

Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel

D. J. Wiseman

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A. DARIUS THE MEDE

1. The Problem. 'The references to Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel have long been recognised as providing the most serious historical problem in the book.'¹ Yet the Bible clearly declares that after the death of the Chaldean king Belshazzar 'Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old' (Dn. 5:30-31). This Darius was 'son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who became king over the realm of the Chaldeans' (9:1). He 'set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, to be throughout the while kingdom; and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss' (6:1-2). Daniel held a position of authority at least during the first regnal year in Babylon of this king (6:1; 9:1) and, according to the traditional translation of 6:28, 'Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.' Thus Darius the Mede appears to have been succeeded by Cyrus² and this verse is considered 'the clearest evidence of the book's belief in a Median empire between the Babylonian and the Persian'.³

On the other hand, contemporary extra-biblical sources relate that Belshazzar, co-regent with his father Nabonidus, the last Chaldean king of Babylon, died some time after the entry of Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium, with the army of Cyrus into Babylon without a battle on the sixteenth of Tashritu.⁴ Nabonidus, who had fled the day before, was probably captured and died in exile.⁵ Cyrus, who had remained with his troops at Opis, entered

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the city eighteen days later (third of Araḥshamnu = 29 October 539 BC) when the temple ritual had been restored and agreement for surrender reached. He was received as a victor and deliverer with popular rejoicing and at once sent greetings to all Babylonia. Gubaru, his governor, installed sub-governors in Babylonia. The deities which had been brought in by Nabonidus to Babylon were restored to the shrines in their own cities. On the eleventh of Araḥshamnu Ugbaru died and later that month some person, whose description is lost (possibly the wife or mother of the king), died amid national mourning at the end of which Cambyses, son of Cyrus, entered the temple.⁶ There is thus no room for the reign of a king Darius or for a 'Median empire' between the fall of the Chaldean Dynasty and the inauguration of the Achaemenid suzerainty at Babylon.

¹ *DTM*, p.9.

² *ibid*

³ J. Barr in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (ed. M. Black and H. H. Rowley, 1960), p. 597.

⁴ The Nabonidus Chronicle, text in Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts relating to the Fall of Babylon* (1924), pp. 98-123. Translation in *AXET*, pp. 305-307; *DOTT*, pp. 81-83.

⁵ In Carmania (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, I, 20-21, quoted by Sidney Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 105, n. 2 *Isaiah XL-LV* (1944), pp. 48, 157, n.154).

⁶ The Nabonidus Chronicle, ii. 15-23.

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2. The Gubaru Theory. Since the time of Jerome there have been many attempts to identify Darius, but most of these have failed with the discovery of cuneiform texts which give an exact and often contemporary description of the main events of the period. H. H. Rowley has very ably discussed many of these theories and shown that Darius the Mede could not be identified with Cambyses, Gobryas, Astyages or Cyaxares.⁷ However, the view that Darius was a title of Gubaru, the prefect or governor of Babylon and of the district west of the Euphrates, proposed by a number of scholars⁸ has recently been revived, with some modification and additional arguments and evidence, by J. C. Whitcomb.⁹ He sets out to answer the objections previously raised by Rowley against this identification. Although Gubaru is nowhere in the cuneiform texts connected with the name Darius, Whitcomb follows Albright¹⁰ in claiming that it is 'highly probable' that Gubaru (whom he distinguishes from the Gobryas of the Behistun inscription) did actually assume the royal dignity, along with the name 'Darius', which was perhaps an old Iranian title, while Cyrus was absent on an eastern campaign.¹¹ In support of such use of double titles he instances that of Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, equated with his native or Babylonian name of Pul(u) in 2 Kings 15:19-29, cf. 1 Chronicles 5:26. However, this argument from silence, as the analogy of double royal names or titles, could with equal validity apply to other identifications, and perhaps with greater probability where Darius is equated with a person, such as Cyrus, otherwise

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known to have held royal office. There is no known instance of a governor of Babylon, other than a usurper, in the first millennium bearing a royal title and claiming a throne, as would be required by this theory.

