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## THE LITERARY NATURE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL AND THE LINGUISTIC CHARACTER OF ITS ARAMAIC\*

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The biblical book of Daniel tells its readers about the life and visions of Daniel, a Judean courtier and visionary, and of three friends of his during various short periods in the reigns of the Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar (in about 605-603 BCE, maybe also a little later) and Belshazzar (in about 541-539 BCE), an enigmatic king Darius, 'the Mede' (539) and the Persian king Cyrus (in about 539-537). Daniel's long life (according to the information provided by the book at least ca. 622-537) encloses the entire episode of the Exile of the Judeans and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (about 587-539), though the Exile is mentioned only implicitly, if at all.<sup>1</sup>

\*Earlier versions of parts of this article have appeared as 'Daniel' [in Dutch] in J.P. Fokkerman and W. Weren (eds.), *De Bijbel Literair* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2003), pp. 251-261, and as 'Hoe de valse beschuldiging een echte beschuldiging wordt. De relatie tussen de beschuldigingen in Genesis 38-44 en Daniel 3 en 6, en de bedoeling van het boek Daniel' [Dutch], in C. Houtman (ed.), *De leugen regeert. . . Valse beschuldiging in de Bijbel en in de wereld van de Bijbel* (Kampen: Kok, 2004), pp. 58-80. Some of the arguments presented here are already in J.W. Wesselius, 'The Writing of Daniel', in J.J. Collins and P.W. Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, 2 vols. (FIOTL 2; Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 291-310, id., 'Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 13 (1999), pp. 24-77, and in earlier publications quoted there. Detailed discussions of many issues touched upon only briefly here will appear in my forthcoming monograph, *Language, Style and Structure in the Book of Daniel*. The present article is meant to be a succinct, but basically complete presentation of my new model of the literary and linguistic nature of the Book of Daniel. Biblical texts will be quoted according to the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), with a more literal translation of the Hebrew and Aramaic where that is useful for the argument.

<sup>1</sup>But it should be noted that according to the chronology of the book itself the

The book is in its present form best described as a kaleidoscopic work. The story is not told in one continuous text, but in ten episodes which exhibit great variation in language, style and literary genre. The main division in the book is between six stories about Daniel and his three friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah in the first six chapters, and four accounts of visions seen and told by Daniel in chs. 7–12 (10–12 clearly belong together as one unit). The first two chapters and the accounts of the visions are dated by king and regnal year, the others are dated mainly by the mention of the ruling monarch. The book thus looks like a kind of dossier about Daniel, with various documents about episodes in his life and his visions in more or less chronological order, with only loose connections between them, usually in the form of references to the events of earlier chapters.<sup>2</sup>

In Daniel 1 the readers are told that king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem and takes it in the third year of the Judean king Jehoiakim, which according to Jer. 25.1 should be identical with Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, the period between his actually becoming king and the beginning of his first regnal year at the Babylonian New Year festival in the autumn.<sup>3</sup> On this occasion the vessels of the Temple and probably also Jehoiakim himself (the text is ambiguous) are brought to Babylon. This event probably corresponds with what is narrated in 2 Chronicles 36.6, where it is noted that Nebuchadnezzar 'bound him in fetters to take him to Babylon'. It is not entirely

Exile lasted for 70 years, which would make Daniel's life and career even longer, see also below.

<sup>2</sup>There is a vast amount of literature about the book of Daniel, of which I can mention only a few titles here: G. Ch. Aalders, *Daniel* [Dutch] (COT; Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1962); A. Bentzen, *Daniel* (HAT, 19; Tübingen: Mohr, 2nd ed., 1952); J.J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); P. R. Davies, *Daniel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985); J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (World Biblical Commentary, 30; Dallas: Word, 1989); J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1926). Two collections of important articles: A.S. van der Woude (ed.), *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993) and Collins and Flint, *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*. Specifically about the literary character of the parts of the book: S. Talmon, 'Daniel', in: R. Alter & F. Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1987), pp. 343-56.

<sup>3</sup>Note that this very precise date is almost forced onto the reader, because Daniel 2, at least three years after the events of the beginning of ch. 1 (Dan. 1.5), is dated to Nebuchadnezzar's second year (2.1). See already Bentzen, *Daniel*, p. 17, who rightly noted that there is no contradiction between the dates.

clear whether this is a third conquest of Jerusalem in the year 605 BCE (beside the well-known occasions of 598 and 587), or a purely literary reflection of the episode in 2 Chronicles 36 (it is interesting to note that the ambiguity about Jehoiakim's fate is found there also).<sup>4</sup> In Babylon, the story in Daniel continues, some of the Israelite princes who live there (and at least some of which have apparently been brought there on the same occasion) are chosen to be educated in 'the letters and language of the Chaldeans'; this last word always indicates the class of professional scholars and dream-interpreters in the book of Daniel. Among them are the Judeans Daniel and his three companions Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They refuse to be contaminated by the food of the court, which does not meet the standards of their religion (a connection with *kashrut* seems to be suggested, but is not noted explicitly), and show that they can thrive on vegetables and water. Finally they are introduced to the king, and he is amazed by their wisdom and knowledge.

In the second chapter the king has a dream, and, after they unsuccessfully try to persuade him to tell the dream to them, he wants his Chaldeans to tell him both the dream and its interpretation. When they prove unable to do so he gives orders to kill all the wise men of Babylon, including Daniel and his companions. Daniel, however, is informed about the dream and its interpretation through divine inspiration, and he tells them to the king. A huge statue of the materials gold, silver, bronze, iron and iron mixed with clay, which the king saw in his dream, symbolizes the empires which will arise in the world from the Babylonians onward. In a situation of great political division the kingdom of God, represented as a great stone in the dream, will destroy all those empires. Deeply impressed, king Nebuchadnezzar gives honour to Daniel's God and appoints him and his companions to high positions.

The third chapter starts with another huge statue, this time a real golden one which the king ordered to be set up, for which all his subjects must bow down on the penalty of being thrown into a fiery oven. Certain Chaldeans accuse Daniel's three friends (surprisingly, Daniel himself is absent from the story) of refusing to do obeisance to the statue. In a conversation with the king the three men concede this, but persist in their refusal. The king gets very angry and orders his servants to throw them into the oven. An angel, however, saves them

<sup>4</sup>Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 133-34.

and when they come out of the oven unscathed, the king orders all his subjects to respect the God of Daniel.

Daniel 4, couched as an edict or proclamation of the king to all the nations of the earth, is the last chapter in which Nebuchadnezzar figures. He has a dream of an enormous tree which is cut down, with only its roots remaining in the earth, which his wise men are unable to interpret, but Daniel explains it: the king will become insane and be driven away from other humans, until the moment he recognizes the power of God. Thus it happens and the king again orders obeisance to Daniel's God.

The events of Daniel 5 take place on the very last day of the kingdom of Babylon. During a royal banquet king Belshazzar gets drunk and orders to bring the vessels of the Temple in Jerusalem so that he and his courtiers can drink from them. At once a hand appears which writes an inscription on the wall of the palace. Daniel is able to read and interpret the inscription: it contains three names of units of weight, mina, shekel and half-shekel, which he interprets as referring to the end of the reign of Belshazzar and of the kingdom of Babylon. In that very night the city is taken by the Medes and the Persians and Belshazzar is killed. The king of Persians and Medes, 'Darius the Mede', who is often supposed to be personally referred to in the inscription,<sup>5</sup> then receives the kingship over Babylon.

Many aspects of ch. 3 return in Daniel 6. Again there are certain unnamed Chaldeans who utter a denunciation, in this case that Daniel keeps praying to his God in spite of a royal edict, treacherously proposed by them to the king, that everybody is to refrain from making a request to any human being or god for thirty days. Darius has no choice but to let Daniel be thrown into the lions' den. But when he comes back to the den on the following morning, it turns out that Daniel has been saved by an angel, and the king orders the accusers with their families to be thrown to the lions. Like Nebuchadnezzar before him, king Darius now gives praise to Daniel's God.

The atmosphere of the prediction of Daniel 2 returns in ch. 7, dated to the first year of king Belshazzar. This time the riddle is not presented in a dream of the king, but in one of Daniel himself, which is explained by a heavenly being. Four animals symbolize again four empires, the

<sup>5</sup>K. Gallig, 'Die 62 Jahre des Meders Darius in Dan 6.1', *ZAW* 66 (1954), p. 152: the sum of the weights mentioned in the inscription is probably 62 shekels, which number coincides with the age of Darius at the time he conquers Babylon (Dan. 5.31 [RSV 6.1]).

last of which will have ten kings. The last of these kings will be so evil, that he will disturb even the order of nature itself. His power, however, will be ended through the coming of God's empire, when judgment and power will be given to the 'Holy of the highest', probably a designation for the people of Israel. Both here and for the following chapters we will present only an outline of the detailed visions and their explanations.

In the third year of Belshazzar Daniel has a new vision (Dan. 8), this time apparently not in the form of a dream. A ram with one horn is defeated by a he-goat, and from the latter's horn arise four others, after which from one of these comes a small horn, which does terrible things and stops the service of sacrifices. The angel Gabriel gives the explanation: the he-goat is the king of Greece, who will defeat the kings of Persia and Media. The Greek empire will be divided into four parts, and at the head of one of these there will be a very evil king, who will even oppose God himself, but will be utterly defeated in the end.

When Daniel, in the first year of 'Darius the Mede', reads the words of the prophet Jeremiah that seventy years will pass after Jerusalem's destruction (Dan. 9.2), in a prayer he confesses sins on behalf of his entire nation and begs for the restoration of Jerusalem. Again Gabriel appears and he explains that on the one hand the word of Jeremiah has been fulfilled at the beginning of Daniel's prayer, but that on the other hand this word refers to the remote future, not of seventy years but of seventy 'weeks' of years, 490 years, until the days of an evil monarch, who will interrupt the sacrificial service.

The last episode in the book takes up three complete chapters (10–12). In the third year of Cyrus, the king of Persia, Daniel sees a vision of a celestial being. He falls asleep and when he wakes up, various divine beings speak with him, and explain the further course of history in great detail, of the Persian empire until the Greeks defeat it, and of the divided Greek empire again, but this time with the addition of numerous details about the evil king, who will interrupt the sacrifices and will commit all kinds of evil acts, until he will come to his end without human intervention. After the great oppression there will be a time of salvation for Daniel's people. Daniel is ordered to seal the book until the time of the end, and is promised that he himself will rise again at that time (12.13).

It has often been noted that the book is much more interested in the sequence of the great world empires, and in the time scheme of events in world history, than in specifically Israelite history. Though not everything is as clear as we would like it, the eschatological age which

is referred to time and again seems to be identical with the period of oppression of the Jewish religion during the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes around 165 BCE. As noted from antiquity onwards, the description of second century BCE history is correct up to the great persecution under Antiochus, after which an eschatological age is expected. The book as a whole thus presents itself as pointing to an unfulfilled expectation of the end of history and the coming of God's kingdom around that time on the basis of the predictions of Daniel in the sixth century BCE. Whether this means that the book was at least partly written with this expectation in mind, in the short period between the persecution and Antiochus' death, as maintained by most critical scholars,<sup>6</sup> is outside of the scope of this literary and linguistic study. The events in the book itself range from the accession of king Nebuchadnezzar to the third year of king Cyrus; see below for a possible explanation of this time-frame.

