Pre-Achaemenid Persians:
An Elamite Point of View

Gian Pietro Basello
<elam@elamit.net>
<www.elamit.net>

Synchronized Reference

בְּנֵי שֵׁם עֵילָם וְאַשּׁוּר וְאַרְפַּכְשַׁד וְלוּד וַאֲרָם׃ [*Genesis* 10:21]

Shem, the third of Noah's ['no*u*€] sons, had five sons, who inhabited Asia as far as the Indian Ocean, beginning at the Euphrates. Elymus had for his descendants the Elymaeans, **ancestors** of the Persians (Ἔλυμος μὲν γὰρ Ἐλυμαίους Περσῶν ὄντας **ἀρχηγέτας** κατέλιπεν). [Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, I 143]

On Elymais: Weissbach 1905, Le Rider 1965, Sellwood 1983, Wiesehöfer 1994 and Hansman 1998. Elam > Elymais: Potts 1999: 375 and 380; cf. Alizadeh 1985b.

Additional note 1. Elam and Elymais

One of the ancient sources which connects 'Elam' and 'Elamites' with Elymais is a Babylonian diary dated to 125/124 BC. In the text, the Parthian king, simply named Arsaces, leads a campaign against Elymais, where he finds the resistance of 15 000 Elamites under the command of Pittit [Potts 1999: 391]. The name of the chief is easily understandable as Elamite in etymology [Zadok 1984: 35, n. 186, 'PITIT'; Hinz & Koch 1987: 225, 'pittit']. So, notwithstanding the Old Persian tradition of *ūja* (u-v-j, perhaps still surviving in the present name 'Khuzistān'), already in Parthian period Elam was revived in the choronym 'Elymais'.

Elymais and Elymaeans are attracting growing interest in the last years. The few related archaeological remains are coins and rock-cut bas-reliefs. At the 5th conference of the Societas Iranologica Europæa (Ravenna, 2003), Iranian archaeologist Jafar MEHR KIAN spoke about the discovery of a new bas-relief, while the Japanese HARUTA Seiro compiled an up-to-date list of known bas-reliefs and inscriptions [Haruta 2005; Mehr Kian 2005].

Josephus' sources: Bloch 1879; Feldman 1998. Josephus knew the events related to the Seleucid struggle for Elymais (Ιουδαϊκης αρχαιολογιας, XII 358-359, without explicit mention of Elymais). Elymais and Elymaeans in the Greek (LXX) bible: *Judith* 1:6 (Αριωχ βασιλέως Ἐλυμαίων); *Tobit* 2:10 (εἰς τὴν Ἐλυμαΐδα); *Daniel* 8:2 (ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐν Ἐλυμαΐδι ['Elam' in Hebrew] χώρᾳ); *1Maccabees* 6:1 (Ἐλυμαῖς ἐν τῇ Περσίδι).

The monography, essay and proceedings cited: Culican 1965, Vogelsang 1998, Lanfranchi & al. 2003.

Elamite Kurash: Potts 1999: 288 (with reference to Andreas 1904: 94). Cyrus not Achaemenid: Vallat 1997, Frye 2003 and Waters 2004.

Kuddakaka (^{BE}ku-ud-da-ka$_4$-ka$_4$), the most attested *kurman* in the Acropolis tablet, 'could be the outcome of OIran. kutaka- "small" ... with a reduplicated final syllable' (Zadok 1983: 117-118).

"Challenge" to the Median "empire": Genito 1986, Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988 and 1990, Kienast 1999. From an archaeological point of view, beyond Genito 1986, see Muscarella 1987 and Genito 1995. From a linguistic point of view, see especially Schmitt 2003, then Briant 1984: 97 and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988: 208-210. From an historiographic point of view, see the preface and the afterword in Lanfranchi & al. 2003.

KUR par-su-a, KUR par-su-aš, KUR par-su-maš: 'An inscription by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III, which was written around 843 B.C., mentions the region of Parsua'; 'Somewhat later, at the end of the eighth century, the Assyrian text mention the country of Parsu(a)mash, which was situated somewhat east of the present-day city of Sulaimaniya; *i.e.*, to the northeast of Elam' (Dandamaev & Lukonin 1989: 3); Waters 1999: 100, footnote 7. KUR par-su-ma-aš in Weidner 1931-1932: 4.

Elamite administrative tablets from the Acropolis of Susa: 298 tablets, MDP 9, 1-87 and 89-298 (Scheil 1907, Jusifov 1963); MDP 11, 309 (Scheil 1911). MDP 9, 88 is a letter.