Gubaru is nowhere described as 'son of Ahasuerus', and the defence that there are similar omissions (in the Nabonidus Chronicle) of the name of Cyrus's father, Nabonidus's mother, or the ancestry of Belshazzar, is much weakened by the fact that these relationships are ascertainable from other texts. Similarly no evidence can be adduced that Gubaru was a Mede, even if it is agreed that 'the Medes, closely related to the Persians both racially and linguistically, were united under Cyrus', or that Gubaru, if identified with Darius, 'is definitely in agreement with what we know of the early Medo Persian history and is not contradicted by any Greek or cuneiform records'.¹² The identification of Darius with Gubaru also necessitates the acceptance of Whitcomb's proposition that the Ugbaru of the Nabonidus inscription is not the Gobryas of Xenophon, Herodotus and the Behistun inscription, where he is represented as a Persian, and Whitcomb distinguishes this Ugbaru from Gubaru (named with Ugbaru in the same text) who became Cyrus's governor in Babylon.

Rowley's strongest argument against the identification of Darius the Mede with Gobryas is that there is no evidence that Gubaru ever bore the title of king. Even the royal prince, Cambyses, who undertook the New Year ceremony and ruled in Babylon for a while on

⁷ *DTM*, pp. 12-43.

⁸ E.g. C. H. H. Wright, *Daniel and his Prophecies* (1906), pp. 135-137. R. D. Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (1957), pp. 128-220.

⁹ *DM*.

¹⁰ *JBL*, XL, 1921, p. 112 n.

¹¹ *DM*, pp. 26-42.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

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behalf of his father Cyrus, was never himself then called 'king'. The cuneiform contracts dated from the fourth year of Cyrus to the fifth year of Cambyses (535-524 BC) refer to Gubaru only as governor (*pihatu*). It is uncertain whether this is the equivalent of the Persian 'Satrap' (*khshatrapava*).¹³ Even if it is there is no evidence that it is the equivalent of the Aramaic title of *malkâ* used by Cyrus and his successors.¹⁴ Whitcomb's argument that the later Darius (Hystaspes) refers to district governors as kings is open to question. The reference in the Behistun inscription (4:2-3) is to clients or vassals, native chieftains left in command of local and tribal territories.¹⁵ He interprets 'received the kingdom' (5:30-31)

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as denoting subordination to a higher power, Cyrus the Persian, by whose name events were dated (1:21; 7:28; 10:1) and whose reign he considers to be contemporary.¹⁶ Thus the strongest point in favour of the identification of Darius the Mede with Gubaru is that he was a provincial governor with subordinate officials under him. There is no extra-biblical evidence to show that he was about sixty-two years of age, son of Xerxes, a Median, or called king of Babylonia as required by the book of Daniel.

Rowley concluded that the Darius of Daniel was fictitious,¹⁷ the result of confusion between the fall of Babylon in 539 BC and that of 520 BC in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.¹⁸ However, even if the Gubaru theory is not accepted there is another which should at least keep the question of the historicity and identification of Darius the Mede in the book of Daniel open.

3. The 'Cyrus' Theory. In 1957 I put forward as a working hypothesis the possibility that Darius the Mede is to be identified with Cyrus the Persian king.¹⁹ It may be helpful to review this theory in the light of criticism made of it by Dr. Whitcomb.²⁰ The basis of the hypothesis is that Daniel 6:28 can be translated 'Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, even (namely, or i.e.) the reign of Cyrus the Persian.' Such a use of the appositional or explicative Hebrew *wāw* construction has long been recognized in Chronicles 5:26 ('So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria even the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria') and elsewhere.²¹ Granted such an interpretation it remains to examine how

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 32. The exact neo-Babylonian equivalent is *ahšadrapannu*, CAD A.1, p. 195

¹⁴ The title 'King of Kings' (Dn. 2:37) is not a Persian title as often argued (e.g. J. Barr, *op. cit.*, p. 594), but was used in royal inscriptions by both Assyrian and Babylonian kings from Tiglath-pileser I (c. 1100 BC) onwards (E. A. W. Budge and L. W. King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria* (1902), p. 32, 1. 30 *cf.* p. 265, 1. 21, Ashurnasirpal).

