

THE SOURCE OF DANIEL'S ANIMAL IMAGERY¹

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It is proposed to evaluate a number of suggestions concerning the source of the animal imagery in Daniel 7–8 viz. Mesopotamian iconography, *Enuma Eliš*, VAT 10057, *Shumma Izbu*, astrological geography and the OT, and then consider the implications the conclusions have for the authorship, date and provenance of these chapters.

I. Mesopotamian Iconography

The only modern scholar to make a detailed case for iconography as the background for the animal imagery of Daniel 7 is Noth.² His own comments make clear the weakness of the case he argues. Speaking of the second beast, he says that the bear, is but rarely depicted in the plastic arts of the ancient orient. . . It was seen only in the mountains, and the few reproductions of bears that are known come therefore from the Iranian mountains and their immediate vicinity.

Of the third beast he says, 'The image as it stands, however, is not authenticated among examples of the ancient oriental plastic arts; here the seer's power of imagination is given full rein'.

There is then little precedent in the plastic arts for the second beast, and none for the third. In view of this it is not surprising that no recent commentator or study of Daniel 7 has taken up Noth's position, beyond pointing out the prominence of winged beasts, some with many heads, especially lions, in Mesopotamian iconography. Moreover, iconography cannot account for the sequence of lion, bear, panther, that is found in Daniel 7.

¹This paper is taken from the author's Ph.D. thesis, *Akkadian Prophecies, Omens and Myths as Background for Daniel Chapters 7–12* (University of Liverpool, March 1989). The author wishes to thank the Tyndale House Council for grant support whilst carrying out research for the thesis.

²M. Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays* (London 1966) 210–12.

II. *Enūma Eliš*

Since Gunkel³ first expounded Daniel 7 in the light of *Enūma Eliš*, a number of scholars have pointed to that Babylonian myth as the source of the imagery of the beasts from the sea in Daniel. Recently this view has been adopted by Bentzen⁴ and Heaton⁵. The arguments advanced by Heaton are:

- (1) The four winds of heaven are mentioned in Daniel 7:2. In *Enūma Eliš* Marduk uses the four winds as a trap for *Ti'amat*.
- (2) Daniel 7:2 refers to 'the great sea'. In Isa. 51:10 'the sea' is identified with 'the great deep' (*têhôm*), and in Gen. 1:2 *têhôm* is used of the primeval watery chaos. He then says 'The Hebrew word *têhôm* is philologically the same as *Ti'amat*, and both are used as proper names without the definite article'.⁶
- (3) *Ti'amat* produced a brood of monsters, including great lions.
- (4) The image of monsters or turbulent waters quelled by God in the beginning is found in a number of OT passages.

Since Heaton wrote his commentary Lambert has argued that OT scholars have over-stressed the influence of *Enūma Eliš* on the OT because it happens to be the best known Babylonian creation story,⁷ and the one most readily available in translation.⁸ His conclusion is that,⁹

. . . the Epic of Creation is not a norm of Babylonian or Sumerian cosmology. It is a sectarian and aberrant combination of mythological threads woven into an unparalleled compositum. In my opinion it is not earlier than 1100 BC. It happens to be the best preserved Babylonian document of its genre simply because it was at its height of popularity when the libraries were formed from which our knowledge of Babylonian mythology is mostly derived. The various traditions it draws upon are often perverted to such an extent that conclusions based on this text alone are suspect. It can only be used safely in the whole context of ancient Mesopotamian mythology.

³H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen 1895) 323–35.

⁴A. Bentzen, *Daniel* (Tübingen 1952).

⁵E. Heaton, *Daniel* (London 1956).

⁶E. Heaton, *op. cit.* 5, 175.

⁷W.G. Lambert, 'A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis', *JTS* 16 (1965) 287–300.

⁸A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago 1963²) is still the most convenient English translation.

⁹W.G. Lambert, *op. cit.* 7, 291.

In any case, as the texts from Ugarit became more widely known some scholars began to suggest that where ancient near-eastern mythological motifs occur in the OT the source is more likely to have been Canaanite than Mesopotamian. Thus, Emerton argued for a Canaanite background to some of the imagery of Daniel 7.¹⁰

More recently, Collins could say,¹¹

Many scholars have accepted the view that the imagery of the chapter is derived ultimately from Canaanite mythology, as exemplified in the Ugaritic myth of Baal's struggle with Yam (Sea).

One of the most recent studies of the background of the OT imagery of God's conflict with the sea and with monsters is that by Day. He concludes that the origin is Canaanite mythology, not Babylonian, because:¹²

(1) The Ugaritic texts contain not only an account of Baal's defeat of Yam, but also allusions to a defeat of Leviathan (*ltn*, probably to be vocalized *litan*¹³) who has seven heads (cf. Ps. 74:14, 'many heads'). Litan is called *bt̄n br̄h*, 'the twisting serpent' (cf. Job 26:13 & Isa 27:1, *nāḥas bariāh*) and *bt̄n q̄ltn*, 'the crooked serpent' (cf. Isa. 27:1, *nāḥas qallaton*). Leviathan is also called *tnn*, 'dragon', a term identical with the *tannîn* mentioned in some OT passages (e.g. Isa. 27:1; 51:9).

(2) In connection with the dragon in the OT we find not only the waters (*mayîm*) and the sea (*yām*) but also the 'rivers' or 'floods' (*nēḥarōt̄, nēḥarîm*). This recalls Baal's opponent, who is called not only *zbl ym*, 'Prince Sea', but also *tp̄t nhr*, 'Judge River'.

(3) The term *tēhôm* in the OT may be etymologically related to the name *Ti'amat*, but it is not derived directly from the Babylonian, or one would expect 'not *h* as the middle radical,

¹⁰J.A. Emerton, 'The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery', *JTS* 9 (1958) 225–42.

¹¹J.J. Collins, *Daniel, with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, (Grand Rapids 1984) 76.

¹²J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge 1985) ch.1.

¹³J.A. Emerton, 'Leviathan and LTN: the Vocalization of the Ugaritic Word for the Dragon', *VT* 32 (1982) 327–31.

and the feminine ending *-ah*.¹⁴ The form *thm* is, however, attested in Ugaritic (Ugaritica V.7.1).¹⁵ This supports the view that the OT term may be Canaanite.

