The Book of Daniel in its final form is held by common consent to be the most recent composition of the Hebrew Bible, and Book X of the Antiquities of Flavius Josephus represents the earliest substantial 're-writing' of Daniel in inter-Testamental Jewish literature.¹ In the circumstances, it is remarkable that the subject has received so little attention in modern scholarly writings, the only general discussion being contained in F. F. Bruce's paper, 'Josephus and Daniel'.²

All the textual evidence relating to Daniel suggests that its inclusion in the Hebrew canon occurred in a hurry. It had no time to undergo the revision and harmonization necessary for a polished edition of a composite literary work. It is written in two languages: the Aramaic layer of Dan. 2:4b–7:28 is sandwiched between two Hebrew sections, the introductory part (Dan. 1:1–2:4a) and four chapters at the end (Dan. 8:1–12:13). The language changes, from Hebrew to Aramaic and back again to Hebrew, are attested at the earliest stages of the manuscript tradition: already the Qumran evidence of the book, dated to the late second and to the first century B.C. [HJP III.1, 248], contains a fragment of Dan. 2:4b in Aramaic, preceded by Hebrew words (IQ 71) and Dan. 8:1ff (4Q 112, 113) in Hebrew as in the Masoretic text, follows on Aramaic fragments belonging to the preceding chapters.³ These features are consequently likely to pertain to the final redaction, and not be due to later alterations. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that Qumran Cave 4 has yielded various Aramaic fragments belonging to apocryphal Daniel stories, indicating that there were elements of the narrative cycle which failed to penetrate the 'real' Daniel manuscripts themselves. Likewise, the Greek apocryphal supplements—Susanna, the Song of the three young men and the legend of Bel and the


dragon—are without trace in the Hebrew-Aramaic textual tradition.4

A further oddity is that, whereas the contents of the book neatly fall into stories on the one hand, and eschatological-apocalyptic visions on the other, the linguistic division does not correspond to the change of literary genres: the narrative chapter 1 is in Hebrew and not in Aramaic, while the eschatological chapter 7 is in Aramaic and not in Hebrew like chapters 8–12.

Another pointer to the unfinished character of the Book of Daniel is furnished by its Greek translations. The first of these, referred to as the LXX, is ‘midrashic’ in many places,5 whereas the second, designated as ‘Theodotion’, although quoted already in first century A.D. sources such as the New Testament and, as will be seen, Josephus, is much closer to the Semitic form of Daniel, without being identical with it.6 Both the LXX and Theodotion supply the apocryphal additions. The Song of the three youths is placed within the Greek text itself after 3:23. Susanna, in turn, precedes Dan. 1:1, and Bel and the dragon forms an appendix attached to Dan. 12.7

The main purpose of this study is to describe and evaluate the interpretative treatment meted out by Josephus to Daniel. However, before such an examination can be undertaken, three preliminary questions must be dealt with briefly:

1. Preliminary Questions

(1) The place of Daniel in JA

Whilst modern scholarship considers the Book of Daniel to be a combination of hortatory stories (Dan. 1–6) and prophetic-apocalyptic


6 The Greek Bible translator, Theodotion, is thought to have flourished at the end of the second century A.D. (HJP III.1, 499). For the Book of Daniel he must have revised a pre-existing version (cf. R. R. Ottley, A Handbook to the Septuagint (1920), 40; HJP III.1, 501). Christian writers preferred this text to the LXX: ‘Illud quoque lectorem admoneo, Danielem non juxta LXX interpretes sed juxta Theodotionem ecclesias legere’ (Jerome, Prologue to the Commentary on Daniel (CCL vol. lxxv A, 774). Cf. also Swete, op. cit., 46–8. As a result, the LXX version of the book survives only in a single tenth-century manuscript (cod. Chisianus) and partly in the Chester Beatty papyrus X as well as in the Syrohexapla (HJP III.1, 500).

7 Cf. Swete, op. cit., 260.
visions (Dan. 7–12), for Josephus it is essentially a source of Jewish history during the last reigns of the Neo-Babylonian empire and to a lesser extent the foreshadowing of the main events of the early post-exilic age. All the explicit references to the book appear in JA x. 186–281, with two supplementary notices in xi. 337 and xii. 322.

The Daniel story bridges the Josephan account of the fall of Jerusalem and the deportation to Babylonia, based on Kings–Chronicles–Jeremiah, and the Judaean restoration under Cyrus recounted after Ezra and 1 Esdras. It provides the source material for the latter years of Nebuchadnezzar and the reign of Belshazzar. The gap between the two is filled in with the help of non-biblical material: Berosus’ History of Chaldaea, Megasthenes’ History of India, Diocles’ History of Persia and Philostratos’ History of India and Phoenicia (JA x. 219–31), all cited in Contra Apionem i. 134–53. Seen in this context, the Daniel account represents for Josephus a reliable record of Jewish life in Babylonia and the already fulfilled parts of several prophetic visions.