¹⁵ Thus the comparison with the 'King of Sagartia' of this inscription, if interpreted as an aspiration for independence (E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (1949), p. 300, n.11), could be an argument against the ascription of the title 'King' Gubaru as *governor* of Babylon. The title 'King' was used of a vassal who, though subordinate to the central state, continued to exercise local autonomy.

¹⁶ *DM*, p. 35.

¹⁷ *DTM*, pp. 44-53, followed by many writers, e.g. J. Barr, *op. cit.*, p. 592, 'a figure constructed purely on the basis of a theory of the Median empire'.

¹⁸ *DTM*, pp. 54-60.

¹⁹ In a BBC broadcast subsequently published in *Christianity Today*, II, 1957, pp. 7-10.

²⁰ *DM*, pp. 46-49.

²¹ *Cf.* Gesenius-Kautsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, §154a, n.1b. Akkadian *-ma* is similarly used. The same interpretation would follow if the use were explained as *wāw concomitantes* or as *pleonastic wāw* (M. Pope, *JAOS*, LXXIII, 1953, pp. 95-98; P. Wernberg-Moller, *JSS*, III, 1958, pp. 321-326). I cannot agree with

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far Darius might be a bi-name of Cyrus in the light of the scriptural statements.

Cyrus as much as Gubaru could have been called 'a Mede' by the Babylonians. By 550 BC Cyrus had taken over Media and joined it to the 'Persian' federation. When Nabonidus in 546 BC declared that the 'King of the Medes' welcomed his proposed return from exile²² he could at this time refer to no other than to Cyrus, and presumably this title was known as far as Tema' even though it has not been found yet in other inscriptions. Although Cyrus only uses 'King of Anshan',²³ 'King of Persia',²⁴ 'King of Babylonia',²⁵ or 'King of the lands',²⁶ in his inscriptions, it cannot be denied that he might also have incorporated the title 'King of Media' but that, if of Median stock, he did not stress it in view of the unity of the Aryan Medo-Persian coalition under his rule.²⁷ It is noteworthy that nowhere does the writer of Daniel claim that Darius was 'King of Media'.

It has been argued that 'the phrase "seed of the Medes" in Daniel 9:1 means that the *paternal* (as opposed to the maternal) ancestry of Darius was Median',²⁸ While descent from Achaemenes and Persian lineage is normally emphasized it need not be surprising that the grandson of Cyrus I (vassal of the Medes) through the marriage of Cambyses I to Mandane, daughter of Astyages, should not despise or renounce a claim to be 'of Median descent', which is all that need be implied by the phrase.²⁹ Herodotus

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represents Cyrus correctly as son of a Median princess³⁰ and Xenophon as heir to the Median throne.³¹ While the unusual nature of 'Darius (the Mede)' as an appellation of Cyrus the

Whitcomb (p. 48) that this is a *wāw* of contrast ('Darius *the Mede* is set over against Cyrus *the Persian*') rather than comparison. The verse 6:28 comes at the end of a section of Daniel (5:35-6:28) introduced by 'Darius the Mede'. The whole of 6:28 could be taken as the explanation of the introduction of a ruler's name otherwise unknown to the reader. Rowley's view (p. 47 = Cambyses, with which Whitcomb agrees, p. 48, n.23) that the contrast between Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede is so definite that no-one could possibly suppose the author to have known that they were father and son begs the question. No statement of the relation of Darius the Mede to Cyrus is given except in the verse in question.

²² C.J. Gadd, *AS*, VIII, 1958, p. 77.

²³ Cyrus Cylinder, 1. 12; *ANET*, p. 315; *DOTT*, p. 92.

²⁴ Dn. 10:1; 2 Ch. 36:23; Ezr. 1:2. A title revived by Cyrus (Cylinder 2:15).

²⁵ So on all contracts dated to his reign in Babylonian cities. R. Parker and W. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology (626 BC-AD 75)* (1956), p. 14; J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cyrus, König von Babylon* (Babylonische Texte V, 8-9, 1890).

²⁶ This title is added after 'King of Babylonia' in most contemporary contracts. For references see n.25 above.

