

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN OLD ARAMAIC INSCRIPTIONS AND THE ARAMAIC SECTION OF DANIEL

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Problem. In scholarly debates on the origin of Danielic Aramaic (DA), the corpus of Old-Aramaic (OA) texts has not received full attention. Thus, there is a lack of comparative studies between DA and OA. This type of study serves a twofold purpose: It contributes to providing an answer to the questions of origin of DA, and it provides fresh insights into both OA and DA.

Method. The present study of OA texts has been organized into seven sections which pertain to the literary and linguistic character of every one of the inscriptions: Description, Nature, Structure, Vocabulary, Orthography and Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax. The discussion of each of these sections has brought its corresponding subject into contact with the text of DA.

Eight OA inscriptions dating from the ninth to the seventh centuries B.C. have been studied. To these, six other inscriptions have been added since they come from a period of transition from OA into Official Aramaic (OfA).

Results. The text of DA in its present form contains a significant amount of material similar to OA texts. Literary evidence presented in this study on structure and vocabulary, as well as grammar (especially orthography) and syntax, points to the presence of early material in DA.

This contextual study of OA texts contributes to the present discussions on DA in that it presents the answers to certain objections raised regarding the traditional dating of DA. The study has produced a number of parallels which provide a better understanding of the literary, historical, and cultural situations of both dialects.

Three factors have to be accounted for in any conclusion on DA: geography, chronology, and the literary character of the text. A *desideratum* raised by this study is that the search for early dated features in DA should be pursued more intensively in the future.