Introduction

This paper examines the scholarly debate concerning the phenomenon of “apocalyptic,” focusing to start with on the work of John J. Collins and Paul Hanson. To begin with, we will review some of the key issues in defining apocalyptic literature. The work of Hanson and Collins has been instrumental in developing a definitional framework to assist with studies in the field. However, the employment of the categories “apocalypse,” “apocalypticism,” and “apocalyptic eschatology” has not resolved all of the taxonomical and sociological ambiguities inherent in the term apocalyptic. This review will highlight the significance of the distinction that is often drawn between historical apocalypses, and ascent apocalypses that contain an otherworldly journey. As an example of the former type, the Book of Daniel will be discussed in some detail. A further case study on the Book of the Watchers will disclose similarities and differences between the two branches of apocalyptic literature. Finally, we will use the insights gleaned from our case studies to reflect upon the terminological and methodological disputes surrounding the identification of genres and their social settings, before suggesting some fruitful areas for future research.
Chapter 1: Definitional Issues in the Study of “Apocalyptic”

The appearance of certain Jewish and Christian texts written during the period c.250 BCE-250 CE has, at least since Friedrich Lücke’s comprehensive study of the subject in 1832,\(^1\) been regarded as sufficiently coherent to be studied as a distinct phenomenon within late antiquity: “apocalyptic.”\(^2\) Yet “coherent” might be too strong a word. For some, that this literature must have come from the uneducated classes of the Jewish people was clearly demonstrated by its “naive style… the lack of a lucid mind, the delight in the bizarre, the exaggeration of free fantasy, the lack of criticism, and the collection of ideas and thoughts from the most variegated backgrounds.”\(^3\) More recent scholarship, as we shall see, has attributed apocalyptic literature to educated scribal circles. Even the term “apocalyptic” itself has been the source of a great deal of methodological confusion.

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Apocalyptic

The terms apocalyptic (and apocalypse) derive from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, meaning simply “revelation” or “uncovering.” From the very late first or early second century CE, under the influence of the Revelation / *apokalypsis* of John, the term apocalypse began to be used to describe a literary form. Biblical scholars in the nineteenth century, drawing analogies with the Revelation of John, identified other Christian and earlier Jewish works as apocalypses in so far as they were apocalyptic in character, if not name. However, the manner in which the relevant vocabulary was employed in the ancient literature does not give a reliable indication as to which texts should be regarded as apocalypses.

As Morton Smith notes, the adjective apocalyptic never occurs in classical Greek, and ancient Christians apparently never used the word to describe any religious texts. Noting the lack of unambiguous evidence that the Jewish works commonly designated as apocalypses were described as such by their authors, Michael Knibb sees the very existence of an apocalyptic


genre as “open to question.”\textsuperscript{9} Furthermore, he notes the methodologically problematic nature of the term apocalyptic itself. Apocalyptic is, in the first instance, a literary term: the adjective corresponding to the literary form apocalypse\textsuperscript{10}; thus Gerhard Von Rad defined apocalyptic as “a literary phenomenon of late Judaism, that is, the group of pseudepigraphical apocalypses from Daniel to IV Ezra.”\textsuperscript{11} However, confusion has arisen as a result of apocalyptic also being used as a noun or collective term to refer to “a pattern of thought relating to the end of this age and the future destiny of man, a pattern of thought by no means restricted to the apocalypses.”\textsuperscript{12} Collins also notes the importance scholars of apocalyptic attached to the motif of the end of this world “and related concepts,” hinting at the term’s burgeoning vagueness.\textsuperscript{13} Philip Davies notes another usage: “a set of ideas, expressed either as individual dogmas or a vaguer ‘world-view’ which merit the name because the apocalypses are felt to reflect corporately and individually” an ideology focused on the end of the world.\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{10} Knibb, “Prophecy and the Emergence,” p.157.


\textsuperscript{12} Knibb., “Prophecy and the Emergence,” p.157.

\textsuperscript{13} Collins, Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls, p.3.

In short, apocalyptic has been used as a noun whose referent “hovers vaguely between literature, sociology, and theology.”¹⁵ The debate over the relationship between apocalypses and their origins, constitutive elements, and literary and social settings was not well served by such a vague, broad term, and “apocalyptic” has now fallen out of scholarly favour.

Paul Hanson’s concern with the arbitrariness of the term apocalyptic has been crucial in shaping subsequent debate, as we shall see. Hanson’s work is heavily influenced by the academic debate over Persian influence upon Judeo-Christian apocalyptic. Hanson discerns methodological shortcomings in the conclusion, at one stage popular among historians of religion, that Jewish apocalypticism could be traced to Persian dualism. He, like Collins, questions how a text can be identified as apocalyptic on the basis of a “long list of random features gleaned from various apocalyptic works.”¹⁶ Hanson believes such a method obscures the sources of apocalyptic, resulting in an inaccurate typology of apocalyptic literature that fails to illuminate its historical and sociological matrix.¹⁷ For Hanson, to identify apocalyptic as “the new baby of second-century foreign parents” is to ignore the relationship between the eschatology of classical prophecy and the eschatology at the heart of the apocalypses.¹⁸ Only by tracing the unbroken development of this relationship, Hanson

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¹⁵ Collins, Apocalyptic Imagination, p.3.


¹⁷ Hanson, Dawn of Apocalyptic, p.7.

¹⁸ Hanson, Dawn of Apocalyptic, p.6.
argues, can the origin and intrinsic nature of apocalyptic literature be understood, as apocalyptic eschatology is the “taproot” of the apocalypses.\(^\text{19}\)

It is in view of these considerations then, as well as the arbitrariness of the term apocalyptic, that Hanson addressed the taxonomical conundrum of apocalyptic by distinguishing between apocalypse, apocalypticism and apocalyptic eschatology.\(^\text{20}\) Apocalypse is a literary genre, although Hanson declares that it is “by no means the exclusive, or even the dominant, genre in most apocalyptic writings.”\(^\text{21}\) Apocalypticism is the “symbolic universe in which an apocalyptic movement codifies its identity and interpretation of reality,”\(^\text{22}\) a definition that has been elsewhere described as indicating a “religio-social movement”\(^\text{23}\) or “sociological ideology.”\(^\text{24}\) This is in turn grounded, or latent, in the movement’s apocalyptic eschatology, which is a “religious perspective, a way of viewing divine plans in relation to mundane realities,” continuous in many ways with prophetic eschatology, but divergent in so far as the vision of God’s action is no longer integrated into the realities of the political and historical

\(^\text{19}\) Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p.8.


\(^\text{21}\) Hanson, “Apocalypticism,” p.29.

\(^\text{22}\) Hanson, “Apocalypticism,” p.29.


\(^\text{24}\) Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, p.3.
situation: “God’s final saving acts came to be conceived of not as the fulfillment of promises within political structures and historical events, but as deliverance out of the present order into a new transformed order.”


26 Hanson, “Apocalypticism,” pp.29-30; italics added.
Apocalypse

These distinctions have been taken up and refined most notably by Collins, who is critical of studies that arrive at generalizations about apocalypses and apocalypticism based upon the detailed study of only a few texts. Collins sees the genre apocalypse as the most fundamentally important category of the three, as it allows for a specific group of texts to be identified. In order to define the genre, Collins conducts a comprehensive survey of the relevant texts of the period to identify their distinctive recurring elements. These elements (the framework, or form, which consists of the manner of revelation – the medium, an otherworldly mediator, and a human recipient – and the content, which is divided into a temporal axis and a spatial axis) led Collins to the following recurrently-quoted definition: “‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.”

Collins makes some important qualifications to this definition. On one hand, an apocalypse does not necessarily constitute an independent work, but may be a subordinate part of a larger


work. On the other, it may include “subsidiary literary forms which are independent of the genre.”  

Another qualification that Collins makes is that the paradigm may be repeated either entirely, or to some extent, more than once in a single apocalypse. Rather than such repetition highlighting separate compositions, it instead indicates the technique of recapitulation.  

However, an even more fundamental qualification that Collins makes is to distinguish between two types of Jewish apocalypses: those that do not contain an otherworldly journey (Type I) and those that do (Type II). Collins describes this as the most obvious distinction within the Jewish apocalypses, as it coincides strikingly with a distinction in the content of the revelation: “All apocalypses which do not have an otherworldly journey contain an ex eventu prophecy of history.” Nonetheless, Collins insists that distinctions between the types does not challenge the definition of the genre, as in every case the content of the revelation involves both a temporal and spatial axis; “the differences between the different sub-types of apocalypses may be assessed in accordance with the varying emphasis which is placed on either axis.”  

While conceding that the expectation of a future judgment in which the righteous are rewarded and the evil punished is the only temporal feature common to all apocalypses, Collins downplays

the significance of this difference between the two types: “Both primordial history and *ex eventu* prophecies are ultimately directed to understanding the present.”

Collins’s definition enjoys widespread support on the basis of a number of appealing aspects. Firstly, it is consistent with previous classifications in that it examines the conformity of the corpus of texts traditionally called apocalyptic. Secondly, it confirms that these texts do share significant distinguishing characteristics, as well as showing the extent and limits of this conformity. At the same time, as these characteristics are “not a set of unique features, but rather a particular constellation of traits that belong to a recognizable kind of literature,” the definition allows for the texts to be investigated “synchronically, as religious texts whose contents, messages, and functions might vary widely, and diachronically, as representatives of genre, ideology, and (perhaps) *Sitze im Leben* that were subject to historical processes.”

However, the support that Collins enjoys is not universal. For example, Martha Himmelfarb is not as convinced that it is justified to speak of a single genre apocalypse. She argues, on literary grounds, and on historical grounds more relevant to the “groups in crisis” theory (to be discussed below), that we are in fact dealing not with two types within a single genre, but rather

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35 Murphy, “Apocalypses and Apocalypticism,” pp.149-150.


with two distinct genres. So, for example, while the style of the angelic tour guide’s explanations of sights in the tour apocalypses and the angelic interpreter’s decipherment of visions in the historical apocalypses can be traced to the same tradition of exegesis, the function in the tour apocalypses is altered significantly.\(^{38}\) Himmelfarb argues that “no single line of development can be traced through the tour apocalypses to the historical apocalypses”; rather, that tour apocalypses are a distinct genre within which tours of hell and tours of heaven are to be distinguished.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{38}\) Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, p.60.

\(^{39}\) Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, p.169.
Apocalypticism

The definition of apocalypticism that Collins provides in *The Apocalyptic Imagination* differs from Hanson’s definition in one important aspect. By defining apocalypticism as “the ideology of a movement that shares the conceptual structure of the apocalypses,”[^40] Collins seems to suggest that the ideology of an apocalyptic group must be fundamentally the product of the genre apocalypse, or vice versa. At the very least, it suggests a dialectical relationship. However, as Davies points out, of the two apocalyptic communities that Collins himself identifies in Greco-Roman Palestine – the Qumran community and the early Christians – the former did not write any apocalypses, and the latter only one, meaning that “most apocalypses were written by ‘apocalyptic’ individuals or non-apocalyptic communities.”[^41] Furthermore, even if we understand an apocalyptic community as one which defines itself by the kind of ideology found in apocalypses, then that is still no more evidence of such a community existing than ‘prophetic communities,’ ‘myth communities’ or ‘court-tale communities’ are inferred by those respective genres.[^42]

Collins insists that a movement might reasonably be referred to as apocalyptic if it endorses a worldview in which supernatural revelation, the heavenly world, and eschatological judgment play essential parts.[^43] This, he argues, would qualify both the Qumran community and early

[^41]: Davies, “Social World,” p.253: “And who, or what, is an apocalyptic individual?”
Christianity as apocalyptic “quite apart from the production of apocalypses.”\textsuperscript{44} Two points are notable about this assertion. Firstly, insofar as Collins concedes that this “argument depends upon analogy with the apocalypses and that the affinity is always a matter of degree,”\textsuperscript{45} it is problematic as it insists upon a relationship between apocalypse and apocalypticism without specifying the nature of that relationship- a methodological shortcoming that recalls the uncritical use of the term apocalyptic. Secondly, Collins’s qualification that, just as there are different types of apocalypses, so there must be different types of apocalyptic movements,\textsuperscript{46} raises a number of questions. As we have seen earlier, Collins identifies two types of apocalypses. Does it follow that we should then talk of two types of apocalypticism? How should we understand the relationship between these two types of apocalypses and their respective ‘apocalypticisms’? If we have different types of apocalypses and apocalypticism, does it make sense to still talk about a single genre apocalypse?

This quandary brings to mind another of Davies’s criticisms: that the tripartite distinction is inadequate because it continues to use the same root word for phenomena which belong in three different categories, and between which an intrinsic connection has only ever been assumed and never demonstrated. As Davies notes, “the transfer of a literary classification into the arena of social classification is potentially muddling.”\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.13.
\textsuperscript{45} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.13.
\textsuperscript{46} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.13.
To be fair, Collins himself has highlighted on many occasions the problematic way in which the genre has been tied to precise social settings, and has emphasized that the genre is capable of accommodating a range of social settings that need to be established by historical study.\textsuperscript{48} Collins is particularly concerned with the primacy given to the historical apocalypses. The traditional perspective was that apocalypses were underground texts of crisis and consolation\textsuperscript{49} that focused on history and politics; an idea strongly influenced by the identification of Daniel as the “archapocalypse.”\textsuperscript{50} From this traditional understanding of apocalypses as literature evoked by crisis there emerged a popular theory about their \textit{Sitz im Leben}: that apocalypses were the products of marginalized or “deprived” conventicles whose fervent desire and expectation for an imminent crisis-resolution was articulated in terms of a radical, eschatological reversal of the current, corrupted state of the world, particularly its political dimension, and their own subsequent vindication.\textsuperscript{51}

Yet the “crisis” most often the focus of attention- the persecutions under Antiochus IV Epiphanes- comes too late to explain the advent of apocalyptic literature. Paleographical analysis of Aramaic fragments of \textit{1 Enoch} found among the Dead Sea Scrolls dates the \textit{Astronomical Book} and the Book of the Watchers, neither of which is an historical apocalypse,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} Collins, “Genre, Ideology,” p.20.
\item \textsuperscript{49} See, for example, Yarbro Collins, Adela, \textit{Crisis and Catharsis: the power of the Apocalypse} (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984).
\item \textsuperscript{50} Tigchelaar, Eibert J.C., \textit{Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers and Apocalyptic} (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p.263.
\item \textsuperscript{51} DiTommaso, “Part 1,” pp.254-255.
\end{itemize}
to the third century BCE, not only making them, rather than Daniel, the oldest known apocalypses, but amongst the most ancient non-biblical examples of Jewish literature.\textsuperscript{52} This discovery has precipitated a growing concern amongst scholars to account for the scientific-sapiential knowledge that informs a wide variety of ascent texts; the groups-in-crisis theory does not appear to be of use in this task.\textsuperscript{53}

Furthermore, even when we do turn our attention to historical apocalypses, the traditional perspective was vague about the nature and extent of the crisis and deprivation under which apocalypses were supposed to have emerged and been received. The lack of clarity inherent in the concepts of crisis and deprivation led to the qualification that it was relative deprivation and perceived crisis that was fundamental to apocalypticism: “the crucial element is not so much whether one is actually oppressed as whether one feels oppressed.”\textsuperscript{54}

This clarification still does not account for the methodological shortcomings of this understanding of apocalypticism. As Eibert Tigchelaar highlights, the crisis hypothesis incorporates distinct lines of reasoning: “On the one hand that specific severe crises gave rise to apocalyptic and the writing of apocalypses. On the other hand that the period in general was characterized by a pessimistic mood or world view.”\textsuperscript{55} This ambiguity allows proponents of


\textsuperscript{54} Yarbro Collins, \textit{Crisis and Catharsis}, p.84.

\textsuperscript{55} Tigchelaar, “Prophets of Old,” p.264.
the crisis hypothesis to link an apocalypse to a specific crisis, safe in the knowledge that should that link turn out to be problematic, they can fall back on the argument that it fits well with the pessimism of the period as a whole.\textsuperscript{56} Tigelchaar cautions against assuming a fixed setting for any particular type of literature; the setting in which a genre originated is not necessarily the same setting in which later authors will decide to employ that genre.\textsuperscript{57} As Lester Grabbe notes: “the apocalyptic tradition has its own momentum that will lead to the production of further apocalypses in a variety of social contexts and conditions.”\textsuperscript{58}

Finally, it should be noted that subsequent scholarship has validated many of Davies’s criticisms: more recent research has been characterized by a hesitation to describe the setting or function of apocalypses in monolithic terms, and a willingness to utilize the social-scientific studies of millennial movements.\textsuperscript{59} Stephen Cook’s assertion that “the millennial group, the Sitz im Leben of apocalyptic literature, is motivated by factors that occur with or without deprivation,”\textsuperscript{60} summarizes neatly the more nuanced direction in which many scholars’ understanding of apocalypticism has moved over the last ten or fifteen years.

\textsuperscript{56} Tichelhaar, “Prophets of Old,” p.264.

\textsuperscript{57} Tichelhaar, “Prophets of Old,” p.265.


\textsuperscript{59} Di Tommaso, “Part 1,” p.255.

