

## **Suffering, Psalms and allusion in Daniel 9**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In a religious context, the book of Psalms is often read in order to find some form of consolation and comfort in a situation of distress. This article uncovers a similar function, in an ancient context, for a number of individual psalms. It investigates the intertextual links between the book of Daniel, written during a period of crisis in the second century B.C.E., and a compendium of religious poetry available at that time. Several allusions to specific Psalms are found in Daniel 9. Furthermore, chapter 9 occupies a special place in the book of Daniel.*

### **A INTRODUCTION**

In a present-day setting, the book of Psalms plays an important role in public and private worship. This article investigates how this collection of sacred poetry, albeit not in its current form, functioned in an ancient context of suffering. This context is the persecution of the Jewish population in Jerusalem by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century B.C.E. The book of Daniel provides the reader with a glimpse of those desperate times.

The article traces the link between the book of Daniel and the notion of suffering as it is captured in the book by placing it in the context of the sixth century B.C.E. Next, it considers the actual historical context of the second century B.C.E. It then seeks to establish a link between the book of Daniel and Psalms through a discussion on intertextuality. This allows, in the last instance, for a discussion of allusions to Psalms found in a specific chapter in the book of Daniel (Dan 9), and for a consideration of the function of such allusions.

### **B LINKING DANIEL TO SUFFERING – THE EXILIC EXPERIENCE**

From a theological point of view the book of Daniel can be viewed as set against a backdrop of suffering. The introductory chapter frames the book as situated in the exilic era. Both the king responsible for the exile (Nebuchadnezzar) and the one responsible for its end (Cyrus) are mentioned in the first chapter (in its opening and closing verses respectively). The superscriptions to the subsequent chapters also refer to foreign rulers dating from the period of exile. Over and above the two already mentioned (Nebuchadnezzar – 2:1, 3:1,

4:1; and Cyrus – 10:1), the reader finds references to Belshazzar (5:1, 7:1, 8:1) and to the enigmatic figure of Darius the Mede (6:1, 9:1).<sup>1</sup>

This period of suffering stimulated the production of some of the laments found in the Psalter and the book of Lamentations (see Pss 74, 137; Lam 3). From a political or administrative point of view, the exile most probably did not entail the large-scale deportation of "the whole Jerusalem" (2 Kgs 24:14). Even if the numbers given in 2 Kgs 24 are taken at face value (namely, 10 000 – v. 14; or 8 000 – v. 16), and even if the poor, who were supposedly left behind after the first deportation (v. 14) made up the bulk of the population in Jerusalem, then the fact remains that a sizable number of people were not deported. Add to this the very low numbers of deportees mentioned in Jer 52:28–30 and the fact that Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah as governor over Jerusalem, and it becomes clear that for most people in Jerusalem the exile and events surrounding it meant at most a change in government.<sup>2</sup>

However, the leaders who were deported and also the influential people who were left behind succeeded in reinterpreting the political events inside a theological framework that would become a remarkable achievement and a beacon for the development of later Judaism.<sup>3</sup> For these members of the social elite, the exile meant the loss of what they believed their God had promised and given them: a land, a place of worship, and an everlasting royal lineage. To them, the event of the exile presented a conundrum: why had their God not lived up to his promises? The reasons for the unforeseen tragedy and the suffering it brought, together with the possibility of a hope-filled new beginning, were worked out in the literature that had the exilic experience as its origin (e.g. the books of Jeremiah, Lamentations, deutero-Isaiah and the final version of the Deuteronomistic History). As far as the reasons put forward for the calamity go, the overall impression given by the interpretation of Israel's history presented in the books Joshua–2 Kings is that the exile should be seen as a form of punishment by Yahweh for Israel's disobedience of the Law of Moses. Hence, for Albertz, the Deuteronomistic History is in part "one long confession of sin, which is meant to lead to the insight that it is not Yahweh but Israel who is to blame for the downfall of the state."<sup>4</sup> The suffering linked to the exile, and

<sup>1</sup> Daniel 11:1 does not introduce a new unit and should not be viewed as a superscription. In fact, as commentators often note, Dan 10–12 forms one unit that is related to a fourth visionary experience.

<sup>2</sup> John Barton and Elizabeth Bowden, *The Original Story: God, Israel and the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 145.

<sup>3</sup> Gabrielle Boccaccini, *The Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) outlines this development.

<sup>4</sup> Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 389.

also the preceding political and military events, were what the author<sup>5</sup> of the book of Daniel had in mind when the context of the exile was chosen as the setting for the text. The reason for this choice was that the Jewish community in Jerusalem faced a similar desperate situation during the second quarter of the second century B.C.E., a situation that was brought about by the persecution of the Jews by the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

### **C LINKING DANIEL TO SUFFERING – THE ANTIOCHUS EXPERIENCE**

The origin of the book of Daniel in its present form can probably be traced solely to the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Jerusalem during the second century B.C.E.<sup>6</sup> Here we briefly consider Antiochus' course towards Jerusalem, which resulted in destruction, persecution and suffering.

The Achaemenid Period, as the time of Persian ascendancy in the ancient world is referred to, came to an end when Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.) conquered the Persian Empire in 334 B.C.E. When he died a little more than a decade later, his vast empire was divided among four of his most influential generals. Initially, Palestine came under the Ptolemaic Empire with Egypt as its stronghold, but in 198 B.C.E. the Seleucid emperor Antiochus III (241–187 B.C.E.) brought Palestine under his control. The Seleucid animosity towards the Ptolemaic regime continued under the reign of his son and eventual successor, Antiochus IV (215–164 B.C.E.).

