

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

The Text and the oldest Versions.

THE Palestinian Jews, as is well known, divided their Scriptures into three parts, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa (Heb. פְּתוּכִים). The Book of Daniel was never, so far as we know, included among the Prophetical Books, but occupied a place in the Hagiographa. In our present Hebrew Bibles, Daniel stands between Esther and Ezra; in ancient times, however, the order of the books in the Hagiographa was not rigidly fixed.

The received Jewish or Masoretic text of Daniel is written partly in Hebrew (chaps. i.—ii. 4 a, viii.—xii.), partly in the Aramaic dialect spoken by the Jews of Palestine (chaps. ii. 4 b—vii.). At what time this text assumed its final shape, cannot be positively stated, but it is now agreed that the present Jewish Bible, leaving out of account the vowel-points, accents etc., is virtually identical with that which was used in the latter half of the second century after Christ. Many scholars believe the Masoretic text to have been fixed much earlier, though few would venture to go further back than about the beginning of the first century—the date assigned by Nöldeke (*Die alttestamentliche Litteratur*, p. 241). It is in itself probable that the text of some books was fixed earlier than that of others. Since the Book of Daniel, like most of the writings included in the Hagiographa, does not appear to have been used in the public services of the Synagogue, it was presumably one of the latest books to assume a stereotyped form.

Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah are the only books of the Old

Testament which are lacking in the collection of Aramaic versions or paraphrases known as the Targums. Whether this be due to the fact that parts of the books in question are already written in Aramaic, is uncertain. In the Mishnah (*Yadayim* iv. 5) the Aramaic portions of Ezra and Daniel are called Targum, but they are expressly distinguished from other Targums, since they always “defile the hands” (i.e. they are of Canonical dignity).

The so-called Septuagint version of Daniel is generally believed to have been made rather more than a century before the Christian era. An examination of this version reveals at once two facts, firstly that the text used by the translator, or translators, differed in numerous *details* from the Masoretic text, secondly that the version contains an unusual quantity of later additions and alterations. To this work a separate chapter will be devoted.

The Greek versions of Aquila and Symmachus have been preserved only in fragments, as in the case of other Old Testament writings. On the other hand, Theodotion's version has been handed down to us entire. According to some Theodotion was a Jew, according to others an Ebionite Christian. It was formerly supposed that he lived about the middle or end of the second century after Christ, but Schürer has lately brought forward arguments to prove that his date may be somewhat earlier (*Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, II. p. 709). Theodotion's version of Daniel is to be regarded as a revision of the Septuagint for the purpose of making it agree more closely with the Masoretic text, or at least with a text differing from the Masoretic only in a very small number of minute details. The apocryphal additions (Susanna, the Song of the Three Children, Bel and the Dragon) were retained by Theodotion, though with some changes.

Whether Theodotion's translations were ever used among Greek-speaking Jews, is not known; but in the Christian Church his translation of Daniel rapidly became so popular as almost entirely to displace the old Septuagint version. Yet, as might have been expected, reminiscences of the Septuagint soon found their way into Theodotion's text, while the Septua-

gint in its turn became interpolated from Theodotion. One striking proof of the popularity of Theodotion's Daniel and of the obscurity into which the Septuagint text fell, is that Porphyry, writing about 270 A.D., based his criticism of the Book of Daniel upon Theodotion's version, which he believed to be the original¹. In the time of Jerome this version alone was in official use among Greek-speaking Christians, and so long had the Septuagint been set aside that the reason of the change had been forgotten (*Praef. in Vers. Dan.*).

The Coptic version published, with a Latin translation, by Tattam in his *Prophetæ Majores* (Oxford, 1852), is evidently based upon Theodotion², though it contains occasional interpolations from the Septuagint. It may be remarked in passing that the Coptic text has a long additional chapter which was composed centuries after the Mohammedan conquests, probably in the reign of the Fatimite Caliph Al-Hākim (996—1020 A.D.). It is a *naïf* attempt to bring the prophecies of Daniel down to date. The author, like most other apocalyptic writers, displays great ignorance of the remote past, while as he approaches his own time his descriptions gradually become more minute and more accurate.

The Old Syriac Version, the so-called *Pēshittā*, almost invariably follows the present Jewish text—the apparent divergences being generally due to the paraphrastic style of the translator or to later corruption. Only in a very small number of cases does it appear at all probable that the text used by the translator differed from the Masoretic. The apocryphal pieces are found even in the oldest MSS. of the *Pēshittā*, but seem not to have belonged to it in its original form.

