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The Iconography of Narratives and a Case Study of the Lion in 1 Kings 13:11–32

The aim of this paper is to test an analysis technique that applies iconographic exegesis for the Hebrew Bible narratives. I would be grateful to have feedback on following issues: 1) How well is this research situated in the research history of iconographic exegesis? Does it have its place there and does it continue plausibly from the predecessors in the field? 2) How is the literary analysis (3.1.) conducted? Am I able to treat the text as a whole literary constellation, thus avoiding the fragmentary use of it (see ch. 1)? 3) How does the transition between 3.1. and 3.3. work? Is the iconic structure of the narrative (3.2.) a functional "bridge" between two sources, texts and images?

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1. Research History

In the field of iconographic exegesis it is a standard these days to pay proper attention to the artistic context of the ancient visual material. Prior to 1970's the pictorial material discovered from ancient Near East was often used to illustrate the Bible with its characters and key events.[1] Hugo Gressmann and James Pritchard were among first, who started to pay attention to images in a text-

[1] LeMon 2009, 143-145.

orientated sphere of Biblical studies and Western science.[2] Without discrediting their achievements, these works do not take the artistic context of images properly into account.[3] In his groundbreaking research *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (1972) Othmar Keel criticizes Pritchard's *ANEP* for only delivering the first part of its title, the ancient Near East in Pictures, but it fails to relate them to the Old Testament.[4] Keel himself was the first biblical scholar who saw more value in images, and did not treat them as mere illustrations of the Bible.[5] In his article "Iconography and the Bible" in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992) Keel criticizes the fragmentary use of images:

> Fragmentation […] followed by many biblical scholars, is still typically the way in which Egyptian and Assyrian pictures are presented in illustrating biblical civilization. Very seldom is an entire relief or a complete wall painting reproduced. Usually particular kinds of agricultural activity, specific cult utensils, or single musical instruments are selected for illustration. This is legitimate for those interested in material culture in a narrow sense […]. Under such fragmentization the social aspect of the pictures is not revealed […]. For example, when the great relief of the conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib serves to illustrate "battering rams," "women's clothes," and "wagon types" that is indeed useful; but the picture's possibilities for information do not stop there. This method of presenting only fragments […] pays no respect to the original message of these works, the purpose of which was not the illustration of perceptual material culture, but of concepts like divine rule, world order, kingship and the gods, etc.[6]

Keel wrote his *ABD* entry in the beginning of 1990's and it demonstrates how his own understanding of the relationship between texts and images had developed over time; in his early work Keel is guilty for treating images in a fragmentary fashion.[7] Along with Keel's methodological development, the field of iconographic exegesis has also developed steadily since 1970's. Keel and a network of his students and colleagues, the so-called "Fribourg School"[8] laid the foundation for iconographic exegesis.

Over the last two decades the pioneering work of the Fribourg School has been revised and advanced by a second generation of scholars. The "second wave"[9] of iconographic exegesis includes scholars such as Brent A. Strawn, Joel M. LeMon, Izaak J. de Hulster and Ryan Bonfiglio. To quote the last mentioned, "one of the hallmarks of this "second wave" […] is its increased

[2] See Hugo Gressmann: *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament* (1909) and James B. Pritchard: *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (1954).
[3] Bofiglio 2016, 72.
[4] Keel 1997 [1972], 11. See also Bonfiglio 2016, 72.
[5] LeMon 2009, 146.
[6] Keel 1992a, 360-361.
[7] E.g. in his commentary of the Song of Songs Keel uses restricted views of images and some of his captions are verses from the Song of Songs. (Keel 1994. See also de Hulster 2007, 67-72.)
[8] See e.g. Bonfiglio 2016, 3; de Hulster 2007, 21-164.
[9] Bonfiglio 2016, 3.

attention to and revision of interpretative methods, especially when it comes to relating texts and images."[10]

Brent A. Strawn's monograph *What is Stronger than a Lion?* (2005) is highly significant for this current research. Strawn has done extensive work in categorizing lion's appearance in the ancient Near Eastern art, literature and in the Hebrew Bible. In his research he is able to provide convincing interpretations of ancient images by taking their own artistic contexts into account and thus avoiding fragmentary use of images. However, while Strawn succeeds in analyzing the images thoroughly, he overlooks the *literary* context of the motifs he studies.[11]

Joel M. LeMon makes a case against the literary fragmentation in the introduction of his monograph *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms* (2010) and calls iconographers to explore even larger literary constellations.[12] LeMon himself does indeed succeed in avoiding literary fragmentation. In his interpretative procedure he evaluates a level of congruency between ancient Near Eastern art and the imagery in the selected Psalms. LeMon borrows William P. Brown's terminology as he attempts to "interpret the image of the wings of Yahweh within the 'iconic structure' of each individual psalm".[13] His analysis follows a twofold structure: literary analysis and evaluation of congruencies between the literary constellations and the iconographic depictions in the ancient Near Eastern art. He begins his literary analysis with an overview on structural outline, rhetorical movement and form and setting. In the second part of the literary analysis his observes the image of the psalmist, enemy/enemies and Yahweh. In the end of the literary analysis he summarizes the iconic structure of each psalm. This operates as a bridge to evaluating congruencies between verbal and visual material.

The aim of this research is to answer the call of bringing "ever-larger constellations of literary imagery into conversation with congruent constellations of iconographic motifs".[14] This research will follow in the footsteps of LeMon but takes a slightly different path. While LeMon applies his 'iconic structure' to psalms, in this research the analyzed texts are prose.[15] The differences in the literary genre demand careful consideration when adapting LeMon's concept. An iconographic exegesis on the Hebrew Bible narratives provides a chance to bring forth the methodological tools of narrative criticism as well. It opens a door to analyze several other literary devices in addition to characterization. These include for example structure and storyline, narration, narrator and focalization, and also time, especially on the perspective of repetitions.

[10] Bonfiglio 2016, 3.
[11] LeMon 2010, 15.
[12] LeMon 2010, 16.
[13] LeMon 2010, 16. Brown 2002.
[14] LeMon 2010, 16.
[15] Although this difference seems not anymore accepted in Biblical Studies, the distinction can be argued to less obvious but still useful to hint at the particularities of the present paper.

2. Template of the Analysis

What then, would be a proper way to do iconographic exegesis on the Hebrew Bible narratives? How, in practice, should the iconic structure be applied and adapted to this textual genre? In this chapter I attempt to describe the procedure that I will later follow in the case study of 1 Kings 13:11-32. The main points are summarized in Table 1.

