

Who is Darius the Mede?!

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King Darius, the Mede, is a personality mentioned in the Book of Daniel 5-31 [and Darius the Mede hath received the kingdom, when a son of sixty and two years], (Young's Literal Translation). Modern so-called "Critical Bible Scholarship" has generally insisted that there is no corroborating evidence for the existence of such a person which necessitates, inter alia, the assumption that the Book of Daniel is a much later fabrication reaching its final (canonical) form in the Maccabean period ca. 165 BCE, a far cry from the "fundamentalist" claim of Daniel's authorship around 530 BCE, some 4 centuries earlier.

Let us examine how critical is this "critical scholarship".

Main Piece of Evidence: The Babylonian record of the conquest of Babylon [Chronicle of Nabonidus - Seventeenth year (539/538)]: is as follows: [In the month of Tašrītu, when Cyrus attacked the army of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris, the inhabitants of Akkad revolted, but he [Cyrus, Nabonidus?!] massacred the inhabitants (or alternative translation: In the month of Tashritu, at the time when Cyrus battled the forces of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris river, the citizens of Akkad revolted against him, but Nabonidus scattered his opposition with a great slaughter). The fifteenth day [12 October], Sippar was seized without battle. Nabonidus fled. The sixteenth day [13 October], Gubaru, the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle. Afterwards, Nabonidus was arrested in Babylon when he returned there. Till the end of the month, the shield carrying Gutians were staying within Esagila but nobody carried arms in Esagila and its buildings. The correct time for a ceremony was not missed. In the month of Arahsamna, the third day [29 October], Cyrus entered Babylon, [unidentified objects] were filled before him (or alternative translation: they laid down green branches in front of him). The state of peace was imposed upon the city. Cyrus sent greetings to all Babylon (or alternative translation: The city was no longer at war, Peace being restored. Cyrus then sent his best wishes to the residents living there). Gubaru, his governor, installed sub-governors in Babylon. From the month of Kislīmu to the month of Addaru, the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had made come down to Babylon, were returned to their sacred cities. In the month of Arahsamna, on the night of the eleventh, Gubaru died [6 November]. In the month of Addaru, the [... lacuna...] day, the wife of the king died. From the twenty-seventh day of Adarru till the third day of Nisannu [20-26 March], an official weeping was performed in Akkad. All the people went around with their hair disheveled. When, the fourth day [27 March] Cambyses, son of Cyrus, went to the temple of [unintelligible], the epa-priest of Nabû who [... lacuna...] the bull [... lacuna...] They came and made the weaving by means of the handles and when he led the image of Nabû [... lacuna...] spears and leather quivers, from [... lacuna...] Nabû returned to Esagila, sheep offerings in front of Bêl and the god Mâr-bîti];

(This translation was made by A. Leo Oppenheim and is copied from James B. Pritchard's Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament, 1950 Princeton. Some minor changes have been made, based on the new edition by A.K. Grayson; <http://www.livius.org/ct-cz/cyrus/l/babylon02.html>)

First Piece of Supporting Evidence: The Nabonidus Cylinder from Sippar [Third regnal year (553 BCE) of Nabonidus], important Babylonian sources states: [In the beginning of my everlasting reign they sent me a dream. Marduk, the great lord, and Sin, the luminary of heaven and the netherworld, stood together. Marduk spoke with me: 'Nabonidus, king of Babylon, carry bricks on your riding horse, rebuild Ehulhul and cause Sin, the great lord, to establish his residence in its midst.' Reverently, I spoke to the Enlil of the gods, Marduk: 'That temple which you ordered me to build, the Mede [Ummanmanda] surrounds it and his might is excessive.' But Marduk spoke with me: 'The Mede [Ummanmanda] whom you mentioned, he, his country and the kings who march at his side will be no more.' At the beginning of the third year, they (Marduk and Sin) aroused him, Cyrus, the king of Anšan [Persia], his second in rank. He scattered the vast Median [Ummanmanda] hordes with his small army. He captured Astyages [Ištumegu], the king of the Medes, and took him to his country as captive in chains. Such was the word of the great lord Marduk and of Sin, the luminary of heaven and the netherworld, whose command is not revoked. I feared their august command, I became troubled, I was worried and my face showed signs of anxiety. I was not neglectful, nor remiss, nor careless]; (Langdon, p. 220, col. 1 ll. 26-32 & <http://www.livius.org/na-nd/nabonidus/cylinder.html>).

Second Piece of Supporting Evidence: In the Babylonian chronicle [Chronicle of Nabonidus - Sixth year (550/549)] it is recorded that: [King Astyages [litt: Ištumegu] called up his troops and marched against Cyrus [Kuraš], king of Anšan, in order to meet him in battle. The army of Astyages revolted against him and in fetters they delivered him to Cyrus. Cyrus marched against the country Agamtanu [the Median capital Ecbatana]; the royal residence he seized; silver, gold, other valuables of the country Agamtanu he took as booty and brought to Anšan. The valuables of the army of [...lacuna]]
(Grayson, 1975a, p. 106, col. 2 ll. 1-4 & http://www.livius.org/ct-cz/cyrus_l/babylon02.html)



It is clear, that Babylonian chronicle (Nabonidus Chronicle) is more detailed than the Sippar cylinder, and relatively free from religious agendas and metaphysical references. The Nabonidus Chronicle historical accuracy and relevance must be generally judged as higher than the Sippar cylinder, which, never the less, contains essential and significant historic facts.