Apocalyptic Eschatology

As mentioned earlier, Hanson’s focus upon apocalyptic eschatology arose from his concern that apocalyptic was being mischaracterized through “the hasty application of contemporary analogy” with Persian dualism. Hanson sees within apocalyptic eschatology a visionary element that is present throughout Israel’s religious history: “the prophet’s vision of the saving cosmic activities of the Divine Warrior and his council.” This continuity has been overlooked, according to Hanson, due to the shifts in the way the visionary element has been integrated into historical reality.

Hanson’s conceptual framework revolves around the relationship between vision and reality. Hanson’s work talks about four stages of this relationship. As Israel emerged from a mixture of peoples, many of whom had the kind of mythopoeic view exemplified in the ancient Ugaritic literature, the visionary element was, in the first stage, often not integrated into historical reality. In the second stage, of prophetic eschatology, the prophets “forged the visionary and realistic aspects of the religious experience into one tension-filled whole, allowing Yahwism to develop into an ethical religion in many ways unique in the ancient world.” In the third stage, this “unique” dialectic that the classical prophets had maintained goes through a process of

61 Hanson, Dawn of Apocalyptic, p.11.
62 Hanson, Dawn of Apocalyptic, p.16.
63 Hanson, Dawn of Apocalyptic, pp.17-20.
64 Hanson, Dawn of Apocalyptic, p.17. Hanson cites Exodus 15, Judges 5 and Joshua 10 as examples.
65 Hanson, Dawn of Apocalyptic p.18.
dissolution.\textsuperscript{66} In the fourth and final stage, of apocalyptic eschatology, the cosmic realm and the historical realm have become completely separate spheres.\textsuperscript{67}

Hanson’s work focuses on how vision and reality went from integrated in prophetic eschatology to discrete in apocalyptic eschatology, so it follows that his work is mostly concerned with the third stage of this schema. Within this third stage, Hanson examines Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah as examples of “proto-apocalyptic” and “early apocalyptic” respectively; while Second Isaiah uses mythical motifs (that would later be prominent in apocalyptic eschatology) metaphorically, Third Isaiah applies these motifs more literally.\textsuperscript{68} Hanson employs the “contextual-typological method” – a form-critical, stylistic and thematic analysis of the Hebrew prose and poetry – to arrange the oracles within Third Isaiah in a chronological sequence which, he argues, documents the successive stages of an increasingly bitter struggle for control of the restoration cult between a hierocratic and a disenfranchised visionary group. As the visionary disciples of the prophets found themselves outside the political structure, they grew increasingly skeptical about the capacity of the mundane to provide salvation, and looked increasingly to the cosmic realm.\textsuperscript{69}

Despite the enormous impact that Hanson’s thesis made when it first appeared and the widespread admiration for its ambitious scope, it has in subsequent years been attacked from a

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{66} Hanson, \textit{Dawn of Apocalyptic}, p.19, 21.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Hanson, \textit{Dawn of Apocalyptic}, p.19.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Hanson, \textit{Dawn of Apocalyptic}, p.27.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Hanson, \textit{Dawn of Apocalyptic}, pp.32-208.
\end{footnotes}
number of angles. For one, the contextual-typological method that he employed is, “to paraphrase the sentiments of many reviewers, unable to bear the weight of the task it has been asked to bear.”\textsuperscript{70} For another, the idea of Israel’s historical understanding as unique in the ancient Near East had already been called into question by Bertil Albrektson in the previous decade: the motif of gods playing an active role in historical events is found in ancient Near Eastern literature as well.\textsuperscript{71} Not only is causally oriented historiography a part of ancient Near Eastern thought, but it has been argued that the concept of time as circular is as characteristic of the Bible as it is of ancient Near Eastern literature, as the biblical tradition shares with it a literary and conceptual mode of typology and analogy: “Its writers frequently described the past and its traditions in terms of patterns of recurrence, a technique by which one tradition or event might be seen as a commentary on another, rendering meaning to the whole.”\textsuperscript{72}

Furthermore, Hanson’s viewpoint has been criticized as artificial on the basis that he refuses to categorize texts that are not the products of disenfranchised elements as containing ‘genuine’ apocalyptic eschatology.\textsuperscript{73} However, the appeal to esoteric knowledge and heavenly revelation

\textsuperscript{70} DiTommaso, “Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity (Part II),” p.370 in \textit{Currents in Biblical Research 5.3} (2007), pp.367-432. An investigation into the merits of the contextual-typological method is outside the scope of this paper, but I think it is safe to summarize its current standing in this way.


\textsuperscript{73} Knibb, “Prophecy and the Emergence,” p.174.
is equally characteristic of the strategies ruling cliques utilize to justify their status and exercise ideological control.\textsuperscript{74} Cook, for example, identifies three biblical proto-apocalyptic texts that “are not products of groups that are alienated, marginalized, or even relatively deprived”: the end time assault of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38-39, proto-apocalyptic sections of Zechariah 1-8, and the early apocalyptic descriptions of cosmic upheaval in the book of Joel.\textsuperscript{75}

Similarly, Collins too rejects the idea that the Hebrew Bible prophets translated a mythical message into plain history as smacking too much of twentieth century demythologizing: “Surely both prophets and apocalypticists presented their message as they themselves saw it.”\textsuperscript{76} However, with this condition in place, he uses Hanson’s definitions of prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology, which he thinks focus more on form of presentation than content, to highlight an important relationship he sees between the form and message of apocalypses: in the apocalypses, the most significant action occurs in the heavenly realm, and with this restatement the distance between Hanson and Collins is not great.\textsuperscript{77}

Collins notes the motif of angelic representatives of the nations in Daniel 10. Similar to Hanson’s schema of the stages in the relationship between vision and reality, Collins sees the emphasis on the heavens as the locus of action in Daniel as a return to an ancient mythological

\textsuperscript{74} Davies, “Social World,” p.258.

\textsuperscript{75} Cook, Prophecy and Apocalypticism, p.2.


\textsuperscript{77} Collins, “Transcendence of Death,” p.84.
world structure that is rare in the Hebrew Bible.\textsuperscript{78} Collins takes Daniel 12:2-3 literally and concludes that, unlike either other sections of the Hebrew Bible or the ancient mythology, Daniel “suggests that the just can be elevated to the heavenly sphere of life to join the angelic host.”\textsuperscript{79} Elevation to the heavenly form of life can happen before death – a belief apparently present in the Qumran community – or through resurrection; both constitute a transcendence of death by the attainment of an angelic form of life.\textsuperscript{80}

Collins argues that his focus on a two-storey universe rather than a theory of two ages delineates a coherent eschatology that takes into account the ascent apocalypses: “If the future hope of the apocalypticist was to be elevated to a heavenly life, then any information about the heavenly regions where such life is most fully lived is relevant to that hope.”\textsuperscript{81} However, the logic of apocalyptic eschatology that Collins identifies is based upon the idea that, within the apocalypses, future hope and present experience are interdependent: the hope for a form of life which transcends death provides the courage necessary to respond to the demands of righteousness which might be inhibited by “the fear of personal loss, of pursuing an unprofitable course of action, and especially of the ultimate loss of death.”\textsuperscript{82} This logic might seem to presuppose a crisis setting once again, which conflicts with Collins’s stated desire not

\textsuperscript{78} Collins, “Transcendence of Death,” p.87.

\textsuperscript{79} Collins, “Transcendence of Death,” p.87.

\textsuperscript{80} Collins, “Transcendence of Death,” pp.89-97.

\textsuperscript{81} Collins, “Transcendence of Death,” p.91.

\textsuperscript{82} Collins, “Transcendence of Death,” p.96.
to privilege the historical apocalypses, and his assertion that the genre is capable of accommodating a range of social settings that need to be established by historical study.\textsuperscript{83}

Our discussion of the terms apocalyptic, apocalypse, apocalypticism, and apocalyptic eschatology, particularly as they are delineated in the work of Paul Hanson and John J. Collins, has raised a number of issues. In order to be able to continue to meaningfully discuss these issues and their theoretical implications, we need to review key features of the research on apocalyptic literature, highlighting the transformations of genre and the reuse of older traditions. As Daniel and Book of the Watchers are, respectively, early examples of the historical and ascent types of apocalypses that Collins identifies, these are ideal case studies. I have evaluated a range of methodological approaches to the study of apocalypses in the course of my research. The approach I will take to the two case studies will be a reflection of what I believe to be a preferable methodology. I will begin by looking at smaller units in the order they appear within the texts, and move towards considering the overall text as the case studies unfold. My approach reflects Collins’s understanding of the multivalence of apocalyptic symbolism,\textsuperscript{84} and also Annette Reed’s work, which identifies “the new meanings generated by the juxtapositions of multiple traditions.”\textsuperscript{85} This analysis of examples of the two types of apocalypses will help illuminate issues in the identification of traditions and genre. It will

\textsuperscript{83} Collins, “Genre, Ideology,” p.20. This problem potentially disappears if the challenge is framed more generally as the impositions of empire, as suggested by Portier-Young, Anathea B. \textit{Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

\textsuperscript{84} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.51.

\textsuperscript{85} Reed, \textit{Fallen Angels}, p.27.
highlight the difficulty of identifying the social setting of apocalypses, and also allow us to consider the relative significance of ideas such as resurrection, by studying those ideas in their historical and literary context. Once these case studies have been completed, we will be in a position to bring a more informed analysis to the methodological issues raised in this chapter.
Chapter 2: Case Study – The Book of Daniel: A Historical Apocalypse

The Book of Daniel is the only full-fledged example of an apocalypse in the Hebrew Bible, although the sense in which it is “an” apocalypse is complicated by its compositional history.\textsuperscript{86} While there is a small minority of scholars who argue that the book was written as a unity, the majority of scholars regard it as the result of a process of redaction.\textsuperscript{87} Most obvious in this process would be the combination of the older material of the first six books, the “court-tales” or “court narratives,” in which Daniel is always addressed in the third person, with the later apocalyptic visions of the subsequent chapters, in which Daniel speaks in the first person. Nevertheless, one could say that the whole book engages with imperial sovereignties in various ways that assert Daniel’s claims on a higher, divine sovereignty.

While the apocalyptic features of Daniel may all be found in the second half of the book,\textsuperscript{88} the court-tales also require our attention. For one, as Collins argues, if we assume that the author of the visions was responsible for combining them with the tales, then it follows that they identified both with Daniel the visionary \textit{and} Daniel the wise courtier; thus the court-tales are


\textsuperscript{88} Collins, \textit{Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls}, p.12.
highly important for an understanding of the author’s self-identity.  
Furthermore, the court-tales provide a narrative introduction to the visions, allowing the book as a whole to be identified as a historical apocalypse: “Diachronically speaking… the legends have been recontextualized, as it were, in an apocalyptic mode.” Most importantly, the visions build upon themes and a chronology developed in the tales, as we shall see.

Narratives about the wise courtier who, in service to a foreign king, is involved in adventure and intrigue, form a well-known genre from the ancient Near East. Collins identifies three motifs that are present in court narratives, and correlates each chapter of Daniel 1-6 to one of the motifs. Thus, chapters 1, 3 and 6 are tales of danger and deliverance, 4 and 5 are vehicles for the message of the courtier, and 2 highlights the skill of the wise courtier. Bearing Collins’s divisions in mind, let us look briefly at each chapter.

While chapter 1, which takes place after the successful siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, has striking similarities to a letter from Mari sent to Sibtu, the wife of


91 Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar*, p.11.


chapter 3 and 6 share a particular Mesopotamian background: “The story of Daniel’s fall from grace, the period of his tribulations, and his eventual return to court conforms to the traditional narrative pattern of what might be called the Tale of the Vindicated Courtier.” Specifically, the vicissitudes of Daniel draw from Ludlul bel nemeqi, “I Shall Praise the Lord of Wisdom,” a classic of Babylonian wisdom literature. This composition has been tentatively dated to the twelfth century BCE on the basis of the names of the author and figures in the story. Ludlul bel nemeqi itself appears to be a variation on a traditional theme, the fall of a successful sage who is eschewed by his colleagues and friends but eventually delivered by his god, but its quality is such that it became the canonical model of its genre. While the exact reason for the king’s disfavor is not mentioned, it involves a plot by other courtiers to discredit him, and uses the image of a lion to illustrate the force with which the protagonist is being damaged by their designs: “Marduk put a muzzle on the mouth of the lion that was devouring me.” This metaphor is quoted in a mid-first millennium text from


97 van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.43.

98 van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.44.

99 van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.46.
Babylon that contains selected lines from literary texts, and also quoted and explained in a commentary text from the Ashurbanipal library in Nineveh.  

Karel van der Toorn’s research into the case of Urad-Gala, who was a court exorcist under Esarhaddon (699-680) but was dismissed from his post after the accession of Ashurbanipal in 668, helps clarify the connection between *Ludlul bel nemeqi* and Daniel. In a letter from Urad-Gala to the king – the literary quality of which makes it clear that the author was a man of letters familiar with the classics of Mesopotamia – he beseeches the king to reinstate him. Urad-Gala, interpreting his situation in the light of the texts with which he was familiar, laments that while he used to be “one who eats lion’s morsels,” he now finds himself “in front of the lion’s pit”; the lions’ pit being the circle of his former colleagues. For Urad-Gala, the situation among the sages and scholars at the Assyrian court was like the situation in a pit of lions: “famished animals fighting one another for the slightest morsel of food.” The author of Daniel 6 apparently used the plot of the slandered and vindicated courtier, however, in his eagerness to portray the protagonist heroically, elaborated the metaphor of the lions’ pit into the sage’s actual punishment. Consistent with the prototypical *Ludlul bel nemeqi*, the protagonist is delivered by his god’s “muzzling of the lion(s).”

100 van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.47.
101 van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.50.
102 van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.50
103 van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.51.
104 van der Toorn, “Scholars at Oriental Court,” pp.52-53.
While the tales about Daniel in chapters 1, 3 and 6 skilfully evoke the *couleur locale* of the oriental court, much of the detail is less convincing, and cautions against the conclusion that the stories must have been the product of someone personally familiar with the neo-Babylonian court.\textsuperscript{105} Not only is the enumeration of the various branches of scholarship at the court suspiciously schematic, but the centrality of dream interpretation in the court as depicted in Daniel contrasts with the negligible interest in, even aversion to, dream interpretation in the Assyrian, and presumably also the Babylonian, courts.\textsuperscript{106} Rather, the milieu of the tales in Daniel highlights “the remarkable continuity of Babylonian cultural, societal, and linguistic norms that were preserved and maintained not only in their original cuneiform garb, but were also transferred and transformed into Aramaic, the new *lingua franca*.”\textsuperscript{107} While the description of Belshazzar’s panic-stricken state is vividly described using imagery from the Near Eastern *topos* of physiological reactions to alarming news, as evidenced by expressions in the Aramaic passage of Daniel which correspond exactly to some from Mesopotamian texts,\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{105} van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” p.41.

\textsuperscript{106} van der Toorn, “Scholars at the Oriental Court,” pp.41-42.

\textsuperscript{107} Paul, “Babylonian Background,” p.65.

\textsuperscript{108} Paul, “Babylonian Background,” p.59. Valeta, who notes the use of scatological humour in this episode, argues for a reading of the court-tales that is satirical and designed to ridicule the king: “An attitude of judgment towards kings and empires unifies the entire book. There is also the possibility that humor and satire may also provide the bridge between these two seemingly disparate sections.” Valeta, Daniel, “The Satirical Nature of the Book of Daniel,” p.92 in Rowland, Christopher and Barton, John (eds.), *Apocalyptic in History and Tradition* (Sheffield Academic Press: London, 2002), pp.81-93. See also Charlesworth, James H., “Folk Traditions in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature,” p.97 in Collins, John J. and Charlesworth, James H. (eds.), *Mysteries and
an analysis of Daniel 4 can illustrate this influence better than an analysis of Daniel 5 or the chapters above is able to.

The depiction of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel has long been a source of confusion for biblical commentators. Firstly, a lot of the historical information in Daniel cannot be reconciled with the best possible historical reconstruction of events during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Secondly, some commentators have been surprised by the friendly relations that Daniel enjoys with Nebuchadnezzar, Israel’s arch enemy and the destroyer of the Temple at Jerusalem in 2 Kings 25. An examination of Daniel 4 makes it seem likely that the underlying traditions did not originally revolve around Nebuchadnezzar, but rather Nabodinus, the last king of the neo-Babylonian empire. The Qumran text 4QPrayer of Nabodinus is widely believed not only to provide the link between the Nabodinus legend and Daniel 4, but also to be the “clearest case of a text that can be defined as a source of the Book of Daniel.”

Nabodinus’ reign was remarkable for two things: his self-imposed exile to Teima, an oasis in the Arabian Desert (for reasons that remain unclear, despite the wealth of written material that

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Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium, (JSP Sup 9, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp.91-113: “Humor was a way of attacking the powerful and hostile, without breaking cultural norms for respecting the dignified and the theological and moral restrictions put on anger and hatred.”

