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ART. II.—*Chronology of the Medes, from the Reign of Deioces to the Reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, or Darius the Mede.* By I. W. BOSANQUET, Esq.

[Read June 5, 1858.]

THE origin and duration of the empire of the Medes, which occupied so important a position in early Asiatic history, has been the subject of attention to many recent writers. The Lectures of Niebuhr on the Medes and Persians are probably familiar to us all. Dr. Leonard Schmitz, the translator of Niebuhr's works, has recently published his matured views on the same subject¹. Mr. Johannes Von Gumpach² in 1852, Professor Brandis³ in 1853, and Jacob Kruger⁴ in 1856, have also expressed their views upon Median history and chronology; and within the last twelve months, the works of Marcus Von Niebuhr on Assyrian and Babylonian history, and the translation of Herodotus by the Rev. George Rawlinson, have appeared, embracing and commenting upon the early history of the Medes.

These writers have all treated the subject more or less upon the same chronological outline, which has long been accepted as defining the true limits of the history of the Median empire; and as they have already explained in the most efficient manner all that can be said in their particular view of the subject, it would be hopeless to attempt to add anything new or interesting to what they have advanced, while merely treading in the same track. Having, however, frequently expressed my conviction that the commonly received chronology of the Median empire is far from correct, and that all these writers, therefore, must have built their scheme of history upon a false foundation; and being persuaded that sufficient data are in our possession for framing a far more correct system of dates; it will be my object to lay before you as briefly as possible, first, a corrected outline of the chronology of the period, and then to point out some new historical combinations which necessarily flow from the altered position of the several contemporaneous kingdoms, which I trust may prove not uninteresting.

It is not my intention to touch upon those extremely remote

¹ Schmitz's Ancient History.

² Die Zeitrechnung der Babyl. und Assyrer: Chronological Table.

³ Rerum Assyriarum tempora emendata, pp. 1—10.

⁴ Geschichte der Assyrier und Iranier.

periods of Median history, referred to by Berosus and the later Arabian historians, who speak of Median dynasties which would carry us back to the time of Nimrod in Assyria. Nor will I detain you by discussing the merits of Median history as delivered to us by Ctesias, from whom we have received an account wholly irreconcilable with Herodotus, contradicted by contemporaneous Hebrew writers, and unsupported by recent monumental discoveries. But following the simple narrative of Herodotus, I will proceed at once to fix the chronology of those four kings of Media spoken of by that historian as having reigned from the time of the revolt of the Medes from the Assyrians, down to the conquest of the Medes by the Persians. According to Herodotus—

Deioeces, the first king of Media, reigned	53 years
Phraortes, his son	22 "
Cyaxares, his son	40 "
Astyages, his son	35 "

Making together a period of 150 years

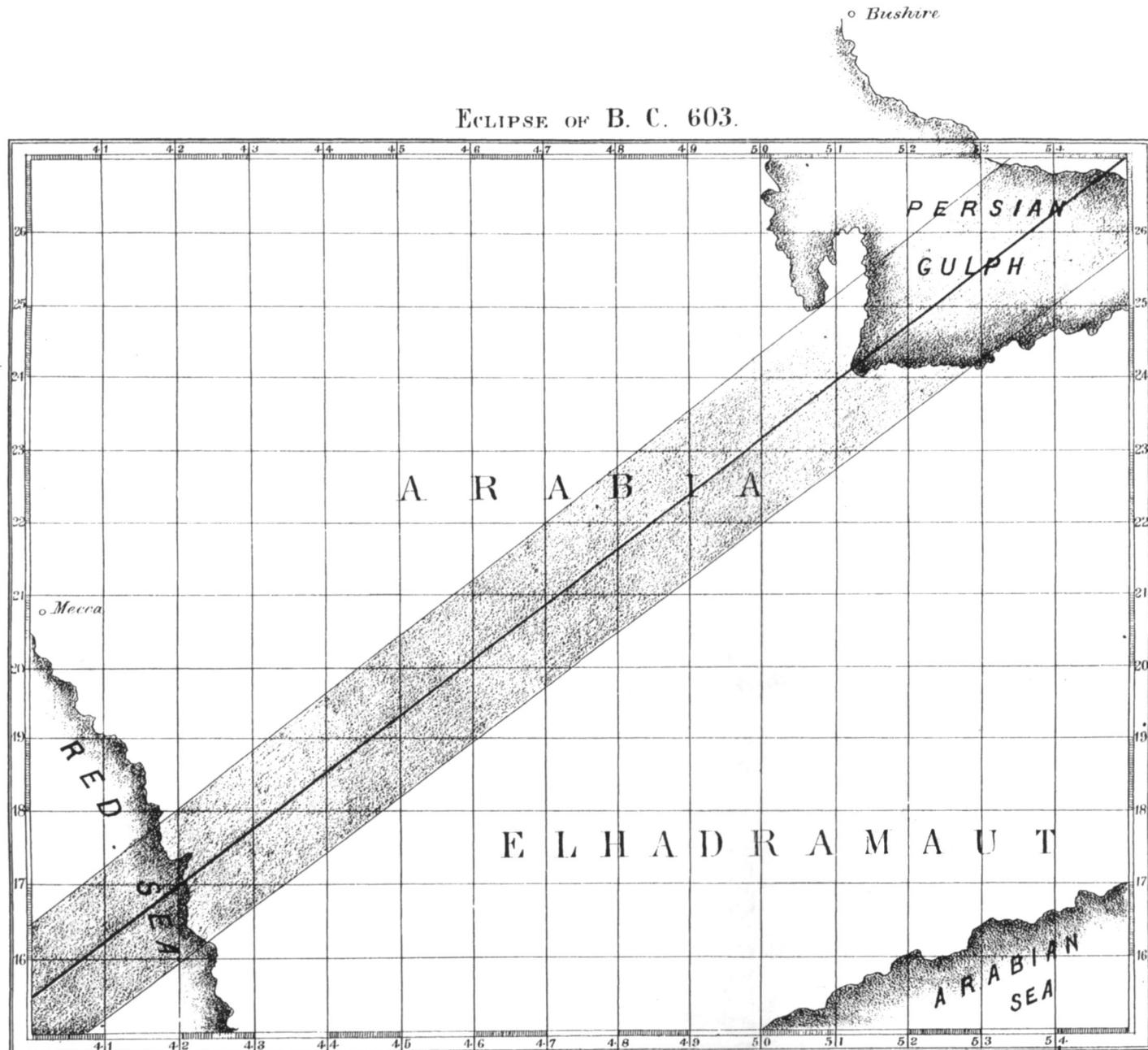
Now, assuming the correctness of the length of each of these separate reigns, it will be sufficient, if we can determine with exactness the chronological limits of any one of them, to establish the correct position of all four reigns throughout the hundred and fifty years. Let us, then, select, for the purpose of examination, the reign of Cyaxares, the third Median king.

In his reign a remarkable solar eclipse is spoken of as having led to important events in Median history, and this eclipse affords the means of fixing the time of the events with extreme accuracy. Cyaxares had been at war for six years with Alyattes, king of Lydia, during which no great advantage had been gained on either side. While they were engaged in fighting their last battle, suddenly both armies were involved in total darkness, or, as Herodotus describes it, day was *suddenly*¹ turned into *night*². Such sudden and total darkness, it is well known, can only be produced by a total eclipse of the sun—a very rare occurrence at any particular spot in the world. No partial eclipse, however large, as instanced by the almost total eclipse which

¹ *ἐξαπτοῦς*, "suddenly." The sudden failure of light on this occasion forms an important element in considering the nature of the eclipse. An eye-witness of the total eclipse in Norway in 1853 observes: "As long as the least bit of the solar disk was visible, there was a diminution of light, though not absolute darkness; but, the moment the disk was completely covered by the moon, darkness was as suddenly produced, as when in a room the last candle out of several is put out."

² Herodotus, L. i. 74.

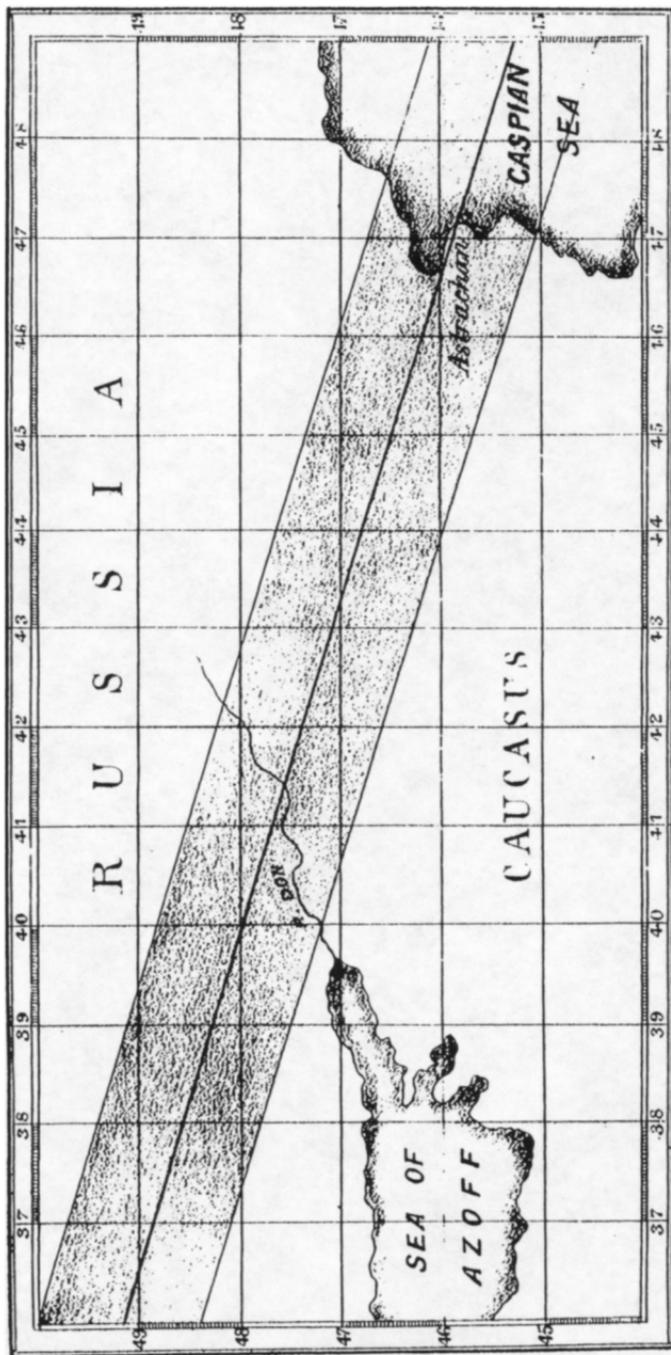
ECLIPSE OF B. C. 603.



