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INTRODUCTION

The sixth chapter of Daniel is well known to children because it contains the beloved story of God’s deliverance of the prophet from lions. The chapter is also well known to scholars of the Old Testament, yet primarily for a different reason: In Daniel 6:1, the intriguing character of Darius the Mede is first introduced. The specific identity of this figure has proved to be quite vexing to students of the book. Rowley, who has written the preeminent critical work on the subject, notes that “[t]he references to Darius the Mede in the book of Daniel have long been recognized as providing the most serious historical problem in the book.” In fact, it is Rowley’s opinion that recent discoveries of relevant ancient texts have provided sufficient evidence to once and for all declare the book of Daniel as historically defective. He writes,

These new texts have determined the identification of Belshazzar, as has been said; and beyond that, they have brought to light material which is relevant for the discussion on the question of Darius, and in view of the unimpeachable reliability of the sources now open to us, the reconciliation of the book of Daniel with history is quite impossible.

Is Darius the Mede a “conflation of confused traditions” as Rowley and others maintain? Must he—and the miraculous rescue of Daniel from the lions—be explained to children as an imagination (or misconception) of the author?

1 In English editions, the verse introducing Darius the Mede is 5:31.


3 Ibid., 11. It is quite amazing that such a bold statement would be made in the same breath as the admission that former “assured” results concerning Belshazzar were in fact overturned.
The example of Belshazzar alluded to by Rowley gives strong support for believing that such a conclusion is not warranted. In fact, several plausible solutions to the problem of Darius the Mede’s identity have already been suggested. It is the purpose of this paper to enumerate and explain these suggested solutions, presenting argumentation leading to the selection of one as the most reasonable answer.

THE IDENTITY OF DARIUS THE MEDE

There are at least five suggested identities of Darius the Mede: (1) The first is the view of Rowley and others, namely, that such a person never actually existed in history. Other possible identifications to be discussed include (2) Cambyses, the son of Cyrus (Winckler, Riessler, Boutflower), (3) Ugbaru, the general who orchestrated the overthrow of Babylon and died shortly after (Shea, Dillard and Longman III (?)), (4) Gubaru, a governor of Babylon appointed by Cyrus (Delitzsch, Whitcomb, R. D. Wilson), and (5) Cyrus himself, Darius being another way of identifying the Persian ruler (Wiseman, Bulman). Other theories have also been posited, but these have in general been discounted in the light of increased information available concerning the time period in question.

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5 Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, 43.
**Historical Blunder**

The view held by a majority of critical scholars concerning Darius the Mede is that the author of Daniel has sincerely but nonetheless inaccurately reported history. Rowley is the preeminent statesman of this view, claiming that the author has accidentally conflated several facts of history into one fictional figure who never actually existed.\(^6\) This assertion is based on the supposition that the author has in the first place confused the overthrow of Babylon in 538 B.C. with that in 520 B.C. Thus, elements concerning Cyrus (the victor in 538 B.C.) have been mixed with elements concerning Darius Hystaspis (the victor in 520 B.C.) to create the “fiction of Darius the Mede.”

Why must the author have confused the two overthrows of Babylon? According to Daniel 5:30-6:1, Darius the Mede received the kingdom immediately after the demise of Belshazzar the Chaldean. According to Daniel 6:29, the reign of Cyrus the Persian followed that of Darius. Thus, it is argued, the book of Daniel presents an intermediate viceroy in between Belshazzar and Cyrus. This viceroy, dubbed Darius the Mede, may not be considered a delegated governor but must be viewed as an ultimate sovereign, for he has authority to make decrees which concern “all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth” (Dan 6:25 KJV). Since historical records exist which clearly demonstrate that Cyrus immediately followed Belshazzar without any intervening sovereign, the history recounted in the book of Daniel in general and the existence of Darius the Mede specifically must be inaccurate.

