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Meta-Textual Semantics in the Hebrew Text of Jeremiah

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2022

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Acknowledgements

לֹא לָנוּ יְהוָה לֹא לָנוּ כִּי־לְשִׁמְךָ תֵּן כָּבוֹד עַל־חַסְדְּךָ עַל־אֲמִתֶּךָ

Many contributed to the completion of this dissertation. Timothy Lim has been an exemplary *Doktorvater*. He constantly demonstrated concern for my well-being, provided tireless guidance, and encouraged me throughout every stage of this project. His tenacity allowed me to finish in a timely fashion. Anja Klein, my secondary supervisor, clarified my route by her feedback and comments at my boards. I appreciate the willingness of Suzanna Millar and Noam Mizraḥi to be my examiners. Their criticisms and instructions during the *viva voce* were illuminating. I thank Connor Boyd, Paul Foster, Phil Foster, Alex Muir, and John Screnock for challenging my thinking and articulation in numerous ways.

The pandemic made some sources inaccessible. I appreciate Steven Boyd, Russell Fuller, David Marcus (Jewish Theological Seminary), Alan Millard (University of Liverpool), Richard Parkinson (University of Oxford), Tomasz Polański (Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce), Meira Polliack (Tel Aviv University), and Keven Youngblood (Harding University) sharing their work. My research progressed more quickly because of their kindness.

Several people provided emotional, spiritual, and financial support during our time in the UK. I would like to thank David and Deborah Chapman, Mike and Susan Heinemeier, Joy Langan, Ken Nichols, Kenneth and Helen Nisbet, Mitch and Kathryn Stevens, and Nick and Donelda Wilson. I also thank my parents, Tommy and Christi Peeler, and in-laws, Richard and Karen Jones, for their support. Belonging in a category of their own are my grandparents, Sanders and Peggy Peeler. They never stopped believing in the importance of my work and persistently fortified me by doing anything possible to accelerate its completion. There is no way to adequately express my appreciation for their participation in this project.

Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε μνείαν σου ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου

I express my gratitude and appreciation to Danielle for her steadfast strength and unswerving kindness in weathering this eight year voyage. *Je t'aime.*

וַיְהִי־הוּא טֶרֶם כֻּלָּה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רִבְקָה יֹצֵאת…וְכַדָּהּ עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ

I beg the pardon of בָּרוּךְ and מִישָׁאֵל who know nothing but my working on theses. I could not have finished without your prayers for "Abba's paper."

הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְּכוּ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו אַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק

הָאֱלֹהִים הָרֹעֶה אֹתִי מֵעוֹדִי עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגֹּאֵל אֹתִי מִכָּל־רָע

יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים

Our last years recall the truth of the prophet's words.

כִּי־תַעֲבֹר בַּמַּיִם אִתְּךָ־אָנִי

וּבַנְּהָרוֹת לֹא יִשְׁטְפוּךָ

כִּי־תֵלֵךְ בְּמוֹ־אֵשׁ לֹא תִכָּוֶה

וְלֶהָבָה לֹא תִבְעַר־בָּךְ

This project would have been impossible without YHWH's guidance, provision, and protection. After experiencing deliverance, I echo Moses's words — בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה. At last, a new day arises with healing in its wings.

זָכְרָה־לִּי אֱלֹהַי לְטוֹבָה

Lay Summary

Form generating a contextual effect in a written text is an acknowledged literary device, but it has not been investigated extensively in the Hebrew Bible. In the last few decades, Avi Hurvitz, Gary Rendsburg, Scott Noegel, and others note several cases where the form of the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible is elegantly structured as either misshapen or shapely to demonstrate a meaning beyond the lexical or phrasal level. These linguistic elements are cases of meta-textual semantics.

Scribal schools across the ancient Near East create cases of meta-textual semantics in their texts. They expect meta-textual semantics to be part of the reading and interpretational process. Ancient Israelite authors expect their readers and hearers to discover examples of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible (Prov 1:5-6). The rabbinic exegetes around the first centuries CE and in medieval times employ meta-textual semantics in their analysis to explain a contextual theme.

Previous studies are too brief and selective to determine the importance of meta-textual semantics for the study of the Hebrew Bible. Additionally, they do not provide a methodology to properly test appearances of meta-textual semantics. I create a methodology to determine whether a textual impropriety or paragon is part of the stylistics of an author, is an accidental textual corruption, or indicates a minor or major textual theme. To be a proper case of meta-textual semantics, the example must have a contextual purpose and illustrate a theme in the text.

I use this methodology to examine a selection of potential cases of meta-textual semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah. Hebrew Jeremiah is an ideal place to investigate meta-textual semantics because it emphasises the connection between the written and oral aspects of the text. This connection between the written and oral in Hebrew Jeremiah provides opportunities

to evaluate the graphemic and phonetic aspects of the visions, sign acts, and prophecies in Jeremiah as they relate to the ill-formed or well-formed nature of the text. The form of the text contributes to the textual themes and meaning. The textual issues in Hebrew Jeremiah as well as the vastness of the book provide ample occasion to utilise my methodology.

I find cases of meta-textual semantics in the words of YHWH, Jeremiah, the narrator, and the Judahite people in Hebrew Jeremiah in both the prosaic and poetic portions of the book. My study illustrates that scribes are careful readers of their text and add to the meta-textual semantics of the author. Later translators additionally understand and seek to replicate the meta-textual semantics in their *Vorlage*. Consciousness of the presence of meta-textual semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah has implications for the interconnection between author and scribe in the Hebrew text, the relationship of a version to its *Vorlage*, textual criticism, and exegesis of Jeremiah. This study and methodology opens future exegetical pathways in Hebrew Jeremiah and potentially other prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible. This investigation calls for a reevaluation of our understanding of linguistic infelicities in the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible.

Abstract

In this study, I examine the linguistic infelicities (i.e., meta-textual semantics) in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah. The introduction to Proverbs, especially Prov 1:5-6, suggests that it utilises mind-advancing strategies and riddles (e.g., the acronym תֹּכֵא in Prov 1:10 interpreted as תֵּלֵךְ בְּדַרְכְּךָ אִתָּם via verse 15). Ancient Near Eastern scribes, rabbinic exegetes, and the Masoretes also display an awareness of meta-textual semantics in their textual production and exegesis.

Meta-textual semantics, however, has not been systematically explored across an entire book in the Hebrew Bible. Several scholars (e.g., A. Hurvitz, S. Noegel, and G. Rendsburg) have signalled the exegetical significance of oddities or coherence in the text of the Hebrew Bible (i.e., a text is confused or well-formed to illustrate its message). Their studies are illuminating but too brief and selective. Additionally, they lack a methodology. I, therefore, enumerate a methodology which follows two paths — textual contortion or textual cohesion. I examine abnormalities or cohesion in Hebrew Jeremiah to determine if an element is a case of authorial or scribal stylistics or if it is a textual corruption as evidenced by the extant ancient witnesses. If neither of these sufficiently clarifies the questionable textual element, then I assess whether it is a case of textual contortion (i.e., a disharmonious textual element creating a contextual effect which exemplifies a major or minor contextual theme) or textual cohesion (i.e., a harmonious textual element orchestrating a contextual effect to demonstrate a contextual theme). For example, Saul's "lacking" regnal dates in 1 Sam 13:1 illustrate his short, failed kingship (i.e., textual contortion). Elijah responding identically to YHWH in 1 Kgs 19:10 and 14 demonstrates that he is unmoved in his faithfulness to YHWH (i.e., textual cohesion). If a suggestion does not fit a major or minor theme in the context, then this oddity cannot be a case of meta-textual semantics.

Meta-textual semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah appears in the orthography (e.g., בֹּאר in Jer 2:13), syntax (e.g., anacoluthon in Jer 4:23-26), and morphology (e.g., geminate verbs in Jer 6:9) of the text as well as literary aspects of the text (e.g., palindrome mimicking siege conditions in Jer 52:6). The examples appear in the words of YHWH, Jeremiah, the narrator, and the Judahite people in both the prosaic and poetic portions of the book.

There are several implications of this study. Meta-textual semantics is more extensively distributed in the Hebrew Bible than previously recognised. Scribes were competent readers of Hebrew text and contributed to meta-textual semantics in major and minor ways in the text. An odd linguistic element in the text is not necessarily a textual corruption. An author's use of meta-textual semantics might lead to additional cases of meta-textual semantics created by a scribe in the same text and context. Finally, the versional translators of the Hebrew Bible may be motivated to make meta-textual semantic choices when crafting their translations of their Hebrew *Vorlage*.

Abbreviations

α′	Aquila
σ′	Symmachus
θ′	Theodotion
A	Aleppo Codex
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AcBib	Academia Biblica
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASJ	*Acta Sumerologica*
AUM	Andrews University Monographs
AuOr	*Aula Orientalis*
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BBRSup	Bulletin for Biblical Research, Supplements
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980)
BeO	*Bibbia e oriente*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHHB	Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible
Bib	*Biblica*
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BIOSCS	*Bulletin of the International Organisation of Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
C	Cairo Codex of the Prophets
CAD	Chicago Assyrian Dictionary
CAT	Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places, 2nd ed. (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995).
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document

CDCH	David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009)
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CIS	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*
CPNIVC	College Press NIV Commentary
DNWSI	J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling., *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EHLL	Encyclopaedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics
ErIsr	*Eretz Israel*
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
FO	*Folia Orientalia*
G	Greek Translation of the Hebrew Bible often called Septuagint
HA	*Hebrew Abstracts*
HALOT	M. E. J. Richardson, ed., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Study Edition, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2001)
HBCE	Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HeBAI	*Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*
Hen	*Henoch*
Hermeneia	Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSMM	Harvard Semitic Museum Monographs
HTKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HUCM	Monographs of Hebrew Union College
HvTSt	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	Interpretation
Int	*Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*
IOS	*Israel Oriental Society*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHebS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JSem	*Journal of Semitics*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
J.W.	*Jewish Wars* (Josephus)
KAI	Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften 1* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002).
KJV	King James Version
KUSATU	*Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*
L	Leningrad Codex
LBH	Learning Biblical Hebrew
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LMS	Lexham Methods Series
LSWS	Linguistic Studies in West Semitic
Maarov	*Maarov*
MCAAS	Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OCDSS	The Oxford Commentary on the Dead Sea Scrolls
OL	Old Latin
OrLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OLP	*Orientalia lovaniensia periodica*
OTL	Old Testament Library
Presb	*Presbyterion*
Proof	*Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumrân*
TMSJ	*The Master's Seminary Journal*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
S	Syriac Peshitta
SAIS	Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
Scrip	*Scriptura*
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SSN	Studia Semitics Neerlandica
SSLL	Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics

StANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
StPh	Studia Phoenicia
StPohl	Studia Pohl
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
SuppTHB	Supplements to the Textual History of the Bible
T	Aramaic Targumim to the Hebrew Bible
TCT	Textual Criticism and the Translator
TS	Texts and Studies
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
Text	*Textus*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
V	Latin Vulgate
VCSupp	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WW	*Word and World*
YJS	Yale Judaica Series
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebräistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZB	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZECOT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament

Chapter 1 Meta-Textual Semantics: Present or Absent in the Hebrew Bible?

1.1 Introducing Meta-Textual Semantics

The reader of the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible encounters several oddities within the text usually explained as scribal corruptions (e.g., the scribe has accidentally interchanged the consonants of a lexeme) or scribal variation (e.g., a scribe has a preference for spelling a lexeme a certain way though other ways simultaneously exist). If scribal variation is the chosen explanation, then no significance is given to the intentional change. If a textual corruption, then the text is emended. Some readers, however, understand certain textual oddities neither as scribal corruptions nor variations but as elements elucidating the context.

In this study, I use the term meta-textual semantics to refer to the form and presentation of the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible providing meaning beyond what is inherent in the form of lexemes and phrases.[1] I highlight cases involving a peculiar or obtrusive element within the Hebrew text of Jeremiah which illustrates the context though the element under discussion does not actually possess any semantic value (e.g., an extra א in the orthography of a word).[2] The form adds meaning beyond the contextual sense of the words. I

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[1] The terminology of "meta-textual semantics" was suggested to me by Timothy Lim in December 2020. Also, see Lewis Glinert, *The Story of Hebrew* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 1-2. Glinert describes this aspect as "para-language." He says, "We will look beyond the words and grammatical structures to communication styles and to the 'para-language' of scripts, fonts, spellings, formats…No account of language can ignore the pull of para-language."

[2] For ancient and medieval Jewish and Christian exegetes using the contextual message in their exegesis of the Hebrew Bible, see Timothy H. Lim, "Contextual Readings of the Song of Songs in the Pre-Modern Period," in *Congress Volume Aberdeen 2019*, ed. Grant MacAskill, Christl M. Maier, and Joachim Schaper (VTSup 192; Leiden: Brill, 2022), 186-203. Lim argues that the contextual meaning corresponds to פשט and the allegorical reading corresponds to דרש while a middle ground is found in Anonymous Prague and Anonymous Oxford manuscripts of Songs which lists different interpretations.

include elements of orthography, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics as representatives of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew text.

The secondary literature of the Hebrew Bible often mentions the phenomenon of meta-textual semantics, though this literature does not use uniform terminology to describe it.[3] In addition to this lack of consistent terminology, there does not exist a critical methodology of meta-textual semantics which can test the validity of its purported presence in a text, nor has a work appeared detailing its complexity across various texts within a section or book in the Hebrew Bible.[4] This lack of a full and critical engagement with meta-textual semantics has resulted in a flat description of the phenomenon within the Hebrew Bible. Also, previous studies upon meta-textual semantics provide brief examples across a plethora of texts producing the assumption that this particular device is not wide spread across the texts of the Hebrew Bible, which does not appear to be an entirely accurate assessment. This study will seek to correct some of these misconceptions and misrepresentations by suggesting a methodology and describing a selection of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah.

1.2 Call for a Fuller Investigation of Meta-Textual Semantics in the Hebrew Bible

To illustrate briefly the need for further investigation of meta-textual semantics, I examine the description of the phenomenon in a few sources discussing Isa 61:3.

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[3] A lack of consistent terminology is also discussed regarding puns and metathesis in the Hebrew Bible. For puns, see Scott. B. Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (ANEM 26; Atlanta: SBL, 2021), 1. For metathesis, see Isaac Kalimi, *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible: Wordplay as a Literary and Exegetical Device* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2018), 1-8.

[4] Similarly, Nathan LeMaster states that Janus parallelism lacks a clear methodology. See Nathan LeMaster, "A Methodology for Janus Parallelism," *TMSJ* 31 (2020): 173-188. A methodology is lacking in spite of a monograph on the subject. See Scott B. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job* (JSOTSS 223; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).

Isa 61:3 reads —

[שְׁלָחַנִי]…לָתֵת לָהֶם פְּאֵר תַּחַת אֵפֶר

[He (YHWH) sent me]…to give to them a turban instead of ashes…[5]

In Isa 61:3, metathesis illustrates the reversal of the Babylonian exiles' situation.[6] The exiles, who have smeared their heads with ashes in mourning, now will have "a turban instead of ashes" (פְּאֵר תַּחַת אֵפֶר) placed upon their head. Commenting on this verse, John Goldingay says, "The first exchange involves a paronomasia: *'ēper* will be replaced by *pe'ēr*. The exchange of letters suggests the exchange of that to which they refer."[7] Also, Joseph Blenkinsopp says, "The point is also made by the reversal of consonants and sounds in the first of the three images: *pĕ'ēr taḥat 'ēper*, 'a turban instead of ashes.'"[8]

While both Goldingay and Blenkinsopp provide the essential details (i.e., the form of this phrase encapsulates the reversal the Judahite exiles will experience), they do not fully explore the construction of this particular phrase. First, the pun does not simply involve metathesis (or consonance) between the consonants א and פ as Goldingay suggests but equally includes vocalic metathesis (or assonance) as Blenkinsopp notes.[9] Second, the fact that the pun includes the preposition תַּחַת is not mentioned by either commentator. Goldingay

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[5] The *Qal qatal* of √שׁלח in Isa 61:1 governs the following infinitives in Isa 61:1-3.

[6] Kalimi, *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*, 72, 132, and 160.

[7] John Goldingay, A *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 56-66* (ICC; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 304.

[8] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 226.

[9] For a fuller description of the nature of the vocalic metathesis, see Josiah D. Peeler, "Quenching Tears: A Note on 2 Kings 22:17 and 19," *VT*, forthcoming.

does not even transliterate the preposition when discussing the pun in this phrase.[10] Blenkinsopp transliterates the preposition but ignores its significance by suggesting the importance centres on the connection between the first and third words within the phrase. The contribution of the preposition תַּחַת to this phrase denoting reversal resides in the fact that this preposition is a palindrome.[11] The appearance of a palindrome between two anagramic lexemes marks the organic connection inherent throughout this phrase.[12] By using a palindrome between two metathesising lexemes of the first two consonants, the author or scribe illustrates the ease with which YHWH will reverse the exiles' circumstances. Additionally, this three word phrase pivots on the preposition תַּחַת. The consonant ח is the middle letter of the phrase פְּאֵר תַּחַת אֵפֶר. This consonant only appears once but every other consonantal phoneme within this phrase appears twice — once on either side of ח. The author or scribe constructs this phrase to illustrate a thorough and systematic reversal.

Third, neither commentator mentions the contextual association of the lexemes אֵפֶר "dust" and פְּאֵר "turban" with the verb √פאר "to glorify" which appears in Isa 61:3 (i.e., as a *Hitpael* infinitive) at the conclusion of Isa 61:1-3. The verb √פאר is a *Leitmotiv* in this section (Isa 60:7, 9, 13, 21; and 61:3; cf. the lexeme תִּפְאֶרֶת in Isa 60:7, 19; 62:3; 63:12, 14; and 64:10). The *Hitpael* infinitive of √פאר in Isa 60:21 and 61:3 envelopes the proclamation of Isa

[10] Kalimi does not transliterate the preposition תַּחַת in his discussion. See Kalimi, *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*, 72, 132, and 160.

[11] For the significance of the palindrome in Isa 61:3, see Josiah D. Peeler, "Quenching Tears: A Note on 2 Kings 22:17 and 19."

[12] For anagramic paronomasia, see Scott B. Noegel, "Paronomasia," *EHLL* 3:26.

61:1-3. Additionally, the verb √פאר is a denominative verb deriving from the lexeme פְּאֵר.[13] A key component of the coherence of this section is that Israel's reversal (i.e., אֵפֶר to פְּאֵר) results in Israel having a פְּאֵר and being √פאר and YHWH being √פאר. In this way, the author or scribe extends the pun between אֵפֶר and פְּאֵר and centres the reader or hearer's attention to the multifaceted nature of the root √פאר as a noun in Israel's case and as a verb in YHWH's case.

Fourth, neither commentator seeks to connect the actual textual elements in Isa 61:3 with the possible lexical or conceptual associations that the ancient reader or hearer of this text might envision. Though this is admittedly subjective, there is evidence that other lexemes would be evoked by the language of אֵפֶר and פְּאֵר in this verse. The fact that the pun extends to include the verb √פאר, especially from Isa 60:21 and 61:3, suggests that the author or scribe is open to additional, implicit connections between the puns explicitly within the metathesising phrase in Isa 61:3. For example, the pun between אֵפֶר and פְּאֵר may include the lexeme אֵפֶד "bandage" (1 Kgs 20:38 and 41). The various witnesses of 1 Kgs 20:38 confuse the lexeme appearing in the text (i.e., אֵפֶד "bandage" in the MT; פְּאֵר "turban" in G and T; and אֵפֶר "dust" in S, α′, σ′, and V).[14] This suggests that the close graphemic and phonetic connections between these three lexemes might cause the reader or hearer to confuse them. In

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[13] The lexeme פְּאֵר is an Egyptian loanword. See Benjamin J. Noonan, *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible: A Lexicon of Language Contact* (LSAWS 14; University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2019), 169-170. It has been proposed that the noun פְּאֵר derives from the verbal root √פאר "to glorify." Noonan, however, notes that there is no Semitic cognate for the Hebrew lexeme פְּאֵר, and there is no Semitic cognate for the Hebrew root √פאר. It seems that Hebrew borrowed the lexeme פְּאֵר from the Egyptian *pry*, *pyr* which denotes a cloth wrapping including, but not limited to, one wrapped around the head. The same conclusion appears in *HALOT*, 908.

[14] For the textual evidence, see C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 241-242 and Marvin A. Sweeney, *1 and 2 Kings* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 237.

each case, the lexeme describes something that can be placed upon or wrapped around the head. Also, the lexemes פֹּאָרָה "branch" (Ezek 17:6; 31:5, 6, 8, 12, and 13)[15] and פְּאֵרָה "branch, bough" (Isa 10:33; cf. the denominative verb √פאר "to go over the branches" in Deut 24:20)[16] might be in view because of the tree imagery in this section (i.e., נֵצֶר "branch" in Isa 60:21 and אַיִל "oak" in Isa 61:3), as well as the consonantal connection with the lexeme פְּאֵר, as well as אֵפֶר. The noun מַטָּע "planting" appearing in Isa 60:21 and 61:3 also appears in Ezek 17:7 and 31:4, further linking at least the lexeme פֹּאָרָה to this particular Isaianic context. Within the context of the reversal of the Babylonian deportation of Judah, a pun operable between lexemes with the consonantal phonemes פ and ר (i.e., פְּאֵר and אֵפֶר explicitly in Isa 61:3 as well as other lexemes possibly implicitly evoked אֶפֶר, פֹּאָרָה, and פְּאָרָה) in Isa 61:3 might additionally suggest that Judah's fully reversed situation will culminate with a re-crossing of the Euphrates River (פְּרָת) to return to Canaan. If so, then this Isaianic text probably envisions this crossing of the Euphrates as a reenactment of the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14-15) and Jordan River (Josh 3-4) which were part of the first Exodus. This crossing signals both a reversal of the Babylonian deportation and institutes a second Exodus. Additionally, YHWH came from פָּארָן "Paran" (Deut 33:2 and Hab 3:3) to rescue and claim Israel. Now, he comes to give Israel a פְּאֵר perhaps from פָּארָן.

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[15] See *HALOT*, 909 and *BDB,* 802. The form פֹּאֹרוֹת in L of Ezek 17:6 appears as פֹּרָאוֹת in A. See D. S. Loewinger, "The Aleppo Codex and the Ben Asher Tradition," *Text* 1 (1960): 85.

[16] The masorah of Isa 10:33 states that the א is written but not read in the form פְּאָרָה thus producing פּוּאָרָה. See *HALOT*, 909 and *BDB*, 802. John Watts understands the lexeme פְּאָרָה/פּוּאָרָה in Isa 10:33 as related to the root √פאר I "to glorify," instead of √פאר II "to go over the branches." This is because he understands only one root for √פאר which has both glory and tree semantics. He believes the noun פְּאֵר derives from the verb √פאר "to glorify" and understands the form in Isa 10:33 as referring to glory and not to the branches of a tree. See John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (WBC 24; Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 164-165.

This brief examination of the authorial or scribal design within one phrase of Isa 61:3 illustrates that previous comments on meta-textual semantics are often too brief. A fuller, more detailed engagement with this phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible needs to be conducted. Additionally, it should be acknowledged that all of the implicit lexical and conceptual links I suggest above with the three word phrase in Isa 61:3 could be a fabrication of mine and are not necessarily intended by the authors and scribes of this text. This illustrates that there is a need for a methodology to determine what connections and associations the authors and scribes of Isa 61:1-3, for example, intended when they inscribed their text. What elements of the form of a text are constructed by the author or scribe in contradistinction to which elements are constructed by the modern scholar?

1.3 Is Meta-Textual Semantics an Ancient or Modern Conceptualisation?

An issue related to the study of meta-textual semantics is determining whether it is an ancient device placed in the texts of the Hebrew Bible by its authors and scribes or whether it is an invention of the modern scholarly mind.[17] Did the author or scribe place it in the text or did the reader? For example, Gary Rendsburg cautions regarding Kalimi's recent monograph on metathesis that while metathesis is certainly an intentional device in some texts, Kalimi might be too keen to find metathesis across the Hebrew Bible. The limited Hebrew *abjad* with only 22 consonantal phonemes means that the same consonants will likely appear in various juxtaposed lexemes and probably create unintentional metathesis at various points.[18] In a similar way, Michael Fox warns that modern commentators may create enigmas in

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[17] Cf. Scott B. Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah and Its Literary Significance: Part 1," *JBQ* 24 (1996): 86. Noegel notes that the few occurrences of atbash in Jeremiah and the difficulty in describing them means that "some consider the device to be pure scholarly fiction, or not original to Jeremiah's prophecy."

[18] Gary A. Rendsburg, review of *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible: Wordplay as a Literary and Exegetical Device*, by Isaac Kalimi, *VT* 71 (2021): 153-156 especially 154-155.

Proverbs because of the phraseology of Prov 1:6 instead of discovering ones the author placed in the text.[19] If meta-textual semantics is a modern construction which scholars have superimposed upon ancient texts, then its value is limited to a discussion of modern approaches to the text.[20] If, however, the ancient authors and scribes and their original audience were familiar with and utilised meta-textual semantics both when forming and creating their texts as well as when listening to and reading texts, then providing a framework from which to properly understand its appearance and function in the texts of the Hebrew Bible will aid in exegeting these texts.

I suggest that Prov 1, especially verses 2-6, 10, and 15, provide evidence that ancient Israelite authors and scribes were aware of the concept of meta-textual semantics and employed it when constructing their texts. Additionally, the authors and scribes of ancient texts in the Hebrew Bible and in the ancient Near East expected their readers and hearers to be familiar with meta-textual semantics in order to properly perceive and grasp the significance of its appearance within a discourse.

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[19] See Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 65-67. Fox (p. 67) says, "The Prologue's assumption that the book holds a significant number of enigmas encourages the reader to seek them out, and this effort may itself produce enigmas — as it did for Tur-Sinai and Zer-Kavod. The messages of such 'found' enigmas always accord with the basic message of the book and thus reinforce it. When that happens, the enigma then belongs to the act of interpretation, not the moment of composition."

Contra Scott B. Noegel and Corinna E. Nichols, "Lurking Lions and Hidden Herds: Concealed Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible," *Religions* 12 (2021): 493. Noegel and Nichols suggest that the hidden "lion" (אֲרִי) among the form הֶאֱרִיךְ "he prolongs" in Prov 19:11 "puts into practice the directions given in Prov 1:6 that to obtain wisdom one must listen closely."

[20] This is a difference between historical-critical approaches to the Hebrew Bible and post-modernist approaches. Post-modern approaches focus on the reader's interpretation of the text, while historical-critical approaches are more focused on the original context and conceptualisation of a text.

1.4 Proverbs 1:1-7: A Paradigm for Increasing Wisdom through Reading

The introduction to the book of Proverbs and the immediately following textual unit illustrate how meta-textual semantics is part of the shared rhetorical and literary framework of both author/scribe and hearer/reader when interacting in a text. Several odd elements appear within the text of Proverbs 1 that are difficult to interpret. Is the title in Prov 1:1 (מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה בֶּן־דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל׃) only composed of the overt object of a null copula phrase with both the subject (i.e., אֵלֶּה "these" as in Exod 1:1 and Deut 1:1) and the verb being covert?[21] Or is this phrase a "syntactic fragment functioning as a title," a possibility which Robert Holmstedt, John Cook, and Phillip Marshall note regarding the similar construction in Qoh 1:1?[22] Is the title governing the following infinitives? If Prov 1:1 represents a null copula phrase, then is the null finite verb in Prov 1:1 governing the infinitives which follow it in verses 2-4 and 6? Has a verb elided between Prov 1:1 and 1:2?[23] The titles within Proverbs (10:1; 24:23; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1) are not connected to what follows them according to Arthur

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[21] The titles in Prov 24:23 (גַּם־אֵלֶּה לַחֲכָמִים) and 25:1 (גַּם־אֵלֶּה מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה) begin with אֵלֶּה. This suggests that אֵלֶּה is the null subject in Prov 1:1.

[22] Robert D. Holmstedt, John A. Cook, and Phillip S. Marshall, *Qoheleth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (BHHB; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 48. Holmstedt, Cook, and Marshall understand Qoh 1:1 as having a null subject (i.e., אֵלֶּה).

[23] Most understand the title as governing the infinitives. For example, R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 31; Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC 22; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 3-4; Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 58 and 72; and Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 173-174. Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, 58) says, "The syntax of this passage — a noun defined by a long series of infinitives of purpose — is without parallel in the Bible. It is later employed in the Rule of the Community from Qumran (1QS I 2-11), probably in dependence on Proverbs." Waltke (*The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15*, 174) says, "This unique series of infinitival phrases binds the preamble to the title. A verb such as 'were collected' is elided — i.e., the full thought is, 'The proverbs of Solomon…were collected to know wisdom…'"

Keefer.[24] Is the title in Prov 1:1 an exception to this pattern? If Prov 1:1-6 is syntactically connected, then the resulting understanding that מִשְׁלֵי in 1:1 help to understand a מָשָׁל in 1:6 seems tautological.[25] Is the jussive beginning verse 5 (√שׁמע "to hear, listen") evidence of an editorial insertion or a parenthesis that is separated from the rest of verses 2-6?[26] If this verse is not a parenthetical statement, then how does the jussive relate to the infinitives preceding it in verses 2-4 and the following one in verse 6? Should √שׁמע be gapped both backward and forward so that it governs the infinitives in verses 2-4 and 6 as Keefer suggests?[27] Does verse 7 refer to the fear of YHWH being the starting point of knowledge or the foremost aspect of knowledge?[28]

The subject of the null copula phrase in Prov 1:1 is covert (i.e., אֵלֶּה is the covert subject) and separate from the following verses.[29] The jussive of √שׁמע in verse 5 governs the infinitives in verses 2-4 and 6 though it is

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[24] For a discussion of the titles in Proverbs, see Arthur Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective: The Intended Audience and a Coherent Reading of Proverbs 1:1-7," *JBL* 136 (2017): 105-106. A paragraph opens immediately after the title in Prov 10:1 (i.e., מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה פ) strengthening Keefer's point, though it is not noted by him.

[25] This is suggested in Whybray, *Proverbs*, 34. Whybray believes that the tautological nature of verse 6 means that it was not originally part of the preface.

[26] This is argued in Crawford H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1904), 4-5. But, see Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 62. Fox understands the jussive as logically following the infinitives.

[27] See Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective: The Intended Audience and a Coherent Reading of Proverbs 1:1-7," 106-108.

[28] Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, 67-68) understands the fear of YHWH as the first thing to know so that everything else can be learned (cf. Ibn Ezra and Kaspi). The use of תְּחִלָּה "beginning" in Prov 9:10 suggests that רֵאשִׁית refers to the starting point in Prov 1:7.

[29] See Holmstedt, Cook, and Marshall, *Qoheleth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 48 and Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective: The Intended Audience and a Coherent Reading of Proverbs 1:1-7," 105-106.

phonologically null.[30] This overview highlights the complex grammatical structure of Prov 1:1-7.

The intricate nature of Prov 1:1-7 requires the hearer/reader to closely scrutinise this text within its context while the phraseology and structure also continually forces them to reevaluate and reformulate their previous understandings.[31] Close, contextual reading is not a modern enterprise. I suggest that the text formulates grammatical difficulties mentioned above in Prov 1:1-7 to force the reader to grapple with the message. In this way, the text encourages the hearer/reader to a close, contextual reading of every element within the text. The reader is constantly reevaluating previous understandings (i.e., retrospective patterning) and wrestling with how each new understanding should be incorporated into the coherence of

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[30] For phonologically null constituents in ancient Hebrew, see John A. Cook and Robert D. Holmstedt, *Intermediate Biblical Hebrew: An Illustrated Grammar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), 18-19. Cook and Holmstedt say, "…The null constituent is a type of constituent that is rarely recognized in Hebrew grammar, though it is both syntactically critical and nearly omnipresent. Null constituents lack a phonological shape and yet have a syntactic reality…Null constituents are allowed within a discourse because their reference is easily recoverable" (p. 19).

[31] The fact that various proverbs in the book of Proverbs force the hearer/reader to reexamine their previous exegetical decisions appears in Suzanna R. Millar, "When a Straight Road Becomes a Garden Path: The 'False Lead' as a Pedagogical Strategy in the Book of Proverbs," *JSOT* 43 (2018): 67-82. Millar argues that certain lexemes provide a false lead for the reader who must reevaluate and then reread the proverb. This device is pedagogical. It forces the reader to think more about an individual proverb. Millar says, "The process fosters alertness, and trains the reader to think, coaching them in moral reasoning. The initial interpretation is rejected because it is morally abominable. The proverbs teach the reader how to navigate Proverbs' ethical system and thus contribute to their moral development, a main pedagogical aim of the book. The reader learns to consider instruction, rejecting bad advice and accepting wise counsel…This technique makes the reader aware of the limits of their wisdom. In fact, it exemplifies the limits by forcing the reader to come up against them in their own mistaken interpretation (p. 81)."

the text.[32] In this way, the comments by Blake Couey on Hebrew poetry in general are helpful. Couey says, "…This account of poetic structure emphasizes the audience's experience of a poem as an event that unfolds in real time. Even so, poetic movement is hardly a straightforward progression from beginning to end. The audience is continually processing new lines of a poem, and the devices that move the poem forward may also send the audience back to preceding lines with new insights. Smith dubs this process 'retrospective patterning.'"[33]

Retrospective patterning provides a lens to describe the infinitives' relationship to their governing finite in Prov 1:1-6. The jussive of √שׁמע is phonologically null but present through ellipsis (backward and forward) in these surrounding verses. The placement of the finite in Prov 1:5 illustrates a reading strategy of the book. The hearer/reader must connect what they read both with what proceeds it and what follows. Similarly, the subject (i.e., אֱלֹהִ֑ים) and verb of the null copula is phonologically null but present in Prov 1:1 highlighting that the hearer/reader must be aware of what is covert in the text as well as what is overt. The syntax of Prov 1:1-7 establishes the blueprint for reading Proverbs.

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[32] For the concept of coherence in a text, see Elizabeth Robar, *The Verb and the Paragraph in Biblical Hebrew: A Cognitive-Linguistic Approach* (SSLL 78; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 2-3 and Elizabeth Robar, "Coherence and Cohesion," *EHLL* 1:473-476. Robar argues based on the Gestalt Effect and the Zeigarnik Effect that the mind remains stressed until it places new information into cohesive units. This stress can only be alleviated by fixing and forming cohesive units in the mind which allows the brain to feel that the situation has been sufficiently resolved. The troubling element, which does not fit cohesively and cogently into the present categories of the mind, will prey upon the mind until there is some closure which comes in the form of cohesion. This process forces the mind to fixate on a divergent element and to explore different avenues which might provide cohesion.

[33] J. Blake Couey, *Reading the Poetry of First Isaiah: The Most Perfect Model of Prophetic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 68-69. Couey is dependent on the terminology in Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 10.

Proverbs encourages its hearers/readers to continually contemplate its teachings (cf. Deut 6:4-9; Josh 1:8-9; and Ps 1:2). Proverbs suggests that the sayings are carefully arranged by the teacher to cultivate further investigation and discovery by the student (cf. Qoh 12:9-11).[34] The student's goal should be an infatuation with acquiring and reexamining wisdom (Prov 4:5-7) using every aspect of their physical constitution (e.g., eyes, ears, lips, neck, heart, fingers, feet, etc. in Prov 1-9). Studying wisdom is an all-encompassing enterprise. Wisdom is equally profitable for the naïve (פְּתָאִים in Prov 1:4; 8:4-5; and 9:4) and the wise (Prov 1:5 and 9:9) to expand their mental and cognitive abilities.

The introduction to Proverbs purports that the entire book is a handbook to help its hearers/readers understand various complexities.[35] The nouns לֶקַח and תַּחְבֻּלוֹת in Prov 1:5 illustrate that the wise person will increase their ability to acquire and take in more understanding. The noun לֶקַח derives from the root √לקח "to take, receive."[36] In this context, it refers to the increasing capacity of the wise to receive and acquire more wisdom than was previously accessible.

The noun תַּחְבֻּלוֹת always appears in the plural in Proverbs (1:5; 11:14; 12:5; 20:18; and 24:6). It appears with nouns from √יעץ "to plan, advise" (Prov 11:14 and 24:6) and √חשׁב "to think, devise" (Prov 12:5 and 20:8) in its other occurrences in Proverbs. It describes the ability to receive advice from diverse sources and to synthesise them to produce a coherent plan of action. The lexeme תַּחְבֻּלוֹת connects to the lexeme חֶבֶל "rope" as it is probably derived

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[34] See Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*, 9. Toy says, "The aphorisms, and particularly the discourses, in Pr. and Ben-Sira are for the most part not popular in form, but bear the impress of cultivated thought."

[35] Proverbs 1:1-7 seems to consist of two later additions to the book (i.e., a title in Prov 1:1 and an introduction in Prov 1:2-7). The connection between the phraseology of לָדַעַת חָכְמָה וּמוּסָר in Prov 1:2 and דָּעַת חָכְמָה וּמוּסָר in Prov 1:7 draws these verses together.

[36] See *HALOT*, 535; *BDB*, 544; and *CDCH*, 197.

from the same root.[37] תַּחְבֻּלוֹת could have the nuance of creating mental connections (i.e., tying together information; cf. Arabic *'aql* refers both to a rope used to tie up a camel and intelligence).[38]

The wise who listen will understand a מָשָׁל, a מְלִיצָה, and a חִידָה in Prov 1:6.[39] The semantic range of מָשָׁל is quite broad. It is related to a "song" (שִׁיר in 1 Kgs 5:12), a lament (Mic 2:4), a prophecy (Num 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15, 20, 21, and 23), a wisdom teaching (Ps 78:2), a mocking song (Isa 14:4), a short parabolic story (Ezek 17:2), among others. In Proverbs (1:1; 10:1; and 25:1), it serves as a title to a collection. Perhaps the broadness of the semantic range of the lexeme מָשָׁל is important in this text. The wise person will increasingly perceive with practice the varied meanings of the different manifestations of a מָשָׁל.

The lexeme מְלִיצָה is from the root √ליץ "to mock, deride," and it appears with the lexemes מָשָׁל and חִידָה in its only other appearance in the Hebrew Bible in Hab 2:6. The similar lexeme מֵלִיץ refers to a translator in Gen 42:23 and 2 Chron 32:31 and to a mediator in Isa 43:27 and Job 33:23. The process of translation is inherently difficult.[40] The contortion of language, as well as translational obscurity, seems to be the idea present in the lexemes מְלִיצָה and מֵלִיץ. The fluency of the wise person will increase in relationship to properly interpreting

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[37] For √חבל "to bind, pledge," see *BDB*, 286-287 and *HALOT*, 1716.

[38] Saqib Hussain brought this to my attention in a personal communication (26 March 2021).

[39] See Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs* (BCOTWP; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 99. Regarding a מָשָׁל, a מְלִיצָה, and a חִידָה, Longman says, "…they all seem to refer to indirect language, and therefore language difficult to understand at first glance." See also Allen P. Ross, "Proverbs," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, Vol. 5, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 906. Ross notes that the verb √ליץ and the lexeme חִידָה in Prov 1:6 might be related to Arabic verbs meaning "to turn aside" (i.e., *lâṣa* and *hâda* respectively). In each case, Ross understands that these lexemes might refer to speaking indirectly or obscurely.

[40] Cf. The Prologue to Sirach describes the difficulty of translating a document.

the various twisting and distorting of language at different levels (e.g., lexical, syntactic, etc.) by engaging the texts of Proverbs. The best way to become fluent is to read widely, speak with native speakers, and spend prolonged time in the source language. The author/scribe suggests that the way to better understand a מְלִיצָה is to spend time in the text and with its teachers.

The lexeme חִידָה appears most prominently in Judg 14:12-19 where Samson propounds a riddle in the form of a poem or song at his wedding. In Num 12:8, YHWH says he speaks with Moses face-to-face (i.e., in open, visible ways) and not in a חִידָה. Thus, a חִידָה in Judg 14 and Num 12 appears to refer to a veiled, opaque saying. In 1 Kgs 10:1, the queen of Sheba comes to test Solomon with multiple חִידָה. A חִידָה parallels a מָשָׁל in several places in the Hebrew Bible (Ezek 17:2; Ps 49:5; and 78:2). In Prov 1:6, such puzzling rhymes and games provoke the intellect of the wise to see through a dark, enigmatic חִידָה.

Bruce Waltke notes that the use of the lexemes מָשָׁל, מְלִיצָה, and חִידָה in Hab 2:6 suggests that these are not different categories.[41] If Waltke is correct, then these lexemes are viewed together in Prov 1:6, describing a saying which is difficult to decode upon first encounter. The reader/hearer unlocks the meaning of the saying by scrutinising and meditating upon every aspect of the form and content of the text.

Proverbs 1:1-7 suggests that at least the book of Proverbs, and also other biblical texts (see below), are meant to be translated and unriddled.[42] Proverbs 1:1-7 expects the hearer/

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[41] Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15*, 179-180.

[42] Toy (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*, 8) notes that מָשָׁל, מְלִיצָה, and חִידָה are not "esoteric teaching intended to conceal the highest wisdom from the mass of men…" The author/scribe suggests that it takes mental effort to understand these wisdom sayings, but they are not impossible to decode. As I will argue below, they are not esoterically but aesthetically arranged.

reader to formulate connections throughout the reading process (cf. Matt 13:12 par. Mark 4:25; Luke 8:18).

The connection between the introduction (Prov 1:2-7) and the title mentioning Solomon (Prov 1:1) are significant. Several verses in the Hebrew Bible emphasise the increase (√רבה "to become many, increase" and √יסף "to add, increase") in Solomon or a Solomonic personification's wisdom (1 Kgs 5:9-10; 10:7; and Qoh 1:16). The ultimate wise person, Solomon, bespeaks the potential within each person for an increase in wisdom. The expanding wisdom of Solomon is illustrative of what could be true of any student of the book of Proverbs.

It still remains to be seen exactly how the book of Proverbs conveys wisdom.[43] How does the arrangement of Proverbs and its material promote a circumspect contemplation that results in intellectual amplification?[44] One example becomes visible in the form תֹּבֵא in Prov 1:10.

1.5 A Strategy for Increasing Wisdom in Proverbs 1:10

The problematic form תֹּבֵא appears in Prov 1:10. It could tentatively be a *Qal yiqtol* second masculine singular from either √בוא "to enter, come" or √אבה "to be willing," but

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[43] Waltke (*The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15*, 176) says, "The preamble and ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature in general do not explicate how this intellectual skill is acquired, apparently assuming that the ability to comprehend a saying's meaning is learned through exercise of hearing and/or reading…Probably both the eye and ear were involved in perceiving sayings, which were both written and read aloud." Waltke continues on pages 176-177 to talk about the importance of both reading and writing in ancient scribal schools including Israel. If Proverbs 1, for example, is a scribal exercise, then the form תֹּבֵא in Prov 1:10 illustrates that the scribe must both hear and see to become wise.

For scribal education, see André Lemaire, *Les Écoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'ancien Israël* (OBO 39; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981) and James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 221-237.

[44] Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, 65-67) argues that while Prov 1:6 suggests that the book of Proverbs contains enigmas, it does not actually have them or at least not many of them.

neither is certain.[45] If this is a *yiqtol* from √בוא, then the expected form is תָּבֹא (e.g., Prov 4:14 and 23:10). If this is a *yiqtol* from √אבה, then the expected form is תֹּאבָה (e.g., Deut 13:9 and 1 Kgs 20:8).[46] Roland Murphy thinks Prov 1:10 evidences a *yiqtol* from √אבה, but he translates "do not go along" as if √בוא and √אבה are both represented.[47] It is possible that both verbal forms are in view here, but that does not sufficiently answer the reason for the strange form which is unlike either expected verbal form.

Hugh Williamson notes that if the form is from √אבה, then the final vocalisation with a *ṣere* instead of a *seghol* and the loss of the ה are especially difficult to explain, even due to Aramaic influence.[48] Williamson says, "In short, there are two significant anomalies in the spelling of this word. Each can just about be explained, though without great conviction. That the two should be combined to produce the Masoretic form will for some scholars, at any rate, strain credulity beyond the breaking point."[49] Indeed, several medieval Hebrew

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[45] G, S, and T read √אבה.

[46] Williamson notes that the spelling of the verb √אבה is תובא in Sir 6:33 in manuscript A 2v:2; see H. G. M. Williamson, "An Overlooked Suggestion at Proverbs 1:10," in *Leshon Limmudim: Essays on the Language and Literature of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of A. A. Macintosh*, ed. David A. Baer and Robert P. Gordon (LHBOTS 593; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 219. For the digital manuscript, see https://www.bensira.org/navigator.php?Manuscript=A&PageNum=4.

[47] Murphy (*Proverbs*, 7) says, "The translation tries to combine both ideas."

[48] But Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, 85) says, "MT *tb'* (*tōbē'*) is an apocopated form of *t'bh* (*tō'beh*), from *'-b-h* 'be willing,' with elision of the *aleph*. The writing of the final vowel with *-ē'* is apparently an Aramaism…For the replacement of the final *he'* by *'aleph*, compare *yōre'* in Prov 11:25, where, however, the *segol* is maintained." The retention of the *seghol* in Prov 11:25 would seem to make the spelling in Prov 1:10 more suspect.

Also, see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 1:60-61. They say, "In the form תֹּבֵא (from אָבָה, to agree to, to be willing)…the performative א is wanting, as in תֹּמְרוּ, 2 Sam xix. 14, cf. Ps. cxxxix. 20…and instead of תֹּבָה (i.e., תֹּאבָה, 1 Kings xx.8) is vocalised not תֹּבָא (cf. xi.25), but after the Aram. תֹּבֵא (cf. יִגְלֵי)."

[49] Williamson, "An Overlooked Suggestion at Proverbs 1:10," 219-220.

manuscripts have one of the expected forms (i.e., either תֹּאבֶה from √אבה or תָּבֹא from √בוא).[50] These forms are corrective in Williamson's estimation, however. They illustrate that this form also troubled later scribes. Based on these difficulties, Toy suggests deleting the phrase אַל־תֹּבֵא entirely.[51]

D. H. Müller suggests that the form אַל־תֹּבֵא is an acronym for the phrase אַל־תֵּלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אִתָּם surfacing later in Prov 1:15. A scribe constructs an abbreviation in the margin to note how the pupil should respond via Prov 1:15 to the sinners pestering him in Prov 1:10. Müller does not specify why the scribe added the abbreviation. Perhaps a scribe previewed the apodosis which will not appear until verse 15. At a later point, this abbreviation accidentally became part of the text.[52]

Godfrey Driver proposes that the phrase אַל־תֵּלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אִתָּם was accidentally left out of Prov 1:15 so a scribe wrote it as תבא in the margin. A later copyist mistakenly repositioned the abbreviation (i.e., תבא) to Prov 1:10 while simultaneously putting the full phrase (i.e., אַל־תֵּלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אִתָּם) in Prov 1:15.[53] Williamson objects that Driver's explanation does not adequately explain how another scribe would restore אַל־תֵּלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אִתָּם for the marginal abbreviation אַל־תבא in verse 15 nor how the abbreviation was transposed to its position in

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[50] Williamson, "An Overlooked Suggestion at Proverbs 1:10," 220. Kennicot 494 reads תבוא, while Kennicot 573 reads the defective תָּבֹא. See Jan de Waard, *Proverbs* (BHQ 17; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008), 3 and *31. Also, see Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary* (HBCE 1; Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 86.

[51] Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*, 13 and 19.

[52] D. H. Müller, *Komposition und Strophenbau: Alte und neue Beiträge* (Jahresbericht der Israelitisch-Theologischen Lehranstalt in Wien 14; Vienna: Verlag der Israel.-Theol. Lehranstalt, 1907), 70–71.

[53] G. R. Driver, "Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text," *Text* 1 (1960): 128-129. Williamson ("An Overlooked Suggestion at Proverbs 1:10," 221 note 10) notes that Driver is dependent upon Müller for the observation that תֹּבֵא is an abbreviation.

verse 10.[54] Following Müller and Driver, Williamson accepts the hypothesis that תֹּבֵא is an abbreviation since it is possible that an abbreviation would be part of the text.[55]

Cyrus Gordon sees the cleverness of the ancient author/scribe as central. The author alerts the reader in Prov 1:6 that riddles will be part of the following presentation of the text.[56] Subsequently, the author intentionally uses an incongruent vocalisation (i.e., תֹּבֵא) to signal that a riddle approaches.[57] תֹּבֵא in Prov 1:10 is an authorial abbreviation for the phrase תֵּלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אִתָּם in Prov 1:15.

The odd form תֹּבֵא in Prov 1:10 signals that this misspelling stands for some textual element beyond what the morphology suggests (i.e., תֹּבֵא = תֵּלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אִתָּם). Several factors recommend this suggestion. The phrase בְּנִי "my son" begins Prov 1:10 and 15. The negative אַל appears before תֹּבֵא in Prov 1:10 and before תֵּלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אִתָּם in 15. The sinners' speech begins with a masculine singular imperative from √הלך "to go, walk" in Prov 1:11. The teacher's advice begins with a negated jussive second masculine singular from √הלך in Prov 1:15. The protasis appears in verses 10-14 with verse 15 providing the apodosis.[58] Additionally, the morphologically questionable phrase אַל־תֹּבֵא interrupts the two similar phrases in Prov 1:10

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[54] Williamson, "An Overlooked Suggestion at Proverbs 1:10," 222-223.

[55] See Williamson, "An Overlooked Suggestion at Proverbs 1:10," 221-226. Williamson sees some of Driver's examples of abbreviations in the MT as convincing, though not all. See Driver, "Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text," 112-131 and G. R. Driver, "Once Again Abbreviations," *Text* 4 (1964): 76-94.

The Masoretes include abbreviations in their notations. In Num 26:3, the abbreviation מוחמו provides the correct sequence of the names of Zelophehad's daughters. See Elvira Martín-Contreras, "Annotations in the Earliest Medieval Hebrew Bible Manuscripts" in *Scribal Habits in Near Eastern Manuscript Traditions*, eds. George Anton Kiraz and Sabine Schmidtke (TS 23; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2021), 176.

[56] Cyrus Gordon, "New Light on the Hebrew Language," *HA* 15 (1974): 29.

[57] See Gordon, "New Light on the Hebrew Language," 29.

[58] See Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 87.

(אִם־יְפַתּוּךָ חַטָּאִים "If sinners entice you…") and 1:11 (אִם־יֹאמְרוּ "If they say…") which would otherwise be juxtaposed. The odd orthography of תֹּבֵא as well as the syntactic placement of the phrase in which it occurs in Prov 1:10 between two אִם clauses make this phrase obtrusive. The repetitions between Prov 1:10-11 and 15 gesture to the hearer/reader that the proper reading lies within the connections in these verses.

This חִידָה/מְלִיצָה/מָשָׁל, which appears in the form of תֹּבֵא in Prov 1:10, is a representation of how the book of Proverbs works to increase the mental capacity of its hearer/reader. This riddling element prepares the reader to properly read and gain understanding. The hearer/reader must be alert and attentive to every detail in the text (e.g., the odd orthography and morphology of תֹּבֵא), as well as reading forward (e.g., From what root is תֹּבֵא? Is it an abbreviation? Does it stand for some element in the text?) and backward (e.g., The phrase תֵּלֵךְ בְּדָרֶךְ אִתָּם in Prov 1:15 explains the previous abbreviation תֹּבֵא).[59] In this way, and many

[59] Regarding reading forward and backward to understand a pun in ancient Near Eastern texts, see Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 174-175.

others, the book of Proverbs encourages its hearer/reader to a close, active reading of the text.[60] This approach commends a constant reexamination of the text.[61]

Regarding Prov 1:10, Gordon says, "It was a favorite stunt in presenting ancient riddles to alert the reader through an incorrect form."[62] Similarly, Gary Rendsburg, Gordon's student, says, "This is an exceedingly clever maneuver, a wordplay of a totally different type, perhaps unique in the biblical corpus—but decoding the message is the self-stated purpose of the book of Proverbs, as revealed in Prov 1:6…From such an entrée to the book, the reader knows to expect various types of wordplay, including ciphers such as the present example, to be included in this collection."[63]

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[60] With the goal of Proverbs in mind as articulated in Prov 1:1-7, I suggest that the plural orthography of פֶּתִי "naïve" as פְּתָאִים in Prov 1:4, with an extra א, as opposed to the spelling פְּתָיִים appearing twice later in the chapter (Prov 1:22 and 32) is significant. The book promises that the naïve will gain insight. The orthographic increase of פֶּתִי exemplifies the promised increase in knowledge. The spelling with an extra א certainly appears elsewhere (cf. Ps 116:6; Prov 7:7; 8:5 [which is very similar to Prov 1:4]; 9:6; 14:18; and 27:12), but this spelling is in the minority within this section. The reader would not originally place any significance upon the extra א when encountering it in Prov 1:4. As the chapter progresses, however, the twofold spelling of this same form without an א would cause the reader to reexamine the occurrence in Prov 1:4 and reevaluate if there is significance to its divergence. This orthography forces the reader to participate in retrospective patterning as well as fits the context. Keil and Delitzsch note that an א replaces a י in the spelling פְּתָאִים instead of appearing as פְּתָיִים (cf. Ps 119:130 and Prov 22:3). The segholate form פֶּתִי might be the catalyst for the interchange (cf. עֲפָאִים from עֲפִי "foliage" in Ps 104:12 and צְבָאִים from צְבִי "gazelle" in 1 Chron 12:9). See Keil and Delitzsch, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, 1:56.

For the possibility that an absent א should be read into the text in Ps 22:17, see Noegel and Nichols, "Lurking Lions and Hidden Herds," 497. They suggest that Ps 22:17 should be reread retrospectively as כְּלְבָאִים "like lions" instead of כְּלָבִים "dogs" after encountering אֲרִי "lion."

[61] Cf. *Pirkei Avot* 5:22 (בֶּן בַּג בַּג אוֹמֵר הָפֹךְ בָּהּ וְהָפֹךְ בָּהּ דְּכֹלָּא בָהּ "…ben Bag Bag says, 'Turn it, turn it, because all is in it.'").

[62] Gordon, "New Light on the Hebrew Language," 29.

[63] Gary A. Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019), 380-381.

The form of תִּבֶּא in Prov 1:10 illustrates the mental focus which reading the book demands.[64] The Book of Proverbs, based on this example in Prov 1:10, makes connections across lines and sections through malformed morphology and ill-proportioned phonology among other means to tease the mind and expand its capacity. The introduction warns that Proverbs will twist language, expecting the reader to untangle the riddle and puzzle out the meaning. The acronym in Prov 1:10 is but one example of the strategies which will be utilised within this book. The attentive reader will be greatly rewarded by reanalysing, reexamining, and reinvestigating the complexities present in the various texts of Proverbs.

1.6 Is Proverbs 1 Unique or Indicative of How the Hebrew Bible Is Written?

Since the authorial and scribal design of Proverbs purportedly involves pressuring the hearer/reader to concentrate deeply upon its content by placing oddities in the text, then it is possible that other authors of the Hebrew Bible also employ a similar tactic in their writings.[65] Indeed, word twistings and riddles are present in other texts of the Hebrew Bible

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[64] Noegel (*Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, 115, 127-128, and 146) suggests that the authors of ancient Near Eastern literature and the Hebrew Bible signal an approaching pun by telling the audience to "listen" (p. 115; cf. Prov 1:8), by using an obvious pun (pp. 127-128; cf. Prov 1:10), or by using odd orthography (p. 146-147 and 164) to prepare the reader for other puns which are coming in the paragraph, section, or book. Proverbs similarly tells its hearer/reader both to listen (Prov 1:5) and that various twistings of language will be part of the presentation of the book (Prov 1:6). Referring to the puns achieved by odd orthography in Akkadian literature, Noegel says, "Such non-normative orthography, I would argue, is the poet's way of alerting the reader to hidden polysemy, and by extension, to conceal wisdom" (p. 146).

[65] When I refer to the Hebrew Bible, I am assuming a set group of books which make up this corpus. It is hard to say exactly when the canon of the Hebrew Bible was established and which books it included. See Timothy H. Lim, "The Literature of Early Judaism," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. Matthias Henze and Rodney A. Werline (Atlanta: SBL, 2020), 257-279.

(e.g., Dan 5:25-28).[66] The author or scribe often chose a lexeme to demonstrate the context (e.g., שָׁקֵד "almond" with שֹׁקֵד "watching" in Jer 1:11-12 and קַיִץ "summer fruit" with קֵץ "end" in Amos 8:1-2).[67] The name of characters (e.g., 1 Sam 25:25 כִּי כִשְׁמוֹ כֵּן־הוּא נָבָל שְׁמוֹ וּנְבָלָה עִמּוֹ "…For according to his name thus he is. Nabal is his name and folly is with him.") or locations (e.g., Amos 5:5 כִּי הַגִּלְגָּל גָּלֹה יִגְלֶה "For Gilgal will surely go into exile") produces a contextual effect.[68]

The strategy described in Prov 1:5-6 and implemented in the book of Proverbs illustrates that meta-textual semantics is not foreign to the Hebrew Bible. There are also similar strategies of language contortion in other books of the Hebrew Bible. The introduction to Proverbs and the utilisation of similar devices in the Hebrew Bible combine to justify looking for meta-textual semantics throughout the Hebrew Bible. Since the same scribe, Samuel ben Jacob, copied, vocalised, and produced the masora of L, then a

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[66] See Al Wolters, "The Riddle of the Scales in Daniel 5," *HUCA* 62 (1991): 155-177. Wolters thinks that Daniel interprets nine juxtaposed, and thus ambiguous, letters as three words consisting of three letters each with three levels of meaning — 1) the names of weights, 2) the process of weighing, and 3) the outcome of weighing and paying out silver. Daniel manipulates the orthography of מְנֵא "Mene" so that it becomes מְנָה to mark a transition in interpretation (p. 165). Also, "Shekel" is spelled as תקל instead of שׁקל, which is the normal Aramaic spelling. The change in orthography makes possible Daniel's play upon the Aramaic verb √קלל "to be light" (pp. 173-174).

[67] Amos 8:1-2 is partially a dialectal pun (between Israelite and Judahite Hebrew); see William M. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 77; Mitchell Dahood, "Comparative Philology Yesterday and Today," *Bib* 50 (1969): 74; and Al Wolters, "Wordplay and Dialect in Amos 8:1-2," *JETS* 31 (1988): 407-410.

[68] On Amos 5:5, see Yvonne Sherwood, "Of Fruit and Corpses and Wordplay Visions: Picturing Amos 8:1-3," *JSOT* 92 (2001): 13. Sherwood says that the place גִּלְגָּל is "splintered" into two words (i.e., גלה and יגלה). The shrine will be smashed and the worshippers deported.

documented case of meta-textual semantics in L might mean other examples are in the same manuscript.[69]

1.7 Twistings in the Text of the Hebrew Bible

By examining the different witnesses and manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, it is obvious that authors and scribes of the Hebrew Bible create oddities in the text in intentional (and unintentional) ways. For example, the MT of 2 Sam 12:9 (בָּזִיתָ אֶת־דְּבַר יְהוָה "You despise the word of YHWH") and 14 (כִּי־נִאֵץ נִאַצְתָּ אֶת־אֹיְבֵי יְהוָה בַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה "For you have surely caused the enemies of YHWH to slander because of this matter") each evidence a scribal gloss intended to soften the fact that David has "despised" and "slandered" YHWH. The softening lexeme (i.e., דָּבָר in 2 Sam 12:9 and אֹיֵב in 12:14) does not appear in the Lucianic recension of the Greek. The Lucianic recension probably provides a better and older text which places stronger blame on David's actions as being directed against YHWH.[70] A scribe intervenes to lessen David's guilty.

The meaning and form of מַן in Ps 61:8 is ambiguous (i.e., חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת מַן יִנְצְרֵהוּ "Lovingkindness and truth [מַן] will guard him"). It could be repointed as the preposition מִן "from;" it could be the Aramaic interrogative "who, what;" it could be a *Piel* imperative from

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[69] For Samuel ben Jacob's production of L, see the brief comments by Martín-Contreras, "Annotations in the Earliest Medieval Hebrew Bible Manuscripts," 183-184.

A case of meta-textual semantics in L does not necessarily mean others will appear, however. It is possible that Samuel ben Jacob is singularly a copyist who copies a case of meta-textual semantics present in his text and tradition without being active in the text. The activity of a second temple scribe does not necessarily mirror a medieval scribe.

[70] For a full discussion of 2 Sam 12:9 and 14, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 68. Fishbane notes (68 note 8) that the phrase כִּי בָזִתָנִי "…for you despised me…" in 2 Sam 12:10 in the MT supports the Lucianic recension without the lexeme דָּבָר in 2 Sam 12:9.

√מנה "to appoint;" or something else.[71] Another possible solution is that מַן is an abbreviation for the phrase מָלֵא נוּן "a full נ." If so, then it refers to the fact that the vowelless נ in the *Qal yiqtol* of √נצר "to guard" does not elide (i.e., יִנְצְרֶהוּ instead of יִצְּרֶהוּ).[72] The similarity between the phrases in Ps 61:8 and Prov 20:28 with different spellings of the verb √נצר (i.e., יִנְצְרֶהוּ in Ps 61:8 and יִצְּרוּ in Prov 20:28) is illustrative that the *nun*'s presence is surprising in this *yiqtol* form. If מַן is an abbreviation, then it is a Masoretic-type note that appears early in the Hebrew text since G translates מַן as τίς "who."[73] Apparently, G has מַן (cf. מַן "what" in Exod 16:15), or something similar, in its *Vorlage*.[74] In this Psalm at least, there is scribal activity at a very early stage or perhaps an authorial note meant to preserve the non-normative spelling of the *yiqtol* of √נצר with a *nun*.

In light of these examples, how can one determine if an author or a scribe is responsible for an odd element within a particular text? It is impossible to firmly delineate between the work of an author and that of a scribe in each individual infelicity in the text of the Hebrew Bible. There are a few general guidelines, however, for suggesting differences between the ways an author and a later scribe might form the text. It should be noted that the

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[71] The Midrash understands the form מַן as the verb "to appoint" citing the verb's appearance in Dan 1:5. See William G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms* (YJS 13; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 1:518.

[72] This suggestion appears in Julius Fürst, *Hebräisches und Chaldäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1857), 753 and F. Perles, *Analekten our Textkritik des Alten Testaments* (Munich: T. Ackermann, 1895), 20. It is followed by J. Weingreen, "Rabbinic-Type Glosses in the Old Testament," *JSS* 2 (1957): 160; Driver, "Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text," 125; J. Weingreen, *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 88-89; and Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 63-64.

[73] See Weingreen, *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible*, 88-89 and Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 63 note 47.

[74] For the cognate Semitic evidence for the relative מַן, see Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus* (JPS Torah; Philadelphia: JPS, 1991), 89 and 246 note 26 and Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2011), 248 and 255.

work of author and scribe are firmly entangled in the text of the Hebrew Bible. It is comparable to the relationship of a modern author and copy-editor. Both are active and make important contributions to the text. The crafted text is a joint effort by accomplished textual producers.[75]

1.8 Authorial Twistings in the Hebrew Bible

An author chooses a divergent lexeme or a collocation because this element fits his rhetorical strategy. For example, the use of the verb √בוא in Jonah 1:3 (i.e., a *Qal* feminine singular participle) to describe Jonah's flight is odd. √בוא here describes movement away from the speaker (i.e., "to go to [Tarshish]"). The verb √הלך usually describes movement away from the speaker while the verb √בוא usually describes movement toward the speaker. Illustrating how abnormal this usage of √בוא is, Kevin Youngblood mentions 2 Chron 9:21 where the verbs √הלך and √בוא appear together to refer to Solomon's ships going (√הלך) to Tarshish and returning (√בוא) every three years.[76]

The second use of √בוא (i.e., a *Qal* infinitive construct) in Jonah 1:3 equally refers to movement away from the speaker, though this is not emphasised by Youngblood. The infinitive of √בוא appears with a cliticised ל preposition. The infinitive of √בוא with a cliticised ל preposition usually has the meaning "to go in, enter" in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Gen 12:11; 31:18; 1 Sam 7:13; 23:10; 27:11; 2 Sam 17:17; and 2 Kgs 6:23). This construction in Jonah 1:3, however, refers to movement away from the speaker (וַיֵּרֶד בָּהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה

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[75] See Timothy H. Lim, *The Earliest Commentary on the Prophecy of Habakkuk* (OCDSS; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 6-9 especially 6-7. Lim notes that the distinctions between the stages of composing and copying the text is still maintained but scribes are much more than thoughtless copyists. Lim says, "It would be akin to a modern copyeditor shaping the manuscript of an author for publication" (p. 6).

[76] Kevin J. Youngblood, *Jonah: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd. ed. (ZECOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 59.

מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה "He went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from YHWH's presence."). The author of Jonah 1:3, therefore, uses the verb √בוא not once but twice in two different verbal forms (i.e., a participle and an infinitive) in the same *binyan* in the same verse to detail movement away from the speaker. The chiastic structure of Jonah 1:3 additionally illustrates that the *Qal* infinitive construct of √בוא parallels the *Qal* infinitive construct of √ברח "to flee" at the beginning of this verse, according to Elie Assis.[77] These elements each highlight the unusual semantics of √בוא in Jonah 1:3.

Youngblood believes that the author selects the verb √בוא, the lexical opposite of √הלך, to describe Jonah's actions after YHWH commanded him to go to Nineveh, using the verb √הלך, in Jonah 1:2.[78] Jonah does the opposite of everything that YHWH commanded him. Youngblood says, "The use of this unusual expression may be explained in terms of its rhetorical effect…Everything about Jonah's action is diametrically opposed to YHWH's

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[77] For the chiastic structure of Jonah 1:3, see Elie Assis, "Chiasmus in Biblical Narrative: Rhetoric of Characterization," *Proof* 22 (2002): 275-276.

A וַיָּקָם יוֹנָה לִבְרֹחַ תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה "Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from YHWH's presence"

B וַיֵּרֶד יָפוֹ "He went down to Joppa"

C וַיִּמְצָא אָנִיָּה "He found a ship"

D בָּאָה תַרְשִׁישׁ "going to Tarshish"

C' וַיִּתֵּן שְׂכָרָהּ "He paid its fare"

B' וַיֵּרֶד בָּהּ "He went down in it"

A' לָבוֹא עִמָּהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה "to go with them to Tarshish from YHWH's presence."

Jonah intends to travel to Tarshish away from YHWH's presence in each A line. The B lines contain the verb √ירד "to go down." The C lines both refer to the ship (i.e., being located and its payment made). The antecedent of the feminine singular clitic pronoun on שְׂכָר "wages" is אָנִיָּה "ship" in the previous C line. This places the destination of the voyage at the centre of the chiastic structure (p. 275-276). Assis says, "The chiasmus here characterizes Jonah's flight as a well-planned action…The author constructed Jonah's escape in a neat and orderly form, in order to characterise it as a well-planned action…The chiastic structure expresses the idea that Jonah's action is an ideological one, rather than the result of panic, and anticipates his subsequent pronounced outlook" (p. 276).

[78] For a different view, see Uriel Simon, *Jonah* (JPS Commentary; Philadelphia, PA: JPS, 1999), 6. Simon says that √בוא can mean "go" as well as "come" (cf. Num 32:6). He does not see a significance to the appearance of √בוא here.

commission. YHWH says, 'Up!' and Jonah goes down. YHWH says 'go to Nineveh' and Jonah leaves in the opposite direction, underscored by the clever use of a lexical infelicity."[79] The author demonstrates that Jonah is at pains to disobey every aspect of YHWH's words down to the lexical level.[80] The author carefully chooses lexemes in Jonah 1:3 (i.e., √ירד and √בוא) which are the opposite of YHWH's commands in the previous verse (i.e., √קום "to arise" and √הלך).[81] The fact that the author of Jonah regularly uses puns strengthens the possibility that the use of √בוא in Jonah 1:3 is crucial.[82]

Another example of authorial twisting of language appears in Ruth 2:21. Ruth tells Naomi that Boaz instructed her to stay with the young men (נְעָרִים) for the rest of the harvest

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[79] Youngblood, *Jonah: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*, 59.

[80] For the interrelatedness of phraseology in Jonah 1:1-3 including the opposition between √הלך and √בוא in these verses, see Claude Lichtert, "Par terre et Par mer! Analyse Rhétorique de Jonas 1," *ETL* 78 (2002): 7-9, especially 8.

[81] The use of the *wayyiqtol* of √קום to describe Jonah's rebellion in Jonah 1:3, instead of his obedience to YHWH's call using √קום in Jonah 1:2, is significant (cf. קוּם…וַיָּקָם describing Elijah's obedience in 1 Kgs 17:9-10). It links Jonah's actions with YHWH's commands in a way that anticipates obedience but actually describes disobedience. See Jack M. Sasson, *Jonah* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1990), 77 and Simon, *Jonah*, 5.

[82] See Baruch Halpern and Richard Elliot Friedman, "Composition and Paronomasia in the Book of Jonah," *HAR* 4 (1980): 79-92.

when Boaz actually told her to stay with the young women (נַעֲרוֹת) in Ruth 2:8.[83] Naomi, understanding what Boaz surely meant, corrects Ruth in Ruth 2:22 by repeating נַעֲרוֹת in place of Ruth's נְעָרִים. Subsequently, the narrator reaffirms Boaz and Naomi's use of נַעֲרוֹת by employing the same term in Ruth 2:23.

Several different interpretations result from Ruth's use of נְעָרִים. Ruth Rab. 47:1 understands Ruth's words to illustrate her Moabite (i.e., immoral) background and desires.[84] Schipper thinks that the masculine plural form is neutral and inclusive for both genders.[85] Yair Zakovitch suggests that the form נְעָרִים is an error which appears because it was thought

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[83] In spite of Boaz's statement in Ruth 2:8, Block understands Ruth's use of נְעָרִים in Ruth 2:21 to come directly from Boaz. See Daniel I. Block, *Judges and Ruth* (NAC 6; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 677. Block says, "Concerned about her welfare, she [*Naomi - JDP*] changes Boaz's *nĕʿārîm*, 'servants' (the masculine stands for all harvesters, irrespective of gender), to *naʿărôt*, 'female servants.' Apparently Naomi had been worried about Ruth as she sent her out of the house in the morning and she would have been relieved to see her return safe and sound." Similarly, see Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *A Commentary on Judges and Ruth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013), 640. Chisholm thinks that Naomi is expressing concern for Ruth.

Holmstedt is unsure whether Boaz originally used נְעָרִים or if only Ruth uses it when reporting Boaz's speech. Holmstedt seems to assume that נְעָרִים is the intended form in this verse and that it accurately describes the conversation between Ruth and Boaz. See Robert D. Holmstedt, *Ruth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (BHHB; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 144.

