OTSEM
OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES:
EPISTEMOLOGIES AND METHODS

Copenhagen 2025

Friday, August 29:

15:00-15:30 *Registration (outside of 9A.0.01)*

15:30-16:15 *Opening Session @ Kierkegaard Auditorium (9A.0.01)*

16:15-16:30 *Break*

16:30-17:30 *Paper Session 1*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.17	Room 7C.1.05
More traces of Babylonian astronomy in the Blessing of Jacob **Presenter:** Pasi Schultz, *University of Eastern Finland/Åbo Akademi* **Chair:** Kacper Ziemba, *Københavns Universitet* **Respondent:** Frederik Poulsen, *Københavns Universitet*	Divine Kingship: an Examination of its various Literary Expressions in Psalm 47 **Presenter:** Ronja Berner, *Kiel University* **Chair:** Antti Laato, *Åbo Akademi University* **Respondent:** Reinhard Müller, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen*	Evoking Shame, Honour, Desire, and Disgust through Sex Work Vocabulary in the Pentateuch, Hosea, and Ezekiel **Presenter:** Marika Pulkkinen, *University of Helsinki* **Chair:** Mikael Larsson, *Uppsala University* **Respondent:** Blaženka Scheuer, *Lund University*

17:30-17:45 *Break*

17:45-18:45 *Paper Session 2*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.17	Room 7C.1.05
Aphrahat's Reception of the Patriarch Jacob **Presenter:** Topias Tanskanen, *Åbo Akademi University* **Chair:** Ola Wikander, *Lund University* **Respondent:** Thilo Rudnig, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen*	Literary growth of Hebrew Job versus the Old Greek translation of Job **Presenter:** Kristin Klaus, *University of Tartu* **Chair:** Jesper Høgenhavn, *Københavns Universitet* **Respondent:** Matthew Monger, *MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion, and Society*	Drunk, Devouring, Dead: Grotesque representations of mighty men **Presenter:** Sara Järlemyr, *Lund University* **Chair:** Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, *University of Oslo* **Respondent:** Alexiana Fry, *Københavns Universitet*

18:45 *Reception @ Faculty of Theology, Grundtvig Auditorium (8B.0.16)*

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Saturday, August 30:

09:00-10:00 *Paper Session 3*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.17	Room 7C.1.05
The Bible as Political Tool in the World's most Secularized Country **Presenter:** Hanna Liljefors, *Lund University* **Chair:** Topias Tanskanen, *Åbo Akademi University* **Respondent:** Frederik Poulsen, *Københavns Universitet*	The Jerusalem Temple and the Kethiv HW' for the Feminine Pronoun **Presenter:** Pedro Axelsson Goncalves, *Uppsala Universitet* **Chair:** Lucie Perez, *Københavns Universitet* **Respondent:** Jutta Jokiranta, *University of Helsinki*	Boundary-Crossers and Empire: Colonial Masculinity through the Eunuchs of Esther **Presenter:** Rae Fujimori, *University of Edinburgh* **Chair:** Blaženka Scheuer, *Lund University* **Respondent:** Mikael Larsson, *Uppsala University*

10:00-10:30 *Coffee Break @ Markedspladsen*

10:30-11:30 *Paper Session 4*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.17	Room 7C.1.05
The Early Jewish and Christian Reception of Isaiah 11:2–3a in Relation to Pneumatological Perceptions **Presenter:** Simon Johansson, *Ãbo Akademi University* **Chair:** Richard Pleijel, *Uppsala and Stockholm University* **Respondent:** Corinna Körting, *Universität Hamburg*	The Literary Background Behind the Shared Verbatim Parallels of Hosea 8:13 and Jeremiah 14:10 **Presenter:** Nehara Meinemer, *University of Göttingen* **Chair:** Urmas Nõmmik, *University of Tartu* **Respondent:** Christoph Berner, *University of Kiel*	Making Sense through End Time Narratives (ETNs) with our Embodied Cognition **Presenter:** Melissa Sayyad Bach, *Københavns Universitet* **Chair:** Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, *Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel* **Respondent:** Lotta Valve, *Åbo Akademi University*

11:30-11:45 *Break*

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11:45-12:45 *Paper Session 5*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.17	Room 7C.1.05
Rebuilding Jerusalem's Temple: A Religious, Social, and Economic Analysis of Judean Activities Under Persian Rule **Presenter:** Daniele Soares de Silva, *University of Helsinki* **Chair:** Reinhard Kratz, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen* **Respondent**: Kacper Ziemba, *Københavns Universitet*	Language that binds: Hittite Subjugation Treaties in light of Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Cognitive Blending Theory **Presenter:** Julius Kankkunen, *University of Helsinki* **Chair:** Reinhard Müller, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen* **Respondent:** Ola Wikander, *Lund University*	Ezekiel in Action: Studying Ezekiel 5:1–4 as Literary Ritual Action **Presenter:** Lauri Aila, *University of Helsinki* **Chair:** Thilo Rudnig, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen* **Respondent:** Paul Joyce, *King's College London*

12:45-14:00 *Lunch @ Markedspladsen*

14:00-15:00 *Paper Session 6*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.17	Room 7C.1.05
The welfare state bible: translating scientific knowledge in late postwar Sweden **Presenter:** Richard Pleijel, *Uppsala and Stockholm University* **Chair:** Lotta Valve, *Åbo Akademi University* **Respondent:** Kasper Siegismund, *Københavns Universitet*	Reflections on the First Chapter of the Book of Joshua **Presenter:** Elisabeth Behr, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen* **Chair:** Jutta Jokiranta, *University of Helsinki* **Respondent:** Susanna Rudnig-Zelt, *Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel*	The Interconnections in Law and Narrative **Presenter:** Luis Quinones-Roman, *The University of Edinburgh* **Chair:** Hanna Liljefors, *Lund University* **Respondent:** Marika Pulkkinen, *University of Helsinki*

15:00 *Social Events*

18:30-21:00 *Dinner @ Riz Raz, Store Kannikestræde 19*

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Sunday, August 31:

08:30 *Optional Morning Prayer @ the Piano in Markedspladsen*

09:00-10:00 *Paper Session 7*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.05
Grief and Comfort in Lamentations 1 **Presenter:** Tessa Böhme, *Universität Hamburg* **Chair:** Paul Joyce, *King's College London* **Respondent:** Antti Laato, *Åbo Akademi University*	Warfare Mutilation: Is There a Reason Beyond Humiliation? **Presenter:** John Tallefors, *Lund University* **Chair:** Marika Pulkkinen, *University of Helsinki* **Respondent:** Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, *Univeristy of Oslo*

10:00-10:15 *Coffee Break @ Markedspladsen*

10:15-11:15 *Paper Session 8*

Room 7C.1.19	Room 7C.1.17	Room 7C.1.05
The Performance of Complaint: A Performance Analysis of Psalm 3 **Presenter:** Johanna Rönnlund, *Uppsala University* **Chair:** Corinna Körting, *Universität Hamburg* **Respondent:** Urmas Nõmmik, *University of Tartu*	Capital Punishment in Biblical Law: A Critical Comparative Approach with Capital Punishment in Other Civilisations of the Ancient World **Presenter:** Alex-David Baldi, *King's College London* **Chair:** Matthew Monger, *MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion, and Society* **Respondent:** Reinhard Kratz, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen*	The book of Job and focalization- a cognitive narrative approach **Presenter:** Sander Tulk, *University of Tartu* **Chair:** Christoph Berner, *University of Kiel* **Respondent:** Jesper Høgenhavn, *Københavns Universitet*

11:15-12:15 *PhD (7C.1.19)/Postdoc (7C.1.05) Meetings*

12:15-13:15 *Lunch @ Markedspladsen*

Coordinating Committee Meeting (7C.1.17)

13:15-14:00 *Business Meeting and Close @ Grundtvig Auditorium (8B.0.16)*

Project Summary

The Blessing of Jacob (Gen 49) in Light of Ancient Celestial Cartography

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The Blessing of Jacob is among the most scrutinised passages in the Bible. However, questions concerning its origin, age, genre, and unity remain unsettled. The goal of this study is to shed light on these issues by examining, whether the Blessing should be read as an ancient celestial map. The study consists of two phases, divided into four articles. The first three articles will focus on the Blessing itself, while the fourth will use text mining to discover whether there are traces of the celestial map elsewhere in the Bible. The draft presented at the 2025 OTSEM conference in Copenhagen will be the second article. In the first article—currently under peer review—I introduced the methodology and analysed the imagery of the Blessing's first three strophes and compared it to the Babylonian astronomical compendium MUL.APIN to determine, whether it had been used as a source for the Blessing. The findings were promising.

The methodology used in the first three articles is twofold. First, the metaphorical and non-metaphorical imagery of each strophe is identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure VU, also known as MIPVU, which belongs to the tradition of cognitive linguistics.[1] Since the method only identifies metaphorical language, it is supplemented by a close reading of the texts. After identifying the Blessing's imagery, it is compared to MUL.APIN using a set of criteria abstracted from the naming strategies used in antiquity when transmitting astronomical data from culture to culture.[2] The criteria are as follows:

1. Location	Is the constellation near a previously identified constellation? Is it in the expected path?
2. Nomenclature	Does the Blessing's language resemble the constellation's name or description, either in the form of translations, loanwords, or wordplay?
3. Myth	Does the Blessing's language recall a myth or a deity connected to the constellation?
4. Appearance	Can the imagery of the Blessing be seen as an allusion to the constellation's physical properties or the associated iconography?

In the second phase of the study, text mining is used to search for the imagery of the celestial map from other parts of the Bible. This will be done by using open source software packages, such as TextFabric and Pandas, which will be run in the Python environment. The ETCBC database maintained by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the SBLGNT package published by Andrews University will provide the data for the analysis.[3] The results will be structured using the phylogenetic approach, which originates from the field of evolutionary biology and has been successfully applied to comparative mythology. In the phylogenetic approach, myths are considered to consist of

[1] See Steen et al., *Method*; Nacey et al., *Metaphor*; Schultz, "Until."
[2] See Kurtik and Militarev "Once More."
[3] For the use of TextFabric and the ETCBC database, see Winther-Nielsen, "Interactive;" Roorda, "Coding;" van der Schans et al., "Clustering;" van Peursen, "Tracing."

smaller sub-myths, mythemes, which are inherited, mutated and eliminated according to principles partly analogous to the evolution of genes. By examining the distribution of mythemes in different versions of myths, it is possible to reconstruct a phylogenetic tree or network describing the interrelationships between the myths.[4]

The mythemes examined in this study are the astrological elements of the blessing. These include, for example, a heel-biting snake, violent brothers and a lion ruling as king. The texts, selected on the basis of text mining, are encoded in a binary form for each mytheme (1 = mytheme, 0 = no mytheme). Using the SplitsTreeCE application, the encoded material is presented in the form of a phylogenetic tree, which will show the relationship between the texts. The more astrological mythemes a given text shares with the blessing, the closer it is to the celestial map on which the blessing was based.[5] Together, the two phases of my study will reveal the origins of the Blessing of Jacob and the reception of the astronomical material behind it.

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[4] d'Huy, "A Phylogenetic," 115; Thuillard et al., "Computational," 123–125.

[5] d'Huy, "A Phylogenetic," 115; d'Huy, "Compte," 11–12.

He Bites the Tails of the Swallow

More Traces of Babylonian Astronomy in the Blessing of Jacob (Gen 49)

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Preface

This draft discusses the astronomical background of the Blessing of Jacob. The paper is a sequel to my previous article, in which I introduced the methodology and applied it to the first three strophes of the Blessing. In this paper I use the same methods to analyse the strophes of Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali. First, I identify each strophe's visual elements using the metaphor identification procedure MIPVU and a close reading of the texts. Second, I apply a set of criteria abstracted from the field of cultural astronomy to compare the Blessing's imagery to the Babylonian constellations listed in the astronomical compendium MUL.APIN. Together, my first two articles demonstrate that the Blessing is deeply rooted in Babylonian astronomy. One focal point of discussion which I would like to propose for the conference is the translation of the Hebrew texts at hand.

Keywords

cultural astronomy, metaphor studies, Genesis, Hebrew poetry, tradition history

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the SCE and FILOTO doctoral programmes of the University of Eastern Finland. For my research I made grateful use of the All Skies wiki by the International Astronomical Working Group Star Names, and the Stellarium planetarium software. The transcriptions and translations of MUL.APIN in this article are from Hunger and Steele, *The Babylonian Astronomical Compendium MUL.APIN*.

1 Introduction

The influence of Mesopotamian literature on first chapters of Genesis is well documented. In recent years, its impact on the patriarchal narratives has been acknowledged as well. Signs of this cultural interaction have been detected, for instance, in Jacob's dream at Bethel and his wrestling match with the deity.[1] In the Mesopotamian religious system, the stars and other celestial phenomena played a central role as deities and indicators of their will.[2] Astronomical knowledge was, therefore, intermingled with mythological material. In my previous article I demonstrated how the Babylonian astronomical compendium MUL.APIN has left its mark on several parts of the Jacob narrative in Genesis. The name of the hometown of Jacob's wives, the number of children in his family tree, and the imagery of the first strophes in the Blessing of Jacob can all be traced back to the Mesopotamian night sky.[3] In this article I hope to establish that the same holds true for the second section of the Blessing, which comprises the strophes of Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali—the sons of Jacob's concubines.

In Mesopotamian thought, the sky was divided into three *ḫarrānum* 'paths', named after the three main gods of the Sumerian pantheon, Enlil, Anu, and Ea. The constellations near the celestial equator belong to Anu, the northern ones to Enlil, and the southern ones to Ea. The path of the moon—a predecessor of the ecliptic—runs through the three main stellar paths (see Table 1). In Jacob's family tree, the descendants of Leah, the concubines, and Rachel align with the three paths, as the number of constellations in each path corresponds to the number of the descendants of each wife. There are 33 constellations of Enlil and 33 descendants of Leah, 23 constellations of Anu and 23 descendants of the concubines, and 15 constellations of Ea and 14 descendants of Rachel. The only difference between the two lists is the number of Rachel's descendants, which is short by one. The discrepancy is likely to be resolved by counting in the patriarch himself.[4]

In the Blessing, the order of the wives (Leah-concubines-Rachel)[5] reflects the order of the paths in MUL.APIN (Enlil-Anu-Ea). In my previous article I demonstrated that the imagery of the first three strophes of Leah's sons corresponds to MUL.APIN's descriptions of the first constellations in Enlil's path, sometimes supplemented by nearby constellations from the other two paths. In this article I focus on the strophes dedicated to the sons of the concubines, which are expected to correspond to the path of Anu. Unlike the paths of Enlil and Ea, the path of Anu intersects with the path of the moon not once, but twice a year (see Table 1). This astronomical detail—which manifests itself in the vernal and autumn equinoxes—likely inspired the allotting of the path to two wives instead of one.

In the following chapters I will analyse the second section of the Blessing using the methodology introduced in the previous article. I will first provide a translation of each strophe and label the text with the appropriate MIPVU tags.[6] The article can be read and understood without prior knowledge of the tags, but they should be of interest for readers involved in cognitive linguistics. After providing a translation, I will analyse each strophe's imagery using a close reading of the text, taking into account possible intertextual references. I will then compare the imagery to the descriptions of the constellations in MUL.APIN to identify, which constellations are alluded to in each strophe. This will be done by considering each constellation's location, nomenclature, associated myths and appearance.[7]

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[1] See Hurowitz, "Babylon;" Hamori, "Echoes."

[2] See Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian*, 11–13.

[3] Schultz, "Until."

[4] See Schultz, "Until," 2.

[5] The concubines are combined to form a chiastic pattern, see Sarna, *The JPS*, 331.

[6] For a discussion on the use of MIPVU, see Steen et al., *Method*; Nacey et al. *Metaphor;* Artemov et al., "Taking;" Schultz, "Until," 3–4.

[7] See Kurtik and Militarev, "Once More," 4–5; Schultz, "Until," 4–5.

Constellations in the Path of the Moon	*Primary Stellar Path*
The Stars	Anu
The Bull of Heaven	Anu
The True Shepherd of Anu	Anu
The Old Man	Enlil
The Crook	Enlil
The Great Twins	Enlil
The Crab	Enlil
The Lion	Enlil
The Furrow	Anu
The Scales	Anu
The Scorpion	Ea
Pabilsag	Ea
The Goat-Fish	Ea
The Great One	Ea
The Tails of the Swallow	Anu
Anunitu	Anu
The Hired Man	Anu

Table 1. Constellations in The Path of the Moon and their primary stellar paths according to MUL.APIN.



Figure 1. The first constellations in the path of Anu: The Field, the Swallow (Great Swallow), Anunitu, the Hired Man, the Stars (Star Cluster), the Bull of Heaven, the True Shepherd of Anu, Lulal and Latarak, and the Rooster. To the north are constellations in the path of Enlil.

A view of the night sky in Jerusalem. November, 750 BCE.[8]

Stellarium 24.4, Susanne M Hoffmann, Jessica Gullberg

[8] The date 750 BCE is chosen to reflect MUL.APIN's *terminus ante quem*, see Hunger and Steele, *The Babylonian,* 1.

2 Dan

דן ידין עמו כאחד שבטי ישראל

/ Dan / will judge / his / people /

/ like (MFlag) / one / (of) the staves (WIDLII) / (of) Israel /

יהי דן נחש עלי דרך שפיפן עלי ארח הנשך עקבי סוס ויפל רכבו אחור

/ Dan / will be[9] / a snake (MRW, direct) / on / a road /

/ a viper (MRW, direct) / on / a path /

/ biting (MRW, direct) / the hooves / (of) a horse /

/ its / rider / will fall / backwards /

לישועתך קויתי יהוה

/ For / your / salvation / I / wait, / YHWH /

The second section of the Blessing opens with Dan's strophe, which is divided into three verses and contains six bicola and a concluding single colon prayer. It stands out from the rest of the concubines' sons strophes, because it is substantially longer and contains two blessings instead of one, as indicated by the double usage of the proper name.[10] To this end, the strophe recalls the strophes of Judah and Joseph.[11] The first verse presents an image of Dan, judging his people in the same manner as one Israel's שבטים. The contextual sense of the word is uncertain; it could be rendered as 'staves', 'tribes', or 'rulers'.[12] If the meaning is 'staves', the word is used metaphorically, as Dan is compared to his father's rods—perhaps the ones used to set right the wage discrimination practised by Laban in Gen 30.[13] However, apart from the birth narrative, Dan as a patriarch does not appear in Genesis. In fact, none of the concubines' sons are referred to as individuals elsewhere in the book. The single notion of them as a separate group is found in Gen 37, where they are depicted as Joseph's co-shepherds and his main antagonists. The Blessing's description of Dan is, therefore, most often read as a metonymic reference to the tribe, the city, or the Danite judge Samson.[14]

The second verse is an extended metaphor, depicting Dan as a snake on the road. If the image is a sequel to the first one, the reader is expected to imagine a metamorphosis of a human or a staff into a snake. With the latter interpretation, the scene recalls Moses' staff in Exodus and Ahaz's broken staff in Isa 14:29. The first bicolon uses parallelism to emphasise the image, while the second one describes the snake's attack against the hooves of mounted horse. Within Genesis, the imagery can be seen as an allusion to the heel-bruising snake in Gen 3 and Jacob's heel-grabbing birth story in Gen 26, although neither passage depicts a horse.[15] The attack against an animal-human couple also recalls the hamstrung bull and the slain man in Simeon's and Levi's strophe in Gen 49:6.

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[9] The *yiqtol* form is likely a jussive, but can be translated as indicative, see Seufert, *Of Beasts*, 258–259. The choice does not affect the imagery.

[10] See Nõmmik, *Genesis 49*, 25.

[11] See Hamilton, *The Book*, 669.

[12] See DCH 8:231–234, שֵׁבֶט, 1, 2, 4. Elsewhere in Gen 49 שבט is used twice, first in v. 10 where it has the sense 'staff' or 'ruler' and second in v. 28 where it refers to the sons or tribes of Israel.

[13] However, the word for the rods is not שבט but מקל.

[14] See Von Rad, *Genesis*, 421; Hamilton, *The Book*, 669–670; Laato, *Vanhan*, 359; Seufert, *Of Beasts*, 272–274.

[15] See Hamilton, The Book, 670; Seufert, *Of Beasts*, 275–276.

The concluding prayer introduces two new figures to the scene, Jacob[16] and YHWH. The former awaits the latter's ישועה 'salvation'. The prayer is often treated as a gloss,[17] but in its present context it functions as a legal appeal to the deity to act as the supreme judge—either to uphold or to change Dan's verdicts.[18] As such, it recalls Rachel's prayer in Gen 30:6 and the annunciation of Samson in Judg 13:5.

To sum up, the imagery to be considered in the analysis' second phase depicts Dan in the form of a staff, a tribe, or a ruler, judging his people by turning into a snake and biting a horse's hooves to knock the rider supine, while Jacob summons the supreme judge, YHWH, for help. I will now turn to the constellations in MUL.APIN to see if they match the strophe's imagery.

Dan is the first of the concubines' sons to receive his blessing, which suggests that his strophe likely refers to the first constellations in the path of Anu. The path begins with the Field, described in MUL.APIN as *šubat Ea* 'the seat of Ea'[19] (see Figure 1). The image of an enthroned god fits the depiction of Dan acting as a judging ruler. As was the case with Judah's strophe, the word שבט is likely used to create a wordplay based on homophony with the Akkadian term *šubat*.[20] The constellation following the Field in the path of Anu is the Swallow. Unlike the Field, the Swallow is also one of the constellations in the path of the moon. When describing the constellations in moon's path, MUL.APIN refers to the Swallow as the Tails of the Swallow.[21] The Hebrew word for 'swallow' is סוס,[22] which appears in Dan's strophe as the horse, whose hooves Dan bites. Although the Hebrew word עקב 'hoof' is not a direct translation of the Akkadian word *zibbatu* 'tail', it shares with it the sense 'rear guard'[23] and could, therefore, have inspired a wordplay. The word pair עקבי סוס thus likely refers to the constellation Tails of the Swallow.

The constellations following the Swallow in the paths of Anu and the moon are Anunitu and the Hired Man.[24] The two are located northward of the Swallow and could be perceived as riding it (see Figure 1). It is likely that one of them is the falling rider mentioned in the Blessing. The more probable option would be Anunitu, since the Swallow was depicted as flying eastward, making it impossible for the Hired Man to fall אחור 'backwards' or 'westwards'[25] through her. The strophe's depiction of a man turning into a snake recalls MUL.APIN's description of the Hired Man as the god Dumuzi. In a mytheme recorded in *Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld*, Dumuzi pleads with the sun-god Utu for his hands and feet to be transformed into snakes for him to escape from the galla-demons haunting him.[26]

Jacob's prayer at the end of the strophe could also perhaps refer to Dumuzi's prayer to Utu, since Jacob is equated with the sun in Joseph's dream.[27] Another possibility—also in line with his solar identity—is that the prayer indicates the place of the vernal equinox. According to MUL.APIN, the vernal equinox occurs when the sun is between the Hired Man and the Stars, a constellation following the Hired Man in the path of the moon.[28] The prayer's place after Dan's strophe would be a natural place for such a reference. Since the vernal equinox marks the victory of the sun (Jacob) over darkness, it would be apt for the phenomenon to be referred to in the Blessing.

To summarise, the constellations referred to in Dan's strophe include the Field, the Tails of the Swallow, Anunitu, and the Hired Man. All the criteria—location, nomenclature, myth, and appearance—were applied to identify the

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[16] Unless the prayer is uttered by the tumbling rider, see Speiser, *Genesis*, 367.

[17] See de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 169, 557. See also Hamilton, *The Book*, 671.

[18] For the use of ישועה in a legal context, see Sawyer and Fabry, "ישׁע," TDOT 6:441–462.

[19] MUL.APIN I I 40.

[20] See Schultz, "Until," 12; CAD 17.3:172–185, šubtu A; DCH 8:261, שֶׁבֶת I.

[21] MUL.APIN I iv 36.

[22] HALOT 746, II סוּס; DCH 6:132, סוּס II.

[23] See CAD 21:100–102, zibbatu, 2; DCH 6:541, עָקֵב I, 3.

[24] MUL.APIN I I 42–43.

[25] See HALOT 31, אָחוֹר, 2, 4; DCH 1:184, אָחוֹר, 1, 2b.

[26] *Inanna's Descent,* 368–383.

[27] Gen 37:9–10.

[28] MUL.APIN I i 19–21. See also Hoffmann and Horowitz, "The Moon."

constellations. After Dan's strophe it is time to turn to the rest of the concubines' sons to see if similar patterns can be discovered.

3 Gad

גד גדוד יגודנו והוא יגד עקב

/ Gad, / a troop / gathers against / him /

/ but / he / attacks / their[29] / rear (MRW, indirect) /

The three strophes of Gad, Asher, and Naphtali each consist of a single bicolon in one verse. Gad's strophe comprises three puns (גדוד, יגודנו, יגד) inspired by the patriarch's name. The strophe presents an image of a troop, gathering against one man or a tribe, who responds with a rear attack. The object suffix in יגודנו can be read with an energetic נ, making Gad the object of the troop's attack, or without it, in which case the assault is directed at the entire family. With the latter reading, the image could refer to the troops of Laban and Esau, which encountered Jacob's family near Jordan, close to the area of the tribe of Gad.[30] The stories might reflect the tribe's later history, as the area was vulnerable to the attacks of nomads.[31] There is one indirect metaphor, עקב 'rear', whose basic meaning is 'heel'. The image of a wounded heel recalls Dan's strophe, as well as the snake in Gen 3 and Jacob's birth story in Gen 26. These images should be kept in mind when turning to the constellations.

After the Hired Man, MUL.APIN has the entry "The Stars, the Seven, the great gods."[32] The constellation Stars, whose modern counterpart is Pleiades, stands in the paths of Anu and the moon, and its description connects it to the *Sebettu*, a group of seven warrior deities, who were seen as both beneficial and malevolent.[33] This troop is likely the one referred to by the גדוד in the Blessing. The astronomical counterpart of the wounded heel is unclear. It could, perhaps, refer to the Tails of the Swallow, but this seems unlikely given its location. Other possibilities include the Bull of Heaven—the constellation following the Stars in the paths of Anu and the moon—whose hamstringing was attributed to Simeon and Levi.[34] Like its Greek counterpart, Taurus, the constellation was depicted without its hind legs.[35] The Stars is located in the back of the Bull of Heaven (see Figure 1), which could account for the choice of words. However, at least at this point in the analysis, a decisive solution cannot be made.

4 Asher

מאשר שמנה לחמו והוא יתן מעדני־מלך

/ Asher! / A fatling (is) / his food /

/ and / he / will provide / delicacies / of a king /

The first colon in Asher's strophe is difficult to translate.[36] The prefix in מאשר is awkward, and there is a gender discrepancy between שְׁמֵנָה 'fat' and לַחְמוֹ 'his bread'. However, as many scholars have argued, the prefix likely belongs

[29] If emended עקבם, see the discussion is chapter 4.

[30] See Gen 31–32; Josh 13:24–28. See also Gevirtz, "Of Patriarchs."

[31] Laato, *Vanhan*, 359.

[32] MUL.APIN I i 44.

[33] Frayne et al., *A Handbook,* 309.

[34] See Schultz, "Until," 9–10.

[35] Hilder and Hoffmann, "GU_4.AN.NA."

[36] See Gevirtz, "Asher," 155–163; de Hoop, Genesis 49, 171–172.

to the end of Gad's strophe,[37] and the gender discrepancy is not necessarily an issue.[38] I have therefore excluded the prefix and translated שמנה as a noun 'fatling'[39] and לחמ as 'food'.[40] The image presented is that of a patriarch eating a fat animal.[41] Since לחמ also has the more basic meaning 'bread',[42] a loaf of bread could be a part of the imagery. The second colon amplifies the image with a new character, a king, to whom Asher provides his delicacies. Within Genesis, the image could be an allusion to the story of Joseph and his five anonymous brothers standing in front of the pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who asked for some of Joseph's brothers to be appointed as שרי מקנה על־אשר־לי "chief herdsmen over that which is mine".[43] Although אשר is not a proper name here, it could have served as an inspiration for the Blessing's author. From a canonical perspective, the strophe is usually interpreted as a reference to the tribe's abundant provisions.[44]

Turning to the stars, the constellation following the Stars in the paths of Anu and the moon is called the Bull of Heaven, the Jaw of the Bull.[45] Although a bull is not explicitly mentioned in the strophe, the fatling and the royal delicacies could refer to it.[46] The identification is supported by the constellation's description in MUL.APIN as the Crown of Anu. The image of a crown fits the strophe's description of a feasting king, even more so as it belongs to Anu, the "King of the gods".[47] Additional support is provided by the fact that a by-form of the word מעדנ 'delicacy' is used in Job 38:31 to refer to the מעדנות כימה 'bonds of the Pleiades'. The Pleaides—known to the Babylonians as the Stars—stands in the back of the Bull of Heaven (Figure 1). All the images in Asher's strophe can thus be associated with the constellation Bull of Heaven.

5 Naphtali

נפתלי אילה שלחה הנתן אמרי שפר

/ Naphtali (is) / a lambing (MRW, direct) / ewe (MRW, direct) /

/ he gives birth (MRW, indirect) (to) / beautiful / lambs (MRW, direct) /

As with Asher's strophe, the translation of Naphtali's strophe is not without problems. There is considerable variation already among the *versiones*.[48] LXX reads the strophe as an arboreal metaphor, while TO, TN, Peshitta, and Vulgate treat it as a depiction of a fast-footed herald who brings good news. TPsJ and The Masoretic text follow the latter tradition for the second colon, rendering אמרי שפר as אִמְרֵי־שָׁפֶר 'beautiful words'. However, the MT could also be read as a reduced form of *אִמֵּר 'sheep'.[49] This would be more in line with the first colon, where the Masoretic text

[37] See de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 170

[38] As Hamilton has noted, the Samaritan Pentateuch reads שמנ instead of שמנה. However, the Masoretic reading should be preferred since it is the *lectio difficilior.* For other solutions to the discrepancy, see de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 171.

[39] See DCH 8:447–448, שָׁמֵן I, 4.

[40] DCH 4:534–535, לֶחֶם I, 2. See also de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 170.

[41] There are several other ways to render the text. One possibility is to emend לַחְמוֹ 'his bread' to לָחֲמוּ 'they have eaten'. In this case the colon reads "They have eaten a fatling out of Asher" or, without the prefixed מ, "Asher is a fatling which they have eaten". The problem with this solution is that the 'eaters' are not identified. Another option is to emend שְׁמֻנָה to שְׁמֹנֶה and read "Eight will eat (out of) Asher." This would recall the structure of Gad's strophe. However, apart from the sons' birth order (Asher being the 8th) there is no apparent explanation for the numeral.

[42] DCH 4:534–535, לֶחֶם I, 1.

[43] Gen 47:6.

[44] See Hamilton, *The Book*, 674; de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 558–560; Laato, *Vanhan*, 359.

[45] MUL.APIN I ii 1.

[46] Since the bull is a masculine figure, it could provide a new perspective to the discussion concerning the gender discrepancy between שמנה and לחמו. Notice also that מעדנ 'delicacy' is masculine.

[47] Frayne et al., *A Handbook,* 19.

[48] See Gevirtz, "Naphtali;" de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 173–179.

[49] See HALOT 67, I *אִמֵּר; Speiser, *Genesis*, 367; de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 175.

reads אַיָּלָה שְׁלֻחָה ‘a hind let loose’. I have followed Raymond de Hoop’s translation and read *אֵילָה ‘ewe’ instead of אַיָּלָה and vocalised שלחה as שֹׁלְחָה part.act.fem.sg. qal with the sense ‘to give birth’.[50] With this reading, the strophe becomes coherent and depicts Naphtali as a lambing ewe.

Although the ovine imagery is likely the correct reading for the strophe,[51] the sense of news-bringing preserved in the *versiones* could be an intended wordplay.[52] Within Genesis, sheep and heralding appear together at the beginning of the Joseph story in Gen 37:2, where the concubines’ sons served as Jacob’s shepherds while Joseph carried the דבתם רעה ‘bad rumours of them’ to their father. The two themes overlap also in vv. 31–34, where Joseph’s clothes are smeared in goat’s blood and שלח ‘sent’ to Jacob for identification.[53] If the wordplay is intentional and the strophe refers to the Joseph story, the ‘good news’ should probably be understood as irony. From a canonical perspective, the image of a sure-footed אילה is often seen as reflecting the tribe’s capacity to defend itself,[54] perhaps in the days of Barach.[55]

The astronomical counterpart of Naphtali’s strophe can be found with considerable ease. The constellation following the Bull of Heaven in the paths of Anu and the moon is called the True Shepherd of Anu (see Figure 1). The image of a shepherd is in line with the description of Naphtali as a lambing ewe. The sense of news-bearing is also present in the constellation, since MUL.APIN describes the True Shepherd of Anu as “Papsukal, the minister of Anu and Ištar.”[56] A *sukkallu* ‘minister’ was a high ranking officer, who acted as an intermediary between the king and his visitors.[57] If additional constellations were used to create the strophe, the first colon’s אילה could be a wordplay on the Stag, Hebrew איל, the last constellation in Enlil’s path (see Figure 1). However, this is unlikely since the True Shepherd of Anu suffices to explain all the imagery.

6 Conclusions

As has been demonstrated, the second section of the Blessing, comprised of four strophes dedicated to the sons of Jacob’s concubines, align with the first seven constellations in the path of Anu, as found in the Babylonian astronomical compendium MUL.APIN. Apart from the Field, all the constellations are also located in the path of the moon. After the True Shepherd of Anu—the constellation associated with Naphtali—the path of the moon diverges from Anu’s path and unites with the path of Enlil. There it traverses five constellations, after which it returns to Anu’s path a second time to pass through the Furrow and the Scales (see Table 1). The two constellations are not referred to in the Blessing’s second section. However, as I have demonstrated earlier,[58] the Furrow is mentioned in the Shiloh-oracle and should, therefore, be allotted to Judah. The Scales, in turn, is described in MUL.APIN as the Horns of the Scorpion and forms the front part of the Scorpion, a constellation in Ea’s path. Since Ea’s path is associated with Rachel in the family tree of Jacob, it is possible that the Scales will turn up in the strophes of Joseph and Benjamin. This question will be addressed in a future publication.

The findings presented in this paper raise some important questions concerning the rhetorical role of the Blessing of Jacob. What exactly was the reason for equating the wives of a patriarch with the supreme (male) deities of Mesopotamia? The question will hopefully be addressed by future research, but some preliminary notions can be given here. At least two options are worth considering. The association could either have served to bring down the foreign gods from heaven or, alternatively, to uplift the local men and—especially—women up to the skies. To my

[50] See de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 176–178. Cf. Gevirtz, “Naphtali.”

[51] See Gevirtz, "Naphtali;" de Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 175–178.

[52] See DCH 8:372, שלח I; 1–4, 1:325, אֹמֶר.

[53] Gen 37:31–34.

[54] See Hamilton, *The Book*, 677.

[55] See Laato,Vanhan, 360.

[56] MUL.APIN I ii 2.

[57] See CAD 15:354–359, sukkallu 1; Frayne et al., *A Handbook,* 291.

[58] Schultz, "Until," 12.

mind, it is especially important that the supreme deity, Anu, is associated with the concubines of Jacob. This association gives the subjugated women an unparalleled status and a voice that is heard nowhere else in the scripture. Hopefully, these preliminary answers will be elaborated by scholars in the field of gender studies.

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The Literary Growth and the Composition of Zion Theology within Psalms 46-48

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In my dissertation project, I undertake linguistic, literary-critical and motif-historical examination of Psalms 46-48. This is done in order to determine whether and how the texts themselves and their composition as a small collection have undergone literary growth and made literary references to each other. In this regard, particular attention is paid to the different motifs that are specific to each of the psalms. One of the key objectives of my study is to examine the manner in which motifs evolved and were continuously reinterpreted in the context of this literary composition. The aim of this project is to develop a redaction critical model that elucidates the manner in which the triptych of Psalms 46-48 was collocated and reworked to create a distinct theological composition. It seems reasonable to posit that once independent pieces of literature were collected and arranged together and that these texts underwent a profound and intricate reworking, resulting in the triptych of Psalms 46-48. Consequently, each psalm must be understood in its own right, while also taking into account its position within the context of the triptych. The focal point of my analysis is to consider the texts as a unified whole, rather than as three separate entities.

The research interest of the dissertation is to show a) within a smaller collection how psalter composition or at least psalm group growth might have taken place and b) how theology was produced through the deliberate composition of texts with literary references, in the example of Psalm 46-48 it is the productive shaping of Zion theology within the texts and in their references to each other.

In order to uncover these literary references, the dissertation first examines the three psalms individually in terms of language, literary criticism and motif history. The aim is to reveal literary growth and content-related peculiarities and commonalities in each case. In a further step, the literary relationships of the three psalms to each other will be examined. This will then culminate in a redaction-historical description of the growth of the collection. The aim here is to show how Zion theology is constructed, modelled and modified through the composition and redaction of the texts. A brief outlook on the embedding in the first Korah collection then concludes the analysis. Methodologically, the work is based on the historical-critical methodological steps, with a special focus on literary criticism, tradition criticism and redactional criticism.

Divine Kingship: an Examination of its various Literary Expressions in Psalm 47

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Preface

This paper is an English translation of a section of my dissertation written in German. Possible references to other sections of the dissertation are still included as part of the work but are not relevant to understanding the analysis. The translation is an abridged version of the original section of the dissertation. I would be very pleased to receive feedback on the content of my observations.

Focal points of discussion

1. Is a focus on the literary expressions of divine kingship in Psalm 47 enough for the analysis of this concept? Verse 6 does not address kingship directly; hence it is analysed under a different thematic focus in my dissertation.

2. Does verse 9 fit into the imagery of divine kingship in Psalm 47 or does it address different nuances? In my point of view, verse 9 adds new aspects to the imagery of divine kingship in Psalm 47 and addresses a different, more mythological concept of God.

3. Do I see it correctly that verse 10 avoids talking about the earthly rulers as מלכים because the Psalm claims the lexeme מלך and its concept for YHWH?

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1. Introduction

> „Wie Jhwh König über die ganze Welt ist (V. 3), so ist er auch König über die Völker (V. 9). […] Als Ort wird kissē' qodšô „sein heiliger Thron" genannt, der hier gewiss nicht in himmlischen Sphären zu orten ist, sondern im Jerusalemer Tempel steht. Er ist das Zentrum von Jhwhs Herrschaft über die ganze Welt und somit auch über alle Völker. Die Rede von Königen als deren Herrscher wird strikt vermieden, denn in [sic!] Ps 47 kennt allein den großen König Jhwh. Der „heilige Thron" als Ort seiner Präsenz ist nur hier belegt. Dadurch werden Königsherrschaft und Heiligkeit eng verbunden, ein Signal für die aus den Völkern versammelten Edlen, dass sie von Jhwh an diesem Ort Außergewöhnliches erwarten dürfen."[1]

With the words of the above-quoted passage, Spieckermann describes the kingship of YHWH in Psalm 47. Spieckermann's analysis contains many important observations, which must be unfolded in a nuanced examination. On one hand, YHWH's position in relation to the nations is relevant; on the other hand, the designations of YHWH as king shed light on the understanding of kingship in Psalm 47.

The depiction of YHWH as king is particularly relevant in Psalm 47.[2] YHWH is referred to as king in three verses (verses 3 and 7–8), and in one verse, his kingship is described (verse 9). The royal designations in verses 3 and 8 are very similar, as the reference to God as king over the whole earth in verse 3 appears in a more elaborate construct form (מלך גדול על כל הארץ) and in verse 8 in a shorter construct form (מלך כל הארץ). Verse 7 describes YHWH as king from the perspective of a "we"-group (מלכנו). Verse 9 stands out among the attestations in Psalm 47, as YHWH's kingship over the nations is expressed here through a verbal clause in the perfect form of מלך.

2. "King over the Whole Earth" (Verses 3 and 8)

The designation of YHWH as "King over the whole earth" (מלך על כל הארץ) is a very rare formulation, even though the image of YHWH as king is common in Old Testament writings.[3] Aside from Ps 47:3.8, the phrase מלך על כל הארץ appears in the Old Testament only in Zech 14:9:

והיה יהוה למלך על כל הארץ

ביום ההוא יהיה יהוה אחד ושמו אחד

[1] Spieckermann, Psalmen 1-49 (ATD), p. 457f.
[2] Cf. Körting, Israel und die Völker, p. 310.
[3] Cf. Exkurs 8 in Schott, Sacharja 9-14, p. 217f.

Zech 14:9 emphasizes not only YHWH's kingship, but also the unity/uniqueness of YHWH and His name.[4] In this verse, the universal kingship is connected to a monotheistic idea rooted in Deut 6:4. Zech 14:9 appears in the context of a salvation proclamation for Jerusalem (Zech 14:7–12). Thus, the designation of YHWH as "King over the whole earth" contains fewer real-political implications of a terrestrial regime and more so the idea of a universal acknowledgment of YHWH as God and thus the true ruler over all peoples. The phrase מלך על כל הארץ elevates YHWH to the highest power on earth.[5] This implication of YHWH as supreme authority is also found in Ps 47:3.8, where YHWH's power and greatness as God and king are celebrated throughout the psalm.

The context of Zech 14:9, namely verses 8 and 10a, connects to motifs found in Psalm 46: verse 8 parallels Ps 46:5, while verse 10a relates to Ps 46:3. Verse 8 references eschatological Jerusalem as a place from which water flows:

והיה ביום ההוא יצאו מים־חיים מירושלם
חצים אל־הים הקדמוני וחצים אל־הים האחרון
בקיץ ובחרף יהיה

This imagery resembles the description of the river streams in Ps 46:5, which gladden the city of God. While Ps 46:5 emphasizes the importance of water to the city itself, Zech 14:8 focuses on the significance of Jerusalem's water for the earth as a whole. Thus, Zech 14:8 interprets the water motif in a different direction.

Zech 14:10, by contrast, describes a transformation of the land occurring on that day:

יסוב כל הארץ
כערבה מגבע לרמון נגב ירושלם

The expression יסוב כל הארץ is semantically similar to בהמיר ארץ in Ps 46:3. In both cases, the verbal form is Hifil with ארץ as the subject.[6] The transformation of the land implies a visible and dramatic upheaval. In Zech 14:11, this moment of geographical destruction and uncertainty culminates in stability and security for Jerusalem. A similar image is found in Ps 46, where a "we"-group feels secure in God despite the surrounding chaos (cf. Ps 46:2–3). Interestingly, the concept of ארץ (land/earth) differs in Zech 14:9 and 14:10: in Zech 14:9 it refers to the cosmos, while in Zech 14:10 it denotes the physical landmass.[7] This semantic distinction is also observable in Ps 46:2–7 compared to Ps 46:9–11 and the references to ארץ in Psalm 47.

[4] Cf. ibid.
[5] Cf. Steiner, „Gott stieg hinauf …", p. 166.
[6] Cf. referring to Ps 46,3 Chapter II.3 and referring to Sach 14,10 Schott, Sacharja 9-14, p. 206f.
[7] Cf. Schott, Sacharja 9-14, p. 218.

This analysis shows that the concept of YHWH as "King over the whole earth" in Zech 14:9 correlates with the kingship imagery of YHWH in Psalm 47. Both are universal models portraying divine kingship as an exalted form of rule. The thematic links between Zech 14:8–10 and Psalms 46 and 47 are particularly striking, suggesting that the portrayal of the city of God in Psalm 46 and YHWH's kingship in Psalm 47 may have been understood as complementary and interconnected theological ideas during the development of Zechariah 14:8–10.[8]

3. "Great King" (Verse 3)

In Ps 47:3, YHWH is not only described as king over the earth (as in verse 8), but as a "great king over the earth." The phrase מלך גדול is an attributive construction and in Psalm 47 it functions as a characterization of YHWH right at the beginning of the psalm, serving as a justification for the call to praise. The attributive construction מלך גדול appears a total of eleven times in the Old Testament texts (2 Kgs 18:19.28; Isa 36:4.13; Jer 25:14; 27:7; Mal 1:14; Ps 47:3; 95:3; 136:17; Eccl 9:14). Among these, four instances appear with the article as המלך הגדול (2 Kgs 18:19.28; Isa 36:4.13), three in the plural as מלכים גדלים (Jer 25:14; 27:7; Ps 136:17), and four as indefinite attributive constructions, i.e., מלך גדול (Mal 1:14; Ps 47:3; 95:3; Eccl 9:14).

3.1. "Great King" = Foreign Ruler

The instances with the article המלך הגדול are found in the parallel accounts of 2 Kgs 18 and Isa 36. Since verses 2 Kgs 18:19 | Isa 36:4 and 2 Kgs 18:28 | Isa 36:13 are identical in wording, only the occurrences in 2 Kgs 18:19,28 will be analysed more closely here:

[19] ויאמר אלהם רב שקה אמרו נא אל חזקיהו כה אמר המלך הגדול מלך אשור מה הבטחון הזה אשר בטחת

[28]ויעמד רב שקה ויקרא בקול גדול יהודית וידבר ויאמר שמעו דבר המלך הגדול מלך אשור

In both passages, the designation המלך הגדול is clarified by the apposition מלך אשור. The reference in 2 Kgs 18:19 | Isa 36:4 also shows that this king wields significant authority, since the formula כה אמר ("thus says") is used to announce his demand. In 2 Kgs 18 | Isa 36, המלך הגדול functions as a title for the king of Assyria, and therefore could also be translated as "Great King" in the imperial sense.

[8] Zechariah 14:9 is sometimes interpreted by scholars as secondary, particularly due to the varying semantics of ארץ in comparison to the surrounding verses, cf. ibid. This could provide an indication of the perception of the composition of Psalms 46-48. However, as this assumption is highly hypothetical, it will only be mentioned in this context without being pursued further. It is also conceivable that Psalms 46 and 47, with their different semantic concepts of ארץ, were already read as belonging together when Zechariah 14:8-10 was written, and that these varying concepts were incorporated into the text accordingly.

A fitting comparison is found in Eccl 9:14, where מלך גדול appears without the article:

עיר קטנה ואנשים בה מעט ובא אליה מלך גדול וסבב אתה ובנה עליה מצודים גדלים

Verses 13–18 of Ecclesiastes 9 depict an allegory about the value of wisdom, which goes unrecognized. Verse 13 introduces this with a metacommentary, followed by verse 14 (quoted above), which sets the scene. Verses 15–16 describe a poor, wise man who could have saved the city with his wisdom – despite lacking military might – but whose wisdom was ignored. Whether verse 14 implicitly refers to the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem is unclear. If it does, then מלך גדול in Eccl 9:14 might also refer to the king of Assyria as "Great King." However, the reference in Eccl 9:14 is much more general, so the story can simply be read as a paradigm of wisdom. In either interpretation, מלך גדול refers to a powerful and formidable ruler.

The plural forms of the phrase, מלכים גדלים, also refer to earthly kings or imperial rulers:

כי עבדו בם גם המה גוים רבים ומלכים גדולים ושלמתי להם כפעלם וכמעשה ידיהם (Jer 25,14)

ועבדו אתו כל הגוים ואת בנו ואת בן בנו עד בא עת ארצו גם הוא ועבדו בו גוים רבים ומלכים גדלים (Jer 27,7)

למכה מלכים גדלים

כי לעולם חסדו (Ps 136,17)

In Jer 25:14 and 27:7, the attributive constructions גוים רבים and מלכים גדלים appear as a word pair, denoting social-political powers to whom service is due. Unlike in 2 Kgs 18 | Isa 36, these refer not to a specific political power (e.g., Assyria), but rather to an undefined collective of foreign dominions, whose power is expressed in terms of number (רב) and greatness (גדול). The same applies to Ps 136:17, where מלכים גדלים refers to a collective of powerful kings defeated by YHWH – whose power is thereby praised.

The phrase מלך גדול also occurs once in an extrabiblical source: on an ivory plaque from Nimrud dating to the 8th century BCE (ND 10150).[9] On this plaque, מלך גדול is used to describe a ruler as a great king or imperial ruler. Scholars have interpreted the inscription as Hebrew based on the script style, although this classification is debatable. Regardless, the presence of the term in a nonbiblical context is significant. Like in Eccl 9:14, no specific ruler needs to be implied; rather, מלך גדול simply denotes a powerful ruler, whose greatness is likely measured by the perceived scope of his authority.

The parallels in 2 Kgs 18 | Isa 36 and the Nimrud inscription clearly align with the Akkadian royal title *šarru rabû*. The Hebrew phrase מלך גדול seems to be the equivalent of this Assyrian

[9] Cf. HAE, p. 128-130; TUAT II, p. 564; Aḥituv, Echoes from the Past, p. 329f.

title, referring at least in the biblical parallels to the Assyrian king.[10] Both the Nimrud example and Eccl 9:14 show that מלך גדול could also be used generically for powerful rulers, without reference to a formal imperial title. In such cases, the literal translation "a great king" fits well—it describes a ruler who is greater than others, influential, and powerful. Furthermore, the plural parallels demonstrate that this title could function as a collective label for major political powers with wide-reaching influence.

3.2."Great King" = YHWH

The title מלך גדול used for an earthly king isapplied to YHWH in Ps 47:3, Ps 95:3 and Mal 1:14 . In Ps 47:3, the phrase מלך גדול appears as part of a more complex construct chain. A similar construction is found in Ps 95:3, while in Mal 1:14, YHWH uses the title מלך גדול to refer to Himself in a divine speech:

כי אל גדול יהוה
ומלך גדול על כל אלהים (Ps 95,3)

וארור נוכל ויש בעדרו זכר ונדר וזבח משחת לאדני כי מלך גדול אני אמר יהוה צבאות ושמי נורא בגוים (Mal1,14)

The reference to מלך גדול in Ps 95:3 is found in the second colon of the verse and forms a synonymous parallelism with אל גדול in the first colon. The identification of YHWH as אל גדול opens the verse and is understood as synonymous with his description as מלך גדול על כל אלהים. In Ps 95:3, YHWH's kingship does not have earthly connotations, as it does in Ps 47:3. Instead, YHWH is described as a great king over all gods. The sphere of dominion and the theological concept differ accordingly. While in Ps 47:3 (and also Mal 1:14) YHWH is king over the earth, i.e., over lands and peoples – thus implying a worldly dominion – Ps 95:3 explicitly presupposes a polytheistic system, in which other gods exist alongside YHWH, over whom he reigns as great king (מלך גדול) and great god (אל גדול).

The expression אל גדול appears elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Deut 7:21 and Ps 77:14, but there it does not describe YHWH as king or ruler over other gods, but rather characterizes him simply as great:

לא תערץ מפניהם כי יהוה אלהיך בקרבך אל גדול ונורא (Dtn 7,21)

אלהים בקדש דרכך
מי אל גדול כאלהים (Ps 77,14)

[10] Cf. Kratz, Reste hebräischen Heidentums, S. 170; Müller, Jahwe als Wettergott, p. 198.

In these two cases, אל גדול is not used to define YHWH's kingship or rule over others but to declare his magnitude. The connection between אל גדול and kingship over other gods within a polytheistic system is thus unique to Psalm 95.

Therefore, in Ps 95:3, the title מלך גדול is not semantically derived from אל גדול; rather, both terms are placed in parallel as synonyms, without one depending on the other for meaning. The idea of YHWH as a great God can exist independently of the idea of YHWH as a great king. The scope of dominion – whether על כל הארץ ("over all the earth") or על כל אלהים ("over all gods") – can differ. Through the designation מלך גדול, the core message is that YHWH exercises power comparable to that of a worldly great king over a defined domain.

This interpretation also applies to Mal 1:14, where מלך גדול appears as YHWH's self-designation in a divine speech. That this title also conveys the effect of power over a realm is made clear in the second part of the speech: ושמי נורא בגוים – "and my name is feared among the nations." YHWH presents Himself as a great king (מלך גדול אני) and continues by affirming that His name is feared among the peoples. This self-declaration is directly linked to the title great king.

Likewise, in Ps 47:3, both נורא ("awesome/fearsome") and מלך גדול appear together. The kingship of YHWH as מלך גדול is connoted with awe and fear, illustrating that His rule may be perceived as powerful, overwhelming, and at times intimidating to the nations – just as one might expect under the dominion of a worldly imperial king. YHWH, then, is likened to a sovereign who presides over multiple rulers and nations, governing his territory with might. This social-political dimension – the idea that YHWH exerts direct influence – is a crucial part of the title מלך גדול.

4. "Our King" (Verse 7)

The lexeme מלך in the singular with the 1st person common plural suffix (i.e., מלכנו, "our king") appears only five times in the Old Testament (1 Sam 8:20; Isa 33:22; Hos 7:5; Ps 47:7; 89:19). The instance in 1 Sam 8:20 occurs in the context of the people's demand to Samuel to appoint a king over Israel. The verse is part of the people's speech describing the type of king they desire. In Hos 7:5, מלכנו appears in a time-related expression, יום מלכנו ("on the day of our king"). The identity of this king remains unclear, even in the broader literary context. In Ps 89:19, the king is related to YHWH, though YHWH and the king are clearly two distinct figures.

This leaves, in addition to Ps 47:7, the occurrence in Isa 33:22, where YHWH is explicitly called “our king”:

כי יהוה שפטנו

יהוה מחקקנו

יהוה מלכנו

הוא יושיענו (Jes 33,22)

Isa 33:22 begins with the particle כי and can be syntactically divided into three nominal clauses and one compound nominal clause. All clauses function as parallelisms, each naming YHWH explicitly (or via הוא, “he”) and attaching a characteristic noun. YHWH is judge, leader, king, and saviour. These affirmations are all made from the perspective of a “we”-group, as evidenced by the 1st person plural suffix attached to each noun and the verb. The designation מלכנו thus serves in Isa 33:22 as an epithet of YHWH. His rule is defined through the attributes of judging, leading, and saving, which are all assigned to YHWH in this verse. The verse unfolds as a progressive portrayal: YHWH judges the group → thus He is their leader → as leader, He is their king → as king, He will save them. YHWH is thus recognized in His royal role as the ruling and guiding saviour, to whom the group pledges allegiance.

By using the 1st person plural suffix, Isa 33:22 and Ps 47:7 create a direct relationship between the “we”-group and the addressed subject (YHWH). This relationship is established from the group’s perspective; they define themselves in relation to YHWH and actively acknowledge Him as their king.

In the broader scope of Old Testament usage, מלכנו can refer either to a human king (1 Sam 8:20; Hos 7:5; Ps 89:19) or to God as king (Isa 33:22; Ps 47:7). In Isa 33:22 and Ps 47:7, there is more than a personal relational claim: the kingship of YHWH is characterized. It includes the exercise of authority and dominion over a specific territory or people. Isa 33:22 explicitly connects this kingship with aspects of judging and leading.

These are typical ancient Near Eastern royal attributes. Accordingly, YHWH is not only a deity worshipped by the group but also its political sovereign, who guides, judges, and rules over it—YHWH reigns over the “we”-group. [11]

5. The Kingship in Verse 9

The aspect of rulership in the form of kingship is also attested in Ps 47:9. The kingship of YHWH is expressed in verse 9a through a verbal clause: מלך אלהים על גוים ("God has become

[11] Cf. Körting, Israel und die Völker, p. 311.

king over the nations"). Verse 9 is structured as a parallelism membrorum. The second colon complements the first by describing enthronement as an expression of rulership: אלהים ישב על כסא קדשו ("God sits on his holy throne"). The statement in verse 9b is unique in the Old Testament and only appears in Psalm 47. The declaration that God is – or has become – king occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament as well, with both verb-subject and subject-verb syntactic constructions. This raises the question: To what extent does the syntax of מלך אלהים reveal its meaning?[12]

When the verb precedes the subject (i.e., מלך – יהוה/אלהים) this construction appears five times in the Old Testament (Isa 24:23; 52:7; Mic 4:7; Ps 47:9; 146:10). These are verbal clauses, emphasizing the act of becoming king.[13] In contrast, the inverted syntax (יהוה – מלך) appears six times (Exod 15:18; Ps 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; 1 Chr 16:31), and only with the subject YHWH, never with אלהים. These are nominal clauses, emphasizing who the king is rather than the act itself.[14] So, the syntax is semantically significant.[15]

5.1. "YHWH is King" – יהוה מלך

As a first step, the passages using the nominal clause syntax (יהוה מלך) are examined. Based on this phrase, Psalms 93, 96, 97, and 99 are designated as YHWH-Kingship Psalms. Psalm 47 is often included in scholarly literature, even though Ps 47:9 uses a different syntax. A closer look at these verses will help clarify the meaning of the statement יהוה מלך:

יהוה ימלך לעלם ועד (Ex 15,18)

Among the six instances, Exod 15:18 differs from the others in its use of a yiqtol (PK-form) of מלך, whereas the rest use the perfect (AK-form). Exod 15:18 emphasizes a future and ongoing reign, expressed clearly with לעלם ועד ("forever and ever"). The imperfect form underscores continuity and enduring kingship. The remaining examples use the perfect form (AK), highlighting the fact of YHWH's reign as a present and irreversible reality: [16]

יהוה מלך

גאות לבש

לבש יהוה

עז התאזר

[12] Cf. Körting, JHWH besteigt seinen Thron, p. 248: „Im Gegensatz zu der eingangs präsentierten Lesart des יהוה מלך als permanent wirksame Ausübung der Königsherrschaft, sollte hier (bei der Formulieren אלהים מלך in Ps 47,6, Anmerkung RB) tatsächlich überlegt werden, ob nicht von einer Thronbesteigung auszugehen ist."

[13] Cf. Michel, Thronbesteigungspsalmen, p. 51f.

[14] Cf. ibid.

[15] Cf. ibid., p. 52.

[16] Cf. ibid., p. 48 (Michel quotes Köhler): „Das Perfektum wird da angewendet, wo etwas Einmalig [sic!], ein für alle Male, faktisch geschieht, geschah, geschehen wird".

אף תכון תבל בל תמוט (Ps 93,1)

אמרו בגוים
יהוה מלך
אף תכון תבל בל תמוט
ידין עמים במישרים (Ps 96,10)

Both Ps 93:1 and Ps 96:10 connect YHWH's kingship with the stability of the cosmos. The world's immovability is expressed through synonymous phrases: תכון תבל ("the world is established") and בל תמוט ("it shall not be moved"). These terms belong to the vocabulary of chaos combat, suggesting that YHWH's rule ensures cosmic order.
In Ps 93:1, these declarations are preceded by characterizations of YHWH – גאות (majesty) and עז (strength). YHWH's kingship is described as majestic and powerful.
Ps 96:10 adds a new dimension: the proclamation of YHWH's kingship is to be declared among the nations (בגוים). This implies that divine kingship is not limited to Israel but has universal implications, especially in justice (ידין עמים במישרים).
In Ps 97:1 and 1 Chr 16:31, YHWH's kingship is linked to cosmic joy:

יהוה מלך
תגל הארץ
ישמחו איים רבים (Ps 97,1)

ישמחו השמים ותגל הארץ
ויאמרו בגוים
יהוה מלך (1 Chr 16,31)

In both, the vocabulary of joy (גיל and שמח) is paired with cosmic dimensions:
– Ps 97:1 uses ארץ (land) and איים (islands/coasts) to express center and periphery.
– 1 Chr 16:31 uses שמים (heaven) and ארץ (earth) to express above and below.
Both compositions emphasize that YHWH's rule elicits universal joy and spans the entire cosmos.
In contrast, Ps 99:1 connects YHWH's kingship with cosmic instability:

יהוה מלך
ירגזו עמים
ישב כרובים

תנוט הארץ (Ps 99,1)

Here, instead of stability and joy, YHWH's kingship causes fear and trembling among nations. The structure forms a synonymous parallelism:

– YHWH's reign (יהוה מלך) corresponds to His enthronement on cherubim (ישב כרובים);

– the trembling of nations (ירגזו עמים) parallels the quaking earth (תנוט הארץ).

This shows that YHWH's kingship is perceived as awe-inspiring and destabilizing – especially for the nations (עמים) and the earth (ארץ). The motif of enthronement as a symbol of kingship is very important here and in Ps 47:9.

5.2."God Has Become King" – מלך אלהים

The reference in Ps 47:9 shows a reversed syntax compared to the occurrences of יהוה מלך. It forms a verbal clause whose core statement is מלך אלהים ("God has become king"). This formulation has parallels in four other Old Testament passages:

וחפרה הלבנה ובושה החמה
כי מלך יהוה צבאות בהר ציון
ובירושלם ונגד זקניו כבוד (Jes 24,23)

מה נאוו על ההרים רגלי מבשר
משמיע שלום
מבשר טוב
משמיע ישועה
אמר לציון
מלך אלהיך (Jes 52,7)

ושמתי את הצלעה לשארית
והנהלאה לגוי עצום
ומלך יהוה עליהם בהר ציון
מעתה ועד עולם (Mi 4,7)

ימלך יהוה לעולם
אלהיך ציון לדר ודר
הללו יה (Ps 146,10)

According to Michel, the syntax of these examples affects the semantics of the statement.[17] While יהוה מלך emphasizes the fact of YHWH being king, the reversed syntax, as in מלך יהוה or מלך אלהים, places the emphasis on the process of becoming king – the assumption of kingship.[18]

The perspective from which the message is proclaimed also differs:

- In Ps 96:10 and 1 Chr 16:31, and implicitly in Ps 99:1, יהוה מלך is announced to the nations, stressing YHWH's ongoing rule.
- In contrast, in Isa 52:7 and Ps 146:10, the message מלך יהוה / מלך אלהים is addressed inwardly to Zion, being a metaphor for YHWH's own people. This highlights YHWH's installation as king, rather than the mere fact of his rule.

One exception is Ps 146:10, which – like Exod 15:18 – uses the yiqtol form (PK-form) ימלך instead of the perfect form. This likely reflects the emphasis on eternity, expressed with לעולם. The use of the imperfect verb stresses continuity and future duration of the kingship.

All four of these verses – Isa 24:23; 52:7; Mic 4:7; Ps 146:10 – link the kingship of God to Zion as a geographical or theological center:

- Either as the site of kingship (Isa 24:23; Mic 4:7),
- Or as the addressee of the proclamation (Isa 52:7; Ps 146:10).

In Ps 47, however, Zion is not explicitly named.[19] It is only implicitly presupposed through its literary context: [20]

- Psalm 48 makes Zion explicit,
- Psalm 46 references the city of God, likely meaning Jerusalem.

Therefore, in Psalm 47, Zion serves as an implied center of divine kingship.

6. God as King in Psalm 47

The central concern of Psalm 47 is the portrayal of YHWH's kingship.

- In verses 3 and 8, His kingship over the entire earth is expressed.
- In verse 7, YHWH is described in relation to the "we"-group as their king.
- And in verse 9, His kingship over the nations is described, a kingship that proceeds from Zion.

[17] Cf. Michel, Thronbesteigungspsalmen, p. 52.
[18] Cf. also Körting, JHWH besteigt seinen Thron, p. 248. For Körting, the syntax emphasises the act of YHWH's accession to the throne and assumption of power, while for her the phrase יהוה מלך must be understood as „permanent wirksame Ausübung der Königsherrschaft", cf. ibid.
[19] Cf. ibid., p. 246.
[20] Cf. ibid., p. 248.

These three aspects of divine kingship are interconnected and form a unified picture, yet the themes of:

1. Kingship over the whole earth (vv. 3 & 8),
2. Kingship over the nations (v. 9), and
3. The designation מלכנו ("our king") in its relation to the three entities “world”, “nations” and “we-group”.

The kingship of YHWH over the entire earth, as postulated in verses 3 and 8 of Psalm 47, is a universal concept of divine rule. The phrase כל הארץ expresses a comprehensive view of the entire terrestrial world. As shown in Zech 14:9, this concept belongs to an eschatological vision of YHWH’s dominion replacing all earthly authorities.

Verse 3 articulates this universal dominion even more explicitly than verse 8 by employing the expression מלך גדול על כל הארץ. The title מלך גדול ("great king") resonates with the concept of an Assyrian, Babylonian, or Persian imperial king.[21] This establishes a link between divine kingship and a worldly title from the ancient Near East, which inherently contains the notion of a cosmic world ruler.[22]

Thus, verses 3 and 8 in Psalm 47 operate at the intersection of cosmic kingship and terrestrial political analogy. This shows that Psalm 47 emphasizes God’s kingship as something experienced within the world.

In addition to מלך גדול, the attributes עליון ("Most High") and נורא ("awesome") in verse 3 are crucial for understanding YHWH’s kingship. These attributes reflect mythological motifs from Israel’s cultural environment:

> „Die nominalen Zustandsaussagen von V. 3 und 8 preisen also die universale Macht und Überlegenheit des Weltenkönigs, wie sie in Ugarit den Götterkönigen El als Schöpfer der Götter und der Welt bzw. Baal als Sieger über das Chaos und Welterhalter eignen. עליון und נורא drücken damit in ihrer Verbindung ganz entsprechende komplementäre Aspekte des Königtums Jahwes aus wie in Ps 93,1 גאות „Hoheit" und עז „Macht". Der Akzent der Aussagen liegt hier wie dort darauf, daß Jahwe die gesamte Welt beherrscht und keine Macht der Welt ihm seine Herrschaft streitig machen kann. Diese Herrschaft ist, insofern sie ohne Anfang und ohne Ende ist, für Israel nur zuständlich beschreibbar, anders als die im ugaritischen Mythos erzählte, im Kampf errungene Herrschaft Baals. Weil aber auch Jahwes Königtum urzeitlich-universal ist, ist es andererseits nur in mythischen Kategorien darstellbar.“[23]

The struggle for kingship is not directly expressed in Psalm 47, though it resonates in the characterization of YHWH in verse 3. This conflict motif, however, becomes clearer when

[21] Although Dahood also sees a connection to Ugarit in this designation, cf. idem, Psalms 1-50 (AncB), p. 284.
[22] Cf. Zenger in Hossfeld/Zenger, Psalmen 1-50 (NEB), p. 292. The idea of this king of the world envisages that the peoples of the earth, through a world order with this king, should be freed from the chaos in which they found themselves according to ancient Oriental beliefs.
[23] Jeremias, Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen, p. 55.

viewed through the chaos-combat imagery in Psalm 46 and the verbal assertion of YHWH's reign over the nations in verse 9.

YHWH's kingship over the nations in verse 9 is likewise far-reaching, though not as universal as in verses 3 and 8. Verse 9 does not express kingship via a construct chain, but rather via a verbal clause using the perfect form of מלך. This form of rule is closely linked to the idea of enthronement.

Verse 9 is especially reminiscent of Canaanite mythology, particularly the Baal cycle. However, the use of perfect verb forms conveys that this is a continuous present state – one that is experienced in the world:

> „Man ist sich über die Nähe zum Baal-Zyklus relativ einig, und ebenso ist man sich einig im Hinblick auf die Beobachtung eines entscheidenden Unterschiedes: im Gegensatz zu Baal muss JHWH sein Königtum nicht stets neu erkämpfen, oder, noch genauer, das Königtum JHWHs wird im Hymnus als ‚Dauerzustand ohne Anfang und Ende gegen die permanente Bedrohung durch das Chaos im Wechsel der Jahreszeiten behauptet.'"[24]

Körting's observation highlights two key features of YHWH's kingship in verse 9:

1. The depiction of God as enthroned ruler over chaotic forces (represented in Ps 47:9 by גוים, "nations") borrows imagery from Canaanite myth. – Yet, Israel's theology modifies the myth.[25]
2. YHWH's kingship does not require constant reaffirmation through conflict. It is instead a timeless and factual theological assertion.[26]

When the statements from verses 3, 7, 8, and 9 are taken together:

- YHWH rules over the nations (v. 9),
- He is our king (v. 7),
- And He is a great king over the whole earth (vv. 3 and 8).

The "we"-group explicitly confesses YHWH as their king and submits to His rule. They also position themselves within this divinely ordered world, recognizing that His kingship is:

1. Primordial and universal,
2. Historically manifested, and
3. Currently experienced in worship.

[24] Körting, JHWH besteigt seinen Thron, p. 242.
[25] Cf. Kratz, Reste hebräischen Heidentums, p. 169.
[26] Cf. ibid.

Quoting Jeremias, YHWHs Kingship is „1) ein von Urzeit her gesetztes und universales Königtum [ist], das sich aber 2) in der Geschichte verwirklicht und 3) im gegenwärtigen Kult neu als Realität erfahren wird.“[27]

Thus, YHWH's kingship is not merely a theological concept but is experienced through His actions in the world. The group experiences this kingship personally and collectively.

Although Psalm 47 does not explicitly name the location from which YHWH reigns, the metaphorical language and literary positioning between Psalms 46 and 48 suggest that Zion or Jerusalem is the implied center of divine rule and action.

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[27] Jeremias, Königtum JHWHs in den Psalmen, p. 53.

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Project Summary, Marika Pulkkinen 28.7.2025

Evoking Shame, Honour, Desire, and Disgust through Sex Work Vocabulary in the Pentateuch, Hosea, and Ezekiel

Introduction:

My study will explore how the figurative language of sex work is related to certain emotion concepts. The study applies the new perspectives of emotion studies, gender studies, sociological understanding of sex work, and metaphor theories to examining the affect-laden vocabulary of sex work in the Pentateuch, Hosea, and Ezekiel. The study views what kind of emotions are related to the lexemes denoting sex work and sexual labour in Hebrew and Greek. Literally, the Hebrew lexeme *zānāh* (זנה) and other derived forms and the Greek porneuō (πορνεύω and cognates) express sexual labor in neutral sense. However, especially in sources stemming from post-exilic time (i.e., from 6th century BCE), the vocabulary of sexual labor is frequently used metaphorically referring to idolatry or apostasy from God. For instance, in the prophetic books of Hosea and Ezekiel, the worshipping nation of Israel is described as an unfaithful wife of their god (e.g., Hos 1–3, see esp. 2:4–17; Ezek 16, 23). The vocabulary can also be understood as betrayal or selling one's loyalty—or as a cause of disgrace for the entity that is expressed as a grammatical object for *znh* (Deut 22:21).

The novelty of the project is to combine these new methodological approaches to a rigorous historical, textual and source critical study of the biblical texts on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to investigate a broad set of primary sources to obtain an understanding of the diachronic development of the use of sex work vocabulary in the biblical texts.

Aims and Objectives: Research Questions:

The study will scrutinize the following questions (using the following methodology):

1. What function does the vocabulary of sexual labor have in each context it occurs in the biblical texts and why it gained a more pejorative use in later texts, especially from the post-exilic / Persian period (i.e., from 6th century BCE) onwards? (Functional and diachronic sematic analysis)
2. What does the use of feminine word forms (zŏnāh/pornē, "a sex worker") denote when used in reference to male audience? (Gender studies, metaphor theories)
3. How is the imagery that refers to sexual acts and attitudes attached to and detached from its concrete meaning in each context where it is used? How was the lexeme zānāh/porneuō extended to denote all kind of illicit sexual/moral behavior (Metaphor theories, Functional and diachronic semantic analysis)
4. What role does the social dynamics of shame and honor play in the use of the word-group? (Emotions studies, affect theories)
5. How are the emotions of disgust and desire evoked by the usage of the vocabulary of sex work and how these emotions can be identified from the textual sources? (Emotions studies, affect theories)

The Sources of the Study:

The source material of my study comprises the occurrences of the words denoting sex work in Hebrew (zānāh [זנה] and other derived forms) and in Greek (porneuō [πορνεύω] and cognates) in **the Hebrew Bible** (95 occurrences), in **the Pseudepigrapha** (*The Testament of Twelve Patriarchs, Jubilees)* **and Apocrypha** (Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon), and in **LXX** (161 occurrences). The analysis of the monograph will cover the occurrences of the word-group in the Pentateuch, Hosea, and Ezekiel.

Methods Applied in the Study:

My study will employ the **methods of textual criticism and diachronic lexical analysis by exploring the functions of the occurrences of the lexemes** zānāh/porneuō and their cognates in the sources listed above. When the occurrences of the word-group in the LXX will be analyzed, porneuō and its cognates will be examined in relation to its Hebrew equivalents by comparing all the available textual evidence as well as relevant sources in the Graeco-Roman world.

As a theoretical framework, this study applies theories of emotion developed in the multidisciplinary field of affective science.[1] On the one hand, I will apply findings of contemporary psychological emotion studies[2] as well as cultural anthropology on emotions.[3] On the other hand, the views of affective theories will be evaluated when analyzing the sources of this study. Affect theories can be divided into two main streams, of which one stems from Silvan Tomkins's psychological studies and the other one stemming from cultural studies.[4] The latter one builds on phenomenological and post-structural philosophical approaches that scrutinize affect and affectivity. Phenomenologically and post-structurally oriented affect theories emphasize the corporeal as well as cultural and political aspects of being moved, affected and of living in interpersonal (inevitably) affectious systems in which power dynamics play a central role. This view is important regarding my study as it investigates how certain emotions are provoked by attaching derogatory labels to marginalized bodies in my sources.

Regarding the study of specific **emotion concepts**, especially studies exploring the concepts of desire, disgust, honor, and shame in historical sources offer an invaluable background of methods and framework.[5] Emotions are not manifested as emotion vocabulary only, rather, they are experienced and recognized as bodily gestures and postures (sight, avert, gazing down), physiological changes (blushing, increase of heart rate), facial expressions (smiling, crying, etc.), and tones of voice among other things. Moreover, the concept of 'emotives' has been used to refer to speech acts that express a certain emotional state.[6]

Work Outline and Implementation:

The research will be conducted at the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Theology, Department of Biblical Studies. **My overall research project will be conducted in four years** in the following work packages:

The project has already been funded for three and a half years in total: by Emil Aaltonen Foundation (September 2025 – February 2026), by the Ella and Georg Ehrnrooth Foundation (September 2024 – August 2025) and by The Finnish Cultural Foudation through Post-Doctoral Pool (January 2022 – August 2024, 24 months). With the latter-mentioned funding, I have spent two years abroad in multidisciplinary research environment. During the **calendar year 2022, I worked as a visiting postdoctoral researcher in the University of Edinburgh** in collaboration with Prof. Douglas Cairns who works in the field of emotions studies in Classics (Research Questions 4 and 5). In the **academic year 2023–2024, I have worked as a visiting postdoctoral researcher in Eberhard Kalrs Universität Tübingen** in collaboration with Prof. Monique Scheer and Prof. Holger Zellentin. Prof. Scheer is a world-leading scholar in the history of emotions from the perspective of cultural anthropology.

As a research output, the project will offer one monograph and two peer-reviewed articles in Finnish. My OTSEM paper will represent a book proposal of my work-in-progress monograph including a detailed synopsis of the book and summaries of each chapter.

[1] For this umbrella term, see, e.g., Colombetti 2014.
[2] See, e.g., Feldman Barrett & Russell (eds.) 2015.
[3] Scheer 2012.
[4] Tomkins (1962) 2008. For later applications of Tompkins's approach, see, e.g., Massumi 1995; Ahmed 2004. For applications to Biblical Studies, see Black & Koosed (eds.) 2019.
[5] Cairns 1993; Stiebert 2002; Marchal 2019; Mylonas 2023.
[6] Reddy 2001.

Marika Pulkkinen

University of Helsinki

OTSEM paper (28.7.2025)

Dear OTSEM members,

This paper aims at functioning as a base for a book proposal of a monograph based on my on-going postdoctoral project independent from my PhD thesis. For such a purpose, I acknowledge that the summaries for each chapters in this paper are too wordy, and, in some places, contain too detailed information. Since I never haven't written an official book proposal (for an international academic yet commercial publisher) and hence the genre is somewhat unfamiliar to me, I would very much appreciate comments that help me compile a decent book proposal. The publisher that I am aiming at requires a proposal that contain a synopsis of the whole monograph as well as summaries of each chapter.

Naturally, all feedback is welcome. I look forward to seeing you in Copenhagen! -Marika

Evoking Shame, Honour, Desire, and Disgust through Sex Work Vocabulary in the Pentateuch, Hosea, and Ezekiel

In recent decades, a vast amount of studies focusing on the cultural and social history of sexual labor in ancient Greece and Rome has emerged.[1] The developments in gender studies and the notion of the intersection of gender, race, economic status, and sexuality have enabled examining how social, socio-economic, racial status, gender roles and gender representation influence the settings where sex is sold for money.[2] Moreover, gender representation influence the settings where sex is sold for money and how the bodies of the enslaved people are often sexually abused.[3] Likewise, the socio-economic and social views have been applied to investigating biblical sources which similarly attest to a wide range of sexual commerce-related phenomenon.[4] Moreover, both in antiquity and contemporary societies, sexual labor is often referred to in either mystified and/or stigmatized manner in literature, popular culture, and political debates by means of evoking certain emotions, such as desire but also disgust and shame.[5] In these uses, the vocabulary has a derogatory and metaphorical connotation often detached from its concrete meaning. Yet, the force of the metaphor stems from its visceral corporeality.[6]

My study will explore how the figurative language of sex work is related to certain emotion concepts. The study applies the new perspectives of emotion studies, gender studies, sociological understanding of sex work, and metaphor theories to examining the affect-laden vocabulary of sex work in the Pentateuch, and the books of Hosea and Ezekiel according to the readings of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint (henceforth LXX) and other relevant witnesses. The study views what kind of emotions are related to the lexemes denoting sex work and sexual labour in Hebrew and Greek. Literally, the Hebrew lexeme *zānāh* (זנה) and other derived forms and the Greek porneuō (πορνεύω and cognates) expresses sexual labor in neutral sense. However, especially in sources stemming from post-exilic time (i.e., from 6th century BCE), the vocabulary of sexual labor is frequently used metaphorically referring to idolatry or apostasy from God. For instance, in the prophetic books

[1] McGinn 1998; Flemming 1999; Faraone & McClure (eds.) 2006; Glazebrook & Henry (eds.) 2011; Kapparis 2017; Levin-Richardson 2019.
[2] Joshel & Hackworth Petersen (eds.) 2014.
[3] Joshel & Hackworth Petersen (eds.) 2014; Kamen 2023, 61–72. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110654769-005.
[4] Bird 2006.
[5] Bruckert 2012; Bird 1997.
[6] Kövecses 2000.

of Hosea and Ezekiel, the worshipping nation of Israel is described as an unfaithful wife of their god (e.g., Hos 1–3, see esp. 2:4–17; Ezek 16, 23). The vocabulary can also be understood as betrayal or selling one's loyalty—or as a cause of disgrace for the entity that is expressed as a grammatical object for *znh* (Deut 22:21). However, it is noteworthy that not all biblical texts outlaw using the services of sex workers or describe sex workers negatively (see Gen 38; Judg 11:1; 16:1; 1 Kings 3:16).

The novelty of the project is to combine, on the one hand, the new methodological approaches to a historical, textual and source critical study of the biblical texts, and, on the other hand, to investigate a broad set of primary sources to obtain an understanding of the diachronic development of the use of sex work vocabulary in the biblical texts. In addition, by scrutinizing both the Pentateuchal and the prophetic texts of Hosea and Ezekiel from a lexical point of view focusing on sexually and affect-laden vocabulary, it is possible to detect redactional affinities between these texts. For instance, whereas Hosea bears Deuteronomistic tones in its theology, Ezekiel shows clear links to Priestly emphases.[7]

Shame and honor dynamics are in force in many areas of public discourse. My study helps to understand the mechanism how hate speech functions in building toxic boundaries by provoking certain emotions. Ethnic and national boundaries are often drawn and fostered through a derogatory use of vocabulary of sexual labor in my sources. These uses of the vocabulary of sexual labor could be labelled as hate speech, as the emotions of disgust, shame, and honour are used to shape an emotional community.

As a research output, the project will offer one monograph, which will be handed in for an international peer-reviewed monograph series by the end of February 2026. My OTSEM paper will represent a book proposal of my work-in-progress monograph including a detailed synopsis of the book and summaries of each chapter.

Research Questions:

The study will scrutinize the following questions (using the following methodology):

1. What function does the vocabulary of sexual labor have in each context it occurs in the biblical texts and why it gained a more pejorative use in later texts, especially from the post-exilic / Persian period onwards? (Functional and diachronic sematic analysis)
2. What does the use of feminine word forms (zŏnāh/πόρνη, "a harlot") denote when used in reference to male audience? (Gender studies, metaphor theories)
3. How is the imagery that refers to sexual acts and attitudes attached to and detached from its concrete meaning in each context where it is used? (Metaphor theories, Functional and diachronic semantic analysis)
4. What role does the social dynamics of shame and honor play in the use of the word-group? (Emotions studies)
5. How are the emotions of disgust and desire evoked by the usage of the vocabulary of sexual labor? (Emotions studies)

The first part of the monograph study consists of two introductory chapters outlining the theoretical framework of my study. The first one examines the relevant lexemes (*zānāh* [זנה] and cognates, πορνεύω, πέρνημι, *nā'āph* [*qal*]; *ni'ēph* [*pi'el*] [נאף] /μοιχεύω; *qedešah*) as well as the concepts (sex

[7] Cf. Weems 1995, 38.

work, emotional labor, adultery, sexual transgression, exploitation, abuse, [sex] slavery, sexual violence) under scrutiny. In the second chapter, I will focus on the methodological and theoretical framework applied to this study (emotion studies, affect theories, emotions in antiquity, metaphor theories, gender studies). The second part of my monograph, consisting of three main-chapters, analyses the occurrences of the lexemes *zānāh* and *porneuō* in the Pentateuch, Hosea, and Ezekiel. In the concluding chapter, I will present the results applied methodology and approach chosen to this textual material.

Summary of the Chapter Dealing with the Theoretical Framework: Emotion Studies and Affect Theories

During the last decades, emotion research has gained currency among multiple disciplines in the humanities. An increasing interest in emotions is visible in the field of Classics as well as Biblical Studies.[8] However, a focus on emotions requires one to be explicit about what in particular is being studied when emotions are scrutinized in historical sources.[9] It is important, for instance, to consider the extent to which it is possible to examine emotions in sources that stem from diverse cultural milieux in comparison to each other and to our contemporary culture.[10] Moreover, one needs to be clear about what is denoted by "emotion" when we examine ancient sources and how we can access these emotions under scrutiny if emotions are viewed as subjective experiences rather than cultural practice. Yet, both in the field of neuroscience and in humanities, scholars have arrived at a consensus that emotions cannot be isolated merely as an individual experience that occurs in the brain. Rather,

[8] For ancient Greek, see, e.g., Konstan, 2006; Chaniotis (ed.), 2012. A survey of approaches to emotions in antiquity is provided by Cairns, 2017; Cairns, 2022b; Cairns & Nelis (eds.), 2017; Cairns (ed.), 2019. For studies focusing on emotion from the perspective of emotion studies in biblical texts, see, e.g., Stiebert, 2002; Mirguet 2016; Spencer (ed.), 2017, and for the letters of Paul, see Marchal, 2019; Schellenberg, 2020. Christian sources in late antiquity from affective perspective is studied by Burrus, 2008. For an application of affect theory on Biblical Studies, see Kotrosits, 2016; Black & Koosed (eds.), 2019.

[9] For the methodological limitations on studying emotions in ancient history, cf. Chaniotis, 2012, 14–16. See esp. p. 16: "The historians […] cannot directly study neurobiological processes; only in some well documented cases they may have immediate access to psychological reactions. But they have access to the external stimuli that generated emotions. They also have information concerning the various factors that determine the manifestation of emotions, their linguistic expressions, their control and display, their use in communication, and their use as a strategy of persuasion." See also p. 23: "Historians have to study emotions, because emotions have shaped all the source material that they have at their disposal. Therefore, the ancient historian does not only – perhaps not even primarily – study texts in order to understand emotions. It is far more urgent for an ancient historian to study emotions in order to understand texts."

[10] An example of culture-based changes in conceptualizing certain emotions is given by Chaniotis 2012, 16: "The religious fear of polluted and polluting things (death, menstrual blood, types of food, etc.), disgust, and feeling of privacy are all to a great extent constructs of social, ethnic, and cultural groups, consequently subject to subtle differentiations and changes." However, see Haidt et al., 1997, for a view of how the feeling of disgust has developed from physical disgust towards possible pathogens (certain food, dead animals) to moral disgust.

emotions are both embodied and evoked in interpersonal interaction.[11] Moreover, with regard to the study at hand, a noteworthy position holds that emotions are not simply subjective experiences but that the subjective and embodied experience is reflected on the emotion lexica that use metonymies and metaphors drawn by the emotional experience.[12] In this vein, emotions as cultural interpersonal practice is a perspective that has inspired my study as well.[13]

As for the terminology of affect and emotion, they are often distinguished conceptually from each other in that emotion denotes the recognition and appraisal of a certain emotional state, while affect refers to a pre-cognised state.[14]

Karen Bray and Stephen Moore divide the approaches that fall into the category of affect theory into three different emphases: psychobiological, prepersonal, and cultural. The first category includes approaches that stem from Silvan Tomkins's affective theory.[15] Second, the prepersonal approach, which stems from Deleuze and Guattari, emphasizes affect as a preprocessed intensity. Third, the cultural approach to affect underlines how the affects are "produced through cultural and historical structures of power".[16] This approach has gained currency among feminist and queer theorists such as Sara Ahmed.[17]

As a theoretical framework, I apply the theories of emotion as embodied and situated in social interaction presented above. Regarding the study of specific emotion concepts and emotion lexemes, studies that explore the concepts of desire, disgust, honour, and shame in historical sources offer an especially invaluable background of methods and framework.[18] In addition to focusing on lexemes that denote specific emotions, when studying emotions in ancient cultures, it is necessary to scrutinize narratives that describe the circumstances in which certain emotions and affects are evoked and depicted. In other words, a script refers to a descriptive account in which a given emotion is

[11] For this notion in the field of neuroscience, see Gallese, 2020: esp. 136–140. For a historical overview, see Colombetti, 2013.
[12] Cairns, 2022b: 37. For the justification of studying emotions and examples of the external manifestations of emotions in ancient sources, see e.g., Cairns, 2022a: 7: "[…] emotions are not private, internal, subjective experiences, but physically embodied, manifested in behaviour, socially and contextually situated, and embedded in the conceptual categories of particular linguistic communities. The evidence of emotion events that survives in the historical record is evidence of emotion as such, in the true sense of the term, not of phenomena that are in some way derivative of or secondary to emotion."
[13] For this type of study, see Scheer, 2012, who applies Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus. Sara Ahmed's studies of emotions and affects as cultural practice (see, e.g., Ahmed 2004) have been abundantly applied to biblical studies (see, e.g., Black & Koosed [eds.] 2019).
[14] Plamper 2015, 12: "I will deal with the word 'affect' in a different manner [in distinction to emotion and feeling]. Influenced by the neurosciences, the notion has in recent years increasingly assumed the sense of purely physical, prelinguistic, unconscious emotion."
[15] Tomkins, 1962 (2008).
[16] Bray & Moore, 2019, 5.
[17] See Ahmed 2004.
[18] Klopfenstein 1972; Cairns 1993; Stiebert 2002; Mirguet 2016; Lateiner 2017; Marchal 2019; Couto-Ferreira 2023; Nadali 2023; Mylonas 2023.

associated.[19] Emotions are not manifested as emotion vocabulary only. Rather, they are experienced and recognized as bodily gestures and postures (sight, avert, gazing down), physiological changes (blushing, increase of heart rate), facial expressions (smiling, crying, etc.), and tones of voice among other things.[20]

I will next turn to clarify how I define and approach the specific emotion concepts that are central to the texts under scrutiny and how these emotion concepts can be identified in my sources.

Shame

Shame is a complex intra- and interpersonal concept. From the psychoanalytic point of view, Léon Wurmser defines shame as including three aspects: 1) fear of disgrace or dishonor, 2) the internalization of shame as the affect of contempt directed against the self by others or by one's own conscience, and 3) as "an attitude of respect toward others and toward oneself, a stance of reverence".[21] Shame is hence an ambivalent concept that carries the connotation of self-loathing or a feeling of being disgraced by others on the one hand and respect toward a significant other on the other hand.

In addition to psychological dimensions of shame that focus on the concept as the experience of an individual, the concept has been approached from social-anthropological and social-psychological points of view in which the connotation of shaming as a social sanction is analyzed. This aspect naturally relates to the abovementioned dimensions, but the social setting also affects the way shame is experienced by the individual. For instance, depending on social status, gender, or other factors of the individual, there may be different expectations of what is considered as shameful conduct. In Neo-Babylonian and Persian period Palestine—the contexts from which my sources roughly stem—protection of female chastity, their sexual purity, was a central concern for the honor of all the members of a household in order to preserve patrilineal offspring.

As an example of shaming, In Ezekiel 16, the physical integrity of the woman is transgressed in the narrative by stripping her naked in front of her lovers.[22] Shame is an interpersonal emotion also

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[19] Cairns, 2008, 46.

[20] Noteworthy are the metaphorical aspect (language itself as metaphorical expression) of other words that denote physical and bodily changes stemming from shame and expressed in the different Hebrew vocabulary: חור (to grow pale) נדמה (to be silenced), פחד (to dread), סוג אחור (to turn away from), שדד in pual (to be devastated, Jer 9:18), אבד (to perish, Ps 83:17[18]), and כלה (to be destroyed, Ps 71:13), cited in *TDOT* (Seebaß 1973, 571).

[21] Wurmser 2015, 1618.

[22] This coarse uncovering act can be contrasted with the protecting act of YHWH at the beginning of the narrative in which a naked abandoned baby girl is covered by him (Ezek 16:8). Marvin Pope has noted that in vv. 4–7, YHWH appears to lack interest toward the saved baby and gets back to her when she is sexually mature (cited in Morse 2018, 136). The covering of the nakedness of the girl occurs only after noticing that she has reach the age of love. Hence, the covering act may also be seen as carrying sexual connotation. Kamionkowski (2003, 60–72) discusses how gender representation and hegemonic masculinity are at play when describing the metaphorized woman to be stripped in Ezekiel: since stripping and other coercive actions were practiced on war victims in order to emasculate enemies, Ezekiel's abusive imagery

in the sense that, in the narrative of Ezekiel, the actions of the woman implicitly disgrace her husband as well. The text reflects the dynamics of shame and honor in patriarchal societies that cherish female chastity as a source of honor and hence unchastity as a source of dishonor to the whole household. However, I do not mean to say that a preoccupation on female chastity entirely characterizes the dynamics of honor and shame in my source texts. Rather, the text covers different aspects of shame as it starts with the description of abandoning the addressed child after her birth (Ezek 16:4–5).[23] In addition, the text also seeks to provoke abhorrence towards the shamelessness, i.e., the lack of a sense of shame, of the woman by describing her unsatisfied desire when she searches for one new lover after another (Ezek 16:26–29).[24]

Shame is hence an ambivalent concept on the linguistic level as it may (as αἰδώς and its cognates in ancient Greek)[25] denote both shame in the sense of humiliation as well as respect for oneself and the other. The Hebrew root *boš* has a diverse sematic field in Semitic languages just like the Greek word αἰδώς: depending on the context, the Hebrew *bošet* may denote both dignity and humiliation.[26]

The vocabulary of shame used in the Hebrew Bible may attest to its *Sitz im Leben*, its original context, in legal settings. In the Book of Hosea, chapter 2, which has functioned as a model for Ezekiel 16 and 23 in which God is metaphorized as a husband in a marriage with his people, God is depicted as a prosecutor who sues his wife after her unfaithfulness is manifested in "whoring" and "adultery," which now yields punishment.[27] The inner logic of the narrative holds that the husband is dishonored by the behavior of the woman, hence the husband demands punishment to be vindicated. In the Prophetic books, the Hebrew word-group (בוֹשׁ, *boš* in *hiphil*: "to put to shame") is often used in a

towards the female may reflect a fear of emasculation in warfare, a way to seek to maintain the ideal of masculinity through hypervirility. See, e.g., Ezek 23:25–26 for a graphic and violent description of mutilating war captives: "I will direct my jealous anger against you, and they will deal with you in fury. They [Assyrians] will cut off your noses and your ears, and those of you who are left will fall by the sword. They will take away your sons and daughters, and those of you who are left will be consumed by fire (NIV)." When citing the biblical passages in this article, I have used the NIV translation. In some cases, I have cited another translation (NRSV) or modified the existing translations in order to show certain features in the original. When I discuss analyses conducted in previous scholarship, I cite their translations.

[23] In Gerhart Piers and Milton Singer's classical study on shame (Piers and Singer, *Shame and Guilt: a Psychoanalytic and Cultural Study*, 1953), they view that shame emerges from the fear of abandonment by the source of good (cited in Nussbaum, 2004: 185).

[24] Lapsley (2000, 146) distinguishes the two types of shame as discretion-shame and disgrace-shame.

[25] See Cairns 1993 2: the Greek verb αἰδέομαι bears two distinctive meanings when used with an accusative object. These can be translated into English as 1) "I feel shame before…", and 2) "I respect…" Cairns (1993, 2), however, notes that "there is a unity in this distinctiveness; for the purposes of this illustration, let *aidōs* be an inhibitory emotion based on sensitivity to and protectiveness of one's self-image, and let the verb *aideomai* convey recognition that one's self-image is vulnerable in some way; a reaction in which one focuses on the conspicuousness of the self."

[26] Seebaß 1973, 570.

[27] Wischnowsky, 2001: 10–10; cf. Klein, 2019b.

forensic sense in scenes where God is depicted as a judge and as a "frequent executer of attendant acts of shaming."[28]

Disgust

Another emotion concept that prevails in my source texts is disgust. Many biblical passages use the imagery of land in prohibitions against certain sexual interactions: the people of God are warned not to mix with the inhabitants of the land and not to adopt their or the Egyptians' habits, lest "the land vomits you out" or the people make the land to fornicate (Lev 19:29). According to Feinstein, "[t]he repeated statement that the land 'vomited out its inhabitants' as a result of its pollution (vv. [Lev 18:]25, 28) may belong to a different conceptual domain, resulting in a 'mixed metaphor': The author wished to convey that the land sinned and that the Canaanites were expelled from the land, and thus construed the relationship between land and inhabitants in two different ways."[29] In a similar vein, the text of Ezekiel associates the Canaanites with disgust. The practise in which disgust is attached not only to objects that elicit disgust but also to ideas and certain groups of people has been labelled as moral disgust.[30]

Whereas moral disgust can be attached to ideas and groups of people, core disgust is an attitude elicited by physical objects. It is a food-related emotion that makes human beings cautious about what they put in their mouth.[31] Jonathan Haidt and his colleagues base their argumentation on a cross-cultural analysis of disgust elicitors by analysing how disgust can be viewed both as stemming from concrete and physical aspects, i.e. "embodied schemata" or "core disgust", as they put it, as well as from more cultural variables, i.e. a "broader set of physical and social issues".[32] In addition to ambivalence about food, the sense of disgust is also dependent on contamination sensitivity: "Disgust is triggered off not primarily by the sensory properties of an object, but by ideational concerns about *what it is*, or *where it has been*."[33] In addition to "core disgust" (provoked by food, animals, body

[28] Cited in Stiebert, 2001: 48, referring to Klopfenstein, 1972. Moreover, Klopfenstein assesses the use of the word-group (בוש) from a Form-Critical perspective, arguing that the original *Sitz im Leben* of the word is court speeches (Klopfenstein 1972, 85; cf. Stiebert, 2002: 49). A similar connotation of the hiphil form of *boš* is given by Seebaß, 1973 (*TDOT*). "It should be mentioned that in Middle Hebrew, the meaning has shifted more to the subjective idea, to the feeling (in Middle Hebrew the qal, piel, hithpael, and nithpael forms occur, but not the hiphil; *bosheth* retains the nuance 'modesty,' but it also denotes the reimbursement for a dishonor inflicted on someone)."

[29] Feinstein 2014, 125.

[30] Haidt et al. 1997, 121–124. Haidt et al. seek to explain, by cross-cultural exploration, how disgust as an embodied emotion evoked primarily by physical objects is extended to evolve also on a cultural level. In their words (p. 108), human beings as omnivorous have developed from asking the question "what to eat" to the question "what to do in the cultural world." First, Haidt et al. note (p. 111) the discrepancy that if disgust is interpreted to serve as a biological function of food selection and avoiding the deceased, it is surprising that young children and non-human animals seem to lack a disgust response and contamination sensitivity. Hence, they (p. 111) presume that social functions of disgust appear to be more important than biological functions. Cf. also Lateiner & Spatharas 2016, 23.

[31] Haidt et al. 1997, 111.

[32] Haidt et al. 1997, 108.

[33] Haidt et al. 1997, 109. Emphasis original.

products), Haidt and his colleagues conclude that aspects that remind human beings of their animal nature can be seen as an "expanded domain of disgust".[34] They argue that "[o]ne of the most widely shared features of disgusting events is that they remind us of our animal nature. Human beings in many cultures feel the need to distinguish themselves from animals […] and to hide their animal nature behind the cover of humanising rituals and practices."[35]

In Ezekiel 23, both the woman and her lovers are described in a way that associates them explicitly or implicitly with the behaviour of animals. In Ezek 23:20, the woman is depicted as lusting after her lovers, whose genitalia are that of the donkey and emission that of the horse.[36] On the lexical level, the abandoned baby girl is described as evoking revulsion by a Hebrew expression that stems from the verb *g'l* (געלה נפש), which denotes "powerful loathing and is probably a metaphorical description of nausea, comparable to English expression 'gorge rising'" (cf., Ezek 16:5).[37] Another example of the use of denigrating language by associating the female protagonist with elements that usually evoke an urge to avoid contamination is in chapter 16, where the baby girl is said to be discarded into a field, naked and "squirming" in blood (16:6).[38]

Desire

Another central concept that comes to the fore in my sources is pleasure and desire. In biblical texts and in ancient Graeco-Roman literature, the concepts of desire and pleasure are ambivalent. For instance, in relation to God's creation or Torah (e.g., Gen 2:9; 3:6; Ps 19:10)—or God as the subject of desiring (Ps 68:17), desirability and desire (חמד) are portrayed in positive light. On the other hand, in the texts stemming from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the complexities of desire, pleasure, enjoyment and the relationship of these affects to reason and law became to prevail. In the sources of Hellenistic period, desire is connected to moral danger and pollution, which is often metaphorically garmented in a form of promiscuous woman. Moreover, it is connected to the intoxication of proper moral reasoning. Both these views make use of the imagery of sex (and sometimes also food and

[34] Haidt et al. 1997, 115.
[35] Haidt et al. 1997, 112.
[36] Cf. also Lapsely (2017, 380), referring to Safwat Marzouk ("Not a Lion but a Dragon: The Monstrification of Egypt in the Book of Ezekiel" PhD. diss. Princeton Theological Seminary, 2012): "The amalgamation of a human being with animalized sexual characteristics creates a grotesque image" (p. 231).
[37] Feinstein 2014, 21, referring to Lev 26:11, 15, 30, 43, and Ezek 16:5. Furthermore, she notes that "TDOT states that the Qal stem of גאל/געל in its basic sense 'describes the feeling which results from being soiled and unclean: loathing, abhorrence, disgust.'"
[38] Mylonas (2023: 87) illuminates how the proper postpartum rituals, such as washing and cleansing the new-born and cutting off the umbilical cord, are denied to the baby. Hence, since these rituals are essential to remove the ritual impurity that is an inevitable part of birth-giving according to Priestly legislation (cf. Lev 15:19–30 for the purity legislation concerning menstrual blood, which likewise applies to any vaginal discharge), their denial is a means to mark the baby as disgusting.

drink) in a derogatory sense where desire brings forth debauchery, fornication, and unrestricted sexual conduct.[39]

For instance, Philo provides an example of Hellenistic view of contrasting desire and virtue by describing dangers of seductive prostitute (*Opif*. 166; *Sacr*. 21-23).[40] Moreover, Loader notes that Philo considers intermarriage with non-Israelites as a "danger of exposure to idolatry (*Spec*. 3:29) and can also use it symbolically to depict mind's lusting after pleasure (*QG* 4.245)".[41]

The increasing negative attitude and restricting caution towards sensual pleasures and desire appear already in the exilic and post-exilic sources before these ideas develop into full bloom in the Hellenistic period. The sex work vocabulary functions as a metonym for desire which further encapsulates theological impetus. My study will deconstruct the intertwined union of desire, demand for loyalty, and betrayal behind the metaphor of religious unfaithfulness. In addition, when analyzing the occurrences of the lexeme *znh*/*porneia* in my sources, I will examine how the ambivalence of desire is played out in the graphic sexual imagery that takes a sadistic and transgressive form.

PART II

Summary of the Analysis Chapter on the Pentateuch

In this chapter, I will analyze the occurrences of the Hebrew word *znh* (זנה) in the Pentateuch. The lexeme can be translated as 'to visit a prostitute,' 'to work as a prostitute' (also figuratively) in *qal*; and 'to make someone to prostitute themselves' (also figuratively) in *hiph*. As I shall show below, *znh* is frequently used in the prohibitions which ban a marriage between an Israelite and a person of another ethnicity, namely, "the people of the land," or explicitly certain ethnic groups. It is not, however, always clear when *znh* should be interpreted as denoting intermarriage (e.g., Lev 20:5).

I will also compare *znh* to the vocabulary of other prohibited sexual encounters. As for this vocabulary, *n'p* ([נאף] 'to commit adultery' and its derivatives) occurs only in three passages in the Pentateuch,[42] whereas *znh* ([זנה]) occurs in 17 occasions. While *n'p* carries a rather technical meaning in the Pentateuch, the use of *znh* is very flexible. Moreover, it is not used to denote other forms of prohibited sexual relations only (e.g., sex with an unmarried woman or with someone else's wife),

[39] As for an example from the Classical period in Greek literature, in Plato, self-restraint is needed to control the excess of pleasures of food, drink and sex: "And for the general population the main thing about self-control is that while they are to be the subjects of those who govern them, they themselves are to be in control of the pleasures derived from drink, sex and food?" (Plato, *Republic* III 389e). Σωφροσύνης δὲ ὡς πλήθει οὐ τὰ τοιαῦτα [δὲ] μέγιστα, ἀρχόντων μὲν ὑπηκόους εἶναι, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἄρχοντας τῶν περὶ πότους καὶ ἀφροδίσια καὶ περὶ ἐδωδὰς ἡδονῶν;
[40] Cited in Loader 2012, 16.
[41] Loader 2012, 19.
[42] Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10 (four times); Deut 5:18.

but it is often used figuratively in religious sense. In addition to *n'p* (נאף) and *znh* (זנה), also other expressions are used to describe transgressive sexual encounters, such as "to lie down with" (עִם + שׁכב, for instance in Deut 22:22).

In the Pentateuch, the prohibition of idolatry is often expressed with a fixed terminology in which the verb *znh*/*porneuō* occurs with a prepositional expression אַחַר/ὀπίσω (after) with a reference to other gods or demons (e.g., Ex 34:15; Lev 17:7). This expression is usually translated as "prostituting oneself to gods" or "whoring after gods". The expression could be also understood as betrayal or selling one's loyalty—or as a cause of disgrace for the entity that is expressed as a grammatical object for *znh* (Deut 22:21). In addition to the husband (either betrothed or the spokesperson of the groom's family, as in Gen 38:24, or the current one) and a father (Deut 22:21), betrayal or disgrace may be directed to household (Deut 22:21), or the entire land (Lev 19:29). Noteworthy is that not all biblical texts outlaw using the services of sex workers or describe sex workers negatively (see Gen 38; Judg 11:1; 16:1; 1 Kings 3:16). However, especially in the sources stemming from post-exilic time, the vocabulary of sexual labor is frequently used metaphorically referring to idolatry or apostasy from God.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the Pentateuchal texts which refer to *znh* in a concrete albeit negative sense (Gen 34:31; 38:24; Deut 22:21; 23:3, 18). These texts refer to *znh* in a sense where *zānāh*/*porneuō* (or the derivatives) denote female's failure to remain sexually pure, in other words, that they have been—or are claimed to have been—sexually active before their marriage. I will label this use of *zānāh*/*porneuō* as the first level of metaphorization where "sex worker" or "sex work" needs to be understood in a denigrating sense "a whore" and "whoring" (Gen 34:31; Deut 22:21) denoting that the woman has involved, involuntary or voluntary, in sexual intercourse outside or before her marriage. By this metaphorization, the connotation of the lexeme *znh* receives a more negative tone compared to those uses of the lexeme in the Hebrew Bible that refer concretely to sex work. The use of the lexeme *znh* to express female infidelity is partly caused by the peculiar way in which females are described being involved in extra-marital sexual affairs in the Hebrew Bible. Namely, a concept close to "fornication," זנה/πορνεύω, is adultery (נאף [in *qal*: nā'āph; *pi'el*: ni'ēph] /μοιχεύω). However, especially *znh* is depicted occasionally in a manner that it is not entirely clear what precisely is prohibited.[43] Secondly, I will focus on the increasing negative connotation of *znh* in reference to marriage between members of different ethnic background (see, e.g., Ex 34:15; Num

[43] This is the case especially in later sources stemming from the late Second Temple period. For instance, as William Loader (2012, 4) notes, "[s]ometimes the issue of adultery is depicted simply as flouting the commandment (Sir 23:23; *LAB* 11:12; 25:10; 44:6–7; 10: 4 Macc 2:4–6; *Ps.-Phoc*. 3, 177; *Sib. Or*. 3:594–595; 764; Philo *Hypoth*. 7.1; Josephus *A. J.* 3.92; *Ap*. 2.201), often in association with other sins such as idolatry (Wis 14:24 – 26; *Sib. Or*. 3:36 – 38; 4:31–34; 5:430; 1:178) and as a cause of defilement (*LAB* 2:8; 25:10)."

25:1).[44] I argue that the usage of *znh* in a metaphorized manner as an imagery of abandoning God (Lev 17:7, 20:5, 6) functions later as a model for prohibiting intermarriage. This usage is found especially in the Pentateuchal texts belonging to the redactional layer that stems from between the early and mid-Persian period.[45]

Lastly, I will argue that the metaphor of "sex work," "prostitution," or in derogatory sense "whoring" describing the religious practices of the people of the land gives rise to use the same figurative speech to denigrate an intermarital relationships between Israelites and other-ethnic groups (Lev 19:29, 21:7, 9). I will argue that a negative use of *znh* as a metaphor of both worship among people of the land and intermarital relationships with them is related to the socio-economic and political situation of Judeans in the Persian period when the ethnic identity was in formation reflecting struggles between different socio-religious groups. Within this minority setting, the metaphorical use of sex vocabulary appears to be used as fostering both the developing monolatry and ethnic identity.[46] In relation to developments of monolatry during the postexilic time, there were theological emphasis on centralization of the cult, stricter requirements for purity for the priests and holiness for Israelites, as well as punishment of excommunication from the community (*karet*) when the member of the community does not meet these requirements.[47]

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[44] The increasing negative attitude is visible, for instance, in Ezra and Nehemia: Ezra prohibits intermarriage between an Israelite member belonging to priestly clan and a non-Israelite (Hayes 2001, 68). Later, this ban against intermarriage was extended to all Israelites. According to Hayes (2001, 68–69), intermarriage became to be regarded as causing impurity to the offspring of the marriage in which other member did not belong to Israelites – and hence labelled as zenuth. Whereas in earlier sources transgressing sexual purity regulations were interpreted to cause a temporal defilement, in Jubilees and 4QMMT, transgressing the ban against intermarriage was considered to cause permanent defilement (Hayes 2001, 69). Hayes (2001, 70) also provides Hellenistic sources that interpret the prohibition for intermarriage stemming from the Biblical texts, more specifically from Moses (Josephus, *Antiq*. 4:191–192; 8:190–196; Philo, *Spe. Leg*. 3:29). Interestingly, Bodleian Aramaic fragment of the Testament of Levi (Col a 15 – 17) possibly attest to a notion that likens intermarriage with an Aramaic root *zny* which corresponds to the Hebrew *znh* ("[…] take for yourself a wife from my family so that you will not defile your seed with harlots [זניאן = Heb. zonot]. For you are a holy seed, and holy is your seed, like the holy place. For you are a holy priest called for all the seed of Abraham." Kugler 1996, cited in Hayes 2001, 72). However, it is not explicit in whether intermarriage is in itself zenuth or whether this would lead to zenuth (for discussion, see Hayes 2001, 72–73). Tobit, likewise, warns against marrying "a strange wife". Hayes (2001, 73) mentions that "the biblical notion that intermarriage is to be avoided because it leads ultimately to apostasy, idolatry, and heinous sins is entirely absent."

[45] See, e.g., Rhyder, 2019; Jeon 2022.

[46] Cf. Rhyder 2019, 61, who dates Pg (Priestergrundschrift) to the early Persian period when the Judeans returned from the Babylonian exile: "[…] a growing number of scholars have argued that the political ideology of Pg suggests that it emerged in the initial years of the Persian period (between 535–520 BCE). […] The image of the patriarchs dwelling as גרים 'immigrants' in the land has been read as mirroring the priestly scribes' own situation as early returnees from Babylon: they arrived in Yehud to find that it "was not their own land any more," but was controlled by the Persian empire and inhabited by those who had remained in the land during the exile."

[47] These themes are visible in so-called Holiness legislation (H), Lev 17–26, although the centralization of the cult may have been implemented later than the compilation of H. The question of when the centralization of the ancient Israelite religion that later emerged as Judaism having its Yahwistic worship centralized in the temple of Jerusalem occur, has been discussed since Julius Wellhausen's study in the late 19th century. The most recent scholarship argue, on the basis of archaeological findings from the Mount Gerizim (Samaria) that the temple build there dates to the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Rhyder 2019, 71; Jürgen Zangenberg dates the building no earlier than 450 BCE, Jan Dušek proposes 424–405 BCE, cited in Rhyder 2019, 71), hence refuting the view that the centralization of the cult would have taken

In conclusion, a stricter attitude towards the prohibition of marriage between members of different ethnic background (see, e.g., Ex 34:15; Num 25:1, and in H: Lev 19:29; 21:7,9) appears to be a later development than the metaphorical use of the sex vocabulary as idolatrous worship. Although the dating of the survived composition of the Pentateuchal texts would likewise go back to the post-exilic period hence the chronology of theological ideas attested in these texts cannot be traced with certainty. However, my study aims to show that, in the first place, the development of this semantic shift stems from metaphorical use of *znh* as a figure of idolatry to prohibit concrete intermarriage. As evidence for this is the increasing number of banned nations with whom an Israelite cannot marry. The settings of these sources date to post-exilic time when the population of Judah returned from exile. It is noteworthy that often the vocabulary of sexual transgression occurs in the passages—particularly in the narrative sections—that describe the characters of the narratives relocating when they encounter the native people of the relocations (Gen 34; Ex 34; Num 14:33, 25:1).

Of interest, as for the documentary evidence outside the biblical text, these sources attest that intermarriages among the Judeans living in exile were not uncommon during the Neo-Babylonian period. A few marriage contracts between Israelites and non-Israelites from the Neo-Babylonian period have survived in cuneiform tables written in Akkadian. For instance, among Judean or West Semitic community in Babylonia, there is a marriage contract which attests that a Judean bride was married to a Babylonian man.[48]

Summary of the Analysis Chapter on Hosea 2 and 4

The second main-chapter of the second part of my monograph consist of the analysis of the occurrences of *znh*/*porneuō* in chapters 2 and 4 in the book of Hosea.

Hosea 2

The passage of Hosea 2:4–15 is one of the earliest instances[49] where the marriage metaphor between Israel's god and the nation occurs in the Hebrew Bible. The passage opens with a first-person singular

place already at the time of Hezekiah and Josia (Neo-Assyrian period). This view which was based on the depiction in 2 Kings 22–23 was questioned already by Reinhard Kratz and Juha Pakkala, who argue that the centralization was implemented after the downfall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE (cited in Rhyder 2019, 69).

[48] Abraham 2015, 45. For discussion of the bride's lower social status compared to her Babylonian groom, see ibid., 45.

[49] Cf. Klein 2019a, Clothing, nudity, and Shame: "Hos 2:4–17 (1.1), the most probably first text to use the prophetic marriage metaphor in the description of judgement against personified Israel. Motifs and imagery are later taken up in the judgement oracles against foreign cities, namely Nineveh in Nah 3:1–7 (1.2) and Babylon in Isa 47:1–4 (1.3)." Cf. also p. 8: "In the prophetic oracle Nah 3:1–7, Yhwh announces judgement against the personified city Nineveh, the capital of the Neo-Assyrian empire, which fell in 612 BCE." In another words, in Nah 3, there is a historical reference to the fall of Niniveh in 612 BCE, but the literary composition is later than the events it reflects. The Book of Hosea reflects the events of the collapse of the Northern Kingdom and its last days in the eight century BCE, whereas the book itself is interpreted as a product of the late Persian period. For methodological problems in dating the Book of Hosea, see Nissinen 2019, esp. p. 617.

proclamation of God commanding that "the mother" must be rebuked/striven/contended,[50] since she has—as is implied in verse 4—committed adultery and harlotry and thus invalidated the marriage.[51] Formally, the speech is directed to the children named in chapter 1 (Hos 1:4: Jezreel, 1:6: Lo-Ruhama [not-loved/not-pitied], and 1:9[10]: Lo-Ammi [not-my-people], who are reversely named in chapter 2: "my loved ones" and "my people", v. 3[1]). The mother/wife shall "put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts" (v. 4, NRS). If the woman shall not do so, Yahweh will execute the judgement: he will strip her and "expose her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and turn her into a parched land, and kill her with thirst" (v. 5, NRS). Noteworthy is also the corporeal emphasis of "turning away the adulteries from her breasts": this expression can be viewed carrying pornographic connotation.[52] This pornographic imagery is elaborated in a more explicit manner in the Book of Ezekiel, where the woman's "well-formed / upright" breasts are described in detail before punishing her from her "harlotry".[53]

Concerning the composition of the passage, it has been viewed that the core of the passage consists of a court metaphor in which the original textual unit comprehends verses 2:4–5, 7b, 10–15. Yahweh is depicted as a prosecutor suing his wife after her unfaithfulness manifested in "whoring" and "adultery" and now yielding a punishment.[54] The husband is dishonoured by the behaviour of the woman, hence seeking for punishment to be vindicated."[55]

Verse 6 introduces another affective aspect of the narrative: there will be no pity/mercy/compassion/love towards the children, echoing the name of the daughter given in Hos 1:6: Lo-Ruhama, namely: "not-loved" or "not-pitied".[56] The reason for the lack of mercy (רחם, "to show love/mercy") is that "they are the children of whoredoms (in Hebrew plural, in the LXX singular). The husband expresses his anger and jealousy of his wife's "lover's love"—noteworthy is that the clients and sexual partners are called "lovers" (אהב, "to love")—by excluding the children outside the familial love, hence objectifying them as a messenger in a family of dysfunction.

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[50] The Hebrew verb rib denotes aggressive encounter with someone, a hostile confrontation. Andersen & Freedman 1980, 219, note that in juridical context, rib is used with several prepositions, but with b, as in verse 4, it is used more seldom. Hence, they translate this instance with "argue with the mother".

[51] Of interest is also the replacement of *n'p* with *porneia* in verse 4 in the LXX. In the HB, these two nouns form a parallelism, whereas the LXX repeats the same lexeme (*porneia*).

[52] Of interest is Landy's (1995) notion that the reference to "breasts" (v. 4) have a reminiscence of pre-symbolic order and the abandon of the mother: the child (the speaker?) is frustrated with the abandonment and hence abandons his mother (the woman in the passage).

[53] Francis Landy has aptly noted that "[c]hapter 2 belongs to the literature of sexual disgust, in which desire appears only spectrally, as a revenant, and in reverse." Landy 1995, 32.

[54] Wischnowsky 2001, 102 (cf. also Klein 2019b).

[55] Stiebert 2001, 48, cf. Klopfenstein 1972; see note 36 above.

[56] Similarly, Wischnowsky 2002, 102.

The theme of shame is explicated in verse 7 as it uses shame-vocabulary: the mother has played a harlot and acted shamefully (*hiphil*: הֹבִישָׁה) (כִּי זָנְתָה אִמָּם הֹבִישָׁה הוֹרָתָם). The text is ambiguous regarding the question of how does shame (*boš*) involve in the actions and events as well as who is ashamed or put to shame by harlotry of the mother, namely, the verb has no object: has she put to shame her offspring, or does the text imply that she has conceived them in disgrace/in shame (thus NIV), i.e., that the children are conceived while practising harlotry?[57] This reflects the patriarchal norms which regulate female chastity by excluding all other sexual relationships on behalf of the female in marriage in order to "protect" the patrilinear procreation. Moreover, the narrative structure is interesting, since in the latter part of verse 7, the text gives a voice to the mother—or the narrator/YHWH imagines how the woman would respond—by telling that she will go after her lovers who gives her food and clothing: first the basic needs are satisfied such as bread and water as well as wool, and then finer goods, such as linen, oil and drink.[58] In verse 10, the gifts and goods given to the woman are revealed to be given by the speaker (Yahweh). In this context, the gifts are even more abundant as she is given gold and silver as well as wine (τὸν οἶνον / תִּירוֹשׁ).

Verse 12 is crucial in the narrative: the husband/God claims that he will expose or uncover (ἀποκαλύπτω / גלה) the genitals / shame / foolish[59] (נַבְלֻת) of the woman before the eyes of her lovers emphazising that no one (in Greek emphatically: καὶ οὐδεὶς οὐ μὴ) will rescue her from the violent hands of the husband. The text implies that the woman has not paid respect to her husband by keeping her body clean. This connotation is visible especially in the Greek translation as it renders ἀκαθαρσία, "uncleanness," for the Hebrew hapax legomenon (נַבְלֻת), "shame, foolish" which is a possible euphemism for genitalia.[60]

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[57] Andersen & Freedman 1980, 214: "Indeed, their mother was promiscuous, the one who conceived them behaved shamefully." New American Standard Bible Update: "She who conceived them has acted shamefully."

[58] In Greco-Roman literary sources, sex workers are often depicted as receiving luxury products from their clients both as gifts and for payment for their sexual services. On the other hand, in these sources, sex work can be seen also as emotional labor, since the sex workers are documented to praise the sexual prowess of their clients (for examples in the graffiti recovered from Pompeii, see, Levin-Richardson 2019). This tendency is depicted also literary sources as a when referred to a dubious (paid) praise. Moreover, flattery received from a sex worker is used as a common metaphor for a statesmen taking bribes [ADD REFERENCES: Aristophanes, *Equites*; Plutarch, *Moralia*]. In addition, the vocabulary hints at idolatrous behaviour, as the text renders the construction "walk after" the lovers () which is often used in reference to other gods ("to walk after other gods"), hence apostacy. Of interest is that the LXX replaces "the drink" with "all that belongs to me (καὶ πάντα ὅσα μοι καθήκει)".

[59] Likewise, *mebhushim* denoting "the pudenda of a male" (cf. Deut 25:11).

[60] The Hebrew word' shamelessness' (נַבְלֻת) is a hapax in the HB denoting genitalia. According to *TDOT*, this occurrence "represents a special problem […]. The usual translation is '(female) pudenda' […] derived from Akk. *baltu* < *baštu*, 'shame'". [Cf. Steininger, *ZAW*, 24 (1904). The verbal root (נבל) denoting withering of vegetation (also: desolation?) occurs 25 times in the HB. Of interest is the connotation of "deserted (genitalia?)" of the woman which will be exposed: is it (whatever will be exposed) deserted due to the excess of sexual interaction and hence – as the Greek translation has it – unclean? Noteworthy is also that the lexeme נְבָלָה bears a meaning 'shame', 'shameful deed' (Liljeqvist). *TDOT* notes that the etymology of the Hebrew word is uncertain, since it is not attested outside Hebrew. It is possible that a single root

In addition to focusing on the emotion lexica in the passage, my analysis of Hosea 2 is grounded to the historical-critical analysis of the text. The Book of Hosea reflects the events of the collapse of the Northern Kingdom (721 BCE) and its last days in the eight century BCE, whereas the book itself is interpreted as a product of the late Persian period.[61]

[Summary of the analysis of Hosea 4 removed from this paper due to the space – and time – limits.]

Summary of the Analysis Chapter on Ezekiel 16 and 23

This chapter deals with the metaphorization of the city of Jerusalem as an unfaithful wife of God in chapters 16 and 23 of the Book of Ezekiel.[62] The figurative use of blaming Jerusalem[63] for "whoring with other gods" stems from the historical event of the destruction of the city and the Temple in Jerusalem: The conquest of Jerusalem by the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 587 BCE led to the exile of the Judeans in Babylon. This event marked the culmination of the siege of Jerusalem as the first wave

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nbl was differentiated into two: one with the meaning 'wither', and the second with the meaning 'to act disgracefully' or 'to be worthless, foolish, folly'. However, it is more likely that these are homonymous verbal roots without etymological connection to each other. The semantic field of the first root with the basic meaning 'wither' is extended by its metaphorical use expressing transitoriness. Then noun *nebēlă* (I) is used frequently in purity legislation of Priestly source. In preexilic texts, this noun refers to human corpses as well as animal corpses.

[61] For methodological problems in dating the Book of Hosea (see Nissinen 2019, esp. p. 617).