109 Henze, Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar, pp.52-55. For example, during the third year of Jehoiakim’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar was campaigning in northern Syria.

testifies to the event itself), and his championing of the moon-god Sin.\textsuperscript{111} Immediately subsequent to the demise of the neo-Babylonian empire in 539 BCE, “there arose a significant body of polemic literature leveled against Nabodinus.”\textsuperscript{112} \textit{4QPrayer of Nabodinus} stands in this tradition, and also has important parallels to Daniel 4. These parallels include a Babylonian king suffering for seven years, and a Jewish exile and seer revealing that the source of that suffering is the monarch’s transgressions against God: “In either narrative the focus is on the conversion process of the gentile king to the God of Israel, all of which is related by the monarch himself in the first person.”\textsuperscript{113} Thus, according to Esther Eshel, the most significant changes that the biblical author made in adapting the prayer to suit his worldview were simply changing the king’s name from Nabodinus to Nebuchadnezzar and identifying the anonymous Jew of the prayer with Daniel.\textsuperscript{114}

On the other hand, as Matthias Henze notes, not only do Daniel and his anonymous counterpart have different roles in the development of the plot – the anonymous seer does not enter the story until after the seven years have passed – but some of the key elements of the biblical tale, including the vision of the cosmic tree and the king’s exclusion from the human realm, are missing from the prayer. For Henze, the similarities “do not extend below the surface, and common elements are employed rather differently… discrepancies dominate the picture.”\textsuperscript{115}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} Eshel, “Possible Sources,” p.58.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Eshel, “Possible Sources,” p.61.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Henze, \textit{Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar}, pp.55-56.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Eshel, “Possible Sources,” pp.387-388.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Henze, \textit{Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar}, p.73.
\end{itemize}
According to Henze, a tendency to emphasize thematic parallels at the expense of literary differences is one of the consequences of biblical scholarship’s assumption that traditions such as the exile of Nabodinus begin with a single written source. Rejecting the idea of the legend having developed linearly, he supposes a pluriform history, in which both texts originated as oral recollections, and thus understands the differences between the accounts “as distinct elements embedded in either traditions’ trajectory rather than as interpretative elements away from an alleged common origin.”

The vision of the cosmic tree and Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation into an animal can be traced to Assyrian and Babylonian sources respectively. Representations of plants such as lotuses, lilies and papyrus as supports for divine and royal architecture in Egypt as early as the Eighteenth Dynasty (1540-1307) shows the antiquity of the ancient Near Eastern idea that gods, king and land are bound in a special relationship. In first millennium Neo-Assyrian reliefs from the throne of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud, this vegetal motif is expressed through the symbol of the stylized date palm, or “sacred tree.” In two nearly identical and prominent orthostats, Ashurnasirpal II is shown next to a stylized palm tree. Above the tree is a winged disc from which a male figure, probably the god Ashur, gestures to the king. The sacred tree

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117 Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar*, p.73.


120 Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design*, p.83.
“metaphorically represents the gods bestowing abundance and security upon the king in exchange for his pious husbandry.”

The author of Daniel plays upon this motif. On the one hand, insofar as the tree symbolizes the divine order as maintained by the king, the stripping of the tree could be seen as a denunciation of Assyrian claims to divine sovereignty. On the other hand, insofar as the king in some reliefs appears as the human manifestation of the tree, the stripping could be read as a description of the king’s humiliation, which is how verse 22 interprets it. The way in which the vision of the tree being stripped is jarringly combined with a section of a distinct, and seemingly out-of-context, story about Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation into an animal also lends itself to this interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation into an animal can be understood as an inversion of the ubiquitous wild man trope. The most famous wild man from the ancient Near East is Enkidu from the Gilgamesh epic. The first tablet of the epic contains a hymn of praise for Gilgamesh: “Who can compare with him in kingliness?” However, for reasons unclear due to a break in the text, Gilgamesh is subsequently described as oppressive, and the gods decide to create a

121 Feldman, Diplomacy by Design, p.83.
122 Henze, Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar, p.78.
123 Henze, Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar, p.78.
124 Henze, Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar, pp.93-99.
rival to challenge him: “Let them rival each (in battle), that Uruk may gain peace.” Thus the primitive Enkidu is created, and his early life is described using traditions about primordial man, who ate grass, drank water, and knew neither the eating of bread nor the wearing of garments, that go back at least as far as a Sumerian text called “The Dispute Between Cattle and Grain.” Enkidu exists at the lowest level of human existence, barely able to be differentiated from an animal. Yet by the end of the epic he is the companion of Gilgamesh the king, who represents the highest point of civilization that a human can reach. Henze argues that the author of Daniel 4 borrows this Babylonian trope, but turns it upside-down; it is no longer the wild man who is transformed into the counterpart of the king, but the king who is made by God to undergo the reverse process in order to learn humility.

For Henze, the literary treatment of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 is consistent with a shift that took place in Israel’s collective memory between the account in 2 Kings and accounts from the latter half of the Second Temple period. As evidenced in Judith, the memory of Nebuchadnezzar had become de-historicized by the late biblical period; he had become a type, a symbol of pride and arrogance, stripped of his frightening qualities; “the object of action

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128 Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar* pp.98-99: “Each of the elements in the description of Nebuchadnezzar’s life finds an exact counterpart in descriptions of Enkidu, the wild man, before his metamorphosis into a fully civilized human being.”

rather than its subject.”\textsuperscript{130} Furthermore, Daniel’s friendly relations with the king are part of a narrative pattern of stories set in the Jewish diaspora such as the Book of Esther or the Joseph novella: “The friendly relations with the king serve to underscore the wickedness of the king’s officials and are an important aspect in the plot development.”\textsuperscript{131}

Daniel Smith-Christopher also recognizes the parallels that exist between Daniel and Joseph,\textsuperscript{132} but notes archaeological evidence that highlights the severe treatment that Palestine received at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, as well as the ubiquity of Babylon imagery long into the Hellenistic period.\textsuperscript{133} He is thus critical of readings of Daniel that romanticize Jewish diaspora life. For Smith-Christopher, the different atmosphere that is often perceived between the earlier and later chapters, i.e. a relatively tranquil atmosphere of the court-tales compared to an atmosphere of persecution in the visions, is based upon the false assumption that behind the court-tales is a diaspora setting “that can be comfortable and even encourage aspirations to high office.”\textsuperscript{134} On the contrary, he argues, given the brutal social realities of Ancient Near Eastern empire building throughout the periods from 587 through 163 BCE, there was little opportunity for gaining prosperity and the tales of Daniel should be read rather as indicating a

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{130} Henze, \textit{Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar}, p.104-114.

\textsuperscript{131} Henze, \textit{Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar}, p.56.


\textsuperscript{133} Smith-Christopher “Prayers and Dreams” p.276.

\textsuperscript{134} Smith-Christopher “Prayers and Dreams” p.273.
\end{flushright}
subversive strategy; “that knowledge of Jewish identity as the people of Yahweh’s light and wisdom is the key not only to survival, but also to the eventual defeat of the imperial rule of ‘the nations’ on earth.”

Whichever of these views we favour, Henze’s or Smith-Christopher’s, we can at the very least concur that the court-tales are concerned with Gentile kings acknowledging the ultimate sovereignty of the Jewish god. It will also become clear that there is some contrast between the representations of gentile kingship in the court-tales and the visions. Indeed, the structuring of the court-tales is instrumental in providing this contrast.

Each chapter in Daniel 1-6 can be read as a self-contained tale. In chapters 1 and 2 Daniel appears with his three companions, in chapter 3 the companions appear without Daniel, and from chapter 4 onwards Daniel appears without his companions. Furthermore, chapter 4 is in the form of a letter from Nebuchadnezzar, while an anonymous narrator relates the other chapters. To the majority of scholars, Daniel 1-6 is patently reductive; “linked by multiple editorial devices… which are identified by their unifying function and consistent editorial

135 Smith-Christopher, “Prayers and Dreams,” pp.280-289. Interestingly, Smith-Christopher’s position here is consistent with that of Valeta in so far as he sees satire as prominent – he raises the possibility that Nebuchadnezzar’s statue in chapter 3 satirizes communal memories of the building of Babylonian monuments, and that Belshazzar’s feast pillories the extravagance of Antiochus IV (p. 280) – and rejects the idea of two seemingly disparate sections.

The most important of these devices is the chronological framework within which the tales are arranged; they move chronologically from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in chapters 1-4 through the reigns of Belshazzar in chapter 5, Darius the Mede in chapter 6, and finally to Cyrus. However, the historical record tells us that Belshazzar was not the son of Nebuchadnezzar and never served as king – rather, he was the son of Nabodinus and only ever served as regent – and that Nabodinus was succeeded immediately by Cyrus the Persian, not “Darius the Mede,” who appears to be an invention without historical basis. The sequence of kings and the chronological order of the legends in chapters 1-6 are instead based on the four-kingdom schema that is introduced in chapter 2, and which links the court-tales with the visions of chapters 7-12. This schema, according to which there would be a sequence of four world kingdoms followed by a fifth, final kingdom, was a convention of Near Eastern political propaganda, and is thought, on account of its inclusion of Media, to have originated in Persia. Although the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2 may have arisen as a Babylonian oracle of imperial history, it serves the vital function of defining the period from

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137 Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (Brill: Leiden, 1st ed 2005), p.49-80. This includes the “recurring references to Daniel’s Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, the appearance of which in the narrative seems awkward and contrived, suggesting a deliberate harmonization of multiple story-complexes, including one whose protagonist was this Belteshazzar.”


139 Gowan, *Daniel*, p.34.


the exile to Daniel’s present as the era of empires: “This vision serves as an introduction to the other historical visions by delimiting the period to be explained and by outlining an explanation.”¹⁴² The schema is more neatly applied in chapters 7-12: 7 and 8 are dated to the reign of Belshazzar, 9 to the reign of (the fictional) Darius the Mede, 10 to Cyrus, and 10:20 refers to the Greek kingdom.¹⁴³

According to Reinhard Kratz’s fascinating reconstruction, the addition of the visions in chapters 7-12 has left its traces not only in the language of 1:1-2:4, but also in important additions to chapter 2.¹⁴⁴ Kratz notes that the stone in 2:34-35, which destroys the statue and fills the whole earth, has in verses 31-45 two competing interpretations. The original interpretation, which occurs in verse 39 and continues in verse 45, “runs hand in hand with the doctrine of the three kingdoms in the framework of Daniel 1-6 (cf. 1:1, 21; 5:25-28; 6:29).”¹⁴⁵ The second interpretation prepares for the insertion of the fourth kingdom and the kingdom of God in verses 40-44 by adding the numeration and interpretation of the empires to the individual metals in 2:39.¹⁴⁶ The additions in chapter 2 are thus a kind of prelude to chapter 7, which gives the narratives a new meaning by looking back chronologically behind chapter 6


for the first time and changing Daniel’s role from one who converts gentile kings to one who foresees their downfall.\textsuperscript{147} For Kratz, chapters 1-6 and 7 relate to each other as text and commentary (“except that the commentary in narrative form is added as a flashback to the time of chapter 5”); chapter 7 was never an independent text.\textsuperscript{148}

In the court-tales Daniel can guess, interpret and decipher anything he encounters. However, he does not understand the visions he receives in the chapters 7-12, and is dependent upon an \textit{angelus interpres} (although, according to the chronology of the book, he does both at the same time).\textsuperscript{149} In trying to understand the visions, it will also be useful for us to change our methodology, rather than continue to approach Daniel chapter by chapter. As Collins has noted, the visions are “notoriously difficult, in the sense that they go over the same material in different ways and often deviate from sequential logic.”\textsuperscript{150} Nonetheless, the repetition that occurs does help illuminate the significance of the visions, so I will focus on what I believe to be the most significant aspects of the vision in chapter 7 – the beasts rising from the sea, and the judgment scene with the ‘ancient of days’ and the ‘son of man’ – and analyze their backgrounds as well as their development within the visions. Dividing Daniel 7 into two halves, 7:2-8 and 7:9-14, is consistent with the history of research on the influences and traditions underlying

\textsuperscript{147} Kratz, “Visions of Daniel,” p.98.

\textsuperscript{148} Kratz, “Visions of Daniel,” p.97

\textsuperscript{149} Kratz, “Visions of Daniel,” p.97: “7:1 and 8:1 run parallel with chapter 5; 9:1 and 11:1 with chapter 6; and 10:1 with 1:21 and 6:29.”

it.\textsuperscript{151} Following that, a closer look at Daniel’s expectations of “the end” will draw together some of these aspects of the visions.

Well over a century ago, Hermann Gunkel observed several unexplained elements in the vision of chapter 7,\textsuperscript{152} and from this concluded that the vision was an adoption and allegorisation of pre-existing material.\textsuperscript{153} Gunkel’s basic thesis that the imagery of the beasts rising from the sea in the first half of Daniel 7 alludes to a fuller narrative prototype that must be sought outside the Hebrew Bible has been widely accepted.\textsuperscript{154} The symbolism of the sea as a chaos monster is well attested in ancient Babylonian texts in which Marduk overcomes Tiamat, the saline waters of the ocean, and thus becomes king.\textsuperscript{155} Canaanite texts, in which Baal, “the rider of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{151} Eggler, Jurg, \textit{Influences and traditions underlying the vision of Daniel 7:2-14: the research history from the end of the 19th century to the present} (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 2000), p.1.
  \item \textsuperscript{152} Eggler \textit{Influences and Traditions}, p.3: “Gunkel’s suggested Babylonian background launched the traditio-historical explanations of the vision of Dan 7 with all its vigour in 1895.”
\end{itemize}
clouds,” vanquishes the sea god Yam and acquires kingship, as well as the Hebrew Bible, as Levenson’s and Day’s studies both demonstrate. Since the work of John Emerton in 1958, a Canaanite source has been regarded as more likely than a Babylonian source, although such influence has increasingly been recognized as “vague, general and indirect.” While no significant scholarship since the 1950s has supposed a complete Babylonian background to Daniel 7:2-8, arguments for a partial background persist. For example, the phrase “the four winds (of heaven)” occurs commonly in Akkadian literature whereas, within the Hebrew Bible, it occurs only within passages in Daniel and Ezekiel, which are set in Babylonia. Interestingly, “the normal order of reference to the winds in Akkadian literature is south, north, east, west, which corresponds to the geographical location of the four kingdoms from a Mesopotamian perspective.” Scholars have in fact proposed a range of extra-biblical influences on the first half of Daniel: Babylonian, Greek, Canaanite, Phoenician, Iranian, Egyptian, Astrological, Treaty Curse, Iconographic, Birth Omen and ‘Kosher Mentality’ is not an exhaustive list!


159 Eggler, *Influences and Traditions* p.6.


The first three beasts rising from the sea cannot be easily equated with chaos monsters. The first beast is given a human mind, the second is told to arise and devour many bodies, and the third is given dominion (vv. 4-6). Appearing at the conclusion of six chapters that have made the point emphatically that it is God, and God only, who grants dominion, it can only be that these three beasts are empowered and instructed by God. No such instruction is given to the fourth beast, which is “different from all the beasts that had preceded it” (v. 7). How are we to understand this difference?

In the court-tales, Daniel’s religious loyalty does not impede his allegiance to the gentile kings because, quite simply, God’s sovereignty is exercised in the present through the agency of gentile kings: “In the political theology of Daniel 1-6, the eternal kingdom of the God of heaven is over all.”163 The principle of the court-tales may be summed up by the hymnic pieces – Daniel’s prayer of thanksgiving in 2:20-23 and the gentile kings’ acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty e.g. 2:47; 3:28-29 – while the hubris of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4 and the sacrilege of Belshazzar in chapter 5 provide the exceptions which confirm this principle.164 According to Kratz, as the first three beasts all operate through God’s dispensation, their forms are based on the divine likeness in Hosea 13:7-8: lion, panther, bear.165 However, while the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar into a beast in chapter 4 is only a temporary exception, the

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empires in Daniel 7 assume a lasting beastly form because the exception has become the rule on account of the nature of the fourth kingdom: “What had served the order and welfare of the whole earth in Daniel 1-6 raises itself in the character of the fourth beast against the whole earth and therefore against the highest God, who bestows or withdraws dominion for the well-being of the entire earth.”

The first three beasts are thus, according to Kratz, a mixture of divine attributes and more ambiguous features formed through exegesis of Daniel 1-6, specifically Daniel 2 and Nebuchadnezzar’s humiliation in chapter 4, an ambiguity that is reflected in the fate they receive in the judgment of 7:12: “their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.” The fourth, different from the other three and deserving of a more definitive and brutal punishment, is nonetheless also described in language drawing from the court-tales: the iron that smashes everything in 2:40.

Kratz’s thesis is supported by the work of Anne Gardner, who focuses on one of the beasts (the bear) and concludes that only inner-Biblical exegesis can explain all the details of the beasts and their actions. While the background to the beasts is an issue that is far from closed, perhaps the detailed, intertextual approach taken by Gardner suggests a worthwhile methodology for future researchers.

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167 Kratz, “Visions of Daniel,” p.96: “…the process of removal from power and reinstatement based on chapter 4; the eagle based on 4:30; the heart of man based on 4:13:5:21; flesh instead of grass for food based on 4:9, 22, 29-30; and the four wings and four heads together with the bestowal of reign based on 2:37-39.”


