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EMPIRES LOST AND FOUND: Stratigraphy and Today's Search for the Great Powers of the Past

"Assyrii principes omnium gentium rerum potiti sunt, deinde Medi, postea Persae, deinde Macedones" (Aemilius Sura, 2nd century BCE).

"Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes, [...] drew together under his own rule all Asia beyond the Halys. Then, collecting all his subject peoples, he attacked Nineveh. [...] He had defeated the Assyrians in battle; but then, when he was beleaguering Nineveh, there came upon him a great host of Scythians, whose leader was their king, Madyes" (Herodotus, *The History* I: 103.)

"This survey of the evidence, both textual and archaeological for Media between 612 and 550 BC has revealed almost nothing. Media in the first half of the sixth century is a Dark Age" (Michael Roaf). "It has to be admitted at the outset that there is not the slightest archaeological indication of a Median presence in Assyria after 612 BC" (John Curtis). From: Giovanni Lanfranchi, Michael Roaf, Robert Rollinger, *Continuity of Empire (?). Assyria, Media, Persia. Proceedings of the International Meeting in Padua, 26th-28th April 2001. History of the Ancient Near East. Monographs, V.* Padova: S.a.r.g.o.n., 2003, p. 19 and p. 165.

"In power the land of Assyria counts as one third of all Asia. Rule over this country - which rule is called by the Persians a satrapy - is of all the satrapies by far the greatest" (Herodotus, *The History* I: 192). That is why the Hebrews called Akhaemenid rulers "King of Assyria" (*Ezra* 6: 22).

"Unfortunately there are no cuneiform tablets from the Assyrian heartland that are securely dated to the Achaemenid period. [...] We are not confident in our ability to identify Achaemenid pottery. [...] At the same time, there is no evidence for major urban centres, with the possible exception of Erbil, and it is doubtful whether they existed" (John Curtis, *The Achaemenid Period in Northern Iraq*, November 2003, www.aina.org/articles/curtis.pdf).

"The topic of our symposium, 'Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period', leads us to the realm of mystery. The word *mystery* evokes a twofold feeling of sadness and of hope: sadness, because we know so little and would like to know so much more; hope, because there is still much work to be done in this area. [...] The Hebrew Bible contains very few passages that address Achaemenid rule over Judah and the Judeans (539-332 B.C.E.). Very few events are illuminated or given any kind of value judgment. [...] The existing extrabiblical sources contain little or no reference to the Judeans or Judah. There are only a few archaeological and epigraphic finds. Thus, Herbert Donner justifiably refers to the Persian era as the 'dark ages'" (O. Lipschits / M. Oeming, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Winona Lake/Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006, IX).

"It should come as no surprise to learn that this mass of new material has resulted in drastic revisions of almost everything we thought we knew about ancient Mesopotamia. I have gone into this in some detail because it is important that Classical scholars come to appreciate the hard-won advances that have been made in the study of "Oriental" history in recent decades" (James D. Muhly, Review of Giovanni Lanfranchi, Michael Roaf, Robert Rollinger, *Continuity of Empire (?). Assyria, Media, Persia. Proceedings of the International Meeting in Padua, 26th-28th April 2001. History of the Ancient Near East. Monographs, V.* Padova: S.a.r.g.o.n., 2003, in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2004, 11.11.)

The Chaldaean priest Berossos, around 278-290 B.C.E., writes, in Greek, a history of his homeland for the Macedonian/Seleucid king Antiochus I. It is known under the title *Babyloniaka* of which fragments are preserved in ancient Greek writings.

In his section on the Deluge, Berossos surprisingly calls the flood hero Xisuthros (Alexander Polyhistor) or Sisithrus (Abydenus). This is a Greek transliteration of Ziusudra. Yet, Ziusudra is the protagonist of the “**Sumerian**” version of the Flood. That Berossos does not leave us the **Chaldean** name of the flood hero has never stopped to stun Orientalists. After all, Berossos tells us nothing about the “**Sumerians**” who, since Jules Oppert’s coining of the term 1868, are thought to have created mankind’s first civilization in his very homeland. All ancient Greek writers who cite Berossos take him for a Chaldaean expert of **Chaldean** history. Therefore, they list his records under headings like “Chaldaean History” (Alexander Polyhistor), “Of the Chaldaean Kings” (Apollodorus) or “Of the Chaldaean Kings and the Deluge” (Abydenus).

