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The King is a Tree: Arboreal Metaphors in the Hebrew Bible

by

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Dedication

It has become par for the course that a dissertation should commence with words of thanks, and yet until I had actually written one myself I had no idea just how indebted to the help of others they would prove to be! I would like to thank my two supervisors, Assoc. Prof. Ian Young and Dr Shani Tzoref. Without their patience and commitment, this would be less than a fifth of its current length, nestled away in a remote corner of my hard drive, never to be spoken of again. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. Mark Brettler: his generosity in sharing with me his own bibliography-in-progress saved me untold hours of finding relevant material on the application of metaphor theory to biblical studies and was enormously appreciated. So too Prof. Suzanne Rutland, who freely and generously gave much of her time to assist me with the early stages of writing a thesis - the more useful, since those early stages happened far too late.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my parents, who pushed me, encouraged me, believed in me and continued to support me - even when I threatened to give up and throw in the metaphorical towel. It is an understatement to suggest that I could not have done this without them, and it is to them in particular that this thesis is dedicated. And finally (though far from least) to my own little trope, in whose presence words continue to fail me. Ariella, you *know* that I could not possibly have written this without you, and that no metaphor is sufficient to convey the depth of my appreciation.

Bereft of flesh, this odd precipitation... (6, 3, 4, 3, 4)

All translations from the biblical literature are taken from the NRSV, although versification is in accordance with the Masoretic Text (MT). Where I have modified the NRSV translation, employed another or provided my own, I have made that clear.

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Passages quoted from mediaeval scholars are taken from the Rabbinic Bible (מקראות גדולות); Jerusalem: Hamaor, 2001. Translations of those passages are my own.

Abbreviations:

BDB - Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951)

BHRG - Christo H.J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999)

GBHS - Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)

GKC - E. Kautzsch (ed.), *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (trans. A.E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910)

HALOT - Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (2 vols; Leiden: Brill, 2001)

IBHS - Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990)

JM - Joüon P. and Muraoka T., *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2009)

Williams - Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax* (3rd ed; rev. John C. Beckman; University of Toronto Press, 2007)

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§1 - General Introduction: The Nature of the Beast

I think it would repay his trouble if a real scholar were to write a good monograph upon Biblical metaphors.

Claude Goldsmid Montefiore, 1891¹

Any investigation into the function of arboreal metaphors within the Hebrew Bible is going to be forced to reckon at the outset with the sheer number of them. Trees, by virtue both of their importance and their general scarcity, feature strongly within a large and varied number of metaphorical passages². As metaphors, they can serve to represent the general abundance and fertility that trees themselves might signify, or the prosperity and security that the ownership of trees entails. And yet, just as there are different types of trees, and different parts of an individual tree to which a text may draw attention, so too is there a certain degree of flexibility as regards their metaphorical application.

The following analysis of arboreal metaphors is intended to highlight this versatility, and to provide a working framework for considering the general literary function of this particular trope. In so doing, it is also my intention to indicate the manner in which metaphorical complexes derive meaning from the general interactivity of their constituent metaphors. An appreciation of the ways in which metaphors influence one another within textual units has been absent from metaphorical studies to date, in spite of a growing awareness now of metaphorical *interactivity*.

By way of a preamble to these two studies (the interactivity of metaphors within metaphorical complexes, and the function of a specific type of arboreal metaphor in particular), it behoves us to consider precisely what a metaphor is in the first place: how it might be recognised as such, and how it might be interpreted. And far from being a simple question, it turns out that defining "metaphor" is a somewhat gruelling task.

1. C.G. Montefiore, "A Tentative Catalogue of Biblical Metaphors", *JQR* 3:4 (1891), 623-681 (623)

2. For the suggestion that the literary importance of trees is inversely related to their actual presence on the landscape, see Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III (eds), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 890.

Standard dictionary definitions have come to represent the commonplace view: a figure of speech in which a descriptive word or phrase is transferred to an object different from, but analogous to that to which it is literally applicable³. But what does it mean to suggest that one word or phrase is “different from, but analogous to” another? After all, what is a relation of analogy if not a metaphorical relation in the first place?⁴

This awkwardness, when it comes to identifying metaphors and explaining the manner in which they operate, is born of the tension that exists between two conceptions of the prevalence of metaphor in human discourse: the classical view, which locates metaphor in the flowery language of rhetorical adornment⁵, and the “romantic” view, which recognises the ubiquity of metaphor in everyday speech⁶. Where the former asserts that metaphor is a tool of poets and rhetoricians⁷, the latter argues that it is a function of language itself.

In 1931, no less a literary critic than John Middleton Murry was able to remark, without a trace of irony, that discussions of metaphor were plagued by both paucity and superficiality⁸. At the time of my writing this, the very opposite holds true: there is not only an abundance of literature on the identification and interpretation of metaphor, but it is increasingly complex and generative of debate⁹.

3. So, for example, OED (2001).

4. Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 89.

5. So, for example, Eco, *op.cit.* 88.

6. For the term “romantic” to describe this model, cf: Geoffrey Finch, *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics* (2nd ed; Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 163.

7. So, for example, Andrew Ortony, who suggests that it was for this reason that it was only in the field of Rhetoric that the nature of metaphor was traditionally analysed: Andrew Ortony, “Metaphor, Language and Thought” in *Metaphor and Thought* (ed. A. Ortony; 2nd ed; Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-16 (2-3).

8. Cited in Max Black, “More About Metaphor” in *Metaphor and Thought*, 19-41 (19).

9. Indeed, less than half a century after Murray made the remark quoted above, Mark Johnson described the time in which he lived as being gripped by a “frenzy” of “metaphormania”, and Wayne C. Booth was able to joke that by 2039 there would be more students of metaphor in the world than people: Mark Johnson (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), ix; Wayne C. Booth, “Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation”, *On Metaphor* (ed. S. Sacks; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 47-70 (47).

Indeed, it is no longer even possible to truly speak about metaphor theory; a glance at the available literature is enough to demonstrate that what prevails at the present time is a number of metaphor **theories** instead. In fact, the literature on metaphor is now so great that it has come to eclipse the extant literature on all other figures of speech, the term "metaphor" now effectively constituting a metaphor, itself, for a range of different tropes¹⁰. And so a useful place to commence this part of the introduction may be in describing what metaphor theory is *not* - and what better place to start than with the classical model that everybody claims to reject.

In the ancient world, when philosophers and rhetoricians first turned their attention to the delineation of literary tropes, that which they would eventually label metaphor was unanimously considered to be a feature of style¹¹. The assumption that one might divest oneself of such flourishes, and in so doing speak less colourfully but more directly, prefigures the longstanding misapprehension that metaphors constitute an adornment only, devoid of independent semantic value.

In the Western philosophical tradition, once described as "a series of footnotes to Plato"¹², the traditional view of non-literal language has long been Aristotelian. Implicit in this view, which was dominant for many centuries, is the assertion that metaphor is a literary trope that consists of embellishing a text for rhetorical purpose¹³. The effect that it has upon the reader

10. Jonathan Cullen, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 188.

11. Although Plato never refers to this stylistic feature explicitly, he demonstrates both a fondness for poetry (chiefly the work of Homer) and a disparagement of poets. In defending his decision to banish all poets from his utopian state, Plato has Socrates declare that "all the poets from Homer downwards have no grasp of truth but merely produce a superficial likeness of any subject they treat... Strip it of its poetic colouring, reduce it to plain prose, and I think you know how little it amounts to." While it is unlikely that Plato's words were intended as a slight against the figurative use of language in general (if not because Plato was, himself, a skilled rhetorician), his attitude has come to be seen as emblematic of a general distrust of all things non-literal. For Plato, and his views on metaphor, see Desmond Lee, *The Republic* (trans. Desmond Lee; Penguin Classics, 1987), xi-lvi (xxviii); Charles L. Griswold, "Plato on Rhetoric and Poetry", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/plato-rhetoric/>; Mark Johnson, "Introduction: Metaphor in the Philosophical Tradition" in *Philosophical Perspectives* (M. Johnson, ed), 3-47; Terence Hawkes, *Metaphor* (The Critical Idiom 25; London: Methuen, 1972), 34-36.

12. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (ed. D.R. Griffin and D.W. Sherburne; New York: The Free Press, 1978), 39.

13. *Rhetoric* III:2.

is one of delight¹⁴, and its primary function is to be persuasive¹⁵. It achieves maximal effect in poetry¹⁶, where an author might be freer in its application, but in prose one needs preserve as carefully as possible the similarity between the metaphor and the subject to which it is being related¹⁷.

As such, the term "metaphor" in Aristotle's appraisal¹⁸ denotes a particular word that in context is misplaced, but which is sufficiently similar to the one that it represents in order to be recognised as a figurative allusion to the same¹⁹. While metaphors may be found frequently in discourse, to speak without them altogether is entirely possible, perhaps even common, and in some situations desirable²⁰. Most importantly, if one should wish to interpret a metaphor, he need only *translate* it - to "substitute" it for the literal expression that is being avoided.

This theory - which nobody claims to accept, but which everybody accuses at least one person of embracing - is termed by Janet Soskice "a nobody's theory" of metaphorical analysis²¹. This is important, for while there may be a plethora of opinions on just how metaphors are created, what they are, what they mean and how they succeed in doing what it is that they do, one thing that everybody agrees on is that the information conveyed by the metaphor *cannot* be conveyed by a "more literal" paraphrase.

14. *Rhetoric* III:11.

15. That the primary function of such rhetoric lies in persuasion was suggested also by Plato: *Gorgias* 453a; Griswold, "Plato", §4. See also Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (trans. Robert Czerny; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 10-11; I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford University Press, 1936), 24.

16. *Rhetoric* III:2; Hawkes, *op.cit.* 6.

17. *Rhetoric* III:2, 11.

18. The name itself denoting 'transfer' from one semantic domain to another; Liddell and Scott, s.v. μετα-φερω.

19. Kittay, *op.cit.* 181; Johnson, *op.cit.* 5-6.

20. For a detailed overview of the Aristotelian model, cf: Christof Rapp, "Aristotle's Rhetoric", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>; Eco, *op.cit.* 91-95; Hawkes, *op.cit.* 6-11; Johnson, *ibid.*

21. Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 26. In fact, the so-called Substitution "Theory" is so profoundly ill-equipped at dealing with metaphor that Soskice rejects the notion that it was ever embraced as a theory in the first place. Her suggestion is that a close reading of Aristotle and Quintilian yields a somewhat more sophisticated approach, which she terms the Comparison Theory. Her argument is convincing, but beyond the scope of this introduction.

And yet, such was the influence of Aristotle, that it was some time before this fact was properly appreciated. That the field of rhetoric was intimately tied to the art of political persuasion may have contributed to its decline in the 19th century²². Having been gradually diminished to a theory of style, and thence to a taxonomy of literary tropes, the art of rhetoric came to be viewed less as a scientific appraisal of meaning-making in language and more as an amputated discipline whose roots, in antiquity, served a purpose no longer current²³. With metaphor restricted ultimately to the field of poetics, in which embellishments of style might be thought to serve a cathartic rather than a propagandistic purpose²⁴, its fate was sealed for a time as a trope devoid of independent semantic content.

This misapprehension, that such figures of speech constitute oratorical embellishment only and that true and fair discourse might be better served by their avoidance, reached its climax in the empiricist and positivistic philosophies of the 18th to early-20th centuries²⁵. It is noteworthy that even some of the starkest condemnations of such literary flourishes are so riddled with metaphor as to negate their author's assurances that such figures of speech are unnecessary²⁶. The long-held assumption that metaphor is a feature of style and not a fundamental component of language is continually belied by attempts at expressing it.

It was in an effort to reverse such mistaken impressions that I.A. Richards delivered a series of now-famous addresses in 1936, which have come to be viewed as the basis for an "interaction theory" of metaphor²⁷. The chief issues with which he took umbrage were the

22. Ricoeur, *op.cit.* 9.

23. Ricoeur, *op.cit.* 44-45.

24. Ricoeur, *op.cit.* 12.

25. Ted Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy" in *On Metaphor* (ed. S. Sacks), 1-10 (1-3).

26. Consider the following example, from John Locke's *Essay in Human Understanding*, 1689: "Only I cannot but observe, how little the preservation and improvement of Truth and Knowledge, is the Care and Concern of Mankind; since the Arts of Fallacy are endow'd and preferred. 'Tis evident how much Men love to deceive, and be deceived, since Rhetorick, that powerful instrument of Error and Deceit, has its established Professors, is publickly taught, and has always been had in great Reputation: And, I doubt not, but it will be thought great boldness, if not brutality in me, to have said thus much against it. *Eloquence*, like the fair Sex, has too prevailing Beauties in it, to suffer it self ever to be spoken against. And 'tis in vain to find fault with those Arts of Deceiving, wherein Men find pleasure to be Deceived" (ed. Peter H. Nidditch), III.10 §34. It is not at all difficult to agree with de Man: "Nothing could be more eloquent than this denunciation of eloquence"; Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor", *On Metaphor* (ed. S. Sacks), 11-28 (13).

27. In fairness, Gustaf Stern's *Meaning and Change of Meaning with Special Reference to the English Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965) was first published a year before Richards' addresses, and anticipates the observations of Richards in several important respects - most notably in terms of the

assertion that a successful employment of metaphor might require special skills or training²⁸, that words might possess a meaning independent of their cotext²⁹, and that a metaphor might be reduced to being no more than a simile, elliptically expressed³⁰. In order to assert both the ubiquity of metaphor and the manner in which it operates in the generation of meaning, Richards proposed a model that stresses conceptual interactivity over a simple substitution of terms³¹.

To better appreciate the form and content of a metaphorical expression, Richards also revised the traditional Aristotelian view that the locus of the metaphor was at the level of the individual word³². This word, which previously might have been dubbed the "metaphor", was termed by Richards the **vehicle**. The metaphor, in Richards' terminology, constituted the interaction between the vehicle and the **tenor**, where the latter denotes the subject to which the vehicle is in some way being compared³³.

To take the example THE KING IS A TREE, the vehicle in this phrase is TREE³⁴ and the tenor is that which is being conveyed about KING. In metaphorical phrases of more complex structure, the vehicle is the literal meaning of the figurative phrase and the tenor its literal referent³⁵.

interanimation of words (11.59), but also in terms of the relationship between principal and subsidiary subjects (11.54).

28. Richards, *op.cit.*, 89-90.

29. Richards, *op.cit.* 11, 51, 69ff. Throughout this dissertation I adopt the distinction between context and cotext, whereby the former represents "the sociological and historical setting of the text", and the latter "the contribution of all the other parts of the text to that part under immediate consideration"; Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 16 and 72.

30. Richards, *op.cit.* 100, 120.

31. While Richards is thought of as the progenitor of the Interaction Theory, the individual most directly responsible for its development and promulgation was Max Black. To a large extent, the terminology employed and the definitions adopted are Black's, and can be found chiefly in the following sources: Max Black, "Metaphor", *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Cornell University Press, 1962), 25-47; Max Black, "More About Metaphor", *Metaphor and Thought* (2nd ed; ed. Andrew Ortony; Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19-41. For criticism of Black's theory, for the charge that he actually misunderstood Richards, and for the suggestion that much of his "interactivity" boils down to a Comparison Theory instead, see Soskice, *op.cit.* 39ff.

32. Ricoeur, *op.cit.* 14.

33. Richards, *op.cit.* 96.

34. By using small caps, I am referring to the semantic domain of this term: that range of unexpressed and sometimes inexpressible 'commonalities' that the category invokes. In any given example, that domain might also include a specific, real world referent - as in, THE KING OF JUDAH IS A TREE.

35. Kittay, *op.cit.* 16. Note that most metaphorical statements *do* have a more complex structure. Throughout

And yet, formulating an explicit definition of these two terms has proven problematic in a number of instances, due to a confusion over whether they refer to the actual words in the metaphorical phrase or to the concepts that those words represent.

To return to the previous example, the vehicle might be thought to be the word "tree", the concept TREE or those features of the concept that can be made to correlate with the concept KING, while the tenor can be thought to be the word "king", the concept KING, those features of KING that might adequately be described by TREE³⁶, or even the interpretation of the phrase as a whole!³⁷ This problem is especially compounded by those instances in which differentiation of vehicle and tenor is open to more than one interpretation³⁸.

For the sake of simplicity, we shall attempt to bypass this terminological minefield by differentiating between the linguistic structure of the phrase and the conceptual structure of the metaphor, reserving the terms tenor and vehicle for the latter only. For the former, I shall use the words **focus** and **frame**. In the phrase, THE KING IS A TREE, the vehicle is TREE, the tenor is KING, the focus is "a tree" (those words used to signify the vehicle) and the frame is "that minimal unit which establishes the incongruity"³⁹ between vehicle and tenor - in this case, the sentence as a whole.

Once we've successfully identified an incongruity of this nature, the metaphor is born of the interanimation of vehicle and tenor - in other words, of the semantic domains that are signified by their respective terms. To appreciate how this is done, it will be useful at this juncture to clarify the relationship between metaphor and two other figures of speech with

this thesis, I use the familiar shorthand "AN X IS A Y" to depict metaphorical utterances, fully cognizant of any individual metaphor's often being inexpressible in so formulaic a fashion.

36. See Cohen for the example, "The Lord is my shepherd", in which the tenor may refer to THE LORD or to the notion of a protector; Mordechai Z. Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 20.

37. Kittay, *op.cit.* 25; Black, "Metaphor", 47 n23; Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (2nd ed; Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 159 n10-C.

38. Kittay provides an amusing example: "This man is my mother". In one context, THIS MAN might denote the vehicle, MY MOTHER might denote the tenor, and the import of the metaphor might be her masculine appearance. In another context, MY MOTHER might denote the vehicle, THIS MAN might denote the tenor, and the import of the metaphor will be his 'maternal' behaviour; Kittay, *ibid.*

39. Kittay, *op.cit.* 24.

which it is frequently identified: metonymy⁴⁰, and the simile. Both have a long history of being considered species of metaphor, and both have their fair share of advocates who claim that they are fundamentally dissimilar⁴¹.

Andrea Weiss highlights no fewer than eleven different varieties of metonymy, each of which possesses a different type of contiguous relationship with its subject⁴². So, for example, when Zimri murders every individual of Baasha's family who "urinates against the wall"⁴³, the tenor of the expression is that of an adult male, employing a DOER/THING DONE metonymic relation. Similarly, where Cain's face is said to have "fallen"⁴⁴, the tenor of the expression is his feeling sad or disappointed, whereby the drooping facial muscles represent his sorrow in an EFFECT/CAUSE metonymic relation.

The distinction between a metonym (which possesses a contiguous relationship between its parts) and a metaphor (which possesses a more conceptual relationship) can at times be nearly impossible to identify, and may frequently be arbitrary. It has been suggested that the difference between the two lies in the number of domains being "mapped onto" one another⁴⁵.

40. While they are often treated separately in the literature, I am considering metonymy and synecdoche to be two varieties of the same phenomenon. A metonymy denotes a contiguous relationship between tenor and vehicle, while a synecdoche denotes a compositional relationship. An example of a metonymy would be, "The lips of the righteous feed many" (Pr 10:21). If this means (something like) "The words of the righteous enlighten many", then THE LIPS corresponds to THE WORDS by virtue of a contiguous relationship (lips move in the production of words). An example of a synecdoche would be, "In another forty days, Nineveh will be overturned" (Jon 3:4b). If this means (something like) "In another forty days, Assyria will be destroyed", then NINEVEH corresponds to Assyria by virtue of its being a prominent city within it.

41. For an excellent introduction to the relationship between metaphor and metonymy, see Antonio Barcelona, "On the Plausibility of Claiming a Metonymic Motivation for Conceptual Metaphor" in *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* (ed. Antonio Barcelona; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003), 31-58; Günter Radden, "How Metonymic are Metaphors?" in *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads*, 93-108. On the relationship between metaphor and simile, see Andrew Ortony, "The Role of Similarity in Similes and Metaphors" in *Metaphor and Thought*, 342-356; Andrea Weiss, *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 161ff.

42. Weiss, *op.cit.* 136.

43. 1 Kgs 16:11, לא השאיר לו משתין בקיר, Weiss mentions similar passages from Samuel: Weiss, *op.cit.* 72 and 124.

44. Gen 4:5, ויפלו פניו. Weiss mentions a similar expression (1 Sam 25:35; ואשא פניו); for the English expression, "John has a long face", see Antonio Barcelona, "Introduction: The Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and Metonymy" in *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads*, 1-28 (5).

45. For a description of this phenomenon, see Weiss, *op.cit.* 142.

So, for example, when Jacob makes reference to the labour of his hands⁴⁶, he is employing a metonym (PART/WHOLE), since both the vehicle and the tenor (ie: his hands and himself) belong to the one conceptual domain. When the psalmist, however, refers to God having lain him down in green pastures⁴⁷, he is employing a metaphor (GOD IS A SHEPHERD), since the tenor and the vehicle belong to two *separate* domains. Given the tremendous cross-over between these two tropes, Günter Radden's suggestion is the one that this particular dissertation will follow - that metaphor and metonymy constitute two "prototypical categories at the end points of a continuum of mapping processes"⁴⁸ and that the traditional distinction between them cannot be so rigidly maintained.

This is likewise the case when it comes to simile: a figure of speech whose relationship to metaphor is somewhat vexed. Protestations of its independence have become somewhat par for the course⁴⁹, and are frequently based upon the premise that metaphor is in some sense more profound. The assertion, however, that a metaphor might be stripped of its profundity with the inclusion of the particle, "like", or that the absence of said particle might make the simile any harder to interpret, is not worth entertaining⁵⁰.

For my purposes, I shall use the terms "metonym" and "simile" only insofar as it is germane to specify the particular type of relationship between the tenor and the vehicle; otherwise, and for the purposes of this analysis, I consider them both to be species of metaphor.

When it comes to the interpretation of a metaphor, of whatever variety, the vehicle's ability to emphasise, de-emphasise and fundamentally re-organise the manner in which we think of the tenor will determine its effectiveness in this regard. And yet, we must be wary of treating the

46. Gen 31:42, יגיע כפי.

47. Psalm 23:2, בנאות דשא ירביצני.

48. Radden, "How Metonymic are Metaphors?", 105.

49. See, for example: Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 58-61; Weiss, *Figurative Language*, 161-164.

50. In defence of the notion that similes can convey a range of meaning no less profound than metaphor, Soskice quotes Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* to the effect that "human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we are longing to move the stars to pity". As she observes, "the comparison in this simile is in no way obvious or boring, nor would its impact be altered by deleting the 'like' to make it a metaphor"; Soskice, *op.cit.* 59.

vehicle as though it were a type of filter. To reduce the phrase, THE KING IS A TREE to an observation that concerned, for example, the king's majesty would be to slip into a form of substitution in place of a genuine interaction.

On the contrary, the real import of a metaphorical phrase will come about through an investigation of the semantic domains of its respective components, and will require them to demonstrate a *mutual* interactivity. It is in this regard that the field of cognitive semantics has been most informative⁵¹. Broadly put, cognitive semantics approaches discourse from the perspective that comprehension of the text depends upon "the conceptual framework underlying our approach to reality, and *not* in a presumed determinate relationship between the logical and the ontological order"⁵². That is to say, while metaphor as a linguistic expression constitutes an instantiation of analogy, metaphor itself is a *cognitive* process⁵³.

The most frequently cited text in this regard is *Metaphors We Live By*, by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson⁵⁴. There, the authors differentiate between three different forms of conceptual metaphorisation, which they broadly refer to as denoting orientational, ontological and structural relationships, respectively⁵⁵. So, for example, where the psalmist praises God for "raising him up"⁵⁶, he is employing an orientational metaphor (UP IS GOOD); where the prophet

51. For substantive introductions to the field, see Earl R. Mac Cormac, *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor* (MIT Press, 1985); George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989); Antonio Barcelona (ed.), *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003); Kurt Feyaerts (ed.), *The Bible Through Metaphor and Translation: A Cognitive Semantic Perspective* (Religions and Discourse 15; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003); Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*; Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor*; and Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*.

52. Lieven Boeve, "Linguistica ancilla Theologiae: The Interest of Fundamental Theology in Cognitive Semantics" in *The Bible Through Metaphor and Translation* (ed. Kurt Feyaerts), 15-36 (19); my emphasis.

53. Elizabeth Hayes, "Where is the Lord? The Extended Great Chain of Being as a Source Domain for Conceptual Metaphor in the Egyptian Hallel, Psalms 113-118" in Pierre Van Hecke and Anton Labahn (eds), *Metaphors in the Psalms* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 55-69 (59). On this point, see also George Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor" in Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, 202-251 (203).

54. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 1980). For the assertion that this work has had a greater influence upon metaphor construal in Biblical Studies than any other, see David H. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 101.

55. For their discussion of orientational metaphors, see *Metaphor We Live By*, 14-21; for ontological metaphors: *op.cit.* 25-32; for structural metaphors: *op.cit.* 61-68.

56. For example, יהוה כי דליתני, ארוממך יהוה, Ps 30:2.

speaks of Torah coming from Jerusalem⁵⁷, he is employing an ontological metaphor (DIVINE INSTRUCTION IS AN ENTITY); where the elegist laments God's bringing him into darkness⁵⁸, he is employing a structural metaphor (LIFE IS A JOURNEY)⁵⁹.

While this particular text did much to change the way that people conceptualise metaphor, and is rightly considered a classic in the field, the authors' focus on precisely those terms that are endemic to speech has led to a propensity to recognise metaphoricity within virtually every conceivable utterance. If metaphors of the form outlined above are a function of the ways in which we think, they are ultimately less useful to biblical exegetes than are those metaphorical relationships that are *deliberately* employed.

In the first example given above, while the psalmist does indeed imply that UP IS GOOD, he also remarks upon the relationship between misfortune and the grave⁶⁰. In the second example, where the prophet has Torah "departing" from Jerusalem, the implication that DIVINE LAW IS AN ENTITY is of less interest than the fact that "Jerusalem" functions as a metonym for the temple and for its priests⁶¹. In the third example, while God's "driving" the elegist into darkness does imply that LIFE IS A JOURNEY, the metaphorical relationship between God and a herder of livestock is the one more likely to benefit from considered analysis.

While cognitive linguists identify a broad range of metaphorical utterances, the ones that we shall be analysing within this dissertation will be limited to those that the cotext gives us reason to suppose are conscious utilisations of *deliberate* tropes, the construction of which is neither a function of the Hebrew language nor a basic requirement of human thought. But if the field of cognitive semantics cannot guide us in metaphor identification, it can certainly assist when it comes to their interpretation.

57. For example, *כי מציון תצא תורה*, Isa 2:3.

58. For example, *אותי נהג וילך חשך*, Lam 3:2.

59. Note that Eidevall construes this as an orientational metaphor, constructed along the horizontal (rather than the vertical) axis: Göran Eidevall, "Spatial Metaphors in Lamentations 3,1-9" in Pierre Van Hecke (ed.), *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2005), 133-137 (133).

60. This relationship is made textually explicit in verse 4: *העלית מן שאול נפשי*.

61. This is made textually explicit in the preceding verses, where reference is twice made to "the house of God".

Since 1998, cognitive linguists have been employing a particular technique known as "conceptual blending"⁶². Simply put, this technique relies upon the conceptual visualisation of a metaphor's constituent parts as a series of interrelated domains. In the first domain (the "source space"), we have all of the associated commonplaces of our vehicle; in the second domain (the "target space"), we have all of the associated commonplaces of our tenor; in the third domain (the "generic space"), we have all of the information that the previous two share in common.

Thus far, this is merely a visual representation of the interaction theory of metaphor and allows for no greater insight than was previously afforded. It is with the creation of a fourth domain (the "blended space") that this particular technique shows especial potential. Here, in the fourth domain, we have the *interaction* of both the source space and the target space, without any regard for what specific information they share in common with one another.

To take the example, THAT SURGEON IS A BUTCHER⁶³, the interaction theory in its most basic form encourages us to consider the associated commonplaces of surgeons and butchers, to remark upon those features that they share in common and to derive information from those features that they do not share. As such, we might note that both domains imply the qualities of cutting meat/flesh with implements (which, in "Conceptual Blending" Theory, we will put into the generic space), and will attempt to draw inferences from the incongruities that result from those things that they do *not* share.

When we consider their interactivity in this fashion we discover that they result in conclusions that cannot be sourced in any of the other domains. Neither the source space, the target space nor the generic space contains inferences of incompetence or haphazardness - two attributes that arise solely as a result of the interaction of these particular terms. What is more, the information derived from the blend can then successfully be reapplied to the

62. The formative article, and an excellent introduction to this method, is Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, "Conceptual Integration Networks" in *Cognitive Science* 22:2 (1998), 133-187.

63. This example is taken from the literature: Fauconnier and Turner, *ibid*; Joseph E. Grady et al., "Blending and Metaphor" in *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics* (ed. G. Steen and R. Gibbs; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1999), 101-124.

information within the source domain, thus allowing for a genuine interactivity in place of a mere combination of tropes.

It is important to note that this theory, while comprehensive, explains *how* meaning is derived from a metaphor but does not pretend to explain *which* meanings are derived. In the example given above, the attendant meaning ("the surgeon is incompetent", for example) cannot scientifically be demonstrated in the blend but is resultant from a familiarity with the semantic range of both "butcher" and "surgeon" (the former, as a verb, denoting mutilation and the latter, as a noun, precision), as well as certain culturally-shared presuppositions as regards the relative status of different professions.

While it is a convenient fiction that texts might be in possession of a well-defined number of legitimate readings, it is one that we entertain most comfortably when we possess a first-language proficiency with the text under consideration, and belong to the same (or roughly the same) culture as its author. When applying these theories to the biblical literature, the yawning gulf between text and meaning demands of us that we attempt to analyse those frameworks⁶⁴.

Since the application of metaphor theory to a text demands, first and foremost, an appreciation of the text as literature, metaphorical approaches to the Hebrew Bible take their stand as part of a general trend of literary analyses of the biblical texts⁶⁵. Within that field, these studies can be split into various categories, depending upon their scope of analysis, the object of that analysis and their method undertaken.

64. An interesting introduction in this regard is Thomas A. Schmitz, *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts: An Introduction* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2002). The author's efforts at subjecting the classics to various literary theories of the 20th century is illuminating - both in terms of what they demonstrate about the texts, but also in terms of what they say about the theories.

65. For an excellent overview of the history of these approaches, see Job Y. Jindo, "Metaphor Theory and Biblical Texts", *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation II* (ed. Steven L. McKenzie; Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-10 (3-5). For an introduction to such literary approaches, see Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Indiana University Press, 1985); Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Literature* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

A theoretical approach seeks to treat the Hebrew Bible (either altogether or as individual texts) as a case study for the purpose of investigating the use of metaphorical language within it, and in so doing advancing both metaphor theory in general, and our understanding of biblical themes in particular. Noteworthy in this category are the contributions of Janet Martin Soskice, Paul Ricoeur, Peter Macky and David H. Aaron⁶⁶.

An image-based (or metaphor-based) approach investigates the function of a particular metaphorical trope within the biblical literature. By considering all of the texts that treat of one subject with language drawn from the semantic domain of another, such an approach is able to draw conclusions that concern the function of a *particular* metaphor in the Hebrew Bible, and perhaps even make observations that concern how that subject was seen to operate within the ideology of those authors⁶⁷.

A third approach treats of the use of metaphorical language within a particular biblical text, and with a view to appreciating the treatment of a theme by its various authors, and perhaps even with the intention of understanding how its message was shaped over the course of its textual transmission. An important example in this regard - and of especial import for the theme of this dissertation - is the work of Kirsten Nielsen⁶⁸.

66. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*; Paul Ricoeur, "Biblical Hermeneutics", *Semeia* 4 (1975), 29-146 (in particular, 107ff); Peter Macky, *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought: A Method for Interpreting the Bible* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 19; Lewiston: The Edwin Meller Press, 1990); Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*. As an historical approach to metaphor theory, Mordechai Z. Cohen's work is especially worthy of remark. His analysis of the approaches of three mediaeval scholars (David Qimḥi, Maimonides and Abraham Ibn Ezra) provided a fascinating insight into their respective methodologies, and demonstrated that the metaphorical approach of David Qimḥi was pre-emptive of the Interaction Theory: Mordechai Z. Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

67. Examples of this approach include Marc Brettler, *God is a King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOT 76; Sheffield, 1989); Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Desert Motif in the Bible and in Qumran Literature", *Literary Studies in the Hebrew Bible: Form and Content* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 216-254. An excellent example of this approach, albeit it outside of the realm of biblical studies, is Gail Labovitz, *Marriage and Metaphor: Constructions of Gender in Rabbinic Literature* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009).

68. Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT 65; Sheffield, 1989). Sharon Moughtin-Mumby's contribution also deserves special notice in this connection, as do the articles of Karin Adams, Peggy Day, Karin Schöpflin and Fokkeli van Dijk-Hemmes: Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* (Oxford University Press, 2008); Karin Adams, "Metaphor and Dissonance: A Reinterpretation of Hosea 4:13-14", *JBL* 127:2 (2008), 291-305; Peggy L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel XVI", *VT* 50:3 (2000), 285-309; Karin Schöpflin, "The Composition of Metaphorical Oracles within the Book of Ezekiel", *VT* 55:1 (2005), 101-120; Fokkeli van Dijk-Hemmes, "The Metaphorization of Woman in Prophetic Speech: An Analysis of Ezekiel xxiii", *VT* 43:2 (1993), 162-170.

Nielsen takes as her starting point a number of different metaphorical passages within the book of Isaiah, each of which treats of the tree as a vehicle to convey theological information. With a sensitivity towards the compositional and redactional integrity of the text, she sets out to reconstruct the function of the tree images at different stages of the text's transmission, and to determine the import that they may have had to their respective communities.

I cannot share Nielsen's specific conclusions, and feel that attempts at pinpointing the precise historical tenor depletes the metaphor of its potency⁶⁹. Nonetheless, by considering the trope's ability to function for different referents simultaneously, she succeeds in highlighting the richness of this metaphor. As such, her work could be seen as an investigation of evolving metaphor, and her conclusions demonstrate the versatility of arboreal imagery to a broad array of situations.

Despite being an excellent text, and one that offers a profound contribution to the redactional history of Isaiah, Nielsen's work suffers in failing to take into consideration the *interactivity* of this metaphorical trope. Indeed, this is a shortcoming of text-based approaches in general, and results from a propensity to treat metaphorical tropes in isolation⁷⁰.

It is in respect of this point that the present study aims to demonstrate just how rich and meaningful a passage can be when this one basic premise - that metaphors rely upon an **interactivity** of semantic domains - is explored to its full potential. To demonstrate this, I have chosen to limit my analysis to a particular form of metaphorical text, conventionally dubbed a species of "the allegory".

What *is* an allegory? This question has proven surprisingly difficult to answer, and has yielded a correspondingly varied array of hypotheses. By surveying some of the different

69. For similar sentiments, see Antje Labahn, "Wild Animals and Chasing Shadows. Animal Metaphors in Lamentations as Indicators for Individual Threat" in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Pierre Van Hecke; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 69-97 (n30).

70. For an eloquent criticism of this problem, see Job Y. Jindo, *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered: A Cognitive Approach to Poetic Prophecy in Jeremiah 1-24* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 64; Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 19-21. For an example of a metaphorical analysis that *does* take into consideration the interactivity of tropes, consider M.B. Szlos, "Body Parts as Metaphor and the Value of a Cognitive Approach. A Study of the Female Figures in Proverbs via Metaphor" in Van Hecke (ed.), *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, 185-195.

approaches to what differentiates an allegory from a single metaphorical trope, I hope to demonstrate the path that this dissertation will take on the issue, and the features of text that I have looked for in determining my individual case studies.

§1.1 - Allegory vs. Metaphor: Theoretical Considerations

It has been suggested that an allegory functions as a *type* of metaphor, differing only in respect of the fact that it could also be understood literally⁷¹. By this approach, "the king is a tree" would constitute a metaphor (as might depictions of kings with branches, etc), while a story that involved trees interacting with one another (such as in Judges 9, for example) would be allegorical.

This is a compelling perspective, and the suggestions of Eva Feder Kittay in this regard are interesting. She proposes a similar view, albeit one in which the allegory need not possess any metaphors at *all* and still be allegorical⁷². The difference, in her opinion, lies in the fact that the allegory possesses first-order meaning, while a metaphor possesses both first- and second-order meanings.

The chief problem with both of these approaches lies not in their characterisation of allegory, but in their characterisation of metaphor! To suggest that an allegory differs from a metaphor in respect of the fact that it could also be understood literally is to overlook the fact that many a metaphor also succeeds in suggesting a literal interpretation. This is especially the case when it comes to dead, or "retired" metaphors⁷³, such as "the head of the bed"⁷⁴ or "the house of Israel"⁷⁵. One of the chief problems with metaphorical analyses of the Hebrew Bible has concerned whether the authors were intending to be metaphorical in any given instance⁷⁶.

71. Cohen, *Three Approaches*, 27-28; Paul Henle, "Metaphor", *Philosophical Perspectives* (ed. Johnson), 83-104 (91). This approach is critiqued by Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 190.

72. Kittay, *Metaphor*, 87 (see also pp156ff).

73. For reference to metaphors as "retired", rather than dead, see Macky, *The Centrality of Metaphors*, 72-80.

74. Gen 47:31, ראש המטה.

75. For example Exodus 16:31, בית ישראל.

76. This is discussed extensively by Soskice, whose basic premise concerns the metaphoricity of religious

Alternatively, we might understand the difference between an allegory and a metaphor on the basis of their structural composition. While a metaphor conveys meaning through the interactivity of its respective semantic domains, it may be that the allegory corresponds to its interpretation isomorphically. That is to say, that the individual components of an allegory bear a *relationship* to one another that is analogous to the *relationship* borne out by their individual counterparts within the analogue⁷⁷.

Another way in which we can construe this isomorphism is in terms of the respective meta-structures of both allegory and metaphor. In this respect, it is useful to consider a distinction raised between two different forms of metaphorical trope in the thought of Roman Jakobson. Where we might refer to metonymy and synecdoche as sub-species of metaphor, so too might we differentiate them from the latter on the basis of the former two expressing a syntagmatic relationship with their tenors and the latter expressing a paradigmatic relationship with the same⁷⁸. On analogy with this distinction, it has been suggested that allegory shares with metaphor an exclusively *paradigmatic* relationship between its tenor(s) and its vehicle(s)⁷⁹.

When Jehoash confronts Amaziah with an allegory in 2 Kings 14, his comparing the two of them to a cedar and a thistle was based not only on the interaction of these semantic domains, but on their *relative* qualities in particular. As such, an isomorphic/paradigmatic definition of allegory would assert that we need not look for any particular correspondence between

language that has long been understood literally; Soskice, *op.cit.* 142ff. See also Brettler, who discusses this issue in relation to identifying God as the tenor of enthronement psalms, and Macky - who questions the metaphoricity of God language: Brettler, *op.cit.* 139ff; Macky, *op.cit.* 189ff. The above examples of dead metaphors are both taken from Weiss, *op.cit.* 188.

77. Black, "Models and Archetypes", *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Cornell University Press, 1962), 219-243 (236ff - and particularly 238).

78. That is, if we conceive of a grammar of meaning (semiotics), on analogy with linguistics as a grammar of structure, the syntagmatic relationship between the respective parts of an utterance is combinatorial (as is the linguistic syntax of its nouns, particles and verbs), while the paradigmatic relationship is selective and substitutional. While the former might be analogous to the use of a thesaurus and is usually depicted along a horizontal axis, the latter is usually depicted along a vertical axis. For information on the applicability of Jakobson's theories (and Russian formalism in general) to classical literature, see Thomas Schmitz, *op.cit.* 17ff. For an example of its applicability to Biblical Studies, see Roland Barthes, "The Struggle with the Angel: Textual Analysis of Genesis 32:23-33", *Structural Analysis and Biblical Exegesis: Interpretational Essays* (Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series 3; trans. Alfred M. Johnson, Jr; Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1974), 21-33.

79. On this point, see Stephen Bonnycastle, *In Search of Authority: An Introductory Guide to Literary Theory* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 1996), 104-105.

Jehoash and a cedar, but may look for a correspondence between the *relationship* between Jehoash and Amaziah and the *relationship* between a cedar and a thistle.

While in any given instance this might yield a solid interpretation of the passage, it suffers in supposing that all allegories convey meaning in so formal a fashion, when a simple glance at the corpus is enough to demonstrate that this is untrue⁸⁰. As such, it has been suggested that the difference between an individual metaphor and an allegory may lie less in the nature of the relationship between their respective parts than it does in the extent to which that relationship is made textually explicit. It is Gustaf Stern's opinion, for example, that an allegory contains within itself (or, at the least, is capable of containing within itself) "the process of transfer" - which is to say, the relationship between its primary and secondary referents⁸¹.

While it may be the case that an allegory gets mistaken for a literal passage, the metaphor's supposed *inability* to convey within itself the process of transfer makes an error of this nature that much more likely with a single metaphorical trope. The implication here is that, were a metaphor to give a clear indication as to what its process of transfer is, it would be termed a simile instead. Perhaps, therefore, it may likewise be suggested that an allegory is precisely that: an expanded, *narrativised* simile.

This definition is at once both elegant and profound, and it succeeds in describing a large number of different allegorical schemas, but it is possessed of a fundamental flaw in its characterisation of the metaphor as a trope that *lacks* the ability to indicate the process of transfer itself. While an isolated metaphorical trope, devoid of both cotext and context might truly lack such indications, we expect of the text in which the metaphor is embedded (and of the cultural and linguistic norms that give utterance to the metaphor) to provide that very process of transfer that Stern claims is lacking.

80. A pertinent example in this regard would be the allegorisation of Nebuchadnezzar's descent into madness in Dan 4. While the relationship between the tree and its components within the dream narrative was analogous to the relationship between the king and his kingdom in the analogue, to assert that the choice of metaphor was wholly isomorphic would be to deny the prevalence of this particular trope in the Ancient Near East. On the relationship between Daniel 4 and ANE literature, see in particular J.J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 223ff.

81. Gustaf Stern, *Meaning and Change of Meaning*, 299.

So far as the interpretation of metaphor and allegory is concerned, it may be suggested that the difference between them lies in their relative scope. Where an allegory has (usually) only the one conventional meaning - a meaning that might be governed by the inclusion of its analogue, or by the narrativisation of its fulfilment⁸² - a metaphor possesses a virtually limitless number of applications⁸³. Relatedly, Soskice has suggested that the difference may also be understood to lie in the statement's ambiguity: while the allegory aims at a degree of obliqueness, a metaphor is designed to be understood⁸⁴.

Unfortunately, both of these approaches to the semantic content of allegories make the same mistake of generalising across all instances of this one text type, and where a great diversity of allegorical discourses exists, they seek to replace it with a single allegorical prototype. In actuality, the extent to which an allegory will be ambiguous, the extent to which its analogue will disambiguate the allegory and the extent to which it professes more than one meaning are all phenomena to be determined by the one who utters the discourse, the genre of the discourse and the expectations of the one to whom it is being addressed⁸⁵.

As such, it may be simplest to operate in accordance with a purely structural definition: where the metaphor resides in a single formulation, comprising a word, turn of phrase or aphorism, the allegory possesses narrative extension, comprising a fable⁸⁶. As it is, this

82. An example of the former, from the passages so far mentioned, would be Jud 9, while an example of the latter would be 2 Kgs 14. Dan 4, in including both the analogue *and* the fulfilment, fulfils both criteria.

83. Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, 142; Robert J. Fogelin, *Figuratively Speaking* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 88. This is justified further by Eco as metaphor's being a symbol, and thus designating indirectly; the designation of allegory is more direct, and thus permitting of less permutation. Note in this regard the qualifications of Empson, who correctly observes that an allegory may possess many *levels* of interpretation - although how this differs from its possessing many different interpretations is unclear; William Empson, *7 Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1947), 114.

84. Soskice, *op.cit.* 55-56. Note that this is contrary to Empson, who holds that metaphor aims at obliqueness and that allegory is designed to be understood, and Scheffler - who recognises ambiguity as the foundation of both types of text: Empson, *op.cit.* 128-129; Israel Scheffler, *Beyond the Letter: A Philosophical Enquiry into Ambiguity, Vagueness and Metaphor in Language* (Routledge, 1979), 79ff.

85. In this regard, some of the differences between prophecy and apocalyptic are worthy of note. Where the former in many instances employs allegories to convey specific meanings, the latter might aim for initial obscurity instead. That the allegory within Daniel 7, for example, might not be understood until its analogue is conveyed makes it no less allegorical than is the text in Dan 11.

86. Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 308; Eco, *Semiotics*, 141; Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 55. Note that Cotterell and Turner carefully differentiate allegory from parable, claiming that it is the goal of the former to confound in some fashion. While I would reject that qualification of allegory, a difference between parable and these other literary types is beyond the scope of this introduction.

definition serves to highlight the structural relationship between metaphors and allegories in ways that the various attempts at differentiating them all fail to do: that the allegory *is*, in essence, a metaphorical construct⁸⁷.

In order to avoid the ambiguities created by the term "allegory", and the various connotations that it invokes in light of the above considerations, terminology is required that can differentiate between metaphor and allegory on the basis of structure and not of function. What is more, this terminology needs to differentiate between two different types of allegories: ones that are based on a single metaphor, and ones that comprise a variety of different metaphors in juxtaposition with one another.

The terminology that I propose to use is as follows:

Isolated Trope: this refers to a metaphor without any degree of narrative extension, operating in isolation. When Mephiboshet tells David in 2 Samuel 9:8 that he is a dead dog, his utterance is metaphorical but is not part of an otherwise metaphorical narrative. Similarly, when Moses is told in Exodus 19:4 that the people had been borne on the wings of eagles, this assertion lacks context of a similarly metaphorical nature.

Interpretation of an isolated trope must commence with an appreciation of the set of associated commonplaces invoked by the vehicle that the trope employs. We cannot understand the nature of Mephiboshet's statement until we appreciate the imagery invoked by dead dogs, nor appreciate the import of what Moses is told until we understand the connotations held by eagles in flight. It is only once the import of the trope is properly understood that one can consider its function within the narrative in which it is embedded.

Narrativised Metaphor: this refers to a metaphor that *is* given narrative extension. Traditionally termed an allegory, the narrativised metaphor derives all of its tropes *from the*

87. Murray Knowles and Rosamund Moon, *Introducing Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 2006), 11 and 130. Note that Black, who defines an allegory as a passage in which every word is metaphorical, anticipates this possibility without actually embracing its ramifications: "Metaphor", *Models and Metaphors*, 27. So too Jülicher, as cited by Nielsen, *op.cit.* 35.

one semantic domain. When the psalmist declares, in Psalm 23, that God is his shepherd, the dual metaphor at play (THE LORD IS A SHEPHERD and THE PSALMIST IS A SHEEP) is maintained for at least four verses⁸⁸. Similarly, when Ezekiel describes the Pharaoh as a large reptile in Ezekiel 29:3, the analogy is maintained and developed in the subsequent two verses of that oracle as well.

In such passages, our initial objective must be an interpretation of the allegory on its own literary merits. While it still demands of us a familiarity with the set of associated commonplaces invoked by its vehicle, our primary objective is to understand that vehicle's narrative function. Such an analysis must commence, therefore, with a sensitivity to the needs of different text types (poetry, prophecy, history, etc). It is not until we appreciate the precise manner in *which* God is being compared to a shepherd, the psalmist to a sheep and the Pharaoh to a reptile that we can then set about appreciating the import of those particular analogies in context.

Metaphorical Complex: this refers to a metaphor that, whether given narrative extension or not, features in juxtaposition with metaphors from different semantic domains. While likewise traditionally termed an allegory, the metaphorical complex differs from the narrativised trope in that it derives its vehicles from *more than one semantic domain*. In some instances, these domains will be mutually incompatible with one another, as when Jacob describes Dan in Genesis 49:16-17 as both a judge of his people and as a snake biting horses and dismounting their riders. At other times, these domains, while different, will achieve a certain harmony - as when Judah is described in verses 8-10 with language reminiscent of warriors, kings and lions.

The means by which texts of this nature must be analysed will depend upon their schemic structure. In the event that the discrete metaphors within them take the form of isolated tropes, an appreciation of the complex as a whole must commence with the type of analysis to which we would subject the first variety of metaphor, described above. In the event,

88. See Clines on the possibility of this trope extending the length of the psalm and thus actually constituting a "narrativised" metaphor in the fullest sense: David Clines, "Translating Psalm 23", *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of Graeme Auld* (ed. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim and W. Brian Aucker; VTSupp 113; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 67-80.

however, that at least one of the tropes receives narrative extension, an appreciation of the overall complex must commence with an analysis of those tropes conducted in accordance with that fact.

