

**Is there a document dated to the reign of Bardiya II (Vahyazdāta)? –**

The publication of the book of S. Graziani<sup>1</sup> offers an opportunity to discuss some aspects of the chronology of Bardiya's reign.

According to the famous Bisitun Inscription on the 14th of Addar 523 B.C. (in the Julian calendar, March 11, 522 B.C.) an uprising of Gaumata the Median Magush started, in which he claimed to be Bardiya, the true son of Cyrus and brother of Cambyses. In 1896 J. N. Strassmaier published a document BM 41455 (81-6-25, 66) written in Humadešu on Nisan 19, first year of Bardiya. Until 1976 the document was recognized as the earliest known document of Bardiya, dated April 14, 522 B.C. In that year R. Zadok, in an article concerning the connections between Iran and Babylonia in the sixth century B.C. demonstrated convincingly that Humadešu, where that document and 8 other texts were written, must be located not in Babylonia but « in the westernmost part of Persis, not more than 50 km., east of Susa »<sup>2</sup>. Because not long after the killing of Gaumata the revolt of Vahyazdāta who also called himself Bardiya started and was limited only to Persis, Zadok suggests recognizing the text BM 41455 as a text written under the sovereignty of Vahyazdāta/ Bardiya II i. e. on May 2, 521 B. C.

In my opinion Zadok's suggestion, which has been left almost without any comment<sup>3</sup>, can hardly be approved. Vahyazdāta's behaviour is almost fully parallel to the behaviour of the second rebel king in Babylonia, i.e. Araha, son of Haldita, who – just as his predecessor Nidintu-Bēl, son of Aniri (Nebuchadnezzar III in our reckoning) – also called himself Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabonidus (Nebuchadnezzar IV in our reckoning), i. e. pretended to be Nebuchadnezzar III. Similarly, by taking the name of Bardiya, Vahyazdāta pretended to be treated by people of the country as the still living Bardiya, the son of Cyrus. Only in such a situation did taking the name of Bardiya by Vahyazdāta have any sense. However, as Vahyazdāta took the name of Bardiya, his murdered predecessor, he had to continue the reckoning of the years according to Bardiya's reign. On this basis the text BM 41455 – if it were a text from the time of Vahyazdāta's rule – must be dated to the second and not to « his » first year. This chronological premise speaks for the acceptance of the traditional dating of the text to the reign of Bardiya I, i.e. on April 14, 522 B.C.

1. *Testi Editi ed inediti datati al regno di Bardiya (522 a.C.)*, Supplemento n. 67 agli *Annali Istituto Universitario Orientale* – vol. 51 (1991), fasc. 2, Napoli 1991. Cf. M. Jursa, « Neues aus der Zeit des Bardias », *NABU* 1993/19.
2. R. Zadok, « On the Connections between Iran and Babylonia in the Sixth Century B.C. », *Iran* 14 (1976) 70.
3. It was mentioned only in R. Borger, « Die Chronologie des Darius-Denkmal am Behistun-Felsen », *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen I. Phil.-Hist. Kl.* Jhrg 1982, Nr 3, p. 119, note 19 and J. M. Cook, *The Persian Empire*, London, Melbourne, Toronto 1983, p. 237, note 14.

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