Template of Analysis
1) Pre-analysis
a) Choice of a theme (lion).
b) Selection of related Hebrew Bible narratives that are comparable with each other (Judg. 14, 1 Kings 13:11-32, Dan. 6).
c) Survey on the iconography of the selected theme (lion imagery in ANE art).
2) Analysis
a) Literary constellation
b) Literary motifs / Iconic structure
c) Iconographic congruencies
d) Conclusions: the *X* (lion) imagery in *Y* (Judg. 14 / 1 Kings 13:11-32 / Dan. 6)

Table 1.

2.1. Pre-analysis

(1a) This analysis technique takes a theme as a starting point. In this research I have selected lion for the target of analysis, because it is extensively represented in the Hebrew Bible, and also in the ancient Near Eastern iconography.

(1b) After selecting a theme, I survey the representations of a lion in the Hebrew Bible in order to select suitable texts for the research. Since the focus is on narratives, I have left out other literary genres where lions also appear. The selected narratives in the dissertation are Judg. 14 (Samson's encounter with a lion), 1 Kings 13:11-32 (the man of God is killed by a lion) and Dan. 6 (Daniel in the lions' den). Another option would have been to analyze only one narrative, but there is a reason why I chose to take three narratives under observation. One of the aims of this research

is to evaluate the methodological issues of analysis. Therefore, analyzing three narratives provides a more broad perception of the succeeding and short comings of this analysis technique. The selected narratives are approximately the same length and similarly structured, which makes them comparable with each other. As already mentioned above, 1 Kings 13:11-32 will be analyzed as a test case in this paper.

(1c) Before the actual analysis phase, the iconography of the selected theme is surveyed to increase the reliability of the research. In this research I make an overall survey to lion imagery and lion motifs in the ancient Near Eastern art. If this step was excluded, there would be a danger to search congruencies between text and images with the basis of only seeming similarities. I lean on Brent A. Strawn's categorization of lion motifs in the ancient Near Eastern art.[16] He has done an extensive amount of work in that field and therefore there is no need to reinvent the wheel. However, I discuss his categorization critically and suggest supplementations and alterations if I find it necessary. In the scope of this paper, I will leave this step aside and only discuss images that I consider congruent with the imagery of 1 Kings 13:11-32.

2.2. Analysis

(2a) The analysis begins with observing the whole literary constellation. Even though the main focus in this research is on the image of a lion, it is crucial to see its surroundings as well. When we see a painting, we do not make an interpretation of it on the basis of only one element. In order to understand the image, we would have to see the whole constellation in the painting. It is impossible to make a valid interpretation without observing the connections between the characters, the composition, the use of colors and so forth. Said differently, one has to pay attention to the whole constellation in order to interpret the role of a single component. The Hebrew Bible narratives deserve to be treated in the same way. In order to make an interpretation of lion's role in a certain narrative, one has to observe the whole literary constellation first. How the selected narratives are structured and how are their storylines composed? Which individual components are there (e.g. characters, milieus, events etc.)? What kind of interaction is there between the different components? Which literary features are used in the text? How do all of these affect the portrayal of the selected theme, the lion? On this stage of analysis, I employ the terms and narratological categories of those scholars, who have done research on narrative criticism and on contemporary literature studies.[17]

[16] Strawn 2005.
[17] See chapter 3.1. of this paper.

(2b) Only after observing the whole literary constellation, it is possible to describe which motifs of the selected theme appear in the narrative. If we isolate the image of the lion from its constellation, the narrative, we have a limited number of motifs to describe. But if the analysis begins from observing the whole literary constellation, it helps to recognize the motifs more comprehensively. The aim of recognizing and describing the motifs is to map the iconic structure of the narrative, in order to make plausible connections with representations in the iconographic material. In other words, this phase of the analysis forms a bridge between the literary and visual images.

(2c) Once the relevant literary motifs have been listed, the analysis turns to iconographic comparison. How are these motifs represented in the visual material of the ancient Near East? What seems to be their function and meaning(s)? Have the motifs evolved in time and were they used differently in different contexts?

(2d) In the final phase of the analysis the comparative materials, texts and images, are discussed side by side. The attempt of this exegetical work is to make an interpretation of the lion imagery in the selected Hebrew Bible narratives. In the following chapter, I will adapt the template of the analysis to 1 Kings 13:11-32, in order to examine its functionality.

3. A Case Study on 1 Kings 13:11-32

3.1. Literary constellation

Introduction

1 Kings 13:11-32 is part of a larger deuteronomistic narrative that is placed in the history of king Jeroboam. Criticism against the cult of Bethel, connection to Josiah's reform and the repetition of the "word of Yahweh" are the themes that reveal the deuteronomistic agenda behind the storyline.[18] The narrative divides into two parts[19]: first a man of God comes from Judah to proclaim judgment to the altar of Bethel and to the reign of king Jeroboam. In the second part an old prophet witnesses the brutal consequences that face the man of God for disobeying the word of Yahweh.[20]

Structure and Storyline

[18] Cogan 2001, 373–375. Jones 1984, 267.
[19] e.g. Cogan 2001, 373. DeVries argues for the unity of the narrative and disclaims the theory of two originally separate stories. (DeVries 1986, 168–169.)
[20] Cogan 2001, 373–374.

The structure of the narrative is chiastic.[21] It begins and ends in Bethel, the second and the fourth part of the narrative take place on the road and the third part in the middle is positioned in the house of the old prophet. Structuring the narrative in this fashion underlines the importance of the proclamation of the word of Yahweh in verses 21-22.

11-13 Bethel

14-18 On the road

19-23 Old prophet's house (Bethel)

24-28 On the road

29-32 Bethel

Narration, narrator and focalization

> "Biblical narrative is famous for its economy of style, its essential terseness. It tends to avoid description in any form but even more so figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification, and the like). And with regard to characterization, the biblical narrator consistently, if not slavishly, refuses the reader access to the inner lives of the characters, so that their thoughts and feelings, and therefore what motivates their actions, are largely unavailable. These aspects of biblical prose narrative are part of what I take to be its nascent realism, where an objective third-person narrator is wont to present the world with neither commentary nor adornment and where literary characters, like those people we encounter in the physical world, are largely opaque to us."[22]

The description of the Hebrew Bible prose by Tod Linafelt is largely convergent with the narration in 1 Kings 13:11-32. The narrative is very ambiguous, due to the fact that the third person narrator reveals as little as possible. The narrator is omniscient. He knows what has happened before at the altar of Bethel (v. 11) and he implies, through the old prophet though, what is about to happen in the future (v. 30-32). The narrator remains objective, except in verse 18, where he intrudes in the story by pointing out that the old prophet lies.

