Chapter 3

Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel (Dan 2)

Chapter 2, the chapter where MT switches to Aramaic, is a mix of the book of Daniel's two genres. An apocalyptic dream interpretation is framed by a court contest tale. As we shall see, this chapter's connections to the rest of the book of Daniel as a whole have prompted a remarkable amount of editorial activity, resulting in a highly layered text.

1 Comparative Reconstruction

OG vv. 18–19 read τὸν χυρίον τοῦ υψίστου and τῶν χυρίων τῶν υψίστων ‘the Lord Most High’ instead of MT and 4QDan⁰ 3 i:n’s אלה שבעי ‘the god of heaven’. Segal argues that the Greek reading is original and reflects a Vorlage like אלהא עליא.¹ MT and 4QDan⁰ then reflect assimilation to the title used in vv. 37, 44, where OG also has δ χυρίς το υψίστου ‘the Lord of heaven’ and δ θεός το υψίστου ‘the god of heaven’, respectively.

Against MT v. 20’s אלהא רבא ‘(the) god’, 4QDan⁰ 3 i: reads אלהא עליא ‘the great god’, in agreement with OG v. 20 τὸν χυρίον τοῦ μεγάλου ‘the great Lord’. No motivation for the addition of רבא is clear, so MT may reflect homoioteleuton.

Against MT v. 23’s כיבריה ‘strength’, 4QDan⁰ 3 i:5 reads כיבריה. Based on comparison with OG φρόνησιν ‘intelligence’, we may restore this as כיבריה ‘illumination’. MT has been assimilated to v. 20, where all three witnesses read (a translation of) כיבריה ‘strength’.

Against MT v. 24’s ‘went in to’, QDan⁰ 3 i:6 reads לע על ‘to’ just once, agreeing with OG. MT reflects dittography.

Against MT v. 25’s יהודא ‘Judah’, 4QDan⁰ 3 i:8 reads יהודא הJudahites’, which is more similar to OG τῶν οικουμένων τῆς Ιουδαίας ‘the sons of Judea’ than to MT. MT’s reading could be assimilated to the similar expression occurring in Dan 5:13, 6:13. Neither of these occurs in OG or has been preserved in 4QDan⁰, however, so we cannot know whether יהודא is any more original there. Still, we may tentatively adopt the reading of ‘the Judahites’.

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¹ Segal, Dreams, Riddles, and Visions, 37–41. Segal suggests alternative phrasings as well.
4QDan a 17:12 attests an extra מ compared to MT in a context which based on OG v. 28 βασιλεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ζήσῃ ‘O king, you shall live forever!’ should be restored as מְלָכָה לְעוֹלָם וְיִזְרָעֶל ‘O king, live forever!’ MT has most likely deleted this phrase as it does not occur at the beginning of the speech addressed to the king, as it does elsewhere. Alternatively, we could interpret the phrase as a secondary addition to 4QDan a and OG that was made to harmonize this chapter with other speeches in Daniel. But this leaves unexplained why the phrase does not occur as the speaker’s opening words. 4QDan a and OG are probably more original here.

At the end of the sentence corresponding to MT v. 40, 4QDan a 5:9 reads כל ארעא ‘all the earth’, which MT lacks. OG πᾶσα ἡ γῆ ‘all the earth’ agrees with this plus. It is hard to see how this phrase would have been added to 4QDan a and OG. Hence, the minus in MT is probably secondary. It may reflect an atypical case of haplography, where מָרָעָה כִּלּוֹתָן וְחַיֶּם מְלָכָה ‘merits all these, it will crush and pulverize the whole earth’ was changed to מָרָעָה כִּלּוֹתָן וְחַיֶּם מְלָכָה ‘... pulverizes all these, it will crush and pulverize the whole earth’ because the repeated letter sequence מָרָעָה כִּלּוֹתָן וְחַיֶּם מְלָכָה… instead of מָרָעָה כִּלּוֹתָן וְחַיֶּם מְלָכָה… led the scribe to believe that he had already copied these words.