²⁷ Note that the references to the 'law of the Medes and Persians' (Dn. 6:8, 15; cf. 5:28; 8:20) emphasize the unity of the realm. The writer of Esther 1:19; cf. verses 3, 14, 18, cites Persia before Media, perhaps as an indication of his 'Persian' (Susian) standpoint as opposed to Daniel's Median view. The influence of Media on Persia is seen both in language (*OP*, pp. 8-9) and culture (R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (1962), p. 77.

²⁸ *DM*, p. 48.

²⁹ The Achaemenid pride in Aryan descent, as found in the Old Persian inscriptions, does not preclude an actual mixture of blood, R. N. Frye, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

³⁰ Though W. W. How and J. Wells, *Herodotus* (1912), p. 389, consider that 'Herodotus had no conception of the birth and royal claims either of Cyrus or Darius'. On the legends of Cyrus's birth see now R. N. Frye, *Iranica Antiqua*, IV, 2964, pp. 40-42.

³¹ *Cyropaedia*, VIII. V. 19.

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Persian could be a reason for the explanatory note in Daniel 6:28, it should be also noted that the description of the later Darius (II) as 'the Persian' (Ne. 12:22) could imply the need to distinguish the king of that name from one who was already known in Babylonia as 'Darius the Mede'.

The identification of Cyrus the Persian king with Darius the Mede accords well with the prophecies of Isaiah (13:17) and Jeremiah (51:11, 28), who saw in the Medes the conquerors of Babylon.³² My argument here, however, is directed to show that the traditional close connection of Medes and Persians under Cyrus by marriage, conquest or inheritance, and language makes him a stronger candidate for the appellation 'the Mede' than Gubaru, for whom the argument for such a description is one of total silence.

4. Cyrus received the kingdom at sixty-two years of age. From the Babylonian Chronicle it is clear that Cyrus was welcomed in Babylon, received the citizens' submission and took over the kingship.³³ No-one questions the often recurring statements of contemporary texts, that Cyrus was 'king' or that he appointed subordinate governors. He appears to have appointed high officials or generals as governors (e.g. Tabale at Sardis, Gubaru at Babylon) only in such places as he did not wish to have client-kings. It is probable that the satrapy system already existed in the time of Cyrus, since the title *khshathrapanva* is Median, and the organization was a development of the provincial governorships initiated by the Assyrians.³⁴

That Cyrus was about sixty-two years of age in 539-538 BC has

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already been noted by Bengel³⁵ and Sidney Smith.³⁶ Rowley thinks that at this point the author has 'transferred the age of Cyrus, which some tradition had preserved, to Darius'. He is thus forced to conclude that 'his reason for recording a detail of so little significance to his narrative is not apparent'.³⁷

Cyrus died in 529 BC after a reign of nine years over Babylon dating from 539 BC, by which time he had already ruled Persia for thirty years.³⁸ His reign over Anshan could have begun in 558 BC,³⁹ and a date of *c.* 600 BC for his birth is not impossible, his grandfather being already King of Parsumas in 640 BC.⁴⁰

³² It is possible that these prophecies led to the employment of this title for Cyrus in Dn. 5:30. It should be noted that the identity of Cyrus with Media accords well with Ezr. 6:2 which states that the records of his decrees were kept in Ecbatana, Media. Also the tradition of Josephus (*Antiq.* X.1 4.4) that Daniel was removed by Darius to Media.

³³ H. H. Rowley (*DTM*, p. 52) rightly shows that the phrase *qabbe'l malku'tha* means 'succeeded to the kingdom' without specifying the means and does not denote a delegated authority (as required by Whitcomb's view). A text from Sippar within the week of its capture on October 10, 539 BC, is dated to the 'accession year of Cyrus' (BM. 56454, unpublished).

³⁴ R. N. Frye, *op. cit.*, p. 74; *cf.* *DTM*, p. 40.

³⁵ J. A. Bengel, *Ordo temporum aprincipio... diviniae historicas ...* (1770), p. 181, referring to Josephus, *Antiquities*, X.248.

³⁶ Sidney Smith, *Isaiah XL-LV* (1944), pp. 29-32.