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§1.2 - Methodology

This dissertation comprises an analysis of **the arboreal metaphor**, insofar as it operates within **metaphorical complexes** exclusively, and with a view to understanding those instances in which it functions with a king as its subject. Since it is my intention to assess the nature of metaphorical interaction, I have therefore limited myself to the type of text in which metaphors from more than one semantic domain are in close proximity to one another.

In conducting these studies, I have relied upon a modified version of Conceptual Blending, whereby the resultant nuances of the complex's individual tropes (with or without narrative extension) can be blended together in order to highlight disparities and recover emergent meanings.

To give an example of the style of analysis to which I refer, consider Hosea 4:16:

כִּי כִפְרָה סוֹרְרָה סוֹרֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל עִתָּה יָרְעִם יְהוָה כִּכְבֹּשׁ בְּמִרְחָב:

In the first half of the verse, the prophet speaks of Israel's rebelling like an errant cow, while in the second half he asks if God shall shepherd him in open spaces like a sheep⁸⁹. Pierre Van Hecke applies the principles of Conceptual Blending in his analysis of this verse, but omits to treat it as a metaphorical complex. As a result, he construes the metaphor as possessing two source spaces (the one pertaining to cattle drivers and stubborn cows, and the other to

89. Thus, Van Hecke's construal of the verse: Pierre Van Hecke, "Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor. Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hos 4,16" in P. Van Hecke (ed.), *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, 215-231. For the view that כִּכְבֹּשׁ בְּמִרְחָב relates to the following verse instead, see F.I. Anderson and D.N. Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible Commentaries 24; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 373.

shepherds and their sheep), as well as a single target space (God's relationship with Israel). The generic space, which concerns the commonalities between both source spaces and the target space, is then reduced to the features of a superior who seeks to exert his will over an autonomous agent in the performance of a particular task.

Van Hecke suggests that the attempt at creating a blended space results in an incongruity, born of the tension that exists between the depiction of Israel's behaviour in the first half of the verse and the depiction of God's response in the second. It is his suggestion that by returning to the original source spaces in order to resolve this tension, we can deduce the existence of a cattle prod, or goad, and read that back into the target space, thus augmenting God's refusal to shepherd his flock in open spaces with the otherwise-unstated threat of actual punishment.

While Van Hecke is certainly correct that the tension between Israel's behaviour and God's lack of response is a striking one, it is a tension made evident by even a simple reading of the verse, and already resolved in his postulating the second half's being rhetorical. What is more, his particular conclusions are problematic, since there is no implicit reason within this verse as to why we should resolve the incongruity with reference to punitive measures. This is especially problematic since the cotext concerns allowing Israelites and Judeans to go astray *without* explicit reference to punishment. Van Hecke's reading, while it does allow for the incongruity of the second verse, does not take into consideration that passage's function within the oracle as a whole, nor the fact that there is more than one metaphor at play within the verse.

On the contrary, a blended reading of the metaphors within this passage needs to take into consideration their fundamental duality: on the one hand, Israel has rebelled like a stubborn cow, and on the *other* hand God will [not] shepherd them in open spaces like a sheep. These are two distinct metaphorical tropes and an appreciation of how they function within the passage as a whole needs to bear this in consideration and to treat them accordingly.

Applying the theory to the two metaphors individually results in two distinct generic spaces. The first, which likens Israel to a cow, invokes the commonplaces of (expected) docility and submissiveness, together with their both being burdened by certain responsibilities. The

second, which utilises a pastoral metaphor for God and Israel, is one focused more on a relationship between its constituent parts; here, the responsibilities are those of the care-giver, who provides both nourishment and protection to the flock within his charge.

When we take the two halves of the verse together, we are presented with a contradiction: on the one hand we have a beast of burden that shirks its responsibilities, while on the other we have a free-roaming animal that has none. In attempting to resolve this contradiction, we find that the tenor (the Israelites) relate in their stubbornness to the beast of burden and, in their compliance to God's will, to the creature without responsibility. The resultant meaning, which can be read back into the original source spaces, is that one cannot divest oneself of God's commandments by *avoiding* their performance, and that true liberation comes about through the observance of the law.

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The primary aim of this dissertation is exegetical and it should be considered an instance of both a theoretical and an image-based analysis. The specific questions that I seek to ask are as follows:

1. How do metaphors operate in the presence of other metaphors? How might the appearance of an arboreal metaphor within a metaphorical complex affect its construal, and how might it influence those other metaphors in turn?
2. In what manner do these theoretical considerations assist us in our primary aim of *understanding* those passages in which metaphorical complexes feature? What might we learn about THE KING IS A TREE as a metaphor, and what might we learn about those passages in which it is attested, that we did not know before?

This study takes two paths in the pursuit of its aims. In the first, I conduct four separate analyses that concern the metaphor, A PERSON IS A TREE. The passages chosen were taken less for their paradigmatic nature than for their ability to convey both the versatility of the arboreal metaphor, and the manner in which it interacts with other tropes within a metaphorical complex. In order to demonstrate this point most effectively, I have deliberately chosen passages that, on superficial levels, are considered to be very similar.

In the second part of the thesis, I turn my attention to the trope, THE KING IS A TREE. Once again, the passages chosen were picked on the basis of their ability to convey this trope's versatility, and on the basis of their constituting metaphorical complexes. While my presentation doesn't aim at being exhaustive, I have included an introduction to §3 that contains a list of every biblical passage in which I believe that I have correctly identified this metaphorical trope. As the studies will hopefully demonstrate, a more exhaustive analysis of arboreal imagery will be required in order to produce a comprehensive list.

As mine is an approach that primarily constitutes an exercise in textual exegesis, it is worth making clear at the outset precisely what I mean when I refer to treating the corpus as literature.

Firstly, while an appreciation of compositional and redactional history might prove informative in certain instances, it is with the texts in their final redacted form that I am primarily and ultimately concerned. I have endeavoured to incorporate scholarship on the compositional history of a text where I have deemed such information to be relevant to that text's metaphorical function only.

Secondly, it should also be clear that when I refer to "God" throughout this text, I am employing a convenient shorthand for the character known variously as YHWH and Elohim, and am only referring to him insofar as he constitutes a character within the corpus under consideration. So too, when I refer to any other character; in the event that the text in which they feature bears their name (eg: Isaiah), I use that name in reference to the character only, and refer to the author as "the author" (or "the psalmist", or "the prophet", etc).

§2 - A PERSON IS A TREE

ואל יאמר בן הנכר הנלווה אל יהוה לאמר הבדל יבדילני יהוה מעל עמו ולא יאמר הסרים הן אני עץ יבש

Isaiah 56:3

§2.1 - Introduction

In its outline of rabbinic usufructuary law, the Mishna (Ketubot 8:5) provides two scenarios in which a man may have recourse to selling the inherited property of his wife. One of these is where she inherits old olive trees and grapevines¹. There, the mishna in question rules that her husband may sell these items for lumber so long as he uses the proceeds to purchase land, the principal thus remaining in his wife's possession while he benefits from the fruits. Rabbi Yehuda demurs in favour of his keeping the old trees and vines as they are, "מפני שהן שבה בית", "for they are the pride of her father's estate".

In what manner might old olive trees and grapevines be considered the "pride" of a dead man's household? If they are no longer able to yield their fruits but can serve as neither lumber nor kindling, what benefit might they be said to possess? While the mishnaic legislation derives from a time far removed from that in which the various texts of the Hebrew Bible were authored, the emphasis placed on the importance of trees *for their own sake* is but one example of an attitude that the two corpora have in common².

In ancient Israelite economies, the land itself was of primary importance³. It should be no surprise, therefore, that arboreal and agricultural tropes feature so heavily in a range of

1. For an extended discussion of how this legislation dovetails with rabbinic inheritance law and the rights of women in marriage, see Gail Labovitz, *Marriage and Metaphor: Constructions of Gender in Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Lexington Books, 2009), 210-220.

2. For an in-depth overview of early rabbinic attitudes towards agriculture, viticulture and the maintenance of one's ancestral land, see Gedaliah Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age* (trans. Gershon Levi; Harvard University Press, 1984), 152-168.

3. So, for example, Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 39; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 24-25; Peter Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2003), 91; Oded Borowski, "Agriculture", *ABD* 1 (Doubleday, 1992), 95-98.

different biblical genres⁴. But that the Hebrew Bible abounds with arboreal language is a fact explained by the Dictionary of Biblical Imagery in relation not to the abundance of trees, but to their general scarcity in the arid climate of the Palestinian world⁵. Such scarcity might give to trees a value even beyond their utility - such value being potentially responsible for their treatment as items of cultic significance⁶.

From a utilitarian perspective, trees were both sources of food and of lumber. The high valuation of both items made the wanton destruction of trees a reprehensible act⁷, and their destruction at the hands of one's enemies a clear demonstration of military power⁸. The importance of trees (their value, their scarcity and their function in various cultic practices) is such that the tree appears as both the tenor and the vehicle of a great many Hebrew and Aramaic metaphors, recorded in the literature of the Hebrew Bible.

Trees function as symbols of strength and of fertility. They function in metaphors that denote power, security, opulence and vitality. To own a house constructed of wood may be construed as a symbol of wealth or of permanence; by contrast, the image of a felled tree or of a denuded forest may serve as a metaphor for death, for the conquest and destruction of one's land, or for the termination of political autonomy.

Successfully interpreting a metaphorical expression relies on a familiarity with both the thing described and the means of describing it - that is, on an appreciation of the relevant semantic paradigms shared by the author of the expression and his intended audience. While a

4. Borowski, *op.cit.* 98.

5. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III (eds), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 890.

6. For the assertion that trees were sacred by virtue of their scarcity, see Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT Supp; Sheffield, 1989), 79-80. For the carefully-worded rejection of the notion that trees, themselves, were sacrosanct in favour of the assertion that they simply marked out places of cultic significance, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. John McHugh; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 278-279.

7. So, for example, the Mishna declares that one is not allowed to cut down even his own trees (Baba Qama 8:6), save for when they have already yielded a sufficient amount of fruit (Sheviit 4:10), and the Tosefta refers to those who do so as a metonym for evil-doers in general (Bikkurim 2:16, Sukkah 2:5). For a discussion of such statements in light of various other examples of agricultural legislation, cf: Alon, *op.cit.* 277-285.

8. Jacob L. Wright, "Warfare and Wanton Destruction: A Reexamination of Deuteronomy 20:19-20 in Relation to Ancient Siegecraft", *JBL* 127:3 (2008), 423-458.

familiarity with such an encyclopedia is a necessary tool for engaging with metaphor, it is also true that "metaphor is the tool that permits us to understand the encyclopedia better"⁹.

There are several texts that testify to the metaphorical equation, A PERSON IS A TREE. Broadly speaking, these texts can be separated into two categories: those that utilise this metaphor in order to accentuate the difference between different types of people (the righteous, most commonly, and the wicked), and those that employ this metaphor in order to indicate a quality that human beings all have in common with one another. In the former instance, the features of the tree that are rhetorically exploited are those that concern its location, its physicality and its fruit-bearing capacity. In the latter instance, the metaphysical qualities of longevity and the possibility of regrowth serve to underscore the comparison.

In order to properly delineate these qualities and how they are served by the arboreal metaphor, I shall undertake four textual analyses. The examples chosen are not intended to be paradigmatic, but are simply taken to be representative of the incredible versatility of this one metaphorical trope. A general analysis of arboreal imagery within the Hebrew Bible falls beyond the scope of the present study.

In choosing which passages to analyse, I have been governed by two motivations. On the one hand, I have selected passages that demonstrate the incredible versatility of this particular metaphorical trope. On the other hand, I have also selected passages that testify to the appearance of this metaphor as part of a metaphorical complex exclusively. This is in order that the following analyses might serve not only as an indication of the meanings conveyed by trees within metaphorical texts of this nature, but also demonstrate some of the ways that a sensitivity to the varied structures of metaphorical passages might yield insights that may otherwise go unnoticed.

By way of an introduction, and to indicate the sorts of questions that a metaphorical analysis might wish to answer, it might be useful to consider this metaphor's opposite: A TREE IS NOT A PERSON. While this proposition is technically *true*, the fact of its being expressed in the first

9. Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 129.

place nonetheless enables us to recognise a certain incongruity and to identify it as a metaphor¹⁰. A consideration of the language used to convey this trope in Deuteronomy 20:19 will provide us with a starting point for our subsequent analyses.

§2.1.1 - A Tree is *Not* a Person: Deuteronomy 20:19

כִּי־תִצְוֶה אֶל־עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְשָׁהּ לֹא־תִשְׁחִית אֶת־עֵצֶיהָ לְנֹדֶחַ עָלֶיהָ גֵרֹן בִּי מִמֶּנּוּ
תֹאכַל וְאֵתוֹ לֹא תִכְרֹת כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה לִבָּא מִפְּנֵיךָ בַּמִּצְוָה:

The critical clause, and the one that bears the metaphorical information, appears in the second division of the verse and commences with the particle *ki* (כי). It is comprised of two phrases, the second appearing to be subsidiary to the first: כי האדם עץ השדה =< לבא מפניך במצור. Its translation into English and its correct interpretation hinge both upon an understanding of the purpose of this subsidiary phrase, as well as on an analysis of the introductory particle. To this end it would be prudent to consider the work of Carl Follingstad on the range of meanings possessed by the particle *ki*¹¹.

Follingstad's preliminary conclusion is that the particle is deictic, and thus dependent entirely upon a syntactic and semantic interpretation of its cotext. In line with this conclusion, he provides a detailed range of historical approaches to the particle¹², and in so doing highlights several possible interpretations of the various passages in which it occurs.

One particularly common construal of this verse relies upon interpreting the particle as an interrogative conjunction¹³. This makes of the subsidiary clause a continuation of the reason for one's inability to cut down the fruit-bearing tree: that the tree is not a human being who might otherwise flee from before you. Such a reading is evident in the Septuagint's rendering

10. English examples of X is X and X is not Y metaphors include, NO MAN IS AN ISLAND, BUSINESS IS BUSINESS, LIFE IS NO GARDEN OF ROSES, etc.

11. Carl M. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle כִּי (ki)* (SIL International, 2001).

12. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 9-63 and Appendix A (337-349)

13. See, for example, GBHS §4.3.4n: "Are the trees of the field as human beings?"

of the verse, which utilises clause-initial μή to indicate a question that expects a negative response¹⁴:

μή ἄνθρωπος τὸ ξύλον τὸ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ εἰσελθεῖν ἀπὸ προσώπου σου εἰς τὸν
χάρακα

Is the tree that is in the field a man, to enter before thee into the work of the
siege?

A semantically similar formulation is the one that Follingstad cautiously identifies with the substantival consecutive meaning¹⁵ (perhaps best translated as, "for is it [not]"), but which might more easily be thought of in this instance as a modal subset of the interrogative. It is exclusive to the Jewish tradition of biblical commentary¹⁶, and is most clearly attested in the 11th century commentary of Rashi, to which Follingstad refers¹⁷:

הרי כי, משמש בלשון דלמא, שמא האדם עץ השדה...

Ki (כי) has the same import as *dilma*' (דלמא): Perhaps the tree of the field is a person? (Rashi, Deut 20:19)

The indication in Rashi's comment that the passage is to be understood as a rhetorical question that expects a negative response is made through his employment of both דלמא and its cognate, שמא. Semantically, this is similar to its usage as an interrogative conjunction in that both interpretations make of this clause a reason for the prohibition of cutting down fruit trees, and of the ensuing subsidiary clause a continuation of this logic. Similarly, both interpretations allow the clause to raise the possibility of there being a metaphorical connection between trees and people without explicitly dismissing it.

14. See Herbert Weir Smith, *Greek Grammar* (Harvard University Press, 1963), §1772 and 2651; Donald J. Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), §31.3c; Hardy Hansen and Gerald M. Quinn, *Greek: An Intensive Course* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 773; Liddell and Scott, s.v. μή.

15. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 14, although see 28-29 for the recognition that this may only be an approximation.

16. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 39.

17. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 33.

Although Driver notes¹⁸ that adopting either of these interpretations requires of us that we modify the vocalisation of the MT text from *ha'adam* to *he'adam*, thus signifying the interrogative, this interpretation is the one most commonly found in contemporary biblical translations. So, for example:

"Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you?" (NRSV)

"For is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee?" (JPS 1917)

"Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city" (NJPS)

And likewise, among translations of more dynamic equivalence:

"Is the tree in the fields human that you should besiege it too?" (Jerusalem Bible)

"Is the tree of the field a man that it should enter the siege before you?" (Artscroll Tanakh)

"Are the trees of the field people, that you should besiege them?" (NIV)

Craigie¹⁹ interprets likewise ("For are the trees of the field human that they should be besieged by you?"), and cites as evidence for the need to adjust the vocalisation²⁰ both the

18. S.R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC; 3rd ed; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 240 n19.

19. Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976), 276-277.

20. Craigie, *op.cit.* 277 n20.

Septuagint and the Syriac Peshitta. While the Septuagint, as we have seen, does indeed reflect on this interpretation of the particle, the Peshitta would appear to attest to an alternative understanding altogether. Rather than convey the presence of an interrogative clause, the Syriac renders the particle as signifying a causal adverbial adjunct clause²¹ instead - most commonly rendered into English as "because", "since" or "for"²².

ܩܠܠ ܘܥܝܠܬܐ ܘܥܣܠܐ ܠܥ ܡܫܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܒܘܥܘܪ ܘܢܘܫܡ ܗܝ ܡܘܨܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܩܠܠܐ

... since the tree of the field is not like a person to flee from before you into the siege. (Peshitta, Deut 20:19)

As the relationship between the Syriac Peshitta and the Aramaic Targums has long been noted²³, it is of interest to observe that this is how our verse is rendered in both Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan as well:

ארי לא כאנשא אילן חקלא למיעל מקדמך בצירה

... since the tree of the field is not like a person, to go before you into the siege. (Targum Onkelos)

ארום לא כבר נש אילן דאנפי ברא למטמרא מקמיכון בצירה

... since the tree on the face of the field is not like a person to be concealed from you in the siege. (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Deut 20:19)²⁴

21. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 10.

22. A denotation, respectively, of either "ordinary causality", "a supposedly known cause" or "explanatory causality"; Joüon and Muraoka §170a.

23. So, for example: A. E. Silverstone, "Onkelos and Peshitta" in *Aquila and Onkelos* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931), 123-146 and P. Wernberg-Møller, "Prolegomena to a Re-Examination of the Palestinian Targum Fragments of the Book of Genesis Published by P. Kahle, and their Relationship to the Peshitta," *JSS* 7 (1962), 253-266 (263). For an alternative view, cf: M. P. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction* (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1999), 129.

24. This is also the interpretation of Saadiah Gaon, whose usage of the preposition (כאדם; *like* a person) might indicate his reliance in this instance upon the targum tradition: ולא תכרתנו בהשבך שעץ השדה כאדם שהסתתר מפניך (Saadiah Gaon, Deut 20:19); for the alternative possibility that the *hiphil* may imply the "protection" of the tree were it to recede into the siege, rather than its simply being hidden, cf: Jastrow, s.v. סתר I.

Despite the fact that the particle *ki* is used more frequently than any other particle as a signifier of the causal adverbial adjunct clause²⁵, and despite the fact that it is employed for this purpose more often than it is for any other²⁶, this particular construal of our verse is an interpretation almost entirely absent from contemporary translations of the Bible. Yet, since the interrogative conjunction referenced above invites the answer no, the causal interpretation is found frequently in reformulations, descriptions and summaries of the relevant legislation²⁷.

In each of the aforementioned readings, whether interrogative or causal, the subsidiary clause is understood as an extension of the logic behind the original prohibition. To consider the passage in a metaphorical fashion, the phrase as a whole constitutes the rhetorical assertion that a tree is *not* like a person, and that it is not like a person specifically in reference to its inability to enter the siege. Making this assertion requires both an allusion to the possible metaphorical connection between trees and people, together with a simultaneous denial of the same.

In the event that we interpret the particle *ki* as either a substantival consecutive²⁸ (Rashi) or as an indicator of the interrogative (LXX), the relationship between trees and people is evoked but rejected after consideration only. By allowing us to pose the question instead of answering it for us, this reading not only alludes to a particular metaphorical connection but invites of us that we consider its viability. In the event, however, that we construe the particle as a causal conjunction (Peshitta, Targums), the dismissal of any metaphorical relationship is both direct and absolute. Indeed, an awareness of the absence of any metaphorical relationship is inferred already by the clause itself: one may not cut down certain trees *because* the tree is not [like] a person.

25. JM §170d.

26. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 10. See also *op.cit.* 39 for the assertion that this usage constitutes one of the best attested definitions of the particle in historical treatments of the Hebrew language.

27. So, for example, Roland de Vaux suggests that Deuteronomy 20:19 relates the fact "that trees should be spared *because* they are not men": Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), 256; *emphais mine*.

28. As per Follingstad's hesitant appraisal of כִּי .

An alternative construal of the particle may yield a markedly different reading again, both of the metaphorical expression and of the subsidiary clause that follows it. It is worth noting, therefore, that the single best attested interpretation of this particle in pre-19th century analyses of the language is as an adversative/exceptive²⁹. This is classed by Follingstad as an example of an asseverative clause on the grounds that an emphatic yes and an emphatic no are semantically related³⁰. The other members of the same group are asseveratives of reinforcement³¹, apodosi of oaths³² and exclamatives³³.

Taking as his database the literature spanning Joshua through 2 Kings³⁴, Follingstad's analysis³⁵ demonstrates a total number of 174 *ki* clauses in the asseverative group (16% of the total), of which 97 (82% of this class) constitute adversative/exceptive clauses. That number comprises 9% of the total number of *ki* clauses within the overall database: the most frequent usage of the particle, second only to its function as a causal signifier (586 instances, or 54% of the total)³⁶.

The interpretation of the particle *ki* in Deuteronomy 20:19 as an adversative/exceptive is wholly absent both from the ancient witnesses to the text and from its contemporary

29. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 36.

30. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 12 n46.

31. For the view that this particle may not properly be said to possess this meaning, see Joüon and Muraoka, §164b n2 - a criticism which Follingstad acknowledges, *op.cit.* 11 n40. For views in line with Follingstad's approach, see: JM §164c; Williams §449; GKC §159ee (where it is referred to as the corroborative כִּי - a subset of conditional sentences); BHRG §41.3.9 (where it is classed as a modal of confirmation); GBHS §4.3.4i. See also IBHS §35.3.1f, where this particle features in examples of clauses of "affirmation".

32. See also: JM §165a-b, e; BHRG §41.3.9. See GKC (§149a) for the observation that the particle כִּי functions only rarely in this context. For the recognition that this usage may actually be identical to the asseverative of reinforcement, see: Follingstad, *op.cit.* 12 n44; GBHS §4.3.4i; Williams §449.

33. This is the most controversial of the three asseveratives delineated by Follingstad. For a detailed description of its place (or its absence) in traditional appraisals of the particle, see: Follingstad, *op.cit.* 46-47 and Appendix A.1-7 (337-341).

34. A total of 1,078 *ki* clauses; Follingstad, *op.cit.* §3.1.2 (66-67).

35. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 408-414.

36. It might be noted that some of these interpretations were both anticipated and determined by a *baraita* recorded in Tractate Rosh haShana of the Babylonian Talmud: דאמר ר"ל כי משמש בד' לשונות אי דילמא אלא דהא (For Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish has said that *ki* is used with four meanings: "if", "that not", "rather/except" and "because"). While the foregoing text is taken from Rosh haShana 3a, this *baraita* is recorded also in Gittin 90a, Taanit 9a and Shevuot 49b, and is alluded to in Pesachim 93b. My translations of the relevant terms are taken from Follingstad, *op.cit.* 28. He defines them respectively as the conditional, the adversative, a rough approximation of the consecutive, and the causal.

translations. To get a sense as to how it might have functioned were it to have been employed, it is necessary to consider the commentary of Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam), who employs it in his analysis of the verse. Similar interpretations are found in a variety of other mediaeval commentaries upon the biblical text, and are cited by Follingstad as an example of the adversitive interpretation³⁷:

כל כי שאחרי לא מתפרש אלא, אותו לא תכרת אלא עץ השדה לבא מפניך במצור, אותו תכרות, הם
הקרובים לעיר שנסתרים בהם אנשי העיר הבורחים מפניך ובאים בתוך העיר... שגורם את האדם
לבא מפניך במצור

Every כי that comes after the word לא is to be interpreted as אלא: This one [the one from which you can eat], you should not cut down, but the tree of the field [that allows you to make the townspeople] come before you into the siege, *that* one you may cut down (the ones close to the city in which the men of the city who fled from before you are hiding) that they should enter into the city... [It is referred to as the person of the tree of the field because its destruction] causes people to come into the siege from before you. (Rashbam)

While this interpretation in particular may be decidedly less compelling than others that we have seen, it is nonetheless predicated on a well-established understanding of the particle *ki* as an adversitive³⁸. Rashbam notes in his explication of the passage that this interpretation requires the presence of a negative (לא... כי), and while it is recognised today that the presence of a negative may more commonly produce such a reading³⁹, it is also understood that the negative might simply be implied⁴⁰.

Importantly, the construal of the particle *ki* as an adversitive makes of the subsidiary clause a predicate that further qualifies עץ השדה. In other words, while you may not cut down "the tree of the field", the tree that you *may* cut down (as Rashbam phrases it) is specifically "the tree

37. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 28-29. See also his Appendix F.3 (557-586) for a more detailed investigation of the role of this particle in adversitive clauses.

38. Follingstad, *op.cit.* 12-13 and 28.

39. JM §172c, GKC §163a, IBHS §39.3.5d, BHRG §40.9 II.3, GBHS §4.3.4g; Williams §555.

40. GKC §163b; Follingstad, *op.cit.* 341 n21.

of the field [that, in being cut down, causes] a person [escaping from before you] to enter the city". Parsing the clause in such a fashion divests it of its metaphor of similarity, which is replaced instead with a metaphor of contiguity, or metonym⁴¹. There is no tree, in other words, that is *like* a person, but rather a type of tree that is merely *called* "person".

It is evident from the foregoing that an interpretation of the clause that preserves the metaphorical equation between trees and people (be it only rhetorical) may thus be dependent upon our specifically ascribing to the particle a non-adversitive meaning. Might it be the case that a reading of this text that preserves such a metaphor is reliant upon the particle being rendered as either an interrogative or as a causal adjunct signifier?

To answer this question it is important to note that, in addition to their dependence upon our treatment of the initial particle, interpretations of the passage may also be affected by their treatment of the ensuing clause. Thus far we have operated in accordance with the assumption that it represents a continuation of (and is subsidiary to) the clause that commences with the particle. An alternative means of rendering the passage is demonstrated by the KJV:

"Thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege" (KJV)

This reading is also included in the NIV as an alternative translation⁴², and testifies to an interpretation of the second clause (לְבֹא מִפְּנֵיךְ בַּמְצוֹר) as an extension of the ruling that is found immediately prior to the particle: וְאֵתוּ לֹא תִכְרֹת. This interpretation might rely upon a construal of the verb לְבֹא as a causative, usually signalled with the *hiphil*⁴³. Alternatively, it may rely upon the assertion that it is the siege itself that is being "brought" as a result of the tree being

41. So, for example: Murray Knowles and Rosamund Moon, *Introducing Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 2006), 52-53; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 35-40; Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 90; Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (London: Routledge, 1977), 77-79.

42. "Do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the fruit trees are for the benefit of man" - NIV, Deut 20:19, alternative reading.

43. For possible examples of the *hiphil* of this verb denoting usage or employment, consider Neh 3:5 (לֹא הֵבִיאוּ) and Prov 23:12 (הֵבִיאה לְמוֹסֵר לְבֶךְ); BDB s.v. בּוֹא, Hiphil 1g.

felled, the concept of "bringing" being semantically extended to denote construction (ie: "brought into [a state of being] a siege")⁴⁴.

It is noteworthy as well that the reading in the KJV both interprets the metaphor and reverses its direction. Rather than suggesting that the tree of the field is [not] a person, it parses the metaphor as asserting that people are [like] the tree of the field. This interpretation is of some antiquity, being found in an early midrash on this verse, which may have achieved its final written form as early as the late 3rd century CE⁴⁵:

כי ממנו תאכל מצוות עשה שחייו של אדם אינו אלא מן האיל⁴⁶

"From it you may eat" is a positive ordinance, since the life of a person comes only from trees. (Sifrei Deuteronomy 239)

That there may be a relationship between the interpretation found in Sifrei Deuteronomy and the translation of the KJV is suggested by Driver⁴⁷, who attributes the latter to the mediaeval exegete Abraham ibn Ezra, and to his reformulation of the midrash. I reproduce the commentary of Ibn Ezra below, since it is evident that his treatment of the particle *ki* and his interpretation of the second clause are both intimately related:

וזו פירושו, כי ממנו תאכל ואותו לא תכרות, כי האדם עץ השדה, והטעם, כי חיי בן אדם הוא עץ השדה

44. For examples of the *qal* of this verb followed by a noun with the instrumental preposition denoting "bringing", see 1 Kgs 13:1 (והנה איש אלהים בא מיהודה בדבר יהוה) and Ps 66:13 (אבוא ביתך בעולות); for a possible example of this construction denoting "bringing [into a state of]", see Prov 18:6 (שפתי כסיל יבאו בריב); HALOT s.v. בוא, Qal 2e. Note that in two of these examples the instrumental preposition is vocalised as an indefinite noun, in contrast to its vocalisation in Deut 20:19. In the passage from 1 Kings, it is perhaps noteworthy that the noun to which the preposition is attached is semantically definite, even if not morphologically so.

45. H.L. Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. M. Bockmuehl; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 272-273.

46. Text taken from MS Rome Assemani 32, as made available by Bar-Ilan University (<http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/tannaim/sifrei/Sifre%20Dev%20Vatican.pdf>).

47. Driver, *op.cit.* 240 n19.

And this is its interpretation: because you eat from it, so you should not cut it down, "for a person is a tree of the field" - the reason being that the *life* of a person is the tree of the field. (Ibn Ezra)

There are echoes of such a reapplication of the midrash in the writings of various of his contemporaries as well⁴⁸, but it is specifically in Ibn Ezra's commentary that we see that this formulation is governed by an interpretation of the second clause. This is made evident by what he writes immediately pursuant to the above observation, concerning the end of the first half of the verse:

ואתו לא תכרת דבק עם לבא מפניך במצור. הנה לא תשחית עץ פרי שהוא חיים לבן אדם, רק מותר
שתאכל ממנו, ואסור לך להשחיתו כדי שתבא העיר מפניך במצור. והעד על זה הפירוש שהוא נכון,
שאמר וכרת ובנית מצור

"You should not cut it down" is joined to "to come before you into the siege". Thus, you should not destroy a fruit-bearing tree, which is the life of a person, but are permitted only to eat from it. And it is forbidden for you to destroy it in order to bring the city that is before you into a [state of] siege. And the proof that this is the correct interpretation is that it says, "you may cut down [the tree that does not bear fruit] and build a siege" (Ibn Ezra).

In other words, the fact that Deut 20:20 testifies to the use of trees for the building of siegeworks has led Ibn Ezra to conclude that the trees spoken of in our verse would have been used in such a fashion as well were it not for this prohibition. The verse must therefore be read as though the key clause, *כי האדם עץ השדה*, is parenthetical to the broader prohibition: *ואתו לא תכרת... לבא מפניך במצור* (You may not cut it down... to bring [the city that is] before you into [a state of] siege).

As we saw in the KJV, it is noteworthy that the adoption of this interpretation not only renders *כי האדם עץ השדה* as a parenthetical phrase, but that it reverses the direction of the metaphor. Now, instead of remarking upon the relationship (or lack thereof) between trees

48. Most notably Asher ben Jehiel and Nahmanides.

and people, the reformulation of the latter part of the clause has led to the conclusion that it is *people* who are the tree. Or more precisely, that vegetation and herbage constitute the basis of human life⁴⁹.

Before we conclude this preliminary analysis, it is worth mentioning the possibility that the phrase constituted an expression prior to its being incorporated into the text. One indication that this may have been the case is the presence of the qualifier, קר, at the commencement of the following verse. Fishbane is right to suggest that it alone is insufficient evidence for verse 20 constituting an additional exegetical stratum⁵⁰ - if only because of the frequency of this particular adverb⁵¹.

If we *were* to propose, be it only for the purpose of consideration, that the clause might have constituted an expression, then a familiarity with that expression may justify the vocalisation tradition that renders the inseparable /*heh*/ an emphatic marker, rather than as a signifier of an interrogative clause. What is more, the possibility of its being a fixed expression raises a

49. It is interesting to consider whether or not such may have been the interpretation of Philo and of Josephus. Philo writes (*The Special Laws* IV, 226-228): "But our lawgiver implants such a love of justice in all men who live under the institution which he has established, that he does not permit them to injure the fertile land of even an hostile city by ravaging it, or by cutting down the trees, so as to destroy the crops. "For why," says he, "do you bear a grudge against inanimate things, which are in their nature quiet, and which produce wholesome fruits? **Does the tree, my friend, display the hostile spirit of a man that is an enemy**, so that you are to tear it up by the roots in retaliation for the evils which it has inflicted, or which it has designed to inflict upon you? On the contrary, ... plants offer even more useful tribute at the fixed seasons of the year, **a tribute without which men cannot live**"; C.D. Yonge (trans.), *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1993).

Josephus, also, writes as follows (*Antiquities* 4.8.42): "When you have pitched your camp, take care that you do nothing that is cruel; and when you are engaged in a siege, and want timber for the making of warlike engines, do not you render the land naked by cutting down trees that bear fruit, but spare them, **as considering that they were made for the benefit of men**; and that if they could speak, they would have a just plea against you, because, though they are not occasions of the war, they are unjustly treated, and suffer in it; **and would, if they were able, remove themselves into another land**"; William Whiston (trans.), *The Works of Josephus* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1987). I find it especially interesting that in the case of Josephus, he makes the somewhat more logical claim that if trees were human they would escape altogether. Indeed, it may be the apparent illogicality behind the trees choosing to enter the siege that has inspired some of the metaphorical reformulations attested in the various historical treatments of this passage.

50. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 199. For a similar reticence with this particular adverb, cf: Fishbane, *op.cit.* 73. For alternative possibilities, consider his treatment of קר in 1 Kings 15:5b and Deuteronomy 12:15-16 - *op.cit.* 73 n23 and 533, respectively.

51. Fishbane, *op.cit.* 525. It should be noted, however, that קר occurs 39 times within the Pentateuch (108 times altogether in Tanakh); קא, on the other hand, appears 43 times within the Pentateuch (161 times altogether in Tanakh), yet Fishbane acknowledges its frequent usage as "a technical exegetical term": *op.cit.* 184 n53, 185, 197-198 and 260 n64.

number of interesting questions that concern the direction of the metaphor and its possible import:

1. Does a construal of the particle as an adversitive necessitate its constituting a parenthetical phrase? Might it be possible, in other words, to maintain that the metaphorical expression is a continuation of the legislation (and that the ensuing clause is subsidiary to it), while nonetheless marking it in contrast with the foregoing?
2. Does the attribution of parenthetical status to the key clause preclude an appreciation of the particle as either a causal signifier or as an interrogative? That is, might it be possible to assert that the metaphorical expression provides a reason for an item of legislation that includes, rather than governs, the concluding clause?
3. Do any of these interpretations by necessity affect the direction in which the metaphor can be said to travel? To what extent is interpretation of the metaphor's direction (THE TREE IS A PERSON / HUMANITY IS A TREE) contingent upon our parsing of the syntax?
4. And ultimately, how do these differing interpretations of the metaphor affect our understanding of the legislation or of its purpose within this particular legal pericope?

It is beyond the scope of this short introduction to the topic to suggest any answers to these questions, but in asking them we see the intimate relationship between the construction of meaning and the fabric of language. The grammar of semiotics and of linguistics are interrelated, and a proper investigation of the literature must be faithful to the Hebrew language.

In the case studies to follow, attention will be given to the interplay of semantic domains and not to a grammatical analysis - save for rare instances in which observations of this nature will be pertinent to an exegesis of the passage. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate the power of the metaphorical complex, the utility of the arboreal metaphor, and just what it means to say that A PERSON IS A TREE.

§2.2 - The Fruit of a Faithful Tree: Jeremiah 17:5-8 and Psalm 1

רבי יודן אומר המזמור הזה משבח מכל המזמורים

Midrash Tehillim 1:1

The relationship between Jeremiah 17:5-8 and Psalm 1 has long been noted⁵². Whether this is because the psalmist adapted a motif from Jeremiah, because Jeremiah adapted a motif from Psalms or because the two texts were heir to the same tradition is unresolved⁵³. Their utilisation of arboreal imagery in order to characterise a righteous person is by no means unique to their texts⁵⁴, but the phraseology that they employ, by which they specifically refer to the righteous person as having been planted alongside water, finds no parallel within the biblical literature⁵⁵.

Jeremiah 17:5-10 and Psalm 1 both constitute narrativisations of the metaphor, A PERSON IS A TREE. In both instances, the righteous individual is compared to a tree planted alongside water, the leaves of which are perpetually green and which never fails to bear fruit. The difference between the two texts is most noticeable in their treatment of the wicked. In Jeremiah, the one who does not trust in God is compared to a shrub in the wilderness, while in Psalm 1 he is likened to chaff blown away by the wind.

52. John Bright, *Jeremiah* (The Anchor Bible 21; New York: Doubleday, 1965), 119; William L. Holladay, "Indications of Jeremiah's Psalter", *JBL* 121:2 (2002), 245-261 (248-249); John Goldingay, *Psalms* (vol. 1; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 84. See also Kraus, for observations regarding lexical differences between the two texts: Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 118.

53. For discussion of different opinions on this matter, see Holladay, *ibid*. The author adopts the perspective that Jeremiah adapted this psalm, and presents a range of scholars who hold otherwise, to which list can be added Dahood, who sees in both texts also a deliberate reference to the rivers of Eden: Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I* (The Anchor Bible 16; New York: Doubleday, 1965), 4. While Holladay cites Mowinckel to the effect that the psalms are undeniably late, Mowinckel's assertion that this motif entered "the learned psalmography" by means of a wisdom tradition should not be taken to signal a Jeremiatic origin in particular, but that both texts owe their phraseology to a common source: Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship II* (trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas; Oxford, 1962), 52.

54. Kraus, *ibid*.

55. For parallels within ANE literature, art and iconography, see Michaela Bauks, "Sacred Trees in the Garden of Eden and Their Ancient Near Eastern Precursors", *JAJ* 3:3 (2012), 267-301; Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (King and Saviour IV; Uppsala: Lundequist, 1951); William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 59ff; *ANET* 421-424.

While this is the most striking difference between the two texts, an analysis reveals that their respective presentations of the righteous individual are also unlike from one another. What is more, the difference between the two applications of the arboreal metaphor in this regard reflects upon the subtlety of the tree image and upon two of its different functions: its ability to ascribe qualities to an individual, and its capacity for theological observation. That is to say, the image of the tree informs our understanding of the person that it represents, as well as our understanding of the one who planted it.

Jeremiah 17:5-10

17:5	<p>כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָוֶיךָ הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בְּאֲדָמָה וְשָׁם בְּשֵׁר וְרָעוּ וּמִן־יְהוָה יִסּוּר לְבוֹ:</p>
6	<p>וְהָיָה כַּעֲרָעַר בְּעֲרֵבָה וְלֹא יִרְאֶה כִּי־יָבֹא טוֹב וְשָׁכֵן תַּרְרִימִם בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲרִיז מְלַחָה וְלֹא תִשָּׁב:</p>
7	<p>כִּרְיוֹד הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בִּיהִגָּה וְהָיָה יְהוָה מִבְּטַחוֹ:</p>
8	<p>וְהָיָה כַּעֵצוֹ שֶׁתּוֹלַע עַל־מַיִם וְעַל־יּוֹבֵל יִשְׁלַח שָׁרְשָׁיו וְלֹא יִרָא כִּי־יָבֹא חֵם וְהָיָה עַל־הוּרָעוֹ וּבִשְׁנֵת בְּצִרְתּוֹ לֹא יִדְאָג וְלֹא יִמְיַשׁ מַעֲשׂוֹת פְּרִי:</p>
9	<p>עֵקֶב הַלֵּב מִכָּל וְאִנְגַּשׁ הוּא מִי יִדְעֵנּוּ:</p>
10	<p>אֲנִי יְהוָה חֹקֵר לֵב בִּתְנוּן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלִתְת לְאִישׁ כְּדַרְכּוֹ כַּפְרֵי מַעֲלָלוֹ:</p>
17:5	<p>Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord.</p>
6	<p>They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.</p>
7	<p>Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.</p>
8	<p>They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.</p>
9	<p>The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse - who can understand it?</p>
10	<p>I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.</p>

This oracle commences with an indictment of those who place their faith in human beings, whom it compares to a shrub that grows in a barren land. It continues in praise of those whose trust is in God alone, who are likened to a tree planted alongside a stream. Finally, it concludes with a meditation on the impossibility of assessing a person's private motivation - indeed, perhaps even on the impossibility of a person truly understanding himself⁵⁶. According to the coda, God alone is capable of knowing what an individual's intentions are. God alone, in other words, can determine whether a person belongs amongst the wicked or amongst the righteous; whether he has placed his faith in other people or whether he trusts solely in the divine.

As such, this oracle commences with condemnation (verses 5-6), proceeds with praise (verses 7-8) and then concludes with a coda (verses 9-10) that represents both the objects of scorn and of laudation. In all three of these sections, the imagery of the tree is exploited for rhetorical effect: in the first, by means of a shrub and its location; in the second, by means of a tree, its location, its form and its yield; and in the third, by means of a reference to "fruit". While all three of these sections are of importance to the function of the trope, we shall focus specifically upon the first two, which concern most directly its application in this text.

The two types of people of whom this passage speaks are differentiated from one another on the basis of faith alone, and not of deed. The former is one whose faith is in people - in "flesh", while the second is one whose faith is placed only in God. The resultant difference between them is dramatic: while the one who trusts in people is like a desert shrub, the one who trusts in God alone is like a perennially fruitful tree, planted beside water.

The format is that of a macarism, or beatitude⁵⁷: a statement that has as its object the praise of a pious or prudent individual, structured in the format of a blessing⁵⁸. While the curse is a less

56. On the function of this phrase, see Tzvi Novick, "עקב הלב מכל ואנש מי ידעני" (Jeremiah 17:9)", *JBL* 123:3 (2004), 531-535. While I have chosen to present the translation as it appears in the NRSV, I agree with Novick's conclusions.

57. From μακαρισμος, "blessing"; Raymond F. Collins, "Beatitudes", *ABD* I:629.

58. Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form-Critical Method* (trans. S.M. Cupitt; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 17ff.

common component of this genre⁵⁹, when it does appear it is always an inversion of its corollary. In this particular instance, the curse contains more information than does its counterpart. I produce below verses 5 and 7:

A ₁	Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals
A ₂	and make mere flesh their strength,
B	whose hearts turn away from the Lord.
a ₁	Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
a ₂	whose trust is the Lord.

The synonymous parallelism exhibited in the opening two clauses of the curse formulation (A₁ and A₂ above) is mirrored by the synonymous parallelism in the opening two clauses of the blessing formulation (a₁ and a₂), but the language of the curse is somewhat richer than that of the blessing. The former utilises two different ways of making its point: in clause A₁ it employs the verb בטח ("trust") and the noun אדם ("[mere] mortals"), while in clause A₂ it expresses the assignation of strength to mortals by way of a circumlocutory phrase (...ושם זרעו), and underscores the fragility of that faith by means of the noun בשר ("[mere] flesh"). The latter, however, merely inverts in clause a₂ that which it had asserted in a₁: a man of faith is one who trusts in the Lord (יבטח ביהוה), and one for whom the Lord is his trust (יהוה מבטחו).

The simplicity of the blessing is further underscored by the additional information conveyed in the curse. There, a second stipulation (clause B) asserts that not only does this man place his faith in mortals, but in so doing his heart *turns away* (יסור) from the Lord. This verb, which conveys the sense of transgressive behaviour⁶⁰, further heightens the extent to which

59. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship II* (trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 52.

60. Other passages in Jeremiah in which this verb denotes "turning aside" from God include 5:23, 6:28 and 32:40. The verb also appears in reference to "stripping away" the branches of a rebellious vine in 5:10 and as an adjective denoting degeneracy in 2:21 (itself also as part of a vine metaphor). In addition to those passages in which it functions, as here, in reference to turning aside from God or from "the right path", its nominal form, סרה, appears in Jer 28:16 and 29:32 in reference to apostasy.

trusting in human beings is a betrayal of the divine - a theme more fully fleshed out in Jeremiah's use of the adultery metaphor⁶¹.

In the descriptions of these two individuals, for which the author provides arboreal imagery, the inverse phenomenon is found. Here, it is the one whose faith is in God to whom the more detailed description is given. I produce verses 6 and 8 below:

A, B ₁	They shall be like a shrub in the desert,
C	and shall not see when relief comes.
B ₂	They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,
B ₃	in an uninhabited salt land.
a ₁ , b ₁	They shall be like a tree planted by water,
a ₂ , b ₂	sending out its roots by the stream.
c ₁	It shall not fear when heat comes,
d ₁	and its leaves shall stay green;
c ₂	in the year of drought it is not anxious,
d ₂	and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Here, the description of the unfaithful man is limited to his form ("like a shrub"), his location ("in the desert", "in the parched places of the wilderness", "in an uninhabited salt land"), and his inability to detect the coming of good ("he shall not see when relief comes"). The description of the faithful man, however, includes his form ("like a tree", "sending out its roots"), his location ("planted by water", "by the stream"), his imperviousness to the approach of misfortune ("it shall not fear when heat comes", "in the year of drought it is not anxious") and the quality of his produce ("its leaves shall stay green", "it does not cease to bear fruit").

61. See Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 80-116.

As is evident from my marking of the clauses above, every assertion made in the description of the faithless man has its parallel within the description of the faithful. What is more, both the description of his form (A) and of his inability to detect the coming of relief (C) feature extension in their counterparts (a_1 , a_2 and c_1 , c_2). While the former is merely "like a shrub" (כערער), the latter is "like a tree... sending out its roots" (כעץ... ישלח שרשיו). While the former "shall not see when relief comes", the latter shall neither fear the coming of heat *nor* be anxious in a time of drought.

The relationship between clauses C and c_1 is a complex one. Rather than assert that only misfortune will befall the faithless man, while the man of faith will enjoy unceasing prosperity, the text instead notes that the faithless man will not *notice* the good around him, while the man of faith will be *unaware* of the bad. The implication here appears to be that, as with the weather, the vicissitudes of circumstance are beyond any person's control. The difference between tribulation and satisfaction is as much one of perception as it is of providence. Furthermore, the ability to perceive things as good or as bad and to behave accordingly is likewise a gift, granted in return for one's faith.

The results of this difference in perception are starkly indicated. In spite of the coming heat, the leaves of the tree will remain verdant; in spite of the drought, it shall continue to produce fruit. The tree's persistence in the face of misfortune is mirrored by the shrub's inability to thrive, even in times of prosperity⁶².

The relationship between these two clauses takes an additional, ironic form in the unvocalised text. There, the verb employed in clause c_1 is written ירא, "he shall [not] fear". In the MT, this verb is amended to יראֵה, "he shall [not] see" - a reading that is also to be found in Targum Yonatan (וילא יחזי). Alternatively, a construal of the verb as being of root ירא (a construal that maintains a stronger degree of parallelism with יראג in clause c_2) can be found in the Peshitta (ܘܠܐ ܝܚܝܐ) and the LXX (ὀφθηθησεται). Indeed, the similarity between this verb (of root ירא) and its counterpart in clause C (of root ראה) is the basis for a number of

62. The implication that good fortune will befall the shrub is supported by interpretations of the particle כִּי as an asseverative; T. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985), 158-164; Carl M. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle כִּי (ki)* (SIL International, 2001).

both puns and errata in the biblical literature. In this instance, the wordplay seems to underscore a theological point: it is the man of faith who will not fear, while the faithless man will not even *see* - a trope frequently applied to the objects of the faithless man's cultic devotion⁶³.

When it comes to the description of their respective locations, we find that in this instance the curse contains more information than does the blessing. There we get three clauses (B₁, B₂, B₃), successively describing his location as "the desert" (ערבה), "the parched places of the wilderness" (חררים במדבר) and "an uninhabited salt land" (ארץ מלחה ולא תשב). An analysis of these three clauses will demonstrate a degree of progressive emphasis in their description of the faithless man's predicament.

