The Book of Daniel in Recent Research (Part 1)

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ABSTRACT

This is the first of two articles exploring recent research on the book of Daniel. The focus of Part 1 is the court tale narratives of Daniel 1–6, with particular attention to genre identification, sociological and ideological viewpoints, and textual and language issues. Other topics of interest are represented in the bibliography, which identifies important publications since 1993. Foundational works published prior to 1993 are also included. Historical-critical analysis of Daniel 1–6 has furthered understanding of important topics such as the nature of court tale literature and the context of conquest, exile and empire in the ancient Near East, and how those constructs affect the biblical writings. New explorations of Daniel 1–6 that focus on literary, multi-critical and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of this book suggest interesting answers to perennial debates over issues such as the language, genre and ideology of these court tales, and are a main focus of this survey article.

Part 2 will explore the apocalyptic material of Daniel 7–12, including discussion of topics such as the Son of Man and the nature of vision material in the Hebrew Bible.

Keywords: apocalyptic; Aramaic; court tales; Daniel 1–6; Hebrew.

Introduction

During the last two millennia, the stories and apocalyptic visions of the book of Daniel have enjoyed great popularity, even while engendering abundant controversy. Interpreters of Daniel meet a pastiche of genres, sociological and ideological viewpoints, and linguistic phenomena that frustrate attempts to discern a coherent hermeneutical strategy. The pub-

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lication of three major studies in 1993—the Hermeneia Commentary by Collins; the Papers of the 40th Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense (BETL), edited by Van der Woude; and *The Book of Daniel: An Annotated Bibliography*, by Thompson—provides a ready focal point for beginning an exploration of Daniel studies in recent scholarship. The only pre-1993 entries in the bibliography are major, seminal works, or works particularly relevant to issues discussed in this article. While the book of Daniel contains both stories and visions, this initial article focuses only on the narratives of the Masoretic Text of Daniel 1–6. Part 2 of this study will review scholarship concerning the visions of Daniel 7–12, the Greek versions of Daniel, and the Greek additions to Daniel.

This discussion first examines recent compendia and commentaries on the entire book, and serves as an introduction to both studies. The analysis then explores the following major interpretive issues concerning the narratives of Daniel: genre identification, sociological and ideological viewpoints, and textual and language issues. I have chosen these subjects because of the development of newer theories in each of these areas. Other issues of interest, such as those suggested in the subject headings of the Collins and Flint volumes (2001), include such topics as Daniel in its Near Eastern milieu, Daniel and Qumran studies, and the theology of Daniel. Readers interested in these topics can consult the bibliography.

Compendia

The Book of Daniel: An Annotated Bibliography by Thompson (1993) provides a helpful starting point for studying the history of the book's interpretation. The multiple indices of authors, subjects, and scriptural references offer the researcher guidance for navigating the nearly 2,000 entries in Thompson's volume. Van der Woude (ed. 1993) organizes thirty conference submissions under the following headings: bilingualism and Greek versions; literary-critical, form-critical and tradition-critical problems; literary and sociological approaches; general historical and religio-historical problems; and other studies. In two volumes, editors Collins and Flint (2001) present thirty-two wide-ranging essays divided into eight sections: general topics; Daniel in its Near Eastern milieu; issues in interpretation of specific passages; social setting; literary context, including Qumran; reception in Judaism and Christianity; textual history; and the theology of Daniel. Introductory essays by Collins (2001) and Knibb (2001) survey the topics covered in these volumes. Mills (2002) supplies a bibliography of twentieth-century research that is important for understanding the text and background

of Daniel. Over 1,000 entries are arranged in categories of scriptural citations, subject citations, and commentaries. Nel (2005) analyses the issues that determine the agenda of present-day research, and discusses the directions future research may take. Topics examined are: the text of the book as rendered in different traditions; the genres in the book; the different *Sitzen im Leben*; the history of interpretation of Daniel; and theological and ethical issues raised in the book. These compendia are especially useful for helping acquaint readers who are unfamiliar with the areas of continuing research in Daniel. Each article directly related to Daniel 1–6 in the Van der Woude and the Collins and Flint volumes is listed in the bibliography. Many of them are noted in the following essay.

