HISTORIOGRAPHY AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCES RELATED TO DANIEL

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by

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APPROVAL SHEET

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCES

RELATED TO DANIEL

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For my wife who encouraged me, my family who supported me, my church who remained patient, my son who provided timely urgency, my cats who caused many backspaces, and for Christ's name above all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ad Q. f.	Marco Tullius Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*
Anab.	Xenophon, *The Anabasis of Cyrus*
ANE	ancient Near East(ern)
ANET	J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*
CoS	William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr. eds., *The Context of Scripture*
Cyro.	Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
Nab	Nabonidus
OT	Old Testament
RE Suppl.	*Real-Encyclopädie Supplement*

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PREFACE

Writing a dissertation is a daunting task, one that cannot be accomplished in isolation. I am thankful that I did not make this journey alone. I would not have discovered my topic without Dr. Duane A. Garrett's help, and his continual feedback and guidance were invaluable. I always thought I was a good writer until my first seminar with him, and he has helped me improve as a scholar throughout this process. I appreciate Dr. Terry J. Betts helping foster my interest in history. I offer additional thanks to Dr. Dominick S. Hernández for his assistance with Akkadian and Dr. Robert L. Plummer and Dr. Peter J. Gentry for the years equipping me in Greek. I am thankful for all the faculty, librarians, and staff at SBTS who contributed toward the completion of this project. The library and writing center workers were especially helpful and gracious throughout the pandemic and my absence from campus.

I would also have been ill-equipped for this task without the continual prayers and love from my family and friends. My friends were a significant part of my success: Eugene, Jeremiah, Forrest, Stephen, Martin, and especially Andrés, who often had to answer my questions about Zotero and other random things. My church Gravel Hill Baptist has been too kind and patient with me in these last years of writing. My grandparents have had a huge impact on where I am today. My sister Kayleigh has always pushed me to work harder, which I frequently needed. My brother-in-law Isaac always believed in me and even temporarily supplied me with a quiet office. My Mom was an endless well of encouragement, and my Dad's continual interest as my first reader was immensely motivating. Without their financial, emotional, and spiritual support, I never would have completed this work. My dear wife Krystal deserves as much or more credit for this project as I do. Her ceaseless patience endured through late nights typing,

boring discussions of ancient texts, and my regular periods of stress. How she managed to make me laugh so much through these years, all while giving us our son Mack, I will never know.

I am not the same thinker or person I was when I began writing this dissertation. I have all the individuals above and many more to thank for my growth as a researcher, scholar, and person. I pray that someone like me will find this project one day in their library carrel and find it as helpful as I have found all the sources referenced in this study. I stand on the shoulders of many great thinkers and faithful Christians. To the glory of God alone.

Duncan Collins

Louisville, Kentucky
May 2022

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1967, Jacques Derrida famously wrote, "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte."[1] This debated statement is one of many entry points into the complex dialogue surrounding postmodernism, past reality, and truth.[2] The emergence of postmodernism ushered in an era of conflict for biblical studies after the historical-critical methodology dominated biblical scholarship during the twentieth century. Although scholars have reached radically different conclusions about the Bible and its historical claims,[3] most scholars in recent history have operated within the same methodological framework of historical criticism.[4] This methodology proposes that the scholar's purpose is to gather as much

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[1] Jacques Derrida, *De La Grammatologie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 227.

[2] Yilmaz alludes to several debates stemming from Derrida's original comment between scholars such as White and Zagorin, and Easthope and Evans. Kaya Yilmaz, "Postmodernism and Its Challenge to the Discipline of History: Implications for History Education," *Educational Philosophy & Theory* 42, no. 7 (October 2010): 787. In his interpretation, Barstad argues that these words are not a denial of the possibility of past knowledge but merely that each text represents a different knowledge. Hans M. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 29.

[3] Hens-Piazza and many others have addressed the plurality of conclusions about the biblical text. Gina Hens-Piazza, *The New Historicism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 27. Two examples from the OT that illustrate the diversity of opinion in biblical studies are the composition of the Pentateuch and the conquest of Canaan. For the Pentateuch, see Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005); Duane A. Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991); Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012). For the conquest, see Israel Finkelstein, "The Emergence of Israel in Canaan: Consensus, Mainstream and Dispute," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 2 (1991): 47–59; Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008); Avi Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2006); Baruch Halpern, *The Emergence of Israel in Canaan* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983).

[4] In the broader field of historiography, the modernist perspective is usually called "traditional history." I am linking this historiographical approach with the biblical studies approach of historical criticism since they carry the same assumptions about the past, texts, and truth. Furthermore, I will use the terms interchangeably throughout this work.

evidence as possible about the past, to judge critically that evidence's reliability, and to draw conclusions from that evidence concerning past events.

The historical-critical method remained unchallenged in biblical studies and historiography for over two centuries. Nevertheless, postmodernism has become legitimate competition to the historical-critical method in the past half century. Some scholars welcome and employ the postmodern methodology, even calling for the cessation of the traditional method of historical studies.[5] Meanwhile, the researcher need only skim titles to see that other historians consider postmodernism a danger to their field.[6] Like historiography, the world of biblical studies has developed primarily into two entrenched camps which seem no closer to reconciliation today than a decade ago: traditional and postmodern.[7]

A way to bring these two camps closer lies with a methodology already employed, though rarely explicated. By using elements from postmodernism as a corrective to the traditional method, a more balanced system can be outlined. Though explicit attempts at this combination of approaches have been made, I argue that they lean too heavily on either of the two camps.[8] While some scholars have claimed that no one

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[5] Clark encourages historians to employ many postmodern literary critiques. Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), ix. Additionally, Van De Mieroop laments that the old way of doing history is not dead yet. Marc Van De Mieroop, *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History* (London: Routledge, 1999), 1.

[6] Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists Are Murdering Our Past* (New York: Free Press, 1997); Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005). Iggers titles his tenth chapter "The 'Linguistic Turn': The End of History as a Scholarly Discipline?". Zagorin provides a helpful, brief overview of various responses in the field of historiography to the postmodern movement. His overview goes beyond what is necessary for this dissertation. To see the responses of more scholars, however, see his article: Perez Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative: Reflections on Postmodernism Now," *History & Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1999): 3.

[7] George Aichele, Peter Miscall, and Richard Walsh, "An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 383–404. Butler explains how this polarization is further complicated by the frequency with which both sides present caricatures of their opponents instead of engaging in legitimate, careful dialogue. Marilyn Butler, "Against Tradition: The Case for a Particularized Historical Method," in *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 25–26.

[8] For example, Barstad's concept of "narrative truth" comes close to a proper implementation of elements from both camps, but he accepts too many of the postmodern presuppositions and undermines

can combine these two approaches and produce an exhaustive, coherent statement about the Bible or any other historical source,[9] such a comprehensive endeavor is not my goal. I merely seek to utilize parts of postmodernism, like its emphasis on perspective and bias, to develop one method and apply that method to the historical context of Daniel. The events surrounding the book of Daniel serve as an excellent test case for applying this system of historiography.

Thesis

An approach that uses the best elements from postmodernism to enhance a more traditional historiography allows for a robust understanding of ancient texts and of historians and a generally reliable reconstruction of the past. Applying my proposed methodology to extra-biblical texts related to the events in Daniel will shed further light on these sources, illuminating the authors' goals and the reliability of their work. As a result, the historicity of Daniel can then be evaluated more deeply and consistently.

Clarifying a Method of Historiography

My first task is to clarify a consistent approach to historiography. Although the trend of postmodernism has potentially lost some momentum, it remains a significant challenge to the fields of history and biblical studies. Just a few years ago, Simon Susen attempted to delineate the effects that postmodernism has had on the social sciences.[10] In a critical review and response to Susen's book, David Roberts remarked that the postmodern challenge is not behind us.[11] Even if the trend of postmodernism has abated,

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his proposal. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*.

[9] Aichele, Miscall, and Walsh, "Elephant in the Room," 402.

[10] Simon Susen, *The 'Postmodern Turn' in the Social Sciences* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[11] David D. Roberts, "Postmodernism, Social Science, and History: Returning to an Unfinished Agenda," *History & Theory* 56, no. 1 (March 2017): 126.

the reverberations of its impact continue to resonate within academia. Georg Iggers observes that while the radical epistemological relativism of postmodernism has not had much impact on historical research, concepts stemming from postmodernism are present in much historical writing today.[12]

The historical-critical method and postmodernism both have strengths and major weaknesses for historiography. The historical-critical method carefully analyzes evidence and reconstructs the past but lacks attention to literary elements. Postmodernism emphasizes perspective, narrative, and bias, but it abandons knowledge of the past. By starting from the historical-critical method's presuppositions about truth and history, I can engage in historical reconstruction and seek to determine what really happened. Then by incorporating elements from the postmodern perspective, like the attention to literary details and each text's narrative, I can analyze each source more holistically and gain a fuller understanding of Daniel's history.

The outline of my methodology could be particularly helpful for conservative biblical scholars, who often stress the importance of the Bible as both history and theological narrative, but who also rarely explain their methodological approach. By explicitly laying out such a perspective, scholars can then apply a consistent methodology to not only the book of Daniel or even to the whole Bible, but to all ancient documents. Additionally, I hope that it will be another productive voice in the ongoing discussion about postmodernism's relation to historiography.

Analyzing Sources Related to Daniel

My second but most important task is to provide a thorough analysis of the most significant extra-biblical sources that relate to the events recorded in Daniel. Though Daniel is ripe with historical debates, the external evidence is rarely given due

[12] Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 150.

attention. Works like Steven Anderson's dissertation that do delve into the extra-biblical sources are too infrequent.[13] When projects like his are completed, they are typically studies on a specific historical problem and not focused on the methodology of historiography or on Daniel broadly.[14] My work could serve as a prolegomenon to historiography in Daniel, opening new avenues for research and discussion. I intend to analyze the most prominent sources and to determine their author, genre, bias, historical reliability, and other features. By laying this groundwork for many of the most significant sources, more targeted studies of the many historical issues in Daniel could arise.

Supporting the Historicity of Daniel

Supporting the historicity of Daniel is not a primary task, but a byproduct of this study will be evidence for the book's historical reliability. The ancient sources generally agree with Daniel's record of events. The application of the methodology in this study will offer some interpretations that oppose the mainstream opinion.[15] I hope that these interpretations will spur more analysis into the sources' historical reliability and their relevance for Daniel's context.

Need for Study

Currently, studies done on historical issues of Daniel typically focus on specific historical questions and not on the extra-biblical evidence. The extra-biblical

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[13] Steven D. Anderson, "Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal" (PhD diss., Dallas, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2014).

[14] Another example of a work with attention on extra-biblical evidence is Beaulieu's study of Nabonidus. This work has considerably less time devoted to the character and reliability of the witnesses but is focused on a specific historical problem (Nabonidus and Belshazzar) as is Anderson's dissertation. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

[15] The *Cyropaedia*, for instance, is generally considered quite unreliable. See, for example, Deborah Levine Gera, *Xenophon's "Cyropaedia": Style, Genre, and Literary Technique* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), but this summary is too hasty. While Xenophon's work includes a significant amount of material that does not correspond to historical reality, this material is generally easily identified and can be properly understood within the work's genre and themes. The *Cyropaedia*'s elements of historical fiction do not discredit the work's foundation upon real historical events.

evidence is infrequently evaluated for its own quality. When scholars do analyze the external evidence, they usually do so as a means to an end. There is a considerable amount of evaluation of the Greek historians, but that evaluation rarely has any interest in Daniel. Modern scholarly work analyzing historiography and Daniel comes from the two opposing camps of traditionalism and postmodernism, so it can be difficult to synthesize conclusions and judgments about the textual witnesses' character. In the debate between approaches to historiography, the dialogue can be unhelpful and even hostile.[16] Despite postmodernism's influence, many opponents do not engage its views carefully. Postmodernists allege that their critics regularly show a lack of attention to legitimate issues and a disregard for genuine arguments.[17]

My work is not primarily concerned with theory and method.[18] Although some discussion of this nature is necessary, my project seeks to move beyond theoretical discussion toward application to the book of Daniel. Therefore, it is not an exhaustive defense of my methodology; a deconstruction of either postmodernism or of historical-criticism; nor a search for the nature of truth or the goal of history. Neither is this project focused on one specific historical problem or even on the historicity of Daniel. Though various historical problems and the historical reliability of Daniel are related issues to this project, they are not of primary concern.

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[16] For example, see the conversation between Jenkins and Zagorin. Keith Jenkins, "A Postmodern Reply to Perez Zagorin," *History & Theory* 39, no. 2 (May 2000): 181–200; Perez Zagorin, "Rejoinder to a Postmodernist," *History & Theory* 39, no. 2 (May 2000): 201–9.

[17] Porter, for example, delivered a scathing review of Richard J. Evans's book *In Defense of History*. In Porter's article, he alleges that Evans consistently attacks views that postmodernists do not actually hold and altogether misses the point and thus the value of postmodern historiography. Roy Porter, "The Untrustworthy," *New Republic* 219, no. 24 (1998): 42–45; Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History* (New York: Norton, 1999).

[18] I seek to avoid contributing to Zagorin's diagnosis that this debate has turned many historians into bad philosophers. So, I will attempt to avoid going too deep into this debate as it is outside my expertise. Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative," 4.

Methodology

I seek to present an approach to historiography that uses helpful postmodern correctives to enhance a more traditional historiography, enabling a robust understanding of the relevant ancient texts. By applying this methodology to those extra-biblical texts related to the events in Daniel, I hope to illuminate both the sources and Daniel. It is impossible to cover every text that has a historical implication for Daniel in one dissertation. I will attempt to choose the most significant sources, but choosing texts will inevitably involve some subjectivity. So, some texts may receive only passing mentions. While I will strive to defend my methodology as much as possible, it is not the primary goal of this project. Many scholars have written books on methods of historiography.[19] As quickly as possible, I intend to move from theory to practice.

The first section will present the historical-critical method and the postmodern method. I will outline the major strengths and weaknesses of each approach, highlighting elements that I am incorporating into my method. Several aspects of the historical-critical method prove helpful for historiography. I agree with Iggers that the traditional model of history has withstood postmodernism and should still operate as the base for historical pursuits.[20] I also believe that the correspondence theory of truth is critical for historiography.[21] Postmodernism has highlighted a few weaknesses in the traditional method though. For example, the traditional method regularly fails to view ancient texts

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[19] For a few, see Edward Hallet Carr, *What Is History?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961); Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*.

[20] Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 141–44.

[21] Postmodernism takes issue with this simple theory, which states that propositions are true when they correspond to the facts. Postmodernism argues that there is not a sharp distinction between word and world or perspective and reality. So in postmodernism, one's view or "word" helps construct and create reality or "world." As a result, the correspondence between these two spheres cannot be trusted since they are already linked. Yilmaz, "Postmodernism and Its Challenge," 785.

as literature. Additionally, its textual analyses often lack nuance and unnecessarily disregard sections or entire sources as unreliable.

Similarly, I will discuss postmodernism's strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, postmodernism contains several strengths for studying history. Its literary approach to the text enables astute observations of the author's narrative and goal. Its view of truth encourages viewing every statement equally, regardless of plausibility.[22] On the other hand, postmodernism is not without its weaknesses. It suffers from a reductionistic understanding of knowledge.[23] It is unnecessarily skeptical of narrative as a form of history,[24] and it underestimates the human ability and desire to relate events as they happened.

Following my critiques of the two major approaches to historiography, I will offer my view.[25] In my presentation, I will explain why I am implementing aspects from each method. More importantly, I will offer reasons for how my view avoids some weaknesses of the two predominant views. Later in my work when I am passing from text to text, the reader will be able to see my methodology worked out in the analysis.

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[22] Although I do not agree with postmodernism's claims about truth, I do value this outworking of its presuppositions. The traditional perspective presents the temptation to dismiss a text that does not correspond to its established historical reconstruction. The peculiar benefit of denying objective truth is that every account of an event must be taken seriously. This benefit is particularly helpful when reevaluating legitimate historical accounts that may have been improperly discredited.

[23] It argues that since one cannot fully know an event in the past, attempts to reconstruct that event should be abandoned. This argument, however, stems from a linear view of knowledge when knowledge is better understood as scalar. Whether one can know the past is not a yes or no answer. While I concede that one cannot know a past event in the same way as a participant of that event did while the event was happening, I reject the notion that one cannot know the event at all. My certainty of each past event exists on a scale. I am extremely confident that I was married on June 13, 2015. I am quite confident (but less so) that a man landed on the moon in 1969. I am still confident (but even less so) that Babylon fell to Cyrus in 539 BC. Postmodernism misinterprets this scale of confidence or knowledge and considers anything beyond absolute certainty in the present as impossible to know.

[24] For instance, White argues that since the narrative form dominates mythic and fictional discourse, it is therefore suspect as a means of speaking about "real" events. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 57.

[25] My presentation will necessarily engage with other historians and their propositions for a methodological approach to historiography. For example, Butler has several points with which I agree and a few that go too far toward postmodernism. Butler, "Against Tradition," 43–45.

After establishing my methodology for historiography, I will delve into the next and largest section: surveying the extra-biblical sources. I will categorize them into major sections for broad similarities: Babylonian sources, Persian sources, and secondary sources.[26] I will cover the most significant witnesses for Daniel's historical problems, presenting general information for each of the texts: historical context, date, author/perspective, summary, and relevance to Daniel. I will then provide a conclusion of the text's narrative and its reliability for reconstructing the events recorded in Daniel. Lastly, I will analyze one historical problem (the fall of Babylon) and show how the work in this project can provide a foundation for more examination of historical issues in Daniel.

History of Research

To reflect the history of research, this project will require two different areas of focus. First, I will survey the development of historiography in modern history and outline the current methodological debate. To accomplish this task, I will examine important publications on historical theory and method, especially works that address postmodernism. A few examples of modern scholars who favor the traditional method are Georg Iggers, Gertrude Himmelfarb, and Perez Zagorin.[27] Some key postmodern writers and historians are Michel Foucault, Hayden White, and Jean-François Lyotard.[28] I will

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[26] The Babylonian and Persian sources (which are both written in Akkadian) are grouped based on my determinations of bias and perspective. The secondary sources consist primarily of Greek historians with a few exceptions.

[27] Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990); Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*; Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Some Reflections on the New History," *American Historical Review* 94, no. 3 (June 1989): 661–70; Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The New History and the Old* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1987); Perez Zagorin, "Historiography and Postmodernism: Reconsiderations," *History & Theory* 29, no. 3 (October 1990): 263–74; Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative"; Zagorin, "Rejoinder to a Postmodernist."

[28] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); Hayden White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," in *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1957–2007*, ed. Robert Doran (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 304–17; White, *Content of the Form*; Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

include how this discussion of methodology has relevance in biblical studies,[29] and I will also acknowledge the diversity within postmodern thought.[30]

Second, I will evaluate the developments of scholarship around each of my analyzed texts. To achieve this goal, I will observe prominent works on ancient Near Eastern and Greek historiography. Noteworthy ancient Near Eastern historians include Hans Barstad and Marc Van De Mieroop.[31] Two significant scholars engaged in ancient Greek history are John Marincola and T. James Luce.[32] Throughout my analysis of the various texts, I will examine works on each source from critical scholars such as Carolyn Dewald, John Dillery, and Nicole Loraux.[33]

Summary and critique of the secondary literature will show that the debate between the traditional model of historiography and the postmodern method is still active and relevant for Old Testament studies. The answer to the problem is not in either view's total defeat but more likely in blending the strongest elements from each view into an

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1984).

[29] Commentaries, for example, still primarily operate within the traditional framework. See Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Hess, *Joshua*. Some issues like the conquest of Canaan are still dominated by a traditional methodology. See Finkelstein, "Emergence of Israel"; Halpern, *Emergence of Israel*. Some ideas of postmodernism like "social history" have influenced biblical studies. For instance, see John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan, eds., *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008); Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Changes in the Forms of Religious Life* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996).

[30] Two examples of nuance are new historicism and poststructuralism. For new historicism, see Jürgen Pieters, "New Historicism: Postmodern Historiography between Narrativism and Heterology," *History & Theory* 39, no. 1 (February 2000): 21–38; Hens-Piazza, *New Historicism*. For poststructuralism, see Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); James Williams, *Understanding Poststructuralism* (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 2005).

[31] Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*; Van De Mieroop, *Cuneiform Texts and History*.

[32] John Marincola, *Greek Historians*, Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 31 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); T. James Luce, *The Greek Historians* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[33] Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); John Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times* (London: Routledge, 1995); Nicole Loraux, "Thucydides Is Not a Colleague," in *Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. John Marincola (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19–39.

approach that values both recreation of the past and historical texts as literary documents. The extra-biblical evidence surrounding Daniel will be a valuable area to explore with this methodology.

Outline

In the second chapter, I will present the two dominant historiographical methods in recent history: historical-criticism and postmodernism. In doing so, I will survey some major proponents of each approach and their contributions to historiography. I will also critique both camps, highlighting strengths that should be maintained and problem areas that require further nuance. Then, I will offer my historiographical method and arguments for why it alleviates some of the issues with the two prevailing approaches.

The third chapter dives into what I have categorized as Babylonian texts. It will investigate the ancient Near Eastern texts that appear to be Babylonian in origin. They are all written in Akkadian and seem to be Babylonian-mandated. I will include basic information about each source: date, author, summary, etc. More importantly for this dissertation, I will analyze each source to determine its historical reliability, literary structure, and biases. I will analyze the sources from chapters 3-5 in this way. A few examples from this chapter are the Nabonidus Cylinder and the Sippar Cylinder.

The fourth chapter analyzes the Persian texts. These sources also exist in Akkadian but are heavily pro-Persian. As a result, I have placed them into a separate category from the Babylonian texts, despite being in the same language. Most these texts were likely commissioned by Cyrus and his administration after his conquering of Babylon. Two texts from this grouping are the Cyrus Cylinder and the Nabonidus Chronicle.

The fifth chapter shifts from ancient Near Eastern sources to the Greek historians. Though more distant from Daniel chronologically, they are arguably even

more important than the Akkadian inscriptions for understanding Daniel's context. The Greek historians naturally write in Greek, not Akkadian. The two historians in view are Herodotus and Xenophon. Other historians have implications for studying Daniel like Berossus and Josephus, but Herodotus and Xenophon are significantly more important sources than the others.

In the sixth chapter, I will attempt to take the analysis from the previous chapters, synthesize some key findings, and apply them to a few historical issues in Daniel. I will review some important observations on the sources and their implications for Daniel. Then, I will address some of Daniel's historical issues and use the sources to give potential solutions. This section will cover a few minor problems. Then, the chapter will briefly discuss Darius the Mede before turning to the fall of Babylon in greater detail. Finally, I will offer some final words including potential areas for further research. The exercise of this chapter will display how non-experts and experts alike may utilize the research in my dissertation to gain a better grasp of the extra-biblical sources and the biblical text.

CHAPTER 2

BETWEEN HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND POSTMODERNISM

The corpus of work analyzing historiography and Daniel comes from two opposing camps, so it can be difficult to synthesize conclusions and judgments about the textual witnesses' character. The traditional or historical-critical camp seeks to recreate the past as it really happened and emphasizes objectivity and stable language. Though diverse, the postmodern camp generally contends that the present creates the past, and it emphasizes subjectivity and unstable language. Just a few issues at stake are the definition of truth, the concepts of reference and meaning, and the value and goal of history.

In the debate between approaches to historiography, the dialogue can be harsh and even hostile.[1] Despite postmodernism's influence, many opponents do not engage its views carefully. Postmodernists allege that their critics regularly show a lack of attention to legitimate issues and a disregard for genuine arguments.[2] Some criticisms of postmodernism lack depth prima facie. For instance, Simon Susen contends that postmodernists make universal assumptions in denying universality.[3] David Roberts rejects such allegations, which he calls "gotcha traps."[4] Criticisms of this nature can

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[1] For example, see the conversation between Jenkins and Zagorin: Keith Jenkins, "A Postmodern Reply to Perez Zagorin," *History & Theory* 39, no. 2 (May 2000); Perez Zagorin, "Rejoinder to a Postmodernist," *History & Theory* 39, no. 2 (May 2000).

[2] Porter, for example, delivered a scathing review of Richard J. Evans's book *In Defense of History*. Roy Porter, "The Untrustworthy," *New Republic* 219, no. 24 (1998): 42–45; Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History* (New York: Norton, 1999).

[3] Simon Susen, *The 'Postmodern Turn' in the Social Sciences* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 20. This example is not finding fault with Susen's work. Merely, it is an attempt to show the gap in communication between traditional and postmodern scholars.

[4] David D. Roberts, "Postmodernism, Social Science, and History: Returning to an Unfinished

oversimplify postmodernism and discount the nuanced approach of these scholars. In my analysis, I will seek to avoid generalizations and accurately represent a postmodern perspective.

Postmodernists are not immune to weak arguments either. For instance, they are prone to making bold overstatements. Keith Jenkins brashly asserts, "For surely we are all now mature enough to recognise that what passes for 'objectivity' is only ever us 'subjects', objectifying."[5] He presupposes that his assumption is a foregone conclusion and implies that those who disagree with his assertion are immature. Claiming greater intellectual maturity does nothing to further the discussion and, in fact, hinders it.

Additionally, postmodernists have a tendency to dismiss their critics, claiming that their opponents simply fail to understand postmodernism. In doing so, they ignore inconsistencies in their own arguments. One example is Roberts's response to Ernst Breisach. Breisach levies the criticism that postmodernism's denial of referentiality undermines its advocates' value choices and truth claims.[6] Roberts objects to this point, arguing that making an ethical choice does not necessitate invoking a transcendent standard. He further claims that making such a choice is necessarily creative and reflects "care for the world, a defining attribute of human being."[7] Roberts's defense, however, fails to address the core of Breisach's critique. Breisach is not claiming that someone loses their ability to make choices in the postmodern system but that someone loses the grounds from which to support those choices. Indeed, Roberts's defense invokes the same inconsistency that Breisach originally notes. Specifically, Roberts states that when a

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Agenda," *History & Theory* 56, no. 1 (March 2017), 119; See also David D. Roberts, "Postmodernism and History: Missing the Missed Connections," *History & Theory* 44, no. 2 (2005): 240–52.

[5] Keith Jenkins, *Refiguring History: New Thoughts on an Old Discipline* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 12.

[6] Ernst Breisach, *On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and Its Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 119.

[7] Roberts, "Postmodernism and History," 248.

human makes a choice, "it is simply an ethical choice."[8] Ultimately, Roberts is claiming that these value judgments come down to mere preference, but his wording reveals inconsistency. A person cannot make an ethical choice without invoking standards. Certainly he might choose without consciously weighing and contemplating his standards, and he might not consider those standards to be objective. Nevertheless, implicit objectivity exists in those value judgments because the person chooses one decision to be superior to the alternatives.

Roberts invokes "reflecting care for the world, a defining attribute of human being" as integral to our capacity to make ethical choices.[9] He argues that this aspect is simply inherent and does not stem from objective values. Roberts is correct in assuming that this is typical of mankind and that it does play a role in our ethical decision-making, but he errs when he assumes that having care for the world does not stem from objective standards. Caring for the world cannot properly be considered a value or ethic without some standard behind it. At the very least, Roberts's explanation of ethical choice in a postmodern system is confusing at first reading.

A summary would be helpful here to avoid straying too far into morality and ethics. It appears that the past few decades of scholarship have fostered a culture of distrust and antagonism between the traditional and postmodern methods of historiography. Roberts, for example, has observed that both postmodernists and traditional historians tend to caricature the other side.[10] While some scholars are already attempting to deescalate the enmity between the two camps,[11] a significant rift persists.

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[8] Roberts, "Postmodernism and History," 248.

[9] Roberts, "Postmodernism and History," 248.

[10] David D. Roberts, *Historicism and Fascism in Modern Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 266.

[11] George Aichele, Peter Miscall, and Richard Walsh, "An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 383–404.

The examples given above highlight two pitfalls. First, traditional historians often overgeneralize and ignore the nuances of postmodern thought. Second, postmodern historians frequently overstate their case and ignore or awkwardly harmonize the tension among their claims. Both perspectives have significant value and should be considered carefully, while recognizing their weaknesses. My goal is not to mend the rift between camps entirely but to offer critiques of both methods and display an approach that utilizes helpful elements from each perspective through an analysis of Daniel.

Postmodernism

Due to biblical studies' close relationship to historiography, it is no surprise that postmodernism has also created waves within the discipline and areas tangent to biblical studies. In the realm of ancient Near Eastern historiography, Hans Barstad recognizes that the atmosphere has changed in recent years. He states simply that history is not as important as it used to be.[12] Barstad prefers the concept of narrative history to conventional history and contends that narrative history is not a lesser truth.[13] Most significantly, he argues that the fact versus fiction distinction is not valid anymore and that the Bible does not pass down the past but creates the past.[14] While Barstad employs a postmodern methodology, he does not wage an attack on the old method. Marc Van De Mieroop, however, displays no hesitancy in that regard. He writes, "The nineteenth-century idea that the past could be represented 'as it really happened,' that the scholar can stand back and let the source material speak for itself, unfortunately may not be dead."[15] He also argues that narrative and history are paradoxical because narrative has order and

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[12] Hans M. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 21.

[13] Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 15.

[14] Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 6–17.

[15] Marc Van De Mieroop, *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History* (London: Routledge, 1999), 1.

coherence but history does not.[16] Biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies are certainly affected by the methodological debate.

Postmodernism has also affected interpretation of the ancient Greek historians, who are vital for understanding Daniel's historical context. One of the most significant moments for the recent shift in Greek historiography was an article by Nicole Loraux. She argued that Thucydides was unreliable and further argued that reality cannot be grasped through texts due to inherent contradiction.[17] In the spirit of Loraux, John Marincola tends to approach the Greek histories primarily as literary works, rather than as reliable historical documents.[18] This approach has led Marincola to some insightful conclusions, such as how the ancient historians claimed authority to write their history.[19] Like Marincola, T. James Luce maintains that history was a literary enterprise above all, an imaginative creation of the author. He further argues that the concept of truth should be understand as a scale rather than a hard line.[20] Greek historiography, like the other areas, is not immune to change.

The competition between the two methodological camps may be seen in a few examples of the various historical sources as well. The historical-critical method leads to two broad conclusions about Herodotus: (1) it is a reliable witness with a unified composition and (2) it is an unreliable and probably composite work.[21] The influx of postmodernism has seen scholarship move toward thematic and literary studies of the

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[16] Van De Mieroop, *Cuneiform Texts and History*, 79.

[17] Nicole Loraux, "Thucydides Is Not a Colleague," in *Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. John Marincola (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19–39.

[18] John Marincola, *Greek Historians*, Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 31 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7.

[19] John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[20] T. James Luce, *The Greek Historians* (London: Routledge, 1997), 4–6.

[21] Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

historian.[22] Though not explicitly accepting postmodern assumptions, John Dillery's work still reflects the general shift in scholarly interest resulting from the postmodern movement. His work on Xenophon is a detailed study of the ancient author's texts to better understand the author as a product of his culture and time.[23] The postmodern turn then is pervasive throughout all areas of historiography.

This dissertation is hardly the first attempt to mesh the traditional and postmodern approaches to history.[24] George Aichele, Peter Miscall, and Richard Walsh have offered a few areas where they believe postmodern and historical-critical methodology might join to foster new scholarship: physical aspects of the texts, intertextuality, ideology and translation, the author and her or his intentions, and the semiotics of canon.[25] Intertextuality and authorial intent will feature most prominently from these areas in my analysis.

Biblical scholars should not ignore postmodernism's relevance and its impact on biblical studies.[26] Intertextuality, for example, has become a popular trend in hermeneutics.[27] The notion of intertextuality would not exist without arguments from

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[22] Dewald and Marincola, *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*. Just a few examples are studies on speech and rhetoric, humor, danger, travels, nature, religion, warfare, and more.

[23] John Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[24] Several traditional historians like Iggers have seen the value that postmodernism offers for methodology. See Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005). Some postmodern historians have also pursued a blend or cooperation of methodological camps. See Aichele, Miscall, and Walsh, "Elephant in the Room."

[25] Aichele, Miscall, and Walsh, "Elephant in the Room," 402–4.

[26] For a few discussions of the relationship between postmodernism and biblical studies, see George Aichele, ed., *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); David Jobling, Tina Pippin, and Ronald Schleifer, eds., *The Postmodern Bible Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003); A. K. M. Adam, ed., *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000).

[27] For just a few examples, see Marianne Grohmann and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, eds., *Second Wave Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019); D. Jeffrey Bingham and Clayton N. Jefford, eds., *Intertextuality in the Second Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Michael R. Stead, *The Intertextuality of Zechariah 1–8* (New York: T & T Clark, 2009).

postmodernists like Derrida's network of traces.[28] Biblical scholars must be willing to engage postmodernism and critically evaluate its claims, strengths, and weaknesses like any other intellectual movement.

Though postmodernism is a collective reaction to the previous age's modernism of empiricism and humanism,[29] the methodology of postmodern historians is not uniform. Jürgen Pieters quips, "Few people will want to deny that the mansion of postmodernist historicism contains many rooms."[30] The underlying assumptions of postmodernism assure methodological diversity. In fact, some postmodernists even take issue with the idea of a methodology.[31] Kaya Yilmaz refers to postmodernism as an "intellectual trend" or "loose alliance of intellectual perspectives" that draw on philosophical ideas from many movements like poststructuralism and semiotics.[32] Due to this diversity, an attempt to provide an exhaustive overview of postmodern historiography would be futile. Instead, I will survey two trends within postmodernism before moving into a broad, thematic summary of postmodern historiography. The two movements of note are new historicism and poststructuralism.

New historicism as a term is debated,[33] but in its most basic understanding, it refers to the notion of using critical literary theory to determine history. Gina Hens-Piazza outlines four assumptions that craft its method. First, literature is viewed as integrally tied to and identified with other material realities that make up a social context. Second,

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[28] See page 26 below.

[29] View Foucault's work as an example. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

[30] Jürgen Pieters, "New Historicism: Postmodern Historiography between Narrativism and Heterology," *History & Theory* 39, no. 1 (February 2000): 28.

[31] Nicholas Royle, *After Derrida* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 24.

[32] Kaya Yilmaz, "Postmodernism and Its Challenge to the Discipline of History: Implications for History Education," *Educational Philosophy & Theory* 42, no. 7 (October 2010), 780.

[33] Gina Hens-Piazza, *The New Historicism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 5.

literature is on par with other types of texts, and its composition is not privileged over and above other social practices. Third, characteristic distinctions between literature and history are sidelined. Fourth, the constructions of the past are presumed as intimately tied to the reader's present.[34] Pertaining to historiography then, the key aspects of new historicism are that history is not distinct from literature, that the past is a construction, and that historical texts must be understood as interconnected to and not above other texts.

Pieters observes what he sees as two distinct variants of new historicism within postmodernism: narrativist and heterological. The narrativist or discursive approach appears in Michel Foucault's work, and the heterological or psychoanalytical approach finds its example in Michel de Certeau.[35] Narrativist historicism searches for the historical idea embedded in texts but displaces it from the ontological level of the past (contra the traditional method) to the discourse of the text. Heterological historicism, on the other hand, seeks to understand the "other" of history by feeling and seeing what is absent in written history, reading past the text and focusing on the margins.[36] Pieters argues that these two approaches are not in opposition but are kindred practices with different goals.[37] At the very least, both fall under the postmodern umbrella.

Poststructuralism is an intellectual movement often confused with and used synonymously with postmodernism. Poststructuralism critiques the dominant way or structure of thinking, writing, and speaking.[38] It suggests that the distinctions people

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[34] Hens-Piazza, *New Historicism*, 6.

[35] Pieters, "New Historicism," 22.

[36] Pieters, "New Historicism," 28.

[37] Pieters, "New Historicism," 29.

[38] Yilmaz, "Postmodernism and Its Challenge," 781. For an introduction to poststructuralism, see Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); James Williams, *Understanding Poststructuralism* (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 2005).

make are not products of the world around them but produced by language and other symbolizing systems.[39] Humans learn language so early that even imaginary distinctions, like the distinction between gnomes and pixies, seem transparent.[40] As a result, ideas are not the source of meaning but meaning the source of ideas. Poststructuralism then pinpoints meaning in difference, not reference. The meaning of a sign or symbol is not in its reference but in how that sign or symbol differentiates it from other signs and symbols. Consequently, the meaning of a sign rests in the sign itself and nowhere else.[41]

In the case of historiography, the dominant structure is the traditional historiographical method that seeks to objectively represent the past as it was. Particularly relevant for historiography is poststructuralism's view on readings of authors. In poststructuralism, pursuing an author's intent is a flawed methodology. Since language exists outside people, there can be no final judgment on what any instance of language means. Catherine Belsey offers the caveat, "That does not imply, on the other hand, that it can mean whatever we like."[42] She contends that a nonsensical reading would result in a private language that cannot properly be called a language and does not enable dialogue. Instead, she suggests that an instance of language can mean "whatever the shared and public possibilities of those signifiers in that order will permit."[43] The implication then is that although language is not utterly arbitrary, it is highly flexible and capable of meaning virtually anything within the constraints of a shared community.

Belsey's definition is lacking though. Let us suppose a hypothetical. I interpret the adage "One in the hand is worth two in the bush," to mean that baseball is the only

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[39] Belsey, *Poststructuralism*, 7.

[40] Belsey, *Poststructuralism*, 7.

[41] Belsey, *Poststructuralism*, 10.

[42] Belsey, *Poststructuralism*, 18.

[43] Belsey, *Poststructuralism*, 18.

good sport and all other sports should be banned. Though my interpretation is utterly nonsensical, perhaps I acquire celebrity status with a substantial cult following who accept my interpretation. By Belsey's definition, my interpretation would have originally been illegitimate. Would my hypothetical fans' agreement give legitimacy to my nonsensical reading?

Consider a less ridiculous example. Americans from past centuries used the story of Ham, Shem, and Japheth as a justification for the enslavement of African Americans. Certainly, a great number of people considered such reasoning to be a legitimate reading of the text. Did the story's meaning change from the 18th century to today? If a biblical scholar self-published that interpretation today, surely his reading would be considered so nonsensical as to be an impossible understanding of the text. Nevertheless, it would have been a "legitimate" interpretation with significant support just a couple centuries ago. Language then seems necessarily to have some stability that exists outside the sign. Difference then appears to be an inadequate marker of meaning, so reference must remain the foundation of meaning.

Postmodern Tenets

Moving from these intellectual trends that have shaped postmodernism, I will now survey some postmodern tenets. Hayden White, who Porter jokingly calls "the pope of historiographical postmodernism,"[44] outlines the key postmodern beliefs that affect interpretation of history.[45] Since White's observations are illuminating, I will use his seven points to guide the presentation of postmodern historiography.

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[44] Porter, "Untrustworthy," 43.

[45] Hayden White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," in *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1957–2007*, ed. Robert Doran (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 312–13.

First, “Postmodernists believe that events exist and have existed in the real world but that in our efforts to represent them, we inevitably obscure them or distort what might have been perceptions of them.”[46] Many readers who do not associate with postmodernism at all might agree with this point. An individual might misrepresent an event due to a variety of factors: adrenaline, poor memory, or ulterior motive. White’s point, however, goes far beyond sheer misremembering. It asserts that merely by describing an event, the speaker or writer inherently obscures or distorts that event. As soon as an event is put into language, it can no longer be represented as it truly happened. White claims, “The historian must accept responsibility for the construction of what previously he or she had pretended only to discover.”[47] An emphasis on construction of the past is the core of postmodern historiography.

An important distinction must be made here. A common attack on postmodernists is that they are antirealists, namely they implicitly deny that the world actually exists.[48] This critique is especially relevant for the world of historiography. Postmodernists do not deny that the past exists or that the past happened, and they do not claim that the past happened in divers ways. They acknowledge that the “world is out there” but deny that “truth is out there."[49] As a result, postmodernists affirm that there is an ontological reality to which our language and discourse refers, but that reality is only able to come to us through the intermediary of language.[50]

Second, “Postmodernists believe that all (written) documents . . . are texts and that this means that they must be submitted to the same explicative techniques as those

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[46] White, “Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties,” 312.

[47] White, “Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties,” 304.

[48] Jenkins, “Postmodern Reply,” 183.

[49] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 4.

[50] Jenkins, “Postmodern Reply,” 184.

used on literary texts."[51] Terminology is critical for understanding this second point. "Texts" are representations of events, real or fictional. An important clarification for this point is the nature of texts. Postmodernism does not simply say "apply literary textual principles to historical texts." Instead, it seeks to blur the line between the nature of historical texts and the nature of literary texts.[52]

They contend that the distinction between historical texts and literary texts is a false dichotomy. David Jasper and Allen Smith attempt to blur the truth versus fiction line by using examples in which people receive or realize truth through fiction. For instance, they mention how the parables of the New Testament invite the hearer into a fictive world that they might experience and obtain truth.[53] Their suggestion is provocative, but it unfortunately does nothing to actually blur that dichotomous line. While a speaker certainly may package truth in fiction, the true aspects do not become fictitious; neither does the fiction become true. Remaining with the authors' example of the prodigal son parable, much truth is embedded in that narrative. Believers should welcome, not begrudge newer converts. The Father is patient and forgiving, and the parable certainly contains more examples. These truths, however, do not make the characters in the story historical people. While Jasper and Smith's concerns that Christians have been too harsh on fiction are legitimate,[54] their push to blend truth and fiction misappropriates both terms.

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[51] White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," 312.

[52] David Jasper and Allen Smith, *Between Truth and Fiction: A Narrative Reader in Literature and Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), ix. Jasper and Smith are technically calling for a blur between truth and fiction, not historical texts and literary texts. The two different distinctions are fundamentally in line though and are so similar that the authors' work applies here.

[53] Jasper and Smith, *Between Truth and Fiction*, 2–3.

[54] Jasper and Smith, *Between Truth and Fiction*, 4–5.

Third, "Postmodernists do think that the social context is itself a text or is apprehensible only by way of texts."[55] Roberts points out that discourse shapes society which shapes discourse, and the reciprocity of the relationship prevents isolation of either element.[56] Jenkins argues that the historian is "always part of the historical past he or she paints."[57] Fred Burnett explains that postmodernists do not deny that ancient communities did not exist. They do believe that if a real community did exist, it is irrevocably lost and only exists now as an "intertextual construct *within scholarship*."[58]

Fourth, "Postmodernists think that any attempt to describe or represent reality in language must run up against the fact that there is no literal language."[59] Roberts observes that for postmodernists, language and reality experience a "dialectical interplay."[60] Consequently, separating reality and language as distinct entities is a false dualism.[61] Roberts rhetorically asks, "Is language not real and is 'real' not language? What difference does it make if it is all 'language' or 'discourse' and humanly constructed meanings as opposed to 'facts' or some historical 'thing in itself'?"[62] He further argues that history happening inside language—even with that language not being literal—does not cut the present off from the past. The present can still have and seek understanding but it does so "from the inside."[63]

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[55] White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," 312.

[56] Roberts, "Postmodernism, Social Science," 123.

[57] Jenkins, *Refiguring History*, 12.

[58] Fred W. Burnett, "Historiography," in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation*, ed. A. K. M. Adam (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 109.

[59] White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," 313.

[60] Roberts, "Postmodernism, Social Science," 125.

[61] Roberts, "Postmodernism, Social Science," 125.

[62] Roberts, "Postmodernism and History," 249–50.

[63] Roberts, "Postmodernism, Social Science," 249–50. Roberts's key point is that the nature of language does not cut the observer off from reality. Instead, language and even the person in the present are part of that reality. So one can study and seek understanding, but one must do so with a different

Fifth, "Postmodernists believe that the subject of a discourse is always being substituted for its apparent referent."[64] An important aspect or view within postmodernism for this point is antirepresentationalism.[65] The salient theme of antirepresentationalism for historiography is the emphasis on the inaccessibility of the subject of discourse. Language only allows words to refer indirectly to the subject.[66] As a result, the referent cannot be perfectly or truly discussed.

The idea of language and texts always being a representation of the source is most famously present in Derrida's statement already mentioned earlier in this dissertation: "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte."[67] Jenkins explains that Derrida's statement should be understood within his context of *le texte en général*.[68] The "text in general" includes the concept of an endless line of traces or references that seek to return to the source (the subject of discourse).[69] That source though is a trace itself since it too must be put into language for it to have meaning to the reader or hearer. The result is an endless network of traces, referents, and references that all have interdependence and relative meaning.[70] Derrida is referring to this network in his famous statement about the "text." Nicholas Royle observes that the network of traces is related to Derrida's notion of "writing" as well.[71] Such a connection leads Derrida to the logical conclusion that Jenkins

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perspective than one did within the traditional model of modernity.

[64] White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," 313.

[65] The key aspect of antirepresentationalism is the viewing of knowledge not as a matter of accurately conveying what is right but as a matter of acquiring practical information that helps the learner better handle the contingencies of the world. Jenkins, "Postmodern Reply," 185.

[66] Jenkins, "Postmodern Reply," 187.

[67] Jacques Derrida, *De La Grammatologie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 227.

[68] Jenkins, "Postmodern Reply," 189.

[69] Jenkins, "Postmodern Reply," 189.

[70] Royle, *After Derrida,* 22.

[71] Royle, *After Derrida,* 18.

observes, "Given that all meaning is necessarily within this extended notion of the general text, then there is, by virtue of logic and definition, nothing meaningful outside it."[72] Royle even suggests that a more helpful phrasing of Derrida's point might be "There is nothing outside context."[73]

Derrida then does not deny the reality of things and events outside our language and interpretation. He does, on the other hand, affirm that one cannot refer to a thing or event without operating within this large network of referentiality through an interpretive experience.[74] Burnett alleges, for instance, that a historian's true referent is not the past itself or the past as it happened but the "*textuality* of the past."[75]

Sixth, "Since facts are themselves linguistic constructions, 'events under a description,' *facts* have no reality outside of language. So while events may have happened, the representation of them as *facts* endows them with all the attributes of literary and even mythic subjects."[76] The only way to achieve a noninstitutional fact, Richard Rorty argues, would be through a language that was "as little ours, and as much the object's own, as the object's causal powers."[77] Such a language does not and cannot exist.

Jenkins offers a mitigated version of this claim by clarifying that historians can know facts if they are details like Margaret Thatcher's coming into power in 1979. He admits that facts of this nature are important but contends that they are trite within the

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[72] Jenkins, "Postmodern Reply," 189.

[73] Royle, *After Derrida,* 22.

[74] Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, ed. Gerald Graff, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Samuel Weber (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 148.

[75] Burnett, "Historiography," 107.

[76] White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," 313.

[77] Richard Rorty, "Texts and Lumps," *New Literary History* 17, no. 1 (1985): 7. The "causal forces" refers to the event or object's physical, ontological nature.

larger historical picture. Historians are primarily concerned with linking such facts to determine causation.[78]

Seventh, "Postmodernism presumes that since historical writing is a kind of discourse, and especially a narrative discourse, there is no substantial difference between *representations* of historical reality and *representations* of imagined events and processes."[79] White also states that the referent for the term "history" is as indeterminable as the term "literature." He argues that the history of historiography is as contested concerning history's sense or essence as the history of literature.[80] Burnett suggests that history is not a reconstruction but a construction in both form and content, thus placing him in line with White.[81]

These seven beliefs are tantamount to understanding the postmodern perspective on historiography. As postmodernists apply these tenets to historiographical work, several major themes emerge. Though not exhaustive, a few of these themes are the concept of narrative (especially the narrativization of facts), frustration toward those who have dominated the interpretation of history, and a redefining of the notion of truth.

Other Postmodern Tendencies

White discusses the development of history and the implementation of narrative.[82] The narrativization of facts is a critical theme of the postmodern approach to history.[83] White contends that historians have attached objective value to narrativity, but

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[78] Keith Jenkins and Alun Munslow, *Re-Thinking History*, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2003), 40.

[79] White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," 313.

[80] Hayden White, "Historical Pluralism and Pantextualism," in Doran, *The Fiction of Narrative*, 225.

[81] Burnett, "Historiography," 110.

[82] White, "Postmodernism and Textual Anxieties," 316–17.

[83] Critical to this point is the argument that narrative is never a neutral form but necessarily entails specific choices of ideology, politics, and other areas. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form:*

this value stems from a desire to present history with order and coherence when those aspects are only an image of life that only exists in the imaginary.[84] Quite contrary to having objective value, White suggests that narrative is "*inherently* fictive."[85] He further contends that historiography is a type of narrative rather than narrative being a type of history.[86]

Jenkins invokes Orwell's *1984* to argue that those who control the present control the past and that control of the past leads to control of the future. In Orwell's novel, Big Brother declares war on Oceania and claims that they have always been at war with Oceania (even though they have not).[87] Jenkins suggests that the dynamic of control on display in Orwell's created world may also exist outside fiction.[88] In another book, he provides his definition of history:

> History is a shifting, problematic discourse, ostensibly about an aspect of the world, the past, that is produced by a group of present-minded workers (overwhelmingly in our culture salaried historians) who go about their work in mutually recognizable ways that are epistemologically, methodologically, ideologically and practically positioned and whose products, once in circulation, are subject to a series of uses and abuses that are logically infinite but which in actuality generally correspond to a range of power bases that exist at any given moment and which structure and distribute the meanings of histories along a dominant-marginal spectrum.

Jenkins's definition is fundamentally flawed because it conflates the essence of history with the results and applications. While interpretations of history are important and worthy of study, they are not history themselves. The same point applies to the motives and constraints of the historians. The essence of history must remain distinct from the applications, misuses, and results of history.

Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), ix.

[84] White, *Content of the Form*, 24.

[85] Hayden White, "The Discourse of History," in Doran, *The Fiction of Narrative*, 202.

[86] Hayden White, "The Structure of Historical Narrative," in Doran, *The Fiction of Narrative*, 112.

[87] George Orwell, *1984* (New York: Signet Classics, 1961).

[88] Jenkins and Munslow, *Re-Thinking History*, 22.