HARRISON & SONS, LITH.

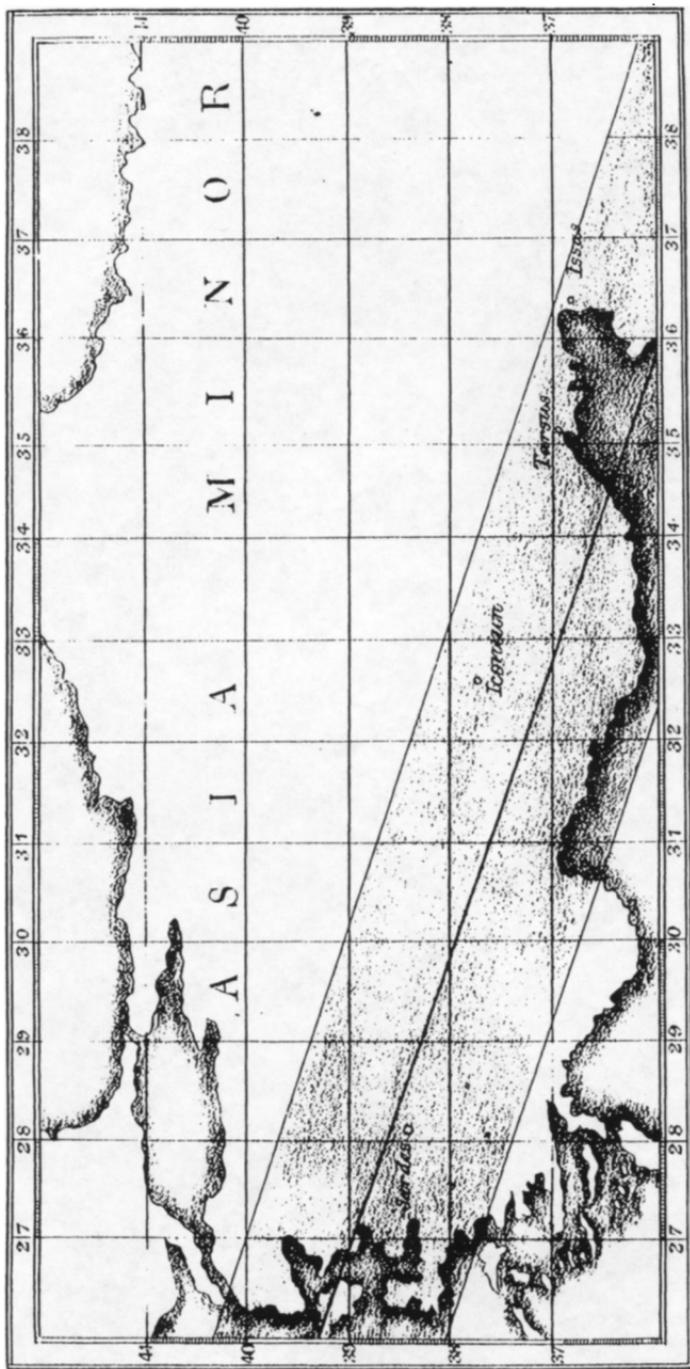
Drawn according to data furnished by ME Airy, and calculated according to Hansen's tables.

ECLIPSE OF B. C. 610.



Drawn according to data furnished by M. Levy, and calculated according to Hauser's tables.

ECLIPSE OF THALES B. C. 585.



Copied from Mr. Aris's Maps and calculated according to Haussner's tables.

occurred in this country on the 15th of March last, in any degree approaches the awfulness of a total solar eclipse, as described by those who have witnessed the phenomenon¹. There was nothing in the effect of the eclipse of March last (though the apparent diameters of sun and moon were so nearly equal, that it was doubtful beforehand whether the eclipse would be total or annular) which would have attracted the attention of two contending armies. On the occasion, however, of the battle between the Lydians and Medes, the armies were so terrified that they desisted from fighting. Peace was forthwith made between the two kings, and sealed by a matrimonial alliance between Astyages, the son of Cyaxares, and Aryenis, the daughter of Alyattes. Both the sudden darkness and the terror created mark a total eclipse. Herodotus adds, that this eclipse had been predicted to the Ionians by Thales, as about to happen in their country in the very year in which it occurred.

If, then, we can fix the date of this eclipse, we shall of course know the exact date of this important battle, which, we are told, preceded the fall of Nineveh², and obtain one fixed point in the reign of Cyaxares. We shall also know the year of the marriage of Astyages, grandfather of Cyrus, from which to estimate the probable time of the events which occurred in his grandson's reign. Now, there are only three eclipses which were total in that part of the world during the fifty years which elapsed between b.c. 630 and 580, within which interval the battle must have been fought, which can possibly be supposed to have occasioned the awful darkness which led to such results—viz., the eclipses of b.c., September 610, May 603, and May 585. The astronomers Mayer, Costard, and Stukeley, in the last century, calculated, according to the imperfect knowledge of the moon's motion of their day, that the eclipse of b.c. 603 was that which put an end to the battle between the Medes and Lydians³; and Dr. Hincks still endeavours to contend for that date⁴. The eminent German chronologist Ideler⁵, on the authority of the astronomer Oltmanns, his countryman, fixed upon the year b.c. 610, which has since been generally received: and this is the date adopted by Mr. Grote⁶. Both these years well agree with the reckoning of the common chronology. They are both, however, at variance with the ancient traditional date,

¹ "The phenomenon, in fact, is one of the most terrible that man can witness; and no degree of partial eclipses gives any idea of its horror."—Airy's Lecture at Roy. Inst., Feb. 4, 1853.

² Herod., L. i. 103--136.

³ Philosophical Transactions, A.D. 1754.

⁴ Athenæum, Aug. 16, 1856.

⁵ Handbuch der Chron., vol. i. p. 209.

⁶ Grote's History of Greece, vol. iii., p. 314, note 2.

which, by Pliny¹, is fixed to the 4th year of the 48th Olympiad=
B.C. 585; and Clemens Alexandrinus² and Solinus³, who speak of the
50th and 49th Olympiads, can only point to the same eclipse.

You are, perhaps, aware, that from the year 1852, when the
attention of astronomers was recalled to this subject⁴, up to the present
time, the determination of the true date of this eclipse has been a
matter of investigation with several eminent European astronomers,
as being a question of great astronomical importance in connexion
with the lunar theory, independently of its historical interest. In
the course of their investigation, the supposed position of the moon's
shadow during each of these three eclipses has come under considera-
tion, and has been subjected to the test of its conformity with the
actual known position of the moon's shadow during several eclipses
of a later date. In the year B.C. 310, just three hundred years later
than the eclipse of B.C. 610, we read, in Diodorus⁵ and Justin⁶, that
Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, while conducting his fleet from
Syracuse to a spot near Cape Bon, on the coast of Africa⁷, fell in with
an eclipse. His fleet had been chased by the Carthagenians on
leaving Syracuse the preceding day, and is said to have escaped in
the darkness of night. On the following morning, about eight or
nine o'clock, a sudden darkness came on which greatly alarmed his
crew, and the stars appeared. On the morning of this eclipse, we are
certain that Agathocles must have been somewhere within one hundred
miles north or south of Syracuse, and the shadow of the total eclipse
which enveloped his fleet must, therefore, have fallen within those
limits. Now it is found by calculation, that the same theory which
would bring the moon's shadow, in the year B.C. 610, so as to throw
the zone of total darkness any where over Asia Minor, would neces-
sarily so lower the position of the shadow of the eclipse in the year
B.C. 310, as to throw it over the continent of Africa far too much to
the south for any possible position of the fleet of Agathocles to have
been touched by it: and the same theory which would raise the
position of the shadow in B.C. 603, so as to cause the zone of total
darkness to pass anywhere near Asia Minor, would so raise the posi-
tion of the shadow in the year B.C. 310, as to throw it far too much
to the north for any possible position of Agathocles to have been
reached by it: while the theory which brings the shadow of the
eclipse of B.C. 585, where ancient history leads us to infer that it passed,

¹ Hist. Nat., ii. 12.

² Solinus, cap. xv. p. 25.

³ Diodorus, L. xx. p. 735.

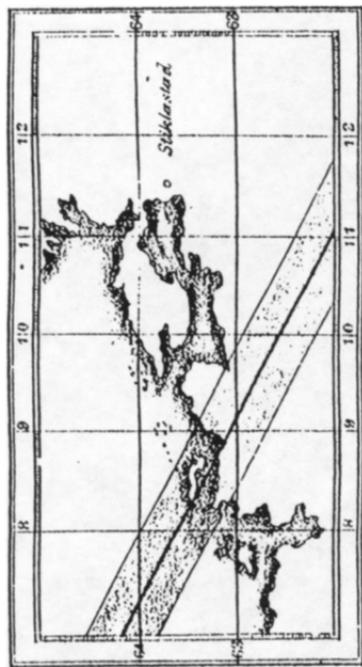
⁴ Clem. Alex. Strom. 8.

⁵ Athenæum, Aug. 1852.

⁶ Justin. Hist., L. xxii. c. v.

⁷ Mr. Airy's paper, Phil. Trans., 1833.

ECLIPSE AT STIKLASTAD A.D. 1030.



Copied from Mr. Auys Maps, and calculated according to Horsens tables.

