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DANIEL IN BABYLON

An Accurate Record?

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The book of Daniel tells of events that took place in Babylon in the sixth century BC and forecasts events that should take place during the following four hundred years. Those forecasts give such detail and concur with known history to such an extent that almost all commentators deduce that the book could only have been composed in the second century BC. At the same time, many today ascribe the narratives of affairs in Babylon to a slightly earlier date, accepting that they preserve memories of the Babylonian court. Despite the recovery of thousands of documents from Babylon, including royal inscriptions and chronicles, and extensive reports by Greek writers, notably Herodotus and Xenophon, knowledge of the period is very partial, so the information any ancient writing offers about it deserves to be assessed carefully.

Numerous questions arise concerning the Daniel narratives, and only some can be explored in this essay. Discussions of others can be found in the commentaries and additional studies.[1]

The Date of Daniel's Exile

In the summer of 605 BC the Babylonian army, commanded by the crown prince Nebuchadnezzar, defeated Egypt's forces at Carchemish and pursued their remnants as far as Hamath. Nebuchadnezzar then took control of

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[1]Besides the major commentaries by John J. Collins (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) and John Goldingay (Dallas: Word, 1989), see the essays in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Leiden: Brill, 2001), and, in favor of the accuracy of the narratives, Alan R. Millard, "Daniel 1–6 and History," *EvQ* 49, no. 2 (977): 67–73; Terence C. Mitchell, "Achaemenid History and the Book of Daniel," in *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Persian Period: Conquest and Imperialism 539–331 BC*, ed. John Curtis (London: The British Museum Press, 1997), 68–78; Thomas E. Gaston, *Historical Issues in the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: TaanathShiloh, 2009).

the whole region of Hamath, but his father, Nabopolassar, died on August 15–16, so Nebuchadnezzar sped home to be acclaimed king on September 6–7. Thereafter he returned to the Levant, cementing his victory and taking booty until January-February 604.

Jeremiah refers to the Battle of Carchemish, dating it to the fourth year of Jehoiakim of Judah (46:1), a year that he elsewhere equates with Nebuchadnezzar's first year (25:1). The second book of Kings (24:1) simply reports that Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadnezzar during his reign, without giving a specific date. As "Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years,"[2] then rebelled, and as that rebellion is unlikely to have occurred before the Babylonian army withdrew in 601, after an inconclusive battle with Egypt, the submission can be placed in 605 or 604. The statement in Daniel 1:1, that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's third year, is commonly treated as an error or confusion, because that year would have run from March-April 606 to March-April 605, and there is no likelihood of any Babylonian activity so far south as Judah before the Battle of Carchemish, when the whole area was subject to Egypt. Before dismissing the statement as uncorroborated and thus unacceptable as a historical record, however, we should make every effort to discover if it could be correct. There are two aspects to explore: first, the date; second, Babylonian strategy.

The Date

The kings of Judah, like the kings of Babylon, counted the first year of their rule from the New Year's Day after their accession, the period of their reign before that being their accession year; so the last year of king *A* would be termed the accession year of king *B*, whose first year would commence with the next New Year's Day. That made 609 BC Josiah's last year and 608 Jehoiakim's first (the "accession year" system). Earlier, in Israel, as in Egypt, the year in which a king came to the throne was reckoned his first year, overlapping with the last year of his predecessor (the "non–accession year" system). Thus the last year of king *A* might also be the first year of king *B*, making 609 Josiah's last and Jehoiakim's first.

The situation is complicated because there were also two ways of calculating the year. The spring New Year began in the month of Nisan (March-April); the autumn New Year began in the month Tishri (September-October). The book of Jeremiah uses the spring New Year, and the books of Kings use the

autumn New Year, as appears from Jeremiah's dating Jehoiachin's capture in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year, and Kings' in his eighth (Jer. 52:28; 2 Kings 24:12). Now the spring New Year would mean Jehoiakim's first year covered 609 to March-April 608 on the non–accession year system, his second 608–607, his third 607–606, and his fourth 606–605; on the accession year system his first year ran from March-April 608 to March-April 607, his second 607–606, and his third 606 to March-April 605. Thus any advance by Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem after the Battle of Carchemish would have fallen in Jehoiakim's fourth year (cf. Jer. 46:2). Equally, an autumn New Year would mean Jehoiakim's first year could have fallen in 610–609 or 609–608, for we do not know exactly when he acceded, bringing his third year to 608–607 or 607–606, and his fourth to 607–606 or 606–605, on the non–accession year system. However, on the accession year system and with an autumnal New Year, his first year would run from September-October 608 to September-October 607, his second 607–606, his third September-October 606 to September-October 605. This last would just accommodate the statement of Daniel 1:1 in chronological terms. If the autumn New Year and the accession year dating are not acceptable, then there is probably no alternative to assuming an error in the figure of this verse. Yet the fact that it is possible to reckon the date as 605 BC belies the claim that "the very first statement in chapter 1 can be shown to be inaccurate."[3]

Babylonian Strategy

The absence of any record of a siege of Jerusalem by Babylonian forces in this year is not a strong argument against its happening. There would be a few weeks after the Battle of Carchemish in which a Babylonian force might threaten Jerusalem and take hostages. Whether Nebuchadnezzar or his generals led the force, it could still be attributed to the king.[4] Taking hostages from rulers previously subject to the defeated Pharaoh would be a means of

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[3]Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel, A Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM, 1965), 25f.