Essential to the postmodern approach to historiography is a reinterpretation of the concept of truth. It calls for a more nuanced understanding of truth than has been known previously. This emphasis has two significant ramifications in scholarly practice. First, concern for recreating the past vanishes, since it cannot possibly be known. Second and subsequently, interest shifts away from texts as historical sources and toward texts as literary artifacts that reveal the character and cultural milieu of the author. Though many argue that these two results spell the downfall for history, Roberts contends that postmodernism does not destroy history but gives it even greater value than modernism.[89] He claims that by de-emphasizing metaphysics, history becomes even more important because there is "nothing but history."[90]

Historical Criticism or Traditional Historiography

Moving away from postmodernism to the traditional method, perhaps no historian has been more important to the development of modern historiography than Leopold von Ranke.[91] Many scholars have continued to prefer his traditional historiography into the twenty-first century despite postmodernism's influence. Yilmaz notes that while a small number of historians have embraced aspects of postmodern, most historians ignore or reject postmodernism's relevance for their discipline. Traditional empiricism still dominates the field.[92] Due to the nature of the debate, traditional historians frequently define their positions contra-postmodernism as counter points to postmodern claims. For example, Iggers suggests that elements from postmodernists like

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[89] Roberts, *Historicism and Fascism*, 277.

[90] Roberts, *Historicism and Fascism*, 276. Roberts is speaking hyperbolically when he says that there is "nothing but history," but the phrase succinctly supports his point that I am making here.

[91] For an example, see his collection of essays edited and published by Iggers: Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers (London: Routledge, 2010); For just a couple of his important works, see Leopold von von Ranke, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber*, Dritte Aufl. (Leipzig, 1884); Leopold von Ranke and Horst Michael, *Die römischen Päpste in den letzen vier Jahrhunderten* (Wien: Gutenberg, 1928).

[92] Yilmaz, "Postmodernism and Its Challenge," 788.

Lyotard and Derrida must be taken seriously, but he concludes that the philosophy of language and the linguistic turn apply more appropriately to literary criticism than to historiography.[93]

The field of biblical studies has continued to prefer the traditional methodology just like historiography. Biblical commentaries, for instance, typically do not employ a postmodern approach and still operate within the traditional framework.[94] Historiography within biblical studies still seems primarily dominated by the historical-critical method.[95] Though biblical studies favors a traditional method, the field should take postmodernism and its impact seriously.

Susen summarizes the main differences between modern and postmodern historiography by placing them into three categories: necessity versus contingency, grand narratives versus small narratives, and continuity versus discontinuity.[96] The necessity versus contingency dichotomy centers on the nature and trajectory of historical development. Modern necessity implies a universal condition of human history, a teleological nature of history, and a general historical order and structure that leads to linearity and predictability.[97] Postmodern contingency, on the other hand, implies a

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[93] Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 132.

[94] Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).

[95] Consider a few examples of the literature discussing the historical problem of Israel's entrance into Canaan. The dominant goal of the literature is determining whether this event happened and not analyzing Joshua as a piece of literature to comprehend the purpose of the narrative within its context. Israel Finkelstein, "The Emergence of Israel in Canaan: Consensus, Mainstream and Dispute," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 2 (1991): 47–59; Baruch Halpern, *The Emergence of Israel in Canaan* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983); Yeḥezkel Kaufmann, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Canaan*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985).

[96] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 136.

[97] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 137.

particular condition of human history, a directionless nature of history, and a general chaos and irregularity that leads to nonlinearity and unpredictability.[98]

The grand narratives versus small narratives debate focuses on the narrative or perspective from which history is presented. Grand narratives or metanarratives from modernism seek to provide a comprehensive explanation about history and its processes through logically connected assumptions.[99] Postmodernists reject the idea of a metanarrative as untrustworthy and instead support the idea of many small narratives.

Continuity versus discontinuity refers to the discussion concerning which era currently exists.[100] In other words, are we in the age of modernity, or have we moved beyond it into the era of postmodernity? While most postmodernists see discontinuity in the contemporary era, traditional historians tend to see continuity. These three issues significantly influence a scholar's goals and conclusions in his historiographical work.

Traditional Keys

More specific than the aforementioned three categories of distinctions, traditional historians stress several crucial aspects when defending their methodology against postmodernism: (1) the correspondence theory of truth, (2) the existence of history and facts outside language, (3) the stability of language and referentiality, (4) the legitimacy of a grand metanarrative, (5) the continuity of the modern era and methodology, and (6) the methodological and practical dangers of postmodern historiography.

The first key to the traditional historiographical method is the correspondence theory of truth. This theory argues simply that propositions are true when they correspond

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[98] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 138.

[99] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 140.

[100] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 143.

to the facts.[101] Postmodernists reject this theory because of their claims that facts are institutional or narrativized and that every "fact" is biased and subjective. Thus in postmodernism, each fact represents a separate truth, and facts cannot serve as a collective, objective standard against which one may judge truth claims.

A second point of the traditional method is the existence of facts outside of language. Richard Evans disagrees with the postmodern understanding of facts, claiming that historical facts happened in the past and can be verified. Whether historians have been able to verify a fact or not is irrelevant to its factuality. For this reason, Evans notes that historians typically speak about "discovering" facts.[102] Facts then exist apart from historians' knowledge of them and are not creations of language. Evans also contends with the postmodern understanding of historians' bias. He maintains that while historians are influenced by their context and goals, they ultimately are judged based on how their theories conform to the evidence.[103]

For historians, facts become epistemologically vulnerable with the simultaneous linking of facts to language alongside the undermining of language because the historian is unable to observe his subject directly.[104] While a zoologist might watch a lion hunting its prey, a historian cannot directly witness a past battle, diplomatic meeting, or personal exchange. The historian may only access his subject indirectly through texts. Therefore, the stability of language becomes a crucial tipping point as language is the only means of observing historical facts.

A third emphasis of traditional historiography is the meaning and stability of language. Perez Zagorin admits that associating a particular phoneme with a particular

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[101] Yilmaz, "Postmodernism and Its Challenge," 785.

[102] Evans, *In Defense of History*, 66.

[103] Evans, *In Defense of History*, 191–92.

[104] Yilmaz, "Postmodernism and Its Challenge," 786.

signifier and its designated concept is arbitrary, but he emphasizes that once the signifier is established it is not arbitrary with respect to reference or meaning.[105] He elaborates that the sound and letters "dog" always mean or refer to a dog, and the association between reference and sound is not arbitrary at all. He also discusses that re-describing an event or thing is possible but limited. One might re-describe the Amazon River as the longest river in the world, but one cannot re-describe it as the shortest river in the world.[106] Traditional historiography rejects this anti-epistemological approach by asserting that language is stable and knowable.

Michael Roth argues for a traditional epistemology in a related issue in his review of Jenkins's book. Roth condemns Jenkins's "all or nothing universe of deconstruction" where Jenkins maintains that without absolutely stable knowing, only radical uncertainty remains.[107] Roth also critiques Jenkins's idea of surprise. Jenkins claims that every historian returns from the past with exactly the version of history they want.[108] Roth alleges that Jenkins is mistaken because he has supposed a world where surprises are impossible. He contends that in Jenkins's model, even disconfirming evidence is not a surprise because it falls within the paradigm of knowledge and judgment that the historian already established.[109]

A fourth key focus of the traditional method is the legitimacy of a large metanarrative over multiple small narratives. Postmodernism's critique of a grand narrative rests upon the assumption that modernism has not resulted in dissenting or minority histories. Zagorin, however, rejects the common postmodern claim that history

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[105] Zagorin, "Rejoinder to a Postmodernist," 205.

[106] Zagorin, "Rejoinder to a Postmodernist," 205.

[107] Michael S. Roth, "Classic Postmodernism," *History & Theory* 43, no. 3 (October 2004): 373.

[108] Jenkins, *Refiguring History*, 11.

[109] Roth, "Classic Postmodernism," 374.

is always written by the victors.[110] He alludes to Thucydides's record of his city's defeat, Tacitus's history of Rome's fall, and German historiography post-World War II.[111] In modern historiography, dissenting histories have always existed, but the job of the historian is to collect and critique those histories in the search for the big picture.

A fifth example of traditional argument is seen in Susen's argument that postmodernism has not spawned a radically different paradigm. Instead, modernity continues to develop and maintain relevance. As a result, Susen contends that postmodernism has not supplanted or undermined modernity. Rather, modernity is still an unfinished project and has always been self-critical.[112] Many of postmodernism's critiques of modernity then do not inspire an entirely new system of thought but merely a reevaluation of applications and practices. For example, the postmodern emphasis on discursive representations of reality might spur traditional historians to reevaluate presentations of historical events, but it does not require a completely new methodology or radical doubt of the source itself.

A sixth argument of traditional historiography is the danger of the postmodern method. Ultimately, Zagorin sees postmodernism as an imposition of philosophy upon history and argues that it has little to offer the discipline.[113] Importantly, he maintains that literature and history must be kept distinct for two reasons: (1) history presumes a distinction between fact and fiction and (2) historical work does not contain an imaginary

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[110] Perez Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative: Reflections on Postmodernism Now," *History & Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1999), 13; David D. Roberts, *Nothing But History: Reconstruction and Extremity after Metaphysics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[111] Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative," 13.

[112] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 241.

[113] Zagorin, "Rejoinder to a Postmodernist," 201.

world.[114] Additionally, he stresses the importance of accountability for historians. Historians write knowing that readers can call their accounts into question.[115]

Other Traditional Tendencies

Himmelfarb also supports traditional historiography or "old history," contending that the "new history" or postmodernism[116] goes too far in usurping the traditional model.[117] She argues that new history is in danger of fostering an inappropriate condescension toward ancient writers. In its desire to view history from a new vantage point, namely from the oppressed or non-elite, postmodernism creates a consciousness not of the ancient source but of the historian himself.[118] Himmelfarb alleges that the new historian's reality he attributes to the past is merely the reality he recognizes in the present.[119] As a result, the methodology of the old way is to be preferred, even if imperfect.[120]

A teleological view of history is a cornerstone of traditional historiography, and traditional historians fear postmodernism's chaotic view of history and the potentiality for a resulting nihilism among other things. Zagorin maintains that even

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[114] Zagorin, "Historiography and Postmodernism," 272.

[115] Zagorin, "Historiography and Postmodernism," 272.

[116] Himmelfarb primarily writes toward the development of "social history" or the increased focus and interest of history that looks beyond major historical events, dates, and metanarratives. This history instead looks toward the daily lives of the average person and seeks to understand what his life looked like. Though social history is more precisely a development or result of postmodernism and not the view proper, I am using them interchangeably since it functions as an example of weaknesses within postmodernism. For a couple examples of this outworking in biblical studies, see John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan, eds., *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008); Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Changes in the Forms of Religious Life* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996).

[117] Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Some Reflections on the New History," *American Historical Review* 94, no. 3 (June 1989): 661–70.

[118] Himmelfarb, "Some Reflections," 668.

[119] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The New History and the Old* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1987), 17. Ironically, this is the same critique as one that White levies above concerning the traditional approach to history.

[120] Himmelfarb, "Some Reflections," 669–70.

ordinary human experiences are not chaotic but contain structure and meaning. Further, he suggests that historical facts are never isolated but exist within causitive relationships.[121] Zagorin writes, "Generally speaking, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that whatever form historiography may take, whether predominantly narrative or something else, it is not and cannot be purely a mimesis, description, or picture in words. History is above all and in its essential character a work of thought and of analysis and synthesis."[122] Zagorin also rejects the postmodern attempt to move historiography into the category of the aesthetic.[123] He contends that postmodernism has identified the aesthetic nature of historiography and has attempted to remove the line separating history and literature.[124]

Susen proffers several concerns about the postmodern method. He argues that postmodernism's reading of society as a text may lead to a reinterpretation of social developments as textual developments.[125] He also contends that postmodernism can only seriously defend its concern for sociohistorical analysis and not historical analysis.[126] Susen also raises the frequently discussed issue of relativism within postmodernism. He suggests that the relativism endorsed by postmodernism makes it impossible to distinguish between principles that transcend one's context and principles that are dependent upon one's context. As a result, he contends that within postmodernism "all aspects of existence are open to interpretation."[127]

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[121] Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative," 20.

[122] Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative," 21.

[123] Zagorin, "Historiography and Postmodernism," 271.

[124] Zagorin, "Historiography and Postmodernism," 270–71.

[125] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 242.

[126] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 244.

[127] Susen, *"Postmodern Turn"*, 253.

Summary and Methodology

Much disagreement manifests itself in the debate between postmodernism and modernism. The overviews of postmodern and traditional approaches to history provide the opportunity for developing a methodology that will prove valuable for new or uncommon readings of ancient texts. I will now offer five guiding principles which I will use as I explore texts related to the historical context of Daniel.

First, truth is not a spectrum, but knowability of truth is. Though historians cannot recreate the past exactly as it was, they can make considerable strides toward a recreation of the past with some degree of confidence. In a historian's account, he will indeed be more certain of some details and connections than he is about others. This spectrum of certainty is inherent to the idea of knowledge. Every day, people act in ways that correspond to the most likely outcomes even without assurance: make purchases, travel to work, invest in stocks, etc. In the same way that it would be irrational for a person to stop going to work due to the chance of a car accident, it would also be unreasonable to stop seeking the past as it really was due to the chance of a historiographical error. Historiography should acknowledge that truth is not relative but certainty regarding that truth is.

Second, while language can be misleading and subjective, it is not entirely arbitrary. Namely, language does have stability and also referentiality outside itself. Difference is an inadequate marker of meaning. "Dog" does not simply mean "non-cat" (and "non-everything but dog") but has a specific and firm referent which it represents. While language is flexible and words do often shift in meaning, the flexibility is noteworthy specifically because language has meaningful stability and reference. Without language's overall stability, the flexibility and changes in individual words would be difficult to observe.

Third, historical texts can have literary features but must be approached differently than purely literary texts. There is a meaningful distinction between a

representation of a historical event and a representation of an imaginary event. Nevertheless, historians should apply literary analytical techniques to historical texts because they have potential for significant insights. Historical texts (especially narrative historical texts) have considerable literary elements and share much in common with literary texts. While literary techniques are helpful in analyzing historical texts, the investigation of historical texts should include an added layer of seeking the reality to which the texts refer.

Fourth, texts provide us with information both about the past as it existed and about the individuals who created the texts. The traditional approach rightly acknowledges that texts provide information about past events and can be credible sources that aid in historical reconstruction. On the other hand, the traditional approach tends to neglect the text as a window to viewing the author. A careful reading of a text can illuminate the view, character, and context of the author. The postmodern approach does observe and utilize texts as a window into the author, but it rejects the idea of using texts as a means to reconstruct the past. The two aspects that texts provide, however, are not mutually exclusive. As a result, the historian should seek both the past and the author through texts.

Fifth, careful historiography is predominantly a recreation of the past and not purely a creation. An element of subjectivity or bias and thus creation is unavoidable, but through self-awareness and rigorous inquiry a historian can achieve a historical narrative that can stand as mostly objective. Furthermore, historians might create hypothetical, plausible explanations for cause-and-effect relationships or various details in history. Nevertheless, proper historiography should always separate speculation from knowledge based on the historian's certainty in his evidence.

The methodology that I employ for this dissertation is not without its shortcomings. First, historiography is best done in community with considerable accountability. This dissertation will obviously be my perspective and interpretation of

the data, but I hope that many will engage the sources in similar endeavors from different perspectives. Such diversity will likely show weaknesses (though hopefully not many) in my interpretations.

Second, some of the texts, most noticeably the ancient Near Eastern texts, are quite small. Their brevity creates challenges when seeking to draw significant conclusions about the author and the work's characteristics. While I will seek to offer insightful observations about all the sources, I will have to concede a lack of certainty in several instances.

Third, most of the discussion of this chapter wades into the waters of philosophy more than history. Philosophy necessarily requires a fair amount of assumption and presupposition. Proving my methodology as superior to all others is impossible. Nevertheless, I do hope that the subsequent chapters will show that it is at the very least a valuable methodology that is worthy of emulation in research of other ancient texts.

As I examine the extra-biblical evidence related to Daniel, I will seek to consistently apply these principles to my inquiries. Some principles might feature more prominently with certain documents than others. These principles support a more holistic historiography than practiced by many historians today, though some historians do already employ them. The rest of the dissertation will apply my methodology to the sources. The next chapter will examine ancient Near Eastern texts close to the time of Daniel.

CHAPTER 3

BABYLONIAN SOURCES

Considering the principles from the previous chapter, analysis of the ancient sources will involve several elements. First, I will preview each text with basic information including its discovery, likely date, physical character, relevance for Daniel, and other elements. Second, I will provide an outline or literary structure. Third, I will offer my interpretation of the text's bias and disposition which will include drawing conclusions about the authors and historical context, as well as highlighting key themes. Fourth, I will attempt to extract historical details that contribute to the understanding of events. Fifth, I will discuss the text's intersection with Daniel and any historical tensions.

I have categorized the ancient Near Eastern inscriptions into two sections: Babylonian and Persian (dealt with in the next chapter). The distinction between the two is an interpretive decision based on the second point above concerning the text's disposition. With that being said, the fundamental nature of the texts in these two categories is essentially identical. They are from contemporary time, produced in like fashion, and written in the same language (Akkadian). Only the inscriptions' content and perspectives separate them.

Synopsis of Daniel's History

A brief summary of the historical details in Daniel will be helpful before drawing any comparisons between it and the texts in consideration. Daniel's dreams and visions are of little interest for this project, but their dating according to the various rulers at the time may prove useful. The subsequent overview is not in chronological order but narrative order.

The narrative begins with Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem and Daniel's ensuing exile circa 604 BC (1:1–7). Daniel eventually rises to a prominent position under Nebuchadnezzar (2:48). After Nebuchadnezzar constructs a large image, he commands his subjects to worship it (3:1–4). The text also speaks of a large furnace already in existence that is key in the narrative of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (3:6, 19–26). Later, Nebuchadnezzar experiences a period of insanity but regains his wits (4:33–34). Then Belshazzar holds a feast (5:1), promotes Daniel to third in the kingdom (5:29), and on the same night Belshazzar dies and Babylon falls (5:30–31). According to Daniel, the person who receives the kingdom is not Cyrus but Darius the Mede (5:31) who throws Daniel into a den of lions (6:16). Daniel then records two visions, both received during Belshazzar's reign (7:1; 8:1). The book follows with a concern and prayer that Daniel offers during the reign of Darius (9:1–2). Immediately after that comes a vision during the reign of Cyrus (10:1). Lastly, the text gives a prophetic statement during the first year of Darius's rule (11:1).

Over the years, scholars have devoted considerable attention to the historical details within Daniel. Two areas of attention are the events surrounding the fall of Babylon in Daniel 5 and the identity of Darius the Mede and his reception of the kingdom at the end of the same chapter. As a result, the sources that speak to either the fall of Babylon or the identity of Darius the Mede feature most prominently for studying Daniel. Unfortunately, very few ancient sources cover this material directly, but many of them have implications for understanding the historical issues.

Babylonian Historical Background

The Babylonian texts are the first category of inscriptions to be analyzed. Before investigating the individual texts, some background information will be beneficial for a frame of reference. The following table shows the rulers during the years before Babylon's fall.

Table 1. The last rulers of Babylon with dates[1]

Name	*Dates of Reign (BC)*
Nabopolassar	626/625–605
Nebuchadrezzar II (Nebuchadnezzar)	605–562
Amel-Marduk (Nebuchadnezzar's son)	562–560
Neriglissar (Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law)	560–556
Labashi-Marduk (Neriglissar's son)	556
Nabonidus (usurper)	556–539
Belshazzar (Nabonidus's son)	c. 553–543 (as coregent)
Cyrus conquers Babylon	539

Chronology

Babylon is a fabled city with a rich history, countless artifacts, and impressive topography.[2] The Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean empire's beginning is generally dated to 626/25 BC when Nabopolassar ascended the throne.[3] Nabopolassar spent much of his regnal energy through conflict with Assyria in which he sought to rectify past losses, consolidate power, and succeed Assyria's position of primacy in the ancient Near East.[4] He allied with the Medes and together they conquered Assyria, sending shockwaves throughout the Near East.[5] His exploits paved the way for his son Nebuchadnezzar to

[1] This data is adapted from Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 81. All dates are BC.

[2] For a few more resources on Babylon, see Eckhard Unger, *Babylon: die heilige Stadt nach der Beschreibung der Babylonier*, 2. Aufl. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970); A. R. George, *Babylonian Topographical Texts*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 40 (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1992).

[3] Joan Oates, *Babylon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 126–27. Some scholars do not date the beginning of the empire until Nebuchadnezzar assumed the throne in 605.

[4] Oates, *Babylon*, 126–28.

[5] Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *A History of Babylon, 2200 BC–AD 75*, Blackwell History of the

enjoy the most famous reign in Babylonian history.

Nebuchadnezzar claimed the throne in 605 and ruled the Babylonian empire for over four decades. Considerable building efforts mark his tenure. Jack Lundbom lists numerous projects that include walls, canals, bridges, ziggurats, temples, and even a moat.[6] He accomplished such feats chiefly through his conquests of the Levant and imposing the corvée on subjects.[7] The king lauded as a builder was far from one-dimensional though and displayed significant military competence. Indeed, he experienced considerable success in his campaigns and established dominance for Babylon over its past antagonists.[8] Babylon's prosperity and stability did not last, however, as palace rivalries and coups threw the subsequent years into chaos.

Nebuchadnezzar's son Amel-Marduk ascended the throne in 562 but only remained in power for two years before being assassinated.[9] His successor was Neriglissar, Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, who was also an experienced general.[10] He was probably the same Nergal-sharru-usur who was present at the second siege of Jerusalem in 586.[11] Neriglissar continued to expand the empire during his tenure, but he also died shortly into his reign.[12] Labashi-Marduk then became king in 556, a mere three years after Neriglissar had gained the throne. The grandson of Nebuchadnezzar was still a minor and only lasted a few months before being deposed by a discontent court.[13] The

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Ancient World (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2018).

[6] Jack R. Lundbom, "Builders of Ancient Babylon: Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II," *Interpretation* 71, no. 2 (2017): 154–66.

[7] Beaulieu, *History of Babylon*, 229–32.

[8] Gwendolyn Leick, *The Babylonians: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003), 62.

[9] Leick, *The Babylonians*, 64.

[10] Oates, *Babylon*, 131.

[11] Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 237.

[12] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 238.

[13] Oates, *Babylon*, 131. Beaulieu suggests that his reign lasted only a few weeks. Beaulieu,

throne finally went to Nabonidus, one who apparently had no familial connection to Nebuchadnezzar. The kingship remained with him until the fall of Babylon, his total reign being 556–539.[14]

Key Figures

The leading Babylonian figures in the sources for Daniel are as follows: Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus, and Belshazzar. All these rulers either appear directly in Daniel's narrative or have a meaningful impact on the understanding of Daniel's context and thus benefit from some introduction.

Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar needs virtually no introduction. He is one of the most famous ancient Near Eastern kings and certainly one of the most recognized in Western culture. He appears in multiple biblical narratives, featuring prominently in Daniel. His building efforts are illustrious, and his reign is widely considered the pinnacle of Babylonian civilization. His prestige extended to ancient audiences in similar ways. Kings and usurpers alike appealed to his name after his death for legitimacy and likely to invoke feelings of prosperity and continuity. Unfortunately, virtually no evidence is extant from the latter half of Nebuchadnezzar's rule. Years 12–43 of his reign are missing in the Babylonian chronicles, which are central to reconstructing political history.[15] After his death, the Neo-Babylonian empire mostly experienced political instability until its downfall.

Nabonidus. Nabonidus reigned over the Babylonian empire for its last seventeen years. Several of the primary sources surveyed in this dissertation are royal

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History of Babylon, 238.

[14] Leick, *The Babylonians*, 64.

[15] Beaulieu, *History of Babylon*, 220.

inscriptions from those years. Nabonidus is especially interesting for the events of Daniel not merely because he was in power when Babylon fell, but also due to the apparent coregency with his son Belshazzar. He stands out among Babylonian rulers from his devotion to the god Sîn, which played a large role in his stay in Tayma and in his granting authority to Belshazzar. His religious commitment to Sîn would cause controversy during his reign and would be used against him in propagandistic criticisms of his rule.

Belshazzar. Belshazzar was the son and heir of Nabonidus. Though previously doubted in history, primary sources emerged that firmly established his historicity as a Babylonian ruler. Belshazzar seemingly became coregent with Nabonidus just a few years into his reign and also conducted many of the kingly duties in Babylon while his father remained in Tayma on an extended absence. Belshazzar is one of the primary figures in Daniel 5, and scholars have scrutinized Daniel's description of the ruler for some time.

Babylonian Texts

The Babylonian inscriptions in view are all written from the perspective of Nabonidus and likely commissioned by him as well.[16] A difficulty with analyzing the Neo-Babylonian inscriptions is the severe lack of information about the scribes.[17] On top of this problem, the texts are brief, and some of them have even suffered significant physical damage. Nevertheless, internal evidence and external evidence (such as archives) can still provide insights into each inscription's perspective, date, and other details.

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[16] For a catalog of Neo-Babylonian texts, see Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *Late Babylonian Texts in the Nies Babylonian Collection*, ed. Ulla Kasten, Catalogue of the Babylonian Collections at Yale 1 (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1994), 79–82.

[17] Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), 14.

Table 2. Key information of Babylonian texts

Title[18]	*Date (BC)*[19]	*Author*[20]	*Purpose*
Nabonidus's Rise to Power	c. 555	Nabonidus	Describe Nab's accession
Nabonidus and His God	c. 542–541	Nabonidus	Honor rebuilding of Ehulhul
Sippar Cylinder	c. 540	Nabonidus	Honor rebuilding of three temples
Nabonidus Cylinder with Belshazzar	c. 540–539	Nabonidus	Honor rebuilding of Ur temple

Nabonidus's Rise to Power[21]

Nabonidus's Rise to Power discusses the events that led to Nabonidus's accession and some of his notable actions as a ruler.[22] The basalt stele was found in

[18] The titles for these inscriptions are not standardized. I attempt to provide multiple possible titles the reader may encounter when studying these texts. For the subheadings, I attempt to employ the most common title or the title that provides the most clarity among other texts. As a result, I often incorporate titles from Pritchard and other scholars. James B. Pritchard, *ANET: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

[19] For the dating of these inscriptions, I rely heavily on Beaulieu's work though I do consider other Assyriologists' dates when they disagree. Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*.

[20] By "author," I do not mean the individual who inscribed the words. Instead, I am using the word "author" to refer to the individual most responsible for the text's content. So instead of giving credit to a scribe, priest, or subordinate administrator, I am referencing the king or individual who has ultimate authority over the inscription's production.

[21] For several of the inscriptions, I borrow the titles from Pritchard, Hallo, and other works. Pritchard, *ANET*; William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds., *CoS*, vol. 2, *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). The naming or numbering of inscriptions is not standardized, so reading multiple scholars can become confusing. Beaulieu cross-references the Nabonidus inscriptions with several other scholars' work. See Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 20–41. His cross-references include P.-R. Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 4/1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973); Hayim Tadmor, "The Inscriptions of Nabunaid: Historical Arrangement," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger*, eds. Hans G. Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen, Assyriological Studies 16 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 351–64; C. B. F. Walker, *Cuneiform Brick Inscriptions* (London: British Museum, 1981). Schaudig also provides cross-references and a remarkably helpful catalog of literature on each inscription. The names for the inscriptions that Schaudig uses are also more standard for Assyriologists, whereas the names I use will be more familiar to biblical scholars who often use *CoS* and *ANET*. Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 256 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001). This text is Beaulieu's Inscription 1. Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 20. This inscription is often called the Babylon Stele or even the Istanbul Stele. For explanation, see Andrew Knapp, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 339n12.

[22] For full translation, see Pritchard, *ANET*, 308–11. For full text and translation, see Schaudig,

Istanbul in the late nineteenth century.[23] Unfortunately, it is the only copy of the text that has been found.[24] It was probably written earlier in Nabonidus's reign rather than later. Due to its subject matter, Beaulieu suggests that it was written during Nabonidus's first year.[25] While a large portion of the inscription remains, significant sections are missing. Often only a few lines or words are destroyed, but in a few places up to ten lines seem to be absent.[26]

The text begins by describing the evil that Sennacherib had committed against Babylon and how Nabopolassar subsequently avenged Babylon, both under the umbrella of Marduk's will. It then details the efforts of Nabonidus's predecessors, possibly both Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar,[27] in restoring the various cultic locations. Later, the inscription explains that Neriglissar died and Labashi-Marduk assumed the throne. The text contends that he was a minor who "had not yet learned how to behave."[28] Although the inscription is then missing three lines, it picks up after the lacuna during the instance of Nabonidus's being crowned as king. The text portrays him carried into the palace and celebrated by a large group as they prostrate themselves before him and kiss his feet.

The latter portion of the inscription preserves a prayer.[29] The prayer exhibits significant uncertainty from Nabonidus concerning his legitimacy as a ruler and his

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Die Inschriften, 514–29.

[23] Pritchard, *ANET*, 308.

[24] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 21.

[25] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 21.

[26] For full text and translation, see V. Scheil, "Inscription de Nabonide," *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* 18 (1896): 15–29.

[27] Whether Nebuchadnezzar is also mentioned here is debated. The other option is that Neriglissar is the sole referent. Beaulieu cites evidence that suggests Nebuchadnezzar is the identity of the king who restores the Eanna of Uruk. Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 21.

[28] Pritchard, *ANET*, 309.

[29] For comments on some of the prayers in the Nabonidus inscriptions, see Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, vol. 2 (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1993), 751–58.

ignorance to Marduk's will. The text even seems to claim that Nabonidus had no desire or intention to acquire the throne. The text reads as follows: šá LUGAL-ú-tú ina ŠÀ-ia la ba-šu-ú ia-a-ti la mu-da-a-ka.[30] Beaulieu translates this phrase: "I who, not knowing, had no thought of kingship for myself."[31] The remainder of the inscription details his work in maintaining the temples, including his committing prisoners of war to specific temples as slaves and his divine command from Marduk to restore the ancient cults, most notably the cult of Sîn.

Literary structure. The structure of this inscription is difficult to determine due to many missing lines of text. As a result, the following outline is provisional and avoids speculating about missing sections.

1. The wrath of Marduk against Babylon (i) [32]
2. The wrath of Marduk against Assyria (ii)
3. Rebuilding and reforming by predecessors (iii.1–iv.33)
4. Nabonidus's legitimate ascension (iv.34–v.34)
5. Nabonidus's dreams (vi–vii)
6. Nabonidus's temple maintenance and offerings (viii–x)
7. Sacrificial information/postscript (xi)

Disposition. The text portrays Nabonidus in a positive light and his accession as a boon for Babylon. The inscription was assuredly a royal commission during his reign and probably within the first few years. The early portion of the text holds two ideas in tension: the sovereignty of Marduk and the conflicted conscience of Nabonidus. The tension of these two ideas along with a few other elements suggest that the inscription

[30] vii.47–49.

[31] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 89.

[32] The Roman numerals refer to columns, and when applicable the numbers refer to lines in that column.

was intended to legitimize his claim to the throne. By invoking Marduk's will, he utilizes a divine argument for his kingship. In mentioning his predecessors, he inspires feelings of continuity and stability. Then by denigrating Labashi-Marduk's behavior and mentioning his conflicted conscience, he portrays himself as a righteous public servant whose aim is duty, not as a usurper lusting for power. Additionally, the palace scene aims to display his overwhelming support among the nobility.

The evidence suggests that the text served as a royal apologetic for Nabonidus's claim to the throne. If one accepts this proposal, then it is reasonable to assume that Nabonidus commissioned the inscription within the first few years of his reign.[33] It is doubtful that an inscription would seek to legitimize his rule after he had already reigned for many years.

Key historical details. The historical claims within the text and the text's apologetic function are not mutually exclusive. Nabonidus was clearly a religious individual as demonstrated in other inscriptions,[34] even by ancient Near Eastern standards. There seems to be no good reason to doubt that he did, in fact, see himself as fulfilling Marduk's will. His claim that he did not want the throne and was conflicted about taking it might even be true, though it should be viewed with more skepticism than the previous point. Nevertheless, Beaulieu judges it legitimate given its repetition much later in Inscription 13 and Berossus's corroboration.[35] Knapp also considers the claim to be true but for a different reason, namely because in the inscription Nabonidus confesses

[33] Beaulieu argues that because the consecration of En-nigaldi-Nanna and the restoration of the Ebabbar are not mentioned, the inscription must have been written during Nabonidus's first regnal year. Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 22. While dating it to the first year of his reign is certainly possible, and perhaps even likely, it is not necessary. The silence on these two events does not require a first-year date.

[34] See the next three analyzed inscriptions below.

[35] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 89–90.

to a conspiracy and only seeks to justify it rather than deny it.[36] Both scholars' reasons are valid and lend credibility to Nabonidus's claims.

The inscription also provides several interesting details regarding repairs, dedications, and activities of the various cultic locations. The description of Nabonidus being declared king in the palace is probably generally true as well. The details of everyone prostrating themselves before him and kissing his feet might be embellished, but they could be entirely accurate. What can be safely determined is that Nabonidus obtained enough backing from the palace court to usurp the throne without plunging the kingdom into further chaos.

Intersection with Daniel. The inscription does not directly intersect with Daniel much. It does, however, provide some interesting background. Many commentators have speculated about the identities of Nabonidus and Belshazzar, particularly any potential biological relationship to Nebuchadnezzar. In attempts to defend Daniel's identification of Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's son, some scholars have proposed that Nabonidus married one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters.[37] Such a suggestion seems highly unlikely.[38] Nabonidus's claim that he had no desire for the throne, exaggerated or not, makes little sense if he were married to one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters. Furthermore, Nabonidus makes no claim in any of his inscriptions that he has a familial connection with Nebuchadnezzar.[39] The inscription

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[36] Knapp, *Royal Apologetic*, 339n10.

[37] Raymond Philip Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar: A Study of the Closing Events of the Neo-Babylonian Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929), 60; Michael J. Gruenthaner, "Last King of Babylon," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (October 1949): 424; Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 149–50. For an alternate theory with an interesting spin, see H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1969).

[38] Furthermore, the attempt to establish a biological link to Nebuchadnezzar as a defense for Daniel's description of Belshazzar is misguided. "Son" in the ANE can be used to refer to a successor without any biological connection. Compare the Mesha Stele and Black Obelisk.

[39] Knapp boldly asserts, "That he had no right to the throne by birth or marriage is beyond doubt." Knapp, *Royal Apologetic*, 337.

does provide us with a clearer picture of the last years before the fall of Babylon and the political dynamic in which Daniel would have lived. It also gives a better image of Nabonidus's personality and actions which are relevant for understanding Daniel.

Nabonidus and His God[40]

The Nabonidus and His God inscription describes Nabonidus's rebuilding of Ehulhul and the historical context before his doing so.[41] D. S. Rice discovered two exemplars of the inscription in Harran in 1956.[42] The two exemplars are basalt stelae with most material preserved but several lines missing, primarily from the bottom of the inscription.[43] The text is situated into three columns of about fifty lines.[44] C. J. Gadd observes that the first two columns are quite clear with minimal damage or intrusion, but time has not been as kind to the third column. The mason, he notes, seems to have realized his lack of remaining space when he came to the third column and tried to cram the material onto the stone by beginning the text much higher on the tablet than he did with the first two columns.[45] As a result, the third column's first few lines are missing as well as roughly its bottom nine lines.[46] The third column's extreme height on the inscription and the lack of any remnants of text on the reverse side imply that the inscription was placed against a wall.[47] With these details, one may be relatively

[40] Beaulieu refers to this inscription as "Inscription 13." Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 32. See also footnote 21 above. It is also called the Harran Stele. See Knapp, *Royal Apologetic*, 338n8.

[41] For full translation, see Pritchard, *ANET*, 562–63. For full text and translation, see C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus," *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958): 56–65; Schaudig, *Die Inschriften*, 486–99.

[42] Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 35; Pritchard, *ANET*, 562.

[43] Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 36–37.

[44] Pritchard, *ANET*, 562.

[45] Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 38.

[46] Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 36–38.

[47] Gadd points out that the back side of the inscription was walked over for some time as a paving stone into a mosque. Nonetheless, he is still confident that text was never inscribed on this side of

confident that the majority of the text is preserved with only minor portions (mainly the beginning and ending of column 3) missing.

The dating for the inscription is quite straightforward. The mention of Nabonidus's decade-long absence from Babylon demands that the text be dated to his fourteenth year at the earliest, and Beaulieu estimates the fourteenth or fifteenth year.[48] As a Nabonidus inscription, the fall of Babylon provides the latest possible date in his seventeenth year. The dating window then is very small. Any position on the date within this window would not meaningfully affect interpretation of the text.

The text outlines Nabonidus's rebuilding of Ehulhul, Sîn's temple. It contains much religious language and celebration of Sîn. The narrative begins with a presentation of Sîn's calling Nabonidus. It then moves into a brief historical explanation that covers Sîn's wrath on the Babylonians and the circumstances of Nabonidus's stay in Tayma. The text then proceeds into the king's successes, a prayer, and the account of rebuilding Ehulhul before concluding with an exhortation for potential successors to honor Sîn.

Literary structure. The structure is relatively easy to determine since the text is preserved well. The only significant difficulties are determining the transition from the end of column two into the beginning of column three and determining the possible content at the bottom of column three. The narrative is less rigid and formulaic than many of the building inscriptions, so the literary sections are less pronounced even in the preserved portions. The suggested structure is as follows:

1. Sîn's will and vision (i.1–14a)
2. Babylonian evil and Sîn's judgment (i.14b–27a)
3. Gods' provision (i.27b–38a)

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the stone. Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 37.

[48] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 32.

4. Subjection and peace (i.38b–ii.13)
5. Prayer to Sîn (ii.14–48)
6. Preparations and provision for rebuild (iii.1–17a)
7. Rebuilding Ehulhul (iii.17b–33a)
8. Exhortation to successor (iii.33b–41+)[49]

Disposition. The text is highly celebratory of Nabonidus and critical of the Babylonian populace. It identifies him as Sîn's chosen king who must rebuild the god's temple. He is frustrated, however, by Babylonia's impiety and dishonor of Sîn. The direction of blame on the people seems a likely attempt to encourage people to repent and beseech Sîn while perhaps also shifting blame of misfortune away from the administration and onto the people.[50] He portrays his absence from Babylon as one of duty and necessity, potentially in an attempt to justify his absence. He highlights his military victories, and he emphasizes the plentitude and prosperity with which the people lived while he was in Tayma. This detail too seems an effort to vindicate his long stay from Babylon. He also states that after his completion of Ehulhul the people rejoiced,[51] which is an unsurprising remark but still reiterates the importance and reception of his work.

The text also strongly praises Sîn. While praise of the god should be expected since Ehulhul is his temple, the epithets and remarks concerning the god seem to reveal a unique devotion. For example, Nabonidus refers to Sîn as "lord of all the gods and

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[49] The text clearly continues, but the content beyond line 41 is illegible. Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 65.

[50] Beaulieu compares this text to the Letter of Samsuiluna to display a similar posture between them that features the failure of Babylonia's inhabitants to carry on their cultic duties. He even suggests that the Harran Stele borrowed this motif from the letter. See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of His Steles from Harran and Babylon," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 145.

[51] Pritchard, *ANET*, 563.

goddesses residing in heaven"[52] and "king of the gods,"[53] and states that his name "surpasses that of (all) the (other) gods in heaven."[54] Nabonidus even implies that the other gods were unable to accomplish what Sîn did.[55] The excessive glorification of Sîn supports the theory that Nabonidus was making an intentional effort to promote Sîn worship throughout his kingdom.[56] The inscription then should be graded as a propagandistic piece with two apparent goals: to ascribe guilt for misfortune to Babylonians who dishonor Sîn and to encourage people to repent and exalt Sîn above other gods.

Key historical details. Two comments have special historical significance. First, he refers to himself as the "lonely one who has nobody" and claims that he had no desire for the kingship.[57] The phrase "lonely one who has nobody" could imply that Nabonidus had no support among the royal court[58] but is difficult to decipher. The inscription reads as follows: a-na-ku PA-I DUMU e-du šá man-ma-an la i-šu-ú šá LUGAL-u-tú ina lìb-bi-ia la tab-šu-ú.[59] Beaulieu translates the entire phrase, "I am Nabonidus, the only son, who has nobody. In my mind there was no thought of kingship."[60]

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[52] Pritchard, *ANET*, 562.

[53] Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 59.

[54] Pritchard, *ANET*, 563.

[55] Pritchard, *ANET*, 562. The translations in Gadd's article and in *ANET* are slightly different for this phrase and for some of the above phrases. Still, both translations display the overwhelming precedence given to Sîn over the other gods.

[56] Foster, *Before the Muses*, 2:757.

[57] Pritchard, *ANET*, 562.

[58] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 68.

[59] i.7–9.

[60] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 67.

A few observations may be made. Instead of "lonely one," Beaulieu more concretely translates "only son," which an inscription from Adad-guppi, the mother of Nabonidus, corroborates.[61] With either translation, the phrase "who has nobody" still seems to suggest that Nabonidus originally lacked support and thus came from a humble or at least non-royal lineage. The claim that he had no desire for the throne corroborates the same claim appearing in Nabonidus's Rise to Power. The combined details of this short statement make any theory that biologically connects Nabonidus to Nebuchadnezzar doubtful.

Second, Nabonidus later mentions that he dispatched a message from Tayma to the city of Babylon, confirming his presence in Tayma.[62] He further describes his absence from Babylon, saying that he moved around for ten years without entering the city.[63] Of less significance but still noteworthy, Nabonidus describes his actions in bringing laborers to complete the work on Ehulhul and provides some details about the construction's process.

Intersection with Daniel. The inscription is valuable for understanding Daniel in two ways. First, it implies that Belshazzar does not have a biological connection to Nebuchadnezzar. Over the years, scholars have offered several theories in attempts to explain Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's son. Raymond Dougherty suggests that Belshazzar is Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.[64] H. C. Leupold proposes that Nabonidus

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[61] The Adad-guppi inscription is quite interesting, but I will not be analyzing it in this dissertation. While it is certainly worthy of study, the inscription only has impact on Daniel secondarily by corroborating claims made in the Nabonidus and His God inscription. For more information about the Adad-guppi inscription and for full translations, see Gadd, "Harran Inscriptions," 46–56; Pritchard, *ANET*, 560–62. Beaulieu suggests that the inscription was commissioned by Nabonidus after the death of his mother even though the text speaks in the first person from the perspective of Adad-guppi. Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 68n1. A similar inscription is the Family of Nabonidus inscription. See Pritchard, *ANET*, 311–12.

[62] Pritchard, *ANET*, 563.

[63] Pritchard, *ANET*, 562.

[64] Space does not allow for a full survey of Dougherty's arguments and views. For this example, see Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, 60. To see a summary of all his major reasons for

married a widow of Nebuchadnezzar and adopted Belshazzar.[65] Neither of these explanations is satisfactory in the face of the Nabonidus inscriptions already covered.

The likely historical reality then allows for two possible interpretations of Daniel's identifying Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's son: (1) the author of Daniel is in error,[66] or (2) the author has used "son" as a literary element to establish a connection between the two characters and highlight their common experience. [67] The second option seems plausible considering the flexible nature of בן in the Old Testament alongside the appearance of "son" operating in like fashion in other ancient Near Eastern texts.

The use of בן as a literary link is the preferable choice of the two options.[68] This explanation gains weight when analyzing two inscriptions. The Mesha Stele speaks of Omri's oppression of Moab, signifying the king's foreign power and fame.[69] The Black Obelisk then describes Jehu as a son of the house of Omri.[70] Jehu was not a son of Omri and even slaughtered Omri's descendants and family (2 Kgs 10). Fant and Reddish

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taking Nitocris the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar as the wife of Nabonidus, see Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, 60–63. For critique of this position, see Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar*, 117. Though views are diverse, some scholars still maintain this position. See, for example Miller, *Daniel*, 149–50. Though much earlier, Gruenthaner also follows Dougherty. Gruenthaner, "Last King of Babylon," 424.

[65] Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, 211.

[66] John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 32; Irving Finkel and Michael Seymour J., eds., *Babylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 170. Goldingay maintains Daniel's historical inaccuracy but adds that Belshazzar serves as a cipher for Antiochus Epiphanes. John Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 105.

[67] Wilson takes "son" here to mean "successor." Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel: A Discussion of the Historical Questions* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), 117–18. Wilson goes further in his analysis on the words "father" and "son" to argue for twelve distinct nuances to the relationship. Although a full discussion of these many meanings would distract from this paper, noting the wide semantic range of these words is a helpful reminder to avoid assuming a direct biological link.

[68] The role of the literary connection is likely to show the two different responses from the Babylonian kings to a similar warning from Yahweh. The God of Israel humbles Nebuchadnezzar through madness, and Nebuchadnezzar glorifies him. Belshazzar, however, refuses to humble himself and is judged as a result. This connection is made explicit in Dan 5:18–24.

[69] Clyde E. Fant and Mitchell G. Reddish, *Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 99.

[70] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 121. For some introductory information, a translation, and some key resources for the Black Obelisk, see Mordechai Cogan, *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating to Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 22–27.

explain that the Assyrians regularly refer to kings of a country with the name of the dynasty in power upon their first encounter.[71] This dynamic is precisely what the author of Daniel is utilizing by linking Belshazzar with the great Nebuchadnezzar.[72] By linking the two through with an identification of successor, the author creates a clear contrast in their responses to YHWH.[73] The author of Daniel intentionally builds a tight connection between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar for a theological point of humility to YHWH.[74]

The inscription's second major intersection with Daniel is that it confirms Nabonidus's absence from Babylon, thus supporting a major role for Belshazzar within the kingdom's administration. Belshazzar's role and responsibilities are key details in determining whether the author of Daniel is justified in calling Belshazzar מלך. An extended absence from Babylon, where Daniel would have lived in exile, adds credence to the book's title of king that it gives to Belshazzar. An additional noteworthy detail is the text's mention of the land of the Medes, which could have implications for the topic of Darius the Mede's identity.

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[71] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 122. Ironically, Fant and Reddish judge Daniel inaccurate for precisely this feature. See Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 234.

[72] Garrett also provides several other examples in which an unrelated royal predecessor is referred to as one's father, most notably the Tel Dan inscription. See Duane A. Garrett, "Daniel" (unpublished manuscript, Louisville, 2016). Kuhrt observes a similar practice in some of Nabonidus's inscriptions. See Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 8, no. 25 (1983): 91.

[73] Arnold even shows how the verb נפק is used by the author of Daniel to closely align Belshazzar's arrogance with Nebuchadnezzar's which are both opposed to God's response to their blasphemy. Bill T. Arnold, "Wordplay and Narrative Techniques in Daniel 5 and 6," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112, no. 3 (1993): 482. This instance is an example where a postmodern approach of reading thematically and theologically proves to be a valuable asset in a historiographical method.

[74] Shea even argues for a chiastic structure of Dan 2–7 with chapters 4 and 5 being the centerpiece. He further argues that chapters 4 and 5 each have their own independent chiastic structure. See William H. Shea, "Further Literary Structures in Daniel 2–7: An Analysis of Daniel 5, and the Broader Relationships within Chapters 2–7," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 23, no. 3 (1985): 277–95. Garrett, however, argues that the chiasm is not clear in Dan 2–7 and that the label is somewhat arbitrary. See Garrett, "Daniel."

Sippar Cylinder (Dream Text)[75]

The Sippar Cylinder describes Nabonidus's rebuilding of three temples for various gods.[76] The text is preserved quite well through two exemplars and thirteen fragments.[77] They all were clay cylinders found at the remains of the Ebabbar temple in Sippar.[78] Beaulieu dates the text after Nabonidus's tenth year, arguing from the Sippar ziggurat's construction.[79] He alludes to archival evidence that "strongly suggests that the ziggurat of Sippar was repaired in the tenth year of Nabonidus."[80] He links three texts from the tenth year that mention both scholars going to Sippar and building materials for work on the ziggurat.[81] Though mildly speculative and not without weaknesses,[82] Beaulieu's arguments for the ziggurat's dating are strong and coherent. He then suggests that the rebuilding of Ehulhul occurred after Nabonidus's return to Babylon.[83] Ultimately,

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[75] This text is Beaulieu's "Inscription 15." Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 34. It is also called the Ehulhul Cylinder. See Schaudig, *Die Inschriften*, 409.

[76] For translation, see Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:310–13. For full text and translation, see Schaudig, *Die Inschriften*, 409–40.

[77] Hallo and Younger, *CoS* 2:310; Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 34. Ungnad has published one of the two exemplars and many other inscriptions related to Nabonidus in the following collections: Arthur Ungnad, *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin III* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1907); Arthur Ungnad, *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin IV* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1907); Arthur Ungnad, *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin V* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1908); Arthur Ungnad, *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin VI* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1908). Pinches has published the other exemplar and many other inscriptions as well. See T. G. Pinches, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 55: Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Economic Texts* (London: British Museum, 1982); T. G. Pinches, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 56: Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Economic Texts* (London: British Museum, 1982); T. G. Pinches, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 57: Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Economic Texts* (London: British Museum, 1982).

[78] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:310.

[79] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 34.

[80] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 31.

[81] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 31.

[82] For example, Beaulieu raises the possible criticism of Inscription 16's lack of mentioning the ziggurat. He contends, however, that the absence is due to the text's nature, which is not intended to be a summarizing work of previous building works, like Inscription 15 is. Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 31.

[83] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 34.

Beaulieu dates the inscription after his thirteenth year and return from Tayma and more specifically estimates in his sixteenth year.[84]

After a brief list of titles, the text begins by describing the condition of Ehulhul in Harran in the context of the Medo-Persian conflict. It mentions Marduk's raising Cyrus to destroy the Medes and free Harran. It explains how Cyrus defeated the Median army and captured Astyages. Nabonidus then details his rebuilding of the temple Ehulhul, its dedication with a sacrifice, and his prayer to Sîn. He then explains how he found the previous memorial inscription and returned it without altering it. The rest of the inscription follows the same format but for the temples Ebabbar in Sippar and Eulmash in Sippar-Anunītu. The final portion of the inscription offers encouragement to any future successor who finds the inscription and seeks to restore the temples.

Though hardly the text's focus, the information about Cyrus and the Medo-Persian conflict proves quite important to identifying Darius the Mede, which naturally affects one's judgment concerning Daniel. The rest of the inscription is relatively unimpactful for the biblical book, but the descriptions of the buildings do still aid in dating and providing an overall picture of Nabonidus's time as king.