The employment of the four beasts is of course consistent with the schema of the four empires that we have already examined, including the revelation in 7:18 that “the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom.” However, the visions of Daniel focus in on one figure from the fourth (Hellenistic) empire: the “little horn” (v.8). Chapter 7 tells us that the little horn spoke “arrogantly” (vv. 8, 11, 20), “made war with the holy ones and was prevailing over them” (v. 21), and spoke against the Most High and wore out the holy ones of the Most High (v. 25).

The core part of Daniel 8 is the vision of the battle between the ram and the he-goat, which is usually understood in scholarly literature as a symbolic representation of the struggle between Persia and Greece, as Gabriel identifies the two animals subsequent to the vision (v. 20). Holger Gzella argues that reducing the vision to historical allegory focuses too much on understanding the contemporary history, and so fails to grasp that the vision represents an objective form of reality: “the world seen with angels’ eyes.”170 This is an interesting thesis, and worth at least bearing in mind in relation to Collins’s thesis about the desire and potential for attaining an angelic form of life within apocalyptic eschatology, as well as for other cosmological implications.

Of more immediate significance in chapter 8 is the information provided about the little horn: it is said to grow as high as the host of heaven, to throw to earth and trample upon some of the host and some of the stars, to act arrogantly “even against the prince of the host” (vv. 10-11), to

destroy the powerful and the people of the holy ones (v. 24), and even to rise up against “the Prince of princes” (v. 25) i.e. God. The little horn doesn’t only speak against God and attack the holy ones and the host of heaven, but actually rebels against God himself. In challenging God’s sovereignty, the little horn does fill the role of the chaos monster in a way that the other three beasts that rise from the sea do not.

But who is the little horn? Chapter 8 provides information that makes its identification easier for the reader: it took the regular burnt offering from the sanctuary and replaced it with “the transgression that makes desolate” (vv. 11-13; also mentioned in 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11). As has long been recognized, this is a reference to the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who, in around 167 BCE, set up an altar to Zeus in the temple of Jerusalem upon which pigs were sacrificed.

Chapter 11 demonstrates even more clearly that Antiochus is the focus of the visions of Daniel, and is the key text in dating the book. Its central part is a “regnal prophecy outlining the rise, activities, achievements, and fall of a series of kings who are unnamed but can be identified on the basis of the events referred to.”

It describes the struggle between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids in great detail for the period from about 260 to 165 BCE, focusing in particular on the career of Antiochus IV in chs 21 to 35. In 11:40-45, it speaks of a third campaign against Egypt that Antiochus IV is to undertake, subsequent to which will be his death in on the coast of Palestine. However, Antiochus IV did not lead his army on a third campaign to Egypt, but


172 Gowan, Daniel, p.19.
rather to Parthia, where he died suddenly of disease in 164 BCE, which has led to the conventional dating of the book to 165 BCE.\textsuperscript{173}

Analysis of the second half of Daniel 7 has also tended to focus on the identification of one of the figures in the text, in this case the “one like a son of man,” conventionally referred to as simply “the son of man.” The first question that Emerton asked in relation to the identification of the son of man was “Whence came these pictures and these stories?”\textsuperscript{174} It is a question that has not yet received a definitive answer. For Emerton, the background to the son of man imagery “was the religion of Canaan, not Babylon.”\textsuperscript{175} Scholars have long been aware of certain parallels between the Ugaritic texts and Daniel 7:9-14: that both El in the Ugaritic texts and the ancient of days in Daniel are aged deities with grey hair (an exceptional depiction in the Hebrew Bible)\textsuperscript{176}; El and the ancient of days may have an etymological relationship\textsuperscript{177}; that

\textsuperscript{173} This part of Daniel is often regarded simply as a sort of failed prophecy, but Goldingay rejects such an interpretation. Noting that this type of regnal prophecy has no parallels in the Hebrew Bible, he cautions us against ignoring the Near eastern background to this text. Goldingay compares this part of Daniel with Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Greek texts of similar formulae and detail, dating from the late second millennium to the Hellenistic period, which combined extensive quasi-prophhecy of prior events with more limited prophecy of future events. From this, Goldingay concludes that the Daniel 11 would have been understood as mostly quasi-prediction: “This is a more natural assumption than the view that the author has turned a familiar way of giving quasi-prophecies into a way of giving actual prophecies.” Goldingay, \textit{Commentary}, p.282.


\textsuperscript{175} Emerton, “Origin,” p.228.

\textsuperscript{176} Emerton, “Origin,” p.229.
both Baal and the son of man are associated with the clouds; and that two distinct divine figures are mentioned, one subordinate to the other.\(^{178}\) If these associations are correct, then a key element of the background to Daniel 7 would be, broadly speaking, the chaos combat myths of the Ancient Near East,\(^{179}\) and, more precisely, the conflict between Baal and Yam in the Baal Cycle, in which Baal’s act of slaying the sea god / monster Yam sees him enthroned as king, albeit a kingship which is in harmonious subordination to the will of El.\(^{180}\)

This proposal has met with some resistance. In particular, how themes like those found in the Ugaritic texts (which date from the fourteenth century) may have found their way into the book of Daniel cannot be identified conclusively,\(^{181}\) although the theory that the festival of Yahweh’s enthronement served as the transmitter of the Canaanite theme has enjoyed

\(^{177}\) The etymological relationship between the Ugaritic \textit{ab snm} and the Danielic ancient of days is disputed. Some scholars assert that there is no direct parallel (Eggler, \textit{Influences and Traditions}, p.60), while LaCocque enthuses that ancient of days “recalls unmistakably El’s title \textit{ab snm} in Ugarit”: LaCocque, Andre, “Allusions to Creation in Daniel 7,” p. 119 in Collins, John J. and Flint, Peter W. (eds.), \textit{The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception} (Brill: Leiden, 2002), pp.114-131. Regardless, the description of El as the “father of years” occurs only four times in the Ugaritic material, none of which are in the tale of the conflict between Baal and Yam; Walton, “Anzu Myth,” p.83.


\(^{179}\) Walton, “Anzu Myth,” p.70.


longstanding prominence.\textsuperscript{182} Accordingly, no unbroken tradition can be traced from the Canaanite god El to the ancient of days, as Yahweh incorporated characteristics of both El and Baal.\textsuperscript{183} In response to this quandary, some scholars have assumed a hypothetical phase of a new differentiation into the ancient of days and the son of man to account for the two distinct beings in Daniel.\textsuperscript{184}

Such solutions are probably unnecessary. For one, the symbolism of the sea as known from the chaos conflict myths is well attested in the Hebrew Bible and indeed across the ancient Near East, including in roughly contemporaneous texts. Andre LaCocque states that “Isa 27:1 (and Isaiah 24-27 in general) shows that God’s fight with the Dragon or Mot was very much on the minds of second century Israelites (or of an intellectual elite?)”\textsuperscript{185} Although LaCocque’s implied dating of Isaiah 24-27 to the second century is questionable – there has been a clear tendency in recent years toward an earlier date, with the period between the sixth and fifth centuries achieving a degree of consensus\textsuperscript{186} – his point that the chaos combat myth continued to be influential long after the fourteenth century is beyond doubt.\textsuperscript{187} Secondly, it may be futile

\textsuperscript{182} Eggler, \textit{Influences and Traditions}, pp.58-68.

\textsuperscript{183} Smith, Mark S., \textit{The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. 2002), pp.32-43, 80-91.

\textsuperscript{184} Eggler, \textit{Influences and Traditions}, p.61.

\textsuperscript{185} LaCocque, “Allusions to Creation,” p.117.

\textsuperscript{186} Doyle, Brian, \textit{The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking: A Study of the Use, Function and Significance of Metaphors in Isaiah 24-27} (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2000), p.36.

\textsuperscript{187} LaCocque, “Allusions to Creation,” p.117.
to build a case for a single chaos combat myth tradition behind Daniel 7; Walton’s study has demonstrated that Daniel 7 appears to be a conflated and eclectic account drawing liberally from several exemplars of the chaos combat myth.\textsuperscript{188}

The identification of the son of man is a classical \textit{crux interpretum} in Daniel exegesis.\textsuperscript{189} The figure is usually identified as belonging to one of three categories: the messiah, the people of Israel, or an angelic being.\textsuperscript{190} The messianic interpretation is understood as being rooted in longstanding messianic expectations.\textsuperscript{191} Although traditio-historical argumentation is not always employed in support of the son of man’s identification with a messianic figure, the enthronement festival has, again, been postulated as the possible background.\textsuperscript{192} Clearly, the collective interpretation of Daniel 7:18; 27, in which the people of the holy ones of the Most High receive the kingdom, means that the son of man is to be identified on some level with the Jewish people.

Similarly, there is an abundance of evidence within Daniel that lends itself to the angelic interpretation. Angels who are described anthropomorphically are present around the throne of

\textsuperscript{188} Walton, “Anzu Myth,” pp.85-86

\textsuperscript{189} Albani, Matthias, “The “One Like a Son of Man,”” (Dan 7:13) and the Royal Ideology,” p.47 in Boccaccini, Gabriele (ed.), \textit{Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), pp.47-53

\textsuperscript{190} Eggler, \textit{Influences and Traditions}, pp.88-95.

\textsuperscript{191} Eggler, \textit{Influences and Traditions}, p.88.

\textsuperscript{192} Eggler, \textit{Influences and Traditions}, p.89.
God in Daniel and elsewhere both inside the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ezekiel 1) and outside it (e.g. 1 Enoch 14). Their description parallels in many ways the human servants of ancient oriental potentates.\textsuperscript{193} And just as ancient oriental kings had generals and soldiers as well as counselors and courtiers, so angels form the armies of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible.\textsuperscript{194} Occasionally, angels intercede for humans in the same way that members of the royal court might intercede for ‘common people.’\textsuperscript{195} These features are found in combination in Daniel, with Michael, in his first appearance in the Hebrew Bible, enjoying a particularly prominent position as the angelic representative, champion and protector of the Jewish people (12:1). Just as the four beasts that rise from the sea symbolize kingdoms that are represented by individual kings, so we might expect that the leader of “people of the holy ones of the Most High” i.e. Michael, be logically identified with the son of man.\textsuperscript{196} However, the literary treatment of Michael and the other angelic representatives of nations can help not only identify the son of man, but give us greater insights into the cosmology of Daniel.

Although the princes of Persia and Greece with whom the speaker, most likely Gabriel, in Daniel 10 contends are overwhelmingly presumed to be combatants in a heavenly battle, Tim Meadowcroft argues that the term translated as “prince” has the more expected sense of human


\textsuperscript{194} Hannah, \textit{Michael and Christ}, p.18: Deut 33:2; Jos. 5:13-15; 2 Kgs. 6:17; 19:25 = Isa. 37:36; Ps. 68:18.

\textsuperscript{195} Hannah, \textit{Michael and Christ}, p.18.

\textsuperscript{196} Albani, “Son of Man,” p.48.
official or ruler, and that the princes are just as likely to be human figures. According to Meadowcroft, “the text enables us, and the context leads us, to interpret… the ‘princes,’ as human figures subject to the attention of Michael and his angelic colleague.” This has profound cosmological implications; earthly reality is not simply mirrored, symbolized, or reflected in heavenly symbolism or archetypes, but rather earthly and heavenly reality are intermingled.

Aware that this is too significant a point to hang on the possible meaning of one word, Meadowcroft points to other features of the vision narratives of chapters 7 to 9 and 10 to 12 to demonstrate the interactive nature of heaven and earth within Daniel. In chapters 7 and 8, not only does the visionary participate in the vision being conveyed, the interpretation of the vision is itself part of the vision (7: 15-16 and 8: 16). Rejecting the idea that 7: 21-22 is simply a redactional seam, Meadowcroft understands it as the introduction of additional material by Daniel in the context of the very same conversation that conveys the interpretation, thus “the vision, the interpretation and the interaction between the two are almost impossible to separate.” Likewise, he rejects the idea that chapter 10 acts as a prologue, and 12:5-13 as an


198 Meadowcroft, “Princes of Persia,” p.103.


epilogue, to chapter 10, as there are elements of the vision in all three chapters. Rather, if we understand chapters 10 and 12: 5-13 as forming the framework within which chapter 11 is to be understood, then the same narrative patterns that occur in the earlier visions emerge. Daniel is both observer of and participant in the visions: “The words of ch. 11 are then read as directed to Daniel who, by now, through the offices of his extended conversation with the angelic figures, has been incorporated into the vision itself.”

Meadowcraft’s bold thesis may find support in Gzella’s interpretation of Daniel 8 that I mentioned earlier, that the vision represents an objective form of reality: the world seen with angels’ eyes. If Daniel actually participates in the visions, then it would make sense to understand the visions as, in some sense, Daniel seeing the world as an angel would see it. The visions are thus neither symbols nor a parallel reality; they are the same single reality seen from different perspectives. Part of the function of the repetition that occurs in the visions is to allow these perspectives to become more integrated.


203 Meadowcroft, “Princes of Persia,” p. 106: “As in ch. 9, ch. 10 indicates the prelude to Daniel’s vision experience, the three-week fast (10: 2-3). Then we see his experience of being caught up into a vision. His physical context is described, the bank of the river Tigris, and the detail of those who were with the seer (10: 7) is a further reminder of the connectedness of the visionary experience with the temporal setting. The physical response of fear and trance-like experience are also features with which the reader is now familiar (see 7. 28; 8. 27, 18).”

204 Meadowcroft, “Princes of Persia,” p. 106.
Regardless, Meadowcroft’s point that the membrane between the heavenly and earthly spheres is highly permeable, and that heavenly and earthly reality must constantly be understood in terms of each other, directs us away from understanding the son of man as exclusively either a messiah figure, or a collective symbol for the Jewish people, or the archangel Michael.²⁰⁵

He is in fact better understood as a synthesis of those roles. Matthias Albani offers an interesting proposal as to how such a synthesis could be conceivable, and why the phrase son of man might have been considered appropriate. Albani regards the Israelite royal ideology as the common denominator of the messianic and angelic interpretations of the son of man.²⁰⁶ In Psalms 2: 7 and 89: 27, God employs father-son imagery in speaking of the enthroned Davidic king, indicating that the king has, in a sense, moved into the divine sphere.²⁰⁷ However, following the failure of the Davidic monarchy, prophets such as Ezekiel denounced the royal claim to divinity as hubristic, and central ideas of the royal ideology became democratized.²⁰⁸ In the apocalypses, “some ideas of the royal pattern return mutatis mutandis: now the righteous Jewish people, not the kings, are associated with the stars or angels.”²⁰⁹ While originally the Davidic kings bore the responsibility of realizing justice and righteousness on earth, in Daniel “those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (12: 3). Of course, it is widely held that the


²⁰⁸ Albani, “Son of Man,” pp.49-50 e.g. Gen., 1: 26; Ps 8:5.

²⁰⁹ Albani, “Son of Man,” p.50.
authors/editors of Daniel are to be found within the privileged group that is referred to here as “the wise”; the maskilim.²¹⁰

There are two lines of reasoning behind Albani’s explanation for the expression one like a son of man. On the one had, the expression “son of God” was too evocative of the hubris of the heathen kings who claimed divinity, as the famous passage in Isaiah 12: 14 may indicate.²¹¹ Collins rejects this thesis and instead proposes that the author of Daniel chose not to use this expression simply because of his lack of interest in the Davidic kingship, with which this expression was associated. He also argues that this line of reasoning is redundant anyway because the expression son of God was never de rigeur.²¹²

Albani believes that the author of Daniel drew upon the expression son of man that occurs in Psalm 80.²¹³ In this psalm, an appeal to God for deliverance from oppression by enemies and for Israel’s restoration, the phrase son of man appears in a royal context yet implies humility.²¹⁴ In Daniel, however, the phrase is more specifically “one like a son of man,” the likeness


²¹¹ Albani, “Son of Man,” p.52.


²¹³ Albani, “Son of Man,” p.52.

²¹⁴ Albani, “Son of Man,” p.52.
indicating a heavenly figure. For Albani, Michael embodies the royal Israelite ideal of just power, which rules in obedience to God, through his representation and defence of the suffering people of the holy ones of the Most High.\textsuperscript{215} While Collins may be right to question Albani’s reconstruction of the selection of wording for the son of man, his criticism that Albani undervalues the choice of an angelic deliverer is less appealing to me.\textsuperscript{216} Collins’s argument that the “prominence of Michael, the heavenly deliverer, expresses the conviction that the salvation of Israel was not to be attained by human military action but by reliance on the heavenly world”\textsuperscript{217} is supported by “the lack of synergistic militant ideology, particularly the lack of any role for the elect in the final battle” (although this is mainly an argument from silence),\textsuperscript{218} as well as by the author of Daniel’s probable use of the model of the suffering servant as portrayed in Isaiah 53: 11 to describe the fate of the wise.\textsuperscript{219} While Collins’ point may be valid, his emphasis on a distinction between the heavenly and earthly lacks the nuanced understanding of the significance of the son of man figure that Albani’s synthesis strives towards, and the deeper understanding of the visions that such nuance provides.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Albani, “Son of Man,” p.53.
\item Collins, “Response,” p.62.
\item Collins, “Response,” p.62.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
An examination of the social setting of Daniel may help further illuminate this aspect. Stefan Beyerle’s methodology is to investigate the *maskilim* in Daniel, and to draw a link between their belief system and social position.\(^{220}\) Clearly, their role and function within Daniel is characterized by a “certain elitism,”\(^ {221}\) which might be described as belonging to an “upper class.”\(^ {222}\) Much of the recent scholarship on Daniel has acknowledged this, and therefore Paul Hanson’s emphasis on “marginalized social settings” has proved unsustainable.

