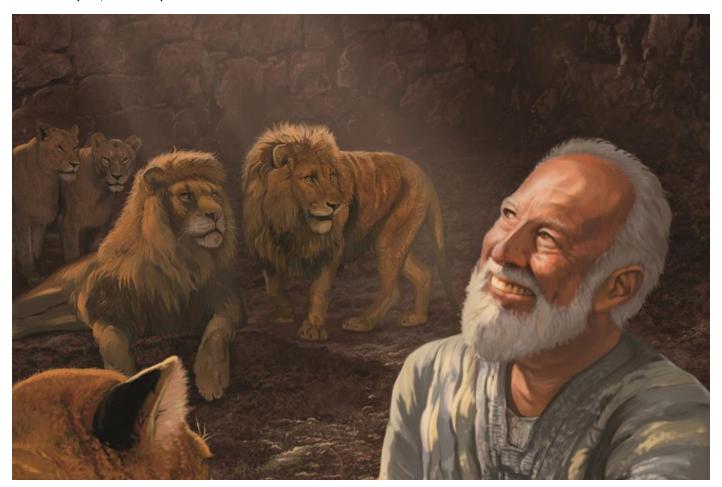# The Authenticity of the Book of Daniel: A Survey of the Evidence

- July 14, 2021 – by Dr. Jonathan McLatchie

The book of Daniel purports to have been written in the sixth century B.C. and it concerns the prophetic ministry of Daniel the prophet, who was taken into Babylonian captivity along with his fellow Hebrews. The book of Daniel contains many detailed and specific predictive prophecies concerning the course of world history, and this has prompted many higher critical scholars to date Daniel to the second century B.C., during the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid emperor Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The first to propose that the prophecy of Daniel is *ex eventu* (after the event) was the philosopher Porphyry (~234-305 A.D.). None of Porphyry's works survive, however, and his critique of Daniel is known to us only through Jerome (~342-420) who interacts with Porphyry's critiques in his commentary on Daniel. According to Jerome, Porphyry denied "that it was composed by the person to whom it is ascribed in its title, but rather by some individual living in Judaea at the time of the Antiochus who was surnamed Epiphanes" and asserted that "'Daniel' did not foretell the future so much as he related the past, and lastly that whatever he spoke of up till the time of Antiochus contained authentic history, whereas anything he may have conjectured beyond that point was false, inasmuch as he would not have foreknown the future". [1] Following Porphyry's critiques of Daniel, the authenticity of the book went unchallenged through the seventh century, when Uriel da Costa attributed the book to the sect of the Pharisees in view of the book's emphasis on the resurrection. [2] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Porphyry's approach to the text of Daniel was again taken up by various authors. By the close of the nineteenth century, the scholarly consensus supported the Maccabean dating of Daniel.

The dating of Daniel's prophecies carries high stakes for both sides of the debate concerning the veracity of Christianity. If the book of Daniel can be robustly shown to be composed before the events that the prophecies forecast, this would constitute significant evidence in *confirmation* of Christianity (since the specificity and accuracy of Daniel's predictions are significantly more probable given the truth of Christianity than given its falsehood). In chapter 11 alone, there is well over one hundred historically fulfilled predictive prophecies. Assigning each of them a conservative Bayes Factor of only 10 would yield a massive cumulative Bayes Factor of more than 10100, meaning that the data is 10100 times

more probable on the hypothesis of divine inspiration than its falsehood. Technically, one does not need to have certainty about the date of composition of the book preceding the events it purports to predict in order for Daniel's prophecies to carry evidential value. If the Bayes Factor is sufficiently high when the evidence is certain, then the evidential force is merely reduced when the evidence is uncertain.

Though one might argue that this data would be equally well predicted on Judaism (sans Christianity), I would argue that the prior probability of the hypothesis of Christianity is higher than that of Judaism, since there are independent reasons to believe that Judaism finds its fulfilment in the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, though these reasons will not be discussed here.

On the other hand, if the evidence supports that the book of Daniel is a forgery, composed around 164 B.C., during the Maccabean period, this would constitute significant evidence in *disconfirmation* of Christianity – in particular, since Jesus seems to recognize the book of Daniel as having Scriptural authority (Mt 24:15). Indeed, the book of Daniel is the basis for Jesus' favourite self-identification as the Son of Man (Mk 14:62). Some Christian scholars, such as John Goldingay [3] and Michael Heiser [4], have argued that *ex eventu* prophecy was not considered problematic or a crime by second temple Jews, and that it should not cause concern to Christians. Goldingay, an evangelical scholar, states that [5],

"…conservative scholarship has sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly approached these visions with the a priori conviction that they must be actual prophecies because quasi-prophecies issued pseudonymously could not have been inspired by God; it has also approached the stories with the a priori conviction that they must be pure history, because fiction or a mixture of fact and fiction could not have been inspired by God. All these convictions seem to be mistaken. I believe that the God of Israel who is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is capable of knowing future events and thus of revealing them, and is capable of inspiring people to write both history and fiction, both actual prophecy and quasi-prophecy, in their own name, anonymously, or—in certain circumstances—pseudonymously. It was excusable for Pusey (1–4) to think that pseudonymity makes the author a liar and must be incompatible with being divinely inspired. It is less excusable now we know that in the ancient world, and in the Hellenistic age in particular, pseudonymity was a common practice used for a variety of reasons—some unethical, some unobjectionable—for poetry, letters, testaments, philosophy, and oracles, and by no means confined to apocalypses…That pseudonymity is a rarer literary device in our culture, especially in religious contexts, should not allow us to infer that God could not use it in another culture. Whether he has actually chosen to do so is to be determined not a priori but from actual study of the text of Scripture. I shall consider these questions in the Form sections of the commentary."

However, I would strongly disagree with this assessment. For one thing, on the falsehood of Judeo-Christianity, the Maccabean date of Daniel more or less has to be true. But it does not at all have to be so on the assumption that Christianity is true, since the Biblical view is that God is able to foresee the future before it transpires, unlike false gods (c.f. Isa 42:9). To the contrary, on the hypothesis of Christianity, it would be really quite surprising if Daniel were a forgery. Given that God could have used a genuine prophet to whom He disclosed future events, why would God choose on this particular occasion to use someone writing after-the-fact to write as though he were composing actual predictive prophecies? Furthermore, Jesus Himself, during the Olivet Discourse, spoke of "the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel," (Mt 24:15). Note that the text does not merely assert that the abomination of desolation was spoken of in *the book of Daniel* but rather *by the prophet Daniel*. The preposition διὰ in this verse denotes personal agency. Even Jesus' favourite self-designation as the "Son of Man" who will "come on the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26:64; Mk 14:62) is derived from Daniel 7:13-14. Thus, the inescapable conclusion is that Jesus regarded Daniel as an actual prophet of God. Given how surprising the Maccabean date of Daniel would be on the hypothesis of Christianity, coupled with how certain it is on its falsehood, one cannot evade the implication that the Maccabean theory, if true, constitutes a weighty piece of evidence against the veracity of Christianity. Though one can make any set of data *logically compatible* with a theory (in this case, Christianity), this is *not* the same thing as demonstrating that the theory remains equally plausible as it was prior to acquiring these data.

Furthermore, contrary to Goldingay's assertion concerning the acceptability of pseudepigraphy in ancient religious works, there is in fact quite a bit of data that suggests that pseudepigraphy was very much frowned upon. For example,

the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (~260-340 A.D.) quotes Serapion of Antioch (~191-211 A.D.) as having said, "We brethren receive Peter and the other apostles as Christ himself. But those writings which falsely go under their name, as we are well acquainted with them, we reject, and know also, that we have not received such handed down to us" (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae* 6.12.). Eusebius also questioned the inclusion of the Shepherd of Hermas in the New Testament canon on the grounds that he was uncertain that the author was in fact the Hermas of Romans 16:14 (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae* 3.3). Tertullian (155-220 A.D.) also speaks of the composition of the Acts of Paul by an elder of Asia (Tertullian, *On Baptism* 17). He indicates that the elder wrote the book out of love for Paul and to increase Paul's fame. Tertullian, however, notes that consequently he "was removed from his office". Though there were clearly pseudepigraphal works circulating both in the early church as well as in the deutero-canonical period (including the *book of Enoch*, *Life of Adam and Eve*, and the *Ascension of Isaiah*), there is no evidence whatsoever of any book being canonized as Scripture while being recognized as pseudepigraphal. As John J. Collins, a leading exponent of the second century date, states, "there is no evidence that the literary convention was generally recognized in Judaism or early Christianity." [6]

Unfortunately, the significant worldview implications of our answer to the question of the dating of Daniel has the negative corollary that scholars, *on both sides of the debate*, bring certain assumptions to the table that are inevitably going to colour how they perceive and interpret the evidence. Scholars on the conservative end of the spectrum (in particular, those who hold to the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy and a high view of Scriptural authority) are going to have motivation to find Daniel's work to be authentic. On the other side of the coin, scholars who occupy the more liberal end of the spectrum (in particular, those whose who subscribe to metaphysical naturalism and thereby deny the possibility of the miraculous) are going to have motivation to find Daniel's work to be written *ex eventu*. Put another way, one's Bayesian priors are going to be significantly affected by one's evaluation of upstream metaphysical questions. There is no problem in principle with a scholar having a bias (indeed, it is unavoidable), but this bias must be candidly acknowledged so that the reader is made aware. Furthermore, given the role that presuppositions play in evaluating questions such as this one, scholars, on both sides of the debate, should be read with extra scrutiny, and blind acquiescence to the academic consensus should be done with more caution and trepidation than in other less consequential fields of inquiry.

One recurring characteristic of this debate that has persistently frustrated me as I have sought to dive deep into the topic is both sides' tendency to dismiss the other as possessing ulterior motives, seeking to defend an *a priori* conclusion under the guise of disinterested scholarship. For example, at the liberal end of the spectrum, Lester Grabbe asserts concerning conservative scholarship on the book of Daniel, "Fundamentalism has already determined its conclusions; it is not seeking because it already knows the answer. If it has good evidence on its side which supports the Bible, it uses it. If it has little data, it twists and interprets what it has to support the Bible. If it has no evidence, it hypothesises that such will eventually be found. And of course no amount of contrary evidence is sufficient. Fundamentalism can never conclude that the Bible is wrong." [7] In a similar vein, Richard Carrier asserts, "Attempts by fundamentalists and unrelenting believers to 'rescue' Daniel's authenticity are of course abundant. None follow any credible historical method. Real historians apply the same standards to the Book of Daniel, and to Daniel as a person, that we do to all other ancient books and persons. And we attend to what's more probable, not to what's convenient or merely possible." [8] Further, "apologetics is not legitimate history. It is what it is called: just a self-satisfying rhetoric built to defend a pre-conceived conclusion, not a critical means of ascertaining what actually is true." [9] I contend that this rhetoric is a naïve simplification. The apologist's role is not that of a defence attorney, being committed to defending the veracity of his or her position come what may. Rather, genuine apologetics assumes the role of an investigative journalist, reporting for popular consumption the results of a fair and balanced inquiry. The apologist's allegiance is, or should be, to truth first and foremost, and he is bound to follow the evidence wherever it might lead him in pursuit of truth. As to the point that apologists tend to rationalize incongruent data, this is true of any position that concerns a complex field of inquiry, in which there are many variables. As we shall see in the ensuing discussion, there are data that can be considered *possible* on a Maccabean dating of Daniel, but not at all *probable*. In those cases, those who subscribe to the Maccabean dating of Daniel must rationalize the evidence, just as those who subscribe to the traditional dating of Daniel must rationalize other evidence. Rationalizing away contradicting evidence is not always bad scholarly practice, provided one is candid about the fact that one's overall thesis has become less probable. [10] The real question of interest is which side of the debate must rationalize more evidence. As we shall see, there is

historical and linguistic evidence that is better predicted by a sixth century date than a second century date. It is, moreover, legitimate, having established the truth of Christianity on independent grounds, to require that a relatively high burden of proof be met before it is conceded that the book of Daniel is in fact a forgery.

On the conservative end of the spectrum, alas, a similar naivete exists. For example, John MacArthur asserts, "Though the use of Imperial Aramaic and archeology have confirmed the early date of writing, some skeptical interpreters, unwilling to acknowledge supernatural prophecies that came to pass (there are over 100 in chap. 11 alone that were fulfilled), place these details in the intertestamental times." [11] In a similar vein, Gleason Archer (though a great scholar whom I will be referencing much throughout this essay) states, "In order to avoid the impact of the decisive evidence of supernatural inspiration with which Daniel so notably abounds, it was necessary for rationalistic scholarship to find some later period in Jewish history when all the 'predictions' had already been fulfilled, such as the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.), when such a pious fraud could most easily be prepared." [12] I believe this caricature of the skeptical position to be similarly simplistic. Clearly there are reasons, independent of an anti-supernatural bias against predictive prophecy, that can lead one to embrace a second century date for Daniel. I do not believe those arguments, even cumulatively, to be conclusive, and I believe the arguments for a sixth century date to be, on the whole, stronger. But it is naïve to assert that the only reason one might disagree with the traditional view is because of a bias against predictive prophecy. Moreover, if one has sufficient independent evidence against the truth of Judeo-Christianity, it is reasonable to require that a relatively high burden of proof be met before it is conceded that the book of Daniel in fact contains genuine prophecy.

Doubtless there are presuppositions (that may be rationally or irrationally arrived at), which are going to colour one's examination of the subject-matter, perhaps more so than in other academic disciplines. Nonetheless, my goal in this article is to evaluate the data as fairly as I can, sifting through and reviewing the academic literature on both sides, before arriving at what I believe to be a fair and balanced conclusion. In the process of doing so, I will expose weaknesses in arguments adduced by both sides of the debate. I will also not (as some have done) argue that my position is supported by all of the relevant data and that there is none supporting the Maccabean theory. The subject before us is enormously complex and it is extremely naïve to assert that all of the evidence supports one's own conclusion. Rather, I believe there is evidence on both sides of the scale. In this essay, I will discuss why I personally find the evidence to be, on the whole, significantly better explained by the traditional sixth century dating of Daniel than by the second century dating. I will conclude with a discussion of the evidential value of Daniel's prophecy in building the case for Christianity.

Historical Data in the Book of Daniel

The Positive Case:

Various incidental features of the book of Daniel suggest a Babylonian setting in the sixth century, and seem surprising on the supposition that the work was composed by a second century Palestinian Hebrew. Perhaps the best-known case of historical confirmation of Daniel concerns Belshazzar who, though featured in the book of Daniel, had not been identified in any extrabiblical sources until the discovery of an ancient Babylonian text in 1854. In around 550 B.C., Belshazzar's father, Nabonidus, constructed four cylinders as foundation deposits at a temple of the moon god Sin in Ur. The cylinders contain a cuneiform inscription in two columns of thirty-one lines each. The text reads, "for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, save me from sinning against your great godhead and grant me as a present a life long of days, and as for Belshazzar my firstborn son, my own child, let the fear or your great divinity be in his heart, and may he commit no sin; may he enjoy happiness in life." Another cuneiform text discovered in Babylon, known as the Verse Account of Nabonidus, indicates that Nabonidus went on a long journey, thus leaving Babylon, and that he entrusted his eldest son (whom we know from the cuneiform inscription to be Belshazzar) with the kingship. This discovery, then, corroborates the existence of Belshazzar and his position as acting king in Babylon until the Medo-Persian invasion.

Kenneth Kitchen comments [13],

"In the late Babylonian empire Nabonidus was largely an absentee ruler, spending ten of his seventeen years far, far southwest of Babylon (about 450 miles) in and around Teima in northwest Arabia, and returning barely a year or so before Babylon's fall in 539. During that long span, circa 550–540, the effective ruler in Babylon was in fact his son

Belshazzar, as local documents attest, wherein oaths are sworn in the names of both men. Without actually having the title of king in official usage, Belshazzar enjoyed the powers, for (as one cuneiform chronicle has it) his father had in practice 'entrusted the kingship into his hand.'"