Literary structure. Fortunately, the text is almost entirely preserved thanks to the two exemplars and many fragments. As a result, we can have significant confidence in the original structure of the text from what is preserved. The only significant portion that seems to be missing is the end of the introduction, in which Nabonidus lists his titles and perhaps further introductory information. Each description of a temple includes details about the building's condition, how it came into that condition, the rebuilding process, and a celebratory resumption of religious practices. The structure is as follows:[85]

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[84] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:310. Tadmor also prefers a date toward the end of Nabonidus's rule, though he estimates the 14th year. His arguments, which are strong, may be found here: Tadmor, "Inscriptions of Nabunaid," 351–58.

[85] For this inscription, I follow Beaulieu's outline of the text exactly. See Hallo and Younger,

1. Royal titles (i.1–7)

2. Rebuilding Ehulhul (i.8–ii.25)

3. Prayer to Sîn (ii.26–43a)

4. Restoring previous inscription (ii.43b–46)

5. Rebuilding Ebabbar (ii.47–iii.7)

6. Restoring previous inscription (iii.8–10)

7. Prayer to Shamash (iii.11–21)

8. Rebuilding Eulmash (iii.22–38a)

9. Prayer to Anunītu (iii.38b–42)

10. Exhortation to successor (iii.43–51)

Disposition. The typical understanding of the inscription is a standard building text from Nabonidus. Anderson, however, argues that the text is a propaganda piece from Cyrus.[86] He makes three primary arguments: incongruity with Nabonidus's attitude toward Cyrus, incongruity with Nabonidus's religious convictions, and incongruity with other sources.[87]

First, Anderson contends that the text's presentation of Cyrus cannot be accepted as coming from Nabonidus. Accepting Beaulieu's reasonable late dating of the text, he contends that the text's portrayal of Cyrus is at odds with what Nabonidus would have thought of Cyrus at the time of the inscription's production.[88] Strong evidence suggests that Babylon and Cyrus had already experienced conflict, perhaps even a battle. The Nabonidus Chronicle and archival texts suggest that Belshazzar was likely

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CoS, 2:310–13.

[86] Steven D. Anderson, *Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal* (Grand Rapids: Self-published, 2014), 93–94. This citation is a self-published book that is an updated version of Anderson's dissertation of the same name with minor changes and corrections.

[87] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 87–92.

[88] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 87–89.

commanding an army at a military camp in Nabonidus's eighth year, and Herodotus and Xenophon both state that Babylon and Lydia had an alliance.[89] The details from these sources suggest that Belshazzar was posturing an army to combat Cyrus's aggression. As a result, Nabonidus already would have viewed Cyrus as an enemy by the time of the Sippar Cylinder's writing.

The issue with Anderson's argument is not with his piecing together the historical evidence but with his interpretation of the text's portrayal of Cyrus. Anderson assumes too much positivity from the text when its portrayal of the Persian leader is predominantly neutral. He states that the text praises him as a "brilliant general who defeated the large army of the Medes with his small army."[90] He also notes that the text refers to him as Marduk's "young servant," but this designation is debated.[91] The only firmly positive thing that the inscription attributes to Cyrus is, "He scattered the vast Median hordes with his small army. He captured Astyages, the king of the Medes, and took him to his country as captive."[92] Apart from this success, the inscription completely ignores Cyrus. This comment alone is not enough to claim a pro-Cyrus bend. Consequently, Anderson has overstated the text's positivity toward Cyrus.

If Cyrus's victory against the Medes is the historical reality, Nabonidus would have two options on how to present the event to his advantage. He could deny the reality and articulate a new narrative to claim as the truth, or he could attempt to spin the event

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[89] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 197–200; Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 88.

[90] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 88.

[91] The term seems to apply to Cyrus's relationship with Astyages rather than his relationship to Marduk. As a result, this particular term is not strong evidence that the text portrays Cyrus positively. My reasoning is both grammatical and contextual. See Beaulieu's explanation in Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:311n7. Kratz chooses neither option, instead taking the reference to be a young servant of the Medes. Reinhard Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," in *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena*, ed. A. Panaino and G. Pettinato (Milan: Università di Bologna & IsIao, 2002), 148n17. Anderson acknowledges that this term is debated but states, "He is still presented as acting in behalf of Marduk," with which I agree. Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 88n85.

[92] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:311.

where he appears in a more positive light. If Nabonidus is behind the inscription, he seems to opt for the second approach. He acknowledges Cyrus's defeat of the Medes, but he manages to interject himself into the narrative through a prophetic vision from Marduk. Then by framing these occurrences under the umbrella of the Babylonian pantheon, he presents himself as having a semblance of control and influence over the incident. Cyrus did not liberate Harran; Marduk did! In addition to that theological interpretation, Marduk also gifted Nabonidus with intimate knowledge of his plan for the events to unfold. The text does not focus or highlight Cyrus. Instead, it presents Nabonidus positively amidst a situation in which he did nothing at all.[93]

Second, Anderson argues that the inscription is inconsistent with Nabonidus's religious convictions.[94] The chief critique here is that the inscription mentions Marduk several times. As Anderson notes, it is the only inscription that Beaulieu dates after his return from Tayma that mentions Marduk.[95] Anderson then asserts that the prominence given to Marduk instead of Sîn suggests that the text is a Persian forgery.[96]

Several reasons could explain the uniqueness of this inscription without resorting to forgery. Nabonidus may have highlighted Marduk as a means to garner favor with the Babylonian religious elite. He may also have referenced Marduk instead of Sîn since the agent is Cyrus who is not Babylonian, whereas the other inscriptions do not mention Cyrus and focus purely on Babylonian agents. The most likely answer is that the inscription was edited from a previous version. The texts early in Nabonidus's reign often

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[93] Furthermore, the known propaganda from Cyrus is direct and hardly subtle. If the Sippar Cylinder is propaganda from Cyrus, it is unlike other texts that scholars have discovered from him. The Cyrus inscriptions are blunt in their denigration of Nabonidus. For examples, see the Persian inscriptions analyzed in the next chapter.

[94] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 89–91.

[95] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 89; Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 45.

[96] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 90.

mention Marduk.[97] It is possible that certain sections which were originally Marduk-focused may have remained in the final product. What is clear is that Sîn is equal with Marduk in the inscription and dominant in the later parts of the inscription. It is unlikely that Sîn would still be elevated equal to Marduk if Cyrus was seeking to produce propaganda. More likely, he would remove Sîn entirely from the dream and cater exclusively to Marduk worshippers in Babylon.

The early year inscriptions also suggest caution in placing too much emphasis on theological inconsistency. In the inscriptions that Beaulieu assigns to Nabonidus's early years, one (Inscription 2) mentions Sîn with multiple epithets but does not mention Marduk even once.[98] Though the others in his early years are the opposite (mentioning Marduk many times and Sîn only sparingly or not at all), the absence of Marduk from Inscription 2 is not cause to suspect a forgery. It is certainly an outlier but does not call the authenticity of the inscription into question. The Nabonidus inscriptions do not perfectly show a straight line of Nabonidus's changing orthodoxy. They do, however, imply a shift toward more overtly favoring Sîn in the later years of his reign.[99]

Perhaps most importantly, the number of extant inscriptions is relatively small, once segmented into categories, and makes judgments from comparisons difficult. Beaulieu only gives four inscriptions from the early years and five from the late years.[100] While it is true that the Dream Text is an outlier, it is only an outlier from four other

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[97] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 44.

[98] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 44.

[99] The trend toward exalting Sîn does not necessarily imply that Nabonidus experienced a theological shift during his reign. Instead, Beaulieu postulates that Nabonidus was already a devoted follower of Sîn at the beginning of his reign, and the inscriptions' shift may simply be evidence of Nabonidus growing bolder and more confident in his power to assert religious reform. Whether Nabonidus actually shifted his convictions or merely grew more brash in asserting them, neither conclusion supports Anderson's assertion that the text is a Persian forgery. Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 62–65.

[100] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 44–45. Beaulieu skips a few inscriptions from his full list. He details though that these inscriptions seem to function as companion inscriptions (i.e., Inscriptions 3 and 4 seem to be in a set with Inscription 2). Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 24–25.

known inscriptions. Due to the small corpus of Nabonidus inscriptions, the Sippar Cylinder's uniqueness among the late inscriptions in mentioning Marduk should not be overemphasized.

An alternative option to Anderson's theory surfaces in the other inscriptions. In Nabonidus's Rise to Power, Nabonidus states that Marduk ordered him to rebuild the Ehulhul and attributed its destruction to Marduk's will (Col. 10).[101] This first-year text would have been inscribed much earlier than the Dream Text and would have been the known narrative. When the rebuilding of Ehulhul is retold in the Dream Text, it is reshaped by making Sîn equal with Marduk without completely erasing Marduk. The last half of the text, which also records the latest events, focuses on Sîn and never mentions Marduk. The focus on Sîn seems like strong evidence that this inscription was an attempt to reframe old narratives in a way that incorporates the moon god. As a result, the text does not reveal inconsistency with Nabonidus's religious convictions, at least no more than his other authentic inscriptions. On the contrary, it demonstrates his progressing theological boldness over his seventeen years.

Third, Anderson contends that the Sippar Cylinder is incongruous with other sources.[102] He states that the inscription conflicts with the Nabonidus Chronicle and Herodotus in the details of Cyrus's conflict with Astyages regarding timing, initiator, and type.[103] He also claims that the sources are inconsistent concerning Cyrus's relationship to Astyages. Anderson remarks, "It is striking that so many discrepancies among the sources exist when there are so few details given in the cuneiform texts."[104] Most significant among Anderson's points is his remark about the type of conflict between

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[101] Pritchard, *ANET*, 311.

[102] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 91–92.

[103] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 91.

[104] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 92.

Cyrus and Astyages. Anderson contends that the conflict was peaceful, while the Sippar Cylinder asserts a violent clash between the two.

While the details surrounding the Medo-Persian conflict and Cyrus are sparse and inconsistent, they are not contradictory as they might initially appear. Recreation of the historical situation demands much speculation. Duane Garrett has proposed a plausible explanation that addresses many of the inconsistencies in the sources. I will now summarize key points of his proposition relevant to the Sippar Cylinder to show that judging the text a forgery due to inconsistencies is unnecessary.

Garrett first offers a few criticisms of Anderson's proposal before providing his theory. The relevant critique is with Anderson's suggestion that Cyrus falsely claimed to have sacked Ecbatana. Garrett asserts that it makes no sense for Cyrus to claim he sacked his own city. He continues that even with propagandistic aspects of the Sippar Cylinder and the texts that agree with it, the encounter at Ecbatana is unlikely to be a fabrication.[105] As a result, Garrett modifies Anderson's proposal and offers a possible historical situation that led to the development of the extant sources.

Since the empire is viewed in several sources as the Medo-Persian empire, it seems unlikely that Cyrus dominated and subjugated the Medes. Still, the two kingdoms' cooperation does not remove the possibility of armed combat. Garrett suggests that Cyrus and Cyaxares II, who he doubts Xenophon would completely invent, were rivals. Cyrus's base was Persian and Cyaxares's Median. Combat resulted from their rivalry, and Cyrus ultimately won and took Ecbatana. Garrett then proposes that after this victory an agreement was reached whereby Cyaxares II would succeed Astyages but Cyrus would marry the daughter of Cyaxares, thus becoming coregent after Astyages's death and sole

[105] Garrett, "Daniel," 33. Garrett also has a third problem with Anderson's overall proposal concerning Anderson's suggested three-person coregency, but it is not directly applicable to the Dream Text.

heir upon the death of Cyaxares.[106] Garrett concedes that his proposal is speculative,[107] but it is plausible and solves some issues in Anderson's theory. Even if Garrett's suggestion is wrong, it displays the possibility of reconciling some inconsistencies in the sources without simply judging the Dream Text a forgery.

Secondarily, Anderson also states that the sheer number of copies that have been recovered (over seventy-five) suggest that the Sippar Cylinder was part of a large propaganda campaign by Cyrus.[108] This argument is confusing though as Anderson earlier admits that the inscription must have been propagandistic, whether it came from Cyrus or Nabonidus.[109] Anderson unnecessarily assumes that only Cyrus would have launched such a large campaign. It is quite possible that Nabonidus dealt with some opposition to his religious reforms from the Babylonian elite. Such a scenario would be an ideal condition for a propaganda campaign from Nabonidus. Consequently, the number of copies discovered does not seem to suggest Cyrus authorship any more than Nabonidus authorship. Furthermore, determining the purpose of the inscription from the number of copies discovered seems hasty.

Ultimately, Anderson's take on the Dream Text is unsatisfactory. Some problems with Anderson's proposal are too difficult to ignore. The primary sources lack data referencing Cyrus and the Medo-Persian conflict, and the Sippar Cylinder can be reasonably harmonized with other cuneiform inscriptions. The Sippar Cylinder then is not a Persian propaganda piece from Cyrus. Instead, it is a legitimate Nabonidus inscription. It is hardly objective, but it has considerable historical value despite its theological interpretations, manufactured prophetic dream, and praise of Nabonidus.

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[106] Garrett, "Daniel," 33–34.

[107] Garrett, "Daniel," 35.

[108] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 94.

[109] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 88.

Key historical details. The Sippar Cylinder is the only Nabonidus inscription that mentions Cyrus. This detail alone makes the text significant, but it also provides the only details from a primary source regarding the Medo-Persian conflict. Although the reliability of the text is debated, the fact remains that no other primary source information about the conflict is extant. Any argument or theory then must thoroughly examine the Dream Text to determine a conclusion about the historical details of Cyrus's accession and the conflict. Lastly, the text highlights three temple rebuilding projects and contains an abundance of religious content.

Intersection with Daniel. The Sippar Cylinder does not overlap with Daniel much on the surface. Nevertheless, it is far from irrelevant for understanding the biblical book. The information concerning the Medo-Persian conflict is significant for seeking the identity of Darius the Mede. Additionally, the text seems to preserve Nabonidus's theological development as he became increasingly bold in his enamor of Sîn. His obsession with Sîn also plays a major role in understanding Belshazzar's role in the kingdom and potentially in the details surrounding the fall of Babylon and Belshazzar's feast in Daniel 5.

Nabonidus Cylinder with Belshazzar[110]

The Nabonidus Cylinder with Belshazzar commemorates Nabonidus's rebuilding of the ziggurat in Ur.[111] J. E. Taylor found the clay Nabonidus Cylinder in 1854 deposited in a ziggurat at Ur.[112] The text is magnificently preserved with eleven exemplars and one fragment.[113] Taylor initially discovered four copies of the inscription

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[110] This text is Beaulieu's Inscription 17. Beaulieu, *Late Babylonian Texts*, 35–37. It is also called the Elugalmalgasisa Cylinder. See Schaudig, *Die Inschriften*, 350.

[111] For a full translation, see Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:313–14. For full text and translation, see Schaudig, *Die Inschriften*, 350–53.

[112] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 232.

[113] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 35. Shah as-Siwani published the inscription in an article

in each of the four corners of the ziggurat's second level.[114] Burying cylinders like this one in a structure's walls was a common practice in the ancient Near East.[115] Berger dates the inscription to Nabonidus's second year,[116] while Tadmor dates it after the thirteenth year.[117] Beaulieu follows Tadmor and tentatively dates it to the sixteenth or seventeenth year.[118] Frankly, the dating for this inscription has very little impact on its interpretation and virtually no influence on its relationship to Daniel. With that being said, Beaulieu and Tadmor's dating seems preferable.

After a brief list of royal titles, the text describes Nabonidus's work in rebuilding the damaged ziggurat in Ur. It briefly mentions how the ziggurat had become old and how Nabonidus rebuilt the damaged areas and restored the structure. After a prayer to Sîn, the text concludes with a plea for Sîn to keep him and his offspring from erring. This text is a straightforward building inscription, though it does demonstrate Nabonidus's commitment to Sîn as "the lord of the gods of heaven" and "my lord 'gods'"[119] and mentions Belshazzar by name as his oldest son.[120]

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that includes images of the cylinder, copies of the columns, and transliteration of the cuneiform. Shah M. A. as-Siwani, "A Prism from Ur," *Sumer* 20 (1964): 69–76.

[114] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 232; Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 36.

[115] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 36; Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 233; Richard S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 110–12. Though the information was probably distributed another way to the masses. Matt Waters, *Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550–330 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 45.

[116] Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, 112.

[117] Tadmor, "Inscriptions of Nabunaid," 361.

[118] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 42.

[119] Beaulieu discusses the curious grammatical ambiguities that lead to theological ambiguities as well. For this particular phrase, the plural is awkward and as Beaulieu observes, most have translated the phrase "lord of the gods." That phrase is used earlier in the text though, and this construction is different. Beaulieu then proposes the alternative "my lord gods" and states that the phrase has monotheizing connotations. If true, then the parallel with the OT's אלהים would be noteworthy. Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:314n2.

[120] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:314.

Literary structure. With multiple copies, the text does not have much ambiguity or any missing sections. Additionally, the text's brevity leaves very little room for debate concerning its structure. It contains a royal introduction, account of rebuilding the ziggurat, and prayer to Sîn.

1. Royal titles (i.1–4)
2. Restoration of the ziggurat (i.5–ii.2)
3. Prayer to Sîn (ii.3–31)

Disposition. The text is quite bland concerning the category of bias or disposition. Nabonidus simply relays a project he completed and includes a prayer for the well-being of his successors and the building. The text certainly intends to celebrate Nabonidus and his work, but the account hardly makes any bold claims. Though the text's blandness leaves little doubt concerning the historical reliability of its information, it does not mean that the text has no perspective or that this perspective is pointless. Even an innocuous building inscription like this one still provides a peek at Nabonidus's person. For instance, the list of titles including "worshiper of the great gods" suggests the primacy of theology in Nabonidus's building projects.[121] The prayer to Sîn likewise invokes this cultic concern. The pleas for Sîn to "instill reverence" within the people and Belshazzar reiterate Nabonidus's religious concern and imply that his preferential worship of Sîn and religious reform were genuine. Benjamin Foster observes that the temples mentioned within the prayer are referred to as Sîn's temples even though Esagila is Marduk's temple and Ezida is Nabu's temple.[122] By attributing these temples to Sîn, Nabonidus reveals his personal elevation of Sîn above other gods.[123]

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[121] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:314.

[122] Foster, *Before the Muses*, 2:756.

[123] Foster, *Before the Muses*, 2:756. Beaulieu also makes this observation in his contributed section in *CoS*. Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:314n3.

Key historical details. Given the text's neutral disposition, the historical details it provides may be considered to represent accurate historical reality. The inscription provides only two important historical details. The first is Nabonidus's rebuilding of the ziggurat E-lugal-galga-sisa in Ur. The second key detail is its mentioning of Belshazzar as "the eldest son of my offspring."[124] The only other content in the inscription is an entreaty to Sîn.

Intersection with Daniel. Like the inscriptions before, this text echoes Nabonidus's devotion to Sîn. His devotion remains an important piece to the puzzle of understanding his unique seventeen years ruling Babylon. More concretely, the inscription provides historical evidence beyond Daniel that Belshazzar was a historical individual. While the text originally had major historical significance, it is not as critical for determining Belshazzar's personhood as it once was. Now a number of texts, especially administrative and contract texts, attest to Belshazzar and his significant role within the Babylonian kingdom.[125] Until late in the nineteenth century, however, many scholars were quite doubtful that Belshazzar existed.[126] This inscription remains an important discovery in the history of reconstructing Nabonidus's reign.

Summary of History and Perspectives

To avoid creating an anthology of texts with no coherence, some comments

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[124] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:314.

[125] For more information on these texts, see Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 156–57; 188–97. See especially 193–95. For an interesting theory on Belshazzar's role in the usurpation of the throne, see 90–98. The most notable detail that these texts present is the significant investment Belshazzar had in royal and financial matters. They display that while Belshazzar could not completely replace his father as king during the Tayma absence, he still actively performed many of the kingly duties.

[126] Dougherty provides several examples that indicate the previous state of scholarship. View his footnotes 56–63 for multiple theories on Belshazzar's identity. He mentions, for instance, commentaries written by von Lengerke and Hitzig. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, 13–14; For further documentation, see Miller, *Daniel*, 147; James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1927), 66; Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1923), 114.

may be made regarding the historical details gathered from the Babylonian sources and the lenses through which these texts viewed the events. Understanding thematic trends among the sources' perspectives is both inherently valuable and indirectly valuable for determining their veracity and reliability.

The Babylonian sources provide a number of significant data that help partially recreate the historical context in which the events of Daniel are set. Some of the most notable details are Belshazzar's historicity, Nabonidus's and Belshazzar's lack of familial connection to Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus's lengthy stay in Tayma resulting in Belshazzar's enhanced role in the kingdom, the Medo-Persian conflict, and Nabonidus's religious rebuilding projects. All these details play an important role in understanding Daniel and judging the biblical book's historical reliability.

The sources conveniently share the same primary perspective since they are all royal inscriptions commissioned by Nabonidus. Each text is unique with its own character, but some general tendencies emerge upon considering this chapter's analyses. First, the textual evidence strongly suggests that Nabonidus had a fanatical devotion to the moon god Sîn and that his devotion seems to have been genuine rather than utilitarian. Multiple inscriptions show evidence that Nabonidus theologically supplanted Marduk and other gods with Sîn. Additionally, the texts also seem to show a theological progression. At minimum, Nabonidus likely grew more confident over the course of his reign to enact religious reform and to promote Sîn worship explicitly.

Second, Nabonidus seems to have viewed himself as one chosen by the gods, especially Sîn, to fulfill their will and to restore damaged temples. Some scholars might regard this as propaganda to defend the legitimacy of his rule, but I find the perspective to be genuine. Nabonidus seems to have been thoroughly religious and committed to Sîn. I am relatively confident that he viewed his rebuilding projects and efforts throughout the kingdom as his divine prerogative.

Third, Nabonidus apparently did not want to be king but saw himself as a

reluctant servant fulfilling a divinely given duty. Certainly, he wanted to be king in some regard since he took the throne and kept it for seventeen years. Nevertheless, the idea that he did not initially desire the kingship seems legitimate. His hesitancy toward the throne fits well with the texts' emphasis on divine will for his reign.

Fourth, the texts are remarkably kind to Nabonidus. They mention his successes, highlight his conquests and completed projects, and take credit for any prosperity that the people experience. Nabonidus is portrayed as a popular king who vindicates past defeats and restores damage that the empire suffered. Nevertheless, the texts do not appear to be filled with fanciful claims or ridiculous boasts. This aspect of the texts is hardly a surprise but still worth mentioning.

Fifth, the inscriptions seem generally reliable and historically accurate. The texts have many themes and obvious biases but appear mostly to correspond with historical reality closely. Instead of undermining their historical value, the texts' perspectives enhance their value by providing even more insight into their background than if they were entirely neutral and bland. While scholars should still exercise caution when appealing to the Babylonian inscriptions' claims, the sources are ultimately strong historical evidence.

CHAPTER 4

PERSIAN SOURCES

The Persian inscriptions date after the fall of Babylon and are negative toward Nabonidus and mostly positive toward Cyrus. To review the historiographical principles from chapter two, they appear again here. First, I will preview each text with basic information including its discovery, likely date, physical character, relevance for Daniel, and other elements. Second, I will provide an outline or literary structure. Third, I will offer my interpretation of the text's bias and disposition which will include drawing conclusions about the authors and historical context, as well as highlighting key themes. Fourth, I will attempt to extract historical details that contribute to the understanding of relevant events. Fifth, I will discuss the text's intersection with Daniel and any historical tensions.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I have categorized the ancient Near Eastern inscriptions into two sections: Babylonian and Persian. This chapter focuses on the second category: Akkadian inscriptions that appear to be written from the Persian perspective and thus contain a pro-Persian bias.

Persian Historical Background

The Persian texts are the next category of inscriptions to be analyzed. Before scrutinizing the individual texts, an overview of the Persian empire will be beneficial.[1] The following table shows Achaemenid rulers before and briefly after the fall of Babylon.

[1] Like the similar section in the previous chapter, this overview will take many liberties and rush past many controversial details for the sake of brevity and focus. It is meant to be the briefest of introductions to the timeline and key players.

Table 3. Achaemenid rulers with dates[2]

Name	*Dates of Reign (BC)*
Astyages (king of Media)[3]	585–550
Cyrus	559/557–530
Cambyses II	529–522
Darius I	522/521–486

Chronology

The Persian empire was unlike anything the ancient world had ever seen. The empire's beginning is generally dated to Cyrus's defeat of the Medes around 550 BC, though it was through Cyrus's later victories that it became a true empire. Ancient sources do not agree on the method of Cyrus's ascension. Herodotus and Xenophon both remarked on multiple and contradictory traditions for Cyrus's origin and early years.[4] For example, Herodotus presents him as a vassal overthrowing a master, while the Babylonian sources speak of one state conquering another.[5] Whatever the process and means of his rise, Cyrus's empire did eventually dominate the ancient world. After defeating the Medes and conquering several other key kingdoms, most notably Babylon,

[2] This table is built on the list from Van De Mieroop. Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000–323 BC*, 2nd ed., Blackwell History of the Ancient World (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 314.

[3] Astyages is obviously the odd ruler in this table. I have placed him here though to help draw attention to my best guess at Cyrus's earliest conquests and consolidation of power. In short, it is possible that Cyrus defeated the Medes, but not totally, and that he struck an agreement with Astyages to effectively combine their kingdoms with Cyrus as the sole heir. There is obviously speculation to this theory, but two details lend weight to its plausibility: (1) Cyrus's styling himself as Astyages's successor and (2) sources referring to a Medo-Persian empire. I will go into some detail below, but for more information, see Duane A. Garrett, "Daniel" (unpublished manuscript, Louisville, 2016); Steven D. Anderson, *Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal* (Grand Rapids: Self-published, 2014).

[4] M. A. Dandamaev, *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*, trans. W. J. Vogelsang (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 11.

[5] Van De Mieroop, *History Ancient Near East*, 287.

the rest of the Fertile Crescent bent knee to Cyrus the Great.[6] He continued expansion until his death in central Asia in 530,[7] which apparently occurred in battle with a relatively obscure Saka tribe.[8]

Upon his father's death, Cambyses became ruler of the largest empire in the world. He had already played a role in the administration of Babylon on behalf of his father after its conquest in 539.[9] Following his accession, Cambyses turned toward the last major power in the ancient Near East: Egypt. In 525, Persia invaded Egypt and had their first engagement east of the Nile delta. They subsequently conquered the Egyptian capital Memphis and became the sole power in the ancient Near East.[10] Following his success, Cambyses sought to expand even further west and south. He then was returning to Persia after some unsuccessful campaigns when he died in 522, throwing the empire into instability.

The Persian empire reached its peak under Darius I, reaching from the Indus to the Balkans.[11] Before this expansion though, Darius had to secure the throne. Upon Cambyses's death, the throne went to his brother Bardiya whom Darius asserted was a lookalike imposter called Guamata.[12] Darius conspired with others to murder the king

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[6] Pierre Briant, "History of the Persian Empire 550–330 BC," in *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*, ed. John Curtis and Nigel Tallis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 12. Dandamaev remarks that the Near East had four major kingdoms during Cyrus's early years: Media, Lydia, Babylonian, and Egypt. Cyrus subdued the first three of these powers during his reign. Dandamaev, *Political History*, 14.

[7] Van De Mieroop, *History Ancient Near East*, 287.

[8] A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 66.

[9] Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 86–87.

[10] Matt Waters, *Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550–330 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 54–55.

[11] Briant, "History of the Persian Empire," 13. See also the map on page 11.

[12] Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 58–59.

and usurp the throne, though his role in the conspiracy may have been limited.[13] Regardless, Darius the Great seized power in 522 but was forced to deal with multiple uprisings and rebellions over the next year.[14] The ones leading the Babylonian rebellions styled themselves as sons of Nabonidus.[15] After securing his authority, Darius was able to expand the empire to its peak through annexations including Libya and western India.[16] The impressive Achaemenid empire would last almost 200 more years and boast several famous rulers like Xerxes and Artaxerxes I.

Key Figures

The leading Persian figures found in the sources for understanding Daniel are as follows: Cyrus II, Cambyses II, Astyages,[17] and Darius the Mede. All these rulers either appear directly in Daniel's narrative or have a meaningful impact on the understanding of Daniel's context.

Cyrus II. Cyrus is a man whose stature rivals and perhaps even surpasses that of Nebuchadnezzar.[18] Unfortunately, the details surrounding his early years are dubious.[19] His conquests, especially of Babylon in 539, dramatically shifted the ancient Near East's power structure. His religious and political policies, on the other hand, were relatively tolerant and contributed to significant stability within his empire. His

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[13] Dandamaev, *Political History*, 103–5.

[14] Briant, "History of the Persian Empire," 13.

[15] Stefan Zawadzki, "The Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus in Their(?) Chronicle: When and Why the Present Version Was Composed," in *Who Was King? Who Was Not King? The Rulers and the Ruled in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Petr Charvát and Petra Vlčková (Prague: Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2010), 151n38.

[16] Van De Mieroop, *History Ancient Near East*, 289.

[17] Precisely, Astyages is Median, not Persian.

[18] Kuhrt notes the "good press" that Cyrus receives in Herodotus, Xenophon, and the OT. Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 8, no. 25 (1983), 83.

[19] Matt Waters, "Cyrus and the Achaemenids," *Iran* 42 (2004): 93.

successors went on to rule over one of the largest empires ever seen, and that empire would stand as the world's greatest power until its defeat at the hands of Alexander the Great. Cyrus features prominently in the Hebrew Bible and is best known for his proclamation that commissioned the Judean exiles' return to Israel.[20] His appearances in Daniel are minor, only in general statements and dating formulas,[21] but he is a major figure for the events surrounding Daniel and the fall of Babylon.

Cambyses II. Cambyses only features in Daniel through implication[22] but is a key figure for understanding the Persian power dynamic around Babylon's fall. The son of Cyrus inherited the kingdom upon his father's death and ruled for almost a decade. He also played a role in governing Babylon from the point of its fall until Cyrus's death. He possibly appears in the Nabonidus Chronicle as well. Nevertheless, he is arguably the least important of the key figures for interpreting Daniel.

Astyages. Astyages was king of Media for over three decades. He was even the grandfather of Cyrus, as his daughter married Cyrus's Persian father. The details of Astyages's life are unclear after his defeat at Ecbatana, but the sources report that Cyrus treated him favorably, either keeping him in his court or appointing him as a governor. Astyages bears significance for understanding the Persian texts as well as understanding Cyrus's ascension, his policies, and the identity of Darius the Mede.

Darius the Mede. Darius the Mede's identity remains one of the largest points of critique concerning the historical data in Daniel. Daniel states that Darius the Mede received the kingdom at the end of chapter 5, but his identity has eluded scholars since no

[20] Ezra 1:1–4.

[21] Dan 1:21; 6:28; 10:1.

[22] Dan 11:2.

primary sources have been able to corroborate Daniel's claim. Scholars have proposed numerous individuals who might be Darius the Mede: Cyrus, Cyaxares II, Ugbaru, Gubaru, and more. From these candidates, the most likely individual for the identity of Darius the Mede is Cyaxares II (Astyages's son).[23] The prevailing scholarly position, however, is that Daniel was mistaken and Darius the Mede never existed.

Persian Texts

The Persian inscriptions in view are all commissioned by Cyrus except for one. The texts are generally longer than the Neo-Babylonian inscriptions but are still far from the length of the Greek historians analyzed in the next chapter. Still, using the prescribed methodology can still provide insights into the texts' bias and reliability.

Table 4. Key information of Persian texts

Title	*Date (BC)*	*Author*	*Purpose*
Nabonidus Chronicle	c. 538–530[24]	Cyrus	Chronicle Nab's reign, critiquing Nab, and celebrating Cyrus
Verse Account of Nabonidus	c. 538–530	Cyrus	Justify Persian conquest of Babylon
Cyrus Cylinder	c. 537–530	Cyrus	Commemorate building restorations in Babylon and justify Persian rule
Dynastic Prophecy	c. 333–331	Darius III	Garner support for Darius III

Note: These texts are pro-Persian and constructed after the fall of Babylon.[25]

[23] Most scholars deny that Cyaxares was a historical individual, instead asserting that Xenophon invented the character. See Eckard Lefèvre, "The Question of the ΒΙΟΣ ΕΥΔΑΙΜΩΝ: The Encounter between Cyrus and Croesus in Xenophon," in *Xenophon*, ed. Vivienne J. Gray, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 415.

[24] The discovered inscription is likely a copy of the original and dates to the 4th century BC or even later. Nevertheless, the original was probably written during the 6th century BC, most likely shortly after the fall of Babylon. See Clyde E. Fant and Mitchell G. Reddish, *Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 228. More details may be found below about the complicated issue of dating this text.

[25] For a more thorough catalog of inscriptions from the early Achaemenid empire, see

Nabonidus Chronicle

The Nabonidus Chronicle outlines several military and administrative endeavors of Nabonidus the king of Babylon.[26] The fragment is under six inches in both length and width.[27] The tablet is badly damaged with portions of the bottom and left-hand side broken, resulting in much of columns one and four missing. In addition to these lacunae, the bottom of column two and top of column three are also missing.[28] As a result, years 4–6 and 12–16 are impossible to pinpoint, and the details collected for those years amount to scraps and bits of singular words or phrases. Year 8 is missing as well with merely a blank line taking its place.

The Nabonidus Chronicle's dating and composition are more complex than any of the Babylonian inscriptions from the previous chapter. The fall of Babylon provides a *terminus post quem* for the original but does not prohibit a later date. The only surviving text of this chronicle dates much later than the proposed date for the original. Virtually every aspect of the text's creation is debated. Scholars disagree on when the extant text was written. They debate whether the extant text is a copy or an original creation, and those who maintain that the text is a copy are divergent on the potential date of the original. To handle all these issues completely is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I will offer my best estimation for all three questions.

The first issue is the date of the surviving text. D. J. Wiseman argues that the

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Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *Late Babylonian Texts in the Nies Babylonian Collection*, ed. Ulla Kasten, Catalogue of the Babylonian Collections at Yale 1 (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1994), 83.

[26] For text and translation, see A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 104–11. On page 104, Grayson has produced a bibliography that includes a list to older editions of the inscription as well as resources for images and other things related to the text. See also Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (London: Methuen, 1924), 110–18; Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 232–39. For another translation, see James B. Pritchard, *ANET: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 305–7.

[27] Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 98.

[28] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 228.

orthography and format of the Nabonidus Chronicle matches the Babylonian Chronicle and thus dates it to 500 BC when the latter text was written.[29] A. K. Grayson follows Wiseman in his observation.[30] Stefan Zawadzki also uses Wiseman's argument to establish a terminus *ante quem* of 500 BC but stops short of choosing precisely this date.[31] Zawadzki maintains that the present version did not merely have material added after the fall of Babylon but that the entire chronicle was edited.[32] Ultimately, he estimates that the extant text was composed just after 539 BC.[33]

Recent scholarship has generally moved away from such an early dating of the text. J. A. Brinkman rejects Wiseman's conclusion, arguing that the handwriting of the two chronicles has noticeable differences.[34] Caroline Waerzeggers agrees with Brinkman that such an early dating cannot be defended and prefers a date that is late Achaemenid, Seleucid, or Parthian, which was first proposed by Sidney Smith.[35] Waerzeggers provides

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[29] D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626–556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 3. For the date of the Babylonian Chronicle, see Wiseman, 1.

[30] Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 9n7.

[31] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 143.

[32] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 143.

[33] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 151n38. Zawadzki employs but modifies Kristin Kleber's arguments in her dating of the Verse Account. She uses the references of Rēmūtu and Zēriya to date the text to 522/521 BC, but Zawadzki considers these mentions to be late additions after the text was already composed. To see the argument from her two works, see Kristin Kleber, "Zēria, šatammu von Esangila, und die Entstehungszeit des 'Strophengedichts,'" *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* 52 (2007): 65–66; Kristin Kleber, *Tempel und Palast. Die Beziehungen zwischen dem König und dem Eanna-Tempel im spätbabylonischen Uruk*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 358 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008).

[34] J. A. Brinkman, "The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited," in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 86–87. Brinkman also calls into question whether Wiseman's conclusions are accurate regarding the similarity of many other chronicles. See 87n78.

[35] Caroline Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History? Shaping Political Memory in the Nabonidus Chronicle," in *Politcal Memory in and after the Persian Empire*, ed. Jason M. Silverman and Caroline Waerzeggers, Ancient Near East Monographs 13 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 103. See especially footnote 31. Smith argued for this dating by comparing the form to another fragment that mentions Darius and Artaxerxes, namely B.M. 36304. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 98.

a broad range from the reign of Artaxerxes II (early 4th century) to 60 BC.[36] Fant and Reddish also follow this date.[37] Waerzeggers argues for this range due to the text's discovery, which was in a collection actively used during that period.[38]

Waerzeggers also highlights two details that seem to suggest a 4th century or later construction. The first is the text's use of the anachronistic title "King of Parsu" for Cyrus.[39] The second detail is a reference to Persia as "Elam," which does not appear in any contemporary literature but resembles the Dynastic Prophecy.[40] Based on these instances, she concludes that the text may not be identical to the original and that judging the text as purely pro-Persian may be too simple.[41] The later dating is preferable due to its discovery with texts from contemporary time and the idiosyncrasies observed by Waerzeggers. The extant text probably comes from the 4th century or later.

The second issue is whether the text is a copy or an original. The overwhelming view in scholarship is that the text is a copy. Waerzeggers's article, however, provides an interesting alternative that demands consideration. Her arguments are so central to the counterview against the scholarly consensus that the following discussion is largely an analysis of her perspective. Her judgment of the text as an original creation stems primarily from the idiosyncrasies mentioned above: the title "King of Parsu," the use of "Elam," and a third detail in the name "Gutium."[42] She notes

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[36] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 103–4.

[37] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 228.

[38] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 103–4.

[39] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 104.

[40] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 103–4. Waerzeggers takes the reference to be anti-Persian sentiment. She also notes a similar argument of anti-Persian bias from Stephanie Dalley concerning the text's use of "Gutium" for Ugbaru. Stephanie Dalley, "Herodotos and Babylon," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 91, no. 5–6 (1996): 525–32.

[41] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 105.

[42] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 104–5.

that the title "King of Parsu" is anachronistic.[43] Waerzeggers also suggests that the use of "Elam" in reference to Persia "carried connotations of threat and destruction by Babylonia's age-old archenemy" and implies anti-Persian sentiment.[44] Additionally, she proposes a similar negative connotation in "Gutium."[45]

Waerzeggers argues that these details suggest an anti-Persian bias within the text effectively layered on top of whatever lay before. She provides the potential context for her reading of the text by noting the multiple Babylonian revolts that occurred under Persian rule.[46] She concludes then that both pro-Persian and anti-Persian biases can be maintained in the text's interpretation and provides an example of this duality in the New Year festival in 538 BC. In this year, the chronicle records the celebration in marked contrast to its absence during Nabonidus's reign. The mention serves as a rebuke of the Babylonian king and praise of Persia. In the celebration, however, the Persian ruler wears Elamite garb.[47] Waerzeggers argues that this detail would have been perceived as insulting or oppressive to Babylonian readers.[48]

Waerzeggers's perspective is certainly interesting and demands a closer inspection of the text, but her argument contains a few problems. The first weakness is the small amount of evidence for her reading, which hinges upon three minor details.

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[43] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 104.

[44] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 104–5.

[45] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 105.

[46] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 105n39.

[47] Whether the Persian ruler alluded to is Cyrus or Cambyses is debated, as the inscription is damaged. Technically, it could be neither. For more information on reading this word, see Amélie Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great of Persia: Images and Realities," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 177–78; A. R. George, "Studies in Cultic Topography and Ideology," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 53 (1996): 363–95.

[48] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 105–6. Though this interpretation appears to be the correct reading, it bears mentioning that such a reading requires an emendation. See Amélie Kuhrt, "Babylonia from Cyrus to Xerxes," in *The Cambridge Ancient History: Persia, Greece, and the Western Mediterranean c. 525 to 479 B.C.*, ed. John Boardman et al., 2nd ed., vol. 4, The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 122n72.

While these details indeed seem to have been added or changed later, Waerzeggers goes too far by extrapolating them as evidence for an original version. The second problem is the nature of her evidence. She does not provide any argument that is structural or interacts with the narrative at a macro level. The evidence is all minor and seems more reminiscent of a copier making updates than an author rewriting the narrative. The third weakness is the inconsistency of the evidence applied to her interpretation of the text. Waerzeggers argues for a significant anti-Persian bias within the text, but only two of the three apparent changes support that reading. The title "King of Parsu" for Cyrus indicates no bias but is merely anachronistic, so the anti-Persian reading rests on two details alone.

Additionally, the example she provides from the New Year festival in 538 possibly reveals anti-Persian sentiment, but it does not necessitate a late addition. A priest of Marduk could easily be both glad about the Persians' reinstatement of the Akitu festival while at the same time being annoyed by the Persian rulers' failure to conduct the ceremony in a ritually appropriate fashion. Criticism of Nabonidus does not exclude the possibility of simultaneous criticism of the Persian ruler from the same person.[49] Though Waerzeggers's analysis provides some remarkable insights, her judgment of the text as an original creation should be rejected.

Assuming then that the current text is a copy, the third issue is the date of the original. Wiseman's argument concerning the text's orthography and structure, also followed by Grayson and Zawadzki, has been rejected above. Several arguments exist though concerning the text's content and that content's bearing on the *sitz im leben* for the text's creation. Two dates seem most probable for the text's creation: shortly after 539 BC and around 520 BC. The first is obviously shortly after the fall of Babylon. The

[49] Whether this comment has any bias at all is uncertain. It could have simply been an accurate recording of what took place. Kuhrt proposes a possible reasoning for what Cambyses or Cyrus wore. See Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great," 177–78. In other words, it is possible and even reasonable to speculate what a Babylonian priest would have felt about the Elamite garb in the ceremony, but whether the recording of this detail reflects significant bias is questionable.

text then would have functioned as a propaganda piece to justify Cyrus's conquest of Babylon. The second date develops from uprisings of Nebuchadnezzar III and IV. These insurrectionists apparently presented themselves as sons of Nabonidus.[50] The goal of the text would then be to refute any narrative suggesting that Nabonidus was a good ruler, thus discrediting Nebuchadnezzar III and IV in the process. Though different contexts, each date has relatively little impact on one's interpretation of the chronicle. In either setting, the primary goal of the inscription is to disparage Nabonidus, and the simultaneous action is to praise Cyrus and justify Persian rule. Shortly after 539 seems the more natural context, but considering the matter further is unnecessary for the purpose of this chapter.

Though the evidence for an early dating might not be strong for the surviving text, the chronicle's disposition still carries weight for the original text stemming from the latter half of the 6th century. The text presents a strongly positive view of Cyrus and negative view of Nabonidus that fits within the context of a post-fall Babylon.[51] Any conclusion for the text's dating and history requires some guesswork and should be held tentatively. Nevertheless, some estimations do seem more plausible than others. The explanation that seems to handle all relevant issues most effectively is that the surviving text is a 4th century or later copy that mostly preserves the version of the chronicle created shortly after 539.

Moving on from the text's date and history, I will provide a brief summary of the text's contents and then discuss the issue of source criticism for the chronicle. The first few years of the chronicle are too damaged to reveal much information, though they do clearly report on several military endeavors. The text then records Cyrus's defeat of Astyages and Cyrus's subsequent sacking of Ecbatana. It then jumps to Nabonidus's

[50] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 151.

[51] I discuss these dynamics more in the disposition section below.

seventh year when he was in Tayma while the "prince, his officers, and his army were in Akkad."[52] The eighth year's text is missing, but it states that Nabonidus stayed in Tayma for the next three years. During the ninth year, his mother died, so the crown prince and his army mourned for three days. The ninth year also mentions Cyrus's destruction of a kingdom that many have taken to be Lydia.[53] The inscription repeatedly highlights the cessation of religious festivals in these years and Nabonidus's failure to come to Babylon. Most of years twelve through sixteen are destroyed as well. In his seventeenth year, he entered the temple and "performed the Akitu festival *as in normal times*."[54]

The final section discusses Cyrus's attack and the fall of Babylon. When Cyrus seized Sippar without a fight, Nabonidus fled. Cyrus later also "entered Babylon without a battle."[55] Nabonidus was subsequently arrested when he returned to Babylon. When Cyrus entered the city, something is laid down before him, perhaps demonstrating the city's joy at his coming. Lastly, the text explains how Cyrus returned the gods displaced by Nabonidus to their original cities and how there was no more interruption of religious ceremonies.

The Nabonidus Chronicle is not an easy text to analyze. The significant damage to the inscription leaves the scholar with numerous questions and holes in knowledge. Furthermore, the text's composition poses a problem. The text is probably a Persian-commissioned inscription after the fall of Babylon that is an edited version of a Nabonidus inscription before the fall. Such a text demands that the scholar engage in

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[52] Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 106.

[53] Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 107. The inscription is damaged where the name of the location should be. The dominant view throughout the text's history has been that this place is Lydia. As a result, many scholars date the fall of Lydia to 547 BC. Increasingly, scholarship is shifting away from this reading toward Urartu. Either interpretation is dependent upon reading one damaged sign and is mostly irrelevant for this dissertation's purposes. For more info, see Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 39–40. Many scholars still maintain Lydia as the correct reading. See Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 146–47.

[54] Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 109.

[55] Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 110.

source criticism. Unfortunately, the lack of editions and previous texts makes those efforts rely heavily on speculation and individual judgment. While somewhat necessary, conclusions about the nature of the text's composition must be taken with a grain of salt. For example, Zawadzki argues that the 6th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, and 12th years contain nothing from the original inscription.[56] Only the 9th year, he maintains, contains original information.[57] Zawadzki's theory is possible, but the premise is too speculative to arrive at any firm conclusion about the text's composition. My analysis attempts to be sensitive to issues of composition, but my primary goal is to deal with the form of the text that is extant.

Literary structure. The text is so poorly preserved that any attempts to organize the material into a structure demand considerable guesswork. The Chronicle reflects the standard format of Neo-Babylonian chronicles. It moves through Nabonidus's regnal years, remarking on key events and details of each year, including military encounters. The suggested structure is as follows:

1. Accession year and first year (i.1–8)
2. Second year (i.9–10)
3. Third year (i.11–22)
4. Fourth – sixth years (i.lacuna–ii.4)
5. Seventh year (ii.5–8)
6. Eighth year (ii.9)
7. Ninth year (ii.10–18)
8. Tenth year (ii.19–22)
9. Eleventh year (ii.23–lacuna)

[56] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 150–51.

[57] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 151.

10. Twelfth – sixteenth years (ii/iii.lacuna–iii.4)

11. Seventeenth year and fall of Babylon (iii.5–15)

12. Aftermath of Babylon's fall (iii.16–iv.9)

Disposition. Scholarship allows for four basic views of the Nabonidus Chronicle: (1) generally objective and reliable, (2) biased and reliable (3) early biased and unreliable,[58] and (4) late biased and unreliable.[59] My view best fits into the second category, but I also want to highlight some valuable insights from the other camps. I will briefly survey the various perspectives and provide arguments for my judgment on the text's disposition.

One of the most common perspectives on the chronicle is that it is a generally objective and reliable account.[60] Two primary arguments exist for supporting the Nabonidus Chronicle's reliability: correspondence with contemporary sources, especially archival texts,[61] and affinity with other Babylonian chronicles.[62] The first argument is difficult to deny and thus does not need to be defended, but the second argument is more contested.

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[58] Scholars who deem the text unreliable do not necessarily claim that the chronicle has nothing of value to offer. Nonetheless, their conclusions concerning the text's portrayal of events is predominantly negative and doubtful.

[59] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 96.

[60] Waerzeggers undergoes a similar history of research as my small section here. She actually argues for "two diametrically opposed" camps corresponding to the first two categories I have provided. Although there are indeed diverging interpretations regarding the chronicle's objectivity, her categorization might be an overstatement of a few scholars' perspectives. Kuhrt, for instance, acknowledges bias in the text (see footnote 69 below), but Waerzeggers emphasizes how much Kuhrt argues for the chronicle's reliability and places her in the category of scholars who consider the text a neutral witness. Like Waerzeggers, I have also split scholars into two camps for clarity and ease, but the scholarly opinion would perhaps be more precisely shown on a spectrum as one group. Many scholars within these first two views would likely see themselves somewhere in between the two perspectives or at minimum, agreeing with elements from both camps. Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 97.

[61] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 98. There are only minor, and relatively easy to explain, inconsistencies between the chronicle and the archival texts. For more information, see Waerzeggers "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 98n9.

[62] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 100. For another resource on the Babylonian Chronicles, see Caroline Waerzeggers, "The Babylonian Chronicles: Classification and Provenance," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 71, no. 2 (2012): 285–98.

The Babylonian chronicles are typically viewed as objective, brief accounts of history and kings.[63] Amélie Kuhrt argues this very point by stating that if the scholar abandons assumptions from other source material, then the chronicle appears to follow the typical pattern of reporting only events relevant to Babylon and its ruler.[64] Beaulieu observes that the chronicle records the cancellation of the Akitu festival but expresses no anger at their absence and remarks that the text relays events in a "dispassionate tone."[65] Robartus van der Spek views the chronicles not as historical narrative but as a "database."[66] He continues that the chronicles remain detached from history and avoid applying a narrative to the facts. Instead, they merely record details about Babylon and its kings.[67] Kuhrt, however, does concede that the Nabonidus Chronicle may contain biases but that it remains "the most reliable and sober account of the fall of Babylon."[68] She states that the chronicles as a genre were not written "at the behest or in the interests of any political agency," and that this chronicle's dispassionate statements are extremely reliable.[69]

The view of the Nabonidus Chronicle as a dispassionate and objective record of history is tempting but incomplete. While it is true that the chronicle is quite consistent with archival evidence and indeed reliable, claiming that the text is objective is an

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[63] Waerzeggers doubts this view and refers to the series as a "miscellaneous, ill-defined group of texts." Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Chronicles," 286.

[64] Kuhrt, "Cyrus to Xerxes," 122.

[65] Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of His Steles from Harran and Babylon," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 138.

[66] Robartus J. van der Spek, "Darius III, Alexander the Great and Babylonian Scholarship," in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg*, ed. Wouter Henkelman and Amélie Kuhrt, Achaemenid History 13 (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2003), 290.

[67] van der Spek, "Darius III," 291.

[68] Kuhrt, "Cyrus to Xerxes," 122.

[69] Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great," 176.

overstatement. The narrative seems to create a sharp contrast between the commendable behavior of Cyrus and the neglect and carelessness of Nabonidus. Though this inscription shares much with other Babylonian chronicles, it also reflects a unique and detectable agenda. Furthermore, the idea that the other chronicles are totally objective should be approached with caution because the mere inclusion or exclusion of certain facts and details can reveal an attempt to shape a subtle narrative. As a result, this first view of the Nabonidus Chronicle is helpful and mostly accurate in judging the chronicle's reliability but remains incomplete.

