

The date of the death of Darius I and the recognition of Xerxes in Babylonia is based on the dating comprised in business and administrative documents. Parker and Dubberstein who studied carefully all the dates accessible to them have recognized VS IV 180 as the last document of Darius I dated 27.VII.Dar 36 (Nov. 7, 486 B.C.) and VS v 117 as the earliest document of Xerxes dated 22.VIII.Xer 0 (Dec. 1, 486 B.C.) (written in Borsippa). On the basis of those datings the authors concluded that Darius died in November, 486 B.C. (R.A. Parker, W.H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C. – A.D. 75*, Brown University Press, Providence, Rhode Island 1956, 17).

M. Stolper in a short text « Babylonian Evidence for the End of the Reign of Darius I. A Correction », *JNES* 51 (1992) 61-62 called his attention to the text BM 77850 (edited by him earlier in *JNES* 48 (1989) 305 and corrected here ; a new edition of the text with the copy is prepared by J. MacGinnis in his book « Letter Orders from Sippar and the Administration of the Ebabara in the Late-Babylonian Period ») dated 15.VIII. Dar 36 (Nov. 24, 486 B.C.). In Stolper's opinion « the scribe who drafted the letter-order dated it in the belief that Darius was still reigning on 15/VIII/36, that is, 24 November 486 B.C., at least seventeen days later than the latest previously published text dated by Darius and seven days before the earliest published text dated by Xerxes. Hence, word of Xerxes' succession reached northern Babylonia during the last week of November 486. Darius's death must have occurred not much earlier ».

Two additional datings, not used by Stolper, give us the possibility to complete this picture. While writing his text Stolper still had probably no access to the volumes of « Sippar collection », especially the second one (*Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, vol. VII : Tablets from Sippar 2* by E. Leichty and A. K. Grayson, London 1987), where we can find two new texts of Darius dated 10.IX.Dar 36 (Dec. 18, 486 B.C.) : BM 71941 (82-9-18,11944) (to be published by MacGinnis, *ibid.*, No 81) and BM 72574 (82-9-18,12580) dated 10+x.IX.Dar 36 (Dec.18+x, 486 B.C.). It means that although the news about the death of Darius and Xerxes' accession to the throne reached Babylonia as late as December 1, 486 B.C., the scribes at Sippar (BM 77850 and both texts mentioned by me belong to the group of the administrative documents of the

Ebabbar temple) had dated the documents for at least 17 days according to Darius' rule ! The period is too long to suppose that the scribes at Sippar, i.e. about forty km. north of Babylon did not know about the change on the Persian throne. We can only suspect that there was another reason (or reasons) preventing them from dating the documents according to the new ruler, e.g. they could have waited for an official announcement or formal ascending to the throne (coronation ceremony ?) etc. We know that at Sippar the decision to change the dating from Darius to Xerxes was made after Dec. 18+x and before Dec. 21, 486 B.C.

Stefan Zawadzki (08-05-92)

ul. Szeherezady 21 60-195

Poznan Pologne