Like Berossos, ancient Greek authors never give the slightest hint of a “Sumerian” civilization though Greek transliterations of cuneiform texts, called “Sumerian” by modern scholars, are produced as late as the 2nd or even 3rd century AD (so called Graeco-Babyloniaca). Thus, ancient Greeks are able to read and write “Sumerian” for nearly half a millennium but fail to recognize the “Sumerian” people not to speak of a “Sumerian” cradle of civilization. What they know is a Chaldean civilization with some 900 larger and smaller settlements which supposedly did not leave a single grave, brick or even potsherd

Why Berossos would draw on sources of the “**Sumerians**” to tell **Chaldean** history remains as mysterious as the bewilderingly wanting scholarly and astronomical/astrological texts of the Chaldaeans whose erudition is famous all over Antiquity and “from whom the Greek mathematicians copy” (Flavius Josephus). This enigma is aggravated by the fact that the “Sumerians” themselves, who have left countless astronomical/astrological texts, never employ the word “Sumer” or “Sumerians”. In their own cuneiform writing they call their country **Kalam** (e.g., *Sumerian Kinglist*) and its inhabitants **people of Kalam** (e.g., the Nippur poem *Praise of the Pickax*).

Yet, not only the term **Kalam** fits **Chaldea** well—as do the **Mitanni** fit the **Medes** or the **Martu** the **Mardoï**—but also its stratigraphic location just two strata groups below Hellenism where one would look for the predecessors of the Akhaemenids in Babylonia. Therefore, beginning in 1987, this author has been suggesting that certain empires of the ancient near east did not really exist, and should

therefore be removed from modern textbooks (in English see Heinsohn 1991. 1996 and 1998). At the same time realms and empires well-known since antiquity should be restored to the place they once held in the history and chronology of the ancient world.

The logical basis for this proposal is that in order for great empires and civilizations that appear in modern textbooks to be accepted as genuine there must be evidence of their existence in the archaeological layers of the earth. If textbook empires are without such layers, then there are two possibilities: (1.) these empires should disappear from the pages of modern textbooks. (2.) the existence of these empires must be affirmed by using archaeological layers that are currently assigned to other empires, thus causing these latter empires to disappear.

The author prefers a conservative solution, i.e. possibility 2. Otherwise we would have to throw out teachings and empires that have dominated historical writings for two and a half millennia. We would have to punish thus countless authors of antiquity—Jews, Greeks, Romans and Armenian—by calling them liars, without being able to explain why, in their own time, they had no doubt that the realms described by them were real. Despite their rather quarrelsome dispositions they were united in agreement about the imperial succession—starting, quite in tune with proven Chinese chronology, around -1000—of Assyrians, Medes (with Chaldeans and Scythians), Persians and Macedonians: "Assyrii principes omnium gentium rerum potiti sunt, deinde Medi, postea Persae, deinde Macedones" (Aemilius Sura, -2nd century). Today's beginning of Mesopotamian civilization around -3000 was obtained by employing unscholarly dating techniques which prefer Bible Fundamentalist genealogies and pseudo-astronomical retro calculations to volume of strata and their depth in the ground. The 2nd option produces the following results:

(A) The imperial dimensions of the Akhaemenids, regarded as "elusive" by modern Assyriologists, remain in the textbooks. They are well-known in the cuneiform literature *pars pro toto* under the name of the martial and metallurgically famous Persian tribe of the Mardoi (Mardians/Amardians). They are thus the Old Babylonian (and/or Middle Assyrian) Mar(d)tu/Amorites, who didn't enter the history books until the 19th century. Their great kings are really Babylonian and/or Middle to Late Assyrian throne names for the Akhaemenid rulers (or their satraps) in Persia's two richest provinces—Babylon ("Babery") and Assyria ("Athura"): "In power the land of Assyria counts as one third of all Asia. Rule over this country - which rule is called by the Persians a satrapy - is of all the satrapies by far the greatest" (Herodotus, *The History* I: 192). That is why the Hebrews called Akhaemenid rulers "the King of Assyria" (*Ezra* 6: 22). Examples given, the five last "Neo-Assyrian" rulers Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, Ashur-etil-ilani, Sin-Shumu-Lishir (eunuch), and Sin-Shar-Ishkun are

identical with the last five Akhaemenids: Artaxerxes II Arsakes, Artaxerxes III Okhus, Artaxerxes IV Arses, Bagoas (enuch), and Darius III Kodomannos. The nine slain soldiers found by David Stronach at Nineveh's Halzi Gate are victims of Alexander's capture of the city. "According to Moses [of Khoren; 5th century] these archives [of Nineveh] had been translated from the 'Chaldaean' [cuneiform] to Greek at the command of Alexander the Great" (R.W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenatsi's: History of the Armenians*, translation and commentary on the literary sources, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press, 1978, p. 12). Enigmatic Chana and Subartu of the Martu period are Ionia and Sparta of the Persian (Mardian) period.