As far as Daniel 7 is concerned Day regards the motif of beasts rising from the turbulent sea as ultimately of Canaanite origin, but comments that, 'the fact remains that the precise form of the beasts does not correspond to that of Leviathan and the other dragons attested in Ugaritic'.¹⁶

Day has made a strong case for the claim that in general the OT imagery of God's conflict with the sea and monsters has its background in Canaanite, rather than Babylonian, mythology. However, if Daniel has its origins amongst the Jews of the Babylonian dispersion, it is possible that in the case of Daniel 7 the source of the imagery was the Babylonian New Year Festival. But even if this is so, it fails to explain the form of the beasts since they have no substantial parallel in *Enuma Eliš*. Thus Lacocque says,¹⁷

. . . in the poem *Enuma Elish*. . . Tiamat (=ocean) does give birth to a lion, but the other monsters which emerge from its depths have nothing to do with the incredible animals in Daniel... We believe they are an original creation of the Author.

However, the possibility of direct Babylonian influence on Daniel 7:2f. is suggested by the phrase 'the four winds of heaven'. This phrase is not common in the OT. It occurs here and in Daniel 8:8; 11:4; Zech. 2:6 (Heb. 2:10). The shorter phrase 'the four winds' occurs in Jer. 49:36; Ezekiel 37:9. The passages in Daniel and Ezekiel are set in Babylonia. Zechariah speaks out of a community of Jews returned from exile in Babylonia and addresses Jews still there. Jeremiah addresses Elam at a time when Judah is under the Babylonian yoke. All these passages, therefore, have a Babylonian connection. The phrase 'the four winds' is not attested in the

¹⁴The entry under *tiamtu(m)* (ocean, sea, lake) in W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, suggests that the Hebrew *t'hôm* is cognate to *tiamtu*, from which the name *Ti'amat* is derived.

¹⁵The text can be found in J.C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, (Edinburgh 1978²) 138.

¹⁶J. Day, *op. cit.* 12, 152.

¹⁷A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (London 1979) 139.

extant Ugaritic literature.¹⁸ It is quite common in Akkadian literature.¹⁹ The possibility of a connection between Daniel 7:2f. and Akkadian literature is strengthened if the four beasts represent (in order): Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece.²⁰ This is because the normal order of reference to the winds in Akkadian literature is S, N, E, W, which corresponds to the geographical location of the four kingdoms from a Mesopotamian perspective.²¹

It is considered probable that the motif of monsters rising from the turbulent sea is used in Daniel 7 because it echoes both the OT passages about God's conflict with the sea and the monsters in it, and is reminiscent of the Babylonian New Year Festival. This allows an implied polemical point to be made, *viz.* that the Most High, the God of Israel, is the Creator who overcomes the monsters which incarnate chaos and evil. The number, form, and sequence of the monsters, however, cannot be explained by appeal to *Enūma Eliš*.

III. VAT 10057

In a preliminary publication²² Kvanvig has suggested that the Assyrian text VAT 10057 illuminates our understanding of Daniel 7. Indeed he claims, 'that traditions from the Assyrian vision form the main source of Daniel 7'.²³

The text is written in neo-Assyrian script on a broad format tablet which was excavated at Assur. It was first

¹⁸There is no reference to it under *rbē*, *rh* or *itl* in: C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, Vol. 3, Glossary (Rome, 1965). R.E. Whittaker, *A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature* (Cambridge, Mass. 1972).

¹⁹On the 'four winds' see: A. Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur* (Leipzig, 1913) 50–3. K. Tallquist, 'Himmelsgegenden und Winde' *St.Or.*, 2 (1928) 105–85. W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, under *šarru(m)*, gives examples from the Old Babylonian period onwards.

²⁰E.C. Lucas, 'Daniel's Four Empires Scheme', *TB* 40 (1989) 185–202. The identity of the empires is discussed on pp. 192–4.

²¹K. Tallquist, *op. cit.* 19, 120. A. Sachs, 'A Late Babylonian Star Catalogue' *JCS* 6 (1952) 146f. says, '... in Late Babylonian usage. . . the directions numbered 1 through 4 correspond to South, North, East, and West respectively.'

²²H.S. Kvanvig, 'An Akkadian Vision as Background for Dan. 7?', *ST* 35 (1981) 85–9.

²³*Ibid.* 88.

published by Ebeling,²⁴ Five years later von Soden²⁵ published a revised edition of it. It is this edition, including a few new readings accepted by von Soden²⁶ following another publication by Ebeling²⁷, that at present is the basic edition of the text.

There are numerous lacunae on the obverse of the tablet, lines 1–40 of the text in von Soden's edition. The reverse (lines 41–75) is much better preserved, though still with some lacunae. As well as von Soden's German translation of the whole text there are translations of the reverse of the tablet in English by Heidel²⁸ and Speiser,²⁹ and of lines 35–75 in French by Labat.³⁰

The central figure of the story is an Assyrian prince by the name of Kummâ. For a reason which is not clear, he desires to see the underworld. To this end he offers sacrifices and prayers to Erishkigal. His request is granted in a night vision. This vision, and the effect which it has on him and an unnamed scribe, are recorded on the better preserved reverse of the tablet. In the vision Kummâ sees Nergal on his throne surrounded by many lesser gods, who have the forms of hybrid creatures of various kinds. Nergal is angry with Kummâ and wants to kill him. He spares him at the request of his consort Erishkigal and Ishum, his counsellor. He delivers a speech in which he commands Kummâ to take to heart when he returns to the upper regions. On awakening, memory of this speech causes Kummâ to lament, and the unnamed scribe to mend his ways.

The date and purpose of VAT 10057. Von Soden argues that the narrative could not have been written before 700 BC because:

²⁴E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier I* (Berlin and Leipzig 1931) 1–9.

²⁵W. von Soden, 'Die Unterwelts Vision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen', *ZA* 43 (1936) 1–31.

²⁶W. von Soden, 'Altbabylonische Dialektdichtungen', *ZA* 44 (1938) 26–44. See especially p. 29.

²⁷E. Ebeling, 'Kritische Beitrage zu neueren assyriologischen Veröffentlichungen', *MAOG* 10 (1937) Heft 2.

²⁸A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*. (Chicago 1949^a) 132–6.

²⁹In J. Pritchard, *ANET*, (Princeton, 1969^a) 109f.