Commentaries

The surprising number of full-length commentaries on Daniel published since 1993 testifies to the ongoing interest in this book. Each commentary has its particular point of focus. The Hermeneia volume by Collins (1993) provides a comprehensive survey of critical and historical issues regarding text, language, composition, genre, social setting and the history of interpretation. The narratives in Daniel 1–6 already had an extensive oral and written prehistory when they were gathered and edited in the second century BCE, and were combined with the visions of Daniel 7–12. Péter-Contesse and Ellington (1993) provide a handbook of exegetical information that indicates possible solutions for translational problems related to language or culture in the book of Daniel. Lederach (1994) emphasizes the pervasive theme of resistance to evil in the book of Daniel, and explores the text in its biblical context, and in the life of the church. Miller (1994) presents his argument for a sixth-century BCE date for the entire book of Daniel. Smith-Christopher (1996) studies Daniel through the lens of sociological and postcolonial methods, and postulates a reading of Daniel as resistance literature. Di Lella's commentary (1997) combines consideration of common historical-critical and literary issues with a concern for the spiritual and moral significance of the book in the modern world, without reference to a predictive prophetic framework. Berrigan (1998) considers the timeless conflict of the human conscience and the struggle against both heavenly and earthly ideologies and powers. He particularly emphasizes the resistance message of the book and its significance for today's world. Newsom (1998) comments on the presence and absence of women in the book of Daniel, and highlights issues that are relevant to a feminist analysis of the text.

Bauer (1996) and Redditt (1999) each explore the redactional development of Daniel as a series of editions prior to and during the time of persecution under Antiochus IV. Redditt also provides brief theological remarks for each chapter, after extensive exegetical analysis. Buchanan (1999) describes the Daniel stories and visions as midrashic dramas of redemption that celebrate the Hasmonean victory over the Seleucids as the fulfillment of promises to the Jews. They are not prophecies portending the impending end of the world. His work attends especially to textual and philological issues. Gowan (2001) offers succinct literary, exegetical, theological and ethical analyses of each chapter of Daniel, focusing on the questions 'How long?' and 'Who's in charge here?' This volume provides excellent readable summaries of the major interpretive issues of the book. Lucas (2002) maintains that there are plausible arguments for either a sixth or a second century BCE date for the book, and that this issue does not materially affect a belief in divine inspiration or authority of the book. Seow (2003a) reads Daniel with a focus not only on its theological message for the original audience, but also on the relevance of that message for contemporary communities of faith. Exegetical matters are explored in the context of theological analysis. Lacocque (2004) holds that Daniel is an engaged document that is neither abstract nor speculative, but rather confronts the real life issues of persecution, suffering and evil that so many face in today's world. Finally, Koch (2005) has compiled several fascicles of his careful study of the book of Daniel into one volume that covers Daniel 1.1–4.34. This exhaustive commentary combines analyses of text-linguistics, form-criticism, tradition history, theology, and history of interpretation, into a masterful summary of the major interpretive issues of this portion of Daniel.

From this brief survey, which only cursorily describes a major theme of each of these commentaries, it is apparent that interest in, and debate concerning, the book of Daniel continues unabated, as it has through the centuries.

Genre Identification and Literary Issues

The book of Daniel resists facile classification, for it contains two literary forms (narratives and visions), two languages (Hebrew and Aramaic), and two viewpoints concerning how one should live under foreign domination (collaboration with existing rulers or hostility toward such rule). The first two dichotomies of literary form and language are easily observable but difficult to explain. Generically, the book of Daniel is often identified as the best example of apocalyptic literature found in the Hebrew Bible, because

of the vivid visions of the second half of the book. The argument is that apocalyptic literature usually has a narrative frame, and Daniel 1–6 provides the introductory platform for the otherworldly visions (Gane 1997; Nel 2001b). Although there is little doubt that Daniel 7–12 exhibits the characteristics of apocalyptic in both form and content, the narratives of Daniel 1–6 have always resided somewhat uncomfortably within that designation. As a result, Daniel scholars debate endlessly the reasons for these differences and how to interpret these changes in genre.