[4]Assyrian reports attribute to some kings campaigns led by their generals, who were, of course, the kings' agents. In the twenty-seventh to thirty-first years of his reign, Shalmaneser III sent his turtan, Dayyan-Ashur, to command his armies in campaigns against Urartu, Hattina, and other places, and he openly states that in his "annals." What is particularly significant is the continuation of the narratives. Although he said, "I remained in Calah, I dispatched Dayyan-Ashur, . . . he approached city X," he continued, "I marched against Y, I destroyed their cities," and "Dayyan-Ashur advanced against B, he crossed the river C . . . the Urartian enemy heard of it and advanced against me. I fought with him, I defeated him." This fluctuation of persons could be attributed to scribal carelessness; since most of the "annals" are written in the first person, the scribe may have slipped unconsciously into the normal style. However, these passages may be understood in the light of the master-agent relationship. The king could claim that anything his general did was effectively his action—and, of course, he could disclaim anything that did not satisfy him. The situation is no different from my sending you a letter in which I say, 'I wrote to you two months ago,' when, in fact, a secretary wrote the letter of

trying to ensure they did not resume their loyalty to him. In the following years Nebuchadnezzar returned regularly to the Levant; in his first year local kings, probably including Jehoiakim, formally became his subjects, and he took their tribute. The town of Ashkelon had not submitted, so was captured, looted, and sacked. That is the only town named in the surviving lines of the Babylonian Chronicle covering the four years when the king campaigned in the Levant ("Hatti"). Nebuchadnezzar now held the entire region, restricting Egypt to her own land (cf. 2 Kings 24:7).[5]

The Madness of Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar ruled for forty-three years, from 605 until 562. He left numerous inscriptions vaunting his piety and building works, but few giving information about other aspects of his reign. Clay tablets bearing extracts from the Babylonian Chronicle tell of military activities in his early years, to 594–593, but no Babylonian Chronicle texts survive to cover the rest of his career, and other documents mention little. A small fragment referring to his thirty-seventh year (568–567) may tell of an attack on Egypt.[6] Part of a clay prism lists various persons in Nebuchadnezzar's circle, and fragments of administrative tablets found in the Southern Palace in Babylon include issues of rations to hostages and foreigners there, among them Jehoiachin, king of Judah.[7] The splendor visible in the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon shows that he had reason to be proud of his work on its defensive walls, gates, temples, and palaces.

The almost complete silence of Babylonian records about Nebuchadnezzar's activities for thirty years of his kingship allows the assumption that the events of Daniel 2–4 may be placed in that period. Of course, that is reminiscent of a "god of the gaps" approach. Yet it should not be ignored. That a king might suffer illness, physical or mental, is to be expected, especially one who was middle-aged or older; Nebuchadnezzar was no child at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 and reigned for forty-three years. In societies that believed illness was imposed by the gods, a sick king would not necessarily be deposed;

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my request. For the texts, see A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 BC)*, RIMA 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 69–71.
[5]The Babylonian Chronicle tablets give the only information in cuneiform about Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns, see Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, SBLWAW 19 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 228–31.
[6]A. Leo Oppenheim, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Bible*, 3rd ed., ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 308 (hereafter *ANET*); note that much more of the text is missing than Oppenheim's translation indicates; see Terence C. Mitchell, "Where Was Putu-Iaman?," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 22 (1992): 69–80.
[7]Oppenheim, in *ANET*, 307–8.

nor would he in societies that could diagnose the illness (cf. Uzziah of Judah, 2 Kings 15:5–6, or George III of Britain).[8] Some incomplete lines on a fragment of a cuneiform tablet describe Nebuchadnezzar's pondering and, so far as can be understood, changing his mind, but so much of the text is missing that no conclusions can be based upon it.[9] Vague allusions in Greek writings might indicate knowledge of the king's suffering, the clearest being Josephus's citation of Berossus, a Babylonian who wrote about his country's history in Greek early in the third century BC. After relating Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Egypt and accession to the throne, Berossus tells of his falling ill after beginning his building work, then dying.[10] Interestingly, Berossus reports no other activities by the king.

Most often compared with Daniel's narrative is the Aramaic "Prayer of Nabonidus," preserved in four fragments found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.[11] Nabonidus (written *nbny*), king of Babylon, living in Teima, by decree of the Most High God, was afflicted with horrid boils for seven years and "banished far [from men]." He prayed to God, and a Jewish exorcist forgave him and told him to issue a proclamation in honor of the Most High God. The fragments do not relate directly to the account of Daniel 4, but common opinion holds that "there is every reason to believe" it "preserves a more primitive form" of that and is the product of oral traditions and folkloristic elements merging the figures of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus. In both, the Babylonian king is the speaker, suffers God's punishment for seven years, prays and is relieved, and then is advised by a Jewish expert to honor God.[12] Among noticeable differences are the circumstances: Teima as against Babylon, the illness—boils, or some other debilitating illness that did not result in animal-like behavior—as opposed to Nebuchadnezzar's madness,[13] and Nabonidus's not being

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[8]The Babylonian Chronicle reports that a king of Elam was paralyzed at the beginning of a year and died only at the end of that year (see Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 198–99, lines 19–27).

[9]A. Kirk Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1975), 87–91; Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, The Schweich Lectures 1983 (London: The British Academy, 1985), 102–3.

[10]Stanley M. Burstein, *The* Babyloniaca *of Berossus*, Sources and Monographs, Sources from the Ancient Near East 1/5 (Malibu: Undena, 1978), 28.

[11]John J. Collins, "4Q Prayer of Nabonidus," in *Qumran Cave 4, XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3*, ed. James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 83–93; Florentino García Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 289.

[12]See Frank M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 166–68; Ronald H. Sack, "Nabonidus," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 973–76, see 976a; Esther Eshel, "Possible Sources of the Book of Daniel," in Collins and Flint, *The Book of Daniel*, 387–94; see 387–88.

