

## **INTRODUCTION**

## 1. COORDINATES ON A NEW METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

“Book of Daniel” (= *Dn*) can be considered as one of the most complex texts included in First Testament, due to both its elaboration process and literary structure<sup>1</sup>. If critics, and signally the branch dealing with the study of Hebrew Bible, have widely focused on its “internal” features, principally trying to determine some essential points about its history and formation<sup>2</sup>, scholars interested in Christian origins have primarily concentrated on the fortune and reception of *Dn*, which consistently conditioned the development of early Jewish and paleochristian reflection<sup>3</sup>.

The present research can be placed among the studies that aim at defining the range and the significance of *Dn* influence on early Christianities, with the intention to individuate and reconstruct the multifarious exegetical techniques activated in the process of selection, interpretation and use of such material. In order to fully understand the presupposes underling this work and its organization, it is first of all necessary to shortly introduce:

- the *status quaestionis* concerning *Dn*, its fortune and the analytic perspectives so far assumed in this field;
- the reasons that have determined the adoption of a specific method in the investigation;
- the plan of the present work.

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<sup>1</sup> B. MARCONCINI, *Daniele. Nuova versione, introduzione e commento*, Milano 2004, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra*, pp. 3-6.

<sup>3</sup> For an outline of *Dn* influence see J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel*, Minneapolis 1993 (Hermeneia. A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible), pp. 72-123. About *Dn* reception in apocalyptic literature see in part. G.K. BEALE, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St John*, Lanham 1984.

## 1.1 DANIEL IN FIRST TESTAMENT: REFERENCES ABOUT SOME PROBLEMATIC QUESTIONS

Critics have so far pursued a thorough study of *Dn* internal features, with the peculiar objective to establish and define some fundamental coordinates concerning its structure and the complicated history of its composition. Many studies on specific subjects have been so far published<sup>4</sup>, but the consistent number of commentaries<sup>5</sup> can be undoubtedly considered as the most relevant outcome of such research branch. Though it would be impossible to expose in detail either the range of issues connected with the “book”<sup>6</sup> or the complete panorama of studies on them, it is at least necessary, for the purposes of the present research, to draw the attention on *some* specific topics directly associated with the reconstruction of *Dn* circulation and fortune.

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<sup>4</sup> A rich bibliography is presented by J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. xxi-xxxiv and B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 189-206.

<sup>5</sup> A section of the final bibliography is dedicated to *Dn* commentaries; see *infra*, bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> As it emerges from the commentaries, the problematic topics connected with *Dn* involve different domains and remain sometimes unsolved (B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 39). Besides the arguments shortly introduced in this premise, the main problems pertain to: the possible identity of the character of Daniel (among the others see M. DELCOR, *Le livre de Daniel*, Paris 1971 [Sources Bibliques], p. 14; L.F. HARTMANN, *Daniele*, in A. BONORA-R. CAVEDO-F. MAISTRELLO [curr.], *Grande commentario biblico*, Brescia 1973, p. 574; J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 1-2; N.M. PORTEOUS, *Daniele*, Brescia 1999 [Antico Testamento 23], p. 21; B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 15-16); the eventual presence and the function of historical references in the text (L.F. HARTMANN in A. BONORA-R. CAVEDO-F. MAISTRELLO [curr.] 1973, p. 573; H. NIEHR in F. DALLA VECCHIA [cur.], *Introduzione all'Antico Testamento*, Brescia 2005, pp. 773-774); the process of formation of “tales”, their setting and their structure (J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 35-52; B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 23-24; 28-29; H. NIEHR in F. DALLA VECCHIA [cur.] 2005, pp. 771-775; see also A. LENGLET, *La structure littéraire de Daniel 2-7*, “Biblica” 53[1972], pp. 169-190; J.G. GAMMIE, *On the Intention and Sources of Daniel I-VI*, “Vetus Testamentum” 31 [1981], pp. 282-292); the function of “visions” and their setting (J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 60-61; B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 21; see also J.J. COLLINS, *The Apocalyptic Visions of the Book of Daniel*, Missoula 1977 [Harvard Semitic Monographs 16]); the number of authors involved in the text composition (L.F. HARTMANN in A. BONORA-R. CAVEDO-F. MAISTRELLO [curr.] 1973, p. 574), the pseudonymity (N.M. PORTEOUS 1999, pp. 21-22; J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 56-58); the relation between *Dn*, the prophetic tradition and the apocalyptic literature (see in part. G. BERNINI, *Daniele*, Roma 1984 [Nuovissima versione della Bibbia 28], pp. 44-54; J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 58-60; 70-71; N.M. PORTEOUS 1999, pp. 17-21; B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 18-21. See also J.J. COLLINS, *The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic*, “Journal of Biblical Literature” 94 [1975], pp. 218-234; G. BOCCACCINI, *È Daniele un testo apocalittico? Una ridefinizione del pensiero del libro di Daniele in rapporto al Libro dei Sogni e all'apocalittica*, “Henoc” 9 [1987], pp. 267-302; G. RAVASI, *Daniele e l'apocalittica*, Bologna 1990). About the literary unity of the text, an exhaustive dissertation is exposed by G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 16-36.

### 1.1.1. The linguistic structure

The first of these arguments is represented by an inescapable evidence: *Dn*, whose composition is commonly assigned to the Maccabean era<sup>7</sup>, appears in Hebrew Bible as a bilingual text, “being partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic”<sup>8</sup>. Since at the moment of its translation some additions in Greek were included<sup>9</sup>, the material circulating in early Christian communities was composed of the following linguistic sections:

➤ ARAMAIC SECTION:

*Dn* 2:4b-7:28: probably the most ancient core of *Dn*<sup>10</sup>, including “tales and narrations” about the prophet, his Hebrew companions and their deeds<sup>11</sup>.

➤ HEBREW SECTION:

*Dn* 1-2:4a: an introduction to the whole text<sup>12</sup>;

*Dn* 8-12: the so-called section of Daniel’s “visions”<sup>13</sup>.

➤ GREEK DEUTEROCANONICAL ADDITIONS<sup>14</sup>:

*Dn* 3:24-45: the prayer of Azarias<sup>15</sup>;

*Dn* 3:46-90: the Song of the three young Hebrews in the furnace<sup>16</sup>;

*Dn* 13<sup>17</sup>: the so-called “Book of Susanna”<sup>18</sup>;

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<sup>7</sup> G. BERNINI 1984, p. 36. N.M. PORTEOUS 1999, p. 15 and 24, places a possible date immediately before 164 B.C. B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 7, places the final redaction of the book between 175 and 164 B.C., while H. NIEHR in F. DALLA VECCHIA (cur.) 2005, p. 775, speaks about the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.

<sup>8</sup> J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 12; see also G. BERNINI 1984, p. 17-20. N.M. PORTEOUS 1999, p. 15, speaks about late-Aramaic dialect and late-Hebrew. About the Masoretic text of *Dn*, with a particular reference to Qumran fragments, see J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 2-3; see also G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 63-64 and B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 39-42.

