

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TEN HORNS OF DANIEL 7

Of the features of the fourth beast those of the ten horns and of the little horn have caused endless discussion. While in all fairness to scholars it must be affirmed that this is a baffling problem, few other knotty problems in Daniel have occasioned more arbitrary solutions. It is not possible here to go into the history of interpretation in detail, nor would the mere registration of scholarly opinion be very helpful¹. I shall concentrate, instead, upon drawing certain interpretative principles and criteria, certain safeguards, to be applied in any attempt at interpretation. It is hoped that these guidelines will eliminate a wide variety of identifications based on loose reasoning and will, if nothing more, at least narrow the possibilities of identification.

The first question to be considered is whether the entities represented by the ten horns are meant to be contemporaneous or successive. The expression "it had ten horns" (v. 7) has been taken by some scholars to indicate simultaneity, i.e. all ten horns were simultaneously on the head of the beast². This contention receives some support from v. 6 where the successiveness of the appearance of the third beast is explicitly mentioned (cf. "Behind this I saw"). The implication is that since the author does not here say explicitly that the horns came up one after the other, he must intend them to be taken as contemporaneous. The fact that the little horn is described as coming up (v. 8), i.e. subsequently to the ten horns, would tend to reinforce this position. On the other hand, this very analogy proves to be a detrimental argument against the theory of simultaneity. In v. 3 the author says "four great beasts were rising up out of the sea". The *ptc.* סִלְקִין, correctly rendered by Θ and the LXX with an *impf.*, does not function as the constative aorist in Greek, timelessly considering the successive emergence of four beasts, but describes the simultaneous sight of them as they were emerging from the sea, which our author caught. Yet this description of the beasts as being simultaneously in sight does not hinder the author from specifying later that the beasts as a matter of fact came up one after another (cf. the sequence in v. 6, which should be applied to all three beasts). Furthermore, since the interest is not focused on the ten horns but on the little horn, subsequently emerging, the author is not concerned to give any details about the time and circumstances of the emergence of ten horns. Moreover, if mere lack of explicit mention that the appearance of the horns was sequential is understood to imply that they were

1. The interested reader will find different identifications in the commentaries e.g. KEIL, *Dan*, 253 ff.; MONTGOMERY, *Dan*, 291 ff.; CHARLES, *Dan*, 172 f.; HARTMAN, *Dan*, 214 ff. and a richer variety of them in ROWLEY, *Darius the Mede [= DM]*, 98 ff.

2. Accordingly, KEIL, *Dan*, 255, refuses to identify the ten horns with any Syrian kings, "because these horns did not grow one after another, but are found simultaneously on the head of the beast, and onsequently cannot mean ten Syrian kings following one another". This view is shared by WALVOORD, *Dan*, 162, "ten actual kingdoms will exist simultaneously in the future consummation". YOUNG, *Dan*, 148 f., is more cautious being concerned only to prove that the ten horns will appear during a latter phase of the beast's history: "Although these horns need not be exact contemporaries one with another, nevertheless, they all belong within this second period of the beast's history."

simultaneous, then, by the same token, the three ribs in the bear's mouth ought similarly to be understood of three kings or states simultaneously conquered by the second empire. The contention is obviously absurd, and will be rejected even by the advocates of the theory of simultaneity—in self contradiction³! Therefore, the natural interpretation is to take the ten horns successively⁴.

The second question to be considered is whether the ten horns symbolise kingdoms or kings. Ch. 7 uses two Aram. terms, מְלָכוּ (kingdom) with various suffixes, and מְלָכִין (kings) in pl. form. The fifteen occurrences of these terms in ch. 7 express three ideas: “kings”, “kingdom” in concrete sense, and “kingdom” or “rule” in the abstract, dynamic sense⁵. The conspectus in note 5 indicates that while מְלָכוּ invariably bears the sense of “kingdom” either abstractly or concretely, of the three occurrences of מְלָכִין, that in 7,17 refers not merely to individual kings but also to the kingdoms they represent. This constitutes a precedent and allows the possibility for taking the occurrence in v. 24 similarly in the sense of “kingdom”. In that case the ten horns and the little horn represent kingdoms and not kings. However, the fact that the term for “king” may by metonymy bear the meaning of “kingdom” does not mean that its proper and natural sense (i.e. “king”) has been lost. Indeed, this is the first and foremost meaning to be considered, and only if it does not yield tolerable sense in a passage are we justified in taking it in a less literal sense. Now we may, indeed, understand מְלָכִין in v. 17 with the meaning of “kingdom”, but that is not because the term as such bears that meaning, but simply because from the whole context of Dan (e.g. chs. 2, 7, 8) and from the particular context in ch. 7, it becomes evident that these entities, here represented by various beasts, are kingdoms, i.e. a series of kings ruling over definite parts of the earth. The horns, however, all belong to the fourth beast, which would indicate that it is more natural to consider them as kings rather than kingdoms. Furthermore in Dan 7