(B) The first Indo-Aryan empire of the horse-breeding Medes, judged as a "phantom" by modern Assyriologists, can be identified in the layers of the Mitanni (imperial dimension) and the Middle-Elamites (Iran proper). Both powers were only admitted to the history books in the 19th century. Cyaxares, despoiler of Assur and conqueror of Nineveh, and Shaushatra (Hurrian transcription), despoiler of Ashur and ruler over Nineveh, are one and the same Medish Cyaxares. In the Assyrian language, Cyaxares of Ekbatana appears in Nineveh as Shamshi-Adad of Ekallatum, in the "Elamite" language of Iran as Kutuk-Inshushinak. Aziru the Martu, as the man of the future rising at the end of the Mitanni era, is identical with Cyrus the Mardian rising at the end of Media's empire. Aziru's father Asratu is the same as Cyrus' father A(s)tradates. Aziru's Armenian friend and ally Karanis is identical with Cyrus' friend Tigranis. The rebellious Medes of the "Late-Assyrian" Period are the Medes notoriously rebelling against their Akhaemenid overlords.

The Scythians under Madyas as allies of the Medes and Chaldaens against Sharakos likewise return to the history books. The Qutheans (Guti) under Madga, who were admitted to history books in the 19th century as allies of the "Sumerians" and Elamites against Shar-kali-sharri, disappear. The vassal graves of Ur, a unique feature in the entire history of Babylonia, belong to the brief interregnum of Scythians well known for that type of burial.

(C) The more than 900 cities and towns of Chaldaeia, known to the Greeks as "the cradle of civilization" but seen as non-retrievable by modern Assyriologists, returns to the textbooks. To Chaldaeia are given the archaeological layers that not until 1868 began to be called "Sumer" (albeit Kalam in its own language), which disappears accordingly.

(D) The Ninos and/or Nimrod Assyrians as the first empire builders of history, defined as mythological creations by modern Assyriologists, get the layers of the Old Akkadians, who received those strata in a 19th century transfer. In Egypt the empire Assyrians were

known as the Great Hyksos. The close relationship between the enigmatic Hyksos – with Sharek (Salitis) as their first ruler – and Old-Akkadians – with Sargon in the same role – was seen long ago: Stratigraphically, both empires immediately precede the Mitanni. However, the Hyksos are pseudo-astronomically Sothic-dated to the -2nd millennium whereas the Old-Akkadians are tied via a hidden Bible-fundamentalist Abraham-date to the -3rd millennium. In glyptic, writing, pottery, weaponry (scimitars and composite bows), bellows, true tin bronzes, vertical looms, chariots, vaulted burials, toggle pins, glass, glazing, sophisticated triple gates etc. these stratigraphical bedfellows always looked like twins. The first Akkadian "world ruler" Naram Sin, a great hunter, supplies the empirical basis for Ninus of the Greeks and/or Nimrod of the Hebrews, a great hunter before the Lord: "Nimrod began to be a mighty one on the earth. / And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Akkad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (*Genesis* 10: 8/10). Ctesias (in Diodorus Siculus 2, 1: 4-8;//2, 2: 1/3) writes: "The first about whom history provides us with stories of his outstanding deeds is Ninus, king of the Assyrians. / Easily he defeated the inhabitants of Babylonia [and] / the Armenians. // Eventually he began to subdue the nations of Asia. And, indeed, within 17 years he was master of them all — with the exception of India and Bactria. / He subjugated Egypt and Phoenicia, Coele-Syria, Cilicia, Pamphylia, and Lycia (Ctesias as preserved in Diodorus Siculus 2, 1: 4-8;//2, 2: 1/3.)

Heinsohn, G. (1991), "Who were the Hyksos?", in: Organizing Committee/ S. Curto et al., eds., *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia. Abstracts of Papers*, Torino: Organizing Secretariat, pp. 208-209

Heinsohn, G. (1996), "Cyrus the Mardian/Amardian, Dethroner of the -6th Century Medes, and Aziru the Martu/Amurru, Dethroner of the -14th Century Mitanni" paper given at the *Symposium on Cosmic Deities and Ancient History*, Deerfield Beach, Florida, July 12-14, 55 pp.