At first Antiochus IV was a political hostage in Rome, so that the authorities there could keep the reigning Greek family in Palestine in check. When Antiochus III died he was succeeded by Seleucus IV, who was another of his sons (and the brother of Antiochus IV). This resulted in Antiochus IV being replaced as hostage by his nephew and the son of Seleucus, Demetrius I. When Seleucus IV was murdered by a usurper, Antiochus reclaimed the throne for the family. With the rightful heir still in Rome, Antiochus declared himself co-regent together with an infant brother of Demetrius, whom he arranged to have murdered a few months later. Now, as sole regent, he set his eyes on the Ptolemaic Empire in the south-west.

After limited success during a first invasion, Antiochus launched another onslaught in 168 B.C.E. During this second campaign a rumour reached Jerusalem that he had lost his life. This set in motion a chain of events in Jeru-

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<sup>5</sup> The book of Daniel was compiled from different sources. The word "author" as it is used here also refers to the process of compiling texts from existing narratives.

<sup>6</sup> The attempt that follows to briefly construct the events in Jerusalem during the early second century B.C.E. does not aim to represent a final word. For a detailed discussion of the issues and sources, see Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 276-285.

salem that were developing for some time. These need to be considered briefly here.

When Antiochus IV came to power in 175 B.C.E., Onias III held the highest religious office in Jerusalem. However, his brother Jason offered to pay Antiochus a sum of money if he were named High Priest in Onias' stead. The emperor accepted the offer, but three years later Menelaus persuaded Antiochus to name him high priest with the promise of an even higher reward. This caused Jason to flee from Jerusalem, and then to return in order to reclaim the office he had had to vacate on hearing the false rumour of Antiochus' death. The subsequent unrest in Jerusalem led to Antiochus cracking down on the Jewish population, killing thousands and committing sacrilege in the Temple in 167 B.C.E. Only three years later, after an initial Maccabean uprising, was the Temple rededicated.

The devastation caused by Antiochus IV and his armies in Jerusalem remains by and large inexplicable and unprecedented in the ancient world. What can safely be assumed, though, is that these events brought about immense suffering for a large part of the population in Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup>

#### **D LINKING DANIEL TO PSALMS: POETRY AND ALLUSION**

We now turn our attention to the way in which psalmody is employed in the book of Daniel in the face of the suffering caused during the period of persecution under Antiochus IV. The use of the word "psalm" immediately invokes the notion of poetry. In the book of Daniel a number of poetic sections occur, which have been the subject of much scholarly discussion.<sup>8</sup>

The relative scarcity of poetry in Aramaic prompted Prinsloo to investigate the use of poetry in two Aramaic narratives found in the book of Daniel (Dan 2:20–23 and 6:27–28). He concluded that both these strands of poetry had contributed to the structure and understanding of the narratives in question as either a focal point, or a climax. Furthermore, he emphasised that such sections of poetry occurring in a narrative setting should not be neglected.<sup>9</sup>

The present contribution is focused especially on the use of psalms, and not on poetry in general, in this late text in the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, it is restricted to the Hebrew visions in the last and so-called apocalyptic part of the book. The poetic sections Prinsloo identified here for analysis are Dan 8:23–26; 9:26–27; 12:1–3.<sup>10</sup> However, none of these sections alludes to poetry found in the book of Psalms or similar collections in existence during the second century

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.5.4; *J.W.* 1.1.1–3.

<sup>8</sup> Gert T. M. Prinsloo, "Two Poems in a Sea of Prose: the Content and Context of Daniel 2.20–23 and 6.27–28," *JSOT* 59 (1993): 93.

<sup>9</sup> Prinsloo, "Two Poems," 106–107.

<sup>10</sup> Prinsloo, "Two Poems," 93.

B.C.E. Instead, the pieces of poetry singled out by Prinsloo relate to their immediate context by providing:

- (i) a description of the exploits and eventual end of Antiochus IV (Dan 8:23–26 and 9:26–27); and
- (ii) the theological climax of the book when, for the first time in the OT, explicit reference is made to the resurrection of the dead (Dan 12:1–3).

The present study utilises the broader term “psalmody” to indicate the use of Psalms not only in formal worship but also in the creation of texts set in the context of private worship, for example Daniel’s prayer (Dan 9:4–19). As such it represents a study of a secondary development in the use of Psalms distinguished by Gunkel in the early twentieth century. Gunkel argued that the Psalms did not reflect the religious outpourings of individuals (that was a later development), but instead had their *Sitz im Leben* in the real acts of real people in the context of communal worship.<sup>11</sup> Here our concern is with the second use of the Psalms – by a religious individual in a context of suffering.

Next, we should note a few issues regarding the structure of the book of Daniel that are important for the present enquiry. These will indicate the reason for choosing a very specific section from the Hebrew section of the book as the focus of the present research. Already in the 1970s Lenglet argued persuasively that the Aramaic section (Dan 2–7) is arranged in a concentric pattern.<sup>12</sup> According to this reasoning there are distinct similarities between ch. 2 (the statue constituted of different metals symbolising four world empires that were brought to an end through divine intervention) and ch. 7 (four animals symbolising four world empires that also ended through divine intervention). Along a similar line ch. 3 (the persecution story about Daniel’s three friends who miraculously escape a fiery furnace in the wake of their disregard for King Nebuchadnezzar’s decree to worship a huge statue) and ch. 6 (the persecution story in which Daniel miraculously escapes being devoured by hungry lions following his disregard for King Darius’ proclamation to worship him) show distinct thematic and literary agreement. In the centre of this concentric composition stand chs. 4 and 5. The similarities between these two chapters are likewise quite obvious. Daniel 4 is the story of Daniel’s interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, in which the latter’s kingdom is represented by a huge tree that is felled as a result of hubris. Daniel 5 narrates how the “son” of Nebuchadnezzar, named Belshazzar in the narrative, gets a similar warning by means of a hand writing this message on a wall, with Daniel being called upon to interpret this fateful omen.