For Beyerle, their treatment of the “suffering servant” motif is crucial for understanding the nature of transcendence in Daniel. He sees a three-stage development: firstly, in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, “‘teaching’ and ‘exaltation’ are connected to the transformation of the Servant’s status or personality.”\(^ {223}\) Secondly, the Wisdom of Solomon 1:1-6:21 echoes Isaiah while also expressing the hope of the righteous for immortality.\(^ {224}\) Finally, Daniel understands the teaching and exaltation of the wise with reference to a transcendent reality that is exceptional in the Hebrew Bible: resurrection (12:2-3). It is the association of the risen *maskilim* with the angels that unites the two mirrored realities that the composition and structure of the visions

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\(^{221}\) Hempel, “*Maskil(im)* and *Rabbim*,” pp.140-141.

\(^{222}\) Beyerle, “Social Setting,” p.213.


presents: the present, lost and corrupt world of persecution under Antiochus IV, and the everlasting world of salvation; “the maskilim were never aware of two or more realities.”

Our discussion has so far focused on spatial dimension to the Book of Daniel, but the temporal dimension of the book is also worth considering. Collins identifies some variety in the meaning of “the end” in Daniel 7-12: chapter 7 envisages the end of persecution, followed by a kingdom of the people of the holy ones; chapters 8 and 9 focus on the restoration of the temple cult; chapters 10-12 detail the period of wrath and look forward to the resurrection of the dead; and the epilogue in 12:5-13, although appearing to have been composed after the rededication of the temple, nonetheless anticipates the arrival of “the end of the wonders.” The interpretation of Jeremiah’s prophecy in Daniel 9, and the relationship of this prophecy to Daniel’s immediately preceding prayer for the people, is particularly important for an appreciation of Daniel’s historical understanding.

Two key divergent perspectives on chapter 9 can be identified in the work of Collins and Gabriele Boccaccini. Both hold the position that the prayer reflects covenantal theology in

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its logic that Jerusalem will be restored in response to repentance.\textsuperscript{228} Collins argues that, as nothing similar to the ideology of the prayer is found elsewhere in the visions of Daniel, the prayer has been inserted so that its meaning may be subverted by its new apocalyptic context; the angel tells Daniel that the period of desolation will end at a predetermined time \textit{regardless} of repentance and prayer.\textsuperscript{229} He states that “The crisis in history in chapter 7 is not initiated by the people’s sin but by the mythological beasts that arise from the sea” and, in chapters 8 and 11, by the rebellion of the little horn.\textsuperscript{230} In essence, Collins finds the prayer irreconcilable with the determinism he discerns at the heart of the apocalyptic worldview, and dismisses it as an act of piety that functions to underline Daniel’s lack of understanding at the conclusion of chapter 8.\textsuperscript{231}

Boccaccini sees the implications of the prayer completely differently: “without the prayer of Daniel 9, the book of Daniel as a whole would lack any internal logic.”\textsuperscript{232} This is because (in contrast to the Book of the Watchers, as we shall see) Daniel’s visions do not relate the entire

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{228} Although Collins, contra Boccaccini, holds that its theology is Deuteronomic rather than Zadokite: Collins “Response,” p.61.

\footnote{229} Collins, “Response,” p.61.

\footnote{230} Collins, “Response,” p.61. I have argued earlier that at least the first three beasts are given dominion by God; a point established in the court-tales. The rebellion of the little horn seems to clarify something about the exceptional nature of the fourth beast. While Collins’s point about chapters 8 and 11 seems to be valid, I think he is mistaken in including all of the beasts in chapter 7 in the same schema.


\footnote{232} Boccaccini, “Covenantal Theology,” p.42.
\end{footnotes}
course of history, and thus do not make sense in themselves.\textsuperscript{233} While there is a historical determinism in Daniel, it is a \textit{sui generis} determinism that is limited to a single historical period and not the entire course of history.\textsuperscript{234} According to Boccaccini, what Daniel is searching for in Jeremiah’s prophecy is not the cause of the degeneration of history – he already understands that Israel’s breaking of the covenant is the cause – but rather “the consequences the realization of the divine curse has on history and the individual.”\textsuperscript{235} Thus he sees no discontinuity between Daniel’s prayer and Gabriel’s response that Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years should be understood as seventy weeks of years whose time is the time required to “finish the transgression, put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity” (9:24), nor, indeed, any contradiction between Daniel’s prayer and the overall ideology of the book.\textsuperscript{236} In one sense, the history of Deuteronomic piety has been taken up in an apocalyptic framework.

We have now gained some insight into how the author of Daniel has employed various traditions to reflect upon God’s sovereignty and the appropriate response of faithful Jews to the hubris of gentile rule. Having reviewed the strategies in Daniel for asserting divine sovereignty over competing imperial regimes, let us now consider how the author of the Book of the Watchers utilizes different literary strategies for somewhat similar theological purposes.


\textsuperscript{234} Boccaccini, \textit{Roots of Rabbinic Judaism}, p.184.

\textsuperscript{235} Boccaccini, “Covenantal Theology,” p.42.

\textsuperscript{236} Boccaccini, “Covenantal Theology,” p.44.
Chapter 3: Case Study – The Book of the Watchers: An Ascent Apocalypse

The Book of the Watchers constitutes the first 36 chapters of 1 Enoch, or the Ethiopic Book of Enoch. The Ethiopic Book of Enoch derives its name from the pre-diluvian biblical figure in Gen. 5:24 who is said to have “walked with God”, or with the “divine beings”, thus becoming a suitable authority to map the cosmos in a so-called ascent apocalypse.\(^{237}\) As Portier-Young has recently suggested, such a cosmic enterprise establishes grand epistemological claims that exceed and contest even the mapping undertaken by ancient empires.\(^{238}\)

While 1 Enoch is known mainly from a translation into classical Ethiopic that dates to the fifth or sixth century CE,\(^ {239}\) five separate compositions have long been recognized within it: the Book of the Watchers ( chapters 1-36) – a title derived from the work of ninth-century chronographer George Syncellus, who spoke of “the first book of Enoch concerning the Watchers,” although, in reality, only parts of these chapters are concerned with the Watchers,\(^ {240}\) – the Similitudes ( chapters 37-71), the Astronomical Book ( chapters 72-82), the Book of Dreams ( chapters 83-90), and the Epistle of Enoch ( chapters 91-108). Aramaic fragments of all these sections except the Similitudes have been found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the paleographical dating of these manuscripts, along with internal and external evidence, indicate


\(^{238}\) Portier-Young, Apocalypse Against Empire, pp.280, 290, 307.

\(^{239}\) Knibb, Essays on Enoch, p.17.

\(^{240}\) Tigchelaar, Prophets of Old, p.152.
that the Book of the Watchers dates from the end of the third century, making it several decades older than the Book of Daniel.\textsuperscript{241} The Book of the Watchers itself in turn may be divided into three main sections: chapters 1-5, 6-16, and 17-36,\textsuperscript{242} although those sections appear to integrate at least five originally independent units (chapters 6-11 are distinct from 12-16, and chapters 17-19 are distinct from 18-36).\textsuperscript{243}

The first of these five units, chapters 1-5, constitutes an introduction.\textsuperscript{244} Again, three sections have been discerned: 1:1-9, 2:1-5:4, and 5:5-9.\textsuperscript{245} Chapter 1:1-9 parallels Deuteronomy 33 in such a way that suggests “from the start that the revealed wisdom imparted by Enoch stands on a par with its Mosaic counterpart.”\textsuperscript{246} Its paraphrasing of the stories of the seer Balaam in Numbers 24: 3-4 and 15-16 alludes firstly to the vision of the Holy One that Enoch will give, and secondly to the heavenly journeys to follow and the indispensible role of the interpreting angels.\textsuperscript{247} Furthermore, the expression “to take up a parable,” also drawn from the Balaam

\begin{footnotes}
\item[242] Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.47.
\item[243] Reed, \textit{Fallen Angels}, p.24.
\item[245] Nickelsburg and VanderKam, \textit{1 Enoch}, pp.1-2.
\end{footnotes}
stories, underlines two aspects of Enoch’s revelation: its obscurity and its “wisdom.”

The theophany employs traditional “divine warrior” language and imagery found in several biblical theophanic texts, with the notable difference that, rather than coming from Sinai, God comes to Sinai from “his dwelling,” indicating that, while Sinai has a place in Enoch’s revelation, it is not the ultimate source of revelation. Chapter 2 employs the language of Israelite wisdom traditions to introduce a new theme which runs through the remainder of the introduction; the contrast between the harmony and regularity of nature, and Israel’s defiance of the divine ordinances: “the underlying idea that a breach of divine law leads to a condign punishment becomes another leitmotiv in the Enoch apocalypses.” The introduction concludes with a section that specifies the consequences of “the Great Holy One’s” judgment on all (1:3-7).

George Nickelsburg describes the introduction as a “prophetic oracle of judgment, which develops the late tendency evidenced in Third Isaiah to predict both condemnation and salvation.” Interestingly, this description is indebted to Hanson’s work on proto-apocalyptic. Hanson identifies a radical alteration in the function of prophetic oracles

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248 Argall, Enoch and Sirach, pp.19-20.


250 Collins, Apocalyptic Imagination, p.48.


252 Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.31.

253 As Nickelsburg notes: Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.31.
in the post-exilic period. Originally, prophetic oracles foretold either salvation or condemnation upon Israel; when salvation and condemnation were juxtaposed, the negative judgment was directed against the nations, and the positive towards Israel. However, in transitional oracles such as Isaiah 58, the juxtaposition implies a dichotomy within the nation whereby one group is promised salvation and the other threatened with condemnation. Thus Jackson understands the use of terms identifying “the righteous”, “the elect”, and “sinners,” as well as the transferral of plantation imagery from the nation as a whole to the elect remnant rising from an apostate Israel, as “the domestication to the Enochic author’s circle of the categories of Isaiah.”

The social setting of the Book of the Watchers will be discussed as we move through the text’s different sections. Clearly, the pastiche of biblical language and images in the introduction accords the figure of Enoch a very elevated status: it implies the prophetic attributes of Moses, Balaam – the greatest of the pagan prophets – and the great seer Ezekiel. Enoch is indeed one of the central figures of Jewish pseudepigraphy, appearing in numerous documents that circulated widely among Jewish and non-Jewish circles.

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254 Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p.107.
255 Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p.107.
256 Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, pp.100-108.
However, the wealth of traditions about Enoch stands in stark contrast with the brevity of biblical comments about him.\textsuperscript{260} Enoch is not mentioned in the account of angelic descent in Genesis 6 that is associated with the story of the Watchers in 1 Enoch 6-11. Rather, his name appears in the seventh position in the genealogy of Genesis 5, in which special attention is drawn to his “walking with God” during his life, and, at the end of his life, a relatively brief 365 years, to him being no more, “because God took him.”

As James VanderKam has demonstrated, the priestly editor was not only influenced by Mesopotamian sources when he wrote his accounts of creation in Gen. 1:1-2:4 and the flood in Gen. 6-9, but also when he wrote this genealogy.\textsuperscript{261} The Sumerian King List is the most notable influence upon the genealogy. While various versions of this pre-flood king list exist, dating from between 1500 and 165 BCE,\textsuperscript{262} a king named *enmeduranki* (or sometimes *enmenduranna* or *enmeduranna*) is consistently listed as the seventh king and ruler of the Sumerian city Sippar.\textsuperscript{263} VanderKam has hypothesized that the 365 years that Enoch lives, which is both the number of days in a solar year and which make him the shortest-lived

\textsuperscript{260} Reed, *Fallen Angels*, p.1.


\textsuperscript{262} VanderKam, *Enoch a Man*, p.7.

member of the genealogy by 412 years, is a monotheistically-acceptable reference to the relationship between Enmeduranki’s city Sippar and the sun-god Shamash. Even more striking is the nature of the special relationship that Enmeduranki enjoyed with Shamash and also Adad, a deity closely associated with omens. Akkadian texts speak of Enmeduranki being brought into the council or assembly of these two gods and being taught various divinatory techniques; as a result Enmeduranki was regarded as the founder of the guild of diviners known as the baru priests. VanderKam again proposes that a monotheistic rendering of this tradition is evident in the priestly genealogy. He argues that in using the expression ha- Elohim to talk of the divine fellowship that Enoch enjoys during his life, while using the expression Elohim to describe the divinity that takes Enoch at the end of his life, the priestly editor is distinguishing between angels and God. In other words, the priestly editor “seems to have rendered the traditional motif of the seventh king’s entry into the society of the gods by employing ha-Elohim to mean ‘the angels’.” Whether or not this is the precise process that took place – VanderKam himself concedes that ha-Elohim is a common way of

264 VanderKam, Enoch a Man, p.4.

265 VanderKam, Growth, pp.43-44: “For the priestly editor, Enoch could not be a devotee of the sun-god who was one deity among many, but traditional associations appear to have been so strong that he gave them muted expression through the harmless but suggestive language of Enoch’s unusual age.”

266 VanderKam, Growth, p.42.

267 VanderKam, Enoch a Man, p.8.

268 VanderKam, Enoch a Man, p.13.

269 VanderKam, Growth, p.44.
referring to God in the Hebrew Bible— it is clear that the figure of Enoch incorporates motifs associated with various mythical heroes, suggesting that he was developed as a Jewish counterpart of such heroes as Enmeduranki.  

Less clear is the nature of the relationship between Gen. 5:21-24 and the figure of Enoch found in the pseudepigraphical texts. As Stone notes, “in all the apocryphal sources the figure of Enoch stands forth full-formed; these are not tentative first groupings, nor are they merely the exposition of evident implications of the biblical text.” This raises the question of whether the tradition evident in the pseudepigraphal texts emerged in the Persian and Ptolemaic periods through exegesis of Genesis 5, or whether Genesis 5 itself only hints at a more ancient, extra-biblical tradition that was the source of the developed Enoch figure.  

A similar question may be asked of the relationship between the account of the descent of the angels in Genesis 6:1-4 and the myth of angelic rebellion in 1 Enoch 6-16, which is the foundational and central myth of the Enochic tradition. Nickelsburg describes 1 Enoch 6-11 as rewritten biblical narrative: “it is one of the oldest preserved examples of a form of biblical exposition that interprets a narrative by retelling it in an elaborated form.” This dynamic is


\[272\] Stone, “Pseudepigraphy Reconsidered,” p.6.  


\[274\] Nickelsburg, *Commentary*, p.165.  

\[275\] Nickelsburg, *Commentary*, p.29.
often evidenced by a juxtaposition of the two texts. Employing this approach, VanderKam points out some ways in which the Enoch author has nuanced the biblical text: moving “in those days” to the beginning of the story; labeling the sons of God / sons of the *elohim* as angels; describing the human women as both “beautiful” and “lovely” and employing the words “saw” and “desired” to highlight the lustful nature of the angels’ actions; and adding the section about the etymology of Mt. Hermon and the binding by oath to stress that the angels’ deed was deliberate, and its implications clearly understood.276 Nickelsburg identifies four exegetical tendencies in the retelling of the Genesis story: the eschatologizing of primordial times – “*Urzeit* is a paradigm for the present time, which is *Endzeit*”277; the use of words and phrases from elsewhere in the Bible, particularly Isaiah 65-66, to facilitate this eschatological tendency; the employment of non-Israelite tradition and myth; and the enhancement of this eschatological tendency by an ontological dualism not found in Genesis: “The origin of evil is not attributed to human beings (though they may be complicitous in it), but to malevolent spirit powers.”278

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One matter of concern about seeing Enoch as rewritten Bible is whether “at this time in history there was a Bible to rewrite.”  Helge Kvanvig argues that the concept of rewritten Bible, insofar as it presupposes a fixed authoritative text that was elaborated, misrepresents what was in fact a more fluid tradition in the third century. He suggests that there is evidence in the texts that could indicate influence in either or both directions. On the one hand, it is possible to observe word for word how the Enochic author could have expanded the Genesis text. On the other, Gen. 6:1-4 appears to be out of context in the primeval history, standing out as an isolated piece of text with puzzling problems of syntax, and an unclear sequence of events. It is also incongruous with the interpretative scheme that most commentators see within Genesis 1-11 of human misdeed meeting with divine response. While the reason given for the flood in Gen. 6:5 is human wickedness, the union of angels and women is apparently

\[\text{\textsuperscript{279} Kvanvig, “Watcher Story,” p.168.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{280} Kvanvig, “Watcher Story,” pp.168-169. Also Reed, Fallen Angels, p.55: “…the authors (and early readers) of the Book of the Watchers did not conceive of ‘the Bible’ in the same sense as later Jews and Christians. In the third century BCE, it is likely that the Torah already held a special level of authority amongst almost all Jews, but there was not yet a broader ‘biblical’ canon and the notion of scriptural authority remained fluid.”}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{281} Kvanvig, “Watcher Story,” p.170.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{282} Kvanvig, “Watcher Story,” p.171.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{283} Kvanvig, “Watcher Story,” p.170.}\]
depicted with neutrality, and the offspring of this union are described as *gibborim* and *anshey shem*, terms used approvingly elsewhere in the Bible.\(^{285}\)

Kvanvig, in investigating this incongruity, identifies four overall corresponding themes in the Genesis and Enoch material: the sexual union and birth of the giants; the introduction to the flood; the end of the flood and the new conditions; and Enoch in the divine realm.\(^{286}\) He observes that all these correspondences can be explained with reference to the P source, while nothing in either chapters 6-11 or 7-12 of 1 Enoch relates to any stories in the primeval history that have traditionally been attributed to J.\(^{287}\) From this Kvanvig raises the possibility that there once existed a scroll containing material similar to the P section of the primeval history which was known and used by the Enochic scribe. He does not, however, assume that the Genesis text must have therefore been edited later than the composition of the Watcher story, as there “could have existed other scrolls at that time containing the full text.”\(^{288}\) Equally, he concludes that the allusion in Genesis refers to a story with some of the basic features known to us in the Watcher story.\(^{289}\)

\(^{285}\) Davies, “Enoch was not,” pp.97-98.