Dating of the Acropolis tablets: 680 (Hinz 1987: 125-127) or 685 BC (Hinz & Koch 1987: 1327, 'S') according to HINZ; first quarter of the 6th century BC according to VALLAT (Vallat 1998a: 311); no earlier than the late 7th century BC according to STOLPER (Stolper 1984b: 8); ca. 650-550 according to DE MIROSCHEDJI (Miroschedji 1982: 60ff), reign of Cyrus the Great and Cambyses according to CAMERON (Cameron 1948: 24, footnote 2). See also Steve 1986: 8, No. 2.

Cyaxares in the Acropolis tablets: a Median anthroponym (Scheil 1907: 118; Cameron 1948: 24, footnote 2); the Median king Cyaxares (Hinz 1987: 126). MDP 9, 132:7: PAP BE ma-ak-iš-tur-ri du-iš; restored also in MDP 9, 95:17: BE ma-a[k ...].

Archaeological context of Acropolis tablets: found in 1900 by the French archaeologist Jacques DE MORGAN on the Acropolis of Susa, near the temple of Inšušinak built by will of Šutruk-Nahhunte II (717-699 BC) (Amiet 1967: 27-29 and 1973: 4, footnote 1. See plan in Harper & al. 1992: 124, fig. 41)

Biographical note on father SCHEIL: André-Salvini 1997.

See Stolper 2004 for a brief introduction to Elamite grammar.

Additional note 2. The 'Village perse-achéménide'

The so-called 'Village Perse-achéménide', located on the western flanks of the 'Ville des Artisans', was considered proof of the existence of a Persian community settled in the neighbourhood of Susa already in the 8th century BC. To support this thesis, Ghirshman put forward a number of links between the oldest layers of the 'Village Perse-achéménide' I and Iron II sites comparatively late like Sialk VI and Giyan I (Ghirshman 1954, especially pp. 71-74). Stronach showed that the 'Village' cannot be so ancient: it should be dated to the 6th century BC, preceded by an Elamite occupation starting from ca. 625 BC (Stronach 1974: 244; also Steve 1986: 9 and Miroschedji 1981a: 38-39). According to Boucharlat, the only traces of an Achemenid occupation went back to the end of the Achemenid period, as showed by subsequent soundings (Boucharlat 1990: 154; see also Dandamaev 1989: 2-3).

Persians in the Acropolis tablets: Henkelman 2003a: 211-213; Persian: Waters 1999: 105-106.

Iranian names in the Acropolis tablets: Scheil 1907, *passim*; Mayrhofer 1971; Hinz 1975; Zadok 1984a; Hinz & Koch 1987. Hinz 1987: 128: 65 anthroponym, 10% of the attested onomastics.

Synopsis of the occurrences of *parsa* as collective designation:

P type: MDP 9, 11 (Zampegir), 49 (Huri), 51 (Datiyana), 94 (Zampegir), 187 (Datiyana), 246 (Datiyana?), 281:20, 281:29 (Datiyana);
S type: MDP 9, 121;
O type: MDP 9, 166:4, 166:25;
fragmentary: MDP 9, 185, 233, 272 (S type?);
[proper name: MDP 9, 47 (or S0 type?), 97 (or O type?), 117 (or S0 type?).]

Unsak, second most attested collective designation (14 occurrences): Vallat 1992b.

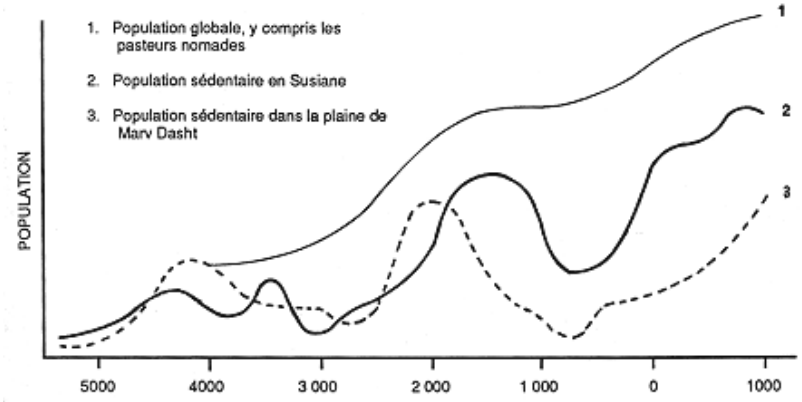
Additional note 3. Products related to the occurrences of Persian people

Among the products related to the occurrences of Persian people, one can find *kuktu*, 'overalls', BABBAR.BABBAR 'white' and *dabantina* 'blue', *tukli tain* 'light-grey (i.e. made in wool [Hinz & Koch 1987: 268, s.v. 'ta-in']) clothing', *likkina* another clothing, ri-tú.hu-el-ip perhaps a 'skirt', and weapons such as *šukurrum* 'spears', BAN 'bows' and sa-ah GI 'arrow-heads'. The translations follows the (somewhat hypothetical) proposals by Hinz and Koch (1987; see also Hinz 1967).

