

5 Reconsidering the Theological Background of Daniel 7

Daniel 7 functions as a pivotal episode within the book of Daniel as a whole, completing the section of Aramaic court tales (chapters 2–7), while also constituting the first of the four apocalyptic visions (chapters 7–12). This chapter presents perhaps the most complex interpretive issues of all of the chapters in Daniel, in terms of both determining the theological worldview of its author, and unlocking the cultural and literary background of this text. Previous studies have correctly drawn attention to the extrabiblical parallels to this vision. The purpose of the present analysis, however, is to highlight the inner-biblical interpretive elements of Daniel 7, an aspect of this chapter which I suggest has not yet received sufficient attention. I will suggest here that a full appreciation of the message of this pivotal text can only be achieved by means of a precise identification of the biblical passages alluded to in this chapter, and a nuanced analysis of how they are reused and recast.

5.1 The Literary Unity of Daniel 7¹

Daniel 7 presents a double apocalyptic vision – double in the sense that, in addition to the general dichotomy between the symmetric heavenly and earthly realms, two planes of activity may be identified within the heavenly, mythic realm itself (vv. 1–14).² On one plane is the scene of the four beasts which arise from the Great Sea, and on the other is the divine court where these beasts are judged and

¹ This brief summary of research is indebted to the more extensive discussion in Collins (1993, 277–94).

² This observation is supported by the description of Daniel’s reaction following the vision. According to v. 15, “As for me, Daniel, my spirit was disturbed within me and the vision of my mind alarmed me.” This phrasing in itself generally seems to mark the end of symbolic dreams or visions, as in 2:1,3; 4:2; 5:6 (cf. also 7:28 following the interpretation of the vision). However, in this instance, the ensuing dialogue takes place in the same plane as the vision itself: “I approached one of the attendants [אֲמִיָּק, lit.: “those standing”] and asked him the true meaning of all this. He gave me this interpretation of the matter” (7:16). This term refers back to one of the “myriads of myriads” who stand before the throne of the Ancient of Days in service (v. 10). The interaction between Daniel and a character from the vision demonstrates that the apocalyptic revelation is not merely symbolic, but reflects a reality to which Daniel is privy. This is similar to the visions related in 1Kgs 22:19; Isaiah 6; and Ezekiel 1, all of which describe a prophet to whom the divine court has been revealed.

punished, and where sovereignty is given to the “one like a man.” Each of these planes is characterized by its own literary style, with the four beasts described in prose and the court scene in poetic style. The differences between these two scenes have led to the suggestion that they in fact represent the work of two different authors, combined here.³ However, it seems more likely that instead, we have in this case a subtle literary technique by which the author of Daniel 7 distinguished between the two scenes within the mythic realm. Following this vision, Daniel approaches one of the heavenly attendants and requests his assistance in understanding the vision, which is given to him in the verses that follow (vv. 15–27). There are those who have suggested that the interpretation offered by the heavenly attendant does not fully correspond to the vision itself, and that perhaps it likewise reflects the hand of a different author;⁴ but here too, I find the arguments unconvincing. Finally, there are many scholars who have identified scribal additions within the interpretation itself, which reflect an updating of the apocalypse.⁵ However, many of the arguments put forth in these studies are based upon *a priori* assumptions regarding the historical background of the composition of this passage. A careful literary analysis does not reveal any serious fissures or cracks within this chapter, and I therefore agree with those scholars who have posited that Daniel 7 reflects a unified text, and is the work of a single author.⁶ I will now present an interpretation of the chapter as a whole, which emerges from a close reading of the text, with an emphasis on the inner-biblical connections within the passage.

³ For this position, see, e.g., Noth ([1926] 1969, 14–19). See more recently Boyarin (2012, 141–48).

⁴ See, e.g., Müller (1972), who holds that vv. 19–24, in addition to vv. 9–10 and 13–14, were added by a Maccabean redactor. Boyarin (2012, 150–62) views the *peshet* of the vision (7:15–27) as a reinterpretation and demythologization of the throne vision, according to which the originally divine “One like a Son of Man” was transformed into a reference to the Maccabean heroes who redeemed the Temple. This *peshet* was composed by the author of Daniel 7, who relied on earlier sources to compose the throne vision (cf. n. 3).

⁵ Sellin (1910, 233–34), posited that the references to the final horn (following the ten) in 7:8, 20–22, 24–25 are editorial additions to an original, pre-Maccabean stratum. This suggestion has been adopted, with various minor alterations, by many subsequent scholars, for example Hölscher (1919, 119–21), who excised from the “original” stratum any reference to horns (vv. 7bβ + 11a, in addition to the verses proposed by Sellin). Ginsberg (1948, 11–13) proposed a process of literary development similar to that put forth by Sellin (he viewed vv. 7bβ, 20aα, and 24a as belonging to the primary stratum), but claimed that even the original stratum (ten horns) was composed during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes; this position was adopted by Hartman and Di Lella (1978, 202–4, 209, 215–17).

⁶ See Montgomery (1927, 95–96); Rowley (1950–1951, 255–59); Zevit (1968, 388–89); Collins (1977, 127–32; 1993, 277–80); Goldingay (1989, 156–57).

5.2 Identifying the “One like a Man”

One of the central exegetical issues in the interpretation of Daniel 7 is the identification of the character in the vision described as **כבר אנוש**. This has frequently been translated literally as “One like the Son of Man,” but the Aramaic **בר אנוש**, is equivalent to the Hebrew **בן אדם**,⁷ and therefore a more appropriate translation is “one like a man.”⁸ In the vision of the four beasts, the character that appears as a man reflects a being of higher or more advanced standing than the other animals. A similar situation obtains in the *Animal Apocalypse*, where those beings depicted as animals represent humans, and those portrayed as human beings are unique in the apocalypse, reflecting their divine or semi-divine status (*1En.* 87:2; 90:14,17,21–22). In *1En.* 89:1,9 Noah is represented as having been transformed from a bull into a man, and according to 89:36 Moses was transformed from a sheep into a man.⁹ Within Daniel, the heavenly interpreters of the apocalypses are also described as “men” (8:15; 9:21; 10:5,16,18; 12:6–7).¹⁰ The formulation “like a man **כבר אנוש**” uses the **-כ** to denote that this character is part of the original vision of the four beasts, which are similarly marked: the first beast is **כאריה** “like a lion,” the second **דמיה לדב** “like a bear,” and the third **כנמר** “like a leopard.” Interestingly, the fourth creature is not compared to any other animal because it is indeed incomparable to any other: “It was different from all the other beasts which had gone before it” (v. 7). However, it is subhuman, and within the realm of beast. The use of the same stylistic device in the divine court drama demonstrates that both heavenly scenes were composed as one, and its use in introducing the “one like a man” displays the author’s skill in weaving these two heavenly planes together.¹¹

⁷ The expression appears over 100 times in the Bible, with a primary concentration in the book of Ezekiel.

⁸ Zevit (1968, 393–94); Collins (1993, 304–5).