Davies, who finds the story of Gen. 6:1-4 “curious, tantalizing in its brevity and lack of clarity, and infuriating in its inconsequentiality,” goes further than Kvanvig. He begins with the assumption that the story’s incoherence and inconsequentiality indicate that it is a reworking of an existing tale that is older than both the Genesis and Enoch accounts. He then moves the P and J accounts to the centre of the discussion, noting that P gives no account of the origin of evil. He adduces that P may have agreed with 1 Enoch’s perspective on the origin of evil, along with other affinities: P acknowledges the figure of Enoch in the genealogy; P may employ the same type of calendar used in the Enochic literature; and the Noachic covenant (Gen. 9:1-7) focuses on bloodshed, which parallels the bloodshed perpetrated by the giants in the Watcher story. He also agrees with the common association of P and the authorship of Leviticus, and thus argues that the ceremony of the scapegoat in Leviticus, in which a goat is sent into the wilderness to Azazel, is provided a rationale in 1 Enoch by the imprisonment of Asa in the wilderness. However, Davies adopts the uncommon position that J is in fact a supplement to P, and proposes that J has replaced an earlier P account, that was associated with Enoch, with a new myth, in which sin originated in human disobedience, by removing the figure of Enoch and transposing the Asael figure onto Cain.

290 Davies, “Enoch was not,” p.98.
291 Davies, “Enoch was not,” p.103.
292 Davies, “Enoch was not,” p.104.
293 Davies, “Enoch was not,” pp.104-105.
294 Davies, “Enoch was not,” pp.100-105.
295 Davies, “Enoch was not,” pp.102-103: “In the Book of the Watchers the angels also bring knowledge of arts and sciences to humans. In that story also, the birth of giants leads to bloodshed, and the earth cries out and its
While such provocative hypotheses may continue to promote interesting analysis, it must be acknowledged that the most foundational and influential studies of the Book of the Watchers assume that the Watcher story essentially proceeds from a negative interpretation of the *bene elohim* episode of Gen. 6:1-4.\textsuperscript{296} The phrase *bene elohim* can be traced back to the language of divine council, or assembly, that was the dominant Ancient Near Eastern way of referring to the social structure constituted by the gods and goddesses as a group.\textsuperscript{297} In this structure, as evidenced in the Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls versions of Deuteronomy 32:8-9, Yahweh was originally a member of this second tier of gods, the “divine sons / sons of God,” who were subordinate to *Elyon*, “the Most High,” who can be identified as the figure of El.\textsuperscript{298} This two-tier system had collapsed by the eighth century under the emerging identification of Yahweh with El.\textsuperscript{299} While the development of angels is a complex issue, it might be broadly described as part of the monotheizing approach to this divine hierarchy, in which members of the lowest tier of the early Israelite pantheon, although sometimes referred to by previously

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\textsuperscript{298} Smith, *Biblical Monotheism*, pp.48-49.

\textsuperscript{299} Smith, *Biblical Monotheism*, p.49.
more elevated terms such as bene elohim, nonetheless become “powers that act only in the name of their patron god and only thanks to the power of that deity.”

Or at least they ideally act in subordination to God, but Hugh Page’s study highlights the antiquity of the myth of cosmic rebellion. He argues that not only Gen. 6:1-4, but also Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28:1-10, Ezekiel 28:11-19, Psalm 82, Job 38, and Daniel 11-12 reflect an early myth of cosmic rebellion that came to Israel via Canaan and that has been subjected to various interpretative agenda: “The influence of this myth in Israel was pervasive and is attested by the distribution of its reflexes across a broad temporal spectrum and in texts representing a variety of socio-political settings and genres.” Furthermore, he argues that the original myth involved a revolt against El by a member of his own divine council.

This of course brings to mind the story of the rebellious Watchers. However, 1 Enoch 6-11 actually includes three descriptions of the Watchers’ transgressions, each of which has a different focus. Chapters 6-7 most closely resembles Gen. 6:1-4 in its account of the angels, under the leadership of Shemihazah, mating with human women who give birth to giants who wreak havoc on the earth. However, in ch 8, while Shemihazah is present, Asael is more

300 Smith, Biblical Monotheism, pp.49-50.


303 Page, Cosmic Rebellion, p.207.

304 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.27.
prominent. In this chapter, it is Asa’s revelation of forbidden knowledge that precipitates the spread of violence and promiscuity across the earth. In ch 9, both these figures and both these sources of corruption are presented in the form of an intercession by the four archangels. Thus Reed describes 1 Enoch 6-11 as “a composite unit whose polysemy evades any easy explanation.”

Nickelsburg and Hanson are responsible for two of the foundational studies of 1 Enoch 6-11. They focus on resolving how the text developed, and why there existed the need for a text to explain the origin of evil during the period of Israelite history in which the text was written. They identify the core stratum of chapters 6-11 in the Shemihazah Narrative, an older story about Shemihazah and his hosts, but disagree over the development and function of the text. Nickelsburg identifies in the Shemihazah Narrative a drama in three parts, each of which contains elaborations on, and divergences from, Genesis 6. Nickelsburg believes that the author of the Shemihazah Narrative has been influenced by Greek myths about giants, and thus utilized Greek motifs in describing the mighty of the earth, who wage war and fill the earth

305 Reed, *Fallen Angels*, p.27.
with violence.\textsuperscript{309} He identifies the wars of the Diadochi as the background of the text, and proposes that the parenting of destructive giants by fallen angels is a parody of claims that certain of the Diadochi had gods as their fathers.\textsuperscript{310}

Nickelsburg also sees Greek influence at work in other strata of chapters 6-11. He argues that a later reviser has elaborated the Shemihazah story with the addition of the Asael material and its motif of instruction, which is based in the Prometheus myth, particularly as it is reflected in Aeschylus’s tragedy \textit{Prometheus Bound}.\textsuperscript{311} Either this reviser, who was also reflecting on the desolation of the world through warfare, or a later reviser, subsequently introduced the instruction motif into the Shemihazah material itself, in which it has no logical function.\textsuperscript{312}

Hanson disagrees with Nickelsburg about the nature of both the Shemihazah and Asael strata. While he acknowledges that there are parallels between various features of 1 Enoch 6-11 and Greek writings, he points out that the roots of the Greek myths reach back to ancient Near Eastern sources.\textsuperscript{313} He understands the Shemihazah story as an “expository narrative”\textsuperscript{314} that takes themes and motifs from Gen. 4-10 and arranges them into “a complete mythic pattern around the theme of rebellion-in-heaven, and consisting of four movements: rebellion,

\textsuperscript{309} Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth,” p.396.

\textsuperscript{310} Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth,” pp.396-397.

\textsuperscript{311} Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth,” p.399.

\textsuperscript{312} Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth,” pp.386, 404.

\textsuperscript{313} Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.213.

\textsuperscript{314} Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.197.
devastation, punishment, restoration.” Hanson traces the rebellion-in-heaven pattern back to ancient Hurrian myths. He sees several versions, representing both astral and zoomorphic / anthropomorphic allomorphs, present in the prophetic books of Isaiah and Ezekiel, in which they have been applied to a new genre: “taunts and judgment oracles against foreign potentates.” While these judgment oracles show a mythic pattern of thought being absorbed into early Yahwism and modified into the service of a new theologoumenon, the Shemihazah narrative retrieves this ancient myth and reinfuses it with some of its original meaning.

Hanson sees a similar process at work in the Asael narrative. He focuses on the distinctive description of the penultimate punishment, and finds the catalyst for the elaboration of the Shemihazah in the similarity between one of the chief angels listed as a subordinate of Shemihazah, Asael, and the name Azazel in Leviticus 16, which is a desert location to which a scapegoat is sent in the yom kippur ritual. This Azazel would appear to have originally been a god or demon “appearing in desert places, to whom sacrifices had to be made to placate a malevolent disposition and satisfy a voracious appetite.” Thus, the author of the Asael strata also appears to retrieve mythic elements that had been obscured by historicization.

315 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.197.
316 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.217.
317 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.207: e.g. Isa. 14:5-21.
318 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.203.
319 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.221, 225.
320 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.222.
321 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.222.
Hanson’s argument, and his conclusions, are consistent with his earlier work in The Dawn of Apocalyptic. As he puts it, “a familiar phenomenon is encountered anew: a mythic pattern of thought, absorbed into early Yahwism and modified almost beyond recognition in the service of a new theologoumenon, is retrieved by later apocalypticism and reinfused with some of its original meaning.”322 Again, consistent with his earlier work, he concludes that this must be the work of a sectarian group suffering from the loss of nationhood and the oppression of foreign powers that are being assisted by collaborating compatriots.323 Again, though, this claim suffers from a paucity of supporting evidence: he asserts, rather than demonstrates, that the angelic prayer of intercession (ch.9) and the salvation-judgment oracle (ch.10) “describe a polarized community setting analogous to that underlying Isa 56-66, Dan 7-12, and the sectarian writings of Qumran.”324

Tigchelaar criticizes Nickelsburg and Hanson for underrating the importance of those sections of chapters 6-11 which do not deal with the Watchers. He points out that the presence of the motif of the Flood within the text (10:1-3, 10:16-11:2) that Nickelsburg and Hanson identify as the original Shemihazah story, is inappropriate as it is neither the means of punishment of the Watchers or their offspring.325 Furthermore, the concern for the righteous, which presupposes the notion of human sin, might be appropriate for an Asael stratum, but not for the Shemihazah

322 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.203.
323 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.203.
324 Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” p.219.
325 Tigchelaar, Prophets of Old, p.174.
narrative.\textsuperscript{326} Tigchelaar calls for a reevaluation of the hypothesis of an original Shemihazah story, and proposes instead that chapters 6-11 is the work of an author who converted a number of traditions about the Watchers into “a story with a new scope: the deliverance of the righteous from evil and the restoration of the earth.”\textsuperscript{327} While he believes that the text allows us to characterize the righteous – as the evil are those who indulge in violence, immorality and magic and divination, so the righteous must be those who do the opposite – and, moreover, to identify the evil sons and daughters of men as belonging to the Jewish community, he concludes that the charges the author makes against his fellow Jews “are too common for one to be able to attribute a sectarian view to the author.”\textsuperscript{328}

Other important literary approaches to understanding the story of the Watchers read chapters 6-11 in light of chapters 12-16, which reiterate and reinterpret the earlier chapters.\textsuperscript{329} Chapter 12 opens with a redactional introduction that links chapters 12-16 temporally with chapters 6-11 – “Before these things, Enoch was taken” (12:1) – although, in this context, the paraphrase of Gen. 5:24 refers to the beginning of a period of association with the angels: “And his works were with the Watchers, and with the holy ones were his days”\textsuperscript{330} (12:2). It then moves to the first of three commissionings, in which “the Watchers of the Great Holy One” appear to Enoch and commission him to announce doom to “the watchers of heaven” and Asael,

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Tigchelaar} Tigchelaar, \textit{Prophets of Old}, p.175.
\bibitem{Tigchelaar} Tigchelaar, \textit{Prophets of Old}, p.176.
\bibitem{Tigchelaar} Tigchelaar, \textit{Prophets of Old}, p.181.
\bibitem{Nickelsburg} Nickelsburg, \textit{Commentary}, p.229.
\bibitem{Nickelsburg} Nickelsburg, \textit{Commentary} p.233.
\end{thebibliography}
who is the chief rebel angel in these chapters; Shemihazah is not mentioned\(^{331}\) (12:3-13:3). In the second commissioning, the fallen Watchers commission Enoch to intercede for them (13:4-10). Finally, having written out “the memorandum of their petition” (13:6) and recited the petition to God until he falls asleep (13:7), he is taken up to heaven and enters the divine throne room (14:8-23), where God confirms the original commissioning and its message (14:24-16:4).\(^{332}\)

The ascent of Enoch and the throne vision has received a great deal of scholarly attention. For one, according to most scholars, Enoch’s vision of the divine throne represents an antecedent of the throne vision in Daniel 7:9-10.\(^{333}\) Ithamar Gruenwald sees in the description and placement of heavenly ascensions such as Enoch’s both a revolutionary new religious mood and interest that is central to ‘apocalyptic,’ as well as the roots of later Jewish mysticism.\(^{334}\) According to Himmelfarb, the “vision of 1 Enoch 14 marks a crucial departure in the history of ancient Jewish literature… unlike any of the prophets, Enoch ascends to heaven,”\(^{335}\) (apparently overlooking Elijah’s ascent in 2 Kings 2). She acknowledges the profound debt that Enoch’s

\(^{331}\) Nickelsburg, *Commentary*, p.229.

\(^{332}\) Nickelsburg, *Commentary*, p.230.


ascent owes to Ezekiel’s vision of the chariot that carries God’s glory (Ezekiel 1, 8-11, 43);\(^{336}\) in Ezekiel, the temple is no longer seen a God’s proper dwelling, but merely as a copy of the true temple which is located in heaven.\(^{337}\) She also acknowledges the broader prophetic background, an aspect of which is the idea of the prophet’s participation in the divine council.\(^{338}\) However, while in the biblical literature the divine council is described in the context of royal court imagery, in Enoch the divine council meets in the heavenly temple.\(^{339}\) Thus, she argues, the description of God’s white garment, which is not present in Ezekiel, reflects the plain white linen garment that the high priest wears once a year to enter the holy of holies.\(^{340}\) Correspondingly, both the language used to describe the actions of the angels, and the language God uses in response to the petition of the fallen Watchers, make it clear that the angels are depicted as priests.\(^{341}\) This is certainly how David Suter, who analyses the Watcher myth “as it stands” in chapters 6-11 along with the commentary on it in chapters 12-16, understands the angels.\(^{342}\) He argues that the myth is primarily concerned with the purity of the angels and that the effect of the

\(^{336}\) Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, p.10.


\(^{340}\) Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, p.18.

\(^{341}\) Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, p.20.

angels’ action on the human race is secondary. Specifcally, he argues that the narrative of
the appeal and sentence of the fallen Watchers in chapters 12-16 highlights the centrality of the
angels to the myth in chapters 6-11. He concludes that the myth, in its concern for the angels’
purity in both sections, as well as its treatment of the giants as mamzerim (“offspring of a
marriage contracted beyond the legitimate degrees of matrimony”) is paralleling the
separation between “the angelic and human realms and the tendency toward endogamy in
priestly marriages.”

Suter’s thesis that the myth deals with purity of the priesthood is, like Nickelsburg’s thesis that
the giants can be identified as Hellenistic rulers, a groundbreaking piece of scholarship that has
been widely heralded for highlighting an important aspect of the text. However, in identifying
an extant version of the myth in chapters 6-11 and identifying chapters 12-16 as a commentary
on the myth, Suter’s (like Tigchelaar’s and many others’) study ignores the transitional aspect
of chapters 12-16, which relates chapters 6-11 to the account of Enoch’s otherworldly journeys
in chapters 17-36. Furthermore, as Collins points out, “we should beware of drawing too
firm a conclusion about social reality from symbolic description…. The author chose not to
refer explicitly to the wars of the Diadochi or to the Jerusalem priesthood.” Collins sees the

346 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.25.
347 Collins, Apocalyptic Imagination, p.51.
search for a modern clarity or consistency in the Book of the Watchers as anachronistic.\textsuperscript{348} Rather, he understands the inconsistencies, breaks in continuity, and preservation of multiple traditions as an aspect of “the essential multivalence of apocalyptic symbolism.”\textsuperscript{349} While Collins presupposes a crisis background, he suggests that the crisis is deliberately obscured by its transposition to the mythological plane, where it becomes paradigmatic and can thus relieve anxiety and be applied to analogous situations should they subsequently arise.\textsuperscript{350}

Again, Collins’s arguments have proven generative. His critique of source-critical and form-critical approaches, and his ideas about the multivalence of apocalyptic symbolism, have inspired, for example, Reed’s outstanding examination of the significance of the Watcher myth within the Book of the Watchers as a redacted whole, including chapters 17-36.\textsuperscript{351}

Chapters 17-36 relate Enoch’s cosmic journey/s. Chapters 17-19 are distinguished from the rest of the section, and the apparent finality of 19:3 – “I, Enoch, alone saw the visions, the extremities of all things. And no one among humans has seen as I saw” – has led some scholars to suppose that the text at one time finished here.\textsuperscript{352} Chapter 20, which lists the seven archangels, is a counterpart to the list of rebel angels in 6:7-8, and functions to introduce the


\textsuperscript{349} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.51.