³⁰R. Labat et. al., *Les Religions Du Proche-Orient Asiatique*, (1970) 94–7.

(1) The style has numerous similarities to the Sargonid inscriptions (he cites lines 8ff., 21ff, 64ff. as examples).

(2) The language is late Babylonian with interspersed Assyrian forms.

(3) Orthographic peculiarities such as: line 64, *An-šar* as the name of the god *Aššur* (this is not found before Sennacherib's time); lines 17, 73, LU₂-A-BA for *tupsarru* is typical of the Sargonid period.

(4) The description of Nineveh as *al bēluti* (line 11) is only really conceivable after Sennacherib.

(5) Mention of the New Year Festival for the city in line 64 is reminiscent of Sennacherib.³¹

A *terminus ad quem* is offered by the allusions in the narrative to the great power of Assyria. This would be unlikely after ca. 635 BC. Kummâ is called a prince (*rubû*, line 72), but is never given any royal titles. In line 72 there is reference to 'the subjects of Aššur', not 'his subjects'. Yet Nergal says that as a punishment for his presumption he will face rebellions (*saḫmašati*, line 60). In the closing words of warning he is linked with his father who, according to the context, seems to be a king. From this evidence it is reasonable to conclude with von Soden that Kummâ is a crown prince.

Nergal's speech (lines 58–68) refers to three people:

(1) A now dead king, who had been blessed and protected by the gods so that his reign had been a successful one. His celebration of the New year Festival of Aššur is given particular mention.

(2) Kummâ's father, whose great wisdom is mentioned. However, he ignored the word of some god, and committed an unspecified sin.

(3) Kummâ, who seems to be being warned not to continue in, or repeat, his father's sin.

Von Soden identifies these figures as Sennacherib (who built Aššur's New Year House in the middle of an artificial park), Esarhaddon (who in his inscriptions frequently praises his own great wisdom), and Aššurbanipal. He goes on to argue that the narrative is a reflection of the 'nationalist Assyrian'

³¹W. von Soden, 'Die Unterwelts Vision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen' 3.

and 'Babylonian' party strife within the Assyrian hierarchy of that period.³² Sennacherib destroyed Babylon, but Esarhaddon rebuilt it. Von Soden suggests that the text was a piece of propaganda on behalf of the nationalist Assyrian party which sought to influence the people against Esarhaddon's policies. He then dates it to the period just prior to Esarhaddon's death, when Aššurbanipal had been nominated as his heir, and so about 670 BC.

Kvanvig hints at a somewhat different interpretation of the text. He says that in his forthcoming study he will argue 'that it was written in the second half of the seventh century, perhaps about 630 BC'.³³ It is not clear whether here he refers to the writing of the tablet or the composition of the narrative. Later he asserts that the purpose of the vision was 'to underline that the decline of the contemporary Assyrian empire was predicted by the gods'. This suggests that he thinks that the narrative was composed in the later years of Aššurbanipal's reign, about which little is known. His son Aššur-etel-ilani was probably co-regent with his father from 630–627 BC.³⁴ Perhaps Kvanvig considers him the best candidate for Kummâ's rôle.

The very general nature of the statements in the vision and the paucity of evidence concerning the later decades of the Assyrian empire mean that, if the Assyrian rulers referred to are historical figures, there can be no certainty in their identification. However, the reference in line 67 to Kummâ's father having 'violated a taboo, trodden down what was forbidden' (*asakku tkula anzilla ukabbisa*) would fit well with Esarhaddon's rebuilding of Babylon despite the original decree that it should lie waste for 70 years, even though he claimed as justification for this a re-interpretation of the decree in which the ban lasted only 11 years.³⁵ There is, however, no room for dogmatism in this matter.

The similarities between VAT 10057 and Daniel 7 which Kvanvig lists are:

³²W. von Soden, 'Die Unterwelts Vision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen' 6–9

³³H.S. Kvanvig, *op. cit.* 86.

³⁴H.F.W. Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria* (London 1984) 117f.

³⁵D. Luckenbill, 'The Black Stone of Esarhaddon', *AJSL* 41 (1924/5) 165–73.

(1) Both are characterized as night visions and contain the basic elements of that *Gattung*. Features (2) & (3) below follow the same order in both.

(2) Both contain descriptions of bizarre monsters.

(3) In both the ruling god is sitting on his throne with fire (Daniel 7) or lightnings (VAT 10057) coming from him.

(4) In both the ruling god acts as a judge.

(5) In both a ruler is given everlasting dominion over all nations by the god(s).

(6) In VAT 10057 the visionary sees a figure designated as *ištēn etlu* (line 50), which Kvanvig argues corresponds to the phrase *bar ʿnaš* in Daniel 7. Kvanvig identifies this figure with the ruler of (5) above.

Although these similarities may seem impressive at first sight, on close examination they are considerably weakened.

The monsters in the Assyrian vision are gods, not symbols for empires; there are 15 of them, not 4; and there is no connection with the sea. Moreover, none of them have bear or leopard characteristics, as do the second and third beasts in Daniel 7. The similarities that exist between the gods of the Assyrian text and the beasts of Daniel 7 are:

line 46. '...the evil Utukku (had) the head (of) a lion, hands (and) feet (of) the zu-bird. Shulak was a normal lion stand[ing] on his hind legs'. Here one god has combined lion and bird-like (eagle, according to Kvanvig) features, but significantly wings are not mentioned, which are the specific eagle-like feature of Daniel's first beast. When this first beast is made to stand upon two feet like a man, it is also given a man's mind.

line 48. '... (had) three feet; the two in front were (those of) a bird, the hind one was (that of) an ox'. Kvanvig suggests that, standing upright, this beast would have 'the same limping attitude' as Daniel's second beast. This is pure supposition, and also adopts an unusual interpretation of the meaning of an obscure phrase describing the bear in Daniel 7.³⁶

³⁶A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (London 1979) 140, refers to two common interpretations, 'Its position "put upright on one side" shows it crouched down ready to spring or standing on its back legs in an aggressive position.'

line 45. 'The upholder of Evil (had) the head of a bird; his wings were open as he flew to and fro, (his) hands (and) feet were human'. Also

line 47. 'All that is Evil (had) two heads; one head was (that of) a lion, the other head [. . .]' Here the resemblance to Daniel's third monster that Kvanvig seems to find is trivial at best.

line 48. 'Two gods, I know not their names, one (had) the heads, hands, (and) feet (of) the zu-bird; in his left [. . .]' Kvanvig sees here a parallel with Daniel's fourth beast of which it is said, 'It was different from all the other beasts', and which is not compared to any specific creatures. However, the two gods here are compared to a known creature, so it is not clear that, as Kvanvig claims, they are nameless 'because of its (*sic*) bizarre appearance'. Kvanvig also claims a parallel between the crown worn by one of these gods (assumed to be a horned head-gear) and the ten horns of Daniel's fourth beast.