3. ROWLEY, *DM*, 100, produces as parallels against the theory of simultaneity the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the fat and lean kine of Pharaoh's dream. While in the case of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the absence of cinematographic tricks with moveable parts, rendered simultaneous appearance of all four parts an absolute necessity—and hence of no corroborative value to either view—in the case of the kine we have a good parallel.

4. Here it may be objected that if the ten horns are understood successively how can the little horn displace three of them? In that case it would displace only one, the preceding. On this see below.

5. Cf. the following analytical conspectus:

Ref.	Aramaic	Ⓞ	LXX	RSV
7,14a	מְלָכוּ	βασιλεία	—	kingdom
14b	מְלָכוֹת	βασιλεία	βασιλεία	kingdom
17	מְלָכִין	βασιλείαι	βασιλείαι	(four) kings
18a	מְלָכוֹת	βασιλείαν	βασιλείαν	kingdom
18b	מְלָכוֹת	αὐτήν	βασιλείαν	kingdom
22	מְלָכוֹת	βασιλείαν	τὸ βασιλείον	kingdom
23a	מְלָכוּ	βασιλεία	βασιλεία	(fourth) kingdom
23b	מְלָכוֹת	βασιλείας	—	kingdoms
24a	מְלָכוֹת	αὐτοῦ	βασιλείας	kingdom
24b	מְלָכִין	(δέκα) βασιλεῖς	(δέκα) βασιλεῖς	kings
24c	מְלָכִין	(τρεῖς) βασιλεῖς	(τρεῖς) βασιλεῖς	kings
27a	מְלָכוֹת	(ἡ) βασιλεία	(τῆν) βασιλείαν	kingdom
27b	מְלָכוֹת	(τῶν) βασιλέων	βασιλειῶν	kingdoms
27c	מְלָכוֹת	βασιλείαι	βασιλειῶσαι	kingdom
27d	מְלָכוֹת	βασιλεία	βασιλείαν	kingdom

and 8 the kingdoms are represented by beasts and animals, whereas the horns, as becomes clear from 8,3.5.9, represent kings and not kingdoms. In addition, the very human description of the little horn in 7,8.11 indicates that the horns ought to be understood as individual kings rather than kingdoms.

The third problem is whether the horns must represent only kings who came in direct contact with the people of God or also kings who had no particular relation to them. The interest of Dan focuses on the Jews and the treatment of the various empires is dictated by this interest. Accordingly, the events that loom large in Dan are not the events of momentous importance for the Greek empire and for the world at large, but just those events that had relevance for the Jews. This fact would seem to argue for the view that the horns of the fourth beast must somehow represent such kings as had at least some direct connection with developments in Judea⁶. Yet, on the other hand, the interest in the vision (vv. 7-8) as well as in the interpretation (vv. 24-26) lies clearly with the little horn, and the ten horns are mentioned only for the relation they bear to the three horns, which, in turn, are more directly related to the little horn⁷. If direct relevance for the Jews is demanded for the ten horns then the three ribs in the bear's mouth ought similarly to be understood analogically. Yet many of the advocates of the Roman view, who would be the ones most interested in pressing the point here, have identified the three ribs with lands such as Scythia, Minni, Ashkenaz, Lydia, countries with no obvious relevance for Jewish history! I conclude, therefore, that the ten horns need not necessarily in their totality have direct relevance for the Jews.