Archaeologist Titus Kennedy notes that "These specific details about Belshazzar in the book of Daniel, confirmed by ancient Babylonian sources, demonstrate the exceptional accuracy of the book about political matters in Babylon during the 6th century BC that were forgotten in the following generations." [14] Indeed, the fact that no Greek author mentioned Belshazzar suggests that he had been forgotten by the time of the Hellenistic period. Belshazzar's name is even missing from king-lists of Babylon. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus was also unaware of Belshazzar's existence, and argued that Belshazzar may have been an alternative name for Nabonidus (*Antiquities* 10.231). James Montgomery (who subscribes to the Maccabean dating of Daniel) summarizes [15]:

"The existence of a Belshazzar at the end of the Chaldæan dynasty was strikingly demonstrated by the discovery of his name on the Nabonidus Cylinder, in which he appears as Nabonidus' son. Otherwise Belsh. had entirely disappeared from history except for the reff. in Dan. and the dependent ref. in Bar. 1:11, where the Jews are bidden to 'pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and for the life of Baltasar his son,' which appears at first sight to be an echo of Dan."

Daniel's knowledge, then, of Belshazzar is quite surprising on the Maccabean dating of Daniel, but not at all on a traditional dating of Daniel. It is therefore of significant evidential value in confirming the authenticity of the book.

Daniel 5:5 speaks of "the fingers of a human hand" that appeared and "wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand." This description of the hand writing on the plaster on the wall is striking, since archaeological excavation has revealed that the walls of the palace in Babylon were indeed covered in white plaster. Joyce Baldwin comments [16],

"The circumstantial detail suggests the testimony of an eyewitness, in this case the king himself. The excavation of the palace has uncovered beyond three impressive courtyards a large room (52m by 17m) which has become known as the Throne Room. 'Inside the throne room, and facing the doorway, a recessed niche in the wall probably indicates where the king's throne stood.' One wall was 'adorned with a design in blue enamelled bricks', but the others were covered with white plaster."

In verses 26-28, Daniel gives his interpretation of the writing on the wall: "This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." In verses 30-31, we are told that "That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old." This seems to imply that the kingdom of Babylon was taken suddenly and unexpectedly, and without much resistance. A cuneiform document known as the Nabonidus Chronicle, written on a clay tablet, confirms that Babylon was indeed conquered without resistance. The chronicle reports [17],

"In the month Tishri, when Cyrus fought at Opis on the Tigris river against the troops of Akkad, he destroyed the people with burning; he put the people to death. On the 14th day Sippar was captured without fighting. Nabonidus fled. On the 16th day Ugbaru the governor of Gutium, and the troops of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting. Afterward, when Nabonidus returned, he was taken captive in Babylon. Until the end of the month the arms of Gutium surrounded the gates of the temple Esagila. No one's weapon was placed in Esagila or the sanctuaries, and no appointed time was disregarded. In the month Marchesvan, the 3d day, Cyrus entered Babylon. Harine (?) were carried before him. Prosperity was established in the city; Cyrus decreed prosperity for all in Babylon. Gobryas, his governor, placed governors in charge of Babylon. From Kislev to Adar the gods of Akkad, whom Nabonidus had brought up to Babylon, they returned to their cities."

The text then notes the death of a prominent person, though the lines are fragmentary and the identity of the individual in question is unclear: "In the month Marchesvan, on the night of the 11th, Ugbaru … In the month (?) the … of the king died. From the 28th day of Adar to the third day of Nisan there was weeping in the land of Akkad.… All the people prostrated their heads." [18] James Montgomery notes [19],

"Who this personage was is quite doubtful; most scholars, while recognizing the uncertainty, have filled the lacuna with 'the son [of the king],' i.e., Belsh.; so, e.g., King, Barton, Clay, Boutflower (p. 129), and Dougherty earlier; but the latter now does not venture to fill the gap. He writes later on: 'Accurate interpretation … is impossible owing to the illegible condition of the text. However, there is strong probability that Belsh. was slain in connection with the fall of Babylon, as indicated in the fifth chapter of Daniel and intimated by the record of Xenophon.'"

The fall of Babylon is also attested by the Cyrus Cylinder, which states that Cyrus was instructed by the God Marduk "to march against his city Babylon… Without any battle, he made him enter his town Babylon, sparing Babylon any calamity." [20]

The Greek historian Xenophon, in *Cyropaedia* (writing in the early fourth century B.C.) also offers additional details on how Babylon was won without a fight. He notes that the Persians diverted the Euphrates River in order to infiltrate the city. He also indicates that the acting king (though he does not name him) was killed following the fall of the city (*Cyrop.* 7.5.29–30). [21] Daniel indicates that Babylon fell the night of a party that had been thrown by Belshazzar (Dan 5:1). This is confirmed by Xenophon, who notes that Cyrus chose to invade "when he heard that a certain festival had come round in Babylon, during which all Babylon was accustomed to drink and revel all night long…" (*Cyrop.* 7.5.15). [22] According to Xenophon, Cyrus encouraged his men (*Cyrop.* 7.5.20–21) [23],

"Let us, therefore, enter in with dauntless hearts, fearing nothing and remembering that those against whom we are now to march are the same men that we have repeatedly defeated, and that, too, when they were all drawn up in battle line with their allies at their side, and when they were all wide awake and sober and fully armed; whereas now we are going to fall upon them at a time when many of them are asleep, many drunk, and none of them in battle array. And when they find out that we are inside the walls, in their panic fright they will be much more helpless still than they are now."

An even earlier Greek historian, Herodotus, writing in the fifth century B.C. offers a very similar account (*Hist.* 1.191.2–6) [24]:

"He [Cyrus] posted his army at the place where the river goes into the city, and another part of it behind the city, where the river comes out of the city, and told his men to enter the city by the channel of the Euphrates when they saw it to be fordable. Having disposed them and given this command, he himself marched away with those of his army who could not fight; and when he came to the lake, Cyrus dealt with it and with the river just as had the Babylonian queen: drawing off the river by a canal into the lake, which was a marsh, he made the stream sink until its former channel could be forded. When this happened, the Persians who were posted with this objective made their way into Babylon by the channel of the Euphrates, which had now sunk to a depth of about the middle of a man's thigh. Now if the Babylonians had known beforehand or learned what Cyrus was up to, they would have let the Persians enter the city and have destroyed them utterly; for then they would have shut all the gates that opened on the river and mounted the walls that ran along the river banks, and so caught their enemies in a trap. But as it was, the Persians took them unawares, and because of the great size of the city (those who dwell there say) those in the outer parts of it were overcome, but the inhabitants of the middle part knew nothing of it; all this time they were dancing and celebrating a holiday which happened to fall then, until they learned the truth only too well."

Of course, one might object that the author of Daniel, writing in the second century B.C., would have had access to those Greek historians. However, it is noteworthy that Daniel knew the identity of the last Babylonian prince, a detail not supplied by the Greek historians. Moreover, it is very probable (though not certain) that the Nabonidus Chronicle indicates that the son of king Nabonidus was killed during the Persian invasion. Xenophon also indicates that an acting king in Babylon was assassinated during the invasion. If the identity of this individual is Nabonidus, then this would contradict the Chronicle, which indicates that Nabonidus (who by this time had returned to Babylon from Teima) fled following the battle of Sippar and was later captured upon returning to Babylon after its fall to Persia. The most plausible harmonization of those accounts, then, is that Nabonidus' son, Belshazzar, was acting king and was killed during the Persian invasion of Babylon. It should, however, be noted that the account of Xenophon is considered to be frequently inaccurate, so caution should always be taken before accepting his account at face-value. [25]

One might also object that there exists some evidence to suggest that Belshazzar may have in fact been stationed outside of Babylon at this time. Paul-Alain Beaulieu notes that [26],

"Belshazzar is attested after Nabonidus' return in two types of sources: in the prayers appended to inscriptions 16 and 17…and in three archival texts dated to the end of the fourteenth year… Two of the three archival texts yield more information as to the role of Belshazzar after Nabonidus' return, CT 56:429 and Nbn 824, from Sippar, mention the son of the king in interesting contexts. Both are lists of travel equipment such as garments, shoes, and foodstuffs alotted to various individuals who are dispatched to the son of the king."

If Belshazzar was being sent travel equipment such as garments, shoes and foodstuffs, this could be taken to indicate that Belshazzar was at this time stationed outside of Babylon, which would not comport with the account in Daniel which represents him as throwing a party the night that Babylon fell. However, the archival texts cited by Beaulieu do not explicitly say that the son in question was Belshazzar. Here are the texts:

- *Beginning of CT56:429*: "[Travel provisions] which have been given to Dannu-Nergal [and Amur]ru-ibni, who took a 'well-arranged basket' [t]o the son of the king. Month Sabatu – Day 15 – Fourteenth year of Nabonidus, [king] of Babylon."

- *Beginning of Nbn824*: "[Travel provisions] which have been given to Dannu-Nergal [and Amur]ru-ibni, who took a 'well arranged basket' [t]o the son of the king. Month Sabatu – Day 15 – Fourteenth year of Nabonidus, [king] of Babylon."

Whether this reference is to Belshazzar or some other, as yet unknown, son of Nabonidus is not clear. Not much is known about Nabonidus' children, and Belshazzar himself was only discovered a little more than a century ago. We know that Nabonidus had at least three daughters – Ennigaldi-Nanna, Ina-Esagila-remat, and Akkabu'unma, and there is also evidence of another daughter whose name is uncertain. [27] Not much is known about those daughters, and it is plausible that Nabonidus had other sons of whom we know nothing. In fact, the Verse Account of Nabonidus refers to Nabonidus' "eldest son," which implies that he had other sons. Our knowledge of Nabonidus' family is so scant that one should not repose too much confidence in those archival texts as demonstrating that Belshazzar was stationed outside of Babylon at the time of the Persian invasion, particularly when other evidence suggests the opposite.

It has often been pointed out that, in Daniel 5:7, Belshazzar offers the one who can correctly interpret the writing on the wall the rank of third ruler in the kingdom (literally, "and third in the kingdom he will reign"). [28] But why only the third in rank? The archaeological evidence discussed in the foregoing indicates that Belshazzar himself was only second in rank under his coregent father, Nabonidus. Thus, "third" was the highest possible rank that Belshazzar could offer. But Daniel himself does not mention that there was a coregency at this time, thus leaving Belshazzar's offer of third in command unexplained. This undesigned coincidence is therefore argued to be somewhat more probable given the hypothesis of historical reportage than the falsity of that hypothesis. James Montgomery argues alternatively that the expression "third in the kingdom" should be interpreted as "a true reminiscence of old Bab. officialdom, where the Akk. *šalšu* (= our word spelled both *talti* and *taltâ*) was a high official title, = 'Thirdling' or 'Triumvir,' similar in its use to the Heb. equivalent *šâlîš*." [29] Thus, "We are dealing here, then, with a customary official title, the numerical denotation of which has been lost." [30] On this interpretation, however, it would presumably still serve to confirm

Daniel's insider knowledge of Babylonian customs and idioms. Furthermore, Andrew Steinmann has noted several problems with this view [31]:

"First, the Aramaic use of taw in place of the Hebrew shin is reserved for native Aramaic words, for example, Hebrew שׁוֹר, Aramaic תּוֹר, "bull." Akkadian loan words, especially those that designate officials, are always transliterated directly from Akkadian and preserve Akkadian shin, for example, אָשַׁף, "soothsayer" (e.g., 2:10; not אָתַף*). Also note שְׁלָה, "blasphemy" (3:29 Kethib; not תְּלָה*), and even shin in the names בֵּלְשַׁאצַּר (e.g., 5:1) and בֵּלְטְשַׁאצַּר (e.g., 1:7). Second, later in this chapter, the form תַּלְתָּא (5:16, 29) is used as an equivalent of תַּלְתִּי here, and this later form can only be analyzed as a determined state ordinal adjective, "the third" in rank. Compare תְּלָתָא, the determined cardinal numeral "three," in, for example, Dan 3:24 and Ezra 6:4. Finally, it is difficult to reconcile the bestowal of royal honors (represented by the purple robe and gold chain) with the offer to bestow a mid-level military rank."

Alternatively, though, one may interpret the 'second' in the kingdom to be the queen (argued by many to be the queen-mother), who is alluded to in Daniel 5:10. The importance of the queen mother is well attested in ancient Near Eastern literature. [32] This, in my assessment, reduces the evidential force of the expression "third ruler in the kingdom" in Daniel 5:7, and one must therefore be careful not to overstate the case.

Yet further historical confirmations of Daniel exist. Perhaps the strongest example, besides that of Belshazzar, is the statement in Daniel 8:2, "And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the citadel, which is in the province of Elam." The Greek and Roman historians indicate that, in the Persian period, Susa (or Shushan) was re-assigned to a new province, which was named Susiana. The province of Elam, which had hitherto been much bigger, was reduced to the region west of the Eulaeus River (c.f. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 6.27; Strabo, *Geogr.* 15.3, 12; 16.1, 17). Gleason Archer notes that "It is reasonable to conclude that only a very early author would have known that Susa was once considered part of the province of Elam." [33] If Daniel had gotten this wrong, it would be hailed as proof positive of a Hellenistic date. The fact that he in fact gets this right, therefore, necessarily constitutes evidence in favor of the dating of Daniel in the neo-Babylonian period, before Susa had been re-assigned to the province of Susiana.

Another hallmark of authenticity of the book of Daniel that suggests that our author is well informed about Babylonian culture is his casual and incidental familiarity with the Babylonian sexagesimal numerical system, which was based on the numbers six and sixty. In Daniel 3:1, we read, "King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits." Leon J. Wood comments, "It should be noted that the figures 'sixty' and 'six' suggest that the sexagesimal system was in use, rather than the decimal; these numbers, then, provide a mark of authenticity, because Babylon employed the sexagesimal system." [34]

In Daniel 6:24, we read that King Darius of Persia cast "the men who had maliciously accused Daniel…into the den of lions – they, their children, and their wives." This reflects the Persian custom of punishing the relatives of the guilty party, as attested by Herodotus (*Hist.* 3.119). This stands in contrast to the Biblical statements that every man was to die for his own sin (Jer 31:29-30; Ezek 18).

It is often pointed out that Darius' inability to revoke his own laws after passing a decree that nobody may make petition to any gods besides the king (6:8, 12, 14-16) fits well with what we know about Medo-Persian law, which precluded even a king from revoking or making exceptions to the law. Similarly, in the book of Esther, Xerxes is said to be subject to the law of the Medes and Persians which cannot be repealed (Esther 1:19). This stands in contrast to the Babylonians, where the king could revoke or make exceptions to the law (note that Nebuchadnezzar, in 3:15, offers Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego a way to escape death despite their violation of his decree which had required that they be immediately thrown into the furnace). In my view, however, this example is weaker than the others I have discussed, since this fact would have been readily accessible to a second century writer from sources such as the book of Esther.