The term used for "desert" (ערבה) denotes an arid region, being employed variously for North Arabia, the Dead Sea region in Southern Judah and the Jordan valley east of the river⁶⁴. In addition to emphasising the low precipitation and the barrenness of the landscape, the term also calls to mind the homonymous ערבה ("poplar"). A tall and fast-growing tree, found in areas of dense growth, the poplar further underscores the smallness and frailness of the shrub, the very name of which (ערער) denotes being "stripped", or "destitute"⁶⁵.

The second description, in clause B₂, emphasises further the aridity of the shrub's environment by means of the substantive חררים. As a description of a location, the term is a *hapax legomenon*, but as a predicative adjective it features in several verses as a reference to being scorched, or burnt black⁶⁶. As such, it adds a degree of intensity to the former term, while also calling to mind an additional homonym for ערבה: the verb of root ערב, "be black"⁶⁷.

63. So, for example, Deut 4:28, Isa 44:9-20, Jer 10:3-5, Ps 115:5-6, etc.

64. Anson F. Rainey & R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 40; J. Maxwell Miller & John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 17.

65. For the relation between this shrub and the Ugaritic "tree of death", see Job Y. Jindo, *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered: A Cognitive Approach to Poetic Prophecy in Jeremiah 1-24* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 64; Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 223ff. On the import of this image in light of the desert motif in biblical literature, cf. Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Desert Motif in the Bible and in Qumran Literature", *Literary Studies in the Hebrew Bible: Form and Content* (Magnes Press: Jerusalem, 1993), 216-254 (233).

66. So, for example, in Jeremiah 6:29 and in Ezekiel 15:4ff.

67. Note that, acc. to the BDB, this word serves as the etymology of "poplar", and not as an additional

Here, it is not merely a land with low rainfall, but one subjected to scorching heat, in which little can survive.

The third description, in clause B₃, constitutes the most intensive of the three. Here, it is not only a dry and scorched terrain in which the shrub should find itself, but a *salty* land - a land in which few things can conceivably grow in the first place. The term employed (מלחה) is a *tris legomenon*, its being likewise coupled with ערבה in Job 39:6, and its being contrasted with a "fruitful land" (ארץ פרי) in Psalms 107:34. As we shall see shortly, it is with fruitfulness that the shrub in this verse is being contrasted as well.

It remains only to note a profound irony in the fate of the faithless man, depicted as a shrub in an arid, scorched and salty land. His crime was one of having placed his faith in others, yet it is to a shrub within a *barren* land that he is being compared. The assertion that the shrub's location is one without a single occupant (ארץ... לא תשב) underscores the wrongheadedness of his position. While one might be able to expect temporary support from a mundane ruler, it is the view of the prophet that without God one is ultimately alone.

In contrast to this, the man of faith's location is expressed somewhat more prosaically. He is described, in clauses *b*₁ and *b*₂, as being "by water" (על מים) and "by a stream" (על יובל)⁶⁸. The contrastive element is obvious: the shrub, alone in the wilderness, is in need of water; the tree, alongside a stream, has water in abundance. What is more, while the shrub is described as "abiding", or "dwelling", in the wilderness (שכן), the tree's location is prefaced with the verb שתול.

The connotations of this verb are important, since it appears ten times within the corpus and every one of those times constitutes a metaphorical depiction of either righteous people in general⁶⁹, or of the Judean kings in particular⁷⁰. While it is often translated as "planted", and

homonym.

68. Although this latter designation may more appropriately be applied to the roots of the tree only.

69. Jer 17:8; Hos 9:13; Ps 1:3 and 92:14.

70. Ezek 17 (4 times), and 19:10 and 13.

while there might be a basis for this translation⁷¹, the term is traditionally understood to denote the tree's having been *transplanted* from somewhere else⁷² - a reading that further emphasises the role of God in its present location, and which underscores the impermanence of its own situation. While the transplanted tree enjoys the care of the gardener, its having *been* transplanted once reminds us that it might be yet again.

Ultimately, however, the chief difference between these two passages lies in the attention given to the tree's produce in clauses d_1 and d_2 . These descriptions lack any explicit counterpart in the depiction of the shrub, save for the fact that the term employed for "shrub" bears both a resemblance and an etymological relationship to the adjective ערירי, used to denote a person either literally or figuratively without offspring⁷³. By contrast, the tree to which the man of faith is being compared "does not cease to bear fruit" (לא ימיש מעשות פרי).

As a means of conveying the fruitfulness of the tree, the text employs for its leaves the adjective רענן. While this term denotes verdancy in several other passages⁷⁴, its primary designation in both narrative and legislative genres is of trees beneath which people worshipped foreign gods⁷⁵. What is more, this lexeme functions in reference to idolatry only six verses earlier, in Jeremiah 17:2. The implication here appears to be that while those who worship under verdant trees have turned their backs on God, those who trust in God are *like* a verdant tree instead.

Finally, the text presents the following coda by way of a conclusion:

71. C.L. Seow, "An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter", *JBL* 132:2 (2013), 275-293 (284 n47). Seow's argument hinges on the word's connotations in Rabbinic Hebrew and the Targum on Psalms - together with the fact that in none of its biblical attestations is the sense of "transplant" required. Seow overlooks, however, the imagery in Ezekiel 17:22 in which the (trans)planting of the cedar's crest was *after* it had been moved from somewhere else first.

72. In this regard, see the observations of Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I* (Anchor Bible 16; New York: Doubleday, 1965), 3.

73. Gen 15:2; Lev 20:20-21; Jer 22:30. For the suggestion that this noun also alludes to the assonant ארור, see Jindo, *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered*, 248.

74. Chiefly metaphorical: Jer 11:16, Hos 14:9, Ps 52:10, Job 15:32, etc.

75. On the use of verdant trees as objects of worship, see Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT 65; Sheffield, 1989), 79ff.

- A₁ The heart is devious above all else;
 A₂ it is perverse - who can understand it?
 B₁ I the Lord test the mind
 B₂ and search the heart,
 C₁ to give to all according to their ways,
 C₂ according to the fruit of their doings.

Given that the individuals of whom this passage speaks are differentiated from one another on the basis of faith and not of deed, it is fitting that the text's conclusion should speak to the means by which the one responsible for their reward and punishment might ascertain the category to which they belong. What is more, by emphasising that the divinity in which these individuals either trust or fail to trust in the one responsible for their subsequent circumstances, the role of God as *planter* of the tree is here brought into focus.

The assertions concerning the heart, in clauses A₁ and A₂ above, require closer consideration. The lexemes that are translated by the NRSV as "devious" (עקב) and "perverse" (אנוש) both derive from the semantic fields of physical injury. The former, which literally means "twisted", lends its name both to the ankle and to the act of deception⁷⁶, while the latter, which refers to an incurable injury, qualifies "wound" (מכה) or "pain" (כאב) in several other instances⁷⁷.

When we consider the function of these terms in Jeremiah specifically, we can consider the reference in 17:16-18, but seven verses after our own, to a "fatal day" (יום אנוש), an "evil day" (יום רעה) and a day of "breakage" (שברון). This deployment further underscores the term's reference to physical injury, which we find stressed again in Jeremiah 30:12-15. There, the prophet utilises this term in specific reference to something's inability to heal (רפאות תעלה אין), making clear its function as an adjective for sickness or harm.

76. For the interplay of these two terms, consider the relationship between the aetiology of Jacob's name in Gen 25:26 (וידו אחזת בעקב עשו), and the accusation of treachery levelled against him two chapters later (ויעקבני זה; Gen 27:36).

77. Isa 17:11, Mic 1:9, and Jer 15:18, 30:12 and 15. See also Job 34:6 (where it clarifies הזך) and 2 Sam 12:15, where this word appears in the *niphal*, referring to a mortal injury.

In relation to the former lexeme, we find that עֵקֶב refers to verbal deception in 9:3-4. There, the prophet bemoans those who go about deceitfully (עֵקֶב יֵעֲקֹב), whom he likens to tale-bearers (רִכִּיל יִהְלֹךְ) and to speakers of falsehood. The reference, in 17:9, to a heart's being devious in this fashion thus appears, on the surface, to be employing a metonym whereby the heart represents the individual himself (a POSSESSOR/POSSESSED metonymic relation). That this stands in contrast to the heart's unknowability, expressed in the second half of this verse, is noted by Tzvi Novick, who suggests translating עֵקֶב as "closely kept", of parsing מִכֹּל as the infinitive construct of כוּל, "to measure", and of translating אָנֹשׁ as a noun: "humanity"⁷⁸. Thus, "the heart is more closely kept than anything, and humanity - what human being can know it?"

Novick's suggestion has a great deal to recommend it: aside from the difficulties inherent in translating אָנֹשׁ, this rendering adheres closely to the themes that a metaphorical analysis of the passage yields. Unfortunately, since Novick does not consider the interaction of metaphors within this verse, his analysis suffers from a desire to translate them into simple prose. What is more, while it allows for the statement to be possessed of a (fairly straightforward) metonym, it otherwise depletes it of all metaphorical content.

While the suggestion that the heart is deceitful opened itself up to the possibility of its being a metonym for the person in whom it resides, the reference to its being *injured* allowed for a separation of the two. In the interaction between deceitfulness and injury, we are forced to suppose that the heart is deceitful by *virtue* of its being injured, and not in addition to that fact. Its being incomprehensible to one in whom it resides is now not at all mysterious; his being sick has made his own organs strangers to himself.

Rather than comprising a straightforward metonym that can so easily be translated into a more literal paraphrase, the metaphors within this passage are sophisticated and profound. The heart, which may in other contexts represent a person's intentions and surface motivations is here estranged, through metaphorical injury, from the person himself. The primary domain in which these two ideas intersect is that of the medical patient, and it is in

78. Novick, *op.cit.* 533-534.

this respect that God's subsequent examination casts him in the metaphorical role of a physician.

In order to determine the extent of a person's faith, God is described in clauses B₁ and B₂ as both "testing" their heart (הקִּר לֵב) and "searching" their mind (בַּחַן כְּלִיּוֹת). Both the nouns and the verbs in these two expressions command a range of different connotations. Taken literally, לֵב refers to the heart and כְּלִיּוֹת to the kidneys, but taken figuratively, these organs denote the seats of understanding, of emotion and of the intellect. The possibility of their functioning on either of these two levels adds a bivalency to this verse that is exploited by the metaphorical context.

The first of the two verbs (הקִּר) denotes the manner, either physically or metaphysically, in which something is explored. So, for example, Jeremiah speaks of the impossibility of exploring the foundations of the earth⁷⁹, and of the utter impenetrability of Egypt - here typified as a metaphorical forest⁸⁰. The second verb (בַּחַן) relates to the means by which a person or an object is tested. So, for example, Zechariah refers to testing people as one tests gold⁸¹, while Jeremiah makes reference to testing people after having "refined" them⁸².

While both of these terms allow God to function as a physician, both testing and investigating his metaphorical patient, it behoves us to consider the interaction of this metaphor with the previous oracle (verses 5-8), and in so doing note the peculiar function of the second of these two lexemes within the book of Jeremiah as a whole.

In five other instances, the verb בַּחַן appears in Jeremiah, and in each of them it conveys the nuance of testing moral character. In both 11:20 and 20:12, the prophet makes reference (as he does here) to specifically testing the heart and the kidneys. In the second of those passages, the implication is made textually specific: that in so doing, he should be able to

79. Jer 31:37 (ויחקרו מוסדי ארץ למטה).

80. Jer 46:23 (כרתו יערה... כי לא יחקר).

81. Zech 13:9 (ובחנתים כבחן את הזהב).

82. Jer 9:6 (הגני צורפם ובחנתים).

determine who is righteous (צדיק) and who merely pretends to be so. In a similar fashion, the prophet asserts his *own* righteousness in 12:3 by suggesting that his heart is with God (לבי איתך) and that he has been both seen and tested in that regard (תראני ובהנת).

In 6:27, the prophet speaks of testing the people's "ways" (דרכם), and concludes that they are all tale-bearers (הולכי רכיל). In this passage, the metaphorical relationship between "testing" and smelting is made clear in the subsequent description of these people being bronze and iron (as opposed to refined gold). The relationship between testing people and determining their character as tale-bearers is one that we also see in 9:6, where the prophet speaks of testing those who are determined, in the three verses prior, to be speakers of falsehood. As we noted above, that passage also employs the verb עקב in its representation of that deceit, making it a stronger parallel to the section under consideration.

The metaphorical interaction between these two clauses in 17:9 can be depicted as being between two different (but similar) relationships: on the one hand, we have the relationship between the physician and a patient; on the other, between an investigator and the subject of his moral investigation. Since that second relationship has a strong bearing upon the first four verses of this oracle in particular, it is necessary to consider whether or not something can be inferred from their interaction.

When we consider the relationship between doctor and patient, which emerged from our analysis of 17:9a, we find that it is the patient's symptoms (and the patient himself) that are both "analysed" and "appraised", and that the heart and the kidneys are both functioning in their non-metaphorical senses. When we consider the relationship between judge and defendant, we find that it is the defendant's case (and, indeed, the defendant himself) that is being both "investigated" and "tried", and that the heart and the kidneys are both functioning in their *metaphorical* senses.

When we construct a generic space, we find that both of these metaphors have in common with one another the presence of an agent who investigates a patient who is absolutely *passive*. Indeed, both convey the nuance that the object of the investigation may even be unaware of the nature of their sickness or their guilt - in one case, since it is the heart itself

that is sick, and in the other since it is only through the process of "investigation" (as in the process of refining metal) that the subject's character can be inferred.

The means by which the judge/doctor arrives at his verdict/diagnosis is left to be concluded by the reader, but the import is clear: the penalty inflicted on the defendant/patient is a just one, and reflects entirely upon their own condition. This is then linked back to the first part of the oracle through the inclusion of an arboreal metaphor in clause C₂: that God will give recompense in accordance with "the *fruit* of their doings". As such, it is now necessary for us to create a blended space that incorporates all three of this oracle's major tropes.

When we do so, we note that all three domains share in common the concept of absolute passivity, contrasted with the supreme power of a governing agent. God, as both a surgeon and as a judge, is possessed of unmitigated authority; likewise, God's role as a gardener in the first four verses is one that goes unchallenged. Just as a patient and a defendant are subject to forces beyond their ultimate control, so too does a tree convey well the same passivity. As they function within this text, neither the shrub nor the well-watered tree have any means at their disposal to influence the seasons nor to respond better to the tribulations that they face.

Since these metaphors must influence one another in a mutually informative manner, we can now read material from God's characterisation as a gardener into his characterisation as both a doctor and as a judge, and infer information as regards the condition of the oracle's subject. Just as it was God who was responsible for the placement of the trees and who continually ensures their growth and their fruitfulness, so too is he ultimately responsible for the patient's response to sickness, and to the nature of the defendant's case.

Similarly, we have already observed that just as God had transplanted the tree to a favourable location, so might he then remove it to a less favourable one; just as he ensures that a tree might prosper regardless of the weather, so too might he cause it to be subject to the same. In a similar fashion, we thus realise that even though the physician has healed the patient, or the judge acquitted the defendant, the factors that originally brought them into contact with sickness and crime are not eradicated, and all still depends on what they *do* with their health and freedom.

The underlying theological sentiments of this text are conveyed through a careful interanimation of its respective metaphors: that humans are ultimately helpless, that placing one's faith in people is counter-productive, that God is the ultimate authority in the world, that placing one's faith in God will help to avert tribulation, and that one's ultimate reward is in accordance with one's faith. The imagery of the tree, which is passively dependent upon its location and upon the weather (and the implied imagery of the gardener, whose authority over the tree's location is absolute) thus furthers every one of this text's theological aims, and interacts importantly with the other metaphorical tropes within it.

Psalm 1:1-6

1:1	אֲשֶׁר־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁרוֹ לֹא הָלַךְ בְּעֲצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבְמוֹשָׁב לִצְיִים לֹא יָשָׁב:
2	כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵה:
3	וְהֵיכֵן כְּעֵץ שֶׁתּוֹלַעַל־פִּלְגָי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פָּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעֵלְהוֹ לֹא־יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ:
4	לֹא־יִכּוּ הַרְשָׁעִים כִּי אִם־כַּמִּיץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ:
5	עַל־כֵּן לֹא־יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים בְּמִשְׁפַּט חַטָּאִים בְּעֵדַת צְדִיקִים:
6	כִּי־יִוָּדַע יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד:

1:1 Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;

2 but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.

3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

6 for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

As with Jeremiah 17:5-8, Psalm 1 also treats of the righteous man and of the wicked, presented in the form of a macarism and reliant upon the metaphor that likens people to trees. Structurally, however, while the proverb in Jeremiah includes a curse formulation, Psalm 1 denounces the wicked without explicitly cursing them. In addition, while the proverb in Jeremiah differentiates between the righteous and the wicked on the basis of faith alone, Psalm 1 differentiates between them on the basis of their deeds.

Within this text, the righteous man is described both positively and negatively. Positively, he delights in divine law and studies it perpetually; negatively, he removes himself from wicked counsel and from scornful company. The wicked, however, are given no such explanation save from what can be inferred from what is said of the righteous. What is more, while it is to a plant that the righteous are compared, the wicked are likened only to the plant's refuse - to the chaff that remains once the kernels have been separated from their husks.

Structurally, the psalm takes a tripartite division, as follows:

- A Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.
- B The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- C for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

In the first section, the psalmist praises the righteous by way of an arboreal trope: they are like trees planted by streams of water. This simile receives metaphorical extension in the subsequent three clauses, the first two of which relate exclusively to trees ("which yield their fruit in its season", "their leaves do not wither") and the third of which pertains to its non-metaphorical tenor ("in all that they do, they prosper"). By equating the tree to the righteous

in this final clause, the section as a whole invites us to see the tree as a metaphor for a righteous person, and to seek an isomorphic relation between the tree's parts (fruit, leaves) and information that pertains to the righteous man.

In the second section, the wicked are condemned by way of a simile only, and by consequences that are stated explicitly. Here, they are likened to chaff that the wind drives away, but with no explicit correlation suggested between the process of eradicating chaff and the nature of their destruction. As such, this section features less metaphorical development than does the former - a reticence that is also reflected in the psalm's general treatment of wickedness. This section (section B) also contains the first reference to the righteous as, explicitly, "righteous" (צדיקים): a status that in the first section was inferred only.

Finally, the psalm concludes in its third part with a coda that sums up the information presented in the previous two. This section may be altogether without metaphorical content⁸³, demonstrating a gradual reduction in metaphoricity over the course of the psalm's final four verses: an arboreal metaphor for the righteous in verse 3, an agricultural simile for the wicked in verse 4, and two non-figurative assertions as regards both the righteous and the wicked in verses 5 and 6.

A clause-based analysis of the arboreal and agricultural tropes in sections A and B demonstrates that, unlike the metaphor in Jeremiah 17:5-8, the dual presentations of righteousness and wickedness in this psalm are in no way parallel to one another. I produce verses 1-5 below:

83. There is a possibility that the metaphor is preserved in the psalm's conclusion, whereby the "path" of the righteous and of the wicked refers to a passage through a grove or a field, "watched over", or maintained, by a divine gardener. Compare the use of דרך, with verb אבד, in the Mishna: Ketubot 13:7.

- A₁ Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
 A₂ or take the path that sinners tread,
 A₃ or sit in the seat of scoffers;
 A₄ but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
 A₅ and on his law they meditate day and night.
- B₁ They are like trees planted by streams of water,
 B₂ which yield their fruit in its season,
 B₃ and their leaves do not wither.
- C In all that they do, they prosper.
- a* The wicked are not so,
b but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
- c*₁ Therefore the wicked will not stand in judgment,
*c*₂ nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

The description of the righteous commences with five clauses detailing their constitution (A₁-A₅), followed by an arboreal metaphor that comprises three clauses (B₁-B₃) and a single clause (C) that sums up the import of the metaphor: "in all that they do, they prosper". The description of the unrighteous comprises a nod in the direction of their entailing the opposite of the righteous in every respect (*a*: "the wicked are not so"), followed by a simile that comprises a single clause (*b*), and featuring two clauses (*c*₁, *c*₂) by way of a summary. An analysis of this psalm needs to demonstrate precisely how the righteous and the unrighteous are being compared to one another, and the function of their respective metaphors within that presentation⁸⁴.

In the psalmist's description of the righteous, we are given five successive indications as to who merits this appellation, the first three of which (A₁, A₂, A₃) are phrased negatively. The

84. For the purpose of this analysis, and as mentioned in the general introduction, I am considering simile to denote a species of metaphorical relationship.

development from one to the next within these three clauses is marked by a sustained vagueness when it comes to those from whom the righteous is said to be separating himself, together with a simultaneous decrease in his own physical activity.

In clause A₁, the psalmist praises the one who does not follow in the advice of the wicked. The term employed for the "wicked" (רשעים), which appears again in clauses a₁ and c₁ (and again in the coda, in section C), may be functioning here as a generic term for anybody guilty of a crime that merits punitive consequences. The severity of the crime might vary, from one who is simply "in the wrong"⁸⁵ to one who is subsequently deserving of capital punishment⁸⁶. Without any description as to what makes a person in this particular instance "wicked", this depiction constitutes a vague rejection of all that is transgressive or merely improper.

The verb that expresses the manner in which one might heed the advice of such people (הלך) denotes movement from one place to another. The implication appears to be that the advice (עצה) of the wicked is something that may or may not be *acted* upon. It is advice that spurs a person to movement; an ethic by which one structures one's life. Metaphorically, it is the path on which the righteous does *not* walk, and of the three verbs used in these first three clauses, this one is the most active.

In clause A₂, the object of the psalmist's praise is he who does not stand on the path of sinners. The word used for "sinners" (הטאים) appears again in clause c₂, and may be roughly synonymous with the term for wicked (רשעים). The precise semantic range of this term has long proven difficult to assess⁸⁷. As with the former term, its denotation may be as benign as a failure of common courtesy, or as egregious as that which merits exile or death. Since it is once more lacking any information that might give it specificity, it functions here as another general indictment of impropriety and transgression.

85. So, for example, Exodus 2:13 and Deut 25:2 - to pick two of the more benign attestations in the literature.

86. Num 35:31, etc. This is the most frequent attestation, with the term functioning as a substantive for murderers and apostates in the prophetic literature.

87. Robin C. Cover, "Sin, Sinners (OT)", *ABD* VI:32.

The verb that expresses a person's engagement with this path (עמד) suggests both rigidity and immobility. In the royal court, this verb denotes standing to attention⁸⁸, as it does likewise in the judicial court⁸⁹, and in other contexts might imply transfixedness or a cessation of all movement. It is a term used for inanimate and animate objects alike, and in the latter case implies also a certain inflexibility⁹⁰.

The implication here may be that the path of sinners is a path that does not lead a person to any destination. Its being a "path" (דרך), however, suggests a certain irony; while this is one on which an individual remains immobile, it may provide the illusion of a journey. The rough synonymy of the terms "wicked" and "sinner" allows for this clause and the foregoing to mutually inform one another and to suggest that the implied activity in the former clause was illusory as well, despite its denoting something on which a person might be said to "act".

In clause A₃, the psalmist further defines the righteous man as he who does not sit in the company of scoffers. The term used for "scoffers" (לצים) is the most expressive of the three depictions of those from whom the righteous must separate himself. Being etymologically related to a term denoting indirection, or obliqueness of speech, it perhaps shares with הטא the sense of "missing the mark", whilst also conveying the notion of scornfulness or mockery⁹¹.

The verb used to convey how one participates in this pastime (ישב) is the least active of the verbs in these first three clauses, denoting both immobility and sedentariness. It is the epitome of inactivity, and a comment on the nature of scornfulness as a pursuit that requires little actual work. Thus, the individuals from whom the righteous man is enjoined to separate himself are those whose only labour lies in the pursuit of a wicked lifestyle, whose path leads them to no destination and whose occupation, which lies in being critical of others, is an idle one.

88. For example, Gen 41:46 (בעמדו לפני פרעה).

89. So, for example, Ezek 44:24 (ועל ריב המה יעמדו למשפט).

90. So, for example, of boards in Ex 26:15, or of pillars - for which it functions as a substantive (eg: 1 Kgs 7:16, etc).

91. For the relationship between this term and the word used for "metaphor" in the writings of mediaeval scholars, cf: Mordechai Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 157-159.

In addition to being one who separates himself from such people and their pastimes, the righteous man is also defined positively, in clauses A₄ and A₅. We are told that the righteous man is not one who keeps the company of the transgressive, but *rather* (כי אם) is one who delights in divine law, with which he occupies himself perpetually. As C.L. Seow observes, this is structured as an adversative clause in antithetical relation to the foregoing, highlighting the difference between "what a commendable person *has not done* over against what the person *will do*"⁹². The verb that denotes the manner of his occupation, of root הגה, might signify his verbal recitation of a text⁹³ - an interpretation in line with the ramifications of "law" (תורה) in the wisdom tradition⁹⁴.

"The law of the Lord" (תורת יהוה) is the fourth construct phrase in as many clauses, the initial three being "the advice of the wicked" (עצת רשעים), "the path of sinners" (דרך הטאים) and "the company of scoffers" (מושב לצים). Clauses A₄ and A₅ thus differentiate a righteous man from his unrighteous counterpart not only by means of his engaging with the legal norms of the society being described, but by means of that law's origin. While the genitives in the other three construct phrases represent the unrighteous individuals from whom one must separate oneself, the genitive in the fourth construct phrase represents the divine. In doing this, the psalmist is not only contrasting the righteous with the unrighteous, but the wicked and the scornful with God himself.

One who cleaves to the instruction of God and who separates himself from the instruction of the wicked is one whose every endeavour is successful (כל אשר יעשה יצליח). This assertion, comprising clause C, is the only one to feature any extension in its parallel. There, in clauses c₁ and c₂, we are told that the wicked will not stand in judgment (לא יקומו רשעים במשפט), nor will sinners [stand] in the congregation of the righteous (והטאים בעדת צדיקים). On one level, this information serves as a reflection of clause C: an indication that while the righteous man will enjoy success, the unrighteous man will only experience failure. On a deeper level, the

92. C.L. Seow, "An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter", *JBL* 132:2 (2013), 275-293 (282). Emphasis in the original. On adversative clauses in this context, see also Gesenius §163a; Williams §555; JM §172c.

93. The classic text in this regard is Jos 1:8, in which the verb is also attested in relation to תורה. For the connection between these texts, cf: Jean-Louis Ska, "From History Writing to Library Building: The End of History of the Birth of the Book", *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers & Bernard M. Levinson; Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 145-169 (159).

94. For the classification of this as a "Torah psalm", cf: Stanley C. Pigué, "Psalms, Book of", *ABD* V (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 522-537 (533). Consider also the role of this psalm as opening the collection.

language chosen to express this idea also reinforces the righteous man's claim on absolute truth.

The verb employed to convey standing in judgment (קרום) is used in Psalm 76:10 in reference to passing a verdict⁹⁵ and in Psalm 78:5 in reference to enacting legislation. The verb's connotations of raising somebody to dignity or power⁹⁶, or of reinstating them, leave open the possibility of its also being used to indicate legal exoneration. As such, the reference to "standing" in judgment might serve for all three of the primary functions of a legislative system: making laws, enforcing laws and pronouncing an individual either innocent or guilty of infracting those laws⁹⁷. The wicked person's inability to stand in judgment reflects on their absolute non-involvement with a culture that venerates divine legislation, together with the assuredness of their not receiving vindication. Further, it justifies the righteous man's involvement with divine law as a means of furthering his position within a society predicated on legal norms.

This judicial imagery extends also to the noun employed for the "congregation" (עדה) of the righteous. Of root יעד, this term denotes an appointed body, or a group of individuals working concertedly towards a shared goal⁹⁸. Appearing here as the *nomen regens* of a construct phrase (עדה), it is also reminiscent of the homonymous עדה: the testimonies of witnesses⁹⁹. As such, were it not for the masoretic vocalisation, this verse might also be read as suggesting that the sinful will not "stand" (ie: will not be pronounced innocent) by the testimonies of the righteous.

95. Possibly so used in Job 31:14 as well.

96. Chiefly in Isa 49:6, but compare references to raising the prostrate: Deut 22:4 (in reference to a donkey), 2 Sam 12:17 (in reference to a mourner), Amos 5:2 (the figurative elevation of a fallen Israel), etc.

97. For allusions from classical rabbinic works that recognised this theme of judgment, and for early Christian works that saw in this an allusion to the eschaton, see Seow, *op.cit.* 288.

98. For the latter, see for example Ex 29:42 (in which reference is made to Moses meeting God at the tent so designated [אהל מועד]), Jos 11:5 (in which the verb refers to armies rallying together) and Amos 3:3 (in which it denotes two people walking in concert).

99. So, for example, Deut 4:45, etc.

Interestingly, this is the very interpretation offered by the Targum on Psalms, which renders Psalm 1:5 as follows:

מטול היכנא לא יזכון רשיעי ביומא רבא וחיבין בסיעת צדיקיא

Because of this (על כן), the wicked will not be vindicated on the great day [of judgment], but will be pronounced guilty by the testimony of the righteous ones¹⁰⁰.

In depicting these individuals, and the manner in which they either succeed or fail in their respective endeavours, the psalmist employs two metaphors. Unlike the occurrence of this trope in Jeremiah 17:5-8, these metaphors are not both of them arboreal. While the first concerns a tree, it is of wheat that the psalmist speaks in that metaphor's counterpart. Nonetheless, a consideration of how the arboreal metaphor functions in verse 3, and how it complements the information derived from an analysis of the other clauses, relies of us that we contrast it with the metaphor employed for the wicked in verse 4.

The relevant section of the psalm reads as follows:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| B ₁ | They are like trees planted by streams of water, |
| B ₂ | which yield their fruit in its season, |
| B ₃ | and their leaves do not wither. |
| a | The wicked are not so, |
| b | but are like chaff that the wind drives away. |

100. While the second of these two clauses appears to lack attestation amongst the other ancient witnesses, the interpretation of 5a might be suggested also by the Peshitta (ܡܬܘܠ ܗܝܚܢܐ ܠܐ ܝܙܟܘܢ ܪܫܝܥܝ ܒܝܘܡܐ ܪܒܐ) and the LXX (Δια τουτο ουκ αναστησονται οι ασεβεις εν κρισει). Note that Seow understands αναστησονται in the Greek as a reference to the resurrection instead; Seow, *op.cit.* 288.

The word used for "streams" is of the root פלג, which denotes bifurcation¹⁰¹. It appears as a metaphor for tears in Lamentations 3:48, and implies a plenitude of oil in Job 29:6. In its more literal manifestations, it functions as a reference to clefts in the landscape through which water flows, and to artificial canals used for irrigation¹⁰². The implication in all of these passages is of water in abundance, allowing for the impression here of a tree not merely beside a brook, but actually surrounded by channels. Like the righteous person, whose engagement with divine law enables him to survive in a society predicated on the same, so is this tree inundated from all sides by life-giving water.

The image of the tree's being transplanted (שתול) calls to mind the dual images of stability and impermanence, which we witnessed also in Jeremiah 17:8. While the transplanted tree enjoys the rewards of its present location, we know from the context that this situation is a reward for a person's behaviour, and that should the person symbolised by the tree so merit it, it will be transplanted again.

As such, we are reminded here of the role of God in the affairs of the righteous: just as it is the gardener to whom the transplanted tree owes its present success, so it is to the author of the divine law that the righteous person is ultimately grateful. Similarly, just as a person's ability to stand in judgment is owed not only to their study of the law as it is to the temperament of their judge, so too must the success of this tree be owed not merely to its physical location, but to its preservation as well. Such preservation cannot be directly inferred from an initial reading of these opening verses, but is made evident in the psalm's conclusion, as we shall see.

As with the tree in Jeremiah 17, the focus here is not only on its ready access to water, but on its youthful vigour and its bounteous crop. The assertion in B₂ that the tree will yield fruit in its season implies a certain climatic stability. Unlike a tree that might be subjected to occasional droughts or to floods, the image employed by the psalmist conveys the notion of a

101. As a verb, consider its classic attestation in Gen 10:25 (= 1 Chr 1:19), כי בימיו נפלגה הארץ.

102. HALOT lists several verses that it identifies as references to artificial canals in particular, presumably on the basis of their mentioning water "in a dry place".

world run smoothly and in accordance with law. This image thus functions also as a comment upon the merits of a society ordered by the same principles.

The vigour of the tree is conveyed in clause B₃, in the assertion that its foliage will never wither (עלהו לא יבול). The verb used to denote withering (נבל) suggests also the decay experienced by human beings and other animals¹⁰³. In the context of the metaphor A PERSON IS A TREE, the implication is one of eternal youthfulness. The possibility of this word also implying "dissoluteness" and "impiety" allows for this image to function as a moral assurance as well¹⁰⁴, indicating not only what the righteous can expect but what is continually expected of them in return.

It is noteworthy that the metaphor employed for the righteous makes no explicit mention of the weather, focusing instead on the tree's proximity to flowing water and allowing us to deduce the weather's favourability from its perennial yield. In the depiction of the unrighteous in clause *b*, the very opposite is the case. There, no mention is made to the *location* of the wheat, the psalmist's focus being on the weather conditions instead.

The differences between the depictions of the righteous and of the unrighteous are manifold. Where the righteous is likened to a tree, the wicked is likened to chaff - the refuse of grain. This metaphor calls to mind a ubiquitous image in the prophetic literature of grain in the wind as a metaphor for the disappearance of the wicked¹⁰⁵. In some of these images, the implication is of the wicked's being destroyed that the righteous might constitute the remnant destined for ultimate salvation. Were we to borrow that trope in our analysis of Psalm 1, we would need to suggest that the kernels of grain from which the chaff has been separated represent the individuals who fulfil the criteria of righteousness delineated in its first two verses. And yet, it is not to this conclusion that the psalmist leads us.

103. So, for example, the familiar נבלה, denoting either a corpse and a carcass.

104. As, for example, in Ps 14:1 and 53:2.

105. Isa 17:13, 29:5, 41:15; Hos 13:3; Zeph 2:2; etc.

That the grain in verse 4 no more represents the righteous than does any of the background imagery in verse 3 represent the wicked, highlights further the fundamental independence of these two tropes from one another. The focus in the second is not on the *purpose* of winnowing but of the impermanence of the chaff that it allows one to discard. Similarly, the focus of the first metaphor is not on the utilitarian function of fruit trees (although the value of fruit as a commodity constitutes a domain that this metaphor *can* exploit) but on the permanence of the tree.

As such, a generic space in which these two domains intersect is that of the issue of permanence. Although they employ two completely dissimilar formulations in expressing those ideas, and although both tropes function entirely independently of one another, they intersect at this critical issue: the righteous can expect to endure, while it is the nature of wickedness that they must perish. The verb used to convey this perishing (נָדַח) implies scattering and dissolution. It underscores the immaterial nature of the chaff being scattered and serves as a profound metaphor for ephemerality. The wicked, who occupy themselves with mockery and who neglect the study of wisdom, have no lasting hold in this world; the righteous, by virtue of their engagement with divine law and their avoidance of the wicked, thrive eternally.

The psalm's conclusion, in verse 6, sums up these ideas by introducing the role of God as the divine farmer, making textually explicit that which until now could only be inferred:

- A₁ for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
- A₂ but the way of the wicked will perish.

While the psalmist originally praised the righteous for not standing in the "path" of sinners, it is only in the psalm's conclusion that this term is applied to the righteous lifestyle as well. On a literal level, this denotes the activities with which the righteous person was engaged: the constant occupation with divine law, and the cherishing of that legislation. God's knowing, or watching over, that path reflects on his being the author of that law. By way of a contrast, the destruction of the wicked lifestyle once more underscores its ultimate impermanence.

In this regard, what the conclusion does *not* say is no less important than what it does. While God watches over the path of the righteous, he is not, actively, the author of the wicked path's destruction. On the contrary, the ruination of the wicked appears to be as much the result of divine *neglect* as the preservation of the righteous is owed to divine *attention*. It is here, most importantly, that we see how the arboreal imagery functions in communicating this particular idea on a metaphorical level.

In its literal application, the word "path" takes on the figurative nuance of "lifestyle". Here, in its metaphorical application, it takes on the literal nuance of a path through the countryside, and alludes to the location of gardens and trees. Those trees that are favourably situated merit more care from the gardener, while those paths that suffer the gardener's neglect are ultimately overgrown and wild. A healthy tree, within this psalm, is as much the result of favourable weather as it is of horticultural care. And yet, unlike the trope in Jeremiah 17, the subject of this psalm is not a passive recipient.

God, who is here cast as both the metaphorical gardener and as the metaphorical agriculturalist, is the ultimate arbiter when it comes to both the tree and to the wheat. The choice of tropes is telling, since it is the fundamental *nature* of a fruit tree that it should merit attention from a gardener, while it is the *nature* of wheat that its chaff should be discarded. And yet, rather than assert a certain fatalism as regards the treatment of different individuals, the psalm repeatedly asserts the active qualities that might cause one to be considered in the former of those categories.

It is here, in considering the metaphorical interaction of this psalm's various tropes, that we need to combine the horticultural and agricultural imagery with the legal imagery that the psalm also deployed. In creating a blended space, one immediately encounters the opposition between passivity and activity: the plant is a passive recipient of all that the gardener bestows upon it; the plaintiff, on the other hand, is not. In order to better effect a favourable judgment, it is incumbent upon the litigant to familiarise himself with the law; failure to do so results in an inability to receive satisfaction. At the same time, the company one keeps will determine also the extent to which one deserves special treatment.

This conflict is resolved by reading a degree of activity back into the metaphorical depiction of the tree. A person who avoids congress with sinners is like a tree that has been transplanted - a trope that helped to underscore this individual's passivity in Jeremiah 17, but which reminds us in Psalm 1 that it was the righteous person, himself, who manufactured that scenario. His deliberate avoidance of evil-doers has effectively resulted in his transplanting *himself*. Rather than his new location being bestowed upon him in recompense for his faith (as was the case in Jeremiah 17), it is by *virtue* of his new location that he can expect reward.

Since the emphasis within this psalm is on the subject's activity, the passive nature of the tree is downplayed in favour of its other characteristics: youthfulness, vigour, fecundity and permanence. In effect: "in all that they do, they prosper".

§2.2.1 - Conclusion:

The similarities, both structural and metaphorical, between Jeremiah 17:5-10 and Psalm 1 are many. Both texts employ an arboreal metaphor to communicate the qualities of righteousness, and both texts impute to God the role of ultimate arbiter in that person's affairs. The responsibilities of the individual and the specific qualities that they possess, however, are different in both passages, and the arboreal metaphor is employed differently as a result.

In Jeremiah 17, the chief attribute of the righteous person is that of faith alone. As such, the imagery of the tree, the surgical patient and the defendant are all used to indicate passivity. To further highlight the merits of faith, this passage also employs an arboreal metaphor to characterise the wicked, whose lack of faith has resulted in isolation, barrenness and death. The shrub in the wilderness functions as a metaphor for exile, while the thriving tree serves as a metaphor for rootedness in the land. This presentation allows for a furtherance of Jeremiah's political philosophy, insofar as how such rootedness might be achieved - and how it might *not* be achieved.

In Psalm 1, the chief attributes of the righteous are those of their preoccupation with divine law and their separating themselves from the wicked. The imagery of the tree, or the wheat and of the plaintiff are both employed to remark, separately, upon these two ideas. The

arboreal trope highlights the merits of a favourable location, and thus underscores the need to separate oneself from the sinful; the courtroom trope highlights the merits of studying law. Both tropes also indicate the success of their subjects: the plaintiff receives a favourable verdict and the tree thrives perennially.

When it comes to the metaphorical characterisation of God, we see here a theological difference as well. Jeremiah 17:8 implies that there will sometimes be moments of inclement weather, while there is no indication within Psalm 1 of the tree's ever being subjected to heat or to drought. On the contrary, Psalm 1:3 implies that the weather will remain forever favourable.

The difference between the two passages in this regard is a subtle one. The tree in Jeremiah bears fruit even during times of dryness, while the psalmist's tree bears its fruit *in its season* (אשר יתן פריו בעתו). In both instances, the authors assure success for the subjects of their respective texts, but the differences in the means by which they convey this success imply differences in the means by which it is achieved.

In Psalm 1:3, success is assured through God's influence on the seasons. A tree planted in the midst of rivers will always produce fruit and will never see drought. As such, a person who occupies himself with divine law and who avoids unlawful company will never experience tribulation. This is a message that harmonises with the theology of Psalms, in which the wicked suffer for their wickedness (or *will* suffer for their wickedness), and in which the righteous rejoice eternally.

In Jeremiah 17:8, success is assured through God's influence on the *righteous*: while they themselves may continue to see suffering, their ability to respond to that suffering will surpass the abilities of others - indeed, it may even surpass the abilities of the wicked to respond to prosperity. As such, despite moments of respite, the desert shrub will fail to see good; despite encountering drought, the tree will continue to bear fruit. This message is entirely consonant with the text of Jeremiah, in which the prophet endures tribulation, and is forced to offer a message of consolation to a repentant people undergoing exile.

§2.3 - Planted in the House of God: Psalm 52 and Psalm 92

Psalms 52 and 92 both constitute complexes of metaphors in which A PERSON IS A TREE appears as a trope with narrative extension. In both passages, this metaphor functions in respect of the righteous individual, while in Psalm 52 it also represents his wicked foes. While the metaphors with which this particular trope operates are different in both occasions, the similarities between the two of them are striking. In both passages, the righteous person is depicted as flourishing tree, growing in the house of God. In Psalm 52, the image employed is that of an olive tree, representing the psalmist; in Psalm 92, it is a date palm and a cedar and it represents righteous people in general.

When it comes to the function of the arboreal imagery in these two psalms, the differences between them (as well as the differences between them and the two passages that we have already seen) will prove informative. Furthermore, the ways in which these metaphors interact with the other metaphors within their respective complexes will highlight further functions of this imagery, and will extend our metaphorical 'encyclopedia' in critical ways.

Psalm 52:1-11

לְמַנְצֵחַ מִשְׁכִּיל לְדָוִד:	52:1
בְּבֹאֵי דוֹאֵג הָאֵדְמִי וַיִּגְדֵּל לְשִׂאֵוִל וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ בָּא דָוִד אֶל־בַּיִת אַחִי מְלֹךְ:	2
מִה־תִּתְהַלֵּל בְּרַעַה הַגְּבוּר תִּסְדֹּאֵל כָּל־הַיּוֹם:	3
הַיּוֹת תִּחְשָׁב לְשׁוֹנֵה פֶתַעַר מְלִטָּשׁ עֲשֵׂה רַמְיָה:	4
אַתְּבֹתָ רַע מְטוֹב שִׁקְרוּ מַדְבַּר צֶדֶק סְלָה:	5
אַתְּבֹתָ כָּל־דְּבָרֵי־כָלֵע לְשׁוֹן מְרָמָה:	6
גַּם־אֵל־יִתְצֶנֶה לְגִצָּח יִחַתֶּנָּה וַיִּסְתַּחֶף מֵאֵהֶל וּשְׂרִישׁוֹ מֵאַרְצֵי חַיִּים סְלָה:	7
וַיִּרְאוּ צַדִּיקִים וַיִּירְאוּ וַעֲלִיוּ וַשְׁחֲקוּ:	8
הִנֵּה הַגְּבֹר לֹא יֵשִׁים אֱלֹהִים מִעֲוֹנוֹ וַיִּבְטַח בְּרֵב עֲשָׂרוֹ יַעֲזֹ בַּהֲנֹתָו:	9
וַאֲנִי כַזֵּיתִי־רַעְנָן בְּבַיִת אֱלֹהִים בְּטַחְתִּי בַחֲסֵד־אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד:	10

52:1 To the leader. A Maskil of David,
 2 when Doeg the Edomite came to Saul and said to him, "David has come to the house
 of Abimelech"¹⁰⁶.
 3 Why do you boast of mischief, O mighty one? The kindness of God is all day long¹⁰⁷.
 4 Your tongue plots destruction. Like a sharp razor, it works treachery.
 5 You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth. (*Selah*)
 6 You love all words that devour, treacherous speech¹⁰⁸.
 7 But God will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he
 will uproot you from the land of the living. (*Selah*)
 8 The righteous will see, and fear, and will laugh at him, [saying:]
 9 "See the one who would not take refuge in God, but trusted in abundant riches, and
 relied upon his mischief¹⁰⁹!"
 10 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of
 God forever and ever.
 11 I will thank you forever, because of what you have done. In the presence of the
 faithful I will wait for your name, for it is good.

106.For comments as regards the secondary nature of the superscription, cf: Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 510; John Goldingay, *Psalms 2* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 142-143; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld & Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2* (Hermeneia; ed. Klaus Baltzer; trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 30; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 2* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1968), 12.

107.This phrase is textually problematic, and is frequently amended. The Syriac reads *ܘܥܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ*: "and against those who atone perpetually" (or "perpetually against those who atone"). On the basis of the plural noun's orthographic resemblance to *ܘܥܢ ܗܘܢܐ*, the BDB inverts the Hebrew word order: *אֶל הַיְשָׁרִים*, "against the righteous [all day]". The NRSV does similarly, following the versification of the LXX: "[Why do you boast, O mighty one, of mischief done] against the godly? All day long [you are plotting destruction]," etc. For discussion concerning the translational problems with this verse, see Goldingay, *op.cit.* 141 n1; Hossfeld & Zenger, *op.cit.* 26a.

108.In accordance with the NJPS. The NRSV renders *לשון מרמה* as "O treacherous tongue", as does Kraus and Hossfeld & Zenger; *ibid.* Dahood takes the verse as, "you love all the words of your destructive, deceitful tongue" (my emphasis), which strikes me as a rather clumsy attempt at divesting the verse of its metaphor.

109.As per the NJPS's construal of the Hebrew text.

This psalm constitutes an indictment of the wicked, whose crime is that of treacherous speech and whose fate is to be utterly destroyed¹¹⁰. In depicting the wicked individual, this psalm uses arboreal imagery, although it narrativises their predicament and is thus different from the characterisations of the wicked that we saw in Jeremiah 17 and Psalm 1. The utilisation of arboreal imagery to describe the righteous is somewhat more explicit than that used to describe the wicked, although we shall endeavour to give equal attention to both appraisals in our analysis.

From a structural perspective, this psalm is comprised of four sections. In the first section (verses 3-6), the psalmist condemns a wicked individual whose crimes are those of treachery and libel, while in the second section (verse 7) he remarks upon the destruction that this person can expect. Taken together, this first half of the psalm is concerned exclusively with the sinful, against whom the righteous individuals in the second half of the psalm are to be contrasted. Within these first two sections, the psalm's subject is consistently addressed in the second person.

The third section of the psalm (verses 8-9) concerns the taunt of the righteous, who witness the wicked man's destruction and rejoice over his fate, while the fourth section (verses 10-11) constitutes a glorification of the righteous individual who is reciting the psalm¹¹¹, and who in turn glorifies God. References to the wicked within the third section are all in the third person, while the fourth section only alludes to the destruction of the wicked ("I will thank you forever, because of what you have done"), without explicitly mentioning them at all.

As such, the gradual effacement of wickedness and its replacement with piety is communicated on a syntactic level: the wicked person, who serves as the initial subject of this psalm, is at first addressed in the second person, is subsequently only referred to in the third person, and is finally dropped from the psalm altogether, to be replaced with a righteous subject in the first person, who makes no explicit reference to the wicked. This is paralleled

110. For the suggestion that this psalm has elements of the lament genre on the basis of its praising God for having speedily uprooted the wicked, cf: Stanley C. Pigué, "Psalms, Book of", *ABD* V (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 522-537 (532); Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I (trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas; Oxford, 1962), 220.

111. On psalms as liturgical texts, see Mowinckel, *op.cit.* II, 74ff; Pigué, *op.cit.* 533.

in the fact that, at the psalm's conclusion, the entity being addressed in the second person is God, who was absent for the first part of the psalm, and spoken of in the third person for much of the rest. At every point of this development, metaphors play a crucial part, functioning strongly in the progression from one section to the next.

In the first section, the primary metaphor concerns the tongue of the wicked, which is likened to a sharpened razor (כתער מלטש). In the second section, the metaphor again concerns the wicked but appears to be mixed: it treats of tearing down, plucking out and uprooting sinners from their dwellings and from the earth itself. In the fourth section, the metaphor concerns the righteous individual who is reciting the psalm, and who is likened to a thriving olive tree in the house of God.

An understanding of the arboreal metaphor for the righteous person in the fourth section requires of us that we contrast it with how the wicked individual is described in the rest of this text. What is more, an analysis of this psalm as a whole demonstrates that the arboreal metaphor is present in those earlier sections as well.