The narrator does not reveal a lot about the inner lives of the characters, nor does he even describe the characters much. The 'sons' of the old prophet and the 'people' that pass by the corpse of the man of God are merely mentioned. The function of these characters is to deliver information to the old prophet, who is the main focalizer of the narrative. The narrative is filtered through the eyes of the old prophet. He interprets the events and the narrator does not verify his views, so the

[21] On chiastic structure / ring composition see Douglas 2007.
[22] Linafelt 2015, 88.

reader must consider whether the conception of the old prophet holds true or not. He records the events as he would stand next to the characters.

Characters

The characters in the narrative are mostly characterized by their action and speech, rather than having the narrator describe them.[23] In fact, the narrator only defines the main characters as the 'man of God' and 'the old prophet'. The first is from the South, Judah and the second from the North, Bethel. This implies a theological or ideological contrast between the two. In addition, there is an intriguing interplay between these two characters. The first one is disobedient and the second is deceitful. They are both prophets, as is stated in verse 18. The man of God has proclaimed judgment to the altar of Bethel before (vv. 1-10) by the word of Yahweh. He attempts to act according to the command of Yahweh and return back to Judah, but the old prophet makes him deviate from the road, which turns out to be a fatal mistake. The old prophet is able to convince the man of God for having received a commandment from Yahweh to bring the man back to his house. However, the narrator notifies that the old prophet was lying. Ironically, he receives the actual word of Yahweh in the table as they are eating, and proclaims the judgement to the man of God for disobeying Yahweh's orders. As was noted before, the focalization point is in the old prophet throughout the storyline. His role in the narrative is to be a witness to the events. The man of God on the other hand, is the object of action. His role is to demonstrate what follows for those who disobey Yahweh's commands.

There are also two important animal characters in this narrative: a lion and a donkey(s). The donkey is a domesticated animal that serves human beings, whereas the lion is an uncontrollable wild beast. Donkeys are portrayed as quite passive animals in this narrative. They do what they are expected to do, that is, transport people from place to place. There are no explicit mentions of donkeys disobeying their owner or rider. The lion acts aggressively in verse 24, as one would expect a lion to do. Later the old prophet makes an interpretation of this scene by saying: "Yahweh has given him to the lion and it has mauled him and killed him according to the word of Yahweh that he spoke to him" (v. 26). The narrator does not confirm or confute this view. It is the only explanation that is given for the aggressive confrontation. It indicates that the lion does not act on his own, but is under control of Yahweh or at least does some kind of co-operation with the deity. After the death of the man of God, the two animals seem to act against their nature: the lion does not attack the donkey and the donkey does not run away from the lion. Once again, there seems to

[23] Already Bar-Efrat notes that characterization through action is the most typical way of transmitting information about characters in the Hebrew Bible. See Bar-Efrat 1989, 77.

be an ironic twist in the narrative: the human characters are disobedient and deceitful, but the animal characters are not.

As was noted above, there are also two groups of minor characters in this narrative: the sons of the old prophet and the people on the road. It is obvious that the only function of these two groups is to pass on information to the old prophet, who otherwise is the focalizer in the narrative. In addition to this, they do serve another function as well. They are the observers of the events. The people on the road are part of the constellation, where the dead body of the man of God is left on the side of the road, and the lion and the donkey are flanking it. The people *see* this while they pass by. The following sub-chapter will underscore the importance of this scene even more.

Before continuing to another literary devices, it is worthwhile to ponder, whether there is still one character left to discuss. Yahweh is strongly present in the narrative, even though he is not portrayed as the other characters. In several occasions the phrase 'the word of Yahweh' has such an important role that it could almost be considered as a character of its own (vv. 17, 18, 20, 26, 32). An 'agent' would perhaps describe Yahweh better, since he seems to act on the background, or at least the other characters believe that he does. As a character Yahweh is hard to reach; he is present, but not visible. However, Yahweh, or 'the word of Yahweh', motivates the actions of the other characters.

Repetition[24]

In 1 Kings 13:11-32 there are several elements that are repeated. The prohibition to eat bread and drink water in Bethel repeats several times in verses 15-23, and also the phrase 'the word of Yahweh', as was noted above. The lion scene is also an event that is reported more than once in the narrative. After the lion has killed the man of God, his mangled body remains on the road. His donkey takes a stand beside the body and so does the lion. It is made very clear and explicit that the action of the animals, the lion and the donkey, has a great importance in the storyline. The setting is mentioned three times:

(24) "[And] he went away and a lion confronted him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was abandoned on the road and the donkey stood beside it and the lion stood beside the corpse."

[24] The term repetition could be replaced with the concept of *frequency*, which was first applied to literary studies by Genette in his *Narrative Discourse* (1980). Frequency always contains the element of repetition. There are several levels of frequency, which all provide information about the importance of a certain event in a storyline: (1) an event happens once and is told once in the narrative. (2) An event happens once, but is told twice or more often. (3) An event happens several times and is told several times. (4) An event happens several times, but is told only once. According to Alter and Sternbeck, the second option is often present in Biblical narratives and carries indeed an intention. See Alter 1981, 95; Sternbeck 1985, 432. Also Rimmon-Kenan 1997 [1983], 56; Jonker 1996, 216.

(25) "And behold people passed by and saw the body abandoned on the road and the lion standing beside the corpse. And they came and told it in the town, where the old prophet lived."

(28) "And he went away and confronted his body abandoned on the road and the donkey and the lion standing beside the corpse. The lion had not eaten the body nor crushed the donkey."

In the first passage, the event itself takes place. It is repeated when the passing people see the outcome of it. The purpose of the second repetition is to point out that also the old prophet sees it. Even though the witnesses change, the event itself stays the same: in every repetition there is explicit mention of the forsaken, ripped body and a standing lion next to it. Interestingly the donkey is missing from the scene in the verse 25. This could be a simple error, but it can also indicate that the donkey is not as crucial player in the scene as the lion and the dead man are, since these two are mentioned in all repetitions.

In my view, the function of these repetitions is to underline the stagnated position of these three components of the constellation and inform the reader that *seeing* it plays also part in it. As I already argued in the chapter above, the people who pass by, as well as the old prophet, witness the scene but also participate in it.

3.2. The Iconic Structure and the Lion Motifs in the Narrative

The central message of the narrative seems to be the obedience to Yahweh, as the chiastic structure and the repetition of the phrase 'the word of Yahweh' indicate. The lion scene also underline this point. The violent death is the outcome of disobeying Yahweh. The purpose of the characters is to demonstrate the fulfillment of the word of Yahweh. The man of God serves as an example of the power of the deity and his word, and the other characters testify this as witnesses. Therefore seeing plays such an important role in the narrative. The lion scene in verses 24-26 consists of 5 different characters or agents: the man of God, the donkey, the lion, the witnesses (the people and the old prophet) and Yahweh, who is certainly present in the scene, even though he is not portrayed. The phrase "Yahweh has given him to the lion" in verse 26 indicates that Yahweh has a divine control over the beast. Also the way how the lion behaves after killing the man of God implies that something drives it to act against its nature and holds it back from eating its prey and attacking the donkey.