Holmstedt additionally notes that the form נְעָרַי is the expected form here (cf. נַעֲרֹתָי in Ruth 2:8) instead of הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לִי. It is possible that Ruth's use of the phrase הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לִי instead of נְעָרַי is another example of non-native speaker confusion within Ruth's words. This possibility is not mentioned by Holmstedt.

[84] See Jacob Neusner, *Ruth Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* (BJS 183; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1989), 136.

[85] See Jeremy Schipper, *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7D; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 136. The same view appears in A. R. S. Kennedy, *The Book of Ruth: The Hebrew Text with Grammatical Notes and Vocabulary* (London: SPCK, 1928), 40-41 and Donald R. Vance, *A Hebrew Reader for Ruth* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 46 who both cite E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), §122. Also, see Adam J. Howell, *Ruth: A Guide to Reading Biblical Hebrew* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022), 179 and 181. Howell thinks that הַנְּעָרִים refers to all workers but is open to the possibility that Naomi is clarifying Ruth's words by using נַעֲרוֹת.

to be the subject of the masculine plural verb later in the verse (i.e., כִּלּוּ "they finished").[86] Tod Linafelt believes that Ruth is "teasing" Naomi by urging Naomi to take care of her well-being or suggesting that she will be separated from Naomi by one of the young men mentioned.[87] G. Driver believes that an abbreviation הנער stood in the text and was mistakenly read as הנערים instead of הנערות.[88]

Timothy Lim suggests that this morphological mistake could be a calculated one by the author.[89] The author cleverly illustrates that Ruth is a "Moabitess," the sobriquet unnecessarily reiterated in Ruth 2:21, by having her misspeak. Lim connects Ruth's incorrect morphology with the problem of bilinguals accidentally using the wrong word in the target language. This might very well mean that Ruth misunderstood Boaz's advice in regard to avoiding the נְעָרִים in other fields and staying with the נַעֲרוֹת in his field.[90] Lim concludes, "It seems that the author intended to emphasize her alien status, her Otherness, by reminding the reader that she was 'Ruth the Moabitess' and to underscore this by making her speak with

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[86] See Yair Zakovitch, *Das Buch Rut: Ein jüdischer Kommentar* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1999), 65 and 129-130. Lim objects that if the verb √כלה occasions a change from נַעֲרוֹת to נְעָרִים in Ruth 2:21, why does נַעֲרוֹת appear unaffected by the infinitive of √כלה in Ruth 2:23. See Timothy H. Lim, "How Good Was Ruth's Hebrew? Ethnic and Linguistic Otherness in the Book of Ruth," in *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, ed. Daniel C. Harlow, Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Joel S. Kaminsky (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 104.

[87] Tod Linafelt, "Ruth," in *Ruth and Esther* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999), 43-44.

[88] Driver, "Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text," 117.

[89] Lim, "How Good Was Ruth's Hebrew?" 101-115.

[90] Lim, "How Good Was Ruth's Hebrew?" 107-109.

some infelicities of the Hebrew language."[91] The author of Ruth uses a miscalculation in Ruth's morphology to remind the reader that she is a Moabitess.[92]

The authors of the Hebrew Bible place infelicities in their text for their rhetorical purposes. An author might use a semantically improper verb (e.g., √בוא in Jonah 1:3) or incorrect morphology (e.g., נְעָרִים in Ruth 2:21) to produce a contextual effect. These illustrate that the authors of the Hebrew Bible are clever and willing to twist their text, even to the point of ungrammaticality in order to achieve their goals.[93] Meta-textual semantics is one of the devices used by the authors of the Hebrew Bible.[94]

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[91] Lim, "How Good Was Ruth's Hebrew?" 114.

[92] For a similar example of Ruth's confusion in Ruth 2:21 which the narrator corrects in 2:23, see Yair Zakovitch, *Ruth* [Hebrew] (Mikra LeYisrael; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 85. Zakovitch believes that the narrators's words in Ruth 2:23 (וַתִּדְבַּק…עַד־כְּלוֹת קְצִיר־הַשְּׂעֹרִים וּקְצִיר הַחִטִּים) correct Ruth's construction in Ruth 2:21 (תִּדְבָּקִין עַד אִם־כִּלּוּ אֵת כָּל־הַקָּצִיר אֲשֶׁר־לִי).

[93] See Nick C. Veldhuis, "The Fly, the Worm, and the Chain: Old Babylonian Chain Incantations," *OLP* 24 (1993): 46. Veldhuis says, "The rules of grammar are not laws of nature — the existence of which, after all, is generally doubted. Ungrammaticality, or deviant grammar, is often a mark in that it draws our attention to something special, as readers of modern poetry well know. Therefore the object of our interest must be the deviation as well as the rule."

[94] For a selection of other suggestions of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible, see Avi Hurvitz, "Ruth 2:7 — 'A Midrashic Gloss'?," *ZAW* 95 (1983): 121-123; Gary A. Rendsburg, "Confused Language as a Deliberate Literary Devise," *JHebS* 2, article 6 (1999): 1-20; Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 128-154 and 539-549; Scott B. Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part I," *JBQ* 26 (1998): 12-19; Scott B. Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part II," *JBQ* 26 (1998): 93-100; Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, "Healing and Hissing Snakes — Listening to Numbers 21:4-9," *Scrip* 87 (2004): 278-287; Jeremy Schipper, "The Syntax and Rhetoric of Ruth 1:9a," *VT* 62 (2012): 642-645; Rachelle Gilmour and Ian Young, "Saul's Two Year Reign in 1 Samuel 13:1," *VT* 63 (2013): 150-154; and J. Blake Couey, "Poetry, Language, and Statecraft in Isaiah 18," in *Biblical Poetry and the Art of Close Reading*, ed. J. Blake Couey and Elaine T. James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 167-183.

1.9 Scribal Twistings in the Hebrew Bible

Differing from authorial twistings, a scribe might update the orthography of a lexeme or its morphology to adhere to and reflect present usage. A scribe might update a rare lexeme with a modern one. A scribe might add a verb or a referent to an ambiguous text. He might make theological changes (e.g., adding overt religious elements to Esther as appears in G) or changes regarding the presentation of characters.[95] For example, there are reported cases where the scribes deliberately changed (i.e., *tiqqune soferim*) or omitted parts of the text (i.e., *itture soferim*).[96] A scribe inserted a super-linear נ in Judg 18:30 to read מְנַשֶּׁה "Manasseh" instead of מֹשֶׁה "Moses" to disassociate Moses from the idolatrous priest Jonathan. The Masorah suggests reading (i.e., *qere*) the verb √שכב "to lie down" instead of √שגל "to rape" (i.e., *kethiv*) in Deut 28:30; Isa 13:16; Jer 3:2; and Zech 14:2 because the verb √שגל is offensive.[97] Scribes changed the Hebrew text to read √ברך "to bless" when it almost certainly

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[95] For examples of intentional scribal changes, see Ralph W. Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: The Septuagint after Qumran* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 80-83; Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 111-112; Ellis R. Brotzman and Eric J. Tully, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 126-129; and Amy Anderson and Wendy Widder, *Textual Criticism of the Bible*, Rev. ed. (LMS 1; Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018), 34-40.

[96] Gen. Rab. 49:7, for example, reports that scribes changed YHWH standing before Abraham to Abraham standing before YHWH in Gen 18:22. See Jacob Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah* (BJS 105; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), 2:202. For an overview of *tiqqune soferim*, see W. Emery Barnes, "Ancient Corrections in the Text of the Old Testament (*Tiḳḳun Ṣopherim*)," *JTS* 1 (1900): 387-414; D. Barthélemy, "Les tiqquné sopherim et la critique textuelle de l'A.T.," *SVT* 9 (1963): 283-304; and Carmel McCarthy, *The Tiqqune Sopherim and Other Theological Correction in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament* (OBO 36; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1981). On *itture soferim*, see Brotzman and Tully, *Old Testament Textual Criticism*, 127.

[97] See Brotzman and Tully, *Old Testament Textual Criticism*, 128-129 and Robert Gordis, *The Biblical Text in the Making: A Study of Kethib-Qere* (New York: Ktav 1971), 86. Gordis mentions other examples of this same technique.

read √ארר or √קלל "to curse" originally in 1 Kgs 21:10, 13; Job 1:5, 11; 2:5, and 9.[98] Scribes manipulated the phonology of personal names so they no longer reflect the theophoric element בַּעַל "Ba'al." They replace the element בַּעַל with בֹּשֶׁת "shame" (e.g., מְפִיבֹשֶׁת in 2 Sam 4:4 for מְרִיב בָּעַל in 1 Chron 8:34 and 9:40; אִישׁ־בֹּשֶׁת in 2 Sam 2:10 for אֶשְׁבָּעַל in 1 Chron 8:33 and 9:39; and יְרֻבֶּשֶׁת in 2 Sam 11:21 for יְרֻבַּעַל in Judg 6:32).[99] Richard Hess suggests that scribes change the name עָכָן to עָכָר in 1 Chron 2:7 in order to fully connect the character's name to the location and event.[100] C. L. Seow notes that a scribe points יגל in Job 20:28 as יְגַל from √גלל in de Rossi 552 instead of MT's יְגֶל from √גלה or יָגֹל from √גלל to link this verse to Amos 5:24 (וְיִגַּל).[101]

The scribe is not only responsible for relatively minor changes in the text. The text of the Hebrew Bible exhibits innovations of both author and scribe as their contributions appear interwoven in the MT. This demonstrates the scribal ability to understand precisely the

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[98] For a discussion of these texts in the MT and G, see Douglas T. Mangum, "Euphemism in Biblical Hebrew and the Euphemistic 'Bless' in the Septuagint of Job," *HvTSt* 76 (2020): 3-6. Mangum also cites cases of dysphemism such as the divine names Astarte and Melek which are vocalised with the vowels of בֹּשֶׁת "shame" to produce the derogatory titles Ashtoreth and Molek in the Hebrew Bible (p. 3). He mentions the term for "idols," גִּלּוּלִים, which is from √גלל "to roll" and has the derived meaning "dung." This lexeme subsequently receives the vowels of שִׁקּוּץ "detestable thing" (p. 3). On the derogatory nature of גִּלּוּלִים in Ezekiel, see John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (BJSUCSD 7; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 28-35 especially 32-35.

[99] See Donald W. Parry, "The 'Word' or the 'enemies' of the Lord? Revisiting the Euphemism in 2 Sam 12:14," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov*, eds. Shalom M. Paul, Robert A. Kraft, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Weston W. Fields (VTSup 94; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 373-376.

[100] See Richard S. Hess, "Achan and Achor: Names and Wordplay in Joshua 7," *HAR* 14 (1994): 89-98.

[101] C. L. Seow, "Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job," *JBL* 130 (2011): 83. For details about de Rossi 552 = Parm. 2035 (14th century), see Benjamin Richler, ed., *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma: Catalogue* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2001), 66.

author's *modus operandi* and to carefully expand it. Lim explains the scribal involvement in the text of Pesher Habakkuk as similar to a modern copy-editor.[102] Specifically, the scribal innovations are intermingled with the author's work in the present form of the text.[103] In addition to these intentional changes, there would be unintentional changes to the text that were introduced as a result of the copying process such as orthographic confusion, transposition of letters and lexemes in the text, dropping textual elements, adding textual elements, anticipating incorrectly the following word, skipping a word or sentence, etc.[104]

Exactly where the author stops and the scribe begins is not always discernible. The text betrays an intermixing of the presence of author and scribe. In spite of the scribal changes mentioned above, a scribe is generally active in his text for the purpose of advancing the presentation of the author, not to outmanoeuvre it. The scribe upholds and promotes the

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[102] For the scribe as a "copyeditor," see Lim, *The Earliest Commentary on the Prophecy of Habakkuk*, 6.

[103] See James K. Aitken, "Editing and the Formation of Biblical Writings: Hebrew and Greek" (Paper presented at Biblical Studies Seminar, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK, 24 March 2022). Aitken demonstrates that ancient authors (e.g., 3rd century BCE) edited their own work. The copying process also includes textual adjustments by the scribe of various kinds. Thus, editing happens during the writing process and in a "finished document." Micro-level changes are added by author as well as a later scribe or copyist including deletions, abbreviations, supra lineal or marginal additions, and lexical replacements. The corrections are sporadic and often in small segmented sections in order to clarify material or make it more accessible to the reader.

[104] For examples of these unintentional changes see, Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament*, 76-80; Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 108-110; Brotzman and Tully, *Old Testament Textual Criticism*, 118-125; and Anderson and Widder, *Textual Criticism of the Bible*, 16-34.

See Kim Phillips, "A New Codex from the Scribe behind the Leningrad Codex: L17," *TynBul* 68 (2017): 16. When discussing the general differences between manuscripts, Phillips says, "First, differences between codices arose through inevitable copying error. Second, differences arose when individual scribes transmitted particular traditions they had received pertaining to some word or detail of the text. Finally, differences arose between codices as a result of the non-standardisation of some of the most fine-grained details of the vocalisation and accentuation of the biblical text."

authorial intentions in the text by facilitating its full appreciation. Author and scribe are collaborators in the textual production seeking to improve the textual message making distinguishing their individual contributions less significant. Therefore, I make little attempt in this study to delineate their activity. When discussing an author in this study, I simply refer to the one responsible for the present form of the text.

Scribes were active within their received text. As Fishbane says, "Israelite scribes did not simply transcribe textual materials believed to be divinely revealed or otherwise authoritative; they intensively studied them and left us a record of their *traditio* in the received *traditum*."[105] By this process of strenuously studying every detail of the text during their copying, the scribes realise changes which needed to be made to the text to clarify various ambiguities. The result of their comprehensive engagement with the text is a penetrating understanding of how the authors of the Hebrew Bible constructed their text in order to proficiently replicate their composition.[106] In this way, the changes which the scribes introduce into the Hebrew text are meant to enhance and enrich it while also being grounded in a rigorous engagement with it.[107] Scribal activity in the text would not be self-perceived as

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[105] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 83. Fishbane refers to tradition (*traditum*) and transmission (*traditio*). He says, "…the content of tradition, the *traditum*, was not at all monolithic, but rather the complex result of a long and varied process of transmission, *traditio*" (p. 6).

[106] See Lim, *The Earliest Commentary on the Prophecy of Habakkuk*, 16-19. Lim notes that the pesherist imitates the biblical style in his own presentation and vocabulary. Drawing from Lim's comments on Pesher Habakkuk, it is possible that a diligent scribe understands the biblical style so thoroughly that he mimics it. This might illustrate a common result of a scribe saturated in the biblical literature.

[107] For the care an ancient copyist and scribe would have when reproducing a text, see Alan R. Millard, "In Praise of Ancient Scribes," *BA* 45 (1982): 143-153. Millard maintains that the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible is not perfect but the scribes have carefully preserved what was handed down to them with minimal intrusion into the text.

violations of the text but as clarifications in order to preserve it.[108] For our purposes, it is significant to note that scribes would be aware of the authorial twistings within the texts of the Hebrew Bible producing meta-textual semantics, and they might at times produce an example of their own.

1.10 Meta-Textual Semantics in Ancient Near Eastern Literature

Meta-textual semantics appears in the literature of the ancient Near East. It is part of the oral and written nature of these texts. Edward Greenstein says, "…some texts can be fully appreciated only when read. Certain texts and literary tropes within them depend on being read in written form."[109] Greenstein cites a case in the Sumerian Hymn to the Hoe.[110] Noegel mentions several visual puns in the Tale of the Poor Man of Nippur.[111] Antonio Loprieno

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[108] See Matthieu Richelle, "Towards A Variegated Approach to Textual Fluidity: Limited Variations, Deliberate Duplication and A Creative Scribal Mistake in 2 Kings 10:15-31," *Hen* 42 (2020): 258-280. Richelle argues that the typical dichotomy between conservative and creative scribal activity when discussing the text's fluidity is overly simplistic. By using 2 Kgs 10:15-31, he argues that some changes are based on mistakes in the text being copied while other changes appear as a result of a scribe clarifying aspects of the text through rearranging and rewording. Richelle concludes, "I would argue that *inadvertent changes sometimes led to a very creative, albeit not deliberate, activity*. If, for instance, it is a *homoioteleuton* that occurred in (2) and results in the shorter, brisk form of 2 Kings 10:23-25 that we read in OL, then it constitutes a striking case where a transmission accident was indeed creative because it resulted in a new form of the narrative where Jehu's portrait is different…We should think in terms of a spectrum and go beyond the simple opposition between conservative and creative scribal approaches, to recognize that there were various shades of creative activity."

[109] Edward L. Greenstein, "Verbal Art and Literary Sensibilities in Ancient Near Eastern Context," in *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel*, ed. Susan Niditch (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 470.

[110] Greenstein, "Verbal Art and Literary Sensibilities in Ancient Near Eastern Context," 470.

[111] Scott B. Noegel, "Word Play in the Tale of the Poor Man of Nippur," *ASJ* 19 (1996): 177-182. Noegel also mentions a visual word-play in Egyptian in Chester Beatty I.4.12-5.3; see Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, 179-180.

mentions an Egyptian text from about 1400 BCE where a blank space in the written text is part of the reading.

Loprieno says,

> In this text, which, presumably as an intentional mark of its owner's intellectual versatility, displays an unconventional, cryptographic use of hieroglyphs and is inscribed on a palette made of reddish *mrj*-wood, the expression 'who loves myrrh' (*mrj 'ntjw*) is rendered by an uninscribed graphic unit–the so-called 'ideal square' within which hieroglyphic signs are aesthetically organized–followed by a logogram for the word *'ntjw* 'myyrh.' Parallel witnesses of the same formula clearly show that the empty space has to be decoded as a word play on its material support, i.e., on the *mrj*-wood itself: the anepigraphic portion of the text is meant to let the material substance become the vehicle of phonetic similarity and semantic ambiguity: a tridimensional pun![112]

Meta-textual semantics illustrates both the oral and written nature of a text. For example, in lines 2-3 of the Meṣad Ḥashavyahu inscription in Hebrew, the phrase עבדך קצר היה עבדך "…your servant was reaping, your servant…" appears.[113] The tautological nature of

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[112] Antonio Loprieno, "Pun and Word Play in Ancient Egyptian," in *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000), 4-5. This text is also mentioned in Greenstein, "Verbal Art and Literary Sensibilities in Ancient Near Eastern Context," 470-471. For the concept of an ideal square in ancient Egyptian orthography, see Antonio Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21-22.

[113] For the participle √קצר "to reap" plus the verb √היה "to be" emphasising habitual action here, see W. Randal Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 187 and James F. Ross, "Prophecy in Hamath, Israel, and Mari," *HTR* 63 (1970): 23 note 80.

the second עבדך suggests that this element illustrates the emotion and vexation of the author at having his cloak unduly taken when he had actually completed his work.[114]

Wilfred Watson demonstrates that speech in Ugaritic texts can appear without an introductory speech marker.[115] He acknowledges that some cases of a missing introductory speech marker may be due to scribal omission.[116] Usually, however, a missing speech marker emphasises an emotional response on the part of the speaker, giving the effect of someone who is so impatient that they are unable to wait for the speaker to finish. They begin speaking while their companion is in mid-sentence. Syntactically, by removing the introductory speech marker, the text illustrates the emotion of the speaker.[117]

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[114] See J. Naveh, "A Hebrew Letter from the Seventh Century B.C.," *IEJ* 10 (1960): 131-132. Naveh compares this usage to Reuben's confused statement in Gen 37:30. See also Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 130 note 11. Rendsburg notes that Victor Hurowitz reminded him of the possibility that the form of this text illustrates its meaning. For this inscription, see Shmuel Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 156-163, especially 160 and Peter Bekins, *Inscriptions from the World of the Bible: A Reader and Introduction to Old Northwest Semitic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2020), 107-111, especially 108. Aḥituv notes that the second use of עבדך is a case of *casus pendens* and Bekins leans toward the same explanation. Cross takes the first עבדך as a case of *casus pendens;* see Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth-Sixth Centuries B.C.: II. The Murabba'ât Papyrus and the Letter Found near Yabeh-yam," *BASOR* 165 (1962): 44. For a different view see, Dennis Pardee, "Meṣad Ḥashavyahu (Yaveh-Yam): A New Philological Study," *Maarav* 1 (1978): 40-41. Pardee understands עבדך קצר as a nominal sentence "your servant is reaping." This eliminates the repetition of עבדך twice in a single sentence.

[115] For introductory speech markers in Ugaritic, see Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Introductions to Discourse in Ugaritic Narrative Verse," *AuOr* 1 (1983): 253-261. For speech that lacks an introductory marker, see Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Abrupt Speech in Ugaritic Narrative Verse," *UF* 22 (1990): 415-420.

[116] Watson, "Abrupt Speech in Ugaritic Narrative Verse," 418.

[117] Watson, "Abrupt Speech in Ugaritic Narrative Verse," 418-420.

This device also appears in Akkadian literature. Benjamin Foster notes that this device appears several times in the Nineveh Gilgamesh Epic.[118] Unannounced speech depicts the passion of the speaker in an emotionally charged situation — prayer, seduction, anger, and cry for help.[119] In one case, an angry Ishtar speaks unannounced while Ea's response, which includes an introductory speech marker, is level and calm.[120]

Rendsburg demonstrates that lines 36-37 and 105-106 in the Egyptian Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor are difficult and confused — *ḫt ḥwi n-i s(y)* "by wood, struck, to me, it."[121] Rendsburg suggests that the "difficulty and unintelligibility of the passage are precisely the point."[122] The author jumbles the syntax to replicate the confusion that the sailor felt in the midst of the terrifying storm.[123]

Alice Mandell proposes that the difficulties in the *Marziḥu* contract text from Ugaritic and the sloppy writing style of the text is instructive. These factors suggest that this text is

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[118] Benjamin Foster, "Gilgamesh: Sex, Love and the Ascent of Knowledge," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing Company, 1987), 24 note 20, 34, and 40. Foster says, "When the actual seduction takes place, the poet conveys excitement by dropping the conventional poetic formulae introducing the direct speech (p. 24)." When commenting on Nineveh VI 6ff., Foster says, "Note [the] omission of the formulae of speech, emphasizing the abruptness and excitement of the speaker (p. 34)." Commenting on Nineveh VII iv 25, Foster says, "Note the utterance without a formula of speech, indicating Enkidu's excitement, echoing the abrupt narrative of line 17 (p. 40)."

[119] Foster, "Gilgamesh: Sex, Love and the Ascent of Knowledge," 24 note 20.

[120] Foster, "Gilgamesh: Sex, Love and the Ascent of Knowledge," 24 note 20.

[121] This is Rendsburg's translation. See Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 129.

[122] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 129.

[123] See Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 128-130. For more details about this story, see Gary A. Rendsburg, "Literary Devices in the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor," *JAOS* 120 (2000): 23. For a similar suggestion regarding lines in the Egyptian Tale of Sinuhe, see Richard B. Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and other ancient Egyptian poems, 1940-1640 BC* (Oxford World's Classics; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 47 note 36 and 40.

written by a trained scribe since such an important document would be written by a professional. According to Mandell, the sloppy and potentially playful nature of the text (e.g., the possible division *šm mn* "the name of whoever" and the use of *-w* as the 3ms clitic pronoun which might mimic a certain dialect or registry) illustrate that it is a practice contract so the need for neatness in this text is non-existent. The form of the text illustrates its particular function.[124]

Similarly, Hayim Tadmor contends that the syntax of a few lines in the Apology of Esarhaddon (I, 43-44) illustrates the confusion and turbulence of the time period (i.e., "*issiḫūma kakkē ina qirib Ninuna balu ilāni ana epeš šarrūti ittakkipū lalā'iš*… they rebelled and weapons, inside Nineveh, […], godlessly, like goats they fought each other for kingship!").[125] Tadmor says, "The word 'weapons', *kakkē*, stands alone without subject or predicate. This *staccato*-like anacoluthon may reflect the excitement of its author - perhaps the king himself - or perhaps a passage was omitted here, exactly at the point where the murder of Sennacherib should have been mentioned."[126]

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[124] Alice Mandell, "When Form Is Function: A Reassessment of the *Marziḥu* Contract (KTU 3.9) as a Scribal Exercise," *Maarov* 23 (2019): 39-67.

[125] Hayim Tadmor, "Autobiographical Apology in the Royal Assyrian Literature," in *History, Historiography, and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, ed. Hayim Tadmor and Moshe Weinfeld (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), 40. Tadmor does not think that Esarhaddon killed his father. He knows it is possible, however, that Esarhaddon intentionally confused the text because he did not want the name of his father's murderer (i.e., himself) to surface.

[126] Tadmor, "Autobiographical Apology in the Royal Assyrian Literature," 40.

Benjamin Foster thinks that the four cases of morphological confusion in quick succession in the Agušaja Hymn attest to the terror of Ninšubur, a messenger of Ishtar, upon seeing Ṣaltu.[127] Foster says,

> The remarkable phonological distortions of this passage, *kukkulat* for *nukkulat*, *imlallik* for *imtallik*, *taklak* for *taklat*, *aliwītim* perhaps for *alilītim*, and *namulāti* for *namurrāti* are taken as corruptions or scribal errors by Groneberg (cf. p. 90) and others. Four 'errors' of this kind could hardly occur one each in four successive lines. It seems preferable to interpret them as intentional distortion by the poet designed to convey Ninšubur's great agitation.[128]

William Soll mentions that the first (acrostic) or last (telestich) letters of a Babylonian poem often spell out a message. For example, Ashurbanipal's prayer to Marduk has the

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[127] See Benjamin R. Foster, "Ea and Ṣaltu," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein*, ed. Maria de Jong Ellis (MCAAS 19; Hamden, CT: Archon, 1977), 83. Foster translates,
"She is b-bizarre in her actions
She b-behaves unreasonably.
In her form she is m-mighty.
She makes many c-cries for battle.
She is adorned in a-awesomeness…"

[128] Foster, "Ea and Ṣaltu," 83. For a similar argument regarding Mic 1:10-16 that several scribal errors in one short text is unlikely, see David Noel Freedman, "Discourse on Prophetic Discourse," in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honour of George E. Mendenhall*, ed. H. B. Huffman, F. A. Spina, and A. R. W. Green (Winona Lake: IN, 1983), 141-158. Freedman notes that some passages in Micah (e.g., 3:1-5) are relatively free of text-critical problems and that there is an unusually high number of textual issues in Mic 1:10-16. This suggests that Mic 1:10-16 is not simply textually corrupt, since the textual corruptions would presumably be spread out relatively evenly throughout the course of the book, instead of being concentrated in one place. Freedman suggests that these verses are the product of emotion. Both Freedman and Anderson are uncertain whether Mic 1:10-16 is the product of a spontaneous emotional outburst or whether it is a deliberate rhetorical device that imitates such an outburst. See Francis I. Anderson, "Linguistic Coherence in Prophetic Discourse," in *Fortune the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Astrid B. Beck, Andrew H. Bartelt, Paul F. Raabe, Christ A. Franke (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 146-150 especially 148.

acrostic sentence: *a-na-ku aš-[šu]r-[ba-an]-ap-li šá il-su-ka [b]u-[u]l-[l]i-[ṭ]a-[ní]-[m]a ma-[ru]-du-uk da-li-li-ka lu-ud-lul* "I am Ashurbanipal who prays to thee; grant me life, O Marduk, and I will sing thy praise."[129] The carefully fashioned form of the prayer is itself a prayer which corresponds to the larger prayer it transcribes.

These texts from Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Egypt illustrate meta-textual semantics appearing in the orthography, phonology, morphology, and syntax of texts in the ancient Near East.[130] Every element of the text including the writing materials (e.g., the red wood in the Egyptian text mentioned by Loprieno) and the structure of the text (e.g., acrostic or telestich) create a contextual effect.[131] These texts are meant to be read and heard (i.e., they are both written and oral). Certain textual intricacies would only be perceptible to someone reading from the clay tablet, papyrus, ostracon, etc. while others would be perceptible to reader and hearer alike. These texts often signal the approach of visual and oral twistings within themselves. This contributes to the hearer/reader looking for the contextual effect through the prism of meta-textual semantics. Since these examples appear in ancient Near

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[129] William Michael Soll, "Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics," *Bib* 69 (1988): 308-309.

[130] For a possible case of meta-textual semantics in the iconography of a Judahite tomb, see Christopher B. Hays, "Swallowing Death at Tel 'Eton," *JNSL* 44 (2018): 103-116. Hays suggests that the face in the stone tomb at Tel 'Eton is carved underside-down to symbolise the overturning of death. He notes that the only other iconographic inscription in a Judahite tomb is an upside-down hand, see Ada Yardeni, *The National Hebrew Script: Up to the Babylonian Exile* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2018), 161-165.

[131] Cf. Lim, *The Earliest Commentary on the Prophecy of Habakkuk*, 11 and 163-164. Lim argues that the pesherist circumspectly ends his comments at Hab 2. The pesherist encourages his community that God will ultimately silence the opponents of the community as Habakkuk says that idolators will be mute before YHWH in Hab 2:20. Subsequently, the absence of Hab 3 is not an argument for its absence in the pesherist's *Vorlage* as is usually argued. The fact that there is more space in the manuscript is an argument for intentionality on the part of the pesherist. The pesherist stops at the end of Hab 2 because he intends his message to stop with YHWH's enemies being silenced.

Eastern texts from the second and first millennium BCE, it can be assumed that these rhetorical devices were wide-spread among scribes throughout the ancient Near East, including Israel, from an early period.

1.11 Meta-Textual Semantics and Rabbinic Exegesis

Close, attentive reading of every element in the text is characteristic of rabbinic literature.[132] The rabbis comment on various infelicities within the Hebrew text such as orthography (e.g., the final *mem* in medial position in Isa 9:6),[133] syntax (e.g., the placement

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[132] See Arnold Goldberg, "The Rabbinic View of Scripture," in *Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature*, eds. Philip F. Davies and Richard T. White (LHB/OT 100; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 153-166. Goldberg emphasises the written nature of the Scriptures as understood by the rabbis. Goldberg says that Torah is "a piece of writing" which is "perceived with the eyes" (p. 157). Subsequently, though the *qere* is read, the *kethiv* was important as God still communicated something through it. Goldberg says, "Not only what can be heard, but also what can be seen is significant and meaningful (p. 158)." There is no unnecessary element in Scripture (p. 159). God allowed things to be written ambiguously to communicate different meanings in the same text (p. 160). Regarding rabbinic exegesis, Goldberg says, "It conceives of and uses Scripture as a graphic basis of communication…Only through interpretation of the graphic signs can the communication, God's message, which is found in Scripture, be construed (p. 162)."

Also, see Glinert, *The Story of Hebrew*, 46-50. Rabbis focused on seemingly unnecessary words, usual words or phrases, the same word in different contexts, and subtle or ambiguous language "as an exegetical opportunity, or opportunities" (p. 48).

[133] See b. Sanh. 94a; Ruth Rab. 64:4; and Targum Jonathan on Isa 9:6. For Ruth Rab., see L. Rabinowitz, "Ruth" in *Midrash Rabbah: Ruth and Esther*, Vol. 8 (London: Soncino, 1939), 83. For Targum Jonathan, see Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation. The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum* (HUCM 2; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974), 45-46 and 154 note 35. For the Hebrew text of Isa 9:6, see H. G. M. Williamson, *Commentary on Isaiah 6-12* (ICC; London: T & T Clark, 2019), 373-374 and Donald W. Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants* (SuppTHB 3; Leiden: Brill, 2019), 96. For a different view of the significance of this orthography in Isa 9:6, see M. Friedländer, *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah: Edited from Mss. And Translated with Notes, Introductions, and Indexes*, Vol. 1 (London: Society of Hebrew Literature, 1873), 52. Ibn Ezra says, "Some remark, after the manner of the Midrash, that the use of the final Mem in this word hints at the miracle of the sun's shadow going backward (xxxviii. 8)." For the Hebrew text (למרבה, דרך דרש הסופרי' כי המ״ם סגור בתוך המלה והיה ראוי להיותו בסוף, רמז לאות השמש ששב הצל לאחור), see M. Friedländer, *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah: Edited from Mss.*, Vol. 3 (London: Society of Hebrew Literature, 1877), 21. How the orthography in Isa 9:6 connects with Isa 38 is not clear nor is it obvious to which midrash Ibn Ezra refers.

of שְׁמוֹ “his name” after a name means the individual is wicked [e.g., 1 Sam 25:3], while the placement before a name means they are righteous [e.g., Esth 2:5]),[134] morphology (e.g., Ruth uses נְעָרִים instead of Boaz’s נַעֲרוֹת),[135] and enallage (e.g., why does the text read וַיָּבֹא “and he entered” instead of וַתָּבֹא “and she entered” in Ruth 3:15).[136] They understand every element of the text to be exegetically and interpretively significant. This often leads to fanciful readings without much contextual evidence. At other times, they seek to interpret a text through another text or to illustrate that the element under discussion corresponds to another in the same *pasuq* or beyond.[137]

One example of rabbinic exegesis looks towards Gen 37:3, where Joseph is given a coat (כְּתֹנֶת) of פַּסִּים (cf. this lexeme appears elsewhere only in 2 Sam 13:18-19).[138] The rabbis see in the use of פַּסִּים a reference to casting lots (i.e., the Rabbinic Hebrew √פיס “to split,

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[134] See Ruth Rab. 27:5 in Neusner, *Ruth Rabbah*, 101-102.

[135] See Ruth Rab. 47:1 in Neusner, *Ruth Rabbah*, 136.

[136] See Ruth Rab. 64:4 in Neusner, *Ruth Rabbah*, 169. Cf. C. Levias, “Enallage in the Bible,” *AJSL* 50 (1934): 104-108.

[137] See Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, “Who’s Kidding Whom?: A Serious Reading of Rabbinic Word Plays,” *JAAR* 55 (1987): 765-788.

[138] For the Ugaritic lexeme *psm* “light garment, veil,” see Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, 3rd rev. ed., trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (HdO 112; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 675. For the Old Babylonian word *pussumu* “veil” occurring from early in the 2nd millennium BCE (also appearing in Old Assyrian, Middle Assyrian, and Standard Babylonian), see *CAD* 12:537 (cf. The word *pusmu* “a garment” in *CAD* 12:536). Also, see Hayim ben Yosef Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew: Etymological-Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalents with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2009), 300. Ben Yosef Tawil connects the Akkadian *pišannu* “veil, garment” because the phrase *kitû* (or *kitinnū*) *pišannu* appears in an Akkadian text relating to clothing. He also notes that *lbš psm* occurs in lists of clothing from Ugarit. Sarna also mentions the Ugaritic phrase *lbš psm*; see Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (JPS Torah; Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 255.

divide, distribute").[139] The name of the garment signals that Joseph's brothers will cast lots over Joseph's garment to decide who must tell Jacob about Joseph's fate. They also understand פַּסִּים as an acronym. It spells out Joseph's approaching tribulations. The פ stands for Potiphar (פּוֹטִיפַר), the ס for traders (סֹחֲרִים), the י for the Ishmaelites (יִשְׁמְעֵאלִים), and the מ for the Midianites (מִדְיָנִים).[140] Finally, this orthography anticipates Israel's later redemption. They divide the lexeme to read פס ים "split the sea" (cf. Ps 66:6 הָפַךְ יָם לְיַבָּשָׁה "he divided the sea into dry land"). Howard Eilberg-Schwartz says, "At the level of the narrative, the word *psym* merely indicates that Joseph was given an elegant coat. But implicit in the coat's description is a hint that this garment would be the cause of jealousy and ultimately result in Jacob's being sold into slavery, which in turn would lead to the redemption of Israel from Egypt."[141] Meta-textual semantics is foundational for rabbinic interpretation.

1.12 Meta-Textual Semantics and Medieval Hebrew Exegesis

Medieval Jewish exegetes were aware that components of the text communicate beyond the semantics of that particular element. For example, Mosheh ben Shesheth notes that some understand the *Qal* participle נִצָּרִים in Jer 4:16 to be a pun on Nebuchadnezzar's

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[139] See Gen. Rab. 84:8 in Jacob Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah Vol. 3* (BJS 106; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1985), 189-190.

For √פיס to split, divide, distribute" referring to casting lots, see Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 1166.

[140] For another attempt to explain the form פַּסִּים, see Richard Elliot Friedman, *The Exodus* (New York: Harper One, 2017), 115. Friedman suggests that the form פַּסִּים is a pun on the name Joseph (יוֹסֵף). The lexeme פַּסִּים spells the name Joseph backwards. Additionally, the verb √יסף "to add" (וַיּוֹסֶף in Gen 37:5 and 8) and the *wayyiqtol* of √ספר "to tell" (i.e., וַיְסַפֵּר in Gen 37:9-10) are additional puns on the name Joseph in this context.

[141] Eilberg-Schwartz, "Who's Kidding Whom?: A Serious Reading of Rabbinic Word Plays," 779-780. Joseph's story of going into slavery and then being released anticipates the same narrative on a national level.

name.[142] The form נֹצְרִים describes not just any enemy coming against Jerusalem to besiege it but specifically speaks of Nebuchadnezzar and his army.

Meira Polliack states that Saadiah Gaon and Yefet ben ‘Eli both comment upon the punning language of Zeph 2:4.[143] Yefet ben ‘Eli notes that the phrase וְעֶקְרוֹן תֵּעָקֵר “Ekron will be uprooted” is emphatic (cf. cognate infinitival phrase) and means that Ekron will be utterly removed (i.e., ועקבותיהם ייעקרו מהמקום “Their footprints will be uprooted from the place.”).[144] The city עַזָּה is part of a pun in this verse also (i.e., כִּי עַזָּה עֲזוּבָה תִּהְיֶה “for Gaza will be forsaken”).[145] Saadiah Gaon similarly understands all Philistine cities, not just the obvious puns between Gaza and Ekron, including Ashkelon (אַשְׁקְלוֹן) and Ashdod (אַשְׁדּוֹד), to be part of a pun. By dividing up אַשְׁקְלוֹן (i.e., אֵשׁ “fire” and קָלוֹן “shame”) and אַשְׁדּוֹד (i.e., בָּאֵשׁ “in fire” and יְדוֹד from √דדה “to run away”), Gaon understands the orthography of these locations as

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[142] Mosheh ben Shesheth, *A Commentary upon the Book of Jeremiah and Ezeqiel*, ed. S. R. Driver (London: Williams and Norgate, 1871), 4 and ג. Driver identifies (p. 4 note 3) Kimḥi as the one ben Shesheth references.

[143] For Yefet ben ‘Eli’s comments on Zeph 2:4, see Eliezar Schossberg and Meira Polliack, *Yefet Ben Eli’s Commentary on the Book of Zephaniah* [Hebrew](Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2020), 154-156.

[144] This is from the modern Hebrew translation appearing in Schlossberg and Polliack, *Yefet Ben Eli's Commentary on the Book of Zephaniah*, 156.

[145] Regarding the puns in Zeph 2:4, see Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Ezechiel und die Kleinen Propheten* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912), 5:312; Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WB 32; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 135; O. Palmer Robertson, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 297-299; and Marvin A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 110 and 122-123. Sweeney follows Zalcman in seeing the language of Zeph 2:4 to refer to a forced, abandoned wife in contrast to Jerusalem appearing in Zeph 3:14-20 as well as evidencing paronomasia.

creating a contextual effect.[146] The very names of these Philistine cities predict their demise.[147] Polliack also cites similar views expressed by Ibn Ezra and Kimḥi.[148] Polliack states that these medieval Jewish exegetes understand "These afflictions are (encoded) in the secrets of the Hebrew language."[149] Medieval Jewish commentators are attune to the presence of meta-textual semantics in the text of the Hebrew Bible and utilise it in their interpretation.

1.13 Meta-Textual Semantics and Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts

The arrangement of the text in several medieval Hebrew manuscripts evidence meta-textual semantics. Rendsburg notes a visual pun that appears in several medieval manuscripts of Exod 15:19.[150] He cites Cambridge MS Add 652, folio 47v (from the thirteenth century CE) and the Oxford Bodleian MS Kennicott 1, folio 44v.[151] In each case, the scribes arrange the words of Exod 15:19 in order to place the phrase הַיָּם "the sea" on either side of the phrase

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[146] Meira Polliack, "Don't Alter a Word: Thoughts on Robert Alter's 'The Art of Bible Translation' (Princeton University Press: Princeton & Oxford, 2019) in the Wider Context of Hebrew Bible Translation," *Biblia Arabica*, 3 March 2021, https://biblia-arabica.com/dont-alter-a-word-thoughts-on-robert-alters- the-art-of-bible-translation-princeton-university-press-princeton-oxford-2019-in-the-wider-context-of-hebrew-bible-translation/.

[147] See Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 108 and Lawrence Zalcman, "Ambiguity and Assonance at Zephaniah II 4," *VT* 36 (1986): 365-371. Noegel and Zalcman note that the verb √שׁדד "to destroy" is present in the name אַשְׁדּוֹד. Also, see D. Winton Thomas, "A Pun on the Name Ashdod in Zeph 2:14," *ExpTim* 74 (1962/63), 63. Thomas suggests that √שׁדד means "to drive away" in a parallel sense to √גרשׁ in this verse.

[148] See Polliack, "Don't Alter a Word: Thoughts on Robert Alter's 'The Art of Bible Translation,'" *Biblia Arabica*, 3 March 2021.

[149] Polliack, "Don't Alter a Word: Thoughts on Robert Alter's 'The Art of Bible Translation,'" *Biblia Arabica*, 3 March 2021.

[150] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 388-391.

[151] For Cambridge MS Add.652, see http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-00652/1. For Oxford Bodleian MS.Kennicott 1, see https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/9fbdb696-ca28-4904-b91c-42ac283ccb2c.

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בַיַּבָּשָׁה בְּתוֹךְ “The sons of Israel walked on dry ground in the middle of [the sea].” The representation of the words in each manuscript looks like this:

הים	ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך	הים

The scribes form the text for contextual effect. There is no way to guess when this arrangement first appeared in the manuscript tradition. Rendsburg says, “But regardless of when the practice arose…[it] demonstrates that later Jews also understood that a scribe/author could play with the visual form of the text no less than with the oral/aural nature of the words.”[152] Indeed, at least these two medieval manuscripts of Exod 15:19 reveal that the medieval, scribal creators of Hebrew manuscripts were aware of various opportunities to create meta-textual semantics.[153] Is this example from Exod 15:19 indicative of a larger realisation among ancient Masoretic scribes that the text can be shaped in such a way as to represent the contextual meaning? There is no way to be certain, but the possibility is intriguing.

James Diamond mentions that the Masoretic tradition states that the ו in the word שָׁלוֹם in Num 25:12 should be written severed or “broken.”[154] Regarding the significance of a broken ו in Num 25:12, Diamond says, “Could this have something to do with the context in

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[152] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 391.

[153] This scribal device may come directly from the arrangement of the text of Exod 15:12-17. Peter Gentry argues that YHWH’s activity appears in Exod 15:12-13 and 17 on either side of a description of Israel’s enemies in 15:14-16. This structure mimics the walls of water surrounding and destroying Israel’s enemies. See Peter J. Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 88-89.

[154] James S. Diamond, *Scribal Secrets: Extraordinary Texts in the Torah and Their Implications*, ed. Robert Goldenberg and Gary A. Rendsburg (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Papers, 2019), 123-125. Diamond leans on material from Mordecai Pinchas/Marc Michaels; see https://www.sofer.co.uk/broken-vav. For an example of a “broken” ו, see Bodleian Library MS. Kennicott 1 folio 92r. See https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/cb9df4b7-f77d-48f8-93f0-eced1e0e6942. Codex L (91 recto) does not represent a broken ו.

which this *vav* is written?…It could be that the *vav* is written to represent visually the spear as it might have looked after Pinḥas had deployed it."[155] The Talmud (b. Qidd. 66b) suggests that the word should be read as √שׁלם "to be whole, complete," not שָׁלוֹם, since the ו is split. The broken ו might represent Phinehas's brokenness upon committing murder. He is not whole (√שׁלם). Whether a reader understands the broken ו in Num 25:12 as referring to Phinehas's spear breaking through those engaged in coitus or to the fracturing of Phinehas's soul, it illustrates the context. In the words of the modern scribe, Mordecai Pinchas, the broken ו in Num 25:12 is "a special visual *midrash*."[156]

1.14 Conclusion

Is the phenomenon of meta-textual semantics present in the ancient scribal mind or is it a product of modern scholarship? The literature in the ancient Near East from Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Egypt each illustrate that the authors and scribes of ancient texts used textual elements to provide meaning beyond the semantic value of a lexeme or collocation.

If meta-textual semantics appears in ancient Near Eastern literature, then does it appear in the Hebrew Bible? The introduction to the book of Proverbs intimates that this book is formed to encourage creative investigation into the meaning and devices of a מָשָׁל, a מְלִיצָה, and a חִידָה in a text. The reader must concentrate on every textual element (e.g., orthography, morphology, syntax, etc.), both covert and overt, to properly reevaluate previous clauses while looking ahead and simultaneously incorporating new understandings to increase knowledge. The syntax of Prov 1:1-7 and the acronym in Prov 1:10 dependent upon 1:15 provide a reading strategy for the book.

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[155] Diamond, *Scribal Secrets*, 124.

[156] See https://www.sofer.co.uk/broken-vav.

Finally, are the puzzling compositional games described in Prov 1:5-6 something that all the authors of the Hebrew Bible employed or is this phenomenon restricted to Proverbs? In addition to the presence of this strategy in the broader context of ancient Near Eastern literature and specifically in Proverbs, it is not surprising that similar riddles appear across the literature of the Hebrew Bible at the authorial (e.g., Jonah 1:3; Ruth 2:21, etc.) and scribal levels. As Noegel says, "There appears to be no limit to the sophistication of ancient writers."[157] A remaining question which needs further investigation is: "How prevalent is meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible?" I will examine selections of Hebrew Jeremiah as test cases.

[157] Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 156.

Chapter 2 Methodology for Meta-Textual Semantics

2.1 Introduction

No methodology currently exists to verify a proper case of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible. For example, should there be a נ line in Ps 145?[158] Adele Berlin believes so based on G, V, S, and DSS. She understands the complete acrostic in Ps 145 to represent a complete praise of YHWH (i.e., a case of meta-textual semantics).[159] Yefet ben ʻEli, however, understands the absence of the נ line in Ps 145 to bespeak the fact that humans are incapable of perfectly praising YHWH (i.e., a case of meta-textual semantics).[160] Both Berlin and ben ʻEli understand the presence or absence of the נ line in Ps 145 as indicative of the message. How is one to decide which suggestion is correct, or if either is?[161] Similarly, is the repetition in Lev 20:10 a classic case of dittography or a case of meta-textual semantics?[162] A methodology is necessary to test suggested cases of meta-textual semantics.

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[158] For the versional and textual evidence, see Peter J. Gentry, "The Text of the Old Testament," *JETS* 52 (2009): 30-31.

[159] Adele Berlin, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 145," in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry*, ed. A. Kort and S. Morschauser (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 18.

[160] Uriel Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms from Saddya Gaon to Abraham Ibn-Ezra* [Hebrew] (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1982), 75 note 45.

[161] Perhaps the issue is simply that some acrostics are full while others are not (see Qoh. Rab. 1:13 and Song Rab. 1:5 and 7). See August Wünsche, *Der Midrasch Kohelet* (Leipzig: Schulze, 1880), 19-20 and Jacob Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* (BJS 197; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 1:45.

For more on the missing נ line in Ps 145, see Reuven Kimelman, "Psalm 145: Theme, Structure, and Impact," *JBL* 113 (1994): 49-51. Kimelman argues that the נ line is not part of the original psalm as is evidenced by the resulting reverse acrostic spelling מלך at the beginning of the lines in Ps 145:11-13 (p. 45). See Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Reversed Rootplay in Ps 145," *Bib* 62 (1981): 101-102.

[162] Both possibilities are mentioned in Brotzman and Tully, *Old Testament Textual Criticism*, 123.

Additionally, previous discussions of meta-textual semantics lack a full description of each occurrence of meta-textual semantics (see chapter 1). These studies generally leave unexplored the specific purpose of a case of meta-textual semantics within its context. Meta-textual semantics must produce a textual effect.[163] There are no textual limitations in previous suggestions of meta-textual semantics as they vary in range from a single word, line, or verse to an entire section or book.[164] In some studies, there is not a careful distinction between

[163] See Kalimi, *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*, 1-16. Previous studies on metathesis and puns in the Hebrew Bible do not give a proper account of why a certain element should be understood as intentional metathesis. For an element to be intentional in a text, it must serve a demonstrable contextual purpose. Noegel (*"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 47-153) argues that puns have a function and purpose in their context instead of simply being a literary or rhetorical device.

[164] For example, Rendsburg (*How the Bible Is Written*, 140-143, 151-152, 539, 540-541, and 547-549) focuses on a single word (e.g., וַתִּצְפְּנוֹ in Josh 2:4) or a short phrase (e.g., וְהָמֵת אַל־תְּמִיתֵהוּ in 1 Kgs 3:26) while also mentioning an entire chapter (e.g., Gen 1), section (e.g., Exod 7-9), or book (e.g., Numbers and Job). This varying textual range makes it difficult to assess the validity of his suggestions.

meta-textual semantics and textual corruption.[165] Some other suggestions disregard the

[165] See Daniel I. Block, "Text and Emotion: A Study in the 'Corruptions' in Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision (Ezekiel 1:4-28)," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 418-442. Block argues that the confusion in this text (including grammatical, syntactic, and morphological issues as well as stylistic and substantive ones) is too pervasive to all be the result of scribal error. Instead, Block suggests that the text mirrors Ezekiel's emotional state of confusion upon receiving the vision. Block's helpful analysis does not help to distinguish individual cases of confusion as either textual corruptions or cases of meta-textual semantics, however.

For example, Walther Zimmerli suggests reading וּבֵינוֹת "and among" with the Greek (καὶ ἐν μέσῳ "and in the midst") instead of the MT's וּדְמוּת "and the likeness" in Ezek 1:13 by comparison with Ezek 10:2 [twice], 6 [twice], and 7 [twice]. See Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* (Hermeneia; Philadephia: Fortress, 1979), 509. Block acknowledges this possibility (p. 424) saying, "Verse 13 begins with a problematic *wdmwt*, which most emend to *umtwk* or *wbtwk* after the LXX's *kai en mesǭ*." How can one determine which divergent elements in Ezek 1 are textual corruptions and which ones are part of the prophet's presentation?

Additionally, do any odd elements in Ezek 1 illustrate the author's style appearing in the book? Block discusses the irregularities in the text of the book of Revelation and suggests the possibility that the literary genre (i.e., apocalyptic writings) could "have a tendency to become stylistically erratic (p. 434)." Thus, it is possible that the genre and style of the text makes Revelation appear textually misshapen. Block (p. 435) suggests that the prophetic vision of the deity is what makes the text turbulent. Block's discussion of Revelation is based on R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (ICC; Edinburgh T & T Clark, 1920), 1:cxvii-clix.

context.[166] Some suggestions of meta-textual semantics are predicated upon intertextuality instead of the context of an occurrence.[167] Some scholars assume that ancient Hebrew authors and scribes strove for grammatical perfection in their textual production which results in their finding various corruptions in the Hebrew text. It is possible that some textual imperfections might be part of the intentional presentation of an author or scribe and should not be

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[166] See Philippe Guillaume, "Lamentations 5: The Seventh Acrostic," *JHebS* 9 (2009): Article 16, pages 1-6. Guillaume argues that the beginning words of Lam 5:1 (זְכֹר יְהוָה) should be read with the first consonant of each half verse in Lam 5:1-3 to produce the phrase זכריה הנביא "Zechariah, the prophet." He also reads the first consonants (אלהך "your God") and the last consonants (רם מד "he is very exalted") of Lam 5:19-22. The resulting message is [זכריה[ו] הנביא אלה[י]ך רם מ[א]ד "Zechariah, the prophet, [says]: your God is greatly exalted."

There are several problems with Guillaume's approach. 1) He does not provide a method for determining what consonants to include. He reads a whole phrase in verse 1, the beginning consonant of each half verses in verses 1-3, and the first and last consonants in verses 19-22. What drives his selection in each particular case? 2) He omits (i.e., ו in יהוה) or adds (i.e., י in אלהיך and an א in מאד) consonants in his reconstruction. This illustrates the strain of Guillaume's hidden acrostic. 3) There are no contextual clues in Lam 5 to alert the reader to look for a hidden acrostic at the beginning, middle, and end of a phrase or verse respectively. The context of Lam 1-4 suggests only looking at the beginning of a phrase or verse. He cites the repetition of the preposition עַל "upon" at the beginning of verses 17 and 18 as well as the beginning of the second line of verse 17 as proof that the acrostic and telestitch should begin in verse 19. If this is valid, do other repetitions in Lam 5 also signal something? Why, for example, should the reader not begin reading each line beginning with the lexeme שׁוּעָלִים "foxes" in the line following the three-fold repetitive of עַל in verse 18? 4) His reading provides a hidden message of hope which does not seem to be part of the context of Lamentations.

[167] For example, William Holladay argues that the verb √בצר "to fortify" describing the city of Babylon appears with the lexeme שָׁמַיִם "heavens" in Jer 51:53 which invokes a connection to the text of Gen 11:1-9. In Gen 11:6, the meaning of √בצר is "to be impossible" where people are seeking to build Babylon to שָׁמַיִם. Similarly, David Vanderhooft argues that the place of burning (i.e., Babylon) in Gen 11:3 (וְנִשְׂרְפָה לִשְׂרֵפָה) will become a burnt mountain in Jer 51:25 (הַר שְׂרֵפָה). Meta-textual semantics is realised in each case through intertextuality. See William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989), 430-431 and David S. Vanderhooft, "Babylon as Cosmopolis in Israelite Texts and Achaemenid Architecture," *HeBAI* 9 (2020): 53. For the use of sound play to connect a text with previous ones and then to reformulate them, see Jonathan G. Kline, *Allusive Soundplay in the Hebrew Bible* (AIL 28; Atlanta: SBL, 2016).

emended.[168] A methodology to determine the presence of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible is acutely needed.

2.2 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Contortion and Textual Cohesion

I present two paths for understanding meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible — textual contortion and textual cohesion. Textual contortion refers to occasions where an aspect of the text appears distorted or misshapen, but it illustrates the message of the text. This can include odd orthography, manufactured morphology, spoiled syntax, a *hapax*, unnecessary repetition, the inappropriateness of a historical note by the narrator, the inappropriateness of a complementation pattern appearing with a verb, etc.[169] Several of these elements may be present in the same text. An incongruity in the form (e.g., lexical, syntactic, morphological, etc.) of a text should be investigated for the possibility of textual contortion.

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[168] See Anderson, "Linguistic Coherence in Prophetic Discourse," 147. Anderson says, "There are so many places in the Hebrew Bible where modern readers have judged the text corrupt, and the matching attempts to heal the text have been so diverse, arbitrary, and unconvincing, that one wonders if the fault lies in us modern readers, not in ancient authors or scribes. Imposing our standards of correctness in either grammar or literary form, we might have obliterated precious evidence of deviant linguistic usage or of deliberate literary artifice. We should recognise that genuine utterance of living speakers rarely attain to the required standards of textbook grammars. Literature is artificial." Anderson (p. 148) and David Freedman think that various "unintelligible" texts in the Hebrew Bible might illustrate that the author carefully designs the form to illustrate the emotion of the text.

Additionally, Anderson says, "I have carried out my research in the belief that every difference in language use makes a difference, that every detail, however seemingly slight, might well be significant. I accept the reproach that I have a pedantic obsession with minutiae." This statement was written in Anderson's hand in the margins of a manuscript that he was working on at the time of his death. Dean Forbes mentions this quotation and its discovery in an email (25 May 2020) sent to the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.

[169] Regarding a *hapax*, Greenspan suggests that the presence of a *hapax legomenon* means that it is rare in the Hebrew language itself. Also, poetry uses more *hapax legomena* than prose. See Frederick E. Greenspahn, *Hapax Legomena in Biblical Hebrew: A Study of the Phenomenon and Its Treatment since Antiquity with Special Reference to Verbal Forms* (SBLDS 74; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1984), 31-46 and Frederick E. Greenspahn, "The Number and Distribution of Hapax Legomena in Biblical Hebrew," *VT* 30 (1980): 8-19 especially 12-16. Also, see Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 198-199 note 19.

The other path to meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible is textual cohesion. This refers to situations when an author uses an element because it is consistent or compatible with the context, including repetition of a keyword, phrase, or formula, chiasmus, acrostic, inclusio, the contextual appropriateness of a sound or word, and the contextual appropriateness of a pun to name a few.[170]

After initially noting a disharmonious or harmonious element in the text, several subsequent tests are necessary to confirm this example as a case of meta-textual semantics. First, this element might simply represent the stylistic preferences of the author or scribe. A particular orthography, which is odd, may be characteristic of a section or an entire book (e.g., an extra א which appears in many lexemes in the text of 2 Sam 10-12).[171] A particular collocation, which may or may not be syntactically unique, may appear several times in the work of a certain author. The mere fact that some element is a perfect fit or misfit in the context, does not automatically mean that it is a case of meta-textual semantics. If, however, the element under examination does not appear to be a stylistic element related to a specific author or scribe, then the possibility that it is a case of meta-textual semantics remains open.

I am using a synchronic approach to the Hebrew text of Jeremiah in this study. As with my approach to textual criticism, I am dealing with the extant forms of the text in the manuscripts, witnesses, and versions. This does not assume that the present text has not experienced alterations. A diachronic approach to the text is valid as is seen in two aspects of this study. I employ commentaries that are both diachronically and synchronically oriented. It

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[170] For example, Abimelech carries wood on his shoulder (שְׁכֶם) to Shechem (שְׁכֶם) to burn it (Judg 9:47-49). See Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 23, 88, 152-153, and 232.

[171] See Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 374-377.

should be noted, though I do not pursue this in the present study, that if a diachronically oriented commentary does not entertain a certain textual element as representing a textual issue (e.g., a gloss, deletion, addition, etc.), then the possibility of textual soundness is increased. Also, I believe the diachronic aspect of the text of Jer 27-29 in relationship to the rest of Jeremiah is essential to understanding the textual incongruity of placing "Jehoiakim" in Jer 27:1 (see below).

An aspect of a synchronic approach in this study deserves comment. Since there are several hands at work in the text of Jeremiah, how does one determine stylistics? In my analysis, I focus on elements which are rare in the entirety of Jeremiah or the Hebrew Bible. This approach is admittedly limited. For example, an author or scribe who always spells "cistern" as בֹּאר instead of בּוֹר may be responsible for Jer 2:13 and other portions of Jeremiah which do not again use the lexeme בֹּאר/בּוֹר. In this way, the spelling בֹּאר is stylistically normative for this particular author or scribe but non-normative for its other occurrences in Jeremiah or in the Hebrew Bible. In this study, therefore, it is always possible that by understanding a certain orthographic element as non-normative I might actually be muddling the stylistics of a particular author or scribe instead of properly identifying it.

While my approach is subjective, it remains valid as it does not disregard the possibility that diachronic approaches might illuminate our understanding of the text, but it does explain aspects of the extant text in the context of the present form of Jeremiah in the MT and the normative syntax, orthography, and morphology of ancient Hebrew as manifested in the Hebrew Bible. Rendsburg, following Greenspahn, suggests the possibility that a *hapax* or rare spellings in the Hebrew Bible are potentially rare elements in the ancient Hebrew language itself and not simply rare in the registry that we possess (i.e., in the extant written

texts represented in biblical and ancient Hebrew).[172] This suggestion is directive for this study. Rendsburg and Greenspahn use the extant written texts of biblical and ancient Hebrew to determine what is potentially normative and rare in the ancient Hebrew language system.

If this element is not stylistic, then it could be a textual corruption. The text could be twisted, resulting in a deviant or an inappropriate element entering the text. If this is true, then the resulting bizarre text is the exact opposite of meta-textual semantics. A textual corruption has created the form, destroying the author or scribe's intended structure. Similarly, a later scribe might have reordered or reworded the text so that an element exhibits perfect balance with the surrounding elements, yet this does not reflect the previous state of the text (cf. harmonising in manuscripts of the Gospels). In either scenario, the resulting textual element has been superimposed upon the text beyond the authorial or scribal intention. It is not a case of meta-textual semantics via textual contortion or textual cohesion but a case of accidental or misguided textual corruption. Shimon Bar-Efrat makes a similar point regarding 2 Sam 18:29. After commenting that Ahimaaz's confused words convey his confusion,[173] Bar-Efrat says, "This explanation is not necessarily correct, however, since the confusion in the sentence may simply derive from textual inaccuracy. There are several

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[172] See Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 198-199 note 19 and Greenspahn, *Hapax Legomena in Biblical Hebrew*, 31-46.

[173] See Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (JSOTSS 70; Sheffield: Almond, 1984), 65. Bar-Efrat says, "It is obvious that this sentence is not constructed correctly. The lack of fluency may be explained by Ahimaaz's confusion at having to answer an uncomfortable question. He wants to tell the king about the victory in battle but does not want to inform him of his son's death, and does not know how to extricate himself from this predicament."

disjointed or defective sentences in the Bible which have no connection with confusion or any other psychological state."[174]

To be considered a case of textual corruption in this study, a different and better reading should appear in one or more of the ancient witnesses (e.g., the Scrolls, medieval Hebrew manuscripts, G, S, T, V, OL, etc.) or some other source (e.g., the marginal Masoretic notes in the medieval Hebrew manuscripts or in rabbinic comments).[175] If a different reading does appear in an ancient witness, then the nature of the difference must be determined.[176] The reading could be the result of the translator seeking to smooth over a difficult text in his *Vorlage*. Additionally, the translator may attempt to work with a difficulty in the *Vorlage* and

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[174] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 65. See Jacob Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1978), 146. Licht similarly warns that we might be "misinterpreting a scribal error as a deliberate stylistic device, or awkward editorial manipulations as structural features."

[175] See Aaron D. Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah: The Case for A Sixth-Century Date of Composition* (SSLL 74; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 31 note 89. Hornkohl says, "While there is no denying a degree of literary and textual development, unequivocally evidenced in the concrete textual witnesses of a few exceptional cases (e.g., the DSS Jeremiah material), the vast majority of instances of literary and textual development suggested by scholars remain conjectural, unreflected in extant manuscript sources, or derive from the often ambiguous evidence of the ancient translations." Also, see Gary A. Rendsburg, "Genesis 49:4—The Route of Facile Textual Emendation vs. Appreciation for Literary Brilliance," *VT* 71 (2021): 673-686. Rendsburg argues that the versional evidence supporting the MT's reading יְצוּעִי in Gen 49:4 is significant (pp. 673-676). The versional evidence suggests that the reading יְצוּעִי should appear in Gen 49:4 and be explained as Jacob turning to address the audience who thought he had forgotten about Reuben's actions based on his non-responsiveness in Gen 35:22 (pp. 676-681). The reading יְצוּעִי in Gen 49:4 is particularly striking since the construct יְצוּעֵי appears in 1 Chron 5:1 which is based on Gen 49:4 (p. 676). Rendsburg concludes that our increasing appreciation for the inner workings of literature makes emendation of problematic elements in the Hebrew text less necessary and often confirms the MT (p. 681).

[176] See Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 113-120 especially 118-119; Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 269-282; and Anderson and Widder, *Textual Criticism of the Bible*, 42-46. Cf. For the difficulty of understanding the motivation behind the difference in G and MT in Jonah, for example, see Eric J. Tully, "A Model for Distinguishing between Textual Variants and Translation Shifts in Old Testament Textual Criticism," *SJOT* 34 (2020): 245-266.

represent it as best as possible which results in rewording the text so that a later critic thinks there is a difference between the translator's *Vorlage* and the MT which is not actually present. In these cases, the difference does not originate from a different *Vorlage* but from the problem of translating an uneven text. On the other hand, the different reading may indeed result from a different *Vorlage*, and the versions may have a better reading than the one represented in the MT. Only this last scenario represents a proper case of textual corruption.

My approach to textual criticism in this study uses the extant manuscripts and versional evidence as its basis. This does not preclude the reality that there have been changes in the text which are not extant. For example, 2 Chron 20:1 should most probably read מֵהָאֲדוֹמִים instead of מֵהָעַמּוֹנִים though there is no extant evidence for such a reading. The proper noun בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן has just been mentioned two words before מֵהָעַמּוֹנִים in the MT. Additionally, the Edomites are present throughout the narrative (i.e., הַר־שֵׂעִיר in 2 Chron 20:10, 22, 23 and יוֹשְׁבֵי שֵׂעִיר in 2 Chron 20:23) but not mentioned in 2 Chron 20:1. G reads Μιναίων seemingly for מֵהַמְּעוּנִים (cf. 2 Chron 26:7) which is probably a result of metathesis with מֵהָעַמּוֹנִים. S reads ܓܒܪܐ ܩܪܒܐ "men of war" probably for אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה (cf. 2 Chron 17:13; Deut 2:14; 1 Kgs 9:22; 2 Kgs 25:4, 19; Jer 39:4; 41:3, 16; 52:7, 25; etc.). T seeks to explain the awkward presence of מֵהָעַמּוֹנִים in his text while acknowledging the expected presence of the Edomites by stating that there are Edomites among the Ammonites in this group of armies (ועמהון מן אדומאי דאתחברו עם עמונאי). The reading מֵהָאֲדוֹמִים is better than the present form of the MT even though there is no extant evidence for this reading.

Changes certainly occurred which are undocumented between the time of Jeremiah's original writing in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE to the first extant evidence of the Jeremianic text in the Scrolls after the 3rd century BCE. The absence of evidence of textual change is not

evidence. When determining a case of textual corruption, the exegete should be sensitive to the textual evidence and the possibility that an alteration has transpired in the text which is no longer discernible. One has to judge a text, a scribe, or scribal tradition on a case-by-case basis. In this study, I choose to discuss textual corruptions through the lens of extant textual, manuscript, and versional evidence though I recognise the limitations of this approach and that other explanations might present a better description in individual cases.

The perpetuation of a textually problematic element (e.g., the missing dates in the Hebrew text in 1 Sam 13:1) by competent scribes and copyists is instructive. Anyone reading 1 Sam 13:1 realises that something is missing but apparently the humility of the scribe caused him to acknowledge both the mistake and his present limitedness. Repeating an obvious mistake is significant. The scribe or copyist acknowledges that he does not know enough presently to reject, rearrange, or alter this odd element. He does not even make a corrective marginal or superscript suggestion. The scribe who repeats this obvious mistake seems open to the possibility that there is more to this ill-formed element than immediately meets the eye.

It is generally agreed that an ancient Hebrew writer or compiler would understand the context of their text, what constitutes grammaticality in regard to their language, and whether an element within the text is compatible in its context. This makes the ancients capable guides when discussing the oddities within ancient Hebrew texts. Admittedly, the ancients

were less willing to change the text (e.g., *qere* and *kethiv*), though they intervene occasionally (e.g., *tiqqune soferim*).[177]

An ancient Hebrew author or scribe was highly competent when creating, constructing, deconstructing, reordering, or forming their text (cf. the high competency of ancient Near Eastern scribes as illustrated in Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine, Egypt, etc.). Therefore, I assume that the processes which the Hebrew text went through to reach its present form by the hands of several authors and scribes as represented by the Masoretic witnesses is generally better than anything that could be reconstructed.[178] Textual problems remain in the Hebrew text as represented by the Masoretic manuscripts and the various other

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[177] For an example of scribes trying to preserve the text of the Hebrew Bible, instead of changing or updating it, see Eduard Yechezkel Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, ed. Raphael Kutscher (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 92 and the entire discussion on pages 88-93. There are several changes in the Hebrew text of Ben Sira evidenced in the manuscripts found at Masada and Cairo Genizah. When comparing the fragmentary manuscript of Psalms at Masada with the manuscript of Ben Sira from the same location, there is an obvious difference regarding scribal updating and various changes to the phraseology. The Psalms's manuscript is particularly close to the later Masoretic texts without much intervention. This is not true of the manuscript of Ben Sira at Masada.

[178] For a similar view, see Freedman, "Discourse on Prophetic Discourse" 142-143. Freedman says, "On the other hand, indulging in the restorative process always risks compounding or creating errors and so producing a new text that has little or nothing in common with the original author's work…Over the years it has become clear that some features of Biblical Hebrew have been preserved in the text but not regained by grammarians, medieval or modern. Gradually we are learning to accept these features, thus preserving and clarifying the text, without resorting to the surgery of emendation. From an aesthetic point of view this is much more satisfying than the kind of ruthless assault practiced by an earlier generation of scholars. It is akin to the difference between finding and fitting the right but elusive piece in a jig-saw puzzle and forcing the wrong but handy piece into the configuration, thereby guaranteeing an imperfect solution."

Also, see William D. Barrick, "Exegetical Fallacies: Common Interpretive Mistakes Every Student Must Avoid," *TMSJ* 19 (2008): 18-19. After stating that Anderson believed that the "crazy" text of Micah was at points intentional, Barrick says, "In other words, the classical Hebrew authors of both Job and Micah really did know the language better than modern Hebraists."

witnesses.[179] These manuscripts still represent, however, the best Hebrew text available to us because of the skill and competence of the people producing them.[180] I am concerned with ancient understandings of textual corruption when evaluating the possibility of textual corruptions in this study.

If an element is not a textual corruption, then the possibility that it is a case of meta-textual semantics is especially strong but still not fully established. In order for this element to be meta-textual semantics, it must demonstrate some textual theme. The contextual importance of a particular textual element is often the weakness of suggestions in the

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[179] For example, Hugh Williamson suggests an error in the Masoretic vocalisation in Isa 24:16; see H. G. M. Williamson, "Sound, Sense and Language in Isaiah 24-27," *JJS* 46 (1995): 3-5. Williamson believes that the odd form רָזִי from √רזה "to be lean, waste away" is chosen because it alliterates with צְבִי "glory" in Isa 24:16. He suggests that the vocalisation of the form should be רְזִי instead of the MT's רָזִי to make the contrast with צְבִי stronger. Williamson says, "On this occasion, therefore, it seems probable that they thus overlooked a striking example of the link between sound and sense in Isaiah 24-27 to which they elsewhere showed themselves to be sensitive."

[180] For an example of following the MT of Jer 2:20 over other suggestions, see Barbara A. Bozak, "Heeding the Received Text: Jer 2,20a, A Case in Point," *Bib* 77 (1996): 524-537.

The MT appears to generally represent the Hebrew text of the rabbis as well as being the source text of many ancient versions (S, T, V). See Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 23-31. Tov (p. 25 and 27) says that the medieval representations of the MT is reflected in earlier tradition from the Judean desert (i.e., Masada and other sites and to a lesser extent at Qumran). The text of the MT is frozen from about the third century BCE (p. 26). T, S, revisions and recensions of the G (i.e., θ′, α′, σ′, and the fifth column of the Hexapla), and V are more or less based upon the proto-MT text (p. 27). The rabbis appear to be using a Hebrew text (e.g., b. Sukk. 6b) similar to proto-MT (pp. 30-31). For the importance of copying each letter of a scroll correctly, see b. Sot. 20a.

