THE GOAT FROM THE SOUTHWEST
IN THEODOTION'S DANIEL TRANSLATION,
THEODORET'S COMMENTARY,
AND THE *ALEXANDER ROMANCE**

Abstract: According to Theodotion's translation of the Book of Daniel, in one of Daniel's visions a he-goat, interpreted as the king of Greece, is said to attack a ram, the king of Media and Persia, from the southwest, while the Septuagint translation says from the west. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, basing his commentary on Theodotion's translation, explains this verse as referring to Alexander's march from Egypt to his final battle against Darius at Gaugamela. In so doing, he must disregard the remainder of Alexander's campaign against the Persians (of which he is clearly aware). He also eschews as a source the *Alexander Romance*, which offered a point of origin for Alexander's attack on the Persian Empire perfectly consistent with Theodotion's 'from the southwest', but was thoroughly unreliable as an historical source. It is possible, nevertheless, that the translation of Theodotion was itself influenced by the *Alexander Romance* on this point.

Keywords: Book of Daniel, Theodotion, Septuagint, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Alexander Romance*

Although some of the broader tendencies of Theodotion's rendering of Daniel, such as the preference for transliteration over translation of certain Hebrew nouns, have often been noted, I would like to draw attention to a minor discrepancy between Theodotion and the Septuagint. Theodotion's variant translation called forth a special explanation on the part of Theodoret of Cyrrhus. While this interpretation retains no exegetical value apart from Theodotion's translation, it still bears testimony not so much to Theodoret's method, as to his conscientiousness as a Bible commentator. Both Theodotion's translation and Theodoret's commentary, moreover, raise questions about the influence of the *Alexander Romance*.

In the prophecies of the Book of Daniel a he-goat is said to come from the west "on the face of the whole earth" and to fatally strike the ram who had previously been preeminent.[1] The goat is explained as the king of Greece, that is, Alexander, and the ram as "the king of Media and Persia".[2] The Septuagint and Theodotion translated this verse and especially the Hebrew phrase מן־בּרעם in two different ways.[3] The Septuagint (or Old Greek) rendering had the goat come ἀπὸ δυσμῶν, that is, simply 'from the west'. The translation attributed to Theodotion, however, had him come ἀπὸ λιβός. Λίψ may mean simply south or simply west, but its primary and precise sense was southwest, as in a southwest wind.[4] The variation is minor, but it creates a difficulty for the exegete. Whereas the advance of the goat from the west is easily explicable in terms of Alexander's invasion of the Persian Empire from Macedon, across the Hellespont, and through Asia Minor, it was not clear how Alexander was to be understood to come at the Persians from the southwest. Nor was the problem found merely in a negligible variant version; Theodotion's was by far the preferred rendering of the Book of Daniel, at least, for Christian readers in antiquity.[5]

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1) Dan. 8.5–8. See J. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel (Edinburgh 1927) 329–32; A. Lacocque, The Book of Daniel (Atlanta 1979) 156–65; J. Collins, Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel (Minneapolis 1993) 325–43; R. Kratz, The Visions of Daniel, in: J. Collins / P. Flint (eds.), The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception (Boston / Leiden 2001) I 99–105; C. Newsom / B. Breed, Daniel: A Commentary (Louisville 2014) 261–2.

2) Dan. 8.20–21. See G. Wirth, Der Weg in die Vergessenheit: Zum Schicksal des antiken Alexanderbildes (Wien 1993) 23–6, cf. 58–68.

3) A. Rahlfs (ed.), Septuaginta, Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes (Stuttgart 1935) II 917.

4) Hdt. 2.25.2; Arist. Mete. 364B2, [Mund.] 394B27; Theoc. Id. 9.11; Polyb. 10.10.3.

