A P P E N D I X   E

THE DATE AND AUTHORSHIP CONTROVERSY OF DANIEL
by Dr. J. Paul Tanner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

The Hebrew and Christian tradition consistently attributed the book to the prophet Daniel, who was held to have composed it in the 6th century BC. In the 3rd cent. AD, this position was challenged by Porphyry, a Neoplatonist thinker and skeptic. His work has not survived, but his comments on Daniel have been preserved in the writings of Jerome. Basically, Porphyry held that the book was written in the Maccabean age (2nd century BC) so as to encourage the Jewish people who were persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes IV. His presupposition was that predictive prophecy was impossible, and that only someone living in the 2nd century BC could have had knowledge of the events recorded in the Book of Daniel. Pentecost elaborates the nature of the problem:

> The book unfolds details concerning the history of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Details recorded in Daniel 11:5-35 were fulfilled in the fourth to the second centuries B.C. Skeptics insist that Daniel could not have foreknown those details but must have written them *after* the events transpired and cast them in the form of prophecy. (Or they maintain that someone other than the Prophet Daniel wrote the book in the second century B.C. and used his name.) Such a view of course denies the power of God to reveal what He has predetermined.[1]

While evangelical Christians today attribute the book to Daniel of the 6th century BC, critical scholars consistently deny this view. Bernhard W. Anderson (professor emeritus of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary) expresses the typical critical position: "In any case,

---

[1] J. Dwight Pentecost, "Daniel, in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1324-25.

the book in its present form is fundamentally a unity, issued during Antiochus Epiphanes' persecution—probably about 165 BCE."[2]   He elaborates:

> Shortly after the outbreak of the Maccabean wars, an unknown writer composed the book of Daniel. Undoubtedly this person was one of the Hasidim, who felt a revulsion for the ways of Hellenism and the tyranny by which it was imposed upon the Jews.[3]

Anderson has little sympathy for those who choose to believe that the Book of Daniel has accurately recorded predictive prophecy by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He asserts,

> Some people have been misled by the author's portrayal of incidents and visions experienced by Daniel during the Babylonian Exile. Supposing that the book of Daniel was written during the Exile, they have regarded it as a prophetic preview of several centuries of future history and, indeed, of the divine program for a future that still lies ahead. Thus the book has become a happy hunting ground for those who are fascinated by 'biblical prophecy' and who look for some mysterious blueprint of the future hidden in its pages.[4]

The position of the critical scholar is not simply one of denial of predictive prophecy but an outright attack on the integrity of Scripture. Anderson states, "The author of Daniel spoke to people of the day in the guise of a writing that was predated in the Babylonian period, as though one were looking forward into the future rather than backward from the present."[5]   In essence, he is accusing Scripture of being deliberately misleading. Di Lella (author of the commentary on Daniel in the popular Anchor Bible series) holds that the 2nd century author(s) merely used erroneous traditions for the sake of communicating the true concern: a theological message. For him, the accounts are midrashic tales or edifying stories (1-6), and apocalyptic visions (2:13-45; 7-12). He then accuses conservatives of misrepresenting God's Word: ". . . the so-called conservative also does the Word of God a huge disservice by insisting that the book does in fact deal with real persons and events of the seventh and sixth centuries BC, as if the authors of Daniel intended to write history."[6]

Evangelicals (who do not come to the Scriptures with a presuppositional bias against predictive prophecy) accept the fact that the book itself presents Daniel as the author (e.g., Dan 12:4,5). The phrase "I, Daniel" occurs in several places (e.g., Dan 8:1, 27; 9:2; 10:2; 12:5). Even though in some portions of the book, Daniel is referred to in the 3rd person, this is not uncommon for ancient

---

[2] Bernard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4th ed., 622. Not all critical scholars would agree with Anderson's view of the unity of the book. While the debate rages over the choice of the historical Daniel in the 6th century BC and a pseudonymous author in the 2nd century BC, the unity of the book has also been brought into question. The unity of the book was first denied by Spinoza (AD 1632-77), and has been contested ever since. Numerous suggestions have been made about multiple authorship, redaction work, etc. For an involved discussion of the unity of the book from a critical perspective, see Di Lella, 9-18.

[3] Ibid., 618.

[4] Ibid., 618-19.

[5] Ibid., 619.

[6] Di Lella also calls them "pious romances" similar to other Jewish works like Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, etc. He writes, "In general, the principal theme of these religious romances is the serious problem that faced Israel as God's holy people living in a pagan environment, and the intention of the authors was to dramatize, often with great imagination and ingenuity, the truth that the almighty and omniscient God of the Fathers will protect and rescue the current Israel of faith from disaster and will raise up wise and stalwart men and women who will overwhelmingly confound the wisdom and might of the Gentiles" (*The Book of Daniel*, The Anchor Bible, 61).

writers.   Xenophon authored *Anabasis* even though he used the 3rd person to refer to himself. The same is true of Caesar's *Gallic Wars*.

OBJECTIONS TO THE TRADITIONAL DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF DANIEL

Most of the objections are based on what some have perceived as historical inaccuracies in the book. In addition to this, there are also literary/linguistic arguments and theological arguments.

1. **Alleged Historical Inaccuracies**

   a. Daniel 1:1 reports that Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Jerusalem was in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, in contradiction to Jeremiah 25:1 and 46:2 which would place the attack in Jehoiakim's 4th year.

      Anderson charges the Scriptures with error on this point:

      > The book begins with a glaring historical error, for Nebuchadnezzar did not take Jerusalem in the third year of King Jehoiakim (606 BCE), and it was Jehoiakim's son—Jehoiachin—who was borne away to captivity (see II Kings 24). The author did not have the history of the Persian empire straight, as is shown by confusion about the sequence of kings (see Dan. 5:31; 9:1) and the telescoping of historical periods (11:2). These and other errors indicate that the writer was looking back over four centuries of history from a time when memories were blurred or distorted by popular views. After all, his purpose was not to give a correct history, after the manner of Thucydides or Herodotus, but to proclaim a religious message to embattled fellow Jews.[7]

      The fact that Daniel and Jeremiah refer to the time of Nebuchadnezzar's attack in different years of Jehoiakim's reign may seem strange to a 20th century reader, but that is not necessarily an indication of an historical error.   One must remember that calendar systems and methods of keeping dates were much different in the Ancient Near East from what exist today.   There are at least two possible explanations as to why Jeremiah and Daniel used different designations for the attack of 605 BC.[8]

      The first possible explanation is that there were two ways of counting years within the Hebrew society, one using the month of Nisan (March-April) as the first month and the other using the month of Tishri (Sep-Oct) as the first month. Thiele explains:

      > It is important to understand the month with which the various Old Testament writers during this period commence the regnal year, because the practice was not always the same. The writers of Kings continued to employ Tishri years for the Hebrew rulers, and apparently also for Nebuchadnezzar. Ezra-Nehemiah employed Tishri years even for the kings of Persia, as is evidenced by the fact that Nehemiah speaks of being in the palace of Artaxerxes in the month of Kislev in the twentieth year of the king, and the following Nisan is still in the same twentieth year (Neh. 1:1; 2:1), which would otherwise have been the twenty-first year.   Daniel also employs Tishri years, but Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and

---

[7] Anderson, 622-23.

[8] See the appendix on the "Historical Background" for an explanation of the date of Nebuchadnezzar's initial attack on Jerusalem.

