

## Fresh Light on the Book of Daniel.

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IN THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for June last year (p. 420) I gave, under the heading 'Glimpses of Life in Erech,' an account of some new inscriptions from that ancient and renowned city, gleaned from some of the tablets of the collection belonging to Mr. W. Harding Smith. An examination of a further instalment of tablets in the same collection has revealed the existence of other documents of a semi-historical nature, the contents of which will probably rejoice the hearts of many who have found in the Book of Daniel a stumbling-block to their faith.

As will be remembered, the tablets from Erech in the collection in question are mainly contracts; and such, in fact, is the nature of the new texts which I now bring to the notice of scholars. This, naturally, is somewhat disappointing, for we should all like to come across further material of the nature of the Babylonian Chronicle, to which we have been mainly indebted for details of Nabonidus' reign hitherto. Our consolation, however, is that the new material belongs to a class which cannot mislead us—written for the day whose date they bear, their chronological indications, as well as the accompanying historical and other information, would seem to be absolutely unimpeachable.

The important tablets are two in number. The earlier measures  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. high by  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. long, and is inscribed with 21 lines of writing. The clay is apparently unbaked, and being soft, worms have tunnelled holes through it, and in one place near the lower edge of the obverse, the points of entry and exit are visible. As, however, the damaged portions can, in most cases, be restored, the full translation may be given as follows:—

'Īši-Amurrū, son of Nūrānu, has sworn by Bêl, Nebo, the Lady of Erech,<sup>1</sup> and Nanâ, the oath of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, and Belshazzar, the king's son, that, "on the 7th day of the month Adar of the 12th year of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, I will go to Erech, to the presence of Zêri, steward of Ê-anna, and the (priests?) of

Ê-anna, and the business of cattle-raising for the Lady of Erech, which is mine (*ina pania*), I will perform in Ê-anna." If, on the 7th day of the month Adar, Īši-Amurrū does not perform (*lâ itepšû*) the business of cattle-raising with the steward and the priests of Ê-anna, he will commit a sin against the king' (*hiši ša šarri isaddad*).

Here follow the names of three witnesses, and that of the scribe. The date reads:

'City Maḥrâ, additional month of Adar, day 22nd, year 12th, Nabonidus, king of Babylon.'

(From this text it would seem that the additional Adar came before, and not after, Adar proper—it was on the 7th of the real Adar that Īši-Amurrū was to perform his vow.)

The importance of this inscription is that it places Belshazzar practically on the same plane as Nabonidus, his father, five years before the latter's deposition, and the bearing of this will not be overlooked. Officially, Belshazzar had not been recognized as king, as this would have necessitated his father's abdication, but it seems clear that he was in some way associated with him on the throne, otherwise his name would hardly have been introduced into the oath with which the inscription begins. We now see that not only for the Hebrews, but also for the Babylonians, Belshazzar held a practically royal position. The conjecture as to Daniel's being made the third ruler in the kingdom because Nabonidus and Belshazzar were the first and second is thus confirmed, and the mention of Belshazzar's 3rd year in Dn 8<sup>1</sup> is explained.

We have yet to learn what was the exact position of Belshazzar in the kingdom of Babylonia, but though he was, in the earlier part of his father's reign, with the army in Akkad, he constantly went, it may be conjectured, to Babylon, and contracts exist showing that he acquired property there. One point is noteworthy, namely, that his secretary, Nabû-kain-âḥi,<sup>2</sup> borrowed 45 shekels of silver, which is described as having been 'tithes of Bêl, Nebo, Nergal, and the Lady of Erech.' This, however, was not borrowed directly, but from Nabû-šabitqatê, Belshazzar's major-domo, and was apparently

<sup>1</sup> Istar. 'The Lady of Erech and Nanâ' are also mentioned in the inscriptions translated in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for June 1914, pp. 420-422.