<sup>9</sup> J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> See N.M. PORTEOUS 1999, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> About the possible unitary structure of these chapters see the study of A. LENGLET 1972, pp. 169-190, and the efficacious summary in G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 21-28, who states: “In *Dn* 2-7 dunque abbiamo scoperto non una serie qualsiasi di episodi del ciclo aramaico di Daniele, ma una serie concatenata di sei eventi, che si corrispondono a due a due in forma concentrica (...)”.

<sup>12</sup> About this introduction and its possible function see G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 34-35.

<sup>13</sup> A unitary structure has been hypothesized also for these chapters; see in part. O. PLÖGER 1965, pp. 24-119; O. EISSFELDT, *Daniels und seiner drei Gefährten Laufbahn im Babylonischen, Medischen und Persischen Dienst*, “Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft” 72 (1960), pp. 134-148; G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 21-28.

<sup>14</sup> According to B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 24, this material was included in the text at the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.

<sup>15</sup> About the probable Aramaic or Hebrew origin of the prayer see G. BERNINI 1984, p. 13. See also M. GILBERT, *Le prière d’Azarias*, “Nouvelle Revue Théologique” 96 (1974), pp. 561-583.

<sup>16</sup> A Semitic original version is hypothesized also for this section, see G. BERNINI 1984, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> The indication of chapter 13 alludes to the position of this section in the actual canon.

Dn 14: the story of Bel and the Dragon<sup>19</sup>.

The efforts of scholars both to establish a precise chronology of these materials and to investigate the reasons of such multilingualism have not so far brought to a fully satisfactory solution<sup>20</sup>.

### 1.1.2. The literary structure

For the purposes of the present research, it is useful to connect the problem of *Dn* linguistic features with another critical evidence: the distribution of Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek does not coincide with the organization of the literary genres coexisting in the biblical text<sup>21</sup>. A substantial difference allows to distinguish two fundamental cores:

- the first core of *Dn*, formed by chapters 1-6 and the Greek additions 13-14, includes the narration of the “tales” concerning the prophet, his companions and Susanna. The fact that these sections are developed in three different languages does not compromise their literary unity<sup>22</sup>. As appropriately underlined by L.F. HARTMANN, this material pertains to the “haggadic genre”, assuming the word used in Hebrew *mishnah* to define a story that does not necessarily have an historical fundament and it is rather narrated to convey a moral content<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Also the story of Susanna seems to presuppose the existence of a Semitic original version (see G. BERNINI 1984, p. 15). About this portion of the text see M. ENGEL, *Die Susanna Erzählung*, Göttingen 1985 (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 61).

<sup>19</sup> The story, which is placed at the end of *Dn* in Greek Bible (J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 3), seems to have been previously divided into two separate legends having Daniel as protagonist: the first one concerns the unmasking of Bel’s ministers by the prophet (*Dn* 14:1-22); the second one narrates the exposition of Daniel to lions as a punishment for the killing of the Dragon (*Dn* 14:23-42 – in this section appears the character of Habakkuk) – see G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 15-16 and J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 3-4.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed descriptions of these theories see G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 18-20 and 34-36; J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 12-13; B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 22-29; H. NIEHR in F. DALLA VECCHIA (cur.) 2005, pp. 771-774.

<sup>21</sup> See also *infra*, tab. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Such closeness is noticed also by G. BERNINI 1984, p. 13, who suggests to consider the text as divided in four different sections: 1) introduction; 2) the Aramaic cycle of Daniel; 3) the “visions”; 4) the deutero-canonical cycle (see p. 8). B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 17, underlines the similarities linking chapters 13-14 with chapters 1-6.

<sup>23</sup> L.F. HARTMANN 1973, p. 574. See also G. BERNINI 1984, p. 19, and B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 22, who explains: “All’interno del genere del *midrash*, *Dn* 1-6; 13-14 come racconti edificanti, di tipo narrativo o haggadico del giudaismo rabbinico, intendono ognuno dare un preciso insegnamento sotto la veste della finzione narrativa”. About the *midrash* see G. STEMBERGER, *Il midrash – Uso rabbinico della Bibbia. Introduzione, testi, commenti*, Bologna 1992.

- The second core of *Dn*, formed by chapters 7-12, includes the description of “visions” occurred to the prophet and reported in the first person<sup>24</sup>: such portion is generally considered as the “strictly apocalyptic” part of the “book”, consisting in a mysterious revelation of past and present events, with frequent allusions to the instauration of God’s kingdom<sup>25</sup>.

With the progress in the study of *Dn*, critics slowly disassociated from a stiff division of the text in the two mentioned literary sections, observing that such approach puts unavoidably in the shade the effective existence of three different linguistic units<sup>26</sup>; however, signally focusing on Christian reception, the distinction between “tales” and “visions” keeps on appearing particularly fruitful: as it will be progressively highlighted, both the history of *Dn* fortune and the distribution of quotations in Christian production seem to confirm the perception, since the antiquity, of a difference between the “haggadic” and the “apocalyptic” sections<sup>27</sup>. For this reason, without neglecting the importance of the linguistic element for a full comprehension of the “book” and constantly bearing in mind the artificial character of a rigid subdivision of it, the present work will underline the significant coexistence of two literary genres, the “tales” of chapters 1-6, 13-14, and the “visions” of chapters 7-12.

Here follows a scheme of the literary and linguistic distribution of *Dn* sections:

| <b>“HAGGADIC <i>DN</i>”<br/>(SECTION OF “TALES”)</b> | <b>“APOCALYPTIC <i>DN</i>”<br/>(SECTION OF “VISIONS”)</b> |
|--|---|
| <b><i>DN</i> 1 - 2:4A → HEBREW</b>                   |   |
| <b><i>DN</i> 2:4B - 3:23 → ARAMAIC</b>               |   |
| <b><i>DN</i> 3:24 - 90 → GREEK</b>                   |   |
| <b><i>DN</i> 3:91 - 6:29 → ARAMAIC</b>               |   |
|  | <b><i>DN</i> 7:1 - 7:28 → ARAMAIC</b>                     |
|  | <b><i>DN</i> 8 - 12 → HEBREW</b>                          |
| <b><i>DN</i> 13 - 14 → GREEK</b>                     |   |

(Tab. 1)

<sup>24</sup> G. BERNINI 1984, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> L.F. HARTMANN 1973, p. 574; G. BERNINI 1984, p. 19: “Questa seconda parte sarebbe quindi veramente un’Apocalisse”.

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, G. BERNINI 1984, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> See *infra*, p. 9.

### 1.1.3. *Daniel* Wirkungsgeschichte

The complex panorama concerning the Greek translations of *Dn* is strictly connected with the reception of the text in early Christian communities. The matter has been mainly debated in commentaries, which generally agree about an essential point: as Jerome by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century expressively affirms<sup>28</sup>, the Old Greek (= OG)<sup>29</sup> version of *Dn* was the less used by early Christian communities<sup>30</sup>, that soon replaced it with the translation assigned to Theodotion (= Θ), probably because of its more faithful rendering<sup>31</sup>. If Aquila (= α) and Symmachus (= σ) – known by Syro-Hexapla and patristic citations – “reflect the Masoretic Text with minimal exceptions and add little to the critical study of the text”<sup>32</sup>, Old Latin (= OL) versions, which seem to be as well testified by patristic citations, are in turn preferably based on Θ; they present, as Coptic and Ethiopic versions, “little independent value for text criticism”<sup>33</sup>.