A second view is that the text is heavily biased toward Cyrus and the Persians but that these biases are discernable and do not undermine the source's reliability. Scholars in this camp closely align the Nabonidus Chronicle with the Cyrus Cylinder and Verse Account as tendentious.[70] Brinkman considers the typical view of the Babylonian chronicles as objective and detached to be "functional, if limited."[71] Brinkman also notes the difficulty with the genre of the Babylonian chronicle due to the lack of clear criteria for the categorization of a document as a "chronicle."[72] Nevertheless, he concludes that the chronicles provide an "essential chronological backbone for much of Mesopotamian history between the eighth and sixth centuries."[73]

Though the text is essential and quite reliable, scholars of the second view argue that the chronicle does not seem to be detached. Reinhard Kratz observes that the Nabonidus Chronicle has a clear concern: the uninterrupted celebration of the Marduk cult through the Akitu festival.[74] While Kratz observes the text's bias, he still seems to

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[70] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 101; Muhammad A. Dandamaev and Vladimir G. Lukonin, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 377.

[71] Brinkman, "The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited," 74.

[72] Brinkman, "The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited," 76.

[73] Brinkman, "The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited," 74.

[74] Reinhard Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," in *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena*, ed.

value its contribution to historical reconstruction more than contemporary works like the Verse Account and the Cyrus Cylinder.[75] Scholars with this perspective tend to emphasize that the text's bias lies primarily in the structure and the inclusion or exclusion of historical details, rather than distortions of them.[76] This second view of the Nabonidus Chronicle is strong, but other scholars with differing interpretations have provided additional valuable insights.

The third view of the Nabonidus Chronicle is that the chronicle was produced in the 6th century and, being heavily pro-Persian, is not reliable. One prominent scholar who takes this position is Zawadzki. He notes the radical shift in tone after the first three years of the Chronicle. It changes from Nabonidus's military successes to suddenly focusing on Cyrus after the lacuna. Zawadzki observes that the text presents Cyrus as a conquering leader but Nabonidus as a ruler who abandoned his people.[77] As Zawadzki notes, constant mentions of the Akitu festival's cessation is the defining feature of the chronicle[78] and contains a discernable critique of Nabonidus.[79] He contends that the lack of a description for the eighth year implies that the festival was performed.[80] Such an absence reveals the chronicler was not keen to show Nabonidus in any positive light.[81]

A. Panaino and G. Pettinato (Milan: Università di Bologna & IsIao, 2002), 149.

[75] Kratz never explicitly gives a summary judgment of the Nabonidus Chronicle. The primary concern in his analysis is the ideology of the text, not its historical accuracy. His comments seem to imply that he still considers the chronicle mostly reliable, but he also could be placed somewhere in between the second and third categories with a mixed view of the text's reliability. Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 149–50. Zawadzki cites this same page from Kratz asserting that Kratz judges the Nabonidus Chronicle to be unreliable, but his judgment of the text is not so clear to me. Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 142.

[76] Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 149.

[77] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 144.

[78] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 149.

[79] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 145.

[80] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 150.

[81] Admittedly, this point is speculative. The absence could easily be explained by the current text being a copy of an original that was damaged before the copier could access it. He might have left year 8 out because he did not have a year 8 in his *vorlage*. Nevertheless, the key argument does not rest upon

Zawadzki argues that the preserved inscription is basically nothing like the original Nabonidus inscription except for the first three years. Based on this assumption, he interprets the inscription's message to be that the ruler who remains faithful to Marduk will experience success.[82] Zawadzki ultimately calls the Nabonidus Chronicle a "propaganda document" with two goals: to present political opinions antagonistic toward Nabonidus and to present Cyrus positively.[83] He argues that its depiction of Nabonidus is distorted and "almost totally loses contact with reality."[84] His overall assessment of the chronicle is that the text is too near to the events it records and too directly involved with them to be reliable.[85]

Zawadzki's judgments about the propagandistic goals of the text are important because they urge the scholar toward caution. Any text that has an apparent goal must be approached and interpreted carefully. Nevertheless, Zawadzki undervalues the religious focus of the text in favor of the political. He fails to give enough credence to the possibility that a priest of Marduk created the text with theological goals as prevalent as political goals. The scholar should approach the text with wariness, but Zawadzki goes too far in his criticism of the chronicle's reliability.

A fourth view, and the least mainstream, is that the text is a 4th century or later creation and unreliable. This perspective has been best argued by Caroline Waerzeggers.[86] Some of her arguments appeared above in the dating section, but a quick summary will

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year 8 but upon the continual presentation of Nabonidus in a villainous form.

[82] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 145.

[83] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 151.

[84] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 151.

[85] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 151–52. Waerzeggers interprets Zawadzki quite differently than I do. She writes "The Chronicle's ultimate reliability remains undisputed by Zawadzki. The report may be selective and incomplete, but it is not false." She does not cite Zawadzki here directly, but she cites page 143 of the aforementioned article earlier in her summary. I do not draw the same conclusion from Zawadzki's article. Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 102.

[86] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 102.

be helpful. For Waerzeggers, two details undermine a pro-Persian judgment of the text: the anachronistic use of "King of Parsu" for Cyrus and the use of "Elam" to refer to Persia. These two details, in addition to the use of "Gutium" for Ugbaru suggest anti-Persian sentiment within the text.[87] Waerzeggers then urges that we should maintain both a pro- and contra-Persian reading of the inscription.

The arguments for this perspective are critiqued above, but a brief review is beneficial. This theory is built on too few points of evidence, some of which can be contested. The evidence consists only of minor, not macro level observations. Lastly, the details don't reflect a clear and consistent vantage point but could support several editors/authors.

Notwithstanding the above criticisms, the fourth view is important for properly interpreting the Nabonidus Chronicle. It is a crucial reminder that the inscription preserved today is probably much later than the original. It also serves as a caution against assuming every detail of the text's perspective is set in stone. The analysis by Waerzeggers and others shows that the text possibly underwent changes in at least the 4th century or later. Though these details do not seem to reflect an original version, they do reveal minimal changes and should not be ignored.

Several themes permeate the Nabonidus Chronicle. Zawadzki has noted a few of the ways the text contrasts Cyrus and Nabonidus: military successes vs. defeats,[88] the continuation vs. interruption of religious practices,[89] and respect vs. disrespect for the dead.[90] The text probably records some of Nabonidus's military successes in his first few years, but no evidence exists of any recorded military successes from the beginning of his

[87] Waerzeggers, "Facts, Propaganda, or History," 104–5.

[88] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 144.

[89] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 144–45.

[90] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 150–51.

stay in Tayma. Cyrus, however, enjoys multiple victories culminating in the conquest of Babylon. The text shows the constant refrain of Nabonidus's stay in Tayma that causes the cessation of the Akitu festival and inability for some of the gods to come to Babylon. The problem is solved when Cyrus conquers Babylon, enters as its king, and resumes all religious ceremonies. Cyrus's response to his wife's death even seems to be presented more favorably than Nabonidus's response to his mother's death, in which Nabonidus still does not enter the city for the mourning ceremony. Nabonidus is consistently compared negatively with Cyrus.

The religious festival that the chronicle is most concerned with is the Akitu festival.[91] The Akitu festival's cessation functions as the chronicle's primary critique of the Babylonian ruler. The lack of an Akitu festival would have been disconcerting for those faithful to Marduk and is clearly noteworthy to the chronicler. The resumption of all religious practices and ceremonies, including the Akitu festival, is the climax of the narrative. The text even notes the gathering of local gods into Babylon and seems to celebrate Cyrus's return of the gods.

The inscription consistently portrays Nabonidus negatively. His physical absence from Babylon, leading to the cancellation of the Akitu festivals, is an explicit theme throughout the text. Meanwhile, the inscription portrays Cyrus positively as a competent and welcomed liberator. The author seems to be a Babylonian living after the

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[91] The Akitu festival or New Year's festival was especially important in Babylon as it was the event when Marduk would inhabit the body of the king to perform rituals and offerings in a proper manner. By being in Tayma and not Babylon, Nabonidus was effectively preventing Marduk from exercising his role as the primary god of the Babylonian pantheon. See Spencer C. Woolley, "'Where Has Nabonidus Gone? Where Can He Be?' A Synthesis of the Nabonidus Controversy," *Journal of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters* 93 (January 2016): 239. Beaulieu suggests that the feast in Daniel, Xenophon, and Herodotus may allude to the Akitu festival for celebrating Sîn, originally conducted in Harran. He does this by observing that the dates for the fall of Babylon and an Akitu celebration correspond perfectly. See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 152–53. Wolters expounds this thesis with arguments from both astronomy and from evidence of similar contemporary celebrations. For his full article, see Albert M. Wolters, "Belshazzar's Feast and the Cult of the Moon God Sîn," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5 (1995): 199–206.

fall of Babylon who has faith in Marduk and did not approve of Nabonidus's reign, possibly a priest of Marduk writing at the behest of Persian authority.

Key historical details. Though it contains strong criticism of Nabonidus and potentially even some small anti-Persian sentiment, the Nabonidus Chronicle remains quite reliable and provides numerous key historical details. Though perhaps some have overstated the text's objectivity and neutrality, the chronicle still seems to be quite reliable as a historical source. It claims that Astyages's army revolted and handed him over to Cyrus who then sacked Ecbatana. The text remarks consistently of Nabonidus's absence from Babylon and the cessation of the Akitu festival. It mentions the death of Nabonidus's mother, and it later mentions Nabonidus's return. It remarks on Cyrus's defeat of the Babylonian army at Opis and the conquest of Sippar, after which Nabonidus fled. Most notably, it describes the fall of Babylon to Persia in which the Persians enter "without a battle."[92] It also records the death of Cyrus's wife and gives information about a religious ceremony conducted by the Persians in Babylon.

Intersection with Daniel. The Nabonidus Chronicle's intersection with Daniel appears most prominently in the fall of Babylon, which is recorded by both texts, though it also has pertinent information for the identity of Darius the Mede. One of the most important details the chronicle gives regarding Babylon's fall is that the Persian army entered the city without a battle.[93] The chronicle also is one of the primary resources for determining Nabonidus's decade absence from Babylon and his subsequent transfer of authority to Belshazzar. The conflict between Astyages and Cyrus is a significant point for the identity of Darius the Mede. Beyond this detail, the text also mentions Ugbaru (Gubaru I) as governor of Gutium and a general for Cyrus who dies a short time later. It

[92] Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 110.

[93] Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 109–10.

then mentions Gubaru II a few lines later, who serves as an officer over Babylon. Scholars have proposed both these individuals as potential matches for the identity of Darius the Mede. The text's year-by-year timeline also provides significant clarity to better understanding Belshazzar's role in the kingdom. The text further suggests that Nabonidus was away from Babylon during its fall, with Daniel's account of the event focusing on Belshazzar.

Verse Account of Nabonidus

The Verse Account of Nabonidus is a poetic text that covers the same basic material from the Nabonidus Chronicle. [94] It was discovered by Hormuzd Rassam in 1880 and is in the same collection as the Sippar Cylinder from the previous chapter.[95] The preserved inscription is a small fragment of a clay tablet, just over four inches long and four inches wide. Smith estimates that the extant text represents "a little more than the bottom left quarter of the original."[96]

Most scholars consider the date of the inscription to be shortly after the fall of Babylon (539 BC). Kleber argues, however, that the inscription should be dated to Darius's reign around 520.[97] She argues for this date primarily due to the mentions of Zeria and Rimut in column five of the inscription.[98] These two individuals were officials who eventually sided with rebels during Babylonian revolts in 522/521. Kleber asserts that the text's negative portrayal of them requires a *terminus post quem* of the fifth year

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[94] For full translation, see Pritchard, *ANET*, 312–15. For full text and translation, see Schaudig, *Die Inschriften*, 563–78; Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 83–91.

[95] "Collection Online: Verse Account," British Museum, accessed April 28, 2020, https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1469546&partId=1.

[96] Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 27.

[97] Kleber, "Zēria," 66.

[98] Pritchard, *ANET*, 314. Zeria and Rimut are transliterated many different ways. I'm following the spelling in *ANET* for simplicity.

of Cambyses (526/525) because they are attested in letters and administrative documents until that year.[99] She places the text after the Babylonian revolts, summarizing "Das Strophengedicht ist mit der Nennung der Beamtennamen sehr personalisiert, die Zeit nach 2 Darius ist daher m.M. nach zu favorisieren."[100] Zawadzki rejects her dating, preferring the earlier date. He employs two arguments. First, the later date only makes sense if the officials held their positions through Cambyses's reign and supported the usurpers, which evidence does not confirm. Second, the text relates directly to Nabonidus's reign and the fall of Babylon while lacking references to the revolts.[101] The earlier date is preferable, but the extant copy probably was produced after the Babylonian revolts with minor edits like references to the two officials.[102]

The text begins by emphasizing Nabonidus's crimes against his people and then focuses on his theological unfaithfulness in pushing a god "which nobody had (ever) seen in (this) country."[103] It also includes a remark about the festivals being completely stopped. After these religious actions, he "entrusted the kingship" to his oldest son and gave him command of the army.[104] The inscription then details his march to and subsequent stay in Tayma, which negatively impacts Tayma's population through massacres and forced labor. After areas of significant damage and uncertain content, the text moves into a series of insults and vilifications of the Babylonian king. The narrative concludes with an account of Cyrus's restoration of theological orthodoxy and physical repairs and improvements in Babylon.

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[99] Kleber, "Zēria," 65.

[100] Kleber, "Zēria," 66.

[101] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 151n38.

[102] Beaulieu also takes this view. See Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King," 137.

[103] Pritchard, *ANET*, 313.

[104] Pritchard, *ANET*, 313.

Literary structure. The Verse Account is quite damaged and thus makes any attempt to reconstruct a structure difficult. Nonetheless, below is a proposed literary structure for the inscription. The text moves from topically covering Nabonidus's sins to his stay in Tayma. After mentioning Cyrus, the text bashes Nabonidus and presents Cyrus as the righteous alternative to the wicked, defeated king.

1. Sins of Nabonidus (i.1–16)
2. Installment of Sîn (i.17–ii.15)
3. Tayma Inhabitation (ii.16–iii.6)
4. Conflict with Cyrus? (iii.7–iv.lacuna)[105]
5. Denigration of Nabonidus (v.2–v.27)[106]
6. Cyrus's Restoration of Babylon (v.28–vi)

Disposition. The disposition of the Verse Account is not as complex or debated as that of the Nabonidus Chronicle. The universal view toward the Verse Account is that it must be treated with caution and functions primarily as a justification for Cyrus's conquest of Babylon.[107] Smith argues that the text's content shows the writer's intention to present Nabonidus as unfavorably as possible.[108] Likewise, Ronald Sack states that the inscription was produced to justify Babylon's fall and Persia's rise.[109] Just as he does with the Nabonidus Chronicle, Kratz judges the Verse Account to be

[105] This portion is so damaged that most of the "lines" preserved are only one or two words at the start of each line. As a result, determining the subject matter except through Cyrus's mention and surrounding contextual material is virtually impossible. Pritchard, *ANET*, 314.

[106] There is clearly a topic shift from section 3 to 5, but section 4 is such a mess that how exactly this movement takes place is unclear.

[107] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 142.

[108] Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 31.

[109] Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), 16–17.

tendentious literature.[110] He argues that it bears little intrinsic worth as a historical source, asserting that the text mixes motifs together from other inscriptions and entangles itself in contradictions.[111] While scholars do differ somewhat on the text's historical value, there is virtually unanimous agreement that the Verse Account is overtly biased against Nabonidus and is clear propaganda. Though the text's pro-Cyrus propaganda reveals itself, the view taken by most scholars is that the author was a Babylonian priest from the cult of Marduk.[112] This view is probably correct.

Tadmor stresses the necessity of remembering the Verse Account's poetic form in interpretation. He contends that scholars often struggle to harmonize the text with contemporary inscriptions because they read chronologically rather than topically and because they read line seventeen too literally.[113] The text's poetic nature is an integral aspect to properly understanding the Verse Account. Most of the other ancient Near Eastern sources are building inscriptions that can be read more simply. The Verse Account, however, requires more care and attention to literary elements.[114]

The Verse Account's agenda is undeniable. It was intended to sway opinion. Smith deduces from the text's form and polemic nature that the text was probably intended to be read aloud.[115] It may have even been sung.[116] Kuhrt notes that the Verse Account shows the strong support that Cyrus and the Persian conquest had from at least

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[110] Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 149.

[111] Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 150.

[112] Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 380.

[113] Hayim Tadmor, "The Inscriptions of Nabunaid: Historical Arrangement," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger*, eds. Hans G. Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen, Assyriological Studies 16 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 354.

[114] For example, the Verse Account's depiction of Ehulhul's restoration does not necessarily imply that the restoration took place before the Tayma absence. Rather, it likely mocks Nabonidus's claim and failure to do so before the absence. See Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 208.

[115] Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 31.

[116] Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great," 175.

some of the Babylonian population.[117] Kuhrt's claim is probable, and there is no doubt that this text reveals a pro-Persian propaganda campaign. Many of the events and details from the Verse Account are probably reliable, but the alleged motivations for them and their portrayals must be inspected carefully. For example, the Verse Account depicts Nabonidus constructing an image for Sîn, which his inscriptions confirm. Nevertheless, the text describes the image as demonic and with a hostile countenance.[118] It seems clear then that the author of the Verse Account used many real actions and events and merely spun them in a way that would vilify Nabonidus.

The narrative incorporates many themes as tools for its propagandistic message. The text condemns Nabonidus's actions, accuses him of mistreating and killing his people, ridicules his propaganda against Cyrus, scorns his religious crusade, and even mocks his alleged inability to write.[119] Strangely enough, the insult that he cannot write comes in what Beaulieu considers "the most significant part of the Verse Account."[120] Beaulieu thinks it so important because it reveals specific claims made by Nabonidus in his inscriptions and criticizes the idea that the king should prevail over religious matters.[121] The author of the text is contrasting Nabonidus's claims to have secret knowledge and revelation from the gods with the king's ignorance.[122] Meanwhile, the

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[117] Kuhrt, "Cyrus to Xerxes," 115.

[118] For an interesting look at Nabonidus's reconstruction of Sîn's image, see Thomas G. Lee, "The Jasper Cylinder Seal of Aššurbanipal and Nabonidus' Making of Sîn's Statue," *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie Orientale* 87, no. 2 (1993): 131–36. Lee translates the description of the image more positively with its only negative descriptor being "strange." The overall perspective of the account is still negative toward this building project though.

[119] Pritchard, *ANET*, 314.

[120] Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King," 162.

[121] Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King," 162.

[122] An interesting article on this criticism of Nabonidus comes from Peter Machinist and Hayim Tadmor. In their article, they analyze this section of the Verse Account, particularly a phrase in line 12. The basic arguments of their article are as follows. The criticism refers to an instance when Nabonidus claimed to have wisdom which surpasses that of a text compiled by Adapa. The criticism, however, mocks Nabonidus's claim by referring to a document that does not even exist and would be theologically incorrect if it did. As a result, the attack on Nabonidus is intended to show him as "not only blasphemous, but utterly idiotic." Peter Machinist and Hayim Tadmor, "Heavenly Wisdom," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near*

narrative presents Cyrus as the leader who restores theological orthodoxy, repairs Babylon, and saves the people from Nabonidus's wickedness. The account attempts no subtlety in its rebuke of Babylon's last king but makes a bold and obvious effort to tarnish Nabonidus's reputation and to extol Cyrus.

Despite the text's pro-Cyrus bend, it is unlikely that the text was produced purely as a political weapon of indoctrination. The idea that the Marduk priests were discontent with Nabonidus is likely since his promotion of Sîn above the chief Babylonian deity is heavily suggested in his royal inscriptions. While Marduk's demotion would have come with political effects for the priests as well, it is highly unlikely that they were all cynics who only were concerned about the authority granted to them by their offices. Nabonidus's religious sins would have been meaningful to orthodox Marduk priests. As a result, the Verse Account must be approached not purely or even primarily as a political propaganda piece but as a religious chastisement of a wayward king and a celebration of Marduk's victory over the unrighteous.

Key historical details. The unique historical details that the Verse Account offers are limited since the text mainly just rehashes material from the Nabonidus Chronicle. The text's redundancy with other sources combined with its overt bias have resulted in negative judgments from scholars. Still, many assertions and even insults in the Verse Account have been verified by contemporary inscriptions.[123] The text is hardly useless since a few valuable pieces of information emerge. As Anderson notes, the text suggests that Cyrus was not the only actor in the propaganda war. Nabonidus seems to

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Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo, ed. Mark E. Cohen, Daniel C. Snell, and David B. Weisberg (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1993), 146–51.

[123] For example, the Harran Stele confirmed the Verse Account's story of Nabonidus's remaking a statue called Nannar that was probably an image of Sîn. See Lee, "Jasper Clinder," 131–32. Beaulieu also remarks that the information in the Verse Account is mostly corroborated by the Harran Stele (i.e. Nabonidus and His God/Inscription 13). Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 172.

have enacted his own propaganda campaign against Cyrus.[124] The account provides strong additional evidence that Tayma was Nabonidus's permanent residence during his absence from Babylon.[125] It also testifies to a claim from Nabonidus of his looting Cyrus's palace. Anderson takes this statement to reflect a legitimate historical possibility,[126] but it must be treated with the gravest suspicion. It potentially illuminates the extent of Nabonidus's religious reforms in his later years, but the situation remains mostly obscure.[127] The most important details the text offers (but also attested elsewhere) are Nabonidus's religious building projects, cessation of key religious festivals, transfer of authority to Belshazzar, and Cyrus's efforts in rebuilding Babylon and returning to religious orthodoxy.

Intersection with Daniel. Despite the knowledge that has surfaced, much of Nabonidus's campaign and stay in Tayma remains a mystery. For that reason, every bit of information that provides more context on his absence and Belshazzar's administrative role is valuable for understanding Daniel's portrayal of Belshazzar and the book's silence regarding Nabonidus.[128] The Verse Account also reflects a significant propaganda war between Nabonidus and Cyrus that shapes our impressions of the ancient rulers even now. Without understanding these figures and Daniel's picture of them, poor judgments of the biblical text are easy.

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[124] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 74.

[125] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 174.

[126] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 74.

[127] For a discussion of these years and the Verse Account's potential explanation, see Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 219.

[128] For a couple other sources regarding Nabonidus's absence not yet mentioned in this dissertation, see Hani Hayejneh, "First Evidence of Nabonidus in the Ancient North Arabian Inscriptions from the Region of Taymā'," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 31 (2001): 81–95; W. G. Lambert, "Nabonidus in Arabia," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 2 (1972): 53–64.

Cyrus Cylinder

The Cyrus Cylinder primarily describes the fall of Babylon from the perspective of Cyrus.[129] The date and location of its discovery are disputed.[130] Rassam claimed that he discovered the barrel-shaped,[131] clay inscription at Babylon in 1879.[132] Sir Henry Rawlinson, however, immediately objected to Rassam's account, and the details of the cylinder's finding have been debated ever since.[133] Originally only thirty-six lines of the inscription were preserved with the original cylinder,[134] but P. R. Berger identified a fragment of the inscription in 1970 that provides some of the last ten lines.[135] Two small fragments of a duplicate recently were identified by W. G. Lambert and Irving Finkel.[136] Unfortunately, even with Berger's connection and the two additional fragments the text remains incomplete, most notably at the beginning and end of the

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[129] For full translation, see Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:314–16; Pritchard, *ANET*, 315–16; John Curtis, *The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia* (London: British Museum Press, 2013), 42–43; Irving Finkel, "The Cyrus Cylinder: The Babylonian Perspective," in *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon*, ed. Irving Finkel (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 4–7. Finkel's is the most up to date version since two fragments were found in 2010. For full text and translation, see F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften Der Achämeniden* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1911), 2–8; Schaudig, *Die Inschriften*, 550–56. Finkel has also provided a recent transliteration directly from the cylinder. Irving Finkel, ed., *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 130–33.

[130] Jonathan Taylor, "The Cyrus Cylinder: Discovery," in *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon*, ed. Irving Finkel (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 36.

[131] Finkel humorously remarks that the Cyrus Cylinder isn't a cylinder at all since since the middle is swollen. Thus, its shape is that of a barrel and not cylinder. Finkel, "Babylonian Perspective," 11.

[132] Taylor, "Discovery," 35–36; Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:314.

[133] Taylor, "Discovery," 35–36. Taylor's paper on these issues is quite helpful. For a brief summary of his reconstruction of events surrounding the text's history, see Taylor, "Discovery," 62–63.

[134] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 267.

[135] P.-R. Berger, "Der Kyros-Zylinder mit dem Zusatzfragment BIN II Nr. 32 und die akkadischen Personennamen im Danielbuch," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 64, no. 2 (1975): 192–234; C. B. F. Walker, "A Recently Identified Fragment of the Cyrus Cylinder," *Iran* 10 (1972): 158. The fragment was originally published by Nies but was not matched with the full cylinder until later. James B. Nies, *Historical, Religious, and Economic Texts and Antiquities*, vol. 2, Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies (New Haven, CT: AMS Press, 1920).

[136] Curtis, *Cyrus Cylinder*, 45.

inscription.[137]

It is almost unanimously agreed among scholars that the Cyrus Cylinder was composed shortly after the fall of Babylon.[138] The fragment connected by Berger identified the cylinder's purpose as a foundation inscription to commemorate the rebuilding of Babylon's wall. In doing so, he helped date the text's construction as well. In addition to the wall's rebuilding, Anderson notes that the description of returning displaced peoples and the mentions of administrative affairs in Babylon require a few years gap between the fall of Babyon and the text's production.[139] The Cyrus Cylinder remains one of the most important ancient Near Eastern texts ever found.[140]

The text immediately takes a theological and political stance by describing Nabonidus as an "incompetent person" who "continually did evil against his (Marduk's) city" through his neglect of Marduk and cessation of religious festivals.[141] The inscription proceeds by describing how Marduk sought a leader to correct such a grievance and chose Cyrus to conquer Babylon. The text then explains how the god delivered Nabonidus into Cyrus's hands and how the inhabitants of Babylon welcomed him without a battle. He restored Marduk worship in Babylon and was celebrated as a result. Cyrus then returned the images that Nabonidus had brought into Babylon, placing them in their original cities. Furthermore, he built and restored permanent temples and sanctuaries for those gods.

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[137] For many high-quality images of the cylinder, see Finkel, *King of Persia's Proclamation*.

[138] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 142.

[139] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 64.

[140] For just a couple examples of recent publications, see Finkel, *King of Persia's Proclamation*; Curtis, *Cyrus Cylinder*.

[141] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:315.

Literary structure. Due to the text's damaged state, the structure is somewhat speculative. Nonetheless, a structure may be offered. The narrative begins by outlining Nabonidus's misdeeds and impiety. Marduk then hears the cries of the people and raises Cyrus to save Babylon. The rest of the narrative covers Cyrus's entrance into Babylon, his successes, and his restoration of the cultic centers in the area.

1. Nabonidus's wickedness (1–8[142])
2. Marduk calls Cyrus to save Babylon (9–19)
3. Cyrus's pronouncement and entrance to Babylon (20–26a)
4. Marduk submits kings to Cyrus (26b–30a)
5. Returning gods and restoring buildings (30b–45)

Disposition. Like the Verse Account, the scholarly consensus on the Cyrus Cylinder is that it is propaganda.[143] Sack considers the Cyrus Cylinder similar in tone to the Verse Account, only much more straightforward with its propaganda.[144] The text's function as a building inscription to commemorate Cyrus's restoration of Babylon gives more insight into its disposition, but two recently discovered fragments with the same text show that the content was distributed and used more widely than a mere foundation deposit.[145] Finkel notes how the text's content always appeared at odds with the purpose of an unreadable building inscription. The two newest fragments of a duplicate have confirmed a wider circulation than merely resting within Babylon's wall.[146] Its propagandistic purpose seems undeniable.

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[142] Lines 1–3 are mostly destroyed but probably had similar content to lines 4–8. See Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy."

[143] Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus," 142; Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 143.

[144] Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar*, 18.

[145] Finkel, "Babylonian Perspective," 2. For more discussion on these fragments, see Finkel, *King of Persia's Proclamation*; Curtis, *Cyrus Cylinder*, 45.

[146] Finkel, "Babylonian Perspective," 18.

Just like the Nabonidus Chronicle and Verse Account, Kratz argues that the Cyrus Cylinder exemplifies literature that has a clear and definitive interest. As a result, it demands extreme care when pursuing a historical reconstruction.[147] He maintains that all three of the aforementioned inscriptions function primarily to defame Nabonidus and to offer an apology for Persian rule.[148] The inscriptions offer a counter-insurgency by harmonizing Babylonian nationalism and Persian domination through their emphases of Nabonidus's estrangement from Babylonian roots.[149] Kratz's remarks are helpful, but here he overreads the situation. What caused the Babylonian priests to create this propaganda with the Persian authority's blessing was probably theological orthodoxy, not political stability. Certainly, ensuring a stable transition would have been Cyrus's chief aim, but religious concerns were probably the priests' primary motive. Cyrus's and the Babylonian priests' goals need not be identical for them to cooperate on several propagandistic inscriptions.

In some cases, scholars have argued that this text and others show a much more tolerant Achaemenid imperialism than the earlier Assyrians and even that this text is a great humanitarian feat,[150] but such a claim is an exaggeration.[151] C. B. F. Walker argues that Berger's fragment shows the cylinder not as a "general declaration of human

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[147] Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 149–50.

[148] Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 150.

[149] Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 151.

[150] For example, John Curtis discusses how the Cyrus Cylinder was used for modern day political purposes and presented in Iran as a humanitarian achievement regarding human rights. Curtis, *Cyrus Cylinder*.

[151] Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 84. See also Curtis, *Cyrus Cylinder*. Kuhrt further argues that Cyrus was possibly following a policy similar to earlier Assyrian rulers that restored privileges and gave special treatment to strategic locations. Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 93. See also; R. J. van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations," in *Extraction & Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper*, ed. Michael Kozuh et al., Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 68 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 233–64.

rights or religious toleration but simply a building inscription."[152] This analysis is probably an overcorrection though. A middle perspective is most helpful, one that acknowledges the tolerance implied in the Cyrus Cylinder while recognizing its similarity to other Persian inscriptions. The cylinder is hardly the Magna Carta, but it still has implications for understanding Achaemenid religious policy.[153]

Kuhrt makes five comments concerning the style and perspective of the text. First, it is Marduk-focused. Second, the text focuses on Babylon and its inhabitants. Third, it contains no remarks of a general return of exiles. Fourth, the structure resembles standard Mesopotamian building inscriptions. Fifth, the text probably commemorates Cyrus's restoration of Babylon.[154]

Kuhrt's first, fourth, and fifth points are most important for the present analysis. The text certainly stresses Marduk's will and his role in Cyrus's "liberating" of Babylon. The emphasis reveals Cyrus's propagandistic theology and supports the conception of Nabonidus's rift with pro-Marduk Babylonian priests.[155] She alludes to another inscription detailing the restoration of Sîn's temple in Ur that appeals to Sîn.[156] Appealing to the patron deity of the city seems to have been standard policy. Kuhrt also notes that restoring rights and privileges, particularly religious ones, was probably common policy for Mesopotamian rulers.[157]

The text's propagandistic nature and emphasis on Marduk should not exclusively drive one's interpretation of the cylinder. As demonstrated by the fragment

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[152] Walker, "Recently Identified Fragment," 159.

[153] Sparks states, "The Cyrus Cylinder lends support to the generally accepted view of Persian imperialism, that the Persians garnered support from their new subjects by restoring and supporting native religious institutions." Sparks, *Ancient Texts*.

[154] Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 87–88.

[155] Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 93.

[156] Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 89.

[157] Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 89.

that was connected with the text later, the Cyrus Cylinder was likely used as a standard Mesopotamian building inscription. Being a building inscription hardly means that the cylinder is objective and neutral though. Therefore, interpreting this inscription requires a careful balance that weighs both perspectival aspects in analysis: a clearly propagandistic element and a simultaneous mundane function to commemorate building restorations. Altogether, the text presents Cyrus as a welcomed liberator, rebuilder, and servant of Marduk. Though the text is clearly celebrating Cyrus, many of the recorded details agree with other inscriptions.

Key historical details. The text contains several notable details, including Cyrus's returning of all the Babylonian gods to their proper cities.[158] It reiterates the claim of Nabonidus's theological changes and his drift from Marduk. The most important detail for Daniel is the text's description of Babylon's fall. The inscription claims that Cyrus entered Babylon in a "peaceful manner" and that his army did so "without fighting or battle."[159] This description agrees with the Nabonidus Chronicle. It states that Marduk gave Cyrus lordship over the Medes. It also claims that Cyrus was welcomed quite positively by the Babylonian population. Lastly, it records Cyrus's work in restoring and bolstering Babylon's wall.

Intersection with Daniel. The Cyrus Cylinder's intersection with the Old Testament is more direct than many of the inscriptions analyzed in this dissertation. Kenton Sparks wonders how much the Hebrew view of Cyrus as Yahweh's agent was influenced by Persian propaganda like this inscription.[160] While this thought is

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[158] Though this statement is certainly true, Nabonidus's portrayal is unfair. Nabonidus likely brought the gods to Babylon not out of evil or an intention to abandon the people but to protect the images in case other cities fell to Cyrus.

[159] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 2:315.

[160] Sparks, *Ancient Texts*, 398.

interesting, the centrality of gods and their wrath in the ancient Near East should not be overlooked. Any ancient text's author who asserts that a conqueror is the agent of his god probably would have held that position with or without any help from Persian propaganda. If the conqueror succeeds, then he proves himself to be sent from the author's god. If an assailant fails, then the author's god has judged the assailant. To interpret major events theologically would be far from unusual.[161]

Scholars have often appealed to this text in defense of Cyrus's decree to return the Jews to Jerusalem, though this application has little impact on the book of Daniel. The text's main intersection with Daniel comes from its comments on Nabonidus's reign and the manner in which Babylon falls to Cyrus. The most important of these details is the cylinder's claim that Babylon fell without a fight and how it matches with Daniel's account, though its mention of the Medes also has implications for understanding Cyrus's rise to power.

Dynastic Prophecy

Lastly, the much later Dynastic Prophecy is a list of prophecies concerning various rulers beginning with neo-Assyrian kings and possibly going as far as the Seleucid period.[162] The text is damaged in a way that makes it impossible to determine just how much material is missing.[163] Indeed, no single line remains perfectly

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[161] For a few examples of this practice in the OT, see: Josh 7; 1 Sam 4; 2 Kgs 17; Jer 20; 34. In this light, it would be almost strange for the Babylonian priests (and many Babylonians in general) not to consider Cyrus as an instrument of Marduk's judgment. Cyrus then is successfully leaning into a common ANE tendency, rather than dramatically shifting public opinion.

[162] For text and translation, see A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 28–37. For translation, see William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds., *CoS*, vol. 1, *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 481–82; Susan Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia: A Case-Study for the Installation and Development of Greek Rule," in *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and Non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander*, ed. Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 12–14.

[163] Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 27.

preserved.[164] At first, Grayson identified only four columns within the text.[165] W. G. Lambert, on the other hand, suggests that it originally contained six columns. He argues for six columns due to scribal practice and necessary space for material on Achaemenid kings from Darius I to Artaxerxes III.[166] Susan Sherwin-White agrees with Lambert's proposition of six columns.[167] The text originally having six columns appears more likely.

The date of the inscription is debated. Matthew Neujahr argues that the text may be dated by its apparent failed authentic attempt to predict victory for Darius III, thus placing it around 333–331 BC.[168] Since the battle of Guagamela proved decisive for Alexander and invalidated the prophecy for Darius's victory, that prediction may be seen as a genuine attempt to predict and a *terminus post quem*. The problem with this dating, however, is that the text continues to offer "predictions" of history after the date.[169]

Most scholars argue that the text is post-Alexander.[170] Dating the text to the time of Alexander's successors is not without problems either though. If the text dates to this period, then the author's false prophecy of Darius conquering Alexander is difficult to explain.[171] Sherwin-White tries to remedy this problem by claiming that the defeat was

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[164] W. G. Lambert, "The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic" (lecture, University of London, London: Athlone Press, 1978), 12.

[165] Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 24–27.

[166] Lambert, "The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic," 13. Regarding scribal practice, Lambert explains that cuneiform tablets run from left to right on the front and right to left on the back. Additionally, tablets are switched top to bottom, not side to side like we switch our pages. As a result, the rightmost column has broken off, thus removing columns 3 and 4 in their entirety. It is impossible to verify Lambert's theory without further discoveries, but his theory is persuasive.

[167] Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia," 10–11.

[168] Matthew Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander: Composition and Redaction in the Dynastic Prophecy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 64, no. 2 (2005): 107.

[169] Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 27; Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 104. Anderson disagrees with most scholars and states that the predictions after this event are merely bogus. This claim stands at odds with the prevailing opinion that these predictions do, in fact, report history accurately. Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 96.

[170] Lambert, "The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic," 13. Sherwin-White, for example, estimates the text's creation in the early Seleucid period. Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia," 11.

[171] Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 103.

converted into a victory and cites 2 Maccabees 13:9–24 as evidence.[172] She argues that the function of the text is not objective history and equates the alteration to a refusal to acknowledge the conquest.[173] Her arguments, however, are unconvincing. A blatant failed prediction of such magnitude would undermine the text's acceptability and purpose.

M. J. Geller takes an entirely different approach to solve the issue. In his unique interpretation, he argues that scholars have misidentified the text's historical referent. Namely, the account in question refers to wars between Antigonus and Seleucus.[174] Geller's solution is appealing. It solves the problem of a false prophecy. It allows for a unified composition of the text, and it places that text squarely after all the events that the text "predicts." Despite these strengths, a jump over Alexander the Great seems too bizarre to accept Geller's proposal.[175]

Solving the date and composition of the Dynastic Prophecy is no easy task. The physical quality of the text alone provides enormous hurdles for interpretation. Frankly, any one of the three major interpretations of the troublesome inscription are valid. The reference to Darius's defeat of Alexander could be a failed authentic prediction. It could be an intentional misrepresentation, or it might not even refer to Darius and Alexander at all. Ultimately, no position is significantly stronger than the others, but each position will yield a different date and interpretation of the text's purpose and disposition. It seems most likely that the reference to Darius and Alexander is an

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[172] Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia," 11.

[173] Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia," 11.

[174] M. J. Geller, "Astronomical Diaries and Corrections of Diodorus," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 53, no. 1 (1990): 6.

[175] Geller anticipates and counters this criticism. He writes, "The omission of Alexander the Great from the Dynastic Prophecy can be understood from the point of view of this text, which is primarily concerned with those events directly affecting the fate of Babylon. Alexander's brief rule was less threatening to Babylon than Antigonus's hegemony." Geller, "Astronomical Diaries," 6n25. I do not agree that this explanation satisfies Alexander's absence from the text.

authentic and errant prediction of the future. Consequently, the date of the text's creation is probably 333–331 BC.[176]

The prophecy moves through various rulers, providing judgments on the quality of their reigns. The preserved portion of the text begins with the neo-Babylonian empire's beginning. The text progresses through the reigns of Neriglissar and Labashi-Marduk into the time of Nabonidus and Cyrus. The section referring to Nabonidus states that a "rebel prince will arise."[177] This prince establishes the dynasty of Harran, rules for seventeen years, and cancels the festivals. The prophecy bluntly attributes oppression and evil to the prince. The narrative also judges Cyrus negatively claiming that his rule will "oppress the land."[178] The next portion is debated but seemingly refers to Alexander the Great and Darius III, and the final column discusses rulers after Alexander.

Literary structure. The structure of the Dynastic Prophecy requires much guesswork. Only if further fragments or exemplars are found will an outline be able to be produced with certainty. As it stands, columns three and four are missing and column six is only mildly helpful. Fortunately, the preserved portions of the inscription reveal a straightforward chronological progression of rulers. Below is my best estimation of the prophecy's structure:

1. Babylonian rulers (i)
2. Babylonian rulers and Cyrus (ii)

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[176] With this view, the assumption is that subsequent material was added later. As a result, the text preserved today was possibly produced when the other camps argue it was (namely, early Seleucid or later). Nevertheless, the majority of the inscription seems to have been produced before 331. The errant prediction of Darius's victory was nonetheless preserved in later copies. Alternatively, Anderson's theory of the subsequent material being bogus prophecies remains plausible. The text is so damaged that it is impossible to determine if the material corresponds to historical reality.

[177] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 1:482.

[178] Hallo and Younger, *CoS*, 1:482.

3. Achaemenid rulers[179] (iii)
4. Achaemenid rulers cont. (iv)
5. Alexander and Darius (v)
6. Greek rulers[180] (vi)

Disposition. The scholarly judgment on the Dynastic Prophecy's purpose and disposition is not uniform.[181] Ringgren considers the text to be a critique of the Seleucids.[182] Sherwin-White, however, argues that the text is pro-Seleucid propaganda.[183] Neujahr contends that the preserved text is a redacted copy that includes an older authentic attempt to predict victory for Darius III.[184] Therefore, he determines that the text's function was to rally people around Darius III by providing prophecy of his victory alongside other verifiable true "predictions."[185] The text's archaisms seem to show its efforts to project authenticity.[186] Projecting authenticity is necessary to ensure that the text's predictions appear to be legitimate predictions.

One's judgment concerning the text's composition and date will drive interpretation of the text's disposition. Since I follow Neujahr's dating of the text, I

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[179] For more discussion of these missing columns, see Lambert, "The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic"; Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia."

[180] Sherwin-White suggests that two rulers referenced here are probably Philip III and Alexander IV. Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia," 14.

[181] Even the genre is up for debate. For an interesting and thorough discussion of this classification of cuneiform inscriptions, see Maria deJong Ellis, "Observations on Mesopotamian Oracles and Prophetic Texts: Literary and Historiographic Considerations," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 41, no. 2 (1989): 127–86.

[182] Helmer Ringgren, "Akkadian Apocalypses," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979*, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 383.

[183] Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia," 11.

[184] Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 101. The reason Neujahr argues for redaction is due to events and rulers recorded in the Dynastic Prophecy that occur after this prediction but accurately reflect historical reality.

[185] Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 107.

[186] Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 102n8.

unsurprisingly follow his arguments for the text's purpose. The text was probably originally used as propaganda that sought to rally Babylonia behind Darius. With that being said, contradictory estimations from scholars regarding the text's disposition toward the Seleucids reveal the speculative nature of judging the inscription.

Beyond the text's core perspective, a couple themes provide clarity. For example, Kratz observes that the Dynastic Prophecy maintains the anti-Nabonidus sentiment of the Persian inscriptions but adds a negative perspective of Cyrus.[187] This shift in perspective toward Cyrus probably served to establish Darius III as better for Babylon than both Nabonidus and Cyrus. Of critical importance, Geller argues that the key focus of the Dynastic Prophecy is the restoration of Babylon.[188] When theorizing about the text's ending, Sherwin-White also sees a reciprocal representation of Babylon's fall and rise as the core of the prophecy.[189] The fate of Babylon undoubtedly is a central theme to the narrative.

The text's damaged condition prohibits straightforward analysis. A scholar's position on the text's purpose rests heavily on the assumptions he or she makes concerning the amount and subject matter of content missing from the text. The apparent prediction of Darius's victory over Alexander adds another problematic reality of interpreting the extant text.

Key historical details. The text's obvious *vaticinia ex eventu* does not mean that the text's historical value should be dismissed. Neujahr observes a critical detail in analyzing the purpose and usefulness of texts. He writes, "The fact is that the Dynastic Prophecy is not history but propaganda…Saying that this text is not 'history,' however, is

[187] Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," 151. See especially n31.

[188] Geller, "Astronomical Diaries," 6.

[189] Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Babylonia," 14.

not enough; one must consider in detail why the composers of the text should have structured their propaganda in such a way."[190] Neujahr errs in assuming a text cannot both be history and propaganda. By "history," he probably more precisely means modern Western critical historiography. This claim is true, but that does not mean that the Dynastic Prophecy is not history at all. He is correct though that the scholar must carefully consider why the propaganda is structured in the way it is.

The most important comment Neujahr makes though is this: "What must be assumed, however, is that the author of such a propagandistic work included events which—whether they happened or not—are recognizable and presumed verified by the intended audience of the text."[191] When approaching propagandistic texts, the scholar should acknowledge that the author does not precisely record every event to the standards of modern critical historiography. Nevertheless, the scholar must also acknowledge that for propaganda to be truly effective, it must be grounded in a shared and partially verifiable perspective of reality.

With that being said, the most important historical details of the Dynastic Prophecy follow. It identifies Nabonidus as a "rebel prince," adding further evidence that he had no connection to the royal line. It corroborates the notion in other sources that Nabonidus cancelled religious festivals. The text claims that Cyrus did not kill Nabonidus but instead moved him to another place.[192] Of note, it provides an alternative perspective on Cyrus's rule over Babylon, suggesting that he was not as popular as Cyrus's own inscriptions claim.[193]

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[190] Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 107.

[191] Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 107.

[192] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 231.

[193] This claim should be taken with some suspicion. The alternative narrative is tempting since the claims of Cyrus's popularity come from Cyrus's inscriptions, but the Dynastic Prophecy seems to be as propagandistic as the Cyrus Cylinder or the Verse Account. The goal of the prophecy is to garner Babylonian support for Darius. One of the easiest ways to do that is to suggest that life under any other ruler has been terrible and under Darius, it will improve. So while Cyrus's inscriptions must be doubted, so

Intersection with Daniel. The Dynastic Prophecy most obviously relates to Daniel through their similarity, and this similarity is more significant than any of the individual historical details that the prophecy offers. Many scholars have noted the parallels between the two texts.[194] Most take these similarities to mean that Daniel was drawing inspiration from the Dynastic Prophecy and other Akkadian prophecies. This conclusion as it relates to the Dynastic Prophecy, however, rests on the assumption of a second century dating of Daniel. The date and composition of Daniel is a complex issue with much debate, with the presence of Aramaic only complicating the discussions.[195] Whichever text came first, they do seem to pull from the same tradition. So, the Dynastic Prophecy remains quite useful for better understanding Daniel's prophecies.

Summary of History and Perspectives

The Persian sources provide a number of valuable insights into the history behind Daniel. First, they reveal significant propaganda campaigns from both Cyrus and Nabonidus in the midst of their conflict. The analyzed sources, excluding the Dynastic Prophecy, bear noticeable positive bias toward Cyrus, and all are negative toward Nabonidus. This overt bias demands scholarly caution but does not invalidate the sources as reliable testaments to historical reality. The biases themselves provide a valuable

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must the Dynastic Prophecy. As a result, Cyrus's popularity in Babylon should be neither easily accepted nor totally rejected.

[194] The most notable of these was A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 18, no. 1 (1964): 7–30, but there have been many others, such as Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Hermeneutical Issues in the Book of Daniel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23, no. 1 (1980): 15–16; Paul Buehler, "Daniel and Akkadian Prophecy: Exploring the Origins of Apocalyptic Eschatology," *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 32, no. 1 (2008): 1–24; Neujahr, "When Darius Defeated Alexander," 105n24; Lambert, "The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic."

[195] These issues are outside the scope of this dissertation. For just a few discussions touching on Daniel's date and composition, see Ernest Lucas, "Daniel: Resolving the Enigma," *Vetus Testamentum* 50, no. 1 (2000): 66–80; John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); John Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1989); Zdravko Stefanovic, *The Aramaic of Daniel in the Light of Old Aramaic* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1927); H. H. Rowley, "The Unity of the Book of Daniel," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, no. 1 (1950): 233–73.

reflection of the methods and efforts of ancient rulers to sway public opinion.

Second, they suggest that Babylon's fall was not through a major battle but something much smaller and less violent. Though the descriptions in the above sources should be taken with some suspicion, the claim that Babylon fell without a battle seems plausible. Despite the attesting sources' primary function as propaganda, the target audience was the Babylonian population. A wild and clearly contrived summary of Babylon's fall would be patently rejected by the masses, many of whom would have been in Babylon at the time of Cyrus's and his army's arrival. Even worse, such blatant propaganda would probably enrage and incite many to resistance, causing the opposite result of its intention.

Nevertheless, the story of Babylon's fall might not necessarily be black and white. One's understanding of the descriptions relies on the scope of what a battle entails. A large clash between two armies of thousands would be too far a stretch, but Cyrus's army likely did face some armed combat that day. Certainly at least some individuals remained loyal to whatever authority remained in the city and refused to surrender their weapons. Much room exists for theorizing the events of that fateful day in the ancient Near East, but the Persian sources do seem to limit the range of our imaginations.

Third, they corroborate the tales of Nabonidus's religious reforms found in the Babylonian texts and also display Cyrus's use of those reforms as core to his propaganda campaign. Nabonidus's exaltation of Sîn above Marduk and other gods seems to have been controversial in Babylon, and it became an easy point of attack for the Persian propaganda. They presented Nabonidus as the unrighteous king who forsake the gods of Babylonian tradition and Cyrus as Marduk's chosen means to rectify the blasphemous behavior.

Fourth, Cyrus probably engaged in battle with Astyages and Media during his rise, but the details surrounding his ascension and consolidation of power remain unfortunately obscure. Cyrus's rise remains mysterious, but it is unlikely that he joined

with the Medes without armed conflict. The hypothetical situation that seems most plausible is that Cyrus defeated Astyages but made an agreement that gave Media a privileged, perhaps even equal position within the empire due to his connections with both Persia and Media.

Fifth, the texts are highly theological. Scholars tend to focus on the texts' purpose as political propaganda, and this aspect is undoubtedly a key function of these inscriptions. Nevertheless, a political function does not mean that a text is not thoroughly religious. Even more, given the likelihood that at least the Verse Account was produced by a Babylonian priest of Marduk, the purpose of religious propaganda seems even more central to the texts than one of political propaganda. Even if one rejects the previous statement, these sources still show that the means through which ancient kings like Cyrus accomplished their propaganda was through religion. For that reason, acknowledging the texts' religious focus is necessary for proper interpretation.