For a similar discussion, see Russell T. Fuller, "John Owen and the Traditional Protestant View of the Hebrew Old Testament," *SBJT* 20 (2016): 86-87; Yeshayahu Maori, "The Text of the Hebrew Bible in Rabbinic Writings in the Light of the Qumran Evidence," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, eds. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 283-289; and Yeshayahu Maori, "Rabbinic Midrash as Evidence for Textual Variants in the Hebrew Bible: History and Practice," in *Modern Scholarship in the Study of Torah: Contributions and Limitations*, ed. S. Carmy (Northvale, NJ: J. Aronson, 1996), 101-129.

literature regarding puns in the Hebrew Bible.[181] If an element in the text is meta-textual semantics, then there must be a verifiable purpose for its appearance.

Regarding intentionality in meta-textual semantics, I engage in a close reading of the Hebrew text. Whether the author or scribe originally intended every layer of meta-textual semantics as described in my analysis is not significant. The present form of the MT text can be analysed through the lens of meta-textual semantics and close reading. The modern enterprise of close reading in literary circles, as well as the assertions in ancient prophetic literature, affirm that there is often meaning in the text beyond what the author can initially identify.[182] A prophetic saying (Ezek 17:12) or vision (Dan 7:15-16, 19-20; and 8:15-17) is not immediately apparent until YHWH interprets it. Isaiah (Isa 8:16-18) and Daniel (Dan 12:4) bind or seal their writings waiting to see how YHWH will fulfil them. Habakkuk writes down his vision (Hab 2:2-4) allowing him to reflect on its possible significance and meaning. There is textual meaning that is not transparent at the moment of the original dissemination of the prophetic word by the original author to his audience. Thus, meta-textual semantics may not always be intentionally conceived by the author or scribe but is present upon circumspect reflection and reexamination (cf. John 11:49-52 and 1 Pet 1:10-12).

2.3 Overview of Methodology

There are two paths to understanding meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible. If the text has a disjointed element, then this might be a case of textual contortion. If the text has an element that perfectly affixes to the context, then this might be a case of textual cohesion. In each instance, there are several possible explanations with their own controls. First, the

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[181] For example, see the critique of previous suggestions of metathesis by Kalimi (*Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*, 2-10).

[182] Cf. The essays appearing in J. Blake Couey and Elaine T. James, eds., *Biblical Poetry and the Art of Close Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

element might be characteristic of a particular author. To test whether this is stylistic, the interpreter asks, "Is there evidence that this is part of the style of this particular author?" If not, then it might be a case of textual corruption. To test whether it is a case of textual corruption, the interpreter asks, "Is there support for a different and better reading among the extant ancient textual witnesses?" If it is neither a stylistic device nor a case of textual corruption, then it might be a case of meta-textual semantics. To test whether it is a case of textual contortion or textual cohesion, the interpreter asks, "Is there a contextual purpose for this element?" Without a contextual purpose, this element could simply be accidental or inadvertent in the text. If, however, there is a verifiable reason within the text that this element appears, then this is a legitimate case of meta-textual semantics. By "verifiable reason" I mean simply that there must be some theme in the text and context that complements this element. This method is grounded in the Hebrew text and its context.[183]

2.4 Testing the Methodology

I examine a suggestion of meta-textual semantics by Robert Chisholm regarding Judg 15:20 using my methodology to decide if Judg 15:20 is a case of stylistics, textual corruption, or meta-textual semantics. After dismissing the possibilities of stylistics and textual corruption, I search the context to determine if this element embodies the context and is a case of meta-textual semantics. It appears that Judg 15:20 is a case of textual contortion.

Chisholm argues that Samson's "early" epitaph in Judg 15:20, which reappears in Judg 16:31 at the end of Samson's narrative, prepares the reader for Samson's death report. An epitaph usually accompanies a judge's death report in the book of Judges (e.g., Judg 10:2,

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[183] Meta-textual semantics will be strongest in the language of the original composition of a text. It can be duplicated to some degree, however, in translation. Cf. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in Job*, 140-143 and Scott B. Noegel, "Wordplay and Translation Technique in the Septuagint of Job," *AuOr* 14 (1995): 33-44.

3-5; 12:7, 9b-10, 11b-12, and 14b-15). This preemptive epitaph makes the reader anticipate Samson's death report. The fact that Samson goes to a prostitute, who are often pictured as dwelling in the gateways of death (e.g., Prov 6:26; 7:10; and 23:27), immediately after his preliminary epitaph (Judg 16:1) illustrates that he is moving toward death. The form of the verb √פתה "to be simple, naïve" (i.e., פַּתִּי; also in Judg 14:15) appearing in Judg 16:5 connects Samson to the naïve (פֶּתִי) young man led away to his death in Prov 7:7. The two epitaphs in Judg 15:20 and 16:31 form an inclusio around Samson's descent into darkness and death.[184]

After seeing Chisholm's argument, I examine Judg 15:20 according to my methodology. First, the note in Judg 15:20 initially appears to follow the stylistic pattern repeated in the book of Judges. Judges 15:20 reads: וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּימֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה "He judged Israel during the days of the Philistines twenty years." The exact phrase וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל "He judged Israel" appears elsewhere in this book in Judg 3:10; 10:2, 3; 12:9, 11, 14; and 15:20 (cf. 1 Sam 7:16). A *Qal wayyiqtol* of √שׁפט "to judge" takes an אֶת marked noun phrase as its complement.

On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that in each of the cases in Judges referenced above, except Judg 15:20, this phrase is closely followed by the verb √מות "to die" in the context (see Judg 3:10-11; 10:2, 3-5; 12:9-10, 11-12, and 14-15). This suggests that this phrase, namely a *Qal wayyiqtol* of √שׁפט with an אֶת marked noun phrase complement and the

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[184] Robert B. Chisholm, "What's Wrong with this Picture? Stylistic Variation as a Rhetorical Technique in Judges," *JSOT* 34 (2009): 178-179 and Chisholm, *A Commentary on Judges and Ruth*, 414-415. Also, see Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000) 216-217.

Though not noted by Chisholm, the name דְּלִילָה looks and sounds similar to לַיְלָה "night," even though these lexemes are not otherwise connected (דְּלִילָה seems to be from the root דלה/דלל "to hang down, dangle" or possibly "to flirt;" see especially *HALOT*, 222; also *BDB*, 195-196 and *CDCH*, 79). This is probably a connection that additionally signals Samson approaching a situation of danger and death. For more puns in the Delilah narrative, see Scott B. Noegel, "Evil Looms: Delilah — Weaver of Wicked Wiles," *CBQ* 79 (2017): 187-204.

verb √מות, is a set eulogising phrase in the book of Judges. Thus, the fact that √מות is missing in Judg 15:20 and its context is surprising. Indeed, the verb √מות next surfaces in Judg 16:30, where the root appears four times.

Two similar forms in Judges confirm this is a set eulogising phrase. In Judg 12:7, the phrase has an overt subject between the *wayyiqtol* of √שׁפט and the אֶת marked noun phrase (i.e., וַיִּשְׁפֹּט יִפְתָּח אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים "Jephthah judged Israel six years.") with the verb √מות in the immediately following phrase (וַיָּמָת יִפְתָּח הַגִּלְעָדִי וַיִּקָּבֵר בְּעָרֵי גִלְעָד "Jephthah, the Gileadite, died and he was buried in the cities of Gilead."). In Judg 12:8, 11, and 13, a אַחַר ("after, behind") prepositional phrase follows the *wayyiqtol* of √שׁפט and precedes an אֶת marked noun phrase complement followed by the overt subject (e.g., וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אָחֲרָיו אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אִבְצָן מִבֵּית לָחֶם "After him, Ibṣan, from Bethlehem, judged Israel" in Judg 12:8) with the verb √מות appearing shortly thereafter (Judg 12:8-10, 11-12, 13-15).

This survey illustrates that the *Qal wayyiqtol* of √שׁפט is usually followed, either immediately or in close succession, by an אֶת marked noun phrase and the verb √מות in the stylistics of the author of Judges. The fact that the verb √מות does not appear in Judg 15:20 or in its context with the rest of the formula is unexpected and actually breaks with the stylistics of Judges. Additionally, the odd prepositional phrase בִּימֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים "in the days of the Philistines" which appears in the eulogising formula in Judg 15:20 is unique among these notices in Judges.[185] This seems to signal that something about this entire formula is off when compared to similar ones in the book of Judges. The OL omits the phrase בִּימֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים.[186] Yet, the cumbersomeness of this phrase in Judg 15:20 suggests that its omission is an attempt on

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[185] See K. Lawson Younger Jr., *Judges and Ruth* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 309.

[186] Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminister John Knox, 2008), 153.

the part of the OL to do away with an awkward reading in its *Vorlage*. Thus, the OL reading does not seem to come from a legitimate difference in its *Vorlage* from the MT but is simply an attempt to smooth it.[187]

Since this verse is not stylistic, it might be textually corrupt. Perhaps, the verb √מות was originally present in Judg 15:20 but has accidentally dropped from the text. There are no ancient witnesses, however, that attest to a reading that differs significantly in Judg 15:20 from the Hebrew text as represented by Masoretic manuscripts. No witnesses add the verb √מות or its equivalent.[188] The OL omission of the phrase בִּימֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים does not seem to evidence a different text but a smoothing of the text.

Alternatively, the eulogising formula was perhaps accidentally and carelessly added at Judg 15:20 when it was not supposed to appear until the end of Judg 16. Or perhaps, the story of Samson originally ended here.[189] These are valid possibilities, but they assume that the author or compiler is incompetent and unfamiliar with the rest of the text of Judges. Additionally, there is no manuscript evidence that Samson's story ended in Judg 15 (i.e., a

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[187] Block (*Judges, Ruth*, 448) highlights that Judg 15:20 does not mention that there is rest in the land as in the previous eulogy in Judges. He suggests that the addition of the phrase "in the days of the Philistines" is significant. Block says, "…the addition of 'in the days of the Philistines' highlights the fact that this period bears the signature of the Philistines rather than the Israelites." While this is an interesting observation, the verb √שׁקט "to be quiet" only appears in Judg 3:11, 30; 5:31; and 8:28 (cf. the ironic use in Judg 18:7 and 27). This verb does not describe any period of deliverance after Gideon. The verb √ישׁע "to save" appears more evenly in the book (Judg 2:16; 3:9, 31; 6:14, 36; 8:22; 10:1; 13:5). For a similar emphasis to Block's, see J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (London; SCM, 1981).

[188] The recent BHQ edition of Judges does not mention any textual divergences in Judg 15:20; see Natalio Fernández Marcos, *Judges* (BHQ 7; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 45 and *97-98. There are no textual issues in the Greek of Judg 15:20 mentioned in Walter Ray Bodine, *The Greek Text of Judges: Recensional Developments* (HSM 23; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1980).

[189] This is suggested in C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (London: Rivingtons, 1930), 335-339, especially 338-339 and Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 240-241.

manuscript without the stories of Judg 16 or one that rearranges the material so that the events of Judg 16 are recorded before those in Judg 15). Nor is there a Hebrew manuscript or versional witness in which Judg 15:20 is absent. Judges 15:20 does not seem to be a case of textual corruption. Judges 15:20 raises stylistic and text critical concerns but remains a part of the text.

Is this a case of textual contortion as Chisholm argues? The divergence from the contextually established and narratively set style of eulogising a judge at the conclusion of their particular section is surprising (i.e., the absence of the verb √מות in Judg 15:20). Equally surprising is the preemptive note suggesting Samson's death. Chisholm's suggestion that Samson is descending to his death by spending time with a prostitute in the next verse (Judg 16:1-3) makes canonical and contextual sense.[190]

Adding to Chisholm's argument, the Philistines are waiting to ambush and kill Samson outside the gate in Judg 16:2. Even though the verb √ארב "to ambush" only appears in Judg 16:2, the concept of lying in ambush is central to the entirety of Judg 16.[191] Samson apparently knows that the Philistines plan to ambush him, or else that they are actively engaged in doing so, but he still lingers in the doors of a deadly place. In addition, the Philistine army surrounds (√סבב "to surround" has negative and deadly associations in this context; see Judg 19:22 and 20:5; cf. Ps 118:10-12) and besieges Samson in Judg 16:2-3, which anticipates the conclusion of Judg 16 where he is actually ambushed, mutilated, and

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[190] None of the authors of the Hebrew Bible would understand someone approaching a prostitute to copulate as a positive thing (e.g., Prov 5:5-6; 7:12; and 23:27-28).

[191] Cf. The prostitute ambushes (√ארב) those who come to her in Prov 7:12 and 23:27-28. The prostitute leads those who come to her to death in Prov 5:5-6 and 7:21-27. This observation connects with Chisholm's suggestion regarding the verb √פתה in Judg 16:5 and the noun פֶּתִי in Prov 7:7.

imprisoned by the Philistines. The structure of this narrative illustrates that Samson is in terrible danger and anticipates his future troubles.

Samson taking hold of the doors (דֶּלֶת) in Gaza anticipates him taking hold (√לפת "to hold, grasp") of the pillars in Dagon's temple. The rare verb √לפת appears only in the *Qal* in Judg 16:29 (cf. *Nifal* in Job 6:18 and Ruth 3:8). This verb shares several consonants with the lexeme פֶּתַח which is parallel to דֶּלֶת in Gen 19:6 and Judg 19:27. Samson fingering the doors at Gaza (Judg 16:3) when the Philistines threaten his life foreshadows his fingering (√לפת in Judg 16:29) the pillars of Dagon's temple when he dies with the Philistines. Contextually, Samson's demise directly relates to his fingering, grasping the prostitute's doors (cf. פֶּתַח in Prov 5:8 and דֶּלֶת in Song 8:9).[192]

Upon going into the prostitute at Gaza, Samson is in the dark. The lexeme לַיְלָה "night" appears four times in Judg 16:2-3 anticipating the fourfold occurrence of the root √מות in Judg 16:30. The graphemic and auditory connection between the name of the next woman in Samson's life, דְּלִילָה, who is introduced in Judg 16:4 immediately following this dark and potentially deadly episode, and the fourfold recitation of the lexeme לַיְלָה in Judg 16:2-3 further alert the reader to a dimming, darkening element in Samson's story. By associating with these particular women in Judg 16, the narrator illustrates that Samson is moving deeper into the darkness, through the doorway. He will never emerge from these

[192] Proverbs 5:8 warns not to go near the door (פֶּתַח) of the prostitute's house. The lexeme פֶּתַח "opening, door" has sexual connotations in Prov 5:8 as does the lexeme דֶּלֶת "door" in Song 8:9. Samson's going into the prostitute at Gaza and handling the doors (דֶּלֶת) of Gaza in Judg 16:3 is ominous in light of these associations.

doors.[193] Judges 15:20 is a legitimate case of textual contortion.[194] The presence of an example of meta-textual semantics in Judg 15:20 suggests that more examples might be awaiting discovery.

2.5 Conclusion

Since previous studies on meta-textual semantics lack a methodology, I enumerate a methodology following either textual contortion or cohesion. I examine abnormalities in the Hebrew text to determine if they are stylistic or textual corruptions. If neither of these sufficiently clarifies the questionable textual element, then I assess whether it is a case of textual contortion or cohesion. If an element fits the context, then this oddity is a case of meta-textual semantics.

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[193] Similarly, it is possible that Samson's association with the house (בַּיִת) of these women (cf. the warnings in Prov 2:18; 5:8, 10; 7:8, 11, 19-20, and 27) connects with Samson's going to the prison "house" (בֵּית הָאֲסִירִים in Judg 16:21, 25) and dying in the "house" of Dagon (הַבַּיִת in Judg 16:26, 27, 29, 30). The house of דְּלִילָה is literally where Samson's lights go out (Judg 16:21). Her house leads directly to Samson's death (cf. Prov 2:18 and 7:27).

[194] It might be objected that I use intertextuality to establish Judg 15:20 as a case of meta-textual semantics. My argument hinges, however, on the context of Judg 16 and the sexual innuendo of ancient Hebrew as evidenced in the Hebrew Bible.

Chapter 3 Reading Jeremiah through the Lens of Meta-Textual Semantics

Meta-textual semantics describes some element that is either aesthetically malformed (i.e., textual contortion) or aesthetically pertinent (i.e., textual cohesion) that an author or a scribe places in the text for contextual effect. I suggest that the textual contortion and textual cohesion appearing in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah, and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, alert either the reader, or both the reader and the hearer, to a particular textual element. The skilful author or scribe crafts a disfigurement or paragon within the text to demonstrate a contextual theme. This element grabs the attention, forcing the hearer to seek a contextually fitting explanation for this textual element.[195]

I overview a selection of previous suggestions of meta-textual semantics in Jeremiah as well as discuss reasons why Jeremiah is a good place to look for meta-textual semantics. The book of Hebrew Jeremiah begins with the form of a lexeme illustrating the message of a prophecy (Jer 1:11-12). This suggests that in the Hebrew Jeremiah the form of words, phrases, etc. will produce a contextual effect by illustrating a contextual theme. Additionally, Jeremiah purports more than any other book in the Hebrew Bible to be written and subsequently discusses writing and writing materials often.

3.1 Previous Suggestions of Meta-Textual Semantics in Jeremiah

3.1.1. Moshe Garsiel

Moshe Garsiel understands the various spellings of the name Nebuchadnezzar (e.g., נְבֻכַדְנֶצַּר in Dan 1:18; 2:1) to be significant in their context. Also, Mosheh ben Shesheth states

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[195] Robar in *The Verb and the Paragraph in Biblical Hebrew: A Cognitive-Linguistic Approach* (see chapter 1) illustrates that a reader tries to make sense of an oddity and will not rest until forming some coherence between the oddity and surrounding information.

that some connect the participle נֹצְרִים in Jer 4:16 to Nebuchadnezzar's name.[196] Garsiel argues that the authors of the Hebrew Bible form a pun between Nebuchadnezzar's name and the verb √צור "to lay siege" in Jer 21:2-4, 9; 32:1-2; and 39:1.[197] The spelling נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר in 2 Kgs 24:1, 10, and 11 intertwines with the lexeme אוֹצָר "treasure" that the Babylonian king extracts from Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:13).[198] In Ezek 26:7, the name Nebuchadnezzar appears immediately following the city צֹר "Tyre," connecting the king with the city he conquers. The city logically belongs to Nebuchadnezzar.[199] Garsiel notes that the *hapax kethiv* spelling נְבוּכַדְרֶאצּוֹר (cf. *qere* is נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר) in Jer 49:28 "seems to be a deliberate change designed to fit it to the name of *ḥṣwr*."[200] Garsiel demonstrates that the authors of the Hebrew Bible employ a particular spelling of the name of the Babylonian king for contextual effect. Garsiel's analysis mentions Jeremiah but does not focus on examples from this book.

3.1.2 Gary Rendsburg

Rendsburg suggests several instances of alliteration in Jeremiah as well as addressee-switching. Rendsburg understands the connection between שָׁקֵד "almond" and שֹׁקֵד "watching" in Jer 1:11-12 as "rudimentary alliteration" which climaxes in the repetition of the *n* and *p* sounds in נָפוּחַ…וּפָנָיו מִפְּנֵי צָפוֹנָה "boiling…its face is toward the north" (Jer 1:13).[201] He sees the connection between וּבַקֹּתִי "and I will invalidate" in Jer 19:7 and בַּקְבֻּק "jug" in Jer 19:1

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[196] See ben Shesheth, *A Commentary upon the Book of Jeremiah and Ezequiel*, 4 and ג.

[197] Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48.

[198] Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48.

[199] Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48.

[200] Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48-49.

[201] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 342-343.

and 10 as alliteration.[202] He notes the anagramic alliteration in Jer 2:22 between תַּרְבִּי "I cause to multiply" and בֹּרִית "borax" which have the same consonants in the opposite order with a long *i* vowel. In the same verse, the participle נִכְתָּם "stained" from √כתם "to stain" alliterates with אִם־תְּכַבְּסִי "if you wash" producing the sounds כ-ת-מ then מ-ת-כ.[203] The *Nifal* verbal form נִסְחַף from √סחף "to be swept away" in Jer 46:15 puns upon the names of Egyptian cities (i.e., תַּחְפַּנְחֵס and נֹף) appearing in Jer 46:14.[204]

Rendsburg does not comment on whether there is any significance to Jeremiah's two opening visions being shrouded in aural/oral and visual puns in Jer 1:11ff. The fact that part of the alliterative element in Jer 1:13 (i.e., וּפָנָיו מִפְּנֵי צָפוֹנָה is added after אֲנִי רֹאֶה "I was looking" in Jer 1:13 while Jer 1:11 ends with the phrase אֲנִי רֹאֶה) is an addition in close proximity to the similar phrase in Jer 1:11, as mentioned by Rendsburg, is noteworthy.[205] Rendsburg understands this as simply variation within repetition which he frequently discusses throughout his book. Rendsburg does not state why the prophetic text wants to alliterate on the lexeme בַּקְּבֵק in Jer 19. Nor does he elaborate on why alliteration appears so prominently in Jer 2:22. Rendsburg's objection to Kalimi's study may be applicable to his own (i.e., there are only 22 consonants and alliteration is bound to accidentally and unintentionally occur).[206] Since Rendsburg does not offer a contextual reason for the author or scribe to choose to alliterate at these points in the text, then his suggestions are incomplete. He additionally notes the intentionality of an author using a *hapax* verb in Jer 2:22 and a

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[202] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 343 note 17.

[203] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 344-345.

[204] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 345-346.

[205] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 317.

[206] Rendsburg, review of *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*, 153-156, especially 154–155.

hapax construction in Mal 3:1 without specifying the point an author or scribe seeks to achieve by this deliberate arrangement.[207] Rendsburg's comments are valid, but he has left unfinished the work needed to confirm his thoughts on these texts. If an element is deliberately placed in the text, then it must have a purpose.

Rendsburg further suggests that the section of oracles against the nations in Jer 46-51 utilises linguistic elements from the languages of the nations under discussion.[208] For example, the *hapax* form יִתְרַת "abundance" in Jer 48:36 with an *-at* feminine ending mimics Moabite (cf. the Hebrew יֶתֶר "abundance" is masculine).[209] The *hapax* form אָשְׁיוֹתֶיהָ "her towers" in Jer 50:15 mimics the Akkadian *asītu* "tower."[210] These cases of addressee-switching in Jer 46-51 cause Rendsburg to suggest that the *hapax* third feminine plural *yiqtol* form תִּבְטָחוּ (i.e., *tiqtəlū*) in Jer 49:11 "reflects Edomite morphology."[211] Rendsburg admits that this suggestion might make too much of the form as our understanding of Edomite morphology is rudimentary. In these cases, Rendsburg provides a contextual purpose for each oddity strengthening the likelihood of his suggestions.

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[207] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 345 and 345 note 22.

[208] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 518.

[209] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 521.

[210] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 521-522. See Harold R. Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (SBLDS 37; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1978), 46–47; Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC 27; Dallas: Word, 1995), 366; and Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21C; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 391-392.

[211] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 524.

3.1.3 Scott Noegel

Noegel argues that several times in the Hebrew Bible a finite appears with an adverbial infinitive from a different root. These cases are usually emended as scribal errors, but Noegel suggests that both roots are part of the construction.

In Jer 8:13, an adverbial infinitive from √סוף "to bring to an end, cease" appears with √אסף "to gather."[212] Some scholars emend or assume a scribal error but Joseph Kimḥi and Radak acknowledge two roots.[213] The two roots appear in a context of total destruction (Jer 8:12 and 14) and agricultural imagery (Jer 8:10 and 13). Another ambiguity in Jer 8:13 is the confusing form יַעַבְרוּם. Noegel understands that both the verbs √עבר "to pass over" and √בער "to burn" are suggested by this form. Noegel also notes that √בער means "to gather, glean" in Ugaritic and Syriac and in Hebrew in Isa 3:14.[214]

In Jer 42:10, the adverbial infinitive from √שׁוב "to turn, return" appears with √ישׁב "to dwell."[215] Both roots appear in the context (cf. √שׁוב in Jer 42:12 and 43:5 and √ישׁב in Jer 42:13, 14, and 18). Both verbal forms appear because YHWH's future promise hinges on the people's proper response to his words. Noegel says, "God's message, therefore, forces the people to listen closely and to decide…"[216]

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[212] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part I," 14-16.

[213] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part I," 15. For Radak's comment on Jer 8:13, see https://www.sefaria.org/Radak_on_Jeremiah.8.13.1?lang=bi.

[214] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part I," 16.

For a similar case in Zeph 1:2, see Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part II," 94-96. For a different view regarding both Jer 8:13 and Zeph 1:2, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "YHWH's Future Ingathering in Zephaniah 1:2: Interpreting אָסֹף אָסֵף," *HS* 59 (2018): 173-191. DeRouchie argues that אָסֹף is a *Qal* adverbial infinitive from √אסף and אָסֵף is a *Hifil yiqtol* from √אסף.

[215] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part II," 93-94.

[216] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed: Part II," 94.

In Jer 48:9, an adverbial infinitive from √נצא "to fly" occurs with √יצא "to go out, exit."[217] Noegel suggests that as many as four meanings may contextually be present regarding √נצא — marching out to battle, coming to ruin, flying away, and to go out shining (i.e., in the sense of glory being removed or lost). Noegel says, "This networking of nexuses…adds weight to the argument of its deliberateness."[218]

According to Noegel, these cases illustrate that an author or scribe 1) makes deliberate lexical choices to concisely include two different verbs, 2) forces the listener to closely contemplate the oracle, and 3) provides contextual clues to interpreting the oracle.[219]

In another essay, Noegel argues that puns in the Hebrew Bible are meant to alter reality and activate divine judgment while controlling the possible meanings of an ambiguous expression so the reader focuses on one aspect. This is based on the fact that words and texts in the ancient world contain power and can manipulate reality. Additionally, prophets, diviners, and priests created ancient texts as a result of their connection to deities. Thus, puns are not stylistic or rhetorical (i.e., aesthetic) in the literary and cultural context of the Hebrew Bible but powerful and performative.[220]

With this background in view, Noegel notes that Jeremiah uses polysemy and paronomasia "to affect Babylon's violent reversal of fortunes" in the context of YHWH's

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[217] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed, Part II," 96-97.

[218] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed, Part II," 97.

[219] Noegel, "A Slip of the Reader and Not the Reed, Part II," 99.

[220] Scott B. Noegel, "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient Near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context," in *Approaches to Literary Readings of Ancient Jewish Writings*, ed. Klaas Smelik and Karolien Vermeulen (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 19-38. Noegel expands on this idea in "*Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*.

judgment on Babylon in Jer 51:34-37.[221] The plural lexeme גַּלִּים in Jer 51:37 can mean either "mighty waves" or "rubble heap" (cf. Jer 9:10). The context of Babylon as a sea monster and Babylon's water being dried up suggests that "waves" are in view. The immediately following discussion regarding Babylon becoming a wasteland makes the meaning "rubble heap" equally possible. Noegel says, "In essence, the prophecy has transformed Babylon's abundant 'waters' into 'rubble' simply by changing the linguistic context of a single word—the transformation happens in the recitation."[222]

Nebuchadnezzar is a תַּנִּין "sea serpent/monster" in Jer 51:34, but Babylon will become a place for תַּנִּים "jackals." Noegel says, "By altering one consonant, the prophet transformed the serpent of chaos into a lair for jackals."[223]

The name בָּבֶל in Jer 51:35 is connected to the verb "to swallow" (√בלע) in Jer 51:34. Babylon swallowed Israel.[224] Regarding YHWH's punishment of Babylon in Jer 51:44, Noegel says, "Here the words 'in Babylon' (i.e., *bə-bābel*, בְּבָבֶל), 'swallowed' (i.e., *bil'ō*,

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[221] Noegel, "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient Near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context," 37. For a similar discussion of Jer 51:34-37, see Scott B. Noegel, "The Ritual Use of Linguistic and Textual Violence in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East," in *State, Power, and Violence*. Vol. 3 of *Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual*, ed. Margo Kitts, Bernd Schneidmüller, Gerald Schwedler, Eleni Tounta, Hermann Kulke, and Uwe Skoda (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 38-39.

[222] Noegel, "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient Near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context," 37.

[223] Noegel, "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient Near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context," 37. *Mem* and *nun* are both nasals. See Geoffrey Khan, "The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew," *ZAH* 9 (1996): 9; Holger Gzella, "Ancient Hebrew" in Languages from the World of the Bible, ed. Holger Gzella (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 79; and Gary A. Rendsburg, "Phonology: Biblical Hebrew," *EHLL* 3:102.

[224] Noegel does not mention that the verb √בלע connects Judah's punishment with their worship of בַּעַל in the context of Jeremiah (cf. Jer 3:24).

בִּלְעוֹ), and the god 'Bel' (*bēl*, בֵּל), recall the primordial dragon who had swallowed Jerusalem, and in so doing, they connect Babylon's deeds with its punishment."[225]

Regarding the *Atbash* in Jer 51:41, Noegel says, "The alphabetic reversal results in transforming the name 'Babylon' (*bābel*, בָּבֶל) into 'sheshak' (*šēšak*, שֵׁשַׁךְ), a word devoid of meaning, and thus without essence or destiny. YHWH has turned it into a 'rubble heap' of letters."[226] Noegel argues that *atbash* usually appears to illustrate a reversal often in the context of a power struggle. Noegel says, "Thus, if words possess power and essence, *atbash* represents a reversal of that power and essence…It is fitting that God's word be encoded in inverted language…The inversion of power is expressed through inverted language."[227] *Atbash* is not a concealing device but one grounded in the inherent power within words, especially in divine declarations.[228] This reversal is accomplished by visual and oral means. Babylon's name being turned upside down (i.e., *atbash*) is a common ancient Near Eastern device to denote the removal of power.[229] YHWH is removing Babylon's power.

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[225] Noegel, "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient Near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context," 37. Though Noegel does not expressly say it, his point seems to be that Babylon's very name signals its previous actions and approaching destruction.

[226] Noegel, "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient Near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context," 37-38.

[227] Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah: Part 1," 84. Cf. Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah: Part 1," 82-89; Scott B. Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah and Its Literary Significance: Part 2," *JBQ* 24 (1996): 160-166; and Scott B. Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah and Its Literary Significance: Part 3," *JBQ* 24 (1996): 247-250.

[228] See Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah: Part 1," 83-84.

[229] See the discussion in Hays, "Swallowing Death at Tel 'Eton," 103-116 regarding the upside-down face carved in a Judahite tomb.

Noegel uses the clear cases of *Atbash* in Jeremiah (25:26; 51:1, 41; cf. 1 Kgs 9:13) to search for more cases within the book via computer technology.[230] Noegel notes that "some consider the device to be pure scholarly fiction, or not original to Jeremiah's prophecy."[231] Noegel suggests that several proven appearances of a rhetorical and literary element in a book sanction the search for further examples to solidify the presence of the questionable device.[232]

Applying Noegel's approach to meta-textual semantics is helpful. Some consider the presence of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible to be doubtful.[233] Others, however, suggest that it is part of the presentation of the Hebrew Bible, including Jeremiah. Using my methodology, I will test further possibilities of meta-textual semantics in Jeremiah to see if this device is a fabrication, sparingly used but present in the Hebrew Bible, or whether it is more prevalent than previously understood. The fact that some examples of meta-textual semantics appear in Jeremiah lends support to the hypothesis that additional examples are

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[230] See Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah: Part 1," 86.

[231] Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah: Part 1," 86.

[232] See Noegel, "Atbash (אתב״ש) in Jeremiah: Part 1," 86-87.

[233] It is certainly possible that some linguistic features accidentally produce a collocation that the reader takes to be meaningful but the author or scribe did not so envision (e.g., reader-response approaches).

present but un-excavated.[234] In my discussion, it will be the cumulative accoutrement of linguistic elements which are consistent with the minor and major themes of Jeremiah, which demonstrate that the features are not coincidental.[235]

3.2 Meta-Textual Semantics in Jeremiah's Opening Visions

I suggest that the introductory visions of Jeremiah in Jer 1:11-12 and 1:13-16 articulate how to read the book (cf. Prov 1:1-7). Tremper Longman notes that these two oracles give "a preview of oracles to come…They illustrate the prophet's technique…"[236]

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[234] This is a sampling of suggestions of meta-textual semantics in Jeremiah. For example, Mark Hamilton says that the poetry of Jer 1-6 "repeatedly alternates viewpoints to mimic the confusion and tragic nature of the times…" See Mark W. Hamilton, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 292. John Calvin says the fourfold repetition of the verb √ראה "to see" in Jer 4:23-26 means that the prophet looked to the four corners of the universe. See John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2003), 1:235-236. Jan Joosten suggests that the prophet calls the people of Jerusalem Benjamites to connect his audience to the wicked Benjaminites in Judg 19; see Jan Joosten, "Les Benjaminites au milieu de Jérusalem. Jérémie VI 1ss et Juges XIX-XX," *VT* 49 (1999): 65-72. The extra א in some Hebrew manuscripts at Jer 7:18; 44:17, 18, 19, and 25 makes מְלֶכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם "the Queen of Heaven" become מְלֶאכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם "the host of the heavens." This extra א functions apologetically according to Robert Gordon to distance Judah from the worship of the Queen of Heaven. See Carl Heinrich Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: Chr. Herm. Tauchnitz, 1905), 98-99; Robert P. Gordon, "Aleph Apologeticum," *JQR* 69 (1978): 112-116 (especially 112), and Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 21A; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 476-477. For Jer 9:16-17 being an ironically lengthy section asking women to make haste and wail, see William L. Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," *JBL* 85 (1966): 411. Regarding Jer 10:14, Calvin (*Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 2:39) says, "Now, בער, in Hiphil, means to be foolish; but the noun means a brute animal. Hence he reproachfully compares the illustrious artisans, who gained repute by the elegant forms they gave to their gods, to asses, and oxen, and other brute animals."

[235] This is similar to the accumulation principle in Avi Hurvitz's methodology for establishing a feature as Late Biblical Hebrew; see Avi Hurvitz, "Can Biblical Texts Be Dated Linguistically? Chronological Perspectives in the Historical Study of Biblical Hebrew," in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998*, eds. A Lemaire and M. Saebø (VTSup 80; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 153 and Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 7-8.

[236] Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (UBCS; Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2008), 22.

Longman notes that these oracles might not be the first in Jeremiah's ministry but they appear first because they represent the nature of the material to follow.[237] Though Longman does not specify how these texts preview the rest of the book, I suggest that the focus on the form of lexemes and phrases in the interpretation and explanation of these two visions is the key to reading the rest of Jeremiah. The presentation in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah signals the importance of the form of a vision, sign-act, or oracle to create a contextual effect.

The pun between שָׁקֵד and שֹׁקֵד in Jer 1:11-12 is well-known (cf. Amos 7:7 and 8:1-2). What is the significance and meaning of this pun? Aspects of Jer 1:11-12 remain ambiguous (e.g., Is the content of Jer 1:4-10 the דָּבָר YHWH watches over to fulfil? Is the שָׁקֵד here connected to Aaron's staff producing several שָׁקֵד in Num 17:23?).[238] It should be emphasised, however, that YHWH's interpretation of this vision revolves around the nearness in etymology, orthography, and phonology between שָׁקֵד and שֹׁקֵד.[239] The form of these lexemes inherently links them and demonstrates the meaning which YHWH announces to Jeremiah.[240] Michael Brown says, "It is possible that the nature of the almond tree is partially in mind… The play on words, however, is certainly primary (almond tree — *šāqēd*; watching — *šōqēd*)."[241] Georg Ewald says, "An almond-tree שָׁקֵד is selected here merely because its

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[237] Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 22-24.

[238] Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 102-104 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 230 and 236. Carroll is uncertain which word YHWH watches over while Lundbom believes it is the content of Jer 1:5-10 described as a דָּבָר in Jer 1:4.

[239] Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 23.

[240] See Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25* (WBC 26; Dallas: Word, 1991), 16. They say, "The word play indicates that the tree and the divine watching are intimately interrelated."

[241] Michael L. Brown, "Jeremiah," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Revised Edition*, Vol 7: Jeremiah-Ezekiel, eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 78.

Hebrew name suggests the thought of *watching*."[242] Noegel says puns "may simply embody the process of revelation—the act of seeing one thing in another, like seeing שׁקֵד…in an שָׁקֵד."[243]

Disregarding the suggestions of some that the connection between the lexemes שָׁקֵד and שׁקֵד refers to the early waking of the almond tree from winter or the hastening blooms of the almond tree,[244] William McKane says, "The effect rather depends on the virtual homonymy of שָׁקֵד and שׁקֵד, as Jerome observed. The effect of the Hebrew depends simply on the association of almost identical sounds, whereby a transition is made from 'almond branch' to the thought of Yahweh's surveillance and vigilance שׁקֵד אֲנִי."[245] McKane states that the vision depends wholly on a seen element (i.e., a שָׁקֵד) which YHWH phonetically twists to discuss his own activity (i.e., שׁקֵד).[246] The etymological, morphological, orthographic, and

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[242] Georg Heinrich Ewald, *Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament*, Vol. 3 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 96.

[243] Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 79.

[244] For example of such an interpretation, see Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah* (SHBC; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 52. Fretheim says, "A word-play centers the first vision (vv. 11-12). The object seen is a branch (or twig) of an almond tree (Heb., *šāqēd)*, one of the first trees to blossom in the spring. This issues in an interpretation that God is watching (*šōqēd*) over his word so that as the twig will blossom (early), so God will effect what Jeremiah speaks, and soon." Similarly, see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 1:42-43 and Derek Kidner, *The Message of Jeremiah* (Downers Grove, IL; IVP, 1987), 27.

[245] William McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 15. For a similar understanding, see S. R. Driver, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 3 note a. Driver says, "For the play upon *shōkēd* and *shākēd*, cf. Amos viii. 1-2, where Israel's 'end' (Heb. *kētz*) is suggested by the basket of 'summer fruit' (Heb. *kayitz*) seen by the prophet in his vision." Also, see John Bright, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 7. Bright says that the first vision "hangs on a wordplay."

[246] The verb √שׁקד in Jeremiah is usually negative (5:6; 31:28; and 44:27), but it can be positive (31:28).

phonetic form of the vision (i.e., שָׁקֵד) creates a bridge to YHWH's interpretation (i.e., שֹׁקֵד).[247] More implicitly, Timothy Willis says, "By merely pointing to an almond branch, Jeremiah can make the point to his audience that the LORD is watching - is keeping watch like a guard over - his prophecies to ensure that they are carried out."[248] From the beginning of Jeremiah, interpretation depends on the interrelatedness between what is seen and heard. Jeremiah will be a written and oral text.

In the next vision, a similar punning connection links the element which Jeremiah sees (Jer 1:13) and YHWH's verbal interpretation to Jeremiah (Jer 1:14-19).[249] The puns in the second vision are not usually mentioned in the literature.[250] Ewald, however, says, "The paronomasia must clearly appear in the second no less than in the first symbol…"[251] The vision in Jer 1:13-16 is linked to the first vision in Jer 1:11-12 by the lexeme שֵׁנִית "a second time" in Jer 1:13 (cf. Jer 13:3 and 33:1).[252] This suggests that the interpretive key to the first

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[247] The centrality of this pun in Jer 1:11-12 is difficult to replicate in translation. For example, see Georg A. Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus* (SCS; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 200. Walser says, "καρυΐνην ... ἐγρήγορα] are renderings of שׁקד ... שׁקד. There is no attempt in LXX to reproduce the play on the Hebrew root שׁקד (almond/watch). It is hard to see how the vision could have made any sense to a Greek reader, since the explanation of the vision given by the Lord in verse 12 obviously has nothing to do with what the Greek reader could find in verse 11." For Jerome's treatment of these verses, see Michael Graves, *Jerome's Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on His Commentary on Jeremiah* (VCSupp 90; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 130-132.

[248] Timothy M. Willis, *Jeremiah-Lamentations* (CPNIVC; Joplin, MO: College Press, 2002), 37.

[249] See Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 29. Allen says, "The imagery operates not by wordplay but by featuring metaphor that uses a key word, somewhat as in Amos 7:7." Allen does not further expand on the distinction.

[250] For example, they are not mentioned in Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 102-104; Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 23-24; or Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 16-17.

[251] Ewald, *Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament*, 3:96.

[252] For the general similarities between these visions, see Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 52.

vision (i.e., YHWH uses the graphemic form of an element Jeremiah sees in his interpretation) will inform the second.[253]

In the second vision, Jeremiah sees a boiling (נָפוּחַ) pot in Jer 1:13. The graphemic form of the participle נָפוּחַ from √נפח "to breathe" is the key to YHWH's explanation, just as the form שָׁקֵד was the key to the first vision.[254] The נָפוּחַ pot is linked through the repetition of the *n* and *p* sounds to the conclusion of Jeremiah's description of the vision in Jer 1:13 (וּפָנָיו מִפְּנֵי צָפוֹנָה "and its surface is from the north").[255] Since the structure of Jer 1:13 almost exactly replicates that of Jer 1:11, the addition of this consonance at the end of Jer 1:13 is contextually obtrusive, drawing the reader's attention. The boiling pot and the location of the pot are graphemically and phonetically linked.

Additionally, the lexemes linked through the repetition of נ and פ in Jer 1:13 forge a link with other forms having these same consonants in Jer 1 (i.e., מִצָּפוֹן "from the north" in 1:14 and 15; צָפוֹנָה "north" in 1:15; and מִפְּנֵיהֶם פֶּן־…לִפְנֵיהֶם "from before them lest…before them" in 1:17). The vision of a boiling (נָפוּחַ) pot from the north (מִפְּנֵי צָפוֹנָה) signals an approaching enemy from the north (צָפוֹן) through the repetition of the consonants נ and פ. Referring to the vision in Jer 1:13-14, Jack Lundbom says, "Although not containing a word-play quite like the almond rod vision, it is nevertheless tied together by key words: the

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[253] The fact that Jer 1:13-14 should be read similarly to Jer 1:11-12 seems to be hinted at though not explicitly stated in R. K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 19; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), 51. Harrison says, "Again, the prophet 'sees' a specific object designed to convey a definite meaning, the details of which, however, only become evident subsequently."

[254] The verb √נפח only appears once elsewhere in the book (Jer 15:9). It describes the women of Judah breathing their last (Jer 15:9), perhaps reversing the use of √נפח in Gen 2:7 (cf. Ezek 37:9).

[255] The consonance in this verse is mentioned by William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), 38-39 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 241.

boiling pot tipped 'away from the north' (מפני צפונה) refers metaphorically to the enemy who will come 'from the north' (מצפון)."[256] The participle describing the pot graphemically and phonetically describes the approaching enemy.

Lundbom also states that the awkward use of the verbal form תִּפָּתַח in Jer 1:14 connects to the lexeme פֶּתַח "doorway" from the same root (i.e., √פתח "to be opened") in Jer 1:15.[257] This root connection links Jeremiah's vision in Jer 1:13-14 with YHWH's oracle in Jer 1:15-19 according to Lundbom. The form תִּפָּתַח and the lexeme פֶּתַח link back to the lexeme נָפוּחַ in Jer 1:13 as they each have the consonants ח and פ.[258] Keil and Delitzsch say, "In the interpretation of this symbol in ver. 14, תִּפָּתַח, assonant to נָפוּחַ, is introduced, just as in Amos viii. 2 קַיִץ is explained by קֵץ…"[259] The lexeme מִשְׁפָּחוֹת in Jer 1:15 shares the consonants ח, פ, and ת with תִּפָּתַח and פֶּתַח. This consonantal connection might explain the awkward presence of מִשְׁפָּחוֹת in Jer 1:15 (לְכָל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת מַמְלְכוֹת צָפוֹנָה "to all the families, the kingdoms of the north") which probably does not appear in G.[260]

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[256] Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study of Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 128.

[257] Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study of Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 129 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 238-239 and 243. The pun is also noted in D. Paul Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1920), 3.

[258] G seems to read the MT's תִּפָּתַח in Jer 1:14 as either תְּגֻפַּח or תֻּפַּח each from √נפח providing a further link with נָפוּחַ in Jer 1:13. See Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Jesaia, Jeremia* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968), 4:234 and McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 17. Volz emends the MT's תִּפָּתַח in Jer 1:14 to a *qatal* first common singular of √נפח (i.e., נָפַחְתִּי). See Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia*, 3. Ewald (*Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament*, 3:96) reads a *Hitpael* of √נפח (i.e., תִּתְנַפַּח). Keil and Delitzsch (*Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:44) dismiss G and various emendations because of their understanding of a pun between תִּפָּתַח and נָפוּחַ.

[259] Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:44.

[260] For a discussion of מִשְׁפָּחוֹת in Jer 1:15, see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 105 and McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 18. If Greek translates מִשְׁפָּחוֹת מַמְלְכוֹת as a hendiadys, then it does not represent a different *Vorlage*.

These connections between the lexeme נָפוּחַ and the root √פתח link other forms in the context which also possess the consonants ח and ת. There are several such forms (i.e., וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ "and they worshipped" in Jer 1:16 and the verbal palindrome תֵּחַת and the form אֶחָתְּךְ in Jer 1:17 both from the root √חתת "to be dismayed").[261] In this way, the author has linked all of Jer 1:13-19 together via the lexeme נָפוּחַ.[262] The boiling pot signals the trouble ahead both for the nation of Judah and the prophet Jeremiah.

Besides the puns mentioned above in Jer 1:11-12 and 1:13-19, there are several additional elements which suggest the careful arrangement of this text. First, Lundbom argues that Jer 1 is a chiasmus with the call and commission of Jeremiah each being reiterated as both an oracle and a vision from YHWH.[263] Second, the phrase מָה־אַתָּה רֹאֶה "What are you seeing?" appears in Jer 1:11 and 13 and elsewhere in Jeremiah only in Jer 24:3. This forms an inclusio around the visions beginning and ending Jer 1-24 according to Alexander Rofé, which is the first section within the Hebrew text of Jeremiah.[264] This illustrates the calculated arrangement of Jer 1 at the lexical level regarding שָׁקֵד in Jer 1:11 and נָפוּחַ in 1:13 as the

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[261] Regarding the verb √חתת in Jer 1:17, Keil and Delitzsch (*Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:46) say, "In מ׳ אַל־תֵּחַת and ל׳ אֶחָתְּךְ there is a play on words. The Niph. sig. broken in spirit by terror and anxiety; the Hiph. to throw into terror and anguish. If Jer. appears before his adversaries in terror, then he will have cause to be terrified for them; only if by unshaken confidence in the power of the word he preaches in the name of the Lord, will he be able to accomplish anything."

[262] Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 106-108) separates Jer 1:13-14 from 1:15-16 and 1:17-19.

[263] See Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study of Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 127-130; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 86-87 and 227; and Jack R. Lundbom, "Rhetorical Structures in Jeremiah 1," *ZAW* 103 (1991): 201-210. The chiasmus in Jer 1 is below.

A Articulation of the call (1:4-10)
  B Vision of the call (1:11-12)
  B' Vision of the commission (1:13-14)
A' Articulation of the commission (1:15-19)

[264] See Alexander Rofé, "The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 394.

interpretive key to Jeremiah's visions, across the pericopes in Jer 1:4-19 through chiasmus, and throughout the first section of the book as the phrase מָה־אַתָּה רֹאֶה forms an inclusio in Jer 1:11, 13; and 24:3.

The pattern in Jer 1:11-12 and Jer 1:13-19 illustrates how prophetic pronouncements work in Jeremiah. There is a connection between the visual images in Jeremiah's visions and the verbal interpretation of the vision. These opening visions in the book demonstrate that the author crafts the form of the text for contextual effect. The vision and its interpretation are linked. The author might use orthography and phonology within the oracles for a contextual effect to connect a theme and the interpretation of an oracle. By opening in this way, the prophet illustrates what the reader should expect to find in this book.[265]

3.3 Meta-Textual Semantics in Jeremiah's Prophetic Sign Acts

In addition to Jeremiah's opening visions, some of the prophetic sign acts in the book connect the action and proclamation of Jeremiah with YHWH's oracle and explanation of the sign act.[266] The symbolism of Jeremiah's actions links to the interpretation. YHWH's oracle graphemically connects with an element of the prophet's action as it centred on what the prophet saw in Jer 1. In the prophetic sign acts, it centres on what the people see Jeremiah doing.

YHWH tells Jeremiah to buy a belt and bury it by the Euphrates (Jer 13:1-2). Later, YHWH instructs him to retrieve it. Jeremiah then discovers that the belt is ruined (√שׁחת "to destroy") and good for nothing (לֹא יִצְלַח לַכֹּל) in Jer 13:7. YHWH's interpretation is that Judah

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[265] See Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, 127-128. Noegel argues that an obvious pun alerts the reader that more puns are coming (cf. the discussion on Prov 1:1-7 in chapter 1).

[266] Not all of the sign acts connect the act with the accompanying oracle (e.g., Jer 16:1-4 and 51:59-64).

will be destroyed (√שׁחת in Jer 13:9 and 14) because they have worshipped (*Hishtafel* of √חוה "to bow down" in Jer 13:10) other gods. The verb describing Judah's destruction (i.e., √שׁחת) shares its consonants with the form of the *Hishtafel* of √חוה (i.e., the ח, שׁ, and ת are juxtaposed in the form הִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת in Jer 13:10). Judah is destroyed (√שׁחת) because they worshipped (הִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת) other gods.

Additionally, the phrase לֹא יִצְלַח לַכֹּל which describes the belt in Jer 13:7 reappears in Jer 13:10 to describe the people. The phrase does not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. The fate of the belt illustrates the approaching doom of the people. The form of the lexeme מָתְנַיִם "loins" (Jer 13:1, 2, 4, and 11) anticipates Judah's judgment being measured out (√מנה "to portion, measure") to them in Jer 13:25.[267] The form of the verb √מנה in Jer 13:25 (i.e., מָנָת) shares the consonants מ, נ, and ת with the lexeme מָתְנַיִם. The destroyed (i.e., √שׁחת) belt and the place on the body where it is worn (i.e., מָתְנַיִם) signal that Judah's destruction will be measured out (i.e., מָנָת) to them because they worship (הִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת) idols.

Jeremiah goes to the potter's (יוֹצֵר in Jer 18:2, 3, 4 [2x], and 6 [2x]) house. He watches as the potter's work is corrupted and needs to be reformed (√שׁוב) to what is right in the potter's eyes (Jer 18:4). Similarly, YHWH states that if a nation repents (√שׁוב), he will relent from bringing judgment (Jer 18:8). YHWH urges Judah to repent (√שׁוב) while hope remains (Jer 18:11). The potter does what he wants (√עשׂה) in Jer 18:4 [3x]. In the same way, YHWH can do what he wants (√עשׂה in 18:6 and 8) based on Judah's actions (√עשׂה in 18:10 and 12). YHWH is fashioning (i.e., יוֹצֵר, the participle from √יצר "to form" in Jer 18:11) trouble against Judah. The morphological homonyms יוֹצֵר "potter" and יוֹצֵר "fashioning" in this context remind Judah that YHWH supremely determines their fate. YHWH can fashion (יוֹצֵר)

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[267] The lexeme מָתְנַיִם only appears twice elsewhere in Jeremiah (1:17 and 48:37), each in contexts of difficulty or trouble.

trouble or blessing against Judah. Depending on whether Judah acts (√עשׂה) by turning (√שׁוב) toward or away from YHWH, then YHWH will act (√שׁוב in Jer 18:4, √עשׂה in Jer 18:6 and 8, and יוֹצֵר in Jer 18:11) accordingly.[268] The potter and his activity provide the foundation of Jeremiah's oracle.

YHWH tells Jeremiah to buy a jug (בַּקְבֻּק in Jer 19:1 and 10) to illustrate that he will empty (√בקק in Jer 19:7; cf. Jer 51:2) Jerusalem.[269] A few other lexemes describing judgment also have the consonants ב and ק in Jer 19 (i.e., מְבַקְּשֵׁי "seeking" in Jer 19:7 and 9 and the verb √קבר "to bury" twice in Jer 19:9; cf. the form בַּמָּקוֹם "in the place" in Jer 19:7 and בְּמָצוֹק "in distress" in Jer 19:9). Later, Jeremiah smashes (√שׁבר) the jug in Jer 19:10 illustrating that YHWH will smash (√שׁבר twice in Jer 19:11) the people. Jeremiah's prop is key to his pronouncement.

Additionally in Jer 19:15, YHWH brings רָעָה upon the Judahite cities (עִיר) because they have hardened their necks (עֹרֶף). The specific form עָרֶיהָ "its cities" in Jer 19:15 graphemically connects it to the lexeme רָעָה as these forms arrange the same three consonants differently. Each of these three lexemes share the consonants ע and ר (i.e., רָעָה, עִיר, and עֹרֶף). The punishment (רָעָה) recalls the geographic (עִיר) and bodily (עֹרֶף) location of the crime.

In Jer 27, Jeremiah wears a yoke on his neck (צַוָּאר in Jer 27:2, 8, 11, and 12) to symbolise that the Babylonian king נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר (Jer 27:6, 8, and 20) will conquer all the אֶרֶץ "land, earth" (Jer 27:5 [twice], 6, and 7). The name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר illustrate the geographic (אֶרֶץ)

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[268] If a nation turns from evil (רָעָה) in Jer 18:8 and 11, then YHWH will not bring disaster (רָעָה) in Jer 18:8. If they turn to evil (רָעָה) in Jer 18:10, then YHWH will bring disaster (רָעָה) in Jer 18:11. The plans (מַחֲשָׁבָה "plan, thought" in Jer 18:12) of the people influence YHWH's plans (√חשׁב "to think, devise" in Jer 18:8 and 11 and מַחֲשָׁבָה in 18:11) against them.

[269] The lexeme בַּקְבֻּק appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in 1 Kgs 14:3. Keil and Delitzsch mention this pun (*Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:309) as well as suggest that the lexeme בַּקְבֻּק is onomatopoetic (*Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:306).

and bodily (צָוָּאר) location of punishment. Jeremiah's prop illustrates what Nebuchadnezzar will accomplish by the juxtaposition of the consonants א, צ, and ר in these three lexemes (see below).

Hananiah understands that Jeremiah's actions anticipate his message from YHWH. He, however, reverses the normal procedure of Jeremiah's sign acts by speaking and then acting in Jer 28. Hananiah says YHWH will break (√שׁבר) the yoke of Babylon's king from Judah's neck (Jer 28:2 and 4), then he tears the yoke from Jeremiah's neck and smashes (√שׁבר) it (Jer 28:10). He subsequently repeats his prophecy (Jer 28:11 and 12). In this way, Hananiah seeks to reverse and undo Jeremiah's previous prophecy. The mention of צָוָּאר (Jer 28:10, 11, and 12) and נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר (Jer 28:11) reiterates that Hananiah seeks to undo the pun proclaimed by Jeremiah in the previous chapter. Hananiah's actions are performative.[270] Ultimately, YHWH nullifies Hananiah's actions (i.e., √שׁבר in Jer 28:13) by placing an iron yoke on the צָוָּאר of all the nations to serve נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 28:14. Hananiah's subversion of Jeremiah's pun does not materialise as YHWH reinstitutes it.

YHWH tells Jeremiah to buy (√קנה "to buy, purchase" in Jer 32:7 [twice], 8 [twice], 9, and 25) a field (שָׂדֶה in Jer 32:7, 8, 9, and 25) in his hometown of Anathoth in the land (אֶרֶץ in Jer 32:8) of Benjamin.[271] Since YHWH's message fixates on Judah's deportation to Babylon, Jeremiah is confused. YHWH says that this act symbolises that fields (שָׂדֶה in Jer 32:15, 43, and 44) and land (אֶרֶץ in Jer 32:15, 41, 43, and 44) will be bought (√קנה in Jer 32:15, 43, and 44) again in Judah. YHWH will restore his people from the lands (אֶרֶץ in Jer 32:37) of their

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[270] For the performative nature of puns, see Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 145-152 and the bibliography there.

[271] The verb √קנה only appears in Jeremiah in relationship to his prophetic sign acts (Jer 13:1, 2, 4; and 19:1).

deportation and resettle them in Canaan. Jeremiah's actions signal the restoration of Judah to their land and the activities accompanying such a return.

Jeremiah hides (√טמן "to hide") stones in the brick pavement (מַלְבֵּן) under Pharaoh's house in Jer 43:9 as the newly relocated Judahite sojourners watch. This symbolises that the king of Babylon (בָּבֶל) will stretch out (√נטה "to stretch out") his canopy (שַׁפְרוּר) over the same spot where the stones were hidden (√טמן) in Jer 43:10. The verbs √טמן and √נטה are juxtaposed in Jer 43:10 to highlight their shared consonants ט and נ. Jeremiah's actions (√טמן) predict Nebuchadnezzar's actions (√נטה). The consonants ב and ל each appear juxtaposed in מַלְבֵּן and בָּבֶל though in reverse order. The pavement (מַלְבֵּן) belongs to Babylon (בָּבֶל). Additionally, the *hapax* שַׁפְרוּר shares the consonants פ and ר with the verb √שׂרף (Jer 43:12 and 13) while the consonantal phonemes שׂ and שׁ are both sibilants and closely related.[272]

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[272] For the similar realisation of the consonantal phonemes שׂ and שׁ, see Khan, "The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew," 12. For a pun involving the interchange of the consonants שׂ and שׁ in Judg 16, see Charles Halton, "Samson's Last Laugh: The Ś/ŠḤQ Pun in Judges 16:25-27," *JBL* 128 (2009): 61-64. Halton argues that the narrator understands that Samson is summoned "to crush" (שׂחק) the Philistines while they believe they summon him "to mock" (שׂחק or צחק) him. Since the graph ש would be ambiguous in an unpointed text, Halton argues that the form צחק appearing between the form שׂחק in Judg 16:25 and 27 is significant (i.e., שׂחק, צחק, and שׂחק). The interchange alerts the reader to the pun between the two consonantal phonemes (שׂ and שׁ) and the narrator's point of view (שׂחק) in contrast to the Philistines' understanding (שׂחק).

For a similar pun in Isa 5:7, see Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSS 26; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 246; Robert D. Chisholm Jr., "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," *BibSac* 144 (1987): 49; H. G. M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 324; J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015, 72); and F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Isaiah's Love Song: A Reading of Isaiah 5:1-7," in *Biblical Poetry and the Art of Close Reading*, ed. J. Blake Couey and Elaine T. James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 163. Dobbs-Allsopp suggests that the form מִשְׁפָּח is a superficial spelling to enhance the pun upon מִשְׁפָּט. The pun in Isa 5:7 between מִשְׁפָּט and מִשְׁפָּח is not simply one of sound but also of a visual nature. It seems that the prophet uses the consonant שׁ, instead of the consonant ס, to produce the form מִשְׁפָּח, instead of the presumed form מִסְפָּח from √ספח "to pour out," which brings this form closer to its counterpart מִשְׁפָּט in Isa 5:7.

Nebuchadnezzar's actions of setting up a canopy (שַׁפְרוּר) phonetically and graphemically connect to his actions of burning (√שׂרף) the important buildings of the city.

YHWH's oracles accompanying Jeremiah's sign acts depend upon phonetic and graphemic elements in Jeremiah's demonstration to unite them. In this way, the sign acts of Jeremiah correspond to what is seen of Jeremiah's visions in Jer 1. This reasonably suggests that the book of Jeremiah will also use the phonetic and graphemic form of prophetic oracles to produce a contextual effect as it has done with the prophetic visions and sign acts in the book.

3.4 Jeremiah As A Written Document

An important aspect of Jeremiah is its emphasis on writing, writing materials, and written documents.[273] The lexeme סֵפֶר which denotes a book, document, or letter appears 26 times in Jeremiah.[274] The verb √כתב "to write" appears 21 times in Jeremiah.[275] Often in Jeremiah, the verb √כתב appears with the lexeme סֵפֶר (e.g., Jer 25:13; 30:2; etc.).

YHWH commands the prophet to write things down (Jer 22:30 and 30:1-2). The book of Jeremiah purports to be a written book (סֵפֶר) in Jer 25:13 and 30:1-2. The book includes a written letter (סֵפֶר) by Jeremiah to those deported to Babylon (Jer 29:1). Shemaiah sends several letters (סֵפֶר) from Babylon to the leaders in Judah encouraging them to rebuke Jeremiah (Jer 29:25 and 29). Jeremiah dictates YHWH's words to Baruch who writes them in

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[273] See Chad L. Eggleston, *"See and Read All These Words": The Concept of the Written in the Book of Jeremiah* (Siphrut 18; University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2008) and Annette Schellenberg, "A 'Lying Pen of the Scribes' (Jer 8:8)? Orality and Writing in the Formation of Prophetic Books," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*, eds. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 285-309, especially 292-295.

[274] The only book with more occurrences of סֵפֶר is 2 Kings which has 44.

[275] The only books with more occurrences of √כתב are 2 Kings (30); 2 Chronicles (27); and Deuteronomy (22).

a scroll (מְגִלַּת־סֵפֶר) in Jer 36:2, 4 (cf. Jer 32:6, 17-18, 27, and 32) and a book (סֵפֶר) in Jer 45:1. Jeremiah wrote all the disasters to befall Babylon (i.e., Jer 50-51) in a book (סֵפֶר) and gave them to Seraiah, probably the brother of Baruch, to read in Babylon and cast into the Euphrates (Jer 51:59-64).[276]

The book of Jeremiah also mentions written documents (i.e., a סֵפֶר of divorce in Jer 3:8 and a סֵפֶר of a land deed in 32:10, 11, 12 [2x], 14 [2x], 16, and 44). Writing utensils appear in Jer 8:8 and 17:1 (i.e., עֵט "pen" in both texts) and writing materials (i.e., דְּיוֹ "ink") in Jer 36:18.[277] The process of writing appears in Jer 31:33 where YHWH will write his instructions on his people's hearts.[278] People forsaking YHWH, the fountain of living water, will be written in the earth (בָּאָרֶץ יִכָּתֵבוּ) in Jer 17:13 (cf. Ps 69:29 [E 28]).

Jeremiah 36 is particularly pertinent to a discussion of writing and written texts.[279] YHWH tells Jeremiah to take a scroll (מְגִלַּת־סֵפֶר) and write (√כתב) all of YHWH's words

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[276] These things are mentioned briefly in Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 35-36.

[277] The lexeme עֵט only appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in Ps 45:2 and Job 19:24. The lexeme דְּיוֹ is an Egyptian loan. See Noonan, *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible: A Lexicon of Language Contact*, 86-87. For the production of ink and pens in ancient Israel and the ancient Near East, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 602-603.

[278] For a discussion of the relationship between Jer 8:8 and 31:33-34, see Schellenberg, "A 'Lying Pen of the Scribes' (Jer 8:8)?" 306-309. Schellenberg notes that the book of Jeremiah warns against the lying interpretation of scribes, priests, and prophets throughout the book. Jeremiah 31:33-34, therefore, envisions a time when people will no longer listen to lying explanations but will have internalised YHWH's words.

[279] The following is my own understanding of the Hebrew text but is informed by J. Andrew Dearman, "My Servants the Scribes: Composition and Context in Jeremiah 36," *JBL* 109 (1990): 403-421.

against Israel, Judah, and the nations from Josiah's time to the present (v. 2).[280] Baruch writes (√כתב) upon the scroll (מְגִלַּת־סֵפֶר) at Jeremiah's dictation (v. 4).[281] Then, Jeremiah commissions Baruch to read (√קרא) the scroll (מְגִלָּה) written (√כתב) at Jeremiah's dictation in the temple (v. 6).[282] Baruch reads (√קרא) the scroll (סֵפֶר) to the people gathered in the temple (vv. 8 and 10). Baruch reads the words of Jeremiah (דִּבְרֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ in v. 10) which are also the words of YHWH (אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה in v. 11).[283] Micaiah hears (√שׁמע) all the words of the scroll (סֵפֶר) in verse 11.[284] He relates (√נגד) all the words he heard (√שׁמע) when Baruch read (√קרא) from the scroll (סֵפֶר) to the people (v. 13). The leaders tell Baruch to bring the scroll (מְגִלָּה twice) which he read (√קרא) from (v. 14) and Baruch reads (√קרא) the contents to them (v. 15). The leaders ask Baruch how he wrote (√כתב) this scroll (v. 17). Baruch responds that

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[280] See, Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 237. Longman says, "How the oracles have been preserved up to this moment is unclear. We are not to necessarily take this as the first writing down of the oracles, though no doubt the majority of oracles were initially delivered in an oral form. It may be that this new scroll was a collation of previously written down oracles."

[281] The text is unclear why Jeremiah is banned from the temple; see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 665; William McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), 901-902; and Schellenberg, "A 'Lying Pen of the Scribes' (Jer 8:8)? Orality and Writing in the Formation of Prophetic Books," 304. It is particularly striking as Carroll notes that Jeremiah has just taken the Rechabites into the temple in Jer 35:2-11.

Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21-36*, 591) says, "This is the only explicit reference in the OT to a scroll's being written from dictation…although the practice was common enough in the ancient scribal schools."

[282] See Dearman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 327. Dearman says, "…The words of the scroll delivered orally by Baruch are accorded the same prophetic authority as that of Jeremiah."

[283] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 597. Lundbom says, "Here the scroll is said to contain 'the words of Jeremiah'; in v 11 it is 'the words of Yahweh.' In prophecy the two become one." The words of YHWH, his prophet, and the prophet's scribe are deeply intertwined.

[284] Contrasting Jer 26, where Jeremiah proclaims a message to people gathered in the temple, and Jer 36, where Baruch reads Jeremiah's words to the people, Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 662) says, "The written word has *replaced* Jeremiah."

Jeremiah recited (√קרא) the words and he wrote (√כתב) them in the scroll (סֵפֶר) with ink (דְּיוֹ) in verse 18.[285] The leaders retell (√נגד) the contents to the king while the scroll (מְגִלָּה) remains in the scribal chamber of Elishama (v. 20). Jehoiakim sends Yehudi to retrieve the scroll (מְגִלָּה) and read (√קרא) it to his court (v. 21). When Yehudi reads (√קרא) 3 or 4 columns (דֶּלֶת),[286] the king cuts (√קרע; pun with √קרא) them off with a scribal knife (תַּעַר הַסֹּפֵר) until the entire scroll (מְגִלָּה) is disintegrated in the flames (v. 23).[287] A few officials urge the king not to burn the scroll (מְגִלָּה), but he does not listen (√שׁמע) in verse 25. YHWH speaks again to Jeremiah after Jehoiakim burned the scroll (מְגִלָּה) which Baruch wrote (√כתב) at Jeremiah's dictation (v. 27). YHWH tells Jeremiah to take another scroll (מְגִלָּה) and rewrite (√כתב) the contents of the previous scroll (מְגִלָּה) which Jehoiakim burned (v. 28). Jehoiakim burned the scroll (מְגִלָּה) in anger because Baruch wrote (√כתב) that Babylon would come and destroy

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[285] See, Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 238. Longman says, "Apparently, the identity of the prophet is a significant piece of information for those who hear his word."

[286] Cf. the phrase הדלת in Lachish Letter 4:3 refers to columns of a written document or a writing tablet. See William F. Albright, "Some Comments on the 'Ammân Citadel Inscription," *BASOR* 198 (1970): 38-40. Albright argues that דלת means a column of a scroll in Jer 36:23 and a writing tablet in the 'Ammân Citadel Inscription line 5 and probably the same in Lachish Letter 4:3.

[287] Willis (*Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 294) suggests that scribes encourage Jehoiakim to reject Jeremiah's words. Dearman (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 328) notes that this document is probably a scroll with several pieces of tanned animal skins sewn together. Jehoiakim is probably cutting the sewn seams of these skins. Thus, several sewn skins compose this scroll. See F. B. Huey, Jr. *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (NAC 16; Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 324. Huey notes that a scribal knife is usually employed to create a scroll but Jehoiakim utilises it to destroy one. Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 667) notes that Jeremiah and Baruch are absent at the last reading. Only the scroll remains. YHWH's words are present even when the prophet and his scribe are absent.

Judah (v. 29).[288] Jeremiah takes another scroll (מְגִלָּה) and Baruch writes (√כתב) at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the book/scroll (סֵפֶר) which Jehoiakim burned, as well as adding (√יסף) many similar words (v. 32).[289]

Jeremiah 36 witnesses the complexity of a written document and its consumption in an ancient context. There are both written and oral components in this text. A written text is clearly in view (i.e., סֵפֶר, √כתב, and מְגִלָּה), but most people within the story experience the written text through a reading or recitation (i.e., √קרא and √נגד).[290] Jeremiah dictates the text (Jer 36:4, 6, 18, 27, and 32). Baruch writes down what Jeremiah recites (Jer 36:4, 6, 18, 27,

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[288] The judgment pronounced on Jehoiakim is a pun on the context; see Dearman, "My Servants the Scribes: Composition and Context in Jeremiah 36," 408. Dearman says, "The king's dead body will be cast (שׁלך) out to the elements to suffer exposure to heat (חֹרֶב) and cold. This punishment corresponds to the hubris of the king, who sat in his winter house (בית חֹרֶף) before the fireplace and who sent (שׁלח) contemptuously for the scroll and cast (שׁלך) it into the fire."

[289] For the relationship between 2 Kgs 22-23 and Jer 36, see Charles D. Isbell, "2 Kings 22:3-23:24 and Jeremiah 36: A Stylistic Comparison," *JSOT* 8 (1978): 33-45.

Regarding the wording of Jer 36:32, see Schellenberg, "A 'Lying Pen of the Scribes' (Jer 8:8)?" 306. Schellenberg says, "In the same context that aims at proving that a scroll with words of Jeremiah contains the authentic words of the prophet (cf. 36:4, 6, 17, 18, 27, 32), it is acknowledged that more words were added later, without naming those who added them."

Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 663) argues that the king's actions make the words of Jeremiah operative. He references the broken jar (Jer 19:1-2, 10-11) and the drowned book (Jer 51:59-64). Carroll says, "In this story of a prophetic act the irony lies in the fact that it is the king himself who releases the fatal word rather than the prophet." Thus, Jehoiakim ironically participates and activates a prophetic sign act through his own actions. Jehoiakim actions are performative seeking to undo Jeremiah's words (cf. Hananiah breaking the yoke on Jeremiah's neck in Jer 28) but instead he strengthens them. See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 604-605.

Holladay (*Jeremiah 2*, 261-262) suggests that the narrator has Exod 34:1 in mind.

[290] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21-36*, 585) says, "Although the OT refers elsewhere to a writing down of prophetic utterances, or to prophetic utterances being disseminated in written form — in Jeremiah: 29:1; 30:2; 51:60; and elsewhere: Isa 8:1, 16; 30:8; Hab 2:2 — here is an actual report of prophetic words being written on a scroll for public reading, the only one of its kind in the entire OT."