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\(^6\) Rowley, *Darius the Mede*, 54-60. “For his [i.e., Darius’s] creation the author of the book of Daniel appears to have used some traditions belonging to Darius Hystaspis and some belonging to Cyrus, but all confused and distorted” (59)
Rowley is correct in stating that the book of Daniel portrays Darius the Mede as immediately following Belshazzar. Daniel 6:1 clearly has him receiving the kingdom after the death of the Chaldean king just one verse earlier. Yet, it is not certain that Daniel 6:29 portrays Cyrus as following Darius the Mede. Whether it does or not depends on how one interprets the conjunction in the phrase כָּכֶלֶת בִּין אֶלֶף הָמוֹלֵמְאֹת חֲרָשׁוֹן. If this phrase is to be rendered “in the reign of Darius and [then] in the reign of Cyrus,” then indeed an intermediate ruler is posited.

There are, however, two other possible interpretations: First, it is possible that the conjunction is explicative, so that the phrase is to be rendered “in the reign of Darius, even in the reign of Cyrus.” This possibility leads to the conclusion that Darius the Mede is actually another name for Cyrus, a view to be considered below. Second, it is possible that the conjunction serves to make the reigns of Darius and Cyrus concurrent; Darius reigned at the same time as Cyrus. This possibility leads to the conclusion that Darius the Mede is actually another name for a ruler subordinate to Cyrus, whether Cambyses, Ugbaru, Gubaru, or another. Concerning how such a subordinate ruler could issue a decree to “all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth” (Dan 6:25 KJV), it must be noted that the Aramaic rendered “in all the earth” (אֲרָמַי אֶמְלָא) can just as easily be translated “in all the land” (NAS) or “throughout the land” (NIV), so that the scope of the decree is limited to the area rule by Darius.

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7 Wiseman, “Darius the Mede,” 12.
8 Whitcomb, Darius the Mede, 35.
Given the feasibility of these two interpretations, it is not certain that the author of Daniel posits a ruler in between Belshazzar and Cyrus, and thus the historicity of the book need not be so quickly impugned. If it is argued that both of these interpretations falter because it is unlikely that either Cyrus or one of his subordinate rulers would take the name Darius or be called by it so extensively, it must be remembered that Darius is possibly a titular name along the lines of Tiglath-pileser III (previously Pul). Such dual titles were quite common in general, and, according to Josephus, Darius the Mede indeed had another name. Interestingly, the author of Daniel seems to have “a penchant for giving double or multiple appellations to his characters.” Such a penchant is indeed evident in the book:

“Daniel” occurs seventy-five times; his Babylonian name, “Belteshazzar,” ten times. The friends are called “Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah five times; and “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego” fifteen times . . . .The most noteworthy feature is that the name “Darius” is mainly confined to a single chapter, as is true of the Babylonian names of Daniel and his friends. Of the eight occurrences of “Darius,” six are found in a single chapter (6:1-29); of the ten occurrences of Daniel’s Babylonian name, six are found in a single chapter (4:5-16), while of the fifteen occurrences of the Babylonian names of Daniel’s friends, thirteen are found in a single chapter (3:2-30).

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10 Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, 26-28; Archer, *Old Testament Introduction*, 429. Another possible biblical example of this is Joseph, who was given the name Zaphenath-paneah (Gen 41:45) upon being set “over all the land of Egypt” (Gen 41:41).


13 Brian E. Colless, “Cyrus the Persian as Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 56 (Dec 1992): 114; cf. Miller, *Daniel*, 176. As Miller points out, the fact that Daniel was written in two languages only encourages this.

The idea that the book of Daniel is historically inaccurate is thus far from proven. Rather, there is a strong argument for the idea that Darius is an appellation given to a historic ruler. It now remains to consider four views of who exactly that ruler might have been.

**Cambyses, Son of Cyrus**

According to a significant number of contract tablets dated to the year of Babylon’s overthrow, Cambyses, son of Cyrus, was named king of Babylon shortly after Belshazzar’s demise. The book of Daniel also deems Darius as “king” over Babylon (Dan 6:6, 9, 25; 9:1). This connection has lead some to propose that Darius the Mede is actually another name for Cambyses. Cyrus was the ultimate ruler of the empire; Cambyses was set up to rule over the newly conquered land of Babylon. Such an idea would not have been foreign to the inhabitants of Babylon, as Boutflower points out:

> It would appear to the people of Babylon that as Cyrus had taken the place of Nabonidus on the throne of [sic] empire, so his son Cambyses had taken the place of Belshazzar the son of Nabonidus on the throne of Babylon.

