

By the capture of Nineveh, B.C. 625, and the destruction of Assyria by Nabopolassar, the Chaldean, and his ally Cyaxaras, King of the Medes, the Assyrian dependencies of Egypt and Palestine fell to the share of the Chaldeans. Both countries rebelled against the new master, the King of Babylon, and were in turn subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, who twice took and plundered Jerusalem and led the Jews captive under Zedekiah, B.C. 586. Apries the Pharaoh-Hophra of Scripture, who had by promising assistance to Zedekiah led the latter to rebel against Babylon, was then subjected to obedience by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 568. He went up country as far as Jeb "destroyed the idols and made the images cease (Ezek. XXX, 13.) This verse would leave the temple at Jeb untouched, for it is seen from the petition that there was no image or symbol worship there. Nebuchadnezzar was thus at his death B.C. 561, lord of both Egypt and Palestine. He was a general of ability, but abominably cruel. He was exceedingly able and saw that agriculture made Egypt the richest of nations. He profited by what he saw there, irrigated Mesopotamia from the Tigris and Euphrates, became the greatest farmer the world has seen, and made his empire the envy of the nations, by farming.

About 568, Cyrus, of the Arian race of the Persians, rebelled against the kindred Medes, and as king of both Medes and Persians became so powerful that all Western Asia wished to combine against him. He attacked them one by one. Croesus of Lydia, the most powerful ruler in Asia Minor, he conquered first and treated well, about 547 B.C. In 538 he attacked Nabonadius and took Babylon, putting an end to the Chaldean empire, and thus obtaining the reversion of the tributary states, Egypt and Palestine. Egypt rebell-

ed, the Jews were in captivity, and dispersed and could not rebel. In 536, B.C., Cyrus issued a Proclamation for the Jews to return home and build the temple at Jerusalem. The new temple was finished B.C. 516. Fresh bands of Jews returned under Ezra, B.C. 458, and under Nehemiah, B.C. 445. When Darius, (Ezra VI, 1.) made his decree, about B.C. 519, it is not improbable that his Council had before it some knowledge of the temple and Jews of Jeb, and of how they had been favoured by Camlyses only a very few years before. This knowledge may have been influenced by the decree for the re-establishment of the service at Jerusalem, of Nehemiah VI, 9. Camlyses, on succeeding his father Cyrus in 529, had to subdue rebellious Egypt, which he accomplished in 525. This was the beginning of the Persian rule in Egypt, which continued down to the date of this letter. These few facts shew how we find Governor Arsham at Jeb, and Governor Bagohi at Jerusalem, as representatives of the King of Persia.

Bagohi, or Bagoas, is a Persian name. We have some account of him in Josephus (Antiquities, Book Eleven, Chapter Seven.)

"Eliashib the High Priest was succeeded by his son Judas, whose son 'John' succeeded him in turn in that dignity. Now Jesus, the brother of John, was a friend of Bagoas, who was general of one of Artaxerxes' armies, and was promised the priesthood by Bagoas. Jesus provoked a quarrel with his brother John, and the latter slew Jesus in the temple. Bagoas came to Jerusalem and said to the Jews "Have you had the impudence to perpetrate a murder in the temple?" He proceeded to enter the temple. The Jews forbade him, but he entered, and polluted it, and punished the Jews seven years for the murder of Jesus by his brother John, the High Priest. In the daily sacrifices they