In our judgement the claimed similarities listed above are either non-existent or trivial, and the list does not provide evidence of any significant relationship between the Assyrian vision and Daniel 7. What remains of the description of Nergal enthroned in VAT 10057 bears no resemblance to the description of the enthroned 'one that was ancient of days' in Daniel 7, except the reference to lightning flashes, apparently coming out of his arms. Moreover, in VAT 10057 it is the visionary himself who is judged, and spared, whereas in Daniel the beasts are judged and either lose their dominion (the first three) or are destroyed (the fourth). Once again the claimed similarities are trivial. In the Assyrian vision Nergal speaks of a ruler to whom 'the king of the gods granted all that was in his heart' (line 62), and who 'ruled over all' (line 63). The phrase 'forever' then occurs at the end of line 64. What it refers to is unclear, but could mean that the celebration of the New Year Festival at Aššur will continue for ever. The most important point is that, if von Soden's 'certain' reconstruction of the beginning of line 62 is accepted,³⁷ this ruler is someone who

³⁷W. von Soden, 'Die Unterwelts Vision eines assyrische Kronprinzen', ZA 43 (1936) 1-31. The reconstruction is proposed on p. 4. Speiser, *op. cit.* 29, and Labat, *op. cit.* accept it.

is already dead, not someone yet to receive kingship. Kvanvig does not comment on this. Kvanvig does not claim that *bar ʿnaš* is a translation of *išten eflu*, but that the two phrases have equivalent 'semantic values' because both: (a) designate the main figure of the vision, (b) in contrast to the monsters, and (c) designate an ideal king. The equation of the 'ideal ruler' with the figure referred to as *išten eflu* is an open question. Ebeling identifies this figure as Ishum, mentioned later as Nergal's advisor.³⁸ His name means 'fire', and this could explain why the human figure is said to wear a red cloak. This suggestion is at least as likely as Kvanvig's. In addition the main figure of the Assyrian vision seems to us not to be the 'ideal king' (or *išten eflu*, if they are not the same) but Kummâ. Finally, it is doubtful how far *išten eflu* is meant to stress a beast/man contrast since this figure has a face 'like that of Zu'. All in all, the parallels between the Akkadian and Aramaic phrases seems at best forced, and at worst non-existent.

The preceding discussion leads us to the conclusion that Kvanvig's preliminary paper has failed to establish any substantial connections between the Assyrian text VAT 10057 and Daniel 7. It remains to be seen whether the full study, in which a new translation and analysis of VAT 10057 is promised, produces any new evidence to support his claims.³⁹

IV. *Shumma Izbu*

Recently Porter has argued, with regard to Daniel 7–8, '...that the peculiar physical characteristics ascribed to the various beasts are ultimately traceable to Mesopotamian mantic wisdom traditions'.⁴⁰

The specific traditions concerned are those enshrined in the birth omen series entitled *Shumma Izbu*. The series has been known since Rawlinson published two excerpt tablets from

³⁸E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier I* (Berlin and Leipzig 1931) 6 n. g.

³⁹Now available in: H.S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*, Neutkirchen-Vluyn (1988), 345–555. The fuller presentation does not deal satisfactorily with the objections presented here. However, the argument for identification of the ideal ruler with *išten eflu* is plausible.

⁴⁰P.A. Porter, *Metaphors and Monsters* (Toronto 1985). This was formerly *Coniectanea Biblica*, O.T. series 20, (Lund 1983). The quote is from p. 15.

it in 1870.⁴¹ Leichty has published what is now the definitive edition of the series.⁴² It is uncertain when the Mesopotamians began to divine through the media of unusual births. According to Leichty, as with many other omen collections, 'The first written collection of birth omens comes from the Old Babylonian period and bears all the characteristics of a collection of oral tradition'.⁴³

At some point in the Middle Babylonian period the existing collections of omens were ordered into longer series, producing the two series *Shumma Sinnistu Aratma* and *Shumma Izbu*. These were then combined, and with addition of other tablets, formed the canonical series *Shumma Izbu*.⁴⁴ The vast majority of extant fragments of this series come from Assurbanipal's library in Nineveh (ca. 650 BC). An indication of the importance of the series is the fact that in the unpublished catalogue K 13280 it is ranked second only to the astrological omens. Moreover, its importance is further attested by the wealth of related material that has survived—letters, prayers, reports, rituals and commentaries.⁴⁵ The series is arranged according to the subject matter of the protases.

There are three main divisions *viz.* Omens derived from human births, (*Shumma Sinnistu Aratma*) tablets I–IV, Omens derived from the birth of an *izbu* (original *Shumma Izbu*) tablets VI–XVII, and Omens derived from specific animals (each tablet deals with one animal: goats, dogs, etc.), tablets XVIII–XXIV, V.

The term *izbu* is a general one, referring to any malformed or otherwise imperfect newborn creature. Usually, however, it refers to sheep.⁴⁶ The protases are concerned with all conceivable types of abnormality, ranging from simple birthmarks to excess limbs. Miscarriages are included as well as live births. The apodoses may refer to public events (involving the king or the whole country) or events associated with private

⁴¹H.C. Rawlinson, *Inscriptions from Western Asia* (London 1870) pl. 65.

⁴²E. Leichty, *The Omen Series Summa Izbu* (Locust Valley, New York 1970).

⁴³*Ibid.* 23.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* 25f.

⁴⁵*Ibid.* 7. He discusses this related material in his 'Introduction'.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* 3 n. 4.

individuals (usually the owner of the animal or the head of the household).