Sixth, they reveal divergent interpretations in history of Nabonidus's and Cyrus's reign. The next chapter will show this truth through subsequent history. At least two major traditions seem to have been preserved in history. First, some Akkadian and Greek sources have preserved a tradition in which Nabonidus was perceived as a terrible ruler who neglected his people and their gods. Cyrus then is the liberator who saves Babylon. Second, some sources have preserved a tradition in which Nabonidus is treated more favorably. In these sources, Cyrus is presented as an unwelcome conqueror.

CHAPTER 5

GREEK HISTORIANS

Despite the large number of letters, administrative texts, building inscriptions, and other sources, many important periods and events in the Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid era remain opaque. As a result, historians have frequently turned to other sources for illumination.[1] The closest chronologically and most notable of these sources are the Greek historians.[2] In fact, escaping Greek historians seems impossible when studying the Persians since the early stages of Greek historiography were focused on Persia.[3]

The Greek historians need no historical introduction since the focus of this dissertation remains on the late sixth century BC. Instead, the historical context of each historian will be presented in its respective section. As a result, this chapter can jump directly into analysis of the sources. The historians in view cover a significant amount of material that is not germane to Daniel. While that material is relevant for evaluating the author's disposition and trustworthiness, it is unfortunately too much information to cover in this project. As a result, the following analysis will focus predominantly on the sections of each historian's work that focus on events directly related to Daniel. Some foray into each historian's overall work is necessary, but these comments will remain

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[1] Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), ix.

[2] The Dynastic Prophecy could be placed alongside the Greek historians since it is not a contemporaneous source. The Dynastic Prophecy, however, is still produced in Akkadian. The difficulty of categorizing the sources is one reason I have placed the Dynastic Prophecy last in the previous chapter.

[3] Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 10.

brief. Exploration of many Greek historians would prove valuable,[4] but this chapter will focus exclusively on the two works that are most relevant to Daniel and its context: Herodotus and Xenophon.

Table 5. Key information of the Greek historians

Title	*Date (BC)*	*Author*	*Purpose*
The Histories	c. 420s	Herodotus	Explain Greco-Persian conflict and preserve deeds of heroism
Cyropaedia	c. 360s	Xenophon	Present Cyrus as a model of leadership

Herodotus

Herodotus, often called "The Father of History," is known for his work that covers the Greco-Persian conflict culminating in the Persian Wars.[5] His work is sometimes called *The Histories*, *The Persian Wars*, or merely titled by his name. The amount of literature on Herodotus is enormous and grows by the year. He remains one of the most discussed ancient authors with scholars constantly scrutinizing his work. P. A. Cartledge writes, "Of the making of translations of Herodotus—and thereby of the continuing vigorous and vital study of Herodotus—there is in fact no, or at least no immediately foreseeable, end. Herodotus lives!"[6]

[4] Some of the historians omitted from this dissertation are Berossus, Josephus, Abydenus, Eusebius, Ctesias, Diodorus, Timaeus, and Megasthenes. Perusals into their work would likely yield profitable insight for interpreting Daniel, but I must exclude them in this study for brevity.

[5] There is a plethora of translations and editions of Herodotus and will undoubtedly be more as time passes. For a few, see Herodotus, *Herodotus*, trans. A. D. Godley, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Herodotus, *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Andrea L. Purvis (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007); Herodotus, *The Histories*, ed. Walter Blanco and Jennifer T. Roberts, trans. Walter Blanco, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013).

[6] P. A. Cartledge, "Taking Herodotus Personally," *The Classical World* 102, no. 4 (2009): 382.

Despite the pronounced interest in Herodotus, information about his personal life is sparse and unreliable. As a result, scholars know little about who he was.[7] Marincola explains that Herodotus's traditional biography is a composite of ancient testimonies and inferences from his work.[8] The lack of evidence has cast much doubt on the traditional understanding of his life,[9] but a few aspects emerge with some reliability. The most apparent autobiographical detail is merely that he identifies himself as "Herodotus of Halicarnassus" in his proem.[10] James Romm observes that Herodotus also identifies himself as "of Thurii" in a version quoted by Aristotle, and he supposedly spent some of his later years in Thurii.[11] He seems to have been born in Halicarnassus and spent some of his life in several cities, including Samos, Athens, and Thurii.[12]

A key source for biographical information about Herodotus is the *Suda*, which Romm judges only partly reliable.[13] The *Suda* says that Herodotus came from a prominent family in Halicarnassus, mixed with both Greek and Carian members. The *Suda* further suggests that Herodotus spent time in Samos in exile after a failed coup against the ruler in Halicarnassus and later returned in a second, successful takeover.[14] According to the ancient author Aulus Gellius, he was born in 484 BC.[15] The internal

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[7] James Romm, *Herodotus* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 48.

[8] John Marincola, *Greek Historians*, Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 31 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 20.

[9] Marincola, *Greek Historians*, 20.

[10] Herodotus, *Herodotus*, trans. A. D. Godley, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 2.

[11] Romm, *Herodotus*, 49.

[12] Rosalind Thomas, "Introduction," in *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*, by Herodotus, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Andrea L. Purvis (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007), ix–x.

[13] Romm, *Herodotus*, 49. The Suda is a tenth century text akin to an encyclopedia. For more information, see Barry Baldwin, "Aspects of the Suda," *Byzantion* 76 (2006): 11–31.

[14] Romm, *Herodotus*, 49.

[15] A. D. Godley, "General Introduction," in *Herodotus*, by Herodotus, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), vii.

evidence gives no reason to doubt this estimation.[16] His death is also debated, but he probably saw the first few years of the Peloponnesian War, if not more.[17] So, he likely died in the 420s.[18] He also seemingly travelled considerably, yet even the scope of his travel remains unclear.[19]

If Herodotus's exile in Samos is true, it would provide meaningful context with which to interpret many of the political events recorded in his work.[20] The *Suda*'s stories of Herodotus the insurrectionist, however, struggle to find harmony with his presentation of Artemisia, the supposed grandmother of the ruler against whom Herodotus rebelled.[21] His positive portrayal of the woman clashes with the idea of a rebellious Herodotus. While possible, the explanations given in the *Suda* must be viewed with suspicion. Apart from the sparse details above, Herodotus the man sadly remains a considerable mystery.

The textual history of Herodotus is also opaque, though perhaps more transparent than the man himself. The text of Herodotus relies on a few key witnesses. The oldest and most important of these witnesses is the 10th century manuscript Laurentianus 70.3 (A).[22] Other major manuscripts include the 11th century Codex Angelicanus (B), 11th/12th century Vatican graecus 2369 (D), and 14th century Vatican graecus 123 (R).

These manuscripts, however, are not the oldest sources to Herodotus. The oldest sources are papyri from as far back as the first century.[23] Excluding one, all these

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[16] Godley, "General Introduction," vii; Thomas, "Introduction," x.

[17] Romm, *Herodotus,* 53.

[18] John P. A. Gould, "Herodotus (1)," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[19] Marincola, *Greek Historians,* 21–22. See especially 22n9.

[20] Romm, *Herodotus,* 49–50.

[21] Romm, *Herodotus*, 50.

[22] R. A. McNeal, "On Editing Herodotus," *L'Antiquité Classique* 52 (1983): 111.

[23] Olga Tribulato, "Herodotus' Reception in Ancient Greek Lexicography and Grammar: From

papyri come from Egypt, and most come from Oxyrhynchus.[24] At least forty papyri of Herodotus are extant,[25] but these fragments unfortunately contain only small portions of text.[26] Despite the papyri's small size, some overlap exists, allowing for competing readings. For instance, three papyri attest to Herodotus's account of the Babylonian marriage market.[27] With the papyri's fragmentary nature, the later manuscripts remain the most important resources for reconstructing Herodotus.

Scholars generally sort the major manuscripts into two families: Florentine and Roman.[28] The Roman family is generally considered more reliable.[29] Some scholars, however, dispute this separation into two groups.[30] The organization of Herodotus into nine books may have been done by an Alexandrian editor.[31] The textual history of Herodotus is mostly a mystery before the tenth century and the creation of A. Some changes like the transition from papyrus to codex are certain, but the date and content of changes from Herodotus to A is obscure.[32] Heinrich Stein published a critical edition of Herodotus in 1856 that significantly influenced subsequent critical editions.[33] Several

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the Hellenistic to the Imperial Age," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Herodotus in Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. Jessica Priestley and Vasiliki Zali (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 171.

[24] Stephanie R. West, "The Papyri of Herodotus," in *Culture in Pieces: Essays on Ancient Texts in Honour of Peter Parsons*, ed. Dirk Obbink and Richard Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 70.

[25] West, "The Papyri of Herodotus," 70.

[26] For an example of analysis, see Andrzej Mirończuk, "Notes on Two Herodotean Papyri," *Aegyptus* 90 (2010): 37–39; Andrzej Mirończuk, "Notes on Five Herodotean Papyri," *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 49 (2012): 227–32.

[27] West, "The Papyri of Herodotus," 75.

[28] McNeal, "On Editing Herodotus," 120.

[29] Tribulato, "Herodotus' Reception," 171.

[30] McNeal, "On Editing Herodotus," 121–22.

[31] The preserved spelling is also likely Alexandrian and not Herodotus's original spelling. McNeal, "On Editing Herodotus," 126.

[32] McNeal, "On Editing Herodotus," 128–29.

[33] McNeal, "On Editing Herodotus," 114–17.

modern critical editions of Herodotus exist, including ones by Walter Blanco and Jennifer T. Roberts, Haiim B. Rosén, and the foundational work of Carolus Hude.[34]

The traditional date for the completion of Herodotus's work is between 430 and 425 BC.[35] Some scholars, like Charles Fornara, have challenged this terminus and pushed the final publication date to 414 BC.[36] Regardless, Herodotus's mention of the Peloponnesian War gives a short window of possible dates (9.73).[37] The possibilities within this debated range have little impact upon this study, so a generic dating in the decade of the 420's BC will suffice. Dating Herodotus's final text more precisely requires significant analyses of external evidence that would distract from this dissertation's goal. With any proposed date, Herodotus would be writing from the general historical context of the Peloponnesian War. The only notable difference would be whether Herodotus concluded his work within the Archidamian War (the first part of the Peloponnesian War) or within the unstable and short-lived Peace of Nicias. The two possibilities would not foster a radically different perspective from the ancient historian.

Herodotus is organized into nine books, and the prevailing view is that he wrote his nine books generally in the order that we have today. Book 1 focuses primarily on Cyrus and Croesus. Book 2 is effectively a long intermission at the beginning of Cambyses's attack of Egypt where Herodotus plunges into a study of Egypt's culture and

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[34] Herodotus, *The Histories*; Herodotus, *Herodoti Historiae*, ed. Haiim B. Rosén, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987); Herodotus, *Herodoti Historiae*, ed. Carolus Hude, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

[35] David Sansone, "The Date of Herodotus' Publication," *Illinois Classical Studies* 10, no. 1 (1985): 1.

[36] Charles W. Fornara, "Evidence for the Date of Herodotus' Publication," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 91 (1971): 25–34; Charles W. Fornara, "Herodotus' Knowledge of the Archidamian War," *Hermes* 109, no. 2 (1981): 149–56.

[37] Henceforth, I will use parenthetical references to Herodotus's text and not footnotes. Doing so will reduce clutter. The method of citation will be a number followed by a period and a second number, where the first number represents the book and the second number represents the section within that book. So, 1.5 would indicate Book 1, Section 5. This method helps maintain consistency across the many versions of Herodotus and allows readers to easily find the section in whatever version of Herodotus they have accessible. For further discussion of Herodotus and the Peloponnesian War, see Egidia Occhipinti, "Herodotus' Awareness of the Peloponnesian War," *Journal of Ancient History* 8, no. 2 (2020): 152–74.

practices. Book 3 tracks Cyrus's successors, mainly Cambyses and Darius. Book 4 is similar to Book 2 where Herodotus takes a historical break for a cultural and geographical exploration. In it, he delves into studies of Scythia and Libya when Darius attacks. Books 5–6 describe the Ionian revolt, and Books 6–9 outline the main Persian assaults into Greece. Book 1 contains the majority of relevant information for Daniel, but the rest of *The Histories* does still provide insights into Herodotus's style, methodology, reliability, and interests.[38]

Literary Structure

Scholarship has generally understood Herodotus's composition in two ways: disunity and unity.[39] The older view in modern scholarship is that of disunity, which the supremely important Herodotean scholar Felix Jacoby (1876–1959) held.[40] Jacoby's developmental view argued that Herodotus began as an ethnographer and anthropologist and later developed into a historian.[41] Though the debate was already ongoing, Jacoby's developmental view became a focal point of the discussion. The disunity view contends that *The Histories* is a collection of accounts written at different times with different purposes.[42] As a result, Herodotus's final work contains many digressions and struggles

[38] I have provided a shorthand list of important sections of Herodotus in Appendix 1. The references illustrate Herodotus's purpose and method and show him interacting with and often critiquing his sources. The references for earlier books (especially Book 1) also point to key sections that have relevance for Daniel. This list is intended to be used for finding quick examples in Herodotus that explain the arguments I make concerning his work. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list that details every allusion to Herodotus's methodology, but it hopefully proves useful to beginners interested in further Herodotean study.

[39] Lateiner borrows the terms "analytic" and "unitarian" from Homeric criticism. Donald Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 4. Dewald and Marincola also use this apparently common terminology. Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, ed. Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3. Dewald and Maincola's historical summary of the two positions is illuminating, and I will rely on it heavily for my brief survey.

[40] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 1–2.

[41] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 2; Felix Jacoby, "Herodotos," in *RE Suppl.*, 1913.

[42] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 2–3.

to find any consistent tone or theme. Many readers, however, have received *The Histories* as a unified literary work. This view's first clear modern defender was Otto Regenbogen (1930), followed by Wolfgang Schadewaldt (1934) and Max Pohlenz with *Herodot: Der erste Geschichtschreiber des Abendlandes* (1937).[43] Decades later, Henry Immerwahr expounded the view of unity in his influential work *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (1966).[44] This view maintains that Herodotus did construct his entire work with a unified plan. Consequently, these scholars see continuity, clear patterns, and consistent values throughout Herodotus.[45]

Donald Lateiner acknowledges the value in both perspectives but nonetheless sees unity in Herodotus's work. He argues that one of the biggest weaknesses with the disunity perspective is its inability to agree upon stages of Herodotus's development in thought or even whether the composition of Books 7–9 preceded or followed the composition of Books 1–5.[46] Lateiner favors a unitarian view of Herodotus, but many of the compositional questions that arise are due to apparent disunity.[47]

Despite weaknesses in the disunity argument, some evidence does suggest that Herodotus initially organized *The Histories* into multiple works.[48] For instance, Books 7–9 record Xerxes's invasion and show greater cohesion than other parts. Herodotus even introduces terms and characters in them discussed in earlier books, suggesting separate composition.[49] Herodotus also launches into a long discussion of Egypt's land and people

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[43] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 3; Max Pohlenz, *Herodot: Der Erste Geschichtschreiber Des Abendlandes* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1937).

[44] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 3; Henry R. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, Philological Monographs 23 (Cleveland: Press of Western Reserve University, 1966).

[45] Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, 4.

[46] Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, 4–5.

[47] Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, 4.

[48] Romm, *Herodotus*, 55.

[49] Romm, *Herodotus*, 55–56. The reader should not push this evidence too far though, as

when he arrives at the point of the Persian attack on Egypt (2.2). He may have written this section independently and then interposed it at a relevant point in the historical narrative.[50]

Romm argues that Herodotus must have worked on *The Histories* over much of his life and revised it on more than one occasion, even to the point of still adding to it until his death.[51] He suggests that various readers may see Herodotus as a unity with great diversity or a diversity with great unity.[52] Ultimately, Romm concludes that the work of Herodotus exists as he intended in all major respects.[53] Romm's position is one example of the trend in scholarship toward a unitarian view.[54]

Precisely determining the structural development of Herodotus's work is a large task, one that exceeds the scope of this project. Herodotus may have intended for *The Histories* to stand as multiple works at some point, but its readers have received, understood, and analyzed it as one work throughout its history. Furthermore, Herodotus's work undoubtedly shows some unity. He certainly digresses at times. Indeed, almost all of Book 2 can be seen as a digression, but these excursions into culture, geography, and other matters don't undermine the book's message. Telling the primary political and military history is only one of Herodotus's goals. He is also seeking to produce what is effectively an anthropological study, as various cultural practices seem to fascinate Herodotus. The sporadic nature of Herodotus's work is not a reflection of disunity but shows a man with a range of interests who is seeking to produce a holistic work.

Herodotus is a massive work. Some accidental redundancy would be highly plausible.

[50] Romm, *Herodotus*, 56.

[51] Romm, *Herodotus*, 57.

[52] Romm, *Herodotus*, 56.

[53] Romm, *Herodotus*, 58.

[54] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 3.

Nevertheless, without an explicit statement from Herodotus himself, the reader will never know the precise form that Herodotus intended for his work. It is plausible that Herodotus intended *The Histories* to exist in the form it does today and that he worked on its various parts with that purpose in mind, but it is far from provable. For this dissertation, I will use a canonical approach and analyze *The Histories* in its final form. As a result, a level of unity in literary form is necessarily assumed. An outline of Herodotus is below:

1. Book 1 (Cyrus and Croesus)
2. Book 2 (Egypt)
3. Book 3 (Cyrus's Successors)
4. Book 4 (Scythia and Libya)
5. Book 5 (Greek Conflict and Ionian Revolt)
6. Book 6 (Ionian Revolt and Persian Wars)
7. Book 7 (Persian Wars)
8. Book 8 (Persian Wars)
9. Book 9 (Persian Wars)

Disposition

Concerning Herodotus's purpose for writing, it is only fair to give the man himself the first word. He writes, Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι᾽ ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.[55] Herodotus then seems intent upon preserving a reliable account of what happened in the past. At the same time, he expressly wants to

[55] Herodotus, *Herodotus*, 1981, 1:2. Translation (my own): That which is from the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus is set forth here, so that what has happened might not fade from men's minds in time, and so that the great and marvelous works—some brought forth by the Greeks and some by the barbarians—might not go without acclaim, neither the reasons that they made war against each other.

record *ἐργα μεγαλα τε και θωμαστα*, specifically that they not be *ἀκλεα*. Herodotus expresses this clear goal, which does not seem to be objective preservation. This dual function is probably part of the reason for disagreeing interpretations of Herodotus's work. A methodology that employs elements of both modernism and postmodernism, however, handles Herodotus's work well.

Many issues surface when analyzing Herodotus's work. A few guiding categories can help provide organization and clarity to the sea of problems. First, Herodotus's reliability warrants attention. Judgments on his reliability will be traced both throughout history and in contemporary scholarship. Second, Herodotus's style and method demand some focus. Included in this discussion will be comments on his argumentative technique, content, and other elements. Third, the nature of Herodotus requires discussion. After discussing the smaller issues, the final section will attempt to combine the details to explain what kind of work Herodotus set out to produce.

The reception of Herodotus's reliability has been controversial to say the least. Throughout history, two general perspectives emerge regarding the historicity of his work.[56] These two perspectives are that Herodotus is reliable and the father of history or that Herodotus is unreliable and cannot be regarded as a work of history. While Cicero labeled him "The Father of History," Plutarch branded him "The Father of Lies." Ironically, J. A. S. Evans observes that these two perspectives simultaneously created a contradictory reputation around Herodotus.[57] Such confusion was not merely present through separate people with competing opinions. Even individuals gave Herodotus inconsistent judgments. For example, while Cicero did dub Herodotus the father of

[56] For a helpful summary of the reception of Herodotus in history, see Emily Baragwanath and Mathieu de Bakker, "Introduction: Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus' Histories," in *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus*, ed. Emily Baragwanath and Mathieu de Bakker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2–10.

[57] J. A. S. Evans, "Father of History or Father of Lies; The Reputation of Herodotus," *The Classical Journal* 64, no. 1 (1968): 11.

history, he also accused him of pure invention.[58]

Evans notes that Herodotus's ambivalent reputation in ancient history is difficult to explain,[59] but one observation he makes does illuminate a significant portion of it. He states that ancient historians developed a pattern of criticizing their predecessors. He further adds, "Herodotus himself wastes no praise on Hecataeus of Miletus, and Thucydides mentioned Hellanicaus, whom he probably used, only to find fault with him."[60] So, heavy criticism from subsequent ancient authors is normal and expected.

Ironically, Herodotus's exemplary prose and style damaged his historical reputation by making his work more aesthetically pleasing and entertaining.[61] Many of Herodotus's students, including and following Ctesias, effectively became historical novelists, thus damaging Herodotus's reputation further.[62] A few negative works from history include *Against Herodotus* by Manetho, *On Herodotus' Thefts* by Valerius Pollio, *On Herodotus' Lies* by Aelius Harpocration, *Against Herodotus* by Libanius, and *On the Malignity of Herodotus* by Plutarch. Of these criticisms, only Plutarch's work survives, but the titles alone show that significant anti-Herodotean literature was present. Of Herodotus's critics, Arnaldo Momigliano identifies Thucydides as the most important agent in discrediting him.[63]

In later eras, readers continued to admire Herodotus's style and storytelling but impugn his history. Dionysius, Lucian of Samosata, Procopius of Caesarea, and Photius all viewed Herodotus favorably while never affirming his historical reliability.[64] The

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[58] Evans, "Father of History," 11.

[59] Evans, "Father of History," 12.

[60] Evans, "Father of History," 13.

[61] Evans, "Father of History," 13–15.

[62] Evans, "Father of History," 13–14.

[63] Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 40.

[64] Evans, "Father of History," 15.

Renaissance continued this momentum with a similarly negative judgment on Herodotus. His reception shifted slightly with James Rennell's work that asserted Herodotus was, in fact, honest but merely naïve.[65] Just as Jacoby influenced the compositional debate, he also significantly impacted the discussion of Herodotus's trustworthiness. Most scholars did not accept the basic reliability of Herodotus's narrative until Jacoby.[66]

Expounding upon history's reception of Herodotus much further is unnecessary for this dissertation, but a few summarizing remarks would still be helpful. Generally, Herodotus's work was received well upon completion. His readers immediately after him, however, were highly critical. Herodotus was effectively lost and forgotten during the Middle Ages but was rediscovered and read positively in the Renaissance. For example, Henricus Stephanus's *Apologia pro Herodoto* was a key voice for Herodotus, as well as the works of Joseph Scaliger and Isaac Newton.[67] The Enlightenment swung the pendulum back toward criticism of Herodotus, and he was predominantly considered untrustworthy, though the judgments were less harsh than those from the ancient historians.[68] Scholarship in the twentieth century began to trend more positively toward Herodotus once again. Today, academia as a whole views Herodotus more favorably than perhaps it ever has. Undoubtedly, Herodotus has experienced a tumultuous reception through history.

Some scholars have sought to explain Herodotus's ambivalent reception. For instance, Evans links Herodotus's reputation to his perspective on war that differs from Thucydides's perspective. Thucydides understood war as a natural phenomenon linked to man's inherent desire to dominate the weaker. Therefore, searching for the reasons or

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[65] Evans"Father of History," 15.

[66] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 4.

[67] Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 51.

[68] Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 52.

αἰτιην of war, like Herodotus does, was pointless. Herodotus, however, sought to explain wars through customs, culture, actions, and reactions.[69] Thucydides's understanding of war gained more support in the ancient world and even throughout much of history, but the past century has shifted toward Herodotus's view.[70] Evans argues that this shift on warfare has caused modern scholars to regard Herodotus more highly than their predecessors since they find Herodotus's view of war more compelling.

Evans's conclusion does bear some weight, but the shifting views of war should be seen primarily as a consequence of shifting methodologies. Namely, the move toward postmodernism is the chief cause for a warmer reception of Herodotus. One may even argue that Herodotus exemplified some key postmodern ideals by seeking to understand and explain the causes for war. He accomplished this feat through examining cultural customs and values and developing a better understanding of the "barbarian" perspective. Herodotus was effectively seeking multiple smaller narratives from various vantage points instead of accepting a single grand metanarrative.

The two general perspectives on Herodotus observable in antiquity persist into scholarship today, and little dialogue exists between these two camps.[71] Simply, those perspectives are that Herodotus is either reliable or unreliable.[72] Such divergent interpretations and judgments of Herodotus's work among today's scholars demand inspection.

One common view of Herodotus is that he is a reliable historian and a pillar of the development of modern historiography. Arnaldo Momigliano argues that Herodotus

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[69] Evans, "Father of History," 16.

[70] Evans, "Father of History," 17.

[71] Dewald and Marincola, "Introduction," 4.

[72] With the plethora of Herodotean scholars, more nuances exist than these two generalized judgments. Some nuances will appear in discussion, but this dissertation can hardly cover them all. While perhaps an oversimplification, the two general conclusions on Herodotus's reliability will serve as guideposts for the subsequent discussion.

is a better historian than virtually all the medieval historians.[73] Moses I. Finley states that Herodotus was successful in his endeavor to record history faithfully.[74] Christian Meier views Herodotus quite positively as well.[75] Donald Lateiner considers Herodotus mostly reliable and unpartisan.[76] Robert B. Strassler also has a high view of Herodotus and argues that the Western world must acknowledge his work as the progenitor of academic history.[77] Other scholars who consider Herodotus generally reliable are J. A. S. Evans,[78] P. J. Rhodes,[79] W. Kendrick Pritchett,[80] and Gordon S. Shrimpton.[81] Viewing Herodotus as a trustworthy historian is a popular view within scholarship today.

Many scholars have not been so quick to accept Herodotus as an entirely truthful historian. Most of his critics consider him either dishonest or naïve. O. K. Armayor judges that Herodotus falsified some of his observations and likely lied about some of his travels.[82] Stephanie West is more positive toward Herodotus's travel claims but suggests that his inquiry did not include careful attention to primary evidence and

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[73] Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 30.

[74] M. I. Finley, *The Greek Historians: The Essence of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), 4–5.

[75] Christian Meier, "Historical Answers to Historical Questions: The Origins of History in Ancient Greece," *Arethusa* 20, no. 1/2 (1987): 41–57. Though Meier also does consider dual motives in Herodotus similar to this dissertation.

[76] Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, 218.

[77] Robert B. Strassler, "Editor's Preface," in *The Landmark Herodotus* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007), xxxvii.

[78] J. A. S. Evans, *Herodotus, Explorer of the Past: Three Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[79] P. J. Rhodes, "In Defence of the Greek Historians," *Greece & Rome* 41, no. 2 (1994): 156–71.

[80] W. Kendrick Pritchett, *The Liar School of Herodotos* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1993).

[81] Gordon S. Shrimpton, *History and Memory in Ancient Greece*, History of Ideas 23 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997). In the book, K. M. Gillis has prepared an appendix that covers Herodotus's source citations, prepared by K. M. Gillis. This tool defends Herodotus's sources as real and reliable and not fictitious.

[82] O. Kimball Armayor, "Did Herodotus Ever Go to the Black Sea?," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978): 62; O. Kimball Armayor, "Did Herodotus Ever Go to Egypt," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 15 (1978): 70.

contains a heavy dose of guesswork.[83] Detlev Fehling argues that Herodotus invented his sources.[84] These judgments on Herodotus do not require that the aforementioned scholars object to every one of Herodotus's claims. Neither do they imply that Herodotus gets everything wrong. Nevertheless, they do generally approach Herodotus more with skepticism than confidence.

Despite reasonable criticisms of Herodotus, his work still seems to be an overwhelmingly reliable historical source. Nonetheless, several details are verifiably wrong. He struggles with geography and distances. For instance, he grossly overestimates the height of Babylon's wall (1.178). Additionally, several more details appear fantastical or fabricated, like the infamous golden ants (3.102). Despite these idiosyncrasies, most of Herodotus's accounts appear reliable. While obviously not entirely objective, he does display an effort to give objective remarks at several junctures. Much of his historical accounts and cultural customs are corroborated. Furthermore, he remains the most important source for the Persian Wars by far. The fact that ancient Greeks lambasted him for being a barbarian lover further suggests that his work was probably quite fair.

The Histories must be viewed within the context of the Greco-Persian wars, so an anti-Persian bias may surface in certain instances despite his comparative fairness. Herodotus even explicitly constructs his historical narrative under the Greek versus barbarian dynamic.[85] Despite this framework, Herodotus is famous for his honesty and fair review. His portrayal of the Persians is remarkably positive compared to the cliched

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[83] Stephanie West, "Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests," *The Classical Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (1985): 281; Stephanie West, "Herodotus' Portrait of Hecataeus," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 111 (1991): 147; Stephanie West, "Introducing the Scythians: Herodotus on Koumiss (4.2)," *Museum Helveticum* 56, no. 2 (1999): 82.

[84] Detlev Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben Bei Herodot: Studien Zur Erzählkunst Herodots* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971); Detlev Fehling, *Herodotus and His "Sources": Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art*, trans. J. G. Howie (Leeds, UK: Francis Cairns, 1990).

[85] Herodotus, *Landmark Herodotus*, 3.

and hostile image presented by most writers in his time.[86] Future Greek writers would scorn Herodotus's fair treatment of the Persians, as far as five hundred years later.[87] Considering the persistent negativity with which the Greeks apparently viewed the Persians, Herodotus appears all the more impressive. His presentation of the Persians displays a level of objectivity and maturity far beyond most of the preserved writings of his peers and successors. Michael Flower aptly states, "Nonetheless, for better or for worse, Herodotus remains the best and fullest source for Achaemenid history."[88]

Historically, readers have judged Herodotus to be heavily pro-Athenian.[89] The most important evidence for this perspective is Herodotus's assertion that Athens was paramount in defeating Persia, also called the encomium. He acknowledges that the Athenians did most the work in defeating the Persians because it "appears to [him] to be true" even though it would "cause offense to many people" (7.139).[90] Evans explains how the Greeks were wielding their performance in the Persian Wars against one another as moral justification for their actions in the Peloponnesian War.[91] Given the cultural climate, Evans argues that the date of the encomium is important for interpretation. If it were written well before the Archidamian War, it is likely a fair and objective judgment of Athens's role against Persia. If Herodotus wrote it at the start of the war, then it is hard not to read it as a defense of Athens.[92] Either way, Herodotus would have produced the

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[86] Thomas, "Introduction," xxxi; Michael Flower, "Herodotus and Persia," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, ed. Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 275.

[87] Thomas, "Introduction," xxxii.

[88] Flower, "Herodotus and Persia," 281.

[89] J. A. S. Evans, "Herodotus and Athens: The Evidence of the Encomium," *L'Antiquité Classique* 48, no. 1 (1979): 112. See especially n2.

[90] Herodotus, *Landmark Herodotus*, 552.

[91] Evans, "Herodotus and Athens: The Evidence of the Encomium," 112–13.

[92] Evans, "Herodotus and Athens," 114.

final draft of his work after the war broke out and must have been prepared to stand by his judgment, which Evans concedes.[93]

Herodotus explicitly states that he gives Athens credit because he observes it to be true. His self-justification should not be ignored. He attempts to reflect the historical truth despite the other Greeks' disdain for how the Athenians were using this detail as a propagandistic weapon to build an empire.[94] Furthermore, Herodotus would almost certainly have known how his defense of Athens would have been used in public discourse, so reading his remarks as pro-Athenian is a reasonable conclusion. His remark is neither detached objectivism or Athenian cheerleading. It is recognizable but fair Athenian acclaim.

On the other hand, some scholars have argued that Herodotus's account of Persia's defeat serves as a critique of Athens.[95] In this interpretation, his observations of Persia's tyranny and loss in the Persian Wars serve as a warning against Athenian aggression in the Peloponnesian War. Lisa Irene Hau argues that Herodotus has moral didactic elements throughout his work.[96] She gives examples like his disapproving of the excuses that barbarians give for having sex in temples (2.64),[97] Cleomenes's daughter Gorgo saving him from Aristagoras's bribes (5.51),[98] and the pattern of a powerful man brought low by sudden disaster such as Croesus (1.35–44; 1.86).[99] Herodotus skillfully weaves moral lessons into his historical narrative, so seeing a moral lesson in his tale of

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[93] Evans, "Herodotus and Athens," 115.

[94] Thomas, "Introduction," xiv.

[95] Hermann Strasburger, "Herodot Und Das Perikleische Athen," *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 4, no. 1 (1955): 1–25.

[96] Lisa Irene Hau,*Moral History from Herodotus to Diodorus Siculus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 172–93.

[97] Hau, *Moral History*, 175.

[98] Hau, *Moral History*, 179.

[99] Hau, *Moral History*, 181.

Persia's defeat is a plausible interpretation.

Romm, however, suggests that such an interpretation reads too much of the future into Herodotus's work. He mentions that Herodotus may have written most of *The Histories* before the Peloponnesian War had a clear outcome. Furthermore, Romm asserts that Herodotus focuses more on recording the past than providing a paradigm for the future.[100] Others like F. D. Harvey have also critiqued the anti-Athenian view of Herodotus.[101] Romm's cautions are worthwhile but have problems. Herodotus would have been writing well into the beginning portions of Athenian aggression, and the conflict's outcome is unnecessary for Herodotus to critique Athens. While Herodotus does primarily record the past, he also draws conclusions and makes moral suggestions to his readers.

Identifying Herodotus's view of Athens with any certainty is difficult. Readers need not choose between the anti-Athenian and pro-Athenian interpretations of Herodotus, as both can coexist. Herodotus's praise of Athens is explicit and difficult to deny, but some scholars have overstated his support for the city.[102] His praise does not mean that he is an outright supporter of Athens. He likely saw Athenian imperialism as an inevitable result of Athens's role in defeating Persia.[103] The thematic elements of tyranny and freedom do seem to develop into a didactic warning. Admittedly, the internal evidence is weak, so an anti-Athenian view of Persia's defeat should not be pushed too far. With that being said, the possibility of a warning to the Athenians seems stronger given the historical context of the Peloponnesian War in which Herodotus was concluding his work. So, pro-Athenian and anti-Athenian elements both seem to be

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[100] Romm, *Herodotus*, 54.

[101] F. D. Harvey, "The Political Sympathies of Herodotus," *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 15, no. 2 (1966): 254–55.

[102] Evans, "Herodotus and Athens: The Evidence of the Encomium."

[103] Martin Ostwald, "Herodotus and Athens," *Illinois Classical Studies* 16, no. 1/2 (1991): 148.

present in *The Histories*. Neither should be discarded. Herodotus displayed considerable nuance for his time in his presentation of the Persians. He seems to be presenting the Athenians with the same care. Herodotus both praises the Athenians for their role in the Persian Wars while also subtly critiquing their recent imperialism.

Herodotus should be read carefully but may be received as a mostly objective record of history. Herodotus does involve himself in the narrative by making moral judgments, but he still seems deeply concerned about reporting the truth. Herodotus does record some extraordinary accounts, but he frequently does so with more than a modicum of criticism. He occasionally expresses disbelief in a narrative he records, and he often provides multiple accounts of an event and suggests the readers judge and decide for themselves.[104] Overall, Herodotus seems to have believed in the possibility of truthfully reconstructing the past, though he also seems to acknowledge that the past can be elusive.[105]

Herodotus's style is another important aspect for interpreting his work. Thomas observes numerous argumentative techniques in Herodotus. For instance, he employs deductive arguments (2.15–18),[106] asserts he has proof (2.18, 99),[107] appeals to analogy (2.23, 33),[108] engages in polemic (4.36),[109] and regularly uses the first person.[110] Herodotus engages a multitude of rhetorical techniques and displays a thorough flexibility in his writing style. The diversity in argument shows that Herodotus is far

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[104] Wu Xiaoqun, "On How Herodotus's 'Historia' Became 'History,'" *Chinese Studies in History* 53, no. 2 (2020): 81.

[105] Baragwanath and de Bakker, "Introduction," 1.

[106] Rosalind Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science, and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 175.

[107] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 190.

[108] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 200.

[109] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 214–15.

[110] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 235.

more than a simple reporter of events.

The stylistic element of mythical material in Herodotus's work remains an issue even with modern scholars.[111] There is no doubt that Herodotus is interested in mythical origins and the divine. Nevertheless, the presence of the material in his work seems to point toward the common cultural acceptance of these mythical narratives in Greek culture, particularly those that explain ethnic origins and conflict. Modern readers should not expect Herodotus to transcend his cultural milieu. Furthermore, the mythical material does not undermine his reliability as it generally remains restricted to specific topics and is distinguishable from nonmythical material. The mythical material then is more an element of style and culture than it is an issue of historical credibility.

There appears to be little doubt that Herodotus's work includes more flare than modern Western history would acceptably contain. That flare, however, could be explained by an intentional element of theatrics. Wu Xiaoqun argues that Herodotus seems to have read his writings aloud before an audience and that some details suggest oral performance, like Ionia's being conquered three times and resisting twice.[112] Even if not performed orally, readers must be willing to accept more literary elements than typically present in modern works of history.

One driving force behind interpretations of Herodotus has been the theory of the "other" in the ancient world.[113] Paul Cartledge sees the self versus other framework as dominant in the ancient world and expressed in a variety of categories like Greeks versus barbarians, men versus women, and gods versus mortals.[114] Many scholars have applied the self versus other model to Herodotus when analyzing his style. François Hartog has

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[111] Baragwanath and de Bakker, "Introduction," 10.

[112] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 86.

[113] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 83.

[114] Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

explored how Herodotus noted differences in the other.[115] A few other scholars who have employed this method are Jonathan M. Hall[116] and Edith Hall.[117] Some scholars like Rosaria Munson have employed the model in a different way to argue that Herodotus instead seeks to show commonality between the Greeks and barbarians and to help the Greeks better understand themselves through describing barbarian culture.[118]

Other scholars have questioned the applicability of the self versus other paradigm. Erich S. Gruen suggests that the modern understanding of the ancients' portrayal of the other has been far too simplistic and that ancient writers described the other with more care and nuance than generally accepted.[119] Furthermore, Gruen argues that the ancient writers did not just highlight differences or even note commonality but appropriated experiences from the other to develop a broader collective consciousness.[120] Xiaoqun considers the paradigm to be a modern invention and has the weakness of using the modern to interpret the ancient.[121] Rejecting the model, Rosalind Thomas's work attempts to consider Herodotus within his own ancient milieu.[122] In her book, she considers both Herodotus's cultural and intellectual influences, like medical studies and his argumentative methodology. Thomas contends that Herodotus agrees with the prevailing view in his time of Greek superiority, but that he maintains affinity for

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[115] François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

[116] Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[117] Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

[118] Rosaria Munson, *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

[119] Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 3.

[120] Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 4.

[121] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 83.

[122] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*.

barbarians throughout his work.[123] Herodotus emphasizes how each people prefers its own cultural customs and suggests that no culture's customs are objectively superior to another's (3.38).[124] In her view, his intent is to inform the Greeks about the non-Greek cultures and subvert their assumptions that non-Greek cultures are barbaric. Herodotus even addresses that the "barbarians" have their own barbarians. For example, he writes that the Persians view those farther from their empire as *kakistoi* (1.134).[125] Additionally, the Egyptians even call those unable to speak Egyptian *barbaroi* (2.158).[126]

Though Thomas explicitly rejects the self versus other paradigm, her perspective seems to align more with the view that Herodotus sought to show commonality between the Greeks and non-Greeks. Furthermore, Thomas still acknowledges that the crucial distinction in Herodotus is between Greeks and barbarians.[127] For Herodotus, this cultural distinction seems predicated upon continental divisions and environment.[128] The self versus other paradigm should not dominate one's reading of *The Histories*, but it is still a useful lens through which to view Herodotus. Culture and customs are major themes in *The Histories*, and the distinction between Greeks and barbarians is inevitable. With that being said, Herodotus does present a more careful and nuanced presentation of non-Greeks than often assumed, and he also presents them more fairly than most other writers from his era.

The self versus other paradigm can be an imposition upon the work of Herodotus. Nevertheless, it is not useless. An element of competition between the Greeks

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[123] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 123.

[124] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 127.

[125] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 131.

[126] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 131.

[127] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 101.

[128] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 75.

and non-Greeks is present within Herodotus, but he does seem to be deconstructing this view more than reinforcing it. As a result, while the paradigm can prove helpful to understand the contextual debate in which Herodotus wrote his work, he apparently attempts to undermine such a mentality and to display the inherent value and uniqueness of each culture. For these reasons, all the above expressions of the paradigm provide value. Distinctions between the Greeks and barbarians exist, and Herodotus does show these at times. He also sometimes shows commonality and presents the barbarians more positively. Still, scholars can push the self versus other paradigm too far, as it does not seem to be the dominant framework for understanding Herodotus's *The Histories*.

Thomas observes several significant themes and topics throughout *The Histories*: medicine, geography and continents, naming, nature, and others.[129] Thomas argues that Herodotus's method and style of argumentation lean toward the rhetorical side of the academic spectrum, similar to natural philosophers and medical writers. She further argues that in doing so, he is participating in the fifth century's development of thinking and argumentation.[130] In some sense, Herodotus does seem to be dissecting historical events and cultures and then attempting to diagnose apparent problems. The medical elements in his style give him a unique breadth, but modern narrative historiography has similar elements. Modern history will similarly bleed into anthropology, sociology, and other fields in attempts to explain causes for events, though perhaps not as extensively as Herodotus does.

Thomas argues that *nomoi* (customs and laws) play a massive role in Herodotus's understanding of the success of various peoples.[131] Her argument undermines the interpretation that he thought Greeks to be innately superior to the

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[129] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 75.

[130] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 271.

[131] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 102.

barbarians by nature.[132] For Herodotus, custom is linked to geography and logical constraints and dominates the way a society develops and operates. He also consistently presents customs as morally neutral rather than inherently good or evil. He does, however, acknowledge that customs have practical effects on societies.

Herodotus's handling of the various stories he records are inconsistent. On occasion, he records impossible stories that he cannot believe. For example, he writes of the Neuri becoming wolves once a year (4.105) and Scyllias deserting to the Greeks by swimming underwater for almost nine miles without taking a breath (8.8).[133] At times, he relays fantastic tales with no caution like the story of Alcmeon filling himself with gold (4.125).[134] Other times, Herodotus will give multiple, conflicting accounts of the same event such as with Cambyses's march through Syria and the death of Polycrates (3.122).[135] Sometimes, he will comment on the reliability of an account (3.56), and other times he will not (9.16). Some of these contrasting methods are surely due to practical reasons. For instance, with several instances of competing accounts, Herodotus concedes that he cannot determine whose account is true (6.137). Even with good explanations for many of his differing methods, he still seems inconsistent in his search for the past.

Though Herodotus's methodology may seem inconsistent, a way to preserve the ancient historian's method exists. His methods only appear inconsistent when approaching his work under the assumption that his only goal is to preserve the details of events as they happened. This assumption, however, directly conflicts with Herodotus's stated purpose in writing. He is seeking to do more than strictly relay events. He is also trying to discover the causes behind war through cultural analysis and simultaneously

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[132] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 134.

[133] Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 36.

[134] Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 36.

[135] Momigliano *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 36.

preserve cultural traditions, folklore, and remarkable deeds.

If assuming the above goals in Herodotus's work, then his methodology appears more consistent. He occasionally reports fantastic tales not because he believes them but because they give understanding of cultural traditions. Folklore and beliefs play critical roles in determining customs. This connection is no less true today. A Protestant historian may scoff at Catholic rituals, but he would be remiss not to consider them in a historical study of Latin America where Catholicism has been a driving force in the resultant culture.

Furthermore, Herodotus potentially offers no disclaimer on some of these fanciful stories because he expects his reader to be discerning and considers the judgment obvious. Where he does express skepticism, it may be due to his fear that a reader may take it seriously or even out of pure amusement at the tale's ridiculousness. He relays multiple versions of the same event perhaps to give power to the reader but also possibly to reflect competing cultural interpretations of an event. In the American South, multiple perspectives exist that reflect Southern culture following the Civil War: the traditional understanding of the Civil War and the Lost Cause narrative. Even if one may be largely propagandistic, reporting and understanding both perspectives are historically valuable because they provide insight into cultural tendencies. In short, Herodotus's methodology is consistent when remembering his dual purpose of recording events accurately and providing insight into cultural customs and practices. A historiographical approach employing traditional and postmodern methods handles these dual functions quite well.

Beyond Herodotus's historicity and style, many scholars have questioned the very nature of his work. The primary issue is whether readers should receive *The Histories* as a work of history or something else entirely. Some scholars have judged Herodotus to be a work of prose closely related to the oral traditions of poetry in the vein

of Homer.[136] Gregory Nagy, for instance, equates Herodotus to something akin to a literary bard.[137] Homer undoubtedly influences Herodotus, and the tradition of Greek poets seems to have an impact upon Herodotus's interpretation of events and even his style. Even his first line seems to have drawn inspiration from Homer.[138] Nevertheless, to judge *The Histories* to be more poetry than history is an overstatement.

Thomas considers Herodotus's work to be less an objective review of events and topics discussed and more a subjective quest for personal understanding. She breaks from the traditional judgment of Herodotus and identifies him not as a historian but as a *sophos,* though with a few qualifications.[139] Thomas ultimately places his work of *historie* alongside academic writings like medical works, natural philosophy, and politics. She contends that Herodotus, while certainly influenced by Homer and bearing poetic elements, fits best within the aforementioned enquiries.[140]

Xiaoqun rejects Thomas's classification, arguing that the academic fields in the ancient Greek era had not yet become specialized. As a result, much academic writing bore noticeable similarity, and the shared characteristics between Herodotus and sophists do not indicate that Herodotus belongs to this category.[141] Either way, the similarity between Herodotus and other academic writing of his time is apparent and meaningful.

The similarities between Homer and Herodotus are strong, but they are far

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[136] Gregory Nagy, "Herodotus the 'Logios,'" *Arethusa* 20, no. 1/2 (1987): 175–84; Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). See especially 215-313 where Nagy compares and closely relates Herodotus to Greek poets.

[137] Nagy, "Herodotus the 'Logios.'"

[138] Nagy, "Herodotus the 'Logios,'"175.

[139] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 284. Though Thomas qualifies her classification by saying that it's only true in the way the word was used before Plato, and not in the way that Herodotus himself used it. She further hedges her assertion by stating that Herodotus was indeed crudely a historian. Thomas, 270.

[140] Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 285.

[141] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 84.

from being identical projects. Xiaoqun observes several unique elements in Herodotus: the use of his own name and origin instead of a call to the Muses, the desire to study human rather than divine matters, and the interest in understanding the causes for events through inquiry.[142] Ultimately, Xiaoqun concludes that *The Histories* settles into a place between epic poetry and purely historical writing.[143] While it may not meet the current standards of historiography in the twenty-first century, Herodotus still established a foundational model of historiography. In a culture prior to strictly defined academic disciplines, Herodotus successfully charted a new course by writing narrative history through the process of inquiry.[144] All three of the above views have merit, but Xiaoqun's designation is most appropriate. Herodotus does bear resemblance to both Homer and a *sophos*, but his primary concern does still appear to be recording the past. Despite his quirks, historian does still seem to be the best category for Herodotus in *The Histories*.

Herodotus's opening words prove to be a valuable guide for approaching his text. His goals are to preserve tradition and stories while also discovering precise details of historical events. These dual aims pair nicely with the methodology suggested in this dissertation. By employing both traditional and postmodern historiography to analyze Herodotus, the reader can effectively handle his multiple intentions: recording events, explaining causes for conflict, and preserving glorious and honorable deeds.

Historical Details

Any perusal into the historical veracity of Herodotus's work will find an overabundance of previous examinations from other scholars and is unlikely to offer any new insight. This surplus of work is perhaps one of the reasons why Herodotean

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[142] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 87.

[143] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 88.

[144] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 89.

scholarship has increasingly turned toward studies of his style, rather than factual accuracy.[145] Still, a quick survey of his reliability is useful.

Herodotus is hardly without error regarding specific historical details. For example, he conflates Babylon and Assyria (1.178), asserts the Greeks acquired the shield from Egypt (4.180), and reports conflicting Spartan procedure (5.75 and 6.56). Some other details, like the casualties at Marathon (6.117), should raise significant doubt. Nevertheless, most of Herodotus's mistakes come not from historical details but from geography, biology, and meteorology.

One debated account is Herodotus's oracle of the "Wooden Wall" (7.140–44). In the narrative, the Athenians seek the oracle of Delphi for advice against the Persians. Initially, they receive an oracle that sounds calamitous. Upon consulting the prophetess a second time, she gives a less harsh oracle and mentions a wooden wall that will help them against the Persians. Subsequently, the Athenians hotly debate the meaning of the wooden wall. The prominent Athenian Themistocles interprets the wooden wall to mean their naval fleet and urges the city to prepare for a naval battle with Persia at Salamis. His interpretation eventually wins the debate, and the Athenians later triumph at the Battle of Salamis (480 BC). The Greek victory helps cement Themistocles as one of the most important Athenian leaders in history.

Though unrelated to Daniel, this oracle presents an interesting historical problem that provides insight into Herodotus's truthfulness. Evans states that most scholars are hesitant to discard the oracle despite the historical problems it causes, because the account provides several key narrative functions.[146] Nonetheless, Evans argues that the oracle presents legitimate formal and chronological difficulties. The

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[145] Xiaoqun, "Herodotus's 'Historia,'" 79–80.

[146] Namely, it "serves to introduce Themistocles, it establishes Themistocles' reputation for shrewd opportunism, in this case employed for the benefit of Athens, it accounts for the willingness of Athens to trust her naval arm, and at the same time, gives a motive for the brave, hopeless defense of the Acropolis." J. A. S. Evans, "The Oracle of the 'Wooden Wall,'" *The Classical Journal* 78, no. 1 (1982): 24.

oracle's form and verse structure resemble myth much more than any extant historical oracles, and it does not easily fit into the chronology of Greece's preparations for the war.[147] Evans argues that the oracle's structure suggests that it developed later around the "wooden wall" and that the hexameters that appear in Herodotus likely followed the debate led by Themistocles.[148]

Regarding the oracle's date, Evans believes that Herodotus's implied timing is unlikely. The traditional dating of the oracle to 481 rests on the pluperfect ἐγεγονεε (7.145.1)[149] immediately following the oracle narrative and the μεν . . . δε construction in the same location, in which Herodotus seems to imply that the oracle takes place before the congress at the Isthmus.[150] Evans suggests that the μεν . . . δε construction could merely reflect a new topic and that the pluperfect does not necessarily imply time prior to that construction.[151] If such an interpretation of the pluperfect were accepted, then Evans asserts that the arguments for a 481-date collapse. He subsequently argues that circumstances, like Delphi's defeatist tone, fit better in 480 than 481.[152]

Evans's argument from structure is more compelling than his argument from chronology. The chronological argument rests on an uncommon interpretation of the pluperfect, which is far from assured, and the only positive evidence that supports a 480 date is circumstantial. His chronological objection to the oracle's authenticity, while interesting, should be rejected. Evans's structural argument is much simpler and more sound. It does seem unlikely that the structure of the oracle was originally communicated

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[147] Evans, "The Oracle," 24–25.

