

IDENTIFICATION
OF
DARIUS THE MEDE

George R. Law

Ready Scribe Press
Pfafftown, NC

IDENTIFICATION OF DARIUS THE MEDE

Copyright © 2010 by Ready Scribe Press

All Rights Reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act. Brief quotations in critical publications or reviews are encouraged. Otherwise, requests for permission should be addressed to the Publisher: 3655 Transou Rd., Suite 706, Pfafftown, NC 27040.

This book is the published version of the 2010 dissertation written by George R. Law in order to complete his Ph.D. in O.T. Studies at Piedmont Baptist College and Graduate School.

Cover Illustration / by Elizabeth J. Law (© Elizabeth J. Law). The scene suggests a well-known practice among Mesopotamian kings: here a Medo-Persian king is engaged in physical combat with a mature male lion in order to prove his divinely-ordained status and favor.

Law, George R.

Identification of Darius the Mede / by George R. Law.

ISBN 978-0-9827-6310-0 (paper binding)

Printed in the United States of America

Herodotus mentioned that Darius' age was "nearly twenty" at the death of Cyrus the Great in 530 BC.⁷⁵ Therefore, the date of Darius' birth can be assigned to 550 BC and would make Darius not more than twelve years old at the fall of Babylon in 539 BC. Pinches has estimated that Darius was thirty-six years of age when he began to reign,⁷⁶ making him twenty years old when Babylon fell to Cyrus—still much too young allow Darius the Great to be Darius the Mede.

No documents have been found which confirm or deny that Darius was present at the fall of Babylon in 539 BC.⁷⁷

Personal Data Sheet:	
Subject: Darius the Great	
<u>Categories of Qualification:</u>	
1. Gender:	
-Was this person male?	Yes
2. Socio-political classification:	
-Was this person involved in the taking of Babylon in 539 BC?	NA
3. Age at fall of Babylon:	
-Was this person approximately 62 years old when Babylon fell in 539 BC?	No

Table 4.5 Darius' (the Great) Personal Data Sheet (Phase One)

6. Data Concerning Gobryas / Ugbaru / Gubaru

According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, a governor of Cyrus named Gubaru helped the Medo-Persian army to conquer Babylon, and then he appointed other governors in the city. Because of this report of the Nabonidus Chronicle the suggestion has been made that Gubaru was Darius the Mede.

⁷⁵ Herodotus I.209.

⁷⁶ Theophilus Pinches, "Darius the Mede," in *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents, Including the Biblical Theology*, vol. 1, ed. by Hastings, James, John A. Selbie, A. B. Davidson, S. R. Driver, and Henry Barclay Swete. (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1898), 559.

⁷⁷ The first records which positively place Darius the Great in Babylon are those which tell of his retaking of the city in 522 BC (Behisun ¶19-20). See Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire* I, 140.

Gobryas

The names Gobryas, Ugbaru, and Gubaru have often been used interchangeably, which situation has resulted in unfortunate mistakes in identity. Gobryas is the Greek form of the names Ugbaru and Gubaru. In his book, *Darius the Mede*, Whitcomb noted the distinction between these two names, both having been rendered “Gobryas” in Pinches’ original translation of the Nabonidus Chronicle.⁷⁸ The distinction between these two persons and, specifically, the separation of their individual personal data are crucial to the theory that Gubaru is Darius the Mede. In short, Ugbaru died shortly after the fall of Babylon, but Gubaru did not. Whitcomb has noted that this reading concerning the death of Ugbaru has been confirmed by other scholars.⁷⁹ The other Gubaru(s) named Gobryas in the works of Herodotus and Xenophon are irrelevant to this investigation.