[13]The restoration of line 3 of the prayer to read "I came to be like [the beasts]" offered by Frank M. Cross, "Fragments of the Prayer of Nabonidus," *IEJ* 34 (1984): 260–64, followed by Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar*, 103, is no longer supported; see Peter W. Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran," in Collins and Flint, *The Book of Daniel*, 329–67, esp. 332–36, with 336 note to line 3.

portrayed as boasting about his building works. A case has been made for the dependence of the prayer upon the book of Daniel.[14] The prayer is only one composition found at Qumran that concerns Daniel, the others being even more fragmentary and, where their sense can be followed, referring to the exile by Nebuchadnezzar as God's punishment.[15]

The Chaldeans

Use of *Chaldean* for a special class of learned men in Daniel is an "undoubted anachronism" for the time of Nebuchadnezzar.[16] The word in Daniel 5:30, "Belshazzar the Chaldean king," and in 9:1, "the realm of the Chaldeans," has an ethnic connotation, and that may be true of the phrase "the letters and language of the Chaldeans" in 1:4. Every other occurrence in Daniel carries the specialized sense of a category among the wise men, sometimes standing for the whole body (cf. 2:2, 4, 10, etc.). The same restricted meaning occurs in Herodotus, *Histories* 1.181f., where the Chaldeans are priests of Bel. This limited meaning, it is argued, could have developed only after the Chaldeans had ceased to have any significance as a people or a power, that is, when the Persian Empire was fully established. Admittedly, the ethnic use did continue to be current for a long while, preserved in the Old Testament writings and used by historians such as Strabo at the end of the first century BC. Were Chaldean a normal gentilic in sixth-century-BC Babylonia, attested in contemporary documents, with no trace of the specialized use, *Daniel's* mode of employing it might be considered anachronistic. But beside the fact that there is no evidence for Chaldean as a professional name in Babylonian texts, we should note the complete absence of the word as an ethnic term from the royal inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar, his father, and his successors. In Assyrian records of the eighth and seventh centuries it is used as the overall name for a group of tribes often mentioned separately. In this situation it is as improper to label the professional sense of Chaldean a sixth-century usage as it is to call it an anachronism.

A possible analogy can be found among the Medes. According to Herodotus, there was a group of six tribes (*Histories* 1.101). One of the tribes was called the Magi. Now the Magi are well known as religious functionaries in the Persian Empire and as the eponyms of all magicians. Their early history is obscure. R. N. Frye wrote, "One may tentatively suggest that the Magi were a

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[14] A. Steinmann, "The Chicken and the Egg: A New Proposal for the Relationship between the 'Prayer of Nabonidus' and the 'Book of Daniel,'" *RevQ* 20 (2002): 557–70.

[15] See Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 288–89, and Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran," 329–67, esp. 332–36.

[16] Porteous, *Daniel*, 28, following the majority of commentators.

'tribe' of the Medes who exercised sacerdotal functions. During the supremacy of the Medes they expanded over the Median empire as a priesthood since the priestly trade was kept, so to speak, 'in the family.'"[17] Perhaps something similar was true of the Chaldeans. *Chaldean* has passed into English from Greek and Latin, the Greek being a correct transliteration of the Babylonian **kaldāyu*. In Hebrew the form differs: *kaśdim*. The variation is explicable in the light of historical development within Babylonian and Assyrian. From the mid-second millennium BC onward the combination of sibilant + dental was often written as *1* + dental, revealing a phonetic shift probably universal in the spoken language, though concealed by scribal conservatism in many of the texts that survive.[18] This shift accounts well for the difference between the Akkadian and Greek forms and the Hebrew, which was unaffected by it, deriving from the Chaldeans themselves or from a time before the shift had occurred. Again, to view "Chaldean" as "taken from the Greek rendering of the Hebrew *kaśdim* and corresponding more accurately to the original *kaldu*" appears unjust to the Hebrew-Aramaic text of *Daniel*.[19]

Belshazzar

Belshazzar, King of Babylon?

Nebuchadnezzar's son Awel-Marduk became king in 562 and was assassinated after two years, although not until after he had taken Jehoiachin out of prison to eat at his table (2 Kings 25:27–30). The assassin was one of Nebuchadnezzar's generals, probably a son-in-law, Nergal-sharezer, who had been involved in the capture of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:3), but he reigned for only four years (560–556), and then his son for less than a year (Labashi-Marduk, 556). Another of Nebuchadnezzar's officials, Nabonidus, took the throne. He was the last king of Babylon, reigning from 556 until 539. He did not support the god of Babylon, Marduk, in the traditional way, but was devoted to the worship of Sin, the god of the moon. Three years after he became king, he took an army and marched through Transjordan and into Arabia where he lived for ten years at Teima. Arabian tribes were devoted to the moon god, and that may have been one reason for this strange move; there may have been mercantile, political, and strategic reasons too. While Nabonidus was

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[17]Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1962), 76.
[18]See W. von Soden, *Grundriss der Akkadischen Grammatik*, AnOr 47 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), §30g; W. F. Leemans, *Ex Oriente Lux* 10 (1945–1948): 437; Harry W. F. Saggs, "Ur of the Chaldees: A Problem of Identification," *Iraq* 22 (1960): 200–209, here 206 n. 39.
[19]Porteous, *Daniel*, 28.

in Arabia, his son ruled Babylon.[20] That son was Belshazzar. Until 1854 only the book of Daniel and writings derived from it named Belshazzar as a ruler of Babylon. His name is absent from the lists of kings of Babylon preserved correctly in the Greek sources, Berossus, and the Ptolemaic canon.[21] Herodotus and Xenophon report the fall of Babylon to Cyrus during a festival without naming Babylon's king, while Xenophon also fails to name the king who was killed (*Histories* 1.191; *Cyropaedia* 7.5.15). Berossus states that Cyrus captured Nabonidus and exiled him to Carmania (Kirman).[22]