Summa summarum, on the basis of the literary analysis of 1 Kings 13:11-32 there is 1) a lion that confronts a man and kills him, 2) a lion standing next to a human corpse, with a donkey on the other side, 3) a lion who does not eat the body or hurt the donkey, and 4) a god who gives someone

to a lion, i. e. *controls* a lion. In the following chapter I will discuss iconographic material that seems to be congruent with the literary imagery.

3.3. Iconographic congruencies

Attacking lions

A lion killing a man was a common motif in the ancient Near Eastern art. A clear attacker/attacked-position is on display in an ivory piece from eight-century Nimrud. In this piece a lioness has firm hold on her victim, who is lying underneath the beast. The lioness has sunk her teeth into the neck of the victim. (**Fig. 1**) Lion attacking other animals was also common in the ancient Near Eastern art. In Mesopotamia this motif appears already in early Sumerian era (Uruk Period V-III, 3300–2900 BCE) [25] and in Egypt from the era of Old Kingdom forward (3100–2200 BCE). [26] The use of the motif covers several different media and time periods. The victims of lions are other wild animals, but also domesticated livestock. (**Fig. 2**) In general, attacking lions symbolize enemies, chaos, threat to order and civilization.[27]

However, negative forces were not all that was targeted towards lions. In the ancient Near East lions were respected and feared, due to the fact that they were, and are, dangerous and powerful predators. For this reason lions were often associated to gods, goddesses and kings. For example, a Late Bronze Age seal from Tell el-Farʿah (S) depicts an attacking lion, ready to devour his human victim. (**Fig. 3**) According to Strawn, here "the lion's awesome, threating power is positively appropriated by the king".[28] Keel & Uehlinger also discuss this object and state, that king's "irresistible power is … depicted as … a lion that overpowers a human … or as a lion that tears a man apart."[29]

Lions and donkeys?

Donkeys appeared somewhat frequently in the ancient Near Eastern art as well. **Fig. 4** depicts a highborn nomad riding a relatively small donkey. This piece is a bronze figure, originated in Syria, possibly in early MB IIA.[30] A two sided engraved plate from late MB IIB (**Fig. 5**) shows a donkey as a beast of burden. On one side of this plate there is a striding donkey with a baggage on his/her back. Behind him/her there is a standing man. On the other side of the plate there are two male

[25] Keel 1992, 26–27.
[26] Strawn 2005, 135.
[27] Strawn 2005, 134.
[28] Strawn 2005, 85.
[29] Keel & Uehlinger 1998, 82.
[30] Schroer 2008, 74.

characters, who stand around a stylized tree of life. It is clear that a depiction such as this relates to trade and wellbeing,[31] but it also simply shows that donkeys were held as draught animals. Even though the above mentioned pieces are dated to the Bronze Age, the depictions of donkeys in the Hebrew Bible demonstrate a continuity: several passages give examples of donkeys being used for riding (e.g. Ex. 4:20; Num. 22:22ff; Judg. 10:4; 1 Sam. 25:20), as a beast of burden (Gen. 42:26; 1 Sam. 25:18; Neh. 13:15; Is. 30:6) and in the field work (Deut. 22:10; Is. 30:24).[32] The iconographic examples, together with Biblical material, indicate that a donkey was held as a servant and a helper of men.

Unfortunately there are not too many depictions of lions and donkeys together. One rare example is a seal from 15th Dynasty Egypt (MBII).(**Fig. 6**) Even in this piece the lion and the donkey are not portrayed side by side: the striding lion is the motif on one side and the donkey with a burden on the other side. According to Regine Schultz, the lion in this piece represents royal features, since lions were often associated with pharaohs in Egyptian iconography. The donkey on the other side depicts elements of trade and well-being.[33] Other than representing both animals in the same piece, this rare object does not seem to share a lot in common with the depiction in 1 Kings 13:11-32.

Guardian lions

The most surprising element in the narrative in 1 Kings 13:11-32 is the action of the beast after it has killed the man of God. This is what the repetitions are about: the lion stays standing next to the corpse, with the donkey on the other side. The narrator also makes it explicit that this was a place, where people passed by and saw the setting. This was indeed meant to be seen! In the iconography of ancient Israel/Palestine there are no direct counterparts for this constellation, where a dead human body is flanked by a standing male lion and a donkey.

However, the so-called 'guardian lion' motif might be comparable here. 'Guardian lion' statues were common in the architecture of the ancient Near East, including the Israel/Palestine region. They were usually placed on the entrances of cities, palaces and temples. From the Late Bronze Age there are the famous orthostats of Hazor. (**Figs. 7-10**) The first of these was thrown into a pit and possibly buried ceremoniously. This indicates that a gate lion was more than a decorative statue; it had a cultic significance and was considered to strengthen the gate with its godly, demonical or

[31] Ibid.
[32] Woschitz 1991, 597.
[33] Schultz 2004, 60.

punitive powers.[34] In addition to their popularity in the monumental art, guardian lions also appeared in the miniature art as well, as a small lion amulet from Tell el-Far'ah illustrates (**Fig. 11**).[35]

Keel & Uehlinger state that the "increase in importance [of] the northern Syrian guard-lion symbolism" is one of the "hallmarks of Iron Age IIB."[36] Orientation of the guardian lions has an impact on their interpretation. Guardian lion statues on the entrances of cities and public buildings were usually facing outwards. However, slightly different type of guardian lions were found in Tel Eitun (**Fig. 12**). These are roughly carved images in a grave. Unlike the guardian lions on the city, palace or temple entrances, these lions face *into* the grave. The guardian lions that are faced outwards, usually serve an apotropaic function. Their task is to threaten the enemy, keep the bad away from a building or a person and invite good. The purpose of the Tell Eitun lions is to protect the living outside the grave and keep the spirits of the dead inside.[37]

According to Strawn "The practice of placing leonine figures in key architectural contexts is quite early and can be traced with relative consistency thereafter."[38] One relatively early occurrence (though not the earliest!) in Mesopotamia is from the end of third millennium of two massive lions flanking the entrance of Enki's temple in Eridu (**Fig. 13**).[39] Similarly there are two clay figures from Tell Harmal, the temple of Nisaba and Hani (**Fig. 14**). These male lions are sitting and roaring, just as the stone statue from Eridu. An inscription of these statues clarifies their function: "[This is] he who rushes against the rebellion and purges the enemy country, who bids the evil go and good to come".[40] The lions of Eridu and Tell Harmal belonged to temple context, but because lions were associated with several deities and monarchs, they were also used as a decorative element of palaces, city gates and in doorways generally.[41]