Heinsohn, G. (1998), "Why Were Ancient Greek, Latin and Armenian Historiographers [from the 5th century BCE to the 5th century CE] So Wrong About the Pre-hellenistic Periods of the Ancient Near East, And How Did We Arrive at Our Present Understanding of These Periods?", Poster at the *XLV^e RENCONTRE ASSYRIOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE*, Cambridge/Mass. (Harvard University) and New Haven (Yale University), July 5-8, DIN A0

Stratigraphy and Search for Empires: Egypt (Tell el-Daba as best stratigraphy)

Strata groups:	Empire searched (Daba-Strata) (Greek sources and dates)	Empire found and Dating Method (Hieroglyphic and cuneiform sources)
Hellenistic strata group:	A/3-1 Macedonians/Ptolemies Dates: Greek (from -300)	Ptolemies (from -300) Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? Yes Did ancient Greeks know empire? Yes
1st Pre-Hellenistic strata group	B/3-1 Akhaemenids in Egypt Dates: Greek (from -550)	Ramessides (-1300 to -1085) gap to -300 Dates: Sothic pseudo-astronomy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? Not at that date
2nd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	D/3-1 Contact with Medes under Cyaxares and Astyages Dates: Greek (from -700)	Contact (Amarna) with Mitanni (-15 th century -1300) under Shaushatra and Tushratta Dates: Sothic pseudo-astronomy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? No
3rd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	E/3-1 Ninos-Assyrians Ninos (greatest), Sharakos (last king) Dates: Greek (from -800)	Great Hyksos (from 1680) with script and artifacts of Old-Akkadians (last king Sharkalisharri [-2200])* Dates: Sothic pseudo-astronomy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? No ----- *Abraham genealogy back to Naram Sin

Stratigraphy and Search for Empires: Anatolia (Cappadocia)

Strata groups:	Empire searched (Greek sources and dates)	Empire found and Dating Method (cuneiform sources)
Hellenistic strata group:	Kat (known from Strabo) Dates: Greek (from -300 to -190)	gap from -1100 or -800 to -190
1st Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Kat from Akhaemenid satrapy Kat-Patuka Dates: Greek (from -550)	Khat of Late Empire-“Hittites” (-1300 to -1100) Dates: Sothic pseudo-astronomy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? No
2nd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Kat from Media’s satrapy Kat-Patuka Kat-leader Aribaeus assists Assyria Dates: Greek (from -630)	Khat of Empire-“Hittites” (-1500 to -1300; Mitanni) “Hittite”-ally Eriba-Adad assists Assyria Dates: Sothic pseudo-astronomy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? No
3rd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	“Ketans” (<i>Odyssee</i> XI: 521) Dates: Greek (from -750)	Old-Empire-“Hittites”* (1700 to -1500; Hyksos) Dates: Sothic pseudo-astronomy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? Not at that date *Old-Empire Hittites use cuneiform of Old-Akkadians (-2200) instead of “Old-Babylonians” supposedly preceding them. Yet, strata wise, Old-Babylonians are in 1 st pre-Hellenistic strata group whereas Old-Akkadians (Abraham-date) sit in same 3 rd pre-Hellenistic strata group as Old-Hittites

Stratigraphy and Search for Empires: Northern Mesopotamia (Assyria)

Strata groups	Period searched (Greek sources and dates)	Empire found and Dating Technique (cuneiform sources)
Hellenistic strata group:	Macedonians / Parthians Dates: Greek (from -300)	Macedonians and (later) Parthians (from -300) Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? Yes Did ancient Greeks know empire? Yes
1st Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Assyria, Persia's richest Satrapy Dates: Greek (from -550)	Middle- to Late Assyrians (-1200/-600). Gap to -300 Sothic pseudo-astronomy (Middle-Assyrians) Dates: Biblical Destruction of Israel (Late Assyrians) Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high! Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no
2nd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Indo-Aryan Medes with Cyaxares Dates: Greek (from -700) Rising star is Cyrus (Mardian)	Indo-Aryan Mitanni (-1500/-1300) with Shaushatra of Ninveh (Sothic date of modern Egyptology, or Shamshi-Adad (Nineveh; Biblical date). Rising star Aziru. Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high! Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no
	Interregnum of Scythians (Madyas) Dates: Greek (from -650)	Qutheans (Guti) with General Madga (-3rd mill.) Counted back from Biblical Abraham genealogy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high! Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no
3rd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Assyrians as 1 st Great Power Ninos (greatest), Sharakos (last king) Dates: Greek (from -800)	Old-Akkadians 1 st Great Power (-2300) gap to 1500 Naram-Sin (greatest) + Sharkalisharri (last king) Counted back from Biblical Abraham to Naram Sin Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no