The confusion over genre is not surprising. Lacocque (1993: 335) notes that a plethora of diverse elements, forms, and interests are contained within the book. He lists the most notable characteristics as popular lore, mythological imagery, mantic wisdom, prophetic imagination, scribalism, pietism, apocalyptic eschatology, dualism, determinism, pacifism, divine secrets and priestly interests. These characteristics may suggest any number of genres and social settings. Collins (1993: 38-52) provides the most extensive summary of the various options. The most important, with representative examples, include: comedy (Good 1984; Murphy 2001: 194-99); court legend (Collins 1993: 44-45); court tale (Humphreys 1973; Patterson 1993); didactic or historical wisdom tale (Gowan 2001: 24-29); folktale, particularly the hero story (Niditch 1993: 10); novelistic (Wills 2002: 152); short story (Fewell 1988: 10); story-collection (Holm 2005); composed dossier (Wesselius 2001), and wisdom literature (Nel 2001b, 2002a). Finally, there are those who have simply abandoned all efforts to determine a genre designation (Meadowcroft 1995: 28). Since each encompasses a major characteristic of the narratives, the three most common genre classifications of Daniel 1–6 are the court tale, folklore, and wisdom tale.

The existence of so many designations for these stories is an indication of the genre confusion that afflicts Daniel studies. The sources of the confusion are many. First, the definition of each genre classification often differs among scholars. Second, some of these genre designations are actually sub-genres of a larger genre designation. Third, some scholars differ as to which genre a particular story fits. Fourth, in giving these stories their genre designations, each scholar tends to emphasize a particular aspect of these stories and to highlight that specific feature as the most important, while other characteristics are diminished. Fifth, many analyses tend to blend attributes of multiple genres without clear delineation of that fact. For example, the royal court setting of these stories has driven the court tale designation, but scholarly analysis of Daniel 1–6 as court tales often proceeds as if they were wisdom tales, whether or not that connection is identified. Sixth, some of the designations just do not address the fundamental

nature of the stories. For example, the designation of the texts as a story collection offers some insight into the redactional questions of Daniel 1–6, but gives little guidance as to the nature of the stories in this collection.

Each of these genre classifications, while having a few or even many meritorious supporting arguments, remains less than adequate, and therefore provisional, because no classification satisfactorily solves fundamental interpretive issues, such as the social conditions from which the book arose. Additionally, they leave a number of unresolved literary problems in their wake, such as the presence of the two languages in the book, and the lack of a plausible explanation of how the two disparate sections of the book relate to one another. Several recent studies have moved the discussion of genre in new directions. Goldingay (1993) and Van Deventer (2003) note that literary analyses of Daniel suggest possible synchronic avenues of research to complement continuing diachronic questions. Smith-Christopher (1996) presents a sociological analysis of Daniel that identifies the book as resistance literature, and provides a thematic link between the stories (chs 1–6) and the visions (7–12) that unifies the overall message. The move from identifying the tales of Daniel as Success in the Court literature (Humphreys 1973)—that is, as a kind of primer on how to be religiously faithful and still enjoy worldly success in the court of the foreign king—to a consideration of this material as resistance literature, opens the way for a reconsideration of the genre of this material. This shift provides a more adequate thematic link between the stories and the obviously more negative view of kings and empires portrayed by the vision section of Daniel. Smith-Christopher's later article (2001) examines how prayers and dreams are politicized in the stories to represent the yearnings of the dispossessed, as well as the true nature of power in control of the Hebrew deity.

Recent studies further this understanding of Daniel 1–6 as resistance literature. Brenner (2001b) identifies the literary motif of the obtuse foreign ruler and how it functions as a humorous and satirical device to ridicule the king. In his postcolonial analysis, Chia (1997) explores how, in Daniel 1, the refusal to accept new Babylonian names, or eat the royal food of the king's training table, exemplifies resistance to the imperial claims of power and control. Henze (1999a, 2001b) challenges the common assumptions about the origin and function of the court tales, and identifies conflict as the major theme of the narratives. Sweeney (2001) demonstrates that the political and religious goal to overthrow the Seleucid domination of Antiochus IV over Israel permeates the entire book. Fewell (2003: 117-30) argues that Daniel may be the foremost book of resistance against domination in the Bible. Polaski (2004) explores how writing in Daniel 5 and 6 is used both as the