In 1854 four small clay cylinders were dug from the ruins of the temple tower (ziggurat) of the moon god at Ur; more copies were found during Iraqi restoration work on the ziggurat in the 1960s. They carry a prayer by Nabonidus, who had repaired the tower in honor of his god. As well as praying for himself, Nabonidus prayed for the health of his son, the crown prince Belshazzar. Other Babylonian tablets discovered since then show that he was active in business and in state affairs. Some documents record oaths sworn in the names of gods, of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, and of Belshazzar, the crown prince, a formulation unknown in earlier reigns.[23] While his father was in Teima from 553, the Babylonian Chronicle states, "The crown prince, his officers and his troops stayed in" Babylonia.[24] After the Persian conquest, someone wrote a poem denigrating Nabonidus and praising Cyrus. One passage tells that Nabonidus gave command of the army to the crown prince and "entrusted the kingship to him."[25] Belshazzar was effectively king during his father's absence, although he did not bear the title *king* according to any Babylonian source, and, notably, no documents are dated by years of his reign. Therefore H. H. Rowley asserted that the failure of any of these texts to give Belshazzar the title *king* and the absence of any other evidence for his reigning as monarch proved that the author of Daniel was in error. E. J. Young countered that Daniel is not an official document written by Babylonian scribes, and so it could represent an effective situation rather than a state position; Belshazzar was *de facto* king, although not *de jure* king.[26] An older inscription offers support for that position. The statue of a ruler of Gozan

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[20]For the person and reign of Nabonidus, see Paul Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

[21]Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus*, 28, 38.

[22]Ibid., 28.

[23]The material was collected by Raymond P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, YOSR 15 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929), and expanded by Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus.*

[24]Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 234–37.

[25]Oppenheim, in *ANET*, 313. For Nabonidus's period in Arabia, see Wilfred G. Lambert in *Proceedings of the Fifth Seminar for Arabian Studies* (London: Society for Arabian Studies, 1972): 53–64.

[26]Harold H. Rowley, *JTS* 32 (1930): 12–31; Edward J. Young, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949; repr., London: Banner of Truth, 1972), 115ff.

(now Tell Halaf in Syria) in the ninth century BC bears two inscriptions, the first in Assyrian, and the second in Aramaic and largely a translation of the former. The text is the ruler's dedication of his statue to his god with prayers for his well-being and curses on anyone who should deface it. In the Assyrian text the ruler bears the title *governor* (*šākin māti*), as a vassal of the Assyrian emperor, while in the Aramaic text his title is *king* (*mlk*), as ruler of Gozan. Each title is appropriate to its audience.[27] Somewhat similar may be the rank of the thirty-two kings who accompanied Ben-Hadad to attack Samaria (1 Kings 20:1, 12, 16). In Babylonian a king who rules other kings is distinguished by the adjective *great* (*rabû*).

Belshazzar's Ancestry

While cuneiform texts plainly name Nabonidus as the father of Belshazzar, Daniel 5:11 and 18 give that place to Nebuchadnezzar. Of course, *father* may stand for grandfather or for a more remote ancestor in Semitic languages, but it is objected that Nabonidus was not a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar; in fact he was a usurper who took the throne from Labashi-Marduk, son of Neriglissar, who was a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar if, as appears likely, Neriglissar had married Nebuchadnezzar's daughter Kashshaya. There are hints that Nabonidus also held high office in Nebuchadnezzar's reign; the inscription honoring his mother, who lived for 104 years, claims that she forwarded his career in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, without specifying any office.[28] It is suggested that Nabonidus, too, may have been married to a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, putting him in as good a place to take the throne as Neriglissar. Then the mother of Belshazzar would have been a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Had that been the case, Nabonidus's mother might have mentioned it when she boasted of placing her son to a high position in the Babylonian court. But this remains speculation unless more evidence becomes available.[29]

The Third Place in the Realm

In Daniel 5, Belshazzar promises to reward Daniel with the third position in the kingdom if he can interpret the writing on the wall. As previous writers have noted, Belshazzar could not give Daniel the second place because he occupied it, his father holding the first place, as king.

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[27] Alan R. Millard and Pierre Bordreuil, "A Statue from Syria with Assyrian and Aramaic Inscriptions," *BA* 45 (1982): 135–41, here 139. Note also the claim of a governor to the role of king in the eighth century BC in K. Lawson Younger, "Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur—the Suḫu Annals," in *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 279.

[28] Oppenheim, in *ANET*, 560–62.

[29] See Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar*, 8–12.

The Third Year of Belshazzar

Commentators have been at a loss to account for the date of Daniel 8:1, "In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign." If taken at its face value, the year would be 550–549, reckoning from the fourth year of Nabonidus, when he "entrusted the kingship" to his son. That was the year in which Cyrus of Persia finally overcame his nominal suzerain, Astyages the Mede, and established the joint state of the Medes and Persians.[30] That is to say, the events of the vision were beginning at the time they were revealed; the higher horn of the ram (i.e., Persia) was now rising above the other (Media).