(2) The Daniel text used by Josephus

For obvious reasons, the source employed by Josephus was a Greek translation and not the Hebrew-Aramaic original of Daniel. A proper comparative study of JA x. 186–281 and the surviving LXX and Theodotion versions is a strong desideratum. Meanwhile, on the basis of J. Ziegler’s introduction to Daniel in the Göttingen LXX (Susanna—Bel et Draco (1954), 22) and F. F. Bruce’s study (art. cit., 160f, n. 3) it may be pointed out that JA displays close affinities with the Septuagint. Thus in x. 190, the diet of Daniel and his companions consists of ‘vegetables’ = δαπρια (Dan. 1:12 LXX) rather than ‘seeds’ = σπέρματα as in Theodotion. Likewise in JA x. 216f Nebuchadnezzar is said to have lived in the desert for ‘seven years’ (ἐτεσαν ἐπτα—cf. Dan. 4:16 LXX: ἐπτα ἐτη) as against Theodotion’s ‘seven times’ (ἐπτα καιροι). Again, the allusion to a king coming ‘from the west’ (ἀπο της δυσεως) in JA x. 209 resembles ἀπο δυσμων of Dan. 8:5 LXX and is definitely distant from Theodotion’s ἀπο λιβος. Also Daniel’s designation by Darius as πρωτος των φιλων (x. 263) echoes the LXX’s use of φιλος as a court official in Dan 3:91, 94; 5:23 and especially 6:13 where it applies to Daniel.8

On the other hand, ‘the whole earth was filled’ in JA x. 207 (ἀπασαν ... την γην ... πετηριωθαι) is inspired by Dan. 2:35 Theodotion (ἐπηρωσε πασαν την γην) rather than the LXX’s ‘struck (ἐπαταξε) the whole earth’. Note also that in the famous passage Dan. 5:26–28, where the interpretation of the

three mysterious words written on the wall during Belshazzar’s feast is given, Josephus reproduces them in Aramaic as \( \mu \alpha \nu \gamma \eta - \theta \epsilon \kappa \ell - \varphi \alpha \rho \varepsilon \) (JA x. 243f) as does also Theodotion. On the other hand, \( \mu \alpha \nu \gamma \eta \) is rendered as ‘number’ and explained as ‘God numbered’ (\( \alpha \rho \theta \mu \theta \alpha \varsigma / \eta \rho \iota \beta \mu \iota \kappa \varepsilon \nu \ \theta \varepsilon \omicron \delta \)) in Josephus, and the LXX uses also the same verb (\( \eta \rho \iota \beta \mu \iota \kappa \eta \tau \alpha i \)), whereas Theodotion has ‘God measured’ (\( \epsilon \mu \epsilon \tau \rho \tau \rho \sigma \varepsilon \nu \ \theta \varepsilon \omicron \delta \)). In short, Josephus’ Greek Daniel appears to have been a mixture of LXX and Theodotion, a phenomenon exactly paralleled in Justin Martyr’s Dialogue, ch. 31 quoting Dan. 7:9–14.9

To complete the picture, it should also be observed that in Dan. 2:31–35, both LXX and Theodotion use \( \epsilon \iota \kappa \omega \nu \) for ‘statue’ whereas JA x. 206–14 regularly substitutes for it the Greek synonym \( \alpha \nu \theta \rho \iota \delta \alpha \varsigma \), a term appearing twice in Symmachus’s version of Dan. 2:31 (cf. Ziegler, loc. cit. above).

(3) Textual omissions in Josephus

To begin with, Josephus shows no knowledge whatsoever of the apocryphal sections contained in the Greek Daniel. It would be mistaken, however, to argue from this absence that his Bible lacked these passages. If we bear in mind that the aim of the author of JA was history writing, it may well be maintained that neither the anecdote of Susanna and the elders, nor the Bel and dragon legend, let alone the Song of the three young men in the fiery furnace, furnished any information useful to Josephus.

There is no obvious echo in JA to the so-called ‘midrashic’ content of the Septuagint version of Daniel. As far as can safely be deduced, Josephus’ account exclusively depends on the ‘canonical’ Daniel. This does not imply, of course, that the re-written Daniel narrative contains no additional data—these will be discussed in the main part of this paper—nor that the entire Book of Daniel can be traced in JA.

There are in fact five out of the twelve chapters of the Semitic composition which are not quoted at all, namely Dan. 7 and 9–12. In other words, of the apocalyptic half of the work only chapter 8 is utilised. Whether Josephus indirectly testifies to his acquaintance with the prophecy of the seventy weeks of years in Dan. 9 will be touched on later. In the light of the firm manuscript evidence regarding the integrity of the book, the omission of the chapters in question in JA cannot have a textual significance. The most likely explanation is that these passages did not serve Josephus’ purpose. The situation is similar to that obtaining in the

---

9 For a synoptic display of Justin, LXX and Th, see Swete, op. cit., 421f. An examination of the varied use of LXX and Th of Dan. 7:13 in the relevant New Testament quotations is highly instructive. The phrase 'the clouds' is rendered 'with (\( \mu \varepsilon \tau \alpha \)) the clouds' (= Th) in Mk 14:62 and Rev. 1:7; ‘on (\( \lambda \mu \iota \)) the clouds’ (= LXX) in Mt 24:30; 26:64 and Rev. 14:14; but ‘in (\( \delta \varepsilon \)) the clouds’ or ‘the cloud’ in Mk 13:26 and Lk 21:27. It should be observed that, although LXX leaves out the Aramaic words in 5:25–8, it reproduces them in a special introduction to chapter 5, albeit in a different order, viz. \( \mu \alpha \nu \gamma \eta , \varphi \alpha \rho \varepsilon , \theta \epsilon \kappa \ell \) and renders them literally as ‘it has been numbered, it has been divided, it has been weighed’.
Habakkuk Commentary from Qumran, which ignores Hab. 3, and interprets only the first two chapters.

II. The treatment of Daniel by Josephus

The manner in which Daniel is handled in JA partly reflects Josephus’ aims in composing his history and partly his understanding of the biblical book. The latter aspect is the chief concern of this paper. Certain sections are abridged, others expounded. Some are explicitly commented on. The nature of the explanation will be of particular interest. Our first task is to set out and endeavour to explain the discrepancies between the biblical Daniel and the corresponding sections of JA. This will be followed by a classification and assessment of the exegetical peculiarities testified to by Josephus.