[62] The unfaithfulness of the metaphorized city is expressed by the derogatory use of the Hebrew verb root *znh*, which is often used in the Hebrew Bible to denote women's illicit sexual activity, mostly either premarital or extramarital sexual encounters. Ezekiel is dependant on earlier uses of the metaphor in which Israel is characterized as YHWH's wife in other prophetic books. Hosea 2:4–15 is one of the earliest instances where this metaphor is used. The metaphor of cities as promiscuous women has been later elaborated on in Nah 3:1–7 (Nineveh), Isa 23:15 (Tyre), Isa 47:1–4 (Babylon), Micah 1:7 (Samaria), and in Jer 2:1–4 (Jerusalem as a metonym of the Judeans and the kingdom of Judah). Since the literal meaning of the word *znh* denotes offering sexual services for monetary or other exchange, when used in the sense to denote pre- and extramarital sex, it can be labelled as a metaphorized use. Cf. Galambush, 1992: 31: "Twice removed from its literal meaning as prostitution, the second level metaphor (a metaphor based on the metaphor of illicit sexual activity as 'prostitution') thus depends on a comparison between idolatry and adultery, not one between idolatry and prostitution." This is an important emphasis, although I would suggest that Ezek 16 and 23 use imagery in which a particularly stereotypical and derogatory representation of sex work, such as describing a woman's hypersexuality and luxurious gifts from her clients as payment, play a role. Since the metaphorization of Jerusalem as a woman occurs throughout chapters 16 and 23 in a complex way that portrays also other concrete elements through metaphorization, some scholars have suggested that an allegory would be an apt description for Ezek. 16 and 23. However, Allen (1994, 233, referring to Zimmerli, 1979: 335) notes that the judgement oracle of Ezek 16 does not correspond to a definition of allegory since it describes elements that at times have no correspondence in reality, while at times "the reality brakes through […] leaving the metaphor behind." Rather, following Galambush (1992: 11), he describes Ezekiel 16 as an extended metaphor (Allen, 1994: 233).

[63] The object of the accusation of "whoring" is Jerusalem, the capital city of the Southern Kingdom. Jerusalem may refer to the residents of the city, its elite members, or all the inhabitants of Judah. In addition, "Jerusalem," "Zion," and "the house of Israel" (and the like) later came to designate interchangeably those who worshipped Yahweh after the collapse of both kingdoms. Some scholars regard chapter 16 as consisting of different editorial layers that each address different audiences. Rom-Shiloni (2013: 187–188) notes that vv. 1–43 employ a metaphor of an adopted baby girl who becomes the wife of God, whereas vv. 44–58 omit the adoption metaphor. In contrast to these two earlier sections of chapter 16, the end (vv. 59–63) is more positive as it prophesizes restoration to Jerusalem. According to Rom-Shiloni (ibid.: 193), these differences imply an inner tension between different social groups: between those who were exiled into Babylon and those who remained in Jerusalem.

of the deportations of the Judeans had already occurred in 597. After the fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire at the hands of the Achaemenid Persian Empire in 539 BCE, the Judeans were allowed to return to Jerusalem. These events are reflected in the biblical texts that present theological explanations for the sins of the previous generations that were interpreted to have caused the divine punishment in the form of the exile. Consequently, these texts present a need for a more rigorous monotheistic worship. Jerusalem and its elite rulers are depicted as the unfaithful, "whoring" wife of Yahweh (i.e., the God of Israel) since Jerusalem formed a mistaken alliance with its neighboring nations, which led them to abandon their covenant with Yahweh.[64]

Since the text itself is a product that stems from the Persian period, this chapter analyzes how the retrospect view of the events of the collapses of the Northern kingdom and its capital Samaria under the Assyrian rule in 722 BCE and of the Southern Kingdom with its capital Jerusalem and the Temple under the Neo-Babylonian rule in the 6th century BCE are described through marital and sexual imagery. While the topics of the pornographic representation of cities as metaphorized female figures, sexual and domestic violence, and colonization and racialization have been dealt with in previous scholarship,[65] not much attention has been paid to the combination of military and erotic connotations in the text[66] and how these motifs make use of emotions. This study seeks to fill this gap.

The book of Ezekiel depicts several marriage metaphors: in chapters 16 and 23, two sisters portray the capital cities of the Northern and Southern kingdoms (Samaria in 16:46 and Jerusalem throughout chapters 16 and 23) and they both are depicted as adulterous wives of God: Jerusalem is blamed for following the bad example of her older sister Samaria (16:46).[67] In addition, chapter 16 presents a narrative of three sisters: Sodom is introduced as the younger sister of Jerusalem at the end of the chapter (v. 46).[68]

The adulterous wife in chapters 16 and 23 represents the elite of Jerusalem that has mistakenly trusted in military allies, hence "whoring" with the neighboring nations (the Egyptians in Ezek 23:21

[64] Mein 2006.

[65] For the metaphorization of cities as a female figure, see, e.g., Galambush 1992; Weems 1995 (from the perspectives of gender criticism, literary studies, and sociological and ideological analyses); Baumann 2000; Lapsley 2000; and Moughtin-Mumby 2008. For studies that investigate Ezekiel from the perspective of emotions, see, e.g., Stiebert 2003; and Mylonas, 2024 (who also combines postcolonial and queer theory in her analysis).

[66] For a study that explores the use of erotic aesthetics, including sexual violence against the enemies of Assyria in the Assyrian royal court decorations to depict military victories, battle, and siege scenes in order to promote military moral, see Chapman 2010.

[67] Kamionkowski (2003, 134) notes that there is a sharp difference between the portrayals of chapters 16 and 23: In 16, the woman actively seeks to find men, and hence she reversely takes "the male role," whereas in 23 she is passive and pledges herself to the wrong man, consequently threatening the masculinity of the male who is primarily interested in her.

[68] For the differences of the sins of these three sisters, see Greenberg, 1983: 303: "[…] in ch. 23, only two sisters figure, as in Jeremiah, and they have a history of infidelity that goes back to the sojourn in Egypt (unlike our passage, but cf. 20:7-8). In our passage [ch. 16], there are three sisters—Sodom is added—and while all have 'spurned their husbands' none is explicitly YHWH's spouse; this point is muffled in order to accommodate Sodom, which was never 'married' to YHWH (whose sin is accordingly not infidelity)."

and the Philistines, Assyrians, and Babylonians in Ezek 16:27–29). The extended metaphorization illustrated in Ezekiel is taken Hosea 2.[69] In chapters 16 and 23, sexual imagery is expressed by coarse and shocking language that resembles revenge pornography against the wife and her lovers. This graphic depiction evokes and expresses emotions such as shame, disgust, jealousy, and anger.

Conclusions

The derogatory and metaphorical use of the concept of *zānāh*/*porneuō* gained a more pejorative meaning when it was used in **figurative language for religious transgression** in the biblical texts stemming from the Persian period. The figurative use of blaming the elite of Jerusalem or the entire nation of "whoring with other gods" stems from the historical event of destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem: The conquest of Jerusalem by Neo-Babylon Empire in 587 BCE led the Judeans to exile in Babylon. After the fall of Neo-Babylonian Empire by Achaemenid Persian Empire, the Judeans could return to Jerusalem in 539 BCE. These events are reflected in the biblical texts with theological explanations of sins of the previous generations that were interpreted to cause the divine punishment in the form of exile. Hence, to avoid further punishment, there was a need for a more rigorous monotheistic worship and fostering of ethnic boundaries. For instance, the prohibition of the Israelites to have encounters with members from a different ethnic background, namely, the people of the land, is done by describing the other-ethnic groups practicing *zenûth*/*porneia* ("whoring") in their religious worship and making the Israelites likewise to "whore after their gods" (Ex 34:15; Num 25:1). The metaphor of "sex work," "prostitution," or in derogatory sense "whoring", describing the religious practices of the people of the land, gives rise to use the same figurative speech to denigrate an intermarital relationship between Israelites and other-ethnic groups (Lev 19:29, 21:7, 9). The metaphorical use of sex vocabulary is used to foster both the developing monolatry and ethnic identity.[70] In the prophetic texts, Jerusalem and its elite rulers are depicted as an unfaithful, "whoring" wife of Yahweh, since Jerusalem has had a mistaken alliance with neighboring nations leading them to abandon their covenant with God.[71] **My study will analyze how these historical changes generated a more pejorative use of the vocabulary referring to sex work and what emotions are provoked by this usage. (Research Question 1)**

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[69] Cf. Galambush (1992, 53–54, n. 82): "Whereas in Hos 2:16–17 the intended tenor is unclear, here the addressee is unquestionably Jerusalem, which is said to have spent time 'in the wilderness.' The capital city thus metony[mically] represents the entire nation, apparently including the life of that nation before it had Jerusalem as its capital." Galambush (1992, 89) further notes that Ezekiel's depiction of the city of Jerusalem as a woman compared to the earlier personifications of Hosea and Jeremiah elaborates on the themes of purity and pollution associated with the female body as a symbol of the destruction of the temple.

[70] Cf. Rhyder 2019.

[71] See Mein 2006.

The use of the concepts of *zānāh*/*porneuō* is gender-specific, as the Hebrew distinguishes female and male behaviour: a man visits a "harlot" (*zŏnāh*/*pornē*), while a woman practices "fornication" (*zenûth*/*porneia*). Visiting a *zŏnāh* is not that often moralised as practicing *zenûth*. Male worshippers are described as practicing *zenûth* only through a metaphor in which they are made effeminate. Hence, addressing male agents as practising *zenûth* increases the pejorative connotation of the word: they are *prostituting themselves* with other gods—not only visiting a metaphorical brothel of other gods. In this manner, by rendering female pronouns (*zŏnāh*/*pornē*) in reference to male subjects, the authors seek to shame their male audience. **My study will analyze the linguistic expressions that effeminate its audience by articulating the emotions** (shame, disgust) that are **evoked through this usage**. **(Research Question 2)**

The semantic field of the Greek word-group *porneuō* is extended to denote more broadly illicit sexual relationships or all kind of illicit behavior in later biblical sources stemming from the Hellenistic and the early Roman period. Whereas in the Hebrew Bible and the LXX, the nouns denoting sex worker (*zŏnāh*/*pornē*) or verbs denoting selling sex (*zānāh*/*porneuō*) are used to refer to female subjects only—unless used in a metaphorical sense—, in the New Testament, these words are often used inclusively to refer to male audience alike. **My study will examine how the semantic field of the word-group *porneuō* was extended to denote sexual behaviour outside marriage more broadly** so that also male worshippers were demanded to abstain from *porneia* ("fornication"), although in the biblical texts stemming from Iron Age Levant, it is not morally excluded that male worshippers would have used the services of sex workers (cf. Gen 38; Judg 16:1). **(Research Question 3)**

Since the use of the sex work vocabulary is affect-laden, in the center of my research are the questions, **how the writers of the biblical texts make use of emotions**: What role do the social dynamics of shame and honor play in the use of the word-group? How are the emotions of disgust and desire evoked by the usage of the vocabulary of sex work and how these emotions can be identified from the textual sources? **(Research Questions 4 and 5).**

The novelty of the project is to combine, on the one hand, these new methodological approaches to a rigorous historical, textual and source critical study of the biblical texts, and, on the other hand, to investigate a broad set of primary sources to obtain an understanding of the diachronic development of the use of sex work vocabulary in the biblical texts.

This study will have **impact beyond the scientific community** by offering more nuanced knowledge of how our values regarding sexual norms, gender representation, and intimate relations have been constructed and challenged. The research project will yield better understanding of concepts of shame, honour, disgust, and desire: how these concepts have been associated with the

phenomenon of sexual labor in the biblical texts and how this association has resulted in concrete lives of sex workers in history and in contemporary societies. By analyzing the mechanism of stigmatization of sex work in the biblical texts critically, my study seeks to deconstruct the stigma that still hinders sex workers to conduct their work in sustainable way. Moreover, my study will provide with the historical background for understanding and deconstructing the harmful forms of so-called honour-based violence threatened against women and gender minorities.

Likewise, shame and honor dynamics are in force in many areas of public discourse. My study helps to understand the mechanism how hate speech functions in building toxic boundaries by provoking certain emotions. Ethnic and national boundaries are often drawn and fostered through a derogatory use of vocabulary of sexual labour in my sources. These uses of the vocabulary of sexual labour could be labelled as hate speech, as the emotions of disgust, shame, and honour are used to shape an emotional community.

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Aphrahat and the Jacob Tradition

PROJECT SUMMARY

My doctoral dissertation *Jacob, the Torah, and the Abrahamic Promise: Studies on the Use and Interpretation of the Jacob Story in the Book of Jubilees* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2023), published as *Jacob in Jubilees: Jacob, the Torah and the Abrahamic Promise*; DCLS 57 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2025), dealt with the early reception history of the Jacob Story and how the author of Jubilees utilized the story for building early Jewish identity. Thus, I was immersed in the reception history of the Pentateuch and Genesis in particular, although Isaiah began to play more and more crucial role in the reception of the Jacob Story in Jubilees, too.

After completing the dissertation, I have continued in my post-doctoral research with early Syriac Christianity and how the Book of Isaiah is understood and used there as part of a larger project "Isaiah between Judeo-Christian Borderlines," led by prof. Antti Laato (https://polininstitutet.fi/jesaja-i-granslandet-mellan-judiskt-och-kristet/), and as of 2025 as postdoctoral fellow in the Polin Institute in a project "Biblical Interpretation of Aphrahat the Persian Sage." This project concerns mainly with Aphrahat's interpretation of the Book of Isaiah and the Pentateuch, in the latter with focus on the patriarchal stories as well as the Mosaic Law in general.

As my earlier expertise lays on the early *Jewish* reception history, I am very interested in seeing both *continuity* and *discontinuity* in how the early Christian writers and groups possibly adopted and adapted earlier Jewish interpretive traditions. The early Christian explication did not start from a scratch, and the early reception began at the same time as the final composition was established. A new research along these lines are from prof. Antti Laato, *Message and Composition of the Book of Isaiah: An Interpretation in the Light of Jewish Reception History* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2022). One can also note the closer connection, crossing and combination of both traditional textual criticism and literary and redaction criticism in textual historical studies: the changes in the manuscript are evidence of exegesis and interpretation, and early reception!

As Aphrahat writes in the Sassanid regime, which during his lifetime begins a new set of wars with the recently-shortly-Christianized Rome, he has a totally different attitude for example with eschatological aspects of Isaiah than Eusebius. He gives a good perspective how Isaiah is understood and used outside the Christian Rome. Further, in comparison with Ephrem the Syrian, Aphrahat is much less influenced by "the Greek spirit," if one can say so. He is an idiosyncratic writer, and possibly also a witness of very early Syriac traditions. As the origins of the Old Testament Peshitta is still related to early Jewish(-Christian) groups, it is interesting to look for possible interpretive traditions which are similar with Jewish traditions. This does not yet prove that Aphrahat would have inherited them from Jews, or from the early Syriac Church, but if similar argumentation of Isaiah is used as with Justin and/or his predecessors, which still is different from

the New Testament which Aphrahat knew, this *could* lead into discerning some very early reception history among the Jewish-Christian Circles.

Earlier, I have presented a paper "Hezekiah, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar and Isaiah in Aphrahat, "On Wars" (Dem. 5) in a national conference in Turku, Finland (May 2024), where I studied *Dem.* 5 and how Aphrahat used the historical figures Hezekiah, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar and Isaiah in explaining how the dire situation raised by Shapur II affecting the Christians will not be the final word. Aphrahat has read Isaiah very carefully here. In May 2023 I presented a paper "Aphrahat's Use of Isaiah in Demonstrations: Two Case Studies," in the kick-off conference for the project "Isaiah between Judeo-Christian Borderlines" mentioned above, which will be published in WUNT. There I write on the Peshitta of Isaiah, Aphrahat as an Exegete in general and exegete of Isaiah in particular, and offer some case studies pertaining to how Aphrahat is generally using Isaiah with possible similarities with Justin. For the previous OTSEM 2024 in Arhus, I submitted a paper on *Demonstration* 23 and Isaiah-exegesis there, but I was unable to participate in the actual conference. This withdrawn contribution, now named "Reading Biblical History through Isa 65:8: Aphrahat's Reception of Isaiah in Demonstration 23" will be part of a project "Isaiah Reception in the New Testament and Patristic Writings: Luke-Acts as a Model for Early Christian Isaiah Reception?" (2025–2027) led by Prof. Lukas Bormann (Marburg) and funded by DAAD and Academy of Finland.

Forthcoming planned papers include but are not restricted to:
- Early Jewish Exegetical Techniques in Aphrahat?
- Aphrahat and Esau/Edom
- Aphrahat and Abraham
- Aphrahat's Isaiah against the Jews
- Aphrahat and the Mosaic Law

I plan to write a monograph regarding "Aphrahat and Genesis" whereas "Aphrahat and Isaiah" as well as "Aphrahat and the Mosaic Law" will consist of mostly independent articles.

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Aphrahat and the Jacob Tradition

0 Preface

The paper is very incomplete, but should nevertheless be at least opening a perspective to the subject at hand. Especially discussion with secondary sources is superficial at the moment. English language is unedited.

The following questions, perhaps in this order, could be points of discussion:

(1) The amount of material (great many references to Jacob) and distilling it from various contexts.
(2) How much should Aphrahat (and Syriac Christianity) be itnroduced and/or Aphrahat's relation to Judaism (of course depending on where and in which format the study will be published)?
(3) How much should the train of thought by Aphrahat be explained? (related to first question)?
(4) The discussion of parallels in early Judaism/Christianity and the relationship between reception history and historical exegesis.
(5) Secondary sources which should be noted and discussed with.

1 Introduction

Aphrahat the Persian Sage wrote *Demonstrations*, the only surviving work, between 335–345 in the Sassanid Persia.[1] He was part of a minroity in a time when Rome was becoming Christian, and the Sassanids regarded Christians as enemies of the state. This also raised concerns among the Christians. Earlier scholarship saw also the Sassanids to favour Jews over Christians, which also led into persecutions and sparked tense relations.[2]

1 The edition used is J. Parisot, ed., *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes*, 2. vols, PS 1.I–II (Paris: Firmin-Didot et socii, 1894 and 1907). The first volume contains *Dem.* 1–22 and the latter *Dem.* 23 with detailed indexes. For the English translation, I quote Adam Lehto, *The Demonstrations of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage*, GECS 27 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), with slight modifications. When discussing the Syriac text, the column and line number of the Syriac text in PS is given.

2 On the persecutions of Christians in the Sassanid era and how the christianization of Rome affected it, see, e.g., Arman Akopian, *Introduction to Aramean and Syriac Studies: A Manual*, Gorgias Hasndbooks (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017), 171–173. An important source is "the Acts of Persian Martyrs" but they are already embellished, according to Touraj Daryaee, "The Sasanian Empire," in *The Syriac World*, ed. by Daniel King, The Routledge Worlds (New York: Routledge, 2019), 33–43 (34–36), and esp. Kyle Smith, *Constantine and the Captive Christians of Persia: Martyrdom and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), esp. 103–109 on Aphrahat. Smith, however, downplays the argumentation and allusions to the dire political situation in Aphrahat.

Aphrahat's relation with the (imaginary or real) Jews is a well-trodden road.[3] The Jacob Tradition has not played that important a role in this comparative approach, even though the patriarchal stories of Genesis play a crucial role in his Aphrahat's argumentation, especially in the polemical treatises against the Jews (*Dem.* 11–22).[4] Actually, Aphrahat refers to Jacob in all his demonstrations except for three, *Dem.* 6 "On Covenanters," 7 "On the Penitent," and 12 "On the Passover." Jacob is referred to approximately as often as Abraham, 53 times over and against 57 sections, both coming behind only David and Moses.[5]

Needless to say, it is impossible to discuss every reference to the Jacob tradition in this paper. The paper at this stage consists of some case investigations where I discuss how Aphrahat is using and interpreting the patriarch Jacob, how he read the Jacob story and other references to Jacob in his bible. Ain addition, I discuss whether there are any parallels with other material, mostly Jewish exegetical traditions. Given the fact that many early Jewish texts are preserved in Syriac, and the old and questioned but still vivid thesis that Syriac Christianity has been greatly influenced by Judaism, this analysis is worth taking.[6] In order to keep the paper in the margins of acceptable, I have chosen five cases which are discussed in more detail.

2 Dem 2.2–5 No Need for Established Law for Jacob

In the second demonstration, "On Love," Aphrahat states that the Law and the Prophets, or their "force" (ܚܝܠܐ), "depend" (ܬܠܝܢ pass.part.) on the two commandments to love God with all one's soul,

3 Recent discussion in, e.g., Aaron Michael Butts and Simcha Gross, eds., *Jews and Syriac Christians: Intersections across the First Millennium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020); Naomi Koltun-Fromm, *Jewish-Christian Conversation in Fourth-Century Persian Mesopotamia*, Judaism in Context 12 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011); Eliyahu Lizorkin, *Aphrahat's Demonstrations: A Conversation with the Jews of Mesopotamia*, CSCO 642 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), compares different Jewish traditions and customs depicted by Aphrahat and the Talmuds with somewhat questionable methodology. See also earlier Jacob Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism: The Christian-Jewish Argument in Fourth-Century Iran*, StPB 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1971), where Neusner sees Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* witnessing of Jewisch circles little affected by rabbinical Judaism, and earlier *parallelomania* between rabbinical Judaism and Aphrahat as failed. These include, esp., Solomon Funk, *Die Haggadischen Elemente in den Homilien des Aphraates, des persischen Weisen* (Wien, 1891); Frank Gavin, *Aphraates and the Jews: A Study of the Controversial Homilies of the Persian Sage in Their Relation to Jewish Thought*, Contributions to Oriental History and Philology 9 (New York: AMS Press, 1966; orig. published 1923).

4 E.g., Funk*, Haggadischen Elemente*, 32–34, discusses Gen 43:32; 47:29 and 49:4. Gavin's analysis is more in the veins of "comparative religion."

5 The calculation excludes references to "Israel" which is sometimes used to denote the patriarch, too. Moses is more often referred to, but often in quotation clauses from the Pentateuch. The same is true with David who is often named when introducting a quotation from the Psalms. The calculation is based on the index of names in Jouko N. Martikainen and Veijo Koivula, eds., *Afrahat Persialainen Viisas: Uskon monet värit* (Helsinki: Kirjapaja, 2007), 430–437. In comparison, Abraham is also referred to at least once in every demonstration except for *Dems.* 6, 10, and 19.

6 The origins of at least parts of the Old Testament Peshitta is often regarded to stem from or at least be influenced by Jewish interpretive traditions. See the discussion in Michael P. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Ignacio Carbajosa "1.3.4 Peshitta," in *Textual History of the Bible Online* (Brill, 2020). Butts and Gross, eds., *Jews and Syriac Christians*, have raised many concerns relating to the older thesis of specially Jewish background of Syriac Christianity. On some further discussion, see, e.g. Sebastian P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," *JSJ* 30 (1979). 212–232 and the investigations on the almost contemporary Ephrem the Syrian by Sten Hidal, *Interpretatio Syriaca: Die Kommentare des heiligen Ephräm des Syrers zu Genesis und Exodus mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer auslegungsgeschichtlichen Stellung*, CONBOTS 6 (Lund: GWK Gleerup, 1974); and Tryggve Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1–11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian with Particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition*, CONBOTS 11 (Lund: GWK Gleerup, 1978).

power, and property, and neighbour as oneself (*Dem.* 2.1–2; PS I.1 48.1–13).[7] Aphrahat then continues to state that there would not have been any need for written Law and the Prophets if these two commandments had been "set in the minds and hearts of people" (*Dem.* 2.2). With quotation from 1 Tim 1:9, Aphrahat states that the Law was given because of the wicked. "However, if the Law had not been established, the power of God would not have been known in all generations, through all the wonders that he showed." (*Dem*. 2.2).

Now, Aphrahat gives a short summary of different characters where God's power was shown, starting with the wickedness of Adam's house and Noah's generation. The "power of God" was also "seen in Abraham through righteousness, because he preserved a righteousness according to the Law before the Law was established" (Dem. 2.2). As an example, Aphrahat gives the fact that Abraham declined to take anything from Sodom. Thus, "He, upon whom the Law had not been imposed manifested the works of the Law; a law was not required for his righteousness." (Dem. 2.2).

> Likewise, there was no need for the Law to be established for the righteousness of Isaac and Jacob his sons, for their father commanded them to act righteously and justly. As it is written, the Lord said concerning Abraham, "I know that he will command his sons after him to keep all my commandments." (Dem. 2.2; PS I.1 49:18–25)

Here, Aphrahat continues with reference to Genesis 18:19, which states that Aphrahat commanded Isaac and Jacob (but not his other sons?).[8] The verses in question have an important early Jewish exegetical tradition pertaining to the idea that the Law had already been revealed to Abraham, who further gave different halakic stipulations to his sons.[9] For Aphrahat, however, it only shows that righteousness (ܙܕܝܩܘܬܐ) is attainable even before the Law.

Aphrahat then continues with Joseph, who "preserved a righteousness that was in the Law when he did not obey her mistress" (*Dem.* 2.2).[10] before continuing in length with Moses. All these figures, namely Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses are taken as examples also elsewhere (*Dem.* 1.14 on faith as above; 3.2–3 on fasting; cf. 13.8 on the patriarchs being righteous even without keeping Sabbath.). What is evident for Aphrahat is that Jacob has been righteous and kept the righteousness which the Law would demand, although he did not know the Law. "All of these [people] manifested the works fo the Law, but the Law was not established for their righteousness. They were a law unto themselves." (*Dem.* 2.2; PS I.1 52.6–9).

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7 Here, Aphrahat's words differ from that of Peshitta Matt 22:37 and par., where one has ܠܒܐ "heart," ܢܦܫܐ "soul," ܚܝܠܐ "power" and ܡܕܥܐ "mind" in different order. Peshitta Deut 6:5 includes ܢܦܫܐ ,ܠܒܐ and ܚܝܠܐ. Even here Aphrahat's "quotation" in *Dem.* 2.1 differs. The interpretation of Hebrew חיל as one's property is well known in rabbinical traditions. See, e.g., *m. Ber.* 9:5 (cf. *b. Ber.* 61b); Tg. Onq to Deut 6:5 (נכס), Tg. Ps.J. to Deut 6:5 (ממון). The quotation by Aphrahat may stem from *Diatessaron* with influence from Peshitta Deut 6:5 and the interpretive tradition. The composite quotation is introduced as "For the Saviour said."

8 On the quotation, see Robert J. Owens, Jr., *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*, MPI 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 142–144.

9 The Book of Jubilees from first half of the 2nd century BCE is the example *par excellence*. See esp. Jub 20–22; 35–36; 45:16, and the discussion in Topias K. E. Tanskanen, *Jacob in Jubilees: Jacob, the Torah and the Abrahamic Promise*, DCLS 57 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2025), 75–83, 248–263. The importance of Gen 18:18–19 in Jub was noted esp. by David Lambert, "Last Testaments in the Book of Jubilees," *DSD* 11.1 (2004): 83–104.

10 Lehto, *Demonstrations*, 19, translates wrongly with "did not obey Pharoah's wife." There is no mention of Pharoah, nor "wife" here.

Aphrahat continues with the Pauline idea of the Law being "added on the account of transgression" (Dem 2.3; cf. Gal 3:19):

> And why was there this addition? If not on account of the vocation of the Peoples which was promised before the Law (Gal. 3:8). The Law was the pedagogue and tutor until the Seed came through whom the Peoples were blessed came (Gal. 3:24). For the word of oath which was promised to Abraham is the covenant of promise in that God said to him, "In your seed all the Peoples will be blessed." (Gen. 18:18; 26:4; Gal 3:8). And this word is the covenant, 430 years before the Law-giving, which was promised to Abraham (Ex. 12:40; Gal. 3:17), namely that in his seed – which is Christ – they will be blessed. (*Dem.* 2.3)

That is, according to Aphrahat, the Law was added to the original promise, which was given to Abraham as an oath by God. For him, the 430 years plays a crucial role – as for Paul in Galatians 3. The chronological problem between Aphrahat's calculations that there were only 225 years between Jacob's enter in Egypt and going out by Moses (*Dem.* 2.3) and 430 or 400 years of slavery according to Gen 15:13, is then solved ingeniously, as explained in the following paragraph. The problem was prevalent also in Jewish sources in Antiquity.[11]

Aphrahat states that one must begin counting from Gen 15:4, from God's promise which Abraham believed and which was counted to him for righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:13). At the same time, also the prophetic oracle of servitude was given to him in Gen 15:13. "He began to be anxious about how his seed would be in slavery and his heart was enslaved in Egypt." (*Dem.* 2.4). Isaac and Jacob did the same. Thus, according to Aphrahat, there was 15 years before the birth of Isaac, 205 years before entrance into Egypt and, thus, 430 before the Law that the promise of seed had been enacted, and also the enslavement in Egypt had begun. Therefore, the Law was only an addition, not anything else.

According to Aphrahat, the Law thus could not "annul" the promise – or the word (ܡܠܬܐ) – which was older. And when the word "came, it did away with the observances of the Law (ܡܠܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܒܛܠ ܠܢܡܘܣܐ ܘܒܛܠܗ).[12] Instead, the "Law and the Prophets have been brought to a conclusion (ܐܫܠܡ) by these two commandments of which our Lord spoke." Here, Aphrahat quotes three texts from the Gospels, Matt 11:13; 5:17; and John 1:17 (*Dem.* 2.5; PS 1.I 56.20–57.2).

In this text, Jacob functions as an example from the time before the "Law and the Prophets."

The same kind of interpretation, again related to Genesis 18:18–19 is found in *Dem.* 13 which polemically discusses the correct function of Shabbat:

> From Noah was born Abraham, the faithful man, head of the righteous, who kept the Law though the Law had not been imposed on him. He fathered Isaac, the son of the promise, and Jacob, the head of the people. These righteous fathers did not keep the Sabbath, but they were

11 See, e.g., James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: The Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 570–574, who lists, e.g., LXX Sam Exod Tg. Ps.J. to 12:40; Demetrius the Chronographer; *LAB* 9:3 for discussing the problem, among others. Aphrahat may have known something of this tradition independently from the one Paul is giving in Gal 3, although he is mostly influenced by Paul, his most beloved apostle, here. Note that for the most Jewish traditions, the Israelites actually sojourned approximately 210 or 215 years in Egypt, not 225 as in Aphrahat. They, however, start the counting from the birth of Isaac, whereas Aphrahat starts from the actual promise. If the 15 years is counted before the birth of Isaac is removed, the same 210 years is found as in, e.g., *LAB*.

12 The pa. of ܒܛܠ has the sense of removing, bringing to end, here.

> justified through faith, as it is written, "Abraham believed in God and it was credited to him as righteousness." Isaac and Jacob, his sons, also conducted themselves (ܐܬܚܙܝ) according to the commandment and the law of their father, and they were justified through faith and not through the Sabbath. (*Dem.* 13.8)

Note, that Jacob's linkage to Abraham is heightened, Isaac is only a "son of promise" as he was promised, and Jacob is precisely Abraham's son, here, too, although Isaac is his biological father.

Dem 3.2: Jacob's pure fasting

In the third demonstration, Aphrahat wants to discuss what pure fasting is, which is not only abstaining from bread and water, but there are different kinds of fasting, such as virginity, keeping one's impulses in guard, abstaining from property, and so on. Aphrahat wants to talk about fasting with laying ground on the holy scriptures wherefrom he takes examples of how true or pure fasting has been beneficial (*Dem.* 3.1).

> Hear then, my friend, how pure fasting is demonstrated (ܐܝܟ ܐܬܪ̈ܥܝ ܕܨܘܡܐ). First of all, Abel demonstrated (ܐܒܝܠ) pure fasting in his offering. Enoch by being pleasing (ܚܢܘܟ) before his God. Noah kept his integrity in a corrupting generation. Abraham excelled in his faith. Isaac on account of the covenant of Abraham. Jacob on account of the oath of Isaac, because he knew God (ܒܓܠ ܕܝܥ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܓܠ ܕܫܒܘܥܬܐ ܕܐܒܪܗܡ ܒܓܠ ܕܝܥ ܐܠܗܐ). Joseph through his compassion and his good administration. The purity of all these men was perfect fasting before God, since without purity of heart, fasting is not accepted. (*Dem.* 3.2; PS 1.I 100:25–101:11)

Parisot and Valavnalolickal refer to Genesis 32:30 at this point, and also Lehto gives Gen 32:25–33 in a footnote. I am not, however, totally sure whether the reference is correct here, although one may think that the fact that "he knew God" may very well be related to the wrestling match on the brink of Jabbok river. The reference is to Isaac's oath which is not part of the Jabbok story which may be related to the second "because of" following Isaac's oath. Aphrahat does not actually pay attention to the wrestling match anywhere in his work.[13] Therefore, also the "because of he knew God" most probably alludes to some other event in Jacob's life. In Gen 28:16, Jacob awakes from his sleep and says that he did not "know" that God is in the place. Alternatively, Aphrahat may have referred to Jacob's overall faithfulness to God.

Dem 3.13 The relationship between Amalekites (Haman) and Jacob (Mordechai)

Perhaps due to the Persian context, Aphrahat is very much aware of the book of Esther and often discusses its contents.[14] One of these discussions are found in *Dem.* 3.10–13, where he discusses the fasting of Mordechai and Esther. He contends that Mordechai and Esther could thwart the plans of Haman because of their pure fasting (*Dem.* 3.10). He then asks his friend, why "did Haman demand and seek from the king that all the Jews be destroyed?" (*Dem.* 3.11) The reason is that he "wanted to avenge his people and wipe out the name of the Israelites, as the memory of Amalek had been wiped out under heaven." (*Dem.* 3.11) Aphrahat notes that Mordechai was a descendant of Agag

13 In *Dem.* 4.6, where he investigates the Bethel theophany, he also talks about how Jacob prayed and that prayer helped him to avoid Esau's wrath, alluding to Genesis 32. The wrestling match is not given.

14 My hunch (which needs to be confirmed) is that the book of Esther was not that much commented upon in patristic sources in general, which would make Aphrahat stand apart in his heavy emphasis on the book in many of his demonstrations. See, e.g., Mark E. Biddle, "Christian Interpretation of Esther before the Reformation," *Review and Expositor* 118.2 (2021): 149–160 (150).

whereas Haman was a descendant of Saul. He did not, however, know of the godly decree against Amalek, with reference to Exod 17:9 and 17:14. The time for possible repentance had gone because of 400 years of patience by God (cf. Gen 15:16).[15]

Mordechai, however "kept the Law," that is, was aware of the decree to destroy the Amalekites in the Law and, according to Aphrahat, remembered what had happened to Saul. Therefore, although some find blame in Mordechai by not standing up before Haman, he followed God's decree by not doing so (*Dem.* 3.12).

Now, Aphrahat continues by discussing why precisely Amalekites made war with Israel "more than all the peoples" (*Dem.* 3.13).

> For the Amalekites had thought, 'Let us go out and destroy the sons of Jacob and abolish the blessings of Isaac!' Indeed, they were afraid of the domination of the sons of Jacob, for this is what Isaac had said to Esau, "You will serve Jacob your brother, but if you repent, his yoke will pass away from your neck." For this reason you ought to know that Amalek was the son of the concubine of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, and he did not want to become enslaved to the sons of Jacob. Why, therefore, my friend, did Isaac say to Esau, "You will serve Jacob your brother"? The scriptures indicate that it was because Esau had taken his wives from among the daughters of Canaan, who was cursed by his father Noah. Here is what Noah said to him, 'You will be a servant of servants to your brothers.' Abraham and Isaac, knowing that the Canaanites had been cursed, did not take any of their daughters for their sons. Abraham did not take any for Isaac, nor did Isaac for Jacob, for the cursed lineage of the Canaanites did not mingle (ܡܫܟ) with that of Shem, whom Noah had blessed. This is why Amalek, son of Eliphaz, son of Esau, wanted to abolish the curses of Noah and the blessings of Isaac, and fight with the sons of Jacob. But God had justly written concering Amalek, that his memory would be wiped out by the sons of Rachel. (*Dem.* 3.13; PS 1.I 125.15–128.17)

Aphrahat thus combines the struggle between Mordechai and Haman with the struggle between Jacob and Esau: Mordechai can be traced back to Jacob and as Amalek was a son of a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and Haman was the son of Agag, an Amalekite, too, thus, a son of Esau should serve the son of Jacob. As was already told by Aphrahat, however, Amalek/Haman/Esau has not repented, and the time of mercy is already over. A decree had been given, and it was first Mordechai and Esther, through their fast, who put the commandment into action.

An interesting case here is also that Aphrahat combines the "blessing of Isaac," namely his words to Esau, with the curse of Canaan. The fact is that Esau married Canaanites, and thus Isaac's words that Esau would serve Jacob is only an application of what had been decreed already beforehand: Canaan will serve his brothers. Here, interesting parallels with early Jewish reception of the curse of Canaan are intriguing.

First, it should be borne in mind that, for Aphrahat, the children of Seth and the children of Cain should not have mingled. This is why he states that Noah had actually been virgin and decided not to have children because of this mingling that had occurred, an interpretation of Gen 6:1–4 which had become prevalent especially in Syriac Christianity (*Dem.* 13.5, PS 1.I 549.15–552.17):[16]

15 Aphrahat seems to equate the Amalekites with Amorites here, maybe because they were living in Canaan.

16 See esp. the illuminating monograph in Finnish on Noah in Jewish reception history and its influence on early Christian interpretation, Antti Laato, *Nooa juutalaisessa tulkintatraditiossa ja sen vaikutus varhaiseen kristilliseen*

> It seems to us that his integrity (ܫܠܡܘܬܗ) consisted of this: when he saw that the generation of Seth was mixing (ܡܬܚܫܕ) with the descendants of Cain, who were cursed, he established in his mind that he would not take a wife and father children, so that they would not be mixed and cursed (ܡܬܚܫܕ ܘܡܬܚܪܡ ܠܐ) with the descednants of Cain, the cursed seed… he, then, in his five-hundreth year, took a wife from the daughters of Seth, the blessed seed of the righteous. Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japeth, and he warned these three sons of his not to take wives from the daughters of Cain. He gave them wives from the seed of the righteous, so that the seed from them would be preserved (ܢܬܛܪ) on the face of the earth and the world might be established through them.

The verb ܫܚܠ ("mix, mingle") in ethpaal is used in the Peshitta in mixed forbidden marriage with Canaanites in Josh 23:7, 12; Ps 106:35; mixing with peoples in Hos 7:8; Solomon's marriages which led to his idolatry in 1 Kgs 11:2; King Sennacherib's general Rab Sheqa's plea in Peshitta 2 Kgs 18:23/Isa 36:8 to "mingle" with the king of Assyria in order to get horses for exchange[17]; mixed marriages in Dan 2:43[18]; holy seed being mixed with others in Ezra 9:2; that Israelites were not to "mingle" with Moabites and Ammonites and Mount Gebel in 2 Chr 20:10.[19] In some cases there may be allusion to mixed marriage and idolatry, which were related in early Jewish reception history in general.[20] Non-sexual usage of the verb is also found, but not that often. In these cases, the stem is peal or pael instead of ethpaal, with Proverbs and Siarch being exceptions.[21] Only once is peal passive used with sexual undertones in Hos 4:14.

Aphrahat himself uses ܫܚܠ in ethpe. in *Dem.* 5.13 (PS 1.I 209:24) when discussing Daniel 2 and in ethpa. when quoting Dan 2:43 (Ps 1.I 209:5–6). Ethpa. is otherwise used by him when discussing Ruth joining to the people of Israel in *Dem.* 16.6 (PS 1.I 780:13); that Israelites went astray in Egypt because they "mixed" among them in *Dem.* 15.6 (PS 1.I 748:8, 10); of Seth's descendants mingling with daughters of Cain (in relation to the interpretive tradition of Gen 6:1–4) in *Dem.* 18.9 (PS 1.I 837:18); of the Judeans mixing with peoples in exile in *Dem.* 19.1 (PS 1.I 848:17); that the cursed lineage of Canaan did not mingle with that of Shem (see above, *Dem.* 3.13; PS 1.I 128:10); that Jacob would not be "mingled with the wicked" at the resurrection because his grave would not be found in Egypt in *Dem.* 8.7 (PS 1.I 373:13). Again, in *Dem.* 13.7 (PS 1.I 553:25), Aphrahat uses

tulkintaan, SPF 13 (Helsinki: Societas Patristica Fennica, 2021), 150–164. Aphrahat counts that Noah was 502 years old when Shem was born; thus he must have taken a wife for himself after God's compliments in Gen 7:1!

17 Note LXX μίχθητε, and of course the originalערב in hitp., if interpreted according to I ערב and not IV. See *DCH* 6:546–548 and, e.g., the same verbs occuring in MT LXX Ps 106(105):35!

18 A comparison is made with iron and clay being mixed in Dan 2:41. Note the usage of pael passive and ethpaal in Dan 2:41, 43: ethpaal has – again, sexual overtones!

19 Peshitta Chronicles is known for targumic traditions. Sebastian P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions"; Weitzman, *Syriac Version*, 111–121. Here, instead of Mount Seir, Mount Gebel/Ebal is given (cf. 1 Chr 4:42 and 2 Chr 25:11, 14). Perhaps the MT 2 Chr 20:10 לבוא was interpreted sexually. Another possibility is to render the verb as "to make alliance with," as is done by Robert Gordon in *The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible with English Translation*: *Chronicles*, The Antioch Bible (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2019), 295.

20 Ezek 22:18–19. Note first peal in the metaphor in v. 18 and ethpaal in v. 19. On mixed marriages and its relation to idolatry, see, e.g., Tanskanen, *Jacob in Jubilees*, 114–124.

21 Gen 30:40; Isa 1:22; 5:8(?); Hos 4:2; Wis 14:25; Sir 49:1; 3 Macc 3:10; Jer 23:28 is an interesting case, because Peshitta differs from MT LXX here with introducing "you (pl.)" as subject, and the worship of Baal was mentioned a verse before. In 4 Ezra 7:76 one should not "mingle" (pael) with the ones who have shown scorn and will be tormented. In 4 Ezra 13:10 (ethpa.) the word is, again, used for mixing of elements. 2 Macc 13:3 and 14:4 use the word (in peal) with associating with enemies of Judah. 4 Macc 7:6; 8:8 use ethpa. for intermingling with unclean food and ungodlines. See Prov 14:10, 16; 20:19; 24:21 and Sir 23:12 (one should not intermingle with sin); 28:19; for nonsexual usage of ethpaal (if not taken as ethpeel!).

the verb in ethpaal to indicate that Noah was not afraid for himself that he would "mix with the cursed seed of the house of Cain." In *Dem.* 11.4 (PS 1.I 477:18), Aphrahat states that God commanded circumcision in order for the holy people not to "take part in" the unclean deeds of the people among whom the children of Abraham would live.[22] In *Dem.* 14.48 (PS 1.I 720:15), either the poor man or "tin and lead" are mixed or having dealings with false metal/merchandise.[23] The two positive attestations of ethpa in *Demonstrations* are found in *Dem.* 12.9 (PS 1.I 528:12), where one baptized "is joined to the people of God" (ܐܬܚܒܪ ܥܡ ܥܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ) as well as in *Dem.* 1.4 (PS 1.I 12:21), where "simplicity is mixed with faith."

For Aphrahat, thus, the verb ܐܬܓܠ in ethpaal is mostly associated with illicit mixing and mingling, marriage between things that are not pure and should not be mixed.[24] Here, he may be influenced by the usage of the verb and stem in his Bible. The problem starts with the first curse of Cain. The sons of Seth should not mingle with the daughters of Cain, which though occurred according to Aprhahat's interpretation of Gen 6. As Noah was witnessing this, he remained as virgin; only God's command changed his mind, as he had to have some offspring in the new world. He, however, did not mingle with the daughters of Cain but took himself a wife from Seth's offspring and admonished also his chilrden not to mingle with them either.

In the postdiluvian age, Noah cursed Ham's son Canaan in a similar way to how Cain was cursed. As he was living still when Abraham was born, according to Aphrahat (*Dem.* 23.15), Abraham was aware of the curse and therefore did not want anything to do with the women from Canaan's lineage; otherwise, they would be cursed. Therefore, he nor Isaac took Canaanite women for their children. This of course changed with Judah and Simeon in the biblical narrative (Gen 38:1–2; 46:10), but Aphrahat is totally silent of these matters.[25] Now, Aphrahat states that Isaac's blessing was due to the fact that Esau had married Canaanite women – thus his offspring was to serve the offspring of Jacob and had become under curse. This association between the curse of Canaan and the curse of Esau was prevalent also in some early Jewish writings, such as Jubilees, where Abraham likewise advises his sons – especially Jacob – not to marry a Canaanite because of Ham's mistake, because they are meant to be uprooted (Jub 22:19–22; cf. 20:3–5).

22 The form ܢܬܓܠܘܢ itself could be parsed either as ethpe or ethpa ipf. 3.pl.m.even with the vocalization given in Parisot's edition.

23 See the differing translations of Lehto and Valavanolickal. George Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1982), 439, gives "metalla" as one possibility for *nefqā* ܢܦܩܐ. (see also Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon: A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's* Lexicon Syriacum [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 936), whereas Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 346, gives only "fine parchment."

24 Of course, sexual intercources itself was something from which Aphrahat very much advised to abstain. See, esp., *Dem.* 18 "On virginity and purity."

25 Perez is named in *Dem.* 23.15, but not the other sons of Judah from a Canaanite wife. Perez' mother was Tamar, who perhaps was not a Canaanite (cf. Jub 41:1 "daughter of Aram"). See also *Dem.* 23.21. Tamar, the final wife of Judah, is not mentioned in *Dem.*, which is perhaps not so surprising given the narrative in Gen 38. Neither is Simeon, son of Jacob except for a short mention in *Dem.* 23.43. As a comparison Jub is aware of the Canaanite women who both Simeon and Judah marry (Jub 34:20) but they are playd away in Jub 34:21 (Simeon) and 41:1–28 (Judah). On the latter, see Topias K. E. Tanskanen, "Expectations of a Royal Messiah in the Book of *Jubilees*? The Case of Judah," in *Herald of Good Tidings: Essays on the Bible, Prophecy and the Hope of Israel in Honour of Antti Laato*, ed. Pekka Lindqvist and Lotta Valve, HBM 97 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2021), 133–159 (142–148).

Dem 4.5–7 What did Jacob see in Bethel?

Aphrahat talks about prayer on the fourth demonstration. Here, he first talks about the power of pure prayer and then gives a cavalcade of examples from the Old Testament, starting from the offerings of Cain and Abel and ending in Daniel (*Dem.* 4.2–9), before explicating what Jesus taught on prayer (*Dem.* 4.10–11). What interests us is how Jacob's prayer is explicated (*Dem.* 4.5; PS 1.I 144.25–145.25):

> Likewise with our father Jacob: he prayed (ܨܠܐ) at Bethel, and he saw the gate of heaven open, and a ladder going up to the heights. It was a symbol (ܪܙܐ) of our Saviour that Jacob saw. The gate to heaven is Christ, as He said: 'I am the gate to life; whoever enters by me will live forever.' (John 10:9) And David, too, said, 'This is the gate of the Lord by which the righteous enter.' (Ps 118:20) And the ladder which Jacob saw, this is also the symbol (ܪܙܐ) of our Saviour, by whom all righteous people rise from below to the heights. It is also the symbol (ܪܙܐ) of the Cross of our Saviour, who was lifted up like a ladder. And the Lord stands above it, for above Christ is the Lord of all, as the blessed apostle said: 'The head of Christ is God.' (1 Cor 11:3) Jacob called that place Bethel, and he erected a standing stone there in remembrance (ܠܗܘܝܗ ܚܫܐ ܘܐܩܝܡ ܨܒܐ), the head of which he annointed with oil. Our father Jacob did this symbolically (ܪܙܝܬ), in advance, to represent the rocks which receive anointing. For the peoples who have believed in Christ are the ones who are annointed, as John said concerning them, 'From these rocks, God can raise up sons for Abraham.' (Luke 3:8) Thus, the symbol of the calling of the peoples was shown in advance by the prayer of Jacob (ܝܥܩܘܒ ܨܠܐ ܘܚܙܐ ܕܦܬܝܚܝܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܣܠܩܐ ܕܪܙܐ ܗܘ ܕܚܙܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܫܪܝܪ ܥܠ ܟܠ ܙܕܝܩܐ ܕܡܢ ܬܚܬ ܠܪܡܐ ܡܣܠܩܝܢ ܘܐܦ ܗܘ ܪܙܐ ܕܨܠܒܗ ܕܡܪܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܣܠܩܐ ܡܬܪܡܡ ܘܩܝܡ ܘܡܪܝܐ ܟܠ ܥܠ ܠܥܠ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܪܫܐ ܕܟܠ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܠܗܐ).

First is to note that Jacob is "our father," that is, the Christians's father as they are "Jacob/Israel."[26] Second, whereas there is no mention of Jacob's prayer in Genesis 28, this is what Aphrahat states is the case: he prayed there and therefore saw the dream vision. That Jacob prayed there is also found in, admittedly later, fifth century CE *Genesis Rabbah* 68:9:[27]

> מהו ויפגע צלי במקום צלי בבית המקדש... יעקב תקן תפלת ערבית שנאמר ויפגע במקום ואין פגיעה אלא תפלה שנאמר ואל תשא בעדם וגו' ואל תפגע בי וכן הוא אומר ואם נבאים הם ואם יש דבר ה' אתם יפגעו נא בה' צבאות
>
> Another matter, what is *vayifga*? He prayed. "In the place" – he prayed in the Temple… Jacob instituted the evening prayer, as it is stated: "He encountered [*vayifga*] the place," and *pegia* is nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: "You, do not raise a cry [or a prayer] on their behalf, and do not plead with [*tifga*] Me" (Jer 7:16) Likewise it says: "If they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is with them, please, let them plead [*yifge'u*] with the Lord of hosts." (Jer 27:18)[28]

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26 See Topias K. E. Tanskanen, "Aphrahat's Use of Isaiah in Demonstrations: Two Case Studies," *forthcoming* in *Isaiah between Judaeo-Christian Borderlines*, ed. Judith König, Stefan Green, Antti Laato, and Tobias Nicklas, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck).

27 On dating, see, Günter Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 9th ed. (Münich: Beck, 2011), 310.

28 Text and translation from sefaria.org (accessed 21/06/2025). See also y.Ber. 4, 7b. According to Stemberger, *Einleitung*, 189–190, Gen. R. and Jerushalmi are approximately redacted at the same period. See also Tg. Ps.-J. to Gen 28:11: וצלי באתר בי מקדשה "He *prayed* in the place *of the* sanctuary." Translation by Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis. Translated with Introduction and Notes*, ArBib 1B (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992). Tg. Nf. has the same rendering except for the fact that the place still remains as a place – thus, it may be a

It may be that Aphrahat knew a corresponding interpretation that Jacob received the vision because of a prayer preceding it – although it is not totally sure whether it was in any way related to the verb ܦܓܥ/ܨܠܝ as in the rabbinical midrash. Although tradition-historically the Bethel episode may have something to do with incubation,[29] this may not have been something that the ancient interpreters were thinking. Given the similar rendering of פגע as צלי in Tg. Nf. and Tg. Ps.-J., it is plausible that Aphrahat knew a familiar and well-known interpretation of the passage in question. Another possibility is that he innovated this reading with no direct or indirect link with earlier Jewish(-Christian) reception: prayer must precede a vision given by God. As of yet, however, I have not found any other early Christian text where Jacob would have prayed before sleeping.

Second, another parallel with Jewish reception history of the Bethel episode is that the dream vision told Jacob something in advance (ܩܕܡ), although the actual *contents* of what was shown differed. In Jewish reception history, the ladder was connected with, for example, what will happen to the Israelites at Egypt or connected to the four kingdoms motif of Gentile kings subjugating Israel.[30] For Aphrahat, however, the ladder, and the gate foreshadowed Christ himself and his crucifixion, and the standing stone, *massebah*, Christians who are annointed (in or direct after baptism) and thus become Abraham's children, with quotation from John the Baptist's (!) words. The same word, ܪܙܐ ("mystery, secret"), used in *Dem.* 3.5 to denote "symbolical" or "typological" meaning, is the *terminus technicus* in Syriac for sacraments.[31] Interestingly enough, Aphrahat does not quote John 1:51 in this case.[32]

Third, the *massebah* was erected ܠܣܗܕܘܬܐ. Lehto translates "in remembrance," but perhaps a better would be "as a witness/testimony." The addition is intriguing, given that a same sort of addition is found in Jub 27:26, where Jacob erects the stone "as a sign" (Ge'ez *la-təʾmərt*). The meaning is different between these two additions, but the idea was the same: the standing stone, *massebah*, was not to become a cultic object *per se* (as in the original narrative); instead, its was secularized to function as a witness of the event, nothing else.[33] This particular interpretation is not visible in the targums.

Aphrahat then continues to show "how many symbols were in hidden in this vision." (*Dem.* 3.6): Gate of Heaven is Christ, Ladder functions as a symbol (ܪܙܐ) of the Cross, and the annointed rocks

witness of an earlier version of the rendering. Cf. b.Soṭ 14a with same biblical proof from Jer 7:16 but in another context.

29 Susan Ackerman, "The Deception of Isaac, Jacob's Dream at Bethel, and Incubation on an Animal Skin," in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*, ed. Gary A. Anderson and Saul M. Olyan, JSOTSup 125 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 92–120, argued tradition- and redactionhistorically of an original incubation story which was later changed. Although I disagree with her main proposal, I think tradition-historically there may links with incubation in the Bethel story, but perhaps intentionally unintentional.

30 On these motifs, see esp. James L. Kugel, *The Ladder of Jacob: Ancient Interpretations of the Biblical Story of Jacob and His Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9–35; *idem*, *Traditions of the Bible*, 362–364, 373–376.

31 On baptism in oriental churches, see, e.g., Paul Krüger, "Sakramente," *KWCO*, 312–315. See also Payne Smith, *Compendious*, s.v. "ܪܙܐ."

32 When talking about angels in the context of taking care of the poor in *Dem.* 20.11, he quotes John 1:51 with no relation to the Bethel episode *per se*.

33 For the meaning and function of *massebot* in ancient Israel, see, e.g., Tryggve Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context*, ConBOT 42 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995).

are a type (ܛܘܦܣ cf. Gr. τύπος) of peoples, as already mentioned. Then, he continues (*Dem.* 3.6; PS 1.I 148.4–149.24):

> He dedicated (ܥܒܕ) the tithe to give to Levi, for in Jacob was hidden both givers of tithes and recipients of firstfruits. In his loins was the child of the lion of Judah, in whom was hidden Christ the King, and in him he pointed to the annointing [of baptism] (ܡܫܝܚܐ).[34] The tribes who were in him dedicated firstfruits (ܥܒܕ) to the Levites, the kings who were in his loins enlarged his heart (ܠܒ ܪܚܝܒ), and in him the spirit of the prophets examined those who were going to come into being from his seed. With only his staff, he crossed the Jordan. In advance, he held in his hand a wondrous symbol: the sing (ܨܠܒ) of the Cross of the Great Prophet. Then he directed his feet to the land of the people of the east, since from there shone forth light for the peoples. He rested by a well with a stone over its mouth, which many [men] had not been able to lift. For many shepherds had not been able to move the stone in order to open the well, until Jacob came. By the strength of the Shepherd who was hidden in his loins he moved the stone and watered his sheep. Many prophets had come who had not been able to reveal [the mystery of] baptism, until the Great Prophet came who alone could open it, and who was baptised in it, and who announced in a gentle voice, "Whoever has thirst, let them come to me and drink." Jacob prayed again (ܨܠܐ) upon his return from Laban, and he was saved (ܐܫܬܙܒ) from his brother Esau. He prayed and gave thanks and spoke in this way: "I have crossed this [river] Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two camps." What a wonderful symbol (ܪܙܐ) of our Saviour! When our Lord came for the first time, the staff came out from the trunk of Jesse, similar to the staff of Jacob. But when he returns from his Father's house at his second coming, two camps will go with him, one from the People, and another from the Peoples, [which is] similar to [what happened with] Jacob, who returned to the house of his father Isaac with two camps. For Jacob returned with his eleven sons, and with our Saviour will come his eleven disciples, since Judas will not be with them. Later, Benjamin was born and there were twelve sons of Jacob. Afterwards, Tolmai was appointed and there were twelve disciplies of our Saviour. This was the effect (ܥܒܕܬܐ) of the prayer of Jacob.

First, Jacob dedicated tithes to Levi already in Bethel, because Levi was in his loins – as were those giving the tithes. Levi as a receiver of tithes has a long Jewish tradition history which is also connected especially with Genesis 32 and 35, when Jacob returns to Bethel to fulfil his vow.[35] That Jacob's forthcoming offspring is already in the picture is evident, too, although differently from that of Aphrahat. The idea that the tribes were mysteriously in Jacob's loins is important in Aphrahat's interpretation elsewhere too (see esp. *Dem.* 23). Here, Aphrahat may be influenced by Heb 7:8–10 which states that Levi was in the loins of Abraham and thus tithed to Melchizedek, who is thus of better priestly order.

The "light to the peoples" shining from the land of the "sons of east" may allude to Isa 42:6 or 49:6, 8[36] and Luke 2:32.[37] The "sons of the east" come from Gen 29:1, but the same phrase is also found

34 Cf. the note on annointed stones before.

35 See, e.g., Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*, 115–168; Tanskanen, *Jacob in Jubilees*, 126–129, 131–136. On earliest texts, see ALD; Jub 32; T. Levi; and the rabbinical literature referred in Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*.

36 In Peshitta Isa 49:8, there is an addition of ܠܢܘܗܪ ܥܡܡܐ "light for the peoples."

37 Luke 2:32 itself is based on Isa 42:6; 49:6. See, Jukka Thurén, *Lukas' Cantica*, Studier i exegetik och judaistik utgivna av teologiska fakulteten vid Åbo Akademi 3 (Åbo: Åbo Akademis tryckeri, 2007), 99–101.

in Ezek 25:4 with reference to the Babylonians,[38] and the magis coming from the east, following the star (Matt 2:1), is evidently what Aphrahat is also thinking of.

The staff is mentioned in Gen 32:11 in Jacob's words in his prayer to God. Now, Aphrahat applies it to the actual context between Gen 28:22 and 29:1. The staff which Jacob had with him points to the cross, which is also related to Christ's first coming which ends up with a cross. Gen 32:11 is, then, referred to another time when Aphrahat explicates what took place between Jacob's journey away from the promised land and his return there: first, he went outside of the promise land with only a staff, which earlier resembled Christ's crucifixion. Now, it is related to the messianic promise in Isa 11:1–5, where "a shoot from the stump of Jesse" in Peshitta Isaiah uses the same word ܫܒܛܐ "rod, staff" as Gen 32:11.[39] It is of course obvious that Aphrahat identifies the Messiah prevalent in reception history of Isaiah with Christ, and furthermore, it is easy for him to identify the "staff" with the cross and humiliation of the messiah. When Jacob then returns from the exile back to the promised land, he has "two camps," which denote the Gentiles ("peoples" in Aphrahat's terminology") and the Jews ("people"), both believing in Jesus as the Messiah. In this symbolical reading, the promised land functions as God's sphere, and the east as the land of exile, the earth.

In-between, the stone which Jacob was able to lift with his hidden power, is connected to Jesus's exchange of words with the Samaritan woman concerning the well of Jacob. Thus, Aphrahat connects the well of Jacob in John 4 with how Jacob is able to provide water for Rachel and her flock in Gen 29. What Jacob did was only foreshadowing what Christ did with baptism. As Jacob himself drank from the well (John 4:12), so was Christ himself baptised and he also opened the waters of baptism for everyone. In this way, he can also gather the two camps, through baptism.

One should also note, that baptism – or more precisely the chrism related to the baptism – was already mentioned regarding the annointed stone and also to the "annointed/messiah" in Jacob's loins.

In the end, Aphrahat further notes the similarities with Jacob's sons and Jesus's disciples. First, both had only eleven, but one was subsequently added: Benjamin and Tolmai/Mattias.[40]

In *Dem.* 3.7, Aphrahat continues still with the power of Moses' prayer. After giving briefly many examples, he notes that "there is more to say about his prayer than about the prayer of Jacob" (*Dem.* 3.7; PS 1.I 152.12–13) before venturing further to Joshua.

Dem 8.7 Jacob and the Resurrection of the Dead

On the eight demonstration, Aphrahat talks about the resurrection of the dead. The demonstration starts with a quotation of 1 Cor 15:35; how will the resurrection happen and which kind of a body will people have. Aphrahat states that some think that as the body decays and there will not be any body left, it must be a different heavenly body which will be resurrected (*Dem.* 8.1).

38 Note Jer 49:28, where Kedar and the kingdom of Hazor is meant with the phrase.

39 This identification is not possible in Hebrew, where the word in Gen 32:11 differs. חטר in Isa 11:1 is cognate to the Syriac ܫܒܛܐ. Tg. Nf. and Ps.J. to Gen 32:11, however, use חוטרא to render the Hebrew מקל.

40 Of course, for Jesus, the twelve disciples very well symbolized the twelve tribes, i.e., Jacob's sons. Aphrahat, however, saw something hidden here, especially since Judah was not among the eleven. On the twelve disciples. see, e.g., Joachim Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie 1: Die Verkündigung Jesu*, 3rd ed (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1979), 222–225; Timo Eskola, *A Narrative Theology of the New Testament: Exploring the Metanarrative of Exile and Restoration*, WUNT 1.350 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 88–95.

According to Aphrahat, everyone who thinks so is stupid and without understanding (*Dem.* 8.2). After discussing the matter some more with quotations from First and Second, and perhaps Third Corinthians, he then starts to take, as before, Old Testament examples concerning the resurrection of the dead. The cavalcade of examples start with Hebrews 11:15-16:

> "If the righteous had been looking for that city which Abraham came forth, there was a time for them to turn back again and go to it. They showed, however, that they were looking for a better [city], one which is in heaven." They were expecting to be set free and go quickly to it. Understand and see, from what I am writing to you, that they were waiting for the resurrection. When he was dying, our father Jacob bound his son Joseph with an oath and said to him, "Bury me in the tomb of my ancestors with Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Rebecca." Why, my friend, did Jacob not wish to be buried in Egypt, but with his ancestors? He was showing in advance that he would be waiting for the dead to come to life. When the shout and the sound of the horn takes place, his resurrection will be near his ancestors. At the time of the resurrection, he will not be mingled with the wicked, who will return to Sheol and to torment. (*Dem.* 8.7)

Aphrahat also notes that nobody knows where Moses was buried. However, Moses was wery sad and wept as he saw Hebron, "since he would not be buried with them and his bones would not be placed with their bones, and at the resurrection he would not rise with them." He though received consolation from God, because he himself buried Moses. The reason why nobody knows where he was buried was that enemies would not throw his bones from the tomb and his tomb would not become a place of worship for his people. Thus, Aphrahat.

There are striking resemblances in rabbinical exegetical traditions, esp. *Gen. R.* 96:5, according to which Jacob did not want to be buried in Egypt in order not to become "subject of idolatrous worship," resembling what is stated of Moses by Aphrahat. Second, the patriarchs wanted to become buried in the Land of Israel, first, because "the dead of the Land of Israel come to life first in th emessianic era, and enjoy the messianic years," and, second, "[o]ne who dies outside of the Land of Israel and is buried there, has undergone two deaths."[41]

After referring to Joseph's wish to be buried in the holy land too, Aphrahat refers to Reuben's sin with Bilhah (*Dem.* 8.8):

> Furthermore, when Jacob was dying, he blessed his tribes and showed them what would happen to them in the last days. He said to Reuben, "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my strenght and the beginning of my might. You have gone astray: like water, you will not remain, since you went up to the sleeping quarters of your father. It is a fact that you went up and defiled my bed." (Gen 49:3–4). From the time that Jacob died to the time that Moses died, two hundred and thirty-three years passed. Then Moses, in his role as priest, wanted to absolve Reuben, who had gone astray and sinned when he slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine. [This was done] so that when his brothers were resurrected, he would be numbered among them. For he said at the beginning of his blessing, "May Reuben live and not die, and may he be included in the census." (Deut 33:6)

Also *Gen. R.* 98:4 includes the same connection between the blessings uttered by Jacob and Moses:

41 Translations from sefaria.org (accessed 28/07/2025).

> Our rabbis said: You [Reuben] sinned in water, let one who is drawn up from water [Moses] come and bring you back, as it is said, "Let Reuben live and not die" [Deut. 33:6].[42]
>
> The Rabbis say: I am neither distancing you nor drawing you near. Instead I am leaveing you in loose abeyance until Moses, in whose regard it is written: "And Moses ascended (עלה) to God" (Exod 19:3), comes, and does with you what he perceives to be correct. When Moses came, he began to draw him near: "May Reuben live" (Deut 33:6).[43]

The similarity is the connection between the blessings, which is natural if one reads the Bible as Aphrahat does. He often connects the dots between different passages. From there, one can infer that Moses wanted to "absolve" Reuben.

Furthermore, the targumic tradition to Deut 33:6 (and b. *Sanhedrin* 92a) understand Moses's blessing to be regarding Reuben as an individual, not as a people, and with reference to the resurrection of the dead, just like Aphrahat.[44]

One slight difference is found between the Jewish tradition and Aphrahat's interpretation. Kugel traces an exegetical tradition that Moses's words in Deut 33:6 had originally been uttered by Jacob, something which is found in Philo, Testament of Reuben, and possibly in the targums and Bavli.[45] Aphrahat, by contrast, emphasizes the time between Jacob and Moses: thus, the words belong to Moses, not to Jacob. Was Aphrahat aware of the aggadic tradition or had he come up himself with this reading as he read his Bible?

Conclusions

The investigation in some of the cases where Jacob is referred to in Aphrahat's demonstrations shows resemblance to some early and rabbinical Jewish exegetical traditions. Aphrahat is naturally influenced by the horizon to the Old Testament given in the New Testament writings, especially by the apostle Paul and the author of Hebrews. He is well versed in Old Testament writings, often using them typologically.

As the discussed references stem from those demonstrations which are not polemical against the Jews, that aspect is not that much touched upon in the investigated sections. Actually, once, with reference to Jacob's two camps, Aphrahat brings to the fore the idea that God's people consists of "people from the peoples" as one camp, and the Jewish people as the second. The anti-Jewish demonstrations, however, depict a different picture where it becomes clear that the second camp consists of those Jews who believe in Jesus.

The relationship between Aphrahat and Jewish exegetical traditions do need a thorough study which will shed more light on the connexions and differences between them, and maybe also shed light on how Aphrahat may have become aware of some traditions.

42 Translation by Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*, 86.
43 Translation from sefaria.org.
44 Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*, 102.
45 Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*, 100–105.

Abbreviations:

ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ConBOTS	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
CSCO	
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DCH	*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew.* Edited by David J. A. Clines. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1993–2014.
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
GECS	Gorgias Eastern Christianity Studies
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
JSJ	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
KWCO	*Kleines Wörterbuch des Christlichen Orients*. Edited by Julius Aßfalg and Paul Krüger. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975.
MPI	Monographs of the Peshitta Institute, Leiden.
PS	Patrologia Syriaca
SPF	Studia Patristica Fennica
STCA	Studies on the Children of Abraham
StPB	Studia Post-Biblica
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchunzen zum Neuen Testamentum

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Project summary

Kristin Klaus, University of Tartu

"Style of Old Greek Job. Its value for textual, literary, and redaction criticism of Hebrew Job" (Supervisor: Urmas Nõmmik, University of Tartu)

In my PhD project, titled "Style of Old Greek Job. Its value for textual, literary, and redaction criticism of Hebrew Job", I have undertaken to study the poetic style of the Old Greek translation of the book of Job and the significance of its poetic style for textual, literary, and redaction criticism of the Hebrew text. The dissertation is nearing its completion and is hopefully ready to be submitted by the end of 2025.

In the dissertation, I study ten speeches of the Book of Job: chapters 4–5, 8, 12–14, 15, 19, 21, 25, 29–31, 38–39, and 40–41. The selection is partly random and partly influenced by a reading group organised at the University of Tartu in the first couple of years of my doctoral studies. The selection includes speeches with fewer textual problems in Hebrew and no asterisked passages in Greek, but there are also speeches with numerous textual problems and large omissions in the Greek translation.

All these speeches are studied in the following way. The first stage consists of analysing the style, more specifically the strophic structure of the Old Greek translation. My analysis has shown that the translator definitely sensed the strophic structure of Hebrew Job and replicated it in the translation, although not one to one.

In both languages, strophes are thematically coherent blocks of texts that are often formally delimited with the help of deviations from bicola and similes. However, in Greek, the role of monocola and tricola in delimiting units is far more distinctive than in Hebrew and it is obvious that the translator has used this technique consciously. Otherwise, the structural importance of these deviating verses would be too coincidental. Reflecting parallelistic structures, similes, and a large amount of the lexical repetitions speaks to the translator respecting the source text and following it quite closely. Still, repetitions are extended and added, sometimes even similes. Both Hebrew and Greek are abundant in marked vocabulary, thus the authors of both can be seen as educated and attempting to aim at a higher style, markedness, and the unusual –

possibly to keep the listener or reader attentive and aware of the fact that the book of Job is not so ordinary.

In the next stage, the strophes are investigated for textual differences between Hebrew and Greek. This study includes differences that are due to reading or vocalising the consonantal text differently and differences that are due to the difficulties in the *Vorlage*, but also more intentional changes such as paraphrases, unique translation choices of the translator, unifying of content (or the opposite), stylistic choices, and so on. In this stage, different theories of the literary growth of Hebrew Job are taken into account. The Hebrew and Greek texts are studied side by side in order to see if there are any correlations between the Greek translator's choices and the literary growth of the Hebrew text (for example, a late addition abruptly inserted into the text).

The conclusions of this stage of the analysis are currently under way and the paper presented in this meeting is a simplified and short summary of several sections of my dissertation (namely the chapters dealing with Job 4–5, 15, and 25), trying to look at the translator's activities regarding larger themes in the book of Job, more specifically the lowliness redaction (*à la* Markus Witte).

Literary growth of Hebrew Job *versus* the Old Greek translation of Job

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Preface

This paper is a very simplified, in progress summary of several sections of my dissertation, titled *Style of Old Greek Job. Its value for textual, literary, and redaction criticism of Hebrew Job*. It serves as a tool to think through my chapters and findings related to larger themes and not constricted to the individual speeches.

I would appreciate the following points for discussion:

- How much intentionality can we assume in the actions of the Old Greek translator of Job? Are the assumptions that I have made in my paper sound?
- A wider discussion on what we can assume about the *Vorlage*/*Vorlagen* that the Job-translator and other LXX-translators used. Is it possible that the manuscripts that some of the ancient translators used had visual inconsistencies correlating to later additions to the Hebrew text?

Introduction

This paper explores if and how the Old Greek translator of the book of Job sensed the literary growth and textual problems of the Hebrew text. For that we will firstly begin with a brief overview of the literary growth of the book of Job and a comparison of some of the theories. Then, we will look at the overall translation technique and sensitivities of the Old Greek translator, after which we will take an in depth look at how the translator dealt with the passages and longer units that are considered to be added in the lowliness redaction (*Niedrigkeitsredaktion*).

The Book of Job and its growth

It has been hypothesised that the book of Job grew over several centuries and the growth is usually dated to be from the 5th or 4th up to the 3rd or 2nd century BCE.

In general terms, different layers of growth have been suspected and identified through linguistic, content-related, formal (e.g., poetry), and motif-critical analyses, through recognising different anthropologies, theologies, cosmologies, and ideologies. The different layers, whether larger (containing larger additions in several speeches) or smaller (individual glosses) can bring in entirely new content or modify the earlier layers.[1]

For example, Markus Witte identifies six or seven hypothetical stages of development in the Book of Job. These are, in order: Ia *Hiobdichtung* A and Ib *Hiobnovelle*; II *Hiobdichtung* B (*Niedrigkeitsredaktion*); III *Buch* A (*Buchredaktion*); IV *Buch* B (*Elihuredaktion*), V *Buch* C

[1] See, for example, Witte, *Vom Leiden Zur Lehre*; Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*; van Oorschot, *Gott Als Grenze*; van Oorschot, 'Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches'; Syring, *Hiob Und Sein Anwalt*; Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*; Nõmmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*; Nõmmik, *Literary History of the Book of Job: A Sketch*.

(*Majestätsredaktion*), VI *Buch* D (*Gerechtigkeitsredaktion, Endredaktion*), VII *Buch* E (additions of different origins and glosses).[2]

Jürgen van Oorschot, Wolf-Dieter Syring, Otto Kaiser, and Urmas Nõmmik, after Witte, use much the same terminology for their redactional theories; however, the redactional layers do not always align in detail or order.

Lowliness redaction (*Niedrigkeitsredaktion*)

Lowliness redaction is a good starting point for comparing how different redactions were received by the translator. While Witte thinks it is an early (even earliest) redaction, Kaiser sees it being not too early but not late either, and the others think it is a later one (Syring[3], Van Oorschot, Nõmmik). Thus, it serves as a good corpus of passages to study: if the redaction is early, it should not be in any way noticeable in the *Vorlage* of the Old Greek translation; if it is later or very late, the *Vorlage* may have contained noticeable irregularities.

According to Markus Witte, the lowliness redaction (*Niedrigkeitsredaktion*) was the main editing stage of the still independent poem of Job. The main added motif in this redaction was that of man's lowliness, humility, and unworthiness before God. Suffering is a basic consequence of being a human, there might not be a reason for why one person suffers while another does not. Witte has noted that while Job confesses to being innocent in the original speeches (in the oldest layer of the poem), the lowliness redactor started invalidating these confessions and emphasised that humankind in general is sinful. Witte has identified this motif in the following passages: 4:12–21, 15:11–16, 25:1–6, 40:3–5, and 42:2.3aβ.5–6.[4]

Old Greek Job

The Old Greek translator has been widely described with statements like: 1) the translator translates freely and not word for word, they paraphrase and rewrite; 2) the translator abbreviates the text more and more as the chapters go on or abbreviates when the Hebrew is too difficult; 3) the translator has vocalised the consonantal text differently than the later Masoretes; 4) the translator has often "misread" the consonantal text or used metathesis in order to make sense of the text; 5) the translator has used contextual translation when the Hebrew was not understood; 6) the translator has used anaphoric/associative translation when the Hebrew was not fully understood[5]; 7) the translator breaks the poetic structure by leaving a part of the verse untranslated; 8) the translator does not translate into Greek poetry; 9) the translator is more at home with Koine Greek than some other LXX translators. Claude Cox has summarised the translator's activity as that of "a creative editor"[6]. Even the abbreviation of the text was done for stylistic and sociological reasons, to be suitable for the Hellenistic audience, without too much repetition and redundancy[7]. Compared to other translations in the Septuagint corpus, the Old Greek of Job has fewer Hebraisms and is generally less interlinear or isomorphic[8].

In my dissertation, I study the stylistic efforts of the translator extensively. Although the translator is quite sensitive to poetry and style overall, these aspects of the translation are not

[2] Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 45–59.

[3] He calls it the anthropological editing (*Anthropologische Bearbeitung*).

[4] Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 45–59.

[5] Already noted by Ziegler, 'Der Textkritische Wert', 22–28., but later in more detail by Heater, *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job*.

[6] To mention only a few overviews that agree on most if not all of these statements: Heater, *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job*; Fernández Marcos, 'The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job'; Cox, 'Iob', 667–68; Kepper and Witte, 'Job. Das Buch Ijob / Hiob'; Cox, 'Does a Shorter Hebrew Parent Text Underlie Old Greek Job'; Cox, 'Job'; Witte, 'Job / Das Buch Ijob / Hiob'; Cox, 'Septuagint'; Witte, 'Job'; Gorea, 'The Book of Job'.

[7] Cox, *The Text (Provisional Copy)*, 4.

[8] Cox, 'Iob', 667. The translation is not devoid of Hebraisms, as he argues in Cox, 'The Translator's Commitment'.

discussed in detail in this paper. It suffices to say that the translator often reflects poetic techniques found in the Hebrew, such as parallelism, repetitions, and similes. The translator is also capable enough to create these on their own, independently of the Hebrew. In both Hebrew and Greek, we can observe marked vocabulary, such as rare words and neologisms, but also poetic vocabulary. Although both Hebrew and Greek also use diverging from the standard bicolic verse to structure the speeches on the macro-level, the Greek translator utilises this technique more, either by not translating certain cola or by adding cola. Unlike the Hebrew, Greek also has monocola besides the regular use of tricola. As a result, a tricolon can mark the beginning or end of a strophe in Hebrew, whereas a tricolon or monocolon can do the same in Greek (sometimes, a strophe can begin with a monocolon and end with a tricolon, even).

In my dissertation, I have discovered that the translator primarily works on the strophe level, even on the level of several strophes, when introducing changes to the text. This can be seen in something as simple as unifying or changing the tenses of the strophe, or on a larger scale such as inserting lexical repetitions that help structure the speech into smaller units (for example, several strophes beginning with the same word, independently of the Hebrew). Therefore, in this paper as well, the discussion is made on the level of one or several strophes.

Lowliness redaction in Old Greek Job[9]

4:12–21

The first addition made in the lowliness redaction consists of at least two strophes: verses 12–16 and 17–21[10]. Thematically, this addition is seen as an excursus, while textually it has verses with irregular colometry (verse 12 is too short, verse 13 is too long, verse 16 is not balanced, verse 17 is too long, etc.), tricola (sometimes hypothesised to be not original to the Job-poem), and other peculiarities[11]. Nõmmik thinks that 20b is an even later gloss[12].

In the Hebrew text, the ideas of man's lowliness are expressed more in the second half of the first strophe and in almost the whole of the second strophe.
In the first strophe, in verses 14 and 15, the idea of a (divine) vision being fear-inducing is introduced ("Dread came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh bristled.").
In the second strophe, the possibility of mortals being righteous or pure before God is questioned ("Can mortals be righteous before God? Can humans be pure before their Maker?"). This is emphasised by saying that God does not even think that His servants and angels can be, much less humans. Finally, from verse 19c, the mortality of humankind is described: they are destroyed, they perish. The destruction of humans is delivered passively; it is not explicitly mentioned that God is the one who destroys.
In the Old Greek translation, the motif of fear is more explicit. The terror of the vision—now only auditory—is already mentioned in verse 13 ("Now there was terror and an echo sound in the night—when terror falls on mortals"). In verse 14, the description of the fear is similar to the Hebrew, but in verse 15, the physical effects of fear are more emphasised in Greek ("And a spirit came upon my face, and *my hair and flesh* bristled up").
In the second strophe, although the mention of being blameless before God is now removed in verse 17b, in what follows, God's destructive power is made explicit and active: God strikes humankind, who live in houses of clay and who themselves are made of clay, like a moth; He

[9] The Hebrew and Greek texts are found in the Appendix: the Greek text is that of Ziegler, *Iob*, XI, 4; the Hebrew text is that of the BHS, however unpointed. The translation of the Greek text is from Claude Cox's 2020 provisional copy of the NETS; the translation of the Hebrew is from the NRSVUE. Rare Hebrew words (occurring up to ten times) are marked with a grey highlight, additions on the Greek side with a double underline, and omissions on the Hebrew side with a box.
[10] van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job*, 61–69, for example, divides this into one canto, which itself consists of two canticles (vv. 12–16 and 17–21), which both divide further into two strophes (vv. 12–14 and 15–16, vv. 17–19 and 20–21).
[11] See detailed analysis in Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 129–49, for example.
[12] Nõmmik, *Literary History of the Book of Job: A Sketch*.

breathes on them and they wither. As can be seen, the translator also brings in the creation of man out of clay.

For the purposes of this investigation, we do not need to look at everything that precedes verse 12. In the Old Greek translation, verse 12 is a tricolon by traditional numeration; however, it seems that verse 12ab concludes the previous strophe (and more specifically, previous strophes), whereas verse 12c introduces the strophes under study. It looks like the translator saw the transition between verse 11 and 12 to be too abrupt and felt the need to smooth it out. Thereby, "verse 12" is now a tricolon, of which the first two cola conclude Eliphaz's reproach of Job: if you had been speaking truth, nothing bad you had mentioned would have happened to you. The Greek 12ab does not seem to have an origin in the Hebrew text (except for ῥῆμα "word"). However, Dhorme has explained the differences to be due to the combination of the translator misreading the Hebrew consonantal text and later corruption in the Greek manuscripts. He posits that the beginning εἰ δέ ("and if") is due to reading וְאֵלַי as אֻלַי ("perhaps"). Secondly, ἀληθινὸν "truthful" is a corruption on the Greek side and is supposedly caused by a dittography of the last letter (α) of ῥῆμα and should be λήθινον ("secret") instead, interpreting thus גָּנַב "to steal". He sees the rest as a recognisable paraphrase of the MT as well.[13] Paraphrases and rewritings triggered by certain readings of the consonantal text are quite common in the Old Greek translation of Job. Both Witte and Nõmmik have pointed out that this verse has a different colometric pattern than the rest and therefore may be a later addition. Nõmmik also adds that in addition to the colometrical problem, the beginning of the strophe is now marked with a simple *waw*-conjunction rather than an emphatic particle.[14] If so, the later hand may have been harder to read in the *Vorlage* and the translator also noticed that a new thematic block started without a proper transition marker and rectified it.

The translator made some stylistic changes. In Greek 12c which translates MT 12b, the interrogative πότερον οὐ "shall not" is added. Yes-no questions, especially marked with the interrogative, are a frequently used clause-type at the beginning of strophes in Job. The translator has added some emphatic and rhetorical phrases, for example, in 16c, ἀλλ᾽ ἢ "but instead" and in 17a, the rhetorical question Τί γάρ; "So what?". Both function as transition markers, one closing a strophe and the other opening a strophe.

The translator has used contextual translation, mostly with rare words. Most importantly, the rare nouns בִּשְׂעִפִּים "amid disquietings" (plural[15]) in 13a and תַּרְדֵּמָה "deep sleep" in 13b[16] are both translated with φόβος "fear". Thus, a repetition is created (stylistic efforts) but also closer affinity with the shuddering and trembling mentioned in the next verse. Another example of a word that the translator probably did not know, can be seen in 12c, where the very rare שֵׁמֶץ "whisper" is translated as ἐξαίσια "portentous; extraordinary things"; this word occurs twice in Job, both times translated differently. An example of a translation that takes the context of the whole strophe into consideration is in 13a, where another rare noun מֵחֶזְיֹנוֹת "from visions" (plural) is replaced with ἠχὼ "sound" (singular). Since the translator has changed the vision into an auditory experience, "sound" is more appropriate in the context.

A change that cannot be explained at first is in 16a, where the verb יַעֲמֹד "it stands, arises" is translated into first person singular ἀνέστην "I stood up" (so also Peshitta with ܩܡܬ and Aquila with ἔστην). Further, in 16b, מַרְאֵהוּ "its appearance" from MT 16a is translated as εἶδον "I saw", but omitting the suffix. Seow suggests that the Greek originally read εἶδος 'shape, form' but got corrupt over time[17]; however, I have not managed to find any supporting evidence for this. In Hebrew, there was a form before the speaker's eyes, whereas in Greek, this is changed into the

[13] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 48–49.

[14] Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 53–54, 135–36; Nõmmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, 24–25; Nõmmik, *Iiobi Raamat*, 39, 144, 147–48; Nõmmik, *Hebrew Job through the Lens of Diachronic Poetics (Provisional Copy)*.

[15] Some Greek manuscripts do attest the plural form. The Vulgate agrees more with the Old Greek (*in horrore*), whereas the Peshitta has translated this as ܒܫܠܝܐ "in quiet, stillness".

[16] The same translation equivalent can be found in 33:15, a verse that has many other similarities with this one.

[17] Seow, *Job 1-21*, 402–3.

opposite: the speaker heard a voice and did not see any form before his eyes. And this fact the translator emphasises with καὶ οὐκ ἦν μορφὴ. Therefore, Eliphaz heard an audition instead of seeing a vision.

Now, let us look at all of the differences that in some way relate to the lowliness and mortality of man.
As mentioned before, "fear" was already inserted into the translation in verse 13. Colon 15b is paraphrased: תְּסַמֵּר "it bristles up, stands up" (about a single hair) is translated into plural ἔφριξαν "they quivered" (about the hairs and the flesh), because the translator changed the construct שַׂעֲרַת בְּשָׂרִי "the hair of my flesh" into μου τρίχες καὶ σάρκες "my hairs and fleshes". This results in a more intense expression of the physical effects of fear.
In 17a, the Hebrew יִצְדָּק "he is just" is translated into καθαρὸς ἔσται "he will be pure". In the parallel colon, the Hebrew verb יִטְהַר "he is pure" is translated with ἄμεμπτος "blameless" (the verb ἔσται is in 17a). The equivalence is unique but not improper in the context; ἄμεμπτος could also translate יִצְדָּק in 17a. For some reason, the translator has either switched the order of these characteristics or chosen to remove the mention of being just in this strophe.
In 17b, מֵעֹשֵׂהוּ "before his maker" is translated as ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ "from/in his actions" (possibly due to reading a passive participle[18]). With this, the repetition of "before God" is lost, however, the human factor of pureness and blamelessness is developed. Furthermore, in 20b, the MT מִבְּלִי מָשִׂים לְנֶגֶד יֹאבֵדוּ "without the one who sets (who pays attention?), they perish for forever" is replaced with παρὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι αὐτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς βοηθῆσαι ἀπώλοντο "because they were not able to help themselves, they perished". Dhorme thinks that the translator read מוֹשִׁיעַ "saviour" instead of מָשִׂים "considering; setting", thus translating βοηθῆσαι 'to help'[19]. Once again, the idea that human actions bring consequences of impurity or even death is developed.
In 18b, יָשִׂים "he puts, sets" is interpreted as ἐπενόησεν "he observed", toning down God's action.
In 19b, the Hebrew בֶּעָפָר יְסוֹדָם "their foundation (is) in the dust" is paraphrased and extended into αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πηλοῦ ἐσμεν "we are of the same clay", suggesting that the translator understood the foundations mentioned to be those of people not houses. Dhorme considers this translation a result of poor understanding of the Hebrew again[20] and Seow thinks that the Hebrew verb was misread as יָסַדְנוּ "we established"[21], whereas Heater thinks that the translator had no problem understanding and the translation is rather an intentional paraphrase or amplification and is inspired by other passages in Job (10:9a, 30:19, and 33:6; of these, he considers 33:6 as "the catalyst")[22]. This translation could well be inspired by these passages, although it has to be noted that at least in 30:19 and 33:6 the Greek translations are not literal and exhibit paraphrases.
In 19c, יְדֻכְּאוּם "they are crushed" is translated into third person singular in aorist: ἔπαισεν αὐτοὺς "he (the Lord) struck them"; Seow says that several witnesses, including the OG and the Syriac translation seem to attest to the reading יְדֻכְּאֵם "he crushes them" instead, i.e. without the *mater*[23]. Therefore, this difference may not be an intentional emphasising of God's destructive power but rather a text issue. However, in 21a, the translator writes ἐνεφύσησεν γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐξηράνθησαν "for he breathed on them and they perished" to replace the Hebrew (הֲלֹא־נָסַע יִתְרָם בָּם "their tent-cord is plucked up within them"). It is agreed that the Greek is with minor changes actually taken from Isa 40:24b, whose context is similar[24]. Fernández Marcos explains that the translator substituted the image for a more understandable one for a Hellenistic reader[25]. This change, therefore, is more intentional and also emphasises that it is God who has the destructive power. This change could be influenced by the reading of 19c.
In 20a, יֻכַּתּוּ "they are beaten, crushed" is paraphrased into οὐκέτι εἰσίν "they no longer exist", making the message of death clearer.

[18] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 52. He deems the translation nonsensical.
[19] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 54.
[20] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 53.
[21] Seow, *Job 1-21*, 406.
[22] Heater, *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job*, 45–46.
[23] Seow, 'Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job', 66.
[24] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 55; Heater, *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job*, 46–47.
[25] Fernández Marcos, 'The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job', 259.

15:11–16

The second addition that was made in the lowliness redaction has been identified in 15:11–16; this block of text divides into two strophes, the latter following the same structure, theme, and form as 4:17–19. The characteristics of this passage signalling a later addition are similar to those of chapter 4, for example, colometrical imbalance, terminological issues, and the whole addition disrupting the connection between verses 10 and 17[26].

In the Hebrew text, the motif of lowliness is expressed more so in the second strophe, having overlap with the second strophe of the first part of the addition in chapter 4. Once again, the possibility of a human being clean or righteous is questioned ("What are mortals, that they can be clean? Or those born of woman, that they can be righteous?"); however, this time, being clean or righteous before God is not specified in the first verse, like it was in chapter 4. Next, the fact that God does not trust His holy ones or heavens is mentioned, similarly to chapter 4. Finally, again, it is emphasised that if God does not even trust His holy ones, how much less does He trust a corrupt person ("how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, one who drinks iniquity like water!").
In the Greek translation, the first verse of the second strophe is syntactically stricter and the fact that not a single mortal can be blameless or in the right is more explicit ("For who, being mortal, can be blameless, or who can be in the right, born of woman?"). The other two verses are translated fairly faithfully.

In several verses of these two strophes, the translator has made minor changes and paraphrases, both syntactical and stylistic, that do not alter the meaning or message, therefore they do not need to be discussed in detail here.

Differences that are related to the consonantal text being misread or the Vorlage being different from the MT are the following. In 12b, the hapax verb יִרְזְמוּן "they wink, flash (?)" is translated as *ἐπήνεγκαν* "they brought, laid upon". It has been suggested that the translator read יְרוּמוּן "they are high, raised" instead[27]. In 15a, the singular בְּקְדֹשׁוֹ "in his holy one" (but *qere* is in plural: בִּקְדֹשָׁיו) is translated with the plural *κατὰ ἁγίων* "in holy ones", omitting the suffix. Neither of these bring any significant changes to the meaning of the text. Most of verse 11 is heavily paraphrased or even rewritten. The interrogative particle -הַ is left untranslated; this is curious, as marked questions are very often found at the beginning of strophes and the translator was definitely aware of that. Since verse 10 is completely untranslated, the omissions in this verse may be connected (difficult or even corrupt text in the Vorlage; this is further supported by the fact that Vulgate paraphrases as well[28]). While the Hebrew reads a rhetorical question that would assume a positive answer: המעט ממך תנחמות אל ודבר לאט עמך "Are the consolations of God too small for you or the word that deals gently with you", the Greek reads an accusation *ὀλίγα ὧν ἡμάρτηκας μεμαστίγωσαι, μεγάλως ὑπερβαλλόντως λελάληκας* "You have been scourged for few of the sins you have committed, you have spoken wildly extravagantly". Septuaginta Deutsch relays the opinion that *ὑπερβαλλόντως* could be a paraphrase of לא טַעַם "no discernment" instead of the לָאַט עִמָּךְ in the MT[29]. Dhorme suggests that the Greek translator may have interpreted תַּנְחֻמוֹת as "vengeances" (from the verb נָחַם "regret" in niphal and hithpael forms)[30], and thus "scourging" as a translation is not out of the question. The verb *λελάληκας* "you have spoken" has an association with וְדָבָר "the word" in Hebrew. Although verse 11 is markedly different in Greek, the rewriting also resulted in not translating אֵל "the Lord", which is almost always translated in Old Greek[31].

[26] See more closely in Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 246–62.
[27] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 212; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 243; Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 246.
[28] *numquid grande est ut consoletur te Deus sed verba tua prava hoc prohibent* "Is it a great matter that God should comfort thee? but thy wicked words hinder this."
[29] Kepper and Witte, 'Job. Das Buch Ijob / Hiob', 2091. Cf. also Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 212.
[30] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 212.
[31] Mangin, 'Le Texte Court', 49–50.

Gehman sees the rewriting as theological, since implying that God's consolations could be too small is offensive[32]. Orlinsky (later also Gorea[33]) sees no reason for reading the Hebrew differently and argues for a conscious change of clause-types. Thus, the meaning of the Hebrew is "Haven't you received enough consolations from God?" which the translator turned into an accusatory "For few of your sins have you been punished".[34]

Now, lastly, let us look at the differences that are related to the lowliness of man. In 14a, the Hebrew interrogative מָה seems to have been read or interpreted as מִי and thus translated with τίς "who?". This makes the question stricter in implying that mortals can in no way be blameless. The Hebrew verb יִזְכֶּה "he is clean" is translated periphrastically with ἔσται ἄμεμπτος "he will be blameless". This is not a common equivalent; however, the lexical choice connects this verse to 4:17. In 16a, the *niphal* participle of the very rare וְנֶאֱלָח "and corrupt" is translated with the adjective καὶ ἀκάθαρτος "and impure". This choice is contextual (lowliness, impurity of man) but also stylistic, creating a root-repetition with 15b (οὐ καθαρὸς).

25:1–6

The third piece of the additions made in the lowliness redaction has been identified as the whole of chapter 25. Once again, the addition has two strophes, of which the second one follows the topic and form of those in chapter 4 and 15. Besides the obvious thematic overlap with the discussed passages in chapters 4 and 15, this addition has some similar problems, like colometrical imbalance, especially in the first and last verses[35].

In the Hebrew text, the first strophe says that although dominion and fear are with God, He does make peace in heaven. His armies are countless, but He also shines His light on everyone. In the second strophe we see the already familiar questioning of whether a mortal person can be righteous or pure ("How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?"). This time, being righteous before God is mentioned in the first colon but not in the second. Once again, it is explained, that God does not even find the moon or the stars pure, therefore a human, who is a maggot and a worm is worse.
In the Old Greek translation, the first unit makes God's nature more explicit. He does not make peace in heaven but instead keeps making the entire earth (the creation process is not over). You cannot find anybody who would think that brigands get any respite, and there is no one who does not get ambushed by Him.
In the second strophe, the first verse is quite similar to the Hebrew, although in the second colon, instead of a human being pure, the question asks whether a human can purify himself ("For how can a mortal be right before the Lord? Or who, born of woman, could purify himself?"). The heavenly bodies that are not pure before God do not shine if He so instructs. The final statement of a human being low, has been summarised by one colon: a human being is rot.

We can observe differences that are due to the translator vocalising the consonantal text differently. In 2a, what is usually read as a *hiphil* infinitive absolute of the verb מָשַׁל ("to rule"), הַמְשֵׁל "dominion, rulership", was read by the translator as the interrogative particle -הַ and the noun מָשָׁל "proverb; poem" and thus translated as τί ... προοίμιον "what … preamble/beginning/premonition?". This makes sense on the translator's part because speeches and thematic-formal units often begin with questions, although the interrogative particle -הַ is not translated with τί too often. In 5a, The Greek ἐπιφαύσκει "it shines" is a result of reading and vocalising the Hebrew hapax as יָהֵל, stemming from הָלַל "to shine". Dhorme even suggests emending the MT accordingly while Nõmmik disagrees and suggests staying with the MT reading.[36]

[32] Gehman, 'The Theological Approach of the Greek Translator of Job 1-15', 232–33.
[33] Gorea, *Job Repensé Ou Trahi?*, 40–41.
[34] Orlinsky, 'Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job: Chapter II', 245–46.
[35] Detailed description in Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 387–92.
[36] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 369; Nõmmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, 68.

There are also differences that are either due to misreading the consonantal text or the actual Vorlage being slightly different from the MT. For example, in 2b, the noun שָׁלוֹם "peace" seems to have been read as שָׁלֵם "complete, whole" and thus translated with *τὴν σύμπασαν* "the entire (earth)"[37]. This could suggest that the reading did not have a *mater lectionis*. In 5a, the preposition עַד "until" is read as a verb יָעַד "he appointed" and translated as *συντάσσει* "he instructs".

Lastly, differences related to the lowliness of man and God's (unforgiving, fearsome) nature need to be discussed; most of these are actually related to (mis)reading of the consonantal text. In 3a, the question הֵישׁ "is there" is in Greek represented by *μὴ γάρ τις ὑπολάβοι ὅτι* "for is there anyone who thinks"[38], making the question regarding God's fearsome nature stricter. At first glance, the Hebrew word מִסְפָּר "number" has nothing to do with the phrase *ἐστὶν παρέλκυσις* "there is delay". It could be possible that the translator read מִסְפֵּד "mourning, wailing" instead of מִסְפָּר "number" and interpreted the colon as meaning "is there mourning for his armies?". Thus, the translation "is there anyone who thinks that delay/respite exists for brigands?" would be an emphasising paraphrase based on the (mis)reading. In 3b, the Hebrew אוֹרֵהוּ "his light" is translated as *ἔνεδρα παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ* "ambush(es) from him". Dhorme and Hartley agreeably suggest that the translator read אוֹרְבוֹ (present participle with suffix of the verb אָרַב "to ambush"). This is especially plausible since the noun אוֹר "light" does not appear with the same personal suffix הוּ- in any other passage in Job. Dhorme even suggests emending the MT accordingly.[39] Witte and Nõmmik disagree on the basis of the cosmological parallelism, since elements of "light" are mentioned in verse 5 as well[40]. In 4b, the question וּמַה־יִּזְכֶּה "and how can be pure?" is paraphrased into *ἢ τίς ἂν ἀποκαθαρίσαι ἑαυτὸν* "or who could purify himself?". This is probably due to vocalising the verb in *piel* instead of *qal*[41]; the question particle may have been translated differently to add variation instead of the repetition (or it is once again read as a different interrogative). The translation changes the meaning slightly, as it suggests that not only is a mortal not born pure, but they cannot purify themselves in the course of the life either (this is a motif that is repeated in the Greek translation). Dafni has analysed the vocabulary of Job's translation and said that verse 25:4 "is not simply a repetition of LXX-Job 15:14 but its completion, because it contemplates reconciliation between God and man through human purification. The question of whether or not human beings can purify themselves implies dependence on God's forgiveness and redemption."[42] In 6a, the repeating אֱנוֹשׁ "mortal" is translated as *ἄνθρωπος* "human" this time, opting for variation instead of a strophe-framing repetition. The Hebrew רִמָּה "worm" is directly connected with the verb רָמַם "to be rotten" and is translated accordingly as *σαπρία* "rot"[43]. 6b is left untranslated, possibly since it repeats the message of the first colon and the monocolon that is left marks the end of the unit and the whole speech structurally.

40:3–5

The short answer of Job in chapter 40 is thought to belong to this lowliness redaction as well.

Thematically, it is much simpler, the lowliness of man is explicitly mentioned only in verse 4a, where Job admits that he is of small account.

The Greek translation, which at first look seems to be longer than the Hebrew, translates and paraphrases verse 2 of Hebrew in 4a. The translator has connected both God's and Job's short speeches into one: Job's. The lowliness of man/Job has been emphasised from "I am of small

[37] Cf. also Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 368; Witte, *Philologische Notizen Zu Hiob 21 - 27*, 124; Kepper and Witte, 'Job. Das Buch Ijob / Hiob', 2101.

[38] Cf. also Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 368.

[39] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 368–69; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 356. BHS has this proposed emendation in the apparatus and documents another, namely אִמְרֵהוּ "his word, speech = command?".

[40] Witte, *Das Buch Hiob*, 389; Nõmmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, 68.

[41] Cf. also Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 369.

[42] Dafni, 'Βροτός. A Favourite Word of Homer in the Septuagint Version of Job', 55.

[43] Similarly in 21:26b.

account" into "being nothing" (οὐθὲν ὤν). Other differences are more to do with the usual smaller paraphrases, clarifying, or syntactical additions. The phrase ולא אענה "and I will not answer" in 5a has been left untranslated, possibly due to it not being very logical in the context (God not answering would be more suitable).

42:2–6*

The final unit of text added in this lowliness redaction is in the beginning of chapter 42, in verses 2–6*. This is once again a short reply from Job to God, but long enough to be divided into two strophes.

In the Hebrew text, Job admits that God can do everything and that no one can change His actions. It references questions from God's first speech and then answers them: Job has hidden counsel without knowledge; he has uttered words that he did not actually understand. At the end of this speech, Job admits that he despises himself and he repents in dust and ashes.
In the Old Greek translation, Job also admits that God can do anything and that nothing is impossible for Him. However, Greek Job does not admit that he has spoken words without knowledge. Greek Job asks who hides counsel from God or even thinks to hide words from God. The translator brings verse 3 closer to the Greek text of 38:2, by adding colon 3b. Job then asks, if there is anyone who could tell him what he does not know. At the end of the speech, Job also admits that he has disparaged himself and he has wasted away, and now he regards himself dust and ashes.

Verse 2b has been paraphrased, influenced by Greek Gen 18:14 (μὴ ἀδυνατεῖ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ῥῆμα;); the paraphrase makes God's power more emphasised. In verse 3, just like in chapter 38, the phrase בלי דעת "without knowledge" is not translated but is instead replaced with φειδόμενος δὲ ῥημάτων "sparing with words" (with συνέχων δὲ ῥήματα ἐν καρδίᾳ "confining words in his heart" in chapter 38). In both chapters, the phrase οἴεται κρύπτειν "thinks to hide them" is added, only the pronoun is different.[44] Hebrew 42:3b has changed from a confession ("Therefore have I uttered what I did not understand") into a question ("But who will tell me what I did not know"). Verse 3d (translating Hebrew 3c) is made longer in Greek, but the meaning remains. In 4a, the translator has added the vocative form κύριε "Lord", adding emphasis to the beginning of the second strophe. Differing from the beginnings of chapter 38 and chapter 40, where והודיעני is translated with different forms of ἀποκρίνομαι, in 42:4b the translation equivalent is με δίδαξον "teach me". Therefore, in some ways, the translator wanted to bring this section closer to chapter 38, and yet in some ways, distanced them. In verse 6a, ונחמתי "I repent" has become καὶ ἐτάκην "and I wasted away"[45], while in 6b, the translator has added some clarification (ἥγημαι δὲ ἐμαυτὸν). Thus, Job's suffering is emphasised.

Lowliness redaction in Old Greek Job

Now that we have looked at the supposed lowliness redaction passages individually, we should investigate them as a whole, to see, what commonalities and repeating motifs the Old Greek translator saw.

In the first and third passages, the translator has made (intentionally or unintentionally) a human's actions relevant to his/her purity before God. More specifically, these were: in 4:17b, a human being pure in his own actions (not before the Lord like in Hebrew; this can be due to a difference in reading/vocalising), in 4:20b, humans not being able to help themselves leads to death (in Hebrew: they perish without notice/being noticed; once again, a different reading may be the reason behind this), and in 25:4b, a mortal cannot purify themselves (in Hebrew: a mortal cannot be pure; this can be due to a difference in vocalising).

[44] Cf. also Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 645; Heater, *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job*, 122.
[45] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 646 suggests that the translator double translates אמאס "I despise myself".

Next, let us look at some of the keywords used in these passages (bolded in the Greek and Hebrew texts).

For example, the noun אֱנוֹשׁ "mortal". The word is not exclusive to this redaction in the book of Job and occurs in its singular abstract form 20 times, in several layers (*à la* Witte) of the Job-poem: 4:17 (lowliness); 5:17 (original?); 7:1.17 (original); 9:2 (majesty or righteousness)); 10:4.5 (original); 13:9 (original); 14:19 (original); 15:14 (lowliness); 25:4.6 (lowliness); 28:4.13 (majesty); 32:8 (Elihu), 33:12.26 (Elihu); and 36:25 (Elihu). It has been left untranslated by the Old Greek translator once, namely in 13:9; the word appears twice in passages that are asterisked (10:4b and 14:19b in 14:18–19).
It has been translated with βροτός "mortal" in the following passages: 4:17a, 9:2b[46], 15:14a, 25:4a, 28:4b, 28:13a, 32:8a, 33:12b, and 36:25b. It has to be noted here that all of these occur in the redactions and not in the original layer of the Job-poem.
The word has been translated with the more general ἄνθρωπος "human being" in 5:17a, 7:1a, 7:17a, 25:6a (variation instead of repetition), 33:26c. Three of these are in the original layer, one of these in the lowliness redaction, but more than likely translated with ἄνθρωπος to avoid repetition, and one in a speech of Elihu. More often, this general noun translates אֲנָשִׁים/אִישׁ in Job.
In 10:5b, which is in the original layer, it has been translated with the adjective ἀνθρώπινος "human, of mankind".
As a generalisation, therefore, it seems that when אֱנוֹשׁ is in a later addition, whether lowliness or other, the context motivates the translator to prefer βροτός "mortal" instead of the simple ἄνθρωπος "human being".

A phrase that Witte has identified to be only used in the lowliness redaction and in 14:1, is יְלוּד אִשָּׁה "born of woman"[47]. In all of its three occurrences, it is translated with γεννητὸς γυναικός (that is 14:1a, 15:14b, 25:4b). In the lowliness redaction passages, the phrase is in the second colon, while אֱנוֹשׁ is in the first one. Contrarily, outside of lowliness redaction (14:1), the phrase is in the first colon and together with אָדָם, not אֱנוֹשׁ. The Greek translator has translated the latter with βροτός γεννητὸς γυναικός (therefore still keeping in mind the connection of these two words/phrases). 14:1b also exhibits the phrase קְצַר יָמִים "few of days", which the translator translates with ὀλιγόβιος "short-lived". Independently[48], the translator has used the same phrase in 11:12b (ἄνθρωπος in the first colon) and γεννητὸς γυναικός ὀλιγόβιος in 11:2c (δίκαιος in the second colon)[49], which is an additional colon to the verse[50].
Thus, due to some common keywords[51] and possibly difficult Hebrew text in chapter 11, the translator made connections with the lowliness redaction and with the beginning of chapter 14.

In Hebrew, the first three passages all have the verb יִצְדָּק, however, the Greek translator does not translate the same way in each case. They translate with δίκαιος in 15:14 and 25:4, but with καθαρός in 4:17 (linking with 25:4b and 15:14b). The rest, dealing with being not trustworthy or righteous before God is translated quite faithfully. In Hebrew, the three passages are linked with אֱנוֹשׁ and יִצְדָּק, in Greek, they are linked with βροτός and καθαρός. As the discussion of chapter 11 showed, the translator associated יִצְדָּק with this lowliness motif as well.

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[46] 9:2b = 25:4a (וּמַה־יִּצְדַּק אֱנוֹשׁ עִם־אֵל). The Greek translator varies only slightly: πῶς γὰρ ἔσται δίκαιος βροτὸς **παρὰ κυρίῳ**; and πῶς γὰρ ἔσται δίκαιος βροτὸς **ἔναντι κυρίου**; Although this question is identical to those in lowliness redaction, Witte nor Nõmmik have identified it to be from this redaction.

[47] Witte, *Vom Leiden Zur Lehre*, 94–95.

[48] The verse in Hebrew has some of the keywords that may have prompted this translation: **ואיש** נבוב ילבב ועיר פרא **אדם יולד**: "But a stupid **man** will get understanding, when a wild donkey's colt is **born** a **man**."

[49] The Hebrew verse has some common keywords again: הרב דברים לא יענה ואם־**איש** שפתים **יצדק**: "Should a multitude of words go unanswered, and a **man** full of talk be judged **right**?"

[50] Cox, 'Job', 388 has suggested that the Greek comes from 14:1.

[51] In addition to those already mentioned, verse 4 has זַךְ "pure" (καθαρός) and בַּר "clean, pure" (ἄμεμπτος), verse 11 has מְתֵי־שָׁוְא "worthless men" (ἔργα ἀνόμων "the works of transgressors"), and the beginning of the speech in general frequently mentions God, etc.

Summary

It can be said that the Old Greek translator of Job recognised the motif of lowliness and even utilised it outside of the passages considered to be in the lowliness redaction (in chapter 11), when they were confronted with difficult text but familiar keywords. The translator operated on a larger level than a single verse and could bring up references from various parts of the book.

In the first three passages (4:12–21, 15:11–16, 25:2–6), the translator "misread" the consonantal text quite often. On its own, this could suggest that the *Vorlage* was badly written in the newer parts. However, similar "misreadings" can be found in basically all of the speeches in the book of Job. Before any conclusive statements, other redactional layers should be summarised similarly to the lowliness redaction as well.

In the first passage of lowliness redaction, the translator sensed the transition to be too abrupt and made changes so that the previous section of the speech had a conclusion and the new lowliness section (description of Eliphaz's vision) had a formally marked introduction. Other textual problems caused differences in the translation, including those related to lowliness. For example, some of these are due to the *Vorlage* possibly not having a *mater lectionis* in certain readings.

Some of the keywords of lowliness have fixed or almost fixed equivalents in Greek. The keyword אֱנוֹשׁ "mortal" has no fixed equivalent overall; however, when it appears in the redactions of Job, the equivalent is overwhelmingly βροτός "mortal". On occasion, ἄνθρωπος "human" is used, for example when the translator possibly wants to avoid repetition in a strophe. The phrase יְלוּד אִשָּׁה "born of woman" does have a fixed equivalent (γεννητὸς γυναικὸς) that the translator also uses outside of the lowliness redaction, independently of the Hebrew.

The first three passages of lowliness redaction are in Hebrew connected with the keywords אֱנוֹשׁ "mortal" and יִצְדַּק "to be righteous". In Greek, however, the link is made with the words βροτός "mortal" and καθαρός "pure". Further, ἄμεμπτος "blameless" links chapters 4 and 15 with chapters 9 and 11; both 9 and 11 also have δίκαιος "just". The two later passages in chapter 40 and 42 are not explicitly linked to the first three passages nor with each other in either language.

The translator has emphasised human actions in the context of purity before God, although the catalyst for these and related changes was probably different vocalisation/reading of the consonantal text. Humankind being made of clay and vulnerable before God was also brought in through interpretation. Therefore, certain readings and vocalisations of the consonantal text influenced the translator to bring in changes on a larger scale and in other passages of the text.

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Appendix: Hebrew and Greek texts

4:12–21[52]

10a	σθένος λέοντος, φωνὴ δὲ λεαίνης,	שאגת אריה וקול שחל
10b	γαυρίαμα δὲ δρακόντων ἐσβέσθη·	ושני כפירים נתעו:
11a	μυρμηκολέων ὤλετο παρὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν βοράν,	ליש אבד מבלי־טרף
11b	σκύμνοι δὲ λεόντων ἔλιπον ἀλλήλους.	ובני לביא יתפרדו:
12a	εἰ δέ τι ῥῆμα ἀληθινὸν ἐγεγόνει ἐν λόγοις σου,	ואלי דבר יגנב
12b	οὐθὲν ἄν σοι τούτων κακὸν ἀπήντησεν.	ותקח אזני שמץ מנהו:
12c	πότερον οὐ δέξεταί μου τὸ οὖς ἐξαίσια παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ;	
13a	φόβος δὲ καὶ ἠχὼ νυκτερινή,	בשעפים מחזינות לילה
13b	ἐπιπίπτων φόβος ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώπους,	בנפל תרדמה על־אנשים:
14a	φρίκη μοι συνήντησεν καὶ τρόμος	פחד קראני ורעדה
14b	καὶ μεγάλως μου τὰ ὀστᾶ συνέσεισεν,	ורב עצמותי הפחיד:
15a	καὶ πνεῦμα ἐπὶ πρόσωπόν μου ἐπῆλθεν,	ורוח על־פני יחלף
15b	ἔφριξαν δέ μου τρίχες καὶ σάρκες.	תסמר שערת בשרי:
16a	ἀνέστην, καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγνων·	יעמד | ולא־אכיר מראהו
16b	εἶδον, καὶ οὐκ ἦν μορφὴ πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν μου,	תמונה לנגד עיני
16c	ἀλλ᾽ ἢ αὔραν καὶ φωνὴν ἤκουον	דממה וקול אשמע:
17a	Τί γάρ; **μὴ καθαρὸς** ἔσται **βροτὸς** ἐναντίον κυρίου	**האנוש** מאלוה **יצדק**
17b	ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ **ἄμεμπτος ἀνήρ**;	אם מעשהו **יטהר־גבר**:
18a	εἰ κατὰ παίδων αὐτοῦ οὐ πιστεύει,	הן בעבדיו לא יאמין
18b	κατὰ δὲ ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ σκολιόν τι ἐπενόησεν,	ובמלאכיו ישים תהלה:
19a	τοὺς δὲ κατοικοῦντας οἰκίας πηλίνας,	אף | שכני בתי־חמר
19b	ἐξ ὧν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ **πηλοῦ ἐσμεν**,	אשר־בעפר יסודם
19c	ἔπαισεν αὐτοὺς σητὸς τρόπον·	ידכאום לפני־עש:
20a	καὶ ἀπὸ πρωίθεν ἕως ἑσπέρας οὐκέτι εἰσίν,	מבקר לערב יכתו
20b	παρὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι αὐτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς βοηθῆσαι ἀπώλοντο·	מבלי משים לנצח יאבדו:
21a	ἐνεφύσησεν γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐξηράνθησαν,	הלא־נסע יתרם בם
21b	ἀπώλοντο παρὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν αὐτοὺς σοφίαν.	ימותו ולא בחכמה:

[52] NETS: The strength of the lion, and the sound of the lioness, / and the arrogance of dragons was extinguished; / the ant-lion perished for lack of food, / and the lions' whelps abandoned one another. / But if there had been anything truthful in your words, / nothing bad in them would have met you. / Will my ear not receive extraordinary things from him? / Now there was terror and an echo sound in the night– / when terror falls on mortals; / then shuddering befell me, and trembling, / and my bones shook mightily. / And a spirit came upon my face, / and my hair and flesh bristled up. / I arose, and I did not recognize it. / I looked and there was no shape before my eyes, / but I heard a breeze, and a voice: / 'What? Can a mortal be pure before the Lord, / or a man be blameless on the basis of his actions?' / If he does not fully believe in his servants, / and he took full note of any crookedness in his angels, / those that inhabit houses of clay– / being their offspring, we ourselves too are of the same clay– / he struck them like a moth! / And so between morning and evening they ceased to exist; / they perished, because they were not able to help themselves. / For he breathed on them, and they withered; / they perished, because they did not possess wisdom.

NRSVUE: The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion, / and the teeth of the young lions are broken. / The strong lion perishes for lack of prey, / and the whelps of the lioness are scattered. / Now a word came stealing to me; / my ear received the whisper of it. / Amid thoughts from visions of the night, / when deep sleep falls on mortals, / dread came upon me and trembling, / which made all my bones shake. / A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh bristled. / It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. / A form was before my eyes; / there was silence; then I heard a voice: / Can mortals be righteous before God? / Can humans be pure before their Maker? / Even in his servants he puts no trust, / and his angels he charges with error; / how much more those who live in houses of clay, / whose foundation is in the dust, / who are crushed like a moth. / Between morning and evening they are destroyed; / they perish forever without any regarding it. / Their tent cord is plucked up within them, / and they die devoid of wisdom.

15:11–16[53]

11a	ὀλίγα ὧν ἡμάρτηκας μεμαστίγωσαι,	המעט ממך תנחמות אל
11b	μεγάλως ὑπερβαλλόντως λελάληκας.	ודבר לאט עמך:
12a	τί ἐτόλμησεν ἡ καρδία σου,	מה־יקחך לבך
12b	ἢ τί ἐπήνεγκαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί σου,	ומה־ירזמון עיניך:
13a	ὅτι θυμὸν ἔρρηξας ἔναντι κυρίου,	כי־תשיב אל־אל רוחך
13b	ἐξήγαγες δὲ ἐκ στόματος ῥήματα τοιαῦτα;	והצאת מפיך מלין:
14a	τίς γὰρ ὢν **βροτός**, ὅτι ἔσται **ἄμεμπτος**,	מה־**אנוש** כי־יזכה
14b	ἢ ὡς ἐσόμενος **δίκαιος γεννητὸς γυναικός**;	וכי־**יצדק ילוד אשה**:
15a	εἰ κατὰ ἁγίων οὐ πιστεύει,	הן בקדשו[54] לא יאמין
15b	οὐρανὸς δὲ **οὐ καθαρὸς** ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ.	ושמים לא־זכו בעיניו:
16a	ἔα δὲ ἐβδελυγμένος καὶ **ἀκάθαρτος**,	אף כי־נתעב ונאלח
16b	**ἀνὴρ** πίνων ἀδικίας ἴσα ποτῷ.	**איש**־שתה כמים עולה:

25:1–6[55]

2a	Τί γὰρ προοίμιον ἢ φόβος παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ,	המשל ופחד עמו
2b	ὁ ποιῶν τὴν σύμπασαν ἐν ὑψίστῳ;	עשה שלום במרומיו:
3a	μὴ γάρ τις ὑπολάβοι ὅτι ἐστὶν παρέλκυσις πειρατᾶς;	היש מספר לגדודיו
3b	ἐπὶ τίνας δὲ οὐκ ἐπελεύσεται ἔνεδρα παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ;	ועל־מי לא־יקום אורהו:
4a	πῶς γὰρ ἔσται **δίκαιος βροτὸς** ἔναντι κυρίου;	המה־יצדק **אנוש** עם־אל
4b	ἢ τίς ἂν **ἀποκαθαρίσαι** ἑαυτὸν **γεννητὸς γυναικός**;	ומה־יזכה **ילוד אשה**:
5a	εἰ σελήνῃ συντάσσει, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιφαύσκει·	הן עד־ירח ולא יאהיל
5b	ἄστρα δὲ **οὐ καθαρὰ** ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ.	וכוכבים לא־זכו בעיניו:
6a	ἔα δέ, **ἄνθρωπος σαπρία**	אף כי־**אנוש רמה**
6b		**ובן־אדם תולעה**: פ

[53] NETS: You have been scourged for few of the sins you have committed; / you have spoken wildly extravagantly. / What did your heart dare, / or what did your eyes set themselves upon, / that you burst forth in rage before the Lord / and brought out such remarks from your mouth? / For who, being mortal, can be blameless, / or who can be in the right, born of woman? / If he places no faith at all in his holy ones, / and heaven is not pure before him ... / But aha, abominable and impure, / a man drinking injustices like a drink!
NRSVUE: Are the consolations of God too small for you / or the word that deals gently with you? / Why does your heart carry you away, / and why do your eyes flash, / so that you turn your spirit against God, / and let such words go out of your mouth? / What are mortals, that they can be clean? / Or those born of woman, that they can be righteous? / God puts no trust even in his holy ones, / and the heavens are not clean in his sight; / how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, / one who drinks iniquity like water!

[54] Qere: בקדשיו

[55] NETS: Why, what preamble or fear is there from him, / he who on high keeps making the entire earth? / For would there be anyone who thinks there is respite for brigands? / And upon whom will not come ambushes from him? / For how can a mortal be right before the Lord? / Or who, born of woman, could purify himself? / If he instructs the moon, then it does not shine, / and the stars are not pure before him. / But alas, a human being is rot!
NRSVUE: Dominion and fear are with God; / he makes peace in his high heaven. / Is there any number to his armies? / Upon whom does his light not arise? / How then can a mortal be righteous before God? / How can one born of woman be pure? / If even the moon is not bright / and the stars are not pure in his sight, / how much less a mortal, who is a maggot, / and a human being, who is a worm!

40:3–5[56]

1	※	ויען יהוה את־איוב ויאמר:
2a	※	הרב עם־שדי יסור
2b	※	מוכיח אלוה יעננה: פ
3	Ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰὼβ λέγει τῷ κυρίῳ	ויען איוב את־יהוה ויאמר:
4a	Τί ἔτι ἐγὼ κρίνομαι νουθετούμενος καὶ ἐλέγχων κύριον	הן **קלתי** מה אשיבך
4b	ἀκούων τοιαῦτα **οὐθὲν ὤν**;	ידי שמתי למו־פי:
4c	ἐγὼ δὲ τίνα ἀπόκρισιν δῶ πρὸς ταῦτα;	
4d	χεῖρα θήσω ἐπὶ στόματί μου·	
5a	ἅπαξ λελάληκα, ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ δευτέρῳ οὐ προσθήσω.	אחת דברתי ולא אענה
5b		ושתים ולא אוסיף: פ

42:2–6*[57]

2a	οἶδα ὅτι πάντα δύνασαι	ידעת[58] כי־כל תוכל
2b	ἀδυνατεῖ δέ σοι οὐθέν	ולא־יבצר ממך מזמה:
3a	τίς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ κρύπτων σε βουλήν	מי זה ׀ מעלים עצה בלי דעת
3b	φειδόμενος δὲ ῥημάτων καὶ σὲ οἴεται κρύπτειν	לכן הגדתי ולא אבין נפלאות
3c	τίς δὲ ἀναγγελεῖ μοι ἃ οὐκ ᾔδειν	ממני ולא אדע:
3d	μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ ἃ οὐκ ἠπιστάμην	
4a	ἄκουσον δέ μου κύριε ἵνα κἀγὼ λαλήσω	שמע־נא ואנכי אדבר
4b	ἐρωτήσω δέ σε σὺ δέ με δίδαξον	אשאלך והודיעני:
5a	ἀκοὴν μὲν ὠτὸς ἤκουόν σου τὸ πρότερον	לשמע־אזן שמעתיך
5b	νυνὶ δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός μου ἑόρακέν σε	ועתה עיני ראתך:
6a	διὸ ἐφαύλισα ἐμαυτὸν καὶ ἐτάκην	על־כן אמאס ונחמתי
6b	**ἤγημαι δὲ ἐμαυτὸν γῆν καὶ σποδόν**	**על־עפר ואפר**: פ

[56] NETS: Why do I still contend—rebuked even while confuting the Lord, / hearing such things—when I am nothing? / And I, what answer shall I give to these things? / I will lay my hand on my mouth. / Once I have spoken, but to a second time I will not add.
NRSVUE (from verse 2): Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? / Anyone who argue with God must respond./ … / See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? / I lay my hand on my mouth. / I have spoken once, and I will not answer, / twice but will proceed no further.

[57] NETS: I know that you can do anything, / and 'nothing is impossible for you.' (Gen 18:14) / For who is it that hides counsel from you, / and, sparing with words, even thinks to hide them from you? / But who will tell me what I did not know, / great and marvelous things that I did not understand? / Yet hear me, Lord, that I too may speak, / and I will question you; and you, teach me! / Formerly I used to hear an ear's report of you, / but now my eye has seen you; / therefore I disparaged myself and wasted away, / and I regard myself dust and ashes.
NRSVUE: I know that you can do all things / and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. / 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' / Therefore have I uttered what I did not understand, / things too wonderful for me that I did not know. / 'Hear, and I will speak; / I will question you, and you declare to me.' / I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, / but now my eye sees you; / therefore I despise myself / and repent in dust and ashes.