¹ That Porphyry believed the Greek text to be the original is expressly affirmed by Jerome (*Prol. Comm. in Dan.*), and that the Greek text used by Porphyry was Theodotion's appears from Jerome's commentary on Dan. xi. 38, "*Deum MAOZIM ridicule Porphyrius interpretatus est, ut diceret in vico Modin, unde fuit Mathathias et filii ejus, Antiochi duces Jovis posuisse*

statuam, et compulsisse Judaeos ut ei victimas immolarent, id est, deo Modin."

² The same would seem to be the case with the Coptic text edited by Joseph Bardelli (Pisa, 1849), as far as can be gathered from the Latin preface, for my ignorance of the Coptic language makes it impossible for me to speak from personal investigation.

Ancient and medieval interpreters.

The ancient Jewish interpretation of the Book of Daniel is known but imperfectly, since it was not till the Middle Ages that the Jews began to compile systematic commentaries, and we have therefore to gather our information from stray allusions in the Talmud, the Midrashim, and other works. The statements of Josephus on this subject are of little value, as his acquaintance with the book was very superficial¹. Much Jewish tradition as to the book of Daniel may be found embedded in the works of the Christian Fathers. Among the writers who are of most value in this respect may be mentioned the Persian Christian Aphraates (who lived in the middle of the 4th century, and whose *Homilies* have been edited, in the original Syriac, by Prof. Wright), Aphrēm of Nisibis (commonly known as Ephraim Syrus), of whose *Commentary* on Daniel excerpts have been published in the Roman edition of his works, and, above all, Jerome.

One writer, who was neither a Jew nor a Christian, the Neo-Platonic philosopher Porphyry (233—304 A.D.), a native of Tyre, occupies a prominent place in the history of the interpretation of Daniel. He wrote a *Treatise against the Christians*, in 15 books, of which the 12th was intended to prove that the Book of Daniel had been composed by a Palestinian Jew in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, that the supposed prophecies of Daniel relate the history correctly as far as the time of the real author, and that beyond that point they are mere guesses². For the purpose of his work Porphyry had studied various Greek historians, among whom were several

¹ See *Antiq.* x. 11. 7, where the vision in Dan. viii. is confused with other parts of the book in a manner which shews that Josephus was writing from vague recollection.

² “Contra Prophetam Danielem duodecimum librum scripsit Porphyrius, nolens eum ab ipso cujus inscriptus est nomine esse compositum, sed a

quodam qui temporibus Antiochi, qui appellatus est Epiphanes, fuerit in Judaea, et non tam Danielem ventura dixisse quam illum narrasse praeterita. Denique quidquid usque ad Antiochum dixerit veram historiam continere, si quid autem ultra opinatus sit, quia futura nescierit, esse mentitum.” Jerome, *Prolog. Comm. in Dan.*

now lost¹. His treatise has, of course, perished, but considerable fragments are cited by Jerome and other writers.

The theory of Porphyry, as may well be imagined, met with no favour. It was "refuted," before the time of Jerome, by Methodius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Apollinarius, and appeared to have been swept away for ever. But it was to be heard of again.

In the 9th century the Jews, influenced by the Moham-
medan schools of learning, began to give the exegesis of the
Old Testament a scientific form. Of the medieval Jewish
commentaries on Daniel one of the earliest was the work of
Saadia (892—942 A.D.), the Gāōn, or head of the academy, of
Sūrā in Babylonia. This work is quoted by Ben-Ezra, and a
fragmentary copy of it exists in the Bodleian (see Neubauer's
Catalogue, No. 2486); the commentary which appears in the
Rabbinic Bibles under the name of Saadia is the work of a
much later author². Shēlōmōh ben Yīshāḳ (commonly known
as Rashi, 1040—1105), and Abraham ben Mēir ben Ezra
(commonly known as Ben-Ezra or Abenezra, 1090—1168), are
the most important of the medieval commentators. Ben-Ezra
is incomparably superior to Rashi in acuteness and originality,
but for that very reason less valuable as a depository of Jewish
tradition. The Commentary of Yepheth ibn 'Alī, a Karaite
Jew, who wrote about 1000 A.D., has lately been edited in the
original Arabic, with an English translation, by Professor
Margoliouth.