Another argument that is sometimes put forward by conservative apologists, in support of Daniel's authenticity, concerns the role of Nebuchadnezzar as the builder of Babylon. As one seventh day Adventist commentary puts it, "According to the Greek historians, Nebuchadnezzar played an insignificant role in the affairs of ancient history. He is never referred to as a great builder or as the creator of a new and greater Babylon. That this honor is usually ascribed

to Queen Semiramis, who is given a prominent place in the history of Babylonia, is evident to every reader of classical Greek histories." [35] The author goes on to point out that the contemporary cuneiform records, which have been unearthed by archaeologists over the past century, have corroborated Daniel's claim that Nebuchadnezzar was responsible for the rebuilding of "this great Babylon" (Dan 4:30). In connection with this claim, it is customary to cite Robert Henry Pfeiffer who, in 1941, wrote (though holding to a second century date for Daniel), "We shall presumably never know how our author learned that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar (4:30 [H. 4:27]), as the excavations have proved (see R. Koldewey, Excavations at Babylon, 1915), and that Belshazzar, mentioned only in Babylonian records, in Daniel, and in Bar. 1:11, which is based on Daniel, was functioning as king when Cyrus took Babylon in 538 (ch. 5)." [36] This argument, often citing the quote from Pfeiffer (together with the ellipsis in the same place, suggesting secondary citation) has been widely disseminated among conservative apologists. However, the statements concerning the silence of the Greek historians on Nebuchadnezzar's building projects is completely false. For example, the Hellenistic-era Babylonian priest Berossus (who wrote in Greek) credits Nebuchadnezzar with various building accomplishments. Though Berossus' work has been lost, Josephus quotes him as follows (*Against Apion* 1.137–141) [37]:

"Being now master of his [i.e. Nebuchadnezzar's] father's entire realm, he gave orders to allot to the captives, on their arrival, settlements in the most suitable districts of Babylonia. He then magnificently decorated the temple of Bel and the other temples with the spoils of war, restored the old city, and added a new one outside the walls, and, in order to prevent the possibility in any future siege of access being gained to the city by a diversion of the course of the river, he enclosed both the inner and the outer city with three lines of ramparts, those of the inner city being of baked brick and bitumen, those of the outer city of rough brick. After fortifying the city on this grand scale and adorning the gateways in a manner worthy of their sanctity, he constructed a second palace adjoining that of his father. It would perhaps be tedious to describe the towering height and general magnificence of this building; it need only be remarked that, notwithstanding its immense and imposing proportions, it was completed in fifteen days. Within this palace he erected lofty stone terraces, in which he closely reproduced mountain scenery, completing the resemblance by planting them with all manner of trees and constructing the so-called hanging garden; because his wife, having been brought up in Media, had a passion for mountain surroundings."

Thus, given that Berossus, who wrote in the fourth century B.C. represented Nebuchadnezzar as a great builder, Daniel's knowledge of Nebuchadnezzar as the builder of a greater Babylon is not surprising on the Maccabean hypothesis, and should not be used to discount the second century date.

The Negative Case:

The foregoing historical confirmations of the book of Daniel notwithstanding, critical scholars have identified a number of problem texts in the book of Daniel that seem, at first blush, to contradict other sources – and thus, it is argued, point to a late date for Daniel. It is to these that I now turn. The first historical problem is found in the first two verses of the book, which state,

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god."

It is commonly noted that Daniel's statement that Nebuchadnezzar invaded in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim contradicts Jeremiah, who indicates that Nebuchadnezzar's ascension year was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer 25:1). This apparent discrepancy, however, can be harmonized by taking account of two dating systems. Jeremiah counts the years of a king's reign using a non-accession-year system – that is, the first year is counted as a complete year, even if the king began reigning during the middle of the year. Daniel, by contrast, utilizes the accession-year system that was practiced in Babylon under the Babylonian and Persian kings. According to this system, partial years at the commence of a king's reign were not counted. Thus, under the non-accession-year system employed by Jeremiah, this would have been Jehoiakim's fourth year, whereas under the accession-year system employed by Daniel, this would have been Jehoiakim's third year. Daniel's utilization of the accession-year system that was practiced in

Babylon and Persia in fact tends to confirm, rather than disconfirm, the authenticity of the book, since a second century Hebrew author would presumably have been expected to draw from Jeremiah 25:1, employing the non-accession-year system. Joyce Baldwin comments, "The biblical editors did not attempt to synchronize dates, and the fact that the Babylonian way of reckoning remains in the text indicates that an ancient substratum underlies the chapter." [38]

Another, more challenging, issue relating to these opening verses is that the fourth year of Jehoiakim falls in 605 B.C., whereas Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Jerusalem took place in the eleventh year of Jehoiakim, in 597 B.C. This is confirmed both elsewhere in the Bible (2 Chron 36:5) as well as in contemporary Babylonian sources. Samuel Rolles Driver asserts that the statement in the first verse "cannot, strictly speaking, be disproved" but is "highly improbable: not only is the Book of Kings silent, but Jeremiah, in the following year…speaks of the Chaldeans in a manner which appears distinctly to imply that their arms had not yet been seen in Judah." [39]

While it is certainly the case that the book of 2 Kings makes no mention of a Babylonian siege of Jerusalem at this time, it does inform us that, during the days of Jehoiakim, "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years," (2 Kings 24:1). We also read in 2 Chronicles, "Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon," (2 Chron 36:6). Thus, Nebuchadnezzar's presence in Jerusalem prior to the siege of 597 B.C. is doubly attested. Joyce Baldwin maintains that "All that the text [of Daniel] requires is that Nebuchadrezzar threatened Jerusalem, which, being a vassal of Egypt, came under the jurisdiction of Babylon when the Egyptian hold over Syro-Palestine was broken after the battle of Carchemish (2 Kgs 24:1; 2 Chr. 36:6)." [40] Furthermore, "When the evidence from Daniel is added to that of the historical books it becomes clear that the fall of Jerusalem was brought about in three stages, in 605, 597 and 587 BC, of which only the first is mentioned in Daniel, and only the second and third feature in the history." [41] She notes that concerning the siege of 605 B.C., "Though on this occasion Jerusalem and its king had to give in to the superior might of the Babylonians, worse was to come in 597, when Jehoiachin surrendered and was deported, together with the cream of the population, and in 587, when the final destruction and deportation occurred (2 Kgs 24:10–25:21)." [42] Along similar lines, Andrew Steinmann notes [43],

"Daniel simply states that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. He does not say that Jerusalem was conquered. Since 'the Lord gave into his [Nebuchadnezzar's] hand King Jehoiakim of Judah' (1:2), Daniel may be indicating that Jehoiakim, an ally of the defeated Pharaoh Neco, capitulated almost immediately. Thus if Nebuchadnezzar was merely mopping up after his victory, Jerusalem may have been an easy plum to pick that year. That the Babylonian Chronicle does not specifically mention Judah as part of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign is not necessarily at variance with what Daniel says, since it is not always specific or complete."

In Daniel 1:2, we read, "And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god." This can be plausibly interpreted to say that Nebuchadnezzar brought into the temple the vessels as well as Jehoiakim, in agreement with 2 Chronicles 36:6-7, which indicates that Nebuchadnezzar "bound him [Jehoiakim] in chains to take him to Babylon" and "also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon." Up to this point, Judah had been a vassal of Egypt, and Jehoiakim had been made king by Neco II, king of Egypt. Thus, one may read these texts to indicate that Jehoiakim was bound and taken to Babylon and forced to swear an oath of allegiance to Babylon before being sent back to Jerusalem, which would now be a vassal of Babylon. 2 Kings 24:1 states that "In his days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him." Thus, apparently Jehoiakim was a vassal of Babylon for the ensuing three years. But, probably, as a consequence of Nebuchadnezzar's disastrous defeat to the Egyptians in 601 B.C., Jehoiakim turned and rebelled against him.

On the supposition that Daniel's chronology in 1:1 is in error, scholars have sought to understand how Daniel may have arrived at this incorrect date. Carol Newsom suggests (as many others have done) that [44],

"Daniel 1:1 may arrive at its date of the third year of Jehoiakim through an attempt to harmonize the account in Chronicles with the note in 2 Kgs 24:1 that 'In his [i.e., Jehoiakim's] days Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up,

and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him.' Although the allusion in 2 Kgs 24:1 is to Jehoiakim's revolt in 601 B.C.E, it does not specify the date and so leaves open the possibility for a reader to assume that the revolt came in the third year of his kingship. Since the stories in Dan 1–6 show no further interest in the particularities of Judean history, it seems likely that it was not the author of Dan 1 himself who worked out this synthesis…but rather that he drew on a historiographical interpretation of the sources that had already become current."

John J. Collins observes that "The dependence [on the account in 2 Chronicles] is shown clearly by v 2, since the removal of some of the sacred vessels also follows directly the deportation of the king in 2 Chron 36:6–7." [45] I do not believe, however, that the coincidence is sufficiently striking to repose too much confidence in this reconstruction. On the hypothesis that Daniel is in error, this is a possible hypothesis but by no means conclusive. If Daniel is not in error, as I have suggested above, then this hypothesis is no longer needed.

A further concern is that Jehoiakim was technically killed before the sacking of Jerusalem and his son Jehoiakin (also known as Jeconiah) reigned for a few months prior to the fall of Jerusalem, at the end of 598 B.C. However, this is no longer problematic if, as suggested above, Daniel's allusion to Jehoiakim's capture refers to an earlier Babylonian siege of Jerusalem than that of 597 B.C.

Another historical issue is that, according to Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son, Belshazzar (Dan 5). It is commonly argued, however, that Belshazzar was not Nebuchadnezzar's son, nor did he succeed him to the throne. Rather, as previously mentioned, Belshazzar occasionally served as regent under his father Nabonidus (and thus was never technically king). Nabonidus ascended the throne six years after Nebuchadnezzar, and his reign was separated from Nebuchadnezzar's by three intervening kings — Amel Marduk, Neriglissar, and Labashi-Marduk. The objection that Belshazzar was not in fact king may be easily dispensed with. As previously mentioned, Belshazzar was king *in effect* for more than half of his father Nabonidus' seventeen-year reign, since Nabonidus spent a decade of his reign campaigning in Arabia, leaving his eldest son, Belshazzar, as acting ruler. As stated previously, one cuneiform chronicle indicates that Nabonidus "entrusted the kingship into [Belshazzar's] hand." [46] The name Belshazzar even appears associated with that of his father the king in the oath formulae during Nabonidus' reign. [47] Joyce Baldwin comments, "Since Belshazzar was to all intents and purposes king, it is pedantic to accuse the writer of the book of Daniel of inaccuracy in calling him 'Belshazzar the king'. This is especially out of place in the light of Daniel 5:7, 16, 29, where the reward for reading the mysterious writing was to be made third ruler in the kingdom. Evidently the writer knew that Belshazzar was second to his father Nabonidus." [48] Even James Montgomery, who subscribes to the Maccabean dating of Daniel, notes [49],

"In the texts hitherto known Belsh. is never given the title of king, and this has been ground for argument against one detail of our story which represents Belsh. as absolute king. But Sidney Smith's presentation of a new text…shows that royal dignity was actually conferred upon Belsh. This text, of the third full year of Nabonidus, detailing that king's victorious campaign against Arabian Teima (as this place has elsewhere been identified by Dougherty), records: 'He entrusted a camp to his eldest, his first-born son; the troops of the land he sent with him. He freed his hand; he entrusted the kingship (šarrûtam) to him.' That is, in the early part of Nabonidus' reign, in his third year, his son was invested with royal dignity, which, in view of the active position he held throughout the subsequent years, must have continued throughout his life. That is, the Bible story is correct as to the rank of kingship given to Belsh. Now in several texts the prince's name is coupled with his father's in the latter's prayers and in the omens interpreted for him; and in Pinches' text and two texts in the Yale Museum his name is associated with his father's in an oath; on which Dougherty remarks: "There is no other instance in available documents of an oath being sworn in the name of the son of the king." The induction therefore that had been made from earlier data by Pinches, Dougherty, and others, is now brilliantly corroborated; as in a previous statement of the latter scholar: "It appears that he was invested with a degree of royal authority, not only at the close of the reign of his father, but throughout large part, if not the whole, of the reign of Nabonidus."

What, though, about the objection that Belshazzar was not Nebuchadnezzar's son, as stated in Daniel (5:2, 11, 13, 18, 22)? It is important to note here that in Semitic languages such as Aramaic and Hebrew, the words used for "father" and "son" have a broader semantical range than in English. Not only can they be used of relationships that span multiple, even many, generations, but they can also be used of non-hereditary relationships. For example, a prophet's disciples may be called his "sons", or he their "father." The terms "father" and "son" can even be used of predecessors and successors to the throne. Andrew Steinmann comments that [50],

"On the Black Obelisk erected by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III about 830 BC, a contemporary king of northern Israel, Jehu, is called "son of Omri" even though Jehu had exterminated the descendants of Omri (885–874), an earlier king of northern Israel. Shalmaneser, who conducted several campaigns in Syria and Israel between 859 and 841, could hardly have been unaware that Jehu was not a descendant of Omri. Instead, it appears as if he used "son" to mean 'successor.'"

Steinmann further points out that "The normal formula to indicate a father-son relationship would be 'Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar,' but that formula never occurs in Daniel… Since the formal father-son designation is never used, it is quite probable that the term 'father' here signifies 'predecessor,' and 'son' means 'successor.'" [51]

One may object here that the six-fold repetition of the statements in Daniel 5 concerning Nebuchadnezzar being the "father" of Belshazzar (Belshazzar is also called Nebuchadnezzar's "son" once) argues against this interpretation and in favor of a more literal reading. However, it is plausible to understand Daniel to be drawing a theological connection between the two men – that is to say, Nebuchadnezzar is a spiritual predecessor of Belshazzar. As I shall discuss later, Daniel 2-7 form a chiastic structure, and chapters 4 and 5 concern the consequences for gentile rulers when they become haughty and arrogant and lose their humility. In drawing out this spiritual connection between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, Daniel is emphasizing that Belshazzar ought to have known better than to challenge the sovereignty of the one true God, given the historical experiences of his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel reminds Belshazzar of those events in 5:18-22). Various parallels between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar are highlighted in the text of Daniel. Both individuals abused the vessels of the temple of God (1:2; 5:2-3, 23); both spoke of Daniel and the Holy Spirit using similarly pagan language (4:8-9, 18; 5:11, 14); and both arrogantly defied the God of Israel.

It is sometimes argued alternatively by conservative scholars that Belshazzar was in fact a genetic descendent through his mother. [52] It is often asserted that Nabonidus married Nitocris, said by Herodotus to have been a wife of Nebuchadnezzar (Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.188). [53] On this theory, Belshazzar would be a genetic descendant of Nebuchadnezzar. However, Herodotus often gives inaccurate information regarding the final years of the Neo-Babylonian kings, and the information supplied by Herodotus concerning Nitocris seems to be largely legendary. Thus, this theory remains purely speculative and lacks supporting evidence.

Another issue pertains to Daniel's allusion to Darius the Mede, for whom no independent evidence presently exists. Daniel asserts that Darius "received the kingdom" following the death of Belshazzar (Dan 5:30-31). Critics have long observed that Daniel represents Darius the Great as the Persian king who liberated the Jewish captives and allowed them to return to their own land, whereas this was in fact done by Cyrus the Great, a predecessor of Darius the Great (who ascended the throne only after Cyrus' sons, Chambyses and Bardiya). Daniel's error here is sometimes attributed to a deliberate conversion on his part of a real historical character, Darius the Great of Persia (522-486 B.C.) into a Mede in order to fulfil prophecies by Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa 13:17; 21:2; Jer 51:11, 28). [54]

It should be noted that Daniel is clearly familiar with Cyrus of Persia, since he is alluded to by name three times in the book (1:21; 6:28; 10:1). Many commentators have identified Darius the Mede as an alternative name for Cyrus the Great (making them the same individual), since the conjunction ‌ו (*waw*) in Daniel 6:28 allows for the translation "this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian," [55] a usage of this conjunction that is common in Daniel (e.g. 1:3; 2:28; 3:2; 4:13; 6:28; 7:1; 7:7). [56] There is also a construction in 1 Chronicles 5:26 that serves a similar function to that in Daniel, if indeed this is the correct way of reading it in this case: "So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria…" Furthermore, given the

past experience of the discovery of the historicity of Belshazzar, one should not be quick to repose too much confidence in arguments from silence such as this.