Belshazzar's Feast and Death

The lines of the Nabonidus Chronicle that relate the fall of Babylon to Cyrus tell of fighting and slaughter at Opis (which lay east of the Tigris and north of Babylon), then claim that "the town of Sippar was taken without a battle. Nabonidus fled . . . Ugbaru, governor of Gutium and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without a battle. Afterwards, when Nabonidus retreated, he was seized in Babylon" (iii.12'–16'). The "Cyrus Cylinder," Herodotus (*Histories* 1.188–91), and Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* 7.5) also assert that there was no battle at Babylon.[31] Although Beaulieu maintained that the accounts of the city being taken by surprise while a festival was in progress (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.191; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.5; Daniel 5) "can hardly be harmonized with cuneiform evidence," he noted the date of the capture was the day before a festival might have been held and that Xenophon tells how Gobryas, having been alienated by a king of Babylon, joined Cyrus and, entering Babylon first with Cyrus's troops, killed the "unrighteous" king there (*Cyropaedia* 7.20–32). Xenophon's account agrees well with the Nabonidus Chronicle about the lack of fighting, with Herodotus and the book of Daniel about the feast, and with Daniel about the death of the king. In claiming a peaceful occupation, both the chronicle and the Cyrus Cylinder may be presenting Persian propaganda, the view that the Persians took the city because it was the will of its god, Marduk. If some leading Babylonians were killed in the palace, that was not a matter of concern to their authors, since the chronicle had already told of the most important fact, the capture of King Nabonidus. (It should be noted that all the Babylonian chronicle texts are extracts from longer compositions and should not be treated as comprehensive or complete records of any event; they were made for purposes no longer understood.)

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[30] Noted by Sidney Smith, *Isaiah Chapters XL–LV. The Schweich Lectures 1940* (London: The British Academy, 1944), 125 n. 41; Brian E. Colless, "Cyrus the Persian as Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel," *JSOT* 56 (1992): 123.

[31] Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus*, 224–26.

The Medes

The book of Daniel names the Medes as a power following the Babylonian kingdom and connected with the Persian. The passages are these:

> That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two. (Dan. 5:30–31)

> In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom . . . (9:1; cf. 11:1)

> The two-horned ram . . . represents the kings of Media and Persia. (8:20)

> . . . the laws of the Medes and Persians. (6:8, 12, 15)

Whether there was ever a Median Empire that intervened between the Babylonian and the Persian and who Darius the Mede might be are questions that have been endlessly debated. They should be considered separately.

The Kingdom of the Medes

Assyrian kings fought against the Medes in Iran from the ninth century BC onward, taking control of some of their territory where deported Israelites were settled (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11). Esarhaddon made treaties with some of their rulers in 672, but under King Cyaxares the Medes joined with the Babylonian king Nabopolassar to conquer Assyria in 612, and Berossus reports that Nebuchadnezzar was married to a daughter of the Median king.[32] The political situation changed over the next fifty years, for Nabonidus names Medes, with Egypt and Arabs, as enemies who sought friendly relations with him.[33] The prophets Isaiah (13:17; 21:2 with Elam) and Jeremiah (51:11, 28) forecast the fall of Babylon at the hands of the Medes, Jeremiah including them, with Elam, among the nations whom the Lord would punish (25:25). It is noteworthy that, although Elam is mentioned beside the Medes, there is no hint in those texts of a Persian power. The Chronicle of Nabonidus reports that, in the king's sixth year (550), Cyrus, king of Anshan, conquered Astyages, capturing Ecbatana, the Median capital, and in the king's ninth year (547), Cyrus, now titled king of Persia, attacked Urartu.[34] The impact of the Medes

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[32] Burstein, *The* Babyloniaca *of Berossus*, 25.

[33] *ANET*, 126.

[34] Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 234–37. The name of the place attacked has usually been reconstructed as Lydia—only part of the first sign remains—but reexamination of the tablet shows Urartu is more likely (Joachim Oelsner, "Review," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 46/47 [1999/2000]: 373–80, see 378; and Robert Rollinger," The Western Expansion of the 'Median' Empire: A Re-examination,"

on the Greeks is evident in writers, such as Thucydides, calling "the Median War" the war with the Persians and treating various Persian styles as Median, the term *Persian* gradually becoming dominant from the middle of the fifth century BC.[35] As the Medes spread toward western Anatolia, they would be the first Iranian people Greeks living there met, and so it can be understood that they would call all similar people by the same name,[36] just as Europeans call "Chinese" all the people who call themselves "Han" because the Ch'in were the most westerly. Biblical sources display the same pattern as the Greek: the book of Daniel, relating events of the sixth century, echoes the previous dominance of the Medes in the phrase "Medes and Persians," whereas in the book of Esther, reflecting the mid-fifth-century, Persian power is well established, and so the order becomes "Persians and Medes" (see Esther 1:3, 14, 18, 19), except for the history of the rulers, which remains "The annals of the kings of Media and Persia" (10:2).

The Medes clearly made their mark on the ancient Near East. How do they fit in the book of Daniel?

Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the composite statue foretold a lesser king-dom following his own, then a third that would "rule over the whole earth," to be replaced by the iron power with internal division (Dan. 2:36–43, quote from 39). If we take the last to be Alexander the Great's kingdom, the third becomes the Persian, and the second the Median. The same pattern appears in Daniel's dream of four beasts, which are explained as four unnamed kingdoms (7:17). In Daniel's vision of a ram and a goat in chapter 8 the interpretation is specific: "The two-horned ram . . . represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece" (vv. 20–21). Accordingly, commenta-tors have assumed a rigid sequence of kingdoms. However, if the sequence lies in terms of power, the Babylonian and Median can be seen to overlap, and the Persian to arise from the Median—reflecting well the political devel-opments of the sixth century BC. The final phrase in the description of the third beast, "it was given authority to rule" (7:6), may indicate a difference from its predecessor.

As noted, Isaiah and Jeremiah forecast the downfall of Babylon at the hands of the Medes, and so some contend that the author of Daniel had to invent a Median rule and insert it into the narrative to show those prophe-cies as fulfilled. All are agreed there was a Median kingdom during the first

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in *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia*, ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Michael Roaf, and Robert Rollinger [Padova: S.a.r.g.o.n., 2003]: 289–320, here 315–16 n. 128).