This view is quite impressive. Even Rowley remarks that of all the attempts at historical harmonization, this one is the strongest. Its strength lies in its concurrence with the archaeological evidence viewing Cambyses as ruling in Babylon shortly after the overthrow of Babylon. Objections have been raised, however, as to its feasibility.

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16 Ibid.

17 Rowley, *Darius the Mede*, 12.
First, some have tried to discount the archeological data as confused and inaccurate. Accordingly, it is argued that the reign of Cambyses with his father began in 530 B.C., not at the overthrow of Babylon in 538 B.C.\textsuperscript{18} Despite this possibility of scribal error, there still seems to be a significant amount of evidence demonstrating that Cambyses was involved in Babylon from the beginning of its overthrow.

A second argument mustered against this view is that Cambyses was not the son of Ahasuerus nor of Median descent.\textsuperscript{19} Yet, Daniel 9:1 says that Darius the Mede was. This objection seems weighty but is mitigated by three observations: (1) “Son of” may not imply immediate parentage but rather descendance. (2) Ahasuerus, like Darius, may be a royal title and not a personal name. (3) Both Cyrus and his son Cambyses were related to the Medes through their maternal lines.\textsuperscript{20} Bulman—in arguing for the identification of Cyrus—gives several reasons why the author of Daniel might have intentionally chosen to emphasize the Median descent of one also identified with Persia, including conformity to prophecy, Jewish customs of reckoning nationality, and the possibility of the appellation “Darius” being of Median origin.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{19} E.g., Rowley, \textit{Darius the Mede}, 16-18. Rowley sees this as an indication that the author of Daniel has confused Darius the Mede with Darius Hystaspis, father of Ahasuerus, and in so doing has accidentally made Darius a son of Ahasuerus (56-57).

\textsuperscript{20} Wiseman, “Darius the Mede,” 13-15; Boutflower, \textit{Daniel}, 154-5; Whitcomb, \textit{Darius the Mede}, 45. Whitcomb does point out, however, that for Cyrus the relationship was direct (his mother), whereas for Cambyses both his mother and father were Persian.

\textsuperscript{21} Bulman, “Darius the Mede,” 264-6.
A third and more convincing argument against the identification of Darius the Mede with Cambyses is that Daniel 6:1 clearly portrays Darius as being 62 years old upon receiving the kingdom. Yet, Cambyses would have been much younger than this in 538 B.C. This difficulty is overcome by Boutflower only by proposing an emendation to the text and claiming that “inaccuracy in numbers is a common thing in the Old Testament.” What seems at first to be quite an impressive theory is thus diminished significantly. Until further evidence is garnered to explain how the age of Darius the Mede given in Daniel 6:1 corresponds to the age of Cambyses in 538 B.C., this view must be considered wanting.

**Ugbaru, General of Cyrus**

An extremely important document relating to the problem of identifying Darius the Mede is the Nabonidus Chronicle. This document recounts the events of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, including the overthrow of that city while under the control of Belshazzar, his son. While describing the overthrow of Babylon, a figure by the name of “Gobryas” is mentioned three times. In particular, he is seen as (1) entering Babylon without battle, (2) installing subordinate rulers as governor of Babylon, and (3) dying shortly after. This figure has been identified with Ugbaru, a general in Cyrus’s army who helped to defeat Babylon in 538 B.C.

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23 Boutflower, *Daniel*, 156.

This picture of Ugbaru accords to some degree with that of Darius the Mede in the book of Daniel. After all, the first action of Darius after receiving the kingdom (Dan 6:1) was to appoint 120 satraps or subordinate rulers, among whom Daniel was one (Dan 6:2-3). Beyond this similarity, though, not many positive arguments are given for associating the two.

