THE PARALLEL EDITIONS OF THE OLD GREEK AND MASORETIC TEXT OF DANIEL 5*

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Then there are texts that appear to be either scriptural writings or slight modifications of them...; others occupy points on a spectrum leading from authoritative texts to writings intimately related to them, to works that cite authoritative books, to ones that only allude to scripture or employ scriptural language.¹

James VanderKam has provided fundamental contributions as well as numerous insights to the study of the Scriptures, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and related religious writings of the Second Temple period.² His statement above articulates the concept of a broad and gradated spectrum of types of composition encountered in this literature that—under the umbrella of “rewritten Scripture”—is one of the most important issues currently challenging Scrolls scholars. One set of writings that illustrates such a spectrum is the corpus of Danielic writings.³ In this

* It is a pleasure to contribute this essay in honor of Professor James VanderKam, an ideal colleague and long-treasured friend. As a superb scholar and a beloved teacher, he has greatly advanced Jewish and Christian scholarship and immeasurably enriched the lives of generations of students.


³ For the editions of the scriptural scrolls of Daniel, see Eugene Ulrich, DJD 16:239–89 and The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants (VTSup 134; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 755–75; for discussion, see idem, ”The Text of Daniel in the Qumran Scrolls,” in The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception (ed. John J. Collins and
chapter I will cursorily review the scrolls containing Daniel-related traditions and then focus on the phenomenon even within biblical texts: the two parallel editions of Daniel 5 attested in the OG and the MT.

In addition to the seven mss of the full scriptural book of Daniel, the Scrolls provide a trajectory of Danielic literature: evidence of possible earlier sources for the book, as well as compositions beyond the book. The Prayer of Nabonidus (4Q242) is widely accepted as a probable source for chapter 4 of Daniel. The small ms 4QDanε (4Q116), which most likely contained only the prayer of Dan 9:4–19,⁴ may provide evidence of another source, a separate prayer that was taken and incorporated into chapter 9.⁵ Alternatively, it may simply be an “excerpted” ms drawn from the completed book. Esther Eshel suggests, in addition to the Prayer of Nabonidus, that Historical Text A (4Q248; formerly Acts of a Greek King) and column 2 of a Book of Giants manuscript (4Q530) may also have served as sources of the book of Daniel.⁶ Pseudo-Danielα–ε (4Q243–245), and possibly Four Kingdomsa–c (4Q552–553a), represent developments of the wider Danielic traditions, partly similar to the biblical book but also showing differences, especially in the broader scope of Israelite history surveyed.⁷ But the spectrum is not simply “sources–Scripture–developments”; within the scriptural text itself, there is “rewritten Scripture,” that is, rewritten versions of Daniel 4–6.

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⁴ 4QDanε survives in only seven small fragments with parts of 9:12–17; it is the only Qumran attestation of chapter 9. Its small number of lines per column, estimated at only nine, plus the large size of the letters suggests that it contained only the prayer, in five columns. If it were to contain the entire Book of Daniel, it would require ca. 120 columns; see DJD 16:287 and Pl. XXXVII, and Collins, Daniel: A Commentary, 347–48.

⁵ See similarly inserted prayers in Daniel 3: The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Youths, as well as prayers inserted elsewhere: e.g., Hannah’s prayer in 1 Samuel 2, and David’s song of thanksgiving in 2 Samuel 22.


⁷ Scholars have suggested that other compositions, such as the Aramaic Apocryphon (4Q246 apocrDan ar), an Apocalypse in Aramaic on papyrus (4Q489 papApocalypse ar), and another entitled Daniel-Susanna? (4Q551 Account ar, olim DanSuz? ar) were related to the book of Daniel, but the suggestions no longer find favor.