It is also clear from the main record (main evidence), especially the second part that the writer of this record is, or pretends to be, a 'fan' or an outright 'propagandist' of Cyrus, but not of this Gubaru:

- * the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without;
- * they laid down green branches in front of him;
- * The city was no longer at war, Peace being restored;
- * Cyrus then sent his best wishes to the residents living there... etc.

Compare this flurry of 'positive references' to Cyrus to the relatively plain and meager referencing of Gubaru. Not very much is further mentioned about this person except the obscure phrase: (Gubaru the governor of Gutium), the cold factual: (Gubaru is Cyrus' governor) and that he (installed sub-governors in Babylon).

It is also noteworthy that the death of Gubaru is reported in passing: no mourning, weeping or other signs of public grief are mentioned, not even by the so-called Gutians, supposedly the people of Gubaru, or Cyrus army. Contrast this with the lengthy and detailed reporting of the public mourning for the wife of the king. Amazingly our chronicler did not bother, or did not want, to inform us which king he is talking about! Clearly the wife of 'that king' enjoys considerable public respect and sympathy. We can safely assume that she is Babylonian, not Mede or Persian. Is she the wife of Nabonidus?! Not likely as Nabonidus is named quite frequently in the chronicles without his royal titles except once; [Chronicle of Nabonidus - Ninth year (547/546): Nabonidus, the king, stayed in Temâ ...]. Moreover there is no good reason for our Chronicler to avoid mentioning his name. Belshazzar, Nabonidus' son and co-regent, is not mentioned at all. Could it be Cyrus?! But he is not known to have married in the Babylonian nobility, nor is there any other record of any of his wives dying at the said time frame. Cambyses, son of Cyrus, is out of question because he became only King of Babylon (while Cyrus' title was: King of Lands) after the death of this wife of the king. Also here there is no good reason for our Chronicler to avoid mentioning his name. Most reasonable solution is that Gubaru, following the best custom of that time, married in the defeated royal house. His Babylonian noble wife died a few months later, but our cunning Chronicler decided NOT to say: wife of king Gubaru.

We do not doubt the historic veracity of the events stated in the Nabonidus Chronicle, but the biased anti-Gubaru propagandist spirit cannot be denied.

It is also clear that Babylon in the phrase (...installed sub-governors in Babylon) could not possibly mean the City only, which was referenced earlier as such: "The City", but rather the whole Babylonian Kingdom.

It should be evident, that such a supreme authority in such a vast area of such critical importance, which was just yesterday the core region of World Empire of the highest level of civilisation, cannot be conceived to be vested in any run-of-the-mill governor or military general. This Gubaru (aka Ugbaru in some readings) must have been already, before the conquest of Babylon, much higher in rank than what the obscure phrase: (Gubaru the governor of Gutium) may suggest. It is only natural to assume that he, after the conquest of Babylon, has to be appointed a co-regent or a co-king, or at the very least: a sub-king under an emperor of a larger empire, who is the overlord of that empire, including the specific region under consideration. It should have been fair and reasonable to say: Gubaru King of Babylon, while Cyrus ought to be referred to as King of Lands. As a matter of fact this

Gubaru is so high ranking, that he was given preference over Cambyses, Cyrus son and crown prince of the empire, who was appointed King of Babylon shortly after **Gubaru**, whose death was some 24 days after the conquest of Babylon.

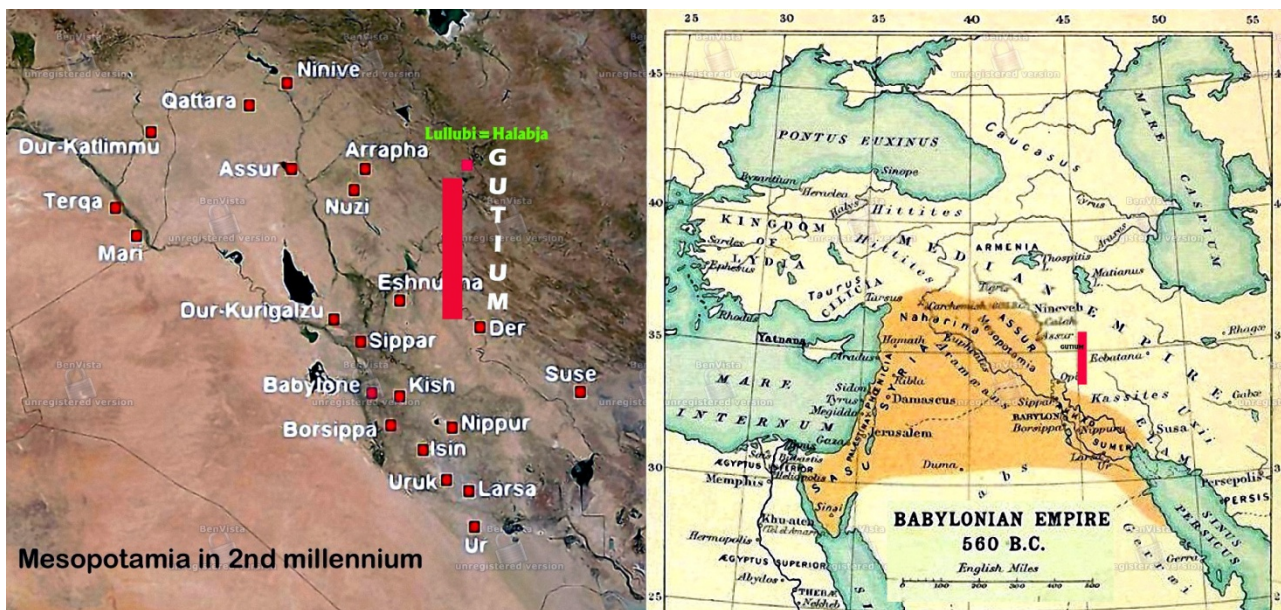
We can assume, with highest probability, that the Chronicler is a Marduk priest, who pretends to be loyal to Cyrus, but deep inside is a racist Babylon nationalist. Marduk priests were the upper educated class and immensely powerful. Their considerable power is the reason for King Nabonidus, who ruled the Babylon Empire from 555 to 538 BC, to appoint his son Belshazzar as co-king and 'exile' himself, setting up his court over a thousand miles far away in Tayma (north-west of Arabia) so he could pursue his "Sin" worship (Sin is the god of the Moon, Marduk is the god of Mars). It is thus very well possible, that this **Gubaru** somehow offended the Marduk priests and gained their displeasure, even outright hostility. We will soon see, with high level of confidence, that this was indeed the case.