A problem with this view is that according to the Nabonidus Chronicle itself, Ugbaru died just a few days after receiving the kingdom. This hardly gives enough time for the events depicted in the book of Daniel concerning Darius the Mede to have occurred. In response to this, it is suggested that the Nabonidus Chronicle be read differently than traditionally accepted. Namely, it is proposed that the text should be taken to mean that Ugbaru died a year and a few days after the defeat of Babylon, not merely a few days after. Yet, the positive evidence for identifying Darius the Mede with Ugbaru is not sufficient enough to merit a willingness to read the chronicle in this way. The case for Ugbaru seems to rest on many arguments from silence along with a questionable reading of a standard text. Thus, this view should also be set aside.

**Gubaru, Governor of Cyrus**

As mentioned, the name “Gobyras” is found three times in the account of Babylon’s fall in the Nabonidus Chronicle. Interestingly, the second of these references to Gobyras actually renders a different original word than the other two. In the first and last instances, the underlying word is “Ug-ba-ru;” in the second instance, the underlying word is “Gu-ba-ru.” This difference

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lead Sidney Smith to propose a distinction between the two names, suggesting that the author of the chronicle meant to signify two different persons (Ugbaru and Gubaru) whose names were nevertheless quite similar.

John Whitcomb took this suggestion and applied it to the problem of identifying Darius the Mede. The strongest argument for identifying Darius with Ugbaru was his activity in setting up subordinate rulers in Babylon. The strongest argument against identifying Darius with Ugbaru from the Nabonidus Chronicle was that the latter was said to have died a few days after Babylon was conquered. If Smith’s thesis was correct, however, the author of the chronicle intended to portray Ugbaru (the general) as conquering Babylon and then dying shortly after but Gubaru (a governor) as being installed as a local ruler and then delegating authority. The positive argument thus remains while the negative one falls away.

Beyond this, Gubaru was known to have been advanced in age at 586 B.C., and thus, unlike Cambyses, he would fit the description of being 62 years old upon receiving the kingdom.\textsuperscript{26} In addition, there are many documents that have been uncovered which speak of Gubaru’s position in Babylon and the fear of falling into his disfavor.\textsuperscript{27} His continued influence in the city of Babylon is thus well attested not only in the beginning (i.e., the Nabonidus Chronicle) but also in following years.

\textsuperscript{26} Rowley, \textit{Darius the Mede}, 21; Miller, \textit{Daniel}, 173.

\textsuperscript{27} Whitcomb, \textit{Darius the Mede}, 11-16, 23-24.
Finally, the language used to speak of Darius the Mede seems to imply at times a subordinate ruler, not an ultimate one.\(^{28}\) This as well would fit the historical character of Gubaru, who was placed in his position of leadership by Cyrus. For instance, in Daniel 6:1, יְהָ֣בֹ֑רֹ is used to speak of Darius “receiving” the kingdom. In Daniel 9:1, it is said of Darius that he was made king (hophal יְהָ֣בֹ֑רֹ). Furthermore, at various points in the story of Daniel and the lions’ den, Darius seems himself to be subject to the laws of the Medes and the Persians.\(^{29}\)

Several objections have been raised against this view: For instance, at its foundation the view rests upon a very minor distinction in the Nabonidus Chronicle between Ugbaru and Gubaru. Yet, at one of the three locations where the name appears, the scribe apparently questioned his own spelling of the name.\(^{30}\) To base an entire view on such a minor and questionable distinction is possibly tenuous, therefore.

A second objection concerns the evidence presented to demonstrate that Darius the Mede was a subordinate ruler. Whitcomb himself admits that the language of Daniel 6:1 need not require a subordinate ruler.\(^{31}\) Similarly, the supposed subjection of Darius to the laws of the Medes and Persians need not require a subordinate ruler, for ultimate leaders may nonetheless rule in accord with stated law. Grabbe feels that the parallels between Darius, Nebuchadnezzar,

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\(^{28}\) Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, 39-40; Miller, *Daniel*, 172

\(^{29}\) Harrison, *Old Testament*, 1128; Harrison lists Daniel 6:8, 12, and 15.