In spite of the apparent unity of the contents of most of the book of Daniel we see, as noted above, a bewildering variety of language, narrators and style in the twelve chapters of the book, which made a large majority of scholars agree that the book was put together by one or more redactors from various earlier materials, while they did not want to interfere too deeply in the texts which they used.<sup>7</sup>

The book contains parts in two different languages: 1.1–2.4 (until the word אַרַמִּית, 'in Aramaic') and chs. 8–12 are in Hebrew, the part in between is surprisingly in Aramaic. The Aramaic part of the book looks like a separate unity, among other things because a clear concentric structure can be recognized: predictions about the course of history in 2 and 7, martyrs' stories in 3 and 6, and enigmatic predictions to the eastern kings about the direct future of their reign in chs. 4 and 5.<sup>8</sup> This division, however, is clearly different from the one according to content, where, as noted above, the narrative chapters 1–6 are in contrast with the visions in 7–12.

Between the chapters themselves, moreover, there are considerable differences also. The stories in 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are told by an anonymous

<sup>6</sup>E.g. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 61-71.

<sup>7</sup>One of the few scholars of a non-fundamentalistic background to defend the basic unity of Daniel in modern times was H.H. Rowley, in his 'The Unity of the Book of Daniel', *HUCA* 23 (1950–1951), pp. 233-73; reprinted in his *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (London: Athlone, 1952), pp. 235-68; 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), pp. 247-80.

<sup>8</sup>A. Lenglet, 'La structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7', *Biblica* 53 (1972), pp. 169-90.

narrator. As noted above, ch. 4 is entirely in the form of a letter, or rather a proclamation, of king Nebuchadnezzar to all the nations of the earth. In ch. 7 Daniel's vision, which is told in the first person ('I, Daniel'), is introduced by an anonymous narrator, but 8 and 9 start in the first person without any introduction, whereas the anonymous narrator again introduces the first-person account of 10–12. Maybe the end of ch. 7, where Daniel tells about his reaction on the vision and its explanation, should be regarded as a transition to the first-person accounts of 8 and 9: in this way we are reminded that Daniel is still speaking. Another remarkable feature is that in ch. 3 the main person is not Daniel, but his three friends, while no reason is given why Daniel is absent from this chapter, or the companions from ch. 4 and the rest of the book. By itself not problematic, but still remarkable is that the chapters are not in the exact chronological order: the events of 7 and 8 (dated to Belshazzar's first and third years) precede those of ch. 5, which describes the last day of his reign.

In the personal names we also see a certain degree of variation. In ch. 1 the readers are told that Daniel and his companions Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah receive Babylonian names, namely Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, respectively, but the use of these names in the sequel seems to be rather arbitrary. The name of the king who takes Babylon for the Persians in 539 BCE is probably given in two forms also, as Cyrus, 'the Persian', the historical name of this king, which we also encounter in the book of Isaiah (44.28 and 45.1), beside the enigmatic Darius, 'the Mede', the descendant of Ahasuerus (Dan. 9.1), certainly not the famous king Xerxes, who ruled much later (486–465), but either a fictitious earlier Xerxes or the great Cyaxares, the great-grandfather of Cyrus according to Herodotus.<sup>9</sup> There has been an enormous amount of discussion about the supposed question of the identity of this Darius, but we should probably turn the reasoning around: in an even minimally coherent literary text there is very little reason to suppose that Cyrus and Darius are different persons if we find the dates Darius 1 (Dan. 9.1) and Cyrus 3 (Dan. 10.1) one after the other, and the events at the beginning of the reign of 'Darius the Mede' seem to be those usually associated with Cyrus (see below). B.E. Colless has in my view convincingly presented the case for the

<sup>9</sup>Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 103-16. About the question of this Ahasuerus see, for example, the balanced verdict in Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 348, and the earlier literature mentioned there.

identification of the two, though in my opinion it remains a mystery why Cyrus could be called 'Darius'. One can note, however, that in this way the character of the book as a 'linear composed dossier' (see below) would be underscored once more. In this case the difficult verse Dan. 6.29 [RSV 28] should probably be translated as: 'So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, namely the reign of Cyrus the Persian'.<sup>10</sup> It can be added that for some of the arguments about the book of Daniel which are presented below, an identification of the two is helpful, though never essential: in all these cases more or less the same reasoning would be valid in the case of 'Darius the Mede' as a real intermediate figure between Belshazzar and Cyrus.

It is also notable that there are a few important lacunae in the book itself. It describes events during the reigns of kings at the beginning and at the end of the exile, but as noted above the captivity itself, which started with the three (or two) displacements of exiles which are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, in 605, 597 and 587 BCE, and ended through the famous edict of king Cyrus in his first year of office which allowed the exiles to go home again (2 Chron. 36.22-23; Ezra 1.1-4) is passed over almost in silence. This would seem to go a long way towards explaining why the image of king Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel is not the negative one to be expected for the person who destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, but a view which can be compared to the rather positive one in the book of Jeremiah, cfr. Jer. 27.6, 'Nebuchadnezzar, my servant'. We shall see below that there is more to the role of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel. The provenance of Daniel and his companions is left in the dark. Not only are we not told exactly how and when they arrived in Babylon, but the names of their fathers are not even given, which is highly unusual in the world of the Hebrew Bible, and would be even more so for princes from the royal house of Judah (Dan. 1.3 and 6). It is suggested at the beginning of the book that they came to Babylon with king Jehoiakim, but this is not said explicitly, and we can only guess after their family relationship with the last kings of Judah, though it seems indeed likely that in the book

<sup>10</sup>B. E. Colless, 'Cyrus the Persian as Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel', *JSOT* 56 (1992), pp. 113-26; cf. also L.L. Grabbe, 'Another Look at the Gestalt of "Darius the Mede"', *CBQ* 50 (1988), pp. 198-213; D. J. Wiseman, 'Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel', in: D. J. Wiseman a.o. (eds.), *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), pp. 9-18. Note that the reasoning proposed by Colless is mainly of a literary nature, whereas earlier authors usually attempted some sort of historical explanation.



of Daniel the prediction to king Hezekiah is fulfilled, 'And some of your own sons, who are born to you, shall be taken away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon' (2 Kgs 20.18 and Isa. 39.7).<sup>11</sup>

In view of these observations, it is understandable that most scholars suppose that a complex history underlies this seemingly highly irregular state of the text of the book of Daniel. John Collins' statement in the introduction to his and Peter Flint's collection of essays on Daniel, 'It is generally agreed that the tales in Daniel 1–6 are older than the visions in chapters 7–12, and are traditional tales that may have evolved over centuries', is characteristic of the position taken by most researchers, and is only the starting point for the assumption of a number of editorial processes.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted, however, that in view of the disagreement about nearly every aspect of the supposed redactions, Philip Davies' words about the problem of the languages deserve attention: 'The presence, and the distribution, of the two languages in Daniel may be in the end inexplicable', and might well have been extended to the entire problem of composition and origin of the book, though I will indeed attempt such an explanation here.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Derivation of Table of Contents*

The unity of the book of Daniel, however, is surprisingly confirmed by the observation that the structure of the entire book mirrors the layout of two other works, namely the story of the life of Joseph in Genesis 37–50 and the biblical book of Ezra (i.e. the first part of the book Ezra-Nehemiah of the Hebrew canon). This is a complex and very interesting literary strategy, which explains many of the problems of the literary form of the book: most of the discontinuous features noted above, which have traditionally been explained as the outcome of a complicated process of redaction underlying the present form of the book, turn out to be literary reflections of comparable traits of the other two compositions.

Two remarks need to be made about this. Firstly it may be useful to point out that this is not an instance of a relatively vaguely

<sup>11</sup>Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 135.

<sup>12</sup>J.J. Collins, 'Current Issues in the Study of Daniel', in: Collins and Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 1–15 (5).

<sup>13</sup>P.R. Davies, *Daniel*, p. 35. A brief survey of various opinions about the prehistory of the book in Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 24–38.

defined process of 'influence' of one text on another, but that we are dealing here with a highly sophisticated literary emulation. As I will demonstrate, the author of Daniel wrote his book in such a way that as a whole it refers to other literary works within and outside of the Hebrew Bible, and within this framework contains numerous allusions to various elements in these other works. Secondly, the existence of numerous agreements between Daniel and other works, especially Ezra and the life of Joseph, is hardly something new. Many of them, in fact, have been commented upon in the vast literature dealing with the book of Daniel. What was completely new, by contrast, when I first pointed it out, is that these agreements occur exactly in linear order: this is an observation which can be repeated and is hardly subject to doubt, and thus requires some sort of explanation in any case.

The change of main person in Daniel 3 agrees with the same phenomenon in Genesis 38, the story about Judah and Tamar which interrupts the story of Joseph. Important elements of the narrative of Joseph's life, such as all the revelations of what is to happen in the near and remote future and all the accusations uttered against the main persons, return in corresponding places in the book of Daniel; see Figure 1. The nature of the predictions seems to be comparable in all cases: the three episodes of double dreams which Joseph has or which are explained by him correspond with three riddles posed to the Babylonian kings, two dreams and one enigmatic inscription. Note that in Daniel all three thus assume the character of Pharaoh's double dream in Genesis 41: an enigma presented by God to the king, which is explained by the Israelite courtier. Both in Daniel and in Genesis the explanation of these riddles has consequences within the cycle of stories itself, whereas the explanation of the others becomes meaningful only after its completion.

While these elements constitute part of the narrative texture of Genesis 37–50 only, they are the main motives in the corresponding chapters in Daniel. All the elements which occur in pairs in Genesis have been fused into one only in Daniel, such as the 'double dreams' of Joseph, of the steward and the baker, and of Pharaoh, the sexually tinted accusations of Genesis 38 and 39 and the accusations of theft in 42 and 44. By contrast, the nightly prediction of Genesis 46 appears to correspond with the two visions of Daniel 7 and 8. In the substance of these elements some systematic shifts can be observed. We already noted the three riddles which God put before the kings, corresponding with three different pairs of dreams in Genesis. The four

different accusations in Genesis 38, 39, 42 and 44 are fused into a pair of highly similar accusations of refusal to commit idolatry in Daniel 3 (corresponding with the pair in Genesis 38 and 39) and forbidden adherence to Daniel's own religion in ch. 6 (corresponding with Genesis 42 and 44). Some shifting of motives and elements can be observed

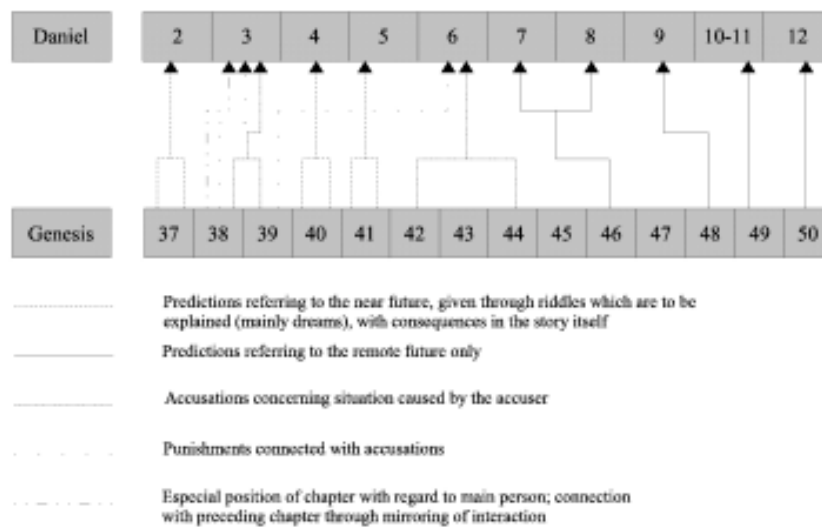


Figure 1: *Intertextual Connections between Daniel and Genesis*

between the parts which are now similar in Daniel. The punishments which followed or threatened to follow the false accusations of Genesis 38 and 39 return in Daniel 3 and 6, namely the punishment of burning and of being thrown into a prison or ‘pit, hole’ (Gen. 40.15, cf. for this expression also Ex. 12.29). The story about Nebuchadnezzar’s first dream, in Daniel 2, formally corresponding to Genesis 37 with Joseph’s two dreams, not unexpectedly has assumed certain characteristics of Genesis 41, with the dreams of Pharaoh.<sup>14</sup>

Another aspect of the book of Daniel where emulation of Genesis seems likely is the length of time covered by Daniel’s career in the book: twenty years of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign until the fall of Jerusalem (his accession year plus the 19 of 2 Kings 25.8), seventy years of exile (Dan.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, G.G. Labonté, ‘Genèse 41 et Daniel 2: Question d’origine’, in: Van der Woude, *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, pp. 271-84.