A crucial point in the lion scene of 1 Kings 13 seems to be that the lion stays standing by the corpse, as this is reported several times. Therefore, I will now bring up a few examples of ancient Near Eastern art that might relate to this depiction. First is from a palace in Alaja Hüyük (ca. 1450–1200 BCE) (**Fig. 15**). Noteworthy in this orthostat is an unlucky bull-calf underneath the lion's pawn. The lion is standing, faced forward. The lower part of the statue is not very well preserved, but it still clearly shows the calf's submission to the lion.[42] Another example is a detail in a portico

[34] Strawn 2005,86. See also Ussishkin 1970, 127.
[35] Strawn 2005,.
[36] Keel&Uehlinger 1998, 278. See also Strawn 2005, 100.
[37] Keel&Uehlinger 1998, 188. Strawn 2005 100; 217. Schroer 1987, 78.
[38] Strawn 2005, 218.
[39] Strawn 2005, 218.
[40] Keel 1997 [1972], 126; See also Parrot 1969, 77.
[41] Strawn 2005, 217; Brown 1976, 1.
[42] Strawn 2005, 223.

of ninth century Kappara palace, Tell Halaf (**Fig. 16a-b**). The detail is an orthostat of a standing and roaring male lion. A male figure (divine or divinized) is standing on the lion and underneath the lion there is a deer, whose guts are hanging out.[43] Finally, there is also a statue from the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE) (**Fig. 17**). Unfortunately the statue is unfinished and its origin and dating is debated. Nevertheless, its content is quite interesting. Under a vigorous, standing lion male lion lays a human figure.[44] Depicting a guardian lion in these kinds of manners underlines the apotropaic function of them. They are meant to be warnings for those, who enter with bad intentions: intruders will become lion's prey![45]

Deity or Monarch Controls Lions

After killing the man of God in 1 Kings 13:11-32, the lion refrains from eating its prey and it does not attack again. Even though it is not stated explicitly, it is doubtful that the lion acts under the command of Yahweh. In the iconographic record of the ancient Near East, a deity or a monarch controlling a lion is one attestation of so called Master/Lord of the Animals. The theme of control is usually conveyed by depicting the anthropomorphic figure higher the beast, with his/her hand on the back of the animal. In some cases the anthropomorphic figure is holding the lion on its tail, or even dangles it in the air. There can be one or more lions or other animals, and the anthropomorphic figure can be flanked by the animals.

Fig 18 depicts a four-winged male deity (genius), who is holding a male and a female lion on their hind legs. Both lions have attacked a bull. The central position of the deity clearly indicates that he is in control of the attacking beast, although it is difficult to determine, whether the deity is sending the lions towards the bulls or restricts their attack. This specific image is a detail in a 9th century relief from Nimrud, but the motif is at least 2000 years older.[46]

A Late Bronze age cylinder seal from Tell el-ʿAjjul also depicts a deity controlling a lion (**Fig. 19**), although the overall meaning of the constellation is uncertain. According to Keel & Uehlinger, the deity "holds, by tail, the lion that, together with a winged daemon is threatening a human who is lying on the ground."[47] Strawn suggests that alternatively the lion could be the deity's familiar, as well as the horned animal on his left hand. Both of the animals are sent by the deity towards the winged demon, who is threatening the human character.[48] Be that as it may, the

[43] Strawn 2005, 221.
[44] Strawn 2005, 223–224.
[45] Strawn 2005, 221; 224.
[46] Frankfort 1954, 104. Strawn 2005, 4.215. Cf. Strawn 2005 e.g. fig. 4.88 and 4.222.
[47] Keel & Uehlinger 1998, 78.
[48] Strawn 2005, 84.

constellation indicates divine control over the lion. The deity either *restrains* a lion from attacking the human being or he[49] *commands* it to attack the demon.

The element of control is also present in such images, where a king is fighting his enemies in a battle, with an attacking lion by his side. For example in a sandstone relief from Medinet Habu (**Fig. 20**) the king and the lion are infallibly unanimous about their enemy. The king has grabbed his enemy by hair and prepares to strike him dead, while the lion has sunk his teeth on the enemy's elbow. The enemy of the king is also the enemy of the lion.

A lion was (and still is) considered as one of the most dangerous land predators.[50] Therefore depicting a deity or a monarch in control of such animal emphasizes his/her insurmountable power. Also, when a lion is portrayed as the familiar or an attribute animal of the deity, the lion "lends" its power and aggressiveness to the anthropomorphic character.[51]

3.4. The Lion Imagery in 1 Kings 13:11-32

In my view, the lion in 1 Kings 13:11-32 does not represent enemy or chaos forces as in **figures 1-2**. The lion is not portrayed negatively, but represented as an obedient minion of Yahweh and therefore the role of the lion is to highlight the power of Yahweh. When portrayed as god's familiar, the lion lends it aggressive power to the deity in a same way as in the iconographic material.

The lack of images indicates that making a pair of a lion and a donkey is a unique feature in the narrative. The function of the donkey (and the viewers) could be to demonstrate, how the lion only attacks the one who has violated against the word of Yahweh. Numerous images and texts in the ancient Near East depict lions attacking domesticated and wild animals. Therefore, a non-attacking, or selectively attacking lion is certainly an artistic device that pinpoints the message of the narrative.

I argue that the main emphasis in the lion constellation in 1 Kings 13:11-32 is on the guarding, as the repetitions in the narrative indicate. The image of the dead man flanked by a standing lion and a donkey is highly congruent with the iconographic examples of the guardian lions. The lion in the narrative is placed on a visible site, on the road, where people pass by and see it. Just the same were the guardian lion statues placed on the city gates or on the entrances of palaces and temples. The victim is shown next to the lion in order to warn others; this is the outcome of ignoring the word of Yahweh. After hearing about the peculiar triangle on the road, the

[49] In *SBW* (p. 83, fig. 96) Keel interpreted the divine figure to be female, but later in *GGG* (p. 78, fig. 90a) he and Uehlinger describe the figure as male.
[50] Strawn 2009, 158.
[51] Strawn 2005 84-85. Keel & Uehlinger 1998, 82.

old prophet realizes that the unfortunate victim is the man of God who disobeyed Yahweh. In the end the narrative is connected back to the larger narrative of 1 Kings 13. After seeing the constellation of the lion, donkey and the corpse on the road, the old prophet realizes that since Yahweh's word came true in the faith of the man of God, the proclamation against the altar of Bethel was also genuine prophecy and will be reality one day.