Let us now look at the obscure phrase: (**Gubaru, the governor of Gutium**). What is this "Gutium"?! And where is it located?!

In the Wikipedia we find: [The Gutians (also Guteans or Guti) were a tribe that overran southern Mesopotamia when the Akkadian empire collapsed in approximately 2154 BC. Sumerian sources portray the Gutians as a **barbarous, ravenous people** from Gutium or Qutium (Sumerian: Gu-tu-umki or Gu-ti-umki) in the mountains, presumably the central Zagros in the Kurdish area of Iraq. The Sumerian king list represents them as ruling over Sumer for a short time after the fall of the Akkadian Empire, and paints a picture of **chaos within the Gutian administration**. Next to nothing is known about their origins, as no "Gutian" artifacts have surfaced from that time; little information is gleaned from the contemporary sources. Nothing is known of their language either, apart from those Sumerian king names, and that it was distinct from other known languages of the region (such as Sumerian, Akkadian, Hurrian, Hittite and Elamite).]; [The Guti appear in Old Babylonian copies of inscriptions ascribed to Lugal-Anne-Mundu of Adab as among the nations providing his empire tribute. These inscriptions locate them between Subartu in the north, and Marhashe and Elam in the south. They were a prominent nomadic tribe who lived in the Zagros mountains in the time of the Akkadian Empire. Sargon the Great also mentions them among his subject lands, listing them between **Lullubi**, Armanu and Akkad to the north, and Nikku and **Der** to the south. The epic Cuthaeen Legend of Naram-Sin of a later millennium mentions Gutium among the lands around Mesopotamia raided by Annubanini of Lulubum during Naram-Sin's reign in Akkad. Contemporary year-names for Shar-kali-sharri of Akkad indicate that in one unknown year of his reign, he captured Sharlag king of Gutium, while in another year, "the yoke was imposed on Gutium".], (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gutian_people)

And we find further: [The **Lullubi** or Lulubi were a group of tribes during the 3rd millennium BC, from a region known as Lulubum, now the Sharazor plain of in the Zagros Mountains of modern Iran. Frayne (1990) identified their city Lulubuna or Luluban with the modern Kurdish town, **Halabja**], (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lullubi>).

The location of Lulubuna (or Luluban), the city of the **Lullubi**, is well known as it coincides with the modern Kurdish town **Halabja**. Moreover we are in possession of maps depicting the location of the ancient city **Der**. Putting everything together results in the two following maps merged together in one image:



The maps show clearly that during our relevant time frame of around 560 BC, "**GUTU**" lies clearly deep in the domain of the Median Empire, a major empire of that time challenging Babylon both in power and civilisation (and soon sacking it). Clearly most subjects of that empire, including our **Gutians**, if they still exist, are settled and civilized. The small nomadic fraction of the population is docile and submissive to the imperial power emanating from the imperial capital Ecbatana (modern days: Hamadan). The times of the **barbarous, ravenous and chaotic Gutians** are long gone past. Never the less we may safely assume that the term **Gutian** retained its **negative connotation** in the mass-psychology and social consciousness of the Babylonians, exactly like the terms: barbarian, barbaric, vandalism and the like imply in our time. Our chronicler seems to know this very well and employs it to the maximum. He is clearly intent to, subtly; denigrate **Gubaru** and his soldiers, the **Gutians**!

