

The Small/Young Daniel Re-Edited

Sebastian Brock

Manuscript,
A physical thing
Unlike any other.
Of a book there are thousands,
Even myriads,
But just one manuscript.

MICHAEL E. STONE, “St Toros’s Keeper,” *Selected Poems* (2010), 62



1 Introduction

Although the manuscript from which the text below is re-published cannot claim to be “on hand-polished paper,” like the manuscript described by Michael Stone in this poem, it is indeed on paper, and furthermore, the work in question is preserved in “just one manuscript.” “The Young Daniel,” as the work is usually known, is preserved in a single biblical manuscript of the twelfth,¹ or perhaps rather, the thirteenth century, Additional 18715, purchased by the British Museum on 14 June 1851 from W.B. Barker.²

Additional 18715, designated 12d2 in the Leiden Peshitta, contains the following sequence of biblical books: Isaiah, XII Prophets, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Bel and the Dragon, Susanna, “The Young/Small Daniel” (*Dani’il z’ura*), Letter of Jeremiah,³ and the two Letters of Baruch. The rest of

1 So W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838* (London, 1870), 1.118–20.

2 Barker (1810/11–1856) was an amateur orientalist and the author of *Lares and Penates, or Cilicia and Its Governors* (ed. W.F. Ainsworth; London: Ingram Cooke, 1853); cf. A.H. Grant and E. Baigent, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 3 (Oxford, 2004), 900–901.

3 Wright does not mention this since he did not notice that there was a loss of a folio between fols. 241 and 242; fol. 242r contains the Letter of Jeremiah from verse 31 onwards.

the manuscript is filled up with miscellaneous items, including a short history of the Apostles, a number of Greek names in both Syriac and (rather barbaric) Greek script, a treatise on inheritance, and then, rather as an afterthought, Tobit. The position of the *Young Daniel* indicates that the copyist considered it a biblical book, and in this case it may well be that the *z'ura* should be taken as “the small,” or “lesser” Daniel, in contrast to the standard book of Daniel; this would seem all the more likely seeing that there is no indication in the text itself that Daniel was “Small” at the time of his visions.⁴ Accordingly I have below preferred “the Small Daniel” to “the Young Daniel” as the title of the work, even though the scribe, or an early reader, of Additional 18715 has added “12 years (old)” in the margin at the beginning of the work.

Apart from various, inevitably speculative, references to the work,⁵ it was not until 1972, however, that any serious attention was paid to the item on fols. 239v–241v, entitled “Next, the Small (book of) Daniel concerning our Lord and concerning the End.” The merit for bringing this short work out of obscurity goes to H. Schmoldt, who produced an edition of it in his Hamburg Dissertation of that year, entitled “*Vom jungen Daniel*” und “*Daniels letzte Vision.*” *Herausgabe und Interpretation zweier apokalyptische Texte*. Schmoldt considered the work essentially to be a Jewish work of the Second Temple period, albeit with several Christian interpolations (above all in chapters I–II). This dating was followed in the few references to the work in subsequent secondary literature on apocalyptic texts.⁶ The publication of the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*, however, in 2000 and 2001, by two scholars working independently of each other,⁷ made a re-assessment of the dating necessary, for there turned out to be a number of shared passages in the two works, and Henze had plausibly dated the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* to the seventh century. A key feature in the *Syriac Apocalypse*, which strongly points to a date in the first half of the seventh century, is the passage describing the opening of “the gates of the north,” whereupon

4 The phrase *Dani'il z'ura*, “the young Daniel,” does, however, occur in verse 45 of Susanna.

5 E.g., W. Bousset, *Der Antichrist in der Überlieferung des Judenthums, des neuen Testaments, und der alten Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895 [repr. 1983]), 44; English translation by A.H. Keane, *The Antichrist Legend* (London, 1896), 71.

6 Notably, F. Garcia Martinez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 158–160, A.-M. Denis, *Introduction à la littérature religieuse judéo-hellénistique* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 2.1301–1302, and L. DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (SVTP 20; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 108–113.

7 M. Slabczyk, *Apocalipso de Danielo profeto en lando Persio kaj Elamo* (Wien: Arcadio eldonejo, 2000) and M. Henze, *The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel* (STAC 11; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001); at a late stage in his work Henze became aware of Slabczyk's edition.