32). Baruch (Jer 36:6, 8, 10, 15) and Yehudi (Jer 36:21, 23) read the text to an audience.[291] Various groups of people, both large and small, listen to the text being read or recited. Those hearing the written text read in turn tell others what they heard (Jer 36:13 and 20) which can be checked against the written copy (Jer 36:14-18 and 21-25). A written copy could be recalled from memory after it is destroyed (Jer 36:27-28 and 32).[292] A written copy transcends the physical presence of its originator.[293] A scribe or prophet can add to a text even after it is written. The lines between YHWH, a prophet, and a scribe regarding textual production are blurred and their participation in the compositional process is interconnected making their separation very difficult and perhaps insignificant.

Jeremiah 36 and the narrative within it suggests that ancient texts, and especially Jeremiah, should be understood both as a written and an oral text. Based on the evidence in Jer 36, Jeremiah is intended to be read (√קרא) by a reader who holds the written (√כתב) סֵפֶר or מְגִלָּה in his hands while the audience listens (√שׁמע) to the pronouncement. The original reading would result in unofficial, informal dissemination to other individuals not present at the original reading. The written nature of the text means that the second hand oral accounts

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[291] See Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 150. Harrison says, "The actual contents of the document in question are unknown, though it probably comprised an anthology of material proclaimed between 626 and 605 BC. As compared with the extant prophecy it was evidently fairly short, since it could be read three times in one day (verses 10, 15, 21)." See Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 43-44. Lundbom argues that the scroll described in Jer 36 contains Jer 1-20 in its basic present form in the MT.

[292] Other texts such as 2 Kgs 22 (especially verses 8-11), 2 Kgs 23 (especially verses 1-3), and Neh 8 (especially verses 1-8 and 13-18) envision a similar situation. Namely, a public reader is holding a written text and reading it to a gathered audience. The audience listens to the reading of the text and then discusses its contents with others who are either present or absent at the original reading.

[293] Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 668) says, "Committed to writing, the word has a permanence beyond the exigencies of human existence and can survive even the absence of its original bearer."

could be checked against the written text when desired. The essential orality of the text, namely that the text would probably be recited orally by a speaker in order to be scribbled down by a scribe into a written form, means that the loss of the original written document would not compromise the document as it could continue to be recited and rewritten at the speaker's convenience. Additionally, the hearers of this text could retell its content to others. Perhaps, the scribe responsible for writing down the document would also be able to recall portions or possibly all of the dictated material. A scribe or a prophet could also add material to a previously written document.

The implications of Jer 36 for this study are manifold. Jeremiah is meant to be read as both a written and an oral text.[294] The oral nature will be realised in various puns such as between √קרע and √קרא in Jer 36:23-24.[295] The reading (√קרא) of Jeremiah's written words should result in the tearing (√קרע) of the listener's garments (Jer 36:24) not the written document itself (Jer 36:23).[296] This inversion of the proper and expected response to the divine word is evident to the hearer and reader alike through the soundplay between these two verbs.

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[294] For education involving both oral and written components in the ancient Near East, see Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*, 154-155.

[295] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 605. For the validity of using א and ע in a pun, see Moshe Garsiel and Robert Řehák, "Puns on Names as a Poetic Device in the Book of Judges," in *Ben Porat Yosef: Studies in the Bible and Its Word — Essays in Honor of Joseph Fleishman*; eds. Michael Avioz, Omver Minka, and Yael Shemesh (AOAT 458; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2019), 285. They say, "The sounds of א and ע are so close, they enable flexibility to use puns as a device." Also, see Noam Mizrahi, *Witnessing a Prophetic Text in the Making: The Literary, Textual and Linguistic Development of Jeremiah 10:1-16* (BZAW 502; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 196. Mizrahi notes a pun between the verbs √יראand √רעה in Jer 10:5 involving the gutturals א and ע.

[296] Isbell, "2 Kings 22:3-23:24 and Jeremiah 36: A Stylistic Comparison," 37 and Dearman, "My Servants the Scribes: Composition and Context in Jeremiah 36," 407.

The written nature of the text will only be evident to the reader holding the scroll. For example, Rendsburg argues that the unexpected orthography of the plural of מֶלֶךְ with a medial א (i.e., הַמַּלְאָכִים) is a visual pun.[297] The reader alone, not the unaffected hearer, struggles to decipher why "kings" look like "messengers" in 2 Sam 11:1.[298] Rendsburg believes this text centres on the interplay between kings and messengers. David does not obey God so Joab does not obey David, and the messenger does not obey Joab. Rendsburg says,

> When the king abrogates God's command, generals no longer listen to the commander-in-chief, and privates (i.e., messengers) no longer listen to generals. All of this, I submit, is anticipated by the author in the enigmatic orthography המלאכים HML'KYM 'kings' in v. 1. The reader—in this case literally the reader, that is, the individual actually reading with written document in hand—understands that 'kings' is intended, but questions why 'messengers' is spelled. As he proceeds through the story, our presenter keeps this piece of information in the back of his mind, and recalls it as 'messengers', especially the last and most important one, play a significant role in the narrative.[299]

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[297] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 374-377.

[298] For a phonetic explanation, see Noam Mizrahi, "Kings or Messengers? The Text of 2 Samuel 11:1 in the Light of Hebrew Historical Phonology," *ZAH* 25-28 (2012-15): 57-83. Mizrahi believes that both the *kethiv* and *qere* mean "messengers." The historically older spelling מלאך/מלאכים becomes מלך/מלכים with the elision of the *aleph* in the second temple period. For a similar view, see David Toshio Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), 174-176. For an apologetic explanation, see Gordon, "Aleph Apologeticum," 112-116. Gordon believes that the *aleph* deflects the blame from David's staying at home when he should be at war.

[299] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 376-377.

3.5 Conclusion

Previous studies (e.g., ben Shesheth, Garsiel, Rendsburg, and Noegel) illustrate that meta-textual semantics appears in the Hebrew Jeremiah. The puns at the beginning of the Hebrew text of Jeremiah (Jer 1:11-19) and the central role which they play regarding YHWH's interpretation suggest that the book of Jeremiah will use the very form (i.e., phonology, orthography, morphology, etc.) of the text to create a contextual effect. The sign acts of Jeremiah similarly employ puns. Often in his sign acts, Jeremiah will use a specific element (e.g., בַּקְבֻּק) or a particular body part (e.g., צַוָּאר) to symbolise the message. Since the form of Jeremiah's visions and sign acts are significant to their interpretation, then it seems reasonable to look for additional times when the form of the Hebrew Jeremiah generates a contextual effect within other parts of Jeremiah (e.g., oracles). Using Jer 36 as a test case, the nature of the text of Jeremiah involves both oral and written elements. When investigating the Hebrew Jeremiah for cases of meta-textual semantics it is reasonable to examine the text from both perspectives. I examine examples in Hebrew Jeremiah which are beyond stylistics that cannot be easily explained via textual criticism since no ancient versions or witnesses of

the Hebrew Bible have a different reading.[300] Instead, the odd textual elements illustrate the literary and rhetorical skills of the authors and scribes of Jeremiah.[301]

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[300] I assume a careful arrangement of Hebrew Jeremiah. As Hamilton (*A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, 295) says, "LXX represents an original text which MT has split up and put to new purposes…But the fact of the rearrangement does show that, at some level, the apparent disarray of the book of Jeremiah was intentional, not an accident created by incompetent editors." The careful arrangement of the MT appears in Jer 10:1-16. Mizrahi (*Witnessing a Prophetic Text in the Making*, 5-12) argues that the alternating structure of satire against idolatry and hymns to YHWH in the MT of Jer 10:1-16 is a secondary arrangement subsequent to the version of Jeremiah represented by G. The secondary nature of MT does not dismiss the fact that is it carefully arranged according to Mizrahi. The form of Hebrew Jeremiah is worthy of investigation as argued by Jack Lundbom (*Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*).

Notwithstanding its careful arrangement, there are several examples of textual corruption in Hebrew Jeremiah. In Jer 19:15, the *kethiv* reads מֵבִי while the *qere* reads מֵבִיא. The א has dropped out by haplography. The construct form בֵּית in the MT of Jer 2:26 should probably be בְּנֵי as in G and S; see William L. Holladay, "Text Criticism and Beyond: The Case of Jeremiah," *Text* 23 (2007): 185. For a possible case of an element dropping from the MT of Jeremiah, see David J. Reimer, "A Problem in the Hebrew Text of Jeremiah X 13, LI 16," *VT* 38 (1988): 348-354. Based on an Ugaritic parallel, Reimer argues that the text should read בַּעֲרָפֶל קוֹל תִּתּוֹ "He gives his voice in the thick darkness" instead of MT's difficult לְקוֹל תִּתּוֹ. This reading provides a good parallel with the next line הָמוֹן מַיִם בַּשָּׁמַיִם "He gives tumult of water in the heavens." Mizrahi (*Witnessing a Prophetic Text in the Making*, 94 note 58) argues, however, that Reimer's emendation is "ungrammatical in Hebrew."

[301] Previously, scholars have too quickly disregarded or discarded elements of the text supposing them to be incoherent without looking for their coherence in the context. See Robar, "Coherence and Cohesion," 473-476.

Chapter 4 Cases of Meta-Textual Semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah

The following chapter evaluates cases of meta-textual semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah. The chapter is divided into two section presenting cases of textual contortion and cohesion as they appear in Hebrew Jeremiah. Highlighting the example, I examine whether it is a case of stylistics, noting particularly odd (e.g., *hapax*, unusual collocation, unusual orthography, and unusual syntax) or well-formed elements which signal the uniqueness of the text. The versional witnesses are consulted to determine whether the strange element should be read differently than in the Hebrew text of L. If stylistics and textual criticism do not adequately resolve and explain the textual element, then I determine whether it fits a minor or major theme in the context. If the element is pertinent to the context, then it is a case of meta-textual semantics via either textual contortion or textual cohesion.

4.1 Textual Contortion in Jeremiah

4.1.1 Jeremiah 2:13

כִּי־שְׁתַּיִם רָעוֹת עָשָׂה עַמִּי

אֹתִי עָזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים

לַחְצֹב לָהֶם בֹּארוֹת בֹּארוֹת נִשְׁבָּרִים

אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָכְלוּ הַמָּיִם׃

"For two evils, my people have committed.[302]

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[302] This כִּי clause is subordinate to Jer 2:12 and explains the reason the heavens should be appalled. With indefinite nouns, the numeral usually appears first in the absolute with the indefinite noun following it in apposition; see A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), §36a.

Calvin (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 1:92-93) understands this כִּי as asseverative. For asseverative כִּי, see John C. Beckman, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), §449 and Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), §4.3.4i.

Me, they have forsaken, the Fountain of living water,[303]

To hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns,[304]

Which do not retain water."[305]

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[303] The אֶת marked noun phrase is fronted. The phrase מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים is in apposition to the fronted noun phrase but is separated from its appositive by the verb √עזב. This two-fold extraposition emphasises the people's rejection of YHWH.

[304] The phrase בֹּארֹת נִשְׁבָּרִים is in apposition to בֹּארוֹת. The *Nifal* participle is an attributive adjective modifying בֹּארֹת; see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §37.4. The appositive phrase בֹּארֹת נִשְׁבָּרִים is the head of this אֲשֶׁר clause.

It is also possible that the phrase בֹּארוֹת בֹּארֹת "pits of cisterns" is a construct phrase with the participle נִשְׁבָּרִים modifying the entire construct phrase (i.e., "broken pits of cisterns"). The disjunctive accents (i.e., *zaqef qaton*, *pashta*, and *zaqef qaton*) appearing in the phrase (i.e., בֹּארוֹת בֹּארֹת נִשְׁבָּרִים) show that the Masoretes understood this phrase as a noun and its appositive not as a construct phrase. See Mark D. Futato, Sr., *Basics of Hebrew Accents* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 20-21, 39-41, and 46-47.

[305] There is ambiguity over the last verbal form in Jer 2:13. The unpointed יכלו could be a *Hifil yiqtol* of √כול "to hold, retain" (יָכְלוּ in Jer 10:10), *Qal qatal* of √יכל "to be able" (יָכְלוּ in Gen 37:4 or יוּכְלוּ/יֻכָלוּ in Jer 1:19; 6:10; and 15:20), or *Qal yiqtol* of √כלה "to finish" (יִכְלוּ in Jer 16:4). The MT vocalises it as a *Hifil yiqtol* from √כול (i.e., יָכְלוּ). This verb is bi-valent in the *Hifil* having a subject and accusative complement (e.g., 1 Kgs 7:26 and 38). It appears in Jer 6:1 and 10:10 in the *Hifil* and 20:9 in the *Pilpel*, where it means "to provide." The only times in the Hebrew Bible that the *Hifil yiqtol* third masculine plural of √כול is spelled defectively are in Jer 2:13 and 10:10.

G seems to conflate two readings by representing both a finite of √יכל and an infinitive of √כול (i.e., οἳ οὐ δυνήσονται ὕδωρ συνέχειν "which they are not able to hold water."). See Henry Barclay Swete, ed., *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 3:225 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 30-31. T takes a similar approach (דְּלָא יָכְלִין לְקַיָמָא מַיָא "which they are not able to hold water."). See Alexander Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 413 and Robert Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah: Translation with Critical Introduction, Apparatus and Notes* (ArBib 12; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1987), 50. T seems to read a finite of √יכל with an infinitive of √קום (e.g., a finite of √יכל appears with an infinitive of √קום in the Hebrew text of Gen 31:35; Josh 7:12, 13; Ps 18:39; 36:18; and Lam 1:14 which is generally represented in T in a similar way to its representation of Jer 2:13 [but not in Ps 36:18 where a finite of √יסף appears with an infinitive of √קום]). The appearance of √יכל would require an infinitive as G and T illustrate. The MT reading יָכְלוּ makes sense, is similar to Jer 10:10, and does not require an infinitive (*contra* G and T).

4.1.1.1 The Contortion

The verse mentions two evils but defines only one. The lexeme בּוֹר "cistern" appears with a medial א. The intervening א (i.e., בּאֹר), creating a break in the orthography of the lexeme בּוֹר, mimics a crack in the cistern. The plural of בּאֹר appears twice and is written defectively the second time. The plural defective spelling immediately juxtaposed to a fuller spelling of בּוֹר/בּאֹר demonstrates the diminishing contents of the cisterns in which Judah hopes.

4.1.1.2 Stylistics

The lexeme בּוֹר/בּאֹר "cistern" exhibits rare orthography in Jer 2:13 compared to the rest of its appearances in Jeremiah and the Hebrew Bible where it is otherwise spelled as בּוֹר (e.g., Jer 6:7 [*kethiv*];[306] 37:16; 38:6 [twice], 7, 9, 10, 11, 13; 41:7, and 9). The orthography בּאֹר only appears in one other context in the Hebrew Bible (2 Sam 23:15, 16, and 20). L (246 verso) places a *raphe* above the א in each occurrence of בּאֹר in Jer 2:13 (i.e., בּאֹרוֹת בּאֹרת).[307]

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[306] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 203) says, "In the present passage the ketib is בּוֹר; the qere' appears to be בַּיִר, a word otherwise unattested: it would appear to be for *bayr = **bēr* = בְּאֵר." Hornkohl (*Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 92 note 56) understands the plural form בירות in 11Q20 12:25 to be equivalent to בארות (cf. 4Q225 f2i:13).

[307] Each appearance of the spelling בּאֹר is a case where the א is written but not read according to the Masora (כתּ א לא קרֹ). See Weil, *Massorah Gedolah*, 109-110. For *raphe*, see Jacob Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, 2nd Ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), 17-18.

The Masoretes note that the א should be written, not read. The lexeme בּוֹר/בּאֹר is not to be confused with the similarly spelled lexeme בְּאֵר "well."[308]

Though the original Northwest Semitic spelling of the lexeme "cistern" was akin to the orthography בּאֹר appearing in Jer 2:13, the א seems to have elided before Jeremiah's time as illustrated by the orthography of this lexeme as בּוֹר in Jeremiah and the rest of the Hebrew Bible.[309] This lexeme is spelled בּוֹר at least 10 times in Jeremiah (cf. *kethiv* of Jer 6:7). This is not a stylistic spelling in Jeremiah but a divergent one.[310] Compared to the regular orthography of this lexeme in the Hebrew Bible and in Jeremiah, the spelling בּאֹר is conspicuous.

The medial א does not represent the only oddity in the spelling of בּוֹר/בּאֹר in Jer 2:13. The plural orthography of בּוֹר/בּאֹר appears twice but is different in each occurrence.[311] This

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[308] For the distinction between the meaning and usages of בְּאֵר and בּוֹר in the Hebrew Bible, see Yoel Elitzur, "The Interface between Lounge and Realia in the Preexilic Books of the Bible," *HS* 59 (2018): 133-135.

The Greek lexeme λάκκος "cistern, pit" which translates this lexeme in Jer 2:13 usually translates the Hebrew בּוֹר and only rarely בְּאֵר. See T. Muraoka, *A Greek Hebrew/ Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 73. G is reading בּוֹר/בּאֹר, not בְּאֵר.

[309] The two reconstructed lexemes בְּאֵר and בּאֹר in Old Northwest Semitic would be very similar. בְּאֵר is from the Old Northwest Semitic *bi'r* and בּוֹר/בּאֹר from the Old Northwest Semitic *bu'r*. See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 203 and Peter Bekins, *Inscriptions from the World of the Bible: A Reader and Introduction to Old Northwest Semitic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2020), 157. When discussing the Mesha Inscription, Bekins notes that the Moabite בר might represent the Hebrew equivalent of either בְּאֵר or בּוֹר/בּאֹר, but whichever it denotes, it "indicates the deletion of syllable-final *'* in word-internal position." For the Semitic cognates for the Hebrew בְּאֵר, see *HALOT*, 106 and *DNWSI*, 141-142. For the same evidence for בּוֹר, see *HALOT*, 116.

[310] The picture is not as clear in the books of Samuel regarding the lexeme בּוֹר/בּאֹר. The spelling בּוֹר appears four times (1 Sam 13:6; 19:22; 30:30; and 2 Sam 3:26) while בּאֹר appears three times (2 Sam 23:15, 16, and 20).

[311] See Brown, "Jeremiah," 90. Brown thinks the repetition בּאֹרוֹת בּאֹרֹת is emphatic to convey shock. Cf. The collocation וּמָלַךְ מֶלֶךְ in Jer 23:5 as understood by S and Radak. See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 562.

does not fit the stylistics of Jeremiah, which often juxtaposes a lexeme or a phrase without variation elsewhere (e.g., מֵעַי מֵעַי "my loins, my loins" in Jer 4:19; הֵיכַל יְהוָה הֵיכַל יְהוָה הֵיכַל יְהוָה "YHWH's temple, YHWH's temple, YHWH's temple" in Jer 7:4; and אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ "land, land, land" in Jer 22:29).[312] The first occurrence appears with a full *holem* in the plural suffix (i.e., בֹּאֹרוֹת) while the second appears with a defectively written *holem* in the same position (i.e., בֹּאֹרֹת).[313] The juxtaposition of these plural lexemes accentuates their distinctive orthography. The reader expects the same form of the plural lexeme to reappear in the same clause when the lexeme is duplicated. For example, the phrase וְעֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים בְּאֵרֹת בְּאֵרֹת חֵמָר "Now the valley of Siddim had pits, tar pits…" in Gen 14:10 is representative of this expectation. In Gen 14:10, the feminine plural lexeme בְּאֵר is juxtaposed and the orthography of each lexeme is identically defective (i.e., בְּאֵרֹת בְּאֵרֹת). Additionally, the structure of this phrase in Gen 14:10 is identical to Jer 2:13 — a noun juxtaposed to its appositive with an adjective modifying the appositive. The reader expects, based on Gen 14:10, that the two juxtaposed plural appearances of בּוֹר/בֹּאר in the same clause in Jer 2:13 will be spelled identically.[314] The text veering from this expected presentation suggests purpose.[315]

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[312] For variation in repetitive phrases in Jeremiah (e.g., Jer 50:35-38 and 51:20-23), see David Noel Freedman, "Deliberate Deviation from an Established Pattern of Repetition in Hebrew Poetry as A Rhetorical Device," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1986), 50 and Freedman, "Discourse on Prophetic Discourse," 151. Cf. John Goldingay, "Repetition and Variation in the Psalms," *JQR* 68 (1978): 146-151.

[313] The lexeme בּוֹר/בֹּאר is masculine but takes the feminine plural וֹת- ending.

[314] The reader would reasonably expect that since Samuel ben Jacob is responsible for copying and vocalising all of L that he would behave similarly in Gen 14:10 (7 verso) and Jer 2:13 (246 verso).

[315] Different orthography of בּוֹר/בֹּאר does appears when the lexeme is juxtaposed (הַבֹּרָה וְהַבּוֹר "…to the pit. Now the pit…" in Gen 37:24) or in the same verse (Exod 21:33). In each case, however, the lexeme repeats in a separate clause.

4.1.1.3 Textual Criticism

Some commentators and translations (e.g., KJV, NRSV, and JPS) understand the two evils as 1) forsaking YHWH and 2) hewing cisterns.[316] This symbolises choosing other gods or possibly political alliances instead of YHWH.[317] They understand the infinitival phrase לַחְצֹב to function as a finite. The infinitive here, however, is governed by the finite √עזב "to forsake" in the previous clause. The only other time this verbal form לַחְצוֹב, spelled *plene*, appears in the Hebrew Bible is in 1 Chron 22:2, where it is governed by the finite √עמד "to stand." If the infinitive construct was acting as a finite it would have both the cliticised conjunction ו and the cliticised preposition ל (i.e., וְלַחְצֹב).[318] Since the infinitive lacks the conjunction in Jer 2:13, it is not functioning as a finite but instead expands on the proceeding action described by the verb √עזב.[319] It might be objected that the conjunction ו would be expected to drop in Hebrew poetry and thus its absence is not significant. The preceding poetry of Jer 2 witnesses several uses of the conjunction ו (e.g., *wayyiqtol* in Jer 2:5, etc.), however, making its absence here noteworthy. Also, a similar case of a finite (√בוא) governing an infinitive (√אכל) without a ו appears in the context in Jer 2:7 (וָאָבִיא אֶתְכֶם אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכַּרְמֶל לֶאֱכֹל פִּרְיָהּ וְטוּבָהּ "I brought you to the fertile land to eat its fruit and goodness"). This suggests that the same construction in Jer 2:13 functions similarly.

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316 For example, Calvin, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 1:92-93; Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 30-31; and Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 64. Longman thinks this is a reference to a "two-fold sin."

317 The image of a בּוֹר to symbolise Judah pursuing other gods is appropriate as it has sexual connotations (Prov 5:15ff.). Judah's idolatry is contextually presented through sexual imagery (e.g., Jer 2:23-25 and 32-37). In the Hebrew Bible, people are often engaged at a בְּאֵר (Gen 24:11, 20; 29:2-3, 8, 20; Exod 2:15; etc.). In Jer 2-3, there is a divorce at a בֹּאר.

318 See Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §36.3.2 and Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §124p.

319 See Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §124o and Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §3.4.1g.

The Greek reads καὶ ὤρυξαν ἑαυτοῖς λάκκους συντετριμμένους "and dig for themselves broken cisterns."[320] Since G has a conjunction and a verb (ὀρύσσω "to dig") its *Vorlage* might read וְלַחְצֹב. If so, then G's *Vorlage* has an infinitive functioning as a finite. Alternatively, G's *Vorlage* might have something like a *Qal wayyiqtol* of √חצב continuing the *qatal* of √עזב, but this is uncertain. G appears to be a literal rendering of a text similar to MT in this verse which suggests the possibility that either וְלַחְצֹב or וַיַּחְצְבוּ is in its *Vorlage*.[321] It is also possible that the Greek translator reads the text as וְלַחְצֹב instead of לַחְצֹב. G might even have added the conjunction. Codex Vaticanus has two occurrences of καί in Jer 2:13 with the first καί (ὅτι δύο καὶ πονηρὰ ἐποίησεν ὁ λαός μου "for my people have done two evils") being unnecessary and most probably not representative of its *Vorlage*.[322] It is possible, though uncertain, that the second καί is also not present in its *Vorlage*. G's καὶ ὤρυξαν is probably not a divergence from MT's לַחְצֹב.[323] S reads a conjunction followed by two finites instead of an infinitive (ܘܐܙܠܘ ܚܦܪܘ ܠܗܘܢ "…and they went, they dug cisterns for themselves").[324] S could use a finite for an infinitive in its *Vorlage* which probably happens in Jer 2:2, where MT (√הלך) and G (ἐξακολουθέω "to follow") have an infinitive and S (ܐܙܠ "to walk, go") has a finite. Additionally, the use of two finites in S in Jer 2:13 is surprising

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[320] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 225 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 30-31.

[321] For example, the phrasal structure of G ἐμὲ ἐγκατέλιπον, πηγὴν ὕδατος ζωῆς, is identical to the MT's אֹתִי עָזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים.

[322] See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 30 and 208 and Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 225.

[323] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:225 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 30-31.

[324] See Gillian Greenberg and Donald M. Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible with English Translation* (The Antioch Bible; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2013), 8-9.

since MT has one infinitive and G has one finite. S seems to be translating freely. Both G and S seem to be smoothing the syntax to conform it more properly to the opening statement that there are in fact two evils. The two finites in S might mirror the two evils earlier in the verse.

The Greek represents only one occurrence of בּוֹר/בּאֵר, but S represents two occurrences.[325] The two occurrences of "cistern" in MT and S recall the two evils in this verse. G may have only one occurrence due to haplography.[326] Alternatively, G may have a *Vorlage* identical to MT, but the translator chose only to translate the appositional phrase as this phrase provides all the important information. There is not enough evidence to understand the textual elements mentioned above as textual corruptions.[327]

4.1.1.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Contortion

YHWH's introductory statement that Judah committed two evils against him does not match the syntax of the verse. Syntactically, only one transgression appears. William Holladay says, "The number שְׁתַּיִם (literally 'two') here implies 'double' (compare Exod 22:3), since in reality only one act is involved, the exchange of one deity for another; indeed it is something of a puzzle to locate the 'two crimes,' since one involves the other."[328] Similarly, Jack Lundbom says, "The two evils are actually only one, but the exaggeration adds emphasis."[329]

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[325] See Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 8-9.

[326] See Freedman and Lundbom, "Haplography in Jeremiah 1-20," 31* and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 268.

[327] This is generally confirmed in that this verse is not discussed in either de Waard, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 1 or Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de L'Ancien Testament 2: Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations* (OBE 50/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 466.

[328] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 92.

[329] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 267.

The people have illogically chosen a faulty, broken source of sustenance instead of YHWH (cf. Isa 8:6-8). The dative of disadvantage (cf. Ezek 37:11) following the infinitive (לַחְצֹב לָהֶם) emphasises that Judah made the wrong choice to their own detriment.[330] YHWH is described as the fountain (מָקוֹר) of living water (מַיִם חַיִּים) twice in Jeremiah (2:13 and 17:13).[331] Judah's rejection of YHWH, a מָקוֹר, has left them empty, implying the lexeme רֵיקָם, also appearing twice in Jeremiah (14:3 and 50:9).

The one digging the well is significant (cf. CD 6:2ff.). Judah creates (√ברא) a בֹּאר that is broken and untrustworthy. They should trust in the Creator (בּוֹרֵא) of everything — YHWH (cf. Isa 40:28; 42:5; 43:15; 45:7 [twice], and 18). Only the בּוֹרֵא is capable of creating (√ברא) a proper, trustworthy בֹּאר.

In Jer 14:1, there is a drought. People search for water (מַיִם) in the cisterns (גֵּב) of the land, but they return with empty (רֵיקָם) vessels (Jer 14:3). A similar scenario appears in Jer 2:13. The people leave the fountain (מָקוֹר) to approach their cisterns (בֹּארוֹת) only to discover that they are fractured (בֹּארֹת נִשְׁבָּרִים) and empty (רֵיקָם). The people choose empty (רֵיקָם) cisterns instead of the fountain (מָקוֹר) of living water. The lexemes מָקוֹר and רֵיקָם are reverse

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[330] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 92 citing Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §119s.

[331] See Noam Mizrahi, "The Linguistic History of מדהבה: From Textual Corruption to Lexical Innovation," *RevQ* 26 (2013): 104 note 40. Mizrahi states that the phrase אֵל חָי in Ps 42:3 in a context of thirst "evokes the common collocation מים חיים" citing Jer 2:13 and 17:13.

anagrams and a near palindrome.[332] The graphemic and phonetic reversal inherent between the lexemes מָקוֹר and רֵיקָם symbolises Judah's foolishness for exchanging מָקוֹר for רֵיקָם. Judah chooses empty (רֵיקָם) cisterns instead of the fountain (מָקוֹר) of living water.

Lundbom notes the chiastic arrangement in Jer 2:13 of the double appearances of the lexemes מַיִם "water" and בּוֹר/בֹּאר "cistern, pit" (i.e., מַיִם-בֹּאר-בֹּאר-מַיִם).[333] By utilising this chiastic structure, the author illustrates that water surrounds Judah, but they do not have access to it because it trickles out of their cracked cisterns.[334] Namely, the lexemes מַיִם are structurally outside of the lexemes בּוֹר/בֹּאר demonstrating the oracle's meaning and replicating the fact that מַיִם is oozing out of the broken בּוֹר/בֹּאר. Additionally, the two-fold appearance of two lexemes (i.e., מַיִם and בּוֹר/בֹּאר) recalls the use of the numeral שְׁתַּיִם at the beginning of the verse.[335] The double repetition focuses on the fact that Judah exchanges מַיִם for a cracked and subsequently empty בּוֹר/בֹּאר.

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[332] The reserve anagram is illustrated as a chiasmus (cf. Kalimi's discussion of literary metathesis for purposes of reversal in *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*).

מָקוֹר
A *mem*
  B *qamets*
    C *qoph*
      D Long vowel (full *holem*)
        E *resh*
רֵיקָם
        E' *resh*
      D' Long vowel (*tsere yod*)
    C' *qoph*
  B' *qamets*
A' *mem*

[333] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 266.

[334] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 266) notes that the lexeme מַיִם (Jer 2:13 [twice] and 18 [twice]) and the verb √עזב (Jer 2:13, 17, and 19) are key words in Jer 2:13-19.

[335] For a discussion of the morphology of שְׁתַּיִם, see John Mauchline, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar*, 26th ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1966) §45.b.ii

In Jer 2:13, the א interrupts or breaks the normative spelling of the lexeme בוֹר. The lexeme describing broken cisterns is itself fractured in the middle. Rendsburg argues that the plural of מֶלֶךְ appears with a medial *aleph* in 2 Sam 11:1 (in L 173 verso) as well as other contextual lexemes or phrases (i.e., חֵלָאמָה "Helam" in 2 Sam 10:16; וַיֹּרְאוּ הַמּוֹרִאִים "the archers shot" in *kethiv* 2 Sam 11:24; and רָאשׁ "poor" in 2 Sam 12:1 and 4) to emphasise that the role of kings and messengers has become confused throughout 2 Sam 11.[336]

William McKane says, "In v. 13 the contrast between spring and cistern is sufficient to bear the main weight of the exegesis (so Kimchi) and the defective construction of the latter is at the periphery of the metaphor."[337] Does McKane singularly refer to the defective building of the cistern? Does he also understand the defective nature of the phrase בֹּארוֹת בֹּארת as significant? It is unclear whether he understands meta-textual semantics to be present in Jer 2:13.

The orthographic move from a partially full (בֹּארוֹת) to completely defective (בֹּארת) spelling of the lexeme בוֹר/בֹּאר demonstrates Judah progressively moving to a position of emptiness. The newly dug cisterns are defective in retaining water as the form of the lexemes are defective.[338]

In Jeremiah, בוֹר/בֹּאר usually refers to a prison (37:16), a pit in which a person is thrown with the intent of leaving them there to die (38:6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13; cf. Gen 37:20, 22, 24, 28, 29), or a burial place for the dead (41:7 and 9). In the Hebrew Bible, it usually refers

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[336] Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 374-377. See discussion above.

[337] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 34-35.

[338] For a move from *plene* to defective orthography denoting the removal of water in Exod 7:24, see Josiah D. Peeler, "Disappearing Orthography Representing Disappearing Water: The Infinitive of √שׁתה as A Test Case," forthcoming.

to a prison or the place of the dead.[339] The people of Judah are tunnelling into their own prison. They are digging their own graves (cf. Ps 7:16; 35:7; and Qoh 10:8).

The verb √חצב "to hew, dig" with the lexeme בוֹר/בֹּאר describes efforts to inhabit a desolate area (2 Chron 26:10; cf. Deut 6:11 and Neh 9:25). YHWH brought Judah through an uninhabited land in Jer 2:6 to bring them to the plentiful land of Canaan in Jer 2:7. In Jer 2:13, Judah is rescinding YHWH's actions in the Exodus, wilderness wanderings, and conquest (Jer 2:6-7). Judah is voluntarily carving a path back into desolation and drought.

The verb √חצב also describes hewing a new tomb (Isa 22:16). Jeremiah 2:13 depicts people digging (√חצב) a בוֹר/בֹּאר. At first, the hearer expects that they are digging a cistern but eventually realises they are preparing their tomb. The בוֹר/בֹּאר normally a cistern to collect rain water to facilitate life, has been transformed into a tomb.[340] Later, Jeremiah is thrown into a waterless בוֹר/בֹּאר in order to kill him (Jer 38:6; cf. Gen 37:24). Ironically, Judah is deliberately putting itself in a situation of death as it later does to Jeremiah.

The elements in this verse evidence interruption. YHWH references two wrongs of Judah, but the syntax of the verse only details one. The lexeme בוֹר/בֹּאר which is normally spelled בוֹר in the Hebrew Bible appears with a medial א twice. Two appearances of the plural lexeme בוֹר/בֹּאר are juxtaposed with each occurrence being spelled slightly more defective.

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[339] בוֹר/בֹּאר is a prison in Gen 40:15; 41:14; Exod 12:29; Isa 24:22; and Zech 9:11. בוֹר/בֹּאר refers to the place of the dead in Isa 14:15, 19; 38:18; Ezek 26:20; 31:14, 16; 32:18, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30; Ps 28:1; 30:3; 40:3; 88:5, 7; 143:7; and Prov 1:12.

[340] For the use and shape of cisterns in ancient Israel, see Philip J. King, *Jeremiah: An Archaeological Companion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 154-157. King says, "In agricultural societies, cisterns (*bor*, *borot*, *bo'r*, *bo'rot*) are important for several reasons. A principal use of these underground chambers is as storage for rainwater collected through drains as it accumulated on flat roofs or in courtyards. This rainwater is then stored for use in dry season (from May through September)" (p. 154).

These elements suggest that the textual structure of Jer 2:13 mimics the message. The syntax does not match the logic of the pronouncement as Judah's actions are illogical. The spelling of בּוֹר/בּאֹר with a medial א interrupts the conventional spelling of this lexeme in the Hebrew Bible as Judah's cisterns are broken in the middle and cannot retain their contents.[341] The juxtaposed occurrences of the plural of בּוֹר/בּאֹר becomes completely defective illustrating the useless cisterns.

A chiasmus (i.e., מַיִם-בּאֹר-בּאֹר-מַיִם) illustrates that water is trickling outside of the cisterns in which Judah trusts. The chiasmus and the repetition of the lexemes מַיִם and בּאֹר reinforce the lexeme "two" (שְׁתַּיִם) at the beginning of the verse. Additionally, the author alters the normal orthography of the lexeme בּוֹר by adding an א and continues tampering with the orthography by making the two juxtaposed forms of the plural of בּאֹר more defective. The cisterns, orthographically and functionally, are not quite right.[342]

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[341] Variant orthography or vowel pointing can be employed for lexical disambiguation. See Robar, "*Wayyiqṭol* As an Unlikely Preterite," 37. Robar notes that the long *wayyiqtol* form of √בנה (i.e., וַיִּבֶן) means "to rebuild" (Josh 19:50; 1 Kgs 18:32; 2 Chron 26:6; cf. Ps 69:36 where the long *yiqtol* form appears with a similar meaning) instead of "to build." The author could use the orthography בּאֹר for the purpose of lexical disambiguation. The form בּוֹר or בֹּר could easily be confused with the similar lexemes בֹּר "cleanness" (2 Sam 22:21, 25 par. Ps 18:21, 25; and Job 22:30) and בֹּר "lye," which describes purification and cleansing (Isa 1:25 and Job 9:30). The possible connection with cleansing (בֹּר in Job 22:30) or purification (בֹּר in Job 9:30) is broken by the form בּאֹר. Thus, this orthography appropriately disconnects Judah from cleansing since their pursuit of foreign gods makes them unclean (cf. Jer 2:17-25 and 3:2). Additionally, Judah's idolatry leads to their trusting in broken בּאֵרוֹת/בּאֵרֹת making them incapable of becoming clean even if they use בֹּרִית "borax" (Jer 2:22; cf. Mal 3:2). The possibility of YHWH approaching to clean (cf. the verb √ברר "to purify" in Jer 4:11) the people is thwarted by the people's allegiance.

Cf. For a connection between √ברר, בֹּר and בּאֹר in Job 9:30-31, see Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 42-43.

[342] בּאֹר orthographically recalls the verb √באר "to make plain, clear" in Deut 1:5; 27:8; and Hab 2:2. Judah has chosen the wrong בּאֹר, the wrong source of life. Judah's destructive decision only becomes clear (√באר) at the bottom of the בּאֹר.

4.1.2 Jeremiah 4:23-26

רָאִיתִי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ

וְהִנֵּה־תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ

וְאֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם

וְאֵין אוֹרָם׃

רָאִיתִי הֶהָרִים

וְהִנֵּה רֹעֲשִׁים

וְכָל־הַגְּבָעוֹת הִתְקַלְקָלוּ׃

רָאִיתִי

וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם

וְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם נָדָדוּ׃

רָאִיתִי

וְהִנֵּה הַכַּרְמֶל הַמִּדְבָּר

וְכָל־עָרָיו נִתְּצוּ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה

מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ׃

"I saw the earth.

Ho![343] …Desolation and nothingness.

[343] The particle הִנֵּה often immediately follows a verb of sight, such as √ראה (e.g., Gen 19:28; 22:13; 26:8; etc.). It describes the perspective of an astonished character. See Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 35-36.

…to the heavens.[344]

Their light is nonexistent (cf. Isa 5:30)."

I saw the mountains.

Ho! …Quaking.

All the hills are trembling.[345]

I saw…

Ho! Humankind is nonexistent.

All the birds of the heavens fled.

I saw…

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[344] It is tempting to change אֶל in v. 23 to כֹּל in order to match the other C lines of vv. 24-26. The collocation אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם is rare in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 8:30; Jer 51:9; Ps 50:4; and Dan 12:7). The phrase כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם, however, is preceded by the preposition תַּחַת in its other appearances in the Hebrew Bible (i.e., תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם in Gen 7:19; Deut 2:25; 4:19; Job 28:24; 37:3; 41:3; and Dan 9:12). Similarly, אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם should not be changed to אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם since it is only rarely (Ps 8:4) the object of a verb of sight (see Gen 1:1; Exod 20:11; 31:17; Deut 4:26; 11:17; 28:12; 30:19; 31:28; 2 Kgs 19:15; Isa 37:16; Jer 23:24; 32:17; Hos 2:23; Hag 2:6, 21; Neh 9:6; and 2 Chron 2:11). The reading אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם should be retained despite its peculiarity. Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 165) thinks that the prepositional phrase אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם describes Jeremiah standing on the earth and looking to heaven.

See D. Bernh. Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901), 53. Duhm proposes reading וּפָנֹה אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם "and turn to the heavens" for the MT's וָאַבֹּהוּ אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם. He believes that אֶל should have a new verb. The adverbial infinitive פָּנֹה continues the previous finite.

The phrase וְאֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם is the complement of the covert verb √ראה in its own clause. See Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A New Translation with Commentary* (New York: Norton & Company, 2019), 2:870. Alter translates:
"I saw the earth, and, look, welter and waste (cf. reproducing sound play).
the heavens, and their light was gone."

[345] The *Hitpalpel* of √קלל "to curse, be light" is a *hapax* (cf. *Pilpel* √קלל "to shake" in Ezek 21:26). Does this denote the hills moving back and forth (i.e., trembling) or being moved because of their lightness (i.e., tossed)? See *HALOT*, 1104-1105; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 165; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 360. Ehrlich (*Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel*, 4:251) emends הִתְקַלְקָלוּ to הִתְחַלְחָלוּ "they whirl, dance."

Duhm (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 53) proposes adding the particle אֶת to the phrase וְכָל־הַגְּבָעוֹת though this is unnecessary.

Ho! The fertile land became the wilderness (cf. Joel 2:3).[346]

All the cities have been torn down before YHWH.[347]

…Before the burning of his anger.[348]

4.1.2.1 The Contortion

The author uses anacoluthon to grammatically replicate Jeremiah's vision of the land's destruction. The removal of grammatical elements mimics the removal described in the text. The last lines then evidence an expansion to replicate YHWH's increasing wrath.

4.1.2.2 Stylistics

Jeremiah 4:23-26 are connected through the repetition of variously ordered elements (i.e., the *Qal qatal* first common singular of √ראה, the deictic particle הִנֵּה with a cliticised conjunction ו, the preposition אֶל "to, toward" or the lexeme כֹּל "all, each, every" with a cliticised conjunction ו, and in verses 23 and 26 a nominal phrase).[349] The following chart

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[346] Cf. Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:116.

[347] Some Hebrew manuscripts in Jer 4:26 read נִצָּתוּ (cf. Jer 9:9) from √יצת "to burn" instead of MT's נִתָּצוּ from √נתץ "to tear down" which is metathesis. G, using the verb ἐμπυρίζω "to burn," presumably reads נִצָּתוּ from √יצת and a few Greek manuscripts add the lexeme πῦρ "fire." For the textual evidence, see Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:232; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 38-41; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 107; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 168; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 360; and Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 81. McKane (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 107) says that V and S represents the MT's נִתָּצוּ.

[348] See William L. Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," *JBL* 85 (1966): 404-405. Holladay understands the repetition מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ as emphatic.

[349] McKane (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 106) notes that the repetition of רָאִיתִי separates Jer 4:23-26 from its surroundings. Holladay ("The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," 409) notes "the fourfold repetitions of ראיתי and of והנה, and the threefold repetition of וכל" (p. 409). See Ägabo Borges de Sousa, "Jer 4,23-26 als P-orientierter Absehnitt," *ZAW* 105 (1993): 424.

notes these similarities as well as a few differences in the arrangement.[350] These reiterations force the hearer to contemplate their significance.[351] The repetitions connect these verses while the restatement of the preposition מִפְּנֵי "before" (i.e., מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ) climatically concludes this section.[352]

Line	Verse 23	Verse 24	Verse 25	Verse 26
A	רָאִיתִי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ	רָאִיתִי הֶהָרִים	רָאִיתִי	רָאִיתִי
B	וְהִנֵּה־תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ	וְהִנֵּה רֹעֲשִׁים	וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם	וְהִנֵּה הַכַּרְמֶל הַמִּדְבָּר
C	וְאֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם	וְכָל־הַגְּבָעוֹת הִתְקַלָּקָלוּ׃	וְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם נָדָדוּ׃	וְכָל־עָרָיו נִתְּצוּ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה

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[350] For a similar analysis see Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," 404-406. Holladay reads the phrase מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה as a separate line from וְכָל־עָרָיו נִתְּצוּ and separates מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ into another line. Holladay says, "The last two cola stand outside the general scheme of parallelisms. They are obviously the clix of the poem…these last two cola do not enter into the symmetries of the body of the poem" (p. 405). Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 357-358) notes the repetition of רָאִיתִי…וְהִנֵּה in Jer 4:23-26 and מִפְּנֵי in Jer 4:26.

[351] For the suggestion that what is commonly termed parallelism in Hebrew poetry is instead a device of repetition to force the hearer to linger over the content of the words under discussion, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 44-45 and 69 and Robert D. Holmstedt, "Hebrew Poetry and the Appositive Style: Parallelism, *Requiescat in pace*," VT 69 (2019): 617-648.

[352] For a helpful discussion of how to delineate the beginning and closing of a poetic section, see D. Phillip Roberts, *Let Me See Your Form: Seeking Poetic Structure in the Song of Songs* (New York: University of America Press, 2007), 370-386. Roberts's analysis is specific to Songs but still useful for other poetic sections. He sees the following as opening a poetic section at the micro and macro level — vocatives, deictic particles (הנה), demonstrative pronouns, imperatives, jussives, cohortatives, interrogatives, independent personal pronouns, longer cola (see Song 1:7a; 3:6a), phonological features (assonance, alliteration), semantic expressions of beginning (e.g., √קום "to rise" and √פתח "to open"), speaker or addressee change, theme change, style change, repetitive parallelism (Song 4:9a-c; 6:9a-c), and mono-cola (Song 2:8a; 5:2a). He sees the following as closing a poetic section at the micro and macro level — ו-initial final cola (especially when grammatically unnecessary as in Song 6:6d), synonymous parallelism at the close of a strophe, chiastic parallelism (Song 1:6), phonological features (alliteration, end-rhyme), inclusio, semantic features (value statement, attaining goal of section or discourse), refrains (Song 2:16-17; 4:5-6; 6:3; 7:11; 8:14), inclusio (note especially when there is a repetition with an additional "intensifying element"), mono-cola, thematic closure, multi-layered closure (a combination of two or three elements), and possibly longer or shorter cola when compared to the surrounding cola (Song 7:11a, 13e; 8:6f).

Line	Verse 23	Verse 24	Verse 25	Verse 26
D	וְאֵין אוֹרָם׃			מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ׃

Jeremiah sees a vision (cf. רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה in Ezek 37:8; Zech 4:2 and √ראה followed by הִנֵּה in Jer 24:1; Ezek 1:4; 2:9; 8:2, 7, 10; etc.) after YHWH's lament in Jer 4:19-22.[353] The surrounding context of Jer 4 narrates the approaching, cataclysmic destruction of Judah.[354] The use of √ראה in Jer 4:23-26 specifically responds to the use of √ראה by YHWH in Jer 4:21. YHWH wonders how long he must see the enemy standard raised against Judah (עַד־מָתַי אֶרְאֶה־נֵּס) in Jer 4:21. By the time Jeremiah sees a vision in Jer 4:23-26, there is no longer anything visible — no standard, no light, no people, no animals, no cities.[355]

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[353] For the vision language here, see de Sousa, "Jer 4,23-26 als P-orientierter Absehnitt," 424-426.

For Jer 4:19-22 being a lament by YHWH, see J. J. M. Roberts, "The Motif of the Weeping God in Jeremiah and Its Background in the Lament Tradition of the Ancient Near East," *OTE* 5 (1992): 361-374, especially 368-370. Roberts says, "All of Jeremiah 4:19-22 may be understood as spoken by the deity" (p. 368). For the suggestion that the Judahite people or Zion are speaking based on ancient unit delimitations, see Marjo C. A. Korpel, "Who Is Speaking in Jeremiah 4:19-22? The Contribution of Unit Delimitation to an Old Problem," *VT* 59 (2009): 88-98.

[354] For an ecological and environmental reading of this passage, see Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, 105-106; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 169-170; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 362-363. Both Carroll and Lundbom quote Elie Wiesel, "Jeremiah," in *Five Biblical Portraits* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 97-127, especially 126. Wiesel notes that no birds were present when the concentration camps were operational, referencing Jer 4:25. Also, see Hilary Marlow, *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[355] For a defence of the placement of Jer 4:23-28 within the context of Jer 4:5-31 and the larger section of Jer 4:5-6:30, see Katherine Murphy Hayes, *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic* (AcBib 8; Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 69-72.

For the structure of Jer 4:5-31, see William L. Holladay, *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1976), 71-74.

For a defence of these verses as authentic to Jeremiah, see William L. Holladay, "Style, Irony, and Authenticity," *JBL* 81 (1962): 47-48. The apocalyptic nature of these verses causes some to object to their Jeremianic origin; see Volz, *Studien Zum Text Des Jeremia*, 30-31; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 168; Gunther Wanke, *Jeremia 1,1-25,14* (ZB 20; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1995), 64.

The structural repetition in Jer 4:23-26 suggests a verbatim arrangement, a common feature in Jeremiah (e.g., 2:18; 5:4-5; 50:35-38; 51:20-23; etc.). This expectation is thwarted, however. Several clauses are missing grammatical elements. The verb √ראה moves from having an אֶת marked noun phrase accusative complement (Jer 4:23) to the accusative complement missing an אֶת particle (Jer 4:24). The אֶת particle and accusative complement completely disappear in Jer 4:25 and 26. There is no overt subject in the nominal clause וְהִנֵּה־תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (Jer 4:23). There is no overt subject or verb in the clause וְאֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם (Jer 4:23) nor in מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ (Jer 4:26).

There are other grammatical elements missing in these verses. The participle in Jer 4:24 lacks an accompanying pronoun (וְהִנֵּה רֹעֲשִׁים). When a participle is used predicatively in Jeremiah, an overt pronoun usually acts as the subject (e.g., אָנֹכִי מֵבִיא "I am bringing" in Jer 4:6). Regarding the construction in Jer 4:24, the pronoun can appear between הִנֵּה and the participle (e.g., הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי מֵבִיא "Ho! I am bringing…" in Jer 6:19) or be cliticised to הִנֵּה (e.g., הִנְנִי קֹרֵא "Ho! I am calling…" in Jer 1:15). The *kethiv* (וְהִנֵּהוּ עֹשֶׂה) and *qere* (וְהִנֵּה־הוּא עֹשֶׂה) of Jer 18:3 both meaning "Ho! He is making…" illustrate that a predicate participle usually appears with an accompanying pronoun in Jeremiah — either an overt subject pronoun or a pronoun cliticised to הִנֵּה.

The deictic particle הִנֵּה appears in a clause with a participle without a pronoun once elsewhere in Jeremiah (10:22). The clause הִנֵּה בָאָה in Jer 10:22 may have an impersonal subject (i.e., Ho! It is coming…) or the subject (i.e., שְׁמוּעָה "news, report") may be phonologically null but covertly present through ellipsis from the previous line ("Ho! [A report] comes."). A pronoun usually accompanies the predicative participle in Jeremiah.

While Hebrew poetry generally has fewer definite accusative complement markers, has the subject or verb of a sentence covertly present though phonologically null through

ellipsis, elides pronouns and prepositions, etc., the amount of missing elements suggests a level of planning beyond common practice according to the dynamics of Hebrew poetry.[356]

The lexeme עוֹף "bird" usually pairs with the lexeme חַיָּה "animal, beast" (e.g., Gen 1:30 and 1 Sam 17:46) or בְּהֵמָה "beast" in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Deut 28:26; Jer 7:33; 9:9; 12:4; 15:3; Ezek 29:5; Hos 2:20; 4:3; and Zeph 1:3). Every time the collocation עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם appears in Jeremiah it is paired with בְּהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ, except in Jer 4:25.[357] The expected pair of עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם, namely בְּהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ, has vanished with everything else.[358] Instead of inhabiting the ruins of a city (Jer 49:33; 51:37; cf. Isa 13:21-22; 34:11-15; and Zeph 2:14-15) or consuming the remains of the dead (Jer 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; cf. Isa 18:6), the birds disappear from heaven as humankind and animals disappear from the earth. This is a reversal of the fifth and sixth days in Gen 1. Birds will not inhabit the ruins of Judah but will flee from YHWH's destruction (Jer 4:25; cf. Jer 9:9).[359]

The cumulative grammatical minuses in a text anticipating verbatim repetition is striking. This does not follow the stylistics of Jeremiah. The author orchestrates this text in contradiction to other collocations or grammatical norms in the book to highlight YHWH's removal of Judah.

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[356] For these aspects of Hebrew poetry, see David Noel Freedman, "Another Look at Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Elaine R. Follis (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 11-28; Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986), 303-306; and Tod Linafelt, *The Hebrew Bible as Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 58.

[357] See Calvin, *Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, 1:238. Calvin says, "By stating a part of the whole, the Prophet, by mentioning birds, includes all earthly animals: he says then, that the earth was emptied of its inhabitants."

[358] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 165-166) notes that one probably expects beasts to accompany birds here.

[359] Holladay ("Style, Irony, and Authenticity," 48) says that the phrase עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם appears with the verb √נדד "to flee" only in Jer 4:25 and 9:9 (cf. עוֹף appears with the verb √נדד in Isa 16:2).

There are a few rare elements in these verses. The phrase תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ in Jer 4:23 appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in Gen 1:2. The collocation אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם in Jer 4:23 appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in 1 Kgs 8:30; Jer 51:9; Ps 50:4; and Dan 12:7. The *Hitpalpel* of √קלל "to curse, be light" is a *hapax*. A *Hitpalpel* verbal form only appears once elsewhere in Jeremiah (*Hitpalpel* of √ערר "to strip" in Jer 51:58).

4.1.2.3 Textual Criticism

G represents MT's תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ in Jer 4:23 with a single word οὐθέν "no one."[360] The implications of G's reading in Jer 4:23 is debated. α′, σ′, and θ′ seem to think that οὐθέν only translates בֹּהוּ because they add κενὴ καί "empty and" according to Origen (cf. the MT).[361] Katherine Hayes believes that οὐθέν translates תֹּהוּ instead of בֹּהוּ.[362] McKane is uncertain that G has a different *Vorlage* than the MT and says "οὐθέν might be a compact rendering of תהו ובהו (so Giesebrect)…"[363] McKane is following D. Fredrich Gisebrecht and Brevard

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[360] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:232; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 106-107; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 168; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 360; and Allen, *Jeremiah*, 69.

[361] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 106.

[362] See Katherine M. Hayes, "Jeremiah IV 23: *Tōhû* without *Bōhû*," *VT* 47 (1997): 247-249. Hayes believes that οὐθέν translates תֹּהוּ since בֹּהוּ never appears alone in the Hebrew Bible but always with תֹּהוּ (i.e., Gen 1:2 and Isa 34:11). Also, θ′ uses οὐθέν to translate תֹּהוּ in Job 26:7. Finally, תֹּהוּ represents a dry, desert chaos similar to the J account of creation (Gen 2:5) instead of a "watery chaos" as in P's account (Gen 1:2). Hayes concludes that the MT of Jer 4:23 originally read תֹּהוּ singularly while וָבֹהוּ is a later addition to draw this text closer to the phraseology of Gen 1:2.

While I agree that תֹּהוּ can describe a wilderness setting (Deut 32:10; Isa 34:11; etc.), I am uncertain that the distinction between J and P's creation account is helpful when understanding the presence or absence of תהו ובהו in Jer 4:23. The phrase תהו ובהו only appears in Gen 1:2 in respect to creation. I do not think Gen 2:5 is significant for a discussion of Jer 4:23 since neither תֹּהוּ nor בֹּהוּ appear there. It is ironic that Hayes, in trying to dismiss בֹּהוּ from Jer 4:23 because it does not appear without תֹּהוּ elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, appeals to Gen 2:5, a verse in which neither appears. If other occurrences of תֹּהוּ in the Hebrew Bible are taken into account, then תֹּהוּ can equally describe dry (Deut 32:10; Isa 34:11) or wet (Gen 1:2) conditions of chaos.

[363] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 107.

Childs.[364] I suggest that G has the same Hebrew *Vorlage* as the MT. G uses οὐθέν to translate the phrase תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ mimicking the rhetoric in its Hebrew *Vorlage* by representing as few grammatical elements as possible (see below).

G has a verb (ἀφανίζω "to cause to disappear, ruin, destroy") at the end of Jer 4:26 which the MT lacks.[365] Holladay suggests restoring the *Nifal* נָשַׁמּוּ from √שׁמם "to destroy."[366] David Freedman and Lundbom suggest restoring סָפוּ from √סוף "to come to an end."[367] A scribe accidentally reduced the phrase סָפוּ אַפּוֹ to אַפּוֹ because of the similar endings. This explanation, however, would include a confusion of the consonants ס and א which is unlikely. The verb √סוף only appears in Jer 8:13 in Jeremiah making this reconstructed appearance of

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[364] See D. Fredrich Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1907), 28; Brevard S. Childs, "The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition," *JBL* 78 (1959): 189 note 9. Also, see Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 228. He says, "οὐθέν] is most likely a rendering of תהו ובהו or at least of one of these words. Aq. Symm. and Theod. add κενὴ καὶ (with the asterisk) before οὐθέν, thus indicating that the translator has left something in the Hebrew text untranslated. However, תהו is translated both into οὐθέν (1 Sam 12:21; Isa 40:17; 40:23 (οὐδέν); Job 26:7 (οὐδέν)) and into κενόν (Isa 45:18). Moreover, תהו ובהו appears to be a quotation from Gen. 1:2, where it is translated into ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, a rendering which obviously was not appropriate for the present context."

[365] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:232 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 40-41.

[366] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 143 and 166) thinks the restoration is likely since it creates a close parallel between the last two lines. It would read:
C וְכָל־עָרָיו נִתְּצוּ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה "All the cities have been torn down before YHWH."
D מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ נָשַׁמּוּ "[All the cities] are destroyed before his burning anger."
Holladay notes that G uses ἀφανίζω to translate √שׁמם about 29 times in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Jer 12:11 and 50:45); see T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 105-106. The form נָשַׁמּוּ appears contextually in Jer 4:9 as well as the lexeme שְׁמָמָה "destruction." The resulting chiasmus and the importance of the root √שׁמם convinces Holladay that נָשַׁמּוּ should appear in Jer 4:26.

[367] See David Noel Freedman and Jack R. Lundbom, "Haplography in Jeremiah 1-20," *ErIsr* 26 (1999): 35*.

the verb in this verse obtrusive. T, S, and V do not evidence a verb at the end of Jer 4:26.[368] The appearance of שְׁמָמָה at the beginning of Jer 4:27 may have influenced the translator of G. An overt verb is unnecessary as √נתץ "to tear down" is phonologically null but present through ellipsis from the last line. I suggest that the translator of G notices the expansion at the end of v. 26 in his *Vorlage* and subsequently adds an overt verb to the last line to further lengthen it (see below).

4.1.2.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Contortion

4.1.2.4.1 Dissolving Verbatim Repetition in Jeremiah 4:23-26

Lundbom says that "verbatim repetitions" are characteristic of Jeremianic poetry.[369] He includes Jer 4:23-26 with Jer 5:4-5, 15, 17; 23:21; 50:35-38; and 51:20-23. To Lundbom's examples could be added Jer 2:18; 9:22; 14:8-9, 18; and 17:5-8. There is obviously repetition in Jer 4:23-26 but not to the extent of other repetitions in the book. Jeremiah 4:23-26, however, should be read against the background of verbatim repetition in the book, not with it.[370]

Verbatim repetition appears in Jer 2:18.[371]

וְעַתָּה מַה־לָּךְ לְדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לִשְׁתּוֹת מֵי שִׁחוֹר

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[368] See Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 404; Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 61; and Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 26-27.

[369] Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36* (AB 21; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 142.

[370] Elijah's twice reported answer to YHWH's question (1 Kgs 19) illustrates verbatim repetition *par excellence*. See Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 543-544. Rendsburg says, "The prophet's response appears verbatim in vv.10, 14 (letter for letter, vowel for vowel, *ṭa'am* for *ṭa'am*), over the course of twenty-four words!"

[371] The *te'amim* in the lines of this verse are identical with the exception of the differences expected based of the location of a word in the verse (i.e., *mûnāḥ* must appear before *'atnāḥ* and *mērkā'* must appear before *sillûq*) and the unrepeated וְעַתָּה. See Futato, *Basics of Hebrew Accents*, 61-63 and Sung Jin Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents: Divisions and Exegetical Roles beyond Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 53-54 and 56.

וּמַה־לְּךָ֙ לְדֶ֣רֶךְ אַשּׁ֔וּר לִשְׁתּ֖וֹת מֵ֣י נָהָ֑ר׃

“Now, what are you doing on the road to Egypt — to drink the waters of the Nile?

What are you doing on the road to Assyria — to drink the waters of the Euphrates?”

These lines are identical except for a few necessary lexical changes (i.e., מִצְרַיִם “Egypt” to אַשּׁוּר “Assyria” and שִׁחוֹר “Shihor/Nile” to נָהָר “The River/Euphrates”) as well as the absence of the particle עַתָּה “now” at the beginning of the second line.[372] Judah is trying to find sustenance in foreign allies instead of in YHWH (cf. Jer 2:13 and 36).

Structural repetition appears in Jer 9:22.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

אַל־יִתְהַלֵּל חָכָם בְּחָכְמָתוֹ

וְאַל־יִתְהַלֵּל הַגִּבּוֹר בִּגְבוּרָתוֹ

אַל־יִתְהַלֵּל עָשִׁיר בְּעָשְׁרוֹ׃

Thus YHWH says,

“Do not let a wise one boast in his wisdom.

Do not let the mighty one boast in his might.

Do not let a rich one boast in his wealth.”

Each line begins with a negated (אַל “no, not”) *Hitpael* jussive third masculine singular of √הלל “to praise, boast.” An adjective acting as a substantive is followed by a ב prepositional phrase with its complement being a cognate noun of the previous adjective.

In these examples, there is verbatim repetition or repetition of every structural element in the line in identical order. In contrast, the author of Jer 4:23-26 dissolves grammatical elements and structural repetition to design a contextual effect. The removal and

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[372] It is significant that the same spelling לִשְׁתּוֹת appears in both occurrences of this form in Jer 2:18. There are two different spellings of this form in Exod 7:24 (i.e., לִשְׁתּוֹת and לִשְׁתֹּת).

deconstruction of Judah before YHWH's anger in the prophet's vision is mirrored in the disappearance and deconstruction of expected grammatical elements within the text. Additionally, the expunging of grammatical elements portrays the shock of the speaker and his difficulty to process the vision.[373]

4.1.2.4.2 Disappearing Accusative Complement of √ראה

Lundbom notes that the repetition of רָאִיתִי…וְהִנֵּה is anaphora.[374] The verb √ראה usually takes an object specifying the thing seen, even if it is covert (e.g., Gen 19:1 and Exod 16:15).[375] The accusative complement of √ראה is often an אֶת marked noun phrase (e.g., Gen 24:64; Exod 3:3, 7; Judg 16:24; 1 Sam 6:13; Hos 5:13; and Jonah 3:5). Anacoluthon becomes apparent by comparing the A lines across Jer 4:23-26.[376] Verse 23 has an אֶת marked noun phrase as its accusative complement (i.e., אֶת־הָאָרֶץ). Verse 24 loses the particle אֶת but still has

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[373] See Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 544-545 and Block, "Text and Emotion: A Study in the 'Corruptions' in Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision," 427-433.

[374] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 358.

[375] See Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (SubBi 27; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2008), §157d and *CDCH*, 407.

[376] For a different view, see Victor Eppstein, "The Day of Yahweh in Jeremiah 4 23-26," *JBL* 87 (1968): 93-97, especially 95-96. Eppstein believes that v. 24 is the only "complete" verse. Eppstein states that v. 26 is missing a noun as a complement for √ראה, so he proposes adding אֶת־הָאָרֶץ from v. 23 to fill this void. He also proposes moving וְאֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם (or אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם or possibly הַשָּׁמַיִם) from v. 23 to be the complement of √ראה in v. 25. The second line in the MT of v. 25 (אֵין הָאָדָם) was a misreading of אֵין אֹרֶם. Regarding Jer 4:23 Eppstein says, "Stylistically this fourth vision, vs. 23, is clumsy and quite different in form from the other three visions…Logically vs. 23 is unrelated to the context…(p. 96)." Thus, Jer 4:23 is the last part of Jer 4:23-26 to be incorporated into this text and is the work of a later redactor using the elements already present in vv. 24-26. The text is still growing, according to Eppstein since G has only οὐθέν instead of MT's תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ. In Eppstein's words, "Context, form, even syntax, could be disregarded (p. 96)." The lines get progressively less complete, however, as he notes, as one moves through Jer 4:23-26 with Jer 4:23a being the fullest of these lines. The diminishing lines produce a contextual effect.

an accusative complement (i.e., הֶהָרִים).[377] Verses 25 and 26 completely lose the particle אֶת and the accusative complement.[378]

When רָאִיתִי first appears without an overt accusative complement in Jer 4:25, the next line reads וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם.[379] Jeremiah looks and see nothing syntactically (i.e., there is no accusative complement of √ראה) or physically (i.e., there is no human). The A lines of Jer 4:23-26 get progressively shorter and evidence anacoluthon.[380]

4.1.2.4.3 Missing Subject in Nominal Phrase in Jeremiah 4:23B

The next lines of each verse also lack grammatical elements. In Jer 4:23B, the phrase הָאָרֶץ is the subject covertly present but phonologically null with תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ being the complement. The copular phrase וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ "The earth was desolation and nothingness" appearing in Gen 1:2 suggests that the phrase הָאָרֶץ is covertly present through ellipsis in Jer 4:23. The fact that the collocation תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ only appears in Gen 1:2 and Jer 4:23

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[377] Duhm (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 53) proposes adding the particle אֶת (i.e., אֶת־הֶהָרִים).

[378] Duhm (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 54) proposes adding an object for רָאִיתִי in Jer 4:25, perhaps אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה, which might be missing because of הָאָדָם in the next line. In Jer 4:26, Duhm (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 54) proposes reading רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַכַּרְמֶל וְהִנֵּה הַמִּדְבָּר so that רָאִיתִי has an overt object.

Cornill (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 53-54) mentions that רָאִיתִי in Jer 4:25 lacks an object. Cornill mentions Duhm's suggestion of אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה as a potential object and also mentions אֶת־הַנָּוֶה "the pasture land" as another possibility mentioned by Erbt. Cornill concludes, however, that the phrase רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה is illustrative of the context. Jeremiah is no longer looking for a specific object but anything which provides hope.

[379] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 165. Regarding Jer 4:25 Holladay says, "Now, as we have noted, the diction becomes more abrupt: 'I looked' lacks a complement. 'I looked, to see' what?—no one at all." Holladay notes, "Still the abruptness of lack of complement after 'I looked'…" appears in Jer 4:26.

[380] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 164) suggests that the particle אֶת might appear only in Jer 4:23 in order for this line to reach another syllable making אֶת־הָאָרֶץ in v. 23 parallel to הֶהָרִים in v. 24. Elsewhere Holladay ("The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," 405) says, "Grammatically analyzed, the passage offers some noteworthy symmetries. Each of the four lines begins, obviously, with ראיתי, and continues with והנה; but each of the first two occurrences of ראיתי has an accompanying accusative, while there is none with the last two."

(cf. Isa 34:11) strengthens this possibility. This is a null copula in Jer 4:23 with a phonologically null subject.

4.1.2.4.4 The Predicative Participle Lacking a Subject Pronoun in Jeremiah 4:24

A *Qal* participle of √רעשׁ "to shake, quake" appears without an accompanying pronoun in Jer 4:24. A pronoun almost always accompanies a predicative participle acting as its subject in Jeremiah (see above). The expected word order for such a phrase should be subject, copula, and participle.[381] The copular phrase may be either overt or covert with the participle functioning as the complement of the copula. In Jer 4:24, the masculine plural participle has a covert subject (הֶהָרִים) which is phonologically null but present through ellipsis from the previous line.[382]

4.1.2.4.5 B Lines in Jeremiah 4:25 and 26

The other B lines in Jer 4:25 and 26 are nominal clauses. The phrase וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם in Jer 4:25 is similar to other phrases in Jeremiah (e.g., 4:7, 29; 26:9; 32:43; 33:10, 12; 34:22; 44:22; 46:19; 48:9; 49:18; 51:29, and 37). וְהִנֵּה הַכַּרְמֶל הַמִּדְבָּר in Jer 4:26 is either a nominal phrase ("Ho! The fertile land became the wilderness") or a noun with its appositive ("Ho! The fertile land, the wilderness"). If this is an appositional phrase, then the verb √ראה is covertly present through ellipsis in these lines (i.e., "Ho! I saw the fertile land, the

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[381] See Holmstedt, Cook, and Marshall, *Qoheleth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 11. Also, see Jan Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew: A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose* (Jerusalem: Simon Ltd, 2012), 239-47. Joosten notes that the subject-participle order "is very often, though not always, introduced by הנה" when referring to the imminent future (241).

[382] Hayes (*"The Earth Mourns,"* 65) and Alter (*The Hebrew Bible*, 2:870) translates as if a pronoun is present.

wilderness").[383] It seems that הַכַּרְמֶל הַמִּדְבָּר in Jer 4:26 is a nominal phrase (cf. Isa 32:15 וְהָיָה מִדְבָּר לַכַּרְמֶל "the wilderness will become a fertile land"). The B lines in Jer 4:23-26 progress from תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ in Jer 4:23 to הַמִּדְבָּר in Jer 4:26.[384]

The lexemes כַּרְמֶל "fertile land" and מִדְבָּר are performative in reversing Jer 2:6-7.[385] YHWH brought his people through the מִדְבָּר (Jer 2:6), a place where no one passed through and no man dwelt (לֹא־עָבַר בָּהּ אִישׁ וְלֹא־יָשַׁב אָדָם שָׁם), into the fertile land (אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכַּרְמֶל in Jer 2:7). Now, Jeremiah sees the fertile land (כַּרְמֶל) transformed into a מִדְבָּר in Jer 4:26 where אֵין הָאָדָם (Jer 4:25). The order of מִדְבָּר preceding כַּרְמֶל in Jer 2:6-7 is reversed with כַּרְמֶל proceeding מִדְבָּר in Jer 4:26 to further demonstrate the reversal (cf. Isa 32:15 and 35:1-7).[386]

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[383] For the difficulty of determining whether this is a case of apposition or a nominal phrase, see Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §131a. They say, "As a rule, two nouns which can be the subject and predicate of a nominal clause can become the first noun (N_1) and the noun in apposition (N_2)."

[384] The lexemes מִדְבָּר and תֹּהוּ are juxtaposed in Deut 32:10; see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 165 and Allen, *Jeremiah*, 69.

[385] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 166) says, "Quite strikingly, two nouns both carrying the article: 'the garden-land' has now become 'the desert'…Both nouns carried the article in 2:6–7, and the presence of the articles in the present passage ensures that the specific historical desert experience by the Israelites, the specific garden-land into which they entered in Canaan, are what is understood."

[386] The lexeme כַּרְמֶל recalls the lush geographical location הַכַּרְמֶל "Carmel" (e.g., Isa 35:2). Carmel is often paired with other beautiful locations (Isa 33:9; 35:2; Jer 50:19; Nah 1:4; and Amos 1:2) or is part of a description of luxurious beauty (Song 7:6). See Calvin, *Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, 1:238-239. Calvin believes the location Carmel is under discussion in Jer 4:26.

For the possibility that a lexeme, though absent, can be invoked by the wording of a text, see Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 98-126, especially 102-113.