If it is certainly true that critics have extensively reflected on the linguistic and literary features of Greek translations of *Dn*, an element that may deserve to be better-examined concerns the modality of the text circulation at the beginning of Christian era, with particular attention to the

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<sup>28</sup> See Jerome, *Preface to Daniel*, ed. PL 28, col. 1357.

<sup>29</sup> I adopt here the expression “Old Greek” used by J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 4. About the transmission of this text see J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 4-7; G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 64-66.

<sup>30</sup> As G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 64-65, underlines, it is possible that the ancients’ negative opinion about this translation depended on its distance from the original text, emerging especially from chapters 4-6 (see R. ALBERTZ, *Der Gott des Daniel. Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4-6 in der Septuagintafassung sowie zu Komposition und Theologie des aramäischen Danielbuches*, Stuttgart 1988 [Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 131]). About the possible “tendentious character” of OG version see J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 7-8. See also the article by F.F. BRUCE, *The Oldest Greek Version of Daniel*, “Oudtestamentische Studiën” 20 (1977), pp. 22-40; T.J. MEADOWCROFT, *Aramaic Daniel and Greek Daniel. A literary comparison*, Sheffield 1995. About specific passages of the text in OG see P.M. BOGAERT, *Daniel 3 LXX et son supplément grec*, in A.S. VAN DER WOUDE (ed.), *The Book of Daniel*, Leuven 1993 (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium 106), pp. 13-37, and the conspicuous production of P. GRELOT on the argument: *Le versions grecques de Daniel*, “Biblica” 47 (1966), pp. 381-402; *La Septante de Daniel IV et son substrat sémitique*, “Revue Biblique” 81 (1974), pp. 5-23; *Le chapitre V de Daniel dans la Septante*, “Semitica” 24 (1974), pp. 45-66. About the translation of “visions” section see also S.P. JEANSONNE, *The Old Greek Translation of Daniel 1-7*, Washington 1988 (Catholic Biblical Quarterly. Monograph Series 19). For a general panorama on *Dn* Greek versions see A.A. DI LELLA, *The Textual History of Septuaginta – Daniel and Theodotion – Daniel*, in J.J. COLLINS-P.W. FLINT (edd.), *The Book of Daniel. Composition and Reception*, II, Leiden- Boston-Köln 2001 (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83), pp. 586-607.

<sup>31</sup> See G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 66-67, and J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 9-11. A complicated matter that cannot be properly analysed in this context concerns the date of composition of such version, which is generally ascribed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, but actually presupposes OG, being in turn presupposed by New Testament: for this reason it may be dated before the turn of that era (see J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 10-11, who traces an exhaustive panorama on the issue; see also G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 66-67).

<sup>32</sup> J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 11.

story of Susanna<sup>34</sup>. The issue seems in fact to become concrete and interesting especially about this portion of the “book”, whose collocation inside *Dn* has been characterised by a certain instability: the story of the young woman is found “before *Dn* 1 in the version of Theodotion but after *Dn* 12 in the OG and in the Vulgate. It appears after Bel and the Serpent in Papyrus 967”<sup>35</sup>.

If this panorama suggests at least the possibility that “Susanna tale” kept on circulating as a single “book” also during paleochristian era, the study of *Dn* fortune may represent a further occasion to extend the reflection about the unity of the entire “book” in Christian origins; at the same time, such perspective may stimulate a more conscious analysis of the assumption and use of its Greek translations.

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<sup>34</sup> The eventual independency of “tales” is debated by critics, but in a perspective that focuses on their circulation *before* Christian translation and reception. It is the case of E. HAAG, *Die Errettung Daniels aus der Löwengrube: Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der biblischen Danieltradition*, Stuttgart 1983 (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 110), p. 12; S. NIDITCH, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition*, Chico 1983 (Harvard Semitic Monographs 30), pp. 225-226, and J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 37, about sections 3:31-6:28.

<sup>35</sup> J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 3. About the Papyrus 967 see *IBID.*, p. 4-5. About chapters 13 and 14, B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 22, summarizes: “questi ultimi due capitoli variano la loro posizione all’inizio o alla fine del testo, finché con la traduzione di S. Gerolamo sono collocati definitivamente alla fine.” About the reasons which may have determined the inclusion of the story of Susanna in *Dn* see H. NIEHR in F. DALLA VECCHIA (cur.) 2005, p. 779.



## 1.2. DANIEL AS A SOURCE FOR PALEOCHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES: ITS RECEPTION

Scholars seem to agree without exceptions about the importance of *Dn* in the development of early Christian reflection<sup>36</sup>. In spite of this evidence, an exhaustive bibliography on the matter does not seem to have been so far produced. Some coordinates concerning the *status quaestionis* deserve to be here summarized:

- Critics have eminently focused on the reception of “visions” in ancient Christianities, because of the prevalence of “apocalyptic *Dn*” in proto and early Christian literature. As A.Y. COLLINS affirms, “the use of *Dn* in Christian writings of the first two centuries was heavily concentrated on a few eschatological passages: the stone in chapter 2, the «one like a Son of Man» in chapter 7, the seventy weeks of chapter 9, and the account of the resurrection in chapter 12, with occasional references to chapters 3 and 6”<sup>37</sup>. Due to the minor consistence of “tales” quotations, their diffusion and their role in the elaboration of Christian documentation seem to have so far attracted the attention of scholars only in a marginal way<sup>38</sup>.
- Concerning the reception of “visions”, critics have concentrated on some peculiar themes recurring in early Christian production. Such inspection has been principally conducted in the context of scientific articles which select and extrapolate single passages and subjects<sup>39</sup>, or in specific sections of commentaries dedicated to *Dn* fortune<sup>40</sup>. The only monographic work remains R. BODENMANN, *Naissance d’une exégèse*:

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<sup>36</sup> See G. BERNINI 1984, p. 61-62; J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 90.

<sup>37</sup> See A.Y. COLLINS, in J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 112.

<sup>38</sup> About the reception of some themes extracted from “tales” see in part. the following articles: M. HENZE, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar. The Ancient Near Eastern Origins and Early History of Interpretation of Daniel 4*, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1999 e ID., *Nebuchadnezzar’s Madness (Daniel 4) in Syriac Literature*, in J.J. COLLINS-P.W. FLINT (edd.) II 2001 pp. 550-571. See also the following sections of commentaries: J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 105-107; B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 160-173 (here “tales” are especially mentioned in the paragraph dedicated to prayer – pp. 171-172). In his monographic work concerning the remission of sins and partially devoted to the role of martyrdom in this context, E. DASSMANN, *Sündenvergebung durch Taufe, Busse und Märtyrerfürbitte in den Zeugnissen frühchristlicher Frömmigkeit und Kunst*, Münster-Aschendorff 1973 (Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie 36), pp. 258-259, affirms that “die typologische und allegorische Deutung” of the subjects of Daniel in lions’ den and three Hebrews in the fiery furnace “ist nur schwach; die Väter kommen meistens sofort zur moralischen Auswertung der Haltung Daniels und der drei Jünglinge als Vorbilder des Gebetes und des standhaften Ausharrens im Martyrium, woraus ihnen die Rettung aus der Todesgefahr erwuchs”.