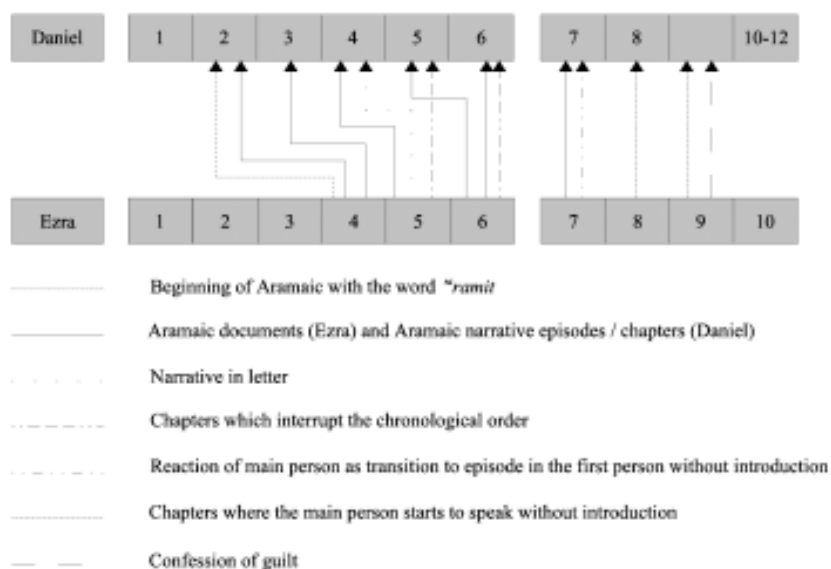


Figure 2: *Intertextual Connections between Daniel and Ezra*

9.2) and three years of king Cyrus (Dan. 10.10), probably making a total of 93, exactly the same number of years as in the long career of Joseph in Genesis (Genesis 37.2 and 50.22);<sup>15</sup> 'Darius the Mede' does not fit easily in this scheme, perhaps another argument for his identification with Cyrus.

Also in the relation with Ezra we see a close agreement between chapters, often also with an increase in the significance and a systematization of the corresponding elements; see Figure 2. The six Aramaic documents of Ezra 4–7 (Ezra and Daniel are the only two books with a sizeable amount of Aramaic) return as the Aramaic chs. 2–7 in Daniel, while the beginning of the Aramaic also shows a close agreement: in both cases the word אַרְמִיָּה, '(in) Aramaic', seemingly as an announcement of the language of a document or of speech, but in reality as the introduction of a long stretch of text in the Aramaic language. This agreement, though very striking to everyone who reads the texts in the original languages, has received preciously little attention; one of

<sup>15</sup>Wesselius, 'Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible', p. 37 n. 19.

the few to have dealt with it is J.E. Miller, who ascribed it to what he called 'bilingual editing'.<sup>16</sup> The assumption of literary emulation provides a clear and unambiguous explanation for this state of affairs.

The divisions in chapters (or rather in major episodes) seems to correspond in Ezra and Daniel also: in both cases we see six and four coherent episodes, which in Ezra describe the restoration of cult and Temple (1–6), and the mission of Ezra (7–10), respectively. In the episode described in Ezra 5, a large part of the information about events is provided in Tattenai's Aramaic letter in 5.8-17; in the corresponding Aramaic chapter Daniel 4 Nebuchadnezzar's edict in the form of a letter has become the only source for the episode. Both in Ezra and in Daniel chs. 5 and 6 are not in the right chronological order within the book: as noted above Daniel 5 and 6 properly belong after ch. 8, whereas Ezra 5 and 6, dated to the reign of Darius I (522–486), belong before the parts of Ezra 4 which are dated to the kings Xerxes (4.6, ruled 486–461) and Artaxerxes (4.7-23, ruled 464–424).<sup>17</sup> The transition between chs. 7 and 8, formally from third-person account to the first person in both cases, is made through a personal reaction of the main persons Ezra and Daniel: 'Blessed be the Lord, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem,<sup>28</sup> and who extended to me his steadfast love before the king and his counselors, and before all the kings mighty officers. I took courage, for the hand of the Lord my God was upon me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me' (Ezra 7.27-28), and 'Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed; but I kept the matter in my mind' (Dan. 7.28)'; these sentences also mark the transition from Aramaic to Hebrew in both cases (though

<sup>16</sup>J.E. Miller, 'The Redaction of Daniel', *JSOT* 52 (1991), pp. 115-24. The main thesis of his article, however, namely that the present-day Book of Daniel was edited out of a complete book in Hebrew and another one in Aramaic, seems not very likely.

<sup>17</sup>See for a new view of the problems of the Aramaic documents in Ezra 4-7, which look like a single Aramaic text composed of documents in incorrect chronological order, J.W. Wesselius, 'Ezra-Nehemia' [Dutch] in Fokkeman and Weren (eds.), *De Bijbel Literair*, pp. 215-24; cfr. also H.G.M. Williamson, 'The Composition of Ezra i-vi', *JTS* 34 (1983), pp. 1-30, who rightly concluded that these chapters must belong to the latest stage of the composition of Ezra-Nehemiah. Note also that, like the Aramaic chapters of Daniel, the Aramaic episodes in Ezra 4-6 can be shown to exhibit a chiasmic structure: S.C. Matzal, 'The Structure of Ezra iv-vi', *VT* 50 (2000), pp. 566-69.

the verses themselves are in different languages, Hebrew in Ezra and Aramaic in Daniel). In chs. 8 and 9 of both books, Ezra and Daniel start speaking without further introduction, whereas they are formally introduced again at the beginning of Daniel 10 and Ezra 10. Finally, both Ezra 9 and Daniel 9 contain a confession of guilt on behalf of the people of Israel. The conclusion seems justified, briefly said, that all these elements in the book of Daniel cannot be considered in isolation from the parallels in Ezra and Genesis any more.

It becomes clear that a number of issues, which appeared like formidable and to all appearances insoluble problems, can be explained from the literary nature of the book of Daniel without much effort. Thus even the perennial question why Daniel contains both Hebrew and Aramaic parts is answered by the observation that the distribution of these two languages constitutes a literary emulation of the situation in Ezra. The same observation can be made for a number of other, hotly debated but never resolved, problems in the book of Daniel, such as the change of main person in Daniel 3 or the changes of the person who is speaking in Daniel 7–12.

All this means that the existence of various texts among the Dead Sea scrolls dealing with Daniel or other Jewish courtiers may indicate the literary background of the book of Daniel, and may have provided the inspiration for making such a collection of seemingly independent stories, but that the book of Daniel itself cannot be regarded as a more or less random collection of such stories.<sup>18</sup> The intertextual references to the episodes of Joseph and Ezra, which are also related to Daniel through the great likeness of the main persons in function and piety, provide an undeniable unity to the book, and show that many features of its parts are not accidental or the result of a historical development of the text.

Such observations about the dependence of certain works in the Hebrew Bible as we made for Daniel are not unique to this book. We may, in fact, be dealing with the key to understanding much of the literary texture of the books of the Hebrew Bible. Elsewhere I argued

<sup>18</sup>See about this literature, for example, P.W. Flint, 'The Daniel Tradition at Qumran' in: Collins and Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 329-67; E. Eshel, 'Possible Sources of the Book of Daniel', *ibid.*, pp. 387-94; S. White Crawford, '4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550a-e) and its Relation to Biblical Royal Courtier Tales, especially Esther, Daniel and Joseph', in: E.D. Herbert & E. Tov (eds.), *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (New Castle DE: Oak Knoll Books, 2002), 121-37.

that the seemingly fragmentary nature of many of the books in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the historical literature, is not to be explained from the supposed prehistory of the text as we now have it, but represents a hitherto unrecognized, highly characteristic, literary genre, namely the linear composed dossier (or linear literary dossier), a text which consists of a number of elements which are usually in roughly chronological order, and which show a considerable amount of deliberately conceived discontinuity and even outright contradiction, which was counterbalanced by several indicators of unity and continuity. Many of these elements which bind the text together have long been recognized, such as unity of subject, references within the text or common terminology, and have caused numerous problems to scholars who attempted to explain the text mainly from its supposed historical background. Two of these indications of unity and continuity, however, have remained hidden until recently. The first one is the just-mentioned derivation of the layout of the complete work from a comparable other work, in most cases within the Hebrew Bible, but outside it in the case of the so-called Primary History in Genesis–2 Kings, the global structure of which appears to derive from the near-contemporary Greek-language *Histories* of Herodotus of Halicarnassus (composed ca. 450 BCE).<sup>19</sup> The second one, the use of striking and probably relatively uncommon literary and linguistic forms for each one of a number of comparable narrative situations, will be discussed below.

It may be useful to point out that the literary emulation in Daniel (and, one may add, in the Primary History) through its reflection of the overall structure of other works is relatively straightforward when we compare it to other instances in the ancient world, both in Jewish and in classical Greco-Roman literature. A good example is the book of Tobit, which on good grounds has been noted to have intertextual connections with the books of Genesis and Job in the Hebrew Bible,<sup>20</sup> and with the story of Telemachus' journey in Homer's *Odyssey*,<sup>21</sup> but

<sup>19</sup>Wesselius, 'Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible'; id., *The Origin of the History of Israel: Herodotus' Histories as Blueprint for the First Books of the Bible* (London: Sheffield Academic Press/Continuum, 2002).

<sup>20</sup>Deborah Dimant, 'Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha', in: M.J. Mulder and H. Sysling (eds.), *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Assen and Philadelphia: Van Gorcum, 1988; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), pp. 379-419: 417-19.

<sup>21</sup>Carl Fries, 'Das Buch Tobit und die Telemachie', *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie* 53 (1911), pp. 54-87; Dennis R. MacDonald, 'Tobit and the

which does not exhibit the same rigid adhering to the table of contents of the works to be emulated. The Jewish literary world of late Persian and early Hellenistic times apparently appreciated such literary works, which can be read and enjoyed without any knowledge of their intertextual links, but yield a lot of insight about their intention and structure once their literary background is revealed. In this respect they look very similar to various works of Greek and Latin literature, where the same observation can be made.<sup>22</sup>

We are evidently dealing in the book of Daniel, as in the other cases of the linear composed dossier, with a conscious literary strategy, which was not intended to deceive the reader (in that case the indications for the unity of the text would have been entirely superfluous), but which aimed to create the above-mentioned kaleidoscopic view of the events which were to be described. The author performed a true literary *tour de force*: he painted the life of Daniel and his visions in a series of texts, which have been consciously made very different from each other in various respects, so that they can be read independently from each other and make the impression of deriving from various backgrounds, while the author caught them all the same in one coherent framework through the systematic application of several narrative techniques, as discussed below, and through the intertextual character of the entire book. This unitary character also makes it very unlikely that the visions can be contrasted with each other as referring to different views of the future, originating in different times and circumstances, but makes it almost certain that they should be used to supplement each other. In other words, the highly detailed vision in chs. 10–11 is in the last resort an expansion of the visions in chs. 2 and 7, and the coming of God's empire and the role of the people of Israel as recounted in those chapters can safely be presumed for this last and greatest vision also.