The existence of fragments of at least one copy of the series from Seleucid Uruk and the fact that a new commentary on the series was composed late in the Late Babylonian period, show that the series remained in use well into the Seleucid era.⁴⁷

Porter's thesis that the animal imagery of Daniel 7–8 finds its background in Babylonian birth omens has three aspects:

(1) 'Common to both. . . are references to animals raised on one side, multiple headed animals, animals with multiple horns, animals with displaced eyes, horned animals with claws, animals with horns of unequal length, and unicorns'.⁴⁸

(2) *Shumma Izbu* contains 29 extant historical omens. 'The specificity of these apodoses brings us one step closer to the historical interpretation accompanying the vision of Daniel 8, in which beasts or horns are identified with specific kings'.⁴⁹

(3) In Daniel 7 the first three beasts are likened to, rather than identified with, a lion, bear, and panther respectively. In the Old Babylonian birth omens the form of the protasis is, 'If an *izbu* is like an X'. Porter goes on to draw a parallel between the phrase 'one like a son of man' in Daniel 7:13 and the following omens from *Shumma Izbu*: 'If a goat gives birth to a human. . . XVIII 33'; 'If a mare gives birth to a human. . . ' XX 24'.⁵⁰

Here he takes 'gives birth to' to be a short-hand for 'gives birth to an *izbu* like. . .', on the basis of the Old Babylonian formula.

One should not jump to hasty conclusions regarding the significance of the common references to unusual features in Daniel 7–8 and *Shumma Izbu*. Below are cited the more striking examples given by Porter:

⁴⁷E. Leichty, *op. cit.* 21, 23.

⁴⁸P.A. Porter, *op. cit.* 18f.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* 19f.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* 22.

7:6. . . the beast had four heads.⁵¹

Text g (g). If an anomaly has four heads.

8:3. . . a ram. . . It had two horns but one was higher than the other.

IX 56' If an anomaly's right horn is long and its left one short

8:5. . . and the goat had a conspicuous horn in between his eyes.

IX 34' If an anomaly has only one horn, and it protrudes from its forehead.

8:8. . . instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

V 29 If a ewe gives birth to a lion, and it has four horns on the right and left.

The parallels may seem impressive, but it should be noted that:

(1) There are features of the animals in Daniel 7–8 which have no direct parallel in the omen protases. In particular, as Porter admits, there is nothing in the extant omens about winged animals.⁵²

(2) Most of the features of the animals in Daniel 7–8 can be explained just as convincingly, if not more so, by the historical referent of the allegorical features. For example, the unequal horns of the ram reflect the historical relationship of the Medes and Persians. The goat's single horn which is broken to produce four horns reflects the unity of the Greeks under Alexander and the break-up of his empire on his death. It is true that matters are less clear with the beasts of Daniel 7, but there is considerable agreement over the main points of correspondence between the features of the animals and historical references.⁵³

In the light of these two points one can argue that the features of the beasts in Daniel 7–8 are the result of the

⁵¹P.A. Porter, *op. cit.* 19 n. 20 refers to, but does not quote this omen. It comes from a text which almost certainly belongs to Tablet VIII of *Shumma Izbu*. E. Leichaty, *op. cit.* 113 quotes it but does not translate it.

⁵²*Ibid.* 19. The three omens cited in note 21 do not mention wings, simply a bird-like appearance of some kind.

⁵³See for example the comments of: N. Porteus, *Daniel* (London 1979²). A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (London 1979).

author's imagination working on the historical referent in the light of the images of *Mischwesen* that are common in Babylonian art, mythology, and birth omens. There need be no direct dependence on the omens.

Porter's appeal to historical omens in *Shumma Izbu* is not very convincing. The best comparisons are:

8:20f. . . these are the kings of Media and Persia.
And the he-goat is the king of Greece.

YOS 10 56 42 If an anomaly is like a fox. . . the king of Sumer will rule the land.

7:24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.

VIII 80' If an anomaly has two heads, two spines, six (sets of) ribs, two tails, six feet, three eyes (and) three bases—the sons of the king will fight among themselves and one among them will fall.⁵⁴

Here the parallels are not very close. The most important difference, however, is that in Daniel the symbols stand in a direct, allegorical, relationship to the historical referent. They are symbols. The relationship between the form of the *izbu* and the historical events in the apodosis is unclear. There is certainly no direct symbol-referent relationship.⁵⁵

It is no doubt true, as Porter claims, that the sense of the canonical protases is, 'If an X gives birth to an *izbu* like a Y', as the Old Babylonian protases suggest. However, a mantic wise man of either the sixth or second century BC would know the omens in their canonical form. That being so, one would expect the language of Daniel 7 to be patterned on the canonical phraseology if dependent, in a literary sense, on the omens. It seems more probable that the language of Daniel is intended to express the numinous quality of the visionary experience. A much closer, and more relevant, parallel is Ezekiel's vision

⁵⁴P.A. Porter, *op. cit.* erroneously quotes this as VII 80'.

⁵⁵E. Leichty, *op. cit.* 6f. discusses the protasis-apodosis relationship in *Shumma Izbu*. He can find no generally applicable principles of relationship, but finds examples of paranomasia and various kinds of 'association of ideas'.

account in Ezekiel 1, where the words 'like' (*ke*) and 'likeness' (*demut*) are prominent.

The preceding considerations show that the most Porter can really claim is that there is a possibility that Babylonian birth omens have influenced the animal imagery of Daniel 7–8. He has not shown that the relationship between them is a necessary one (it has been suggested that there are other possible explanations of the feature he claims to explain), nor has he demonstrated a clear literary dependence of Daniel on *Shumma Izbu*.

As has been already said, it is conceivable that the beasts are the product of an imagination informed in a general way by the *Mischwesen* that are common in Babylonian art and mythology, as well as birth omens. Jastrow has argued that it was the Babylonian interest in birth omens that made these *Mischwesen* a feature of their art and mythology.⁵⁶ He may well be right. In this more generalized sense the imagery of Daniel 7–8 might be influenced by the birth omen traditions. Porter argues that if his case is accepted it means that,

...the animal anomalies in these visions originally had an evocative power by virtue of their stylistic dependence on Mesopotamian omen literature, rather than because of any perceived literal absurdity.⁵⁷

This point may be valid in a more general sense than he seems to mean. In a culture in which the bizarre forms represented in the birth omens were accepted as conceivable beings of ominous import, the images of Daniel 7–8 would have a greater evocative power than in one that regarded them simply as absurdities. We suggest that, whatever the origin of the detailed imagery, it was the evocative power of such imagery in Babylonian culture that lies behind its use in Daniel. This point has an interesting corollary with regard to the expected readership of the visions. It suggests a Jewish readership embedded in Mesopotamian culture, rather than one battling against Hellenistic culture in Palestine. Leichty states that, 'Outside of Mesopotamia birth omens seem to have been unim-

⁵⁶M. Jastrow, *Babylonian-Assyrian Birth Omens* (Geissen, 1914) 59ff.