[58] Qere: ידעתי

Project Summary: (T)ex(t)crement

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The military hero has been, and still is, a masculine ideal. The strong, courageous hero is found also in the Biblical corpus, especially in the heroic portrayals of the historical books where the tales of successful military men, some of them kings, mirrors one of the prevailing masculine ideals. These ideals are displayed in texts from the entire ANE-area. Vulnerability, however, has little to do with the ideal man. Still, it seems that vulnerability, in its different shapes and forms, is a textual companion of the warrior hero in the prophetic texts.

In my PhD-project, with the working title *Worthless Men: Vulnerable Warriors in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond,* I look at the how the prophets, mainly Isaiah and Jeremiah, often portray their military men as vulnerable. This vulnerability can be depicted as cowardice, weakness, pain, fear, they are compared to women in general, and remarkably to women giving birth.

My study is firmly rooted in the historical and socio-cultural context of the time when the texts are generally thought to be situated. I will deal with the history of motifs and ideas and how they can be found both in ancient Israel and in the surrounding cultures, generally summarized as the ANE, including the NA empire and Mesopotamian literature.

I use theories about hegemonic masculinity to look at the different ideals present and especially what values and norms are connected to the context of warfare. The first part of my project is focused on the warrior heroes of the HB (the *gibbôr*/*gibbôrim*) and how they are portrayed both in the historical books and the prophetic corpus. I continue with an overview of how military masculinity is portrayed in texts from outside the HB.

In the chapter entitled “Grote(xt)squeries” where the submitted text belongs, the vulnerable warriors of the prophetic corpus are in focus. A large part of this chapter is dedicated to the warriors giving birth and in other ways being feminized. The theory of the *grotesque* (Bakhtin) will be used in this chapter as a tool to better understand the function of the vulnerability in the texts, and the belittling of the heroes as a rhetorical tool in order to explain and handle different crisis and defeat (the exile in particular) throughout their history.

I also use the grotesque perspective to talk about the change in masculine ideals from the military masculinity of the monarchy which is no longer applicable after the ultimate military failure that was the exile. In the creative confusion of the exile the prophetic texts apply grotesque imagery to portray

Mainly the grotesque challenge the fantasy of the intact, impenetrable, and dignified male body, revealing instead a body that is destabilized and grotesquely undone.

Introduction

This paper is part of my PhD-project which is approaching its final stage. What you have here is part of a chapter which I have shortened in order to fit the requirements of OTSEM. The title for the entire chapter “Grote(xt)squeries” (hence the play on words in the title of this chapter) and there I look at how the warriors when described as vulnerable are feminized in the imagery of mainly Isaiah and Jeremiah. However, in this text I move outside the feminizing imagery for the most part and focus on other ways the warriors are described when they are not successful or deliberately belittled by the author(s).

I have taken out two short sections from this text which are to be part of the chapter but there are still some allusions to it in the introduction or summary, one is “Being devoured” about the enemy as a monster, and the other is “Burying or unburying the dead” about the grotesque aspects of dead bodies in metaphoric imagery.

I did’t have time to finish the bibliography, so if there is a particular title you are wondering about, either ask in person or send me an email at: sara.jarlemyr@ctr.lu.se.

Points of discussion:

How does the theory engage with the texts?

Are there any theoretical considerations/problems not included?

General inspiration and advice is always welcome.

Thank you for taking the time to read my text!

Best,

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(T)ex(t)crement

Drinking and Devouring Mighty Men

While the feminizing imagery we have looked at thus far is an effective and therefore frequently recurring tool used by the authors/editors to portray the warriors as vulnerable, there are a few other strategies and some of which we shall turn to now. If the feminized men are vulnerable because they are acting like women, then the men we meet here are vulnerable because they are unable to fulfill their task because of bodily issues and limitations.[1]

The act of drinking alcohol or celebrating is not in itself a derogatory or reprehensible activity, but it does seem particularly inconvenient if you are either a) a decision maker or b) a warrior about to go into battle. To help us understand the function which the drinking and feasting plays we shall remind ourselves of the trope where the *gibborîm* are either the means of defeat or of success. For the authors, they are simply a tool for conveying either their superiority or immanent defeat which is emphasized by way of recounting their activities, who they are working for, or their ability to adhere to the prevailing norms. If they are sent by Yahweh their adversaries are chanceless, and likewise if Yahweh is against them, they will not be victorious.

We shall be returning to the analytical tool of the grotesque, but also, as there are quite a few prophetic texts which share traits with the medieval "feast of fools" that Bakhtin also built his theory upon—therefore, here we will also discuss the carnival. In his book on Rabelais, he expands on the carnivalesque imagery, and we will especially take note of some things which signify the popular-festive culture's festivities. These feasts are centered around eating and drinking, which is an activity that is connected to the grotesque body. Basically, the grotesque body's connection to the carnival is characterized by the fact that its reproductive, digestive, excretory functions are emphasized and through these functions their intimate connections to each other and the world are illustrated.[2]

For clarity we shall briefly repeat the salient features which distinguish the carnival. Firstly, there is an abundance of food and drink, so much so that it gives the impression of transcending the occasion—a feast for the world. While the carnival can, in theory at least, exist without the grotesque and vice versa, they are often connected. Also, as already mentioned, the carnival often has direct or indirect connection with the lower regions of the body—which you can imagine often results in grotesque imagery. The open mouth and the swallowing are images which are found on the border between the food and the body, the act of devouring l erases the line between body and food and they become one.[3] Coincidentally,

[1] In this section we have by and large left the stricter designation of the warrior man (*gibbôr*) to include a more general group of elite men, of which the warriors were part as argued previously.
[2] Black 2011, 97.
[3] Bachtin 2007, 262.

swallowing is one aspect which binds this section together, whether it be people feasting on food and drink, Sheol opening its gullet, or enemies devouring like monsters.

So far, we have discussed the abundance of food and drink, the connection to the lower regions, the open mouth, which are all carnivalesque features, but the carnival is also a feast for the people. When people gather during carnivals they act as one unit, according to Bakhtin. And as a collective the limits between the individuals are blurred. Status and class are no longer issues and together they perceive themselves as one immortal body.[4] This is an interesting contrast to the grotesque body where the united body falls apart as the narrative shifts from having one large body in celebratory synchronicity into individual bodies who start to act as bodies do, grotesquely.

Because of the temporary or even liminal character of the feast, status reversal is also often part of the people's celebrations. The king and the servant can switch places for the duration of the feast, often this is an opportunity for satire, making fun of those in power. And in this context, we also encounter the final important aspect of the carnival in this section, namely: laughter. Bakhtin even calls the popular festive culture a "culture of laughter." Within the realm of the carnival the laughter is disruptive and subversively critical as the tables are turned. These aspects relate mainly to the drunk and devouring men in the title of this chapter, as you will see I will also introduce the aspect of death and burials in this section, how then does death fit into this image?

As you shall see in the text below, death is also a grotesque consequence of the feasting, just as the peoples devouring of food and ejecting said food under less joyous circumstances, the earth too—Sheol—devours the devouring as the earth opens its monumental womb.

To summarize thus far I will look at the vulnerable mighty men when they feast; eat and drink and when their bodies because of this are depicted as grotesque, but also when they are swallowed, eaten, devoured by Sheol. Images connected to the mouth, stomach and genitals, are aspects of the grotesque body we will focus on in this chapter.[5] As you can imagine, it is now time to get into the nitty gritty of bowels, excrements, genitals, vomiting and other unpleasantries, and with that said—consider yourself warned.

[4] Because of this continuity and unity which transcends the present and stretches throughout history, childbirth and metamorphosis are recurring motifs. This understanding of the childbirth motif is quite contrary to the understanding of childbirth that Isaiah and Jeremiah present when warriors are likened to women giving birth. The focus on the new life makes it an aspect of the celebratory carnival and festive fertility celebrations, the prophets though, emphasize the feelings of anxiety, panic and stress rather than the joy of bringing new life which is rarely ever mentioned as discussed earlier in this chapter. ###SIDA###

[5] Activities connected to those body parts are thus important features of the life of the grotesque body or –the drama of the grotesque body, eating, drinking, bodily needs (also including sweating, sneezing, blowing one's nose), intercourse, pregnancy, giving birth, growing, ageing, illness, death, and/or tearing, dismembering or devouring bodies. All of this is distinguished by things happening by boundaries of the body or the earth, or by the boundaries of the old or new bodies, the beginning and end of life are thus intertwined. Bachtin 2007, 295.

The Feast of Fools[6]

There are of course several differences between the medieval feast of fools described by Rabelais and others and the feasts in the prophetic writings. But a point of comparison is when the nobles, those in charge, are accused of being busy eating and drinking and thus acting like fools while the nation is about to be devoured by the empire.

Bakhtin describes the act of eating as a humanly encounter with the world, the body exceeds its boundaries when eating; it swallows, devours, crumbles, and slurps the world, all the while enriching and growing the body at its expense. While eating, humankind senses the taste of the world, takes it in and makes it part of the body.[7] She triumphs over the world, devouring without herself being devoured, making it a joyous event. It is also closely connected to work and struggle where eating is the last triumphant phase of struggle and work. The feast as a universal event is thus intimately connected to life, death, struggle, triumph, and re-birth.[8]

Devouring also has a close connection to the lower regions of the body, not only the intestines and stomach but also, as we shall see below, the mouth shares some features with a female vagina and in that spirit some of the imagery is ambiguous to what part of the body it actually portrays.[9] In general, the mouth is the gate which leads down to the bodily underworld which also makes the act of swallowing a fitting image for death itself.

As we move through these prophetic depictions of the decadent other, we might ask ourselves who are they? In Isaiah—as well as other prophets who use metaphors to describe the relationship between the people and Yahweh, the crux often lies in understanding to whom the allegorical or literal accusation is aimed at. Is it the leaders of Israel, Jerusalem or Judah? Is it the nation personified?[10] Ephraim is s reference to the northern kingdom, but is the "real" recipient a Judahite audience? This is relevant in my investigation as I have chosen to limit the texts to those which involve the warrior men. Because this is a thoroughly discussed problem which has yet to reach a consensus, I have found that understanding it as a *double entendre*, pointing both to the leaders and the nation works within the narrative. Bearing Barton's words in mind, where he finds that the texts appear deliberately vague because they are edited to allude to different historical events.[11] Rather than us knowing exactly to whom and what the specific message was, the overarching message is the same with regard to every crisis; from the invasion of

[6] Within Bahktin's work the "feast of fools" can refer to a specific medieval ritual satirizing church services, but he also makes use of it in a more general sense, which is what this chapter refers to.
[7] Bachtin 1965, 263.
[8] Bachtin 1965, 264.
[9] Although not ambiguous, Bakhtin refers to the birth of Pantagruel where wagon-loads of salted starters emerged out of his mother's open womb. Bachtin 1965, 262.
[10] This is argued by Bäckersten who, rather than viewing the critique as part of the social-critical discourse, favors the foreign-political discourse and more specifically a critique against participating in the anti-Assyrian rebellion. Bäckersten 2007.
[11] Quoted in "Approaching the text" above, on page ####. Barton 1995, 89.

Samaria in 722 BCE to the exile in 586 BCE. The leadership does not get the job done. And in a series of grotesque images, they are accused of being drinkers, having a decadent lifestyle, living in luxury and neglecting the poor. Generally, when the metaphor of a drunkard is used the negative consequences are in focus, like that they are not thinking clearly, walking straight, or remaining conscious. However, it is not always a moral judgement upon drinking but rather a portrayal of a desperate situation.[12] Interestingly, the drunkenness is in many cases presented similarly to the childbirth-metaphors we saw above, almost like a condition which comes at the affected not like anything self-inflicted. In fact, in Isa 28 the drunkards of Ephraim are hammered, like Sisera is hammered by a tent peg in the temple by Jael (*hlm*).[13]

Turning now to the theme of the devouring elite and their excessive eating and drinking. Feasting is a cause of concern in Isa 5:11–15, in the series of woes[14] the theme returns several times.

> 11. Ah, you who rise early in the morning
> in pursuit of strong drink,
> who linger in the evening
> to be inflamed (*dlq*) by wine;
> 12. Whose feasts consists of lyre and harp,
> tambourine and flute and wine,
> but do not regard the deeds of the Lord,
> or see the work of his hands.
>
> 13. Therefore my people go into exile (*glh*) without knowledge;
> their nobles (*kavôdô*) are dying of hunger,
> and their multitude (*hāmônô*)[15] is parched with thirst.
>
> 14. Therefore Sheol has enlarged (*rḥb*) its wide gullet (*napšāh*),[16]
> opened its mouth beyond measure,
> the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude (*hāmônāh*),
> her throng (*šĕʾônāh*) and all who exult in her.[17]
> 15. People are bowed down, everyone is brought low,
> and the eyes of the haughty are humbled.[18] (Isa 5:11–15)

We begin in judgement over those who are busy partying rather than paying heed to Yahweh. But it is not just that they drink, because drinking alcohol is generally not seen as problematic in the HB, is it

[12] Bäckersten 2007, 34. Cf. also Mic 2:11 where those preaching against drinking wine are preaching falsehoods.
[13] Judg 5:26. Blenkinsopp 2000, 385.
[14] among which Blenkinsopp also includes Isa 10:1–4 and 5:8–24. Blenkinsopp 2000, 208–210.
[15] To emphasize the juxtaposition, Blenkinsopp translates *hāmônô* with "commoners." Blenkinsopp 2000, 209.
[16] NRSV has "enlarged its appetite," *npš* can of course be understood both figuratively and literally, from soul/life to the more physical functions of the throat such as the respiratory and digestive system.
[17] A possible connection between the popular festive culture and the text in Isaiah is this designation of the common people as opposed to the glorious (*kavôd*) the word *hāmôn* can also entail the sound that a group makes (cf 1 Sam 4:14, 1 Sam 14:16, 19, Isa 13:4, Isa 17:12, Isa 33:3, Jer 10:13, Jer 51:16) and especially parallelled with *šĕʾônāh* which has the same connotations. The noise and revel of the town square is also part of Bakhtin's theory of the carnival. Bachtin 1965, 149.
[18] Isa 5:15 draws on Isa 2:9a.

that they are constantly in pursuit of strong drink, and they are inflamed by wine? Is it the excess which leads to the alcohol affecting your judgement and mind which is the problem?[19]

One aspect of the carnival is that it erases differences between high and low, this is also the case in the Isaiah text quoted above where nobles and commoners suffer and go down together. Presumably, it is the exile (cf. v. 13) which is compared to Sheol, to death, or the netherworld.[20] Bäckersten and Landy argues for lack of knowledge as the main reason for the exile rather than a decadent lifestyle (sin and punishment), as the people are said to not see the deeds of Yahweh nor the work of his hands.[21] Consequently, the exile is not, in their view, a punishment for celebrating or drinking. Rather than morally objecting to parties the prophet's critique is that they fail to take the threat of Assyria seriously, especially since they have seen what happened to their neighbors in the north. Their foreign policy, aligning with anti-Assyrian rebels, is a mistake, regardless of this they continue to throw their parties like nothing has happened.[22]

Slightly at odds with the interpretation presented above, within the parameters of the prophetic texts exile and carnival can be perceived as each other's opposites. Carnival means coming together and celebrating in abundance, practicing a joint tradition, whereas exile means displacement, uprooting, lack of land, food, and collective identity. Hence, the lack of food for the people in v. 13 is parallelled by the enlarged appetite of Sheol in the next verse. The imagery suggests a city built on Sheol, sinking and at the same time being alienated from Yahweh. Imagining Sheol's mouth, which is so vast it cannot even be measured, and the elite of Jerusalem being devoured by it is grotesque in many ways.[23] The mouth, as we have seen above, also has grotesque aspects because it is an opening through which we can consume food and drink in grotesque ways, but even worse, things can come out of the mouth, and also its resemblance to a vagina or womb which fits well with Sheol as deaths womb.[24] It overtly illustrates the paradox where the high of status are "brought low" but it is not simply that the spiritual is made into crude imagery, it is also what Bakhtin refers to as topographical, where the bowels of the body represents the bowels of the earth.[25] It is because of their extensive gulping of alcohol that Sheol opens its vast mouth to swallow them, as sort of a *quid pro quo*. In Bakhtin's theory the drinking is also carnivalesque but can quickly turn into the grotesque. In this case I would argue that the author/editor presents feasting

[19] Cf. Gen 9:20–21 and Hos 4:10.
[20] Cf also Ezek 26:19 where the author calls the deep *tĕhôm*, the same deep which in the priestly creation epic (Gen 1:2) is covered by darkness.
[21] Generally, for Isaiah, unlike Amos and Hosea for example, who continuously juxtapose alternatives of death and exile, exile means death and *lack of knowledge.* Landy 2010, 242. Bäckersten 2007, 101.
[22] Bäckersten 2007, 109.
[23] Cf. Num 16:31 where the Korah family is swallowed by the mouth of Sheol. Sometimes agency is ascribed tp Sheol, like in Prov 1:12 "Like Sheol let us swallow them alive and whole, like those who go down to the Pit."
[24] A trope which thrives in medieval paintings and visions where for example S. Franceska Romana in a 15th century vision refers to hell as "a lurid and rotting uterus." Miles 1997, 86.
[25] This is further developed in relation to Shakespeare where he finds that Shakespeare never randomly selects a direction but every movement is a spatial analogy and thus it bears a topographical meaning. Hirschkop 2021, 132-133. Cf. also Jonah 2:2 who cries out "from the belly of Sheol" inside the whale (*mibbeṭen šĕôl*).

and the focus upon drinking rather than on Yahweh's work is the reason for them being swallowed by Sheol. Pursuing a grotesque lifestyle rather than the spiritual path of Yahweh, we may infer, is presented as leading to unwanted consequences. However, this does not exclude the possibility that the elite's policy making is not also part of the prophet's critique.

Continuing the series of woes, the prophet returns to those preoccupied with drinking later on in the same section, now falsely admiring their dedication if it was not for their immoral choices:

> 22. Woe to those warrior wine–guzzlers (*gibborîm lišttôt*)
> Those heroic (*ʾanšê ḥayil*) drink–mixers (*limsôk šēkār*)![26]
> 23. Who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
> and deprive the innocent of their rights.
> (Isa 5:22-23)

As with the previous section, most scholars interpret this part of the poem as direct judgement on the moral failure of the political leadership. Noteworthy, the *gibborîm* are specifically mentioned, and once again we can see that those expected to excel in valor and gallantry, contrary to expectations they are described as being good at drinking, rather than waging war.[27] As already stated, the warriors are specifically mentioned as part of the elite who are to blame for what is to come, but the moral objection is not aimed at their taste in drinking in general. Bäckersten finds that the two verses are likely to be unrelated and put together through the process of editing, as all connections between drinking soldiers and corrupt judges, who are in charge of the legal proceedings mentioned in v. 23, are speculative.[28] This would mean that the drinking warriors are not per definition related to the more severe accusations of corruption in the following verse. However, the warriors are clearly not excelling in the way they are expected to excel. But, what we have seen throughout this section, and which will become even more clear in the next, is that drunk warriors equal defeat, and mixing and guzzling their own drink would mean that they also paved the way for their own defeat. In Isa 3:14 we see devouring from the aspect of gluttony, eating and drinking at the expense of the poor:

> The Lord enters into judgement
> with the elders and princes of his people:
> It is you who have devoured (*bʿr*) the vineyard;
> The spoil of the poor is in your houses.
> What do you mean by crushing my people,

[26] My translation. Bäckersten argues that as both *gibborîm* and *ʾanšê ḥayil* are usually used of men in a certain stature and capability but never figuratively (with regard to humans at least) as could be inferred from NRSV, for example, which render them as "heroes in drinking wine" and "valiant at mixing drink," I prefer his understanding of them being warriors and strong/skilled men who drinks, rather than using the designation of warrior/skilled men as a metaphor for their skills (cf. Jer 48:14 for a similar wording). There is however a sense of irony, just as the partying elite in Isa 28 (see below) and for that matter as in the theme of this entire book, the irony lies in them doing the opposite of the expectations of strong capable men in power. Bäckersten 2007, 132. Cf. also the watchmen in Isa 56:9–12 who drink instead of keeping watch so that the wild animals can come unnoticed and devour.

[27] Blenkinsopp 2000, 212.

[28] He argues that v. 23 was initially a gloss in the margin to explain v. 24b which would connect this verse to Exod 23:7–9 which prohibits taking bribes. Bäckersten 20076, 138–140.

> By grinding the face of the poor?
> Says the Lord God of hosts. (Isa 3:13–15)

Bäckersten argues that the leaders are held responsible for the foreign aggressors who plunder the people because of the decision–makers enabling them to do so, rather than them looting the poor themselves.[29] Interestingly, the theme of devouring is present in both the Isa 3:14 and in the verse following the text cited above in Isa 5:24, although in the latter text the verb *ʾcl* is used to describe how the fire devours the stubble and dry grass. The same theme returns but with a slightly cannibalistic theme in Isa 9:20 (19):

> They overindulged (*gzr*) on the right, but still were hungry
> And they devoured (*ʾkl*) on the left but were not satisfied;
> They devoured (*ʾkl*) the flesh of their own children.[30]

Referring to Ephraim who was scorched by the wrath of Yahweh and whose people became like "fuel for the fire (Isa 9:19) because of their pride and arrogance (Isa 9:8). The text indicates various forms of moral and physical decay, such as a fire which is eating them (*ʾkl*) in verse 19 and them eating their children in the following verse.[31] This is probably the most grotesque version of gluttony, if there is a scale, where they are continuing the gluttonous feast even though the food consists, not only of human flesh, but of the flesh of their own family. Elsewhere in the HB, cannibalism is either a dystopic consequence of lack of food,[32] or for breaking the covenant[33] (or both), here though, it is an example of the wickedness which spreads like fire in v. 17. There is a play on words present in the texts cited above where the devouring gluttony of the elite is parallelled with the devouring fire or the mouth of Sheol who will in equal measure devour not only the elite but also the innocent people of the land (see also Joel 1:5).

So far, we have mostly looked at imagery from Isaiah 1–39 and one thing that we infer from its message is that the nobles are busy having fun, all the while the nations independence risks going down the drain. Their leaders are neglecting their job and their responsibilities towards those without power. It works well with other imagery prevalent in Proto-Isaiah depicting the leaders as incompetent and the future as

[29] To strengthen his argument he finds that v. 13 is the original introduction (which mentions the peoples) and that v. 14 with the princes and elders is a later addition Bäckersten 2007, 187 and 189.
[30] My translation. MT's literal translation would be that they ate their own arm (*zʿr*). Blenkinsopp favours metre, therefore, he rearranges the lines as such: (18b) No one spares a companion, all eat the flesh of their children. (19). Here one gorges and is still famished, there one devours and is not sated. Blenkinsopp 2000, 216.
[31] Eidevall 2009, 139.
[32] Cf. 2 Kings 6:28–29, Lam 2:20 and 4:10. Cf. Josephus, who tells an especially harrowing episode of a woman eating her own baby because of famine during the siege of Jerusalem in the Jewish–Roman wars. *JW* 6.3.4.
[33] As in a covenant curse in Deut 28:53-57 and Lev 26:29, cf. Ezek 5:10, and Jer 19:9, here it is the desperation of being besieged that, in a dystopian image of what can happen if they break the covenant, lead the people to eat the fruit of their wombs. Also, Yahweh will make the oppressors eat their own flesh and become drunk with their own blood as with wine in Isa 49:26.

dystopic. There is however a positive take on feasting in Isaiah, in the eschatological feast where his people will be rectified. Isa 25:6–8:

> On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make
> for all peoples a feast of rich food,
> A feast of well-aged wines,
> of rich food filled with marrow,
> of well-aged wines strained clear.
> And he will destroy (*blʿ*) on this mountain
> the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
> The sheet that is spread over all nations;
> He will swallow up (*blʿ*) death forever.
> Then the Yahweh Adonai will wipe away the tears from all faces
> And the disgrace of his people,
> He will take away from all the earth,
> For Yahweh has spoken. (Isa 25:6–8).

Not only do we see that feasting, devouring, or swallowing, can work as an image both for failure and triumph. In the last oracle the triumph is not only over worldly enemies, but death itself, the ultimate triumph. The sea-monster which devours the nation uses the same word for swallowing (*blʿ*) and in some Second temple texts the people participating in the eschatological banquet will even feast on the meat of the Leviathan.[34] The eschatological banquet described is perhaps, although substantial evidence lacks in the HB, part of a liturgy celebrated in honor of the enthronement of Yahweh. A similar kind of festival is described both in Enuma Elish (the Akitu festival dedicated to Marduk) and in the Ugaritic Baal texts (celebrated in honor of Baal). Blenkinsopp suggests that the unveiling of the peoples and nations is in reference to the end of the mourning period for the dead during which it was customary to cover head and face.[35] The last line is perhaps a reference to the old Canaanite myth where Mot (who's name literally means death) swallows Baal.[36] The whole event gives carnivalesque associations, as the triumphant end to a time of struggle.

Continuing through Isaiah, in Isaiah 28 the author paints the scene of a feast which involves wearing garlands with flowers in one's hair. When we enter the scene though, the party has been going on for quite some time as the flowers are now withering and the party people are bloated from eating rich food.

> 28:1 Woe, the proud garland of the drunkards (*škr*)[37] of Ephraim,
> A flower doomed to fade is its splendid beauty
> At the head of a fertile valley (/those bloated with rich food),[38]

[34] For example in 4 Ezra 6:52. Blenkinsopp 2000, 358.
[35] Blenkinsopp 2000, 359.
[36] Some see it as a very late addition to the text when the idea of an afterlife became popular. Blenkinsopp 2000, 359.
[37] Bäckersten finds that the root *škr* often appears in texts with strong military connotations. Cf. Deut 32:42, Isa 49, 26, 51:21, Jer 48:26, 51:7, 51:57, and, Lam 4:21. Bäckersten 2007, 35.
[38] The wording in Hebrew is ambiguous: *rōʾš gēʾ šĕmānîm hălûmê yāyin* where either a "valley" *gyʾ* or *gāʾāh* "surged" (see NRSV for example) brings about two different options. For a discussion on the two possible interpretations see Asen 1996, 83. Blenkinsopp argues that the fertile valley is a reference to Jezreel. Blenkinsopp 2000, 387. The same wording is found in verse 4.

hammered (*hlm*) with wine.
2 See, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong,
Like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty overflowing waters;
With his hand he will hurl them down to earth.
3 Then the proud garland of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trampled under foot,
4 and the flower of its splendid beauty doomed to fade at the heart of the fertile valley
(which is on the head of those bloated with rich food)
Will be like figs that ripen before the summer
Those who see them will devour (*blʿ*) them
As soon as they have them in their hand.

5 On that day Yahweh will be a splendid garland, a beautiful diadem[39]
For the remnant of his people,
6 A spirit of justice for the one who sits in judgement,
And strength for those who turn back the fighting from the gate.
7 These too stagger with wine,
Lurch about with strong drink;
Priest and prophet stagger with strong drink
They are confused/swallowed (*blʿ*) with wine;
They lurch about with strong drink,
they err in visions,
They stumble in giving judgement;[40]
8 all tables are covered in vomit (*qî*),
No place free of excrement (*ṣwʾ*)[41]. (Isa 28:1–8)

Here we find another texts beginning with the particle "woe!" just as in the two texts from Isaiah 5 rendered above.[42] The garland and the drinking indicate some sort of celebration or religious festival (Cf. Amos 2:8 and Hosea 4:17-18). The garlands have contributed to different interpretations of what the celebration was, it could for example be a spring festival celebrating vegetation or a celebration inspired by Greek or Egyptian culture. Flowers are generally part of a luxury culture,[43] which works with the overarching message that people are busy with celebrations and drinking while they, according to the prophet, should be concerned about the looming threat. Blenkinsopp and Asen argue for a funerary banquet *marzēaḥ/mirzēaḥ*,[44] which involved consuming considerable amounts of alcoholic beverages.[45] Suffice to say here that the occasion is not crucial for the understanding, rather the juxtaposition of the joyous celebration with the marching feet and impending doom.

The imagery fits the overall portrait of Assyria: the Assyrian army is an instrument of Yahweh's and they come at them like a storm and a flood of water.[46] Eidevall finds the paragraph more scornful than

[39] Cf. Isa 62:3.
[40] Both the words rendered here as vision and judgement are *hapax legomenon* and therefore their meanings derive form the context.
[41] My own translation. NRSV has "all tables covered in filthy vomit; no place is clean." For *ṣwʾ* as human excrement cf. Deut 23:13(14), 2 Kings 18:27, Ezek 4:12, Isa 4:4, 36:6 and possibly 30:22 but probably referring to menstrual cloths.
[42] NRSV sometimes translates *hô* as "Ah!" instead of "Woe," as seen in Isaiah 5:11 above.
[43] Asen 1996, 75.
[44] See Amos 6:7 and Jer 16:5.
[45] Blenkinsopp 2000, 388. Asen 1996, 82.
[46] Cf. Isa 8:5–8. Eidevall 2009, 201.

sad with the overarching message being "pride goes before a fall."[47] This is also indicated by the juxtaposition of high and low, on the one hand the garland or coronet/crown placed on the head of both the participants and the valley, and on the other hand being trampled, devoured, drunk and withering. We see a similar structure of juxtaposing as with the drinking/swallowing of Isa 5:11–15. Bäckersten argues similarly to Eidevall, rather than a moral condemnation upon drinking he focuses on the nobles who are depicted as simple drunkards as a fall from glory.[48] He also sees that the drunkenness in vv. 7–8 is a metaphorical way of expressing the nations defeat, hence the drunkenness is not the reason for their poor decisions, rather, the metaphor of drunkenness is a consequence of the priest's and prophet's participation in the anti–Assyrian policy which brings death and destruction to the nation.[49] When depicting the neighbors in the north as frail and fading, the flower's fading beauty is parallelled by the staggering drunks, vomiting and defecating everywhere. Metaphorical drunkenness or not, the carnival is once again juxtaposed the exile as the mindless drinking is directly correlated to being invaded and the sign of the celebration being trampled in the dirt. The Israelites are also, as a consequence of overindulging in wine, too drunk to defend themselves, hence, they are helpless, vulnerable, disgraceful, and a laughingstock.

The leaders are here personified as priest and prophet, and they are held responsible for the party getting out of hand. The withering garlands, staggering drunks, vomiting and filth everywhere, together they turn the celebratory feast into the epitome of a living hell. The connection between being drunk and deceit can also have a linguistic function: being drunk is often described with the verb *škr* while deceit can be expressed by the root *šqr*, the drunkenness is salient in the first part and the in a later verse (15) the deceit is introduced.[50] If we read the entire paragraph (Isa 28:1-22) together, the second part mentions a covenant with death.[51]

> 14 Therefore hear the word of the Lord,
> you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem.
> 15 Because you have said: "We have made a covenant with Death,
> And with Sheol we have an agreement;
> when the raging flood passes through it will not touch us;
> for we have made a lie our shelter, in falsehood (*šqr*) we have taken refuge. [52]

This reversal of the covenant is sometimes understood as a reference to the negotiations with Egypt to get protection from the Assyrians. More specifically, entering a covenant with Mut (*mwt*)—the Egyptian mother-goddess, who dwells in the underworld. According to Hays the flower garlands and heavy

[47] Eidevall 2009, 149.
[48] Bäckersten 2007, 48.
[49] Bäckersten 2007, 183–184.
[50] Bautch 2017, 559–560.
[51] The two passages are interconnected by v. 14 beginning with "therefore," suggesting that they are a unity, but from verse 14 and on the recipients are changed from Samaria to Jerusalem. Even so, quite a few themes recur from the previous section so they benefit from being read together. Just like in the previous section with the "overflowing waters," the "raging flood" is best understood as an allusion to Assyria.
[52] This verse follows Blenkinsopp's translation.

drinking are references to the cult dedicated to Mut.[53] If the covenant-partner is not understood as Mut, Blenkinsopp suggests the Ugarit God Mot, who is the opponent of Baal and rules the underworld.[54] Suffice to say, no consensus has been established but since the negotiations with Egypt at the time where ongoing it is possible that there is a reference to Mut and the prophets understanding of the cult devoted to her. The reference to Sheol contextualizes it to the Israelite audience and according to Amos, Yahweh can reach those hiding in the netherworld as well. There is a reversal of a feast Amos 8:10 where it has turned into a "mourning for an only son at the end of a bitter day." Further down in the same section Yahweh will pick up those who have dug their way down to Sheol (Amos 9:2), and those hiding at the bottom of the sea will be bitten by the sea-serpent (Amos 9:3). Concluding that there is no escape from Yahweh.

Moving now from Israelites partying like there is now tomorrow, a motif favored by Isaiah, we shall now take a closer look at those instances when the drunkenness is instigated by Yahweh.

Yahweh makes people drunk

Making the opposing army drunk is used like a weapon where the soldiers become confused, unable to walk straight and aim at the opposing army. Normally, the preparations for battle were a rigorous affair where soldiers were careful of impurities, therefore performing purifying rituals in order for the camp to be kept clean. This would also include abstaining from certain activities, like excessive drinking. However, for Yahweh to make the enemies act like they are drunk would be an enormous advantage for his favoured army, as we shall see below.

If the representation in the previous section consisted mainly of drunk Israelites in Isaiah, here the enemy army is often the object and Yahweh is the subject. It would also seem that the authors/editors of Jeremiah use this motif more than Isaiah. We shall begin with texts where Yahweh is getting the Israelite rulers drunk. Found here in Jer 13:13-14, where the drunkenness will result in them smashing together and being destroyed:

> Then you shall say to them: Thus says Yahweh:
> Behold, I will fill all who dwell in this land—
> the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets
> and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness.
> And I will dash them on against the other,
> father and son together, says Yahweh.
> I will not pity, or spare, nor have compassion when I destroy them. (Jer 13:13–14)

Stumbling, staggering, and falling is portrayed as a real hazard for warriors, perhaps it seems rather simple that stumbling is such a risk but the metaphor works similarly to how the drunkenness or confusion is inflicted on people: Yahweh is a rock that Jerusalem will trip upon in Isa 8:14–15 and Jer

[53] Hays 2010, 212–240.
[54] Blenkinsopp 2000, 393.

6:21. In Jer 50:32 the image of the high (haughty and arrogant) being brought low by stumbling and falling is spelled out (Cf. also Zeph 1:3 and Isa 3:8).

Moving now to the enemy armies, a rare example of the motif in Isaiah is found in 19:14. Yahweh has inflicted confusion upon the Egyptians, and they act like drunkards.

> Yahweh has mixed (*msk*)[55] to them a spirit of confusion,
> And they have made Egypt stagger in all its doings
> As a drunkard (*šikôr*) staggers around in vomit (*qî*).[56] (Isa 19:14)

The general portrait of Egypt in Isaiah is that they are devious and helpless, weak and treacherous at the same time.[57] Being portrayed as a drunkard would give the impression of a nation in decay, but also an untrustworthy ally. In the so-called Isaiah Apocalypse the earth staggers like a drunk (Isa 24:20), here it seems like the transgressions of the people burdens the earth so that it staggers and falls, but at the beginning of the section it is Yahweh who will lay waste the earth (Isa 24:1), followed by different examples of how it will be done. The section is almost a reversed carnival, all the ingredients of a celebration: wine and laughter (Isa 24:7), rejoicing and music (Isa 24:8), singing and strong drink (Isa 24:9), are removed or silenced. Whoever tries to flee from the desolation will "fall into the pit (*pḥt*)" and those who try to climb out shall be "caught in the snare (*pḥ*)" (Isa 24:18).

Similarly, Yahweh makes the Babylonians drunk in Jer 51:39, this will make them sleep and never wake up (cf. also Jer 51:57). Moab too will be made so drunk that he will wallow in his own vomit making him a laughingstock (Jer 48:26). All nations will be drunk by Yahweh's "cup of the wine of wrath" in Jer 25:15-29 and if they refuse to drink the prophet is urged to insist and say that they must drink because Yahweh says so (Jer 25:28) so that they "drink, get drunk, and vomit, fall and rise no more" (Jer 25:27).[58]

Being drunk with all it entails is not just a huge disadvantage when you are under attack, it also brings the ideal male down in the gutter. Drunkenness does not seldom exhibit as grotesque as it affects the body and mind in different ways. The drunk are not fit to lead (Jer 51:56–57), or to fight. As mentioned above, in Isa 19:14 they are like drunkards, confused and staggering around in their own vomit. The drunk priests and prophets are confused and cannot give proper judgement in Isa 28:7–8 and the intoxicated elite are too busy drinking and partying to notice the exile. In some instances, we have seen that Yahweh is doing the pouring himself to make sure that his favourite army at the time would win the battle, this just goes to show how much of a disadvantage it was considered, intoxicating the enemy would be comparable to biological warfare, although, in a more primitive. We can see that when the own leaders of Judah and Jerusalem are accused of being drunk, it is a critique against a decadent

[55] NRSV has "poured" instead of my own choice: "mixed."
[56] The same word is used for when the land vomits out the inhabitants who have defiled the land in Lev 18:25, 28 an 20:22. It is also the same word as in Isa 28:8 where it is parallelled with excrement, quoted above. See also Jer 25:27 and 48:26 which have a similar message as Isa 19:14.
[57] Eidevall 2009, 201.
[58] Babylonia makes the nations drunk in Jer 51:7.

lifestyle which results in them being unable to fulfill their duties. When enemies are drunk it is Yahweh who makes them drunk so that they will not be successful in battle. Isaiah favors the first motif of accusing the own (except for Isa 19:14), while Jeremiah favors the drunk enemy (with a few exceptions). Nevertheless, both motifs confirm and reinforce the fantasy of the ideal intact male body, even though what they depict is the opposite. As is the case with the complicit or relative masculinities in masculinity theory. We will now continue with another way of reversing the feast, what happens when the enemy has a monstrous appetite and has its sight set upon Judah?

Excrement

Ending this chapter with the lowest of low, it is now time to visit the nether regions, not Sheol this time, but the bowels and their—let's call it product.

Sherwood argues that the prophetic texts are very much part of the Levitical discourse of entrails, offal and blood.[59] This section bears, perhaps surprisingly, together with the section on childbirth. At least, this is what Bakhtin claims, because the lower part of the body is where both excrement and one's descendants are expelled they are connected. The lower part of the body is very important to Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque, this is where life is formed, food is digested, and where the body opens up to the world, and because of this it is an everlasting source of ambivalent imagery.[60] The ambivalent imagery is also found in the biblical text, often covered in euphemisms or metaphors. The difference between the Levitical discourse introduced by Sherwood above, is that for prophets it serves a rhetorical function. With two notable exceptions the first is Ezek 4:9–15, where the prophet is instructed to bake bread cakes with human dung, expressly with the purpose to make the people of Israel unclean. The second is found in Isa 36:12, a parallel to 2 Kings 18:27, where the Assyrian Rabshakeh (official) speaks of Jerusalem under siege where they are doomed to drinking their own urine and to eating their own dung.

It can be used as a marker describing the difference between life here and now and an idealized future. For example, in an eschatological future, the excrement will be washed away from the daughters of Zion:

> 2 On that day, the branch that Yahweh has planted shall be beautiful and glorious,
> And the fruit of the land shall be an object of pride and splendor
> for the survivors of Israel.
> 3 Whoever is left in Zion and who remain in Jerusalem and will be called holy,
> all those who have been recorded for life in Jerusalem,
> 4 once the Lord has washed away the excrement (*sy'*) of the daughters of Zion
> and cleansed the blood (*dm*) from Jerusalem
> with a spirit of judgement and a spirit of burning.
> Isa 4:2–4)

[59] Sherwood 2012, 149.
[60] Hirschkop 2021, 132.

The same word for filth is used as in the Isaiah-text mentioned above where there is vomit and excrement everywhere (Isa 28:8). The splendor and glory in the first part juxtaposes the holy future and the grotesque now. Zephaniah also speaks of the day of judgement ("the great day of Yahweh" Zeph 1:14), and the sound of that day is bitter (*mar*). This is reinforced by the statement: "Their blood shall be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung" (*gll*) in Zeph 1:17. In Zechariah the high priest is dressed in filthy clothes (*ṣy'*), and as Vanderkam argues the choice of word suggests that the clothes were not just a little soiled they were " thoroughly filthy and beyond cleaning."[61] At the instruction of the angel of Yahweh his clothes are removed as a sign of his guilt being taken away. In another juxtaposition in Isaiah the glorious past in Moab is contrasted against their current state of devastation, and with compassion (?) the author/editor's bowels (*m'h*) throb like a harp for Moab (Isa 16:11).[62]

Lastly, we have two instances of flinging and spreading. Flinging dung is not merely a metaphorical course of action, not in these instances at least, as the meaning here sends a clear message. First in Nah 3:5 Yahweh first exposes the city of Nineveh and then continues to throw filth (*šqṣ*) at her. He will treat her with contempt and make her a spectacle. Then, in a curse against the priests in Mal 2:3 Yahweh will "spread dung" (*prš*) on their faces the dung of their offerings, once again the holy—offering—is juxtaposed the grotesque—dung.

So, as we have seen, excrement is mostly used as a juxtaposition against either describing a grotesque present time, or future juxtaposed a pure and holy time. In two of the texts the excrement is attributed to women, which also fits with the Levitical discourse where women are leaking bodily fluids and while the male fantasy is for the body to remain intact.[63]

Summary

As with the feminizing imagery from the previous chapter, the language here describes different ways of failing as a male elite person in Judah in a time when powerful leaders and warriors were really needed. The expectations on the leaders were in line with the masculine ideal, and the accusations and predictions of these texts are aimed at overthrowing and reversing those expectations. They hit the mark by using grotesque imagery where bodily issues limit them from succeeding. It will probably never be more clear than in this section that the authors/editors seek to evoke both laughter and disgust simultaneously by the use of strong and associative language.

First, we looked at Bakhtin's "feast of fools" and carnival as comparative concepts to the drunk leaders in Isaiah. There we saw that there are several points of similarity, one being that issues of class were dissolved, they all suffered the same fate. Secondly the focus on swallowing is noteworthy, both the

[61] Vanderkam 1991, 555.
[62] This text will be revisited in the section on crying warriors.
[63] Interestingly though, Leviticus does not label feces as impure, however, it seems as the prophetic authors juxtaposition presuppose a level of, if not impure, at least taboo.

gluttonous appetite of the people, followed by the monstrous swallowing by Sheol. Also, the way of describing the leaders as drunken fools, vomiting everywhere, is a satire of those in power, bringing them down the gutter. We also found that the leaders of Judah/Jerusalem were making themselves drunk and they were judged because of it, as for other nations, Yahweh was the one making them act like drunkards or even pouring "a spirit of confusion" (Isa 19:14) down them, to make sure that they forfeit. Judah/Jerusalem can also be described as being devoured, then the enemy is described like a monster swallowing them.

Engaging in battle does, perhaps surprisingly, have some carnivalesque connotations. Battle, similarly to the feast of fools, does have liminal qualities, the hierarchy is temporarily paused as everyone faces the same risks. The consequences of battle are probably going to be grotesque, just as the feast, and the male fantasy of the impenetrable body is put to shame: bleeding, oozing, and with broken bones at the best of times, and in worse cases—death.

The (t)ex(t)crement of this section has the rhetorical function of binding the feast to the less dignified afterparty, so to say, of waking the listener by using the language of the square while speaking of foreign policies. It is also a method for dragging women, priests, warriors and prophets down the gutter, juxtaposing the holy and exalted with the grotesque. Ultimately, the prophets challenge the fantasy of the intact, impenetrable, and dignified male body, revealing instead a body that is destabilized, swallowed, and grotesquely undone.

Project Summary: The Bible as Political Tool in the World's Most Secularized Country.

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In this postdoc book project, I examine and compare how the (Christian) Bible is used and framed in opinion pieces on politicized issues in Sweden's largest newspapers between 1979–1983 and 2019–2023 (key periods before and after the Church-State separation in Sweden). By applying critical discourse analysis, the study investigates which patterns and changes emerge in the political Bible-use in a country often described as the world's most secularized nation. What happens to the Bible in media debates in a pluralistic and secularist society, which is at the same time affected by social processes such as mediatization and politicization of religion? In relation to which political issues is the Bible used, which texts, interpretations, and actors dominate the debates? Which underlying ideologies impact the Bible-use, and what societal relations of domination do the Bible-use risk to reinforce? While actors stress the importance of a secular society, they simultaneously invoke the Bible in debates on nationalism and identity, highlighting the Bible as key for "our" society. While the (Christian) Bible increasingly becomes framed as benign, a source of good moral standards, useful in times of crises, and connected to "Swedishness," other religious scriptures, mainly the Qur'an, increasingly become framed as the opposite and as a threat to the Swedish society. The study places the analysis of the case of Sweden in broader developments regarding biblical reception in the West, to explore what the case of Sweden offers for debates more generally about secularism, identity, and the relationship between the Bible and politics in the modern world.

In chapter 1, I introduce the aim and scope of the book and relate the study to international biblical reception studies on political Bible-use. I introduce the Swedish political and religious context and provide the background needed to follow the book's argumentation. I present the method and the material.

In chapter 2, I analyze debates on the Church of Sweden, the official state church during the first period (therefore a political issue), and the majority church during the second period. I show how the Bible's authority is contested during the first period, a period affected by secularist and church-critical currents. The main argument in this chapter is that the Bible is decreasingly criticized due to an increasing secularization: there is no longer a need to take the Bible serious in the political debate. Instead, supposed positive connotations are put to the fore; that the Bible itself is secularist, and that the Bible's main concern is charity work.

In chapter 3, I analyze debates on environmental issues; nuclear power (mainly in the first period) and climate change (the second period). The main argument of this chapter is that motifs and terms (such as prophet) are increasingly detached from religious discourse and integrated into the Swedish language, as a language form.

In chapter 4, I analyze debates on welfare. In relation to the theory of heritagization of religion, I argue that the Bible becomes recontextualized as a moral authority and crises support text, a resourceful source and part of the Swedish heritage.

In chapter 5, I analyze debates on ideological matters. Most of the material comes from the second period. I show that the dominant discourse in the material is that the Bible has nothing to do in politics. Although most actors agree on this, there is at the same time an underlying preposition that Swedes know their Bible, and therefore, it is useful in political debates as an interpretative lens for political events or to generate feelings. I therefore argue that the Bible continues to be an important part of Swedish cultural memory.

In chapter 6, I analyze debates on immigration and integration, with material from the second period. I argue that in the debates, the Bible becomes a prop used to create identity and reinforce nationalism. While Swedes are presupposed to be secular, they are at the same time supposed to relate to the Bible, to stand in a biblical tradition. I address this conflicting notion and relate my findings to studies that show that Swedes are not so secular or "religious neutral" as they might think. The main argument is that the Bible is increasingly invoked in debates on "Swedishness" and in relation to the religious Other.

In chapter 7, I analyze the broader patterns and changes in the material over time. I show how the Bible is decreasingly contested, since its religious authority is decreasingly taken for granted. Instead, the Bible is increasingly invoked in political debate as a moral authority and as a carrier of Swedish identity. I relate the changes to three theories that help explain the discourses: religious complexity, mediatization of religion, and politicization of religion. Besides social processes, critical discourse analysis stresses the importance of discerning underlying ideologies, and I focus on secularism and Lutheranism as two influential ideologies that reinforce the discourses. I relate these two seemingly contradictory ideologies to the theory on religious memory, arguing that the Bible is used in a deconstructed and decontextualized way, as commonplace and as part of everyday language, reflecting a form of habitual collective remembering. This transformation, detectable in the material over time, turns the Bible into raw material that helps create and support a collective national/ethnic identity.

In chapter 8, I conclude the study's findings and discuss them in relation to biblical reception studies from other contexts.

The Bible as Political Tool in the World's Most Secularized Country

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Introduction

This paper summarizes the introduction and parts of the discussion of a monograph I am currently writing which investigates and compares how the Bible is deployed and framed in media debates on politicized topics during 1979–1983 and 2019–2023 in the world's most secularized country, namely Sweden.[1] What happens to the Bible in a political context marked by both secularized voters and politicians? Does it go away, does it linger, or does it fade into the background, operating on a latent level? Since the paper is cut out of a larger corpus, I wish to focus on my discussion on changes in the material.

Material and Method

The study draws on a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, where the basis is biblical reception criticism. By reception criticism, I refer to the field within biblical reception studies that aims to analyze and challenge how biblical texts are used to legitimize people, opinions, or ideologies, especially those who run the risk of reproducing unjust structures.[2]

My aim is to examine how the Bible is used in Swedish media debates on politicized topics. To do this, I have chosen a particular corpus and genre as my material: opinion pieces from Sweden's four main daily newspapers. *Aftonbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter*, *Expressen*, and *Svenska Dagbladet*. The material was collected by a manual search in a digital database where I applied 17 keywords and phrases illustrated in *Table 1*.[3]

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[1] World Values Survey, 2023. The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map - World Values Survey 7. *World Values Survey*. http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

[2] Cf. Holly Morse. 2015. "What's in a Name? Analysing the Appellation 'Reception History' in Biblical Studies," In *Biblical Reception 3*. Pages 243–264. Edited by J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press; Holly Morse. 2020. *Encountering Eve's Afterlives: A New Reception Critical Approach to Genesis 2-4.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Cf. Hanna Liljefors. 2025. "A Mediatized Bible Discourses on the Hebrew Bible in Swedish Newspaper Debates." *Journal of the Bible and its Reception* 12 (1): 109–132.

[3]The keywords are based on what previous research has shown to be commonly used biblical texts in public debates. For instance, Crossley, as Berber Neutel with Bjelland Kartzow, has shown that the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) has been frequently used by political actors; Bachner has analyzed the use of the term "eye for eye" (e.g., Ex. 21:24, Lev. 24:20) in Swedish media (often used to describe the state of Israel's actions in wars, and combined with problematic anti-Jewish notions on "Jewish vengefulness"); and I have previously studied the recurring use of the story of Adam and Eve (Gen. 2–3) in Swedish media. Cf: James G. Crossley. 2018. *Cults, Martyrs and Good Samaritans*. London: Pluto Press; Karin Berber Neutel and Marianne Bjelland Kartzow. 2021. "Neighbours Near and Far: How a Biblical Figure is Used in Recent European Anti-Migration Politics." *Biblical Interpretation* 29 (3): 358–380; Henrik Bachner. 2006. "Kristna antijudiska motiv i medier och debatt" [Christian anti-Jewish motifs in the media and the debate]. Pages 143–163 in *Religion och medier: Några perspektiv* [Religion and media: Some perspectives]. Edited by Göran Larsson, Mia Lövheim and Alf Linderman.

Table 1. Selected keywords.

Keyword Swedish	**English**	**Comment**
"Adam och Eva"	"Adam and Eve"	
"barmhärtige Samariten/Samarien"	"the Good Samarian"	
bibel*	bible*	
biblisk*	biblical	
budord	commandment	
evangeli*	evangeli*	As in "evangelical" and "*evangelium*, the Swedish word for Gospel.
"Gamla Testamentet"	"Old Testament"	I did not search for Hebrew Bible, Tanak etc., because of the minimal use of those terms in Swedish media.[4]
gammaltestamentlig	"old testamently"	A Swedish adjective, used to describe subjects (e.g., "an old testamently rain") but also biblical texts or characters (e.g., "the old testamently saying").
Jesu*	Jesus*	
"Nya Testamentet"	"New Testament"	
Nytestamentlig	"new testamently"	As above.
Mosebok*	Book of Moses	Used for the Pentateuch in Swedish (First–Fifth Book of Moses).
"tillhör Kejsaren"	"the things that are Ceasar's"	
Paulus	Paul	
plogbillar	plowshares	
profet*	prophe(t)*	
"öga för öga"	"eye for eye"	

Below, in *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*, I list the frequency of the keywords in the two different periods. In both periods, the keywords appear in crossword puzzles, news reporting, and in expressions such as "like the Devil reads the Bible" or when newspapers refer to their sport section as "the Bible of sports." The majority of the thousands of articles are thus not relevant for my aim, but I present the result as they indicate which keywords are most referenced in Swedish daily press. The keywords "new testamently," "the good Samarian," "the things that are Ceasar's," and "plowshare" generated fewer than 100 hits each (38/19, 66/0, 1/5, 77/20), which is why I exclude them in the bar charts. I present the result in two figures, to make the figures readable, the first illustrating keywords generating more than 1000 hits in one or both periods and the second illustrating keywords generating between 100-1000 hits.

Lund: Studentlitteratur AB. This approach has obvious limitations, such as the risk of missing relevant articles because they don't include the keywords. I argue that obtaining the material this way is sufficient for identifying broader patterns in line with the aim of the study. When searching for a cluster of words, and not just one word in particular, I needed to use citation marks, and by adding a *, I was able to find words based on the keyword (for instance, prophe* includes; prophet, prophecy, prophetic, prophesies, prophesize and so on.). The number of frequencies should not be taken literally, since the database includes errors such as missing articles (that is, some editions have failed to be included) and duplicates (that is, an article may have been added several times). The result should therefore not be seen as definite but gives an indication to which keywords recur more frequently than others, and broader tendencies over time.

[4] Liljefors, "A Mediatized."

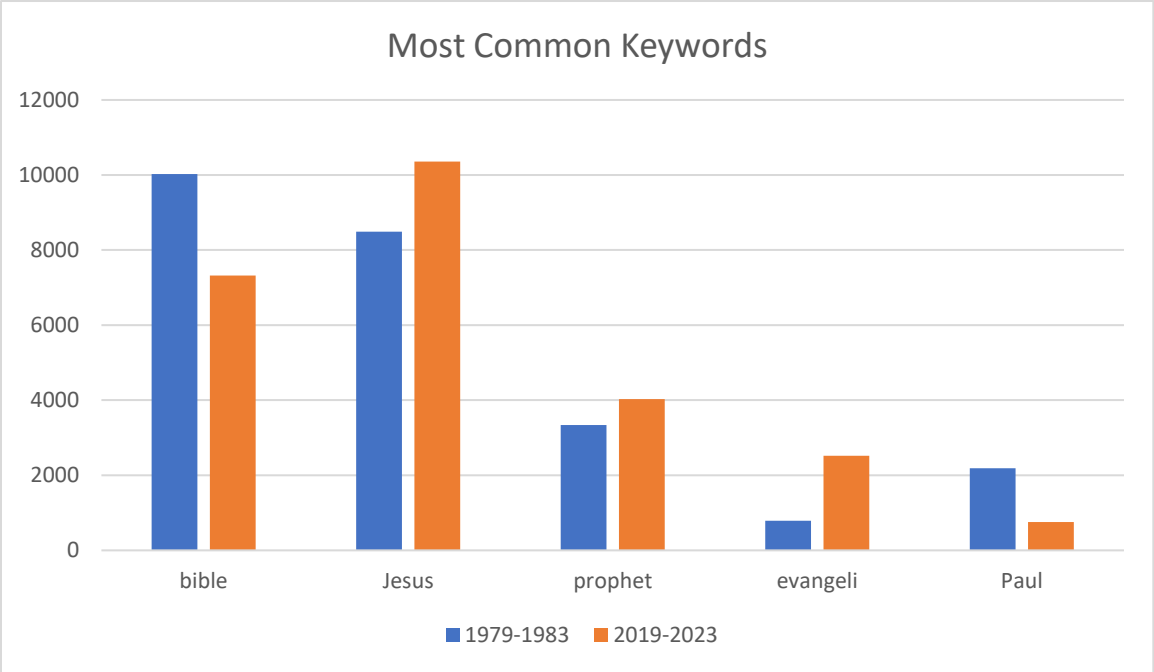


Figure 1. Most common keywords.

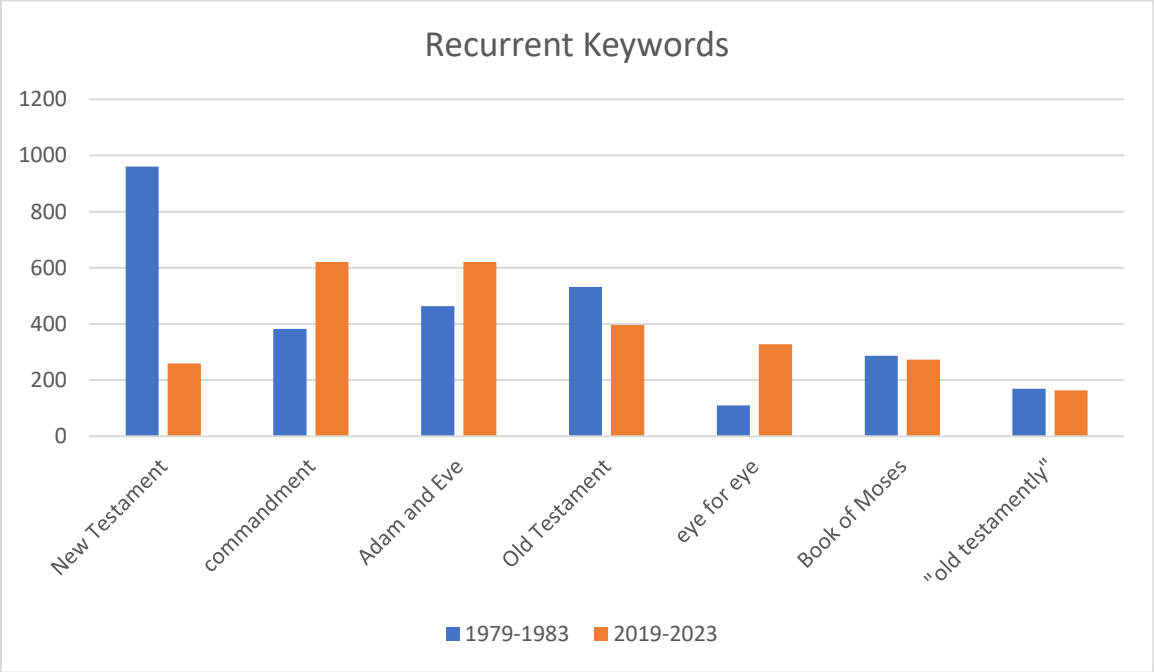


Figure 2. Recurrent keywords.

After the initial frequency analysis, I proceeded by selecting about 350 articles relevant for the study, that is, articles on (national) politicized topics with references to one or several keywords. Since I am interested in how the Bible is used in political debates, I finally singled out opinion pieces which, after a close reading, left me with 178 articles (59 in the first period, 119 in the second). How the debates are distributed between the first and second period is illustrated in *Figure 3* below:

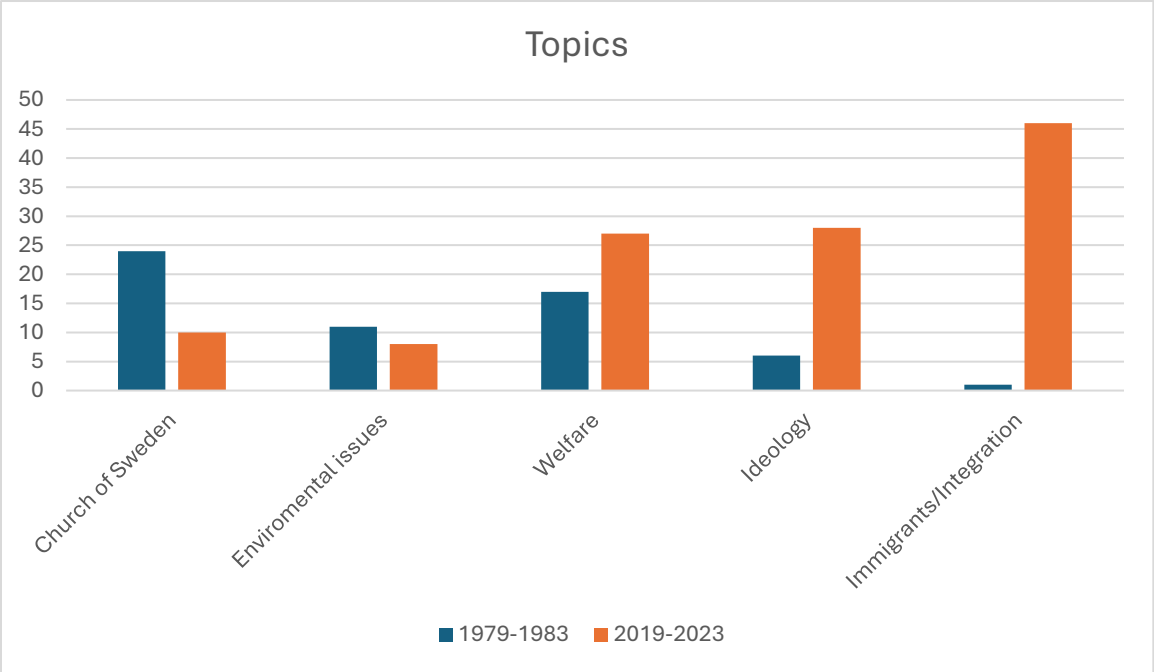


Figure 3. Topics.

The material was analyzed through critical discourse analysis (CDA), which has been advocated for analyzing media material.[5] The approach stems from a notion of the world as contingent, arguing that representations and practices that exist in the social world are created through social processes.[6] Discourse can be seen as language use as action, or as John Richardson states: "Language use is one way in which subjects – *people* – may act upon society".[7] The model for CDA employed in this study includes three dimensions of discourse: Discourse as text encompasses the linguistic characteristics of the text; discursive practices concern how discourses are produced, distributed, and consumed; discourse as social practices concerns the discourse's interaction with the society that constitutes its context.[8]

Identified Discourses

Below, I list the discourses concerning the Bible that I have identified in the material.

Table 2. The discourses in the *order of discourse*[9] "The Bible's role in Swedish political discourse."

Discourses affirming the Bible's role	**First detected**	**Explainatory comment**

[5] John E. Richardson. 2007. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 15.
[6] Titus Hjelm. 2014. *Social Constructionism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 16.
[7] Richardson, *Analysing*, 29. Emphasis in original.
[8] Norman Fairclough. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity, 71–73.
[9] Fairclough, *Discourse*, 94.

The Bible must be interpreted in light of modern values.	First period.	The Bible can still be relevant if interpreted taking gender equality and other secular norms into account.
The Bible is against nuclear power.	First period.	
The Bible propagates secularity	Second period.	The Bible itself promotes separation between church and state, for instance through the "render unto Ceasar" maxim.
The Bible emphasizes social aid	Second period.	
Climate activists are like biblical prophets	Second period.	
The Bible demands climate justice	Second period.	
The Bible is a moral authority	Second period.	
The Bible offers comfort and guidance in times of crises	Second period.	E.g. the covid pandemic.
The Bible demands solidarity with refugees	Second period.	
The Bible demands responsibility for our fellow citizens	Second period.	E.g. not refugees from other countries, a counter discourse to the above-mentioned discourse.
Discourses contesting the Bible's role		
The Bible is absurd and outdated	First period.	
The Bible is not about current politics	First period.	E.g. in relation to the issue of nuclear power.
The Bible has nothing to do in politics	Second period.	
The benign Bible and the malignant Qur'an	Second period.	The Bible contains benign values that are compatible to Swedish secular values, while the Qur'an poses a threat against the same. Mainly uttered in relation to the Qur'an burning debate.

Although most discourses are listed as affirming the Bible, this can be interpreted as the (many) exceptions that affirm the rule; namely what I argue is the dominant discourse; *the Bible has nothing to do in politics*. The dominant discourse is detectable in most of the debates through its interdiscursive links to *the Bible is absurd and outdated*-discourse and *the Bible is not about current politics*-discourse. Actors who articulate *the benign Bible and the malignant Qur'an*-discourse also underline that religion and politics should not be mixed, emphasizing freedom of speech. Further, the tendency to use the Bible in an ironic way can be detected in both periods, especially when actors mock Christian politicians for taking the Bible into consideration in the political debate.

There are also counter discourses, challenging the dominant discourse. First, *the Bible must be interpreted in light of modern values*-discourse stresses the possibility of the Bible being relevant in the political debate if it is interpreted through a specific lens. Second, through *the Bible propagates secularity*- discourse, actors argue that the Bible itself propagates secularity (the separation between church and state) and thus constitutes both a political and a theological argument that should be considered in the debate. Third, the Bible can be seen as relevant in political debates that revolves around specific issues, such as moral issues (*the Bible is a moral authority*) or in relation to societal crises (*the Bible offers comfort and guidance in*

times of crises). The latter discourse can be detected in debates on environmental issues (climate change, nuclear power), in relation to the need for social aid, and the so-called refugee crisis, making it a prominent discourse in the order of discourse. The discourses *the Bible demands climate justice*, *Climate activists are like biblical prophets*, *the Bible demands solidarity with refugees*, and *the Bible demands responsibility for our fellow citizens* all suggest the Bible can be useful for political decisions, as does *the Bible is against nuclear power*-discourse and *the Bible emphasizes social aid*-discourse. A pattern in the material is thus the recurrent hegemonic struggle between the dominant discourse *the Bible has nothing to do in politics* and challenging discourses arguing that specific circumstances can affirm the Bible's position in political debates; either when applying a specific interpretative lens or when considering a specific topic (mainly topics relating to morality or crises).

Not surprisingly, the Bible is invoked in debates relating to the majority Lutheran and state church up until 2000, the Church of Sweden, or when representatives of the Church of Sweden partake in various debates. That Sweden has a state church is criticized in the first period, and in the second period actors disprove of the representation and influence of political parties in the Church General Synod. In both periods, when religious actors invoke the Bible, they are accused of stepping into a political rather than theological debate and domain. This notion is also detectable in other Nordic countries. In Denmark, for instance, pastors are often warned by right-winged politicians not to misuse their office for political purposes. Larsen describes the situation as paradoxical; politicians warn religious actors against crossing over into the domain of politics, while they themselves risk stepping into the domain of theology.[10] The Bible is understood as important in the discussion on church and state relations, although mainly as an argumentation for the separation of the two (drawing on a Lutheran discourse on the two kingdoms).

Generally, in the overall debates, the idea that one should not mix religion and politics is dominant in both periods, as well as the apparent difficulty in not doing so. The Bible is continuously used as political currency, to create identity and reinforce power claims. This is done in different ways; the Bible can be used to underline one's argument and legitimize one's claim or to mock politicians or political opponents to delegitimize them. The Bible can be used ironically, for dramatic effects, or for entertaining purposes. Further, actors ascribe the Bible

[10] Kasper Bro Larsen. 2023. "'Render unto Ceasar': Jesus and the Lutheran Liberal Bible in Debates on Religion and Politics in Denmark since 2000." Pages 79–96 in *The Nordic Bible: Bible Reception in Contemporary Nordic Societies*. Edited by Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, Kasper Bro Larsen and Outi Lehtipuu. SBR 24. Boston/Berlin: de Gruyter.

with their own ideological position and there are many examples of truth claims about Jesus, considering what he would have said today. The Bible can in this sense also be used as a source of authority, despite secularist and church critical currents in both periods. For instance, there is a tendency, mainly in the first period, to use the Bible to counter-cite itself, illustrating that what the Bible says matters. In addition, the Bible is used as a religious authority by self-identified Christians (and two Jewish actors).

The Bible is further used throughout the material as language form or rhetorical device, as a common story and point of reference, and to interpret or frame political events. There is a recurrent presupposition, that readers are familiar with biblical texts, characters, and themes, that is, the Bible is understood as a common denominator, and biblical references are assumed to bring a certain value or weight to actors' arguments. In both periods, there is a presupposition that Swedes speak "biblish." Therefore, bits of the Bible, and particular bibles, can play important roles in the political debate.

In both periods, to know the Bible (or at least come across as knowing the Bible), can thus generate political points. It is presupposed that Swedes know their Bible (although, not believe in it) and that the Bible resonates with Swedish hearts, for nostalgic reasons if nothing more. As long as the Bible is not evoked to impose what is considered conservative religiously coded actions and norms, the Bible can be used as a political resource.

Besides the broader patterns emerging in the material, there are also some interesting differences between the two periods, mainly related to the divergent topics that the Bible is summoned to comment on. To understand the social context surrounding the discourses, other theories need to be applied. For that reason, I have selected three theories that intertwined can explain the discourses in relation to the social practice: religious complexity (since religious complexity influences the geographical context); mediatization theory (since I analyze media material), and; politicization of religion (since the material relates to political debates). These will be presented below.

Religious Complexity, Mediatization and Politicization of Religion as Theoretical Lenses

A significant societal change is that during the first period, 1979–1983, Sweden had an official state church, the Church of Sweden. In 1978, 96.4% of the Swedish population were members of the state church. The long-term relationship between the state and the church ended in the year 2000. In the second period, 2019–2023, membership had dropped to 56% (in 2019). There is thus an increasing secularization taking place between the two periods, both in membership

(that is, regarding the issue of belonging) and on the institutional level, two important aspects when discussing what secularization is and how it manifests.[11] Sweden is often described as the world's most secularized country, yet, the Swedish state's affiliation with the majority church, is far from over. When it comes to describe the religious context in Sweden, I side with sociologist of religion Inger Furseth, who argues that theoretical concepts such as secularization, desecularization, and post-secularization all fail to capture the religious trends in the Nordic counties. Furseth states that new perspectives and terms are needed to describe the changing religious profile of Europe, and particularly the Nordic countries. The Christian majority churches are increasingly losing members, migration has led to an increasing cultural and religious diversity, and people are increasingly choosing to remain outside of religious communities. At the same time, the Nordic countries continue to be influenced by and embedded in a Christian tradition. Furseth labels these contradicting parallel trends as *religious complexity*. In addition, she stresses the increasing visibility of religion in the public sphere (e.g. in media and political debate). Titus Hjelm has termed this latter phenomenon as *a new type of visibility of religion*, characterized by the tendency that religion is made visible when connected to controversies or conflicts, including the notion of religion as a problem.[12] The visibility is thus conditioned; religion is depicted as either a problem or as something useful, creating or solving a social problem.

The second selected theory that I shall apply is *mediatization of religion*, a theory mainly developed in the Scandinavian setting. In a condensed form, mediatization can be said to describe the increasing influence of the media and how media affects society in an indirect way.[13] Media determines who is considered a trustworthy source, who is allowed to be heard,

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[11] In the 1980s, several social scientists assumed the connection between modernization and secularization, in the sense that religion in modern societies become more privatized and have little public significance. However, the 1990s and early 2000s witnessed a growing scholarly interest in religion in the public sphere, some even claiming there was a return of religion in the public sphere. Peter Berger famously coined the term *desecularization* (1999) in reference to this tendency, while Jürgen Habermas (2006) instead talked about a state of *post-secularization*. Both terms met critique due to their conceptual fuzziness, making them difficult to use in empirical studies. A more promising approach came from Jose´ Casanova (1994), who argued for a subdivision of secularization theory into three sub-theses, namely: secularization as religious decline (practices and beliefs); the differentiation of the secular sphere from that of religion, and; secularization as the privatization of religion to its own sphere. But Casanova's approach also met skepticism, with critics claiming he fails to account for multiple and seemingly contradictory religious trends. For a summary of the secularization theory, and critique thereof, see Inger Furseth. 2018. "Introduction." Pages 1–29 in *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere: Comparing Nordic Countries*. Edited by Inger Furseth. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. Cf. Inger Furseth, Lena Kühle, Knut Lundby and Mia Lövheim. 2019. "Religious Complexity in the Nordic Public Sphere." *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 32 (1): 71–90.

[12] Titus Hjelm. 2014. "Understanding the New Visibility of Religion." *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 7 (3–4): 203–222; Titus Hjelm. 2015. "Is God Back? Reconsidering the New Visibility of Religion." Pages 1–16 in *Is God Back? Reconsidering the New Visibility of Religion*. Edited by Titus Hjelm. London: Bloomsbury.

[13] Cf. Stig Hjarvard. 2011. "The Mediatisation of Religion: Theorising Religion, Media, and Social Change." *Culture and Religion* 12 (2): 119–135; Stig Hjarvard. 2012. "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the

and what they are allowed to say. Mediatization indicates the social and cultural process through which a field or institution to some extent becomes dependent on the logics of the media.

Media scholar Stig Hjarvard writes about the mediatization of religion, that "media have acquired an important role not only in the transmission of religious imagery but also in the very production and framing of religious issues."[14] Together with Mia Lövheim, Hjarvard has proposed an understanding of mediatization of religion as: "the process through which various forms of media (journalism, entertainment, social media, etc.) become prominent producers of religious meanings and experiences at the same time as religious organizations and individuals have to reconsider existing practices and engage with a mediatized environment in attempts to reassert their authority under new conditions."[15]

Media representations are influenced by media logic(s) which, in Hjarvard's terms, compromise the various operational modalities by which the media enable, limit, and structure human communication and action.[16] For instance, there is a specific media logic in relation to the genre of debate articles in which the concept of news value is central.[17] Either the debate article is related to an already established news story or event, or it is signed by someone who is considered to be newsworthy.

As a third theory on processes that shape the social context, I will employ the theory on the *politicization of religion*. Here, I mainly draw on Carolina Ivanescu, who conceptualizes the politicization of religion as a process wherein religion, religious actors, and religious arguments become objects or subjects in discussions on political topics.[18] Ivanescu argues that although religion and politics have never been completely separated, secularism has been used as proof and measure of the modernity of the nation-state, which understands itself as a secular political unit perceived to be culturally homogeneous. From the perspective of the state as agent, ethnicity, cultural specificity, and religion are dismissed as characteristics of assumed simpler pre-political societies, or of marginal groups destined to assimilate into the nation state. Further, she claims that the line between private and public is as thin as ever, and

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Public Face of Religion." Pages 21–44 in *Mediatization and Religion*. Edited by Stig Hjarvard and Mia Lövheim. Göteborg: Nordicom; Mia Lövheim and Gordon Lynch. 2011. "The mediatisation of religion debate: An introduction." *Culture and Religion* 12 (2): 111–117; Mia Lövheim. 2014. "Mediatization of Religion." Pages 547–571 in *Mediatization of Communication.* Edited by Knut Lundby. Boston/Berlin: de Gruyter.

[14] Hjarvard, "Three Forms," 21.

[15] Mia Lövheim and Stig Hjarvard. 2019. "Mediatized Conditions of Contemporary Religion." *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture* 8: 296–225, (216–217).

[16] Hjarvard, "The Mediatisation,"123.

[17] Marta Axner. 2013. *Public religions in Swedish media: A study of religious actors on three newspaper debate pages 2001–2011.* PhD diss. Uppsala: Uppsala University.

[18] Carolina Ivanescu. 2010 "Politicised Religion and the Religionisation of Politics." *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 11: 309–325.

so is the line between religion and politics. This can be observed at two levels. First, the invocation of religion in political discourse, leading to the politicization of religion. This first level positions religion as something spoken *about* within debates over politicized issues. In contemporary Swedish political discourse, this manifests most prominently in discussions linking religion to migration, integration, and security concerns.[19] The second level of politicization of religion involves religious actors and arguments as entities to speak *with*, incorporating them as integral components of political debate. The second level focuses on the influence religion has on political life, leading to the religionization of politics. It is Ivanescu's first observation that I will draw on in my analysis, as well as studies on the use of religion within (mainly authoritarian) political discourse, where religion is given a symbolic function, particularly in relation to conflicts of values.[20]

The theory on the politicization of religion stresses that religious values, actors, and issues (and objects such as the Bible), become key themes around which new political debates can be mobilized and groups formed.[21] In this process, religious symbols and beliefs might be detached from particular actors or traditions and made into what James Beckford has called "a potent cultural resource" which, "may act as the vehicle of change, challenge or conservation."[22] When transformed into policy practice, the voice of religion is distorted by other parallel politicized discussions.[23]

The outcomes of an increased politicization of religion are complex: for instance, more debates on religion in national parliaments.[24] Further, increased politicization of religion is connected to globalization and, as a consequence of globalized politics, religion may become a provider of social cohesion, but also a site of difference and contestation between social and ethnic groups. This relates to religious complexity; religion is no longer relegated to the religious or the private sphere (thus less privatized and deprivatized).[25] The politicization of religion also relates to the mediatization of religion, and the processes reinforce each other.

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[19] Jonas Lindberg. 2020. "Changes in the Politicisation of religion in Scandinavian Parliamentary Debates 1988-2019." *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 33 (2): 87–100.
[20] Cf. Jonas Lindberg. 2015. *Religion in Nordic Politics as a Means to Societal Cohesion: An Empirical Study on Party Platforms and Parliamentary Debates 1988–2012*. PhD Diss.: Uppsala University.
[21] Mia Lövheim, Jonas Lindberg, Pål Ketil Botvar, Henrik Reintoft Christiansen, Kati Niemelä, and Anders Bäckström. 2018. "Religion on the Political Agenda" Pages 137–191 (139) in *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere: Comparing Nordic Countries.* Edited by Inger Furseth. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
[22] James Beckford. 1989. *Religion and Advanced Industrial Society*. London: Unwin Hyman, 170.
[23] Ivanescu, "Politicised religion," 312.
[24] Lövheim et al. "Religion on the," 140.
[25] Lövheim et al. "Religion on the," 181.

Religion has become more visible as a topic in the secular press, due to an increased politicization of religion.[26]

In what follows, I will address changes in the material and how they can be explained with the three theories described in this section.

Conflicting Ideas of the Bible's Authority in Secular Sweden

I argue that references to the Bible in the material effectively illustrate the ambiguous role of Christianity and the majority Lutheran church in the Swedish public sphere. Changes over time reflect both a process of an increasing privatization and pluralization of religion, a decreasing authority of religious institutions, and the lingering influence of Christianity and the Christian scripture as well. These tendencies can all be seen to reflect what Furseth labels religious complexity.

An increasing privatization of religion is for instance detectable in the way the Bible comes up in news reports. During the first period, politicians regularly talk about their Christian faith or refer to the Bible in public speeches and media interviews, something that is considered positive. Before elections, party leaders and other politicians visit churches and some even preach there. Further, politicians are asked in election campaigns to state their favorite passage from the Bible. There are also news reports illustrating politicians publicly venerating the Bible. I have not detected a similar material in the second period, where such practices would come across as more controversial due to a lower connection between state and church, an increased self-understanding of Swedes as secular, and an increasing religious diversity. In the material from the second period, also religious actors refer to the Bible as containing a message to "all of us," that is, all Swedes, stressing it as part of "our" tradition or heritage, and its spiritual, rather than religious, message of, for instance, human rights (notions that could be challenged as the predominant message of the biblical literature). This shift could reflect a broader European trend of a decrease in the number of people self-identified as religious and an increase of people self-identifying as spiritual; the word choices can be seen as ways for religious actors to appeal to a broader audience (and adapt to the media logic).[27]

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[26] Inger Furseth. 2018. "Secularization, Deprivatization, or Religious Complexity?" Pages 291–312 (297) in *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere: Comparing Nordic Countries*. Edited by Inger Furseth. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

[27] Cf. Grace Davie and Erin K. Wilson. 2020. "Religion in European Society: The Factors to take into Account." Pages 15–30 in *Religion and European Society: A Primer*. Edited by Benjamin Schewel and Erin K. Wilson. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell; Erika Willander. 2013. "'Jag tror på något': Konstruktioner av tro och tilltro" ['I believe in something': Constructions of Beliefs in Sweden]. *Sociologisk forskning* 50(2): 117–138.

In the material from the first period, most actors seem to take the religious authority of the Bible for granted, although there are interdiscursive links to both a church-critical and a secularist discourse in the debates. These two discourses are not as prominent in the material from the second period, mainly, I argue, since they are presupposed due to an increased secularization. While in the first period, through *the Bible is absurd and outdated*-discourse, several actors argue for the problematic consequences the Bible might have on society (particularly concerning women's rights, but also regarding gay rights), while in the second period, through *the Bible offers comfort and guidance in times of crises*-discourse, several actors instead stress what an asset the Bible can be for society.

Generally, in both periods, Christian religious actors and politicians can be mocked if they use the Bible to defend religious arguments that are perceived as conservative, reflecting a dominant secularist discourse in Swedish newspaper editorials stating that political claims based in religious argumentation are not accepted, previously identified by Lövheim.[28] As stated above, in the second period, it comes across as controversial to invoke the Bible for religious purposes in relation to specific policies, such as an argument against abortion. This aligns with studies showing that when a religion is presented in the media as conservative with moral claims it is framed as "bad religion."[29] Also in my material, invoking the Bible can be considered "bad," except in times of crises. *The Bible offers comfort and guidance in times of crises*-discourse is one of the prominent discourses in the second period, also detectable in the debates on climate change and the so-called refugee-crisis. This could relate to the argument put forward by scholars, that in times of crises, secularized societies can undergo a period of religious increase.[30] The Bible can thus be framed as problematic in the second period when discussed in connection to laws and regulations on how to live one's life, but non-problematic when framed as a general influential story on human conditions and a resource in difficult times or as a guideline for (perceived non-conservative) morality. In the first period, when the Bible is framed as antique, that means something bad; it is outdated and absurd. Since the Bible still has religious authority, it is necessary for actors who want to argue against that position to devalue the Bible by pinpointing its absurdity for instance by framing it as old. In the second period however, the fact that the Bible is antique can be something good and positive; it contains an old knowledge on life's existential and moral sides, knowledge that can be useful in times

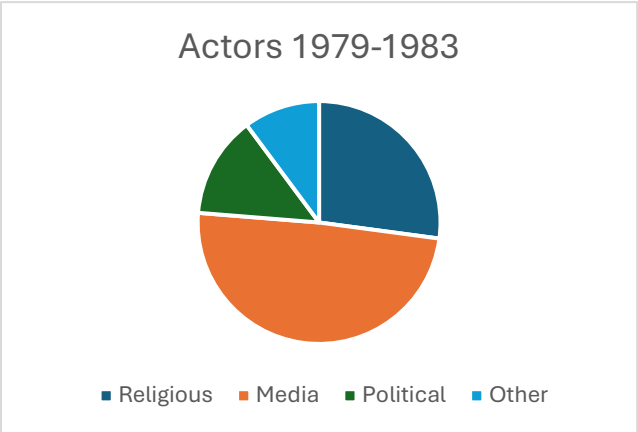
[28] Lövheim, "Religion," 380.
[29] Furseth, "Secularization," 301.
[30] Isabella Kasselstrand, Phil Zuckerman and Ryan T. Cragun. 2023. *Beyond Doubt: The Secularization of Society*. New York: New York University Press.

of crises. Because the Bible is no longer by default considered a religious authority, it can be positioned as worthy of respect because of its age. To enforce societal morality and hope in times of crises, the Bible is ascribed a certain cultural capital.

This relates to an increased secularization, where in the first period, several actors wish to revolt against the state church, Christianity, and the religious authority of the Bible, while actors in the second period tend to value the Bible for other qualities. The use of the Bible as language form, common story, and identity marker, increases in the second period. Because of the diminishing role of religious authorities and an increased privatization of religion, which has led to Christianity being a bearer of nondogmatic moral teachings that undergird modern secular political order,[31] the Bible can be deployed by anyone, adjusted to anything. Also, because of an increasing religious diversity, the Bible increasingly becomes framed as one religious scripture among others, mainly the Qur'an. This process also contributes to the presupposition that the Bible and Swedishness are connected and the use of the Bible as an identity marker, detectable in the second period. When faced with the Other, the Bible becomes framed as a benign denominator of what constitutes Swedishness, reflecting the lingering impact of Christianity in the Swedish society.

I now move away from how the material reflects religious complexity, to how an increased mediatization of religion influences the material (although, as stated above, the three processes are entangled). Two changes come across as particularly relevant, namely the question of who is considered newsworthy, and what.

When it comes to which actors partake in the debates, actors in the first period are distributed as seen in *Figures 4* and *5* below.



[31] Scott W. Hahn and Benjamin Wiker. 2013. *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300–1700*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 11.

Figure 4. Actors 1979–1983.

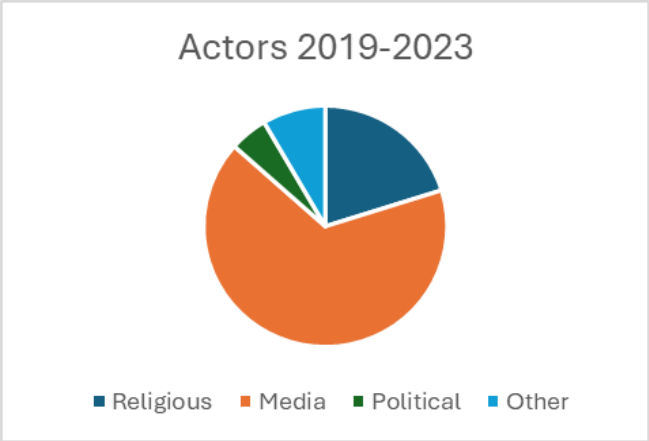


Figure 5. Actors 2019–2023.

There is an increase in the number of media actors (from 49% to 69%) and a decrease in the number of religious actors (from 27% to 20%) and political actors (from 14% to 5%) over time. The category "others" does not see a vast difference (going from 10% to 8%). That there were more political actors in the first period was discussed above; the decrease in political actors reflects an increased secularization rather than mediatization. Because Sweden had a state church during the first period, it was not as controversial for politicians to be outspoken about their Christian faith or refer to the Bible.

Interestingly, many of the media actors in the second period have been publicly opened about self-identifying as Christian, of which some reoccur in the material. That is, during the second period, while there are fewer religious actors involved in the debate, there are more self-identified Christian media actors. These are, however, not participating in the debates as religious experts or authorities, but as cultural celebrities, columnists, or journalists, which indicates an increased mediatization of religion. The representation of the Bible as religious authority is thus composed by media actors rather than religious authorities. Religious actors might very well have tried to get more articles published, but been declined, due to a decrease in religious leaders' authority and relevance. Since they no longer represent a state church they come across as less newsworthy according to media logic. In addition, religious critical voices are more absent in the second period: religious critical and non-confessional actors in the second period might not have felt a need to refer to the Bible, while in the first period also they needed to relate their argument to the Bible due to its perceived authority in the debates. Also, in the first period, the most debated issues relate to the Church of Sweden, where references to the Bible might come across as relevant also for non-confessional actors.

This relates to another perspective of mediatization, namely which debates are considered newsworthy.

Ultimately, the Bible becomes newsworthy when it complies with the media logic; it is used by someone considered newsworthy (journalist, cultural celebrities, or high-profile religious actors such as bishops) or when it is invoked in relation to newsworthy events. During the first period, 1979–1983, Sweden's major morning papers, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, had a rather extensive coverage of issues regarding the Church of Sweden, that is, the Church of Sweden was considered newsworthy due to its position as state church.[32] During the second period, other issues, such as immigration and integration, was topical. The latter reflects another aspect of mediatization of religion, namely the so-called new visibility of religion where religion tends to be made visible when connected to a controversy or conflict and framed as either "good" or "bad."[33] In the first period, the Bible is framed as "bad" through the discourse *the Bible is absurd and outdated*, that is, the Bible is seen as creating a social problem (mainly discrimination of women). At the same time, the Bible is framed as "good" through *the Bible must be interpreted in light of modern values*-discourse, that is, the Bible can be useful for society (if interpreted considering certain values). In the second period, it is the Qur'an that is framed as "bad" and the Bible mainly framed as "good," through the discourse *the benign Bible and the malignant Qur'an*. This shift illustrates how the three social processes (religious complexity, mediatization, and politicization of religion) are intertwined: Due to increasing religious pluralism and politicization of religion (mainly Islam), Islam is no longer primarily discussed in foreign news reports relating to international conflicts (as in the first period, where Islam was mentioned in debates on for instance Iran and the Israel/Palestine conflict) but increasingly mentioned in relation to media controversies about religious diversity and integration, topical issues in the political debate.[34] This corresponds to studies highlighting a shift in the Nordic countries between 1988 and 2008 where religion in media went from being related to news to being related to debates, indicating greater contestation around religion.[35] This is also the case in my material, where news reports mentioning the Bible decrease between the two time periods, but opinion pieces mentioning the Bible increase.

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[32] Curt Dahlgren. 1985. "Sverige" [Sweden]. Pages 196–237 (225) in *Religiös förändring i Norden 1930–1980* [Religious Change in the Nordic Countries 1930–1950]. Edited by Göran Gustafsson. Malmö: Liber.
[33] Cf. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd. 2015. *Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
[34] Lövheim, "Culture."
[35] Furseth et al. "Religious Complexity," 83.

This leads me to discuss the main change in the material, which has to do with the different topics to which the Bible is related and summoned, which I argue reflect an increased politicization of religion. The frequency of the topics in the two periods were illustrated in *Table 1* above. In the first period, the relationship between the state and the Church of Sweden was debated in 24 articles, which make up about 40.5% of the material from that period. Welfare issues make up about 29% (17 articles), environmental issues (nuclear power and climate change) about 18.5% (11 articles), ideological issues about 10% (six articles), and immigrants/integration about 1.5% (one article). In the second period, the bar chart illustrates almost opposite numbers: Here, the main debate concerns immigrants/integration, referred to in 46 articles, making up about 38.5% of the material. Ideological issues make up about 23.5 % (28 articles), welfare issues about 22.5% (27 articles), the relationship between state and the majority church about 8% (ten articles), and environmental issues about 6.5% (eight articles).

The main change in the material is that the Bible becomes decreasingly referred to in relation to state/church issues (decreases from 40.5% to 8%), and increasingly invoked in relation to debates on ideological issues (increases from 10% to 23.5%) and immigration/integration (increases from 1.5% to 38.5%). In the first period, the Bible is mainly invoked in debates on the state church. In the debate, several actors use the Bible for religious arguments, mainly concerning the ordination of women. The debate, as well as the debate on the relationship between state and church, can be considered to be political issues (since they relate to the state church), but they also relate to a theological debate, illustrating the thin line between religion and politics. In the second period, the Bible is increasingly decontextualized from religious argumentation and recontextualized for political purposes (even if the line between the two can be fine), such as in the Qur'an burning debate where the Bible is mainly used as opposing object to the Muslim scripture. This process can be discerned already in the first period, where the Bible's religious authority decreases, and over time, the Bible is increasingly framed as important for the Swedish culture, heritage, and national identity. As stated above, the process of an increased politicization of religion also impacts how the Bible can be framed as "bad" religion in the first period, while in the second period, it is increasingly the Qur'an that represents "bad" religion. This representation of religious scriptures impacts the relationship between politics and religion as well as challenges notions of secularity.

This finding aligns with what other studies have shown, illustrating that the perception of which is the "bad" religion has changed in the past decades. Before the 1980s, Christianity was a contested religion from time to time, especially in the debates on science and religion, the legalization of abortion, and the role of religious education in public schools. Since

the 1990s, and especially after 2001, Islam has become the "bad religion" in Western public debate.[36] This context makes Beckford's conceptualization of religion in contemporary Western societies particularly relevant. As mentioned above, he argues that religion, while "adrift from its former points of anchorage," retains its power as "a potent cultural resource" capable of driving "change, challenge, or conservation."[37] Analysing religion's role in political discourse reveals how meanings attributed to religious elements, such as religious scriptures, undergo continuous negotiation. Beckford describes this as a dynamic process where religion's meaning is "intuited, asserted, doubted, challenged, rejected, substituted" across various contexts.[38]

One of the major factors behind the increased politicization of religion in Swedish politics is the entrance of the Sweden Democratic party in the Swedish parliament in 2010.[39] The right-wing populist party, with a strong ideological opposition against Islam, tends to draw on the so-called Eurabian thesis and replacement theory discourse, where Christianity appears as the value-base of Sweden, Swedes, and Swedishness, while Islam, and interestingly also current leaders of the Church of Sweden, appear as the negation of this value-base.[40] As other anti-immigrant parties in Europe, they seek to mobilize religion in the context of their identity politics, producing a triangular worldview of the "us," the pure and homogeneous people, that is defined in opposition to a set of "them." "Them" consists of on the one hand the corrupted liberal elite (in my material mainly the Church of Sweden and is bishops) which threatens the people's identity from within, and on the other hand the external "Other" (in my material mainly Muslims) who threatens it from without.[41] This follows a broader European trend, where growing Islamophobia is masked behind concern for the maintenance of public order, public safety, and social cohesion. This movement or current, sometimes described as religious nationalism, has contributed to the development of an idea of the national identity strictly connected with majoritarian religion, to the disadvantage of minority religion. While the latter tends to be deemed as a risk for social cohesion, majoritarian symbols tend to be perceived as "passive," harmless, and socially acceptable manifestations of religion.[42]

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[36] Furseth, "Secularization," 300.
[37] Beckford, *Religion*, 170.
[38] James Beckford. 2003. *Social Theory and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3.
[39] Lindberg, "Changes."
[40] Per-Erik Nilsson. 2020. "'Shame on the Church of Sweden': Radical Nationalism and the Appropriation of Christianity in Contemporary Sweden." *Critical Research on Religion*. 8 (2):138–152.
[41] Tobias Cremer. 2023. "Religion and Anti-Immigration Parties in the West." Pages 225–239 (229) in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and* Politics, third ed. Edited by Jeffrey Haynes. London: Routledge.
[42] Adelaide Madera. 2023. "The Interplay among Religion, Politics and Law in Europe: New Challenges and Future Trajectories." Pages 254–269 in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, third ed. Edited by Jeffrey Haynes. London: Routledge:

As stated above, although one can claim that the Bible has always, at least to a certain degree, been politicized,[43] I argue that the role the Bible plays in the material can be better understood in the light of the increasing politicization of religion. The Bible is increasingly framed as an object (spoken about within debates over politicized issues) and as a symbol for policies, rights, and a particular society rather than a scripture relating to religious arguments, contexts, debates, and call for actions. While religious actors are present in both periods, relating the Bible to religious arguments (and then accused of expressing political arguments), other actors decreasingly use the Bible in relation to a religious discourse. This has mainly to do with the shift of focus in the debate to issues on immigration and integration, not least in the Qur'an burning debate, where the Bible is mainly framed as benign and as a demarcation between "us" and "them." By adopting and adapting the Bible for this purpose, the Bible further becomes a subject that is incorporated in the political debate. There is thus, I argue, a new type of politicization of the Bible to be discerned in the material, where the Bible, as object and subject, is drawn into debates on politicized issues more loosely related to religious discourse in an increasingly secularized context. In the first period, such issues were for instance gay rights, female ministers, or state-church relationship, issues that were politicized but also connected to the state church's, and God's, view on these matters. This is not the case in the second period, where other types of issues are politicized, issues that are not as clearly linked to religious discourse (despite some religious actors approaching and connecting debates on immigration/integration to biblical notions on the stranger and climate change to biblical notions on creation). The Bible is thus decreasingly used to ascribe actors with religious authority (which is no longer needed due to an increasing secularization). Instead, the Bible is used to gain (secular) political points, for instance through ironic, rhetorical, or entertaining usages, or to stress "Swedishness" and notions on a particular set of values, culture, heritage, or national identity.

Ivanescu argues that we can talk about a politicization of religion (the Bible) in the public sphere as both object and subject of political and policy discussion and action, in my

[43] Hanh and Wiker claim that to understand the development of the historical-critical method(s) in biblical studies one must take into account the secularization "project" where the politicization of the Bible was essential. By politicization they mean "*the intentional exegetical reinterpretation of Scripture so as to make it serve merely political, this-worldly (hence secular) goal*." Hahn and Wiker, *Politicizing*, 8–9. Emphasis in the original. In addition, they argue that: "Since this effort was largely undertaken by those who embraced a new secular worldview, the effect was to subordinate the method of interpreting Scripture to secular political aims. This subordination was essential in the early development of the modern historical-critical method" (9). Cf. Killeen who illustrates how the Bible was used as political document in 17th century England and ask why the Bible has so often and so thoroughly been excluded within the scholarship of political history. Kevin Killeen. 2017. *The Political Bible in Early Modern England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

material concerning gender equality at the workplace, church governance, environmental issues, welfare issues, ideological positions, and immigration/integration. The Bible is invoked in these debates, presupposed to add something to the discussions, and to have consequences for policy actions (e.g. separate state and church, forbid nuclear power, enforce stricter regulations to end climate change, distribute taxes in a certain way, impose a more generous or more restrictive asylum policy). Although an overwhelming majority of actors in the second period are media actors, rather than political actors, I argue that they express opinions on politicized issues (that is, issues that are supposed by political parties to influence the electorate) in a way that can influence public opinion. The way the Bible is politicized challenges assumptions about the strictly secular state and the notion that religion and politics are (and should be) separate in Swedish politics. When the Bible is politicized, following Ivanescu's line of thought, it cannot be claimed that the (Western) state is unconditionally secular, because the way the Bible is politicized shows that religion and politics are interacted in ways that affect people's opportunities in society (through political decisions and the discourses that condition people's and groups' opportunities).

Ultimately, changes in the material can be understood in relation to religious complexity, where the Bible increasingly loses religious authority but simultaneously, despite an increasing individualization and pluralization of religion, continues to play a part of Swedish public discourse due to Christianity's lingering influence on the Swedish society and an increased visibility of religion in media. In addition to this lingering influence of Christianity in public debate, the shift of the issue of religion from the margins to the center in the political debate following the Sweden Democrats' accentuating of Christianity as fundamental to Swedish culture contributes a politicization of the Bible, meaning that the Bible is used to influence voters' attitudes on politicized issues.

1. Research Questions and Objectives

My PhD thesis has two main research questions. The first research question is "How does language function as an instrument for constructing and enforcing colonial masculinity in the Persian-period biblical books of Nehemiah and Esther?" To address this, the thesis explores the following subsidiary questions:

1. Which speech acts in Nehemiah and Esther explicitly encode colonial masculine authority?
2. How do these features reflect or diverge from Persian imperial language policies attested in extra-biblical sources?
3. How does Esther depict decrees as mechanisms that
   (a) impose or challenge gender norms, and
   (b) organise the empire into hierarchical, male-dominated spaces?
4. In what ways does Nehemiah's self-presentation negotiate his dual identity as imperial official and Yehudite leader?

The second main question is 'How can an integrated postcolonial-masculinity framework, centred on the proposition that "language is a tool for exercising colonial masculinity," reshape the interpretation of biblical narratives written under the imperial rule?'

To explore this, I ask:

1. What limitations in previous postcolonial or gender readings does this hybrid framework address?
2. What new insights emerge about Yehudite identity formation under Persian imperial rule?
3. How might extending this language-centred postcolonial-masculinity lens to other biblical or ancient Near Eastern narratives open new lines of inquiry into identity formation under imperial rule?

The aim of addressing these two research questions is twofold. First, the thesis establishes the central argument that "language is a tool for exercising colonial masculinity." Second, it explores how this argument can offer new interpretive possibilities for biblical texts composed under Persian imperial rule.

2. Tentative Outline

Part 1: Establishing the Central Argument

1. An Overview of Masculinity Studies
2. The intersection of masculinity studies and colonial studies
3. "Language is a tool of exercising colonial masculinity"
4. Methodologies

Part 1 establishes the theoretical foundation of my research. I examine how masculinity studies have not only played a crucial role in advancing gender theory, but also how their methodologies have been adapted to expand the interpretation of Hebrew biblical texts(1.1). It then explores the intersection of masculinity and colonial studies, introducing the concept of "imperial masculinity"(1.2). At this stage of the research, I define imperial masculinity as a form of masculinity embedded within imperial patriarchal structures, in which the emperor occupies the highest position as the model of ideal manhood, while those of lower status are marked as increasingly "unmanly." While I first encountered the term colonial masculinity in Mrinalini Sinha's work on 19th-century British colonial India, my ongoing engagement with scholarship on masculinity and imperialism in ancient empires demonstrates that the concept can be

meaningfully applied to my focus texts.[1] Building on this intersection, I argue that language functions as a crucial mechanism through which imperial masculinity is exercised(1.3). My analysis aims to demonstrate that controlling the language choices of socially subordinate or colonised subjects is itself a manifestation of masculine power, particularly within colonial contexts.

Part 2: "And Every Man Should Speak According to the Language of His People" (Esther)

1. State of scholarship of the Book of Esther
    a. Author and location
    b. Textual traditions and editorial history of Esther
2. Analysis of focus texts (Chapter 1)
3. Character analysis
    a. Artaxerxes
    b. Eunuchs
    c. Esther
    d. Mordecai and Haman

The first section begins with a survey of scholarly debates on the book's dating, authorship, and provenance(2.1). The analysis then turns to a detailed reading of Esther chapter 1. The primary aim is to further establish the central argument of this thesis that language functions as a tool for exercising imperial masculinity(2.2).

After establishing the central argument and demonstrating its relevance through close reading, the final section of Part 2 will turn to a character-based analysis(2.3). By tracing how each character navigates power through speech, silence, letters or written command, this section extends the argument that language underwrites the performance of imperial masculinity throughout the Book of Esther.

Part 3: "And They Did Not Know How to Speak Yehudite" (Nehemiah)

1. State of scholarship (dating, author, location, editorial history)
2. Analysis of focus texts (13:23-27)
3. Character analysis of Nehemiah
4. Linguistic hierarchies and gender

Similar to Part 2, this section begins with an overview of scholarly discussions concerning the Book of Nehemiah(3.1). After conducting the close reading of the focus text(3.2), I offer a character analysis of Nehemiah using the framework of complicit masculinity, a category within the broader theory of multiple masculinities, which argues that there are various ways of enacting masculinity that exist in relation to one

[1] Mark Masterson, 'Studies of Ancient Masculinity', in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, ed. Thomas K. Hubbard (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013), 17–30; Omar N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79, no. 3 (September 2016): 214–21; Sarah C. Melville, 'Neo-Assyrian Royal Women and Male Identity: Status as a Social Tool', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124, no. 1 (2004): 37–57; Bradley J. Parker, 'The Construction and Performance of Kingship in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', *Journal of Anthropological Research* 67, no. 3 (2011): 357–86; Agnès Garcia-Ventura and Saana Svärd, 'Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East: First Steps and Future Prospects', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79, no. 3, Special Issue: Gender Archaeology (September 2016): 222–23; Ilan Peled, 'Visualizing Masculinities: The Gala, Hegemony, and Mesopotamian Iconography', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79, no. 3, Special Issue: Gender Archaeology (September 2016): 158–65; Ilona Zsolnay, ed., *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East (London: Routledge, 2016); Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*, Harvard Semitic Monographs ; Volume 62 (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Michael B Dick, 'The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt and Yahweh's Answer to Job', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125, no. 2 (2006): 243–70; Brent A. Strawn, '"A World Under Control": Isaiah 60 and the Apadana Reliefs from Persepolis', in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*, ed. Jon L. Berquist, Semeia Studies 50 (Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 85–116.

another(3.3). Within this system, Nehemiah exemplifies complicit masculinity. Though he does not sit at the top of the imperial hierarchy, he reinforces its authority and derives his status through loyalty to it. In addition, in postcolonial biblical scholarship, Nehemiah's character analysis is conducted using the framework of hybrid identity, which explores the complex and sometimes contradictory identities produced under imperial domination. Building on this analysis, I then compare Nehemiah with other imperial-serving figures such as Ezra and Daniel, both of whom operate within the imperial court but do so as scribes.

The second section is to how language functions as a site of colonial control, not only through top-down enforcement, but also through the participation of the colonised. Colonised subjects may adopt the dominant language not simply out of submission, but as a strategy to advance within the imperial hierarchy(3.4).

Part 4: Conclusion

Reimagining Imperial Masculinity through the Eunuchs of Esther

Introduction and Contextualisation of This Paper

This paper is prepared for the OTSEM 2025 conference in Copenhagen and forms part of my doctoral research project, *Unveiling Identities: Language, Gender, and Power in Achaemenid Yehud*. The broader framework of my project, and the specific ways in which this paper contributes to its overarching argument, are outlined in the separately submitted project summary.

In modern English, eunuch generally refers to a castrated male official serving in a royal court. The institution of eunuchs is attested across a wide temporal and geographical range, from the Babylonian imperial court[1] to the Qing dynasty in nineteenth-century China[2]. Because they existed in such different times and places, the precise definition of a eunuch, the nature of their physical condition or castration, their origins (whether as slaves, war captives, or specially appointed courtiers), and their functions within the court vary significantly across cultures and historical contexts. A number of scholarly debates on these questions remain unresolved. Nevertheless, one element consistently distinguishes eunuchs from other royal servants: their isolation from kinship-based security, often resulting from the brutal physical operation they endured, combined with their elevated status as court officials despite their socially stigmatised bodies. Furthermore, their role of working closely with the royal women is often emphasised. The eunuchs depicted in the Masoretic Text of

[1] Serdar Yalçin, 'Men, Women, Eunuchs, Etc.: Visualities of Gendered Identities in Kassite Babylonian Seals (ca. 1470–1155 B.C.)', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 376 (November 2016): 121–50.

[2] Shih-shan Henry Tsai, 'Eunuch Power in Imperial China', in *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. Shaun Tougher (The Classical Press of Wales, 2002).

the Book of Esther correspond closely to this image. Within the narrative, they are shown caring for women, initiating the selection process for a new queen after Vashti's banishment, guarding the palace gates, and even plotting against the king. The aim of this paper is to analyse these various roles in light of the Persian imperial power structure as reflected in the wider narrative of Esther.

This paper is organised into three parts. The first part examines the philological background of the Hebrew term סָרִיס, used to denote eunuchs in the Book of Esther, and its usage in other parts of the Hebrew Bible. The second part analyses the structure of the Persian society in the Book of Esther by using two concepts: "household" and "imperial gendered hierarchy." After describing the Persian imperial society through the framework of these two concepts, I would like to explain, in the third section, where the eunuchs are situated in this hierarchical and group-oriented society, how they were incorporated into the imperial system and made complicit in its operation. The third part offers a close reading of the roles of eunuchs in the Book of Esther, focusing on three functions I identify within the text: intermediating the genderes paces, caring for women, and serving as security guards.

Part 1: Hebrew Term סָרִיס

The Hebrew term סָרִיס, typically translated as "eunuch," is widely believed to originate from the Akkadian term *ša rēši*, which referred to a high-ranking court official.[3] An

[3] B. Kedar-Kopfstein, 'סָרִיס', in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck et al., trans. Douglas W. Scott (Grand Rapids, 1999); Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', in *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. Shaun Tougher (The Classical Press of Wales, 2002), 24; Martti Nissinen, 'Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament', in *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, ed. Ilona Zsolnay, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East (Routledge, 2016), 231; Tracy M. Lemos, *"Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget": Gender, Mutilation, and Negotiated Status in the Ancient Near East* (Springer Nature, 2011), 48.

alternative theory, although not widely accepted, suggests that סָרִיס derives from a Hebrew root סרס, meaning "to castrate."[4] According to this view, the term referring to high officials would be a separate loanword, possibly from Old Persian. Yet the majority of scholars continue to support the Akkadian derivation due to its attestation across the broader ancient Near Eastern context.

The literal meaning of the Akkadian expression *ša rēši* is "one who stands at the head of the king," a phrase denoting both physical proximity to the monarch and elevated courtly status. As J. E. Reade notes, eunuchs are often depicted in close proximity to the king or crown prince in relief, a visual marker of their privileged position within the court.[5] There is evidence that *ša rēši* is used to denote a castrated official. According to A. K. Grayson, Assyrian reliefs depict beardless figures labelled as *ša rēši*, whose appearance is clearly distinct from that of adolescent boys yet lacks the facial hair characteristic of adult men.[6] Similarly, Watanabe Kazuko notes that Neo-Assyrian seals inscribed with the title ša rēši frequently depict a beardless worshipper.[7] In the Assyrian cultural context, the beard functioned as a significant social marker of masculinity, and its absence conveyed an altered or diminished masculine status.[8] Textual evidence reinforces this reading, as *ša rēši* is often

[4] Kedar-Kopfstein, 'סָרִיס'.

[5] J. E. Reade, 'The Neo-Assyrian Court and Army: Evidence from the Sculptures', *Iraq* (London) 34, no. 2 (1972): 95.

[6] A. Kirk Grayson, 'Eunuchs in Power: Their Role in Assyrian Bureaucracy', in *Vom Alten Orient Zum Alten Testament : Festschrift Für Wolfram Freiherrn von Soden Zum 85. Geburtstag Am 19. Juni 1993*, ed. Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz, Alter Orient Und Altes Testament 240 (Butzon and Bercker; Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 92.

[7] Kazuko Watanabe, 'Seals of Neo-Assyrian Officials', in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East: Papers of the Second Colloquium on the Ancient Near East – The City and Its Life Held at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (Mitaka, Tokyo) March 22–24, 1996*, ed. Kazuko Watanabe (Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH Heidelberg, 1999), 319.

[8] Nissinen, 'Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament', 231.

contrasted with *ša ziqni* (“bearded ones”), underscoring the distinction between eunuchs and fully bearded male courtiers.[9]

In the Hebrew Bible, סָרִיס appears in multiple texts from different periods of composition, and in every instance it occurs within a courtly context.[10] Similar to the use of *ša rēši* in Assyrian sources, whether the term referring to royal court officials in general or specifically to castrated officials must be evaluated case by case.[11] For example, Isaiah 56:3 states: ‘Do not let the foreigner joined to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people”; and do not let the eunuch say, “I am just a dry tree.”(NRSV)’ The reference to a “dry tree” is likely a metaphor for the eunuch’s inability to procreate, suggesting that physically castrated individuals are in view. If סָרִיס could, in some instances, denote castrated court officials, the question arises as to whether the Israelite court actually employed them. B. Kedar-Kopfstein argues that such mentions do not necessarily indicate their historical presence in the Judean court and may instead be later editorial additions designed to portray these courts in a more elaborate, imperial style like the Assyrian empire.[12] In contrast, T. M. Lemos contends that eunuchs were indeed employed in the Israelite court. She further suggests that legal prohibitions such as Deuteronomy 23:2 and Leviticus 21:20 may reflect the priestly establishment’s resentment toward the elevated status eunuchs could attain in the court, despite their stigmatised physical condition and inability to produce heirs.[13]

[9] Grayson, ‘Eunuchs in Power: Their Role in Assyrian Bureaucracy’, 92.

[10] Grayson, ‘Eunuchs in Power: Their Role in Assyrian Bureaucracy’, 92.

[11] Kedar-Kopfstein, ‘סָרִיס’; Tracy M. Lemos, *“Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget”: Gender, Mutilation, and Negotiated Status in the Ancient Near East* (Springer Nature, 2011), 51.

[12] Kedar-Kopfstein, ‘סָרִיס’.

[13] Lemos, *“Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget”: Gender, Mutilation, and Negotiated Status in the Ancient Near East*, 59.

The biblical view of eunuchs is not consistent. As just mentioned above, some passages, such as Deuteronomy and Leviticus, stipulate that eunuchs should be excluded from the covenant community. By contrast, some texts display a markedly more inclusive stance. Isaiah 56:3–5 promises that eunuchs who keep the Sabbath and uphold the covenant will be granted "a name better than sons and daughters." Likewise, Wisdom of Solomon 3:14 affirms the value of eunuchs who remain faithful to divine law. Kedar-Kopfstein suggests that this shift may be explained by the realities of the exile, when some Israelites likely became eunuchs, leading to a more tolerant attitude toward their inclusion within the community.[14] Indeed, several biblical figures, such as Nehemiah and Daniel, have been suggested by some scholars as possible eunuchs.[15]

Part 2: Situating Eunuch in the imperial structure

The previous section examined the linguistic background of the Hebrew word סָרִיס, denoting eunuch. This section aims to locate the eunuch sociologically within the Persian Empire as portrayed in the Book of Esther. I will approach this analysis through two conceptual frameworks. In the first section, I will apply the concept of "imperial gendered hierarchy" to clarify how the Book of Esther depicts the patriarchal structure of the Persian Empire, and to identify where eunuchs were situated within that hierarchy. My argument is that eunuchs occupied a marginalised position in this imperial order. In the second section, I will introduce the concept of the "household" as a framework for understanding societal and economic security in the empire. I will argue that the masculine imperial power outlined

[14] Kedar-Kopfstein, 'סָרִיס'.

[15] Kedar-Kopfstein, 'סָרִיס'; Edwin M. Yamauchi, 'Was Nehemiah the Cupbearer a Eunuch?', *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (Giessen) 92, no. 1 (1980): 132–42.

in the first section utilised the household structure to isolate eunuchs from broader society and bind them into absolute service to the royal court.

2.1. Imperial Gendered Hiearchy

A number of scholars have argued that, in imperial hierarchies, the emperor occupies the apex as the embodiment of ideal masculinity, while lower-ranking individuals are perceived as progressively "unmanly," correlating to a diminished social power.[16] This hierarchy includes other men from colonising groups, women from colonising groups, and members of colonised populations.[17] Performing in accordance with societal masculinity ideals, in other words, acting as "a manly man", was therefore crucial in asserting and maintaining one's authority. At the same time, it is important to note that the hierarchical structure is not linear but rather displays a complex interplay of gendered and colonial identities. Within this system eunuchs,castrated men, were typically regarded as an imperfect form of masculinity.[18]

This hierarchy is evident in the opening banquet scene of the Book of Esther(1:1-9). The narrative begins with Ahasuerus, in the third year of his reign, hosting a banquet attended exclusively by officials, ministers, military leaders, nobles, and governors(1:3), the highest-ranking leaders of the imperial administration. Notably, there is no indication that

[16] Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity : The 'manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester University Press, 1995); Ralph J. Crane and Radhika Mohanram, *Imperialism as Diaspora : Race, Sexuality, and History in Anglo-India*, 1st ed., Postcolonialism across the Disciplines ; 13 (Liverpool University Press, 2013); Michael S. Kimmel et al., eds, *Handbook of Studies on Men & Masculinities*, Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities (Sage Publications, 2005); Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), particularly Chapter 8 'The History of Masculinity'.

[17] Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity : The 'manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, 2.

[18] Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 34.

royal women or female relatives of these men were present. After 180 days, the king held another banquet in the capital for "both great and small (וְעַד־קָטֹן לִמְגֻדּוֹל :1:5)." For the first time, the text explicitly states that Queen Vashti hosted a separate banquet for women. If taken at face value, and assuming that women were entirely absent from the first banquet, the scene reflects a gendered hierarchy in which the emperor is surrounded by elite men, while other marginalised groups, those whose bodies or social roles marked them as deficient within the imperial masculine ideal, are relegated to the periphery. Eunuchs are not mentioned in this section, yet, given their diminished masculine status, they are firmly situated within this "othered" category.

Here we encounter a clear structural tension. Within the masculine hierarchy of the empire, eunuchs were socially stigmatised because their physical condition aligned them, in prevailing ideological terms, with women—rendering them "incomplete human specimens."[19] At the same time, they occupied positions of exceptional proximity to the court. Explaining this apparent contradiction requires shifting the analytical frame to the concept of the household, understood here not as a purely kinship-based unit but as an institutional structure providing both social and economic security.

2.2. Royal Household

In his paper entitled "Eunuchs and the royal harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)", Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones argues that "the royal household was the fundamental unit of political and social organization in the Achaemenid empire."[20] Rooted in a patriarchal

[19] Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 34.
[20] Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 41.

framework, the royal household maintained a gendered hierarchy that operated as a mechanism of social order and security.

In sociology focusing on the modern context, the term "household" is defined as "a group of co-residents, people who live under the same roof and typically share in common consumption."[21] This concept is carefully distinguished from the term "family", which refers to individuals connected through kinship ties. Applying this distinction to the royal context, the royal household does not necessarily refer exclusively to the royal family linked by blood relations. Rather, its composition is far more fluid and relational. In its narrowest sense, the royal household includes the emperor's immediate family. However, the boundaries of this household can extend to encompass a wide network of servants, attendants, and officials. This leads us to a critical question: what defines the boundaries of the royal household? In the context of the Persian empire, the answer lies in the figure of the emperor himself. The emperor stands at the centre of the household, and it is through one's relationship to him that an individual's authority, status, and identity as a member of the royal household is established and maintained. More importantly, the concept of the royal household extends beyond its physical existence as an institutional structure to also carry significant symbolic weight. The royal household serves as a model that symbolically shapes and legitimises the patriarchal organisation of the entire empire. All subordinate households are understood as smaller replicas of the royal household, each governed by its own father figure who mirrors the emperor's role at the top of the imperial hierarchy. In this way, the royal household functions as a symbolic framework for the broader imperial order, representing and regulating household structures across the empire. The patriarchal authority exercised

[21] David I. Kertzer, 'Household History and Sociological Theory', *Annual Review of Sociology* 17, no. Volume 17, 1991 (1991): 156.

within individual households is thus an extension of the emperor's authority, reinforcing the empire's hierarchical and gendered social order.

The Book of Esther provides a vivid illustration of this ideology of the royal household. During the second banquet hosted in the city of Susa, guests were allowed to drink freely "according to the desire of each person" (1:8), and the king himself became intoxicated with wine. In this state, King Ahasuerus commanded his eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti, who was at that moment hosting a separate banquet for the women. The queen, however, refused the king's order (1:12). This act of disobedience posed a direct challenge to the king's authority within the royal household and threatened the stability of the household's hierarchical order. In response, the king sought counsel from his advisors, described as "those who were versed in law and government" (1:13). Among them, Memucan argued that Vashti's disobedience was not merely a personal affront to the king but a transgression against the entire imperial patriarchal structure. Memucan warned, "Queen Vashti has done wrong not only to the king but also to all the officials and all the people who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus" (1:16). He elaborated that her actions would set a dangerous precedent that women across the empire would begin to scorn their husbands, using Vashti's defiance as an example, as he dramatically narrates "For the Queen's deed will go out to all the women, causing them to regard their husbands with disdain, as they say, 'King Ahasuerus told Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she did not come.'(1:17)" Memucan's speech reflects the underlying ideology that the royal household functions as a model for all households within the empire. The royal family's internal order sets the standard for patriarchal authority across the imperial domain. In his recommendation to depose Vashti, Memucan proposed that publicising this decree would reaffirm the patriarchal structure across the empire. By expelling Vashti from the royal

household, the emperor would demonstrate that a wife's refusal to obey her husband threatens her place within the household, which is presented here as the fundamental form of social and economic security in patriarchal society.

2.3. The Eunuchs and the Royal Household

The preceding discussion on the structure and ideology of the royal household has served to highlight the importance of household affiliation within the social and political fabric of the Achaemenid Empire. Belonging to a household conferred security, status, and identity. Exclusion from this structure entailed a profound social vulnerability as exemplified by the sudden disappearance of Queen Vashti from the narrative following her removal from the royal household. This context is essential for understanding the unique position of eunuchs within the royal court. Their detachment from their own household necessitated an absolute loyalty to the royal household, which, in turn, explains the degree of trust and responsibility vested in them by the emperor. In the following section, I examine the thoroughness of this detachment, both from the eunuchs' natal households and from any potential to establish households of their own.

Upon entry into court service, eunuchs were symbolically and institutionally severed from their families of origin. Unlike other officials, eunuchs' parentage is conspicuously absent from Neo-Assyrian inscriptions.[22] As Omar N'Shea argues, this omission was likely not accidental but an intentional obscuration of their personal familial identity, marking

[22] Omar N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79, no. 3 (2016): 219. While I am aware that the periodical difference between Neo-Assyrian and Persian empire, I still believe that it is relevant to turn to Assyrian sources to enlighten and fill the gaps of the information about the eunuch from the persian context. This is because royal institutions established by the Assyrian empire was hugely adopted by Persian Empire as they wanted to be seen as "the inheritors of Assyrian rule."(Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', in Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond, ed. Shaun Tougher (The Classical Press of Wales, 2002), 22)

their disassociation from their natal households.[23] This was the first level of exclusion. The second level involved the prevention of forming their own households. Physical castration served as a powerful symbol of this severance.[24] Castration removed the capacity to produce heirs, and this limitation was widely understood in the ancient social imagination. For instance, in Neo-Assyrian sale documents, the standard phrasing that placed future legal accountability on a person's "sons or grandsons" is omitted in documents involving eunuchs, reflecting an accepted assumption about their inability to reproduce.[25] Further evidence is found in a Neo-Assyrian letter in which the royal family assures that the burial of a eunuch will be taken care of by the royal family.[26] This promise reflects the state's recognition of the eunuch's lack of heirs. The absence of biological heirs made eunuchs particularly valuable, as seen in the Assyrian context, especially when appointed as provincial governors.[27] This eliminated the risk of rival dynasties or secessionist movements arising through their descendants.[28] The preeminence of the royal household over all subordinate households in the empire was never guaranteed, but it was continually vulnerable to displacement by a competing household, as attested in both Assyrian and Persian history. Entrusting other male servants with administrative power always carried the risk that they might use their position to use their own household to challenge the throne.

[23] N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 219.

[24] Although scholarly debates continue regarding the extent to which physical castration was uniformly practiced during the Achaemenid period, the central issue, I argue, lies not in the surgical procedure itself but in the broader implications of social and institutional exclusion. Within the context of court life, the formation of a household through marriage or childbearing was not an individual decision but a politically regulated process. If entry into royal service as a eunuch involved, either explicitly or implicitly, an oath to remain unmarried and to refrain from establishing an independent household, such a commitment could have represented a systematic severance from the structures of household. This detachment, I suggest, functioned as a social and symbolic equivalent to physical castration.

[25] Watanabe, 'Seals of Neo-Assyrian Officials', 317–19.

[26] N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 217.

[27] N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 219.

[28] N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 219.

In this context, eunuchs, who are structurally detached from any competing household and bound by necessity to direct their loyalty exclusively toward the royal household, were an advantageous institution for maintaining masculine imperial power.

Eunuchs were thus systematically placed in a marginal position in which their social survival depended entirely on their loyalty to the royal court. In such a system, a eunuch had little choice but to maintain unwavering loyalty to the emperor, for it was this loyalty that secured both their status as high officials and their membership within the royal household. In exchange for their absolute obedience, they were granted a place within the symbolic household of the emperor.[29] In addition, as noted in the previous section, eunuchs were physically perceived as incomplete men. This perception would have provoked hostility and resentment from other male servants(and possibly female servants), who may have viewed their proximity to the emperor as an affront to the masculine order. Such tensions further deepened the eunuchs' social isolation. In this environment, loyalty to the royal household was not merely a political necessity but a survival strategy, anchoring their identity and security to the very institution that had severed them from all other forms of belonging.