Finally, it is important to outline the dual significance of this emulation of the structure of other works for the thesis proposed here. On the one hand this emulation is part of the entire network of sophisticated

Odyssey', in: Dennis R. MacDonald (ed.), *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), pp. 11-40. Compare also in the same volume George W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Tobit, Genesis, and the Odyssey: A Complex Web of Intertextuality', pp. 41-55.

<sup>22</sup>See, beside the literature mentioned below about the relationship between various epic works in Latin and Greek, for example also Edmund C. Cueva, *The Myths of Fiction: Studies in the Canonical Greek Novels* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).



intertextuality which is described in this article and in the publications about the Primary History and Ezra/Nehemiah referred to here. On the other hand, and in this stage of research in a way more importantly, as noted above this copying of the table of contents of another work in such a way that a very small set of short and unambiguous rules can describe the transformation from one work's overall structure to the other's<sup>23</sup> constitutes the observation of a fact about the texts and a problem for their interpretation. The chances that such a simple congruence between two works would arise by accident are infinitely small, that such a congruence would then occur several times within the one small corpus of the Hebrew Bible is downright impossible. If one would for some reason reject the other observations and proposals which are made here about the book of Daniel, one would be faced even more by the problem how to explain this basic and repeatable observation.<sup>24</sup>

*Unusual Literary Forms as a Unifying Principle*

Another interesting link between the Aramaic court stories in Daniel 2–6 seems to belong to the stock instruments of the genre of the linear composed dossier in the Hebrew Bible also. It would seem, as noted above, that in some cases the sense of unity of the parts of the dossier is increased by providing an unusual and striking literary layout to every instance of a number of comparable episodes. Thus it can be observed that in the Primary History the introduction of main persons in the first eight books is in the vast majority of cases (the first humans, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Saul and David) marked by the use

<sup>23</sup>See the listing of these rules in my 'Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible', pp. 66, 68-69, 71 and 75; 'The Writing of Daniel', pp. 306-307.

<sup>24</sup>I emphasize this point because some authors tend to turn a blind eye towards observations which do not fit in the framework of the discipline as they conceive it. Even if any or all of a number of strange opinions attributed to me by B. Becking in his review of my *The Origin of the History of Israel (Review of Biblical Literature, [http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/3038\\_3303.pdf](http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/3038_3303.pdf))*, of which 'Both Joseph and Cyrus lived in exile before reaching a powerful position' [sic! not in my book and not in reality] is a characteristic example, were to be found in my book, the basic congruence of the two works as described on pp. 57-68, which is indicated to be pivotal to the book on p. viii-ix of the Preface, would still have to be dealt with; Becking for some reason refrained from referring to those central pages at all. Of course any book can be called 'weakly [...] argued', as Becking does at the end of his review, if one takes the liberty to omit its explicitly stated main argument from consideration.

of a peculiar duplication in the account of their first described movement in space, with two alternative courses for the background or the circumstances being provided, connected through ambiguous sentences and contrasted by means of apparent or real contradictions.<sup>25</sup>

In the book of Daniel we can observe that in all the stories of Daniel 2–6, which deal either with accusations against the Judeans (Dan. 3 and 6) or riddles presented to the eastern kings (Dan. 2, 4 and 5) important information, which in the story is already available to the characters and plays a role in the development of the story, is presented to the reader only once it becomes absolutely vital for the action itself. Sometimes this postponement is functional within the story, but usually it seems to have mainly the function of heightening the tension. Here and there this procedure looks somewhat forced, and in one instance, in Daniel 5, it makes the interpretation of the narrative very difficult. In the case of the predictions (2, 4 and 5) the account of the contents of the riddle is postponed, with the accusations (3 and 6) both the nature of the accusation and the way in which the martyrs are saved are placed in a later position in the story.

In Daniel 2 it is not at once clear whether the king remembers the dream or has entirely forgotten it, nor whether he asks of his wise men to tell the interpretation only or the dream itself also, until he confirms this in 2.9. The frequently recurring expression ‘the dream and its interpretation’ can apparently be understood in either direction, as a *hendiadys* with the meaning ‘the interpretation of the dream’, or literally as referring to two different queries. However that may be, the dream is told only just before its interpretation by Daniel, in 2.31–

<sup>25</sup>J.W. Wesselius, ‘Collapsing the Narrative Bridge’, in: J. W. Dyk a.o. (eds.), *Unless Some One Guide Me. Festschrift for Karel A. Deurloo* (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2001), pp. 247-55; id., ‘Towards a New History of Israel’, *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* [online journal: [www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS](http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS) of [www.purl.org/jhs](http://www.purl.org/jhs)] 3 (2000–2001), article 2; PDF version p. 1-21; *The Origin of the History of Israel: Herodotus’ Histories as Blueprint for the First Books of the Bible* (London: Sheffield Academic Press/Continuum, 2002); and my forthcoming book *God’s Election and Rejection: The Literary Strategy of the Historical Books at the Beginning of the Bible*. See about a possible West-Semitic background of such ambiguity my ‘Language Play in the Old Testament and in Ancient North-West Semitic Inscriptions: Some Notes on the Kilamuwa Inscription’, in: R.P. Gordon & J.C. de Moor (eds.), *The Old Testament in Its World: Papers Read at the Winter Meeting, Januari 2003, The Society for Old Testament Study, and at the Joint Meeting, July 2003, The Society for Old Testament Study and Het Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland en België* (Leiden etc.: Brill, 2005 [appeared 2004]) pp. 253-65.

35, while he must already have known it from verse 19 onwards. In Daniel 3 the readers are at first not informed about the reaction of the three men to the king's decree. Only after the Chaldeans' denunciation we understand that they visibly refused to comply with it. Something comparable happens with their salvation from the fire. The divine intervention must have taken place at the very moment when they are thrown into the oven and the men who were to execute them die from the flames themselves (3.22), yet the readers are informed only when the king announces that he sees four persons walking around in the middle of the fire (3.25): the three men and the angel who saved them. In Daniel 4 the dream is put in Nebuchadnezzar's mouth first when he tells it to Daniel (4.10-17), not when he informs his wise men about it (4.7). Daniel 5 presents formidable problems in this respect. The use of the expression 'the inscription and its interpretation' causes great uncertainty: does the king really ask for both, or are we dealing with a *hendiadys* again? Yet, especially in view of the sentence 'because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation' (4.15, RSV 18), where nothing is said about any difficulty with reading the inscription itself, it appears very likely that reading this text which consisted of the common names of weights mina (= 60 shekels), shekel and half-shekel, posed no problem, and that it was kept from the reader only to conform to this literary pattern, raising the suspension of the story in the meantime, until Daniel reads it in 5.25 and explains these ordinary names of weights as a prediction referring to the end of the kingdom of Babylon.<sup>26</sup> Finally, in ch. 6 we see the same pattern as in Daniel 3. The real background of the denunciation, the fact that Daniel always prayed three times a day and would certainly not be stopped from doing this by the king's decree, is told to the readers when his accusers make certain of this before telling it to the king (6.12), not as the background of their plans (6.8). Daniel was saved when he fell between the lions in the den (6.17, compare verse 23), but only on the following morning his answer to the king's question makes this clear to the readers (6.22). We have a unique indication that this procedure was experienced as very strange in antiquity already. Though the translator of the original Greek translation of Daniel (which was replaced by the so-called Theodotion version in

<sup>26</sup>I hope to discuss the problems of this chapter at length elsewhere, but for the time being it suffices that it is *possible* to read the chapter in this manner, and that this fits in a general literary trend in Daniel 2-6.

most Septuagint manuscripts) probably did not understand the literary nature of his original, he took such offense to the unusual and somewhat forced postponement in these cases, that he attempted to remove most of them. The amount of intervention needed for this purpose accounts for much of the greater and smaller deviations from the Masoretic Text in chs. 2-6, which in turn makes it very likely that the Masoretic text is the original form of the text of the book of Daniel: there is a perfectly logical path from the complex Masoretic text to the easier and, one could add, in the literary field sometimes undoubtedly superior, Septuagint text type, but none the other way round.<sup>27</sup>

Having established the intertextual links with the book of Ezra and with Genesis, our eyes are opened once more to the non-linguistic factors determining the use of certain words, expressions and grammatical constructions in the Aramaic of Daniel. On the grammatical level we can observe that the use of the demonstrative pronoun אֵלֶּךְ 'these', in Dan. 3.12, 13, 21, 22, 23, 27 and 6.6, 12, 16, 25, mainly serves to draw the two chapters together (it is used both for the accusers of the Judeans and for Daniel's three companions), but cannot be used as proof that this demonstrative pronoun was really used in the Aramaic spoken or written at the time of composition of the book of Daniel; in Ezra by contrast, both this word and the corresponding singular forms מֵךְ (m.) and מֵךְ (fem.) are used very frequently. This word should be added to the well-known list of words and expressions connecting the two chapters, such as the denunciation (3.8; 6.25); the trusting in God (3.28; 6.24); the role of the angel (3.28; 6.23); and the note that the martyrs were not hurt in any way (3.25; 6.24).

The very frequent use of the construction וְ... מֵכָּל־קֶבֶל דֵּי, 'in agreement with the fact that...' or 'because', with *waw apodosis* at the beginning of the second sentence, probably derives at least partly from a possible interpretation of the sentence כָּל־קֶבֶל דֵּי־מֶלֶךְ הֵיכְלָא מִלְחָנָא וְעֵרוּתָא מִלְחָנָא (Ezra 4.14), translating it as 'Now because (כָּל־קֶבֶל דֵּי) we eat the salt of the palace, (וְ) it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonour', instead of the simple juxtaposition of the two clauses as in, for example, the RSV: 'Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonour'. In Daniel, however, it has been extended into a commonly

<sup>27</sup>See in general about the relation between the Masoretic Text, 'Theodotion', and the Old Greek version of Daniel: A.A. Di Lella, 'The textual history of Septuagint-Daniel and Theodotion-Daniel', in: Collins and Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 586-607.

used literary means of indicating reflection on events and slowing down of the speed of the narration: a sentence expressing the state of affairs is followed by a sentence which begins with *כִּלְ-קַבֵּל דִּי* and gives the reason or the circumstances, and a final sentence beginning with *וְ* and returning to the subject of the first sentence.<sup>28</sup> Also with regard to the expression ‘the dream/the inscription and its interpretation’ in chs. 2, 4 and 5 which we discussed above, it is inevitable to assume that the linguistic usage must have been influenced by literary considerations. Many features of the Aramaic of Daniel will have to be reconsidered in the light of these and comparable observations, and we must in any case be very cautious with using them for linguistic information before we fully understand the literary aspects of the text we are dealing with.

This intertextual aspect of the use of language in Daniel is also relevant for one of the most frequently discussed passages in the book, the dialogue between king Nebuchadnezzar and the three men in 3.14-18, where the text seems to suggest doubt about God’s ability to save his servants. The passage should be studied in the light of the observation that in Daniel 2 and 3 there are two instances of the king threatening a group of his subjects with certain death if they do not comply with his wishes. He commands his wise men to tell his dream and its interpretation in Dan. 2.5-6 and 8-10, and orders Daniel’s three companions to worship his statue in 3.14-15. In both cases the unusually frank answer of the subjects echoes or mirrors the formal structure of the king’s words, after which he gets exceedingly angry and condemns them to death. In Daniel 2 we see in both cases the construction *כִּלְ-קַבֵּל דִּי . . . וְ* between two parallel sentences at the beginning and end of the speech of the king and of the wise men, in Daniel 3 in both a positive and a negative conditional sentence around a simple question of the king and an answer by the three men, with the question and the answer about worshipping the king’s statue at the beginning of the king’s speech and the end of the men’s. Moreover, both the first conditional sentence of the king and the last one of the men have no apodosis, apparently because it is so evident that it need not be said explicitly.