\textsuperscript{350} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.51.

\textsuperscript{351} Reed, \textit{Fallen Angels}, pp.26-27.

\textsuperscript{352} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.55.
angels who serve as Enoch’s guide in chapters 21-33, as well as separating the two accounts of
Enoch’s visits to the places of punishment (18:6-19:2/21:1-10). While Collins understands
chapters 21 onwards as a prolongation of the single journey that begins in chapter 17, Nickelsburg discerns two journeys, and Jonathan Stock-Hesketh discerns a third journey in
chapters 33-36.

A closer look at chapters 17-19 reveals a number of intriguing features. With regard to the
Book of the Watchers’ relationship to the biblical tradition, Daniel Olson has identified a
relationship between chapters 17-19 (and 21) of the Book of the Watchers, and Jeremiah 4:5-31,
which is an example of the “foe from the north” oracle. Olson sees a striking resemblance
between the “cosmic poem” of verses 23-28 and the doublet passages of 1 Enoch 18:11-19:3
and 21:7, 1-6, 8-10. He argues that “the parallels there point us to the wider context of the full
BW and the full oracle of Jeremiah… understanding both the overall symbolism of BW as well
as its details clarifies some of the chiastic pairings in Jeremiah’s oracle which otherwise remain

353 Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.294.
354 Collins, Apocalyptic Imagination, p.55.
355 Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.290. As does Reed: Reed, Fallen Angels, p.49.
357 Olson, Daniel C., “Jeremiah 4.5-31 and Apocalyptic Myth,” p.90 in Journal for the Study of the Old
358 Olson, “Jeremiah,” p.81.
hard to understand.”

While this may lead one most naturally to wonder whether the Enoch material drew inspiration from Jeremiah and was more or less an apocalyptic midrash on the poem, Olson’s study finds no evidence for the Book of the Watchers’ dependence upon Jeremiah. Rather, he concludes that Jeremiah, in giving a mythological interpretation to the imminent attack on Judah by the foe from the north, must have been drawing upon a myth about the fallen Watchers and their doom that was in a form very similar to that found in the Book of the Watchers. His conclusion not only parallels Kvanvig’s and Davies’s critique of the idea of the Enoch material as rewritten Bible, but supports those arguments that posit that the Enoch material and biblical material were in dialogue.

Within the Book of the Watchers, chapters 17-19 parallel chapters 14-16 in structure, content, and message. Nickelsburg points out several factors that suggest chapters 17-19 were not created as a supplement to chapters 12-16, but rather “are a duplicate version of a tradition about Enoch’s journey to God’s throne that was secondarily attached to chaps. 12-16.”

While the well-ordered cosmos and beautiful mountains that demonstrate God’s majesty are

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360 Olson, “Jeremiah,” pp.94-103.


363 Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.278.

364 Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.278.
consistent with a biblical worldview, the sites that pertain to the afterlife find no parallels in the biblical literature. Kelley Bautch notes that this section might appropriately be placed in the genre apocalypse or the Greco-Roman genre nekyia given the focus on the fate of the dead and the question of justice. Nickelsburg, who acknowledges the nekyia as the best available model for Enoch’s journey over against the Gilgamesh epic, describes these chapters as “the fountainhead of a long tradition that is embodied and developed in Jewish and Christian apocalypses.”

There is broad agreement that the function of the parallels in chapters 17-19 with the earlier sections of Book of the Watchers is to provide tangible reinforcement of God’s judgment, or, as Bautch poetically puts it: “History and theology intersect in the geographical interests of 1 Enoch 17-19.” A similar interest is evident in the remaining material about Enoch’s cosmic

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365 Bautch, Kelley Coblentz, A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17-19: “No One Has Seen What I Have Seen” (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p.230: “1 Enoch 17-18 and 24-25 reflect the Israelite tradition, though not an exclusive one, of mountains related to the divine abode or to theophany. 1 Enoch 17:3-18:5 exhibits cosmological interests similar to Job. 1 Enoch 17-19’s focus on sites located at the geographical extremities may correspond to the locations of Eden (Genesis 2-3) and Zaphon, the mountain of God (Isaiah 14) far from mere mortals.”

366 Bautch, Geography, p.230.

367 Bautch, Geography, pp.277, 256.

368 Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.280.

369 Nickelsburg, Commentary, pp.30-31.

370 For example, Collins, Apocalyptic Imagination, p.55; Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.278.

371 Bautch, Geography, p.287.
tour/s, which is a “rewritten and reversed” account of chapters 17-19 that draws upon Genesis as well as adding places and objects of eschatological significance for human beings.\textsuperscript{372} Again, various models have been put forward about the construction of these chapters and their relationship to other sections of the Book of the Watchers. Nickelsburg, who treats chapters 20-36 as a single journey from the west edge of the earth to its east edge, notes a number of correspondences to parts of chapters 17-19.\textsuperscript{373} Although Nickelsburg understands these chapters as a single journey, he does distinguish the cosmic emphasis of chapters 33-36 from the preceding chapters.\textsuperscript{374} While Stock-Hesketh’s understanding of these cosmically-oriented chapters as a distinct third journey facilitates a particularly insightful analysis of chapters 21-32 and their relationship to chapters 33-36, there are other aspects of Nickelsburg’s work that are worth highlighting.

Nickelsburg describes chapters 17-19’s recasting of Enoch’s ascent to the heavenly throne room in chapters 12-16 as an example of the shaping power of genre: instead of hearing an oracle about the judgment of the Watchers, he travels to the places where that judgment will be enacted.\textsuperscript{375} While Bautch describes \textit{nekyia} as a genre, Nickelsburg does not explicitly do so, preferring to describe the \textit{nekyia} as the “model” upon which chapters 12-16 were transformed.

\textsuperscript{372} Nickelsburg, \textit{Commentary}, p.290.


\textsuperscript{374} Nickelsburg, \textit{Commentary}, p.290.

\textsuperscript{375} Nickelsburg, \textit{Commentary}, pp.29-30.
into chapters 17-19. Nonetheless, it could be implied that the shaping genre in question is *nekyia*. However, when we come to chapters 20-36, which Nickelsburg describes as a secondary revision of the tradition in chapters 12-16, we find that, although “The narrative’s character as a *Nekyia* has not been lost… the order of the present narrative and the contents of some of its additions mitigate its character as a *Nekyia***. Nickelsburg defines these chapters rather as an apocalypse following Collins’s typology, in so far Enoch is taken on a journey to hidden places whose significance must be interpreted by his angelic guides. This potential ambiguity comes into focus when we consider the earlier statement by Nickelsburg that “The accounts of Enoch’s cosmic journeys are the fountainhead of a long tradition that is embodied and developed in Jewish and Christian apocalypses.” If we accept Bautch’s designation of *nekyia* as a genre, then we might ask how the genres *nekyia* and apocalypse relate to each other. Even if we do not, then Nickelsburg’s work still raises the question of how we understand this tradition of cosmic journeys as relating to the genre apocalypse, given Nickelsburg describes the journey narrative in chapters 20-16 as “a kind of revelation or apocalypse.”

When it comes to understanding the symbolism of Enoch’s journey/s in chapters 20-36, and their relationship to Genesis, Stock-Hesketh’s analysis is particularly useful. While he does

379 Nickelsburg, *Commentary*, p.31.
comment on the significance of chapters 33-36,\textsuperscript{381} his focus is the second journey in chapters 21-32. Although he emphasizes that the account of Enoch’s journey is not intended as a travel guide, he identifies in the travel directions an important function, which is to structure the material into a circular, anti-clockwise journey of two halves divided by Enoch’s trip to Jerusalem in the middle.\textsuperscript{382} While the western and eastern hemispheres that are divided by Enoch’s trip to Jerusalem are mirror images of each other, the details of the structure are enantiomorphic: the terrible, deathly places of the west find their counterparts in the pleasant, fertile places of the east.\textsuperscript{383} Stock-Hesketh finds particular significance in the enantiomorphic trees. The “marvelous tree,” which is presumably the tree of Life, appears, somewhat surprisingly, in the western hemisphere, while the tree of Judgment, which smells of rubbish, is in the eastern hemisphere, placing the trees in opposition to the overall mirror structure.\textsuperscript{384} The authors of the Enoch text have thus taken advantage of the Genesis narrative’s ambiguity, in which there is sometimes one tree and sometimes two, to draw attention to the central importance of what the trees –or, more specifically, the two natures of the same tree – represent, which are a microcosm of the Genesis story: “the tree gives life, but it also brings death when

\textsuperscript{381} Stock-Hesketh, “Circles and Mirrors,” p.34: “Chapters 33-36 describe a second circumnavigation of the earth, further out and so outside that just described in the Second Journey.” p.45: “We have a structure of concentric circles in the text in (1.) Jerusalem; (2.) the Second Journey; and (3.) the Third Journey…. It is the righteous and elect who, like Enoch in his journey, hold the place of the all-embracing outermost circle.”

\textsuperscript{382} Stock-Hesketh, “Circles and Mirrors,” pp.29-33.

\textsuperscript{383} Stock-Hesketh, “Circles and Mirrors,” pp.36-37.

\textsuperscript{384} Stock-Hesketh, “Circles and Mirrors,” p.39.
God’s commands are rejected.” In fact, Stock-Hesketh sees the Enoch text as an enantiomorph of the creation account in Genesis: “the description and details of both texts are very similar, but the meaning ‘goes the other way’.” The two trees (or two natures of the one tree) have been separated to highlight the inaccessibility of paradise until God has restored the correct order of things. Following judgment, the righteous will enter the very place that Adam was evicted from and be fed with the fruit from the tree of whose consumption led to Adam’s eviction.

Reed’s analysis, which starts with an examination of the widely identified “tensions, disjunctions and contradictions in chaps. 6-11,” not only provides further insight into the significance of chapters 17-36, but also into the figure of Enoch and the Book of the Watchers as a whole. When Reed writes that “The challenge of engaging the Book of the Watchers as both a composite text and a redacted whole proves particularly pertinent for the present enquiry,” she is referring to the appropriateness of such a methodological approach for a study of the text’s reception-history, which is the main focus of her book. However, such an approach is equally appropriate for a study that seeks to trace the use of older traditions in the transformation of genre. Moreover, Reed’s bold claim that the Book of the Watchers’ approach

389 Nickelsburg, Commentary, p.172.
390 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.27.
to angelic descent is unintelligible without an analysis of the new meanings generated by the juxtaposition of multiple traditions is worth investigating.391

Her work, which focuses on the motif of illicit angelic instruction, proceeds in three stages: an examination of the instruction motif and the significance of the topics of teaching associated with the Watchers in chapters 6-11; an examination of the literary and epistemological functions of the instruction motif within Enoch’s commission to rebuke the Watchers in chapters 12-16; and an analysis of the significance of the instruction motif and the fallen angels within the Book of the Watchers as a whole, particularly regarding the claims that the book makes vis-à-vis the material about Enoch and the *bene elohim* in Genesis.392

The first stage of her work derives from her belief that the organizational principles behind the selection and arrangement of traditional material in chapters 6-11 might be illuminated through a study of the repetitions and contradictions within the section.393 As noted earlier in this case study, there are in fact three descriptions of the Watchers’ transgressions, each with a different focus. While most scholars treat the instruction motif as part of a secondary stage within the text’s redaction, two of the three accounts, chs 8 and 9, privilege the theme of knowledge. This results in “an overdetermination in the explanation of evil”394; ch 7 blames the Watchers for the antediluvian corruption of the world, while ch 8 posits the shared culpability of corrupting

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391 Reed, *Fallen Angels*, p.27.


393 Reed, *Fallen Angels*, p.29.

394 Reed, *Fallen Angels*, p.35.
angels and corrupting humans. Reed mentions the option of reading 8:1-2 as a flashback to the cause of events described in chs 6-7, which would render Asael’s instruction as a causal factor in the descent of Shemihazah i.e. the other angels were drawn down to human women on account of the jewelry and cosmetics with which they had adorned themselves following Asael’s instruction. This order of events is consistent with the chronology of 9:6-10, and possibly a very early interpretation; 1 Enoch 86:1-2 metaphorically describes angelic descent by depicting a single star falling from the sky, followed later by other stars. Regardless, the polyvalent account of chs 6-11 accommodates different perspectives on the issue of human culpability for earthly evils.

Another intriguing incongruity that Reed addresses is the inclusion of knowledge about lightning flashes, shooting stars, the earth, the sun, and the moon, amongst the forbidden knowledge the Watchers taught (8:3). As Himmelfarb points out, this is the very knowledge that indicates faithfulness in the introduction to the Book of the Watchers and causes praise for God in the tour to the ends of the earth: “The negative attitude of this strand of the story of the fall of the Watchers is quite isolated in apocalyptic literature.”

The second stage of Reed’s work examines the role the instruction motif plays in the transitional chapters of 12-16, in which traditions about the elevation of Enoch are integrated

395 Reed, Fallen Angels, pp.35-36.
396 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.36.
397 Himmelfarb, Ascent to Heaven, pp.77-78.
into the traditions about the fallen Watchers. The rebukes and instructions to rebuke provide three perspectives on angelic descent: in chapters 12:4-13:3 the archangels tell Enoch to rebuke the fallen Watchers, which he subsequently does, before God rebukes them in chapters 15:2-16:4. While the archangels lament the Watchers’ departure and improper activities, they fail to mention the negative result of the Watcher’s descent for humanity, which is the sole concern of Enoch’s rebuke. However, it is God’s denunciation that is ultimately determinative: “the exuberant polysemy of 1 En. 6-11 and the modulation of different voices in 1 En. 12-16 are both resolved through the final appeal to an omniscient, divine perspective in 1 En. 15-16.” God, who understands things on a much deeper level, interprets angelic descent “in terms of the inversion of the ideal relationship between identity and activity that properly delineates the heavenly and earthly realms.”

Not only does the dialogue attributed to God display this concern, but Reed identifies how chapters 12-16 treat the antispeculative tendency that is evident in chapters 6-11 as generative by juxtaposing the Watchers with Enoch: “this unit is structured around a two-part contrast between the former, who descend to earth to corrupt humankind with their teachings, and the latter, who ascends to heaven to receive salvific knowledge.”

398 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.44.
399 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.45.
400 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.45.
401 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.45.
402 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.46: “Within 1 En. 12-16, each statement about improper angelic instruction corresponds thematically and inversely to the events subsequently related about Enoch.”
Watcher’s illicit pedagogy (13:1-2) explores the instruction motif along the axes of sin and punishment, providing both an etiology of human sin and a paradigm to stress the inescapability of divine punishment.\footnote{Reed, \textit{Fallen Angels}, p.47.} In the following passage (13:3-14:25) Enoch comes to learn his unique position within this scheme: as God “destined and created men to understand the words of knowledge, so he created and destined me to reprimand the watchers, the sons of heaven” (14:3). The second description of the illicit pedagogy (15-16), which suggests that the inappropriateness of certain heavenly secrets for human consumption is at the heart of the Watchers’ sin, introduces the next stage in Enoch’s elevation: his tour of heaven and earth in chapters 17-36.\footnote{Reed, \textit{Fallen Angels}, p.48.} The placement of chapters 12-16 before Enoch’s otherworldly journeys thus mitigates the “potentially radical epistemological ramifications” of a man having access to knowledge through heavenly ascent, by highlighting his predestined commission from God and by placing his reception of divine secrets within an examination of the proper types of behaviour for earthly and spiritual beings respectively.\footnote{Reed, \textit{Fallen Angels}, pp.45-49.}

The final stage of Reed’s study considers two passages within chapters 17-36: 19:1-2 and 32:6. Chapter 19:1-2 is the only direct reference to the Watchers’ descent in Enoch’s journeys, and it appears to presuppose a somewhat different understanding of the angelic descent: it describes their sexual sins without mentioning their illicit pedagogy; describes the Watchers themselves, not their offspring, as the evil spirits who continue to lead humans astray; and depicts the
demonic spirits of the Watchers as encouraging idolatry. While this passage explicitly blames the Watchers for bringing evil to earth, 32:6’s dismissive reference to Genesis 2-3 undermines the biblical account of progressive alienation of humankind from God by omitting “the very details that other exegetes would use to transform this biblical narrative into an etiology of all human sin and suffering.”

We have now examined both a historical apocalypse and an ascent apocalypse, and our examination of the Book of the Watchers has revealed somewhat different theological concerns on the part of its author from what was discerned in Daniel. With the benefit of the insight that the case studies has generated, we are in a position to be able to return to a more informed analytical discussion of the methodological issues around the identification of genres and social settings that relate to the study of apocalypses. And while eschatology has not been the focus of the case studies, I would nonetheless like to make some brief concluding observations about apocalyptic eschatology as well.