In the visual representations, the divine control over lions is depicted with a physical contact between the (usually) anthropomorphic deity and the beast. Gods, goddesses and monarchs stand on lions, they have laid their hands on the backs of the lions, and they hold lions on the hindlegs, tails and throats. – Some images even portray how the goddess Ištar has a lion on a leash! (**Fig. 21**) Due to the aniconic tradition of Yahweh, these portrayals are not used in the Hebrew Bible. The depictions of Yahweh's action are very subtle, and respect the ban of image. Yahweh does participate, yet he does not act in a same way as the other characters. Even so, the element of divine control is certainly visible in the narrative, but in a more abstract level than in the iconographic material. The action of the lion implies this, same as the statement of the old prophet: "Yahweh has *given him* to the lion and it has mauled him and killed him according to the word of Yahweh that he spoke to him" (v. 26). *In contra* to one possible interpretation of **Fig. 19**, Yahweh does not refrain the lion from attacking the donkey or the people on the road to protect them. It is also worth to ponder, whether the lion in the narrative is acting on the command of Yahweh, or whether it represents the deity itself as in **fig. 3**. In any case, the lion lends it power and aggression to Yahweh in the same manner as in the iconographic constellations.

4. Evaluation of the Analysis Technique

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate one possible procedure of applying iconographic exegesis to the Hebrew Bible narratives. The leading aspiration was to avoid the fragmentary use of both images and texts. Observing the narrative as a whole literary constellation, expanded the understanding of the image of a lion in it. Isolating the lion from its literary context would have led to a more narrow interpretation of it. LeMon's iconic structure turned out to be a helpful tool for bridging the literary and visual images. His concept has been applauded for evaluating the level of congruence between textual and visual representations in a convincing way.[52] Indeed, the mapping of motifs helped to narrow down the comparative material that largely based on the categorization of Brent A. Strawn.

[52] See e.g. Bonfiglio 2016, 5–6; 74.

A few pitfalls have to be born in mind when working with ancient narratives and images. First, the analytical tools that we use are modern and they derive from the sphere of Western science and European, (Christian) culture. The way of representing thoughts and concepts varies between that cultural context and the ancient Near Eastern one. For example, Yahweh turned out to be a difficult component in the narrative when traditional narratological categorization of characters was used. When a tool does not serve the purpose, it has to be modified. The ancient concepts should not be forced into modern categories.[53] Second, evaluating the level of congruence between texts and images is an interpretative task. Showing a true, historical dependence between images and texts is impossible, or at least extremely difficult undertaking. Therefore we have to rely on cautious, but well-argued academic interpretations. Also, in the field of iconographic exegesis there is no clear consensus on how to diagnose the image-text relationship, even though LeMon's approach provides one credible option.

Ryan P. Bonfiglio points out that often times scholars focus on finding similarities between texts and images, and leave the differences out of the discussion.[54] I hope that in this paper I have been able to ponder both similarities and differences, since they both reveal information about the subjects of research. In the end, the analysis revealed that the narrative adapts and modifies iconographic motifs and thereby creates a unique blend. Several different motifs of one theme can occur within one constellation, either textual or visual, and that reveals the multistability of the image of a lion.[55]

[53] Historical narratology aims for this in the field of literary studies. See e.g. Monika Fludernik's manifestational essay "The Diachronization of Narratology" (2003).
[54] Bonfiglio 2016, 114.
[55] See discussion of LeMon 2010, 192–193 and Bonfiglio 2016, 115.

Images

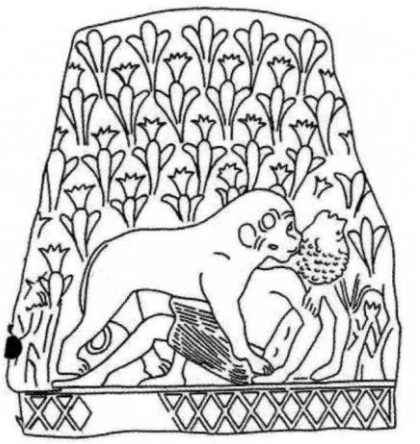


Fig. 1. Ivory; Nimrud; 8th c. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.56.

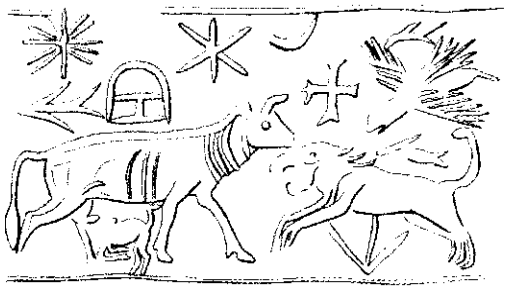


Fig. 2. Cylinder seal; 9th or 8th c. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.42.



Fig. 3. Seal, el-Farʿah (S), LBA. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.12.

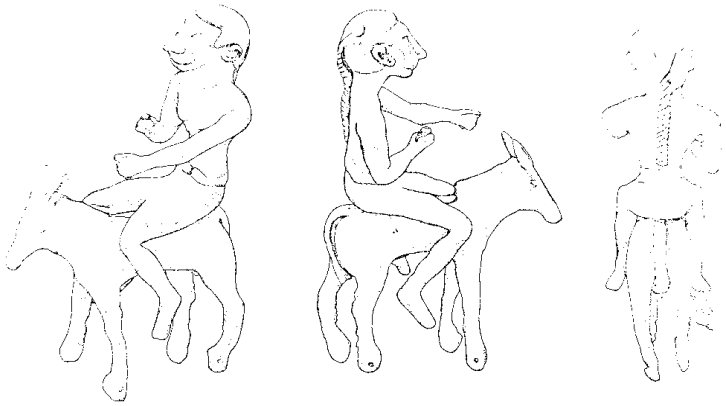


Fig. 4. Bronzestatue; Syria, unprovenanced; MB IIA (ca. 1900).
Schroer 2008, p. 74.



Fig. 5. Two-sided engraved plate; Tell eḍ-Ḍab'a, Egypt, unprovenanced; late MB IIB.
Schroer 2008, p. 74.



Fig. 6. Scarab/amulet; East Delta, Egypt, unprovenanced; 15th Dyn. / MB II.
Schultz 2004, p. 55–56.