ECLIPSE OF AGATHOCLES B. C. 310

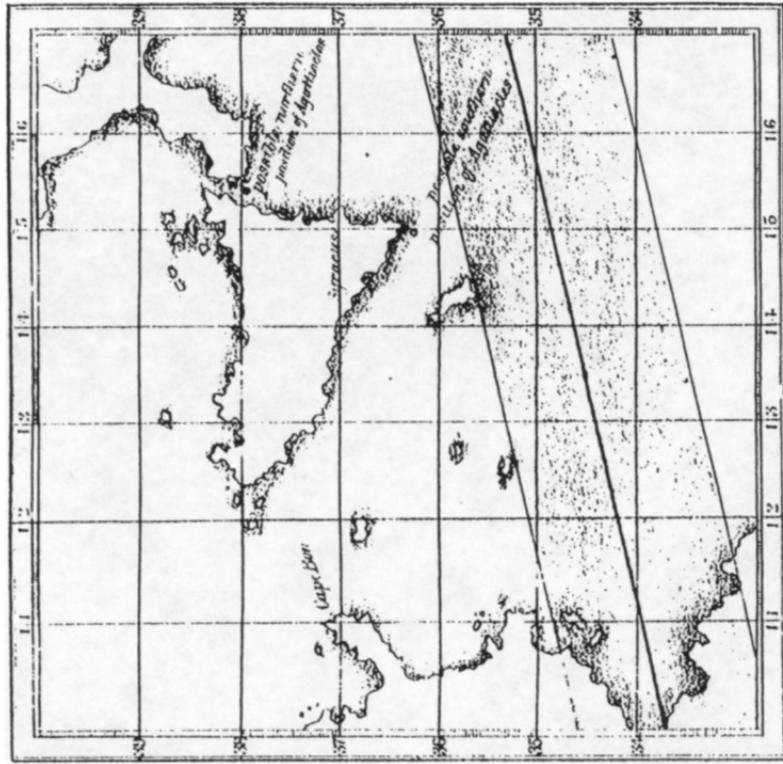
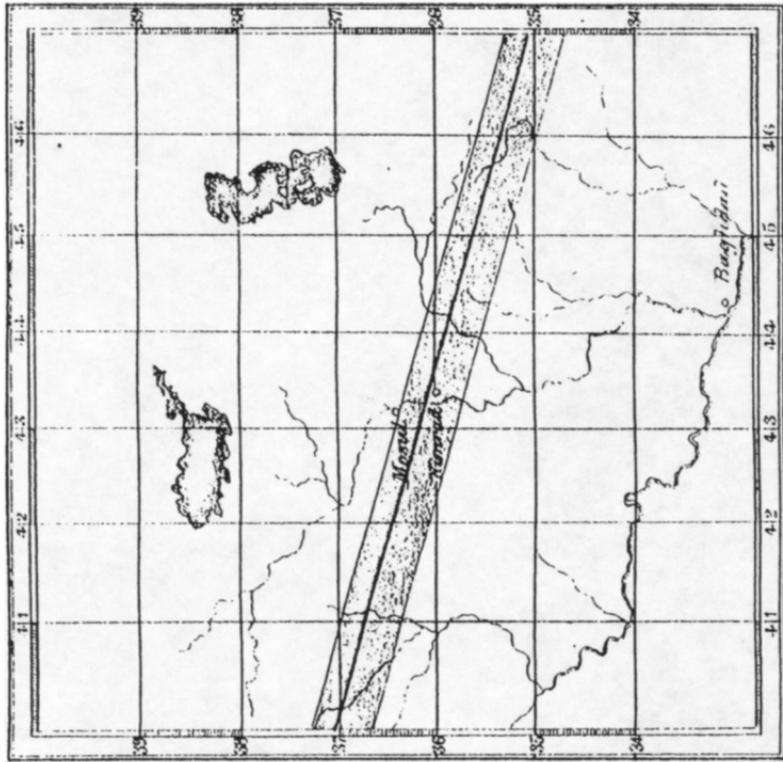


PLATE 10

Copied from Mr. Argy's Maps

ECLIPSE AT LARISSA B. C. 557



and calculated according to Hansen's tables

—viz., through Ionia, and therefore through the centre of Asia Minor, and on the direct road leading from Lydia to Media, also throws the shadow of the moon in the time of Agathocles not far from Syracuse, where we are certain from history that it must have passed. Such is the nature of the proof, the details of which may be seen in Mr. Airy's valuable paper in the Philosophical Transactions of 1853, that the historical dato B.C. 585, or 4th year of the 48th Olympiad, is the true date of this eclipse¹; and with the registered motions of the moon for upwards of one hundred years, before him, at Greenwich Observatory, and with a practical knowledge therefore of the laws which regulate her motions, he has "expressed his opinion, that the date B.C. 585 is now established for the eclipse of Thales beyond the possibility of doubt²." The new Lunar and Solar Tables of the German astronomer Hansen, published last year by our Board of Admiralty, lead to the same result, as set forth in the accompanying maps: since which, Mr. Airy has published another paper in the Memoirs of the Royal Astronomical Society of 1857, testing his former conclusions with regard to the eclipse of Thales, by the eclipse of Larissa in B.C. 557, and the eclipse of Stiklastad³ in A.D. 1030, and substantially confirming them. Thus the date of the eclipse now scientifically fixed by the best astronomical authorities, coincides with the date handed down by tradition: and it would seem to be a mark of extreme hardihood to deny the result of this concurrent testimony. Nevertheless, some are still found warmly contending against it, feeling that the current chronology of the period is shaken to the foundation by this decision.

Thales is said to have predicted a good olive crop, and Anaxagoras to have foretold the fall of an aerolite. In a note, with the initials H. C. R., to Rawlinson's Herodotus, it is observed: "The prediction of this eclipse by Thales may fairly be classed with the prediction of

¹ See also Mr. Hind's Letter to the Athenæum, 26th August, 1852.

² Lecture at the Royal Institution, Feb. 1853.

³ A translation of Professor Haasten's paper on the Eclipse of Stiklastad will be found in the Transactions of the Chronological Institute, vol. i. p. 209. It is clear, from the account of the battle fought near Stiklastad during this eclipse, that the line of shadow must have passed farther north than would appear from Hansen's Tables. It is also clear, that the shadow in the time of Agathocles must have passed much further north than the Tables place it, from these words of Justin: "Nullo militum sciento quo veleretur, cursum in Africam dirigit; cum omnes aut in Italianam prieditum se, aut in Sardiniam ituros crederent." The correction of the position of these two shadows would have the effect of throwing the shadow in B.C. 585 much farther north in Asia Minor, so as to bring it upon the road leading from Sardis to Susa, so fully described by Herodotus, L. v. 52; for the shadows of the three eclipses are all affected in the same direction, being all at the ascending node.

a good olive crop, or of the fall of an aerolite¹. Thales, indeed, could only have obtained the requisite knowledge for predicting eclipses from the Chaldeans; and that the science of these astronomers, although sufficient for the investigation of lunar eclipses, did not enable them to calculate solar eclipses—dependent as such a calculation is, not only on the determination of the period of recurrence, but on the true projection also of the track of the sun's shadow along a particular line over the surface of the earth—may be inferred, from our finding that in the astronomical canon of Ptolemy, which was compiled from the Chaldean registers, the observations of the moon's eclipse are alone entered². In reply to these observations, I quote the words of Mr. Airy³: "I think it not at all improbable that the eclipse was so predicted: and there is one easy way, and only one, of predicting it—namely, by the *saros*, or period of 18 years, 10 days, 8 hours nearly. By use of this period, an evening eclipse may be predicted from a morning eclipse; but a morning eclipse can rarely be predicted from an evening eclipse (as the interval of eight hours after an evening eclipse will generally throw the eclipse at the end of the *saros* into the hours of night). The evening eclipse, therefore," of B.C. 585, May 28, "which I adopt as being *most certainly the eclipse of Thales*, might be predicted from the morning eclipse" of B.C. 603, May 17. . . . "No other of the eclipses discussed by Bailly and Oltmanns present the same facility for prediction." Sir Henry Rawlinson has correctly stated the difficulty in those days of projecting on a map the true line of any coming eclipse; but the peculiar facility, without need of any such scientific projection, of anticipating that an eclipse would be visible in Ionia, on the 28th May, B.C. 585, from the fact of a large partial eclipse having occurred there on the 17th May, B.C. 603, again confirms the decision, that it was that, and no other eclipse, which Thales could have led the Ionians to expect.

Considering, then, that according to our ablest astronomers the eclipse of B.C. 585 is the only one which could have been total on the line between Media and Lydia during fifty years from B.C. 630 to 580—that all ancient tradition affixes the date B.C. 585 to the battle between the Medes and Lydians—and that the solar eclipse in that year is the only one which could have been foretold by any astronomer

¹ A recent writer in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, in a studied article on the date of the fall of Nineveh, suggests, that it was merely "a sudden thunder storm of unusual gloom and violence," which terrified the two armies.—J. S. L., April 1858, p. 151.

² Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. i. p. 212.

³ *Proceedings of the Royal Astronomical Society*, vol. xviii. p. 148.

of that early time, I assume it to be a fact established for ever, that the battle between the Lydians and Medes was fought in the year B.C. 585, and that Cyaxares, king of Media, was in that year in the full vigour of his power. This one fact, however, is subversive of the whole scheme of Median and Persian chronology adopted by the authors to whom I have before alluded, who all place the death of Cyaxares in or about the year B.C. 595, ten years before the battle could have been fought; whereas it is clear, from Herodotus, that he must have lived several years after that event.

Another remarkable event connected with the reign of Cyaxares, from which we are enabled to define still more closely the time of his reign, is the final destruction of Nineveh and the Assyrian empire by the Medes under his command. The destruction of Nineveh is the last event in the reign of Cyaxares mentioned by Herodotus, and appears therefore to have happened after the conclusion of the Lydian war in B.C. 585. The Lydian war, he tells us, had been carried on by the king of Media, in the time of Labynetus, or Nabopalassar, ruler of Babylon, and somewhere within those twenty-eight years when the Scythians held supreme power throughout all Asia. From which we may infer, that Labynetus was then merely local or tributary ruler of Babylon under the Scythians¹. In the meanwhile, Cyaxares having grown powerful in Media, prepared to shake off the yoke of the Scythians. He had strengthened himself already by the marriage of his son, Astyages, to the daughter of the king of Lydia in B.C. 585. He now, as we learn from Abydenus², formed another alliance, by marrying his daughter, Amuhea, to Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopalassar, or Labynetus, ruler of Babylon, who was acting as general of the armies of the king of Nineveh.

The Babylonians, probably headed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Medes under Cyaxares (the Nebuchadonosor and Ahasuerus of the book of Tobit), now besieged Nineveh, which fell after a long siege, Saracus, king of Nineveh, (Assaracus, Assarac, or Assarac-bal, son of Esarhaddon,) who had probably been set upon that throne by the Scythians, on the expulsion of Nabopalassar the usurper, perishing in

¹ Herodotus does not speak of him as king of Babylon, but as *Λαβύνητος ὁ Βαβυλωνίαιος*, L. i. 74.

² Euseb. Chron. Arm. Aucher., Part I, p. 27. Abydenus here speaks of the daughter of Astyages, not of Cyaxares, having married Nebuchadnezzar. But he has probably written Astyages, for Astibares, who was Cyaxares, as we may infer from a fragment of Eupolemus (Muller's Frag., vol. iii. p. 229), who records an expedition of Nebuchadnezzar and Astibares against Syria and Judæa. The same error may have led Cicero and Solinus to have placed the eclipse of Thales in the reign of Astyages, which is clearly incorrect.

the flames. If we allow three years for preparations and for the siege of that great city, after the termination of the Lydian war, we shall arrive at the year B.C. 581 as the date of the final destruction of Nineveh, in which year I am disposed to place the event. But if Cyaxares was living in the year B.C. 581, and reigned only forty years, he could not have come to the throne earlier than the year B.C. 620; and his father, Phraortes, who, we are told, was slain in battle by a king of Nineveh, could not have died earlier than about the same year.