What facts may be gleaned from Daniel regarding Darius the Mede? First, we learn that he was around sixty-two years old when Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians (5:31). We also learn that he appointed one hundred and twenty provincial governors called satraps over the Babylonian kingdom (6:1). We are further informed that he possessed the authority to compose a letter to "all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth" (in context presumably referring to the Medo-Persian empire) (Dan 6:25). We also are told that he reigned no less than part of a year (9:11; 11:1). We can also determine that he was a Mede (5:31; 9:1; 11:1) and a descendent of someone identified as Ahasuerus (9:1). Finally, we learn that Darius "received the kingdom of Babylon" (5:31) and "was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans" (9:1), and that his conquering of Babylon terminated Daniel's service to the kings of Babylon (1:21).

Various clues converge on the conclusion that Darius the Mede is the same individual as Cyrus the Great. Herodotus mentions twice that Cyrus had originally been given a different name by his mother at birth, and only later came to be called Cyrus (Hdt., *Hist.* 1.113–114). Perhaps, then, Darius was Cyrus' original name that was given to him by his mother, Mandane of Media. This theory would also account for his being called "Darius the Mede," since Cyrus' mother was a Mede.

Another striking clue is Daniel's statement of Darius' age when Babylon fell, of "about sixty-two years old" (Dan 5:31). Cyrus lived between 600 and 530 B.C. (as confirmed by Cuneiform evidence in Babylon), making him seventy years old at the time of his death. When Cyrus died can be determined from the last reference to Cyrus' own reign (a tablet which dates to August 12, 530 A.D., from Borsippa) and the first reference to the reign of Cambyses, his son (a tablet from Babylon dating to August 31st, 530 A.D.). Babylon fell in the year 539 B.C., which would be the year in which he turned sixty-two. The activities and prerogatives that Daniel ascribes to Darius (stated in the list in the preceding paragraph) would certainly be consistent with the identification of Darius as Cyrus the Great. It may be objected here that it would be inappropriate for Daniel to say of Cyrus that he "received the kingdom" and "was made king" (9:1), since that language suggests that he had a more passive role. However, this may be interpreted theologically, since a theme in the book of Daniel is that the real active agent is God, who makes kings of whomever He wills.

In view of the considerations above, it is my assessment that Daniel's references to Darius the Mede tend to support the early rather than later dating of Daniel, since Daniel's account concerning the career of Darius casually dovetails with Herodotus who indicates that Cyrus' Median mother gave him a different name at birth, and the independent data that confirms that Cyrus would have indeed been about sixty-two at the time of the conquest of Babylon, as asserted by Daniel. On the Maccabean date hypothesis, it would be quite surprising if our author knew the age of Cyrus at the time of the conquest with that degree of specificity.

A further objection against Daniel concerns his assertion that Darius was the son of Xerxes (Dan 9:1). John J. Collins observes that [57],

"Darius is here given a father, whose name is rendered as Xerxes in the OG. There were Persian kings named Darius and Xerxes, but the relationship was reversed (Xerxes was the son of Darius I)."

It is thus argued that Xerxes was in fact the son of Darius, and that this Darius' actual father was Hystaspes, a distant relation of Cyrus. However, this Darius is plausibly understood to be a Darius other than Darius Hystaspes, who ascended the throne in 522 B.C. (c.f. Ezra 4:24ff, Hag 1:1, Zech 1:1). Joyce Baldwin notes that [58],

"Haggai and Zechariah. Son of Ahasuerus, or Xerxes in its Greek form, is a name which occurs in Ezra 4:6 and in the book of Esther, but belongs to a fifth-century king (486–465/4). To some commentators these facts have seemed to prove conclusively that the writer had confused his history, but their judgment may be premature, for 'it is … now recognized that Xerxes (Ahasuerus) may be an ancient Achaemenid royal "title"'. W. F. Albright has argued that the name Darius may be an old Iranian title, and while this remains a theory it is in keeping with known history for a

monarch to have more than one name, as, e.g., in the case of Tiglath-Pileser who is also called Pul (2 Kgs 15:19, 29; 1 Chr. 5:26)."

A final objection that I will discuss concerns the prayer of Nabonidus, an Aramaic text found among the Dead Sea Scrolls that many have observed offers a striking parallel to the story of Nebuchadnezzar's madness, recounted in Daniel 4. The account reads as follows (elements supplied by the translator to fill gaps in the text are given in brackets) [59]:

"The words of the pra[y]er of Nabonidus, king of [Ba]bylon, [the great] kin[g, when he was smitten] with a severe inflammation at the decree of G[o]d, in Teima. [I, Nabonidus,] was smitten [with a severe inflammation] lasting seven years. Beca[use] I was thus changed, [becoming like a beast, I prayed to the Most High,] and He forgave my sins. An exorcist – a Jew, in fact, a mem[ber of the community of the exiles – came to me and said,] 'Declare and write down this story, and so ascribe glory and gre[at]ness to the name of G[od Most High.' Accordingly, I have myself written it down:] I was smitten with a severe inflammation while in Teima, [by the command of God Most High. Then] for seven years I continued praying [to] the gods made of silver and gold, [bronze, iron,] wood, stone, and clay, for I [used to th]ink that th[ey] really were gods."

The number seven is also used in Daniel's account: "...let seven periods of time pass over him," (Dan 4:16). Because of the similarities between the two stories, it is argued that the Qumran text represents a more ancient tradition which later came to be associated with Nebuchadnezzar. There are also, however, important differences – for one thing, the text in Daniel represents Nebuchadnezzar as becoming like a wild animal (which seems to be a case of a mental illness called Boanthropy), whereas the prayer of Nabonidus suggests that the sufferer's condition was a skin condition. Furthermore, according to the text, Nabonidus experienced his condition while in Teima, whereas Nebuchadnezzar remained in Babylon. The differences between the two accounts have given rise to the view that Daniel is drawing on a related line of orally transmitted material, with the prayer of Nabonidus more closely representing the original. Joyce Baldwin, however, comments, "It is tempting to speculate, but until more evidence comes to light it is impossible to evaluate these theories, and meanwhile the text of Daniel has not been proved incorrect. There the name is clearly Nebuchadrezzar, and it remains a conjecture that the text became corrupted." [60]

Also of concern is the absence of any evidence for Nebuchadnezzar's Boanthropy (thus making him unfit for royal duties) in Babylonian records. Tremper Longman III, a conservative commentator, notes, "It is probably unwise to make much out of the silence of the extrabiblical texts, since the king's reign is not exhaustively documented and it is not the type of thing that Nebuchadnezzar may have wanted preserved for perpetuity in his royal inscriptions." [61] However, this response is vulnerable to the objection that Nebuchadnezzar, according to Daniel, wrote "to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth," and wrote, "It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me," (Dan 4:1-2). Thus, the silence of the Babylonian record concerning Nebuchadnezzar's illness seems at least somewhat surprising on the hypothesis of historical reportage. Though it is an argument from silence, it seems to me to be of greater evidential weight than the majority of arguments from silence in historiography.

To conclude this section, it is my assessment that the historical data, on balance, tends to favor the traditional dating of Daniel over the Maccabean date. Though there are some data that tends to point in the direction of the Maccabean hypothesis, the historiographical objections to Daniel generally have plausible resolutions. On the converse, Daniel's knowledge of Belshazzar (who apparently had been lost to history by the time of the Hellenistic era) and his correct placement of Susa as a province of Elam (appropriate for the neo-Babylonian period but not for the Hellenistic period), along with other specialized knowledge is, considered cumulatively, significantly more surprising on the Maccabean theory than on the traditional dating of the book.

Linguistic Data

Much ink has been spilled on linguistic arguments for and against a Maccabean dating of Daniel. Of all of the categories of evidence bearing on our question, this one is without doubt the most difficult for a non-specialist to evaluate. Since I am a non-specialist in this area, I will be leaning quite heavily on the work of bona fide authorities in the subject matter and drawing upon their collective wisdom and expertise.

Persian Loanwords: Daniel is widely recognized to contain Persian loanwords, and this is believed by many to constitute evidence supportive of a late date. Harold Henry Rowley listed twenty words in Daniel which he believed to be derived from Persian. [62] He inspected the Jewish Targums (composed in the first century B.C. and later) to determine how many of those words were used therein. He discovered that twelve were present in the Targums. As a control, he looked at twenty-six Persian words found in Arthur Ernest Cowley's collection of Aramaic papyri from the fifth century B.C. [63] Of those, only two are found in Daniel and two in the Targums. Rowley thus argued that the composition of the book of Daniel was likely closer in time to the Targums than to the fifth century. [64] Kenneth Kitchen, however, notes that a study of so few words "is altogether too fragile a basis for statistical argument" and that one should also compare the Aramaic of Daniel with the vocabulary of Imperial Aramaic. [65] He also observes that there are six words that have thus far not been identified post-330 B.C., and some phrases were not understood by the Greek translators.

Furthermore, Kenneth Kitchen observes that "The Persian words in Daniel are specifically *Old Persian* words. The recognized divisions of Persian language-history within Iranian are: Old down to c. 300 BC, Middle observable during c. 300 BC to c. AD 900, and New from c. AD 900 to the present. Now, the fact that the Iranian element in Daniel is from Old Persian and not Middle indicates that the Aramaic of Daniel is in this respect pre-Hellenistic, drew on no Persian from after the fall of that empire—and not on any Middle Persian words and forms that might have penetrated Aramaic in Arsacid times (c. 250 BC, ff.)." [66] Thus, the evidence from Persian loanwords tends to support an older rather than later date for Daniel's composition. Kitchen notes elsewhere that "These facts suggest an origin for the Persian words in the Aramaic of Daniel before c. 300 BC." [67] Andrew Steinmann, however, cautions that "little actual evidence of Old Persian survives, and a number of words are said to be derived from reconstructed theoretical Old Persian forms." [68]

It should also be observed that all of the Persian loanwords in the book of Daniel relate to government. This is not particularly surprising given that the purported author of the book, Daniel, worked for a significant portion of his career in the Persian government.

It is commonly argued that it would have taken a significant time for Persian loanwords to be incorporated into Aramaic, and thus Daniel, supposing his work to be authentic, could not have employed any Persian loanwords. However, Kenneth Kitchen points out that [69],

"If a putative Daniel in Babylon under the Persians (and who had briefly served them) were to write a book some time after the third year of Cyrus (Dn. 10:1), then a series of Persian words is no surprise. Such a person in the position of close contact with Persian administration that is accorded to him in the book would have to acquire—and use in his Aramaic—many terms and words from his new Persian colleagues (just like the Elamite scribes of Persepolis), from the conquest by Cyrus onwards."

It has also been pointed out that the Elephantine Papyri (discovered in 1929 and dating to the fifth century B.C.) contains fewer Persian loanwords than does Daniel. However, Gleason Archer notes that " in the 'Aramaic Documents of the 5th Century B.C.' published by G. R. Driver (Oxford, 1957) and composed for the most part in Susa or Babylon (op. cit. pp. 10–12), there are no less than twenty-six Persian loanwords." [70]

Greek Loanwords: Critics often note the presence of Greek loanwords in the book of Daniel, and this is sometimes taken to favour a late date of Daniel. Peter Coxon, for example, states that "Of all the linguistic arguments which have been used in the debate concerning the age of the Aramaic sections of Daniel and the date of the composition of the book, the Greek loans seem to provide the strongest evidence in favor of the second century B.C." [71] Coxon, however, also offers evidence that this is not so. For example, he observes that the form of the word קַתְרוֹס ("lyre") (Dan 3:5, 7,

10, 15) shows that it was derived from the Ionic Greek word κίθαρις rather than Attic κιθάρα, thereby suggesting it was an early loanword. [72] Furthermore, there is only a grand total of three Greek loanwords in the entire book of Daniel, all of them in chapter 3, and all of them describing musical instruments. Musical instruments frequently retain their original names across international borders – for example, the piano and viola are Italian loanwords in English. Gleason Archer further observes that [73],

"We know that as early as the reign of Sargon (722–705 B.C.) there were, according to the Assyrian records, Greek captives who were sold into slavery from Cyprus, Ionia, Lydia, and Cilicia. The Greek poet Alcaeus of Lesbos (fl. 600 B.C.) mentions that his brother Antimenidas served in the Babylonian army. It is therefore evident that Greek mercenaries, Greek slaves, and Greek musical instruments were current in the Semitic Near East long before the time of Daniel. It is also significant that in the Neo-Babylonian ration tablets published by E. F. Weidner, Ionian carpenters and shipbuilders are mentioned among the recipients of rations from Nebuchadnezzar's commissary—along with musicians from Ashkelon and elsewhere."

Moreover, Edwin Yamauchi discusses a large amount of data that reveals contacts, long prior to Alexander the Great, between the Aegean and ancient Near East, even highlighting examples of Semitic influence on Greek culture and language. He concludes, "We may safely say that the presence of Greek words in an Old Testament book is not a proof of Hellenistic date, in view of the abundant opportunities for contacts between the Aegean and the Near East before Alexander." [74] Thus, even John J. Collins admits that "the evidence for Greek influence on Daniel is too slight to prove anything." [75]

Gleason Archer attempts to turn this argument on its head, when he suggests that it is the sheer lack of Greek that tends to support an early rather than late dating of the book of Daniel. He notes that "By 170 B.C. a Greek-speaking government had been in control of Palestine for 160 years, and Greek political or administrative terms would surely have found their way into the language of the subject populace. The books of Maccabees testify to the very extensive intrusion of Greek culture and Greek customs into the life of the Jews by the first half of the second century, particularly in the big cities." [76] Joyce Baldwin likewise argues that "the fact that no more than three Greek words occur in the Aramaic of Daniel (and those are technical terms) argues against a second-century date for the writing of the book." [77] However, one caution, which seems to me to put a dent in this argument, is, as John J. Collins observes, "Greek loans are conspicuous by their absence also in the Dead Sea Scrolls." [78] Jan Joosten likewise notes that, though there is "little reason to doubt" that the Qumran community knew Greek, it is "striking to observe how little the Greek language affected the Hebrew and Aramaic used in the [dead sea] scrolls. Apart from the Copper Scroll, there are hardly any Greek words in the Qumran texts. Since Greek words already turn up in Late Biblical Hebrew and in Biblical Aramaic, the absence of such words in the Qumran texts may reflect a conscious policy of avoiding such words." [79] Thus, while I think the lack of Greek loanwords in Daniel still remains rather suggestive of an early rather than late dating of the book (particularly in view of the fact that the book of Daniel uses no Greek term pertaining to government or politics, despite Greek having been the language of government for 160 years), one ought to be cautious not to repose too much weight on this line of evidence alone.