Part 3: Textual Analysis

In the previous part, I defined the social location of the eunuch by using the frameworks, "imperial gendered hierarchy" and "household." Through this analysis, I hope I

[29] There are a few cases, such as in Esther 3:21 and in certain historical records, where eunuchs acted against the emperor (For the details look N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 219; Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 39). These instances do not reflect a rejection of the royal household model itself, but rather an attempt to subvert the existing order by positioning themselves as the new head of the household. Such efforts, had they succeeded, might have elevated their status within the hierarchy. However, they would still remain within the same structural framework. These actions suggest not a desire to dismantle the imperial system, but to gain power through it by reorienting its internal dynamics in their favour.

demonstrated the following two points. The eunuchs were in a marginalised position in this patriarchal imperial order; still, they were granted a high social position, which puts them in a contradictory position. By putting them in the contradictory position, and severing them from securing their own household and embedding them into the royal household, the patriarchal imperial power enabled the institutional system of the eunuch, which is extremely difficult to rebel against and dismantle the masculine imperial power of the royal household. Turning to this secion, I would like to look into the role played by the eunuchs in the mascoretic text of Esther: caring for women, serving as security guards, and acting as messengers between gendered spaces.

3.1. Intermediating Gendered Spaces

The first appearance of eunuchs in the Masoretic text of *Esther* occurs when Ahasuerus orders seven eunuchs to deliver his command that Queen Vashti join his banquet, even though she was hosting a separate banquet for women. Greek sources attest that women in the Persian Empire, particularly royal women, were subject to strict seclusion and shielded from the gaze of non-family men, a custom that aligns with the scene depicted in the Book of Esther. For instance, Plutarch describes how Persian royal wives, concubines, and female slaves were kept entirely out of sight, confined to secluded quarters, and transported in enclosed carriages to ensure they remained unseen.[30] To understand why such seclusion mattered, it is helpful to turn to Lillian R. Klein's use of the anthropological concepts of honour and shame.

[30] Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 27.

In group-oriented societies, Klein explains, honour was regarded as an exclusively male achievement, attained through the exercise of autonomy.[31] This could be expressed in two primary ways: first, through sexual autonomy, and second, through the ability to provide for and protect the "reflected honour" of one's family, alongside demonstrating social prominence, courage, and virility.[32] A parallel to this concept of honour appears in the Hebrew term יקר, used in Esther, particularly in 1:4 and 6:1 13.[33] In 1:4, Ahasuerus displays "the riches of his royal glory and the splendour (יקר) of his great majesty" by hosting a lavish banquet for his officials.[34] In 6:1–13, the term occurs in the account of how Haman is compelled by the king to honour his rival Mordecai. Taken together, these passages indicate that יקר signifies public recognition of a man's successful performance of the ideal masculinity valued by society. Furthermore, when read in light of the previous discussion of the imperial masculinity hierarchy, this ideal masculinity is ultimately embodied and exemplified by the emperor in the imperial context.

By contrast, women were understood to achieve honour through what was defined as shame.[35] This seemingly contradictory valuation involved deference and submission to male authority, modesty in attire and behaviour, sexual exclusivity, and seclusion from the public gaze.[36] The Esther narrative reflects this dynamic in different ways. First, the text

[31] Lillian R. Klein, 'Honor and Shame in Esther', in *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*, ed. Athalya Brenner-Idan, The Feminist Companion to the Bible ; 7 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 152.

[32] Klein, 'Honor and Shame in Esther', 150.

[33] Klein, 'Honor and Shame in Esther', 91; Siegfried Wagner, 'יקר', in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Eerdmans, 1990).

[34] It is also noteworthy that יקר is mentioned in connection with the first banquet, but not the second. This detail allows us to reasonably infer that the first banquet, where Ahasuerus achieved and displayed his honour, was attended exclusively by men.

[35] Klein, 'Honor and Shame in Esther', 150.

[36] Klein, 'Honor and Shame in Esther', 151. As Klein rightly observes, Ahasuerus' command for Vashti to appear at the male banquet would have compelled her to shame herself, thereby simultaneously undermining his own honour. By becoming intoxicated and ordering Vashti to violate the norms of sexual

repeatedly refers to "the house of women(בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים)" which, when considered alongside other details in the narrative, suggests that women of the royal household were segregated and resided in designated quarters. Second, when Memucan advises the king on how to respond to Vashti's refusal, he suggests issuing an edict removing her from the royal household to restore patriarchal order throughout the empire, declaring that "all the women, from the greatest to the least, will give honour (יקר) to their husbands" (1:20). Memucan effectively asserts that a woman's obedience, rather than scorning her husband, is what bestows honour upon him.

To summarise the discussions above, obedience and seclusion from the gaze of non-family males were essential to preserving the honour of the men to whom women were affiliated, whether father, husband, brother, or son.[37] This framework clarifies why eunuchs were particularly well suited to move fluidly between the gendered spaces. Firstly. owing to their exclusive belonging to the royal household, combined with their absence of certain masculine characteristics, most notably the ability to procreate, eunuchs posed no threat to royal women.[38] Consequently, their presence did not constitute a violation of the honour of the king or of other male members of the royal household. Secondly, their elevated status

segregation, the king was, in effect, shaming himself even before she refused his command. For an emperor expected to embody hegemonic masculinity, this failure to safeguard his honour marks the first pivotal moment in the narrative, drawing the reader's attention to the unexpected fragility of his authority.

[37] This understanding does not contradict the idea that Persian royal women could exercise political power as argued by Maria Brosius (Maria Brosius, Women in Ancient Persia, 559-331 BC, Oxford Classical Monographs (Clarendon Press, 1996)). As the character of Esther vividly illustrates, even though these women were hidden from public view, they could exert influence over the emperor or other male members of the royal household. However, as the contrasting fates of Vashti and Esther demonstrate, such influence had to be exercised in a manner that did not undermine the honour of the men involved. In this sense, their power was not independent but was always relationally shaped by their relationship to male authority and dependent on how successfully they could negotiate within it.

[38] However, Weidner also notes contradictory literary evidence suggesting that eunuchs were not permitted to enter the harem unless accompanied by a superior non-eunuch official. (Ernst Weidner, 'Hof- Und Harems-Erlasse Assyrischer Könige Aus Dem 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.', Archiv Für Orientforschung 17 (56 1954): 257–93.)

within the court permitted them to enter male-dominated spaces that were otherwise restricted to female servants. In this way, eunuchs functioned as systematically advantageous agents, able to navigate both domains without destabilising the imperial masculine order.

An important observation emerging from this section is that eunuchs in the Esther narrative not only move freely between gendered spaces, but when doing so, they consistently serve as bearers of speech, carrying messages from one sphere to another.[39] In this sense, they function almost as the embodiment of speech itself. This observation connects directly with the broader focus of my doctoral project, which argues that controlling the language of imperial subjects, such as determining in which language they speak and how they speak, constitutes a crucial mechanism for sustaining the masculine order in the empire. If we apply the lens of language control to this context, the eunuchs' role becomes even more telling. They do not speak their own words but circulate within the court as conduits for the words of others, whether those of the emperor or of those subject to imperial authority. In this way, eunuchs exemplify how the dominant masculine hierarchy could control and instrumentalise the voices of its subjects, rendering them vehicles for the language of power.

3.2. Taking care of Royal Women

The preceding section examined the eunuch's role as an intermediary between gendered spaces. The present and following sections extend this analysis by showing that eunuchs did not merely move between domains but could also remain within a single

[39] Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 37.

sphere and perform functions aligned either with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity or with roles culturally associated with those deemed "imperfect men" within the imperial masculine hierarchy. This section focuses on their role in caring for royal women, while the next will consider their military and security functions.

The Masoretic Text introduces Hegai, the eunuch "in charge of the women" (הֵגֵא סְרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים : 2:3). As the narrative unfolds, it becomes clear that eunuchs were entrusted with responsibilities including the prospective queen's diet, cosmetics, and the allocation of female attendants to each candidate. Particularly striking is the account in 2:12, which describes an extensive twelve-month regimen of beauty treatments. The physical intimacy inherent in these treatments underscores the perception that eunuchs posed no sexual threat to the women under their care.[40] Additionally, chapter 2 hints at an internal hierarchy among the eunuchs, which may have corresponded to the status or rank of the women under their supervision.[41] After spending a night with the king, the women did not return to Hegai's custody but were instead placed under Shaashgaz, the eunuch "in charge of the concubines" (2:14), suggesting a differentiated structure of authority within this sphere of royal service.

This section will require further development; however, for the purposes of OTSEM discussion, I wish to note a possible extension of the eunuchs' role. Although the Book of Esther does not explicitly attest to such responsibilities, it is plausible to imagine that eunuchs may have been charged not only with overseeing their physical preparation but also with instructing them in courtly conduct. Such instruction could have encompassed training in appropriate modes of speech, forms of address, and linguistic registers deemed suitable for interaction within the highly stratified and performative environment of the Persian court. From the perspective of my broader doctoral project, which examines language as an instrument of imperial control within gendered and colonial hierarchies, this speculative

[40] Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 37.

[41] Llewellyn-Jones, 'Eunuchs and the Royal Harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)', 37.

function would cohere with the wider mechanisms through which imperial authority sought to regulate both the appearance and the voice of women in the royal household.

3.3. Military and Security Functions

Esther 2:21 reports that eunuchs were stationed at the palace gate for security purposes. At first glance, this may seem to stand in contrast to the role of caring for women, yet it provides important evidence that eunuchs also operated in domains typically associated with more overtly masculine traits. Indeed, numerous Assyrian sources attest to eunuchs serving in positions of military leadership, suggesting that their functions were not confined to domestic or gender-segregated spheres but extended into areas central to the maintenance of imperial authority.[42]

This section will require further development.

Conclusion

This paper analysed the role of the eunuch in the Book of Esther within the broader framework of the imperial masculine order depicted throughout the text. As the analysis has shown, the eunuch embodies multiple layers of contradiction. Despite their physical castration, which diminished their status in the imperial masculine hierarchy, they were nonetheless granted high-ranking positions within the royal court. They were considered sufficiently non-threatening to be entrusted with the intimate care of royal women, yet could also be appointed to roles strongly associated with elite masculine status. These

[42] Nissinen, 'Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament', 232; N'Shea, 'Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 216.

contradictions were precisely what made eunuchs valuable to the imperial order. Their physical condition and social marginalisation severed them from the economic and social security of a household, leaving them with little choice but to devote themselves wholly to imperial service for their survival. At the same time, their presence in roles more closely aligned with normative masculinity may have provoked jealousy or resentment among other court officials, further reinforcing their isolation and dependence on imperial favour. The second contradiction—their ability to operate in both "feminine" and "masculine" domains—made them exceptionally adaptable, enabling them to move between gendered spaces and to act as intermediaries in communication across these boundaries.The creation and maintenance of such an institution reveal the calculated dehumanisation embedded within the imperial system. Eunuchs were not merely administrative conveniences but deliberately fashioned as instruments to facilitate the fluid exercise of imperial power. Their roles in Esther, particularly as intermediaries across gendered spaces, exemplify how imperial authority could also regulate and direct speech in service of patriarchal dominance.

The starting point for this study was a genuine question: why did such a system need to be institutionalised? Addressing this question illuminates the depth and complexity of patriarchal and masculine control within imperial contexts. It also exposes a notable gap in both ancient Near Eastern and biblical scholarship, where eunuchs are too often treated as "mystifying" or "interesting" figures rather than as products of systemic subjugation. I hope this paper has demonstrated the importance of recognising eunuch not as a curious anomaly but as a manifestation of the same imperial machinery that silenced and instrumentalised the marginalised, stripping them of their own voice so they could speak only in service of the language of power.

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Isaiah 11:2–3a and the Spirit in Early Jewish and Christian Reception

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Title of paper (OTSEM 2025): "Isaiah 11:2–3a and Pneumatological Perceptions in Early Jewish and Christian Writings."

My doctoral research follows the reception of Isaiah 11:2 (11:2–3a LXX) in early Jewish and Christian writings; it consists of four articles: two dealing with sources in Second Temple Judaism, and two dealing with early Christian sources up until approximately 200 CE. The main research question is how this text has been used and interpreted *in relation to* what broadly can be termed pneumatological developments and perceptions, and uses of the words רוח, πνεῦμα and *spiritus* (breath, wind, spirit). Seeing the different ways in which the spirit of God/YHWH and its attributes (Isa 11:2–3a) has been perceived and applied in these sources help shed light on pneumatological, angelological, and even anthropological matters in early Judaism and the early, pre-Nicene stages of Christianity.

This research is part of a larger project: *Isaiah between Judeo-Christian Borderlines*, which is financed by the Polin Institute and the Academy of Finland, and focuses on the relationship between the early Christian interpretation of the Book of Isaiah and the reception history of the same in early Judaism; the working hypothesis is that the early Christian interpretations are rooted in and developments of Jewish interpretations, and the starting point is Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, in which texts from the Book of Isaiah play an important role.

The basic idea in my project is to follow and study the reception – use and interpretation – of Isa 11:2–3a from the Book of Isaiah up until the late second century CE, study the relationship between different interpretations (Jewish and Christian), and how the interpretations of these texts interplay with the "pneumatological perceptions" surrounding them. One aim of the research is to contribute to increased knowledge and new perspectives on the way in which the Hebrew Bible and Jewish interpretations play an important role in the formation of early Christian pneumatological thought.

The following case studies/articles are part of the project:

- "Spirit(s), Angels, and Virtues: The Reception of Isaiah 11:2–3a in Early Judaism" (forthcoming in *Verbum Vitae* 43:4, 2025).
- "The Angelomorphic Spirit of Wisdom in the *Wisdom of Solomon*" (Forthcoming in the *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*).
- "The Mysterious Identity of the Seven Spirits of God in the Book of Revelation" (in the reviewing process for a SRB-volume).
- "Angelomorphic Features, Charismatic Manifestations, and Triadic Formulas: Isa 11:2–3a and Pneumatology in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Tertullian" (forthcoming in a *WUNT*-volume).

The present paper is a (first) draft for the introductory chapter for the doctoral dissertation.

Isaiah 11:2–3a and Pneumatological Perceptions in Early Jewish and Christian Writings

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Preface for the OTSEM 2025-Conference

Dear reader(s),

This paper can be seen as a draft for the introductory chapter to my doctoral dissertation, which is article based, and is as such very much a "work in progress." All four articles are written, and three of them have been accepted for publication.

All constructive criticism and suggestions on how to further strengthen, improve and develop this paper are most welcome. I will especially appreciate feedback and discussions that relate to questions of theory and method, and advice on how to best write an introductory (and concluding) chapter for this kind of dissertation.

Thank you very much!

Simon Johansson
Simon Johansson

Åbo/Turku, 2025-07-28

1. Introduction

"The πνεῦμα blows where it wishes" (John 3:8). So does also, many times, both the uses and interpretations of texts and the different ways of understanding and perceiving certain words in those texts, as well as their re-application in new and changing contexts. This study, i.e. the research for my doctoral dissertation, follows the reception of Isaiah 11:2 (11:2–3a LXX) in early Jewish and Christian writings; it consists of four articles: two dealing with sources in Second Temple Judaism, and two dealing with early Christian sources up until approximately 200 CE.[1] The main research question is how this text has been used and interpreted *in relation to* what broadly can be termed pneumatological developments and perceptions, and uses of the words רוח, πνεῦμα and *spiritus* (breath, wind, spirit). Seeing the different ways in which the spirit of God/YHWH and its attributes (Isa 11:2–3a) has been perceived and applied in these sources help shed light on pneumatological, angelological, and even anthropological matters in early Judaism and the early, pre-Nicene stages of Christianity.

[1] **Article 1:** Simon B. Johansson, "Spirit(s), Angels, and Virtues: The Reception of Isa 11:2–3a in Early Judaism," *Verbum Vitae* 43:4 (2025), forthcoming. **Article 2:** Simon B. Johansson, "The Angelomorphic Spirit of Wisdom in the *Wisdom of Solomon*," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* (2025), forthcoming. **Article 3:** Simon Johansson, "The Mysterious Identify of the Seven Spirits of God in the Book of Revelation: An Exploration of Interpretations," *SRB*, submitted (in the reviewing process). **Article 4:** Simon Johansson, "Angelomorphic Features, Charismatic Manifestations, and Triadic Formulas: Isa 11:2–3a and Pneumatology in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Tertullian," *WUNT* (Mohr Siebeck), forthcoming.

The research, thus, takes place in between two borders, or limiting principles, which also function as unifying principles for the different articles. The first one being that the study follows the reception of *a specific text*, i.e. Isa 11:2–3a, how it has been translated, used and interpreted in the *specific contexts* of early Judaism and early Christianity (as defined above). The second, that the reception of this text is studied and analyzed in relation to *two specific but closely related themes*: perceptions and developments regarding pneumatology and, more generally, uses of the words for "spirit, breath, wind" (רוח, πνεῦμα, *spiritus*) in those contexts.

1.1. Two Immediate Questions

This immediately raises two questions: (1) Why choose *Isa 11:2[–3a]* as the text whose history of interpretation/reception is to be studied? (2) Can we really speak of early Jewish *pneumatology* and *pneumatological developments* without anachronistically reading later Christian ideas and concepts into the sources? In fact, do we not also risk reading later, more dogmatic Christian concepts into the early Christian (or Jewish-Christian) material? Before moving on with questions regarding methods, limitations and theory, these questions will be addressed.

The Book of Isaiah is one of the most quoted books in early Judaism and early Christianity,[2] and Isaiah 11 has played an important role both in Jewish, pre-Christian, messianic expectations and in subsequent, christological discourses in Christian sources.[3] Here, the "Shoot of Jesse," the coming Davidic king, is empowered by the spirit of YHWH with the royal qualities needed to rule as YHWH wills, with righteousness and in peace; and nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible are the attributes of the Spirit described in such a concentrated way as in this passage:[4]

> A branch shall go forth from the stem of Jesse, and a shoot from his roots will bear fruit; and upon him shall rest the spirit of YHWH [רוח יהוה], the spirit of wisdom and understanding [רוח חכמה ובינה], the spirit of counsel and might [רוח עצה וגבורה], the spirit of knowledge and fear of YHWH [רוח דעת ויראת יהוה]; and his delight [והריחו] shall be in the fear of YHWH. (Isa 11:1–3a)[5]

In this short passage, רוח occurs four times, and the רוח יהוה is connected to three pairs of attributes, qualities that are given to the future king by the Spirit. This is the "royal charisma" which Tryggve Mettinger argues here is a combination of the "martial charisma of Saul and the judicial wisdom of Solomon."[6] Connections can, however, also be made to the *practical* abilities given to Bezalel, who was filled with the "spirit of God, with wisdom [skill] and intelligence, with

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[2] My doctoral research is part of a larger project, *Isaiah Between Judeo-Christian Borderlines* (2022–2026), led by professor Antti Laato (my supervisor) and financed by the *Polin Institute for Theological Research* at Åbo Akademi University and the *Research Council of Finland*.

[3] Isa 11:1–10, together with Gen 49:9–11; Num 24:17, and perhaps 2 Sam 7:10–14, was probably part of a "core group of *testimonia*" in Jewish expectations of a royal, Davidic messiah, and later applied to Jesus by Christians. Martin C. Albl, *"And Scripture Cannot Be Broken": The Form and Function of the Early Christian* Testimonia *Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 58, 208–215.

[4] The Book of Isaiah is second only to the Book of Ezekiel in number of occurrences of the word רוח, with 51 and 52 occurrences respectively. Of the 51 occurrences in the Book of Isaiah, at least 18 of them refer to the spirit of God (11:2; 30:1; 32:15; 34:16; 40:7, 13; 42:1; 44:3; 48:16; 59:19, 21; 61:1; 63:10, 11, 14; possibly also 4:4; 11:4, 15; 27:8; 28:6; 30:28). Only in two verses in the Hebrew Bibles does רוח occur as many as four times in the same verse: Isa 11:2 and Ezek 37:9.

[5] My own translation, based on the Hebrew text of the BHS.

[6] Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1976), 253.

knowledge and with all craftsmanship" (רוח אלהים בחכמה ובתבונה ובדעת ובכל־מלאכה, Exod 31:3), and to Joseph, who – since he had God's spirit (רוח אלהים) – was more "discerning and wise" (נבון וחכם) than anyone else (Gen 41:38–39).

A brief overview of the reception of Isa 11:2–3a, taken from the findings of the research presented in the articles (spoiler alert!), can show the richness of its early reception:

- In the *early Jewish reception* of Isa 11:2–3a (Hebrew and Greek texts),[7] the recipient(s) of the spirit and/or the attributes/qualities connected to the spirit vary: from clearly messianic figures, such as the eschatological warrior-messiah in some Qumran texts,[8] to priests and scribes, or even "ordinary" or anonymous people.[9] רוח/πνεῦμα can denote the spirit of God, but also human dispositions, charismatic gifts or virtues, and angelic beings.[10] With the translation of the Book of Isaiah into Greek (LXX), the spirit of YHWH with its six attributes becomes the spirit of God followed by *seven* attributes, as the doubling of יראת יהוה (in v. 2d–3a) is translated into two different attributes (εὐσέβεια and φόβου θεοῦ) and "delight [or smell]" (רֵיחַ/הריח) in v. 3a is translated by πνεῦμα (i.e., as רוּחַ). This facilitates the later, mainly Christian, tradition of the "sevenfold spirit."
- In its *early Christian reception*, the first verses of Isaiah 11 are always taken to refer to Christ; a typical interpretation is that he is the "Shoot of Jesse" upon whom the fullness of the spirit of God came to rest (at his baptism in the Jordan river) and the one distributing the gifts of the Spirit to those who come to believe in him.[11] There is no direct quotation of Isa 11:2(–3a) in the New Testament (or the Apostolic Fathers),[12] but the "seven spirits [of God]" in the Book of Revelation (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) has often in the history of interpretation been connected to the sevenfold description of the spirit of God in Isa 11:2–3a (LXX).[13]

Because of it central place in both Jewish and Christian "messianic discourses," Isa 11:1–3a has early on a rich history of reception and interpretation; and because of its high concentration of "spirit-language," its reception can be studied not only in relation to messianism and christology (as has many times been done), but also in relation to uses of רוח/πνεῦμα/*spiritus* and pneumatological perceptions and developments. This leads us to the second question.

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[7] Treated in **Article 1** of this study: Johansson, "Spirit(s), Angels, and Virtues."

[8] 1QS^{b} V, 21–27; 4Q161 8–10 III. Can also be compared to the *Psalms of Solomon* 17–18, but there, the military aspect is debated.

[9] Levi the priest (4Q213^{a}); scribes (Sir 39:6–7); Daniel and his friends (OG-Sus 45, 62b); Joseph (*Jos. Asen.* 4:9); anonymous people (e.g., 1QH^{a} VI; XX; 4Q444).

[10] "In the sources surveyed, it [רוח/πνεῦμα] can refer to: (1) the *spirit of God* (Isa 11:2–3a [MT+LXX]; 4Q161; 4Q213^{a}; 4Q444 1, 1; 1QH^{a} XX, 12b; Wis 7:7; Jos. Asen. 4:9; probably 1QS^{b} V, 25; 1QH^{a} VI, 13; Sir 39:6–7; Pss. Sol. 17:37; 18:7–8; possibly 1QS III, 6–7; IV, 21; OG Sus 45, 62b; 1 En. 49:3; Jos. Asen. 19:11; T^{J} Isa 11:2); (2) *human dispositions* (possibly 4Q444 1, 3; 1QH^{a} VI, 25; XX, 11–12a; 1QS III, 6–8; Sir 48:24; Pss. Sol. 18:7); (3) *charismatic gifts* or *virtues* (possibly 4Q444 1, 3; 1QH^{a} VI, 25; OG Sus 45, 62b; Jos. Asen. 19:11);[10] or (4) *angelic spirit-beings* (4Q400–407; possibly 4Q444 1, 3; T^{J} Isa 11:2). In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and perhaps also in the *Isaiah Targum*, the spirit of God is presented with angelomorphic traits; and in 1QS III–IV, the created spirit of truth/light is best understood as a spiritual influence on the human heart which is subordinate to the Angel of God's Truth and reflects the nature of God and his spirit." (Johansson, "Spirit(s), Angels, and Virtues.")

[11] E.g., Justin, *Dial.* 39.2; 87–88; Iren., *Haer.* 3.9.3; 3.17.1–2; *Epid.* 9; 59; Tert., *Jud.* 9.26; *Marc*. 3.17.3–5; 5.8.4–12; 5.17.4–5. These are treated in Johansson, "Angelomorphic Features, Charismatic Manifestations, and Triadic Formulas."

[12] There are some verbal allusions, which are, however, not part of this research; see section 1.3.

[13] Treated in Johansson, "The Mysterious Identity of the Seven Spirits of God."

רוח is a very prevalent word in the Hebrew Bible (used 378 times in total), yet "studies of pneumatology tend to start elsewhere than the Jewish Bible or the Old Testament," as John Levison puts it.[14] Levison suggests that this is partly because pneumatology has been seen as a *Christian*, not Jewish, discipline, rooted in the perception that רוח is an "impersonal force," not a person, in the Hebrew Bible.[15] To this can be added the proposal by some scholars that early Christian pneumatology had its origin in Hellenism, rather than in Judaism (or even "Christianity"),[16] and the common assumption that the idea of a "cessation of prophecy" was widespread within Second Temple Judaism.[17] These points, however, have all been contested in different ways:

(1) Levison disputes the claim that the understanding of the spirit of God as a *person* first arose in the beginnings of Christianity, and argues that the Spirit was *given agency* when introduced into the Exodus-tradition by the prophet Haggai (in 2:5) and the author of Isa 63:7–14.[18] In the Exodus story, "God had rescued Israel from Egypt through a cadre of divine agents—pillars, an angel, clouds, and God's presence or *pānîm*. Now, claimed these prophets, the holy spirit took on the role of those agents by standing in Israel's midst and guiding them, once again, to the promised land."[19] Levison boldly proclaims

[14] John R. Levison, "The Jewish Origin of Christian Pneumatology," *It is the Spirit Who Gives Life: New Directions in Pneumatology*, ed. Radu Bordeianu (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2022), 3–21, esp. 4.

[15] Levison, "The Jewish Origin," 4.

[16] This has been a debated issue. **Hans Leisegang** argued that pneumatology originated in Greek culture and proposed that the concept of the Holy Spirit was already fully worked out in Hellenism and then applied to passages in the Septuagint mentioning the Spirit; the origins of "Christian" pneumatology, thus, lay neither in Christianity nor in Judaism; H. Leisegang, *Der heilige Geist: Das Wesen und Werden der mystisch-intuitiven Erkenntnis in der Philosophie und Religion der Griechen* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1919). Earlier, **Hermann Gunkel** had emphasized the Jewish character of the early Christian understanding of the Spirit, but also argued that Paul had a unique perspective (e.g., the ethical role of the Spirit), which was rooted in his own personal experience; Gunkel also rejected the suggestion that Paul was influenced by Hellenistic-Jewish writings; H. Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und nach der Lehre das Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1888). **Heinrich von Baer** argued against both Gunkel and Leisegang, for a Jewish origin of Lukan pneumatology and for the Spirit as the source for moral renewal and driving force in salvation history (in Luke's view); H. von Baer, *Der heilige Geist in den Lukasschriften* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926). **Eduard Schweizer** argued that Luke adopted the Jewish concept of the "spirit of prophecy", but that Paul's unique pneumatology, on the other hand, was due to Hellenistic influence; E. Schweizer, "πνεῦμα, πνευματικός E. The New Testament," *TDNT* 6, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 396–451, esp. 404–409, 415–437. **David Hill** suggested that the understanding of πνεῦμα in the New Testament was due to Jewish, not Hellenistic, influence, and that Paul was no innovator: "he [Paul] was emphasising what had been present in the Old Testament and what was implicit (though only rarely expressed) in later Jewish thought" (D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 270. For a more detailed discussion on the contributions and different positions of these, and other, scholars, see Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke–Acts* (London: T & T Clark, 1994), 18–44.

[17] See, e.g., Erik Sjöberg, "πνεῦμα, πνευματικός C. III: רוּחַ in Palestinian Judaism," *TDNT* 6, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 385; Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 914; Benjamin D. Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation," *JBL* 115 (1996), 31–47. For an overview of scholarly positions and discussions, see L. Stephen Cook, *On the Question of the "Cessation of Prophecy" in Ancient Judaism*, Texts and Studies on Ancient Judaism 145 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 10–45.

[18] Levison, "The Jewish Origin"; John R. Levison, *The Holy Spirit before Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2019).

[19] Levison, "The Jewish Origin," 7. Levison has argued for the identification of the "angel of his presence" (Isa 63:9; cf. Exod 14:19; 23:20–23; 33:14) with "his holy spirit" (Isa 63:10, 11; cf. Exod 23:21) and the "spirit of YHWH" (Isa 63:14; cf. Exod 33:14) also in John R. Levison, "The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism," *SBL Seminar Papers* 34 (1995), 464–493, esp. 470–471. So has C. A. Briggs in "The use of *Ruach* in the Old Testament," *JBL*

that "[t]his marks the birth of the holy spirit, or, in more acceptable theological terms, the *origin of pneumatology* as we know it."[20]

(2) The claim that early Christian pneumatology stems from Hellenism can be juxtaposed with other claims that have been made, e.g. that it had its origin in Judaism.[21] It must be said, however, that this makes it sound like an either–or, when, in fact, the Judaism that existed around the turn of the Common Era itself was affected by Hellenism and to some extent the result of Hellenistic influence;[22] the question, therefore, should rather be one of aspects and proportions.

(3) The idea of a "cessation of prophecy," the absence or non-activity of the prophetic spirit, in Second Temple Judaism has many times been passed on uncritically (or without nuance); often with reference to *Tosefta Sotah* 13.2: "From the time that the last prophets – Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi – died, the holy spirit ceased among Israel."[23] More recent scholarship, however, has challenged this view and shown that there is much evidence for the ongoing presence of prophetic phenomena in ancient Judaism.[24] Stephen Cook points out that the conclusion reached by different scholars to a large extent depends on what questions they ask and how "prophecy" is defined.[25] His own conclusions are that: (1) "Jews of the Second Temple period tended to see themselves as living in an interim period between manifestations of prophecy,"[26] and "did, on the whole, tend to believe that prophecy [in the 'classic' sense] had ceased in the Persian period";[27] but (2) at the same time, "numerous claims of inspiration and the interest in the prophetic texts of old mark the period as one of remarkable spiritual vibrancy. Second Temple Jews believed that God still raised up Spirit-filled leaders for the purpose of re-interpreting and re-applying ancient revelation".[28] This is, in my view, an informed and nuanced assessment of the actual situation, which takes into account both the claims found in Jewish literature from the time and the evidence for ongoing pneumatic activity.

There is, therefore, grounds for investigating "pneumatological perceptions and developments" in early Judaism without being anachronistic, as long as we are careful to read the material from this period on its own terms (i.e., not through the lens of later, Christian dogmatic terms). The

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19 (1990), 132–145. This is important also in **Article 2** in this study: Johansson, "The Angelomorphic Spirit of Wisdom."

[20] Levison, "The Jewish Origin," 7. My emphasis.

[21] See footnote 16.

[22] In fact, the term ἰουδαῖσμός first occurs in the Maccabean literature (2 Macc 2:21, 8:1; 14:38), which is all about the Jewish encounter with Hellenism. Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 18.

[23] Cf. *y. Sot.* 9.13/14; *b. Sanh.* 11a; *b. Sot.* 48b; *b. Yoma* 9b; *Cant. Rab.* 8.9. Other ancient sources that could be interpreted as expressing the same idea: Amos 8:11–12; Mic 3:6–7; 1 Macc 9:27; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 85.1–3; Justin, *Dial*. 53.3–4; 82.1; Josephus, *Ap.* 1.8.

[24] E.g., David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 103–106; Matthias Henze, "Invoking the Prophets in Zechariah and Ben Sira," *Prophets, Prophecy and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, eds. Michael Floyd and Robert D. Haak (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 120–134; John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 114–221.

[25] Cook, *On the Question*, 43, 181–191.

[26] Cook, *On the Question*, 176.

[27] Cook, *On the Question*, 192. See also Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishna*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: WJK Press, 2014), 192–198; Cohen argues that "classical prophecy," "of the biblical kind," ceased during the Persian period, but was transformed into apocalypticism, charismatic phenomena, and mysticism.

[28] Cook, *On the Question*, 176.

hypothesis that early Christian writers depend and build on earlier Jewish interpretations of biblical texts and pneumatological developments, in their own pneumatological theologizing, can be tested as an open hypothesis. In order to not impose later perceptions and concepts on the material, however, this study intentionally does not limit "pneumatological perceptions" to only perceptions of the spirit of God, however understood, but openly explores the different uses and perceptions of the words רוח, πνεῦμα and *spiritus*. Both the material from pre-Christian, Second Temple Jewish sources, and the material from early, pre-Nicene, Christian sources, should of course first be studied in its own context, before any comparisons are made with material from other contexts and periods.

1.2. Reception History – Theory and Method

This is a reception-historical study. Since the reception of the Bible "comprises every single act or word of interpretation of that book (or books) over the course of three millennia",[29] *reception history*, as a scholarly enterprise, by necessity needs to be selective. This goes for both material and methods, usually "in accordance with the particular interests of the historian concerned."[30] The material in this study is, as already stated, limited to text passages and writings from Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity (up until ~200 CE) in which Isa 11:2–3a is cited or alluded to, and is studied with a special focus on the "particular interest" of pneumatological matters (in the broad sense described above). This material will be presented more specifically in the next section (1.3).

The scholarly community surrounding the "reception history of the Bible" has yet to come up with a widely agreed upon definition of exactly what *reception history* is, and it is tempting to add to the wide array of alternatives (or confusion) by creating yet another one in order to clarify what it is that you yourself are doing.[31] Reception history is often equated with *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of impact or effective history),[32] and separated from "history of interpretation" by its philosophical underpinnings. John Barton distinguishes the two in the following way:

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[29] Jonathan Roberts, "Introduction," *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, eds. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason and Jonathan Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), e-book pages 18–27, esp. 18.
[30] Roberts, "Introduction," 18.
[31] Part of the "problem" is that "Biblical reception history is very much an evolving and multidimensional field" (Jonathan Morgan, "Visitors, Gatekeepers and Receptionists: Reflections on the Shape of Biblical Studies and the Role of Reception History," *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, eds. Emma England and William John Lyons, LHBOTS 615/STr 6 [London: T & T Clark, 2015], 61–76, esp. 62). Another contributing factor might be that "[r]eception history is grounded in the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer" (Roberts, "Introduction," 19), and has therefore an inherited "suspicion of 'method' (*Methode*)" built into it (Morgan, "Visitors, Gatekeepers and Receptionists," 75; see also Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009], 211–215, 217); Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Bloomsbury, 1989 [rev. ed. 2004]), 3–9. In his "Introduction" to *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, Jonathan Roberts writes: "As this brief overview indicates, we have not tried to establish a consensus view on reception history" (e-book page 26).
[32] Thiselton, *Hermeneutics*, 316. See, e.g., John F. A. Sawyer, *Isaiah Through the Centuries* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 5; Susan Gillingham, "Biblical Studies on Holiday? A Personal View of Reception History," *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, eds. Emma England and William John Lyons, LHBOTS 615/STr 6 (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 17–30, esp. 20; John Barton, "Biblical Theology: an Old Testament Perspective," *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, eds. Christopher Rowland and Christopher Tuckett (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 18–30, esp. 21.

> [In history of interpretation, it] is assumed that the text has a determinate meaning, but that this can be illuminated by understanding how it has been read in the past […] Reception history as currently practiced can look, superficially, like the history of interpretation, but for most practitioners it inhabits a different mental universe. [… It] is generally taken as a given that texts do *not* have determinate meanings, but their meaning is a kind of sum of, or selection from, what they have been taken to mean. […] In principle, reception history is a child of postmodernism, opposed to 'objectivity' in interpretation…[33]

However, Barton himself admits that the "border between reception history and history of interpretation is in practice porous,"[34] and according to Ulrich Luz, the "best-known German-language theologian working in reception history,"[35] *Wirkungsgeschichte* – in the way Luz understands Gadamer – is "not the same as 'reception history'."[36] Gadamer and Luz both reject "hermeneutical positivism" and the idea that a text only has one "objective" meaning, but they are also not accepting a radical relativism or subjectivism; there are good and bad interpretations, and one of the goals of the dialogical process of hermeneutics is to separate valid interpretations from invalid ones.[37]

One could argue that the present study should be placed in the category of history of interpretation rather than in the category of reception history, since the approach taken is more traditional – using exegetical and historical methods to study theological themes and motifs.[38] This might be the case, but the categories are overlapping, and it should be pointed out that this study is no

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[33] John Barton, "Preface," *The Decalogue and Its Cultural Influence*, ed. Dominik Markl (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2017), ix–xi, esp. ix, x.

[34] Barton, "Preface," x.

[35] Roberts, "Introduction," 21.

[36] Ulrich Luz, "The Contribution of Reception History to a Theology of the New Testament," *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, eds. Christopher Rowland and Christopher Tuckett (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 123–134, esp. 124.

[37] Gadamer criticizes the Enlightenment project and positivism, with its reductionist, distant and technical 'objectivism', without submitting to total subjectivism or radical relativism. The positivist idea that truth only can be reached through a strict scientific methodology is rejected (for Gadamer, this process actually leads to the loss of genuine truth), but the baby is not thrown out with the bathwater: truth *can* be reached (Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, xx, xxxiii, 308, 314). Tradition can embody truth, the hermeneutical dialogue can separate good prejudices from bad ones (p. 280, 306, 309–310, 317), and the nature of the object of interpretation determines what can be understood (p. xxvii, 306); all interpretations are, thus, not equally valid (p. 281). "Gadamer argues that understanding comes from open-minded, benevolent dialogue, and when linked to his attempts to recuperate tradition, this leads to him endorsing a way of thinking about the past that can be quite surprising to those schooled in a hermeneutics of suspicion. He depicts tradition as a kind of benevolent inheritance in which the acolyte may trust. The trusting, questioning relationship that can be developed with tradition is a paradigm of his dialogical model of truth. Given Gadamer's attempts to rehabilitate tradition in this way, it is perhaps unsurprising that his work has been so attractive to some theologians." (Roberts, "Introduction," 20). Luz also emphasize truth: "The quest for truth is the essence of theology; theology cannot get rid of it" (Luz, "The Contribution of Reception History," 133). "Luz's work demonstrates how the concept of 'tradition' can be a way of putting parameters on the multivalency of the biblical text by setting out what is and is not acceptable to the interpreter. As Hagner points out, it is not the case for Luz that 'any or *every* interpretation of a text is acceptable' […] Luz may not have a foundationalist commitment to the 'original sense' of the text, but in setting out parameters for separating 'valid interpretations from false ones' […] he has replaced that commitment with a different kind of foundationalism: a belief in what he calls the '"trajectory" of biblical texts", and 'the totality of the Christian faith' […] (Roberts, "Introduction," 22–23?)

[38] "[The] differences between History of Interpretation and Reception History is that the former takes a more exegetical and theological approach, and the latter approaches the subject more anthropologically and sociologically with a different concern about the impact of the text within a period of cultural history. But the two disciplines are undoubtedly closely related." (Gillingham, "Biblical Studies on Holiday?" 26, n. 17.)

mere stacking of descriptions of different interpretations; nor is it a search for the one "correct" interpretation.[39] The aim is to show the interpretative potential of the text and the different lines of interpretation that effectively have been drawn out from it during the early stages of its reception;[40] this is an examination of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the text – how the interplay between the text, the horizons of its interpreters and their pneumatological perceptions have opened up new meanings – that in turn have influenced subsequent readings and interpretations.[41] Reception history stands in the tradition of dialectical philosophy, and has a "dual commitment to close historical analysis and hermeneutical reflection";[42] hopefully this dual commitment is reflected also in this present research.

Methodologically, the research that goes into this study and the articles is has produced mostly consist of close readings in the original languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin) of the selected texts, including linguistic and contextual analyses. In the first stage, the ways in which Isa 11:2–3a has been *quoted* or *alluded to* (or *translated*), and *used/applied* and *interpreted* in the close literary context, has been analyzed. In the second stage, the findings of the first stage has been related to the *overall pneumatological perceptions* in the works as a whole (or in the case of a known individual writer, his collected works). The selection of texts and text passages that precedes all of this will be discussed in the next section (1.3).

In the location and analysis of quotes and allusions, the analytical categories suggested by Matthias Henze and David Lincicum have been employed to distinguish between different uses of Scripture. These categories are:

- *Marked Citation*: "an explicit citation of a discrete text that is marked for the reader in some way."
- *Unmarked Citation*: "might have a verbatim agreement with a scriptural predecessor text but is not marked as such for the reader."
- *Verbal Allusion*: "a reference to a specific word or string of words without an explicit marker." (No distinctions are made between an allusion and an echo.)
- *Conceptual Allusion*: "a reference to a theme or topic that is not tied to a specific text in Scripture but nonetheless may be plausibly seen to derive from it."[43]

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[39] This is not meant to caricature any position, rather to problematize oversimplified categorizations.

[40] When talking about the early stages of the reception of texts from the Book of Isaiah, it should also be mentioned that the "final forms" of biblical books themselves often are the result of "reception." The point James Harding makes about 1 Samuel can in many ways be applied also to Isaiah: "[W]e are dealing with a text that developed over time, within and between manuscript traditions in Hebrew and Greek. As is now abundantly clear to anyone who has studied the 'biblical' manuscripts from Qumran, the biblical 'text' contains the beginnings of the history of its own reception. Text and reception are inseparable." (James E. Harding, "What is Reception History, and What Happens to You if You Do It?" *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, eds. Emma England and William John Lyons, LHBOTS 615/STr 6 [London: T & T Clark, 2015], 31–44, esp. 38.)

[41] Anthony Thiselton writes: "*Reception theory* explores a *diachronic* segment of readers over a particular period, perhaps that of the Church Fathers, the Reformers, or any era of history. But it is not simply the history of interpretation" (*Hermeneutics*, 316). He then goes on to discuss *Wirkungsgeschichte*, which has to do with "the influence of readers on texts and the influence of texts on readers, as a two-way process and method of shaping traditions."

[42] Morgan, "Visitors, Gatekeepers and Receptionists," 75.

[43] Matthias Henze and David Lincicum, "Introduction," *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings: The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, eds. Matthias Henze and David Lincicum (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023), 1–20, esp. 9–12.

1.3. The Material

This study aims at being comprehensive, including all quotes of Isa 11:2–3a (or significant parts of it) and allusions to this text that contain at least the word רוח, πνεῦμα or *spiritus* and one or more of the qualities attributed to the Spirit in Isa 11:2–3a, in early Jewish and early Christian writings (the Second Temple Era and up until ~200 CE). Note that not all quotes and allusions to Isa 11:2–3a from this period are included by these criteria; there are, for example, several allusions to "upon him the spirit [of God] will rest" (from Isa 11:2a) in the New Testament (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10;[44] Luke 3:22; John 1:32; 1 Pet 4:14[45]), but these are not part of this study since no attribute of the spirit from Isa 11:2–3a is mentioned. And there are numerous texts in which these "attributes" are mentioned ("wisdom," "knowledge," "understanding," "power," etc.), but with no connection to רוח, πνεῦμα or *spiritus*.[46] These criteria have been applied to the selection of texts in order to limit the study to texts which are relevant for *pneumatological perceptions*.

There are, however, to my present knowledge,[47] three exceptions which make this study fall short of its aim at being comprehensive. The first two are that no texts from Philo of Alexandria or Josephus are studied, although there are passages in their writings where, for example, "spirit" and "wisdom" are mentioned together. The third one is that Eph 1:17 is not treated, which speaks of the "spirit of *wisdom*… and *knowledge* about him";[48] this text clearly fits the criteria, but is not studied in any of the articles. These "missing pieces" are hereby acknowledged, and mentioned as suggestions for further research.

As starting points for the selection of relevant texts and text passages for this study, the following indexes has been used: *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Literature* (Lange and Weigold, 2011); *A Scripture Index to Charlesworth's The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Delamarter, 2002); *Biblia Patristica* (https://www.biblindex.org/en). These indexes, however, need some updating; therefore, texts have also been added – primarily in two ways: by reading through potentially relevant literature from Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity; and via suggestions in research seminars and conferences.

What follows in Table 1 is an overview of all the selected texts in this study:

Table 1:		
Text:		*Type of use:*
Isa 11:2–3a (LXX)	"And the spirit of God shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness; the spirit of the fear of God shall fill him."	Translation
$1QS^{b}$ V, 25	Benediction to the messianic Prince: "May He give [you the spirit of coun]sel and of eternal might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of God."	Unmarked Citation

[44] Mark 1:10 has εἰς αὐτόν in NA^{28}, but επ is used in several manuscripts.
[45] 1 Pet 4:14: τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται (some manuscripts has επαναπαυεται, αναπεπαυται, or επαναπεπαυται. In LXX-Isa 11:2, ἀναπαύσεται is used.)
[46] There is, however, one exception to this rule in the present study: Sir 24:23–29 is included, although "spirit" is not mentioned in this text, on the basis that the "Wisdom-torah" here described is described like a spirit.
[47] There is, of course, always the terrifying possibility that you could have missed something important due to simple ignorance.
[48] LXX-Isa 11:2, "πνεῦμα σοφίας... πνεῦμα γνώσεως"; Eph 1:17, "πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως ἐν ἐπιγώσει αὐτοῦ."

4Q161 8–10 III, 11–17	[Quotation of Isa 11:1–5, almost identical to the MT-text.]	Marked Citation + Comments
4Q213[a] 1 I, 14	Prayer of Levi: "[… Show me the holy spirit, counsel, wi]sdom, intelligence and strength…"	Verbal Allusion
4Q444	"… I belong to those who fear God, he opened my mouth with his true knowledge, and from his holy spirit […] A spirit of knowledge and understanding, truth and justice, did God place in [my] hea[rt…"	Verbal Allusion
1QH[a] VI, 13, 25	"the spirit of your holiness… approach your understanding"; favored with the "spirit of knowledge"	Verbal Allusions
1QH[a] XX,11–13	"your holy spirit… knowledge of the mystery of your wisdom, and the source of your strength."	Verbal Allusion
1QS IV, 3	"A spirit of… insight, understanding, and mighty wisdom" (a total of seven virtues)	Verbal Allusion
1QS IV, 4	A "spirit of knowledge"	Verbal Allusion
1QS IV, 21–22	A cleansing "by the holy spirit" and sprinkling "upon him the spirit of truth," leading to "understanding," "knowledge of the Most High and [the] wisdom of the sons of heaven."	Verbal/Conceptual Allusion
4Q400–407	Spirits of understanding, spirits of knowledge (angelic beings); seven mysteries of knowledge.	Verbal/Conceptual Allusions
Sir 24:23–29	The *torah* is described like a spirit, and full of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and counsels.	Verbal Allusion
Sir 39:6–7	The diligent scribe can be filled with the "spirit of understanding," speaking "words of wisdom," getting "counsel" and "knowledge."	Verbal Allusions
Sir 48:24 (MS B)	The prophet Isaiah had the "spirit of strength."	Verbal Allusion
Wis 7:7	"spirit of wisdom" (= the angelomorphic spirit of God)	Verbal/Conceptual Allusion
Sus 45 (OG)	An angel gave Daniel a "spirit of understanding."	Verbal/Conceptual Allusion
Sus 62b (OG)	"… powerful sons; for youths will be pious, and a spirit of knowledge and understanding shall be with them…"	Verbal Allusion
Pss. Sol. 17:37, 40	Of the messianic king: "God will make him powerful in the holy spirit and wise in the counsel of understanding, with strength and righteousness"; he will be strong "in the fear of God."	Verbal Allusion
Pss. Sol. 18:7–8	"… the rod of discipline of the Lord Messiah in the fear of his God, in wisdom of spirit, and of righteousness and of strength, to direct people in righteous acts in the fear of God…"	Verbal Allusion
1 En. 49:3	In the Chosen One dwell "the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of insight, and the spirit of instruction and of might, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness."	Unmarked Citation (modified)
1 En. 61:11	The whole host of heaven praise God "with the spirit of faithfulness and with the spirit of wisdom, and with (a spirit of) long suffering and with the spirit of mercy, and with the spirit of judgment and peace and with the spirit of goodness." (seven spirits/virtues)	Conceptual Allusion
1 En. 71:11	Enoch praises God "with a spirit of power"	Verbal Allusion
Jos. Asen. 4:9	Joseph is "powerful in wisdom and knowledge, and the spirit of God is upon him."	Verbal/Conceptual Allusion
Jos. Asen. 19:11	"spirit of life… spirit of wisdom… spirit of truth"	Verbal Allusion
T[J] Isa 11:2	"And *a* spirit *before* the Lord shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."	Translation
Rev 1:4–5a	"Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ…"	Conceptual Allusion
Rev 3:1a	"The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars"	Conceptual Allusion

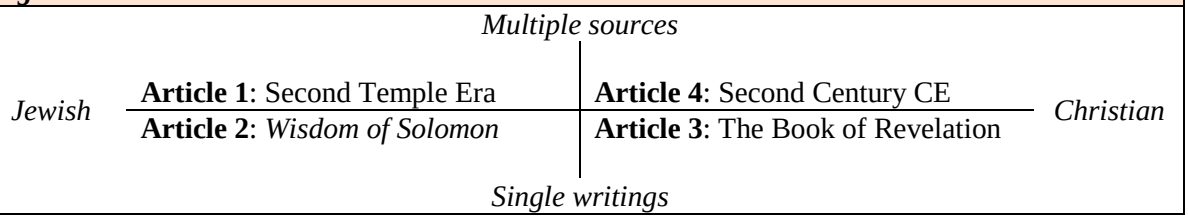
Rev 4:5	"From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God…"	Conceptual Allusion
Rev 5:6	"… I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth."	Conceptual Allusion
Just., *Dial*. 39.2	"For one receives the spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, another of the fear of God."	Verbal/Conceptual Allusion
Just., *Dial*. 87.2	[Quotation of Isa 11:1–3a (LXX), almost verbatim.]	Marked Citation
Just., *Dial*. 87.4	"For Solomon had the spirit of wisdom, Daniel that of understanding and counsel, Moses of might and piety, Elijah of the fear [of God], and Isaiah of knowledge…"	Verbal Allusion (following from the receding quotation)
Iren., *Haer*. 3.9.3	[Quotation of Isa 11:1–4a. Sevenfold pattern.]	Marked Citation
Iren., *Haer*. 3.17.1, 3	[Quotation of Isa 11:2a + 11:2b–3a. Sevenfold pattern.]	Marked Citation
Iren., *Epid*. 9	[Quotation of Isa 11:2–3a. One attribute missing, probably a mistake.]	Marked Citation
Iren., *Epid*. 59	[Quotation of Isa 11:1–10. Sevenfold pattern.]	Marked Citation
Tert., *Jud*. 9.26	[Quotation of Isa 11:1–3a, but the order is messed up.] "… there shall rest upon him the spirit of God, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of discernment and piety, the spirit of counsel and courage; the spirit of the fear of God shall fill him."	Marked Citation
Tert., *Marc*. 3.17.3	"My Christ, upon whom has rested, according to Isaiah, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of discernment and of piety, the spirit of the fear of God."	Marked Citation
Tert., *Marc*. 5.8.4	[Quotation of Isa 11:1–2a + 11:2b–3a.] "… the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of discernment and of religion; the spirit will fill him with the fear of God."	Marked Citation
Tert., *Marc*. 5.8.8	[Tertullian matches the nine charismatic gifts from 1 Cor 12:8–10 with the seven "gifts" that Isaiah speaks of in Isa 11:2–3a.]	Marked Citation (from two texts)
Tert., *Marc*. 5.17.5	The "spirit of wisdom" in Eph 1:17 is equated with one of the "seven spirits in Isaiah"	(Marked Citation)
Tert., *Cor*. 15.2	"… the branch of Jesse, upon which the totality of the grace of the Divine spirit rested…"	Unmarked Citation (Verbal Allusion)

2. Articles and Research Findings

This doctoral research consists of four separate articles, each presenting different parts of the overall research project and bound together by the common theme and the *limiting* and *unifying* principles laid out in the introduction. They are here presented and summarized chronologically, in respect to the time period the material they deal with are written. There are, however, some overlap in time between individual sources in different articles. The *Isaiah Targum* is, for example, is treated in the first article since it is a Jewish source, but the text we have is later than the sources studied in all the other articles; and the second article is dedicated to a single writing, namely the *Wisdom of Solomon* from the first century BCE, while the first article contains texts from both before and after that time. It can also be noted that the first article refers to findings presented in the second article, as the first one is a survey of all the texts in early Judaism which are relevant for this study, including the *Wisdom of Solomon*; the second article can, therefore, be viewed as an expansion of a single source from this survey.

Two of the articles deal with Jewish writings (Article 1–2), and the other two deal with Christian writings (Article 3–4); the first and the last deal with multiple sources (covering specific periods of time), while Article 2 and 3 dig deeper into single sources/books. See Figure 1.

Figure 1



It is also the case that the articles which treat multiple sources deal with more direct quotes and allusions to Isa 11:2–3a, and thus cover – in a broad sense – the reception of this text during the selected time period (approximately 200 BCE–200 CE), with the exception of New Testament writings. The articles that focus on single writings complement these with more in-depth studies on two books in which Isa 11:2–3a is *not* quoted, but whose allusions to Isaiah 11 interact with pneumatological matters in ways that shed light either on a pneumatological development or on the multivalent *Wirkungsgeschichte* of this text.

2.1. Article 1

The first article in this study, "Spirit(s), Angels, and Virtues: The Reception of Isaiah 11:2–3a in Early Judaism" (forthcoming in *Verbum Vitae* 43/4, 2025), follows the reception of Isa 11:2–3a in Second Temple Judaism, and examines it as it relates to pneumatological perceptions and uses of the words רוח and πνεῦμα. Via close readings and analyses of the selected texts, this article aims to demonstrate different interpretative lines and uses of "spirit" (רוח/πνεῦμα) in early Judaism. The studied material include: (1) The *Septuagint* translation of Isa 11:2–3a; texts from (2) Qumran/Dead Sea Scrolls and (3) the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha[49] which quote Isa 11:2–3a (or significant parts of it) or allude to it, using at least the words רוח/πνεῦμα *and* one or more of the qualities attributed to the Spirit in Isa 11:2–3a; (4) the *Isaiah Targum* of Isa 11:1–4.[50] The article is intended to examine and analyze these texts on their own terms and in their own contexts, while noting similarities and differences between them, but also to see if and in which ways this early Jewish reception could be part of the background to later, early Christian interpretations of the same text.

The main research findings from this article can be summarized and commented upon as follows:

(1) The translation of Isa 11:2–3a into Greek (LXX) is notable for the change from the spirit of YHWH having *six* attributes (three pairs) to the spirit of God having *seven* attributes, with the split of the "fear of YHWH" (יראת יהוה) into two different attributes: piety (εὐσε-

[49] The problems related to the use of these terms and their definitions are well-known in scholarship; I hereby acknowledge this, but have chosen to use these terms anyway for the sake of simplicity since they are still used by scholars to refer to certain groupings of writings.

[50] This text is technically later than the Second Temple Era, but is included in the study because it can be argued that it reflects earlier stages of the Jewish reception of Isaiah 11; it is relatively safe to assume that parts of the interpretative layers of the *Isaiah Targum* goes back to the Tannaitic Period (prior to 220 CE). See the Introduction to: Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible, vol. 11 (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987).

βείας) and fear of God (φόβου θεοῦ); and an extra πνεῦμα in v. 3a.[51] Even though there is no clear Jewish concept of a "sevenfold spirit" in the sources (albeit there are many other sets of "sevens"), it can already here be said that this change is crucial for the development of a later "sevenfold spirit"-tradition in early Christianity – or at least crucial for the adoption of Isa 11:2–3a into this tradition.

(2) In several of the sources, Isaiah 11 is interpreted as a *messianic* text (1QS^{b} V, 25; 4Q161; Pss. Sol. 17:37; 18:7–8; 1 En. 49:3; T^{J} Isa 11:1–2), and this naturally coincides with the texts which most clearly quote or allude to the passage (or significant parts of it) rather than merely alluding to a few of the attributes. The nature and character of the messianic figure, however, varies. In the two Qumran texts (1QS^{b} V, 25; 4Q161), the messiah is expected to be an *eschatological warrior* against the enemies of God's people, and it is emphasized that he will be endowed with the spirit of "eternal might" (גבורת עולם, 1QS^{b} V, 25) or "with the spirit of strength" (ב[רוח ג]בורה,[52] 4Q161 8–10 III, 19). In the *Psalms of Solomon*, the messiah will also be powerful, but it is debated whether his rule – and subjugation of the Gentiles – will be violent or executed by word and wisdom only. In 1 Enoch 49, the "Chosen One" is a heavenly figure in whom the spirit of wisdom and insight, instruction and might, and "the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness" will dwell. The *Isaiah Targum* emphasizes the kingship of the messiah; and it is said that "a spirit before the LORD shall rest upon him," indicating that this is no longer God's own spirit but a separate entity, a spirit or quality going forth from God. All these sources mention the (or a) spirit, but my assessment is that the role of the spirit is somewhat toned down.

(3) In many other texts, the messianic theme and context has been omitted or transformed, and the attributes or endowments of the spirit (or allusions to those attributes) are understood as *virtues*, *charismatic gifts* or *human dispositions*. A "democratization" of the original royal charisma has taken place, perhaps via the influence of Isa 55:3–5 where the promise to the Davidic dynasty is expanded to include the whole people of God. The recipients/possessors of the spirit and/or its attributes/virtues/gifts in these sources are: priests ("Levi," 4Q213^{a}); diligent scribes/students of the torah (Sir 39:6–7); the "sons of truth" (1QS III, 24–IV, 8); anonymous supplicants (1QH^{a} VI, 13; XX, 11–13; 4Q444), or young Jewish men like Joseph (Jos. Asen. 4:9) or Daniel with friends (OG Sus 45, 62b).

(4) The words רוח and πνεῦμα are used in different ways and can refer to:
   a. *The spirit of God* (Isa 11:2–3a [MT+LXX]; 4Q161; 4Q213^{a}; 4Q444 1, 1; 1QH^{a} XX, 12b; Wis 7:7; Jos. Asen. 4:9; probably also 1QS^{b} V, 25; 1QH^{a} VI, 13; Sir 39:6–7; Pss. Sol. 17:37; 18:7–8; and possibly 1QS III, 6–7; IV, 21; OG Sus 45, 62b; 1 En. 49:3; Jos. Asen. 19:11; T^{J} Isa 11:2);
   b. *Human dispositions* (possibly 4Q444 1, 3; 1QH^{a} VI, 25; XX, 11–12a; 1QS III, 6–8; Sir 48:24; Pss. Sol. 18:7);
   c. *Charismatic gifts* or *virtues* (possibly 4Q444 1, 3; 1QH^{a} VI, 25; OG Sus 45, 62b; Jos. Asen. 19:11);
   d. *Angelic spirit-beings* (4Q400–407; possibly also 4Q444 1, 3; T^{J} Isa 11:2).

[51] There are in total four occurrences of רוח in Isa 11:2[–3a] (MT), but five uses of πνεῦμα in Isa 11:2–3a (LXX).
[52] Some editions/reconstructions have ה[תורה instead of ג[בורה here, but I follow Florentiona García Martínez and Eibert J. C. TIgchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

(5) In some cases, the conclusion is that the spirit(s) in question *should* or *could* be interpreted angelomorphically.[53] As argued in Article 2, the spirit of God is presented with angelomorphic traits in the *Wisdom of Solomon* as it is identified with personified Wisdom; and also, the spirit from God in the *Isaiah Targum* could be interpreted in a similar way. Furthermore, in the *Two Spirits Treatise* (1QS III–IV), the created spirit of truth/light is best understood as a spiritual influence on the human heart which is subordinated to the Angel of God's Truth (the Prince of Lights) and reflects the nature of God and his spirit. The distinctions between the different uses of רוח and πνεῦμα are often blurry and may overlap.

2.2. Article 2

The second article, "The Angelomorphic Spirit of Wisdom in the *Wisdom of Solomon*" (forthcoming in the *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*), focuses on the *Wisdom of Solomon*, which is connected to Isa 11:2 by the mention of the "spirit of wisdom" (Wis 7:7) and the close connection between σοφία and πνεῦμα in the book as a whole (e.g., Wis 1:6; 7:22–23, 25; 9:17). The connection fits the category of Verbal and/or Conceptual Allusion.

The aim of this article is to show how, in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the theme of wisdom, the personification of Wisdom and Wisdom as spirit, are interrelated with texts in which angels (or an angel) play important roles in the salvation history of Israel, and how this makes this writing an important case study in the development of "angelomorphic pneumatology." In this way, the article adds to research on angelomorphic pneumatology in other sources in early Judaism and early Christianity, primarily done by John Levison and Bogdan Bucur.[54]

The *main point* argued in this article is the following:

(1) The author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* brings together three themes from the Jewish Scriptures and lets them converge into one figure. Not only is the "spirit of wisdom" (cf. Exod 28:3; Deut 34:9; Isa 11:2) identified with personified Wisdom (cf. Prov 8–9), but this personified spirit of Wisdom also takes on the role of the Angel of the Lord in the Exodus-tradition (cf. Exod 14:19; 23:20–23).

This main point is, in turn, backed up by the following points of argumentation, summarized and shortly commented upon:

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[53] Angelomorphic is here defined in the following way, as put forth by Crispin Fletcher-Louis: "we propose its use *wherever there are signs that an individual or community possesses specifically angelic characteristics or status, though for whom identity cannot be reduced to that of an angel*." Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*, WUNT 2/94 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 14–15.

[54] John Levison has looked at possible perceptions of the divine spirit as an "angelic being" in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, Qumran texts and other Jewish writings (Levison, "The Angelic Spirit"). He has also studied the identification of the "Angel of God's presence" with the God's holy spirit in the re-telling of the Exodus-story in Isa 63:7–14, proposing that Jewish pneumatological speculations in many ways are a precursor to early Christian pneumatology (Levison, *The Holy Spirit Before Christianity*). Bogdan Bucur has argued for the presence of angelomorphic pneumatology in Clement of Alexandria and other early Christian authors; see, e.g., Bogdan G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christinanae 95 (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Bogdan G. Bucur, "The Angelic Spirit in Early Christianity: Justin, the Martyr and Philosopher," *The Journal of Religion* 88 (2008), 190–208; Bogdan G. Bucur, "The Son of God and the Angelomorphic Holy Spirit: A Rereading of the *Shepherd's* Christology," *ZNW* 98 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 120–42.

(2) Wisdom, which is one of the main themes of the book, is presented as both a personification of God's wisdom (e.g., Wis 6:12–25; 7:22–8:21; 9:18–11:1) and a spirit (Wis 1:6; 7:7, 22–25; 9:17; 10:16). Wisdom can be compared to the intermediary principle in Middle Platonism and has some resemblance to the Stoic concept of the World-Soul, she is both transcendent and immanent and, thus, bridges the gap between God and the world. It is clear that Wisdom functions as a divine agent, and the article argues that she should be identified with the divine spirit, i.e., the spirit of God.

(3) As a personification and divine agent, Wisdom takes on angelic traits and is associated with angelic motifs common in Second Temple Judaism, such as the throne of God, sun, light and fire (e.g., Wis 7:19, 26, 29; 9:4, 10; 10:17; 18;15–16). In the re-telling of the Exodus, Wisdom takes over the role of the Angel of the Lord and the pillar of cloud-and-fire in the Book of Exodus; she saved/delivered the Israelites from Egypt, led and guided them, brought them over the Sea, performed signs and wonders through Moses, and became for them a shelter by day and a starry flame by night (Wis 10:15–21). This alone is enough to see the connection between the Angel and Wisdom, but the perception of Wisdom as spirit (πνεῦμα) in the *Wisdom of Solomon* only make an angelomorphic interpretation of Wisdom more plausible; angelic beings are referred to as "spirits" (רוחות) many times in ancient sources (e.g., 1 Kings 22:19–21; *Jub* 2:2; 15:31–32; 1 En. 61:12; 1QM XXII, 8–9; 4Q403 1 I, 43–44; 4Q405 23 I, 8–9; cf. Heb 1:13–14).

(4) This convergence of the spirit of God and the Angel of the Lord finds a parallel or precedent in Isa 63:8–14, a text which I argue is part of the background to Wis 10:15–21,[55] although the exact relationship between the texts is complicated due to textual variants of Isaiah 63. According to the *Qere*-reading (and the preferred reading of the *Kethib*-text as well) of the Hebrew text, the "angel of his [i.e., God's] presence [or face] saved them" (Isa 63:9), and this angel can be identified with "his holy spirit" (v. 10, 11) and the "spirit of YHWH" (v. 14) in the same passage.[56] However, we know that the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* has access to the Greek version of the Book of Isaiah (LXX), which in 63:9 negates that it was an angel that saved the people. This could be a problem, if not for the following reasons: (a) The author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* does not follow the LXX uncritically; for him, it is *not* God alone who saves the people, but God uses an agent, i.e. personified Wisdom; (b) Both the Hebrew and Greek texts of Isaiah 63 agree that God sent "his holy spirit" to lead the people, that they provoked the spirit (like they shouldn't with the Angel in Exod 23:21), (c) It is *possible* to read the statement about the spirit in the Greek Isa 63:14 angelomorphically, since the spirit here is a πνεῦμα παρὰ κυρίου, a spirit who descended from the Lord to lead the people. My conclusion is that the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* either had access also to a Hebrew text (or a text-version that follows the Hebrew), which remains unknown, and the "spirit-angel equation was adopted in a rather straightforward way and applied to Wisdom, *or* he adapted his re-telling in light of the narrative in the Book of Exodus (where an angel clearly plays an important role) and, possibly, also identified the spirit who descended and guided the Israelites in Isa 63:14 (LXX) with Wisdom.[57]

[55] I show that there are linguistic as well as conceptual allusions and structural parallels between the passages.

[56] So argues also John Levison, see footnotes 18–19.

[57] I have here included this rather long explanation of this specific point of my argumentation in Article 2, because this has been the major struggle – and dispute – both in writing this article and, subsequently, in the process of reviews and revisions. I acknowledge that there are different ways of interpreting the data, but I

2.3. Article 3

The third article, "The Mysterious Identity of the Seven Spirits of God in the Book of Revelation" (at the moment in the reviewing process for a SRB-volume),[58] presents, explores and evaluates three different views on the identity of the "seven spirits [of God]" in the Book of Revelation (mentioned in 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). Often, in the reception and history of interpretation of this book, the sevens spirits have been taken to refer to the sevenfold description of the spirit in Isa 11:2–3a (LXX).

Originally, the intention was to determine which one of the three view was most plausible, but one of the conclusions of the article is that there are good arguments for all of them (that does not mean that all arguments are good), and that it even might be the case that John himself (the author of the book) did not know exactly what he was seeing/reporting on. In the end, however, the findings of this article turned out to be a very useful and fruitful contribution to the research project as a whole, as the different views of the seven spirits illuminate not only the different ways the seven spirits themselves has been interpreted, but also the different ways Isa 11:2–3a has been interpreted.

The different views presented, explored and evaluated are the following:[59]

(A) The *pneumatological* view, which interprets the seven spirits as a reference to a sevenfold manifestation of the one, holy spirit of God, or a symbolic way of expressing the fullness or totality of the Spirit. This is the traditional view, and shows up very early in the history of interpretation.
(B) The *angelological* view, which interprets the seven spirits as a reference to seven archangels (or principal angels), standing before God and serving him. This would be grounded in Jewish angelology, in which seven angelic beings are mentioned quite frequently (e.g., in Tob 12:15; 1 En. 20:1–8; 90:21–22; 4Q400–407). The article investigates early Jewish angelological speculations as they relate to seven angelic beings.
(C) The view that the seven spirits express an archaic *angelomorphic pneumatology*, suggested by Bogdan Bucur in order to bring together the "angelic imagery" and "pneumatological content" of the seven spirits.[60] According to this view, the "seven spirits" denote the (one) spirit of God, but described as or manifesting itself as a sevenfold multiplicity of angelic beings.

Although the exact nature and identity of the seven spirits remain mysterious, there are some conclusions that can be drawn from this study:

(1) The seven spirits are described as having typical "angelic traits" and are presented as seven entities (of some sort); therefore, even if we prefer a pneumatological interpretation, there is at least some level of "angelomorphism" at work in this presentation.

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remain convinced that the relationship between Isa 63:8–14 (with its textual variants) and Wis 10:15–21 is worth investigating, and that it can help shed light on the developments of angelomorphic pneumatology.

[58] SRB = *Studies in the Reception History of the Bible*, part of the *Network for the Study of the Reception History of the Bible*. The specific volume in question is edited by Dr. Lotta Valve from the University of Eastern Finland.

[59] For the actual arguments made, I refer to the (hopefully) forthcoming article (Article 3).

[60] Bogdan G. Bucur, "Hierarchy, Prophecy, and the Angelomorphic Spirit: A Contribution to the Study of the Book of Revelation's *Wirkungsgeschichte*," *JBL* 127:1 (2008), 173–194, esp. 182.

(2) The "singular spirit" (τὸ πνεῦμα) mentioned on several occasions in the book (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 14:13; 19:10; 22:17) is best understood as the "prophetic spirit" prevalent in ancient Jewish understandings of the spirit of God; the relationship between this spirit and the seven spirits remain, however, unclear and opaque.
(3) There is a clear connection between the prophetic spirit and angelic activity in the transmission of prophetic revelation in the book, and between pneumatology and angelology in general (in earlier and contemporary sources).
(4) Isa 11:2–3a (LXX) is likely part of the quite complicated textual background to the seven spirits, but the seven spirits (in the Book of Revelation) should not be seen as a commentary on Isaiah 11; the references to this text are primarily used to make christological – not pneumatological or angelological – claims. The textual background also shows that Scripture passages with pneumatological content could be transformed and interpreted "angelologically" in early Judaism.

2.4. Article 4

The fourth and final article, "Angelomorphic Features, Charismatic Manifestations, and Triadic Formulas: Isa 11:2–3a and Pneumatology in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Tertullian" (forthcoming in a *WUNT*-volume connected to the project *Isaiah Between Judeo-Christian Borderlines*), focuses on the reception of Isa 11:2–3a in Christian writings from the second century. The three authors that do quote or clearly allude to Isa 11:2–3a during this time are Justin Martyr (in *Dial*. 39.2; 87.2, 4), Irenaeus (in *Haer*. 3.9.3; 3.17.1; *Epid*. 9–10; 59), and Tertullian (in *Jud*. 9.26; *Marc*. 3.17.3–5; 5.8.4–12; 5.17.5; *Cor*. 15.2).

The main conclusions in this article can be summarized as follows:

(1) All three authors connect Isa 11:2–3a with the spirit of God descending upon Jesus at his baptism, and see the sevenfold pattern (from LXX) as an expression of the fullness or totality of the Spirit's operations; this fullness rested on Christ, not because he lacked the Spirit but for the sake of humanity.
(2) Justin and Tertullian directly connect this "resting" of the Spirit on Christ with the cessation of these operations among the Jewish people, which is something that also Irenaeus seems to believe (see *Haer*. 3.17.3).
(3) Justin and Tertullian also interpret the attributes of the Spirit in Isa 11:2–3a as charismatic powers/gifts – and they relate it to their own experiences. This text is for them associated with a whole cluster of Scripture passages (e.g., Ps 68:18//Eph 4:8; Joel 2:28 [Acts 2]; 1 Cor 12); Tertullian explicitly equates the seven "gifts" in Isa 11:2–3a with the nine gifts in 1 Cor 12:8–10 (see *Marc*. 5.8.8). Irenaeus, on the other hand, does not discuss charismatic phenomena in relation to Isaiah 11 but focuses instead on the soteriological functions of the Spirit. He does, however, connect the seven attributes of the Spirit from Isa 11:2–3a (LXX) with the "seven heavens," and associates Isa 11:2–3a with Joel 2:28 and Isa 61:1.
(4) Justin's pneumatological theologizing is many times "baffling," but a "quasi-trinitarian" structure can be discerned, consisting of God the Father, the Son and Logos of God (who is also "spirit"), and the prophetic spirit. The latter two both have "angelomorphic features," and the powers (δυνάμεις) of Christ seem to include both the seven powers of the spirit from Isa 11:2–3a (which he gives a charismatic interpretation) and angelic beings. Justin is primarily interested in christology, however, and it is plausible that he

actually does not have a consistent theology of the Spirit. In his writings, we find a mix of: (a) inherited triadic formulations; (b) a strong Logos-theology, which explains the overlap between the λόγος and the πνεῦμα of God and his tendencies towards binitarianism; (c) descriptions containing angelomorphic features of both Christ and the Spirit.

(5) In Irenaeus and Tertullian, there is no discernible "angelomorphic pneumatology," and the divine Triad of God/Father, Son/Logos, and Spirit is more clearly formulated than in Justin's writings.

3. Discussion and Conclusions

[This part, among many others, remains yet to be written.]

Verbatim Parallels between the Book of Hosea and the Book of Jeremiah: A Diachronic Analysis

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A Project Description – OTSEM 2025

In my PhD project, I examine verbatim parallels between the Book of Hosea and the Book of Jeremiah using literary- and redaction-critical analysis.

For many years, scholars have been aware of the apparent connections between the Book of Hosea and the Book of Jeremiah. The two books use some identical terms and metaphors and thus share some key theological ideas. A striking example of this is the representation of Yahweh's relationship with Israel through the imagery of a marital union (see Hos 1–3; Jer 2–3; 13:20–27; 30:12–17). However, the similarities between the two books are also manifested in verbatim parallels – strings of two to eight words, which appear in both texts (for example, Hos 11:5 / Jer 5:3; 8:5).[1] In contrast to shared metaphors and terms, the literary process that results in verbatim parallels might leave some traces behind it. This means that critical methods may allow us to detect the direction of influence behind a certain verbatim parallel.

Indeed, when facing two texts that include verbatim parallels, scholars are usually concerned with the *direction of influence*. The common approach is to investigate which of the three possibilities is most plausible: (1) text B is dependent on text A; (2) text A is dependent on text B; (3) both texts have a common origin.

Surprisingly, this approach has hardly been employed by modern scholars in the analysis of the relationship between the Books of Hosea and Jeremiah. Most scholars simply assumed that when contact between any two passages seems likely, it is necessarily the Hoseanic text that influenced the Jeremianic text. It is generally agreed that Jeremiah the prophet was influenced by the prophecy of Hosea.[2] This view relies, first of all, on the observation that Hosea was active in roughly 750–722 BCE, approximately 100–130 years prior to the estimated period of Jeremiah's

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[1] For existing lists of these verbatim parallels see K. Groß, *Die literarische Verwandtschaft Jeremias mit Hosea* (Dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 1930), pp.1–6; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2* (Hermeneia), Philadelphia 1989, pp. 45–47.

[2] B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (KHAT), Tübingen-Leipzig 1901, pp. xiii, 15–16; J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: studies in the life of Jeremiah*, Cambridge 1963, pp. 21–22, 33, 60, 64–65, 84, 86; G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments. Band 2*, München, 1965[4], p. 200; F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (Anchor Bible), New York 1980, pp. 54, 395; J. Bright, *Jeramiah* (Anchor Bible), New York 1981, pp. lxxxviii, xci; Holladay, 1989, pp. 45–47; M. I. Gruber, *Hosea*, New York 2017, p. 31.

activity. However, scholars also make another assumption – that all of the material found in the Book of Hosea (with very few exceptions) goes back to Hosea the prophet, and that nearly all of the poetic material in the Book of Jeremiah – which contains most of the parallels to the Book of Hosea – goes back to the prophet Jeremiah. These common assumptions regarding the dating and the origins of the two books have been challenged in recent decades, and therefore, a novel approach to the subject is required.

The few studies that have focused on the relationships between the two books accepted the prevalent view that Jeremiah the prophet was influenced by Hosea the prophet, and sought to demonstrate such an influence (Groß, 1930; Weider, 1993), to assess the nature of the contact that Jeremiah had with Hosea's prophecy – textual or through oral tradition (Groß, 1930; Schulz-Rauch, 1996), and to examine the ways in which Jeremiah reshaped and actualized Hosea's message (Schulz-Rauch, 1996; Jeremias, 1994).[3]

In my project, I seek to correct the flaws of previous studies on the subject, and to take into account the complex literary history of the two Books. For this purpose, I analyze each case of a verbatim parallel separately, without any presumptions regarding the direction of influence. Given the premise that both books underwent a gradual process of growth, we need not expect to find a one-directional relationship of influence between the books. Furthermore, my analysis seeks to take into account the individual literary history of each of the verbatim parallels' respective passages. Given scholarly disagreements about such reconstructions, a fundamental part of my work is to offer my own observation on the literary history of each passage.

My goal is to understand the background behind each case of verbatim parallels between the books. In cases of literary borrowing, I seek to illuminate its function, purpose, motivation, and literary techniques, along with its place and role within the narrow literary history of the passage in which the borrowing was incorporated. Moreover, I believe that such analysis of the verbatim parallels between the Books of Hosea and Jeremiah also has the potential to shed light on the background of the shared terms, metaphors, and theological ideas in these books. Hopefully, this analysis will also help address wider issues in biblical research, such as the acceptance in Judah of texts that had originated in the northern kingdom, literary contacts between different prophetic books, and the formation of the prophetic literature in general.

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[3] Groß, 1930; A. Weider, *Ehemetaphorik in prophetischer Verkündigung: Hos 1-3 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte im Jeremiabuch* (FzB 71), Würzburg 1993; J. Jeremias, 'The Hosea Tradition and the Book of Jeremiah', *OTE* 7/1 (1994), pp. 21–38; M. Schulz-Rauch, *Hosea und Jeremia: zur Wirkungsgeschichte des Hoseabuches*, Stuttgart 1996.

Jer 14:10 as a Hoseanic Lens on Jer 14:2–12*

Nehara Meinemer

(OTSEM Meeting, Copenhagen 2025)

1. Introduction: The Verbatim Parallel of Jer 14:10 with Hos 8:13 in Modern Research

Jer 14:2–10 can be read as one literary sequence. Vv. 2–6 describe a severe drought in Judah with destructive consequences for both humans and nature. This is followed by the people's supplication for Yahweh's help in vv. 7–9, in which they confess their sins, express their trust in Yahweh, and entreat Yahweh to act. V. 10 is then presented by its placement along with its opening phrase כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה לָעָם הַזֶּה as Yahweh's rejection of the people's plea. The meaning of the opening bicolon of v. 10a is unclear and will be discussed in the last part of this paper, but the following lines – וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם עַתָּה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם וְיִפְקֹד חַטֹּאתָם ("But\And Yahweh has not accepted them. Now he will remember their iniquity, and call to account their sins") – clearly express a message of rejection.

Exactly these three lines that express Yahweh's rejection appear also in Hos 8:13.[1] They are part of a short passage in Hos 8:11–13 that sarcastically rejects Ephraim's excessive efforts to please Yahweh through the cult.[2] Scholars have noticed that exactly these three lines also refer to Yahweh in the third person, while they are presented as Yahweh's words. These overlapping "problems" have received from scholars three main explanations, bearing different consequences for the relationship between Jer 14:10 and Hos 8:13.

A) V. 10b is *"unecht"*:

Duhm (1901) and Cornill (1905) proposed deleting עַתָּה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם וְיִפְקֹד חַטֹּאתָם and replacing וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם with something like ואני לא ארצם that could have been derived from Jeremiah himself.[3] Through this reconstruction, Duhm and Cornill reduce the literary relationship between Jer 14:10 and Hos 8:13 to that of a marginal, insignificant instance of harmonization.

B) V. 10b is a cultic formula

[1] The only difference is the absence of the initial *waw* in the first parallel line in Hos 8:13. As for the shorter version of the Greek for Jer 14:10, see fn. 23 below.

[2] I follow Ginsberg's emendations of Hos 8:11 (recorded by Ahituv, p. 198) and read: כִּי הִרְבָּה אֶפְרַיִם מִזְבְּחוֹת, לְחֵטְא לוֹ הָיוּ – "When Ephraim has multiplied altars, They were counted against him as a sin" (cf. Psa 109:7; 1Kings 12:30 with the Lucianic recension). According to this reading, both v. 11 and v. 13 present the idea that Ephraim enthusiastically worshiped Yahweh, but his efforts to please Yahweh were rejected. Then, v. 12 seems to response to v. 11, noting what Yahweh had demanded from Ephraim instead of altars. V. 12 is formed in a parallel logic to v. 11, presenting a reversed case – the numerous instructions that Yahweh gave to Ephraim were regarded by him as something alien. Furthermore, in v. 12 Yahweh is the speaker, while this is certainly not the case in v. 13 and probably not in v. 11 either (היו לחטא reflects an outside perspective on Yahweh's evaluation). Therefore, it seems that v. 12 was added at a later stage to the passage. The last line of v. 13 – הֵמָּה מִצְרַיִם יָשׁוּבוּ – appears redundant and is probably a secondary insertion which depends on Hos 9:3.

[3] Duhm, p. 129; Cornill, p. 184

Weiser (1959) suggested that the words וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם עַתָּה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם וְיִפְקֹד חַטֹּאתָם constitute a cultic formula of divine judicial decision of guilt, which would account for their recurrence in Hos 8:13. Weiser's suggestion is connected to his understanding of vv. 2–9 as reflecting a realistic cultic scene, in which Jeremiah pleads with Yahweh on behalf of the people as part of the "covenant cult".[4] Yet both Bright (1965), who saw vv. 2–10 as a Jeremianic poem, and Carroll (1986), who perceived them as a composite unit, similarly suggested that v. 10b reflects a liturgical formula.[5] The implication of this is denying any literary contact between Jer 14:10 and Hos 8:13.

C) V. 10b was borrowed from Hos 8:13 into Jer 14:10

Giesebrecht (1894) defended the "authenticity" of v. 10b, arguing that an attested tendency of Jeremiah is to borrow pieces from other texts.[6] Volz (1928) went further, and suggested a motivation for this borrowing by Jeremiah: the old prophetic oracle is now fulfilled.[7] In more recent research, McKane (1986) and Maier (2022) assumed that v. 10b was borrowed from Hos 8:13; yet, not by Jeremiah, but by an exilic author or editor.[8]

The following analysis will suggest that a literary contact between Hos 8:13 and Jer 14:10 not only exists, but also concerns the entire poetic text of Jer 14:10. Thereby, evidence will be provided for the dependency of Jer 14:10 on Hos 8:13. This is under the methodological assumption that the direction of influence *Hosea > Jeremiah* should not be presumed, and that each case of verbatim parallels between the Books of Hosea and Jeremiah should be considered separately.[9] Subsequently, much effort will be invested in analyzing vv. 11–12 to demonstrate

[4] Weiser, pp. 128, 130 (particularly note 2). The idea of a cultic *Sitz im Leben* for vv. 2–9 probably finds its earliest articulation in Gunkel's interpretation: "solches Lied müssen wir uns halb gesprochen, halb gesungen denken von einem Priester oder ältesten inmitten einer dichtgedrängten Schar von Männern und Weibern, die im großen Dorhof die Hände ausstreden gegen das Allerheiligite, wo die Gottheit wohnt, und sich dann mit der Stirn auf den Boden werfen. Wenn aber das Wehegeschrei, in das sie alle einstimmen, einen Augenblid schweigt, dann tritt wohl ein Prophet aus und gibt ihnen die Antwort Gottes" (Gunkel, Jeremiah, p. 269). See also Mowinckel, i, pp. 193–224.
[5] Bright, p. 102; Carroll, p. 311.
[6] Giesebrecht, p. 82. Giesebrecht referred to Jer 13:26 which has a parallel in Nah 3:5.
[7] Volz, p. 162. So also Rudolph, p. 99; Thiel, p. 181, fn. 16.
[8] McKane, p. 324; Maier, p. 14.
[9] It is well known that the Book of Hosea and the Book of Jeremiah share some strong similarities – similar terms and metaphors, and sometimes also verbatim parallels. Lists of these verbatim parallels appear in: K. Groß, *Die literarische Verwandtschaft Jeremias mit Hosea* (Dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 1930), pp. 1–6; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2* (Hermeneia), Philadelphia 1989, pp. 45–47. Presuming both that Hosea was active approximately 100–130 years prior to the estimated period of Jeremiah's activity, and that the material found in the book of Hosea generally goes back to Hosea himself, scholars mostly assumed that when contact between any two passages seems likely, it is necessarily the Hoseanic text that influenced the Jeremianic text. Many even noted that Jeremiah the prophet was in one way or another familiar with the prophecy of Hosea and was influenced by it (Duhm, pp. xiii, 15–16; J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah*, Cambridge 1963, pp. 21–22, 33, 60, 64–65, 84, 86; G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. Band 2, München, 19654, p. 200; F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (Anchor Bible), New York 1980, pp. 54, 395; J. Bright, pp. lxxxviii, xci; Holladay, pp. 45–47; M. I. Gruber, *Hosea*, New York 2017, p. 31 – partial list, should be completed.) However, when the gradual, complex development process of each of the books is acknowledged, a careful critical analysis of each case of verbatim parallels is required in order to detect the direction of influence.

that these verses constituted the rejection of the people's plea in the original composition, while v. 10 was later inserted as an alternative rejection. Finally, a direction of interpretation applied by Volz (1928) will be further developed, and thereby a clearer motivation for inserting an alternative rejection while employing Hos 8:13 will be hypothesized.

2. The Dependency of the Entire Poetic Text of Jer 14:10 on Hos 8:13 (Identifying the Direction of Influence)

2.1 The Tension Between the Opening Phrase of v. 10 and Its Poetic Text

Scholars have regularly connected the parallel of v. 10b with Hos 8:13 to the problem of the third-person-reference to Yahweh in these lines. However, the deviation of v. 10b from its introducing phrase includes another element of inconsistency as well: the reference to the people in the third person, which contradicts the address "to this people". This deviation appears, in fact, in v. 10a as well. Notably, these two elements of inconsistency were treated by scholars as two unrelated issues. The problem of the third-person-reference to *Yahweh* in v. 10b was often explained against the background of a citation from Hosea,[10] whereas the problem of the third-person-reference to *the people* throughout the verse was mostly harmonized: Many translated לעם הזה as "regarding this people"[11], while a few suggested that this third-person-reference to the people expresses Yahweh disapproval of them.[12]

These two elements of inconsistency, however, can be treated as one phenomenon: v. 10 contains a poetic text, on which new rhetorical settings are forced by its introductory phrase. This phenomenon should be connected to the fragmentary character of v. 10 – it does not show continuity with what precedes it, nor with what follows.[13] In this sense, v. 10 is not different from vv. 2–6 and vv. 7–9, which also appear to be distinct sources that were juxtaposed here to produce the scheme of *distress → supplication → rejection*.[14]

The differences between vv. 2–6 and vv. 7–9 are apparent: vv. 2–6 are "a graphic description of a drought", while vv. 7–9 are a "liturgy of penitence and petition".[15] Vv. 2–6 have no clear speaker or audience, while vv. 7–9 exhibit a pleading "we" voice addressing Yahweh. Despite these differences, many scholars perceived vv. 2–9 as one unit – as a real communal

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[10] Volz, p. 162; Rudolph, p. 98; Lundbom, p. 704;

[11] Duhm, p. 129; Volz, p. 160; Rudolph, p. 98; Holladay, p. 434 (both options are mentioned); Maier, p. 282. See also some translations: ESV; NRSVUE. The implication is that in v. 10, Yahweh speaks to Jeremiah, which would be problematic given the opening of v. 11 ויאמר יהוה אלי.

[12] Kessler, 1981, p. 75; Holladay, 1986, p. 434.

[13] Lundbom observed that v. 10 "appears to be originally independent" (p. 703), and assumed that it was composed by Jeremiah at an "early date" (p. 710). The independence of v. 10 is also suggested by Carroll (p. 312). For some reason, both of them did not link this observation to the connection of v. 10 with Hos 8:13.

[14] A second parallel sequence of *distress → supplication → rejection* appears in 14:17–15:4 and will be discussed below.

[15] Bright, p. 102

lament with a cultic *Sitz im Leben* or as poetry modeled on the form of a communal lament.[16] The distinctiveness of vv. 7–9 from vv. 2–6 becomes even more apparent in light of vv. 7–9's strong connections by themes, style and phraseology to several "penitential prayers" in late biblical texts (Is 63:7–64:11; Joel 2:17–18; Psa 79; 106; Ezr 9; Neh 1; 9; Dan 9, 2Chr 20:6–12. Cf. 1Kings 8).[17] As Carroll noted, neither vv. 7–9 nor v. 10 seem to be aware of the particular situation of a drought.[18] This artificial connection between the distinct elements in this sequence reinforces the impression that they were all originally formed in different contexts, and were reused in this composite unit to form a meaningful sequence.[19] What complicates the situation of v. 10, however, is that only part of its poetic text has a verbatim parallel in Hos 8:13. What does this mean for the reconstruction of the original context of v. 10?

2.2 Structural Dependency of Jer 14:10 on Hos 8:13

Juxtaposing Jer 14:10 and Hos 8:13 reveals that both stanzas exhibit a parallel construction, which extends beyond their three verbatim parallel lines. In both texts, the three shared lines are preceded by a bicolon, and these two bicolons have several characteristics in common: both are formed as synonymous parallelism, and both have the people as their grammatical subject. Moreover, in both cases, the people are the antecedent to which the pronominal suffix of רָצָם in the following line (the first parallel line) refers back.[20]

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[16] **A)** Gunkel, p. 269; Mowinckel, i, pp. 193–224; Weiser, p. 128, 130. See fn. 4 above. **B)** Bright, p. 103; McKane, pp. 316, 319, 321; Hoffman, p. 348. McKane (p. 316) noted that a description of distress is a "regular, formal, element of the communal lament", but Beuken and van Grol rightly wondered regarding vv. 2–6, "where do we find the very essential subject <<we>>?" (p. 312). Beuken and van Grol (p. 313) concluded their analysis of vv. 2–6 thus: "Our summary of the form-critical exegesis of this <<description of distress>> led us to the limits of form-criticism and makes the question arise whether the text […] might not better be explained from the literary context."

[17] The same is true also for the prayer in vv. 19–21 (see below). For לְמַעַן שִׁמְךָ (vv. 7,21), cf. Psa 79:9; 106:8; Dan 9:17–19. For וְאַתָּה בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ, cf. Joel 2:27. For וְשִׁמְךָ עָלֵינוּ נִקְרָא, cf. Is 63:19; Dan 9:18–19; 2Chr 7:14. For לְךָ חָטָאנוּ, cf. Jer 3:(21–)25; 8:14. A prominent feature of this genre is the confession of guilt. Literature to be completed. Beuken and van Grol (p. 327) also observed that vv. 7–9 reflect the "temple theology" by their appeal to Yahweh's name (v. 7, 9b), by the concept of Yahweh's presence (v. 8b, 9b), and by the connection of Yahweh's name to the temple (v. 9b).

[18] Carroll, pp. 311–312.

[19] Illuminating in this respect, is Carroll's comments on how the discrete elements were stitched together, to represent a schematic theological concept, that is far from any common reality (pp. 312–313).

[20] The verb רצה, in its common usage, indicates whether Yahweh is willing to accept one and his offerings. The object of רצה can be either the worshiper (2Sam 24:23; Ezek. 20:40,41; 43:27) or the offering (Mal. 1:10,13; Psa. 51:18; Mic. 6:7; Amos 5:22). In Hos 8:13, it seems that לֹא רָצָם refers back to the people. זִבְחֵי הַבְהָבַי, which could be the verb's object, appears in the first clause of the previous bicolon, while in the second clause, one has בָּשָׂר in the singular. Additionally, the next lines also have the people as their object. So BDB.

Hos 8:13	Jer 14:10
זִבְחֵי הַבְהָבַי יִזְבְּחוּ בָּשָׂר וַיֹּאכֵלוּ יהוָה לֹא רָצָם עַתָּה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם וְיִפְקֹד חַטֹּאתָם [הֵמָּה מִצְרַיִם יָשׁוּבוּ[21]]	[כֵּן][22] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם עַתָּה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם וְיִפְקֹד חַטֹּאתָם[23]

Seeking to explain this overall structural parallel between Jer 14:10 and Hos 8:13, one should consider the following factors: the fragmentary nature of Jer 14:10 and the overall tension between its poetic text and its opening phrase, on the one hand; and the fact that Hos 8:13 appears to be an integral part of Hos 8:11–13 on the other hand. These combined factors lead to the conclusion that the original version of this stanza is the one that appears in Hos 8:13, while the version found in Jer 14:10 depends on it. The common assumption of scholars of a *Hosea > Jeremiah* direction of influence in this case is confirmed by this conclusion. However, in comparison with the standard view, it now appears not only that Jer 14:10b quotes Hos 8:13, but also that the entire poetic text in Jer 14:10 depends on Hos 8:13 in its structure. It seems that the editor who borrowed the last three lines of Jer 14:10 from Hos 8:13 replaced the original preceding bicolon in Hos 8:13 – זִבְחֵי הַבְהָבַי יִזְבְּחוּ בָּשָׂר וַיֹּאכֵלוּ· – with a newly composed bicolon – [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ.

[21] See fn. 2 above.

[22] The particle כֵּן is not attested by G and appears to be a gloss. See further bellow.

[23] The clause וְיִפְקֹד חַטֹּאתָם does not appear in the Greek, and in light of this, several possibilities should be considered: 1. The clause was not included in the borrowing from Hos 8:13 to Jer 14:10 but was added in the proto-Masoretic text of Jeremiah as a harmonization with Hosea. 2. The clause was borrowed from Hosea to Jeremiah but was omitted in the Greek as a result of haplography between עונם and חטאתם (either in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the translation or within the translation process itself), or between αὐτῶν which appears twice (within the Greek transmission). 3. The clause is not original to Hosea either. It was first added to Jeremiah as part of the proto-Masoretic expansions and from there was also copied to Hosea. First, the third possibility can be ruled out for several reasons. Two expressions of further literary growth in Hosea presuppose the existence of this clause: the replication of the parallelism in Hos 9:9, and the addition of הֵמָּה מִצְרַיִם יָשׁוּבוּ· at the end of this verse (since ויפקד חטאתם is less likely to have been added after it). An additional argument in favor of the originality of the complete parallelism is the fact that the verbs יזכור and ויפקוד are not identical in meaning. They rather constitute two consecutive steps that together form the complete notion – bringing sins to remembrance, which leads to their punishment. For the same reason, it does not seem likely that only half of the parallelism would have been borrowed from Hosea to Jeremiah. Therefore, the most likely possibility is that the clause was omitted in the Greek translation.

3. Vv. 11–12 as the Original Rejection; V. 10 as a Secondary Alternative

So far, we have observed that the entire poetic text of v. 10 was borrowed from Hos 8:13 modifying the first bicolon to serve as Yahweh's rejection of the people's supplication in vv. 7–9. However, there are good reasons to think that vv. 11–12, and not v. 10, constituted the *rejection* in the original composition.

3.1. The Reference of vv. 11–12 to the Plea in vv. 7–9

Immediately after the people's plea was rejected in v. 10, vv. 11–12 follow, presenting Yahweh's words to Jeremiah in prose. Yahweh first commands Jeremiah not to pray for the people (v. 11). Then, Yahweh states in two conditional sentences that he does not accept the people's fasting and crying, as well as their sacrifices, as he is determined to annihilate them (v. 12). One wonders: does this rejection of the people in v. 12 not relate to their plea in vv. 7–9?

Commentators, however, have established a clear division between vv. 11–12 and what precedes them. There is general agreement that vv. 11–12 constitute together with vv. 13–16 a continuous dialog between Jeremiah and Yahweh.[24] Indeed, the rhetorical indicators in vv. 11, 13 and 14 formally allow this understanding. The transition between v. 12 and v. 13 was explained as if Jeremiah presents in v. 13 his objection to Yahweh's judgment in v. 12 by defending the people, claiming that they were misled by their prophets.[25] However, v. 13 only seemingly responds to vv. 11–12. Lundbom observed that in v. 13, "Jeremiah is simply complaining about other prophets, and has given up on intercession".[26] In fact, Yahweh's answer to Jeremiah in v. 14 does not take Jeremiah's words in v. 13 as an argument defending the people – instead it marks the false prophets as the topic of the conversation. Therefore, it appears that vv. 13–16 were stitched to vv. 11–12 through the formula חֶרֶב וְרָעָב (vv. 12, 13, 15, 16).[27] The conclusion to be drawn is that vv. 11–12 include only Yahweh's words to Jeremiah, and are not part of the dialog in vv. 13–16.

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[24] Duhm, p. 129; Bright, p. 103; Kessler, pp. 72, 80; McKane, pp. 327–328; Lundbom, p. 704.

[25] Giesebrecht, p. 82; Rudolph, p. 101; Weiser, p. 131; Bright, p. 103; Kessler, pp. 75–76; McKane, pp. 325–326 (McKane seems to accept Rudolph's and Weiser's view); Maier, p. 289. This interpretation is also suggested by the Targum, which adds some elaborations in this direction: אָמְרִין לְהוֹן יוי אֱלֹהִים הָא נְבִיֵי שִׁקְרָא וַאֲמַרִית קַבֵּיל בָּעוּתִי... (see Lundbom, p. 707).

[26] Lundbom, p. 707. Duhm (p. 129) noted how forced the connection of the false prophets theme (vv. 13–16) and what precedes is: „Der Ergänzer hat eine merkwürdige Vorliebe für die Polemik gegen die Propheten; hier hat er sich die Gelegenheit dazu an den Haaren herbeigezogen, nenn der Wassermangel gab gewiss keine Veranlassung zu einem Angriff auf die Propheten." Hoffman (p. 349) also admitted that it is the adjacency of the prohibition to Jeremiah and his complaint about the prophets that creates the impression that Jeremiah defends the people in v. 13. Hoffman deduced that it is questionable whether this was the original intention or whether vv. 11–12 and vv. 13–16 are two independent units that were juxtaposed together.

[27] Carroll observed this link and this shift to another theme (pp. 312, 314). Thiel also noted this connection, but he proposed a reverse dependency. Thiel argued that vv. 11–12 are a bridge between vv. 2–10, and that they take up the partial triad from v. 13. Thiel, p. 183. See further below. Vv. 13–16 evidently depend in their phraseology on 23:25–26. They seem to reformulate these accusations against the prophets (23:25–26) in relation to Yahweh's declaration of judgment in v. 12b. This connection to v. 12 might suggest that they result from *Fortschreibung* of v. 12. In any case, they are a later contribution to the unit, which stands between the two parallel sequences of distress → supplication → rejection (14:2–12*; 14:17–15:2(–4)). For the second sequence, see below.

Despite his reservations regarding the link between v. 12 and v. 13, Lundbom concluded that vv. 11–16 constitute a unit. It seems that this persistent perception of vv. 11–16 as a unit was largely guided by the distinction between poetry (vv. 2–10) and prose (vv. 11–16). This distinction was merged in this case with the alleged break between the ("authentic") situation of a drought established in vv. 1–10 and the (stereotypical) engagement of vv. 11–16 with the destruction (v. 12b).[28] However, these divisions are irrelevant in this case. Vv. 2–10 are not an account of an authentic situation of a drought and its ramifications. The description of a drought (vv. 2–6) was simply exploited to form a scheme of divine rejection. As Carroll concluded, "the fall of Jerusalem is the single germane fact behind the construction of 14.1 – 15.4".[29] Furthermore, in light of this use of existing poetry passages to form a kind of narrative, one should question: must the redactor of this composite unit restrict himself to pure poetry? Can vv. 11–12 not belong to the composition simply because they are prose?

Even with the tendency to separate vv. 11–12 from vv. 2–10, scholars felt that vv. 11–12 are oriented backwards. McKane, and Lundbom assumed that Jeremiah is the speaker of the prayer, as a representative of the community, and that in this context Yahweh commands him not to pray for the people in v. 11.[30] Yet, Duhm, and Thiel argued that vv. 11–12 only interpret vv. 7–9 as if they were uttered by Jeremiah. Eventually, all of them saw vv. 11–16 as supplements to vv. 2–10.[31] Within these supplements, Thiel differentiated vv. 11–12 as a bridge connecting vv. 2–10 with vv. 13–16.[32]

However, the people are evidently the speakers of the plea in vv. 7–9, as indicated by the "we" voice and by the plea's content.[33] Moreover, vv. 11–12 appear to be aware of this as indicated by their reference to רִנָּתָם – "their cry" in v. 12. רִנָּה appears often with תְּפִלָּה or in

[28] For example, Giesebrecht (p. 82): "Das Cap. […] geht von einer schweren Dürre und Hungersnoth aus, unter welcher Juda zu leiden gehabt hat, wendet sich jedoch bald den auch sonst dem Propheten geläufigen Gedanken zu." See also Duhm, p. 129; Bright, p. 103; Thiel, pp. 183–184.

[29] Carroll, p. 313. McKane wrote regarding Thiel arguments: "The disparateness of v. 11–16 over against vv. 2–10, suggested by the reference to military disaster rather than drought, or by the new subject of שלום prophecy, should not be over-estimated." Although McKane understood vv. 2–10 differently than the present study – as a reflection on the failure of Jeremiah as an intercessor to prevent the destruction – his following observation is relevant: "military defeat leading to disintegration and exile are the circumstances on which we would expect the problem to focus rather than on drought" (McKane, p. 327). As we will see below, the second parallel sequence of *distress* → *supplication* → *rejection* in 14:17–15:4 takes a military defeat as it starting point (14:17–18).

[30] McKane, pp. 319, 324; Lundbom, pp. 699, 709. So also Giesebrecht, pp. 82, 84; Weiser, p. 128.

[31] Duhm, p. 129; McKane, pp. 325–326; Lundbom, pp. 704, 710.

[32] Thiel, pp. 182–183. However, vv. 11–12 do not "act" like a bridge. It is better to assume that vv. 13–16 are supplements to vv. 11–12, as was suggested above. See fn. 27 above.

[33] The idea that Jeremiah would be presented as if he identifies himself with the position of the people, including himself in such a confession of sins does not seem plausible. Jer 42 demonstrates how Deuteronomistic authors imagined Jeremiah's role as an intercessor. Jehoshaphat in 2Chr 20:5–12 and the priests in Joel 2:17, who entreat Yahweh with a "we" supplication, are a counter example. The command to Jeremiah not to pray "for this people" (cf. 7:16; 11:14) is based on the very distinction between Yahweh's prophet and the sinful people. This distinction is also prominent in relation to Moses and Samuel who are presented in 15:1 as models for intercessory prophets.

parallel to it – in these contexts it denotes an outcry of supplication.[34] Hence, the phrase אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶל רִנָּתָם ("I do not hear their cry") in v. 12 may refer directly to the supplication in vv. 7–9 as a metonym. For some reason, many scholars have often not paid attention to this term, and mentioned only fasting and sacrificing in their interpretation of v. 12.[35]

In fact, fasting and crying are presented by v. 12 as interconnected elements: fasting appears in the protasis (כִּי יָצֻמוּ) while their cry appears in the apodosis (אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶל רִנָּתָם). This suggests that they are both performed as part of one petitionary act, to which the sacrificing in the following line likely belongs as well. The rejection of these petitionary practices in v. 12 can be understood in relation to the petitionary situation established by vv. 2–9. V. 12 would operate under the assumption that the plea in vv. 7–9 was performed accompanied by fasting and sacrificing in the temple. This assumption is natural in biblical context. Fasting in the temple is the expected response for times of crisis (cf. Jer 36:9), including drought,[36] and several biblical texts that depict such gatherings also include petitionary prayers similar to that in vv. 7–9 (Joel 2:15–18; Neh 9; 2Chr 20; cf. Dan 9; Neh 1).[37] Given the proximity of vv. 2–9 and vv. 11–12, the rejection of petitionary practices in v. 12 is most naturally understood in relation to the petitionary setting established by vv. 2–9.

Scholars were generally vague regarding what is referred to by v. 12.[38] Yet, McKane, Carroll and Maier clearly interpreted vv. 11–12 as a general elimination of any hope for the people, as part of which, the appeal through fasting and sacrificing (overlooking crying!) is rejected, once and for all.[39] The reasons for the tendency to overlook the likely reference of v. 12 to the supplication in vv. 7–9 are multiple: first of all, v. 10 stands in between, providing the required rejection of the plea. Second, vv. 11–12 open with the command to Jeremiah, while the rejection of the people comes only afterwards (what will be explained below). Third, the use of conditional sentences in v. 12 can also denote a general statement. To these factors, one should

[34] In parallel with תְּפִלָּה: Psa 17:1; 61:2; 88:3. רִנָּה attached to תְּפִלָּה: 1Kings 8:28 (2Chr 6:19); Jer 7:16; 11:14. In Psa 119:169–170, רִנָּה parallels תְּחִנָּה. BDB (רִנָּה, 1, p. 943) "ringing cry in entreaty, supplication, to יי". HALOT (I רִנָּה, 2): "cry of lament, wailing (especially in prayers)".

[35] Duhm, p. 129; Volz, p. 166; Rudolph, p. 99; Carroll, p. 313; McKane, p. 328; Maier, p. 289. Attention to רנה was given by Lundbom, p. 706.

[36] Lundbom made similar observations regarding the setting that is reflected in v. 12 (pp. 706–707).

[37] The practices of fasting and sacrificing, indeed, correspond to the plea's (vv. 7–9) acknowledgment of guilt and attempt to stir the deity to action. How natural this understanding was for the composer of v. 12, can be demonstrated by Joel 2:15–27. In this text, in times of distress, the community gathers in the temple for fasting; the priests cry (בכה) and plead with Yahweh not to disgrace them before the nations – an argument that echoes Jer 14:7 (cf. v. 21). In vv. 19–27, Yahweh responds to the people with promises of divine favor, suggesting that such petitionary practices can be effective under different circumstances. See also 2Chr 20:3–19 which describes a communal supplication in the temple followed by a positive divine response.

[38] So also Lundbom (pp. 706–707), who did elaborate on the petitionary setting which v. 12 reflects.

[39] McKane (p. 328) saw vv. 11–12 as presenting two different "principal reasons" that were given in Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic circles for Jeremiah's failure to prevent the destruction through his intercession and his preaching for repentance. Carroll (p. 313) understood vv. 11–12 as a general statement: "Whatever the people may do, whatever fast (cf. 36.9) or offer sacrifice, it is not acceptable." So also Maier, p. 289. What may have encouraged this generalization of vv. 11–12 was the fact that the prohibition of Jeremiah in v. 11 appears elsewhere in the book (7:16 and 11:14). However, see discussion below.

add what was said above regarding the alleged break between poetry and prose, between a drought and the destruction. Nevertheless, a literary critical examination of vv. 11–12 reveals that their main intention is, indeed, to reject the people's supplication in vv. 7–9.

3.2. Vv. 11–12 – an Adaptation of the Command to Jeremiah in 7:16

A clear indication of this deliberate reference of vv. 11–12 to the plea in vv. 7–9 is found in the observation that vv. 11–12 adapt the command to Jeremiah in 7:16. It was often pointed out that the prohibition of Jeremiah in v. 11 has parallels in 7:16 and in 11:14.[40] However, the affinity with 7:16 and 11:14 extends to v. 12 as well. As Holladay pointed out, the phrase אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶל רִנָּתָם in v. 12 seems to be an adaptation of the parallel passages, picking up רִנָּה from their second line and אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ from their last line.[41]

Jer 7:16	Jer 11:14	Jer 14:11–12
		וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָי
וְאַתָּה אַל תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד הָעָם הַזֶּה	וְאַתָּה אַל תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד הָעָם הַזֶּה	אַל תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד הָעָם הַזֶּה לְטוֹבָה
וְאַל תִּשָּׂא בַעֲדָם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה	וְאַל תִּשָּׂא בַעֲדָם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה	כִּי יָצֻמוּ אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶל רִנָּתָם
וְאַל תִּפְגַּע בִּי	כִּי אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ בְּעֵת קָרְאָם אֵלַי	וְכִי יַעֲלוּ עֹלָה וּמִנְחָה אֵינֶנִּי רֹצֶם
כִּי אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֹתָךְ	בְּעֵת[G] רָעָתָם	כִּי בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב וּבַדֶּבֶר אָנֹכִי מְכַלֶּה אוֹתָם

A closer comparison of these three passages suggests that 7:16 is the original formulation, on which the other two passages rely. Jer 7:16 exhibits both structural refinement and thematic unity. It consists of a sequence of three commands to Jeremiah that are introduced by אַל, exhibiting a gradual reduction in length, and a final causal clause slightly longer than the preceding line. The whole passage focuses on the prohibition against Jeremiah not to pray for the people.

Both 11:14 and 14:11–12 deviate from this refined structure. Jer 14:11 completely deletes the third prohibition of 7:16, and modifies the fourth line into a much longer clause, breaking the semi-poetic form. Jer 14:11–12 replaces the second and third prohibitions with two conditional sentences introduced by כִּי, and prolongs the final causal clause, moving toward prose as well. Moreover, both 11:14 and 14:11–12 seem to shift their focus from Jeremiah's prayer to the people's plea, though in 11:14, this shift can be avoided by a text amendment.[42] In

[40] In recent research, these three verses were identified as reflecting Deuteronomistic concerns dealing with the inevitability of the destruction of Judah and with Jeremiah's role in this regard. Carroll, p. 311; McKane, p. 328; Maier, p. 292.

[41] Holladay, p. 434. Thiel, however, ascribed v. 11 and v. 12b to D, but argued that v. 12a seems to employ an old utterance of Jeremiah, because of its conciseness and its parallelism (Thiel, p. 182).

[42] There is considerable confusion regarding 11:14 due to textual variants and multiple reading possibilities. The original אֹתָךְ in the last line of 7:16 is replaced by בְּעֵת קָרְאָם אֵלַי בְּעֵת/בְּעַד רָעָתָם. This, of course, creates inconsistency within v. 14. Therefore, BHS emends the form קָרְאָם (MT, G, S) to קָרְאֵךְ (T), and this reading is also embraced by McKane (p. 240). בְּעַד רָעָתָם which is attested by MT fits well with this emendation, but בְּעֵת רָעָתָם (G; several

any case, it is remarkable that these two passages recontextualize the general prohibition of Jeremiah in 7:16 within specific circumstances, in which the people are in distress and they themselves entreat Yahweh. The prohibition of Jeremiah should probably serve to reinforce Yahweh's rejection of the people in these passages.

The shift of focus from Jeremiah's prayer to the people's own supplication is clearly evident in 14:11–12. Following the opening prohibition to Jeremiah, the second line redirects Yahweh's refusal – from not hearing Jeremiah (אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֹתָךְ) to not hearing the people's supplication (אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶל רִנָּתָם). Perhaps the line was structured as a temporal conditional sentence precisely to facilitate this transition – כִּי יָצֻמוּ redefines the context so that the people, rather than Jeremiah, are the supplicants.[43] The next line was constructed as a parallel conditional sentence, rejecting the people as they sacrifice.[44] A reasonable explanation for this sudden transition would be that the editor assigned a double purpose to vv. 11–12: First, to reject the supplication made by the people in vv. 7–9 (v. 12a), and second, to prohibit Jeremiah from entreating Yahweh as a last resort to placate Yahweh (v. 11). The reversed order of these matters results from the dependency of these verses on 7:16. Using 7:16 as his framework, the editor was obligated to start with the prohibition to Jeremiah, and to incorporate his adaptations into the following lines. Support for this understanding derives from 15:1–2, which serves as the *rejection* in the parallel sequence in 14:17–15:2 (see below), and which also combines the rejection of the people themselves with the negation of any possibility for intercession.

3.3. A New Analysis of the Relationship Between V. 10 and Vv. 11–12

The above interpretation of vv. 11–12 calls for a new examination of the relationship between v. 10 and vv. 11–12. This interpretation points to redundancy between v. 10 and vv. 11–12, which was also noted by Giesebrecht.[45] V. 10 and v. 12 contain parallel statements about the people: both state that Yahweh rejects the people (10b$_1$, 12a) using similar phrasing – וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם (v. 10), אֵינֶנִּי רֹצָם (v. 12). Additionally, both announce Yahweh's judgment (10b$_{2–3}$, 12b).[46] The difference in setting – an address to the people (v. 10) versus an address to Jeremiah (vv. 11–12) – does not justify this redundancy. Therefore, it is unlikely that both v. 10 and vv. 11–12 were part of the original scheme, and one has to conclude that one of these passages is secondary.

Hebrew manuscripts) aligns better with בְּעֵת רָעָתָם. קָרְאָם appears also in v. 12, and thus, it links the prohibition of Jeremiah to the situation described in vv. 11–12. Therefore, it seems that בְּעֵת רָעָתָם should be preferred (so also THUB), and the *lectio difficilior* קָרְאָם should be accepted.

[43] Cf. Is 1:15.

[44] In this case, רֹצָם can refer back either to the people or to עֹלָה וּמִנְחָה (see fn. 20 above). Holladay (p. 434) inferred from the parallel line אֵינֶנִּי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶל רִנָּתָם that רֹצָם refers to the people. Perhaps, the following line כִּי בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב וּבַדֶּבֶר אָנֹכִי מְכַלֶּה אוֹתָם is more of an indication that רֹצָם maintains the reference to the people. The people as the object are also suggested by BDB.

[45] Giesebrecht, p. 82.

[46] Rudolph (p. 99) sought to read these verses as one coherent divine answer, but his commentary reflects this duplication: he refers first to the rejection in v. 10a-b$_1$, then jumps to the rejection in v. 12a; next, he points to the "old punishment" in v. 10b$_{2–3}$ and moves to the specified punishment in v. 12b; finally, he turns attention to the command to Jeremiah in v. 11.

The above analysis suggests several arguments in favor of vv. 11–12 as the original *rejection*: Firstly, vv. 11–12 contain what may be an explicit reference to the people's prayer, while v. 10 makes no such reference.[47] Secondly, the apparent adaptations of 7:16 in vv. 11–12 (which, in turn, confirm this reference) reveal a clear intention to reject the people's prayer, and indicate that v. 10 did not yet fulfill the function of divine rejection at that time. Thirdly – and this will be discussed below in section 3.4 – vv. 11–12 resemble in several aspect 15:1–2, which serves as the *rejection* in the parallel sequence in 14:17–15:2.

Now, the parallel in content between v. 10 and vv. 11–12 suggests that v. 10 was inserted as an alternative rejection to the earlier rejection in vv. 11–12, seeking (and succeeding) to supplant it. The different settings of v. 10 and vv. 11–12 seem to contribute to this result. Apparently, the editor exploited the original situation – where Yahweh's rejection was addressed to Jeremiah (vv. 11–12) – to insert an alternative rejection where Yahweh (allegedly) responds directly to the people (v. 10).

Finally, the shared phraseology between v. 10 and vv. 11–12 (רצה + negation) not only reflects their parallel functions, but also suggests dependency between them. This in itself provides no indication of the direction of dependency. But according to the above conclusions, it is likely that the insertion of v. 10 was triggered by the phrase אֵינֶנִּי רֹצֶם in v. 12:[48] when reading Jer 14, a later editor was reminded by אֵינֶנִּי רֹצֶם in v. 12 of Hos 8:13, which includes the similar phrase יהוָה לֹא רָצָם. This editor must have found Hos 8:13 to be illuminating in some way for Jer 14:2–12*, and was inspired to form an alternative rejection of the people's prayer, modeled on Hos 8:13a and replicating the phrase יהוָה לֹא רָצָם.

What, then, is the alternative that v. 10 offers to vv. 11–12? And what exactly was the motivation behind its insertion and behind its employment of Hos 8:13? We will return to these questions after discussing the similarities between vv. 11–12 and 15:1–2.

3.4. The Similarities Between vv. 11–12 and 15:1–2: Two Parallel Prose *Rejections* in Two Parallel Sequences

The similarities between vv. 11–12 and 15:1–2 offer additional support for the view of vv. 11–12 as the original *rejection*, but because they provide broader textual insights, they are analyzed here.

In 14:17–15:2(4), one finds a second sequence of *distress* → *supplication* → *rejection* that parallels the sequence in 14:2–12*. This second sequence is formed of:

a) 14:17–18: a lamentation over destruction. Unlike 14:2–6, the text is written in the first person with a clear lamenting voice, and the circumstances are those of a military defeat

[47] The opening bicolon of v. 10 has not been discussed yet, but given its ambiguity, whatever it may refer to, it does not make this reference explicitly.

[48] Thiel suggested the opposite dependency, assuming that אֵינֶנִּי רֹצֶם in v. 12 is drawn from וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם in v. 10. This was part of his idea that vv. 11–12 are a bridge, connecting vv. 2–10 with vv. 13–14. Thiel, pp. 182–183. See ft. 27 above.

(cf. 4:19–21; 8:18–23). Still, both passages depict a situation of distress, which, in turn, generates a communal petition to Yahweh.

b) 14:19–22: a collective plea, which resembles the plea in 14:7–9, in style, content, and phraseology.[49]

c) 15:1–2(4): Yahweh's rejection of the people and a subsequent judgment.[50] 15:1–2 shares several characteristics with 14:11–12. Both passages are prose and are addressed to Jeremiah, using the introductory phrase וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי. Both passages combine a rejection of the people's plea with a dismissal of any possible or hypothetical attempt by Yahweh's prophets to intercede for "this people."[51] Similarly to what was suggested above regarding 14:11–12 (section 3.1), 15:1–2 assume that the supplication in 14:19–21 took place in the temple: with the commend שַׁלַּח מֵעַל פָּנַי וְיֵצֵאוּ (15:1),[52] Yahweh dismisses the people from his sight. Finally, the phraseology, motifs, and theological conception of both passages are similar to each other, and mark both passages as "Deuteronomistic".

The various shared characteristics of 14:11–12 and 15:1–2 indicate that these passages were composed by the same author. Furthermore, these two passages assume the situations that are set up by the previous verses and both reveal clear intentions to conclude these verses. Therefore, we likely hear in these passages the voice of the redactor who juxtaposed 14:2–6 with 14:7–9 and 14:17–18 with 14:19–21. With these two passages, the redactor gave meaning to the two sequences. This dependency of each of the sequences on its concluding passage suggests a unified composition.[53] [54]

Recognizing this deliberate literary structure provides, of course, additional support for the view of vv. 11–12 as the original *rejection*. Beyond this, detecting this deliberate structure emphasizes how exceptional the message of this unit is within the book of Jeremiah. Throughout the rest of the book, the people are called by Jeremiah "to return", assuming that they will be

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[49] What was said above about the genre of 14:7–9 can be applied to these verses as well. The trio חטא, רשע, and עון (v. 20) occurs in 1Kings 8:47, Psa 106:6, and Dan 9:5. עון אבות appears in Dan 9:16, Neh 9:2, and Lev 26:39–40. For לְמַעַן שִׁמְךָ (v. 21) see note 18 above. For v. 22 cf. Neh 9:6.

[50] Vv. 3–4 are excessive and seem to be elaborations of vv. 1–2.

[51] Compared to 14:11–12, which forbids Jeremiah from praying for the people, 15:1–2 heightens the tone by invoking Moses and Samuel. See Holladay, p. 423.

[52] The phrase שלח מעל appears only twice elsewhere (Gen 25:6; 2Sam 13:17). In 2Sam 13:17, Tamar entreats Amnon not to send her out after he had raped her, but he refuses and then orders his servant to send her out and close the door behind her – שַׁלְּחוּ נָא אֶת זֹאת מֵעָלַי הַחוּצָה. In Jer 15:1, we are to imagine Jeremiah in the role of Yahweh's servant, being asked to send the people out.

[53] Therefore, Maier's reconstruction of an earlier stage, in which only the prayer in 14:7–9 was added to vv. 2–6 seems to be unconvincing. Maier, p. 292.

[54] Scholars did identify, of course, the two parallel sequences, but because they saw v. 10 as the *rejection* element of the first sequence, 15:1–4 became a problem for them as it does not parallel 14:10. Therefore, Bright (p. 103–104) suggested that the second sequence had once a poetic concluding passage, and considered 17:1–4 or 15:13–14 for this role. Carroll (p. 319) also argued that "After the lament of 14:19–22 a divine response is to be expected, but the editing of 15:1–4 hardly provides an appropriate reply", and referred to Bright's proposal. In the same breath, Carroll noted that 15:1–4 "has connections with 14:11–16", but he did not extract from 14:11–16 a rejection that would parallel 15:1–4.

accepted. But here, even though they seem to truly confess their sins, they are harshly rejected.[55] For this, no reason is given. Carroll suggested that it must be the incorrigible nature of the people that compels Yahweh to show them no mercy.[56] In any case, it is this context that should be kept in mind when we now ask what exactly prompted the literary contact between Jer 14:10 and Hos 8:13.

4. The Insertion of V. 10 and the Employment of Hos 8:13 – Motivation, Purpose, and Literary Modifications

Gathering the observations that were made so far, we can conclude that v. 10 was probably inserted as an alternative rejection seeking to supplant the original rejection in vv. 11–12. This insertion was triggered when a later editor encountered the phrase אֵינֶנִּי רֹצֶם in v. 12, which reminded him of the similar phrase יהוָה לֹא רָצָם in Hos 8:13. The editor then adopted Hos 8:13 while modifying its opening bicolon. The remaining questions – why the editor found Hos 8:13 relevant for Jer 14:2–12*, and what he sought to achieve by adding v. 10 – depend on one's understanding of the modification the editor made to the opening bicolon – his main distinctive contribution to the verse. However, here we enter speculative territory, since the newly composed bicolon is obscure.[57] Nevertheless, an alternative interpretation of this bicolon will be considered, also in light of the broader picture we have assembled thus far.