A. Dan. 1—JA x. 186–94

1. The young Jews destined to serve in the royal court are selected by Nebuchadnezzar himself (186) and not by Ashpenaz, the chief eunuch (1:3).

2. The statement that some of the youths were relatives of ‘king Sacchias’ (186; cf. 102) is substituted for the vague reference to their royal pedigree (1:3).

3. Their instruction is entrusted, not to Ashpenaz in person (1:4), but to tutors or pedagogues (186).

4. Contrary to the Bible, but echoed in post-biblical literature, Josephus notes that some of the boys were made eunuchs (186).\(^{10}\)

5. The specific duration (three years) of the training (1:5) is unmentioned in JA. Josephus simply asserts that they became proficient in Babylonian wisdom (187).

6. The Hebrew names of Daniel and his colleagues are changed to Babylonian, not by the chief eunuch (1:7), but by the king.

7. Without biblical prompting Josephus further emphasizes the natural and acquired qualities of the four youths and Nebuchadnezzar’s fondness of them (189).

8. Daniel’s request to obtain a special diet for himself and his companions is addressed to the chief eunuch (Ashpenaz) in 1:8, who appointed a steward to deal with the matter (1:10). JA mentions a eunuch called Aschanes in charge of the pupils. It is unclear whether he is the chief eunuch or the steward. The Greek tradition hesitates. LXX knows only one person, the arch-eunuch Abiesdri (1:3, 11, 16), but Theodotion’s chief eunuch is

\(^{10}\) In the Life of the Prophets (4:1) Daniel is thought by the Judeans to be a eunuch on account of his chastity. The tradition is founded on Is. 39:7 / 2 Kgs 20:18, cited in JA x. 33. In yShab. 6, 8d the virility of the castrated Daniel and his three companions is miraculously restored. According to bShab. 93b (R. Haninah), castration is to be understood figuratively as the excision of idolatry, but according to Rav, it is to be taken literally. Cf. also Origen, Comment. in Mt. 15:5 (PG 13. 1263).
called Asphanez (1:3), whereas the term ‘steward’ (םלוע in the Hebrew text (1:11, 16), including IQ71 for 1:16) is taken to be a proper noun variously transliterated as Amelsad, Amalsad, Amelsar or Amellasar.

Another point requiring comment concerns the meals themselves. In Dan. 1:8, mention is made of ‘the king’s (unclean) rich food and wine’ for which vegetables and water are to be substituted (1:12). JA refers generally to animal meat coming from the royal table and to Daniel’s preference for pulse and dates, and his distaste for all other foodstuffs (190). In the Bible, it is implied that king’s menu was ‘taken away’ by the steward (1:16), but in JA it is consumed by Aschanes (190, 193).

9. In Scripture, the knowledge acquired by the four young men was directly granted by God (1:17); JA by contrast associates it with their vegetarianism, which contributed to the purity of their soul and the vigour of their body. Hence their easy mastery of learning (194). Daniel’s expertise in dream interpretation (1:17) is presented as additional to his possession of wisdom. It is seen as a particular means of divine revelation (194).

B. Dan. 2—JA x. 195–212

10. The first dream of Nebuchadnezzar is inconsistently dated in 2:1 to the second year of his reign (cf. commentaries). Josephus, realizing this, specifies that it was in the second year after the sack of Egypt (cf. JA x. 182).11

11. The disturbing dream of 2:1 is turned in JA x. 195 into a ‘marvellous’ dream whose meaning God disclosed to the king, but on awakening he forgot it. So at one stage he knew both the dream and its interpretation, according to Josephus.

12. On learning about the sentence of death passed by Nebuchadnezzar on all the wise men of Babel, Daniel begged him for time (2:16). In JA x. 198 one night of stay of execution is obtained by the captain of the bodyguard on Daniel’s request, allowing him a brief delay before he was to report to the king.

13. In the Bible, a blunt statement that the mystery was revealed is followed by Daniel’s prayer of thanksgiving (2:19–23). Josephus, by contrast, explains that, pitying those in danger and impressed by Daniel’s wisdom, God disclosed to him the royal dream of the previous night and its interpretation. Delighted, Daniel first hurried to hearten his despairing companions whose thoughts were focusing on death. Then together they are said to have thanked God for his mercy on their youth. No prayer is quoted however (JA x. 200–2).

14. Daniel is taken before the king to recount the dream (2:24–26); or, more precisely, his dream of two nights earlier (JA x. 202).

15. Daniel's introductory words to the king claim that no magician can deal with the king's mystery, but only God; that Nebuchadnezzar's concern was about the end; and that the revelation was intended for the king's enlightenment, and not for Daniel's glorification (2:27–30). In JA x. 203–5, the revelation serves a dual purpose: (a) to deliver Daniel and his countrymen from the threatened death, but also (b) to protect the king's good name by preventing him from ordering the execution of excellent men whose only guilt lay in not doing what was impossible to humans.

16. The description of the statue and of the stone which shatters it is essentially the same in both versions (2:31–5 and JA x. 206–7) with the following exceptions. Josephus omits the reference to clay apropos of the statue's feet. They are of iron only. He then adds that the stone broke off from a mountain. The biblical image of the statue smashed so as to resemble the chaff of the summer threshing floor is replaced by that of fine flour blown away by the wind.