The first section of the psalm conveys various details about the object of the psalmist's ire. He is described as mighty (גבור), which calls to mind the positive qualities of valour and strength, as well as the negative qualities of audaciousness and tyranny¹¹². That the individual who merits this appellation should be boasting of mischief (תתהלל ברעה) would suggest either the latter qualities, or the former applied ironically. The word used for "boast" (הלל) denotes a speech act, and is thus consistent with those crimes of which he is said to be guilty, being also concerned with speech.

We are told that this individual loves evil more than good, and falsehoods more than truthful speech. The adjective qualifying his speech as truthful is צדק, which calls to mind those general qualities of righteousness that are presumably typified by those in verse 8 to whom

112. For valour, see Job 21:7 (in which it is paired with היל); for strength, see 2 Sam 1:23; for audaciousness, see Job 15:25 (which employs an adversative particle, אל); for tyranny, see Isa 42:13 (which uses the particle על, in reference to God's overpowering his enemies).

this adjective is applied substantively¹¹³. We are also told that he loves the language of treachery and "words that devour" (דברי בלע).

The implication here might be the sort of language that causes confusion, as per the use of בלע in Isaiah 28:7, where it is coupled with verbs like "reel" (שגה), "stagger" (תעה) and "stumble" (פוק)¹¹⁴. Alternatively, the implication might be language that causes destruction, as per the use of בלע in 2 Samuel 20:19-20, where it is coupled with the verb "destroy" (שחת)¹¹⁵.

There is a two-fold characterisation of this perniciousness, the first of which personifies the sinner's tongue and the second of which likens it to a razor. In the first, the psalmist claims that the tongue of his addressee plots destruction (הוות תחשב לשונך), although once more the precise nature of this destruction is elusive. The term employed, of root הוה, may also denote his sinful desires¹¹⁶ - a reading that might also be implied by the second appearance of this noun in verse 9.

That the personification of the sinner's tongue might be a synecdoche for the sinner himself is suggested by the NRSV's construal of verse 6b. Where I have rendered לשון מרמה as "treacherous speech", coupled with דברי בלע ("words that devour") as something that the addressee loves, the NRSV takes it in the vocative and as a reference to the addressee himself: "O treacherous tongue"¹¹⁷. This is a reading set up by verse 4b, in which the tongue is likened to a sharp razor, "working treachery". Indeed, the characterisation of the sinner's tongue devising the schemes of which he is then said to be guilty might still suggest an implicit synecdoche even were one to reject the vocative reading in the sixth verse.

In the second characterisation of the sinner's tongue, it is likened to a sharp razor (כתער מלטש). The adjective, of root לטש, appears in reference to a sword in Psalm 7:13 and in reference to a

113. Other instances in which צדק denotes a form of speech can be found in Pr 8:8, 12:17 and 16:13.

114. For other instances in which בלע denotes confusion, see also Isa 9:15 and Ps 55:10, etc.

115. On בלע as "destructive", cf: Dahood, *ibid*.

116. So, Mic 7:3; Pr 10:3 and 11:6.

117. A reading also suggested, *inter alia*, by the KJV, Ibn Ezra (s.v. דברי בלע) and Malbim (*Tefillot David*, 52:6).

variety of farming implements sharpened for battle in 1 Samuel 13:20¹¹⁸. The only other verse in which the object being described is not a weapon is Job 16:9, in which this adjective describes the eyes of Job's figurative enemy. That this individual is said to gnash his teeth (חרק... בשיניו) and shred the narrator, antagonising him, makes clear that the description of his eyes is predicated on the word לטש primarily denoting an object used for warfare. That the tongue in our verse should be similarly described serves to indicate the harm that such treacherous speech causes.

Military connotations of the "razor" (תער) are not otherwise attested¹¹⁹, although this term does feature together with the sword in Ezekiel 5:1, and as part of a metaphor for destruction in Isaiah 7:20. Its occurrence in Psalm 52 need not suggest the actual use of razors in acts of betrayal or assassination, but may simply convey their ability to cut down, to smooth over and to cause injury. As we shall see, the function of the razor in plucking hairs and tearing flesh is exploited in the mixed metaphors of the second section of this psalm.

This second section, comprising verse 7, continues its second-person indictment of the wicked with three prefix-conjugation verbs and a *waw*-consecutive preterite, giving the impressing of hasty activity, one event following on swiftly from the other¹²⁰. Introduced with an emphatic גַּם¹²¹, this section denotes God's recompense for the perniciousness of the psalm's addressee. God's fury is presented in a manner that appears both swift and irrevocable, heralding a destruction that will last forever, with no possibility of amelioration or renewal.

Indeed, it is asserted that the nature of this individual's ruin will cause others who pass by to be astounded and to mock him. The trope of astonished passers-by marvelling at the ruin of a once great nation is a familiar one within the biblical literature¹²². In this instance, however, it is made clear that we are not speaking of a group of people having been destroyed but of a single individual. Such is conveyed not only by the grammatical singularity of the addressee

118. For an ambiguous attestation, in which instruments of war may or may not be denoted, see Gen 4:22.

119. Although note the homonymous "sheath": 1 Sam 17:51, Ezek 21:8, etc.

120. IBHS §32.3; JM §119c; Williams §182; GKC §49h

121. T. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Magnes Press: Jerusalem, 1985), 143-146.

122. So, for example, Lam 2:15, Isa 14:10ff and Jer 18:16.

(הגבור) in verse 3, but by the singular referent of every verb throughout the text, as well as by the indication in verse 9 that the subject of the mockery will simply be "the man" (הגבר).

The individuals who will witness the destruction of the mighty one are described as righteous (צדיקים) - the only instance within this psalm of this adjective functioning substantively. Their behaviour, on seeing the destruction of the wicked one, mirrors the behaviour of God in bringing it about. Once more we have a string of three prefix-conjugation verbs noting that they will see what happened to him (ויראו), that they will *fear*, in some sense, what happened to him (וייראו), and that they will mock him (ועליו ישהקו).

The content of their mockery comprises verse 9 and, together with their physical response to the mighty one's demise, makes up the third section of the psalm. This section is noteworthy for its deviation from the second-person structure of the previous two parts. While verses 3-7 all treated the psalm's subject as its addressee, verse 9 speaks *about* him in a manner that presupposes his sudden absence. This disappearance is in harmony with the description in verse 7 of his being suddenly destroyed.

The manner in which the righteous ones mock the downfall of the wicked person provides us with more information concerning those crimes of which he was deemed guilty. He was somebody, we are informed, who did not take refuge in God (לא ישים אלהים מעוזו), who trusted in his great wealth (ויבטח ברב עשרו) and who he relied upon his mischief (יעז בהותו). His failure to seek shelter in God is ironic, given that it was God who acted violently against him, but it serves to underscore the extent to which he sought refuge elsewhere. The attribute of strength, imputed to him by virtue of his title in verse 3 (הגבור), might suggest that in addition to his money and his machinations he sought refuge also in his own physical prowess.

The imputation of strength is important to our understanding of the wicked one's demise for another reason as well. In accusing him of not making God his refuge (מעוזו) and of relying (יעז) upon his mischief, the psalmist is employing two terms whose etymological similarity has engendered a great deal of exegetical confusion. Where the former is understood to derive from the root עוז ("take shelter, refuge"), the latter is thought to stem from the root עז

("to be strong"). The semantic overlap between a stronghold and a place of refuge has allowed for a gradual mingling of the two terms¹²³.

For our purposes, it is important to note that a construal of יעז as deriving from עזו ("take shelter, refuge")¹²⁴ thus parallels the indictment in the first clause that he spurned the protection (מעוז) of the divine. Construal of יעז as deriving from the morphologically similar עזו ("to be strong")¹²⁵, instead contrasts with the stipulation in the first clause by giving us a reason as to why he did not feel the need for God's protection in the first place. In such a fashion, a parsing of יעז as deriving from either עזו or from עזו produces differences in conceptions of the actor's motivation. Either he failed to seek protection in God, seeking protection instead in his own machinations, or he failed to seek protection in God *because* his mischief gave him strength.

Similarly problematic is the interpretation of the noun (בהותו) within the third clause. Deriving from the root הוה, the implication may be that he took some degree of protection or of fortitude from his sinful desires - a possibility that we noted also with this noun's appearance in verse 4, and which might be borne out by the Septuagint's translation of this term as "vanity", or "irreverence"¹²⁶. The term's primary designation of "destruction" serves as an additional irony, reminding us of the destruction that ultimately served as his recompense.

Since the term used here for desire, or for destruction, is the same as was employed to describe those things that this individual was guilty of devising in verse 4, the suggestion that he seeks comfort or derives strength from these same machinations allows the psalm to come full circle. His tongue, like a sharpened razor, engaged in plotting mischief; refusing to take shelter in God, he took those plans as a source of strength; ultimately, while his mischief caused great harm to others, it was he who was cut down by them.

123.Cf: BDB s.v. עזו; GKC §85k; GBH §88Le.

124.Hossfeld & Zenger, *ibid*; Dahood, *op.cit.* 16.

125.Goldingay, *op.cit.* 145-146; Kraus, *ibid*.

126.LXX: και ἐνεδυναμωθη ἐπι τη ματαιοτητι αὐτου ("and strengthened himself in his vanity").

Nonetheless, it has been justifiably suggested that the text has undergone an error in its transmission and that the original form of this term may have been בְּהוֹנוֹ: in his wealth¹²⁷. In line with this possibility, the Peshitta notes that "he was elevated by his possessions"¹²⁸, while the Targum has it that he was "strengthened by his riches"¹²⁹. Adopting this interpretation allows us to maintain a stronger degree of parallelism with the previous clause, which has him placing his faith in money (וַיִּבְטַח בְּרַב עֲשָׂרוֹ).

Although the third section of the psalm enables the righteous to contrast themselves with the wicked, the ultimate contrast comes not with the righteous in verse 8 but with the psalmist himself at the psalm's conclusion. There, the one reciting the psalm likens himself to a verdant olive tree in the house of God, trusting in God's kindness and testifying to his greatness in the presence of his saints. The term used to denote this final category (חֲסִידִים) is related to the kindness (חֶסֶד) in which the psalmist trusts and denotes a group of people potentially related to the righteous of verse 8¹³⁰.

Since this passage denotes the most explicit attestation of arboreal imagery within this psalm, it behoves us now to consider it in more depth. In what sense does this imagery add to the tropes developed throughout the rest of this psalm, and to what extent is it governed by them? A clause-based analysis demonstrates that this metaphor was not introduced in the fourth section, but that it underscored the second section of the psalm also. I produce verses 7 and 10 below:

127.Cf: BDB, s.v. הוֹנָה. Dahood defends the MT in this regard, noting that wealth and perniciousness were parallel concepts; Dahood, *op.cit.* 16. The suggestion of Hossfeld & Zenger is a clever one - construing the preposition as designative of manner (GBHS §4.1.5i), they take the verse as, "seeking refuge there, *to his ruin*" (my emphasis); Hossfeld & Zenger, *op.cit.* 26.

128.Peshitta: אֲרֻחָא בְּרַב עֲשָׂרוֹ

129.Targum: עֲשִׂין בְּמִמּוֹנָה. Note that the interpretations of the Targum and the LXX (and potentially also the Peshitta) understand יַעַז as being from the root עָזָז.

130.So Hossfeld & Zenger, *op.cit.* 33. Dahood relates the חֲסִידִים to the hypocritical one (as he construes the verse) in verse 3b, while Kraus sees it as a reference to the community of the faithful, in whose presence the psalmist declares God's praise: Dahood, *op.cit.* 17; Kraus, *op.cit.* 511.

- A₁ But God will break you down forever;
 A₂ he will snatch and tear you from your tent;
 A₃ he will uproot you from the land of the living.
- a₁ But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.
 a₂ I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

There are three clauses in the psalmist's description of the mighty one's destruction and two in his depiction of himself. Each of the initial three clauses constitutes a verbal phrase qualified with an adverbial proposition. Of the two clauses in the psalmist's description of himself, only the second constitutes an adverbial phrase, while the first is a nominal phrase with adjectival extension. That they mirror one another and serve as central to the psalm will be evident from both a grammatical and a metaphorical analysis.

In the first clause of verse 7 (clause A₁ above), the verb used to describe God's breaking down the wicked (נחץ) has the denotation of violent wreckage. It is used frequently to describe the razing of altars¹³¹, cities¹³² and houses¹³³, but appears also in the context of shattering teeth¹³⁴, crumbling rocks¹³⁵, smashing implements¹³⁶ and, figuratively, of eradicating peoples¹³⁷. As such, it would appear to specifically denote the smashing of one object by hurling it to the ground or by forcefully swinging a second object against it. In this particular instance the verb has a singular human referent as its object. The two other instances in which this is the case are also figurative: Ezekiel 16:39, which employs the metaphor of cultic sites in

131. Deut 7:5, Jud 6:30ff, 2 Kgs 23:12, etc.

132. Jud 9:45, Jer 4:26, Ezek 26:9, 2 Chr 36:19, etc.

133. Lev 14:45, Isa 22:10, Ezek 26:12, etc.

134. Ps 58:7b (מלתעות כפירים נתץ יהוה) - an assertion parallel to הרס שנימו בפיו in 7a.

135. Nah 1:6 (והצרים נתצו ממנו).

136. Lev 11:35 (וכירים יתץ טמאים הם).

137. Jer 18:7 (רגע אדבר אל גוי ועל ממלכה לנתוש ולנתוץ ולהאביד).

describing the person to be destroyed¹³⁸, and Job 19:10, which also utilises an arboreal metaphor.

The context in Job is particularly significant. There, the author complains of the abuse that he has suffered by suggesting that his antagonist "tears" him down from every side (יתצני סביב). This is then paralleled with the assertion that his hope has been uprooted, "like a tree" (ויסע) (כעץ תקותי). In Job, this is a two-staged metaphor, exploiting first the correlation between tearing something down and assailing a person, and next the connection between felling a person (or a person's hope) and felling a tree. As we shall see, the three clauses in Psalm 52:7 follow a similar progression in their metaphorical development¹³⁹.

In the second of these clauses (clause A₂) we find two verbs in close succession. The first of these verbs is vocalised as being of the root הטה, meaning to snatch or seize. On analogy with the function of a cognate Akkadian term¹⁴⁰, this expression may also denote snatching *away*, or eradicating¹⁴¹. An alternative vocalisation appears to underlie the targumic reading, in which this verb is translated as יתברנך: "he will shatter you". This targumic interpretation might suggest a construal of the verb as being of the root הנת instead¹⁴².

The second verb in clause A₂, translated above as "and tear you", is of the root נסה. Its occurrence in Proverbs 15:25, in reference to houses and in contrast to נצב ("establish"), would suggest that it can be employed with a similar purpose to נתך - with the sense of

138.Or which speaks of the destruction of the city using language that relates to violence against an adulterous wife; cf: Peggy Day, "Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel XVI", *VT* 50:3 (2000), 285-309.

139.A more direct relationship between this verb and the destruction of trees might be suggested by its occurrence in Jeremiah 31:28. There it is part of a short oracle that implies an arboreal metaphor for the people of Israel and Judah, and one in which this verb appears in a cluster of terms that denote destruction, each of which is subsequently contrasted with both building and *planting*.

140.Cf: René Labat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne: Signes, Syllabaire, Idéogrammes* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1988), #89 (abattre); Jeremy Black, Andrew George & Nicholas Postgate (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (2nd printing; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), s.v. ḫatû(m) II.

141. See BDB and HALOT for this suggestion; s.v. הטה. The translation, "he will annihilate you", is adopted by Kraus - but on analogy with Aquila's rescension of the LXX, the Vulgate and the Targum instead: Kraus, *op.cit.* 509.

142.To the best of my knowledge, the first person to have suggested this derivation was David Altshuler (*Metzudat Tziyon*), s.v. יהתך.

tearing down, or of demolishing. The function of this verb, however, in Deuteronomy 28:63 and Proverbs 2:22 would suggest instead the tearing of one thing *from* another. In both of those passages it is the ground from which the sinful will be torn, functioning (in the case of Deuteronomy) as a metaphor for exile.

This second clause features an adverbial modifier, either indicating the object from which the subject will be torn or the manner in which he will be demolished. In the event that the adverbial prefix is understood as a spatial preposition¹⁴³, the purpose of the clause would be to signify his source: "from [his] tent, he will be torn"¹⁴⁴. In the event that it is to be understood as a privative preposition¹⁴⁵, the purpose would be to indicate the nature of his destruction: "he will be demolished, without a home". In both cases, the clause draws attention to his previous status as a settled individual, with the tent functioning as a metaphor for stability¹⁴⁶.

Before progressing to clause A₃ it must first be stressed that both of the verbs in clause A₂ possess the same subtle bivalency. On the one hand, they refer to the eradication and destruction of the wicked, whose shattering in clause A₁ is said to be everlasting (לנצח). On the other hand, both verbs are capable of expressing the act of pulling up, or of tearing out. As we noted earlier, the dual functions of cutting down and of plucking are the two functions of the razor, to which the subject's tongue was likened in the fourth verse. They are also the two means by which trees and herbage might be destroyed, allowing this clause to function simultaneously as a development from clause A₁ and as a *segué* to clause A₃.

The third and final clause in verse 7 expresses the eradication of the wicked by means of an arboreal image, declaring that God will "uproot" him from the land of the living (ושרשך מארץ חיים)¹⁴⁷. The verb, formed from שרש ("root"), which functions in some instances in reference

143. IBHS §11.2.11a; Arnold and Choi, §4.1.13a; etc.

144. So, for example, NRSV, NJPS, etc.

145. IBHS, §11.2.11c; Arnold and Choi, §4.1.13f; etc.

146. On this metaphor, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 13.

147. Other passages which mention "the land(s) of the living" are Isa 38:11, 53:8; Jer 11:19; Ezek 26:20, 32:23-27 and 32; Ps 27:13, 116:9, 142:6; Job 28:13.

to *striking* root¹⁴⁸, functions here in reference to removing them. Other passages in which this verb means to cut down or uproot include Job 31:8 and 12¹⁴⁹ and Ezra 7:26, in which this term appears as either a reference to exile or to corporal punishment.

Unlike the other verbs employed in verse 7, this one leaves no doubt as to its arboreal connotations. As such, we see a staged progression in the psalm's development of the tree imagery, from a verb that had no overtly arboreal nuances in clause A₁ (נתץ), through two verbs that functioned both in reference to breaking down *and* to uprooting in clause A₂ (חתה, גסס), to a verb in clause A₃ whose primary function is that of uprooting a tree (שרש). Like the metaphor in Job 19:10, which likened tearing something down to assailing a person, and then felling a person to felling a tree, the three clauses in Psalm 52:7 have taken a similarly two-staged approach in their development of the tree imagery that they will exploit in verse 10.

It is in this tenth verse that the psalmist provides the ultimate point of contrast with the subject of the preceding imprecation: himself. Introduced with the adversative conjunction (clause a₁)¹⁵⁰, the text forgoes any description of the narrator's righteousness and moves straight to the analogy instead. By contrasting the figurative portrayal of the psalmist with the psalmist's portrayal of the man of strength, the text invites us to also contrast those less figurative aspects of their personalities that are not so explicated.

While the mighty one was described as being guilty of harmful words, of treachery and of trusting only in himself, the righteous one is extolled only for the virtue of trusting in God. We are led to assume, even without its being stated, that his faith in the divine has also manifested in conduct more favourable than that which he laments in others, and it is not unreasonable to expect of his choice of metaphor that it might convey this.

Unlike the metaphors in Jeremiah 17 and Psalm 1, Psalm 52 doesn't merely liken its subject to a tree but equates him with a specific variety: the olive. References to a flourishing olive

148. Isa 27:6, 40:24; Jer 12:2; Ps 80:10; Job 5:3.

149. Both of these may be literal references to the destruction of crops, although note the possibility of the former of them constituting a metaphor for the death of one's children.

150. Arnold and Choi, §4.3.3a; BHRG, §40.8.1(iv); Williams §432 and §552; GKC §163a; etc

tree (זית רענן) occur only here and in Jeremiah 11:16 - a passage that utilises its imagery in order to describe the people of Israel as a whole¹⁵¹. And yet, despite this particular collocation appearing only twice, the image of a thriving olive tree must have carried with it a range of powerful associations.

The olive, by virtue of its many functions within Israelite society, was a highly valued commodity. Its oil served for lighting, for cooking, for medicine and for anointment - both cosmetic and sacral¹⁵². Its high valuation made it an integral feature of so many sacrificial offerings and its cultivation an indicator of wealth. It is for the land's ability to produce olive trees that it is praised¹⁵³, and it is by virtue of an inability to properly harvest them that the people are cursed¹⁵⁴.

The wicked one, we are informed, was one who relied upon his great wealth. In contrast, the righteous individual is represented not as one who *owns* olive trees, but as an olive tree himself. He is not in possession of valued commodities but he is, himself, a valued commodity. What is more, while the wicked are like trees uprooted by God, the righteous is like a tree in God's own house. This contrast in particular provides the clearest differentiation between the righteous individual and the wicked subject of the psalm's first three sections.

So far as that wicked subject is concerned, we see how he relied upon his strength, his wealth and his machinations, yet was unable to save himself from his own demise. In order to characterise him at both the height of his success and at the depths of his own depravity, the psalmist employed imagery from two semantic domains: the sharpened razor, and the uprooted tree. In life, the slanderer was like a razor, causing destruction; in death, he was like an uprooted tree, at whom passersby marvelled.

151. On this passage, and its relationship with its context, see Job Y. Jindo, *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered: A Cognitive Approach to Poetic Prophecy in Jeremiah 1-24* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 64; Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 209ff.

152. Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT 65; Sheffield, 1989), 76-78.

153. For example, in Deut 8:8.

154. Deut 28:40; Mic 6:15; etc.

The manner in which this individual met his destruction involved the subtle combination of both of these domains. Just as the chief functions of the razor are cutting down and plucking, and just as cutting down and uprooting are the primary means of eradicating herbage, so was he cut down in his prime and uprooted from life. Understood this way, the arboreal imagery as it is applied to the wicked needs to be understood specifically in contrast to the imagery of the razor: as the razor serves as a weapon, so is the tree helpless in the face of attack; as the razor is an object of fear, so is a felled tree the object of derision.

The manner in which arboreal imagery functions within this one psalm with such different applications demonstrates the incredible versatility of this particular metaphorical trope, and enables us to expand our encyclopedia of arboreal connotations in important ways. To the list of arboreal features that metaphors can exploit, we can now add those of fear and derision, together with those of monetary value and utility.

Psalm 92:6-16

מה־גָּדְלוֹ מִעֲשֵׂיֶיהָ יְהוָה לְמֵאֵד עָמְקוֹ מִחֻשְׁבְּתֶיהָ:	92:6
אִישׁ־בָּעֵר לֹא יִדְעֶה וְכֹסִיל לֹא־יָבִין אֶת־זֹאת:	7
בְּפֶרֶחַ רִשְׁעִים כִּמוֹ עֵשֶׂב וַיִּצְיָצוּ כָּל־פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן לְהִשָּׁמְדָם עַד־יֵעָד:	8
וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לְעֵלָם יְהוָה:	9
כִּי הִנֵּה אִי־יָדָהּ יְהוָה כִּי־הִנֵּה אִי־בָיָהּ יִאֲבָדוּ יְתִפְרְדּוּ כָּל־פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן:	10
וְתִרַם כְּרָאִים קִרְגֵי בְלֹתֵי בְשָׁמוֹ רַעְוֹן:	11
וּתְבַט עֵינֵי בְשׁוֹרֵי בְקָמִים עָלַי מְרֵעִים תִּשְׁמַעְנָה אֲזִנֵּי:	12
צַדִּיק כְּתֹמֵר יִפְרַח כְּאַרְז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגָּה:	13
אֲשֵׁתוֹלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּחֻצְרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ:	14
עוֹד יִנוּבְּוֹן בְּשִׁיבָה דְשָׁנִים וְרַעְנָנִים יְהִיוּ:	15
לְהַגִּיד כִּי־יִשָּׂר יְהוָה צוּרֵי וְלֹא־עוֹלָתָהּ כּוֹן:	16

92:6 How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep!

7 The dullard cannot know, the stupid cannot understand this:

8 though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to
destruction forever,

9 but you, O Lord, are on high forever.

10 For your enemies, O Lord, for your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be
scattered.

11 But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh
oil.

12 My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my
assailants¹⁵⁵.

13 The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

14 They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.

15 In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap,

16 showing that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in
him.

Psalm 92 combines praise for God with condemnation of the wicked, and functions as an assurance that the wicked will perish for all time while the righteous will continue to flourish. In the context of this message, the psalmist also indicates that the situation often seems otherwise, with the wicked flourishing and the righteous beset. On the contrary, the wicked only flourish in *order* that they may be destroyed, while the subjugation of the righteous is assuredly but temporary.

Like Psalm 52, this text constitutes a metaphorical complex, within which images from a variety of different semantic domains are juxtaposed with one another. The imagery used to characterise the righteous is that of a tree, while the imagery employed for the wicked in this psalm is predicated on a similar metaphor (A PERSON IS GRASS), with some semantic overlap. The function of any one metaphor within a complex of this nature is dependent upon an

155. This verse is beset with ambiguities of a primarily lexical nature, as I shall mention in more detail below.

understanding of every other, and so it is only by considering the intersection of the various semantic domains within this psalm that we can draw solid conclusions that concern the function of its arboreal imagery in particular.

Structurally, this psalm is comprised of four overlapping sections. The first section, which is omitted from my presentation of the text above, is found in verses 2 to 5 and constitutes a preamble to the psalmist's praise of God¹⁵⁶. In the fifth verse, God is explicitly extolled for the profundity of his thinking (מאד עמקו מחשבתיד). This then provides a *segué* into the second section, which is found in verses 6-8. That section begins with a condemnation of stupid people (who cannot understand the depth of God's thought) but continues with an indictment of sinners in general.

In the psalmist's condemnation of the ignorant, the verbs that refer to their meagre understanding (בין, ידע) parallel the term that denotes God's clarity of thought (השב). At the same time, the nominal phrase that denotes the dullard (איש בער) may also call to mind connotations of livestock¹⁵⁷, thus further underscoring his comparative lowliness. The bovine imagery, which is only dormant within this second section, is deployed more fully within the third section, as we shall see.

Within the psalmist's condemnation of stupidity, he leads on from bemoaning the ignorance of fools to remark upon the apparent success of the wicked. His assertion that they are in fact doomed to eternal destruction provides a link to the ninth verse, which serves the function of concluding the first section: the psalmist's praise of God. This is done by means of a reference to his eternity, and it provides a mirror image of its counterpart. God, whose thoughts were said to be "deep" (עמק), is here described as "high" (מרום).

Where verse 9 concludes the first section, verse 10 concludes the second: a repeated assertion to the effect that the wicked will all be destroyed. Just as the ninth verse served as an

156. Since this section merely functions as an introduction to the main body of the psalm, and since the references to musical instruments operate here in a non-metaphorical fashion, I have only included its final verse (verse 5) in my analysis below.

157. From בעיר, "cattle"; BDB, HALOT. For the suggestion that כסיל may have derived from a term that meant "fat, docile" (and, hence, "bovine"), cf: BDB, s.v. כסל.

inversion of its counterpart in the fifth, so too does the tenth serve as an inversion of its counterpart in the eighth: the wicked, who were there likened to flourishing grass, are here said to be "scattered" (יתפרדו). The unrighteous have received their reward, and God's plans are shown to have been sophisticated indeed.

The two terms used in verse 10 to denote the destruction of the wicked convey the notion both of perishing (אבד) and of being scattered (פרד). It is specifically the enemies of God who are said to perish, and the doers of iniquity who will be dispersed. While the former term may be roughly synonymous with the destruction that the wicked are said to undergo in verse 8 (of root שמד), the latter more directly alludes to their status as grass. As a metaphor, it is similar to the depiction of the wicked in Psalm 1, which characterised them as chaff blown about (נדף) by the wind.

It is against the confusion and destruction of the sinful that the one reciting the psalm subsequently contrasts himself. Unlike the wicked who have either been ground down and scattered to the wind, or routed in battle and defeated, the subject of this third section has been elevated to a position of glory, and one from which he is able to witness the eradication of his foes. While the raising of his horn may evoke the imagery of battle, the assertion that it is like that of the wild ox calls to mind also the beastly imagery used of the psalmist's enemies in verse 7. Here, the final two sections of the psalm complement the former two. Where the third section (verses 11-12) comprises an assurance of the psalmist's survival in the face of great odds, the final section (verses 13-16) treats of the righteous and their eternal youth.

Having had his horn exalted by God, the psalmist boasts of being drenched (בִּלְהֵי) in fresh oil. This verb is presumed to be of the root בלל, and to denote saturation. Its resemblance to בלה ("wasting away") may underscore the translation of the Septuagint, which has the psalmist exalted in his old age¹⁵⁸ - an allusion that may be significant in light of the psalm's conclusion. Its function here, in describing the anointment of the psalmist, is drawn from the semantic domain of a king's coronation¹⁵⁹. This construal is reinforced by the use of horn

158.LXX: και το γηρας μου εν ελεφ πιονι ("and mine old age [shall be exalted] with rich mercy").

159.On the frequency of this trope, see the chart in Marc Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite*

(קרן) as a receptacle for transporting oil used for such purposes¹⁶⁰, and is supported by the martial nuances in the following verse.

There, in verse 12, the psalmist concludes the depiction of his own glorification by remarking upon a visual spectacle, the nature of which is both lexically and syntactically ambiguous. This verse constitutes the conclusion to the third section, and it mirrors the conclusion to the second, since both of them treat of the destruction of the psalmist's enemies.

From a lexical perspective, it is unclear what the psalmist's eye is said to have seen. The Hebrew phrase (ותבט עיני בשורי), as with the one in the previous verse, commences with *waw*-consecutive, suggesting a narrational relationship (be it adversative or developmental) with the foregoing. Since the imagery employed in verse 11 was of a martial nature, it makes sense to construe the noun, בשורי, as comprising a contraction of שוררי: a *polel* formed from the verb שור ("behold, regard")¹⁶¹. Furthermore, the metaphorical context of this observation suggests that the nature of these onlookers is presumably insidious, yielding the translation "my enemies"¹⁶² or "my watchful foes"¹⁶³.

As it is written, this word is homonymous with both the Hebrew term for oxen, as well as for singers - the latter possibly having been a feature of the royal coronation¹⁶⁴. Philippe Guillaume is correct to observe that eschewing the imagery of oxen in an attempt to render this word as "enemies" is to negate the function of the taurine imagery in verse 11¹⁶⁵. And yet, in adopting the reference to oxen to the *exclusion* of its other connotations, Guillaume has altogether depleted the verse of its martial and monarchic associations! His conclusion, while clever, suffers from an inattention to the interplay of semantic categories within this psalm,

Metaphor (JSOT 76; Sheffield, 1989), 131.

160. For example, 1 Sam 16:1 and 1 Kgs 1:39 - both of which are enthronement narratives.

161. The noun, שורר, occurs in Psalms only, always in the plural, and always with the 1cs suffix: Ps 5:9, 27:11, 54:7, 56:3 and 59:11.

162. NRSV.

163. Thus, NJPS.

164. Cf: 2 Kgs 11:14 (LXX); Brettler, *op.cit.* 133.

165. Philippe Guillaume, "Bull-Leaping in Psalm 18" in Pierre Van Hecke and Antje Labahn (eds.), *Metaphors in the Psalms* (Leuven University Press, 2010), 35-45 (37-38).

and his attempt at reading the verbal phrase, בקמים עלי, as a reference to acrobats on the psalmist's shoulders is thoroughly forced.

On the contrary, this verse bears all the hallmarks of establishing a relationship of opposition between the psalmist and those who "gaze upon" him, which in context of his proving triumphant over his enemies need be no other than his foes themselves. And yet, the deliberate utilisation of a word that can also refer to oxen is but one of the ways in which the author of this text maintains the continued presence of the images that he is employing, even as one semantic domain is muted in favour of another.

Since it is a feature of metaphorical complexes that we are encouraged to read back into earlier metaphors the information that emerges from later ones, we can also apply the battle imagery of verses 11 and 12 to the description of the wicked in verse 10. There, the use of the verb יתפרדו suggested the scattering of grass, but here we might suggest that it alludes also to the manner in which people are physically separated from one another¹⁶⁶. In the context of the martial imagery in this third section of this psalm, it may denote the routing of an enemy camp or the splitting of an enemy formation¹⁶⁷. The reference in verse 10 to the psalmist's horn being raised (ותרם...קרני) may thus also allude to the blowing of a trumpet at the onset of battle - a tactic devised to strike fear into the hearts of the enemy¹⁶⁸.

The second clause within this verse features a syntactic ambiguity: while the psalmist remarks on his ears having heard these evil-doers (מרעים), the verbal phrase (בקמים עלי) that connects this assertion with the first half of the verse could be appended to either. As such, it appears to function in reference to both clauses simultaneously: as a reference, in other words, both to the *approaching* enemies and to the sound of evil-doers *drawing near*¹⁶⁹.

166. Gen 13:9, 2 Sam 1:23, Est 3:8, etc.

167. On the use of trumpets and shouting to strike fear into the enemy, cf: Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1961), 253-254.

168. Note, however, that while this noun does appear in reference to trumpets fashioned from horns (Jos 6:5 and Dan 3:5, 7, 10 and 15), the words more commonly used in exclusively martial contexts are those of שופר and חצוצרת. Nonetheless, the general synonymy of these terms is sufficient to suggest that here, in a non-exclusively martial context, it may be functioning in reference to war. On this point, it is perhaps notable that in the Mishna's depiction of warfare, Sotah 8:1 specifically mentions the need to stay together and not to be afraid of the sound of *trumpets* ("מקול קרנות").

169. Mitchell Dahood, *op.cit.* 337. Note that the masoretic division of this verse, while it lacks an *atnach*, places

The substantive at the conclusion of this phrase ("workers of evil"; מְרַעִים) is reminiscent of the homonymous מְרַנְּנִים: those who shout in triumph or applause, as well as those who sound a battle cry (from רוּע). Once again, the ambiguous phraseology allows this verse to allude to multiple semantic domains simultaneously - in particular, the domain of warfare and of the king's coronation. Since this verse concludes the third section, it is fitting that it should bring together the major metaphorical tropes that this part of the psalm has already employed: the domains of oxen, of monarchs and of warfare. Significantly, all three of these intersect in a generic space that invokes the qualities of strength and of ferocity, which contrast with those of the psalmist's enemies who *appear* to be strong, but who only share with oxen the traits of brutishness and stupidity.

Having now successfully contrasted the psalmist with his enemies, the text concludes by contrasting the righteous person as an ideal with wickedness in general. As such, the subjects in the third and fourth sections of this psalm mirror the two subjects in the second section: a foolish or ignorant person (כסיל, איש בער) and wicked people in general (רשעים, כל פעלי און), with the reader of the psalm in particular and righteous people in general (צדיק). What is more, where the first two sections set up a contrast between God and all workers of iniquity, the third and fourth sections establish a connection between the psalmist and the congregation of the righteous. The focus in these two sections relates to longevity, being a counterpoint to God's treatment of the wicked in the second section of the psalm.

While the imagery thus far has been taken from the semantic domains of herbage, brute animals, the king's coronation and warfare, it is from the semantic domain of trees in particular that the final section's metaphors are all drawn. Here, in verses 13-15, the righteous person is said to sprout like a palm tree and to thrive (ישגה) like the cedars of Lebanon. His flourishing is specifically said to be within the house of God, in the context of which the reference to Lebanon in verse 13 may constitute an allusion to the temple in Jerusalem¹⁷⁰. The benefits of such placement are evident in the psalm's conclusion, which informs us that the

the strong accent (the *revia mugrash*) over מְרַעִים, indicating a reading in which עלי בקמים qualifies the "evil-doers" and not the "enemies"; Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (trans. and ed. E.J. Revell; Masoretic Studies 5; The Society of Biblical Literature, 1980), §367.

170. Hossfeld & Zenger, *op.cit.* 440. For other such examples of this imagery, see in particular Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT 65; Sheffield, 1989), 126-128.

righteous will continue to bear fruit in old age (עוד ינובון בשיבה), and that they (and their fruit) will remain both verdant and lush.

For our purposes, those components of the psalm that are of especial importance comprise verses 8-9 and 13-16, as follows:

- A₁ Though the wicked sprout like grass
- A₂ and all evildoers flourish,
- B they are doomed to destruction forever,
- C but you, O Lord, are on high forever.

- a₁ The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
- a₂ and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
- b₁ They are planted in the house of the Lord;
- b₂ they flourish in the courts of our God.
- b₃ In old age they still produce fruit;
- b₄ they are always green and full of sap,
- c₁ showing that the Lord is upright;
- c₂ he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

As is evident from a clause-by-clause portrayal, there are three themes that govern this metaphorical depiction of the wicked and three that govern the corresponding depiction of the righteous: the subject's success (A₁, A₂ + a₁, a₂), a temporal qualification on the nature of their success (B + b₁-b₄), and a related observation on the glory of God (C + c₁, c₂). Similarly evident is the fact that the psalmist's depiction of the righteous features significant elaboration in the *b* clauses.

In both instances, the psalm's subject is said to "flourish" (פרח), although in the case of the wicked it is like grass that they flourish, while in the case of the righteous it is like palm trees

and cedars. There are several ways in which we can configure the difference between these two tropes, and indeed they function differently in both passages. When it comes to the wicked, the metaphor (THE WICKED ARE GRASS) concerns the ubiquity of this particular type of person. As blades of grass cannot be counted, so the wicked cannot be numbered. Such is not the case when it comes to the righteous (THE RIGHTEOUS ARE PALMS AND CEDARS), where the metaphor conveys their grandeur instead.

That said, the manner in which these tropes function together within the same psalm demands of them that they inform one another in a mutual fashion. As such, while the wicked are depicted as beyond number, so too must this trope function within the presentation of the righteous. While the depiction of the righteous draws upon connotations of grandeur, so must this be read back into the depiction of the wicked as well. In such a fashion, as grass is more plentiful than palm trees, so are the wicked more numerous than the righteous; yet, as the cedar is so much grander than grass, so are the righteous more exalted than the wicked.

Having presented this detail, both passages proceed to qualify the flourishing of their subject, and both qualifications concern their ability to continue doing so. In the case of the wicked, clause B asserts that they are doomed to an everlasting destruction. The function of the preformative *lamed* as an adverb signifying purpose¹⁷¹ allows this verb (להשמדם) to indicate the reason for their flourishing. It is not in spite of their apparent success that they will be destroyed, but it is only for the purposes of destroying them that they have been allowed to flourish in the first place.

The psalmist's qualification of the flourishing of the righteous is somewhat more extensive, featuring two clauses that elaborate on the location of the trees (b_1 , b_2) and two that remark upon their physical and qualitative characteristics (b_3 , b_4). As we saw likewise in Psalm 52, the preservation of the righteous is conveyed by asserting that it is in God's house that they are planted. Unlike the grass that was grown in order that it could be eradicated, the palm trees and cedars are being cultivated deliberately. While both tropes assert the authority of God over human affairs, the latter also denies any form of providence for the wicked.

171.GBHS §4.1.10d, etc.

The value of being planted in the house of God is especially evident in clauses b_3 and b_4 . There we are told that even as the trees age they will continue to yield fruit (עוד ינובון) and that they will remain both lush and verdant (דשנים ורעננים). The lushness of the tree's produce stresses its suitability for consumption, which in turn stresses the role of God as the cultivator of this produce.

Finally, both passages include an observation on God's glory, which is related in some fashion to the depiction of both the wicked and the righteous that precede it. In the case of the wicked, the presentation of God's glory is adversative: while the wicked are slated for everlasting destruction, God is destined to be on high forever. Indeed, throughout the first two sections of the psalm, it is primarily against God that the wicked are contrasted.

This is not so with the righteous, whose primary contrast is against the wicked themselves. The presentation of God's glory in clauses c_1 and c_2 is an extension of the description of the righteous in the previous clauses. Just as the wicked only flourished in order that they might be destroyed, so the flourishing of the righteous is only in order that they can subsequently declare the justness of God (להודות כי ישר יהוה).

Taken as a whole, the glorification of God is the primary message of this psalm, which both commences and concludes with assertions of his greatness. As a means of conveying this greatness, however, the psalmist also remarks at length upon the relative merits of wickedness (and ignorance) and righteousness (and wisdom). Although God is the only individual within this psalm to whom the quality of wisdom is imputed, the psalmist and others share in the quality of righteousness, and are benefited as a result.

Metaphorically, this one complex employs images from a number of different semantic domains, the denseness and interconnectedness of which is reflected by the psalm's dense and interconnected literary structure. For the purpose of seeing how these semantic domains relate to one another, we might separate them into three broad categories. In the first, there is the domain of the brute animal. This is used both positively and negatively - in order to typify the stupidity of fools (at least one of the terms for which derives etymologically from "cattle"), and in order to characterise the great warrior.

The semantic domain of warfare features strongly in verses 10-13. While alluding at several intervals to the coronation of a king (to be associated, it would seem, with the psalmist himself), the military nature of that coronation underscores the martial elements around it and enables it to function as a subset of the semantic domain of warfare in general. Within this context, the psalmist rejoices over the destruction of his enemies and over his own victory, awarded to him by God.

Finally, the semantic domain of trees and herbage makes two appearances within this text - both as a characterisation of the wicked (and their destruction) in verse 8, as well as of the righteous (and their prosperity) in verses 13-15. The psalm's conclusion, which in its reversion to the first person ascribes the qualities of a "rock" (צור) to God, demonstrates the common element in all three of these semantic domains: that of strength, or lack thereof.

When considering the manner in which these metaphors mutually inform one another, we can note that where the first two domains bear the added connotations of victory, the arboreal imagery carries with it also the connotations of peace. Their being located in the house of God and their remaining youthful and vigorous forever enables them to serve as indicators of economic and political prosperity within this psalm.

§2.3.1 - Conclusion:

While similarities between the arboreal tropes in Psalms 52 and 92 have long been noted, these similarities are ultimately of a superficial nature. Although both psalms employ the image of a flourishing tree planted in the house of God, the interplay between that image and the other metaphors within their respective complexes highlights an impressively broad scope of metaphorical application, and one that thoroughly differentiates these two occurrences of the trope from one another.

In Psalm 52, the arboreal metaphors for the righteous are predicated on the connotations of commercial value invoked by the image of the olive tree. Its high valuation and broad utility make of it here a symbol of wealth. God's accumulating such trees enables him to be viewed

as the owner of precious commodities¹⁷², while its representing the righteous themselves enables the psalmist to disparage the accumulation of material wealth.

In Psalm 52's characterisation of the wicked, the primary connotations of the tree are physical. On the one hand, there are its weaknesses. Like the trope in Jeremiah 17, it is the passivity of this tree that enables it to function for the wicked in the wicked's demise. On the other hand, however, there are its former strengths. As such, and unlike the trope in Jeremiah, the metaphor here is able to focus on the response of bystanders to the tree's collapse. A felled tree strikes awe into the hearts of those who see it, and at the same time inspires derision. Both responses correspond to its former physical grandeur.

In Psalm 92, the arboreal metaphors demonstrate the paucity of the righteous, their grandeur and their vigour, and they do this by remarking upon both physical and qualitative characteristics that trees can possess. Unlike grass, which can so easily be destroyed, the trees within this psalm have the attributes of solidity and strength, together with the added qualities of commercial, aesthetic and consumptive utility. The careful interplay of metaphors within this psalm enables the psalmist to employ each one of these attributes, but to ultimately downplay them in favour of the tree's metaphysical connotations: as symbols of peacetime, of political strength and of economic prosperity.

172. Despite this characteristic never being imputed to God directly; Brettler, 56.

§3 - THE KING IS A TREE

§3.1 - Introduction

We find that the metaphor under consideration (THE KING IS A TREE) is attested in all three of the categories that we delineated in the introduction, and that an analysis of their respective texts would need to proceed in accordance with the stipulations that were there conveyed. As it stands, this dissertation only constitutes an analysis of arboreal tropes within certain metaphorical complexes (to the exclusion of both isolated tropes and narrativised metaphors). While I have not aimed at exhaustiveness, this introduction also features a short list of passages that I have identified as instances of THE KING IS A TREE in the three different text types:

Type 1 - Isolated Tropes

1. Jeremiah 23:5

הַיְהִי יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִקְמַתִי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדִיק וּמְלֹךְ מְלֹךְ וְהִשְׁכִּיל וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וַצְדָקָה בְּאֶרֶץ:

2. Jeremiah 33:15

בְּיָמֵם הָהֵם וּבָעֵת הַהִיא אֶצְמַיִם לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדָקָה וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וַצְדָקָה בְּאֶרֶץ:

3. Zechariah 3:8b

שְׁמַע־נָא יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל אֶתְּהָ וְרַעֲיֶה הַיְשָׁבִים לְפָנָיִךְ כִּי־אֲנֹשִׁי מוֹפֵת הָמָּה כִּי־הִנְנִי מְבִיא אֶת־עַבְדֵי צֶמַח:

4. Zechariah 6:12-13

וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה-אִישׁ צֶמַח שָׂמוֹ וּמִתְחַתָּיו יִצְמָח וּבָנָה אֶת-הַיִּכָּל יְהוָה:
וְהוּא יִבְנֶה אֶת-הַיִּכָּל יְהוָה וְהוּא-יֵשֵׂא הוֹד וְיֵשֵׁב וּמִשָּׁל עַל-כִּסְאוֹ וְהָיָה כְהֵן עַל-כִּסְאוֹ וְעֲצַת שְׁלוֹם תִּהְיֶה בֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם:

5. Daniel 11:7

וְעַמֵּד מִנְצָר שְׂרָשִׁיָּה כִּגּוֹ וַיָּבֵא אֶל-הַחִיָּל וַיָּבֵא בְּמַעוֹל מֶלֶךְ הַצָּפוֹן וַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם וְהַחֲזִיק:

Type 2 - Narrativised Metaphors

1. Judges 9:7b-20

One of the classic narrativisations of the KING IS A TREE metaphor, Jotham characterises his opponents as trees in search of a king to reign over them. The different types of trees to whom they submit their request represent different *types* of kings. Ultimately, their choice of a thorn bush (טט) says much for Jotham's conception of Abimelech. While the allegory serves a rhetorical function independent of the specific trope employed, the choice of arboreal imagery to depict kingship is informed by that particular trope and its ubiquity in ancient Israelite thought.

2. 2 Kings 14:9-10

The imagery employed in Jehoash's rebuff of Amaziah bears strong resemblances to the allegory of Jotham in Judges 9. Here too, Jehoash utilises arboreal imagery in order to depict the differences between different *types* of kings and their relative capabilities.

3. Ezekiel 31:1-17

This oracle in Ezekiel contains elements that were likely predicated on slightly different metaphors. The final form of the text, as it appears in the book of Ezekiel, demonstrates an effort at bringing the entire oracle under the rubric of the one trope. An appreciation of this trope's function within the overall schema will indicate once more the means by which it can simultaneously serve as a characterisation of physical and metaphysical qualities.

4. Daniel 4:7-24

Unlike the allegories in Isaiah and Ezekiel, the lengthy narrativisation of this trope in Daniel 4 is of a tripartite structure, indicating not only the allegory and its analogue, but its swift actualisation as well. All three of these components bear upon one another in terms of the arboreal imagery that they employ, with the second and third adding constraints upon our interpretation of the imagery within the first section. The function of the trope within this passage is predominantly metaphysical.

Type 3 - Metaphorical Complexes

1. Numbers 24:5-9

Balaam's third oracle employs a number of different tropes, their vehicles stemming from different and occasionally incompatible domains. Only two of these tropes receive narrative extension: THE ISRAELITE DWELLINGS ARE TREES and GOD IS [THE HORNS OF] AN OX. Tropes that function in an unremarked capacity are GOD IS A LION and THE KING IS A TREE - that latter trope arising as part of the narrative extension of the DWELLINGS ARE TREES metaphor.

2. Isaiah 10:33-11:10

Text-critical considerations will lead us to conclude that the opening two verses (10:33-34) were originally separate to the oracle in 11:1-10, but that the final form of the text a metaphorical complex that spans 10:33-11:10. The manner in which that trope simultaneously informs the presentation of God's furious conquest of the Assyrians and of the prophet's expectations of peace reveals its capacity for both physical and qualitative application.