Zechariah used Nisan years for the Hebrew kings and also for the rulers of Babylon and Persia. Thus, according to Daniel 1:1, Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Jerusalem was made in the third year of Jehoiakim, but according to Jeremiah 25:1 and 46:2, this campaign took place in Jehoiakim's fourth year.[9]

A second possible explanation is based on the differences between Jewish and Babylonian systems for reckoning time (neither society had a year based on Jan 1 as we do today). The Babylonians counted years from their New Year in the spring (March-April). The first full year of a king's rule (from New Year to New Year) was considered the "first year", while any months that he may have reigned prior to the New Year (however short a period) was considered his "accession year." Thiele refers to this as "accession-year dating."[10] If this were the case, then Daniel was following the Babylonian system of dating, as Harrison affirms.[11]

The difference between Jeremiah's and Daniel's reference to Jehoiakim may be explained by some combination of accession-year dating and whether or not the year was counted from Tishri to Tishri (the tendency in Judah) or from the spring New Year (as in Babylon).

b. The reference to Darius in Dan 6:28 is a confusion with Darius I, the Persian king who reigned from 522-486 BC.

Some have thought that this verse purported to place Darius I (522-486 BC) before Cyrus (539-530 BC) and make Xerxes the father of Darius I (cf. 9:1), a mistake which would not seem unlikely for a Maccabean author. Anderson suggests this by his comment, "Notice that Cyrus and Cambyses actually followed after Nabonidus/Belshazzar."[12]

In response, one can reply that it is an assumption on the part of critical scholars that the reference to "Darius" must be linked with the Persian king Darius I. More likely, the author was not speaking of Darius I, but of Darius the Mede, a contemporary of Cyrus. Either he bore the same name as Darius I or the word "Darius" is something of an honorific title (like Caesar). Furthermore, if the author had indeed been of the Maccabean era, it would be unlikely that he would have made such a blunder in light of Ezra 4:5f. which he certainly had access to.

Note should be made that the Book of Daniel does not present this Darius as ruling over the Persian Empire but of being made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans or as having received the kingdom (of the slain Chaldean king) [see Dan 5:31; 9:1]. This implies an honor bestowed on him by a higher authority (in contrast to the Persian king Darius I).[13]

---

[9] Edwin R. Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1977), 68, note 3.

[10] Ibid., 87.

[11] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *International Standard Bible Ency.*, 1:862.

[12] Anderson, 625.

[13] Critical scholars have objected to the notion of this Darius being a viceroy to a higher authority on the basis that no viceroy would have dared to issue a decree to the inhabitants "in all the earth" (6:25, *KJV*). In response, the world translated "earth" can just as well be translated "land," thus giving it a more *local* sense.

Some have objected to the idea of there ever being a Median kingdom as a successor to Babylon. Anderson states, "Strictly speaking, the idea of a Median kingdom between the Babylonian and Persian regimes is a historical inaccuracy."[14] He adds in regard to the Medes,

> . . . they never established themselves as imperial successors to the Babylonians. Rather, their leader, Astyages, was vanquished by Cyrus, who established the Persian empire as the successor to Babylonia.[15]

Actually, the problem is only an imaginary one. The author is not stating that there was a Median kingdom between that of Babylonia and Persia (Darius is simply said to be of Median descent).

c. Belshazzar is recorded as the last Babylonian king in Daniel, whereas historically Nabonidus was the last king.

In contemporary cuneiform writings, it was Nabonidus who occupied the Babylonian throne (c. 555-539 BC). Anderson remarks, "Actually Belshazzar never reigned as king of Babylon, and the statement that he was the son of Nebuchadnezzar (5:2,11) is a glaring error." Anderson does admit that Nabonidus went away and that Belshazzar did rule in his place. Di Lella writes,

> . . . for a period of ten years of Nabonidus' reign Belshazzar was appointed crown prince or coregent with his father, but he never became king in the strict sense because he could not preside at the celebration of the New Year Festival, which was the climax of the Babylonian cultic year.[16]

Response: Nabonidus was plagued with political troubles in other parts of his realm, and thus had to appoint his son Belshazzar as co-regent in order for him to travel away from the city and deal with these threats. He campaigned in Syria and N Arabia for a decade while the Babylonian priesthood gradually simmered down. The mention in Dan 5:29 of Daniel being made a third ruler in the kingdom correctly accounts for the coregency of Nabonidus and Belshazzar his son. Furthermore, Harrison brings forth evidence that Nabonidus had indeed entrusted the kingship to Belshazzar:

> The name Belshazzar has long been known from cuneiform sources, but instead of describing him as king the texts spoke of him predominantly as *mar šarri* (i.e., son of the king, crown prince), since Nabonidus was the actual king of Babylon. Nevertheless, one document, the so-called 'Persian Verse' account of Nabonidus, does in fact state that Nabonidus had entrusted the kingship to his son Belshazzar, and that he himself made his dwelling in Teima in Arabia.[17]

In addition, Belshazzar functioned as king in Babylon:

The Aramaic *ʾărꜤ* (like its Hebrew cognate *ʾereṣ*) may mean "land" rather than "earth" in its largest sense (cf. 2:35; 4:20). Notice that the *NASB* translates 6:25 as "land."

[14] Anderson, 625, note 17.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Di Lella, 50.

[17] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ISBE*, 1:863.

The cuneiform evidence also supports the view that Belshazzar did exercise regal functions. Oaths were taken in the name of both Nabonidus and Belshazzar; Belshazzar granted leases and issued commands. Both the names of Belshazzar and Nabonidus are mentioned in connection with the payment of the royal tribute.[18]

d.   In Daniel 5:2, Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as the father of Belshazzar, although historically Nabonidus was the father of Belshazzar.[19]

This alleged problem arises from a false reading of Western concepts into Ancient Near Eastern terminology. The term "father" is being used in the common oriental manner to describe an ancestor (here, a forefather). Archer explains, "... it should be understood that ʾ$\bar{a}\underline{b}$ ("father") was also used in both Hebrew and Aramaic to refer to a grandfather (Gen 28:13; 32:9) or even to a great grandfather (1 Kings 15:10-13)."[20]

e.   Critics claim that there is no historical person known as Darius the Mede (Dan 5:31 = 6:1 in Aram.), and that such a reference in Daniel is a complete fabrication without historical basis.

Contemporary cuneiform inscriptions of that period leave no room for a king of Babylon between Nabonidus-Belshazzar and Cyrus of Persia; critics claim that an author of the Maccabean era has simply recorded a mixture of confused traditions (in particular, confusing the ruler with the famous Darius I who ruled over the Persian Empire in 522-486 BC). Di Lella charges, ". . . 'Darius the Mede' is a literary fiction in the Book of Daniel."[21] Likewise, H. H. Rowley writes, "We are compelled to recognize that he is a fictitious creature."[22]

Response:

We must admit that as of this time, the historical documents do not make mention of any "Darius the Mede," and the historical records are clear that the Babylonian kingdom under Nabonidus and Belshazzar was conquered and succeeded by the Persian king Cyrus the Great (r. 559-530 BC).

Despite the fact that Cyrus the Great became the ultimate ruler over Babylon, he did not personally rule in Babylon, and it is very possible that he could have appointed someone of Median descent to be his viceroy over Babylon. In fact, a close reading of the Book of Daniel suggests that "Darius the Mede" was not the ultimate ruler. Archer explains,

In Daniel 9:1 it is asserted that Darius the Mede was made (*homlak*) king over the realm of the Chaldeans. This term indicates that he was invested with the kingship by some higher authority, which well agrees with the supposition that he

---

[18] Ibid.

[19] Belshazzar was actually the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, as his father Nabonidus married the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar (Nitocris) to gain the throne.