406 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.50.

407 Reed, Fallen Angels, p.51.
Chapter 4: Discussion of Key Unresolved Issues

As we saw in the introduction, Hanson’s distinction between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic eschatology was problematic in that it revolved around a somewhat anachronistic distinction between myth and history. This distinction, however, continues to generate debate, and thus Job Jindo attempts to clarify the relationship between the two types of eschatology by proposing that “prophetic eschatology is a history understood mythically, whereas apocalyptic eschatology is a myth understood historically.”

This highlights the problem of applying such vague and monolithic terms as myth and history to understand subtle differences between texts or traditions. Putting aside the circularity of this statement, what does Jindo mean when he describes an eschatology as a history or a myth?

The categories of myth and history are surely not the most useful through which to understand the eschatology of the apocalypses. In this regard, Collins’s attempt to locate a particular point of divergence between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology was an important step forward. While Collins admits that the idea of an end at an appointed time is a part of the determinism that distinguishes Daniel’s eschatology from that of the Prophets or the Psalms, he ultimately concludes that “The most significant difference over against the Hebrew Scriptures, however, lies in the hope of resurrection…. the hope of the maskilim is radically different from that of a prophet such as Jeremiah.”

Collins, who identifies various traditions about the afterlife in 1

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Enoch 22:9-14,⁴¹⁰ sees this passage as significant in that it distinguishes between the fate of the righteous and of sinners in a manner not attested in earlier Jewish tradition.⁴¹¹ Similarly, he notes that Daniel 12:1-3 is the only passage in the Hebrew Bible that clearly predicts the resurrection of individuals.⁴¹²

Collins clearly focuses upon aspects of the eschatology of the early apocalypses that demonstrate innovation and discontinuity with earlier tradition. However, as our case studies have demonstrated, resurrection is hardly the most prolific motif in early examples of the apocalypse genre; references to it in Daniel and Book of the Watchers are brief and fleeting. If the defining point of divergence between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology is a feature that receives relatively little attention in the earliest examples of the genre, we might ask how central to the debate about apocalypses this “significantly different worldview”⁴¹³ needs to be.

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⁴¹⁰ Collins, John J., “The Afterlife in Apocalyptic Literature,” p.122 in Avery-Peck, Alan J. and Neusner, Jacob (eds.), Judaism in Late Antiquity, Part Four: Death, Life-After-Death, Resurrection and the World to Come in the Judaism of Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp.119-139: “The location of the chambers of the dead inside a mountain recalls the Epic of Gilgamesh, where Gilgamesh has to enter the base of a mountain to reach the Netherworld. The motif of water and light is associated with the afterlife of the blessed in Orphic tradition.”


On the other hand, even if the belief in judgment after death is taken as serving a fundamental role in that it upholds the ultimate justice of God,\textsuperscript{414} we might ask how significantly different it is. Jon Levenson describes the doctrine of resurrection as “both innovative and deeply conservative”\textsuperscript{415} in that, although Israelite tradition had not previously spoken of a single event in which those worthy would be awoken from their mortal sleep to be rewarded with eternal life, all the elements for such a development already existed,\textsuperscript{416} and that there are greater affinities between the biblical narrative literature and the later doctrine than first appear to be the case.\textsuperscript{417} This might seem like hairsplitting, especially at this stage of the discussion:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{414} Collins, “Afterlife in Apocalyptic,” p.137.


\textsuperscript{416} Levenson, \textit{Restoration}, p.218: “For the same tradition had long acclaimed its God as one who ‘deals death and gives life / Casts down into Sheol and raises up’ (1 Sam 2:6), told stories of prophetic miracle workers who had performed individual resurrections in his name, and voiced a communal yearning to experience the ‘everlasting life’ (Ps 133:3) that was a central aspect of the conception of the Temple atop Mount Zion in Jerusalem.”

\textsuperscript{417} Levenson, Jon D., “The Resurrection of the Dead and the Construction of Personal Identity in Ancient Israel,” in Lemaire, Andre (ed.), \textit{Congress Volume Basel 2001}, VTS 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp.305-322: “In the older Israelite culture, it seems to me… two categories, individual and type, are united in the figure of the ancestor, a figure who, in some sense difficult for us modern westerners to grasp, encompassed his or her descendants in an inextricable linkage. My central claim in this paper is that if one takes the understanding of the self of the older Israelite literature into account, the affinities of the biblical narrative literature with the later doctrine of the resurrection of the dead are much greater than first appears to be the case.”
\end{quote}
obviously, whether we talk about tradition or innovation, there will always be elements of both continuity and discontinuity. But, in this case, Levenson makes a very important methodological point. When the resurrection of the dead is treated as an idea, its textual character, “the rich intertextual connections and dependence in which it is enveloped,” is underestimated. He argues that the scholarly concerns we have when we approach a passage dealing with resurrection tend to make us see more innovation than ancient people approaching the text with its linguistic embedding more clearly in view might. Levenson’s warning that “every item in a religious tradition stands in a systematic relation to every other and cannot be detached and examined on its own without grave damage to its organic function (and thus our capacity to understand its nature)” highlights the value of intertextual approaches for the study of resurrection and eschatology. Accordingly, in this study I have resisted the temptation to focus on a supposedly key theme such as resurrection.

Let us now make a few concluding remarks about apocalypticism. Our case studies have highlighted that there still exists a strong tendency within scholarly work on the apocalypses to identify a “crisis” setting behind the texts. In the case of Daniel, this is justified; the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes are clearly a fundamental point around which the various traditions that may be identified within the text take shape and are given meaning. However, the situation with the Book of the Watchers is less clear. While various crisis settings have been proposed – the wars of the Diadochi, inner-priestly conflict, or, according to Hanson, a polarized

418 Levenson, Restoration, p.185.

419 Levenson, Restoration, p.185.
community setting that remains unidentifiable – Collins concedes that the story of the Watchers does not have a clearly identifiable referent.\textsuperscript{420}

Collins argues that the story suggests a situation of cultural change: “The fallen angels induced culture shock in the pre-diluvian generation. Similar culture shock in Israel in the Hellenistic period gave rise to the apocalyptic visions ascribed to Enoch.”\textsuperscript{421} However, this seems to be too vague a description to be useful. Does the culture shock in the Hellenistic period that Collins identifies equate to “Hellenization” as such? If it does, then Collins is using a term that is “blurred and disputed.”\textsuperscript{422} As Martin Hengel argues, it is an elusive term that needs to be looked at more closely in relation to particular historical phenomena.\textsuperscript{423} Collins is obviously referring to Hellenization to make the very point that there is not a singular historical event that precipitated the Book of the Watchers. However, in declining to elucidate what the nature of this culture shock might be, his argument becomes purposeless. It is tempting to see in Collins’s treatment of the Book of the Watchers the methodological equivocation that allows proponents of the crisis hypothesis to identify specific crises or a less clearly defined period of pessimism, and assign them to the same sociological category. While we can agree with Collins that the disorder of this world is either explicit or implicit in both types of apocalypses, this

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{420} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.50. Although Nickelsburg convincingly argues that the giants stand for Hellenistic rulers (whose sovereignty is transient); Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth,” pp.383-405.
\item \textsuperscript{421} Collins, \textit{Apocalyptic Imagination}, p.51.
\item \textsuperscript{423} Hengel, \textit{Jews Greeks}, p.54.
\end{itemize}
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does not presuppose a crisis setting.\textsuperscript{424} Such a setting would need to be clearly identified and defined, not merely assumed and alluded to.

In a discussion of the groups behind Daniel and the Book of Watchers, Collins seems to clarify his position somewhat: Daniel and the Book of the Watchers are both concerned with the “common enemy of Gentile rule that was brought to a crisis point by the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes,” and accordingly, these two books do not point to two separate groups who are engaged in ideological warfare.\textsuperscript{425} He makes this point to counter the proposal put forward by Boccaccini that “Enochic Judaism” belongs to a separate tradition.\textsuperscript{426}

Boccaccini identifies four anti-Zadokite implications of the Book of the Watchers that he equates with a dissent movement he refers to as “Enochic Judaism.”\textsuperscript{427} These four implications all problematize the Zadokite idea of stability and order.\textsuperscript{428} The first implication is that, by crossing the boundaries between heaven and earth, the fallen Watchers unleashed a chaos that continues to spread.\textsuperscript{429} The second is the introduction of the concept of a final cataclysmic event that will mark a new creation discontinuous with what has gone before.\textsuperscript{430} The third is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{424} Collins, “Jewish Apocalypses,” p.27.
\item \textsuperscript{425} Collins, “Response,” p.66.
\item \textsuperscript{426} Boccaccini, “Covenantal Theology,” p.41.
\item \textsuperscript{427} Boccaccini, \textit{Roots of Rabbinic Judaism}, pp.89-103.
\item \textsuperscript{428} Boccaccini, \textit{Roots of Rabbinic Judaism}, pp.91-92.
\item \textsuperscript{429} Boccaccini, \textit{Roots of Rabbinic Judaism}, p.91.
\item \textsuperscript{430} Boccaccini, \textit{Roots of Rabbinic Judaism}, pp.91-92.
\end{itemize}
the belief that the Babylonian exile has not yet ended, which challenges the legitimacy of the priesthood, while the fourth is the presence of calendrical discussions that question the correspondence of the cultic calendar with the comic structure. Boccaccini contends that the myth of the fallen angels itself is neither Enochic nor Zadokite; the myth belongs to a common polytheistic heritage. Furthermore, the fallen angels and Enoch were originally autonomous characters from separate narrative traditions. Indeed, he supposes that the chronology of the Book of the Watchers is dependent upon the Zadokite narrative found in Genesis, and that both traditions share the same priestly background. But in the treatment of the Watcher myth and the combination of the Watcher story with the figure of Enoch, which gives the patriarch an antiquity and access to heaven that makes him a separate vehicle for a revelation, he sees the beginning of a distinct Enochic Judaism. One of the implications of this hypothesis is that, as mentioned above, Daniel and Enoch belong to two separate and opposed traditions; or, more precisely, Daniel represents a “third way” between Enochic Judaism and the defunct Zadokite priesthood in that it allows the Zadokite ideology to survive “by making a sharp distinction between corporate and individual retribution.”


436 Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, pp.206-207: “The centrality of the covenant was reconfirmed only through courageous choices and painful renunciations by making a sharp distinction between corporate and individual retribution. Humankind preserves its freedom and denies evil any autonomy, yet accepts life in a
One of the methodological strengths of Boccaccini’s hypothesis is that it focuses on how different groups may have developed particular aspects of the traditional scribal repertoire. In this sense, his methodology is consistent with Horsley, who proposes that “What seems determinative for which aspects of the traditional repertoire a scribal circle cultivated and developed was its relation to the rival factions.” On the one hand, the intertextual dimension of this methodology seems to offer the possibility of fresh insights. On the other, this approach perpetuates a pre-existing methodological conundrum that has plagued the study of apocalypticism.

This conundrum (exemplified by Hanson’s *Dawn of Apocalyptic*) revolves around the question of how groups can be identified. At the other end of the spectrum from Boccaccini is Patrick Tiller, who argues that a common hero and theology does not equate to a social group, and thus history condemned to inexorable degeneration (‘the four kingdoms’). The idea of a resurrection, one the one hand, solves a problem that had tormented generations from Job to Sirach, by removing God’s judgment from the scrutiny of human experience; on the other hand, it painfully distances the hope of seeing merit compensated and guilt punished from the horizons of human existence. The protests of Job and Jonah and the skepticism of Qoheleth belong to a distant past. From contradiction and scandal, the suffering of the righteous has become the norm of their existence.”

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“Nothing in either Enoch or Daniel can be realistically taken as evidence for a community.”

While also rejecting Boccaccini’s hypothesis, Collins nonetheless adopts a middle ground by arguing that the Daniel and Enoch literature reflect distinct, but not opposed, groups. He argues that, although we may not know exactly how, or to what extent, these groups were organized, the continuity between the various Enochic compositions, and the apparent self-identification of the authors of Daniel with the *maskilim*, suggests a common understanding and purpose. The most obvious problem with this argument is that “Textual continuities need not be identified with sociological continuities.” A more fundamental problem is the vagueness of terms such as “community” or “group.” On the one hand, Tiller argues that a group must be characterized by an organized social structure with defined boundaries and constraints. On the other, Collins privileges “references in apocalyptic texts to groups of people who were self-consciously different from other Jews of their time.” As I have indicated above, I find Collins to be blurring textual and historical categories, and so


439 Collins, “Response,” p.64.


naturally lean toward Tiller’s end of the spectrum. Regardless, Hanson’s distinction between
generic and sociological categories has still not precipitated a detailed enough discussion of
what exactly is meant by a group or community. Until this lacuna is filled, it is difficult to see
how discussions of “apocalypticism” can proceed more productively than they have done up
until the present time.

Boccaccini’s hypothesis, and the various responses to it we have briefly noted, raise an
important question: on what grounds do we identify the unity of a tradition? Boccaccini and
Collins seem to be using tradition the same way as Himmelfarb, who uses the term in relation
to texts, to indicate historical continuity, while leaving open the precise nature of the
connection between particular texts. But a closer look reveals an important difference in
Himmelfarb’s formulation. While for Boccaccini and Collins the historical continuity between
texts implies at least some evidence for a community, for Himmelfarb this continuity might
indicate nothing more than common religious assumptions and shared canonical texts.
Himmelfarb’s concern is rather to identify a “form” of literature, in this case “tours of hell.”
Her interest is how tradition relates to genre, not social setting. She concludes that
demonstrative explanations first appear as a structuring feature of apocalyptic tours in the
Book of the Watchers, and are then developed into a central feature of the tours of hell under
the influence of the tradition of pesher-style exegesis. Furthermore, she argues that these
explanations distinguish the tours of hell from other types of texts with similar interests such as
the nekyia. The Book of the Watchers is thus the fountainhead of the tour apocalypse genre,

444 Himmelfarb, Tours of Hell, p.2.
445 Himmelfarb, Tours of Hell, p.67.
which is a distinct genre from the historical apocalypse, and within which tours of hell represent one stream of subsequent development.446

The work of Boccaccini and Himmelfarb might make us wonder what value there is in having Daniel and the Book of the Watchers in the same genre. Collins himself admits, firstly, that the ascent apocalypses are more variegated than the historical apocalypses, and, secondly, that it might be worth considering making a generic distinction between historical apocalypses and ascent apocalypses: “The ‘historical’ apocalypses constitute a much more compact group of writings which might well be classified as a genre in itself.”447 He concludes, however, that it seems preferable to regard them as part of the same genre on account of the similarities in manner of revelation.

The impasse that seems to have been reached about the generic classification of apocalypses might be traced to a number of sources. On the one hand, scholarship on apocalypses has not been clear enough in defining what is meant by a genre. Collins definition of genre as “a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing”448 is vague. Furthermore, when he qualifies this definition by stating that the texts which make up the genre must be intelligible as independent units but

446 Himmelfarb, Tours of Hell, p.169.
447 Collins, “Jewish Apocalypses,” p.27.
needa’t necessarily have ever existed as independent works, he seems to be reaching for a definition of genre “which is neither Gattung nor entire (composite) literary work.”

Despite its deserved influence and profound contribution to the study of apocalypses, Collins’s definition highlights some of the developments that have taken place since the findings of the Apocalypse Group of the SBL were published in Semeia 14. As Carol Newson notes, Collins’s work is characteristic of genre studies at that time in that it frames its task primarily as one of identification and classification. Genre theorists have become increasingly dissatisfied with this approach because it does not account for how genre functions in human communication, and it treats genre as a static phenomenon when it is in fact dynamic. However, one aspect of this classificatory approach which does continue to receive support is its pragmatism: the idea that generic classifications can be useful in creating new critical insight, even though they don’t necessarily correspond to the author of the text’s own sense of genre. Collins appears sympathetic to this approach: “An ‘apocalypse’ is simply that which scholars can agree to call

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452 Newson, “Spying Out the Land,” p.22.
an ‘apocalypse’. ”453 I am in agreement with Newsom, however, when she states that Collins’s work is “not intended so much as a constructive act as a reconstructive act.”454

Collins’s approach sits uncomfortably between generic realism, which assumes that genres are rigid ontological categories, and generic nominalism, which assumes that genres are arbitrary classifications.455 The shift away from generic realism to generic nominalism is perhaps reflected in the growing indifference to the debate about the “origins of apocalyptic,” which once dominated the field. We can confidently conclude that the study of apocalypses requires a greater methodological clarity when it comes to questions of genre, and, similarly, we can conclude that discerning the relationships between texts and social groups has no established method (although Hanson’s emphasis on marginalized groups has rightly been eliminated as a general characteristic of apocalypticism). I am personally excited, once again, by the potential of intertextual approaches. However, that full potential need to be addressed in a separate, more extensive, and detailed study.


455 I owe this terminology to Sparks, Kenton L., Ancient Texts for the study of the Hebrew Bible: a guide to the background literature (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2nd ed. 2006), pp.5-6.
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