The truth is that the real **Gutians**, most likely Arian in origin and speaking some Arian Indo-Germanic language, have disappeared from history. Their great grandchildren have rearranged their tribal structure and mixed with other tribes and nations in that region, mostly Arian in origin with similar language. This **Gubaru** is most likely a high ranking leader (king, ruler) of Media, or an important region of it, whose population is of mostly Arian ancestry and speaking Old Persian (Kurdish?!). He must be also so close to Cyrus to be given preference over Cambyses, Cyrus own son and heir to the throne. The Chronicler should be well aware about this. He himself speaks, in the second supporting evidence (Chronicle of Nabonidus - Sixth year (550/549)), clearly about king Astyages [**Ištumegu**] and his capital city **Agamtanu**, where no word about the **Gutians** is uttered. The Babylonian king Nabonidus is very well aware about the strength of the Mede [**Ummannanda**] and their king Astyages [**Ištumegu**]. This is clear from the first piece of supporting evidence (The Nabonidus Cylinder from Sippar [Third regnal year (553 BCE) of Nabonidus]), which does not have any trace of the infamous **Gutians**.

The name of this **Gubaru** may be just a Median or Gutian native personal name, reported to us only in transliteration, but this is quite unlikely. The prevalent custom for kings and rulers of that era is to adopt "throne names" which have a specific meaning. A notable exception is Cyrus himself who was well known and loved under his personal name before uniting the Persian and Median kingdoms and wished his appreciation as a cosmopolitan

"father" figure by his subjects to continue. Moreover Gubaru, or: Gu-baru, or: Gub-arū, or: Gu-ba-ru, or whatsoever does not sound like any known Old Persian single or composite word.

But if Gubaru is Aramaic, and it is indeed the translation of a certain Old Persian name or title, then we would expect a fair chronicler or historian to say: (... XXXXXX, whose name means Gubaru, the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle.. etc); or something similar.

It is also possible that Gubaru himself choose an Aramaic title for himself. This is not so out of the ordinary, as Aramaic was the de facto Lingua Franca of the whole region for decades, even centuries before it was made officially the language of the Medo-Persian Empire. Upper and educated classes may have felt elevated above the "ordinary" masses by adopting Aramaic as their language of choice, even in their own households. I myself have seen certain educated Egyptian (Arabs) giving their children French names and speaking French at home!

But most probable Gubaru's name, nick name or throne title was XXXXXX, which translates to Gubaru, but our racist chronicler chose to express his contempt for Gubaru, the Gutians and their language by just stating the Aramaic translation. Additionally the word "Gubaru" may have some 'negative' connotation, which our hostile chronicler can only welcome as a bonus. Let us pursue this most probable option first.

Aramaic is a direct cousin of Arabic (Standard Classical Qur'anic Arabic). Both descended directly from the hypothetical Proto-Semitic (ca. 3500 BCE). Most modern linguistic authorities agree that Standard Arabic is, in every linguistic aspect, the closest to Proto-Semitic, and thus the closest to Aramaic. Some classical Arabic linguists voiced the opinion, about a millennium ago, that 'Arabic' is essentially the Proto-Semitic, and hence the mother language of all other Semitic languages, which survived essentially unchanged in the isolation of the barren desert of Arabia. This opinion harmonises well with the theory that Semitic human waves invading the Levant and Mesopotamia did always originate from Arabia starting ca. 5000 BCE.

The Catholic Encyclopedia addresses the original home of the Semites: [The tribes which inhabited these territories, and to some extent still inhabit them, show in language, traits, and character a sharply characterized individuality which separates them distinctly from other peoples. Their languages are closely related to one another, not being almost independent branches of language, like the great groups of Indo-Germanic languages, but rather dialects of a single linguistic group. Physically, also, the Semitic form it is found in Arabia. Here also the phonetics and partly also the grammatical structure of the Semitic language, are most purely, as the vocabulary is most completely, preserved. From these as well as from other circumstances the conclusion has been drawn that Arabia should be considered the original home of the Semitic peoples. All the racial peculiarities of the Semites are best explained from the character of a desert people. All Semites settled in civilized lands are, therefore, to be considered offshoots of the desert tribes, which were detached one after the other from the parent stem. This pressing forward towards civilized lands was a continuous movement, often in a slow development lasting through centuries but often also in mighty and sudden invasions, the last of which appears in that of the Arabs of Islam. The further question as to how the original ancestors of the Semites came to

Arabia, is for the present beyond historical knowledge.], (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13706a.htm>)

The Aramaic nouns **Gubaru**, **Ugbaru** and even **Gubrya** reduce to the trilateral root: G-B-R, or equivalently to the Arabic J-B-R (**G**, like in **G**arden, being a transformation of the proto-Semitic and Arabic **J**, like in **J**ungle). The root verb **jabara** (جبر) means: coerce, compel, enforce, restrain. Thus the closest construct to **Gubaru** is **Jabbaar** (جَبَّار), which means: coercer, coercitor, compeller, enforcer and restrainer and then, not originally but rather by rational implication; mighty, almighty, all-powerful ... etc. It has almost always, with a few exceptions, the negative connotation of suppression, oppression and even tyranny. It is not as strongly and exclusively negative as the word Tyrant (طاغية = Taaghiyah).

Furthermore we find Herodotus (VI. 98) rendering (**Darius**), a title used frequently by Medo-Persian kings, in Greek as: **ἐρξίης (Erxeies)** = coercer, coercitor, compeller, restrainer, commander. Herodotus was writing around 440 BCE, only a half century after the death of Darius Hystaspis (Darius the Great) and a century after the conquest of Babylon. He may have been alive when Darius II ascended the throne. This is the closest to our relevant time. Herodotus must have received that rendering from the contemporary speaker of the language at that time and reported it as such (like a dictionary entry).