5) Jerome, Prolog. in Dan., Comm. in Dan. 4.5a; R. Weber (ed.), Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem (Stuttgart 1975) 1341; F. Glorie (ed.), S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Commentariorum in Danielem Libri III ⟨IV⟩ (Turnhout 1964), (CCSL 75A) 811. See Montgomery (n. 1 above) 46–50; P. Grelot, Les versions grecques de Daniel, Biblica 47 (1966) 381–402; Collins (n. 1 above) 9–11; N. Fernández Marcos, The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible, trans. W. Watson (Leiden 2000) 143–4; K. Jobes / M. Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint (Grand Rapids 2000) 41 and n. 30; J. Dines, The Septuagint (London / New York 2004) 23–4, 86; T. McLay, Daniel (Old Greek and Theodotion), in: J. Aitken (ed.), The T & T Clark Companion to the Septuagint (London / New York 2015) 551–2. Cf. E. Tov, The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint (Leiden 1999) 519–26.

Nevertheless, neither Hippolytus nor Jerome faced this difficulty, since Hippolytus, although he also read ἀπὸ λιβὸς in this verse, was concerned with the personalities intended and did not bother with the direction of march, and Jerome took the goat as coming from the west.[6]

In his commentary on Daniel (written c. 433[7]), Theodoret of Cyrrhus followed Theodotion's translation and understood ἀπὸ λιβὸς in its precise sense of 'from the southwest' and so explained the words as meaning that the goat, Alexander, first conquered Egypt and then proceeded against Persia:

> ἀπὸ λιβὸς δὲ αὐτὸν ἐληλυθέναι ἔφη, ἐπειδὴ πρότερον Αἴγυπτον χειρωσάμενος οὕτως εἰς τὴν Περσῶν ἐλήλυθε χώραν. ἐνίκησε μὲν γὰρ τὸν Δαρεῖον ἐν τῇ Κιλικίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖθεν τὴν Συρίαν, καὶ Φοινίκην, καὶ Παλαιστίνην διαδραμών, καὶ τὰς μὲν τῶν πόλεων ὁμολογίᾳ λαβών, τὰς δὲ βίᾳ ἑλών, εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον ὥρμησεν· εἶτα κἀκείνην τὴν βασιλείαν παραλαβών, τὴν Περσίδα καταλαμβάνει, καὶ τὴν μεγίστην αὐτῶν καταλύει βασιλείαν.[8]

> He [Daniel] says that he [the goat, that is, Alexander] came f r o m t h e s o u t h w e s t, because, having already taken possession of Egypt, he advanced into the land of the Persians. For he had defeated Darius in Cilicia, but from there he hurried through Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, and having taken some of the cities by capitulation and having seized others by force he rushed on to Egypt; then once he had taken possession of that kingdom, he laid hold of Persia and made an end of their superlatively great dominion.

The route described here is the standard itinerary of Alexander's expedition found in the most reliable historical accounts: Alexander defeated Darius at Issus and proceeded south along the Levantine coast to Egypt. It is only the final thrust of the campaign against the Persians, at the end of which Alexander administered the coup de grâce to the armies of Darius at Gaugamela and pene-

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6) Hippolytus, Comm. in Dan. 4.26, G. Bonwetsch (ed.), Hippolyt Werke, 1.1: Kommentar zu Daniel, rev. M. Richard (Berlin 2000), (GCS NF 7) 254; Jerome, Comm. in Dan. 8.5b–9a; Glorie (n. 5 above) 852–4.

7) R. Hill, Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on Daniel (Atlanta 2006) xii–xiv; cf. M. Richard, L'activité littéraire de Théodoret avant le concile d'Éphèse, RSPh 24 (1935) 83, 106. See also K. Koch, Europa, Rom und der Kaiser vor dem Hintergrund von zwei Jahrtausenden Rezeption des Buches Daniel (Hamburg 1997) 68.

