

brick reliefs, the procession way leading to the great temple and tower of Bêl-Marduk, the palace with its hanging gardens, the Euphrates bridge, became one of the marvels of the world. (cf. Dr. R. Koldewey, *The Rediscovered Babylon*, 1899-1912.) The Babylonian Section of the University Museum is rich in monuments of this period: stamped bricks bearing the name, title, filiation of the king, and the name of the building shrine or tower for which it was intended; foundation documents like the clay cylinder of Nabopolassar, the large clay barrel of Nebuchadnezzar (*Figure 42*), bought in London in 1888 (cf. PBS, Vol. XV, *Royal Inscriptions and Fragments from Nippur and Babylon*, 1926), describing the restoration of the temples of Marduk and Nabu at Babylon and Borsippa, and their magnificent state-boat, and another describing the restoration of the great walls; the clay cylinders of Nabonidus discovered by Taylor in 1854 on the second stage of the Ziggurat at Ur, which first identified the ruin with the native city of Abraham. On them is inscribed a prayer for Belshazzar, his son and heir, the same who saw the ominous writing on the wall. A daughter of Nabonidus, Bel-shalti-Nannar, was high priestess of the moon-god, as was the daughter of Sargon centuries before. She lived in state in the Egipar palace with a large retinue and endowment, as we know from a cylinder in the Yale University collections. A small clay column dating to Sin-balatsu-iqbi and inscribed with copies of ancient brick stamps was one of the curiosities exhibited in her museum. The blue glazed bricks of the shrine at the top of the Ziggurat restored by Nabonidus may be seen in the Babylonian Section of the University Museum.

The Persian Period

The capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 B.C., almost a century after the ruin of Nineveh, sealed the destiny of the Semitic emperors who had ruled over the four corners of the world. Henceforth Mesopotamia became a mere province of the Persian, the Greek, the Roman empires, of the Parthians and the Sassanians, until centuries after Christ it passed under the domination of the Moslem conquerors. A list of the tribes and nations assembled by Darius on the Hellespont before his invasion of Europe, gives a good illustration of the new conditions of life in the Oriental world. Cyrus put an end to the captivity of Babylon and let the

Jewish exiles return to Jerusalem. His inscription stamped on a brick from Ur, now in the University Museum, reads like a part of his proclamation: "The great gods have delivered all the lands into my hand. The land I have made to dwell in a peaceful habitation." (Ur excavations, *Royal Inscriptions*, Vol. I, no. 194.) The brick was built into the socket box of the so-called Cyrus gate.

Aramaic endorsements scratched or painted on the edges of a number of cuneiform tablets are another sign of changing times. (*Business Documents of Murashû Sons of Nippur*, B.E., Vol. IX and X.) Aramaic was the language employed by the Persians in their official relations with their subject nations. It was written, not with syllabic signs, but with the letters of an alphabet. That great Semitic innovation originated on the shore of the Mediterranean. (cf. *Fouilles de Ras-Shamra* by Prof. Claude F. A. Schaeffer and Charles Viroilleaud.) The simple signs were eventually to replace the complicated cuneiform characters, as the parchment would be preferred to the cumbersome clay tablets. The Phoenician signs may have been derived from Egyptian hieroglyphs, but there were already in the second millennium in upper Syria cuneiform alphabets in use to write the language of Pre-Israel Canaanites. Cuneiform signs with alphabetical values were adopted by the Persian kings in their official inscriptions at Persepolis and on the famous rock of Behistun. On the latter Darius I ordered the history of his conquests to be engraved, in three versions, all in cuneiform characters, but representing three different languages: old Persian, Elamite and Assyro-Babylonian. In 1837 to 1846 Rawlinson deciphered the old Persian version, and thus supplied the key to an understanding of the others. By the unlocking of the mysterious Assyro-Babylonian writing, he revealed a wonderful treasure of ancient history and well deserved his name of "Father of Assyriology." There is in the Babylonian Section a good example of a trilingual cuneiform inscription in the Persian, Elamite and Babylonian languages. It is engraved on a large alabaster vase of Xerxes I, probably found at Babylon, and bought in London in 1888. It reads "Xerxes the Great King." The same is repeated in Egyptian hieroglyphs enclosed in a cartouche. The vase filled with scented oil was part of the royal stores, providing luxury for the bath.

Under Artaxerxes I (*Figure 43*) and Darius II a large portion of the land around Nippur was in the hands of the Persians. The administra-

tion of their estates was left to a local agent or banker, better known as "The Murashû Sons" from their numerous business documents now in the Babylonian Section of the University Museum (*Business Documents of Murashû Sons of Nippur*, B.E. Vol. IX and X). They throw a curious light on the conditions of life in southern Mesopotamia in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Greek Period

In 331 B.C., Alexander, after the battle of Arbela, entered Babylon and added Persia to his previous conquest of Asia Minor, Palestine and Egypt. After his return from India, he settled in Babylon and dreamed of restoring the glory of the old city, but died before he could achieve it. His successor, Seleucus, built a new capital at Seleucia, twenty miles south of Baghdad. Greek art and mythology are represented in the Babylonian Section by a few alabaster statuettes and terra cotta reliefs with some of the charm of the Tanagra figurines.

Coined money was also introduced at the example of Sardes and Athens. Greek artists worked hereafter in the royal mints and Greek-trained gem cutters wrought in intaglio on seal stones exquisite models of pure Greek inspiration. Greek was spoken far south in the learned schools of Uruk where under Greek administration Chaldaean astronomy was taught. Berossus wrote in Greek his ancient history of Babylonia back to the Flood and the Sumerian immigration. Among typical Greek objects found at Nippur are the handle of a Rhodian amphora, Greek lamps, and a limestone cornice representing the vine branch.

The Parthian Period

Large constructions of that period, like the fortress built on the top of the Ziggurat and a Parthian palace, called "The Court of Columns," have been found at Nippur. The cruciform, heavy, mud-brick walls of the fortress had to be removed before the upper stage of the tower could be exposed. In the outer wall of the Parthian citadel a brick tomb