<sup>2</sup> Or Nabû-takîn-ušur.

repaid through Nabû-âhê-iddina, a descendant of Egibi.<sup>1</sup> In this transaction between the members of Belshazzar's household, there is probably no indication that the invocation of Istar of Erech in Mr. Harding Smith's tablet was due to special connexions with the temple of the goddess in that city. 'The Lady of Erech' referred to in the British Museum text implies rather her temple at Babylon, where were also temples to the other deities mentioned—Bêl (Merodach), Nebo, and Nergal.

Naturally the existence of inherited authority might be of use in settling the question of any royal title applied to Belshazzar, and in this matter it may be well to refer again to the contract in which a seemingly blundering copyist has applied to a certain Nabonidus (he who afterwards became king of Babylonia?) the title 'son of the king of the city,' replacing 'he who is over the city' in the more correct copy. Though this is of no great value for the title 'king of the Chaldeans,' which is given to Belshazzar in Daniel, his being in residence at Babylon at the time Nabonidus, his father, was captured, implies that he may have been governor of the city, and therefore possessed authority which would otherwise have belonged to the king. This the later tablet, which I shall now describe, shows to have been customary at this period, if not at other times.

Unlike the tablet associating Nabonidus and Belshazzar, the second text is in an excellent state of preservation—well written and carefully baked. There is, it is true, slight damage to the reverse, but this only affects the list of witnesses, leaving the text proper intact. Its height is  $1\frac{7}{16}$  in., and its length  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in.; colour greyish-red.

This inscription runs as follows:—

'At the end of the month Chisleu, 4th year of Cambyses, king of Babylon and the lands, Ardîa,<sup>2</sup> son of Nabû-bani-âhi, descendant of Rêmut-Êa, the man who is over the date-offerings of Istar of Erech, will take 5 talents of early fruit, and deliver them, in the palace of the king, which is situated above Ê-anna, to Nabû-âha-iddina, the king's

<sup>1</sup> Further details are given—*i.e.* the money was borrowed to purchase Nabû-ikribi-šime, a slave, and the transaction took place in the presence of the borrower's wife, Didîtu<sup>m</sup>. One of the witnesses was 'Arša'u, son of Kudma-âbi, slave of Belshazzar, the son of the king.' The date is: 'Sebat, day 9th, year 7th, Nabonidus, king of Babylon.'

<sup>2</sup> See THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for June 1914, p. 422, col. 1.

captain (*sak šarri* or *rêš šarri*), lord of Ê-anna's contribution. If he does not bring (the amount), he will commit a sin against Gobryas, governor of Babylon (*hitu ša Gubarru, âwel pihâti Bâbili, inamdin*). Besides the balances which are against them, they shall give an amount of 100 *gidimu*.'

Here follow the names of three witnesses and the scribe. The date runs:

'Erech, month Marcheswan, day 9th, year 4th, Cambyses, king of Babylon, king of the lands.'

The above inscription will show the importance of the question, whether Belshazzar was governor of Babylon—'king of the city'—or not. It is to be noted that the dates were for the royal palace in Erech, but if they were not delivered, the wrong committed is not described as being against Cambyses, but Gobryas, and the importance of this point will not be overlooked. Noteworthy, also, is the fact that he was still governor of Babylon in the 4th year of Cambyses—thirteen years after he took the city for Cyrus—and his possessing authority at Erech implies that he occupied a position which would be best described by the words 'Babylonian viceroy.' Babylonia and Assyria, at this time, were simply provinces of the great Persian Empire. The reference to the 3rd year of Cyrus in Dn 10<sup>1</sup> implies, however, that 'Darius the Mede,' son of Ahasuerus (a certain Xerxes), may not have been governor of Babylon and viceroy all the time. The age attributed to Darius the Mede in Daniel, 62 years, would make Gobryas (whom we must identify with him) to have been 75 at the time this tablet was written. Tiele's objection, that Cyrus would not have given power in Babylonia to a Mede, says nothing against the identification, as Gobryas, in the Babylonian Chronicle, is distinctly stated to have been governor of Gutiu<sup>m</sup>, a part of ancient Media. According to Xenophon, Gobryas possessed all the fidelity with which Orientals are often credited, for though he had no small hatred for Belshazzar, he remained faithful to Nabonidus to the end. He seems, however, to have regarded Belshazzar as the murderer of his son, hence the conflict in or near the royal palace at Babylon, and the death of this last representative of Babylonia's royal house.