⁹ Collins (1993, 306). See Tiller (1993, 245, 259, 295–96); Nickelsburg (2001, 374–75, 381). Dillmann (1853, 257); Charles (1912, 190); Black (1985, 267), all suggest that they were transformed into humans so that they would be able to build a boat or house. However, as Tiller (1993, 295) and Nickelsburg (2001, 375 [n. 27]) noted, *1En.* 89:72–73 demonstrates that animals can build as well. Black (1985, 262) and Tiller (1993, 259) propose that the tradition about Noah’s transformation, absent from the Aramaic version of the text, was added under the influence of 89:36.

¹⁰ Zevit (1968, 394–96); Boyarin (2012, 148).

¹¹ Boyarin (2012, 146–47, 151) claims that the preposition **-כ** is used differently with respect to the beasts than the man. In his estimation, the former use refers to elements in a symbolic vision, which appear like an animal, while the latter refers to “a real divine entity that has the form of a human being.” However, this distinction does not seem to be borne out by the text itself.

What are the characteristics of the “one like a man,” which assist in identifying him within the context of the heavenly vision?¹² According to v. 13, he came with the heavenly clouds: **וארו עם-ענני שמיא כבר אנש אתה הוא**. This picture appears in a number of instances in the Bible, all in reference to YHWH himself:¹³

Ps 68:5 (MT)	Ps 104:3 (MT)	Isa 19:1 (MT)
שירו לאלהים זמרו שמו סלו לרכב בערבות ביה שמו ועלו לפניו	השם-עבים רכובו המהלך על- כנפירוח	(משא מצרים) הנה יהוה רכב על-עב קל ובא מצרים...
Sing to God, chant hymns to his name; extol him who rides the clouds; YHWH is his name, exult in his presence.	He (YHWH) makes the clouds his chariot, he moves on the wings of the wind.	Mounted on a swift cloud, YHWH will come to Egypt ...
(cf. also vv. 33–34 – O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; chant hymns to the Lord, <i>selah</i> , <u>to him who rides the ancient highest heavens</u> , who thunders forth with his mighty voice.)		

This biblical motif was almost certainly borrowed from Canaanite myth, in which the same image was attributed to Baal. Baal was referred to as *rkb.ʿrpt* “Cloud-rider” in the following passage, whose significance for the comparative study of Daniel 7 has been noted previously:¹⁴

¹² Collins (1993, 304–10), offers an extensive excursus regarding the interpretive possibilities that have been suggested for identifying **בר אנש**. He himself supports the option that it refers to the angel Michael.

¹³ Cf. also Deut 33:26.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the Canaanite background of Daniel 7, see Emerton (1958); Cross (1973, 16–17); and Mosca (1986), who also raises potential biblical links, including Psalms 89 and 8. Collins (1993, 286–94), closely analyzes the relevant Canaanite material and addresses the passage quoted here. He also investigates the question of possible avenues of transmission of this Canaanite material to Daniel 7, a text composed over a millennium later. The parallels to Canaanite literature that have been noted are more extensive than discussed in the current study, including a pantheon headed by a senior deity described explicitly as elderly.

<i>lrgmt/lk.lzbl.b'l</i>	Indeed, I tell you, Prince Baal,
<i>tnt.lrbk.'rpt.</i>	I reiterate, O Cloud-rider:
<i>ht.ibk./b'lm.</i>	Now your enemy, Baal,
<i>ht.ibk.tmlḥṣ.</i>	Now smash your enemy,
<i>ht.tṣmt.ṣrtk.</i>	Now vanquish your foe.
<i>tqh.mlk.'lmk.</i>	So assume your eternal kingship,
<i>drkttdrdrk.</i>	Your everlasting dominion.
...	
<i>ym.lmt.b'lm.yml[k]</i>	So Yamm is dead! Baal reig[ns! (?)] ¹⁵

The speaker in this passage is the craftsman Kôtar-wa-Hassis, who is encouraging Baal in his battle against Yamm. The context of this battle is the struggle between the gods for kingship over the world, similar to the primary topic of Daniel 7.¹⁶

A second parallel between this passage and Daniel 7 is also significant for the identification of the “one like a man.” Baal is the recipient of eternal kingship and everlasting dominion. This is almost identical to what the one like a man receives in Dan 7:14:

Dan 7:14

<p>ולה יהב שלטן ויקר ומלכו וכל עממיה אמיה ולשנייה לה יפלהון שלטנה שלטן עלם דיילא יעדה ומלכותה דיילא תתחבל.</p>	<p>Dominion, glory, and kingship were given to him; all peoples and nations of every language must serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.</p>
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Who receives eternal dominion and kingship elsewhere in the book of Daniel? Interestingly, the language and content of 7:14 parallels and overlaps that found in the doxologies in the narrative half of the book:

¹⁵ KTU 1.2 IV 7–10, 32, in Smith (1997, 103–5).

¹⁶ See also the discussions of Cross (1973, 112–16); Day (1985, 8–9, 151–77). Smith (1986) identified this as the overarching framework of the Baal Cycle.

Dan 7:14	Dan 7:27	Dan 3:31–33	Dan 4:31	Dan 6:26–27
<p>Dominion, glory, and kingship were given to him; All peoples and nations of every language must serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.</p>	<p>The kingship and dominion and grandeur belonging to all the kingdoms under Heaven will be given to the people of קדישי עליונין. Their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.</p>	<p>(31) “King Nebuchadnezzar to all people and nations of every language that inhabit the whole earth: ... (33) How great are His signs; how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endures throughout the generations.”</p>	<p>“When the time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason was restored to me. I blessed the Most High, and praised and glorified the Ever-Living One, Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and whose kingdom endures throughout the generations.</p>	<p>(26) Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language that inhabit the earth, ... (27) ... for He is the living God who endures forever; His kingdom shall not be destroyed, and His dominion is to the end of time.</p>

The phrases common to these passages, such as שלטנה שלטן עלם (7:14 and 4:31; note the variant form מלכותה מלכות עלם shared by 7:27 and 3:33), כל עממיה אמיא (7:14; 3:31; 6:26), and ומלכותה די-לא תתחבל (7:14 and 6:27),¹⁷ demonstrate their interdependence. This shared language could be the result of the activity of a single author in all three spots, but more likely stems from a conscious attempt to draw a connection between chapter 7 and these earlier passages.¹⁸ In either case, these literary allusions point toward the identification of the “one like a man” in the vision of Daniel 7 with the subject of the doxologies in the previous chapters. Each figure receives an eternal kingdom and dominion over all of the nations of the world. The reuse of the language of the earlier chapters in relation to this figure, in addition to the use of the cloud-riding motif, allows for a somewhat theologically radical suggestion: the one like a man is to be identified with YHWH himself!¹⁹

Further evidence for this identification can perhaps be adduced from the heavenly chariot vision in Ezekiel 1, where YHWH is depicted as sitting on a throne: ועל דמות הכסא דמות כמראה אדם ... הוא דמות כבוד יהוה “and upon this semblance of the throne, there was the semblance of a human form ... that was the semblance of the Presence of YHWH” (vv. 26,28).²⁰ That vision, and especially the description of the divine figure sitting upon a throne, demonstrably inspired elements of the imagery of Daniel 7.²¹ While one cannot assume a direct equiva-

¹⁷ As noted to me by Prof. Alexander Rofé, an additional parallel to this verse can also be found in Dan 2:42: “And in the time of those kings, the God of Heaven will establish a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (מלכו די לעלמין לא תתחבל), a kingdom that shall not be transferred to another people. ...” This parallel also conforms to the larger parallel scheme structured between the dream in chapter 2 and the apocalyptic vision in chapter 7, both of which refer to the sequence of four kingdoms to be followed by an eternal kingdom. In 2:44, the reference is clearly to the establishment of a kingdom in which Israel will be sovereign. This verse appears within the *interpretation* of the dream; it is parallel to 7:27, which states that the עם קדישי עליונים, also a designation for Israel, are to receive the kingdom, (see below). The discussion in this section addresses the identification of אנש (כ) in the *vision* itself, who functions, according to the claim here, as Israel’s heavenly representative.