<sup>11</sup> John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 463.

<sup>12</sup> André Lenglet, “La structure littéraire Daniel 2–7,” *Bib* 53 (1972): 169–190.

Turning our attention now to the introductory chapter of the book of Daniel, which is written in Hebrew, we make use of Goldingay, who drew attention to the fact that this chapter's structure mirrors the concentric pattern of the Aramaic section.<sup>13</sup> According to him "Daniel 1 forms a chiastically shaped short story composed of three double panels, the central panels being themselves subdivided chiastically."<sup>14</sup> It means that vv. 1–2, which set the context of the beginning of the exile, is in parallel with v. 21, which refers to Cyrus and the end of the exile. Furthermore, vv. 3–7 refer to "young men ... taken for training" at the Babylonian court, while their chiastic counterpart, vv. 17–20, narrates that "the young men are triumphant in the training." The center of the narrative (vv. 8–16) tells how Daniel avoids defilement by instigating and obtaining positive results from an experiment in healthy eating.

Having considered the concentric structures of Dan 1 and Dan 2–7, we should also pay attention to the last part of the book written in Hebrew (Dan 8–12). In order to demonstrate that the book of Daniel not only meant different things to different people during its history of interpretation, as Grabbe<sup>15</sup> noted, but as composition also reflects more than one point of view, I have chosen to consider the possibility of a concentric structure for this part of the book also.<sup>16</sup> On the basis of thematic and linguistic aspects, it was suggested that Dan 9 is intended as focal point in Dan 8–12. The argument I put forward was that diverse opinions in the second-century Jewish social context called for a text that unified the community by reflecting these diverse points of view.<sup>17</sup> Boccaccini also refers to the important place of Dan 9 in the second part of the book. He states that "Dan 9 is the nucleus of the second part of the book (Dan

<sup>13</sup> John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Goldingay, *Daniel*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Lester L. Grabbe, "A Dan(iel) for All Seasons: for Whom was Daniel Important?" in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*. (vol. 1; eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 229–246.

<sup>16</sup> H. J. M. (Hans) van Deventer, "What shall We Do with the Power Drunken Ruler? Structure and Theology in the Book of Daniel," in *Basel und Bibel: Collected Communications to the XVIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of The Old Testament* (eds. Matthias Augustin and Hermann M. Niemann, Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 2004), 247–258. A similar suggestion was made earlier by the same author when reasons for a Deuteronomistic insertion (Dan 9:4–19) into the apocalyptic section of the book were considered. Cf. H. J. M. (Hans) van Deventer, "The End of the End, or What is the Deuteronomist (still) Doing in Daniel?" in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets* (eds. Johannes C. de Moor and Harry F. van Rooy; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 62–75.

<sup>17</sup> This view was based on Noll's suggestion regarding the unifying function of assembling an anthology of religious writings in a disparate community. Cf. Kurt L. Noll, "The Kaleidoscopic Nature of Divine Personality in the Hebrew Bible," *BibInt* 9 (2001): 1–24.

8–12) and at the center of ch. 9 is Daniel's prayer to God (9:4–19)."<sup>18</sup> He then adds: "Structurally and theologically, Dan 9 plays a central role in the book of Daniel."<sup>19</sup>

Thus far the following has been established: 1) the book of Daniel relates to a period of severe suffering (recalling the exile) for the Jewish community in second-century Jerusalem; and 2) the structure of the book foregrounds Dan 9 as a focal point for the message presented to this suffering community.

When we shift our attention to this focal point in the book (Dan 9), it is striking that the chapter explicitly recalls another text from what later became the Hebrew Bible, namely the book of Jeremiah. Thus, Dan 9:1–2 reads:

"In the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus, of the stock of Media, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord, that came to Jeremiah the prophet, were to fulfil the desolation of Jerusalem: seventy years."

This announcement is followed immediately by an introduction to (v 3) and a prayer of penitence (vv 4–19). The prayer gets interrupted when an *angelus interpres* interprets the 70 years mentioned in what is now Jeremiah 25:11–12 or 29:10 as, in fact, 70 weeks of years (490 years). These weeks are further broken down into sections of varying lengths (seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week). The focus falls on the last week when, midway through the week, the ruler (Antiochus IV) will suppress sacrifice and offering, "and the desolating abomination will be in place until the predetermined destruction is poured out on the desolator" (9:27). There is no postscript following this communication (*contra* Dan 8:27, and also 7:28 in the Aramaic section).

Collins, among other scholars noted that this chapter, and especially the prayer of penitence "is of a type familiar in post-exilic Jewish literature: compare Ezra 9:6–15; Neh. 1:5–11; 9:5–37; Psalm 79 ... [and] draws heavily on traditional biblical language."<sup>20</sup> The literary unity of the chapter has been questioned because the prayer includes a number of stock phrases found elsewhere in similar material; and because the content and language of the prayer differ from those of its immediate context. This debate does not concern the present study and since the prayer forms part of the "final text," Collins' conclusion in this regard is affirmed: "although the prayer was not composed for the present

<sup>18</sup> Gabrielle Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 181.

<sup>19</sup> Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 188.