<sup>39</sup> See *infra*, n. 42.

<sup>40</sup> See for instance J.J. COLLINS 1993, pp. 90-123 and B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 42 and 155. Both scholars distinguish between the fortune of *Dn* in New Testament and further interpretations in ancient authors (in most cases, the latter are less accurately investigated). This approach can be considered as the most diffused.

*Daniel dans l'église ancienne de trois premiers siècles*, Tübingen 1986, focused on chapters 7 and 9. Apart from it, the miscellany edited by J.J. COLLINS and P.W. FLINT, *The Book of Daniel. Composition and Reception*, I-II, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001 (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83), including a wide portion dedicated to the circulation of the “book”, deserves to be mentioned<sup>41</sup>. Also in the latter case, the perspective of the analysis remains mainly linked to single themes and chapters. The most studied topic is undoubtedly represented by the fortune of the figure of the “Son of Man” (*Dn* 7:13)<sup>42</sup>. The other subjects on which scholars have so far preferably lingered are the “resurrection”<sup>43</sup>; the “Kingdom of God”<sup>44</sup>; the “angels”<sup>45</sup>.

- A methodological approach tending to trace a sharp division between literature and iconography has radically excluded visual documentation from the analysis of *Dn* reception<sup>46</sup>, though material documents testify, since their remote origin, the diffusion and the circulation of types extracted from the “book” and commonly considered among the most ancient and conspicuous in Christian production<sup>47</sup>. Significantly,

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<sup>41</sup> For a study devoted to the circulation of *Dn* in different cultures see K. BRACHT-D.S. DU TOIT (edd.), *Die Geschichte der Daniel-Auslegung in Judentum, Christentum und Islam*, Berlin-New York 2007 (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 371), in part. pp. 79-98 (K. BRACHT, Logos Parainetikos: *Der Danielkommentar des Hippolyt*).

<sup>42</sup> Among the other studies, see in part. T.W. MANSON, *The Son of Man in Daniel, Enoch and the Gospels*, “Bulletin of the John Rylands Library” 32 (1950), pp. 171-193; A. FEUILLET, *Le Fils de l'homme de Daniel et la tradition biblique*, “Revue Biblique” 60 (1955), pp. 170-202; 321-346; J. COPPENS, *Le Fils d'homme daniélique et les relectures de Dn 7,13 dans les apocryphes et les écrits du NT*, “Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses” 37 (1961), pp. 5-51; J. BRIEND, *Le chapitre VII du Livre de Daniel*, “Bulletin Communautaire des Études Sulplitiens” 51 (1967), pp. 26-38; M. CASEY, *Son of Man: The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7*, London 1979; B. LINDARS, *Jesus, Son of Man: A Fresh Examination of the Son of Man Sayings in the Gospels in the Light of Recent Research*, Grand Rapids 1983; A.Y. COLLINS, *The Origin of the Designation of Jesus as “Son of Man”*, “Harvard Theological Review” 80 (1987), pp. 391-407; ID., *The “Son of Man” Tradition and the Book of Revelation*, in J.H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, Minneapolis 1992, pp. 536-568; J.D.G. DUNN, *Danielic Son of Man in the New Testament*, in J.J. COLLINS-P.W. FLINT (edd.) II 2001, pp. 528-549; H. ZACHARIAS, *Old Greek Daniel 7:13-14 and Matthew's Son of Man*, “Bulletin for Biblical Research” 21/4 (2011), pp. 453-465. Among *Dn* commentaries, the following ones dedicate a specific section to the theme of the “Son of Man”: G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 74-76; J.J. COLLINS 1993, p. 90-91; B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 155.

<sup>43</sup> See in part. B.J. ALFRINK, *L'idée de résurrection d'après Dan XII,1,2*, “Biblica” 40 (1959), pp. 355-371. In commentaries see G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 76-78; B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 166-168.

<sup>44</sup> The elaboration of this topic in Christian reflection is articulated starting from chapters 2 and 7 (among the arguments on which the critics have so far focused, this is the only one presupposing a reference to a chapter included in “tales”); see in part. G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 68-73; C.A. EVANS, *Daniel in the New Testament: Visions of God's Kingdom*, in J.J. COLLINS-P.W. FLINT (edd.) II 2001, pp. 491-527 (the section includes an accurate bibliography); B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 162-164.

<sup>45</sup> See G. BERNINI 1984, pp. 78-81; B. MARCONCINI 2004, pp. 168-169.

<sup>46</sup> The mention of the iconographic reception of *Dn* recurs in B. MARCONCINI 2004, p. 38: the cursory approach to the matter clearly testifies the marginal role attributed to this source by the author.

<sup>47</sup> See in part. P. PRIGENT, *L'art des premiers chrétiens. L'héritage culturel et la foi nouvelle*, Paris 1995, p. 187. See also E. DASSMANN 1973, p. 259, who affirms, after noticing the weak literary value of the subjects derived

iconography does not attest any reference to “visions” section, expressing in this way an attitude that can be considered as complementary and opposite to literary one.

### **1.2.1 From paleochristian literature to paleochristian identity: a methodological reflection**

A significant evidence seems to emerge from the panorama so far described: if, in general, the study of *Dn* fortune is a field partially unexplored by critics, the specific exam of “tales” diffusion can be considered as the most disregarded space of the analysis.

If this tendency can be on one side understood considering the real prevalence of materials extracted from “visions” in paleochristian literature, the capillary diffusion of “tales” in iconography stimulates a reevaluation of the role of the “haggadic” *Dn* in the formation of the communities’ identity. In other words, leaving from an approach that arbitrarily separates the study of literature from the analysis of iconography, the picture of *Dn* fortune deeply changes, as the substantial importance of “tales” in a non-peripheral district of early Christian documentation starts to surface.

The reasons that may have determined the exclusion of figurative source from the inspection on *Dn* circulation deserve to be here shortly investigated. The principal cause of this entrenched tendency seems to apparently depend on the placement generally attributed to iconography in the historical reconstruction of Christian origins; in other words, the issue is part of the broader problem of the *status* and the value of this documentation.

First of all it must be noticed that on the evaluation of the role of iconography seems to weight the widespread belief that early Christianities, adhering to the precept of *Ex* 20:4, prevalently assumed an “iconophobic” attitude and consequently did not assign a remarkable function to “visual”<sup>48</sup>; in addition, an even more rooted prejudice seems to be represented by the passively accepted conviction that iconography was principally used as a sort of *Biblia pauperum*, nothing more than an “illustrative transcription” of meanings elaborated in literary context. Interpreting

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from *Dn*, how “Daniel gehört zu den ältesten biblischen Bildern; in der Malerei ist er sogar das am frühesten bezeugte alttestamentliche Motiv. Die drei Jünglinge tauchen dagegen erst einige Jahrzehnte später auf”.