The Aramaic of Daniel: One curious feature of the book of Daniel is that it is partly composed in Hebrew; and partly in Aramaic. Daniel 1:1-2:3 is written in Hebrew; 2:4-7:28 is written in Aramaic; and chapters 8-12 are written in Hebrew. The inclusion of Aramaic in the book of Daniel should not be terribly surprising, since the predominant language spoken in sixth century B.C. Babylon was Aramaic. It was once thought that Daniel's Aramaic was of Western dialect and thus could not have been written in Babylon. However, more recent discoveries of Aramaic documents dating to the fifth century B.C. have revealed that the book of Daniel was composed in a form of Imperial Aramaic, akin to the Aramaic of the Elephantine Papyri, which is also composed in Imperial Aramaic. Edward Yechezkel Kutscher, an Israeli philologist and Hebrew linguist, remarks, "With regard to Biblical Aramaic, which in word order and other traits is of the Eastern type (i.e., freer and more flexible in word order) and has scarcely any Western characteristics at all, it is plausible to conclude that it originated in the East. A final verdict on this matter, however, must await the publication of all the Aramaic texts from Qumran." [80]

Another interesting feature of the Elephantine Papyri, noted by Gleason Archer, is that they "contain the name *Abednego*, which was formerly interpreted as a late corruption of 'Abed-Nebo' ('servant of Nebo') such as might be expected in a second-century production. But it turns out to be a current name as 'Abednego' in the fifth century B.C. Egypt." [81]

Gleason Archer also makes the observation that "even in the Septuagint translation of Daniel, which dates presumably from 100 B.C., or sixty-five years after Judas Maccabeus, the rendition of several of the Aramaic technical terms for state officials was mere conjecture." [82] He notes that, in Daniel 3:2, the word for counsellors is translated ὕπατος ("highest official"); the term for "treasurers" is translated διοικητής ("administrators, governors"); and the word for "magistrates" or "judges" is translated by the general phase τοὺς ἐπ' ἐξουσιῶν ("those in authority"). Archer argues that "It is impossible to explain how within five or six decades after Daniel was first composed (according to the Maccabean date hypothesis) the meaning of these terms could have been so completely forgotten even by the Jews in Egypt, who remained quite conversant in Aramaic as well as in Greek." [83]

A further argument that is sometimes adduced in favor of the later dating of Daniel is that, to quote John J. Collins, "Where the Aramaic of Daniel differs from that of the Samaria papyri, it favors the later forms (*d* rather than *z*; *-hwn* rather than *-hm*; *hmwn* rather than *hmw*, *-yn* rather than *-n* for the masculine plural ending)." [84] Collins, however, adds that "How far this evidence can be translated into an absolute chronology is debatable. The fifth-century Book of Ezra uses d rather than z; the fourth-century papyri use the reverse. Nonetheless, it is remarkable that the papyri never use the later forms. The cumulative evidence suggests that the Aramaic of Daniel is later than that of the Samaria papyri." [85] In response to this argument, Gleason Archer comments [86],

…it ought to be pointed out that up to the present time no Aramaic documents from any region have been discovered from the sixth century B.C., much less from the eastern or Babylonian section of the Aramaic-speaking world. Until such documents are discovered, it is premature to say whether the shift from z to d had taken place by that period. It certainly ought to be recognized that this shift had consistently taken place in the Aramaic chapters of Ezra (at least so far as the text has come down to us), which presumably reflected the pronunciation of Aramaic in Persia, from which Ezra came. It would therefore appear that the shift from z to d took place earlier in the East than it did in the West (since the Elephantine Papyri show this shift only in four or five examples: ʾ-, h-d for ʾh-z ["take"], d-y 1-k-y for z-y 1-k-y ["yours"] in A. Cowley's Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C. (London: Oxford, 1923), (hereafter CAP), 13:7, 11, 16; d-k-ʾ for z-k-ʾ ["clean"] CAP 14:6, 9; d-k-y for z-k-y ["that"] CAP 21:6; 27:12; d-n-h for z-n-h ["this"] CAP 16:9). See also CAP 30 m-d-b-h-ʾ ("altar") and d-b-ḥ-n ("sacrificing") instead of m-z-b-ḥ and z-b-ḥ-n. It is by no means necessary to suppose all the consonantal shifts took place simultaneously in Aramaic throughout the whole area of the Near East where this language was current. (For example, in the history of Medieval German it may be verified from documentary evidence that the High German consonantal shifts took place earlier in some regions of Germany than they did in others.)

The Genesis Apocryphon is one document that was discovered in 1946 among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Gleason Archer points out concerning this text that [87],

"…many grammatical traits mark the Apocryphon as centuries later than the Aramaic of Daniel, Ezra, or the Elephantine Papyri, such as -haʾ for the feminine third person possessive pronoun, instead of -āh; dēn for "this" instead of denah; the ending -iyat for third feminine singular perfect of lamed-aleph verbs instead of -āt—and many other examples. As for the vocabulary, a considerable number of words occur in the Apocryphon which have hitherto not been discovered in Aramaic documents prior to the Targum and Talmud… Neither in morphology, nor syntax, nor style of expression can any evidence be found in Daniel for a date of composition approaching the period of these sectarian documents. According to the Maccabean Date Theory, the entire corpus of Daniel had to have been composed in Judea in the second century B.C., only a few decades before these documents from Qumran. In the light of this newly discovered linguistic evidence, therefore, it would seem impossible."

The argument for an early dating of Daniel based on the Aramaic, however, is unfortunately inconclusive. Kenneth Kitchen, himself a conservative Christian scholar who holds to the sixth century dating of Daniel, notes concerning Daniel's Aramaic [88]:

"What, then, shall we say of the Aramaic of Daniel? It is, in itself; as long and generally agreed, integrally a part of that Imperial Aramaic which gathered impetus from at least the seventh century BC and was in full use until c. 300 BC, thereafter falling away or fossilizing where it was not native and developing new forms and usages where it was the spoken tongue. If proper allowance be made for attested scribal usage in the Biblical Near East (including orthographical and morphological change, both official and unofficial), then there is nothing to decide the date of composition of the Aramaic of Daniel on the grounds of Aramaic anywhere between the late sixth and the second century BC. Some points hint at an early (especially pre-300), not late, date—but in large part could be argued to be survivals till the second century BC, just as third—second century spellings or grammatical forms must be proved to be original to the composition of the work before a sixth—fifth century date could be excluded. The date of the book of Daniel, in short, cannot be decided upon linguistic grounds alone. It is equally obscurantist to exclude dogmatically a sixth-fifth (or fourth) century date on the one hand, or to hold such a date as mechanically proven on the other, as far as the Aramaic is concerned."

To conclude this section, the linguistic data fails to confirm the second century dating of Daniel and actually in a number of cases tends to favour a significantly earlier composition of the book. The traditional sixth century dating of Daniel is quite consistent with the linguistic evidence.

The Theology of Daniel

Perhaps the weakest argument for the late dating of Daniel is the assertion that the motifs and emphases in the book bear resemblance to the inter-testamental literature, such as the Book of Enoch. In particular, the book of Daniel, like those other books, lays emphasis on the last judgment and the resurrection of the dead; on angels; and the Messiah. Although it is admitted that older Old Testament literature contains allusions to these themes, it is argued that these ideas are much more developed in Daniel than they are in the books of Ezekiel or Zechariah. I would, however, contest this claim. Zechariah's prophecies date from approximately 519 to 470 B.C., and yet contain clearly Messianic themes and references to angels (Zech 2:3; 3:1; 6:12; 9:9; 13:1; 14:5). Furthermore, the role of angels in Zechariah, as in Daniel, is to interpret the meaning of the prophet's visions. The book of Malachi also contains two important references to the Messiah (Mal 3:1; 4:2) and to the final judgment (Mal 3). Moreover, as Gleason Archer points out, "works which are admittedly of the second century B.C., such as 1 Maccabees and the Greek additions to Daniel, Baruch, and Judith, show none of these four elements (angelology, resurrection, last judgment, and Messiah) which are asserted to be so characteristic of this period that they betray the second-century origin of Daniel. Even the Jewish apocryphal literature from the first century A.D. contains only two works (out of a possible sixteen) having all four characteristics, namely, the *Vision of Isaiah* and the *Ascension of Isaiah*." [89]

These characteristics are also found in books that are older than Daniel. For example, the concept of the resurrection is found in Job 19:25-27: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." Isaiah 26:19 likewise says, "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead." We also see the concept of resurrection in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (Ezek 37:1-14). Conversely, as Gleason Archer points out, "of the large number of postcanonical works, only the Book of the Twelve Patriarchs refers to a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked as is found in Dan. 12:2." [90] There are even allusions elsewhere in the Old Testament to the book of life by which the dead are to be judged, of which we read in Daniel 7:10 (Exod 32:32-33; Isa 4:3; Mal 3:16). Angels are also found throughout the Old Testament, and are said to deliver messages from God to such individuals as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Isaiah, Zechariah, Ezekiel and others.

To conclude this section, my assessment is that this is an extremely weak argument for the late dating of Daniel. As Gleason Archer notes, "Doubtless it is possible to make out some kind of progression in the development of these

doctrines during the history of God's revelation to Israel, but it is a mistake to suppose that Daniel contains anything radically new in any of the four areas under dispute. Moreover, these precise doctrines were most appropriate for Israel's comfort and encouragement during the time of captivity and on the threshold of their return to the promised land." [91]

The Genre of Daniel

A popular argument for the 'late date' view of Daniel relates to the placement of Daniel in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Old Testament canon is divided into three sections – the "Law," the "Prophets," and the "Writings." Critics note that Daniel is placed in the "Writings" rather than the "Prophets." This is taken to suggest that the book of Daniel was not known when the canon of the Prophets was closed, around 200 B.C. Samuel Rolles Driver states [92]:

"…there are strong reasons for thinking that the threefold division represents three stages in the collection and canonization of the sacred books of the O.T.,–the Pent. being canonized first, then the 'Prophets' (in the Jewish sense of the expression), and lastly the Kethubim. The collection of the 'Prophets' could hardly have been completed before the third century B.C.; and had the Book of Daniel existed at the time, and been believed to be the work of a prophet, it is difficult not to think that it would have ranked accordingly, and been included with the writings of the other prophets."

In response to this argument, it may first be noted that there are plausible reasons why Daniel may have been included among the writings, even if the book existed before 200 B.C. Among those reasons are the fact that Daniel did not directly prophecy to the people of Israel and in fact served in a foreign court; and that much of the book is taken up with historical narrative. Furthermore, some scholars have in fact suggested that Daniel was originally classified as being among the "Prophets", being moved to the "Writings" in the fourth century A.D. [93] For one thing, the Septuagint translation lists Daniel among the prophets. Furthermore, Josephus and Melito, the bishop of Sardis, both writing in the first century A.D., also list Daniel among the prophets. The early church father Origen (184-253 A.D.) also listed Daniel before Ezekiel and the twelve prophets. Gleason Archer comments [94],

"The Masoretes may have been influenced in this reassignment by the consideration that Daniel was not appointed or ordained as a prophet, but remained a civil servant under the prevailing government throughout his entire career. Second, a large percentage of his writings does not bear the character of prophecy, but rather of history (chaps. 1–6), such as does not appear in any of the books of the canonical prophets. Little of that which Daniel wrote is couched in the form of a message from God to His people relayed through the mouth of His spokesman. Rather, the predominating element consists of prophetic visions granted personally to the author and interpreted to him by angels. (Here a comparison may be drawn with Zechariah, which likewise features a series of visions. But in Zechariah far more emphasis is laid upon God's communicating His message to Israel through a prophetic mouthpiece.) It was probably because of the mixed character of this book, partaking partly of historical narratives and partly of prophetic vision, that the later Jewish scribes relegated it to the third or miscellaneous category in the canon."

To conclude this section, given the plausibility of explanations for Daniel's inclusion in the "Writings" rather than the "Prophets", together with the evidence that suggests that the book of Daniel may well have originally been included in the prophetic division of the Hebrew canon, it seems to me that the argument based on the classification of Daniel is at best only weak evidence for the late date view.

Evidence from Qumran

One of the more weighty arguments for dating Daniel earlier than is popularly supposed by critical scholars concerns the discovery of eight manuscripts of the book among the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves of Qumran. Indeed, one of those manuscripts, 4QDanc, is considered to be among the oldest Biblical manuscripts found at Qumran, being dated to around 120-115 B.C. Frank Moore Cross Jr., who himself assumes that Daniel was composed during the Maccabean period, states that this manuscript is "no more than about a half century younger than the autograph." [95] It is evident that the Qumran community understood Daniel to have been a genuine prophet. In a text known as 4QFlorilegium,

Daniel is placed among the prophets. In column 2, line 3, the text says, before quoting from Daniel 12:10 and 11:32, "As is written in the book of the prophet Daniel…" This uses identical wording to previous quotations from Isaiah and Ezekiel (column 1, lines 15 and 16). To maintain a dating of Daniel's composition of around 164 B.C., therefore, one must postulate that the book of Daniel received a very rapid acceptance as being canonical and as containing genuine prophecy by essentially all of the known Jewish sects in the late Hellenistic and early Herodian periods. Andrew Steinmann notes that [96],

"The probability of this rapid and widespread acceptance of a recent composition is extremely remote. It is made even more remote by the fact that critical scholars often claim that the end of Daniel 11 and the end of Daniel 12 were attempts at genuine prophecy by the author of Daniel, but they proved to be inaccurate. If they were recent and inaccurate (false) prophecies, it is almost impossible to image [sic] that there has survived no record of controversy among Jewish sects about the prophetic status of Daniel. Surely some would have objected that Daniel was a false prophet (cf. Deut 18:20–22) and that the book was only a recent work and a forgery attributed to a much earlier figure from the Babylonian and Persian periods."

Daniel's widespread canonical acceptance during the second century B.C. suggests that the book of Daniel was taken to be genuine prophecy prior to the rise of the Jewish sects following the persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167-164 B.C.). This, by extension, tends to confirm a date of Daniel's composition prior to 164 B.C.

Evidence from the Septuagint

The Septuagint was the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. It was produced in Alexandria in Egypt and came to be widely used by the Jews of the Diaspora. According to the mainstream critical view, a mere thirty years from the composition of Daniel, the book had not only been received as canonical but had made it as far as Alexandria in Egypt, approximately three hundred miles away, and translated into the Greek language. It is often argued by conservatives that such a scenario seems to be rather implausible and thus Daniel's inclusion in the Septuagint tends to suggest a date of composition earlier than is frequently supposed by the higher critics. However, one must once again be cautious not to overstate this evidence. The apocryphal story of Bell and the Dragon was included by the Alexandrian Jews as chapter 14 of the Septuagint translation (though the legend was never accepted by the Jerusalem Jews or by later rabbinical authorities). Thus, at best the inclusion of Daniel in the Greek Septuagint translation by the Alexandrian Jews is only weak evidence for an earlier date.

Evidence from Ben Sira

Jesus son of Sirach (Yeshua ben Sira) was a Hellenistic Jewish scribe who wrote *Sirach*, otherwise known as the book of Ecclesiasticus, usually dated to around 180 B.C. (some fifteen years prior to the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes). Ben Sira's work was discovered in the late nineteenth century in the Cairo synagogue, in a storage area known as the genizah. Ben Sira's lack of mention of the prophet Daniel (though he mentions other prophets) has sometimes been taken to indicate that the book of Daniel had not been composed at the time when the *Sirach* was written. For example, Samuel Rolles Driver asserts [97],

"Jesus, the son of Sirach (writing c. 200 B.C.), in his enumeration of famous Israelites, Ecclus. xliv–1., though he mentions Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and (collectively) the Twelve Minor Prophets, is silent as to Daniel. In view of the remarkable distinctions attained by Daniel, and the faculties displayed by him, according to the Book, the statement in Ecclus. xlix. 15 that no man had ever been born 'like unto Joseph,' seems certainly to suggest that the writer was unacquainted with the narratives respecting Daniel."

Gleason Archer responds to this argument as follows [98]:

"But it should be noted that other important authors like Ezra received no mention earlier. (Nor for that matter did he make mention of such key figures in Hebrew history as Job, or any of the Judges except Samuel, Asa, Jehoshaphat, and

Mordecai. How can such omissions furnish any solid ground for the idea that these leaders were unknown to Jesus ben Sirach? See ZPEB ii 19A.) Critics have also pointed to ben Sirach's statement that there never was a man who was like unto Joseph; and yet, it is alleged, Daniel's career greatly resembled that of Joseph. Note, however, that in none of the particulars specified did Daniel resemble Joseph: "Neither was there a man born like unto Joseph, a governor of his brethren, a stay of the people, whose bones were regarded of the Lord" (Ecclus 49:15)."