³⁷ *DTM*, p. 56.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55, n.6 for references.

³⁹ F. H. Weissbach, art. *Kyros*, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie*, Supp. 4.

⁴⁰ Sidney Smith, *Isaiah XL-LV*, p. 32, for the argument that Cyrus was over forty years of age in 556 BC.

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It has been argued that since Cyrus was the son of Cambyses he could never be designated 'son of Ahasuerus' (Dn. 9:I). The argument, again *e silentio*, that Gubaru could have been so designated is therefore said to be stronger. It is, however, now recognized that Xerxes (Ahasuerus) may be an ancient Achaemenid royal 'title'⁴¹ and thus would be more applicable to the royal Cyrus than to the governor Gubaru. Whitcomb implies that since 'Ahasuerus' occurs outside Daniel only in Ezra 4:6 and in Esther (also identified with Xerxes I, 485-465 BC) it cannot be a 'Dynastic' title.⁴² This argument indicates that he would seem to fall in with Rowley, who believes that the writer of Daniel, by mentioning Ahasuerus, is conflating two traditions. Whitcomb elsewhere considers 'Darius' as a 'dynastic' or royal title.⁴³

It is submitted that, while it must remain only a *theory* and be further tested, the view that the 'Darius the Mede' could be another name used of 'Cyrus the Persian' and as such specifically noted in Daniel 6:28 has support from the text itself in that Cyrus was about sixty-two years old, received the kingdom and appointed

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governors. Since he was probably known to Nabonidus, his second cousin, as 'king of the Medes' a claim to Median descent as echoed by some classical writers is not impossible. As in the case of the Gubaru theory, there is as yet no clear evidence for or against the claim that Cyrus was a 'son of Xerxes', or that he bore another name.⁴⁴ That kings in the ancient near east bore more than one name is abundantly attested.⁴⁵

If it is argued that a contemporary writer would not refer to one and the same person by such distinct names as Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede,⁴⁶ then it must be pointed out that the use of the different names applies to clearly defined sections of the book (5:30-6:28; 9 and 11-12) which are given a single date ('the first year of Darius'). Further investigation might disclose some reason for this peculiarity or literary preference.

If the interpretation of 6:28 given above is accepted it disposes of the view that the writer of Daniel was depending on a popular tradition and sought to distinguish a separate 'Median empire' on the basis of scattered biblical references. Here was no author granting the Medes a place to accord with biblical prophecy which led to the creation of fictitious 'Darius'. This new theory should lead to the re-examination of any interpretation of the four world empires

⁴¹ R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (1962), p. 97, cf. p. 95. This raises further questions. If Xerxes was the bi-name of a predecessor of Cyrus (not necessarily of Cambyses since the phrase 'son of' could merely imply descent) then the frequently used throne-names Darius (Median?) and Cyrus (Old Persian *Kurush*, Greek *Kyros*; perhaps originally Elamite *Kurash*) could also have occurred in earlier history. For Darius as a title and *Programmname* see *Reallexicon der Assyriologie*, II, 1938, p. 121 (*sub. Da'rejawo's*). Did Isaiah (44:28; 45:1) know of a surname Cyrus earlier than Cyrus I (the contemporary of Ashurbanipal of Assyria) who reigned c. 640 BC? Was 'Cyrus' one of the throne-names of Achaemenes (c. 700- 675 BC)?

⁴² See p. 10 and n.10 above (*DM*, p. 48).

⁴³ *DM*, pp. 27 f.

⁴⁴ Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.* X. 11.4 says that 'Darius... had another name among the Greeks'. However, with this may be compared Strabo (XV.3.6), who says that the original name of Cyrus was Agradates.

⁴⁵ As in the case of Assyrian kings on the throne of Babylon.

⁴⁶ As *DM*, p. 49.

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which required a separate Median and Persian empire,⁴⁷ since the writer could now be shown to maintain the view of a single Medo-Persian realm throughout.