The fourth point is whether the ten horns are to be identified with kings of one dynastic line or of several. This question is clearly related to the preceding point as well as to the following one. However, this question is harder to determine. Making their starting-point relevance for the Jews and identity with rulers referred to in ch. 11, many scholars have advocated a mixed number consisting of Seleucids and Lagids⁸. In itself this procedure is permissible since the fourth beast covers all four Greek kingdoms, and as far as relevance for the Jews goes, both the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic kingdoms can come into

6. Among the authors who have advocated this view are Porphyry, ROSENMÜLLER, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum*, Part X, *In Daniele*, 1832, p. 237; BECKMANN, *Dissertatio de quarta Monarchia*, 4th ed., 1684, pp. 21ff.; GROTIUS, *Opera omnia theologica in quatuor tomos divisa*, 1732, vol. 1, p. 466; BROUGHTON, *Works*, 1662, pp. 212-18; and COWLES, *Ezekiel and Daniel with Notes critical, explanatory and practical*, 1867, p. 360, who considered that the ten kings must be identical with those mentioned in Dan 11. These authors thought, too, that the ten kings belonged to more than one dynasty.

7. In a similar way ROWLEY, *DM*, 103f. argues that "The author's primary interest was in his own people, but every detail of the vision need not be related to them. It suffices if every detail is related to what is related to them, and if it serves a purpose germane to the fundamental purpose which is found in the vision."

8. As examples may be mentioned: ROSENMÜLLER, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum*, Part X, *In Daniele*, p. 237:

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| 1. Antigonus | 6. Ptolemy Philopator |
| 2. Demetrius Poliorketes | 7. Ptolemy Epiphanes |
| 3. Ptolemy Soter, Lagi | 8. Ptolemy Philometor |
| 4. Ptolemy Philadelphus | 9. Antiochus Magnus |
| 5. Ptolemy Euergetes | 10. Seleucus Philopator |

consideration⁹. Nevertheless, the focus on the little horn, which is to be identified with Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, would tend to support an identification with kings belonging to that line of descent. Still, this is not decisive. The most serious objection to the mixed interpretation is the embarrassment felt in supplying the ten kings. This interpretation works on the assumption that the ten kings chosen from the Seleucid and Ptolemaic successions must be kings who had direct contact with the Jews. The problem is that any selection of ten such kings is bound to be arbitrary. On the other hand, the search after ten kings within the Seleucid line of succession is not without its difficulties¹⁰. It is thus not possible to decide with certainty whether the ten kings are meant to belong to the Seleucid line, or to a mixed line of succession. Given the interests and approach of our author either possibility is fully open.

Finally, the fifth question is whether the ten horns and the three horns are meant literally or as indefinite figures. In this chapter mention is made of the

CHARLES, *Dan*, 172:

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| 1. Alexander the Great | 6. Seleucus III |
| 2. Seleucus I | 7. Antiochus III |
| 3. Antiochus I | 8. Seleucus IV |
| 4. Antiochus II | 9. Heliodorus |
| 5. Seleucus II | 10. Demetrius I |

MONTGOMERY, *Dan*, 292f. accepts a list similar to that of CHARLES or alternatively one which excludes Alexander and includes Ptolemy VII (sic), Philometor.

ORBINK, *Daniel*, 1932, p. 106:

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| 1. Alexander the Great | 6. Ptolemy Epiphanes |
| 2. Ptolemy Soter | 7. Antiochus Magnus |
| 3. Ptolemy Philadelphus | 8. Seleucus Philopator |
| 4. Ptolemy Euergetes | 9. murdered son of Seleucus Philopator |
| 5. Ptolemy Philopator | 10. Demetrius I |

9. ROWLEY, *DM*, 103ff., discountenances the mixed theory mainly on the ground that in the Sibylline Oracles III, 388-400, the ten horns are all related to the Seleucid kingdom. This may be so. However, strictly speaking the Sibylline Oracles bear witness to their own author's understanding of Dan's passage and not to the way in which Daniel meant his words. Besides, the Sibylline Oracles text is corrupt and the ten horns have a different reference to that in Dan 7. See the discussions in LANCHESTER, *Sibylline Oracles*, in R.H. CHARLES, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the OT*, vol. 2, pp. 385 f.; R.H. CHARLES, *Dan*, 167f.; ROWLEY, *DM*, 115-20. Accordingly, the Sibylline Oracles passage does not solve the problem as ROWLEY claimed.