Herodotus (VI. 98) says literally: (δύνатаι δὲ κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ταῦτα τὰ οὐνόματα, Δαρείος ἐρξίης, Ξέρξης ἀρήιος, Ἀρτοξέρξης μέγας ἀρήιος. τούτους μὲν δὴ τοὺς βασιλέας ὧδε ἂν ὀρθῶς κατὰ γλῶσσαν τὴν σφετέρην Ἑλληνες καλέοιεν), translated: (Now in the Hellenic tongue the names which have been mentioned have this meaning--Dareios means "compeller," Xerxes "warrior," Artoxerxes "great warrior." Thus then might the Hellenes rightly call these kings in their own tongue), The History of Herodotus; parallel English/Greek; English translation: G. C. Macaulay, (pub. Macmillan, London and NY) [1890]; <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hh/index.htm>.

The meaning given above must be the original meaning in common use at that time, because Herodotus did not indulge in any analysis of the word or any speculation about possible derivations from other words. There is absolutely no reason to doubt Herodotus' accuracy in this regard.

On the other hand we find many speculative claims about the meaning of **Darius** (Roman form of **Δαρειος (Dareios)**, which was the Greek form of a certain Persian name) based on some alleged original Persian spelling:

- (1)- Dārayavahush is composed of the elements dāraya "to possess" and vahu "good": "owner of the good", "inherently good", and "upholder of the good"; similarly: Darayavahua
- (2)- Dareyavesh, {Strong's #01867}: "He who investigates and governs"; and by implication: a king who is a wise and just.
- (3)- Dariush, Daryush: "he possesses" or "rich and kingly".
- (4)- Dara: "king" (but in new Persian)
- (5)- Darayawua: "one who maintains" or "Maintainer", according to Professor Sayce (<http://www.angelfire.com/nv/TheOliveBranch/append57.html>)

All these claims have to be rejected as being ill founded and relying on pure speculation lacking any root in historic reality. Historic reality is known to us with a reasonable level of confidence due to Herodotus' testimony.

So we may conclude quite confidently: Gubaru, the governor of Gutium is nobody else than Darius the Mede; or: Darius, the king of Media.

That is it. I rest my case. We could stop here, but actually we may be able to know this unique man, Darius the Mede, a little bit better.

Concerning the early death of Gubaru, the governor of Gutium aka Darius the Mede, we have an intriguing theory from advocated by William H. Shea and published in the Journal of the Adventist Theological Society (12/1 (Spring 2001): 97Ð105). We will quote literally from the article and comment as needed.

Prof. William H. Shea says: [The name given to Cyrus' general in the Nabonidus Chronicle varies. In one instance it is spelled as Ugbaru, in another instance it is spelled Gubaru, and in the third occurrence the first sign of the name is defective. Clearly the same individual is referred to in all three cases, and for convenience he is referred to here as Ugbaru. Ugbaru was the general whose troops conquered Babylon on the 16th of Tishri, according to the Nabonidus Chronicles. This fits perfectly with the reference in Dan 5:31, which states that Darius the Mede 'received' the kingdom when Belshazzar was slain, the night the city fell (v. 30). The verb used here (qbl) has been accurately translated as 'received,' and it does not mean that he became king then. It only implies that he took over rule there on a temporary basis until Cyrus the full king arrived. Darius was, in effect, the trustee of the conquered kingdom until Cyrus came. In this span of two weeks, from 7/16 (i.e., 16th of Tishri, the seventh month) to 8/3 (i.e., 3rd of Marchesvan, the eighth month), he could best be described as the military governor.]

My comment: Prof. William H. Shea is way too trusting of the ancient cunning Chronicler. According to our exposition above it is most probable that Darius the Mede was the king of Media and he took the kingdom of Babylon, which borders directly on Media, as an extension of the Median sub-kingdom. The Kingdom of Anshan (Persia) has no direct border with Babylon, as the kingdom of Susania does separate the two. This may have agreed upon with Cyrus much earlier. More supporting evidence will follow a bit later.

Prof. William H. Shea says thereafter: [This interpretation requires one correction to the previous study. There it was advocated that the verb which referred to Ugbaru's troops guarding the temple area in this period meant that they kept the people out, in compliance with Darius' thirty-day decree concerning no prayers to any god. I now revert back to the more traditional interpretation that Ugbaru's troops simply maintained the temple area in peace. No disruption in the temple services took place at this time. The transition was an orderly one. Darius' thirty day decree came later.]. **Prof. William H. Shea refers here to an earlier article in which he said:** [Line 16b-17: "Until the end of the month (Tishri) the shields of Gutium (i.e., troops) surrounded the gates of the Esagil." This is the first of three main statements about activities at the main temple of Babylon. The chronicle takes great interest in the religious affairs in the temple. Earlier, for example, the scribe noted each of the years during which the New Year's ritual was suspended while Nabonidus was away in Tema of Arabia. So it is natural for him to take an interest in what was going on in the temple at this important juncture. The translation of this passage presents no problems, but its interpretation does. The standard interpretation of Assyriologists who have dealt with this text has been that these troops were stationed at the gates of the temple to insure that all of the rituals proceeded in the usual manner and without any interruption. The other alternative is that these troops were stationed at the temple to prevent any of those rituals