17. In the scriptural interpretation of the statue (2:36–43), the head is identified with Nebuchadnezzar, i.e. the Babylonian empire, to be followed by two kingdoms of decreasing importance. They are all to be destroyed at the end by a harsh, though divided, kingdom (iron-clay). For Josephus (JA x. 208–9), the head symbolizes the Babylonian kings down to Nebuchadnezzar himself. The hands and shoulders allude to the two kings (of Media and Persia) who are to conquer his empire. The bronze kingdom from the west (that of Alexander) will defeat them, but will itself be overrun by an iron kingdom, harder than gold, silver or bronze.¹²

18. In 2:44–5, the stone by which the final empire will be destroyed is defined as a 'new kingdom' established by God. Josephus, however, refuses to comment on this matter because qua historian he is not concerned with the future. Readers anxious to investigate unknown matters are advised to read Daniel (JA x. 210).

19. Josephus reconciles the somewhat contradictory biblical account in which the king worships Daniel and commands an offering and incense to be presented to him, yet immediately confesses that Daniel's God is the God of gods. In JA x. 211–12, on recognizing his forgotten dream, Nebuchadnezzar was filled with admiration for Daniel's natural talents and venerated him in the manner in which people worship God. He even ordered that sacrifices be offered to him as to a god and bestowed on him the name of his own deity.

20. In both versions, Daniel and his three companions are promoted. In 2:48, Daniel becomes ruler of Babylon and prefect of the wise men, while the other three are made provincial governors. Josephus is silent, however, on Daniel's specific honours and is content with attributing the same office

of epitropos to all four. But he announces that the elevation of the three companions provoked the jealousy and resentment of the native officials (JA x. 212).

C. Dan. 3—JA x. 213–14

21. The story of the statue erected by Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura (the great plain of Babylon according to Josephus), which at the sound of the various musical instruments (trumpet only in JA) all the invited officials and the whole population were to worship or be thrown into the fiery furnace (3:1–7) and the ensuing misadventure of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as well as their miraculous escape (3:8–30), are retold in a greatly abbreviated form in JA, where some of the colourful features of the biblical account are missing; e.g. the dialogue between the king and the three; the accidental death of the executioners; the fact that not only the three men, but even their clothes remained intact among the flames. There are nevertheless significant differences. The refusal by the Jewish governors to worship the statue is attributed to their unwillingness to transgress the ancestral laws (JA x. 214). Their miraculous deliverance by divine providence (the angel or ‘one like a son of the gods’ of 3:25, 28 is unmentioned in JA) is explained: they escaped because they had done nothing wrong and for this reason their bodies were made incombustible by God (JA x. 215).

D. Dan. 4—JA x. 216–18

22. The second dream of Nebuchadnezzar concerning a gigantic tree felled by order of an angel and its stump surrounded with beasts, once more leaves the Chaldeans nonplussed, but is understood and interpreted by Daniel as applying to the king: he would spend seven ‘times’ in the desert among animals and feed on grass to learn humility before God. In his attempt at abridging the story, Josephus produces a garbled version. The dream is recounted in its interpreted form: Nebuchadnezzar, severed from power, would live among beasts for seven years before being restored to his throne. It is difficult to see why the Babylonian magicians found this account puzzling. Be this as it may, Daniel fared better and his dream interpretation was fulfilled. Josephus adds that during the king’s absence no-one tried to usurp his royal power (JA x. 216–17).

23. At the end of the Nebuchadnezzar chapter Josephus appends an apologetic note. Those of his readers who might find the Daniel saga a little odd should not blame Josephus who, as announced in JA i. 17, merely seeks faithfully to reproduce in Greek translation the story preserved in ‘the books of the Hebrews’ (JA x. 218; cf. also x. 280–1).

Josephus at this point interrupts his account based on the Book of Daniel and, as has been noted earlier, continues his narrative concerning Nebuchadnezzar and his immediate successors with the help of citations from Berosus and various Greek writers until he comes to the last Babylonian king Nabonidus/Baltasares (Belshazzar) (JA x. 219–32).
E. Dan. 5—JA x. 232–248

24. The introductory part of the Belshazzar story—the desecration of the Jewish Temple vessels by the banqueting king, the mysterious hand writing on the wall and the inability of the Chaldean sages to read, let alone explain, the inscription (5:1–9)—is reproduced in JA with several alterations. The feast took place while Cyrus and Darius were besieging Babylon (JA x. 232). The astonishing vision occurred in a great hall. The sacred utensils taken from Jerusalem were deposited in Nebuchadnezzar’s temple, and brought to the banquet from the temple of Belshazzar. In addition to the sacrilegious use of the sacred vessels, Belshazzar is expressly accused of blaspheming God at the moment when the hand emerged from the city-wall (ῥῷσος) and wrote on the wall of the house (ῥῶσος) (JA x. 233).¹³

The description of the intervention of the Babylonian sages is also more elaborate. Instead of an immediate offer of reward (5:7), first the local Chaldeans are summoned and show themselves incapable. Then follows a nation-wide proclamation with the promise of a golden necklace, royal apparel and one third of the king’s realm, to which an even larger number of magi responded without being able to solve the mystery (JA x. 234–6).

25. In the Bible (5:10–12), Daniel is summoned on the advice of the queen who recalls the outstanding services rendered by him to Nebuchadnezzar. Josephus brings in the king’s grandmother instead who describes Daniel as a ‘wise man capable of discovering inconceivable things which are known only to God’. His intervention would set in relief the ignorance of the magi, but it might also disclose a divinely announced calamity (JA x. 237–8).

26. Daniel’s arrival and the request addressed to him by the king to solve the riddle are similarly told in 5:13–16 and JA x. 239–41. A supplementary argument to persuade Daniel to respond to the royal request is adduced by Josephus, namely that the gifts would exceedingly enhance his fame. The rejection of the reward is also justified on religious grounds: supernatural wisdom cannot be acquired with money but is granted gratis to those who pray for it. Again, anticipating the outcome of the story as stated in 5:30, Josephus refers here to Belshazzar’s imminent demise (JA x. 241).