[20] Gleason L. Archer, Jr., "Daniel," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:16.

[21] Di Lella, 36.

[22] H. H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel: A Historical Study of Contemporary Theories*, 2nd ed., 59.

was installed as viceroy in Babylonia by Cyrus the Great. Similarly, in Daniel 5:31 we are told that Darius 'received' (*qabbēl*) the kingdom (*malkutāʾ*).[23]

Furthermore, it is doubtful that the author was confusing "Darius the Mede" with the famous Persian king, Darius I the Great (522-486).[24] Not only was Darius the Great clearly regarded as a Persian, but it is also well known that Darius Hystaspes was fairly young when he began his rule.

The historical development of the Persian Empire would easily allow for a viceroy of Median descent, for the Medes and Persians were very closely linked. Initially, the Medes were the dominant power, but eventually the Persians came to dominate. Merrill explains,

> . . . in time Cyaxares (625-585) overthrew the Scythians and the Assyrians, establishing Median control over all of northern Mesopotamia and Iran. He also reduced Persia to submission, setting up Cambyses as governor over that province.[25]

But the domination of the Medes eventually gave way to the Persians as a result of the uprising of Cyrus the Great (ruler of Anshan). Cyrus was actually a descendant of both groups, his father being a Persian and his mother a Mede.[26] Cyrus was able to unify several Persian tribes, and in 550 BC he marched against the Median capital at Ecbatana and made Media itself a Persian province, thereby laying claim to all Median territories. The resulting union, however, was a kingdom in which both the Medes and the Persians played an important part. Clines explains,

> Because Cyrus remained respectful of Median culture, made Median Ecbatana one of his royal residences, and often appointed Medes to high positions in

---

[23] Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 384. Archer deals with the objection raised against Darius the Mede being a mere viceroy. The objection is based on the phrase in Dan 6:25 that Darius addressed a decree to the inhabitants of "all the earth." He states, "If the word *earth* refers to the whole inhabited Near East, the objection is well taken (since the authority of Darius the Mede would necessarily have been confined to the former dominions of Nebuchadnezzar, which did not include Asia Minor, North Assyria, Media, or Persia). But it should be pointed out that the Aramaic word *ʾăraʿ* (like its Hebrew cognate *ʾereṣ*) may signify only land or country, rather than having the wider significance. So construed, the term presents no difficulty at all" (384).

[24] Archer points out that the fall of Babylon was well-known information, such that a 2nd century author would not have made such blunders. "Herodotus (1.191) states that it was Cyrus, in command of a combined Medo-Persian army, who captured Babylon by the stratagem of diverting the channel of the Euphrates and slipping into the city at night by means of the riverbed. His work was published in the middle of the fifth century B.C. Writing in the early fourth century, Xenophon related in his *Cyropaedia* (7:20) how Cyrus engineered the surprise attack through the skillful leadership of his generals Gadatas and Gobryas and thereby took control of all Babylon" (*Expositor's Bible Comm.*, 7:17).

[25] Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 479.

[26] According to the account of the historian Herodotus, Cyrus was actually a descendant of the Median king Cyaxares. The granddaughter of Cyaxares (Mandane) married the Persian vassal of her father, and to this marriage was born Cyrus.

his provincial government, his kingdom became known as that of the "Medes and Persians" (cf., e.g., Dnl. 5:28; 6:8,15; Est. 10:2).[27]

Thus it is entirely possible that a Mede was appointed to rule over Babylon after the armies of Cyrus conquered the city in 539 BC.

We know from extrabiblical documents that the Medes played an active part in the capture of Babylon, and that a Mede by the name of Ugbaru or Gubaru (sometimes referred to as Gobryas) was even in charge of Cyrus' forces and led the capture of the city.[28] A lot of speculation has been made about this Ugbaru/Gubaru, with attempts to link him to Daniel's "Darius the Mede." Whether or not that is true, Cyrus certainly had strong links to the Medes, and they did play a significant role in the capture of Babylon. That Ugbaru/Gubaru was a Mede himself is most likely from the fact that he had been "governor of Gutium." The Guti were a mountainous people of ancient Mesopotamia who lived primarily around Hamadân, which had been the capital of the Median Empire known as Ecbatana. Cyrus himself had close connections with Ecbatana and the Guti people (i.e., the Medes), as Hayden points out:

> Cyrus captured the city from Astyages (548 BC), ... Cyrus and other Persian kings used to spend the two summer months there yearly, owing to the comparative coolness of the climate.[29]

Hence, there is a very good possibility that Cyrus could have appointed a Mede to be king of Babylon. We may not be certain as to why Daniel calls him "Darius the Mede," but having a viceroy of Median descent is not surprising at all.[30]

---

[27] D. J. A. Clines, "Cyrus," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1:846. In his commentary on Daniel (*EBC*, 7:18), Archer elaborates on the cooperative empire that emerged from the defeat of the Medes by the Persians. He notes, "The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on 'Media' (1969 ed., 15:68) remarks, 'In the new empire they [the Medes] retained a prominent position; in honor and war they stood next to the Persians . . . many noble Medes were employed as officials, satraps and generals.' It would not, therefore, be surprising for Cyrus to appoint as viceroy over the newly conquered Babylonian domain a trusted lieutenant who was a Mede."

[28] An account of the fall of Babylon is contained in the Nabonidus Chronicle, a translation of which is contained in James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd ed., 305-307. In Cyrus's attack upon the province of Babylonia, the city of Sippar fell and two days later the city of Babylon fell: "The 14th day, Sippar was seized without battle. Nabonidus fled. The 16th day, Gobryas (*Ugbaru*), the governor of Gutium and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle. Afterwards Nabonidus was arrested in Babylon when he returned (there). . . . In the month of Arahshamnu, the 3rd day, Cyrus entered Babylon, green twigs were spread in front of him—the state of "Peace' (*šulmu*) was imposed upon the city. Cyrus sent greetings to all Babylon. Gobryas, his governor, installed (sub-) governors in Babylon. . . . In the month of Arahshamnu, on the night of the 11th day, Gobryas died" (306).

In this text, the governor of Gutium (here translated Gobryas, the name referred to him by the Greek historian Xenophon; see *Cyropaedia*, iv.6, vii.5, 26-30) is referred to as Ugbaru and at some points Gubaru. This official (a Mede) died very shortly after the capture of Babylon.

[29] R. E. Hayden, "Ecbatana," in *ISBE*, 2:11.

[30] Even though the Medes were conquered by the Persians in 550 BC, there is evidence for a king of the Medes after this date. Harrison ("Daniel, Book of," *ISBE*, 1:863) points out: ". . . it is known that in the tenth year of Nabonidus (546 BC), a cuneiform text at Harran referred specifically to the 'king of the Medes.'"

Although there is no historical evidence outside the Bible for a person by this name, this may be an alternative designation for someone else (or "Darius" may have been an honorific title like Caesar).[31] Several suggestions have been made as to the identity of "Darius the Mede":

(1)   Another name for Cyrus

This is the position of D. J. Wiseman (see *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, 12-14). In this case, the text (6:28) may be translated: "So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, <u>even</u> the reign of Cyrus the Persian." [32] Harrison points out that Cyrus was related to the Medes. "He was evidently about sixty-two years of age when be became king of Babylon, and according to inscriptions he appointed many subordinate governors."[33] Hence, "Darius the Mede" would be an alternative title to "Cyrus the Persian."