3. Isaiah 14:4-19

Arboreal imagery features strongly within Isaiah's condemnation of the Babylonian king. Of the tropes employed within this passage, THE PEOPLE ARE TREES is the most explicit and the one to receive the greatest narrativisation. The trope, THE KING IS A TREE, is alluded to on more than one occasion, both in terms of a king's being felled and in terms of his subsequent decomposition on the forest floor. The Masoretic reading that the Babylonian king is like a loathsome branch (כנצר נתעב) is textually problematic, but contributes to the arboreal schema in important ways.

4. Isaiah 37:23-29

In this oracle, directed against the Assyrian king, the two tropes to receive the greatest narrative extension are THE PEOPLE ARE GRASS, THE KING IS A LUMBERJACK and THE KING IS A WILD BEAST. The trope, THE KING IS A TREE, receives narrative extension only insofar as it can be inferred from a close reading of the overall schema. As we shall see, an analysis of this oracle leads strongly to the conclusion that this trope is not only operating in the background, but that its function informs the entirety of the text.

5. Ezekiel 17:3-24

A classic metaphorical complex, Ezekiel's indictment of Zedekiah and his prophecy of a future kingdom employs multiple tropes from distinct and incompatible domains. In his depiction of the Judean king, Ezekiel relies both upon THE KING IS A TREE and THE KING IS A VINE, while in his depiction of the Babylonian and Egyptian kings he employs THE KING IS AN EAGLE. His similarly varied depiction of the protagonists' locations adds additional colour to the allegory, while the detailed analogue provides constraints that assist us in our interpretation of the various tropes within it.

6. Ezekiel 19:1-14

Ezekiel's lament for Jehoahaz and Jehochin, the exiled kings of Judah, employs two different tropes in a complex arrangement. In the oracle's first part, THE KING IS A LION governs two different discourses, while in the second part the one discourse is governed by the trope, THE KING IS A VINE. Both tropes receive extensive narrativisation, although their precise relationship with one another and the means by which they are mutually informative is not straightforward.

7. Lamentations 4:19-20

Within these two verses, the author employs no fewer than six different metaphorical tropes in his depiction of both the enemies of the Judeans and of the Judean king. The three tropes employed for their enemies (ENEMIES ARE [SWIFTER THAN] EAGLES, ENEMIES ARE FIRE and ENEMIES ARE HUNTERS) are in turn paralleled by the three tropes employed for their king (THE KING IS A BREATH, THE KING IS AN ANIMAL and THE KING IS A TREE). As we shall see, the manner in which these different tropes interact with one another provides a high degree of mutual informativeness.

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§3.2 - The Metaphorical Complex in Isaiah

משל הוא הדבר שאינו מובן כמשמעו, וכן בזה:

David Qimhi, Isaiah 14:4 (s.v. משל)

Isaiah 10:33-11:10 constitutes a complex of arboreal and zoological vehicles, metaphorically describing the destruction of an enemy nation (10:33-34), the ascension of a Judean king (11:1-5 and 10), and the era of peace that will be ushered in by his reign (11:6-9). While some have argued that metaphors are, in themselves, a feature of textual ambiguity¹, we find that the primary ambiguity here is at the structural level instead. Such structural polysemy is a hallmark of the prophetic literature, joining a given unit of text to its surrounding context in a variety of different ways, and even allowing for its being further subdivided within itself².

Unlike other complexes that we have considered, the degree to which this passage originally constituted more than one text is beyond debate. It stands to reason that the reception of these oracles at the times of their respective composition did not necessarily rely upon their juxtaposition with one another, and yet it is as juxtaposed texts that they have been transmitted. To deny any significance to the manner in which they have been combined would be to reduce the editorialisation of Isaiah to a haphazard process, and to strip those responsible of all deliberation and intent.

At the same time, while the locus of the metaphor in its current form is this passage as a whole, it would be unwise to ignore the fact that a measure of historical context will necessarily bear upon our interpretation of the metaphors within it. As Nielsen notes, the structural delineation of a unit of text in any corpus necessarily affects the manner in which it

1. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1966), 2; Israel Scheffler, *Beyond the Letter: A Philosophical Inquiry into Ambiguity, Vagueness, and Metaphor in Language* (London: Routledge, 1979), 79ff; David H. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

2. Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature", in Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi (eds.), *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 276-297 (288).

is read, as does the manner in which it is connected with its literary cotext³. A recognition that this passage involves more than one textual unit demands of us that we pay some attention to differing theories that concern its compositional history.

This requirement is particularly strong in the case of Isaiah 10:33-11:1, since it is only by making the case that the final verses of chapter 10 belong to the same oracle as is found in chapter 11 that we can assert the existence of a metaphorical complex. As such, our analysis of this passage will be preceded by remarks that justify our approach to it as a single unit - and those remarks will focus in particular on the connection between 10:33-34 and 11:1.

In Isaiah 10:33-11:10, we have a number of different possible delineations, depending on the potential independence of 10:33-34 from the material that directly precedes it, the compositional history of 11:1-9, the relationship between 11:10 and the following six verses, and the potential independence of both 10:33-34 and 11:10 from the passage (11:1-9) that they circumscribe. In order to provide a detailed metaphorical analysis of this passage, we shall commence with a brief assessment as to the position of those units, relative to both their immediate and their referential cotext, and with a view to theories that concern their historical provenance.

Ultimately, however, while it is incumbent upon us to recognise that the text in its original and hypothetical form may have conveyed nuances different to those that the text in its final form communicates, it is with the final form of the text that we shall concern ourselves. As such, our analysis shall treat of 10:33-11:10 as a single unit of text, defined by its utilisation of a specific arboreal trope and extracted from the book of Isaiah as it exists in its *present* arrangement. Our metaphorical analysis will focus in on the frames of the individual metaphors employed within this section of text, defined as the "minimal unit[s] which establish... the incongruity"⁴ between vehicle and tenor.

3. So, for example, Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT Supp. 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 123. See too Aaron, who notes in this regard that "text... is neither an independent repository for objective meanings nor a reservoir for potentially limitless interpretations", *op.cit.* 7.

4. Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 24.

It is evident from even a cursory reading of chapter 10 that the extent to which its final two verses follow on from the preceding material will affect their interpretation greatly. Furthermore, the precise determination of the import of 10:33-34 is critical to an interpretation of the ensuing poem in chapter 11, since both the placement and the structure of 11:1-10 invite us to relate the metaphors within it to those that feature at the end of the previous chapter. The image of a forest being felled, when coupled with the image of a shoot growing from the stump of a single tree, is contrastive and provokes an emotional response⁵.

In commencing her analysis of this passage, Nielsen remarks upon the different ways in which its structural integrity might be established. In particular, she contrasts the perspectives of J. Vermeylen and Hermann Barth, both of whom recognise the independence of 10:33-34 from that which precedes it, and both of whom construe the foregoing passage as comprising a textual unit that commences with the latter part of verse 27⁶. As a demonstration of just how radically such segmentation of the passage might affect its construal, Nielsen shows how Vermeylen and Barth arrive at opposing interpretations. Where the former sees the "forest" as a metaphor for the Assyrians, the latter sees it as a metaphor for the Jerusalem aristocracy instead⁷.

Barth is not alone in configuring the tenor as a Judean entity. By establishing the original independence of these verses from the rest of chapter 10, Hans Wildberger also suggests that

5. So, for example, Marvin Sweeney, who notes that 10:27-11:9 "contrasts the coming fall of the Assyrian monarch and the rise of the Davidic king"; Marvin A. Sweeney, "Dating Prophetic Texts", in *Hebrew Studies* 48 (2007), 55-73 (57).

6. Nielsen, *op.cit.* 125-126. For other scholars that construe 10:27b-32 as a discrete textual unit, separate from the two verses that conclude the chapter, cf. Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (trans. David Green; London: SPCK, 1970), 365 and 367; George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I-XXXIX* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1962), 206-207. For scholars who understand 10:33-34 as being more intimately connected with the preceding passage, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel: Revised and Enlarged* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 103; S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965), 210; Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (trans. Peter R. Ackroyd; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 307-308; R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1969), 783. Note that while these scholars construe the passage as ending with verse 34, they each hold differing opinions as regards where in chapter 10 the passage begins.

7. Nielsen, *op.cit.* 125.

its original import was the Judean elite⁸, Kaiser sees it as a reference to the Judean people⁹, and Nielsen sees it as having been written about a Judean king¹⁰. Even in the event that we were to adopt such a perspective, it stands to reason that the editor responsible for the placement of this passage was interested in reapplying its message to contemporary circumstances, but the separation of these verses from their original literary context makes the ascertaining of those circumstances virtually impossible¹¹.

That the object of divine wrath is the Assyrian people is the standard interpretation of 10:33-34, and the one to which the present version of the text most explicitly lends itself¹². The Assyrians are unambiguously referred to at various points within the preceding passage: in 10:5-11 they are singled out as the instrument of God's fury, in 10:12-19 they are made subject to that fury themselves, and in 10:24-27 Israel is exhorted not to fear the Assyrians, for their day of reckoning is at hand. Ultimately, the fact that the metaphor of a forest is employed in verses 15-19 (in context, a figurative reference to Assyria) further leads us towards adopting Assyria as the forest's referent in verses 33-34.

Such an adoption suggests a monarchic setting for this passage's composition - be it authorial or editorial, since a prophecy that concerns the imminent demise of a hubristic Assyrian empire bears little rhetorical import after c.612 BCE¹³. It would thus seem that the most immediately compelling events to which it could be referring are Sargon's campaign against Ashdod and Jerusalem (c.711 BCE¹⁴) and Sennacherib's campaign against Jerusalem,

8. Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12* (Continental Commentary; trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 456.

9. Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 157.

10. Nielsen, *op.cit.* 136. Berges also adopts this perspective, but does so without divorcing this passage from the previous; on the contrary, the relationship between 10:5-15 and 10:33-34 is such that "Assyria" can now represent the enemies of God in general - in this case, the Davidic house itself; Ulrich F. Berges, *The Book of Isaiah: Its Composition and Final Form* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 46; trans. Millard C. Lind; Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012), 111-112. This is part of a general trend in Berges' analysis, by which tropes take on a figurative, rather than a literal connotation, and informs also his understanding of the king in 11:1ff as a reference to the community in exile: *op.cit.* 112-117.

11. Eissfeldt, *op.cit.* 312. See also Marvin A. Sweeney, "Dating Prophetic Texts", in *Hebrew Studies* 48 (2007), 54-73 (54).

12. So, for example, Driver, *op.cit.* 210; Eissfeldt, *op.cit.* 308; Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 103.

13. Sweeney, "Prophetic Texts", 58.

14. S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965),

Ashkelon and Ekron (c.701 BCE¹⁵). In both of these events, an Assyrian regent led an army against the city of Jerusalem, in which context this oracle might presage the city's salvation and the deaths of those who sought to invade it¹⁶.

Since 11:1 in its present form is a direct continuation of 10:33-34, as is made evident by the continuation of sustained arboreal imagery, it makes sense to include it in our analysis of both 10:33-34 and 11:1-10. But since it is evident that these two metaphorical clusters have completely different tenors, we shall analyse them separately from one another before considering the import of their having been combined.

210-211; Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (trans. Peter R. Ackroyd; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 312; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 406.

15. Eissfeldt, *op.cit.* 308; Driver, *op.cit.* 210; Nielsen, *op.cit.* 125 and 137; Christopher R. Seitz, "Isaiah, Book of (First Isaiah)", in *ABD* 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 472-488 (481); Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 29 and 91ff; Berges, *op.cit.* 112.

16. For problems with these dates, and compelling evidence in favour of the text's addressing the invasion of Judah in 734/733, see Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimite Crisis* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 274-281. For our purposes, the precise conflict is of less importance than is a recognition that the tenor in this passage is the Assyrian armies.

§3.2.1 - The Sprouting of a New King

וזה שנ' בישעיה וגר זאב עם כבש ונמר עם גדי ירבץ משל וחידה.

MT, Melakhim u-Milhamoteihem 12:1

Isaiah 10:33-11:10 constitutes a metaphorical complex: the final two verses of the tenth chapter employ the imagery of a forest as representative of the Assyrian people (THE NATION IS A TREE), while the subsequent oracle in chapter 11 employs the imagery of a tree as representative of the future Judean king (THE KING IS A TREE), together with zoological imagery that concerns the period of his reign. In order to understand the import of the arboreal imagery within this passage it is crucial that we recognise its function as part of a metaphorical complex, and that we allow the interaction of its various tropes to govern its meaning.

Isaiah 10:33-11:1

10:33 הַגָּה הָאֵדוּן? הֲנֹה צְבָאוֹת מְסַעֵף פְּאֲרֵה בְּמַעֲרָצָה וְרָמֵי הַקֹּמָה גְּדוּלְעִים וְהַגְּבֹהִים יִשְׁפְּלוּ:

34 וְנִקַּף סִבְגֵי תֵינֵר בְּבַרְזֵל וְהִלְכְּנוּן בְּאֲצִיר יְפוּל:

11:1 וַיֵּצֵא הַטֵּר מִגִּזְע יֵשִׁי וַיִּצְרַח מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה:

10:33 Look, the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the tallest trees will be cut down, and the lofty will be brought low.

34 He will hack down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall.

11:1 A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Isaiah 10:33-11:1

Limiting our analysis for the moment to Isaiah 10:33-11:1, we have here a complex of metaphors that includes seven distinct frames. I produce the passage below in the translation of the NRSV, enclosing each individual frame in parentheses:

Look, [the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, will lop the boughs with terrifying power];

[the tallest trees will be cut down],

and [the lofty will be brought low].

[He will hack down the thickets of the forest with an ax],

and [Lebanon with a majestic one¹⁷ will fall].

[A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse],

and [a branch shall grow out of his roots].

The first four of these frames feature a cotextual incongruity only - which is to say that were they situated differently they might be satisfactorily parsed as literal descriptions of the deity's destruction of a forest. The fifth frame invites metaphorical interpretation by virtue of the unexplicated referent of אדיר ("a majestic one"), but the sixth and seventh frames both feature examples of incongruity at a textual level. "Stump of Jesse" and "his [Jesse's] roots" not only signify the presence of a non-literal phrase but encourage us to similarly interpret the arboreal references at their commencement ("shoot" / "branch") as metaphors.

Before subjecting this passage to a metaphorical analysis, it is important to make some syntactic observations about its structure. Since the passage as a whole is connected to that which precedes it by means of the particle הנה, and since this particle serves the additional purpose of drawing attention in some fashion *to* this passage, we must consider how this particle is functioning here and what propositional content, if any, it might convey.

17. Thus following NRSV's construal of the Hebrew text.

In actual fact, the precise semantic construal of הנה has long been controversial¹⁸. Indeed, when it comes to this particular particle, there appear to be very few things on which grammarians can be said to agree with one another. It has been defined variously as a demonstrative interjection¹⁹, a deictic interjection²⁰, a demonstrative adverb²¹, a presentative adverb²², and even as a predicator of existence²³. If there is anything on which scholars are in agreement, it may be that the particle is cognate with the Arabic *inna* (إِنَّ)²⁴, which is defined by Wright as an adverbial particle that adds assertative force to the following text²⁵, that the Hebrew term likewise adds a degree of nuance to the passage that it introduces, and that it cannot always be translated as "behold"²⁶.

Concerning the precise manner in which it succeeds in this regard, there is little agreement on the nature of the force that it brings to the passage, the passage's subsequent interpretation, or even on techniques for translating (or not translating) the particle in question²⁷. McCarthy, for example, indicates no fewer than nine different uses of הנה in a range of different clause types, concluding that it performs a wide variety of functions, "parallel [to] just about all the

18. C.H.J. van der Merwe, "Discourse Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Grammar", in Robert D. Bergen (ed.), *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics* (SIL, 1994), 13-49 (38); BHRG §44.3. For fairly exhaustive reviews of the historical treatment of this particle, cf: Carl M. Follingstad, "Hinnēh and Focus Function with Application to Tyap", in *JOTT* 7:3 (1995), 1-24 (3-6); Carl M. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle כִּי (ki)* (SIL International, 2001), 608.

19. Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), s.v. הנה; GKC §147b.

20. HALOT, s.v. הנה.

21. IBHS §17.2b; BDB, s.v. הנה.

22. JM §102k, 105d.

23. Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), 168.

24. C.H.J. van der Merwe, "A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on הנה in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth", in *Hebrew Studies* 48 (2007), 101-140 (107); Takamitsu Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1985), 137-138.

25. William Wright, *Arabic Grammar* (3rd ed; New York: Dover Publications, 2005), i283-285; Muraoka, *op.cit.* 137. For the suggestion that הנה is cognate with Akkadian *ennu* and Ugaritic *hn*, see Sabatino Moscati et al, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (ed. Sabatino Moscati; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), §15.8; Van der Merwe, "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 108.

26. Van der Merwe, "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 102; a notable exception to the third of these points is GKC §100o, 105b.

27. Van der Merwe, "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 101-102.

various kinds of clauses"²⁸ prevalent in Biblical Hebrew. In a subsequent study of הנה (without the preformative *waw*), C.H.J. van der Merwe establishes no fewer than twelve different clause types, from which he concludes that the most "concrete" use of this particle is gestural - in particular, the pointing out of physical entities relative to the addressee²⁹.

The information to which the clause is pointing obviously need not be physical, as is borne out by the corpus. In this category, der Merwe mentions the possibility of its focusing attention on actions, events, states of affairs and the propositional content of other clauses³⁰ - an analysis more fully developed in a subsequent article with Cynthia Miller-Naudé³¹. Here they provide three different categories of lexical information pointed by הנה, only the first of which involves indicating an *entity*, the second and third being the pointing of cognitive effects or of propositions.

Even so far as the first category is concerned, while the entity on which the particle focuses attention might be concrete, it might also be a temporal entity: an event, or state of affairs. As such, Joshua 24:27 uses the particle to focus attention on a stone (הנה האבן הזאת), while Genesis 41:29 uses it to focus on approaching years of famine (הנה שבע שנים באות).³² In fact, of all circumstances in which the particle focuses attention on an entity³³, in only 113 instances³⁴ does the particle focus it on a physical object (83x) or that object's location (30x), while in 308 instances³⁵ the particle focuses information onto an event or a state of affairs.

28. Dennis J. McCarthy, "The Uses of *w'hinnēh* in Biblical Hebrew", in *Biblica* 61 (1980), 330-342 (341).

29. Van der Merwe, "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 122 and 138. See also IBHS §16.3.5b; Muraoka, *op.cit.* 140. In maintaining the literal meaning as the "most concrete", der Merwe is explicitly subscribing to a principle of cognitive linguistics, whereby the development of the meaning of lexical items moves from the concrete to the abstract. In particular, cf: "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 105.

30. Van der Merwe, "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 138.

31. Although note that the authors of this study still maintain that "the most basic reading" is where the entity being pointed out is of a concrete nature: Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and C.H.J. van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity in Biblical Hebrew", in *Hebrew Studies* 52 (2011), 53-81 (54 and 61).

32. Both of these examples are from the study: Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 62 and 68.

33. 421 times, acc. to the article, out of 1060 instances of הנה - or 39.7% of the total.

34. 10.67% of the total.

35. Or fully 29% of the total.

When one considers the fact that הנה indicates propositional content in 271 clauses³⁶ and the cognitive effects of an observation or a proposition in a further 265³⁷, the assertion that the particle is a discourse marker, the purpose of which is to comment on textual content from a meta-level³⁸ appears highly justified. Indeed, if we can accept the figures presented by Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, the focusing of attention onto something of an intangible, propositional or entirely figurative nature accounts for almost 90% of the particle's repertoire.

In calling special attention to a passage, it may add a certain degree of vividness³⁹, or may simply emphasise what Lambdin terms "the here-and-now-ness" of the situation⁴⁰. While the notion that it predicates existence might be controversial⁴¹, the basic fact that it reinforces an affirmation on some level appears undeniable. From a discourse perspective, it frequently functions as a "change of topic" marker⁴², and would likewise appear to be bringing new information, not previously available to the addressee - or, at the least, information that is "counterexpected, counterdesired or overlooked"⁴³.

Van der Merwe refers to this latter feature as the "newsworthiness" of the particle⁴⁴, while McCarthy terms it "excited perception"⁴⁵. This is a quality that Muraoka explains by positing the particle's origin as a demonstrative or a deictic⁴⁶. This "newsworthiness", while it *does* involve the speaker in the content of the assertion, may not testify to his opinion as regards

36. 25.6% of the total; Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 74-79.

37. 25% of the total; Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 70-74.

38. BHRG §11.9, 44.1; HALOT, s.v. הנה.

39. IBHS §37.6f, 40.2.1b.

40. Lambdin, *ibid.*

41. See JM §164a n8.

42. GBHS §4.5.

43. Follingstad, "Hinnēh and Focus Function", 22. See also BHRG §44.3. For a parallel function of the Arabic particle, see Wolfdietrich Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic* (3rd ed; trans. Jonathan Rodgers; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), §339.

44. So, for example, Van der Merwe, "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 122.

45. McCarthy, *op.cit.* 332-333. For a similar appraisal, cf: Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 62-63 and 91ff.

46. Muraoka, *op.cit.* 138.

the assertion's *veracity*. As such, הנה might be viewed as a focus particle, rather than a modal⁴⁷, or something midway between the two⁴⁸.

It is in respect of the proposition's newsworthiness that the linguistic category of mirativity is relevant. First coined by Scott Delancey⁴⁹, mirativity denotes the grammatical marking of a proposition that is in some fashion newsworthy to the *speaker* of the utterance. It is distinct from the grammatical marking of a proposition's newsworthiness to the *addressee*, from the speaker's involvement in the proposition's truth content, and perhaps even from evidentiality: the "grammatical marking of the source of evidence" for the speaker's proposition⁵⁰.

It is the conclusion of Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe that הנה is primarily a lexical marker of mirativity, and that the non-mirative uses - such as where the information is deemed newsworthy to the addressee only - are to be explained as shifts of meaning in the evolution of this particle's function⁵¹. While they cite Isaiah 10:33 as an instance in which הנה marks propositional content that is only newsworthy to the addressee⁵², the extent to which the speaker's surprise might be conveyed in this instance by other means requires a more detailed consideration of the other syntactic features of this clause.

Indeed, the range of forms that the particle can take, its range of positions in different clauses and the varied syntagmatic arrangement of its cotext are all indication that an analysis of its function in *any* given instance must be dependent upon an analysis of both its morphology and syntactic arrangement⁵³. In Isaiah 10:33a, we have an unsuffixed הנה fronting a participial phrase: הנה האדון... מסעף פארה במערצה.

47. BHRG §44.3.

48. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint*, 608-609.

49. Scott DeLancey, "Mirativity: The grammatical marking of unexpected information", in *Linguistic Typology* 1:1 (1997), 33-52. See also Scott DeLancey, "The Mirative and Evidentiality", in *Journal of Pragmatics* 33 (2001), 369-382.

50. DeLancey, "The Mirative and Evidentiality", 369; Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 57.

51. Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 80-81.

52. Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 68n51.

53. Muraoka, *op.cit.* 140; Lambdin, *op.cit.* 169.

In such an arrangement, there is broad consensus that the participle denotes something that is either occurring presently⁵⁴ or is to occur in the immediate future⁵⁵. As such, it is a construction that appears frequently in prophecy, where it can convey threats to God's (or the prophet's) enemies, and immanent rewards to the community of the faithful⁵⁶. Whether it is used in this fashion because the event described is imminent, or whether it is used in this fashion in order to indicate the irreversibility of the event being promised is unclear⁵⁷. Furthermore, as will be made evident in our analysis below, the bivalency of the participle's temporality in this clause (current action, or imminent action) can be exploited for rhetorical effect.

§3.2.1.1 - Isaiah 10:33-34

10:33a - הנה האדון יהוה צבאות מסעף פארה במערצה

A linguistic analysis of 10:33a demonstrates how the author uses a focus particle and a participle in order to concentrate the addressee's attention on the actions described within it, and thus provide a sense of active immediacy. Having enumerated the places that the approaching army has already reached on their way to Jerusalem (10:28-32), the sudden transition into violent and immediate action is striking. But while we might be led to expect a description of the slaughter of Judeans, we are instead presented with a radical reversal of fortunes.

The deity is introduced as an active participant in the story, in a manner somewhat different to his function in the preceding verses. While 10:5-19 features a number of clauses in which God is described as bringing ruin upon the Assyrians, his involvement in their demise is less direct. He will *send* wasting sickness (10:16), or he will somehow *become* a burning fire (10:17). By contrast, in 10:33, God is personified as a tree-feller, acting directly against the forest with a degree of personal involvement in the fate of its trees.

54. GKC §116n; IBHS §37.6d.

55. GBHS §4.5.1; Williams §214; Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 65-70; Van der Merwe, "Cognitive Linguistic Perspective", 127-128; BDB, s.v. הנה; IBHS §37.6d and 40.2.1b; GKC §116p.

56. Donald Slager, "The Use of 'Behold' in the Old Testament", in OPTAT 3:1 (1989), 50-79 (58).

57. Miller-Naudé and Van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity", 65-66.

There are two parts to this first metaphorical frame, the first of which has an explicated tenor but an inferred vehicle, and the second of which has an explicated vehicle but an inferred tenor: THE LORD [IS A TREE-FELLER] + [ASSYRIA IS] A FOREST. These two metaphorical constructs remain constant throughout the first five frames, which comprise verses 33-34. In addition to colouring our construal of the two frames in verse 34, the explicated tenor in the first metaphor provides a means of interpreting the second and third frames in the same verse, which are phrased in the passive voice and which otherwise lack sufficient lexical information for their interpretation.

The term used to describe the deity is **הַאֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**. This martial designation is found several times in Isaiah⁵⁸ and calls attention both to God's militaristic prowess, as well as to the ironical nature of the Assyrian king's hubris. While the lord of Assyria might have deemed himself a formidable general, his opponent was *the* Lord, YHWH of armies. As such, the characterisation of God as a feller of trees works not only as an indicator of his dreadful power, but also serves to underscore the passivity of his foes. The Assyrians might have enjoyed success while God was on their side, but arrayed against him they are as harmless as trees beneath the axe of a lumberjack.

In describing the deity's behaviour, the author employs lexemes that are uncommon in the Hebrew literature. The verb, of root **סָעַף**, occurs nowhere else in the *piel*, but is presumably denominative of the noun, **סַעִיף** ("branch"). It is generally translated as "lop off boughs", but might also refer to cleaving them or to chopping them up, on analogy with the Arabic cognate⁵⁹. As such, the depiction of God's actions has an additional element of violence to it, since he is not only removing the branches with his axe but is hacking them into smaller pieces as well.

Although the structure of the passage is such that we are invited to compare this forest with the one mentioned in 10:18, it is noteworthy that the forest itself is not mentioned explicitly until the verse after this one. In 10:33, what we instead find is a series of tropes that are

58. Nielsen, *op.cit.* 129.

59. BDB, s.v. **סָעַף**. Note that HALOT proposes a derivation Arabic *sa'f*, "contemptible".

designed to allude to the forest that has yet to be named⁶⁰. In 10:33a, the term used is פְּאָרָה: a *hapax legomenon* in the singular, but one that appears in the plural six times in Ezekiel⁶¹ - all metaphorical references to various kings.

The word is of doubtful etymology, but is reminiscent of פֶּאֶר ("beauty, adornment") and, as such, is rendered by some of the ancient witnesses to the text as a reference to illustrious or glorious people⁶². Each of these translations suffer from the same defect, in that they remove the metaphorical content of the clause. The Hebrew term, on the basis of its function within the passages in which it appears, is usually translated as boughs. As such, the term constitutes a synecdochic reference to the forest that is mentioned in 10:44.

The adverbial qualifier that concludes this first frame underscores the fury of God's violence. A *hapax legomenon*, מַעֲרִיצָה may derive from the root עֲרַץ: a verb that denotes trembling, and which may either indicate the manner in which one trembles when furious, or the act of inspiring terror in others⁶³. Its resemblance to מַעֲצָדָה (an unattested feminine form of מַעֲצָד, "axe") has led some to suppose that it is an error for the same, and that the prefixed *bet* is functioning instrumentally instead of adverbially. It may also be the case that the choice of word was designed in order to invoke the comparison with the tree-feller's implement, which is otherwise not mentioned explicitly until the following verse⁶⁴.

The second and third frames are both phrased passively, and while the second mentions the forest but not the one who denudes it of its trees, the third mentions neither of them explicitly and relies entirely upon the former two for its construal.

60. For the heightening of imagery conveyed by this feature, see Nielsen, *op.cit.* 135.

61. Five of these attestations are in Ezek 31, and concern metaphorical depictions of the Assyrians and (by extension) the Egyptian Pharaoh; the remaining instance occurs in Ezek 17, and concerns the Judean monarchy. For the latter, see my analysis in §3.1.2.

62. LXX = ἐνδοξοῦς; Peshitta = מַעֲרִיצָה; Targum = רָמִי.

63. The former - albeit with the nuance of trembling in *fear* - is attested six times in the corpus, and primarily after a negative preposition (Deut 1:29, 7:21, 20:3, 31:6 and Jos 1:9), although see Job 31:34. The latter, in the *gal*, appears five times: Isa 2:19, 2:21, 47:12; Ps 10:18; Job 13:25.

64. So, for example, Nielsen, *op.cit.* 129.

10:33b follows on directly from the content in the first half of the verse and expresses a degree of synonymous parallelism with the same. The proposition in the first clause is mirrored by the proposition in the second, but without attention paid to the agent. Furthermore, the forest is again described synecdochically - this time as a single tree, for which the author employs a metonym that denotes its (formerly) upright stature. Rather than speak of the deity's hacking of boughs, this second frame focuses on the branches themselves, describing them as both the branches of the upright (or lofty) tree, and as the branches that are, or will be, hewn down.

The word employed for the branches derives from the root *רומ*, and denotes a high or lofty status. It appears in references to people of great social stature, to monuments of glorious construction and to trees of impressive height. Its function in this clause is ironic, given that it has the verb *גדועים* ("hewn down") applied to it. The image of hewn branches provides a double irony: the tree from which the branches have been hewn is referred to as *קומה*, but by virtue of this clause's mirroring of the first one (and by that clause's synecdochic allusion to an entirely denuded forest), we know that this tree is anything but majestic. By employing terms like *רם* and *קומה* to denote the hacked branches of a fallen tree, we are reminded of the erstwhile splendour of the metaphor's referent and of the power of the agent of their destruction.

We noted above that a participial phrase introduced by the deictic particle *הנה* might denote imminent action or the description of an occurrence happening concurrently with the utterance. This second clause, whether intentionally or otherwise, exploits the temporal ambiguity by employing a passive participle instead of a *niphal*. Had the verb appeared as *ויגדעו*⁶⁵, its function as an imperfective might have lent itself more overtly to having a future time referent. As a passive participle, it is also open to being understood adjectivally.

65. Unattested, but compare this verb in the *niphal* perfective: Isa 14:12 and 22:25.

The final clause in 10:33, and the third metaphorical frame, provides neither a reference to the agent of the forest's denudation, nor any explicit reference to the forest itself. In this instance, the term used to allude to the forest is a metonym; rather than focus on the trees that comprise the forest, the term *הגבהים* focuses instead on a quality that those trees once possessed.

This clause constitutes a continuation of the synonymous parallelism that was constructed by the previous, but its relationship to the previous clause is incremental, rather than explicative. That is to say, while the second and third frames together provide a mirroring of the first one, the third frame also constitutes a reformulation of the second, but one that goes further in its description of the forest's destruction.

Where the second frame referred to the branches of the fallen tree as *רמי הקומה* ("the lofty ones of the upright", were we to adopt a translation that indicated the figurative connotations at the expense of good English), this third frame simply terms them *הגבהים*: "the exalted ones". This goes considerably further than the previous clause in that *הגבהים* need not relate to branches of a tree, but serves frequently throughout the literature as a metonym for wealthy and influential people. Importantly, it also appears in Isaiah 5:15 as a denotation for the haughty - a fitting allusion, given the presumed referent of the metaphors in 10:33-34⁶⁶.

As such, this third frame almost reads as a translation, or interpretation, of the previous two. It functions on two levels: both as an intensification of the second frame, which together with it provides a reformulation of the first, and as an interpretation of the metaphorical construct presented in the first two frames. Where they refer to trees being laid low and branches being hacked into pieces, this third frame makes clear that what they are alluding to is the humbling of the haughty and the humiliating of the proud.

66. For the general lexical connections between these two verses and the oracle in Isa 2:9ff, see Nielsen, *op.cit.* 129. In addition to *גבה*, she also remarks upon the function of *רום*, and of *שפל* (when applied to the humiliations of the haughty) - *op.cit.* 129-130.

Were we to suggest that the pronouncements in this passage all refer to future (albeit imminent) events, then this third frame is as contrastive as the previous. There, the second frame's stipulation that "the branches of the tree are/will be hewn down" was contrastive by virtue of the associated commonplaces held by the words employed for the branches of the tree (and ironic by virtue of the information presented in the first frame). Here, the stipulation that "the high ones will be laid low" serves a similar purpose.

While the imperfective certainly lends itself very strongly to an interpretation of this passage as denoting future events, its frequent occurrence as a "progressive non-perfective" allows the issue of timing to remain potentially ambiguous⁶⁷. In line with the possibility that these pronouncements denote activities occurring as the addressee reads them, the assertion that "the high ones will be laid low" can also be construed as saying that "the high ones *are* laid low". Taking the term in its etymological sense, whereby גבה refers to physical stature, this third frame presents us with an oxymoron, the irony of which draws greater attention to the false hubris of its subject.

The relationship of the fourth and the fifth frames to the three that precede them is similar to the relationship of the second and third to the fourth: by mirroring the content, they provide something of a synonymous parallelism. What is more, as we shall see, the relationship of the fifth frame to the fourth is similar to the relationship of the third to the second: it not only reformulates the content of the fourth, but does so with a degree of intensification as well.

10:34a - ונקף סבכי היער בברזל

If the prefix-conjugation verb in the third frame allowed for a degree of ambiguity as regards whether it was an imperfective or a progressive non-perfective, that ambiguity is present all the more so in the verb that opens the fourth frame. A parsing of the preformative *waw* as a *waw*-conjunctive would make of the verb a perfective; a parsing of the *waw* as a *waw*-consecutive, however, would make of it a *weqatal*, which in predictive text denotes future occurrences⁶⁸.

67. IBHS §31.3, etc.

68. Robert E. Longacre, "Weqatal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Prose: A Discourse-modular Approach", in Robert D. Bergen (ed.), *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics* (SIL International, 1994), 50-98 (51-52).

The verb that opens this frame is ambiguous in another respect as well. It can be understood, with some precedent, as a *niphal*⁶⁹, or it can be understood as a *piel*. The difference is significant, since a construal of the verb as a passive will continue the trend that commenced in the second frame, by which the agent of the forest's destruction is no longer being mentioned, while a construal of the verb as an active will make this frame more overtly synonymous with the first.

Irrespective of how one construes the verb (active/passive, present/future), the subject is here explicated for the first time: the thickets of the forest (סבכי היער). The word for "thicket" is, in this form, a *dis legomenon*, and is etymologically related to a word that denotes interweaving. The only other occurrence is in Genesis 22, where it is in a "סבך" that Abraham discovers a ram, caught by its horns.

As a word that denotes entanglement, the reference to the forest here creates a somewhat different impression than do the allusions to the forest in the previous three frames. There, the focus was on the stateliness of its trees, while here the focus is on their number and motley arrangement. The image calls to mind the fact that פארה, which functions as a synecdoche for the forest in the first frame, can denote vines as well as cedars.

In this instance, the implement used to cut through the thickets is mentioned explicitly at the end of the clause. If we were to suppose, therefore, that this fourth frame is entirely synonymous with the first, we might be led to suggest that מערצה in that first frame was indeed an error for מעצדה, since the preformative *bet* in this fourth frame does function instrumentally, with a metonymic description of the tree-feller's axe.

One need not, however, be too quick to amend one unattested lexeme for another; the relationship between the first frame and the fourth can also serve to heighten the allusion that was present in that first frame, by which the furious anger of the deity also suggested to the mind the slightly homophonous term for a weapon. What is more, this interplay works both ways. If we are reminded of an axe when reading of God's anger, we may also be reminded of

69. Gray, *op.cit.* 211; BDB, s.v. נקף. For a sg niphal with plural referent, cf: GKC §145o.

his anger when reading of his axe. It is a feature of metaphorical passages that the set of associated commonplaces held by any term necessarily builds as the passage progresses and continues to inform the passage's reconstrual over subsequent readings of the text⁷⁰.

The fifth and final frame of this first complex is related to the fourth in much the same way that the third was related to the second. Together with the fourth, it provides a mirroring of the initial three, but with a greater degree of intensification than did the fourth. As such, while it is part of a synonymous parallelism, it also provides an incremental parallelism of its own.

והלבנון באדיר יפול - 10:34b

In this instance, the forest is referred to as הלבנון - itself a metaphor for a beautiful place, and one possessed of trees not only stately but possessing utility⁷¹. As such, it intensifies the utterance found in the previous frame, which referred only to "the thickets of the forest". Here, it is not merely a thickly-grown forest that is being destroyed, but the Lebanon itself! By utilising this term, the author also calls to mind the Assyrian tradition of travelling west in order to fell stately and magnificent trees⁷². The manner in which he does so, however, is both lexically and syntactically ambiguous.

The verb used is a simple prefix-conjugation, which again lends itself to being construed as an imperfective. In this instance, however, in addition to a certain degree of ambiguity as regards whether or not it functions as a progressive non-perfective, it is also worth noting that construing it as an imperfective will leave unaffected the temporal referent of the verbs in the preceding frames. The reference to the Lebanon being utterly denuded is so overtly an intensification of the previous passage that were the foregoing to be understood as describing an event happening concurrently with the utterance, the assertion that the Lebanon itself shall fall in the very imminent *future* might serve as a powerful coda.

70. Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Indiana University Press, 1984), 129.

71. See Nielsen, *op.cit.* 126-128.

72. 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* 128:4 (2009), 717-733.

Likewise ambiguous is the term, באדיר, which has provoked a number of hasty emendations due only to the difficulty of construal. Unlike other terms that have proven ambiguous or problematic, אדיר is neither obscure nor difficult to parse. On the contrary, the problem here resides in the preformative *bet*.

Understood as an instrumental of agency⁷³, the passage may suggest that the Lebanon will fall through the agency of the glorious one. In context, the referent would be האדון יהוה צבאות, mentioned explicitly in the first frame, and possibly alluded to in the fourth, depending on our construal of the verb. As we shall see, the placement of 11:1 relative to this passage will raise other connotations for the referent of this noun, in the event that the preformative *bet* is parsed in this fashion.

In the event, however, that the *bet* is parsed an adverb of accompaniment, the clause would instead be suggesting that the Lebanon will fall together *with* the glorious one. A macro-context that takes the rest of chapter 10 into account may lead us to construe the Assyrian king as the intended referent of this epithet, making it an ironic phrase and, again, contrastive. Like the branches and the trees, to which terms denoting height and grandeur have been applied together with verbs that denote destruction and lowness, we have here a noun that invokes splendour, contrasted with the general content of these five frames.

The ensuing poem does not decide for us which of these two construals might be the more apt in its present context. With the first construal, it provides an alternative referent; with the second, it provides an additional element of contrast to the Assyrian king's "splendour". Here it is contrasted with his ultimate degradation; there, it is contrasted with one who is truly splendrous.

73. IBHS §11.2.5d; Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 156. It is interesting that this construal appears to be omitted by GBHS §4.1.5.

§3.2.1.2 - Conclusion:

This first complex of five frames is disjoined from the previous text grammatically, thematically and stylistically. Grammatically, the fronted הנה marks this section as a change of topic⁷⁴ in which we are given a new focus. Thematically, there is a dramatic shift from describing an unnamed enemy who is marching towards Jerusalem, to recounting in violent and frenzied terms the deity's destruction of a forest. Stylistically, the list of toponyms that precedes this passage (while the enemy or the campaign may have been fictitious) is a literal list. At its most figurative construal, it may have referred to the *news* of the enemy approaching, rather than the enemy itself. The five clauses in 10:33-34, however, are clearly metaphorical.

As noted previously, the metaphorical import of these clauses is cotextually conveyed. As we shall see, that is something that differentiates them from the metaphorical tenors in 11:1ff. As these five are presented, they convey a theme that is elaborated in different ways, building a complex of metaphors rather than conveying a single metaphorical idea. This complex informs its own construal, such that a second reading might convey more nuance to its propositions than were conveyed at first glance.

So far as the tenors of the metaphor are concerned, God is characterised as impulsive and violent, his enemies unable to stand before him in his hour of wrath. He is typified as a tree-feller, but unlike a feller of trees is neither using the lumber nor the clearing. His motivation is anger and the utter destruction of the forest. His enemy, which from context is either the Assyrian king or the Assyrian army, is typified as impressive to behold but as ultimately helpless. Their former grandeur is emphasised repeatedly, and contrasted with their ultimate inability to save even themselves.

So far as the vehicles are concerned, we have the arboreal metaphor conveying both stateliness and passivity. Unlike various other instances of this trope in which the associated commonplaces of security, shade and utility might be exploited for rhetorical purposes, the commonplaces exploited by this metaphorical complex are aesthetic (height, girth, physical arrangement) and volitional (immobility, defencelessness). In the former instance, the

74. GBHS, §4.5.

metaphors yield an ironic comment on hubris, while in the latter they contrast with the agent of their destruction.

This vehicle - and, by extension, its unexplicated tenor - is the focus of the oracle. Such is conveyed both lexically and grammatically. Lexically, the trees are mentioned either explicitly (פארה, רמי הקומה, סבכי היער) or figuratively (הגבהים, הלבנון) in all five clauses, while the other vehicle is only mentioned explicitly in the first and fifth clauses (depending on our construal of באדיר), and possibly alluded to in the fourth clause if the verb is parsed as being in the active voice.

Grammatically, the trees are the subject of a verb in three or four of the five clauses (depending again on whether the verb in the fourth clause is parsed as active or passive). They are the direct object of the participle in the first clause, and may be either the direct object or the subject of the fourth.

As with the previous passage, the two frames in 11:1 are also disjoined from that which precedes them. This disjunction is communicated both thematically and figuratively. From a thematic perspective, there is an immediate shift from a prophecy of destruction (albeit the destruction of an enemy) to a prophecy of consolation: the ascension of a new king. Figuratively, this passage is distinct from the previous one also by virtue of its utilising a different arboreal metaphor. There, we witnessed the wanton destruction of an entire forest; here, we are privy to the rejuvenation of a single, unrelated tree.

While these disjunctive elements have led many to focus on the differences between these passages, their placement relative to one another conveys a contrastive theme. There is a destruction followed by a reconstitution, but while the object of the reconstitution and the object of the destruction are not the same, there is a clear causal relationship between the death of the one and the new life of the other. Now that the forest has been destroyed, this single tree can once more sprout.

It is in context of this causal connection that two elements of the *waw*-consecutive come into play. The first is that of logical succession⁷⁵, which creates the sense of immediate narrative progression. This underscores the relationship between the complex of metaphors in 10:33-34 and the two metaphorical frames in 11:1 - "The Lebanon will fall with/by the glorious one, [at which time] a shoot shall come forth", etc. A construal of the verb in 10:34b as having a future time referent makes of this complex likewise a prediction of an imminent event. A construal of the former as denoting concurrent action would serve to highlight the imminence of the new Davidic king without necessarily moving it into the realm of present activity.

The second feature of the *weqatal* is its ability to mark "a relative or absolute beginning" to a prophecy⁷⁶. It is in this grammatical bivalency that the term can both emphasise the relationship between the two complexes and preserve their independence from one another. In such a fashion, 10:33-11:1 functions as a distinct unit, as does 11:1-10. We shall remark upon this dual configuration of the text in more detail once we have analysed the rest of the passage in chapter 11.

§3.2.1.3 - Isaiah 11:1

11:1a ויצא חטר מגזע ישי -

In addition to the change of referent in this clause, the most striking difference between it and the foregoing five clauses lies in its only possessing the single metaphor, both parts of which are explicated within the passage itself: THE KING IS A TREE. For the vehicle, we have a variety of unambiguous nouns, but for the tenor (as we shall see) we have instead a circumlocutory phrase, pregnant with metaphorical potential.

In this first frame of the new complex, two arboreal terms can be found: גזע and חטר. The first of these (חטר) is a *dis legomenon*, only appearing outside of this context in Proverbs 14. It can be understood, on the basis of its Aramaic and Akkadian cognates, as referring to a branch⁷⁷.

75. IBHS §33.2.1; Thomas J. Finley and George Payton, "A Discourse Analysis of Isaiah 7-12", in JOTT 6:4 (1993), 317-335; etc.

76. See JM §119c, who cite this verse as an example of the *weqatal* commencing a new section.

77. Cf. René Labat, *Manuel d'épigraphie Akkadienne* - sign 295 (*ḥaṭtu*). Listed as baton, sceptre; also in John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* - "scepter, staff, stick, branch" (*ḥaṭtum*). Appears also in Hadad inscription (Gibson, #13 line 3 - vocalises it *ḥīṭōr*).

It is the term employed by Targum Onkelos for both שבט (Psalm 45:7) and מטת (Numbers 17:21)⁷⁸. It is markedly distinct for the terms employed for branches in the former passage, in which their great height and their impressive girth were emphasised. Here, the vehicle is somewhat more slender and fragile than those that we saw previously.

The second of these nouns (גזע) occurs only thrice within the corpus: twice in Isaiah (here and in 40:24) and once in Job (14:8). It derives from a word that may mean "sawn" or "cut into two". In its nominal form, therefore, it likely denotes the trunk of a felled tree. Unlike those trees that were felled in the previous five frames, this one has hope for salvation, for it is from this trunk itself that the branch will come forth.

Identifying the tenor of these vehicles can be done by inference only. The phrase גזע ישי, by its very incongruity, invites metaphorical interpretation directly. This feature of the sixth frame likewise distinguishes it from the former five, since their metaphorical potential was inferred cotextually only. What might "the trunk of Jesse" refer to?

It seems fairly obvious (or at least appears to provoke no disagreement) that Jesse is a reference to the father of David - the only person within the corpus to possess that name. To refer to the stump of Jesse would seem to imply that the Davidic dynasty has been terminated - an interpretation in accordance with post-exilic dates for the composition of this oracle. Such an interpretation is not necessary, however, since it might also indicate a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the king regnant, or pride in his successor⁷⁹.

As such, it may be the case that Jesse is chosen for the referent of the trunk in order to signal that the new king will not *just* be a descendent of David (or perhaps will not be a descendent of David at all), but is to be seen in some fashion as a *new* David.

78. Gray, *op.cit.* 221.

79. Martin Sweeney, "Dating Prophetic Texts", *Hebrew Studies* 48 (2007), 55-73.

This seventh frame (the second of our new complex) provides a synonymous parallelism with the previous. As such, the pronominal referent is doubtless ישׁי, although a more developmental reading is possible, if undesirable⁸⁰. Here, instead of speaking of a branch, we have another vehicle that likewise emphasises slenderness and fragility. The word נצר also appears only three times within the corpus: Isaiah 11:1 and 60:21, and Daniel 11:7. Interestingly, all three of these clauses are metaphors in which the word alludes to a particular king. This phenomenon is all the more striking when one considers the fact that Daniel 11 is otherwise free of overtly metaphorical language altogether - arboreal or otherwise.

In the previous clause, the verb employed lent itself to having a future time referent, and we see here as well that there is a prefix-conjugation almost certainly functioning as an imperfective. Here, however, the verb is of a more noticeably arboreal timbre, increasing the number of arboreal terms to five out of a mere seven words (שרש, נצר, גזע, חטר, and a verb of the root פרה). The last of these - the verb that denotes the growth of the shoot from Jesse's roots - has also a fructuous connotation. Where the other terms may emphasise fragility and youth, the verb פרה might allude as well to the bounty of this new king. Though he may be young, though there may be an element of delicacy to his present or his prophesied nature, there is also the promise of his performing great deeds or of yielding much progeny.

§3.2.1.4 - Conclusion:

We shall analyse these two clauses more fully in context of the oracle to which they serve as an introduction, but for now it is useful to consider the structural form of this first super-complex of metaphorical frames.

As we have already noted, it is clear that the five frames in 10:33-34 are distinct from the two frames in 11:1, thus forming two complexes of metaphors in oppositional relationship (A, and yet B). In the first of these two complexes, we find that the fourth and fifth frames constitute a reframing of the initial three, the fifth adding a degree of emphasis to the fourth

80. "A branch shall issue from the stump of Jesse and a sprout shall flower from its [the branch's] roots" is, to the best of my knowledge, unattested in translations of this passage.

and the second and third adding a degree of emphasis to the first. Similarly, in the second complex, which is comprised of only two frames, we find that the second frame constitutes a reframing of the first one:

- a [The Sovereign... will lop the boughs with terrifying power];
 - even more so,**
 - b [the tallest trees will be cut down],
 - which is to say,**
 - c [the lofty will be brought low].
- A
- all of which is to say,**
 - d [He will hack down the thickets of the forest with an axe];
 - even more so,**
 - e [Lebanon with/by a majestic one will fall].
- And yet,**
- f [A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse],
- B
- which is to say,**
 - g [a branch shall grow out of his roots].