4.1. [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ – What Does This Mean?

The bicolon [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ is ambiguous. The verb לָנוּעַ and the phrase רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ seem to describe the people in movement, though it is not specified where they are headed and for what purpose. The verb אָהֲבוּ seems to add a sarcastic condemning tone to the description (cf. 5:31, Amos 4:5). The particle כֵּן poses a further difficulty. Its function here is unclear. It is not part of a comparative structure (כן ...כ...). Moreover, unlike its function in 5:31 and Amos 4:5, it does not connect the verb אהב to an action that has already been described previously.[58] For this reason, the Greek testimony that it did not appear in its *Vorlage* seems even more compelling. One may conjecture that it was added as a gloss under the influence of 5:31. It might also be that the glossator aimed to instruct us to read this bicolon in relation to the preceding prayer, as an attempt to clarify its meaning.

Although the reference of this bicolon is not clear, the language implies the nature of the people's movement. The verb נוע in its basic meaning expresses constant movement back and forth. It is used to depict shaking objects, for example, waving trees (Is 7:2), Hannah's moving lips (1Sam 1:13), and the temple's shaking thresholds (Is 6:4). Likewise, it is used to portray

[55] Such confessions as those in v. 7 and in v. 20 are perceived as genuine in other cases (3:25; Psa 106:6; Dan 9:5,16; Neh 9:2; so also in Lev 26:39–40; 1Kings 8:47).
[56] Carroll, p. 320.
[57] I found the recognition that the exact meaning is not accessible to us only in Hoffman, p. 355.
[58] The Latin and Syriac translations reflect the difficulty in understanding its function: the Syriac replaced it with ܗܢܘܢ ("them") and the Latin with *qui* ("who").

stumbling movement – that of drunkards (Psa 107:27; Is 24:20) or of the blind (Lam 4:14). In Jer 14:10, the expression רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשְׂכוּ in the second part of the parallelism indicates spatial movement. Hence, five other occurrences of נוע seem more relevant for us. In these five cases, נוע refers specifically to people or animals who move around or travel long distances in search of livelihood: Gen 4:12,14; Am 4:8; 8:12; Psa 59:16; 109:10. There are two apparent possibilities for the meaning of נוע in these cases – with the wave-like movement manifested differently in each: A) "go tottering, faint and uncertain" (BDB)[59] – the movement itself is unstable; B) Go to and fro – the direction of movement is unstable.[60] The second meaning does not seem to fit Amos 4:8, where several cities travel directly to another city (אֶל עִיר אַחַת) to get water, indicating straight-line movement. Might this suggest that the first meaning should be ascribed to all these five attestations? This meaning of a tottering, stumbling walk is also certainly attested in various contexts in Psa 107:27, Is 24:20, and Lam 4:14. Yet, the *hifil* conveys the meaning "to cause to move to and fro" (HALOT) – see Num 32:13; 2Sam 15:2; Amos 9:9.[61]

Because of this uncertainty, one should rely more on the contexts of the cases in which נוע depicts spatial movement. In all these five relevant cases, the subjects are not simply wandering around. Rather, they are exhausted but also restless and determined to reach their goal. It emerges that above all, נוע reflects an effortful, restless movement. This impression is also conveyed by the second part of the parallelism in v. 10 – רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשְׂכוּ – which can be translated either as "they did not restrain their feet" or as "they did not spare their feet."[62] With these observations in mind, we will now turn to examine the common interpretations that have been offered for this bicolon.

4.2 The Common Direction of Interpretation for [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ

Both ancient and modern scholars have almost unanimously agreed that the description [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ points to the people's apostasy against Yahweh. Yet, their specific interpretations can be divided into three main streams:

A. One prominent interpretation suggests that the people are blamed for following other gods.[63] Giesebrecht and McKane described a movement away from Yahweh (*auszuschweifen*, "to go astray"), which reflects a less accurate understanding of נוע.[64]

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[59] BDB for all five cases. BDB, נוּעַ, *Qal*, 2, p. 631; HALOT allocates to Amos 4:8 and 8:12 a similar meaning – "to tremble (those seeking help)". HALOT, נוע, *qal*, 1.

[60] Gesenius (נוע, 2, p. 493) has defined all of these cases as *sich umhertreiben, herumschweifen*, and HALOT (נוע, *qal*, 2) ascribes to three of them (Gen 4:12,14; Psa 59:16; 109:10) the meaning "to roam around without house or home." Yet "to go to and fro" reflects better the wavering-like motion of נוע. Cf. *Hierhin und dorthin zu laufen* (Zurich Bible for Jer 14:10).

[61] HALOT, נוע, *hif*, 1.

[62] BDB, חָשַׂךְ, 1, c\e, p. 362

[63] This interpretation underlies the free translation of the Targum: וכמָא דַהֲווֹ מְעָרְבִין בָּפֻלחַן טָעֲוָתָא. A version of this idea was also presented by Rashi: אהבו הם להיות גולים, לעבוד עבודות זרות רחוקות "they loved to be in exile, to worship distant idols". Rashi's interpretation is based on the use of נוע to describe Israel's wandering between the nations in Amos 9:9.

[64] Giesebrecht, p. 84; McKane, p. 321. So also Holladay, 1986, p. 434.

Lundbom simply translated לָנוּעַ as "wander about" and clarified "after other gods".[65] Rudolph's translation – *hin und her zu schwanken* – is a better attempt to capture the wavering-like nature of נוע. Rudolph interpreted that the people run around to all possible other gods.[66] Lundbom and Rudolph supported their interpretations with 2:23–25, which portrays the chase of Judah as wife after the Baalim, using the expression מִנְּעִי רַגְלֵךְ מִיָּחֵף ("Keep your feet from going bare" NRSVUE).

B. A slightly different interpretation is represented by Duhm who translated לָנוּעַ as *zu schwanken*, and interpreted that the people are running between Baal and Yahweh.[67] This interpretation relies on the assumption that נוע can reflect alternations in the direction of movement.

C. Another interpretation suggests that the people are portrayed in their search for military help from other nations, instead of showing their trust in Yahweh. This interpretation was first proposed by Radak, who supported his interpretation with 2:18. Calvin followed this idea and emphasized that נוע reflects the inconsistency of the people.[68] But traveling between Egypt and Assyria would fit נוע as a stumbling walk as well.

This general agreement that [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ accuses the people of unfaithfulness against Yahweh is understandable given the fact that imagery and metaphors of motion are regularly used in the Bible to portray the people turning away from Yahweh, to other gods or to foreign powers. But how does this fit the context of Jer 14:10? In vv. 7–9, the people supplicate Yahweh to help them. Yahweh's response in v. 10 opens with this assumed accusation of unfaithfulness, and immediately thereafter follows the rejection ...וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם. As Kessler defined it, this assumed accusation (v. 10a) would function as the motivation for the rejection in the following lines (v. 10b).[69] According to Rudolph, the argument should be completed as follows: in ordinary times, the people are disloyal to Yahweh, but in times of distress they suddenly turn to seek his help. Because of this *Notbuße* they are rejected.[70]

This direction of interpretation suggests an inner dynamic within v. 10 that is different from that which exists in Hos 8:13. In Hos 8:13, there is an *adversative* relationship between the opening bicolon and the following clause וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם: the people enthusiastically sacrifice to Yahweh, *but* they were not accepted. Differently, in Jer 14:10 (according to this interpretation), one finds a causal syntactic connection: the people were unfaithful to Yahweh, and *therefore*, they were not accepted.[71] Thereby, the function of the verb רצה also changes. In Hos 8:13, רצה

[65] Lundbom (1999), p. 705.
[66] Rudolph, p. 99.
[67] Duhm, p. 129.
[68] Calvin, ii, p. 215. A similar emphasis was made by Hoffman, p. 355. In recent research, this interpretation is also represented by Maier, p. 288.
[69] Kessler, p. 72.
[70] Rudolph, p. 99.
[71] The translations that were proposed for this *waw* are various: "Thus" (Lundbom, p. 730); "therefore" (NRSV; ASV); *und* (Elberfelder); "so" (JPS; Bright, p. 98); *so* (Giesebrecht, p. 84); no representation (McKane).

is used in its common sense – the people are rejected as worshipers (see fn. 20 above). In Jer 14:10, however, (when applying this interpretation) רָצָם refers back to the people in the previous bicolon only grammatically. In its implication, it does not reject the people's action in the previous bicolon like in Hos 8:13,[72] but it serves to reject the people's prayer in vv. 7–9. According to McKane, לֹא רָצָם "is indicative of an authoritative refusal of the plea of the community.[73] Such a function of רצה is demonstrated in Job 33:26: יֶעְתַּר אֶל אֱלוֹהַּ וַיִּרְצֵהוּ ("then he prays to God and is accepted by him" NRSVUE).

4.3 An Alternative Suggested Direction of Interpretation for [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ

4.3.1 Maintaining the Inner Dynamic of Hos 8:13

However, one should also consider the possibility that v. 10 maintains the adversative inner dynamic of Hos 8:13, as Volz interpreted (1928). [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ may also describe the people restlessly moving as part of their cultic activity in order to appease Yahweh, and the following line – וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם – would declare that the people, however, were not accepted as worshipers. A cultic context for this restless movement is suggested both by the verb רצה, and by the rejection of cultic practices in v. 12, to which v. 10 may respond as an alternative rejection. In this case, the initial *waw* in וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם should be translated as "but", and the adversative dynamic of Hos 8:13 would even be reinforced (as this *waw* does not appear in Hos 8:13). In fact, it is most natural for the construction וַיהוָה לֹא רָצָם to establish an adversative relationship with what precedes (Cf. 2:10; 14:14; 15:19; 16:20; 17:16; 23:24; 29:31; Is 10:7; 49:15; Ezek 13:6,22; 27:28; Amos 3:6; Jonah 4:11; Psa. 119:87).[74] Both a cultic context and an adversative dynamic are suggested by the Targum, which translates וּמְבֵּית מַקְדְּשִׁי רַגְלֵיהוֹן לָא מְנַעוּ וּקְדָם יוי לָא רַעֲוָא בְּהוֹן.[75] Applying this direction of interpretation, one may consider the following possibilities as the actual movement to which [כֵּן] אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם לֹא חָשָׂכוּ refers:

A) The reference may be to the people's cultic processions, as was suggested by Volz (1928), who is to my knowledge, the only scholar who has turned in this direction.[76]
B) The reference can also be to exhausting travels of the people to the temple. These travels might also include the gathering together of worshipers from all around Judah, similar to what is depicted in Zech 8:21–22 with respect to the nations.

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[72] This would make no sense since רצה applies only to cases in which one seeks to gain Yahweh's favor, which acting unfaithfully is of course not one of them. This was the thought of all interpreters who understood v. 10a as an accusation of apostasy, except for Lundbom (see fn. 78 below).
[73] McKane, p. 323.
[74] Even several interpreters who found in v. 10a an accusation of disloyalty translated the *waw* as "but" / *aber* (what seems to be illogical): Zurich Bible; Duhm, p. 129 (*doch*); Rudolph, p. 98; Holladay, p. 419; Maier, p. 282.
[75] But at the same time, the Targum interprets the first part of the parallelism (כֵּן אָהֲבוּ לָנוּעַ) as an act of apostasy: וּכְמָא דַהֲווֹ מְעָרְבִין בָּפֻלְחַן טָעֲוָתָא. See fn. 63 above.
[76] Volz, p. 165.

C) As a combination of these two, it may be that the people make their way to the temple while participating in such pious processions (cf. Psa 42:5; 122:1–2).

Given the language of the description (see above), one may envision the people traveling in processions or making their way to the temple, trudging wearily but at the same time restless and persistent. No matter how exhausting this journey is, they "love" it. The verb אהב presents their activity as an obsession, and thereby, emphasizes the contrast between their devotion and Yahweh's displeasure. Volz called this movement a "busy, external piety, […] piety of the feet" (*geschäftige, äußerliche Frömmigkeit, […] Frömmigkeit der Füße*).[77]

4.3.2 V. 10 as an Application of Hos 8:13 to Jer 14:2–12*

The implication of this interpretation is that the editor responsible for v. 10 did not only borrow from Hos 8:13 a declaration of rejection (v. 10b), but rather replicated the entire message of Hos 8:13, applying it to Jer 14:2–12*. Since his new opening bicolon is unclear, it is also difficult to define its adaptation to the context of Jer 14:2–12*. While the original opening bicolon refers explicitly to the action of sacrificing, the depiction in the newly composed bicolon (according to this interpretation) contains a more flexible portrayal of cultic engagement. A supplicatory context that would fit Jer 14:2–12* is not necessarily evident from this portrayal, but one can certainly imagine that the people gathered at the temple for a communal fast. This possible contextual gap is understandable, in light of the proposal that the verse is a replication of Hos 8:13, and hence, there is no need to press too hard in trying to fit the description to the precise setting of Jer 14:2–12*.

As a replication of Hos 8:13, v. 10 serves within its broader context as a rejection of the plea in vv. 7–9, but at the same time, it also functions as a self-contained unit of meaning.[78] This suggested function of v. 10 is similar to the function of vv. 11–12, which also include a definition of what is exactly rejected (v. 12). Therefore, according to this suggested interpretation, v. 10 can be seen as a complete poetic paraphrase of v. 12. It duplicates v. 12's reference to the rejected cultic actions, along with its declaration of rejection and judgment. As a paraphrase of v. 12, the new twist offered by v. 10 is its sarcastic tone drawn from Hos 8:13.[79] A merciless rejection (vv. 11–12) becomes a mocking rejection (v. 10). Moreover, v. 10 seems to offer a Hoseanic reasoning for the rejection of the Judahites, which undermines vv. 11–12. In vv. 11–12, fasting, praying,

[77] Volz, p. 165: "*Mit Prozessionen sind sie gleich bei der Hand, da „schonen sie ihre Füße nicht", kein Weg ist ihnen zu heiß, kein Berg zu steil, und sie meinen dann, Jahwe müsse augenblicklich erwidern. Jahwe hat diese geschäftige, äußerliche Frömmigkeit, diese Frömmigkeit der Füße, diese „wichtigen" Gottesdienste stets für sehr unwichtig angesehen.*"

[78] This situation also emerges from Lundbom's interpretation, pp. 706, 709. Accordingly, Lundbom suggested that v. 10 was originally independent (p. 703; see ft. 14 above). However, adopting the common interpretation of v. 10a, Lundbom assumed an impossible situation, in which the people are presented both as chasing other gods and as rejected worshipers of Yahweh (pp. 705–706).

[79] The description seems to mock the passion in which the people offer their sacrifices to Yahweh. The phrase זִבְחֵי הַבְהָבַי ("roasted offerings") and the choice of words בָּשָׂר וַיֹּאכֵלוּ portrays the sacrificial feast in a vulgar and gluttonous light.

and sacrificing appear as valid means, but in the case of "this people" they have no effect on Yahweh. V. 10 does not reject cult in principle either,[80] but it does criticize the people for a mistaken understanding of its function, implying that the problem lies in the Yahwistic cult.

Ultimately, this alternative suggested direction of interpretation presents several advantages over the commonly-held direction of interpretation. These are:

A) Better alignment with the language of the description: This direction of interpretation seems to better suit the language of the description in v. 10a. Both parts of the parallelism emphasize the restless nature of the people's movement, without any indication of direction. Thus, the impression is that the problem is not about the destination of this motion, but about its compulsive nature. Hence, the interpretation that the people overdo their cultic devotion sits more naturally with the portrayal than interpretations that focus on the movement's destination. Further support is the use of נוע in Amos 8:11–12 and of אהב in Amos 4:4–5[81] to express comparable ideas and emphasis.

B) Better fit with the unit's theme: If one accepts the conventional interpretation of v. 10a, it follows that the contribution of v. 10 to the unit is pointing to the stereotypical sin of unfaithfulness to Yahweh as Yahweh's motivation to reject the people. However, it seems that this old sin is not such a relevant reason for this rejection, since the people have already repented of their sins (vv. 7, 20).[82] Moreover, the old sins are not really the concern of this unit – they are mentioned only within the prayer and without detail. In contrast, if v. 10 presents concisely and ironically the dynamic in which the people seek Yahweh's favor but are rejected, it hits the central theme of the unit and contributes to its development.

C) Clearer motivation for inserting an alternative rejection that employs Hos 8:13: The standard view that v. 10 constitutes the only rejection of the plea (while vv. 11–12 are supplements) suggests that Hos 8:13 was used in order to provide a declaration of rejection and judgment that will reject the people's plea. However, when one follows the conclusions of this study, one must justify the need for a secondary rejection when vv. 11–12 already fulfill this function. If a later editor was, indeed, reminded of Hos 8:13

[80] Like in Jer 14:2–12*, in Hos 8:11–13, the background for the rejection of the Israelites is not a fundamental rejection of ritual practices, but rather a personal rejection. The second colon לוֹ הָיוּ לְחֵטְא֔* (v. 11) should be surprising – an abundance of altars should be considered righteousness; however, Yahweh counted it as a sin for Ephraim (cf. Psa 109:7). The same contrast appears in v. 13 – the people enjoy their sacrificial meal like they should (cf. Deut 27:7), but "Yahweh did not accept them".

[81] Paul, p. 78.

[82] Some scholars sought to explain the relevance of this assumed accusation of disloyalty. Rudolph (p. 99) interpreted it as an accusation of *Notbuße* and compared it to Hos 6:4, in which the people's repentance is rejected with the argument: "Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early" [NRSVUE]. Hoffman (p. 355), on the other hand, tried to establish a symmetry between the unstable movement of the people and their unstable repentance. However, unlike the clear statement in Hos 6:4, establishing a similar idea here would constitute over-interpretation.

when reading Jer 14:12, what could have inspired him to add v. 10 while employing Hos 8:13? He probably found the affinity between the two texts – a divine rejection of Yahweh's worshipers – to be fertile ground, and decided to apply the ironical rejection of the Israelites to the merciless rejection of the Judahites. Through his sarcastic portrayal of overzealousness which is not accepted and his implied cult criticism, he presented a Hoseanic lens on Jer 14:2–12*. This suggested interpretation reflects a much more significant exploitation of the affinity between the two texts than the conventional interpretation, and, thus, it also suggests a clearer motivation for this literary contact.

Conclusions:

The above investigation suggests that the literary contact between Jer 14:10 and Hos 8:13 expands beyond their three parallel lines to the first bicolon in each verse, which is part of the parallel structure that the two stanzas share. The fragmentary character of Jer 14:10 and the tension between its poetic text and its opening phrase suggest a *Hosea > Jeremiah* direction of influence.

This borrowing is not the work of the redactor of the composite unit Jer 14:2–12*, but of a later editor-reader. When reading Jeremiah, an association triggered by similarity of phrasing prompted him to apply the divine rejection in Hos 8:13 to the context of Jer 14:2–12*. He replicated Hos 8:13 while completely modifying its opening bicolon, and incorporated it between the plea in vv. 7–9 and its original rejection in vv. 11–12. By its introductory phrase, the supplement was presented as Yahweh's direct response to the people's plea, exploiting the fact that the rejection in vv. 11–12 is addressed to Jeremiah. All of these conclusions are independent of the interpretation of the obscure opening bicolon of Jer 14:10.

Beyond these conclusions, if one adopts the proposal to interpret the opening bicolon of Jer 14:10 as describing the people's restless movement within the context of Yahweh worship, then it appears more specifically that this borrowing was motivated by an analogy the editor established between the two texts, both of which present divine rejection of the people as *worshipers* (as also appears in Jer 14:12). If the opening bicolon of Jer 14:10 indeed refers to the people's cultic activity, then v. 10 paraphrases all the elements found in v. 12. As such a paraphrase, v. 10 views the situation in Jer 14:2–12 with a Hoseanic lens on the matter: it ascribes to the people empty overzealousness while portraying the rejection of their zealous activity sarcastically.

The replacement of the opening bicolon in Jer 14:10 probably aimed to adapt the verse to its new context. But because of the vagueness of this bicolon, we can only speculate that the purpose was to expand the original reference to sacrificial worship in Hos 8:13 into a more comprehensive picture of Yahweh worship that would suit the supplicatory setting in Jeremiah.

Precisely because this supplement was based on existing similarities between the texts, its application of the Hoseanic perspective to the Jeremianic text can be conceptually compared

with a harmonizing addition (see Duhm's claim on p. 2). For the same reason, this editing adds not much more to Jer 14 than a paraphrase of v. 12, to which it responds. However, this editing had de facto two far-reaching effects, as demonstrated by the readings of ancient and modern interpreters. First, the addition created a new structural division of the text, within which vv. 11–12 lost their original function. Second, the opening bicolon composed by the editor posed interpretive challenges and opened the door to various interpretations. If the interpretation proposed above is correct, it seems that its semi-Hoseanic character made it incomprehensible outside the Hoseanic context.

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Abbreviations

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End Time Narratives and Embodied Cognition

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Over the recent decades, cognitive sciences have played an increasing role in biblical studies and related fields. In my PhD thesis (Melissa Sayyad Bach, *Power of Perception in the Community Rule through Stability and Change*, 2021), I have tested various cognitive approaches on the Community Rule (1QS) from Qumran, in particular Harvey Whitehouse's Modes of Religiosity theory, and Construal Level Theory, developed by Tal Eyal and Nira Liberman.

During my Postdoc period (June 2021-September 2025), I have focused on the *Embodied Cognition* and 4E-perspective, which view cognition as a complex process involving the entire organism in constant interaction with its environment, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the organism's survival. From this perspective, I have co-developed a project focusing on End Time Narratives (ETNs) – representations (in various media) of a collapse of the world order (cosmic, social, or moral). My research engagement has been with ancient Jewish and early Christian ETNs that feature apocalyptic or apocalyptic-like literary traits. ETNs are cross-cultural phenomena, spanning different historical periods and different religious contexts. The psychological effects and the persistent power and attraction of these narratives imagining the end appear to be connected to fundamental bodily and neurocognitive mechanisms. Therefore, I have investigated these neurocognitive mechanisms by developing a model to map and analyze how these mechanisms are potentially activated by the structure and design of ETNs (Høgenhaven, Bach, and Geertz, "A Neurocognitive Model for Analyzing End Time Narratives: The Book of Revelation 14-16 as a Test Case," *Numen* 71 (2024): 335-92).

Furthermore, this model is currently under revision and testing on different ETNs (e.g., 1QM, the Book of Daniel, Mark 13, Surah 81 from the Qur'an, and apocalyptic writings of 17th century Jesuit Antonio Vieira), this study has been accepted for publication in the Diegesis in Mind series (De Gruyter/Brill).

One recurring feature of ETNs is that they often include dream/vision accounts or they often display a similar dream-like world-format. Consequently, in connection with my part in the Copenhagen AMRAM project (Apocalypticism, Manuscripts, Rewriting, and Authority Management), I have examined the function of dream and vision accounts, especially in ancient Jewish Aramaic literature within and outside the biblical canon (Bach, "Dream Functions and "Dream Logic": Dan 4 and 1QapGen 19–20 Seen through Threat Simulation Theory and Social Simulation Theory" in *Apocalypticism and Authority*, Studies on the Text of Desert of Judah, forthcoming).

In the present paper, I further investigate meaning-/sense-making which is one of the main mechanisms of ETNs. From the Embodied and Predictive Processing perspective, meaning/sense-making is a fundamental aspect of cognition as the organism is constantly striving for survival. My intended

next step is to establish a cross-disciplinary research team to conduct a more comprehensive investigation of the different functions of ancient and contemporary ETNs.

"Making Sense through End Time Narratives (ETNs) with our Embodied Cognition"

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Introduction

What happens when the world ceases to make sense, when it only defies and challenges our expectations? How do we navigate, when our models of orientations are outdated or just not good enough? This paper seeks to explore End Time Narratives (ETNs) as means for sense-making when minor or major collapses leave us without a sense of direction.

Together with my two colleagues, I have previously attempted to map how ETNs potentially affect their audiences, from an Embodied Cognition perspective.[1] We use the term ETNs to point to a wide variety of representations in various forms (oral, written or visual), each describing imminent collapses of the known world order. A "world order" can be cosmic, social, or moral, or all three at the same time, and these collapses can either be collectively or individually experienced. The core idea with the term ETNs is to focus on the ongoing interactions that these narratives draw the readers into. Thus, the term ETN is not intended as a new way of categorizing this corpus of narratives.

In the following, I focus on ETNs as products and means of sense-making: I will briefly present the Predictive Processing (PP) framework, then move on to a discussion of how PP can be understood within Embodied Cognition. Next, I turn to research into ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings, examining ways in which these narratives have been regarded as reflecting a need for reorientation in the light of crises and changed circumstances, sometimes framed by researchers as overcoming of "cognitive dissonance." I briefly examine research on sense/meaning-making, and point to the idea of embodied "participatory sense-making," which shows how the mechanism of sense/meaning-making is a crucial multilayered navigator for survival. Finally, I analyze the Two Spirits Treatise (TST) from the Community Rule (1QS) from Qumran, through the lens of participatory sense-making.

Predictive Processing

The Predictive Processing (PP) framework regards our brains as prediction machines, constantly attempting to anticipate and predicate what comes next, both in terms of our internal bodily states and with respect to our surroundings.[2] What we perceive and experience in any given moment is not the

[1] See Høgenhaven, Bach, and Geertz 2024. See also Bach 2023.

[2] "Predictive processing (PP) is a framework involving a general computational principle which can be applied to describe perception, action, cognition, and their relationships in a single, conceptually unified manner" (Wiese and Metzinger 2017, 19). For an introduction to PP see also Clark 2015b, 12–52.

sole result of registering and processing internal or external stimuli, but rather the interactions between these stimuli and the predictions (based on previous experiences, also called priors) made by the brain in those exact moments. Priors are shaped by our former sensory experiences of how things look, sound, smell, taste, and feel, and they are informed by our previous movements, actions, and bodily states in careful coordination with our surroundings. In other words, the priors are our brains' internal models of incoming sensorimotor stimuli, which are then compared against the actual sensory input from the body and the environment. Within the PP framework, this process is understood as a "Bayesian" process,[3] a continuous loop between prior experience and new observations.

However, the incoming stimuli do not always match our predictions and expectations, which can cause surprise elements, as these signals surpass our priors and internal world models. The ability to handle surprises by registering and reacting appropriately to the unexpected, is crucial for survival and very often a matter of life and death in human evolution. Being able to handle a surprise is thus central to the predictive brain. The brain combines top-down (the brain's predictions) and bottom-up processes (sensory stimuli), striving for the right balance to ensure that the organism receives the right amount of information for its survival and well-being, responding properly to its current surroundings. Our brains handle surprises in two ways: Either by updating and adjusting their priors or by taking action to readjust the surroundings by changing the incoming signals, thus better conforming to the predictions. In both cases, it is a matter of balancing costs and benefits: The processing of stimuli, matching these stimuli with the right priors, and responding appropriately is a costly and energy-demanding procedure. Therefore, the organism always seeks to keep its cost low while letting the necessary information "pass through". Thus, for a large part of our perceptive tasks, relying on the priors is optimal with regard to this cost/benefit system. A mismatch between our priors and the incoming signals rises the risk for occurrence of "prediction error". While many prediction errors are of minor importance and less costly, requiring only small adjustments to our priors, other prediction errors can be of major importance and consequential, needing a more thorough updating of our model or the generation of new models, requiring a more costly process (Clark 2015b, 57–61; Wiese and Metzinger 2017, 6–8).

The process of assessing the "amplitude" or "volume" of prediction errors and adjusting in accordance with these assessments is "precision estimation", which evaluates the weight to assigns to each of the many mismatches between the predictive models and the incoming signals. Precision estimation is thus a context-sensitive and flexible process (Clark 2015a, 8; Clark 2015b, 57–59).

[3] The theorem of Thomas Bayes (1702–61) calculates probability by combining existing information with new evidence. See Clark 2013, 188–189; Wiese and Metzinger 2017, 5–6.

The overall goal of the predictive brain is not to process the largest amount of information, nor to generate the most detailed and precise models of the world. Rather, the point of this process is to enable just the necessary and adequate interaction with the world, thus, ultimately ensuring the organism's survival in the least costly manner (Clark 2015b, 250).[4]

Predictive Processing and Embodied Cognition

This section shows how Embodied Cognition and PP supplement each other. Embodied Cognition represents a strand of theoretical perspectives that fundamentally challenge "computational", representational, or brain- or mind-centered accounts of cognition. From an Embodied Cognition perspective, cognitive processes are not abstract computations or mental representations occurring solely within the brain. Rather, cognition is profoundly dependent on and shaped by the body's physical states, its sensorimotor capacities, and its dynamic interactions with the environment. From an evolutionary perspective, cognition is a process of sustaining the life of organisms in constant interaction with their surroundings (Ciołkosz 2021, 86–87).[5]

A key assertion within Embodied Cognition is that the body plays a "constitutive role" in cognition, as an integral part of the cognitive system itself, rather than merely serving as an input/output device for the brain or mind (Newen, Gallagher, and de Bruin 2018). In other words, cognition is a constant interaction between mind, body, and environment (*the constitutive thesis*). Cognition does not necessarily require complex internal mental representations of the outside environment (*the non-representational thesis*). Perception, action, and thinking are integral parts of and inseparable from the continuous processes of affect, cognition, and sensorimotor (*the cognitive-affective inseparability thesis*). The body in action as well as the brain is plastic. Our "entire organism is situated in a plastic network of processes spanning brain, body, and world" (*The metaplasticity thesis*).[6]

These central aspects of Embodied Cognition are all compatible with PP: In PP, the body has a "constitutive role with respect to mind," thus aligning with the "constitutive thesis" (Kirchhoff 2018, 246–249) Furthermore, regarding the "non-representational thesis", PP's predictive models are not elaborate inner reconstructions of the world, but situation- and action-oriented processes embedded in the constant prediction-action loop (Kirchhoff 2018, 249–252). Moreover, PP also aligns with the

[4] As an example of the action-oriented nature of PP, Clark mentions a baseball player ("fielder") who must run to catch a flying ball: The task is not achieved by first using the visual system to determine the position of the ball and then calculating the impact. Instead, the fielder runs in such a way that the ball seems to maintain a constant speed through the visual field – cancelling any changes in the ball's acceleration through his or her own bodily movements, which will take the fielder to the location where the ball would hit the ground. What is needed for the prediction, is "an action-based grip" on the world, not a detailed reconstruction designed for abstract reasoning (Clark 2015a, 13, 15).

[5] For an introduction to the Embodied Cognition perspective, see Newen, Gallagher, and de Bruin 2018; Klocová and Geertz 2019.

[6] The four theses are formulated by Michael Kirchhoff (2018, 244) as implied by those who defend Embodied Cognition or who conceive of cognition "not as a detached reconstruction of the world but as a suite of dynamic processes enabling embodied activity" (ibid., 243).

"cognitive-affective inseparability thesis": Cognition is basically sense-making, the organism attempting to keep itself alive or maintain homeostasis by moving towards what is "good" for survival and avoiding what is "bad" for the organism. The prediction error minimization posited by the PP framework is an enactment of sense-making, carried out in constant interaction with the environment (Kirchhoff 2018, 253–254). Finally, the plasticity of the entire organism (the "metaplasticity thesis"), its ability to change and be shaped due to cultural and environmental influences, plays a central role in establishing prior expectations and in the process of precision estimation.[7]

Furthermore, PP is fundamentally an action-oriented survival strategy of the entire organism, ensuring the necessary information to engage with the world, at an optimal cost-benefit balance. This matches well with the Embodied Cognition perspective (Clark 2015a; 2015b).[8] As living, embodied beings, the goal our cognition is to make sense of the world as we interact in it. Therefore, sense is not an abstract and luxury notion that we may or may not engage intellectually, but sense-making is fundamental for ensuring our survival and every action we take. The following example of "missing a step" demonstrates how an embodied and predictive brain functions:

The Embodied Surprise of the "Missing" Step
Imagine you walk home on a familiar path you traverse daily. Your predictive brain has developed robust priors not just about the visual layout, but crucially, about the sensorimotor expectations of this path. It anticipates the specific proprioceptive feedback from your ankles as you push off, the haptic sensation of the pavement against your soles, the subtle shift in your center of gravity on an incline, and the precise muscular engagement required to ascend the curb as you approach the street. These priors are action-oriented internal models – your brain is constantly predicting the feel of your body interacting with the environment.

The Embodied Prediction
As you near the crosswalk, your brain's top-down predictions aren't just a visual expectation of a curb; they are a pre-activation of your motor cortex for the slight ankle dorsiflexion and knee lift needed. Your balance system is already bracing for the momentary instability of the step, an embodied prediction, where your physical body is preparing for the anticipated interaction.

The Embodied Surprise and Prediction Error
Suddenly, as you initiate the lift of your foot, your foot lands flat on the pavement where the curb should have been. This isn't just a visual "no-show"; it's a profound sensorimotor mismatch. Your proprioceptors signal a lack of the expected ankle joint change, your tactile receptors on your sole register flat ground instead of an edge, and your vestibular system notes the absence of the anticipated change in vertical motion. These discrepancies between your brain's embodied prediction and the actual bottom-up input from your body creates a significant prediction error. The surprise is felt as a physical jolt, a momentary loss of coordination – your body literally experiences the "wrongness" of the situation.

[7] An example of the metaplasticity thesis could be in people experiencing "culture shock". Kirchhoff refers to the case of 13-years-old Eva Hoffmann, who left Poland for Canada in 1959 with her family, and later recounted the complete upheaval of her experiential world: "What has happened to me in this new world? I don't know. I don't see what I've seen, don't comprehend what's in front of me. I'm not filled with language anymore, and I have only a memory of fullness to anguish me with the knowledge that, in this dark and empty state, I don't really exist" (Kirchhoff 2018, 256).

[8] There are certainly versions of PP that can be termed "internalist" (Kirchhoff 2018, 244), locating prediction primarily in the brain, where rich models of the world are gradually built up, allowing at some point for the models to stand in for the real, external world for the purpose of planning, reasoning, and acting (Clark 2015, 244–245). However, as argued by Andy Clark and Michael Kirchhoff, the internalist version of PP underestimates the involvement of the body, and of action, in the ongoing prediction process.

Handling the Embodied Surprise: Two Intertwined Pathways
Your brain handles this embodied surprise in various ways, highlighting the close link between perception and action, always aiming to reduce costly prediction errors and maintain an optimal cost/benefit balance:

1. Updating Embodied Priors (Internal Adjustment):
Your brain rapidly updates its sensorimotor model of this specific segment of the path. The lack of the curb is immediately integrated, as a visual fact and a change in the expected bodily engagement. For future walks, your brain will "know" (and your body will prepare for) a flat transition at that spot. This recalibration of your action-perception loop is a relatively low-cost adjustment if the change is permanent. The precision estimation for this error is high enough to trigger an update because the bodily mismatch was notable, but not so severe as to cause significant injury.

2. Taking Embodied Action to Readjust Surroundings (External Adjustment):
Concurrently with updating priors, your body might instinctively react to "correct" the unexpected incoming signals. Your muscles might tense involuntarily, you might stumble a few steps as your gait rhythm is disrupted, or your arms might flail slightly to regain balance. These are action-based responses aimed at re-establishing a predictable, stable interaction with the ground. By changing your own bodily configuration and movement, you are attempting to make the sensory input (the feeling of your body moving) better conform to some stable prediction, even if it's an adjusted one. This physical re-stabilization can be more costly in terms of immediate energy and coordination, but it quickly resolves the immediate, felt discrepancy.

The Embodied Cost/Benefit Trade-off
The brain, in its embodied context, is constantly balancing the costs and benefits of these adjustments, always striving for efficient interaction:

Low-Cost Embodied Interaction: For familiar environments, our brains primarily rely on highly optimized, action-tuned priors. Most of our movements are fluid and automatic precisely because the sensory input largely confirms our embodied predictions. The minor prediction error from the "missing curb" is resolved quickly, with minimal conscious effort or physical exertion. The precision estimation of this error indicates it's important enough to learn from, but does not demand a full re-evaluation of your walking model.

High-Cost Embodied Interaction: If you were navigating a new, visually ambiguous, and physically uneven terrain (e.g., scrambling over rocks in the dark), the brain would be flooded with prediction errors across all sensory modalities – proprioceptive, haptic, visual. In this scenario, the precision estimation for these incoming error signals would be extremely high, compelling your brain to dedicate significant resources to constantly updating its embodied models and generating continuous, energy-intensive corrective actions. Each step would be deliberate, cautious, and physically demanding as your body and brain work in concert to build a new, reliable sensorimotor map of the environment and minimize the risk of falls or injury.

Apocalyptic Narratives and Surprise: "Cognitive Dissonance"

The emergence of apocalyptic featured literature within ancient Judaism from some time in the fourth century BCE onwards into the early Christian period is a complex and multi-facetted phenomenon. The much-debated issues of what constitutes the apocalyptic genre, where to locate its origins in earlier Jewish traditions or various external influences, and how to understand apocalyptic writings with regard to particular movements or religious groups, is not my focus here. These questions aside, there is a widespread consensus that apocalyptic compositions were, in one way or the other, products of and reactions to crises. The assumption is that these literary constructions of catastrophic end time scenarios and transcendent worlds were born out of an experience that the traditional or conventional

worldview were no longer adequate or sufficient (Yarbro Collins 1984; Horsley 2010, 21; Daschke 2010, 6; Hallbäck 2018, 83; 215–225).

Scholars have sought different explanations for these processes: One assumption is that apocalyptic literature expresses a radical revision of certain central concepts that constitute a religious or theological world-view in the light of changing circumstances: Apocalyptic writers felt the need to rethink the idea of history, extending the course of history beyond the past and present into an imaginary eschatological future, and regarding it as an entirety planned and designed by God (Von Rad 1960, 316–331; Von der Osten-Sacken 1969, 33). Another perspective is that apocalyptic thinking and writing revolved around a new form of prophecy, a new notion of divine revelation expanding the boundaries far beyond the traditional idea of the Mosaic Law as the ultimate revelation and adding new perspectives such as the emphasis on dualism (Otzen 1984).

Apocalyptic writings have also been regarded as means to overcome a psychological crisis triggered by the loss of the Jewish Temple: Derek Daschke reads apocalyptic descriptions of Jerusalem's fall in the light of a psychoanalytic model of mourning, suggesting that they "mediate between individual anxieties and hopes arising from the loss of the Zionistic symbol system and the people's aspirations to create and maintain a viable, meaningful culture" (Daschke 2010, 6). From a different angle, Hindy Najman has interpreted the apocalypse of Fourth Ezra as an attempt to overcome the trauma caused by the loss of the Temple by rewriting ("rebooting") the past, and postponing the reappearance of the Temple to an eschatological future (Najman 2014).[9]

Some scholars attempted to interpret ancient apocalyptic compositions, in the light social-scientific studies of millenarian movements: Comparisons were drawn between the situation of the Jews of Hellenistic Palestine and the experience of various indigenous peoples in modern time that were conquered and colonized by Western powers. Millenarian movements among indigenous nations were regarded as reactions to political and economic oppression (Esler 2014). Along similar lines, albeit with different emphases, Richard Horsley (2010) and Anathea Portier-Young (2011) have argued that ancient Jewish apocalypses should be seen as "resistance literature", their main concern being the oppression of the Jewish people at the hands of foreign empires. While Horsley rejects the notion of "apocalypse" as a distinct genre, focusing on a class of Judean scribes as representatives of resistance against imperial oppression, Portier-Young attempts a broader theoretical foundation for her analysis of resistance as a multi-facetted phenomenon in ancient Judea, and the different theologies of resistance found in ancient Jewish apocalypses.

[9] Najman points to the dislocation of the Crow Indian tribe from their ancestral land to a reservation as an analogy: When culture and traditions are completely disrupted, the written words becomes the only hope left (Najman uses the phrase "revelation inflected by destruction").

Several researchers of ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses found inspiration in psychologist Leon Festinger's notion of "cognitive dissonance." Festinger's point of departure was a field study of a small millenarian group, which he carried out with Henry W. Rieken and Stanley Schachter (Festinger et al. 1956). The group believed that at a specific date in 1954, US would be destroyed by a massive flood, from which the believers would be rescued by aliens in a flying saucer, according to a prophecy by a woman in the congregation. Festinger's, Rieken's, and Schachter's investigation focused on how this group dealt with the passing of the predicted date without the occurrence of the flood. In essence, the group received a new message stating that the flood had been averted as a consequence of their devotion and their conduct in the world. The main takeaway from the study was that "the individual will frequently emerge not only unshaken, but even more convinced of the truth of his beliefs than ever before" (Festinger et al. 1956, 3, quoted by Bermejo-Rubio 2017, 122).[10] According to Festinger, this fortification of one's beliefs even in the face of contradicting reality, is an attempt to deal with cognitive dissonance. When there is a clash between people's beliefs, values, or opinions, and their actual experience, cognitive dissonance is produced, and the "countervailing psychological pressures within persons" then cause them to look for ways to reduce or eliminate the dissonance (Festinger 1957, 26, quoted by Bermejo-Rubio 2017, 122).

From the beginning, some serious objections were raised against Festinger's dissonance theory: Regarding the original field study, critics pointed out that there seemed to be a fair amount of interference by the observers who at times made up a third of the group members, taking an active part in the events, which also unfolded under considerable media attention. Criticism was also directed at the researchers' working hypothesis, which posited an initial phase of secrecy followed by a second phase where the group would actively proselytize (Bermejo-Rubio 2017, 123). Furthermore, questions have been raised as to the validity of Festinger's assumption that the group's beliefs must have been centered around logically coherent propositions that would be exposed to falsification through external contradictory information. This account seems to be skewed in an intellectualist direction, presuming that "the preferred state of an individual's cognitive universe is that of consistency or non-contradiction between cognitions" (Bermejo-Rubio 2017, 123–124), downplaying emotional and practice-oriented aspects of religious belief.[11]

Notwithstanding such criticisms, the cognitive dissonance theory became widely adopted within psychology (Bermejo-Rubio 2017, 122), and a number of scholars studying ancient apocalyptic literature have adapted the idea of cognitive dissonance as a driving force behind the production of these writings. In general, they use a broad definition like that of Adela Yarbro Collins, who states

[10] Due to summer vacation's delay Festinger's works were not available to me at the time of writing.
[11] See also Petersen 2025 on Festinger's study and the debate on its methodology.

that cognitive dissonance is "a state of mind that arises when there is great disparity between expectations and reality" (Yarbro Collins 1984, 141). According to Yarbro Collins, the symbols and plot of the Book of Revelation could have the effect of reducing cognitive dissonance in two distinct ways: "First, disquieting, disruptive feelings were released in a literary, experiential process of catharsis. Second, the conviction was instilled in the hearers that what ought to be *is*" (Yarbro Collins 1984, 154). Similarly, for John J. Collins, "cognitive dissonance" describes the clash "between what was affirmed by religious belief and what was empirically the case" (Collins 2015, 310).[12] Likewise, Philip Esler, in his study of Fourth Ezra, regards this composition as an attempt to reduce the cognitive dissonance created by the defeat of the Jewish rebels by the Romans in the First Jewish Revolt. Esler compares the dynamics in Fourth Ezra to indigenous millenarian movements in modern times (the Ringatu church among the Maoris of New Zealand and the rebellion of the Iroquois led by Handsome Lake) (Esler 1994).

For many scholars of ancient apocalyptic literature, the notion of cognitive dissonance has been an attractive descriptive model. The term was seized upon as an expression of a mismatch between expectations and realities, and the assumption was that apocalyptic writings were an attempt to reduce the psychological tension that this would have caused.

Reorientation and Sense/Meaning-Making: The World as Surprise

The emergence of apocalyptic literature in antiquity has been assigned to the recognition that traditional ways of making sense of the world were no longer adequate in view of the current state of affairs. Thus these ancient authors found themselves in need of reorientating their view of the world to regain meaning.

These perspectives regarding the disenfranchisement, dissatisfaction, or dissonance, and the need for reorientation among those who produced apocalyptic compositions have a great deal in common. But they also differ when it comes to how this necessary reorientation is understood: Is it primarily a question of revising theological ideas (e.g. of time, history, communication with the divine)? Is it the external, political and social upheavals of the world and the pressure they exert that generate the necessity of rethinking and reshaping one's positions and practices within the social structures? Or is it more than anything else a deeply felt internal – existential or psychological – need for new meaning and a feeling that prior assumptions of meaning no longer function that drive the production of apocalyptic thought and writing? These aspects are, of course, not mutually exclusive, they often overlap.

Meaning-Making, Global & Situational Meaning

[12] Similar definitions of cognitive dissonance can be found in Hallbäck 2010, 11; Hallbäck 2018, 171.

This brings us to the fundamental question of how making sense/meaning is conceptualized. Within the large of body of research into how people search for meaning in their lives, there is a consensus that meaning-making processes are triggered by stressful and traumatic events. Despite this extensive research, there are often no clear distinctions for the different levels involved in meaning-making, leading to false conclusions on *if* and *how* meaning is achieved at all (Park 2010). Psychologist Crystal L. Park points to the need for more conceptual and methodological clarifications, suggesting a systematization of these mechanisms. She distinguishes between *global meaning* and *situational meaning*, and between *meaning-making efforts* and *meaning made*. Global meaning refers to people's "general orienting systems … consisting of beliefs, goals, and subjective feelings", through which they interpret their experience of the world, and situational meaning refers to "meaning in the context of a particular environmental encounter" (Park 2010, 258). When a stressful or traumatic event causes discrepancy between global and situational meaning, a new search for situational meaning is initiated (Park 2010, 259). The search leads to "meaning-making efforts", that can be either automatic or deliberate, involving assimilation (changing situational meaning to fit global meaning) or accommodation (changing global beliefs/goals to fit the events). These efforts include searching for comprehensibility (why does this happen?) and significance (what impact does it have?) (Park 2010, 260).

Despite the widespread idea that meaning-making is essential for adjusting to stressful events, for better coping with crises, or for decreasing psychological pressure, there seems to be no clear evidence for this assumption. Meaning-making efforts are only helpful when they lead to "meanings made", but not all meaning-making efforts lead to "meanings made" (Park 2010, 261). Unsuccessful or protracted meaning-making efforts can be unproductive and associated with increased distress (rumination). The process of meaning-making may result in "meanings made," which are "end results or changes derived from attempts to reduce discrepancies or violations between appraised and global meaning" (Park 2010, 260). Meanings made occurs in forms of a sense of having "made sense," acceptance, reattributions, perceived growth or positive life changes, changed identity, reappraised meaning of the stressor, changed global beliefs or goals, and a restored or changed sense of meaning in life. As Park demonstrates, it is difficult to assess when a positive outcome of meaning-making occurs and the individuals experience helpful adjustments, whether the significance lies within the meaning-making process itself or within the result of the process. Thus, the quality of meaning-making efforts and meanings made is important; non-judgmental reflection seems generally to lead to better outcomes (Park 2010, 286).

Cognitive dissonance in the light of Meaning-Making

Festinger's notion of "cognitive dissonance" referred to an intuitive observation that a meaning was altered as the group's expectations did not correspond with the reality. This intuitive observation has

since been transferred to explaining the origin, motivation, and the drive behind apocalyptic literature. However, a better understanding of different stages of meaning-making process, might help us ask better and more precise questions regarding this literature. Are ETNs results of "meaning-making efforts"? Or are they the results of "meanings made"? or are they somewhere in between? Do these narratives lead to better adjustments? Do they invite new rounds of meaning-making efforts?

In the following, we will explore, from an Embodied PP perspective, how sense/meaning-making is involved in the process of worldview reorientation and how undertaking either minor or major changes of our predictive models is an essential skill to ensure survival.

End Time Narratives and Participatory Sense-Making

The notion of "participatory sense-making" was introduced by Hanne de Jaegher and Ezequiel di Paolo as an embodied and enactive approach to social cognition (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007). According to De Jaegher and Di Paolo, making sense of the world is at the core of cognition:

> "An organism that regulates its coupling with the environment does so because there is a direction that this process is aiming at: that of the continuity of the self-generated identity or identities that initiate the regulation. This establishes a perspective on the world with its own normativity, which is the counterpart of the agent being a centre of activity in the world … Exchanges with the world are inherently significant for the cogniser and this is a definitional property of a cognitive system: the creation and appreciation of meaning or sense-making in short" (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007, 488).

Sense-making, in other words, is an integral and central part of cognition, it is constitutive of the organism's process of keeping itself alive through interaction and exchange with its surroundings. Having a direction and a sense of what is normative or "good" for the organism is a necessity for survival. De Jaegher and Di Paolo also explain sense-making as "a relational and affect-laden process grounded in biological organization" (ibid.). Thus, sense-making takes place simultaneously both within in an individual or organism and in social interactions. This is what De Jaegher and Di Paolo call "Participatory Sense-making": It is "the coordination of intentional activity in interaction, whereby individual sense-making processes are affected and new domains of social sense-making can be generated that were not available to each individual on her own" (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007, 497).

Recently, Matylda Ciołkosz has applied the notion of participatory sense-making in the context of religion and morality (Ciołkosz 2021/2023). In her view, cognition functions at multi-layered levels: she distinguishes between basic and scaffolded cognition. Basic cognition refers to cognitive processes that do not require mental representations. Organisms with no central nervous system such as bacteria can move efficiently to where the surroundings are optimal in providing nourishment and warmth without any mental processing. Even a great amount of everyday behavior in humans can be

carried out successfully without any mental content involved – like opening doors, which is "completed through a series of minute sensorimotor adjustments in response to the encountered aspects of the environment, such as the resistance of the door handle" (Ciołkosz 2021, 88). Scaffolded cognition refers to forms of cognition that involve mental content, building on cultural practices, most importantly language (Ciołkosz 2021, 89). Mental representations are scaffolded on language, and language is, in turn, scaffolded on bodily experiences. In other words, mental representations, "are built from substrates made available through the recurrent experience of coordinated perception and movement" (ibid.).

Scaffolded cognition can be described as interconnected layers of "sensorimotor, intersubjective, and linguistic engagement with the world" (Ciołkosz 2021, 93). The development of language allows for mental representations "as an inalienable part of the human experience" (ibid.), and these representations are used to conceptualize and interact with the world at symbolic levels. Mental representation can also give additional meanings to sensorimotor and intersubjective actions beyond what those interactions are in themselves.

Participatory sense-making refers to any interaction between individuals. It unfolds at a basic cognition, pre-linguistic level (e.g., through non-verbal coordination of bodily movements) and it unfolds at a scaffolded cognition, post-linguistic cultural level, where language and mental representations become part of the sense-making process (e.g., in the form of shared symbols, signs, or narratives). Ciołkosz uses the example of two people attempting to pass through a narrow corridor from opposite sides but not succeeding. They may intuitively coordinate their movement resulting in both moving to their respective right side (basic cognition). However, their movement can also be coordinated and directed by either a sign "keep right", or a verbal instruction "always keep to your right" or a cultural narrative based on a myth "there once was a hero, who passed the first ever build corridor keeping to his right, therefore always keep to your right" (scaffolded cognition) (Ciołkosz 2021, 91–93).[13]

One important variety of participatory sense-making, according to Ciołkosz, is morality, which she understands as "a system for evaluating and regulating social interactions" (Ciołkosz 2021, 97). More specifically, morality is "a kind of social agency in which individuals jointly regulate their individual couplings and their mutual coupling constituting the social group … aimed at achieving and maintain cooperation" (ibid.). There are "rudimentary aspects" of morality which rely on basic

[13] Ciołkosz borrows the image of the corridor from Ezequiel A. Di Paolo, Elena Clare Cuffari, and Hanne De Jaegher, *Linguistic Bodies: The Continuity between Life and Language* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2023), 87 (inaccessible to me).

cognition, but the more complex aspects – e.g. "explicit moral codes or the role of representations of gods in enforcing moral norms" – require scaffolded cognition (Ciołkosz 2021, 96).[14]

The notion of participatory sense-making, as Ciołkosz explains it, provides an important clarification to the Embodied PP framework. The distinction between basic and scaffolded cognition makes room for understanding how our brains' priors are shaped by a wide range of embodied experiences, including cultural, post-linguistic (scaffolded) contents. To illustrate how this perspective may be helpful with regard to ETNs as sense-making processes, I turn to the Two Spirits Treatise from the Community Rule (1QS) from Qumran.

The "Two Spirits Treatise" (1QS III, 13–IV, 26) from Qumran as Participatory Sense-Making

The so-called Two Spirits Treatise (TST) is a passage in the Community Rule (1QS) from Qumran, occupying one and a half columns out of the eleven columns of the entire manuscript.[15] The text is unique in its treatment of creation, cosmic structures, the division and struggle between the forces of light and darkness, humans' place in this struggle, and the eschatological future.[16] This passage is only found in the 1QS manuscript from cave 1, and not in any of the other related manuscripts of the Community Rule.[17] There is an ongoing discussion regarding the origins and background of TST, and whether it was an earlier independent composition that was subsequently inserted into the Community Rule or integral part of the composition.[18]

TST is addressed to the *maskil* (משכיל), an instructor or teacher figure, and contains knowledge which the *maskil* must convey to the "all sons of light" (כול בני אור), concerning the "origins of all sons of man" (תולדות כול בני איש, 1 QS III, 13). This knowledge regards the unchangeable plan of "God of Knowledge" (אל הדעות) encompassing all created beings from before creation to after the eschatological end time (1QS III, 13–17a). According to TST, God created man to rule the earth, and appointment the spirits of truth and deceit (רוח האמת והעול), in which humans must walk. Mankind is divided into two categories: The sons of justice, ruled by the prince of lights (שר אורים), and the sons

[14] Ciołkosz also regards religion as participatory sense-making. While the universal foundations of belief in gods belong to basic cognition, most actual religious practice requires scaffolded, post-linguistic cognition (Ciołkosz 2021, 95).
[15] See the following link for the digital photographs of the manuscript at the website of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem: http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/community. 1QS was first published in Burrows 1951. More recent text editions with translation and commentary are Qimron and Charlesworth 1994, 1–51; García Martínez and Tigchelaar 1997, 69–98; Metso 2019; Hempel 2020.
[16] I have analyzed various aspects of TST in my PhD dissertation: See Bach 2021, 55–87, 133–159.
[17] Minor parts of TST are found in the papyrus manuscript 4Q257 and possibly in another papyrus manuscript, 4Q255. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar has been able to reassign two fragments formerly assigned to 4Q487 and 4Q502 to 4Q257, fragment 5 (Tigchelaar 2001), 194). Furthermore, Tigchelaar has proposed that a small fragment from Cave 1 (published originally as a part of "Tongues of Fire (1Q29)", now relabeled 1Q29a), might be an alternative version of the Two Spirits Treatise (Tigchelaar 2004, 529–548). Cf. Hempel 2020, 98.
[18] I am not concerned with determining whether TST was composed for the sake of 1QS, or whether it was a preexisting text that was integrated into 1QS at some point. For a thorough treatment of this issue see Hempel 2010; Hempel 2020, 99–101.

of deceit, ruled by the angel of darkness (מלאך חושך). However, the angel of darkness is authorized to mislead the sons of justice – a time-limited situation lasting until the annihilation of all evil (1 QS III, 17b–25a). The two spirits are created to enlighten the hearts of mankind, leading them to opposite results: Walking in the path of the spirit of light results in eternal glory, and walking in the path of darkness leads to eternal destruction (1QS III, 25a–IV, 14). The final part of TST concerns the eschatological end time: While humans walk in the spirits of truth and deceit, there is enmity between them, but at the time of his choice, God will end all evil. The people he has chosen for his eternal covenant will be purified, and they will attain heavenly wisdom and insight, and be restored to Adam's glory (ולהם כול כבוד אדם). Until then, humans walk either in wisdom or in folly, and the two spirits fight within the hearts of men (1QS IV, 15–26).

To be clear, we do not know to what extent TST was known by the contemporary community and which functions this passage served.[19] The same applies to the entire Community Rule (1QS), which combines different literary genres (rituals, rule collections, hymnic material). However, Carol A. Newsom has made a compelling case for viewing 1QS as a composition that has to do with identity-making: The rhetorical structure of 1QS, according to Newsom, is "roughly shaped to recapitulate the stages of life as a sectarian: from motivation, to admission, instruction, life together, and leadership" (Newsom 2004, 107). In this context, TST contains the core ideology of what a community member must know about the self and its place within the world (ibid., 127–134).

TST presents itself as a social text, aiming at providing direction for a community. It is formed as an instruction, addressed to the *maskil*(a teacher), who has to pass on its message to a group, "all sons of light." TST is symbolically rich and influenced by cultural notions, as it draws heavily on the creation stories in Genesis.[20] TST further advances these traditions by presenting a cosmic struggle between light and darkness, placing this struggle as an *a priori* plan designed before the creation of the world (See Newsom 2021, 105–11; Bach 2021, 64–87). Furthermore, TST seeks to navigate the lives of its recipients by implying that the ultimate sense of every human life is inscribed in the unchangeable plan of the God of Knowledge:

> From God of Knowledge is everything that is and everything that comes into being, and before their being he established all their plans, and in their being to their appointed times according to his glorious plan they will fulfill their deeds and this cannot be altered. In his hand are the regulations of all things and he supports them in all their wishes. He placed for him two spirits so he could walk in them until the appointed time

[19] There is no consensus regarding the origin of TST inside or outside the Qumran community. Some scholars view TST as an early "pre-sectarian" text adopted by the Qumran community (Stegemann 1988, 125–128; Lange 1995) while others maintain that TST is a late highly developed version of the "sectarian" Qumranic ideology (Collins 2007; Porzig 2019).
[20] The close relation between TST and Gen 1–3 has recently been emphasized by Schwartz 2020. See also Newsom 2004, 86; Newsom 2021, 105–111, Bach 2021, 64–87.

> for his visitation. They are the spirits of truth and deceit, from the spring of light truth originates and from the spring of darkness deceit originates. (1QS III, 14–18).[21]

Seen through embodied participatory sense-making, TST contains both basic and scaffolded cognition. As a culturally shaped narrative, drawing and reshaping traditions TST represents scaffolded cognition, and when it employs embodied motifs such as walking, erring, and stumbling, the text draws on mechanisms rooted in basic cognition. The idea that humans walk along a "path," with each step having at the same time an immediate bodily and a symbolic meaning, transforms individual sensorimotor experiences into a collective, conceptual understanding, which also connotes metaphorical use of "walking on the right path" in wisdom literature. TST outlines the consequences of walking on the path of light (healing, long peaceful life, crown of glory, garment of honor) versus the path of darkness (eternal destruction), thus enacting the opposite values of "good" and "bad" in a profound, existential sense. The narrative reinforces specific moral attitudes and behaviors by linking them to the divine plan and positive outcomes in the eschatological future. The shared understanding of belonging to the "sons of light" or "sons of righteousness" and being guided by the spirit of truth according to a divine plan defines a collective identity and meaning for the community:

> In the hand of the prince of lights is the dominion of all the sons of righteousness, they shall walk on the paths of light. And in the hand of the angel of darkness is all the dominion of the sons of deceit and on the paths of darkness shall they walk (1QS III, 19–21).

On the one hand, TST presents its recipients with sense and direction, and the text becomes a form of "meaning made." On the other hand, the rich mythological narrative of TST invites recipients to engage in continued "meaning-making efforts," searching for deeper meanings behind the symbolic expressions and references. Furthermore, TST also seems to deal with cognitive dissonance, or mismatch between prior expectations and experienced reality, or between global and situational meaning. The passage acknowledges the vexing problem that even the righteous may err from their appointed path, despite the global meaning, according to which the righteous must receive divine blessing and rewards:

> And, by the angel of darkness are all the sons of righteousness misled. And all their sins and their inequities and their guilt and their wrongdoings are in his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God until his end. And all their afflictions and the appointed times of their oppressions are in his resentful dominion. And all the spirits of his lot will cause the sons of light to stumble, and the God of Israel and the angel of his truth are a help to all sons of light (1QS III, 21–25).

[21] Quotations from TST are given in my own translation.

TST portrays a transcendent community (supernatural beings: God, angels, spirits), offering these agents as vehicles for the ongoing meaning-making process that comprises a crucial part of mankind's life. Furthermore, TST points to the "extended authority" of the angel of darkness over the righteous as the cause of their individual shortcomings and failings, thus providing a continuous framework for meaning-making efforts. Additionally, at a collective, communal level, TST addresses the continuous apparent discrepancies between global meaning (the ultimate divine plan for the world) and situational meaning (the actual state of the world), inviting a meaning-making process that includes the knowledge of the origins of evil and the ultimate dissolution of tension at the end time.

TST comprises both meaning-making efforts and meanings made. This function of TST is strengthened by its place (col. 3-4) within the composition of the Community Rule: The passage stands between a description of the community's annual covenant renewal ritual (col. 1-2) and a collection of rules for the community, including the procedure for admitting new members (col. 4-6). Within the entire text, TST serves as the overarching explanation and the meaning behind the ritual practice in the preceding columns, and it also provides direction and motivation for members of the community, as described in the following columns.

To sum up, TST facilitates sense/meaning-making processes both at an individual level and for a community. The text draws on pre-existing traditions and interpretations, transforming them and rendering them suitable as vehicles for sense/meaning-making in the current situation. While providing results of "meaning made", TST also equips its recipients with frameworks for continued "meaning-making efforts", potentially helping them interpret and make sense of new experiences and discrepancies. The narrative includes aspects of basic (pre-linguistic, sensorimotor) cognition, as well as scaffolded (post-linguistic, cultural) cognition. Thus, TST reflects a shared community narrative, supporting processes of participatory sense-making on various levels. These features are shared cross many ETNs, rendering them suitable as a means of participatory sense-making.

Unfortunately, we do not know whether the initiated process of meaning-making efforts that a text such as TST facilitates, goes further than what we can witness within the text. And we do not have any access to know whether any adjustments have been made. However, we do know, that since the discovery of this composition there is a lively debate on the nature and function of TST and its eloquent ways of using the tradition.

Conclusion

ETNs are about the collapses of world orders, when existing worlds cease to make sense. In this paper, I have attempted to show how ETNs are also essentially means for sense-making when our

current experience defies prior expectations. From an Embodied PP perspective, sense-making is not an abstract intellectual process, but deeply intertwined with our bodies and their constant interactions with the world, with the need for survival. Ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts have generally been understood as reactions to unexpected events or crises challenging traditional worldviews, and many scholars have applied the notion of cognitive dissonance to explain the motivation behind these writings. This process of sense/meaning-making can be understood with more precision and clarity when we distinguish between different layers of meaning-making: Meaning-making efforts, meanings made, and meaning adjustments. The idea of embodied participatory sense-making seems to provide useful in explaining both the deep roots of sense/meaning-making in organisms' striving for survival, and the complex linguistic and cultural scaffolding of our brains' models of the world. The Two Spirits Treatise from Qumran could be meaningfully read as reflecting and supporting a process of participatory sense/meaning-making, encompassing both meanings made and meaning-making efforts.

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OTSEM 2025

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Rebuilding Jerusalem's Temple: A Religious, Social, and Economic Analysis of Judean Activities under Persian Rule

I started my dissertation in January this year, and my research aims to understand the temple's activities, taxation, workers' tasks, and the process of leaders' nomination, as depicted in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah (hereafter EN). These texts are essential in understanding the socio-economic and political dynamics of the Judean community during the Achaemenid Empire. In this paper, I will focus on the idea of work in the biblical text, specifically in EN and what it means for understanding labor dynamics in this historical setting. It starts with a brief introduction of the settings of EN and methodology, presents some part of the study on terminology with words related to work, examines topics related to work in EN, and briefly presents debate about the concept of work in economics theories.

The research will analyze biblical literature from an interdisciplinary perspective. The books of Leviticus, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and 1Esdras, despite their historical and theological emphasis, offer valuable information that can contribute to the study of labor work. I will use the Masoretic version of the Hebrew Bible and compare them with the Septuagint when relevant. In addition to the biblical records, the Elephantine Papyri, the Āl-Yāhūdu texts, and the Samarian Papyri (4th century BCE) are the extra-biblical documents that provide evidence of the life of Judean communities and, at times, their correspondence. The name lists from these documents offer data for the analysis of identity, social positions, and origin to cross the correlations. The investigation will also draw from recent publications about the ruling mechanism of Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires, highlighting the significance of the temple's activities for the local community but also to the relationship between the province and the empire. In addition to the literary sources, archaeological and iconographic evidence will supplement the analysis. The research will employ on a methodology that considers the social interaction of nomination by the emperors and the power structure in the political and economic dimensions related to the religious realm. In this context, the tools and concepts of Bourdieu's modern theory will help to rethink the priest organization and labor forces at the temples during the ancient context of the Persian period. The data, viewed through this new framework, will contribute to a broader view of the social structure, incorporating economic, sociological, and anthropological perspectives. The ultimate goal is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the Persian administration of the temples in Jerusalem and its impact on Judean society.

Outline of the Dissertation

Introduction

1) A study on terminology
    - The words related to work
        - in the biblical texts
        - in EN
        - in other ANE relevant texts
    - The words related to taxation in EN
        - in the biblical texts
        - in EN
        - in other ANE relevant texts

2) The work in EN
    - A discussion on the organization of the activities in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple in the book of Ezra according to the priestly tradition
        - The temple as an institution
            - Ritual activities
            - Storage
            - Collector of taxes
        - Identifying the activities in Jerusalem’s temple in parallel with the priestly tradition
        - Activities of the temple in the Babylonian context
        - Political, economic, an social implications of the activities in Jerusalem’s temple
    - A discussion on the organization of the activities in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall in the book of Nehemiah

3) Worker’s identity and tasks
    - The lists in EN
        - Names
        - Positions
        - Comparison with other biblical lists
    - The main characters
    - The payment

4) The difficulties due to the encounter of the remnant people's objectives with the returnees' ones, the imagery about Jerusalem and the temple, and the Persian requirements

5) A theoretical discussion toward concepts and appropriate framework for the study of the meaning of work labor and temple's activities to the local community and the empire

Final Considerations

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The Context of EN

EN has a start and an end: to settle down on the land. The introduction in Ezra 1.1-4 states its purpose: to narrate the return of the Judeans to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, as permitted by King Cyrus of Persia and in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. The four verses indicate that the scribes were situating the history of Israel within the broader context of the rise of the Persian Empire (539 BCE). The story continues based on this introduction. Discussing the return to the land implies a movement of people and planning a new routine in response to the new circumstances. After the Chaldeans destroyed it, Jerusalem lost its status as a great city. Daily life became similar to that of villages, which were essentially agrarian with subsistence production. Agricultural activity was slow, the land was dry, and the production was less than expected. Jerusalem was in ruins, but not empty. The need for restoration shows how important the temple and labor were in reviving this community.

The biblical text affirms that only the poorest people remained in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24.14-16) because Nebuchadnezzar brought captive the court, the officials, all the artisans, and metalworkers. However, 2 Kings 25.22-26 and Jeremiah 40-41 suggest that some members of the upper strata were not taken captive. According to Oded Lipschits (2024), from an archaeological perspective, there is no clear transition between the Babylonian and Persian periods, no distinct phases within the Persian

period, and no evidence of any change in the transition from the Persian to the Hellenistic period. After the destruction of the temple, the site became a pilgrimage attraction without impediments from Babylonia.

In 539 BCE, Jerusalem was not yet an urban center and required restoration. Restoring the temple was not just about a physical structure, but about reviving the entire city, entailing the physical and social structures. This restoration would be a significant event in Jerusalem's history, marking a turning point in its social and economic conditions as well as its status as a city. In Ezra, the theological perspective is one of not resisting the Persians or questioning due to a lack of autonomy (Ezra 9.9); the focus is on organizing activities. However, in Nehemiah's prayer, there is a complaint about the political situation (Neh 9.36-37). Ezra's account is about rebuilding the altar and the temple; in contrast, Nehemiah focuses on rebuilding the city walls and local administration.

The significance of labor dynamics in this context lies in gathering/involving people for construction and administration. This dynamic guarantees the initial stages of revitalizing buildings and walls, while also accommodating social positions to new circumstances and becoming crystalized. While new positions emerge, others adapt or disappear. For instance, in the absence of a local king, officials and the priests have a prominent role. Work related to ritual activities discloses interests in politics, economics, and society. My research aims to understand labor dynamics during this transition and how EN presents the nature of work. A couple of questions to guide the analysis: How do we understand labor as attending to a social demand? How does what we call concern for the economy reveal itself? The idea is to recognize the social settings of Jerusalem and its surroundings in which work is emerging in response to the Persian system's requirements.

My research will analyze biblical literature from an interdisciplinary perspective, a method that ensures a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The historical and philological method, involving grammar and literary criticism, will be employed to analyze the narratives and genres, thereby understanding the writings as accurately as possible. Given the complexity of the text composition, this paper will examine each passage of EN in terms of its literary and historical dimensions, theological perspective, and, where possible, material evidence.

The use of forced labor by the Persians, as a continuity of an Ancient Near East (ANE) practice, is discussed in the literature. Jason Silverman (2015) applied the sociology of forced labor to explore the connection between Persian labor policies and the Judaeans, highlighting the significance of forced labor within the Persian Empire. He suggests that the settlement of Jerusalem, as mentioned in Nehemiah 11, may have involved non-voluntary elements and that the temple might have been part of forced labor systems, warranting further investigation into its social and economic impacts in Yehud. Additionally, Dietler and Herbich (2010) examine the relationship between feasts and the mobilization of collective labor in agrarian societies in modern societies, offering an opportunity to consider feasts as part of the motivation for labor in ancient times, as well as their role in remuneration and

rituals. These feasts not only gather labor for big projects like temples but also turn economic resources into social prestige. In this way, the feasts show the complexity of labor relations, the inequality, and other dynamics of ancient societies.

Given the theological bias of the biblical texts, it is essential to start by listing the words employed in the labor context to identify the type of activity being discussed. To study labor in this context, it is difficult to apply the traditional categories of economics, which tend to classify work as either productive or unproductive. Work has a social dimension that needs to be taken into account in the analysis. In my study of work in EN, I define "work" as a physical and mental effort that leads to an outcome, whether goods or services. In the biblical context, work has a theological implication; it is not only a productive act but also the fulfillment of God's command (Gn 2.15). Different types of work have distinct social meanings and remuneration, which can impact more than just the economy. This assumption challenges the modern classification of labor as a productive activity and the measurement of economic growth. Also, it seeks to identify other parameters to examine the living conditions of a society.

Studies on ancient economies, and particularly temple economies, will be helpful for comparison: Bongenaar (1997); Jursa (2010); Waerzeggers (2010).

In that sense, this comprehensive approach of the socio-economic and political circumstances in EN will provide a deeper understanding of the labor dynamics in Yehud during the Achaemenid Empire period and will contribute to the studies of forced labor in the ANE.

Words Related to Labor

The root עבד (*ʿ-v-d*) refers to the semantic range of "labor or work." It is attested in Ugaritic, Aramaic, Phoenician, and Arabic. The noun עֶבֶד (*ʿeved*) can be understood as slave, servant, dependent, or position of trust, whereas עֲבֹדָה (*ʿavodah*) involves any kind of work, for instance, of a slave, priest, in agriculture or construction (HALOT). This root appears 60 times in EN. For women, instead of *ʿeved*, the word is אָמָה (*ʾamah*), and it forms a pair *ʿeved-ʾamah* (such as in Exo 20.10; Lev 25.6; Deut 5.14; Ezra 2.65; Neh 7.67). By itself, the term *ʿeved* does not specify the activity, requiring the context for its understanding. I will discuss

A more specific word is שָׂכִיר (*sakhir*) that refers to a "hired worker," and שָׂכָר (*sakhar*), to "wage" or "reward." They originate from the root *š-k-r*, with meanings of "hiring" or "rewarding" also found in Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Ethiopian; in Arabic, it is also used for "thankfulness" or "praise." The root is attested 74 times in the biblical text, and as "worker, "*sakhir*," the word is attested 17 times. In Leviticus 19.13, the law prohibits a person from keeping the hired laborer's wage (פְּעֻלַּת שָׂכִיר – *peʿullat sakhir*) overnight. What does it mean to hold the payment? To explore the person? To use the money for another purpose? The existence of this rule suggests a regular practice by the employer, perhaps toward another type of worker, that should be reconsidered in the case of regarding the hired individual.

In Nehemiah, the root *š-k-r* appears 3 times as a verb (6.12-13; 13.2), in the context of hiring the prophet. In chapter 6, Tobiah and Sanballat hired Shemaiah to speak a prophecy against Nehemiah; in chapter 13, it is about the hiring of Balaam as mentioned in Deuteronomy 23.3-6. This passage narrates the hiring of Balaam by the Ammonites and the Moabites to curse the Israelites, explaining why the Law of Moses ordered that none of these peoples may ever enter the assembly of God (Num 22-24; Deut 23.3-6). In using "assembly," it should refer to the rituals in the Temple. These passages seem to disclose that an Israelite and a foreigner could be a *sakhir* and also that the occupation of a prophet was a hired worker and related to administrative and political tasks.

Sakhir appears together with *toshav* (תּוֹשָׁב), from the root *y-š-v*, renders "sojourner, temporary resident, or transient alien" (HALOT). The differentiation between them might be the residency, as *sakhir* is considered permanent and *toshav*, a visitor. However, it is not clear whether this visitor is necessarily a temporary worker. In Exodus 12.45, which discusses the regulations for the *Pesach* celebration and its context, both types of workers are not allowed to participate in the meal, placing them in contrast to the Israelites. However, in Leviticus 22.10, they occupy a similar position to the Israelites because a non-Aaronite is not allowed to eat the holy offerings; neither the *sakhir* nor the *toshav* are, but a person bought by the priest with his own money and those born in the priest's house can eat those offerings. This case concerns the issue of belonging to the holy level of the priests.

Leviticus 25.40 talks about a person from Israel who becomes poor and sells themselves as a *ʿeved* (Lev 25.39). That person cannot execute *ʿeved*'s work and cannot be treated with brutality (Lev 25.43) as *ʿeved*, but as *sakhir* and *toshav*. The justification is that the Israelites were Yhwh *ʿavadim* whom Yhwh brought out from Egypt, and for that reason they shall not sell themselves (יִמָּכְרוּ – *yimmakheru*, nifal, impf) as *ʿeved* (Lev 25.42). *ʿEved* in this case can refer to those who sell themselves because of debts and to those treated with violence in the context of work. If it is not appropriate for an Israelite to perform the service of a *ʿeved*, instead this person should occupy a position as a *sakhir* and a *toshav*, does this imply the debtor would work to pay for debts? In Egypt, according to the biblical description, the Israelites worked with brick (לְבֵנָה - *levenah*), mortar (חֹמֶר - *chomer*), and straw (תֶּבֶן - *teven*), and also performed service in the fields (Exo 1.14; 5.7). So, are these the tasks that defined *ʿeved*'s work?

Yet, v. 41 mentions the end of "the contract" of this impoverished person. In the Year of Jubilee, because it should be a time of release and restoration, where debts should be forgiven, and land was returned to its original owner, the person and their children could "go out" from (וְיָצָא - *yatzaʾ*) the employer and restore their first social status. The biblical text does not use words like freedom or liberation. I am trying not to use these concepts and use the terms "slave, " or "slavery" to have a better comprehension of the interactions. Cornelia Wunsch (2025) discusses the problems associated with the use of semi-free status and the definition of state of ownership and freedom, free vs. unfree; slave vs. non-slave, in the study of ancient Mesopotamia. She proposes, then, to go beyond the legal status of a person and

consider her place and relations within a household to reach a better understanding of the social structure. In this passage of Leviticus 25.39-42, we then see an analogous situation. The term *ʿeved* implies a certain type of contract, reveals social dynamics, and indicates the task being executed.

Although the Israelites could not trade themselves as *ʿavadim*, they could buy *ʿeved* from the foreigners around them, הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֵיכֶם – *hagoim asher sevivotehem* (Lev 45.44), the children of the foreigners living among the Israelites, מִבְּנֵי הַתּוֹשָׁבִים הַגָּרִים עִמָּכֶם – *mibene hatoshavim hagarim ʿimmakhem* (Lev 25.45), and the foreigner sojourners among them, הַתּוֹשָׁבִים הַגָּרִים – *hatoshavim hagarim* (Lev 25.45). This passage implies that *ʿeved* entails the concept of property. The law of Moses permitted the practice in Israel, as the *ʿavadim* were acquired from other peoples, but not among the Israelites. It is also possible to see in the passage that *ʿavadim* were oppressed, and brutality should not exist in the relationships among Israelites. The type of work executed by *ʿeved* or a non-*ʿeved* does not seem to be relevant for the distinction. The discussion about foreigners in Israel can be extended but the purpose of this research is work.

A specific term that implies imposed or forced labor in the Bible is מַס (*mas*), which appears 24 times, but not in EN. Its etymology is not clear. In Jewish Aramaic, מִסָּא (*missaʾ*), it is "tribute, tax;" in Canaanite, $^{\text{ameluti}}$*mazza*, forced laborer; in Akkadian, *massu*, "corvée worker, obligation to do service" (HALOT). Deuteronomy 20.11 brings both terms – מַס (*mas*) and וַעֲבָדוּךָ (*vaʿavadukha*) – in a context of war negotiation, יִהְיוּ לְךָ לָמַס וַעֲבָדוּךָ. The city against Israel, in case of surrender, would serve as forced labor and work for them. Therefore, the first term serves as a kind of penalty, and the labor is its concrete manifestation. In the account of Joshua, the land's inhabitants who were not exterminated were forced to *mas*.

In Proverbs 12.24, the parallelism of *mas* is with *mašal*, "to rule." The proverb is יַד־חָרוּצִים תִּמְשֹׁול וּרְמִיָּה תִּהְיֶה לָמַס׃, "the hand of the diligent will rule//but [the hand] of the indolent will be [put] in forced labor." In general, the word pair "worker-lazy" in Proverbs conveys the idea that hard work leads to a prosperous life (10.4; 12.27; 13.4; 21.5; 24.30-34).

When comparing the MT with the Greek version, the imposition is seen not only as physical effort but also as a form of payment. In Judges, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, Lamentations, and 2 Chronicles, μάς (*mas*) was consistently rendered as φόρος (*phoros*), "that which is brought in, tribute, such as is paid by subjects to a ruling state" (Liddell, Scott). Still in that meaning, in Deuteronomy 20.11, the Greek rendered μάς (*mas*) as φορολόγητος (*phorologētos*), "tributary to, paying tribute to," and it appears only once in the Septuagint (LEH).

Other renderings for μάς (*mas*) were, in Exodus 1.11, ἔργων (*ergon*); γεωργός (*geōrgos*), "one who is occupied in agriculture or gardening" (Gen 49.15). In Joshua 17.13, μάς (*mas*) was interpreted as subjection or obedience ὑπηκόους (*hupēkoos*). The prophecy against Assyria states that the young man would be forced to hard labor – μάς (*mas*), and the Greek text as ἥττημα (*hēttēma*), only once in the Septuagint (31.8).

And why is *mas* not used in EN? Is the idea behind the term *mas* somehow present in EN?

מְלָאכָה (*melaʾkhah*) has been translated as work, duty, trade, objects, property, service, and others. This term is used in the creation account to describe the divine action of creating (Gen 2.2,3), which is extended to human daily activities. Six days of the week are dedicated to work, and the seventh is dedicated to rest (Exo 20.9; Deut 5.13); some feasts, such as *Pesach*, also require a break from work (Lev 23.7, 8, 21, 35; Num 28.18). The term is also used to describe the rebuilding work of the tabernacle (Exo 35.24; 36.1) and to denote specific skills (Exo 35.35; 1 Kgs 7.14). Joseph of Egypt's duties in Potiphar's house are also *melaʾkhah* (Gen 39.11). In 1 Samuel 8.16, one of the king's prerogatives would charge male (עֲבָדִים – *ʿavadim)* and female servants (שְׁפָחוֹת – *šĕfaḥot)* to his service. The term appears twice in Ezra (3.8; 6.22), related to the building of the house of Yhwh, and five times in Nehemiah, regarding the work of the city's wall (4.9; 5.16), the ritual (10.34; 11.22), and the priest and Levites' duties (13.30). The Greek version renders *melaʾkhah* and *meleʾkhet* ἔργων (*ergon*) most of the time.

In 2 Chronicles 8.8-9, these three terms related to work, *ʿeved*, *mas*, and *melaʾkhah*, appear and offer some insight into their use. In this passage, Solomon led to *mas* those peoples not annihilated by Israel, but he did not assign his *melaʾkhah* to the *ʿavadim* among the children of Israel because they were busy with the war. Some questions emerge: Is this parallelism? What kind of work/concept of work do I see here? Are there three categories of labor? Is military activity a different kind of work? Is it just a task from the list of the royal attributions: foreigners and locals?

Given this analysis of some words, such as *ʿeved* and *sakhir*, it was possible to discuss certain aspects of Judean society related to labor. The study examined the regulations regarding wage withholding and the role of workers in the biblical context, as well as the distinctions between temporary and permanent workers, and the implications of Israelites selling themselves due to debt and poverty. It showed the complexities of social status, work, and identity in the biblical context. The distinctions between these roles points out not only the economic functions of labor but also the underlying relationships and power dynamics inherent in them. The ethical dimension related to freedom and ownership, or even social justice, require further examination.

The next step in this section will be a comparison analysis involving a review literature on biblical commentaries and historical accounts. By examining this material, my goal is to identify common themes and divergences for a better understanding of the labor dynamics in EN. Additionally, this analysis will consider how the contemporary interpretations reflect or challenge this ancient and biblical views on labor and social positions.

The Work in EN

The narrative of EN offers insights into a small province whose life functioned around the temple. The temple establishes a set of social relations, connecting people. Edelman (2012) discusses the function of Jerusalem's temple in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods, noting that the renovated temple had administrative and ritualistic functions. The temple was at the same time a worship site, a place to collect taxes and tithes, a treasury, and a storage facility. Also, "it likely was a repository for administrative records and likely held a library" (p. 352-356). The strength of the temple lies in its way of gathering/involving people for the articulation of agriculture, feeding, communal, and spiritual bounds.

In this way, the broad definition of work I suggested to start the research, a physical and mental effort that produces an outcome, whether it be goods or services, becomes helpful in analyzing the dynamics around the temple. Therefore, I selected the following list as work activities in EN for the analysis:

- Rebuilding the temple (Ezra 1-6)
- Rebuilding the city wall (Neh 2.17-4.23, 6.15-16; 12.26-29)
- Performance of rituals (Ezra 3.1-7, 10-13; 6.14-22; Neh 8.13-18; 12.26-43)
- Keeping the city safe (Neh 4.13-23; 7.1-3)
- Organizing the storage/Collecting taxes (Neh 5.1-19; 10.32-39; 12.44-47; 13.4-14)
- Trade (Neh 13.15-22)

For this paper, I will briefly list some issues related to these activities. First, some general observations about the composition of EN and the theological view behind it that will be considered in the research. Some passages show a parallel with the account of Exodus and Solomon's first temple. This parallel implies an intertwined situation of historicity, ideology, and theology.

Who would be the labor force in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple?

The rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple is narrated only in Ezra, and there are three different phases of the construction: the laying of the foundations (1-3); a pause (4); the renewal and, finally, the completion of the temple (5-6).

The context in Ezra 1.1-11 informs that King Cyrus allowed the temple to be rebuilt and returned the vessels brought by Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem's temple (v. 3, 7). According to this section, the return to Yehud is justified by the rebuilding of the temple (v. 2). In that sense, the main reason for the return is construction, and settling down is a consequence. The returnees were the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, the priests, the Levites, and everyone touched by the spirit of God (v. 5). The person in charge was Sheshbazzar (v. 8), who apparently was the first governor of Yehud. This group would be financed by those who decided to stay in Babylon with vessels of silver, gold, goods, animals for transportation and work, and voluntary offerings (v. 4, 6).

In Ezra 6.3-5, the decree of King Cyrus is quoted to sustain the decision of King Darius to support the renewal of the temple's rebuilding. In this section, there are the dimensions of the temple, sixty cubits height and sixty cubits breadth, and the mention of two materials: stones and timber (v. 3). However, there are some differences compared to the first chapter. There is no mention of the returnees, and the Persians would finance the construction (v. 4).

The implication is that, in the first chapter, the returnees would execute the labor force; however, in chapter 6, who would be the labor force?

Payment and feasts

Ezra 3.7 states that they paid the workers to work on the construction of the temple. Silver (kesef) for the stonemasons (חֹצְבִים – *chotzevim*), food (מַאֲכָל – *maʾakhal*) and drink (מִשְׁתֶּה – *mishteh*) for the craftsmen (חָרָשִׁים – *ḥarashim*). The cedar wood from Sidon and Tyre was exchanged for oil (שֶׁמֶן – *šemen*).

Although מַאֲכָל – *maʾakhal*, "food," is not a frequent noun in the Hebrew Bible, it appears 31 times, only in Ezra 3.7 is it used as a compensation for an activity. In 2 Chronicles 11.11, however, it is one of the items in the royal storage, along with oil and wine. On the other hand, מִשְׁתֶּה – *mišteh* (46 times), which means "drinking," refers to a feast (Gen 19.3; 26.30; 40.20; Judg 14.10; 1 Sam 25.36; Isa 25.6; Jer 16.8; Job 1.4; Prov 15.15; Esth 1.3; Dan 1.5). Daniel 1.10 is not evident whether it refers to a banquet or drinking; it may have a different meaning because it follows the particle "et". Could we read banquet instead of beverage in Ezra 3.7? Solomon gave a banquet to his workers (עֲבָדִים – *ʿavadim*) when he started ruling (1 Kgs 3.15); King Ashur offered a feast to his officials (שָׂרָיו וַעֲבָדָיו – *šărav veʿavadav*) when Esther became a queen (Est 2.17).

The Greek texts render *mišteh* as πότος (*potos*), which was a drinking gathering; δοχή (*doche*), a reception; γάμος (*gamos*), for weddings; πότημα (*potema*), ?; συμπόσιον (*symposion*), drinking party with conversation; κώθων (*koton*), a Laconian drinking-vessel (L&S). All the terms refer to a feast, but with a slight difference. In the banquet of Isaiah 5.12 (*mišteh* – *potos*), they had musical instruments and wine (כִּנּוֹר וְנֵבֶל תֹּף וְחָלִיל וְיַיִן). In the divine feast of Isaiah 25.6, there would be meat and wine.

Mišteh of Ezra 3.7 is πότος (*potos*) in the Greek versions, which was a drinking gathering. 1 Esdras does not mention the oil, instead, it adds χαρά (*chara*), which means an experience of happiness, used to express joy or a metonym for a banquet (BDAG).

I do not wish to suggest a reduction of the Hebrew terminology, but it is pertinent to call attention to the role of feasting in labor dynamics. For further information: Henkelman (2011) and Silverman (2024).

Mapping the workers

So far, the workers can be organized into officials, priests, temple personnel, and other occupations. Much of this information comes from the lists.

	Categories	Names
Officials		Ezra Nehemiah Sheshbazzar Yeshua, son of Yozadak Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel Haggai, the prophet Zechariah, son of Iddo Shemaiah, the prophet Tattenai
Priests		
Personnel of the temple	Levites Singers Gatekeepers *Netinim* the sons of Solomon's *ʿavadim*	
Other occupations	Artisans Builders Prophets Traders	

A list of returnees appears in Ezra chapter two, organized by the heads of the fathers' houses (v. 3-35), the priests (v. 36-39), the Levites (v. 40), the singers (v. 41), the sons of the gatekeepers (v. 42), *netinim* (v. 43-54), the sons of Solomon's *ʿavadim* (v. 55-58), and those excluded from the priestly activities for could not prove their origin (v. 59-63). Not counted in this main list of names, there are numbers of male and female servants, and male and female singers (v. 65). There could be some difference between the types of singers. In v. 41, "singers" is in the plural form, while in v. 65, with no family name, there is a differentiation between male and female.

The word *netinim* appears 18 times in the Hebrew Bible, 17 in EN, and once in 1 Chronicles in the context of the temple's activities. This lexeme comes from the root *n-t-n*, which is related to the semantic meaning of "giving," literally it can be translated as "given." The versions render it as "temple's servants." The same word is attested in the Ugaritic texts as "guild." The equivalent term in Akkadian is *širku*, literally "given" people, referring to those bound to the temple by legal, social, and economic ties, but not ritualistic (CAD Š/3 110). Japhet (1968) argues that the tradition of *netinim* dates back to David (1 Chr 22.2; 2 Chr 2.16), and that the sons of

Solomon's *ʿavadim* are descendants of the Canaanite peoples forced to work by King Solomon (1 Kgs 9.20-21).

The lists of EN require a deeper examination, as they seem to offer insights into work and social structure. According to Zevit (2001, 631), the post-exilic genealogies served as an official means to guarantee the rights and territory of the Judeans. Furthermore, he notes that the mention of the chief of the families may indicate that the Judeans continued to live in clusters after the exile. For Laura C. Hasler (2021), the list of Nehemiah3, for instance, is a way of preservation of the laborers names, tying them "to the Judean community by blood, land, and deed (...) This list creates a textual map pf the city: the reader can, in a sense, move with Nehemiah in his inspection of the city wall and its workers, bearing witness to their progress (…) it "is a kind of archival document, but one that shows movement" (p. 324-325). In this sense, it is relevant to observe the relationship between the construction/work and the registration of the activity.

Ezra 3.7 mentions some specific activities: stonemasons (חֹצְבִים – *ḥotzevim*), the craftsmen (חָרָשִׁים – *ḥarašim*). *Hotzevim* appears in the context of the building or repairing of the first temple in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 12.2; Jer 24.1; Prov 9.1; 1 Chr 22.2; 2 Chr 2.1; 26.10). The meaning of this root, *ḥ-z-v*, is related to carving the stone or digging. The root of *ḥarašim*, *ḥ-r-š*, has a broader use in the biblical texts, as it is used in the context not only of the building or repairing of the first temple (2 Kgs 12.12), but also of the palace (2 Sm 5.11), carving images for any deity (Deut 27.15; Isa 40.20), producing swords (1 Sam 13.19). 2 Kings 24.14 describes that Nebuchadnezzar deported all officials, military force, and craftsmen (חָרָשׁ – *ḥaraš*) to Babylon, leaving only the poor in Jerusalem.

In Isaiah 44 (vv. 9, 12-14), there is a brief description of these activities (Isa 54.14 with iron). If Isaiah uses *ḥaarašim* frequently, Jeremiah prefers צוֹרֵף (*ṣoref*) in relating this activity to idols' production (10.9, 14). The translation can be a metalsmith. The root semantic range is melting and refining metal. In Proverbs 25.4, *ṣoref* is a worker; however, its metaphorical use applies to human purification, normally by fire (Zech 13.9), or to divine refinement (Mal 3.3; Dan 11.35) and instructions (Psa 12.6). It only appears in Nehemiah 3.8; 3.32. A description of this worker is in Isaiah 10.19; 41.7.

Another word for metal worker is מַסְגֵּר (*masger*), but it is not attested in Ezra-Nehemiah, only in 2 Kgs 24.14, 16; Jer 24.1; 29.2.

To initiate the study of the profile and work of priests in the priestly literature: Christophe Nihan (2007); Deirdre Fulton (2021).

Work/labor in modern economics theory

Economists, since Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*, have understood "labor" as productive to observe and quantify the growth of an economy. It means they consider work effort the activity that creates a product or service with exchangeable value. At the same parameter, this activity also determines the wage

rates according to the worker's qualifications and the time expended to produce goods or services. According to this concept of labor, then, several efforts are unproductive and excluded. For example, usually, when a person is engaging in productive labor, someone else's unproductive effort is creating or supporting the other's work. A classic example is the woman or man who stays at home, cleans, cooks, and keeps everything in order while the spouse or the roommate spends more time at work.

There are ways to address this narrow concept, such as discussing the social implications of work, questioning the definition of value and the meaning of exchange. Various economic theories have debated the problems with this concept. One perspective, as suggested by Amartya Sen, is to use well-being as a parameter to study economic conditions, living conditions, and well-being.

The ongoing discussion on the meaning of work in ancient times and its implications is a contribution to the contemporary debate of modern economics.

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Otsem 2025

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Project summary

My doctoral monograph dissertation *"She Is Not My Wife, And I Am Not Her Husband" – Metaphorical Divorce of Yahweh and Israel in Light of Ancient Near Eastern Subjugation Treaties* studies the ANE treaty background of the Sinai covenant of the Pentateuch, as well as the marriage metaphor innovation on the Sinai covenant by the Latter Prophets, with a focus on the divorce aspects of the metaphors. Whereas the prior comparative studies between the ANE treaties and the Pentateuch have been mainly focused on questions of dependence and dating of the Pentateuch, my research offers a fresh perspective on the metaphorical world of the Hittite treaties and the treaty-curses of the Neo-Assyrian treaties, from the perspective of how they influenced the Sinai covenant of the Pentateuch and later on the marriage metaphors of the Latter Prophets. I will demonstrate how both the metaphorical world of the Hittite diplomatic language and the broader phenomenon of treaty-curses serve as reference points for the divorce aspects of the differing marriage metaphors of Hosea 2, Jeremiah 2–3 and Ezechiel 16 & 23.

I have gone through the Hittite treaties during my first year and the paper I present here is a collection of the basic information regarding them, as well as the larger metaphorical world of Hittite diplomatic correspondence. Since no similar metaphorical language is known from either the Neo-Assyrian treaties, nor the Sefire treaties, I will focus on the curse aspects when it comes to their sections in my monograph. The overarching argument will be, that the marriage metaphors and the Sinai covenant of the Pentateuch share the underlying metaphor "covenant community is a family", and the treaty-curses of the Pentateuch are based on the larger phenomenon of ANE treaty-curses. Both of these come together in the marriage metaphors, forming a composite metaphor of divorce, which unites the family metaphors and is a metaphorical way of communicating the treaty-curses coming into play against the Israelites and Judahites. The books of Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezechiel have differing ways of emphasizing this breaching of covenant stipulations, Hosea is largely a polemic against Baal with traces of Deuteronomy in it, Jeremiah also seems to be mostly Deuteronomistic in its handling, whereas the book of Ezechiel is much more priestly in its emphasis.

Preface:

This paper maps the metaphorical language of Hittite subjugation treaties and serves as an early part of my monograph. My aim is to show the metaphorical background of the covenant language of the Sinai covenant in Pentateuch and the marriage metaphors of Latter Prophets. The focal point of discussion should be on how well the paper presents the Hittite conceptual world and the treaties as documents. I have cut out the section regarding the structure of the treaties for the sake of saving space.

Language That Binds – OTSEM 2025

Hittite Subjugation Treaties

Hittite treaties as documents

There are 40 treaty tablets that have been found from Hatti, of which 26 are subjugation treaties, 7 parity treaties and 6 of unknown social status.[1] Several more that haven't been recovered are mentioned in other compositions.[2] The treaties were written in late Bronze age cuneiform tablets (1500–1200 BCE) of the Hittite empire found in Boğazköy, Turkey at the archaeological remains of Hattusas. They are written either in the Hittite or the Akkadian language, both utilizing the cuneiform script developed by the Sumerians. Akkadian was the diplomatic language of the age, so the division into the native language and the diplomatic language is quite natural for the diplomatic documents.[3] Some treaties have a version in both Hittite- and Akkadian, while others have been only in the one.[4] The tablets we have are of clay material, but metal tablets are mentioned as well in the texts.[5]

The vassal treaties were used to control the areas at the periphery of the empire of Hattusa. The vassal king or, in the case of a parity treaty, a king of similar social standing, was made to vow loyalty to the Hittite king on the threat of curses from the usually enormous list of potentially angry gods.[6]

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[1] Huddleston 2017, 71–76.
[2] Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 1; Devecchi 2015.
[3] Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 1–2; Laato 2017, 92.
[4] For example, Hittite & Akkadian: CTH 62. Just Akkadian: CTH 66. Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 1–2, 59, 64; Laato 2017, 92.
[5] Van Den Hout 2011, 3.
[6] Schloen 2018, 256–258. The parity treaty in question is between Hattusili III of Hatti and Ramses II of Egypt. CTH 91. Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 96–100.

The term in Hittite for a treaty is *išḫiul,* derived from the Hittite verb *išḫai*-, meaning to 'wrap' or 'bind' something.[7] The word *išḫiul* is also used of instructions given to someone, which has kindled discussion on similarities between Hebrew and Hittite conceptions of law.[8] In the case of diplomatic texts, the *išḫiul* was enforced by an oath, the Hittite word being *lingai*-, from the verb *link-,* to swear or state under oath.[9] The Akkadian equivalents are *rikiltu / rikištu / riksu* with the meaning a fetter or a treaty and *māmītu*, meaning an oath or a curse.[10] The oath was a way to ratify the treaty in the absence of modern international sanctions. After all, the gods were the most powerful entities conceived, so they would be the most likely candidates for those who make sure the treaty stipulations were followed.[11] In addition to oaths, the treaties were at times strengthened by diplomatic marriages to form kinship with the other party of the treaty.[12] This part of the treaties has been previously neglected, but a few scholars have highlighted the importance of marriage in Ancient Near Eastern diplomacy.[13] Usually in case of royal marriage there were stipulations regarding the treatment of the royal consort, some of these are mentioned by Suppilulima I to King Shattiwaza of Mitanni:

> Prince Shattiwaza shall be king in the land of Mittanni, and the daughter of the King of Hatti shall be queen in the land of Mittanni. Concubines will be allowed for you, Shattiwaza, but no other woman shall be greater than my daughter. You shall allow no other woman to be her equal, and no one shall sit as an equal beside her. You shall not degrade my daughter to second rank.[14]

Sadly, very little is known about the social context of Hittite treaties. We have no evidence of a specific ceremony or yearly festival in which a vassal would renew their vow or pay tribute to the suzerain. Some treaties state that the vassal must pay tribute annually or present themselves before the suzerain to renew their vows, which is described as a yearly audience before His Majesty. [15]

While the treaties themselves do not mention specific consequences, the El-Amarna correspondence indicates that failing to appear before the suzerain could raise suspicions of rebellion. In the following letter, the suzerain expresses concern over his vassal's suspicious behaviour and summons him to appear before His Majesty:

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[7] Kloekhorst 2007, 454–455.
[8] Weeks 2004, 86; Taggar-Cohen 2011; 2020; Yanamoto 2016.
[9] Kloekhorst 2007, 609–610.
[10] Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 2; Black & Postgate 2000, 194, 304
[11] Magnetti 1978.
[12] e.g. CTH 105. Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 103–108.
[13] Kalluveettil 1982, 80; Weeks 2004, 83; Charpi 2019; Morrow 2024.
[14] CTH 51; Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 44.
[15] CTH 49, frg 2 Vs I 13. Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 55.

> (42– 54) And inasmuch as you have written, saying: "May the king, my lord, give me leave this year and really I will c[ome] in the second year to the presence of the king, [my] lo[rd]; if not, my son [verily will co]me [to the king]." So now, the king, your lord has released you [in] this year according to what you have said. Come yourself or send your son, and you will see the king at whose sight all the lands live. But don't say, saying, "Give me leave this year also." Moreover, if it is not possible to come before the king; send your son to the king, your lord, in your stead. If it is not possible, let him come. [16]

There is a similar example of a Hittite high official warning the new Ugaritic vassal of their neglect of tribute and of the ceremonial appearance before the overlord:

> Thus says Prince Piha-walwi: Say to my son Ibiranu: At the moment all is well with His Majesty. Why have you not come before His Majesty since you have assumed the kingship of the land of Ugarit? And why have you not sent your messengers? Now His Majesty is very angry about this matter. Now send your messengers quickly before His Majesty, and send the king's presents together with my presents.[17]

Some treaties specify that the treaty shall be read before the vassal at a fixed time each year. For example, in the Treaty between Muwattalli II of Hatti and Alaksandu of Wilusa, it is to be read three times per year. However, the location of the reading remains imprecise.[18]

Although the Hittite treaties are, at their core, diplomatic texts, the Ancient Near Eastern supernatural worldview permeates them, blurring the lines between politics and religion. Distinguishing between the two is anachronistic at best.

This is evident, for example, in the Hittite king's favoured epithets, such as "^{d}UTU" (the Sun) or "^{d}U" (the Storm God). The Hittite king was considered the protégé of the empire's patron deity, either the Storm God or the Sun Goddess. As a result, the king held autocratic power, second only to the gods, acting on his own instinct and judgment.[19] The gods were the originators of the king's right to rule as well as the guarantors of the treaties. This is especially evident in the lists of witnessing deities, the blessings granted to the upholder, and the curses invoked upon the breaker of the treaty.

The treaties were placed in the temple, before the statues of the deities, so that the gods could continuously witness the stipulations and be prepared to curse the violator of the covenant or anyone who dared to break or alter the treaty tablet by any means.[20]

Next, I will present the conceptual world of the Hittite treaty documents and their contemporary diplomatic correspondence. I will do this with two theories, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and the Conceptual Blending Theory.

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[16] EA 162. Schniedewind 2015, 803–808.
[17] Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 127.
[18] CTH 98. Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 91.
[19] Collins 2007, 92–93. A similar view of kingship is common in the broader ANE, see e.g. Töyräänvuori 2014; Walton 2006, 256–268. This close relationship between the Hittite monarch and the patron deity can also be seen in the Hittite kingly prayers. E.g. prayers of Mursilis to the sun goddess Arinna (CTH 376.A), English translation can be found in Singer 2002, 49–54.
[20] Hillers 1969, 35–36.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The Conceptual Metaphor theory (CMT from now on) is a theory that maps the meaning of metaphors by dividing them into two parts. The first part of the metaphor is the *source domain*, which is the image used to communicate the concept that is thought about. The second part is the *target domain*, the thing signified by the image used to communicate about the subject.[21] I will demonstrate this below with Hittite treaties and diplomatic correspondence.

Common Metaphorical Language in the Hittite Treaties

Various metaphorical expressions found in the treaties and their contemporary correspondence provide insight into the conceptual world of the Hittites. The very word behind "treaty" and its usage serves as an excellent example of this.

As mentioned earlier, both the Hittite and Akkadian terms for "treaty" (Hit. *išḫiul* and Akk. *riksu*) refer to a sash or a band—an object used to bind something or someone together.[22] The Hittite verb *išḫai-* as well as the Akkadian verb *rakāsu* mean to bind something together.[23] This establishes the source domain as a bond, whereas the target domain is a treaty, forming the metaphor: "a treaty is a bond." This is particularly fitting, as the treaties were intended to bind kingdoms together.

This conceptual reality is also evident in one of the prominent ways Hittite treaties explicitly form an alliance: nu=šši menaḫḫanda linkatta n=at=za 1-NU-TIM kišantat / “He took an oath with him and they became one”.[24] Pallavidini demonstrates that this expression, which is literally translated as "becoming one," appears frequently in the treaties and signifies the formation of an alliance. "Becoming one" represents the source domain, while an alliance serves as the target domain, forming the metaphor: "an alliance is unity."[25]

Metaphors related to the relationships between the different parties found in the treaties can be summarized by the metaphor: *International society is a family*.[26] In a patriarchal communal society, the family was led by the patriarch, who held the highest authority within the household.[27] This is evident in parity treaties as well as in contemporary diplomatic

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[21] Kovecses & Benczes 2010, 5–9; In my opinion this methodology is demonstrated most efficiently by Day 2008.
[22] Black & Postgate 2000, 304; Kloekhorst 2007, 454–455.
[23] Pallavidini 2020b, 6–7. Black & Postgate 2000, 296.
[24] CTH 68, Rev. III 33. Pallavidini 2020b, 8.
[25] Ibid., 8.
[26] Pallavidini 2020a, 88. Morrow 2019, 320.
[27] Ryken, Wilhoit & Longman 2010, 273–274.

correspondence. The suzerain was referred to as "father" by the vassals, while the vassals were called "sons." The hierarchy in international gift-giving, correspondence, and diplomacy mirrored that of a household, with the king as the highest authority.[28] This is particularly evident in Aziru of Amurru's letter to an Egyptian official named Tutu, in which he expresses his fidelity to the Pharaoh: "a-na ^{I}Tù-ú-tù ENia a-bi-i[a] um-ma ^{I}A-zi-ri DUMUka ÌRka [- ma] / "To Tutu my lord, my father from Aziru your son."[29] A similar letter, sent to Hattusili by the Egyptian prince Šutaḫapšap, a vassal of a Hittite suzerain, reads as follows: ana m Ḫattušili LUGAL.GAL LUGAL KUR Ḫatti abuya qibīma / "to Ḫattušili, Great King, King of Ḫatti, my father, say."[30]

From this, we can see that the metaphor utilizes the source domain of "father," while the target domain is the Great King or suzerain. The same applies to the vassal, who is referred to as a son. A person of lower social standing employs the source domain of son and the target domain of vassal.

The metaphor of a family is found also in the parity treaties, where the kings of similar social standing pronounce their alliance: u nīnu k[i ŠEŠMEŠ ša 1-en abi u ša 1-et MUNUSAM]A / "we are like brothers, from one father and one mother."[31] Similar calling of kings of equal rank as brothers is also amply evident from the contemporary correspondence.[32] The metaphors source material is brotherhood and target domain is alliance, thus *alliance is brotherhood*.

The previous conceptual examples provide a framework of various metaphors that convey alliance and unity. Interestingly, the absence of unity, as well as the dissolution of alliances and treaties, also have their own metaphors. The primary concept associated with breaking an alliance is *separation*.

In the treaty between Tutḫaliya and Šunaššura, the dissolution of the alliance between Kizzuwatna and the Hurrians is conveyed through the following statement: itti LÚ Ḫurri ipṭuru / "they separated from the Hurrian." The use of the Akkadian verb for separation is paṭāru, and it means "to loosen / to untie."[33] Therefore the underlying metaphor is that of

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[28] E.g. Kopanias 2015. Another couple of terms used in same meaning as father / son are lord / servant. Pallavidini 2020a, 87.
[29] EA 158 obv. 1–2. Schniedewind 2015, 786. It must be stressed that the official Tutu is under the authority of the Pharaoh.
[30] KUB 3.70; Edel 1994, 34. Pallavidini 2020b, 3.
[31] CTH 91 Obv. 31–32. Pallavidini 2020b, 3.
[32] Ibid., 4.
[33] CTH 41.I, Obv. 31–32; Pallavidini 2020b, 8. Black & Postgate 2000, 271.

untying a bond, with untying being the source domain and breaking of an alliance the target domain.

Pallavidini offers another example and stresses how the Hittite preverb *arḫa* brings forth the idea of separation. The text is as follows: KUR URUWiluša ANA KUR URUKÙ.BABBAR-ti kuedani memiyani šēr awan arḫa tiyat / "in this matter, the land of Wiluša completely separated from the land of Ḫatti".[34] All the previous examples show how alliance is depicted as unity and closeness, even as family ties, whereas breaking alliance is separation. The source domain is separation and the target domain breaking of alliance, thus *breaking alliance is separation*.

Family, unity and bond are quite fitting metaphors for communicating diplomatic relations, for they are relationships as well. The untying of that bond and separation from a family is also an apt way of communicating the breaking of an alliance.

Conceptual Blending Theory

Conceptual Blending Theory is another theory utilized to track how metaphors work. As shown before, CMT works well when tracking singular metaphoric expressions and when the metaphoric inquiry is quite narrow in focus.[35]

When tracking a broader number of different metaphors, Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT from now on) is often taken into use. Whereas the CMT identifies singular metaphors, the CBT shows how the metaphors and the things they signify form a unified blend that usually requires high cultural knowledge of shared ideas. Oakley and Coulson give an ample example in *nation as ship*. The nation as ship metaphor gives us many cross-domain correspondences that highlight the strength of CBT.

In the metaphor ship signifies nation, whereas the course of the ship is an image used of the policies of the nation as well as steering the ship stands for determining national policies or actions. The citizen of the nation can naturally be presented as the crew of the ship, and the national success can be pictured as the forward movement of the ship, as well as failures of nation as sailing mishaps. The circumstances surrounding the nation might as well be presented as the conditions of the sea.[36] Oakley and Coulson present these blends in a few short sentences:

> "Without the consent of our fellow citizens, we lose our moral authority to steer the ship of state."

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[34] CTH 76, Obv. I 4–5. Pallavidini 2020b, 8.
[35] Dancygier 2017, 29–30.
[36] Oakley & Coulson 1999, 5.

> "The [Sri Lankan] ship of state needs to radically alter course; weather the stormy seas ahead and enter safe harbour."[37]

As can be seen from the sentences above, they use many different metaphors that blend to communicate something with the unison of the metaphors. This can also be mapped more precisely by presenting the general space that unites the two conceptual domains that blend, as well as differentiating the two different conceptual domains. The two conceptual domains have Cross mapping between them, meaning both domains use similar entities, agent(s) and so on. The Blend is formed by selectively projecting elements from both domains. Dancygier uses the word input instead of Domain, so in the following diagram (Diagram #1) the word input will be used instead of domain:

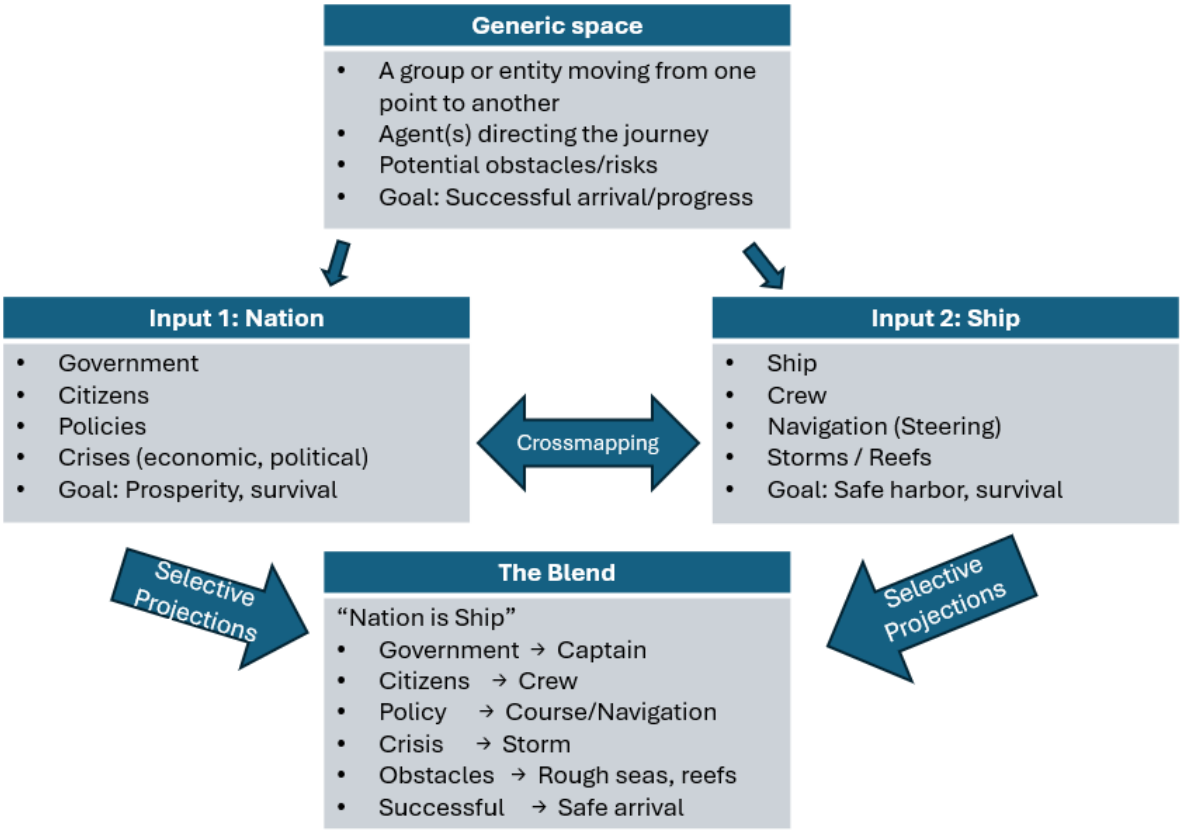


Diagram #1[38]

When it comes to the use of CBT in regards to the primary sources presented in this study, it will include many different metaphors that work together to form a larger metaphor blend in treaties coined by Pallavidini and Morrow as follows: *International society is a family.*[39] The first input will be a treaty between political entities, and the second will concern a family. A

[37] Ibid., 5–6.
[38] Cf. Dancygier 2017, 33; Oakley & Coulson 1999, 3.
[39] Pallavidini 2020a, 88; Morrow 2019, 320.

similar blending of domains is also evident in the metaphorical language used to describe the covenant in the Pentateuch, whereas the Latter Prophets innovate upon this by developing the family metaphor into that of a marriage. In both cases, the Pentateuch and the Latter Prophets employ the metaphorical blend "*Covenant is a family*," with the Latter Prophets introducing the innovation "*Covenant is a marriage*," to communicate that the stipulations of the covenant have been broken.

Conceptual Blending in Hittite treaties and Amarna Correspondence

As previously presented, there are various metaphors that the Hittites utilized when communicating the treaties. The metaphors listed before are *Treaty is bond, suzerain is father, alliance is unity, vassal is son, alliance is brotherhood* and *breaking alliance is separation*. By drawing them together the treaty and family language form a blend. The generic space has a group of entities with ties to each other, agents of different status, a bond that ties the entities together, and breaking the alliance is getting separated from the group, which in the treaties means that the treaty-curses come into play. The input #1 is a subjugation treaty, the input #2 is a family. These form a blend; *international society is a family* (see Diagram #2).

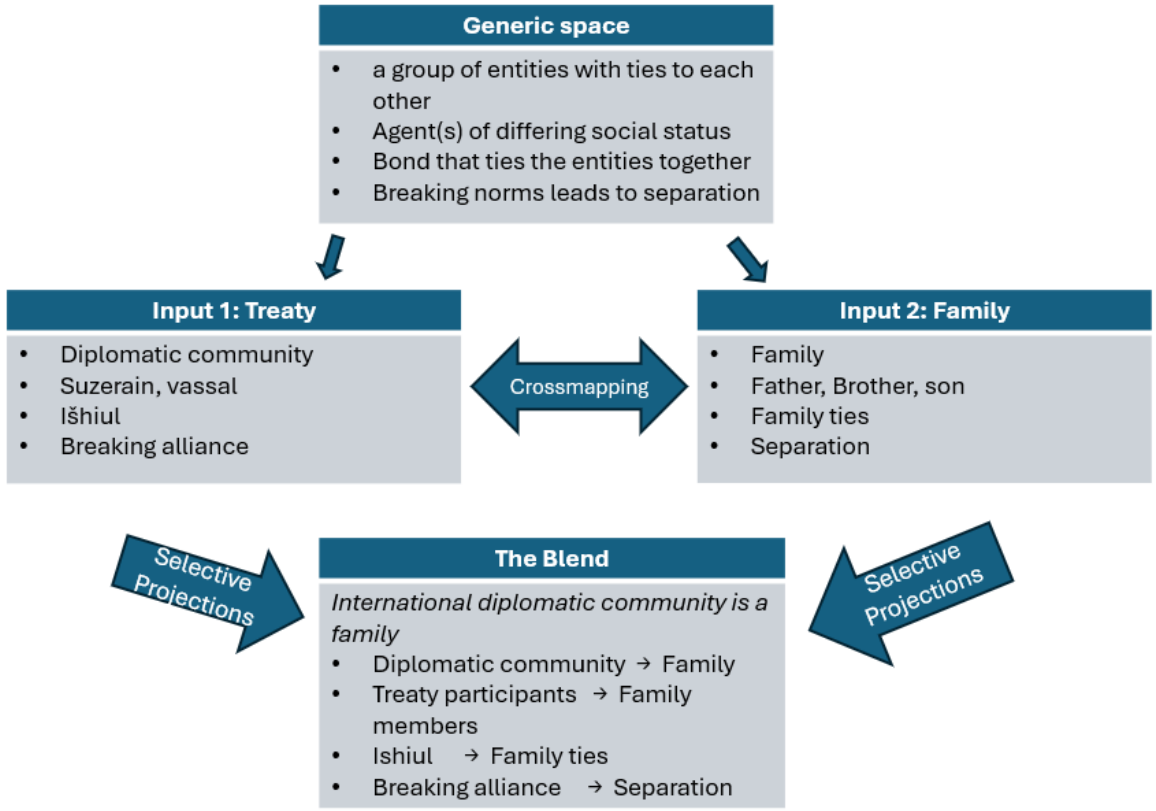


Diagram #2

We can see in this diagram how close the language of a treaty and family are to one another, as they form the blend. The diplomatic community is talked of as a family, which is primarily done with the father and son or brotherhood metaphors. The Father was of higher social standing than the son and had much more responsibility. On the other hand, the sons of the family had many duties and were subservient to the father of the enlarged family.[40] All of the members of the family had duties to the family and society allocated to them according to their gender.[41] This patriarchal system of "House of the father" can be seen also in the Hittite law code §46, where a *luzzi*-service of an owner of a smaller field will be rendered to the house of the father, that being the principal heir.[42] The older males, especially the patriarch or the first-born were in a higher social status and responsibility.

In addition to the father / son metaphor presented in Amarna correspondence, there are different kinds of metaphors that communicate the differing social status of the participants of the treaty. Pallavidini notes that in the subjugation treaty between Šuppiluliuma I and Šattiwaza, King of Mittani communicate the beginning of the treaty relationship as follows: Šattiwaza DUMU Tušratta ina ŠU-ya aššabatma / 'I took you, Šattiwaza, son of Tušratta, in my hand.' This expression is in response to a Mittani prince escaping Šuppiluliuma I earlier, which is precented in the historical prologue of the treaty. In general, it denotes protection, but in the treaty context, it means primarily subjugation to be in the hand of the Great King. This expression has also no motion in it, though it denotes the general closeness between the participants, for to be in hand of someone is to be nearby. This again reinforces the larger metaphor blend of diplomatic treaty being a family due to closeness of the participants.[43]

As another observation it is interesting that a marriage was also a contract between families, with a negotiation about the bride-price, dowry and issues pertaining to inheritance. The contract had also stipulations and consequences to breaking them, which mostly had to do with the bride-price and dowry. The mentions of divorce in the Hittite texts don't however

[40] Trevor 2011, 86–89, 94–95. In Shawn Broyles' study it is estimated that the Hittites had earlier a matrilinear kinship system, but by the time of Old Kingdom we can see a full adoption of the patrilinear kinship culture of the surrounding nations. Broyles 2011. For a more in-depth study of Hittite kinship and marriage, see Pringle 1993.

[41] Pringle 1993, 159–175.

[42] Roth 1997, 223–224. Puhvel sums up the meaning off Luzzi as follows: "To sum up, luzzi was not a specific form of service distinct from šaḫḫan but meant simply the discharge or rendering or payment of an imposed or forced obligation. It is an old legal term matching Greek lúsis "ransom" and Latin so-lutio "payment"." Puhvel 2015, 66.

[43] CTH 51; Pallavidini 2025, 103–104.

list a fine that is to be paid according to stipulations like other marriage documents found from the Ancient Near East.[44]

When it comes to the metaphor of *Treaty is bond,* it is evident that this is utilized to make an image of family ties that unify the participants. This is reinforced by the familial language discussed earlier, as well as the breaking of alliance being communicated with separation. It evokes a picture of a family being separated from each other. However, the treaty-curses that follow breaking of alliance are never communicated metaphorically in the Hittite text corpus. The *Treaty is bond* metaphor is again reinforced by other bodily expressions in the subjugation treaties.

Continuing with the expressions regarding hands, the metaphorical use of the hands in accord with the vassal convey the idea of protection as well. The Hittite expression *ŠU.ḪI.A arazhanda ḫar(k)-*, literally "to hold the hands around (someone)," reflects a metaphor of care and safeguarding. The phrase appears in a diplomatic context: *ŠUḪI.A–[KA]–ya=mu=1 arazhanda QA-TAM-MA U-UL ḫarši / "If you are not well-disposed to the person of My Majesty, the soul of My Majesty, and the body of My Majesty, and you do not hold me in a protective embrace... ŠUḪI.A–uš=za arazhanda ḫarši / in the same way as you are well-disposed to your own person, soul, and body, and hold yourself in a protective embrace"*. While this "embrace" is clearly metaphorical, it illustrates the conceptual framework of protection — as if the vassal were literally cradling the king in his hands. This image of physical closeness effectively communicates the emotional and political obligation to safeguard the ruler.[45] Similar familial duties of protecting the family were and are a given in both many ancient and modern civilizations. This idea of protection and social cohesion based on duties is put nicely by Hoffner as he is describing the utility of the Hittite family system:

> Families were cohesive social units, not just because of shared affection, but because mutual loyalty between members of nuclear and extended family groups gave financial security and protection.[46]

Hoffner's observation about loyalty and protection within the family shows that, in this case, the blending of diplomatic and familial relationships involves relatively little selective projection. The duty of protection appears to be a matter of course in both types of

[44] See for example Hittite laws §26–34. Roth 1997, 220–222. This is also noted by other scholars. Instone-Brewer 2002, 1–20; Pringle 1993, 182–199. On Hittite divorce, see Pringle 1993, 358–359.
[45] CTH 42, obv. I 22–26. Pallavidini 2025, 104.
[46] Hoffner 2003, 106.

relationships, suggesting a universal phenomenon in communal cultures.[47] In these metaphors the conceptual images of closeness and unity have to do with alliance. In the context of Hittite subjugation treaties, both the protection of the Hittite king and the military support owed to him by a subordinate ruler are carefully delineated. In the treaties the protection given by the Great King to the subordinate was also a given. Pallavidini notes that these treaties not only establish loyalty but also emphasize the concept of physical and metaphorical proximity to the king as a marker of allegiance. For instance, military support is conceptualized through proximity-based language, such as the phrase: *IŠ-TU ŠA DUTUŠ-maḫhan artati nu IŠ-TU ŠA DUTUŠ-pat EGIR-an arḫut* — "As you have stood on My Majesty, you shall continue to stand only on My Majesty." Here, the verb *ar-* ('to stand') conveys unwavering support and loyalty.[48] This verb also appears in other formulations, like *nu zik Ḫukkannaš DUTUŠ-pat aššul paiši EGIR-pa=anna= A-NA DUTUŠ-pat arḫut* — "You, Ḫukkanna, benevolently protect My Majesty, and stand behind only My Majesty." In this case, the idea of support is reinforced through a slightly different spatial orientation: standing *behind* the Great King.[49]

This metaphor of standing behind someone is also used of changing alliances. For example, in CTH 42 this is conveyed as follows: našma apēdani imma EGIR-an tiyaši A-NA DUTUŠI-ma awan arḫa tiyaši; 'if you go behind him and you go away from My Majesty.' This expression conveys that breaking alliance is to follow someone else and to break a relationship to form another. The proximity is switched, going far from the suzerain, as one becomes close to another. In a similar manner family units in the ANE were closely knitted communities that held the honor and loyalty to the family in high regard.[50] Benefiting someone else more than the family collective or changing from one community to another would most certainly have been seen as a betrayal.