8) Theodoret, Comm. in Dan. 8.5. PG 81.1441A–B. Migne's text is reproduced, along with an English translation, in Hill (n. 7 above) 206–9.

trated into the Persian heartland, that emanates from Egypt. Theodoret's understanding of the route of Alexander's expedition is confirmed by his comment on the subsequent verses:

> πρώτοις μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἐκείνου συμβαλὼν στρατηγοῖς ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν τόποις, πᾶσαν αὐτῶν ἐκείνην ἀφείλατο τὴν ἀρχήν. εἶτα τοῦ Δαρείου κατὰ τὴν Κιλικίαν μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς στρατείας ἀπαντήσαντος, ἑτέρα γίνεται συμπλοκὴ, καὶ τρέπεται μὲν ὁ Δαρεῖος εἰς φυγήν, πολλοὺς δὲ τῆς στρατείας καταναλώσας ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἔλαβεν αἰχμαλώτους τοῦ Δαρείου τὰς θυγατέρας. εἶτα αὖθις μετὰ τὴν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐπάνοδον, περὶ τὴν Βαβυλῶνα παραταξάμενος, αὐτόν τε τὸν Δαρεῖον ἀνεῖλε, καὶ τὴν Περσικὴν κατέλυσε βασιλείαν.[9]

> For first he joined battle with the generals of that man in the places along Asia and took away all their power. Then, when he encountered Darius with a great army down near Cilicia, another engagement occurred and Darius was put to flight, while Alexander devastated many of the army and took the daughters of Darius prisoner. Then again after his return from Egypt, drawing up his battle lines near Babylon, he destroyed Darius himself and made an end of the Persian dominion.

Asia here is Asia Minor and the region of Alexander's first victory over the satraps of Darius is at the Granicus; Cilicia, once again, refers to the battle at Issus; coming from Egypt, Alexander is supposed to defeat Darius at a final battle near Babylon, that is, at Gaugamela.

Theodoret can explain Daniel's he-goat coming from the southwest inasmuch as the final and fatal stroke of Alexander's campaign against Darius is launched from Egypt. This accounts for the goat's attack on the ram well enough, but the Biblical text does not indicate any previous movement on the part of the goat or a change of course, rather the goat seems to appear on the scene from the southwest. Theodoret's explanation requires him to discount the whole of Alexander's expedition up to his arrival in Egypt, material of which he is obviously aware, as insignificant preliminaries that the prophet was willing to pass over in silence. There was, however, another account of Alexander in circulation in Theodoret's day that would have provided a narrative rather more consistent with Daniel's verse as Theodotion renders it. The *Alexander Romance* (made up of some elements in circulation fifty or a hundred years after Alexander's death, although we do not have evidence for the composition as a whole until c. AD 270–

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9) Theodoret, Comm. in Dan. 8.6–7. PG 81.1441C; Hill (n. 7 above) 208–9.

330[10]) did not conform to the route of Alexander as it was presented by all of the reliable historical sources, but, in its earliest version, related that Alexander did not make war on the Persians until he had circled round the Mediterranean, adding Rome and Egypt to his kingdom.[11] His attack on the Persian Empire thus commenced from Egypt and he marched north to meet the Persian army for the first time at Issus.[12] Even in the later β recension (c. 500) of the *Romance*, although Alexander did cross the Hellespont and fought the Persians at the Granicus, he broke off after conquering the western seaboard of Asia Minor, made a circuit of the western Mediterranean, and began the war in earnest after he left Egypt.[13] The best histories require a bit of juggling for them to be used to explain the goat's approach from the southwest, but the *Romance* has Alexander initiate his attack on the Persian Empire from Egypt, from the southwest, and so agrees perfectly with Theodotion's translation of Daniel's prophecy. That Theodoret did not exploit such a congenial text raises questions about his source selection, particularly in regard to Alexander.

Alexander is seldom mentioned in the extensive surviving writings of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and none of the references to Alexander is sufficiently detailed or idiosyncratic to allow us to identify a specific source. Most of Theodoret's references to Alexander occur in the commentary on Daniel and are intended to make sense of the prophecies which, clearly or more obscurely, allude to the Macedonian king. He identifies the third kingdom of bronze in Nebuchadnezzar's initial vision as the kingdom of Alexander, who de-

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10) On the problem of dating the *Alexander Romance*, see R. Stoneman, The Greek Alexander Romance (London 1991) 8–17; C. Jouanno, Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre: Domaine grec (Paris 2002) 13–34; R. Stoneman, Il Romanzo di Alessandro, Volume I, trans. T. Gargiulo (Milan 2007) xxii–xxxiv; cf. J. Trumpf, Pap. Berl. 21266: Ein Beleg für die historische Quelle des griechischen Alexanderromans?, ZPE 155 (2006) 85–90. On the various versions and recensions of the *Romance*, see R. Stoneman, Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend (New Haven 2008) 230–54.