"In the Harran Stele and other sources, Cyrus is called king of the Medes. Also, in Theodotion's ancient text of Bel and the Dragon, the king who sends Daniel to the lions' den is Cyrus of Persia; in the Book of Daniel, it is Darius the Mede."[34]

This position is not without its problems. Cyrus was not spoken of as the son of Ahasuerus in inscriptions. Why call him Cyrus the Persian in one place and Darius the Mede in another? [If it were Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Persian, it might be a bit more believable]. Also, a clear distinction is made between Darius of Median descent (9:1) and Cyrus who was the king of Persia (10:1), and this in such close proximity! It is also doubtful that Cyrus was 62 years old (see 5:31), since Cyrus died six years later leading troops into battle (would a 68 year old king be leading troops into battle?).[35] Even though Wiseman tries to show evidence that Cyrus was <u>also</u> known as a king of the Medes, it is doubtful that he would be referred to as such. McDowell argues,

---

[31] Archer writes, "This viceroy was given the title of *Dār^{e}yāwēš*, which apparently meant 'The Royal One,' from *dara* (which is attested in Avestan Persian as a term for 'king')" (*EBC*, 7:18). Archer also writes concerning the famous king Darius having a personal name: ". . . we should take personal note of the fact that even the later Darius, son of Hystaspes (*Wištāspa*), bore the personal name of *Spantadāta* (cf. F. W. König, *Relief und Inschrift des Königs Dareios I* [Leiden: Brill, 1938], 1" (Archer, *EBC*, 7:19).

[32] Wiseman explains the retranslation: "Such a use of the appositional or explicative Hebrew *wāw* construction has long been recognized in I 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" (Donald J. Wiseman, Jrs., et al., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* [London: The Tyndale Press, 1970], 12).

[33] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ISBE*, 1:863.

[34] Josh McDowell, *Daniel in the Critics' Den*, 72.

[35] "Following this decree in 538 Cyrus continued to maintain and even expand his magnificent empire. He died in 530 in combat against the Massagetae in the Jaxartes River valley in central Asia" (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 480).

Cyrus came from Persia, not Media, and Persia under Cyrus had overthrown the Median rulers and conquered not only Media but also Elam, the third important province in that area.[36]

Furthermore, the expression in 5:31 "received the kingdom" (*NASB*) does not fit Cyrus. Archer explains, "*Homlak* is a causative passive that strongly suggests that he was appointed king by some higher authority."[37]

(2) Darius the Mede is the same as Ugbaru/Gubaru who was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon.

This is the position of Wm. H. Shea, J. Dwight Pentecost, and Eugene Merrill.[38] In this case, Babylon refers to a small portion of the Medo-Persian Empire. According to this position, Ugbaru conquered Babylon on Oct 12, 539 BC, but Cyrus entered on Oct 29. Ugbaru was then appointed by Cyrus to rule in Babylon on Cyrus' behalf. Darius was simply another name to Ugbaru. However, Ugbaru died shortly thereafter on Nov 6.

In defense of equating Darius with Ugbaru, Mercer notes:

---

[36] Josh McDowell, 74.

[37] Archer, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:18.

[38] William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20 (Autumn, 1982):229-47, J. Dwight Pentecost, "Daniel," *Bible Knowledge Comm*., 1347; and Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 480, note 34; also 485, note 50. Merrill (485, note 50) writes, "It seems best, without going into the debate here, to accept Shea's identification of Darius the Mede with Gubaru, governor of Gutium, who as the head of the Persian army conquered Babylon."

The evidence in favor of the identification of Ugbaru as the vassal king of Babylon can be summarized as follows. First, the change of Cyrus' titulary from "King of Babylon, King of Lands" to simply "King of Lands" and then back to "King of Babylon, King of Lands" during a fourteen-month period following the fall of Babylon suggests the throne was vacant or that someone else was "King of Babylon" during the interim period in which Cyrus is called simply "King of Lands" (William H. Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King of Babylon in the Early Achaemenid Period," *AUSS* 9 [1971]:105-28, esp. Table II, pp. 107-8). Assuming that the throne of Babylon would not be left vacant at such a crucial period in Cyrus' reign, the most logical choice for the position of "king of Babylon" would be Ugbaru, the governor of Guti, who captured Babylon. Second, the mere mention of Ugbaru in the Nabonidus Chronicle suggests his royalty because of the extreme paucity of nonroyal personages in the Babylonian Chronicles (Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King," pp. 147-52).   Finally, the record of Ugbaru's death suggests that he was king because with only one exception, all the death dates in the Babylonian Chronicles refer to royalty (Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King," pp. 152-54).[39]

Evaluation:

Ugbaru was indeed the conqueror of Babylon, and his victory is recorded in *ANET* (p 306). He died shortly thereafter on Nov 6, 539 BC. He is the governor of Gutium, and the Gobryas mentioned by Xenophon. However, it is hard to see how the reference to Darius the Mede could be equated with Ugbaru since Daniel seems to speak of his reign (6:28; 9:1), although Ugbaru did not live long enough to really have a "reign" (a few weeks?).   Nevertheless, this is a possible identification.

(3)   There was another official named Gubaru (different from Ugbaru) who was appointed by Cyrus to rule Babylon.

This is the position of John C. Whitcomb (*Darius the Mede*), B. Waltke, and Gleason Archer. Ugbaru was the governor of Gutium who did conquer Babylon. However, when Cyrus entered the city on Oct 29, he appointed another individual named Gubaru (Ugbaru either suffered from wounds in battle or had incurred a fatal illness and eventually died on Nov 6).[40] Gubaru seems to have held this

---

[39] Mark Mercer, "An Historical, Exegetical, and Theological Study of Daniel 11:26–12:4," (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987), 15-16, note 18.

[40] "The Nabonidus Chronicle mentioned two persons connected with the fall of Babylon, namely Ugbaru and Gubaru, and faulty tr. of the Chronicle since 1882 has tended to confuse their identities. It was on the basis of this misunderstanding that scholars such as H. H. Rowley assumed that they were actually one person, the Gobryas of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, who died after the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. The tr. of the Chronicle by Sidney Smith in 1924, however, distinguished between Ugbaru and Gubaru, and it is now apparent that the former, who was governor of Gutium and an ally of Cyrus, took a prominent part in the capture of Babylon and then died shortly afterward, presumably of wounds sustained in the battle. Whereupon the other victorious leader Gubaru, who with Ugbaru was apparently responsible for diverting the river Euphrates so that his soldiers could capture the city by infiltrating along the dried-up river bed, was appointed by Cyrus as the governor of Babylon" (R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2:17).

position for 14 years.[41] The Ugbaru mentioned above died shortly after the conquest, but Archer brings forth evidence of Gubaru's existence and rule long after the fall of Babylon:

> A Gubaru appears as the governor of Babylonia and of Ebir-nari (the western domains under Chaldean sovereignty) in tablets dated from the fourth to the eighth year of Cyrus (535-532 BC) and even as late as the fifth year of Cambyses (525 BC).[42]

In response, Harrison points out that "To date, however, there is no specific evidence which would show that he was a Mede, a descendant of Ahasuerus, or a man who was about sixty years of age."[43]

(4)   Darius the Mede = Cambyses (Cyrus' son)

So Charles Boutflower (*In and Around the Book of Daniel*). Cambyses ruled Persia 530-522 BC. Cambyses did have connections to Babylon (participating each spring in the annual New Year Festival), but he did not live there.

Of the above mentioned positions, options two and three seem to have more credibility. A definitive conclusion is difficult at this time.

f.   There is no mention in Neo-Babylonian sources confirming the account of Nebuchadnezzar's disease (Ch 4).