4.1.2.4.6 C Line: Disappearing Verb in Jeremiah 4:23

The C line in Jer 4:23 lacks a verb. The verb √ראה is phonologically null but covertly present through ellipsis from line A.[387] Additionally, line C in Jer 4:23 is unique as it is the only C line in Jer 4:23-26 which does not begin with the lexeme כֹּל and a cliticised conjunction ו followed by a *maqqef*. The nonconformity of this line to the following context regarding an overt verb in the clause and its beginning as וְאֶל־ instead of as וְכָל־ highlights this clause. In addition to being contextually marked, the collocation אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם only appears four other times in the Hebrew Bible besides Jer 4:23.

The author utilises various means to highlight this clause. The retrospectively expected verb with the אֶל preposition phrase in Jer 4:23 illustrates the disappearing verbal element of this clause.[388] The hearer only recognises this disappearance when thinking back through Jer 4:23-26. With the accusative complement of √ראה, the hearer discovers the disappearing accusative complement by moving through the text. With the missing verb in the C line of Jer 4:23, the hearer retrospectively discovers the missing element at the conclusion of the section.

4.1.2.4.7 Antecedent of עָרָיו

Regarding reading backwards, what is the antecedent of the third masculine singular clitic pronoun on עִיר "city" in Jer 4:26?[389] The closest referent is מִדְבָּר. The מִדְבָּר and its cities

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[387] Ehrlich (*Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel*, 4:250) says that √ראה takes an אֶל prepositional phrase complement only in Isa 17:7. Since the meaning in Isa 17:7 is inappropriate to this context, he emends the MT's וְאֶל to וְאֶת.

[388] On the importance of retrospective patterning when reading poetry in general and Biblical Hebrew poetry in particular, see Seow, "Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job," 74-76; Couey, *Reading the Poetry of First Isaiah*, 68-69, 93, 172, and 182-185; and Couey, "Poetry, Language, and Statecraft in Isaiah 18," 177.

[389] Duhm (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 54) removes this problem by reading כָּל־הֶעָרִים.

are being destroyed (cf. Isa 42:11 and Jer 22:6). The wilderness, already a place with few inhabitants (2 Chron 8:4 and 26:10), will be emptied and destroyed. The desert strongholds and fortresses, the last to succumb to invasion, will fall (e.g., Jer 34:7; cf. Masada). The fertile land became a wilderness. The wilderness subsequently becomes a more desolate wasteland. Not even the recesses of the מִדְבָּר provide a hiding place (cf. Rev 12:6).

4.1.2.4.8 Expansion in C line of Jeremiah 4:26

In the midst of the disappearances in this section, there is an expansion at the end of Jer 4:26. The C line which ends with a verb in Jer 4:24 and 25 seems set to end identically in Jer 4:26. A prepositional phrase is added to the verb in Jer 4:26, however.[390] After this unexpected inclusion, an additional line follows which is a reformulation of the prepositional phrase at the end of the last line. The two prepositional phrases are juxtaposed across the C and D lines. The second phrase is longer than the first and anaphora (i.e., מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה and מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ).[391] This is a two-fold expansion. The C line expands through a prepositional phrase. This same prepositional phrase is then repeated and expanded into the D line. The source of the desolation has been withheld throughout most of Jer 4:23-26, but it appears twice at the

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[390] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 166) says, "The verb נִתְּצוּ 'lie demolished' might well be expected to close the poem: the second colon of v 24 offered only the single verb הִתְקַלְקָלוּ for predicate, and the second colon of v 25 the single verb נָדָדוּ; but when the poem is at its tightest and most extreme expression, it suddenly opens out again, not in a coda or afterthought, as M gives it ('before Yahweh, before his hot anger'), but in a chiastic structure that includes a third colon with its own verb…" He reads a *Nifal* of √שׁמם (i.e., נָשַׁמּוּ; cf. Jer 4:9) in the last line following G. See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 143 and Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 54. The resulting chiasmus is below.

A *Nifal qatal* third common plural (נִתְּצוּ)
  B מִפְּנֵי prepositional phrase
  B' מִפְּנֵי prepositional phrase
A' *Nifal qatal* third common plural (נָשַׁמּוּ)

[391] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 358.

end.[392] The resulting four lines in Jer 4:26 connect with the four lines in Jer 4:23 and delineate these verses.

The repetition and expansion of a prepositional phrase in Jer 4:26 contrasts with the disappearing textual elements previously in this section. Holladay says there is "a steady diminution in the length of verses" in Jer 4:23-26.[393] The author removes grammatical elements mimicking the message of the vision. This decline in verbiage is reversed in the last lines of Jer 4:26, however, when YHWH's anger is introduced. The anger of YHWH boils and increases while the earth diminishes under his burning anger. YHWH's wrath expands to cover the land on account of Judah's sin.[394]

4.1.2.4.9 Summary of Vanishing Grammatical Elements in Jeremiah 4:23-26

The verses of Jer 4:23-26 get progressively shorter with the exception of the last two lines. There are several nominal clauses (i.e., they lack an overt verb) — וְאֵין אוֹרָם in Jer 4:23, וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם in Jer 4:25, and וְהִנֵּה הַכַּרְמֶל הַמִּדְבָּר in Jer 4:26. There are several expected grammatical elements missing in each verse. In Jer 4:23, the noun phrase הָאָרֶץ is covertly present in the B line and the verb √ראה is covertly present in the C line. In Jer 4:24, the

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[392] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 166) says, "Now, suddenly, one understands the agent of the whole array of destruction we have glimpsed: it is the word of Yahweh in חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ 'his hot anger' (for the phrase see v 8). As Yahweh was the only agent for creation, so now he is the only agent of destruction. It is his righteous wrath, elicited by the covenantal disobedience of his people, that has brought on this smashing of creation." Also, Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," 405.

[393] Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," 405. Holladay additionally says, "We must believe the diminution here to be deliberate." What the diminution means specifically, however, is not addressed by Holladay. Also, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 358.

[394] For an enemy desolating a land as that it becomes a desert, see Josephus's description of Simon destroying Idumea (*J.W.* 4.9.7) and Rome destroying Jerusalem (*J.W.* 6.1.1 and 7.1.1) in J. Thackeray, *Josephus With An English Translation: The Jewish War, Books IV-VII* (Loeb Classics, London: William Heinemann, 1928), 158-61, 378-381, and 504-505.

accusative complement of √ראה (i.e., הֶהָרִים) is missing the particle אֶת, and הֶהָרִים is phonologically null in the B line. In Jer 4:25 and 26, the verb √ראה is completely missing an accusative complement, which is usually an אֶת marked noun phrase. The phrase עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם in Jer 4:25 lacks its expected accompanying phrase בְּהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ. In Jer 4:26, the verb √נתץ is covertly present but phonologically null in the concluding phrase מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ. The author removes elements in Jer 4:23-26 at the level of the phrase, clause, and sentence to mould a contextual effect which substantiates the textual message. Jeremiah sees nothing. Judah's wickedness reduces them to non-existence.

Reversing this poetic movement, the last two lines of Jer 4:26 exhibit expansion at two different levels. There is an expansion of the C line when compared to Jer 4:24 and 25 which begins with a כֹּל noun phrase and ends with a verb. In Jer 4:26, the prepositional phrase מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה is added to increase the length of the C line. After lengthening this line, the preposition מִפְּנֵי reappears and produces an expanded, similar line to close the text — מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ. While Judah is vanishing, YHWH's wrath is multiplying.

4.1.2.4.10 G's Reduction of MT's Compound Phrase in Jeremiah 4:23

G's shorter text in Jer 4:23 and longer text in Jer 4:26 might be a literary, not a text critical, issue. Regarding Job, Noegel illustrates that the translators of G, among other witnesses, often understand puns in their Hebrew *Vorlage* and replicate them. The resulting translation, Noegel argues, may be due to a desire to replicate a pun or rhetorical device

present in their *Vorlage*, not to a divergent *Vorlage*.[395] Noegel further suggests that some supposed textual problems might actually be a case of a version trying to mimic the puns or rhetorical devices in their *Vorlage*.[396]

I suggest that the seeming variations in G of Jer 4:23 and Jer 4:26 compared to the MT are cases of the translator understanding his Hebrew *Vorlage* and replicating it. The possibility that οὐθέν represents an identical *Vorlage* to the MT is intriguing since all other witnesses of Jer 4:23 (i.e., S, T, V, α′, σ′, and θ′) seem to have the phrase תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ in their *Vorlage*.[397]

The lexeme בֹּהוּ only appears with תֹּהוּ in the Hebrew Bible. α′, σ′, and θ′ seem to understand the lexeme οὐθέν in G as translating בֹּהוּ with וָ תֹּהוּ in the MT left unrepresented. They, therefore, add κενὴ καί. It is highly unlikely that G had only בֹּהוּ in its *Vorlage*. Subsequently, Hayes believes that οὐθέν has a *Vorlage* of only תֹּהוּ.[398] The uncertainty regarding G's *Vorlage* makes it just as possible that G has the phrase תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ in its *Vorlage*.

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[395] See Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in Job*, 140-143. Noegel mentions that T, V, S, and G all represent puns at points in their translations. Noegel says, "The versions demonstrate an awareness of and attempt to render the polysemous passages of the Hebrew text, suggesting the need for a fresh examination of the LXX. Typically, in order to explain instances of textual variance among the versions, especially the LXX, a different *Vorlage* has been posited. The evidence above suggests that in some cases the variance may be due to the translators' desire to preserve the sacred word by rendering it fully, that is, by capturing its polysemy" (p. 142). Also, see Scott B. Noegel, "Wordplay and Translation Technique in the Septuagint of Job," *AuOr* 14 (1995): 33-44.

[396] See Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in Job*, 143. Noegel says, "While the above does not imply that all problems of variance between the versions and the Masoretic Text can be explained in this way, it does suggest that an awareness of polysemy in the Hebrew text might shed light on a few textual problems."

[397] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 107.

[398] See Hayes, "Jeremiah IV 23: Tōhû without Bōhû," 247-249.

The use of a single lexeme to translate a compound phrase by the translator of G may be a deliberate choice in this text. The G translator represents the Hebrew phrase more concisely to improve the diminishing rhetoric in his *Vorlage*.

The translation of Isa 40:17 in G might demonstrate the textual situation in Jer 4:23. MT Isaiah 40:17 reads: כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם כְּאַיִן נֶגְדּוֹ מֵאֶפֶס וָתֹהוּ נֶחְשְׁבוּ־לוֹ "All the nations are like nothing before him, they are considered by him as less than nothing and empty." G renders: καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὡς οὐδέν εἰσι καὶ εἰς οὐθὲν ἐλογίσθησαν "And all the nations are as nothing, and they have been accounted as nothing."[399] G uses one lexeme (οὐθείς) to translate the compound Hebrew phrase conveying the idea of nothingness (מֵאֶפֶס וָתֹהוּ) in Isa 40:17.[400] The same lexeme οὐθείς might serve the same purpose in a similar situation in Jer 4:23.

If the use of οὐθείς is analogous in these texts, then the reading in G (i.e., οὐθὲν) in Jer 4:23 parallels the readings of α′, σ′, and θ′ (i.e., κενὴ καὶ οὐθέν) even though G is not as full. The translator of G constructs a more succinct rendering of תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ. The G translator realised the diminshining rhetoric in his Hebrew *Vorlage* of Jer 4:23-26 and trimmed this

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[399] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:174. For the English translation, see Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 854.

The Targum of Isaiah uses two words to translate the Hebrew phrase מֵאֶפֶס וָתֹהוּ in Isa 40:17. See Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 3:80; J. F. Stenning, ed., *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), 132; and Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 11 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987), 78.

[400] For this example of the Greek using one lexeme to translate more than one Hebrew lexeme and other examples in the Greek translation of Isaiah, see Mirjam van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of Its Pluses and Minuses* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 188-190.

compound Hebrew phrase to a single lexeme to mimic as well as improve the Hebrew style.[401]

4.1.2.4.11 G's Additional Verb in Jeremiah 4:26

G has a verb in the last line of Jer 4:26 which is lacking in the MT. This leads some to suggest that G's Hebrew *Vorlage* is מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ נָשַׁמּוּ or something similar.[402] In the MT, the verb √נתץ is phonologically null though covertly present through ellipsis from the last verse. While it is possible that the verb in the last line of Jer 4:26 has accidentally dropped from the MT, there is another possibility.

G's additional overt verb in Jer 4:26 may again illustrate the translator's keen awareness of the rhetoric of his *Vorlage*. The MT expands the C line of Jer 4:26 and repeats the expansion with a seemingly unnecessary D line. Understanding the expansion in his *Vorlage*, the translator of G realises that the last line could be further expanded by the addition of an overt verb. This verb, therefore, may not have been part of his *Vorlage* which had a covert verb but an improvement on his *Vorlage*. If so, then the translator of G understands both the diminishing rhetoric in his *Vorlage* in most of Jer 4:23-26 and uses it to further improve his rendering of Jer 4:23. He likewise understands the expanding rhetoric at the conclusion of Jer 4:26 and improves his *Vorlage* with an overt verb. It is then possible that the translator of G may not simply understand the various rhetorical devices of Jer 4:23-26 but creatively replicates them.[403]

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[401] Alternatively, perhaps G's *Vorlage* had only בֹּהוּ as α′, σ′, and θ′ asumme, which implies תֹּהוּ since it never appears alone. In this case, G is exactly reproducing what is in his *Vorlage*. Perhaps, תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ is in his *Vorlage* and he simply translates it as hendiadys.

[402] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 143 and 166.

[403] For the nature of G Jeremiah and its relationship to its *Vorlage*, see Miika Tucker, "The Septuagint of Jeremiah: A Study in Translation Technique and Recensions" (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2020).

4.1.2.4.12 Jeremiah 4:23-26 Reversing Genesis 1

The anacoluthon in Jer 4:23-26 produces a contextual effect.[404] It echoes Gen 1 and reverses it. The repetition of the verb √ראה in Jer 4:23-26 recalls the seven times that God looks and sees that his creation is good in Gen 1 (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31). The climatic collocation in Gen 1:31 (i.e., וַיַּ֣רְא…וְהִנֵּה־טוֹב מְאֹד "He saw…Ho! It was exceedingly good") is similar to רָאִ֣יתִי…וְהִנֵּה in Jer 4:23-26. The order of Jeremiah's vision in Jer 4:23 (i.e., הָאָ֔רֶץ and הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם) reverses the lexical order of Gen 1:1 (i.e., הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם and הָאָֽרֶץ).[405] This reordering and reversal demonstrates the unhinging of the created order. The phraseology תֹּ֥הוּ וָבֹ֑הוּ only appears in Gen 1:2 and Jer 4:23 in the Hebrew Bible. Lundbom believes that the use of the singular אוֹר "light" in Jer 4:23 recalls God's original creation of the light in Gen 1:3 (cf. Gen 1:17).[406] The phrase אֵ֥ין הָאָדָ֖ם in Jer 4:25 is often connected to וְאָדָ֣ם אַ֔יִן לַעֲבֹ֖ד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָ֑ה "there was no human to work the ground" in Gen 2:5.[407] Jeremiah's vision marks the realisation of Lot's daughters' fear that no person remains besides them (וְאִישׁ אֵ֥ין בָּאָ֖רֶץ in Gen 19:31).[408] It has not been noted that the lexemes are reversed in Jer 4:25 (i.e., אַ֔יִן and אָדָ֖ם) compared to Gen 2:5 (i.e., אָדָ֖ם and אַ֔יִן), again reiterating that this is an undoing of the created order. There are additional lexical parallels between Jer 4:23-26 and Gen 1 besides תֹּ֥הוּ וָבֹ֑הוּ in Gen 1:2 and Jer 4:23 and אוֹר in Gen 1:3 and Jer 4:23, such as שָׁמַ֖יִם in Gen 1:8 and Jer 4:23,

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[404] For anacoluthon in Naomi's words illustrating that she does not believe YHWH can help her daughters-in-law, see Schipper, "The Syntax and Rhetoric of Ruth 1:9a," 642-645.

[405] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 359.

[406] Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," 406 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 360.

[407] Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," 406 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 360.

[408] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 165.

אֶרֶץ in Gen 1:10 and Jer 4:23, עוֹף in Gen 1:20 and Jer 4:25, and אָדָם in Gen 1:26 and Jer 4:25.[409] The land before creation or after de-creation is a desert place with no vegetation in Gen 2:5 and Jer 4:26.[410] Michael Fishbane says, "The movement in Gen. i 1-10 from the void to the lights to heaven and the earth, with its prominent features of mountains and hills, is here reversed. This sequence is further maintained when man and beast and their essential habitats —the tilled land, the steppe, and the cities—are blasted away at the time of Wrath (cf. Gen. i 11-27)."[411] Jeremiah 4:23-26 envisions the elimination of creation. The consistent repetition, symmetry, and balance of Gen 1 is undone in the faltering repetition, anacoluthon, and lack of symmetry in Jer 4:23-26.[412]

The twofold use of the compound preposition involving the lexeme פָּנֶה "face" (i.e., מִפְּנֵי) in Jer 4:26 might be intended to reverse the two-fold use of the compound preposition involving פָּנֶה (i.e., עַל־פְּנֵי) in Gen 1:2. In Gen 1:2, the darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ) residing over (עַל־פְּנֵי) the deep is replaced by the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים "the spirit/wind of God" moving over (עַל־פְּנֵי) the waters. In Jer 4:26, Judah's destruction before (מִפְּנֵי) YHWH's anger is reiterated, not replaced. The earth which appears because of God's presence and moves from a state of darkness to light in Gen 1 now disappears before the same presence and fades into darkness in Jer 4. Previously, the mountains quaked before YHWH at Sinai (Judg 5:5), when YHWH established his

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[409] See Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 81; de Sousa, "Jer 4,23-26 als P-orientierter Absehnitt," 422; and Hetty Lalleman, "Jeremiah, Judgement and Creation," *TynBul* 60 (2009): 19.

[410] de Sousa, "Jer 4,23-26 als P-orientierter Absehnitt," 423-424 and Lalleman, "Jeremiah, Judgement and Creation," 19.

[411] Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *VT* 21 (1971): 151-152.

[412] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 164. Holladay says, "He envisages a 'de-creation' of the cosmos, the world again become the chaos before creation began: not a retroversion, turning the clock back, but a moving ahead to a state identical with that before Yahweh's creative activity began."

covenant with Israel and made them his people (Exod 19:3-6). Now the mountains quake as that covenant and his people dissolve under his rage. Brown says, "When the Creator becomes the Destroyer, how great is that destruction!"[413]

4.1.3 Jeremiah 14:15-16

לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־הַנְּבִאִים הַנִּבְּאִים בִּשְׁמִי וַאֲנִי לֹא־שְׁלַחְתִּים וְהֵמָּה אֹמְרִים חֶרֶב וְרָעָב לֹא יִהְיֶה בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב יִתַּמּוּ הַנְּבִאִים הָהֵמָּה: וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר־הֵמָּה נִבְּאִים לָהֶם יִהְיוּ מֻשְׁלָכִים בְּחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָב וְהַחֶרֶב וְאֵין מְקַבֵּר לָהֵמָּה הֵמָּה נָשֵׁיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם וּבְנֹתֵיהֶם וְשָׁפַכְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־רָעָתָם:

Therefore, thus YHWH says, "Concerning the prophets who are prophesying in my name[414] but I did not send them: They are saying, 'Sword and famine will not come against this land.' By sword and by famine, those prophets will be completely destroyed. The people, to whom they are prophesying, will be cast out into the streets of Jerusalem before the famine and the sword and there will not be anyone burying them — them, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. I will pour out their calamity over them."[415]

4.1.3.1 The Contortion

The lexemes חֶרֶב and רָעָב appear without דֶּבֶר which usually accompanies them in Jeremiah. The lexeme דֶּבֶר is replaced by the participle מְקַבֵּר. YHWH's judgment is not on the brink of discontinuation (i.e., the removal of חֶרֶב and רָעָב) as the prophets say, but the prophets and their hearers are on the brink of burial.

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413 Brown, "Jeremiah," 132.

414 G specifically identifies the prophets's message in Jer 14:15 as a "lie" (cf. בִּשְׁמִי שֶׁקֶר "in my name falsely" in Jer 23:25). See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:254 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 70-71.

415 There is a sound play between the specific judgment רָעָב and the general judgment רָעָה falling on the people (Jer 14:16; cf. 2 Chron 20:9).

4.1.3.2 Stylistics

The phrase וְהַחֶרֶב הָרָעָב "the famine and the sword" in Jer 14:16 is a *hapax* (cf. Isa 51:19). The following phrase אֵין מְקַבֵּר "there is none burying" in Jer 14:16 is also a *hapax*.[416] The juxtaposition of two *hapax* phrases in Jer 14:16 suggests a careful arrangement.

The three lexemes רָעָב, חֶרֶב, and דֶּבֶר appear together often in Jeremiah (and Ezekiel) though Jer 14 is the first occurrence of this triumvirate of YHWH's judgment in the book.[417] All three lexemes of judgment appear in Jer 14:12 (i.e., כִּי בַחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב וּבַדֶּבֶר אָנֹכִי מְכַלֶּה אוֹתָם "For by sword, by famine, and by plague, I am finishing them off.").[418] The lexemes חֶרֶב and רָעָב continue to appear in the following context (Jer 14:13, 15 [twice], 16, and 18) but the lexeme דֶּבֶר "plague" is surprisingly absent after its initial introduction. The appearance of the verb √דבר "to speak" (Jer 14:14) and the noun דָּבָר "word" (Jer 14:17) increase the hearer's

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[416] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 436) notes that the phrase is a *hapax* (cf. אֵין קֹבֵר in 2 Kgs 9:10 and אֵין קוֹבֵר in Ps 79:3).

[417] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 434-435. Holladay says, "The triad 'sword, famine, pestilence' is a fixed combination appearing thirteen times in Jer; this is its first occurrence. Though the triad is found within the present complex in 15:2 as well, these instances are essentially expansions of the pair 'sword, famine,' which not only appears in vv 13, 15, 16 (in reverse order!), and 18, but which appears to regulate the structure of the whole passage. The history of the triad is complex. There are many early expressions, either positive or negative, which refer to the curse of these three and others like them, or the blessing of the lack of them (Deut 7:12–16; 32:23–25). It is possible, then, that the triad existed in oral tradition long before Jrm's time. On the other hand, though the pairs 'pestilence, sword' and 'famine, pestilence' appear in pre-Jeremianic passages (Exod 5:3 [JE]; 2 Sam 24:13; Amos 4:10), there is no occurrence before Jer of the pair 'sword, famine.' Its repeated occurrence in the present passage, and in comparable passages like 5:12 and 11:22, suggests that a specific historical crisis stimulated the pair at this time and stimulated the use of the triad repeatedly in Jer and Ezekiel…One question arises: Does the use of the definite article with 'sword, famine, pestilence' here and elsewhere indicate a prose style, or does it suggest 'the sword' and 'the famine' that precipitated the crisis at the time?"

[418] Willis (*Jeremiah-Lamentations*, 143) says these three lexemes represent siege language.

awareness that the expected lexeme דֶּבֶר is absent after its initial appearance in Jer 14:12.[419] The initial presentation of three lexemes of judgment in Jer 14:12 which is subsequently reduced to two lexemes is immediately notable.[420] The omission of דֶּבֶר in Jer 14:13ff. after its appearance in Jer 14:12 is significant.

The participle מְקַבֵּר from √קבר "to bury" follows חֶרֶב and רָעָב in Jer 14:16, which is the slot where דֶּבֶר previously appeared (Jer 14:12). Indeed, the lexeme דֶּבֶר usually concludes this list of triad judgments in the book of Jeremiah. The consonants ב and ר are juxtaposed in the same order in the lexeme דֶּבֶר and the participle מְקַבֵּר.

Conspicuously, the lexeme רָעָב appears first in Jer 14:16 then the lexeme חֶרֶב. This order is unique in this context as חֶרֶב always initiates the list of two or three lexemes in Jer 14:12, 13, 15 [twice], and 18. Elsewhere in Jeremiah, the lexeme רָעָב precedes the lexeme חֶרֶב only once (Jer 18:21). This odd ordering of lexemes as well as the disappearance of דֶּבֶר within a seemingly set phrase in this context demonstrates a purposeful arrangement.

4.1.3.3 Textual Criticism

G reads Ἐν θανάτῳ νοσερῷ ἀποθανοῦνται "they will die by deathly disease" (Jer 14:15) instead of the MT's בַּחֶרֶב "by the sword."[421] This phrase in G translates מְמוֹתֵי תַחֲלֵאִים

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[419] Parke-Taylor (*The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah*, 201-202) notes that the Greek's Hebrew *Vorlage* has only the terms חֶרֶב and רָעָב in Jer 21:9 and 38:2 and that these two terms appear in the MT at Jer 5:12; 11:22; 14:13, 15, 16, 18; 16:4; 42:16; 44:12, 18 and 27 without דֶּבֶר. Parke-Taylor says, "In the course of time, the triad 'sword, famine, and pestilence' became normative and stereotypical in the Hebrew text (as in 21:9=38:2). However, sometimes the triad occurs in a context where only 'sword' and 'famine' are otherwise mentioned; e.g., 14:12 (cf. 14:13, 15, 16, 18); 42:17 (cf. 42:16); 44:13 (cf. 44:12, 18, 27). This indicates that חֶרֶב and רָעָב are the primary terms; the triad is an editorial expansion." For a similar view, see Allen, *Jeremiah*, 170.

[420] The fact that these three judgment lexemes usually appear together in Jeremiah will only be apparent to the reader through retrospective patterning.

[421] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:254 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 70-71.

יָמֻתוּ "they will die from deathly diseases" in the MT of Jer 16:4 and fits nicely with the description of the devastations of the famine in the next clause. Perhaps, G's reading anticipates תַּחֲלוּאֵי רָעָב "the diseases of famine" in Jer 14:18. It is possible that the lexeme דֶּבֶר, instead of חֶרֶב, is in the *Vorlage* of G. This would mean that the lexemes דֶּבֶר and רָעָב would appear together without חֶרֶב in Jer 14:15. G might understand the verb √חרב "to be desolate," instead of the noun חֶרֶב, here as describing the individuals within a city wasting away because of the disease resulting from a famine (e.g., Jer 26:9; cf. Isa 60:12; Ezek 12:20; and 19:7). S reads ܚܪܒܐ "sword" with MT.

G represents the lexeme חֶרֶב first followed by רָעָב in Jer 14:16. This is the opposite order from the MT.[422] The arrangement in the MT comes in a *hapax* phrase. It is possible that G orders these lexemes normally instead of according to their *Vorlage*. It is equally possible that the *hapax* phrase in the MT results from a mistake in the transmission of this text. G is the easier, and perhaps corrective, reading, however, so it seems that MT is preferable.

G lacks the pronoun הֵמָּה at the end of Jer 14:15 in MT and only represents it once in Jer 14:16 as opposed to its two occurrences in the MT.[423] The appearance of הֵמָּה modifying prophets is unnecessary in Jer 14:15 and the double juxtaposition of הֵמָּה in the MT of Jer 14:16 is admittedly awkward. The repetition of הֵמָּה in Jer 14:16 might be obtrusive to emphasise that these prophets themselves will experience judgment.

4.1.3.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Contortion

Jeremiah laments that false prophets are speaking in opposition to his message of judgment (Jer 14:13). These prophets state that YHWH will bring peace and truth (שָׁלוֹם

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[422] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:254 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 70-71.

[423] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:254 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 70-71.

וֶאֱמֶת), not sword and famine (חֶרֶב וְרָעָב).[424] The prophets' mention of two judgment lexemes (חֶרֶב וְרָעָב) in Jer 14:13, instead of three, is significant. Immediately preceding this contextually, YHWH proclaimed three judgments (בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב וּבַדֶּבֶר) in Jer 14:12. The prophets' act is performative reducing YHWH's judgments to two and overturning them by proclaiming two blessings (שָׁלוֹם וֶאֱמֶת). YHWH responds that these prophets are prophesying falsely and without his authority (Jer 14:14). Ironically, these prophets who deny that YHWH would send sword (חֶרֶב) or famine (רָעָב) will die by these judgments (Jer 14:15).

Additionally, the author of Jer 14:16 cleverly replaces דֶּבֶר, the lexeme disregarded by the prophets in Jer 14:13. The prophets sought to reduce the Jeremianic triad of YHWH's judgments (cf. Jer 14:12). YHWH, however, adds the form מְקַבֵּר, to the lexemes חֶרֶב and רָעָב, which is another word having the consonants ב and ר in the same location and order as דֶּבֶר (i.e., ב precedes ר, and they are the last two consonants in the word).[425] The author carefully constructs a replacement for דֶּבֶר by producing a *hapax* phrase (i.e., אֵין מְקַבֵּר). The author replaces דֶּבֶר while keeping the lexeme in the reader's mind.

The author ironically puns upon the words of the false prophets through the use of the participle מְקַבֵּר. As previously mentioned the false prophets shorten Jeremiah's judgment

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[424] I emend MT's שְׁלוֹם אֱמֶת "true peace" (Jer 14:13) to שָׁלוֹם וֶאֱמֶת "peace and truth," following a few Hebrew manuscripts, G (ἀλήθειαν καὶ εἰρήνην "truth and peace"), α′, σ′, and S (ܫܠܡܐ ܘܫܘܪܪܐ "peace and truth"). The phrase שָׁלוֹם וֶאֱמֶת appears in Jer 33:6.

The prophets replace YHWH's twofold judgment (חֶרֶב וְרָעָב) with a twofold blessing (שָׁלוֹם וֶאֱמֶת). These prophets envision a complete reversal of Jeremiah's prophecy. This suggests that שָׁלוֹם וֶאֱמֶת should not be read as hendiadys but as two separate elements in contradistinction to the two elements of judgment (*contra* Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 419). Also see Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 185; Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia*, 126; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 707; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 313; and Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 198.

[425] See Kalimi, *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*, 93. Kalimi mentions the metathesis between חֶרֶב and מְקַבֵּר in Jer 14:16. The fact that דֶּבֶר is expected here instead of מְקַבֵּר is covertly noted by Kalimi since he puts the metathesis in Jer 14:16 in the section discussing metathesis between חֶרֶב and דֶּבֶר.

pronouncement from three lexemes in Jer 14:12 to two in Jer 14:13 by deleting דֶּבֶר. YHWH replaces the prophets' subtraction by extending the intensity of the judgment imagery. YHWH supplants דֶּבֶר with מְקֻבֵּר to elucidate the tragic fate awaiting Judah. The prophets are ironically right. Judah will not face דֶּבֶר; they will be overcome by רָעָב and חֶרֶב. There is no room left for דֶּבֶר in YHWH's presentation of Judah's destruction. The only thing remaining for Judah is burial (√קבר).

Even the privilege of burial is denied the Judahites since not enough people remain to accomplish a mass burial (cf. Amos 6:9-10).[426] The *Piel* of √קבר in Jer 14:16 probably has a pluralitive sense and refers to a mass burial.[427] If the *Piel* has a pluralitive sense here, then there is an intensified description of horror in this text compared to 2 Kgs 9:10 and Ps 79:3.[428] The effects of רָעָב and חֶרֶב leave no survivors. There is no one left to bury (√קבר) the dead, which inherently means there is no reason for another plague (דֶּבֶר). No one remains to experience a דֶּבֶר. This is a description of utter devastation.

The prophets delete דֶּבֶר in their pronouncement when compared to Jeremiah's words in Jer 14:12 to demonstrate that שָׁלוֹם and אֱמֶת are approaching quickly in Jer 14:13 and 15, and Jeremiah's words are being undone. They reduce Jeremiah's judgment lexemes to two —

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[426] The book of Jeremiah (7:33; 8:1-2; 9:21; 16:4; 22:19; and 25:33) mentions that the wicked, who experience YHWH's judgment, will not be buried as an extension of that judgment (cf. Deut 21:23; 1 Sam 17:44-47; and 2 Sam 21:10).

[427] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 436. Holladay suggests that the *Piel* refers to a mass burial but does not discuss the pluralitive sense of the *Piel*. For the pluralitive use of the *Piel* as well as other functions of this *binyan*, see Benjamin J. Noonan, *Advances in the Study of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: New Insights for Reading the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 102-104 and Steven W. Boyd, "The *Binyanim* (Verbal Stems)," in *"Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?" A Grammatical Tribute to Professor Stephen A. Kaufman*, ed. Hélène M. Dallaire, Benjamin J. Noonan, and Jennifer E. Noonan (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 100-102.

[428] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 436.

חֶרֶב and רָעָב — and subsequently retract them by mentioning an equal amount of blessings — שָׁלוֹם and אֱמֶת. They proclaim that YHWH's judgments will soon abate and be subverted. YHWH subsequently revokes the rhetoric of the prophets by reintroducing the same two judgment lexemes (i.e., רָעָב and חֶרֶב) and superseding דֶּבֶר with מְקֻבֵּר. Additionally, YHWH arranges the lexemes רָעָב and חֶרֶב differently than their contextual occurrences to accentuate their retention. YHWH rescinds the false prophets' proclamation and recapitulates his own decree of disaster. Judgment is intensifying, not abating, according to YHWH. Far from eradicating דֶּבֶר because שָׁלוֹם approaches, YHWH expunges דֶּבֶר because the grave (קֶבֶר) renders דֶּבֶר unnecessary.

4.1.4 Jeremiah 27:1

בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת יְהוֹיָקִם בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הָיָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֶל־יִרְמְיָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר׃

"In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from YHWH saying…"

4.1.4.1 The Contortion

Jeremiah 27:1 says that this message came to Jeremiah during Jehoiakim's reign while the rest of the text illustrates that Zedekiah (Jer 27:3 and 12) is actually the king at the time of these events. Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son, has been deported to Babylon (Jer 27:20). Zedekiah, not Jehoiakim, is king.

4.1.4.2 Stylistics

The onomastics of Jer 27:1 evidence odd orthography. The last vowel is defective in the name יְהוֹיָקִם "Jehoiakim." Jehoiakim is spelled with a *hireq yod* (i.e., יְהוֹיָקִים) in the last syllable in every other occurrence of this name in the Hebrew Bible including later in this

chapter (Jer 27:20).[429] Also, the name יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ "Josiah" appears with a full *holem*, while the spelling elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible lacks it (i.e., יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ).[430] The prophet Jeremiah's name

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[429] Most of the occurrences of the name יְהוֹיָקִים appear in Jeremiah (1:3; 22:18, 24; 24:1; 25:1; 26:1, 21, 22, 23; 27:20; 28:4; 35:1; 36:1, 9, 28, 29, 30, 32; 37:1; 45:1; 46:2; 52:2; cf. 2 Kgs 23:34, 35, 36; 24:1, 5, 6, 19; Dan 1:1, 2; 1 Chron 3:15, 16; 2 Chron 36:4, 5, and 8).

The masora in L of Jer 27:1 suggests that the defective spelling יְהוֹיָקֵם appears once elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in Jer 52:2. See Gérard E. Weil, *Massorah Gedolah Iuxta Codicem Leningradensem B 19a* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971), 308. L (275 verso) represents the name as יְהוֹיָקִים in Jer 52:2 without a note, however.

[430] The name יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ appears often in Jeremiah (1:2, 3 [twice]; 3:6; 22:11 [twice], 18; 25:1, 3; 26:1; 35:1; 36:1, 2, 9; 37:1; 45:1; 46:2; cf. 1 Kgs 13:2; 2 Kgs 21:24, 26; 22:1, 3; 23:16, 19, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 34 [twice]; Zeph 1:1; 1 Chron 3:14, 15; 2 Chron 33:25; 34:1, 33; 35:1, 7, 16, 18, 19, 20 [twice], 22, 23, 24, 25 [twice], 26; and 36:1).

The spelling יאושי[ה does appear in Jer 22:18 in 4Q72 f19 21:2. Earlier in this same fragment the spelling יאשיה appears (see 4Q72 f14 18:7-8; also see 4Q70 f32ii 35:25). Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21-36*, 143) briefly notes the spelling in 4QJer^{c} in Jer 22:18 without reference to the MT of Jer 27:1.

For the redundancy of this *plene* spelling (i.e., with both the vowel letters א and ו), see Francis I. Anderson and A. Dean Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible* (BibOr 41; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1986), 91. Cf. חַטֹּאות "sins" in 1 Kgs 14:16; 15:3, 30; etc. and שְׂמֹאול "left" in Num 20:17; 22:26; Deut 28:14; etc.).

See C. Rabin, S. Talmon, and E. Tov, eds. *The Hebrew University Bible: The Book of Jeremiah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997), 142 and D. S. Lowinger, *Codex Cairo of the Bible From the Karaite Synagoge at Abbasiya: The Earliest Extant Hebrew Manuscript written in 895 by Moshe ben Asher* (Jerusalem: Makor Publishing, 1971), 395. The *waw* is clearly evident (יֹאוֹשִׁיָּהוּ) in A and C.

In L (260 recto), however, the *waw* is smaller than expected and it appears that the text has been scraped after the א in Jer 27:1. Additionally, the letters א and שׁ are written very close together leaving little, if any, space for a proper ו (cf. the placement of the ו in the words יהויקם, יהודה, and יהוה in Jer 27:1 in L). A *waw* does appear between א and שׁ producing the form יֹאוֹשִׁיָּהוּ, that is parallel with A and C, but the ו seems to have been an afterthought in L.

If Samuel ben Jacob is solely responsible for L, he writes יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ as evidenced by the proximity of the letter א and שׁ following the normal spelling. After deliberating, he adds the ו following his manuscript tradition (perhaps visual and oral). On second thought, he scraps off the unnecessary ו deciding to normalise this unique spelling of Josiah's name. At last, he recorrects the name to read יֹאוֹשִׁיָּהוּ because the spelling is significant.

Whatever the exact explanation, it appears that Samuel ben Jacob struggled with representing the unique spelling of Josiah in Jer 27:1 (cf. the *kethiv* spelling מִיכָיָה seems to have first been written identically to the *qere* מִיכָה and then a י was secondarily added in Jer 26:18 on the same page of L). It appears that scribes consciously calculate the importance of each spelling. They update or level some spellings. If they determine, however, that a unique spelling serves a purpose, then they allow the spelling to interact with the context.

appears with a shortened theophoric element in Jer 27:1 (i.e., יִרְמְיָה; cf. ירמיהו appears in 4Q72 f31:1). This orthography is restricted in Jeremiah to Jer 27-29.[431] The form of Jeremiah's name with the longer theophoric element (i.e., יִרְמְיָהוּ) appears 122 times in the book of Jeremiah (e.g., Jer 1:1; 26:7, 8 , 9, 12, 20, 24; etc.).[432]

The three personal names appearing in Jer 27:1 are each unique in their orthography whether compared to other cases in Jeremiah or in the Hebrew Bible. The unique nature of the two royal names are acutely seen in comparing the similar phraseology of Jer 26:1 (בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה) with 27:1 (בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת יְהוֹיָקִם בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה). The homogeneous wording evidences changes in the spelling of the names Jehoiakim and Josiah as well as a different lexeme for "kingdom" (מַמְלָכוּת in Jer 26:1 and מַמְלָכָה in Jer 27:1). The form מַמְלָכוּת in Jer 26:1 is a *hapax* in the book.[433] Jeremiah 26:1 does not mention Jeremiah by name. The form מַמְלֶכֶת only appears in Jeremiah in 27:1 and 28:1. These elements illustrate that Jer 27:1 breaks with the stylistics of Jeremiah and the orthographic practices elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

The spelling of the Babylonian king's name נְבוּכַדְנָאצַּר in Jer 27:6, 8, 20; 28:3; 29:1, and 3 instead of the more common spelling נְבוּכַדְרָאצַּר, which appears 38 times in Jeremiah,

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[431] The spelling יִרְמְיָה appears in Jer 27:1; 28:5, 6, 10, 11, 12 [twice], 15; 29:1; cf. Dan 9:2; and Ezra 1:1.

[432] Duhm (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 217) notes the odd spellings of Jehoiakim and Josiah. Workman (*The Text of Jeremiah*, 221-222) mentions the different spellings of the names Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and Nebuchadnezzar in Jer 27-29. Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21-36*, 304) mentions the unusual spellings of Jehoiakim, Josiah, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and Nebuchadnezzar in Jer 27 and in Jer 27-29. Holladay (*Jeremiah 2*, 112 and 114) mentions the unique spellings of Jeremiah and Nebuchadnezzar but not of Jehoiakim and Josiah. Thompson (*The Book of Jeremiah*, 531) mentions only the unique spelling of the name Jeremiah.

[433] See Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 70. Hornkohl says the form in Jer 27:1 is a *hapax*; he means 26:1.

could be added to the orthographic oddities in this section. Also, the name Zedekiah is spelled with a long (i.e., צִדְקִיָּהוּ in Jer 27:3) and short (i.e., צִדְקִיָּה in Jer 27:12) theophoric element in this chapter. The short spelling צִדְקִיָּה only appears three other times in Jeremiah (28:1; 29:3; and 49:34) while the longer spelling צִדְקִיָּהוּ appears 44 times in Jeremiah. Also, the spelling יְכָנְיָה "Jeconiah" in Jer 27:20, instead of יְכָנְיָה (Jer 28:4), is a *hapax*. There is something beyond stylistics present in the odd orthography of names in Jer 27:1 and its context.

4.1.4.3 Textual Criticism

It is almost universally acknowledged that the MT's יְהוֹיָקִם is a scribal mistake which should read צִדְקִיָּה/וּ.[434] A few medieval Hebrew manuscripts, S, and an Arabic manuscript translating S read "Zedekiah" instead of the MT's "Jehoiakim."[435] The passage clearly happens during the reign of Zedekiah (see Jer 27:3, 12, 20; and 28:1). Emending the text is

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[434] See Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament*, 33-34; Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 11; Brown, "Jeremiah," 344-345; Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel*, 4:312; Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 305; Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 216-217; Driver, *The Book of The Prophet Jeremiah*, 161; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 195; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 526; McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 685; Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 241 note 9; Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 129; Willis, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 221; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 41; Dearman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 247; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 531; Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 191; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 115; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 307-308; Allen, *Jeremiah*, 303; Hetty Lalleman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 21; Nottingham: IVP, 2013), 210-211; Corrine Carvalho, *Reading Jeremiah: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2016), 86; Nahum M. Sarna, "The Abortive Insurrection in Zedekiah's Day (Jer. 27-29)," *ErIsr* 14 (1978): 89*; and Sidnie White Crawford, Jan Joosten, and Eugene Ulrich, "Sample Editions of the Oxford Hebrew Bible: Deuteronomy 32:1-9, 1 Kings 11:1-8, and Jeremiah 27:1-10 (34 G)," *VT* 58 (2008): 365. See D. Hans Schmidt, "Das Datum der Ereignisse von Jer 27 und 28," *ZAW* 39 (1931): 138-144 (especially 142-143). On historical grounds Schmidt suggests that the text in Jer 27:1 would have originally referred to the seventh year of Zedekiah (i.e., 591 BCE). He reconstructs Jer 27:1 to read — בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית לְצִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הָיָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה "In the seventh year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, this word was…"

[435] For the textual evidence of Jer 27:1, see Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia*, 210; Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Jeremiah* (TCT 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 114-115; and Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 164-165.

logical though there is sparse specific textual evidence to support the emendation. Emanuel Tov places Jer 27:1 alongside 1 Sam 13:1 as a case where a textual corruption is evident by the problematic nature of the text, not by variant textual witnesses.[436] Similarly, Jan de Waard believes that Jer 27:1 is not original, but this is determined by literary and contextual considerations rather then textual witnesses.[437]

The name Jehoiakim appears in A, L, C, α′, the Origenic recension, the Lucianic recension, T, and V of Jer 27:1.[438] Medieval Jewish (e.g., Rashi) and Christian (e.g., Calvin) exegetes believe that this prophecy was given during the time of Jehoiakim but not publicised until the reign of Zedekiah.[439] At least some medieval Jewish and Christian scholars are reading a text similar to MT. G lacks Jer 27:1.[440] This could mean that Jer 27:1 was not in the translator's *Vorlage* or that he perceived the reference to Jehoiakim in his *Vorlage* to be so troubling that he removed the verse altogether.[441] The emendation of יְהוֹיָקִם to וּ/צִדְקִיָּה,

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[436] Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 10-11.

[437] de Waard, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 114.

[438] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:302; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 307-308; and de Waard, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 114.

[439] See H. Freedman, *Jeremiah: Hebrew Text & English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (Soncino Books of the Bible; London: Soncino, 1949), 179; A. J. Rosenberg, *Jeremiah: A New English Translation* (New York: The Judaica Press, 1996), 2:217; and John Calvin, *Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, 3:348-349. Rashi says this is a prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's future reign. Calvin thinks God is showing Jeremiah future things which people do not think will happen.

[440] See Workman, *The Text of Jeremiah*, 335; Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:302; and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 132-133.

[441] See Rofé, "The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah," 393 note 16. Rofé says, "The mention of Jehoiakim in 27,1 is, in view of v. 3.12.16ff., a patent scribal mistake that hardly affected the order of the chapters. The absence of the whole verse from Jer-LXX is due, in my opinion, to intentional omission. Cf. the similar fate of another awkward verse, I Sam 13,1."

therefore, is not conclusive on textual grounds. The reading צִדְקִיָּהוּ/ו is a corrective reading of a difficult text.

R. Althann suggests that the phrase בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת יְהוֹיָקִם means "after the completion of the reign of Jehoiakim."[442] Althann's suggestion centres on two elements. The preposition ב can mean "after" in Semitic languages and the noun רֵאשִׁית can mean "totality" (Jer 49:35 and Dan 11:41).[443] Of the four passages in Jeremiah which use בְּרֵאשִׁית in their regnal formula only Jer 26:1, according to Althann, is not muddled by text critical issues and could be translated "in the beginning." Althann remains open to the translation "after the accession year of Jehoiakim," however.[444] Althann's reading is ultimately not satisfactory since בְּרֵאשִׁית appears in regnal formulas to mark the beginning of a king's reign but never its completion.

It is often assumed that a careless scribe recycled Jer 26:1 to create Jer 27:1.[445] For example, regarding Jer 27:1, McKane says, "It is a senseless superscription deriving from 26.1 with which it is almost identical (אל ירמיהו is absent from 26.1)."[446] This argument becomes less convincing, however, since Jer 27-29 is probably an independent unit that circulated separately from the rest of Jeremiah.[447] When it was incorporated into Jeremiah, it most likely was included at this point because the title in Jer 27:1 was already similar to the

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[442] R. Althann, "*bĕrē'šît* in Jer 26:1, 27:1, 28:1, 49:34," *JNSL* 14 (1988): 5.

[443] Althann, "*bĕrē'šît* in Jer 26:1, 27:1, 28:1, 49:34," 3-5.

[444] Althann, "*bĕrē'šît* in Jer 26:1, 27:1, 28:1, 49:34," 5.

[445] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 308.

[446] McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 685.

[447] For the unique nature of Jer 27-29, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 100 and 304; and Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 67-68 and 90. The main features in these chapters are the unique Jeremianic orthography of יִרְמָיָה (i.e., short theophoric element) and נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר (i.e., with a *nun* instead of a *resh*), and the appositional יְכָנְיָה־הַמֶּלֶךְ (i.e., X the king).

one in Jer 26:1 including a reference to the Judahite king, Jehoiakim. The possibility that a redactor chose to add this section about Zedekiah (i.e., Jer 27-29) immediately after a section about Jehoiakim and then tried to superficially conflate these sections by borrowing Jer 26:1 and repurposing it in Jer 27:1 seems contrived. The redactor would certainly see the inherent incongruity this conflation creates. It seems just as likely that this section is placed here because it was attributed to the reign of Jehoiakim and thus bridges Jer 26 to 27-29. To be sure the redactor may have connected the titles in Jer 26:1 and 27:1 further once these chapters were juxtaposed to create their present similarities, but even now these titles are not identical which suggests a distinction between them. It is not beyond doubt that Jer 27:1 is a reformation of Jer 26:1, but this explanation does not account for all aspects of the textual situation in these two verses.

Additionally, Jer 27 and 28 are closely connected in the MT. The title of Jer 28:1 (וַיְהִי בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִיא בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת צִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בִּשְׁנַת [בַּשָּׁנָה] הָרְבִעִית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי "And it was in that year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month…") is odd and probably dependent upon Jer 27:1. Regarding Jer 27:1, McKane says, "This matter cannot be fully discussed without taking account of 28.1 which provides conflicting information and appears to be an overloaded and disordered text. בשנה ההיא, which indicates the same date for chapter 27 and 28 is not represented by Sept. nor is בראשית ממלכת."[448]

It seems that the wording of Jer 27:1 influenced Jer 28:1 in the MT. The phrase בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת צִדְקִיָּה does not make sense in Jer 28:1.[449] Neither the prepositional phrase

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[448] McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 685.

[449] See Sarna, "The Abortive Insurrection in Zedekiah's day (Jer. 27-29)," 95*-96*. Sarna suggests that the fourth year of the Sabbath cycle and the ascension year of Zedekiah are identical.

בְּרֵאשִׁית nor the lexeme רֵאשִׁית “first, beginning” appear elsewhere to describe the beginning of a specific regnal year of a king in the Hebrew Bible. The prepositional phrase בְּרֵאשִׁית appears in Jer 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; and 49:34 to refer to the ascent of a king to their throne. Jer 28:1 is based on Jer 27:1 not *vice versa*. G represents a Hebrew *Vorlage* of וַיְהִי בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבִעִית צִדְקִיָּהוּ/ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי in Jer 28:1. G may be due to *parablepsis* where a scribe’s eyes skip from the first בַּשָּׁנָה to the second, but G reads better than the MT.[450] The Hebrew text of Jer 28:1 seems to be a result of an assimilation with and expansion of Jer 27:1.[451]

Though Jer 27:1 is similar to Jer 26:1 it does not follow that it is dependent upon this verse. Jer 27-29 probably circulated independently, so its inclusion at this point in the book of Jeremiah actually suggests the presence of the name Jehoiakim in Jer 27:1 to bridge these Jehoiakim and Zedekiah chapters. Jeremiah 28:1 seems to conflate elements from Jer 27:1. There is no need to emend the Hebrew of Jer 27:1 based on the Hebrew of Jer 26:1 or Jer 28:1. There is minimal textual evidence that the name Zedekiah should replace Jehoiakim in Jer 27:1. This is an incongruity that textual criticism cannot fully answer.

4.1.4.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Contortion

The orthographic eccentricities in the onomastics of Jer 27:1, especially in the controversial name יְהוֹיָקִם, as well as unique spelling of names in the surrounding context

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[450] See Anderson and Widder, *Textual Criticism of the Bible*, 21-23.

[451] Jeremiah 28:1 in the MT is conflated; see McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 685. Regarding Jer 28:1, see G. R. Driver, “Once Again Abbreviations,” *Text* 4 (1963): 83-88. Driver says, “If an abbreviated בש׳ בר׳ is assumed as the reading of the original text, the error will have arisen through taking this as standing for בשנה ברביעית (בשנת) “in the fourth year” instead of בשנה בראשונה “in the first year”, which is required by the context. Accordingly, the original reading will have been “that year, in the year of the accession of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the first year, in the fifth month”. This statement of the date may seem verbose; but the addition of “in the first year” is required to justify “in the fifth month”; otherwise the reader may be uncertain whether this means the fifth month from the date of the new king’s accession or from that of the beginning of his first full year (p. 86).”

alert the reader to a potential case of meta-textual semantics.[452] The possibility that the author has deliberately used the wrong name (i.e., Jehoiakim) and a unique orthography of that incorrect name to refer to Zedekiah commends itself.[453]

Similarly, the confusion and incompleteness of Saul's regnal formula in 1 Sam 13:1 is so striking that it suggests a purposeful contortion to magnify the incompleteness of Saul's reign, its failure, and sudden end. Rachelle Gilmour and Ian Young suggest that the missing regnal elements in 1 Sam 13:1 are used by scribes to illustrate the inadequacy of Saul's reign and its impending doom.[454] They understand Saul reigning for two years "not as historically

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[452] For a similar argument, see Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, 56. Noegel suggests that the significance of the lexical change from כַּף "palm, hand" to יָד "hand" in Job 10:7 assists in a Janus pun. Noegel says, "In 10.7 Job switches to using יד instead of כף for 'hand' (cf., for example, 10.3). That כף had been used in a Janus construction previously (Job 9.30) may point to the importance of the change here. The switch would have been noticeable to his friends, and thus would have drawn attention to his remark. This would also explain why ידיך is fronted here. The change in lexemes piques the listener's interest in what follows, namely עצבוני." Noegel argues that the form עִצָּבוּנִי is the hinge of the Janus parallelism in Job 10:8 and thus both √עצב "to hurt, pain" and √עצב "to shape, fashion" are operable in Job 10:7-8.

[453] Jezebel uses the incorrect name Zimri to connect Jehu's present actions with Zimri's and predict that the outcome of his reign will be similar (2 Kgs 9:31). Also, Joosten ("Les Benjaminites au milieu de Jérusalem," 65-72) argues that the author uses the improper designation Benjaminites (בְּנֵי בִנְיָמִן in Jer 6:1) for the Judahites to connect them to the wickedness in Judg 19-21.

For the suggestion that the chronologically inaccurate name Abiathar in Mark 2:26 is a case of meta-textual semantics, see Nicholas Perrin, "The Temple, a Davidic Messiah, and a Case of Mistaken Priestly Identity (Mark 2:26)," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis — Essays in Honor of G. K. Beale*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 163-177.

[454] See Gilmour and Young, "Saul's Two Year Reign in 1 Samuel 13:1," 150-154.

T understands Saul as being innocent when coming to the throne; see Eveline Van Staalduine-Sulman, *The Targum of Samuel* (SAIS 1; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 299-302. For the textual witnesses, see S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 96-97.

plausible but as symbolic of Saul's reign."[455] Saul's reign is a failure and his line is marked for destruction.[456]

In the same way, it appears that the author of Jer 27:1 uses a textual contortion to pun upon the name יְהוֹיָקִם. By constructing this chronological absurdity within this text, the author contextually connects the name יְהוֹיָקִם to both Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar.

The hearer is ignorant of the incongruity that the appearance of the name יְהוֹיָקִם creates in Jer 27:1 until the end of Jer 27:3.[457] The unexpected change from the reign of Jehoiakim to Zedekiah forces the hearer to engage in retrospective patterning. Since Jehoiakim has been the king during the last chapter (Jer 26:1, 21, 22, and 23), when Jehoiakim is introduced the hearer naturally accepts this continuation. Is the mistake made in Jer 27:1 (i.e., Jehoiakim should be Zedekiah) or 3 (i.e., Zedekiah should be Jehoiakim)? Which son of Josiah, Jehoiakim or Zedekiah, is presently king?[458]

Jeremiah 27 details Nebuchadnezzar's world domination. Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 24:1) and Zedekiah (Jer 27:12-15 and 2 Chron 36:13) are both servants of the Babylonian king. Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 24:1) and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24:20; 2 Chron 36:13; and Jer 52:3) both rebel

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[455] Gilmour and Young, "Saul's Two Year Reign in 1 Samuel 13:1," 152. For similar suggestions, see David Jobling, *1 Samuel* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998), 79-80; David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 333; Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (HBM 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 119; A. Graeme Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 140; Robert P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel* (OTG; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 53; and V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence* (SBLDS 118; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 71-75, especially 74-75.

[456] See Iain Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 18-19 note 21.

[457] The reader alone is aware of the odd orthography of יְהוֹיָקִם and יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ in Jer 27:1. The substitution of kings sends the reader back to the previous orthography oddity.

[458] Willis (*Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 221 note 1) suggests that the copyist changed Zedekiah to Jehoiakim because of the phrase "son of Josiah."

against Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 24:2) and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 25:1 and 2 Chron 36:17) both face a Babylonian invasion for their rebellion. Jehoiakim (2 Chron 36:6) and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 39:7; and 52:11) are bound and taken to Babylon.[459] Thus, the message of Jer 27 is applicable to either Jehoiakim or Zedekiah.[460] Zedekiah is the proper king as becomes clear in Jer 27:12 and 20.

Jehoiakim and Zedekiah each appear twice with two different spellings in Jer 27. The names appear in chiastic order.

Jer 27:1 יְהוֹיָקִם (defective)

Jer 27:3 צִדְקִיָּהוּ (long theophoric element)

Jer 27:12 צִדְקִיָּה (short theophoric element)

Jer 27:20 יְהוֹיָקִים (*plene*)

The name Jehoiakim contextually surrounds Zedekiah. Indeed, they have become indistinguishable. The author of Jer 27, thus, connects the names and the individuals bearing these names in the presentation of this chapter. Zedekiah is acting like Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim lost his position and kingdom for rebelling against YHWH and Nebuchadnezzar. The same fate awaits Zedekiah if he does not stop replicating Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim is presented in Jeremiah as a king who disregards YHWH's word (Jer 22:21 and 36:20-25). He persecutes and kills YHWH's prophets (Jer 26:20-24 and 36:25).

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[459] 2 Kings 24:1-7 implies that Jehoiakim died during the Babylonian siege and was replaced by Jehoiachin. See Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 32. Wiseman says that Jehoiakim died about a month before the Babylonian army left Babylon.

[460] I am uncertain whether the ancient hearer of Jer 27 is aware of all the details relating to the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah as represented in Kings, Jeremiah, and Chronicles. Regardless, it seems reasonable that the hearer comes to Jer 27 with some knowledge of the historical events surrounding the reigns of the last Judahite kings.

Jehoiakim's actions in Jer 26:20-24 illustrate he is the opposite of Hezekiah, who listened to Micah (Jer 26:17-19). Jehoiakim is like Manasseh, not Hezekiah or Josiah.[461]

Jehoiakim is the antithesis of an ideal Judahite king. Jeremiah presents Zedekiah as mimicking the mistakes of Jehoiakim. Indeed, Jeremiah specifically affixes Zedekiah to

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[461] Jeremiah creates a contrast between Jehoiakim and Hezekiah as the books of Kings (2 Kgs 18-21) and Chronicles (2 Chron 29-33) contrast Hezekiah and Manasseh. A few other texts appear to connect Jehoiakim and Manasseh. In 2 Kgs 24:4, the Lucianic recension of the Greek adds an overt subject to the verb "to pour out" (שׁפך in MT and ἐκχέω in G) in the form of the proper name Ιωακιμ "Jehoiakim." This is similiar to 2 Chron 36:5d in G (καὶ ἐν αἵματι ἀθῴῳ, ᾧ ἐξέχεεν Ιωακιμ καὶ ἔπλησεν τὴν Ιερουσαλημ αἵματος ἀθῴου "…and for the innocent blood which Jehoiakim poured out and he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood"). Manasseh's sins are recounted immediately before in 2 Kgs 24:3 and 2 Chron 36:5c (cf. Jer 15:4). The addition of Jehoiakim's name in these texts connects Jehoiakim with Manasseh. Jehoiakim becomes one of the most wicked kings of Judah comparable to Manasseh. Other manscripts of G and T add the proper name "Manasseh" (see BHS note on 2 Kgs 24:4). Richelle thinks that the Lucianic reading in 2 Kgs 24:4 is secondary. See Matthieu Richelle, "Who Were the 'Worst' of the Kings of Israel and Judah? A little-known divergence between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Boston, MA, 20 November 2017), 4.

Jehoiakim in 2 Chron 36:5-8 (MT) looks very much like Manasseh earlier in the book; see Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 537-538. Manasseh (2 Chron 33:11) and Jehoiakim (2 Chron 36:6) are bound (*Qal wayyiqtol* of √אסר "to bind") with bronze chains (בַּנְחֻשְׁתַּיִם) and taken (*Hifil* of √הלך "to go, walk") to Babylon (בָּבֶלָה). The only difference in these phrases is the form of the verb √הלך "to go, walk" which is a *Hifil wayyiqtol* in 2 Chron 33:11 and a *Hifil* infinitive in 2 Chron 36:6. G's text in 2 Chron 36:6 and 1 Esdr 1:38 uses a finite (ἀπάγω "to lead away, carry off") instead of an infinitive in 2 Chron 36:6 which draws this text closer to 2 Chron 33:11 (see Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 532). Daniel 1:1 understands Jehoiakim's situation similarly to 2 Chron 36:6. The phrase וַיַּאַסְרוּהוּ בַּנְחֻשְׁתַּיִם "they bound him with bronze shackles" describes only Samson (Judg 16:21), Manasseh (2 Chron 33:11), Jehoiakim (2 Chron 36:6), and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 39:7; and 52:11).

Also, see A. Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem: An Historical - Chronolgical Study," *IEJ* 18 (1968): 142 and Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 25. If the texts in 2 Chron 36:6 and Dan 1:1 supplement and complement the text in 2 Kgs 24:6 (וַיִּשְׁכַּב יְהוֹיָקִים עִם־אֲבֹתָיו "Jehoiakim slept with his fathers") this suggests that Jehoiakim is taken to Babylon and then later returned to Jerusalem paralleling the events of Manasseh's reign (2 Chron 33:11-13).

Jehoiakim (Jer 52:2-3 par. 2 Kgs 24:19-20).[462] The only kings mentioned in the book's introduction (Jer 1:1-3) are Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. The narrator highlights the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah in opposition to the reign of Josiah at the outset of the book. Josiah preserves Jerusalem while Jehoiakim and Zedekiah destroy it.

In Jer 27:1, the author illustrates that Zedekiah is indistinguishable from Jehoiakim. As Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and was destroyed, so will be the fate of Zedekiah. Their stories merge into one as demonstrated through their juxtaposition at the beginning (Jer 1:3), middle (Jer 27:1), and end (Jer 52:2-3) of Hebrew Jeremiah. Additionally, in Jeremiah, the new Davidic king will be raised up (√קום) by YHWH and will be righteous (√צדק) in Jer 23:4-6 and 33:14-16. This new king will be the antithesis of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.

This merging of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah might explain a problem within the structure of Hebrew Jer 26-45. The text of Jer 26-45 switches between the reigns of Jehoiakim and

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[462] T further connects Jehoiakim and Zedekiah by adding a masculine plural verb in Jer 52:3 to explain that "they (i.e., Jehoiakim and Zedekiah) provoked" YHWH to anger. See Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 190.

G lacks Jer 52:2-3. See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:346. Lundbom (*Jeremiah 37-52*, 513) suggests that the absence of these verses is the result of haplography.

Zedekiah haphazardly.[463] I suggest that Hebrew Jeremiah intertwines the stories of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah to diminish a distinction between these individuals. What the MT of Jer 27:1 does on a minor level by substituting the name Jehoiakim for Zedekiah, the structure of Hebrew Jer 26-45 does at a larger level by interlinking the narratives of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.

The references to Jehoiakim and Zedekiah in Jer 26-45 proceed as follows. Jehoiakim is king in Jer 26 (26:1, 21, 22, 23) and is introduced in Jer 27:1 though Zedekiah is king throughout Jer 27-29 (27:3, 12; 28:1; 29:3, 21, 22). Jehoiakim has already been disposed of by Babylon (Jer 27:20 and 28:4). Zedekiah remains king in Jer 32 (1, 3, 4, 5) and 34 (2, 4, 6, 8, 21). Then, Jehoiakim is reintroduced in Jer 35-36 (35:1; 36:1, 9, 28, 29, 30, and 32).

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[463] For the general problems of understanding the themes and structure of Jer 26-45, see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 509-510.

See Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study of Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 140-146. Lundbom suggests that the Jehoiakim cluster (Jer 25; 26; 35; 36) and the Zedekiah cluster (24; 27; 28; 29) were each a carefully arranged chiasmus. They became mixed when added at different times to the book. Lundbom can ultimately provide no answer for the present disarray in the arrangement of Hebrew Jeremiah.

See Richard D. Patterson, "Of Bookends, Hinges, and Hooks: Literary Clues to the Arrangement of Jeremiah's Prophecies," *WTJ* 51 (1989): 109-131. Patterson argues that the theme of YHWH's judgment on the nations in Jer 25 logically segues into YHWH's judgment on Judah (Jer 26-45) and the nations (Jer 46-51) as anticipated by Jer 1:4-10. In this way, the structure of Hebrew Jeremiah is very similar to Greek Jeremiah.

See Rofé, "The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah," 393-394. Rofé suggests that the four Jehoiakim chapters (25; 26; 35; 36) frame the five Zedekiah chapters (27; 28; 29; 32; 34). The fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer 25:1; 36:1; 45:1) is key to the present structure.

See Gary E. Yates, "Narrative Parallelism and the 'Jehoiakim Frame': A Reading Strategy for Jeremiah 26-45," *JETS* 48 (2005): 263-281, especially 264-268. Yates argues that Jer 26-35 and 36-45 are structured repetitively. This section is not meant to be read chronologically, but analogically (p. 267). Judah's refusal to listen to YHWH and his prophets is the reason for their destruction.

See Joel Rosenberg, "Jeremiah and Ezekiel," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 190-194. Rosenberg understands all of Jeremiah to exhibit a chiasmus with Jer 20-40 being an internal chiasmus in this larger arrangement. Though Rosenberg does not note the connection of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, he says, "It can be seen that the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah are interspersed in something of a checkerboard pattern… (p. 194)."

Zedekiah returns in Jer 37-39 (37:1, 3, 17, 18, 21; 38:5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 24; 39:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7) after a reference dismissing Jehoiakim (Jer 37:1). Jehoiakim reappears in Jer 45:1 and 46:2 after a reference dismissing Zedekiah (Jer 44:30). Finally, Zedekiah is king throughout Jer 49-52 (49:34; 51:59; 52:1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11). Jehoiakim again surfaces in Jer 52:2, however, where Zedekiah and Jehoiakim are united by the narrator, which has been covert in the form of Hebrew Jeremiah for the entirety of Jer 26-52. The pattern of switching between the narratives of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah appears three times in Jer 26-52. This reaches its pinnacle in Jer 52:2 where Zedekiah merges with Jehoiakim as the reason for Judah's demise.[464]

There is another contextual reason for the use of the name יְהוֹיָקִם in Jer 27:1. The name means "YH raises up/establishes/exalts."[465] The only person in the Hebrew Bible with the name יְהוֹיָקִים is the son of Josiah, king of Judah. The repurposing of this name to refer to Zedekiah in Jer 27:1, however, illustrates that the author is contextually punning on this name. Additionally, the verb √קום appears in Jer 23:4-5; 30:9; and 33:14 to refer to future hopes regarding YHWH raising up a new king to rule the restored Jerusalem. In the context of Jer 27, it is neither Jehoiakim or Zedekiah, however, whom YHWH raises (√קום) up but Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 27:4-15). Nebuchadnezzar is יְהוֹיָקִים. Nebuchadnezzar is the king YHWH raises up to rule over the world.[466] The placement of the improper name יְהוֹיָקִם in Jer

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[464] Jill Firth suggests that the intermixing of the stories of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah in Jeremiah provide two witnesses confirming that Judah should be destroyed. See Jill Firth, "Of the Shaping and Smashing of Pottery: Grace and Judgment in the Book of Jeremiah," (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Tyndale Fellowship, Cambridge, England, 28 Jun 2019).

[465] See *HALOT*, 396.

[466] Cf. The form *Hafel yiqtol* form יְהָקֵים from the Aramaic verb √קום "to arise, stand" in Dan 5:21 (also in Dan 6:16) describes YHWH raising up Nebuchadnezzar for his purposes. For a sound play in this verse, see Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 260.

27:1 alerts the hearer to the tight connection between Jehoiakim and Zedekiah as well as symbolising the contextual theme that YHWH has raised up Nebuchadnezzar to his world-encompassing dominion.

4.1.5 Jeremiah 27:2-6

כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי עֲשֵׂה לְךָ מוֹסֵרוֹת וּמֹטוֹת וּנְתַתָּם עַל־צַוָּארֶךָ: וְשִׁלַּחְתָּם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ אֱדוֹם וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ צֹר וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ צִידוֹן בְּיַד מַלְאָכִים הַבָּאִים יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: וְצִוִּיתָ אֹתָם אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיכֶם: אָנֹכִי עָשִׂיתִי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הָאָדָם וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ בְּכֹחִי הַגָּדוֹל וּבִזְרוֹעִי הַנְּטוּיָה וְנָתַתִּיהָ לַאֲשֶׁר יָשַׁר בְּעֵינָי: וְעַתָּה אָנֹכִי נָתַתִּי אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲרָצוֹת הָאֵלֶּה בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עַבְדִּי וְגַם אֶת־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה נָתַתִּי לוֹ לְעָבְדוֹ:

Thus YHWH said to me, "Make for yourself bonds and bars and put them upon your neck.[467] And you will send them to the king of Edom, to the king of Moab, to the king of the sons of Ammon, to the king of Tyre, and to the king of Sidon by the hand of messengers who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah, king of Judah. You will command them to say to their masters, 'Thus YHWH of the armies,[468] the God of Israel, says, thus you will say to your masters, I made the earth, humankind and beast, who are upon the face of the earth with my great strength and with my outstretched arm and I will give it to whomever is right in my

[467] The form צוא[ר]אך appears in 4Q72 f31:2 in Jer 27:2. See Eugene Ulrich, ed., *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (VTSup 134; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 574. This seems to be a case of accidental metathesis. See Crawford, Joosten, Ulrich, "Sample Editions of the Oxford Hebrew Bible," 364.

[468] The lexeme צָבָא in 27:4 is not present in G. See Crawford, Joosten, Ulrich, "Sample Editions of the Oxford Hebrew Bible," 364 and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 527. G usually does not represent MT's צְבָאוֹת in Jeremiah. G lacks 15 of 19 occurrences of יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in MT Jeremiah; see Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 41.

eyes. Now, I am giving all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant.[469] Even the beast of the field I have given to him to serve him."

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[469] The lexeme עֶבֶד "servant" appears in MT Jer 27:6 to describe Nebuchadnezzar, but G reads an infinitive construct of √עבד "to serve" instead (i.e., לְעָבְדוֹ). See Crawford, Joosten, Ulrich, "Sample Editions of the Oxford Hebrew Bible," 364 and 365-366 and A. van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5-15: How Do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?" *JNWSL* 20 (1994): 64.

Holladay (*Jeremiah 2*, 115) thinks that the resulting parallelism "renders G preferable." He understands the phrase עַבְדִּי "my servant" in the MT of Jer 25:9 and 43:10 as secondary based on the MT of Jer 27:6. Holladay (*Jeremiah 2*, 121) suggests that the language of עַבְדִּי "my servant" in Jer 27:6 may result from later theological reflection on Isa 45:1 where Cyrus is called מְשִׁיחוֹ "his anointed." The title רֹעִי "my shepherd" in Isa 44:28 could also cause such reflection, though Holladay does not mention it.