¹⁸ Additional parallel phrases between these verses, support the conclusion that they are inter-related; cf. Towner (1969), who suggests that 3:31–33; 4:31–32; and 6:26–28 can be considered a group; cf. also Kratz (1991, 156–60).

¹⁹ See already (Emerton 1958); Boyarin, (2012, 149–50). We will return to a discussion of the implications of such a reading in section 6 below.

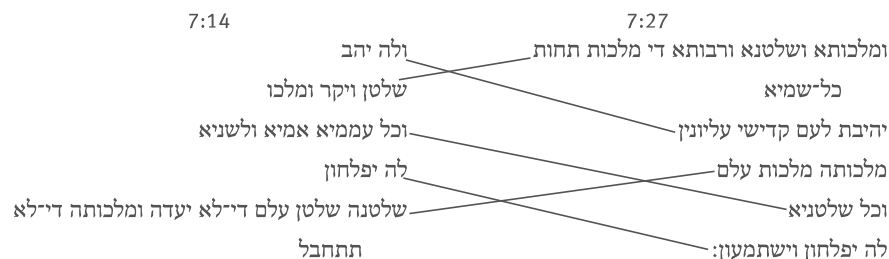
²⁰ Procksch (1920, 148–49); Goldingay (1989, 171); Boyarin (2012, 149).

²¹ See Collins (1993, 300), who mentions Ezek 1 as parallel to Daniel 7 along with 1Kgs 22:19 and Isa 6, but correctly emphasizes the particularly close affinity of Daniel 7 to *1En.* 14. A specification of the relationships between Daniel 7 and *1En.* 14 is beyond the scope of this discussion; see the recent studies of Stokes (2008); Trotter (2012).

lence of meaning between the symbols in each of these visions, it is telling that in Ezekiel 1, YHWH is also depicted in human form.²² However, caution must be exercised in this comparison; although there does appear to be some relationship between the two visions, the complex of elements and the theological and cultural background reflected in each one are different, and specific symbols might reflect different analogues in each case.

5.3 Translating and Identifying קדישי עליונין (עם)

The table of parallels identified between 7:14 and the doxologies in the first half of the book also illustrated parallelism between 7:14, the final verse in the report of the initial vision and 7:27, the final verse of the heavenly interpreter’s explanation of the dream. The following chart illustrates these correspondence:



Despite the differences between these verses, their common basis is very apparent, and allows us to read v. 27 as a word-for-word interpretation of v. 14. Verse 14 describes the details of the vision in the heavenly realm, while v. 27 provides the earthly counterpart to various elements of that vision. According to the correspondences illustrated in the above chart, the “one like a man,” who was granted eternal dominion and sovereignty in the vision, corresponds to the עם קדישי עליונין in the interpretation.²³ Of course, this expression itself is fraught

²² Compare the earlier Priestly conception of the creation of the human being in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27; 9:6).

²³ In Theodotion’s version of v. 27, there is no reflection of the Hebrew עם, and instead we find קדישי עליונין alone (ἀγίοις ὑψίστου); contrast OG [λαῶν] ἀγιῶ ὑψίστου. The absence of the *nomen regens* “people, nation” in Theod may result from harmonization of this phrase with the three additional occurrences of the construct קדישי עליונין (vv. 18, 22, and 25); see ensuing discussion. While it is theoretically possible to posit a different *Vorlage* in which the word עם was not present, this possibility seems less likely, since the interpretation of the vision relates to earthly kingdoms, which are ultimately superseded by the nation of קדישי עליונין.

with interpretive difficulties to which we will turn momentarily. Correspondence indicates, not synonymity, but rather symmetry, between the heavenly and earthly realms. The one like a man is the heavenly representative of the “people” of the קדישי עליונין on earth. But who or what are the קדישי עליונין, and how does this people relate to the one like a man?

In order to analyze this construct chain, it is first necessary to consider the construct expression קדישי עליונין which serves as the *nomen rectum* of the עם. This collocation appears in three additional verses in chapter 7, all in the section that presents the interpretation of the vision.²⁴

7:18	7:22	7:25
ויקבלון מלכותא קדישי עליונין ויחסגון מלכותא עד-עלמא ועד עלם עלמיא.	עד די-אתה עתיק יומיא ודינא יהב לקדישי עליונין וזמנא מטה ומלכותא החסגו קדישיין.	ומלין לצד עליא (על־אָה) ימלל ולקדישי עליונין יבלא ...
Then קדישי עליונין will receive the kingdom, and will <i>inherit</i> the kingdom forever – forever and ever.	Until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was rendered in favor of קדישי עליונין, for the time had come, and the holy one(s) <i>inherited</i> the kingdom.	He will speak words against the Most High, and will “speak (against)” ²⁴ קדישי עליונין.

The context of these passages is the transition from the reign of the four kingdoms to the subsequent bestowal of dominion upon קדישי עליונין.

The identification of the עם קדישי עליונין in v. 27 with בר אנש in the vision is mediated by the occurrence of קדישי עליונין in these three verses. To whom does this latter appellation refer? Much ink has been spilled over precisely this question, among the many interpretive issues in this chapter. The form קדישי is a plural noun in construct form, generally translated as “holy ones.” The substantive form of the adjective קדוש in Biblical and Qumranic Hebrew overwhelmingly refers to heavenly beings.²⁵ The plural can reflect number, as in this translation, yet it can also be the result of other considerations. Among alternative explanations, the most likely is the *pluralis excellentiae* or *maiestatis*, which is often used to refer to God (GKC § 124g–h). The most common example of this usage is

²⁴ For a discussion of the meaning of the verb יבלא, see below n. 53.