<sup>48</sup> See, for instance, C. MANGO, *The art of the Byzantine Empire: 312-1453*, Englewood Cliffs 1972, p. 150: “The Iconoclasts were closer to historical truth than their opponente in affirming that the early Christians had been opposed to figurative arts” and J.D. BRECKENDRIGE, *The Reception of Art into Early Church*, in A.A. V.V. *Atti del IX Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana*, Città del Vaticano 1978, pp. 361-369, in part. p. 364: “Everything seems now quite simple: an absolutely monolithic opposition to imagery existed among responsible ecclesiastics from the earliest days of the Christian era through at least the reign of Constantine”. See also E. KITZINGER, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm*, “Dumbarton Oaks Paper” (1954), pp. 83-150, in part. 87; H. CHADWICK, *The Early Church*, London 1967 (Pelican History of the Church 1), in part. p. 277; R. GRIGG, *Aniconic Worship and the Apologetic Tradition: A Note on Canon 36 of the Council of Elvira*, “Church History” 45 (1976), pp. 428-433 and ID., *Constantine the Great and the Cult without Images*, “Viator” 8 (1977), pp. 1-32.

paleochristian exegesis as an eminently literary fact, the figurative documentation has been relegated to the role of “repetition”, “reproduction”, “translation” in a visual code of those multifarious contents. Such diffused perspective has progressively generated both the assertion of the complete subordination of iconography to literature and the underestimation of its potential for the reconstruction of Christian *Sitz im Leben*: considered as a non-original “reformulation” of reflections produced in literature, visual documentation has not found a specific place among the investigated sources in the study of preconstantinian communities.

Such statements concerning the *status* of iconography seem to have been received by scholars as “incontrovertible premises”, not actually expressed as the explicit and active result of a conscious evaluation, but rather uncritically assumed as a shared methodology<sup>49</sup>. On the contrary, these arguments would deserve to constantly undergo a deep reflection, since they have played and still play a fundamental role both in the process of comprehension of single documents and in the adoption of a specific approach to their reading.

The “interpretative method” commonly applied by critics to the visual production is actually characterized by the presupposition of a direct relation between the meaning of the single figurative “types” and the literary passages from which they are extracted, as if the former represented a simple reproduction of the latter<sup>50</sup>. This tendency has actually compromised the evaluation of the complexity and of the semantic scope of monuments: considering each scene as if it were an “isolated element” endowed with an absolute and independent value, such method have prevalently lead to mechanic, vague and generic interpretations, barely sensitive to each type “figurative context” and insufficiently attentive to each document “material context”. A cursory exam of the interpretations attributed to *Dn* types may offer a concrete example of these tendencies.

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<sup>49</sup> This tendency emerges from the whole panorama of iconographic studies. Since it would be impossible to present here a complete *status quaestionis* about the multifarious and heterogeneous literary production, it seems efficacious to cite the synthesis predisposed by G. PELIZZARI, *Imagines erant futurorum. Dissertazione di Dottorato (Controrelatore P. Piva)*, Università degli Studi di Padova, a.a. 2006-2007, pp. 21-29. Instead of presenting a compilation bibliography, the author individuates three prevalent scientific tendencies in the interpretation of visual: 1) “asemantic” tendency, described as “una prospettiva di lettura che schiaccia l'intera produzione iconografica paleocristiana tra gli angusti estremi della commemorazione e dell'*horror vacui*”, attributing to the source a mere decorative role 2) “iposemantic” tendency, which is the inclination to consider iconographic production as “insubordinata a quella letteraria”; 3) “ipersemantic” tendency, finalized at “pretendere da ogni figura un significato”, but still in constant relation with literature.

<sup>50</sup> This approach particularly emerges from the widespread production of “iconographic lexicons”. Among the others see G. HEINZ-MOHR, *Lessico di iconografia cristiana*, Milano 1984; F. TRISTAN, *Les premières images chrétiennes: Du symbole à l'icone, II<sup>es</sup>-IV<sup>es</sup>.*, Paris 1996; G.H. BAUDRY, *Simboli cristiani delle origini: I-VII secolo*, Milano 2009; F. BISCONTI (cur.), *Temi di iconografia paleocristiana*, Città del Vaticano 2000 (Sussidio allo studio delle antichità cristiane 13).

a) *Short excursus about the most common interpretations of Daniel types*

In a monographic work dedicated to the scenes of the three Hebrews<sup>51</sup>, C. CARLETTI focuses on the dimension of “salvezza raggiunta da chi ha avuto fede nel Signore”<sup>52</sup>, so that the young protagonists of *Dn 3* symbolize “l’espressione di una gioiosa serenità dovuta al possesso della salvezza”<sup>53</sup>. The same meaning ends up being as well associated to the entire range of paleochristian figurative subjects, and signally to the widely diffused scenes of Jonah cycle and Noah in the ark, whose prevalent semantic coordinate is described by the scholar as a generic “salvific potential”<sup>54</sup>.

The exact same interpretation is attributed by P. PRIGENT to both the representation of Daniel in the lions’ den and the other themes extracted from the same “book”<sup>55</sup>, while M. MINASI<sup>56</sup>, in the iconographic lexicon edited by F. BISCONTI, adds a further generic meaning to the scene of the prophet exposed *ad bestias*, that is the emancipation from evil strengths.

What immediately emerges from the described panorama is that neither the specificities of each subject, nor the common semantic denominator of *Dn* scenes have so far been accurately defined by critics. Moreover, those types’ “martyrial value”, which seems to represent the central core of their Christian assumption, turns out to be altogether underestimated, if not almost completely neglected<sup>57</sup>.

In front of the substantial uniformity of the scientific approach, it is necessary to mention two studies attesting the adoption of a different analytic perspective. First of all, J. SALOMONSON’S

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<sup>51</sup> C. CARLETTI, *I tre giovani ebrei di Babilonia nell’arte cristiana antica*, Brescia 1975 (Quaderni Vetera Christianorum 9).

<sup>52</sup> C. CARLETTI 1975, p. 58

<sup>53</sup> C. CARLETTI 1975, p. 62.

<sup>54</sup> C. CARLETTI 1975, p. 58.

<sup>55</sup> P. PRIGENT 1995, pp. 210-211. Considering both the subjects’ pose in iconographic documentation and the literary characteristics of the biblical passages, the author adds a further reference to the theme of “prayer” (p. 211).

<sup>56</sup> M. MINASI, in F. BISCONTI 2000, p. 162.

<sup>57</sup> The “martyrial” element is vaguely cited by M. DULAHEY about both the type of Daniel, which is connected with the Passion of Christ (M. DULAHEY, *I simboli cristiani. Catechesi e bibbia [I-IV secolo]*, Cinisello Balsamo 2004 [Guida alla Bibbia], p. 135), and that one of the three Hebrews, associated with the condition of Christians during persecutions (M. DULAHEY 2004, p. 138). In spite of this, according to the scholar, their meaning would remain prevalently linked with the ideas of eternal salvation, resurrection and baptism (M. DULAHEY 2004, p. 139; the interpretation of Susanna recoups the same subjects, see M. DULAHEY 2004, pp. 149-163). On the same path can be placed the approach of G.H. BAUDRY, who underlines the relation between Daniel and the martyrs condemned because of their refusal to adore pagan idols; he also alludes to the link between this figurative character and Christ – or the believer – who obtains the resurrection (G.H. BAUDRY 2009, p. 169). Also in this case the three Hebrews and Susanna are anyway principally considered as symbols of hope in eternal life, prayer and as a type of the church (pp. 171-173). A general reference to the martyrial value of the scenes can be found in the article by S.J.P. DU BOURGUET, *The First Biblical Scenes Depicted in Christian Art*, in P.M. BLOWERS (ed.), *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity*, Notre Dame 1997 (The Bible Through the Ages 1), pp. 299-326, in part. p. 303.

work<sup>58</sup> presents a deep reflection on *Dn* themes diffusion in African Christianities, with constant attention to the role of historical context in the definition of their meaning. Though the perspective remains linked to the inspection of single, isolated subjects, the interesting dialogue established between figurative documents and the present of communities seems to mark a more productive trail in the study of these iconographic types.