27. As noted above, the words written on the wall are given according to the Theodotic version, but Josephus paraphrases them. μαξης = ‘number’ is applied not only to the reign, but to the king’s life-time, of which a little still remains; and, more strikingly, φαρές is rendered literally as ‘break’ (κλάσμα). This Greek noun is a hapax legomenon in Josephus. It would seem that he used his knowledge of Aramaic to improve the exposition.

28. Both the reward of Daniel and the end of Belshazzar and the accession of Darius (5:29–31) are elaborated in JA x. 245–8. Daniel is described as a prophet, but despite his bringing of bad tidings, Baltasaros/Belshazzar gave him the gifts promised, for a prophet is not the cause of the

¹³Both LXX and Th use the latter term only.
evil he predicts, and in this particular case Daniel was a 'good and just man'.

Josephus mentions Cyrus as well as Darius, named alone in 5:31, as conqueror of Babylon, and dates the event, without biblical parallel, to the seventeenth year of Baltasaros. Also, anticipating the statement in 6:28, JA x. 249 alludes to the prosperity of 'the prophet Daniel' in the court of Darius.

F. Dan. 6—JA x. 249–63

29. The introductory section of the story of Daniel in the lions' den (6:1–5) is followed fairly closely in JA x. 250–2, the only addition being the reference to the impossibility of bribing Daniel. The actual stratagem intended to compromise him—a prohibition to pray to anyone but the king for thirty days—is proposed abruptly in 6:6–9, whereas in Josephus it is conceived in the knowledge of Daniel's regular praying habits—thrice daily—brought forward from 6:10 (JA x. 252), and with the unscriptural supplement that the prayers should be addressed either to Darius or to the pagan deities. According to Josephus, the irrevocable edict, consigning any transgressor to the lions, was confirmed by the king ignorant of his satraps' malicious design (JA x. 254).

30. The insistence of the officials on the irrevocability of the royal decree regarding Daniel's offence (6:11–15) is prompted by their fear that Darius might pardon his favourite courtier (JA x. 257). In 6:16 Darius voices his belief that Daniel will be saved by his God, whereas in Josephus the king's hope is not exposed; he exhorts the prophet to be brave in the face of destiny (JA x. 258).

31. The miraculous deliverance of Daniel brought about by an angel of God (6:20–22) is formulated less directly by Josephus who, by contrast, inserts here a biblically unfounded midrashic story. The detractors, rejecting the intervention of the deity and his providence, attributed Daniel's lucky escape to the lions' lack of appetite. To test their theory, Darius provided the beasts with a large meal and then ordered Daniel's enemies to be thrown into the den. The theory was disproved. The lions, nevertheless, behaved as though famished, and the king concluded that God was the saviour of Daniel.

Josephus appends his own opinion that, in fulfilment of the divine plan, the lions' hunger was aroused by human wickedness perceptible even to irrational creatures (JA x. 259–62).

14 In identifying Daniel as a prophet, 'one of the greatest prophets' in x. 266. Josephus follows the tradition represented by LXX and the Lives of the Prophets, but also that attested in 4Q Florilegium I.3 ('as it is written in the book of Daniel the prophet', and in Mt 24:15 ('the prophet Daniel'). Later talmudic tradition denies the title to Daniel: 'He was not a prophet' (bMeg. 3a; bSanh. 93b–94a).

15 A very similar haggadic account has survived in the late Midr. Tehillim on Ps. 64:1 (ed. S. Buber, 31ff).
32. In JA x. 263–5, Josephus enlarges on the Bible’s story of Daniel’s exaltation by Darius (6:25–8). He not only prospered (6:28), but was the first of the king’s friends. He erected a magnificent fortress in Ecbatana, still standing in Josephus’ time, unmarked by the passing of the years, not like ordinary buildings which age and crumble. It is the burial place of the Mede, Persian and Parthian kings and continues to be cared for by a Jewish priest.

33. A final summary of Daniel’s career constitutes a transition from chapters 6 to 8, chapter 7 being completely ignored. He was ‘one of the greatest prophets’, honoured by kings and commoners during his life and remembered since his death. His books (in the plural), comprising not only divine predictions of the future, but also an indication of the time of their fulfilment (cf. JA x. 271), an unusual feature even among prophets, continued to be read up to Josephus’ age. His popularity was due to the unusual optimistic character of his predictions while the other prophets heralded ruin and disaster. The realization of his prophecies further enhanced his reliability and his esteem as a divine messenger (JA x. 266–8).

G. Dan. 8—JA x. 269–75

34. Omitting the first apocalyptic vision of the four beasts and ‘one like a son of man’ in chapter 7, Josephus contents himself with recounting that given in chapter 8. In 8:1–2, we return in time to the third year of Belshazzar. The venue is Susa, the capital of Elam, on the river Ulai. Josephus omits the date, but correctly identifies Susa as the Persian capital. The scene is set in a plain where Daniel is surrounded by companions. An earthquake, unknown to the Bible, causes his friends to flee and Daniel to fall to the ground. Someone tells him to rise and view the distant future of his nation (JA x. 269). Regarding the vision itself (8:3–14), Josephus’ version contains slight variations. The biblical ram with two horns becomes a great ram with many horns. The he-goat, instead of coming, flies from the west to trample on the ram. The attack by the goat’s horn on ‘the glorious land’ (8:9) signifies war against the Jews, the capture of the capital and the interruption of the sacrificial cult. Its cessation was to last 2,300 ‘evenings and mornings’ (8:14), or ‘days’ according to the ancient versions, but understood as twice 1,150 half days by modern interpreters, who relate it to 7:25 and 12:7 (‘a time, two times and half a time = three and a half years’). JA x. 271 gives 1,296 days, close to but not identical with 12:11 (1,290 days).