²⁵ Cf. Noth ([1955] 1966); Collins (1993, 313–17), and the biblical and postbiblical, Qumranic passages that they quote. קדישי in the plural appears in Dan 4:14, parallel to עירין, both of which refer to angelic beings. Admittedly, this could be used as an argument that mitigates the interpretation proposed here.

of course אֱלֹהִים. Interestingly enough, in Biblical Hebrew the same usage occurs with the appellative קְדוּשִׁים. Thus in Prov 9:10 one finds:

תחלת חכמה יראת יהוה ודעת קדשים בינה. The beginning of wisdom is fear of YHWH, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

The verse exhibits a clear synonymous parallelism, in which YHWH and קְדוּשִׁים (“the Holy One”) can be viewed as equivalent elements.²⁶ Most commentators already assume that this same use of the plural is in fact the most plausible explanation for the plural form of the word עֲלִיּוֹנִין in vv. 18,22,25, and therefore translate the term in Daniel 7 as a singular adjective, functioning as a substantive referring to God: “the Most High (One).”²⁷ The earliest source for this interpretation is both Greek translations of Daniel, which render the Aramaic as ὑψίστου; and they have influenced almost all subsequent analyses of this expression. Alternatively, scholars such as Bauer and Leander, posit that עֲלִיּוֹנִין is singular in meaning but plural in form due to the attraction to the plural (קְדוּשִׁים).²⁸

When the collocation is analyzed as a unit, the issue that needs to be addressed is the syntactical relationship between the two words. Almost all commentators, starting with OG and Theod, interpret this as a construct relationship in which the first element signifies a plural noun and the second a plural noun

²⁶ Note the parallel in Prov 2:5 of דעת אלהים || דעת יהוה; cf. Fox (2000, 308). See also Prov 30:3 – although the parallelism is not explicit in that verse, it can be ascertained from the general context (Fox 2009, 855). In both locations, Fox suggests that the plural can be understood either as a plural of majesty, or as a “plural of abstraction,” carrying the meaning “holiness,” which is perhaps an appropriate epithet for God. Cf. also Hos 12:1. In contrast, Collins (1993, 314 [n. 326]) interprets קְדוּשִׁים in these instances as references to the heavenly court.

²⁷ Note in contrast the use of the singular (עֲלִיּוֹן) “the Most High (One)” in 7:25, without any complement (see below).

²⁸ Bauer and Leander (1927, § 530). Scholars have noted that morphologically עֲלִיּוֹנִין reflects a Hebrew form, despite the Aramaic plural ending with *nun*; see Montgomery (1927, 308); Fassberg (1992, 56–57). While an *-on* suffix is known from various Aramaic dialects, including Biblical Aramaic, Fassberg has observed that since this noun is attested in Hebrew, but nowhere else in Aramaic (except for the clearly Hebraistic אֱלִיּוֹן attested ten times in 1QapGen), its linguistic origins are probably from Hebrew. Noth ([1955] 1966, 218) suggested that in light of the Hebraistic morphology of עֲלִיּוֹנִין (קְדוּשִׁים), it must go back to a Hebrew original. He further claimed that this Hebrew form is recoverable from CD 20:8 – כל קדושי עליון. However, it is more likely that CD generated a Hebrew expression based upon the Hebraism (with Aramaic plural ending) in Daniel 7.

with singular meaning, as described above, translated, “the holy ones of the Most High.” This in turn is interpreted in reference to a collective body, whether it be angelic beings or Israel itself. However, in light of the use of קדושים as a reference to YHWH in the biblical passages cited above, and in light of the analysis of the vision itself, I would like to offer two alternative proposals for the syntax of this phrase:

(1) It could be understood as the construct of a synonymous word pair, whose components complement one another. This phenomenon has been documented extensively by Avishur, in both the Bible and in Semitic languages more generally, although he did not discuss this example.²⁹ The terms can be shown to be synonymous based upon expressions in which they can be interchanged. Thus we find in Prov 9:10; 30:3 – דעת קדשים and in Num 24:16 – דעת עליון (parallel to אמרי־אל “God’s speech”). In each of these contexts, the reference is to divine wisdom. The terms also appear in semi-parallelism in Deut 26:19:

<p>ולתתך עליון על כלהגוים אשר עשה לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת ולהיתך עם־קדש ליהוה אלהיך כאשר דבר:</p>	<p>And that He will set you, in fame and renown and glory, high above all the nations that He has made; and that you shall be, as He promised, a holy people to the Lord your God.</p>
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The construct expressions in this subcategory denote single concepts where one element modifies the other, functioning similarly to the phenomenon of *hendiadys*.³⁰ The phrase קדישי עליון could therefore be translated as “the most high holy one(s).”

(2) Morphologically, the word קדישי is clearly in the construct state. This simple observation has been the trigger that has led scholars to analyze the phrase as two nouns in a construct relationship. However, there is another grammatical precedent for this configuration, which although it reflects a much less common phenomenon, offers yet another way to read the expression קדישי עליון. One finds in a number of biblical passages the collocation of a *nomen regens* and an adjective in agreement with that noun. In these instances, there is no *nomen rectum* to “complete” the noun in construct state. Instead, the meaning of the expression is essentially identical to the more common collocation of absolute

²⁹ Avishur (1984, 153–211 [Chapter 4: “Pairs in Construct State”]).

³⁰ See the classic study of Melamed (1945).

noun + adjective. This phenomenon can be identified in the following expressions, for example, according to the Masoretic vocalization:³¹

Isa 36:2 (= 2Kgs 18:17): בְּחַיִּל כָּבֵד
 Zech 14:4: גֵּיַא גְּדוֹלָה מְאֹד
 Qoh 8:10: וּמִמְקוֹם קְדוֹשׁ

According to this explanation too, the expression can be translated as “the most high holy one(s).” The plural forms of both noun and adjective are the result of the agreement in number (and gender) of both elements, and not due simply to the syntactical juxtaposition of two independent nouns. The use of the plural would therefore have the same connotation for both the noun and the adjective.

According to both of these alternatives, the decision whether to interpret עֵלְיוֹנִין קְדִישִׁי as a reference to one or multiple divine figures would therefore be a matter of interpretation. The use of the *pluralis excellentiae* or *maiestatis* in this phrase is already acknowledged by almost all scholars with reference to the word עֵלְיוֹנִין. The interpretation proposed here suggests that the same argument can be made regarding the word קְדִישִׁי.³² In that case, the phrase may be read “the most high Holy One,” identified as YHWH himself, who stands out among the various divine characters in Daniel 7. The correspondence of the “one like a man” in the vision to the עֵלְיוֹנִין קְדִישִׁי in the interpretation would on this reading be eminently plausible – both refer to YHWH, who is to receive eternal dominion and sovereignty. The extended phrase עֵלְיוֹנִין קְדִישִׁי עַם would then refer to the nation of YHWH, a reference to the people of Israel, who will benefit in the earthly realm from YHWH’s dominion in the heavenly plane.³³

³¹ These examples were identified by GKC § 128w (in footnote), but they were analyzed differently, “[they] must be intended as forms of the absolute state, shortened in consequence of their close connexion.” However, it seems more likely that in fact these patterns reflect a syntactical structure that should be considered as normative within biblical Hebrew.

³² The use of the plural verb in vv. 18,22 with the subject עֵלְיוֹנִין קְדִישִׁי(ן) could perhaps be used as an argument against the suggestion proffered here. However, evidence for a similar usage of a plural verb is found in the Hebrew Bible, including, e.g., Gen 20:13 (corrected to singular in SP); 31:53 (corrected to singular in SP and LXX); 35:7 (corrected to singular in SP and the Versions); 2Sam 7:23 (corrected to singular in 1Chr 17:21) (similarly Exod 32:4,8 as compared to Neh 9:18); cf. GKC § 132h and 145i.