Weeks concludes his treatment of the Hittite treaties by noting that they belong to a distinct conceptual world and understanding of relationships. In his view, this challenges the notion of a unified treaty tradition or the claim that Hittite material merely borrows from earlier Mesopotamian traditions.[51] Although it must also be acknowledged that similar forms of correspondence likely occurred in the cultures represented by the other surviving treaties,

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[47] Regarding this topic and the difference of individualistic and communal cultural lenses of interpretation of the Bible, see Richards & James 2020.
[48] Kloekhorst 2007, 234–235.
[49] Ibid., 104.
[50] Moxnes 1993, 28.
[51] Weeks 2004, 95. This possibility has been speculated by scholars like Laato 2017, 92.

as evidenced by the Mari correspondence.[52] The sad reality, however, is that such documents have not been excavated or translated, so I will not make arguments from silence.

Either way, the many metaphors that are utilized reflect a highly developed conceptual understanding of treaties. It should be noted that these metaphors primarily concern the relationship between the different parties of the treaty. Pallavidini also discusses several other metaphorical expressions, such as *Power is up*, *Control is down*, and *Good is up*.[53] That said, for the purposes of this study, the metaphors that focus on the relational aspects of the treaties are sufficient.

This way of communication about the relationship between the suzerain and the vassal is also strengthened by the non-metaphorical commandments of guarding the reputation of the Great King. One such is listed in the Treaty between Mursili II of Hatti and Kupanta-Kurunta of Mira-Kuwaliya, and reads as follows:

> Furthermore, because people are treacherous, if rumors circulate and someone comes and whispers before you: "His Majesty is undertaking such and such to your disadvantage, and will take either the house of your father or the land away from you, or he will mistreat you in some way," write about this matter to My Majesty. And if the matter is true, when I, My Majesty, write to you, you shall not act rashly, nor do … And you shall not commit evil against My Majesty. This matter shall be taken to your heart. Take it to your heart today![54]

As well as protecting the reputation of the Great King, the subordinate had to protect the Great King from any possible coups and rebellions. This is based on the social status difference between the participants, as well as the tyrannical nature of the rule of the Great King, a form of hegemonic masculinity.[55] Messerschmidt attributes hegemonic masculinities "as those masculinities that legitimate an unequal relationship between men and women" and also stresses that this similar hierarchical setting is also present between men of higher and lower status.[56] Because of this built-in unequal social standing between the hegemon and his subordinates, those of lower status often aspired to attain the position of the highest hegemon.

At the same time, the hegemon must continually demonstrate his ability to maintain his place at the top of the hierarchy. In this sense, the reign of a tyrant—and the image he projects—is inherently fragile and vulnerable to being undermined. Therefore, his reputation and status must be vigorously and constantly enforced. This is also evident in the constant

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[52] Schloen 2001, 256.
[53] Pallavidini 2017, 97; Pallavidini 2025, 103–104.
[54] Beckman & Hoffner 1999, 79.
[55] Connel & Messerschmidt 2005; Messerschmidt 2018.
[56] Messerschmidt 2018, 112.

need of vows of loyalty from the subordinates and commands to rat out any possible coup attempts.

Although family dynamics in the ANE didn't usually include such a tumultuous power struggle, at least in the narrative texts, a few examples can be found. Most usually these are as well in a royal setting of a son usurping or trying to usurp his father's throne.[57] A power struggle between Ham and Noah is depicted in Genesis 9:18–27, but that also serves as an aetiology for the Canaanites and must be read in its literary context.[58] Similarly to that the struggle of Jacob and Esau is an aetiological account (Gen. 25–27).[59] Because of the tyrannical background of the treaties, the vows of loyalty and the emphasis on upholding reputation do not find close parallels in the broader context of Ancient Near Eastern families—unless we look specifically at royal households. However, the metaphorical blend *"international society is a family"* does not inherently require a royal context, but rather pertains more broadly to families in general, even though the metaphor originally emerged from the strictly royal setting of diplomacy between kingdoms.[60]

Conclusions on Metaphorical Language of the Hittite Treaties

All the previous remarks about metaphorical language used in the Hittite subjugation treaties and the Amarna correspondence strengthen the case that the differing conceptual images utilized of treaties and participants of them find close relationship between the domestic culture of the Hittites. The blend formed from both the family concepts and treaty concepts show that they share a larger conceptual language of relationships. The differing status of the participants, the ideas about proximity and bond as well as separation or being far away from one another are very natural ways of communicating political relations.

The notion of mutual protection is of great importance in both the subjugation treaties and in the context of a family. When a vassal becomes bound in a treaty to the suzerain, it also becomes his responsibility to protect the reputation and position of the suzerain. This in part strengthens the notion that both the family ties and a treaty bind the participants together, and not just metaphorically so. Even the subjugation aspect of being in the hand of the Great

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[57] For example, in Ugaritic literature Kirta's son Yassub tries to usurp his father for failing to rule rightly. KTU 1.16:6:23–58. Another example from the Hebrew Bible would be that of Absalom usurping David's throne (2 Sam 13–18).

[58] For this interpretation and presentation of all previous interpretations of the passage, cf. Bergsma & Hahn 2005.

[59] Gertz et al. 2012, 335–338. Note the other Patriarchal aetiological accounts of Reuben, Simeon and Judah (Gen 35:22, 49), Joseph and his brothers (Gen 37–50). These accounts do include power struggles,

[60] Cf. Kopanias 2015.

King finds some resemblance in domestic realities, since the wives and children were categorized as the property of men in patriarchal societies.[61] This being said, it might not be farfetched to assume a family relationship usually had warmer relations than that of between a suzerain and a vassal.

Regarding the metaphor of separation, a family member could be disowned for breaking the rules of society or could leave to join another group and form a new kinship unit. Thus, the metaphor of separation fits well within the broader domestic culture of the Ancient Near East.[62]

ChatGPT has been used in this paper for proofreading and editing.
ChatGPT OpenAI. *ChatGPT* (GPT-4o & -o1). 2023. https://www.openai.com/chatgpt.

[61] Hittite law §26a lists children and land as things the man receives after a divorce, whereas §26b describes how after a divorce the man can sell her wife to a man who would buy her for 12 shekels of silver. Engl. Trans. Roth 1997, 220.
[62] For example, in the code of Hammurabi, a reason for disownment of a son had to be presented before the judge, who would adjudicate whether the son is guilty of a crime. In the case of absence of evidence, the father couldn't disown his son. CH §168. Cf. Fleishman 2001. We do not have such examples from the surviving Hittite

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OTSEM 2025

Project Summary: Studying Prophetic Sign-Acts as Literary Ritual Action

I began my doctoral project in early 2025. I am currently working at the University of Helsinki as a salaried doctoral researcher. The supervisors of my project are professors Martti Nissinen and Jutta Jokiranta. The paper I am presenting at this year's OTSEM is my first conference paper during my doctoral studies. I intend to write a monograph, so I do not plan to develop the paper into a separate journal article. During the first seven months of my research, I have focused on mapping the history of scholarship on my topic, investigating methodological possibilities, and determining which texts to select as the primary subjects of my analysis.

The case study on Ezekiel 5:1–4 was written for the first time for this paper. The remaining content is largely derived from the extensive background reviews I wrote earlier this year. In the paper, I mainly condense and sometimes expand that material. Although there are still many open questions regarding the methodology of my project that I need to address, I consider it important to include a concrete case study already in this paper, even if my working theory remains preliminary and evolving. I hope that this exploratory effort will help to further develop the theoretical framework of the project. I see OTSEM as an ideal occasion at this stage of my research, in which many questions regarding methodology are still unresolved.

My research focuses on the prophetic sign-acts of the Hebrew Bible and their characteristics as ritual action. The objectives of my research are closely tied to methodological questions. The study of sign-acts has long followed a paradigm in which the actions are primarily seen as communication – messages to be understood. At the same time, the connections of sign-acts to magic and ritual action have not been taken seriously. My aim is to broaden the scope of scholarly discussion and to fill the methodological gap by applying ritual studies to the study of the prophetic sign-acts. This also relates to recent developments in the field, in which ancient prophecy is increasingly understood as not just transmitting knowledge, but also as a bodily phenomenon – as *embodied mediation*. (see Portier-Young 2024.)

I seek answers to questions such as how sign-acts express ritual form and other ritual characteristics. I approach the sign-acts as literary prophecy, which prompts the question of whether the ritual nature of a sign-act is in some way related to the reader of the text. The concept of the *implied reader*, derived from reader-response criticism, thus fits into the frame. Applying the concept of the implied reader, it becomes possible to explore certain aspects of ritual that emerge in the interaction between a ritual and its observer. In a literary context, the interaction is instead between the text and the implied reader constructed by the text. The concept of imagination is also particularly relevant to both: sign-act texts employ ritual imagination, and also engage the reader's imagination, inviting them to imaginative participation. While the theoretical approach I propose is ambitious, it is one of the goals of my research to test concepts from ritual studies and literary studies within the context of the study of prophetic texts.

My research focuses on several prophetic sign-acts. Sign-acts appear widely in both the Former and Latter Prophets, most prominently in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Around 40 texts can be identified as including a sign-act. However, these texts are so diverse in both form and content that a clear genre or fixed definition of a sign-act cannot be established. Scholars have always had to construct new definitions of the category based on their own research interests. Accordingly, I must also make a text selection suitable for the aims of the project.

To this end, it is reasonable to narrow the selection down to the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which contain nearly all of the elaborately detailed sign-act texts. To exclude the various unclear cases – such as those lacking an actual action – I include only those texts that feature a *sequence of bodily actions involving an object*. This working definition helps focus the analysis on the clearest and most relevant cases. It also excludes several texts that are virtually always included in comprehensive studies of sign-acts. However, a complete overview of every sign-act text in the Hebrew Bible is not within the limits of this project, because such a wide focus does not allow for in-depth analysis.

The strict working definition results in a corpus of 12 sign-act texts: Jer 13:1–11; 19:1–13; 27:1–15 & 28:1–14; 32:1–44; 43:8–13; 51:59–64; Ezek 4:1–8, 9–17; 5:1–17; 12:1–16; 21:23–29; 37:15–28. Even this amount is rather extensive, if each case is to be analyzed thoroughly from ritual and literary perspectives. If I need to further select some of them as the core subjects of the analysis, these five will serve as the primary focus: Jer 13:1–11; 19:1–13; 51:59–64; Ezek 4:1–5:17; 12:1–16.

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Ezekiel in Action: Ezekiel 5:1–4 as Literary Ritual Action

Preface

This paper is part of the early-stage theorization and methodological exploration of my doctoral research. To make the subject matter more tangible, an analysis of one text-case is included. In the discussion section that follows, a few key methodological perspectives are introduced. I am generally interested in hearing any thoughts this might provoke. Here are a few possible areas of discussion for the session.

1. What are the main difficulties in studying prophetic sign-acts, and how should they be addressed in current scholarship?
2. What are the challenges of applying ritual studies to literary sources, particularly to sign-act texts?
3. Is the proposed literary emphasis viable, and what implications might it have for the study of prophetic texts in general?

Introduction and Research History

Prophetic sign-acts are conventionally understood as the actions of the prophets intended to convey specific prophetic messages. They encompass a wide range of action, from more mundane ones, such as Jeremiah buying a field (Jer 32:1–44), to bizarre or obscure actions, such as Isaiah going naked for three years (Isa 20:1–6). Research has not yet established an exact definition of this category, resulting in the absence of a clear, established set of texts. The difficulty of categorizing the sign-acts can be seen in the variety of terms scholars have used to describe them as a whole, often reflecting a particular research perspective.[1] I use the term *sign-acts* because it has been the most widely adopted in research.[2]

Many of the prophetic sign-acts resemble ritual action in several ways, and some of them have already been connected to known ritual practices.[3] However, ritual studies have not yet been applied to the analysis of sign-acts. I aim to address this gap by utilizing

[1] *Sign-acts/Zeichenhandlungen*, e.g., Friebel 1999; Lang 2001; Krispenz 2014; Erzberger 2015; Mayfield & Barter 2025). *Symbolic acts*, e.g., Fohrer 1953; Viberg 2007. *Analogical acts* is coined by Ott 2009. *Prophetic drama* is used by Stacey 1990. *Acts of power* is coined by Overholt 1989. Some scholars only speak broadly of *prophetic action*, e.g., Amsler 1985.
[2] Probably the main influences being the prevalent German term *Zeichenhandlung* and Friebel's monumental work *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts*, see Friebel 1999. Notable exceptions to the quarter-century ubiquity of the term are Viberg 2007; Ott 2009.
[3] E.g., Ezek 4:4–8 and Jer 19:1–13, see Ott 2009, 137–145; Liebermann 2025, 62; Schöpflin 2025.

contemporary research on rituals in my work. Supporting this novel perspective on action-prophecy is the fact that embodiment in prophetic activity has gained considerable attention within the field in recent years.[4] Viewing sign-acts primarily as bodily action is a helpful frame for analyzing their ritual characteristics.

Since the ritual perspective could easily lead to futile speculations about historical events behind the texts, I stress that the sign-acts are part of literary prophecy. Therefore, as literary prophecy is prophetic mediation directed toward the reader, it is necessary to adopt some concepts and perspectives from literary studies to give the reader the required theoretical attention. This task is not easy, so it remains to be seen if the concepts of *literary ritual action* and *the implied reader* in this paper prove useful in the study of the sign-acts. This paper contains methodological discussion regarding ritual and literary perspectives, as well as an analysis of Ezek 5:1–4, highlighting some ritual features of the sign-act. Next, I will present a brief overview of the most important previous studies on the sign-acts.

The research history comprises a diverse set of perspectives and methodological innovations. The most popular approach over time has been to study the acts as *symbolic communication* directed towards the assumed historical audience of the prophet.[5] The actions are typically treated as signs or symbols, and the task has been to uncover the symbolic meaning behind the act. The acts have been seen as a mode of prophecy among the other prophetic content of the prophetic books. Hence, the question of the *actual performance* of the acts "behind the text" has been (and still is) a major concern for many studies.[6]

Georg Fohrer laid the groundwork for contemporary conceptions of the sign-acts.[7] His conclusions concerning the sign-acts' form, evolution, efficacy and parallels have been widely considered outdated.[8] Nevertheless, especially his idea of sign-acts as a literary genre continues to be repeated in the literature. Some of the less popular theoretical inventions after Fohrer include David Stacey's view of the acts as "prophetic drama" that taps into a divine reality, and Thomas Overholt's conception of the acts as ways to legitimize the prophet's social authority.[9]

A significant line of study has been to compare the sign-acts to performance art. Bernhard Lang, Jutta Krispenz, and Johanna Erzberger have each put forward their own model of sign-acts as performances.[10] Kelvin Friebel, on the other hand, regards the sign-acts

[4] See Portier-Young 2024.
[5] The primary and most thorough example being Friebel 1999.
[6] This was especially the case in the pre-Fohrer era, e.g., Robinson 1927; Van den Born 1935. Historical plausibility was a crucial question especially for Friebel 1999. Contemporary studies acknowledge the question but a shift of focus to a literary perspective can be seen, e.g., Schöpflin 2025; Tuell 2025.
[7] Fohrer 1968.
[8] See e.g., Lang 1986, 302–305; Viberg 2007, 15; Ott 2009, 172–175; Erzberger 2015, 104–105.
[9] Overholt 1989; Stacey 1990.
[10] Lang 1986; 2001; Krispenz 2004; Lang 2008; Krispenz 2014; Erzberger 2015.

as nonverbal communication that employs several communicative and rhetorical strategies.[11] The studies of the 20th century have been criticized, for example, for being overly theory-heavy, placing too much importance on the historicity of the sign-acts, and using ambiguous modern parallels.[12]

The latest attempts to study the sign-acts as a whole were made by Åke Viberg in 2007 and Katrin Ott in 2009.[13] They both share an objective to correct the methodological obscurities of previous studies, step back from using too complex interpretative models, and provide more coherent and clear presentation of the sign-acts than previous studies. Viberg's study operates on a more general level regarding both sources and methodology, whereas Ott applies a stricter hermeneutical model to a closely defined, much smaller subcategory, which she calls *Analogiehandlungen*.[14] They both seek to better understand how the sign-acts function on the symbolic level and categorize them accordingly. After these works, only some articles have been published on the topic, notably in the 2025 collection *Ezekiel's Sign-Acts*.[15]

From Magic and Embodiment to Ritual

Magic has long been a controversial topic in the study of sign-acts. It was noted already in early 20th-century research that sign-acts, for example Jeremiah breaking a jar, resemble magical rituals.[16] The conceptions of magic in the Hebrew Bible and in ancient Near Eastern sources have been highly problematic throughout most of the history of scholarship. At the core of the issue is a prevailing dichotomy between magic and religion. A common example is viewing magic as a primitive practice, naturally overcome by a "higher" form of religion. This kind of definition is now recognized as prejudiced and obsolete, but the division still stands, for example, in seeing magic only as a vernacular practice, opposed to "correct" institutional religion.[17]

The most popular way of articulating the division has been to define magic as coercing the divine, and religion as complying with God's will. This view has largely defined the study of magic in the Hebrew Bible, including the study of the sign-acts.[18] The popular paradigm of

[11] Friebel 1999.
[12] See e.g., Friebel 1999, 384; 2001, 36–37; Viberg 2007, 28–30; Ott 2009, 12–13, 176; Erzberger 2015, 105–106.
[13] Viberg 2007; Ott 2009. Only a few articles have been published, notably the collection of Mayfield & Barter 2025.
[14] See Viberg 2007, 13–54; Ott 2009, 17–34.
[15] Mayfield & Barter 2025.
[16] See e.g., Lods 1927; Robinson 1927; Guillaume 1938, 170–177; Robinson 1942; 1946, 227; Lindblom 1962, 165–173. For a comprehensive review of early research concerning magic, see Friebel 1999, 41.
[17] Schmitt 2004, 3–23.
[18] The pejorative views of magic in many texts from the Second Temple period make it convenient for some to state that "Israel's religion" had nothing to do with magic. For a recent example of this exceptionalist view of the Hebrew Bible compared to other ancient Near Eastern practices, see Gane 2020. For a detailed scrutiny of the research history of magic in the Hebrew Bible, see Schmitt 2004, 29–42.

seeing the sign-acts solely as a form of communication has allowed most scholars to claim that the apparent links to magical practices in the sign-acts have no relevance.[19] This blanket refusal is questionable and reminiscent of the way older research found the "primitive" magic impossible to exist in the context of the "high" Israelite religion.

Rüdiger Schmitt, in his work *Magie im Alten Testament*, argues against the marginalization of magic in research. He states that the magic–religion dichotomy does not reflect the reality of magic in the ancient Near East, and should be abandoned. In his view, instead of coercing the divine, magic is "symbolic anticipation of divine intervention."[20] He further proposes that magic could be defined as ritual action that references the transcendent and produces a desired empirical result.[21] Schmitt also briefly points out some similarities between magical practices and the sign-acts – especially in the form of magic that tries to destroy or harm enemies. The use of harmful magic is most evident in the breaking of a jar (Jer 19:1–13), throwing a scroll into the Euphrates (Jer 51:59–64), enacting a war scene (Ez 4:1–3), and cutting and burning hair (Ez 5:1–4).[22]

The discussion about magic is only a part of a wider issue that arises when sign-acts are reduced solely to the communication of ideas. What is left out in this narrowing is that sign-acts also are fundamentally *action* that involves agents, bodies, space, and so forth. Anathea Portier-Young explores these long ignored themes of embodiment in terms of the phenomenon of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. She makes a case that the study of prophets and prophecy has long been stuck in a logocentric paradigm, in which prophecy is viewed only as verbal and mental activity.[23] In this line of thought, every kind of prophetic activity in its core has information content to be comprehended by its receiver. The embodied experience of the prophet is only a medium in this process, subordinate to the conveying of information.[24]

[19] The clearest in their total rejection of magic are Amsler 1985, 45–52; Friebel 1999, 41–69; Viberg 2007, 18; Ott 2009, 172–175. Lang (1986; 2001; 2008) shares the rejection except for allowing magical interpretations of 2 Kg 13 and Jer 51. Schöpflin (2025) relativizes the whole discussion by arguing that the literary nature of the actions makes the question of magic irrelevant. Hutton (1995) tries to retain magic as a social concept. His study, however, has little value here, as he ends up concentrating more on the social power of prophetic speech than on the sign-acts he set out to study.
[20] Schmitt 2004, 90–92, 103–104.
[21] Here Schmitt is using a definition of ritual by Grimes 1982, 48. See Schmitt 2004, 10, 24.
[22] Schmitt 2004, 141–144.
[23] Portier-Young 2024, 3–29.
[24] Portier-Young 2024, 12–16, 37.

The primacy of verbality and information content in prophetic mediation is more of a bias in research than a feature that stands out from the texts themselves.[25] Portier-Young argues that embodiment is not only in a supporting role in the process of mediation, but also something that is mediated. Thus, she views prophecy as *embodied mediation* – the embodied experience of the prophet makes the divine reality available in a tangible form, for example, through emotions, senses, encounters, and relationships.[26]

The shift to viewing prophecy as a wider phenomenon than just the communication of ideas thus also challenges the symbolism-paradigm in the study of sign-acts. They have to be considered as more than just packages of information to be decoded. I argue that a wider and more integrative approach to the sign-acts is to be found when they are studied as *ritual action*. Schmitt already paves the way for this approach when he presents a definition of magic as action that is fundamentally ritual in nature. Thus, he already brings ritual to the forefront of the study of sign-acts.[27]

Essentially all studies on the sign-acts have been dismissive of the possibility of viewing the sign-acts in the frame of ritual action. This is mostly due to two viewpoints that are seen as unreconcilable: the notion that the sign-acts are unique events that were not repeated, and the simplistic definition of ritual as repetitive conventional action. Most scholars abandon the topic at this stage, providing no further discussion or more nuanced definitions of ritual action.[28] This is an untenable position. The sign-acts, while perhaps singular in their execution, still draw on conventional practices, contributing to their rituality. Furthermore, an exhaustive definition of ritual cannot be formed by one characteristic, such as repetition.

How should we then define ritual and ritual action? It is widely acknowledged in ritual studies that an exact formal definition of ritual is not reachable. Like the concept of religion, it is better described by family characteristics or as a fuzzy set. Many family characteristics of ritual can be identified – for example, repetition, embodiment, strict prescription, redundancy, self-framing, opaque goals or the presence of a special agent, place, or time. Every ritual has varying degrees of some of the characteristics, but none of them is definitive above the others.[29] Even the line between ritual and non-ritual is not clear-cut. Rituals are formed in a

[25] Portier-Young 2024, 38–43.
[26] Portier-Young 2024, 30–46.
[27] See Schmitt 2004, 90–92, 138–144.
[28] E.g., Lang 1986; 2008; Ott 2009, 174; Krispenz 2014; Erzberger 2015. Stacey (1990, 61) presents the same view, but still discusses ritual action throughout his work, leaving the picture unclear.
[29] Snoek 2006, 3–11; Grimes 2014, 192–195. See also McCauley & Lawson 2002, 10–15; Laidlaw & Humphrey 2006, 275; Turner 2006; White 2021, 257–260; Xygalatas 2022, 66–70, 81–82, 88–92.

process of ritualization, which results in actions being on a continuum, having degrees of ritualization.[30] Sign-acts reside in the grey area between clearly ritual and clearly non-ritual. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the broader term *ritual action* of them, leaving more room for considering the actions within the continuum of ritualization.[31]

Ritual studies has already been applied for many years in studies of Hebrew Bible texts.[32] These studies, however, often centre on Leviticus and the temple cult in general, and have not considered more ambiguous cases, like the prophetic sign-acts. Nevertheless, ritual qualities can be found in the sign-acts. For example, the lack of evident repeatability is substituted by another type of prescription – rigid ritual instructions coming from an external source.[33] Almost all of the sign-acts are in the form of commands by God.[34] This divinely prescribed nature of the acts makes every detail of their form and content matter.

As I mention above, parts of certain sign-acts have been recognized to point to some commonly known rituals in the ancient Near Eastern context. There are also connections to ritual texts of the Hebrew Bible. For example, Ezekiel's lying on his sides (Ez. 4:4–8) is linked with the atonement ritual in Leviticus 10:1–20 and 16:1–22.[35] Leviticus 16 is also a good example of that on a more general level, the prescriptive style of the sign-act texts often resembles ritual instructions of the temple cult. The fact that Jeremiah and Ezekiel are identified with the priestly class (Jer 1:1; Ezek 1:3) can also shed some light on the connections to the priestly ritual practices.[36]

Thus, even though the sign-acts are not directly part of an established ritual tradition, such as the temple cult, and might not be subject to a long process of ritualization, they still contain parts that are thoroughly ritualized. Catherine Bell talks about *ritual invention* in similar terms. There has always been improvisation and invention of novel ritual action, and usually it involves adapting "familiar images and patterns to new purposes".[37] Schmitt also connected the idea of ritual creativity and spontaneity with interpreting ancient Near Eastern

[30] E.g., Grimes 2014, 193. See also Xygalatas 2022, 27–49.
[31] Snoek (2006, 13) uses ritual behavior as a similar broader term.
[32] See e.g., Klingbeil 2007; Bonfiglio 2020; Janzen 2020; Lawrence 2020.
[33] Rappaport (1999, 24) considers it essential that the ritual agent has not come up with the ritual themselves. See also Laidlaw & Humphrey 2006, 275–276.
[34] Command is the only account of the action for example in Jer 16:1–9; 19:1–13; 27:1–15; 43:8–13; 51:59–64; Ezek 4:1–5:17; 6:11–14; 12:17–20; 21:11–12; 37:15–28; Zech 6:9–15. Additionally in most of the texts that provide a report of the action itself, it is only in addition to the command: for example Isa 20:1–6; Jer 13:1–11; 32:1–44; Ezek 2:8–3:3; 3:22–27; 12:1–16; 24:15–27; Zech 11:4–17. It is worth noting that a command is present in nearly all of the texts with the exception of Jer 28:1–14.
[35] Yip 2021, 117–125; Liebermann 2025, 62.
[36] See Grabbe 1995, 46–47; 2019; Hilber 2019. Also the temple as a ritual space receives significant attention in both books, especially in Ezekiel. See e.g. Ezek 8:11–16; 45:18–46:15.
[37] Bell 1997, 223–225, 235–237. See also Langer et al., 2006.

magical rituals.[38] This perspective can be a fruitful alternative to seeing ritual just as something that solely relies on established conventions.

Sign-acts have been analyzed through the years using various different theoretical models and paradigms. Astonishingly, this diversity of approaches still lacks the adoption of ritual studies in order to study the sign-acts as ritual action. With the examples I present above, it is clear that the sign-acts can be studied as a form of ritual action.

Ezekiel 5:1–4: General Remarks

In Ezek 5:1–4, the prophet receives commands from God to perform actions on his hair. No previous study has hesitated to define these as sign-acts.[39] The text is particularly fitting for this type of case analysis because it concretely depicts bodily action to be performed by the prophet himself.

וְאַתָּה בֶן־אָדָם קַח־לְךָ חֶרֶב חַדָּה תַּעַר הַגַּלָּבִים תִּקָּחֶנָּה לָךְ וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ וְעַל־זְקָנֶךָ וְלָקַחְתָּ לְךָ מֹאזְנֵי מִשְׁקָל וְחִלַּקְתָּם:	**1** And you, O mortal, take a sharp sword; use it as a barber's razor and run it over your head and your beard; then take balances for weighing, and divide the hair.
שְׁלִשִׁית בָּאוּר תַּבְעִיר בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר כִּמְלֹאת יְמֵי הַמָּצוֹר וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־הַשְּׁלִשִׁית תַּכֶּה בַחֶרֶב סְבִיבוֹתֶיהָ וְהַשְּׁלִשִׁית תִּזְרֶה לָרוּחַ וְחֶרֶב אָרִיק אַחֲרֵיהֶם:	**2** One third of the hair you shall burn in the fire inside the city, when the days of the siege are completed; one third you shall take and strike with the sword all around the city; and one third you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them.
וְלָקַחְתָּ מִשָּׁם מְעַט בְּמִסְפָּר וְצָרַרְתָּ אוֹתָם בִּכְנָפֶיךָ:	**3** Then you shall take from these a small number, and bind them in the skirts of your robe.
וּמֵהֶם עוֹד תִּקָּח וְהִשְׁלַכְתָּ אוֹתָם אֶל־תּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ וְשָׂרַפְתָּ אֹתָם בָּאֵשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ תֵצֵא־אֵשׁ אֶל־כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:	**4** From these, again, you shall take some, throw them into the fire and burn them up; from there a fire will come out against all the house of Israel. (NRSV)

These actions conclude the series of sign-acts that begins in chapter 4. By 5:1, the prophet has constructed a model of a siege, lain on his side, and prepared siege food. After the actions, a lengthy divine speech unfolds in 5:5–17, offering explanation and interpretation of 5:1–4.[40]

The prevailing interpretation of the symbolic meaning of this passage is that it depicts the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem following the siege depicted in chapter 4. The references to the city and to the siege establish a direct link between this passage and the previous sign-acts. Thus, the setting of the sign-act remains the same as in chapter 4. The hair is usually taken to represent the people of Jerusalem, and the destroying actions upon the hair

[38] Schmitt 2004, 140–141. Here Schmitt relies mainly on Bell 1997, 159–161, 223–242.
[39] Even Ott (2009, 28–30) with the strictest definition considers it a clear case.
[40] The widespread view that the speech would connect to the entirety of sign-acts in 4:1–5:4 is too speculative to be taken seriously, see Allen 1994, 55–56; Schöpflin 2025, 83.

to represent the dying and scattering of the people. Accordingly, 5:3 symbolizes a surviving remnant of the population. On a general level, 5:1–4, as well as 5:5–17, constitute prophecy of judgement. However, ambiguous expressions, especially in verses 3 and 4, make it hard to form a detailed picture of the content of the prophecy.

For many scholars, the central task has been to identify the "original form" of the sign-act, as much of the text in chapters 4 and 5 can be seen as a product of redaction. This search also relates to the rather problematic view that some actual historical prophetic performances can be studied through the sign-act texts. The common solution regarding 5:1–4 is that verses 1 and 2a are the earliest part of the text, and 2b–4 constitute a later expansion.[41] For example, according to Allen, the opening expression קח לך puts 5:1–2 alongside 4:1–2 and 4:9–11 as the third core action in the whole account.[42]

It has also been argued that verses 3–4 represent the exile, so they have to be later than the siege-related actions of 1–2.[43] However, this separation based on interpreted themes is somewhat artificial. There is no reason why themes of siege and exile could not appear together from the start – the displacement of the remaining population was not an unseen consequence of a successful siege in the ancient Near East.[44] While verses 3–4 significantly complicate the structure of the sign-act, they at the same time form a coherent unit with the preceding two verses, especially on the level of vocabulary.[45]

A few text-critical issues may be noted. The most significant difference between the MT and the LXX lies in the division of hair in 5:2. The division is threefold in the MT, and fourfold in the LXX. In the LXX, the first two parts of the hair are to be burned – this repetition has likely resulted in the intentional or accidental omission of the second part in the MT.[46] Hence the repetition, the fourfold division does not differ significantly from the threefold in terms of the content of the sign-act. Due to the omission, the MT text in 5:2 contains a redundant לקח, which, although creating a connection to the surrounding verses that also use the same verb, confuses the syntax in relation to the following נכה.[47]

The end of 5:2 is generally regarded as an explanatory expansion, as it shifts focus from Ezekiel's action to God's. It also reflects the same expression in 5:12, both probably citing

[41] E.g., Zimmerli 1979, 154–155; Allen 1994, 57; Pohlmann 1996, 94; Ott 2009, 124; Yip 2021, 112. In contrast, Brownlee (1986, 80–82) offers a different, more speculative model of merging of two distinct sign-acts into one.
[42] Allen 1994, 1–19.
[43] E.g., Zimmerli 1979, 154–157. This line of thinking applies also to all of the actions in chapter 4.
[44] Block 1997, 95.
[45] Block 1997, 104; Friebel 1999, 239–241.
[46] Lust et al., 2001, 148; Yip 2021, 106. For the case that MT would be earlier, see Allen 1994, 51.
[47] Allen (1994, 52); Viberg (2007, 200) argue that the verb was added to harmonize with surrounding verses. See also Ott 2009, 122.

Lev 26:33.[48] In contrast, Friebel proposes that the drawing of a sword after the hair could be read as Ezekiel's action, if אָרִיק was read as תריק.[49] This reading is speculative, but also compelling, because it makes the third action cohere with the second, both ending with Ezekiel's action with the sword against the hair. In 5:3, the plural of כָּנָף is often considered an incorrect form, under the assumption that the word refers to an entire cloak.[50] However, the plural is appropriate, as the word actually denotes the skirts or corners of a cloak.[51]

A major ambiguity in verses 3–4 concerns the expressions מִשָּׁם and וּמֵהֶם עוֹד. What they refer to as the source of the additional hair to be preserved and burned is up to interpretation. Scholars generally agree that מִשָּׁם in 5:3 refers solely to the hair that was scattered to the wind.[52] The source of the hair to be burned in 5:4 is contested between two equally plausible alternatives. Some scholars maintain that these hairs are taken from those bound in the skirts in the preceding verse.[53] Others argue that they too come from the ones scattered to the wind.[54]

The motif of the people's division and scattering, and the idea of an exilic remnant, appear elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel, and also in other books of the Hebrew Bible. Ezekiel 5:1–4 is connected in particular to Isa 7:20 and Lev 26. In the former, the shaving of hair with a razor functions as a metaphor for Assyria's emptying and humiliating of Israel. Ezek 5:1 is commonly understood to be a concretized version of a similar metaphor.[55] The covenant curses in Lev 26, on the other hand, have many connections to Ezek 5. In addition to the overarching theme of judgment, more specific thematic and verbal parallels are present, such as the drawing of a sword and the scattering among the nations.[56] According to Viberg, it is impossible to establish literary dependence in either direction, but the texts nevertheless share a common tradition.[57]

Ritual Features of Ezekiel 5:1–4

Many of the ritual characteristics mentioned above can be identified in the text. First of all, the actions are strictly prescribed: they are presented as divine commands to the prophet. In

[48] E.g., Allen 1994, 71; Pohlmann 1996, 94.
[49] Friebel 1999, 237–238.
[50] Zimmerli 1979, 151; Greenberg 1983, 110; Allen 1994, 52; Ott 2009, 123.
[51] Viberg 2007, 200.
[52] Friebel 1999, 239–241; Ott 2009, 124; Yip 2021, 112, 130–132. However, in the LXX, the corresponding ἐκεῖθεν refers to the brick city, see Lust et al., 2001, 148.
[53] Allen 1994, 72; Schöpflin 2025, 82; Tooman 2025, 199.
[54] Friebel 1999, 241; Yip 2021, 130–132.
[55] Greenberg 1983, 126; Allen 1994, 71; Pohlmann 1996, 94; Viberg 2007, 202.
[56] See e.g., Greenberg 1983, 109, 127; Allen 1994, 71–78; Yip 2021, 131.
[57] Viberg 2007, 205.

other words, the entirety of the sign-act is determined and handed down to Ezekiel by an outside source. The stages of the sign-act are all outlined in detail. For example, Ezekiel is not only told to burn some of the hair, but also how and when to do it. The inclusion of weighing equipment also indicates a required level of precision.[58] Thus, the division of the hair into three parts is clearly meant to be a measured division in equal parts, not merely an approximation. Repetition can also be found, at least in the stages of the action towards the hair in 5:2, and generally in the use of קחל-verbs: Ezekiel is repeatedly told to take something, and then proceed to act.

A special time and setting are mentioned. The action must take place after the "siege" has ended (5:2), referring to the siege-related sign-acts of chapter 4. The setting is the "city", which undoubtedly denotes the brick-city and the surrounding miniature siege equipment described in Ezek 4:1–3. The brick becomes a center of ritual space also in this sign-act – hair is burned on it and struck around it.[59] Even the scattering to the wind relates spatially to the brick city: the wind carries the hair further away from it.[60]

Thomas Lawson and Robert McCauley have proposed, in their ritual form hypothesis, that agents and objects are at the very center of ritual form and how humans cognitively assess rituals. A pivotal concept in religious rituals is supernatural agency, which can be associated either with the ritual's principal agent, making them a "special agent", or with the patient of ritual action. In the case of special agent rituals, the patient usually, conversely, represents humans or something other in the natural world.[61] Even without this particular theoretical frame, or any other perspective stemming from ritual studies, the *roles* of Ezekiel and the various objects in the sign-act have been a popular subject of the studies trying to interpret the symbolic meanings of the action. Particularly 5:1 has received much attention, because in the shaving of his head, Ezekiel is both the agent and the patient of the action. Would this imply a double role?

The most widely accepted symbolic interpretation of 5:1 is that Ezekiel, as the agent cutting the hair, functions in the role of God. Since the hair symbolizes the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as shown below, Ezekiel's head could then represent Jerusalem, from which the people are being removed.[62] This would make him occupy two roles simultaneously. On the

[58] Block 1997, 105.
[59] Greenberg 1983, 108; Allen 1994, 71; Block 1997, 105; Viberg 2007, 201. According to Ott (2009, 124), סְבִיבוֹתֶיהָ in the second action does not refer to the city, but to the hair that is just to be struck around.
[60] Friebel 1999, 238.
[61] McCauley & Lawson 2002.
[62] Eichrodt 1970, 87; Greenberg 1983, 127; Pohlmann 1996, 95; Friebel 1999, 235–236. The head could also be interpreted to represent the land more generally as a reflection of the idea of the holiness of the land, most prominent in the Holiness Code, see e.g., Lev 18:28; 26:6.

other hand, no one has yet suggested that Ezekiel, acting on himself, could also symbolize God cutting the people away from *himself*. It is also worth noting that the prophet's hair becomes a separate ritual object only in the course of the sign-act, when it is separated from the ritual agent. Viberg, focusing more on the meaning of the hair, argues that Ezekiel takes the role of God not until 5:2, and therefore has no particular symbolic role in 5:1.[63] Ott emphasizes Ezekiel's identification with God, and distinguishes two different modes of acting in that role. In verses 1–2 and 4, Ezekiel acts as the hostile God, while in 5:3, he acts as the God that saves the people.[64]

In any case, representing God seems to be the primary role of Ezekiel in 5:1–4 as a whole. The sign-act thus appears to fit well with the ritual form hypothesis: God, as the supernatural agent, is associated with Ezekiel, making him the special agent of the ritual. At the same time, the patient of the action (mostly the hair) represents the people of Jerusalem. God's agency permeates the whole sign-act, since God is both the source of the ritual instructions and the agent to whom the ritual agent is associated. Finally, Ezekiel's role as a prophet in the sign-act subverts the conventional prophetic role. As Schmitt points out, instead of interceding between God and the people, in 5:1–4 Ezekiel is an active agent in the destruction of Jerusalem and the people.[65]

Ritual objects play a significant role in the sign-act as both instruments and patients of the action. The fire can be counted as one of the instruments, while certain objects, such as the brick, were already introduced as ritual objects in chapter 4. The centrality of objects to these sign-acts is indicated already by the fact that 5:1, as well as 4:1 and 4:9, begins with a command to pick a specific object. In this case, it is a sword.

It is noteworthy that Ezekiel has to cut his hair with a *sword* rather than with a razor. For instance, the closely connected Isa 7:20 does not mention a sword used as a razor. A sword-motif appears frequently in the book of Ezekiel, symbolizing the themes of war and judgement.[66] The use of a sword also connects 5:1 to 5:12 and 5:17, in which God uses a sword as an instrument of judgement.[67] Thus, the חרב that is used to cut hair is too meant to be understood as a weapon of war, not as a small dagger that would be more practical as a razor.[68] In 5:1–2, the sword has not only one function, but at least two: it is first used to cut

[63] Viberg 2007, 204–205.
[64] Ott 2009, 125. There is an interesting parallel between 5:3 and 4:3 – in both of them, Ezekiel's action in the role of God is expressed by צור. In 4:3, the verb denotes laying a siege, and in 5:3 binding into a garment.
[65] Schmitt 2004, 144.
[66] Joyce 2009, 88; Ott 2009, 124; Schöpflin 2025, 81.
[67] Viberg 2007, 201.
[68] Block 1997, 104; Friebel 1999, 233.

hair in 5:1, and then to strike it to the ground in 5:2.[69] Striking is an ordinary use of the sword, even though the target is unusual. By contrast, using the sword as a razor is distinctly unconventional. Were the prophet to use an actual razor, the shaving would be a relatively ordinary act. The use of an evidently cumbersome instrument instead points to the sword's ritual significance; it lacks practicality but carries with it connotations of war. It also establishes the sword as the main instrumental object in the sign-act, as it is used again in the following verse.

The most crucial ritual objects in 5:1–4 are undoubtedly the hair. At least in verses 2–4, the hair represents the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The meaning of cutting the hair in the first verse has been interpreted in various ways. Many scholars have observed possible connections to mourning rituals as well as to the treatment of prisoners of war and slaves. Thus, the shaving has been understood to represent, for example, grief, humiliation, shame, and the loss of identity.[70] These interpretations attribute various kinds of hair symbolism to the sign-act perhaps too eagerly, as many of them, at the same time, try to hold that every sign-act has a clear, singular symbolic message. Shaving related to mourning is an active action of the mourning agent themselves, whereas shaving done to a slave is an act of subjugation, imposed upon a passive agent. How could the prophet's bald head also symbolize the humiliated people, if the cut hair already represents them? When the vagueness of the prophet's role and agency in the verse is added to the mix, the resulting confusion, in my opinion, reveals the problematic nature of the symbolic message paradigm.

Some scholars have also pointed out that here Ezekiel, identified as a priest in 1:3, appears to violate the law banning the shaving of priests' hair (Lev 21:5).[71] This tension cannot be denied, but the meaning of Ezekiel's shaving cannot be interpreted as a renunciation of his priestly role either.[72] Ezekiel's identity as a priest is not foregrounded in the sign-acts of chapters 4–5, except in 4:14–15, which is generally considered a later addition, trying to resolve the tension between priestly status and the consumption of defiled food.[73] Seemingly, the shaving did not pose a similar problem in terms of Ezekiel's priestly identity.

[69] The third one would be the drawing of the sword towards the scattered hair, if following the Friebel's correction mentioned above.
[70] Zimmerli 1979, 172; Greenberg 1983, 126; Stacey 1990, 190; Block 1997, 104; Friebel 1999, 234–236; Galambush 2007, 540; Viberg 2007, 202; Ott 2009, 123; Schöpflin 2025, 82.
[71] Greenberg 1983, 126–127; Block 1997, 104; Ott 2009, 123.
[72] Yip 2021, 132.
[73] See e.g., Friebel 1999, 198–200.

Viberg highlights another connection that has received little attention since it was proposed by Baruch Levine in his commentary on Numbers.[74] They argue that Ezekiel 5:1–2 alludes to the deconsecration rite of a nazirite (Num 6:18), in which the hair of a nazirite is cut and offered as a burnt sacrifice. These are the only two instances in the Hebrew Bible where hair is burned.[75] Viberg's interpretation of this connection is that the cutting of the prophet's hair symbolizes the deconsecration of the people of Israel.[76] The idea of deconsecration also fits with my earlier suggestion that Ezekiel's head could be understood as representing Jerusalem or the land. The sword passes over the land (as in Lev 26:6), cutting the people from it and deconsecrating the land. The key point from a ritual perspective is that Ezek 5:1 draws from another ritual – elements from an established ritual context are adopted into a new one, in which their form and function may be transformed.[77]

The disposing of hair in 5:2 can be examined in the context of ancient Near Eastern magic. According to Schmitt, hair is one example of the many personal items that could be used in destruction spells.[78] In Ezek 5:2–4, hair is indeed destroyed, pointing towards a larger-scale destruction event. A peculiar detail is that the hair in this case does not belong to an external, hostile party, but to Ezekiel himself. Accordingly, the represented annihilation is not directed toward an outside enemy, but inward, to the prophet's own people.

The weighing of the hair is an example of ritual redundancy. It can be interpreted to symbolize a precise and thorough judgement.[79] At the same time, the supposed act of weighing is not an essential part of the sign-act's symbolism.[80] It serves no practical function in dividing the hair into thirds. Eichrodt considers the weighing so pointless, that he calls it a "cynically mocking process".[81] Thus, the weighing in the context of this sign-act is a case of highly redundant activity. It lacks instrumental value, but gains its relevance from the prescribed ritual frame. The entirety of the sign-act can also be identified as *goal-demoted* activity. The intended goals of the individual actions in 5:1–4 are not immediately observable

[74] Levine 1993, 233–234; Viberg 2007, 202–204.
[75] Viberg 2007, 203. They are also the only two instances, where the cutting of hair is expressed as עבר עַל־רֹאשׁ, see Viberg 2007, 204.
[76] Viberg 2007, 204.
[77] This is related to the idea of "transfer of ritual", theorized by Langer et al., 2006. It also has to be noted that the term "ritual context" here does not need to refer to any actual ritual practice, but the instructions in literary form already constitute a ritual context in themselves.
[78] Schmitt 2004, 152.
[79] Zimmerli 1979, 173; Schöpflin 2025, 81. Block (1997, 105) even finds a connection to a Babylonian magical ritual that includes the weighing of hair. Absalom also weighs his hair annually in 2 Sam 14:26, but the meaning of this weighing is more to point to the absurd amount of hair.
[80] Viberg 2007, 205.
[81] Eichrodt 1970, 87.

from the actions themselves, although the reader of the text can roughly gather that they relate to the fate of Jerusalem's inhabitants.

As ritual action, the sign-act in Ezek 5:1–4 fits well within the framework of Portier-Young's *embodied mediation*. The text is replete with the prophet's embodied experience, even when presented as divine commands. Ezekiel's body is the medium of prophetic mediation already through chapter 4. Additionally, the sign-acts of Ezek 4–5 can be situated within the broader context of the call narrative, in which the prophet's embodied experience plays a decisive role in the form of eating a scroll and being rendered mute.[82] In 5:1–4, Ezekiel embodies at least the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, as well as the following exile. He simultaneously represents God's body and the bodies of the people of Jerusalem.[83] The sign-act thus comprises far more than a single symbolic message. Viewing it as ritual action better allows for the ambiguity and polyvalence of symbolic meanings, as well as the incorporation of embodiment into the analysis. With this approach, a more complete overall picture of the sign-act can be formed.

Discussion

As the sign-act is identified as a ritual action, it is possible to investigate its ritual functions. This brings into focus the concept of *ritual efficacy*. In ritual studies, efficacy refers to the ritual "working" in the eyes of its participants – whether the effects of the ritual can be associated with its assumed goals.[84] Because of the aforementioned goal-demotion, a ritual may lack a clear causal relationship between its goal and result. Therefore, to produce an impression of efficacy, features of ritual action appeal to certain cognitive mechanisms of the human brain. For example, according to the above-mentioned ritual form hypothesis, the ritual observer's perception of a special agent ritual's efficacy is based on the notion of the supernatural agent's involvement.[85] Applied to the sign-act in Ezek 5:1–4, this would mean that God is the main source of efficacy. God is heavily involved in the action by prescribing it and associating with Ezekiel's agency.

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[82] Zimmerli 1979, 176–177; Odell 1998, 232; 2005, 59–67; Portier-Young 2024, 96–99.
[83] Cf. Portier-Young 2024, 90–99.
[84] Quack & Töbelmann 2010. The efficacy of the sign-acts has been a topic of continuous discussion also without the notion of ritual efficacy. The concept is used slightly differently by each scholar, generally signifying the sign-act's producing of an intended result. The opinions vary on the intended results: are they supposed to be magical-supernatural, social, intellectual or something else. The efficacy is widely seen to be dependent on a belief in God's ability to produce the effects. In the same time, the possible interpretation of the magical efficacy of the action's execution itself is downplayed. See Robinson 1927, 5–15; Van den Born 1935, 26–28; Fohrer 1968, 114–118; Lang 1986; Stacey 1990, 25–30; Hutton 1995, 253–260; Friebel 1999, 41–53; 2001; Viberg 2007, 15–16; Lang 2008; Ott 2009, 172–175; Krispenz 2014, 8.
[85] McCauley & Lawson 2002; Sørensen 2007.

In other words, efficacy as a ritual studies concept refers to the *impression of efficacy* by the ritual observer. This perspective of impressions is part of a wider shift of attention in the field of ritual studies in the 21st century. The emergence of cognitive studies has led to the realization that the (perceived) effects of rituals, not just their symbolic meanings, can be studied.[86] Thus, the perceiver of efficacy is brought to the center of attention. However, focusing on the ritual observer as the assessor of efficacy might be problematic, when studying ritual action that is literary in nature. In this case, is there an perceiver of ritual efficacy other than the reader of the text?

Adopting a literary frame is justified by the fact that we are dealing with literary prophecy. While some sign-acts may reflect a historical background "behind the text", such a history is virtually impossible to trace and identify within the literary form. Therefore, sign-acts – like all biblical prophetic texts – should primarily be approached as literary prophecy.[87] In this framework, the sign-acts are presented to the reader, who functions as the audience. The reader is fundamentally different from any hypothesized historical audience, as readers do not experience the portrayed events firsthand, but only through the mediation of the text.[88]

Why, then, present literary prophecy through actions that lack any immediacy, when the form of direct speech would be more straightforward for communicating symbolic messages to the reader? As I noted above regarding the various interpretations of Ezek 5:1, it is problematic to treat sign-acts as texts conveying a clear, singular symbolic message. The presence of multiple, even contradictory, symbolic meanings complicates the reader's task, particularly if it is assumed that the reader is meant to discern and comprehend a single definitive "message". For instance, Viberg, in seeking a clearer interpretation than previous scholars, still presents the symbolism of 5:1–4 in such a complex manner that the overall picture of the sign-act is obscured. One example of this is his argument that Ezekiel plays no symbolic role in the first verse, but does in the others.[89] Rather than expecting the reader to merely decode symbolic messages, the sign-acts employ embodied experience and ritual form, drawing the reader into participation.

[86] Sax 2010.
[87] See e.g. McEntire 2015, 18–21; Nissinen 2017, 146. Opposing this view, Tuell (2025, 4) states that some parts of the history can be recovered from the text. See also Cook et al., 2022. Portier-Young (2024, 47–50), though agreeing with Nissinen, also leaves room for "reflections of religious experience".
[88] Erzberger (2015, 115–116) calls this *lost immediacy*. Speculating about the historical audience has been a key task for many scholars, especially as most of the sign-act texts do not mention an audience. See e.g. Friebel 1999, 20–34; Ott 2009, 32. For further discussion on the audience, see Krispenz 2014; Erzberger 2015.
[89] Viberg 2007, 204–205.

I propose that the ritual elements in the text engage the reader in a manner in ways analogous to how a ritual engages its observer.[90] From this perspective, the sign-acts are *literary ritual action*. The participating reader is the *implied reader* assumed and constructed by the text. In reader-response criticism, the concept of the implied reader positions the reader as an active agent who responds to the text within parameters set by its structure.[91] In the case of verbal prophecy, the implied reader functions as a listener. The reader of ritual action, however, must be something other than a listener. Are they in a similarly passive role of a spectator, or might the reader experience the literary ritual in other ways as well, perhaps through embodied features in the text?

According to Portier-Young, the embodiment represented in the text holds significance in relation to the reader. She argues that *embodied prophetic mediation* involves not only the prophet's body, but also the embodied participation of the reader.[92] In Ezek 5:1–4, the reader can, through Ezekiel's figure and experience, embody the siege, destruction, and exile. Especially if the implied reader is envisioned as a reader in exile, the sign-act's embodied dimension brings the destruction of Jerusalem closer, making it more immediate and experientially accessible.

Although Ezekiel's sign-acts do not constitute an established ritual practice, they nonetheless draw on existing ritual traditions and employ ritual imagination.[93] The network of ritual features in the text appeals to the reader's ritual sense,[94] enabling the reader to join in a shared imagination with the text. In fact, one might argue that the sign-act text could be seen as generating an *imagined ritual* in the reader's mind.

Mediated and imaginary rituals have not been extensively studied compared to traditional anthropological research on ritual, and hence there is no fully established methodology for doing so. Grimes, for instance, considers non-immediate rituals to be an unpromising object of study.[95] Nevertheless, such rituals have been examined, especially in

[90] For the collective effects of ritual, see Xygalatas 2022, 118–153. See below for discussion of participation to a mediated or imaginary ritual.
[91] The theoretical background goes back to Iser (1978), who proposed the concept of a text-based and -controlled implied reader. It has to also be noted that in the context of ancient literary culture, the reader refers not only to a silent, individual reader, but also to a listener experiencing the performance of a text read aloud.
[92] Portier-Young 2024, xxii, 50. However, she discusses the reader's participation to the embodiment in the text only in general terms. She additionally mentions how actions "draw the audience into a set of embodied "cognitive" processes that will produce forms of knowing beyond propositional content", but doesn't state whether she means by audience the readers or the audience inside the textual world, see Portier-Young 2024, 46.
[93] For ritual imagination, see Nielssen 2012. For ritual in the context of religious imagination, see Van Mulukom 2020. For the related concept of ritual invention, see Bell 1997, 223–242; Langer et al., 2006.
[94] Bell (1992, 80, 98, 107) coined the concept of the cultural *sense of ritual*, denoting practical knowledge of ritual tied to the "ritualized social body".
[95] Grimes 2014, 79–92.

the sphere of virtual environments like the virtual world *Second Life*. There, a variety of rituals appear to function much as they do in real-life settings, and have accordingly been studied as rituals.[96]

The question, whether it is possible to analyze the relationship between literary ritual action and the implied reader, remains central. This returns us to the issue of how the reader assesses efficacy: Could literary ritual action be efficacious from the reader's perspective? Assessment of efficacy through textual material has been employed as a method in cognitive studies to investigate how people evaluate ritual efficacy.[97] Thus, it is feasible to theorize a reader who evaluates efficacy based on literary presentation. Yet beyond this, the role of the text as a medium of ritual participation has not been sufficiently considered within ritual studies.

In examining the efficacy and other characteristics of a literary ritual, we may ask whether similar cognitive mechanisms are at play as in real-world ritual settings. Conversely, might the reader's evaluation of and participation in literary ritual diverge from that of a typical ritual observer? I argue that it is possible – through an analysis of ritual features and the implied reader – to develop a fuller picture of literary ritual action, and, for example, how the text presents itself to the reader as efficacious ritual action.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have demonstrated that numerous ritual characteristics can be identified in Ezek 5:1–4. The actions depicted in the text draw on features of existing ritual forms, applying them in novel ways. The marginalization of magic, ritual, and embodiment in earlier scholarship has contributed to the fact that the ritual dimensions of sign-act texts have not previously been adequately considered.

I have proposed ways in which the ritual characteristics may be approached. The perspective of literary prophecy invites reflection on the relationship between the reader and the ritual content presented in the text. For example, is it conceivable that the text constructs an implied reader that, through the act of reading, participates in the literary ritual in some sense? Further theorization is needed to identify and articulate key concepts and approaches. One such concept could be *imagination*, as employed both in the ritual depiction and by the reader in filling in the gaps and immersing themselves in the text.

[96] See e.g. O'Leary 1996; Radde-Antweiler 2008; Heidbrink et al., 2011; Post 2019; Radde-Antweiler 2022. Notably, there still remains a difference between real and mediated ritual participation. On this, see e.g. Baranowski-Pinto et al., 2022.

[97] See Legare & Souza 2012; 2013. See also Xygalatas 2022, 73–74.

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Responding to secularization: the Bible as public scripture in late postwar Sweden (context of the OTSEM paper)

The present paper has been produced within the context of an ongoing research project titled *A secular bible:* Bibel 2000 *at the intersection between religion and politics in postwar Sweden*, funded by the Swedish Research Council (2021-02108). In a theoretical framework informed by translation studies and biblical reception studies, the project investigates the most recent official Swedish Bible, *Bibel 2000*, funded and organized by the Swedish government and explicitly intended as a national bible for all of the Swedish people. As such, it can be understood as one of the many welfare solutions of postwar Sweden, where scientific research was mustered in order to produce universalistic reforms targeted at the entire population. While the (Swedish and Nordic) welfare state and its political logic has been extensively researched, this research has by and large been (implicitly) informed by various secularization theories holding that religious phenomena should have lost their significance in highly modern societies. Precisely by understanding the making of a new national Swedish bible as a political welfare reform, the present project therefore makes a historigraphical intervention into research on the Swedish postwar period (with many Nordic and European parallells).

In the project, the translation under production, *Bibel 2000*, is not primarily understood as a text (or set of texts) but rather as a socioreligious and political phenomenon in the making over the course of four decades (1961–2001). This processual aspect of the translation is captured by the term 'translation event.' This term underscores how the national bible was not simply a matter of 'translating' the biblical texts into a specific language (Swedish), but essentially of *producing*—and negotiating the production of—a specific textual iteration of 'the Bible.'

The project aims at answering the following general research question, which is framed as a double movement:

- How can the translation event *Bibel 2000* be perceived as an institutional embodiment of the religious and political dynamic of the postwar Swedish welfare state? Conversely, how can the role of religion in the polical visions at play during this period of time be uncovered and understood from the viewpoint of a translation of the Bible—a text with seemingly no place in a secular, modern society?

The general reserach question is answered through a number of consecutive case studies which uncover the translation event from the start (early 1960s) to the late phases (the late 1990s). The finalized and published translation is largely left out of the picture as it is the *making* of the translation over time and the different societal actors implicated in it that interests me. In earlier papers, I have covered the early initatives toward a new national bibel (1960s) as well as the negotiation of the knowledge basis of the Old Testament part of the translation (early 1970s). The present paper investigates two groups of societal actors and their negotiation of the national bible as it was being produced in the 1970s through the early 1990s. It seeks to capture what was time-specific about the particular critique directed at the work of the translators (biblical scholars) producing the translation.

The paper in its present shape is an article under review in a biblical studies journal.

Responding to secularization: the Bible as public scripture in late postwar Sweden

Introduction

The European Enlightenment is regularly associated with a decline in the public authority of religion, often termed 'secularization.' As a response to these developments, a number of predominantly German and British scholars developed strategies for keeping the Bible relevant precisely as a public scripture (Sheehan 2005; Legaspi 2010). This entailed a radical change in the epistemological foundations of the Bible: while it had until this time rested on a single source of authority – theology and traditional ecclesiastical interpretation – the Enlightenment Bible was distributed over a number of different sources: philology, pedagogy, history, and poetry (Sheehan 2005: 91). These new modes of interpretation were eventually picked up by a number of biblical scholars who worked along what came to be known as the historical-critical method (Reventlow 2010: Chapter 5–6).[1] Such research, which may equally well be understood as an effort to keep the Bible societally relevant (Jansson 2022), was established in Western academia in the 19th century and eventually came to signify properly 'scientific' inquiry—particularly in contrast to pre-Enlightenment theological modes of scriptural interpretation (Legaspi 2010; Kurtz 2022). In this way, the Bible underwent a slow and gradual process of *scientization*. Scientization can be defined as a process in which "scientific concepts and methods of inquiry [are] increasingly […] transferred to new areas and contexts" (Sylvan 2024: 27). But the process was never complete and scientization was never as triumphant as its proponents suggested. It remained a shaky and contested ground for the Bible in the public square.

The aim of the paper is twofold. First, it aims to survey scientization as one of the late modern survival modes of the Bible (see Sherwood 2000) and therefore as a response to, rather than a prerequisite for, secularization. Second, it aims to inquire how scientization eventually became the object of more serious contention in the public sphere, which also meant that it lost some of its authority as an epistemic foundation of the Bible as public scripture. This happened, as I will argue, in the wake of the sociopolitical and economic turmoil of the later decades of the European postwar era. Especially the 1970s marked a decline in the public trust in scientific expertise and scientific knowledge (Huisman 2015; Grundmann 2017). New and alternative knowledge claims were on the rise, and with these, the very epistemological foundation of the 'scientific' Bible was being called into question by various societal actors. In this way, the paper investigates scientization of the Bible not as a uniform and linear process, but rather as a sociocultural phenomenon which was negotiated by different (groups of) actors, fighting over the extent of scientization and its societal consequences. In contrast to many earlier accounts of the history of biblical scholarship, which have focused on historical-critical scholarship as the business of a scholarly elite, a handful of "great men" (e.g., Rogerson 1984; O'Neill 1991; Smend 2007; Reventlow 2010; Turner 2014), the present paper rather investigates biblical scholarship as a knowledge form engaged, and contested, by various "non-elites" (Townsend 2025). By

[1] Jon Levenson (1993: 118) has characterized biblical criticism as "the realization of the Enlightenment project in the realm of biblical scholarship."

extension, the paper will hereby discuss how these "non-elites" responded to secularization, and specifically how they responded to the impact of secularization on the Bible as public scripture.

In order to achieve the aim, the paper investigates the production of a new official Swedish Bible taking place in 1972 onwards, and the response to it by two distinct societal groups. The task was carried out by a committee which included a number of biblical scholars, functioning simultaneously as scientific experts and as translators. The translation was intended to be a new national Bible, of service not only to religious denominations and groups but to all those in society who were in need of a new translation (Gustafsson 1990). Once upon a time, in a country which was institutionally and judicially Christian, the "theological truth" of the Bible (Sheehan 2005: 91) had ensured its relevance for all citizens—at least in theory. Now, in the wake of different processes of secularization, something else had to ensure its continuous societal relevance. Science, it turned out, would be this something else. Scientific knowledge was apprehended and constructed by the scholar-translators as disinterested and value-free, and it could therefore enable the translation to transcend the different interests of various groups in the Swedish society. The new Bible would thus be able to rise above religious as well as political interests (Harding 2007: 359–360; see Jasanoff 2012: 104 on the construction of science as disinterested and objective in contrast to both politics and religion). On this basis, it could become a Bible for all Swedes.

During the production of the translation, however, it turned out that several of these groups, representing various partial public spheres of the Swedish postwar society, were highly critical of the translation precisely since it did not meet the particular interests they had in relation to a new national Bible. As this critique was launched, the translators had to defend their understanding and conception of what it meant for the translation to be 'scientific.' The critique I will investigate in the paper was voiced on various occasions during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, and came from two loosely conjoined groups: feminists and conservative Christians. The former group consisted of authors, politicians, and scholars who argued that the translators failed to take an appropriate responsibility in relation to the alleged misogyny of the biblical texts, and that the translators thereby also failed to articulate how their work was relevant to women as a specific group of intended readers of the translation; the latter group, consisting of individuals associated with Lutheran and evangelical denominations and organizations, held that the translators failed to observe a Christian confessional perspective on the biblical texts, and that this was an outcome of the principle of methodological naturalism which the translators were supposedly working from. Thus, both of these groups challenged the epistemological base of the translation project and hence also the epistemic authority of the scholar-translators. The critics thereby questioned the power of the translators to decide what knowledge about sociocultural phenomena and artifacts, such as the biblical texts, that should be considered accurate, trustworthy, and relevant (see Wikman 2019: 35).

The paper is structured in the following way. I begin with briefly describing the background of the work of the Bible Commission. This section will not feature a substantial discussion of the epistemic framework of the translators, which is rather uncovered gradually from the viewpoint of the critique discussed in the two following sections. In these sections, I investigate (1) the conservative Christian critique and (2) the feminist critique against the

translation.[2] I emphasize the extent to which these criticisms should be understood as a critique against the methodological and theoretical presuppositions of the work of the translators. Following this, I investigate the response of the translators to the critique. Importantly, this is discussed as *one* joint response to both groups, since both sets of critique were denounced by the translators from one and the same epistemological standpoint: that of detached, disinterested historical-critical biblical scholarship. A final discussion ends the paper.

The Bible Commission and the Production of a New Swedish Bible

In 1972, the Social Democratic cabinet minister Alva Myrdal appointed a governmental committee for producing a new Swedish Bible (see Author). The committee was named *Bibelkommissionen* ('the Bible Commission'). A translation had been discussed since the 1930s, mainly in the General Synod of the Church of Sweden, but it was because of the initiative of a member of the Riksdag (Parliament) in 1961 that the translation finally came about. In a private motion, Manne Ståhl, member of the Liberal Party, argued that the Riksdag should urge the government to investigate and initiate a new Swedish Bible, primarily of the New Testament. Ståhl asked whether the much-criticized official Bible of the time, the 1917 Church Bible, could be partly to blame for the fact that secularization was an ongoing and increasing process. In contrast to this translation with its awkward and outdated style (see Author), a new translation would enable the Swedish people to better understand the Bible's message, which means that it could also function as a potential tool in the struggle against secularization (Author; on the motion, see Gustafsson 1990). Suggesting that a "narrow circle of experts" should investigate the more exact circumstances of the production of a new Bible, Ståhl contended that scientific research in the form of biblical scholarship was the evident answer to secularization. In this way, scientific research was engaged against secularization. Even if the translators of the committee that was eventually appointed did not take such a clear stance against (or indeed for) secularization, their work may similarly be understood as a response to it, as will be further discussed.

While the task of the committee appointed in 1972 only concerned a translation of the New Testament, in 1975 the task was expanded to also include the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible).[3] The committee include a number of biblical scholars which were supposed to function simultaneously as academic experts and as translators from the biblical source languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). With one exception, the biblical scholars appointed on the committee were recruited from Swedish state universities.[4] With their individual differences and different research interests, the biblical scholars all represented the historical-critical paradigm which by this time (the early 1970s) was firmly established in both research and teaching in Swedish higher education in theology and biblical studies (see Author). Methodologically, this research came close to comparative religion or history of religions, while for example biblical

[2] This does not imply that I side with the critique of these groups (or of the position of the Bible Commission for that matter), but rather that I seek to uncover what it was about the epistemology of historical-critical scholarship that posed as problematic for these two groups.
[3] In what follows, I employ the term "Old Testament" since this was the one used by the translators as well as by the Christian and feminist groups participating in the different debates covered in the paper.
[4] One of the Old Testament translators, Bertil Albrektson, was handpicked from his professorship at Åbo Akademi University in Turku, Finland.

theology was almost completely absent as a research field in Sweden as well as in the other Nordic countries (Laato 2015).

The epistemic framework of biblical studies in Sweden emphasized knowledge production as a scientific quest, which was explicitly or implicitly contrasted with religious 'tradition' (cf. Spieckermann 2012). Being very much indebted to European, especially German, scholarship of the 19th century, historical-critical scholarship had become the dominant knowledge form of Swedish biblical studies at the turn of the 20th century (Author). As Sheehan (2005: 91–92) has argued, whereas the Bible prior to the Enlightenment was a *singular* phenomenon, resting on theology as its sole source of authority, the Enlightenment Bible was inherently *plural*: it had no center, but was rather distributed over a number of disciplines and practices. However, the Bible which emerged in Western academia in the late 19th century onwards arguably did have such a single center and source of authority: historical-critical biblical scholarship, with 'critical' equaling 'scientific' (see Kurtz 2022). Such scholarship did not simply emerge as one of many knowledge forms, existing alongside others; it pushed theological interpretation of the Bible, which had previously been the dominant mode of biblical interpretation, to the margins of that which was deemed academically acceptable.[5] But also political modes of interpretation were located outside the borders of true science, as the ensuing discussion will demonstrate.

As the Bible Commission was appointed in 1972 and given its directives, these were apprehended by the translators as a strong defense of the scientific basis of the translation (e.g., Hansson 1999; Hidal 1999). As already suggested, this was because the epistemic authority of science was, in the eyes of the scholar-translators, not tied to the interests of any specific group (whether religious, political, or other). It was hence the only possible way to transcend such different interests and to produce a Bible which could be of use for all citizens. Rather than letting secularization differentiate the Bible to a particular sphere, representing a specifically 'religious' interest, the Bible was firmly kept in the general public sphere. It was only a scientized Bible that could function as a truly public scripture. But if the translators held this to be the evident response to the changing religious and social status of the Bible, the response to this response from two distinct societal groups showed that there was no solid agreement on how such change should be met. Scientization was not the only answer to the fragmenting effects of secularization.

Responding to the Response (I): Conservative Christian Critique of the Scientific Conceptions of the Bible Commission

The first instance of critique I will survey came from a group of conservative Christians connected to the Lutheran association *Biblicum*. It had been formed in 1968 to promote what was termed "biblical faith and research" (for a background, see Hidal 1979; and Olsson 2015). Its members staunchly and consistently criticized historical-critical biblical scholarship at research universities as well as in the then state church, the Church of Sweden (e.g., Erlandsson, Danell, and Hedegård 1971). In 1972, the same year as the Bible Commission was appointed, the

[5] Grabner & Reiter (1979: 67) provide a helpful metaphor, illustrating this particular feature of scientization: "[The] white patches on the explorers' maps were almost never voids, but territories occupied by other cultures. In the same way, the frontiers of science are not the borderlines between knowledge and ignorance; rather, problems newly taken up by science invariably lead to questions to which other forms of knowledge or belief have already provided answers."

association launched a book series with the name *Bibel och vetenskap* ("Bible and science").[6] In one way or another, all of the books in the series opposed exegetical research connected to the historical-critical paradigm, with the "rationalism" of the Enlightenment as one of the main enemies (e.g., Preus 1972). In the book *Förutsättningslös bibelforskning?* ("Unbiased Bible research?"), Erlandsson (1972) called into question modern biblical scholarship, especially its exclusion of "divine causality" (16) as a possible explanation to events depicted in the biblical texts. That only empirically verifiable phenomena could be the object of research entailed, according to Erlandsson, a "positivistic stricture of the concept of science" (12).[7] The notion that God in a methodological sense does not exist for the historical-critical researcher was furthermore designated a "presupposition" by Erlandsson (20, 33), thus calling into the question the supposed detachedness or distinterestedness of biblical scholarship. But Erlandsson did not thereby claim that a truly scientific study of the Bible should be detached or disinterested. Quite the opposite: he contended that it must always be based on certain presuppositions, but that these need to be, as he put it, the presuppositions of the Bible itself (Hidal 1979: 200).

During the 1970s, the members of *Biblicum* persistently critiqued the work of the Bible Commission (Hidal 1979: 201). As its New Testament translation was published in 1981, the members of *Biblicum* pursued the kind of critique referred to above and attacked the translation for its "liberal theology" and the impact of "biblical criticism" on it (e.g., Furberg 1984). But also a number of persons associated with evangelical denominations and organizations criticized the translation, and in 1983, they formed an association with the goal of producing an alternative translation which would stand free of "liberal theology," "rationalism," and "criticism" (see Author). The translation, named *Svenska Folkbibeln* but often referred to simply as *Folkbibeln* ("The People's Bible"), was published in 1998, and in a revised version in 2015.

Apart from producing the translation during a period of 15 years, the new association was eager to publicize its work and present it to the general public. An integrated part of this ambition was to criticize the Bible Commission and their translation, since the flaws inherent in it was the true reason for why an alternative translation had been needed in the first place. Draft translations were recurrently published in the journal *Biblicum*. The association behind the new translation also published several different newsletters (eventually called *Svenska Folkbibeln Nytt*, hereafter: *SFN*), mixing information about the progress of their work with criticisms directed at the work of the Bible Commission. In other words, they described positively what they considered scientific research on the Bible to be (their own position), as well as negatively what they considered non- or pseudo-scientific research on the Bible to be (the position of the Bible Commission).

In a number of instances, representatives of the *Folkbibeln* association described the method that their translation was based on as "historico-grammatical" (*historisk-grammatisk*, *SFN* 2001/2: 2; 2001/3: 2; Erlandsson 1998: 13; Furberg in Erlandsson 2019a: 52). Most of the proponents of this method, which is associated with conservative Lutheran and evangelical scholarship, assumes a dual authorship of the biblical texts: divine and human (Bergling 2019: 3; see Waltke 1984). This is one of the main reasons why it was contrasted with the historical-critical method, since research associated with the latter method assumes only a human authorship of the

[6] Five books were published in the series, all in 1972.
[7] "[E]n positivistisk förträngning av vetenskapsbegreppet."

biblical texts.[8] A translation such as that of the Bible Commission, being impacted by "biblical criticism," would hence according to its critics be marked by "a different faith than that of the Bible" (Erlandsson 2019b: 64).

This criticism, which one encounters time and again in the writings of the *Folkbibeln* translators, may hence be understood as a reaction to the methodological naturalism of historical-critical scholarship. By the end of the 19th century, Western scientists of different disciplines had come to agree that "God talk lay beyond the boundaries of science" (Numbers 2003: 272). Historicism, empiricism, and observation of natural facts came to be markers of genuine science. It is clearly this scientific paradigm that Erlandsson reacted against when he contended that historical-critical scholarship on a methodological level entailed a "positivistic stricture of the concept of science" (quoted above). Indirectly, the translators and associates of *Folkbibeln* also criticized the epistemic foundations of the work of the Bible Commission when they referred to academic biblical criticism as "so-called science" (Bergling 2019: 30, 32; Erlandsson 2019b: 67), thus making clear that they did not regard it as science proper. Especially the footnotes of the New Testament translation of the Bible Commission were recurrently criticized, and it was stated several times that the footnotes did not hold up to "scientific scrutiny" (Eriksson in Bergling 2019: 27; *SFN* 1/2001: 1, 4). The epistemological foundations of the Bible Commission were, however, not only critiqued from a conservative Christian perspective but also from a feminist perspective, and this will be the object of investigation in the following section.

Responding to the Response (II): Feminist Critique of the Scientific Conceptions of the Bible Commission

In what follows, I discuss two instances of feminist critique against the work of the Bible Commission: 1) the discussion on, and sometimes demands of, inclusive language in the translation of the Bible Commission, and 2) the demands made in the 90s by a small number of highly vocal critics on a preface to the new translation, informing the reader of allegedly misogynist tendencies in the Old Testament texts.[9] What unites both instances of criticism is that they, implicitly or explicitly, problematized the conception of 'science' in the historical-critical scholarship that functioned as the epistemic foundation of the work of the Bible Commission, since the strictly historical character of such research was apprehended as a failure to deal with the impact of interpretations on contemporary readers confronted with the translated biblical texts.

Inclusive translation of the biblical texts first emerged as a theological concern in different Christian denominations in the US and Canada in the 1970s (Ivarsson 1999). The first major inclusive translation was the New Revised Standard Version (1989). Inclusive biblical translation seeks to neutralize the inappropriately gendered language of the biblical source texts (see Bird 1988), and hence to 'remove' this specific form of cultural bias (Von Flotow 1997: 52–53; Simon 1996). Joanna Dewey has contended that inclusive language is necessary because it *matters* what the Bible says: the Bible is ascribed authority and is used as an authoritative text (Dewey et al 1990: 63). This is also the reason why many feminist critics in the 1970s turned against the

[8] At least in the sense that this is the only form of authorship that can be made the object of scholarly analysis. Cf. Webb's (2011) discussion on *methodological* vs. *ontological* naturalism.
[9] In the latter case, I draw extensively on Liljefors (2022; 2023) who has covered the debate on a preface to the Old Testament translation.

different ways the biblical texts had traditionally been interpreted (e.g., Trible 1975). Such critique entailed a discussion of the epistemic authority, whether academic or religious, that had worked as the foundation of these traditional interpretations.

A preamble to the Swedish debate on inclusive language took place in 1981 as the New Testament translation of the Bible Commission was published. The debate centered on Matthew 5:9 (in the Beatitudes) with the translation "Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called the sons of God" (Olsson 1999: 9; Ivarsson 1999: 51).[10] By some debaters, the rendering "sons of God" (*Guds söner*) was perceived as a 'change' in the wrong direction, as the previous 1917 Church Bible had had the term "the children of God" (*Guds barn*) in this particular instance. It was called into question whether women readers of the Bible would feel included by the new rendering "sons of God" (Rehnberg 1982).[11] One of the translators of the commission, Harald Riesenfeld, replied condescendingly that it was "only in little Sweden" that "a few women and friends of women care to react against the source text true differentiation between 'sons of God' and 'children of God'" (Riesenfeld 1982: 17).[12] In other words, the only thing that mattered for the translators was to be true to the source text—not the possible reception of the translation once finalized and published.

A more theoretically sustained discussion on inclusive Bible translation was initiated in the early 1990s. In 1993, the General Synod of the Church of Sweden passed a statement asking that the parts of the translation already finalized as well as the ones under production should employ a principle of inclusive language (Ivarsson 1999: 19). In 1994, the secretary of the Bible Commission, Christer Åsberg, participated in a seminar in Uppsala devoted to the question of inclusive translation, and three years later—in 1997—Åsberg participated in a public hearing arranged by the Theological Committee of the Church of Sweden (see Åsberg et al 1998). In this hearing, the question of inclusive language in the translation was discussed, and Åsberg stated that from case to case the commission had employed inclusive language—when the source texts and the target language permitted (for example, at times the translators avoided generic "he"). But Åsberg found a more ideologically informed "rewriting" (*omskrivning*) impossible, simply because such a translation was not the task of the commission according to the governmental directives it had been given (Åsberg et al 1998: 205–206).

The second debate which I would like to discuss in this context is the demands on a preface to the Bible Commission's translation of the Old Testament. In 1985, the Swedish author and debater Birgitta Onsell wrote a debate article in which she argued that the translation, once published, should contain a preface which alerted the reader to the misogyny of the Old Testament texts (Liljefors 2022; 2023). In 1990, inspired by Onsell, a number of MPs presented a private motion in the Riksdag where they demanded some form of commentary or preface to the translation with the purpose of informing the reader of "the historical background of the Old Testament's largely condescending view of women" (see Author 2018: 175). The debate was picked up by another knowledgeable Swedish public intellectual, Eva Moberg. As the Bible Commission translation was being finalized at the turn of the millenium, she wrote a much-noticed piece in the monthly magazine *Ordfront* in which she stated that the God of the Old

[10] In Swedish, *Saliga de som håller fred, de skall kallas Guds söner*.
[11] As pointed out by Riesenfeld (1982), the New Testament authors oscillate between 'sons of God' (*hyiou theou*) and 'children of God' (*tekna theou*).
[12] The Swedish word *kvinnovänner* ("friends of women") denotes a person who sympathizes with 'the women's cause.'

Testament was a "full-blooded Nazi," who glorified and encouraged genocide and racism (see Liljefors 2023: 91). Moberg also sided with Onsell's demands on a preface to the new translation, although this seems never to have been a main interest for Moberg.

Above, I have very briefly described the two debates. I have discussed them together since they seem to have been informed by the same kind of feminist critique against 'traditional' (whether religious or academic) interpretations of the biblical texts: either strictly linguistically speaking (in renderings such as 'sons of God' which seems to exclude women readers), or more hermeneutically (in interpretations of such foundational texts as Gen 2–3, just to take an example). That these criticisms were voiced in the 1980s onwards is hardly any coincidence given the fact that different kinds of feminist scholarship gained momentum at this time, having been initiated in the late 1960s and 1970s (see Schüssler Fiorenza 2014). In biblical studies, the critique should perhaps not be understood as an opposition to historical-critical scholarship per se, but to certain implications of such scholarship—or rather *non*-implications (the unwillingness to take different ethical implications of biblical interpretation into consideration).[13] In the feminist critique of a number of Swedish exegetes, *responsibility* therefore became a central term: scholars must be responsible for the moral and ethical implications of their interpretations of the biblical texts (Ljung 1998; Larsson 2007; see also Stenström 2016 on inclusive translation specifically).[14] In the same vein, Schüssler Fiorenza (1988) criticized the absence of such responsibility in traditional historical-critical scholarship, stating that "[s]cientist epistemologies covertly advocate an a-political reality without assuming responsibility for their political assumptions and interests" (11).

Defending the Epistemic Authority of Science

The critique of both feminists and conservative Christians was recurrently addressed by the translators of the Bible Commission—surely because they wanted their translation to be received favorably, but also because they wanted to defend their work and its epistemic foundation. Precisely since it was, to use Schüssler Fiorenza's somewhat pejorative term, "scientist epistemologies" that enabled the Bible to survive as a public scripture in late postwar Sweden, they had to be defended. In this scheme, alternative epistemologies, whether feminist or Christian (or both), would not ensure the Bible's survival as a genuinely *public* scripture, as they would rather fragmentize the Bible by relegating it to various partial spheres of the public space.[15] It would therefore not be possible to craft a new national Bible on these grounds.

A first aspect of the counter-critique of the scholar-translators that can be noted is that they, in their own way, also promoted responsibility in biblical interpretation. But whereas the feminist critics had emphasized responsibility for the *outcome* of interpretation, responsibility in traditional scholarship entailed employing those methods which were considered philologically correct. In the traditional conception of scientific work, *this* was the true ethics of interpretation,

[13] Vander Stichele and Penner (2005: 14) note that many feminist scholars of the period "were not abandoning the historical-critical enterprise; they were reconfiguring its goals of recovery based on their alternative experiences as women."

[14] An illustration of the emerging emphasis on the ethical implications of biblical interpretation is Daniel Patte's 1995 book *Ethics of biblical interpretation*, which became extensively cited by several Swedish biblical scholars.

[15] On these *Teilöffentlichkeiten* of postwar Sweden and the various interests they represented, see, e.g., Östling (2020: 120–125).

with scholarly work being considered epistemically authoritative when it followed "methodologically proper scientific procedures" (Gieryn 1999: 2). In this scheme, "method" came close to being synonymous with scholarly "virtues" (Paul 2019: 11). It is interesting to note a statement by the chair of the Bible Commission, Bertil Hansson (1999), when he at one point discussed different kinds of leverages from churches, denominations, and other groups on the translators and their work. Such leverages must be dismissed, since there according to Hansson existed "an ethics of translation" (4). This ethics was strongly connected to the integrity of the work of the translators, which was itself guaranteed by a "consistently scientific approach" (6). The scientific approach and the ethics of translation were hence seen as closely connected.

This line of argument was time and again used by the translators in order to construct and uphold the borders between science and non-science. In one context, Åsberg discussed the conflicting renderings 'sons of god' and 'children of God,' stating that one can discuss the fact that the New Testament Greek source texts differentiate between the two expressions. Whereas this is "an exegetical discussion," another aspect of the translation is "whether it will be a negative experience for women to read this ['sons of God']" (Åsberg et al 1998: 207). This shows on the one hand that Åsberg is aware of the possible consequences of a certain linguistic rendering, and on the other that he considers this problem to be essentially separated from the "exegetical discussion." Thus, the possible consequences of the translation-interpretation have nothing to do with exegesis proper. We find another interesting example in an essay by Åsberg (1995/1996), where he suggested that translators in the face of demands made by a public opinion can be requested to abandon their "scientific principles" (27). He stated that he himself had been confronted with the demands of different critical groups, for example feminists. In this way, feminists and feminist criticisms were set against the scientific principles of the translators; if feminist critique would have been allowed to impact on the work of the translators, this would have meant the abandonment of the scientific principles of the translators.

A different theme in the counter-critique of the scholar-translators is what might be termed faith vs. science. Western science as it developed during the latter half of the 19th century was increasingly conceived—and conceived of itself—as naturalistic, in the sense that only empirically verifiable and observable facts of the natural world could be made the object of scientific inquiry. Methodologically speaking, 'science' and 'scientific' hence represented ideas which were delimited from religious faith. But 'faith' in such statements actually denotes not only religious faith, but also political or ideological faith. Discussing the demands for inclusive language in the translation, Albrektson (2007: 28) for example said that "modern politically correct convictions can serve as temptations to distort the original" (for similar statements, see Åsberg 1991; 1998).[16] In their most extreme form, Albrektson (2007: 30) considered such translations to be "ideological reinterpretations of the original," being the outcomes of "faith" (*tro*). It did not really matter whether the faith was feminist (political) or Christian (religious), as both instances of faith were equally opposed to the kind of scientific translation that the Bible Commission sought to produce. The inappropriate influence of religious faith on the alternative translation *Folkbibeln* (see above) was hence a reason for dismissing this translation as non- or pseudo-scientific (Block 2000: 21; Albrektson 2015: 260). Such sentiments were at times subtly expressed, as in an essay by Åsberg (1991) where he mentioned different sorts of critique voiced against the New

[16] "Också moderna politiskt korrekta övertygelser kan fresta till förvanskningar av originalets ordalag."

Testament translation of the Bible Commission, stating that the critique at times had a "dogmatic" or "confessional" character. He then went on to say that more rarely had there been a "purely scientific, exegetical, and philological critique" (60). By discussing them as separate instances of critique, Åsberg draws a fine but clear line between the philological (science) and the confessional (non-science).

Yet another theme in the counter-critique is the distinction between the historical, biblical context and later, including contemporary, contexts. Thus, in line with most of Western biblical scholarship during (and indeed before) the postwar period, biblical studies in Sweden was permeated by a clear-cut distinction between *now* and *then* (e.g., Olsson 2004: 35). The distinction was made clear in a number of statements by the translators; for example, Albrektson (2007) stated that "one must distinguish between factual translation and explanatory exposition" (28). The first, translation, keeps with the facts, whereas the other, exposition, is pejoratively explaining the biblical texts. Albrektson explicitly stated that keeping with the first is what will define the translation as scientific. In another context, Albrektson (1986/1987: 19) stated that the authority and "implementation" (*tillämpning*) of the biblical texts, hence in religious contexts and communities, concerned the "preacher" (*förkunnaren*) and the "church leader" (*kyrkoledaren*)—not the translator or the exegete. The translators were of course well aware that any translation entails interpretation, but this could only concern the text-critical interpretation of textual evidence and the semantic interpretation of the source texts once established; interpretation in terms of *applying* the biblical message to a present-day context or along the lines of religious traditions was not the task of the translator (Hidal 1999: 28). This was not only the case with the linguistic rendering of the main text of the translation but also of its paratextual framing; as a response to the demands on a preface or commentary of the kind Birgitta Onsell had suggested, Åsberg (1990: 22) said that "[t]here are those who feel that the position of women in the Bible […] should be elucidated in the notes or in some other manner," but for both "practical reasons and as a matter of principle," the footnotes of the new translation under production must be confined to information that "helps the reader to understand the original meaning of the text."

In relation to the finalized translation, Block (2000) similarly observed that the footnotes did not contain "suggestions on how the contents [of the biblical texts] should be applied" (20). In sum, the scholar-translators held tight to a distinction between "pure" and "applied" science (see Gieryn 1999: 54), where the latter was not only considered as a problematic or inferior form of science, but essentially as *non*-science. It should be pointed out that this was far from only a matter of scientific principles; it concerned the very basis on which the Bible could remain a societally relevant work. Block (2000), one of the translators, hence explicitly positioned the work of the Bible Commission in relation to ongoing secularization, with his article bearing the title *Ny bibelöversättning i sekulariserat samhälle* ('New Bible Translation in Secularized Society'). In contrast to the MP Manne Ståhl who had initiated the new national Bible in the early 1960s, Block did not wish to counter secularization—he merely pointed it out as a fact and contended that the task of translating the Bible had changed because of it. The Bible necessarily had to be translated differently, and on different grounds, than in previous generations, not simply because of the passing of time but because of secularization as a social fact. The societal context of the Bible was changing, and therefore the Bible needed to change too. In this sense, both Ståhl and Block clearly, if in their own distinct ways, framed biblical translation as a response to secularization.

Discussion

This paper started in the suggestion that as the Western Bible in the late modern period was gradually differentiated from its traditional religious sphere, science became, especially during the 19th century, one of the primary means for keeping it relevant as a public scripture. As a response to increasing secularization, the epistemological authority of the Bible gradually shifted from 'theology' to 'science.' But this paper has also argued that science only temporarily became the resting-place for the Bible in the public square.

The historical-critical, and therefore also scientific, Bible was the most important biblical configuration which the scholar-translators of the Bible Commission drew on. They however found themselves in a liminal space, in a time between rock-solid trust in scientific expertise and a gradual undermining of such expertise. The early postwar era had in many ways marked the peak of trust in expertise and the kind of objective knowledge it represented. It was a "dream of reason," a dream of "the abolition of politics – of putting an end to the strife and confusion of human society in favor of an orderly administration of things based upon objective knowledge" (Torgerson 1986: 34). But in the late 1960s and the 1970s, something started to change in the Western world. Along with a growing leftist critique of scientific 'objectivity' and 'impartiality,' a number of sociopolitical crises (technological, environmental, economic) significantly undermined public trust in scientific expertise (Huisman 2015; Grundman 2017). These crises impacted the general position of science, but also led to the development of new academic, interdisciplinary knowledge forms (Egan 2017). This particular period hence witnessed a gradual "emergence of a multiplicity of knowledge sources" (Grundmann 2017: 29). If the positivism of the early postwar era had seemed to enable the "abolition of politics," the emergence of a *multiplicity* of knowledge sources was precisely what undermined this quest and reintroduced "strife" and "confusion" as components or aspects of the public sphere. A growing public suspicion toward scientific expertise and the introduction of multiple knowledge sources also undermined the extent to which scientization could function as an epistemological foundation of a Bible for *all* Swedes.

In my discussion earlier in the paper, I pointed to two 'alternative' knowledge sources when it came to the epistemological basis of producing a Bible for all of the Swedish population: Christian epistemology, and feminist epistemology. Whereas the scholar-translators of the Bible Commission sought to found their translation on a "scientist" epistemology (see Schüssler Fiorenza 1988: 11), the conservative Christian and feminist critique articulated precisely the kind of interests that the new translation would supposedly be able to transcend. While feminist biblical scholarship was a phenomenon which emerged in the 1970s (Schüssler Fiorenza 2014), the Christian critique may by contrast seem less time-specific. After all, the 1970s was hardly the first time when 'confessional' critique was being directed at 'liberal' theology and hence 'liberal' translations of the Bible (for a Swedish example from the early 20th century, see Lindmark and Andersson 2021).

But the Christian critique of the 1970s was, I would argue, only seemingly timeless. While the *content* of the critique was not new, its *context* was, and this also brought about a change in how the critique was framed. This explains the recurring use of the term 'science' (*vetenskap*) and

'scientific' (*vetenskaplig*), as well as, occasionally, the term 'positivistic' to characterize secular biblical scholarship. This indicates that the critique was framed in an intellectual climate where the earlier positivistic foundations of the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities were coming under attack. And this was, importantly, taking place in the public sphere (see Heidegren 2016). In other words, it was no coincidence that the Christian conservative actors of *Biblicum* discussed conceptions of science and positivism at this time. Nor was the feminist critique of the slightly later 80s and 90s a coincidence, as it reflected but also co-constructed a critical stance towards 'positivist' research which had gained traction by this time in feminist research, for example through the work of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2014). Several Swedish biblical scholars have noted that they were affected by the more generally changing intellectual climate of this time (e.g., Olsson 2007: 148).

In sum, the epistemic foundation of the new Swedish Bible, which functioned as a way of rescuing the Bible from the potentially undermining and fragmenting effects of secularization, was coming under attack. Secularization had entailed a specific response from biblical scholars, who contended that theology could no longer function as an authority for the Bible as a public scripture (Sheehan 2005). It should be emphasized that the two responses to the scholarly response studied in this paper differed in several respects. While the conservative Christian actors took issue directly with secularization, seeking to resist it as forcefully as possible, the feminist actors seem not to have displayed such an engagement. But what both groups did do was to take issue with the way biblical scholars had *responded* to secularization. What united these two groups was that they questioned the alleged disinterestedness of historical-critical scholarship. As it was being called into question, it was not only criticized but also exposed precisely as an *interest*—and one of many different interests at that (see Vander Stichele and Penner 2005: 13–14). If it indeed constituted a specific interest, it would not be able to function as the basis for a translation that could transcend the various interests of different groups in the Swedish society of the time. Science would no longer be able to save the Bible as a public scripture.

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Project Summary OTSEM 2025

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The paper “Reflections on the First Chapter of the Book of Joshua” is part of my doctoral project, which I started in November 2024. For my doctoral project, I will be analysing the first twelve chapters of the Book of Joshua. The focus will be on the textual and literary history and later, if possible, links will be made to historical and archaeological findings.

The basis of my analysis is the translation of the Masoretic Text. When looking at and analysing the text, the Greek tradition in the form of the Septuagint is also included. In my analysis so far, I have focussed primarily on the synoptic comparison of the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint based on Alfred Rahlfs' edition and have attempted to reconstruct the original text. The method of textual criticism is particularly important here. After the well-founded decision on the text, which I consider to be original on the basis of text-critical arguments, a close examination and analysis of this text follows. In the first step of the analysis, the text is roughly and finely structured. Inconsistencies and breaks in the text often become apparent at this stage, which are then analysed in more detail. Particular attention is paid to tensions in content, linguistic peculiarities and stylistic features. Tensions and breaks, for example through an abrupt change of tense or number, the sudden introduction of a new person or a change of topic, can be indications of growth in the text. Repetitions and *Wiederaufnahmen* of words or phrases can also be clues. In the next step, these literary-critical peculiarities are examined more closely. If it is assumed that a text developed in different stages, it is necessary to find strong and precise arguments for the formation of the various layers. Finally, the question arises as to the intention behind the addition of individual layers and their allocation to different redactors.

The aim of my reconstruction, which can be imagined like a kind of “archaeology of the text”, is to find the deepest layer of the text and to trace its potential extensions by different layers. The presented paper demonstrates my approach and my findings on the basis of Joshua 1:1-11. It presents my reconstruction of the verses and substantiates it with arguments.

Gradually, in my analysis of the individual chapters, a picture will emerge of the genesis and the layers of the overall context of Joshua 1-12. The larger context of the entire book of Joshua will always be taken into account as well.

The analysis is followed by further questions on several levels. Important questions concern the parallel passages. It must be clarified in each case whether the parallel passages that stand out in the analysis through concordance work are models or imitations. Particularly crucial is the relationship the Book of Joshua and the Book of Deuteronomy, to which there are numerous links. Joshua 1, for example, cannot be understood without a detailed analysis of Deuteronomy

31. In addition to that, the relationship between the Book of Joshua and the rest of the Pentateuch is important. For example, the question has to be addressed, where the narrative thread of the conquest of the land starts. Another important aspect is the relationship between Deuteronomistic expansions of the Book of Joshua and those of other books of the Pentateuch. Overall, the analysis of the key area of Joshua 1-12 has far-reaching implications for the question of the genesis of the Hexateuch and the relationship between the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets.

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Reflections on the First Chapter of the Book of Joshua

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Preface

The following paper will look at the first eleven verses of Joshua 1, in which Joshua receives God's command to lead the Israelites into the promised land after Moses' death. These eleven verses contain a number of interesting textual phenomena that give insight into the genesis of the text. After a brief overview of the structure of the entire first chapter the paper will concentrate on the reconstruction of verses 1 through 11. The presented translation of Josh 1:1-11 represents the text that I consider to be original and on which my analysis is based. The markings within the texts refer to the different literary layers, which will be explained in the paper. I will argue that Josh 1:1-11 has developed in different stages. Only Josh 1:1-2 form the basic layer of the chapter while all other verses were added later by various redactors. The main focus of the paper will be to reconstruct the extensions of the basic layer by vv. 3-5a; 5b-6; 7-9 and the layers within these additions.

Even though I am aware that the implications of the conspicuous textual features naturally go far beyond the history of the text and concern the major questions about the sources and hypotheses in the genesis of the Old Testament, the paper will be limited to describing and analysing individual features of Josh 1:1-11, while the broader horizon is perceived only marginally.

Rough structure of Josh 1

The chapter consists almost entirely of verbatim speech (vv. 2-9; 11; 13-15; 16b-18) and can be roughly divided into three different discourses. It begins with a long speech by God to Joshua (vv. 2-9), followed by a speech by Joshua to the Shoterim of the people (v. 11) and finally a speech by Joshua to the two and a half tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (vv. 13-15), to which they reply (vv. 16b-18). The remaining verses form the introductory statement of the situation (v.1a) and the introductions to the individual speeches (vv.1b; 10; 12; 16a). Even just skimming the chapter, it is noticeable that it contains a whole series of special features in terms of content, textual history, literary criticism, and style, some of which I would like to consider below. I would even go so far as to say that the first reading of the chapter already makes it clear that it is by no means a literary unit with at most marginal additions.[1] Rather, the carefully

[1] Thus, Krause 2014, 132.

composed elements give the impression of a coherent composition, despite numerous additions. In the following, I will present my reconstruction of the first chapter and substantiate it with arguments.

Translation of Josh 1:1-11

1 And it came to pass after the death of Moses < >[2] that Yhwh spoke to Joshua Bin-Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 "Moses my servant is dead, and now arise, cross over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them < >[3]. *3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon to the great river, the river Euphrates < >[4] and to the great sea at the place of the sunset will be your territory. 5 No one will resist you[5] all the days of your life*; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall make this people inherit the land I swore to their fathers to give to them. *7 Be sure to be strong and < >[6] courageous to observe to do as < >[7] Moses my servant commanded you, do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.* 8 This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall recite in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written < >[8], then you will make your way prosperous and then you will be successful. 9 Have I not commanded you: 'Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for Yhwh your God is with you wherever you go'?" 10 And Joshua commanded the officials of the people as follows: 11 "Go through the midst of the camp and command the people as follows: 'Prepare your provisions, for in three more days you will cross this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that Yhwh your God is giving to you < >[9]'."

[2] Thus the lectio brevior of the LXX*, while in the Hebrew tradition, following Jos 1:2, עֶבֶד יְהוָה is added.
[3] The lectio brevior of the LXX* is probably original, while the explanatory addition לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is attested in the Hebrew tradition.
[4] Thus the lectio brevior of the LXX*, while in the Hebrew tradition כֹּל אֶרֶץ הַחִתִּים is added (cf. Jdg 1:26).
[5] The lectio facilior ὑμῶν of the LXX in accordance with the parallels Dtn 7,24 and 11,25 which is supported by the Peschitta and the Vulgate seems to be original while the Hebrew reading לְפָנֶיךָ could be a later harmonisation with the 2nd Person Singular in v. 5b.
[6] The lectio brevior of the LXX* seems to be original. The intensification by מְאֹד in the Hebrew text is related to the resumption of the formula from v. 6 (see also Deut 4:9; Josh 22:5).
[7] The LXX* attests καθότι as a translation of כְּכָל ... אֲשֶׁר (e.g. also in Jos 11:23). הַתּוֹרָה seems to have been inserted secondarily into the Hebrew text.
[8] The lectio brevior of the LXX* is probably the more original reading. The suffixed preposition בָּהּ directs the focus back to what is written and the connection with the causal clause beginning with the conjunction כִּי emphasises even more clearly that only following what is written will make success possible.
[9] The lectio brevior of the LXX* is probably original. לְרִשְׁתָּהּ was inserted secondarily into the Hebrew text, probably in adaptation to Deut 31:13 (cf. also Deut 30:16).

Basic layer vv. 1-2

Expansion of vv. 3-5a

Expansion of vv. 5b-6

Expansion of v. 7 (without Torah)*

Expansion of vv. 8-9 + Torah

Expansion of vv. 10-11

My thesis

My thesis is that only vv. 1-2 form the basic layer of the chapter, while vv. 3-5a; 5b-6; 7 (without Torah); vv. 8-9 + Torah in v. 7, and vv. 10-11 are later expansions, which were probably not added by one hand.

Analysis

Basic layer

Vv. 1-2

The text section begins with the introductory situational statement וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת מֹשֶׁה (v.1a) – originally without יְהוָה עֶבֶד – and thus follows on from Deut 34:5 in terms of content. This means that the chapter cannot exist without the story of Moses' death and the narrative connection to the Book of Deuteronomy. Julius Wellhausen also calls the Book of Joshua as a whole an appendix to the Pentateuch that presupposes it in all respects.[10] The same situational formulation is used in the first verse of the Book of Judges to introduce the continuation after Joshua's death (וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, Jdg 1:1). An arc of suspense is thus created from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua (in Jdg 2:8).

The situational statement that Yhwh speaks to Joshua after the death of Moses (v. 1a) is followed by the introduction to Yhwh's speech, in which Joshua is introduced and presented as בִּן-נוּן and מְשָׁרֵת מֹשֶׁה (v. 1b). Due to the level of detail, this sounds like a new introduction of a previously unknown figure.[11] Joshua was first mentioned in the Pentateuch in Ex 17 in the context of the battle against Amalek. In Ex 24:13, he appears in the compound מֹשֶׁה וִיהוֹשֻׁעַ מְשָׁרְתּוֹ. However, since the following verbs are in the singular, Joshua was probably only added there secondarily. Ex 33:11 and Num 11:28 contain the same description of Joshua as the son of Nun and assistant of Moses as Josh 1:1 but these passages could also depend on Josh 1. In any case,

[10] Cf. Wellhausen 1963, 116.
[11] Cf. Kratz 2024, 443f.

the introduction in Josh 1:1 makes it clear that Joshua will play a much more important role than before, because Moses has died.

In Josh 1:2 this is followed by a literal speech by Yhwh to Joshua. V. 2a first states once again, this time from God's perspective, the fact that his servant Moses is dead. The time indication וְעַתָּה leads from the past to the present, in which Yhwh addresses Joshua in the imperative singular, who is now to cross the Jordan. The connection of the root עָבַר with אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה has two negatively formulated counterparts in Yhwh's speeches to Moses in Deut 3:27b (כִּי־לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה) and 31:2b (וַיהוָה אָמַר אֵלַי לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה). The parallels in Deuteronomy make it clear that Moses will not cross the Jordan. In the further course of the analysis, it will become clear in several places that Josh 1 builds on Deut 31 and this could already be the case here. Deut 3:27-28, on the other hand, is probably more of a later retrospective of Deut 31 and Josh 1 and emphasises the commissioning of Joshua by Moses in Deuteronomy and not by Yhwh.[12] While the commands קוּם and עֲבֹר are explicitly addressed only to Joshua, the subsequent clause אַתָּה וְכָל-הָעָם הַזֶּה makes it clear that Joshua acts as the leader of the people whom he precedes. The phrase הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לָהֶם also has numerous parallels in Deuteronomy (cf. e.g. Deut 1:25; 2:29; 3:20; 4:1.2 also with participle but mostly from Moses' mouth) and in the rest of the Pentateuch (cf. Lev 23:10; 25:2). Conceptually, it probably alludes to the promises of Yhwh to Abraham, in the course of which Yhwh promises to give him and his descendants the land. Within the Book of Joshua, the command to cross the Jordan forms a preview of Josh 3 (and 4), when the actual crossing of the Jordan is described.

Expansion

Vv. 10-11

In scholarship it is often argued that vv. 10-11 form the continuation of the basic layer of vv. 1-2.[13] The verses would then represent Joshua's immediate reaction to Yhwh's command. However, there are numerous arguments against this thesis which make it more likely that vv. 10-11 are also a secondary addition.

In v. 10, a new discourse begins by introducing Joshua's speech to the שֹׁטְרֵי הָעָם. Joshua gives the Shoterim the direct command to go through the camp and in turn command the people (v. 11aα). The following indirect command, which the Shoterim are to pass on to the people, is that the people should prepare provisions for the journey (v. 11aβ). As a reason for this the Shoterim are to state that the people will cross the Jordan in three days to enter the land that Yhwh is

[12] Cf. Kratz 2024, 445.

[13] Cf. e.g. Hollenberg 1874, 477; Holzinger 1901, 2; Steuernagel 1923, 211.

giving them and take possession of it (v. 11b). The command that Yhwh gave Joshua according to v. 2 is therefore to be passed on to the people via the Shoterim. It is consistent with this that the phrase אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נֹתֵן לָכֶם, familiar from v. 2, is repeated and this time addressed to the 2nd person plural. It is surprising, however, that suddenly the reference is no longer only to Joshua and the people, but also to the newly introduced group of Shoterim, who are only mentioned as שֹׁטְרֵי הָעָם here. The Shoterim are introduced in Deut 1:15 and pass on commands to the people in Deut 20:5-9 in a similar way to Josh 1:11. The oldest mentioning is in Deut 16:18, where they appear in the connection שֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים. The introduction of the שֹׁטְרֵי הָעָם in Josh 1:10 probably has pragmatic reasons. This also explains the sudden mention of the camp, which last occured in Deut 2; 23 and 29. The people will not have heard God's command to Joshua and it is therefore necessary to send the Shoterim through the camp to spread the message. However, it is very noticeable that the Shoterim do not play a major role in the rest of the narrative of the Book of Joshua. Only in Jos 3:2 does it say: וַיַּעַבְרוּ הַשֹּׁטְרִים בְּקֶרֶב הַמַּחֲנֶה, whereby there is a link to the formulation בְּקֶרֶב הַמַּחֲנֶה from Josh 1:11. The time period שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים is also mentioned in both cases. It is therefore often assumed that the basic layer from Josh 1 (understood as vv. 1-2.10-11) is continued in Josh 3:2.[14] However, Reinhard Kratz has importantly pointed out that the timing and the action in the two chapters do not actually correspond, since in Josh 1 it says that the Jordan will already be crossed in three days (בְּעוֹד ׀ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים), while in Josh 3 the Shoterim only pass through the camp after the end of three days (מִקְצֵה שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים).[15]

Another argument is that God's command to Joshua from v. 2 is expanded by several elements. The fact that the Shoterim are to call on the people to prepare themselves (v. 11a) already represents a significant slowing down of the concise original command קוּם עֲבֹר from v. 2. The justification in v. 11b from כִּי then offers a clear extension of the command from v. 2. The specific time בְּעוֹד ׀ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים is added, which serves as a secondary connection between Josh 1:10-11 and Josh 3:2.[16] In v. 2 it also says: Joshua [and the people] were to cross the Jordan to the land that Yhwh gives them. V. 11 contains the extension לָבוֹא לָרֶשֶׁת אֶת-הָאָרֶץ, which has numerous parallels in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 1:8; 4:1, 5; 8:1; 9:1; 11:31) and could originate from there. The reference to Deuteronomy becomes even clearer through the addition of לְרִשְׁתָּהּ, which is not attested in the Greek text, but was probably inserted secondarily into the Hebrew text in adaptation of Deut 31:13. While the power to act in v. 2 was very clearly with God – he gives the land to the Israelites – in v. 11 it is shifted to the people who are to occupy the land.

[14] See for example Wellhausen 1963, 118 and Krause 2014, 73f.
[15] Cf. Kratz 2024, 424f.
[16] Cf. Kratz 2024, 425f.

Overall, there are therefore several strong arguments vv. 10-11 are secondary[17] and serve to prepare the passage through the Jordan.[18]

Detailed structure of vv. 2-9

In the version of Joshua 1 that we have before us, God's speech does not end with v. 2 but extends to v. 9. It can be structured as follows: The command to Joshua (v. 2) is followed in vv. 3-4 by an explanation of the taking of the land and a description of the territory. In vv. 5-6, Yhwh encourages Joshua for his mission and promises him the same support that he gave Moses. The call for courage and strength is repeated in v. 7 and specified in terms of obeying Moses' commands. In vv. 8-9, what has been said before is specifically linked to the book of the Torah.

It has been and is still sometimes proposed that the composition of God's speech to Joshua in vv. 3-9 is largely uniform.[19] However, there are striking arguments that the speech cannot be seen as a seamless literary unit. Different styles, grammatical forms, themes, and *Wiederaufnahmen* indicate that it consists of different layers. For example, vv. 3-5a are clearly set apart from their surrounding context. However, before I look at the insertion of vv. 3-5a in more detail, I would first like to turn my attention to vv. 5b-6.

Expansion

Vv. 5b-6

In contrast to vv. 3-5a, v. 5b follows on well from v. 2, as in both verses Joshua is addressed in the 2nd person singular and a reference to Moses is made. Despite the grammatically appropriate transition, however, there are some indications that vv. 5b and 6 are also an extension of the original text. Verses 1-2 are characterised by a very concise style. They consist only of an introduction to the speech and short requests with minimal explanations. In contrast, vv. 5b-6 appear to be verbose and almost poetic due to their formulaic elements and stylistic devices. After the command in v. 2 וְעַתָּה֙ קוּם עֲבֹ֔ר, which could not have been more concise, Yhwh now encourages and strengthens Joshua not once or twice, but three times in total with different promises of support for his mission.

Firstly, Yhwh promises Joshua the same assistance that he gave Moses. Here, v. 5b ties in with the reference to Moses being dead from v. 2 and Joshua is artfully paralleled with Moses (כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר הָיִ֤יתִי עִם-מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶהְיֶ֣ה עִמָּ֔ךְ). God had promised Moses his support when he was called in Ex 3:12 (כִּי־

[17] Cf. e.g. Noth 1938, 7; Kratz 2024, 440.
[18] Cf. Fritz 1994, 30.
[19] Cf. e.g. Hollenberg 1874, 476; Krause 2014, 132.

אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ). God's assistance is a recurring motif that, in addition to Moses and Joshua, also characterises Isaac (Gen 26:3), Jacob (Gen 31:3), Joseph (Gen 39:2) and others. It serves here to particularly legitimise Joshua as Moses' successor and at the same time places him in a row with the arch-fathers and other leading figures who were particularly connected to Yhwh.[20] Secondly, the support of Joshua by Yhwh is emphasised by the hendiadyoin לֹא אַרְפְּךָ וְלֹא אֶעֶזְבֶךָּ (Josh 1:5). In Deut 31:6, Moses had initially promised the Israelites the same constant companionship from God and also promised it to Joshua in Deut 31:8. The wording in the 1st person singular from God's own mouth in Jos 1:5 gives the promise even more weight. With these two promises of support behind him, Yhwh finally asks Joshua to carry out his commission with the additional request: חֲזַק וֶאֱמָץ (v. 6). The formula חֲזַק וֶאֱמָץ already appears several times in Deut 31 and therefore seems to have been borrowed from there. In Deut 31:6, the Israelites are commanded in the imperative plural to be strong and courageous, and the exhortation is also justified with the support they receive from God (חִזְקוּ וְאִמְצוּ אַל-תִּירְאוּ וְאַל-תַּעַרְצוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי ׀ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ עִמָּךְ לֹא יַרְפְּךָ וְלֹא יַעַזְבֶךָּ). Josh 1:5b and 6 thus make use of several elements from Deut 31, 6 and 8 and transfer them to Joshua.

In addition to these stylistic peculiarities, v. 6 also contains new information in terms of content. Joshua's mission is supplemented by an important element in v. 6 and explained in more detail. Whereas previously there was only talk of him going with the people across the Jordan to the land that Yhwh is giving them (v. 2), it is now emphasised that Joshua is to distribute the land as an inheritance (אַתָּה תַּנְחִיל֙ אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶת-הָאָ֔רֶץ, Josh 1:6).

In Deut 31:7, the command חֲזַק וֶאֱמָץ is connected with the taking of the land, in which Joshua leads the people, *and* with the distribution of the land as an inheritance. Josh 1:6 picks up on this connection, which is primarily linked to the root נחל Hiphil. Again, Deut 3:28 probably looks back to this later, in that God announces to Moses that Joshua should let the people inherit the land (וְהוּא֙ יַנְחִיל אוֹתָ֔ם אֶת-הָאָ֖רֶץ).

In addition, the allusion to Deut 31:7 explains the giving of the land expressed in v. 2 by the participle נֹתֵן. While the reference to the promises to the ancestors was previously only implied, it is made explicit here. Connected by a relative clause, God explains that he had promised the forefathers to give them the land (אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לַאֲבוֹתָם לָתֵת לָהֶם) and thus refers back to the promises made to Abraham and his descendants. The explicit allusion to the oath to the fathers also occurs in Gen 24:7; 26:3 and 50:24 as well as in numerous passages in Deuteronomy (cf. e.g. Deut 1:8; 31:7, 20, 21 and 34:4). Joshua is now to fulfil this promise.

Between vv. 1-2 and 5b-6, vv. 3-5a were inserted at one point in the tradition.

[20] Cf. Fritz 1994, 28f.

Expansion

Vv. 3-5a

This is very obvious from the linguistic and contextual break between v. 2 and v. 3. While v. 2 and vv. 5-9 are addressed to Joshua in the 2nd person singular, in vv. 3-4 a 2nd person plural is addressed. Now the change to the plural form of address in v. 3 could be explained by the phrase אַתָּה וְכָל-הָעָם הַזֶּה from v. 2.[21] However, it is then not possible to explain why only Joshua is addressed again from v. 5 onwards, especially since the formulation לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ לְפָנֶיךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ from v. 5 has a parallel in Deut 11:25, where it is actually formulated in the plural (לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ בִּפְנֵיכֶם). Rather, it can be assumed that v. 5a represents the seam through which v. 3-4 was connected to the text that follows from v. 5b. For this purpose, in the Hebrew text the formulation לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ לְפָנֶיךָ, which in Deut 7:24 (לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ בְּפָנֶיךָ) and 11, 25 (לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ בִּפְנֵיכֶם) is addressed very similarly to Israel, is quoted here slightly modified in the singular. God's promise that no one will resist Israel is transferred to Joshua as a representative (*pars pro toto*) for the period of his life (כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ). The claim that Israel has against its enemies is thus transferred to Joshua as its leader.[22] Through this promise of God to Joshua that no one will resist him in the fulfilment of his task, on the one hand the linguistic transition is smoothed back into the 2nd person singular and on the other hand a further encouragement of Joshua is placed before the following ones in vv. 5b and 6. A comparison with the Septuagint confirms the assumption of this deliberate change in the Hebrew tradition to smooth the transition, since the Septuagint attests לֹא־יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ **לְפָנֶיךָ** plural as οὐκ ἀντιστήσεται ἄνθρωπος κατενώπιον **ὑμῶν**. It is possible that there was a Hebrew *Vorlage* in which לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ לְפָנֶיךָ was still formulated in the plural as in the parallel passage Deut 11:25.

There is a further tension between the formulation אֲשֶׁר תִּדְרֹךְ כַּף-רַגְלְכֶם בּוֹ לָכֶם נְתַתִּיו in v. 3 and the formulations אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לָהֶם in v. 2 and אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לַאֲבוֹתָם לָתֵת לָהֶם in v. 6. In v. 3 the preposition ל has a 2nd person plural suffix, while in v. 2 and 6 it is suffixed with the 3rd person plural. In addition, the perfect tense נְתַתִּיו in v. 3 has a declarative character. It implies the understanding that the giving of the land has already happened through the promise. However, this is only made explicit in v. 6 through the declaration לָתֵת אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי. V. 6 is therefore already presupposed in v. 3. In the participle נֹתֵן in v. 2, on the other hand, the process of giving is more in the foreground. The Septuagint attempts to resolve the tension by translating the participle in v. 2 with a simple present δίδωμι and the perfect tense in v. 3 futurally with δώσω.

[21] Thus Noth 1953, 20.
[22] Cf. Fritz 1994, 28.

In addition, aspects of content suggest that v. 3 and 4 are later additions. In v. 3a, the wording כָּל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּדְרֹךְ כַּף-רַגְלְכֶם בּוֹ לָכֶם is quoted verbatim from Deut 11:24a, that the Israelites only have to enter the land in order to possess it. While the statement in Deut 11 is formulated in the futuristic imperfect (יִהְיֶה), Josh 1:3 uses the perfect tense, which contrasts with v. 2. In v. 4, the expansion of the land is then described, whereby several parallel passages stand out. The description **מֵהַמִּדְבָּר וְהַלְּבָנוֹן** הַזֶּה וְעַד-**הַנָּהָר** הַגָּדוֹל נְהַר-**פְּרָת** כֹּל אֶרֶץ הַחִתִּים **וְעַד-הַיָּם** הַגָּדוֹל מְבוֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יִהְיֶה **גְּבוּלְכֶם** (Josh 1, 4) is quoted almost verbatim from Deut 11, 24b **מִן-הַמִּדְבָּר וְהַלְּבָנוֹן** מִן-**הַנָּהָר נְהַר**- **פְּרָת וְעַד הַיָּם** הָאַחֲרוֹן יִהְיֶה **גְּבֻלְכֶם** and has only been supplemented by two elements. To specify הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל in accordance with Jos 23:4, the directional indication מְבוֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ has been added. Furthermore, the description of the territory was supplemented by the addition כֹּל אֶרֶץ הַחִתִּים, which has a parallel in Jdg 1:26 and is not attested in the Septuagint. It is probably a secondary addition to the Hebrew text.

Overall, therefore, there are three powerful arguments in favour of vv. 3-5a being a later addition between v. 2 and 5b. On a grammatical level, this is firstly the abrupt change to the plural form of address in vv. 3-4 and the harmonisation of this break through the change of the numerus in the Hebrew text in v. 5a. Secondly, there is an unresolvable tension between the relative clause formulated in the perfect tense in v. 3 and v. 2, which can only be explained by the fact that v. 3 already presupposes v. 6. Thirdly, the comparison with Deut 11 has made it clear that vv. 3-5a is a combination of newly composed quotations from Deut 11:24a; 11:24b and 11:25, supplemented by additions from the Book of Joshua and Judges. The addition כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל-מֹשֶׁה (v.3) also explicitly identifies the verses as quotations. It could be assumed that the purpose of the addition is to emphasise the divine legitimacy and great extent of the conquest of the land.

<u>Expansions</u>

V. 7

In vv. 7-9 there are also expansions of the original text, again by different hands. The *Wiederaufnahme* of the formula חֲזַק וֶאֱמַץ and the intensification of the statement through the addition of רַק, which I translate as “be sure to”, suggest that v. 7* was added to v. 6. As already shown, the command to Joshua to be strong and courageous in v. 6 is based on Deut 31:7(.23) justified with his commission to let the people inherit the land, which God had promised to their ancestors (כִּי אַתָּה תַּנְחִיל֙ אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶת-הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּ֥עְתִּי לַאֲבוֹתָ֖ם לָתֵ֥ת לָהֶֽם). The call for strength and courage is therefore based on the one hand on the far-reaching significance of the task, the fulfilment of the long-prepared promise. On the other hand, it can be assumed that the

distribution of the land will be preceded by an act of war, which will require courage and strength.

In v. 7*, the command חֲזַק וֶאֱמַץ is repeated and specified in a new direction. Joshua is to be strong and courageous לִשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ מֹשֶׁה (to observe to act according to all that Moses commanded [him]). The requirement is reinforced by the vetitive אַל-תָּסוּר and the clarification יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאול. The final clause connected with לְמַעַן makes the consequence clear: if Joshua behaves in this way, he will be successful wherever he goes (לְמַעַן תַּשְׂכִּיל בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ). Thus, v. 7* makes the success of Joshua's endeavour dependent on his adherence to what Moses has commanded. The verse is peppered with concepts and formulations from Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 5:1, 32; 4:1). In Deut 4:1, for example, the observance of the ordinances and legal provisions that Moses teaches the people – i.e. everything that Moses commands – is explicitly mentioned as a condition for taking the land (וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע אֶל־הַחֻקִּים וְאֶל־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְלַמֵּד אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת לְמַעַן תִּחְיוּ וּבָאתֶם וִירִשְׁתֶּם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם נֹתֵן לָכֶם). The connection between the roots שמר and עשה is also typical of Deuteronomy. It appears, for example, in Deut 5:1, 32 in the proclamation of the Decalogue (Dtn 5:1 וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשֹׂתָם; Dtn 5:32 וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֶתְכֶם). In this context, the phrase לֹא תָסֻרוּ יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל (Dtn 5:32) also occurs. The addition of v. 7* thus explicitly links two previously separate contexts. While the command חֲזַק וֶאֱמַץ had before only referred to Joshua taking the land and distributing it as an inheritance, the success of this endeavour is now explicitly linked to keeping what Moses commanded. The link that Deut 4:1 already made for Israel entering the Promised Land is thus explicitly taken up here and emphasised for Joshua. As two different formulations are included that are directly related to the proclamation of the Decalogue, it can be assumed that כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ מֹשֶׁה refers to precisely these Ten Commandments. The consequence לְמַעַן תַּשְׂכִּיל has a counterpart in Deuteronomy as well, where it is also connected to שמר and עשה. It says in Deut 29:8 in connection with the Moab covenant: וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם לְמַעַן תַּשְׂכִּילוּ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן. Thus, by adding the consequence, a reference is also made to the covenant theology of Deuteronomy.