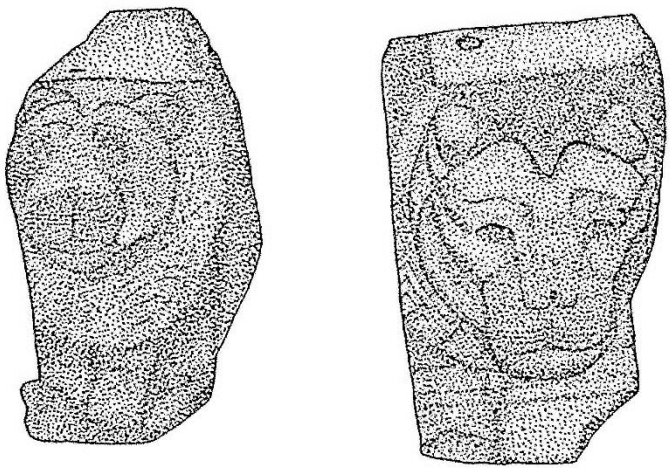


Fig. 7. Basalt orthostat, Hazor (Area H, Stratum IB), LBA. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.17.

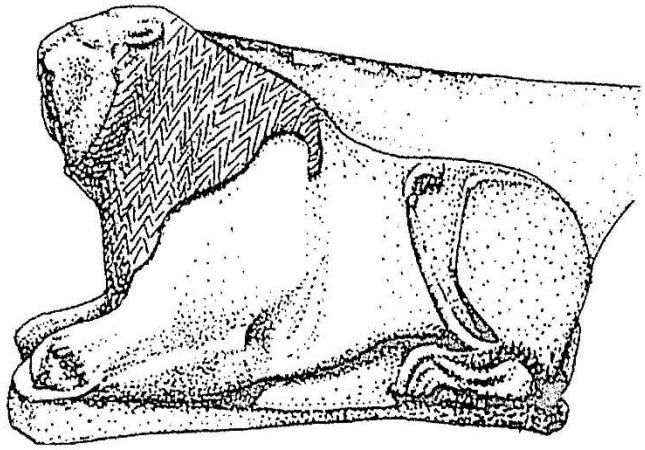


Fig. 8. Basalt orthostat, Hazor, LBA. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.18.

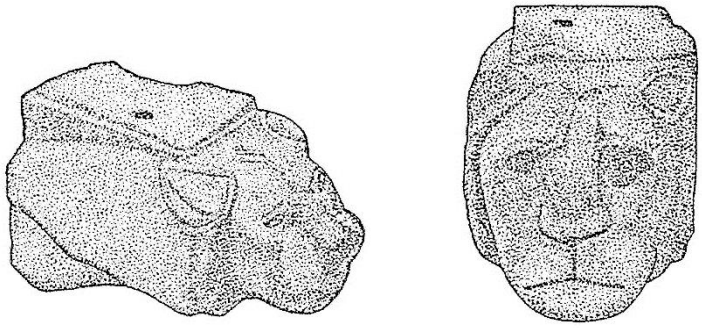


Fig. 9. Basalt orthostat, Hazor (Area A), LBA. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.19.

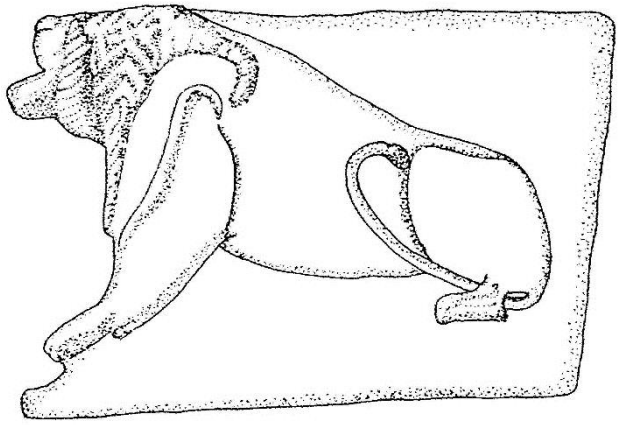


Fig. 10. Orthostat, Hazor (Area C), LBA. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.20.

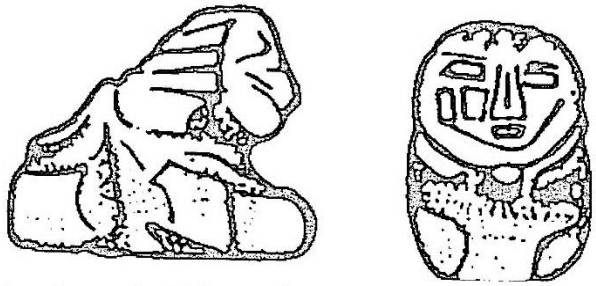


Fig. 11. Cornelian amulet, Tell el- Far'ah (S), LBA. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.24.

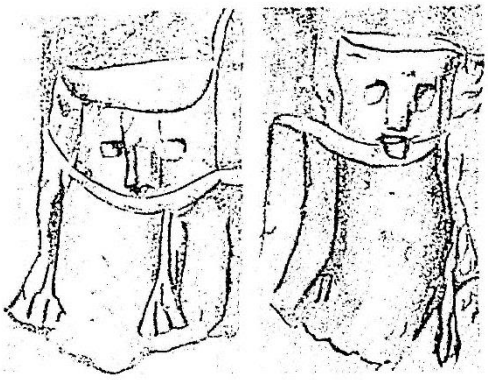


Fig. 12. Tomb carving, Tel Eitun, IA II (9th c.). Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.87.

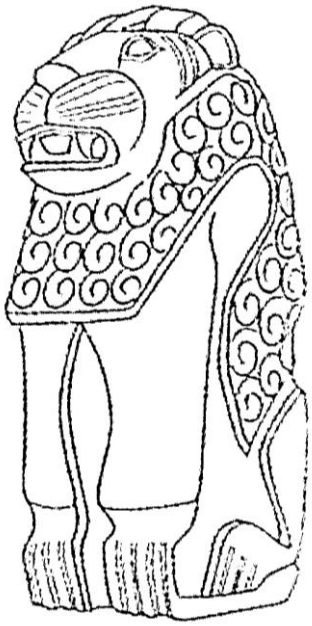


Fig. 13. Stone statue, Eridu (Temple of Enki), end of 3rd millenium. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.291.

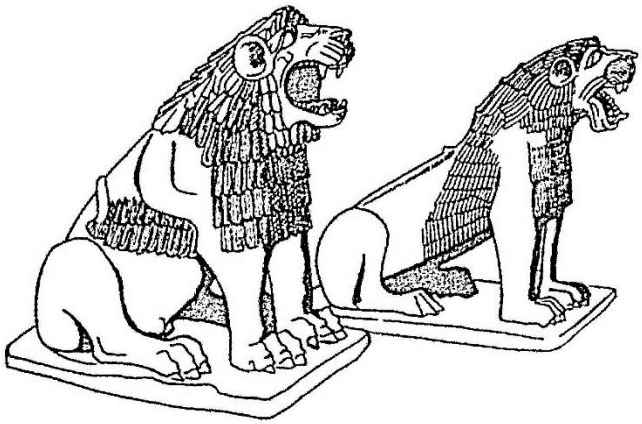


Fig. 14. Clay figures, Tell Harmal (Temple of Nisaba and Hani), early 2nd millenium. After Keel *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 165.