Secondly, the work of R.M. JENSEN<sup>59</sup> deserves to be at least remembered, not as much for the interpretative results it reaches, but rather for the subsistence of a significant methodological note. Highlighting how the scenes of *Dn* “must to some degree reflect of the theme of martyrdom”, the author tries to achieve a better definition of them analysing their relation with other scenes: “their frequent placement next to Noah suggests two other possible interpretations (...) the youths’ salvation, or rescue from death, rather than their willingness to undergo it”<sup>60</sup>. If it must be unfortunately noticed that the scholar does not appraise the fundamental role of martyrdom theology in the analysis of those representations, the efficacy of the method remains anyway remarkable; according to the scholar, it would be necessary to move the attention *from* the single representations *to* the entire iconographic programs historiated on documents.

b) *Coordinates on a new methodology*

Leaving the perimeter of *Dn* scenes interpretation and coming back to the iconographic source in a more generic sense, it must be underlined that R.M. JENSEN’s proposal can be situated along a path that represents the most innovative scientific evolution in this field, theoretically introduced by Anglophone school<sup>61</sup> and recently developed in its methodological implications by scholars from “Università degli Studi di Milano”<sup>62</sup>.

The features and the characteristics of this perspective cannot be examined in every particular here<sup>63</sup>; it will be sufficient to sketch some of the principal coordinates:

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<sup>58</sup> J.W. SALOMONSON, *Voluptatem spectandi non perdat sed mutet. Observations sur l’iconographie du martyre en Afrique romaine*, Amsterdam, Oxford & New York 1979 (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen Verhandelingen Afdeling Letterkunde 98).

<sup>59</sup> R.M. JENSEN, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, New York 2000.

<sup>60</sup> R.M. JENSEN 2000, p. 82.

<sup>61</sup> See *infra*, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> See *infra*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>63</sup> For an efficient and complete exposition of this new perspective see G. PELIZZARI, *Vedere la Parola, celebrare l’attesa. Scrittura, iconografia e culto nel cristianesimo delle origini*, Cinisello Balsamo 2013 (Parola di Dio; seconda serie 71).

- The fundament of such approach consists in a reevaluation of the role of iconography in the process of elaboration and expression of paleochristian identity and thought. The most interesting reflection on the matter comes from P.C. CORBY FINNEY, who calls into question the role of the Israelite prohibition of images, which would have influenced early Christianity “less than is commonly presumed”<sup>64</sup>. Bringing P.C. FINNEY’s considerations to wider consequences, G. PELIZZARI remarks<sup>65</sup> how the centrality of the figurative source in antiquity – and signally during the period in which Christianities spread – is further testified by the essential part it played in Roman world, from which early Christians were not surely isolated<sup>66</sup>; at the same time, the massive production of complex documents, which evidently correspond to multifarious and socially stratified clients, allows to bestow a position of absolute pre-eminence on it<sup>67</sup>, calling into question its function of *Biblia pauperum*<sup>68</sup>. Far from being a passive repetition of literature, iconography should be considered, on the contrary, as *another* independent *medium* of communities thought, capable to produce its own original contents and its theological outcomes.
- In the elaboration of these contents and *theologumena*, a role of primary importance is played by liturgy, which has been identified by G. PELIZZARI as the privileged *milieu* of

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<sup>64</sup> See P.C. FINNEY, *The invisible God. The Earliest Christians on Art*, New York-Oxford 1994, p. xi. The author, who manages to present a complete and articulated description of the *status quaestionis* on the matter, offers the essential coordinates on the origin of the prejudice about iconography (pp. 7-10). A significant tile in the “challenging the consensus” about the reduced importance of figurative source is represented by the article by C. MURRAY, *Art and the Early Church*, “Journal of Theological Studies” 28/2 (1977), pp. 304-345.

<sup>65</sup> G. PELIZZARI 2006-2007, pp. 24-25.

<sup>66</sup> About the role of art as communicative instrument in imperial and late Roman world see, among the massive production on such theme, in part., R. BIANCHI BANDINELLI, *Roma. L’arte romana nel centro del potere*, Milano 2012 (Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli), pp. 223-277; ID., *Roma. La fine dell’arte antica*, Milano 2002 (Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli), pp. 23-38 and P. ZANKER, *Augusto e il potere delle immagini*, Torino 2006 (Universale Bollati Boringhieri 513) and ID., *Un’arte per l’impero. Funzione e intenzione delle immagini nel mondo romano*, Milano 2002 (Saggi di archeologia), in part. pp. 9-37; 79-91. As G. PELIZZARI 2006-2007, pp. 24-25, underlines, the relation between Romans and art does not simply testify the importance of visual in early Christian *Sitz im Leben*, but also forces to reconsider the prejudice about the incapacity of community members to “read” and “decode” the complex programs represented on documents: on the contrary, they more seemingly must have been able to understand the message expressed through a code they were constantly exposed to.

<sup>67</sup> See P.C. FINNEY 1994, p. 15: “the consensus view – namely that early Christian attitude toward art were essentially negative (...) is really little more than a vague generalisation”.

<sup>68</sup> Such element is underlined by L. GRIG, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity*, London 2004, pp. 127 and 118. The scholar states that the interpretation of iconography as *Biblia pauperum* represents a simplistic conception of the role of this source in Christian origins.

the exegetical activity flowing into Christian production both in its literary and iconographic form<sup>69</sup>.

- In order to decipher the semantic results attained and produced by iconography, a fundamental methodological innovation has been introduced<sup>70</sup>: it consists in the radical reevaluation of the role of the so-called “iconographic programs”. The principal object of the study should not be represented by the single figurative “types”, but rather by the entire visual system historiated on documents, which should be considered as a *continuum*. The semantic value of single scenes should not be actually deemed as absolute and repetitive in each source: on the contrary, the specific meaning of every type is prone to variations and acceptations, expressed by the use of different figurative instruments and parameters such as:
  - the size of the scenes;
  - their position in the program;
  - Their reciprocal relations conveyed by expedients such as “figurative parallelism”, “specular position”, “superimposition”.

In other words, it is possible to affirm that the exegetical process and the independent hermeneutics performed by each document emerge, in a manner of speaking; from the “invisible weave” connecting the single subjects one another. The decoding and the interpretation of such weave disclose that original semantic potential which transforms a document in a “theological manifest”.

- The iconographic analysis should contextually originate from the study of each document *Sitz im Leben* and resolve in the same reconstruction of the historical context.