from taking place. This is the interpretation we have adopted here. The matter can only be settled by the next two lines, and this is one place where the readings and interpretation of previous treatments of the chronicle need to be revised. **Line17 b:** *bat√-la s̄a mim-ma ina E-sag-gil u ekurrati. Mesû.DIS* “There was a cessation of everything in the Esagil and the (other) temples.” The first sign of this phrase (see Labat No. 69) has been read by Smith as *be*, as *til* by Oppenheim, and as *bat√* by Grayson. These are all permissible values for this sign, but Grayson’s reading appears to be preferable. That makes the word present here a verb coming from *bat√alu*, “to stop, cease.” The verb is not negated, however, which means that there was a stopping or a cessation. This is followed by the relative *s̄a*, “of,” and the indefinite pronoun *mimma*, “all, whatever.” Thus these three crucial words say that there was a stopping or a cessation of whatever had previously been going on in the main temple and the other temples in the city. The correct translation of this portion of the line complements the preceding phrase by indicating that the Gutian (= Median) troops had been posted at the temple gates to prevent the people from going into the temples and performing their rituals there], (Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 7/1 (Spring 1996): 1-20)

My comment: This should be really settled on the proper translation of the relevant phrases, if at all possible. If not than Prof. Shea's old theory is much more persuasive: The City as at peace, the disliked Belshazzar is dead, the disliked Nabonidus is at large (so troops should rather be securing the gates), and Cyrus is advancing toward the City with another significant army, so why should troops be surrounding the temples?!

Prof. William H. Shea continues thereafter analyzing the events that followed, putting forward an intriguing hypothesis of an assassination plot which killed Darius, the Mede. He concludes with following summary: [The events described above may be tabulated as follows:

7/16 - Ugbaru/Darius 'received' the kingdom of Babylon by conquest. (Dan 5:31). He established peace there as military governor (Chronicle, col. III, line 15).

8/3 - Cyrus arrived in Babylon, greeted by crowds (Chronicle, col. III, line 18b-19).

8/4 - Ugbaru/Darius 'was made king,' by Cyrus (Dan 9:1).. Ugbaru/Darius 'confirmed' by Gabriel (Dan 11:1a).

8/5 - Cyrus left Babylon in pursuit of Nabonidus.

8/6 - Ugbaru appointed governors (Chronicle, col. III, line 20). Darius appointed governors (Dan 6:1-2). Darius planned to make Daniel chief governor (Dan 6:3).

8/7 - Seeing Daniel's appointment coming, the other governors plotted against him (Dan 6:4-5). Darius issued his decree against prayer (Dan 6:6-9).

8/8 - Daniel, caught in prayer, was reported to Darius and placed in lions' den (Dan 6:10-17). Darius was 'strengthened' by Gabriel that night Dan 11:1b).

8/9 - Daniel was delivered in the morning (Dan 6:19-23). The plotting officials were killed in lions' den (Dan 6:24). Darius' decree on behalf of the God of Daniel was given (Dan 6:25-27).

8/10 - Plot against Darius by priests and surviving officials.

8/11 - At the evening sacrifice Daniel prayed and Gabriel answered (Dan 9:1-27). The plot against Darius was carried out with a poisoned sacrifice. Ugbaru/Darius died that night (Chronicle, col. III, line 22b).

9/6 - Thirty days of Darius' decree ended (Dan 6:7). Gods began to return to their cities (Chronicle, col. III, line 21-22c).]

My comment: This is very persuasive, albeit being very tight time wise. I am more inclined to adopt above table with the following modifications:

7/16 - Ugbaru/Darius 'received' the kingdom of Babylon by conquest. (Dan 5:31). He established peace there as king of Babylon (Chronicle, col. III, line 15). Ugbaru/Darius 'confirmed' by Gabriel (Dan 11:1a). He starts the process of interviewing personalities, deliberations and consultations regarding how to govern the conquered kingdom. He comes to know and appreciate Daniel greatly. Due to the ongoing religious conflicts (initiated in part by Nabonidus long time ago) Darius ordered a cessation of all temple activities in the City, surrounding them with armed forces, and takes the whole issue under review.

8/3 - Cyrus arrived in Babylon, greeted enthusiastically by crowds (Chronicle, col. III, line 18b-19). The same evening he receives disturbing news about Nabonidus. He orders the mobilization of the army for next morning.

8/4 - Cyrus left Babylon in the early morning hastily in pursuit of Nabonidus.

8/4 - Ugbaru appointed governors (Chronicle, col. III, line 20). Darius appointed governors (Dan 6:1-2). Darius planned to make Daniel chief governor (Dan 6:3).

8/4-5 - Seeing Daniel's appointment as chief governor coming, the other governors plotted against him (Dan 6:4-5). They trap Darius. Darius issued his decree against prayer (Dan 6:6-9), thus greatly extending the suspension of temple activities.

8/6 - Daniel, caught in prayer, was reported to Darius and placed over night in lions' den (Dan 6:10- 17). Darius feeling trapped and unable to escape the dilemma is in great distress. Darius was 'strengthened' by Gabriel that night (Dan 11:1b).