Also in v. 40, OG has πᾶσα δέντρα ‘every tree’ reflecting כל אלין instead of MT’s כל אלין ‘all these’; the latter makes better sense in context, as it refers back to the different kinds of metal, so OG probably reflects metathesis or defective spelling in the Vorlage. 2

Hartman and Di Lella note that MT v. 40 המרותדת די מורעע is missing from the versions, including those that are closest to MT. 3 4QDan a 5:9 attests the last word, as we have seen. Reconstructing a text with the first two words missing, כל כִּלּוֹתָן hodham חָסָר כל המרותדת כל אלין ‘as iron crushes and pounds everything and pulverizes all these’, can account for all the variants, with MT adding ‘and like iron which’ for clarity.

OG v. 41 lacks the mention of ‘toes’ (MT: זָעָבָתָן ‘and the toes’). Collins and Newsom state that 4QDan a probably lacks the space to include this phrase. 4 In MT, it can be explained as a secondary harmonization with v. 42.

This leaves us with the following reconstructed archetype:

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2 The possibility of defective spelling was suggested to me by Alexey Yuditsky.
3 Hartman and Di Lella, Daniel, 141.
4 Collins, Daniel, 151; Newsom, Daniel, 63.
2 And in year two of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams, and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep happened over him. 2 And the king ordered to call the magicians and the sorcerers and the diviners and the Chaldaeans to tell the king his dreams, and they came and took their stand before the king. 3 And the king said to them: “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.” 4 And the Chaldaeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream so that we may relate the meaning.” 5 The king spoke, saying to the Chaldaeans: “The matter is determined as far as I am concerned: if you do not let me know the dream and its meaning, you will be made into limbs and your houses will be turned into ruins. 6 But if you relate the dream and the meaning, you will receive gifts, presents, and great honour from me. Just relate the dream and its meaning.” 7 They spoke a second time, saying: “Let the king tell his servants the dream so that we may relate its meaning.” 8 The king spoke, saying: “I know for certain that you are buying the season, since you have seen that the matter is determined as far as I am concerned. 9 For if you do not let me know the dream, your sentence is the same as if you planned to tell me something false and corrupt until the season changes. Just tell me the dream and I will know that you can relate its meaning to me.” 10 The Chaldaeans spoke to the king, saying: “There is no man on earth who could relate the king's matter, since no great king or potentate has asked something like this of any magician or sorcerer or Chaldaean. 11 And the matter the king is asking is difficult, and there
is no other who can relate it to the king, only the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

¹² Thereupon the king grew wroth and very angry and ordered to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³ And the law came out and the wise men were to be killed, and Daniel and his friends were going to be killed.

¹⁴ Then, Daniel returned advice and a report to Arioch, the chief butcher of the king who had gone out to massacre the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁵ He spoke to Arioch, the official of the king, saying: “Why is the law so harsh from the king?” Then Arioch let Daniel know the matter. ¹⁶ And Daniel went in and asked of the king that he would be given time and to tell the king the meaning.

¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house and let his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah know the matter. ¹⁸ And to ask mercy from the Highest God concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed together with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹ Then, the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night; then, Daniel blessed the Highest God. ²⁰ Daniel spoke, saying: “Let the name of the great God be blessed from eternity and until eternity, to whom belong wisdom and strength! ²¹ And he changes the seasons and the times, makes kings pass away and sets up kings, gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who know understanding. ²² He reveals deep and hidden things, knows what is in darkness, and the light resides with him. ²³ You, O god of my fathers, I thank and praise, for you have given me wisdom and illumination, and now, you have let me know what we asked of you, for you have let us know the king’s matter.” ²⁴ Thereupon, Daniel went in went to Arioch, whom the king had commanded to destroy
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25 Then, Arioch hastily presented Daniel to the king, and thus he said to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Present me to the king and I will tell the king the meaning.” 26 The king spoke to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, saying: “Can you really let me know the dream I saw and its meaning?” 27 Daniel spoke to the king, saying: “The mystery that the king asks—wise men, sorcerers, magicians, dream interpreters were not able to tell the king. 28 But there is a god in heaven, a revealer of mysteries, and he has let King Nebuchadnezzar know what will happen at the end of days. O king, live forever! Your dream and the visions of your head on your bed is this:

29 You, O king—your thoughts on your bed had turned to what will happen after this, and the Revealer of Mysteries has let you know what will happen. 30 As for me, this mystery was not revealed to me through any wisdom that is in me over all the living, but only so that they would let the king know the meaning and you would know the thoughts of your mind. 31 You, O king, saw a big statue—that statue was great and its brightness was intense—standing before you, and its look was terrifying. 32 That statue—its head was of fine gold, its chest and its arms were of silver, its belly and its hips were of bronze, 33 its legs were of iron, its feet, some of them were of iron and some of them were of clay. 34 You saw that a stone came loose without hands and hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 Then at once the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed and became like chaff from the
And the wind took them away, and no place was found for them. And the stone that had struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. ³⁶ This was the dream, and let us tell the king its meaning. ³⁷ You, O king, are the king of kings, whom the God of Heaven has given kingship, power and strength, and honour. ³⁸ And wherever human beings, wild animals, and the birds of the sky live he has given into your hand, and he has given you authority over all of them. You are its head of gold. ³⁹ And after you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to you, and another, a third kingdom of bronze, which will have authority over the whole earth. ⁴⁰ And there will be a fourth kingdom, strong like iron; as iron crushes and pounds everything and like iron that pulverizes all these, it will crush and pulverize the whole earth. ⁴¹ And that you saw the feet and the toes, some of them potter’s clay and some of them iron: it will be a divided kingdom, but some of the nature of iron will be in it, as you saw the iron mixed with muddy clay. ⁴² And the toes of the feet, some of them iron and some of them clay: some of the kingdom will be strong and some of it will be weak. ⁴³ That you saw the iron mixed with muddy clay: they will mix human seed, but they will not stick together, look, as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings, the God of Heaven will establish a kingdom which will never pass away, and its kingship will not depart to another people, and it will put all these kingdoms to an end, but it will remain forever, ⁴⁵ as you saw that a stone came loose from a mountain without hands and crushed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. A great god
2 Internal Reconstruction

The reconstructed text above contains a great number of literary tensions and inconsistencies:

a) ‘Nebuchadnezzar’ is spelled נבכדנצר without waw in v. 1, but he is referred to as מלכת נבוכדנצר ‘King Nebuchadnezzar’, spelled with waw, in vv. 28, 46. Mostly, he is simply referred to as ‘the king’.

b) ‘It was disturbed’ is a hitpaʿel ותתפרעה in v. 1 but a niphʿal ותתפרעה in v. 3.

c) In vv. 1–2, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have had multiple dreams; from v. 3 onwards, there is only mention of one dream.

d) In v. 2, the magicians, sorcerers, diviners, and Chaldaeans are summoned. In vv. 4–5,10 only the Chaldaeans are present, but based on the mention of “any magician, sorcerer, or Chaldaean” (v. 10), they may represent this whole group. In vv. 12–14,18,24,48, however, the term ‘the wise men of Babylon’ is used instead. V. 27 combines these phrases into “wise men, sorcerers, magicians, dream interpreters”.

e) Vv. 1–4a are in Hebrew, while v. 4b marks a shift to Aramaic.

f) Arioch is introduced twice in rapid succession in vv. 14–15, using different terminology. V. 24 may introduce him a third time, although it could also simply be a reminder to the reader of who Arioch is.
g) In v. 16, Daniel enters and speaks with the king, but in vv. 24–25, Arioch has to introduce him to the king as if they had not met before.

h) Despite the opening scene’s emphasis on the king’s desire to hear his dream together with its meaning, vv. 16,24–25 only mention Daniel’s ability to relate the meaning.

i) God is referred to as ‘the Highest God’ in the reconstructed version of vv. 18–19, as ‘the Great God’ in the reconstructed version of v. 20, and as ‘the God of Heaven’ in vv. 37,44.

j) V. 18 is syntactically awkward, as it starts with an infinitive that does not depend on anything.

k) Daniel’s speech to the king does not start with ‘O king, live forever!’ , which only occurs after several sentences (in the reconstruction). Elsewhere in Daniel, this is the opening phrase when addressing the king, as in v. 4b.

l) Vv. 29–30 are intrusive, as they interrupt the statement “your dream... is this:” and the narration of the dream. The opening of v. 29, אֲנָהּ מְלָכָא, is awkward, and forms a resumptive repetition together with the same words at the start of v. 31.