³³ The motif of Israel as YHWH’s nation is attested extensively throughout the Bible, and is found *inter alia* in Exod 19:5–6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18–19; 32:9.

5.4 Eschatological Biblical Interpretation: Establishing Yhwh's Portion

Verses 18 and 22 both employ *haphel* forms of the Aramaic verb חס"ן, governing the object מלכותא. As noted already by lexicographers and commentators, the Aramaic root חס"ן carries two distinct meanings: “strong/strength” (see, e.g., Dan 2:37; 4:27)³⁴ or “to inherit.”³⁵ The latter meaning related to inheritance, especially in the (*h*)*aphel* conjugation, is attested in most Jewish dialects of Aramaic,³⁶ as well as in Samaritan and Egyptian Aramaic.³⁷ Since Daniel 7’s interpretation of the vision treats of the rise and fall of empires, and who is to receive the kingdom, it is much more likely that the second meaning is the one attested here.³⁸ This suggestion is further bolstered by the structure of v. 18, in which ויחסגון appears in parallel to ויקבלון, “and they will receive.”

It is significant that this root serves as a frequent, stereotypical equivalent of Hebrew נח"ל (as well as אה"ז and יר"ש) in the Aramaic Targumim.³⁹ I suggest that the use of this term within the context of Daniel 7 is part of an intentional effort to evoke the language of two biblical passages, Deut 32:8–9 and Psalm 82,⁴⁰ texts

³⁴ This is also the standard meaning of the root in Syriac.

³⁵ See BDB, 1093 which classifies them as two separate entries: s.v. חס"ן vb. *haphel* “take possession of” (Dan 7:18,22); s.v. חס"ן n.m. “(royal) power” (Dan 2:37; 4:27); similarly *HALOT*, 1878–79; Qimron (2002, 134): s.v. חס"ן = קנה בעלות (acquire ownership), referring to 7:18,22; s.v. [חס"ן] = חוסין (strength, power), referring to 2:37; 4:27.

³⁶ Jastrow (1903, 40), s.v. אחסנתא, אחסנא; Jastrow (1903, 488–89), s.v. חס"ן; Sokoloff (1990, 46–47); Sokoloff (2002, 104–5), s.v. אחסנתא; Sokoloff (2002, 475), s.v. חס"ן; Sokoloff (2003, 50), s.v. חס"ן, חש"ן.

³⁷ Tal (2000, 286–87) classifies two separate verbs: חס"ן = strength; חס"ן = possession (of land), including the verb in *aphel*; Hoftijzer and Jongeling (1995, 391–92), s.v. *hsn*.

³⁸ Charles (1929, 192); Porteous (1976, 94); HaCohen and Kil (1994, 180). Collins (1993, 276) translates “possess,” but then interprets the verbs in vv. 18 and 22 under the influence of 2:37 and 4:27, with the meaning that “the holy ones” will have a strong hold over their dominion.

³⁹ This assertion can be demonstrated statistically for the Targumim of the Pentateuch (the evidence adduced here is based upon the data of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project). For example, verbs from the root חס"ן appear thirty-eight times in Targum Onqelos, thirty-four of which can be identified as directly reflecting a word in the Hebrew *Vorlage* (and not an addition to or paraphrase of the biblical text). Of these, twenty-four translate Hebrew נח"ל (70%), followed by יר"ש (five; 15%), and אה"ז (three; 9%) – all essentially identical semantically. The same analysis in Targum Neofiti of the Aramaic verb אחסין yields even more definitive results – thirty-six instances, twenty-nine with direct Hebrew equivalents: נח"ל (twenty-four; 83%), אה"ז (three; 10%).

⁴⁰ These two passages are associated with Daniel 7 by Lacocque (2001, 121). However, he does not further develop the potential meaning behind these parallels.

that greatly interested and influenced many writers in antiquity, and which also exhibit a distinct, Canaanite imprint. Let us examine the language of the passage from Deuteronomy 32:⁴¹

Deut 32:8–9

<p>(8) בהנחל עליון גוים בהפרידו בני אדם יצב גבלת עמים למספר בני אלהים.</p>	<p>(8) When the Most High gave nations their inheritance, and set the divisions of man, He fixed the boundaries of peoples in relation to the number of “sons of God”/divine beings.</p>
<p>(9) כי חלק יהוה עמו יעקב חבל נחלתו ישראל.</p>	<p>(9) For the Lord's portion is His people Jacob, His own allotment is Israel.</p>

These verses present a distinctive theological-cosmological view of the origins of the division of the world into nations and peoples. According to this perspective, this allotment was not by chance or due to historical developments, but rather the result of a primordial process in which each “son of God” was assigned a nation and a plot of land. The theological picture here is of a head deity, named עליון, with other subordinate, lesser divine figures, the בני אלהים. Scholars have debated the position of YHWH within this theological scheme, suggesting either that he is one of the בני אלהים, or alternatively that he himself should be identified with עליון. According to the first possibility, which I will label the mythic option, when the supreme deity עליון originally distributed the lands and peoples amongst the lesser divine beings, YHWH, as one of these second-tier deities, received Israel as his inheritance. According to the second possibility, the demythologized option, when YHWH, designated as עליון, distributed the lands and peoples, he decided to keep Israel to himself as his own personal possession. These two options offer significantly different perspectives on the role of the God of Israel in the universe, and a potential distinction can be (and has been) made between the myth in its original form, and its inclusion within the context of Deuteronomy 32.⁴² How do these verses, which were addressed and interpreted in numerous ancient sources, relate to Daniel 7?

⁴¹ The end of v. 8 has been quoted here according to the reading of 4QDeut¹ and LXX; the presence of the name ישראל at the end of v. 9 is attested in SP and LXX.

⁴² See the recent, thorough discussion of Goldstein (2010–2011). The mythological motifs which form the basis of this passage survived into the postbiblical period, as demonstrated by Bar-On and Paz (2010–2011). The persistence of these traditions in the sources which Bar-On and Paz adduce lends credence to the articulation of the similar phenomenon in Daniel 7.

Both Deuteronomy 32 and Daniel 7 describe a theological-cosmological picture with a leading divine entity and subordinate divine beings. In Deuteronomy 32, we find עליון and בני אלהים, while in Daniel 7 we find עתיק יומין and בר אנש alongside the four other creatures. Most significantly, the context of each of these passages is the inheritance of the nations and lands by the subordinate divinities. Deuteronomy 32 describes the dawn of history, at which time the division of all of the lands took place, and at that time YHWH and Israel were paired together. Daniel 7 describes a process in which the four beasts, each of which apparently serves as the heavenly representative of one of the nations, emerge one after another from the Great Sea. This is generally interpreted to refer to four successive kingdoms, to eventually be succeeded by the fifth, eternal kingdom.⁴³ However, it seems that the apocalypse does not simply envision a succession of kingdoms. According to 7:11, the fourth beast was killed and its body was destroyed and consigned to flames. At the same time, the dominion of the other beasts was taken away, but they were given an unspecified extension of life (v. 12). This implies that these kingdoms coexisted until the end of the kingdom represented by the fourth beast, and in fact, as the text emphasizes, they will continue to persist even after the fourth kingdom has been destroyed. This picture is actually very similar (yet not identical) to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2, according to which each of the metals in the statue that he envisioned reflects another kingdom. There too, the kingdoms coexisted, and only came to an end when the stone struck the base of the statue and brought the entire structure crashing down.⁴⁴

⁴³ While the origins of this scheme are beyond the scope of the present study, they have been discussed extensively in scholarship; see e.g. Swain (1940); Flusser (1972); Hartman and Di Lella (1978, 30–33); Mendels (1981); Collins (1993, 166–70). The four-kingdom pattern was adopted from non-Israelite/Jewish sources, and adapted to match the Judean reality. In the original (Persian) form of this scheme, Assyria appeared in place of Babylon, leading to a more logical progression of the kingdoms, since Media did indeed take over part of the Assyrian empire.