35. The interpretation of the vision is offered in 8:15–17 by the angel Gabriel in the guise of a man, but according to Josephus by God himself. In the case of the ram, both agree on explaining it as alluding to the kingdoms

---

16 F. F. Bruce (art. cit. in n. 2, 152) sees here an indirect allusion to Dan. 9:24, 27.
17 The mention of greatness figures also in 4QDan a,b as well as in LXX and Aquila. Th follows the Masoretic Text.
of Media and Persia, but Josephus adds to the biblical account a reference to the last and wealthiest Persian king (JA x. 272). He also enriches the narrative concerning the goat = Greek king (8:21) by noting that he defeated the Persian king on two occasions (JA x. 273). The four horns which followed the big horn (8:22) symbolize the the successors of the first Greek king who, Josephus specifies, were not his sons or relations (JA x. 274). In 8:23–6, the description of the misdeeds of the wicked king remains vague, while Josephus explicitly refers to a war waged by him on the Jews and their laws resulting in the despoliation of the Temple and the banning of sacrifice for three years (JA x. 275).

36. The remaining six paragraphs (JA x. 276–81) supply Josephus' general conclusions on Daniel's prophecy. The final section of the previous vision was fulfilled in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. This is followed by a summary statement, no doubt based on chapters 11–12 of the biblical text, that Daniel foretold also Josephus explicitly while the capture of Jerusalem is described (JA x. 276). The case of Daniel, namely that divine revelation recorded by him was subsequently fulfilled, can be used to refute the Epicureans' rejection of Providence and the government of the world by a 'blessed and immortal being' and their corresponding doctrine that the universe is an automaton (JA x. 277-80).

Having introduced prophecy and its realization into his historical work, Josephus immediately reverts to his rationalist stance and observes that he is just repeating what he has found in his source. 'If anyone wishes to think differently about these matters, he may feel free to dissent' (JA x. 280–1).

19 According to JA xi. 337, Alexander the Great, when reading in the Book of Daniel 8:21 that a Greek ruler would conquer the Persian empire, recognized himself as the king in question. Before him, Cyrus confides to have learned his duties towards the God of the Jews from reading the relevant predictions in the Book of Isaiah written 210 years earlier (JA xi. 4–5).

20 The precise reference to the events of AD 70 is missing from the manuscripts of JA which read: 'Daniel also wrote about the empire of the Romans and that it [?] would be destroyed by them'. The supplement—'that Jerusalem would be taken and the Temple destroyed by them'—is borrowed from Chrysostom. Elsewhere the profanation of the Sanctuary by the Greeks is described as the realization of Daniel's prediction made 408 years before (JA xii. 322). The biblical source of the reference to the Romans is no doubt the prophecy of the seventy weeks of years of Dan. 9:24–26 interpreted as extending from Nebuchadnezzar to Titus as in rabbinc chronology attested in Seder 'Olam 30 and bAZ 9a: 'Babylonian empire: 70 years; Persian empire ... 34 years; Greek empire: 180 years; Hasmonaean kingdom: 103 years; Herodian kingdom: 103 years' (=490 years). If Josephus' assertion depends on an exegesis of Dan. 9, the 'rabbinic' computation, attributed to R. Yose the Galilean, actually belongs to the end of the first century A.D., if not to an earlier age. Josephus already alludes to the 'recent' capture of Jerusalem as fulfilling a prediction of Jeremiah in JA x. 79. The four empires—Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman—are listed in JA xv. 385–7.

III. Reflections on the Jewish Sources of JA and on Josephus' Use of these Sources

The differences between the Daniel account in JA x and that contained in the Bible are due partly to the documents employed by Josephus and partly to his own principles and devices as exegete and historian. It should be noted that the non-Jewish sources (Berosus et al.) will not be surveyed here.

The documents utilised in redacting his narrative include (1) the scriptural text—Josephus alludes several times explicitly or implicitly to the Book and even the Books of Daniel (cf. x. 210, 218, 267, 281)—certainly in Greek, and possibly also in Hebrew/Aramaic. He further introduces (2) various 'midrashic' supplements, attested also in post-biblical Jewish literature. Short of embracing the wild theory that they were Josephus' own creations, subsequently adopted by the rabbis, these may reasonably be defined also as sources. (3) Among the many further discrepancies (additions or omissions), some may derive from pre-existing narratives though the majority of them can be accredited to Josephus himself.

Among the literary devices and historico-exegetical principles employed by the author of JA, we shall examine (4) abbreviation and enlargement; (5) shift of emphasis; (6) chronological points; (7) Hellenistic features; (8) political considerations; (9) theological explanations; and (10) rationalistic comments.

I. The Jewish sources of JA

(1) *The Daniel text of Josephus*

Since Josephus did not provide actual citations of the Book of Daniel, his use of the biblical text can be determined only by the study of his vocabulary. As has been observed, his immediate source was a Greek Bible and when the old LXX differs from 'Theodotion', JA is more often dependent on the former than on the latter. Moreover, in one case at least, his account echoes Symmachus against both LXX and Th. As it is unlikely that in the course of writing his History, Josephus was indulging in textual criticism, these features point to a 'mixed' Greek version of Daniel. There is no textual evidence indicating direct reference to the Semitic original of Daniel other than the absence in his narrative of any allusion to the Greek (apocryphal) supplements. There is of course a solution which can account for all these peculiarities, namely that the 'mixed' Greek Daniel in JA x resulted from the re-writing in Greek by Josephus himself of the Hebrew/Aramaic original. Far-fetched though this may seem, this is exactly his claim in JA x. 218: 'At the very beginning of my History (JA i. 5) I... said that I was only translating the books of the Hebrews into the Greek tongue.' Whether his statement is believable or not is another matter.22

22 For an explanation of φαρές, founded on Josephus' familiarity with Aramaic, see above No. 27.
(2) ‘Midrashic’ supplements

Some of the departures of Josephus from the biblical account are to be attributed to his utilisation of exegetical traditions current in his time. The following are the most significant.