m) The clay is poorly integrated into the lists of the statue’s materials: it is mentioned last in the description of the statue, but appears in second position in the reverse list of v. 35 and in third position in the reverse list of v. 45. The interpretation of the mixture of iron and clay is also inconsistent: three different interpretations are given in vv. 41–43; the style of these interpretations differs from the preceding interpretations, which do not include the phrase “and that you saw” like vv. 41,43 or follow vv.41–43’s dream element—interpretation structure; and three different terms are used: ‘clay’, ‘potter’s clay’, and ‘muddy clay’. In the reconstruction, mention of the toes is restricted to v. 42; this element is not explicitly mentioned in the narration of the dream.

n) ‘came loose’ is spelled התגזרת with he in v. 34, but מתגזרת with aleph in v. 45. In v. 34, it is not stated where the rock originated and in v. 35 it is said to grow into a great mountain; in v. 45, it is stated that the rock came loose from the mountains.

o) The use of the plural in vv. 36, 47 is unexpected, since Daniel’s friends are not said to be present during his audience with the king.

p) V. 44 mentions “those kings” while the interpretation of the dream only mentions kingdoms otherwise. The demonstrative pronoun used here is זה, contrasting with זהים used in vv. 40,44 with reference to the materials of the statue in the dream (v. 40) and the kingdoms they represent (v. 44).

q) Daniel’s reward is split up over vv. 46,48. In v. 48, “and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon” seems to have been tacked on as an afterthought.
r) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed Nego only appear under those names in the last verse of the chapter. The mention of Daniel's name Belteshazzar in v. 26 is also isolated.

Refining a suggestion by Hartman and Di Lella, Segal has recently argued that vv. 13b,15–24a were secondarily inserted. Vv. 13a, 14, and 24b then form a continuous narrative: “And the law came out and the wise men were to be killed (13a). Then, Daniel returned advice and a report to Arioch, the chief butcher of the king who had gone out to massacre the wise men of Babylon (14). And thus he said to him: ‘Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Present me to the king and I will tell the king the meaning’ (24b)” The secondary nature of the intervening material explains the double introduction of Arioch in vv. 14–15 (f), the restriction of the divine title ‘the Highest God’ to this passage (i), and the absence of Daniel's friends from the rest of the narrative (which is not strictly a contradiction).

Based on the evidence of OG and 4QDan, we have reconstructed “O king, live forever!” in the archetype of v. 28. Pace Collins, this is hard to explain as an assimilation to the other speeches where this phrase occurs, as it occurs at the very beginning of those speeches, not preceded by a few other sentences, as here. It is commonly recognized that vv. 29–30 form an interpolation (l), interrupting the arroucmement that Daniel will reveal the dream and the narr-ration of the dream itself. The reconstruction of “O king, live forever!” in this position, however, suggests that Daniel's speech up to this point, vv. 27aβ–28a, is also secondary (k). These verses are formulated as a reply to the king’s question in v. 26, which would thus also appear to be secondary, explaining its otherwise anomalous use of the name Belteshazzar (r) and the variation between the mention of both the dream and the meaning in this verse and the meaning alone in the preceding vv. 24–25 (h). Without this verse, the story consistently only mentions Daniel’s ability to tell the king the meaning of his dream, which is somewhat inconsistent with the opening scene, but ultimately what the king is after.

The interpolated opening of Daniel’s speech in vv. 27aβ–28a shares the phrase גלא רזין ‘a revealer of mysteries’ with v. 47, which occurs in an odd position: after Daniel explains the dream’s meaning, the king first orders to bring him offerings (v. 46) and only then expresses this recognition of God’s power (q). These lexemes are repeated at the end of this verse in the phrase בן ה(ne) ‘to reveal this mystery’; otherwise, ית ‘mystery’ and גל ‘to reveal’

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5 Hartman and Di Lella, Daniel, 139. Other scholars have made similar suggestions, identifying slightly different stretches of text as belonging to the interpolation.
6 Collins, Daniel, 150.
7 Newsom, Daniel, 74 and sources cited there.
are exclusively used in passages we have identified as secondary. V. 47 is also strange in context because of the use of אלהים ‘your (pl.) god’, while Daniel’s friends were not present (o); but compare the first person plurals in the conclusion of Daniel’s prayer in v. 23. All this suggests that v. 47 was added by a writer who was also responsible for (part of) vv. 13b,15–24a, 26b, and 27א–28א. V. 36 may also be related, as it shares the unexpected use of the plural with v. 47 and the mention of both the dream and its meaning with v. 26.