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<sup>69</sup> The importance of liturgy in the *genesis* of Christian documents has been pervasively discussed by G. PELIZZARI 2013, in part. pp. 119-134. The author starts from the analysis of the use of the category of “symbol”, adopted in ancient Christianity to interpret facts and events which become signs alluding to a hidden truth. In this process, which is diffused in every community, the “image” performs the privileged function of expressing such profundity of faith, inaccessible to words and to argumentations. In this context, both literature and iconography represent “laboratory of images of faith” (p. 120), composed and originated while the mystery of Christ is celebrated, which means during liturgy.

<sup>70</sup> The credit for the systematic delineation and exposition of this method must be given to G. PELIZZARI, who dedicated to this argument his PhD thesis (G. PELIZZARI 2006-2007) and his recent monograph work (G. PELIZZARI 2013). For the first experiments of a practical application of these principles see: G. PELIZZARI, *Il “Pastore” ad Aquileia. La trascrizione musiva della catechesi catecumenale nella cattedrale di Teodoro*, S. Daniele del Friuli 2010; R. CACITTI.–G. LEGROTTAGLIE –G. PELIZZARI –M.P. ROSSIGNANI, *L’ara dipinta di «Thaenae». Indagini sul culto martiriale nell’Africa paleocristiana*, Roma 2011. For a further attempt of integration between literary and iconographic sources see C. VALENTI, *Una peculiarità del cristianesimo romano precostantiniano. I “racconti” di Daniele nella 1Clementis e nella produzione figurative*, “Annali di Scienze Religiose” 7/11 (2014), pp. 239-288.



This peculiar perspective should safeguard the equal dignity of visual as “source” in comparison with literature.

### 1.3. THE PLAN OF THE PRESENT WORK

The issues and problems so far exposed have massively influenced the definition of the present work's structure and methodological features, which will be here schematized.

a) *A pluridisciplinary approach*

Recognized and admitted the central role of iconography in the study of Christian thought and in the analysis of *Dn* reception, the present work will include in the exam both literary and iconographic documents. If the former will be investigated using the historical-critical method (without neglecting possible philological problems), the latter will be analysed in the light of the most recent scientific acquisitions<sup>71</sup>. The *data* and the critical elements emerging from both sources will be integrated and studied in reciprocal and constant dialogue, with the principal objective to offer a wider reconstruction of *Dn* fortune, and with the eventual goal to underline possible traits of continuity and discontinuity between iconographic and literary elaborations.

b) *The delimitation of the work*

In order to preserve the multidisciplinary character of the research, the work takes in consideration the sections of *Dn*, which knew a circulation in both sources. Considering the exclusion of “visions” from iconography, the present analysis focuses on the reception of “tales”, and signally of the chapters attesting a figurative reception: *Dn* 3, 6, 13, 14. The fact that such materials are also the less studied by critics has further oriented the choice. Concerning the chronological limits, the same methodological approach imposes to select a period offering evidences from both categories of sources: the study will consider documents from the first iconographic evidences – corresponding to the period of the spread of communities of 2<sup>nd</sup> century<sup>72</sup> – to the end of the so-called “preconstantinian Christianity”, conventionally linked with the Edict of Constantin and Licinius of 313 A.D. Such chronological boundaries should anyway be considered as indicative: interesting documents dated before or after such limits will be cited and possibly analysed. In particular, the research will go beyond the threshold of the first decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in order to highlight possible reactions and evolutions in front of the legalization of Christianity. Concerning the

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<sup>71</sup> See *supra*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>72</sup> The difficulty to identify a punctual origin of Christian iconography has been efficiently underlined by G. PELIZZARI 2013, pp. 21-22 and 33-58.

geographic perimeter, the research will include evidences coming from every latitude (from Western communities of Rome, Africa, Italy and Gaul, to Alexandrian and Asian areas) in order to possibly notice the coexistence and the distribution of multifarious traditions at the same chronological stage<sup>73</sup>.

c) *The methodological steps*

The research has been conducted through different steps and phases, going from the “analytic exam” of sources, to the elaboration of a “synthetic” monographic work.

1) Inspection of literary sources.

The exam of literature has originally taken in consideration the reception of the whole “book” in paleochristian literature. With the support of the *Biblia patristica* and the indexes of citations of single authors and works, a complete panorama of *Dn* circulation has been outlined, in order to verify the consistence of “tales” reception in the light of other chapters’ fortune. The attention has progressively focused on “tales”, so that a systematic list of their recurrences has been filled. Each passage has been translated from Greek or Latin, considering the most reliable critical editions and trying to preliminary individuate the translation of *Dn* from which the citations have been extracted. The principal goal of such systematic inspection was to highlight the existence of peculiar traditions and tendencies in the assumption of the biblical material. The list of citations has been organized on the basis of different criteria – geographical, chronological and exegetical – in order to obtain, since the earliest phase of the work, a complete panorama of “tales” exegesis in different communities.

2) Inspection of iconographic sources.

The selection of figurative evidences has been conducted started from *repertoria* and catalogues<sup>74</sup>, with further attention to:

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<sup>73</sup> In spite of this, it seems necessary to underline that, concerning iconography, the most fertile context appeared since the beginning to be that one of Latin Christianities.

<sup>74</sup> Here follows a list of the principal catalogues: J. WILPERT, *I sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, Roma 1929-1936 (Monumenti di antichità cristiana pubblicati per cura del Pontificio Istituto d’archeologia cristiana 1) and J. WILPERT, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane*, Roma 1903; A. NESTORI, *Repertorio topografico delle pitture delle catacombe romane*, Città del Vaticano 1975 (Roma sotterranea cristiana 5) (=NR; particularly useful for the accurate reconstruction of catacombs); F.W. DEICHMANN, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken sarkophage, I: Rom und Ostia*, Wiesbaden 1967 (=REP 1); J. DRESKEN WEILAND-H. BRANDENBURG, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken sarkophage, II: Italien mit einem Nachtrag Rom und Ostia, Dalmatien, Museen der Welt, Mainz am Rhein 1996* (REP 2);

- a) monographic works concerning specific geographical areas<sup>75</sup> or single themes<sup>76</sup>;
- b) articles on peculiar documents<sup>77</sup>,
- c) data-bases<sup>78</sup>;
- d) museum catalogues<sup>79</sup>.

Every kind of iconographic *media* has been taken in consideration: sarcophagi, catacomb paintings, mosaics, liturgical objects (caskets, lamps, plates).

Materials have been classified and studied not just according to the single documentary category, but also considering the whole panorama of monuments. Also in this case, the main goal was to underline the principal trajectories and tendencies in *Dn* assumption.

3) Selection of significant materials.

Once the internal analysis of each category of sources has been completed, the strict boundary between them has been removed, and the documents have been considered as equal expression of the communities' reflection. In this way, a comprehensive panorama of "tales" circulation emerged, revealing the recurrence of some exegetical tendencies and techniques, which lead, starting from the scriptural material, to the Christian themes and *theologumena*. Within each branch and tradition of *Dn* reception, the most significant and representative documents have been selected.

4) Organization of an index.

The organization of a general index required a further reflection about the possible structure of the work. The setting of a "theme oriented" structure, divided in sections singularly dedicated to Daniel, three Hebrews and Susanna, seemed excessively mechanic and artificial: since in documents the characters and the protagonists of the "tales" are often seamlessly cited, a strict division among the reception of each of them would have forced and betrayed the same nature of their Christian circulation. At the same time, the possible assumption of a geographical or chronological perspective would have been definitely weak: on one side, different hermeneutical methods and

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B. CHRISTERN-BRIESENICK, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken sarkophage*, III: *Frankreich, Algerien, Tunisien*, Mainz am Rhein 2003 (=REP 3).