[35]David Graf, "Medism: The Origin and Significance of the Term," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 104 (1984): 15–30.

[36]Cf. Christopher J. Tuplin, "Xenophon in Media," in Lanfranchi, Roaf, and Rollinger, *Continuity of Empire (?)*, 351–89, here 353.

half of the sixth century BC, as the Nabonidus Chronicle and other sources mentioned above demonstrate. (The term *empire* is misleading; the Aramaic of Daniel has simply "kingdom.") The Medes, it seems, were several tribes who might unite for particular purposes under one king, although Jeremiah speaks of the "kings of the Medes" (51:11, 28), and Median strength is apparent in the alliance with the Babylonians to overthrow Assyria, in the threat Nabonidus felt they presented, and in his apparent account of its collapse: "(Marduk) raised up Cyrus, king of Anshan [i.e., Persia], his young servant who scattered the vast (army of the) Medes with his small forces and captured Astyages, king of the Medes."[37]

The Problem of Darius the Mede

The conqueror of Babylon was Cyrus the Persian. Some years before, in 550–549, he had taken control of the Medes and then the kingdom of Lydia in western Turkey. Now with Babylon and her empire, he ruled all of the Near East; his son Cambyses, who is not mentioned in Scripture, conquered Egypt. Daniel 5:31 states that Belshazzar was killed "and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two." Here is a major puzzle; there is no doubt from other sources that it was Cyrus who took the crown of Babylon from Nabonidus and his son. Who was Darius the Mede? Some have tried to identify Darius with one of Cyrus's officers, Gubaru, while many scholars say that the author, eager to show that the prophecies were fulfilled and needing to name a king, made a mistake or simply used a known Persian royal name for his fictitious figure, attributing some of the actions of Darius I to him.[38] The question, could there have been a Darius the Mede? remains open.

The neatest clue toward solving the problem was offered in 1957 by D. J. Wiseman, who compared Daniel 6:28, "So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian," with 1 Chronicles 5:26, "And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tiglathpilneser king of Assyria" (KJV, cf. ASV).[39] Now it is certain that those two names, Pul and Tiglath-pileser, refer to the same man; he ruled as king of Assyria and became king of Babylon by conquest. The Hebrew conjunc-

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[37]See Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus*, 107–9; Mario Liverani, "The Rise and Fall of Media," in Lanfranchi, Roaf, and Rollinger, *Continuity of Empire (?)*, 1–12.

[38]Harold H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1935), is the classic treatment; John C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede: A Study in Historical Identification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), presents the case for Darius being Gubaru.

[39]"Darius the Mede," *Christianity Today* 2, no. 4 (1957): 7–10; "Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel," in Donald J. Wiseman et al., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (London: Tyndale, 1956), 9–16, expanded by James M. Bulman, "The Identification of Darius the Mede," *WTJ* 35 (1973): 247–67.

tion rendered "and" in older translations of the Bible can also mean "that is
to say" or "even." Therefore, 1 Chronicles 5:26 should be translated, "So the
God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, that is to say, the
spirit of Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria" (see RSV and later versions). In past
decades it could be stated, "There is no evidence that 'Pulu' was ever used
as a contemporary name for the king" because the name was found only in
a later copy of a Babylonian king list, in the Bible, and in Greek sources.[40]
Therefore the biblical statement might not reflect a custom of Tiglath-pileser's
time. Recently a Phoenician inscription from his reign has been deciphered
that refers to him four times by this name (*p'l*).[41] By this interpretation, in
Aramaic as in Hebrew, Cyrus and Darius are the same king. The use of two
names for the same man has been noted as a feature of the book of Daniel.[42]
Cyrus may have been his name as king of Persia, and Darius his name as
king of the Medes, although the book of Daniel never gives him the title
"king of the Medes." Darius was possibly a "throne name," even though it
is Persian,[43] for later Persian kings certainly assumed throne names on their
accession, for example, Artaxerxes I and II: Arses; Darius II: Ochus, Umasu or
Umakuš, Old Persian Va(h)uš or Vauka.[44] That Cyrus had Median ancestry is
asserted by Greek sources. Herodotus explains that he was a mule—his father
a Persian, his mother a Median princess, daughter of Astyages (*Histories*
1.91; cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.2.1)—and he also reports that a queen of
the Massagetae, east of the Caspian Sea, addressed Cyrus as "King of the
Medes" (*Histories* 1.206). In Daniel 9:1 Darius is called "son of Xerxes, by
birth a Mede." The father of Cyrus was Cambyses, the name also borne by
the son who succeeded Cyrus, so if Cyrus is identical with Darius, "son" here
can only mean "descendant," but no earlier Xerxes is attested. Cyrus took
Babylon when he was about sixty-one years old, the age Daniel 5:31 gives

[40]John A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia 1158–722 B.C.* (Rome: Pontifical
Biblical Institute, 1968), 61–62, 240 n. 1544, 243 n. 1560.
[41]Stephen A. Kaufman, "The Phoenician Inscription of the Incirli Trilingual: A Tentative Reconstruc-
tion and Translation," *Maarav* 14, no. 2 (2007): 7–26, here 18.
[42]Colless, "Cyrus the Persian," 113–18.
[43]Note that the name of a Median ruler at the end of the eighth century BC was Darî, apparently a
shortened form of a name; see A. Fuchs and R. Schmitt in *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian
Empire*, ed. Karen Radner (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999), 379b.
[44]Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, 87, states that Cambyses and Cyrus could be personal names or throne
names, "but one problem is that neither the name Cyrus nor Cambyses can be adequately explained
as one or the other, and we really do not know." See also Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A
History of the Persian Empire*, trans. Peter T. Daniels (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 570, 588,
591, 615, 664 (cf. 1003), 772, 777 (cf. 1033). On the name Darius, see Rudiger Schmitt, "The Name
of Darius," *Acta Iranica* 30 (1990): 194–99, but Manfred Mayrhofer, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*,
1.2, *Die altpersischen Namen* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979), 18,
states that it was hardly a throne name for Darius I.

for Darius at that moment is "about sixty-two." Other parallels between the actions of Cyrus and "Darius the Mede" have been proposed.[45] Alas, the Medes did not leave written records that might prove or disprove this idea.