Similarly, the phrase ‘מה זו להוה (אחרי דבר)’ ‘what will happen (after this)’ is limited to v. 29, generally recognized as secondary, and v. 45, which also mentions both the dream and its interpretation. Here, it occurs in the phrase ‘אלה רב הודע למלך מה זו להוה אחרון ‘a great god has let the king know what will happen after this’, which is reminiscent of our reconstructed אלהא רבא ‘the great god’ in v. 20. It seems unlikely that the added material at the beginning of Daniel’s speech in vv. 27א–28א was written by the same person as that occurring right before the narration of the dream in vv. 29–30, as the repetitive, back-tracking nature of these latter verses in combination with vv. 27א–28א are what make them stand out. We may connect v. 29–30 with v. 45א–ב and the hymn in vv. 20–23 on the one hand based on their shared terminology. This connection is supported by the remark in v. 30 denying Daniel’s possession of any special wisdom, which resonates with the attribution of all wisdom to God in vv. 20–23. V. 47 may belong to the same hand, as it picks up on the hymn’s theme of God’s sovereignty over kings (although the phrase נל גליים is shared with v. 28א),8 as may v. 36, which shares v. 47’s plural usage. Vv. 13b,15–17,19א,24א,26b and 27א–28א then belong to another textual layer, which would appear to be earlier than that of the hymn and related verses: the ‘hymnic’ layer draws on this layer’s term נל גליים rephrasing it as נל גליים in v. 29. Moreover, vv. 13b,15–19א,24א form a continuous narrative if the hymn in vv. 20–23 is left out. V. 19ב should also be included in the ‘hymnic’ layer, as it forms the direct introduction to the hymn; recognizing vv. 19ב–23 as an interpolation within an interpolation also accounts for the awkward repetition of אחרד then’ in v. 19. In the same way, the syntactically unexpected infinitive (j) marks v. 18 as an interpolation which may similarly be assigned to the ‘hymnic’ layer, which is tentatively supported by the phrase בוה כה ‘this mystery’ shared with vv. 30 and 47. This also restricts the occurrence of the reconstructed divine title אלהא עליה ‘the Highest God’ to the ‘hymnic’ layer (i), while the earlier interpolated layer only vaguely refers to אלהאро ‘a god in heaven’ in v. 28. In order to keep these layers distinct in the reconstructed text below, the layer responsible for the introduction of Daniel’s friends and the focus on God’s revelation of the

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interpretation to Daniel, the ‘night vision’ layer, is given as strikethrough black text (roman), while other secondary material including that from the ‘hymnic’ layer is given as strikethrough lightface (Aramaic) or italics (English) text.

The inconsistent ordering of the clay in the lists of the statue’s materials (m) suggests that this element, too, is secondary. It may have been added to explain why the statue broke so easily once it was struck on its feet. This addition, however, created an asymmetry between the statue’s five materials and the four kingdoms they represented. Hence, the various interpretations of the iron mixed with clay given in vv. 41–43, which all show signs of secondariness. These interpretations do not show any particular connections with the interpolations we have identified above, so they cannot be linked to them with complete certainty. In the Conclusion of this work, however, we will see that v. 43 may be connected to the ‘night vision’ layer; hence, it is also indicated with black strikethrough text in the reconstruction below. As the interpretations reflect themes that are again taken up in the Hebrew apocalypses of Dan 8 and 10–12—the division of Alexander’s empire (Dan 2:41–42, 8:8,22, 11:4), interdynastic marriages (Dan 2:43, 11:6,17)—they may have been added by the authors of those chapters (of course, the addition of the feet of iron and clay to the description of the statue may itself have been motivated by the desire to add a prediction about the Hellenistic successor states). With these verses identified as secondary, the reference to ‘those kings’ in v. 44 (p) stands out even more; one of the writers who added an interpretation of the iron mixed with clay may have updated this from a more original ‘that kingdom’, referring back to v. 40. The change to ‘those kings’ brings v. 44 in line with vv. 41–43’s references to multiple dynasties and kingdoms.