By echoing or mirroring the words of the king his subjects, who do not have much to expect from him in any case, put themselves on the same level with him, and exhibit a liberty of speech which would

<sup>28</sup>J. W. Wesselius, ‘Language and Style in Biblical Aramaic: Observations on the Unity of Daniel II–VI’, *VT* 38 (1988), pp. 194-209. See the appendix to this article for a list of these instances.

otherwise be unthinkable in the relation with the king.<sup>29</sup> Apart from this psychological aspect, well known from many martyrs' stories, this double echoing in two subsequent chapters seems to be an expanded version of the same phenomenon in Genesis 37 and 38, which we already noted to be intertextually connected with Daniel 2 and 3. Already in antiquity it was noted that the interaction of Joseph's brothers with their father Jacob, with the repetition of the verb נכר (hif.), 'to recognize', is resumed in the interaction between Judah and Tamar, where we also encounter this verb twice.<sup>30</sup> See the table at p. 263, where some important Aramaic words have been added between brackets. Note that interestingly the agreement within the passages in Genesis 37 and 38 and between them has largely shifted from a congruence of words and contents to one of structure. Another curious literary shift is to be found in the main subject connecting the chapters: deception of Jacob and of Judah in Genesis 37–38, a huge statue in Daniel 2–3, so from a common theme to a common material object as focus of attention.<sup>31</sup>

All this bears on my old proposal to understand the conditional sentence in verse 17 as it is translated here, not translating ܢܗ at its beginning as 'behold' (which would be highly unusual in Aramaic in any case), which would imply the martyrs' certainty of being saved, nor stopping the conditional sentence after 'fiery furnace,' which would imply doubt about God's ability, but certainty about his willingness to save, nor translating ܐܝܗܘܢܝ as '(our God) exists', but understanding the sentence which begins with ܢܗ as a *protasis* following the *apodosis* 'we do not need to answer you...', which nicely avoids all theological traps which could be involved in the idea of doubting or postulating God's existence or his ability or willingness to save his followers:

<sup>29</sup>Wesselius, 'Language and Style', pp. 204-208.

<sup>30</sup>See about the rabbinic traditions on Genesis 38, where this was already noted, and where the parallel with Daniel 3 is also found (albeit probably not on literary grounds), especially E.M. Menn, *Judah & Tamar (Genesis 38) in Ancient Jewish Exegesis: Studies in Literary Form & Hermeneutics* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, etc. 1997), and Y. Zakovitch & A. Shinan, *The Story of Judah and Tamar: Genesis 38 in the Bible, the Old Versions and the Ancient Jewish Literature* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1992).

<sup>31</sup>The agreement in subject was already noted by the Church Father Hippolytus of Rome in his commentary on Daniel, though not, of course, as a *literary* phenomenon: *In Daniele*, ii, 15. Hippolytus assumed that Nebuchadnezzar, after seeing the huge statue in his dream in Daniel 2, decided to erect a statue for himself in ch. 3.

<p>Dan. 2.8-9, the king: I know with certainty that you are trying to gain <b>time</b>. Because (כל־קבל דַ) you see that the word from me is sure <sup>9</sup>that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you, (!) you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the <b>time</b> will change.</p>	<p>Genesis 37.32 And they <b>sent</b> the long robe with sleeves and brought it to their father, and <b>said</b>, '<b>This</b> we have found; <b>recognize</b> now whether it is your son's robe or not'.</p>
<p>Dan. 2.10-11, the Chaldeans: There is not a <b>man on earth</b> who can meet the king's demand. To such a degree that (כל־קבל דַ) no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean <sup>11</sup>(!) the thing that the king asks is difficult, and none can show it to the king except <b>the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh</b>.</p>	<p>Genesis 37:33 And he <b>recognized</b> it, and <b>said</b>, 'It is my son's robe; a wild beast has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces'.</p>
<p>Dan. 3.14-15, the king: Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you <b>do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up?</b> <sup>15</sup>Now if (יְהוָה) you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made... [well and good]; but if you do not (אל־יְהוָה) worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?</p>	<p>Genesis 38.25 As she was being brought out, she <b>sent</b> [word] to her father-in-law, 'By the man to whom <b>these</b> belong, I am with child.' And she <b>said</b>, '<b>Recognize</b> now whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff'.</p>
<p>Dan. 3.16-18, the three men: O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to answer you about this <sup>17</sup>if (יְהוָה) our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup>But if not (אל־יְהוָה) .... [nothing more is to be said, but in any case] be it known to you, O king, that <b>we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up</b>.</p>	<p>Genesis 38.26 Then Judah <b>recognized</b> them and <b>said</b>, 'She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah'. And he did not lie with her again.</p>

<sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to answer you in this matter <sup>17</sup>if our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup>But if not.... [nothing more is to be said, but in any case] be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up’.<sup>32</sup>

This idea has been criticized by Tim Meadowcroft, in a way rightly, as *in vacuo* the other interpretations may well be considered more likely than the one proposed here.<sup>33</sup> In the presently recognized literary context, however, this inversion of the two parts of the conditional sentence, for which a number of parallels in ancient Hebrew and Aramaic texts can be adduced,<sup>34</sup> creates the desired effect of completing the mirroring of the king’s words, which in the case of such conditional sentences is indeed only possible if one lets *protasis* and *apodosis* change places, and for this reason the use of this less common construction seems no real objection.

#### *Contacts with the Greek cultural sphere*

The existence of this literary procedure for writing the book of Daniel and other books of the Hebrew Bible can hardly be subject to doubt any more. This literary strategy may look highly unusual at first sight, which is doubtlessly the reason why it remained undetected throughout two millennia of intensive occupation with the form and contents of these books. It was, however, hardly unusual in the cultural background of the ancient Mediterranean, albeit in a different literary context. Especially various poetical epic works in Greek and Latin were connected through sophisticated techniques of allusion and intertextuality. In comparison with those works, however, it is remarkable that in the Hebrew Bible this technique was apparently used especially for writing historical works, rather than for complex poetical compositions of an epic nature,<sup>35</sup> once again stressing the fact that Hebrew prose narrative in many respects surprisingly takes the place of epic poems in

<sup>32</sup>Wesselius, ‘Language and Style’, *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>T.J. Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel and Greek Daniel: A Literary Comparison* (JSOTS, 198; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p. 149. His main argument, however, that *וְאִם* without a suffix does not serve as a copula elsewhere in Biblical Aramaic, is very weak in view of the limited amount of material which is available.

<sup>34</sup>Wesselius, ‘Language and Style’, p. 205 n. 11.

<sup>35</sup>See, for example, the contrasting treatment of the genres in Ronald S. Hendel, *The Epic of the Patriarch: The Jacob Cycle and the Narrative Traditions of*



other Mediterranean cultures. The elements which are alluded to are on the whole also different: in the case of the Greek and Latin poetic compositions mainly certain type-scenes and developments, within the differently structured prose texts of the Hebrew Bible certain episodes, often coinciding with present-day chapters, and a number of striking cases of discontinuity. For the Primary History itself the picture is mixed: on the one hand there was the division of the work in nine books in groups of one, five and three deriving from and alluding to the same division in the work of Herodotus, but on the level below that there is no precise division in discrete units, so that as characteristic anchors for allusion in the overall framework its author chose the genealogy of the main family in relation to the events of the Great Campaign in both works, and the course of causally connected cases of deception at the beginning of the work.<sup>36</sup>

But another question is more pressing for the time being. What is the reason why this technique was used simultaneously in Israel and in the world of Greek and Latin literature? Of course the answers which readily come to mind are parallel literary development, stimulus diffusion in the eastern Mediterranean or a pedigree for this technique which goes back very far into the past, from where it reached both the Greek and the Oriental world. But in the case of the Primary History it is apparent from the emulation of the structure of Herodotus' *Histories* that the contacts with the Greek world must have been much closer than we usually think, which makes a direct derivation of this literary strategy and a literary contact on a rather high level between the two cultures very likely. We can now observe that the rareness of references to the Greeks and Greek culture, and likewise to the Persians, are probably the result of limitations which the authors of the Hebrew Bible imposed on themselves, rather than on a supposed unawareness of them. This was not done in an attempt to obscure this background, for in that case the literary references to Greek literature would have been inappropriate, but apparently as part of a deliberate program to concentrate on the national patrimony only.

*Canaan and Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 42; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987), and about the relation between poetry and prose in general the articles in J.C. de Moor and W.G.E. Watson (eds.), *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose* (Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993).

<sup>36</sup>See my 'Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible', pp. 41-43, and *The Origin of the History of Israel*, pp. 35-41, and Fig. 2.1 on p. 61.

A closer look reveals that there is a literary contact between Daniel and Herodotus also. I noted a number of similarities in an earlier article already, but they did not seem to fit easily in the general literary picture of the agreements with Ezra and Genesis.<sup>37</sup> In this case, as with the relationship between the *Histories* and the biblical Primary History, an analogy with the relation between certain Greek and Latin poetic works proves highly illuminating, and appears to solve some of the earlier problems. There is an interesting parallel for this literary strategy of allusion to both a classic work and an earlier emulation of it in classical literature, which throws even more light on the literary nature and method of composition of the Book of Daniel. Damien Nelis has recently demonstrated systematically that Vergil not only based his *Aeneid* on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a connection which has been exhaustively discussed by G.N. Knauer,<sup>38</sup> and in a more incidental way on various other works, but that he also leaned very heavily on a hellenistic Greek work, the *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodos (3rd century BCE), which describes the journey of the ship *Argo* with Jason and his companions to fetch the Golden Fleece from Colchis on the Black Sea.<sup>39</sup>

It would seem that, just as Vergil recognized the literary dependence of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* on one side, and Apollonius' *Argonautica* on the other, and played with the similarities and differences for the composition of his own *Aeneid*, the author of Daniel recognized the allusions to Herodotus' *Histories* in the story of Joseph, noted the agreements and differences between the two, and made his own choices, which not rarely moved his account closer to the *Histories* again than the life of Joseph in Genesis 37–50 is.

In a famous passage in *Histories* I, 107-108, Herodotus tells his readers about the two dreams which the Median king Astyages had about the end of his reign. In the first dream he saw a stream of urine coming from the vagina of his daughter Mandane, which inundated first

<sup>37</sup>J.W. Wesselius, 'Analysis, Imitation and Emulation of Classical Texts in the Hebrew Bible', *Dutch Studies-NELL* 2 (1996), pp. 43-68.

<sup>38</sup>See especially G.N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer: Studien zur poetischen Technik Vergils mit Listen der Homerzitate in der Aeneis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1964, second ed. 1979).

<sup>39</sup>Damien Nelis, *Vergil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (ARCA: Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs, 39; Leeds: Francis Cairns, 2001). In general about these works and their relation: C.R. Beye, *Ancient Epic Poetry: Homer, Apollonius, Virgil* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993).

the entire city and then all of Asia. His dream-interpreters explained the dream, apparently as meaning that her offspring was to remove him from office. His reaction was to marry her off to a Persian named Cambyses. The Persians being regarded as of lower rank than the Medians, he apparently did this in order to make her children less likely to supplant him. But within a year he had a second dream, in which a vine grew from the vagina of his daughter (who was pregnant at the time), finally covering all of Asia. His dream-interpreters gave the same interpretation. Then Astyages decided to do away with his grandson right after his birth. But his scheme went wrong and the young Cyrus indeed dethroned him, but that story is of no direct importance for our purpose here.