Ben Sira is known to be an adapter of earlier material from the Hebrew Bible. It is significant, then, that Solomon Schechter, the first editor of the Hebrew fragments of Ben Sira's work, has identified three verses in Ben Sira that are possible adaptations of the book of Daniel. [99] This is also discussed by Andrew Steinmann. [100]

The first possible use of Daniel is found in Ben Sira 3:30, where we read, "*Righteousness atones for sin* just as water extinguishes a blazing fire." Compare this with Daniel 4:27, where we read, "Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: *break off your sins by practicing righteousness*, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity." The difficulty of comparing these two texts is that, whereas the former is written in Hebrew, the latter is written in Aramaic. Thus, we have to elucidate whether Ben Sira's language appears to be a representation in Hebrew of Daniel's Aramaic. Andrew Steinmann comments [101],

"The question of whether the language of this passage in Ben Sira is drawn from Daniel revolves around the equivalence of Daniel's Aramaic verb, פְּרַק, 'break/tear away,' and Ben Sira's Hebrew verb, כִּפֶּר, 'atone.' Admittedly, פְּרַק is difficult to understand in this context. However, we should note that both the Old Greek and Theodotion translate this verb in Dan 4:24 (ET 4:27) in a way that is similar to the Hebrew verb in Ben Sira. Both Greek versions use λυτρόω, which normally means 'redeem,' but in the context of this verse can only mean 'atone by your actions,' that is, 'your actions will pay the price to redeem you and therefore atone for your sins.'"

Steinmann notes the Old Greek translation of Daniel 4:27, πάσας τὰς ἀδικίας σου ἐν ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι ("Atone for all your unrighteousness with donations to the poor"). Steinmann also cites the rendering of this text by Theodotion, a second century A.D. Jewish scholar who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek: τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐν ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι ("Atone for your sins with donations to the poor"). Steinmann notes that those renderings both interpret the "righteousness" of the Aramaic text to be charitable giving, likely since the verse later alludes to showing mercy to the oppressed. Since this same connection is made by the grandson of Ben Sira, in his translation of Ben Sira 3:30, this, argues Steinmann, confirms the identification of Ben Sira's words with the text of Daniel 4:27. Steinmann concludes [102],

"All of this evidence points in the direction of Ben Sira being dependent on Daniel, not the reverse. We can easily explain the extant texts based on the assumption that Ben Sira, the Greek translation of Ben Sira, and the two Greek translations of Daniel are dependent on the older, original Aramaic text of Daniel. The other scenario is highly improbable: that only fifteen years after Ben Sira was written, Daniel borrowed this thought and transformed its vocabulary into Aramaic, then thirty years later, Ben Sira's grandson interpreted the older Ben Sira 3:30 in light of a younger book of Daniel, and that at about the same time Daniel was translated in the Old Greek with the same understanding. Therefore, we have ancient confirmation that Ben Sira 3:30 does reflect the language of Dan 4:24 (ET 4:27)."

Another parallel suggested by Schechter is between Ben Sira 36:10 and Daniel 8:19; 11:27, 35. This connection has also been recognized by Douglas Fox [103] and Charles Cutler Torrey [104]. These scholars all observe that the collocation of the words קֵץ ("end") and מוֹעֵד ("appointed time") occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible except for Daniel 8:19 and 11:27, 35. The three texts from Daniel are as follows.

- Daniel 8:19: "…for it refers to the appointed time of the end."

- Daniel 11:27: "…for the end is yet to be at the time appointed."

- Daniel 11:35: "…and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time."

Ben Sira 36:10 shows the same collocation of קֵץ ("end") and מוֹעֵד ("appointed time") that we find only in Daniel among the Hebrew Scriptures: "Hasten the end, and remember the appointed time…" Schechter notes that "when the same phrase occurs in one of the canonical writers and in B.S. [Ben Sira], the balance of probability is strongly in favour of the supposition that B.S. was the imitator of the canonical writer and not *vice versa*." [105] This textual parallel, therefore, supports Ben Sira's dependence on Daniel, rather than the other way round.

A final possible parallel to Daniel is found in Ben Sira 36:22, which says, "Listen to the prayers of your servants…" The collocation of the Hebrew words שָׁמַע ("hear"), תְּפִלָּה ("prayer") and עֶבֶד ("servant") is found in the Hebrew Bible only in Daniel 9:17 and Nehemiah 1:6. However, Steinmann points out that "Nehemiah uses the infinitive construct לִשְׁמֹעַ, 'to hear,' whereas Daniel uses the imperative שְׁמַע, 'hear, listen to.' Since the imperfect תשמע, 'may you hear, listen to,' in Ben Sira 36:22 is probably to be understood as an injunction, that is, a request (the Greek translates it with the imperative εἰσάκουσον, 'hear, listen'), Dan 9:17 has a much stronger claim as the source used by Ben Sira. Its syntax more easily aligns with the syntax in Ben Sira, whereas the syntax of Neh 1:6 is much more distant." [106]

As mentioned previously, Ben Sira is known to adapt material from the Hebrew Bible. Apart from other considerations, this tips the balance of probability in favor of Ben Sira being dependent on Daniel rather than the reverse. Furthermore, why would Daniel borrow from Ben Sira in only those three instances? Steinmann notes that [107],

"The parallel in Ben Sira 36:10 to Daniel 8 and 11 could possibly be seen as Daniel adapting an eschatological passage for his own use since his book is eschatologically oriented, and the author of Daniel might have been interested in using another well-respected book to boost his own. However, little reason could be found for adopting the two other passages. Indeed, given the interest in wisdom in the first part of Daniel, one would expect much more borrowing there, especially in the contexts where wisdom is explicitly mentioned. However, we find in Daniel only two other parallels to Ben Sira, and neither in the immediate proximity of references to wisdom. Indeed, Daniel 4 is a different kind of wisdom than found in Ben Sira—wisdom and insight that allow Daniel to interpret dreams, not the proverbial wisdom characteristic of Ben Sira. It seems that Ben Sira is adopting Daniel for his purposes, as he does other biblical books."

Significantly, Ben Sira appears to have drawn even on those chapters (8-12) that are often asserted by critical scholars to be later additions to the book of Daniel. Given his utilization of chapter 4 (which is dated by some scholars earlier than 8-12), Ben Sira seems to have had access to the book of Daniel substantially as we possess it today.

If this conclusion holds, then the book of Daniel has to have predated Ben Sira by sufficiently long to be revered as Scripture by the time of Ben Sira's writing (~180 B.C.). Steinmann notes that [108],

"Even if we were to date Daniel as late as about 300 BC (about as late as possible if it were to become a revered book by Ben Sira's day), the detailed descriptions in Daniel 11 of the reigns of the Ptolemaic kings Ptolemy III through Ptolemy VI and the details of the reigns of the Seleucid kings Antiochus I through Antiochus IV would not have been ex eventu ("after the event") prophecy, since those events had not yet taken place. Yet the book does accurately describe details from the reigns of these kings (see the commentary on Daniel 11). The most logical explanation is that Daniel 11 (and the rest of Daniel) contains actual predictive prophecy revealed to Daniel by God, as the book itself claims."

To conclude this section, I believe these parallels between Daniel and Ben Sira to be quite suggestive, though not conclusive, of Ben Sira's dependence on Daniel (especially in view of Ben Sira's known utilization and adaptation of other portions of the Hebrew Bible). If this is so, then the mainstream critical view of Daniel, which places him in ~164 B.C. cannot be sustained.

Evidence from Ezekiel

Much debate has raged over the identification of the individual named Daniel in the book of Ezekiel. The first reference to this individual occurs in Ezekiel 14:19-20: "Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness." The second reference to this individual occurs in Ezekiel 28:3: "you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you." Ezekiel's prophecy is unquestionably dated to the exilic period in the sixth century B.C. [109] Thus, if Ezekiel is indeed referencing the Biblical Daniel, this would constitute some evidence in support of the traditional dating of Daniel. One argument against identifying this individual with the Biblical Daniel is that it seems unlikely that Ezekiel would list a prophet, contemporary with his own ministry, next to those righteous sages of antiquity. Furthermore, the identification of this individual with the Biblical Daniel requires that the Biblical Daniel was well known to Ezekiel's audience as a paradigm of wisdom and righteousness. This is possible, since Ezekiel 14 was probably written in the late 590s, by which time Daniel would have been present in Babylon for close to fifteen years, being around thirty years of age and having occupied a high court position for a decade. Nonetheless, there is some force to the argument that it seems rather unlikely that a prophet, still alive at the time of writing and so young would be included alongside Noah and Job. Moreover, both Job and Noah were non-Israelites – Job was from Uz (around Edom) and Noah predated Abraham. Ezekiel's individual also has a variant spelling of his name, *dāniʾēl*, whereas that of the book of Daniel is spelled *dāniyyēʾl* (and the Ugaritic figure's name is spelled *danʾel*). However, not much should be made of this in view of other variant spellings of names in Hebrew.

The consensus among contemporary scholars is that the Daniel being referred to here is in fact Dan'el, a mythical king who appears in ancient Ugaritic texts of 1400 B.C. [110] Dan'el is reputed to have "defended the rights of the widow, judged the case of the orphan" (Aqhat 17, v, 7-8; cf. Prov 31,9; Isa 1,17; Keret 16, vi, 33-34). The identification of this figure with the Ugaritic Dan'el, however, is not without its own problems. For one thing, there is no evidence that Dan'el was known to the Jews, much less reputed to be a model of righteousness. Furthermore, in the context of Ezekiel 14:1-11, the prophet is confronting the idolatry of the prince of Tyre. It thus seems implausible that he would have used an idolater as a model of righteousness. As Harold Dressler notes, "It is especially inappropriate to suggest a Baal-devotee, the Ugaritic Dnil, as an exemplarily 'righteous' man." [111] The Ugaritic Dan'el was also not particularly known for his great wisdom, for which our individual is commended in Ezekiel 28:3.

C. John Collins (not to be confused with John J. Collins), identifying this individual with Ugaritic Dan'el, responds to these objections, noting that "the mention of Dan'il in connection with Tyre (Ezek 28:3) seems again to support the Gentile interpretation. Perhaps, as well, Ezekiel knew the Dan'il of the Aqhat story from other sources besides the specific tale found at Ugarit. Further, there is precedent in Gen 14:22 for the LORD accepting the title of a deity worshiped by pious-but-benighted Gentiles; and this is plausible, when we realize that the Ugaritic tale of Aqhat does not recount that he practiced any of the deeds a prophet would find abhorrent." [112]

To conclude this section, my view is that the identification of Ezekiel's Daniel is inconclusive, though I would incline more towards the view that the individual alluded to here is indeed our Biblical Daniel. Nonetheless, given the uncertainty of this identification, the book of Ezekiel offers only weak evidence in support of the traditional dating of Daniel.

Evidence from Josephus

Josephus writes (*Antiquities* 11.336–339) concerning Alexander the Great's annexation of Jerusalem [113],

"And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favors they pleased of him: whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired: and when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired: and when he said to the multitude, that if any of them would

enlist themselves in his army on this condition, that they should continue under the law of their forefathers, and live according to them, he was willing to take them with him, many were ready to accompany him in his wars."

Unfortunately, too many conservative apologists have been willing to accept Josephus' account at face-value. But a story must not be accepted as true simply because it is convenient for our case. One must subject it to the same level of scrutiny that one would apply to a written account that supported the conclusion to which we are less favourable. The reality is that Josephus, writing towards the end of the first century A.D., is describing events that purportedly took place in 332 B.C., more than three centuries before Josephus' life. Josephus is generally not considered to be a particularly reliable source when it comes to events outside of his own era. Paul Maier, in his commentary on Josephus, notes that "All these defects – conceit, inconsistencies, embellishment, exaggeration, credulity, and desultory digressions were widely shared by ancient historians, few of whom brought critical tools to their craft in any modern sense." [114] Regarding Josephus, Maier further notes that "Josephus's accuracy and reliability as a historian have been challenged repeatedly. His free interpretation of his sources and his embellishments of the biblical record have already been cited. That he had a habit of overstating for dramatic purpose is also clear." [115]

Regarding this passage in particular, Cecilia Peek notes that "no surviving non-Jewish source mentions any connection between Alexander and the Jews… It is possible that Alexander visited Jerusalem, but the preserved descriptions of his visit are almost certainly fictional." [116] Jonathan Goldstein further observes that [117],

"None of these legends can be true. Pagan eyewitnesses chronicled Alexander's career, and though their works have perished, later writers were able to draw upon them, particularly Arrian. The pagan authors took pains to record the king's visits to the shrines of non-Greek deities and his participation in their rituals, especially during the years 333-331 B.C.E. when he was in the vicinity of Judaea. Throughout, the pagan Alexander historians tell how the king showed respect to deities, and there is no reason to assume that they would have suppressed a report that Alexander made obeisance to the God of the Jews or even to His high priest. On the other hand, if Alexander had made obeisance to any human being, as related in Josephus and in the rabbinic tale, the fact would have been so astounding that no biographer of the king would have passed over it in silence."

Given the dubious nature of Josephus' claims regarding Alexander the Great and his far-removal from the events, my verdict is that Josephus' statement in the text cited above is of little to no evidential value, and should not be used in making a case for an early dating of Daniel. The debate must be settled on other grounds.

The Textual Unity of Daniel

Because of evidence that tends to support a date for Daniel that is earlier than the Maccabean period, some scholars have argued that the first six chapters of Daniel may in fact date to around the fourth century B.C., while chapters 7-12 may date to the Maccabean period. [118] This is partly because, whereas Daniel 1-6 is written in the third person historical narrative form, Daniel 7 marks a transition to first person, and it is in the ensuing chapters that we read of Daniel's visions and the interpretations provided by the angel. A further feature that links chapter 7 with 8-12 is that the chapter is dated to the first year of Belshazzar (Dan 7:1), though chapter 6 is set in the later time of Darius the Mede. The beginning of chapter 7, then, would be the most natural place to propose to break the text into two distinct compositions. One complicating factor, however, is that, as earlier stated, Daniel is written in two languages – Daniel 1:1-2:3 is written in Hebrew; 2:4-7:28 is written in Aramaic; and chapters 8-12 are written in Hebrew. The transition from Aramaic to Hebrew does not occur at the beginning of chapter 7 (as one might expect on the hypothesis that chapter 7 marks the place of division between authors). Rather, the transition occurs at the beginning of chapter 8. In view of this fact, John J. Collins concedes that "Linguistic considerations neither require unity of authorship for the Aramaic chapters nor, in themselves, warrant a distinction between chap. 7 and the earlier chapters." [119]

A further difficulty with this proposed division of the book is that Daniel 2-7 employs a chiastic structure, a common and well documented ancient literary technique. That is to say, parallels may be identified between chapters 2 and 7;

3 and 6; and 4 and 5. Chapters 2 and 7 both talk about four kingdoms and the coming Messianic kingdom. Chapters 3 and 6 concern the persecution of righteous Jews at the hands of gentile kings (Nebuchadnezzar and Darius respectively). Chapters 4 and 5 concern what happens to gentile rulers who are haughty and arrogant and lose their humility – that is, they are disciplined by God and removed from office. Since chapter 7 forms a part of this chiastic structure, this suggests that chapter 7 is part of the original composition of Daniel. However, if chapter 7 (which more closely resembles both the style and chronology of 8-12 than 1-6) belongs to the original composition of Daniel, then on what basis can one say that chapters 8-12 do not belong to the original composition?

Why, though, would a single author compose the book of Daniel in both Hebrew and Aramaic? Gleason Archer suggests that [120],

"Those portions of Daniel's prophecy which deal generally with Gentile affairs (the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the humiliation of that king in the episode of the fiery furnace and by his seven years of insanity, and also the experiences of Belshazzar and Darius the Mede) were put into a linguistic medium which all the public could appreciate whether Jew or Gentile. But those portions which were of particularly Jewish interest (chaps. 1, 8–12) were put into Hebrew in order that they might be understood by the Jews alone. This was peculiarly appropriate because of the command in chapter 12 to keep these later predictions more or less secret and seal them up until the time of fulfillment (12:9)."