Who, then, was king of Nineveh in the year B.C. 620, who slew Phraortes? Undoubtedly Nabopalassar was then king of Babylon, as fixed by an eclipse registered at Babylon in his 5th year, in the 127th year of the era of Nabonassar, or B.C. 621; and I have before shown, from the Chaldean historians, that Nabopalassar, or Nabopalassar, was also king of Nineveh as well as Babylon¹. Phraortes, therefore, was slain by this king. This fact, thus ascertained, enables us to fix the precise year of the death of Phraortes, and of the accession of Cyaxares, with a great degree of certainty. For Phraortes, king of Media, is the same as Arphaxad, king of Media, of the book of Judith, who, according to the Vulgate edition of that book, was slain in the twelfth year of the king of Nineveh. Now, the twelfth year of the reign of Nabopalassar over Nineveh and Babylon was B.C. 614. Phraortes, therefore, was slain in that year, and Cyaxares came to the throne of the Medes in the year B.C. 613.

We thus obtain the dates of the accession of each of the four kings of Media as follows:—

Deioces	53 years from B.C. 688
Phraortes	22 " 635
Cyaxares	40 " 613
Astyages	35 " 573 to 539

Thus, the first year of the revolt of the Medes under Deioces fell in the year B.C. 688, and the death of Astyages in the year B.C. 539. This arrangement of Median chronology is strongly confirmed by the fact, that it clears up one of the greatest perplexities in the account which Herodotus gives of these times². Herodotus, as we have seen, counts 150 years from the first of Deioces to the last of Astyages. But when he comes to speak of the conquest of Astyages by Cyrus, he writes: "The Medes thus lost the sovereignty of Asia, which they had held for 128 years, excepting only the time of the Scythian dominion." Now, 128 years and 150 years, calculated from the same point, cannot both end in the last year of Astyages. The explanation of the

¹ Journ. R. A. S., vol. xv. part 2, p. 420.

² See a paper on this subject in the Trans. of Chron. Inst., vol. i. p. 131.

difficulty is here perfectly simple. For Astyages was conquered, as all ancient authorities agree, about the 55th Olympiad = B.C. 560. Add 128 years to 560, and we come to the year B.C. 688, as the first year of the dominion of the Medes; and counting 150 years downwards from that date, we come to the year B.C. 539, for the last of Astyages.

But it may be asked, what authority is there for supposing that the ancients placed the last year of Astyages so low as the year B.C. 539? A reference to the Canon of Ptolemy will satisfy us that this was a very early arrangement of the years of that king. It has been before observed, that there are three versions of what is called the Canon of Ptolemy¹, each differing from the other, being, as I conceive, three different attempts to reconcile the then recognized chronology of the kings of Media and Persia, with the fixed and unfixed reigns of the kings of Babylon. In two of these copies, as stated below², we observe that Nabonadius, the last king of Babylon, is identified with Astyages; and the last year of his reign is placed in B.C. 539. And one of the copies even assigns thirty-four years as the length of the king's reign, which we know to be the length, within a year, of the reign of Astyages—not of Nabonadius, who only reigned seventeen years. The years of the reign begin in B.C. 572, and end in B.C. 539, in accordance with the dates already ascertained.

We know, indeed, that the identification of Astyages with Nabonadius is incorrect. Nevertheless, the evidence of these two early documents remains, in proof that the compilers considered the reign of Astyages to have ended in the year B.C. 539. My own conviction also is, that the third copy of the Canon was framed upon the same principle. For the list of kings in this copy, ending with Nabonadius, is headed "Assyrian and Median" kings³, as distinguished

¹ See Jour. R. A. S., vol. xv. part 2, p. 423.

2 Astronomical Canon.		Ecclesiastical Canon.		Canon of Ptolemy, according to Theon.	
B.C.	Yrs.	B.C.	Yrs.	B.C.	Yrs.
623	} 43	606	} 43	604	} 43
Nabopalassar, who is Nabuchodonosor		Nabuchodonosor		Nobocolassar	
580	} 3	563	} 5	561	} 2
Iltarudamus		Ebidan Merodac		Iltarodamus	
577	} 5	558	} 3	559	} 4
Nerigasolassar		Nereglesar, who is Belshazzar		Nerecassolassar	
572	} 34	555	} 17	555	} 17
Nabonadius, to who is		Nabonadius, to who is		Nabonadius	
539	} 0	539	} 31	539	} 9
Astyages		Astyages		Cyrus	
538	} 0	538	} 31	538	} 9
Cyrus		Cyrus		Cyrus	

³ Petavius. Rat. Temp., vol. ii. p. 916.

from the Persian kings who follow. Unless, therefore, Nabonadius was supposed to be Astyages, there would be no single Mede in the list.

Such is the well-defined outline of Median chronology, from Deioeces to Astyages, as deduced from Herodotus, and as I believe it to have been understood in ancient times; which alone also is consistent with the fundamental date B.C. 585, which no ancient authority ever doubted was the date of the eclipse of Thales.

Let us, then, arrange this Median chronology side by side with the chronology of the kings of Lydia, Babylon, Nineveh, and Judæa, and mark the results:—

B.C.	Judæa.	Nineveh.	Babylon.	Lydia.	Media.
704	....	....	....	Gyges	
702	....	....	Belibus		
701	Hezekiah	....	Apronadius		
699	....	....	Mecessimordac		
692	....	....	....	....	Deioeces
689-8	14 Hezekiah	3 Sennacherib	....	
680	....	....	Asaradinus, viceroy of Sennacherib		
672	Manassch	....	....
667	....	Esarhaddon	= Saosduchinus, or Sarchedon		
666	....	....	....	Ardys	
647	....	....	Kinladius		
635	....	....	....	....	Phraortes, or Arphaxad
625	....	Nabupalsar, or Sar-nabupal ¹ , or Sardanapalus, usurper	= Nabopalassar		
617	Amon	....	....	Sadyattes	
615	Josiah	....	....	....
613	....	....	....	....	Cyaxares, or Ahasuerus I.
606	....	....	INVASION OF THE SCYTHIANS		
606	....	Saracus, or Assarac-bal, son of Esarhaddon, set on the throne by the Scythians	Nabopalassar, governor under the Scythians for 28 years		
605	....	....	....	Alyattes	
585	....	....	ECLIPSE OF THALES		
584	Jehohahaz	....	....
583	Jehoiakim	....	....
581	....	Saracus burns himself in his palace	FALL OF NINEVEH		

¹ This transposition of compound titles is very common in the Hebrew Scriptures. For instance: "Eli-am" for "Ammi-el," "Ahaz-iah" for "Jeho-ahaz," "Asah-el" for "El-asah," "Eli-shuna" for "Ishma-el."—See Lord A. Hervey on the Genealogies, p. 116.

B.C.	Judea.	Babylon.	Lydia.	Media.	Persia.	
580		Nebuchadnezzar		EXPULSION OF THE SCYTHIANS		
573	Jechoniah	....	....	Astyages	
572	Zedekiah					
562	11 Zedekiah =	19 Nebuchadnezzar	= 44 Alyattes			
559	Seventy years' desolation of Jerusalem, ending in the 1st year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus.—Dan. ix. 1, 2.	....	....		Cyrus, father of Cambyses
548		....	Crœsus		
538		Cyaxares II., or Ahasuerus, husband of Esther	
537		Cambyses, son of Cyrus, husband of Mandane
536		45 Nebuchadnezzar	= 12 Crœsus	= 3 Cyaxares	= 2 Cambyses
535		Evilmerodac			
533		Nereglissar			
530		FALL OF BABYLON		= 9 Cyaxares	= 8 Cambyses
529		Nabonadius, viceroy under Cambyses	1 Cambyses as King of Babylon
523		Cyrus, son of Cambyses
521	....	....	....	Darius, adopted son of Ahasuerus, son of Hystaspes	
513	Cyrus, son of Cambyses, deposes Nabonadius					
493	Darius, son of Ahasuerus, takes the kingdom, being about 62 years of age					

The chronology of each of these separate lists of kings rests upon its own independent foundation, the proofs of which are elsewhere given¹, but into which we shall not now enter. I will merely say a few words explanatory of the grounds upon which the important reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is fixed to the forty-five years running from B.C. 580 to 536. According to Berosus, this king reigned forty-three years. According to the Hebrew Scriptures, he reigned forty-five years. This discrepancy is explained by the fact, that he took command of his father's armies about two years before his father's death². His first year in Scripture is counted from his association with his father in B.C. 580, after the capture of Nineveh. The first year of his solo reign is counted from B.C. 578. The dates are thus ascertained :—

I. Nebuchadnezzar began to reign after the eclipse of B.C. 585 ;

¹ Trans. Chron. Inst., vol. i. pp. 63, 113, 131, 194, 270.

² Josephus, Con., Ap. i.

because Abydenus¹, copying from Chaldean sources, and writing in the early age of the successors of Alexander, tells us that he began to reign soon after the fall of Nineveh, which event we have already fixed at about the year *B.C.* 581, four years after the eclipse. His first year, therefore, could not be earlier than *B.C.* 580.

II. Demetrius², a Hellenistic Jew, writing in the time of Ptolemy Philopator, states, that the Jews were carried captive to Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar, 333 years and 3 months before the reign of Philopator, who came to the throne in November, *B.C.* 222,—thus making the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, or year of the Captivity, *B.C.* 560, and his first year, therefore, *B.C.* 578. Demetrius, however, thus places the Captivity in the nineteenth year of the sole reign of Nebuchadnezzar, instead of in the nineteenth from association with his father.

III. St. Matthew counts fourteen generations from the captivity of the Jews (in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar) to the birth of Christ. These generations are not generations in the ordinary sense, from father to son, because we know from St. Luke that there were no less than twenty-two generations in that period³. They are generations in the sense spoken of by Herodotus, when he counts five generations from Semiramis to Nitocris, and explains elsewhere that three generations were counted to one hundred years⁴. The Jews appear to have calculated differently. With them forty years was counted for a generation. Placing, therefore, the birth of Christ in the year *B.C.* 3, we have $40 \times 14 = 560 + 2 = \text{B.C. } 562$ for the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, and *B.C.* 580 for the first year of his reign.

IV. The Chaldean historians compute eighty-eight years from Sennacherib to Nebuchadnezzar. I have before shown that the first year of Sennacherib = 36th year of Hulius, was *B.C.* 690 or 691, and that he ceased to reign about the year *B.C.* 668. Counting, therefore, eighty-eight years from his death, we come to the year *B.C.* 580 for the first year of Nebuchadnezzar.