The 120 Satraps

An objection is raised against Daniel 6:1, "It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom," because Herodotus states that Darius I created "twenty provincial governorships called satrapies" (*Histories* 3.89). "Satrap" is certainly an Iranian word, apparently of Median origin,[46] denoting the highest subordinates of the king, who controlled the provinces of his empire. When Babylonian and Aramaic texts refer to those governors, however, they use the word *pīḫatu*, taken as a loanword in Aramaic, *pḥh*, which has a wider range of meaning, embracing controllers of the vast territory of Babylonia and Transeuphratene (*ebir nāri*) and of small regions such as Judah or Samaria.[47] The possibility may be envisaged, therefore, that the term could be applied more widely than Herodotus's report about the reign of Darius I implies.

The Languages

Since S. R. Driver declared, "The *Persian* words presuppose a period after the Persian empire had been well established: the Greek words *demand*, the Hebrew supports, and the Aramaic *permits*, a date *after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great* (B.C. 332),"[48] discoveries of Aramaic documents from the Persian Empire, discoveries of cuneiform texts revealing the presence of Greeks in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, and new light on the history of the Hebrew language provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls have changed the situation markedly.

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[45]Bulman, "Identification of Darius the Mede," 259–64, though not all proposals he advanced are convincing; Colless, "Cyrus the Persian," 115–18, 132–24.

[46]Rudiger Schnitt, "Die Sprache der Meder—eine grosse Unbekannte," in *Continuity of Empire (?)*, 23–36, here 35.

[47]See *The Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 12, P (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2005), 366b; Thierry Petit, "L'évolution sémantique des termes hébreux et araméens *pḥh* et *sgn* et accadiens *pīḫatu* et š*aknu*," *JBL* 107 (1988): 53–67; Matthew W. Stolper, "The Governor of Babylon and Across-the-River in 486 B.C.," *JNES* 48 (1989): 283–305. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 712, notes the use of "satrap" in an Aramaic inscription "may indicate that the person . . . held some sort of official position in the region"; Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–330 BC* (London: Routledge, 1995), 689, wrote, "The terminology is not always precise: the word can be used of less powerful governors, and Greek writers even apply it on occasion to any officers surrounding the king."

[48]Samuel R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 9th ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1913), 508.

When Nebuchadnezzar commanded his experts to explain his dream, they spoke to him in Aramaic, which is the language of all the narrative from that point (Dan. 2:4) until the end of chapter 7. While thousands of cuneiform tablets and scores of royal inscriptions from the days of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors prove the continuing life of Babylonian, "Aramaic had probably become the dominant vernacular."[49] Normally, Aramaic would have been written on parchment, or on wax-covered wooden tablets, which do not survive in the damp Babylonian soil to reveal the extent of its use. One hundred or so clay tablets carry cursive Aramaic notes scratched or written in ink to identify their cuneiform texts, and one of three lines is entirely in Aramaic.[50] A more formal use of Aramaic is evident from stamped bricks. Thousands of bricks in the buildings at Babylonian sites are stamped in cuneiform with the names and titles of Neo-Babylonian kings, following a long-standing Mesopotamian custom, and at Babylon a small proportion is stamped with Aramaic letters. The first examples of these were found in the eighteenth century, but only in 2010 was a comprehensive catalog and study of them produced.[51] The Aramaic stamps are additional to the royal stamps. The purpose of these imprints is uncertain; perhaps they identify the brickworks where they were made. Some give personal names, none royal; some give one or two letters, and others have pictorial designs; but their position on officially marked bricks and their formal or "monumental" script attest an authority behind them. Beside them, another discovery displays the official use of Aramaic: the imprint of a large seal bearing the name of a son of Nebuchadnezzar in cuneiform and in Aramaic.[52] The style of the Aramaic in the book of Daniel is now widely agreed to belong to the Persian period.[53]The Greek words in chapter 3, which are all names of musical instruments, became more accept-

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[49]Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-Millennium B.C. Mesopotamia," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*, ed. Seth L. Sanders, Oriental Institute Seminars 2 (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2006), 187–216, here 194.

[50]Ran Zadok, "The Representation of Foreigners in Neo- and Late-Babylonian Legal Documents (Eighth through Second Centuries B.C.E.)," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 471–589, esp. 558–78; Christa Müller-Kessler, "Eine aramäische 'Visitenkarte': Eine spätbabylonische Tontafel aus Babylon," *MDOG* 130 (1998): 189–95.

[51]Benjamin Sass and Joachim Marzahn, *Aramaic and Figural Stamp Impressions on Bricks of the Sixth Century B.C. from Babylon*, Ausgrabungen in Babylon 10, WVDOG 127 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); see my review in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 131, no. 3 (2011).

[52]To be published by Kathleen Abraham.