The classical Greek sources do not provide much clarification concerning this confusion between Ugbaru and Gubaru. A person named Gobryas (the Greek name for Gubaru and Ugbaru) does appear in the classical Greek histories. Herodotus does not mention anyone named Gobryas in connection with the fall of Babylon to Cyrus, only in connection with Darius the Great. On the other hand, Xenophon does mention an Assyrian governor named Gobryas who joined Cyrus in his campaign against Babylon.⁸⁰

Name	Title	Source
1. Ugbaru (Gobryas)	governor (Gutium/Assyria)	Nabonidus Chron.; Xenophon
2. Gubaru	governor	Nabonidus Chronicle
3. Gubaru	governor (Babylon & more)	Contract Tablets
4. Gubaru ⁸¹ (Gobryas)	accomplice of Darius (I)	Herodotus; Behistun

Table 4.6 Contemporaries of Cyrus II and Cambyses II Named Gubaru

⁷⁸ In his translation, Pinches rendered the names Ugbaru and Gubaru with the Greek equivalent Gobryas. These names, Ugbaru and Gubaru, are found in the text of column three of the Nabonidus Chronicle (see Pinches’ transliteration and translation in Appendix B). Ugbaru is the transliteration of the name in lines 15 and 22. Gubaru is the transliteration of the name in line 20. See Theophilus Pinches, “On a Cuneiform Tablet relating to the Capture of Babylon by Cyrus, and the Events which preceded and led to it,” in *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1872), 139-176.

⁷⁹ Whitcomb documents that “this reading has been confirmed” by Raymond Dougherty in his book, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar: A Study of the Closing Events of the Neo-Babylonian Empire* (1929; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 172, note 561; by A. Oppenheim in his latest translation found in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3d ed., ed. by J. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 306; and by D. Wiseman in a letter; see Whitcomb, 21, notes 8, 9, 10. Sidney Smith also confirmed this reading; see his book, *Babylonian Historical Texts: Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (1925; repr., New York: G. Olms, 1975), 117-118.

⁸⁰ Xenophon VI.4.3-4.

⁸¹ Mohammad Dandamayev does not recognize the distinction between (1) Ugbaru and (2) Gubaru. This lack of distinction requires that (3) Gubaru be a different man altogether since (1) Ugbaru died shortly after the fall of Babylon. Dandamayev also recognizes the possibility that (3) and (4) could be the same man, but he provides some evidence that could make a distinction between them. Mohammad Dandamayev, *Iranians in Achaemenid Babylonia*, Columbia lectures on Iranian studies, no. 6. (Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persica, 1992), 72-79.

Table 4.6 provides a list of the contemporary men named Gobryas / Ugbaru / Gubaru. As far as cuneiform sources are concerned, the only historiographical text in which these names appear is the Nabonidus Chronicle (where as mentioned above both Gubaru and Ugbaru are identified as governors of Cyrus).⁸² A governor of Babylon is attested in the contract tablets beginning in the fourth year of Cyrus the Great (535 BC).⁸³ Informational data for both of these persons from primary and secondary sources from the fifth century BC or before will now be presented separately.

Ugbaru

In the Babylonian Chronicle, Ugbaru is identified as the governor who was from Gutium.⁸⁴ He led part of Cyrus' army and successfully took control of Babylon on the sixteenth day of Tishri (Oct 12, 539 BC).⁸⁵ The armed men from Gutium secured the peace until the end of the month.⁸⁶ According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, Ugbaru died on the eleventh of Marcheswan (Nov 6, 539 BC).⁸⁷ Xenophon also identifies a Gobryas as the governor of Gutium. This governor was "an Assyrian, a man well advanced in years."⁸⁸ Xenophon's aged Gobryas, the governor of Gutium, seems to match Ugbaru the governor of Gutium who died soon after the fall of Babylon. Therefore, based on the fact that he died so soon after the fall of Babylon, Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium, is eliminated from any further consideration.

Gubaru (of the Nabonidus Chronicle)

Gubaru, one of Cyrus' governors, is identified as the governor who installed other governors in Babylon on the third of Marcheswan (October 29, 539 BC).⁸⁹ No other details are available concerning this Gubaru in the Nabonidus Chronicles or in other similar historiographical texts. Neither is there any direct evidence which connects this Gubaru to any other one named Gubaru.

The Gubaru of the Nabonidus Chronicle has often been connected to the Gobryas of Xenophon and also to the later Gubaru who was governor of Babylon in 535-525 BC. For many years the confusion caused by these similar names caused many scholars to blend the details between these governors.⁹⁰ Thus it is important to discriminate between the information concerning this Gubaru and the information concerning the others also named "Gubaru." Some details concerning someone named Gobryas can be found in Xenophon's work, *Cyropaedia*. The problem here is that these details concerning Gobryas do not point to Gubaru but instead to Ugbaru, the aged local Assyrian governor of Gutium who opportunistically joined Cyrus in his

⁸² The distinction between the first letter of each of these two names has been preserved by their transliteration. In the Nabonidus Chronicle, Ugbaru is the transliteration of the name in lines 22, and Gubaru is the transliteration of the name in line 20. The name in line 15 is probably Ugbaru (see Fig. 4.2, p. 104).