As such, the overall structure of 10:33-11:1 might be characterised by the following equation:

$$[[a + [b = c]] = [d + e]], \text{ yet } [f = g],$$

where $[x + y]$ denotes the addition of emphasis, and $[x = y]$ a reframing.

Considering the metaphorical passage in such a fashion serves to highlight the oppositional relationship between the two complexes. The frames within the first complex are presented as a gradual intensification of a theme. The assertion that the Lord, YHWH of armies, will lop the boughs with terrifying power is commensurate with the claim that he will hack down the thickets of the forest with an axe, but it is the assertion that the tallest trees will be cut down

and that the lofty [trees/people] will be brought low (commensurate with the claim that the Lebanon, either with or by a "majestic one", will fall) that serves as the focus of the utterance.

The shift ("and yet...") to an utterance that speaks of a single shoot/branch growing from the stump/roots of a single tree is contrastive by virtue of its shift from a large-scale, militaristic metaphor replete with violent and cataclysmic language, in which the focus of the reader is drawn to the gradual intensification of the trope, to a small-scale metaphor of quiet rejuvenation, with language reminiscent of slenderness and fragility. As the metaphorical complex is thus structured, the hubris of the Assyrian king is being contrasted with the meekness and humility of the Judean monarch in such a fashion as to imply that meekness has greater lasting effect than does all the might of military power.

§3.2.2 - Isaiah 11:1-10

The following oracle comprises a metaphorical complex with imagery drawn chiefly from the semantic domains of trees and of animals. Just as we witnessed the interplay of two arboreal metaphors in the previous section, so too do we witness the interplay of arboreal and zoological metaphors within this one. And, since THE KING IS A TREE functions within both of these two passages, its ultimate interpretation will be governed by the two of them together.

- 11:1 וַיֵּצֵא חֹטֵר מִגִּזְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנְצֹר מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה:
- 2 וַיִּנְתֶּה עָלָיו רִיחַ יְהוָה רִיחַ חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה רִיחַ עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה רִיחַ דַּעַת וַיִּרְאֵת יְהוָה:
- 3 וְהָרִיחוּ בִּירְאֵת יְהוָה וְלֹא-לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו יִשְׁפֹּט וְלֹא-לְמִשְׁמַע אָזְנוֹ יִזְכִּיחַ:
- 4 וְשֹׁפֵט בְּצַדִּיק דְּלִים וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר לְעַנְוֵי-אֲרֶץ וְהָפֵה-אֲרֶץ בְּשֹׁבֵט פִּיו וּבָרוּחַ שְׁפָתָיו יִמִּית רָשָׁע:
- 5 וְתָהָ אֶדְקֵם אֲזוּר אֲזוּר מִתְנַגֵּי וְהֶאֱמוּנָה אֲזוּר תִּלְצָיו:
- 6 וְגַר זָאֵב עִם-כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם-גְּדִי יִרְבֹּץ וְעֹגֵל וּכְפִיר יִמְרִיא יַחְדָּו וְנֹעַר קָטָן נִהְגַּ בָּם:
- 7 וַיִּפְרֶה וְדָבַר תְּרַעֲיָנָה יַחְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ גְלִדֵיהֶם וְאַרְגָּה פִּבְקָר יֹאכַל-חֶבְדָּו:
- 8 וְשֹׁעֲשֹׁעַ יִוָּגַק עַל-תֵּר פֶּתֹן וְעַל מְאֹנֶת צִפְעוֹנִי גָמוּל יֵדוּ הַדָּה:
- 9 לֹא-יִנְרְעוּ וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל-יְהוָה קוֹדֵשׁי בְּיִמְלֹאֵה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַל אֶת-יְהוָה פְּמִים לַיָּם מְכַסִּים:
- 10 וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שְׂרָשׁ יִשְׂי אֲשֶׁר עָמַד לְגַם עַמִּים אֲלֵיו גּוֹיִם יְדַרְשׁוּ וְהִיְתָה מְנַחְתּוֹ כְּבוֹד:

- 11:1 A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- 2 The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
- 3 His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;
- 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- 5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- 6 The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
- 7 The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- 9 They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.
- 10 On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

For the sake of convenience, I have broken this second oracle into four sections: the return of the king (11:1-2), the king's justice (11:3-5), the reign of the king (11:6-9) and the coda (11:10). These divisions roughly correspond to the metaphorical timbres of the passages they denote, with the exception of the fourth, which will be treated separately for structural reasons only⁸¹.

81. For similar divisions, on the basis of theme, see Berges and Seitz, who separate verses 1-5 from 6-8/9: Ulrich F. Berges, *The Book of Isaiah: Its Composition and Final Form* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 46; trans. Millard C. Lind; Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012), 113; Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 105-106.

§3.2.2.1 - The Return of the King (11:1-2)

[A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse],

and [a branch shall grow out of his roots].

[The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him],

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of counsel and might,

the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

There are only three clauses within this section that can be said to be of an overtly metaphorical nature: that a shoot (הטר) shall emanate from the stump (גזע) of Jesse, that a branch (נצר) shall grow out of his (Jesse's) roots, and that the spirit of the Lord (רוח יהוה) shall rest upon him. In all three of these clauses, the metaphor can be correctly identified without recourse to a broader context. So far as attestation is concerned, while the former two constructions are unique to Isaiah, the third metaphor ("the spirit of God") is attested throughout the corpus.

We have already noted in our initial analysis of 11:1 that the verb used to commence this passage bears with it an indication that it introduces something *new*. Like the deictic particle that headed 10:33, the *weqatal* that heads 11:1 both draws attention to this passage within a broader context, and marks it as a new beginning. The focus here has shifted from the travails in store for the enemies of God to the rewards that can be expected by the community of the faithful. In particular, it has shifted from a plural metaphorical referent (the Assyrian armies, together with their king) to a singular metaphorical referent (the Judean king, himself).

And yet, it has to be observed that nowhere within this passage is the metaphorical tenor made lexically explicit⁸². While the branch is accorded qualities that harmonise with the semantic domain of kingship, and while the arboreal metaphor has a history of biblical utility

82. Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT 65; Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 135.

in this regard⁸³, some scholars have nonetheless identified the subject of this oracle as being a remnant of the Judean people instead⁸⁴.

This argument has much to recommend it⁸⁵, but is ultimately problematic. Even if it were the author's intentions to refer to the Judean people by means of arboreal imagery, it would still remain that he is doing so with *monarchic* language. As such, we would be forced to propose the existence of a double metaphor: THE PEOPLE [IS A KING + THE KING] IS A TREE. While the second equation is textually demonstrable, the first remains an interesting conjecture only.

Even in asserting that the metaphor at play here is THE KING IS A TREE, the absence of any exclusively monarchic terminology to denote it as such is a feature of this oracle that deserves comment⁸⁶. Similarly noteworthy is the fact that the bulk of this oracle (11:2-9) contains no arboreal imagery either! As such, while the passage under consideration is framed in verses 1 and 10 as an instance of this metaphor, the metaphor is only explicitly to be found within those two verses.

The manner in which this trope influences the rest of the oracle (and the extent to which it is influenced by it) will require a frame by frame investigation of the metaphors within it. We have already considered the first two frames in 11:1, which concern the king's return. It is interesting that in the context of this oracle's placement, in having been born after the forest's destruction, the king is not the agent of God's plan but rather that plan's beneficiary⁸⁷.

83. For a relationship between these terms and צמח, employed in Jeremiah and Zechariah, cf: Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 157; Robert H. O'Connell, *Concentricity and Continuity: The Literary Structure of Isaiah* (JSOT 188; Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 90; Nielsen, *op.cit.* 132; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 109. For a connection with the "stump" (מצבת) in Isa 6:13, see Seitz, *op.cit.* 97-98.

84. So, for example, Berges, *op.cit.* 112-117. Seitz adopts the perspective that the individual spoken of is a king, but does discuss the inner-textual merits of supposing otherwise: Seitz, *op.cit.* 97-98.

85. Nielsen, who doesn't adopt this perspective, offers a cogent analysis of this passage that does lend itself to such an interpretation: Nielsen, *op.cit.* 134-135.

86. While it may reflect a difference in *vorlage*, the LXX does include a reference in verse 10: και ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἀρχεῖν ἐθνῶν.

87. J.J.M. Roberts, "Isaiah in Old Testament Theology" (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 70; George Buchanan Gray, *The Book of Isaiah 1* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 217.

The third frame, which is in verse 2, commences with another prefix-conjugation verb, indicating an activity occurring either immediately after the preceding verbs or in some sense resultant from them⁸⁸. Here, the result of the sapling's having emerged in the fashion detailed by the text is that the "spirit of God" should come to rest upon him. This is a trope that features in a number of biblical passages⁸⁹, and it is only by considering its employment within the corpus that we might remark upon its function here.

Berges likens the means by which the spirit confers powers upon the young king to that by which it rested upon the seventy elders in the wilderness and upon Elisha by the Jordan⁹⁰. The book of Isaiah testifies likewise to the prophetic connotations of spirit endowment⁹¹, as does Joel⁹², and the means by which the king is endowed with the qualities enumerated here might bespeak a degree of prophetic inspiration⁹³.

Gray highlights a different function of spirit endowment, referring instead to the means by which Bezalel, the architect of the desert tabernacle, was inspired⁹⁴. The commonalities between these two verses and our own are of some significance; while the particular locution is not the same (רוח אלהים), the qualities with which Bezalel is said to have been endowed are almost identical.

88. In addition to the standard grammars (GKC §112; IBHS §32.3d; JM §119c; Williams §182; etc), see also Robert E. Longacre, "Weqatal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Prose", *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics* (ed. Robert D. Bergen; SIL, 1994), 50-98 (66ff).

89. On this point, cf: Kaiser, *op.cit.* 157; Gray, *op.cit.* 216.

90. Num 11:17 (ואצלתי מן הרוח אשר עליך ושמת עליהם); 2 Kgs 2:15 (נחה רוח אליהו על אלישע). Berges, *op.cit.* 116. In this connection, see also 1 Sam 10:6 and 9ff, and 2 Sam 23:2ff; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 157.

91. Isa 61:1 (רוח אדני יהוה עלי), and potentially 63:11 (השם בקרבו את רוח קדשו), although there's little reason to consider these passages part of the same collection in the formal sense of the term. For distinctions between the editorialisation of Isa 1-39 and the rest of the text, one can consult the usual sources. On the legitimacy of treating the text as a whole for the purposes of metaphorical analysis, cf: Nielsen, *op.cit.* 15-23.

92. Joel 3:1 (אשפוך את רוحي על כל בשר ונבאו); in connection with this verse, see also Isa 32:15. And in connection with prophetic ability, see also the attestation in Gen 41:38, in which having the spirit of God *within* oneself denotes an ability to interpret dreams; Gray, *op.cit.* 216.

93. On this point, see Blenkinsopp, who observes that the endowment of spirit is meant to emphasise the king's charisma together with his hereditary rights - two aspects that were frequently in conflict: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (The Anchor Bible 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 264.

94. Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 (ואמלא וימלא אותו רוח אלהים). Gray, *op.cit.* 216.

There, as here, the text stresses wisdom (חכמה), understanding (Ex: תבונה; Isa: בינה) and knowledge (דעת). Where the Isaianic passage stresses also counsel (עצה), might (גבורה) and the fear of God (יראת יהוה), the two passages in Exodus stress instead Bezalel's craft (כל מלאכה). On analogy with those passages, Gray's conclusion is that a conferral of the spirit enables the king in Isaiah 11 to *do* extraordinary things - a conclusion that, on analogy with various other verses as well, possesses some merit.

Other passages of direct relevance include 1 Samuel 16:13-14, in which the presence or absence of the divine spirit confers an ability (or inability) to serve as king⁹⁵. And with a martial nuance, there are five separate instances within Judges⁹⁶ in which the spirit of God (רוח יהוה) "infuses" a warrior (לבש), settles upon him in some fashion (תהי על), or otherwise motivates him (צלח, פעמ). While the passage from 1 Samuel is the only other instance in which this spirit is said to inspire a king, the subject of Isaiah 11 has much in common with the warrior judge as well.

Insofar as what this text conveys in isolation, the specific nature of the divine endowment that it describes is made clear by the subsequent genitive phrases, which serve the purpose of explicating this particular frame⁹⁷. There, as we have mentioned already, the text emphasises the attributes of wisdom, discernment, counsel, strength, knowledge and the fear of God. For the most part, these terms all seem to possess overlapping semantic domains, conveying the nuances of empathy and intellect, while an attempt to fit "strength" into this rubric has yielded the suggestion that the subject is able to put his ideas into action⁹⁸. We might be wary, however, of so easily discarding the term's military nuances: the two other times that it functions in collocation with "counsel"⁹⁹ concern a specifically martial prowess.

95. Here, the verb used to convey spirit endowment is of the root צלח, and denotes the means by which it enlivened (or agitated) its host. Interestingly, this passage provides no other qualifications as regards how it so motivated them.

96. Jud 6:34, 11:29, 13:25, 14:6 and 14:19.

97. Kaiser, *op.cit.* 157-158.

98. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 264; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 158.

99. 2 Kgs 18:20 and Isa 36:5.

Blenkinsopp is correct in noting that all of the king's characteristics converge on his sense of justice¹⁰⁰, but in stripping "strength" of its usual connotations overlooks the important fact that justice, within the framework of this oracle, is possessed of a strikingly violent timbre - a nuance that is often downplayed in light of the oracle's second half. He also observes, and correctly, that the presentation of the king's attributes make those of wisdom subservient to that of fear¹⁰¹. Indeed, this final attribute and the initial qualification of the spirit as a spirit of God, frames the other qualities. As such, this is not mundane wisdom of which the pious king is filled, but divine.

From a syntactic perspective, the conveyance of these categories is expressed by means of four genitive constructions, each of which features רוּחַ ("spirit") as the *nomen regens*. Where the first mentions wisdom and understanding (חכמה ובינה), the second counsel and strength (עצה וגבורה) and the third knowledge and the fear of God (דעת ויראת יהוה), the first merely mentions יהוה. As such, these collocations also encourage us to equate the various attributes listed within them with the deity mentioned at the outset.

§3.2.2.2 - The King's Justice (11:3-5)

[[His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.]]

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,

or decide by what his ears hear;

but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,

and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

[he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth],

and [with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked].

100. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 265.

101. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, On the importance of divine fear within the wisdom tradition, see Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (trans. James D. Martin; Trinity Press, 1972), 53ff; Roland E. Murphy, "Wisdom in the OT", *ABD* 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 920-931 (925). For its importance within biblical literature in general, see Job Y. Jindo, "On the Biblical Notion of the "Fear of God" as a Condition for Human Existence", *Biblical Interpretation* 19 (2012), 433-453.

[Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist],

and [faithfulness the belt around his loins].

In this section, there is a possible metaphorical frame in verse 3a, followed by four frames in close succession in verses 4b-5. Throughout this section of the text, the emphasis is on the king's righteousness and on the primary application of his wisdom: an ability to judge¹⁰². This ability of his is stressed in apocalyptic language¹⁰³ - or, at least, in language that lends itself to apocalyptic use¹⁰⁴.

The phrase that constitutes the first metaphorical frame (והריחו ביראת יהוה) comprises three lexemes in the Hebrew, the juxtaposition of which is semantically problematic and the inherent difficulties of which have inspired a number of tentative reconstructions¹⁰⁵. While the MT's phraseology is attested as early as 1QIsa^a, confusion as regards its translation may be just as longstanding¹⁰⁶.

The first word within the phrase would appear to be a *hiphil* infinitive construct with a 3ms suffix, although the challenges of interpretation are compounded by the difficulties in correctly identifying the verbal root. In the event that it should be construed as a *hiphil* of ריח (a reading that is attested several times within the literature¹⁰⁷), it may comprise a metaphor

102. In this regard, one might note parallels with the Solomon accession narrative, 1 Kgs 3:5-28, in which the text likewise emphasises the king's wisdom, specifically in terms of his ability of judge impartially; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 158.

103. Job Jindo, "On Myth and History in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Eschatology", *VT* 55:3 (2005), 412-415 (413).

104. On apocalyptic reimaginings of this text, see J.J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 49ff.

105. For an overview of the problems with this verse, together with a justification for maintaining the MT's phraseology, see Arie Shifman, "'A Scent' of the Spirit: Exegesis of an Enigmatic Verse (Isaiah 11:3)", *JBL* 131:2 (2012), 241-249. Some scholars have chosen, on the basis of its inherent difficulties, to omit it altogether: Kaiser, *op.cit.* 156; Gray, *op.cit.* 212. Note that both scholars, while they omit it from their translations, do propose interpretations, based upon their own tentative reconstructions.

106. Peshitta: ܘܝܩܪܒܝܢܝܗ ܠܕܗܠܬܝܗ ܝܝ ("he shall shine in the fear of the Lord"); Targum Yonatan: וַיִּקְרַבְיָנִי לְדַחֵלְתִּיָּהּ יְיָ ("God shall bring him to the fear of him"); LXX: πνεῦμα φόβου Θεοῦ ("the spirit of the fear of God") - a construal that allows this passage to continue from the previous as part of its enumeration of the king's qualities. It may be that the Vulgate, which understands the phrase as meaning that "he will be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (*et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini*), is perhaps attempting to harmonise the traditions of the MT and the LXX in this regard.

107. Ex 30:38; Lev 26:31; Amos 5:21; Job 39:25. Note that in the first three of those examples, the verb is

by which "smelling" the fear of God denotes either delight or profound comprehension. In the event that it be construed as a *hiphil* of ריח (a verbal derivative that is otherwise unattested), then it may comprise a metaphor that concerns his essence, or essential (spiritual) being¹⁰⁸.

For our purposes, it must be noted that these two potential construals connect this verse to its context in different ways. While the one derives from the semantic domain of sensory perception, and so relates to the qualities of seeing and hearing also mentioned within this verse, the other relates to the semantic domain of 'spirit', and so relates to the "spirit of the Lord", with which the subject of this text has been infused. The emphasis appears to be that by virtue of his having been infused with the spirit of righteousness and the fear of God, he now possesses an ability to judge people impartially, although the precise manner in which that message is conveyed remains elusive.

The impartiality of the king's justice is universally considered to be the import of verse 3, by which the second and third clauses comprise either an extension or a reformulation of the first¹⁰⁹. The king's independence from his senses in rendering judgment might also imply his not requiring other counsellors¹¹⁰, and we would do well to remember that unlike the forest imagery in the previous chapter, the king in this oracle is depicted as alone, and of deriving his strength from no source other than that of God.

In depicting the results of this strength, the text employs two non-metaphorical clauses for his judgment of the poor and the meek, followed by two metaphorical clauses for his judgment

followed by the particle *bet*, as it is here.

108. Shifman (*op.cit.* 242) applies this interpretation to a reading of the verb as derived from ריח, although its figurative applications may suit a derivation from ריח as well.

109. The possibility that they comprise an extension is linked to a construal of the first clause as denoting an ability to "smell" justice by means of his divine fear. This interpretation is adopted, *inter alia*, in BT Sanhedrin 93b: "דמורה ודאין". For rabbinic interpretations that adopt the sense of smell in a more abstract sense, see the commentaries of David Altshuler (Metzudat David) and Abraham ibn Ezra in the Rabbinic Bible: Daniel Biton (ed.), ישיבה, I מקראות גדולות: ישיבה (Jerusalem: Hamaor, 2001). The possibility that these clauses comprise an interpretation of the first is related to an understanding of והריחו as denoting an investiture of the spirit - and one that is resultant in the king's judicial prowess. Such interpretations are also to be found within the rabbinic literature (see Rashi, for example; *ibid*) and have had a profound impact upon subsequent translations. On this point, see Shifman, *op.cit.* 243-244.

110. Kaiser, *op.cit.* 158. Kaiser's argument, that the king's wisdom represents godly wisdom in respect of this fact, has much to recommend it. For parallels to this notion in 1 Sam 16:7 and 1 Pet 1:17, see Kaiser, *op.cit.* 159.

of the wicked. The nature of the latter two clauses is a complex one: if "the rod of his mouth" (שבט פיו) and "the breath of his lips" (רוח שפתיו) are indeed to be understood metaphorically¹¹¹, the likely tenor of the metaphor is the king's words¹¹² - but words that can *literally* slay the wicked, or words that result in the king's will being executed?

The two terms, שבט and רוח, derive from a variety of different semantic domains. The "rod" features in biblical depictions of shepherds, as a means of both keeping the sheep together¹¹³ and in counting them as they pass¹¹⁴, as well as in biblical depictions of kings¹¹⁵. The semantic crossover between these two domains is extensive, as is evidenced by the large and varied depiction of kings as shepherds both within the Hebrew Bible and throughout the Ancient Near East¹¹⁶.

As a staff, the שבט was capable of functioning as both a tool for chastisement¹¹⁷ and as a weapon¹¹⁸, which allows for its function in metaphors that denote power and authority¹¹⁹. These two roles, of caring for one's flock and of enforcing one's rule both converge in the person of the king, whose position of authority necessitates both solid judgment and firm resolve. In this manner, the word employed both tells us something about the king's judgment, while at the same time derives from the semantic domain of kingship¹²⁰.

111. For the possibility of their being literal, cf. Kaiser, *op.cit.* 159-160; Collins, *op.cit.* 60-66.

112. So Gray, *op.cit.* 218.

113. Mic 7:14, for example, in which the shepherd is a vehicle for God.

114. So, for example, in Lev 27:32 and (metaphorically) in Jer 33:13.

115. So, for example, in Isa 14:5 and Gen 49:10.

116. On shepherd terminology for kings, cf. Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOT 76; Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 36-37.

117. So, for example, Isa 14:29, Prov 22:8 and Lam 3:1.

118. So, for example, 2 Sam 18:14.

119. Brettler, *op.cit.* 80-81. Particularly informative in this regard is the lexically similar formulation in Isa 10:5, in which שבט אפי denotes Assyria as a rod of punishment.

120. We would do well to remember, in this context, that the targumic translation of שבט in Num 17:21 and Ps 45:7. Indeed, it may be that the choice of שבט in 11:4b is designed to allude not only to the oracle's vehicle, but to its original tenor as well.

The term used here for "breath" has an equally wide range of applications and a correspondingly broad number of attestations within the corpus. In each of its various functions, whether as wind or spirit, breath or disposition, it is capable of expressing both positive and negative nuances¹²¹. It has already been attested five times within this oracle's first three verses - primarily with the nuance of "[divine] spirit", but once also with the possibility of its indicating scent. Its usage here, in verse 4b, helps ground this pronouncement within its oracular context, while at the same time conveying something hitherto unexplicated.

As such, both of these lexemes enable the oracle to remark upon the nature of the subject's righteousness, and they do so with terms that are drawn from the semantic domains exploited by this oracle. By grounding these assertions within their context, at the very time their imagery is intensified, the text allows the sudden transition into violence to remark upon the earlier tranquility as well. These are not *new* qualities that the king possesses, and nor are they to be construed as at odds with his other features. On the contrary, his relentless persecution of the wicked is a core component of both his justice and his wisdom.

The characterisation of these two qualities comes to a head in the conclusion to this part of the oracle, in which the attributes of justness (צדק) and of surety (אמונה) are depicted as garments in which the king is clothed. Even more to the point, while a garment might be something that a person can remove, the qualities enumerated here "bind" (אזר) the king and in some sense hold him together. They are intrinsic features of his reign, and typify the way in which he deals with both righteous and wicked alike¹²².

121. BDB lists a range of usages in different adjectival collocations, spanning a broad range of human and divine qualities that include jealousy (Num 5:14), anger (Jud 9:23) and impatience (Ex 6:9) on the one hand, and courage (Jos 5:1) and vigour (Gen 45:27) on the other. In its related function as "spirit", it possesses a similarly broad range of nuances, from prophetic inspiration (Isa 61:1) to violent ecstasy (1 Sam 10:10). In relation to its function as "breath" in particular, we find both the life-giving qualities (Job 27:3) that God preserves (Pr 16:2), as well as a symbol of meaninglessness (Job 7:7) and ephemerality (Isa 41:29). As "wind", the term can denote (even without qualification) both a gentle breeze (Gen 8:1) and a violent storm (1 Kgs 18:45, Jer 10:13). Qualified, it might denote the east wind, which shrivels plants (Ezek 17:10), or the west wind, which removes locusts (Ex 10:19).

122. The suggestion that עצה וגבורה denotes his ability to both hold counsel and to carry it through might find an echo within these two features, in which צדק would qualify the quality of that counsel and אמונה his steadfastness, putting it into action; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 264; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 518.

In fact, a reading of Isaiah 11:1-5 as a whole seems to convey these attributes first and foremost. The features of the king's rule will be the judiciary ones of requiring the innocent and punishing the guilty - the latter signifying that wickedness will still continue to exist¹²³. The king's being described as emanating from the stump of Jesse might communicate his being, in some sense, a new David¹²⁴. In this regard, the shepherd imagery invoked by שבט allows for a connection in that regard.

The presentation of the king within these verses is reminiscent also of the warrior judge, and the manner in which the spirit of God motivate Samson¹²⁵ provides for an interesting parallel. There, as here, the endowment of the spirit precipitated an act of great violence, and the king's being one possessed of "strength" (גבורה) suggests further abilities in this regard. His having grown solely by an act of God, and his having been endowed with qualities through God alone, both serve to reinforce that his justice and God's justice are alike: an archetypal quality, allowing for no debate in its interpretation.

Since the arboreal imagery in the oracle's introduction served to remark upon the nature of the king's growth, and since the subsequent verbs were logically dependent on those ones, it behoves us to consider the qualities of the king in light of that imagery, and that imagery in the light of the subsequently enumerated attributes.

As we noted in our initial appraisal of Isaiah 11:1, the slenderness and fragility of the new shoot was contrasted with the might and power of the forest. Here too, the shoot's fragility is contrasted with those attributes of which it is subsequently said to be possessed. While that initial point of contrast served to highlight the paradoxical nature of mundane power, and reinforce the fact that true power was in the hands of the divine, so too does the latter contrast serve to indicate that the power and majesty held by the new king is derived from God alone.

123. So Gray, *op.cit.* 218.

124. Nielsen, *op.cit.* 133. The question as to whether this is a resurrected David has been raised (Kaiser, *op.cit.* 157n), although it seems more likely that the verse speaks of somebody in possession of Davidic qualities, or will be chosen in a manner similar to that in which David was chosen; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 157-158; Berges, *op.cit.* 115-116.

125. Jud 14:6 and 19.

In the second half of the oracle, the text introduces new semantic domains as a means of conveying the peaceful nature of the king's reign, and then ties the text together by means of a resumption of the arboreal imagery, and by means of lexemes that derived from the oracle's first verse. An appreciation of the themes within this second half of the oracle will provide us with a broader picture of the oracle's metaphoricity in general.

§3.2.2.3 - The Reign of the King (11:6-9)

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;

[for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea].

The debate over the extent of this passage's literalness is one that has existed for well over a millennium, and which shows no sign of abating. What is undeniable is that the general tenor of this passage is one of peacefulness and tranquility. Whether we construe the animals as representative of nations¹²⁶, or as representative of strong and weak people¹²⁷, or whether we see their renouncement of bloodshed as a return to the peace that prevailed in a mythical

126.As, for example, Seitz, *op.cit.* 106-107.

127.Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 265; Blenkinsopp, *History*, 190.

Eden¹²⁸, the natural consequence of all of these readings is that Israel (whether alone, or especially¹²⁹) will be at peace too.

In the oracle's presentation of this idea, a series of nine clauses in three verses depict the coexistence of a wild animal with a domesticated one. The first verse contains four clauses, indicating cohabitation (גור) of wolves, leopards and young lions with lambs, kids, calves and "fatlings", their lying down together (רבצ) and their being led (נהג) by a human child. While the first three of these clauses emphasise the passivity of the predator¹³⁰, the fourth of them adds the further nuance of human supremacy. In the event that this oracle were construed as a figurative reference to the nations, the human child may represent Israel, while the emphasis on his youth serves to further reinforce those qualities remarked on previously: that the level that he has attained has nothing to do with his own capabilities, but that it represents divine beneficence only.

The imagery of human children returns in the third verse (v8), separated only from the first by the three clauses of verse 7. In those clauses, the emphasis is on eating: we are told that the cow and the bear will both graze (רעה)¹³¹ together, that their offspring will lie down together (רבצ) and that the lion will consumed straw (אכל) like the ox. Here it is clear that the change effected in the natural world will be of miraculous proportions, altering the very

128.As, for example, Gray, *op.cit.* 219; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 160; Berges, *op.cit.* 116-117. Note that Kaiser's understanding of the passage is that it only denotes peace insofar as humans are concerned, in protection of themselves, their families and their livestock. Wild animals, in Kaiser's appraisal, will continue in their nature insofar as it affects themselves only.

129.In this regard, it is also worth noting Seitz's observation to the effect that the peace between nations that this oracle metaphorises depicts only a peace vis-à-vis the nation of Israel, but that Israel will continue to punish her enemies in the same way that the king will wreak vengeance on the unrighteous in v4. This argument, whether or not it can be made to suit this particular passage, succeeds in connecting the oracle here with the pronouncements against the nations in chapters 13-23, and is of value for a literary appraisal of the text as a whole; Seitz, *op.cit.* 107.

130.A passivity made stronger in the reference to "fatlings" - a term that otherwise only features in the context of their being suitable for slaughter: 2 Sam 6:13; 1 Kgs 1:9, 19 and 25; Isa 1:11; Ezek 39:18; Amos 5:22.

131.On the lexical-semantic interplay between רעה, "to graze", and רעה, "to cohabit with", see Pierre Van Hecke, "To Shepherd, Have Dealings and Desire: On the Lexical Structure of the Hebrew Root *r'h*", *The Bible Through Metaphor and Translation: A Cognitive Semantic Perspective* (Religions and Discourse 15; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003), 37-53. The semantic interplay that Hecke demonstrates has interesting repercussions for this verse as well, allowing the first clause in verse 7 to serve as a link between the cohabitation imagery of verse 6 and the reference to eating in verse 7b.

nature of biological existence¹³², and that if this passage represents a metaphor for peace between humans, the change effected there is to be no less drastic.

The progression of these three verses is one of structural diminishment, leading to the climax in verse 9. While verse 6 presented four clauses and verse 7 presented 3, verse 8 presents two clauses that remark upon the ultimate subjugation of all: the serpent¹³³. Once more we have human children within the frame, and once more it is their youth that is emphasised. In this instance, however, these are children who have barely attained infancy. Their ability to play around poisonous snakes reflects less, therefore, on their own feelings of security than it does on the feelings of those who had left them there. The shift in society described by these images is drastic.

Finally, this section of the oracle is concluded in two clauses - the second of which is subsidiary to the first, and which provides a reason for the foregoing. The prophet observes that they (the erstwhile predators) will not be evil on all his "holy mountain"¹³⁴ - an assertion that on its primarily level denotes Jerusalem¹³⁵ - and that this fundamental shift in reality will be caused by a knowledge of God permeating the world¹³⁶.

The simile used to express this idea derives from the semantic domain of oceans, and provides the sole reference to water within this entire oracle. The import of the figure is clear: the earth will be saturated with the knowledge of God, such knowledge leading to peaceful

132. On the mythological quality of this peacefulness, see Seitz, *op.cit.* 105-106; Nielsen, *op.cit.* 135.

133. On this signifying the ultimate return to mythical Edenic conditions, see Berges, *op.cit.* 116-117.

134. For the parallels between verse 9a and Isa 65:25b, see R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1969), 778; Gray, *op.cit.* 223-224; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 265; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 161. Note that while the similarities have prompted concerns that 11:9 is either late or based on a redactional error, both Blenkinsopp and Kaiser (*ibid.*) argue on literary grounds for its inclusion.

135. For opinions to the contrary, see Gray, *op.cit.* 213 and 223; Kaiser, *op.cit.* 161.

136. Note Berges' intriguing suggestion that the knowledge of God will be held by humans only, thus allowing v9 to sum up both halves of the oracle: 9a dealing with the animals, and 9b with the people; Berges, *op.cit.* 113. One might find echoes in this idea of Talmon's suggestion that eschatological thought in the Hebrew Bible suggests a staged process, modelled on the war-ridden days of David and the "*pax Solomonica*" that follows. While I am not aware of his having suggested this in relation to Isa 11:1-9 in particular, the two halves of this oracle certainly seem to lend themselves to his schema: Shemaryahu Talmon, "Eschatology and History in Biblical Thought", *Literary Studies in the Hebrew Bible: Form and Content* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 160-191 (190).

cohabitation and harmony. What is more, the extension of the domain of salvation from God's mountain to the entire world reflects upon a dual metaphor, whereby the mountain represents Jerusalem and Jerusalem represents the earth¹³⁷.

Thus far, verse 9 provides us with an ideal conclusion to the preceding oracle. With this one verse, the three sections of the oracle come together and are united in their common theme: the knowledge of God. The first section employed this theme in its stressing the qualities with which the young king would be endowed. Their being subservient to the attribute of piety qualified the nature of his knowledge as a divine one, and the second section demonstrated the fruits that knowledge would produce.

While knowledge, itself, wasn't mentioned within the second section, its possession of lexemes that alluded to the first section (on which it was syntactically dependent) made clear that it was a result of the conferral of the divine spirit that the king was able to engage in his aggressive pursuit of peace. While this section didn't stipulate the actual arrival of such peace, it did demonstrate that all wicked people would suffer, and it presaged the peace that would become manifest within the oracle's third section.

Throughout the oracle's development of this motif, a number of different metaphors have been employed, deriving from different and occasionally incompatible semantic domains. This is a hallmark of the metaphorical complex, and an appreciation of any one metaphorical trope in particular is dependent upon an awareness of its interaction with the others.

137. On the universalism of Isaiah and the participation of all nations in the Jerusalem cult - particularly in Second and Third Isaiah, see J.J.M. Roberts, "Isaiah in Old Testament Theology", *Interpreting the Prophets* (ed. James Luther Mays and Paul Achtemeier; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 62-74 (68-73); For criticism of this thesis, see J. Severino Croatto, "The "Nations" in the Salvific Oracles of Isaiah", *VT* 55:2 (2005), 143-161, and on the redactional history of the Zion pilgrimage motif in First Isaiah, cf: Blenkinsopp, *History*, 109; Berges, *op.cit.* 64. That Jerusalem might function as a metaphor for the earth has elements of ὀμφαλος mythology to it, whereby the use of Jerusalem as a synecodche for the world may presuppose its centrality in the same. For the existence of such conceptions in the Biblical literature, see Shemaryahu Talmon, "The "Navel of the Earth" and the Comparative Method", *Literary Studies*, 50-75.

§3.2.2.4 - The Coda (11:10)

On that day

[the root of Jesse] shall [stand as a signal to the peoples];

the nations shall inquire of him,

and his dwelling shall be glorious.

There are only two explicitly metaphorical frames within this final section, both being found within the same clause. The first employs arboreal imagery to refer to its subject, while the second employs the image of a banner, from the semantic domain of warfare¹³⁸. The assertion that this shall transpire "on that day" (והיה ביום ההוא) connects this passage to the previous oracle, and is suggestive of a time after the peace described in the oracle's third section has prevailed. Unlike that section, which took its tropes from the animal kingdom, the tenor of this coda is unambiguously that of the human world.

The recognition that this coda serves the explicit purpose of both concluding one oracle and commencing another is long-standing¹³⁹. What is more, the manner in which the coda deliberately employs arboreal imagery in order to hearken back to the oracle's first verse has won universal acceptance¹⁴⁰. Somewhat more problematic, however, has been the manner in which it does so. Attempts at harmonising "the root of Jesse" (שרש ישי) with the branch that

138.Both Berges and Seitz note the connection that this image creates with the vineyard oracle in 5:26, and suggest that the reapplication of a military trope in a peaceful context emphasises by contrast the tranquility of that peace: Berges, *op.cit.* 113; Seitz, *op.cit.* 108. For the suggestion that this verse also alludes to the Zion pilgrimage motif of 2:3, see Kaiser, *op.cit.* 163-164.

139.So, for example: Kaiser, *op.cit.* 155; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 266-267; Nielsen, *op.cit.* 141.

140.On this point, see in particular Jacob Stromberg, "The "Root of Jesse" in Isaiah 11:10: Postexilic Judah, or Postexilic Davidic King?", *JBL* 127:4 (2008), 655-669 (656 n2). Blenkinsopp recognises allusions also to the oracle's second verse, in the lexical relationship between the verb, נהה, and the noun, מנוחה; Blenkinsopp, *ibid.* Although the noun is derived from a separate root (נוח), interplay between lexemes of different etymologies is not uncommon in the literature, as the aetiologies of Samuel (1:20) and Noah (Gen 5:29) amply demonstrate.

extends *from* his roots in 11:1 have led some scholars to attribute carelessness to the text's redactor¹⁴¹, or to suppose that the tenor is the Judean people as a whole¹⁴².

On the contrary, while construing the tenor as the Judean remnant might reflect upon the presumed democratisation of postexilic society¹⁴³, it presents us with an oracle that concludes by subverting its own primary message. Unless we now construe the oracle's first two sections as being similarly figurative, we're left with a text that speaks to the rise and reign of a king both just and strong, but that then reapplies its message to a community that neither has nor wants a king!

Since the most natural way to read this text is to assume that its concluding verse adopts the basic premise of its opening sections, we are left with a curious bivalency as regards when to situate it. While, on the one hand, the reference to its events occurring "on that day" presume a situation concurrent with the peace on earth described in verse 9, its being lexically related to the events of the first verse raise that as a possibility as well.

What is more, while *נצר משרשיו* and *שרש* might have been roughly synonymous¹⁴⁴, that observation allows for the possibility of the author using the latter term in place of the former, but doesn't speak to *why* he might do so. Since the two terms are capable of conveying the same meaning, using the latter allows the author to both hearken back to the first verse and to allude to events at its very beginning - when the branch had not yet even emanated from the roots of the fallen tree.

141.Gray, *op.cit.* 224-225; Stromberg, *op.cit.* 656-658. On the basis of an image analysis, Nielsen is led to suppose that by the time of this verse's (postexilic) composition, *שרש ישי* had come to constitute a dead metaphor, "suffering precisely the same fate as... צמח, in Jer 23:5 and 33:15". The absence of other attestations of this locution constitutes a serious flaw with her theory, and while it might be a valid hypothesis, as a conclusion it lacks evidence; Nielsen, *op.cit.* 142 and 144.

142.Blenkinsopp rejects this notion, as does Stromberg, in favour of its tenor being the Judean king: Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 267; Stromberg, *op.cit.* 659ff. Stromberg's analysis of the evidence in favour of *שרש* and *נצר משרשיו* being potentially synonymous is both thorough and compelling. His conclusion, that the final form of this oracle is owed to the author of the coda, and that the theology of the coda governs our reading of the entire text is one with which I thoroughly concur.

143.Stromberg, *op.cit.* 658-659. Stromberg rightly notes (*op.cit.* 667) that the extent of this democratisation is presumed only, and that we must first let the texts speak for themselves, before attempting to situate them in history.

144.Stromberg, *op.cit.* 665; Nielsen, *op.cit.* 142.

If we situate the pronouncement in the coda at such a time, the image suggests that the resumption of the Davidic dynasty will be a *public* miracle. Rather than suggesting that the return of the Judean king and his endowment with majesty will be a private affair that will only affect the whole world after its realisation, the author of the coda is placing it in the most visible position possible¹⁴⁵.

It is in respect of this feature in particular, that we see how the arboreal imagery functions as a metaphorical framework for this oracle. While, initially, it served to convey the notions of slenderness and of fragility, its ability to function also with the nuances of strength and splendour allow the author of the coda to employ it with all of the connotations that those particular images evoke.

In one other detail, however, is it important to stress the relation between the coda and 11:1. While Gray commented upon the "extraordinary combination of figures" produced by the coda, stating that "it remains extraordinary that a person stands like a signal or banner"¹⁴⁶, he failed to note their obvious relationship with the foregoing. In addition to the various physical nuances that have been emphasised in this arboreal trope, the nuance of either passivity or of absolute *immobility* has undergirded both the presentation of the sapling in 11:1, and the branch in verse 10.

As the sapling was fragile and subject to all manner of threats, so did its growth and flowering highlight the solicitations of God; furthermore, as it typified a king who grew to adopt the qualities of wisdom, strength and virtue, so it demonstrated once more the divine origin of all of his majesty. In its conclusion, the resumption of the arboreal imagery signified again the passivity of the king. It is to *him* that the nations come to enquire. What is more, the only verb associated with him in the coda denotes his standing still (עמד), while the term employed to describe his "dwelling" (מנוחה) derives from a word that means repose.

145. For this theme, by which the revelation of God's glory upon the person of the king is conducted in a manner made visible to all the nations of the world, see my analysis of Ezekiel 17 in §3.3.1.

146. Gray, *op.cit.* 225.

§3.2.3 - Conclusion:

It is a fundamental feature of our analysis that metaphors influence one another in a *mutual* fashion, and so it is necessary to consider the interplay of the various metaphors at work within this passage. As we have demonstrated, and notwithstanding the "original" function of any of its sections, this oracle can be subdivided into five distinct units, each of which in some sense incorporates the following:

1. Isaiah 10:33-34 dealt with the destruction of a forest, the annihilation of which precipitated the growth of a sapling, described subsequently in 11:1-2. Here, the grandeur of the forest was contrasted with the slenderness and fragility of the sapling; the violent destruction of the former finding its gentle fulfilment in the quiet growth of the latter. Since the language used to convey the forest denoted hubris, we were able to infer the qualities of piety in its counterpart;

2. Isaiah 11:1-2 described the growth of a sapling, the full maturation of which allowed for the divine punishment of all evil-doers, described in 11:3-5. In this passage, the gentle growth of the sapling contrasted strongly with the ferocity with which it subsequently destroyed the wicked, and allowed for the observation that the restitution of the downtrodden and the punishment of the oppressor were both equally the result of divine grace;

3. Isaiah 11:3-5 concerned a wrathful retribution against the wicked, which set the stage for the era of peace described in 11:6-9. As with the previous passage, the relationship between the destruction of evil-doers and the peaceful cohabitation of all things was made metaphorically explicit, but while the former section implied an equation between the two, this passage suggests a causal connection. Just as the destruction of the forest was a necessary precondition for the growth of a sapling in the transition from the first to the second section, so too is the destruction of the wicked a necessary precondition for peace on earth in the transition from the third to the fourth;

4. Isaiah 11:6-9 presented a vision of global peace, in which all of the animals of the world are able to live at peace with one another and in which even the most vulnerable human has nothing to fear. This description, which invites a metaphorical construal even in isolation,

finds its tenor made explicit with the following verse, for which it serves as an introduction, heralding a depiction of Israel's ultimate reconstitution amongst the nations;

5. Isaiah 11:10 provided a summation of the foregoing, functioning as a coda to the oracle, with language drawn deliberately from the second section. In so doing, this verse not only helps to frame the oracle (which, at both its beginning and its conclusion, has a fundamentally arboreal timbre) but invites a rereading of the foregoing in light of a new metaphor, wherein the nations of the world are as animals living in the shade of a resplendent tree.

In each one of these instances, we have shown how the interplay of its constituent parts determines the import of the whole, but to what extent does the interplay of the individual sections affect the overall oracle that they constitute? It is here that Conceptual Blending theory is of greatest use, applied at a macro level to the interaction of the various metaphors as a whole.

The first section, in which the destruction of the forest was contrasted with the growth of a sapling, allowed us to focus on the metaphorical relationship between hubris and piety, presented as that between strength and fragility. In the second section, the predominant metaphor concerned the relationship between supporting the downtrodden and avenging their suffering, suggesting a justice that transcends human considerations and is infused with a divine wisdom. This was also suggested explicitly by the king's rendering judgment without regard for the appearances of things.

The third section, which suggested a causal relationship between the destruction of the wicked and peace on earth highlighted further the supremacy of God's justice, while drawing into sharper distinction the injustice that reigns in the present age. The expectation of a new era took on a stronger salvific flavour in the fourth section, in which attention is once more drawn to the relationship between the vision of global peace and the reconstitution of the Judean monarchy. Finally, in the coda, this vision of the monarchy is brought back to the oracle's commencement with an emphasis on the king's possessing the qualities of a single tree - here typified not in terms of its fragility, but in terms of its height and distinctiveness.

If we consider each of these separate metaphors as individual source spaces, we can form an additional generic space on the basis of their various commonalities. These, in their most basic form, would comprise the relationship between violence and pacifism, hubris and piety. But when we combine these various ideas in the formation of a new and blended space, we immediately face a contradiction: the violence of the wicked is matched by the violence of the righteous, and the fragility of the latter is belied by their treatment of the former.

When investigating the nature of these contradictions, we are forced to conclude that violence is only ever "wickedness" by virtue of its object, and that the fragility of the pious is but an outward guise. What is more, when we subsequently read those ideas back into the oracle itself, they inform strongly our perception of the metaphors within it - most particularly those within the third and fourth section, in which the nations of the world are characterised as various types of animals.

Since it is somewhat par for the course within biblical literature that a wild animal serves either as a metaphorical depiction of the wicked or of the agent of the wicked's destruction, the presentation of nations within these two sections can now be recognised as subversive. It is not the lion or the adder that is wicked, but the spirit that infuses those creatures; it is neither the wolf nor the bear that will be destroyed, but the *nature* of those animals instead.

§3.3 - The Metaphorical Complex in Ezekiel

זכור אותו האיש לטוב וחנניה בן חזקיה שמו, אלמלא הוא נגזו ספר יחזקאל שהיו דבריו סותרין דברי תורה.
מה עשה: העלו לו שלוש מאות גרבי שמן וישב בעלייה ודרשן...

BT Hagigah 13a (≈ Shabbat 13b, Menahot 45a)

Ezekiel's reputation as a "parable monger"¹⁴⁷ (ממשל משלים, Ezek 21:5) was one that he appears to have well earned. His long, detailed and occasionally convoluted allegories differentiate him from the other prophets, whose oracles require considerably less in the way of untangling and interpretation¹⁴⁸. His elaborate vision narratives cry out for exposition, and even his physical re-enactments of prophetic themes - an activity in which he likewise engages more than any other prophet¹⁴⁹ - demand interpretation, making little sense on a literal level¹⁵⁰.

While the general division of his text into oracles of condemnation (chapters 1-24) followed by messages of consolation (chapters 25-48) is of some antiquity, it is clear that the editorial composition of the text has also favoured smaller groupings based on textual style and themes¹⁵¹. As such, while the prophet's propensity for oblique speech, allusion and the

147. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 174.

148. Robert R. Wilson, "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel", *Interpreting the Prophets* (ed. James Luther Mays and Paul J. Achtemeier; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 157-169 (157); Karin Schöpflin, "The Composition of Metaphorical Oracles within the Book of Ezekiel", *Vetus Testamentum* 55:1 (2005), 101-120 (101); S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965), 296.

149. Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* (The Anchor Bible 22; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 122.

150. See Greenberg, *ibid.* for examples of mediaeval attempts to rationalise, downplay or otherwise explain Ezekiel's more public spectacles. A superb example of this from the modern period is Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: JPS, 1962). His chapter, "Prophecy and Psychosis" (390-409) concludes that the prophets were possessed of "a profound maladjustment to the spirit of society" (408). Similar sentiments, born of a different *tendenz*, have diagnosed the prophet with a range of ailments, from catalepsy to schizophrenia - cf: R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1969), 849-850. Note that Harrison, like Heschel, rejects the possibility of diagnosing somebody in this fashion - what Heschel refers to as "psychoanalysis by distance" (*op.cit.* 397).

151. Greenberg, *op.cit.* 1-6; Blenkinsopp, *op.cit.* 168; Michael Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel", *Interpreting the Prophets*, 170-187 (170); Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 484ff.

subtleties of suggestion can be found throughout, the grouping in chapters 15-19 of four separate allegories, almost one after the other, may also be a deliberate one¹⁵².