Stratigraphy and Search for Empires: Southern Mesopotamia (Babylonia)

Strata groups	Period searched (Greek sources and dates)	Empire found and Dating Technique (cuneiform sources)
Hellenistic strata group:	Macedonians / Parthians Dates: Greek (from -300)	Macedonians and (later) Parthians (from -300) Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? Yes Did ancient Greeks know empire? Yes
1st Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Akhaemenid Satrapy Babylonia Mardoï (tribe of Cyrus) Dates: Greek (from -550)	Old to Late Babylonians (-2000/-550). Gap to -300 Dates: Biblical Deportation of Judah (Late Babylon.); Sothic pseudo-astronomy (Middle-Babyl.-Kassites); Biblical Abraham genealogy (Martu =Old Babylon.) Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high! Did ancient Greeks know empires? Supposedly no
2nd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Chaldeans (908 settlements) Dates: Greek (from -700)	URIII-„Sumerians“ (Kalam in own language; -2100) Biblical Abraham genealogy for „Sumerians“ Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high! Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no
	Interregnum of Scythians (known for vassal graves) under Madyas Dates: Greek (from -650)	Qutheans (Guti) with General Madga (-3rd mill.) Vassal graves of Ur Counted back from Biblical Abraham genealogy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high! Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no
3rd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Early Chaldaeans (cradle of civil.) Dates: Greek (from -800)	Early „Sumer“ (Kalam, cradle of civilization, -3000) Counted back from Biblical Abraham genealogy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high! Did ancient Greeks know civilization? Supposedly no

Stratigraphy and Search for Empires: Iran (Susa, Perseopolis)

Strata groups	Period searched (Greek sources and dates)	Empire found and Dating Technique (cuneiform sources)
Hellenistic strata group:	Macedonians / Parthians Dates: Greek (from -300)	Macedonians and (later) Parthians (from -300) Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? Yes Did ancient Greeks know empire? Yes
1st Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Akhaemenids Dates: Greek (from -550)	Akhaemenids (from -550) Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? Yes Did ancient Greeks know empire? Yes
2nd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Medes under Cyaxares Dates: Greek (from -700)	“Elamites” under Kutuk-Inshushinak; then gap Dates: Sothic pseudo-astronomy Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no
3rd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Assyrians as 1st Great Power in control of Media Ninos (greatest), Sharakos (last king) Dates: Greek (from -800)	Old-Elamites under Akkad as 1 st Great Power (-2300) with Naram-Sin (greatest)+Sharkalisharri (last king) Counted back from Biblical Abraham to Naram Sin Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know empire? Supposedly no

Stratigraphy and Search for Empires: India (Harappa, Mohendjo Daro)

Strata groups	Period searched (Greek sources)	Period found (cuneiform texts+local strata)
Hellenistic/Buddhist strata group:	Buddhism with Greek influence Dates: Greek (from -300)	Buddhism with Greek influence Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? Yes Did ancient Greeks know period? Yes
1st Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Satrapy XX of Akhaemenids with capital Mushikanos Dates: Greek (from -550)	Late Indus Valley Culture (-2000) gap to -300 albeit with Persian style Apadana (Mohendjo) Biblical Abraham genealogy of Old-Babyl. Martu because of Mesopotamian contacts Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know culture? Supposedly no
2nd Pre-Hellenistic strata group	Medish borders close to India Dates: Greek (from -700)	Beginning of Late Indus Valley Culture (-2200) Biblical Abraham genealogy for URIII-Sumerians because of Mesopotamian contacts Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know period? Supposedly no
3rd Pre-Hellenistic Stratagroup	Assyrians as 1st Great Power with influence in India Dates: Greek (from -800)	Early Indus Valley culture (-2300) Biblical Abraham genealogy for Old-Akkadians because of Mesopotamian contacts Do dates fit stratigraphic depth? No, too high Did ancient Greeks know period? Supposedly no