Having identified v. 47 as belonging to the secondary ‘hymnic’ layer, we are still faced with the double reward in vv. 46,48 (q). Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction in v. 46 has puzzled commentators, as the king appears to worship Daniel.9 The story’s resolution in v. 48, on the other hand, makes good on the promise of gifts and great honour made in v. 6. While it could also be a later harmonization, I prefer to see this as the more original ending of this story. V. 46, which remains puzzling, shows some ties with the textual layer that introduced Daniel’s friends and the nighttime revelation. The phrase מלכא נבוכדנצר, with ‘the king’ preceding the name (a), contrary to its usual position in Biblical Aramaic, occurs both here and in v. 28.10 Moreover, the sacrificial elements

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9 Holm, Courtiers and Kings, 432–36 shows that presenting the successful courtier with sacrifices in this manner is a motif in Egyptian court tales, which could explain its use here.

10 Cf. Charles, Daniel, viii, c–ci. Charles writes that “[i]n Aramaic down to 300 BC—in fact down to the second century BC, so far as I can discover, the Aramaic order of words in...
in v. 46 may be related to this textual layer’s emphasis on God as the ultimate revealer of the dream and its interpretation. Or, to anticipate our conclusion that the ‘night vision’ layer was written by the author of Dan 10–12, they may present Nebuchadnezzar as a foil to Antiochus IV, who discontinues the daily sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple. In conclusion, v. 48 is probably more original than v. 46.

Among the closing verses, v. 49 has widely been identified as a redactorial addition anticipating Dan 3–4 (r). V. 48b would also appear to be secondary (q), as it anticipates Belteshazzar’s position mentioned in Dan 4:6. There, he is called הרעיון ‘the chief of the magicians’ instead of the title used here, הbaoוה ‘chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon’, pointing to different authors. Alternatively, Wooden suggests a scribal corruption or misreading of היה ‘the wise men’ as הרעיון ‘the magicians’ in Dan 4:6 or of הרשים ‘the magicians of’ as היה ‘the wise men of’ in Dan 2:48.11 As the phrasing of vv. 48b–49 taken together is awkward, v. 48b should probably be attributed to an earlier hand.

This leaves a number of inconsistencies at the beginning of the chapter: the inconsistent form of והפעם (v. 8) ‘and it was disturbed’ (b), the reference to one or multiple dreams (c), and the switch from the magicians, Chaldaeans, et al. to the wise men of Babylon (d). These are all elements that connect Dan 2 with the story of Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams in Gen 41. There, we find the expression והרצו והרוה ‘and his spirit was disturbed’ (v. 8); the relation of multiple dreams (v. 5) which are referred to collectively in the singular (vv. 8,15) and stated to be one and the same (v. 25); and a reference to כל חרטמיה ממצרים וכל חכמיה ‘all of Egypt’s magicians and all its wise men’ (v. 8). If the author of Dan 2 integrated these references into his text from memory, these small inconsistencies may be expected.12 They do not, therefore, necessarily reflect different sources or authors at work. Alternatively, they may reflect various sources, none of which was completely preserved; Carr points out that many sources were demonstrably only incorporated into edited texts in fragmentary form.13 As no reference is made in our reconstructed version

mentioning an Oriental monarch was always ‘Nebuchadnezzar the King’; but never ‘King Nebuchadnezzar’. This dating is primarily based on Greek texts such as 1–2 Maccabees, but this matches the Maccabean dating of this textual layer we will arrive at in the conclusion of the present work. It conflicts, however, with the use of מלכיה ‘King Darius’ in what appears to be the base layer of Dan 6:10 and מלכיה ‘King Belshazzar’ in a passage shared between OG and MT Dan 5:9, on which see the relevant chapters below. It may be that this variation was not strictly diachronic, but that the word order rather varied between different authors.

12 See the discussion of memory variants in the Introduction.
of the text to the Chaldaeans or to the king’s demand that the dream itself be made known to him after v. 11, these elements may not originally have belonged to the core of the story; this would support Davies’s suggestion that the king’s demand to hear both the dream and its interpretation was introduced together with the four kingdoms interpretation of the dream, which is secondary in his view.14 Alternatively, the opening scene could have been introduced as part of the ‘night vision’ layer, which refers back to it in v. 27 and is generally concerned with the question of the divine source of the dream interpretation. In either scenario, the dream description being secondary would explain some remaining inconsistencies between the dream and its interpretation, such as the different description of what happens to the stone (n).