It is in analysing the imagery within these passages that we encounter a contradiction, familiar to students of the prophetic literature. On the one hand, the evidence in favour of a deliberate grouping of allegories demands of us that in analysing the themes and the language within any one of them in particular, we consider it in relation to the unit of which it comprises a part. This is also, of course, a demand imposed upon us by our recognition of its constituting a metaphorical complex - whether by accidental juxtaposition or by design.

On the other hand, an approach to Ezekiel as literature must reject the tendency to determine within it subunits of text, which can then be submitted to isolated analysis¹⁵³. An appreciation of the themes and the language to be found within each of these allegories is dependent upon an understanding of those themes throughout the rest of Ezekiel as a whole, and cannot be divorced from their broader editorial context.

In considering the arboreal metaphors that Ezekiel employs for the Judean monarchy, we must be mindful of these dual considerations. While we shall endeavour to take into consideration the manifestation of these tropes throughout the entirety of Ezekiel, we must also take into special consideration their function within the section of allegories of which they form a part. In doing so, one cannot help but notice that they relate to the texts with which they have been juxtaposed in important ways.

152. Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (trans. David Green; London: SPCK, 1970), 412-413; Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment", 181-182; Schöpflin, *ibid.*

153. For similar sentiments, concerning prophetic literature in general, see Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature", *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (ed. Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 276-297 (288). Concerning Ezekiel in particular, see Gottwald, *op.cit.* 483-484.

§3.3.1 - The Riddle of the Eagles and the Vine

החידה הוא הדבר הסתום יבינו ממנו דבר אחר והמשל הוא דמיון הדבר לדבר אחר.
כמו זה המשל שהמשיל המלך לנשר, והוא חידה שלא יבינוה כל אדם אלא המשכילים:

David Qimhi, Ezekiel 17:2 (s.v. ויהי בן אדם)

Ezekiel 17:2-24 comprises a detailed allegory, its detailed analogue and a conclusion. In this instance, it is not merely the situation of the allegory within a narrative framework that places constraints upon its interpretation, but the presentation of that interpretation itself. While there remains some scope for varied construal of the individual tropes within this passage, the manner in which each is connected to a real-world person, place or event allows for less flexibility in this regard than in other passages that we have seen.

In this instance, while arboreal imagery is employed for a king, it is specifically the Judean king who merits this metaphor, while the Babylonian and Egyptian kings are typified by eagles instead. In addition to these two tropes (THE KING IS A TREE, THE KING IS AN EAGLE), the text also draws upon various other semantic domains in its allegorical presentation, and thus despite possessing some of the hallmarks of a narrativised metaphor is best treated as a metaphorical complex instead.

From a structural perspective, Ezekiel 17:2-24 can be divided into three passages:

1) Verses 2-10 constitute an allegory that concerns an eagle's transplanting the top of a cedar to a city of merchants, the planting of a low vine in a fertile field, the vine's reaching out to a second eagle for sustenance and the threat of destruction at the hands of the eagle that had planted it.

2) Verses 11-21 comprise the analogue for the foregoing passage, which concerns the Judean monarchy's exile to Babylonia, Nebuchadnezzar's support for a new king of his choosing in

Jerusalem, the treacherous manner in which his new vassal seeks support from the Egyptian pharaoh and the subsequent threat of Jerusalem's destruction¹⁵⁴.

Both of these passages are prefaced with introductory formulae that signal their function within the overall text and that provide clues as to their intended reception. The allegory is so marked with the use of the terms *היידה* and *משל* (verse 2), while its analogue is prefaced with a question: "Do you not know what these things mean?" (verse 12a).

3) Verses 22-24 constitute a coda that concerns the future resumption of the Davidic monarchy. Here, the king is metaphorically typified as the crown of a tree planted atop a hill, growing into a fruitful cedar which provides shelter for all of the birds of the air. The passage concludes by noting that the existence of this tree serves as proof of God's divinity to all of the other trees of the field.

As such, we shall treat of this passage as three texts: the allegory (17:2-10), its analogue (17:12b-21), and the coda (17:22-24). While they each signify the manner in which tree imagery might be exploited for rhetorical effect, the manner in which they do so is by no means the same. On the contrary, the arboreal imagery within the analogue and its interpretation serves a markedly different rhetorical function to that which is found in the coda.

While the coda is dependent upon the allegory and not the other way around, the textual nature of this passage enables the import of the coda to influence subsequent rereadings of the allegory as well¹⁵⁵. As such, while we shall consider the arboreal metaphor in each passage separately, it will be necessary to subsequently consider its function within the text as a whole.

154. In my analysis below, I commence this section from verse 12b, since verses 11-12a constitute a rhetorical introduction to this section only.

155. On the function of prophecies as texts designed to be reread multiple times, and the manner in which subsequent rereadings might influence the meaning, see especially Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book", 280 n16. In relation to Ezekiel 17 in particular, see Moshe Greenberg, "Ezekiel 17: A Holistic Interpretation", *JAOS* 103:1 (1983), 149-154 (esp. 149-150); Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 320-321.

17:2	בְּנֵאֲנִים חַיִּד חִיָּה וּמְשַׁל מְשַׁל אֶל־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל:	17:2
3	וְאָמַרְתָּ כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדַגֵּי יְהוָה הַגֹּשֶׁר הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל הַכְּנָפִים אָרְדָה הָאֵבֶר מְלֵא הַנּוֹצָה אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ הִרְקַמָה בְּאֵל־הַלְּבָנוֹן וַיִּקַּח אֶת־צַמְרַת הָאָרֶז:	3
4	אֵת רֹאשׁ יְגִיחֹתָיו קָטַף וַיְבִיאֶהוּ אֶל־אֲרֶז פְּנֵעַן בְּעִיר רְכָלִים שָׁמוֹ:	4
5	וַיִּקַּח מִזֶּרַע הָאֲרֶז וַיִּתְּנֶהוּ בְּשֹׁדֵה־זֶרַע קֹחַ עַל־מַיִם רַבִּים צָפְצָפָה שָׁמוֹ:	5
6	וַיִּצְמַח וַיְהִי לְגֶפֶן סִרְחַת שִׁפְלַת קוֹמָה לְפָנוֹת דְּלִיּוֹתָיו אֵלָיו וְשָׂרְשָׁיו תַּחְתָּיו יִהְיוּ וַתְּהִי לְגֶפֶן וַתַּעַשׂ בְּדָיִם וַתִּשְׁלַח פָּאֲרוֹת:	6
7	וַיְהִי גִשְׁר־אֶחָד גָּדוֹל גָּדוֹל כְּנָפִים וְרַב־נוֹצָה וַהֲנִיחָהּ הַגֶּפֶן הָיְתָה כְּפִנְיָהּ שָׂרְשֶׁיהָ עָלָיו וְדִלְיוֹתָיו שִׁלְחָה־לּוֹ לְהִשְׁקוֹת אוֹתָהּ מִזֶּרְגוֹת מִטְּעֵה:	7
8	אֶל־שֹׁדֵה טוֹב אֶל־מַיִם רַבִּים הִיא שְׁתוּלָה לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָף וְלִשְׂאֵת פְּרִי לְהִיּוֹת לְגֶפֶן אֲדָרַת:	8
9	אָמַר כֹּה אָמַר אֲדַגֵּי יְהוָה הַתְּצַלַּח הַלּוֹא אֶת־שָׂרְשֶׁיהָ יִבְתַּק וְאֶת־פְּרִיָּהּ יִקּוּסַס וַיִּבֶשׂ כָּל־טֶרְפֵי צִמְחָהּ תִּיבֶשׂ וְלֹא־בִזְרַע גְּדוּלָה וּבְעַם־רָב לְמִשְׁאֹת אוֹתָהּ מִשָּׂרְשֶׁיהָ:	9
10	וַהֲנִיחָהּ שְׁתוּלָה הַתְּצַלַּח הַלּוֹא כִּגְעַת כָּה רֵיחַ הַקְּדִימִם תִּיבֶשׂ יִבֶשׂ עַל־עֲרֵגַת צִמְחָהּ תִּיבֶשׂ:	10

In my presentation of the passage below, I have labelled each functional component of the allegory with an uppercase or lowercase letter, in order to make more visually apparent the various features of the text¹⁵⁶:

156. The translation is my own. I have attempted, as far as possible, to preserve the masoretic versification and the various ambiguities of referent. Where it differs substantially from other major translations, I have made that clear in the ensuing commentary.

17:2 Mortal! Propound a riddle (חידה) and compose an allegory (משל) to the house of Israel,

3 saying: Thus says the Lord God. The great eagle¹⁵⁷ - great of wingspan, fully feathered and of varied plumage (A) - came to the Lebanon (B). It (A) removed the crest of the cedar (C),

4 clipped off the tips of its shoots (C) and brought it (C) to the land of merchants (D); placed it (C) in a city of traders (D).

5 Then it (A) took one of the seeds of the land (E) and placed it (E) in a fertile field (F). It (A) took [it (E)]¹⁵⁸ alongside many waters (F), set it (E) like a willow¹⁵⁹.

6 It (E) sprouted and it became a freely-growing vine of low stature (G), turning its (G) tendrils towards it (A). Its (G) roots, they were beneath it (G/A). Thus it (E) became a vine (G), producing stalks and sending forth branches.

7 It happened that there was a great eagle - large of wing and with much plumage (a), and look! This vine (G) bent its roots towards it (a), and sent out its (G) tendrils to it (a) from the beds (F) where it (G) was planted, that it might water it (G)¹⁶⁰.

157. For the sake of simplicity, I will follow the major translations in identifying this bird with the eagle, rather than with the griffon vulture. For discussion of this issue, and reasons for the vulture's being a more suitable candidate for the biblical נשר, see in particular Edwin Firmage, "Zoology", *ABD* 6 (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1109-1167 (1158 n44); Christopher B. Hays, "Chirps from the Dust: The Affliction of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:30 in its Ancient Near Eastern Context", *JBL* 126:2 (2007), 305-325 (316); G.R. Driver, "Birds in the Old Testament", *PEQ* 87 (1955), 5-20 (8-9). Note also I. Aharoni, "On Some Animals Mentioned in the Bible", *Osiris* 5 (1938), 461-478 (471) and Royden Keith Yerkes, "The Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14", *JQR* 14:1 (1923), 1-29 (9-10). For opinions to the contrary (and an identification of this bird with the golden eagle), cf: Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 310 - but note his having identified it as the vulture in Moshe Greenberg, "Ezekiel 17 and the Policy of Psammetichus II", *JBL* 76:4 (1957), 304-309 (307-308).

158. For the possibility that קק is serving a nominal function and representing an Akkadian loanword for "plant", see G.R. Driver, "Ezekiel: Linguistic and Textual Problems", *Biblica* 35:2 (1954), 145-159 (152); Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 310.

159. Cf: Peshitta: ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉⲛⲉⲛⲉⲛ ("set it as a watchtower"); LXX: ἐπιβλεπομενον ("set it in a conspicuous place") - both presumably from Hb. צפה I ("look out, spy"). Identification with the willow (ערבה) is long-standing, but so too is confusion with the same: ערבה צפצפה, צפצפה צפצפה (BT Shabbat 36a). On this point, see also Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah* IV (JTS, 2002), 858-859; Michael Zohary, *Plants of the Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 130-131. For the possibility that the noun's name might be an allusion to water (based on the root, צפ), see Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 311. This observation appears to have been first raised by Louise Pettibone Smith, "The Eagle(s) of Ezekiel 17", *JBL* 58:1 (1939), 43-50 (47).

160. As per Greenberg's construal of the syntax; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 311-312.

- 8 It (G) [had been/sought to be] transplanted to a good field (F/d) and to much water (F/d), to produce boughs and to yield fruit - to become a glorious vine (G).
- 9 Say: Thus says the Lord God. Will it (G) prosper? Will it (A/a) not tear off its (G) roots? Cut off and dry up its (G) fruit? All of its (G) foliage will wither. And [all this] without a great arm (x) or a populous nation (y) to lift it (G) from its (G) roots.
- 10 And this plant! (G) [Having been transplanted / even if it *were* transplanted] - would it (G) succeed? Would not the touch of the east wind shrivel it (G) out? On the bed (F/d) of its (G) own growth, it (G) would wither.

Within this allegory, two metaphors predominate. The arboreal language, which represents the Judean king and his court, is predicated on the metaphorical equation, THE KING IS A TREE. The aviary language, representing the Babylonian and Egyptian rulers, is predicated on the metaphorical equation, THE KING IS AN EAGLE. There is no explicit reason given as to what might be the logical connection between trees, vines and eagles, nor what it means for the crown of a tree to be transplanted to a city of merchants. The text in which this language appears is thus dependent upon separate and mutually incompatible metaphors.

From a structural perspective, the allegory is of a tripartite nature. The first section (verses 3-6) concerns the removal of the crest of a cedar, the planting of a seed and its becoming a vine. The second section (verses 7-8) concerns the vine's yearning towards a second eagle, together with a comment that either speaks to the vine's motivations or the legitimacy of its act. Finally, the third section (verses 9-10) comments upon the vine's chances of success. The independence of this third section is reinforced by the inclusion of a prophetic quotation formula (אמר כה אמר).

Composed as a narrative with a high concentration of *waw*-consecutive verbs, the allegory gives the impression of fast-paced and consequential¹⁶¹ action. At several junctures, however, the pace of the narrative is interrupted and attention is focused on a nominal or verbal phrase. This is done by means of repetition, through the utilisation of a focus particle or by means of

161. IBHS §33.2.1; etc.

an existential clause¹⁶². It is in this fashion that the author draws attention to those components of the allegory that have a direct correspondence in the analogue, presented in verses 12b-21.

There are several different components of this allegory, each of which requires interpretation and to each of which I have assigned a different letter. In the initial scenario, seven different clauses require analogical exposition: the eagle (A), the Lebanon (B), the uppermost part of the cedar (C), the land of merchants (D), the seed (E), the field in which the seed was placed (F) and the vine that the seed became (G). These seven components can be divided into two groups: entities (A, C, E, G) and locations (B, D, F). As such, the first of the allegory's three parts can be summed up as follows:

It is to B that A comes, removes C and takes it to D. A then takes E (either from B or from D) and brings it to F, where it becomes G.

From a literary perspective, the most striking feature of the allegory's opening verse is the lengthy and detailed description given to the first eagle. We are told that it is large, of great wingspan, with long pinions, that it is full of feathers and that it possesses "variegation" (הרקמה) - a reference, presumably, to its many different colours¹⁶³. The tremendous detail given to the eagle, together with the fronting of "הנשר הגדול", serves to focus our attention on this entity and to encourage construal of its identity. Its serving an explicitly allegorical function is also emphasised by the inclusion of the definite article.

By contrast, the absolute absence of description accorded to the tree top serves to minimise its function within the text - indeed, it is shortly to disappear from the allegory altogether. All that we are told is that it is "the cedar", that it is in Lebanon and that its crest is taken by the eagle. While the definite article appended to הנשר indicated its allegorical function, the definite article appended to הארז serves the additional purpose of suggesting that it is in some

162.GBHS §5.3.4(a); JM §154; Williams §567; etc.

163.See Greenberg, who suggests the golden eagle on this basis, instead of the griffon vulture: Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 310.

sense archetypal. This is reinforced, not only by the absence of adjectival qualification, but by the nature of its location ("the Lebanon") as a setting suited to the archetypal tree¹⁶⁴.

The term used for the crest of the tree (צמרת) appears only within Ezekiel. Its function within Ezekiel 31, in which it constitutes a metaphorical depiction of the Assyrians and of similarly great nations¹⁶⁵ exploits the semantic domain of a tree's height. Since both passages characterise that tree as a cedar of Lebanon¹⁶⁶, we might assume that the emphasis in Ezekiel 17 is likewise on its stature. The eagle's ability to soar to great heights is exploited in a number of tropes that feature this bird, giving the confrontation between eagle and cedar the quality of an archetypal contest.

In the second verse, (the last in which this tree appears) its textual insignificance is further emphasised by means of the opening collocation. Here, the crest of the cedar is clarified as being merely "the tips of its shoots" (ראש יניקותיו). Greenberg mentions this term's connotations of "suckling"¹⁶⁷, but fails to remark upon the necessary ramifications of this image. In all passages in which shoots feature within the biblical text¹⁶⁸, they are either connected to the tree and deriving their sustenance *from* the tree¹⁶⁹, or are separated only for the purpose of replanting¹⁷⁰.

164. Some 2/3 of all references to Lebanon within the Hebrew Bible demonstrating a figurative employment of the term, or exploiting the connotations of its representing "the exemplary place"; Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOT 65; Sheffield, 1989), 126-128.

165. Ezekiel 31:3, 10 and 14.

166. That the cedars of Lebanon are capable of growing up to 30m in height makes them ideally suited to these characterisations; Zohary, *op.cit.* 104-105.

167. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 310.

168. This is the only instance of its being vocalised as though derived from יניקה*, but יניקה features in Job 8:16, 14:7 and 15:30, Ps 80:12 and Hos 14:7.

169. Greenberg does mention, within this context, the imagery in Isa 11:1, although it is not clear why he does so, since no lexeme related to ינק appears within that passage; Greenberg, *ibid.*

170. Once, and in this allegory's coda: Ezek 17:22.

Having been removed, these shoots are brought to a land of merchants¹⁷¹ and placed in a city of traders. They are not replanted, nor do they even share the company of other plants. The image conveyed is of twigs: useless, separated from their source and serving no purpose. What is more, the ease with which they were separated from the cedar (conveyed by use of the verb קטף¹⁷²) further emphasises the insignificance of their removal, thus downplaying the function of the tree while asserting the physical superiority of the eagle.

In actual fact, while the tree is relatively insignificant in the context of this allegory, the choice of cedar carries with it nuances of a contrastive nature. Given its narrative and poetic function as a tree of great height and girth, its minimisation within this passage draws attention to those parts of it that are here functioning as metaphors for relative powerlessness. While on the one hand this again reinforces the power of the eagle, it also serves to contrast the uppermost shoots with that trunk of which they were once a part. This contrast will prove informative within the text's narrative development.

Immediately pursuant to its transfer of the cedar's crest, the eagle removes a seed from "the land" and brings it to a fertile location. Although the land is not explicated, we must assume that it is a reference to the one from which it had clipped the top of the cedar, and the context may even suggest that this is a seed from the same. Its being brought to a field suitable for sowing suggests its placement in Jerusalem¹⁷³, and its being designated as a "willow" suggests the intentions of its planter.

Here, the eagle is being characterised as a benefactor, and on initial readings of the text we may identify it with God¹⁷⁴. Its careful placement of the seed in a field highly suitable for planting and its setting it alongside water both convey the image of great solicitude. Its intentions that it should be a willow, however, signal a drastic diminishment of its former

171. For Canaan (כנען) as a reference to merchants, cf: Michael C. Astour, "The Origin of the Terms "Canaan," "Phoenician," and "Purple"", *JNES* 24:4 (1965), 346-350.

172. This term appears in a few instances, qualifying also the picking of grain (Deut 23:26), of reeds (Job 8:12) and the leaves of bushes (Job 30:4).

173. The image of Jerusalem as a field for sowing also invokes exilic depictions of it as a ploughed field (שדה חרש): Jer 26:18, Mic 3:12.

174. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 321. For the suitability of God to metaphorical depictions of vines, see James A. Durlleser, *The Metaphorical Narratives in the Book of Ezekiel* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 40.

stature, and prefigure the further diminishment that becomes evident when the seed sprouts and becomes a low vine instead.

James Durlless, by way of an introduction to his analysis of this passage, discusses the import of vine imagery in biblical texts¹⁷⁵. His conclusions are significant, but only convey part of the picture. He observes that the vine, by virtue of the importance of viticulture to ancient Israelite economies, serves to represent the nation that inhabits the land and, by extension, the king who represents the nation, but he does not acknowledge the function of vines as symbols of political autonomy.

It is specifically by virtue of the vine's being a valued commodity that its possession serves to signify security and independence within one's own land. This is a trope employed on several occasions¹⁷⁶, with its inverse (having one's vines taken away) serving to represent enemy invasion and subservience to foreign powers¹⁷⁷. As such, the function of the vine in this instance hinges on the identification of the eagle. At present, in an initial reading of the psalm, it reinforces the possibility that the one tending to the vine is none other than God. On subsequent readings, its function here bears a trace of irony. While the vine is expected to bear fruit and to become beautiful, its remaining always underneath a foreign power (here depicted as an eagle) subverts the usual political message inherent in this trope.

By contrast with the first part of this section, in which the eagle received most of the literary focus and the tree was minimised, from verse 6 onwards the primary literary attention is given to the vine, the growth of which here serves as the chief narrative focus. This is conveyed by means of the number of verbs with which it serves as subject, as well as the increased adjectival qualification given to it.

In rapid succession, we are told that the vine bloomed (צמח), turned its tendrils (פנה), produced stalks (תעש) and extended branches (שלה). This heightened activity counteracts its

175. Durlless, *op.cit.* 40-42.

176. 1 Kgs 5:5, 2 Kgs 18:31 (= Isa 36:16), Mic 4:4, Zech 3:10 - and possibly 8:12.

177. So, for example: Jer 5:17, Joel 1:7 and Ps 105:33.

diminished status, as the successor to a cedar tree, from an intended willow to a low-spreading vine.

There are two ambiguities of referent in verse 6. The assertion the vine turned its tendrils "towards it" (אליו) leaves unclear whether the tendrils were being turned towards the eagle - and, if they were, whether the preceding infinitive (לפנות) indicates that this was the eagle's intention - or whether the tendrils were turned inwards to the vine itself. Furthermore, the subsequent assertion, to the effect that its roots were beneath it (תחתיו יהיו), leaves unclear whether they were beneath the eagle or beneath the vine itself. As such, this second clause could be understood as counteracting the previous (its tendrils were... and yet, its *roots* were...), or it could be parsed as an extension of the same.

The four possible construals to which this text lends itself are that both the tendrils and the roots were extended in the direction of the eagle, that both the tendrils and the roots turned inwards, remaining below the vine, that the tendrils turned towards the eagle and yet the vine kept the roots beneath itself, and that the tendrils turned inwards but the roots were beneath the eagle.

In this particular instance the ambiguity is compounded by the fact that the vine (גפן), while usually grammatically feminine, in this passage alternates between expressing the feminine gender and expressing the masculine¹⁷⁸, and thus leaves unclear whether in any one instance it is the vine or the eagle which is serving as the nominal referent. Since the word for vine only takes the masculine gender in two other passages¹⁷⁹, we must assume that the gender confusion within this verse is deliberate, and that it constitutes a way of marking the vine's duality of intentions.

Verse 6 marks the conclusion of this first part of the allegory - what we might term the "set up". The principle actors have been introduced and their respective relationships have either been expressed directly or can be inferred. To the outline that we sketched previously, we can

178. So, for example, it is grammatically feminine in verse 6b (ותהי, ותעש, ותשלה), verse 7 (הזאת, כפנה, שרשיה), etc) and verse 8 (היא שתולה), but grammatically masculine in verses 6a (דליותיו, ושרשיו תחתיו) and 7b (ודליותיו).

179. Hos 10:1 (גפן בוקק) and 2 Kgs 4:39 (וילקט ממנו).

now assert that the eagle (A) is powerful, that it is cruel and that (paradoxically) it is kind. Its discarding of the cedar's crest paralleled the extensive (even exaggerated¹⁸⁰) care that it extended towards the seed (E) and the vine (G). We know also that, while the vine (G) bears some relationship to the original cedar (C), it is but a poor substitute for the same, and its relationship with the eagle that defeated the cedar and that yet cultivated the vine is by necessity a complex one.

In the subsequent scenario (which we might term "the transgression"), there are either three or four features that require analogical exposition: an eagle (*a*), the vine (G), the location of the vine (F) and - depending on our construal of verse 8 - the second eagle's destination (*d*). Of these, the only two entities to remain from the initial section of the allegory are the vine (G) and its location (F). The new information (*a*, and possibly *d*) corresponds to information in the first part: this eagle (*a*) to the former eagle (A), and this eagle's destination (*d*) to the former eagle's destination (D). As such, the second part of the allegory can be summed up as follows:

It is to F that *a* comes, and G yearns towards it - either in the hopes of being brought to *d*, or despite having already been brought to F.

Verse 7 introduces the second eagle, which is fronted with the text deictic (היה) and is thus potentially set up for an oppositional role within the narrative. That this is a separate eagle to the first is not conveyed explicitly by the MT¹⁸¹, but is implied by the relationship between it and the vine, which by seeking sustenance from this eagle somehow betrays the first one. It has been suggested¹⁸² that the second eagle is described less majestically than the first one, although a decrease in adjectival qualification as regards this eagle may also constitute a further means by which the textual primacy of the vine is narrativised.

In this instance, it is clear that it is to the second eagle that the vine twists (כפנה) its roots and extends its tendrils - an inference supported also by the narrative's reversion here to

180.Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 310.

181.Although see the use of אהה in a similar context, 19:5;Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 311.

182.Schöpflin, *op.cit.* 114; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 314.

exclusively feminine pronouns for the vine. The reason as to why the vine has done so is confusing, the ambiguity centring on the verbal phrase at the verse's conclusion. It makes sense, as per Greenberg's analysis¹⁸³, to take the preposition as an indicator of the source of the vine's roots and branches¹⁸⁴, rather than as a comparative¹⁸⁵.

In other words, we can assert that *from* the bed of the vine's planting, the vine stretched forth its tendrils and entwined its roots around the second eagle in the hope that he would water it¹⁸⁶, rather than suggest that the vine approached this eagle in the hope that it would be watered *more* than in the bed of its planting¹⁸⁷.

The description of the vine's betrayal contains, in verse 8, an ambiguous phrase. Having asserted the vine's desire to be watered, the passage continues by qualifying that intention: אל שדלה טוב אל מים רבים היא שתולה. The ambiguity in this construction centres on whether the phrase represents an extension of the vine's motivations, or a comment by the narrator on the legitimacy of the same.

Were the intention here that the eagle would water the vine by transplanting it to another land, then the two clauses in verse 8 might represent that by means of a participle with future-time referent: "that it *be* transplanted to a good field... to become a glorious vine (להיות לגפן) (אדרת)". Evidence in favour of this construal might be found in the description, "a glorious vine" lacking prior attestation within this passage. A "glorious vine" is a vine unlike the low-hanging vine that the first eagle tended; a glorious vine is a vine that will grow in the second eagle's homeland instead.

183.Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 311.

184.BHRG §39.14.1, GBHS §4.1.13a, etc.

185.GBHS §2.5.4a, Williams §317, etc

186.Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 311-312.

187.Note the construal of the NRSV, which renders the latter clause in 7b (מערעות מטעה) as the beginning of the clause in 8a: "From the bed where it was planted it was transplanted..." This interpretation does not appear to reflect a reading in any of the witnesses to the text, nor is it supported by the KJV.

Alternatively, were it the case that the eagle might water the vine without removing it to a new location¹⁸⁸, the clauses in verse 8 might instead reflect on the ethical nature of the vine's intentions. "Having *been* transplanted to a good field... to become a glorious vine", it nonetheless sought the assistance of a third party and betrayed the one who had planted it. Evidence in favour of this construal might be found by equating the "good field" (שדה טוב) of this clause with the "fertile field" (שדה זרע) in verse 5. That both references are qualified by the same expression (מים רבים) lends support to that hypothesis.

That both of these interpretations work on a syntactic level is due to the temporal multivalency of the Hebrew participle, the term שתולה either denoting the vine's "having been transplanted" or its desire to *be* transplanted instead. A construal one way or the other impacts upon the degree to which the allegory explicitly textualises the vine's act as an act of betrayal. Taken on the whole, however, that it *is* an act of betrayal constitutes an unavoidable conclusion.

Before progressing to the third and final part of this allegory, it should be noted that we can now add one more feature to the text's characterisation of its principal actors. While nothing whatsoever can be said for the second eagle¹⁸⁹, the vine's attributes have now been extended to include those of treachery. We have already observed the contrasts fostered by this allegory when it came to the cedar (large/insignificant) and the first eagle (cruel/nurturing). The typification of a vine as both beautiful and deceitful marks a third contrast within this text, and one exploited elsewhere in Ezekiel, as we shall see.

In the final section of the allegory ("The Punishment"), only two clauses require interpretation, but the analogue of one is unclear and the possibility exists that additional, unexplicated entities are alluded to. Of those that are stated explicitly, both have already been introduced: the vine (G) and one of the two eagles (A or *a*). In addition to uncertainty over which of the two eagles will be responsible for destroying the vine, the text also makes reference in its antepenultimate clause to a "strong arm" (זרע גדולה) and to a "populous

188. A reading in line with the Targum (לאשקאה יתה מעוגית נצבתה) and the LXX.

189. "The second eagle is merely there" - Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 318.

nation" (עם רב), the referents of which are unclear. In summary form only, this third component of the allegory can be stipulated as follows:

G will not survive, with either A or a being responsible for its destruction.

Verse 9 commences, after having reintroduced the fact that this allegory is all the word of God, with the rhetorical question: תצלה. Inviting the answer no, this question introduces the ensuing exposition of the vine's ruin. It is perhaps noteworthy that the verb used to convey the possibility of success (צלח) appears five times in Ezekiel, and always within the context of an allegory. In addition to its three attestations within this text, it appears also in reference to the unchaste bride's suitability to be queen (16:13), and in reference to the burned vine's suitability for nothing (15:4). Its usage in all of these instances bears a trace of irony.

As with the faithless wife in Ezekiel 16, whose beauty is destroyed by her figurative husband's wrath¹⁹⁰, so too with the faithless vine in Ezekiel 17. Having formerly been possessed of branches (the term employed for which, פארות, denotes adornment), of tendrils, of roots and of shoots (בדים) - and, depending upon our construal of verse 8b, of boughs (ענף) and of fruit - the vine now stands to be stripped of everything. The description of the vine's destruction, which mentions also its fruit and its foliage (טרפי צמחה), either suggests it as the referent of "glorious vine" in the previous verse, or at least contrasts with the same and highlights the absurdity of desiring further growth and beautification.

There are three ambiguities within this final section, and the first of them concerns the subject of the verbs ינתק and יקוסס: is it the first eagle who will tear up the vine in recompense for its having been betrayed, or is it the second eagle who will tear up the vine while attempting to transplant it to a new land? Is the vine's penalty, in other words, the result only of the betrayed party's response, or can it even be construed as the natural consequence of an act of betrayal?

190. On this passage, see Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 169-189; Istvan Haag, Stephen Llewelyn & Jack Tsonis, "Ezekiel 16 and its use of Allegory and the Disclosure-of-Abomination Formula", *VT* 62 (2012), 198-210; Peggy L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel XVI", *VT* 50:3 (2000), 285-309.

This ambiguity carries over into the following verse as well, in which the focus particle (והנה) may either serve to indicate a recapitulation of the information in verse 9, or a further consequence to those already listed. This second ambiguity, while related to the first, centres once more on the import of the participle, שתולה. In the event that it functions substantively, in reference to the vine itself, the import may be that it serves as a recapitulation: "And this plant! Could it succeed?" In this context, the east wind functions as a metaphorical extension of the same destruction that was visited upon it by one of the two eagles.

Alternatively, we could construe the participle as functioning in the subjunctive and suggest that, "even if it *were* [successfully] transplanted, ... the east wind would dry it out". In addition to lending itself to a construal of verse 9 that equates the vine's destruction with the results of its being uprooted and brought to a new location, this interpretation of the participle in verse 10 allows for an additional remark on the efficacy of political betrayal. While an act of betrayal akin to that which motivated this allegory must almost certainly result in failure, in the unlikely event that it proves successful, such success can only ever be temporary.

The third ambiguity within this section concerns the tenors of two vehicles in verse 9b. To whom is the prophet referring when he makes reference to the "great arm" (זרע גדולה) and to the "populous nation" (עם רב)? While the specific collocation employed for a "great arm" appears only once and in this verse, its structural similarity to God's "strong arm" (זרע חזקה)¹⁹¹ and his "outstretched arm" (זרע נטויה)¹⁹² makes it reminiscent of the same, and suggests on first reading a construal of the divine as its referent. The two other passages in which greatness is applied to the arm of God both imply restraint in particular - the one, his holding the nations of the world back from Israel¹⁹³, and the other, his preserving those in Jerusalem who are doomed to death¹⁹⁴.

191. Jer 21:5, applied ironically against the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

192. Fifteen times, and all of them with salvific connotations: Ex 6:6; Deut 4:34, 5:15, 7:19, 9:29, 11:2, 26:8; 1 Kgs 8:42 (= 2 Chr 6:32); 2 Kgs 17:36; Ps 136:12; Jer 27:5, 32:17; Ezek 20:33, 34.

193. Ex 15:16 (בגדל זרועך).

194. Ps 79:11 (כגדל זרועך).

The use of "arm" (זרע) as a metaphor for strength, however positive it may or may not be when applied to God, can also typify tyranny when applied to humans¹⁹⁵. It is noteworthy that the only other attestations of this noun in Ezekiel - and excluding those passages where it functions as a literal reference to arms¹⁹⁶ - concern the shedding of blood (22:6), or relate figuratively to the might of Assyria (31:17), Egypt (30:21-24) and Babylon (30:24-25). As such, while the term invokes the imagery of salvation, that imagery is tempered by its other possibilities.

References to a multitude (עם רב), or to one of its synonymous terms (עם גדול, עמ כבד, etc), are sufficiently numerous as to defy generalisation. If we limit ourselves to this particular collocation, and excluding those instances in which the multitude functions as a literal reference to large crowds of people, then we can note its martial attestations in Isaiah 13:4, Joel 2:2 and Ezekiel 26:7, in each of which it refers to a large army (potentially, in the case of Joel, a divine army) summoned together by God himself.

In Isaiah, the purpose of that army is to defeat the Babylonians, while in Ezekiel the army (comprising Babylonians) is brought against the king of Tyre. In both instances, the presence of the army is good news for the oracle's recipients, although such cannot be said for its attestation in Joel, in which it comprises a feature of the "Day of the Lord", and marks the beginning of a vast slaughter of Judeans.

While references to the great arm might lend themselves to a salvific reading, their collocation with a vast multitude suggests a more ambiguous import, and an initial reading of this allegory is insufficient for determining the meaning of their non-intervention. Does it convey the first eagle's ability to destroy the vine even without the assistance of an army, or does it convey the absence of any assistance (divine or mundane) to *prevent* the vine's destruction?

195. So, for example, Ps 10:15, 37:17; Job 22:8, 38:15; etc.

196. Ezek 4:7 and 13:20.

As with the previous ambiguities, an initial reading of this text is insufficient for its resolution. While these are questions that we may expect to see resolved by the analogue, the manner in which the analogue will interact with the allegory significantly transcends the simple task of clausal interpretation. On the contrary, the interaction between allegory and analogue will be mutual: just as the former will be constrained by the latter, so too will the latter be constrained. This feature, by which the various components of the passage inform upon one another in a mutual fashion, is a feature of the metaphorical complex.

Before we proceed to an investigation of their interaction, let us first consider the interactivity of tropes within this initial complex.

Metaphors within this text have been drawn, chiefly, from the two domains of eagles and of plants. Within the former domain were two resplendent birds, the first of which was given more description than the second and which might possibly be seen, therefore, as the more powerful of the two. Although their flight was never explicitly mentioned, it was inferred from their movement from one location to the next, and implied by the first eagle's ascent to the top of a cedar. The verbs that functioned in relation to the birds were initially those of coming and going, of taking and bringing, and only subsequently those of wreaking havoc and destruction.

The semantic domains exploited by these eagles (and particularly by the first one) were the familiar tropes of power and of grandness. The secondary tropes of cruelty and of nurturing were both employed, and the shift from one to the other and back again was marked chiefly in the latter instance, and by means of a succession of verbs that described the vine's destruction.

The plant-related metaphors took several forms, with the primary two being those of the cedar and those of the vine. These metaphors had a greater influence upon the narrativisation, yielding locations (שדה זרע, שדה טוב, מים רבים) and subsidiary actors (צמררת, צפצפה, זרע, etc) that corresponded to their semantic domain. What is more, while both eagles and plants received adjectives appropriate to their nature, only the plants served in interaction with verbs exclusively from their own domain (קטף, ויצמח, להשקות, מטעה, שתולה).

The qualities expressed by these vehicles were, like those of the eagles, contrastive. The cedar evoked the nuances of height and power, together with those of immobility and powerlessness. The vine evoked the nuances of beauty and splendour, together with those of treachery and hubris. The vine's location evoked the nuances of prosperity, conveyed chiefly through the imagery of water, and which were forcefully contrasted at the allegory's conclusion with the imagery of dryness¹⁹⁷ and death.

The interactivity of these tropes serves a functional purpose within the context of Ezekiel's message, and a consideration of the allegory in light of its analogue will provide more information as regards the choice of vehicles. At the outset, however, it is apparent that their influence upon one another in this text is mutual. Just as the power of the eagle further indicated the powerlessness of the vine, so too did the text's emphasis upon the vine's low stature serve to re-emphasise the eagle's soaring height.

§3.3.1.2 - Ezekiel 17:12-21

- 17:12 אָמַר-נָא לְבֵית הַמְּרִי הֲלֹא יִדְעֻתֶם מִה־אֵלֶּה אֲמַר הַגֵּה-כָּא מִלֹּד-בָּבֶל יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּקַּח אֶת-מֶלֶכָּהּ
וְאֶת-שָׂרֵיהֶּ וַיָּבֵא אוֹתָם אֵלָיו בְּבֵלָהּ:
- 13 וַיִּקַּח מִזֶּרַע הַמְּלוּכָה וַיִּכְרֹת אֹתוֹ בְּרִית וַיָּבֵא אֹתוֹ בְּאֵלֶּה וְאֶת-אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ לָקַח:
14 לְהִיּוֹת מִמְּלִכָּה שְׂפִלָּה לְבִלְתִּי הַתְּנַשֵּׂא לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ לְעַמְּדָה:
- 15 וַיִּמְרֹד-בּוֹ לְשַׁלַּח מִלְּאֲכָיו מִצָּרִים לְתַת־לוֹ סוּסִים וְעַם-גָּב הַיִּצְלָח הַיִּמְלִט הַעֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה וְהִפְרַת בְּרִית
וְנִמְלֹט:
- 16 חַי-אֲנִי נְאֻם-אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה אִם-לֹא בְּמָקוֹם הַמְּלֹדֶה הַמְּמֻלָּד אֹתוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּזָה אֶת-אֲלֹתָיו וְאֲשֶׁר הִפְרַת אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ
אֹתוֹ בְּתוֹד-בָּבֶל יָמוּת:
- 17 וְלֹא בְּחַיִל גָּדוֹל וּבְקִנְיָן רָב יַעֲשֵׂה אוֹתוֹ פְּרִיעָה בְּמִלְחָמָה בְּשִׁפּוֹד סִלְגָה וּבְבִנּוֹת דָּגָק לְהַכְרִית נַפְשׁוֹת
רַבּוֹת:
- 18 וַיִּבְנֶה אֵלֶּה לְהִפְרַת בְּרִית וְהִנֵּה נָתַן יָדוֹ וְכָל-אֵלֶּה עֲשֵׂה לֹא יִמְלֹט:

197. Note that the word יבש occurs twice in verse 9 and three times in verse 10, thus paralleling the two references to מים רבים in verses 5 and 8.

19 לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה חִי־אֱנִי אִם־לֹא אֶלְתִּי אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה וּבְרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיר וּנְתַתִּיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ:
 20 וּפְרָשְׁתִּי עָלָיו רִשְׁתִּי וְנִתְפַּשׂ בְּמַצּוֹדֹתַי וְהִבִּיאֹתִיהוּ בְכֹלָה וְנִשְׁפַּטְתִּי אֹתוֹ וְשָׂם מֵעַלֹּו אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל־בְּנֵי:
 21 וְאֵת כָּל־מִבְרָחוֹ בְּכָל־אֲגַפְיֹו בְּתַרְבּוּב יִפְלוּ וְהַנְּשֹׂאָרִים לְכָל־רֵיחַ יִפְרָשׁוּ וַיִּדְעֻתָם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה דְּבַרְתִּי:

17:12 Say now to the rebellious house: Do you not know what these things mean? Tell them: The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, took its king and its officials, and brought them back with him to Babylon.

13 He took one of the royal offspring and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath (he had taken away the chief men of the land),
 14 so that the kingdom might be humble and not lift itself up, and that by keeping his covenant it might stand.

15a But he rebelled against him by sending ambassadors to Egypt, in order that they might give him horses and a large army.

15b Will he succeed? Can one escape who does such things? Can he break the covenant and yet escape?

16 As I live, says the Lord God, surely in the place where the king resides who made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant with him he broke - in Babylon he shall die.

17 Nor will he (Pharaoh) employ a mighty army or a great company to do this to him in war¹⁹⁸, when ramps are cast up and siege-walls built to cut off many lives.

18 Because he despised the oath and broke the covenant, because he gave his hand and yet did all these things, he shall not escape.

19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: As I live, I shall surely return upon his head my oath that he despised, and my covenant that he broke.

198.I depart in this clause from the NRSV, whose translation reorders its various phrases to divest it of ambiguity. My translation, while clumsy, preserves some of the awkwardness of the Hebrew - as I discuss in the commentary below.

20 I will spread my net over him, and he shall be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there for the treason he has committed against me.

21 All the pick of his troops shall fall by the sword, and the survivors shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken.

As with the allegory, the corresponding analogue also features a cast of characters, and a cursory reading would suggest that they correspond neatly to one another. While in some respects they do, a close analysis will demonstrate that the correspondence is occasionally weak, or operating at an emotive level only. The actors are all described here without any overtly figurative language, save for the reference to the royal offspring as being of "royal seed" (מזרע המלוכה). They comprise the Babylonian and Egyptian kings, and the unidentified monarch of a new Judean kingdom¹⁹⁹.

From a structural perspective, this section is also comprised of three parts, which roughly correspond to the three parts of the allegory. In the first section (verses 12b-14), the Babylonian king comes to Jerusalem, deposes its ruling party, brings them into captivity in Babylonia and places a new ruler on the Judean throne. In the second section (verse 15a), the new monarch rebels against the Babylonian king by sending to Egypt for military assistance. This verse, in addition to detailing the nature of his betrayal, also includes within it a series of observations on the likelihood of success, headed with the rhetorical היצלח ("Will he succeed?"). These observations belong thematically to the analogue's third section.

The third section of the analogue is the part that possesses the loosest relationship with the previous allegory, but which concerns the inevitability of the king's failure, the certainty of his not receiving reinforcements from Egypt and the futility of rebellion in general. While an identification of the king with Zedekiah is perhaps the most promising, we shall be concerned in this analysis with the function of the metaphorical imagery, and not with the historical attribution of its parts.

199. For an identification with Zedekiah, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 319ff; Greenberg, "Psammetichus", 307ff; Schöpflin, *op.cit.* 114; Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment", 178; Cooke, *op.cit.* 187ff.

In the first section, which is prefaced with the question, הלא ידעתם מה אלה, the text speaks of the king of Babylon (A), who comes to Jerusalem (B), takes its king (C₁) and officials (C₂) and brings them back to Babylon (D) with him. He then takes one of the royal offspring (E), having already taken away the chief men of "the land", makes a covenant (⌘) and proclaims him king (G). Loosely conveyed, the information of this section can be represented as follows:

It is to B that A comes, removes C₁ and C₂ and takes them to D. A then takes E, performs ⌘ and it becomes G.

Even a cursory glance at this first part of the analogue shows how closely it adheres to the allegory in both structure and form. The relationship between the various parts is communicated through the employment of two of the verbs (לקח, בוא) that featured in verses 4-5 - both of which are applied here to the Babylonian king in his interaction with the Judean monarchy. His taking *both* the king and the senior officials thus lends itself to a construal of ראש יניקותיו and צמרת הארז as possessing two separate referents, rather than as having been parallel expressions.

The focus particle, הנה, fronts not only this initial clause but the subsequent clauses in verses 13-15, which are connected to it by means of a string of *waw*-consecutive verbs. The impression created is of a rapid-fire series of actions, occurring either right now or in the immediate future. The mirative connotations of this particle²⁰⁰ emphasise that, as per this allegory's having also been a "riddle", it is not expected that the prophet's audience should have known this information previously. Indeed, as we observed, an initial reading may have suggested that the eagle represented God and the vine, perhaps, the people of Israel.

Now that we know that the first eagle represents the Babylonian king, we can apply to the king those qualities invoked by the eagle within the allegory, and - more importantly - to the Judean monarchy those attributes conveyed about the cedar. As such, while on the one hand we can impute the familiar tropes of grandness, swiftness and power to the Babylonians, we

200. Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and C.H.J. van der Merwe, "הנה and Mirativity in Biblical Hebrew", in *Hebrew Studies* 52 (2011), 53-81. See my analysis of הנה in §3.1.

can also apply the connotations of powerlessness, immobility and *former* grandeur to the Judean king. His transfer to Babylon, which was typified before as the placement of twigs in a mercantile city, further emphasises his current uselessness and the cessation of his rule.

In the analogue's description of the new king's appointment, the seed from which the vine grew is the heir to the Judean throne, in which "seed" functions with familial connotations, denoting the possibility of legitimate dynastic succession. And yet, as we saw in the allegory, the new kingdom must be merely a fraction of its predecessor. While it was a seed that was taken, the seed was to grow into a willow instead of a cedar, and it ended up producing a low-hanging vine in place of the willow.

This contrast between the stature of the vine and the stature of its powerful forebears was implicit within the allegory, but is emphasised explicitly within the analogue. Here, the text makes clear the ratification of a suzerain-vassal treaty²⁰¹ bound by means of an oath. The relative power of the two parties is already clear, but further stipulated in verse 13b, by means of a parenthetical observation to the effect that the chief men of the land had already been removed.

This observation is important, since the means by which it is conveyed further emphasises the relative power of the treaty's participants and the status of the new king, vis-à-vis the old. The clause, *ויבא אתו באלה* ("putting him under oath") can be read as featuring a form of the instrumental prefix often termed the *bet privii*²⁰². Signifying the price of something, or the object with which it was exchanged, the unvocalised verse could be seen as alluding to the fact that the Babylonian king "brought him, in place of an אלה". The אלה, which features some seventeen times within the corpus, denotes a great tree - occasionally translated as the oak, but more probably a reference to the terebinth²⁰³.

201. Michael L. Barré, "Treaties in the ANE", *ABD* 6, 653-656; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 313, 319ff; Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Vassal Oaths and the Prophet Ezekiel", *JBL* 78:3 (1959), 199-204. Tsevat's translation of *ממלכה שפלה* as "vassal state" has much to recommend it; *op.cit.* 201.

202. GKC §119p; JM §133c; IBHS §11.2.5d; GBHS §4.1.5j; BHRG §39.6.3ii; Williams §246.

203. So Zohary, *op.cit.* 108-111.

The allusion to the king's being brought in place of a terebinth - an allusion that functions on an implicit level - corresponds to the willow's being brought in place of a cedar; as the willow became a low-hanging vine (שפלת קומה), so does verse 14 stipulate that the new kingdom should be a lowly kingdom (ממלכה שפלה) and, more to the point, that it not seek to elevate itself (לא התנשא).

As low as the kingdom may be, we are also informed that it is only by virtue of the king's treaty that it is able to exist at all. It is here in particular that we see how the treaty (א, above) fills the place in this schema that the allegory filled with a reference to the vine's location (שדה זרע). While the allegory led us to the conclusion that the fertile field corresponded to Jerusalem, we see here how it functions on a deeper level as well - as a metaphorization of 'treaty-hood', which construes the state of being bound by a treaty as a location in which kingdoms can thrive.

Thus far, the relationship between the analogue and the allegory is both tight and mutually informative. In the second section of the analogue, which comprises verse 15a, this relationship becomes looser. Here, we are told that the new king (G) sends ambassadors to Egypt (a), requesting military support (x) in the form of horses and soldiery. If we assume a correspondence with the allegory, then a simplified representation of these events might look as follows:

It is to *a* that G goes - in the hope of receiving *x*.

The corresponding component of the allegory (which we depicted, "it is to F that *a* comes, and G yearns towards it - either in the hopes of being brought to *d*, or despite having already been brought to F") is considerably denser. The terseness of the analogue is the result of its resting upon the allegorical description and thus not requiring the same degree of figuration in order to convey its meaning. What is more, in the light of the vine's destruction having already been extensively narrativised, a laconic formulation in this instance may convey more rhetorical force.

Taken on its own, this passage makes plain both that which the Judean king has done and how the narrator feels about it. The assertion that he has revolted (וימרד) against the Babylonian king indicates not only his breaking of the treaty but suggests an intention to use Egyptian reinforcements in order to secede from the empire²⁰⁴. The description of these reinforcements employs the term עַם רַב ("large army") in order to describe the Egyptian soldiers, and thus invites comparison with the ambiguous clause in verse 9b, which qualified the destruction of the vine as something that would happen *without* a strong arm and an עַם רַב.

