects concerning the better-known individuals bearing Iranian names in Babylonian sources, the reader is referred to Matthew W. Stolper (1985) and Pierre Briant (1996).

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