[53]K. A. Kitchen, "The Aramaic of Daniel," in Wiseman et al., *Notes on Some Problems*, 31–79; Eduard Yechezkel Kutscher, "Aramaic," in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. 6, ed. T. A. Seboek (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 400–403; Michael Sokoloff, *The Targum of Job from Qumran Cave XI* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press,1974), 9 n. 1; Margaretha L. Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 753–55.

able in a sixth-century setting with the publication of lists of rations issued to people kept in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. Beside Jehoiachin, king of Judah, there were other people from the Levant and Anatolia, including Greeks.[54] A few further attestations of Greeks living, even owning property, in Babylonia have been traced in legal texts.[55]

The history of biblical Hebrew has come under renewed study, especially in the light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the differences appearing between the books are no longer viewed as so clearly marking distinct periods. While the Hebrew of Daniel might support a second-century date, it could equally support an earlier date.[56] The presence of Persian words in a Hebrew (and Aramaic) book written in the Persian period is unexceptionable.

Conclusion

The book of Daniel correctly reflects the building works of Nebuchadnezzar, in common with Herodotus and other Greek writers, and the use of Aramaic in the Babylonian court, also, no doubt, a widely known fact. Unlike every other known ancient author writing about the fall of Babylon, Daniel preserves the name of Belshazzar, son of the last king of Babylon, according to cuneiform texts. Xenophon is in partial agreement with Daniel, giving an account of a banquet and a king slaughtered (*Cyropaedia* 7.5.15, 21, 25–30). Daniel has Cyrus as king of Persia (10:1) ruling Babylon, in agreement with 2 Chronicles 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1, 7, 8; 2:7; 4:3, 5; 5:13–14, 17; 6:3, 14; and Greek writers and cuneiform tablets. In those respects its narrative may be counted as a reliable record.

In the matter of the Medes and Darius there can be less certainty. The expression "Medes and Persians" may point to the historical priority of Median power to Persian and to a period prior to that of the book of Esther, when the phrase is inverted—"Persians and Medes," as Greek sources also attest. As to Darius the Mede, to dismiss him as a fictional figure, as a composite

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[54]Ernst F. Weidner, "Jojachin, König von Juda, in Babylonischen Keilschrifttexten," in *Mélanges Syriens Offerts à Monsieur René Dussaud*, vol. 2, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 30 (Paris: Geuthner, 1939), 923–35; Oppenheim, in *ANET*, 308; Terence C. Mitchell, "The Music of the Old Testament Reconsidered," *PEQ* 124 (1992): 124–43, esp. 134–40.

[55]François Joannès, "Diversité ethnique et culturelle en Babylonie récente," and Robert Rollinger and Wouter F. M. Henkelman, "New Observations on 'Greeks' in the Achaemenid Empire according to the Cuneiform Texts from Babylonia and Persepolis," in *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l'empire achéménide*, ed. Pierre Briant and Michel Chauveau, *Persika* 14 (Paris: De Boccard, 2009), 217–36, 331–52.

[56]See the discussions in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, ed. Ian Young, JSOTSup 369 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), and *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, ed. Ian Young and Robert Rezetko, 2 vols. (London: Equinox, 2008).

of memories about Persian rulers, or as a simple error is to risk discarding
a notice that may be correct. Repeatedly, lone references in ancient writings
that scholars have treated as suspect or unfounded have proved to be correct,
as the case of Belshazzar illustrates, or that of Sargon II of Assyria, known
only from Isaiah 20:1 until his cuneiform inscriptions were deciphered in the
mid-nineteenth century.[57] The accuracy of the book of Daniel on such matters
contrasts with such Hellenistic compositions as Judith and Tobit.[58]

The parallels between Cyrus and Darius in Daniel strengthen the argu-
ment for their identity, but the complete lack of Median documents and the
very restricted contemporary records from the Persian court preclude further
investigation of, for example, "the laws of the Medes and Persians." Darius I
is often held to have drawn up a code of laws, but only in Egypt is he known to
have ordered a collection of old precedents to be made.[59] The hypothesis that
identifies Cyrus with Darius has been decried as "difficult to falsify" because
it cannot be demonstrated or disproved. Yet the proposed alternatives fall into
the same category with arguments based upon the supposition that Darius I
was the model for "Darius the Mede" in that certain characteristics "could
. . . be taken from him," which are also beyond demonstration.[60]

Every ancient document that survives deserves to be examined critically
to discover how well or poorly it reflects the era it describes. The book of
Daniel has suffered at the hands of scholars who, having assumed "Darius the
Mede" is erroneous, have failed to give due attention to the possibility that
other statements—and even that one—might be accurate. Now that there is
adequate evidence to prove the accuracy of some and circumstantial evidence
to allow others, there should be greater willingness to view the book's reports
positively. Kenton Sparks's observation that "the need for . . . a critical per-
spective should be obvious: just because some human view or theory about
the Bible has been believed, or is believed, does not ensure its correctness"[61]
requires the rider: "nor its error."

[57] Steven W. Holladay, "The Quest for Sargon, Pul, and Tiglath-pileser in the Nineteenth Century,"
in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, ed. Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson
Younger, JSOTSup 341 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 68–87, esp. 68–71.

[58] Alan Millard, "Judith, Tobit, Ahiqar and History," in *New Heaven and New Earth: Prophecy and
the Millennium: Essays in Honour of Anthony Gelston*, ed. P. J. Harland and C. T. R. Hayward,
VTSup 77 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 195–203. Note also Wilfred G. Lambert's characterization in *The
Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: Athlone, 1978), 15: "the mish-mash of spurious items
about Babylon that are characteristic of Greek Hellenistic literature."

[59] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 474, 510–11, 956–57.

[60] Lester L. Grabbe, "Another Look at the Gestalt of 'Darius the Mede,'" *CBQ* 50 (1988): 198–213.

[61] Kenton L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 57.