Werner E. Lemke ("Nebuchadrezzar, My Servant," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 45-50) thinks that עַבְדִּי in Jer 27:6 results from a scribal error which later orchestrates its appearance in 25:9 and 43:10. Ziony Zevit ("The Use of עֶבֶד as a Diplomatic Term in Jeremiah," *JBL* 88 (1969): 74-77) believes the term עֶבֶד refers to a political vassal in some cases. Workman (*The Text of Jeremiah*, 243-245) does not believe that Jeremiah would have called Nebuchadnezzar a servant of YHWH. He thinks that an editor after the Babylonian deportation, who only then understood that YHWH had used Babylon to reprove his covenant people, added the words "my servant" in the MT of Jer 25:9; 27:6; and 43:10. Tov ("Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34)," 323-325) believes that the MT's עַבְדִּי is original.

The reconstructed Hebrew *Vorlage* of G (לְעָבְדוֹ) appears at the end of Jer 27:6 in the MT. Thus, the MT has the lexeme עֶבֶד with a clitic pronoun (first common singular) and the infinitive of √עבד with a clitic prounoun (third masculine singular) in Jer 27:6. G has two different infinitives from δουλεύω "to serve" and ἐργάζομαι "to work." See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 132-133. The use of an infinitive from ἐργάζομαι at the end of Jer 27:6, instead of reusing an infinitive of δουλεύω, may be occasioned by a soundplay with the lexeme ἀγρός "field" immediately preceding it. The genitive form ἀγροῦ and the infinitive form ἐργάζεσθαι in this phrase each have the letters α, γ, and ρ juxtaposed (i.e., καὶ τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτῷ "and the wild animal of the field to work it").

The infinitive of ἐργάζομαι translates the infinitive of √עבד (Gen 2:5, 15; 3:23; Num 3:7; 8:11, 15, 19), a *qatal* of √עבד (G Jer 35:14 for MT 28:14), and a *wayyiqtol* of √עבד (G Jer 41:18 for MT 34:14) as well as the infinive of √עשׂה (Exod 31:4 and 5). The infinitive of √עשׂה (i.e., לַעֲשׂוֹת) is usually translated by the infinitive of ποιέω "to do, make" in Jeremiah (Jer 1:12; 7:18; 18:4, 6, 8; G 33:3 for MT 26:3; G 39:35 for MT 32:35; and G 43:4 for MT 36:3). This may mean that G's *Vorlage* reads לְעָבְדוֹ at the end of Jer 27:6, but G's choice of representing this phrase is driven by a desire for soundplay.

4.1.5.1 The Contortion

The orthography of the name of the Babylonian king appears uniquely as נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 27-29 instead of the more common Jeremianic spelling נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר. This isolated orthography creates the opportunity to appropriate a complex of puns in Jer 27 centred around the Babylonian king's name.

4.1.5.2 Stylistics

The Babylonian king's name appears as נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in the book Jeremiah only in Jer 27-29 (27:6, 8, 20; 28:3 without a quiescent *šewa* under the *dalet*; 29:1, and 3).[470] The normal

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[470] The spelling נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר appears also in 2 Kgs 24:11; 25:22; Esth 2:6; Dan 1:1; 2 Chron 36:6, 10, and 13. In the Aramaic portions of the Hebrew Bible, the spelling נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר appears as the standard form. See Hornkohl, *Ancient Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 99.

See D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 2-3. Wiseman says, "However the writing of the name with *n* is possibly attested in an Aramaic tablet dated to Nebuchadrezzar's thirty-fourth year. There is no need then to assume that Nebuchadnezzar reflects an Aramaic pronunciation since the shift *r>n* occurs in other transcriptions of names in Babylonian."

Holladay (*Jeremiah 2*, 114) thinks the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר is only original to Jer 27:6.

spelling of the name is נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר in Jeremiah (c.30 times; cf. four times in Ezekiel).[471] Jeremiah is the only book in the Hebrew Bible with both spellings of the Babylonian king's name (i.e., with a *n* and a *r*).[472] The Hebrew name with a *resh* appears to be closer to the king's Akkadian/Babylonian name (*Nabū-kudurr$^{u/i}$-uṣur* "Nabu, protect the firstborn/ heir").[473] Lundbom states that the spelling with an *resh* is older and "doubtless correct."[474] Donald Wiseman says, "In the Old Testament Nebuchadrezzar, the less common Hebrew

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[471] Jeremiah 21:2, 7, 25; 24:1; 25:1, 9; 29:21; 32:1, 28; 34:1; 35:11; 37:1; 39:1, 5, 11; 43:10; 44:30; 46:2, 13, 26; 49:28, 30; 50:17; 51:34; 52:4, 12, 28, 29, 30; Ezek 26:7; 29:18, 19; and 30:10.

For a discussion of the various spellings of the name of the Babylonian king in the Hebrew Bible, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 100; Jack R. Lundbom, "Builders of Ancient Babylon: Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II," *Int* 71 (2017): 166; David S. Vanderhooft, "'Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, My Servant': Contrasting Prophetic Images of the Great King," *HeBAI* 7 (2018): 93 note 1; Mitka R. Golub and Shira J. Golani, "Judean Personal Names in the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Archaeological Evidence," *JSOT* 43 (2019): 135 note 8; and Hornkohl, *Ancient Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 99-103.

Hornkohl (p. 101) believes that the difference in spelling the Babylonian king's name with a *r* or with a *n* is the result of the common linguistic feature of interchange between liquids (e.g., Hebrew בֵּן "son" vs. בַּר "son" in Aramaic and Hebrew מִזְרָח "east" vs. Aramaic מַדְנַח "east"). Hornkohl (p. 101) also mentions that König suggests that the shift to *n* from *r* is the result of dissimilation where two *r* consonants at the end of the name causes the first one to be changed to another sound. Also, see Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 2-3. See Wendy Widder, "Linguistic Fundamentals," in *Linguistics & Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Douglas Mangum and Josh Westbury (LMS 2; Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017), 15-17.

[472] Hornkohl, *Ancient Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 102. Additionally, Hornkohl notes on page 103, "Out of the 37 cases of the name נבוכדר/נאצר in the MT, only 14 are paralleled in the Greek [Jer 24:1; 27:6; 32:1; 34:1; 35:11; 37:1; 39:1; 43:10; 44:30; 46:2, 13; 49:28; 51:34; and 52:4]. Of these 14, all but one are spelled with *resh* (the exception is Jer 27:6)." Also, see Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 2 note 8. Wiseman says, "The almost unanimous LXX nabouchodonosor may have been used by Josephus in referring to Jewish traditions while he used nabokodrossoros when quoting from Berossos."

[473] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 100; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 571; Lundbom, "Builders of Ancient Babylon: Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II," 166; Hornkohl, *Ancient Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 100; and Golub and Golani, "Judean Personal Names in the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Archaeological Evidence," 135 note 8.

[474] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 100.

נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר (*nᵉbûḵaḏre'ṣṣar*) is used in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. This is a near transliteration of the Babylonian royal name…and this may indicate a closer contact with the name as pronounced."[475] Both Lundbom and Wiseman mention that there is wide variance regarding the spelling of the Babylonian king's name in the Hebrew Bible and in Akkadian texts.[476] The various spellings of the Babylonian king's name in the Hebrew Bible illustrates that the name is borrowed from another language.[477] It should be noted that there are other uniquely spelled royal names in this context (i.e., יְהוֹיָקִם and יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ in Jer 27:1 as well as the prophetic name יִרְמְיָה; see the discussion above).

The spelling נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר appears six times (Jer 21:2, 7; 22:25; 24:1; 25:1, and 9) previously in Hebrew Jeremiah before this orthographic divergence beginning in Jer 27:6. Before Jer 27:6, there has been no orthographic or phonetic variance in the Hebrew representation of the Babylonian king's name in Jeremiah. The name is always נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר before Jer 27. Beginning with Jer 27 the name is represented several different ways — נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 27:6, 8, 20; נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 28:3; נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 28:11, 14; and נְבוּכַדְרֶאצּוֹר in

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[475] Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 3. Wiseman also discusses the meaning of the name.

[476] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 100. Wiseman (*Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 3) says that Nebuchadrezzar's "…Babylonian royal name is likewise written with various syllabic spellings *na-bi-um-ku-du-ur/dur/dúr/-ri/ru-ú/u-ṣu-ùr/ṣur* or more common in Sumerian with logograms (*ᵏᵈnà.níg.du.uri* or *ᵈnà.níg.du.šeš*)…."

[477] See Noonan, *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible*, 13-14 and 117-118. Noonan refers specifically to the different patterns of phonological substitution when borrowing non-Semitic loans into Hebrew. He describes the two spellings of "helmet" as כּוֹבַע in 1 Sam 17:5 and קוֹבַע in 1 Sam 17:38 from Hurrian. The same principle applies to the spellings of the Babylonian king's name in the Hebrew Bible even though this is a loan from a fellow Semitic language. Different authors represent the sounds of Nebuchadr/nezzar's name in different ways.

Cf. There are different representations of other Akkadian names in the Hebrew Bible such as Tiglath-pileser — תִּגְלַת פִּלְאֶסֶר in 2 Kgs 15:29 and 16:10, תִּגְלַת פִּלֶסֶר in 2 Kgs 16:7, תִּלְגַּת פִּלְנֶאסֶר in 1 Chron 5:6 and 2 Chron 28:20, and תִּלְגַּת פִּלְנֶסֶר in 1 Chron 5:26. See Alan R. Millard, "Assyrian Royal Names in Biblical Hebrew," *JSS* 21 (1976): 7.

kethiv Jer 49:28. In regard to the unique spelling נְבוּכַדְרֶאצּוֹר in Jer 49:28, Garsiel suggests that this orthography is constructed as a pun upon the nation חָצוֹר "Hazor" whom YHWH judges.[478] If orthographic divergences in Nebuchadn/rezzar's name create a pun elsewhere in Jeremiah, then it is possible that a pun is also activated by the spelling of the Babylonian king's name with a *nun*. Though several consonants may potentially be part of a pun upon a divergent spelling of Nebuchadn/rezzar's name, as Garsiel illustrates the specifically divergent element will be the focus of the pun. Also, Garsiel notes that the verb √צור "to besiege" in Jer 21:4 and 9 is a pun upon the name נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר in Jer 21:2 and 7.[479] Thus, the Babylonian king's name is part of a pun earlier in Hebrew Jeremiah. This suggests that the change to the orthography of the Babylonian king's name creates a pun. The orthographic change in Jer 27 produces a fixation on the precise spelling of the Babylonian king's name and illuminates a web of connections between the consonantal phonemes within the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר and other lexemes in this context.

4.1.5.3 Textual Criticism

My presentation of puns in Jer 27 is not inhibited by the obvious textual variations among the witnesses.[480] For example, the lexeme γῆ "land, earth" appears once in Jer 27:5 in G, while the lexeme אֶרֶץ "land, earth" appears twice in MT.[481] The reduction in G is perhaps

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[478] See Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48-49.

[479] See Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48.

[480] See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 526-529. G is shorter than MT in this chapter. G lacks MT Jer 27:1, 7, 13-14, and 27:17. G is much shorter than MT Jer 27:19-22.

[481] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:303 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 132-133.

due to *homoioteleuton*.[482] The MT has the plural of אֶרֶץ in Jer 27:6, but G has the singular.[483] Apparently אֶרֶץ appears less in G's Vorlage in Jer 27:6-7 but it still occurs in the text.

The subject pronoun אָנֹכִי "I" appears in MT Jer 27:5 and 6, but it may not be present in G in Jer 27:6.[484] The pronoun ἐγὼ "I" does appear in G Jer 27:5 (i.e., ἐγὼ ἐποίησα "I, I made") which represents the MT אָנֹכִי עָשִׂיתִי "I, I made" exactly. The absence of ἐγὼ in Jer 27:6 (i.e., ἔδωκα "I gave" instead of ἐγὼ ἔδωκα) for the MT's אָנֹכִי נָתַתִּי "I, I gave" suggests that אָנֹכִי is not present in the *Vorlage* of G in Jer 27:6. Though אָנֹכִי is lacking in G's *Vorlage* in Jer 27:6, it is present in Jer 27:5.

Though some textual questions remain on the exact number of occurrences of the lexeme אֶרֶץ and the subject pronoun אָנֹכִי in the MT and G's Hebrew *Vorlage* of Jer 27:4-6, these words are present in the text of both MT and G though in differing quantities.

4.1.5.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Contortion

4.1.5.4.1 צִידוֹן and צֹר

Zedekiah hosts a summit in Jerusalem for the purpose of conspiring against Nebuchadnezzar. There are several nations from the Levant in attendance. Two of the nations

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[482] See Crawford, Joosten, Ulrich, "Sample Editions of the Oxford Hebrew Bible," 365; van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5-15: How Do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?" 60-61; Tov, "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34)," 322-323; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 527; and Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 41.

[483] See van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5-15: How Do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?" 62-63 and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 527. Though it is likely that G has the same *Vorlage*, see Tov, "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34)," 323.

The MT of Jer 27:7 has the lexeme אֶרֶץ, but this verse is lacking in G. See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:303 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 132-135. Also see van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5-15: How Do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?" 65-67.

[484] See especially Tov, "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34)," 323. Also, see van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5-15: How Do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?" 63 and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 527.

are צִידוֹן "Sidon" and צֹר "Tyre." The Phoenician city states of Tyre and Sidon appear three times in Jeremiah (25:22; 27:3; and 47:4). The spelling of the name צִידוֹן is closely connected to the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. The three consonants ד, נ, and צ appearing in the name צִידוֹן are almost juxtaposed in the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר, only separated by a quiescent א.

This pun between צִידוֹן and נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר would probably not be operative if the Babylonian king's name was spelled with a *resh* (נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר) instead of with a *nun* (נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר). Though a *nun* appears at the beginning of both spellings in the theophoric element of the name, the spelling with a *resh* would mean that the *nun* would be significantly distanced from the consonants *dalet* and *tsade*. The spelling with a *resh* additionally separates the *dalet* and *tsade* by two consonants. Thus, the *dalet* and *tsade* would be separated by two consonants and the next nearest consonant, the *dalet*, to the *nun* would also be separated by two consonants. The *resh* spelling (נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר) would probably invalidate a connection between צִידוֹן and Nebuchadnezzar (נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר). The author chooses to spell Nebuchadnezzar's name with a *nun* in this section of Jeremiah in order to facilitate a pun between the names צִידוֹן and נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר.[485]

Closely connected geographically, historically, and contextually to the city צִידוֹן is the city צֹר in Jer 27:3. The two consonants צ and ר in the name צֹר also appear in the same order at the conclusion of the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. Garsiel notes several different puns between the final צ and ר in the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר and place names such as צוֹר in Ezek 26:7 and חָצוֹר "Hazor" in Jer 49:28.[486] Unlike the *kethiv* of Jer 49:28 (נְבוּכַדְרֶאצּוֹר), the final vowel in Nebuchadnezzar's

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[485] Also, ו serves as a vowel letter in each name. It is a *holem* in צִידוֹן and a *shureq* in נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר.

[486] See Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48-49. A *vav* serves as a vowel letter in some spellings of Tyre (i.e., צוֹר; see 1 Kgs 5:15; Ezek 26:15; 27:3 [twice], 8, 32; 28:12; Hos 9:13; Ps 83:8; and 87:4). The spelling of Tyre is defective in Jer 27.

name is not altered to further strengthen the connection between the names of the location (חָצוֹר) and the Babylonian king in Jer 27. Also, Garsiel mentions a pun between the verb √צור "to besiege" and the name of the Babylonian king in Jer 21:2-4, 9; 32:1-2; 39:1; and 2 Kgs 24:10-11. The connection between Nebuchadr/nezzar's name, the city צֹר, and the verb √צור appears in several different texts in the Hebrew Bible.

The form of the names צִידוֹן and צֹר recall the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. The consonants composing the names of these cities are juxtaposed in the name of the Babylonian king. Through this means, the author signifies that YHWH has given all nations into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. The very form of the names of these city states indicate that they belong to נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר.[487]

4.1.5.4.2 אָדוֹן

It appears that only the diplomats (מַלְאָכִים) of the nations, not their kings, are gathered in Jerusalem to Zedekiah. These officials are expected to return and recount the news of the meeting to their king. YHWH sends Jeremiah to give a message to the envoys who in turn will give it to their king (מֶלֶךְ). The lexeme מֶלֶךְ appears six times in Jer 27:3 to refer to the kings of various nations, including Zedekiah. The lexeme also appeared in Jer 27:1. After seven contextual appearances of the lexeme מֶלֶךְ, YHWH tells the envoys to return and speak with their אָדוֹן "master" in Jer 27:4. To make sure the reader does not miss the switch, the lexeme אָדוֹן appears twice in Jer 27:4. Jeremiah 27:4 is the only verse in Jeremiah where this lexeme appears twice in reference to a king (cf. it appears twice in Jer 46:10 in reference to

[487] The names צֹר and צִידוֹן appear together also in Jer 25:22 and 47:4. Both contexts discuss YHWH bringing judgment through Nebuchadnezzar. The pun between the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר and the names צֹר and צִידוֹן is probably operable in these contexts.

YHWH).[488] G (βασιλεύς "king" and κύριος "lord, master"), S (ܡܠܟܐ "king" and ܡܪܝܐ "lord"), and T (מְלַךְ "king" and רִבּוֹן "lord") each use different lexemes to mark the switch in their *Vorlage* from מֶלֶךְ to אָדוֹן.[489]

The lexeme אָדוֹן recalls the name of נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. The three consonants א, ד, and נ in אָדוֹן appear juxtaposed in the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. The author uses the lexeme אָדוֹן twice in Jer 27:4 instead of the lexeme מֶלֶךְ because of the pun it creates with Nebuchadnezzar's name. At this gathering of royal officials in Jerusalem, YHWH has Jeremiah speak to those seeking to overthrow Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. YHWH is removing kingly authority from these gathered leaders and giving it to Nebuchadnezzar. נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר is destined to be the אָדוֹן of every kingdom.

As was the case with the city state צִידוֹן, the noun אָדוֹן is a pun on the spelling of Nebuchadnezzar's name with a *nun* (נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר), not a *resh*. Additionally, the quiescent א is significant to this pun. The quiescent א drops from some Hebrew spellings of the king's name (נְבֻכַדְנֶצַּר in Dan 1:18; 2:1 [twice]; Ezra 1:7; 2:1; and Neh 7:6) and is entirely absent from the Aramaic portion of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Dan 2:28, 46; 3:1; Ezra 5:12, 14; 6:5; etc.).
The spelling of the Babylonian king's name with a *nun* and with a quiescent *aleph* allows the author to connect the three consonants in the lexeme אָדוֹן to the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר where these same consonants are juxtaposed. YHWH is removing all power from the kings of the nations

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[488] The lexeme אָדוֹן usually refers to YHWH in Jeremiah. When it does refer to a human, it always refers to a king (Jer 22:18; 27:4 [twice]; 34:5; 37:20; and 38:9).

[489] In G and S, the same lexeme refers to the kings and YHWH in Jer 27:4 — κύριος and ܡܪܝܐ. YHWH, not the kings, has expansive geographic dominion.

and giving everything into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.[490] נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר will soon become אָדוֹן over all peoples.

4.1.5.4.3 אָנֹכִי

YHWH of the armies (צְבָאוֹת in Jer 27:4; cf. vv. 18, 19, and 21) elevates Nebuchadnezzar to supreme kingship. YHWH uses the unnecessary first common singular subject pronoun אָנֹכִי with a *qatal* twice in Jer 27:5-6 to emphasise his involvement in giving all the world to Nebuchadnezzar — אָנֹכִי עָשִׂיתִי "I, I made…" in Jer 27:5 and אָנֹכִי נָתַתִּי "I, I gave…" in Jer 27:6. As noted above, the pronoun אָנֹכִי is not represented in Jer 27:6 in G but it appears in Jer 27:5 in G.[491]

Since YHWH created the world (אֶרֶץ) and the its inhabitants (אָדָם "humankind" and בְּהֵמָה "beast"), he can give (√נתן "to give") it to whomever he desires (Jer 27:5). YHWH presently gives (√נתן) all the lands (אֶרֶץ) to נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 27:6. As YHWH spoke the land (Gen 1:9-10) and its inhabitants (Gen 1:24-31) into existence, now YHWH speaks (the noun דָּבָר "word" in Jer 27:1, 12, and 18 and the verb √דבר "to speak" in Jer 27:12, 13, and 16) and establishes Nebuchadnezzar's worldwide authority.

The pronoun אָנֹכִי recalls the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. As with the lexeme אָדוֹן, the spelling of the Babylonian king's name with a *nun* and a quiescent *aleph* is key to the connection. The three consonants א, כ, and נ in אָנֹכִי are almost juxtaposed in the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר and appear in reverse. The grammatically unnecessary nature of the pronoun's appearance(s) emphasise(s) YHWH's involvement in Nebuchadnezzar's rise to power. YHWH's own (אָנֹכִי) activity

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[490] The use of the prepositional phrase בְּיַד "by the hand of" in Jer 27:3 and 6 is ironic. The messengers return to their king with a description in their hand (בְּיַד) from YHWH that he has given all lands into Nebuchadnezzar's hand (בְּיַד).

[491] G may still have אָנֹכִי in its *Vorlage* in Jer 27:6; see Tov, "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34)," 323.

creates the name and person נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. YHWH personally creates through his word (√דבר) Nebuchadnezzar's dominion over the world (cf. the use of the phrase בְּרֵאשִׁית in Jer 27:1 and Gen 1:1).[492]

4.1.5.4.4 צַוָּאר and אֶרֶץ

YHWH tells Jeremiah to place bonds and bars upon his neck (צַוָּאר) in Jer 27:2 symbolising YHWH placing the necks of all nations under Nebuchadnezzar's yoke in Jer

[492] The consonants א, ב, ד, כ, נ, and ר of the pronoun אָנֹכִי and the root √דבר spell out the name of נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר with the exception of the consonant *tsade* and the vowel *shureq*. Nebuchadnezzar's name appears with a *qibbuts* instead of a *shureq* in 2 Kgs 24:1, 10; 25:1, 8; Jer 28:11, 14; and 1 Chron 5:41 (i.e., נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר). The name appears in Dan 1:18 and 2:1 without a *shureq* or an א (i.e., נְבֻכַדְנֶצַּר). Also, the Aramaic spelling in Dan 3:14; 5:11, and 18 lacks a *shureq* or an א (i.e., נְבֻכַדְנֶצַּר). YHWH himself (אָנֹכִי) and his word (√דבר) are the driving force sustaining Nebuchadnezzar's rise to power.

27:8, 10, and 11. The lexeme צַוָּאר "neck" appears 8 times in Jer 27-28 (i.e., 27:2, 8, 11, 12; 28:10, 11, 12, and 14) and only once elsewhere in the book (i.e., Jer 30:8).[493]

The lexeme צַוָּאר shares the final three juxtaposed consonants (א, צ, and ר) with the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר.[494] Additionally, a ו appears as a consonant in צַוָּאר and a vowel letter in נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. Garsiel mentions a similar pun between אוֹצָר "treasure" and נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר in 2 Kgs 24:13, which he suggests is also covertly present in Isa 39.[495] In Jer 27:8, YHWH says all necks (צַוָּאר) will belong to נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר (cf. Deut 28:48). The place of enslavement, namely the

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[493] In Jer 28:10-11, Hananiah takes the yoke off Jeremiah's neck (צַוָּאר) and interprets this act as YHWH declaring that he will break the yoke of נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר from off the necks (צַוָּאר) of the nations in two years. Hananiah understands the connection between the lexeme צַוָּאר and the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. Hananiah, by breaking Jeremiah's yoke and removing it from his neck, is trying to functionally break the inherent connection between the lexeme צַוָּאר and the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. YHWH, however, states that Hananiah's action solidified the connection between the two. YHWH will place an iron yoke on the necks (צַוָּאר) of all the nations so that they will serve נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 28:14.

Hananiah's prophecy may have been based on the earlier prophecy describing Judah being freed from the yoke of the powerful Assyrians in Isa 10:27 (cf. Isa 52:2; see Noegel, *Janus parallelism in Job*, 36-37). This prophecy came at a time of Assyrian power. Perhaps, Hananiah understands Judah's present situation through the lens of Isa 10:27 and the subsequent deliverance of Judah from the Assyrian yoke.

Hananiah's description of YHWH removing the yoke of Babylon in Jer 28 may also be intended to subvert neo-Babylonian propaganda. Nabopolassar claims that Nabu and Marduk helped him remove the yoke of Assyria from the necks of their Mesopotamian subjects. Nabopolassar says, "The Assyrian(s), who had ruled Akkad because of divine anger and had, with his heavy yoke, oppressed the inhabitants of the country, I, the weak one, the powerless one, who constantly seeks the lord of lords, with the mighty strength of the gods Nabu and Marduk, my lords, I removed from Akkad and caused (the Babylonians) to throw off their yoke." This quotation comes from Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *A History of Babylon 2200 BC - AD 75* (Blackwell History of the Ancient World; West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 224. Hananiah predicts the very thing Babylon did to Assyria through Nabu and Marduk, Judah will do to Babylon through YHWH's assistance.

[494] See Ludwig Koehler, "Bemerkungen zur Schreibung und Aussprache der Tibetischen Masora," *HUCA* 23 (1950-1951): 138-140. Koehler notes that the א in the word צַוָּאר is not necessary for pronunciation. He suggests that the א was introduced in the lexeme (i.e., צַוָּאר instead of צַוָּר) to distinguish it from צוּר "rock." The form without א appears in Neh 3:5 (i.e., צַוָּרָם "their neck"). The consonant א is significant to the pun between צַוָּאר and נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 27.

[495] See Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48.

צַוָּאר, resounds with the phonetics of the very name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. Written in the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר is the reality that he will subdue the צַוָּאר of every leader and kingdom on the earth (cf. Josh 10:24).[496] The choice of צַוָּאר instead of עֹרֶף "neck" (Jer 2:27; 7:26; 17:23; 18:17; 19:15; 32:33; and 48:39) fortifies a connection between Nebuchadnezzar and his power.

Additionally, the author of Jer 27-28 may be subverting neo-Babylonian royal propaganda.[497] For example, in the Nabopolassar Cylinder C31/1, Nabopolassar says, "I bowed my neck to my lord Marduk. I rolled up my garment, my royal robe, and carried on my head bricks and earth."[498] Nebuchadrezzar is also mentioned as working in this inscription.[499] In this text, Nabopolassar and his children, including Nebuchadrezzar, submit their necks to Marduk, specifically describing their work in constructing his temple.

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[496] The second masculine singular clitic on צַוָּאר in Jer 27:2 (i.e., צַוָּארֶךָ; cf. Jer 30:8) increases the consonantal connection with נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר by the addition of a כ.

There may additionally be a connection between the form צַוָּארֶךָ in Jer 27:2 and the verb √יצר "to form, plan, make" (cf. אֲצוּרְךָ "I appointed you" the *kethiv* in Jer 1:5; the *qere* is אֲצָרְךָ). The verb √יצר describes the appointment of YHWH's servant (Isa 49:5) as well as YHWH giving the lands to Assyria (2 Kgs 19:25 par. Isa 37:26). The verb √יצר in Isa 44:24 probably applies to Cyrus as YHWH's chosen in Isa 44:24-45:7 (as it described Israel in Isa 44:2 and 21).

The verb √יצר refers to YHWH appointing a prophet, a nation, or a king to their respective work. There might be a connection between Jeremiah being commissioned (Jer 1:5) to uproot and tear down nations (Jer 1:9-10) and Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon, like Assyria before them, being commissioned by YHWH to accomplish this mission by conquering all lands. The form צַוָּארֶךָ in Jer 27:2 signals a pun not just with the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר but with his mission from YHWH (cf. אֲצוּרְךָ in *kethiv* Jer 1:5).

[497] For a similar example where First Isaiah subverts neo-Assyrian royal propaganda, see Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah," 719-737 and Michael Chan, "Rhetorical Reversal and Usurpation: Isaiah 10:5-34 and the Use of Neo-Assyrian Royal Idiom in the Construction of an Anti-Assyrian Theology," *JBL* 128 (2009): 717-733.

[498] Rucío Da Riva, "Neo-Babylonian Rock-cut Monuments and Ritual Performance: The Rock Reliefs of Nebuchadnezzar in Brisa Revisited," *BeHAI* 7 (2018): 29. For a discussion of the inscription and a transliteration of the text, see Rucío Da Riva, *The Inscriptions of Nabopolassar, Amel-Marduk and Neriglissar* (StANER 3; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 77-92.

[499] Da Riva, "Neo-Babylonian Rock-cut Monuments and Ritual Performance," 29.

Presumably, Marduk will reward their loyalty by subjugating the necks of various kingdoms under them. Nebuchadrezzar confirms this conceptualisation in an inscription quoted by Wiseman illustrating that he would have understood his conquest as being a result of Marduk's activity. Part of the inscription by Nebuchadrezzar to Marduk reads, "…I am the prince who obeys you, the creation of your hand. You begot me and entrusted me with the rule over all peoples."[500]

YHWH, however, not Marduk, subdues the necks of kings before Nebuchadnezzar according to Jer 27. Nebuchadnezzar, does not receive protection from his namesake, Nabu, but from YHWH. The author of Jer 27 subverts neo-Babylonian royal propaganda by emphasising YHWH's involvement in the exaltation of Nebuchadnezzar over the earth while denying any power to Marduk (cf. Isa 46:1-2).[501]

The consonants א, צ, and ר connecting the lexeme צָוָּאר and the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר repeat in another lexeme appearing in this context — אֶרֶץ. The lexeme אֶרֶץ appears four times in the MT of Jer 27 (vv. 5 [twice], 6, and 7) and twice in G (Jer 27:5 and 6).[502] In verses 5 and 6,

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[500] I am quoting from Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 99. For a transliteration and a translation of the text, see Stephen Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1912), 120-140. The text quoted above appears in i.61-65 from "Nebukadnezar Nr. 15" according to Langdon. It appears on pages 122-125.

[501] For a discussion of the neo-Babylonian presentation of Marduk making Nebuchadnezzar the king of the world, see David Stephen Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSMM 59; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1999), 34-41.

[502] See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 527.

YHWH gives all lands (אֶרֶץ) and their inhabitants to Nebuchadnezzar.[503] The prominence of the lexeme אֶרֶץ in these few sentences is striking when compared to its seldom use throughout the rest of Jer 27-29 (Jer 28:8 and 29:18). Nebuchadnezzar's name (נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר) concludes with the three consonants present in the lexemes אֶרֶץ and צָוַאר. The author illustrates that YHWH gives the earth (אֶרֶץ) and everything in it to נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר. The אֶרֶץ and its inhabitants belong to YHWH, and he gives it to whomever he wishes (cf. Ps 24:1).[504]

The pun between the lexemes אֶרֶץ and צָוַאר and the neo-Babylonian king is not dependent upon either Jeremianic spelling of the king's name as it involves only the last three consonants of his name. The pun, therefore, appears with both forms of the king's name. The pun may be stronger with a *resh* (נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר), which connects the last four consonants of Nebuchadrezzar's name with the lexemes אֶרֶץ and צָוַאר.[505] In any case, the author shows that YHWH has given all lands (אֶרֶץ) into the hand of the king of Babylon and put his yoke on their necks (צָוַאר).

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[503] For the connection between Gen 1:26-29; 2:17; Ps 8:6-9; and Jer 27:5-6, see Adrian Schenker, "Nebukadnezzars Metamorphose vom Unterjocher zum Gottesknecht: Das Bild Nebukadnezzars und einige mit ihm zusammenhängende Unterschiede in den beiden Jeremia-Rezensionen," RB 89 (1982): 500-504. In Gen 1, Adam (אָדָם) has authority from YHWH to be over the animals (בְּהֵמָה). In Jer 27, YHWH has given authority over man (אָדָם) and animals (בְּהֵמָה) to Nebuchadnezzar. The origin aetiology in Gen 1 is politicised in Jeremiah.

Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 527 and 533) notes that Nebuchadnezzar's control over the "beasts of the field" (חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה) in Jer 27:6 (cf. Jer 28:14; Dan 2:37-38) is ironic in light of Dan 4:25 [E 22].

[504] The MT uses the lexeme אֶרֶץ to describe the rise (Jer 27:5-6) and fall (Jer 27:7) of the neo-Babylonian empire (cf. Jer 25:12-13). The latter aspect is missing in G.

[505] There are puns between the spelling נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר and the lexeme אֶרֶץ elsewhere in Jeremiah (35:11; 37:1; and 46:13). Additionally, there is a pun between the lexeme אֶרֶץ and the verb √דבר "to speak" and the name נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר in Jer 39:5 and 46:13.

4.1.5.4.5 Summary of Puns in Jer 27

The name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר in Jer 27, instead of the expected נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר, becomes the catalyst for puns upon this name.[506] The puns demonstrate the message of Jeremiah's prophecy. Every land (אֶרֶץ), king (אָדוֹן), and neck (צַוָּאר) will be given to נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר, including the city states צֹר and צִידוֹן. YHWH himself (אָנֹכִי) speaks (√דבר) Nebuchadnezzar's worldwide dominion into reality.[507]

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[506] Garsiel and Řehák ("Puns on Names as a Poetic Device in the Book of Judges," 278) say, "The author, however, does not make the connections overtly; rather, he lets the reader uncover them." In the same way, the author expects the hearer in Jer 27 to connect the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר to the complex matrix of puns.

Cf. The change from the name אֲבִיָּם "Abijam" in 1 Kings (14:31; 15:1, etc.) to אֲבִיָּה or אֲבִיָּהוּ "Abijah" in 2 Chronicles (12:16; 13:1, 2, 3, etc.) is perhaps an authorial device to demonstrate where the king's allegiance lies. See Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 207. It is also possible that 1 Kings makes an orthographic and lexical distinction, between אֲבִיָּה, the good son of Jeroboam of Israel (1 Kgs 14:1 and 13), and the bad king אֲבִיָּם of Judah (1 Kgs 14:31).

[507] The author of Jer 27 shows that Nebuchadnezzar fulfils the destiny and meaning of his name. Contrast the first king of Israel, שָׁאוּל, who does not "inquire" (√שאל) of YHWH and does not exemplify his name. See Moshe Garsiel, "Word Play and Puns As A Rhetorical Device in the Book of Samuel," in *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*; ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000), 184-189 especially 187-189.

Gideon is from the family of Abiezer (אֲבִי הָעֶזְרִי) and his father's name is יוֹאָשׁ. Gideon is tied to the verbs √עזר "to help" and √ישע "to save" through his familial connections. He is the logical choice to save and deliver Israel. Gideon, however, questions the stories of YHWH's deliverance from "our fathers" (אֲבוֹתֵינוּ in Judg 6:13) and wonders if he can save (√ישע) Israel (Judg 6:15). Also, Gideon (גִּדְעוֹן) hesitates to cut down (√כרת; cf. √גדע) his father's idol and the Midianites. See Moshe Garsiel, "Homiletic Name-Derivations As A Literary Device in the Gideon Narrative: Judges VI-VIII," *VT* 43 (1993): 304-306.

A person can embody their name in a negative way. Jephthah (יִפְתָּח), the judge from Gilead, opens (√פתח) his mouth to make a destructive vow. In this case, the name יִפְתָּח symbolises the devastation this character accomplishes. See Garsiel and Řehák, "Puns on Names as a Poetic Device in the Book of Judges," 276-277.

The author orchestrates the lexemes in Jer 27 around the spelling נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר to accompany YHWH's proclamation of Babylonian dominion.[508] The lexemes and the complex puns they create in Jer 27 demonstrate the futility of resisting Nebuchadnezzar.[509] The author fashions this chapter as an aural, oral, and visual experience comparable to Dan 5:5-9 and 24-28. The lexemes in Jer 27 make sense by themselves but gain new meaning through the recitation of these lexemes in the presence of the name נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר.[510]

4.2 Textual Cohesion

4.2.1 Jeremiah 5:4-5

וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי

אַךְ־דַּלִּים הֵם

נוֹאֲלוּ

כִּי לֹא יָדְעוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם׃

אֵלְכָה־לִּי אֶל־הַגְּדֹלִים

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[508] *Contra* Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 116-117. Holladay believes that verses 12-15 and 16-22 are unrelated to verses 1-11 and are additions based on the theme of submitting the neck to Nebuchadnezzar. In conclusion, Holladay says, "The present literary condition of the chapter is not good, and one can only guess at what carelessness of recording or transmission has left the material in its present shape." The concern for puns upon the name of Nebuchadnezzar, which illustrates that the Babylonian king will conquer the world, is perhaps the controlling concept behind the arrangement and structure of Jer 27.

[509] A few of these same terms appear in Jer 30:8-9 to reverse the prophecy in Jer 27. YHWH of the armies (צָבָא) will break Nebuchadnezzar's yoke from Judah's neck (עֻלָּיו). They will not serve (√עבד) him any longer but will serve (√עבד) YHWH. This is the only occurrence of עֻלָּיו in Jeremiah outside of chapters 27-28.

[510] See Garsiel and Řehák, "Puns on Names as a Poetic Device in the Book of Judges," 285. After examining various puns based on personal and place names in Judges, Garsiel and Řehák conclude that the authors of Judges are responsible for the literary connections created by these names in the text. The names do not seem to be literary creations in most cases, though this is certainly possible in some cases. In general it seems that the authors work out the connection between a certain name and the story line in creative ways.

וַאֲדַבְּרָה אוֹתָם

כִּי הֵמָּה יָדְעוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם

אַךְ הֵמָּה יַחְדָּו שָׁבְרוּ עֹל

נִתְּקוּ מוֹסֵרוֹת׃

"I thought:[511]

But they are poor.[512]

They are foolish.[513]

For they do not know YHWH's way, the judgment of their God.

Let me go myself to the great.[514]

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511 The verb √אמר "to say" probably refers to inner thought here (cf. Jer 3:19); see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 175 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 377.

512 Thompson (*The Book of Jeremiah*, 237-238) suggests that these people are impoverished regarding knowledge (i.e., stupid), not economically impoverished.

Should the pronoun הֵם "they" be read with what precedes it (i.e., as a nominal phrase אַךְ־דַּלִּים הֵם; see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 178) or what follows it (i.e., הֵם נוֹאָלוּ; see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 174; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 86; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 377-378)? The *'atnāḥ* on הֵם in A, L, and C suggests that it goes with what precedes it.

אַךְ means "but;" see Norman H. Snaith, "The meaning of the Hebrew אַךְ," *VT* 14 (1964): 221-225, especially 223 and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 178. Also, see Stephen H. Levinsohn, "רַק and אַךְ: Limiting and Countering," *HS* 52 (2011): 102-105.

513 Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 178) understands this verb √יאל "to be foolish" as an asyndetic subordinate clause ("who are foolish") or as a coordinate ("they are foolish") to אַךְ־דַּלִּים הֵם.

G adds a conjunction (διότι "because, for") providing a reason to consider these people poor ("for they are foolish"). G probably reads the negated verbal form לֹא יָכְלוּ "they are not able" in δύναμαι "to be able" instead of the MT's נוֹאָלוּ. See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:232 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 40-41.

514 T reads רַבְרְבַיָּא "the princes" for MT's הַגְּדֹלִים. See Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 403; Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 62; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 378.

Let me speak with them.[515]

For they know YHWH's way, the judgment of their God.

But they together broke a yoke.[516]

They tore off bonds."[517]

4.2.1.1 The Cohesion

The consonantal connection between the orthography and morphology of דַּלִּים "poor ones" and הַגְּדֹלִים "the great ones" illustrate that these groups are similar, to Jeremiah's surprise. The similar כִּי clauses in Jer 5:4 and 5 additionally collaborate this message.

4.2.1.2 Stylistics

The lexeme דַּל appears only one other time in Jeremiah (39:10). דַּל appears with גָּדוֹל only once elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Lev 19:15). Elsewhere in Jeremiah, גָּדוֹל always appears opposite קָטָן "small, little" (Jer 6:13; 8:10; 16:6; 31:34; 42:1, 8; and 44:12). The rarity of the use of דַּל with גָּדוֹל as well as the rarity of the lexeme דַּל in Jeremiah demonstrates that the author purposely employs this lexeme.

The verb √יאל "to be foolish" appears once elsewhere in Jeremiah (50:36). It describes the Babylonian diviners becoming fools. Judah, as Babylon, has become foolish and will be destroyed.

4.2.1.3 Textual Criticism

There are no significant textual issues impacting my argument in these verses.

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[515] I follow Holladay's (*Jeremiah 1*, 173) emendation אִתָּם "with them" instead of MT's אוֹתָם "them" (cf. Jer 9:7), but as he notes אֹתָם appears in Jer 5:3.

[516] G καὶ ἰδοὺ (cf. Jer 4:10 [lacking in MT], 23, 25, and 26) may have וְהִנֵּה or אַךְ הִנֵּה in its *Vorlage*. See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:232 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 40-41.

[517] The verbs √שׁבר and √נתק "to tear off" appear together with the lexemes עֹל and מוֹסֵרָה "bond" in Jer 2:20 and 30:8.

4.2.1.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

In Jer 5:1, YHWH tells Jeremiah to seek for someone doing justice (מִשְׁפָּט), recalling Gen 18:16-31.[518] This is a difficult task (Jer 5:2). Jeremiah laments the evil of his fellow Judahites (Jer 5:3). He thinks to himself that though the poor (דַּל) disregard YHWH, surely the leaders (גָּדוֹל) know YHWH.[519]

The graphemic connection (and the masculine plural ending *-îm*) between דַּלִּים and הַגְּדֹלִים is central. Jeremiah purposed to go to the הַגְּדֹלִים since the דַּלִּים do not know YHWH. Only one consonantal phoneme (i.e., ג) separates the orthography of these groups suggesting that they are both closely connected — not just graphemically but spiritually, something which Jeremiah did not originally anticipate.[520] The form דַּלִּים appears within the form הַגְּדֹלִים (cf. the lexeme פַּח "snare" is written in the surrounding lexemes פַּחַת "pit" and פַּחַד "terror" in Jer 48:43-44). The spelling הַגְּדֹלִים, instead of הַגְּדוֹלִים (1 Chron 17:8; cf. גְּדוֹלִים in Jer 25:14), in Jer 5:5 tightens the graphemic connection.

The similar כִּי clauses in both verses further connects these groups.[521]

Jer 5:4 כִּי לֹא יָדְעוּ֙ דֶּ֣רֶךְ יְהוָ֔ה מִשְׁפַּ֖ט אֱלֹהֵיהֶֽם

Jer 5:5 כִּי֩ הֵמָּ֨ה יָדְע֜וּ דֶּ֣רֶךְ יְהוָ֗ה מִשְׁפַּט֙ אֱלֹהֵיהֶ֔ם

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[518] The verb √ידע "to know" (Jer 5:1, 4, 5, and 15) and the lexeme מִשְׁפָּט (Jer 5:1, 4, 5, and 28) connect Jer 5:1-9 while also connecting this section to the surrounding ones. For the connection to Gen 18:16-31, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 373 and 378.

[519] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 176) thinks this text is applicable to Jer 36:9-26.

[520] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 378) says that "Hebrew *haggĕdōlîm*…makes assonance with *dallîm*."

[521] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 374) and Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 175) note the connection between these lines as well as דַּלִּים and הַגְּדֹלִים in Jer 5:4-5.

The only difference in the two phrases is that the subject pronoun הֵמָּה replaces the negative לֹא in v. 5.[522] The only major difference in the *ṭe'amim* between these clauses appear on the divergent lexemes (i.e., לֹא and הֵמָּה), as well as on the phrase אֱלֹהֵיהֶם because of its position in the sentence (i.e., *'atnāḥ* at the middle and *sillûq* at the end of the verse).[523] The pronoun הֵמָּה is present for emphasis being grammatically unnecessary since the verbal form יָדְעוּ encodes the person and number of the subject. The poor ones do not (לֹא) know YHWH's way but the greater ones — they (הֵמָּה), they know. The contrast between the placement of לֹא and הֵמָּה in each clause accentuates Jeremiah's thought-process.

The pronoun הֵמָּה has הַגְּדֹלִים as its antecedent and is intentionally different from the pronoun used in Jer 5:4 to describe the דַּלִּים (i.e., הֵם). Jeremiah expects a different, fuller understanding to be present in הַגְּדֹלִים/הֵמָּה. The orthography of דַּלִּים and הֵם gains a consonant in each of its rejoinders (i.e., הַגְּדֹלִים and הֵמָּה). The reappearance of the pronoun הֵמָּה to describe both דַּלִּים and הַגְּדֹלִים together in Jer 5:5 forcibly unravels Jeremiah's expectations. The phrase אַךְ…הֵם in Jer 5:4 is answered by אַךְ הֵמָּה in Jer 5:5. There is actually no distinction between דַּלִּים and הַגְּדֹלִים or הֵם and הֵמָּה — but they together (אַךְ הֵמָּה יַחְדָּו) have rebelled against God.

The particle יַחְדָּו "together," the verb √נתק, and the lexeme מוֹסֵרָה in Jer 5:5 recall Ps 2:2-3 and connects the Judahite population with foreign leaders rebelling against YHWH's

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[522] Cf. The exact repetition in the words of Elijah in 1 Kgs 19:10 and 14 illustrate that he is unmoved in his commitment to YHWH as opposed to the rest of Israel. See Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written*, 543-544.

In Jer 6:16-17, the Judahite people respond with identical syntax in two successive answers to YHWH's urging them to follow him (i.e., a *Qal wayyiqtol* third masculine plural of √אמר introducing a negated (לֹא) first common plural *yiqtol* from √הלך and √קשׁב "to listen"). The people's unmoved response, from a syntactic perspective, illustrates that they are unmoved in their determination to go away from YHWH.

[523] See Futato, *Basics of Hebrew Accents*, 36-37.

authority.[524] The leaders of Judah are not only like the Judahite people, but also the rebellious nations. There is a pun between the bonds (מוֹסֵרָה) Judah tears off in Jer 5:5 and their refusing to take correction (מוּסָר) in Jer 5:3.[525]

Jeremiah 5:4-5 forms a chiasmus centring around Jeremiah's expectation that the leaders will be different in responding to YHWH:

וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי

אַךְ־דַּלִּים הֵם נוֹאָלוּ

כִּי לֹא יָדְעוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם׃

אֵלְכָה־לִּי אֶל־הַגְּדֹלִים וַאֲדַבְּרָה אוֹתָם

כִּי הֵמָּה יָדְעוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם

אַךְ הֵמָּה יַחְדָּו שָׁבְרוּ עֹל נִתְּקוּ מוֹסֵרוֹת׃

The author uses the similar but different orthography of two lexemes and the similar but different construction of two כִּי clauses to undo Jeremiah's expectations. The content of Jeremiah's hope to find righteousness among the leaders actually illustrates that the leaders correspond almost identically to the people. Not much separates either group. הֵם, or הֵמָּה, have become indistinguishable. The designation הַגְּדֹלִים from the root √גדל "to be great" actually hints at the excessive sins of these leaders. The verbs √רבב "to multiply, be great" and √עצם "to be many, be great" describe the multiplication of sin (i.e., פֶּשַׁע "transgression,

[524] See Brown, "Jeremiah," 136 and Robert L. Cole, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter* (HBM 37; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013), 96-97 note 72.

[525] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 179.

rebellion" and מְשׁוּבָה "backsliding, apostasy") by Judah in Jer 5:6.[526] The verb √גדל contextually describes Judah growing in wealth by treacherous means (Jer 5:27).

4.2.2 Jeremiah 6:9

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

עוֹלֵל יְעוֹלְלוּ כַגֶּפֶן שְׁאֵרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל

הָשֵׁב יָדְךָ כְּבוֹצֵר עַל־סַלְסִלוֹת׃

Thus YHWH of the armies says,

"The remnant of Israel will surely be gleaned like the vine,

Return your hand[527] like a harvester over the branches."

4.2.2.1 The Cohesion

Several binary elements in this verse illustrate the second time the gatherer goes over the vine. The geminate verb √עלל "to glean" appears twice in a cognate infinitive construction. The bi-literal verb √שוב appears. The collocation שְׁאֵרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל repeats three (almost four) consonants across two lexemes (שׁ and שׂ). The *hapax* form סַלְסִלּוֹת reduplicates the consonants ס and ל. A *qôṭēl* appears in two differently conjugated verbal forms in the verse — עוֹלֵל, an adverbial infinitive, and בּוֹצֵר, a participle. These dual elements emphasise YHWH taking double action against his people.

4.2.2.2 Stylistics

The verb √עלל "to glean" appears twice in this verse (i.e., A *Polel* adverbial infinitive with a *Polel yiqtol*) and only one other time in the book of Jeremiah in a different *binyan* (i.e.,

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[526] The verbs √גדל and √עצם appear together in Dan 8:8. The verbs √גדל and √רבה "to be many, great," a similar verb to √רבב, appear together in Isa 9:2; Ezek 16:7, 26; and Ezra 9:6.

[527] G lacks יָדְךָ "your hand." See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:236 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 44-45.

a *Hitpael* in Jer 38:19).[528] The noun סַלְסְלָה "branch" is a *hapax*. The form בּוֹצֵר is a *hapax*. These unique elements suggest purpose.

4.2.2.3 Textual Criticism

G reads two imperatives from καλάμη "to gather, glean" which seems to represent the MT's cognate infinitive phrase יְעוֹלֵל עוֹלֵל.[529] Walser notes that this is the only time in Jeremiah where G renders a Hebrew cognate infinitive phrase by two identical verbal forms.[530] The translator seems to be aware that this doubled element is contextually significant and should be represented. It is possible that G has two imperatives in its *Vorlage* instead of a cognate infinitive phrase (i.e., עוֹלֵל עוֹלֵל; cf. Lam 1:22).[531] Strengthening this possibility is the fact that an imperative of √שׁוב appears at the beginning of the next line.

G and V appear to read a singular סַל "basket." MT and S read a plural סַלְסִלּוֹת "branches."[532] It is possible that G and V are reading the lexeme סַל "basket" (cf. Gen 40:16, 17 [twice], and 18) as a reduplicated form in Jer 6:9. If this is the case, then this suggests that G and V are aware of the doubling elements in this verse and understand the form סַלְסִלּוֹת

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[528] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 424) says, "Hebrew *'ôlēl yĕ'ôlĕlû* ('they shall glean thoroughly') creates assonance with *'al-'ôlāl* ('on the child') in v 11b. The *'ôl* and *'al* sounds reverberate throughout 6:1-7 and 6:8-12."

[529] See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 44-45, 217-218, and 234; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 145; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 424.

[530] See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 217-218.

[531] The *qatal* third masculine singular, the masculine singular imperative, and the infinitive of the *Polel* would each be realised as עוֹלֵל.

See Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §59a. Joüon and Muraoka note that *polel* is technically a *po'e'* while bi-literal verbs are *polel*.

[532] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 424 and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 194. McKane (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 145) says, "סלסלות is connected by Sept. and Vulg. with סל 'basket' (cf. Kimchi)."

κάρταλλος "basket" is a rare word in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Deut 26:2, 4; 2 Kgs 10:7; and Sir 11:30) and appears only here in Jeremiah.

possibly as a made-up form to create a further reduplication. This would mean G and V's *Vorlage* is identical to MT.

4.2.2.4 Meta-Textual Semantics Via Textual Cohesion

YHWH compares Israel's approaching judgment to a grape vine that is thoroughly harvested until nothing remains. The *Hifil* of √שׁוב "to return" describes the harvester's hand (יָדְךָ) working back over the branches a second time to gather all the fruit (Jer 6:9). This approach is contrary to the instruction in Deut 24:19-22 (cf. Lev 19:9-10). A person was not to go back (*Qal* of √שׁוב in Deut 24:19) and get overlooked grain from the previous pass through the field during the harvesting process. When a person is gathering (√בצר "to gather") in the vineyard, they are not to go back (אַחַר "after, behind") to glean (*Polel* of √עלל) in Deut 24:21. If Israel followed the instruction in Deut 24, then YHWH would bless the work of their hands (יָדֶיךָ in Deut 24:19). The judgment described in Jer 6:9 is one of a rigorous destruction without any survivors (cf. Jer 49:9-10 par. Obad 5).

The doubling nature of elements in Jer 6:9 enhances the message that a gatherer will go back (√שׁוב) over the branches. The geminate verb √עלל appears twice in this verse.[533] The

[533] For geminate verbs, see Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006), 275-283 and Karl V. Kutz and Rebekah L. Josberger, *Learning Biblical Hebrew: Reading for Comprehension — An Introductory Grammar* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018), 367-379.

preposition עַל repeats the consonants ע and ל.[534] The *hapax* noun סַלְסְלָה "branch" involves a consonantal reduplication of a presumably bi-literal root (cf. בַּקְבֻּק "jug, flask" in Jer 19:1, 10; קָדְקֹד "head" in Jer 2:16 and 48:45; and תַּעְתֻּעִים "mockery" in Jer 10:15 par. 51:18).[535] Contextually, the form סַלְסְלוֹת recalls the siege mounds (סֹלְלָה in Jer 6:6) constructed against Jerusalem. The reduplicated form סַלְסְלוֹת is thus a "second" form with סֹלְלָה, reminding the reader that no one will escape the enemy as the two forms of the verb √עלל did earlier in the verse. There is literary metathesis in the noun phrase שְׁאֵרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל as the consonants א, י, and ר appear in each lexeme as well as the similar consonantal phonemes שׂ and שׁ.[536]

The *qôṭēl* verbal form appears twice with two different verbs in two different verbal conjugations — the adverbial infinitive or masculine singular imperative עוֹלֵל and the participle בּוֹצֵר from √בצר "to gather, glean." The form בּוֹצֵר is a *hapax*. A *Polel* adverbial infinitive only appears elsewhere twice in the MT — הֹרוֹ from √הרה "to conceive" and הֹגוֹ

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[534] Lundbom (*Jeremiah: A Study of Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 108) notes that the pun connecting the verb √תקע "to blow" with two different meanings in Jer 6:1 and 3, the verb √יקע "to hang" (Jer 6:9), and the place תְּקוֹעַ "Tekoa" (Jer 6:1) prepare the reader for the puns involving the consonants ע and ל in the same context (i.e., וְנַעֲלֶה "let us go up" in 6:4-5, עוֹלֵל יְעוֹלְלוּ/עוֹלֵל עוֹלַל in 6:9, עַל־עוֹלָל in 6:11, and the preposition עַל in Jer 6:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 [twice], and 12). Lundbom says, "Now if we can presuppose some sophistication on the part of Jeremiah's audience, it is possible that the audience would hear not only word-plays within a specific poem, but would also recognize when similar sounds are repeated from poem to poem…It becomes quite obvious then that these poems had a much greater impact on the ancient ear than they have on the modern eye."

There are others puns in the context, see Joosten, "Les Benjaminites au milieu de Jérusalem," 65-72.

[535] See Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965), §61D; Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §88J.c; and James L. Sagarin, *Hebrew Noun Patterns (Mishqalim): Morphology, Semantics, and Lexicon* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 145-147. Also see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 424. Lundbom suggests that סַלְסְלוֹת is a by-form of זַלְזַלִּים "sprigs, shoots" in Isa 18:5.

[536] For several cases of metathesis including an exchange between שׂ and שׁ, see Kalimi, *Metathesis in the Hebrew Bible*, 128-131.

from √הגה “to moan” in Isa 59:13.[537] This tentatively suggests that the expected *Polel* adverbial infinitive form in Jer 6:9 should be עוֹלוֹל or perhaps עוֹלוֹ instead of עוֹלֵל. The form may have been altered to connect its morphology with the participle בּוֹצֵר but this is impossible to conclusively determine. It seems significant that the *qôṭēl* form appears twice in the verse in the unexpected form of a *Poel* adverbial infinitive (עוֹלֵל) and a morphologically normative, but *hapax*, participle (בּוֹצֵר).[538]

The form עוֹלֵל additionally recalls the lexeme עוֹלָל “child” (Jer 6:11; 9:20; Lam 1:5; 2:19; and 4:4). Indeed, the exact form עוֹלֵל which appears in Jer 6:9 as an adverbial infinitive of √עלל appears in 1 Sam 22:19; Jer 44:7; and Lam 2:11 as a lexeme meaning “child.” In Jer 6:11, Jeremiah describes some of the people who will experience the wrath of YHWH. This wrath will be poured out upon a child (עַל־עוֹלָל) in the street among others. The graphemic and phonetic connection between עוֹלֵל in Jer 6:9 and עוֹלָל in Jer 6:11 (cf. עוֹלֵל in Jer 44:7) substantiates that children will be among the ones facing the meticulous wrath of YHWH.

Like a gatherer who goes over the vine branches twice, YHWH sends an enemy to thoroughly destroy Judah. To reiterate the two-fold and complete nature of YHWH’s judgment, the author uses the geminate verb √עלל twice as well as the preposition עַל, a reduplicated bi-literal noun (סַלְסְלָה), a two word noun phrase that shares several consonants arranged two different ways (i.e., שְׁאֵרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל), and the repetition of the *qôṭēl* verbal pattern

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[537] For textual problems on these forms, see Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 848. 1QIsa^{A} 48:25 does not have the form הרו but reads והגוא (cf. MT’s וְהֹגוּ).

Cf. III-ו/י verbs, which are closely related to geminate verbs, become III-ה. See Kautzsch, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, §67 and 72 and Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §80-82.

[538] Is this an unattested singular form of the noun עוֹלֵל “gleaning” (i.e., a *hapax*; cf. עוללה in 4Q270 f3ii:14 perhaps vocalised as עוֹלֵלָה) which usually occurs in the plural in the MT as עֹלֵלוֹת “gleanings” (Judg 8:2; Isa 17:6; 24:3; Jer 49:9; Obad 5; and Mic 7:1)?

in two different verbal roots conjugated two different ways. By doubling these aspects of the verse, the author illustrates YHWH going over the branches twice.[539]

It seems likely that G replicates the MT in doubling elements. For example, the MT's cognate infinitive phrase (i.e., עוֹלֵל יְעוֹלְלוּ) becomes a repeating imperative in G (καλαμᾶσθε καλαμᾶσθε), a unique construction in G's translation of Jeremiah.[540] This might be a way to emphasise the doubling present in his *Vorlage*.[541]

4.2.3 Jeremiah 9:20; 49:26; and 50:30

כִּי־עָלָה מָוֶת בְּחַלֹּנֵינוּ

בָּא בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵינוּ

לְהַכְרִית עוֹלָל מִחוּץ

בַּחוּרִים מֵרְחֹבוֹת׃

"For death went through our windows,[542]

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[539] For examples of using gemination and repetition as a literary device to allow the form to express the content, see Karolien Vermeulen, "Two of a Kind: Twin Language in the Hebrew Bible," *JSOT* 37 (2012): 135-150 and Scott B. Noegel and Corinna E. Nichols, "Seeing Doubles: On Two of a Kind," *JSOT* 45 (2019): 1-12.

[540] See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 217-218 and 234. He says, "The rendering of this Hebrew expression by the repetition of the same verbal form is very rare (p. 234)." On page 218, Walser says that this is the only time in Jeremiah where G renders a Hebrew cognate infinitive phrase by two identical verbal forms. Usually, the present participle is the "common rendering of the infinite absolute in LXX, when the infinitive absolute forms a *figura eytmolgica* with a finite verb" according to Walser (p. 217). If, however, G's *Vorlage* has עוֹלֵל עוֹלֵל, then G simply represents its *Vorlage*.

[541] For the versions being aware of and replicating a pun in the Hebrew text of Job, see Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in Job*, 104, 105, 125, and 140-143 and Noegel, "Wordplay and Translation Technique in the Septuagint of Job," 33-44.

[542] For a discussion of the common ancient Near Eastern fear of an enemy coming through the window, see Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 317; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 211; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 565-566; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 314; and Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 91.

It entered into our citadels/palaces (cf. Joel 2:9)[543]

To cut off a child outside,

Young men from the squares."

לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַחוּרֶיהָ בִּרְחֹבֹתֶיהָ

וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה יִדַּמּוּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת׃

"Therefore, its young men will fall in its squares,

And all the men of the army will be destroyed in that day[544] — A declaration of YHWH of the armies."[545]

לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַחוּרֶיהָ בִּרְחֹבֹתֶיהָ

וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי מִלְחַמְתָּהּ יִדַּמּוּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃

"Therefore, its young men will fall in its squares,

And all the men of its army will be destroyed in that day[546] — A declaration of YHWH."[547]

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[543] G may have בְּאַדְמָתֵךְ "in your land" in Jer 9:20 in its *Vorlage* with an interchange of ד and ר and a change in clitic pronoun from MT. See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 56-57; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 210-211; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 566.

Some emend MT's בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵינוּ to בָּאֲרֻבּוֹתֵינוּ "in our lattices" based on a supposed Ugaritic parallel. See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 211 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 566.

[544] The phrase בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא "in that day" is lacking in G in Jer 49:26. See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 122-123 and McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1235 and 1282.

[545] G does not have צְבָאוֹת "armies" in Jer 49:26. See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 122-123 and McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1235.

[546] The phrase בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא is lacking in G in Jer 50:30. See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 108-109 and McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1235 and 1282.

[547] The MT lacks צְבָאוֹת in Jer 50:30 when compared to Jer 49:26. See McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1282.

4.2.3.1 The Cohesion

The consonantal phonemes present in the lexemes בָּחוּר "young man" and רְחֹב "square, street" suggest the covert lexeme חֶרֶב "sword." The victim (בָּחוּר), place (רְחֹב) and means (חֶרֶב) of death are linked through this consonantal repetition.

4.2.3.2 Stylistics

The lexeme בָּחוּר appears about 45 times in the Hebrew Bible. The weapon חֶרֶב is often specified as the instrument of death for a בָּחוּר in the Hebrew Bible and in Jeremiah specifically. In Jer 11:22, YHWH says, הַבַּחוּרִים יָמֻתוּ בַחֶרֶב "The young men will die by the sword." In Jer 18:21, YHWH says, בַּחוּרֵיהֶם מֵכֵי־חֶרֶב בַּמִּלְחָמָה "Their young men will be struck by the sword in battle." Several examples in the Hebrew Bible confirm the general idea that a בָּחוּר generally dies by means of a חֶרֶב (Deut 32:25; Ezek 30:17; and Lam 2:21). It is particularly noteworthy that the lexemes בָּחוּר and חֶרֶב are juxtaposed on a few occasions, which highlights the consonantal connection between them — וּבַחֲרִיהֶם בַּחֶרֶב תַּהֲרֹג "you will kill their young men with the sword" (2 Kgs 8:12), וְנָס לוֹ מִפְּנֵי־חֶרֶב וּבַחוּרָיו לָמַס יִהְיוּ "He will flee before the sword and his young men will become forced labourers" (Isa 31:8), הָרַגְתִּי בַחֶרֶב בַּחוּרֵיכֶם "I killed your young men with the sword" (Amos 4:10), and וַיַּהֲרֹג בַּחוּרֵיהֶם בַּחֶרֶב "He killed their young with the sword" (2 Chron 36:17). Interestingly, the lexemes בָּחוּר and חֶרֶב appear in a clause with the verb √הרג "to kill" in 2 Kgs 8:12; Amos 4:10; and 2 Chron 36:17. In these three cases, the verb √הרג appears either first (Amos 4:10 and 2 Chron 36:17) or last (2 Kgs 8:12) in the clause but does not appear between the lexemes בָּחוּר and חֶרֶב. This suggests that the lexeme בָּחוּר is closely connected to the lexeme חֶרֶב because of the shared consonants between these two lexemes. The lexeme בָּחוּר usually describes a victim in contexts of destruction in Jeremiah (6:11; 9:20; 11:22; 15:8; 18:21; 48:15; 49:26; 50:30; 51:3, and 22) with the exception of Jer 31:13.

Though בָּחוּר only appears with חֶרֶב twice in Jeremiah, it seems logical from the other examples in Jeremiah to expect the weapon of destruction in each case to be a חֶרֶב whether it is overt or covert in the text. The lexeme חֶרֶב is one of the main judgments in Jeremiah. חֶרֶב appears 71 times in Jeremiah to describe YHWH's judgment. The lexeme חֶרֶב appears in the surrounding contexts of the occurrence of בָּחוּר facing YHWH's judgment in Jer 9:20; 49:26; and 50:30. חֶרֶב appears in Jer 9:15; 49:37; 50:16, 35, 36 (twice), and 37 (twice).

Additionally, there are others puns on the lexeme חֶרֶב in these contexts. The lexeme חֶרֶב shares the consonants ח and ר with the juxtaposed preposition אַחַר "after" in Jer 9:15 and 49:37 (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב "I will send after them the sword…"; cf. Jer 29:18 and 48:2). This phrase only appears in Jer 9:15 and 49:37 in the Hebrew Bible. The collocation describing someone being pursued (אַחַר) by the חֶרֶב is significant (cf. Lev 26:33; Ezek 5:2; and 12:14).

The lexeme חֶרֶב is repeated five times in Jer 50:35-37. YHWH brings a חֶרֶב against Babylon as part of his pleading (√ריב) the case (רִיב) of his people (רִיב יָרִיב אֶת־רִיבָם in Jer 50:34). The חֶרֶב of judgment in Jer 50:35-37 is accompanied by a drought (חֹרֶב) in Jer 50:38. The חֶרֶב and חֹרֶב are part of the judgment procedures (√ריב and רִיב) against Babylon. The almost homographs חֶרֶב and חֹרֶב are puns. The consonantal repetition of ב and ר in all these forms lends itself to other covert consonantal repetition such as between חֶרֶב and בָּחוּר.

The verb √כרת "to cut off" appears with the lexeme בָּחוּר only in Jer 9:20 in the Hebrew Bible. The חֶרֶב often brings the results of the verb √כרת (e.g., הִנְנִי מֵבִיא עָלַיִךְ חָרֶב וְהִכְרַתִּי מִמֵּךְ אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה "Ho! I am bringing against you a sword. I will cut off from you human and beast" in Ezek 29:8 and תַּכְרִיתֵךְ חֶרֶב "the sword will cut you off" in Nah 3:15). The unique connection between √כרת and בָּחוּר in Jer 9:20 suggests the covert but expected lexeme חֶרֶב which often appears with each.

The verb √נפל "to fall" appears in Jer 49:26 and 50:30 instead of the verb √כרת (cf. Jer 9:20).[548] The lexeme חֶרֶב is often the weapon striking someone so that they √נפל in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Lev 26:7-8; Judg 4:16; Amos 7:17; and Ps 78:64) and Jeremiah. In Jer 19:7, for example, YHWH says וְהִפַּלְתִּים בַּחֶרֶב לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם "I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies." Other examples appear in Jeremiah (20:4; 25:27; 44:12; cf. 39:18). Further, the lexemes חֶרֶב and בָּחוּר appear with the verb √נפל several times in the Hebrew Bible (בַּחוּרֵי אָוֶן וּפִי־בֶסֶת בַּחֶרֶב יִפֹּלוּ "The young men of On and Pi-Beseth will fall by the sword" in Ezek 30:17 and בְּתוּלֹתַי וּבַחוּרַי נָפְלוּ בֶחָרֶב "My virgins and young men have fallen by the sword" in Lam 2:21; cf. Isa 31:8). The lexeme חֶרֶב would be expected to accompany the lexeme בָּחוּר and the verb √נפל in Jer 49:26 and 50:30.

4.2.3.3 Textual Criticism

There are no textual issues regarding the presence of the lexemes בָּחוּר and רְחֹב in these three verses.

4.2.3.4 Meta-Textual Semantics Via Textual Cohesion

None of these verses overtly state the means by which the young men (בַּחוּרִים) will be cut off (√כרת in Jer 9:20) or fall (√נפל in Jer 49:26 and 50:30).[549] The form of the lexemes describing the individuals (i.e., בָּחוּר) and the location of judgment (i.e., רְחֹב) hint at the means of the destruction, however. These two lexemes share the same three consonantal phonemes (i.e, ב, ח, and ר). They are reverse anagrams (i.e., בָּחוּר and רְחֹב). Additionally, these same three consonants are the three present in the lexeme חֶרֶב. By overtly using the lexemes בָּחוּר

[548] The verb √נפל does appear in Jer 9:21.

[549] θ′, the Lucianic recension, and the Origenic recension of G have דֶּבֶר as the cause of death in Jer 9:21.

and רְחֹב, the author covertly implies the presence of the lexeme חֶרֶב.[550] Specifically, the חֶרֶב is the instrument which will strike (√כרת) down the young men (בָּחוּר) so they fall (√נפל) in the square (רְחֹב).

Regarding Jer 49:26, Rashi glosses the verb √דמם "to destroy" using the verb √חרב "to destroy."[551] In this way, Rashi adds (consciously perhaps from the interchange of חֶרֶב and חֹרֶב in Jer 50:35-38?) the verb √חרב "to be dry, desolate" (e.g., Jer 2:12; 26:9; and 51:36) into the complex matrix of connections within these verses. Rashi understands the overt בָּחוּר and רְחֹב to suggest the covert verb √חרב.

The presence of the two lexemes בָּחוּר and רְחֹב in these verses allow the author to develop the consonantal phonemes ב, ח, and ר appearing in each of these lexemes by rearranging them once again to form the murder weapon (i.e., חֶרֶב) and the state of Judah following the enemies' invasion (i.e., √חרב according to Rashi).

4.2.4 Jeremiah 10:11

כְּדָנָה תֵּאמְרוּן לְהוֹם אֱלָהַיָּא דִּי־שְׁמַיָּא וְאַרְקָא לָא עֲבַדוּ יֵאבַדוּ מֵאַרְעָא וּמִן־תְּחוֹת שְׁמַיָּא אֵלֶּה׃

[550] The lexeme חֶרֶב can be overtly present though phonologically null as demonstrated by comparing Judg 7:18 (וְאַמַּרְתֶּם לַיהוָה וּלְגִדְעוֹן) and 20 (וַיִּקְרְאוּ חֶרֶב לַיהוָה וּלְגִדְעוֹן). S, T, several G manuscripts, and several medieval Hebrew manuscripts add חֶרֶב in v. 18 (see BHS and BHQ note).

[551] Rosenberg, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 2:377 and McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1235.

Thus you shall say to them: "The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth, these will perish from the earth and from under the heavens."[552]

4.2.4.1 The Cohesion

In utilising Aramaic in this verse, the author creates a bilingual pun, calling to mind the meanings of both the Aramaic and Hebrew verbs to display the foolishness of idolatry.

4.2.4.2 Stylistics

This verse is the only portion in the Hebrew Prophets written in Aramaic (cf. Gen 31:47; Dan 2:4; and Ezra 4:8). It is the only verse in the Hebrew Bible that does not specifically announce a language switch from Hebrew to Aramaic (Gen 31:47; Dan 2:4; and Ezra 4:8). The rest of Jeremiah is written in Hebrew. The use of Aramaic for the entire verse of Jer 10:11 breaks with the stylistics of the book. Its placement in the text without an introduction is peculiar when compared to other sections written in Aramaic. Also, two

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[552] See Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 57 note 5. Based on the chiasmus in this verse, Hornkohl understands אֵלֶּה "these" as parallel to אֱלָהַיָּא "the gods" in the earlier part of the verse. He finds further support for אֵלֶּה being the subject of this clause in the disjunctive accent (i.e., *ṭipḥâ*) on the previous word (i.e., שְׁמַיָּא). For a discussion of the *ṭipḥâ*, see Jin Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents*, 14-20 and Futato, *Basics of Hebrew Accents*, 41-43. Previous scholars thought that אֵלֶּה was Hebrew, but it is Aramaic; see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 334-335.

Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 334) says, "The word order is ironic: the main verb seems to be delayed, though the word order subject + verb may have been normal in the Mesopotamian Aramaic of this period, as it was in Akkadian. In any event, the deferment of the verb allows for the ambiguity in the initial words, since אֱלָהַיָּא, like the Hebrew הָאֱלֹהִים, could evidently mean either 'God' or 'the gods'; so one hears 'God/the gods who the heavens and the earth' before the identity of the subject is made known by the negative לָא and the plural verb עֲבַדוּ. And right on the heels of this identification comes the verb 'they shall perish' (יֵאבַדוּ), a word-play on the verb just preceding ('ayin and 'alep were evidently not distinguished in pronunciation)."

different forms of the lexeme for "earth, land" appear in this verse.[553] In the first part of the verse, the early Aramaic form אֲרַק appears and in the second part the later form אַרַע. The dramatic and unannounced alterations in the text — a change in the actual language being used within the text and two different orthographic realisations of the same lexeme over the space of three words in the same verse — alert the reader to the presence of a pun.

4.2.4.3 Textual Criticism

Some regard this verse as suspect or a later addition, but Aaron Hornkohl states, "It is noteworthy that the verse is reflected in all the ancient textual witnesses, including the two fragments from the DSS that include the relevant section (4QJer[a] and 4QJer[b])."[554] The presence of this verse in G shows its authenticity according to Keil and Delitzsch.[555] This fact is particularly striking given the significant differences between the MT and G in Jer 10:1-16

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[553] For the different spellings of the Aramaic lexeme "earth" and the cliticised pronoun מִן in the form מֵאַרְעָא (but מן ארעא in 4Q71 f1:7) in the MT of Jer 10:11, see Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 57 note 5; Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 118 and 120-122; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 334.

For the phoneme ṣ[3] becoming ק in Aramaic and later ע, see Alger F. Johns, *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (AUM 1; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972), 6.

Mizrahi (*Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 122 note 133) notes that α′ uses a different lexeme to represent the different orthographies of the Aramaic lexeme for "earth" (i.e., α′ uses γῆ "earth, land" for אֲרַק and ἔδαφος "ground" for אַרַע [which appears rarely in G for אֶרֶץ in Ezek 41:16 and 20]). Mizrahi also mentions Yafet ben 'Eli using different Arabic lexemes to transcribe these two Aramaic forms. See Joshua A. Sabih, *Japheth ben Ali's Book of Jeremiah: A Critical Edition and Lingustic Analysis of the Judaeo-Arabic Translation* (Copenhagen International Seminar; London: Equinox, 2009), 191. These translators and exegetes attend to minor variations in their text.

[554] Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 57 note 5. Hornkohl refers to 4Q70 f12:3-4 and 4Q71 f1:7-8.

[555] See Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:200.

(e.g., Jer 10:6-8 and 10 in the MT is not represented in G).[556] There is no compelling textual evidence to warrant excluding this verse from the text. Additionally, this Aramaic verse is carefully arranged as a chiasmus centring the pun between the verbal phrase לָא עֲבַדוּ "they do not create" and the verb יֵאבַדוּ "they will perish."[557]

4.2.4.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

Many suggestions seek to explain the sudden switch to Aramaic in this verse. It is a proverbial saying.[558] It is a marginal note accidentally incorporated into the text.[559] It directs the exilic community how to respond to their Babylonian, idolatrous oppressors (cf. Rashi, Kimḥi, and T).[560] It is style-switching to show the foreign nature of this source.[561] I suggest

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[556] The composite nature of Jer 10:1-16 is discussed at length in Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*. Also, see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 324.

For the textual evidence, see Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:245-246; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*; Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 387; Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 79; and Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 66-67. For a detailed analysis of this verse in T and S, see Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 129-147.

[557] See Allen, *Jeremiah*, 127; Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 57 note 5; and Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 112-116. Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 593) notes that there is a double chiasmus (i.e., heavens-earth-earth-heavens and gods-make-perish-these).

[558] See Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 96.

[559] See Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 330; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 79; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 324.

[560] See Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:200; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 225; and Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 160.

Cf. Paul Wegner suggests that the use of the Aramaic בַּר "son" in Ps 2:12 (cf. Hebrew בֶּן in Ps 2:7) directs the nations to properly respond to YHWH's anointed. See Paul D. Wegner, *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching: A Guide for Students and Pastors* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2009), 16 and Peter C. Craigie, *Psalm 1-50* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 64.

[561] Mizrahi (*Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 116-123) suggests that this is a quotation from part of the introduction of Achaemenid royal inscriptions in Old Persian.

that the abrupt and unannounced language switch from Hebrew to Aramaic invites the reader to understand an intermingling of these languages in the verse's interpretation.

In the context of this polemic against idol worship (Jer 10:1-16), Jer 10:11 states the gods are unable to create (√עבד) the heavens and earth, and they will perish (√אבד) from them. The text utilises a pun between the similar sounding, juxtaposed Aramaic verbs √עבד and √אבד.[562] The language switch from Hebrew to Aramaic and the pun between the Aramaic verbs √עבד and √אבד in this verse suggest other puns. The contextual intermingling of Aramaic and Hebrew in Jer 10:1-16 suggests a connection between the Aramaic verb √עבד "to do, make, create" (cf. Dan 3:1; 4:32 [twice]; and 6:28) and the Hebrew verb √עבד "to serve" in Jer 10:11.[563]

The Aramaic verb √עבד is clearly intended in Jer 10:11 as the entire verse is in Aramaic. The Hebrew √עבד is contextually signified since most of Jer 10:1-16 is in Hebrew and is a polemic against idolatry.[564] The Hebrew verb √עבד is used in a cultic sense often in Jeremiah (e.g., Jer 2:20; 5:19; 8:2; 11:10; 13:10; 16:11, 13; 17:4; 22:9, 13; 25:6; 30:9; 35:15; and 44:3). Thus, the text argues that since the gods cannot create (Aramaic √עבד) the heavens and earth, people should not serve (Hebrew √עבד) them. In contrast, YHWH creates (Hebrew √עשׂה "to do, make" in Jer 10:12 which is the Hebrew verb similar to the Aramaic verb √עבד)

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[562] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 334; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 593; and Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 114-116. For a pun between the Hebrew verbs √עבד and √אבד in 2 Kgs 10:18-19, see Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 85.

[563] See *BDB*, 712-714 and 1104-1105 and *HALOT*, 773-774 and 1941-1942.

[564] Cf. Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 325) says, "There is a pun on the verbs "make" (עבד) and "perish" (אבד) which is exact: 'ayin and 'alep were not distinguished at least in the Aramaic of Mesopotamia; the pun could not in any case be transferred to Hebrew, where עבד has a different range of meanings." *Contra* to Holladay's comment, it is these different but contextually appropriate meanings that I suggest actually contribute to the message.

so he deserves to be served (Hebrew √עבד). This bilingual use of the Hebrew and Aramaic verb √עבד in Jer 10:11 appears in a context of language switching and a cultic discussion.[565]

The use of the Hebrew and Aramaic verb √אבד in this context strengthens the likelihood that the text intends both the Aramaic and Hebrew verbs √עבד to be understood since the Aramaic verbs √עבד and √אבד are connected in Jer 10:11. The Aramaic verb √אבד appears in Jer 10:11 (cf. Dan 2:12, 18, 24 [twice]; 7:11, and 26) and the Hebrew verb √אבד appears in Jer 10:15. Both of these verbs in their respective language means "to destroy, perish."[566] The connection between the Aramaic and Hebrew verbs √אבד in this context lends credibility to the possibility that the verb which the Aramaic √אבד puns upon in Jer 10:11, namely the Aramaic verb √עבד, could also be part of a bilingual pun between Hebrew and Aramaic in this context.

The author puns also upon the Hebrew verb √עשׂה which is similar to the Aramaic verb √עבד. The Hebrew verb √עשׂה describes YHWH's ability to create in Jer 10:12 and 13 immediately after the idols are unable to create (Aramaic √עבד). The idols are the work (מַעֲשֶׂה from √עשׂה) of various craftsmen in Jer 10:3 and 9 (twice) but cannot themselves create (cf. Nebuchadnezzar making [Aramaic √עבד] a golden image in Dan 3:1 and 15). Idols are a work of ridicule (מַעֲשֵׂה תַּעְתֻּעִים) in Jer 10:15 since they cannot even replicate the creative process through which they originate (i.e., √עשׂה in Hebrew or √עבד in Aramaic). YHWH, not the idols, should be served (Hebrew √עבד) because he alone can create (Hebrew √עשׂה and Aramaic √עבד). The pun between the Aramaic verbs √עבד and √אבד in Jer 10:11, between the

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[565] For some bilingual puns in the Hebrew Bible, see Al Wolters, "*Ṣopîyyâ* (Prov 31:27) as a Hymnic Participle and Play on Sophia," *JBL* 104 (1985): 577-587; Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Egyptian Sun-God Ra in the Pentateuch," *Hen* 10 (1988): 3-15; idem., "Bilingual Wordplay in the Bible," *VT* 38 (1988): 354-357; and Peter Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 719-737.

[566] See *BDB*, 1-2 and 1078 and *HALOT*, 2-3 and 1806.

Hebrew and Aramaic verbs √אבד in this context, between the Hebrew verb √עשׂה and the Aramaic verb √עבד in this context, as well as the likelihood of a bilingual pun between the Hebrew verb √עבד and the Aramaic verb √עבד suggest a careful arrangement of the present MT despite perceptible textual rearranging.

4.2.5 Jeremiah 10:14-15 par. Jer 51:17-18

נִבְעַר כָּל־אָדָם מִדַּעַת

הֹבִישׁ כָּל־צוֹרֵף מִפֶּסֶל

כִּי שֶׁקֶר נִסְכּוֹ

וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם׃

הֶבֶל הֵמָּה

מַעֲשֵׂה תַּעְתֻּעִים

בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם יֹאבֵדוּ׃

“Every man is stupid without knowledge,

Every refiner is ashamed by a carved image,[567]

For his molten image is a lie,

There is no breath in them.

Vapour they are,

A work of ridicule,

At the time of their punishment, they will perish.”[568]

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[567] The first two lines are syntactically identical — a *qatal* verb, a כֹּל noun phrase, and a מִן prepositional phrase. The מִן prepositional phrase has a different sense in each line — the first is privative and the second causative. See Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 138-139; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 226-227; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 598.

[568] The phrase בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם is unique to Jeremiah (8:12 and 10:15 par. 51:18). See Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 41 note 50.

4.2.5.1 The Cohesion

The meaning of the lexeme הֶבֶל "vapour, breath" plays a central role in the interpretation of these verses. The lexeme immediately follows and reiterates the phrase וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם "there is no breath in them."

4.2.5.2 Stylistics

Within these two verses, there are several different terms used to describe idols. Most of the terms detail the process of image production.[569] The lexemes פֶּסֶל "carved image" and נֶסֶךְ "molten image" in Jer 10:14 both refer to the product of the refiner's (צוֹרֵף) or craftsman's (חָרָשׁ) work (cf. Jer 10:3, 9; Judg 17:4; Isa 40:19; 41:7; and 46:6). The finished image in Jer 10:15 is מַעֲשֵׂה תַּעְתֻּעִים "a work of ridicule." This clearly mocks the manufacturing process where the refiner (צוֹרֵף) or craftsman (חָרָשׁ) creates (√עשׂה) an image (cf. Jer 10:3, 9; Judg 17:4; and Isa 46:6).[570]

In the midst of this scoffing at the manufacturing process of an idol, the lexeme הֶבֶל "breath, vapour" describes idols in Jer 10:15. The phrase וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם "and there was no breath in them" and the lexeme הֶבֶל "breath, vapour" in Jer 10:14-15 seem to refer to the Mesopotamian *mīs pî pīt pî* "mouth washing, mouth opening" ritual which was the climax of the manufacturing process as it brought the crafted image to "life."[571] In this way, there are two terms for manufacturing idols (פֶּסֶל and נֶסֶךְ) and two terms (וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם and הֶבֶל) for the

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[569] See Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 42-46, especially 44-45. Mizrahi argues that MT focuses more on the humans involved in the manufacturing of images instead of on the images themselves.

[570] Regarding the phrases מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי־חָרָשׁ בַּמַּעֲצָד "the work of the craftsman's hands with the axe" in Jer 10:3 and מַעֲשֵׂה חָרָשׁ וִידֵי צוֹרֵף…מַעֲשֵׂה חֲכָמִים כֻּלָּם "the work of the craftsman and the hands of the refiner…the work of wise ones all of them" in 10:9, Mizrahi (*Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 39) says, "These expressions are unparalleled within the book of Jeremiah, nor in the idol parodies of Deutero-Isaiah."

[571] See Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 46-68.

mīs pî pīt pî ritual with one final phrase denoting the ineffectiveness of the entire enterprise (מַעֲשֵׂה תַּעְתֻּעִים).

The lexeme הֶבֶל describes idols in Jeremiah (2:6; 8:5; 14:22; 16:19) and this particular section (10:3, 8, and 15 par. 51:18). הֶבֶל does not often describe idols elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Deut 32:21; 1 Kgs 16:13, 26; 2 Kgs 17:15; Jonah 2:9; Ps 31:7 [E 6]; cf. Zech 10:2). The author incorporates the stylistics of the book, namely the employment of the lexeme הֶבֶל to describe idols, into a description of the lifelessness of the images of the nations' gods.[572] The lack of life and breath in these images is inherently present in הֶבֶל itself. The author places הֶבֶל immediately after וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם to demonstrate that despite the creative activity of the fashioner of the idols, they remain lifeless. Additionally, the phrases וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם and הֶבֶל הֵמָּה appearing in Jer 10:14-15 only appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in the parallel in Jer 51:17-18.

4.2.5.3 Textual Criticism

G, T, and S read a plural verb from √נסך "to pour out, cast" (נָסְכוּ) instead of the noun as in MT (נִסְכוֹ).[573] This is a difference in vocalisation without a consonantal change. These witnesses probably read a plural verb because of the prepositional phrase בָּם in the next line. Regarding בָּם Calvin says, "He changes the number, but the meaning is evident."[574] Volz

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[572] Additionally, the author creates a pun with the consonants ע and ת between מַעֲשֵׂה תַּעְתֻּעִים "a work of ridicule" and the phrase בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם "at the time of their punishment." The form תַּעְתֻּעִים is a near *hapax* (Jer 10:15 par. 51:18) while the phrase בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם is part of the Jeremianic style. Idols bring mocking (תַּעְתֻּעִים) and destruction (בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם), not protection.

[573] For the textual evidence, see Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:246; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 58-59; Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 388; Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 80; Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 66-67; Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia*, 86; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 227; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 598.

[574] Calvin, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 2:39.

suggests reading הוּא "he" instead of הֵמָּה "they" in Jer 10:15 based on G.[575] These readings seek to fix difficulties in the MT.

4.2.5.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

Since הֶבֶל is a frequent lexeme in both Jeremiah (2:5; 8:19; 14:22; and 16:19) and this context (i.e., 10:3 and 8) to describe idols, the use of this lexeme at this moment in the discourse is not usually considered to be significant.[576] There are two aspects of the appearance of הֶבֶל in Jer 10:15 which suggest premeditation. The lexeme הֶבֶל appears fronted in a nominal clause (i.e., הֶבֶל הֵמָּה). The subject pronoun הֵמָּה should appear first in a nominal clause, but is last.[577] The previous subject and possible antecedent for הֵמָּה was נֶסֶךְ from Jer 10:14 (i.e., כִּי שֶׁקֶר נְסָכוֹ וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם: הֶבֶל הֵמָּה) as it is the antecedent for the clitic pronoun on the ב prepositional phrase. The lexeme הֶבֶל may be topic fronted to show a change in topic or it is focus fronted to emphasise that the idols are הֶבֶל.

The author reorders the syntax of the nominal clause to juxtapose the lexeme הֶבֶל to the phrase וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם. The author uses הֶבֶל in Jer 10:14-15 because of its meaning "breath" or "vapour."[578] Immediately after mocking idols for not having any רוּחַ "spirit, breath" in them, the author calls these same idols הֶבֶל. By juxtaposing לֹא־רוּחַ and הֶבֶל, the author illustrates the irony of using the lexeme הֶבֶל to describe these life-less, breath-less statues throughout the book. The appellative is derogatory; it ironically communicates the absence of a connection between the linguistic signifier and the signified. In Jer 14:6, animals pant (√שׁאף) for רוּחַ.

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[575] See Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia*, 86.

[576] For example, see Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 41 note 47.

[577] See Seow, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 92-93 and Cook and Holmstedt, *Beginning Biblical Hebrew: A Grammar and Illustrated Reader*, 34-35.

[578] See *BDB*, 210-211 and *HALOT*, 236-237. For the discussion of how to translate הֶבֶל in Qoheleth, see Holmstedt, Cook, and Marshall, *Qoheleth*, 50-51.

Every creature needs רוּחַ to live. In Ezek 37:5-10, a corpse can only live when the רוּחַ enters it. When the רוּחַ is not in them (וְרוּחַ אֵין בָּהֶם in Ezek 37:8), they are lifeless. When the רוּחַ enters them (וַתָּבוֹא בָהֶם הָרוּחַ וַיִּחְיוּ in Ezek 37:10), they become alive. Idols are mocked in the Hebrew Bible for their lifelessness (Ps 115:5-8 and 135:15-18). Idols do not have רוּחַ in them (Ps 135:17).[579] This is probably an allusion to the Mesopotamian ritual *mīs pî pīt pî*.[580] Even after the ritual, nothing has changed. The idols, whether called a פֶּסֶל, a נֶסֶךְ, or a הֶבֶל in Jer 10, have no life in them. There is no רוּחַ in them (cf. Hab 2:19 and Ps 135:17).[581] There is no הֶבֶל in them. The lifeless, breathless nature of idols makes הֶבֶל a logical choice to describe them. The idols remains breathless even after they are given life.

The title הֶבֶל for idols is also a warning to those who worship them. Judah is in danger of becoming lifeless based on their association with idols. In Jer 2:5, Judah has gone after הֶבֶל

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[579] On reading אַף יֶשׁ וְאֵין רוּחַ בְּפִיהֶם "They have a nose, but there is no breath in their mouth" in Ps 135:17 instead of the MT's אַף אֵין־יֶשׁ־רוּחַ בְּפִיהֶם, see Roman Pytel, "Zur Exegese von Ps. 135,17," *FO* 11 (1969): 239-244.

[580] See Mizrahi, *Witnessing A Prophetic Text in the Making*, 46-68. Mizrahi suggests that Jer 10:2-5, 8-9, and 14-16 as well as Deut 4:28; Ps 115:4-8; and Ps 135:15-18 probably allude to the Mesopotamian *mīs pî pīt pî* ritual. The image is lifeless until the completion of this ritual. The language of וְלוֹא יָפִיק…וְלֹא יְדַבֵּרוּ…לֹא יִצָּעָדוּ…לֹא יָרֵעוּ "They cannot move…they cannot walk…they cannot step…they cannot do evil" in Jer 10:4-5 and וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם "There is no breath in them" in Jer 10:14 seem to mock this ritual. According to these texts, idols are lifeless before or after the mouth opening ritual performance.

[581] Commenting on Hab 2:18-19 and 1QpHab 12:10ff., Lim (*The Earliest Commentary on the Prophecy of Habakkuk*, 161) says, "The resulting product of the craftsman's work is the fashioning of 'dumb idols' or 'worthless gods' (אלילים אלמים). Psalm 96:5 describes the gods of the peoples as 'worthless gods' (= 1 Chr. 16:26; Ps. 97:7). The idols are not only vanities and phantoms, but their lifelessness is characterized by their inability to speak. According to Exod. 4:11, it is Yhwh who confers the faculties of speech, hearing and seeing to living beings."

(i.e., an idol) and have been √הבל (i.e., "to be breath, vapour") themselves.[582] The exact phrase (וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי הַהֶבֶל וַיֶּהְבָּלוּ) appearing in Jer 2:5 describes Israel earlier in 2 Kgs 17:15. It only appears in these two verses in the Hebrew Bible. Those who worship הֶבֶל become breathless and lifeless themselves (cf. Hos 9:10). Judah is in danger of being deported like Israel and becoming הֶבֶל.

While idols are הֶבֶל and do not have רוּחַ in them, this is not true of YHWH. In this context, YHWH sends out רוּחַ from his treasure-houses (Jer 10:13).[583] Thus, YHWH has רוּחַ and can use it as he desires (Jer 10:15).[584] Idols, in contrast to YHWH, have no רוּחַ (Jer

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[582] The verb √הבל describes the vaporous, foundation-less (i.e., מַהְבִּלִים) words of the false prophets (Jer 23:16). The prophets in Samaria prophesied by בַּעַל (Jer 23:13) and Judahite prophets are following their example (Jer 23:14-15). The Judahite prophets' words are מַהְבִּלִים הֵמָּה אֶתְכֶם "they are breath to you" (Jer 23:16). These prophetic words are meant to infuse life and breath into the hearer, but they are actually breathless and lifeless, mimicking the idols from which they proceed.

[583] The phrase וַיּוֹצֵא רוּחַ מֵאֹצְרֹתָיו in Jer 10:13 puns upon the mocked fashioner (צוֹרֵף) in the next verse. YHWH's activity (i.e., יוֹצֵא participle of √יצא "to go out") is morphologically identical to the form צוֹרֵף. YHWH brings out רוּחַ from his treasure-houses (אוֹצָר). The lexeme אוֹצָר shares the consonants צ and ר with צוֹרֵף and illustrates that YHWH has more resources than the צוֹרֵף. Additionally, the product of YHWH's creative activity (√עשׂה) is רוּחַ in Jer 10:13. The hands of a fashioner (וְיִדֵי צוֹרֵף in Jer 10:9) are unable to create רוּחַ for their idols.

[584] הֶבֶל might convey the temporal limitedness of idols in Jer 10:3, 8, and 15. The lexeme הֶבֶל denotes a short time in Ps 78:33; 144:4; and Job 7:16, for example. This concept seems to be emphasised in Jer 10:11 where the gods will perish from the earth and heavens while YHWH remains. The cognate verb √אבד connects Jer 10:11 and 10:15 (i.e., the Aramaic verb √אבד in Jer 10:11 and the Hebrew verb √אבד in Jer 10:15).

10:14). The idols, who are deceptively called הֶבֶל, actually do not possess רוּחַ and are thus a שֶׁקֶר "lie" (Jer 10:14-15).[585]

The author additionally presents YHWH's ability to use רוּחַ in the context of Jer 51 where this section is duplicated (i.e., Jer 10:12-16 par. 51:15-19). YHWH stirs up (√עור) the רוּחַ of a destroyer against Babylon (Jer 51:1). YHWH stirs up (√עור) the רוּחַ of the Median kings against Babylon (Jer 51:11). Then, in Jer 51:16 (par. Jer 10:14), YHWH brings out (√יצא) the רוּחַ from his treasure-houses (אוֹצָר). YHWH utilises רוּחַ several times in Jer 51 while רוּחַ is not in idols (Jer 51:17 par. 10:14). The lexeme רוּחַ only appears 18 times in Jeremiah so its concentration in Jer 51 is noteworthy.

4.2.6 Jeremiah 17:5-8

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

אָרוּר הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בָּאָדָם וְשָׂם בָּשָׂר זְרֹעוֹ וּמִן־יְהוָה יָסוּר לִבּוֹ׃

וְהָיָה כְּעַרְעָר בָּעֲרָבָה וְלֹא יִרְאֶה כִּי־יָבוֹא טוֹב וְשָׁכַן חֲרֵרִים בַּמִּדְבָּר אֶרֶץ מְלֵחָה וְלֹא תֵשֵׁב׃

בָּרוּךְ הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בַּיהוָה וְהָיָה יְהוָה מִבְטַחוֹ׃

וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל־מַיִם וְעַל־יוּבַל יְשַׁלַּח שָׁרָשָׁיו וְלֹא יִרְא [יִרְאֶה] כִּי־יָבֹא חֹם וְהָיָה עָלֵהוּ רַעֲנָן וּבִשְׁנַת בַּצֹּרֶת לֹא יִדְאָג וְלֹא יָמִישׁ מֵעֲשׂוֹת פֶּרִי׃

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[585] Cf. The idols of the nations are הֶבֶל in Jer 14:22 (cf. הַבְלֵי הַגּוֹיִם is a *hapax*). They cannot produce rain (√גשׁם) or רְבִבִים "showers" in contrast to YHWH who does (√עשׂה) all these. YHWH withholds רְבִבִים in the only other appearance of this lexeme in the book (Jer 3:3). The specific form רְבִבִים only appears twice in the Hebrew Bible, both in Jeremiah (cf. רְבִיבִים in Deut 32:2; Mic 5:6; Ps 65:11; and 72:6). The people use הֶבֶל when describing the idols' inability to control the weather and storm (cf. Jer 10:12-15). This text evokes a covert connection between רוּחַ and הֶבֶל in Jer 14:22 perhaps from Jer 10:14-15. There is no הֶבֶל in these idols in order to stir up a רוּחַ.

Thus YHWH says,[586]

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man. He sets flesh as his strength and turns his heart from YHWH. He will be like a shrub in the Arabah.[587] He will not see when good comes. He will reside in the scorched places[588] in the wilderness, in a salt land,[589] where no one dwells.

"Blessed is the man who trusts in YHWH. YHWH will be his trust.[590] He will be like a tree planted beside the water. He will stretch out his roots to the stream (cf. Ps 1:3).[591] He will not

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[586] The MT's introductory כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה is not present in G, but it is present in S and T. McKane (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 389) follows G believing that MT's introductory formula is inappropriate. See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 350; Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 225; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 78-79; Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 373; and Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 106-107.

Holladay suggests that Jer 17:5-8 is Jeremiah's "affirmation of faith" after Yahweh told him that he should repent in Jer 15:19. Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 785-786) is open to the possibility that these words are in response to YHWH's rebuke in Jer 15:19-21.

[587] For the identity of the עַרְעָר, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 783; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 389; and King, *Jeremiah: An Archeaological Companion*, 144-145.

[588] חֲרֵרִים is a *hapax* probably related to √חרר "to burn." See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 492 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 784. For how the versions deal with חֲרֵרִים, see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 390.

[589] For the salt imagery as a curse, see F. Charles Fensham, "Salt as Curse in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East," *BA* 25 (1962): 48-50.

[590] For the chiasmus √בטח-יהוה-יהוה-√בטח, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 784 citing Eduardo Zurro, *Procedimientos iterativos en la poesia ugaritica y hebrea* (BetOr 43; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1987), 197.

[591] For a comparison and contrast with Ps 1, see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 490 and 493. Also see, Geoffrey H. Parke-Taylor, *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah: Doublets and Recurring Phrases* (SBLMS 51; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2000), 238-239. Parke-Taylor thinks that each text is independent. Additionally, he notes the connection between Jer 17:5-8 and Deut 27-28.

fear when heat comes. He will be a leafy/spreading tree.[592] In the year of drought, he will not be anxious.[593] He will not cease to produce fruit."

4.2.6.1 The Cohesion

The similarities and differences in the description of the wicked and the righteous highlight the different sources of their trust and the subsequent differing outcomes of that trust.[594]

4.2.6.2 Stylistics

Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard state that the double occurrence of √בטח is typical of Jeremiah's style.[595] The author uses a similar description in Jer 17:5-8 to compare and contrast two different individuals.

חֲרֵרִים "scorched places" and the lexeme יוּבַל "stream, canal" are each a *hapax*.[596] The lexeme עַרְעָר "shrub" is rare (cf. Jer 48:6).[597] There is a sound play between עַרְעָר and עֲרָבָה

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[592] See Willis, *Jeremiah-Lamentations*, 158. Willis notes the irony behind the use of the lexeme רַעֲנָן "leafy/spreading tree" in Jeremiah. The lexeme רַעֲנָן should remind Judah of their relationship with YHWH (Jer 11:16 and 17:8), but it usually refers to Judah's worship of idols in Jeremiah (2:20; 3:6, 13; and 17:2). For understanding the lexeme רַעֲנָן, see D. Winton Thomas, "Some Observations on the Hebrew Word רַעֲנָן," in *Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner*, eds. B. Hartmann, et al. (VTSup 16; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 387-397.

[593] For understanding the verb √דאג as "to be fatigued" and then "to thirst," see Mizrahi, "The Linguistic History of מדהבה," 101-114.

[594] The different sources of trust are key to this text; see Cole, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter*, 67-68. For an overview of the similarities and differences between Ps 1 and Jer 17:5-8, see James A. Durlesser, "Poetic Style in Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-8: A Rhetorical Critical Study," *Semitics* 9 (1984): 30-48.

[595] See Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 226.

[596] For the lexeme יוּבַל, see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 492 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 785.

[597] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 389.

"Arabah"[598] in Jer 17:6, as well as אָרוּר "cursed" in Jer 17:5.[599] Another homographic lexeme עַרְעָר in Ps 102:18 means "destitute."[600] The verb √ערר "to strip" refers to buildings being destroyed (Jer 51:58 and Isa 23:13) or persons being stripped of their clothes (Isa 32:11). Carroll says, "The word may describe a tree stripped (from *'rr*, 'strip, bare') of its vegetation because of desert conditions and providing a good contrast with the luxuriant foliage of the tree planted by water in v. 8."[601] The rare or *hapax* lexemes in this section focus on the desert conditions of the individual trusting in אָדָם as well as the lavish conditions of the individual trusting in YHWH.

4.2.6.3 Textual Criticism

There is uncertainty about whether יִרָא from √ירא "to fear, be afraid" or יִרְאֶה from √ראה appears in Jer 17:8 — יִרָא is in the *kethiv*, G, S, and V and יִרְאֶה in the *qere*, T, and C.[602] This confusion illustrates how parallel the arrangement of Jer 17:5-8 is and further became. There are a few possible explanations for this textual plurality. The author originally wrote

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[598] See Holladay, "Style, Irony, and Authenticity in Jeremiah," 52; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 492; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 226; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 783.

[599] See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 350 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 783.

[600] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 389.

[601] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 350.

[602] See Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 225; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 391; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 785; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 78-79; Lowinger, *Codex Cairo of the Bible*, 379; Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 372; and Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 98.

For the similarity of the spellings of √ירא and √ראה in the *yiqtol*, see James Barr, *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible* (The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1986; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 92-97. Barr mentions a few cases where the *yiqtol* third masculine plural of either √ירא or √ראה appears but an unpointed text would be especially difficult to determine which verb the author intended (e.g., on p. 95 he alludes to Deut 17:13 וכל־העם ישׁמעו ויראו which could mean either "all the people will hear and fear" or "all the people will hear and see").

the *Qal yiqtol* of √ירא, which would appear as ירא in an unpointed text. A scribe saw the other, explicit parallels between Jer 17:5-6 and 7-8 and decided to change this *yiqtol* of √ירא into a *yiqtol* of √ראה "to see," which involves only the addition of a final ה, creating the form יראה which corresponds exactly with the form in verse 6. Another possibility is that a scribe changed an original use of the *Qal yiqtol* of √ראה in Jer 17:8 because he thought that the *yiqtol* of √ירא made more sense in the context. A final possibility could be that the final ה dropped out of the text thus יראה become ירא. It seems that the first possibility is the most likely in this context.

The author intends the text to read יִרְאֶה in Jer 17:8, not identical to the יִרְאֶה in verse 6 but very similar. A scribe saw the close parallels between Jer 17:5-6 and 7-8. He subsequently desired to make a stronger connection between יִרְאֶה in Jer 17:8 and יִרְאֶה in Jer 17:6. A connection is clearly already present (i.e., between similar forms — יִרְאֶה and יִרְאֶה — from different verbal roots — √ירא and √ראה), but a scribe wanted the relationship between these

verbs to be an exact one.[603] This illustrates that even the first readers of Jeremiah understood the close connection between the presentation of the person trusting in man (Jer 17:5-6) and the person trusting in YHWH (Jer 17:7-8).[604] Additionally, McKane and Lundbom note that the *yiqtol* of √דאג "to worry, be anxious" confirms that the verb √ירא should appear in verse 8, not the verb √ראה.[605] Recognising the authorial connections in Jer 17:5-8, a scribe repoints

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[603] See Holladay, "Style, Irony, and Authenticity in Jeremiah," 52. Holladay says, "… the dazzling wordplay between ראה ("see") in vs. 6 and ירא ("fear") in vs. 8, which allows him the near parallel: 6 ולא יראה כי־יבוא טוב ("and he shall not see any good come"), 8 ולא ירא כי־יבא חם ("and he does not fear when heat comes"), a slight of hand which puzzled the early scribes and bequeathed us a Qr-Kt variation: the Qr wrongly read יִרָא (Kt) in 8 as יִרְאֶה to regularize the line. Here, surely, we see the master hand at work, again too great for later generations to grasp."

For similar comments, see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 490-491. Holladay (p. 491) says, "The word-play on ראה "see" and ירא "fear" is found elsewhere in the OT (Pss 40:4; 52:8; and, after Jrm, Isa 41:5), but those are simple collocations, while Jrm has managed to place the two verbs in parallel patterns in the two halves of the passage."

Also, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 785. Lundbom says that √ירא and √ראה "were created for paronomasia." He cites Jer 5:21-22; Ps 40:14; 52:8; 119:74; Job 6:21; and Isa 45:5 as illustrative texts. He notes that √ירא and √ראה can connect in a context (e.g., in Gen 22:12-14; see Yairah Amit, "The Multi-Purpose 'Leading Word' and the Problems of Its Usage," *Proof* 9 [1989]: 108-109) or be confused (cf. 1 Kgs 19:3).

For the interplay between √ראה and √ירא in various contexts, see Bezalel Porten, "Four Paraphonous Pairs in the Moses Narrative (Exodus 1–34)" (paper presented at the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 22 July 2015) and Bezalel Porten, "Three Paraphonous Pairs in the Book of Judges" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio, TX, 20 Nov 2016).

[604] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 391. McKane says, "An argument can be made for Q יראה in terms of a structural correspondence between יראה of v. 6 and יראה of v. 8, both taken as anthropopathisms. Thus, if the simile in v. 6 has the same scope as the simile in v. 8, and if ערער means 'bush', the stunted bush has no awareness or enjoyment of the generosity of nature, and the tree fed by underground springs (Targ. renders מים by מבוע דמין) is not aware when external climatic conditions are such as might produce wilting and barrenness. Kimchi, who assumes this order of correspondence, was no doubt impressed by the near identity of ולא יראה כי יבוא טוב (v. 6) and ולא ירא כי יבא חם (v. 8), and so was predisposed to accept Q in v. 8 and to achieve complete identity. Hence he concluded that just as חם indicated 'drought', so טוב indicated 'rain'."

[605] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 391 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 785. If √דאג means "to thirst" as Mizrahi notes, then this point is inconsequential. The verb √דאג denotes fear in Jer 38:19. The roots √דאג and ירא appear together in Jer 42:16 and Isa 57:11.

the verbal form in Jer 17:8 to match the form in verse 6. The author intended a different verb to appear in each case to fixate on the difference between the wicked and the righteous. A scribe opted for full uniformity instead of the authorial intention which sought to connect as well as distance each individual.

4.2.6.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

YHWH describes two individuals who each place their trust in a different source — humankind (Jer 17:5-6) or YHWH (Jer 17:7-8). Each set of verses are structured similarly.[606] The initial lines open almost identically.

Jer 17:5 אָרוּר הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בָּאָדָם

Jer 17:7 בָּרוּךְ הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בַּיהוָה

They each have a *Qal* passive participle masculine singular, the definite lexeme גֶּבֶר "man," the relative אֲשֶׁר, the *Qal yiqtol* third masculine singular of √בטח "to trust," and a ב prepositional phrase. The only difference between these lines is the first (אָרוּר in 17:5 and

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[606] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 782. Lundbom says, "The psalm has four stanzas: I-II describe the cursed man, III-IV the man who is blessed. The whole is nicely constructed, with repetitions, keys words, and plays on sound appearing in strategic collocations…There is a wordplay in *lō' yir'eh* ('It will not see') beginning II, and Kt *lō' yirā'* ('It will not fear') beginning IV." Lundbom also notes that the two sections are not equal, and he assumes that a line is missing from section II. It is possible that the length of Jer 17:5-6 is shorter than Jer 17:7-8 to replicate the expansion which the one trusting in YHWH experiences. For a similar view, see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 490-491. Holladay says, "But the number of cola do not match: Jrm has deliberately given a skewed poem, indicating the disparity between someone who puts trust in a fellow human being and someone who puts trust in Yahweh. Thus the simile of the cursed man is four cola (v 6), and the simile of the blessed man is six (v 8). By way of compensation the curse formula in v 5 is three cola and the blessing formula in v 7 is two."

Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 490) says, "The parity between the two sections is close: the first colon of v 5 matches the two cola of v 7 ("cursed/blessed is the man who trusts in. . ."), the first colon of v 6 matches the first colon of v 8 ("he is like [a sort of plant or tree]"), and above all there is the word-play between "shall not see [יִרְאֶה] rain come" in v 6 and "shall not fear [יִרָא] when heat comes."

בָּרוּךְ in 17:7) and last (i.e., אָדָם in 17:5 and יהוה in 17:7) elements.[607] Everything is contingent on the last element of the line. The complement of the ב prepositional phrase explains the destiny of this individual.

The similar description of each person continues between Jer 17:6 and 8 (i.e., a *Qal weqatal* of √היה "to be" and a כ prepositional phrase). The one trusting in humankind will not see (i.e., יִרְאֶה from √ראה) good approach (√בוא) because he is like a bush in the scorched places of the desert in 17:6.[608] The one trusting in YHWH will not fear (i.e., *qere* יִרָא from √ירא) when the heat approaches (√בוא) because he is like a tree that always flourishes and prospers in 17:8.[609]

The similarities in syntax and lexical choice when describing these individuals emphasise the dissimilarities in their destiny. Their trust is determinative.[610] The divergence between the last lines of Jer 17:5 (וְשָׂם בָּשָׂר זְרֹעוֹ וּמִן־יְהוָה יָסוּר לִבּוֹ) and 17:7 (וְהָיָה יְהוָה מִבְטַחוֹ), after the almost identical opening lines in these verses, is striking. The "extra" line (i.e., וּמִן־יְהוָה יָסוּר לִבּוֹ) in Jer 17:5, when compared to 17:7, illustrates the concerted effort of this individual to turn from YHWH and place their trust in some human strength.

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[607] See Willis, *Jeremiah-Lamentations*, 158. Willis says, "The syntax of the two statements is identical; the only differences between them are in their first and last words."

If this is part of Jeremiah's "repentance" in response to YHWH's words in Jer 15:19 as Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 492) suggests, then this statement has an individual (e.g., Ps 40:5 [E 4]; 118:8-9; and 146:1-7), rather than national application (e.g., Isa 18; 30; 31; Jer 27; and 2 Chron 32:7-8).

[608] The statement that this person will "not see" good means they will die (cf. Jer 29:32; cf. 2 Kgs 22:20; Isa 38:11; and Jer 22:12).

[609] For the same observations, see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 490.

[610] Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 226) say, "The contrast of these two situations is intensified by the use of similar-sounding words in Hebrew…Such word plays are common to Jeremiah."

The lexemes זְרוֹעַ "arm" and בָּשָׂר "flesh" only appear together elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in Isa 9:19 (E 20) and 2 Chron 32:8. In each occurrence, they are juxtaposed. The phrase בָּשָׂר זְרֹעוֹ in Jer 17:5 is almost identical to the construct phrase בְּשַׂר־זְרֹעוֹ in Isa 9:19 (E 20). In Isa 9:18-20 [E 19-21], Israel is destroying itself by self-mutilation. They are eating their own flesh (אִישׁ בְּשַׂר־זְרֹעוֹ יֹאכֵלוּ "a man will consume the flesh of his arm" in Isa 9:19 E 20). The individual in Jer 17:5 makes a similarly self-destructive decision by turning from YHWH.

The lexeme זְרוֹעַ precedes the lexeme בָּשָׂר in 2 Chron 32:8. Hezekiah encourages his troops that Sennacherib only has an arm of flesh (זְרוֹעַ בָּשָׂר) while YHWH is on Judah's side. Victory will come, argues Hezekiah, because Judah has YHWH, not simply an arm of flesh (זְרוֹעַ בָּשָׂר).[611] The same philosophy appears in Jer 17:5-8. The arm of flesh will not assist the one trusting in it (cf. Isa 36:6), but the one trusting in YHWH will not be disappointed (*contra* Isa 36:7).

4.2.7 Jeremiah 17:17

אַל־תִּהְיֶה־לִּי לְמָחִתָּה

מַחְסִי־אַתָּה בְּיוֹם רָעָה׃

"Do not be to me a terror.

My refuge you are in a day of trouble."[612]

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[611] Cf. In Ps 56, the psalmist trusts (√בטח) in YHWH in the midst of fear √ירא (Ps 56:4 E 3). The psalmist realises that his trust (√בטח) eliminates fear √ירא (Ps 56:5 and 12 E 4 and 11). He need not fear his opponents, who are בָּשָׂר (Ps 56:5 E 4). Indeed, בָּשָׂר is incapable of doing anything.

[612] Holladay reads בְּיוֹם צָרָה "in a day of distress" in Jer 17:17 with four Hebrew manuscripts and T to parallel the phrase יוֹם רָעָה "a day of trouble" in Jer 17:18 instead of having the phrase יוֹם רָעָה repeat in Jer 17:17 and 18 as in the MT. He refers to the phrase בְּעֵת־רָעָה וּבְעֵת צָרָה "in a time of trouble and in a time of distress" in Jer 15:11 to support this reading. See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 504.

4.2.7.1 The Cohesion

The phrases לִמְחִתָּה and מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה are juxtaposed and exhibit consonantal connections.[613] This portion of Jeremiah's lament evidences his urgency. He understands that YHWH can equally be a horror or a comfort to him.

4.2.7.2 Stylistics

The lexeme מְחִתָּה appears twice in Jeremiah (17:17 and 48:39). In each case, it appears with a form of the verb √היה "to be" and as the complement of a ל preposition (i.e., לִמְחִתָּה). In Jer 48:39, the destruction of Moab results in their becoming a laughing-stock and horror (וְהָיָה מוֹאָב לִשְׂחֹק וְלִמְחִתָּה לְכָל־סְבִיבָיו). Jeremiah fears his own demise will be comparable to YHWH's enemies, such as Moab.

The form of the negated jussive (i.e., אַל־תִּהְיֶה) at the beginning of Jer 17:17 is odd. This is the only occurrence of a non-apocopated jussive of √היה following the negative אַל in the Hebrew Bible.[614] The expected form would be אַל־תְּהִי.[615] This unique orthography of the negated jussive of √היה alerts the reader to possible puns in the forthcoming forms.

The hearer might expect a כִּי clause at the beginning of the second line of this verse. This כִּי clause would provide the reason that the prophet thinks YHWH will not terrify him in his present distress (e.g., "Do not be a terror to me, for you are my refuge in a day of trouble"). A כִּי clause appears at the end of Jer 17:14 (כִּי תְהִלָּתִי אָתָּה "…for you are my praise")

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[613] For the an argument that the phrase לִמְחִתָּה is key to the lament and connects it to the surrounding context, see Catherine Sze Wing So, "Structure in the Confessions of Jeremiah," in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, eds. Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson (VTSup 178; Leiden: Brill, 2018), 141-143.

[614] Cf. Gen 37:27; 1 Sam 18:17; Jer 20:14; 50:26, 29; Ezek 2:8; Zech 1:4; Ps 32:9; 69:26; 109:12 [twice]; Job 6:29; 16:18; Prov 3:7; 22:26; 23:20; 24:28; Qoh 7:16, 17; and 2 Chron 30:7.

[615] This point is made by Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 506).

as a reason that the prophet believes that YHWH will heal and save him. In both Jer 17:14 (כִּי תְהִלָּתִי אָתָּה) and 17:17 (מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה), a noun with a first common singular clitic pronoun is fronted in the clause and the second masculine singular subject pronoun אַתָּה follows the fronted noun. This similarity highlights the lack of a כִּי clause in the second line of Jer 17:17.

4.2.7.3 Textual Criticism

G and S have a free rendering in this verse with S perhaps following G.[616] G does not seem to represent the pronoun אַתָּה in the second part of the verse.[617] T follows the structure of the MT.[618] There are no significant textual issues in this verse.[619]

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[616] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 413 and Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 108-109.

[617] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:260 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 78-79.

[618] See Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 372 and Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 99.

[619] Neither de Waard (*A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 85) nor Barthélemy (*Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations*, 617) discuss this verse.

4.2.7.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

This statement is part of a lament by Jeremiah in Jer 17:14-18 (cf. Jer 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 18:18-23; and 20:7-18).[620] Jeremiah's unnamed detractors (i.e., הֵמָּה אֹמְרִים "they are saying";[621] cf. Jer 5:11-13) mock him saying, "Where is YHWH's word? Let it come!" (אַיֵּה דְּבַר־יְהוָה יָבוֹא נָא) in Jer 17:15 (cf. Isa 5:19; Ezek 12:21-28; and Mal 2:17).[622] Jeremiah, the prophet who often speaks against false prophets, is labeled a false prophet by the people since his words are unsubstantiated (Deut 18:20-22 and Jer 28:9). YHWH's capacity to change his mind depending on people's response to his word immediately follows this accusation, which is hardly accidental (i.e., Jer 18:1-12; cf. Jer 42-44 and Jonah 3:4-10).

The use of a lexeme (i.e., מְחִתָּה "terror") from the root √חתת "to be dismayed" recalls YHWH's words to Jeremiah in Jer 1:17 and anticipates the use of this verb twice in the next verse.[623] YHWH promises to dismay (√חתת) Jeremiah if he neglects his commission or

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[620] For various studies related to Jeremiah's laments, see Robert P. Carroll, "The Confessions of Jeremiah: Towards an Image of the Prophet," in *From Chaos to Covenant: Uses of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*, ed. Robert P. Carroll (London: SCM, 1981), 107-135; A. R. Diamond, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context: Scenes of Prophetic Drama* (JSOTSup 45; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987); Kathleen M. O'Connor, *The Confessions of Jeremiah: Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25* (SBLDS 94; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); Mark S. Smith, *The Laments of Jeremiah and their Contexts: A Literary and Redactional Study of Jeremiah 11-20* (SBLMS 42; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990); and Robert C. Culley, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and Traditional Discourse," in *"A Wise and Discerning Mind": Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long*. eds. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley (BJS; Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 2020), 69-82. For Job's use of Jeremiah, especially elements of Jeremiah's laments, see Edward L. Greenstein, "Jeremiah as an Inspiration to the Poet of Job," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East - Essays in Honor of Herbert B. Huffman*, ed. John Kaltner and Louis Stulman (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 98-110.

[621] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 505) says that הֵמָּה אֹמְרִים "they are saying" in Jer 17:15 is the language of lament (cf. רַבִּים אֹמְרִים "many are saying" in Ps 3:3 and 4:7).

[622] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 7-9 and 505) believes these words are from the summer of 594 BCE during Zedekiah's rebellion against Babylon which corresponds to the timing of Jer 1:17-19 and 15:19-21, according to him.

[623] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 413 and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 506.

strengthen him if he achieves his mission (Jer 1:17-19). Jeremiah states that he has faithfully fulfilled his commission (Jer 17:16) and should not face √חתת from YHWH. He begs YHWH to be a refuge for him (cf. Jer 1:18-19) instead of a source of dismay (cf. Jer 1:17).

The author juxtaposes the two phrases, לְמָחְתָּה and מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה, at the junction of the lines. The syntax of each line confirms this hypothesis. The lexeme מָחְתָּה usually appears as an accusative complement in its clause with an indirect object following it. This is true when it appears in nominal phrases in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Prov 10:29; 13:3; 18:7; and 21:15) as well as in the copula phrase in Jer 48:39. The accusative complement מָחְתָּה usually precedes the indirect object. Jeremiah 48:39 has the only other occurrence of the phrase לְמָחְתָּה in the Hebrew Bible and the only other occurrence of the lexeme מָחְתָּה in Jeremiah. The lexeme is a compound accusative complement of the copula √היה with שְׂחֹק "laughter." The indirect object (לְכָל־סְבִיבָיו "to all surrounding it") follows the compound accusative complement. There is only one other time that מָחְתָּה ends a line in the Hebrew Bible (i.e., Ps 89:41). The odd placement of the accusative complement מָחְתָּה after, instead of before, the indirect object in Jer 17:17 and its rare usage in Jeremiah is preconceived. The collocation לְמָחְתָּה appears last in the line to juxtapose it to the phrase מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה "You are my refuge."

The author is equally intent upon placing the lexeme מַחְסֶה "refuge" at the beginning of the second line. The lexeme מַחְסֶה usually follows the subject pronoun אַתָּה "you" when appearing in a nominal phrase (Ps 71:7; 91:9; and 142:6). Indeed, the subject pronoun usually appears first in a nominal phrase.[624] This is the only time that the lexeme מַחְסֶה is raised above

[624] See C. L. Seow, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Revised ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995), 92-93 and Cook and Holmstedt, *Beginning Biblical Hebrew*, 34-35.

אַתָּה in a nominal phrase in the Hebrew Bible.[625] The lexeme מַחְסֶה usually does not begin a line.[626] The expected phrase in Jer 17:17 would be אַתָּה מַחְסִי בְּיוֹם רָעָה which produces the same translation as the MT but has a different syntax.[627]

The lexeme מַחְסֶה in Jer 17:17 is a *hapax* in Jeremiah. The author could have used another lexeme to express a similar concept (e.g., the lexeme מָנוֹס "refuge" in Jer 16:19; 25:35; and 46:5).[628] The potential phrase אַתָּה מְנוּסִי בְּיוֹם רָעָה "You are my refuge in the day of trouble" in Jer 17:17 would be very similar to Jer 16:19.

The author, however, uses the Jeremianic *hapax* מַחְסֶה to create a pun with the rare Jeremianic lexeme מְחִתָּה.[629] The representative phrases in each line have the consonants מ, ח, ת, and ה appearing in the same order in each phrase (i.e., לִמְחִתָּה and מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה). In each case the phrase would be pronounced as one word (i.e., לִמְחִתָּה and מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה). Each phrase begins with the juxtaposed consonants מ and ח. Both phrases conclude with the same syllable (i.e., תָּה- *-tâ*).

The consonance in the middle of the two lines of Jer 17:17, which produces a phonological, consonantal, and conceptual link between the two opposing options in the

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[625] See Cook and Holmstedt, *Immediate Biblical Hebrew*, 40. Cook and Holmstedt state that "syntax triggering does not occur with null copulas." Thus, this is a case of "pragmatic triggering" where an item is raised to the front of the clause, in this case מַחְסֶה, is raised for the purpose of focus. In pragmatic triggering, an element can be raised for either focus or topic.

[626] מַחְסֶה begins the line in Isa 4:6 and 25:4.

[627] See Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, 59 and 92-93.

[628] Cf. There are several other lexemes appearing in Jeremiah which are possible though most of them are also a *hapax* in Jeremiah — the lexeme עֹז "strength, refuge" in Jer 16:19; the lexeme מָעוֹז "strength, stronghold" in Jer 16:19; the lexeme מִשְׂגָּב "stronghold" in Jer 48:1; the lexeme מִבְצָר "fortifications" in Jer 48:18; and the lexeme מָצָד "stronghold" in Jer 48:41; and 51:30.

[629] See Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 236. They say, "Jeremiah makes use of a word play between מחתה 'terror' and מחסי 'shelter/refuge.'"

verse, illustrate how interconnected YHWH's future involvement in the prophet's life is. It would take very little in Jer 17:17 to turn YHWH from a terror (לְמָחִתָּה) into a refuge (מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה) or *vice versa*. Jeremiah's consonance is hardly playful but represents the anguish of his soul.[630]

Perhaps hidden in this consonance is an accusation against YHWH. Jeremiah feels that YHWH is a source of dismay and terror in addition to the horror and suffering that he experiences from the people of Judah. YHWH has equally been a source of discouragement and dismay to Jeremiah as have the Judahite people. Jeremiah, indeed any prophet or prophetess of YHWH, expects YHWH to be a source of hope, salvation, and healing against the ridicule that constantly bombards them.

Jeremiah 17:17 gives insight into Jeremiah's psyche. Jeremiah understands his ministry as constantly experiencing the interplay between dismay and refuge which goes back to his original call in Jer 1:17-19. He is constantly in danger of being shattered (√חתת in Jer 1:17 and 17:17) or fortified (מִבְצָר in Jer 1:18 and מַחְסֶה in Jer 17:17) by YHWH.[631] Jeremiah repeatedly experiences the extremely fragile nature of his ministry. He fears to speak because his fellows mock YHWH's words which he proclaims. He is dismayed before them. He realises, however, that if he is dismayed before his Judahite audience to the point of silence, then YHWH will aggravate his dismay further. In the midst of his own people's present scoffing and the terror of YHWH dismaying him, Jeremiah despondently proclaims YHWH's word while demanding YHWH's protection. Though he vividly experiences the heavy weight associated with the fear and reality of approaching dismay, he does not feel as strongly the

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[630] For the serious nature of puns, see Noegel, "Paronomasia," 26.

[631] The Judahite people are equally in a position where they are constantly on the brink of facing YHWH's anger or having his face lifted over them in blessing (cf. Lev 26 and Deut 28).

refuge which YHWH's presence provides. The prophet longs for the refuge and healing of YHWH to be as pervasive as his terror. It is this dichotomy which weights heavily upon Jeremiah throughout his prophetic ministry.[632]

4.2.8 Jeremiah 17:18

יֵבֹשׁוּ רֹדְפַי וְאַל־אֵבֹשָׁה אָנִי

יֵחַתּוּ הֵמָּה וְאַל־אֵחַתָּה אָנִי

הָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹם רָעָה

וּמִשְׁנֶה שִׁבָּרוֹן שָׁבְרֵם׃

"May my pursuers be ashamed, but may I not be ashamed (cf. Jer 17:13).

May they be dismayed, but may I not be dismayed.

Bring upon them a day of trouble!

A double breaking — Break them!"

4.2.8.1 The Cohesion

The author illustrates the double breaking of his opponents in this verse by using double lines, geminate verbs, bi-literal verbs, and the second of two contextual occurrences of lexemes, verbs, or roots.

4.2.8.2 Stylistics

The structure of the first two lines is identical, recalling Jer 17:14 and delineating this section.[633] In the first clause of each line, a jussive from √בוש "to be ashamed" and √חתת precedes an overt subject (i.e., רֹדְפַי and the subject pronoun הֵמָּה "they" whose antecedent is

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[632] Ironically, Jeremiah's anguish regarding his situation (Jer 17:17) is a vivid restatement of the people's words in Jer 17:15. The people mock YHWH's inactivity compared to Jeremiah's prophetic activity. Jeremiah likewise is disconcerted by the inactivity of YHWH during his ministry and calls for YHWH's presence to be more visible.

[633] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 797.

רֹדְפַי).[634] In the second clause of the line, a negated cohortative from the same verb is followed by an overt first common singular subject pronoun אָנִי.[635] This duplication of the structure of these two lines and the verbs √בוֹשׁ and √חתת emphasises the similarities and differences between Jeremiah and his opponents. The verbs √בוֹשׁ and √חתת appear together often in Jeremiah (8:9; 14:3-4; 17:18; 48:1, 20, 39; and 50:2 [twice]). The author uses the stylistics of Jeremiah to create an emphasis on two paths.

The final two lines begin (√בוא) and end (√שׁבר "to break") with an imperative recalling the two imperatives (√רפא "to heal" and √ישׁע "to save, deliver") at the beginning of the lament in Jer 17:14. At the beginning of this lament, Jeremiah only mentions himself, not his opponents. At the end, Jeremiah only mentions his opponents, not himself. This delineates this section and focuses on the different expectations that the prophet has for himself and his opponents.

4.2.8.3 Textual Criticism

The *Hifil* imperative form הָבִיא is odd. The expected form is הָבֵא (Gen 43:16 and Exod 4:6).[636] Gesenius suggests that הָבֵיא (1 Sam 20:40) is intended or perhaps the lengthened imperative form הָבִיאָה (Gen 27:4, 7; Amos 4:1; and Prov 23:12).[637] The form הָבִיא is normally

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[634] הֵמָּה refers back to רֹדְפַי. See Robert D. Holmstedt, "Anaphora in Biblical Hebrew: A Generative Perspective," *JSem* 28 (2019): article 2:1-15. Also, see Cook and Holmstedt, *Intermediate Biblical Hebrew*, 34 and 39.

[635] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 797) says that the placement of the pronoun אָנִי at the end of its clause "heightens the antithesis."

For the jussive and cohortative forming a complete paradigm, see Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §34.1b and Fuller and Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew*, §18.4.

[636] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 506.

[637] See Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §72y and also §53m.

a *Hifil* infinitive construct of √בוא (e.g., Jer 17:24). The unusual imperatival form alerts the reader to focus on the form of the text.

4.2.8.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

In Jer 17:17, Jeremiah asks protection from YHWH's terror (מְחִתָּה from √חתת). In the next verse, he asks YHWH to bring dismay (√חתת) on his opponents.[638] The prophet surely recalls YHWH's words in Jer 1:17-19.[639]

Two other elements resurface in Jer 17:18 for the second time in Jeremiah's lament — the verb √בוא and the phrase יוֹם רָעָה.[640] The opponents of Jeremiah demand that YHWH's word approach (√בוא) in Jer 17:15. In light of his opponents mocking, Jeremiah asks YHWH to be a refuge for him in the day of trouble (יוֹם רָעָה) in Jer 17:17. The prophet then prays that YHWH bring (√בוא) the day of trouble (יוֹם רָעָה) — twice — on his opponents. Jeremiah ironically longs for YHWH's word to be doubly established by coming twice upon those who deny the truthfulness of YHWH's words in him. The double judgments become two witnesses establishing the validity of YHWH speaking through Jeremiah (cf. Deut 17:6 and 19:15). The doubling judgment would serve a double purpose — the establishment of the truth of YHWH's word through Jeremiah and the destruction of Jeremiah's opponents.[641]

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[638] The prophet draws on Exodus imagery by asking YHWH to make a distinction (cf. √פלה "to be separate" in Exod 8:18; 9:4; and 11:7) between those who are his people and those who are not by sending a judgment which troubles some while leaving others untouched (see Exod 8:16-20 [E 20-24]; 9:4-7, 23-26; 10:21-23; and 11:4-7).

[639] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 800.

[640] Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 236) state that two elements are picked up from verse 17 — the root √חתת and the phrase יוֹם רָעָה.

[641] For examples of using a form of the numeral "two," gemination, and contextual repetitions of a lexeme as a literary device, see Noegel and Nichols, "Seeing Doubles: On Two of a Kind," 1-12. They do not include bi-literal verbs as part of their presentation. Also, see Vermeulen, "Two of a Kind: Twin Language in the Hebrew Bible," 135-150.

The content of Jer 17:18 reinforces Jeremiah's desire for a double breaking. The verse has two lines with two clauses each. Allen says, "A double expression of a two-sided wish now follows."[642] In the first two lines, Jeremiah asks YHWH to bring two judgments upon his opponents — the verbs √בוֹשׁ and √חתת. He secondarily asks that YHWH not bring the same two judgments upon him. He uses the geminate verb √חתת twice in the verse. The bi-literal verb √בוֹשׁ also appears twice. The bi-literal verb √בוא also is present for the second contextual time. The defective orthography of the geminate verb √חתת results in only two radicals of the root appearing twice in the jussive/cohortative forms in Jer 17:18. The root √שׁבר appears twice in the last clause with two different morphologies juxtaposed — a noun and a verb — with both forms being a *hapax* in the Hebrew Bible.[643] Finally, the lexeme מִשְׁנֶה "double, second" describes Jeremiah's desire that the same thing happen to his opponents — twice.[644]

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[642] Allen, *Jeremiah*, 205.

[643] The double appearance of √שׁבר without comment is noted in Brown, "Jeremiah," 262. Also, Lundbom (Jeremiah 1-20, 800) mentions that שְׁבָרוֹן שָׁבְרֵם is a wordplay without any further discussion. Holladay (*Jeremiah 1, 507*) notes that the root √שׁבר appears twice in Jer 8:21. In that context, however, YHWH or Jeremiah mourns because Judah is broken (שָׁבָר). In Jer 17:18, the prophet sees his opponents broken and demands another breaking.

[644] Cf. Ezek 30:20-26. YHWH will break Pharaoh's arm (Ezek 30:20-21) and strengthen Nebuchadnezzar's arm (Ezek 30:24-26). As Babylon approaches, YHWH will re-break Pharaoh's broken arm as well as break his remaining good arm (Ezek 30:22).

For a discussion of the concept of Pharaoh's arm in the Hebrew Bible and the possibility that Ezek 30:20 is a pun and a mockery of the "Golden Horus" and "Two Ladies" names of Hofra/Apries (i.e., *nb ḫpš* "possessor of a powerful arm") and the lexeme *ḫpš* "sword," see James K. Hoffmeier, "The Arm of God Versus the Arm of Pharaoh in the Exodus Narratives," *Bib* 67 (1986): 384 note 72; James K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt As an Arm of Flesh: A Prophetic Response," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*; ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 91-92; and K. S. Freedy and D. B. Redford "The Dates in Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian and Egyptian Sources," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 482-483. Freedy and Redford say, "… Judaeans in exile, both from their formative years in a land under Egyptian influence and from their contacts in Babylon, would have had no trouble appreciating both Egyptian imagery and Ezekiel's irony: the 'strong-armed' king had suffered a broken arm and Yahweh, not Amun-re, had offered his own *ḫpš*-sword to Nebuchadrezzar, not Apries (p. 483)!"

The two consonants ב and שׁ link the two verbs beginning (√בוש) and ending (√שבר) the verse. The consonants ב and שׁ appear juxtaposed but in reverse order in each root. The verb √בוש at the beginning and the root √שבר at the end appear twice. The shaming and breaking of Jeremiah's opponents are graphemically linked.

The lexeme מִשְׁנֶה appears elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah twice (Jer 16:18 and 52:24). The lexeme מִשְׁנֶה refers to a part of the city of Jerusalem in some contexts — "the second quarter" (e.g., 2 Kgs 22:14 par. 2 Chron 34:22 and Zeph 1:10). The use of מִשְׁנֶה may be Janus parallelism in Jer 17:18. Either Jeremiah asks YHWH to doubly (מִשְׁנֶה) destroy his opponents, who are actually located in the second (מִשְׁנֶה) quarter of the city of Jerusalem, or Jeremiah asks for his opponents to be struck as well as part of the second quarter of Jerusalem. The lexeme מִשְׁנֶה can describe a reversal of terrible circumstances in Isa 61:7 and Zech 9:12 (cf. Job 42:10). In Jer 17:18, however, Jeremiah calls for an intensification, not a reversal, of his opponent's destruction. Jeremiah wants destruction to follow destruction (cf. Jer 16:18; also Jer 4:20; 51:31-32; and Job 1:16-18). The binary nature of this verse presents two paths — YHWH's protection of Jeremiah and YHWH's destruction of Jeremiah's opponents (cf. Jer 17:5-8). The author constructs doubling elements to illustrate the prophet's message.[645] The form of textual elements reiterates the meaning.

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[645] YHWH does not respond to Jeremiah's lament here (*contra* Jer 11:21-23; 12:5-6; and 15:19-21) nor does YHWH respond to Jeremiah's future laments (Jer 18:18-23 and 20:7-18). See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 507 and Willis, *Jeremiah-Lamentations*, 160. This silence illustrates Jeremiah's turmoil. Jeremiah's opponents and their mocking are present, but where is YHWH? The absence of YHWH's response draws the hearer into the emptiness and non-closure that pervades Jeremiah. YHWH's servant often labours in the midst of shame, difficulty, and mocking without any reassurance of YHWH's presence. The presence of Jeremiah's words may convey that YHWH heard.

4.2.9 Jeremiah 23:4-6

וַהֲקִמֹתִי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעִים וְרָעוּם וְלֹא־יִירְאוּ עוֹד וְלֹא־יֵחַתּוּ וְלֹא יִפָּקֵדוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וַהֲקִמֹתִי
לְדָוִד צֶמַח צַדִּיק וּמָלַךְ מֶלֶךְ וְהִשְׂכִּיל וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה בָּאָרֶץ: בְּיָמָיו תִּוָּשַׁע יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֹּן לָבֶטַח וְזֶה־שְּׁמוֹ
אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרְאוֹ יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ:

“I will raise up shepherds over them and they will shepherd them. They will not be afraid again. They will not be terrified. They will not be missing[646] — A declaration of YHWH. Ho! Days are coming — A declaration of YHWH — I will raise up for David a righteous sprig.[647] A king will reign. He will be successful. He will do justice and righteousness in the land. In his days, Judah will be delivered and Israel[648] will dwell securely. This is his name which he will call him, ‘YHWH is our Righteousness.’”

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[646] The MT’s וְלֹא יִפָּקֵדוּ “and they will not be missing” is not present in G. See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 94-95; Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 324; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 557; and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 443.

[647] צַדִּיק in the phrase צֶמַח צַדִּיק might mean “legitimate, rightful.” See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 617-618; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 172-173; and Brown, “Jeremiah,” 312-313. Brown and Lundbom suggest that this is an objection to the legitimacy of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. The phrase ולצמח צדק “legitimate offspring” occurs in a Phoenician (Larnax Lapethos 2:11) inscription. For the inscription, see G. A. Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyree, Jewish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 82-83 and 86-87 and *KAI* 43:11. The phrase ובן צדק “legitimate son” appears in an inscription from Sidon, see *KAI* 16:1.

Keil and Delitzsch (*Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:350) think that the Messiah is designated as the צֶמַח in Jer 23:5 based on comparing the phrase צֶמַח יְהוָה “sprig of YHWH” in Isa 4:2 (cf. Zech 3:8 and 6:12).

[648] G reads וירושָׁלַם “and Jerusalem” for the MT’s וְיִשְׂרָאֵל “and Israel.” See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 94-95; Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 328; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 563; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 446; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 174.

4.2.9.1 The Cohesion

The promised king is described using the roots √קום and √צדק to pun upon the royal names of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. This future king will supersede these present wicked kings.

4.2.9.2 Stylistics

Several puns appear in Jer 23:1-6. The verb √פקד "to visit, count, appoint" is used with several different meanings in Jer 23:2 (twice) and 4.[649] There is a cognate pun with √רעה "to shepherd" in Jer 23:2 and 4 and √מלך "to be king" in Jer 23:5.[650] There is also a sound play between the verbs √רעה and √ירא in Jer 23:4.[651] These puns prepare for puns on the names of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah in Jer 23:4-6.

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[649] See Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 325; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 557; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 488; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 168.

[650] Regarding the cognate pun on √רעה, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 169.

[651] For the interplay of the consonants א and ע in puns in the Hebrew Bible, see Garsiel and Řehák, "Puns on Names as a Poetic Device in the Book of Judges," 271 and 285. They say on p. 271, "The difference between the consonant ע *ayin* and א *alef* does not prevent the scribe from linking the meaning of the name יאיר Jair to different meanings of עיר *'ir*. Already in Biblical times, the sound of the pharyngeal consonant ע *'ayin* weakened and became almost like א *'alef*. No wonder that the judge bearing the name יאיר Jair had thirty sons who rode on thirty עיירים 'donkeys;' they also had thirty עיירים 'towns' called Havoth Jair." Also, they say on p. 285, "Another connotation of אשתאול raises an association with שועל 'fox' [in the Samson narrative - *JDP*]. The combination of the consonants ש-א-ל may sound close to the appellative שועל in Hebrew and in other Semitic languages. The sounds of א and ע are so close, they enable flexibility to use puns as a device."

The collocation וּמָלַךְ מֶלֶךְ in Jer 23:5 might be emphatic as in S and Radak.[652] Similar constructions with the noun מֶלֶךְ preceding (1 Sam 12:12; 2 Chron 23:3; and Prov 8:15) or following (Jer 37:1; Isa 7:6; and 32:1) the cognate verb √מלך seem to indicate emphasis. A similar construction in Jer 37:1 indicates that Zedekiah replaces Jehoiachin, while in Jer 23:5 it signals that Zedekiah will be replaced. The phrase וּמָלַךְ only appears elsewhere in Mic 4:7 with YHWH as the subject.

The form of the *Qal yiqtol* of √קרא "to call" with a clitic pronoun is peculiar (יִקְרָאוֹ in Jer 23:6). The form יִקְרָאוֹ is expected as a *patakh* changes to a *qamets* before a cliticised pronoun. Ben Shesheth compares the similar form יִתְקְפוֹ from √תקף "to overpower, prevail" in Qoh 4:12.[653] He thinks the odd form appears to distinguish it from the *Qal yiqtol* third

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[652] See McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 562. McKane says, "It has been supposed (Rudolph, Bright) that as with צדיק and צדקנו here too there is an allusion to Zedekiah, and so ומלך מלך means, 'And he shall exercise real sovereignty'—unlike Zedekiah who was the mere shadow of a king." McKane does not hold this view but simply mentions it.

For Radak's comment on Jer 23:5, see https://www.sefaria.org/Radak_on_Jeremiah.23.5.2?lang=bi. Regarding the וְהִשְׂכִּיל "he will be successful," Radak alludes to David in 1 Sam 18:14 (וַיְהִי דָוִד לְכָל־דְּרָכָו מַשְׂכִּיל וַיהוָה עִמּוֹ "David was successful in all his ways. YHWH was with him.").

[653] See ben Shesheth, *A Commentary upon the Books of Jeremiah and Ezeqiel*, 15 and ה.

masculine plural (i.e., יִקְרָאוּ or יִקְרָאוּ in pause).[654] Gesenius believes the MT's יִקְרָאוֹ combines יִקְרָאוֹ and יִקְרָאוּ.[655]

The name in Jer 23:6 is unusual in that the full name of YHWH appears in the name. Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard say, "The use of the full form 'Yahweh' as a name element is striking because of its rarity (all other cases occur in place names)."[656] The use of the full theophoric element (i.e., יְהוָה) signals that this king will be the full manifestation and embodiment of YHWH's ideals regarding the root √צדק. The previous kings were cheap imitations.