Let us now return to the list of the kings of Media. With the death of Astyages, who is said to have left no male heir, Herodotus terminates abruptly the empire of the Medes; and from thenceforth considers that the Persians, under Cyrus, the father of Cambyses, king of Persia, became supreme and sole governors of the Medo-Persian empire. In this conclusion there can be little doubt that Herodotus was incorrect. This accomplished Greek, travelling as a stranger through Persia, has selected from the various traditions

¹ Euseb. Chron. Arm., p. 27.

² Clem. Alex. Strom., i.

³ Trans. Chron. Inst., vol. i. p. 63.

⁴ Herod., i. 184; i. 142.

current amongst the Persians in his day, what he conceived to be the true history of the rise of the Persian empire under Cyrus. But he admits at the same time, that other histories of Cyrus were then extant. Another equally accomplished Greek of a later date has thought it necessary to correct his statements. Xenophon, who had mixed with Persians of the highest rank of his day, and had made careful inquiries of them with a view to his History of Cyrus, has handed down to us a widely different statement, and has given a lively history of the political state of Media and Persia after the death of Astyages. He shows us that, while Media and Persia were bound together in close confederacy, and by family alliances, after the death of Astyages, each of those kingdoms still retained its own independent prince. He tells us that Astyages had a son, who was heir to his dominions; and that during the reign of that son over such portion of his dominions as remained unsubdued by the Assyrians, Cambyses was also reigning in Persia, and that Cyrus, his son, had not yet come to the throne. Now, one or other of these two histories is certainly untrue. If Cyrus, who conquered Babylon, was at the time sole monarch over all Asia, Cambyses and Cyaxares could not have been reigning independently in Persia and Media when Babylon was taken by Cyrus, son of Cambyses.

Fortunately we are enabled to adjudicate between these two historians, on the evidence of a contemporary witness of the highest character. At the very time we are speaking of, that is both before and after the taking of Babylon, there was living an eunuch of high rank and of transcendent abilities, who had held office under the kings of Babylon, and who, after Babylon was taken, was equally distinguished in the Court of Persia. The Jewish captive, Daniel, himself of royal extraction, had raised himself to the highest positions in the State; he must have been perfectly acquainted with the persons and politics of the reigning princes of his day; and no one was so competent to write a correct account of the state of the Medes and Persians about the time of the taking of Babylon. Now, although Daniel has not undertaken to record the annals of the Medes and Persians, he has left us incidentally, in a few words, so perfect a picture of the political relations of those kingdoms at that time, as to enable us to decide between the conflicting accounts of Herodotus and Xenophon, and to pronounce, without fear of error, which of the two has approached the nearest to the truth. He pictures the Medo-Persian empire, just before the taking of Babylon, under the symbol of a ram with two horns¹; and these two horns, he tells us, represent the two kings, or

¹ Dan. viii. 20.

kingdoms, of Media and Persia. Nothing can be more distinct and decisive than this image, if Daniel had not written another word. He adds, however—while placing Media as the predominant kingdom at the time of the fall of Babylon, that the horn, or kingdom, which rose last—viz., Persia, should afterwards become the prevailing power—and this twofold, yet united empire, he describes as extending itself westward, and northward, and southward, from Susa, on the river Ulai, in the province of Elam. Thus the kingdoms of Media and Persia, in the days of Daniel, were united into one sovereign head; neither of the two was looked upon as subject to the other, but both combined to form one federal State, and so remained for a while, after Susa had become a principal seat of government. In conformity with this symbol of federal union and equality, we read, therefore, in the book of Esther¹, written after the fall of Babylon, of the “*power of Persia and Media*,” as distinguished from “the nobles and princes of the provinces,” and also of the “book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia.” The Behistun inscription², almost in the same words as Esther, speaks frequently of “*Persia and Media, and the dependent provinces*;” and Daniel refers to the “*laws of the Medes and Persians*,” and declares that the kingdom of Babylon shall be “*divided and given to the Medes and Persians*.”³ The contemporary evidence of Daniel, therefore, establishes the accuracy of Xenophon, as regards the independence and political equality of Media and Persia at the time of the taking of Babylon, and also as regards the titular precedence of Media up to that time as the superior power; and as decidedly sets aside the opinion of Herodotus, that Media had then become a subject province of the full-grown Persian empire. The kingdom of Media did not cease to exist with Astyages; but some Median prince, we infer, must have inherited the throne of that king. When Xenophon, therefore, affirms that Cyaxares, son of Astyages, was that prince, there is the strongest reason for believing that he has stated the truth, and that a fifth Median king really reigned. I assume it then to be a fact, that Cyaxares II. succeeded his father Astyages in Media.

Xenophon has been very particular in his account of the war with Babylon, and of the taking of that city by the Medes and Persians in the reign of Cyaxares II., and his account is found to be in remarkable agreement with what we collect from the Hebrew Scriptures; but having affixed no dates to his history, we are unable to collect from

¹ Esther, i. 2; x. 2.

² Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. x. p. xviii.

³ Dan. v. 29.

the narrative how long Cyaxares II. remained on the throne. All we know is, that if his father Astyages ceased to reign in B.C. 539, Cyaxares must have begun to reign in B.C. 538. There is yet another historian of these times, however, to be consulted, who relieves us from this difficulty. For at this point an interesting historical combination arises out of the new arrangement of dates before us, leading to the fact that Cyaxares must have reigned many years.

While Xenophon has preserved the history of this second Median king bearing the title Cyaxares, a Hebrew writer—some say Jehoiakim, son of Joshua the high priest—has preserved the record of a second king, bearing, in the Hebrew language, the title Ahasuerus, the first of that title having been king of Media. Now, there can be little doubt that Ahasuerus and Cyaxares are one and the same title, for several cogent reasons:—

I. Because Nineveh was conquered, according to Herodotus, by Cyaxares I.; and the Median king who conquered Ninveh, according to the book of Tobit, was called by the Hebrews Ahasuerus.

II. Because the Hebrew title **אחשורוש**, without the vowel points, is "Achshurush" or "Achsurus," which, allowing for the difference of languages, is the same as the Greek title *Ἀξαρης*, or "Axares," and the Median title "Vakstarra"¹, as given in the Median transcript of the Behistun inscriptions, which represents Cyaxares. The first syllable "Cy," in Cyaxares, we know, is merely an affix signifying "king," as in the instances Ké-Cobab, Ké-Caus, Ké-Khosru, Ké-Lhorasp, Ké-Gushtasp, in the Zendavesta².

III. Because, if not Cyaxares, Ahasuerus II. must represent either Artaxerxes, or Xerxes, as many still contend. But the Hebrews could not have written **אחשורוש**, or "Achshurush," for either of the two latter titles; because we know that they wrote **ארתחששתא**, or "Artakshastha," for "Artaxerxes," and would therefore, we may assume, have written **חששתא**, or "Kshastha," for "Xerxes." Moreover, the title "Xerxes," as found on contemporary monuments, was written "Khshayarsha," as in the Persian transcript of the Behistun inscription, and "Khshmarsha," or "Khshirsha," in the Hieroglyphic, without the distinguishing character "Ach" in the beginning, which is found in *Ἀξαρης*, Achshurush, and Vakstarra.

Cyaxares II. of Xenophon, therefore, is Ahasuerus II. of the book of Esther; and it immediately follows, from this identification, that Cyaxares, fifth king of Media, reigned not less than fourteen years;

¹ Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xv. part 1, p. 125.

² Zend., vol. ii. p. 422.

and that, if he came to the throne in B.C. 538, he must still have been reigning in the year B.C. 525, when Cambyses was on the throne of Persia.

The reign of Ahasuerus has been so shifted from place to place by interpreters of sacred history, owing to the difficulty of arranging it in harmony with the common chronology, and the title has been identified with so many different Median and Persian kings, that some have been led to doubt whether the book of Esther, which contains his history, is not altogether fiction. But if the title is really—as I am satisfied it is—the same as Cyaxares, it occurs exactly in the periods where we should expect to find it, and should be found to represent those two kings of Media only who bore that title, and no other kings whatsoever. When it is proposed to identify Ahasuerus, as in the common chronology, first with Cyaxares, then with Astyages, then with Cambyses, and again with Xerxes or Artaxerxes, we may well reject such suggestions as absurd and impossible. It is only to be wondered at that such a series of misidentifications should have passed current up to the present time as the true exposition of this part of sacred history. To accept such a string of contradictions, is to assume that the Jews, who, throughout the period of their captivity, were in frequent contact and favour with the princes under whom they served, and who wrote their histories while those princes were living, were either ignorant of their real titles, or that they have wilfully and systematically misrepresented them. Such an idea is inconceivable of any people, much less of the Jews.

I have observed that the title and reign of Ahasuerus when identified with the title and reign of Cyaxares, fall in the periods where we expect to find them. The events of the book of Esther must have taken place within fifty years after the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jeconiah was carried captive to Babylon; because Mordecai¹, one of the chief actors in the scenes described in that book, was carried captive with Jeconiah, that is to say, as already ascertained, in the year B.C. 573. The first year of Cyaxares, or Ahasuerus=B.C. 538, which is thirty-five years later than the date of Jeconiah's captivity, well agrees therefore in point of time. As Ahasuerus I., who destroyed Nineveh, falls in with the reign of Cyaxares I., who destroyed Nineveh; so Ahasuerus II. of the book of Esther necessarily falls in with the reign of Cyaxares II., in whose reign Babylon was taken by Cyrus. The reign of this king thus loses all its vagueness and uncertainty of position and character; its limits become fixed between the

¹ Esther, ch. ii. 5, 6.

years B.C. 538 and some year later than B.C. 525 ; and two historians, one a Greek, the other a Hebrew, are found, when compared together, to have noted the events of all but the few last years of his reign, each taking up the history when dropped by the other, and each portraying his character with remarkable consistency, as a weak, hasty, capricious, self-indulgent, and luxurious prince in all his ways.

It is from Xenophon only that we learn anything concerning the two first years of this king's reign. On the death of Astyages¹ in Media, he tells us that Cyaxares, brother to the mother of Cyrus, took the throne ; that the reigning king of Assyria and Babylon was then he who had conquered the Syrians, the Arabians, and Hyrcanians, and was about to invade Bactria, a portion of the Median dominions, who could be no other than Nebuchadnezzar², under whom the kingdom of Babylon reached its fullest extent ; that Crœsus was the ally of this king of Babylon in the proposed invasion, which we know from Herodotus took place about three years before his fall ; that Abradates was at the time king of Susa, an ally of the king of Babylon, and probably a tributary king ; and that, when the war broke out, Cambyses, husband of Mandane, was on the throne of Persia, and Cyrus, his son, not yet a king. Accordingly we find in the table of chronology before us, that the year B.C. 537, or second year of Cyaxares, was the last year but one of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar ; that B.C. 537 was the last year but two of the reign of Crœsus ; and, from one of the very few dates fixed by Herodotus, we know that Cambyses had, in the same year B.C. 537, just taken the reins of government in Persia ; for he tells us, that it was in the year that Darius, the son of Hystaspes, entered his twentieth year, that Cyrus his father placed him on the throne, that is to say, in B.C. 537³.