The mention in No. 4 that some of the young Jews in Nebuchadnezzar’s court were castrated originates in Is. 39:7 / 2 Kgs 20:18 (cf. also JA x. 33). It is attested in yShab. 6, 8d, but there was a tendency to substitute something less shocking for later Jewish ears. Cf. n. 10 above.

The uncertainty concerning the identity of the chief eunuch and the steward in No. 8, and the variations of the names Asphanez, Abiesdri, Amelsar and Aschanes testify to divergent traditions.

The characterization of Daniel as prophet (Nos. 28, 33) and of his vision as prophecy (No. 36) is inspired by the LXX tradition and echoes the Lives of the Prophets and 4Q Florilegium, but is contradicted by sayings in the Babylonian Talmud (cf. n. 14 above).

Two colourful increments—the legend concerning the feeding of the lions before Daniel’s enemies are thrown to them (No. 31), and the magnificent mausoleum of the Persian-Parthian kings constructed by Daniel (No. 32)—are paralleled in late Jewish texts, Midrash on Psalm 64:1 and the Voyages of Benjamin of Tudela (cf. R. Marcus, Josephus [Loeb ed.] VI, 304, n. b). According to the Lives of the Prophets iv. 18, Daniel was buried in the royal grotto in Babylon.

Such elaborations are typical of the genre designated as ‘re-written Bible’. This would imply that in such cases Josephus reproduces rather than creates the ‘midrash’.

(3) Additions and omissions

Among the considerable number of minor interpretative increments and omissions it is impossible to distinguish with certainty between borrowings and creative writing, although a good many of these differences seem to have come from Josephus’ pen.

Here is a selection of examples. Those likely to derive from Josephus will be followed by [J?].

No. 2. The young men of royal descent are relatives of king Sacchias.

No. 7. Reference is made to the qualities of the youths and the king’s fondness of them [J?].

No. 8. The rich royal menu is rejected because vegetarian food is preferred.

The royal food is taken away by the steward, that is, eaten by Aschanes.

No. 11. Nebuchadnezzar knew the dream and its meaning but forgot both [J?].

23 For a full, though not historico-critical survey, see L. Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews (1968) IV, 326–31; 343–50; VI, 413–21; 430–7. Cf. also J. Braverman, op. cit. in n. 11 above.

No. 12. The 'time' requested for the discovery of the dream interpretation was one night [J?].

No. 13. Daniel hastens to cheer his companions whose thought is focused on death [J?].

No. 16. The broken statue is similar not to chaff, but to fine flour.

No. 20. Instead of Daniel being promoted chief of the magi and his companions governors, all the four become epitropoi.

No. 21. The plain of Dura is the great plain of Babylon. The series of musical instruments is replaced by a trumpet [J?].

No. 24. Belshazzar's banquet takes place in the great hall. The Temple vessels are deposited in the temples of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

The mysterious hand appears when Belshazzar blasphemes [J?]. It writes on the wall of the palace which emerges from the city wall.

No. 25. The calamity is anticipated [J?].

No. 27. μαν γεννοῦ denotes not only the length of the reign, but also that of the king's life [J?].

No. 28. Babylon is conquered by Darius and Cyrus [J?].

No. 29. Prayer may be addressed not only to Darius, but also to pagan deities.

No. 30. The proclamation of the decree as irrevocable is to prevent Darius from pardoning Daniel [J?].

No. 34. Susa, capital of Elam, becomes that of Persia [J?]. The vision of a ram (= Th) is changed to that of a great ram (= Q, LXX, A). The vision occurs in a plain where Daniel is surrounded by friends. The earthquake that follows makes them flee. Someone instructs Daniel about the distant future of the Jews.

No. 35. The ram symbolizes not just the kings of Persia, but also specifically the last and wealthiest of them [J?]. The Greek king defeats Persia twice [J?]. Four horns are his successors without being sons or relations [J?]. The wicked king attacks the Jews, their laws and Temple [J?].

The result of these minor alterations is a more detailed and coherent Daniel account which at the same time is smoother and more logical than the biblical story.

II. Josephus' Use of his Jewish Sources

4. Abbreviation and enlargement

Without going into detail, it should be observed that Daniel 3 and 4 are presented in an abridged version by Josephus, but chapters 1 and 5 are enlarged. Direct speeches and prayers are generally omitted. The sketch of Daniel 4 (No. 22) deserves particular notice as it is the only section where
Josephus spoils the story by introducing the dream in the form of its interpretation.

5. **Shift of emphasis**

In two instances Josephus enhances the status of Daniel and his companions by making the king rather than the chief eunuch the subject of actions. Thus in Nos. 1 and 6, Nebuchadnezzar himself selects his Jewish courtiers and replaces their Hebrew names by Babylonian ones. On the other hand, in No. 12, Daniel personally addresses the king, whereas in Josephus' account, possibly borrowed from a source, he invites the captain of the royal bodyguard to intercede for him.

6. **Chronological points**

The JA version of Daniel contains several additional data relative to chronology. Some of these must have figured in the sources used by Josephus. Thus in No. 10, the first dream of Nebuchadnezzar is dated to the second year after the sack of Egypt, and not in his second regnal year. In No. 28, the fall of Babylon is reckoned to have taken place in the seventeenth year of Belshazzar, and in No. 34, the cessation of sacrificial worship is predicted to last 1296 days, not 1290 as in Dan. 12:11.