key to proper exercise of imperial authority, and to subvert and thwart the king's authority. Kirkpatrick (2005: 38) reads Daniel 1–6 through the lens of social-scientific models, and articulates an understanding of these stories as resistance to the perceived threat of the loss of Judean identity and heritage in the face of an overwhelming and oppressive Hellenistic domination. Resistance is expressed by means of a sustained comparison of the honor-laden relationship of patronage between the Judean people and their God, and the imposed relationship of their foreign oppressors. The comparison favors the Judean tradition, and thus sounds a call for the refusal and rejection of imperial claims. Valeta (2007a) undertakes a literary analysis of the stories, and identifies their genre as pre-novelistic Menippean satire, which combines the use of varied historical periods, voices, languages, and/or genres in a single literary creation in order to challenge a threatening orthodoxy (Weinbrot 2005; Griffin 1994; Relihan 1993). Daniel 1–6 is not a series of court tales that encourage accommodation to and advancement in a foreign court. Instead, Daniel 1–6 is a type of pre-novelistic Menippean satire, the goal of which is resistance to empire. The method is derived from Mikhail Bakhtin's understanding of genre, the pre-novelistic impulse, and Menippean satire (see Green 2000; Vice 1998). Daniel 1–6 brings older traditions, several sub-genres, two languages, and countless comic elements into a unified satirical piece of resistance literature that is consistent with the social world of the book and the attitude of judgment toward Antiochus IV found in Daniel 7–12. Wills (1995: 5), Davies (1998: 144), and Gruen (2002: 137) all recognize the popular, humorous and creative impulses at the heart of Jewish novelistic writings and rewritings. These literary analyses, as well as the appreciation of the Daniel stories as a type of resistance literature, continue to be a promising avenue for further research into the nature and purpose of these entertaining narratives.

Social Setting and Ideology

Many genre analyses suggest that the Daniel narratives portray a positive attitude toward imperial rule, and argue that these stories embody a primer for living successfully in the Diaspora. Humphreys's designation (1973) of the narratives of Daniel 1–6 as 'Success in the Court' or 'Lifestyle in the Diaspora' tales has convinced many scholars that these stories describe the possibility of maintaining faithful religious observance along with successful participation in the ruling apparatus of the king's court. The result is the opinion that the overall political stance of these stories is one of loyalty, optimism, and accommodation toward the ruling powers. Thus,

Collins (1993: 51) argues that, while the tales present a lifestyle that is not necessarily meant as a model for direct imitation, they nevertheless affirm the possibility of participating fully in the life of a foreign nation. Wills (1995: 47) notes that it is surprising that King Nebuchadnezzar is not condemned outright. There is tension in serving the Babylonian kings, but the loyal Jewish courtier under God's protection can expect rewards for meritorious service. Donaldson (2006) sees the sympathetic portrayal of kings in Jewish narrative as a rhetorical device that highlights the superiority of the Hebrew deity. Some commentators emphasize the skill of Daniel and his friends in living under dangerous conditions, and the importance of faithful obedience to God as a condition of success with its attendant rewards. Daniel and his companions are understood as faithful Jews and their piety is an essential part of what makes them heroes of these stories. Redditt (1999: 48) underscores the importance of faithfulness as the path of success despite the temptation to assume that religious compromise may be the prudent strategy. Ideally, success is possible without compromise, but religious commitment must always take precedence. Seow (2003a: 10) notes that faithfulness amid trials is not only possible but necessary. Daniel and his companions are understood as faithful Jews and their piety is an essential part of what makes them heroes of these stories. This interpretation underscores the importance of the themes of faithfulness and success in numerous interpretations of Daniel 1–6.

A number of theories treating the social world of Daniel analyse the primary concerns of the narratives, and use these to focus on the configuration of scribal, educated, and upper-class values, presented in these narratives. On the surface, the book itself gives evidence that it reflects such matters. The narratives of Daniel 1–6 are set in the king's court, and the stories appear to reflect the concerns of Jewish courtiers striving for high political positions while remaining religiously faithful. Redditt (1998) exemplifies the position that the references to the wise ones (*maskilîm*—משכלים) in Daniel 11 are reflective of the circles that produced this literature, particularly in cultic and wisdom contexts. Davies (1993) suggests that three symbols define Daniel's social world: the book, the court, and the secret. In the book of Daniel, everything significant is done in writing, a symbol of political authority and power. Thus, the authors of the book of Daniel are a deprived elite, and the secret symbolism in Daniel functions to deny the apparent reality of events. Knibb (1993) supports the view that manticism was the matrix for the emergence of apocalyptic literature. The authors of the book of Daniel belonged to a scribal class, but the book does not offer enough indications to determine whether they belonged to a particular religious or

political party. Albertz (2001) argues that the Aramaic portion of Daniel has as its social setting the late third-century BCE, while the Hebrew portions originated among the Hasidim of second-century Judea. The Hasidim were pious scribes located socially between the aristocratic/priestly establishment and the lower class. The Hasidim were split into at least two factions on the question of whether the Maccabean rebellion was theologically justifiable. Beyerle (2001) finds that the book envisions a radical, utopian replacement of the existing social system. Within the apocalyptic visionary context of Daniel, this replacement includes the hope for salvation. The most probable circle of origin for Daniel is, therefore, the *maskilîm*.