I will now establish beyond doubt, from a passage in Megasthenes, that such must have been the exact relative position of the several reigns of Cyaxares, Crœsus, Cyrus, and Nebuchadnezzar, at the time of the death of the latter king. Megasthenes thus writes : " It is related by the Chaldeans, that as he (Nebuchadnezzar) went up upon

¹ Xenophon, v. 2.

² Herodotus affirms, that it was against Labynetus, son of Labynetus and Nitocris who were living at the time of the eclipse in B.C. 585, that Cyrus made war, *i. e.*, against Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopalassar, which latter was living till the destruction of Nineveh after the eclipse.—L. i., 188 and 74.

³ Darius had entered his seventy-second year, in the year B.C. 485, when he died, according to Ctesias. He had entered, therefore, his twenty-second in B.C. 535, and his twentieth in B.C. 537. Herodotus, in the confusion of his chronology, places on the throne of Persia, Cambyses, grandson of this Cambyses, instead of Cambyses, son of Cyrus, who married Mandane.

his palace, he was possessed by some god ; and he cried out, ‘ Oh ! Babylonians, I, Nebuchadnezzar, foretell unto you a calamity which must *shortly* come to pass, which neither Belus, my ancestor, nor his queen, Beltis, have power to persuade the Fates to avert. A *Persian mule* shall come, and by the assistance of your gods, shall impose upon you the yoke of slavery, the author of which shall be a *Mede*, the vain glory of Assyria,’ &c., when he thus prophesied, he expired¹.”

Now we know from Herodotus, that about three years before the fall of Cræsus, that king had consulted the oracle at Delphi concerning his prospect of success in the event of his invading the Persian empire. The response of the oracle was, that when a *mule* should rule over the Medes, then might Cræsus expect to be put to flight. Cræsus, as we have seen, was the ally of Nebuchadnezzar ; and though Megasthenes does not name Cræsus, who can doubt that these last words of the king of Babylon, concerning the coming of a Persian mule, refer to the response of the Delphic oracle which had been communicated to him by Cræsus. The Lydian king, in his eagerness to overthrow the Persians, had interpreted the oracle as favourable to his expedition. The old Babylonian king, more wary, had probably referred the interpretation to the Chaldee magicians and astrologers at Babylon, as we know he had formerly done on the occasion of his own two portentous dreams. Over these magicians, we are informed, that Daniel then presided²; and from such a source he would doubtless learn that evil had long since been decreed against Babylon, and that the evil foretold was to be inflicted upon his country by the hands of the Medes. Nebuchadnezzar was thus enabled to utter, without hesitation, these remarkable words preserved by Megasthenes concerning the fate of his kingdom. Cyrus, son of Mandane the Mede, and also of Cambyses the Persian, was undoubtedly the mule here referred to ; and Cyaxares, or Ahasuerus, who, as brother-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, ought to have been the glory and support of his kingdom, was the Mede, the vain glory of Assyria. Thus we collect by implication from Megasthenes, in corroboration of Xenophon, and also of our arrangement of dates, that it was in the last year of Nebuchadnezzar that the young prince Cyrus was beginning to rise into notice ; that Cræsus was approaching towards the close of his reign ; and that Cyaxares, king of Media, was raising that confederacy against Babylon which ended in its downfall. Let us here step out of our way for one moment to observe, how efficient an answer is thus afforded to the Chevalier Bunsen³ and other writers, who have

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evan., l. 10.

² Dan., iv. 9.

³ Philos. of Universal History, vol. i. p. 217.

attempted to throw doubt on the authority of the book of Daniel, on the ground of the occurrence of Greek appellations for musical instruments in that book, which they affirm could not have been in use so early as the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. For, if that king could have received, either directly or indirectly, a communication from the Greek oracle at Delphi, where can be the difficulty in believing that the Greek *κιθαρῖς*, *σαμβυκε*, *συμφωνία*, and *ψαλτήριον*, together with the names of those instruments, may have reached Babylon in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar? Far more difficulty is there in admitting the correctness of the chronology adopted by these writers, which supposes that Nebuchadnezzar died in the year B.C. 561, and that Crœsus ceased to reign in B.C. 548, by which it would appear that Crœsus received the response concerning the mule in Persia long after the utterance of these words concerning Cyrus, the mule, by Nebuchadnezzar.

Such, then, was the position of the kingdom of the Medes during the two first years of the reign of Cyaxares, or Ahasuerus. A confederacy had been formed between Media and Persia against Babylon; the war had commenced soon after the accession of Cyaxares in B.C. 537 or 536; Media was, as Daniel and Xenophon attest, still nominally in the ascendant, while we cannot but infer that the warlike Persians under Cyrus must *de facto* have been gaining the predominance over the Medes from day to day. It must have been during the few following years of continued conquest, that the horn of Persia became exalted over that of Media, and that the whole northern and western provinces of Asia became subject to the Persians.

We now turn to the book of Esther, which opens with an account of a magnificent banquet given by Ahasuerus, on setting up his throne at Susa, in his third year, B.C. 536, "when," as it is there expressed, "he sat on the throne of his kingdom which was at Shushan." This movement of the court and seat of government of Ahasuerus to Susa would appear to have been the first result of the successful operations of the opening campaign, when Armenia, and probably the province of Elam, were wrested from the hands of the Babylonians. A new partition of the empire now became necessary, owing to the rapid acquisition of large provinces; and it was literally soon after this time that the kingdom of Babylon began to be *divided*, according to the words of Daniel, between the Medes and Persians. To the unwarlike Cyaxares and the more polished Medes were now assigned the one hundred and twenty-seven comparatively peaceful provinces, reaching from India to Ethiopia, with Susa as the capital, that is to say, the whole of the eastern and southern provinces (for the Ethiopia here spoken of was, I assume, Asiatic, not African Ethiopia), while Cyrus and his father

Cambyses would naturally have seated themselves in the more northern provinces, with a view to military operations in Babylonia and Asia Minor. Consistently with this partition of territories, which rests primarily on the authority of Daniol, we learn from Herodotus the fact, that Cambyses, who came into power in B.C. 537, placed the seat of his government at Ecbatana—Xenophon records the fact, that the province of Media was, soon after the fall of Babylon, ceded by Cyaxares to Cyrus as a dowry with his daughter, which seems to imply that this province was not then immediately under his special government—and from the book of Ezra we know, that Cyrus issued his decree for the rebuilding of the Temple from Aemetha in the province of the Medes¹.

In this same third year of Ahasuerus, Vashti, his queen, was repudiated and deposed; and command was given to seek for a queen amongst the fairest virgins throughout the king's dominions. From which incident, though related by the Hebrew historian merely with reference to the exaltation of a Jewess to the throne, we may perhaps trace the anxiety of Ahasuerus for male issue to succeed him, and a corroboration of the fact mentioned by Xenophon, that he had no male heir; for had such been the case, he would hardly have repudiated so hastily the mother of the future reigning prince. The book of Esther now drops the history of Ahasuerus till his seventh year; and we again refer to Xenophon, from whom we collect that Cyaxares was probably engaged with the army during the following campaigns with his nephew Cyrus. In the fifth year of his reign he appears to have been present when a pitched battle was fought with the Babylonians, in which the Babylonian king, who, together with Croesus, headed the army, was slain. This Babylonian king could have been no other than Evilmerodac², son of Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned only two years, and died in the year B.C. 534=5th of Cyaxares. In the next battle described by Xenophon, that is to say, in the following year, B.C. 533, when another Babylonian king (Nereglissar³) had come to the throne, and when Abradates, ex-king of Susa, was slain⁴, Cyaxares was not present. Nor was he present at the taking of Sardis in the same campaign⁵. He had quitted the field and returned to his own dominions⁶. He was full of jealousy, as Xenophon relates, at the superior talents exhibited by his nephew Cyrus, and at the greater deference consequently shown by the army to that young

¹ Ezra, vi. 2.

² Compare Xenophon III., ch. iii. 43, and IV., ch. i. 8.

³ Xenophon IV., ch. vi. 3.

⁴ Ibid. VII., ch. ii. 3.

⁵ Ibid. VII., ch. i. 32.

⁶ Ibid. VI., ch. iii. 2.

prince. This retirement from the war was therefore in the sixth year of his reign. Ahasuerus, we now learn from the book of Esther, gave way to the allurements of the harem. Each fair virgin was presented to him in turn, after one year's purification, till at length the royal choice was fixed upon Esther, the cousin of Mordecai the Jew, who was raised to the throne in his seventh year, B.C. 532.

Meanwhile Cyrus continued to conduct the war against Babylon with vigour. After a long siege, the great city was captured during a nocturnal feast, by turning the waters of the Euphrates, and marching into the city along the dry bed of the river, and another king, we are now told, was slain, who must have been Nereglissar, who reigned four years only, and ceased to reign in B.C. 530. It was at this time also probably that Belshazzar was slain, who, we may infer perhaps from the book of Daniel, held a divided position in the government with Nereglissar; for Belshazzar spoke before his death of raising Daniel to the dignity of third person in the empire, implying thereby the existence of a second of great dignity.¹ Thus, by closely following the narrative of Xenophon, we find that Babylon must have fallen in the year B.C. 530, and not 538 as commonly supposed, and in the ninth year of the reign of Cyaxares or Ahasuerus. It was with the army of Cambyses, his father, king of Persia, chiefly, that Cyrus had been enabled to achieve this victory over Babylon; and to Cambyses, therefore, rightfully belonged the dominion over the newly acquired kingdom of Babylonia. Cyrus, we are told, paid much deference at first to Cyaxares, and assigned to him a palace at Babylon, and some of the best of the spoil. Cyaxares, however, was never recognized amongst the Babylonian kings, as we gather from the omission of his name by Berosus. On the other hand, one of the fixed dates in the Babylonian Canon is the seventh year of Cambyses, B.C. 523, as marked by a lunar eclipse observed and registered at Babylon in that year; and from thence we learn, that Cambyses was recognised as lord paramount over Babylon from the year B.C. 529, or the year following the capture by Cyrus.

All this, we know, is quite inconsistent with the history of Cyrus as given by Herodotus. With Xenophon we have seen that it is consistent in almost every particular. Indeed, the accurate agreement and interlacing of Median, Persian, Lydian, and Babylonian history during these first nine years of the reign of Ahasuerus, according to the arrangement of dates before us, is too remarkable to be misunderstood. A high testimony is thus afforded to the truthfulness of

¹ In the Ecclesiastical Canon, Nereglissar is identified with Belshazzar.