Other chronological extras are best assigned to Josephus' effort to combine items appearing in different parts of the biblical account. For example, Daniel expounds to the king the dream which he has dreamt, not the previous night, but two nights earlier (No. 14). Belshazzar's feast was celebrated during the siege of Babylon by Cyrus and Darius (No. 24) and the king's death is anticipated from the end of the biblical story (No. 26). Similar anticipations can be observed apropos of Daniel's prosperity under Darius (No. 28) and his prayer customs, mentioned only at a later stage of the scriptural narrative, in No. 29.

The purpose of these increments is clearly 'historical precision'.

7. **Hellenistic features**

To mention but a few details attributable to Josephus' aim to speak the language of his intended readers, the education of the young Jews is not handled by the chief eunuch, but is entrusted to pedagogues (No. 3). Darius, in turn, does not express the hope that God will save Daniel, but exhorts him to be brave in the face of destiny (No. 30). Finally, in No. 32, instead of the vague 'Daniel prospered' (6:28), he is made 'first of the king's friends' (cf. n. 8). On the refutation of Epicureans, see section 9.

---

25 One of the Chester Beatty papyri places the event to the twelfth year of the king. Note that the LXX to Dan. 3:1 adds 'In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar' to the Aramaic text, a chronological feature ignored by Josephus.
8. Political considerations

Since, in his understanding of Dan. 2, the fourth kingdom is Rome, Josephus carefully avoids formulating anything that his patrons might find objectionable. Hence in No. 16, the feet of the statue are made of iron and not of a mixture of iron and clay, and in No. 18, he refuses to comment on the 'stone', i.e. a new kingdom established by God, which is to shatter the 'iron' empire.

9. Theological explanations

The purpose of these changes is to enrich the religious content of JA.

Thus dream interpretation is ranked as a means of divine revelation (No. 9). The latter is granted to Daniel because of God's pity for the Jews in danger (No. 13). Jewish refusal of idol worship is motivated by adherence to ancestral laws (No. 21). The flames of the fire had no power over the three youths because of their innocence. (No. 21). Supernatural wisdom cannot be acquired by gifts but by prayer (No. 26). A prophet is the conveyor, not the author, of bad tidings (No. 28). Daniel, unlike his predecessors was not a prophet of doom, but predicted good news. Yet, contradicting himself, Josephus proves the veracity of Daniel's prophecies by quoting their fulfilment in Antiochus Epiphanes and the 'recent' conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans (No. 33). Unless, of course, the uninterpreted prophecy of the stone destroying the fourth kingdom, mentioned in the previous section, is the good news.

There is a general tendency to eliminate angels from the story: Daniel's companions are saved by Providence (No. 21); he is just saved, no doubt by God (No. 31); and it is again the Deity, and not a heavenly messenger, who supplies the interpretation of the vision in No. 35.

Josephus appears to have attributed a kind of supernatural perception to animals: in his personal opinion the lions, though satiated with food, devoured the enemies of Daniel because wickedness aroused their hunger (No. 31)!

Finally, the philosophical doctrine of determinism is proved to be false by the fulfilment of prophecy (No. 36).

These are but a few fragments which may be used to reconstruct Josephus' theological outlook.

10. Rationalistic comments

Josephus was a man of two worlds. He read the Bible with faith, but simultaneously applied to it a logical mind. A Jewish believer, he accepted miracles, yet he was also, or at least pretended to be, a Hellenistic rationalist.

For example, the purpose of the revelation to Daniel of the meaning of the king's dream was not merely to save his and his friends' lives, but to safeguard Nebuchadnezzar's good reputation. How would he have been judged by history if he had gone down as the murderer of innocent men?
merely on account of their inability to perform the impossible (No. 15)?

Furthermore, Josephus remarks in No. 22 on the strange fact that, although the Babylonian throne was unoccupied during Nebuchadnezzar's seven years' illness, no contender arose to usurp it.

Belshazzar was advised to consult Daniel, not by his wife as in the Bible, but by his grandmother, who was an eye-witness of the miracles performed in Nebuchadnezzar's days (No. 25). Again, in the same story, Daniel is exhorted to accept the promised gifts not just because they are valuable, but because they will make him very famous (No. 26).

As for the knowledge of Daniel, which the Bible presents as of divine origin, it is associated by Josephus with his vegetarianism, which leads to purity of the soul and bodily vigour, and consequently to a greater facility to learn. Though not alien to Judaism—Judith's bag was filled with roasted grain, dried figs and bread (Jud. 10:2) and the Therapeutaæ ate no meat (Philo, VC 73)—abstinence from flesh immediately brings to mind the possibility of Pythagorean influence.26

The climax of Josephus' rationalistic inclination is reached when he declines all personal responsibility for the miraculous element in his stories. As a good historian, he simply follows his source, the Bible, but his readers are left free to judge for themselves (Nos. 23, 36).

Conclusion

Where does this examination of Josephus' treatment of the Book of Daniel take us? In a nutshell, it throws some light on the elasticity of the Greek text of this biblical book. It also brings home the antiquity of many of the exegetical traditions surviving in later Jewish compositions, some of them dating to the later stages of rabbinic literature. But, as may be expected, first and foremost it gives an insight into Josephus himself, into the way he worked and thought and produced his great work of biblical history. By extending a similar analysis to his rearrangement of the other biblical books, we will be in a much better position to grasp both the traditional aspects and the personal ingredients of Jewish Antiquities.