<sup>20</sup> John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 349–350.

context, it was included purposefully by the author of Dan 9 and was not a secondary addition."<sup>21</sup>

Turning our attention away from the history of the text to a more literary approach, we note that the same issues that prompted questions on the redaction history also led to discussions on the relation between this and similar texts in the OT. Such studies are often grouped together under the term "intertextuality." Using this term in the context of biblical studies, however, is problematic. Carr discussed this issue in a keynote address presented at the 2010 triennial meeting of the International Society of the Study of the Old Testament<sup>22</sup> and concluded that the terms "allusion" or even "inner-biblical interpretation" better apply to what most biblical scholars mean when they use the word "intertextuality." The discussion over the use of this term seems not to be restricted to biblical studies.<sup>23</sup> Carr added that more specific elements of the concept of "intertextuality" as developed by Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes and others could be useful in directing biblical scholars away from the idea that biblical authors were always (consciously) citing or alluding to other biblical texts. Almost 20 years earlier, Beal had already noted the "seemingly boundless dissemination of 'intertextuality' within our discipline [biblical studies]."<sup>24</sup> He was probably correct when he mentioned as reason for this state of affairs that the term had been developed "as a theoretical rather than a methodological term." Reading the rest of the contributions to the volume in which Beal writes makes it clear that Carr's assessment of the use of the term "intertextuality" in biblical studies holds true, at least as far as that volume is concerned.

From South Africa in the late 1990's came a very thorough contribution on using the concept of intertextuality in the field of biblical studies. Venter, in an article dealing specifically with the text under discussion (Dan 9) first gives a systematic overview of the nature, "technique" and function of intertextual-

<sup>21</sup> Collins, *Daniel*, 348.

<sup>22</sup> David M. Carr, "The Many Uses of Intertextuality in Biblical Studies," in *IOSOT Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (ed. Marri Nissinen; VTSup; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2011/2).

<sup>23</sup> Helen Caple, "Doubling Up: Allusion and Bonding in Multisemiotic News Stories," in *New Discourse on Language: Functional Perspectives on Multimodality, Identity and Affiliation* (eds. James R. Martin and Monika Bednarek; London: Continuum, 2010), 113. Frattarola notes how the shift in emphasis regarding the meaning of the term has led to notably different entries on the topic in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1965 and 1993). See Angela Frattarola, "Modernism and Irresponsible Allusion: Joyce, Elliot and Pound," in *Literature and Ethics: Questions of Responsibility in Literary Studies* (eds. Daniel K. Jernigan, Neil Murphy, Brendan Quigley and Tamara S. Wagner; Amherst: Cambria Press, 2009), 173–200.

<sup>24</sup> Timothy Beal, "Glossary" in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 27.



ity.<sup>25</sup> In his discussion he relies on the theoretical grappling that has occurred with the concept, especially in the Dutch literary context. Following this theoretical grounding, he moves on to examine intertextuality in biblical studies. Only then does he identify different forms of intertextuality present in Dan 9. These include examples of explicit, implicit, illusionary and cultural intertextuality, as well as *montage*. From Venter's discussion it becomes clear, though, that terminology remains a problem. Thus, from his explanation of explicit intertextuality,<sup>26</sup> it seems as if this concept is labelled by other theorists as "specific intertextuality" or even "allusion."<sup>27</sup> In trying to refrain from adding to the confusion related to the term "intertextuality," the present study prefers the term "allusion" when discussing the use of Psalms in Dan 9. It seems the most appropriate literary device to invoke when dealing with Psalms and suffering in the book of Daniel.

In Venter's discussion of the various forms of intertextuality in Dan 9, no reference to Psalms is found.<sup>28</sup> The reason for this probably relates to the fact that in this chapter there are clearer allusions to texts from the Law and the Prophets, rather than Psalms. It is noteworthy, though, especially when adhering to the view of an early tripartite division of the Hebrew Bible, that Dan 9 also alludes to the Writings, and specifically to Psalms.<sup>29</sup> The concept "allusion" as it is to be used here, however, does require further elucidation.

## E LINKING DANIEL TO PSALMS: ALLUSION AND POETICS

The references to "Jeremiah, the prophet" (9:2) and the period of seventy years noted by this prophet are identified by Venter as an example of explicit intertextuality.<sup>30</sup> This direct reference probably sensitises the reader to similar devices used in this chapter.<sup>31</sup> Finding more of these literary devices, especially in the form of allusions to Psalms, requires a few notes on allusion as literary technique.

In a compendium dealing with the issue of intertextuality in biblical studies, Beal indicates a development in the meaning of "allusion."<sup>32</sup> In early

<sup>25</sup> Pieter M. Venter, "Intertekstualiteit, Kontekstualiteit en Daniel 9," *In die Skriflig* 31/4 (1997): 328–333.

<sup>26</sup> Venter, "Intertekstualiteit," 338.

<sup>27</sup> Irwin notes that allusion is indeed one element of intertextuality. See William Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" *JAAC* 59/3 (2001): 295.

<sup>28</sup> The same holds true for a similar discussion by Hartman and DiLella. See Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. DiLella, *The Book of Daniel* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1978), 248.

<sup>29</sup> The similarities between Dan 9 and Ezra 9:6–15, Neh 1:5–11 and Neh 9:5–37 serve as further links between this chapter and other books among the Writings.

<sup>30</sup> Venter, "Intertekstualiteit," 338.

<sup>31</sup> Venter, "Intertekstualiteit," 338–345, discusses these devices.