How far Xenophon's account (*Cyropædia*, iv. 6) is correct, we do not know, but it is exceedingly interesting. That Gobryas should describe himself as an Assyrian (=Babylonian) seems most improbable, not only on account of the statement in

the Babylonian Chronicle, but also on account of his name and its varying forms.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, however, he regarded himself as an Assyrian (= Babylonian) because he was a vassal of Nabonidus, in which case the expression would simply mean that he was a Babylonian subject.

<sup>1</sup> *Gubaru*, *Gubarru*, and *Ugbaru*, which, it might be argued, show that the pronunciation was *G'baru*. The Greek Gobryas, on the other hand, implies a form like *Gubru*.

But the important point in this second inscription is the statement that Gubarru (Gobryas) was governor of Babylon, and that he was the person sinned against if Ardia failed to deliver the 5 talents of dates required for the royal palace at Erech. As the official replacing the king, he evidently had royal power, and this tablet, like that mentioning Belshazzar, adds one more to the arguments that the Book of Daniel may not be so incorrect, historically, as it is commonly held to be.

## National Hate.

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'For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen : as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee : thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

'And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau ; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.'—Ob 15. 21.

'Love your enemies.'—Mt 5<sup>44</sup>.

We have heard much recently of a Hymn of Hate. That production has been received by some as if nothing similar to it had ever been made before. However true that impression may be in one respect, in another it is not well founded. This is not the first century in which nations have regarded each other with hatred. Two thousand five hundred years ago there were two peoples who hated each other with an extreme and lasting hate, and some writings, in which that hate was expressed, have found a place in the world's literature. These two peoples were the Hebrews and the Edomites. Their lands bordered each other in southern Palestine, and between them an intermittent warfare was waged for centuries. The hatred of the Hebrews against the Edomites found expression in many a hymn and prophecy, some of which are now preserved in the Hebrew Scriptures, *e.g.* the prophecy of Obadiah. There were doubtless many such of Edomite origin, but Time has robbed us of them all.

The hatred between these two peoples was remarkable in view of their many common interests. Racially they were closely related to each other. Obadiah and others speak of the relationship as that of brothers. 'Look not thou on the day of thy brother,' says Obadiah; and Amos accuses

Edom of having pursued his brother with the sword. This intimate connexion is also witnessed to by the story that Jacob and Esau, the ancestors from whom these two peoples were descended, were twins. The languages they spoke belonged to the same stock, and, so far as we know, differed little from each other. Recent investigation has shown that certain of their religious practices were identical. Their position as buffer-states between two great empires—Egypt on the west, and Assyria or Babylonia on the east—strongly suggested that instead of wasting their powers in mutual strife they should unite their forces for mutual protection. But no! their animosity only increased with the passing centuries, so much so that the harm of the one was the joy of the other. It was with tumultuous gladness, Obadiah tells us, that the Edomites greeted the conquest of Judæa by the Babylonians in 586. To show how Israel reciprocated this hate, it need only be said that never do we find such hard things said about Babylon for all the sufferings it imposed on the Hebrews, as we find said about Edom.

What gave rise to this 'perpetual hatred,' as Ezekiel calls it, is unknown to us. It is certain that the Edomites were in many ways a favoured people. Their land though wild and mountainous contained many fertile valleys, and their position on one of the great trade-routes of the East—the route between Arabia and Asia Minor—enabled them to accumulate wealth as 'middlemen.' This may at times have excited the jealousy and cupidity of the Hebrews.

But the 'perpetual hatred' was probably due to