10. This is well exemplified in ROWLEY, *DM*, 104ff., who is strongly of the opinion that the ten horns ought to represent Seleucid kings, but who must, in the absence of ten Seleucid kings, inevitably include a Lagid, Ptolemy Philometor, to complete the list! HARTMAN, *Dan*, 214, has tried to stick to the Seleucid line, but had to start with Alexander the Great and his infant son, Alexander Aegus, and end with Antiochus IV as the tenth king, i.e. the little horn being one of the ten. Heading the Seleucid line with Alexander and his son is, of course, entirely permissible from Daniel's viewpoint. The chief difficulty with HARTMAN's identification is that he counts among the ten kings Alexander IV, Roxane's son, who was made king as a mere lad of 6 and reigned till he was 13 (316-310/309), but bypasses the immediate successor to Alexander the Great, his half-brother, Philip Arrhidaeus, who reigned from 323 to 316! Thus, HARTMAN's identification fails to carry conviction. H.L. GINSBERG, *Studies in Daniel*, pp. 18ff. "solves" the problem by presupposing that the reviser of Dan 7 counted the little horn as an eleventh king (while his predecessors counted him as a tenth king) and that for him the seven kings were not always the same. It is GINSBERG's opinion that "the reviser, or second apocalypticist, of ch. 7 understood by the fourth beast not the Seleucid Kingdom but the totality of the heathen kingdoms of his day." With such principles as these, it is no wonder that one can reach the conclusions which GINSBERG reaches.

following numerals: one (2 × : vv. 1.5); two (1 × : v. 4); three (4 × : vv. 5.8.20.24); four (6 × : vv. 2.3.6bis, 17bis); ten (4 × : vv. 7.20.24bis); one thousand (2 × : v. 10); and ten thousand (2 × : v. 10). So far we have taken the small numbers 1-4 literally: one side, two feet, three ribs, four winds/beasts/wings/heads. This would argue for taking the ten horns and the three horns literally too. On the other hand, the figures of a thousand thousands and a myriad myriads clearly indicate indefinite numbers¹¹ and this is sufficient proof that the context uses figures both literally and figuratively. The figure of three horns is, of course, dependent on the figure of ten horns for its significance. The figure ten might be considered as being nearer the small numbers and hence be regarded as being intended as a definite figure. On the other hand, this figure relates to the fourth beast, which more than all the previous beasts is to be understood in symbolic and figurative terms, cf. v. 7, this beast “was different from all the beasts that were before it”! Furthermore, the figure of ten may be intended as a counterpart to the angelic hosts which number 10 multiplied by 100 and 1000 respectively. This would imply that the beast’s strength is indicated by its ten horns = kings¹². However, the power of the Ancient of Days is infinitely greater.

The results of the foregoing discussion can be synthesised as follows:

- a) The horns are to be understood successively.
- b) The horns represent kings rather than kingdoms.
- c) Not all ten horns necessarily have relevance for Jewish history.
- d) The horns can symbolise Seleucid or a mixed succession.
- e) The ten horns are probably to be understood figuratively.

With respect to the fifth question a somewhat plausible case can be made for a literal interpretation of the ten horns. The little horn is, of course, to be regarded as an eleventh king¹³. Despite the fact that the Seleucids started their dynasty with Seleucus I, Nicator (312-280), a Jewish author might feel no inhibition in beginning with Alexander. The Babylonian historian, Berossus, regarded Antiochus I, son and successor of Seleucus I, not as the second but as the third king after Alexander¹⁴. Berossus may have done so because, from his Babylonian viewpoint, the rulers whose reign was effective for Babylon were Alexander, Seleucus I and Antiochus I. By the same analogy, from the Jewish point of view, with its proximity to Greece and hence its closer involvement in Greek events, the reigns of Philip Arrhidaeus and of Alexander IV, Aegus, the immediate

11. For a Greek example of the figurative use of μύριος, cf. Diogenes Laertius II,55 (on Xenophon): φασὶ δ’ Ἀριστοτέλης ὅτι ἐγκώμια καὶ ἐπιτάφια Γρύλλου μύριοι ὄσοι συνέγραψαν.

12. Some support for this is found in the circumstance that the number ten in the phrase “ten times” seems to be a standard expression indicating “many times” rather than exactly ten times, cf. e.g. Gen 31,7; Num 14,22; Job 19,3; Dan 1,20. The “ten days” of Dan 1,12ff., may, however, be meant literally.