In addition to the lack of historical confirmation for Nebuchadnezzar's disease, Di Lella argues that the whole account has an appearance of artificiality. He points out that there are several striking parallels between Nebuchadnezzar's praise account and Old Testament phraseology, which gives one the impression that he has been made to speak like a pious Jew (Dan 4:3 with Ps 145:5,13; Dan 4:35 with Isa 45:9; and Dan 4:37 with Ps 101:5).[44]

While it is true that the account of Nebuchadnezzar's disease is not confirmed by historical records of that period, it is not difficult to see that this kind of thing would have been kept from historical records, for it would have been highly insulting to the monarch and his family. There are numerous examples from Ancient Near Eastern history where historical facts have been kept from record where they distracted from a sovereign's glory. Harrison, however, points out that the issue is not entirely lacking of historical reference:

---

[41] There is evidence that Ugbaru and Gubaru were not confused names for the same individual but actually different people. Ugbaru clearly died shortly after the capture of Babylon, but Gubaru is "mentioned in tablets dating from the fourth, sixth, seventh, and eighth years of Cyrus (i.e., 535, 533, 532, and 531 B.C.) and in the second, third, fourth, and fifth years of Cambyses (528, 527, 526, and 525 B.C.)" (Archer, *Intro.*, 385).

[42] Archer, "Daniel," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:18.

[43] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ISBE*, 1:863.

[44] A similar charge is made in regard to "Darius the Mede" who utters a beautiful prayer that reflects purely Jewish thought and devotion (Dan 6:27-28). Di Lella remarks, "But the humility and piety, the monotheism and praiseworthy sentiments attributed to Nebuchadnezzar, a Babylonian polytheist, and to Darius the Mede, whose very existence cannot be proved, are the stuff not of history but of religious folklore and fiction" (*Daniel*, The Anchor Bible, 52).

> . . . three centuries after the time of Nebuchadnezzar a Babylonian priest named Berossus preserved a tradition that Nebuchadnezzar became ill suddenly toward the end of his reign, which was mentioned by Josephus as well as by the 2nd cent. BC writer Abydenus.[45]

Note: for the position that the madness episode in Daniel is really an account wrongly ascribed to Nebuchadnezzar (Nabonidus being the true victim) based on the discovery at Qumran of the "prayer of Nabonidus," see the remarks of R. K. Harrison ("Daniel," Book of," *ZPEB*, 2:16). Anderson makes this attack:

> . . . 'The Prayer of Nabonidus,' a story similar to that of Daniel 4 is told of Nabonidus, rather than Nebuchadnezzar. This seems to suggest an older tradition in which Nabonidus was regarded as the father of Belshazzar (see Dan. 5:2). 'The change of names,' writes Frank M. Cross, 'as well as the development of the elaborate details of Nebuchadnezzar's theriomania, is best attributed to the refracting tendencies of oral transmission, in this case the shift of a legend from a lesser to a greater name.' The Ancient Library of Qumran [513], pp. 166-68.[46]

The dissimilarity of the accounts, however, argues against such a view. Certainly such a switch would have been exposed by those close to the author's own time.

g.   Supposedly the term "Chaldean" appears in Daniel in both an ethnic sense as well as a more restricted sense (to indicate a group of "wise men"), this usage not being found elsewhere in the Old Testament or in inscriptions, and which points allegedly to a late date of composition.

Critics allege that this ethnic term for Nebuchadnezzar's race could not have become specialized to indicate a class of soothsayers until a much later time (i.e., it would only have carried a racial connotation in Nebuchadnezzar's day).

Note however, that the author was aware of the racial use of the term, for in Dan 5:30 Belshazzar is referred to as the king of the Chaldeans (cf. 3:8).

Herodotus (vol. 1, sec 181-183; 5th cent. BC) "refers to the Chaldeans in such a way as to imply that they were speedily put into all the politically strategic offices of Babylonia as soon as they had gained control of the capital. If this was the case, then 'Chaldean' may have early come into use as a term for the priests of Bel-Marduk."[47]

Harrison adds,

> However, Herodotus (ca. 450 BC) in his *Persian Wars* consistently spoke of the Chaldeans in an ethnic manner, referred to them as priests, and accepted some of their traditions as going back to the early days of Cyrus. Furthermore, from the 10th cent. BC, Assyrian annals used the term *Kaldu* to describe the 'Sea-land' of earlier inscriptions and the people inhabiting that area. The latter were also mentioned in inscriptions from Ashurbanipal II (883-859 BC) and Adadnirari III (811-783 BC), as well as being referred to by Isaiah (23:13;

---

[45] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ZPEB*, 2:15.

[46] B. W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 625, note 16.

[47] Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 382.

43:14). The usage of 'Chaldean' in Daniel thus conforms with normal Near Eastern practices in this respect.[48]

For a technical explanation for the evolution of the term Chaldean as a soothsayer priest, see Gleason Archer (*EBC*, 7:14), who understands two homonyms "one of which is the ethnic designation *kašdu* (as it was spelled in Babylonian cuneiform) and the other is a *kaš-du*, which resulted from a modification of an earlier *kal-du*."

h. The brevity of reference to the Persian rulers in Dan 11:2 (in contrast to the Seleucid rulers) suggests that the author was not familiar with the Persian period, and hence wrote long afterwards.

Anderson charges that it is precisely because the author was writing from the Maccabean period that Dan 11:2 is sketched in only one verse:

> The author's backward glance from the Maccabean period also explains why historical knowledge about the period before the rise of Alexander is blurred, and why historical information becomes more exact and detailed as one comes closer to the time of writing.[49]

Anderson also claims that the text makes an historical blunder for ". . . ten Persian kings (not three) succeeded Cyrus."[50]

Response:

These attacks upon Scripture are not really substantial if one considers them from the standpoint of the author's purpose. He is brief in his reference to the Persian period, because the main purpose of the chapter is to focus on Antiochus IV Epiphanes (11:21-35) who serves as a type of the Antichrist (11:36-45). It is not his purpose to give a full account of the Persian period, but to move quickly to the Hellenistic Period, for it is that period which gave rise to Antiochus. The fact that of 45 verses in the chapter, over half of them deal precisely with Antiochus and the Antichrist (of whom Antiochus is a *type*), argues for this view.

Furthermore, the text does not say there were only three Persian kings that succeeded Darius the Mede. It only points out the fourth (probably Xerxes I in 480 BC) because he was significant in the hostility between Persia and Greece, furthering the clash. Notice that the text (Dan 11:2) seeks to point this out: "he will arouse the whole *empire* against the realm of Greece. Xerxes I (r. 486-465 BC), the fourth Persian king, was famous for his assault upon Greece.[51] This set the stage for the attack by Alexander the Great upon Persia, which in turn set the stage for the Seleucid dynasty and the

---

[48] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ISBE*, 1:864.

[49] B. W. Anderson, 629.

[50] Ibid.