⁴⁴ Ginsberg (1948, 6–7) noted this aspect, but used it to draw historical conclusions. Instead, I suggest that it reflects an exegetically motivated reflection upon the theological-cosmological issue. Contra Ginsberg, Daniel 7 posits the persistence of all of the previous monarchies, and does not claim that the first has been destroyed. Ginsberg (1948, 65 [n. 7]) assumed that the phrase מן ארעא (v. 4) means “it was taken away from earth,” i.e., “it perished.” He was therefore forced to assume the incompatibility of this clause with the continuation of the verse (“only one of many indications that it is out of place”) and proposes that the end of v. 4 originally belonged to the description of the second beast. This approach has been adopted by Hartman and di Lella (1978, 202, 212–13). However, it is simpler to translate this Aramaic phrase as “it was raised/lifted up from the ground,” and understand it as part of the transformation from beast to human.

I do not mean to suggest that Daniel 7 offers no chronological progression whatsoever; the vision emphasizes that the animals emerged from the mythic waters one after the other. However, unlike the apocalypse in chapter 8, where there is an explicit description of the he-goat trampling the ram (8:5–7), reflecting Greece's defeat of Persia and Media, there is no explicit reference in chapter 7 to combat between the different kingdoms. In fact, the only strife described takes place within the fourth kingdom itself, in which the king symbolized by the arrogant horn uproots the three preceding horns of that empire (imagery that reflects Antiochus IV's political struggles against other leaders/monarchs). The emphasis in chapter 7 is on the wresting of dominion from these four kingdoms, and its bestowal upon קדישי עליונין. Therefore, while Deuteronomy 32 focuses on the process of distribution of peoples and lands at the *Urzeit*, Daniel 7 focuses on the *Endzeit*, at which time the land is to be reappropriated and redistributed. Unlike the previous distribution, however, in the eschatological age the land will be granted to only one divine character – the one like a man, or קדישי עליונין.

In the analysis above, it was suggested that one can identify the one like a man, and קדישי עליונין, with YHWH, and the קדישי עליונין עם, with his people, Israel. This identification further strengthens the connection to and transformation of Deuteronomy 32. In that earlier poetic text, YHWH received only a small, yet significant, portion of the nations and lands of the world under his direct care. However, Daniel 7 envisions a transformation of the world order, in which YHWH will be sovereign over all of the nations of the world, thus transforming the national God of Israel into a universal God, to whom all nations will be subservient.⁴⁵ Daniel 7 is not intended to replace Deuteronomy 32, since they describe different periods in the history of the world. The first describes the creation of the cosmos, while the second reaches towards a new creation of the theological-cosmological world order.⁴⁶

Another potential inner-biblical source for the notion of the appropriation of the lands from the members of the divine, heavenly retinue, and their grant to YHWH can be identified in Psalm 82. That somewhat enigmatic psalm describes a

⁴⁵ See the discussion of Knohl (1994), who addresses this theme in a number of biblical texts (including Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 82) although he does not consider Daniel 7.

⁴⁶ Perhaps this transition to YHWH as the sole divine power is already hinted at within the context of Deuteronomy 32: “See, then, that I, I am He; there is no god beside me. I deal death and give life; I wounded and I will heal: none can deliver from My hand.” (v. 39) (as suggested to me by B. Bruning). Rabbinic sources similarly combine Deut 32:39 with Dan 7:9 in order to negate a potential “heretical” reading of the latter; see *Mek. R. Y., Ba-ḥodeš 5; Šīrā 4; Mek. RŠB”Y, Bešallah 15* (cf. also *Sifre Deut. 329* which adduces Deut 32:39 without Dan 7:9) and the discussion of A. F. Segal (1977, 32–36).

heavenly scene in which one deity accuses others in a juridical context. Although the name YHWH does not appear in this mythic psalm, numerous scholars have surmised that it has been removed due to the editorial process by which the Elohist Psalter (Psalms 42–83) was composed, and has been replaced by אלהים in vv. 1 and 8.⁴⁷ According to this reading, YHWH stood as an accuser in the divine court, alleging that other divine beings were guilty of judicial misconduct, since they mistreated the poor and downtrodden. The psalm continues with a pronouncement directed against these divine beings, that they will in fact perish like humans; it concludes with an address to אלהים (=YHWH) that he will judge the earth and should/will inherit among all the nations (כי אתה תנחל בכל הגוים). The theological-cosmological picture of this psalm is not completely clear, and many scholars have debated whether this scene can be defined as monotheistic or not. All critical scholars have recognized the Canaanite, polytheistic background of this scene, although most understand that the author of the psalm has transformed this earlier myth by promoting YHWH to the head of the pantheon. Furthermore, this psalm “corrects” the theological-cosmological model posited in Deuteronomy 32, which had suggested that the various בני אלהים have power and/or sovereignty over the nations. In this psalm, YHWH is able to take away their divinity and transform them into humans, thus subjugating these subordinate deities to YHWH himself. They do not have independent authority that allows them to act upon their own will.⁴⁸

More recently, David Frankel has suggested that Psalm 82 reflects the earlier polytheistic conception known to us from the Canaanite pantheon, in which YHWH stands and accuses these divine beings within the divine court of El.⁴⁹ This has been suggested before; even within the more circumscribed interpretive framework just outlined, many commentators have suggested that the terms אלהים (v. 1) and בני עליון (v. 6) preserve vestiges of such a polytheistic pantheon and court. However, Frankel extends this argument further, and posits that vv. 6–8 of Psalm 82 are not the words of YHWH or the psalmist, but rather those of El.⁵⁰ In his proposed reading, the psalm presumes a pantheon with El standing

⁴⁷ For a summary of this scholarship and an analysis of the statistical distribution of divine names within the Elohist Psalter, see Joffe (2001). With specific reference to Ps 82:1, 8, see e.g., (among many) Rofé (2009, 420–21). Alternatively, and less radically, one can suggest, that the figure named אלהים in vv. 1 and 8 should be interpreted as YHWH.

⁴⁸ See among many, the studies of Wright (1950, 30–41); Cross (1973, 44, 186–88); Rofé ([1979] 2012, 62–73); Smith (2001, 48–49; 2008, 131–43); Parker (1995).

⁴⁹ Frankel (2010).