Grabbe (2001) places the social location of the book's author in the Greek period. The author was an educated figure who had access to Hellenistic books, and probably was an aristocrat, perhaps even a priest. His book quickly established itself as an important work, and was immediately read for clues concerning the immediate future, thus setting up its trajectory at the hands of later Jewish and Christian interpreters. Davies (2001) investigates the identity of the *maskilîm* mentioned in Dan. 12.3, on the assumption that they are the scribal school responsible for the production of the present form of Daniel. He concludes that the *maskilîm* had their roots in the Diaspora, identified as a disenfranchised elite who were likely recruits for sectarian movements opposed to the Hasmoneans, and were potential allies of the Zadokite priests. These stories were not for the masses, but rather originated in and reflect the concerns of upper-class persons.

It is also important, however, to consider the evidence of the popular nature of the stories in determining the social provenance of the book. If the book does, indeed, have a long compositional history, as many scholars argue, this could be one indicator of the book's popularity (Collins 1993: 35-38). The best measure of its popularity probably is the many extant versions available to us (Henze 1999b: 19-23; Koch 2001; Ulrich 2001: 581-82). However, the training manual or elite view of the social setting of Daniel alone does not justify the book's vast popularity, and alternative explanations are possible. The setting of the tales at the foreign court does not necessarily indicate that the stories function only, or even primarily, in court circles. The tales are not simply a factual account of the details of life at court, but instead contain exaggerations of, for example, excessive royal rage (Dan. 1.10; 2.5; 3.19), resplendent dinner parties for a thousand nobles (Dan. 5.1), and seemingly effusive praise, and supposed conversions, of the foreign king to the Hebrew faith (Dan. 3.28-30).

Henze (2001b: 16-17) notes that such exaggerations are not likely to originate in circles well acquainted with court values. It is just as likely

that such extravagant descriptions are wishful projections of the disenfranchised. Thus, it is possible that the stories are not created by well-placed Jews in exile, but instead reflect the imaginings of those well below the social circles of the court (Charlesworth 1998). The characters of the stories of Daniel are exaggerated portraits that serve the purposes of the literary genre of the court tale. The Jews are exceedingly pious, eloquent, and wise, while the monarch is somewhat of a dolt, and his advisors are cunning and malevolent. The tales offer hope to the Jews in the Diaspora by presenting types of characters who personify the national hopes of the exiled Jews (virtuous heroes), and by creating fantastic situations with overblown characters that serve the satirical resistance message of the tales.

A hallmark of traditional form criticism is that once the major forms of a given piece of literature are correctly identified, it is then possible to suggest the genre of the piece and the life situations, or the *Sitz im Leben*, where those forms and that genre may have originated. A common assumption of much traditional biblical social world research is that the text under study is a reliable indicator and conveyor of information concerning the interests and provenance of the creators of that text. The recognition of the wisdom elements, folklore structures, and the court setting of Daniel 1–6 yields many valuable insights concerning these narratives. Nonetheless, questions still remain. Davies (2001: 248-50) notes that historical concerns over the provenance of the Daniel materials in prophetic, wisdom, or apocalyptic circles have diminished as the possible social location of these 'movements' has been problematized by scholars such as Wilson (1981) and Cook (1995). Hence, the adequacy of a direct correspondence between the social setting of the text in the book of Daniel and the real social world of the story has become a serious issue for discussion.

Davies (1993: 347) reviews several suggestions for the social provenance of the Daniel material, and demonstrates that there is no consensus. He concludes that it is simply not possible to know precisely where these texts originated. This tendency to sift out the nuggets of sociological gold from the stream of the text has been replaced by what Davies characterizes, in a later article, as a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (2001: 247) in order to discern the underlying ideological interests of the text. Valeta (2005) argues that the imaginative use of humor and satire in these stories reflects a creative manipulation of the social reality of life in the royal court for the purpose of resisting king and empire, thereby crafting a thematic link with the judgmental visions of Dan. 7–12. Resistance to empire, rather than social and political advancement, is the true purpose of these narratives, and opens the door for the recognition of a more popular social setting for

the genesis of these tales. Continuing research into the social setting of these stories promises to be an ongoing area of fruitful debate.