Finally, there is the switch from Hebrew to Aramaic (e). On the assumption that Dan 1 was originally composed in Aramaic and later translated to Hebrew, it seems likely that the translator kept using Hebrew for the beginning of Dan 2 until encountering a natural end point in the Chaldaeans’ speech. We may then also reconstruct an Aramaic original for Dan 2:1–4a, with the same caveats provided for Dan 1 in the last chapter. This may provide a more straightforward explanation for the variation in תי ות (i.e. ‘and it was disturbed’) (b), where the t-stem represents incomplete translation of an Aramaic word. The crucial ‘and his sleep happened(?) over him’ may also be more easily resolved in this way.15 Based on the parallels in both Dan 6:19 (תבכתי והיהו עליו) and Est 6:1 (‘and the king’s sleep fled’, Hebrew), it has often been proposed to read ‘and his sleep fled from him’ here.16 The exact mechanism changing נדדה ‘it fled’ to נדה ‘it happened’ is unclear, however. In Aramaic, a form נזר, with all three radicals spelled out as in עללת ‘she entered’ (Dan 5:10), could more easily be misread as נזה, which would be written with the same number of strokes. Even though נזה is strictly meaningless in Aramaic, a translator could have recognized the root נזר ‘to be’ and mechanically supplied the closest Hebrew form, the attested n-stem form נדה ‘it happened’.17

14 Philip R. Davies, “Daniel Chapter Two,” Theological Studies 27 (1976): 392–405; Davies, Daniel, 46–48. See also Kratz, Translatio imperii, 61–62, who suggests that the dream originally referred to the succession of the Neo-Babylonian Empire by the Median and Persian ones. This would parallel the prediction in Dan 5 and correspond with the exilic setting of Dan 1–6 overall.

15 The similarly difficult expression וניִני דניאל נכשה (Dan 8:24) eludes explanation, if it is intended to be from the verb נכנת ‘to be’.

16 E.g. Newsom, Daniel, 62.

17 Cf. the likely case of mistranslation of אמי דניאל נכרת ‘that it was broken’ as ויהיו נכר工业大学 ‘the broken one’ in Dan 8:22, where the translator must have mistakenly equated נכרת ‘the broken one’ with the Hebrew participle נכרת, even though an Aramaic participle in the absolute state would not end in taw; Ginsberg, Studies in Daniel, 42.
Reconstructed Text of Dan 2

1 And in year two of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar saw dreams, and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep fled from him. 2 And the king ordered to call the magicians and the sorcerers and the dream interpreters and the Chaldaeans to tell the king his dreams, and they came and took their stand before the king. 3 And the king said to them: “I saw a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.” 4 The Chaldaeans spoke to the king, saying in Aramaic: “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream so that we may relate the meaning.” 5 The king spoke, saying, to the Chaldaeans: “The matter is determined as far as I am concerned: if you do not let me know the dream and its meaning, you will be made into limbs and your houses will be turned into ruins. 6 But if you relate the dream and the meaning, you will receive gifts, presents, and great honour from me. Just relate the dream and its meaning.” 7 They spoke a second time, saying: “Let the king tell his servants the dream so that we may relate its meaning.” 8 The king spoke, saying: “I know for certain that you are buying the season, since you have seen that the matter is determined as far as I am concerned. 9 For if you do not let me know the dream, your sentence is the same as if you planned to tell me something false and corrupt until the season changes. Just tell me the dream and I will know that you can relate its meaning to me.” 10 The Chaldaeans spoke to the king, saying: “There is no man on earth who could relate the king’s matter, since no great king or potentate has asked something like this of any magician or sorcerer or Chaldaean. And the matter the king is asking is difficult, and
there is no other who can relate it to the king, only the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."¹² Thereupon the king grew wroth and very angry and ordered to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.¹³ And the law came out and the wise men were to be killed, and Daniel and his friends were going to be killed.

¹⁴ Then, Daniel returned advice and a report to Arioch, the chief butcher of the king who had gone out to massacre the wise men of Babylon.¹⁵ He spoke to Arioch, the official of the king, saying, “Why is the law so harsh from the king?”¹⁶ Then Arioch let Daniel know the matter. And Daniel went in and asked of the king that he would be given time and to tell the king the meaning.

¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.¹⁸ And to ask mercy from the Highest God concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed together with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.¹⁹ Then, the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night; then, Daniel blessed the Highest God. ²⁰ Daniel spoke, saying: “Let the name of the great God be blessed from eternity and until eternity, to whom belong wisdom and strength!