Xenophon's assertion, that what he related concerning Cyrus he considered that he had ascertained and believed to be true¹.

The last event in the reign of Cyaxares, mentioned by the Greek historian, is the marriage of Cyrus to the daughter of the Median king², while Cambyses still continued on the throne of Persia. The nuptials, we may presume, were celebrated by another great feast such as Ahasuerus delighted to indulge in, and this event probably marks the tenth year of his reign, *b.c.* 529. Xenophon now ceases to guide us, and we again take up the history of Ahasuerus from the Hebrew historian, by whom we are carried on to the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth years of his reign.

We now read of one of most cruel outbursts of religious fanaticism ever recorded in history. At the instigation of his minister, Haman, in his twelfth year, a decree went forth, under the seal of Ahasuerus, to slaughter the whole Jewish people scattered throughout his dominions, on the 13th day of the month Adar in the following year, that is to say, in the thirteenth year of the king's reign, *b.c.* 526, from which perilous position we know that the Jews were rescued by the intercession of queen Esther. The weak, hasty, and vacillating character of Cyaxares here well accords with what is related of Ahasuerus. Niebuhr indeed has not hesitated to pronounce this book of Esther to be of no historical value. When, however, we consider that the day of this great deliverance of the Jews had been kept in memory by an annual festival, observed down to the time of Josephus, as he himself relates; and that the feast of Purim, or casting of lots, on the 14th day of the month Adar, is one of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar, even to the present day, it is hardly reasonable to doubt the substantial truth of this narrative, or to doubt that the Jews were objects of hatred to the Medes and Persians in this reign. Nevertheless, it is hard to account for the idea of an indiscriminate slaughter of a whole nation as the result merely of sudden impulse or caprice on the part of any prince, however cruel or unwise. Some previous preparation for such an event must, we should expect, have taken place throughout the dominions of this despot. The religious tenets and doctrines of the Jews must have become generally obnoxious to the people among whom they dwelt, before such a widely operating decree could have been carried into practical execution. Now we know that a state of religious ferment had arisen throughout the whole empire about this time, which might readily account for the violent and universal feeling thus excited against the Jews. It was about

¹ Xen. I., ch. i. 6.

² Ibid. VIII., ch. v. 20.

this very period that the great spiritual revolution in the East, which, under the influence of the Magi, ultimately prevailed, and brought back the Medes and Persians from the idolatrous worship of the heavenly host to the worship of the one God, began to agitate the minds of thinking men throughout those countries¹. Much such a state of ferment then existed, as when Mahomet, in after days, forced his religion, sword in hand, upon the nations of the East. Now the religion of the Magi as now purified and enforced, we have every reason to believe, was indebted for some of its noblest sentiments to Jewish sources, and contained many of the leading doctrines of the holy people. Zoroaster is said to have been the disciple of a Jewish prophet². If the book entitled "Zendavesta," now extant, in any way represents the doctrines of this great reformer, it would appear that he taught the existence of one Eternal Being; the immortality of the soul; the resurrection of the body; the reward of the virtuous in a future state; and he is said to have spoken of the coming of that great Prince whose appearance was looked forward to throughout the East, and at whose birth the Magi, his followers, came to pay their adoration at Jerusalem. It was the increasing prevalence of these religious doctrines, so nearly allied to those held by the Jews, which had now stirred up the deepest passions of the Medes and Persians in defence of their accustomed worship; and as it was in the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, that Zoroaster's doctrines ultimately prevailed, we may presume that the struggle between religious parties was at the highest during the preceding reign, and in the beginning of the reign of Darius. The decreed massacre of the Jews in B.C. 526, in the reign of Ahasuerus, well accords therefore with the religious temper of the times, as also does that general slaughter of the Magi in the early part of the reign of Darius, occasioned, as I conceive, by a premature attempt of the followers of Zoroaster to overthrow the corrupt religion of the State, and to set up the reformed doctrines of the Magi in its place, together with a Magian ruler on the throne. All which may be collected from the tenor of the Behistun inscriptions. This slaughter of the Magi, like the deliver-

¹ This was an age of deep religious and philosophical speculation throughout the East—the age of Daniel, of Pythagoras, and, according to Persian tradition, of Zoroaster, the two latter of whom are said to have sought the banks of the Euphrates, to drink the cup of wisdom from the hands of the wise men and astrologers of Babylon.

² Prideaux argues, from his thorough knowledge of the Jewish religion and the sacred writings of the Old Testament, that probably he was of Jewish origin.—Prid. Con., vol. i., p. 300.

ance of the Jews, was celebrated by an annual festival for some years after, called "the festival of the Magophonia".

It was in the month Adar, the last Jewish month of the year *n.c.* 526, that the Jews were allowed by decree to stand on the defensive against their enemies, after which we read that Mordecai was raised to great power by Ahasuerus; that tribute was laid upon the isles of the sea, that is, upon the isles of the Persian Gulf, and perhaps beyond it, lately subject to the king of Babylon, but now within the dominions of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes; and that all these things were recorded in the "book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia." It may be observed, that the precedence is given indiscriminately either to the Medes or the Persians in the book of Esther, which agrees not inaptly with the time of transition of power from the hands of the Medes to the Persians. In the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus, the Medes, as we have seen, were without doubt allowed nominal precedence. Towards the end of that reign circumstances were entirely reversed. And when the book of Esther was written, probably in the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, the common order of precedence in everybody's mouth was, without doubt, Persia and Media. How long Ahasuerus continued to reign after the triumph of the Jews over their persecutors, or to whom he bequeathed his dominions, we are not told in the book of Esther. That he died without male issue we know from Xenophon. Yet we read in the book of Daniel of a certain Darius, who styled himself son of Ahasuerus, and who, we shall find, ruled over these same hundred and twenty-seven provinces, and at Susa, who will next come under our consideration. Let us close this sketch of the reign of Ahasuerus with the observation, that while the history of this king, and the history of Cyaxares, when read separately, as referring to two different kings, and according to the common arrangement of dates, have always borne a vague, unfixed, and almost fabulous character; when thus viewed in connexion with each other, as the history of one king in the manner proposed, assume a substantial and well-defined position in history, and form together a most interesting reign, full of leading and important events.

We now come to consider the reign of the last king under whom the Medes set up any claim to independence before their final absorption in the empire of Persia, and one who has caused as much trouble and perplexity as Ahasuerus, in the endeavour to fix his time in conformity with the common chronology. He is mentioned, as we have

¹ See some excellent remarks of Mr. Rawlinson on this subject.—Rawlinson's Herodotus, vol. ii. p. 54B.

observed, in the book of Daniel under the title, "Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes," and also "Darius the Mede." He is usually supposed, though contrary to all Chaldee authority, to have reigned over Babylon during the years B.C. 538 and 537; and, though Daniel, his minister, calls him Darius, son of Ahasuerus, that he was really Cyaxares, son of Astyages. This double contradiction in title is sufficient to set aside such an idea, though it has long prevailed. His name was Darius, and for that name alone must we look in secular history for his representative. Now, there is no trace to be found in any original history of these times of any king bearing the title Darius, before the reign of Darius, son of Hystaspes—no record has been found of any such king, either upon bricks or monuments, in course of the recent researches made in the countries over which he must have reigned—nor can his name be found in any list of kings of Babylon which has come down to us, unless he was the son of Hystaspes, though we are expressly told that he was "set over the realm of the Chaldeans." Marcus von Niebuhr in his perplexity has argued, that the Darius of Daniel must have been Astyages, son of Cyaxares, or Ahasuerus; and Mr. Rawlinson, though more doubtfully, is inclined to adopt the same opinion. But if Astyages came to the throne of Babylon in the year B.C. 538, as supposed, and at the age of sixty-two, as we are told by Daniel, then must he have been born in the year B.C. 600, the very year in which his grandson Cyrus is assumed to have been born, according to the common reckoning of his age, as seventy at the time of his death, in B.C. 530. Astyages also having married in the year of the eclipse B.C. 585, in his sixteenth year, must thus be supposed to have been conquered by his grandson Cyrus twenty-five years after his marriage, which is impossible. From all which it would appear, that according to the common mode of arranging the history and chronology of this period, the time, place, and person of Darius the Mede are matters, to this day, as little ascertained as of some of the kings of the most fabulous times of ancient history.

Under the scheme before us, no doubt or perplexity can arise in fixing the exact time at which Darius the Mede must have reigned. We have seen that his reputed father, Ahasuerus, must have died after the year B.C. 525 or 526, and that he left no male heir to succeed him on the throne. We know that it has always been the practice of despotic princes to appoint or adopt their successors; and any one styling himself son of Ahasuerus, could therefore only have become entitled to do so by the law of adoption, so common and sacred in the East, and so frequently had recourse to in those countries in our own

days, on the failure of male heirs. It is the violation of this ancient law which, in great measure, has been the origin of the present troubles in our Eastern dominions. It is this which has caused the bitter enmity of Nana Sahib, the most active and cruel of the insurgents; whilst, on the other hand, the recognition of the law of adoption has secured to us the steady support of Holkar and Scindia, our two most faithful adherents¹. If Ahasuerus died without male issue, we may be certain that he did not fail to exercise this power of appointment; and Darius, who called himself "son of Ahasuerus," must in fact have been the son of any one but that prince. Now Darius, the son of Hystaspes, who, even at the age of twenty, had been accused of ambitious designs upon the throne, and whose talents for government were afterwards so fully exhibited, would seem to be a likely prince to have been selected by Ahasuerus as his successor, considering his known jealousy of Cyrus, his son-in-law. But when we know the fact, that Darius, the son of Hystaspes, actually came to the throne in the year B.C. 521, as certified by two lunar eclipses observed at Babylon in his reign, and that this was just about the time when Ahasuerus may be supposed to have died, it amounts almost to certainty that the son of Hystaspes was he who was called, at his accession, "Darius the Mede." The seat of government of this Darius we know was at Susa; and both Josephus and the first book of Esdras speak of Darius who decreed the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, who was, without dispute, the son of Hystaspes, as having reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces². The evidence of the book of Daniel will lead us with equal distinctness to the same conclusion. In the ninth chapter of Daniel we read, that "in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes," that is, in the first year of his reign, "*what time* he was set over the realm of the Chaldeans," Daniel knew by books that the seventy years' desolation decreed upon the city of Jerusalem were just coming to an end. That he so interpreted the duration of the seventy years we may conclude from the fact, that he then prayed that Jerusalem and the Temple

¹ This practice of adoption is referred to in the modern Persian history of Cyrus, though not exactly in accordance with our views of that history. Sir John Malcolm writes: "Kal-Khosro resolved to devote the remainder of his life to religious retirement. He delivered over Cabul, Zabulistan, and Neemroz to Roostum as hereditary possessions; and resigned his throne to Lohrasp, the son-in-law of Kai-Kaous, and his own son of adoption and affection."—History of Persia, vol. i. p. 53.