13. Both in verse 8 and in verse 24 the little horn is distinguished from the preceding ten horns. Despite this a number of authors have regarded the little horn as the tenth king, e.g. GROTIUS, *Opera omnia theologica*, Vol. I, 466; BROUGHTON, *Works*, 212ff.; BECKMANN, *Dissertatio de quarta Monarchia*, 21ff.; AMNER, *An Essay towards an interpretation of Daniel*, 161; and very recently HARTMAN, *Dan*, 214. The majority of interpreters, however, have regarded the little horn as the eleventh king, e.g. PUSEY, *Dan*, 80; KEIL, *Dan*, 229; CHARLES, *Dan*, 172; MONTGOMERY, *Dan*, 292ff.; ROWLEY, *DM*, 103; YOUNG, *Dan*, 149; PORTEOUS, *Dan*, 106f.; HEATON, *Dan*, 177; LACOCQUE, *Dan*, 107.

14. Cf. BAUMGARTNER, *Ein Vierteljahrhundert Danielforschung*, in *TR* 11 (1939), 204.

successors of Alexander, may have been considered as relevant. Certainly, if Alexander the Great, as founder and first ruler of the Greek empire can head a list of rulers over a part—geographically and population-wise the greater part—of that empire, there is nothing to exclude the possibility of reckoning his immediate successors to the whole empire as links between himself and the head of that part of the empire with which the author will be concerned in his ensuing discussion. The list in the mind of the author may thus have been:

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| 1. Alexander the Great (336-323) | 6. Antiochus II, Theos (261-246) |
| 2. Philip Arhidaeus (323-316) | 7. Seleucus II, Callinicus (246-226) |
| 3. Alexander Aegus (316-310/09) | 8. Seleucus III, Ceraunus (226-223) |
| 4. Seleucus I, Nicator (312-280) | 9. Antiochus III, Great (222-187) |
| 5. Antiochus I, Soter (279-261) | 10. Seleucus IV, Philopator (186-176) |
| 11. Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (176-164) | |

This identification is historically unexceptionable. It has, moreover, the advantage that it presents the first three kings over the whole empire and then the eight kings of one dynasty, the most important dynasty of the Greek empire, especially from our author's viewpoint. The advantages of this robust identification over the various combinations of mixed dynasties are thus obvious.

Nevertheless, even this, in other respects quite satisfactory identification, can founder upon the rocks of (the identification of) the three horns. The three horns which the little horn uprooted, must be considered to be Seleucus III, Ceraunus; Antiochus III, the Great and Seleucus IV, Philopator. Historically, while some doubt is cast upon the circumstances in which Seleucus IV, Philopator, died, and Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, is usually charged with some complicity, it is not at all possible to attribute to Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, the "uprooting" of Seleucus III, Ceraunus and of his own father Antiochus III, the Great¹⁵.

It may be, therefore, that if the fourth beast is to be identified with Greece—and there is no good reason for identifying it otherwise—the figures "ten" and

15. It is these difficulties which lead ROWLEY, *DM*, 103ff., to bypass Alexander the Great, Philip Arhidaeus and Alexander IV, Aegus, and substitute for these Demetrius I, Antiochus a murdered son of Seleucus IV, Philopator, and Ptolemy VI, Philometor, three persons of whom only the first became king, but not till after Antiochus IV, Epiphanes' death. ROWLEY, accordingly, includes in the list of ten kings three personages, who, at best, might be described as potential kings or claimants to the throne. This is altogether unconvincing. The conditions of our text demand three actual kings.

More recently, in an interesting study R. Hanhart has argued that the Author of Daniel applied two different principles of interpretation, "dem symbolhaft typisierenden für die vormakedonische Zeit und dem historischen für die makedonisch-hellenistische Zeit" (*Drei Studien zum Judentum* [Theologische Existenz heute, N.F., 140], München 1967, p. 22). This principle has been shaped by problems encountered in the identification of the four kingdoms. (In an as yet unpublished study I have taken a different view of the identification of the four kingdoms which allows the retention of the same principle for the treatment of all the kingdoms). On the basis of this principle Hanhart considers that "Die Geschichtsvision des 11. Kapitels ist das Kriterium der Geschichtlichkeit der Bildvisionen" (p. 13) — a criterion used by Cowles (*Ezekiel and Daniel*. With Notes, critical, explanatory and practical), and others. Hanhart's identifications are:

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| 1. Alexander the Great (11,3-4) | 5. Ptolemy III, Euergetes (7-9) |
| 2. Ptolemy I, Lagi Soter (5a αβ) | 6. Antiochus III, the Great (10-19 [kethibh]) |
| 3. Seleucus I, Nicator (5ayb) | |
| 4. Antiochus II, Theos (6) | 7. Seleucus IV, Philopator (20) |
| and the three uprooted horns: | |
| 8. Heliodorus | 9. Demetrius I |
| 10. Antiochus, murdered son of Seleucus IV, Philopator | |

“three” must be probably regarded as indefinite numbers¹⁶. “Ten” would indicate that the beast had many kings, and “three” that some of those kings were uprooted to make room for the “eleventh”.