²¹ And he changes the seasons and the times, makes kings pass away and sets up kings, gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who know understanding.
²² He reveals deep and hidden things, knows what is in darkness, and the light resides with him.²³ You, O god of my fathers, I thank and praise, for you have given me wisdom and illumination, and now, you have made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made the king’s matter known to us.”²⁴ Thereupon, Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had
commanded to destroy the wise men of Babylon, and thus he said to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Present me to the king and I will tell the king the meaning.” 25 Then, Arioch hastily presented Daniel to the king, and thus he said to him, that “I have found a man from the exiles of the Judahites who can make the meaning known to the king.” 26 The king spoke to Daniel, whose name was Beltshazzar, saying: “Can you really make known to me the dream I saw and its meaning?” 27 Daniel spoke to the king, saying: “The mystery that the king asks—wise men, sorcerers, magicians, dream-interpreters were not able to tell the king. 28 But there is a god in heaven, a revealer of mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at the end of days: O king, live forever! Your dream and the visions of your head on your bed is this:

You, O king—your thoughts on your bed had turned to what will happen after this, and the Revealer of Mysteries has let you know what will happen. 30 As for me, this mystery was not revealed to me through any wisdom that is in me over all the living, but only so that they would make known to the king the meaning and you would know the thoughts of your mind. 31 You, O king, saw a big statue—its head was of fine gold, its chest and its arms were of silver, its belly and its hips were of bronze, its legs were of iron, its feet, some of them were of iron and some of them were of clay. 32 You saw that a stone came loose without hands and hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 33 Its legs were of iron, its feet, some of them were of iron and some of them were of clay. 34 You saw that a stone came loose without hands and hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 Then at once the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and
the gold were crushed and became like chaff from the threshing floors of summer. And the wind took them away, and no place was found for them. And the stone that had struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 This was the dream, and let us tell the king its meaning. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings, whom the God of Heaven has given kingship, power and strength, and honour. 38 And wherever human beings, wild animals, and the birds of the sky live he has given into your hand, and he has given you authority over all of them. You are its head of gold. 39 And after you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to you, and another, a third kingdom of bronze, which will have authority over the whole earth. 40 And there will be a fourth kingdom, strong like iron; as iron crushes and pounds everything, and pulverizes all these, it will crush and pulverize the whole earth. 41 And that you saw the feet, some of them potter’s clay and some of them iron: it will be a divided kingdom, but some of the nature of iron will be in it, (as you saw the iron mixed with muddy clay. 42 And the toes of the feet, some of them iron and some of them clay: some of the kingdom will be strong and some of it will be weak. 43 That you saw the iron mixed with muddy clay: they will mix human seed, but they will not stick together, look, as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of that kingdom, the God of Heaven will establish a kingdom which will never pass away, and its kingship will not depart to another people, and it will put all these kingdoms to an end, but it will remain forever, 45 as you saw that a stone came loose from a mountain without hands and crushed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. A great god has
Chapter 3

3 Conclusion

The above reconstruction has resulted in a much slimmer narrative. As was recently emphasized by Segal, the older version of this story more closely parallels the Joseph narrative in Gen 41. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream; none of his mantic experts can explain it; Daniel explains the dream's meaning and is rewarded.

Due to this chapter's combination of the court tale genre shared with the first half of the book of Daniel and the apocalyptic message shared with its second half, the story was overlaid with many later additions. We have identified a relatively old supplemental layer in the verses describing how Daniel's friends were involved and how the dream's meaning was revealed to him by God. Within this interpolation, a second layer was added, including an act of prayer and a hymn of praise. This layer is also connected to several other verses in the chapter. Segal makes a convincing case that this addition (which, in his view, is not distinct from its direct context involving Daniel's friends) forms a foil to Antiochus IV's behaviour described in Dan 7.

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18 Segal, Dreams, Riddles, and Visions, 32–54.
19 Segal, 51–54.
Other secondary elements occur in the inclusion of feet of clay mixed with iron in the dream and the various interpretations given to this dream element. Some of these may be connected with Dan 8 and Dan 10–12. Thus, the analysis given above supports Segal’s conclusion that this chapter continued to undergo editing until quite late in the history of the book of Daniel.20

20 Segal, 54.