11) Al. Rom. (α) 1.26.3–34.9; W. Kroll (ed.), Historia Alexandri Magni (Pseudo-Callisthenes). Recensio Vetusta (Berlin 1926) 26–39.

12) Al. Rom. 1.34.9, 35, 41.

13) Al. Rom. (β) 1.28; L. Bergson (ed.), Der Griechische Alexanderroman, Rezension β (Stockholm 1965) 42–3. The material on the preliminary foray across the Hellespont was either omitted from the earlier α recension or added to the later β recension; see Stoneman (n. 10 above) 516; Jouanno (n. 10 above) 261–3.

stroyed the Persian kingdom.[14] He deems the representation of
Alexander as the beast like a leopard as appropriate because of its
speed and swiftness and diversity of appearance.[15] As we have seen,
Theodoret, taking the lead of the text, interprets the he-goat as
Alexander.[16] And he refers to the dissolution of Alexander's empire
after his death in order to explain the division of the kingdom to
the four winds in the eleventh chapter.[17] Theodoret also exploits the
imagery of Daniel, which depicted Alexander as a goat, in his com-
mentary on Jeremiah, and indicates in the same work that Alexan-
der destroyed the kingdom of the Egyptians and makes them sub-
servient to the Macedonians[18] – this is particularly inconsistent with
the *Alexander Romance*, in which the Egyptians hail Alexander as
their rightful king.[19] He likewise speaks, in his commentary on the
Minor Prophets, of Alexander as the last in a series of foreign con-
querors to place Egypt in subjection; Theodoret refers to the visit of
Alexander to the Oracle of Ammon at Siwa to explain another verse
in the same passage.[20] Theodoret, moreover, refers, in the *Questions
on the Octateuch*, to Alexander's overthrow of the Persian Empire
to indicate the sense in which Chittim shall afflict Asshur in the
prophecy of Balaam.[21] In the commentary on Isaiah he alludes to
Alexander's supposed encounter with the Jewish high priest and
how his anger was turned to reverence;[22] the earliest surviving ac-

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14) Theodoret, Comm. in Dan. 2.43. PG 81.1305C–D; Hill (n. 7 above) 58–9.

15) Theodoret, Comm. in Dan. 7.6. PG 81.1417B–D; Hill (n. 7 above) 180–83.

16) Theodoret, Comm. in Dan. 8.5–7, 21–2. PG 81.1440D–1441D, 1449C; Hill (n. 7 above) 206–9, 218–9.

17) Theodoret, Comm. in Dan. 11.3–4. PG 81.1501D–1504A; Hill (n. 7 above) 278–9. Cf. Theodoret, Comm. in Psal., praef. (PG 80.864A), in which he says that the Septuagint translation was carried out in the time of Ptolemy, who ruled Egypt after Alexander.

18) Theodoret, Comm. in Jer. 46(26).16, 50(27).8. PG 81.712C, 741A.

19) Al. Rom. (α) i.3.4–6, 34.3–6. Alexander, moreover, conducts himself as a legitimate king, rather than an oppressive conqueror, by expending the tribute of the Egyptians on 'their own' city of Alexandria, and the Egyptians volunteer to help him fight the Persians; Al. Rom. (α) 1.34.9, 2.4.5–8.

20) Theodoret, Comm. in Naiium 3.8–10. PG 81.1804C–1805B.

21) Theodoret, Quaest in oct., Num. 44.1, referring to Num. 24.24. R. Hill / J. Petruccione, Theodoret of Cyrus: The Questions on the Octateuch (Washington, D. C. 2007) II 156–7. Cf. 1 Macc. 1.1.