[148] Evans, "The Oracle," 29.

[149] Book 7, Section 145, Part 1.

[150] Evans, "The Oracle," 26.

[151] Evans"The Oracle," 26.

[152] Evans, 26–29.

as it is recorded in Herodotus. It almost certainly was altered through tradition and developed its poetic, mythic form at a later date. Still, alterations in form and verse would not undermine the authenticity of the oracle. Herodotus may have easily preserved the oracle's message and timing, while recording the wording and structure of a later tradition. Such a change would not undermine Herodotus's veracity in the oracle of the wooden wall.

The nuance of this issue surrounding the wooden wall oracle exemplifies the difficulty of surveying many of the historical problems in Herodotus. For much of the content he covers, Herodotus is the oldest and best witness. Very few alternative sources exist with which to compare Herodotus's history. Due to this lack of external evidence, many discussions of historical problems in his work rely heavily upon two areas: analyzing Herodotus's structure and narrative consistency or each scholar using his own reason to judge the plausibility of each claim. Except for the rare instances where Herodotus contradicts himself, both these areas lead to heavy speculation.

A common criticism of Herodotus's reliability is his reliance on oral history. Herodotus and Xenophon undoubtedly did lean on oral tradition heavily, such as Iranian oral tradition.[153] The argument suggests that since Herodotus relies primarily on testimony and not primary evidence, his evidence is flawed. This position further asserts that many people Herodotus interviewed would have wanted to present themselves, their families, or their nation in a better light than deserved. Essentially, his sources are spurious because he cannot trust them to be unbiased.

The argument against oral history has a key problem though. It devalues Herodotus's ability to distinguish biased and unbiased testimony in his writing, which he

[153] Sancisi-Weerdenburg provides an insightful discussion of oral tradition, though she is a bit too negative toward its ability to preserve reliable historical information. Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "The Death of Cyrus: Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* as a Source for Iranian History," in *Xenophon*, ed. Vivienne J. Gray, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 441–44.

demonstrates his willingness to do. He receives perspectives from many different vantage points, often explicitly critiquing them. It is reasonable to conclude that Herodotus could determine and recreate a likely account of events by combining the various vantage points from his testimonials. So, oral tradition is a reliable means of inquiry, if the historian acquires multiple accounts from different perspectives and if the historian analyzes and critiques the information received. Herodotus probably met both these criteria for most of his work, and he explicitly does so in numerous instances.

Throughout history, scholars have scrutinized Herodotus's description of Babylon (1.178–83). Some details appear to be exaggerated, like the wall's height. For this reason, some scholars have questioned whether Herodotus visited Babylon at all. Other details in his description, however, seem to correspond well to archaeological evidence, such as his description of the wall's width[154] and his description of the ziggurat.[155] O. E. Ravn suggests that some of these exaggerations may come from Herodotus's reliance upon his guide's imagination rather than observation and critical judgment.[156] His description of Babylon has flaws but generally appears to be reliable. Finding potential solutions for those flaws is not impossibly difficult. For instance, Herodotus's description of the palace on one side of the Euphrates and the sanctuary on the other side is problematic but may be explained by the redirecting of the river's course during his visit.[157] Ravn's final judgment of Herodotus's account finds commonality with the methodology of this dissertation. He notes that with archaeological evidence, scholars today have a better understanding of Babylon's layout, in many ways, than even Herodotus did. At the same time, he acknowledges that Herodotus's description provides

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[154] O. E. Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon*, trans. Margaret Tovborg-Jensen (Kjøbenhavn: Nyt nordisk Forlag, 1942), 35.

[155] Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon*, 56.

[156] Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon*, 42.

[157] Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon*, 59–61.

its readers with more than a purely scientific account because it has a literary nature. He argues that the literary aspect gives insights into Herodotus's personality and the perspective of the ancient world.[158] Herodotus gives a reliable, if not scientifically precise, description of Babylon that reflects the colossal reputation of the city in the ancient world.

These examples show that Herodotus must be approached carefully due to the apparent literary elements. Some historical details are simply wrong. Some details are almost certainly exaggerated, and others are doubtful. Still, Herodotus remains an immensely valuable historical resource and seems to mostly provide reliable historical information. He is one of the key witnesses to Persian history, including details about Cyrus and his successors. He provides some valuable cultural information about Egypt, Scythia, and other ancient societies. He preserves interesting cultural mythology, and he remains the single most important extant source for understanding the Persian Wars. Without Herodotus, much of the historical period he covers would be shrouded in even more mystery than it currently is.

Intersection with Daniel

Herodotus's intersection with Daniel occurs primarily in Book 1, though some helpful background information does appear in Book 3 as well. The three major areas of intersection are Cyrus's origin and accession, Babylon's fall, and Cambyses II and Darius. The first two accounts come in Book 1, and the third comes in Book 3.

Herodotus presents one of the two primary traditions for Cyrus's accession. He briefly mentions that Cyrus conquered Astyages in passing (1.73). He then identifies Astyages as the grandfather of Cyrus (1.75). Astyages's daughter Mandane marries a Persian named Cambyses and gives birth to Cyrus (1.107–8). Harpagos fosters

[158] Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon*, 96–97.

insurrection against his enemy Astyages as Cyrus gains the support of the Persians (1.123). Cyrus then leads the Persians in a revolt against Astyages (1.125–7). Cyrus engages the Medes, some of whom desert and some of whom flee (1.127). Afterward, Astyages assembles the remaining Medes at Ecbatana, but Cyrus defeats them (1.128). Upon his victory, Cyrus becomes ruler of both Medes and Persians and later subjects Lydia (1.130). Herodotus's account of Cyrus's accession contains some fanciful context, like Cyrus's life as a boy and the interactions between Harpagos and Astyages. Nevertheless, the above outline seems generally reliable.

Herodotus chronicles one version of Babylon's fall. When Herodotus begins his record of Cyrus's attack of Babylon, he provides a lengthy description of Babylon's city structure and also discusses the reign of the queen Nitocris (1.178–87). He explains, "Cyrus went to war against the son of Nitrocris…Labynetos" (1.18).[159] Labynetos is likely Labashi-Marduk. Babylon is amply prepared for Cyrus's siege, so they are not worried (1.190). At first, Cyrus makes no progress at taking the city (1.190). Babylon's preparation is important for the possibility of a feast during the siege as recorded in Daniel.

Also important for Daniel is Herodotus's description of Cyrus's army entering the city. He says that the citizens in the center of Babylon were unaware of the capture "because they happened to be celebrating a festival at that moment" (1.191).[160] According to Herodotus, Cyrus performed this surprise attack by diverting the Euphrates and entering the city through the riverbed (1.191). The city was so large that people in inner parts of the city were unaware that the outer parts had been taken (1.191).

Mainly in Book 3, Herodotus provides information about the reigns of Cambyses II and Darius, two important figures for understanding Daniel. Cyrus's son

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[159] Herodotus, *Landmark Herodotus*, 101.

[160] Herodotus, *Landmark Herodotus*, 103.

Cambyses succeeds Cyrus upon his death and plans to attack Egypt (2.1). Cambyses was the son of Cassandane (2.1). Cambyses dies after reigning seven years (3.66), and a magus poses as Cambyses's brother Smerdis and rules for seven months (3.67). Darius then assembles a conspiracy to oust the duplicitous magus (3.71). Darius and his fellow conspirators kill the magi (3.79). In the aftermath of the conspiracy, Darius wins the kingship for himself, becomes king, and solidifies his power through marriage (3.86–8). The details about Cambyses and Darius are valuable for understanding the accession that Daniel describes at the end of Daniel 5 and the various kings he references throughout his book.

Xenophon

The next historian in view is Xenophon who engages and depends upon Herodotus's work but, at times, seems to oppose it.[161] Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* covers the education and life of Cyrus.[162] Overall, the *Cyropaedia* has not received the same modern scholarly attention that Herodotus's work has.[163] Still, scholars have given him considerable time and energy. Indeed, the scholarly advancement of postmodernism seems to have energized a small revival of interest in the Greek author, especially as studies have moved beyond the issue of Xenophon's historical accuracy and have focused more on his interests and context.[164] For instance, multiple significant monographs exist that are dedicated exclusively to Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, and these works do not

[161] Eckard Lefèvre, "The Question of the ΒΙΟΣ ΕΥΔΑΙΜΩΝ: The Encounter between Cyrus and Croesus in Xenophon," in *Xenophon*, ed. Vivienne J. Gray, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 403.

[162] Walter Miller's translation is widely referenced and heavily influential. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, trans. Walter Miller, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914); For a modern translation, see Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); For a critical edition, see Xenophon, *Xenophon's* Cyropaedia*: A Late Byzantine Recension with Facing Page English Translation*, ed. Donald F. Jackson, trans. Ralph E. Doty, 2 vols. (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010).

[163] Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "The Death of Cyrus," 439.

[164] Marincola, *Greek Historians*, 110n26.

primarily focus upon its historical veracity.[165] Nevertheless, Xenophon today remains demoted in significance behind the titans of Greek historiography: Herodotus and Thucydides.[166]

Though overshadowed by Herodotus in contemporary scholarship, the same was not necessarily true in ancient history. Christopher Nadon writes, "Xenophon was among the most widely read authors in antiquity, and the *Cyropaedia* was considered his masterpiece."[167] Still, his fame in the ancient world stemmed primarily from his work as a philosopher rather than as a historian, as well as his skillful Attic Greek.[168] While Xenophon may not enjoy the same modern scholarly praise as Herodotus or Thucydides concerning his historical precision, the *Cyropaedia* is still a profoundly important work of Greek historical literature.

Xenophon's personal life is less mysterious than the life of Herodotus.[169] The two primary sources for information about Xenophon are his *Anabasis* and Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of the Philosophers*.[170] In the *Anabasis*, he calls himself young (*Anab*. 3.1.25).[171] From this detail, Vivienne Gray concludes that 430 BC is likely the earliest possible date for his birth, which would have made Xenophon thirty at the time of the

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[165] James Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Bodil Due, *The Cyropaedia: Xenophon's Aims and Methods* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1989); Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*; Christopher Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince: Republic and Empire in the "Cyropaedia"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[166] T. James Luce, *The Greek Historians* (London: Routledge, 1997), 99.

[167] Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince,* 4.

[168] Luce, *Greek Historians*, 99.

[169] For more detailed information on Xenophon than what follows, see J. K. Anderson, *Xenophon*, 2nd ed. (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2001).

[170] Vivienne J. Gray, "Introduction," in *Xenophon*, ed. Vivienne J. Gray, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, trans. Carleton L. Brownson, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, ed. Tiziano Dorandi, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[171] Xenophon, *The Anabasis of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 99–100.

Anabasis.[172] He may have been even younger though. Regarding his origin, Xenophon identifies himself simply as "an Athenian" (*Anab*. 3.1.4).[173] Diogenes gives us his father's name of Gryllus and calls Xenophon modest and handsome.[174] He was evidently a student of Socrates (*Anab.* 3.1.5–7) or at least thought himself one,[175] and he also apparently became a friend of Cyrus the Younger through their mutual friend Proxenus and served in Cyrus's army (*Anab*. 3.1.4–8). Cyrus seems to have had a profound impact on Xenophon and his understanding of good leadership.[176]

The *Anabasis* describes Xenophon's journey with the ten thousand Greek mercenaries who join Cyrus the Younger on his foray into Persia and attempt to take the Persian throne around 401–399 BC.[177] Cyrus the Younger is defeated and killed at the Battle of Cunaxa, and Xenophon and the Greek mercenaries flee back to Greece. Upon his return, Xenophon seems to have served under several Spartan commanders like King Agesilaus.[178] During this period, he appears to have been banished from Athens and lived in Sparta, though his exile ended when Athens and Sparta made an alliance.[179]

Several major textual witnesses exist for the *Cyropaedia*, though most are quite late.[180] Scholars slot the most significant witnesses into three families: x, y, and z. Family x includes Parisinus C (C – 14th century), Ambrosianus E (S – 14th century),

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[172] Gray, "Introduction," 8n34.

[173] Xenophon, *The Anabasis of Cyrus*, 98.

[174] Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 180.

[175] John Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times* (London: Routledge, 1995), 5.

[176] Dillery, *History of His Times*, 5.

[177] Luce, *Greek Historians*, 100.

[178] Luce, *Greek Historians*, 101.

[179] Luce, *Greek Historians*, 101.

[180] Donald F. Jackson and Ralph E. Doty have an excellent discussion of the manuscript evidence in the introduction to their critical edition. Donald F. Jackson and Ralph E. Doty, "Introduction," in *Xenophon's* Cyropaedia*: A Late Byzantine Recension with Facing Page English Translation*, vol. 1 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 11–20.

Marcianus (B – 14th century), Etonensis (E – 15th century), and Bremensis (R – 15th century). Family y includes Erlangensis (F – 10th century), Vatican (W – 11th century), and Bodleianus (D – 15th century). Family z includes Escorialensis (H – 10th century), Vaticanus (V – 10th–15th century), Bodleian (O – 12th century), Vaticanus (v – 13th–14th century), Ambrosianus (A – 14th century), Laurentianus (M – 14th century), and Guelferbytanus (G – 15th century).[181] The earliest extant manuscripts are fragmentary and date to the third century AD.[182]

The textual genealogy becomes more complicated as some scholars have argued for manuscripts representing different families within various sections of individual manuscripts.[183] Hubert A. Holden states that the four most significant of the major manuscripts are A, C, G, and D.[184] These four manuscripts include one from family x, one from family y, and two from family z. Manuscript C is a favorite of modern editors.[185] Holden, borrowing from Arnold Hug, proposes a textual genealogy with only x and y as primary families and z representing the original manuscript.[186] Holden's view of the textual families is not commonly accepted today in scholarship. An additional minority view comes from Manuela Garcia Valdes who argues that families x, y, and z all have independent textual developments from their common ancestor.[187]

The majority view in scholarship is that families y and z represent two separate

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[181] Walter Miller, "Introduction," in *Cyropaedia*, by Xenophon, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), xv; Jackson and Doty, "Introduction."

[182] Miller, "Introduction," xv.

[183] Hubert A. Holden, *The Cyropaedeia of Xenophon: Books I and II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1887), 277. For example, see the discussion of manuscript S in Jackson and Doty, "Introduction," 19–20.

[184] Holden, *The Cyropaedeia of Xenophon: Books I and II*, 275.

[185] Jackson and Doty, "Introduction," 19.

[186] Holden, *The Cyropaedeia of Xenophon: Books I and II*, 276.

[187] Jackson and Doty, "Introduction," 13; Manuela García Valdés, "Los problemas del stemma de la Ciropedia," *Emerita* 43 (1975): 139–68.

textual traditions and that family x is a recension of families y and z.[188] Donald F. Jackson and Ralph E. Doty place that recension in the early fourteenth century.[189] In theory, this genealogy means that any manuscript from family x may be broken down into y and z readings. While more complex in practice, each x manuscript may theoretically be classified as family z or family y and the parts edited in the recension can be identified. For example, M can be placed in family z since it is predominantly a copy of O, but M includes many readings from family y, which more precisely makes it a family x text.[190] So, a manuscript may exist in family x, but readers can often deduce either family y or z as its origin before its recension. As a result, the family categorization of manuscripts above should serve as a starting point for investigation rather than a final and definitive list. Despite the *Cyropaedia*'s curious textual history, scholars generally see the text of the *Cyropaedia* received today as authentic. The one significant exception is the heavily debated epilogue, which is discussed below.

The *Cyropaedia* is difficult to date precisely, but an estimated date can be proposed. Xenophon likely wrote the text after his return to Athens following a long exile.[191] Most scholars agree that he wrote the work in the 360s BC.[192] The last chapter, if original, seems to provide a *terminus post quem* of 362/361 by mentioning Mithridates and Rheomithres and their action in the satraps' revolt.[193] Some readers point to hints that Xenophon is writing to an Athenian audience with apparent references to Athenian

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[188] Jackson and Doty, "Introduction," 12–13. Alex Persson first proposed this view. Axel W. Persson, *Zur Textgeschichte Xenophons* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1915).

[189] Jackson and Doty, "Introduction," 19.

[190] Jackson and Doty, "Introduction," 17.

[191] Pierre Carlier, "The Idea of Imperial Monarchy in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," in *Xenophon*, ed. Vivienne J. Gray, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 332n13.

[192] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 23.

[193] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 23. This dating does rely on the authenticity of 8.8, which is heavily debated. The issue is discussed briefly below.

education (1.2.6; 1.6.32) and a conciliatory tone concerning Socrates's execution, though Deborah Levine Gera questions the validity of these assumptions. If Xenophon's intended audience is Athenian, it would suggest that he wrote the *Cyropaedia* after his return from exile, at some point after 369.[194] Another bit of evidence for dating the work is Xenophon's description of the battle of Thymbrara. Some scholars argue that this critical battle between Cyrus and Croesus (7.1.1) seems to mirror the battle of Leuctra between Thebes and Sparta in 371.[195] While every piece of evidence is inconclusive, they all point toward the 360s, with 371 being the likely earliest date and 361 being the likely latest date. Though not precise, the proposed date range is small enough to aid in determining Xenophon's historical context and writing motives.

Scholars debate some aspects of the *Cyropaedia* and their authenticity, such as the epilogue (8.8). Naturally, the inclusion or rejection of portions like the epilogue has an impact on dating the text. Some scholars argue that the section was added later and thus not original, with Walter Miller even telling the reader to "close the book at this point and read no further."[196] Steven W. Hirsch also rejects its authenticity, pointing to apparent contradictions, a more critical tone toward Persia, and other evidence that the epilogue must have been a later addition by another author.[197] Central to Hirsch's arguments is the interpretation that the epilogue is aggressively critical of the Persian masses.[198] Hirsch is partly correct, but the epilogue's criticism of the Persian people is dependent upon its rebuke of the Persian rulers. Xenophon writes, ὁποῖοί τινες γὰρ ἂν οἱ

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[194] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 24.

[195] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 25.

[196] For Walter Miller's view, see his edition: Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, trans. Walter Miller, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 438–39; Steven W. Hirsch, *The Friendship of the Barbarians: Xenophon and the Persian Empire* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1985), 91–97. Hirsch also provides a short introduction and historical trends in scholarship on the issue.

[197] Hirsch, *Friendship of the Barbarians*, 92–96.

[198] Hirsch, *Friendship of the Barbarians*, 94.

προστάται ὧσι, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ὑπ᾽αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ γίνονται (8.8.5).[199] So, while Xenophon is indeed criticizing the Persian people, he is primarily blaming the current Persian rulers for such decline in virtue and character. This critique fits with Hirsch's theory that the *Cyropaedia* may contain propagandistic elements to support Cyrus the Younger's claim to the Persian throne.[200] As a result, to judge the epilogue as inauthentic based upon a supposed contradictory attitude toward Persia fails to consider the epilogue's underlying argument and its place within the larger work.

On the other hand, scholars have made strong arguments for the epilogue's inclusion in Xenophon's work, including manuscript evidence and thematic links.[201] Gera warns the reader against taking the epilogue as a summary of the work, which would lead to an interpretation of the epilogue as contradictory. Instead, the summarizing role is found in the previous chapter (8.7), and the epilogue shows Xenophon's increasing detachment from the hero of his story.[202] James Tatum even notes that Gustav Eichler preferred not to call it an epilogue but simply the last chapter, suggesting that the term "epilogue" is misleading.[203] Tatum argues that that epilogue displays the unavoidable reality that no empire lasts, even one created by Cyrus.[204]

The epilogue seems to function transitionally as the *Cyropaedia* grows increasingly negative and shifts its focus away from Cyrus's impressive qualities and

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[199] Translation (my own): For whatever quality the leaders are, such also becomes those under them for the most part.

[200] Hirsch, *Friendship of the Barbarians*, 80. Hirsch anticipates the connection between criticism of modern Persia and propaganda for Cyrus the Younger. He provides a counter argument, but it is uncompelling. See Hirsch, 181n106.

[201] Paula Winsor Sage, "Dying in Style: Xenophon's Ideal Leader and the End of the *Cyropaedia*," *The Classical Journal* 90, no. 2 (1995): 161. Note especially her reference to Eichler's work on 161n3. Gustavus Eichler, *De Cyrupaediae capite extremo VIII* (Leipzig: Grimmae, 1880).

[202] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 300.

[203] Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction*, 223. Despite Eichler's preference for terms, I will still refer to the final chapter as the epilogue for convenience and consistency with other scholarship. .

[204] Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction*, 220–21.

skill in leadership. That focus then turns toward the decline in the Persian empire upon his death and his still noticeable but diminished influence on Xenophon's contemporary Persia. Overall, the epilogue serves as a means of transitioning from Cyrus's golden age into the deteriorated status quo that Xenophon observes in his day. Despite the epilogue's tonal shift, the prevailing view in modern scholarship is that the entire text of the *Cyropaedia* as received today is original and that Xenophon intended it to be read together.[205] Though reasons to doubt the epilogue's authenticity do exist, reading the last chapter as original seems the preferable judgment. As a result, all further analysis will rest upon the assumption that the entire text of the *Cyropaedia* as received today is authentically from Xenophon.

The *Cyropaedia* is organized into eight books. Book 1 discusses Cyrus's youth and education, including formative years he spent in Media with his grandfather Astyages. Book 2 focuses on Cyrus's experiences as general and consolidation of power while demonstrating his favor with the army. Book 3 outlines his early conquests and highlights some of his skills in leadership. Book 4 discusses Cyrus's first victories within the Babylonian empire.[206] Book 5 speaks of Gobryas and Gadatas. Book 6 follows the lead-up to the conquering of Babylon, and Book 7 describes the battle itself. Book 8 includes Cyrus's thoughts on government and the empire. The most significant portions of the *Cyropaedia* for Daniel are Book 1 with its portrayal of Cyrus's ascension to power and Books 5 and 6 with their descriptions of Babylon's fall, though other sections bear some significance as well.

Literary Structure

The *Cyropaedia*'s structure is straightforward. While many criticisms of his

[205] For a discussion on the epilogue and unity of Xenophon's work, see Sage, "Dying in Style."

[206] The *Cyropaedia* always refers to the Babylonian empire as Assyria, a common practice in ancient Greece.

work exist, its literary unity is rarely the source of that criticism. Xenophon explicitly provides his purpose in his opening chapter and maintains strong continuity throughout the work. He traces Cyrus's life and mixes in considerable political and philosophical dialogue for didactic purposes. Though the reader may find some of the dialogue tedious, its purpose within the narrative is coherent. Below is a proposed outline for the *Cyropaedia*:

1. Book 1 (Cyrus's Youth)
2. Book 2 (Military Management)
3. Book 3 (Armenia and Scythia)
4. Book 4 (Babylonian War)
5. Book 5 (Gobryas and Gadatas)
6. Book 6 (Before Babylon)
7. Book 7 (Fall of Babylon)
8. Book 8 (Empire and Death of Cyrus)

Disposition

As with Herodotus, Xenophon deserves the first word on the discussion of his intentions in writing the *Cyropaedia*. In his opening words, Xenophon comments on the instability of government (1.1.1), human nature (1.1.2), the uniqueness of Cyrus's success (1.1.3–5), and his expressed goal in the *Cyropaedia* (1.1.6).[207] He states, Ἡμεῖς μὲν δὴ ὡς ἄξιον ὄντα θαυμάζεσθαι τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρα ἐσκεψάμεθα τίς ποτ᾽ ὢν γενεὰν καὶ ποίαν τινὰ φύσιν ἔχων καὶ ποία τινὶ παιδείᾳ παιδευθεὶς τοσοῦτον διήνεγκεν εἰς τὸ ἄρχειν ἀνθρώπων. ὅσα οὖν καὶ ἐπυθόμεθα καὶ ἠσθῆσθαι δοκοῦμεν περὶ αὐτοῦ, ταῦτα πειρασόμεθα διηγήσασθαι.[208] At face value then, Xenophon presents his work as an

[207] I will use a referencing scheme with Xenophon similar to the one used for Herodotus. With Xenophon, however, his text is typically broken into chapters as well as books. So for him, the first number corresponds to the book, the second number to the chapter, and the third to the section.

[208] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, trans. Walter Miller, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,

effort to examine Cyrus's origin and upbringing and consequently to understand his skill in leadership.

Though Xenophon provides an explicit and understandable goal, reception of his work has hardly been consistent through history. Instead, debate and controversy have surrounded the *Cyropaedia*. Readers have questioned his faithfulness to his stated goal, the quality of Xenophon's character, and other aspects. For the most part though, ancient readers received Xenophon positively if not historically precise.[209] For example, Cicero denies that the *Cyropaedia* is historical but praised it as an admirable portrait for a ruler (*ad Q. f.* 1.1.23).[210] This positive posture toward Xenophon's work generally persisted in history. For example, Xenophon's work appears prominently in the English humanist tradition.[211] Modern readers, on the other hand, have been highly critical, even with doubts about his intellect and character.[212] The shift is likely connected to modernity's emphasis on historical value and the *Cyropaedia*'s dubious record in that regard.

Many scholars agree that the primary function of the *Cyropaedia* is didactic,[213] but they debate what that didactic message is.[214] Carlier and many other scholars acknowledge Xenophon's opening words and that he primarily intends to teach leadership by using Cyrus as an example, but Carlier questions whether this aim is

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1914), 8. Translation (my own): Since this man is worthy to be admired, we have then examined who his family was, what kind of origin he had, and what sort of education he received that he so greatly excelled in ruling men. Therefore, as much as we have learned and think to have understood about him, we attempt to describe.

[209] Gray, "Introduction," 3.

[210] Gray, 3–4; Marco Tullius Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem* (Milan: Mondadori, 1989).

[211] Jane Grogan, "'Many Cyruses': Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and English Renaissance Humanism," *Hermathena* 183 (2007): 63–74.

[212] Gray, "Introduction," 3.

[213] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 2.

[214] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 328n3; Philip A. Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," *The American Journal of Philology* 112, no. 4 (1991): 464.

Xenophon's only intention.[215] Identifying secondary goals is challenging given the tendency of many Greek writers to avoid overt statements and leave much for the reader to conclude.[216] Nevertheless, Xenophon does seem to have ulterior motives in the *Cyropaedia*.

Concerning Xenophon's disposition and goals in the *Cyropaedia*, two key overlapping questions emerge. The first issue is whether Xenophon is praising autocracy or offering a veiled critique of it. Closely related, the second problem is whether Xenophon is encouraging a Greek conquest of Asia or warning against it.[217] The question of autocracy has a divided history with scholars taking divergent interpretations. Scholarship has been in more agreement concerning the question of empire and seen Xenophon as supporting a Greek empire, but the view has not been universal.[218]

The issue of autocracy receives opposite interpretations. Some scholars see the *Cyropaedia* as a celebration of autocracy or monarchy. Pierre Carlier references the somewhat old works of Maurice Hémardinquer, Erwin Scharr, and Jean Luccioni.[219] Louis-André Dorion provides a more recent presentation of this view.[220] He argues that while Plato criticizes Cyrus's government and particularly his education, Xenophon completely exonerates Cyrus. Dorion contends that Xenophon places no blame on Cyrus

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[215] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 331.

[216] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 332.

[217] Carlier provides a fantastic overview of the history of these two discussions. I depend upon his work heavily in the following analysis. For more details, see especially Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 333-35n16-20.

[218] Erwin Scharr, *Xenophons Staats- und Gesellschaftsideal und seine Zeit* (Halle, Germany: Niemeyer, 1919).

[219] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 333n16; Maurice Hémardinquer, *La Cyropédie: Essai Sur Les Idées Morales Et Politiques de Xénophon* (Paris: Thorin, 1872); Scharr, *Xenophons Staats- und Gesellschaftsideal und seine Zeit*; Jean Luccioni, *Les Ideés Politiques et Sociales de Xénophon* (Paris: Ophrys, 1947).

[220] Louis-André Dorion, "La Responsabilité de Cyrus dans le déclin de l'empire perse selon Platon et Xénophon," *Revue Française d'Histoire des Idées Politiques* 16 (2002): 369–86.

for the decline of the Persian empire.[221] He further argues that though Plato impugns Cyrus for the depravity of his sons, Xenophon does not attribute his sons' vices to Cyrus at all.[222] So, Dorion understands Xenophon to be defending Cyrus's character and decisions in every way, even his government. The cause for the Persian empire's decline is not Cyrus's government, his character, or even his failure to prepare and educate his successors. For Dorion, the guilt lays squarely at the feet of Cyrus's successors who failed to demonstrate for the Persian people the same virtues that Cyrus exemplified.[223] Philip A. Stadter's view also fits loosely under the umbrella of positivity toward autocracy, but he emphasizes, even more than Dorion does, the individual call to virtue above any judgment on government structure.[224]

Other Scholars see the *Cyropaedia* as a veiled criticism of autocracy. Christopher Whidden argues that the *Cyropaedia*'s presentation of empire is ironic and that Xenophon is highly critical of the imperial model of government.[225] Carlier contends that Xenophon does not favor a monarchal government in the context of the Greek πόλις.[226] Christopher Nadon argues that the swift dissolution of Cyrus's empire upon his death shows that the seeds for its fall were sown in its foundations, namely that it failed to establish a common good beyond merely defending against external enemies.[227] With that being said, Nadon emphasizes more strongly that the *Cyropaedia* displays the limitations of both a republican government and an imperial government. For Nadon

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[221] Dorion, "La Responsabilité de Cyrus," 383.

[222] Dorion, "La Responsabilité de Cyrus," 384.

[223] Dorion, "La Responsabilité de Cyrus," 383.

[224] Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," 468.

[225] Christopher Whidden, "The Account of Persia and Cyrus's Persian Education in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," *The Review of Politics* 69, no. 4 (2007): 540.

[226] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 334.

[227] Christopher Nadon, "From Republic to Empire: Political Revolution and the Common Good in Xenophon's Education of Cyrus," *The American Political Science Review* 90, no. 2 (1996): 373.

then, the critique of tyranny is a minor one.[228] Still, he rejects the view that Xenophon calls the reader to imitate Cyrus's government.[229] Xenophon may be presenting autocracy with its weaknesses, while still displaying the potential good it can offer when utilized by a virtuous leader.

The second issue of empire is less divisive. Most scholars argue that Xenophon encouraged a Greek conquest of Asia. John Dillery examines how the ideas of utopia and panhellenism influenced Xenophon's writing.[230] The godfather of this view in modern scholarship is Wilhelm Prinz, who argued for an expansionistic Xenophon seeking the organization of a Greek empire.[231] Carlier notes, however, that this interpretation of the *Cyropaedia* precedes Prinz in Eduard Schwartz and Henri Weil, as well as seeing later defense in Luccioni.[232] Seeing Xenophon as supporting an Asiatic conquest has been the dominant interpretation in history. This view gains further support with Alexander's apparent usage of the *Cyropaedia* in his imperial campaign shortly after Xenophon's writing.

Though understanding the *Cyropaedia* as supporting empire is the majority view, scholars are not in total agreement. Carlier proposes a novel hypothesis[233] that the *Cyropaedia* warns of what an Asiatic conquest would do to Greek life, and he ultimately

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[228] Nadon, "From Republic to Empire," 373.

[229] Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince,* 146. In footnote 79, Nadon also quotes Leo Strauss who makes the same judgment about Xenophon's intention. Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny: An Interpretation of Xenophon's Hiero* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968).

[230] Dillery, *History of His Times*, 41–98. Dillery primarily looks at these concepts in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, but his work still has implications for understanding the later *Cyropaedia*.

[231] Wilhelm Prinz, *De Xenophontis Cyri Institutione* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1911).

[232] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 334n20; Eduard Schwartz, *Fünf Vorträge über den Griechischen Roman* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1896); Henri Weil, "Xénophon et l'avenir Du Monde Grec," in *Festschrift Theodor Gomperz*, ed. Moritz von Schwind (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1902), 118–21; Luccioni, *Les Ideés Politiques et Sociales de Xénophon*.

[233] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 336n22.

argues that Xenophon warns against an Asiatic conquest.[234] Xenophon is impressed by Cyrus's personal qualities and education but suggests that the development of an absolute monarchy undermines the potential for that same education. So, Carlier contends that Xenophon was fascinated with an Asiatic conquest but saw major inevitable problems that would prevent the Greeks from achieving a stable empire.[235] Despite Carlier's distinct interpretation of the *Cyropaedia*, he suggests that Xenophon carefully constructs his presentation of the Persian ruler in a way that allows the reader to draw his conclusion without overt judgments from the author.[236] So, while Carlier ultimately contends that Xenophon warns against empire, he maintains that the author's arguments are restrained and open-ended.

Precisely identifying Xenophon's views on an Asiatic conquest is difficult. Whatever his view, Xenophon subtly crafted it in a way that both interpretations of his work have some merit. Perhaps then, it is best to interpret Xenophon's perspective as one that is conflicted and intentionally ambiguous. He seems to have a desire for Greek success and conquest. At the same time, he mulls on the difficulty of ruling men and appears to have doubts about the possibility of a conquest. The best description of Xenophon on the issue of an Asiatic conquest might be that he is genuinely uncertain. He wants to see a conquest but simultaneously has reservations and concerns. Though he does not expressly state this view, Whidden hints at it in arguing that Xenophon finds Cyrus's empire in some ways both better and worse than the Persian republic that preceded him.[237]

Scholars have generally assumed that Xenophon's writings influenced

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[234] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 366.

[235] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 365–66.

[236] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 366.

[237] Whidden, "Cyrus's Persian Education," 565.

Alexander, though some like Kieran McGroarty question the connection.[238] McGroarty helpfully pushes back against the standard assumption of Xenophon's influence on Alexander and questions the legitimacy of the evidence. While his review of the evidence is helpful, his arguments are unconvincing. It indeed is difficult to prove that Alexander read Xenophon, but it appears likely that Alexander was familiar with his writing. The verifiable parallels, such as Alexander adopting Persian dress like Cyrus did with Median dress, weigh too heavily against McGroarty. Had Xenophon witnessed the events, he probably would have been unsurprised both at Alexander's success and at the Greek empire's fragmentation and fall upon his death.

Many themes and motifs stand out in the *Cyropaedia*. Michael Reichel covers several of them as he explores the various novelle, or imaginary stories of limited length, within Xenophon's work.[239] He observes themes of revenge, jealousy, and others.[240] Rodrigo Illarraga has examined the "other" leaders in the *Cyropaedia* and how Xenophon uses them to highlight noteworthy qualities of Cyrus and the forms of government.[241] These thematic approaches to Xenophon's work are a testament to the recent postmodern influence on historiographical method.

One of the most patent themes in the *Cyropaedia* is the concept of leadership. Indeed, Melina Tamiolaki refers to the work as an "epitome of Xenophon's theory of leadership."[242] She further notes how Cyrus's ability to persuade his audiences and utilize

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[238] Kieran McGroarty, "Did Alexander the Great Read Xenophon?," *Hermathena* 181 (2006): 105–24.

[239] Michael Reichel, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and the Hellenistic Novel," in *Xenophon*, ed. Vivienne J. Gray, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 431–32. Notice Reichel's categories of novelle. The primary division he gives is between those with erotic themes and those with other themes. He makes several other distinctions though including idealistic or realistic, authentic or comic, and digressive or episodic.

[240] Reichel, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," 433–37.

[241] Rodrigo Illarraga, "Los Espejos de Ciro: Tipos y Modelos de Monarca en la Ciropedia," *Alpha* 51 (2020): 207–21.

[242] Melina Tamiolaki, "Emotion and Persuasion in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," *Phoenix* 70, no.

their emotions is a key aspect in his leadership capability. The emotions in focus are love, hope, envy, and pleasure.[243] She links these emotions and persuasion not to Cyrus's political goals but to Cyrus himself. Cyrus then is not wielding persuasive tools to obtain specific aims but to achieve the specific emotion of devotion to him.[244] This method of governance is one of the elements that makes Cyrus the ideal leader; his followers obey him out of love, not compulsion.[245] She concludes that Cyrus deftly utilizes the various emotions of his followers to achieve appropriate responses, but all the emotions ultimately feed into the final desired goal of achieving the devotion of his followers.[246] The way that Xenophon presents Cyrus's use of emotions suggests that Xenophon may have been engaging in political debates of his time.[247]

Whidden examines the critical theme that Xenophon presents of Cyrus's education. He argues that Xenophon offers two aspects to Cyrus's education: traditional and heterodox.[248] His traditional education includes standard training in the context of the Persian republic.[249] His heterodox training, as Whidden describes, involves the learning he acquired independently, as he organically recognized the flaws in the Persian republic system.[250] This twofold education formed Cyrus into the skilled leader who sought to correct problems in the Persian republic through establishing his empire.[251]

1/2 (2016): 41.

[243] Tamiolaki, "Emotion and Persuasion," 41.

[244] Tamiolaki, "Emotion and Persuasion," 43.

[245] Tamiolaki, "Emotion and Persuasion," 44.

[246] Tamiolaki, "Emotion and Persuasion," 60.

[247] Tamiolaki, "Emotion and Persuasion," 60–61.

[248] Whidden, "Cyrus's Persian Education," 542.

[249] Whidden, "Cyrus's Persian Education," 544–45.

[250] Whidden, "Cyrus's Persian Education," 546–47.

[251] Whidden, "Cyrus's Persian Education," 546.

Xenophon's overall portrayal of Cyrus is also worth some attention. Scholars mostly agree that Xenophon presents Cyrus as the paradigm for the good leader but disagree in interpreting the way that Xenophon accomplishes this task. James Tatum argues for a highly utilitarian Cyrus, a shrewd leader who changes his behavior to achieve his desired responses from the people around him, even calling his mother Mandane and grandfather Astyages the first "victims" of his manipulation.[252] Nadon also endorses this view of Cyrus, suggesting that Tatum does not go far enough. Nadon sees Cyrus as thoroughly Machiavellian throughout the work.[253] Stadter rejects this notion, however, and argues that such an interpretation imports modern skepticism into Xenophon's text.[254] In defense, he suggests that such a reading stems from assuming that the *Cyropaedia* is historical with Xenophon's portrayal of Cyrus being a real person.[255] Cyrus in the *Cyropaedia* would be more historically grounded if the reader sees the character as inspired by Cyrus the Younger.[256] Such an interpretation clashes with a harsh view of Cyrus, however, since Xenophon thought highly of Cyrus the Younger and his character for leadership (*Anab*. 1.9.1).[257] There is likely significant connection between Xenophon's portrayal of Cyrus the Great and his personal experiences with Cyrus the Younger, but this connection should not be pushed too far in attempting to recreate the historical person of either individual.

Like Tatum, Whidden perceives a ruthless Cyrus within Xenophon's account. He uses the demise of Abradatas as an example (6.3.35–36).[258] In the account, Abradatas

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[252] Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction*, 97–98.

[253] Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince,* 13.

[254] Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," 490–91.

[255] Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," 491.

[256] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 11.

[257] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 11.

[258] Whidden, "Cyrus's Persian Education," 551–52.

volunteers for the most dangerous position in battle. Cyrus admires his boldness but asks the other commanders if they approve. They object out of their sense of honor, so Cyrus has them cast lots for the position. Whidden considers it implausible that Cyrus would leave his battle plan up to chance and suggests that Cyrus rigged the game to expend Abradatas.[259] Whidden's suggestion has two problems though. First, it is highly speculative and is built on little more than his perception of Cyrus. The text never suggests that Cyrus orchestrates or manipulates the event. Second, it misunderstands the nature of casting lots. Whidden is interpreting an ancient divine appeal as a modern game of chance. Ancient leaders regularly made decisions in ways that readers today would consider ridiculous. Greek generals routinely consulted the oracle of Delphi before military endeavors. Vague omens and signs would cause leaders to change plans. Even the apostles casted lots to determine who would fill the twelfth position vacated by Judas Iscariot. Viewing the casting of lots as nothing more than a game of chance fails to acknowledge the divine element that would have typically been attributed to it in the ancient world. While Whidden's theory is possible, this incident should in no way be used as evidence to support a ruthless, manipulative Cyrus in Xenophon's presentation.

Interpreting Xenophon's portrayal of Cyrus as positive and idealistic is still the preferable interpretation. Indeed, the Cyrus that Xenophon shows can hardly be the Cyrus of history, so an idealistic Cyrus is a reasonable interpretation. Gera observes that though Xenophon does occasionally present negative qualities or surprising actions of Cyrus, he generally presents the leader as worthy of emulation and maintains very little distance between the author and hero of the story.[260] When reading the *Cyropaedia*, the reader's first concern should be what Xenophon wants to display about leadership through Cyrus. Only secondarily, though still legitimately, should the reader focus on the historical

[259] Whidden, "Cyrus's Persian Education," 552.

[260] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 285.

actuality. The reader then should be hesitant about attempting to extract Cyrus's personality traits from his decisions and interactions with other characters.

Though the standard view is that Cyrus is the example leader to be emulated, whether ruthless and utilitarian or kind and idealistic, not all scholars are so positive on Xenophon's portrayal of the Persian emperor. Laura Field argues that Xenophon presents Cyrus as the example of a common political problem: an ambitious and gifted leader who is rash and thoughtless.[261] Consequently, she suggests that Xenophon's aim is to hold Cyrus up as an encouragement for aspiring young leaders to develop the character qualities he lacked.[262] Gera does note several of Cyrus's mistakes that Xenophon shows, especially toward the end of his work as he transitions toward the epilogue. She mentions Cyrus's manipulation of his friends (7.5.37), his use of eunuchs (7.5.65), his establishing a tyrannical bureaucracy (8.5.21–27), his indulging in extravagant dress (8.3–14), and other examples.[263] She argues that these inconsistencies with the highly positive portrayal of Cyrus elsewhere highlight two different aspects of Cyrus's uniquely successful rule: benevolence and despotism.[264] She suggests that Xenophon presents both these qualities as necessary for ruling a large empire successfully. Only despotism can manage a massive empire, but that despotism must also be checked by great character of the despot.[265] Similarly, David M. Johnson argues that Xenophon's entire work is critical of Cyrus. He contends that Cyrus's transformation of Persia into an imperial army irreversibly corrupts Persia's foundation.[266]

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[261] Laura K. Field, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*: Educating Our Political Hopes," *Journal of Politics* 74, no. 3 (2012): 733–34.

[262] Field, "Political Hopes," 737.

[263] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 285–99.

[264] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 296–97.

[265] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 296–99.

[266] David M. Johnson, "Persians as Centaurs in Xenophon's 'Cyropaedia,'" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 135, no. 1 (2005): 181.

While Xenophon's Cyrus is indeed flawed, emphasizing those flaws as the central didactic theme of the *Cyropaedia* is mistaken. Xenophon consistently presents Cyrus as a fantastic leader, not as an impetuous youth. For instance, Field argues that Cyrus's education is inadequate because he never appreciates the value of laws, but she misses the greater context of Cyrus's perspective of laws. Cyrus thinks through the issue of laws and finds his educators' answers to his objections unsatisfactory. He recognizes that laws sometimes stand in the way of what is good.[267] An example of this disharmony is the narrative of the boys with unfitting coats (1.3.16–18). The law prevents one boy from forcing an exchange that would result in more appropriately fitting coats for each of them. Cyrus is not content with the law's result in the boys' situation. Ultimately, Field maintains too negative a view of Cyrus that exaggerates his manipulation and ruthlessness.[268] While she overreads the negative aspects of Cyrus's character and regime, the possibility for her to arrive at that reading shows that Xenophon presents Cyrus with some nuance.

Xenophon portrays Cyrus with admirable delicacy for his didactic purposes. He is attempting to juggle several different questions with noticeable tension. He holds Cyrus up as a model leader but acknowledges that the man is not without flaws. He attempts to understand and show how Cyrus accomplished such a difficult feat of ruling mankind that has seemed impossible in history and remains an arduous task. He seeks to reconcile the unparalleled success of Cyrus's empire with the degradation of that empire in Xenophon's present day. Since Xenophon is handling these complex issues, readers should expect significant tension within his work. Unsurprisingly, this tension has led to diverging interpretations of Xenophon's perspective on Cyrus, autocracy, conquest, and

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[267] Field addresses this alternative interpretation, but her defense is unconvincing. Field, "Political Hopes," 726n5. For a fuller discussion on the topic, see Gabriel Danzig, "Big Boys and Little Boys: Justice and Law in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and *Memorabilia*," *Polis: The Journal of the Society for Greek Political Thought* 26, no. 2 (2009): 271–95.

[268] See, for example, Field, "Political Hopes," 729n9.

other topics. In general, readers should approach all these topics with an expectation of tension and a willingness to accept nuance and uncertainty in Xenophon's perspectives.

Attributing a genre to the *Cyropaedia* has proved difficult. Of Xenophon's work, Miller writes, "It is historical, but not history; it has much Socratic dialogue, but it is not philosophy; it has discussions of many questions of education, ethics, politics, tactics, etc., but it is not an essay. It is biographical, but it is not biography."[269] The *Cyropaedia*'s versatility has resulted in a plethora of categorizations. Most scholars have labeled the work as some form of historical fiction. Some have even explored its relationship to the rise of the Greek novel.[270]

Exploring the *Cyropaedia*'s connection to Greek novels has two problems as it pertains to the topic of the work's nature. First, establishing a connection between the *Cyropaedia* and the earliest Hellenistic novels still does not answer the question of the work's nature. To utilize a connection, a reader would also need to identify the type of connection that existed. Direct imitation could suggest that the *Cyropaedia* is the first novel, while indirect influence could allow it to remain in the genre of history.[271] Identifying what type of connection exists is open to considerable interpretation and subjectivity. So, establishing a connection ultimately does not solve the problem of what the *Cyropaedia* is.

Second, the historical connection between the *Cyropaedia* and later Greek novels can be misleading for the purpose of establishing the nature of Xenophon's work. Ultimately, the development of a later tradition does not have bearing on Xenophon's primary aims in writing. A tradition shows how the *Cyropaedia* was received, but it does not give strong evidence toward understanding Xenophon's goals. Later authors, even

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[269] Miller, "Introduction," viii.

[270] Reichel, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*."

[271] Reichel, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," 419.

those attempting to mimic Xenophon, do not attribute intention or purpose to his writing. They simply reveal their interpretations of Xenophon's work. The *Cyropaedia* then continues to prove troublesome, and its unique nature remains controversial.

Scholars have proposed numerous labels in attempts to define Xenophon's work. The most common designation today is that of historical novel. Stadter categorizes the *Cyropaedia* as fiction and calls it "the first extant novel."[272] Bodil Due similarly calls it the first European novel.[273] John Hilton likewise implicitly categorizes it as a novel, though he does leave the question open.[274] Stadter acknowledges that Xenophon never refers to his work as fiction and that he even claims to have undergone historical inquiry. Nevertheless, he argues that the reader must conclude that the work is fiction upon reading the lengthy discourses and upon observing Cyrus's remarkable success in political dealings later in the book.[275] Reichel also considers the *Cyropaedia* to be a novel and uses the categorizing term "open form," but he contends that its didactic purpose sets it apart from other novels.[276] He maintains that it is a fictional narrative with an "outwardly historiographic manner of writing."[277] Nadon prefers to call the *Cyropaedia* a drama and suggests that the reader must interpret it in the same fashion as one would interpret a dialogue or play.[278] Paul Christesen suggests that in addition to other readings, the *Cyropaedia* should also be read as a pamphlet on military reform.[279]

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[272] Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," 461.

[273] Due, *Xenophon's Aims and Methods*, 10.

[274] John Hilton, "War and Peace in the Ancient Greek Novel," *Acta Classica* 48 (2005): 60.

[275] Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," 461–62.

[276] Reichel, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," 421.

[277] Reichel, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*," 438.

[278] Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince,* 24.

[279] Paul Christesen, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Military Reform in Sparta," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 126 (2006): 47.

Carlier argues that Xenophon builds his tale on the evidence but also leans on his intuition, producing an exercise of imagination more than a precise inquiry.[280] Despite his emphasis of Xenophon's imaginative writing, Carlier rejects the oft repeated category of historical novel. He reasons that Xenophon is seeking neither to present rigorous historical precision nor to entertain through fanciful stories.[281] Though these two goals seem to have been Herodotus's dual purposes for writing, Xenophon's writing reflects something different. Carlier argues that the *Cyropaedia* is a demonstration of ἀρχή, namely what it takes to be a good ruler and leader.[282] Xenophon's work fits into a tradition of developing a science of leadership, also found in Socrates.[283]

Miller considers "historical romance" to be the most appropriate genre for the *Cyropaedia* and more broadly designates it as historical fiction.[284] Xenophon does seem to stretch fact or to contradict other accounts on several occasions, such as the conquest of Egypt and the death of Cyrus.[285] The considerable amount of fictive philosophical dialogue makes this category appealing, but it ultimately remains unsatisfactory. Xenophon's historical details should be approached cautiously, but the category of historical fiction is incomplete and misleading. While Xenophon generally stays close to historical fact and correctly preserves many details, he does take considerable liberty in this work, most notably with philosophical and romantic dialogue. The liberties that Xenophon takes stem from his primary goal being didactic rather than historical. Miller

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[280] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 328.

[281] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 328.

[282] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 330.

[283] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 330n5.

[284] Miller, "Introduction," viii.

[285] Miller, "Introduction," ix–x. Anderson notes, however, that Cyrus subjugating Egypt is not necessarily a historical contradiction. Egypt may have submitted to Cyrus but subsequently rebelled after his death. See Steven D. Anderson, *Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal* (Grand Rapids: Self-published, 2014), 24n62.

acknowledges the didactic thrust of the *Cyropaedia* and argues that Xenophon's intention is to present the ideal monarch.[286] A reader then should take the *Cyropaedia* seriously while being aware of its quirks. A better designation for Xenophon's work, however, is historical paradigm.