Vv. 8-9

V. 7* receives a further specification and interpretation through the even later addition of vv. 8-9. Linguistically, the addition can be recognised by the *Wiederaufnahme* of elements from v. 7. V. 8 repeats the consequence תַּשְׂכִּיל and v. 9 takes up the comprehensive localisation בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ. In v. 8, the demonstrative pronoun in סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה is surprising, as the book had not yet been mentioned in the text. In v. 8, two formulations are particularly striking. Thus, the phrase

לֹא־יָמ֣וּשׁ סֵ֔פֶר הַתּוֹרָ֖ה הַזֶּ֑ה מִפִּיךָ֙ has a parallel in Isa 59:21 (לֹא־יָמ֥וּשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ֖) and וְהָגִ֣יתָ בּ֔וֹ יוֹמָ֖ם וָלָ֑יְלָה in Ps 1:2 (וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ֙ יֶהְגֶּ֣ה יוֹמָ֔ם וָלָֽיְלָה).

This is followed by the slightly modified *Wiederaufnahme* of the phrase תִּשְׁמָ֥ר לַעֲשׂ֖וֹת, which is familiar from Deuteronomy and was already used in v. 7. In v. 7, the connection לִשְׁמֹ֣ר לַעֲשׂ֗וֹת is followed by כְּכָל֩ אֲשֶׁ֨ר צִוְּךָ֜ מֹשֶׁ֗ה, which gives the impression that it means oral commands. In contrast, v. 8 reads כְּכָל־הַכָּת֥וּב בּ֖וֹ. V. 8 thus explicitly refers to the book of the Torah as a written entity, the content of which must be referred to. The writing of the Torah in Deut 31:9 therefore seems to be presupposed. In v.8, הַתּוֹרָה is attested in both the Hebrew and Greek text, but with slightly different references. While the masculine demonstrative pronoun in the Hebrew emphasises the book more, the Greek text seems to have subsequently shifted the emphasis to the law. Connected with כִּי־אָ֣ז, v. 8 also explains the positive consequence of the previously described behaviour. Not only the expression לְמַ֣עַן תַּשְׂכִּ֔יל mentioned in v. 7 is taken up by the phrase וְאָ֣ז תַּשְׂכִּ֔יל but is also expanded by the expression תַּצְלִ֖יחַ אֶת־דְּרָכֶֽךָ. Complying with the *written* law therefore seems to carry more weight and increase the likelihood of success.

Introduced as a rhetorical question (הֲלֹ֥וא צִוִּיתִ֖יךָ), v. 9 repeats several elements already known from the previous verses. Firstly, the formula חֲזַ֥ק וֶאֱמָ֖ץ appears for the third time (cf. vv. 6; 7). With the addition of v. 7, it now refers both to the taking and distribution of land and to the keeping of the law. In addition, the promise of Yhwh's support is repeated, but unlike in v. 5, it is not formulated in the 1st person singular, but in the 3rd person singular. Like v. 7, v. 9 ends with the relative clause בְּכֹ֖ל אֲשֶׁ֣ר תֵּלֵ֑ךְ, whereby the success of the endeavour and God's support are brought into a direct connection. A new element is the hendiadyoin consisting of the two vetitives אַל־תַּעֲרֹ֥ץ וְאַל־תֵּחָ֖ת, between request and promise of assistance. It is striking that instead of the classic reassurance formula אַל־תִּירָ֥א וְאַל־תֵּחָ֖ת, as found for example in Deut 1:21; Jos 8:1 and 10:25, the roots ערץ and חתת have been combined. One problem is the formulation of v. 9b in the 3rd singular. Martin Noth solves this by detaching v. 9b as a later addition.[23] However, since v. 9 seems like a summary of what has been said so far due to the *Wiederaufnahme* of so many already known elements, this does not seem likely. Rudolf Smend's suggestion that in the addition of vv. 8-9 there is a general misunderstanding that Moses is speaking and not God is more convincing.[24] Overall, v. 9 builds a bridge back to vv. 5 and 6 through the numerous *Wiederaufnahmen* and adds a fifth encouragement of Joshua with the formulation אַל־תַּעֲרֹ֥ץ וְאַל־תֵּחָ֖ת. The resulting text leaves no doubt that nothing and no one stands in the way of Joshua's great project if he behaves correctly.

[23] Cf. Noth 1953, 29.
[24] Cf. Smend 1971, 496 n. 11.

Addition of the Torah

The addition of vv. 8 and 9 motivated another very significant secondary addition in v. 7. While the Hebrew text reads כְּכָל-הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ מֹשֶׁה, the Septuagint translates καθότι ἐνετείλατό σοι Μωυσῆς. The Septuagint therefore evidently had a protomasoretic *Vorlage* in which הַתּוֹרָה was not yet in the text. While many LXX variants contain the plus of the MT, the Vetus Latina reads *sicut praecipit tibi Moyses* and thus confirms the shorter reading of the Septuagint. It is possible that it was initially אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ מֹשֶׁה כְּכָל, while הַתּוֹרָה was only later written into the Hebrew text. Sometimes the addition of כָּל הַתּוֹרָה is assumed[25] but the conjunction καθότι does occur in the LXX as a translation of כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר (cf. e.g. Jos 11:23), which suggests that only הַתּוֹרָה was added. The most important arguments supporting the thesis that הַתּוֹרָה is a later addition are, firstly, that in the course of the sentence, the preposition מן carries a masculine suffix (מִמֶּנּוּ), which cannot refer to the feminine Torah. Secondly, that Moses never explicitly commanded Joshua to obey the Torah and thirdly, that the call to be strong and courageous does not fit with keeping the law. [26] The addition could have been motivated by the mention of סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה in v. 8. The addition of 'all that Moses commanded' specifies the Torah as a fixed figure that was not previously known in this way.

The mention of the term Torah in v. 8 and the emphasis by the demonstrative pronoun make it unlikely that the translator of the LXX deliberately omitted the word.

When analysing v. 8, it was already assumed that Deut 31 is in the background. This is made even more likely by the fact that the connection וְשָׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת is also found in Deut 31:12 (addressed to the people), which explicitly refers to אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת.

The phenomenon of a secondary addition of הַתּוֹרָה in the course of relatively late editorial revisions, which were orientated towards the law, is found more frequently in the Old Testament (e.g. Deut 17:19; Jer 26:4 etc.) and was described in detail by Alexander Rofé in an essay in 2009, in which he cites numerous examples. Regarding Josh 1:7-8, he says: "The leader Joshua is thus transformed into a student of the law!".[27]

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that Josh 1:1-11 has developed in several stages in which different layers were added to the basic layer Josh 1:1-2. The content of the basic layer of Josh 1 in vv. 1-2 consists of Joshua being commanded by Yhwh to cross the Jordan after the death of Moses in order to lead the people of Israel to the land that Yhwh is giving them. While the analysis has

[25] Cf. e.g. Smend 1971, 494 n. 3.
[26] Cf. Müller/Pakkala 2022, 64f.
[27] Rofé 2009, 231.

shown that there are compelling arguments that vv. 1-2 are the most original within Josh 1:1-11, it must remain open for now whether Josh 1:1-2 represent an original, pre-Deuteronomistic part of the Book of Joshua[28] or whether they are already to be judged as Deuteronomistic.[29]
Within Josh 1, the first two verses are expanded to include Joshua's reaction in vv. 10-11. Joshua passes on the command, expanded with a few details, to the group of Shoterim of the people who have suddenly appeared. They in turn are to inform the people so that they can prepare for their departure in three days, whereby a secondary link to Josh 3:2 is established.
The consideration of vv. 5b-6 has shown that there is a skilful and substantive addition to the original command to Joshua. The verses extend the original command by Yhwh's encouragement of Joshua, the emphasis on his legitimacy through the explicit parallelisation with Moses, and the addition prepared in Deuteronomy that Joshua is also to distribute the land to the people as an inheritance.
The intention of the addition of vv. 3-5a could have been to emphasise the legitimacy of God's planned conquest of the land and to emphasise its extent.
The addition of verse 7 gives the story a new twist. Joshua's success is now explicitly dependent on following Moses' commands. This new aspect is linked via the *Wiederaufnahme* of the formula חֲזַק וֶאֱמָץ, even if the connection is awkward, as strength and courage fit well with battle, but not with keeping commandments.[30]
Vv. 8 and 9 supplement and specify v. 7. V. 8 does not establish any connection to the actual task of taking the land but merely emphasises in detail the correct handling of the Book of the Torah, namely the constant meditation of it. Only through the literal repetitions is a connection made to what has been said before, and only via the diversions of success is the reference made to the actual command. V. 9 somewhat balances out this deviation from the theme through the *Wiederaufnahmen* from vv. 5 and 6. The addition of vv. 8-9 finally motivated the secondary addition הַתּוֹרָה, which fits into a series of later additions of the Torah in the Hebrew Bible. Verses 7-9 thus insert a passage on the subject of the law into the plot, which is expanded several times. Overall, however, despite the abrupt change of topic, the additions are integrated quite harmoniously into the existing context thanks to the numerous *Wiederaufnahmen* and links. This is probably why scholars have arrived at the thesis that the composition was designed in this way from the outset. In the present text, the command to take the land is now directly related both to the subsequent distribution of the land as an inheritance and to obeying the written law, which probably arose from the corresponding link between the two themes in Deuteronomy.

[28] Cf. Germany 2017, 317 who thinks this is possible.
[29] Cf. e.g. Dillmann 1886, 442; Wellhausen 1963, 117.
[30] Cf. Müller/Pakkala 2022, 65.

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Research Project Summary

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Head-Supervisor: Dr. Anja Klein, School of Divinity, The University *of* Edinburgh
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Project Working Title:

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: Reading Law and Narrative Materials in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible

Project Summary:

This research project investigates the narratives of sexual and gender-based violence in the Hebrew Bible (HB) and their relationship to both biblical and cuneiform legal corpora. It focuses specifically on biblical texts in which sexual violence is not incidental but functions as a central thematic element. The study categorizes these narratives according to types of forcible intercourse: (a) completed male-to-female (Gen 34; Judg 19; 2 Sam 13); (b) completed female-to-male (Gen 19:30–38); (c) attempted male-to-male (Gen 19:1–29); and (d) attempted female-to-male (Gen 39).

Alongside the narrative analysis, the study juxtaposes these accounts with legal prescriptions addressing sexual behaviors, drawing from both biblical laws (e.g., Exod 22:16–17; Lev 18:20; 19:20–22; 20:10; Num 5:11–31; Deut 22) and Ancient Near Eastern cuneiform codes (e.g., LU §§6–8; LE §§26–28, 31; LH §§129–130, 154–156; HL §§189–191, 197–198; MAL §§12, 15–16, 23, 55–56). Particular attention is given to the legal silences surrounding divine justice for victims, especially where the law fails to offer redress or compassion. One of the project's most striking findings is that a single illicit sexual act often triggers a broader cycle of violence and familial or communal breakdown.

The project argues that these texts use sexual violence as a narrative mechanism to expose the underlying social and moral instability in ancient Israelite communities. In light of the present discussion provided by feminist scholars, how do the sexual and gender-based violence narratives in the Hebrew Bible, when examined alongside the cuneiform and biblical legal corpora, contribute to our understanding of sexual violence in the ancient world? Specifically, how does the biblical use of key Hebrew terms such as ידע, ענה, חזק, שכב, לקח, and נבלה inform the portrayal of sexual assault/rape? In what ways do these texts, both legal and narrative, offer insight into the biblical authors' conceptualization of sexual and gender-based violence? Is there evidence to suggest a coherent, genre-based approach to reading these materials collectively, or do alternative interpretations offer a more accurate understanding? Furthermore, how can the parallels between the cuneiform legal materials and biblical texts enhance our interpretation of sexual violence in

these ancient contexts? To answer this, the study draws on narrative criticism, intertextual analysis, and gender-critical approaches—each offering a distinct lens through which to evaluate the dynamics of power, agency, and law.

The research begins with an introductory chapter outlining the project's aims, context, significance, and methodology, alongside a review of relevant scholarship on sexual violence in biblical and legal literature. Following this, Part II countians chapters two and three, which analyze the cuneiform and biblical sexual regulations respectively. They explore the interconnections and framework governing these legislations by comparing them. The argument is that these regulations were developed to prevent male figures from spiraling out of control in anger, revenge, and extreme violence.

Part III of this thesis is the central piece that explores the textual narratives on sexual violence. It contains five chapters that analyze the narratives of sexual and gender-based violence texts. In chapter four, the thesis explores the narrative of Genesis 19:1–29 to understand the label of sexual violence within the story, and how it relates to the other materials on sexual violence text. In chapter five, the study analyzes the Gen 19:30–38 narrative to discuss first-degree incest, which I refer to as a story of sexual fantasy. It examines how the story of incestuous intercourse relates to the ideology of forceful and non-consensual sexual intercourse and how those reveal not merely abuse of power but also sexual deviance and a pattern of systematic violence. In chapter six examines the narrative of Genesis 34, analyzing the usage of the three-verb chain (לקח, שכב, and ענה) that describes the sexual encounter (v. 2), and demonstrating that the chain points to general liability for having committed an act that is considered a "heinous offense" (vv. 7, 13). I argue that though these verbs can have a wide range of meanings, they all point to the idea of forceful intercourse. In chapter seven, the study analyzes the narrative of Genesis 39 to explore the sexual assault against a male Hebrew slave, and it asks how the imagery of violence is portrayed in the narrative. The argument made here is that sexual assault attempts show the vulnerability of Hebrew slaves within the Egyptian society. Similarly, chapter eight considers the narrative of Judges 19 in which the notion of violence is concentrated: nuclear family violence (vv. 1–3), extended family violence (vv. 4–10), and communal violence (vv. 16–26)—all of which contribute to the social fragmentation of Israel's tribal society. And last chapter of this section evaluates the narrative of 2 Samuel 19:1–20 to explores what function the "coercive sexual intercourse" has within the biblical narratives of sexual and gender-based violence.

Finally, Part IV contains two chapters in which it addresses the findings from Part II and Part III. In chapter nine proposes a logical reading of the materials and shows further connections between the legal and narrative materials on the issue of sexual violence. Lastly, the final chapter summarizes the argument and analyzes the study's results, namely that sexual violence narratives intend to show the social fragmentation of the different structures within ancient Israel.

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PREFACE

This chapter is part of my doctoral dissertation on the topic of **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence** in the Hebrew Bible. It is written in a chapter style; however, it is not the final version of the chapter. As you read my chapter, I especially appreciate discussions regarding the following two aspects:

1. **Does the chapter balance legal analysis and narrative interpretation, or does one overshadow the other?**
2. Is the comparative method (legal-historical and narrative-literary) clearly articulated and justified?
3. **Are the comparisons between cuneiform and biblical law used to build a broader argument, or do they remain mostly descriptive?**
4. Does the chapter need clearer transitions or summaries at the end of major sections to guide the reader?

These questions would help further analyze what is at the core of the narrative. All feedback, constructive criticism, and suggestions a strong welcome. It would indeed help me to further strengthen the chapter.

Warmly,

Luis

CHAPTER NINE

THE INTERCONNECTIONS IN LAW AND NARRATIVE

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to understand the legal framework concerning sexual crimes regulations and how we can read biblical narratives against the background of the legal materials. I argue that the language used in these case laws evoke the idea of forceful intercourse. Moreover, these laws were created not to prevent men from committing sexual violence but to guide the ancient legal authorities to find a less violent way to deal with sexual crimes offenses.[1] However, the authorities were not always able to find solutions with positive outcomes.[2] Neither did these texts function as normative and binding legislation in the modern sense.[3] And yet the legal codes are in fact a reliable description of the law in practice—as Westbrook notes.[4]

To demonstrate how it influences our reading of biblical narratives on sexual behaviors, in this chapter I hope to show how the cuneiform lawgivers framed the legal language that regulates or regulated those sexual behaviors. Moreover, I suggest that the redactors of these materials assumed their audiences had some level of knowledge not only of the Israelite legal prescriptions but also of those that relate to the Ancient Near East codes. Likewise, I propose that it is the characters in those materials that create the legal tension by violating both the cuneiform and biblical legislations. Thus, those violations form the subtext of the story lines; indeed, the characters' violations add considerable depth and dramatic irony to the narratives.

To that end, I begin with a brief analysis on the interconnections between the legal materials. Next, I address the theme and aim of the legal corpora. Then, I discuss the notion of the right to avenge, which is a recurrent theme within these materials. In the final section of the chapter, I analyze the correspondence between law and narrative.

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[1] Yamada, *Configurations of Rape*, 3.

[2] For example, see Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13.

[3] See Well, "The Idea of a Shared Tradition," xiii.

[4] Ibid.

2. The Interconnection of Legal Codes

Westbrook developed the dominant theory of the relationship between the cuneiform and biblical legal corpora by proposing the ideal of a "shared tradition,"[5] an ideal which has other scholars like Wright have since challenged. Wright proposes that the biblical legal system "borrowed directly" from the Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian legal codes.[6] Other scholars like Shalom M. Paul and J.J. Finkelstein insist that biblical and cuneiform laws had a "direct connection," but admit that the exact method of transmission cannot be established.[7] It seems plausible that the sharing/borrowing between these legal codes was at a "literary level," meaning that a biblical author borrowed a legal custom through a literary source.[8] In this regard, the case laws demonstrate a remarkable continuity in fundamental juridical concepts while also determining the parameters of the lawgivers. In the following, I briefly summarize the scholarly discussion regarding the interconnection of the cuneiform and biblical legal materials.

A comparison of the Ancient Near East law with other biblical laws shows that they are both heavily indebted to the tradition of cuneiform laws that originated in Mesopotamia.[9] The assumption is that biblical and Near Eastern law both draw from the same stock of legal vocabulary and, at times, reflect similar legal strategies.[10] Yet this does not mean that the biblical lawgivers did not have room to develop their own sets of regulations; rather, it draws attention to the fact that the materials use concepts and content in common.

Broadly speaking, there are four types of connection between the cuneiform materials and the biblical laws: "a direct connection," "a mediated connection," "a common source," and "a common tradition."[11] *Direction connection* refers to instances in which one source is dependent upon the other. *Mediated connection* entails indirect borrowing from a third source, which borrowed directly from the first source. *A common source* refers to the supposition that the

[5] Westbrook, Property and Family, 11–12; Cf. Well, "The Idea of a Shared Tradition," xi–xx.

[6] Wright, *Inventing God's Law*.

[7] Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant*, 104–105; Finkelstein, *The Ox That Gored*, 20.

[8] Van Seters, *A Law Book for The Diaspora*, 30.

[9] Wenham, "Law," 25; cf. Johnson, "Introduction," 7.

[10] The connection between cuneiform and biblical legal materials has, however, not yet been settled. For a discussion on the similarities and differences between these legal codes, see Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant*; Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*; Barmash, *Homicide in the Biblical World*; Wright, *Inventing God's Law*; Greengus, *Laws in the Bible*.

[11] Malul, *Comparative Method*, 87–91, 105 n. 13.

cuneiform and biblical laws borrow from a common source. *A common tradition* describes instances in which two sources exhibit similar traits, which then are attributed to a shared tradition (e.g., literary, religious, legal, historiographical traditions, and so on). Wright states, "The more likely conclusion is that Covenant Code depends directly on Law of Hammurabi."[12] Although the Covenant Code shows evidence of the use of the other cuneiform sources,[13] its greater correspondence is with Law of Hammurabi.[14]

Furthermore, the formation of the biblical laws has been an open question. It is commonly assumed that the biblical laws were formulated in two ways: from the cuneiform laws to (→) the biblical laws, and from the biblical narratives to/from (⇆) the biblical law.[15] However, some are directly linked to the cuneiform legal materials (e.g., *the laws of the Goring Ox*), and others, as Carmichael suggests, are connected to the Genesis narrative.[16] The diagram below presents the relationship between the cuneiform and biblical laws, further demonstrating their shared tradition.

The Common Tradition of the Law

Figure 1

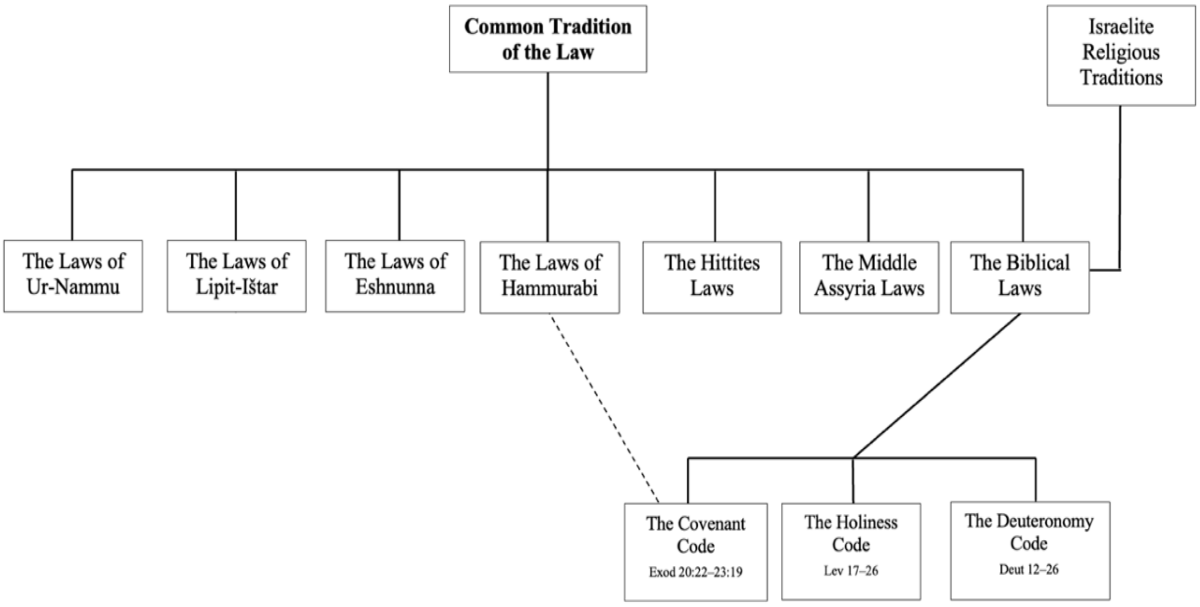
[12] Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, 218.

[13] Westbrook and Wells, *Everyday Law in Biblical Israel*, 24 suggest that the difficulty with this approach is that the Hebrew scribes appear to pull their material from all the known codes; cf. Wright, "The Laws of Hammurabi," 50.

[14] Wells, "The Covenant Code," 85–118 rejects the "direct dependence" idea.

[15] For a general discussion, see Levinson (ed.), *Theory and Method*.

[16] Carmichael, who has sought to explains the origins of the various law collections with reference to narrative contexts in the Bible, states that the Genesis narrative is the starting point for understanding biblical law (cf. Carmichael, *The Origins of The Biblical Laws,* 10–13). He further argues that the connection does not show any direct link to the juridical practice in ancient Israel (Carmichael, *Law and Narrative,* 16–17).



The diagram suggests that the biblical text shares a tradition with the cuneiform legal system that merged in at least the third millennium in response to the invention of the cuneiform writing system—as Westbrook understands it.[17] If this is the case, then the cuneiform and biblical laws draw from the same bank of legal prescriptions, with the biblical authors accepting some rules and rejecting others, and sometimes developing their own laws. Westbrook believed that this tradition represented a fixed "common law" found throughout the Ancient Near East. The significant difference between the cuneiform and biblical laws is that the biblical laws are described as directly given by the divine agent.[18]

My position is that the compositional structure of the biblical materials shows evidence of direct borrowing from the cuneiform legislations,[19] and at times it diverges from the cuneiform materials to create its own understanding of the legal cases within the context of the ancient Israelite culture. If this was indeed the case, then that creates a logical opportunity for the biblical lawgiver to expand, whenever necessary, on precise regulations that are unique to the Hebrew Bible. In this regard, the examination of the selected biblical laws in Chapter II and III not only

[17] Westbrook, *Property and the Family*, 11–12.

[18] Bartor, *Reading Law*, 18. With respect to the Israelite Religious Tradition, the prescription embedded within the Hebrew Bible shows that the Hebrew God is the 'true' lawgiver, and that any violation of his law results in divine punishment—see Greenberg, "Some Postulates," 28.

[19] Westbrook, "What is the Covenant Code?" 15–36 argues that the Covenant Code provisions derive from different sources and periods.

supports his argument but shows how biblical legislators understood and developed their legal materials based on extant materials.

3. Comparisons of the Legal Regulations

There is no denying the similarities between the cuneiform and the biblical legal materials. According to Wright, the resemblance between them "are visible even by casual inspection."[20] The most obvious comparisons include Exod 21:28–32 with LH 250–252 and LE 54–55, as well as Exod 21:35–36 with LE 53—which Paul and Westbrook, respectively, have described as "exact parallel," and "virtually identical."[21] However, as Wells points out, "the similarities are not the result of direct reliance."[22] However, as Wright suggests, "direct borrowing" seems to be the most likely case, since we are dealing with a legal tradition that emerged from the context of Ancient Near East.[23] It is based on this legal tradition that one can explain the similarities and differences between each code. In this section, I therefore analyze the similarities and differences of the sexual crime regulations in the legal corpora. I likewise note both the continuities and disparities between the legal corpora, employing a comparative and gender-critical methodology.

Sexual intercourse was permitted only between already married couples of opposite sexes. This meant that acts such as premarital sex, adultery, rape, incest, and same-sex relations were deemed illicit. The perpetrator was usually a male figure, though sometimes a female figure is identified as initiating a sex act. Violent sex crimes were typically understood as an attack on the honor and masculinity of their rightsholders (e.g., father, brother, or fiancé/husband), rather than as an attack on a woman's body and rights. The law therefore understood the sexual transgressor who attacked a female as emasculating and/or feminizing their (male) rightsholders in an effort to assert their dominance and power over that man. In legal materials to do with cases of sexual violence, typically such attacks or sexual violence fell into four categories: adultery; virginity theft ("rape"); incest; and same-sex intercourse.

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[20] Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, 205. See also Wells' analysis in "The Covenant Code," 104–106; and Wright, "The Laws of Hammurabi," 24, where he states that "the goring ox laws have been recognized as the closest legal parallel between biblical and cuneiform law."

[21] Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant*, 84; and Westbrook, *Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform La*w, 40n4.

[22] Wells, "Covenant Code and Near Eastern Legal Traditions," 86.

[23] Westbrook, "What is the Convent Code?" 36.

Sexual Crimes and Prohibited Sexual Relations
Figure 2

Category	Sumerian	Babylonian	Assyrian	Hittites	Israelites
Adultery	LU §7	LE §28; LH 129	MAL §§12, 16, 23	HL §§190–200	Exod 20:14, 17b; Lev 18:20; 20:10; Num 5:11–28; Deut 22:22
Virginity theft ("Rape")	LU §§6, 8	LE §§ 26, 31; LH §§128, 130	MAL §55	HL §§197–198	Exod 22:16–17; Lev 19:20–22; Deut 22:23–27, 28–29
Incest		LH §§154–158		HL 189–195a	Lev 18:6ss; 20:11, 12, 14; 20:17, 19–21
Same-sex intercourse			MAL §20	HL 189c	Lev 18:22; 20:13

In the legal corpora there are at least two or three related legislations for each of these four categories,[24] and these in turn share four commonalities. First, all these laws provide some level of virginity protection and compensation to the sexual rightsholder. Second, they all concur that the violators receive some level of punishment depending on the particulars of the case. Third, each case employs key elements regarding the status of offense. If a free woman is violated, there is harsh penalty for the offender, but it is less severe if the victim is a slave woman. Fourth, all these cases—adultery, rape, incest, and same-sex intercourse—share in common the general understanding that the sexual right of a free man has been violated and that there should be some level of sanction in response to protect the social order.

3.1.1. Adultery Regulations

The biblical and cuneiform sources reveal a common legal tradition in the treatment of adultery, one enacted to protect the sexual right of a male figure. The legal tradition understood adultery as

[24] For a translation of these laws, see chapter II and III.

an offence against the fiancé/husband by two parties: a) the wife or betrothed girl and b) the paramour. In other words, the basic understanding of adultery is "consensual sexual intercourse by a married woman with a man other than her husband" or fiancé.[25] In addition, the legal tradition considered adultery to be a crime which violated the creation order and thus could engender divine punishment. Its legal solution was the death of both culprits. Several laws address this crime, Westbrook shows that they, at first glance, "present a homogeneous picture,"[26] on how adultery cases were treated. The following table compares the regulations on adultery across the legal materials.

Comparison of Adultery Regulations

Figure 3

Source	Offense	Penalty	Focus
LU §7	A betrothed woman initiates the sexual act	Death for the woman	Honor
LE §28	A married woman caught with another man	Death for the woman	Honor
LH §129	A wife is caught in adultery	Drowning (both) unless pardoned by husband/king	Property and honor
MAL A §15–16	Married woman caught with a man	Death, though this can be mitigated with the husband's consent	Legal control by husband
Lev 20:10	A man and a married woman commit adultery	Death for both parties	Covenant breach and purity
Num 5:11–28	A husband suspects his wife of committing adultery	Ordeal	Focus on moral purity and divine law
Deut 22:22	Man found "lying" with a married woman	Death for both parties	Focus on moral purity and divine law

[25] Ibid.

[26] Westbrook. "Adultery," 543.

The scenarios of the adultery cases here have a larger verity from one other. There are primarily two offences resulting from essentially the same scenarios. First, if a man had sexual intercourse with a woman to whom he was not married and the sexual act was either forceful or coercive, then the act was defined as rape (MAL §§12, 16, 23). Second, if the married or betrothed woman was complicit, then the act was deemed to be adulterous (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22). If a fiancé/husband merely suspected his wife of adultery, then he would take her to the temple and have her pronounce a curse upon herself (Num 5:11–28).[27] If, however, the allegations were found to be true, then the wife was subjected to a "trial by water" (LH § 129).

Neither in Israel nor in Ancient Near East societies more broadly was there a reciprocal ordeal for the wife to impose upon the husband suspected of adultery.[28] The sanctions that were issued depended on these varying definitions and, accordingly, could include either both paramours or only one of them. The LU §7, for example, presents the female as the initiator of the sexual crime—which corresponds to some degree with that of LE §28. In both cases, the legislators condemn the woman to death since she is the one being unfaithful to her husband, whereas her paramour is acquitted from any liability. The cases in Exod 20:14 and 17b (Lev 18:20) have to do with clear prohibitions, but neither punishes the culprits with the death penalty. In Lev 20:10 and Deut 22:22, however, the legislator sanctions the death penalty for both offenders.

3.2. Virginity Theft ("Rape")

There are approximately fifteen statutes that deal with crimes committed against the rightsholder of a betrothed woman. Ancient Near Eastern society regarded female virginity as a significant virtue. A woman was expected to enter marriage as a virgin; failure to do so could result in serious consequences for both her and her family. If the woman was no longer a virgin, then that endangered the potential financial profit of the father from the marriage, and such lack of virginity was therefore perceived extremely negatively. The table below presents a comparison of the virginity theft/rape cases across the legal materials.

Comparison of Virginity Theft/Rape Regulations

[27] For a comparison of Numbers 5 with other ANE texts, see Michael Fishbane, "Accusations of Adultery," 487–502; cf. MacDonald, *Position of Women*, 19.

[28] The exception to this is perhaps LLI §30 where the legislator has to decide a case of a married man having sexual intercourse with a prostitute. In this case the court ordered the man not to return to the prostitute, indicating that the court did not regard his act as constituting a punishable legal felony.

Figure 4

Source	Offense	Women' status	Penalty	Focus
LU §§ 6, 8	Sexual assault	Betrothed or unbetrothed (free or slave)	Death (if betrothed) or compensation (slave – unbetrothed)	Property and honor
LE §§ 27–28	Illicit intercourse or adultery	Free, unbetrothed	Contract arrangement or death (if the woman married)	Property and honor
LH §156–158	Defloration/rape of unmarried woman	Married or betrothed	Compensation (silver) or forced marriage	Property and honor
HL §197–198	Sexual assault	Married or betrothed	Death or mutilation, according to status	Property and honor
MAL A §12–13, 55	Rape or illicit intercourse	Married or betrothed	Death (context)	Property and honor
Exod 22:16–17	Seduction of unbetrothed virgin	Free, unbetrothed	Bride-price payment and optional marriage	Patriarchal property and honor
Lev 19:20–22	Sexual assault	Slave, betrothed	Compensation, guilt offering	Focus on moral purity and divine law
Deut 22:23–27	Rape of betrothed woman	Betrothed virgin	Death of man; woman spared (contextual)	Focus on moral purity and divine law
Deut 22:28–29	Rape of unbetrothed virgin	Free, unbetrothed	50 shekels fine payable to father + compulsory marriage	Patriarchal property and honor

The above statutes refer to various aspects of premarital sexual intercourse. Within these legal cases, there are two main categories: a) those cases pertaining to a "free" woman (betrothed or unbetrothed), and b) those concerning a "slave" woman (betrothed or unbetrothed). The penalty varies significantly depending on the social status of the woman—whether free or enslaved.

The betrothed case laws emphasize the dowry agreements and the penalties for sexual violations. These cases are found in LU § 6, LE §§ 26, §§27–28, and LH §130. The penalties for these cases are various and they depended on the context and particularities of the crime. The legislator of LU §6, for example, provides some level of virginity protection and compensation to the sexual rightsholder. From the case law, there are several key points/statuses that overlap with other legal codes: e.g., seduction, betrothed, virginity, sexual intercourse, and death penalty. The case law assumes that the violated female figure is a "free" woman, which is a clear marker that the death penalty is to be imposed on the sexual transgressor. Presented in similar language, the case law in LE §26 protects the sexual rights of the husband to be. In this regard, the legislator points out that there is a legal formality to the marriage union since the husband-to-be already has brought to the woman's family a bride-payment—which is a formal bonding contract between him and the woman's family. If the case deals with a betrothed person or persons, then case law applies. The elements that the lawgiver considers describing the offence are a) whether the seizure of the woman was forceful; b) whether parental consent was lacking; c) whether sexual intercourse occurred; and d) whether the parties (particularly the woman) was/were free citizen(s). The existence of any or all of these elements determines whether the court imposed the death penalty on the offender.

The case in LE §§27–28 is different from the other two mentioned, though the lawgiver in LE §§ 27–28 seems to expand on a clause from LE §26, "without asking for the consent." In this regard, the two laws are intrinsically connected, since they are following the same legal theme. Likewise, in LH §130 the engaged woman was still residing in her father's domain when a third man restrained her. The law demonstrates that this is an obvious case of "rape" since the offender restrained the woman, which the law considers a violation of property since the woman is already betrothed. Similarly, the case laws referenced in HL §§197–198 and Deut 22:23–24 seem to have the same redactorial source. Indeed, a comparative analysis shows that the texts are structural parallels. Despite this, they show significant differences in how these ancient legal systems addressed sexual offenses, particularly concerning the location of the incident and the presumed consent of the woman involved. Both cases distinguish between sexual offenses based on the location of the act. For instance, HL §197–198 states that if a man seizes a woman in the mountains and rapes her, he is to be executed. Conversely, if the act occurs in the woman's house, the woman is punished, for the fact that it happened in her house to the law implies her consent or complicity.

Similarly, the case in Deut 22:23–26 indicates that if a betrothed virgin is found with a man in the city and does not cry out, both are to be stoned, for her silence is taken as consent. However, if the incident occurs in the countryside, only the man is punished, for the presumption is that the woman cried out but that no one heard her. Here, the woman's crying out for help is what distinguishes nonconsent from consent. Hence, both corpora treat the case as adultery and impose the death penalty on the violators.

Furthermore, the cuneiform materials indicate that the sexual crimes against an unbetrothed (slave) woman would result in a monetary compensation to the owner of (in this case) the slave (cf. LU §8, LE §§31). In the case of LU §8, it is unclear whether the woman has to be married to the sexual transgressor. In LE §31, however, the legislator rules out the possibility of marriage since it stated that the woman remains under her master's domain. In the Hebrew Bible, a close parallel to these two cases appears in Lev 19:20–22; however, there are some distinctions between the law cases. First, the author of Lev 19:20–22 states that the slave woman is assigned to a man, however, he has not yet paid the ransom for her, nor has the master given the woman her freedom.[29] In all these cases, the death penalty is not imposed since the women are slaves.

3.3. Incest Regulations

The social norms of permitted and non-permitted sexual intercourse relations within family circles vary depending on the social group. Within the Ancient Near East societies, we find several laws that directly address cases of incest between close relatives—meaning persons consanguineous to the first-, second-, and third-degree.[30] However, Westbrook notes that in special cases incestuous relations were not regarded negatively.[31] The table below compares cases of incest across the legal materials.

Comparison of Incest Regulations

Figure 5

[29] See Chapter III.

[30] Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 253–4.

[31] These exceptions (Westbrook, Law from the Tigris to the Tiber, 157) are: a) "Where family ties are no more than theoretical, due to geographical (and perhaps jurisdictional) separation;" b) "where two brothers have offspring by the same woman, because the vertical family lineages are not affected;" and c) "where a father and son sleep with a prostitute, because the offspring of a prostitute have no paternity."

Source	Offense	Status	Penalty	Focus
HL §§ 189–196	First-degree Incest	Father, mother, daughter, son	N/A because it is considered to be an "unnatural sexual act"	Social status and coercion
LH §§154–157	First-degree incest	Father, mother, daughter, son	A variety of penalties depending on the case (ranging from expulsion to death)	Social status and coercion
Leviticus 18:6–18; 20:11, 12, 14, 17, 19–21	First-degree Incest	Relatives within the father's household (1st, 2nd, and 3rd generations)	A variety of penalties depending on the case (ranging from expulsion to death)	Ritual purity, holiness, covenantal fidelity

The HL §§189–196 deals with an instance of sexual intercourse between consanguineous relatives in the first-degree (father, mother, son, daughter, etc.). These laws are limited to those relationships explicitly found in Lev 18:6–18 and include only the brother or father's wife and include the warning that they are permitted after the brother or father dies. The Hittite laws are more detailed when it comes to a man and two women related to each other or a woman and two men related to each other who are sexual partners. However, the lawgiver classifies this as an "unnatural sexual act," while Leviticus identifies it in a variety of ways. In a similar vein, the LH §§154–157 sanctions the death penalties for some of these cases. These Hittite laws are intended to safeguard the social status of Ancient Near Eastern societies, while the Levitical laws are intended to perfect the creation order by maintaining the purity, holiness, and covenantal fidelity of the Israelites to the Hebrew Deity.

3.4. Same-Sex Regulations

There are only four case laws across the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible that directly address the matter of same-sex congress—which is considered a deviation from the acceptable social pattern (i.e., a marriage union between two persons of opposite sexes). These regulations were not intended to regulate homosexual sexual orientation; rather, they have to do with sexual

crimes related to forcible or coerced intercourse. The table below compares the same-sex regulations across the ancient legal materials.

Comparison of Same-Sex Regulations

Figure 6

Source	Offense	Male's status	Penalty	Focus
HL §189c	First-degree incest	Father-son (both free)	N/A: "unnatural sexual act"	Coercion
MAL §20	Rape	Companions (both free)	Castration or mutilation in some cases (e.g., for the rape of another man)	Social status and coercion
Lev 18:22	"Lying with" (תשכב משכבי)	Free	N/A: "abomination" (תועבה)	Ritual purity, holiness, covenantal fidelity
Lev 20:13	"Lying with" (תשכב משכבי)	Free	Death: "abomination" (תועבה)	Ritual purity, holiness, covenantal fidelity

The law found in HL §189c deals specifically with a mater of same-sex incestuous intercourse. The lawgiver does not prohibit or condemn the act; rather, he simply states that the act is an "unnatural sexual act." In the MAL A §20, however, the lawgiver suggests that a man who has engaged in same-sex intercourse and been found liable must be sodomized and castrated. However, the law is unclear regarding which of the two men was accused: the one doing the penetrating or the one being penetrated. With regard to the case of Lev 18:22, 20:13, it seems possible that the prohibitions of same-sex sexual intercourse address male-to-male incestuous congress of the first degree (cf. HL 189c), like heterosexual relations within first-degree incest.[32] In addition, the term תועבה in combination with טמא ("to be unclean") in vv. 20, 22–23 points forward to Canaanites' practices, which Israelites are forbidden to follow.[33] However, the prohibition in Lev 20:13

[32] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1569 states that the "sexual liaisons occurring with males outside these relations would not be forbidden."

[33] Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16,* 457–60.

sanctions the death penalty for both parties involved in the act. In this sense the biblical law appears to be very different than the MAL §20. Moreover, neither HL nor the Leviticus text distinguishes between consensual and coercive intercourse—unlike MAL §20. At the same time, neither HL nor MAL explicitly punishes same-sex congress if it is consensual. Moreover, although there are no biblical regulations concerning female same-sex relations, rabbinic traditions do discuss them later.

In sum, this evidence suggests that the sexual crime regulations resemble one another closely in terms of legal structure, language, and vocabulary employed to describe offenses, and the penalties prescribed in each case. For instance, the terms employed in the sexual crime laws of the legal traditions include *ṣabātu* ("seize"), *ṣawā'u* ("cry out"), and *lāqû* ("take"), which have close parallels in biblical legal texts (לקח, שכב, ענה), suggesting a shared legal and linguistic tradition. For this reason, it is possible to make the argument that the legislation in the biblical text seem to have been directly borrowed from the cuneiform tradition. However, there are instances in which the biblical law emerges from a combination of cultic, criminal, civil, and ethical law, whereas the cuneiform collections (apart from the MAL and Hittite laws) have virtually no such instances.[34]

4. The Right to Avenge

The ancient world was one in which the offended party sought to avenge his (it was nearly always his) honor, and because bloodshed required bloodshed, the lawgiver considered it necessary to prevent men from using methods of extreme violence and in so doing disrupting the social order. For instance, what we see among these case laws is a slow progress of moving away from vengeance (LU §6). For the Sumerian verb *ì-gaz-e* ("shall be killed")[35] implies that in an earlier stage of the law, the lawgivers gave the offended party the "right to kill," which implies that the right to avenge lies with the injured party.[36] In LE §26, however, the lawgiver uses the Akkadian verb *imât* ("he shall die"), the usage here suggesting a transitional stage in the language of the law. Westbrook mentions that the LE does not refer to killing at all; instead, it uses the equivalent

[34] Levison, "*The Case for Revision*," 52–53

[35] Halloran, s.v. "gaz," 76; cf. Mark E. Cohen, s.v. "gaz," in *A Sumerian Dictionary* (1981), 169 line 10; see also *CAD* Š, part 1, s.v. "šagāšu," 66.

[36] Westbrook, "Adultery," 556 n. 51.

emphatic phrase *imât* or *imât ul iballuṭ* ("he shall die, shall not live").[37] According to Herbert Sauren, if the rule has already made the punishment, then the execution is naturally in the hands of the injured party.[38] This is something that the lawgiver has granted to the injured party whenever the thief is caught *in flagrante delicto* (e.g., LE §§ 12, 13, 48, and 58).[39] It is unclear in the case of LE §26 whether, at this stage, such a right is still in the hands of the avenger.[40] As a matter of language, says Reuven Yaron, making the death penalty mandatory would fit better with the emphatic element in *imât ul iballuṭ*.[41]

In Hammurabi's legal system, the "right to kill" lies in the state's hands. In this regard, Driver and Miles explain that the Akkadian verb *iddâk* ("shall be killed") refers to execution by the state, while the verb *idukkū* ("they shall kill") refers to execution by way of private vengeance.[42] When the verb *iddâk* is used in the passive form, the state carries out the execution by appointing someone to do the deed.[43] Westbrook suggests that passive or active verbs should be understood in terms of stylistic preferences rather than legal ones.[44] I agree with Westbrook and argue that during the Hammurabi period such execution relied on the state's hands to carry out the punishment and not on the injured party. LH §129, for example, suggests that the state carries out the punishment. However, the injured party was allowed to carry out the execution himself under the supervision of an authorized state-appointed person.[45] Consequently, since the cuneiform legal corpora provide the affected party with the "right to kill" when the adulterers are caught *in flagrante delicto*,[46] the husband is not liable for murdering the offenders. It is unclear who takes them to the royal court (Hitt. *KÁ É.GAL*), whether it is the husband or some governmental authority. The framers allowed the husband to choose the fate of his wife and, by default, that of her lover. However, the king's decision supersedes the husband's wishes. Regarding the biblical

[37] Westbrook, "Revenge, Ransom, and Talio," 53.

[38] Sauren, "Le Mariage selon le Code d'Eshnunna," 52.

[39] Yaron, *The Law of Eshnunna*, 259–60 questions the fact of the usage of the verb *imât* in the "rape" case given that elsewhere the adultery crimes are expressly pardonable (LH §129, HL §198, MAL §15).

[40] Finkelstein, "Ammiṣaduqa's Edict and the Babylonian 'Law Codes,'" 98 no. 9 considers such an innovation to be fully disclosed in the Law of Hammurabi (see below).

[41] Yaron, *The Law of Eshnunna*, 260.

[42] Driver and Miles, *The Babylonians Laws*, 494–8.

[43] *Cf.* LH §§ 108, 109, and 229.

[44] Westbrook, "Revenge, Ransom, and Talio," 54–55.

[45] Ibid., 497–8.

[46] Cf. LU §6; LH §§ 26, 28; LH § 129; and MAL §15.

laws, the right to kill lies with the Hebrew Deity. As the creator and lawgiver, YHWH holds such prerogative in his hands.

5. The Correspondence Between Law and Narrative

Scholars have amply discussed the relationship between law and narrative, and there is currently no consensus on this.[47] On the one hand, narratives are the leading genre in all literary compositions. They are an art that conveys meaningful elements through which we understand our way of living, organize our lives, and express our most profound views of reality. To this point, Assnat Bartor mentions that "stories are not only a literary genre" or a "mode of expression," but also a "central component of the human perceptual system" that places narrative directly in "the realm of research in cognitive psychology."[48] This is to say that narratives are essential to the human experience because they create meaning. On the other hand, laws deal directly or indirectly with human affairs.[49] They present and represent stories about people, their problems, and their relations with the world by how the laws can be applied and how their enforcement could either harm or benefit their recipients. However, as Bartor indicates, "not every law can serve as the object of narrative."[50]

More recently, biblical scholarship has turned its attention to reading biblical law within its narrative context to show how each influenced the other.[51] Do we move from biblical narrative to law, or vice versa? To what extent are biblical narratives and laws intertwined in the Torah? How do the legal texts or narratives construct and interpret one another? The answer to these questions has puzzled interpreters for decades, and yet they have still not reached a consensus.

Three main positions have emerged from this debate. First, David Daube identifies a link between narratives and laws.[52] He considers biblical narratives to have been written after the laws. Carmichael, however, claims that the origins of biblical laws can be found within the Genesis

[47] Bartor, *Reading Law*, 17–22; for a discussion on the relationship between the narratives and laws, see Carmichael, *Law and Narrative in the Bible*; Hepner, *Legal Friction*.

[48] Bartor, *Reading The Law*, 4.

[49] Ibid., 5.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Carmichael, *Law and Narrative*; Jackson, *The Semiotics of Biblical Laws*; Watts, *Reading Laws*; and others.

[52] Daube*, Studies in Biblical Laws*, 37, 49, 50, and 117–21.

narrative.[53] He proposes that the lawgiver saw in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis elements that helped him develop the law.[54] For his part, Joel Rosenberg argues that biblical narratives and laws are intertwined.[55] He states that "narrative and non-narrative materials of the Bible must not be read in isolation from one another."[56] In his view, narratives and laws need to be read in both directions—i.e., narrative ←→ law. I agree with Rosenberg, since reading the texts in both directions enables us to see the tensions and harmony between narratives and laws. Moreover, Nanette Stahl indicates that the most common construction of the generic tension between law and narrative in the Bible is that the law is undermined by the narrative that enacts it.[57]

James K. Bruckner has argued that the pre-Sinai narratives are not normally taken as legal texts, and that the narratives neither contain law codes nor treat laws as a subject.[58] Instead, those pre-Sinai narratives contain a full range of texts that pertain to the study of the legal materials. He distinguishes two forms of laws within the Torah: a) the formulated laws (set as legal principles); and b) the implied laws (set as teaching tools to indicate what "ought and ought not" to be done).[59] The latter, Bruckner suggests, can be uncovered by closely reading the narratives' language in Genesis.[60] Harry Nasuti describes the relationship between law and narrative by noting that "whenever one finds a law in the Bible, one is in the presence of a narrative as well."[61] For him, biblical law participates in the larger narrative context and moves beyond it.[62] He further mentions that the biblical narratives function to ground the laws in certain events from which they take on their meaning.[63]

The source of biblical law is varied; the narrative tradition is, too. For the law is often emerging from and shaping the narrative, with the narratives often serving to illustrate and

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[53] Carmichael, *Law, Legend, and Incest*, 6.

[54] Carmichael, *The Spirit of Biblical Law*, 2.

[55] Rosenberg, "Bible: Biblical Narrative," 65.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Stahl, *Law and Liminality*, 17 also points out that the legal texts within themselves are fraught with the same tension found between the law and narrative.

[58] Brucker, *Implied Law*, 13.

[59] Ibid., 11–13.

[60] Ibid., 14–20, 68, 76, 124–5.

[61] Nasuti, *Identity, Identification, and Imitation*, 9.

[62] Ibid., 11

[63] Ibid.

contextualize the law. In the biblical material, therefore, the law and narratives are intertwined. For example, the former functions as cases to explain the rationale for specific precepts. The laws are mentioned in historical events that open a window onto the framing story for the law's addressees and the readers. Bartor refers to this as "frame story" and "embedded stories."[64] She adds that the narrator then defines the laws with the opening and closing formulas, and the frame story both precedes and follows the law.[65] Bartor's perspective makes a good point, and it can help us to see the reciprocal relationship between biblical narratives and laws.

Furthermore, since the legal corpora share a common tradition, it is possible to assume that the biblical narratives were constructed by reading the customs and legal tradition of the Ancient Near East into the Genesis narrative. This might suggest that the Genesis authors were aware of the legal tradition that originated as late as the fourth or third millennium. For this reason, I see an interplay between the cuneiform laws, biblical narratives, and biblical laws in which the Genesis narrative functions as a transitional point between the Ancient Near East legal tradition and the biblical laws. In this sense, the Genesis narrative helps to provide the context for the rationale of the case laws within Exodus-Number. The authors used narrative features and devices to embed elements of the laws within their stories that the lawgivers would later use to form legal principles (e.g., Gen 9:18–29; 19:30–38; Lev 18:6–7).[66] Such features are likewise embedded in the narratives that deal with sexual and gender-based violence.

Following William Tooman's proposal,[67] it is possible to argue that there are some legal connections between the materials. He points to seven possibilities that enable such interconnections:

1. The description of legal practices in a narrative might correspond with the biblical law codes.
2. A narrative might provide evidence of alternative legal practices that differ from the biblical law codes.
3. A narrative might provide evidence of legal practices that are not recorded in the biblical law codes but do not conflict with them.
4. A narrative might provide evidence of how laws on different subjects might have interacted in practice, something the biblical law codes seldom explain.

[64] Bartor, *Reading the Law,* 18.

[65] Ibid., 19

[66] See further discussion on chapter III.

[67] Tooman, "Genesis 34 and the Law," 228.

5. A narrative might be operating under creative license, borrowing from and innovating with the language and themes of biblical law for the sake of telling an engaging story.
6. A narrative might be innovating with the biblical law in an effort to elaborate on a biblical law or laws.
7. A narrative might be contesting a law (or laws) in the biblical codes, offering an alternative legal vision.

Considering these possibilities, one might assume that there is a direct awareness in the narratives concerning the legal materials. The authors of the narratives either had the Hebrew Legal Codes to hand or perhaps they formed more of ancient legal materials that were in circulation at the time those materials were redacted.

What about the legislator? What does he know? According to Carmichael, the historical method of establishing the laws is built upon two pieces of information about the rules and practices: "matters of speculation" and "familiarity with other laws and practices."[68] The former speaks about the notion that the lawgiver might have redacted the laws from purely hypothetical constructions. The latter suggests that the laws were formed from a tradition that preceded the lawgiver (i.e., not out of a vacuum)—which I will follow. In this respect, the legislator's knowledge also depends on the materials he has at his disposal. Consequently, a narrative reading focuses on law's concrete elements—i.e., situations, characters, and events creating narrative content.[69] This implies that the narrative reading of the law does not restrict itself to identifying the content of the legal material within the telling, describing the textual means that the lawgiver employs to construct the detail of the storyline. It also investigates how the text produces its meaning through reading the characterization of the actors and their stories. In some instances, the patriarchal narratives allude to some elements of the legal tradition. However, the voice of the biblical narrator does not indicate whether his characters have violated the laws or blame them for their behavior.

In sum, the Genesis narrative (as a whole) uses both P and non-P materials. However, if we isolate the sources, it might be possible to argue that the non-P authors are drawing from the common legal tradition because the Sinaitic laws have not yet been given or are not so central to them. This could explain why the authors do not limit themselves to the Sinaitic laws. When it

[68] Carmichael, *Law, Legends, and Incest*, 197.

[69] Ibid., 7.

comes to the P source, the authors are bound by the Sinaitic laws because they have either been given or must wait until the Sinaitic revelation. Moreover, for the non-P authors, the law given at Sinai was in some implicit form known since primeval history.[70] The question is to what extent the biblical characters' behaviors reflect their awareness of laws within their narratives. Following the above, the claim I would like to make about the awareness of the legal prescriptions is that the biblical authors, or the narrator, are aware of the common legal tradition shared.[71] However, their literary characters would be aware or not depending on the source materials used in their individual stories—i.e., the P or non-P sources.

6. Conclusion

This chapter explored how the biblical text presents the cases of sexual crimes, and it compared them to the cuneiform materials on this subject. From this analysis, I made several connections between the cuneiform and biblical legal materials; namely, the framers employed some legal features that connected their materials with that of Ancient Near East legal codes, borrowing their legal vocabulary from those codes. However, they also sometimes departed from that legal tradition to form their unique legal prescriptions. The significant difference between cuneiform and biblical laws is that the former is a product of human agency, while the latter is framed as having been given directly by the divine agent (YHWH). Furthermore, the comparison between the cuneiform and biblical legislations shows that the biblical laws assign a more severe punishment than do the cuneiform materials. For example, the biblical lawgiver imposes the capital penalty without the element of mercy displayed in some cuneiform laws—for example, instances in which the husband is encouraged to consider waiving such a penalty (LH §129; HL §198; MAL A §23). The biblical laws frame YHWH as being the one who originates the laws. He is the one who punishes or grants mercy to offenders (Num 5:11–31; cf. Psa 51). In other words, the biblical laws present God/God's agency—not that of humans, as granting mercy, unlike the cuneiform legal system.

[70] Leland Ryken, *How to Read The Bible*, 187–92.

[71] Jacobus, "Slave Wives and Transgressive Unions," 55–76.

Project Summary

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My doctoral project is currently in its initial phase and exploratory stage. I would like to give an insight into its subject matter, although I do not have a project title yet. I plan to link my reflections to my academic thesis entitled 'Grief and comfort in Lam 1. An analysis of Lam 1:11c-22 with special consideration of the personification of Zion'. For me, the subjects of grief and the longing for comfort represent fundamental anthropological concepts, for which there are diverse descriptions and expressions in a variety of literary ways in the texts of the Old Testament. My goal is to analyse selected sections of text and reveal their descriptions and potential.

The Book of Lamentations, written in response to the historic, theology-changing and identity-questioning catastrophe of 587 BC, is a very suitable starting point. In a highly poetic form, the poems provide insight into emotional reactions and reflective processes of understanding. They can be understood as coping literature in a crisis situation. In doing so, they combine physical and emotional expressions, visual and auditory aspects, and individual and collective descriptions. Through their literary composition, particularly in Lam 1 through the personification of Zion, they offer potential for identification in situations of (threatening) loss of identity, which is linked to the loss of relationship with God and fellow human beings (which does not necessarily means a final break).

My methodological focus will initially be on examining the final text in order to highlight and analyse the potential of the imagery used to describe (Zion's) suffering. To this end, I would like to place particular emphasis on the structural composition, poetological features and, above all, the diverse (body) imagery.

In the overview of the five poems in the Book of Lamentations, the question of perspective (singular and plural; in-group and out-group; female and male) remains relevant and will play a part in further analyses.

In my doctoral project, I would like to further explore the categories of grief and the longing for comfort in concepts of the body and space. How and with what imagery is grief and grieving described? To what extent do the internal and external perspectives differ in their descriptions? What role do time and space play? Who can offer comfort? What relationship with God is reflected in the texts and how is the ambivalent image of God dealt with?

Grief and Comfort in Lamentations 1

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Preface

This paper is based on the analyses and observations in my academic thesis on the topic of 'Grief and Comfort in Lam 1. An analysis of Lamentations 1:11c-22 with special consideration of the personification of Zion,' which I submitted as part of my theological degree. They form the basis for further analyses, which I aim to pursue as part of my doctoral project. The project is in its initial phase and OTSEM is the first event at which I am presenting part of my analyses. Methodologically, this paper deals with the analysis of the final text and the intensive study of linguistic structures, diverse imagery as well as poetological stylistic devices and their functions. Possible starting points for discussion are the following questions as well as the questions presented in the further perspectives at the end of my paper.

a) What are the similarities and differences between the descriptions of grief and comfort presented here and other texts of the Old Testament? What makes them unique?

b) Which familiar concepts of space might be useful for consideration?

c) To what extent do the attributions to the personification of Zion differ here from other texts and what connects them?

Introduction

Grief and the longing for comfort are anthropological concepts throughout time when people engage with one another in relationships. Experiences of loss open up a space for resonance (both individual and collective) in which there are various possibilities for response. In the Old Testament, there are a variety of texts that refer to experiences of loss and repeatedly search for hope. Particularly in the context of death, there is a rich imagery that is often expressed in lamentation. I understand lamentation as a form of expression of grief in which speechlessness is overcome and emotions and suffering find their expression. Lamentation is a form of communication in the context of prayer and thus a primal form of biblical speech[1] to God. Especially in poetic language, one's own suffering is brought before God, and his ambivalent role and his hoped-for or already accomplished intervention are addressed. A particular strength lies in Erich Zenger's description of lamentation as a struggle 'with God against God – namely, for

[1] Cf. Zenger, Leiden, 392.

God's divinity.'[2] This idea will also guide my examination of the Book of Lamentations and the image of God that emerges from them.

When dealing with grief and comfort, various questions arise, including: How is grief described? Which feelings, images and motifs play a part? What does comfort mean? And who is able to comfort someone?

My analysis below is based on the first lament (Lam 1), in particular the second half, in which Zion herself speaks as a literary figure (vv.11c-22). After two interruptions of the dominant voice of the first part (vv.9c, 11c), she now keeps the floor and generates agency in destruction and suffering. A close examination of the words opens our eyes to the perspective of those who suffer and gives them attention – an open eye and ear for their suffering and grief. Thus, the analysis follows Zion's recurring call to look and listen (vv.9c, 11c, 18, 20) and gives space to the perspective of those who suffer.

The Book of Lamentations is suitable for the study because the texts address situations and reactions within Jerusalem after the destruction of the temple and exile by the Babylonians in 587 BC. From different perspectives and in a highly poetic form, fates are traced, emotional and physical destruction are described, and questions are asked. One strength lies in the combination of different perspectives (singular and plural; in-group and out-group; female and male).

My paper is structured around three basic observations, which will be briefly introduced here and then developed in the main section.

1. Lamentations 1 is a poetic text with unique structural features. It exhibits a distinctive dynamic through the alternation of speakers and directions of speech. This dynamic highlights the complexity of the descriptions. The text builds tension between structure and chaos through organizing components.

The changes and complementary descriptions paint a diverse picture of the catastrophe for the city and its inhabitants. Another special feature of Lamentations 1 is the mutual interruption of the speakers. The poetic stylistic device of the alphabetical acrostic contributes to the tension

[2] Zenger, Streiten, 441.

between structure and chaotic content. This tension opens up a deeper understanding of the text on an emotional and cognitive level.

2. Lamentations 1 is characterized by the strong imagery and physicality of the descriptions of grief and comfort and related themes, in which internal and external perspectives complement each other and a holistic perspective on existence emerges.

Based on a semantic analysis, various word fields can be distinguished, which are interwoven to form a complex structure of people and emotions. In the following, the themes of grief, body images, relationship structures and comfort are examined as core themes. The categories are consistently linked to questions of space (horizontal and vertical) and time.

3. The poetological stylistic device of the personification of Zion as a city-woman is key to understand Lamentations 1 and its implications for the individual and the collective, as well as the connections between concepts of the body and spatial dimensions.

Through the personification as a city-woman, it is possible for Zion to speak for herself and describe her fate from her own perspective, thereby generating agency. Through personification, the fate of groups of people is transformed from abstract to personal descriptions, which offer potential for identification in crisis situations.

Main section

1. Literary structure and dynamics of the text

Structure of Lamentations 1

The literary dynamics of the text derive from the alternation and mutual interruption of the speakers. I will explain the structure of Lamentations 1 in two steps, by increasingly zooming in on the text and supplementing the rough divisions with details. Lamentations 1 can be roughly structured as follows:

vv.1-11b Speech about Zion in the third person (dialogic voice[3])[4]

v.9c Interruption by Zion's direct speech as an appeal to YHWH (ראה יהוה)[5]

v.11c Interruption by Zion's direct speech as an appeal to YHWH (ראה יהוה)

vv.11c/12-22[6] Speech of Zion in the first person

v.17 Interruption by speech about Zion in the third person (dialogic voice)

The chapter consists of two parts of equal length (12 verses), with v.11c serving as a hinge. Formally, v.11c is considered the second interjection of the first part and marks the crucial turning point in the speaker's role: with this second interruption, Zion takes the floor and describes her distress, her traumatic experiences and her state of mind from her own perspective. In doing so, she generates agency, becomes the narrator of her own story and sets new accents (looking inward). In addition, she explicitly addresses certain people and groups (looking outward). Particularly striking are the parallels in the phrase turning to YHWH in v.9c, 11c and the use of the same verbs in reverse order in v.12 to those passing by. As already mentioned, v.11c functions as a transition in speech, as Zion keeps the hard-won word after this second interjection. This results in a structure of 5 – 1 – 5 for verses 12-22: vv.12-16 speech of Zion in the 1st person singular; v.17 interruption by speech about Zion in the 3rd person singular; vv.18-22 speech of Zion in the 1st person singular.

This structure also emphasises the intensive structural elaboration in the parallel structure of the poetic text.[7] It is striking that the monologue blocks remain unanswered. The interruption does not offer an answer to what has been described previously, but rather a description of the behaviour from the outside, including an accumulation of titles for the personified city-woman.

[3] Carleen Mandolfo interprets the observations on the narrative voice as a dialogic voice, which, in interaction with Zion, presents and validates her descriptions of suffering. Cf. Middlemas, Speaking, 40.

[4] The paradigmatic 'Ah' as an interjection in Lam 1:1; 2:1; 4:1 sets the tone of the poem. The dramatic opening makes the loneliness seem boundless, the readers become observers of the scene, and there is a strong concentration through the focus on a (single) woman as a metaphorical image. The impression of 'abandonment' is created, the relationships are spatially structured, and time is paused. Cf. Frevel, Klagelieder, 86f.

[5] This first interruption already makes it clear that Zion does not accept her literarily staged death in the form of the introduction with a death lament (Lam 1:1) and resists the common categorizations. Cf. Middlemas, Speaking, 46.

[6] V.11c/12 are deliberately presented side by side here to emphasise the crucial role of V.11c.

[7] Cf. Frevel, Klagelieder, 120.

This reinforces the impression that an awareness of suffering, conscious observation (repeated requests, vv.11c, 12, 18, 20) and taking Zion's perspective seriously are major concerns of the text. The highly emotional descriptions can potentially evoke empathetic responses to suffering[8] and offer opportunities for identification.

In the following detailed division, the information is enriched with keywords relating to the speaking voice, the persons addressed and aspects of content for a better overview and understanding of the text. This allows access to important key observations.

v.11c – hinge passage, *speech of Zion in the 1st person singular*, addressee: YHWH, appeal: see and look, programmatic prelude (ראה יהוה and נבט)

vv.12-16 – lamentation of the enemy, *speech of Zion in the 1st person singular*, addressees: people passing by, appeal: look and see (v.12 נבט and ראה, cf. v.11c), description of suffering

> v.16 – interim assessment, state of mind of *Zion in the 1st person singular*; striking interruption by formulation in participles

v.17 – interjection, *speech about Zion in the 3rd person singular*, addressees: people passing by?

vv.18-19 – description of the fate of individual groups of people, *speech of Zion in the 1st person singular*, addressees: all nations (שמע and ראה)

vv.20-22 – *prayer of Zion in the 1st person singular*, addressee: YHWH, appeal to YHWH (ראה יהוה) seeing the emergency situation, desire for justice

Based on the structure, the theme of space (inside – outside, proximity – distance) and the various relationship structures are already addressed.

Change of speaker and change of direction of speech

The text gains its dynamic through the change of speakers, the mutual interruptions and the different addressees. While the interjection in v.11c is clearly addressed to YHWH, a change takes place in v.12, in which an unclear group (people who pass by) is addressed. The information about the group focuses on knowledge of their task: like YHWH, they are called upon to observe and

[8] Cf. Frevel, Klagelieder, 121.

compare.[9] The parallelism of the formulations (vv.11c, 12) is striking here. The descriptions of Zion seem like a desperate cry into an undefined space, which, however, does not evoke any (positive) response, thus maintaining the distance. Furthermore, after the interruption by the dialogic voice in v.17, two expansions can be observed. On the one hand, there is a personal expansion of the addressees to 'all nations' (v.18). On the other hand, on a semantic level, a sensory perception is added (*hear* and see) (v.18). The following change to YHWH as the addressee in v.20 (cf. vv.9, 11) forms a frame with the beginning of Zion's direct speech and can be described as a prayer. On a physical level, these observations are supported by the gesture of spreading out the hands (v.17) which is typically associated with prayer.

Special features in sentence structures, tenses and modes

A detailed analysis of sentence structures reveals structural references to central theological themes. Thus, in the context of dominant verbal clauses, the nominal clauses address the assessment of pain (v.12), the absence of a comforter (vv.17, 21), the justice of God (v.18), being confined (v.20), and the sickness of the heart (v.22). The nominal sentence structure allows conclusions to be drawn about states of mind and circumstances and also introduces a timeless component.[10] In Lam 1:11c-22 forms of the perfect conjugation in the 3rd singular, 1st singular and 3rd plural dominate, and the possible translations of these forms vary between the perfect and present tense depending on the context. This dominance highlights the use of imperatives (vv.11, 12, 18, 20), participles (vv.11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21), infinitives (vv.15, 20) and forms of the imperfect conjugation (vv.14, 21, 22). The participles emphasise the durative character and are frequently used to describe the (emotional) states of Zion and her children, as well as the lack of a comforter. There is a particular concentration of participles in verse 16, in which the comforter is mentioned for the first time in this section (previously in vv.2, 9; parallel wording in vv.9, 17). The imperatives actively address specific groups of people and verbalise the call for awareness and attention. The appeals to God in v.11c (see and look) and v.20 (see) frame the appeals to the people passing by in v.12 (look and see) and to all nations in v.18 (hear and see). The switch to forms of the imperfect conjugation in verses 21-22 offers a glimpse of potential future actions. The different tenses thus link the past, present and future. With this they open up the category of time in addition to the category of space.

[9] Cf. Frevel, Klagelieder, 120.
[10] Cf. Krause, Hebräisch, 65f.

Alphabetical acrostic and chaotic content

Another structuring element worth noting is the alphabetical acrostic, which gives the text a fixed order and coherence on a literary level. Each verse begins with one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, following the order of the alphabet from Aleph to Taw (Lam 1-4; Lam 5 does not have an acrostic structure, but contains 22 verses). Depending on the historical setting of the Book of Lamentations in relation to the destruction of the temple in 587 BC, various functions of the acrostic structure are discussed. These include, for example, educational-didactic purposes with a certain authorial meaning of the text or the function of expressing pain, death and loss.[11] This raises the question of how the formal arrangement in order and structure can be understood in conjunction with the chaotic and violent content. Elie Assis highlights this tension between artistic structural composition and emotional content. The composition enables readers to access a level of understanding beyond emotional expressions. Assis attributes a level of rational reflection to the lamentations, writing: 'The acrostic form was adopted so that the book would interact with the reader not only on an emotional level but on a rational one as well.'[12] The deep impact of the emotional description encourages readers to engage with the texts repeatedly, now on a rational level. The structured design presents the lamentations as carefully planned poems that go beyond emotionally charged expression, as they are (able to be) presented in a specific conceptual form.

2. Powerful imagery in the descriptions of grief, body images, relationship structures and comfort

Grief

Zion's grief and mourning are expressed in a diverse imagery and open up a holistic perspective. After the descriptions of the external view in verses 1-11, the internal perspective is now introduced. Among other things, Zion speaks of her pain (מכאוב vv.12, 18), which she feels to a very great extent (v.12 call for a comparative assessment of her pain)[13]. She is saddened (יגה v.12), isolated (שמם v.13 Zion; v.16 the children) and sad/sick (דוה vv.13, 22). The strong emotions are intensified by the intense weeping (בכה v.16) and further heightened by the phrase that her eye

[11] Cf. Assis, Acrostics, 715.
[12] Assis, Acrostics, 717.
[13] The request to judge the extent of pain calls those addressed to the witness stand. Frevel describes the request as an attempt to win over the people passing by as witnesses to God's measurelessness. Cf. Frevel, Klagelieder, 127.

melts with water (v.16).[14] The intense increase is expressed on the one hand by the repetition of the eye and on the other hand by the connection of the eye with the concept of water. These descriptions evoke associations ranging from large bodies of water to a sea of tears. In addition, the melting of the eye indicates a loss of function, as it is limited in its ability to perceive and communicate.[15] In addition to crying as a visually noticeable expression of suffering, there is the primarily auditory expression of groaning (אנח v.21), which is further intensified in v.22 ('my groans are many'). Thus, alongside the visual element of seeing pain (vv.12, 18), there is the auditory element of hearing misery (vv.21, 22; cf. v.4 priests groan, v.8 Zion groans, v.11 all her people groan). These observations find their counterpart in Zion's appeals to perceive her suffering in seeing (vv.11c, 12, 18, 20) and hearing (v.18).

Furthermore, Zion describes her grief in spatial imagery. She feels oppressed and turned around (שוב אחור v.13), her strength has stumbled and she can no longer stand up (v.14), a comforter is far from her (v.16), she is confined (צר v.20, same root as the oppressors in v.17), her insides are churned up (חמר v.20) and her heart is wrung inside her (v.20). If the initial situation from v.1, Zion sitting on the ground, is still assumed, the image of Zion being enclosed and oppressed is reinforced. A movement from top to bottom in the form of fire, the yoke or being oppressed is possible and is emphasised. In contrast, an upward movement is not possible (v.14). With regard to spatial dimensions, it can be noted that while Zion is being pressed down and humiliated vertically (v.11c), her horizontal space is also being reduced: she is confined (v.20). Her direction of movement is determined by others (v.13), she is surrounded by enemies and has become socially despised (v.17). Her interior, on the other hand, is in great upheaval. The impossibility of outward movement shifts Zion's movement inward and her voice outward. Zion goes beyond her own (physical) boundaries when she explicitly addresses outsiders in her appeals (v.11 YHWH, v.12 people who pass by, v.18 all nations, v.20 YHWH) in order to generate attention and awareness for her desperate situation.

Body images

The intensive use of body images evokes the anthropomorphic idea of Zion and is closely related to personification. Following the order of the text, I present the body images. In Zion's first speech (vv.11c-16), the following images are used: being despised (v.11c), bones and being

[14] Interestingly, the word for tears (דמעה, cf. Ps 6:7) does not appear here.
[15] Cf. Janowski, Anthropologie, 143.

oppressed (v.13), feet and being turned back (v.13), isolation (vv.13, 16) and sickness/sadness (vv.13, 22), the neck and falling down and the impossibility of getting up (v.14), the inner being (vv.15, 20 קרב) and crushing (v.15), and the eye and the vitality (vv.16, 19 נפש). The interjection in v.17 also refers to the spreading of hands and the becoming of abhorrence of Zion. The concluding prayer (vv.20–22) also mentions bodily images of confinement and distress of her insides (v.20a), the heart (vv.20b, 22c) and its inner twists and turns (v.20b), as well as groaning (vv.21a, 22c). The mention of the heart serves as a framing device and concludes the lament with a metaphor. The heart, as the place of intellect, will and planning[16], is sick and thus, like the eye, limited in its function. The body images reflect the connection between the physical sphere and the social sphere, especially in the images that refer to Zion's direct relationship with other actors within the social context and spatial dimensions. These include images of being despised (v.11c), social exclusion (v.17, abhorrence *between* them), isolation (vv.13, 16) and not being able to get up (v.14), in which a powerful or disinterested counterpart is also in view. In addition, the spreading of the hands towards a counterpart (YHWH) is related to communicative intention.

Relationship structures

The text contains a complex structure of persons and relationships, which I will address here in order to refer back to it in the section on the personification of Zion. Three categories can be distinguished: (1) people outside Zion who act upon her; (2) groups of people within Zion; (3) titles used in connection with Zion.

(1) The complexity of the relationship structure arises, among other things, from the fact that the relationships between the persons acting and addressed remain unclear or turn out to be disappointing. YHWH (v.11, 20), the people passing by (v.12) and all nations (v.18) are addressed, but Zion receives no answer or active response. Her attempt to win over those passing by as witnesses to her suffering and God's excessive punishment fails.[17] While her friends have heard her and abandoned her (v.19), Jacob's neighbours become oppressors (v.17 צר). These groups, once viewed positively, become enemies who take pleasure in what YHWH has done to her (v.21), which is followed by Zion's desire for justice to be done (vv.21–22). The image of God is

[16] Cf. Schroer/Staubli, Körpersymbolik, 47.
[17] Cf. Frevel, Klagelieder, 127, 135.

particularly tense and interesting due to the mixture of God as the agent of destruction, the one addressed, and the possible comforter.

(2) The groups of people within Zion that play a role in the personification include: all her strong men (v.15, warriors), her young men (vv.15, 18), her children (v.16), her virgins (v.18), and her priests and elders (v.19). These groups have been exposed to various types of war violence. The strong were rejected within, that is, in the city, which was intended as a place of refuge, and her young men were (in addition) taken away into captivity (exile) (v.18). Zion has become childless (v.20) and is thus associated with the role of an *orphaned mother* whose future is uncertain and endangered by the missing generation.

(3) Various titles are used synonymously for the personified city-woman, which significantly broadens the range of associations. The titles 'virgin daughter Judah' (v.15; cf. v.19 population group as virgins), 'Zion' (v.17), 'Jacob' (v.17) and 'Jerusalem' (v.17) are used side by side. The accumulation of titles in v.17, which speaks of Zion, is striking. The titles enable associations to be made with regard to the city, the temple, the significance in *salvation history* and the *social position*.

Comfort

The statements about comfort emphasise its painful absence. The absence of a comforter is consistently constructed as a masculine singular participle piel from the root נחם and is repeated like a motto (vv.2, 9, 16, 17, 21). As already noted in the analysis of sentence types, it is striking that the references to the comforter are found in nominal sentences (except in v.16). The nominal sentence structure suggests a certain temporal detachment. The absence of a comforter is in permanent state; the fulfilment is still pending.

In v.16, the function of the comforter as the restorer of vitality (שוב נפש) is further qualified, also formulated as a participle. Interestingly, the phrase 'שוב נפש' (hi.) occurs two more times within the chapter. There, it refers to a subgroup of the city's inhabitants in search of food. On the one hand, the entire people exchange their treasures for food in order to restore vitality (v.11). On the other hand, the search for food to restore their vitality is mentioned in relation to the priests and elders (v.19). Both attempts fail, and the priests and elders die in the city (v.19).

Like grief, comfort is a holistic process that encompasses verbal, nonverbal and physical dimensions. It involves a comprehensive change in state. In the present piel form of נחם, the aspects of comfort, compassion, strengthening and mercy are present.[18] The spectrum of meanings is linked to the fact that a change can be brought about at the relationship level through a reaction (decision and effect). It therefore has an *emotional* and *social* dimension.[19] From an Old Testament perspective, both humans and God can comfort, each with different implications. In Lamentations 1, there are various groups of people whose possible comforting function I analysed in my previous work. On the one hand, there are the actors: friends, neighbours, YHWH and the people of Zion. On the other hand, there are those who are directly addressed: people who pass by, all nations and YHWH. Human comforters are ruled out for various reasons. The friends have become enemies; they heard her cry but abandoned her (v.19) and took pleasure in her misfortune (v.21). The people who pass by and the nations show no reaction whatsoever. This represents a negative action, because a lack of comfort can lead to a constant or worsening condition. Isolation, rejection and pain can be intensified by a lack of help.[20] Thus, the comfortless remain in their situation, and the way back to life and community is blocked for them.[21] Also, the people of Zion are no longer able to comfort one another. They have died (vv.15, 19, 20) or been led away into exile (v.18). Attempts to change their own fate fail (v.19). They are no longer able to change their circumstances and are dependent on action from the *outside*. Due to the lack of help from the groups of people addressed, the only possible comforter left is YHWH, who grammatically represents the only acting person in the singular besides the comforter. YHWH is the one who moves in a tense relationship between violence, power, justice and being directly addressed (vv.9, 11, 20).

YHWH is a God of life. Through his breath, humankind becomes a living vitality (נפש, Gen 2:7). He created humankind from dust, in which Zion, as a personified city-woman, now sits once again amid her ruins (Lam 1:1). The *népeš* in its basic meaning of 'throat' forms the junction for material life activities, verbal and nonverbal communication, and the vitality of a being. A restorer of vitality (v.16) changes a person's entire existence. God's comfort can bring one into community with him (and others). God is the one who can provide salvation and holistic restitution[22], who

[18] Cf. Simian-Yofre, נחם, 368.
[19] Cf. Simian-Yofre, נחם, 369.
[20] Cf. Riede, Trost, 116.
[21] Cf. Riede, Trost, 115f.
[22] Cf. Riede, Trost, 117.

created human beings as a vitality and, as the God of the living, promotes life in relationship. But even a positive response from God is absent in Lam 1; the request for relationship in lament and accusation against God remains unanswered.

3. Poetic device and key to understanding: the personification of Zion

How personification works

A key to understanding the analysed text is the personification of Zion, in which grief and lamentation are expressed. Through it, the personified city-woman *herself* is able to speak (first person singular) rather than only talking *about* the destroyed city and its inhabitants (third person singular; third person plural). The literary stylistic device of personification is closely related to the question of identity and loss of identity. Knut Heim emphasises that pain can only be experienced individually and that one of the strengths of the personification of Zion lies in the ability to speak paradigmatically of pain that has affected a collective but can be expressed on a personal level.[23] In the midst of a comprehensive catastrophe, it is no longer possible for individuals to fall back on structures for coping with grief, hope and comfort. The existing symbolic systems, which are based on the idea of election and a special self-image, have been fundamentally attacked. It is therefore necessary to find a complex form of expression for pain and grief, which is made possible by the personification of Zion. At the collective level, countless individuals who suffer this fate can thus be represented in the background, their pain finding individual expression through one person (Zion).[24] Heim describes the formation of personification in four transformations: (1) ideation (transferring people into an abstract idea); (2) topification (transferring people into a geographical location); (3) personification (transfer of a non-human entity into a human being); (4) impersonation (transfer of a group of people into a person who speaks for them).[25] These transformations allow us to decipher the personification of Zion and reveal its function. The images used in Lam 1 enable Zion to become a conversation partner through personification. Lamentations 1:1 already states that the city sits alone like a widow (כאלמנה). It stands as an *abstractum pro concreto* for the inhabitants and represents them. The image of the widow is also emotionally rich and strongly culturally influenced, opening up a broad range of associations that emphasises loneliness and loss. In addition, human behaviour is used to describe her when she sits (vv.1, 3), weeps (v.2, cheeks), finds no rest (v.3), thinks of her

[23] Cf. Heim, Personification, 130.
[24] Cf. Heim, Personification, 130f.
[25] Cf. Heim, Personification, 135.

glorious past (v.7), etc. The first three transformations therefore already take place in v.1: (1) the individuals with their individual fates become an abstract idea: the people, and (2) the community then becomes a geographical entity: the city. In the third step (3), the geographical entity (city) is personified by being humanised: it sits *like* a widow and is enriched with body images and emotions in the course of the text. The title of widow also integrates her into a social structure in which widows and orphans, as *personae miserae*, are accorded special protection (Exod 22:21; Deut 24:17, 19).[26] Through these transformations, the personification of Zion represents the collective identity of the city's many inhabitants. Furthermore, preparations are made for Zion herself to speak in vv.9, 11, 12–22, thus becoming (4) a person who speaks for the collective.

Personification in concepts of the body

In the second part of Lamentations 1, personification is enriched with various physical descriptions of Zion, which make her appear in anthropomorphic form. Old Testament thinking is based on a holistic concept of the body; a dichotomous division into body and soul is foreign to this way of thinking. Lam 1 also reflects intense relationships between the inside and outside of the body, which really highlights emotional experiences, like crying (v.16).[27] Schroer/Staubli describe Semitic thinking as stereometric. This means that many different aspects of reality (e.g. body parts and experiences) are collected in order to combine them synthetically. This creates spaces for association without fixing facts to a specific meaning.[28] This understanding can be combined with the thesis of Andreas Wagner, who advocates a synthetic conception of the body that emphasises the connection between a body part and its function.[29] In their individual form, combination and references to their function, the body images of Zion point beyond themselves to the person (Zion). They show a wounded, anthropomorphic body that is limited in its functions or threatens to lose them. Seven examples from the text are mentioned here: (1) the bones that are touched by fire (v.13)[30], (2) the feet caught in a net, which can no longer go in the desired direction (v.13), (3) the stumbling strength that actually stands for the vital power of humankind

[26] Cf. Molnar-Hidvegi, Witwe, §4.
[27] Cf. Frevel, Klagelieder, 20.
[28] Cf. Schroer/Staubli, Körpersymbolik, 24.
[29] Cf. Janowski, Anthropologie, 142.
[30] Schroer/Staubli describe the bones during life as a 'barometer of vitality'. When they are attacked in v.13 and exposed without flesh, a shift toward proximity to death occurs. Cf. Schroer/Staubli, Körpersymbolik, 235.

(v.14)[31], (4) the melting eye that loses its perception and communication skills (v.16), (5) the hands that spread out in an attempt to communicate, which remains unanswered (v.17), (6) the absent vitality that cannot be restored by one's own strength (v.19), (7) the sick heart that seems impaired in its function (v.22).

The body images can be linked to the category of space. Zion is thus extremely limited in her range of action, which is expressed through body images that connect the physical and social spheres. The only possible movements are raising her voice (agency) and spreading her hands (v.17). While her range of movement appears to be severely restricted on the outside, her inner self is in great upheaval, as is already evident from the different vocabulary used for the inner self ('inner being' קרב vv.15, 20 and 'insides' מעה v.20). The use of קרב also highlights the correspondence between topographical (v.15, rejection of the strong within the city) and person-centred (v.20, churning of the heart within) aspects in the body images. Furthermore, she is cut off from her relationships, which is expressed in descriptions of proximity and distance: she and her children are isolated (vv.13, 16), she stands alone among her enemies (v.17). Her grief causes her to fall out of the community; she is saddened (v.12), restless (v.14) and has no one to comfort her and thus reintegrate her into the community. In addition, her attempts to make contact with the outside world through concrete appeals remain unanswered. She is lonely in her suffering. The two mentions of the heart (vv.20, 22) frame the last section of the lament, when it is churning inside (v.20) and sick (v.22). In Old Testament contexts, the heart represents the inner being of a person[32] and connects all thoughts about the inner and outer person. While Zion's physical integrity has already been called into question by the attack on its basic structures (bones, v.13), the sickness of the heart affects the person as a whole.

Personification – individual and collective

In Zion's speech, the (4) transformation, the impersonation, i.e. the transfer of a group of people into a person who speaks for them, is accomplished. By describing the experiences of different generations and social groups, images of a collective are drawn, which Zion takes up as a personified individual in her speech. In this way, she becomes both the spokesperson and the bearer of the experiences. The images underscore the total extent of the catastrophe for the entire population and the interdependence of the various social groups. Bernd Janowski

[31] Cf. Bester, Körperbilder, 201.
[32] Cf. Schroer/Staubli, Körpersymbolik, 47.

describes humans as 'physically bound social beings'[33] and emphasises both individual identity and integration into social processes. The individual and the community come together through the physically and socially mediated identity of the individual and the cultically and symbolically formed collective identity. In Lamentations 1, it becomes clear that collective and individual identity are endangered by the catastrophe when fate dissolves existing symbolic systems and connections and violently tears the collective apart.

Function of personification

A major strength and great potential for identification of personification lies in the fact that different fates can coexist and are not summarised into a uniform experience. In addition, the literary conceptualisation offers the possibility of verbalising pain and classifying one's own feelings from the 'I/we' in the 'you' of Zion. Literary personification thus initiates an affective and cognitive process.[34] While individual groups and people can identify with the descriptions and feel seen and taken seriously, personification simultaneously integrates them into the community of the (former) population and connects their fate with the fate of others. Personification enables the simultaneous perception of individual and collective fate. The inclusion takes place without claiming to provide a complete description of the situation, leaving room for identification and interpretation for those affected and those listening. Zion's descriptions clearly convey the state of mourning, the emotions associated with it, and the inner conflict that accompanies the grieving process. Both pain and resistance to accepting the current circumstances are valid. The admission of guilt, the suffering experienced, the insistence on God's justice and the turning to God all go hand in hand. Thus, grief is not presented as a smooth or overcome process, but rather the personified city-woman pulls the audience into her pain and struggle and demands their compassion.

Conclusion

In considering Lam 1:11c-22, it is striking that formal and content-related aspects interact and shape the understanding of the text. Organising structures are encountered repeatedly, interrupted by varying designs. The formal structural elements chosen direct the listener's/reader's attention to the *dynamics and tensions between structure and chaos*, outside

[33] Cf. Janowski, Anthropologie, 30.
[34] Cf. Heim, Personification, 141.

and inside, and proximity and distance. The literary and poetic structure encourages readers to read the lament on both an emotional and cognitive level, to be moved and to reflect.

The *powerful imagery* stands out in the descriptions of grief and mourning, the images of the body, and the descriptions of the desired comfort. In the personified city-woman, the suffering and pain of the collective are described in powerful imagery that combines *physical* and *emotional* aspects, *visual* and *auditory* elements, and the *individual* and the *collective*. It becomes clear that grief and comfort are holistic phenomena that affect people in all aspects of life, roles and relationships. In Lam 1:11c-22, the inside view and therefore the perspective of the sufferers is recorded, which goes far beyond the description from the outside. The connection between physicality and space is particularly striking, with the categories of proximity and distance, inside and outside, and the horizontal and vertical spatial axes playing a major role. In addition, the close connection between the physical and social spheres and the experiences of loss of function of body parts should be emphasised. While the body images experience severe restrictions from the outside, the inside is in great upheaval.

Anthropomorphic images are linked to the personification of Zion, which serves as the *key to understanding* the lament. By speaking for the group and, in a way, taking it into herself, Zion generates agency, overcomes her isolation (turning outward, seeking relationships) and becomes the narrator of her own story. In this way, she counters the powerlessness she has experienced in destruction and violence with her grief and lament. The fates of the various groups of people can stand side by side and experience their own *validity*. Especially in the situation of (impending) *loss of identity*, it is the destroyed city, originally a place of protection and security, that now gives voice to experiences of violence, destruction, loss and grief. It is precisely this that allows her to represent individual fates and open up *potential for identification*.

In Lamentations 1, there is no comfort, thus offering potential for identification for people whose *reality is characterised by a lack of comfort*, open wounds and lasting pain. It illustrates the simultaneous experiences of a lack of recognition in suffering and the struggle for perception and relationship in a situation of loss of relationship.

In addition, the lament unfolds its power as a *passionate struggle for identity*. Zion finds herself in a situation of loss of identity and relationships and is in danger of losing her sense of self. From

this situation, she argues with God against God about his divinity. She demands the special relationship and calls on him to be aware and empathetic. It is a protest against the current state of affairs and an attempt to hold on to God's healing, caring divinity. In doing so, she herself takes on the role of witness and the role of a lamenting woman.

The Book of Lamentations can be understood as *literature for coping with a catastrophe* whose extent remains unbearable. They show how events and emotions can coexist in tension and how contradictions can be endured simultaneously. The tragic situation is not resolved and change is still pending. This is precisely what Zion is struggling with in overcoming her speechlessness, in expressing her grief and in energetically holding on to the perspective of comfort.

Further perspectives

These considerations mark the beginning of a further examination of the Book of Lamentations as poetic literature with its intense focus on grief and the longing for comfort. In the following, I will identify various aspects that I would like to pursue in my further analysis.

1. A detailed comparison of the descriptions of the internal and external perspectives within Lam 1 by examining verses 1-11. What changes as a result of the more intensive examination of the two artistically interwoven parts?

2. What roles do concepts of body and space play in the descriptions of grief and comfort in the other poems (Lam 2-5)?

3. To what extent can the concepts of body and space be linked to the research debate on the topic of ‘space’? Which categories are appropriate for this?

4. To what extent does the perspective of the man (Lam 3) and the collective (Lam 5) change the ideas of grief and comfort in concepts of body and space that have been developed so far in relation to the personified female city-woman? How does the perspective of the literary origin and literary order of the different poems influence the observations?

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The Body and Military Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible: Project introduction

The construction of masculinity in the texts of the Hebrew Bible (henceforth HB) is a subject which garners much interest, not least within the context of warfare. As Clines puts it in his exploration of David's masculinity: to be a man is to fight. This is not unique to the HB, rather it is found in many texts from the ancient Near East and Mediterranean. The military milieu constructs certain types of masculinity in accordance with the military apparatus's – and the state's – needs. This military masculinity is therefore highly ideologically charged, and these ideologies often express themselves bodily. This can be seen in how the perfect warrior is constructed; not only as strong and swift, but beautiful.

The disabled, impaired, or deficit body, and how it is used to construct or communicate certain ideologies in the HB is also an interesting subject. In some biblical texts, disability expresses divine disfavour or punishment, while in others, impaired persons are chosen by God, such as Exod 4:10 where Moses protests being chosen due to his speech impediment, or the suffering servant in Isaiah 52:14, who is described as gravely disfigured. This aspect is especially interesting within a military/warfare context, where the odds of injury and disability were high, and defeat signalled humiliation. While there are numerous studies on Graeco-Roman texts dealing with infirm veterans, this aspect does not seem much explored in a biblical context, despite several pericopes touching on the physical consequences of war. Another feature of embodied military ideology is the mutilation of enemies – dead or alive. The aspect of mutilation is interesting related to disability, as it is, according to Olyan, meant to humiliate the defeated enemy; it is similar to the sexual violence of warfare, while resulting in disability or deformity if the defeated is alive. As an example, I believe these tensions are present in 1 Sam 31:4, where Saul chooses suicide rather than surrender to his enemies; it could be to avoid the humiliation of sexual violence or mutilation.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the body as a site of ideological construction and conflict, with a focus on the disabled, impaired, or deficit body – this to further understand the ideological construction of the HB and use of narratives/characters to promote a certain ideology. This will be done in relation to military contexts, as the military is highly ideologically charged and an environment where the body is deeply involved with those elements, both as a tool and an object to be acted upon.

I will use several theories in my investigation. The first is disability studies, where the material reality of disability is investigated alongside the idea of disability as a social

category, and how it is constructed in relation to power hierarchies. Disability studies interrogate the meanings which cultures assign to physical difference, which goes beyond functionality and includes symbolic value and moral assumptions. Reconstructing lived experiences of disability in the past is difficult, and consequently what is mainly investigated in historical research is representations of disabilities. However, while I too will focus on textual representations of disabilities, I will also ground it in a "historical reality" – that is, with how commonplace battles and warfare were, and with the archaeological evidence we have to support this claim, one might expect a larger presence of war-related disabilities in the texts of the HB, especially when military texts are as common as they are. Therefore, I will attempt to do some sort of approximation of how many soldiers returned from war disabled, which, depending on the results, could make the relative silence on the subject in the HB significant when analysing ideological strains present.[1]

As a companion to biblical studies, disability studies are close to other theoretical frameworks used in the field, such as concepts of purity/danger.

The second theory is masculinity studies, which posits the idea of masculinities as a process and a position in gendered systems, constructed in relation to power hierarchies, which are constantly negotiated. The third theory is honour-shame theory; this theory is used to explore how many social interactions are conducted in relation to a system where honour and shame functions as social currency; honour is something which can be lost and must be defended, while shame takes the place of lost honour and is accompanied by social detriment.

[1] How exactly I will do these calculations is yet unclear, especially since statistics have never been my strong suit. A colleague suggested that I look into the methods used by Uppsala Conflict Data Program, and pair that with archaeological approximations of population size/army size, so that is where I will start. I have also found some studies of Graeco-Roman warfare that includes statistics around death toll, and those will probably also be helpful.

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Preface

Hello everyone!

This paper is a bastardised version of a part of a chapter that will appear in my dissertation. Therefore, it does not have a strong focus on disability, but rather on mutilation. Therefore, I would like the focal point of this paper to be on my use of psychology and how violence can provide social bonding – if the point I'm trying to make comes across and, more importantly, if it is reasonable and has a leg to stand on? However, if you have read my project summary, I will gladly discuss how these findings would fit in with the broader project, and I am always happy to receive literature suggestions.

Thanks!

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Warfare Mutilation: Is There a Reason Beyond Humiliation?

My project aims to understand the ideology around disability in the Hebrew Bible, especially in relation to disabilities arising from wartime injuries. In this paper, a specific type of injury will be examined, that is mutilation. First, I will discuss what warfare mutilation is and how it is used, and then I will examine a few cases of warfare mutilation within the Hebrew Bible, after which I will propose an understanding of mutilation beyond humiliation, that ties back into my project.

Mutilation: a primer

The difference between a battle injury and a mutilation is that the battle injury is imposed with the intent of winning the battle; it is the active fight. Mutilation, on the other hand, is imposed upon a defeated enemy for a different purpose than winning.

Lemos succinctly defines mutilation as "a negatively constructed somatic alteration", stressing the implication of 'negatively constructed' – that is, what is mutilating varies between societies.[1] For a biblical example of this, circumcision is positively constructed, and therefore not considered mutilation even though it is a somatic alteration.[2]

Just as with injuries, mutilation can be differentiated into types of mutilation: punitive mutilation and warfare mutilation (however, when vassal treaties are violated, the line between judicial mutilation and wartime mutilation blurs). While this paper has its focus on wartime mutilation, I believe that understanding punitive mutilation is vital to understanding warfare mutilation. Punitive mutilation occurs within a legal system and is used to punish a crime or misdeed. In the Hebrew Bible, the well-known law of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth shows up in Lev 24:19–20, with similar laws of receiving the same injury one has caused showing up in other Near Eastern texts.[3] Other times, the mutilation is not a reciprocal punishment, such as in Deut 25:11–12, which prescribes that a woman who grabs a man's genitals during an altercation should have her hand severed, or in Hammurabi par. 195: "If a child should strike his father, they shall cut off his hand".[4] There has been much written about which of these seemingly brutal laws were actually carried out and which ones were rhetorical – I will not delve deeper into that discussion in this paper, but I still wish to point out that

[1] Lemos, *Shame and Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible*, 226.
[2] Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible*, 36–38.
[3] Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible*, 39.
[4] Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible*, 39.

these judicial mutilations, were they carried out, would have resulted in life-long, stigmatising somatic alterations which marked the offender as a criminal.

As for warfare mutilation, the main motivation for mutilating the defeated enemy, alive or dead, is to humiliate them. The humiliation arises from the inability to protect oneself or the ones one is supposed to be protecting. The public nature of mutilation is vital for the humiliation, according to Lemos, due to the public nature of shame. Shame does not stop at the personal feeling of embarrassment, guilt or abasement, rather it requires an audience – the feeling of shame relates to the witnessing and scorn of others and often results in a preventative attitude or behaviour.[5] Lemos uses a quote from David D. Gilmore:

> ... shame is above all visual and public. Unlike guilt, shame requires an audience: the watchful community. In the psychic mechanism of shaming, it is the eye' of the community and the related sense of paranoic observation that are assimilated to worldview and personality.[6]

Mutilation is usually (though not always, as we will see below) permanent, which means that even if the mutilated person reversed their situation and defeated the person(s) who mutilated them, they would still carry the reminder of their past humiliation, and others would see it too. The shame of being seen as once defeated and vulnerable would make the past humiliation not past, but ongoing and largely as permanent as the somatic alteration itself.

Warfare mutilation in the Hebrew Bible

Warfare mutilation occurs several times in the Hebrew Bible. One of the most well-known stories happens in Judg 16, where Samson has his hair cut off and his eyes removed by the Philistines. He is then made to grind at the mill, something that Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska argues feminises him. She explains that this work was often performed by women, but also slaves and prisoners; a male prisoner or slave is a man with limited freedom and autonomy, whose life and body is controlled by other men – the male prisoner or slave can therefore be understood to have a subordinated masculinity and be more vulnerable to feminisation.[7] Samson is also brought out as entertainment at a feast, which makes his humiliation visible in a larger setting.

[5] Lemos, *Shame and Mutilation*, 226–229.
[6] Gilmore, David D., "Honor, Honesty, Shame: Male Status in Contemporary Andalusia,", 101, quoted in Lemos, *Shame and Mutilation*, 228.
[7] Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, Ela. "Samson: Masculinity Lost (and Regained?)", 177–179.

In 1 Sam 11 the Ammonite Nahash threatens to remove one eye from every inhabitant in Jabesh-Gilead, something he claims will shame all of Israel, showing the communal nature of shame; Lemos suggests that failing to aid their brethren would be humiliating to all of Israel, even in only the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead were threatened. In 1 Sam 17, the defeated Goliath's head is removed by David and brought to Jerusalem as a trophy. In 1 Sam 31, the Philistines hang the bodies of the beheaded Saul and his sons on the city wall of Beth Shean, and in 2 Sam 4, the murderers of Ish-Bosheth/Eshbaal are executed, have their hands and feet severed, and then their bodies are hung up by the pool in Hebron. In all of these examples, the mutilated person's body is displayed publicly or in a larger gathering, with the last two texts being a textbook example of the public nature of humiliation.

As mentioned above, mutilation is almost always permanent, but there is one biblical story which demonstrates an exception to this rule. In 2 Sam 10, the Ammonite king Nahash has died and been succeeded by his son Hanun, which has David sending envoys to Ammon to show his support in Hanun's grief. Hanun becomes convinced that these envoys are spies and sends them back with half their beards shaved off and their clothes cut off to expose their behinds. The envoys are ordered by David to stay in Jericho until their beards have regrown. The status of the beard has both Olyan and Lemos suggesting that the cutting of it would be seen as mutilation, especially since they are hidden away until their beards have regrown as to not show the people how they have been humiliated – the latter point again illustrating that the humiliation is rooted in one's mutilated body being perceived by the public.[8] This somatic alteration is temporary but negatively constructed in a way to be considered mutilation, and the humiliation remains until the alteration is reversed. However, this mutilation is temporary, and therefore a less severe version of the permanent mutilation. Likewise, then, post-mortem mutilation is severely humiliating and can be seen as having great consequences for the departed, if their spirits can't find peace, but the mutilation of the living has the potential to result in the ongoing, permanent state of humiliation as outlined above.

One biblical story of humiliating warfare mutilation that differs from the others in terms of visibility is Judg 1:6–7, where one reads the fate of the captured king Adoni-Bezek, who is mutilated by the Israelites after they have defeated thousands of Canaanites and Perizzites at Bezek. They cut off his thumbs and big toes, and it is revealed that he has done the same to his own captured enemies in the past:

[8] Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible*, 43; Lemos, *Shame and Mutilation*, 232–234.

> And Adoni-Bezek fled, but they followed after him. And they seized him, and they cut off his thumbs and his big toes. And Adoni-Bezek said: "Seventy kings, their thumbs and big toes maimed – so, they were picking up beneath my table. As such, what I have done, God has repaid to me." And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

Adoni-Bezek's own victims were displayed in their mutilated state, but when he was mutilated by the Israelites, he is not showed off to the public. Doak suggests that he was brought to Jerusalem to be paraded through the streets to signal their victory, which is a plausible explanation, but such a scene is nonetheless missing from the narrative.[9]

The aim of Adoni-Bezek's mutilation is to humiliate.[10] There seems to be two types of humiliation in this case – first is the "classical" humiliation, in that the warrior is overpowered and unable to defend himself and thus prevent bodily harm. This loss of control and inability to protect even himself is humiliating. Adoni-Bezek's reflection on his own past actions reveals a second type of humiliation: it is related to physical ability, yes, but not in the way of preventing the warrior from being able to fight. Instead, this targets the enemy for more everyday tasks, what would be considered "normal ability". The big toe is important for balance and cutting it off would make it difficult for the mutilated enemies to get off the floor or to squat rather than kneel (which could be considered a less humiliating position), and the removal of the thumb would hinder them from picking things off the floor with their hands. When Adoni-Bezek had his mutilated enemies gathering scraps under his table, presumably for eating, they would be forced to kneel or lie down and eat the food off the ground, like dogs. The humiliation would therefore include dehumanisation, that is relegating the person to the status of a non-human animal.

This type of dehumanisation is seen elsewhere, for example Ashurbanipal punishing Uaite of Arabia for rebelling against him:

> I pierced his chin with my keen hand dagger. Through his jaw (lit., jaw of his face) I passed a rope, put a dog chain upon him and made him occupy (lit., guard) a kennel of the east gate of the inner (wall) of Nineveh, which is named *Nîrib masnakti adnâte*. To extol the glory of Assur, Ishtar and the great gods, my lords, I took pity upon him, and spared his life.[11]

[9] Doak, *Heroic Bodies,* 70.
[10] Some commentators, such as Boling, 55; Alter, 112; and Gray, 247 argue that the aim was to stop him from taking up arms again, but I find that reading unconvincing.
[11] Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 319. This punishment is mentioned several times, see also p. 314–315.

Lemos shows that this is a pattern, of the mutilated person being delegated to a lower status. In the case of Adoni-Bezek's enemies, it was that of a dog – they have been dehumanised. In the case of Samson and that of David's envoys to Ammon, it is status of a woman – they have been feminised, Samson through tilling at the mill and the envoys through having their clothes cut to expose their behinds, something that indicated sexual vulnerability if not outright sexual violence.[12] I would also like to include the criminal in this lower status signalling – if we assume that at least some of the laws regarding punitive mutilation were carried out, it would not be clear, at least to an outsider, that someone lost their hand in battle or because they were caught stealing. While a closer-knit social unit might be aware of a mutilated person's history, in a larger setting it would be a problem, or if they ever wanted to move. There would be shame in looking like a criminal or having a behaviour or personal history ascribed to them that they do not have – but by association, it could be stigmatising even in a setting where people would know that they aren't criminal.

Other types of warfare mutilation

The main motivation for warfare mutilation is humiliation, although there are other reasons as well. One is the tallying of people killed, which can be seen depicted in Assyrian and Egyptian reliefs of hands, tongues and genitals being cut off and collected.[13] In the inscriptions of Ahmose, son of Ebana, he records bringing cut off hands to his superiors for tallying.[14] In 1 Sam 18, David brings the foreskins of two hundred Philistines to Saul as a bride price, which could also be read as a tally for the number of Philistines killed.

Looking to Greek texts, there are examples of warfare mutilation being used to hinder someone from being able to take up arms, such as Aelian's description of the Athenian treatment of Aeginetans:

> What decrees did the Athenians make, and those in a democracy? That every one of the Aeginetans should have his thumb cut off from his right hand, so that he might for ever after be disabled from holding a spear, yet might handle an oar.[15]

In the writings of Diodorus Siculus where Alexander the Great encounters mutilated Greeks in Persia, mutilation is similarly used to limit someone's ability beyond their craft:

[12] Lemos, *Shame and Mutilation*, 239–241.
[13] Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*, 399; a heap of hands severed from the enemies of Ramses III, relief at Medinet Habu, pictured in Pritchard, *The ancient Near East in pictures*, 118.
[14] Breasted, *Ancient records of Egypt*, 7–8.
[15] Aelian's Various Histories 2.9, translated by Thomas Stanley (1665).

> At this point in his advance the king was confronted by a strange and dreadful sight, one to provoke indignation against the perpetrators and sympathetic pity for the unfortunate victims. He was met by Greeks bearing branches of supplication. They had been carried away from their homes by previous kings of Persia and were about eight hundred in number, most of them elderly. All had been mutilated, some lacking hands, some feet, and some ears and noses. They were persons who had acquired skills or crafts and made good progress in their instruction; then their other extremities had been amputated and they were left only those which were vital to their profession. All the soldiers, seeing their venerable years and the losses which their bodies had suffered, pitied the lot of the wretches. Alexander most of all was affected by them and unable to restrain his tears.[16]

These examples show that the end goal of warfare mutilation is not always humiliation, though it is worth noting that several goals might exist at once, and the shame of mutilation might exist for the mutilated person beyond the goals of the mutilator.

Violence and social bonding

Adoni-Bezek's own thumbs and great toes are cut off, but there is no hint that he is humiliated like his own enemies were. However, one might extrapolate that the purpose of his mutilation is the same, especially since he is brought to Jerusalem, a point that sparked my interest in the Adoni-Bezek episode.

The fact that Adoni-Bezek reportedly is brought back to Jerusalem is sometimes considered a problem. Bringing not just a prisoner of war along on their campaign was impractical to begin with, but a mutilated prisoner of war is even more of a hassle, especially if the injury to his feet makes it difficult for him to walk. Many commentators therefore concludes that it was Adoni-Bezek's own men that brought him to Jerusalem, and that he died there from his injuries.[17] This seems to be an unlikely scenario, considering that his men have not been mentioned once before or after this line, and relies on collapsing the characters of Adoni-Bezek and Adonizedek from Jos 10 into one. There are textual problems in Judg 1:6–7 related to personal names, titles, and geography, and much have been written on it, with several solutions and theories put forward; all of this lies outside of the scope of this paper. If we look again at Adoni-Bezek's own actions in the past, the reasoning behind bringing a wounded

[16] Diodorus Siculus, XVII.69, translated by C. Bradford Welles, Loeb Library.
[17] See for example Lindars, 19; Gunn, 22; Burney, 6.

prisoner of war with them all the way to Jerusalem becomes clearer, even with taking the episode at face value.

As explained above, Adoni-Bezek's main motivation for mutilating his enemies was to humiliate them by forcing them to eat table scraps off of the floor. This humiliation would serve a secondary purpose, that is to be entertainment for Adoni-Bezek and his men, just like how Samson was brought out for entertainment during the Philistine's feast. The mutilated Adoni-Bezek could have a similar function in the military camp, where he might be forced to perform the same undignified task of eating off the floor, or it could have been enough to see him stumble along as they marched forward. Although it might have been inconvenient to bring him along, the humiliation serves a purpose for the perpetrators. Littman and Paluck show how violence towards an outsider will strengthen the social bonds in a group:

> Specifically, when individuals identify with groups that that use violence to achieve their political, economic, or social goals, they will be motivated to comply with the group's violent standards, whether or not the violence is condoned by the broader society, and, to some extent, regardless of the individual's own views. Moreover, violent groups are likely to inspire stronger identification among their members. High levels of identification with any groups occur most frequently in contexts where individuals are reminded of uncertainty and mortality and when the group is particularly cohesive. Violent groups often operate in uncertain and dangerous environments and, under certain circumstances, can be highly cohesive collectives with strict rules, strong leaders, and clear boundaries.[18]

Cohen likewise finds that public, stigmatising group violence builds trust within the group. Focusing on multiple perpetrator rape committed by combatants, she writes:

> Gang rape is often understood as a performance, with the other perpetrators as the intended 'audience' and the victim serving not as a target per se, but rather as a 'vehicle' for the perpetrators.[19]

While mutilation and rape are not synonymous, Cohen states that violent rituals are used to strengthen the bond in social groups whether or not they are sexualised – the use of rape has a stronger connection with a wish to assert one's manhood, which is not a necessary goal of

[18] Littman and Paluck, *The Cycle of Violence,* 89.
[19] Cohen, *The ties that bind*, 703.

mutilation (although mutilation can, as stated above, be used to feminise in a similar fashion to male-on-male rape).[20]

While Littman and Paluck as well as Cohen focus their research on social bonds between combatants, the bottom line is that "violence against outsiders is more likely to form bonds between insiders".[21] Perhaps the reading of social bonding through violence seems far-fetched regarding the Adoni-Bezek episode, or at least speculative, but since the episode lacks the expected display of Adoni-Bezek's mutilated body, I wished to understand if another reading was possible, and I find the idea of social bonding through violence intriguing with regards to my broader project, discussed further below.

What does it mean for understanding disability?

The ideology of mutilation being shameful will impact how a person who is not "whole" is received in society. Looking to the idea of finding entertainment or community-building in the humiliation of someone, especially through seeing someone struggle or be different, does not stay confined to a war context. Even in peacetimes, within one's own group, cohesion is built by othering.

As an illustrative example, I would like to return to the text by Diodorus Siculus quoted above, in which Alexander the Great encountered mutilated Greeks in Persia. The text quoted above is followed by this paragraph:

> The king called their leaders to come forward and, greeting them with a respect in keeping with his own greatness of spirit, promised to make it a matter of utmost concern that they should be restored to their homes. They gathered to debate the matter, and decided that it would be better for them to remain where they were rather than to return home. If they were brought back safely, they would be scattered in small groups, and would find their abuse at the hands of Fortune an object of reproach as they lived on in their cities. If, however, they continued living together, as companions in misfortune, they would find a solace for their mutilation in the similar mutilation of the others.[22]

The stigma of mutilation is strong enough for the people in the text to want to isolate themselves, rather than return home to the scorn and ridicule they assume will befall them due to their mutilation and subsequent disability or disfigurement.

[20] Cohen, *The ties that bind,* 704–705.
[21] Cohen, *The ties that bind,* 705.
[22] Diodorus Siculus, XVII.69, translated by C. Bradford Welles, Loeb Library.

Mutilation is therefore not only humiliating, but also othering, and other people – even within one's own social group – might use this othering against the mutilated person to strengthen bonds between themselves.

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Project Summary, Johanna Rönnlund

The Performance of Complaint: A Performance Analysis of Translations of the Psalter

Throughout millennia, communities have prayed the words of the Psalter orally. Many of the stylistic characteristics of the Psalms facilitate oral performance, and features like parallelism, chiasm, repetition, sharp contrasts, and visual imagery therefore connect the oral transmission and use of the texts with the texts of the Hebrew Bible (HB). Further, the oral use of Bible translations is broad and diverse, but are translations adapted for oral use and are the oral features of the Hebrew text transferred and transferable in translation?

My PhD-project examines select individual complaint psalms using performance criticism. The project focuses on biblical Hebrew poetry and contemporary Bible translations in Swedish and explores orality-oriented exegesis as a tool in creating orally poignant translations for communal reading, prayer, and liturgy today. The aim of the study is to (a) provide insights regarding the oral discourse of the Psalter, with a focus on exemplar complaint psalms. Selected texts include Psalm 13, 3, and 6. Further, this investigation aims to (b) demonstrate how the performative elements of the selected texts are transformed in translation and what is lost or changed in translations; and to (c) contribute to the development of coherent methods for oral exegesis as a tool in Bible translation.

My project relies on the framework of biblical performance criticism (BPC). I use scholars such as Peter Perry, Richard Schechner, Ernst Wendland, and Ruth Finnegan to define performance and orality in relation to textual analysis and translation. I build upon the historical and current oral use of the Hebrew text as well as the Bible translations. The aim is, however, not to investigate historical performances of the texts. Rather, the analysis is based on the multiplicity of performers and audiences in different times and historical and cultural settings. The performance situation functions as the hermeneutical starting point from which the texts are analysed and the analysis is textually oriented and focuses on features in the text that have a function in the performance situation. The investigation, thus, aims to address the inherent performative qualities of the text as a means to analyse what kind of performance the text invites to. Thus, to answer questions such as: According to the text, who is addressed? What stylistic features in the text are actualised in an oral performance situation? In summary, this study rests on the assumption of an oral use of the Psalter but does not seek to investigate in which setting or on what religious occasion the Israelites used the texts. Instead, the focus is on identifying oral features within the texts of the Psalms and analysing their function in a hypothetical performance situation.

The project will contain three main steps of analysis. The first step (1) is to analyse the Masoretic text (MT), with a focus on the text's oral features and poetic devices. The primary analysis of the biblical texts will be conducted on its canonical form, but the study will address textual critical, and redactional critical issues when relevant. The orally centred exegesis will engage the theories of Wendland and methods from the study of biblical Hebrew poetry. Further, the analysis will include reflections on the Masoretic accent marks, which are in essence reading directions. The second step (2) is to analyse the contemporary Bible translations in Swedish. Through the methods of Wendland in combination with methods from the study of biblical Hebrew poetry, the analysis will identify the oral and poetic features of the texts and compare them to the devices in MT. The analysis of the Swedish translations will be conducted in English and, when needed, the texts will be translated to facilitate the discussion. The third step (3) is to develop example translations of the selected texts. The starting point for the translations will be the model described by Dan Nässelqvist, to create a translation both *of* and *for* performance.[1] Furthermore, the aim of the translations is: a) to the highest extent possible render the Hebrew accurately and understandably in the target language, and b) to the highest extent possible, transfer the features from oral discourse into the target language. The translations will then be compared to the Hebrew text and the contemporary translations in order to examine to what degree and in what ways the oral analysis has provided insights into the translation.

The paper I present this year is a chapter from the first step, i.e. an analysis of a Hebrew text of Ps 3. In a second step, this analysis will be compared with translations.

[1] Nässelqvist, 'Translating the Aural Gospel: The Use of Sound Analysis in Performance-Oriented Translation', 50.

The Performance of Complaint:
A Performance Analysis of Psalm 3

Introduction

Throughout millennia, the cry of Psalm 3 has been used to voice the suffering of communities and individuals in synagogues, churches, and homes. As prayers, the psalms are inherently dialogical and address both YHWH and human listeners. The long and diverse history of oral use of the texts, affirm that the psalms commonly function as scripts for prayer. The poetic texts contain many features that facilitate oral performance and aural reception. For example, traits such as parallelism, chiasm, repetition, and visual imagery aid performers and audiences in memorisation, visualisation, and listening.

In this paper, I will analyse Psalm 3 through the framework of biblical performance criticism (henceforth BPC). Within this framework, scholars investigate both performative features within texts and historical performances of the texts. This study examines the inherent performative and dialogical qualities of Psalm 3. As such, the study will consider communicative features of the text and the function of textual features that are actualised in an oral performance situation.

This study will aim to answer the questions: 1) What features in Psalm 3 are actualised in an oral performance situation, and 2) In what way can a performance critical analysis benefit the study of the psalms?

I will argue that Psalm 3 is an inherently dialogical psalm that addresses YHWH and human listeners concomitantly. It is an apology in defence of YHWH's intention to aid the performer which has a function to address doubt and encourage trust in the middle of turmoil for both the performer and the human audience. Thus, this examination will demonstrate that BPC is a fruitful framework for analysing individual complaint psalms. The framework allows for an analysis of the text's themes and sequence, but also engages communicative and formative functions of the text. It, therefore, provides a broader understanding of the text's form, content, and function.

Theory and Method

The psalms are, to a high degree, prayers that invites readers and reciters into direct address to a deity and a human congregation. This characteristic provides the texts with a dialogical quality which is actualised when the texts are used in oral performance. The psalms' connection to oral performance situations is affirmed by some paratexts with musical and/or liturgical notes which

place specific psalms within communal contexts, as well as the history of use in Jewish and Christian communities which have used the psalms in communal settings for millennia. As literature actualised and used in oral performance, the texts qualify as oral literature according to Ruth Finnegan's categorisations. Finnegan has four criteria for classifying texts as oral literature; These are (1) mode of composition, (2) mode of transmission, (3) actualisation in performance, and (4) oral sources. She deems the most important criteria *actualisation in performance.*[1] Based on which scholarly theory regarding the psalms' mode of composition, transmission, and sources you support, the psalms may be oral literature according to all four criteria.[2] However, regardless of such theories, the psalms – as prayers – are actualised in oral performance and, thus, *are* oral literature. Accordingly, analysis of the texts as oral literature – or stated differently, examined according to their function in an oral performance situation – is a valid approach for study of the texts.

BPC provides frameworks for analysis of texts according to their performative qualities. Richard Schechner identifies a difference between something that "is performance" and studying something "as performance."[3] There is a distinct limitation regarding what "is performance," it is an actual performance of, for example, music, theatre, or a lecture. However, many things can be studied "as performance,"[4] i.e. studied according to their performative qualities. This includes analysis of the sequence, characters, and other features which have an impact in a performance situation.[5] In this study, I will analyse Psalm 3 "as performance." Thus, I will use the performance situation as a hermeneutical starting point to investigate features of the text that are actualised in oral performance. I do not intend to identify or analyse historical performances, rather I will investigate what features of the psalm come into play when the text is performed orally and received aurally.[6] Such features include dialogical qualities of the text, for example, whose voice is speaking

[1] Actualisation in performance is the third criteria for oral literature. She names this as the most important criteria. Further, oral mode of transmission is also a criteria for oral literature. Ruth Finnegan, 'How Oral Is Oral Literature?', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 37, no. 1 (1974): 61.

[2] As demonstrated above, many scholars in biblical studies have focused on oral literature from this criteria and searched for oral previous forms of the texts. Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 4th ed., Göttingen Handkommentar Zum Alten Testament (Dandenhoed et Ruprecht, 1926); Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, trans. Thomas M. Horner (Fortress Press, 1967).

[3] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Third Edition (Routledge, 2013), 38.

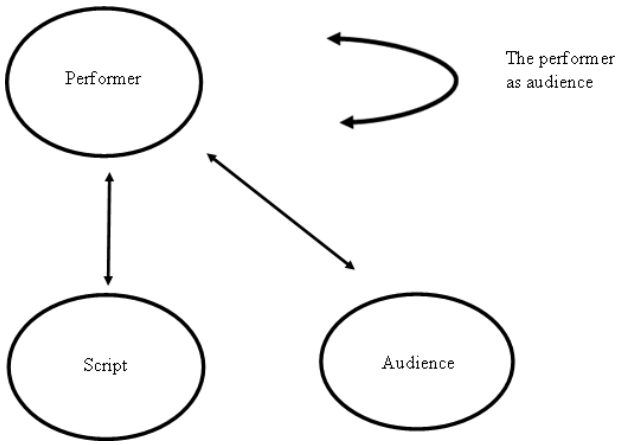
[4] Although I agree that many things can be studied *as performance*, I would not go as far as Schechner and say that almost anything can be studied as performance. As have argued above, the texts of the Psalms are direct communication to a deity and a human audience and as such they are inherently dialogical and actualised in oral performance. Further, the texts have been and are used in performance situations around the globe. Based on the texts' dialogical qualities as well as the historical and current use, the texts are suitable to be studied as performance.

[5] Studying something *as* performance entails analysis of the material according to the theories and methods of PC and asking performance-oriented questions to the material. For example, questions regarding what is happening and sequence. Such questions provide information regarding the process of dialogical engagement through identifying, for example, themes, shift in speaker, and stylistic devises that have communicative functions. Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 38–49.

[6] In regard to the concept audience in relation to Habakkuk, Jeanette Mathews, *Performing Habakkuk: Faithful Re-Enactment in the Midst of Crisis* (Pickwick, 2012), 71 writes: "The term 'audience' in relation to the book of Habakkuk has multiple layers. There would have been an audience for an eighth century prophet, for the prophetic traditions as they were used and transmitted in subsequent generations, for the compilers of the canonical text in about the fifth century and for later Jewish and Christian faith communities who preserved and used the book as Scripture. Because of the privileged place Scripture holds in faith communities across generations, the identity of the audience cannot be limited to any one place and time, but continues through to the present day." The same can be said for the book of Psalms which has been used in different ways in liturgy as well as private and public prayer, reading, and singing through millennia, as identified by for example Carleen Mandolfo, 'Language of Lament in the Psalms', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford University Press, 2014), 116. The multiplicity of

and who is being addressed. It also includes textual features that facilitate performance, such as, references, cues, mnemonic features, visual imagery, and repetition. By examining such features in the sequential progression of the psalm, I will consider what is actualised in oral performance, and, thus, investigate the *function* of the psalm's features in relation to performers and audiences.

I will analyse the text by using three theoretical concepts as my starting-point; *Script*, *Performer,* and *Audience*. The script, performer, and audience are three essential components in the performance situation and I have chosen these concepts to allow for an analysis of the text's features as well as the function these have on speakers and listeners. In a performance situation, there is an intricate interplay between the script, the performer, and the audience:



Pelias and Shaffer demonstrate that dialogue in a performance situation builds upon a mutual process of engagement between (1) the performer and script, (2) the performer and themselves as audience, and (3) the performer and audience (as identified by the figure).[7]

Firstly, the performer engages in dialogue with the script. In a performance situation, the performer commits to communicating the script to the audience. In the script, the performer "encounters another voice," and internalises the words until they "can be spoken as if they were the

performance contexts (including both performers and audiences) affirms the texts function as script in oral performance. However, it entails an intrinsic difficulty to distinguish one individual/group in a specific time and place as *the performer/audience* par excellence. The difficulties to determine the original setting of the psalms also entails problems to conclude who and in what Sitz im Leben *the original performer/audience* was. Although historical investigations are of immense value for biblical studies, the position taken here aims to address the inherent performative qualities of the text as a means to analyse what kind of performance the text invites performers and audiences to. Thus, to answer questions such as: According to the text, who is addressed? What stylistic features in the text are actualised in an oral performance situation? The most obvious example of a feature that is actualised in oral performance is phonetic features of different kinds. In quiet reading, a reader can notice the repetition of letters and sounds, however, when the sounds are not heard the feature is not actualised as a phonetic repetition. Similarly, audience engaging features such as cues, well-known references, and dramatic imagery are experienced in quiet reading, however, they are actualised in oral performance where their function of engaging listeners becomes operational. The same can be said for structural features such as parallelism and chiasm (which are very common in biblical Hebrew poetry). They can be noticed and appreciated for their semantic and visual effect in quite reading, but they are actualised as mnemonic and audience engaging features in an oral performance situation.