Textual and Linguistic Issues

The presence of Aramaic in the Masoretic text of Daniel is undoubtedly one of the most puzzling aspects of this book. As noted below, scholars wrestle particularly with the fact that the language division crosses the genre boundaries of stories and apocalypse. Daniel 1.1–2.4a is in Hebrew; Dan. 2.4b–7.28 is in Aramaic; and Daniel 8–12 is once again in Hebrew. There are four primary theories that attempt to explain the bilingualism in Daniel. They are: (1) a single author composed the book in two languages; (2) the entire book was composed originally in Hebrew, with subsequent partial translation into Aramaic; (3) the entire book was composed in Aramaic, with subsequent partial translation into Hebrew; and (4) older Aramaic material was redacted into a work being composed in Hebrew. The best linguistic tool to explore these issues is Koch and Rösel's volume (2000), which provides a handy synopsis of textual and linguistic issues in the book of Daniel. It is arranged as follows, from left to right: on the left-hand page,>column 1, the MT; >column 2, the Syriac printed in Aramaic block letters with Hebrew vowel points; >column 3, the so-called Theodotion-Daniel; and, on the right-hand page, >column 4, LXX-Daniel; and, >column 5, the Vulgate. Then, at the foot of the page(s), appears the apparatus for individual lines of the texts above.

The arguments that Daniel was first composed entirely in Hebrew or Aramaic, and subsequently partially translated, have found few adherents. The other two positions, that a single author intentionally composed a bilingual work, or incorporated older Aramaic material into a Hebrew document, are considered more plausible (see Collins 1993: 12-13 for a summary of these two positions). J. Miller (1991) argues that the bilingual book of Daniel was redacted at one time from two independent documents. Since Daniel 2 existed in both documents, the author conflated the sources and primarily retained the Aramaic version. Collins (1993) and Koch (2005) best represent the position that Daniel 1 was originally composed in Aramaic, and subsequently translated into Hebrew in order to provide a Hebrew frame for the Aramaic narratives, citing the presence of Aramaisms in the Hebrew as evidence of translation. Thus, the Hebrew portions of the book constitute an *inclusio* for the entire book. Van der Woude (1993) suggests that a version of Daniel 1–7 existed in Aramaic, and that, with the addition of Daniel 8–12 in Hebrew, Dan. 1.1–2.4a was translated into

Hebrew to serve as an appropriate introduction to the book. Nel (2004a) explores rabbinic discussions concerning the question of the change in language, and observes that the use of two languages may have something to do with the process whereby the Daniel tradition was handed down to the second-century BCE writer/redactor of the book.

New synchronic narrative and social analyses further the case of intentionality for the presence of the two languages. The recognition of the vibrancy and popularity of these stories allows for a more dynamic view of the development of the Daniel traditions. It is interesting to note that all of the approaches mentioned above recognize the Aramaic portion of the book as a unified literary creation. Many modern scholars are working on this thesis. Tanner (2003) builds upon the work of Lenglet (1972), and demonstrates that the concentric chiastic arrangement of the Aramaic stories is a unified creation pertaining to the Gentile nations in their relationship to Israel's exile, while the Hebrew visions emphasize the motif of suffering at the hands of Antiochus IV. Van Deventer (2003) employs a structural perspective to posit that the language changes are used to identify particularly accentuated sections within the book. He later suggests (2005b: 103) that based upon corpus-based translation studies, Daniel 1 (Hebrew) and Daniel 7 (Aramaic) are not translated texts, but original compositions. Wesselius (2001) argues that the books of Daniel and Ezra contain parallel structures, so that both contain five Aramaic sections at the end of the first part of the book while the second part in each begins with one Aramaic section. In a subsequent study (2005), he argues that Daniel may well be the most intertextually determined and complex book in the Hebrew Bible, and that the Aramiac sections are consciously chosen by the author for literary reasons.