B. DANIEL 1:1

'In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.' The problem raised by this statement is twofold. First the defeat of Pharaoh Necho II at Carcheniish in 605 BC is stated to be in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Je. 46:2). Secondly, the Babylonian Chronicle seems to preclude any action by Nebuchadnezzar in Judah in 606 BC and moreover makes no reference to any siege of Jerusalem in that or any year before 597 BC—Nebuchadnezzar's seventh and Jehoiakim's eleventh year.

Many solutions have been proposed. Some assert that this statement is an erroneous interpretation by the writer of Daniel of

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2 Kings 24:4 combined with 2 Chronicles 36:6-7.⁴⁸ Others emend the text from 'three' (*šālōš*) to 'eight' (*šēmōneh*) on the basis of Josephus's account of this period.⁴⁹ In various concordist views the attempt is made to translate *bā* ('came to') by 'leave for', but this again is countered by the Babylonian Chronicle which, although not giving the date of the departure of the Babylonian army in 605 BC for Carchemish, shows that it did not return from a prior campaign until Shebat (January-February) 605 BC.⁵⁰ The battle of Carchemish, which opened up the road across the Euphrates, is dated between Nisan (April) and Ab (August) 605 BC by the same Chronicle and is most likely to have taken place in May-June of that year.⁵¹

With the precise information available from the Babylonian Chronicle it is clear that the Babylonians defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish and, overtaking a part of the army which had retreated to Hamath, continued to pursue stragglers 'so that not a single man escaped to his own country'. The Babylonians overran the country from the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt (2 Ki. 24:7), though Josephus expressly adds 'excepting Judea'.⁵² The Babylonian Chronicle claims that 'at that time Nebuchadnezzar conquered the whole of the Hatti-land' (i.e. Syria-Palestine).⁵³

If, as has been suggested, Daniel is here using the Babylonian system of dating (postdating, allowing for separate 'accession' year) while Jeremiah (25:49; 46:2) follows the usual

⁴⁷ E.g. H. H. Rowley, *DTM*, pp. 138-160.

⁴⁸ E.g. J. Barr in *Peake's Commentary* (1962), p. 592; cf. B. Alfrink, *Biblica*, VIII, 1928, p. 408.

⁴⁹ *Antiq. Jud.* X.6. I. This has no support from the Versions. For a summary of views on this verse see J. T. Nelis, *RB*, LXI, 1954, pp. 387 f. ('Note sur la date de la sujétion de Joiaqim par Nabuchodonosor').

⁵⁰ D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings* (1956), p. 23.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵² *Antiq. Jud.* X.6.86.

⁵³ D. J. Wiseman, *op. cit.*, p. 25 (BM. 21946, 1. 8); the restoration *Ha*-[ma-a]-*tu*' (Hamath) rather than *Ha*-[at]-*tu*' is possible.

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Palestinian-Jewish antedating (which ignores 'accession-years'),⁵⁴ there is no discrepancy. On the other hand, it has been argued that in Jeremiah 25:1 'the first year' (*haššānâ hārōšît*) may be interpreted as 'the beginning year' (i.e. accession) of Nebuchadrezzar and therefore in agreement with Jeremiah 46:2.⁵⁵ Whichever solution is accepted there remains the question of the siege of Jerusalem in this year, an event unattested in the Chronicle. It could be argued that since

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the Babylonian Chronicle recording the events of 605 BC is primarily concerned with the major defeat of the Egyptians, a successful incursion into Judah by the Babylonian army group which returned from the Egyptian border could be included in the claim that at that time Nebuchadrezzar conquered 'all Hatti'. If so, Daniel 1:1 would imply that the Babylonian king was himself present. This is not improbable since the energy of the young king in leading his troops is attested frequently in the Chronicle.⁵⁶

The argument against a specific Babylonian siege rests on silence just as must, at present, any defence of it. It is not impossible that the phrase 'and besieged it' (*wayyāšor `ālehā*) could here have the meaning 'and cut it off' or even 'showed hostility towards it'.⁵⁷ The extant historical data does not allow any dogmatic assertion against the historical accuracy of this verse.