⁵⁰ Most commentators suggest that v. 8 is a declaration of the psalmist, or another individual outside of the divine scene, to YHWH. Frankel’s suggestion obviates the need to assume that the

at its head. In light of the indictment that YHWH brings against the בני עליון in El's court, it is El who decides to demote the בני עליון to mere mortals, confiscating their lands and inheritances; and it is El who turns to YHWH in v. 8 and designates him to receive the inheritance of all of the nations. This picture is in many ways a direct development of Deut 32:8–9, according to the mythic reading, featuring Elyon as the one who distributes the lands to the various בני אלהים. In a reversal of this original plan, El (=Elyon) appropriates these lands and grants them to YHWH alone.

This second interpretation of Psalm 82, Frankel goes on to argue, finds its natural continuation in the apocalypse of Daniel 7. As already noted above, Daniel 7 also describes a heavenly court scene in which a senior deity (the Ancient of Days) convicts subordinate divine characters (the four beasts) to death, while granting dominion over all the nations of the world to a divine character of special status, the one like a man. The emphasis on the sovereignty over the nations throughout Daniel 7, and in particular, the use of the Aramaic root כס"ן (cognate with the Hebrew נח"ל), suggest that this is the primary theme of this chapter, as it is in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 82. Moreover, if the ultimate message of the psalm is that YHWH is to inherit sovereignty over all the nations of the world, then the correspondence to the analysis of Daniel 7 above is even more striking.

Of course, Frankel's interpretation of Psalm 82 needs to be further considered in order to assess whether it indeed bears out the position which he stakes out. The psalm is open to multiple interpretations, two of which were outlined briefly above, and others which were not addressed here at all. However, I would suggest that at the very least, we have an example here of inner-biblical interpretation, in which the author of the apocalypse in Daniel 7 has read Psalm 82 in accordance with the interpretation outlined above. It would therefore not be necessary to establish the original meaning of Psalm 82, since the reception history of this chapter is more significant for this evaluation. Even if Psalm 82 were to reflect a monotheistic reaction to Deut 32:8–9 (against the interpretation posited by Frankel), then Daniel 7, which interprets Psalm 82, can be termed a remythologization of this scene. This tendency within Second Temple literature has been noted previously by scholars,⁵¹ and its presence here is not atypical for this

speaker has changed between vv. 7 and 8. At the same time, it can be questioned whether the description of the בני עליון in 3rd person in v. 5, in contrast to the 2nd person in vv. 2–4, 6–8, is a necessary sign of a shift in speaker (from YHWH to El). Alternatively, it can be explained as a literary device intended to differentiate between the crimes of these divine beings and their punishment, each delineated by YHWH.

⁵¹ Note the studies of Stone (1985; 1987).

genre. In the view of this apocalyptic author, the heavenly plane and its earthly parallel functioned according to the plan established at creation, but will both be transformed in the eschatological era, when the sovereignty over the nations of the world will be bestowed upon YHWH in the divine court.

5.5 Daniel 7 and the Other Apocalypses in Daniel: Daniel 7:25

Chapter 7 is simultaneously the first of the apocalypses and the last of the Aramaic chapters. Many scholars have offered explanations for the different contours of the generic (chapters 1–6: narratives; 7–12: apocalypses) and linguistic (chapters 1, 8–12: Hebrew; 2–7: Aramaic) divisions in Daniel. The most convincing explanation, to my mind, is that this overlap is the result of the literary development of the book. Chapters 2–7 existed as a complete composition in Aramaic before the Hebrew apocalypses in chapters 8–12 and introduction in chapter 1 were added to the book.⁵² There are obviously many nuances within this argument which need to be clarified, including the composition history of chapters 2–7 as a unit, and subsequently the order in which the supplementary chapters were added. But setting those questions aside, if one accepts the general distinction between chapters 2–7 and 8–12, and the notion that the Aramaic book preceded the Hebrew apocalypses, then methodologically one should avoid interpreting the former based upon the latter. They were not composed by the same author or at the same time, and therefore they cannot be assumed *a priori* to have the same meaning. Daniel 7 needs to be evaluated independently of the other apocalypses, and only then can it be compared to the subsequent chapters of the book.

This methodological point is crucial for the argument made above since, as just noted, inner-Danielic parallels could have a secondary impact upon the interpretation of Daniel 7. I suggest that such caution is necessary particularly with regard to the exegesis of 7:25, which contains another instance of קדישי עליונין:

Dan 7:25

ומלין לצד עליא (עלֵאָה) ימלל ולקדישי עליונין	He will speak words against the Most High,
:... יבלא	and will “speak (against)” the קדישי עליונין.

These two parallel stichs are generally viewed as referring to two separate negative actions perpetrated by Antiochus against two separate targets – 1) the blas-

⁵² For a thorough discussion of this issue, see Collins (1993, 24–38), and below, pp. 211–213.

phemy directed against the Most High; and 2) the negative action (יבלא)⁵³ carried out against the קדישי עליונין. The parallelism corresponds to the twofold division in the first part of the vision, with עלי referring to the Ancient of Days and קדישי עליונין, already present earlier in the apocalypse corresponding to the one like a man, generally understood as YHWH and the heavenly host (or Israel) respectively.

This interpretation seems to be supported by the parallel passages elsewhere in the subsequent apocalypses in chapters 8–12, which similarly describe the blasphemous actions of Antiochus IV. Thus in chapter 8, the small horn attacks both the stars of the heavenly host and the chief of the host itself (שר הצבא):⁵⁴

(10) It grew as high as the host of heaven and it hurled some stars of the heavenly host to the ground and trampled them. (11) It vaunted itself against the very chief of the host; on its account the regular offering was suspended, and his holy place was abandoned.

⁵³ As discussed by previous interpreters and scholars, the meaning of this verb is not sufficiently clear, although its generally negative tone is apparent from the context. The general meaning of the Hebrew root בל"י is “wear out, wear down” (BDB, 115, s.v. בָּלָה; HALOT, 132, s.v. בלה), and usually refers to a physical object that is worn out, although in 1Chr 17:9 it concerns the nation of Israel. It could perhaps therefore be used metaphorically here to refer to some sort of blow against God. Variations of this meaning are found in the ancient translations and subsequent interpreters. The OG translates: κατατρίψει “wear out” – the same Greek equivalent translates בל"י in Deut 8:4 (LXX^A); 29:4(5); Theod: παλαιώσει “decay, wear out” the same Greek equivalent translates בל"י in the Septuagint to Deut 8:4; 29:4(5); Jos 9:5,13; Neh 9:21; Job 13:28; Ps 32(31):3; 49(48):15(14); 102(101):27(26); Isa 50:9; 51:6; 65:22; Lam 3:4; Vulgate: *conteret* “wear out”; Rashi: יטריח ויציק “bother and badger”; BDB, 1084, s.v. בָּלָה “wear away, out,” fig. for “harass continually”; HALOT, 1834, s.v. בלה: “wear out.” (The Peshitta MSS reads נבלה “deceit,” but should perhaps be emended to נבלה, using the same Semitic root as MT). Further consideration should be given to a suggestion first put forth by Noth ([1955] 1966, 224–25), according to which the verb is based upon a Semitic root related to the Arabic *balā* with the meaning “to offend, test, handle roughly, torment.” In fact, that Semitic root is actually broader semantically, and refers to speech in general, as in the Ethiopic *behla* which is the standard verb of speech. Akkadian *ba'ālu*, *bālu* carries the meaning “to beseech,” usually in the context of human requests to deities (CAD, vol. B, 2, s.v. bāālu B). Wolf Leslau (1987, 89), s.v. *behla*, also compares the Ge'ez verb to the Akkadian verb and to the Arabic (*bhl*) *ibtahala* “implore, beseech.” In view of the parallel ימלל ... ומלין לצד “speak words against” in this verse, it should perhaps be translated here as “speak (against)” (cf. VanderKam [1977], who identifies a similar meaning for the Biblical Hebrew verb בהל in Ps 2:5, offering “speak passionately”).