\(^{31}\) Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, 40.
and Belshazzar also indicate that Darius was an ultimate ruler in the same sense as his Babylonian predecessors. Despite all of this, there has not been a convincing response to the language of Daniel 9:1. As it stands, this verse argues forcefully that Darius was placed in his position by some higher authority. Wiseman (who attempts to identify Darius with Cyrus) does not handle this verse, while others resort to emendation based on the versions.

A third objection concerns the statement in Daniel 9:1 that Darius was a Mede and the son of Ahasuerus. The Nabonidus Chronicle, however, clearly states that Gobyras is the son of Mardonius, a Persian. This objection, though, is based on a misunderstanding of the Gubaru position, for in the Nabonidus Chronicle, Mardonius is the father of Ugbaru, not Gubaru. If the distinction between the two is maintained, one is left with no information concerning the ancestry of Gubaru.

The fourth and most serious objection against this view is that Darius the Mede is referred to over and over again by the author of Daniel as the king of Babylon, not governor. According to Wiseman, this would not have been allowable if Darius was a subordinate ruler:

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32 Grabbe, “Darius the Mede,” 205-206. The brashness of Darius in accepting prayer and making bold decrees certainly enhances the parallel. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in comparing Darius to Belshazzar, a comparison is being made to one who himself was not an ultimate sovereign, for Belshazzar ruled under the authority of his father Nabonidus.

33 Whitcomb, Darius the Mede, 40; Boutflower, Daniel, 142-43.


35 Rowley, Darius the Mede, 22-23.

36 Whitcomb, Darius the Mede, 28.
“There is no known instance of a governor of Babylon, other than a usurper, in the first millennium bearing a royal title and claiming a throne, as would be required by this theory.”

This objection is formidable and has thus received much attention by supporters of the Gubaru theory. It is answered in three ways: First, as noted above, whatever is meant by “king”, it does not mean ultimate sovereign, for several indicators in the text demonstrate that Darius was subordinate to another ruler. Second, there is evidence from the reign of Darius Hystaspes that local governors could indeed be referred to as kings. Third, it is possible that was the best possible way to render the Akkadian pihatu (governor) when the book of Daniel was written.

Despite these responses, the objection still seems reasonable. For instance, most of the supposed “subjection” texts actually don’t require Darius the Mede to be subordinate to another. Further, the naming of local governors as kings in the reign of Darius Hystaspes is questionable. The two examples given by Whitcomb include a host of upstarts who desired to rule independently and the father of Darius Hystaspes. The former group might have been

38 In Darius the Mede, Whitcomb spends just over one page on the lack of link between Gobyras and Darius (26-28) and less than a page on Gubaru being a son of Ahasuerus (28) and of Median descent (29). He spends over ten pages, though, on the problem of Gubaru being labeled a “king” (29-40). In fact, he explicitly admits that this is “Rowley’s strongest argument against the identification of Darius the Mede with Gubaru the Governor of Babylon” (30).
39 Whitcomb, Darius the Mede, 31.
40 Ibid., 31-33.
41 Daniel 9:1 is the only exception. If the Masoretic text is correct at this point, it seems difficult to escape the conclusion that Darius was indeed subordinate.
42 Wiseman, “Darius the Mede,” 11.
deemed “kings” because of their attempts towards independence,⁴³ and the latter might have been deemed “king” because of his relationship to Darius Hystaspes. Finally, the idea of using מלך for pihatu seems suspect.⁴⁴ After all, Darius the Mede is not only deemed Aramaic מלך but is also said to be made king (Hebrew מלך). Yet, other exilic and post-exilic works use של (1 Kings, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles), אֲשֶׁר (Ezra, Nehemiah), and חַזִּיק (Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi) to refer to such subordinate local rulers. Thus, the seeming incongruity of referring to a subordinate governor like Gubaru as “king” makes what otherwise seems a reasonable view less impressive.