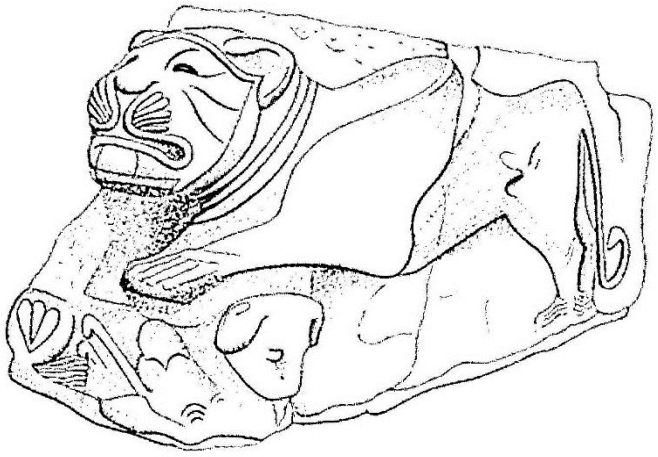


Fig. 15. Orthostat; Alaja Hüyük; ca. 1450-1200. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.310.

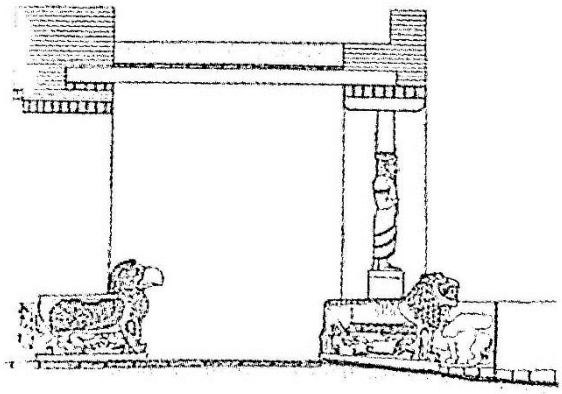


Fig. 16a. Reconstruction of portico; Tell Halaf (Palace of Kapara), 9th c. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.303.

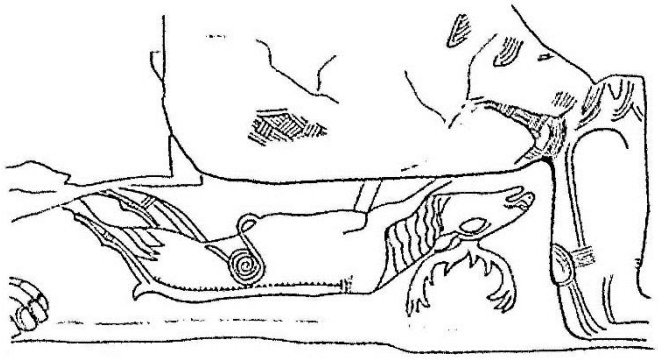


Fig. 16b. Detail of Fig. 16a. Strawn: WSL, fig. 4.304.

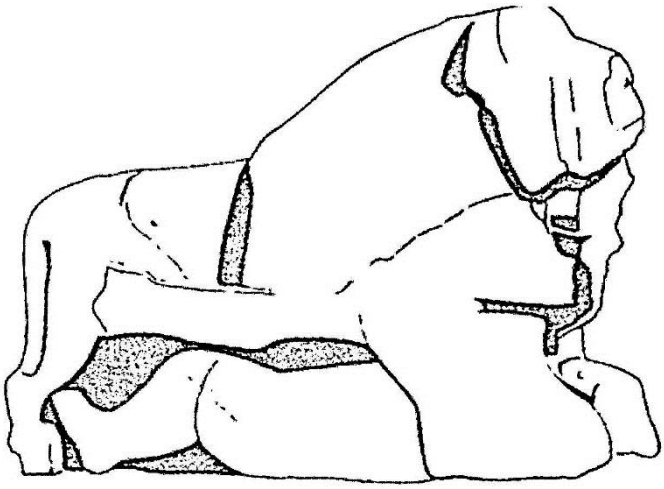


Fig. 17. Basalt statue (unfinished); Babylon (Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II), 6th c., origin and date

debated. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.311.

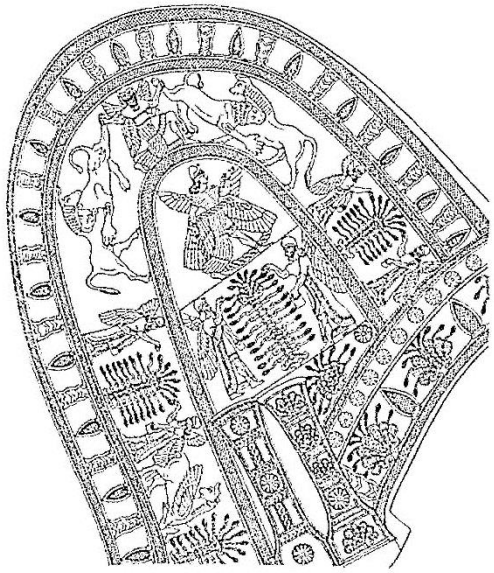


Fig. 18. Detail of relief, Nimrud, 9th c. (ca. 883-859.) Frankfort: *Art and Architecture*, fig. 224.



Fig. 19. Cylinder seal, Tell el-ʿAjjul, LBA. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 3.10.



Fig. 20. Sandstone relief, Medinet Habu (Eastern high gate of North wall), Ramesses III (1184-1153). Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.103.

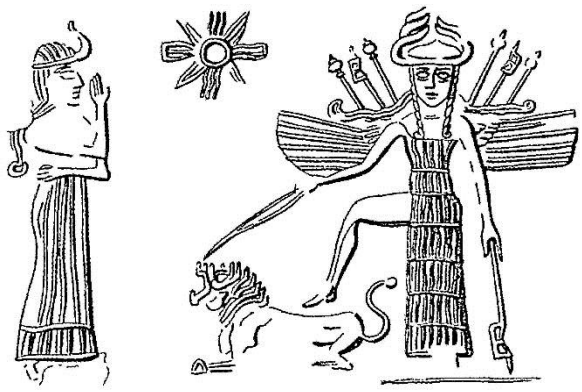


Fig. 21. Cylinder seal, Akkadian Period. Strawn: *WSL*, fig. 4.242.

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