⁵⁷P.A. Porter, *op. cit.* 29.

portant except to the Hittites and the later Etruscans and Romans.⁵⁸

Although Old Babylonian birth omens were copied at Ugarit, there is very little evidence to suggest that they were of much importance amongst western Semites, and certainly not amongst Jews. In fact the Babylonian traditions copied in scribal schools in the Late Bronze Age Levant did not survive the demise of those schools. Although the Greeks were aware of birth omens, they did not play a major rôle in Greek divination⁵⁹. Hence, if the animal imagery of Daniel was chosen for its evocative power, and is not purely allegorical, it makes more sense in the context of the Babylonian diaspora than that of Palestinian Jewry.

V. Astrological Geography

In 1909 Cumont published a paper discussing early Hellenistic treatises on astrological geography.⁶⁰ At the end of it he referred briefly, and favourably, to a suggestion made to him privately by F.C. Burkitt of Cambridge that the choice of animal images in Daniel 8 might be related to astrological ideas. According to these ideas the various heavenly bodies or constellations exert influence on particular regions of the earth. The point made by Burkitt was that in Hellenistic times the constellation Aries (the Ram) was thought to rule Persia, and Capricorn (the Goat) to rule Syria. The latter, one must assume, was used in Daniel 8 as a symbol of Alexander the Great and his successors because of the eventual Seleucid domination of Syria. Amongst the major commentators on Daniel Bentzen, has viewed this suggestion with favour,⁶¹ and Porteus gives it some credence.⁶² Caquot reviewed some possible sources of the beast imagery of Daniel 7.⁶³ He found mythology and iconography wanting. Suggestions of OT influence did not satisfy him because 'On ne saurait toutefois s'en prévaloir pour écarter toute

⁵⁸E. Leichty, *op. cit.* 14.

⁵⁹See R. Bloch, *Les Prodiges dans L'Antiquité Classique* (Paris 1963).

⁶⁰F. Cumont, 'La plus ancienne géographie astrologique', *Klio* 9 (1909) 263–73.

⁶¹A. Bentzen, *Daniel* (Tubingen 1952) 69.

⁶²N. Porteus, *Daniel*, (London, 1979²) 122.

⁶³A. Caquot, 'Sur les quatre bêtes de Daniel VII', *Semitica* 5 (1955) 6–13.

influence sur l'auteur de Daniel du milieu culturel dans lequel vivaient les Juifs de l'époque hellénistique'.⁶⁴

He accepted Cumont's suggestion regarding Daniel 8, and argued that astrological geography was the source of the beast imagery of Daniel 7 also. There is an obvious stumbling-block here. Of the four beasts in Daniel 7 only the lion appears in the Zodiac. Moreover (though Caquot does not mention this) in Hellenistic astrology Leo rules over Asia, not Babylonia, which comes under Taurus.⁶⁵ However, Caquot pointed out that alongside the Zodiac Hellenistic astrology gave significance to the 'paranatellonta' or 'accompanying constellations', which rise and set at the same time as the zodiacal constellations. There were 36 of these forming a circle parallel to the Zodiac. Each constellation covered a 10° stretch, and they were supposed to rise at dusk at 10 day intervals, hence they were called 'decans'.⁶⁶ There were three associated with each sign of the Zodiac. These decans were thought to exert influence on particular earthly regions. The oldest surviving list of the regions ruled by the decans is thought to be that attributed to Teucros. For this Caquot prefers Cumont's second century BC date to the first century AD date proposed by Boll.⁶⁷

In Teucros' list Persia is under the influence of the Cat. Caquot deals with this by arguing that since the cat was apparently unknown to the Semites (he claims that it is not named in Akkadian, Aramaic, or biblical Hebrew), the author of Daniel replaced it by another well-known feline, the panther. Media does not appear in Teucros' list. However, Caquot pointed out, the Bear appears in it as the decan ruling Armenia, which borders Media and, like it, is a northern country from a Babylonian perspective. In Teucros' list Babylon comes under the influence of the Dog, one of the decans of Taurus. Faced with this Caquot appeals to the (later) evidence of Ptolemy, who put Mesopotamia under Leo, one of the decans of Virgo. Clearly the author of Daniel 7 considered none of the

⁶⁴*Ibid.* 8.

⁶⁵F. Boll, *Sphaera* (Leipzig, 1903) 296.

⁶⁶B.L. van der Waerden, *Science Awakening II* (Leyden and New York 1974) 26f.

⁶⁷F. Boll, *op. cit.* 5–11. Pauly-Wissowa, *Realenzyklopädie*, V.A.1 (Stuttgart 1934) 1132, 'Teukros von Babylon', follows Boll's dating.

astrological creatures suitable for the nameless horror of the fourth beast. Caquot's thesis has not found acceptance with English speaking commentators on Daniel,⁶⁸ but has won the support of his compatriot Delcor,⁶⁹ although not that of Lacocque⁷⁰.

The obvious weakness in Caquot's argument is the fact that he cannot appeal to Teucros' scheme of astrological geography, or any other, in a straightforward way, but has to bring in additional arguments and suppositions. Each of these has its own problems.

(1) Day asserts that the word *ḥatul* denotes the cat in post-biblical Hebrew, and points out that the Letter of Jeremiah 21 (ET 22) refers to the cat. He concludes that, 'There is therefore no reason why Daniel 7 should not have alluded to the cat if precise astrological symbolism was required'.⁷¹ It is generally agreed that, although the earliest extant MSS are in Greek, the letter was written originally in Hebrew or Aramaic, probably ca. 300 BC.⁷² This suggests that the cat was known to the Jews by 300 BC at the latest, unless the translator introduced it into the Greek text. The absence of any reference to cats in the OT is, of course, not conclusive proof that the animal was unknown to the Israelites. In view of their contacts with Egypt, where it was common, ignorance of it would be surprising.⁷³

⁶⁸See for example: J.G. Baldwin, *Daniel* (Leicester 1978). L.F. Hartman and A.A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, (Garden City, New York 1978) N. Porteus, *Daniel* (London 1979).