⁸³ See Appendix K for a list of texts attesting Gubaru.

⁸⁴ Nabonidus Chronicle iii.15.

⁸⁵ Nabonidus Chronicle iii.15-16.

⁸⁶ Nabonidus Chronicle iii.16-17.

⁸⁷ Nabonidus Chronicle iii.22.

⁸⁸ Xenophon IV.6.1.

⁸⁹ Nabonidus Chronicle iii.20.

⁹⁰ One of the contributions of John Whitcomb's book *Darius the Mede* was to make this distinction between Ugbaru and Gubaru; see Whitcomb, 17ff.

campaign against Babylon in order to avenge the death of his only son.⁹¹ Therefore, in order not to further the confusion between these two persons, all the information from Xenophon's work should be excluded from this Gubaru's data.⁹² Also previously noted, the information concerning Gobryas (Gubaru) in Herodotus' work is set eighteen years later in the time of Darius the Great.

A. Leo Oppenheim reported that the contemporary cuneiform contract tablets attest a Gubaru who governed the region of Babylon and a district across the river from "the fourth year of Cyrus (535/4 B.C.) to the fifth of Cambyses (525/4 B.C.)"⁹³ (A sampling of this evidence concerning Gubaru is provided in Appendix K.) At present it is unknown if the Gubaru of the Nabonidus Chronicle is the same man who is named Gubaru in the contract tablets and was the governor of Babylon from 535-525 BC.

The following is what is known about any governors of Cyrus who were named Gubaru:

- 1) The name Gubaru itself was a popular Persian masculine name and is often attested in cuneiform records and is sufficient evidence that Gubaru was male.
- 2) The Nabonidus Chronicle indicates that Gubaru installed governors in Babylon immediately after the fall of Babylon in 539 BC. (Therefore, this provides good evidence that Gubaru was present at the time of the fall of Babylon in 539 BC).
- 3) The contemporary cuneiform contract tablets indicate that someone named Gubaru was the governor over the area designated as "Babylon and the region across the river" starting in the fourth year of Cyrus (535 BC).⁹⁴ (The caveat here is that these two men named Gubaru might be different, since there is no evidence to indicate that these two governors were the same person.)

In order to bolster the feasibility of the theory that Gubaru was Darius the Mede, three assumptions are often made concerning the Gubaru attested in the Nabonidus Chronicle:

- a) it is assumed that Gubaru survived long enough to continue as governor during the "first year" of Cyrus' new regime in Babylon;
- b) it is assumed that he was about the age of sixty-two (usually because of confusion with the details of Ugbaru being "aged"); and
- c) it is assumed that he was the same Gubaru who was attested as governor of Babylon in Cyrus' fourth year (535 BC).

There is no direct evidence to support these three assumptions.

⁹¹ Xenophon IV.4.3-4.

⁹² Information relating to the appropriate age of Gobryas (in order for him to be identified as Darius the Mede) is usually taken from Xenophon's description. But as previously stated, scholars such as Whitcomb have identified Xenophon's Gobryas, the governor of Gutium, with the Ugbaru of the Nabonidus Chronicle. Thus, Xenophon's evidence concerns Ugbaru, who died and has been eliminated from further consideration, not Gubaru, who is the subject of this investigation. While there is little doubt that Xenophon described Ugbaru as "old" (Cyrus VI.4.3-4), to transfer Ugbaru's age to Gubaru would be a mistake. Information concerning Ugbaru (specifically his age) should not be assumed to also be true concerning Gubaru.

⁹³ A. Leo Oppenheim, "Babylonian Evidence of Achaemenid Rule in Mesopotamia," In *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 2. ed. Ilya Gershevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 544.

⁹⁴ A. L. Oppenheim, "Babylonian Evidence," 544.