<sup>32</sup> Beal, "Glossary," 21.

literary theory, allusion referred to "the mobilization of unnamed sources and addressees" (quoting Johnston, 1981). Here the focus is clearly on the author and his/her intention. Later notions of allusion tend to shift its significance towards the role the reader plays in meaning formation. Beal states: "In all this, the emphasis is on how the process of allusion evokes for the reader a larger textual field."<sup>33</sup> The matter of authorial intent is no longer raised. Identifying an allusion, in this line of thought, is the prerogative of the reader. The shift in focus away from the author and towards the text and the reader is in line with Kristeva's post-structural view, but is not accepted by all literary theorists.<sup>34</sup>

In an important contribution, Irwin, among others, notes that authorial intention is crucial when identifying an allusion in a text. In this regard, he says, "authorial intent is at least a necessary condition for allusion"<sup>35</sup>; and also, "Allusion, unlike reference in general, requires authorial intent; it is a necessary condition."<sup>36</sup> In a post-structural context it is difficult to deal with the notion of authorial intent. For instance, how will it be proved in the case of an ancient text? And how can it be differentiated from what Irwin calls "accidental associations"?<sup>37</sup> Unlike Irwin who cites a poem by Housman,<sup>38</sup> biblical scholars do not have access to the actual authors. In order to meet this condition when it comes to the biblical text, I am not sure that we can do much better than the fuzzy "it is likely that the author intended a specific allusion." For example, in Dan 9:3, we read that Daniel's penitential prayer is introduced by a preparatory ritual involving "fasting, sackcloth and ashes." The same words are used in Jonah 3:5–6, where we read about the penitence of the people and the king of Nineveh. In this case it is highly unlikely that the author of Dan 9 had the specific text from Jonah in mind, hence we cannot conclude that Dan 9:3 alludes to Jonah 3:5–6. However, these texts do share a cultural milieu in which true penitence was expressed through specific acts. Hence we can concur with Venter that this is a case of cultural intertextuality.<sup>39</sup> Since it is highly unlikely that an allusion to Jonah 3:5–6 was intended by the author, it cannot be viewed as such.

A further qualification for identifying an allusion is that it should go "beyond simple reference."<sup>40</sup> This means that the allusion opens up a broader kaleidoscope of meaning to the reader. Not only the text alluded to, but also its literary (and even historical) context comes into play. Irwin argues that the

<sup>33</sup> Beal, "Glossary," 21.

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Caple, "Doubling Up," 113–114.

<sup>35</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 290.

<sup>36</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 291.

<sup>37</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 294.

<sup>38</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 295.

<sup>39</sup> Venter, "Intertekstualiteit," 342.

<sup>40</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 288.

reader is called upon to make the unstated associations with an earlier text.<sup>41</sup> This is one of the criteria he sets for identifying an allusion: "In other words, for an allusion to be successful, in the sense of being understood, the reader must call to mind something not explicitly in the text."<sup>42</sup> In answering the title of his article ("What is an allusion?"), Irwin proposes the following: "the indirect nature of the reference, the authorial intent, and the possibility of detection in principle amount to a sufficient condition for allusion."<sup>43</sup>

Keeping this in mind, we can now turn to Dan 9 to seek examples of allusions to Psalms in this chapter. In the following discussion, firstly cases that may be called "illusionary allusions" are briefly dealt with. By this is meant cases where the allusion is possibly accidental and skewed towards the eye of the beholder rather than the intention of the author.

The first is found in Dan 9:4:

וְאֶת־פְּלִלָּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶת־תּוֹדָה וְאִמְרָה אָנָּה אֲדַבֵּר הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֲסֵד לְאֶהֱבָיו  
וְלִשְׁמֵרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו:

"I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, 'Ah, Lord, great and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments."<sup>44</sup>

The expression "great and awesome God" finds similar thinking in Ps 95:3: "For the Lord is a great God (אֵל גָּדוֹל), and a great King above all gods" and Ps 99:3: "Let them praise your great and awesome (גָּדוֹל וְנּוֹרָא) name. Holy is he!" Also, a link between "keeping the covenant," God's "steadfast love" and "keeping your commandments" is found in Ps 25:10: "All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love (חֲסֵד) and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees (בְּרִיתוֹ וְעִדְוֹתָיו)." However, when applying the conditions for allusion set out above to these cases there is very little evidence that Dan 9:4 presents us with clear allusions to these Psalms. When turning to a text like Neh 1:5 it becomes clear that these words form part of stock phrases introducing a prayer of penitence. This text reads:

וְאָמַר אָנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֲסֵד לְאֶהֱבָיו וְלִשְׁמֵרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו:

"I said, 'O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments;"

<sup>41</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 288.

<sup>42</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 293.

<sup>43</sup> Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 294.

<sup>44</sup> Translations are taken from the NRSV.

Although these words may have their origin in communal worship, they are employed here in a different context, namely that of an individual saying a prayer of penitence on behalf of his people. The intertextual link in this case is rather cultural intertextuality than allusion.<sup>45</sup> This inference is strengthened by the fact that in Dan 9:6 further stock phrases related to a context of penitence can be found. In this case the resemblance with Neh 9:34 (cf. Ezra 9:7) is quite clear. Dan 9:6 accepts collective responsibility on behalf of leaders and the community when it states:

וְלֹא שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶל-עֲבָדֶיךָ הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבְּרוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ אֶל-מְלָכֵינוּ שְׂרִינוּ וְאַבְתֵּינוּ וְאֵל כָּל-עַם הָאָרֶץ:

“We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.” Nehemiah 9:34 presents a similar idea:

וְאֶת-מְלָכֵינוּ שְׂרִינוּ כַּהֲנֵינוּ וְאַבְתֵּינוּ לֹא עָשׂוּ תוֹרָתְךָ וְלֹא קִשְׁיָבוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְלִעֲדוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הֵעִידָתָ בָּהֶם:

“our kings, our princes, our priests, and our ancestors have not kept your law or heeded the commandments and the warnings that you gave them.” Language related to such a general introduction to express remorse in a post-exilic context is also found in Dan 9:7:

לָךְ אֲדֹנָי הַצְדָּקָה וְלָנוּ בְּשֵׁת הַפָּנִים בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְלְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל הַקְּרֹבִים וְהַרְחֹקִים בְּכָל-הָאָרְצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדְחַתָּם שָׁם בְּמַעַלְם אֲשֶׁר מָעִלוּ-בְּךָ:

“Righteousness is on your side, O Lord, but open shame, as at this day, falls on us, the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you.” This relates to Ezra 9:7:

מִיָּמֵינוּ אֲבֹתֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ בְּאִשְׁמָה גְדֹלָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּבְעֹזְנוֹתֵינוּ נָתַנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מְלָכֵינוּ כַּהֲנֵינוּ בְּיַד מְלָכֵי הָאָרְצוֹת בְּחָרֵב בְּשָׁבִי וּבְבִזָּה וּבְבִשְׁת פָּנִים כַּהֲיֹם הַזֶּה:

“From the days of our ancestors to this day we have been deep in guilt, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is this day.” These references to similar literature from a post-exilic context serve to keep us from too easily claiming examples of allusions to the Psalms when this type of language is used in formal literary contexts. Another example of this nature that at first glance may seem to be an allusion to a Psalm is found in Dan 9:9:

לְאֹדֵנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ הֲרַחֲמִים וְהִסְלַחֲתָ כִּי מְרַדְנוּ בּוֹ:

<sup>45</sup> Venter, “Intertekstualiteit,” 342.

"To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him." This may seem to recall Ps 130:4:

כִּי־עֲמַךְ הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּזְרָא:

"But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered." However, consider Neh 9:17, where we read:

וְאַתָּה אֱלֹוֹהַ סְלִיחוֹת חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם אֲרַדְּ-אַפִּים וְרַב־וְחֶסֶד וְלֹא עֲזַבְתָּם:

"... But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful ..." This, then, is clearly yet another example of "illusionary allusion." The author most likely did not have Ps 130:4 in mind; rather, he is using the stock language of the type of prayers he is reproducing. There are, however, a number of true allusions to be found in Dan 9. The first real allusion to the Psalms in Dan 9 comes from v. 5:

חָטְאנוּ וְעִוְינוּ הִרְשַׁעְנוּ וּמְרַדְּנוּ וְסוּר מִמִּצְוֹתַי וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטַי:

"we have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances." This verse is the first in a section of the prayer (9:5–11) that deals with acknowledgement of guilt, and more specifically direct confession (9:5–6).<sup>46</sup> This verse alludes to Ps 106:6, which reads:

חָטְאנוּ עִם־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ הִעִוְינוּ הִרְשַׁעְנוּ:

"Both we and our ancestors have sinned; we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly." To be sure, there are similar phrases in other prayers of penitence. So we read in Neh 1:7:

חָבַל חָבַלְנוּ לָךְ וְלֹא־שָׁמְרָנוּ אֶת־הַמִּצְוֹת וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה עַבְדְּךָ:

"We have offended you deeply, failing to keep the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances that you commanded your servant Moses." None of the words used, however, is exactly similar to those in Dan 9:5 and Ps 106:6. The same holds true for the prayers in Ezra 9 and Neh 9; there are no clear references to Ps 106:6. In these cases, the similarities between Dan 9 and similar prayers are found rather in their mention of not listening to the prophets (Dan 9:6, 10; cf. Ezra 9:11,<sup>47</sup> Neh 9:26, 30) and experiencing the curses mentioned in the Law of Moses (Dan 9:11, 13; cf. Neh 1:8).

<sup>46</sup> Daniël F. O’Kennedy, "Vergifnis in die Gebed van Daniël (Dan. 9:4–19)," *AcT* 23/1 (2003): 139.

<sup>47</sup> Although prophets are referred to in the text, the content seems to come from the Law of Moses (cf. Deut 7:3).

A further reason for suggesting that the author intended his readers to pick up on this reference to Ps 106:6 and thus for qualifying Dan 9:5 as a true allusion, is the repetition of the same words later in the prayer.<sup>48</sup> According to O'Kennedy, vv. 15–19 conclude this prayer with a plea for mercy and forgiveness.<sup>49</sup> In the first plea (vv. 15–16) the following phrase that repeats the words used in the direct confession (9:5) occurs at the end of the first sentence:

חַטָּאנוּ רָשָׁעוּנוּ

“we have sinned, we have done wickedly” (v. 15). With Dan 9:5 and 9:15 established as most probably allusions to Ps 106:6, we need to ask what its function is.

We noted earlier that in the case of an allusion the reader is required to bring to mind more than the mere words creating the allusion. In this case it means that the whole of Ps 106 is “flashed” in the conscience of the reader. Why would the author want to remind his readers of this Psalm? To answer this question we obviously need to look at Ps 106. As is well known, this Psalm forms a pair with the previous psalm, Ps 105. Kidner suggests that they represent “two contrasted strands of sacred history.”<sup>50</sup> Whereas Ps 105 celebrates the positive aspects of the divine covenant and what it meant for Israel,<sup>51</sup> its counterpart focuses on Israel’s inability to live up to its role of people of the covenant. In this process specific episodes from Israelite history are recalled and the ways in which God’s mighty acts on behalf of his people are met by an inappropriate answer from the latter are indicated. God’s eventual punishment in the form of the exile is specifically mentioned (Ps 106:46). As indicated above, the theme of the exile is closely related to the book of Daniel in general, and to Dan 9 in particular, when Daniel seeks to understand the reference to the “seventy years” found in the book of Jeremiah.