Elsewhere I demonstrated that it is very likely that these two dreams are reflected in a peculiar way in the story of Joseph, namely as three pairs of dreams, of Joseph (Gen. 37), of the steward and the baker (Gen. 40), and of Pharaoh (Gen. 41).<sup>40</sup> The main differences with the situation in Genesis are that there are three pairs of dreams in Genesis and only one in the *Histories*, while there is a considerable amount of time between the two dreams in Herodotus, but hardly any in the three instances in Genesis, that both Astyages' dreams predict the end of the dreamer's reign rather than his coming to power (Gen. 37), restoration to dignity or execution (40) or a period of plenty and one of hunger for the dreamer's country (41). To our amazement some of these elements of Herodotus' account are restored in Daniel in spite of the linear correspondence with Genesis! Nebuchadnezzar's dreams in Daniel 2 and 4 both describe the end of his reign, albeit for the remote future in ch. 2 and only temporarily in 4, and there is an entire chapter, Daniel 3, between them. Because of the fusion of the pairs, through making the king into the dreamer and through changing the third resulting case, Daniel 5, into a prediction based on an enigmatic inscription, the nature of the dreams in the first half of the book of Daniel has moved very close to that of Astyages' dreams in the *Histories*. The actual contents of the two dreams are also much more similar in Herodotus and Daniel than in Genesis: in Daniel 2 the great stone which destroys the statue, having become a huge mountain, finally fills the entire earth, like Mandane's urine filling all Asia, in Daniel 4 the king is represented in the dream as an enormous tree, which can be seen until the ends of the earth, again very similar to the vine from

<sup>40</sup> *The Origin of the History of Israel*, pp. 12 and 59.

Mandane's vagina which covered all Asia. Additionally, we seem to find allusions in Daniel 4 to the tree and the birds of the dreams in Genesis 40.9-10 and 17, and to the wild beasts which are associated with Nebuchadnezzar in Jer. 27.6 and 28.14. Of course the situation in Daniel 2 and 4 is in many ways also very different from that in *Histories* I, 107-108, but the literary return to Herodotus in Daniel is so clear that this cannot be an argument against the allusion, just as the differences of the *Aeneid* from Homer, or from the *Argonautica*, or from both, cannot be an argument against literary dependence.

Something comparable is going on in Daniel 3 and 6, which we noted to be highly similar martyrs' stories. It can be noted that the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 seems to allude to Cyrus' intended burning of the defeated king Croesus of Lydia in *Histories* I, 86-88, related to him by marriage just as Tamar was connected to Judah through her marriage to two of his sons.<sup>41</sup> But otherwise the connection between the stories seems to lie only in the element of the somewhat unexpected punishment of burning, which finally is not carried out. But other elements of the story of Croesus' intended burning, such as the person pronouncing the verdict being a king, who spoke with the condemned person while the latter was already in the place of execution, his desire to stop the execution while not being able to do so, and the divine intervention to save the condemned person are absent from Genesis 38. These elements, however, return in Daniel 3 and 6. Darius 'the Mede', as noted above probably identical with king Cyrus, in Daniel 6 did not want to execute Daniel, but had to do so for legal reasons. He spoke with him while Daniel was already in the lions' den, and the divine intervention, of course, is found in both chapters. Again, it is not likely that these elements which draw Daniel and Herodotus together across the intervening literary episode of the Primary History, would be present accidentally only.

There are three other possible instances of allusion to the *Histories* in Daniel, not of the same weight as those discussed above, but still likely. Elsewhere I pointed out that the train of causally related cases of deception in the *Histories*, which underlie the great conflict between the Greeks and the Persians under Darius and Xerxes, start with the group of Median young men who, on the orders of the Median king Cyaxares (Astyages' father), are to learn the Scythian language and their way of archery (I, 73), which episode corresponds with the story

<sup>41</sup>*The Origin of the History of Israel*, 15 and 73-74.

of Jacob's and Rachel's deception of the aged Isaac in the Primary History, which sets in motion both a chain of deceptions and a train of causal relations which are at the beginning of the history of the nation of Israel and in particular of the tribe of Judah.<sup>42</sup> In Daniel, by contrast, the point of departure of the events in the book is the selection of the Israelite princes to learn 'the letters and language of the Chaldeans' (Dan. 1.4). Also in this case we appear to have an allusion to Herodotus reaching back across the direct example of the Primary History.

The final prediction before the end of the life of Joseph, Jacob's sayings about his sons in Genesis 49, can be noted to take the position of the prediction about Darius, which Cyrus sees in a dream in the night after he enters the country of the Massagetes where he dies in battle soon afterwards (I, 209). In the book of Daniel the final long prediction in chs. 10–12 appears to correspond with the place of Genesis 49 in the first place, but also may refer back to the *Histories*, especially since it is dated to the final year mentioned for Cyrus in the Book of Daniel, his third.

When the author of Daniel discarded the third 'double dream' (of Pharaoh in Genesis 41) in favour of an oracle announcing the taking of Babylon by 'Darius the Mede' (probably just another name for Cyrus, as noted above), he established another parallel with the *Histories*. On one level this regards the piece of information that Babylon was suddenly taken during a nightly banquet, on a more fundamental level the fact that the Mene Tekel inscription of Daniel 5 appears to give a personal detail of Darius in hidden form, namely his age of 62 at the time of his conquest of Babylon,<sup>43</sup> just as in Herodotus' account the oracle of Delphi gave an enigmatic prediction of the figure of Cyrus before his conquest of Lydia in *Histories* I, 55: 'When comes the day that a mule shall sit on the Median throne...'. It turns out that Cyrus is the one characterized as a 'mule' here, because as noted above he descends from a mixed Median-Persian marriage (I, 95).

There are additional instances of similarity between the book of Daniel and the description of Babylon in the first book of the *Histories*,

<sup>42</sup>See my 'De bedrogen bedrieger als oorsprong van het geschiedverhaal bij Herodotus en in de Bijbel' [Dutch], in: A. M. van Erp Taalman Kip & I. J. F. de Jong (eds.), *Schurken en schelmen. Cultuurhistorische verkenningen rond de Middellandse Zee* [Festschrift J. M. Bremer] (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), pp. 33-43, and *Origin of the History of Israel*, pp. 35-41.

<sup>43</sup>Galling, 'Die 62 Jahre'.

which may or may not represent cases of deliberate allusion, such as the huge golden statue in I, 183 and the story of Daniel 3, or the killing of unsuccessful dream-interpreters in I, 128 and Daniel 2, but these cannot carry much weight for our argument, as we are dealing with fairly common elements in those cases.

It is remarkable that the five instances where the author of Daniel apparently makes a part of his account closer to the *Histories* than the passage in Genesis serving as its origin are found in the right chronological order of the first book of the *Histories*. Of these five, the last three episodes (enigmatic reference to identity of king, king willing but unable to save opponent from execution, and prediction of future just before end of reign) deal with Cyrus in both works, the first two, which are connected with Cyaxares and Astyages in the *Histories* (young men who are to be instructed in another culture and two dreams about end of reign), have been transferred to king Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel.

#### *The Babylonian Exile and the Oriental kings*

This realization that we are basically dealing only with the kings Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus (probably *alias* Darius the Mede, as noted above, but in any case represented by this enigmatic figure) in the book of Daniel, apart from the transitional figure of Belshazzar, allows us to take a new look at the regularities pointed out first by A. Lenglet and recently resumed by J.P. Tanner.<sup>44</sup> As noted above, Lenglet demonstrated that Daniel 2–7 has a chiastic structure, with predictions about the further course of history in four parts in 2 and 7, martyrs' stories in 3 and 6 and stories about God's power over kings in 4 and 5, and rightly recognized that such chiastic structure is usually ordered around a central passage, which is thus given a very prominent place within an episode or a book. His proposal that the entire episode of the chs. 4–5 would constitute this centre, however, seems not very likely, because the centre would be almost as large, if not larger than, the chiastically placed parts on either side.<sup>45</sup> But if we reject this option, we are still faced by the question what is in the middle. My proposal is that Daniel 2–7 has a virtual centre between chs. 4 and 5,

<sup>44</sup>A. Lenglet, 'La structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7'; J.P. Tanner, 'The Literary Structure of the Book of Daniel', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (July – September 2003), pp. 269–82.

<sup>45</sup>Lenglet, 'La structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7', pp. 185–87.

namely the taking of Jerusalem, the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the Babylonian exile. This is somewhat less unexpected than it might look at first sight. Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus are the kings who begin and end the exile, respectively. Both are explicitly said to be in God's service, Nebuchadnezzar especially when he is called God's 'servant' in Jer. 27.6, Cyrus when he is even called 'anointed' of the Lord in Isa. 45.1. When we take a closer look, we see that in the book of Daniel both undergo a learning process about Israel's God which leads to their promulgating an edict about their allegiance to him, obliging their subjects to honour and respect this God, Nebuchadnezzar in ch. 4, which as noted above also tells the story of his madness inside the edict itself, and Cyrus/Darius in 6.27. The elements of this process are largely the structural elements which express the chiasmus noted by Lenglet, namely God's ability to save (chs. 3 and 6), his ability to explain riddles (2, 4 and 5) and his power to humiliate or exalt kings (4 and 5). In the case of Nebuchadnezzar this causes a climactic series of statements by the king through the chs. 2-4: though the recognition of Daniel and his companions starts already in 1.20, his statements about their God are found only in 2.47, 3.28-29 and 4.2-3 and 37; note that, as pointed out above, the entire ch. 4 is in the form of a royal edict. By contrast, Cyrus (I use the name instead of 'Darius' with the *caveat* expressed above) only gives praise to God in his edict of 6.26-28, but then the power of God to set up and depose kings and his ability to reveal secrets had been shown decisively at the end of the reign of his predecessor Belshazzar in ch. 5, and both already concerned the person and reign of Cyrus rather than of Belshazzar; note also the continuity of Daniel's career under Belshazzar and Cyrus in 5.29 and 6.3. Cyrus' acknowledgment of the God of Israel thus covers the events of ch. 5 also, though the exact wording of 6.26-28 refers to ch. 6 only.

It can also be noted that some crucial sentences in the edicts are nearly identical (corresponding parts have been underlined): 'King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you!<sup>2</sup>It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has wrought toward me.<sup>3</sup>How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation' (Dan. 3.31-33; RSV 4.1-3), and 'Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you!<sup>26</sup>I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for

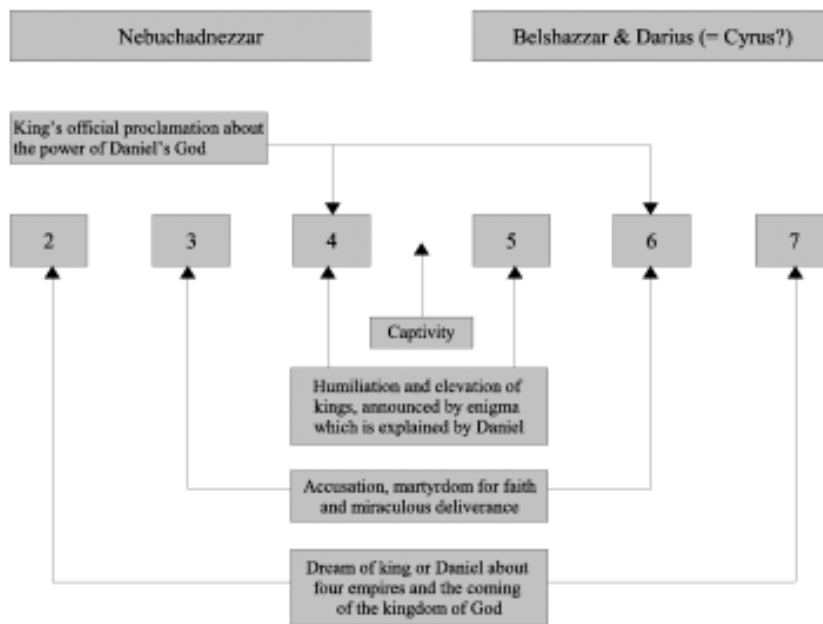


Figure 3: *The Aramaic Chapters 2–7 in Relation to the Oriental Kings and Their Edicts, the Captivity and the Main Subjects of the Chapters*

he is the living God, enduring for ever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.<sup>27</sup> He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions' (Dan. 6.25-27).

Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus are the two human actors who, in spite of their very different roles, execute God's plan with his people Israel in connection with the Exile: Nebuchadnezzar, God's 'servant', by destroying Jerusalem and the Temple and taking the people into captivity, Cyrus, his 'anointed', by allowing the exiles to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple there. The book of Daniel explains how they came to have these remarkable functions by telling its readers how through their experience with Daniel and his companions, observing their revealing of secrets, their being saved from the danger arising from their religious loyalty, and their predicting the exalting and deposing of kings, they became convinced of the power of Israel's God.



Both announce this change of heart in an edict to all their subjects. It is only natural that between these key figures marking the beginning and end of the Babylonian captivity the Exile itself is to be sought, though this traumatic event is only hinted at through the chiasmic structure of the ch. s surrounding its virtual presence (see Figure 3).

It is hardly accidental that exactly on the threshold of the post-exilic era, in the first year of 'Darius the Mede' (the above-mentioned proposed identity with Cyrus helps, but is not essential), Daniel ponders about the prediction of Jeremiah in Jer. 25.11 and 29.10, that seventy years would pass over the ruins of Jerusalem, and receives on the one hand the assurance that the captivity is at an end (Dan. 9.23-25), and on the other hand is informed that Jeremiah's prediction also maps the future course of world history (9.25-27). Once we see the importance of the captivity for the stories in Daniel 1-6, we realize that the story at the beginning of Daniel 9 is the hinge on which the entire book turns, which through its explanation of Jeremiah's prediction connects the episode of the exile, the centre of the Aramaic part of the book in chs. 2-7, and thus also the focus of the court stories in 2-6, with the course of world history as described in Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10-12, two complementary aspects of the book of Daniel which would otherwise have remained unconnected.

### *Conclusion*

Summarizing we can state that the book of Daniel may well be the most intertextually determined and complex one among the books of the Hebrew Bible. Its intricate narrative texture with its manifold allusions is in the centre of the force field of the works of the earlier Israelite literature and the contact with Greek culture. It fits the role of the kings of the great oriental empires in the history of Israel and in God's plans, only hinted at in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, in a great religious framework of world history, and explains how they arrived at fulfilling this role. In this sense there is no break between the stories in Daniel 1-6 and the visions in 7-12.

As is well known, the book is in a continual dialogue with most of the other books of the Hebrew Bible, and often quotes them directly or indirectly. We can now, moreover, add that its overall structure and many of its details are determined by the stories about two persons who exhibit a great likeness to the figure of Daniel, namely Joseph and Ezra. This congruence with two other compositions determines

the course of the various stories to a high degree, besides providing unity to a book which looks outwardly like a collection of ten different accounts of episodes of the life and predictions of Daniel; this character as a collection or dossier is reinforced by the variety in the names of the persons figuring in them. The book can thus be described as belonging to the literary genre of the 'linear literary dossier', or 'linear composed dossier': a book which looks like a collection of various pieces of literature, but was in reality composed as a whole and should be read as a whole in its present form.

Consequently, it is hardly surprising that the unity of the book is also confirmed by internal references and a number of common words, expressions and themes on the one hand, and by a common literary profile of a number of episodes on the other. At the same time, the author of Daniel used the passages of Herodotus which underlay certain passages in the story of Joseph as alternative and supplementary versions for vital episodes in his book. He chose certain linguistic forms in the Aramaic part of his book for literary rather than linguistic reasons, but still managed to give his Aramaic chapters a characteristic and natural linguistic look and feel.

The author of Daniel, past master in Hebrew and Aramaic language and literature, clearly belonged to the same Hellenized circle of intellectual Jewish readers and authors which had earlier produced the *Primary History* and more or less at the same time brought forth the book of Ezra-Nehemiah and the book of Tobit. The book of Daniel is not a collection of material from different periods and situations, but a coherent literary and religious composition in which the changes of language, of person and of style have a perfectly logical literary explanation.

*Appendix: ךַּל־קַבַּל דַּי . . . ךַּל־קַבַּל and related idioms in Biblical Aramaic*<sup>46</sup>

One of the most noticeable features of the dialect(s) in which the Aramaic parts of Ezra and Daniel have been written is the very frequent use of the compound preposition כַּל־קַבַּל, evidently composed of ךַּ, לְ and קַבַּל, which is always spelled as two words (with a *maqfep* between them) and vocalised as כַּל־קַבַּל.<sup>47</sup> While this compound is rarely attested in approximately contemporaneous documents outside of Biblical Aramaic,<sup>48</sup> it appears 20 times in Daniel 2–6 (not once in ch. 7) and three times in the Aramaic parts of Ezra. It is never used as an independent preposition in Biblical Aramaic, but we find it in two compounds, the adverb כַּל־קַבַּל דַּיָּהּ (seven times)<sup>49</sup> and the conjunction כַּל־קַבַּל דַּי (Ezra 4.14 and 7.14, 13 times in Daniel 2–6).

It has always been implicitly assumed that כַּל־קַבַּל דַּי connects the sentence which precedes it to the following sentence, and has a rather wide range of meaning: ‘as, because, while, though’. While the latter statement is undoubtedly correct, the former may be somewhat less evident than it would seem from the unanimity of the commentators about it. We shall discuss all the cases of כַּל־קַבַּל דַּי, and see that in

<sup>46</sup>The appendix of this article serves to elaborate one example for the statements in its main body that certain stylistic and linguistic features serve to connect the Aramaic chapters of Daniel, and to counterbalance (together with certain other common features) the evident discontinuities of the book. In order not to burden the article with a lot of secondary literature, I refrained from discussing every passage in detail. This appendix reiterates a part of my article ‘Language and Style in Biblical Aramaic’, with additions and corrections, and an update on the literary and linguistic consequences.

<sup>47</sup>The vocalization in one Genizah manuscript of the Palestinian Targum seems to be *k<sup>e</sup>loqbal* or *k<sup>e</sup>loqbal*; see the examples from Genesis 38.26 in the next note.

<sup>48</sup>The only instances seem to be Henoah 14, 4 and 7; Murabba‘at 72, 6; 4QAmram 1, 1 (partly restored); see the glossary in K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer...* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), for bibliographical details. Note that this fact is much more striking now that we have a relative wealth of material than formerly, when Biblical Aramaic constituted almost the only testimony for the Aramaic of this period. In the most reliable testimonies for the Palestinian Targum, the Genizah texts, this preposition is not very common either: in this sizeable corpus it appears apparently only in M. L. Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (2 vols.; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1986), pp. 88–89, Gen. 38.26, and 50–51, Gen. 30.38 (=P. Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens*, II (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1927; repr. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967), MS D, Gen. 38.26 [twice כַּל־קַבַּל] and MS E, Gen. 30.38 [כַּל־קַבַּל]).

<sup>49</sup>Dan. 2.12,24; 3.7–8,22; 6.10; Ezra 7.17.

most instances it is used in the same syntactic and stylistic situation, at the beginning of the second of three sentences which clearly belong together. The first sentence of the three is in itself quite sufficient for describing the actual events. Of the two sentences which have been added, the first is introduced by כָּל־קַבְלֵי דֵי, the second by וְ, the common word for 'and'. These two sentences seem to serve for describing the circumstances or for providing an elaboration of the description of the main act. The first additional sentence introduces a new point of view, whereas the last returns to the theme of the introductory sentence, in this way completing and concluding the elaboration. This return can either merely involve a logical connection, or be supplemented by an association between the two by means of the use of the same root. Daniel must say the dream in 4.15 because he is able to do so, and the lions do not hurt him (חבלוני) in 6.23 because he has done no harm (חבולה). When we study all the instances of כָּל־קַבְלֵי דֵי in Daniel 2–6 it appears that this formal pattern can be discerned in a majority of the instances.<sup>50</sup> In most instances the new interpretation which is proposed here can be demonstrated to be superior to the accepted one, in the others it is at least possible. We would have to assume that וְ is a *waw apodosis*. Such a *waw apodosis* frequently occurs in Biblical Hebrew,<sup>51</sup> and also a few times in earlier Aramaic.<sup>52</sup> We shall look at these passages in the order in which they are found in the Bible. In each case, I shall first give the Aramaic text and the translation as found in the RSV, and then discuss alternative interpretations (deliberately kept close to the wording in the RSV) for these passages.

Dan. 2.8-9:

מִן־יָצִיב יָדַע אָנָּה דֵי עֲדָנָא אַנְתּוֹן וּבְנִין כָּל־קַבְלֵי דֵי חֹזִיתוֹן דֵּי אֹדָא מִנִּי מִלְתָּא: 9 דֵּי  
הִן־חֲלָמָא לֹא תְהוֹדַעְנִי חֲדָה־הִיא דְתַכּוֹן וּמְלָה כְדַבְּהָ וּשְׁחִיתָה הוּמְנָתוֹן לְמֵאמְרֵי קְדָמִי  
עַד דֵּי עֲדָנָא יִשְׁתַּנָּא

RSV: 'I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is sure that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change.'

<sup>50</sup>Only in Dan. 2.45, 3.29, 5.12 and 6.11 we seem to find unequivocal instances of *kol q<sup>o</sup>bel di* merely connecting the two sentences which it is in between.

<sup>51</sup>P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), pp. 628-30; compare Muraoka's discussion of the use of this *waw* in various types of sentences.

<sup>52</sup>See the article by P. Grelot, 'Le waw d'apodose en araméen d'Égypte', *Semitica* 20 (1970), pp. 33-39.

Note the recurrence of the word עֵדָן, 'time'. It would seem that the king first merely states the fact that the Chaldeans are trying to gain time, then indicates that the reason for this attempt is the strictness of his command, and finally refines his accusation: they will tell him lies until circumstances change. It should be noted, however, that in vv. 5-6, as is evident from the Chaldeans' answer, the sanction was placed upon not telling the *interpretation* of the dream. To avoid this, merely gaining time before having to tell it is of little use (note that Daniel in verse 16 easily obtains a reprieve, whereas the Chaldeans do not even ask for it), but giving a preliminary, incorrect interpretation, which can be modified as circumstances change, certainly is. It is clear, therefore, that the translation runs much more smoothly if the sentence beginning with כָּל־קִבְּלֵי דֵי is taken with the last instead of with the first sentence:

'I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time. Because you have seen that the word from me is sure that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you, you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change.'

It may even be possible to suppose that the causal relation between the last two sentences is the other way round, which is certainly not excluded by the use of כָּל־קִבְּלֵי דֵי elsewhere in these chapters, and that the king announces this sanction on their not telling the dream because he supposes that they will tamper with the interpretation if they are told the dream first. Compare the use of the verb הוֹי, 'to see', also after כָּל־קִבְּלֵי דֵי, for describing something which is to be explained subsequently in Dan. 2.41-42 (see below) and the structure of the Chaldeans' answer, where the second sentence seems to be depending on the third also. This would give us a tentative translation of this passage as: 'I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time. For this reason you have seen that the word from me is sure that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you, because you had agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times would change.'