Modern interpreters.

Modern Christian commentators on Daniel were, until the
latter part of the 18th century, almost entirely dependent on
Jewish and Patristic tradition. Occasionally doubts were ex-
pressed, for example by Spinoza and Hobbes, as to whether

¹ "Ad intelligendas autem extremas
partes Danielis multiplex Graecorum
historia necessaria est: Sutorii vide-
licet Callinici, Diodori, Hieronymi,
Polybii, Posidonii, Claudii, Theonis,
et Andronici cognomento Alipii, quos

et Porphyrius esse secutum se dicit."
Ibid.

² The statement on this subject in
Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art.
"Daniel," is incorrect.

Daniel had actually put in writing the whole of the book ascribed to him, but as a rule the authenticity and integrity of the work were confidently assumed. Sir Isaac Newton gave it as his opinion that “the last six chapters contain prophecies written at several times by Daniel himself; the first six are a collection of historical papers written by others” (*Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St John*, p. 10). This theory, however, was not intended to call in question the absolute veracity of the book, and Newton expressly declared that to reject Daniel’s prophecies “is to reject the Christian religion. For this religion is founded upon his Prophecy concerning the Messiah” (p. 25).

Some approach to a critical examination of Daniel was made by J. D. Michaelis, who had doubts as to the antiquity of certain chapters (see his *Deutsche Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments*, Vol. x., Anmerkungen zum Propheten Daniel, p. 22). The first modern writers who ventured to dispute the authenticity of the whole, were Corrodi and Eichhorn. But the commentary of Bertholdt, *Daniel neu übersetzt und erklärt*, 1806—1808, was the first serious attempt to grapple with this historical problem. Bertholdt, however, adopted the unfortunate hypothesis that Daniel is the work of nine distinct authors. Gesenius clearly recognized that the whole book was written under Antiochus Epiphanes, and protested against Bertholdt’s theory of a composite authorship (see the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, 1816, No. 57, and also the *Ergänzungsblätter* of the same, No. 80). Gesenius was followed by Bleek and De Wette, who in the most important points agreed with him.

During the last sixty or seventy years almost all writers unbiassed by dogmatic prejudices have maintained both the literary unity of Daniel and the theory of its Maccabean origin. Even as to the interpretation of details there has been little disagreement. Of the commentaries the most valuable are those of Von Lengerke (1835), Hitzig (1850), and Ewald (in the 3rd Vol. of his *Propheten des Alten Bundes*, 2nd ed. 1867 and 1868).

It was not to be expected that the critical theory of the Book of Daniel would be accepted without a contest, for all

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the partisans of ecclesiastical tradition, both Catholics and Protestants, had an obvious interest in withstanding it. The history of the controversy is particularly instructive. At first the so-called "defenders of Daniel" endeavoured to maintain the traditional opinion in all its integrity. Of concession or compromise they would hear nothing. They argued that if the Christian religion be true, the book of Daniel *must* be authentic, and consequently that all arguments urged against its authenticity must be worthless. They spent enormous labour in seeking to shew that the impugned statements in Daniel were not only not disproved but were signally confirmed by the testimony of history, and they confidently predicted that further research would justify their position. Of these apologists the most eminent were Hengstenberg (*Die Authentie des Daniel und die Integrität des Sacharjah*, 1831) and Hävernick (*Commentar über das Buch Daniel*, 1832). The apologetic works of Auberlen, Kliefoth, Keil, Pusey, and others, are, in the main, reproductions of Hengstenberg and Hävernick; as a specimen of the tone adopted by these writers, the following extract may suffice. "The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battle-field between faith and unbelief. It admits of no half-measures. It is either Divine or an imposture. To write any book under the name of another, and to give it out to be his, is, in any case, a forgery, dishonest in itself, and destructive of all trustworthiness. But the case as to the book of Daniel, if it were not his, would go far beyond even this. The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied on a most frightful scale, ascribing to God prophecies which were never uttered, and miracles which are assumed never to have been wrought. In a word, the whole book would be one lie in the Name of God." (Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. 1.)