4.2.9.3 Textual Criticism

A few Hebrew manuscripts, S, T, V, and Arabic witnesses read יִקְרָאוּ "they will call" instead of MT's יִקְרָאוֹ "he will call him."[657] The consonantal text is the same but the witnesses differ regarding whether YHWH (MT) or Israel/Judah (S, T, V, etc.) proclaim the name of the

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[654] For the syntax of וְאִם־יִתְקְפוֹ הָאֶחָד in Qoh 4:12, see Cook, Holmstedt, and Marshall, *Qoheleth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 156-157. The form הָאֶחָד can be the subject of the verb √תקף (i.e., "If the one overpowers him…") or it can be a constituent on the right margin of the clause with an impersonal subject (i.e., "If someone overpowers him — the one…"), or an appositive (i.e., "If someone overpowers him, the one…").

The same options are available for understanding the אֲשֶׁר phrase in Jer 23:6. The subject of the verb √קרא could be יְהוָה (i.e., "which YHWH will call him: 'Our Righteousness'"). יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ could be on the right margin of the clause with an impersonal subject of the verb √קרא (i.e., "which he will call him — 'YHWH Is Our Righteousness'"). יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ could be an appositive to the third masculine singular pronoun cliticised to the verb √קרא (i.e., "which he will call him, 'YHWH Is Our Righteousness'; cf. Brown, "Jeremiah," 311). I understand an impersonal subject for the verb √קרא while יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ is an appositive to the resumptive pronoun cliticised to the verb.

[655] Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §60c and 74e.

[656] Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 331.

[657] See Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 328; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 563-564; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 446; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 175; Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 361; Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 111; and Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 136-137.

new king.[658] The uniqueness of MT's יִקְרְאוּ (see above) perhaps suggests its originality. G reads a third masculine singular verb like MT in Jer 23:6 but provides YHWH as an overt subject.[659] YHWH would be the most logical subject in this context, whether overt or covert, though he speaks in the first person in Jer 23:5 while this is a third masculine singular verb in Jer 23:6. G (and MT?) makes YHWH the one naming this king, which makes more sense than the people (cf. Jer 6:30 and 11:16). The name of the king in the MT is יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ in Jer 23:6. In G, it is Ιωσεδεκ (i.e., יְהוֹצָדָק/יוֹצָדָק which Ιωσεδεκ transliterates in Hag 1:12; Zech 6:11; Ezra 3:2; etc.).[660] G's Ιωσεδεκ might be a conflation and repudiation of the names of יְהוֹיָקִים and צִדְקִיָּהוּ. I argue that this text will focus on undoing the reigns and names of יְהוֹיָקִים and צִדְקִיָּהוּ in order to construct a better king (see below).

4.2.9.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

YHWH addresses Zedekiah (Jer 22:1-10; cf. 21:1-10, 11-14) concerning the failures of previous Judahite monarchs — Shallum/Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Coniah/Jehoiachin (Jer 22:11-30). Zedekiah's own faults, however, are conspicuously absent. YHWH's subsequent

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[658] For a defence of the MT and G and a rejection of the form יִקְרְאוּ being a polemic, see Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:351-352.

[659] See George Coulson Workman, *The Text of Jeremiah* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1889), 239-243. Workman believes that G's reading makes the subject of the verb "call" more explicit as well as the name (ὃ καλέσει αὐτὸν κύριος Ιωσεδεκ "…which the Lord will call him: Io-sedek."). It is also possible that G exactly represents a text similar to MT. See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:271; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanu*s, 94-95 and 329; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 446; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 175.

[660] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:271 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 94-95.

Workman (*The Text of Jeremiah*, 239-243) takes the name to be analogous to יְהוָה יִרְאֶה "YHWH will see" in Gen 22:14; יְהוָה נִסִּי "YHWH is my banner" in Exod 17:15; and יְהוָה שָׁמָּה "YHWH is there" in Ezek 48:35. Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 619) adds יְהוָה שָׁלוֹם "YHWH is peace" in Judg 6:24 and עִמָּנוּ אֵל "Immanuel" in Isa 7:14 to the names Workman mentions. For a similar view, see Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:353.

pronouncement of a new, righteous king (Jer 23:1-8) is a thinly veiled rejection of Zedekiah as well as Jehoiakim.[661]

Most recognise that the name יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ "YHWH is our Righteousness" (Jer 23:6) is a pun upon the name צִדְקִיָּהוּ "Zedekiah."[662] The dismissive pun on Zedekiah's name connects him to the other disappointing monarchs in Jer 22.[663]

Carroll uses the same elements (i.e., the absence of Zedekiah's name in Jer 22, the pun on Zedekiah's name in 23:6, and the placement after an oracle against Jehoiachin in Jer 22:24-30), however, to argue that the use of the name יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ is positive in Jer 23:6. Carroll understands Jer 23:5-6 as legitimising Zedekiah's claim to kingship, as opposed to Jehoiachin, and marking his name change from Mattaniah (2 Kgs 24:17). The fact that a

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[661] See Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 262 and 264-266. Cornill's comments are recommended in John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 312-313 note 1.

[662] For a rejection of the presence of a pun here, see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 564-565. McKane says, "The view that behind the portrayal of the future king Zedekiah lurks as a kind of antitype or antithesis should be given up, because it is a superfluous hypothesis and it attributes to the portrayal a kind of particularity which it does not possess" (p. 564). McKane argues specifically that the lexeme צְדָקָה "righteousness" and the verb √צדק "to be right" are prevalent through the Hebrew Bible and to expect one appearance to signal a pun on the name of king Zedekiah is not very realistic. While this is valid, the fact that portions of Jer 21-22 were addressed to Zedekiah and his name is conspicuously missing from the rebuke in Jer 22 makes it more likely that Zedekiah is commented upon in some way in these verses. Far from being a random suggestion, the connection between יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ and צִדְקִיָּהוּ is contextually suggested.

[663] For similar views regarding the function of יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ in Jer 23:6, see Allen, *Jeremiah*, 258-259; Harrison, *Jeremiah & Lamentations*, 120; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 144 and 146; Kidner, *The Message of Jeremiah*, 90; Wanke, *Jeremia 1,1-25,14*, 206; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 165 and 175; Christopher T. Begg, "Zedekiah and the Servant," *ETL* 62 (1986): 395-396; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 617; Willis, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 195; Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 160; Andrew Dearman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations* (NIVApp; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 218; and Matthew H. Patton, *Hope for a Tender Spring: Jehoiachin in Biblical Theology* (BBRSup 16. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 86. For an overview of possible interpretations of Jer 23:6, see Hugo McCord, "The Meaning of YHWH *Tsidhkenu* ('The Lord our Righteousness') in Jeremiah 23:6 and 33:16," *ResQ* 6 (1962): 114-121.

decent shepherd, like Zedekiah, can be installed before the exile lends credibility to the promise that good shepherds will also be installed in the post-exilic period, according to Carroll.[664] Carroll says,

> Thus the unit reflects the time of salvation expected in the post-exilic period (indicated by the term *ṣemaḥ*, 'branch', cf. Zech. 3.8; 6.12, where it is used of Zerubbabel). As such it can hardly be referred to Zedekiah *simpliciter*. The word-play on that king's name preserves the memory of Zedekiah and incorporates him into the future hope, but the historical Zedekiah is only an echo in that hope, an echo contributed by the Jeremiah tradition. This transformation of the significance of Zedekiah's name underlines the kingly and wise rule of the future scion and, set in the tradition, inevitably contrasts him with Zedekiah's status as a client king of the Babylonians and his behaviour as the leader who foolishly brought about the ruin of Jerusalem.[665]

Carroll's argument is intriguing but does not seem to coincide with the rest of Jeremiah's presentation of Zedekiah. Jeremiah does not present Zedekiah positively elsewhere in the book. Zedekiah is appointed by the Babylonians, but he is constantly chided by Jeremiah because of his rebellion against Babylon and YHWH. The book's final assessment is that Zedekiah is wicked in rebellion to YHWH and his servant, Nebuchadnezzar. The pun in Jer 23:6 is not positively affirming Zedekiah's legitimacy but rather is negative in scope.

The pun upon the name צִדְקִיָּהוּ in this context is not limited to the phrase יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ. Several other occurrences of the root √צדק "to be right, righteous" appear in Jer 23:5 (i.e., the

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[664] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 446-447.

[665] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 447.

lexemes צַדִּיק "righteous" and צְדָקָה "righteousness"). The last kings of Judah, including צִדְקִיָּהוּ, have not exemplified the Judahite kingly ideals described in the root √צדק.

Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, argue that the very form of the new name in Jer 23:6 is significant in relationship to Zedekiah's name. They say, "The name of this new king reverses the elements of Zedekiah's name (צדקיהו, 'Zedekiah'; יהוה צדקנו, 'Yahweh is our righteousness'), indicative perhaps that all the aspects of Zedekiah are here reversed."[666] J. Thompson also notes that the pronouns are different in each name.[667] This new king (יהוה + √צדק) will be the exact opposite of Zedekiah (√צדק + יהוה) even at the lexical and morphological levels.[668] Lundbom suggests that the redactor places the name Zedekiah at the beginning (Jer 21:1-10) instead of the end of the oracles against the kings to mimic the reversal of the placement of the theophoric element in Jer 23:6.[669]

Jehoiakim is another king negatively referenced in Jer 23:1-8. The *Hifil weqatal* of √קום "to stand, rise" in Jer 23:4 and 5 is a pun on the name יְהוֹיָקִים (cf. Jer 22:18).[670] The verbal form וַהֲקִמֹתִי has many similarities with the name יְהוֹיָקִים. Both share the root √קום and the consonantal phonemes ה, מ, and ק as well as having a ו, which functions as a consonant in

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[666] Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 329.

[667] See Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 491.

[668] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21-36*, 176) says, "The name of the future king, 'Yahweh is our righteousness,' is an indirect censure of King Zedekiah, whose name is nearly the same in reverse." Also, see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 619 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 46.

[669] Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 46-47.

[670] See Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 212. Huey says, "This message was most likely delivered during the reign of King Zedekiah. His name means *The Lord is righteous* or *The Lord is my righteousness*. The name of the new ruler was intended as a repudiation of Zedekiah. He will be an exact opposite of rulers such as Zedekiah and Jehoiakim." Huey connects Zedekiah and Jehoiakim as wicked kings without specifically understanding a pun against Jehoiakim in Jer 23.

the verb and a vowel letter in the name, and a *hireq yod*. The verb √קום connects Jer 23:1-4 and 5-6.[671]

The use of √קום is not regarded as a pun on Jehoiakim's name by scholars but the use of the root √צדק in Jer 23:5 is. Several elements in Jer 23:1-8 refer back to the section specifically rebuking Jehoiakim (Jer 22:13-19). Jehoiakim built his house without righteousness (בְּלֹא־צֶדֶק) and justice (בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּט) in Jer 22:13. Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah's father, acted in justice and righteousness (וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה) in Jer 22:15 in stark contrast to his sons. The new Davidic king will look like Josiah, not Jehoiakim, in Jer 23:5 (וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה בָּאָרֶץ; cf. Jer 33:15).[672] This imagery actually recalls David (2 Sam 8:15).[673] Lundbom notes that the use of the phrases צֶמַח צַדִּיק and וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה בָּאָרֶץ "are unmistakable censures of King Jehoiakim, which the audience might be expected to pick up."[674] Lundbom connects the root √צדק to Jehoiakim in Jer 23:5 but not the verb √קום. Lundbom says, "If 'righteous shoot' is read in the present verse, then Jeremiah is indirectly condemning Jehoiakim, who was the most unrighteous of kings (cf. 22:13-17), and v 6b is indirectly condemning Zedekiah, who did not live up to his name, 'My righteousness is Yahweh.' Perhaps Jeremiah is saying that the future king will be unlike either of them!"[675] By including the verb √קום in the presentation against Jehoiakim, it becomes clear that the author rejects Jehoiakim in addition to Zedekiah.

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671 See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 171.

672 Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 329) state that the phrase וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה בָּאָרֶץ appears in the middle of a chiasmus in Jer 23:5-6.

673 See Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:351.

674 Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 175.

675 Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 173.

The use of the verb √מׁשׁח "to anoint" in Jer 22:14 regarding the activity of Jehoiakim's palace construction is canonically ironic. Jehoiakim, the anointed king, anoints his house in an improper way and thus will lose his house (בַּיִת in Jer 22:13 and 14), which is probably a reference to the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7 where YHWH promised to build David's בַּיִת. Jehoiakim is not worthy of his anointing.[676] Additionally, the horticultural imagery in the lexeme צֶמַח "sprout, sprig" to describe the new Davidic ruler in Jer 23:5 may be a mockery of Jehoiakim and his preoccupation with well-grown trees in his building projects (Jer 22:15). Jehoiakim believes that he is building his house through strong trees by his actions of injustice, when according to YHWH these same actions cut him off from David's house and cause a new sprout to replace him.

YHWH describes a new, righteous king who will fix the problems of the previous, wicked kings of Judah (Jer 23:1-8). In the midst of the description of the new king, the verb √קום appears twice and the lexemes צְדָקָה, צַדִּיק, and צֶדֶק appear. This reflects a pun on the names of a previous, יְהוֹיָקִים, and the present Judahite king, צִדְקִיָּהוּ.[677] The failure of יְהוֹיָקִים and צִדְקִיָּהוּ results in YHWH raising up (√קום in Jer 23:4-5) a new king whose name is יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ (Jer 23:6). The new king in Jer 23:1-8 is a direct response to the wicked Judahite kings,

[676] The juxtaposed verbs √קום and √מׁשׁח described David's kingly anointing (1 Sam 16:12-13) and now Jehoiakim's removal.

[677] Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21-36*, 176) says, "The audience must now realize that Judah's last two reigning kings are castoffs in Yahweh's eyes, no better than Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, and that his sights are now set upon the future."

Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.[678] The same pun between the name Jehoiakim and the root √קום as well as the name Zedekiah and the root √צדק appears in Jer 33:14-16 which is very similar to Jer 23:4-6. The verb √קום and the noun צֶדֶק each appear once while the noun צְדָקָה appears twice there.

4.2.10 Jeremiah 48:43-44 (cf. Isa 24:17-18)

פַּחַד וָפַחַת וָפָח עָלַיִךְ יוֹשֵׁב מוֹאָב נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃

הָנִיס [הַנָּס] מִפְּנֵי הַפַּחַד יִפֹּל אֶל־הַפַּחַת

וְהָעֹלֶה מִן־הַפַּחַת יִלָּכֵד בַּפָּח

כִּי־אָבִיא אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־מוֹאָב שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃

"A terror, a pit, and a snare are over you, inhabitant of Moab — A declaration of YHWH.[679]

The one fleeing (*qere*)[680] from the terror[681] will fall into the pit.

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[678] Does Jehoiachin's absence in the punning of Jer 23:1-8 and 33:14-16 anticipate his restoration at the book's end (Jer 52:31-34)? Is the future king's success (√שׂכל in Jer 23:5) on David's (דָּוִד) throne an overturning of Jehoiachin's descendants not sitting on David's (דָּוִד) throne nor succeeding (√צלח in Jer 22:30)? Is the verb √שׂכל (Jer 23:5) a rearranging of the verb √שׁלך "to cast out" from Jer 22:28? If the verb √שׂכל in Jer 23:5 reverses the use of √שׁלך in Jer 22:28 then it would do the same for the use of √שׁלך in Jer 22:19 concerning Jehoiakim. The context, however, demonstrates that no reversal is in view for Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin.

Patton (*Hope for A Tender Spring*, 85-88) believes that Jer 33:14-26 uses the long awaited arrival of Isaac and the promises to Abraham (Jer 33:22) to parallel Jehoiachin's situation. The use of the lexemes זֶרַע "seed" and כִּסֵּא "throne" and the use of the phrase "my servant" for David, instead of Nebuchadnezzar, signals a renewed Davidic king from Jehoiachin.

[679] The phrase נְאֻם־יְהוָה does not appear in Jer 48:43 in G. See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 126-127; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 794; McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1195; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 308; and Allen, *Jeremiah*, 484.

[680] Either an infinitive construct (*kethiv* הָנִיס) or a participle (*qere* הַנָּס; cf. Isa 24:18) of √נוס "to flee" appears at the beginning of Jer 48:44. See Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 2:231-232 and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 794.

[681] S reads מִקּוֹל הַפַּחַד "from the sound of the terror" in Jer 48:44 (cf. Isa 24:18). See McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1195-1196.

The one coming up from the pit[682] will be captured in the snare.

For I will bring over it,[683] over Moab, the year of their punishment — A declaration of YHWH."[684]

4.2.10.1 The Cohesion

The judgment lexemes in Jer 48:43-44 each have the consonants פ and ח. The hunting imagery illustrates that YHWH's pursuit, like a master hunter, is relentless. The fact that פַּח "snare" is present in each of the three lexemes demonstrates that YHWH will ultimately entrap his victim.

4.2.10.2 Stylistics

The three hunting lexemes in Jer 48:43-44 (cf. Isa 24:17-18) are rare elsewhere in the Latter Prophets. The lexeme פַּחַד "terror" appears twice elsewhere in Jeremiah (30:5; 49:5; cf. Isa 2:10, 19, and 21). The lexeme פַּחַת "pit" only appears in two contexts in the Latter Prophets — Jer 48 (vv. 28, 43, and 44) and Isa 24 (vv. 17-18). The lexeme פַּח appears once elsewhere in Jeremiah (18:22; cf. Isa 8:14; Hos 5:1; 9:8; and Amos 3:5 [twice]).

The author uses rare lexemes to produce alliteration, consonance, and assonance (cf. Isa 24:17-18). The lexemes פַּחַד, פַּחַת, and פַּח each appear twice in these verses. They each begin with the consonants פ and ח. Additionally, the nominal form פְּקֻדָּתָם "their punishment" from √פקד "to punish" (Jer 48:44) has the consonant פ as well as ד, which connects it to the lexeme

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[682] A few Hebrew manuscripts, S, and T read מִתּוֹךְ הַפַּחַת "from the midst of the pit" (cf. Isa 24:18) instead of MT's מִן־הַפַּחַת "from the pit." See Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 303-304 and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 794.

[683] In Jer 48:44, the prepositional phrase אֵלֶיהָ "over it" in MT is אֵלֶּה "these" in G and S, while V omits אֵלֶיהָ. See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 794; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 308; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 306-307. For understanding the preposition אֶל to mean "over" here, see below.

[684] G lacks the phrase נְאֻם־יְהוָה in Jer 48:44. See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:297 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 126-127.

פַּחַד, and ת, connecting it to the lexeme פַּחַת. The author uses the form פְּקֻדָּתָם to build upon these three judgment lexemes. The consonant פ also surfaces in the verb √נפל "to fall" (Jer 48:44; cf. Isa 24:18).

The nominal form פְּקֻדָּתָם is a pun upon the lexemes פַּחַד and פַּחַת and to a lesser extent פַּח. The noun פְּקֻדָּה "judgment" is a common lexeme in Jeremiah and often refers to the moment of punishment. It appears with the lexeme עֵת "time" in the phrase בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם "at the time of their punishment" (Jer 8:12 and 10:15 par. 51:18) or עֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם "time of their punishment" (Jer 46:12 and 50:27). It appears with the lexeme שָׁנָה in the phrase שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם "year of their punishment" (Jer 11:23 and 23:12; cf. לְיוֹם פְּקֻדָּה "the day of punishment" in Isa 10:3). Thus, the appearance of פְּקֻדָּה in Jer 48:44 accords with Jeremianic language. The exact phrase שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם in Jer 48:44 appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in Jer 11:23 and 23:12.

There is a close consonantal connection between the the nouns פַּחַד and פַּחַת and the form פְּקֻדָּתָם in Jer 48:43-44. The lexemes פַּחַד and פַּחַת each share two consonants with the form פְּקֻדָּתָם. Additionally, the emphatic consonant ק is probably realised similarly to ח.[685] If so, then this strengthens the sound similarity already present between the lexemes פַּחַד and

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[685] Is ק velarised/pharyngealised (e.g., Arabic) or glottalised (e.g., Ethiopic and Modern South Arabian)? For the details, see Gary A. Rendsburg, "Ancient Hebrew Phonology," in *The Phonologies of Asia and Africa*, ed. Alan S. Kaye (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 73 and 75-76; Gzella, "Ancient Hebrew," 79-80; and Joshua Blau, *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew: An Introduction* (LSWS 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 68.

For additional information on pronunciation of the "emphatics" in Proto-Semitic, see John Huehnergard, "Proto-Semitic," in *The Semitic Languages*, Second Edition, ed. John Huehnergard and Na'ama Pat-El (London: Routledge, 2019), 49-52 and Leonid Kogan, "Proto-Semitic Phonetics and Phonology," in *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger, Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 36 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 59-61.

פַּחַת with the form פְּקֻדָּתָם as well as creates an additional connection between the lexeme פַּח. This is a case where the stylistics of the book contribute to a pun in the text.

4.2.10.3 Textual Criticism

G represents the same hunting imagery as the MT in Jer 48:43 but in a different order — פַּח וָפַחַד וָפַחַת.[686] The order of these three lexemes are the same in MT and G in Jer 48:44.[687] The important thing is that each of these three lexemes appear in both verses.

4.2.10.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Cohesion

In the context of a lengthy oracle against Moab (Jer 48:1-47), YHWH speaks this pun based on alliteration, consonance, and assonance — פַּחַד וָפַחַת וָפָח (cf. Isa 24:17).[688] The consonants פ and ח begin each lexeme and the *a* vowels *qamets* and *patakh* frequent each lexeme.[689] The similar orthography and phonology illustrates that YHWH's similarly articulated judgments entangle his enemies. The lexical coincidence that each of these lexemes have the lexeme פַּח built into their form is used by the author in order to show that

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[686] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:297 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 126-127.

[687] See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 126-127.

[688] See Williamson, "Sound, Sense and Language in Isaiah 24-27," 3-5. Williamson states that Jeremiah uses the phrase פַּחַד וָפַחַת וָפָח in a judgment oracle about Moab (יוֹשֵׁב מוֹאָב "inhabitant of Moab" in Jer 48:43), while Isaiah later makes the judgment universal (יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ "inhabitant of the earth" in Isa 24:17). This follows a frequent trend in Isa 24-27, where the text borrows elements from other texts and restructures these elements to apply them universally. For a similar conclusion, see Parke-Taylor, *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah*, 140.

Moab might be representative of YHWH's enemies, however, as the placement of Moab at the end of the judgment on the nations section in G perhaps indicates. See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 306. If so, then the universal application of Jer 48:43-44 in Isa 24:17-18 is logical.

[689] Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 364. Holladay calls this a "spectacular triple word-play." For similar comments, see Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 713; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 794; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 320; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 305; and Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 293.

the person fleeing from YHWH's judgment will certainly be ensnared (cf. Isa 24:17-18).[690] G's arrangement of these three judgment lexemes in Jer 48:43 (i.e., פַּח וָפַחַת וָפָחַד) focuses the reader on the fact that פַּח is the foundation and building block of the two other lexemes. This aspect may show purpose in G's arrangement of these lexemes.

Escape from one judgment only leads into a deeper entrapment in the nets of YHWH's judgment. McKane says, "There is no doubt that פחד ופחת ופח is hunting imagery and that the literary effect which is secured by the play on פח in all three words is deliberate. Two of the words refer to trapping devices, the pit (פחת) and the snare (פח), while פחד has generally been taken as the fear in the breast of the intended victim of the hunt."[691]

It is possible that the appearance of the phrase פַּחַד וָפַחַת וָפָח in Jer 48:43 and Isa 24:17 and the similar phrase פַּחַד וָפַחַת in Lam 3:47 suggests that this a well-known phrase in the semantic domain of hunting.[692] Perhaps the very recitation of this line would evoke imagery of a hopelessly entrapped animal who will inevitably be captured though they might momentarily escape from one of the hunter's devices. The consonantal and phonetic

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[690] Noegel and Nichols also observe that פַּח forms part of פַּחַד and פַּחַת; see Noegel and Nichols, "Lurking Lions and Hidden Herds," 4.

פַּח "bird trap" is a lexeme borrowed from Egyptian. Egyptians were renowned for their fowling ability. See Noonan, *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible*, 172-173. Also, see Benjamin J. Noonan, "Egyptian Loanwords as Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus and Wilderness Traditions," in *"Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?" Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier, Alan R. Millard, and Gary A. Rendsburg (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 54.

[691] McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1195.

[692] For example, Allen (*Jeremiah*, 487) says, "There is powerful alliteration in the Hebrew, *paḥad*, 'scaring device,' *paḥat*, 'pit,' and *paḥ*, 'snare,' to consolidate the catchall process of hunting." Also, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 305-306. Lundbom says, "This imagery derives from the hunt, where the chased animal escapers one danger only to fall headlong into another…The point then, as stated elsewhere in the OT (15:2; Amos 5:19; 9:1-4; Joel 1:4; Ps 139:7-12), is that escape with Yahweh in pursuit is impossible" (p. 306).

continuity is a case of onomatopoeia. The sounds of this phrase replicates the sounds associated with the fear (e.g., pounding heart) and capture (e.g., crunching bones) of the hunted.

The author additionally puns on the lexemes פַּחַד, פַּחַת, and פַּח by using the noun פְּקֻדָּה. By using characteristic language from the book of Jeremiah with hunting phraseology, the author creates a pun on the lexemes פַּחַד, פַּחַת, and פַּח to connect Moab's fate with other destructions orchestrated by YHWH in the book described through the root √פקד. Moab faces the enveloping judgment of YHWH as many other nations before. They are caught in YHWH's net.

There is a supplemental pun between lexemes containing the consonants ע and ל in Jer 48:43-44 and the surrounding context. The Moabites have exalted (*Hifil* of √גדל "to be/ become great") themselves above (עַל) YHWH in Jer 48:26 and 42.[693] YHWH will subsequently place his judgment over (עַל) them in Jer 48:43.[694] The one attempting to come up (√עלה) from the pit, that is to get above it (Jer 48:44), will be ensnared. Moab, who exalted themselves above YHWH, will be unable to find high ground before YHWH's judgments.

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[693] These are the only occurrences of the *Hifil* of √גדל in Jeremiah.

[694] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 304. Lundbom notes that the preposition עַל connects Jer 48:42 and 43.

Moab's self-exaltation above YHWH leads to YHWH's net covering them from above.[695] YHWH's judgment is pervasively spread over Moab. As the clouds block the light of the sun, YHWH's judgment blocks all rays of hope regarding escape for Moab.

Also, the consonants ח and ת from the lexeme פַּחַת recalls the use of the verb √חתת in this context (Jer 48:1, 20, and 39). The noun מְחִתָּה from the root √חתת appears in this context and only once elsewhere in the book (Jer 17:17 and 48:39). Moab is destined to be dismayed (√חתת) and to become a source of terror (מְחִתָּה). Additionally, the lexeme מְחִתָּה calls to mind the phonetically and semantically similar פַּחַד (i.e., ד and ת are dentals). Moab falls into a פַּחַת because they flee from פַּחַד and will in turn become a מְחִתָּה to others.

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[695] The preposition אֶל means "over" (cf. עַל) instead of "against" in Jer 48:40 (הִנֵּה כַנֶּשֶׁר יִדְאֶה וּפָרַשׂ כְּנָפָיו אֶל־מוֹאָב "Ho! Like the eagle, he will swoop. He will spread his wings over (אֶל) Moab"). A similar clause in the judgment on Edom in Jer 49:22 (הִנֵּה כַנֶּשֶׁר יַעֲלֶה וְיִדְאֶה וְיִפְרֹשׂ כְּנָפָיו עַל־בָּצְרָה "Ho! Like the eagle, he will go up, swoop, and spread his wings over Bozrah.") confirms that the preposition אֶל means "over" in Jer 48:40 while additionally highlighting the fact that the preposition עַל is expected in this phrase instead of אֶל. The verb √עלה puns on the preposition עַל in Jer 49:22. The verb √פרשׂ "to spread" takes an אֶל prepositional phrase complement only in 1 Kgs 8:7 and Jer 48:40. See Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 2:231.

If אֶל means "over" in Jer 48:40, then it probably means "over" in Jer 48:44 (כִּי־אָבִיא אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־מוֹאָב שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם "For I will bring over it, over Moab, the year of their punishment"). The collocation כִּי plus a form of √בוא often appears with an עַל prepositional phrase complement in Jeremiah (e.g. Jer 18:22; 23:12; and 51:56). Jeremiah 23:12 is similar (כִּי־אָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם רָעָה שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה "For I will bring over them trouble, the year of their punishment — A declaration of YHWH") to Jer 48:40 (cf. Jer 51:56 כִּי בָא עָלֶיהָ עַל־בָּבֶל שׁוֹדֵד "For a Destroyer is coming over it, over Babylon").

Also, the similar phraseology at the beginning of Jer 48:43 (פַּחַד וָפַחַת וָפָח עָלֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁב מוֹאָב נְאֻם־יְהוָה "A terror, a pit, and a snare are over you, inhabitant of Moab — A declaration of YHWH") and end of Jer 48:44 (כִּי־אָבִיא אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־מוֹאָב שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה "For I will bring over it, over Moab, the year of their punishment — A declaration of YHWH") lends support to reading אֶל as "over" in Jer 48:44. Thus, the concept of YHWH's judgment being spatially above Moab appears prominently in the surrounding context of Jer 48:43-44.

For the possible diachronic nature of אֶל in and עַל prepositional phrases with the verb √פרשׂ and the lexeme כָּנָף "wing," see 1 Kgs 8:7 and 2 Chron 5:8.

The goal of the consonantal and phonetic repetition across the lexemes פַּחַד, פַּחַת, and פַּח is to emphasise the inevitable nature of YHWH's judgment.[696] There is no escaping it. The one fleeing constantly encounters פַּח in the form of each of the three judgment lexemes. This uniformity of outcome no matter the actions of the one fleeing is reiterated by the lexeme פְּקֻדָּה at the end of these verses. The one fleeing engages in several different and dramatic activities to escape YHWH's judgment, but this judgment remains graphemically and phonetically unmoved throughout the verse and is consistently presented as a storm cloud hovering over the spot wherever the flight occurs. YHWH cannot be outmanoeuvred, a common prophetic *leitmotiv* (cf. Amos 5:18-20 and 9:1-4).[697] YHWH's judgment is ever-present as illustrated by the repetition of the consonants פ and ח across three lexemes.[698] YHWH's judgment never fails to ensnare its victim as demonstrated by repetition of the lexeme פַּח in the very lexical forms of the two other judgment lexemes in these verses.

4.2.11 Jeremiah 52:6

בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי בְּתִשְׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ וַיֶּחֱזַק הָרָעָב בָּעִיר וְלֹא־הָיָה לֶחֶם לְעַם הָאָרֶץ׃

"In the fourth month on the ninth of the month, the famine was severe in the city. There was no bread for the people of the land."

4.2.11.1 The Coherence

The anagramic phrase הָרָעָב בָּעִיר, which is a palindrome, graphemically illustrates the siege of Jerusalem.

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[696] See Willis, *Jeremiah-Lamentations*, 361. Willis says, "There is a crescendo from terror to pit to snare to illustrate the inevitability of their coming humiliation."

[697] See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 794; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 713; McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1196; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 306.

[698] The prophetic image of YHWH surrounding the wicked to cut them off from any source of hope is the opposite of YHWH surrounding the righteous in order to protect them from all harm (cf. Jer 1:18-19 and 15:19-21).

4.2.11.2 Stylistics

The lexeme רָעָב appears 33 times in Jeremiah which is the most of any book in the Hebrew Bible. The lexeme רָעָב usually appears with the lexeme חֶרֶב and also with דֶּבֶר. The only other time that רָעָב appears alone without either חֶרֶב or דֶּבֶר in Jeremiah is in 38:9. The use of רָעָב without חֶרֶב and דֶּבֶר is not common in the stylistics of Jeremiah.

Additionally, the collocation הָרָעָב בָּעִיר in Jer 52:6 appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in the parallel account in 2 Kgs 25:3. Two very similar phrases appears in 2 Kgs 7:4 (וְהָרָעָב בָּעִיר "The famine is in the city") and Ezek 7:15 (וַאֲשֶׁר בָּעִיר רָעָב וְדֶבֶר יֹאכְלֶנּוּ "Whoever is in the city the famine and the plague will consume them"). These contexts describe siege conditions. The rare collocation in Jer 52:6 suggests purpose.

4.2.11.3 Textual Criticism

The opening phrase stating that the famine broke Jerusalem in the fourth month (בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי) of Zedekiah's 11th year is missing in the parallel in 2 Kgs 25:3 and in G Jer 52:6, but the MT's reading corresponds to Jer 39:2.[699] S reads the 5th month (בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי) in Jer 52:6 making this text adhere to Jer 1:3.[700] T is identical to MT in Jer 52:6.[701]

The collocation הָרָעָב בָּעִיר which almost has *hapax* status illustrates that the MT's הָרְבִיעִי should be retained. Though not present in 2 Kgs 25:3, the repetition of the consonantal

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[699] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:347 and Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 184-185. McKane (*Jeremiah 26-52*, 1362) acknowledges that a specific month is probably needed to balance this description with others but thinks ultimately that G of Jer 52:6 and the MT of 2 Kgs 25:3 are better readings than the MT of Jer 52:6. Lundbom (*Jeremiah 37-52*, 515) thinks that this phrase's absence in G might be attributable to haplography.

[700] See Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 336-337 and Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 772 note 3.

[701] See Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 289 and Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 190.

phonemes ב, ע, and ר in the lexeme רְבִיעִי "fourth" anticipate the devastation created by the famine as well as the city walls being broken (√בקע "to divide, split" in Jer 39:2; 52:7 par. 2 Kgs 25:4). The phrase בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי may illustrate that the author makes changes in Jer 52:6 (cf. 2 Kgs 25:3) to connect the events of the city's destruction with its timing. Contextual concerns, not chronological, may drive the author's lexical choice.

4.2.11.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Coherence

Famine is an expected judgment which dominates Jeremiah. The lexeme רָעָב appears more in Jeremiah than in any other book in the Hebrew Bible. According to the testimony of various texts in the Hebrew Bible, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem resulted in widespread famine as the prophet predicted (e.g., Jer 37:21; cf. Lam 1:19; 2:11-12, 20; 4:3-5, 8-10; and 5:9-10). By constructing the palindromic collocation הָרָעָב בָּעִיר, the author illustrates the siege graphemically and phonetically (i.e., ר-ע-ב-ב-ע-ר). It is as if each consonant mimics an enclosure and reminds the hearer of how closed off Judah is from assistance and escape.

4.2.12 Jeremiah 52:31-34

וַיְהִי בִשְׁלֹשִׁים וָשֶׁבַע שָׁנָה לְגָלוּת יְהוֹיָכִן מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בִּשְׁנֵים עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ בְּעֶשְׂרִים וַחֲמִשָּׁה לַחֹדֶשׁ נָשָׂא אֱוִיל מְרֹדַךְ מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בִּשְׁנַת מַלְכֻתוֹ אֶת־רֹאשׁ יְהוֹיָכִין מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וַיֹּצֵא אוֹתוֹ מִבֵּית הַכְּלִיא [הַכְּלוּא:] וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ טֹבוֹת וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ מִמַּעַל לְכִסֵּא מְלָכִים [הַמְּלָכִים] אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּבָבֶל: וְשִׁנָּה אֵת בִּגְדֵי כִלְאוֹ וְאָכַל לֶחֶם לְפָנָיו תָּמִיד כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּיו: וַאֲרֻחָתוֹ אֲרֻחַת תָּמִיד נִתְּנָה־לּוֹ מֵאֵת מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ עַד־יוֹם מוֹתוֹ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו:

“In the 37th years of the deportation of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in the 12th month on the 25th of the month,[702] Evil Marduk, king of Babylon, in the year of his reigning[703] lifted the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and brought him out from the house of imprisonment. He spoke with him good things. He put his throne above the thrones of the kings[704] who were with him in Babylon. He changed his prison garments and he ate bread in his presence continually all the days of his life. And his allowance — a continual allowance — was given to him from the king of Babylon daily,[705] until the day of his death all the days of his life.”

4.2.12.1 The Coherence

The near palindromic phrase כִּלְאוֹ וְאָכַל “…his prison. And he ate…” in Jer 52:33 typifies the reversal of Jehoiachin’s situation at the beginning of Evil Marduk’s reign.

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[702] The day of Jehoiachin’s release differs in the witnesses as either the 24th (G Jer 52:31), 25th (MT and S Jer 52:31), or 27th (2 Kgs 25:27). See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:349; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 188-189; and Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 342-343. Also see Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 438; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 377; McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1385; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 535; and Jannes Smith, “Jeremiah 52: Thackeray and Beyond,” *BIOSCS* 35 (2002): 89.

Rashi explains the divergent reading by saying that Nebuchadnezzar died on the 25th, Evil Marduk looked at Nebuchadnezzar’s body on the 26th to confirm his death, and then Evil Marduk begin to reign on the 27th. See Rosenberg, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 2:420. Cf. Lev. Rab. 18:2.

[703] Evil Marduk releases Jehoiachin during his first year (i.e., reading בִּשְׁנַת מָלְכוֹ “in the year of his reigning” as G and 2 Kgs 25:27 instead of בִּשְׁנַת מַלְכֻתוֹ “in the year of his reign” in MT Jer 52:31). See Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 438; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 377; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 534 note 1 and 535. Hornkohl (*Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, 322-324) argues that the three appearances of מַלְכוּת in Jer (10:7; 49:34; and 52:31) are all the result of scribal updating based on the influence of contemporary Hebrew.

[704] The *qere* of Jer 52:32 reads a definite article on the plural lexeme מֶלֶךְ which is lacking in the *kethiv* while S has הַמְּלָכִים. See Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 342-343.

[705] The phrase דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ “the matter/command of the day by its day” denotes that all the daily needs of Jehoiachin are met.

Jehoiachin receives an allowance (אֲרֻחָה), recalling the lexeme אַחֲרִית "after, end," and signalling that YHWH blesses the end of his life.

4.2.12.2 Stylistics

The name יְהוֹיָכִין "Jehoiachin" appears twice in Jer 52:31. The name does not refer to the son of Jehoiakim elsewhere in the book. Additionally, the defective spelling יְהוֹיָכִן, appearing first in Jer 52:31, is a *hapax* in the Hebrew Bible. The full spelling יְהוֹיָכִין appears later in the verse and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (2 Kgs 24:6, 8, 12, 15; 25:27 [twice]; 2 Chron 36:8, and 9). The parallel verse (2 Kgs 25:27) has the full spelling יְהוֹיָכִין both times. The son of Jehoiakim is usually called כָּנְיָהוּ "Coniah" (Jer 22:24, 28; and 37:1)[706] or יְכָנְיָהוּ "Jeconiah" (Jer 24:1; cf. יְכָנְיָה in Jer 27:20 and יְכָנְיָה in Jer 28:4; 29:2; cf. Esth 2:6; 1 Chron 3:16, and 17) elsewhere in Jeremiah. The names Coniah and Jeconiah are almost entirely unique to Jeremiah. A unique name, from a Jeremianic perspective, describes the son of Jehoiakim in Jer 52:31 with a *hapax* spelling in the first of two occurrences.[707]

The lexeme כֶּלֶא "prison" in Jer 52:33 appears in one other context in the book (Jer 37:15 and 18). Textual confusion appears both in Jer 52:31 (i.e., *qere* הַכְּלִיא or *kethiv* הַכְּלוּא) and Jer 37:4 regarding a noun from the root √כלא "to restrict." The phrase בֵּית־הַפְּקֻדֹּת appears in this context in Jer 52:11 (*qere*) to refer to the prison were Zedekiah was housed in Babylon. The use of the rare lexeme כֶּלֶא here seems to distinguish the imprisonments of

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[706] The form כָּנְיָהוּ which utilises a *qatal* is understood as a pluperfect by Patton (*Hope for A Tender Spring*, 60-61) to signal that YHWH had established Jehoiachin, Jerusalem, and Judah but will no longer do so. This is a reversal of the verb √כון "to establish" in 2 Sam 7:12, 13, 16, 24, and 26. The spelling of כָּנְיָהוּ in Jer 22:24 and 28 appears elsewhere in Jer 37:1 where Jehoiachin is replaced.

[707] For the various names of this Judahite king in the Hebrew Bible, see Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 1:344-345. They do not believe that any of the name changes are a result of Jeremiah manipulating the name to make a theological point.

Zedekiah and Jehoiachin.[708] The lexeme אֲרֻחָה "food portion, allowance" in Jer 52:34 par. 2 Kgs 25:30 appears once elsewhere in the book (Jer 40:5) and once in the rest of the Hebrew Bible (Prov 15:17). The use of the *hapax* יְהוֹיָכִן, which is especially unique in the onomastics of Jeremiah, the rare Jeremianic lexeme כֶּלֶא, and the very rare lexeme אֲרֻחָה in the Hebrew Bible suggest functionality.

4.2.12.3 Textual Criticism

Some suggest that G reads Jehoiakim, not Jehoiachin, in Jer 52:31, but this seems unlikely.[709] Codex Vaticanus reads that Jehoiachin was shaved before leaving prison in Jer 52:31 which further strengthens the connection present in this text between Jehoiachin and Joseph (cf. Gen 41:14).[710]

The spelling "prison" is either הַכְּלִיא (*qere*) or הַכְּלוּא (*kethiv*) in Jer 52:31 (as in Jer 37:4) while the lexeme כֶּלֶא "prison" appears in 2 Kgs 25:27. The Lucianic recension reads כְּלֹאוֹ in 2 Kgs 25:27 which makes this form identical to 2 Kgs 25:29 par. Jer 52:33, where the lexeme כֶּלֶא appears with a clitic pronoun.[711] Additionally, the phrase בֵּית הַכֶּלֶא "prison"

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[708] See Boyd, "The *Binyanim* (Verbal Stems)," 99 note 38 and 123-124. Boyd argues that different *binyanim* (*Qal* and *Nifal*) of the verb √נגשׁ "to draw near" are used to distinguish Leah and Rachel in Gen 33:7. Similarly, the *Qal* and *Hotpaal* of √פקד distinguish the mustering of Ben-Hadad and Ahab.

[709] For the suggestion, see Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 377 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 535. The name Ιωακιμ does represent Jehoiakim in Jeremiah (e.g., 1:3; 22:18; 24:1; 25:1; 26:2; 33:1, 21; 42:1; 43:1, 9, 28, 30, 32; 44:1; and 51:31) but it also represents Jehoiachin in G (4 Kgdms 24:6, 8, 12, 15; 25:27; and Ezek 1:2). For reading Jehoiachin, see Smith, "Jeremiah 52: Thackeray and Beyond," 89.

[710] See Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 188-189 and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 535.

For the connections between Joseph and Jehoiachin, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 535 and Michael J. Chan, "Joseph and Jehoiachin: On the Edge of Exodus," *ZAW* 125 (2013): 566-577. Lundbom (*Jeremiah 37-52*, 535) notes that Jer 52:31 is a reversal of Exod 1:8. A king arises who does not know Nebuchadnezzar's command regarding Jehoiachin.

[711] See BHS note and Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Kings*, 370.

appears in Jer 37:15 and 18. Both Jer 37:4 and 52:31 should probably be emended to read בֵּית הַכֶּלֶא (or perhaps בֵּית כִּלְאוֹ) as their context (Jer 37:15, 18) or their parallel (2 Kgs 25:27) read.

G and S have one reference to allowance (אֲרֻחָה) instead of two, as in the MT in Jer 52:34.[712] The phrase עַד־יוֹם מוֹתוֹ "until the day of his death" is lacking in a few Hebrew manuscripts and 2 Kgs 25:30.[713] The phrase כֹּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו "all the days of his life" is lacking in G.[714]

4.2.12.4 Meta-Textual Semantics via Textual Coherence

The Akkadian name of the Babylonian king would be *Amel-Marduk* "man of Marduk" but its Hebrew representation in Jer 52:31 (par. 2 Kgs 25:27) is אֱוִיל מְרֹדַךְ. Transliterating a proper name into another language is always arduous, but it appears that the first element אֱוִיל "foolish, stupid" (cf. Jer 4:22) is specifically chosen to mock the Babylonian god (cf. Jer 50:2 and 51:44).[715] This is an onomastic twisting (cf. the name change from אֶשְׁבַּעַל in 1 Chron 8:33 and 9:39 to אִישׁ־בֹּשֶׁת in 2 Sam 2:10).[716] This onomastic manipulation by the author hints that more puns follow.

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[712] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:349; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 188-189; Greenberg and Walter, *Jeremiah: The Syriac Peshiṭta Bible*, 342-343; McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1387; and Smith, "Jeremiah 52: Thackeray and Beyond," 92-93. Smith argues G does not have a different *Vorlage* from MT.

[713] See McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1388; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 377; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 438. Lundbom (*Jeremiah 37-52*, 537) believes that since this phrase recalls Jer 52:11, it should be retained.

[714] See Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 3:349; Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus*, 188-189; McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1388; Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 377; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 438; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 537.

[715] See *HALOT*, 21.

[716] See Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 783; McKane, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 1386; Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 438-439; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 535.

The *hapax* spelling יְהוֹיָכֵן becomes significant through retrospective patterning when the *plene* spelling יְהוֹיָכִין appears later in the same verse (Jer 52:31). The spelling of the name of the deposed Judahite king moves from defective to full in the verse. This is the reverse order of the orthography in Jer 2:13. Jehoiachin moves from emptiness in prison to fullness eating from the Babylonian king's daily provisions and having his throne elevated above the other deported kings. This elevation is apparent in the orthographic move in Jer 52:31 in the spelling of Jehoiachin's name.

The anagramic phrase כִּלְאוֹ וְאָכַל in Jer 52:33 is a near palindrome. The consonantal reversal, which includes the clitic pronoun and the conjunction ו, corroborates the altering of Jehoiachin's circumstances. The authors of the Hebrew Bible use metathesis to denote reversal.[717] Jehoiachin removing his prison (כִּלְאוֹ) garments and eating (וְאָכַל) the king's food denotes his elevation and perhaps more (e.g., 2 Sam 9:7, 10, 11, and 13).[718]

There is an additional case of literary metathesis in these verses regarding the lexeme כֶּלֶא. The phrase לְכִסֵּא "the thrones" appears in Jer 52:32, creating a connection with the consonants א, כ, and ל in the lexeme כֶּלֶא. This construction is premeditated as the lexeme כִּסֵּא "throne" in the parallel verse in 2 Kgs 25:28 lacks a ל cliticised preposition. The exact phrase כִּסְאוֹ מִמַּעַל ל "his throne above ל…" only appears in Jer 43:10 and 52:32 in the Hebrew Bible. The parallel phrase in 2 Kgs 25:28 מֵעַל כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים "above the thrones of the kings" has a compound prepositional phrase (i.e., מִן plus עַל) that is only slightly different from the

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[717] See Kalimi, *Methathsis in the Hebrew Bible*, 131-133.

[718] Levenson connects the change of clothes with Zech 3:1-7 and suggests that Jehoiachin is getting a second chance. See Jon D. Levenson, "The Last Four Verses in Kings," *JBL* 103 (1984): 356. Also, Lundbom (*Jeremiah 37-52*, 536) connects the new clothes with the acquittal and ritual cleansing of Jehoiachin. For the suggestion that Jehoiachin repented and is now considered righteous in Lev. Rab. 19 and Song Rab. 8:5, see Rosenberg, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 2:421 and Brown, "Jeremiah," 571-572.

compound prepositional phrase מִמַּעַל "from above" (i.e., מִן plus מַעַל) in Jer 52:32. The slight orthographic difference is syntactically significant since the presence of מֵעַל instead of מִמַּעַל in 2 Kgs 25:28 explains the absence of the ל preposition on כִּסֵּא. The form מִמַּעַל is often followed by a ל preposition (e.g., Isa 6:2; 14:13; Jer 35:4; 43:10; 52:32; and Ezek 1:26).[719] Thus, the author makes the form מִמַּעַל in Jer 52:32 instead of מֵעַל to allow for the placement of a ל preposition on the lexeme כֶּלֶא. The author links the phrase לְכִסֵּא to the lexeme כֶּלֶא. Jehoiachin's rise from prison (כֶּלֶא) to his exaltation above the thrones (לְכִסֵּא) of various captive kings is expressed through an anagramic phrase.

Also, Jehoiachin exchanges his prison (כִּלְאוֹ) garments in Jer 52:33 for his throne (כִּסְאוֹ) in Jer 52:32. These forms have identical vocalisation (*hireq*, *shewa*, and a full *holem*) as well as beginning (with כ) and ending (with אוֹ) in the same way.

The similar consonants in the verbs to describe Jehoiachin being exalted (√נשׂא "to lift, bear") in Jer 52:31 and changing his clothes (√שׁנה "to change") in Jer 52:33 is an anagramic pun. The parallel account in 2 Kgs 25:29 spelled this *Piel weqatal* as וְשִׁנָּא "he changed" instead of as וְשִׁנָּה in Jer 52:33 which accentuates the consonantal connection beyond what is present in the Jeremianic text.[720] In Jer 52:31 (par. 2 Kgs 25:27), the changing (√שׁנה) of Jehoiachin's prison garments is anticipated by the lexeme שָׁנָה "year."

The rare lexeme אֲרֻחָה which denotes Jehoiachin's food allowance recalls the lexeme אַחֲרִית "after, end." The lexeme אַחֲרִית describes the future hope of a nation after YHWH's judgment in the book (Jer 29:11; 31:17; 48:47; and 49:39). This hopeful אַחֲרִית will not be

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[719] *HALOT*, 613.

[720] The spelling of √שׁנה with a final א appears only here in the *Piel*. The *Pual* appears in Qoh 8:1 and the *Qal* in Lam 4:1.

For a case of the sibilant שׂ, and possibly ס, appearing in a pun with שׁ in the forms מִשְׁפָּט "justice" and מִשְׂפָּח "bloodshed" in Isa 5:7, see Dobbs-Allsopp, "Isaiah's Love Song: A Reading of Isaiah 5:1-7," 163 and Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 86.

shared by all (e.g., Babylon in Jer 50:12; cf. 5:13; 12:4; and 17:11). YHWH's promise to give an אַחֲרִית to those Judahite deportees in Babylon (Jer 29:11) is graphemically fulfilled in Jehoiachin.

Elements in this section create a contrast between Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar speaks troubling judgments (וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ מִשְׁפָּטִים) to Zedekiah (Jer 52:9) while Evil Marduk speaks good things (וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ טֹבוֹת) to Jehoiachin (Jer 52:32).[721] Zedekiah is put in prison (בֵּית־הַפְּקֻדּוֹת) until the day of his death (עַד־יוֹם מוֹתוֹ) in Jer 52:11. Jehoiachin is released from prison (*kethiv* בֵּית הַכְּלִיא or *qere* בֵּית הַכְּלוּא or possibly בֵּית כֶּלֶא via 2 Kgs 25:27) in Jer 52:31 and eats on an allowance from the government עַד־יוֹם מוֹתוֹ in Jer 52:34.[722] Zedekiah is placed (√נתן) in prison (Jer 52:11) while Evil Marduk places (√נתן) Jehoiachin's throne above others (Jer 52:32).[723] The horror that Zedekiah experiences when being deported and imprisoned in Babylon is turned upside down in the experience of Jehoiachin.

4.3 Conclusion

Contextual effects generate meta-textual semantics to convey the message of the passage. The cases of meta-textual semantics that I have discussed involve the words of YHWH, Jeremiah, the narrator, and the Judahite people. Later scribes were aware of the rhetorical devices and authorial intentions in these texts as evidenced by later replications or contributions to the presentation by the scribe. Translators, too, can be viewed as adding to

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[721]The use of the lexeme טוֹב "good" in Jer 52:32 contrasts with the lexeme רַע "bad" in Jer 52:2. These two lexemes recall the prospects of the people who stay in Jerusalem (רַע) and those who go to Babylon (טוֹב) in Jer 24. See Allen, *Jeremiah*, 537.

[722] See Patton, *Hope for a Tender Sprig*, 82.

[723] See Patton, *Hope for a Tender Sprig*, 82. The verb √נתן appears with the phrase כִּסְאוֹ elsewhere in Jer 1:15.

the complex web of meta-textual semantics in creatively rendering a translation to uphold the textual rhetoric of his *Vorlage*.

In each text discussed, I exhibit the exegetical significance of the different configurations of meta-textual semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah. Anacoluthon in the syntax of Jer 4:23-26 confirms the disappearance of Judah, while the syntactic expansion in Jer 4:26 denotes YHWH's raging wrath. Onomastics, both normative (Jer 23:4-6) and adaptive (Jer 27:1 and 6), provide authorial opportunity through its accidental lexical and consonantal connections to muse on the destiny of the individual so designated. The means of judgment is covertly present though phonologically null as it can be contextually reconstructed by recovering the necessary consonants from overt lexemes (Jer 9:20; 49:26; and 50:30). The orthographic movement from *plene* to defective spelling (Jer 2:13), or conversely from defective to *plene* (Jer 52:31), narrates the relative fullness of a situation. Graphemic contact in anagramic or palindromic phrases across words or lines (Jer 17:17 and 52:32) denote reversal. An extra consonant (בֹּאר in Jer 2:13) or the reduction of a vowel letter (הַגְּדֹלִים in Jer 5:5), creates a contextual connection. Graphemic and phonetic connections surprisingly generate previously unthinkable associations (דַּלִּים with הַגְּדֹלִים in Jer 5:4-5 as well as מְחִתָּה with מַחֲסִי־אַתָּה in Jer 17:17). A palindromic and near *hapax* phrase is constructed to mimic the Jerusalem siege (Jer 52:6). A complement is fronted in a nominal phrase to connect it to the previous syntactic element (Jer 10:14-15 and 17:17). Structural syntactic repetition and deviation denotes a removal of an anticipated connection (Jer 4:23-26 and 17:5-8). By employing the lexeme מְשִׁנָּה, geminate verbs, bi-literal verbs, the second contextual occurrence of a lexeme, verb, or root, and the twofold use of a root, the author crafts a binary description — a second pass through a vineyard in Jer 6:9 or a double crushing of the enemy in Jer 17:18. The author uses a set phrase in order to subvert expectations (Jer 14:15-16 and

48:43-44). The bilingual nature of a text generates a bilingual pun (Jer 10:11). Lexical meaning, instead of the derived meaning "idol," is ironically utilised to disconnect the linguistic signifier and signified (הֶבֶל in Jer 10:14-15). These representative examples demonstrate the exegetical weight and magnitude of properly perceiving meta-textual semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah which reward an attentive, close reading of the textual form.[724]

Following my methodology, once stylistics and possible text critical issues are considered, these textual oddities can be seen as contortions or cohesions crafted to denote the message. A possible error or corruption becomes elegantly designed composition. Scribes can mimic meta-textual semantics through scribal changes to conform to the context and rhetorical devices therein, as seen in the interplay of author and scribe in Jer 17:5-8. Translators aware of the meta-textual semantics at work in their *Vorlage* replicate the rhetoric in the target language, as in the case of G Jer 4:23 and 26. All of these stages in the transmission of the text show differing levels of meta-textual semantics — the competent composition of a text in which the various semantic components interconnect the meaning, form, and message of the text.

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[724] Noegel (*"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 33) notes that puns in ancient texts work at two levels. The general audience would be expected to gain some insight from the textual riddles while the learned scribes would glean the most through repetitive reading and instruction.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Study

Meta-textual semantics is more prevalent in the Hebrew Bible then has previously been understood. This study provides a selection of meta-textual semantics in Hebrew Jeremiah and enumerates a methodology to test potential cases. The author/scribe in Jeremiah uses a plethora of elements (orthography, morphology, syntax, etc.) to generate meta-textual semantics. At times, Hebrew Jeremiah evidences the careful construction of its text by competent authors and scribes. This suggests that a contorted text should be examined for meta-textual semantics if there is no ready explanation via the stylistics of the author/scribe or via textual criticism. A close, contextual reading of problematic as well as well-formed Hebrew texts in the Hebrew Bible can provide possible exegetical pathways to describe minor and major contextual themes which have been previously unexplored.

Scribes are aware of the rhetorical devices and intentions of the authors as is evident by the scribal hand aiding meta-textual semantics in various texts. The scribe in Jer 17:8 corrects, and subsequently corrupts, the form יִרָא to יִרְאֶה to flatten a slight distinction in the verbal form that is part of the presentation of the author. Even in this, however, the scribe is keenly aware of the context and of the meta-textual semantics created by the author in this text, but his desire for complete symmetry between the verbs in Jer 17:6 and 8 overrides other concerns. The scribal change to יִרְאֶה does strengthen the connection between the cursed and blessed person in Jer 17:5-8. Later translators are equally aware of the meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew text and replicate them (e.g., G's rendering of the cognate infinitive phrase in Jer 6:9). Medieval Jewish exegetes, such as Rashi, understood the authorial meta-textual semantics in the text and interact with them in their exegesis (e.g., glossing √דמם as √חרב in

Jer 49:26). Modern readers should equally incorporate meta-textual semantics into their exegesis.

5.2 Implications of Meta-Textual Semantics for Understanding Authorial/Scribal Activity

The implied author chooses lexemes, orthography, verbal and nominal forms, etc. to add meaning beyond the contextual sense of the words (e.g., the use of √בוא in Jonah 1:3). Scribes were competent readers of the Hebrew text and participate in the phenomena of establishing added meaning through textual formation. They understood the peculiar linguistic elements in the text as a device demonstrating the message. When given the opportunity, they even show themselves capable of reproducing meta-textual semantics and expanding on the original example produced by the author. A scribal gloss is not heedless of the context, the message of the text, and the surrounding literary structure of the text. A scribal gloss often is preconceived and strategically executed. This suggests the possibility that a scribe at times purposefully took up his reed to intervene in the text in order to dilate an element of meta-textual semantics which in his estimation is under-represented in the present form of the text to an extent that it might remain veiled. The stylistics of an author/scribe can also become part of the meta-textual semantics in a text (e.g., Jer 14:15-16 and 48:43-44). It is not just aural or oral aspects of a text which are significant for interpretation, but the written nature of the text is consequential.

The scribal awareness of meta-textual semantics in the Hebrew Bible, including the written form of the text, has implications for understanding orthographic changes in the Hebrew text. It is often assumed that the orthography of the Hebrew Bible has been altered in a random and careless process that evidences the inconsistent scribal updating or changing of orthography. This may be the case but it is uncertain how much of the Hebrew text can be explained in this way. I am convinced that though scribal updating of vowel pointing,

addition of vowel letters, and changes in orthography are certainly part of the Hebrew text, a substantial amount of the variance in the text, even in these minor details, are premeditated and not simply the result of random updating or careless copying. Scribes are component and active in their text, not careless and passive. Giving scribes proper appreciation for their linguistic skill and literary ingenuity might lead to a different understanding of the brilliance of various glosses in the Hebrew Bible. In turn, it might lead to a fuller appreciation of the process and importance of scribal interaction in the text. For example, Hebrew Jeremiah in some places (e.g., Jer 2:13; 27:1, and 6) evidences different orthography for a specific purpose. This possibility suggests that a re-examination of every individual section, context, and book is needed to determine if there is significance to a particular spelling, or variations of spelling, in a text. This study illustrates that almost every aspect of the Hebrew text of Jeremiah is carefully constructed as a literary work of art and the resultant text should be respected in its major and minor details.

Scribes are similar to modern copyeditors, as suggested by Lim. The resultant text is the intwined product of author and scribe. Scribes see authorial themes in the text and replicate them by participating in the textual production. The scribe acknowledges and strengthens the authorial intentions in the text, instead of subverting it. Scribal updating of orthography, additional glosses, or rewriting are means by which the scribe interacts with the authorial material to strengthen and reinforce the themes already present in the text. The scribal activity is not meant to subvert the authorial intentions. They simply expand the authorial presentation.

5.3 Implications of Meta-Textual Semantics for the Translator's Activity

Later translators, in a similar way, may be motivated to distinctly craft their translation to uncover the meta-textual semantics present in their *Vorlage*. Their desire to

replicate the meta-textual semantics within their *Vorlage* may take precedence over a more exact rendering which the text critic might more readily anticipate. A reading in the versions, thus, may not be meant to accurately represent the exact nature of its *Vorlage* on a word to word scale. Instead, the reading in a version might seek to recreate the meta-textual semantics of the *Vorlage* in the target language. It seems likely from G's rendering of Jer 4:23 and 26 that a translator can accentuate and expand a case of meta-textual semantics in his *Vorlage* in addition to simply mimicking it. The absence of a verse in a version (e.g., 1 Sam 13:1 and Jer 27:1 being absent in G) perhaps evidences the version's struggle to understand the verse instead of being illustrative of its absence in the *Vorlage*.

5.4 Implications of Meta-Textual Semantics for Textual Criticism

Meta-textual semantics is present throughout the development of the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible. An original case of meta-textual semantics might be reinforced by subsequent modifications and moments of refashioning the surrounding material. The author provides the incorrect name Jehoiakim in Jer 27:1 instead of the name Zedekiah, for example. Recognising both the emphasis in this immediate context and in the second half of Hebrew Jeremiah where Zedekiah is equated with Jehoiakim, a later scribe perhaps tailors the orthography of Jehoiakim's name to create a *hapax* (i.e., יְהוֹיָקִם), forcing the reader to fixate on this peculiar name. Cognisant of the pattern (i.e., both the original infelicity of the author and the subsequent reformation of the name יְהוֹיָקִם), perhaps a later scribe creates an additional *hapax* spelling of the name Josiah (יֹאושַׁיָּהוּ). In this way, scribes are not maiming the text or creating textual corruptions but are promoting and accentuating the meta-textual elements already present in their text. Scribes were competent and close readers of every detail in their text. They intervened in the text, in major and minor ways, in order to verify textual themes including cases of meta-textual semantics. They equally expect their

subsequent readers to utilise every device in their power to determine the significance of any major or minor textual element. Why is only one of three appearances of a lexeme uniquely spelled in this text? Why is this verbal form peculiarly pointed? The modern textual inspector can be sure they are not the first to ask these questions. These questions have occupied the minds of scribes and exegetes for centuries. Like an ancient scribe, modern readers should leave no element of the text un-investigated.

An odd linguistic feature in the Hebrew text is not necessarily a mistake or an infelicity. The impropriety might be a crafted element from the hand of an author or scribe to enhance a textual theme. An author might even create an inaccuracy to illustrate a textual theme (e.g., Jer 27:1). The ancient creators of the texts in the Hebrew Bible are very competent using every tool at their disposal to orchestrate the text. At first listen to a particular text, it might sound like a cacophony of unrelated instruments. Upon closer scrutiny of the sounds, it becomes evident that this element is actually the crescendo of an exquisite composition. Before resorting to a textual emendation, the possibly of meta-textual semantics should be entertained.

5.5 Implications of Meta-Textual Semantics for Exegesis

Meta-textual semantics was widely understood and practiced in the production as well as the reading process of ancient texts as evidenced in the scribal schools of the ancient Near East. Israelite authors and scribes knew of the concept and thought that it was discoverable in a text, according to Prov 1:5-6. In this way, they understood that meta-textual semantics is significant for the interpretation of the text. The scribes, translators, early interpreters, and textual guardians of the Hebrew Bible were each cognisant of the presence of meta-textual semantics. The selection of meta-textual semantics presented in Hebrew Jeremiah in this

study illustrate that every detail of the Hebrew text should be carefully considered in interpretation as much remains to be discovered.

Reading through the lens of meta-textual semantics is contextually focused (cf. Rashi's *peshat*). Flattening the text by normalising the orthography and syntax, removing glosses, changing lexical choices, and changing the onomastics will subsequently result in the loss of authorial and scribal cues to textual themes. The author and scribe cleverly convey minor and major contextual themes through both the infelicitous and pertinent formations in the text. Like any other rhetorical or literary device in the Hebrew Bible, ignoring this part of the communication of the text will result in underdeveloped exegesis. A better understanding of meta-textual semantics will improve exegesis and provide interpretative pathways which were previously invisible. By attending to the seemingly insignificant oddities in the text, the exegete will continue to rediscover that there is meaning in the form as well as the content of the text.

The interplay between שָׁקֵד and שׁוֹקֵד in the opening vision of Hebrew Jeremiah illustrates that the author expects the reader and hearer to exegete this book through the lens of meta-textual semantics. The written and oral/aural nature of the text is significant for interpretation. The author and scribe utilise graphemic and phonetic elements to produce semantics which are beyond the lexical and phrasal meaning. The exegete who disregards these contextual cues to the message of the prophet does so to their own peril. The form of the text is vital for exegesis. Hebrew Jeremiah evidences the work of author and scribe, who together, create a well-formed book whose composite elements confirm the major and minor themes in the text.

Proper exegesis, as defined by the opening vision, will deal with every detail of the textual form. The anacoluthon in Jer 4:23-26 is essential. The chronological inaccuracy in Jer

27:1 is indispensable to the textual message. The verbal description of the future king in Jer 23:4-6 is chosen to scorn present and past rebellious Judahite monarchs.

Meta-textual semantics is often performative in Hebrew Jeremiah. The prophets in Jer 14:15-16 reduce Jeremiah's three judgment lexemes to two and subvert them with two blessings. YHWH reaffirms the two judgments and graphemically rearranges the missing lexeme of judgement to intensify it. In the same way, Hananiah seeks to subvert Jeremiah's prophecy about all nations serving Nebuchadnezzar by breaking the yoke off Jeremiah's neck (Jer 28:1-4 and 10-11). Instead of deactivating YHWH's program, however, Hananiah's action is ironically performative. Hananiah's action creates an iron yoke, thus, assisting the execution and intensification of YHWH's plan (Jer 28:12-14).

Meta-textual semantics appears in the words of YHWH, Jeremiah, the narrator, and the Judahite people. The examples in the people's words as well as the narrator's are the simplest involving mainly orthography or onomastics to provide the message. Jeremiah's examples of meta-textual semantics are more complex involving syntax, orthography, chiasmus, and morphology. YHWH's words provide the most prolific examples of meta-textual semantics in the book. YHWH's rhetoric is powerful and performative.[725]

YHWH's words produce the most examples of meta-textual semantics surveyed (Jer 2:13; 6:9; 9:20; 10:11, 14-15 par. 51:17-18; 14:15-16; 17:5-8; 23:4-6; 27:2-6; 48:43-44; 49:26; and 50:30). YHWH's words are substantial. Every level of textual meaning confirms the unshakable veracity and vigour of YHWH's words. YHWH has the capacity to change the destiny of nations (צֹר and צִידוֹן) and individuals (נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר) through their names (Jer 27:2-6; cf. Jer 23:4-6). YHWH conjures up an absent weapon from the dust of consonants present in

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[725] For performative power of puns, see Noegel, *"Wordplay" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 145-152 and the accompanying bibliography.

surrounding lexemes (Jer 9:20; 49:26; and 50:30). YHWH's words are persistent and inescapable (Jer 48:43-44). YHWH's word is an unquenchable fire (Jer 20:9 and 23:29). YHWH's rhetoric will not be overturned or dethroned by prophetic rewording or manipulation (Jer 14:15-16 and 28:10-14). YHWH declares the destiny of individuals (Jer 17:5-8). No other deity but YHWH possesses life giving essence (i.e., מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים in Jer 2:13 and רוּחַ in Jer 10 par. 51; cf. idols have no רוּחַ or הֶבֶל) and can confer it to his servants (Jer 2:13 and 10:14-15 par. 51:17-18). YHWH alone is worthy of honour and worship (Jer 10:11).

5.6 Suggestions for Further Study

When a text exhibits some oddities but does not seem to be a case of authorial or scribal stylistics or of textual corruption, then it should be investigated as a potential case of meta-textual semantics. Understanding that meta-textual semantics is present at different stages in the production of the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible might unravel the difficulties surrounding such troubled texts as 1 Sam 13:1. Viewing this problematic text, and others, through the lens of meta-textual semantics at various stages in the textual history might explain the elliptical nature of it.

There is a need to further test my methodology in another textual sample or corpus. It would be interesting to examine a composite text (e.g., Isaiah or Hosea) to see if the various textual layers exhibit similar examples of meta-textual semantics or if they differ significantly in their devices from section to section. Also, do the elements which create meta-textual semantics in a prose work differ from the elements in a poetic work in the Hebrew Bible? Does one author or book prefer one element of meta-textual semantics that is not a significant part of the presentation of meta-textual semantics by another author or in another book? These studies would provide new directions in meta-textual semantics and suggest further refinements to my methodology. These refinements might make possible a methodology for

determining meta-textual semantics across larger texts. This study illustrates that meta-textual semantics appears in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah in L. If meta-textual semantics is part of ancient Hebrew rhetoric in Jeremiah, then it probably appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

A thorough study is needed of an entire book in one of the versions and how the translator deals specifically with the meta-textual semantics in his *Vorlage*. Is the translator aware of the meta-textual semantics in his *Vorlage*? If it can be proven that the translator is aware of the meta-textual semantics in his *Vorlage*, does the translator disregard or seek to replicate meta-textual semantics through his translation? A nuanced understanding of how a specific translator deals with meta-textual semantics in his *Vorlage* should provide important information for textual critics as they seek to reproduce and understand the *Vorlage* of this witness.

A careful examination of the variations of spelling in a section or book of the Hebrew Bible is needed. Though Barr, Anderson, and Forbes have addressed spelling in the Hebrew Bible, it still remains to be investigated if a difference in spelling is pragmatically motivated in a particular context.[726] Is there significance to the different spellings of a single lexeme or lexical form in a given context, section, or book? Is this simply a case of uneven scribal updating or does the concept of meta-textual semantics contextually suggest another possible understanding? Does a particular author, section, or book use spelling prominently for meta-textual semantic purposes?

Along these lines, it would be desirable for an eclectic text of the Hebrew Bible to include in its textual apparatus and footnotes the entirety of differences in the vocalisations and orthographic representations of a lexeme or phrase as represented in all the Hebrew

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[726] See Anderson and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible* and Barr, *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible*.

manuscripts. There might be cases of meta-textual semantics in a given text which are not well-known or wide-spread across the manuscript tradition. Cataloguing each of the representations of a lexeme or collocation in the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible might provide additional and important cases of meta-textual semantics which are not present in L and other major medieval Hebrew manuscripts.

5.7 Conclusion

This study redefines our understanding of the present Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible and its various witnesses as well as has implications for textual criticism and exegesis. A previously understood mistake in the Hebrew text, which needs emendation or deletion, might actually be a premeditated construction placed in the text by an author or scribe to evidence a contextual theme. This suggests that a textual critic should cautiously evaluate the nature of an eccentricity in the text and examine the possible fit of this odd element in the context. The exegete should equally attend to the structure and form of the text to better determine the major and minor themes within the text and how they are actualised. Some texts evidence a form that perfectly conforms to its context while others are malformed but not at odds with their context. This element could potentially highlight a major or minor contextual theme. Thus, an awareness of meta-textual semantics in all its possible manifestations should be part of the equipment with which a textual critic and an exegete approach the Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible.

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