**Cyrus**

In a document dated to 546 B.C., Nabonidus, king of Babylon, makes reference to the “King of the Medes.” Since Cyrus had annexed the Median kingdom by 550 B.C., this reference must necessarily be speaking of Cyrus. Such logic lead D. J. Wiseman to consider the possibility that Darius the Mede was simply another name for Cyrus the Persian.⁴⁵ Though this view has a few difficulties (see below), the large number of positive evidences in its favor make it the most desirable of all of the possible identification theories.

Before enumerating these positive evidences, though, it will be helpful to first deal with Daniel 6:29, for that text specifically mentions Cyrus and Darius the Mede in the same breath.

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⁴³ Cf. footnote 37.


As noted above, proponents of this view consider the conjunction in that verse to be explicative, and thus the phrase in question is rendered “in the reign of Darius, even in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”\footnote{Ibid., 12.} Such a use of the conjunction is found in 1 Chronicles 5:26 of the viceroy dubbed both Pul and Tilgath-pilneser: “So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, \textit{even} the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria” (italics added). Apparently, the author of Chronicles found it necessary to further identify Pul in a way that would be recognized by his audience. In the same way, the author of Daniel (perhaps anticipating confusion in identifying Darius the Mede!), found it necessary to specify exactly who was meant by Darius the Mede. Thus, the author himself in 6:29 answers the question of this paper: Who is Darius the Mede?\footnote{Dillard and Longman III, \textit{Old Testament}, 336.}

Yet, what is the positive evidence to support this supposition? First, this view fully explains how Darius the Mede could so frequently be referred to as king.\footnote{Wiseman, “Darius the Mede,” 15.} Second, the age of Cyrus in 538 B.C. fully accords with the 62 years given in Daniel 6:1.\footnote{Ibid., 15-16.} Third, it is well known that Cyrus appointed governors to assist him in ruling.\footnote{Bulman, “Darius the Mede,” 247.} Fourth, the equation of Cyrus with Darius the Mede is found in Theodotion’s text of \textit{Bel and the Dragon}, for that text has Cyrus sending Daniel to the lions’ den.\footnote{Ibid.} Fifth, this equation is also attested in early Jewish thought.\footnote{Ibid.}
Sixth, this equation seems to be attested in the Septuagint, for in Daniel 11:1, the Masoretic text has Darius whereas the Septuagint has Cyrus.\textsuperscript{52} Seventh, according to Herodotus, Cyrus went by another name, and according to Josephus, Darius also had another name.\textsuperscript{53} Eighth, since Isaiah ( Isa 13:17) and Jeremiah ( Jer 51:11, 28) prophesied the demise of Babylon to Medes, it is possible that Daniel emphasized the Cyrus’s Median connection to accord with prophecy.\textsuperscript{54} Ninth, it is known that Cyrus was of Median descent via his mother.\textsuperscript{55} Tenth, the use of dual titles for Daniel and his friends in the book of Daniel sets a precedent that encourages the identification of Darius the Mede with Cyrus.\textsuperscript{56}

Perhaps the most impressive reason for identifying Darius the Mede with Cyrus, however, is the scanty mention of Cyrus throughout the book of Daniel.\textsuperscript{57} Cyrus is mentioned only three times in the book, and then in each case only to provide a temporal reference point. This is in stark contrast to the picture of Cyrus found elsewhere in the Bible; elsewhere, Cyrus is a preeminent figure in the plan of God, actively participating in the overthrow of Babylon and its attendant events. Who has such a role in the book of Daniel? Darius the Mede. In fact, a

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 257-58.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 259.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 264-65; cf. Colless, “Darius the Mede,” 118.
\textsuperscript{55} Harrison, Old Testament, 341.
\textsuperscript{56} Bulman, “Darius the Mede,” 253; Miller, Daniel, 176.
\textsuperscript{57} Colless, “Darius the Mede,” 117.
comparison of the two characters proves quite revealing. Bulman has provided such a comparison, succinctly noting the similarities between the two figures in eleven areas.\(^\text{58}\)

Despite these strengths, there are two significant weaknesses to this view. First, it is clear from historical documents that Cyrus was not the son of Ahasuerus but rather Cambyses. Nevertheless, as was argued in the section about Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, Ahasuerus may be a titular name and not a personal one. Second, the Hebrew text of Daniel 9:1 does seem to indicate that Darius the Mede was appointed king by some higher authority. Possible resolutions to this problem include textual emendation in line with the versions or viewing the higher authority as God. If neither of these resolutions are sufficient, the equation of Darius the Mede with Cyrus is seriously hindered.