[51] R. E. Hayden describes the assault of Xerxes I upon Greece: "Xerxes' preparations included digging a canal near Athos and having a bridge built over the Hellespont by Phoenician and Egyptian engineers. . . . After being delayed by the Greeks at Thermopylae, the Persians pushed on to Athens and burned the city. Later that year the Persian fleet suffered a disastrous defeat at Salamis, . . . Xerxes withdrew from Greece, leaving the army in the hands of his general Mardonius. In 479 the Greeks defeated the Persian army at Plataea and, on the same day, the Persian fleet at Mycale" ("Xerxes," in *ISBE*, 4:1161).

coming of Antiochus IV.   The point was never to list all Persian kings between Daniel's day and the coming of Alexander the Great.

i.   Dan 2:1 places Nebuchadnezzar's dream in his second year, but according to Ch. 1 (see v 5, 18-19), Daniel did not enter the king's service for three years.[52]

Response:

Nebuchadnezzar's 1st siege of Jerusalem and deportation (inc. Daniel) was 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar became king in Sept 605, following his father's death. However, his first official year did not begin until Apr 604 BC (the New Year) according to accession-year dating. Hence,

> 1st official year: Apr 604 - Mar 603
>
> 2nd official year: Apr 603 - Mar 602

Therefore, when Daniel 2:1 speaks of   "the   second   year   of   the reign of Nebuchadnezzar," it means his 2nd official year, which was Apr 603—Mar 602 BC. This is consistent with the fact that Daniel seems to have used "regnal years" in Dan 1:1 for Jehoiakim (not counting the accession year).   The three years for the ministry preparation of Daniel and his friends are   still possible: 605, 604, and 603 (not necessarily three full years, but at least part of three different years).

j.   In Dan 9:1, Darius the Mede is referred to as "the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent," although Ahasuerus is the biblical name of Xerxes I who ruled as king of Persia (486-465 BC), long after the time of Daniel.

The problem raised here is the identification of "Ahasuerus" as the father of Darius the Mede. Not only is there uncertainty about the identity of Darius the Mede, but there is even more question about him having a father named Ahasuerus. There is a king known as Ahasuerus in the Bible (see Esther), but he is universally regarded as Xerxes I (r. 486-465 BC) who would certainly not have been the father of a ruler in Daniel's day. Critics are quick to charge that the author of Daniel has made a blunder in assigning "Xerxes I/Ahasuerus" as the father of Darius the Mede, although Xerxes I came later than "Darius the Mede."

Critics, however, must admit that it   is only their assumption that the reference to Ahasuerus is the Persian king Xerxes I. In actuality, it is possible that there is another historical figure with the name Ahasuerus (or a second name as such) who could have been the father of Darius the Mede. If so, he   would   have been one of the Medes, although the text does not say that he was a king or even among the royalty.

The Median rulers in proximity to Daniel were Cyaxares and Astyages, as Merrill explains:

> The Median throne remained vacant from 653 to 625 because   of Scythian domination of northwest Iran, but in time Cyaxares (625-585) overthrew the Scythians   and   the   Assyrians, establishing Median control over all of northern Mesopotamia and Iran.   He also reduced Persia to submission, setting   up

---

[52] See Di Lella (48) for this charge, although he is assuming 606 BC for Dan 1:1, whereas 605 BC is the commonly accepted date.

Cambyses as governor over that province. Cyaxares was succeeded by his son Astyages (585-550), whose daughter would be the mother of the great Cyrus II.[53]

Some have felt that the Ahasuerus mentioned in Dan 9:1 is the Median king Cyaxares (r. 625-585 BC),[54] although there is one tradition that Ahasuerus is another name for the Median king Astyages.[55] However, there is no substantial evidence for either of these suggestions (keep in mind that the text does not say Ahasuerus was even a king), and it is best to leave the problem unsolved for the time being.

Even though we have no definitive evidence for this "Darius the Mede" or of "Ahasuerus", we should be cautious about assuming they did not exist (or that the author has confused them). Belshazzar and Sargon (Isa 20:1) were once thought to be fabrications, but archaeology has since turned up inscriptions proving their existence. At one time, critical scholars assumed Daniel's mention of Belshazzar to be completely unhistorical on the basis of what was known from extrabiblical historical sources. Archer notes,

> After the discovery of oath tablets in Neo-Babylonian cuneiform dating from the twelfth year of Nabonidus (543 B.C.) and associating Belshazzar, his son, with him on an equal footing . . . , it became startlingly apparent that the writer of Daniel was much more accurately informed about the history of the 540s in Babylonia than Herodotus was in 450 B.C.[56]

k.   The use of the title "king of kings" (Dan 2:37) is said to be anachronistic.

Driver claimed that the use of this title was anachronistic, since it was characteristic of Persian kings who came after Nebuchadnezzar's time.[57] In response, one could point out that this title is equivalent to the Akkadian title *sar sarrani* which is used as early as the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 BC).

l.   The Reference to Jehoiakim's Removal in Dan 1:2

Anderson has pointed out that in Dan 1:2, it was not Jehoiakim who was borne away to captivity, but rather his son Jehoiachin several years later (cf. 2 Kgs 24).

Indeed, Jehoiakim was not taken into captivity in 605 BC. If one reads the text closely, however, Dan 1:2 does not say that Jehoiakim was borne away to captivity. The text states, "And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god." Anderson has assumed that the word "them" refers to the king and other nobles. However, the following phrase ("to the house of his god') is pointing out the temple at Babylon

---

[53] Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 479.

[54] Mentioned by K. L. Barker, "Ahasuerus," *ZPEB*, 1:82.

[55] In the account of the 1st century historian Josephus, we are told that "Babylon was taken by Darius, and when he, with his kinsman Cyrus, had put an end to the dominion of the Babylonians, he was sixty-two years old. He was the son of Astyages, and had another name among the Greeks" (Josephus, Complete Works, trans. by William Whiston, *Antiq. of the Jews*, X.xi.4 [page 226 in the Kregel ed.]).

[56] Gleason Archer, "Daniel," *EBC*, 7:16.

[57] S. R. Driver, "Daniel," *Cambridge Bible* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1901), 28.

(probably the temple to Marduk) to which "them" are taken. This would refer, then, to the vessels from the Jewish temple which were removed to Babylon and brought to the Babylonian temple. The reference is not to the king at all.

2. **Linguistic Objections to the Traditional Date and Authorship**

    a. Persian Words

    There are no less than 15 words of probable Persian origin,[58] but this would not be surprising if Daniel was written in 530 BC when the Persian Empire had replaced the Babylonian Empire.

    b. Greek Words

    There are names of Greek musical instruments in Daniel, which would presumably indicate an origin in the Hellenistic period at the earliest (see Dan 3:5,7,10,15). How could such words have been part of the vocabulary of sixth-century BC Aramaic in Babylon?

    This is not as surprising as it may seem. Walvoord points out,

    > It has now been proved that one hundred years before Daniel Greek mercenaries served in the Assyrian armies under the command of Esarhaddon (683 BC) as well as in the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar.[59]

    lyre = קִיתָרֹוס   [Gk κίθαρις]

    "The first of these can be identified without difficulty with one of the numerous Near Eastern precursors of the Greek *kithára*, such as the elaborate harp uncovered by Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur."[60]

    trigon = סַבְּכָא   [Gk σαμβύκη]

    "The sakbut was another variety of chordophone similar to or derived from the *sabitu* or seven-stringed lyre of the Akkadians."[61]

    psaltery = פְּסַנְתֵּרִין   [Gk ψαλτηριον]

    "The 'psaltery' was the Persian-Arabic *santir*, an early variety of dulcimer represented on first-millennium B.C. Assyrian reliefs and elsewhere."[62]

    bagpipe = סוּמְפֹּנְיָה   [Gk συμφωνια ? ; perhaps τύμπανον]

---

[58] See Archer ("Daniel," *EBC*, 7:21) for a list of these.

[59] John F. Walvoord, *Daniel*, 23. Cf. Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Daniel and Contacts Between the Aegean and the Near East before Alexander," *EQ* 53 (1981):38-40. Cf. Engel (*The Music of the Most Ancient Nations*, 303), for evidence of Assyrian bas-reliefs picturing captives being led away into captivity carrying musical instruments.