8/7 - Daniel was delivered in the morning (Dan 6:19-23). The outraged Darius ordered the plotting officials to be cast immediately in the lions' den, where they were obviously killed (Dan 6:24). Darius' decree on behalf of the God of Daniel was given (Dan 6:25-27). The horrified surviving officials and the shocked Marduk priests start planning their plot against Darius.

8/7-11 – Conspirators plan meticulously to kill Darius.

8/11 - At the evening sacrifice Daniel prayed and Gabriel answered (Dan 9:1-27). The plot against Darius was carried out with poisoned sacrifice/offerings. Ugbaru/Darius died that night (Chronicle, col. III, line 22b).

9/3- 4 - Thirty days of Darius' decree ended (Dan 6:7). Gods' idols began to be return to their cities (Chronicle, col. III, line 21-22c).

Needless to say that the poisoning plot is not the only explanation for the death of healthy warrior and commander of armies at the aged of 62. We are aware about apparently healthy sportsmen of even younger age collapsing and dying due to a massive heart attack. Also collapse and death of apparently healthy men due to massive stroke (brain hemorrhage) is not a rarity, especially those under stress of heavy responsibility, like Darius. Never the less the above hypothesis fits neatly with all available material, both what is relatively firmly establish as historical (Nabonidus chronicles and Nabonidus Cylinder) and what is being disputed (Daniel), provided it is read with a critical and unbiased mindset,

Let us now examine the previously quoted two pieces of supporting evidence, namely: The Nabonidus Cylinder from Sippar [Third regnal year (553 BCE) of Nabonidus] and the Chronicle of Nabonidus - Sixth year (550/549)], together with following ones:

Third Piece of supporting Evidence: An excerpt taken from the Greek historian **Xenophon**, contains the following two paragraphs:

[8.5.17] "And now when the march had brought them into Media, Cyrus turned aside to visit Cyaxares. After they had met and embraced, Cyrus began by telling Cyaxares that a palace in Babylon, and an estate, had been set aside for him so that he might have a residence of his own whenever he came there, and he offered him other gifts, most rich and beautiful.

[18] And Cyaxares was glad to take them from his nephew, and then he sent for his daughter, and she came, carrying a golden crown, and bracelets, and a necklace of wrought gold, and a most beautiful Median robe, as splendid as could be. [19] The maiden placed the crown upon the head of Cyrus, and as she did so Cyaxares said:

'I will give her to you, Cyrus, my own daughter, to be your wife. Your father wedded the daughter of my father, and you are their son; and this is the little maid whom you carried in your arms when you were with us as a lad, and whenever she was asked whom she meant to marry, she would always answer "Cyrus." And for her dowry I will give her the whole of Media: since I have no lawful son.'

—Xenophon (translated by H. G. Dakyns,) The project Gutenberg Etext of (**Cyropaedia**), Book 8, C-4, line 17-19.

This report seems a little bit 'too romantic'.

Fourth Piece of supporting Evidence: **Xenophon** himself wrote in (**Anabasis**), which is written about ten years earlier, **that Cyrus had conquered Ecbatana (capital of Astyages, the Median king) by force**. This seems to contradict the previous narrative mentioned in the (**Third Piece of supporting Evidence**).

About **Xenophon** himself: **Xenophon's** birth date is uncertain, but most scholars agree that he was born around 431 BC near the city of Athens. **Xenophon** was born into the ranks of the aristocracy of ancient Attica with all its privileges. He had philosophical interests and was close to Socrates. **Xenophon** participated in the expedition led by Cyrus the Younger against his older brother, king Artaxerxes II of Persia, in 401 BC.

Under the pretext of fighting Tissaphernes, the Persian satrap of Ionia, Cyrus the Younger assembled a massive army composed of native Persian soldiers, but also a large number of Greeks. Prior to waging war against Artaxerxes, his brother, Cyrus proposed that the enemy was the Pisidians, and so the Greeks were unaware that they were to battle against the larger army of King Artaxerxes II. At Tarsus the soldiers became aware of Cyrus's plans to depose the king, and, as a result, refused to continue. However, Clearchus, a Spartan general, convinced the Greeks to continue with the expedition. The army of Cyrus met the army of Artaxerxes II in the Battle of Cunaxa (near the current Baghdad). Despite effective fighting by the Greeks, resulting in partial tactical victories, Cyrus was killed in the battle. Clearchus was, Shortly thereafter, invited to a peace conference, where he was betrayed and executed, alongside four other generals and many captains. The mercenaries, known as the Ten Thousand, found themselves without leadership far from the sea, deep in hostile territory near the heart of Mesopotamia. They elected new leaders, including **Xenophon** himself, and fought their way northwards through hostile Persians and Medes to Trapezus on the coast of the Black Sea. They then made their way westward back to Greece.

We may assume safely that **Xenophon**, due to his aristocratic descent and educational background, had ample opportunity, along the long journey from Ionia to Cunaxa, to discuss philosophical and historical issues with Cyrus the Younger personally and with learned men of his entourage, thus gaining some firsthand information contained in the **oral tradition** of Persian royal house, especially about its founder: Cyrus the Great. So his reporting about Cyrus the Great should be regarded as essentially reliable, with the usual caveats about oral traditions.