22) Theodoret, Comm. in Is. 60.10. PG 81.468A: οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀλεξάν-δρου τὴν ἱερατικὴν στολὴν θεασαμένου, καὶ μεταβαλλομένου τὸν θυμὸν εἰς προσ-κύνησιν.

count of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem is found in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, but by the fifth century it was so widespread that we are not in a position to isolate a source for Theodoret's reference.[23] And, in order to accentuate the glory and the power of the martyrs and the assiduity with which their graves are visited, he notes, in the Θεραπευτική or *Cure for Pagan Maladies*, that the graves of Alexander and the other great world rulers are lost and forgotten.[24]

There is no indication that Theodoret was aware of the *Alexander Romance*, so we cannot say whether it was discrimination or ignorance that led him to rely upon dependable historical sources, even though this required him to select only one portion of Alexander's campaign as the subject of Daniel's reference. What remains remarkable is that although Theodoret makes only a few brief, scattered references to the figure of Alexander, he was conscientious enough to have made himself familiar with the general outline of Alexander's career from reliable sources before he made those comments he did about him. This is perfectly consistent with the paramount intention Theodoret shared with the whole of the Antiochene exegetical school to reconcile prophecy with history.[25]

Even if Theodoret did not exploit the *Alexander Romance*, there remains the possibility that Theodotion did. Particularly when we consider the fact that Theodotion's version had the reputation in antiquity, and with some reservations still does, of being a

23) Joseph. AJ 11.8.3–7 (313–47); cf. Origen, C. Cels 5.50; August. De civ. D. 18.45.2. See V. Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, trans. S. Applebaum (Philadelphia 1959) 42–50; A. Momigliano, Flavius Josephus and Alexander's Visit to Jerusalem, Athenaeum 57 (1979) 442–8; G. Delling, Alexander der Grosse als Bekenner des Jüdischen Gottesglaubens, JSJ 12 (1981) 1–51; S. Cohen, Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest According to Josephus, AJS Review 7 (1982) 41–68; J. Nadich, Jewish Legends of the Second Commonwealth (Philadelphia 1983) 37–44; E. Bammel, Der Zeuge des Judentums, in: W. Will / J. Heinrichs (eds.), Zu Alexander d. Gr. Festschrift G. Wirth zum 60. Geburtstag am 9.12.86 (Amsterdam 1987–88) I 279–87; J. Goldstein, Alexander and the Jews, Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Records 59 (1993) 59–101; Wirth (n. 2 above) 20–23; R. Stoneman, Jewish Traditions on Alexander the Great, Studia Philonica Annual 6 (1994) 37–53; Jouanno (n. 10 above) 378–81; O. Amitay, From Alexander to Jesus (Berkeley 2010) 119–20, 127.
24) Theodoret, Graecarum affectionum curatio 8.60–61; P. Canivet (ed.), Théodoret de Cyr, Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques (Paris 1958), (SC 57) 332–3.
25) Hill (n. 7 above) xi–xxxiv. Cf. G. Ashby, Theodoret of Cyrrhus as Exegete of the Old Testament (Grahamstown 1972) 133–7.

revision of the Septuagint rather than a fresh translation,[26] it would be strange that Theodotion should prefer the problematic ἀπὸ λιβὸς to the straightforward ἀπὸ δυσμῶν if there were not some influence at work upon his choice. And there is no reason to doubt that the *Alexander Romance*, or its constituent parts, could have been available to Theodotion. On the one hand, the material in the *Romance* connected with Egypt appears to be amongst its very earliest elements, springing from Ptolemaic efforts to legitimize Graeco-Macedonian rule in Egypt and perhaps going back as far as the third century BC.[27] On the other hand, all of our testimonies to the life of Theodotion, contradictory and dubious as they are, suggest that he lived in the second century AD.[28] Irenaeus speaks of Theodotion as a Jewish proselyte from Ephesus and seems to suggest that he preceded his fellow proselyte and Bible translator, Aquila of Pontus.[29] According to Epiphanius, Theodotion lived in the reign of Commodus (180–192) and was a disciple of Marcion (d. c. 160) before his conversion to Judaism, but Epiphanius' information seems to be confused, since he has Theodotion come, like Aquila, from Pontus.[30] Jerome says that Theodotion was an Ebionite, that is, he belonged to an early Jewish-Christian sect.[31]