⁵⁴ For the scholars that have identified all verses that mention the small horn as redactional additions to chapter 7 (see above n. 5), these verses were likely added under the influence of chapter 8. The present study posits the opposite direction of development.

Subsequently in chapter 11, the contemptible King of the North also acts against two distinctly defined heavenly groups:

(36) ... The king will do as he pleases; he will exalt and magnify himself above every god (על-כל-אל), and he will speak awful things against the god of gods (ועל אל אלים)...

When 7:25 is read in light of these verses, then its most natural reading is that it refers to YHWH and a group of subordinate divine entities as the targets of Antiochus' problematic behavior.⁵⁵

However, in light of the process of literary development of the book of Daniel outlined here, we must be careful not to equate chapter 7 with the later apocalypses. As already discussed, the identity of each of these characters in Dan 7:25 depends on one's interpretation of the *dramatis personae* in the *first* half of the chapter, in the vision of the heavenly court scene. As I have attempted to show, the characters in that section can also be interpreted as a reference to the head of the pantheon (El/Elyon) and YHWH. If that is the case, then perhaps we should read v. 25a as a reference to blasphemy against these divine entities. The alternative picture in the parallel verses in chapters 8 and 11 is then seen to result from the secondary, inner-Danielic interpretation of the earlier "source" apocalypse in chapter 7.⁵⁶

If the above claim is correct, that Daniel 7 reflects the same contours as the heavenly scenes in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 82, in which YHWH received dominion over the world, then subsequent interpretations transformed this theological-cosmological picture, promoting YHWH to the head of this court, and equating him with the Ancient of Days. This promotion, however, created a vacuum for the identification of the one like a man, and opened up the possibility of a new character, a divine second-in-command over Israel, a notion that is developed in subsequent chapters of Daniel (identified as Michael in 10:13,21; 12:1)⁵⁷ and in the New Testament (Jesus).⁵⁸

⁵⁵ See e.g., Collins (1993, 321–22), who thus interprets the parallelism, and explicitly adduces the parallel to Dan 8:10 in this context.

⁵⁶ Similarly Collins (1993, 280) suggests, "Chapter 8 was surely influenced by chap. 7," with reference to the motif of the little horn.

⁵⁷ Michael is not mentioned in chapter 7, and in light of the methodological caution noted here, should not be assumed to be part of its theological-cosmological worldview (Goldingay 1989, 172), contra, e.g., Schmidt (1900, 26–28); Emerton (1958, 242); Collins (1977, 144–46); Lacocque (1979, 133–34); Day (1985, 172); Collins (1993, 310). Zevit (1968, 394–96) suggests that בר אנוש should be identified with Gabriel (Dan 9:21), but this possibility is less appropriate than Michael in terms of their roles in Daniel. In any event, the same methodological qualification applies to this suggestion as well.

⁵⁸ For the New Testament identification of Jesus with בר אנוש of Daniel 7, see the survey essay of Yarbrow Collins (1993, 90–112 [especially pp. 90–105]).

5.6 Theological Worldview or Literary Appropriation?

The interpretation proposed here for Daniel 7 is at first glance striking in its theological assumption of the existence of a deity above YHWH, who is responsible for the distribution and redistribution of lands and empires. While this theological-cosmological construct is familiar from an earlier context, it is more surprising to find its expression in a passage which can be safely dated, at least in its current form, to the second century BCE. Simply expressed – is it conceivable that there were Jews in this period who believed in the existence of a deity superior to YHWH? As a methodological rule, such *a priori* arguments should be avoided, since we should not expect authors to conform to our assumptions about what they could or could not have believed or intended to express, in a specific period of time. Rather, the texts in question need to be analyzed and interpreted on their own terms, and only after we succeed in interpreting each work in its own framework of assumptions can we then continue to the next stage of assessing the place of the text in question within the larger literary, cultural, and ideational matrix from which it emerged. This is the only way to successfully avoid the potential pitfall of anachronistic scholarly assumptions and interpretations. At the same time, if the proposed interpretation leads to the conclusion that the passage in question is indeed unique in its worldview, then caution must be exercised before positing a radical reading of the evidence. Some early rabbinic sources do interpret Daniel 7:9–10 with reference to two divine figures, although they conceive of YHWH as the more senior deity, and the one like a man as a subordinate heavenly being. Others polemicize against the notion of two divinities using this same verses.⁵⁹ These later traditions may hint at the earlier cosmological conception, reinterpreted now through a nonpolytheistic lens.

Due to the uniqueness of the worldview described here (at least unique to the period to which the composition of Daniel 7 is attributed), it is perhaps however preferable to explain this hierarchy of deities not as the result of an exceptional theological perspective, but rather due to the literary and exegetical dependence of the author of Daniel 7 upon the ancient myths of the division of the world as expressed in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 82. The contours of the description of the eschatological period in this apocalypse are not therefore a direct descrip-

⁵⁹ Cf. the sources presented by A. F. Segal (1977, 33–67). As he notes, some of the rabbinic sources ostensibly employ Dan 7:9–10 as a prooftext against the idea of “Two Powers in Heaven,” but the content and context of these verses “makes it more likely that Dan. 7:9f. is as central to the heresy as it is to the defense against it ...” (p. 36), and “is also the locus of the same heretical traditions” (p. 37) against which it is polemicizing.

tion of this author's religious worldview, but instead a literary reflection of these foundational passages of biblical cosmogony, which were then further developed in Daniel 7's description of the eternal kingdom of YHWH. Following this line of thought, the author of Daniel 7 intended for his audience to identify and be aware of these familiar biblical passages, and to understand the new composition against this religio-literary backdrop. The theological hierarchy is therefore not the primary point of this passage, but rather an echo of its mythical sources. The above identification of each of the divine characters in this heavenly drama, while perhaps precise on the literary level, is only part of the appropriate evaluation of the theological worldview of this apocalypse. A complete appreciation of the meaning of the apocalypse can only be obtained by reading it in light of the biblical sources which form its basis.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ As I argued in a separate article (Segal 2014), the relationship between Daniel 7 and these earlier sources was further developed in a subsequent composition discovered at Qumran (4Q246). I suggested there that the identification of the intertextual connections between these biblical passages allows for the interpretation of this enigmatic scroll, and solves an interpretive crux which is fundamental for understanding the religious worldview of that later composition.