The Book of Daniel is one of the most fascinating writings in the Bible—but also one of the most difficult. I would like to remind of some of the highly disputed questions concerning this book. First of all there is the notorious problem of the two language switches from Hebrew to Aramaic and back in Dan 2:4 and after chapter 7. It is generally agreed that the Aramaic parts on the whole belong to the older stratum of the literary history of the book, stemming from late Persian or early Hellenistic times.\(^1\) The Hebrew chapters 8–12 are obviously younger. Here the situation has changed. The issue is no longer life in the Babylonian or Persian diaspora, but the events in Israel itself, when the temple cult in Jerusalem and the religious life of the Israelites were threatened by a wave of Hellenisation, fuelled by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes.\(^2\)

The events in the early 2nd century B.C.E. under the reigns of Antiochus III and IV, and the violent Maccabean response to the desecration of the temple led to the formulation of an apocalyptic concept of history. The different contributors to the Book of Daniel held the conviction that the obvious decline of the worldly kingdoms attests to God’s plans to end this period of history and to introduce a new, just and eternal government.\(^3\) Thus the figure of Daniel, a diaspora Jew full of “enlightenment, understanding, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods” (Dan 5:11), was transformed into an apocalyptic seer who saw strange visions and received insights and understanding from heavenly messengers.

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\(^1\) Some fundamentalist circles still hold the traditional view that the book comes from an exilic author; cf. as a recent example W. Vogel, *The Cultic Motif in the Book of Daniel* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010).


In chapter 11 the historical events from the last Persian kings until the beginning of the final days is revealed to Daniel by an angel. This difficult chapter is largely a *vaticinium ex eventu*, retelling elements of the history of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic wars in the 3rd and 2nd centuries. But since the verifiable data end in the year 165 B.C.E. and the reconsecration of the temple in Jerusalem is not mentioned, scholars generally agree that the Hebrew/Aramaic version of the book was finished in exactly this year.4

But the literary development of the book was not finished. It is here that the Septuagint comes into play,5 because the Greek versions attest to several independent additions to the book, namely the Susanna story to introduce the figure of the wise and just Daniel; the prayers in chapter 3;6 and the stories of Bel and the dragon, which highlight the strictly monotheistic theology of the book. Moreover, the Greek version also offers a glimpse into the earlier history of the Daniel traditions, because in chapters 4–6 the text of the OG differs to such an extent from the parent MT that the assumption of a largely deviating Semitic *Vorlage* is unavoidable.7

To add another field of discussion, the textual tradition of the Greek translation is in itself difficult, because very early a second translation known under the name of Theodotion was made, which was much closer to the Hebrew text than the Old Greek.8 Since there are some citations in the NT from this proto-Theodotionic version, it must come from pre-Christian times.9 Eventually the Old Greek version was no longer used;

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7 R. Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel. Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4–6 in der Septuaginta­fassung sowie zu Komposition und Theologie des aramäischen Danielbuches* (SBS 131; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), who holds that the *Vorlage* of LXXDan 4–6 is older than the Aramaic text of Dan 4–6; see also Collins, *Daniel*, 5f.; Koch, *Daniel*, 377–380, 387–401 (on Dan 4 only, but with a theological exposition of the Greek text.)