The difficulties besetting the above interpretation¹⁷ may permit some further speculation. We are on quite sure ground when we say that our author does not view world-affairs merely on the historical level, the level of verification, the level on which the historian as historian works, but also—in fact, above all—on a supra-mundane, supra-historical level where the real causes for the events taking place on earth lie with the activities of certain invisible powers which operate under the all-controlling hand of God. This much can be safely assumed. If we now identify the ten horns with Alexander the Great, Philip Arhidaeus, Alexander Aegus and the seven Seleucid kings down to Seleucus IV, Philopator, the immediate predecessor of Antiochus Epiphanes, which we saw, above, to be historically unobjectionable, is the suggestion implausible that the three uprooted horns were actually Alexander the Great, Philip Arhidaeus and Alexander Aegus? The death of Alexander the Great is usually attributed to a fever which he is said to have contracted after bathing in the Tigris. Alexander was at this time beginning to turn his eyes towards the West. It is interesting that his death coincided with the arrival of certain “ambassadors” from the West. Philip Arhidaeus was put to death by Olympias, Alexander’s mother, who wished to establish her son’s offspring by Roxane, alone on the throne, i.e. Alexander Aegus. The last named unfortunate prince was put out of the way by Cassander in 310/309. Although Seleucus I, Nicator, had assumed the title of ‘basileus’ already by 312, the existence of an heir of Alexander the Great had played a restraining role on the Diadochoi’s impatience to assume the purple. With the removal of Alexander Aegus the way was definitely open for the segmentisation of the empire which heretofore was regarded as ideally one.

It is, of course, a truism that Antiochus Epiphanes had nothing to do with these events. But it is also a fact that for our author there is an oscillation, a fluctuation between the particular king and the kingdom over which he rules. The removal of Alexander the Great, Philip Arhidaeus and Alexander Aegus made possible the creation of the Seleucid empire which formed the sphere of activity of the little horn, i.e. Antiochus Epiphanes. That all other events should be bypassed and that the entire existence of the Seleucid empire should be considered only insofar as it had any significance for Antiochus Epiphanes

16. The identification of the fourth beast with the Roman empire has immensely greater difficulties in supplying the ‘ten horns’ and the ‘three kings’. The scholars so identifying it normally argue for a renewed Roman empire. A renewed Roman empire is postulated because the conditions of our text are not fulfilled by the historical Roman empire. But if the historical Roman empire does not meet the conditions of the text so that a renewed empire has to be postulated, why cannot a renewed Greek empire be postulated for those conditions not fulfilled in history since the Greek empire manifestly meets the rest of the conditions of our text far better than the Roman empire?

17. The problem with this solution is that this beast is said to be different from the other beasts by its having “ten horns”. If “ten horns” means simply “many” kings, wherein does the difference consist e.g. from the Persian empire, which also had many kings? Besides, if ‘three’ means ‘some’ and this is referred to Seleucus IV, Philopator, why was the figure ‘some’ used when only one person was in view?

ought to cause no surprise. The description of ch. 7 shows that the kings preceding the little horn have no significance of their own for our author except in so far as they relate to the little horn. From our viewpoint the expression "three of the first horns were uprooted before him" would be more natural if the three horns immediately preceded Antiochus Epiphanes and their uprooting was directly and causally linked with him. However, in view of the above considerations, this need not be regarded as an insurmountable obstacle. In the mind of the author the deaths of the three rulers over the whole empire paved the way for the little horn's appearance even though seven other horns might have preceded him. The phrase "before him" need not imply that Antiochus Epiphanes was personally involved in the "uprooting" of the three horns, if the dynamic nature of the vision is conceded.

Alternatively, the three uprooted horns may be Philip Arrhidaeus and Alexander Aegus, whose death opened the way to the emergence of the Seleucid empire and Seleucus IV, Philopator, whose removal brought Antiochus Epiphanes to the throne.

In this somewhat speculative interpretation, which I have met nowhere else—possibly because it was considered unworthy of mention—the figures of "ten" and "three" would represent definite numbers. To my mind, the theory can be regarded at best as only probable. Final certainty is unattainable here.

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