Personal Data Sheet:	
Subject: Gubaru	
<u>Categories of Qualification:</u>	
1. Gender:	
-Was this person male?	Yes
2. Socio-political classification:	
-Was this person involved in the taking of Babylon in 539 BC?	Yes
3. Age at fall of Babylon:	
-Was this person approximately 62 years old when Babylon fell in 539 BC?	NA

Table 4.7 Gubaru's Personal Data Sheet (Phase One)

Personal Data Sheets and Personal Data Chart

Now that the first phase of data collection concerning each candidate has been completed, the information has been organized onto individual Personal Data Sheets and arranged on the master Personal Data Chart. A Personal Data Sheet has been created for each candidate (see Appendix L).

The last step in the first phase of this method is to arrange the information from the qualifying questions on the Personal Data Chart (see Appendix M). The chart will help in analysis of the data and comparison of the candidates. The information associated with each candidate has been placed in the column labeled for that candidate in the appropriate category row.

A candidate who has negative evidence in any one of the three qualifying questions is disqualified as candidate. A single negative response disqualifies the candidate from continuing into the second phase of the identification method. On the other hand, if evidence for a particular category is "Not Available" (NA), that candidate is not disqualified by the lack of evidence. The absence of evidence, by itself, cannot disqualify.⁹⁵ When evidence, negative or positive, is not available for a category the question will be marked with the abbreviation "NA". Even though no evidence is available, the information will be assumed to be "possible" for that qualifying question. As long as no specific evidence disqualifies the candidate, he is deemed to be "qualified" and further research for that candidate is to be pursued concerning the remaining categories in the second phase.

A survey of the Personal Data Chart in Appendix M will show which candidates have been disqualified by the qualifying questions: Astyages, Cambyses II, Cyaxares (II), and Darius

⁹⁵ This "argument from absence" lesson should have been learned by all critics when the evidence for Belshazzar and his co-regency was found in ancient cuneiform records during the last century—after critics had long dismissed him as a fiction created by the author of the book of Daniel.

the Great.⁹⁶ Cyrus the Great has positive responses for each of the three qualifying questions.⁹⁷ Gubaru has positive responses for only two of the three qualifying questions; but, in spite of the lack of evidence for his age, Gubaru's candidacy is not disqualified.⁹⁸ At some future date, more evidence might appear from the archaeologist's spade which could specify his age. The candidates who are qualified to proceed into the second phase of data collection are Cyrus the Great and Gubaru.

Phase Two: Distinguishing Categories

Now that two candidates, Cyrus and Gubaru, have been qualified by the first phase of this investigation, their candidacies can proceed into the second phase. In the second phase informational data were collected on these two candidates concerning the second tier of distinguishing categories (# 4–6). The purpose of these categories is to help to determine the strength or weakness of the candidate's identification as Darius the Mede.

The fourth category concerns the heritage of the candidate. The question for this category is (4.): "Could this person be described as a Mede?" The evidence to be gathered in this category is to reflect what can be known of a person's nationality and/or ethnicity. Terms which describe one's heritage can be overlapping and may even seem to be contradictory (just as someone not familiar with American culture might need an explanation for the terms African-American or Tex-Mexican). Therefore, the evidence in this category will certainly require some discussion.

The fifth category concerns the kin relations of the candidate. The question for this category is (5.): "Was this person a descendant of Ahasuerus?"

The sixth category concerns titles and is to reflect the occupation or position of someone as he functioned in his society. The question for this category is (6.): "Did this person rule as king of the Chaldeans?" The discussion of the particulars of these three categories is intended to establish whether or not one is a strong candidate.

The second phase data collection primarily focuses on the remaining categories but should also include any other distinguishing information which might be pertinent to this inquiry. The new information from this second phase of data collection will be added to the individual Personal Data Sheets and used to complete the Personal Data Chart. The quality of the evidence collected for the distinguishing questions will be appraised and placed as a point value into the Personal Data Chart. The value of the evidence reflected by the candidate's total points will also correspond to a Grade of Identification describing the reliability of his identification as Darius the Mede.

⁹⁶ Zero (0) points have been placed in their columns.

⁹⁷ One (1) point has been placed in Cyrus' column.

⁹⁸ Since no negative evidence has been found, one (1) point has been placed in Gubaru's column.