Another issue with proposing a composite authorship is, as Joyce Baldwin notes, "the book bears so little trace of the allegedly differing viewpoints. As a literary work it manifests unity of purpose and design." [121] Even Harold Henry Rowley, who subscribed to the Maccabean dating of Daniel, asserted that "none of the divisive theories can offer an answer to the case for the unity, or avoid greater difficulties and embarrassments than those it seeks to remove." [122] Rowley observed a fondness on the part of the author of Daniel of "resounding lists of words", such as the groups of wise men in 2:2 and the musical instruments in 3:4, 7, 10, 15. Further, "This same feature is found in chapter 7, where we find the phrase 'peoples, nations and tongues', which stands also in chapter 3, and the phrase 'dominion and glory and kingship'. This feature is effective in popular narration, for which the Aramaic chapters were written, but is less suited for the later chapters, which do not appear to have been written for such a purpose. Hence this feature does not mark the last five chapters in the same way." [123] Rowley also argues that [124],

"…it is characteristic of the author that in his repetitions or interpretations he introduces new elements which were not mentioned before. It has already been said that some scholars would eliminate some verses of chapter 2 on the ground that they introduce in the interpretation elements which did not stand in the account of the vision. Similarly, in chapter 7, new elements of the vision are introduced in verse 21 to prepare the way for the interpretation. In the same way in 7:19 we find an additional touch that did not stand in the previous account, in the nails of brass. This does not stand in one of the alleged interpolations, and it is clear that the supposed canon of dissection cannot apply. Ginsberg therefore proposes to apply it in reverse and to insert the reference to 'nails of brass' in 7:7 to make it agree with 7:19. But in 4:30 (E.V. 33), in the account of the fulfilment of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we similarly find something which did not figure in the account of the dream, in the words 'till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws'. Here there can be no question of an interpolator, since no point could be given to these words to explain their insertion as a reference to some historic situation, and there is no reason to insert them into the earlier account. In all of these cases we find a common mind at work, and parallel treatment should be given to them all."

Rowley concludes that "a quality of mind, or mental habit, is not so easily borrowed. Hence the fact that this is found in the oft-severed parts of the book is of the first significance. Not less so is the difficulty of finding any clear division, since the threefold test of language, form, and presumptive authorship yields different results, while chapter 7 will continue to embarrass the dissectors by its refusal to be assigned to either half alone." [125]

John J. Collins, who takes the view that Daniel represents a composition of multiple authors, offers another reason to reject the unity of the book – namely, "There are also discrepancies between the different units of Daniel that give rise to the view that they were originally independent of one another." [126] The first example he notes is that "The

chronological setting of chap. 2 ('the second year of Nebuchadnezzar') is incompatible with the data of chap. 1, according to which Daniel had already completed a training period of three years, which had begun in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar." [127] He notes in a footnote, however, that "Papyrus 967 reads 'twelfth year,' so the authenticity of the reading can be questioned." [128] Personally, I see no problem with supposing that Daniel could have requested an audience with the king, and offered the interpretation of his dream, *during* his three year period of education. This, then, seems to me to be quite a weak argument. Collins continues, "Chapter 3 is anomalous by the fact that it contains no mention of Daniel. It is also anomalous that Belshazzar in chap. 5, allegedly the son of Nebuchadnezzar, appears to be unaware of the existence of Daniel and of the experience of his father." [129] Chapter 3 does indeed curiously omit mention of Daniel. However, it is not at all clear to me how much, if anything, can be drawn from this. Any proposed explanation for why Daniel is not mentioned in this chapter seems to be nothing more than speculation. As for Belshazzar's apparent ignorance of Daniel, this is only problematic if one supposes that Daniel is representing Belshazzar as the literal son of Nebuchadnezzar. However, as discussed earlier in this essay, it is not necessary to read Daniel this way – Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, who served as his father's co-regent. Nabonidus ascended the throne some six years after Nebuchadnezzar. Furthermore, the text in fact indicates that Belshazzar *had* heard of Daniel. In Daniel 5:14-16, Belshazzar says, "*I have heard of you* that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. *But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems.*"

To conclude this section, there is no convincing reason to believe that Daniel 7-12 was composed at a later date than Daniel 1-6. In my assessment, the balance of evidence tends to point the other direction – that is to say, the book of Daniel forms a literary unit that was composed during the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C.

Daniel's Prophecies

The Identity of the Four Nations of Daniel 2 & 7:

If the Maccabean hypothesis is to work, it is necessary to interpret the fourth kingdom, represented in Daniel 2 by the legs of iron of the statue, as the Macedonians or Greeks, founded by Alexander the Great in approximately 330 B.C., since it is presumed on this theory that the book of Daniel does not contain historically fulfilled prophecies that post-date the Maccabean period. To quote John J. Collins, the leading exponent of the Maccabean hypothesis, "Within the chronological restraints of the Book of Daniel, the fourth kingdom can be no later than that of Greece (despite the longstanding tradition that identified it with Rome, beginning with Josephus)." [130] On this theory, the other three kingdoms, represented by the head of gold, the breast of silver, and the belly and thighs of brass are thus interpreted to be the Babylonian, Median, and Persian empires respectively. However, the book of Daniel seems to portray the Medes and Persians as comprising one and the same empire. There is no indication in the text whatsoever that there was ever a Median empire that was distinctive and previous to the Persian Empire.

Chapter 7 concerns the same four nations, symbolized by wild beasts, that are represented in chapter 2, but this text appears to exclude the notion that the second and third empires are Media and Persia. The first kingdom is universally acknowledged to be the kingdom of Babylon. The second kingdom is symbolized in chapter 7 by a bear devouring three ribs. This likely corresponds to the three major conquests of the Medo-Persian empire under Cyrus the Great and Cambyses, against Lydia, Babylon and Egypt. The third empire is symbolized by a leopard possessing four wings and four heads. It is widely known that Alexander the Great's kingdom was, following his death, divided among four of his generals (see discussion of chapter 11 below). However, there is no evidence for a four-fold division of the Persian empire. This suggests that the leopard is intended to symbolize the empire of Greece. The fourth kingdom is symbolized by a ten-horned beast, who is described as being "terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it." (Dan 7:7). The ten horns recall the ten toes of the image of chapter 2, which have a close association with the two legs of iron. This is readily identifiable with the Roman empire, since it was divided into the Eastern and Western Roman empires during the reign of the emperor Diocletian. However, there is no obvious correspondence with the Greek empire.

Another clue as to the identity of the second and third empires is supplied in chapter 8, in which there is a vision of a ram with two horns, one of which is higher than the other (just as Persia overshadowed Media in the Medo-Persian empire). The ram is overthrown by a male goat who at first has a single horn. This single horn was "broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven," (Dan 8:8). Finally, out of those horns sprouted "a little horn" (Dan 8:9), of which it is said that it "grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land," (Dan 8:9). This symbolism corresponds well with Alexander the Great to overthrew the Medo-Persian empire and whose empire, upon his death, was divided into four domains (Macedon, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt), out of which there grew the little horn, namely, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Thus, there is, in my assessment, a strong case for identifying the four kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7 with the four empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. On the flip side of the coin, the interpretation compelled by the Maccabean theory results in unnecessary discrepancies in the text.

Who is the Anointed One of Daniel 9?

The identity of the anointed one / Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ) who is "cut off" (an idiom meaning killed) in Daniel 9:26 has been subject to much debate. The text reads,

25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

Christians have long identified the anointed one / Messiah in this text with Jesus of Nazareth and "the people of the prince who is to come" as the armies of the Roman general Titus who, in 70 A.D. destroyed the city and temple in Jerusalem. Most critical scholars have instead offered the identification of the slain anointed one with the high priest Onias III who was displaced by his brother Jason in 172 B.C., before being assassinated by Menelaus in 171 B.C. However, this hypothesis fails to account for the statement that the purpose of those seventy weeks is to "finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place," (Dan 9:24). These goals are associated elsewhere in Scripture with the Messianic mission. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 speaks about God's Messianic Servant dying vicariously to atone for the sins of the unrighteous. The description of the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14 comports extremely well with descriptions of the Messianic figure elsewhere in Scripture, suggesting that our author is familiar with those themes. The statement, then, that "an anointed one shall be cut off" fits well with this intertextual background.

Critics have also interpreted the prince who is said to destroy the city and sanctuary not as the Roman general Titus but rather Antiochus IV Epiphanes. However, as Joyce Baldwin notes, "Commentators who argue that Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled this prophecy are at a loss to account for the fact that he destroyed neither the temple nor the city of Jerusalem, though undoubtedly much damage was done (1 Macc. 1:31, 38)." [131] Andrew Steinmann further observes, "The 'strong covenant' of [9:]27 has always been difficult to find within the scope of Antiochus' political activity. And, the ultimacy of such statements as 'to put an end to sin' and 'to bring in everlasting righteousness' [9:24] seems to strike a discordant note when one places them against the background of the Hasmonean struggle." [132]

It should be acknowledged here that it is grammatically possible to interpret Daniel 9:25-26 as concerning two anointed ones. But this is of little consequence. Michael Brown points out, "If Daniel 9:24–27 speaks of only one anointed one who lived and died in the first century C.E....that anointed one is Yeshua. If Daniel 9:24–27 speaks of two anointed ones, one living in the fifth century B.C.E. and the other living and dying in the first century C.E., the second one is Yeshua." [133]

A more difficult challenge to the conservative view is verse 27, which says, "he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering." This is usually interpreted by conservative commentators to refer to the eschatological antichrist, a hypothesis which I think is quite *ad hoc* because the antichrist has not been a theme in this text at all and is not a plausible antecedent of the pronoun. More plausible

is the identification of this individual with the Messiah. Andrew Steinmann, who takes this view, notes that "The preposition לְ on לָרַבִּים serves as a dative of advantage, 'for the benefit/sake of the many.' 'Many' does not imply a limited atonement. Rather, it points to the messianic covenant as one that will include many peoples from many nations, not just Israel." [134] This too is consistent with the picture of the Messiah elsewhere in Scripture, as "a light for the nations" (Isa 42:6; 49:6) as well as what Daniel says concerning the Son of Man (Dan 7:13-14). The Messiah is also said to form a covenant in Zechariah 9:11. Steinmann also points out that "Similarly רַבִּים, 'many,' occurs five times (Is 52:14, 15; 53:11, 12 [twice]) in the fourth Suffering Servant Song (Is 52:13–53:12) and designates the beneficiaries of the Servant's sacrificial atonement and resurrection. Jesus alludes to those verses in Isaiah and Dan 9:27 when he speaks of giving his life as 'a ransom for many' (Mt 20:28) and of his blood 'poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Mt 26:28; see also Rom 5:15)." [135] On this view, the statement in the second half of verse 27, "And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator," can be plausibly interpreted as concerning an individual other than the figure who forms the covenant in the first half of the verse.

The Prophecies of Daniel 11:

Without question, Daniel 11 is the single most prophetic text of the entire Bible, with well over one hundred fulfilled predictive prophecies in only thirty-five verses. In this section, I will review those prophecies and discuss how they have found their fulfilment in the course of world history. For each verse, I shall provide the text in bold font and offer my comments underneath.

2 And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.

These three kings that arose in Persia following Cyrus were Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), Bardiya / Smerdis (died 522 B.C.), and Darius I Hystaspes (522-486 B.C.). The fourth was Xerxes I, referred to in the book of Esther as Ahasuerus. Xerxes' failed military campaign against Greece (481-479 B.C.) marked the beginning of the end for Persia, which eventually fell to Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

3 Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills. 4 And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.

The mighty king referred to here is Alexander the Great, who came to the throne of Macedon in 336 B.C. He came to conquer the territory from Turkey to India, making him ruler of the largest empire ever known at that time. Following Alexander's death from a fever in 323 B.C., Alexander's kingdom was divided among four of his generals (Cassander, Ptolemy, Antigonus, and Seleucus). The four major divisions of Alexander's empire centred around Macedon and Greece; Thrace; Syria and the east; and Egypt.

5 "Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority. 6 After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported her in those times.

The titles "king of the south" and "king of the north" are generic terms that refer respectively to the occupant of the Ptolemaic throne in Egypt and the Seleucid throne in Syria and Babylonia. The first king of the south is Ptolemy I. Though he served as ruler in Egypt from 322 B.C., Ptolemy I only declared himself king in 305 B.C. Our text indicates that "one of his princes shall be stronger than he." This refers to Seleucus I. In 316 B.C., Antigonus attacked Babylonia, and Seleucus fled to Egypt and served there as a general of Ptolemy. Antigonus' army was defeated in 312 B.C. at Gaza by Seleucus and Ptolemy. Seleucus was thus able to regain control of Babylon and also conquer the rest of Antigonus' empire. Thus, Seleucus' kingdom was greater than that of Ptolemy. Palestine itself, however, continued to be controlled through the third century by the Ptolemies – which continued to cause conflict between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires.

Verse 6 indicates that "After some years they shall make an alliance…" In approximately 250 B.C., Ptolemy II gave his daughter Berenice in marriage to Antiochus II, in an attempt to restore relationships with the Seleucid empire. Antiochus II himself had divorced his first wife, Laodice and had prevented their sons Seleucus and Antiochus from succeeding him to the throne. Daniel indicates that "she will not retain the strength of her arm." This reflects Antiochus II's return to his former wife Laodice after two years. In 246 B.C., Antiochus II died (it has been suggested that he was poisoned by Laodice). Laodice also had Berenice and her son assassinated, along with a number of her attendants. That same year, Berenice's father also died.

7 "And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail. 8 He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. 9 Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.

"A branch from her roots" refers to Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III, who succeeded to the throne of their father in Egypt. Daniel indicates that "He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail" (v. 7). Indeed, prompted by the events described above relating to his sister, nephew, and his kingdom's subjects, Ptolemy III invaded the Seleucid empire and took control of significant regions of Syria, including Seleucia and Antioch. He had Laodice killed, thereby avenging his sister Bernice's death, and returned to Egypt with much spoil, as prophesied in verse 8 of our text. However, in spite of his victories, Ptolemy did not continue on in his conquest of the Seleucid empire. He was in fact forced to leave the throne there to the son of Antiochus II by Laodice, called Seleucus II, and return to Egypt to deal with a domestic uprising. Thus, there was no military conflict between the two empires for two years, until 242 B.C. when, in accord with verse 9, Seleucus II tried to invade Egypt but was forced to retreat, his army annihilated.

10 "His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. 11 Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. 12 And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail.

Seleucus II was succeeded by his son Seleucus III (226-223 B.C.). He was killed during a campaign in Turkey, and succeeded by Seleucus II's other son, Antiochus III (223-187 B.C.). Antiochus III recaptured Seleucia in 219 B.C. He also embarked on a conquest of Palestine and captured a significant part of it. Our text indicates that "Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand," (v. 11). In 217 B.C., Ptolemy IV (221-203 B.C.) sent an army to Raphia (the Egyptian stronghold on the Palestinian border) to fight against Antiochus III. Polybius (*Histories* 5.79) indicates that Antiochus had 62000 infantry against Ptolemy's 70,000; 6000 cavalry against Ptolemy's 5000; and 102 war elephants against Ptolemy's 73. Antiochus III was defeated by Ptolemy and lost more than 14,000 soldiers. Ptolemy, content with having regained Phoenicia and Palestine, made peace with Antiochus III.

13 For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies. 14 "In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail. 15 Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand.

Our text says, "For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies," (v. 13). For the ensuing fourteen years, Antiochus III campaigned in Turkey and the East, reacquiring most of the old Seleucid empire, thereby earning the title of Antiochus the Great. Forming an alliance with Philip V of Macedon, Antiochus III raised an even greater army to invade the Ptolemaic kingdom. Our text continues, "In those times many shall rise against the king of the south," (v. 14a). From 207 A.D., there were native Egyptian rebellions against Ptolemaic rule. Polybius (*Histories* 5.107) suggests this was a result of the encouragement of the Egyptian morale by the victory of the Egyptians over Antiochus. Ptolemy IV died

under mysterious circumstances and was succeeded by Ptolemy V (203-181 B.C.), his infant son. However, the ruler in effect was Agathocles, who had been a chief minister under Ptolemy IV. His oppressive governorship provoked insurrection and his assassination.