⁶⁹M. Delcor, 'Les sources du chapitre VII de Daniel', VT 18 (1968) 290-312, and *Le Livre de Daniel* (Paris 1971).

⁷⁰A. Lacocque, *Le Livre de Daniel* (Neuchatel and Paris 1976).

⁷¹J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge 1985) 155. M. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, Vol. 1 (New York 1950) and J. Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim*, Band II (Darmstadt 1963) list the following examples of the occurrence of *ḥatul* (𐤇) meaning 'cat': Targ. Isa. 13:22, 34:14 (Heb. text -'yym) Can. Rab. to 7:2 and Koh. Rab. to 6:11. Several occurrences in the Talmud.

⁷²W.O.E. Oesterley, *An Introduction to the Books of the Apocrypha* (London 1935) 268-71. B.M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York 1977) 95-8. G.W.E. Nickelsburgh, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishna* (London 1981) 35-42.

⁷³G.S. Cansdale, *Animals of Bible Lands* (Exeter 1970) 114, refers to an ivory statuette of a cat found in Lachish and dated ca. 1700 BC, commenting that Lachish had regular commercial links with Egypt at that time.

(2) There are in fact references to the cat in Akkadian literature. In his *AHw* von Soden cites *šurānu(m)* as meaning 'Katze', and gives examples of its occurrence from Old Babylonian times onwards in lexical lists, fables, omens and recipes. Landsberger argues that it refers primarily to the domestic cat⁷⁴ (Bodenheimer questions this⁷⁵), with other words (*murašu*, *zirqatu*, *az/šaru*) having reference to various kinds of wild cat and lynx.

(3) It would be strange for an astrological geography of Mesopotamian provenance to omit mention of Media. In the ancient sources Teucros is referred to as τοῦ Βαβυλωνίου. Boll has sifted the evidence concerning Teucros and concluded that all that can be said about his epoch is that he lived no later than the first century AD.⁷⁶ Cumont argues that the material attributed to Teucros goes back at least to the second century BC.⁷⁷ However, he recognizes that because the animals referred to include the cat, sparrow, hawk, ibis, and crocodile, the schema is of Egyptian origin. In addition it is worth noting Neugebauer's conclusion that the concept of decans is the only astronomical concept of real Egyptian origin.⁷⁸ The so-called 'Chaldean decans' of 36 stars (not constellations) were quite different.⁷⁹ The most we can say, then, is that Teucros provides evidence that this Egyptian system, in a Hellenized form, was known in Babylonia by the first century AD. However, even this is open to question. It is possible that the Babylon from which Teucros is named was the city situated above Heliopolis on the Nile,⁸⁰ a view which Gundel considers very probable.⁸¹ This casts considerable doubt on the validity of Caquot's appeal to Teucros' schema to illuminate the animal imagery of Daniel 7, especially when there is so little direct

⁷⁴B. Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien* (Leipzig 1934) 8–11, 86f.

⁷⁵F.S. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* (Leiden 1960) 108.

⁷⁶F. Boll, *op. cit.* 8.

⁷⁷F. Cumont, *op. cit.* 270.

⁷⁸O. Neugebauer, *The Exact Sciences in Antiquity* (Copenhagen 1951) 81ff.

⁷⁹B.L. van der Waerden, 'Babylonian Astronomy II. The Thirty-Six Stars', *JNES* 8 (1949) 6–26.

⁸⁰Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie*, 2.2 (Stuttgart 1896) 2699, 'Babylon, Stadt in Ägypten' *Lekicon der Ägyptologie*, Band I (Weisbaden 1975) 592, 'Babylon'.

⁸¹*Ibid.* 5.A.1 (Stuttgart 1934) 1132ff, 'Teukros von Babylon'.

correspondence between the animals and countries of that chapter and of the astrological schema.

(4) It is a great weakness in Caquot's case that he has to switch his appeal from Teucros' schema to Ptolemy's when discussing the third beast. He notes that astrological geographies frequently changed to incorporate the growing horizons of the ancient world. He may be correct in assuming that Ptolemy's schema reflects a variant as ancient as Teucros'. However, it is just as likely, if not more so, that it is the result of later revisions of the earlier form attested by Teucros. Also, Caquot fails to note that Ptolemy⁸² treats Babylonia, Assyria, and Chaldea as separate countries, and it is only Chaldea that he puts under Leo. The others he puts directly under Virgo. These considerations show that there are too many problems and uncertainties in Caquot's thesis for it to carry conviction. Cumont's identification of astrological symbolism in Daniel 8 might seem to rest on firmer ground.

However, there are problems with it also.

(1) The first is the assumption that someone living in Babylonia would use the Ram as an astrological symbol. Van der Waerden has discussed the history of the Zodiac.⁸³ He showed that the concept developed gradually in Babylon without the aid of any outside influence. The idea of the zodiacal belt was well established by 700 BC, and the system of 12 equal signs was fixed by 420 BC. The Greek evidence points strongly to the conclusion that the Greeks took over the idea of the Zodiac with its 12 signs from the Babylonians soon after 400 BC. Most of the Greek names of the signs are clearly translations of the Babylonian names. However, one exception is the Ram. The Babylonian name for this sign is *hun.ga* = *agru*, 'the hireling'. The origin of the Greek name is not known. Even in Seleucid tablets the traditional Babylonian names are used for zodiacal signs. Hence, one would hardly expect the Ram to appear as an astrological symbol in a text of Babylonian provenance from either the sixth or the second century BC.

⁸²Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, LCL (London 1940) 141ff.

⁸³B.L. van der Waerden, 'History of the Zodiac', *AfO* 16 (1952/3) 216–30.

(2) The assumption that the Goat would be recognized as an astrological symbol for Greece because of the Seleucid domination of Syria needs questioning on chronological grounds. It would be quite inappropriate in a genuine sixth century BC work, or even in a second century work wishing to appear as a sixth century one. In astrological geography Virgo is the symbol for Hellas and Ionia. In view of these points the possibility of the use of astrological symbolism in Daniel 8 seems almost as questionable as that of its use in Daniel 7.