[7] Ronald J. Pelias and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer, *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts*, Second Edition (Kendall/Hunt, 2007), 15–16.

performer's own."[8] Secondly, the performer acts both as *performer* and *audience.* As performer, the individual embodies a character or text and communicates a message to be received. As audience, the performer acts as themselves and evaluates their performance.[9] As audience, the performer is also *affected* by the performance and, as such, the performance has a self-reflective function where the performer as audience is affected by similar functions as the audience. Thirdly, the performer is in dialogue with the audience. The aim of a performer's presentation is to communicate something to the audience. The performance is "an act of translation," since the performer takes a script and introduces it in a new communicative form.[10] The audience responds to the performance. If successful, the audience responds in a desirable way. Sometime the dialogue is verbal but the audience can also respond through laughter, emotional reactions, or applause.[11]

In this paper, I will begin with considering the psalm as *script* which entails an analysis of its themes, sequence, and stylistics.[12] In the subsequent analysis of the *performer* and *audience* I will examine what functions these features have in a performance situation. There, I will examine the features of the text in regard to how the psalm portrays the performer/audience and how the stylistics aid the performer (i.e. features that facilitate oral performance) as well as the audience (i.e. features that facilitate aural reception). I will examine changes or ambiguity in speaker and addressee, focusing features, and their function. After the sections of *performer* and *audience* I will conclude with an analysis of the function of these features within the context of the psalm.

[8] Pelias and Stephenson Shaffer, *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts*, 17.
[9] Pelias and Stephenson Shaffer, *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts*, 17. Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 72–73; 240–42 also reflects on this process based on the notion of the performer in a double negative space. The person can be fully committed to the drama or ritual and is therefore not acting as themselves but according to the script and the contextual norms of the drama or ritual. However, the person cannot completely separate from themselves, therefore, the person is still not not themselves. The person is in role not being another, yet, the person cannot fully act as themselves and attempts to enter into another's state of mind, therefore the person is still not not being another. The notion of the double negative space demonstrates the complicated process of embodiment and self-reflection and reflexivity which occurs in a performance situation. When a performer embodies a text, character, or prayer the person they commit to act as another or represent a role for the audience and themselves. However, the script also impacts the performer who also reflects on their performance as part of the audience.
[10] Pelias and Stephenson Shaffer, *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts*, 20.
[11] As Kristin M. Langellier, 'A Phenomenological Approach to Audience', *Literature in Performance* 3, no. 2 (1983): 34 demonstrates, the presence of the audience completes the performance. And a performance "is always a form of action for."
[12] As accounted for above, the hermeneutical perspective undertaken here is that of the psalm as a script for performance. This is also the basis for the analysis of the performer and audience. In the analysis of the psalm as *script* the reader of the I-voice of the psalm will be referred to as *psalmist* and in the analysis under the heading *performer* I will refer to the I-voice as *performer.* This distinction serves to illustrate the difference between the textual analysis of the psalm as script and the investigation of how the features identified relate specifically to a performer.

Textual Analysis

Script

Psalm 3 is an is apology in defence of YHWH's intent to save the psalmist. The apology is driven by the statement posed by the enemies which also expresses the problem of the psalm,[13] whether YHWH will save the psalmist. The problem is established in the complaint section, which serves to set the scene for the prayer. There, the psalm establishes key words which serve to highlight the psalm's progression throughout. The psalm answers the statement of the enemies in three steps. 1) The declaration of trust expresses the psalmist's trust in YHWH's intention to save based on the reciprocal relationship between YHWH and the psalmist. This section contrasts the psalmist's trust with the statement of the enemies and, thus, portrays the psalmist as an example to follow in contrast to the enemies. 2) The petition asks YHWH to act in accordance with the trust of the psalmist. 3) In the third step, the concluding bicolon asserts that salvation is with YHWH and asks for his blessing over his people. These lines ultimately answer the question positively, YHWH will save and his people will be blessed. As such, Ps 3 is inherently dialogical and engages in dialogue with itself but also with YHWH and the human audience. In contrast to the speech to the divine and human audiences, the dispute within the psalm is a dialogue with two conflicting voices. However, the voice of the psalmist is evidently dominant and the enemies' speech function as a tool to demonstrate YHWH's faithfulness. Repetition of key words is an important feature and highlights the unity of the psalm and the contrast between the sections. The repetition stresses the progression from complaint, to trust, petition, and to the final expression of trust and benediction.

After this brief investigation into Psalm 3 as script, I will continue with the section of *performer* and *audience*.

Performer

Regarding the speaker, the psalm has a 1sg. voice throughout and there are no evident responses where a human or divine audience would speak. This suggests a single performer or a continuous communal reading. There are two lines of the psalm that contain ambiguity in regard to the speaker. These are the paratext and the enemy-quotation. The paratext connects performances of the psalm to a narrative context associated with king David. As such, it increases the psalm's narrative properties and enables a reading of the psalm through David's voice and identification

[13] Rolf A. Jacobson, *Many Are Saying: The Function of Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Psalter*, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (T & T Clark, 2004), 39; Rolf A. Jacobson, 'Psalm 3: The "Many" and the "One"', in *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans, 2014), 75.

with him.[14] The enemy-quotation provides the psalm with a dialogic complexity as it, even if read by the performer, creates a shift in perspective.[15]

Focusing Features

The psalm contains a movement regarding focus on the performer. It begins with a focus on the performer and their situation relating to the enemies and YHWH. Throughout the course of the psalm, the focus shifts onto YHWH and the human audience. Through vv. 3–7, the psalm has a consistent and distinct focus on the performer. This focus is set through repetition of 1sg. pronouns, imagery of the performer's body and person, and descriptions of actions performed by them. In v. 8, the focus begins to shift onto YHWH and his people, and in v. 9 the shift is completed and the 1sg. voice is taken over by a collective focus. Below, I will investigate features of the psalm which serve to set focus on the performer.

Repetition

The psalm uses various features to create focus on the performer, one such feature is repetition. This tendency is evident in the repetition of 1sg. pronouns which occur fourteen times and are at key points highlighted by phonetic repetition.[16] This repetition is contrasted by the repetition of words from the root רב which is used four times.[17] The contrast between the highlighted first person voice and the reference to the *many*, stress the imbalance between the two parties which, in turn, emphasises the vulnerability of the outnumbered performer. The vulnerable performer does not appear to respond to the aggression by raising an army; rather the invocation demonstrates that the performer's response to the enemies' hostility is to turn to YHWH. The words of the enemies

[14] Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, 'The Psalm Headings: A Canonical Relecture of the Psalms', in *The Biblical Canons*, ed. Jean-Marie Auwers and H.J de Jonge (Leuven University Press, 2003), 249–54 has identified two primary functions of paratexts that refer to specific incidents in David's life. (1) The paratexts can be read as elaboration on and interpretation of the David-narrative and (2) The paratexts can invite performer/audience to identify with king David. Gillmayr-Bucher describes these two functions as a dual process where the paratext turns the psalm into "a text about David." Subsequently, when a performer/audience identify with king David the psalm is brought into the context of the reader. Both these functions come into play in Ps 3. For some audiences, this process may be complicated by tensions between the tensions between Ps 3 and the narrative in 2 Sam 15–19, James D. Nogalski, 'Reading David in the Psalter: A Study in Liturgical Hermeneutics', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 23 (2001): 170–72.

[15] Jacobson, *Many Are Saying: The Function of Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Psalter*, 52–53.

[16] In the beginning of the psalm, the 1sg. pronoun is stressed through multiple occurrences and distinct phonetic repetition. In v. 2, the 1sg. possessive pronouns create a phonetic effect similar to an end-rhyme. As Scott B. Noegel, *'Wordplay' in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Ancient Near Eastern Monographs (Society of Biblical Literature, 2021), 286 describes, rhymes in the HB often include pronouns. Here, the phonetic effect highlight the performer's person and vulnerability. Further, in v. 4 and the beginning of v. 5, the 1sg. pronouns end four words. This repetition highlights the first person voice and connects the confidence provided by YHWH with the cry of the performer and, as such, the repetition serves to stress the reciprocity between YHWH's actions and the performer's actions expressed in the declaration of trust.

[17] Words from the root רב occur four times throughout the psalm. Three times are in the complaint in vv. 2─3 where the words refer to the adversaries. The last occurrence is the word רבבה (*many thousands*) in v. 7, which refer to the many people that surround the performer. As such, all four occurrences designate the multitude of the adversaries.

claim that this strategy will not be fruitful since there is no salvation for the performer in YHWH and, thus, the performer will be defeated.[18]

Personal Imagery

The psalm also uses references to the performer's body and person as a focusing feature. These references highlight that the performer is personally involved in the both the desperate situation and the solution. Firstly, the psalm uses personal imagery to designate the suffering to the performer. The psalm introduces the speech of the enemies as concerning the performer's soul (לנפשי). This designation describes the words as regarding the performer's very person and, as such, it connects the performer's person to the desperate situation and as object to the adversaries' aggression. Secondly, the psalm uses personal imagery to portray the performer as personally involved in YHWH's salvation. In the declaration of trust, the psalm uses references to the performer's person to highlight their reciprocal relationship with YHWH. In v. 4, the psalm uses the idiom of the performer's head being raised as an image for divine salvation. This idiom uses a physical image to illustrate that the performer is the recipient of YHWH's salvation and portrays YHWH's side of the reciprocal relationship – to act for the performer's victory.[19] In v. 5 the psalm uses personal imagery to illustrate the performer's part of the reciprocal relationship. There, the psalm personalises the performer's call on YHWH through the expression *[with] my voice to YHWH I cry*. The designation *with my voice* expresses the loudness and intensity of the cry,[20] and it specifies that the cry is made with the performer's voice. Accordingly, it is an example of personal involvement, where the action described is explicitly connected to the performer personally.[21] This references illustrates the performer's role in the reciprocal relationship; to call on YHWH and, thus, it draws the performer is personally into the solution of the situation and presents their actions and the performer's prayer as the starting point of YHWH's rescue.

The Centre of Attention

The psalm also sets focus on the performer through placing them in the centre of both the enemies' and YHWH's attention. The imagery of YHWH as a protective shield sets the focus not only on

[18] Peter C. Craigie and Marvin Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 2nd edition, 19 vols., Word Biblical Commentary (Thomas Nelson Inc, 2004), 73 states: 'God alone gives victory, but the psalmist (in the eyes of his enemies, at least) has been deserted by God; thus the enemies think that it is safe to attack him.'; John Goldingay, *Psalms, Vol. 1: Psalms 1-41*, Illustrated edition, ed. Tremper Longman III (Baker Academic, 2006), 110.

[19] As A. A. Anderson, *The New Century Bible Commentary, Vol. 1: Psalms 1-72* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), 73 demonstrates, this idiom may derive from the legal system. However, in this context the idiom demonstrates that YHWH is capable to reverse the performer's situation.

[20] Goldingay, *Psalms, Vol. 1*, 107.

[21] Ernst R. Wendland, *Finding and Translating the Oral-Aural Elements in Written Language: The Case of the New Testament Epistles* (Edwin Mellen, 2008), 25.

YHWH's actions, but also on the performer's body which is placed in the centre being physically protected from every side. The description of the ten thousand who surround the performer has a similar function as it both highlights the threatening presence of the enemies, and also centres on the performer who is physically surrounded and being threatened from every side. The visual imagery, thus, places the performer in the centre of both YHWH's protective shield and the enemies' threatening presence.

Description of Actions

Focus is also set on the performer through a description of a sequence of actions done by them in vv. 5–7. The portrayal serves to illustrate a reciprocal relationship between YHWH's and the performer's actions as well as the performer's trust. The lines use a sequence of connected actions to portray a reciprocal relationship between YHWH and the performer (for example the performer calls and YHWH answers).[22] This sequence portrays YHWH as responding to the performer's prayers and actions and, through that, the psalm argues that the current prayer will be successful.[23] The first and last actions (to call on YHWH and not to fear, i.e. to trust YHWH) are common in the Psalms. In contrast, v. 6 is different in character as it centres on everyday actions (sleeping and waking) which are not commonly portrayed in the Psalms but also serve to illustrate trust.[24] Besides depicting a positive relationship between YHWH and the performer, the sequence of actions done by the performer also serves to illustrate the performer's trust. Accordingly, the performer is used as an example of faith and portrayed as an ideal believer who personifies trust in YHWH through doing everyday actions under extreme circumstances.[25]

From the petition section, the psalm begins a change in focus from the performer and onto YHWH. The petition section mirrors the declaration of trust through describing a sequence of actions. However, in the petition section, it is not the performer who is acting, but rather YHWH who is acting for the performer's salvation.[26] In the final line, the change in focus is completed.

[22] This sequence of actions is a consequential progression Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, Revised Edition (Basic Books, 2011), 32; 73 refers to as narrativity. He describes this narrative tendency within biblical Hebrew poetry as "a consequentiality of images and ideas that is incipiently narrative and may include brief sequences of explicit narrative development." He further writes: "It is far more common to find episodic narrativity rather than actual narrative in biblical verse." Here, the episodic narrativity centres on the performer's actions of faith and in trust in YHWH.

[23] The reciprocity is also highlighted through the poetic form. Most distinctively, the corresponding introductions to vv. 4 and 6; *but you* and a stressed I.

[24] The verse contains a consequential progression as the performer first lays down, then sleeps, and then wakes up. These actions are framed by lines connected to prayer and trust which frame the actions in a psalmic context.

[25] As Jacobson, 'Psalm 3: The "Many" and the "One"', 75–76 identifies, sleeping under threat is an act of trust, and, as such, the psalm uses ordinary actions to portray faith. Susan Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1-72*, ed. John Sawyer et al., II, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries (John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 50 demonstrates that the reference to the psalmist waking up has led both Jewish and Christian monastic traditions to use the psalm in morning worship.

[26] This section mirrors the previous description of the performer's actions, and is also an example of the narrativity identified by Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 32; 73. Similarly to the use of the corresponding pronouns mentioned above (*but you* and a stressed I in vv. 4 and 6) the descriptions of actions mirror each other and, thus, serve to highlight the reciprocal relationship between YHWH and the performer.

There, the performer is absent and the focus is completely on YHWH and the human audience – who is the receiver of YHWH's blessing.

Audience

Regarding addressee, the psalm addresses both YHWH and a human audience concomitantly and without any apparent tension between the two. As such, the psalm expects the presence of a human audience. This expectation is demonstrated in several ways. The first part of the paratext connects the psalm to singing which often is a communal activity and the three occurrences of *selah* suggest a liturgical or communal, musical context. Further, the blessing in the last line indicates a human audience.[27] Most significantly, the psalm engages the performer in dialogue with the human audience.[28] The address to the human audience does not constitute an explicit address, but the shift in addressee is visible through the psalm speaking of YHWH in the third person.[29] Notably, the human audience is spoken to in instances where the performer declares trust in YHWH whereas YHWH is addressed in sections which focus on petitions for change. This stylistic device suggests that the psalm has a function to create trust in a human audience and to make YHWH act (see below).

Aside from the shifts in direct address, both YHWH and the human audience overhear parts of the psalm where they are not directly addressed. In these sections, the human/divine audience is expected to be present and listen but is not directly spoken to. The psalm's expectation of both a divine and human audience makes the aspect of overhearing crucial in analysis of the features of the psalm that have a function in relation to listeners. In short, the reoccurring addresses to both a human and divine audience assume that all parties are present throughout the prayer. If the human audience were not present from the beginning of the psalm where YHWH is addressed, they would not have a context for the prayer and would not be able to understand the progression. Likewise, if YHWH stopped listening for parts of the prayer where he is spoken of in third person, the prayers progression and context would not be understandable. Thus, since the psalm expects all parties to be present throughout even sections where YHWH/the human audience are spoken to have a function in relation to the other party.

[27] Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, XIV, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature (Eerdmans, 1988), 52.
[28] The human audience is explicitly addressed in v 5─7 and v 9a.
[29] This is different from Ps 6, which I also analyse as part of my doctoral project. There, the human audience (in this case the adversaries) are spoken to directly in a command for them to turn away.

Interactive Discourse

The psalm is framed by interactive discourse, i.e. discourse where the performer engages in direct communication with the audience.[30] This discourse is solely directed toward YHWH and includes the invocation which establishes communication with YHWH and the imperatives which request that YHWH changes the performer's situation. The use of interactive discourse in communication with YHWH, indicate that the psalm's aim in relation to YHWH is to make him act. This notion is supported by the fact that the complaint and petition sections are the only sections of the psalm where only YHWH is directly addressed. The complaint section has a function to draw YHWH into the performer's situation and the petition section mobilises YHWH for action within this situation.

Well-Known Features

The psalm also contains stylistic features and language which is common in other texts in the psalms and the HB and, thus, may be known to and recognised by a human audience. Such features assist audiences in listening and connects performances to the larger tradition.[31]

The invocation is a common feature in complaint psalms and, together with the solemn tone, the feature communicates to the human audience that the performer is complaining.[32] Accordingly, it is a well-known feature which effectively communicates genre and informs the audience what to expect in the continued performance. As described above, the initial invocation places the entire complaint section in direct communication to YHWH. However, the invocation and complaint also have functions in relation to the human audience. The complaint sets the scene for the prayer and pulls the listeners in to the situation. This is necessary for the human audience who without hearing the complaint would not understand the situation at hand and what type of prayer the performer is conducting. Thus, the human audience is overhearing the complaint section of the prayer which is directly addressed to the divine audience and implicitly spoken to the human audience. Further, the invocation marks the addressee for the human listeners and sets the entire psalm in the context of prayer. The invocation together with the solemn tone also has a genre marking-function and communicates to the human audience that the performer is complaining. Accordingly, it is a well-known feature that communicates genre to an audience and informs them what to expect in the continued performance.[33]

[30] Wendland, *Finding and Translating the Oral-Aural Elements in Written Language*, 25.
[31] Following Wendland, *Finding and Translating the Oral-Aural Elements in Written Language*, 29–30, I refer to such references as well-known features.
[32] As argued above (see analysis of Psalm 13).
[33] Wendland, *Finding and Translating the Oral-Aural Elements in Written Language*, 30 refers to this as a genre marking-form. He defines genre marking-forms as well-known words or phrases that effectively communicate genre to an audience. An English example would be "once upon a time" to introduce a fairy tale. If a text is introduced in that way it is expected by listeners that the

The declaration of trust is expressed to both the human and divine audiences and increases the use of common features.[34] The section begins with a *but you* (ואתה). As Gunkel demonstrates, several psalms use *but you* to introduce structural changes and specifically shifts to a declaration of trust.[35] This insight indicates that the words are a well-known feature that creates contrast and after which a human audience would expect a structural shift.

The well-known features continue in the epithets ascribed to YHWH. Through the images of the *shield* and YHWH *raising* the performer's *head*, the declaration of trust portrays YHWH's relationship to the performer as leading to the performer's victory. These images are used in similar ways in other places in the HB and may be considered well-known features that effectively communicate to the audience that YHWH will bring the performer victory and connect the current situation to other known stories and prayers.[36] The well-known imagery aids the audience in visualisation, as well as, concretises and personalises the victory provided by YHWH.

In the petition section the requests for YHWH to *rise* (קומה) and *save* (הושיעני אלהי). are common phrases with connotations of battle and warfare.[37] As such, the phrase connects the prayer to other prayers and stories where the phrase occurs. For the human audience, this would connect the current prayer and situation with the larger story of YHWH's salvific actions toward Israel. Further, the request for YHWH to rise also introduces a section of petition on multiple occasions.[38] Thus, it effectively communicates to a human audience that the psalm has shifted into a section of petition.

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text will be a fairy tale. Similarly here, a audience familiar with the prayers of the Psalms can be assumed to understand that an initial invocation followed by a complaint in a solemn tone is a prayer of complaint.

[34] The first bicolon is communicated to YHWH and the following lines are spoken to the human audience. In the first bicolon before the break by the *selah* (v. 5) YHWH is spoken of in the third person, and accordingly, the line is spoken to the human audience. V. 6 continues to refer to YHWH in the third person, thus, addressing the human audience. It is unclear who is the addressee of v. 7. The address to the human audience in v. 6 can indicate that the address to the human audience continues in v. 7, however, the reoccurring switches in addressee makes this uncertain. Likely, this ambiguity serves to address both the human and divine audience concomitantly.

[35] Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 14 mentions Pss 22:4, 71:7, 142:4. I would like to add 86:15 and 102:13 where the words also introduces a section of declaration of trust. The words also function more broadly as a structural delineator and introduces other kinds of sections. In Pss 22:20, 41:11 the words introduce a section of petition. In 109:21 and Ps 89:39 they introduce a section of complaint. and in Ps 55:24 it introduces a section of expression of faith.

[36] In the Psalms the imagery of the shield occurs in Pss 7:10, 18:2, 31, 36, 28:7, 33:20, 59:12, 84:12, 115:9, 19, 11, 119:14, 144:2. It is also stated that the shields of the earth belong to YHWH in Pss 47:9 and 89:18. The imagery also occurs in Gen 15:1; Deut 33:29; 2 Sam 22:3, 31; Prov 2:7, 30:5. The imagery of the raising of the head occurs in Ps 27:6 and 110:7. Note that the imagery of shield is used far more widely than the imagery of YHWH raising someone's head.

[37] The word *rise* (קומה) is used frequently in other parts of the HB. As Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 74 describes, Numbers 10:35—36 describes that Moses said "Rise YHWH" (qumah YHWH) when the ark left to lead the Israelites into war. Further, 2 Chronicles 6:41 uses the word in the inauguration of the temple when YHWH's presence is called into the sanctuary. The extensive use of the term, both within and outside the Psalms, suggests that it is a well-known phrase which the human audience would recognise as a plea for YHWH to save. The word *qumah* is also commonly used in reference to YHWH or others rising to go to war as well as YHWH raising up saviours, and thus has connotations connected to battle and rescue. For example, in Josh 7:13, 8:1, 8:7; Judg 2:16, 2:18, 3:9, 3:15, 4:9, 14, 7:9; Jer 29:15. Regarding the call for YHWH to *save* (הושיעני אלהי) the words occurs in pleas for help in Pss 6:5, 7:2, 12:2, 20:10, 22:22, 28:9, 31:3, 17, 54:3, 59:3, 60:7, 69:1, 71:2, 80:4, 8, 20, 86:2, 16, 106:47, 108:7, 109:26, 118:25, 119:94 and 146. The words also occur in descriptive passages that describe YHWH's salvation in, for example, Pss 18:4, 28, 20:7, 34:7, 19, 36:7. In the larger context of the HB the word occurs in relation to YHWH's actions in, for example, Ex 14:30; Num 10:9; Deut 20:4, 33:29; Judg 2:16, 18.

[38] The phrase is used to introduce a section of petition in Pss 7:7, 9:20, 10:12 and in 17:13. In Ps 132:8 the word is used in connection to the ark, thus, very close to the story in Numbers 10:35-36. The word also occurs several other times in the psalms in prayers for

In summary, the well-known features of the psalm have a communicative function to help the audience understand the type of prayer and follow the progression of the prayer. The references also connect the prayer to a larger tradition which aids the audience in relating to the prayer.

Graphic Imagery

After the petition section's initial call on YHWH, the section continues to describe YHWH's defeat of adversaries in graphic, visual descriptions of violence. The descriptions continue the battle imagery from the previous bicolon and concretises the defeat of the enemies through aiding the human audience in visualising it. The graphic imagery invokes strong emotions, such as shock and horror, in the audience and through that aids in visualisation and memorisation. The imagery of YHWH hitting the enemies on the cheek and crushing their teeth has connotations of humiliation, defeat, and silencing.

Both acts of violence occur in other parts of the Psalms and the HB, with somewhat different connotations. The portrayal of YHWH hitting the enemies on their cheek has distinct connotations of humiliation and insult.[39] Thus, YHWH's victory is described as humiliating for the performer's adversaries. Further, teeth are used as an image for threat and danger in the psalms and the broader context of the HB.[40] In extension, to break or crush someone's teeth expresses defeat of something dangerous.[41] Accordingly, the imagery of YHWH breaking the enemies' teeth communicates to an audience that the enemies are dangerous and that YHWH will destroy the threat. Further, as Craigie identifies, the image of crushing someone's teeth can also be a way to symbolically illustrate their silencing.[42] I consider this symbolic meaning likely in this psalm, since one of the psalm's main aims is to counterargue a statement posed by the enemies. To have God silence the enemies through crushing their teeth is a visual way to illustrate the ultimate reproach of their statement. As such, the description of YHWH crushing the enemies' jaw and teeth, illustrates YHWH's capability to ultimately defeat and silence the adversaries whose speech will be proven false in a humiliating and devastating manner.

YHWH to intervene, see Pss 35:2, 41:11, 44:27, 68:2, 74:22, 82:8, 119:28 and 38. The word also occurs in descriptions of YHWH's salvific activity in Pss 40:3, 76:10, 102:14 and 107:29.

[39] This is evident in the use of the word in Isa 50:6 and Lam 3:30. The aspect of humiliation is less explicitly present in 1 Kings 22:24; Mika 5:1; Job 16:10; 2 Chron 18:23. This is also argued by Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 75 who identifies that the descriptions of violence are symbolic as a strike on the cheek was considered highly insulting. In some passages the jaw/cheek is also used to illustrate taking power over someone. For example, Isa 30:28; Eze 29:4; Job 41.

[40] Teeth are used as a designator of dangerous people in Ps 57:5; Deut 31:24; Joel 1.6; Amos 4:6; Job 41:6; Prov 30:14; Dan 7:5, 7, 19. Teeth are also connected to the activity of the evil in Pss 35:16, 37:12, 11:10; Lam 2:16. In Ps 124:6 the psalmist thanks God for not giving them as prey to "their teeth."

[41] See Ps 58:7, 112:10; Job 4:10; 29:7. The imagery is also used in connection to divine judgment in Job 16:9; 19:20; Lam 3:16.

[42] Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 75.

The violent description stretches over two cola that are highly stylised and use both a chiastic structure and an arranged phonetic repetition to create balance.[43] The distinct poetic structure counterbalances the violent content through arranging it in a balanced and organised line,[44] thus, making the graphic violent imagery more accessible for listeners.

After this analysis of features that relate to the performer and audience, I will analyse the combined function of these features.

Concluding Analysis: The Psalms Function for the Performer and Audience

I will argue, that the psalm has a function to address doubt and encourage trust in the middle of turmoil for both the performer and the human audience whereas the function in relation to the divine audience is to make YHWH act. I will argue that the psalm's performative features relate to four groups; (1) the performer, (2) the divine audience, and the human audience consisting of both (3) the believing congregation and (4) the adversaries.[45] In relation to all groups except YHWH, the psalm aims to create trust through addressing doubt and encouraging trust in the middle of turmoil. The psalm achieves this through addressing doubt and portraying trust as an ideal. Further, the psalm warns against disbelief through the rebuke of the adversaries. This rebuke also encourages trust through presenting a counterimage of what the congregation should not do and offering an opportunity to change once behaviour. Accordingly, the psalm invites individuals to move from disbelief to trust through assuming that disbelief occurs also within the congregation of believers. Relating to YHWH, I will argue that the psalm has a function to mobilise YHWH into action. This aim is pursued through prayers of complaint and petition supported by the portrayal of the performer as an ideal believer and the public declaration of YHWH's capacity to save.

The psalm uses the adversaries, or *the many*, to address doubt from within the human audience, including the performer. This function is evident both in the role of the enemy-quotation and in the role of *the many*. Beginning with the enemy-quotation, the statement is phrased in a way which suggests a general belief in YHWH's power to save but doubts YHWH's inclination to save

[43] The line has a distinct phonetic repetition of sound, where both lines contain three repetitions of a sound, which increases the sense of order and also the intensity. Colon 16 contains three repetitions of /k/ and colon 17 contains three repetitions of /sh/. There is also a repetition of /i/ in both lines which stresses the connection between the lines of the bicolon.
[44] Goldingay, *Psalms, Vol. 1*, 113–14.
[45] Derek W. Suderman, 'The Cost of Losing Lament for the Community of Faith: On Brueggemann, Ecclesiology, and the Social Audience of Prayer', *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (2012): 204–6 has also highlighted that the address to humans (social address in Sudermans terminology) in individual complaint psalms relate to both the congregation of believers and the adversaries. As Suderman, 'The Cost of Losing Lament for the Community of Faith: On Brueggemann, Ecclesiology, and the Social Audience of Prayer', 214 further states, the acknowledgment of several roles in the psalm and its address to human listeners acknowledges a broader option for identification within the human audience. A participant cannot only identify with the 1sg. voice of the performer, rather an individual who feels like the performer's adversaries and doubt YHWH's inclination to save can identify with that role in the prayer, whereas a participant instantly aligns with the performer and trust that YHWH will save can identify with the portrayer of the ideal believer.

the performer.[46] Such a statement could be said from within the congregation, but likely not from an outsider who would question YHWH's ability all together. The psalm then proceeds to challenge this statement and, thus, it disputes speech which could be said from within the audience of believers – including from the performer themselves. The progression demonstrates that the psalm aims to argue that YHWH is inclined to save and the phrasing determines that it is not an enemy outside the congregation that is to be convinced, rather, it is the congregation – including the performer. Thus, the quotation demonstrates a connection between the threatening *many* and the human audience.

This connection is further demonstrated by the semantic repetition of *people* (עם) regarding both the threat (v. 7) and YHWH's people (v. 9). The *people* goes from being a threat to being declared the recipient of the requested divine providence. In the final benediction, the previously dominating 1sg. voice of the performer is absent and the *people* have taken its place. This repetition illustrates an inclusion of the once doubting in the divine providence. To take it even further, it is necessary to be part of this people to receive YHWH's providence. This sudden focus on inclusion in a collective, provides the psalm with a function to strengthen and form group identity, which is common in religious texts and rituals.[47] This function relates both to the audience and the performer as audience.

The psalm also portrays the ultimate consequences of doubt – humiliating destruction. In v. 8, the psalm uses graphic imagery supported by a balanced poetic arrangement to describe YHWH's ultimate and humiliating victory over the adversaries. This portrayal has several functions. For the performer as audience, the depiction serves to create trust that YHWH will act on the performer's behalf and the opposition will be defeated. In relation to the human audience, the portrayal of YHWH's ability to be victorious encourages trust in YHWH. Further, the portrayal of the defeated adversaries also serves as a warning of the impending defeat the doubting audience will suffer if they continue their evil ways. This warning cautions the audience to remain into or enter into trust in YHWH through describing the consequences of disbelief. Both these functions relate to both the performer as audience and the believers and doubters within the human audience. However, the warning also relates specifically to the human audience as it urges the congregation to align with the performer.[48] The description of YHWH's victory illustrates the silencing of the enemies and, thus, demonstrates the ultimate reproach of their speech in v. 3. Accordingly, the

[46] Jacobson, *Many Are Saying: The Function of Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Psalter*, 39.
[47] Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 46–52.
[48] In dialogue with Brueggemann, Suderman, 'The Cost of Losing Lament for the Community of Faith: On Brueggemann, Ecclesiology, and the Social Audience of Prayer', 213 identifies one of the social aspect of complaint psalms as demanding that the social audience (here human audience) takes the cause of the petitioner seriously.

imagery compels the congregation to side with the performer as to not face destruction.[49] As argued above, the psalm does not make a distinct delimitation between the adversaries and the trusting congregation. Rather, the connection between these two groups widen the address to engage both the once doubting and trusting. Thus, the portrayal of YHWH's power urges the doubting audience to join the congregation in trusting YHWH as well as encourages the trusting audience to remain in trust. Further, the warning of impending defeat implores the doubting audience to change their ways and also warns the trusting audience not to follow in the ways of the doubters.

In relation to the divine audience, the descriptions of YHWH's acts of salvation function as a persuasive tool. By stating that YHWH is capable of victory, the performer declares YHWH's ability in front of an audience. The public declaration of YHWH's ability, encourages YHWH to act and prove that he is, in fact, capable and worthy of the congregation's trust. Further, the declaration asserts the performer's trust in YHWH and, thus, YHWH should act on behalf of the trusting performer. The persuasive function is reinforced by the intensification of the epithets related to the enemies which move from the ambiguous *many* to being the performer's *enemies* (איבי) and the *wicked* (רשעים). The reference to the adversaries as wicked introduces a moral component into their behaviour which provides YHWH with further reason to act to defeat them.[50]

Besides addressing doubt, the psalm also portrays its opposite – trust – as an ideal which the performer represents and which is to be followed. In the declaration of trust, the performer is portrayed as trusting upon YHWH's faithfulness in the midst of a threat. This portrayal is distinct vv. 5–7, where the psalm uses a description of actions done by the performer as a means to depict a positive and reciprocal relationship between YHWH's actions and the performer's actions; When the performer calls, YHWH answers.[51] The emphasis on the performer's vulnerability as alone and outnumbered stresses the desperation within which the performer trusts and aids the portrayal of the performer as an ideal for trust.[52]

The actions described are both religiously coded, common actions in the Psalms (to call on YHWH and not to fear, i.e. to trust YHWH) and everyday actions (sleeping and waking) which both serve to illustrate the performer's trust. Here, the psalm uses the performer as an

[49] As Suderman, 'The Cost of Losing Lament for the Community of Faith: On Brueggemann, Ecclesiology, and the Social Audience of Prayer', 207 demonstrates, there is an aspect of threat imbedded in this function. He writes: "If the lament has been heard and the psalmist's description of the Lord is seen as accurate, the adversaries have been given notice to stop tormenting the speaker or face the consequences." Ps 3's call for the congregation to side with the performer, is an example of the individual complaint psalms' exhortation for the human audience to act on behalf of the performer. Suderman, 'The Cost of Losing Lament for the Community of Faith: On Brueggemann, Ecclesiology, and the Social Audience of Prayer', 215 identifies this as one of the functions of the address to humans in individual complaint psalms. He writes: "In addition to calling on God to 'change things' and waiting for divine initiative, lament may prompt a response by its audience–be it divine, human, or both."

[50] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, trans. Hilton C Oswald, A Continental Commentary (Fortress, 1993), 141 describes the reference to the adversaries as wicked as a description of their character as godless and wicked.

[51] The reciprocity is highlighted through the corresponding introductions to vv. 4 and 6; *but you* and a stressed I.

[52] As previously mentioned, repetitions of first singular pronouns and the repeated reference to the adversaries as "the many" highlight the performer's vulnerability.

example of faith and portrays them as an ideal believer who personifies trust in YHWH through doing everyday actions under extreme circumstances. This portrayal has several functions. Firstly, for the performer as audience, it assists the performer to remain in or enter into trust. When the performer embodies the ideal of trust in front of an audience, the psalm encourages the performer to remain in or enter into trust and the use of everyday actions to exemplify trust further confirms for the performer that they do trust. I.e. by affirming that everyday actions are in actuality done based on trust and reliance in YHWH, the performer (who most likely sleeps, and wakes up) is strengthened in trust. The psalm's portrayal of a positive relationship between YHWH and the performer and the reciprocal relationship it establishes also has a function to increase the performer's trust that the current prayer will be successful. The psalm's references to the performer's body and person aids the process of embodiment through pulling the performer personally into the prayer. Accordingly, these references aid the performer in remaining in or entering into trust through connecting the descriptions of trust to them personally.

Secondly, the declaration encourages the human audience to remain in or enter into trust in YHWH. This function is accomplished through both the portrayal of YHWH and that of the performer. YHWH is portrayed as present even in difficult situations, thus, he is also present in their struggles. The psalm also uses familiar references to aid the human audience in trusting YHWH. Many of the well-known features within the psalm occur in the portrayal of the reciprocal relationship between the performer and YHWH and in the petitions for YHWH to act. Thus, the psalm uses familiar references and imagery to communicate to the human audience that YHWH is trustworthy and to aid them in visualisation of YHWH's salvation. These references connect the current performance to a larger tradition and uses visualisation of salvation to encourage the audience to trust.

Further, the psalm uses the portrayal of the performer to describe every day actions as acts of faith. This feature connects the lives of the human audience to the faith of the performer and encourages trust in YHWH. The human audience too lays down, sleeps, and wakes up which must mean that YHWH sustains them as well. In a sense, the imagery suggests that they already live in trust and dependence on YHWH. Further, the performer is presented as the ideal believer who remains in trust even in difficulties, and as such the performer models an example for the audience to follow. If the psalm is read through the voice of king David, the portrayal of the performer as an ideal believer can relate to king David. For an audience who has a positive image of king David, the notion of him singing the psalm can reinforce the portrayal of the performer as an ideal to follow. However, for an audience who is critical of David's actions in the narrative of him and Absalom, David can also represent a contrast to the portrayal of the performer as an ideal believer.

Thirdly, the declaration of trust has a function in urging the divine audience to act.[53] It affirms that the performer is faithful and relies on YHWH which is a reason for YHWH to intervene on their behalf. This function is consistent with the psalm's main discourse in relation to YHWH which aims to make YHWH act. This aim is evident in the psalm's extensive interactive discourse directed toward YHWH. The interactive discourse draws YHWH into the situation (in the complaint) and then aims to move him into action (in the petition and final prayer for blessing). Despite the psalm's general tendency to mix speech to the divine and human audience, YHWH is also the only addressee in sections which focus on generating a change. This function aligns with the central issue of the psalm – whether or not YHWH will act on behalf of the performer through invoking him to disprove the performer's opponents.

The psalm portrays the faithfulness of the performer as trust within turmoil. This notion is demonstrated by the psalm's progression and the descriptions of the trust. Regarding the progression, the trust and declaratory descriptions of YHWH's victorious role in the performer's life come at the beginning of the psalm before the petition as a response to the activity and speech of the *many*. The placement of the declaration of trust before the section of petition demonstrates that it is expressed while the performer is still in the midst of difficulty and no oracle of salvation has been pronounced. If the difficulties had passed or if an oracle had been pronounced before the declaration of trust, there would have been no need for the petition section. As such, the declaratory statements which describe YHWH's trustworthiness are stated within the middle of crisis. Further, v. 7 explicitly describes the performer as not fearing even when surrounded by thousands of enemies. Accordingly, the psalm encourages the human audience and the performer as audience to remain in trust in the middle of suffering and threat. The psalm achieves this through juxtaposing threat and trust and repetition of words and sounds which highlight the performer's vulnerability for the listening audience.

In summary, in relation to the performer and the human audience, the psalm has a function to create trust through addressing doubt and encouraging trust in the middle of turmoil. In the address to the human audience, the psalm assumes a connection between the adversaries and the believing congregation. This connection leads the psalm's address to the human audience to include both speech to the believing congregation and the doubting adversaries. In relation to YHWH, the psalm aims to make YHWH act through asking for help while portraying the performer as an ideal believer and publicly declaring YHWH's power to save.

[53] Goldingay, *Psalms, Vol. 1*, 112 identifies the first two functions in relation to the performer and YHWH.

Conclusion and Summary

In the beginning of this paper I asked the questions: 1) What features in Psalm 3 are actualised in an oral performance situation, and 2) In what way can a performance critical analysis benefit the study of the psalms? Throughout this paper, I have aimed to answer the questions by applying performance criticism to Psalm 3 and investigating the psalm from the three perspectives of *script*, *performer,* and *audience.*

My conclusion is that Psalm 3 is an inherently dialogical psalm which engages in dialogue with YHWH, the human audience, and itself. The psalm is an apology in defence of YHWH's intention to aid the performer. The psalm has a function to address doubt and encourage trust in the middle of turmoil for both the performer and the human audience. The psalm addresses doubt through the enemy-quotation and the connection between the adversaries and the congregation declares the inclusion of the once doubting in YHWH's blessing. The psalm exemplifies trust through portraying the performer as an ideal believer. This portrayal serves to create trust in both the performer as audience and the audience. In relation to YHWH, the psalm aims to make him act through complaint and pleas for help. The portrayal of the performer as an ideal believer aims to present the performer as trusting believer who YHWH should act on behalf of. Further, the public declaration of YHWH's power, aims to encourage YHWH to act and prove that he is worthy of the congregation's trust.

In my view, a performance critical analysis provides many benefits in the study of the psalms. Such an analysis takes the texts' dialogical nature into account and provides insights into the texts' dialogical characteristics and ambiguity. The focus on the performer and the audience, allows for examination of the *function* of poetic and other textual features and highlights the importance of, for example, sound, imagery, and references. Through that, the analysis highlights the formative aspects of the texts.

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OTSEM CONFERENCE **By Alex-David Baldi** *Ph.D. Candidate*
2025, Copenhagen **Department of Theology and Religious Studies, King's College London**

Project Summary

Title: A Critical and Comparative Study of Death Penalty Laws in the Pentateuch

Short Summary
My Ph.D. project investigates the origins of the death penalty laws contained in the biblical codes of the Pentateuch (the Covenant Code, Holiness Code and related priestly legislation, and the Deuteronomic Code). Specifically, it seeks to understand why certain crimes were chosen to be punished via capital punishment instead of others, as well as analysing if an overall philosophy of capital punishment can be constructed based on the crimes selected and punishments meted. My methodology partly adopts a comparative approach in order to ascertain if there are any aspects to capital punishment in the biblical codes that are distinctive to themselves. To that end, the project is divided in two parts. In the first part, research and analysis is carried out separately and critically on capital punishment in other civilisations of the ancient world. Findings are then compared to capital punishment in the Pentateuch to determine similarities and differences, with the goal of identifying any features of biblical capital punishment that are peculiar to the Pentateuch when compared to other ancient civilisations. In the second part, the features that have been identified in the first part will be researched further to understand their origins, and will be analysed in the cultural, historical and religious context of the Old Testament, to try to understand the overall reasons why the present death penalty laws in the Pentateuch were chosen.

Structure of Dissertation

My Ph.D. dissertation is structured as follows (subject to changes as work is in progress)

I.
Introduction, purpose of study and methodology

II.
Review of death penalty laws in the Pentateuch. Division of laws between each biblical collection. Preliminary analysis on the emphases placed on particular types of crimes in each legal collection. Preliminary analysis of similarities and differences between capital crimes in each legal collection.

III.
Comparative analysis between capital punishment in other civilisations of the ancient world and capital punishment in the biblical codes. Research to be carried out separately and critically on how capital punishment was administered in each separate civilisation. This is being done using primary written and archaeological evidence where available, and

secondary evidence in the form of studies on capital punishment and ancient law by relevant scholars for each civilisation.

- **A.** Research on Achaemenid Persia, already carried out. After a presentation of which crimes were marked for capital punishment by the Achaemenid rulers, analysis focuses on the influence of Zoroastrian beliefs upon the choice of crimes deserving capital punishment, and on how Achaemenid rulers used Zoroastrianism to support their political power. A comparison is then made between Persia and the bible on the use of capital punishment in the context of religion: in Persia, religion was placed in the service of the state, while in the biblical codes the state is placed in the service of religion. (**THIS SECTION IS SUMMARIZED IN MY OTSEM 2025 PAPER AND PRESENTATION)**
- **B.** Research on Classical Greece, in progress. Due to the disparate nature of capital punishment instances in ancient Greece, where laws were polis-based, research is focused only on capital punishment for murder in Athens. Preliminary research is showing that the primary purpose of the laws regulating murder in Athens was the preservation of civic peace against private revenge between families affected by murder and its punishments, therefore exile was often preferred to capital punishment. A comparison would then be made between the primary purpose of murder laws in Athens—keeping the civic peace—and murder regulations in the biblical codes, where capital punishment was mandated based on religious convictions (reinforcing the results of the comparison with Persia).
- **C.** Research on Egypt, already carried out. After a presentation of which crimes were marked for capital punishment throughout Egyptian history, analysis will focus on which types of crimes were marked more frequently through different eras. My research shows that capital punishment was most frequently applied for offences against funerary cults and funerary sites. A comparison is then made with biblical capital punishment where, conversely, the single crime receiving the most attention is murder. I propose that in Egypt crimes affecting the afterlife were considered the most serious, while in the biblical codes crimes affecting the physical life are considered the most serious, and this difference might be due to the two civilisations' different views of the afterlife.
- **D.** Research on Mesopotamia. Not carried out yet.

IV.

Features identified as distinctive to the application of capital punishment in the biblical codes will be further explored to understand how they influenced the choice of particular crimes to be sanctioned for death. This preliminarily includes: the way that religious and theological reasons determined the choice of crimes; and a preoccupation with the preservation of physical life, including legitimate procreation to further the inheritance of physical life. More features and approaches to research and analysis, comparative or otherwise, will be adopted as research continues.

V. Conclusion

As appropriate.

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Religion and the State: Who Serves Who? The outcome of a comparative analysis between capital punishment in Achaemenid Persia and capital punishment in the biblical law codes

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I. Introduction

My Ph.D. project seeks to understand the reasons why certain crimes were chosen to be punished with capital punishment over others in the biblical law codes. To that end, I have chosen to adopt a comparative method in the first part of my study to determine which features, if any, of capital punishment are peculiar to the biblical codes when compared and contrasted to capital punishment practices in other civilisations of the ancient world. Although I am conscious that the comparative method in biblical studies has its pitfalls, especially when it comes to comparing to each other features that are individually peculiar to themselves when out of their context, I believe that such approach can be valuable when applied in particular ways. In this study, I have opted to research and analyse capital punishment in separate cultures individually and critically (in Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia and Greece), and then compare each individual finding for each culture to capital punishment as proposed in the biblical codes, in order to determine similarities and, most of all, differences. Any features that have been discovered to be particular to capital punishment in the biblical law codes will then be researched further in the second part of my study for causes and influences. In this paper I will present the main points of my research concerning capital punishment in Persia, and the outcome of my comparative analysis with the capital punishment laws in the biblical law codes.

II. Capital Punishment in Achaemenid Persia

Sources

My research on capital punishment in Persia has been based on a mixture of Persian primary and Greek secondary sources. It is simply not possible to reconstruct Persian law or history from direct Persian sources due to the scarcity of material. This is due to the

perishability of sources[1] but also by what seemed to have been a cultural aversion to writing in Persian society, [2] so that primary Persian sources are limited. The few existing ones relevant to my study consist in Darius' testament inscriptions at Behistun and Naqsh-I Rustam, and a few others left on the walls of imperial palaces at Persepolis and Susa. [3] Almost all information regarding capital punishment, however, is found in Greek secondary sources, i.e. accounts of Greek history and society that were written contemporaneously with the Achaemenid Empire. There is, of course, a danger in trusting these sources because such accounts of Persia were written from the Greek perspective, often with an anti-Persian slant, however such mistrust should be qualified. Slant is not the same thing as fabrication. In the words of Achaemenid historian Pierre Briant, we must distinguish between "Greek interpretation coating from the Achaemenid nuggets of information" embedded in Greek accounts.[4] Once cleaned of polemical and stereotypical distortions, Greek sources contain continuities regarding Achaemenid monarchic ideology and government,[5] most of which correlate with the limited information contained in primary Achaemenid sources. The most valuable of Greek sources, and the one most relevant to my study, is Herodotus. *The Histories* recounts instances of capital punishment meted by the Achaemenid kings as well as general information on the Persian philosophy of capital punishment. It is assumed that Herodotus gathered this information from Persian oral sources—the main mode of information transmission in the Achaemenid empire due to their aversion to writing[6]—and in some cases even from written sources which match almost exactly their equivalent Persian source. To be sure, information in Herodotus should not be preferred over primary Achaemenid evidence where there are contradictions,[7] but *The Histories* can be used as the main strand to weave a picture of what the justice system and capital punishment were like in Achaemenid Persia. Other Greek sources, mostly Xenophon and Diodorus Siculus, are used in the study to support the main ideas proposed by Herodotus.

Achaemenid politics and the system of justice

The political system of the Achaemenid empire was heavily centralised upon the person of the king. Although not considered divine as in Egypt, his authority upon the state was total, and he stood as the highest political and legal authority in the empire, embodying the figure of a judge-king.[8] The overall justice system, however, was highly localised, with almost all everyday legal judgments dealt with by provincial authorities who based their judgements on local law. This contradiction is based on the fact that the Achaemenids strove to keep intact local laws and traditions when conquering foreign lands. It facilitated an easy takeover of existing kingdoms by maintaining social stability in conquered areas, and enabled subsequent easy imperial control by placing Achaemenid officials in locally-

[1] Holtz, "Judges of the King" p.482
[2] Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p.50
[3] Harrington, "Persian Law"
[4] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, p.256
[5] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, p.762
[6] We must also remember that orality was not an inferior mode of information transmission in the ancient world, but the *main* mode of transmission. This indeed is what made the writing of *The Histories* a breakthrough in the transmission of historical information.
[7] Grabbe, "The use and abuse of Herodotus by biblical sources" p.67
[8] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, pp.128-129

established positions of power.[9] The Achaemenid king was the guarantor of local laws, and had almost no need to issue new laws to administer the empire since there was no such need given the existing legal and administrative set-up.[10] The few laws issued directly by the Achaemenids concerned the maintenance of central power over local structures,[11] and this priority is reflected in the name used for them, *data*, which in Persian meant 'regulation', used to govern government and social interactions beneath the king's rule. [12] It is in this limited area of purely Persian regulation that we must look for evidence for capital punishment that was specifically mandated by the Achaemenids for crimes that they considered worthy of death.

Capital punishment for lying offences

My research has discovered two particular features of capital punishment that were distinctive of Persia. The first one concerns capital crimes associated with lying. Herodotus provides two examples of judges sentenced to death for accepting bribes and corrupting justice: Sisamnes, during the reign of Cambyses (*Histories* V.25), and Sandoces during the reign of Darius I (*Histories* VII.94). Diodorus Siculus, writing in the 1st century BCE also describes an episode of judges being executed during the reign of Artaxerxes II (*Bibliotheca Historica* XIV.10.1), indicating therefore that judicial bribery was considered a capital crime throughout Achaemenid history. I am proposing that the main reason why judicial corruption was considered an abhorrent crime was because it was a form of perverting truth. Herodotus stresses that the Persians placed great value on truth:

> The period of a boy's education is between the ages of five and twenty, and they are taught three things only: to ride, to use the bow, and to speak the truth….They consider telling lies more disgraceful than anything else, and, next to that, owing money. There are many reasons for their horror of debt, but the chief is their conviction that a man who owes money is bound also to tell lies. (*Histories* I.136, 138)

The importance of truth-telling is also greatly dramatized by Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* which contains several speeches of Cyrus the Great on the subject.[13] It is therefore reasonable to assume that judicial bribery was punished so severely because pronouncing corrupted verdicts was considered to be pronouncing a lie, what's more, a lie on behalf of the king.[14] There are a couple more instances of the death penalty being applied for a crime

[9] The Achaemenids' permission, even encouragement, to the Jews to return to Judea and re-establish their temple and religious laws must be understood in this context, since religion and legal administration ran in tandem in certain cultures (Egypt is another example).

[10] In the words of historian Shalom Holtz: "when it came to the rule of law the Achaemenid emperors saw no need to reinvent the wheels of justice which had been turning efficiently for centuries." "Judges of the King" p.488

[11] Holtz, "Judges of the King" p.488

[12] Tuplin, "The Justice of Darius", pp.77-85. Harrington, "Persian Law". Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, pp.510, 957

[13] Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia,* p.82

[14] It is important to note that Achaemenid kings were not unique in ascribing paramount importance to truth telling, or antipathy to lies. There are example of individual statements against lying from Sargon of Akkad and

that could be considered a form of lying. An epigraphic inscription from c.367-366 BCE found in ancient Caria recounts that Artaxerxes II condemned an ambassador to death for having relayed fraudulent information to him;[15] and Xenophon's *Anabasis* recounts the fate of Orontas, a trusted noble who had foresworn his pledge of allegiance to Cyrus the Younger on two separate occasions, and was put to death due to his inability to be believed any longer (*Anabasis* I.6).[16]

Capital punishment for global offences

The second feature that was distinctive to Achaemenid Persia is the principle that capital punishment should be applied based on the global worth of a person's actions throughout his life, instead of as a penalty for one serious offence. Herodotus mentions this in *The Histories* (I.137):

> I admire also the custom which forbids even the king himself to put a man to death for a single offence, and any Persian under similar circumstances to punish a servant by an irreparable injury. Their way is to balance faults against services, and then, if the faults are greater and more numerous, anger may take its course.

Herodotus provides two specific examples of this custom: the previously mentioned episode of the judge Sandoces, who was spared death even while being impaled because Darius at the last minute judged that "his services to the royal house outweighed his offenses" (VII.94); and the story of a man whose four sons were spared from death by Xerxes I as a punishment for the man's insolence because of the previous services the man had rendered to the king (VII.39). Diodorus Siculus can also be used as supporting evidence in this case through a passage in *Bibliotheca Historica* (15.10-11) where he recounts the deliberations of a panel of judges who were called to judge Tiribazus, a general of Artaxerxes II who had been maliciously accused of treason by another general. The relevance lies in the method by which Tiribazus was acquitted:

> The first [judge] said that he observed the charges to be debatable, while the benefactions [i.e. the services he had rendered to the king] were not contested. The second said that, though it were granted that the charges were true, nevertheless the benefactions excelled the offences. The third stated that he did not take into account the benefactions, because Tiribazus had received from the King in return for them favours and honours many times as great, but that when the charges were examined apart by themselves, the accused did not appear to be guilty of them.[17]

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from several Egyptian kings. Achaemenid Persia, however, is the only place where, according to the evidence available, truth-telling had a central role, and where lying could lead to judicial death. (Tuplin, "The Justice of Darius" p.111)

[15] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, pp.668-669. It is also worth drawing attention to the fact that the very name 'Artaxerxes' meant in Old Persian 'whose reign is through truth'

[16] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, pp.101-105.

[17] Diodorus Siculus, *Library*, pp.351-355

The passage—notwithstanding the historical lateness of its source—is significant as the judges seem to give equal weight to the veracity of the charges as well as to the benefits that the accused had brought to the king until that point.

All these instances suggest that a custom existed among the Achaemenids where capital punishment was decided based on the global worth of a person's actions towards the state, personified by the king, and not on the worth of the single crime committed as was the custom among other civilizations of the ancient world, including Israel, and indeed as has been the custom in the Western world. Admittedly, this is a suggestion coming from secondary Greek sources, not primary Persian material. However, I propose that a connection can be made between primary and secondary material if we try to research the reason why Achaemenid kings placed importance on such distinctive principles as capital punishment based on global merits and faults, as well as to why they had a major abhorrence to lying. I propose that such distinctive features had their source in the religion adopted by most Achaemenid kings, the worship of Ahuramazda, the god of Zoroastrianism.

Zarathustra's teachings and Zoroastrianism

It can be anachronistic to speak of 'Zoroastrianism' as the state religion of the Achaemenid empire, for the religion that has come to be defined by this name was only formalized during the Sassanian period in the 4th century CE, over 700 years after the end of the Achaemenid empire.[18] It is not even clear when or from where the teachings of Zarathustra arrived in ancient Achaemenid Persia. It is clear, however, that beginning with the reign of King Darius I some basic teachings from the faith originally preached by Zarathustra began to be adopted by the Achaemenid royal house, who then transformed it into a state religion. In fact, based on the evidence available, it is most probable that the teachings of Zarathustra arose in a pastoral area of central Asia at an indeterminate date in the past, and then reached Persian society to make its way into royal circles in the 6th century BCE. [19] It is also likely that it was this adoption by the Achaemenid kings that was the cause of the religion's survival and later development.[20]

What concerns us in our discussion of influences on capital punishment are certain principles present in the teaching of Zarathustra which, regardless of later elaboration, seem to have been part of the core teachings since the beginning, and that seem to find expression in statements recorded by Achaemenid kings, especially Darius. These principles include honesty, straightness and moderation, and are opposed to crookedness, deceit and slander. Whoever upholds these principles is considered to be a sustainer of the cosmic order. The idea of an ethical choice is indeed planted in the cosmic origin of life according to Zoroastrian belief. It was revealed to Zarathustra that twin beings existed at the beginning

[18] The Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avestas, only began to be written down in the 9th century CE (Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia, p.*95. Skjaervo 550). Most of the oldest Avestas manuscripts date even later to the 13th and 14th centuries (Skaervo, "Avesta and Zoroastrianism", p.549)

[19] Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, pp.662-666.

[20] The material in the Avestas has a close affinity to the material found in scriptures of other ancient Indo-European cultures, such as the Vedas of India. It is likely that if the teachings of Zarathustra had not been adopted by the Achaemenid kings, they would have remained part of an obscure cult, destined to disappear in western Iran and be amalgamated in other local Vedic cults in eastern Iran/India. (Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, pp.6-12; Sheldon, "Herodotus and the Iranian tradition", p.180; Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, pp.678-679).

of creation: Ahuramazda, the benign one, and Angra Manyu (in Old Persian 'Ahriman'), the maleficent one, the two coming into conflict when everything was created. Ahuramazda chose to follow righteousness (*arta*), while Angra Manyu chose falsehood (*drug*), each choice being deliberate, and prefiguring the identical choice that human beings must make in this life.[21] Those who follow Angra Manyu's example are then said to be possessed by 'The Lie' (*draug* or *draujana* in Old Persian).[22] This 'Lie' is seen as an evil cosmic force, present from the beginning, which distorts reality for both gods and human beings,[23] and who must be resisted by all those who follow Ahuramazda, as he did by example at the dawn of creation. The continuing struggle between Ahuramazda, representing truth and righteousness, and Angra Manyu and the Lie will only be resolved at the end of time in a great last judgment when both evil forces as well as the souls of all wicked humans will be annihilated.[24]

Another Zarathustran teaching relevant to our discussion involved an initial judgement, before the final one, for souls of the dead where each individual's thoughts, words and deeds were weighed upon scales, good on one side, bad on the other, in a somewhat similar way as described in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. If the combined good weighed more on one side, the soul would be led to paradise. If the combined bad, however, tipped the scale, the soul plunged down into 'the dwelling place of Worst Purpose' where the wicked endured eternal torments.[25] This idea of a proto-hell, absent in the *Book of the Dead*, was Zarathustra's particular contribution to religion in the western tradition, and was obviously born out of the fundamental theological need to uphold justice by punishing evil deeds, not to mention acknowledging the fatal consequences of following the Lie. All these principles, in different ways, seemed to have been factors shaping the Achaemenids' concept of justice.

Darius I's adoption of selective Zoroastrian beliefs

Zoroastrian beliefs begin to play a role in the Achaemenid concept of power and justice during the reign of king Darius I (c.550-486 BCE), whose worldview and political philosophy seemed to have been greatly influenced by selective teachings from Zarathustra.[26] It is unclear where or how Darius picked up these teachings, but, notably he seemed to have been influenced by the contents of the teachings, though not to the extent of venerating Zarathustra himself: the name of Zarathustra does not appear anywhere on inscriptions left by Darius. The focus of his beliefs seems to have been solely on the god Ahuramazda. His chief inscription at Behistun, for example, carved at the beginning of his reign to justify his rise to power, [27] mentions the name of Ahuramazda 63 times, mostly to

[21] Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p.20
[22] Skaervo, "Avesta and Zoroastrianism" p.552
[23] Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, pp.643-645
[24] Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p.28
[25] Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p.27
[26] Information on the religion of his predecessors, Cyrus the Great and Cambyses I is scant, but there is no evidence that they observed, or had beliefs in, Zoroastrian ideas. (Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, pp.93, 95. Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, p.684)
[27] See Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia,* pp.13-15. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, pp.99, 116. Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, p.209

acknowledge his help to gain the throne. [28] Darius expressed a closeness that he believed existed between himself and Ahuramazda on another inscription from his tomb at Naqsh-I Rustam that served as a political and moral testament:

> …A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created the sky, who created man…who made Darius king, one lord of many.
> … Ahuramazda, when he saw this earth in commotion, thereafter bestowed it upon me, made me king; I am king. By the favor of Ahuramazda I put it down in its place.[29]

Another inscription on a terrace at Persepolis records what has come to be known as the 'Ahuramazda Prayer', first used by Darius and then adopted by subsequent Achaemenid kings:

> May Ahuramazda and the gods of the royal house come to my aid. May Ahuramazda protect this country from invaders, from famine, and from the Lie. May there never be upon this country an army, famine, or the Lie.[30]

This prayer, found in numerous royal inscriptions from Achaemenid Persia,[31] indeed contains one important element concerning Darius' belief in Ahuramazda: the maleficence posed by the Lie. In the Behistun inscription, it is the Lie that Darius considers to be the prime mover of the rebellions he faced before and after he came to the throne,[32] while in the Naqsh-I Rustam inscription he proclaims "To the man who is a follower of the Lie I am no friend" (30). Mirroring Zarathustra's teaching,[33] Darius speaks about the Lie as if it was an active personal force seeking to corrupt people and, notably, he portrays himself as following the example of Ahuramazda in resisting its influence and choosing instead to follow the path of *arta* (righteousness).[34] It is important to note that the name of Angra Manyu, the chief opponent of Ahuramazda in Zarathustra's teachings, does not appear anywhere in Darius' statements. It is the cosmic Lie itself that is the central concern, especially regarding the danger that it poses to Darius' own right to rule, something that

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[28] Cf. Behistun inscription 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38, 41, 42, 45, 46, 50, 54. "Behistun." Livius website, accessed 04 07 2025, https://www.livius.org/articles/place/behistun/behistun-3/

[29] "Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions, Inscription DNb" Livius website, accessed 04 07 2025, https://www.livius.org/sources/content/achaemenid-royal-inscriptions/dnb/

[30] "Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions, Inscription DPd," Livius website, accessed 04 07 2025, https://www.livius.org/sources/content/achaemenid-royal-inscriptions/dpd/. Also Skaervo, "Avesta and Zoroastrianism", p.555. Notably, the inscription's mention of 'the gods of the royal house' demonstrates that Darius did not worship Ahuramazda monotheistically, or indeed even henotheistically. Evidence from the Persepolis Fortification tablets shows that worship of other gods was fully supported by Darius and his successors (Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, pp.685-688).

[31] De Jong, "Ahura Mazda the creator", pp.87-88

[32] "When Cambyses had departed into Egypt, the people became hostile, and the Lie multiplied in the land, even in Persia and Media, and in the other provinces" (10), "These are the provinces that became rebellious. The Lie made them rebellious, so that they deceived the people" (54). "Behistun." Livius website, accessed 04 07 2025, https://www.livius.org/articles/place/behistun/behistun-3/

[33] Skaervo, "Avesta and Zoroastrianism" pp.554-55. Also Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p.20

[34] From the Behistun inscription: "Because I was not wicked, nor was I a liar, nor was I a despot, neither I nor any of my family. I have ruled according to righteousness (63)". From Naqsh-I Rustam: "By the grace of Ahuramazda I am of such a sort, I am a friend of the right, of wrong I am not a friend….The right, that is my desire" (30).

became central in the thinking of Achaemenid rulers.[35] Besides the Lie, Darius' inscriptions include other distinguishable Zoroastrian principles. At Naqsh-I Rustam Darius proclaims "what things develop in my anger, I hold firmly under control by my thinking power. I am firmly ruling over my own impulses", expressing the idea that one should think carefully about one's actions and their consequences, echoing the Zoroastrian principle of making wise ethical choices. He also echoes the Zoroastrian emphasis on rewarding good and punishing evil at the end of one's life by stating:

> The man who is cooperative, according to his cooperation thus I reward him. Who does harm, him according to the harm I punish...What a man says against a man, that does not convince me, until I hear the sworn statements of both…(30)[36]

When we analyse Darius' statements about Ahuramazda and the moral principles he adopted a few conclusions can be proposed. Firstly, it seems that Darius adopted certain aspects of Zoroastrianism but not others. Ahuramazda is over-present but Angra Manyu isn't, and Zarathustra is also conspicuously absent despite being the original revealer of the religious views expressed by Darius. Secondly, Darius seems to portray himself as the chosen representative and defender of Ahuramazda on earth. This is suggested by statements like "A great god is Ahuramazda…who set wisdom and capability down upon King Darius", and "Ahuramazda, when he saw this earth in commotion, thereafter bestowed it upon me, made me king" (Naqsh-I Rustam). [37] These suggestions are reinforced by the iconography seen at both Behistun and Naqsh-I Rustam. At both sites, but especially at Behistun, Darius and a winged figure which is widely assumed to be Ahuramazda have been carved facing each other, in what looks like an investiture scene, similar to others in Mesopotamian art. [38] Persian historian Pierre Briant has speculated that "the king here is invested with royal power by the god and is Ahuramazda's proxy on earth, as the result of a genuine pact they had concluded."[39] This theory would indeed explain why Zarathustra is absent from Darius' statements: the king saw himself as having a direct line to Ahuramazda with no need to consider its previous intermediary. What can be concluded is that Darius created a form of Zoroastrianism drawn from Zarathustra's principles in which Ahuramazda had a central place as a divinity; in which the threat posed by the Lie is one of the central theological features; and where Darius, and by consequence his successors, acted as direct intermediaries for Ahuramazda. What were Darius' motives for embracing these beliefs? Further research and analysis in my project has shown that his reasons had more to do than with simple religious devotion.

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[35] Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia, pp.*33, 100

[36] "Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions, Inscription DNb" Livius website, accessed 04 07 2025, https://www.livius.org/sources/content/achaemenid-royal-inscriptions/dnb/

[37] "Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions, Inscription DNb" Livius website, accessed 04 07 2025, https://www.livius.org/sources/content/achaemenid-royal-inscriptions/dnb/

[38] This comparison is all the more apt since there does not seem to have been an existing Zoroastrian iconography that could have been adopted by the Achaemenids (or at least none has been discovered yet). Most Persian iconography, religious or otherwise, is derived from Mesopotamian motifs, meaning that Darius' choice of iconography at Behistun showing an investiture reflected a belief that this particular iconography was appropriate to depict the king's relationship with Ahuramazda. See Soudavar, "The formation of Achaemenid imperial ideology" p.120; Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, p.666.

[39] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, p.126

There can be little doubt that, when you consider the fervency of his worshipful inscriptions, Darius' belief in Ahuramazda contained a degree of spiritual authenticity. But it is also hard to ignore the fact that many of his statements of faith are highly politicized, especially when it comes to the danger posed by the Lie. Throughout the Behistun inscription Darius equates political rebellion to his own rule with being corrupted by the Lie, and his testament at Naqsh-I Rustam contains this warning to posterity:

> O man, that which is the command of Ahuramazda, let this not seem repugnant to you; do not leave the right path; do not rise in rebellion. (DNa, 30)

The phrase comes immediately after the statement where he proclaims that Ahuramazda saw the earth in commotion and bestowed it upon Darius to put it down in its place. In this fusion of the religious and the political, rebellion against Darius the Achaemenid king translates into rebellion against Ahuramazda himself. By bypassing Zarathustra and making himself the intermediary of Ahuramazda, Darius turned Zoroastrian elements and principles into political tools that could be used to strengthen the authority of the Achaemenid kings.[40] This development is neatly summarized by Pierre Briant:

> Beginning in the late 520s [i.e. the reign of Darius], Achaemenid monarchic ideology was articulated around rules and justifications where politics and religion were fused into a whole of rare consistency. The authority of the king and the rights of his family were henceforth under the protection of Ahuramazda, who was invoked as the great god of the king and the Empire. The concept of *arta* (truth)—in relation to its antithetical corollary, *drauga* (the Lie)—was the lynchpin of this ideological structure.[41]

For three generations following the death of Darius, Achaemenid kings continued to follow the path he had laid fusing religion and politics. Ahuramazda continued to be the chief god invoked by Achaemenid rulers including Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I and Darius II, with many of their inscriptions aping those of Darius.[42] The guiding principles drawn from Zoroastrianism that he introduced into the Achaemenid dynasty, including opposition to the Lie in accordance with *arta*, and support for equal justice and punishment, continued to be part of Achaemenid royal religion and politics, providing the key to understand capital punishment laws in ancient Persia.

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[40] It is interesting to note in this context that Darius did not adopt the Zoroastrian funerary practice by which dead bodies are exposed to animals until only bones are left for burial. Such practice would obviously have demeaned the dignity of the Achaemenid king and lessened his glorified state among subjects, providing another example of how Darius placed political interests before religious observance in his adoption of Zoroastrian principles.

[41] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, p.138.

[42] Gershevitch, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, pp.232 689-693

Conclusion: The effect of Zoroastrianism and King Darius' politics on capital punishment in Achaemenid Persia

To summarize our findings, King Darius I was the first Achaemenid king who adopted a particular form of Zoroastrianism focused on the worship of Ahuramazda as the royal religion of Achaemenid Persia. The religion gave a sense of divine legitimacy to the imperial dominion exercised by the Achaemenids across their domains, but most importantly Darius used it to buttress the political power of the Achaemenid rulers by making himself the representative of Ahuramazda and his *arta* principles. By fiercely opposing the antagonistic power of the Lie, he turned political rebellion into a religious, cosmic crime which he had a right and duty to stamp out. The traditional role of judge-king that the Achaemenid rulers exercised then ensured that the selective Zoroastrian principles used for political expedience would affect the administration of law as well.

It is in this transfer of select Zoroastrian principles from the political to the legal arena that we see the effect these principles had on capital punishment. The instances of death penalty application I have discovered in this study exhibit both a moral origin in Zoroastrian ideas and a political benefit for the Achaemenid monarchy. Capital punishment for judicial bribery condemned those who seemed to have been morally corrupted by the Lie but at the same time removed judges who could not be trusted to deliver justice effectively and who brought reputational damage on the Achaemenid system of justice of which the king was the fount. The instances of capital punishment discovered where men are executed for crimes related to lying—the Carian ambassador to Artaxerxes II, and Orontas condemned by Cyrus the Younger—punished those who have committed religious cosmic crimes by having embraced the Lie, but also conveniently removed individuals who threatened the stable rule of the king who condemned them. Additionally, all these cases of capital punishment for forms of lying and dishonesty also ensured political loyalty to the Achaemenid king. Finally, it is possible to see a link between the peculiar Achaemenid belief of applying capital punishment based on global lifetime faults, particularly weighed against benefits brought to the king, with the Zoroastrian idea that individual souls are judged on the global worth of the good deeds and sins committed throughout their lives. At the same time, however, this legal concept has an undeniable political expedience as it must have allowed the Achaemenid kings to spare valuable servants who could have been lost, had they been executed for a single objectionable offence.

In the final analysis, capital punishment in Achaemenid Persia does not seem to have been based on distinct legal, philosophical principles, of which we know nothing in any case since no Persian legal philosophy has survived, partly because the Achaemenids relied heavily on local law to administer their empire. The instances of purely Persian capital punishment that I have discovered in my research seem rather to be an expression of the way in which Achaemenid kings adopted the worship of Ahuramazda and certain features of Zoroastrianism to be the official royal religion, and of how they used these to support their political dominion across their empire. Whether this initial adoption represented a genuine embrace of faith in Ahuramazda must be left to speculation, and in the absence of contrary proof must be assumed to have been genuine—at first. But it is also evident that the Achaemenid kings used their faith as a religious foundation to punish untrustworthy, rebellious subjects, or indeed to protect loyal servants from punishment. In Achaemenid Persia capital punishment was an expression of how religion was used by rulers to support

their grip on imperial power. In other words, it was an expression of how religion was placed in the service of the state.

III. Outcome of comparative analysis with capital punishment in biblical law

The worth of my findings on the application of capital punishment in Persia becomes apparent via a comparative approach when contrasted with the context in which capital punishment laws are drafted in the biblical codes. The Pentateuch is, first and foremost, a religious text, and the law contained within it is meant to regulate the community according to, theologically and practically, the will of YHWH and the religious principles embraced by the writers and compilers of the biblical law codes. In essence, law is placed in the service of religion to create a holy, virtuous community fulfilling the religious ideals of the Pentateuch compilers. The enterprise is entirely programmatic since we do not have evidence that the laws described in the biblical codes were actually promulgated and applied legally in ancient Israel, but if they were the state would have been subservient to religious priorities. In the classic words of the late J.J. Finkelstein, the Law of Moses at its inception represented the thought of a religious minority within Israel whose viewpoint amounted to a particular thesis: "The Israelite nation was bound by an ancient and sacred pact with its deity to organize and conduct its life, both personally and institutionally, in accordance with the divinely ordained prescriptions…Directly or indirectly, whatever is included in the Old Testament by way of 'historical' information is meant to reinforce that central thesis."[43]

The primacy of these religious beliefs is demonstrated not only by the narrative context of divine revelation contained in the Pentateuch, but also by particular features in each of the biblical law collections that are better explained by religious belief rather than by secular practicalities or political ideals. The Covenant Code (Ex 20:22-23:19), for example, enjoins Israelites to protect aliens, widows and orphans (22:21-22; 23:9), three marginalised groups whose protection is not a political priority by most political parties or communities even in our own day. The jubilee laws contained both in the Holiness code in Leviticus (25:1-34) and the Deuteronomic Code (15:1-18) imposed impractical and un-political transfers of property and cancellation of debts on a wide scale, and are unlikely to ever have been carried out in the kingdoms of Israel or Judah. The dietary laws contained both in the Holiness Code (Lev 17) and the Deuteronomic Code (Deut 12, 14) are also strongly motivated by religious beliefs, while both these codes also contain worship regulations (Lev 21, 22:17-33, 23; Deut: 12:2-7, 18:1-8, et al) mixed with rules to order the community, as they are meant to be parts of a single organic whole. Most tellingly, the Deuteronomic Code explicitly mandates the supremacy of religion over the state by decreeing that the future king of Israel read the scroll of the law "all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law" (Deut 17:19).

Pertinently to my study, the capital punishment laws in the biblical codes can also be interpreted as an expression in which the state, in the form of the community of Israel, is being placed in the service of religion, in exact opposition to the way the two entities are related to each other in Achaemenid Persia, and it is in this context that the comparative approach I am employing offers revealing and confirmatory results. I have been able to single out 38 individual death penalty laws in the collective three legal codes of the

[43] Finkelstein, "The Ox That Gored," pp.42, 45

Pentateuch (9 in the Covenant Code, 17 in the Holiness Code/Priestly Collection, 12 in the Deuteronomic Code). Of these, 25 of them (65%) can be divided in two groups, both of which are based on religious motivations: death penalty laws punishing apostasy, blasphemy and unlawful religious practices; and death penalty laws punishing sexual relations that are considered religiously sinful:

Apostasy, Blasphemy, unlawful religious practices: 13 laws
Death penalty for sacrificing to other gods (Ex: 22:19)
Death penalty for witches (Ex: 22:17)
Death penalty for those who sacrifice children to Molech (Lev 20:2)
Death penalty for mediums and those consulting spirits of the dead (Lev 20:27)
Death penalty for a priest's daughter who engages in harlotry (Lev 21:9)
Death penalty for anyone cursing the name of YHWH (Lev 24:15-16)
Death penalty for a prophet or seer who entices to worship other gods (Deut 13:1-5)
Death penalty for anyone enticing to worship other gods (Deut 13:6-11)
Death penalty for worshipping other gods (Deut 17:2-5)
Death penalty for a prophet who dares to speak falsely in YHWH's name (Deut 18:20)
Death penalty for breaking the Sabbath (Ex: 31:14-15; 35:2)
Death penalty for anyone who touches the tabernacle except Levites (Num 1:51)
Death penalty for anyone who approaches the sanctuary except Aaron and his successor sons as priests (Num 3:10, 18:7)

Sexual relations considered religiously sinful: 12 laws
Death penalty for bestiality (Ex: 22:18)
Death penalty for adultery within marriage (Lev 20:10)
Death penalty for a man who sleeps with his father's wife, both parties to die (Lev 20:11)
Death penalty for a man who sleeps with his daughter-in-law, both parties to die (Lev 20:12)
Death penalty for a man who marries a woman and her mother, all parties to die (Lev 20:14)
Death penalty for homosexual acts between men (Lev 20:13)
Death penalty for a man who commits bestiality (Lev 20:15)
Death penalty for a woman who commits bestiality (Lev 20:16)
Death penalty for women who lose their virginity before marriage when the sin is discovered after marriage (Deut 22:20-21)
Death penalty for adultery within marriage, both parties to die (Deut 22:22)
Death penalty when a man sleeps with a virgin pledged to marry, both parties to die (Deut 22:23-24)
Death penalty when a man rapes a virgin pledged to marry, only the man to die (Deut 22:25-27)

The fact that the vast majority of crimes marked for capital punishment in the biblical codes concern religious offences supports the initial theory proposed by Finkelstein and others that the Pentateuch in general, and the biblical codes in particular, are part of a programmatic attempt by the biblical writers to create a community where civic, and criminal, organisation is placed in the service of religion. This is in exact opposition to what

my research has shown took place in Persia where religion was placed in the service of civic and political power. In this particular case, the comparative approach I am employing provides a way to validate and support a theory that is internal to biblical studies by using a comparison that is extraneous to those studies. It crucially does so by providing a comparative, contrasting insight with another civilisation from the ancient world in which the relationship between religion and the state was the direct inverse of that one witnessed in the Israel envisioned by the biblical writers.

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The book of Job and focalization- a cognitive narrative approach

OTSEM meeting 2025 paper

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PREFACE

This paper was formed on the basis of my current research into my PhD topic. I have been in the process of developing a literary method (using focalization) which brings together insights from cognitive narratology. In the process of developing my method, I have looked at Genesis 22:1-19 and am in the process of analysing the frame of the book of Job. I have completed my initial analysis of the final form of the prose and am now working on an earlier literary form, which I also wish to analyse with the same literary approach.

My educational background is primarily theological. While I have approached the Bible from a literary perspective, I lack expertise in narratology and literary studies proper. Similarly, a cognitive approach is fresh and novel in my journey as a biblical scholar. Because of this, I have multiple questions of inquiry regarding my textual analysis, interpretation and method.

1. Since a cognitive approach to literature is fluid, how can and should one draw boundaries in interpretation? For example, in the subsequent analysis of Job, I make the claim that the messengers are presenting news of loss to Job from a first-person perspective. But a cognitive approach would suggest that it is equally possible to conceptualise the narrative from the point of view of Job, who is the one experiencing the words of the messengers.
2. How rigid should a literary method of interpretation be in the first place? My method is defined in proper terms and steps, but a cognitive paradigm would suggest fluidity in the methodology itself.

3. How to define a reading strategy based on this methodology? I believe that any method should be transferable to reading a narrative text.
4. There is a general idea on how to posit a SCHEMA in a text, but in my opinion, the method is very loose and primarily based on the interpreter's own understanding. Is there a possibility of identifying a SCHEMA in an ancient text properly?[1]

I have yet to analyse poetic texts with my proposed methodology, but approaching poetic texts from a narrative-critical perspective is also quite new in my own experience. Thus I would like to propose some additional questions regarding the analysis of poetic texts with literary methods, particularly from a cognitive paradigm.

1. Poetry is generally assumed to be figurative and emotion-based. How should one approach this assumption in the context of ancient poetry? What are the main conventions and paradigms of interpretation for Hebrew poetry?

My overall aim in my study is to explore the literary dimensions of Old Testament narratives and to contribute to scholarship that seeks to apply modern cognitive and literary approaches in reading and interpreting Old Testament narratives. My goal is to achieve a richer understanding and appreciation of the Old Testament as a literary product from which one can gain great wisdom for life.

ABSTRACT

The Biblical text has been an object of rigorous study for more than two millennia. However, during the 20th Century, a shift started to take place when a literary emphasis was starting to be pushed due to a reason most evident- the Bible (though having a complex history of development) is literature. Now, a literary approach to the Bible is a given and is well-known in biblical studies, yet much is left unexplored when one looks at developments taking place in the field of narratology. Suffice it to say, many concepts and ideas developed and analysed in modern literary works have yet to find their use in biblical narratives. One such concept is focalization, which was a term taken up by the French

[1] For example, Vermeulen & Hayes claim that Genesis 22:1-19 primarily functions in the schema of SACRIFICE. They do make an argument, but one could just as easily make an argument that this narrative functions within the FAMILY schema. I do posit that a narrative can have multiple interpretative schemas, but where to draw the line and how to define a specific schema in the first place. Why not posit that Genesis 22:1-19 works a schema called WORSHIP?

narratologist Gerard Genette in 1972. In subsequent decades, the method has been used, critiqued and redefined by various authors. Each author has their respective take on Genette's typology. In this regard, Monika Fludernik has made a significant contribution from the perspective of cognitive narratology. A cognitive approach to the bible is relatively new and has slowly started to gain a foothold since the 2000s, but a cognitive narrative approach is almost entirely left unexplored in biblical narratives.

This paper seeks to offer a contribution to the field by proposing a method for the study of biblical narratives. The main method of analysis is focalization, which is combined with aspects from cognitive narratology. Job 1:13-22 will be analysed and interpreted in light of the analysis. Based on the analysis, one can note how the narrative is primarily internally focalized with brief comments from the narrator. The way focalization is used demonstrates how the narrator's point of view confirms Job's reaction to his loss as good. Applying insights from SCHEMA theory in cognitive narratology, the narrative moves along the lines of PIETY and TEST SCHEMA expectations. Applying Fludernik's idea of *experientiality* offers a variety of ways to experience and conceptualise the events, which demonstrates potential ambiguity in the use of focalization.

Keywords: Focalization, narratology, cognitive studies, schema theory, hermeneutics, Job, Old Testament, narrative-criticism

Introduction

The Biblical text has been an object of rigorous study for more than two millennia. Following in the footsteps of Wellhausen, the main emphasis in the historical-critical method was anchored in the world behind the text (i. e. the events that birthed the narratives and composition). However, during the 20th Century, a shift started to take place when a literary emphasis was starting to be pushed due to a reason most evident- the Bible (though having a complex history of development) is literature.

The case for studying the Bible as a unified work of literature has been advanced since the 1970s. Two seminal names in this field are Robert Alter and Shimon Bar-Efrat.[2] While

[2] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Rev. & updated ed (New York: Basic Books, 2011); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, New and rev. ed (New York: Basic Books, 2011); Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, Repr, Bible and Literature Series 17 (Sheffield: Academic Pr, 2000).

Alter and Bar-Efrat can be seen as popularisers of the literary approach in biblical studies, Erich Auerbach in 1946 should be seen as the visionary with his classical comparison of Genesis 22:1-19 (the *Akedah*) with the Homeric tale of Odysseus's Scar.[3] The case he made in *Mimesis* also flows into cognitive narratology when he notes how the *Akedah* (unlike Odysseus's Scar) is "fraught with background."[4]

Now, a literary approach to the Bible is a given and is well-known in biblical studies, yet much is left unexplored when one looks at developments taking place in the field of narratology. Suffice it to say, many concepts and ideas developed and analysed in modern literary works have yet to find their use in biblical narratives. One such concept is focalization which was a term taken up by the French narratologist Gerard Gennette in 1972. His famous words "who speaks" vs "who sees" formed the basic notion in the study of focalization.[5]

In subsequent decades the method has been used, critiqued and redefined. Notable authors in this regard are Mieke Bal, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and Monika Fludernik. Each author has their respective take on Genette's typology and each author has valuable insight to bring to the table in analysing biblical narratives. But unlike Bal and Rimmon-Kenan, Fludernik has made much contribution into the field known as cognitive narratology. A cognitive approach to the bible is relatively knew and has slowly started to

[3] Aulikki Nahkola notes how Auerbach intimated the literary approach in 1946 and Alter was the one to articulate it in 1981. See: Aulikki Nahkola, *Double Narratives in the Old Testament: The Foundations of Method in Biblical Criticism*, Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Bd. 273 (Berlin ; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 103.

[4] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Ropes Trask, Fiftieth-anniversary edition, Princeton Classics (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 11–12. Auerbach's point of comparison was to note how biblical narratives have surprisingly many "gaps," meaning that not every detail is disclosed to the reader. Homeric epics, on the other hand, shower their reader with background information and various details regarding events and characters. This qualitative difference in the way biblical stories present themselves, for Auerbach, signals a clearer representation of reality, for in real-life experience, likewise, not every detail about every event is disclosed to a person, and much "background" is already assumed in specific contexts.

[5] Foreword by Jonathan Culler in: Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, 1. publ., 4. print (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 10.

gain a foothold from the 2000s, but a cognitive narrative approach is almost entirely left unexplored.[6]

Thus this paper seeks to offer a contribution to the field, by proposing a method for the study of biblical narratives. The main method of analysis is focalization, which is combined with aspects from cognitive narratology. Job 1:13-22 will be analysed and interpreted in light of the analysis. The following analysis will demonstrate the richness of biblical text when one focuses on it through a literary cognitive lens.

Method with a brief literature overview

Focalization was first taken up as a concept by Genette in 1972. At the most basic level focalization means "point-of-view" or "perspective" in a narrative text. But Genette famously wished to distinguish the orientation of the narrative and the voice that is speaking.[7] Focalization is meant to highlight this distinction. Thus focalization denotes the specific viewpoint by which a narrative is observed. He famously distinguished between zero (or non-focalised), external and internal focalization.[8] They can be thought of as cameras looking at the story world in a movie. If the scene is panoramic, large in scope and has no human viewpoint (meaning that the scene presented can not be viewed as a spectator in the story), it is essentially the viewpoint of the omniscient narrator.[9] External

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[6] István Czachesz, "Introduction: Cognition, Evolution, and Biblical Exegesis," in *Language, Cognition, and Biblical Exegesis: Interpreting Minds*, Scientific Studies of Religion (London New York (N.Y.): Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 2. The only recent work that comes to mind which approaches biblical interpretation from an entirely cognivite paradigm is Karolien Vermeulen and Elizabeth R. Hayes, *How We Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture's Style and Meaning* (Chicago: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2022). A second notable mention is the study by Dan McClellan which analysed the use of Old Testament divine images from a cognitive perspective: Daniel O. McClellan, *YHWH's Divine Images: A Cognitive Approach*, Ancient near East Monographs, number 29 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022). Another worthy mention is a study conducted by Ellen van Wolde in: E. J. van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014).

[7] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 186.

[8] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 189–90; This categorisation is also the base of Prince's definition in: Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology*, 31; In an earlier work, Prince essentially followed Genette's distinctions, but did not adopt the term *focalization*. He instead used *point of view*. See: Prince, *Narratology*, 50–54.

[9] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 2. printing (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1994), 73. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 189; Wolf Schmid, ed., *Narratology: An Introduction*, De Gruyter Textbook (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 92, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110226324; Konstantin Nazarov, *Focalization in the Book of Ruth* (Carlisle: Langham Monographs, 2021), 14.

is similar to zero, but it's view is restricted to a behaviourist approach. Thus, when the camera can be thought of as a simple observer in the story world, the focalization is external.[10] Internal is essentially a first-person perspective. When the narrative is viewed through the eyes of one specific character in the story the focalization is internal.[11] The criteria for distinguishing between these levels are information. Readers should ask what and how much they know or how much information the narrator is revealing.[12] If readers know more than the characters in the story and they know things the characters are unable to know, the viewpoint is non-focalized. If the horizon of knowledge matches that of the characters the viewpoint is external. And if the horizon of knowledge matches that of a single character with added access to that character's thoughts and feelings, the viewpoint is internally focalized.

Genette has been critiqued by Bal, Rimmon-Kenan and Fludernik. Bal sought to reword Genette's typology by restricting the levels to just external and internal, but also taking up the idea of focalizer (the viewpoint) and focalized (that which is being viewed).[13] For Bal focalization is primarily a relationship, and in her typology, the strength in analysis lies in a close reading of where a perspective is gained and what is perceived from that viewpoint.[14]

Rimmon-Kenan has her own take on focalization. While Gennette and Bal illustratively work in a "viewing" model (i. e. focalization is the camera in a story), Rimmon-Kenan sought to include aspects of human psychology into the concept. Her typology included different facets to focalization- perceptual (temporal and geographical), psychological (emotions and feelings), and ideological (what is right and wrong, the norms of the text).[15] Her contribution added another depth to the analysis, whereby one must be

[10] Nazarov, *Focalization in the Book of Ruth*, 14.
[11] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 4th edition (Toronto: University of Toronto press, 2017), 136.
[12] Compare the horizon of knowledge of the narrator in non-focalized texts. The narrator knows more than the characters. Internally focalized text limits the knowledge of the narrator to one specific character. See: Nazarov, *Focalization in the Book of Ruth*, 14.
[13] Bal, *Narratology*, 135.
[14] Bal, 135–36.
[15] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, Repr, New Accents (London: Routledge, 2001), 78–81.

attentive to what exactly the content of focalization is. Is it perpetual, meaning is the narrative describing places, time, and/or shift in geography and time. Is it psychological, meaning is the narrative detailing emotion and feelings? Or is it ideological, meaning that the narrative is disclosing from a specific viewpoint what the ultimate good is, that which is right.[16]

Genette, Bal and Rimmon-Kenan all bring valuable insight to the discussion, but they all work under the structuralist paradigm. Fludernik, on the other hand, approaches the concept from a cognitive paradigm. In simple terms, the structuralist approach seeks to identify literary units, concepts and ideas in a text, and then interpret the text in light of these features, not by isolating, but by understanding the relationships between them.[17] But the cognitive approach is a lot more fluid, for it does not posit a rigid structure in the text, but instead starts from the reader as a cognitive agent interacting with the story.[18] This is where Fludernik has coined the term *experientiality* whereby her claim is that reading narratives evokes human experience.[19] *Embodiement* is closely connected to the former idea. In cognitive studies embodiement denotes how narratives are described and experienced based on human embodied experience.[20] Notions such as "*grasping* an idea" or

[16] Ideological, as in the „norms of the text." That which the text deems as the highest good. In a simpler fashion, Gunn and Fewell note that ideology in biblical texts is the opinion of the author(s). They also go on to note how ideology in a text is the representation of the value system of the author(s) and the culture. So when dealing with ideology in biblical narrative, one assumes that it is what the implied author of the text deems to be good and right. See: William Donald Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, Oxford Bible Series (Oxford New York: Oxford University press, 1993), 190–91.

[17] A proper definition of the structuralist approach varies in scholarship, but David C. Greenwood notes how the core idea is: „based on the principle that every concept in a given system is determined by all other concepts of that system and has no significance by itself alone." Thus, meaning, for the structuralist, is created when these concepts interact with each other. See: David Greenwood, *Structuralism and the Biblical Text*, Religion and Reason 32 (Berlin ; New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 2.

[18] Vermeulen and Hayes, *How We Read the Bible*, 64; Monika Fludernik, "Narratology in the Twenty-First Century: The Cognitive Approach to Narrative," *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 125, no. 4 (October 2010): 924–30, https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2010.125.4.924.

[19] Monika Fludernik, *Towards a "natural" Narratology* (London New York: Routledge, 2002), 234, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203432501. Fludernik takes human experience as the starting point in her articulation of narratology. „Unlike the traditional models of narratology, narrativity is here constituted by what I call experientiality, namely by the quasi-mimetic evocation of `real-life experience'." See: Fludernik, 9.

[20] David Herman, *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind*, Paperback edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England: MIT Press, 2017), 163.

"*looking* for solutions" directly stem from embodiment.[21] The evocation of human experience also opens the window to schema theory in cognitive narratology. Schema theory posits that people interpret stories based on preconceived patterns they have experienced, hence a schema that activates when narratives follow a specific pattern.[22] In the context of biblical narratives the question of inquiry should be what schemas would have been activated for the original audience, for the lived experience of the original ancient recipient would have been different from that of the modern Westerner.

The way Fludernik views focalization, then, is not just a feature of the text, but a concept that situates the experience of the characters in a story in space and time and what evokes the experience of readers. It is what helps the reader conceptualize the narrative world and experience the way characters interact with it. The following graph outlines her approach.

Vantage point	**Embodied**	**Describes psychological states of others**	**Impersonal**
External (extradiegetic level)	So-called omniscient narrator	Yes	Impersonal 'omniscient' (covert narrative)
		No	Neutral perspective

[21] Grasping is and idea that is understandable because of human embodied expereince where one can use his/her hands to grasp objects. Looking is similar. One can see with his/her eyes objects and places. This activity is used to explain abstact notions where one can *grasp* an idea (an immaterial concept) or look for solutions (another immaterial concept). Anne Katherine de Gudme has given a more in-depth explanation in: Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, "Liquid Life: Blood, Life, and Conceptual Metaphors in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East," in *Language, Cognition, and Biblical Exegesis: Interpreting Minds*, Scientific Studies of Religion (London New York (N.Y.): Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 67.

[22] Vermeulen and Hayes, *How We Read the Bible*, 81–82. Schema (or schemata) as a concept must be distinguished from the narratological idea of "scripts." Scripts, in cognitive narratology, are what generate expectations in how a particular set of events are supposed to unfold. Schemata, on the other hand, generate expectations about how domains of experience are likely to be structured at a moment in time. See: Arkady Plotnitsky, "Schemata," in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 513–14. See also: David Herman, ed., *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, CSLI Lecture Notes, no. 158 (Stanford, Calif: CSLI Publications, 2003), 40–41. The idea of *schema* was originally introduced by Frederick C. Bartlett in 1932. According to Bartlett: "'Schema' refers to an active organisation of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response." See: Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*, Reissued, transferred to digital pr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 201.

Internal (diegetic level)	First-person narrator		
	Reflector figure	No	0

Essentially, in her approach there are two vantage points where a perspective is gained. Either outside the narrative (extradiegetic) or inside (diegetic). After this, the question regards the identity of the speaker or narrator (omniscient, a first-person narrator or a reflector figure that is not just detailing the story, but is experiencing it firsthand). Based on the identity and nature of the speaker, the perspective gained can describe the inner state of others only if the speaker is outside the world and is omniscient. A first-person narrator does not have such access, nor does a reflector figure. In Fludernik's approach, the viewpoint can also be impersonal (covert narrative). This impersonal viewpoint is also omniscient if situated outside the narrative. Her approach allows to have a neutral perspective on the story, but a reflector figure by definition can not be impersonal. Since a key aspect of focalization is restriction and filtering of narrative information, its connection to the activation of schemas is worth investigating.

A few examples highlight the importance and function of focalization in a narrative text. Genesis 22:1 details how God wanted to test Abraham. After this sentence, the narrative gives the readers God's first-person view in the form of direct speech to Abraham, then God asks Abraham to give up Isaac as a burnt offering. The first sentence in the narrative is focalised from an external vantage point and, in Genette's terms, gives readers information that Abraham is not privy to. Then, when the test is given, from Abraham's perspective, he is unaware that the command is a divine test of his faith. A second example is when Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac. The previous text functions on a behaviorist level with focalization on an external vantage point. But right before Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac he is stopped and he looks up and sees a ram. Before raising his eyes the Hebrew *hinne* appears, which signals a shift from third-person to first-person perspective if followed by a verb.[23] Thus, with the use of *hinne* focalization shift to Abraham's internal

[23] Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, reprint (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 63.

viewpoint and readers are not just informed that Abraham saw a ram, but that the readers are looking at the ram through Abraham's eyes right before the knife fell on Isaac. A third, broader example is to note the importance of focalization in the book of Job. One can distinguish multiple competing viewpoints- YHWH, the accuser figure, Job, his wife and his friends. The ultimate authoritative viewpoint is that of the narrator, who at specific points, from an external perspective, confirms Job's righteousness (Job 1:22). This also aligns the narrator's external viewpoint with the internal viewpoint of YHWH in the narrative. In the poetic sections the primary conflict arises from the competing internal viewpoints of Job and his friends. Thus, focalization in the book of Job highlights the distinctiveness of different views regarding Job's response to his suffering and loss and in the context of the whole book, these different viewpoints have to be evaluated to the narrators external viewpoint that confirms Job's righteous character.

From a cognitive perspective, the way to approach narratives differs from a structuralist paradigm. For example, in the narrative of Genesis 22:1-19, the structuralist approach seeks to isolate various narrative instances and then understand the relationships between them. God is the tester, Abraham is the tested, the dialogue between Abraham and Isaac connects to God providing the ram, God's blessing is a response to Abraham's obedience. From a structuralist paradigm there is an essentially moral argument underlying the story, namely that faith in God will be rewarded.[24] A cognitive approach which assumes that narratives evoke human experience, on the other hand, do not seek to divide the text according to strict rules, but understands it in terms of narrativity, meaning that if there is even one quasi-human character in the story, the text can be understood as a narrative.[25] The so-called rules of narrative stem from embodied existence as humans, meaning that in Genesis 22:1-19, when Abraham is tasked with sacrificing his beloved Isaac, the cognitive paradigm assumes a strong emotional undertone even when no emotion is explicitly described (or internally focalized). Or to phrase the distinction in another fashion: the structuralist paradigm sees the story as a divine test which Abraham passes and is rewarded

[24] Greenwood has done a proper structuralist analysis of the narrative in: Greenwood, *Structuralism and the Biblical Text*, 124–29.
[25] Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 1. publ., repr (London: Routledge, 2010), 6.

for, the cognitive paradigm sees the story as a divine test also, but posits Abraham's human experience as the centerpiece of interpretation.

With this brief overview in mind, one proposes the following methodology to study biblical narratives.

1. Employ the model of focalization (via Fludernik)
2. Consider additional aspects of focalization from:
    a. Genette- restriction of narrative information (what is told and by who)
    b. Bal- keen awareness on the direction of focalization (who or what is focalized)
    c. Rimmon-Kenan- look for perceptual, psychological and ideological cues in the text in the context of focalization (who or what is perceiving, what is their psychological state, is there an ideological perspective conveyed and by who)
3. Approach the interpretation of the use of focalization from a cognitive perspective (Fludernik's general idea of *experientiality* and the cognitive idea of *embodiment* in narratology)
4. Connect focalization with SCHEMA theory from the cognitive sciences (what kind of SCHEMAS would be triggered with the use of focalization for primarily the original audience and on what level do these SCHEMAS operate)
5. Look for patterns in how focalization (and SCHEMAS) are used in the narrative

Background and context for the book of Job

The narrative of Job has affinities with other ancient texts. The Sumerian Job known as "A Man and His God," the Babylonian Job *Ludlul Bel Nemeqi* known as "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," and the Babylonian Theodicy. Suffice it to say that ample scholarship has been done in comparing these texts to the book of Job. A well-known study was done by Moshe Weinfeld where he outlined key points of similarity (and dissimilarity) for all

three texts.[26] Weinfeld notes how the Sumerian and Babylonian Job stories have greater affinities with liturgical texts that bear a greater resemblance to Psalms of Thanksgiving in the Old Testament.[27]

Beyond the mentioned literary and theological differences, these texts do deal with the primary theological question in Job, the question of the nature and reason for pious suffering. Weinfeld notes how the reality of these texts testifies to an active discussion about piety and suffering in ancient Mesopotamia and Israel, and that these discussions have typological affinities between them.[28] The Book of Job is one such work that adds another perspective to the discussion.

As a general conclusion, one can state that the ancients had a common understanding of piety, which included the idea of rewards and punishments related to actions that either align with the divine order or not. This general idea did include variety, for one can find stories and texts that seek to connect piety with Torah following (e.g the Deuteronomic history, the book of Proverbs and Tobit), yet there are stories that do not mention the Law of Moses, but regardless explore the nature of YHWH worship and right actions (e.g. Ruth, Esther and Job).[29] Interpreting Job with this background in mind would make it a revolutionary literary composition. [30]

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[26] The study mentioned is: Moshe Weinfeld, "Job and Its Mesopotamian Parallels: A Typological Analysis," in *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F.C. Fensham*, by Walter R. Classen (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 217–26.

[27] Weinfeld, 217–18. Sparks also points this out in: Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature*, 3. print (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2009), 61–62.

[28] Weinfeld notes this regarding Job and the Babylonian theodicy, but by extension, this principle extends to other texts that discuss similar questions. See: Weinfeld, "Job and Its Mesopotamian Parallels: A Typological Analysis," 225.

[29] JiSeong James Kwon, "Meaning and Context in Job and Tobit," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43, no. 4 (June 2019): 635, https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089218762283. Kwon has another study worth referencing here where he has compared in greater particularity the theology and content of Job with ideas from the Torah (deuteronomic and priestly). His conclusion is that „there were no integrated and unified thoughts and views about divine-human relationship in early Israelite religious traditions and that not all Jewish wisdom writings support the theology of Torah." Basically, this means that the ideological perspective and idea of piety of the final author of Job diverges from specific Torah piety and at most functions as an apologetic against it. See: Jiseong James Kwon, "Divergence of the Book of Job from Deuteronomic/Priestly Torah: Intertextual Reading between Job and Torah," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 32, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 70–71, https://doi.org/10.1080/09018328.2017.1376522.

[30] The words of Crenshaw are fitting: "The courageous author who composed the book of Job must surely have become a pariah in the community of exiled Judeans—like a historical critic in Southern Baptist circles or a liberal in an evangelical divinity school. The radical attack on traditional views is analogous to

The book of Job and schema theory

One claims that the book of Job activates three SCHEMAS: (1) PIETY schema (Job 1:1), (2) HEAVENLY COUNCIL schema (Job 1:6), (3) TEST schema (Job 1:11). PIETY and HEAVENLY COUNCIL are activated via external focalization, meaning that they are provided to the reader from outside the narrative world. The TEST schema is activated in the initial dialogues between YHWH and the accuser, meaning that they are provided to the reader inside the narrative world. Thus the overarching schema of Job is PIETY, which includes HEAVENLY COUNCIL and TEST. The former two are nested in this broader framework (PIETY) and thus have to be interpreted in this light.

If one looks at the narrative of Job through SCHEMA theory, it is possible to see how the whole narrative works as a general schema disruptor for the overarching schema of the story- PIETY. The inclusion of HEAVENLY COUNCIL also complements this idea, for it provides the readers with an indication of the reason(s) and potential solution(s) for suffering. Given the apocalyptic context of the heavenly dialogues, one can claim that they direct the immediate suspense of the reader from Job to YHWH and the accuser.[31] In the context of the whole book, the inclusion of HEAVENLY COUNCIL is in dialogue with the broader schema of the book and, through this dialogue, has the reader reconstruct their understanding of the PIETY schema. A general conclusion that one can draw from this is

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postmodernist and feminist rejections of authority centered in Western males of European descent."See: James L. Crenshaw, *Defending God: Biblical Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 183, https://doi.org/10.1093/0195140028.001.0001.

[31] The fact that the heavenly scenes are in the genre of apocalyptic can be deduced from a number of data points. First, the historical formation of Job takes place at a time when apocalyptic literature was being produced (2-3rd Century BCE). Second, Job is associated with the East, and apocalyptic literature, according to John J. Collins owes its shape to a Babylonian matrix. Third, the presentation of the heavenly scenes fits into the matrix of apocalyptic literature (e.g. heavenly beings, heavenly council, the *satan* figure, heavenly beings engaging with the affairs of humanity, and the hero of the story being one from the distant past- for example, Abraham or Enoch). Russell has also detailed aspects that exemplify apocalyptic literature. The presence of angelic messenger, the *satan* figure, a dualistic worldview where God and Satan, light and dark, righteousness and unrighteousness compete, and a strong emphasis on God's sovereign power over the forces of evil. Russell does not explicitly associate Job with apocalyptic literature, but does refer to aspects of Job as implicit indications of apocalyptic. See: D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200BC-100AD* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 236–38; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2. ed., [Nachdr.], The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 5–6, 26.

that the solution to Job's plight lies not in earthly affairs, but in the heavenly realm. This conclusion is supported by God's intervention in the poetic dialogues in Job 38, after which, from a literary perspective, a solution is reached, and Job repents of his words (Job 42:1-6). In the context of the final form of Job being a polyphonic composition, as Carol Newsom argues, one can also claim that the author is seeking to resolve (or at best loosen) the tension in PIETY by appealing to HEAVENLY COUNCIL.[32]

Case study-analysis and interpretation of Job 1:13-22

The following table highlights the shift and content in focalization. For example, verse 13 has an external focal point (EF, internal focalization will be abbreviated IF) where the narrator is describing the setting of the story. Since the narrative gives no indication about the identity of the narrator the narrator is assumed to be impersonal (I, an embodied agent will be abbreviated E, if the narrative is focalized through a single person via first-person speech then he/she is a reflector figure abbreviated RF). The impersonal narrator is thus viewing the events from an external focal point and is describing Job's sons and daughters. The narrator mentions "a day" indicating a temporal shift (meaning, a perceptual change abbreviated PR) and situates Job's children in their oldest brothers house (another perceptual indicator). Content that implies emotion will fall under the psychology (PSY) and moral aspects fall under ideology (ID).

Table- Job 1: 13-22 "Job's first misfortunes" [33]

13	**And there was a day,** when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their **oldest brothers house.**	EF (I narration -> Job's sons and daughters, PR)

[32] Carol Ann Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 24, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195396287.001.0001.

[33] The translation is based on the Masoretic Text form as preserved in the Leningrad Codex and published in the text critical BHS edition. The translation sought to maintain the flow of the original syntax as much as possible. Translations from the following commentaries were consulted Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, 3nd ed, The Anchor Bible 15 (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1986); Urmas Nõmmik, *Iiobi Raamat*, Piibel Kontekstis (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, 2013); Édouard Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (Nashville: Nelson Publishers, 1984); Joannes Petrus Fokkelman, *The Book of Job in Form: A Literary Translation with Commentary*, Studia Semitica Neerlandica, vol. 58 (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2012). The JPS English translation was also consulted.

14	And a messenger came to Job and said: "*The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys pasturing beside them*	EF (I narration->messenger) IF (E narration messenger RF -> Job)
15	*and the Sabeians fell and took them away, and the servants they killed with the edge of the sword. But I alone have escaped to tell you!"*	IF (E narration messenger RF -> Job)
16	While this one was still speaking, another one came and said: "*The fire of God fell* ***from the heavens*** *and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, I alone have escaped to tell you.*"	EF (I narration->messenger) IF (E narration messenger RF -> Job, PR)
17	While this one was still speaking, another one came and said: "*The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them away, and killed the servants, with the edge of the sword, I alone have escaped to tell you.*"	EF (I narration->messenger) IF (E narration messenger RF -> Job)
18	While this one was still speaking, another one came and said: "*Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their* ***oldest brothers house****.*	EF (I narration->messenger) IF (E narration messenger RF -> Job), PR
19	*And behold! A great wind came from* ***across the desert*** *and struck* ***four corners of the house*** *and it fell on the young people and they are dead, I alone have escaped to tell you.*"	IF (E narration messenger RF -> Job), PR
20	And Job arose, and **tore his robe**, and **shaved his head**, and **fell to the ground**, and **worshiped.**	EF->IF (I narration -> Job, PSY, PR, ID)
21	And he said: "*Naked I came, from the womb of my mother, and naked shall I turn back there.* ***YHWH gave and YHWH took-let the name of YHWH be blessed!***"	IF (E narration Job RF -> messengers?, ID)
22	In all this, Job did **not sin**, and **not ascribe ill to God.**	EF (I narration -> Job, ID)

The narrator introduces a new scene via external focalization. Like the previous scene, there is no clear indication of the day that said events are taking place. In the context of the narrative, it is the day that Job's children are feasting at their eldest brother's house. At first glance, this detail appears redundant, but in the context of Job's upcoming trials, it

is an ominous indication by the narrator that Job's family is in danger.[34] The narrator focuses the scene on Job when the messenger comes *to* Job. This lack of narrative description of the disasters serves to increase the impact when Job hears of them having taken place.[35]

The scene opens with an echo to verse 4. The narrator provides a setting where Job's children are full of joy in their gathering. The mention of *wine* here is an artistic touch which pictures the children's joy. This has the coming tragedy hit with greater force against the background of the children joyfully gathered.[36] What makes verses 13-22 interesting is the fact that Job's misfortunes are brought to his attention via the use of internal focalization from four different messengers. Each messenger brings to the table one aspect of Job's lost wealth, which culminated with the death of his children. If one also compares this stylistic choice with the previous verses (verses 6-12), then one can note how the narrative is primarily presented to the readers from an internal vantage point. Most of the information given is given via first-person speech. The fact that the messengers are presenting their point-of-view is indicated in, for example, verse 16 where he mentions "the fire of God."[37] The narrator presents readers with a scene in heaven where the accuser is let loose on the wealth of Job. But Job and the messengers are not aware of this fact. Thus, in their perception Job is suffering at the hands of God. The multiple uses of these disasters "falling" (נפל) on Job also denotes the source, namely heaven.[38] So, even from the perspective of the messengers, the calamities have a divine source. This use of first-person-speech means that the narrative is becoming more and more personal and less descriptive.

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[34] Cheney fittingly deemed this an „ominous restaging of the feast-cycle." See: Michael Cheney, *Dust, Wind and Agony- Character, Speech and Genre in Job*, Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series 36 (Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), 47.

[35] Robert Gordis, ed., *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation and Special Studies*, Moreshet Series, Volume 2 (New York City: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 16.

[36] John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1988), 76.

[37] The fire of God likely refers to lightning. This means that the survivor is detailing a violent thunderstorm that destroyed Job's possessions. See: Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job: Together with a New Translation*, Reprint (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 17; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 16; David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, reprint, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Zondervan Academic, 2017), 32.

[38] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 17:33.

The use of first-person speech in this context helps to create the setting of Job receiving one piece of bad news after another, the reader is left in suspense about his reaction, for the narrator is silent at this moment. The narrator's brief words between the messages ("While this one was still speaking, another one came and said") emphasize the swiftness of the news delivered.[39] Job is receiving one piece of horrible news one after another.

The four-fold presentation of loss mirrors the presentation of Job's wealth and prosperity in verses 1-5.[40] Verse 2 details the fact that Job has many children, verse 3 details his wealth, and the presentation ends with the cycle of Job's children feasting. In the scene of Job's first misfortunes, the scene starts with Job's children feasting and then moves on to his loss of wealth. First, he receives the report of losing his female donkeys and cattle (verse 14). Then he loses his sheep and goats (verse 16). Then his camels (verse 17). And the scene culminates with the loss of his children in verse 19, which was foreshadowed in verse 13. This near mirroring of verses 1-5 possibly indicates a hierarchy of value. Job's most important possessions, his children, receive a double mention and thus the weight of Job's losses hit even harder when the final messenger gives his report of them all having perished.[41] The impact is also conveyed with the use of a three-plus-one pattern. Fokkelman notes: "It is obvious that the scheme 3 + 1 has been contrived with an eye to a climax."[42] The four-fold presentation also symbolises the totality of Job's losses. Sabaeans from the south, YHWH's fire from the west, Chaldeans from the north, and desert wind from the east.[43]

Verse 20 shifts back to an external viewpoint and details Job's reaction to the devastating news. While emotion is not explicitly described, the actions detailed imply strong sorrow and grief.[44] In this sense, the scene starts from an external viewpoint, but

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[39] Harold H. Rowley, *Job*, The Century Bible (Great Britain: Nelson, 1970), 34; See also: Driver and Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job: Together with a New Translation*, 14.
[40] Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 76.
[41] Cheney, *Dust, Wind and Agony- Character, Speech and Genre in Job*, 51.
[42] Fokkelman, *The Book of Job in Form*, 200.
[43] Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 77; Markus Witte, ed., *Das Buch Hiob*, Neubearbeitung, Das Alte Testament Deutsch : neues Göttinger Bibelwerk / herausgegeben von Reinhard Gregor Kratz und Christoph Berner, Band 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 94.
[44] Recall the comment by Clines that the act of tearing clothes and shaving the head served as symbolic acts of mourning that imply emotion in the mourner. See: Clines, *Job 1-20*, 17:34–35. If one considers

through description shifts to an internal viewpoint. The reason that the scene is internally focalized comes from the fact that the focus is on Job. Were the setting one where a crowd is described doing the same, it would remain externally focalized with emotion broadly implied. Verse 20, however, describes Job and his (emotional) response.

Verse 21 explicitly details Job's internal viewpoint on his experiences of loss. He literally blesses the name of YHWH. This detail is relevant and personal. Relevant to this was the wager between YHWH and the accuser. Would Job still bless God if he were to lose his prosperity? The narrative affirms this. And this detail is personal, for the narrator does not simply describe Job blessing God, he gives the reader Job's words in the form of poetry. Fokkelman notes that in this context, Job's words in poetic form leave no doubt about his integrity.[45] Given the emotional impact of the loss, this blessing of YHWH through the words of Job becomes a triumphant and pious declaration of disinterested religion.[46] The author's use of internal focalization serves to bring this idea home to the readers.

In verse 21, Job refers to YHWH in the third person. For some, this implies a key characteristic of Job where he is pious, but he lacks an intimate first-hand relationship and encounter with God.[47] Driver and Gray, on the other hand, point out that the use of the

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experientiality then the emotional aspect is even cleared, since the point of the narrative as a whole is to have readers empathize with Job's suffering. Recall Gutiérrez's stance on Job being a universal figure whose suffering and righteousness implies the same experience for others. See: Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), 36.

[45] Fokkelman, *The Book of Job in Form*, 201.

[46] Gutiérrez claims that a key motif in Job is the nature of true religion. Gutiérrez notes how the author of the story makes the case for true religion being a „disinterested religion," meaning that it is religion that is practised not because of promised gains and prosperity, but it is practised because that is the right thing to do. See: Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 39.

[47] One example is the interpretation of the book provided by Walton. Walton notes how Job's motives for righteousness are suspect with his characterisation in the introduction. In the epilogue, when Job acts as an intercessor for his friends, Walton states how this contrasts with the intercession described in the introduction of the book. Walton states: „When Job acted as priest for his children, his behaviour revealed flaws in his theology and exposed him to questions regarding his motivations, which led to his suffering. In contrast, when Job acts as an intercessor for his friends at the end of the book, he does so in reflection of God's compassion not in suspicion of God's unreasonable character; as a result, this behaviour leads to Job's restoration." See: John H. Walton, "Job," in *The NIV Application Commentary on the Bible: One-Volume Edition*, ed. Christopher A. Beetham and L. Nancy Erickson, 1st ed, The NIV Application Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2024), 1008–9, 1053.

third person is fitting since Job is addressing his messengers who informed him of his loss.[48] In the context of *experientiality* this turns into a scene where the messengers (with the reader) are observing Job's response to the devastating news.

The final verse in the scene (verse 22) is the narrator's comments from an external vantage point. They harken back to Job 1:1, where the narrator explicitly describes him as a righteous man. Verse 22 confirms this righteousness in light of the tragedy he has suffered. Thus, the shifting viewpoints from external to internal, from narrator to Job present the readers with a picture of true piety in light of tragedy. Job's reaction (his perspective on the events) is to bless God after losing his wealth, the narrator in verse 22 confirms this from his external viewpoint that it is the right thing to do.[49] When it comes to schema theory, the general idea of PIETY is moving along as one would have expected.[50] The sufferer remains pious in light of the TEST he is being subjected to, without being aware of those events serving as a test of his faith.

Excursus: Brief comparison of Genesis 22:1-19 and the frame of the book of Job

A brief comparison of the Akedah and the aspects of the frame of Job with the proposed methodology is warranted here. This comparison will mostly focus on the similarities, which broadly demonstrate a similar strategy in so-called second Temple piety tales.

1. Both tales have a protagonist who is being tested by God while being unaware of the details.
2. Both tales resolve the divine test with a divine voice.
3. Both tales excel in behaviourist descriptions with emotion implied, not explicitly described

[48] Driver and Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job: Together with a New Translation*, 19.
[49] Cheney, *Dust, Wind and Agony- Character, Speech and Genre in Job*, 51.
[50] Sternberg connects this idea with Job's characterization in verses 1-5. In light of this, from a literary perspective, the reader can expect ordeals for the hero, but the hero will come through them. This reasoning mirrors schema theory. See: Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington (Ind.): Indiana university press, 1985), 340.

4. Both tales function under the PIETY schema, which then introduces TEST into the framework.
5. Both tales have ambiguity in how and why the divine test has been passed and/or ended.
6. Both tales employ internal focalization in the thrust of the narrative (Gen 22:7-8 and Job 1:21-22).

With these major similarities noted, there are unique features in either story. First, the Akedah is much shorter than the Job frame.[51] Second, the Job frame utilises a lot more internal focalization, though this use does not increase emotional description or give explicit access to thoughts while other characters are present. Thus, even the use of internal focalization in Job is closer in function to external, for it simply moves the narrative forward using first-person speech. Likely the greatest distinction comes when one considers schema theory. The Akedah has three primary schemas which guide it's interpretation: PIETY, TEST and SACRIFICE. PIETY is the overarching schema, in it TEST is included after the divine test, but then SACRIFICE is activated when the nature of the test is to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. In the prose of Job there are also three schemas, but one is quite different: PIETY, HEAVENLY COUNCIL and TEST. The HEAVENLY COUNCIL schema brings apocalyptic aspects to the narrative. One can make the case that the Akedah also has these with the inclusion of the Angel of the Lord who calls Abraham, but that detail itself does not warrant apocalyptic associations.

If one looks at the way these schemas are used in the respective narrative, one can see how different schemas are weaved into the broader schema of PIETY. Ironically, while SACRIFICE and HEAVENLY COUNCIL differ at their core, they have details that are similar. For example, one can expect the divine voice to fall in line with SACRIFICE schema expectations for bringing the right sacrifice warrants a divine response. In HEAVENLY COUNCIL, the reader should expect the solution of the conflict to come from a divine source.

[51] In a diachronic context one can posit that the original core of Job or the earlier folk-tale was just as short, but in a synchronic context the finaal form has to be concidered.

Conclusions with questions for further study

This brief analysis sought to demonstrate the viability of focalization as a method for literary analysis. The concept was combined with insights from cognitive narratology. The previous analysis of Job demonstrated how the narrative is primarily internally focalized with brief comments from the narrator. The content of focalization mainly described events and Job's emotional reaction to those events. From a cognitive viewpoint, the lack of description for the identity of the messengers, their journey or the places that the events took place, serves to direct attention to Job's reaction, which in comparison to the descriptions by the messengers, is vivid and full of emotion and ideology. The narrator's comments right after Job's response serve to confirm Job's reaction as right and good.

Outlining the details, one can claim that the narrative has a clear strategy and point to make. The point is to demonstrate Job's pious response to the news given by the messengers. From the perspective of schema theory the sequence of Job's first misfortunes moves along the lines of the TEST schema. Job is being tested, and his response demonstrates how he passed. The narrative directs its thrust at the ideological question regarding the nature of piety. Based on the analysis, the ideological point is to show that a proper pious response to suffering is to praise and bless God.

However, there are questions that remain open. From a cognitive viewpoint it is not entirely clear how to conceptualise the narrative world in this brief scene. While focalization was directed to the messengers who relayed their viewpoint to Job, one could just as easily conceptualise the entire narrative from the perspective of Job, who is experiencing the messages as they come one by one. This is possible, for no extra details are given about the messengers; the only detail is that they came to Job. The way a reader conceptualises Job's response is likewise possible in multiple ways. Instead of understanding it as the sole perspective of Job, one can view the narrative from the viewpoint of the messengers who see Job's pious reaction. From a literary perspective, one has to carefully read the text and look for cues on how the perspective shifts, but in the

case of Job 1:13-22, the cues are open-ended and allow for the possibility of multiple interpretations.

Coming back to the main point of the narrative, one can see how it is not something open-ended from a literary and cognitive perspective. The clearest indication of it being the thrust of the narrative is the narrator's confirming comments. If the narrator is assumed to be reliable, one can accept his characterisation of piety.

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PhD project "Applying Focalization in Old Testament multi-layered prose and poetic texts" brief overview

The main method of analysis for this PhD project is focalization, a concept from narratology. The reason for this inquiry stems from insights of Constantine Nazarov's study on the same concept, where he notes how the concept has been largely overlooked by Old Testament scholars until recent times. A literary approach to the Bible is not something out of the ordinary, and ample scholarship has been done by studying the final form of the text (a synchronic approach). But a potential gap in the research is applying literary methods in a diachronic context where the shape of the story has changed through time.

Thus, this research project aims to take the concept of focalization, develop it as a method with added insight from cognitive narratology (another approach largely left unexplored in biblical studies), analyse Old Testament narratives in both a synchronic and diachronic context and to compare the results. The texts under analysis came to fruition during the Second Temple period and deal with a similar question of piety. The stories in question are: (1) Genesis 22:1-19; (2) The frame story of Job; (3) The book of Jonah; (4) The book of Joel. Joel stands out in this regard, for unlike the rest, it is a poetic text, and thus another inquiry is to apply literary methods to poetic texts that have an overarching narrative schema.

The current plan for the project is as follows:

- Develop the method of focalization with added insight from cognitive narratology (schema theory and experientiality)
    - In the process of developing the method, do a synchronic-literary analysis of Genesis 22:1-19 (case study analysis with methodology from Gerard Genette, Mieke Bal, Shlomith-Rimmon Kenan and Monika Fludernik)
    - Do a diachronic-literary analysis of Genesis 22:1-19 with discussion on results, differences and similarities with the final form.
    - Based on the analysis, formulate an approach for the study of OT narratives.
- Analyse the frame of Job with the proposed method
    - Synchronic literary analysis

    - Diachronic literary analysis
    - Discussion on results, differences and similarities.
- Analyse the book of Jonah with the proposed method
    - Synchronic literary analysis
    - Diachronic literary analysis
    - Discussion on results, differences and similarities.
- Analyse the book of Joel with the proposed method
    - Synchronic literary analysis
    - Diachronic literary analysis
    - Discussion on results, differences and similarities.
- Final discussion, comparing the results of the previous analysis with hermeneutical perspectives and conclusions.

The hypothesis is that in comparing the results of diachronic and synchronic analysis, one can see how the use of focalization advances the possibilities of interpreting the biblical text. This conclusion would also be in line with current trends in biblical studies, where the meaning and focus of a story change when looked at through different redactional layers.