² The Septuagint translation of Daniel makes Darius the Mede also to have reigned over 127 provinces.

might immediately be restored. This "desolation" of the city of Jerusalem, we collect from the 2 Chron. xxxvi., 19—21, was counted from the time of the burning of the house of God, and the destruction of the city: so that, the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus, spoken of by Daniel, was about seventy years after the fall of that city, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, the date of which we have already fixed to the year B.C. 562. Counting, therefore, seventy years downwards from that date, we come to the year B.C. 493, which falls within the latter part of the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes. According to this computation, therefore, there can be no question that Darius, the son of Hystaspes, is the king referred to by Daniel as the son of Ahasuerus. That this computation is correct, even to a single year, is confirmed by another equally distinct mark of time mentioned by Daniel—viz., that Darius was about three score and two years old when he came to the throne of the Chaldeans. Now Darius, the son of Hystaspes, died in the year B.C. 485, having, as Ctesias relates, entered his seventy-second year; for he says that he died at the age of seventy-two. Darius, therefore, would thus have completed his sixty-second year in B.C. 494, and from his birth-day in that year to his birth-day in B.C. 493, would have been properly spoken of as about three score and two years old. The coincidence of these two independent modes of computation, bringing us to the same year (B.C. 493) as the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, is sufficiently conclusive that Darius the Mede, and Darius, the son of Hystaspes, were one and the same prince.

To those who have faith in the prophetic calling of Daniel, there is a still further mark of time, pointing to the very same year, B.C. 493, as the first year of Darius, which is too remarkable to be passed by in silence, though not of the same purely logical character as the preceding. It was in the first year of Darius that the famous prophecy of the seventy weeks, or 490 years, was delivered, predicting the coming of the Messiah at the expiration of that period. This prophecy, therefore, was literally accomplished by the birth of Christ in the year B.C. 3 or 2, exactly 490 years after the prediction, as thus placed in B.C. 493.

From the exact concurrence of these three different modes of computation, leading to the same year in the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, I look upon it as a point as clearly and absolutely determined, even as the date of the eclipse of Thales, that Darius the Mede of the book of Daniel was the same as Darius the son of Hystaspes; and that the Medes in the beginning of his reign yet still endeavoured to maintain their independence of the power of Persia.

If so, an entirely new arrangement of the history of the Medes and Persians between the years B.C. 585 and 493 becomes absolutely necessary. We have already seen how the hitherto unfixed reign of Ahasuerus assumes a definite position in history, under the proposed arrangement of dates, and proves to have been recorded in secular as well as in sacred history. It will now appear, that the reign of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, which has hitherto held an equally unstable footing, is, in fact, one of the reigns most clearly defined in ancient history, and that it is illustrated by abundance of historical facts contained in the book of Daniel, in Herodotus, and in other Greek historians.

It will require much more time and consideration than we have now to bestow, to explain how the events of the reign of Darius may be arranged in conformity with these several sources of his history. This is a subject into which I propose to enter at some future time. I will now conclude by drawing your attention to a very familiar chapter in the book of Daniel, which, according to the view here taken, will assume a new and very prominent position in the life of Darius. We all remember the story of Daniel and the den of lions. We read it, and admire the constancy and piety of the Hebrew prophet. We lay down the story, however, in uncertainty as to who was the king spoken of; we know not where the event took place; and we do not realize the state of the kingdoms of Media and Persia when the confederacy of princes and rulers spoken of was formed against the prophet.

If Darius the Median, however, was Darius the son of Hystaspes, of which I repeat there can be no reasonable doubt, this scene is clearly fixed to about the year B.C. 493, when the king was about sixty-two years old, and to the twenty-ninth year of his reign; and we shall find that it marks the time of the final struggle of the great men of Media and Persia then in power against the introduction of the reformation of Zoroaster or his followers, and of the ultimate triumph over idolatry of the worship of the one Supreme Being. The Magians, we know, had at this time attained to great power and influence in Bactria and other parts of the Persian dominions, under the fostering superintendence of Hystaspes, the father of Darius. Daniel, with his peculiar tenets, had acquired so powerful an influence over the mind of Darius, that the king, we read, now sought "to set him over the whole realm." Such a proposal could not fail to rouse the animosity of the old religious party to the highest pitch. The presidents, and princes, and governors, who had hitherto swayed the councils of Darius, became alarmed, and resolved to overthrow the favoured

minister and the rising party, by exposing their apparent disloyalty in setting their religious opinions above the will of the king. They induced Darius to pass a decree, by which he exalted himself for thirty days above all gods; and probably persuaded him thus to test the disloyal tendency of the new doctrines before he ventured to proclaim them in his dominions. We know that the result of this plot against the life of Daniel, was the destruction of the whole of the great party thus combined against him. Daniel became more powerful than ever, and a proclamation now went forth under his direction as chief minister of the State, "to all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth. Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, says the king, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel," &c. This proclamation was issued about the year B.C. 493, in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of Darius, in the first year of his taking "the kingdom," or being "set over the realm of the Chaldeans," and after which he appears to have been styled "king of Assyria²."

In the following year, B.C. 492, in the second year of his reign so computed, which by tradition was a year of jubilee, and which was, according to our reckoning, a year of jubilee in regular succession, according to the Levitical institution, the Jews began to rebuild their temple for the worship of the great God; and Darius soon after issued another proclamation confirming their proceedings. How aptly, it may be observed, does all this agree in point of time with what had taken place in Persia in the first year of the king, as regards the worship of Daniel and his people; and how inaptly does the suspension of the building of the Temple of Jerusalem come in after the first proclamation of Darius in favour of the worship of Daniel, when placed as usual in the year B.C. 538. But how did it fare with the Magians at this time? If we are right in tracing a connexion between the reformed religion of Zoroaster and that of the Jews—and if any sympathy existed between the great Magian reformer and the king's most favoured minister, once the master of the magicians and astrologers of Babylon, now was the time when we might look for the triumph of those religious opinions which had so long agitated his dominions. Now, what do we read in the life of Zoroaster concerning the time of the adoption of the religion of the Magi through the Persian dominions? I will quote a passage from Hyde's "Religion of the Ancient Persians"³:—"When Zerdusht proposed to himself to

¹ Dan. vi. 25.

² Ezra, vi. 22.

³ Hyde's *Religio Veterum Persarum*, p. 317.

recommend his religion to the king of the Persians, he chose for himself a place near the palace of the Persians, which was then Istachr, or Persepolis." Abu Mohammed Mustapha, in his "Life of Gushtasp," (who till lately was always identified with Darius, the son of Hystaspes,) relates, that after this king had reigned *thirty years*, Zerdusht appeared—a wise man, who was author of the books of the Magi. At first Gushtasp was disinclined to the new doctrine, but at length was persuaded, and adopted his religion. He was among the disciples of Ozier (that is, Ezra). Mirkond also, in his history of Gushtasp, relates, that when the king adopted the doctrines of Zoroaster, it was in the face of much opposition; that he put to death many who opposed the religion of the Magi; and that at length all people embraced the worship of fire¹. Thus, while the worship of the God of Daniel was proclaimed throughout the empire in the twenty-ninth year of Darius, son of Hystaspes, and the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem proceeded with in his thirtieth year, and the nobles and princes who opposed this worship were put to death by order of the king, the religion of Zoroaster was adopted by the same Darius about the same thirtieth year of his reign, accompanied in a similar manner by the slaughter of those who opposed it. I will quote one more passage from Hyde, and close these observations. "Bundari," he writes, "somewhere observes, that Zoroaster applied to Gushtasp in the second year of that king's reign, which is inconsistent with the fact that he was the disciple of one of the Jewish prophets, as all affirm. Elsewhere, however, he places the approach of Zoroaster in the thirtieth year of the king²." But as I have already shown that the thirtieth year of the reign of Darius was also the second year of that king according to another computation, this apparent contradiction is, in fact, a curious corroboration of the arrangement of the reign of Darius the Mede as it has been deduced from the book of Daniel.

Thus, then, this apparently pointless and abrupt chapter of the book of Daniel must be looked upon as marking the date of one of the most extraordinary epochs in the history of Asia—viz., the date of the overthrow of Sabeanism, and the last remnant of that idolatry, and the adoption of the comparatively pure worship of the Magi throughout the Persian empire. It marks also the date of the final emancipation of the Jews from their long servitude in those eastern countries, whither they had been scattered on the breaking up of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah by the Assyrians, and Babylonians, commencing

¹ Shea's Translation of Mirkond, p. 205.

² Religio Veterum Persarum, p. 310.

with the fall of Samaria in the year *n.c.* 696, and lasting throughout the whole period we have been considering, even down to the year *n.c.* 493. Through the reigns of Deioces, Phraortes, Cyaxares, and Astyages, we watch the gradual spreading of this remarkable people through the provinces of Assyria and Persia; and with their dispersion, trace the growth of a purer worship in the countries where they dwelt. We find the struggle between idolatry and monotheism at its height of intensity during the bloody persecutions of the reign of Ahasuerus, and the early years of Darius, his adopted son, till at length, in the year *n.c.* 492, when Darius had attained to the highest pinnacle of his power, the great object, we may assume, of the dispersion of this people was suddenly accomplished, by the recognition of their faith, and by the forcible promulgation of the kindred worship of the Magi throughout the empire.

I am aware that certain eminent philologists have disputed the fact of Zoroaster's existence in the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, or Gushtasp, and have adopted the notion of the Greeks—that he lived 5000 years before the Trojan war, in preference to Persian tradition as contained in the *Boundehesh*, and the writings of the Arabians¹. The arguments of some of these writers, however, are so vague and shadowy, and appear to be so tinged with the preconceived notion of the existence of man upon the earth for some 20,000 years before the Christian era, that at present they produce no distinct impression of truth. It matters little, however, with regard to the foregoing statement, whether they are right or wrong in their suggestions; and whether it was Zoroaster himself, or his followers in ages after his death, who reformed the worship of the Persians in the reign of Darius, of these two facts, at least, we may be assured:—

1st. That just previous to the reign of Darius, a religious revolution was attempted by the Magi in Persia, and that the leading doctrine of their religion at that time was the existence of one Supreme Being.

2nd. That towards the end of the long reign of the same Darius, when he was of the age of about sixty-two, the worship of the God of Daniel, the one Supreme Lord of the universe, was proclaimed throughout the empire of Persia by that king,

¹ See Bunsen's *Egypt's Place*, &c., vol. iii. p. 457.