The category of historical paradigm might seem odd, and some critics might argue that it is a conflation of nature and purpose. As noted above, many scholars recognize the didactic purpose of the *Cyropaedia* while simultaneously categorizing the work as a novel. Graham Anderson has even argued that an instructive element was normal for early works of fiction. He contends that the categories of wisdom and literature had not yet been distinguished. Ancient authors would use the experience of the narrative to illustrate the lessons to be learned. He maintains that the *Cyropaedia* fits within this mold.[287] Anderson's observations are helpful, yet the title of historical paradigm still seems preferable as it more accurately portrays Xenophon's primary goal while respecting normal literary categories today.[288]

The primary aim of the *Cyropaedia* is Xenophon's presentation of Cyrus as a model to be followed by other leaders. Stadter suggests that Xenophon chose to express this philosophical goal through narrative for three main reasons. First, narrative is highly effective at conveying complicated ideas. Second, narrative is inherently pleasing, as

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[286] Miller, "Introduction," xii.

[287] Graham Anderson, *Ancient Fiction: The Novel in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 51.

[288] The reader may bring a legitimate criticism of my designation and a charge of inconsistency. Previously in this chapter is a similar discussion regarding the nature of Herodotus's *Histories*. There, however, I recommend the category of history for his work, despite the blending of genres in the ancient world and the apparent mixture of material and goals, as well as the distinct approach Herodotus had from modern historians. The primary intention of each author is the key difference. Herodotus seeks to inquire about the past and preserve what took place and why it happened. This purpose is functionally the same as modern historians. The distinction is not mainly one of intention but one of critical methodology, rigor, and consistency. With Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, the distinction from modern novels is primarily one of intent. Xenophon's first goal was to teach about leadership and governance, while modern novelists, though they frequently have secondary motives, typically seek first to entertain their readers. So, Herodotus's distinction from modern history seems to be an issue of scale, while Xenophon's distinction from modern novels is one of nature.

opposed to a treatise or something similar. Third, narrative is easy to remember.[289] Though some scholars have questioned Xenophon's choice of form, all three of Stadter's reasons are plausible causes for why Xenophon chose to write the *Cyropaedia* in narrative form.

Xenophon uses the life of Cyrus as the paradigm for a good leader. He accomplishes this feat by basing his work in historical reality. While he exaggerates and fabricates dialogue to illustrate motifs, even his fabrications demonstrate admirable leadership qualities and hold Cyrus up as an ideal for which young leaders should strive. Xenophon is not writing a pure work of fiction to entertain. He is providing an exemplary figure whom leaders should revere and imitate by presenting true actions and events while also including hypothetical dialogue, speeches, and other embellishments. His work seems to have been a resounding success, as scholars are still using it for instructing leaders in the twenty-first century.[290]

Approaching the *Cyropaedia* from this dissertation's methodological perspective does not lead to any radically different interpretations on the nature of Xenophon's work. The *Cyropaedia*'s didactic aspect reigns supreme over historical inquiry and precision in many different interpretive approaches. Nevertheless, the proposed methodology allows for a reading that considers both the clear aim to present Cyrus as the model for an ideal ruler and the significant amount of meaningful historical evidence. An approach that leans too heavily on a traditional approach may miss Xenophon's main purpose in the search for historical precision and may even misinterpret some narratives by failing to identify Xenophon's motives in changing historical details. Meanwhile, a methodology that overemphasizes a postmodern

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[289] Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," 465–67.

[290] Jennifer O'Flannery, "Xenophon's (The Education of Cyrus) and Ideal Leadership Lessons for Modern Public Administration," *Public Administration Quarterly* 27, no. 1/2 (2003): 41–64; Field, "Political Hopes."

approach can abandon the value that the *Cyropaedia* has as a historical witness.

Historical Details

Scholars generally grade the historical reliability of the *Cyropaedia* to be extremely low. Stadter states that the verifiable factual content in Xenophon's work is an exceedingly small percentage but concedes that some historical information exists.[291] Reichel observes that much of its content is demonstrably inaccurate or of an unhistorical character.[292] Xenophon's work about Cyrus certainly has major issues. Most the dialogue and private encounters are patently invented since Xenophon would have had no source for them. These sections dominate Xenophon's account and reveal the didactic and philosophical core of the *Cyropaedia*. Additionally, most of Cyrus's military reform is likely related more to Sparta than to Persia (2.1.9–10; 4.3.1–4.5.58).[293]

Miller identifies four key historical errors.[294] First, Xenophon contends that Cyrus received Media as a dowry rather than through force (8.5.19). Second, the person of Cyaxares II is almost universally considered Xenophon's invention.[295] Third, Xenophon claims that Cyrus, not his son Cambyses, conquered Egypt (8.6.20). Fourth, Xenophon records Cyrus dying peacefully as an old man and not in battle with the Massagetae (8.7.1; 8.7.28).

Still, most egregious "errors" are not as obviously wrong as many scholars contend. Herodotus's account of the Median takeover and Xenophon's account of the Median dowry can be partially reconciled with some assumptions. Duane Garrett has a

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[291] Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the Cyropaideia," 462–63.

[292] Reichel, "Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and the Hellenistic Novel," 421.

[293] Christesen, "Military Reform in Sparta," 47–52.

[294] Miller, "Introduction," ix–x.

[295] In this dissertation, Cyaxares II and Cyaxares are used interchangeably. Cyaxares with no numerical value after his name always refers to Cyaxares II. Cyrus's great-grandfather Cyaxares will always be called Cyaxares I.

more complete description of such a hypothesis, but a few key arguments are of note.[296] If Cyaxares II is historical, he certainly would have been a rival to Cyrus. Cyrus may have indeed sacked Ecbatana, as Herodotus claims, but Astyages may have arranged a peace agreement between Cyaxares and Cyrus after the conflict. He possibly named Cyaxares his heir but married Cyrus to Cyaxares's daughter to unite the empire. Xenophon's narrative strongly displays this rivalry tension between Cyrus and Cyaxares. At several junctures, like when Cyrus and most of the Median army leave Cyaxares alone, Cyaxares is dramatically irritated and jealous (4.4.9–10). If the army knew Cyrus was the heir of the united Medo-Persian empire, Cyaxares's frustration with Cyrus fits the proposed scenario well. Indeed, Cyaxares would be living in a constant state of fear that Cyrus would usurp him. Xenophon presents a Cyaxares who seems to know that his power is tenuous and formal rather than functional. So, while speculative, a historical possibility exists that partially vindicates Xenophon on this issue.

Perhaps most foundational of the four historical problems, Anderson notes that much of the negativity concerning the *Cyropaedia*'s historicity is connected to the rejection of Cyaxares II as a historical figure.[297] As a result, Cyaxares is worth a brief examination.[298] This historical individual is of special importance for Daniel since some scholars have theorized that Cyaxares is a potential match for Daniel's "Darius the

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[296] Duane A. Garrett, "Daniel" (unpublished manuscript, Louisville, 2016), 33–34.

[297] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 25.

[298] A deep look at this complex historical question would distract far too much from the focus of this chapter. Still, several profitable modern examinations of this problem exist. See Steven D. Anderson, "Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal" (PhD diss., Dallas, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2014); Garrett, "Daniel"; Steven D. Anderson and Rodger C. Young, "The Remembrance of Daniel's Darius the Mede in Berossus and Harpocration," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 173 (2016): 315–23; Lester L. Grabbe, "Another Look at the Gestalt of 'Darius the Mede,'" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1988): 198–213; William H. Shea, "The Search for Darius the Mede (Concluded), or, The Time of the Answer to Daniel's Prayer and the Date of the Death of Darius the Mede," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12, no. 1 (2001): 97–105; William H. Shea, "Nabonidus Chronicle: New Readings and the Identity of Darius the Mede," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 7, no. 1 (1996): 1–20; William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede in His Persian-Babylonian Setting," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 29, no. 3 (1991): 235–57; William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20, no. 3 (1982): 229–47; John H. Walton, "The Decree of Darius the Mede in Daniel 6," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 31, no. 3 (1988): 279–86.

Mede."[299] Identifying Cyaxares as Daniel's "Darius the Mede" was an early and common interpretation in history with Josephus, Jerome, John Calvin, Wilhelm Gesenius, and many others taking this view.[300] Nevertheless, the view fell out of favor, and the overwhelming position in scholarship today is that Xenophon's Cyaxares is fictional.[301]

In recent history, Anderson has defended the theory that Darius the Mede was Cyaxares II. He provides several strong arguments for the plausibility of Cyaxares as a historical figure, but two are especially noteworthy. First, though Herodotus and no extant Akkadian inscriptions definitively mention Cyaxares,[302] Herodotus's account of Cyrus and its agreement with Akkadian sources must be received suspiciously due to those sources' propagandistic portrayal of Cyrus.[303] Second, Xenophon would seemingly have more to gain in his purpose of glorifying Cyrus by removing Cyaxares from the narrative than he would by creating and adding him to it.[304] While these arguments by no means prove Cyaxares's existence, they do cast doubt on the idea that Xenophon completely fabricated the figure. Using Cyaxares as a pillar for Xenophon's untrustworthiness is a weak foundation for such an interpretation.

Xenophon may have indeed wrongly attributed Cambyses's conquest of Egypt to Cyrus, but it is not necessarily a contradiction. Cyrus may have begun the conquest or achieved some nominal surrender only for Egypt to rebel upon his death.[305] Cambyses

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[299] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 123.

[300] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 3–5.

[301] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 5.

[302] The Behistun inscription references two rebels claiming to be of the family of Cyaxares. Most scholars naturally take this to refer to Cyaxares I, but Anderson suggests that claiming Cyaxares I instead of Astyages who came after him would be strange. As a result, he suggests the inscription refers to Cyaxares II. Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 29–30.

[303] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 121. Though this propagandistic bend of the Akkadian texts was observed earlier, it was also argued that this propagandistic lean does not necessarily invalidate the historical reliability of those sources. It should inspire caution but not outright dismissal.

[304] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 29.

[305] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 24n62.

may have then completed Egypt's subjugation. Rebelling against an empire after the death of its leader is hardly a novel historical situation. Attributing the conquest of Egypt to Cyrus does fit into Xenophon's portrait of Cyrus, which should demand a bit more skepticism than the first two major historical problems. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that Cyrus's conquest of Egypt is one of the rare places where Xenophon seems to distance himself from the fact recorded, a technique used much more commonly by Herodotus. Regarding the conquest, Xenophon includes the word λέγεται, suggesting that he is simply reporting what is said about Cyrus's conquests rather than definitively taking a stance regarding where Cyrus conquered.

Cyrus's death is the last major issue, and it also meaningfully changes the way the reader would perceive Cyrus. For this reason, it too should be approached with significant skepticism. Xenophon may have been unhappy with the violent death of Cyrus in Herodotus and the way that it might tarnish his image. The peaceful death also allows Cyrus to deliver one final speech to Camybses and others. So, he might have chosen a different source for his work or even invented the death narrative. Nevertheless, a few contestable historical inaccuracies should not invalidate the *Cyropaedia* in the same way that it does not invalidate Herodotus in the eyes of most scholars today.

Though the common view of the *Cyropaedia*'s historical reliability is overwhelmingly negative, some scholars have defended Xenophon's work. For example, Hirsch rejects the notion that the *Cyropaedia* is entirely or even largely fictional. He contends that such a position overlooks Xenophon's stated purpose in studying the historical Cyrus to teach about good rule.[306] He notes Xenophon's intention to relate his discovery (1.1.6) and his mentions of sources like Persian paintings (1.2.13).[307] Hirsch also perceives that attacks on the *Cyropaedia*'s historicity are often unsubstantiated. To

[306] Hirsch, *Friendship of the Barbarians*, 67.

[307] Hirsch, *Friendship of the Barbarians*, 67.

counter such accusations, Hirsch proposes three categories of sources that Xenophon likely used: books by fellow Greeks (like Herodotus), barbarian oral tradition, and his personal experiences in the Persian empire.[308] While Xenophon does seemingly invent elements, much of his historical material appears to have come from legitimate sources.

Notably, Xenophon's description of Cyrus's origin (note especially: 1.2.1–2) is much more reasonable than many other accounts, including Herodotus's (1.107–30). It contains no prophecy, miraculous salvation, or supernatural sign.[309] The absence of this material is not to say that Xenophon is not concerned with the gods. Indeed, Xenophon is renowned for his pious devotion and frequently presents Cyrus offering sacrifices (2.4.18; 3.2.3; 6.4.1). Instead, Xenophon seems to be emphasizing Cyrus's earthly diligence. In the *Cyropaedia*, the gods appear to favor those who deserve and earn their favor.[310] Regardless of Xenophon's theology, some instances like Cyrus's origin show that Xenophon's work can be of a higher historical character than that of his contemporaries.

At the same time, Xenophon appears to manipulate some events to demonstrate Cyrus's good qualities. Eckard Lefèvre argues that Xenophon eliminates Solon as a character and warps other details in Cyrus's interactions with Croesus. He suggests that Xenophon does this to concentrate Cyrus's good qualities and show him as the ideal leader.[311] Hirsch also concedes that Xenophon is concerned with truth but seems to be more interested in philosophical truth than historical precision.[312] Gera also observes how Cyrus's character can be wildly inconsistent, apparently so Xenophon can

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[308] Hirsch, *Friendship of the Barbarians*, 67–68.

[309] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 336.

[310] Carlier, "Imperial Monarchy," 336n24.

[311] Lefèvre, "The Question of the ΒΙΟΣ ΕΥΔΑΙΜΩΝ," 416–17.

[312] Hirsch, *Friendship of the Barbarians*, 70.

be didactic.[313]

Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg provides a helpful summarizing argument about the *Cyropaedia*. She states, "In no way can it be considered as historiography. This, however, should not imply that the *Cyropaedia* is therefore useless as a source for Iranian history; only that a discussion of its relationship to Iranian historical reality is a necessary requirement before it can be put to any cautious use."[314] This judgment holds true for other intersecting areas of history. The *Cyropaedia* then demands a cautious approach but not a dismissive one. An overwhelming amount of the dialogue has little historical value beyond revealing philosophical and moral discussions in Xenophon's day. Still, the *Cyropaedia* is a credible witness to many historical events, if the reader considers Xenophon's portrayals of those events within his ultimate goal of presenting Cyrus as the paradigm of a good leader.

Intersection with Daniel

The *Cyropaedia* intersects with Daniel in its entirety, but two noteworthy areas are Book 1 and Books 4–7. The major topics of intersection are Cyrus's accession and Babylon's fall. Cyrus's entire background and history, particularly the figure of Cyaxares II, shed more light on the regnal situation presented in Daniel. As a result, virtually all the *Cyropaedia* is useful for understanding Daniel, especially as Cyaxares appears throughout the narrative. Cyrus's origin appears in Book 1. Books 4–6 cover the early stages of Cyrus's war with Babylon, and the fall of Babylon occurs in Book 7.

Xenophon presents a second tradition for Cyrus's accession, the first being given by Herodotus. In the *Cyropaedia*, Cyrus spends formative years with Astyages in Media (1.3.1) and grows in popularity there (1.4.1). He returns to Persia as a young man

[313] Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, 284.

[314] Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "The Death of Cyrus," 440.

(1.4.26). Later, Astyages dies and Cyaxares ascends the throne (1.5.2) and chooses Cyrus to be his commander (1.5.5). Cyrus goes to Media (2.1.1), develops the army, and asks Cyaxares to be his patron (2.4.11). On their campaign, Cyrus and Cyaxares have several disagreements (3.3.31; 3.3.47). The situation escalates when Cyrus and the Median army leave Cyaxares (4.5.9). Afterward, Cyrus and Cyaxares exchange tense correspondence (4.5.10–32). After more military endeavors, Cyrus calls for Cyaxares and they reconcile (5.5.1–36). Though much of Cyrus's path to his throne appears in earlier books, Xenophon relays the key detail of Cyrus's receiving Media as a dowry in Book 8. In this narrative, Cyaxares still reigns, gives Cyrus his daughter and Media (8.5.19), and also guarantees Cyrus the throne of the empire upon his death (8.5.26). This point is the major disagreement between Xenophon and Herodotus and has a significant impact on one's posture toward the historicity of Cyaxares and the potential for a historical Darius the Mede.

Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* generally agrees with Herodotus's narrative of the fall of Babylon. Cyrus initially surrounds the city (7.5.1), but he sees the strength of the walls and withdraws (7.5.3). Next, he proposes a siege (7.5.7), but he then suggests that they divert the Euphrates River (7.5.9). Babylon laughs at the Persian army, knowing they have a massive stock of supplies (7.5.13). The city falls, however, when "a certain festival had come round in Babylon" and the city celebrates with "drink and revel all night long" (7.5.15).[315] Cyrus and his army successfully divert the water of the river and march into the city on the riverbed (7.5.15–26). Though some resistance ensues, the city is largely in panic and flight (7.5.27–28). The Persian army takes a Babylonian king and kills those around him (7.5.30). Xenophon's description of slaying these figures resembles a hunt more than a battle. Finally, the entire city surrenders (7.5.33).

[315] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 1914, 2:267.

Xenophon's account of Babylon's fall corresponds closely with both Herodotus and Daniel.

Summary of History and Perspectives

Herodotus and Xenophon provide several key insights into the historical context of Daniel and toward developing a historiographical methodology. First, the Greek historians cannot be read as modern critical works of history. The ancient methodology differs drastically from what is accepted in today's historiography. The levels of precision, source verification, and investigative rigor that are expected in contemporary historiography should not be imposed upon the ancients.

Second, Herodotus and Xenophon have ulterior motives in their work and often explicitly state them. Herodotus attempts to preserve traditions, even some outlandish ones, embarks on anthropological studies, records feats of valor, entertains his readers, and teaches theology. Meanwhile, Xenophon strives to mold young statesmen, glorify Cyrus and Persian history, and speak into political debates of his day. A reader might think to become lost in so many objectives, but the motives give clarity to their writings rather than discord. Understanding the authors' goals allows for a better critique of their writings, as well as providing a window into their lives.

Third, reductionistic readings must be avoided. Herodotus is too often received as a bland inquiry toward history, which results in incomplete interpretations. Herodotus sought to understand cultural traditions, to preserve myths and legendary deeds, to observe the world, and to engage his reader toward critical thinking. Likewise, the *Cyropaedia* is too often labeled a simple work of fiction. Xenophon's main goal in this work is not to record history. Neither is it to tell an entertaining story. Instead, he seeks to provide a paradigm for leadership and to engage in political discussion of his time. Branding the work as fictive both misses the primary thrust of the book and overlooks the considerable amount of reasonable historical information the work has to offer. Both

authors' works are complex texts that demand nuanced judgment.

Fourth, Herodotus is not objectively superior to the *Cyropaedia* as a source for history. Readers often regard Herodotus as more reliable outright, but this approach is flawed. Readers should instead weigh the evidence from each source within the context of each author's intentions. Herodotus may seem reliable more frequently than Xenophon does, but on some topics, Xenophon appears to be the more reliable historical source. Both authors have goals apart from purely preserving historical data. Scholars must carefully analyze each account and consider its individual value when interpreting related events in Daniel.

Fifth, Herodotus and Xenophon have considerable tension regarding their accounts of Cyrus's accession. Herodotus presents Cyrus as conquering Media, leading the Persians in a revolt against his grandfather Astyages, engaging in direct battle, and apparently assuming the throne immediately. Xenophon describes Cyrus as commanding the army against Babylon for Cyaxares, Astyages's son and successor, though with significant tension and rivalry between them. He then writes of Cyrus ruling over Babylon after its fall but not obtaining Media until later as a dowry when he marries Cyaxares's daughter. In Xenophon, Cyrus then receives the empire upon Cyaxares's death. While virtually impossible to reconcile all details from both accounts, a way to harmonize the general premises from each account may exist and was mentioned above.

Sixth, both Greek authors support Daniel's narrative of Babylon's fall. Herodotus's and Xenophon's accounts of the fall of the city bear much in common. They both discuss Babylon's initial preparation and Cyrus's inability to conquer it by typical means. Xenophon even speaks of the Babylonians laughing at the futility of the Persians' efforts. Both authors mention a festival on the night of the fall, aligning with Daniel's feast. They both speak of Cyrus diverting the river and the army entering through the riverbed. They both also suggest significant chaos and surprise in the city on the night of its fall. Xenophon even mentions the taking of a Babylonian king on that night, mirroring

Daniel's narrative that places Belshazzar in the city.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This project has waded into historiographical methodology and analyzed a number of sources. The final chapter will attempt to take that analysis, synthesize some key findings, and apply them to some historical issues in Daniel. First, I will highlight some significant general observations on the sources and the implications that they have for Daniel. Second, I will summarize my findings on the extra-biblical sources in more detail, especially the elements that have bearing on major historical issues in Daniel. Third, I will address some of Daniel's historical issues and use the sources to give potential solutions. This section will cover a few minor problems. Then, it will briefly discuss Darius the Mede before turning to the fall of Babylon in greater detail. Fourth, I will make some final comments including potential areas for further research.

Opening Remarks

A methodological debate still besets historiography. This debate has also surfaced within biblical studies. Though in no way solving the divide in scholarship, the arguments and evidence presented do show a valuable mediating method. Namely, the typical evangelical approach to reading biblical texts is also a useful methodology for reading extra-biblical literature. It reads texts as legitimate witnesses for recreating history, while also seeking their theological and literary features. The methodology's usefulness is most clearly evident in the analyses of the *Cyropaedia* and Herodotus but even seems promising for the Akkadian texts. The employed methodology also highlights some traditional problems with modernist and postmodernist approaches to texts.

Under the methodology's analysis, the texts prove profitable for understanding Daniel. The Babylonian texts help with understanding Daniel's context. Nabonidus's extended absence from Babylon establishes a unique political climate for Daniel that informs our understanding of Belshazzar, the regnal dates in Daniel, and other areas. They also clarify Babylonian succession, suggest Nabonidus's unorthodoxy, and imply a propaganda campaign from Nabonidus. Though heavily biased toward Nabonidus, the Babylonian sources appear to be strong historical evidence.

The Persian sources also illuminate the book of Daniel. They provide critical information about Babylon's fall, notably asserting the lack of a battle. They confirm Nabonidus's religious reforms toward Sîn and his stay in Tayma, and they provide some information regarding Cyrus's accession. This information has similar implications for Daniel as does the information from the Babylonian sources, but it also provides greater clarity on the identity of Darius the Mede. The Persian sources are heavily biased like the Babylonian sources, but the Persian texts are negative toward Nabonidus and positive toward Cyrus. Their exaltation of Cyrus and denigration of Nabonidus suggest a propaganda war between the two ancient Near Eastern rulers. Such a historical situation demands great caution from today's historians.

Though not contemporaneous with the events of Daniel, Herodotus and Xenophon are arguably even more important sources for Daniel than the Akkadian inscriptions. Herodotus provides significant information regarding Cyrus's origin, Babylon's fall, and Cyrus's successors. Herodotus certainly requires some questioning, but he seems to be a generally reliable source. Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* is a more complex text in nature than Herodotus. Like Herodotus though, its main implications for Daniel are the topics of Cyrus's accession and the fall of Babylon. The *Cyropaedia* requires care in interpretation due to its didactic nature and significant fabricated content. That content, however, is mostly confined to dialogue and identifiable. Despite its fictive

tendencies, the work seems built upon a predominantly reliable skeleton of historical details.

The two Greek works generally agree regarding Babylon's fall, but their presentations of Cyrus's rise to power appear to diverge. The tension, however, may not be as strong as it initially seems, as a way to harmonize the two accounts does exist. Herodotus and the *Cyropaedia* are critical for understanding Daniel's presentation of history and in determining the book's historicity. Both works have explicit and implicit ulterior motives, which make simplistic readings dangerous. Though Herodotus does seem more reliable overall, he is not objectively superior to Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* as a historical witness. Sometimes, the *Cyropaedia* even appears more trustworthy. In the debate of Daniel's Darius the Mede, these two works of Greek literature are the two main pillars of analysis. Understanding these texts is fundamental to judging Daniel's reliability.

The primary focus of this dissertation has been evaluating the extra-biblical literature surrounding Daniel's historical context. The aim has been to avoid studying these texts exclusively as tools for solving a historical conundrum. Instead, the goal has been to examine their innate value and to practice using a historiographical methodology. Nevertheless, a useful function of examining the texts with these goals in mind is precisely that they can be used to shed more light on historical issues. As a result, this chapter will demonstrate how a reader might apply the research in this work toward the study of specific historical issues.

Textual Overview

The methodology used in this dissertation has attempted to use postmodernism as a corrective to some of the flaws of modernism. In that attempt, I employed the following five principles. First, truth is not a spectrum, but knowability of truth is. Second, while language can be misleading and subjective, it is not entirely arbitrary.

Third, historical texts can have literary features but must be approached differently than purely literary texts. Fourth, texts provide us with information both about the past as it existed and about the individuals who created the texts. Fifth, careful historiography is predominantly a recreation of the past and not purely a creation.

Following these principles has not led to radically different conclusions about the surveyed texts than seen in scholarship. Nevertheless, some nuances have emerged. First, this project has judged texts more historically reliable than typical. The desire to understand the authors' motives and biases has led to fewer outright rejections of historical details and more searches for justifications for the authors' inclusions of those details. Second, propaganda has been readily acknowledged but not as readily utilized to discredit the source. Modernist historians regularly use propagandistic elements to deny the historical claims of a text, and postmodernist historians focus on the reasons for the propaganda but not on the historical claims. This dissertation's approach has sought to discover the reasons for the propaganda while simultaneously pursuing the credibility of the historical details. The assumption of this approach has been that propaganda is more effective when it contains some element of truth. Third, the *Cyropaedia* features much more positively as a historical source than is common today. Most historians consider Xenophon's work to be of little historical value, though some defenders exist. While this project identifies the *Cyropaedia*'s primary function as didactic, it still finds it to be a valuable resource for recreating history. Xenophon's work accomplishes this feat by layering his philosophical dialogue and arguments on top of a reliable historical blueprint. He appears to warp that history around his didactic purpose at times, but his text still contains a large amount of trustworthy historical data.

Each text studied in this dissertation will receive a short section below, though not every text will have much information relevant to every historical issue in Daniel. I will quickly review each text by mentioning critical details for understanding the major historical issues, discussing any bias the text's author may have had, and stating how a

reader might apply these elements to better understand Daniel's historical context, especially Belshazzar's feast at the fall of Babylon.[1]

Nabonidus's Rise to Power

The Nabonidus's Rise to Power inscription provides important context for determining Belshazzar's lineage. Daniel refers to Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's son, and some interpreters have taken this detail literally. This text, however, provides strong evidence that Belshazzar was not biologically related to Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonidus claims that he had no desire for the throne, which seems bizarre if he were connected to Nebuchadnezzar's line through blood or marriage. The inscription offers valuable context for understanding the political dynamic in Babylon, especially regarding the transition from Nebuchadnezzar to Nabonidus.

The inscription offers little evidence relevant for the discussion of a feast on the night of Babylon's fall, but it does offer some important background. The inscription shows Nabonidus's strong interest in religious matters, which will prove helpful for a theory supposing the feast to be a religious festival. The text is a propaganda piece from Nabonidus, but that reality does not undermine the presentation of Nabonidus as religious.

Nabonidus and His God

The Nabonidus and His God inscription corroborates Nabonidus's claim from the previous inscription that he did not aspire for the throne. These two inscriptions greatly undermine any theory that places Belshazzar in Nebuchadnezzar's biological line. The text also states that Nabonidus was absent from Babylon for ten years, leaving an administrative gap in Babylon. It also has implications for the identity of Darius the

[1] The comments below will be summarizing, so each section skips many of the arguments and details. The reader may find more complete comments and explanations on each of these texts in chapters 3-5.

Mede, mentioning a king of the Medes supposedly long after Cyrus would have subjugated them.

The inscription highlights Belshazzar's critical role in his father's administration, as well as Nabonidus's apparent devotion to the god Sîn. The text excessively celebrates Nabonidus and the god Sîn. The bias does not jeopardize any of the significant historical details, but it does support the theory that Nabonidus was promoting Sîn worship. While the few details above are important, the inscription has little value overall for understanding the fall of Babylon.

Sippar Cylinder

The Sippar Cylinder is critical for understanding Cyrus's accession. It is the only Nabonidus inscription that mentions Cyrus, and it is also one of the only contemporaneous sources to provide explicit information on the Medo-Persian conflict. It claims that Cyrus defeated vast Median hordes and captured Astyages. In short, it alludes to armed conflict between Cyrus leading the Persians and his grandfather Astyages leading the Medes. One's judgment of this text has implications for understanding the *Cyropaedia*'s reliability and the identity of Darius the Mede.

Unfortunately, the text provides negligible information about Babylon's fall. The text is strongly propagandistic and was possibly edited from a previous inscription, so interpreting its content remains challenging. Still, apart from Nabonidus's theological convictions, the text effectively provides no information applicable to Babylon's fall.

Nabonidus Cylinder with Belshazzar

The Nabonidus Cylinder with Belshazzar inscription crucially established the existence of Belshazzar as a historical figure, removing doubts that Daniel had invented the character. Furthermore, the text's praise of Sîn provides more evidence for understanding Nabonidus's theology and his strange decade absence from Babylon. Beyond these historical topics, the text is generally unhelpful.

The inscription is also not highly useful for understanding Daniel 5. While its discovery critically supported the existence of Belshazzar, that historical issue is far in the past. The text may be seen as having some elements positive toward Nabonidus, but it is primarily a bland building inscription. The only detail relevant to Babylon's fall is its support of Nabonidus having a fanatical devotion to the moon god Sîn.

Nabonidus Chronicle

The Nabonidus Chronicle is a problematic text due to physical damage and issues surrounding its date and composition. The Akitu festivals feature prominently in the text and seem to indicate discontent with Nabonidus's stay in Tayma. Regarding Cyrus, the chronicle asserts that Astyages's Median army revolted and turned him over to Cyrus, who then sacked Ecbatana. This detail proves crucial in discussing the identity of Darius the Mede. The text also states that Nabonidus flees Babylon after the Persian conquest of Sippar and that the Persians conquer Babylon "without a battle." Nabonidus's absence from Babylon could help explain Daniel's account of the city's fall.

The chronicle is probably a Persian-commissioned update of a previous version during Nabonidus's reign, and the text's possible composite nature makes determining its bias difficult. The reader should expect a pro-Cyrus bias that is heavily critical of Nabonidus, but elements of anti-Persian sentiment may also be present. Despite its lack of objectivity, the text still seems largely reliable and offers several helpful details related to Babylon's fall. The chronicle is useful in demonstrating Nabonidus's absence from Babylon, Cyrus's interactions with Media, Belshazzar's administrative authority, the important role of the Akitu festivals, and the method of Babylon's capture.

Verse Account of Nabonidus

The Verse Account overlaps with the Nabonidus Chronicle and provides little unique historical evidence as a result. The text is also difficult to interpret due to its poetic and biased nature. Nevertheless, it does help illuminate the political and religious

situations in Babylon before the fall by providing some useful context for the event. For instance, the text suggests that Nabonidus was engaged in a propaganda campaign just like Cyrus. Additionally, it adds even more evidence that Nabonidus's permanent residence during his absence from Babylon was Tayma, hinting at the significant administrative role of Belshazzar during those years.

The text cannot be read as strictly historical or even chronological, and the text seemingly attempts to justify Cyrus's conquest by highlighting his reforms back to religious orthodoxy. Still, other inscriptions corroborate some details, so the text does have historical value. The inscription's strategy appears to spin real events in Cyrus's favor rather than fabricate them.

Cyrus Cylinder

The Cyrus Cylinder is one of the most important texts for understanding Babylon's fall but has few implications for other historical issues in Daniel. This inscription emphasizes Nabonidus's theological drift from Marduk and notes Cyrus's restoration of each Babylonian god to its proper city. Furthermore, it claims that Cyrus entered Babylon in a peaceful manner without fighting or a battle and that the Babylonian populace received him positively. This version of Babylon's fall mostly agrees with the Nabonidus Chronicle. The Cyrus Cylinder seems to be explicit propaganda from Cyrus. It is highly pejorative toward Nabonidus and laudatory of Cyrus. As a result, readers must handle it cautiously, but it still may preserve some historical reality.

Dynastic Prophecy

Another key text for understanding Daniel is the Dynastic Prophecy. It further refutes any possibility of a biological connection between Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar, referring to Nabonidus as a "rebel prince." It corroborates Nabonidus's cancellation of religious festivals found in other texts. It also claims that Cyrus did not kill Nabonidus but moved him to a place away from Babylon. The text also disputes the

claim of Cyrus's popularity in Babylon, which casts doubt on the other inscriptions' claims of a peaceful Persian takeover of Babylon.

The Dynastic Prophecy's purpose and bias are heavily debated, but the text was possibly a propaganda piece designed to garner support for Darius III. Ironically, the text seems negative toward both Nabonidus and Cyrus. The Dynastic Prophecy's relative lack of information about Babylon's fall and its notable propagandistic nature hinder the text's usefulness for that historical issue though it is valuable for other topics.

Herodotus

For historical issues, Herodotus overlaps with Daniel in three key areas: Cyrus's origin and accession, Babylon's fall, and Cambyses II and Darius. Herodotus's version of Cyrus's rise to power is one of two versions in tension. Herodotus asserts that Cyrus leads the Persians in revolt against Astyages. When Cyrus and the Persians engage the Medes, some Medes desert and some flee. Astyages gathers the remaining Medes at Ecbatana, where Cyrus defeats them. After his victory, Cyrus becomes ruler of both the Persians and the Medes. Herodotus's earlier material on Cyrus that covers his birth and boyhood is notably fanciful. Nevertheless, his version of Cyrus's rise seems mostly reliable. This account is critically important in the debate about Darius the Mede.

Herodotus provides a significant amount of information concerning Babylon's fall. He reports that Babylon is amply prepared for Cyrus's siege and unworried. After Cyrus makes no initial progress in taking the city, he searches for alternative means of capture and diverts the Euphrates, entering through the riverbed. The night of its capture, many people are unaware that the outer parts of the city had been taken. Herodotus attributes the confusion to the city's size and the occurrence of a festival that night.

Herodotus also provides information about Cyrus's successors. He explains that Cambyses II succeeds Cyrus upon his death. Cambyses rules for seven years, and a chaotic transition of power follows his death. Originally, a magus seizes power by posing

as Cambyses's brother, but Darius assembles a conspiracy to remove him. Eventually, the magus is killed, and Darius wins the kingship. This succession is important for understanding the various kings mentioned in Daniel and for the discussion related to Darius the Mede.

Herodotus has distinct goals apart from exclusively recording historical reality. He seeks to preserve traditions, record valorous deeds, and even delight his readers. With these goals, Herodotus's work takes on a literary character throughout but is still historical by nature. Though the reader should not accept every claim at face value, Herodotus nevertheless remains a reliable source for recreating history. His versions of Cyrus's ascension and Babylon's fall seem generally trustworthy.

Xenophon

The *Cyropaedia* is crucial for the debate concerning Darius the Mede. One theory for the figure's identity is Cyaxares II, who appears only in the *Cyropaedia*. Xenophon's work provides the second version of Cyrus's accession. Xenophon claims that Astyages dies and is succeeded by Cyaxares, who chooses Cyrus to be his commander. Cyrus agrees, forms an army, and goes on campaigns. Though there is significant tension between Cyrus and Cyaxares, Xenophon records no open battle between Persia and Media. Instead, he reports that Cyrus receives Media as a dowry upon marrying Cyaxares's daughter. This version of Cyrus's accession and the historicity of Cyaxares II are significant for identifying Darius the Mede.

Like Herodotus, Xenophon provides a rich account of Babylon's fall. Xenophon states that Cyrus surrounds the city but withdraws upon witnessing its strength. He initially proposes a siege but quickly suggests they divert the Euphrates instead. Some Babylonians even taunt the Persians from the wall, gloating over their extensive supplies. Xenophon also states that the army marches into the city on the riverbed when the people are drinking and celebrating a festival all night long. While the

Babylonians mount some resistance, they are largely in panic and flight. The last critical detail that Xenophon reports is the Persian army's taking a Babylonian king and killing his company, which could allude to Belshazzar. Eventually, the entire city surrenders. This account generally supports Daniel's version of the city's fall.

Xenophon's primary motive is not to record history but to display Cyrus as a paradigm for the good ruler. As a result, Xenophon's text must always be viewed questioningly, specifically related to how it presents the character of Cyrus. Indeed, the *Cyropaedia* appears crafted to highlight Cyrus's exceptional leadership skill and exemplary virtue. The didactic element surpasses the historical element in importance. Still, Xenophon's work seems to be built upon a foundation of reliable history, even if some details appear incorrect or tailored to exalt Cyrus.

General Observations

Before looking at the historical issues in Daniel more specifically, a few general observations of the sources are noteworthy. First, the sources reveal Nabonidus's extensive absence from Babylon. Nabonidus was not acting as king in the great city for roughly a decade. His sojourn in Tayma placed Belshazzar in a far stronger position of power than would be normal for a crown prince. Furthermore, the sources suggest a peculiar and tense religious and political situation before Babylon's demise.

Second, Cyrus and Nabonidus seem to have both engaged in considerable production of propaganda. Cyrus sought to portray his capture of Babylon as a liberation rather than a conquest. At least, this was the image he seems to have projected to the Babylonians. He also consistently emphasizes that he was welcomed and celebrated in the city. Nabonidus also seems to have engaged in propaganda in the years leading up to Babylon's fall, but the picture of his propaganda is not as clear since he lost the war and never had the chance to produce victorious material. The propagandistic bend of many of their inscriptions demands care when drawing conclusions from the Akkadian texts.

Third, the *Cyropaedia* is more reliable as a historical source than modern scholarship typically judges it. While Xenophon's work should not be approached blindly, the scholarly consensus on its reliability as a historical resource is too negative. Though Xenophon's primary goal in the *Cyropaedia* is didactic, he seems to build his narrative on a generally trustworthy skeleton of history. Indeed, the story of Cyrus seems less fanciful and more reasonable than Herodotus does at times. Some scholars, however, have defended Xenophon too strongly. The *Cyropaedia* should demand great caution, but it is far from worthless for recreating history.

Fourth, the analyzed texts have a wide range of functions that should influence interpretation. The texts serve political, historical, religious, pragmatic, didactic, personal, and aesthetic ends. Each one alone frequently serves several purposes. They commemorate building projects, spread propaganda, promote theology, justify authority, celebrate victory, preserve history, maintain traditions, offer entertainment, honor gods, establish paradigms, foster morality, explore origins, and many other things. The texts' purposes are manifold, and an interpretive approach that does not identify as many of those purposes as possible will suffer.

Fifth, the sources in view do not address the historical issues in Daniel evenly. Some matters, like the practicality of the fiery furnace, do not have much testimony in the extra-biblical literature. The texts studied in this project provide the most information regarding two historical topics in Daniel: the fall of Babylon and the identity of Darius the Mede. Most of the texts provide useful information on at least one of these topics, but many other discussions are left wanting for information from the extant extra-biblical evidence. As a result, the following section will feature the topics of Darius the Mede and Babylon's fall more prominently than others.

Significance for Daniel

The book of Daniel has raised numerous historical questions. Scholars have

linked Daniel's account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness to the tradition in Jewish literature of Nabonidus's madness. Some have questioned the plausibility of the fiery furnace and Daniel's promotion to the lofty position he claims. Furthermore, the identity of Darius the Mede still commands considerable scholarly attention today. Daniel's depiction of Babylon's fall in Daniel 5 alone has inspired significant historical critique. This section will look at a few minor issues first, followed briefly by the identity of Darius the Mede, and finally the topic of Babylon's fall.

Minor Issues

Two frequent criticisms that scholars levy against Daniel 5 are identifying Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's son and his title of king.[2] Scholars have offered several theories in attempts to explain Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's son. Raymond Dougherty suggests that Belshazzar is Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.[3] H. C. Leupold proposes that Nabonidus married a widow of Nebuchadnezzar and adopted Belshazzar.[4] John J. Collins, on the other hand, argues that the author is simply in error.[5] Alternatively, John Goldingay contends that Belshazzar is a cipher for Antiochus Epiphanes,[6] but the best explanation, made by Robert Wilson, is that "son" refers to a successor.[7]

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[2] John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 32–33.

[3] Space does not allow for a full survey of Dougherty's arguments and views. For this example, see Raymond Philip Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar: A Study of the Closing Events of the Neo-Babylonian Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929), 60. For a summary of all his major reasons for taking Nitocris the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar as the wife of Nabonidus, see Dougherty, 60–63. For critique of this position, see Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), 117. Though views are diverse, some scholars still maintain this position. See, for example, Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 149–50. Though much earlier, Gruenthaner also follows Dougherty. Michael J. Gruenthaner, "Last King of Babylon," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (October 1949), 424.

[4] H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1969), 211.

[5] Collins, *Daniel*, 32.

[6] John Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 105.

[7] *Studies in the Book of Daniel: A Discussion of the Historical Questions* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), 117–18. Wilson goes further in his analysis on the words "father" and "son" to

Wilson's argument gains weight when analyzing two inscriptions. The Mesha Stela speaks of Omri's oppression of Moab, signifying the king's foreign power and fame.[8] The Black Obelisk then describes Jehu as a son of the house of Omri.[9] Jehu was not a son of Omri and even slaughtered Omri's descendants and family (2 Kgs 10). Clyde Fant and Mitchell Reddish explain that the Assyrians regularly refer to kings of a country with the name of the dynasty in power upon their first encounter.[10] This dynamic is precisely what the author of Daniel is utilizing by linking Belshazzar with the great Nebuchadnezzar.[11] By linking the two through this identification of successor, the author creates a clear contrast in their responses to YHWH.[12] The author of Daniel intentionally builds a tight connection between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar for a theological point of humility to YHWH.[13]

Daniel's given title of "king" to Belshazzar has also spawned debate. Collins argues that he could not be considered king in any sense of the word at the time of

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argue for twelve distinct nuances to the relationship. Although a full discussion of these many meanings would distract from this paper, noting the wide semantic range of these words is a helpful reminder to avoid assuming a direct biological link.

[8] Clyde E. Fant and Mitchell G. Reddish, *Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 99.

[9] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 121.

[10] Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 122. Ironically, Fant and Reddish judge Daniel inaccurate for precisely this feature. See Fant and Reddish, *Lost Treasures*, 234.

[11] Garrett also provides several other examples in which an unrelated royal predecessor is referred to as one's father, most notably the Tel Dan inscription. See Duane A. Garrett, "Daniel" (unpublished manuscript, Louisville, 2016).

[12] Arnold even shows how the verb נפק is used by the author of Daniel to closely align Belshazzar's arrogance with Nebuchadnezzar's which are both opposed to God's response to their blasphemy. Bill T. Arnold, "Wordplay and Narrative Techniques in Daniel 5 and 6," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112, no. 3 (1993), 482.

[13] Shea even argues for a chiastic structure of Dan 2-7 with chapters 4 and 5 being the centerpiece. He further argues that chapters 4 and 5 each have their own independent chiastic structure. See William H. Shea, "Further Literary Structures in Daniel 2–7: An Analysis of Daniel 5, and the Broader Relationships within Chapters 2–7," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 23, no. 3 (1985). Garrett, however, argues that the chiasm is not clear in Dan 2-7 and that the label is somewhat arbitrary. See Garrett, "Daniel."

Babylon's fall,[14] since inscriptions imply that he was demoted upon his father's return from Tayma.[15] One explanation for the title of king could be his administrative, financial, and political power.[16] Nabonidus's decade-long stay in Tayma bolsters this point. Daniel also identifies Belshazzar as king in 7:1 and 8:1, but Daniel's familiarity with coregency could explain why he opts to date according to Belshazzar and not Nabonidus.[17] Daniel's promotion to "third" in the kingdom seems to allude to the knowledge of a ruler formally higher than Belshazzar, or at least of similar status.[18] Furthermore, inscriptions of Nergal-shar-usur identify Bel-shum-ishkun as "King of Babylon" without any qualification though this inscription refers to the time of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.[19]

Ultimately, Daniel would have existed in a context where Belshazzar lived in the palace, handled all the kingly affairs, and exercised kingly authority in judgments. Indeed, for most of Nabonidus's reign, Belshazzar led the administration from Babylon.

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[14] Collins's critique, namely that Belshazzar cannot rightly be called king at the fall of Babylon if he had been demoted when Nabonidus returned, is inconsistent with normal usage of the word king. As Wilson shows, an individual who existed as a king at any point may rightly be referred to as king even after his reign has ended. For a modern example, notice how media outlets and the general population tend to refer to former presidents of the United States with the continuous title "President" before their first names, even though they are no longer in office. Once earned, an honorific like king or president does not leave the person. Collins then defeats his own argument when he admits that he might justifiably be called king in an unofficial document like Daniel if he were commanding Babylon at the time of the fall. For arguments, see Collins, *Daniel*, 32–33; Wilson, *Studies in Daniel*, 87–95.

[15] Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 165.

[16] For a detailed discussion on the various texts that point to Belshazzar's influence and an explanation of the theory that he maneuvered to become the heir to Neriglissar's estate, see Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 95–98. Several scholars have even suggested that Belshazzar was the head conspirator in the killing of Labashi-Marduk and usurpation of the throne. See Bill T. Arnold, *Who Were the Babylonians?* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 102; Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 98.

[17] Shea provides a meaningful discussion on coregency and its potential influence on Daniel. He finds nine total examples of coregency in Jerusalem: David and Solomon, Asa and Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram, Amaziah and Azariah, Azariah and Jotham, Jotham and Ahaz, Ahaz and Hezekiah, Hezekiah and Manasseh, and Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. For biblical references and speculation for causes as well as a fuller discussion of the practice of coregency in the ANE, see William H. Shea, "Nabonidus, Belshazzar, and the Book of Daniel: An Update," *Bible and Spade Summer 1983*, 1983, 147.

[18] Miller, *Daniel*, 148; Edwin M. Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 88–89.

[19] Gruenthaner, "Last King of Babylon," 416.

To Daniel and the rest of the Jewish exiles in Babylon, Belshazzar was "*de facto* king."[20] Joyce Baldwin summarizes, "Since Belshazzar was to all intents and purposes king, it is pedantic to accuse the writer of the book of Daniel of inaccuracy in calling him 'Belshazzar the king'."[21] Neither of these two historical problems demand more attention.

Darius the Mede

In Daniel 5:31, the author reports that upon Babylon's fall, a certain sixty-two year-old "Darius the Mede" obtained the Babylonian kingdom. The virtually unanimous judgment from critical scholars is that Daniel is in error and Darius the Mede never existed. His apparent absence from all the extra-biblical evidence makes such a judgment easy for most scholars. Evangelical scholars, however, have traditionally searched for a historical figure whom they might identify as Daniel's Darius the Mede. This historical issue received some attention earlier in this work, but a more complete summary is worthwhile.

Darius the Mede's identity remains one of the biggest points of critique regarding Daniel's historicity. Unfortunately, only a few personal details emerge from Daniel concerning Darius. First, he is apparently a Mede (5:31). Second, he was sixty-two years old when Babylon fell (5:31). Third, he was the son of Ahaseurus (9:1). Though these items prove to be more information than given of other rulers in Daniel, they still do not illuminate who Darius might be.

Several theories emerge regarding Darius the Mede's potential identity. Scholars who reject Daniel's claim frequently assert the author was mistaken and thought that Darius I conquered Babylon.[22] Those who search for a historical person for Darius

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[20] Yamauchi, *Stones and the Scriptures*, 88.

[21] Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 25.

[22] James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1927), 65. Goldingay provides a brief and

the Mede offer several solutions. Two commonly proposed individuals are easily confused. The first is Gubaru I (Ugbaru), and the second is Gubaru II. Gubaru I was Cyrus's general who helped capture the city. Gubaru II was a separate individual who later became governor of Babylon.[23]

William Shea argues that Gubaru I, also known as Ugbaru, was Darius the Mede.[24] Shea argues that Gubaru was only king over Babylon for a week to accommodate his recorded death.[25] Shea's thesis is intriguing, but such a short reign offers a severely problematic timeline. Gubaru would have had to undergo a coronation ceremony, appoint governors, develop respect for Daniel, issue decrees, throw Daniel in a lions' den, and be the victim of a murderous conspiracy. Shea acknowledges how busy such a week would be, but the proposed circumstance still seems outlandish. Additionally, no further evidence exists to support connecting Gubaru I to Darius the Mede.

Conversely, John Whitcomb contends that Gubaru II was Darius the Mede.[26] This theory too struggles to find supporting evidence. Lester Grabbe notes the most damaging problem with this theory: Gubaru does not seem to have taken office until Cyrus's fourth year, too late for Daniel's Darius the Mede.[27] Choosing either Gubaru as

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helpful summary of the potential views. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 112.

[23] The Nabonidus Chronicle contains references to both Gubaru and Ugbaru, but some scholars take these instances all as references to the same person. See William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20, no. 3 (1982); Lester L. Grabbe, "Another Look at the Gestalt of 'Darius the Mede,'" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1988).

[24] Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update"; William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede in His Persian-Babylonian Setting," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 29, no. 3 (1991); William H. Shea, "Nabonidus Chronicle: New Readings and the Identity of Darius the Mede," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 7, no. 1 (1996); William H. Shea, "The Search for Darius the Mede (Concluded), or, The Time of the Answer to Daniel's Prayer and the Date of the Death of Darius the Mede," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12, no. 1 (2001).

[25] Shea, "The Search for Darius," 105.

[26] John Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede: A Study in Historical Identification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

[27] Grabbe, "Another Look," 206.

the solution for Darius the Mede's identity creates another problem with the text of Daniel.[28] Darius enacts an irrevocable decree for prayers to be offered exclusively to him (6:7–9; MT 8–10). No governor or general of Cyrus could make such a decree. Both Gubaru I and Gubaru II are unsatisfactory identifications of Darius the Mede.

In 1957, D. J. Wiseman proposed that Darius the Mede and Cyrus were the same person.[29] He argues for a reasonable reading of Daniel 6:28 (29 MT) in which the name Cyrus is appositional to Darius the Mede, translating the Hebrew phrase בְּמַלְכוּת דָּרְיָוֶשׁ וּבְמַלְכוּת כּוֹרֶשׁ פָּרְסָיָא as "during the reign of Darius, namely the reign of Cyrus the Persian."[30] Joyce G. Baldwin affirms this theory as plausible.[31] The view is appealing and indeed has some textual evidence.[32] Furthermore, the sources do show that Cyrus was half-Median and several texts suggest that he favored his Median heritage. Nevertheless, this theory struggles to explain Daniel's treating Darius and Cyrus as two separate men when he dates some of his visions (9:1; 10:1). The theory does not solve but shifts the difficulty from the topic of extra-biblical evidence to the text of Daniel. Identifying Darius the Mede as Cyrus does have the benefit of nearly solving the issue with the extra-biblical literature. The individual is no longer absent in the textual evidence since that individual is Cyrus who appears everywhere. Another question then arises: why is Cyrus never called Darius the Mede in the plethora of other texts that mention him? Though some possibility exists for this theory, its problems seem too substantial.