[60] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ISBE*, 1:864.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

According to Harrison, "The term *sûmpōnyāʾ*, formerly rendered 'dulcimer' (RSV 'bagpipe'; NEB 'music') apparently is not an instrument at all, but a musical notation having the meaning of 'in ensemble' or its general equivalent."[63]

This interpretation of the term, however, is not without its problems. Archer points out that this term "does not occur in extant Greek literature until the time of Plato (ca. 370 BC), at least in the sense of a musical instrument."[64]   However, since we only have 1/10 of the significant Greek literature of the classical period, we lack sufficient data for timing the precise origin of any particular word or usage in the development of the Greek vocabulary. On the other hand, the term may be neither a bagpipe or "musical notation," but another type of instrument. Charles Dyer has argued at length that the term refers to an instrument like a drum:

> A final proposal is to identify סוּמְפֹּנְיָה as a musical instrument but to reject its association with the Greek word συμφωνία. Instead, according to this view, it should be identified with the Greek word τύμπανον, to be translated "drum."[65]

In any case, the matter of musical instruments with Greek names is not any proof of late dating for Daniel. Harrison writes,

> Despite the fact that the instruments superficially appear to have Greek names, they are all in fact of specific Mesopotamian origin. . . . What is evident, however, is that the Near Eastern peoples had enjoyed a prolonged tradition of music and singing for many centuries before the Greeks began to influence life in that area from the 7th cent. BC onward, and that the various genuine musical instruments in Daniel had already claimed familiar precursors long before that period.[66]

Archer adds,

> . . . the inscriptions of Sargon II (722-705) back in the Assyrian period refer to Greek captives from Cyprus and Ionia sold into slavery. . . . It is therefore evident that Greek mercenaries and slaves served in the Babylonian and Assyrian periods, some of whom were undoubtedly versed in Greek music and musical instruments.[67]

---

[63] Ibid.

[64] Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 387.

[65] Charles H. Dyer, "The Musical Instruments in Daniel 3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147:588 (Oct-Dec 1990): 434.

[66] Harrison, 864.

[67] Archer, "Daniel," *EBC*, 21. Pentecost adds,

"However, archaeology has revealed that commerce existed between Greece and Babylon even *before* Daniel's day. This would explain the presence of Greek words. And the Persian words in the book were from an official or literary form of the Persian language which was in wide use throughout the Near East. (D. J. Wiseman et al., *Notes of Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, 23-7, 35-50)" (*Bible Knowledge Comm.*, OT, 1325).

In addition to the Greek musical terms, there is another Aramaic word in the text which has mistakenly been attributed to Greek, the term "satrap" (pl. אֲחַשְׁדַּרְפְּנַיָּא). Harrison clarifies,

> Thus the term 'satrap,' once thought to be Gr., is now known to have been derived from the old Pers. *Kshathrapan*, which also occurred in the cuneiform texts as *satarpanu*, from which the Gr. form emerged.[68]

3. Theological Objections to the Traditional Date & Authorship

a. Advanced Theology

Sometimes critics charge that the theology of the book is too advanced for the 6th century BC period. Supposedly, the frequent references to angels, the reference to the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the Messiah necessitate a late postexilic date for the book.

This is a weak argument, for angels are attested elsewhere in the Old Testament and throughout Israel's history. Although critics acknowledge this, they insist that it occurs in a much more developed form in Daniel than in books such as Ezekiel or Zechariah (is this proof?). Resurrection is attested to in Ps. 16:10 and Isa 26:19, which certainly predate Daniel.

b. The lack of use of the term "LORD" (יהוה)

Critics would argue that this term was commonly used in biblical literature of the 6th century BC, and therefore its absence in the book of Daniel suggests a later date.

Use, however, is determined by the author's purposes and content. Furthermore, the term יהוה is found in Dan 9:2,4,8,10,13-14,20.

4. Literary Objections to the Traditional Date & Authorship

a. Daniel as Apocalyptic Literature

Critics often claim that the Book of Daniel belongs to a distinctive literary type known as "apocalyptic literature" which appeared prolifically in Israel in the Maccabean era. Hence, a date of 168-134 BC would seem more plausible.[69]

In response, one could argue that Ezekiel also has apocalyptic elements, but scholars do not date this book as late as the Maccabean era. Furthermore, some critics trap themselves in their own arguments, as Anderson appears to do:

> We have seen that prophets tried to account for the sufferings of the present age in the context of a covenant with Yahweh and had called Israel to repent. But apocalyptic writers knew that the sufferings of Israel—or other peoples—cannot be explained on the basis of sin—that is, a failure in human responsibility.[70]

---

[68] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ZPEB*, 2:18.

[69] Di Lella (*Daniel*, The Anchor Bible, 62-71) spends an entire chapter discussing Daniel's resemblance to apocalyptic literature.

[70] B. W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4th ed., 621.

Anderson is attempting to link Daniel with "apocalyptic writers" in contrast with the "prophets" on the issue of sin and repentance, and yet Daniel in chapter 9 is acknowledging the nation's sin and need for repentance (the very fact that he claims apocalyptic writers do not do).

b.   The absence of Daniel's name in Ben Sira's work

Ben Sira wrote his book in Hebrew about 180 BC with a long section (see Sir. 44:1ff.) devoted to the "Praise of the Fathers." Since the name of Daniel is missing (in contrast to other major prophets who are listed), the claim is that Daniel's name is missing because the Book of Daniel had not yet been written. This would suggest a date of writing after 180 BC.

In response, one could point out that other "notables" such as Job, Ezra, and Mordecai are also not listed. Furthermore, the popularity of Daniel at Qumran from the MSS deposits shows how shallow this objection is. Daniel and his book are also referred to in 1 Maccabees 2:59ff., Baruch 1:15–3:3 and Sibylline Oracles III, all of which are at least 2nd century BC compositions. Since Daniel was in the 3rd division of the Hebrew canon (in contrast to the other prophets), it is not surprising that his name was not present in Ben Sira's work.

A DEFENSE OF THE TRADITIONAL DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF DANIEL

Now that some of the objections to the traditional date have been considered and evaluated, arguments for a 6th century BC can be set forth.

1.   **Evidence from Qumran Discoveries**

Portions of Daniel have surfaced among the documents from Qumran, i.e., the Dead Sea Scrolls, which would strongly suggest a date well before the Maccabean era. Harrison states,

Fragments from 1Q, along with some complete scrolls of Daniel from other caves, have testified to the popularity of the work at Qumrân. A florilegium recovered from 4Q spoke, like Mt. 24:15, of 'Daniel the prophet,' furnishing eloquent second-century BC testimony to the way in which the book was revered and cited as Scripture. Since all the Qumrân fragments and scrolls are copies, the autograph of Daniel and other OT canonical works must of necessity be advanced well before the Maccabean period if the proper minimum of time is allowed for the book to be circulated and accepted as Scripture.[71]

2.   **Evidence of Persian Loanwords**

---

[71] R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ISBE*, 1:861. He adds, "When 1Q was excavated, two of the three fragments of Daniel recovered from the site proved to be related paleographically to the large Isaiah MS (1QIsa^a). Since the book of Isaiah comes from a time several centuries prior to the earliest date to which 1QIsa^a can be assigned on any grounds, it follows that the autograph of Daniel also must be several centuries in advance of the Maccabean period" (861).