The Babylonians' great interest in astrology might make the suggestion that astrological ideas lie behind the animal imagery of Daniel 7 and 8 seem plausible, even attractive. However, our examination of the attempts to establish this has shown that they involve too many questionable assumptions and implausibilities for them to be acceptable.

VI. The Old Testament

In our study of possible sources of the animal imagery of Daniel 7 and 8 one possibility remains to be explored—the OT.

The following points have been made regarding a possible OT background to the animal imagery of chapter 7.⁸⁴

- (1) In the OT Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as a lion (e.g. Jer. 4:7; 49:19; 50:17) and his armies as eagles (Jer. 49:22; Ezek. 17:3).
- (2) Prov. 30:30 describes the lion as 'the mightiest among beasts'. In the OT the lion and the bear are often linked as the two most ferocious beasts (e.g. 1 Sam. 17:34; Amos 5:19). Note also Prov. 28:15: 'Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people.' The OT references to the Medes stress their ferocity (Isa. 13:17f; 21:2ff; Jer. 51:11, 28).
- (3) In Hosea 13:7f God says: 'So I will be to them like a lion, like a leopard I will lurk beside the way. I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will tear open their breast, and there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild beast would rend them'.

⁸⁴For example: J.A. Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh 1927), E.W. Heaton, *Daniel* (London 1956) and A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Paris 1976).

Here we have the three beasts named in Daniel 7 (though in a different order) plus a fourth, unnamed beast. We think that these points are sufficiently weighty to warrant the conclusion that the imagery of the four beasts in Daniel 7 has its essential background in the OT. As Collins says with regard to this passage, 'The specific list of beasts in this vision finds its closest parallel in Hosea 13:7'.⁸⁵ This therefore probably provides the framework for the animal imagery. The change in order of the bear and leopard can be explained on the grounds mentioned by Heaton,⁸⁶ that in the OT the bear is 'second to the lion, as silver is second to gold'. Daniel 7 does, of course, have a close relationship with Daniel 2 where Babylonia and Media are represented by gold and silver. The use of this animal imagery, and in particular its rather bizarre nature, may well be a result of the author's acquaintance with Mesopotamian *Mischwesen* and birth-omens. In our view this is only a secondary influence. Overall, we would agree with Day's conclusion that, 'the fundamental basis for the four types of beast is drawn from Hos. 13:7–8, with some influence from ancient near-eastern *Mischwesen*'.⁸⁷

Delcor suggests a reason for the use of ram imagery of Daniel 8 to refer to the king of Persia.⁸⁸ He quotes the testimony of *Ammianus Marcellinus* as evidence that the Persian kings wore ram's head helmets.⁸⁹ However, this evidence relates to Shaqur II at the battle of Amida in the early fourth century AD. There does not seem to be any evidence of crowns or helmets with ram's horns being worn by Persian kings earlier than the third century AD.⁹⁰ Hence this evidence is not relevant to Daniel's choice of imagery.

⁸⁵J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, HSM 16 (Missoula 1977) 104.

⁸⁶E.W. Heaton, *op. cit.* 176.

⁸⁷J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge 1985) 157.

⁸⁸M. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel* (Paris 1971) 170.

⁸⁹*Ammianus Marcellinus*, LCL (London 1935) XIX 1.3, p. 471.

⁹⁰E. Porada, *Ancient Iran: The Art of Pre-Islamic Times* (London 1965) 216, provides an illustration of a third century hunting bowl depicting a king wearing a ram's horn helmet. However none of the crowns or helmets depicted from earlier periods have this feature. The same is true of the royal head-gear depicted in the works on Persian art by R. Ghirshman, *Persia: From the Origins to Alexander the Great* (London 1964); *Iran: Parthians and Sassanians* (London 1962).

Even those who accept an astrological origin for the animal imagery point out that in the OT the ram and the goat are symbols of power, and so of leadership (citing such passages as Jer. 51:40; Ezek. 34:17; 39:18; Zech. 10:3. In fact the only other animal imagery used with any frequency in the OT of leaders is that of the lion (e.g. Jer. 4:7; Ezek. 19:2ff.; Nah. 2:10ff.). Eagle imagery is used in Ezekiel 17. The fact that lion and eagle imagery has already been used in ch. 7 may have prompted the change in ch. 8 to the only other imagery of leadership that is common in the Hebrew tradition. With regard to the apportioning of the images here Hartman and Di Lella comment, 'The symbolic animals are well chosen; just as a male sheep cannot withstand an attack by a male goat, so the Persian empire was easily overcome by Alexander'.⁹¹

In the light of this evidence the OT provides an adequate background for the choice of the animal imagery in this chapter.

VII. Implications

Of the possible sources of Daniel's animal imagery which we have considered the only one to have clear implications for the date of the visions in chs. 7–8 is that suggested by Cumont and Caquot. As we have seen, the Zodiac of twelve equal signs did not come into being until the late fifth century BC. Some time after that it was combined with the Egyptian system of decans and the combined system used as the basis for schemes of astrological geography. When this happened we do not know.

If Cumont is right, the earliest known scheme dates from the second century BC. Clearly a sixth century BC date would be impossible for Daniel 7–8 if the imagery of these visions is drawn from an established scheme of astrological geography. However, we have shown that there are good reasons for rejecting astrological geography as the source of this imagery.

The other possible sources could have influenced the author of the visions in either the sixth or the second century

⁹¹L.F. Hartman and A.A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* (Garden City, New York 1978) 234.

BC, or any time in between. We have argued that the primary source of the animal imagery is probably the OT. However, we have also argued that there is evidence of Mesopotamian influence in the visions. The phrase 'the four winds of heaven' and the imagery of the beasts arising out of the turbulent sea in Daniel 7:2f. suggests influence from *Enuma Eliš*. We see here a polemical allusion to the Babylonian New Year ceremony and its mythology. It is also probable that the choice of bizarre animal figures as ominous symbols for the world empires is influenced by the prominent place that birth omens had in Mesopotamian culture. In that culture such images would have an especially strong impact.

If these points are valid, they point to the author of the visions of Daniel 7–8 being a Jew immersed in the Mesopotamian culture of the eastern dispersion rather than one battling against the effects of Hellenistic culture in Palestine.