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26) Epiphanius, De mens. et pond. 17; Jerome, In Eccl. 2, Praef. in Psalmos. See T. McLay, It's a Question of Influence: The Theodotion and Old Greek Texts of Daniel, in: A. Salvesen (ed.), Origen's Hexapla and Fragments (Tübingen 1998) 231–54; Fernández Marcos (n. 5 above) 143; Jobes / Silva (n. 5 above) 286–7 and n. 43; Dines (n. 5 above) 86. Cf. T. McLay, The Old Greek Translation of Daniel IV–VI and the Formation of the Book of Daniel, VT 55 (2005) 304–23, esp. 323; McLay (n. 5 above) 548.

27) B. Berg, An Early Source of the Alexander Romance, GRBS 14 (1973) 381–7; A. Samuel, The Earliest Elements in the Alexander Romance, Historia 35 (1986) 429; S. Burstein, SEG 33.802 and the Alexander Romance, ZPE 77 (1989) 275–6; R. Jasnow, The Greek Alexander Romance and Demotic Egyptian Literature, JNES 56 (1997) 95–103; Stoneman (n. 10 above) xxviii–xxxii.

28) See Fernández Marcos (n. 5 above) 148–50; Jobes / Silva (n. 5 above) 41–3; Dines (n. 5 above) 84–7; T. Law, Origen's Parallel Bible: Textual Criticism, Apologetics, or Exegesis, JThS 59 (2008) 6–8. This paper does not attempt to address, let alone solve, the vexed question of the date and identity of Theodotion, or even the problematic ascription of the Theodotion-Daniel to Theodotion, but takes the conservative view that there is some, as yet not ultimately determined, validity to the ancient testimonies to Theodotion. Cf. A. Schmitt, Stammt der sogenannte "ϑ′"-Text bei Daniel wirklich von Theodotion? (Göttingen 1966).

29) Irenaeus, Adv. haer. 3.21.1.

30) Epiph. De mens. et pond. 17.

31) Jerome, De vir. ill. 54.

The interval between the probable first appearance of the Egyptian elements of the *Alexander Romance* and the second-century date associated with Theodotion allows ample time for the diffusion of the *Romance*'s version of events in which Alexander launches his attack on the Persian Empire from Egypt. There is still time for such a dissemination even if, with some scholars, we discard the patristic evidence and view the so-called Theodotionic version of Daniel as a work predating the New Testament.[32] Sadly, we know too little of the life of Theodotion, or the circumstances of his predecessors, to suggest a reason for his possible exploitation of such a source as the *Alexander Romance*. Nor is a single ambivalent word enough to confirm that he revised the Septuagint's ἀπὸ δυσμῶν to ἀπὸ λιβὸς with the *Romance* in mind, but the odd and troubling sense this choice of words created should compel us to at least entertain the possibility.

Theodotion's translation of Daniel creates a problem for the exegete inasmuch as it had the goat representing Alexander attack the Persian ram from the southwest, rather than the west. Theodoret tackled this problem by taking Daniel's prophecy to refer not to Alexander's campaign as a whole, but to only one portion of it, the departure from Egypt and the march to Gaugamela. To his credit, Theodoret preferred reliable historical sources on Alexander, which required a certain amount of trimming and adjustment in order to be applied to the verse in Daniel, over such a questionable source as the *Alexander Romance*, which, nevertheless, suited Theodotion's rendering of Daniel perfectly, since it had Alexander commence his invasion of the Persian Empire from Egypt. The possibility remains, however, that Theodotion's translation itself, which eschewed the straightforward 'from the west' for the troublesome 'from the southwest', was influenced in this verse in particular by the *Alexander Romance* or some of the components that would one day make it up.

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32) A. Di Lella, The Textual History of Septuagint-Daniel and Theodotion-Daniel, in: Collins / Flint (n. 1 above) II 586–607; McLay (n. 5 above) 546–7. Cf. K. Koch, Die Herkunft der proto-Theodotion-Übersetzung des Danielsbuches, VT 23 (1973) 362–65.