". . . all the Persian loanwords in Daniel are specifically Old Persian (which is found on inscriptions from the 6th and 5th cents. B.C.), indicating that the Aramaic of Daniel in this area is certainly pre-Hellenistic rather than Maccabean."[72]

3.   The Testimony of Christ - Matt 24:15

4.   Acceptance into the Jewish Canon

If Daniel had indeed been a 2nd century BC work by an author who was attempting to disguise the book as being 6th century BC, it is extremely unlikely that the Jews would have allowed this to slip by unnoticed or to have ever allowed it into the Hebrew canon of Scripture.

5.   Comparison with Literary Material of the 2nd & 1st Centuries, BC

a.   Ecclesiasticus (ca. 200-180 BC)

This would furnish us with a fair sample of the type of Hebrew which would have been current at the time Daniel was written according to the late-date theorists. Nevertheless, Ecclesiasticus exhibits later linguistic characteristics than Daniel, being somewhat rabbinical in tendency. "Israel Lévi in his Introduction to the Hebrew Text of Ecclesiasticus (1904) lists the following: (a) new verbal forms borrowed mainly from Aramaic, (b) excessive use of the *hiphil* and *hithpael* conjugations, and (c) peculiarities of various sorts heralding the approach of Mishnaic Hebrew."[73]

b.   The Hebrew documents from Qumran (1st century BC)

"The Manual of Discipline" (1QS), "The War of the Children of Light Against the Children of Darkness" (1QM), and "The Thanksgiving Psalms" do not show any distinctive characteristics in common with the Hebrew chapters of Daniel.[74]

c.   The Genesis Apocryphon

This 1st century BC document in Aramaic shows considerable variance from the Aramaic chapters of Daniel. According to its editors (N. Avigad and Y. Yadin), the Apocryphon was probably composed in the third century BC. Archer notes, "Yet linguistic analysis indicates that in morphology, vocabulary, and syntax, the Apocryphon shows a considerably later stage of the Aramaic language than do the Aramaic chapters of Daniel."[75] Two other studies of Biblical Aramaic syntax have shown that the Aramaic of Daniel bears the mark of Official Aramaic and is earlier than the second century.[76]

6.   Ezekiel's Testimony - Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3

---

[72] Ibid., 865.

[73] Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 391.

[74] G. L. Archer, "The Hebrew of Daniel Compared with the Qumran Sectarian Documents," in *The Law and the Prophets*, ed. J. Skilton (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974).

[75] *EBC*, 7:23. Cf. Gleason Archer, "The Aramaic of the Genesis Apocryphon Compared with the Aramaic of Daniel," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Payne (Waco, TX: Word, 1970), 160-69.

[76] Peter W. Coxon, "The Syntax of the Aramaic of Daniel: A Dialectical Study," *HUCA* 48 (1977):122 and "The Distribution of Synonyms in Biblical Aramaic in the Light of Official Aramaic and the Aramaic of Qumran," *RdQ* 9 (1978):512.

Ezekiel, which is dated even by critical scholars to a period much earlier than the 2nd century BC, makes mention of Daniel.

Critical scholars sometimes try to dodge this observation with the claim that this Daniel could not refer to Ezekiel's contemporary but to the old Canaanite hero Dan'el whose story is in the Ugaritic legend of Aqhat many centuries earlier.

That argument, however, is most unlikely in light of the character of the "Dan'el" of the Ugaritic legend. Archer notes,

> But a careful reading of the Aqhat epic reveals that Dan'el, the father of Aqhat, was a dedicated idol-worshiper, occupied with blood sacrifices to El, Baal, and other pagan gods for weeks at a time. They depict him as getting so drunk at one of his banquets that he could not walk home.[77]

7. The series of empires must include the Roman Empire,

as Media cannot be regarded as a separate empire, thus pushing the scope of references well past the Maccabean period.

a. Archer has pointed out that the wordplay at Belshazzar's feast in the handwriting on the wall argues strongly against a view of an Empire of Media distinct from that of Persia. He writes,

> The only possible inference is that the author who wrote these words believed that imperial power was taken from the Babylonians under Belshazzar and given over directly and immediately to the Persians, who at the time of the capture of Babylon were already merged with the Medes in a single domain.[78]

b. The symbolism of chapter 7 and 8 points unmistakably to the identification of the second kingdom as Medo-Persian and the third as Greek, which would imply that the fourth must be Rome.

 1) Ch 7 has the 3rd kingdom dividing into four parts, which must be an allusion to Alexander's Greece that was divided among his four generals following his death. There is no historical evidence for Persia being divided into four parts.

 2) Ch 8:20-21 views Media and Persia as one entity.

c. In Daniel 6, Darius regards himself as bound to the law of the Medes <u>and</u> <u>Persians</u>, which would not have been necessary for a Median king (and which argues that these two realms were merged and viewed as one).

8. Acquaintance with 6th Century Customs and Events

a. ". . . the author was sufficiently well informed about 6th cent. B.C. life in Babylonia to represent Nebuchadnezzar as being able to formulate and change Babylonian law with absolute sovereignty (2:12, 13, 46), while showing that Darius the Mede was powerless to alter the rigid laws of the Medes and Persians (6:8,9)."[79]

---

[77] Gleason Archer, "Daniel," *EBC*, 7:5.

[78] Ibid., 25.

[79] Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *ZPEB*, 14.

b. ". . . he was quite correct in recording the change from punishment by fire in the time of the Babylonians (Ch. 3) to punishment by being thrown into a lion's den under the Persians (Ch. 6), since fire was sacred to the Zoroastrians."[80]

c. In Dan 8:2, the city of Shushan is described as being in the province of Elam back in the time of the Chaldeans. Archer writes,

> But from the Greek and Roman historians we learn that in the Persian period Shushan, or Susa, was assigned to a new province which was named after it, Susiana, and the formerly more extensive province of Elam was restricted to the territory west of the Eulaeus River. It is reasonable to conclude that only a very early author would have known that Susa was once considered part of the province of Elam."[81]

9.   Linguistic Arguments for an Early Date of Daniel

a. We have abundant use in Daniel of the particle אֹשֶׁר which would be unexpected in a work of the Maccabean period, since this had dropped out of Mishnaic Hebrew (see Dan 1:4,8 (twice), 10 (twice), 11, 18, 20 (twice); 8:2,6,20,21,26; 9:1,2,6,7 (twice),8,10,11,12 (3x),14,15,18,21; 10:1,7,11,12; 11:4,24,38,39; 12:1,6,7). In contrast, we have no occurrences in Daniel of שֶׁ (or שֶׁלִּי) which critical scholars would normally regard as   an indicator of a late dated work (although this is not necessarily so; see Judges), as in Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and the Psalms.

b. While Mishnaic Hebrew lost the נה suffix for 3rd and 2nd feminine singular verb forms, we do have יַעֲמֹדְנָה (with the נה suffix) in Dan 8:22. This suggests that the Hebrew of Daniel is not from the Mishnaic period, but is earlier.

c. Kutscher argues that ירושלים (mostly with yod) in DSS (Isaᵃ) is late whereas the form without yod is characteristic of standard Biblical Hebrew.[82] Notice that in Daniel 1:1 we have the earlier form יְרוּשָׁלַ .ם (cf. 9:2,7,12,16,25).

---

[80] Ibid.

[81] Archer, *Old Testament Introduction*, 400-401. [Archer's note 3: "Cf. Strabo 15:3, 12; 16:1, 17; Pliny. *Natural History*. 6.27."].

[82] E. Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, ed. Raphael Kutscher (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1984), 94.