Dan. 2.10-11.

לא־אִיתִי אַנְשׁ עַל־יִבְשְׁתָּא דִּי מַלְתָּ מַלְכָא יוֹכַל לְהַחְוִיָּה כַּל־קִבְּלֵי דִּי כַּל־מַלְךְ רַב וְשְׁלִישֵׁי מַלְתָּ כַּדְנָה לֹא שְׂאֵל לְכַל־חֲרָשָׁם וְאַשְׁפָּ וְכַשְׁדִּי: 11 וּמַלְתָּא דִּי־מַלְכָּה שְׂאֵל יְקִירָה וְאַחֲרָן לֹא אִיתִי דִּי יַחֲנֵנָה קִדְּם מַלְכָּא לְהֵן אֱלֹהִין דִּי מַדְרַהּוֹן עַם־בְּשָׂרָא לֹא אִתְּוּהִי

RSV: 'There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand; for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. The thing that the king asks is difficult, and none can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.'

The first and the last sentences are obviously linked by means of the parallel expressions *לֹא אִישׁ*, 'there is not a man', and *וְאִחֲרָן לֹא אִישׁ... לְהֵן אֱלֹהִין*, 'and none... except the gods'. A connection between the sentence containing *דִּי כָל־קִבְלָהּ* and the preceding is very unlikely indeed; there is no reason why a king would not be able to ask something which is not possible. The connection with the following sentence results in a much more natural translation. Exactly because this demand is so difficult that no one is able to fulfill it, no king has ever thought it worthwhile even to ask this thing: 'There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand; to such a degree that no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean the thing that the king asks is difficult, and none can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.' Note that the Chaldeans' answer, as we observed earlier, thus echoes the king's speech in the preceding verses in a remarkable way: it exhibits the same literary structure, in which, apart from the peculiar use of *דִּי כָל־קִבְלָהּ*, the repetition of 'key words' at the beginning and end of each speech is notable. The king begins and ends with *עֵדֵן*, 'time', the Chaldeans with *לֹא אִישׁ*, 'there is no (one)'.

Dan. 2.40:

וּמְלֹכוֹ רְבִיעִיָּהּ תְּהוּא תְּקִיפָה כְּפְרוּזָא כְּל־קִבְלָהּ דִּי פְרוּזָא מְהַדֵּק וְחַשְׁלָא כְּלָא וְכְפְרוּזָא  
דִּי־מְרַעַע כְּל־אֲלִין תְּדַק וְתִרַע

RSV: 'And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things; and like iron which crushes, it shall break and crush all these.'

Even in the translation it is evident that the syntactic relation between the first two sentences is problematic; the second sentence merely elaborates the theme of the power and destructiveness of iron and can easily be connected with the last sentence. The first and third sentences both stress the enormous destructive power of the fourth kingdom, and the first sentence would have been sufficient in itself to express what was to be said about it. It seems much better to translate: 'And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron. Just as iron breaks to pieces and

shatters all things it shall, like iron which crushes, break and crush all these.'

Dan. 2.41-42:

ודי־חזיתה רגליא ואצבעתא מנהון חסף די־פחר ומנהון פרזל מלכו פליגה תהוה ומן־נצבתא די פרזלא להוא־בה כל־קבל די חזיתה פרזלא מערב בחסף טינא: ואצבעת רגליא מנהון פרזל ומנהון חסף מן־קצת מלכותא תהוה תקיפה ומנה תהוה תבירה

RSV: 'And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some of the firmness of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.'

Here the *waw* before the third sentence is lacking, but in other respects the situation is similar to the other passages which we are discussing. The same observations as with the preceding passage are valid here. Both the first and the third sentence are concerned with the fourth kingdom. The fact that the writer only elaborates in this way upon the iron kingdom and upon the kingdom of clay and iron certainly indicates his especial interest in these, more than in the preceding kingdoms. As in the preceding example, the seeming redundancy in this passage can be eliminated by the translation: 'And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some of the firmness of the iron shall be in it. Just as you saw iron mixed with the miry clay, and as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.'

Dan. 4.15 (vs. 18 in RSV):

ואנתה בל־טשאצר פשרא אמר כל־קבל די כל־חכימי מלכותי לא־יכלין פשרא להודעתני ואנתה כהל די רוח־אלהין קדישין בך

RSV: 'And you, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you'.

It is clear that the two sentences which contain forms of the verb for 'to be able' (יכל/כהל) are intimately connected, which was recognized in the RSV by the insertion of 'but' between them. I think we can solve this problem by assuming that קִלְקַבֵּל־דִי connects the two sentences following it, so that we may translate: 'And you, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation; while all the wise men of my kingdom are not

able to make known to me the interpretation you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you’.

Dan. 5.22-23:

ואנתה ברה בלשאצר לא השפלה לבבך כל־קבל די כל־דנה ידעת: 23 ועל  
מרא־שמיא התרוממת

RSV: ‘And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven;’

The parallelism between *לא השפלה לבבך*, ‘you have not humbled your heart’, and *התרוממת*, ‘you have lifted up yourself’, seems to be evident at first sight, but it must be said that the exact opposite of the first expression is rather *רם לבבה*, ‘his heart was lifted up’, which was said of king Nebuchadnezzar in verse 20, than *התרוממת*. Therefore, though it is not at once apparent whether the alternative translation is superior here, it certainly is rather likely. It would appear that the fact that Belshazzar has not humbled his heart is presented in direct opposition to the humility expressed by his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar, who after his former haughtiness ‘knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will’ (5.21): ‘But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart. Though you knew all this, you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven;’

Dan. 6.4:

אדין דניאל דנה הוא מתנצח על־סרכיא ואחשדרפניא כל־קבל די רוח יתירא בה  
ומלכא עשית להקמותה על־כל־מלכותא

RSV: ‘Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.’

Daniel’s success is illustrated and emphasized by his possibly being placed ‘over the whole kingdom’ in the third sentence, and by his success over the satraps and other presidents, who were said in verses 1-3 to have power over the entire kingdom, in the first. Here it is not at once evident whether the second sentence should be taken with the first or the third, and I propose the following alternative translation mainly because of the parallelism with the other instances of *כִּלְקַבְּל* . . . די. Note, however, that *רוח יתירא*, ‘excellent spirit’, is also mentioned as a reason for assigning Daniel to a high position in 5.12; this may be an indication that it should indeed be taken with the last sentence: ‘Then this Daniel distinguished himself above all the other presidents



and satraps. Because an excellent spirit was in him, the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.’

Dan. 6.5:

וכל־עלה ושחיתה לא־יכלין להשכחה כל־קבל די־מהימן הוא וכל־שלו ושחיתה לא  
השתכחה עלוהי

RSV: ‘but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.’

The first and third sentences are evidently parallel to each other. It may be felt to be slightly more appropriate to connect ‘faithfulness’ with the following sentence, in which we find *שלו*, ‘error’, instead of with the preceding, where *עלא*, ‘ground for complaint’, is not a good parallel, but otherwise it is not easy to decide with which sentence the middle sentence should be connected. The alternative translation makes indeed at least as good sense as the traditional one: ‘but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault. Because he was faithful, no error or fault was found in him.’

A comparable instance appears to be Dan. 6.23 (vs. 22 in the RSV):

אלהי שלח מלאכה וסגר פם אריותא ולא חבלוני כל־קבל די קדמוהי וכו השתכחה  
לי ואף קדמיך וקדמך מלכא חבולה לא עבדת

RSV: ‘My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong’.

Again the syntactical relations would seem to be not very clear if we assume this translation; especially the last sentence follows in a rather unexpected way, seemingly not connected with the preceding sentences, except for the use of the stem *הבל* in the first as well as in the third sentence. The third sentence is, however, much better integrated if we translate as: ‘My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not hurt me; just as I was found blameless before him I have also done no wrong before you, O king’.

The reason why this construction apparently escaped the attention of most readers may be that it is usually possible to connect the second sentence in such a construction with the first because of the rather wide range of meaning of *קִלְקַבֵּל* and because it is indeed usually closely related with it. The syndetic addition of a third sentence usually does not impede our ability to understand the passage as a whole, as we feel free to translate the word *ו*, ‘and’, which introduces this sentence, in various ways. We saw, in fact, that in some cases we are unable to

choose between assigning the sentence with  $\text{קִלְקַבְלֵי דִי}$  to the preceding or to the following sentence, and it is only the cumulative evidence concerning this construction  $\text{קִלְקַבְלֵי דִי}$  and its stylistic use in Daniel 2–6 which allows us to connect it with the following sentence with reasonable confidence.

Before continuing with a discussion of the background and function of this phenomenon, we shall look at some more or less close parallels in other Aramaic texts. As noted above, the construction  $\text{קִלְקַבְלֵי דִי}$  apparently appears also in Ezra 4.14  $\text{כען כל־קבל די־מלח היכלא מלחנא וערות}$  and  $\text{מלכא לא ארי־לנא למחזא על־דנה שלחנא והודענא למלכא}$ , which is usually, e.g. in the RSV, translated as ‘Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king’s dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king...’, but which could also be rendered as ‘Now because we eat the salt of the palace, it is not fitting for us to witness the king’s dishonor; therefore we send and inform the king...’. In this case we find the construction without the first sentence which always precedes it in Daniel. An interesting, though not a literal, parallel, with  $\text{אף... לקבל זי}$  instead of our  $\text{קִלְקַבְלֵי דִי}$  can be found in one of the Aramaic documents from Elephantine. In E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), text 9, 16–18 we find a passage which exhibits a great stylistic likeness to the Daniel passages which we studied above:

זנא ביחא זי תחומודי ומשחתה כתיבן ומלוהי כתיבן בספרא זנה אנה ענני יהבתה  
 ליהוישמע 17 ברתי במותי ברחמן לקבל זי סבלתני ואנה ימין סב לא כהל הוית  
 בידי וסבלתני אף אנה 18 יהבת לה במותי

This passage is probably to be translated as:

‘This house whose boundaries and measurements are written and whose words are written in this document I, Anani, have given Jehoisma my daughter gratis at my death. Because she supported me while I was old of days—unable (to use) my hands, yet she supported me—I, in turn, have given (it) to her at my death.’<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup>B. Porten followed my proposal in his *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 240. A comparable translation was already in his earlier *Jews of Elephantine and Arameans of Syene* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, Department of the History of the Jewish People, 1980), p. 61. Differently in his *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt...*, vol. 2: *Contracts* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, Department of the History of the Jewish People, 1989), pp. 86–89.

Note that the structural resemblance is very striking. The first sentence would have been sufficient by itself, but a second sentence indicating the reason for the gift is inserted, after which the scribe returns to the theme of the gift in the third.

In any case, it becomes evident that this idiom  $\text{קָל-קָבֵל דִּי . . .}$  on the one hand is an additional instance of the author of Daniel giving the elements from other books which he derived, or rather alluded to, extra emphasis: against one case in the Aramaic chapters of Ezra he used it nine times in his own book (four times in ch. 2, once each in 4 and 5, and three times in ch. 6). On the other hand we see that this linguistic feature, which our author assigned to a very specific, probably new literary function in his book, namely to slow down and evaluate the action at certain important places in the narrative, appears to connect the Aramaic chapters of Daniel, as against the considerable differences between them. In my 1988 article I interpreted this as meaning that the Aramaic chapters of the book belong closely together, and that they probably had a pre-existence of their own before being inserted into the present-day book of Daniel. It is now clear that their drawing the Aramaic chapters together is part of the larger picture of the balance of continuity and discontinuity within this unitary composition.