With the use of this allusion the author of Dan 9 intends to stress that the iniquities of the people are more specific than the general accusations listed in the chapter. In Neh 9 the author goes to the trouble of recounting the trespasses of the people in history (similar to what occurs in Ps 106) in his prayer of penitence. In Dan 9 the allusion to Ps 106 replaces this long overview of Israel’s sacred history. The presence of the allusion to Ps 106 at two important junctions in the prayer of Daniel reminds the readers of Israel’s history of failure, despite the mighty acts of God on their behalf. It serves to underscore the

<sup>48</sup> The structure that Goldingay suggests has these words at the beginning of the two sections of the prayer, i.e. acknowledgement of wrongdoing (v. 5) and plea for mercy (v. 15). See Goldingay, *Daniel*, 235.

<sup>49</sup> O'Kennedy, “Vergifnis,” 139.

<sup>50</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150* (TOTC; Leicester: IVP, 1975), 373.

<sup>51</sup> See Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (transl. Herbert Hartwell; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 671ff.

idea that their present circumstances of suffering are the result of their own misdoings.

The next allusion to the Psalms we find towards the end of the prayer in the plea for mercy and forgiveness. O’Kennedy distinguishes two subsections in this unit: a first (9:15–16) and a second (9:17–19) plea.<sup>52</sup> In the first plea we read (v. 16):

אֲדֹנָי כְּכֹל־צְדָקֹתֶיךָ יֵשֶׁב־נָא אַפָּךָ וְחַמְתֶּךָ מֵעִירְךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם הַר־קְדְשֶׁךָ כִּי בַחֲטָאֵינוּ וּבַעֲוֹנוֹת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַמֶּךָ לְחַרְפָּה לְכֹל־סְבִיבֵתֵינוּ:

“O Lord, in view of all your righteous acts, let your anger and wrath, we pray, turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; because of our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors, Jerusalem and your people have become a disgrace among all our neighbours.” In this verse we find the author presenting two motivations for the Lord to act. The first motivation refers to his righteous acts, which Goldingay explains as “his acts on behalf of Israel.”<sup>53</sup> The allusion in the previous verse to Ps 106 recalled these acts of righteousness in their full glory. The call on God’s actions in favour of someone is also found in Ps 31:2 פִּלְטֵנִי בְּצַדִּיקֹתֶיךָ (“in your righteousness deliver me”) and Ps 71:2 יְהַפְּלֵטֵנִי וְתַצִּילֵנִי תִצְדִּיקֹתֶיךָ תִצִּילֵנִי וְתַפְּלֵטֵנִי (“In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me”). The context in these Psalms is a call by an individual on his behalf. In Dan 9:16 the context is someone praying on behalf of his people. Since the concept of God’s righteousness is often referred to in the Psalms (and in the OT in general) it is perhaps not likely to claim that Dan 9:16 alludes specifically to Pss 31 and 71. What is clear, however, is that the author of Dan 9 wants to forge a link between God’s righteousness and deliverance, which is the aim of his supplication. This is explicitly done in Pss 31:2 and 71:2, hence the author’s wish to call his reader’s attention to it by way of allusion. If this is correct, what the author is pleading for in Dan 9:16 is not merely a negative call on God to “turn his wrath away,” but also a positive call, albeit implicit and based on the allusion to the Psalms, to also deliver his people.

The second motivation for God to act deals with the iniquities of his people (again, depicted clearly in Ps 106) and the results of these wrongdoings. The idea that God’s people have become a disgrace means that because of their actions they are now viewed as far inferior when measured against neighbouring peoples. In Ps 44:14 the same idea is stated in the context of a communal lament:<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> O’Kennedy, “Vergifnis,” 139.

<sup>53</sup> Goldingay, *Daniel*, 243.

<sup>54</sup> Montgomery directly links this verse to Dan 9:16. See James A. Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 367. He is followed by, among others, Collins, *Daniel*, 351.

תְּשִׁימוּנוֹ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ לְעַג וְקֶלֶס לְסָבִיבוֹתֵינוּ:

“You have made us the taunt of our neighbours, the derision and scorn of those around us.” Here, however, the blame seems to be on God – He is active in setting up his people as a taunt. The tenor in Dan 9:16 is different, because the supplicant already recognised the role that the people played in their downfall. Thus, it is proposed that Ps 79:4 is in fact the text that the author of Dan 9 has in mind:

הֵיינוּ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ לְעַג וְקֶלֶס לְסָבִיבוֹתֵינוּ:

“We have become a taunt to our neighbours, mocked and derided by those around us.” Although the wording is basically the same as in Ps 44:14 the major difference is that God is not blamed by the people for their circumstances. Furthermore, the content of Ps 79, with its reference to the defilement of the temple; the ruining of Jerusalem; and death caused by the enemy surely has a direct bearing on the situation and suffering of the Jews in Jerusalem in the second century B.C.E. Through this allusion the author of Dan 9 reminds his readers of a previous event during which God’s people endured tremendous suffering. In that context God did come to the aid of his people. Not only the people, but also God, is reminded of this. The author acknowledges that the people have brought their present condition on themselves. However, at the same time God is called upon to act in favour of his people so that they will not remain the taunt of their neighbours. Daniel 9:17 presents a second plea<sup>55</sup> by the supplicant, and a call on God to hear his prayer:

וְעַתָּה | שְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶל-תְּפִלַּת עַבְדְּךָ וְאֶל-תַּחֲנוּנָיו וְהֶאֱרַךְ פְּנֵיךָ עַל-מִקְדָּשְׁךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְמַעַן אֲדַנִּי:

“Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his supplication, ....” It is a common feature of the Psalms that God is called upon to listen to the person praying. Where this occurs in the Psalms, this call is usually stated at the beginning or in the introductory part of the psalm. In Dan 9 it is located towards the end of the supplication. Again, the regular occurrence of this feature in Psalms means that we cannot immediately recognise the specific Psalm alluded to here. However, the author does succeed in pointing the reader towards more than what is directly stated. The key to this additional meaning is provided by the fact that in the Psalms all these phrases occur at the beginning of a song of lament or complaint. Psalm 86:6 states:

הֲאֲזִינָה יְהוָה תְּפִלָּתִי וְהִקְשִׁיבָה בְּקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֹתַי:

“Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication.” In Ps 55:2 a very similar expression is found:

הֲאֲזִינָה אֱלֹהִים תְּפִלָּתִי וְאֶל-תַּתְּעַלֵּם מִתַּחֲנוּנָי:

<sup>55</sup> O’Kennedy, “Vergifnis,” 139.



"Give ear to my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my supplication." The word pair, "prayer" and "supplication," is also found in Ps 143:1, in a line that is very close to Dan 9:17:

שְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתִי הָאֵינָה אֱלֹהֵי תַחֲנוּנֵי בְּאַמְנַתְךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ:

"Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness; answer me in your righteousness." What the author is invoking through this allusion to psalms of lament or complaint in general is the idea of someone in distress putting his trust in God as deliverer. What Gerstenberger observes with regard to psalms of complaint in general seems to be appropriate here. In his observation, these songs were "articulated when the final blow had not yet fallen."<sup>56</sup> By means of an allusion to these types of psalms, then, the author of Dan 9 points the reader towards the possibility of deliverance. The earlier allusion to Ps 106 indicated that such deliverance was a distinct possibility. The last verse of Daniel's prayer (v. 19) also provides possible allusions to the Psalms. In this verse we read:

אֲדַגֵּן | שְׁמַעְהָ אֲדַגֵּן | סְלַחְהָ אֲדַגֵּן הַקְּשִׁיבָה וְעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהֵי אֶתְחַחֵר לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהֵי בֵּי-שְׁמַיִךְ נִקְרָא עַל-עִירְךָ וְעַל-עַמְּךָ:

"O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, listen and act and do not delay! For your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people bear your name!" Collins is correct in noting that the "staccato ending of the prayer conveys a sense of urgent insistence."<sup>57</sup> The sense of urgency is heightened by the call not to delay. This call is a familiar one in the Psalms. The following examples can be mentioned:

וְאֲנִי | עָנִי וְאַבְיוֹן אֲדַגֵּן יִחַשְׁבֵּן לִי עֲזָרְתִי וּמִפְּלִטִי אֶתְהַחֵר אֱלֹהֵי אֶתְחַחֵר:

"As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God" (Ps 40:18); and

וְאֲנִי | עָנִי וְאַבְיוֹן אֱלֹהִים חֲוֹשֵׁה לִי עֲזָרִי וּמִפְּלִטִי אֶתְהַחֵר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֶתְחַחֵר:

"But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay!" (Ps 70:6). In both cases these words appear at the end of a supplication, as is the case in Dan 9:19. Again, this may merely reflect a stock ending to a prayer, but more may be at stake here. The fact that the author chooses this ending may recall for his readers the similar endings in Pss 40 and 70. Since there is more to an allusion than the words quoted, we should pay special attention to the slight variation between the last verses of the two psalms under consideration. Psalm 40, which probably reuses

<sup>56</sup> Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 54.

<sup>57</sup> Collins, *Daniel*, 351.

an older Ps 70, makes a very significant addition to the last verse: "but the Lord takes thought for me." If the author intended his call on God not to delay as an allusion to the psalms mentioned, then this addition to Ps 40:18 could be seen as holding the key to why these psalms are alluded to. In the context of Dan 9 this allusion is strengthened when the next verse (v. 20) introduces a section in which God's messenger comes to the one praying with a message of interpretation and understanding – truly the Lord did think of his servant!

The last allusion to the Psalms that we find in Dan 9 returns the attention to the earlier allusion to Ps 79 (cf. discussion on Dan 9:15). In Ps 79:9 God is called to action on behalf of the supplicant "for your name's sake." The context of Ps 79 is one of death, destruction and suffering. Amid these circumstances the action that God is required to take relates to the sake of His name. Through this allusion, the author of Dan 9 enforces the idea that the purpose of God's rescue, which has prevailed throughout Israel's history, is for the benefit of his name. Once this utterance has been made, the door is open for a messenger to enter the scene (cf. Dan 9:20 ff).

## F CONCLUSION

This contribution investigated the use of allusion in a central chapter in the book of Daniel in order to illustrate how some psalms were used very early on in the development of Judaism to serve as encouragement for people during a period of immense suffering. It showed that definite instances of allusion to different psalms occur in Dan 9. Furthermore, the use of the literary technique of allusion ensured that the readers of Dan 9 could link their situation to previous episodes in the *Heilsgeschichte* of Israel. Through this process, people found comfort in the larger picture painted of God's involvement with his people in dire circumstances. This function of psalms as noted in the book of Daniel continues today, in circumstances where religious communities and individuals find themselves faced with various forms of suffering.

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