Even though all these proposed unitary solutions are possible and plausible, none of them has garnered strong support. Wesselius (2001: 292) argues that the complexity of various redactional theories, such as the ones described above, with their intricate translation scenarios, makes them somewhat disingenuous. He suggests that a synchronic approach, which recognizes the book of Daniel as a well-composed literary unit, yields better results. Redditt (1999: 18-19) also contends that it is difficult to imagine reasons why an author or editor would translate only part of a book. Several studies suggest fruitful avenues of research and reflection upon alternative literary arguments for the presence of the two languages. Sérandour (2000) argues that Hebrew represents a local and sacred idiom, while Aramaic signifies the official international and political language of profane use. Thus, in Daniel 2.4b, when the king's servants begin to speak, they naturally speak

in Aramaic, representing the official language of the royal court. The text simply reflects this expected state of affairs, and lends authenticity to the account. Rouillard-Bonraisin (1996) suggests that the language division is a function of openness and hiddenness. Her argument is that, over time, Aramaic became the more commonly spoken language, while Hebrew became more progressively a language of the elite. The Aramaic stories, recounting the distant past, are retained in that language because they are popular. The apocalyptic visions are written in Hebrew, because they deal with currently sensitive political realities. Arnold (1996) contends that the author uses Hebrew and Aramaic intentionally, in order to express differing ideological perspectives. The two languages are utilized as rhetorical devices to express the narrator's shifting point of view, which plays a significant compositional role in Daniel. He notes that, in Daniel 1, the author's point of view is evident on two levels. First, the author is internal to the narrative, as revealed by the consistent use of the Hebrew names for Daniel's friends throughout Daniel 1. Second, the author's assessment of Daniel's determination to resist the royal diet in v. 8, and the report of God's blessings on the Hebrew heroes in v. 17, indicate that the chapter's ideological point of view is clearly oriented toward Daniel and his friends. Thus, the author's internal position, both phraseologically and ideologically, is consonant with the use of Hebrew in the opening chapter of this bilingual document. The point of view clearly shifts, however, in Daniel 2. First, while Daniel 1 opens with a Judean date formula, Daniel 2 begins with a Neo-Babylonian one. Second, the narrator is moving toward an external viewpoint, manifested in part by the use of actual rather than reported speech. Daniel 2.4b begins with the words of the courtiers of Nebuchadnezzar, who speak flattering words about the king, even as they try to hide their inability to meet his requests. When the king's servants begin to speak, it appears that they naturally speak in Aramaic, the official language of the court, and the text is simply reflecting this expected state of affairs. The switch to Aramaic in verse 2.4b confirms the shift of the narrator's point of view to the external. The use of two languages lends authenticity to the account, and contributes to the literary artistry in the composition of these court tales. The use of both Hebrew and Aramaic, as well as the smattering of Greek, is intentional in the book of Daniel, and serves both artistic and ideological purposes.

Valeta (2007b) utilizes the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, who argues that every pre-novelistic literary creation has the attribute of heteroglossia, or the presence of multiple conflicting voices and/or languages in a text. This is typically indicated by the presence of different ideological voices in the text, and is occasionally made obvious by the presence of two different

sociological or even national languages. The use of several languages is therefore most likely a purposeful rhetorical and literary strategy in the formation of this narrative, contributing to the heteroglossic ideological conflicts present in these stories. This creative use of language is also reflected by the presence of extensive wordplay in the court tales of Daniel, as reflected in the following studies: Arnold (1993, 2000); Brensinger (2002); Deist (1997); Gunn and Fewell (1993); Meadowcroft (1995); Paul (1993); Wolters (1991, 1992).

Language is a powerful and ubiquitous marker of identity in all cultures, both ancient and modern. The exploration of the ideological significance of the use of different languages is a promising field of research for our appreciation of the Daniel narratives.

Conclusion

Historical-critical analyses of the court tales of Daniel have uncovered abundant riches and deepened our understanding of these stories in countless ways. The work of scholars such as Collins and Koch identifies fascinating issues and conundrums that are part of a complex work, such as the book of Daniel, and provides a sure foundation for newer explorations of Daniel that focus on literary, multi-critical, and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of this book. The future challenge for Daniel studies will be the ability of the participants in the discussion to listen to and appreciate the insights that each brings to the conversation, so that our appreciation of the book of Daniel as both a fascinating historical document and a text that continues to inspire living communities is held in creative tension.

This first of two articles explores the major interpretive issues concerning the court tales of Daniel 1–6. A future article will consider the apocalyptic section of Daniel 7–12, as well as the additions to the book of Daniel, and will identify future avenues for continuing research.

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