It would seem that Jehoiakim took part of the temple treasure as a *qatrē*-offering or as *biltu* ('tribute') to buy off the Babylonians, much as had Hezekiah in keeping the Assyrians at bay (2 Ki. 18:13-16). Jehoiakim may have been personally required to go to Babylon to take part in the victory celebrations as a conquered and vassal king (2 Ch. 36:6).⁵⁸ as had Manasseh in the days of Esarhaddon (2 Ch. 33:11). The Old Testament is our only record of both these events.

ABBREVIATIONS

For standard reference works and journals, the abbreviations adopted by *The New Bible Dictionary* (1962) are employed. Other abbreviations are:

| | |
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| AK | <i>Die Ausgrabungen auf dem Karatepe (Erster Vorbericht)</i> (H. T. Bossert), 1950 |
| AOT | <i>The Aramaic of the Old Testament</i> (H. H. Rowley), 1929 |
| AOTB ² | <i>Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament</i> Vol. 2 (ed. H. Gressmann), 1927 |
| AP | <i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> (A. E. Cowley), 1923 |

⁵⁴ So E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (1951), p. 151. He is, however, in error on some of his datings (e.g. the Carchemish battle) which were calculated before the publication of the relevant Babylonian Chronicles. See also H. Tadmor, 'Chronology of the last kings of Judah' in *JNES*, XV, 1956, pp. 226-230.

⁵⁵ J. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (1964), p. 202.

⁵⁶ E.g. He rode from Riblah to Babylon (c. 500+ miles) in about two weeks (D. J. Wiseman, *op. cit.*, p. 26).

⁵⁷ This requires no emendation of the text since *šūr* occurs as a bi-form of *šarār* (Akkadian *šarāru*). Possibly revocalize *wayyāšor*. This latter suggestion is doubtful however since the verb (except in Nu. 5: 18 where *I* is used, as sometimes is *b*, for '*al* with *šūr* and *šarār*') normally takes the direct accusative of the person or object.

⁵⁸ Dn. 1:2 might mean that the vessels and not the king were taken to Babylon at this time. However, Jewish captives had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, I.19.137).

D. J. Wiseman, "Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel," D. J. Wiseman, ed., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*. London: The Tyndale Press, 1965. pp. 9-18.

- ASc* *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum, Reign of Ashur-nasir-pal, 885-860 B.C.* (E. A. Walls Budge), 1914
- ASD III, IV* *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli III, IV* (F. von Luschan), 1902, 1911
- BMAP* *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri* (E. G. Kraeling), 1953
- C II* *Carchemish II* (C. L. Woolley), 1921
- CAD* *The Assyrian Dictionary* (ed. I. J. Geib *et al.*), 1956.
- DAB* *The Development of Attic Black-Figure* (J. D. Beazley), 1951.
- DM* *Darius the Mede* (J. C. Whitcomb), 1959
- DTM* *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* (H. H. Rowley), 1935
- GBA* *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (F. Rosenthal), 1961
- GO* *The Greeks Overseas* (J. Boardman), 1964
- HCC* *Handbook of the Cesnola Collection of Antiquities from Cyprus* (J. L. Myres), 1914
- HGB* *A Handbook of Greek Black-Figured Vases* (J. C. Hoppin), 1924
- HSD* 'Notes on the Aramaic of the *Genesis Apocryphon*' (H. H. Rowley), pp. 116-129 of *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to C. R. Driver* (ed. D. W. Thomas and W. D. McHardy), 1963
- LAP* *Introduction to the Law of the Aramaic Papyri* (R. Yaron), 1961
- MAO* *Die Musikinstrumente des Alien Orients* (M. Wegner), 1950
- MS* *The Music of the Swnerians... Babylonians and Assyrians* (F. W. Galpln), 1937
- NB* *Nineveh and Babylon* (A. Parrot), 1961
- NI* *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories* (R. D. Barnett), 1957
- OP* *Old Persian Grammar, Texts, Lexicon²* (R. G. Kent), 1953
- PTT* *Persepolis Treasury Tablets* (G. G. Cameron), 1948
- SA* *The Stones of Assyria* (C. J. Gadd), 1936
- UE II* *Ur Excavations II, The Royal Cemetery* (C. L. Woolley), 1934
- UM* *Ugaritic Manual* (C. H. Gordon), 1955

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<http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/daniel.html>