Fifth Piece of supporting Evidence: According to Ctesias, an ancient historian and a contemporary of **Xenophon**, **the wife of Cyrus (Amytis, mother of Smerdis and Cambyses) was the daughter of the Median king Astyages** (**The Encyclopedia**

Britannica). Ctesias notes furthermore, that Cyrus married Astyages daughter after killing her first husband in order to claim authority to the throne of Media, after he had militarily conquered it

About **Ctesias** himself: **Ctesias** of Cnidus was a Greek physician and historian from Cnidus in Caria. Ctesias, who lived in the 5th century BC, was physician to Artaxerxes II (Artaxerxes Mnemon), whom he accompanied in 401 BC on his expedition against his brother Cyrus the Younger. He stayed at the court of the Persian king Artaxerxes II Mnemon for some seven years (from 404 to 398/397) giving him some access to the royal archives and courtier's oral traditions. Most scholars believe that he was initially enslaved by the Persians as prisoner of war, then freed and promoted to the position of the court's physician. **Ctesias** was the author of treatises on the history of Assyria and Persia in 23 books, called Persica, allegedly founded on the Persian royal archives. The books are lost, but were quoted by ancient authors. Never the less his writings contain some historic blunders forcing to classify his reliability as low, despite his enjoyable and entertaining style of writing.

Sixth Piece of supporting Evidence: The historian **Herodotus** states that Astyages was the last king of the Medes, that he never had a son and that he was defeated militarily by Cyrus after the commander of the Medean army deserted to Cyrus.

This corroborates nicely with the Babylonian chronicle, but seems to conflict with the story of Cyaxares II by **Xenophon**.

Despite my above objections to some reports and the apparent contradiction between certain pieces of evidence, it may be possible to create the following table of facts and harmonised course of events:

(1)- Cyrus' father weds the daughter of king **Astyages**. She has a brother (possibly a full brother, from the same mother) named **Cyaxares**. She gives birth to Cyrus, possibly in king **Astyages'** palace, her maternal home, in the Median Capital Ecbatana, according to the custom of many tribes and nations in the area (but this is not crucial). Cyrus' date of birth is unknown, but most likely ca. 576 BCE.

(2)- Cyrus grows up in his grandfather's palace, most likely in his maternal uncle **Cyaxares'** household (or alternatively: visits and stays for lengthy times). In any case he had a substantial time of upbringing and education in Ecbatana and he is very close to his uncle **Cyaxares**. His cousin, **Cyaxares'** daughter, falls in love with him.

(3)- Cyrus' father dies and Cyrus ascends the throne (ca. 560 BCE) of the Anshan (Persian) kingdom, which was a sub-kingdom of the Median Empire.

(4)- The ambitious young Cyrus starts a conquest campaign to the east of Anshan expanding his kingdom and indirectly the Median Empire, but his grandfather king **Astyages** is worried about what he regards a foolishness of the young Cyrus. He is also not convinced about the loyalty of this adventurous very young man. There may have been other issues and conflicts related to the rise of Zoroastrianism, the new religion of that time and king **Astyages'** despotic government style.

(5)- The conflict between Astyages and his grandson degenerates into open hostility around 553 BCE (Nabonidus Cylinder), there were some military skirmishes, but the royals in Ecbatana are split about the matter. Cyaxares supports his nephew contracting the wrath of king Astyages.

(6)- The conflict peaks into king Astyages casting his only son Cyaxares in prison. He promotes his most loyal general and makes him his son-in-law, offending other generals in the process. Astyages marches with his huge powerful army towards Anshan to settle matters for good.

(7)- Astyages' army revolts against and hands him in fetters to Cyrus. His son-in-law is killed in battle. Cyrus achieves, with his smaller army, a great victory in one of the most decisive battles of human history. The Medo-Persian Empire is born.

(8)- Cyrus advances towards Ecbatana taking over the Capital. He frees his uncle Cyaxares, and wisely, hands the kingdom to him. Cyaxares adopts the title: Darius, king of Media. Cyaxares is now in his fifties. He does not have any sons, and is not expecting any in the future (possibly due to some injuries or other medical reasons) offers his daughter to Cyrus and legitimate inheritance of the Median throne. Cyrus gladly accepts.

(9)- The two men discuss a future campaign against the weakening Babylon Empire and what to do with it, when conquered. Almost certainly they agreed that it would be adjoined to Media so that Darius will be also king of Babylon, with Cyrus taking over after him as a legitimate heir. It is obvious that Cyrus was to attend to warfare and International relations, while Darius would attend to all internal affairs in Media and later in Babylon. No wonder that foreign observers and historian were unaware, or little aware, about his existence, they were seeing only Cyrus.

The account of Xenophon is romanticized version of these events. Ctesias account, (that Cyrus married Astyages' daughter after killing her first husband in order to claim authority to the throne of Media, after he had militarily conquered it) sounds more credible, but most likely he confused Cyrus marriage with his cousin, Cyaxares daughter, with marrying Astyages' daughter. Alternatively Cyrus may have also married, Astyages' daughter, as an act of compensation and reconciliation, a very common practice in that era. That she was his mother's sister is not a problem for Zoroastrians.

So king Darius the Mede (Cyaxares by birth), is truly a historic personality. He is the person named, and very shortly, but accurately described, in the book of Daniel. He is Gubaru of the Nabonidus Chronicle. And he was Cyrus' maternal uncle and father-in-Law.