Elamite administrative tablets from Tall-e Malyān (ca. 1000 BC): published in Stolper 1984b.

On nomadic component in neo-Elamite period: Miroschedji 1990: 62.

Fig. 1: Model of demographic development in south-western Iran from 5th to 1st millennium BC (after Miroschedji 1990: 63, fig. 4). Curve No. 1: global population, including nomadic groups; curve No. 2 (thick): sedentary popolation in Susiana; curve No. 3 (dashed): sedentary population in the Marv Dasht plan.



Collective designations based on an anthroponym as references to the eponym of a nomadic group: Vallat 1992b. Acropolis tablets: ^{BE}*parsa*; Persepolis tablets: ^{AŠ}pá-ir-sa$_{15}$ 'Persepolis'.

Babylonian name Appalaya: Hinz & Koch 1987: 20, s.v. 'hh.ab-ba-la-a'; Stolper 1984c: 305, nota 20. On Aramaean groups: Malbran-Labat 1980 and 1981; also Stolper 1986: 239 and Henkelman 2003b: col. 257. Appalaya is qualified as 'king' in MDP 9, 71.

"Tribes" responsible for the impression of fragmentation of power in neo-Elamite period: Henkelman 2003b: cols. 257-259. Cf. the insight in Scheil 1907: p. IV: 'Il ne s'agit donc pas de villes ou provinces étrangères qui auraient été tributaires de la cour de Suse, mais de simples particuliers ou de groupes d'individus qui, comme négociants et industriels, avaient colonisé en pays élamite'.

On Kalmākarra hoard and the reign of Samati: Vallat 1996c; Henkelman 2003a: 214-27 and 2003b: col. 257.

"Regulated hostility" and "gift exchange" between late Achaemenid kings and Uxioi and Cossean tribes: Briant 1996: 747-753, especially p. 752.

Additional note 4. Collective designations in the Persepolis tablets

In the Persepolis tablets, the number of collective designations did not increase, but single designations changed: Persians are no longer mentioned explicitly (neither Elamites are), and, instead of unknown* peoples, we find Egyptians and Indians (Giovinazzo 1987b e 2001), from end to end of the Persian-centric world. The most substantial difference is the function assumed by groups of people: not receivers of goods or clothings as in Susa, but team of workers (*kurtaš*), foreigner settled in the heart of Persis (Uchitel 1991), not involved in at par exchanges but in services demanded as immigrants or convicts (Dandamaev 1975a; Koch 1983), whose knowledge we have because of the food rations they received.

* Although it should be mentioned [^{BE}]EŠŠANA ^{AŠ}mi-is-ri-[pè]-na 'king of Egyptians(?)' in MDP 9, 158: r5-6.

Please note that in the handout '...' marks omitted text (for sake of conciseness) while '[...]' marks missing (i.e. damagaed) text.

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Abstract

References to Persians before the Achaemenid period are known not only from Mesopotamian sources: as gentilic designation, 'Persian' occurs at least 11 times both in singular and plural form (Elamite pár-sir-(ra) and pár-sìp) in the neo-Elamite administrative tablets from the Acropolis of Susa (V. SCHEIL, MDP 9). In 6 occurrences, the plural form is in concord with people named after a locale; in another occurrence the singular form singles out an individual; in 2 occurrences it seems to mark items as of Persian kind. Often some proper names are related to these occurrences, and most of them are clearly Iranian. According to R. ZADOK (*Beiträge zur Namenforschung*, n.F. 18 (1983)), even the name of the most prominent superintendent (designated as *kurman*) of the administration, Kuddakaka, might be Iranian. However, the most striking insight is not the presence of Persian people in neo-Elamite sources, but the evidence for their relationships with the administrative apparatus both as individuals and as a group. Unfortunately, the dating of the tablets is much debated (W. HINZ: 685 BC; F. VALLAT: first quarter of the 6th century BC; G.G. CAMERON: coeval to Cyrus the Great and Cambyses) and the exact meaning of the technical language of administration is still unclear.