Our text continues, "and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfil the vision, but they shall fail," (v. 14b). This period was characterized by friction within the Jewish community. Though the high priest was endowed with both political and religious authority, Onias II had been compelled to share power with his brother-in-law Tobias, and the Tobiads came to have significant political clout in Jerusalem. Whereas the Tobiads were pro-Egyptian, the Oniads were anti-Egyptian. The "violent among your own people", of which Daniel speaks may refer to the Oniads participating in the resistance against the king of the south, alluded to in verse 14a. Alternatively, and I think more likely, Daniel's allusion may be to the Tobiads and their participation in resistance against the Seleucids (though they failed to thwart Antiochus' conquest of Palestine, as implied by our text). Verse 15 refers to Antiochus' defeat in 198 B.C. of Scopas at the Battle of Panium. This battle marked the end of Ptolemaic rule in Judea.

16 But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hand. 17 He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage. 18 Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him. 19 Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

As per verse 16, Antiochus III took control of Phoenicia and Palestine, including the region of Judea. He also took Cilicia, Lycia, and Caria that had hitherto been under Egyptian governance. Though he was in a position to invade Egypt, he feared intervention by Rome. Thus, in 197 B.C. Antiochus III made peace with Egypt, and gave his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy V, hoping through her to advance his plans for Egypt. However, Cleopatra was loyal to her husband Ptolemy V, and encouraged an alliance between Egypt and Rome. This frustrated Antiochus' plans for Egypt.

Meanwhile, Antiochus III continued his assaults on Egyptian strongholds of Asia Minor, invading Macedon, Thrace, and Greece. He, however, suffered two defeats by the Romans in 191 and 190 B.C. at Thermophylae and near Smyrna respectively. Antiochus III thus became a Roman vassal. His younger son, who would later succeed his father as Antiochus IV, was taken as a hostage to Rome.

Our text then indicates, "Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found," (v. 19). Antiochus III went back to Syria and was assassinated in 187 B.C. by Elymais while trying to steal from the treasury of one of his own deities, Bel, in order to pay tribute to the Romans that had been imposed following his defeat.

20 "Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle.

This verse refers to Antiochus III's immediate successor Seleucus IV who made it his primary objective to pay the tribute that had been imposed on his father by the Romans. His finance minister was named Heliodorus, and he attempted to pillage the temple treasury in Jerusalem. Seleucus IV died in 175 B.C. Appianus of Alexandria asserts that Heliodorus plotted the assassination and that Antiochus, Seleucus' younger brother (now returning from Rome), was involved (Appian, Syriaca 45).

21 In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. 22 Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. 23 And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. 24 Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.

The king in view here is Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.). The successor of Seleucus IV (Antiochus' brother) ought to have been his eldest son, Demetrius I. However, in 175 B.C. he had been sent to Rome to replace Antiochus as a hostage. Thus, Antiochus seized power in Syria. As Daniel prophesied, the armies of Egypt were swept away by the invading forces of Antiochus. In 171 B.C., Onias III, the high priest in Israel (identified in verse 22 as "the prince of the covenant"), was assassinated by his own brother Menelaus, who was a defector, at the request of Antiochus.

Antiochus forged an alliance with Ptolemy VI Philometer over his rival Ptolemy VII Euergetes II, deceitfully plotting to acquire more power in Egypt. Our text indicates that "he shall become strong with a small people." Indeed, with a small army Antiochus was able to conquer Memphis, in addition to the rest of Egypt, all the way to Alexandria.

Under the guise of friendship, Antiochus plundered the wealthiest regions of Egypt that he could, acquiring support by offering lavish gifts. Meanwhile, he formed plans to take over Egypt.

25 And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. 26 Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. 27 And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed. 28 And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.

Antiochus attacked Ptolemy VI Philometer (v. 25), who was betrayed by trusted counsellors (v. 26a) who led him to invade Syria, with a view towards bringing about his death. But Philometer and was captured alive by Antiochus. Antiochus feigned assistance to reinstate Philometer to the throne of Egypt, which was now occupied by Ptolemy Euergetes. However, at the conference, both kings lied. Philometer was established by Antiochus as king at Memphis, while Euergetes was king at Alexandria. Philometer and Euergetes agreed on a joint rule, thereby frustrating Antiochus. Verse 28 concerns Antiochus' assault against the Jerusalem temple and profanation of the sacrificial system.

29 "At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. 30 For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

Antiochus returned to complete his conquest of Egypt, though this time with quite different results. This time he had to contend with the ships of Kittim (the ancient name of Cyprus). "Kittim" came to designate coastlands around the Mediterranean, in particular Rome. Rome formed a coalition with the Ptolemies in order to fight Antiochus. Antiochus was met by a Roman commander outside Alexandria and given a letter from the Roman Senate, requesting that he return home, relinquishing all claims on Egypt. Not desiring to risk war with Rome but also not wanting to comply with this demand, Antiochus stalled. The Roman commander drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and strongly urged him to give his response before stepping outside of the circle. He was forced to withdraw. He dispatched his chief tax collector to Jerusalem who plundered the city and put local residents to death. He also rewarded Jewish supporters of Hellenism. Later that year, Greek troops profaned the temple and put a stop to burnt offering and offering a pig sacrifice on the alter (presumably the abomination that makes desolate).

32 He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. 33 And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. 34 When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, 35 and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

These verses concern the Jews who remained loyal to God, standing steadfast on their firm convictions, preferring to suffer martyrdom rather than compromise. Judas Maccabeus famously led a revolt against Antiochus, and, despite being outmatched, was ultimately successful in overthrowing him and rededicating the temple.

36 "And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. 37 He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. 38 He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. 39 He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.

The text indicates that Antiochus will "exalt himself and magnify himself above every god," (v. 36). There is plausibly an allusion here to Antiochus' title, as some of his coins were minted with the inscription, *BASILEŌS ANTIOCHOU THEOU EPIPHANOUS* ("Antiochus the King, God Manifest"), together with a star above the king's head. The text may also allude to his plundering of temples of various gods and suppression of religions other than his own. Indeed, so pretentious was Antiochus that Polybius says of him that he was "nicknamed from his actions Epimanes (the Madman)" (Histories 26.1). [136] The statement that he "shall speak astonishing things against the god of gods" (v. 36) presumably alludes to his proclamations suppressing the worship of Yahweh. Our text indicates that "he shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers," (v. 37a), which may allude to Antiochus replacing Apollo by Zeus, whom he promoted as the Seleucid deity, as reflected in the coinage. John J. Collins comments that, "Daniel construes this preference to imply neglect of all other gods. This is probably deliberate polemical distortion, to depict the impiety of the king in the most extreme terms possible." [137] A fact that does not correlate so well with these verses is the statement by Livy that Antiochus made extravagant gifts to cities and temples such that he acquired a reputation among the Greeks for piety (Liv., 41 20.4). Thus, it must be admitted that, though the prophecies of 11:36-39 are fulfilled in a general manner, there are also difficulties in correlating certain aspects with the history.

"The one beloved by women", whom Antiochus is said not to honour (v. 37b), is difficult to interpret, and may be a reference to Tammuz-Adonis, since Ezekiel 8:14 says, "Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD, and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." However, as Carol Newsom states, this identification would be surprising, "since there is no evidence that this deity ever had any standing with the Seleucid dynasty." [138]

The statement that "He shall honour the god of fortresses instead of these" is probably referring again to Zeus' replacement of Apollo. Carol Newsom notes that to describe Zeus as "a god whom his fathers did not know" is not strictly true, since "The Seleucid dynasty supported the temples and cults of various important deities in their empire." [139] She suggests that "The phraseology here, however, echoes Deut 13:13 (14), where an Israelite town that worships alien gods 'whom you have not known' is subjected to annihilation (cf. also Deut 32:16–17). Thus Antiochus's veneration of other gods besides the ancestral god of the Seleucid dynasty is framed within the Jewish prohibition of promiscuous worship and cast as a religious horror." [140]

Verse 39 indicates that "Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honour. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price." This refers to Antiochus' reward of Jews who acknowledge Antiochus and the foreign god that he favours. This is supported by 1 Maccabees 2:15-18, in which we read that the king's officers instructed Mattathias to "be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles and the people of Judah and those that are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons will be numbered among the Friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honoured with silver and gold and many gifts."

40 "At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. 41 He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. 42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. 44 But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. 45 And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

Verse 40 is generally regarded by the majority of critical scholars to mark the transition from *ex eventu* prophecy to a genuine (though erroneous) attempt at prophecy. If the referent of the pronoun in verse 40 is understood to be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, it is impossible to harmonize this text with the known career of Antiochus. Not only is the text silent concerning Antiochus' eastern campaign in 165 B.C. or the rededication of the Jerusalem temple in 164 B.C., but there was never any third war between Antiochus and Egypt, and Antiochus died not in Judea but in Syria (Polybius, Histories 31.9). This is the basis for the current scholarly consensus that the book of Daniel was written in the year 164 B.C. James Montgomery writes of these verses, "The alleged final victorious war with Egypt, including the conquest of the Cyrenaica and Ethiopia, in face of the power of Rome and the silence of secular history, is absolutely imaginary. All attempts to place the scene of the king's actual death as accurately foretold in v. 45 are based on misunderstandings, of long inheritance." [141] In a similar vein, Carol Newsom notes, "Since the author of Dan 11 does not seem to know about Antiochus's actual campaign in the East in late 165, the rededication of the temple by Judah the Maccabee in December of 164, or the death of Antiochus in Elam at about that same time, it seems that the author of Daniel wrote this prophecy sometime before those events." [142]

Conservative commentators have tended to identify the eschatological antichrist as the referent of those verses. [143] In defense of this view, Joyce Baldwin comments [144],

"Biblical prophecy regularly exhibits this characteristic of telescoping the future, so that the more distant event appears to merge with the nearer so as to become indistinguishable from it. The best-known passage in which this telescoping features is the discourse of Jesus in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, where he speaks both of the fall of Jerusalem and of the end of this age. Only after the former event had taken place did it become possible to distinguish which passages applied to the events of AD 70, and which were predictions of the more distant future. The common factors in judgment, whenever it takes place, and the similarity between the methods of one tyrant and another, account for the apparent homogeneity of the chapter."

Indeed, this sort of telescoping is observed in Old Testament texts as well (such as the conflation in Isaiah and Jeremiah of prophecies concerning the return from exile and the revealing of the Messiah). One may also note that the identities of the 'king of the north' and 'king of the south' shifts throughout the chapter. However, I worry that this interpretation of Daniel 11:40-45 is rather far-fetched. John Goldingay rightly points out that "The 'him' again presupposes that 'the northern king' is the same person as that in vv 21–39. There is no hint of a transition to Antichrist." [145] John J. Collins adds, "'The time of the end' here has the same meaning as in 11:35: the period when the crisis comes to its resolution… There is nothing to indicate a change of subjects from the preceding passage, so there can be no doubt that the reference is to Antiochus." [146] Even the evangelical commentator Tremper Longman III, who interprets these verses as referring to the antichrist, admits that "The difficulty is that there is no clear transitional statement between verses 35 and 36 or later between verses 39 and 40. In the earlier part of the chapter, there are clear signals that the narrator moves from one king to the next (cf. vv. 2, 7, 20–21), but not in the present section. Here we have the primary textual reason why we cannot simply rule out of court the argument that verses 36–45 continue the 'prophecy' of Antiochus Epiphanes." [147]

Virtually every conservative commentator I have been able to read interprets those verses in reference to the antichrist, which is a good indication that this is a genuine difficulty for the traditional position. The only alternative hypothesis that I have encountered in my reading of the literature was put forward by William B. Nelson, who suggests the following option, which he contends is "the most compelling" interpretation [148]:

"The verses are not intended as prophecy but as a hope for what would happen to this wicked king who persecuted God's people. They are words of judgment on an evil oppressor, a denunciation of Antiochus and a call for heaven to answer by bringing justice. They are an expression of faith in a God who cannot allow such evil to continue unabated. They are the voice of an apocalyptic visionary who expected Antiochus to die in the holy land, who expected deliverance to come from above, and who expected the kingdom of God to arrive in his lifetime. In fact, Antiochus died in Persia; the deliverance of Jerusalem came from the Maccabean revolt; and the kingdom of God has still not appeared in its fullness. Yet, the author of Daniel is not a false prophet, because the literary genre is not prophecy. It is more akin to the imprecatory psalms, where the psalmist is pronouncing curses on a wicked fiend, so he is not really claiming to

predict the future under the influence of the Holy Spirit. As Lucas explains, 'This would then be not so much a prediction as a promise to the reader that Antiochus will meet an end befitting his blasphemous arrogance and his acts against God and against those who are faithful to God' (Lucas, Decoding Daniel, p. 293). Or, perhaps they are predictions, albeit human conjecture based on what the author thinks will happen according to certain Scriptures he is considering."

The problem with this proposal is that these verses are clearly intended by the author to be a continuation of the verses preceding, which are quite obviously put forward as divinely inspired predictive prophecy. And the Biblical qualification for being a true prophet of God was a perfect track-record of successful prediction (Deut 18:21-22).

This text, in my assessment, is therefore one of the more difficult challenges to the traditional dating of Daniel. As Tremper Longman III rightly concedes, "Anyone who does not acknowledge a difficulty here is a polemicist in the worst possible sense. That is, he or she knows better that this is a difficult passage one way or the other, and not to acknowledge the difficulty and not to allow for tolerance for the other view is simply bad faith." [149]

As to my own view of how this text should be approached, I tend to think that postulating scribal interpolation may be less *ad hoc* than the alternative solutions proposed above. There is no independent evidence to support this contention, but it may be warranted if the case for Daniel's authenticity is sufficiently strong. It should be noted also that many scholars who subscribe to the Maccabean hypothesis also seek to divide the text in view of considerations that point to an earlier date of composition of at least some parts, though there is no compelling independent reason to do this (see my discussion of the unity of Daniel above). Recall that positing *ad hoc* auxiliary hypotheses to account for difficult data is not always bad scholarly practice, provided one is prepared to admit that one's thesis has taken a probabilistic hit. [150]

Conclusion: The Evidential Value of Daniel's Prophecies

To conclude the analysis of this essay, it is my view that the evidence here adduced is, on balance, significantly more consistent with a traditional sixth century dating of Daniel than a late dating of Daniel. This is particularly the case when the historical and linguistic data are considered cumulatively. Nonetheless it should be candidly recognized that there remain outstanding problems and questions. Scholars who hold to the second century date should not be dismissed as doing so solely as a consequence of an anti-supernatural bias, since evidence may be adduced in support of their position as well. Because the evidence for an early date raises the probability that Daniel's many specific prophecies are genuinely predictive, which in turn raises the probability that Christianity is true, evidence for an early date may be taken as evidence directly supportive of Christianity. It is not necessary to have certainty of the date of composition in order for Daniel's prophecies to carry evidential value. In the absence of certainty, the evidential force of Daniel's prophecies is merely reduced. Thus, Daniel's prophecies may legitimately be used as evidence for Christianity, provided that one's audience is given the proper nuance and made aware of the complexities surrounding the debate on the dating of Daniel.

Footnotes

[1] Jerome, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Gleason L. Archer Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958), 15.

[2] Uriel da Costa, *Sobre a mortalidade da alma* (Amsterdam, 1624).

[3] John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), xxxix–xl.

[4] Michael S. Heiser, *The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0*, Number 53, Q&A 3, July 13, 2015. https://nakedbiblepodcast.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Transcript-53-QA-3.pdf

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