<sup>75</sup> It is the case of P. DE PALOL, *Arqueología cristiana de la España romana. Siglos IV-VI*, Madrid 1967 (España cristiana Monumentos 1).

<sup>76</sup> See, for instance, C. CARLETTI 1975.

<sup>77</sup> Such as R. DELBRUEK, *Probleme der Lipsanotek in Brescia*, Bonn 1952 (Theophaneia 7).

<sup>78</sup> Especially the richest collection of *Index of Christian art*.

<sup>79</sup> See the *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui* (Catalogue des Musées et Collections archéologiques de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie: Musée Alaoui), 1897-1922.

contents obliquely circulate in the whole paleochristian panorama; on the other – mainly concerning iconography – a certain difficulty to anchor documents to rigid chronologies emerged. For this reasons, it seemed fruitful to focus on the exegetical techniques activated in different districts of Christian speculation, distinguishing among a “typological”, an “allegorical”, and a the “literary” interpretation of “tales”<sup>80</sup>. Within each of these sections the present research aims at pointing out the main contents, *theologumena* and outcomes of Christian elaboration on the “haggadic” *Dn*, starting from the exam of the most representative sources and never neglecting their constant integration.

d) *A terminological clarification*

A final reflection has to be dedicated to a problematic and sensible topic connected with the same structure of the present work, namely the definition here attributed to the terms “typology” and “allegory”.

In a generic perspective, it seems enough to recall the article by M. SIMONETTI and G.M. VIAN, dedicated to “l’esegesi patristica nella ricerca contemporanea”<sup>81</sup>, to highlight the complexity of the matter. The panorama rebuilt in that publication reveals how, among a range of various problems connected with this broad argument, the punctual definition of these categories represents an issue that cannot be considered as actually solved<sup>82</sup>.

In the light of such *status quaestionis*, it seems efficacious to assume the terms “typology” and “allegory” in an wide and ample sense, not actually with the intention to rigidly categorize the work or the exegetical method of the single authors, but rather with the final objective to stress a peculiarity of *Dn* “tales” circulation, namely the coexistence of two principal approaches.

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<sup>80</sup> The terms will be better specified *infra*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>81</sup> M. SIMONETTI-G.M. VIAN, *L’esegesi patristica nella ricerca contemporanea*, “Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia” 6 (1997), pp. 241-267. The article can be assumed also for a rich *status quaestionis*.

<sup>82</sup> Among the studies which have focused on such matter see in part. H. DE LUBAC, *Exégèse Médiévale. Les quatre sens de l’Écriture*, 1/2, Paris 1959, in part. pp. 373-384, about the “allégorie paulinienne”; pp. 426-487, about l’“importance de la lettre”, “les faits bibliques” et la parole de Dieu”. See also J. BONSIRVEN, *Exégèse rabbinique et exégèse paulinienne*, Paris 1939 (Bibliothèque de théologie historique); M. SIMONETTI, *Lettera e/o allegoria. Un contributo alla storia dell’esegesi patristica*, Roma 1985. For a reference to the single authors and their approach see B. DE MARGERIE, *Introduzione alla storia dell’esegesi*, I: *I Padri greci e orientali*; II: *I primi grandi esegeti latini*, Roma 1983/84; M. SIMONETTI, «*Scripturarum clavis notitia Christi*». *Proposta per una discussione sulla specificità dell’esegesi patristica*, “Annali di Storia dell’Esegesi” 4 (1987), pp. 7-19; M. MARIN, *Orientamenti di esegesi biblica dei Padri*, in A. QUACQUARELLI, *Complementi interdisciplinari di patrologia*, Roma 1989 pp. 273-317.

- The first interpretative line seems to be shared by the contexts of Asiatic and Western Christianities.

Mainly in this perimeter, Daniel, his companions and Susanna are principally involved in an interpretative process which can be defined as “typological”: the biblical stories are principally conceived as an anticipation of the experiences of both Christ himself and his church, in a martyrial perspective. In turn, the dimension of the new economy offers an occasion to give sense and significance to the same First Testament “tales”, so that the events happened to the prophet, the Hebrews and – in a less consistent way – Susanna, find a fulfilment and an accomplishment in Christian martyrdom<sup>83</sup>.

In many cases, the definition of such “twofold link” is not explicitly stated, and requires to be inferred as a consequence of the study of the documents; in others, the accent can be mainly put by the author just on one of the two elements involved in the exegetical relation. Moreover, such “typological” approach to *Dn* seems to be characterized, especially in the context of “Latin” communities, by the diffused tendency to establish a connection between the circumstances and the life of the present church and the biblical narrations, in many cases without explicitly mentioning the figure of Christ, who seems to remain anyway the “interpretative key” which paradigmatically sustains the activation of such link. This specific approach is defined in the present research as “typology of the church”, assuming a category which was efficaciously delineated by J. DANIÉLOU<sup>84</sup>.

The application of a “typological exegesis” associating the “tales” to both Christ and the church represents a typical trait of iconographic interpretation. Figurative documentation expresses in a paradigmatic way the complexity, the freedom and the potentialities of this approach, which can actually be considered as the core of *Dn* stories’ paleochristian use<sup>85</sup>.

- The second interpretative line, though attested also in Latin Christianities, seems to find its fullest expression in the context of Alexandrian communities and can be defined as the “allegoric” reception of *Dn* “tales”. The term is here mainly adopted to mention

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<sup>83</sup> Such perspective is clearly rebuilt by R. CACITTI, *Grande Sabato. Il contesto pasquale quartodecimano nella formazione della teologia del martirio*, Milano 1994 (Studia Patristica Mediolanensia 9) and seems to be adopted also by L. PIZZOLATO-C. SOMENZI, *I sette fratelli Maccabei nella chiesa antica d'Occidente*, Milano 2005 (Studia Patristica Mediolanensia 2005).

<sup>84</sup> See the panorama emerging from J. DANIÉLOU, *Les origines du Christianisme latin*, Paris 1978.

<sup>85</sup> The typological nature of the iconographic source has been fully investigated and demonstrated by G. PELIZZARI 2013. It seems for this reason efficacious to send back to such study for further clarifications concerning this aspect.

those cases in which the stories of Daniel and his companions are assumed as generic paradigm of virtues and qualities, which are recommended, in terms of admonitions, to Christians. Though the biblical stories keep on offering in this sense fundamental arguments to orient the behaviour of community members, they do not seem to be conceived as “types” but rather as models.

Under the category of the “allegoric interpretation”, the peculiar outcomes of Origen’s use of “tales” in commentaries are also included, which means those occasions in which the narrations of *Dn* are assumed to offer an interpretation and an explanation of other biblical texts.

The inclusion of such range of different exegetical manifestations in two broad categories undeniably implies some problems, which can be only partially solved by an attentive study of every document’s specificities. Notwithstanding this, the necessity and even the reasonability of such division appears at least to surface from the comparison between the wide groups, corresponding with the two principal outcomes of the paleochristian reflection about *Dn* stories.