Of late years however a great change has taken place in the policy of conservative theologians with respect to this book. When the critical theory was still new, it was easy to denounce it and to proclaim that it would soon be universally abandoned, but when the theory, so far from being overthrown, was confirmed by a long and important series of discoveries, some of

the apologists began to suspect that they had slightly overstated the absurdity of "half-measures." The "middle path," which, as long as it was not needed, had appeared so contemptible, now acquired a strange fascination. Accordingly there commenced a succession of attempts to reconcile the results of criticism with orthodoxy. Concession after concession was made. Instead of labouring to "defend Daniel" from beginning to end, the apologists of the New School freely admitted that many things related in the book were unhistorical. But these things, it was explained, are interpolations, and do not in any way interfere with the truth of the rest. Thus Lenormant accepted the latter part of the book as genuine, but thought that the earlier chapters had been garbled by the scribes. The very first verse of Daniel contains, according to Lenormant, "a gross error." M. Babelon, in the new edition of *Histoire ancienne de l'Orient*, expresses himself thus. "Au reste, quand il s'agit des données historiques contenues dans le livre de Daniel, il ne faut jamais oublier ce fait capital que si ce livre est parfaitement authentique et incontestablement écrit à Babylone, nous n'en possédons plus le texte original dans un état intact, mais seulement un remaniement écrit en partie en syro-chaldaique, et fait vers le III^e siècle avant l'ère chrétienne, par un transcripteur assez ignorant de l'histoire, qui a commis des interpolations et plusieurs confusions manifestes dans les noms des rois babyloniens" (Vol. iv. p. 438, note). Unfortunately neither Lenormant nor any other apologist of the New School has pointed out a criterion whereby to distinguish the "undeniably authentic" portions of Daniel from the "interpolations." Hence we find that scarcely any two of these apologists are agreed as to which pieces should be "defended" and which should be abandoned. The latter part of Daniel, which Lenormant pronounced genuine, is, according to some conservative theologians, manifestly quite late (see the *Handbuch der theologischen Wissenschaften*, herausgegeben von Otto Zöckler, 2nd ed. 1885, Vol. i. pp. 171—173).

Thus the "defenders of Daniel" have during the last few years been employed chiefly in cutting Daniel to pieces. But to pass all these theories in review is quite unnecessary, for the

discordance between them is a sufficient proof of their arbitrariness.

Of modern monographs on Daniel the following are the most important :

- BLEEK—"Die messianischen Weissagungen im Buche Daniel, mit besonderer Beziehung auf Auberlen's Schrift," in the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, 1860.
- CHEYNE—Art. "Daniel," in the 9th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.
- CORNILL—"Die Siebzig Jahrwochen Daniels," in *Theologische Studien und Skizzen aus Ostpreussen*, Vol. II. 1889.
- FRANZ DELITZSCH—Art. "Daniel," in Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*, 2nd ed. 1878. [For Prof. Delitzsch's rejection of the theory of the antiquity of Daniel, see his *Messianic Prophecies*, translated by Curtiss, 1880, p. 90, and his *Old Testament History of Redemption*, 1881, p. 153.]
- DE WETTE—Art. "Daniel," in the *Allgemeine Encyclopädie von Ersch und Gruber*, 1832.
- GRAETZ—"Beiträge zur Sach- und Worterklärung des Buches Daniel," in the *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, 1871.
- GRAF—Art. "Daniel," in Schenkel's *Bibel-Lexikon*, 1869.
- HOFFMANN—"Antiochus IV. Epiphanes, König von Syrien," publ. by Alfred Lorentz, Leipzig, 1873.
- KUENEN—"Historisch-critisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de Boeken des Ouden Verbonds," 2nd ed. 1887—1889, Vol. II. pp. 446—508.
- LENORMANT—"La divination et la science des présages chez les Chaldéens," 1875, pp. 169—227.
- NÖLDEKE—"Die alttestamentliche Litteratur," 1868, pp. 216—234.
- REUSS—"Die Geschichte der heiligen Schriften Alten Testaments," 2nd ed., 1890, pp. 592—604.

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Excerpt

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- SCHRADER—"Die Sage vom Wahnsinn Nebuchadnezar's," in the *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*, 1881.—
"Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament," 1885—
1888, Vol. II. pp. 124—136 [pp. 428—438 in the German
edition].
- SCHÜRER—"Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes," 1886—1890,
Vol. II. pp. 613—616. [Transl. in Clark's Foreign Theological
Library.]

Those who wish to see the controversy as to the date of Daniel stated in a short and popular form may consult a Tract entitled, "Notes on the Defence of the Book of Daniel, addressed to the Clergy, by a Clergyman," London, Simpkin and Marshall, 1878.