Another potential identity for Darius the Mede is Cyaxares II. The *Cyropaedia*

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[28] Garrett, "Daniel," 28–29.

[29] D. J. Wiseman, "Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel," in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), 12.

[30] Wiseman, "Some Historical Problems," 12.

[31] Baldwin, *Daniel*, 30–32.

[32] For instance, the LXX and Theodotion have Cyrus instead of Darius the Mede in Dan 11:1, suggesting the Greek translator knew of a double name and used the more recognizable Cyrus. Additionally, 1 Esdras may preserve the name Darius. See Baldwin, *Daniel*, 31.

stands virtually alone in its attestation to the character named Cyaxares II. Despite the *Cyropaedia*'s dubious image regarding historical reliability, some scholars have identified Cyaxares II as Darius the Mede. The view was popular in antiquity and through the Protestant Reformation with proponents like Jerome and John Calvin, but its acceptance diminished in modern scholarship. In recent years, it has revived some in evangelical scholarship.[33] Steven Anderson convincingly argues the view in his dissertation, and though covered in part elsewhere, his arguments are worth a quick review.[34] First, though Herodotus and no extant Akkadian inscriptions definitively mention Cyaxares,[35] Herodotus's account of Cyrus and its agreement with Akkadian sources must be received suspiciously due to those sources' propagandistic portrayal of Cyrus.[36] Second, Xenophon would seemingly have more to gain in his purpose of glorifying Cyrus by removing Cyaxares from the narrative than he would by creating and adding him to it.[37] While these arguments by no means prove Cyaxares's existence, they do cast doubt on the idea that Xenophon completely fabricated the figure.

Anderson argues from sources beyond the *Cyropaedia* as well. He notes that rebels' claims to be of Cyaxares's family in the Behistun Inscription suggest a Cyaxares later than Cyaxares I, who was too far distant from the events for his name to be meaningful.[38] Persian rulers typically adopted throne names, so Astyages may be

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[33] Steven D. Anderson, "Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal" (PhD diss., Dallas, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2014); Rodger C. Young, "Xenophon's Cyaxares: Uncle of Cyrus, Friend of Daniel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 64, no. 2 (2021): 265–85.

[34] Anderson, "Darius the Mede."

[35] The Behistun inscription references two rebels claiming to be of the family of Cyaxares. Most scholars naturally take this to refer to Cyaxares I, but Anderson suggests that claiming Cyaxares I instead of Astyages who came after him would be strange. As a result, he suggests the inscription refers to Cyaxares II. Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 29–30.

[36] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 121. Though this propagandistic bend of the Akkadian texts was observed earlier, it was also argued that this propagandistic lean does not necessarily invalidate the historical reliability of those sources. It should inspire caution but not outright dismissal.

[37] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 29.

[38] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 29–30.

Ahaseurus and Cyaxares II may be Darius.[39] The Harran Stele, dated much later than Cyrus's assumed conquest of the Medes, also mentions the land of the Medes. Anderson observes that mentioning the Medes is strange if the Medes had been conquered by Cyrus already. Their mention implies that they still have a king.[40] Anderson's arguments are strong with only one significant problem. He argues that Cyrus never sacked Ecbatana, did not conquer the Medes in battle, and that Cyrus's rise to power was peaceful. Instead, he suggests that Cyrus claimed to have conquered the Medes as part of his propaganda campaign.[41] These claims should be rejected. While the Akkadian texts are propagandistic, this project has sought to show that propaganda tends to be utilized by exaggerating or reframing events, not fabricating them. The textual evidence regarding Cyrus's accession is too heavy to favor Xenophon against it all. Still, the previous analysis on the *Cyropaedia* struggled to find any legitimate reason for Xenophon to create Cyaxares II. Claiming that Xenophon totally invented the character seems implausible. These conclusions seem contradictory, so the problem of Cyrus's acquiring of Media demands attention.

Two traditions exist for Cyrus's accession. The Sippar Cylinder, Cyrus Cylinder, Nabonidus Chronicle, and Herodotus indicate that Cyrus subdued the Medes through conflict. In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon records that Cyaxares II gives Media to Cyrus as a dowry after being the general of Cyaxares's army for some time. Scholarship has overwhelmingly favored the tradition supported by the Akkadian texts and Herodotus. Indeed, the evidence for that tradition is weighty. If Xenophon grossly misrepresents Cyrus's acquisition of Media, his historical reliability and much of the information connected to Cyaxares II receive a significant blow. Some evangelical

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[39] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 42–44.

[40] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 94–95.

[41] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 121–22.

scholars have recently defended Xenophon by both promoting the *Cyropaedia* as a historical source and denigrating Herodotus's work.[42] While these arguments do highlight some areas where Xenophon proves more reliable, they mishandle the works holistically. Overall, Herodotus remains the more reliable source to the *Cyropaedia*, so dumping Herodotus's account for Xenophon's version without considerable external evidence will not suffice. Furthermore, Herodotus need not be destroyed to foment trust in Xenophon. A way to reconcile the two accounts exists.

Duane Garrett has suggested an interesting harmonization of the two Greek historians.[43] If Cyaxares II is historical, he certainly would have been a rival to Cyrus. Cyrus may have indeed sacked Ecbatana, as Herodotus claims, but Astyages may have arranged a peace agreement between Cyaxares and Cyrus after the conflict. He possibly named Cyaxares his heir but married Cyrus to Cyaxares's daughter to unite the empire. Xenophon's narrative strongly displays this rivalry tension between Cyrus and Cyaxares. At several junctures, like when Cyrus and most of the Median army leave Cyaxares alone, Cyaxares is dramatically irritated and jealous (*Cyro* 4.4.9–10). If the army knew Cyrus was the heir of the united Medo-Persian empire, Cyaxares's frustration with Cyrus fits the proposed scenario well. Indeed, Cyaxares would be living in a constant state of fear that Cyrus would usurp him. Xenophon presents a Cyaxares who seems to know that his power is tenuous and formal rather than functional. So, while speculative, a historical possibility exists to reconcile Herodotus and Xenophon, while also preserving the person of Cyaxares II.

Such a theory is far from provable with extant textual witnesses. Still, Achaemenid history is murky for this period, so speculation is inevitable. The conclusion offered here satisfies the methodology in this dissertation. It prioritizes recreating history

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[42] For example, see Young, "Xenophon's Cyaxares."

[43] Garrett, "Daniel," 33–34.

while still seeking to consider the various purposes and intentions of each text. If the above conclusions are correct and Cyaxares II is historical, then he is a superb candidate for Daniel's Darius the Mede. The irrevocable decree in Daniel 6 not only fits the proposed hierarchy but even perfectly reflects the rash character of Cyaxares in the *Cyropaedia*. Additionally, the various regnal dates with Darius and Cyrus are easily explained because Darius retained formal power over Cyrus. The greatest challenges are the existence of Cyaxares II and the tension between Herodotus's and Xenophon's accounts of Cyrus. If these two areas are overcome, Cyaxares II proves an elegant solution to the identity of Darius the Mede.

Fall of Babylon

The texts in view provide considerable evidence concerning Babylon's fall in Daniel 5, but the individual relevance ranges significantly. Many of the Akkadian inscriptions provide few details applicable to Daniel, so the Greek historians remain critical sources. Two noteworthy areas emerge when comparing the sources. First, tension exists regarding the manner of Babylon's fall. Xenophon and Herodotus describe a stealthy infiltration of the city. The Nabonidus Chronicle specifically states that there was no battle, and the Cyrus Cylinder claims Babylon welcomed Cyrus into the city peacefully. The most common position is to understand the sources as reflecting two conflicting traditions: a violent fall and a peaceful surrender. On the surface, Daniel's account corresponds more closely to the accounts of Herodotus and Xenophon.

Second, the absence of Belshazzar and his feast in the Akkadian inscriptions is suspicious. The Akkadian texts never mention Belshazzar as being present at Babylon's fall. Neither do they make any mention of a feast on that night. Regarding this topic, only two helpful scraps of information materialize from the Akkadian texts. The Nabonidus Chronicle comments that Nabonidus was not in Babylon at its fall, and the Dynastic Prophecy remarks that Cyrus spared Nabonidus and allowed him to live in exile from

Babylon. Obviously, one would not expect to find the fall of Babylon in Nabonidus inscriptions that preceded the city's fall, but it would be expected to find Belshazzar in the Persian texts. While absence of evidence is never a strong foundation for claims of contradiction, Belshazzar's complete lack of appearance at Babylon's fall in the Akkadian texts is curious.

Considering the tension in the extra-biblical evidence, several of Daniel's claims about Babylon's fall raise questions that deserve evaluation. First, did Babylon fall violently or surrender peacefully? Second, is the existence of a feast in the middle of a siege plausible? Third, was Belshazzar present and killed at Babylon's fall? Fourth, why do these events not emerge in the Akkadian inscriptions? These questions have posed historical confusion, spawning several explanations.

Scholars generally understand the sources to reflect two traditions of Babylon's fall. As a result, many scholars contend either that Xenophon and Herodotus are incorrect or that the Akkadian texts are wrong. Reinhard Kratz summarizes that the Akkadian inscriptions speak of a peaceful Babylonian surrender but that Herodotus and the Old Testament report a violent fall.[44] Some scholars lean toward rejecting the Akkadian texts due to the prevalent propagandistic aspect of Cyrus's inscriptions. Anderson, for instance, is highly skeptical of both the Nabonidus Chronicle and the Cyrus Cylinder.[45] Some scholars, however, favor the Akkadian texts.[46] Choosing between the traditions is difficult. On the one hand, the Akkadian texts are contemporary sources that are theoretically weightier than the later Greek writings. On the other hand, the Akkadian sources are often blatantly propagandistic and have more plausible motives to distort

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[44] Reinhard Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," in *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena*, ed. A. Panaino and G. Pettinato (Milan: Università di Bologna & IsIao, 2002), 144.

[45] Anderson, *Darius the Mede*, 71–72, 82–83.

[46] Lester L. Grabbe, "The Belshazzar of Daniel and the Belshazzar of History," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26, no. 1 (1988): 61.

historical reality. Choosing between the two, however, may not be necessary. The paradigm of two conflicting traditions appears true initially, but it results from cursory readings of the historical evidence.

The two competing traditions are not as far apart as they seem. Judgments tend to focus on narrow interpretations of each narrative. The peaceful surrender recorded in the Akkadian texts does not necessitate every individual laying down arms and kissing the feet of Cyrus, and the violence that Herodotus and Xenophon describe are often overexaggerated. The Greek historians never claim that a major battle took place. Indeed, they suggest the opposite. The Persians enter the city undetected and give the Babylonians no opportunity to mount a large-scale defense.

While the Persian inscriptions seemingly have more cause to distort the historical events than the Greek historians do, neither tradition need be discarded. They might be portraying two separate events or simply highlighting different aspects of the same reality. The Persian texts highlight any positive reception to make Cyrus look welcomed and celebrated. The Greek historians are more concerned with the incredible method of the city's capture.

One possible explanation is that the Persian sources are describing an entirely separate event. It is unlikely that Cyrus went into the city with his army or even immediately after them. His officers probably needed time to secure the city and ensure Cyrus's safety. Cyrus seemingly governed from his camp outside the city temporarily. Xenophon even records that Cyrus later decides to move into the palace, suggesting he remained at his camp for some time after Babylon's fall. This detail may reflect Cyrus's entrance to Babylon in a triumphant procession some days after taking the city. The Persian texts might be describing this entrance rather than Babylon's earlier capture. Focusing on this later event certainly accomplishes Cyrus's apparent goal of portraying himself as the celebrated savior of Babylon.

Even if both traditions are describing the actual capture of Babylon, the tension between the Akkadian and Greek sources is not as pronounced as it initially appears. Herodotus and Xenophon may preserve historical reality in the Persians' riverbed infiltration. Nevertheless, the Akkadian texts are probably partly correct in describing Babylon's welcoming of Cyrus. The texts suggest that Nabonidus's religious reforms were controversial, and some pro-Marduk Babylonians may have been glad to be rid of the idolatrous king. At the very least, one could reasonably describe Babylon's fall as a peaceful surrender if most of the army mounted no resistance due to the Persian army sneakily entering the city. This historical reconstruction allows for Daniel's description of events.

Another common critique of Daniel's Babylon account is the timing of the feast. The contention is that a celebratory feast is implausible during a threatening siege. Many scholars maintain that the feast is a fabrication. On the other hand, some scholars attempt to justify the feast. For instance, William Shea suggests that the feast was Belshazzar's coronation banquet, arguing that the most natural response to hearing of his father's defeat at Opis would be to formally declare himself king.[47] Lester Grabbe rejects Shea's proposal, arguing that such an interpretation is not a natural explanation of the feast.[48] Grabbe's critique of Shea's theory relies heavily on assumption and ignores a key piece of evidence in the sources: Babylon's preparedness for a siege. Nonetheless, Grabbe is correct that a coronation ceremony is an unlikely explanation for Daniel 5, but a coronation is not necessary to justify the feast.

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[47] Shea, "Nabonidus, Belshazzar, and the Book of Daniel," 142. Shea also proposes this argument in an attempt to make Belshazzar king on the night of Babylon's fall. Although such motivation does not necessarily invalidate his suggestions, such a formality is not necessary for Daniel's usage of this title to be accurate (see above). Whether Belshazzar formally became king is irrelevant if one accepts that it is already an appropriate title for the functional king of Babylon. While a coronation would provide a convenient and sensible reason for such an extravagant party, other portions of this theory do not fit.

[48] Grabbe, "Belshazzar of Daniel," 63.

The Akkadian sources make no mention of any feast on the night of Babylon's fall. Only Herodotus and Xenophon discuss the event. Its absence in the Akkadian texts has a few possible explanations. The Babylonians being distracted with a feast could be seen as undermining Cyrus's glory. It partially attributes Babylon's fall to chance and circumstance. Cyrus may have wanted to avoid any detail that didn't reinforce his and the Persian army's skill. Alternatively, Cyrus simply may have not cared about the feast. The Persians entered the city through a clever method that prevented a battle. That is possibly all the explanation Cyrus desired. Furthermore, finding a plausible motive for Herodotus to invent the feast seems challenging. Though the feast's absence from the Akkadian sources is interesting, it hardly precludes its historical possibility.

An argument targeting the wisdom of holding a feast during a siege is a reasonable criticism of Babylon's ruler, but it does not hold historical weight against the plausibility of such an event. In fact, a well-documented parallel can be found in much more recent history. In 1530, the imperial army of Charles V was besieging the city of Florence. To mock the imperial troops and boost morale of the city, Florence hosted a game of *calcio storico*. This game was (and is) exceedingly violent and may be considered imprudent to play during a siege, but Florence hosted a match nonetheless. The more modern example of a similar celebration during a siege reveals the plausibility of a feast and celebration on the eve of Babylon's fall. This parallel seems even stronger evidence when considering how Herodotus and Xenophon both record the extensive preparations and provisions Babylon had for Persia's siege. On top of the preparations, the sources indicate the remarkable strength of Babylon's walls. The Babylonians likely believed that Persia's siege was a hopeless endeavor.

The most likely explanation for Belshazzar's feast is a religious celebration, specifically an Akitu festival for Sîn. Paul Alain-Beaulieu shows that the timing of a festival corresponds well with the recorded date of Babylon's fall, the sixteenth and

seventeenth of Tašritu.[49] The Akitu festival for Sîn would have been celebrated on the seventeenth of Tašritu but in Harran. Belshazzar may have hosted the celebration in Babylon either as a practical necessity with Persia's rampage through the land or as a product of Nabonidus's religious reform. Potential reasons for hosting the feast include boosting morale of the city, mocking the Persians and the futility of their siege, rewarding the most loyal supporters of the administration, asserting authority as king, or even simple religious duty.

Scholars also frequently debate Belshazzar's presence at the fall of Babylon.[50] Grabbe asserts that Belshazzar must not have died at the fall of Babylon because the Akkadian texts do not mention it.[51] Shea responds to Grabbe's critique alleging that he provides no evidence that Belshazzar did not die on that night.[52] Gwendolyn Leick's observations could help solve the dilemma. She contends that Belshazzar used his authority in Babylon to reverse some of the religious reform that Nabonidus had instituted. Belshazzar then may have been attempting to raise Marduk back to his original position of prominence.[53] Unfortunately, the sources do not corroborate such reform from Belshazzar, but they certainly support the historical situation of Nabonidus's theological drift from Marduk.

If Belshazzar did attempt to mitigate his father's radical promotion of Sîn, then his absence during the fall of Babylon in the Cyrus Cylinder and similar accounts

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[49] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 226.

[50] Grabbe, "Belshazzar of Daniel."

[51] Grabbe, "Belshazzar of Daniel," 61.

[52] William H. Shea, "Bel(Te)Shazzar Meets Belshazzar," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26, no. 1 (1988): 67–68.

[53] Gwendolyn Leick, *The Babylonians: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003), 65. This is not to say that Belshazzar was a faithful and consistent Marduk worshipper. If Belshazzar was as involved in the usurpation of the throne as some scholars believe, then he was quite the opportunist. Belshazzar may have attempted to maintain a moderate position regarding religion. This stance can explain why he seems to have supported Marduk worship as primary but never attempted to seize the throne from his father or abolish Sîn worship.

makes theological sense. The Cyrus Cylinder, for example, portrays Cyrus as the servant of Marduk opposed to the blaspheming Nabonidus. Omitting the crown prince's death becomes a strategic move of propaganda for Cyrus. By ignoring the more faithful king's son and stressing the idolatry of the king, Cyrus builds a more convincing argument as Marduk's servant.

Such a political spin of the inscriptions is further supported by Nabonidus's potential unpopularity. Nabonidus's religious reforms toward Sîn apparently caused unrest, and his continuous military campaigns and rebuilding projects strained the nation's resources, leading to significant inflation during his reign.[54] After over a decade of no New Year's festivals, diminishing of Marduk, and economic hardship, Nabonidus may have become deeply unpopular. The pro-Cyrus inscriptions then exclusively focus on Nabonidus to highlight the contrast between the two rulers. Cyrus was a clever leader who would have seized this opportunity not only to conquer but also to win support from the conquered people.

Even though religious reform by Belshazzar potentially explains his absence in the inscriptions, such an argument is not necessary. His death's absence in the Akkadian inscriptions could simply be a matter of priority. Cyrus may have had no interest in recording the death of the crown prince when the king proper would be a bigger topic. Belshazzar may have been too insignificant for Cyrus and his scribes to consider worthy of mention. Assuming Daniel is the author of Daniel, he is writing from a radically different perspective. Belshazzar was functionally Daniel's king for most of Nabonidus's reign since the latter remained in Tayma for a decade. Indeed, Belshazzar is the one who receives Daniel's prophetic oracle in Daniel 5. So, Daniel apparently shows Belshazzar's death to highlight his refusal to repent and submit to YHWH. Daniel's description need not be fabricated if Cyrus has no reason to record his death. Furthermore, a Babylonian

[54] Joan Oates, *Babylon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 133.

king, who may be Belshazzar, does appear in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* whose account of Babylon's fall seems generally reliable and harmonious with Herodotus.

A few summarizing statements on the sources will be helpful before moving to a reconstruction of Babylon's fall. First, the texts suggest that Babylon's fall was not through a major battle but something much smaller and less violent. Though the descriptions in the above sources should be taken with some suspicion, the claim that Babylon fell without a battle seems plausible. Despite the attesting sources' primary function as propaganda, the target audience was the Babylonian population. A wild and clearly contrived summary of Babylon's fall would be patently rejected by the masses, many of whom would have been in Babylon at the time of Cyrus's arrival. Even worse, such blatant propaganda would probably enrage and incite many to resistance, causing the opposite result of its intention: Cyrus gaining favor with the populace.

Nevertheless, the story of Babylon's fall might not necessarily be black and white. One's understanding of the descriptions relies on the scope of what a battle entails. A large clash between two armies of thousands would be too far a stretch, but Cyrus's army likely did face some armed combat that day. Certainly at least some individuals remained loyal to whatever authority remained in the city and refused to surrender their weapons. Much room exists for theorizing the events of that fateful day in the ancient Near East, but the Persian sources do seem to limit the range of our imaginations. They do not, however, seem incompatible with the Greek historians.

Second, the textual evidence strongly suggests that Nabonidus had a fanatical devotion to the moon god Sîn and that his devotion seems to have been genuine rather than utilitarian. Multiple inscriptions show evidence that Nabonidus theologically supplanted Marduk and other gods with Sîn. Additionally, the texts seem to show a theological progression. At minimum, Nabonidus likely grew more confident over the course of his reign to enact religious reform and to promote Sîn worship explicitly. The

king's theological drift provides an important foundation for supposing Belshazzar's feast to be a religious festival.

Third, the absence of Belshazzar from key texts and his feast's absence from the Akkadian sources remain mysterious. Nevertheless, plausible explanations exist, including theological posturing or simple indifference from Cyrus. Conversely, explanations for Herodotus inventing the feast account are more difficult to imagine. At the very least, the historical situation presented in the sources offers a plausible context for both Belshazzar's presence and a feast on the night of Babylon's fall.

Considering all the textual evidence, I will propose a possible explanation of the fall of Babylon. A reconstruction of the context and events surrounding the great city's fall requires significant speculation. New sources may emerge that render parts of this reconstruction impossible. Nevertheless, speculation based on extant texts is a core part of historiography, particularly in the Achaemenid era that lacks substantial evidence.

Cyrus initially surrounds Babylon and prepares for a siege. Upon realizing the difficulty of a successful siege, perhaps reinforced by taunts from the Babylonians, Cyrus seeks an alternative way to secure the city. After consulting with advisors, he determines to divert the water of the Euphrates River and to enter the city through its riverbed. After the army successfully diverts the river and confirms that the terrain is passable, they prepare to take the city.

Either by coincidence or intentionally on the grounds of information provided by Babylonian turncoats, Cyrus initiates the assault on the night of a feast, the sixteenth of Tašritu. The feast is part of the Akitu festival for the moon god Sîn, Nabonidus's favorite god. The religious festivities combined with the nocturnal timing make the surprise Persian assault devastating. Some skirmishes and feeble resistance occur, but the Persians capture the city without any semblance of a major battle. Nabonidus is absent during these events, having fled Babylon earlier, but his son Belshazzar is present and overseeing all administrative duties. On that night, Persian forces find and kill him.

This version of Babylon's fall does spark some questions. One uncertainty that rises from the sources is how the feast could be related to an Akitu festival for Sîn in Babylon. The Akkadian texts speak of the festivals stopping because of Nabonidus's absence from the city. These texts, however, are likely referring to Marduk's festival exclusively instead of all the festivals. Nabonidus may have moved the celebration for Sîn from Harran to Babylon after his stay in Tayma ended, or Belshazzar may have done it in Babylon out of necessity. The Akkadian texts even state that Nabonidus had removed the gods from their local temples and gathered them in Babylon, presumably this action includes Sîn from Harran. Belshazzar might have even claimed the formal title of king upon hearing of his father's defeat. Such an action would enable the resumption of Akitu festivals, but this last proposition seems least likely. The festival's occurrence in Babylon then is not problematic.

Another potential issue is the theory that Belshazzar distanced himself from his father's heterodoxy and positioned himself as a more orthodox leader who favored Marduk.[55] This interpretation has some circumstantial evidence in the texts and could help in explaining Belshazzar's general absence from Persian texts. Cyrus may have left Belshazzar out of his propaganda because he wanted to highlight Nabonidus's heresy and to avoid mentioning Belshazzar's orthodoxy. If Belshazzar did posture himself in this way, then an Akitu festival for Sîn seems a weaker explanation for the feast. A stronger way to show his orthodoxy would be to avoid everything related to Sîn for fear of being branded a heretic like his father. This theory is appealing, but it seems to cause more problems than it solves.

The extant sources deliver a significant blow to this understanding. After Cyrus's conquest, he postures himself as the servant of Marduk who liberates the city

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[55] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 64; Matthias Henze, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 61.

from its heretical ruler. Textual evidence, however, indicates that Cyrus allowed Nabonidus to live, and Xenophon suggests that Cyrus's forces killed Belshazzar in taking Babylon. Killing Belshazzar and sparing Nabonidus makes little sense if Belshazzar was attempting to reestablish Marduk as the chief god of the Babylonian pantheon. The opposite actions would be more advantageous politically: kill the heretic Nabonidus and spare the Marduk-faithful Belshazzar. Doing so would cement Cyrus's image as the servant of Marduk. The texts suggest that Cyrus did the opposite though. He seems to have killed Belshazzar and spared Nabonidus. For this reason, the theory of Belshazzar undoing his father's religious reform should be rejected.

Belshazzar may have been more political than his father regarding matters of theology and attempted to play both sides of the Marduk and Sîn controversy. Unfortunately, Belshazzar's theology and allegiances remain a mystery. Unless further supporting evidence emerges, the theory of a Marduk-sympathizing Belshazzar subverting his father's Sîn worship seems deficient. Belshazzar more likely retained some level of support for his father's theology if only for political expediency. The likely date of Belshazzar's feast lining up exactly with the festival date for Sîn and Nabonidus's well-documented obsession with the moon god make an Akitu festival for Sîn a plausible explanation for Belshazzar's feast.[56] This identification seems possible, but it need not be accepted to defend Daniel's account. Ample historical evidence exists to defend the plausibility of Belshazzar's feast, even if no firm explanation for the feast ever surfaces.

Though speculative, the proposed version of Babylon's fall handles the extra-biblical evidence well. Few details from the ancient sources are rejected, and the ones that are rejected stem from the most extreme propagandistic bend, like Cyrus's being welcomed into Babylon, yet even this detail might have a kernel of truth. Certainly, some of Nabonidus's adversaries within the Babylonian elite were glad to see his

[56] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 226.

administration fall. Additionally, Cyrus guaranteed that he would be welcomed to the city in one sense by allowing his army to secure it and then later entering triumphantly. Despite apparent inconsistencies, the ancient sources paint a rich picture of Babylon's fall that does not have as much tension as apparent on the surface. Moreover, the historical context that arises from the sources does not contradict the biblical account in Daniel 5.

Final Words

I hope this dissertation has accomplished the following goals: (1) led to further understanding of the secondary sources related to Daniel; (2) made biblical scholars more aware of the methodological debate within historiography similar to the one in biblical studies; (3) shown examples of a blended historiographical method in practice having value for interpretation; (4) displayed an evangelical hermeneutic typically used for biblical interpretation being applied to extra-biblical literature; and (5) increased understanding of Daniel as a literary work and confidence in Daniel as a historical witness.

Biblical historiography is a field rich with possibilities. I hope that the proposed methodology in this dissertation proves fruitful, but room for other methodologies exists. It may be possible to improve upon the methodology and yield new insights into the extra-biblical evidence. It might also be profitable to use this methodology for biblical books other than Daniel and examine their relevant extra-biblical sources. Furthermore, the issue of methodology in historiography and biblical studies is a complex one, and it alone could warrant many studies even though this project only allotted one chapter to it. Another application of this work would be to examine historical issues in Daniel that received less attention here. Much work remains to be done to expand the understanding of historical contexts behind the biblical canon, and extra-biblical texts are an underutilized area in biblical scholarship.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF HERODOTUS[1]

Book 1 – Croesus and Cyrus

Proem – H gives reason for writing

1.1 – H explains origins of dispute

1.4 – Persians say Hellenes overreact

1.5 – H makes no effort to discern

1.46 – Cyrus destroys Medes

1.73 – Astyages conquered by Cyrus

1.75 – Astyages grandfather of Cyrus

1.75 – H critiquing story

1.95 – Basis for Cyrus account

1.107 – Cyrus's origin

1.127 – Cyrus's defeat of Media

1.130 – Cyrus's treatment of Astyages

1.137 – H praises Persian customs

1.155 – H writes a Greek proverb for Cyrus

1.172 – H judges origin of Caunians

1.178 – H describes Babylon upon attack

1.190 – Babylon prepares for siege

[1] This appendix gives my shorthand notes on Herodotus. "H" stands for Herodotus. The list focuses primarily on sections that relate to Daniel and that reveal Herodotus's methodology, although occasionally I include elements that are particularly noteworthy or interesting. The notes are not intended to be exhaustive, but they hopefully prove useful for those interested in studying Herodotus's methodology or connection to Daniel more closely.

1.191 – Fall of Babylon

1.196 – H judges Babylonian customs

1.214 – H gives version of Cyrus's death

Book 2 – Egypt

2.1 – Cambyses succeeds Cyrus

2.15 – H critiques Ionian view of Egypt

2.22 – H shows his lack of knowledge

2.35 – H exaggerates Egyptian customs

2.38 – H sets up Cambyses's blasphemy

2.45 – H criticizes Greek Heracles myth

2.47 – H withholds a story for propriety

2.66 – H gives self-defeating cat argument

2.71 – H poorly describes Hippopotamus

2.93 – H gives strange fish theory

2.99 – H explains method

2.102 – Egyptian propaganda for Sesostris

2.110 – More Sesostris propaganda

2.116 – H quotes Homer

2.123 – H explains quoting methodology

2.131 – H critiques story of statues

2.141 – H's version of 2 Kings 19

2.155 – Egyptians call others barbarians

2.171 – H expressing discretion/reverence

Book 3 – Cyrus's Successors

3.1 – Reasons for Cambyses's attack

3.12 – Persian and Egyptian skulls

3.16 – Cambyses burns Amasis's corpse

3.16 – H evaluates competing theories

3.29 – Cambyses kills god Apis

3.30 – Cambyses kills siblings

3.38 – Custom is king

3.45 – H judges battle based on logic

3.56 – H mocks an account

3.60 – H praises Samian engineering

3.65 – Inevitability of fate

3.66 – Cambyses dies

3.67 – Magus poses as Smerdis to rule

3.80 – H criticizes Greek doubt

3.87 – Two versions of Darius's scheme

3.88 – Darius becomes king

3.99 – Indian customs

3.102 – Infamous golden ants

3.103 – Greeks familiar with camels

3.108 – H makes biological deduction

3.115 – H admits ignorance of W. Europe

3.121 – Competing Oroites accounts

3.150 – Babylonian revolt

3.153 – Role of divine omens and fate

3.159 – Darius retakes Babylon

3.160 – Potential source for H

Book 4 – Scythia and Libya

4.1 – Darius attacks Scythia

4.1 – H claims Scythian 28 year rule

4.2 – H claims Scythian slave blinding

4.5 – H gives Scythian origin myth

4.8 – H critiques lack of evidence

4.11 – H chooses his preferred origin tale

4.16 – H admits lack of sources

4.25 – H rejects multiple reports

4.29 – H links horn growth to climate

4.31 – H deduces falling feathers as snow

4.36 – H shows geography ignorance

4.46 – H generalizes Scythian mobility

4.60 – Scythian customs

4.71 – Archaeological finds support H

4.77 – H rejects Anacharsis story

4.81 – H claims to have seen large bowl

4.84 – Darius executes sons of Oiobazos

4.86 – H explains measurements

4.96 – H doubts Salmoxis story

4.99 – H interrupts invasion for description

4.105 – H doubts werewolf story

4.116 – Sauromatai women warriors

4.142 – Scythian disdain for Ionians

4.154 – Cyrenaean and Theraian accounts

4.167 – H questions Egyptian motive

4.173 – H repeating Libyan account

4.179 – H gives story told about Jason

4.180 – H falsely asserts Egyptian origin

4.184 – Divine repercussions for curses

4.187 – H just repeating reports

4.195 – H determines story as plausible

4.201 – Sophistic interpretation of oath

4.205 – Pher's death divine punishment

Book 5 – Greek Conflict and Ionian Revolt

5.10 – H doubts bee story

5.21 – Macedonian murder Persian envoys

5.35 – Tattooed messenger rebel

5.36 – Hekataios the author

5.42 – H shows danger of ignoring divine

5.44 – Competing accounts of Croton war

5.45 – H gives evidence but no judgment

5.52 – Persian Royal Road

5.57 – H disputes origin story

5.58 – H deduces alphabet transmission

5.62 – H resumes primary discourse

5.78 – H praises democracy

5.86 – H gives both sides of the story

5.86 – H doubts statue miracle

5.89–90 – H explains Greek conflicts

5.92 – Speech of Sokleas (literary tool)

Book 6 – Ionian Revolt and Persian Wars

6.3 – H explains Histiaios's deceit

6.15 – H praises Chian bravery

6.19 – Fulfillment of Delphic Oracle

6.21 – H compares Greek grief

6.27 – H explains divine omens

6.32 – Persian finally conquers Ionia

6.41 – Persian kings treat kings well

6.47 – H claims to have seen mines

6.52 – Poets contradict Spartan story

6.56 – Conflicts with 5.75

6.72 – Divine retribution

6.75 – Competing causes for madness

6.89 – Athens "buys" Corinthian ships

6.92 – Reminder of athleticism and fame

6.98 – Earthquake as divine omen

6.103 – Athletic prominence and fame

6.105 – Divine intervention by Pan

6.106 – Sparta waits for full moon

6.109 – Battle of Marathon

6.112 – Unorthodox Greek charge

6.117 – Wildly unequal casualties

6.123 – H rejects Alkmeonids betrayal

6.137 – H gives competing accounts

6.139 – Divine judgment of Pelasgian sin

Book 7 – Persian Wars

7.1 – Egyptian revolt

7.3 – Xerxes's succession

7.7 – Xerxes reconquers Egypt

7.8 – H exaggerates or Xerxes is ignorant

7.12 – Xerxes's indecision and dreams

7.18 – Artabanos, Xerxes agree to attack

7.22 – Xerxes digs a canal

7.35 – Xerxes has Hellespont whipped

7.37 – Eclipse as good Persian omen

7.39 – Xerxes executes Pythios's son

7.41 – H explains Persian units

7.44 – Xerxes watches from throne on hill

7.46 – Speech on brevity of life

7.52 – Recalls Ionian protection of bridge

7.57 – H explains divine portents

7.61 – H describes Persian army

7.99 – H notes Artemisia's courage

7.102 – Demaeatos praises Spartans

7.125 – H perplexed at lion attacks

7.137 – Divine retribution on Sparta

7.139 – H gives unpopular opinion

7.139 – Athens saved Hellas

7.141 – Wooden wall oracle

7.143 – Themistokles oracle interpretation

7.146 – Xerxes mocks spies

7.150 – Dispute over Argive involvement

7.152 – H remains neutral about Argives

7.152 – H gives broad methodology

7.153 – H marvels at amazing feat

7.168 – Corcyrian straddle the fence

7.173 – H gives opinion on motive

7.186 – Scholars doubt Persian army size

7.209 – Xerxes shocked at small army

7.210 – Battle of Thermopylae

7.214 – H judges Ephialtes the traitor

7.220 – Leonidas remains to guard pass

7.226 – Fight in the shade

7.229 – Two Spartans leave to dishonor

Book 8 – Persian Wars

8.2 – Spartan commander

8.8 – H expresses amazement and doubt

8.13 – Divine fairness

8.17 – Egyptians and Athenians prove best

8.20 – Euboeans foolishly ignore oracle

8.30 – H infers Phocian loyalty

8.37 – Divine protection of Delphi

8.55 – H gives reason for including story

8.60 – Themistokles's speech

8.69 – Artemisia respected but rejected

8.73 – H criticized Medizers

8.77 – H asserts truth of oracles

8.84 – Competing accounts of Salamis

8.85 – Battle of Salamis

8.87 – Artemisia rams friendly ship

8.94 – Corinthian role in Salamis

8.109 – H gives Themistokles's motive

8.118 – Boat version of Xerxes's return

8.119 – H rejects boat version

8.129 – Poseidon judges profane Persians

8.132 – Probable sarcasm from H

Book 9 – Persian Wars

9.3 – H criticizes Mardonios as foolish

9.16 – H gives source

9.18 – H uncertain about motive

9.28 – Athenians granted left wing

9.37 – Hegesistratos cuts his foot off

9.43 – H corrects oracle interpretation

9.48 – Mardonios taunts Spartans

9.53 – Spartan positional dispute

9.57 – Battle of Plataea

9.58 – Mardonios taunts Spartans again

9.62 – Persian inexperience is decisive

9.64 – H praises Spartan victory

9.65 – H gives divine theory

9.70 – Probably elite citizen losses

9.71 – H consistently reports bravery

9.73 – H references Peloponnesian War

9.95 – H relays rumor

9.100 – Divine role in Battle of Mycale

9.113 – H supposed reason

9.122 – Wisdom of Cyrus

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF THE *CYROPAEDIA*[1]

Book 1 – Cyrus's Youth

1.1.1 – X considers nature of rule

1.1.3 – Uniqueness of C

1.1.6 – X gives purpose

1.2.1 – Origin of C

1.2.2–3 – X praises Persian education

1.2.6 – Persian boys learn justice

1.2.8 – Persian boys learn restraint

1.2.16 – X praises Persian restraint

1.3.1 – Astyages calls for C

1.3.1 – C adores Median attire

1.3.7 – C gives meat to Median servants

1.3.15 – C seeks horsemanship in Media

1.3.16 – C explains training in justice

1.3.17 – C judges boys' coats

1.3.18 – C considers tyranny

1.4.1 – C grows in Media with popularity

1.4.3 – C is a chatty youth

[1] This appendix gives my shorthand notes on the *Cyropaedia*. "C" stands for Cyrus, and "X" stands for Xenophon. Like the appendix on Herodotus, the list focuses primarily on sections that relate to Daniel and sections that reveal Xenophon's methodology and purposes, although occasionally I include elements that are noteworthy or interesting. The notes are not intended to be exhaustive, but they hopefully prove useful for those interested in studying the *Cyropaedia* or its connection to Daniel more closely.

1.4.4 – C grows less talkative with age

1.4.9 – Cyaxares jokes of C's resolve

1.4.15 – C shows no jealousy in hunt

1.4.18 – C goes to battlefront

1.4.19 – Young C displays tactical prowess

1.4.21 – C daring in combat

1.4.24 – C gloats over victory

1.4.27 – C gives sentimental story

1.4.27 – Man taken with C's beauty

1.5.2 – Cyaxares succeeds Astyages

1.5.5 – C chosen as commander

1.6.1 – C consults gods

1.6.5 – God blesses virtue

1.6.20 – C talks of obtaining obedience

1.6.21 – Willing obedience is best

1.6.22 – Wisdom the key to obedience

1.6.24 – Benefactor to obtain love

1.6.35 – Taking advantage of enemies

1.6.44 – Trust divine omens above all

Book 2 – Military Management

2.1.1 – C goes to Media

2.1.2 – C and Cyaxares discuss situation

2.1.10 – C suggests arming commoners

2.1.19 – Commoners armed

2.1.23 – C rewards soldiers of merit

2.1.25 – Companies tent together

2.1.29 – C's soldiers work hard

2.2.1 – C entertains and edifies

2.2.12 – C defends those telling stories

2.2.20 – Rewards based on merit

2.2.25 – C weeds out lazy soldiers

2.2.28 – C jokes about ugly companion

2.3.1 – C proposes spoils on merit

2.3.16 – Soldiers agree C to judge merit

2.3.18 – Cudgel and clod mock battle

2.3.23 – C rewards good drilling

2.4.6 – C chooses haste over pomp

2.4.11– C asks Cyaxares for money

2.4.12 – Armenians king defects

2.4.17 – C develops ploy against Armenia

2.4.18 – C sacrifices for good omen

2.4.31 – C gives demands to Armenia

Book 3 – Armenia and Scythia

3.1.3 – C grants clemency to Armenians

3.1.6 – Armenian king surrenders

3.1.9 – Armenian king's trial

3.1.17 – Socratic discretion

3.1.34 – C gives demands

3.1.37 – C returns families

3.1.41 – Armenians praise C

3.1.42 – Tigranes joins C

3.2.1 – C prepares for Chaldaea invasion

3.2.3 – C sacrifices to gods

3.2.9 – C engages the Chaldaeans

3.2.13 – C aims for peace

3.2.15 – Armenian king praises C

3.2.22 – C secures peace and prosperity

3.2.26 – C obtains Chaldaean mercenaries

3.2.28 – C motivates with self-interest

3.3.1 – C leaves Armenia

3.3.3 – C refuses pay for good deeds

3.3.14 – C urges Cyaxares to attack

3.3.20 – Cyaxares agrees to attack

3.3.22 – C sacrifices to gods on invasion

3.3.31 – C corrects Cyaxares's strategy

3.3.47 – C corrects Cyaxares again

3.3.49 – C and Chrysantas debate valor

3.3.57 – C charges the enemy

3.3.63 – Persia routs the enemy

3.3.69 – C retreats fearing over pursuit

Book 4 – Babylonian War

4.1.8 – Babylonians abandon camp

4.1.8 – Babylonian general lost

4.1.19 – C proposes to chase stragglers

4.2.3 – Hyrcanians defect to C

4.2.19 – Hyrcanian army joins C

4.2.28 – Babylonian army flees

4.2.31 – Cappadocian and Arabian kings killed

4.2.38 – C urges Persian restraint

4.3.2 – X questions Persian motives

4.3.8 – C proposes Persian cavalry

4.3.23 – X explains Persian riding custom

4.4.1 – Allies return with prisoners

4.4.8 – C releases prisoners to encourage submission

4.5.5 – Persians remain vigilant at feast

4.5.7 – Medes celebrate intemperately

4.5.8 – Cyaxares celebrates intemperately

4.5.9 – C and Medes leave Cyaxares

4.5.10 – Cyaxares writes hostile messages

4.5.16 – C requests Persian reinforcements

4.5.20 – C handles Cyaxares's message

4.5.27 – C responds to Cyaxares

4.5.32 – C rebukes Cyaxares

4.5.39 – C orders to divine spoil

4.5.47 – C requests horses

4.5.52 – Men mock Cyaxares

4.5.54 – Persians will take leftovers

4.6.1 – Gobryas arrives to see C

4.6.2 – Reference to slain Babylonian king

4.6.4 – Gobryas's son murdered

4.6.7 – Gobryas defects to C

4.6.8 – C and Gobryas make agreement

4.6.11 – Medes give C best spoils

Book 5 – Gobryas and Gadatas

5.1.4 – Lady Panthea

5.1.6 – Men praise C to Panthea

5.1.8 – C fears neglecting duties

5.1.9 – Araspas: love is free will

5.1.12 – C: love is slavery

5.1.18 – Araspas falls in love with Panthea

5.1.20 – C appeals to bond with Medes

5.1.24 – Men see C's king nature

5.1.29 – All Medes commit to C

5.2.1 – C visits Gobryas

5.2.9 – C asks only for gift of opportunity

5.2.15 – Gobryas impressed by C's dining

5.2.20 – Possessions versus capability

5.2.25 – C seeks other allies

5.2.31 – C suggests marching to Babylon

5.3.4 – C gives most plunder to Gobryas

5.3.6 – Babylon does not march out

5.3.18 – Gadatas delivers fort to C

5.3.20 – C praised as blessing to friends

5.3.25 – Many Babylonians surrender

5.3.34 – Army goes to help Gadatas

5.3.46 – C's memory for names

5.4.1 – Conspiracy against Gadatas

5.4.7 – C rescues Gadatas

5.4.14 – Gadatas provides gifts

5.4.16 – Cadusian defeat

5.4.19 – C addresses officer's mistake

5.4.21 – C promises revenge

5.4.24 – C suggest leaving farms alone

5.4.27 – Babylonian king agrees

5.4.41 – C sees Babylon

5.4.51 – C captures three forts

5.5.1 – C calls for Cyaxares

5.5.6 – Cyaxares shamed by C's army

5.5.8 – Cyaxares jealous of C

5.5.12 – C apologizes to Cyaxares

5.5.25 – Cyaxares concedes

5.5.36 – C and Cyaxares reconcile

5.5.48 – C pledges to continue campaign

Book 6 – Before Babylon

6.1.1 – Allies beg C to stay

6.1.6 – Cyaxares questions campaign

6.1.13 – C controls debate

6.1.19 – All agree to continue war

6.1.25 – Babylonian king leaves Babylon

6.1.31 – Araspas and Panthea

6.1.36 – C consoles Araspas

6.1.39 – Araspas sent as spy

6.1.46 – Abradatas joins C

6.2.2 – Indian envoys sent as spies

6.2.9 – Croesus forms alliance

6.2.11 – C uses prisoners for intelligence

6.2.23 – C proposes immediate advance

6.2.30 – C outlines preparations

6.3.1 – C and army advance

6.3.2 – Cyaxares remains behind

6.3.5 – Enemy spotted

6.3.10 – C gets information

6.3.14 – Araspas returns

6.3.35 – Abradatas asks for front line

6.3.36 – Abradatas wins casting of lots

6.4.1 – C sacrifices and prepares

6.4.5 – Panthea's speech to Abradatas

6.4.13 – C addresses the army

Book 7 – Fall of Babylon

7.1.1 – C sacrifices to gods

7.1.5 – Croesus tries to flank

7.1.13 – X defends C's boasting

7.1.26 – C breaks enemy flank

7.1.30 – Abradatas charges to his death

7.1.41 – C spares brave Egyptians

7.1.44 – Egyptians join C

7.2.4 – C takes Sardis

7.2.9 – Croesus before C

7.2.14 – C spares Sardis

7.2.26 – C restores Croesus

7.3.8 – Panthea mourns Abradatas

7.3.14 – Panthea commits suicide

7.4.5 – Adusias settles Carina civil war

7.4.16 – C conquers on way to Babylon

7.5.1 – C surrounds Babylon

7.5.3 – C withdraws from wall

7.5.7 – C proposes siege

7.5.9 – C proposes diverting Euphrates

7.5.11 – C begins entrenching

7.5.13 – Babylon laughs with supplies

7.5.15 – Euphrates is diverted

7.5.15 – Festival in Babylon

7.5.20 – C gives instructions to enter

7.5.26 – Persians enter Babylon

7.5.27 – Combat with some guards

7.5.28 – Panic and flight from palace

7.5.30 – Babylonian king taken

7.5.33 – Entire city surrenders

7.5.35 – C meets with magi

7.5.37 – C conducts himself as a king

7.5.41 – C's friends as intermediaries

7.5.57 – C moves into palace

7.5.59 – C selects bodyguard

7.5.77 – C emphasizes virtue for empire

7.5.85 – Persian discipline in Bablylon

Book 8 – Empire and Death of Cyrus

8.1.8 – X stresses role of leader

8.1.9 – C appoints government officials

8.1.12 – C knows he must inspire good

8.1.15 – C organizes government like army

8.1.17 – Means of discipline

8.1.23 – C displays devout worship

8.1.26 – C models character for subjects

8.1.40 – C adopts Median garb

8.1.48 – X gives purpose

8.2.1 – How C procures allies

8.2.7 – X gives purpose

8.2.7 – C gives lavish gifts

8.2.9 – C benefactor over conqueror

8.2.10 – C's giving obtains eyes and ears

8.2.15 – C vs. Croesus on giving

8.2.23 – C on giving wealth for happiness

8.2.28 – How C ensures direct loyalty

8.3.1 – X outlines next section

8.3.1 – Persians wear Median garb

8.3.5 – Pheraulas promoted

8.3.13 – C in procession in Babylon

8.3.23 – C punishes disobedience

8.3.33 – Chariot race

8.3.40 – Wealth and troubles

8.3.46 – Pheraulas gives away wealth

8.4.1 – C has victory banquet in Babylon

8.4.5 – C seats guests by honor

8.4.20 – C jokes about matchmaking

8.4.26 – Chrysantas marries

8.5.1 – C leaves Babylon for Persia

8.5.7 – C's exemplary orderliness

8.5.17 – C visits Cyaxares

8.5.19 – Cyaxares gives daughter and Media as dowry

8.5.20 – C accepts offer

8.5.26 – C guaranteed Persian throne on Cyaxares's death

8.5.28 – C marries and goes to Babylon

8.6.1 – C sends out satraps

8.6.7 – Satraps named

8.6.17 – C starts postal system

8.6.20 – Extent of C's empire

8.6.20 – C subjugates Egypt

8.6.23 – C very popular

8.7.1 – End of C's life

8.7.6 – C's last words

8.7.9 – C outlines succession

8.7.13 – C's words to Cambyses

8.7.28 – C dies

8.8.1 – Extent of C's empire

8.8.2 – Empire immediately deteriorates

8.8.2 – X promises to prove argument

8.8.3 – Moral decline

8.8.6 – Dishonesty in finances

8.8.8 – Physical weakness

8.8.15 – More effeminate

8.8.19 – Military decline

8.8.26 – Persians need Greek soldiers

8.8.27 – X gives conclusion

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ABSTRACT

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCES RELATED TO DANIEL

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This dissertation develops a historiographical methodology and applies that methodology to extra-biblical sources related to the book of Daniel. The first chapter provides basic introductory information and presents the problems addressed. The second chapter presents the two dominant historiographical methods in recent history: historical criticism and postmodernism. It introduces some major proponents of each approach and their contributions to historiography. It critiques both camps, highlighting strengths that should be maintained and problem areas that require further nuance. Then, it proposes a historiographical method that combines elements from both approaches. This approach solves a few issues with the two prevailing views.

The third chapter dives into the Babylonian texts. These texts are written in Akkadian and biased toward the Babylonians. The chapter includes basic information about each source and analyzes its historical reliability, literary structure, biases, and relevance for Daniel. The next two chapters include analysis of this kind. The fourth chapter analyzes the Persian texts. These sources also exist in Akkadian but are heavily pro-Persian. Cyrus and his administration most likely commissioned these texts after his conquering of Babylon. The fifth chapter shifts from ancient Near Eastern sources to the Greek historians. The Greek historians naturally write in Greek, not Akkadian. Herodotus and Xenophon prove critical sources for understanding Daniel but display a vast array of purposes and biases in their writing that require untangling.

The sixth chapter discusses a few historical issues in Daniel to show the value of analyzing the sources in the previous chapters. The exercise displays how readers may utilize the research in this dissertation to gain a better grasp of the extra-biblical sources and the biblical text. The chapter covers a few minor issues before discussing the identity of Darius the Mede, then finally examining the fall of Babylon in greater detail. It also summarizes my arguments and draws attention to other potential areas of research, such as extra-biblical literature related to books of the Bible other than Daniel.

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