Other objections to the view are weak in force. For instance, it is not surprising that the author of Daniel would refer to Cyrus as “Cyrus” in some instances and “Darius” in others.\(^\text{59}\) After all, he is prone to do the same of Daniel and his three friends.\(^\text{60}\) Colless puts it well when he states, “The reader is expected to understand, by the author’s principle of dual nomenclature for many other characters in the book, that Darius and Cyrus are one and the same person.”\(^\text{61}\)

\(^{58}\) Bulman, “Darius the Mede,” 259-64.

\(^{59}\) Whitcomb, Darius the Mede, 48.

\(^{60}\) Cf. footnote 14.

Whitcomb’s objection to Wiseman’s interpretation of Daniel 6:29 is also unconvincing. He claims that 1 Chronicles 5:26 is not parallel to Daniel 6:29 because the former text includes two names of a ruler from Assyria, whereas the latter includes one name of a Median and one of a Persian. However, Daniel 6:29 does not set Darius the Mede over against Cyrus the Persian as Whitcomb’s language seems to indicate, but rather compares Darius with Cyrus the Persian. That Darius is identified as a Mede elsewhere does not do damage to the view either, for on the one hand the Medes and Persians were often combined (e.g., Dan 6:8) and on the other hand Cyrus was indeed half Mede (through his mother) and half Persian (through his father).

CONCLUSION

H. H. Rowley considers the book of Daniel to be historically confused, especially regarding Darius the Mede. Yet, this does not negate the usefulness of the book in his mind:

The claim of the book of Daniel to be a work of history, written by a well-informed contemporary, is shattered beyond repair by this fiction of Darius the Mede. But if the work is of much more recent origin, and if its purpose was not scientific but practical, not the setting forth of history, but the encouragement of men to loyal endurance, its worth is unimpaired. The value of the parable of the Prodigal Son depends not on the historical accuracy of the story, but on the message it enshrines. And the value of Daniel vi depends, not on the title of Darius to a place in history, but on its message that men ought always to pray, for the treasures of a deep religious experience are of more worth than the favour of princes, and the power of God is able to laugh at the might of monarchs and the raging of wild beasts.

This conclusion seems to be inappropriate for at least three reasons: First, whereas the story of the Prodigal Son doesn’t claim to be history (it is a parable), the book of Daniel does. Second, the purpose of Scripture is to provide an authoritative word from God so that lost men can know

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what to subject their mind to. If Daniel is a mixed bag of truth and error, then man is yet lost, for the text of Daniel is thus under his subjection and there is not anything to save the wretched state of man’s mind. The historical accuracy of Daniel is important. Third, Rowley’s conclusion itself is confused: He claims that the story of Daniel teaches that God can save from wicked monarchs and wild beasts yet maintains at the same time that God never actually did so. If God didn’t really do what the author of Daniel suggests that he did, why should someone believe either that author or Rowley when they posit that He nevertheless can indeed do so? On what is such a supposition based? Certainly not a precedent from history according to Rowley.

Fortunately, one need not give up belief in the trustworthiness and historical accuracy of the book of Daniel. Four reasonable proposals have been developed concerning the identify of Darius the Mede, including Cambyses, son of Cyrus, Ugbaru, general of Cyrus, Gubaru, governor of Cyrus, and Cyrus himself. While none of these are without some apparent difficulties, it is evident that a solution to the problem of Darius’s identity is not insurmountable. It is appropriate, therefore, to conclude with the words of R. Laird Harris:

An older author, speaking of the critical attack on the Book of Daniel, referred to it as “Daniel in the critics’ den.” We may now say that Daniel’s lions appear again to have been disappointed.63

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63 Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, x. Harris wrote the foreword to Whitcomb’s book.
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