Initially, we had supposed that there were two ways of construing that qualification. Either the eagle would be capable of destroying the vine without any assistance (divine or mundane), or the vine would be destroyed without its ever receiving any support (again, divine or mundane). The use of this collocation in the analogue suggests a third reading - that the vine would be destroyed for having *requested* a large army, and would be destroyed instead of receiving one.

This is an awkward fit, and we must be wary of not superimposing the analogue onto the allegory in so simplistic a fashion. We shall return shortly to an interpretation of the עַם רַב, which is relevant to the analogue's conclusion, but for the moment must remark upon the *nature* of the king's rebellion. While the allegory suggested that the second eagle had come to the vine (if only because eagles are creatures of movement, and vines are by their nature immobile), the analogue suggests the opposite.

In fact, the dual employment of שְׁלַח in both contexts - both in relation to the vine's tendrils in verse 7b and the king's emissaries in verse 15a - suggests an equation between their respective objects. As the vine extended tendrils towards an eagle in hopes of being watered, so the king sent emissaries to Egypt in the hope of receiving military reinforcement. This allows not only for our correspondence between the king and the vine, but suggests a broader correspondence between the vine and the kingdom as a whole, whereby the parts of the vine can now represent the various officials of the Judean state.

204. For the relationship between this scenario and the revolt of Zedekiah, see Greenberg, "Psammetichus", 307ff; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 321ff; Schöpflin, *op.cit.* 114.

This observation is of some significance, for while the analogue's conclusion only speaks directly to the fates of individuals (the king, most importantly, but a general loss of life in verse 17b), the choice of allegory allows the prophet to allude on an implicit level to the destruction of the kingdom as a whole. Just as there can be no restoration of a vine that has been so thoroughly destroyed, so too must the punishment visited upon the king within the analogue constitute the absolute termination of the Judean monarchy.

Furthermore, an appreciation of this fact now enables us to retroactively add an additional nuance to the trope of the cedar. The exile of the first king was characterised as the removal of the crest of the tree, while the tree itself remained in the ground. The exile of the subsequent king was characterised by the utter destruction of the plant that symbolised his kingdom. While the first king's deposition could prefigure a new Judean monarchy, the latter king's deposition marks its absolute conclusion.

After a series of rhetorical clauses that suggest the futility of rebellion, the third section effectively boils down to this very point: the Babylonian king (A) will bring the Judean king (G) to Babylon (D), where he will die. No mention is made of the office of the king, but the interactivity of metaphors between the allegory and the analogue allow us to infer its fate on the basis of the imagery employed.

In describing the failure of the revolt, verse 17a introduces an ambiguous phrase, and one that has a direct bearing upon our understanding of two expressions used within the allegory. As a whole, the relevant clause appears as follows:

ולא בחיל גדול ובקהל רב יעשה אותו פרעה במלחמה

As Greenberg has cogently observed, the ambiguity within this passage can be localised to the word פרעה²⁰⁵. Were we to omit this term from the verse, the subject is the Babylonian king who neither requires great force nor a powerful army to destroy the Judean king(dom). This accords certainly with the image of an eagle uprooting a vine, since the latter's defences are

205. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 315 and 323; Greenberg, "Psammetichus", 308-309.

clearly insufficient for an enemy of that nature, and suggests a construal of זרע גדולה and עם רב in line with this idea: the eagle will be destroy the vine, and will require neither "great force" nor a "powerful army"²⁰⁶ to do so.

The imposition of פרעה onto this verse somewhat clumsily changes the subject²⁰⁷. As it reads, the verse suggests that it will be with neither great force nor a powerful army that the Pharaoh will do this in war - the deed presumably being his coming to the aid of the Judean monarchy. This interpretation (and the one to which the text in its final form most easily lends itself) suggests an alternative construal of זרע גדולה and עם רב: that the vine will be destroyed by the eagle with neither a "great force" nor a "powerful army" coming to its aid.

While a consideration of the word פרעה as being secondary to the text makes a great deal of sense, it is the flexibility of the language that allows for its inclusion²⁰⁸ and the flexibility of the text's metaphors that it can so easily be accommodated. What is more, since its accommodation yields a construal of the clause in verse 9b somewhat in line with the reference to עם רב in verse 15a, we can consider its inclusion a deliberate one.

The description of the revolt's failure is headed by a curse imprecation in verse 16a, by which God vows to avenge the king's transgression of his treaty. Together with the assertions that conclude the analogue (verses 19-21), this marks a theological shift in the prophet's condemnation of the Judean king, by virtue of which he equates transgression of the Babylonian ordinances with apostasy. Although Ezekiel is the only prophet to make such an analogy²⁰⁹, we need not suppose that it was motivated by an otherwise-unprecedented concern with perjury²¹⁰.

206. To employ the terms with their analogical connotations.

207. It is Greenberg's suggestion (*ibid.*) that this was done in order to 'correct' the prophecy after the events had played out. For observations on this phenomenon within prophet literature in general, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 509.

208. A fact noted by Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 315.

209. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 321.

210. Tsevat, *ibid.*; Greenberg, *ibid.*

On the contrary, the gradual investiture of God within the story is a means by which the narrative can be made to function on both mundane and cosmic planes simultaneously. While an initial construal of the allegory may have led us to identify God's presence within the drama, and while the subsequent analogue stripped it of those meanings, the intensification of covenantal imagery at its conclusion marks the return of this passage to the celestial plane²¹¹.

This development is critical to an interpretation of the coda, which augments the imagery found within the allegory with *new* metaphorical content in order to extend the analogue's political treatment of its themes into those of eschatological salvation. Before we consider how this is done, and the impact that the coda has upon subsequent re-readings of the text, it is worth remarking briefly upon the metaphorical interplay thus far.

At various points, the relationship between the allegory and the analogue has been fairly tight, and has yielded direct correlations that have served to both disambiguate and expound upon the two texts in equal measure. The nuances conveyed by the arboreal imagery within the allegory informed the presentation of the king by remarking upon the former glory of his office. In a similar fashion, the allegorical depiction of the eagle reinforced the solicitude of the Babylonian monarch, whose growth of the new kingdom was thus conveyed as an act of uncharacteristic beneficence.

At other times, the relationship between the allegory and the analogue was an evocative one only. To seek a direct correspondence between *every* feature of their respective passages would be to rob the text of its literary import, and reduce it to an act of mere translation. As such, we need assert no particular relationship between the forms of destruction visited upon the vine and the elements of the siege depicted in verse 17²¹², nor assert a correlation between "the bed of its planting" in verse 10 and Babylonian captivity. The isolated trope does not

211. Greenberg recognises this dual function of this allegory (*op.cit.* 317), and the means by which the prophet's condemnation of the king for his political infractions led to (and, in part, represented) a condemnation of his theological infractions as well (*op.cit.* 321-323). He suggests general infractions in place of the specific, if obvious, suggestion that the king's guilt lay in sending to Egypt for horses. For the function of this trope in Jeremiah, see Jeffrey C. Geoghegan, *The Time, Place, and Purpose of the Deuteronomistic History: The Evidence of "Until This Day"* (Brown Judaic Studies 347; Brown University, 2006), 162. For the relationship between Ezekiel and Jeremiah, see Michael A. Lyons, "Marking Innerbiblical Allusion in the Book of Ezekiel", *Biblica* 88:2 (2007), 245-250.

212. I would also, therefore, disagree with Greenberg's suggestion that the "eagle" represents the Babylonian king, while the "east wind" corresponds to God (*Ezekiel 1-20*, 319 and 323).

work in so substitutive a fashion, and neither do the individual tropes within a metaphorical complex.

And yet, the interplay of tropic categories (or semantic domains) can, in many instances, reveal profound connections that might elude a first reading of the text. As such, the analogical relationship between a fertile field (שדה זרע) and the state of being bound by a treaty highlights further points of interplay between the semantic domains of fecundity (water, seed, growth) and of military allegiance (horses, men, treaties).

The vine's being planted in a fertile field alongside water corresponded to the signing of a treaty. Similarly, the vine's requesting of a second eagle to water it corresponded to a request for reinforcements from Egypt. We can fill these details out even further: if plantation by a stream and the care of an eagle represent a treaty, then the duplicitous request of a second eagle's care implies the proposal of an alternate treaty with a second king²¹³. Similarly, if the request to be watered implies the granting of military reinforcements then so too might the initial planting have suggested the same.

In filling the information out in this fashion, we not only gain a broader perspective on those parts of the analogue that the text draws to our attention, but on the attitudes towards those events that it encourages us to share. For a vassal state to seek military support from a second power is logically absurd - as logically absurd (asserts the text) as a well-tended vine planted alongside water now seeking to be watered from another source.

In the conclusion to this analogue (found in verses 19-21), the prophet introduces new semantic domains in his exploration of the vine's infidelity. In verse 20, in particular, he refers to casting a net (רשת) over the rebellious king, of catching him in a snare (מצודה) and of bringing him to Babylonia. As we shall see in our appraisal of Ezekiel 19 below, this language is taken from the semantic domain of wild animals; were it to pertain in this instance to the character depicted by the eagle, its inclusion here would further that particular

213. On the historical merits of this suggestion, see J. Maxwell Miller & John H. Hayes, *A History of Israel and Judah* (2nd ed; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 474; Greenberg, "Psammetichus", 307.

metaphorical trope. In reference to the character that was depicted by the lion, the language here is confusing.

Durlesser's appraisal of these "mixed metaphors" is entirely dismissive. He suggests that they "garble... the message of the oracle"²¹⁴, fail to contribute anything to the text as a whole, and actually "damage... the rhetoric of Ezek[iel] 17"²¹⁵. While so negative an appraisal of metaphorical complexity is unfortunate, a consideration of verse 20 demonstrates that Durlesser is not incorrect, and that for whatever reason this passage was included, it cannot be seen to function alongside the rest of this text.

§3.3.1.3 - Ezekiel 17:22-24

17:22 כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶנִּי מִצְמַרְת הָאֲרֶז הָרָמָה וְנִתְתִּי מִרֹאשׁ יְנִקוּתֵי־רָךְ אֶקְטֹף וְשַׂתַּלְתִּי אֹנִי עַל הַר־גְּבוּהָ וְתִלְוִל:

23 בְּהַר מְרוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשַׂתְּלֶנּוּ וְנִשְׂאָ עֲנָף וְעָשָׂה פְרִי וְהָיָה לְאֲרֶז אֲדִיר וְשִׁכְנֵנוּ תַחְתָּיו כָּל־כְּפֹף בְּצֶל דְּלִיּוּתָיו תִּשְׁכְּנֶנָּה:

24 וְיָדְעוּ כָל־עֵצֵי הַשָּׂדֶה כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה הַשֹּׁפֵלִתִיו עֵץ גְּבוּהָ הַגְּבִהֲתִי עֵץ שְׁפֹל הוֹבִשְׁתִּי עֵץ לָח וְהַפְרַחְתִּי עֵץ יִבֹּשׂ אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי וְעָשִׂיתִי:

17:22 Thus says the Lord God: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

23 On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.

24 All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.

214.Durlesser, *op.cit.* 63.

215.Durlesser, *op.cit.* 64.

At various junctures within the text, Ezekiel delivers an oracle that concerns the restoration of Judean fortunes²¹⁶. While there may be some debate as regards whether this particular passage was composed before the destruction of Jerusalem or afterwards²¹⁷, there can be no denying that its placement here is deliberate. The extent to which it utilises imagery that functioned within the previous two passages shows a desire to extend that imagery into a new domain - the realm of monarchic restoration.

The language that the prophet uses in this passage is reminiscent of that which he employs in 31:3-9, which serves as a dual oracle against the Assyrians and (in its final form) the Egyptian Pharaoh²¹⁸. Both descriptions treat of a cedar tree, its tremendous height, its superlative beauty, its providing a habitat to all of the various species of birds, and its superiority over every other tree in the garden/world²¹⁹. While the oracle in chapter 31 soon becomes a taunt, with the positive features of the tree being employed to convey the hubris of the Assyrians (and of Pharaoh), the restorative oracle in 17:22-24 concludes on an entirely positive note.

The contrast between the coda in this regard and the preceding allegory is a stark one. The termination of the monarchy described by the destruction of the vine was a final one, and left within it no scope for restoration. The restoration described within this oracle, however, is no less final. The recognition by all the other trees (who here function as metaphors for the various nations of the world) that God alone is the ultimate arbiter provides in turn no room for further destruction. As such, the allegory and its coda not only complement one another, but metaphorically frame a vision of absolute destruction and miraculous renewal.

216. On the (non-)relationship between this passage and the other oracles of restoration, see Tova Ganzel, "The Descriptions of the Restoration of Israel in Ezekiel", *VT* 60 (2010), 197-211. Although Ganzel is no doubt correct in suggesting that Ezek 17:22-24 denotes the restoration of an individual in particular, rather than of the Israelites as a whole (201 n21), this passage does share several of the commonalities that she outlines (in particular, p200), and merits treatment as an oracle of restoration.

217. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 324.

218. For Ezek 31:1-17 as an ambiguous attestation of the metaphor, THE KING IS A TREE, see the Appendix, §5.

219. On the relationship between these images and various Mesopotamian parallels, cf: Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (King and Saviour IV; Uppsala: Lundequist, 1951). On the absence of "cosmic tree" traditions in Israelite tradition, cf: C.L. Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations in Light of a Royal Ideology of Warfare", *JBL* 130:3 (2011), 473-492 (481).

The coda is in two parts, with the first part (verses 22-23a) detailing the removal of the top part of a cedar and its plantation on a high mountain of Israel. There, we are told that it will grow into another cedar, producing boughs and bearing fruit. The second part of the coda (verses 23b-24) concerns this tree's relationship with birds and with the other trees of the forest - this latter component constituting a demonstration of the supremacy of God in bringing about the cedar tree's renewal²²⁰.

In describing the removal of the cedar's crest and its subsequent growth into a new tree, several allusions are made towards the allegory, of both a lexical and a figurative nature. The lexical allusions can be isolated to four clauses, found in verses 22 and 23, while the figurative allusions are throughout. A consideration of the lexical correspondences between the coda and the allegory demonstrate that the cedar within the coda is being compared to both the cedar and the vine within the allegory:

ולקחתי אני מצמרת הארז הרמה ונתתי	22a	ויקה את צמרת הארז	4b
מראש ינקותיו רך אקטף	22b	את ראש יניקותיו קטף	5a
ונשא ענף ועשה פרי והיה לארז אדיר	23a	לעשות ענף ולשאת פרי להיות לגפן אדרת	8b

Lest there be any confusion as regards the specific nuances being exploited by this trope, the coda's descriptions of the crest's removal features additional adjectival qualification, which serves to specify those features that are here being invoked. It is not just the crest of the cedar, but the crest of the *lofty* cedar (הארז הרמה); they are not merely the tips of the shoots, but a *delicate* [shoot] from their tips (מראש ינקותיו רך).

Importantly, in the coda's reapplication of this imagery, God has assumed the role of the eagle - an identification to which the allegory had originally leant itself, before the politicisation of its message within the corresponding analogue. Here, God's motivations as the eagle are substantively different to those of the Babylonian king. Rather than take the crest of the tree

220. See Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1-20*, 319) for a similar bipartite division, but one conducted on the basis of metrical considerations.

and discard it, this crest is carefully planted in a manner reminiscent of the eagle's careful planting of the seed²²¹.

The growth of the cedar parallels the growth of the vine, but with the further qualification that it serves as a shelter for all every type of bird. The expression, צפור כל כנף, may parallel the description of the eagles as being of great wingspan (גדול הכנפיים). If so, the intention may be to specifically include the eagles within this depiction - although the birds in this verse are presumably only birds (the nations being depicted as other trees²²²), the implication may nonetheless exist that the tenor of this tree will be superior to the tenors of the two eagles.

As for the identification of that tenor, the parallel with the allegory should be sufficient to suggest that it is the Judean monarchy, or at the least a Judean king. While the crest of the cedar denoted the king in the allegory's interpretation, the cedar itself, from which he was removed, denoted his office. As such, while the crest of the cedar is removed and replanted, the cedar into which it grows may constitute his kingdom as a whole. Note, however, that while the analogue leant itself to the possibility that the tips of the shoots were the king's officials, the implication within the coda is that the crest of the cedar and the "tender one" are both depictions of the king.

From a metaphorical perspective, the suggestion here appears to be that the Judean monarchy (lofty, etc) will have its king (delicate, etc) removed from it by God. Asserting God's hand in its removal injects a teleological reading into the text (and possibly a theodical). While the purpose of this removal may at first be unclear, the subsequent flowering of the *new* Judean monarchy will make evident the plans that God had implemented. The fragility of the king contrasts with the power of the one who planted him, while the location of his planting serves to augment his height and stress the visibility of this miraculous renewal.

The supremacy of God, the miraculous nature of the king's return and the extent to which all that had previously transpired had been a part of this one divine plan is made clear in the

221. That the expression, גתתי, might parallel שמו in verse 4, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 316.

222. Greenberg, *op.cit.* 316-317.

coda's third and final verse. There, the prophet declares that God alone is responsible for the fate of every tree - the implication being that of every king, or kingdom. This idea is expressed specifically in relation to the qualities of height and moisture - two domains from which much of the metaphorical imagery in the allegory (both positive and negative) was taken.

By asserting the authority of God, and by featuring him in place of the eagle, the text is also able to assert that the power held by the analogue's human actors was only ever illusory. While on the one level, it seemed that the Babylonian and Egyptian kings were the true power-brokers, the coda makes clear that the allegory was also a *riddle*, and its interpretation suggestive of a deeper reality. And, since the interactivity of metaphors is a mutual affair, we can now also stress of God some of those characteristics pertinent to the political domain - most notably, that God demands fealty, and that while no nation is capable of uprooting the tree without God's wishes, God's wishes will be in accordance with the loyalty shown.

§3.3.1.4 - Conclusion:

As we have seen, the interaction of metaphorical tropes within this one metaphorical complex has resulted in a high degree of mutual information. Even taken on its own, the allegory in verses 3-10 attested to this phenomenon. There, the relationship between metaphors from the semantic domain of eagles and from the semantic domain of trees yielded insights applicable to both categories, reinforcing both the stateliness of the eagle and the lowliness of the vine, and subverting various of each trope's expected connotations.

With the inclusion of the analogue in verses 12b-18, the structure of which mirrored the allegory and the content of which provided constraints upon our interpretation of it, an even greater degree of interactivity was achieved. This occurred not only in relation to the interplay of individual metaphorical tropes, but more importantly: in the interplay of their respective semantic domains. By superimposing the analogue over the allegory (to the extent that such superimposition was required by the text), we saw how the analogue allowed for the metaphorization of semantic categories, representing abstract concepts with concrete images.

In so doing, the analogue also allowed for subsequent re-readings of the allegory that would provide insights not available at first glance. Metaphorization of the state of being in a treaty as a vine's location in the field demonstrated a surprising overlap between the semantic categories of fecundity and warfare; recognition of this fact enabled different tropes to inform one another in new ways, and to yield insights that benefited them mutually. Ultimately, the interplay of metaphorical tropes and the relationship between their respective domains revealed additional connections between allegory and analogue, which served to further underscore the text's political message.

Having finally exhausted the range of connotations that the text's tropes can have, the passage then produced a coda (verses 22-24) which subverted them all. There, the eagle came to symbolise God, the trees came to represent earthly kings, and a teleological message was inserted into what had otherwise become a fairly straightforward political oracle. What is more, the range of nuances exploited by the semantic domain of trees was augmented once more.

In the allegory, the tree's height was an ironic feature of the text, contrasting with its minimisation within the narrative and downplayed in favour of emphases on the cedar's immobility and lack of defences. The removal of the cedar's crest and its placement in a useless location indicated the cruelty of the one who took it away - a cruelty that was subsequently contrasted with the eagle's beneficence in carefully raising a beautiful vine. The vine imagery was taken from the semantic domains of fecundity and splendour, which were subsequently exploited in the reversal of its fortunes by images that bore nuances of dryness, barrenness and wastage.

In the analogue, we were able to add depth to these individual tropes and emphasise more the relationship between the vine and the cedar and between the vine and the two eagles. Here, the vine's beauty was downplayed in favour of its lowliness and a re-reading of the allegory in the light of its analogue encouraged a greater awareness of the monarchy's diminution within the first half of the text. As a result, both the vine and the cedar possessed nuances that exploited, first and foremost, their physical stature.

In the coda, the cedar was described in terms that derived from the semantic domains of height and of girth, and of beauty and splendour. In so doing, it came to signify a combination of both the vine and the cedar, and to represent the positive aspects of both. Ultimately, however, these aspects were all downplayed in favour of stressing the tree's ability to serve as a safe-haven for every species of bird. Its constituting a habitat, first and foremost, provided the tropes of height and of leafiness with a utilitarian purpose, and once more encouraged a re-reading of the allegory in line with these possibilities.

When we consider the metaphor, *THE KING IS A TREE*, which featured either explicitly or implicitly several times within these texts, we can now assert a broad range of nuances that the arboreal imagery had in this regard. In addition to his possessing the familiar characteristics of "height" (power, regality) and "splendour" (majesty, renown), we see how the arboreal imagery serves to communicate a number of features about his office: the nature of his deposition, his relationship with his senior officials, the importance of loyalty, the importance - at times - of fealty, and his lack of exilic function.

The conclusion of the text, above all things, stresses his primary function as head of state. Just as there is no use for a tree in whose shade nothing can live, so too is there no value in a kingdom that cannot provide shelter for its people. This is not only the ultimate goal of every political enterprise, but is also (in the prophet's words) the ultimate goal of God's master plan.

§3.3.2 - A Lament for Two Lions and a Branch

Ezekiel 19:1-14 constitutes a two-part allegory. It is framed at its beginning and its conclusion by the term קינה, thus signifying its function as a lamentation²²³. The first of its two parts comprises verses 1-9, while the second comprises verses 10-14. Taken on their own, each of these two allegories constitutes a narrativised metaphor: in the first, the tropes are all leonine and in the second, the tropes are arboreal. In both instances, the narrative structure is an extension of these tropes and an exploration of their various ramifications.

It is only in the deliberate juxtaposition of these two passages that the text produces a metaphorical complex, and so while our focus will be on the second of the two allegories in particular it will be necessary to consider it in light of the imagery in the first allegory as well.

§3.3.2.1 - Ezekiel 19:1-9

19:1	וְאַתָּה שָׂא קִינָה אֶל־נְשִׂיאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
2	וְאַמְרָתָּ מָה אַמְרֵי לְבָיִא בֵּין אַרְיֹת רְבֻצָה בְּתוֹךְ כְּפָרִים רַבְתָּה גִּנְרִיָּה:
3	וַתַּעַל אֶתְד מִגְרִיָּה כְּפִיר הִיָּה וַיִּלְמַד לְטָרֵף־טָרֵף אָדָם אָכַל:
4	וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֱלֹהֵי גוֹיִם בְּשַׁחְתָּם נַתְפֹּשׁ וַיִּבְאֵהוּ בַחַזְקִים אֶל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
5	וַתֵּרָא כִּי נֹחַלָה אֶבְדָּה תִקְוָתָהּ וַתִּקַּח אֶתְד מִגְרִיָּה כְּפִיר שָׁמְתָהּ:
6	וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ בְּתוֹךְ־אֶרְצוֹת כְּפִיר הִיָּה וַיִּלְמַד לְטָרֵף־טָרֵף אָדָם אָכַל:
7	וַיִּדַע אֶלְמְנוֹתָיו וְעַרְיָתָם הִתְקַרֵּב וַתִּשֶׂם אֶרֶץ וּמְלֹאָהּ מִקוֹל שְׁאֲגָתוֹ:
8	וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלָיו גוֹיִם סָבִיב מִמְּדִינֹת וַיִּפְרְשׂוּ עָלָיו רִשְׁתָּם בְּשַׁחְתָּם נַתְפֹּשׁ:
9	וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ בְּסוּגֵר בַּחַזְקִים וַיִּבְאֵהוּ אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בְּבַל וַיִּבְאֵהוּ בְּמִצְדֹת לְמַעַן לֹא־יִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ עוֹד אֶל־הָרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

223. For the notion that the lament genre is, in itself, a symbol, see James A. Durlleser, *The Metaphorical Narratives in the Book of Ezekiel* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 49-50.

19:1 As for you, raise up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,
 2 and say: What a lioness was your mother among lions! She lay down among
 young lions, rearing her cubs.
 3 She raised up one of her cubs; he became a young lion, and he learned to catch
 prey; he devoured humans.
 4 The nations sounded an alarm against him; he was caught in their pit; and they
 brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt.
 5 When she saw that she was thwarted²²⁴, that her hope was lost, she took another
 of her cubs and made him a young lion.
 6 He prowled among the lions; he became a young lion, and he learned to catch
 prey; he devoured people.
 7 And he ravaged their strongholds²²⁵, and laid waste their towns; the land was
 appalled, and all in it, at the sound of his roaring.
 8 The nations set upon him from the provinces all around; they spread their net
 over him; he was caught in their pit.
 9 With hooks they put him in a cage, and brought him to the king of Babylon; they
 brought him into custody, so that his voice should be heard no more on the
 mountains of Israel.

A cursory reading reveals that this passage is written in two parts. In the first, the prophet laments the exile of Jehoahaz to Egypt and in the second, the subsequent exile of his nephew Jehoiachin to Babylon²²⁶. The leonine imagery within this section comprises the vehicle of a few interrelated metaphors. Firstly, and most notably, there is the characterisation of these two kings as lions - a trope to which we shall return momentarily. Secondly, however, there is

224. In addition to the variation attested here within the ancient witnesses to this verse, note also the following: of the ten clauses in which this noun (תקוה) is qualified by a verb, nine of them concern its being taken away or destroyed in some fashion. As such, we might expect that the two verbs in this clause denote also her hope's destruction, although the import of the first verb is unclear. The verses are Jer 29:11; Ezek 19:5, 37:11; Ps 9:19; Prov 10:28, 11:7, 23:18, 24:14; Job 8:13, 14:19. The one exception being Jer 29:11, in which hope is said to be given to the exiles after a set period of exile.

225. This clause (lit. "and he knew his widows") presents textual difficulties, as I shall discuss in the commentary.

226. That no mention is made of the intervening Jehoiakim may be due to his not having suffered a similar fate; cf. G.A. Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 205.

also the characterisation of Judah, the city, as a lioness. This is conveyed implicitly, on the assumption that the referent of the second-person suffix (אִמֶּךָ, "your mother") represents the Judean people in exile, who function as the presumed recipients of this oracle²²⁷.

It is important to note that this is a dual metaphor, since it not only equates the Judean people with the offspring of a lion, but uses maternal imagery in order to characterise the city's relationship with its kings. The semantic domains of lions and of motherhood are potentially conflicting, but the latter appear to be subjugated within this text to the inferences of the former. As such, in addressing the relationship between mother and cubs, this passage neither stresses the quality of her affection, nor remarks upon the nature of her grief. In place of the former, the text merely refers to her raising her offspring, and in place of the latter provides the basis for her decision to do so again. The relationship between Judah and its kings is expressed therefore in functional, rather than qualitative terms.

Finally, it is important to note that by referring to Judah as "your mother", the text also allows us to infer a third tenor for the leonine metaphor: the Judean people as a whole. While the specific qualities of their kings are not necessarily being imputed to them as well, the text does suggest that their relationship with the kings is that of siblings. This is a relationship stressed in various other passages as well²²⁸, and one that in some texts serves an important propagandistic purpose. Its function within this lament may be to inspire feelings of personal grief.

When it comes to the presentation of these two kings, the leonine imagery serves a threefold purpose: communicating their youth at the time of their taking office²²⁹, their military prowess after acceding to the throne, and their subsequent degradation in being captured.

227. Note that Greenberg sees the presumed addressee as one of the last kings of Judah instead. For a discussion as regards the identity, therefore, of the mother, see Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* (Anchor Bible 22; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 355ff.

228. Chiefly, Deut 17:5.

229. Note that Jehohaz was 23 (2 Kgs 23:31; 2 Chr 36:2) and Jehoiachin was 18 (2 Kgs 24:8; 2 Chr 36:9 has him as 8, but cf: LXX).

Their youth is communicated by means of a parenthetical remark appended to descriptions of their upbringing (כפיר היה). So far as that upbringing is concerned, the first lion is said to have been raised by his mother, while the second learns through living together with other lions. This difference may be of significance, given the former lion's correspondence to Jehoahaz, whose accession occurred after his father's death in battle, and the second lion's correspondence to the son of the unexiled and presumably unmurdered Jehoiakim²³⁰.

In both of these passages, the qualification that concerns their being young (verses 3aβ and 6aβ) immediately precedes a description of their respective capabilities²³¹. In both instances, these are expressed with the same pronouncement: that they learned to catch prey, and that they ate humans (וילמד לטרף טרף אדם אכל). The image of their being man-eaters underscores their ferocity and marks their transition into adulthood.

Nothing is said of the first lion's adulthood, beyond the fact that he became known to other nations, who are here personified as individual people. Their learning of his deeds is expressed with the familiar metaphor of "hearing about" somebody (וישמעו אליו), but here parallels the sound of the lion's roar in verse 7b, which devastates the land. That so little is said of this first lion may also be of significance, although the primary textual function is to allow for a degree of progressive incrementation. As such, while more is said of the second lion's exploits, so too is (significantly) more said of his subsequent humiliation.

Of the first lion's capture, we are simply told that he was caught in the nations' pit (בשהחם בנתפס) and that, with the aid of hooks (חזים)²³² was brought to Egypt. While the use of pits conveys imagery consonant with the hunting and capture of animals, the use of hooks derives from the semantic domains of both animal and human captives²³³. Its duality of function makes it well suited for metaphorical depictions of this nature²³⁴.

230. Although note the differences of opinion as regards the tenor of this second lion.

231. One might add to this that, with the second lion, his being young also possesses a contrastive element: he was in the midst of [adult] lions, though he was but a young lion.

232. Note the possibility of this word's alluding to thorns (חזים), and thus serving as a prefigurement of the vine allegory.

233.2 Chr 33:11, etc.

The response of the lion's mother, which features no parallel in the second section, is worthy of comment. Since it is the only explicit remark that concerns the manner in which the events of this text might be appraised, we should expect its tone to conform to the strictures of the genre. On the contrary, her observation appears to be entirely pragmatic, and to serve little more than a functional purpose within the text. Seeing that her hope had been thwarted and was lost (כי נוחלה אבדה תקותה), the lioness chooses a second of her cubs and begins again.

In the textual depiction of this second lion, somewhat more information is provided than with the first. Here, we have an additional qualification that underscores the extent of his ferocity. Having been told that he learned to catch prey and that he became a man-eater, the text next presents us with a series of clauses (7a-b) that concern the extent of the damage that he wreaked and the attitudes of those left devastated by his exploits.

As it appears within the MT, the first of these clauses is problematic. The assertion that the lion had sexual intercourse with his widows (וידע אלמנותיו), in addition to being logically absurd, bears no immediate relation to its cotext. The targumic "he hunted his palace women"²³⁵ has the advantage of connecting this phrase to the following assertion, which concerns the destroying of their cities, although it doesn't assist with our construal of the nominal referent.

Both the Septuagint and the Peshitta render this clause in reference to the manner in which he strutted²³⁶, which preserves the leonine imagery, but does not assist with the following assertion, to the effect that he laid waste cities. The general sense that the text has suffered an error of transmission in this instance might lead us to emend it in favour of something more suited to the imagery of lions or to the destruction of cities²³⁷, although it may still be possible to understand the MT on its own merits.

234. See also Ezek 29:4.

235. Targum Jonathan: ואצדי ברניתיה.

236. LXX: και ἐνεμετο τῷ θρασεί αὐτοῦ ("and he prowled in his boldness"); Peshitta: אַסְמַלְא כַּסְסַמְא.

237. Note the possibility of emending אַרְמְנוֹתָיו for אַלְמְנוֹתָיו; Greenberg, *op.cit.* 351.

From a literary perspective, a preservation of the verb in verse 7a (וידע) is preferable, since it so neatly parallels וישמעו in verse 4a. In the earlier instance, the verb conveyed the means by which the nations came to learn of the first lion's activities, while in the second instance it remarks further upon those activities themselves. The extent to which this clause constitutes an elaboration upon the murderous impulses of the lion might encourage us to view it not only as dependent upon the former clause (verse 6b), but pursuant to the same.

As such, the text may be suggesting that the man whom the lion had eaten serves as the referent of both clauses within this verse. If so, the assertion that he became a man-eater is more properly to the effect that he would devour men, have sexual intercourse with their widows and destroy their towns. While the lexemes in verse 7a lack their leonine associations, the impression that they create is one of a conqueror, both carnal and violent in his impulses.

Having described the extent to which the land in its entirety was devastated by the sound of his roar (the latter constituting a metonym for the lion's behaviour), they surround him and bind him and carry him to Babylon. The sequence of verbs in verses 8-9 also constitutes an expansion upon those that were applied to the capture of the first lion in verse 4, denoting not only the means by which he was bound but the purposes of his transfer.

Where the first lion was caught in a pit, the second has a net (רשת) thrown over him as well; where the first was brought into captivity with hooks, the second is also placed in a cage (בסוגר); where the first was brought to Egypt, the second is brought to the *king* of Babylon - is brought there bound (במצדות) and in order that his roar may no longer be heard. To the extent that the second lion was further developed by the text, so too has his subsequent degradation been elaborated.

Taken on its own, this first passage is a narrativisation of the trope, A KING IS A LION. The semantic domain from which the leonine vehicles are taken conveys nuances of strength and of pride, and a corresponding degree of humiliation within those components that treat of the lions' being captured. The depiction of these lions as cubs and as ferocious beasts must

inform our understanding of the specific tenor of these vehicles, and the description of their capture and exile reflects on authorial attitudes towards the captivity of the exiled kings.

The subsequent five verses provide the conclusion to this lament, and they do so by presenting similar information through the narrativisation of a different trope. We shall turn our attention to this second section next and, having analysed it, will consider the import of its having been juxtaposed with this one. In particular, we shall consider the means by which the juxtaposition of these two passages affects the metaphorical nuances within the second one.

§3.3.2.2 - Ezekiel 19:10-14²³⁸

	אִמֶּךָ כַּגִּפְנוֹ בְדַמְךָ עַל-מַיִם שְׁתוּלָה פְרִיָהּ וְעִנְפֶיהָ הֵיחָה מִמַּיִם רַבִּים:	19:10
	וַיִּהְיוּ-לָהּ מִטּוֹת עֹז אֶל-שִׁבְטֵי מְשָׁלִים וַתִּגְבֶּה קוֹמָתוֹ עַל-גִּבּוֹ עֲבֹתָיִם וַיֵּרָא כְּגִבְהַוּ בְּרֹב דְּלִיתָיו:	11
	וַתִּתָּשׁ בַּחֲמָה לְאֶרֶץ הַשְּׁלֶכָה וַרְיֹחַ הַקְּדָרִים הוֹבִישׁ פְּרִיָהּ הַתְּפָרְקוּ וַיִּבְשׂוּ מִטָּה עָזָה אֵשׁ אֶכְלָתָהּ:	12
	וַעֲתָה שְׁתוּלָה בַמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ צָיָה וְצָמָא:	13
	וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִמִּטָּה בְדִיהָ פְרִיָהּ אֶכְלָה וְלֹא-תִהְיֶה בָּהּ מִטָּה-עֹז וְשִׁבְט לְמִשׁוֹל קִינָה הִיא וַתִּהְיֶה לְקִינָה:	14
19:10	Your mother was like the vine in your blood transplanted by the water, fruitful and full of branches from abundant water.	
11	Its strongest stems became rulers' sceptres; it towered aloft among the thick boughs; it stood out in its height with its mass of branches.	
12	But she was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground; the east wind dried up her fruit; stripped off, her strong stem withered; the fire consumed it.	
13	Now she is transplanted into the wilderness, into a dry and thirsty land.	

238. Translation is in accordance with the NRSV, but modified in various instances to suit the Hebrew nouns and the number and gender of its pronouns. I have consciously preserved the 3fs for the vine, in order to properly differentiate it from the stem, for which I have employed third-person neuter. This distinction is maintained in my commentary, below.

14 And fire has gone out from her stem, has consumed her branches and fruit, so that there remains in her no strong stem, no sceptre for ruling. This is a lamentation, and it is used as a lamentation.

The most noticeable structural difference between this passage and the previous lies in its constituting only a single narrativisation of the dominant metaphor within it. Where the initial nine verses expanded upon the respective fates of two lions, and did so in the form of two parallel narratives, the subsequent four verses comprise only a single narration that concerns the fate of a vine.

So far as the text's similarities are concerned, the most striking one is their commencement with a reference to the addressee's mother, presented as it was before with the second-person pronominal suffix (מִאִמִּי). In addition to inviting personal identification with the subject of the text, this feature also encourages a construal of the ensuing allegory as being parallel to the previous one in all of its particulars - if not representing the same kings, at least serving in reference to the dynasty that they both represented²³⁹.

Construing the metaphorical tenor as the Davidic dynasty helps preserve another feature of this trope, and one that marks a pronounced difference between it and the former. Unlike the relationship between a lioness and her cubs, who enjoy an existence separate to hers, the relationship between a vine and its branches is analogous to the relationship between a whole and its parts. As such, a metaphysical interpretation of the vine (the Davidic dynasty, the Judean monarchy) must be preferred to a physical one.

While it has been suggested that this second passage might constitute a description of Zedekiah²⁴⁰, it is probably more likely that it represents a general description of the Judean monarchy and the cessation of the Davidic dynasty altogether. Identification of the branch

239. Note that this implies a dual metaphor: if the recipient of the text is the Judean people and the mother a reference to Judah, then the city of Judah is also functioning as a synecdoche for the Davidic dynasty.

240. For discussion of this issue, see Greenberg, *op.cit.* 355ff; Karin Schöpflin, "The Composition of Metaphorical Oracles within the Book of Ezekiel", *VT* 55:1 (2005), 101-120 (116).

with a particular king is less compelling in this instance than it was in the previous passage, and we shall eschew conjecture in that regard within our analysis.

אמך כגפן בדמך על מים שתולה פריה וענפה היתה ממים רבים - 19:10

The assertion here that "your mother is like the vine in your blood" is problematic, and whether or not one can accept any given emendation in particular, the MT certainly appears to be corrupt²⁴¹. It is interesting that none of the witnesses to the text feature what appears to be the obvious emendation of [ב]כרם. Given the reference to עבתיים in the following verse, it is entirely possible that the vine is to be construed as being situated within a grove of some description²⁴², although the evidence is insufficient for us to fill in those sorts of details.

As with other manifestations of this trope, the emphasis here is not upon the vine's location but upon its relocation. Its having been transplanted to its position by a stream is a ubiquitous trope within the Hebrew literature, but is particularly reminiscent in this regard of the schema that we encountered in Ezekiel 17. As we shall see, the function of the vine metaphor within this passage is somewhat analogous to the vine metaphor within the earlier one, and the possibility of its serving as an extension of the same has been noted²⁴³.

This passage continues by noting the positive effects that the vine's location has had upon its form. The qualification of the vine as being fruitful (פריה) implies an abundance of grapes, while the term ענפה (a *hapax legomenon*, which we might render here as "boughsome") implies its possessing also a number of branches. While both branches and grapes constitute the components of this vine, the allegory leads us to identify the branches in particular as being her offspring.

241. Note the Targum in this regard, although its somewhat forced interpretation reflects exegetical confusion. Note also the fact that both the Peshitta (אמך כגפן בדמך על מים שתולה פריה וענפה היתה ממים רבים) and the Vulgate (*mater tua quasi vinea in sanguine tuo*) testify to the same reading as is in the MT.

242. As regards the morphology, note the usage of the definite article; GKC §126q.

243. Schöpflin, *op.cit.* 113ff.

ויהיו לה מטות עז אל שבטי משלים ותגבה קומתו על בין עבתיים וירא בגבהו ברב דליתיו - 19:11

In consequence of the vine's proximity to water, the branches are said to be strong, and yet it would be wrong to suggest that the strength of these stems is a direct and natural consequence of the water. On the contrary, the text seems to impute a degree of transgressiveness to the growth of these elements - a crime for which the vine itself appears to be culpable. This is conveyed by means of the various intertextual allusions to Ezekiel 17 within this passage, and by the violent response of unexplicated individuals to the vine's growth.

The strength of the vine's stems is conveyed by means of a genitive construct (מטות עז), and is qualified with a nominal phrase that implies their suitability to be the sceptres of rulers (אל שבטי משלים). It is noteworthy that various witnesses to the text construe the stem in the singular²⁴⁴, which would allow its description to function without recourse to the genitive (מטה עז). What is more, by eschewing the genitive the remaining construction could serve as an adjectival phrase (עז אל שבט[ים] משלים), which might better communicate the extent of the stem's strength.

Understanding the stem as being either singular or plural makes a profound difference to the manner in which this text mirrors the previous one. Nonetheless, the fact that it is the vine itself that is punished for its rebelliousness and not the branch(es) that conveyed its rebellious nature lessens the ultimate importance of this question. That offshoots of the vine expressed a capacity to serve as sceptres marks the vine's desire to serve once more as the progenitor of kings, and need not be identified with the production of any one king in particular.

Having grown strong, the stems (which are here conveyed in the singular within the MT as well) grow such that "its top" is visible amongst the עבתיים. As an adjective, this lexeme qualifies trees in a variety of texts²⁴⁵, and might even function as a substantive for dense foliage in at least two instances²⁴⁶. Etymologically related either to עבת ("wind, twist, weave")

244. Peshitta: $\text{ܘܝܗܝܘ ܠܗ ܡܬܘܬ ܥܙ ܐܠ ܫܒܬܝ ܡܫܠܝܡ}$; LXX: $\text{καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτῆ ῥαβδος ἐπὶ φυλῆν ἡγουμένων}$ ("and she became a rod for a tribe of princes").

245. Lev 23:40; Ezek 6:13, 20:28; Neh 8:15.

246.2 Sam 23:4 and Ps 77:18.

or to עוב ("dense, thick"), this term appears well-suited to describing the structure of a vine, but in its dual capacity as a reference to trees it reminds us of that which the vine is not²⁴⁷.

By virtue of the stem's height and by virtue of its abundant tendrils, it is visible rising above the vine of which it forms a part. The visibility of this stem parallels the means by which the lions within the first passage became known to the nations around them, and as their being discovered precipitated their ruin, so too does this clause mark the vulnerability of the vine's stem, and even of the vine itself. While the strength of the vine's boughs may not have been a natural consequence of their location, their having been noticed *was* a natural consequence of their strength.

19:12 - ותתש בחמה לארץ השלחה ורוח הקדים הוביש פריה התפרקו ויבשו מטה עזה אש אכלתהו -

The sudden transition into activity within this verse marks the narrative shift from remarking upon the vine's growth to describing its destruction, and the contrast between the stative verbs that were previously applied to it (פרה, ענפ, גבה) and the various verbs applied to it here serve to further underscore the transition from calmness and tranquility into violence and aggression.

A clause-based analysis of this verse will demonstrate the means by which this destruction is conveyed, and the strong parallels between it and the passage in Ezekiel 17.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a ₁ (i) | But she was plucked up in fury, |
| a ₂ (i) | cast down to the ground; |
| B ₁ (II) | the east wind dried up her fruit; |
| c ₁ (iii), c ₂ (iii) | stripped off, her strong stem withered; |
| B ₂ (III) | the fire consumed it. |

247. For the suggestion that this word derives from עבת: BDB, s.v. עב II; for the suggestion that it derives from עוב: BDB, s.v. עוב II.

In my presentation of these clauses I have attempted to represent the three different subjects (the vine, its fruit and its strong stem) and to differentiate between whether they serve as the subject of a passive verb (a_1, a_2), the direct object of an active verb (B_1, B_2) or the subject of a stative verb in the reflexive stem (c_1, c_2).

The first subject is the vine itself (i). It appears as the subject of two passive verbs and in the first two clauses only. In the first of those clauses, the verb (גתש) denotes the vine's being pulled up, while in the second, the verb (שלה) denotes its having been thrown down. The contrast between sudden upwards and downwards movement parallels its gradual rise to splendour and the shift, now, to degradation and lowliness.

The first two of these verbs (ותתש) is the only one within this verse to be qualified by an adjective, and features the only adjective within this passage that conveys mood or emotion. The starkness of sentiment was one that we observed in the previous passage as well, and one that made the lone reference to devastation (verse 7b - ותשם ארץ ומלאה) all the more pronounced. The reference to fury has a similar impact in this instance, qualifying not only the uprooting of the vine, to which it is appended, but colouring our perception of the subsequent four clauses as well.

The description of the vine's being cast down to the ground emphasises its degradation, and contrasts with the height formerly attained by the strongest of its stems. Its having been previously visible by virtue of that height, its current location stresses invisibility instead. Just as its erstwhile grandeur denoted a degree of political importance, so its current status prefigures the absence of the same - a feature that will be explicated subsequently, in the lament's conclusion.

The second subject is the vine's fruit (II). This appears as the direct object of an active verb in the third clause (הוביש), and hearkens back to the warnings in 17:9-10, which concerned the drying out of the vine's fruit in its contact with the east wind. Here, the wind is the first agent of the vine's destruction to be mentioned, and its appearance makes all the more pronounced the unexplicated destroyer of the vine in the previous two clauses. While it is tempting to

identify the vine's destroyer with the eagle from chapter 17, the reasons for the vine's destruction are less important to this particular text than the *manner* of its destruction.

Here, the reference to the drying out of the fruit symbolises not only the destruction of those features that made of it a functional vine in the first place, but the very attributes that typified it as a vine in verse 10 and that made of it a mother. Since the vine's relationship with its parts is characterised by this text as a maternal relationship, its necessary grief at the destruction of those parts must be inferred. As with the previous passage, this grief is uncommunicated, but the reference to the vine as being also the mother of the addressee no doubt encourages that grief in the one hearing the lament.

The fourth and fifth clauses feature a single subject (*iii*, III), which serves as the subject of two stative verbs in the reflexive stem (c_1 , c_2) and as the direct object of an active verb (B_2). This subject is the vine's strong stem, the growth of which symbolised the vine's attainment of political glory and the height of which prefigured the vine's subsequent humiliation. Since this stem in particular represented the maternal features of the vine, its treatment in these three verbal phrases is of especial significance.

In the first two of those phrases (c_1 , c_2), the verb with which this noun functions is grammatically plural, although the noun itself is in the singular. As we have seen, the MT's confusion over the number of stems has been present since they were introduced in the previous verse. While the possibility of their being two in number parallels most directly the former leonine allegory, the plurality of these stems may denote a higher number, and serve as an extension of the assertion that concerned the vine's many boughs.

The verbs used to convey the stem's destruction are reminiscent of those that characterised both the uprooting of the vine and the withering of its fruit. In the first instance, the stem is said to be broken off (פרק), which might imply the same unexplicated antagonist as was responsible for pulling up the vine (נחש). In the second instance, its being dried out suggests a continuation of the east wind's influence. In the same way that these two verbs relate to the destruction of the vine and its parts in the previous clauses, so too do they insinuate the destruction of the stem in the clause after this one.

There, the agent of the stem's destruction is fire, and the active verb that denotes the fire's eradication of the stem denotes consumption (אכל). In addition to providing a second named antagonist, this imagery also encapsulates the descriptions given in the previous clause as well. The image of a crackling vine, scorched by fire, allows for both the snapping of stems and the withering of grapes, and raises questions that concern whether the fire is a metaphor for the destruction visited upon the vine in earlier clauses, or whether their descriptions constituted an allusion to the semantic domain of fire²⁴⁸.

ועתה שתולה במדבר בארץ ציה וצמא - 19:13

In this verse and the following, the fate of the vine is recapitulated and concluded. The opening particle, ועתה, suggests circumstances consequential to behaviour or events that the subject manifested previously²⁴⁹. As such, it figures both as a consequence of the destruction that was visited upon the vine in the previous clauses, and also implies a logical development from the vine's earlier rebellion²⁵⁰.

Based on the presumed analogue, by which this vine represents not a king but the kingdom, the reference to its having been transplanted must be seen as depicting a metaphorical exile. Bereft of ruler, the city itself languishes in exile. The dynasty's not having 'taken root' can be conveyed, therefore, as a vine transplanted to a thirsty land, in which it cannot ever grow. This political nuance is made clearer in the following verse, with which the text concludes:

ותצא אש ממטה בדיה פריה אכלה ולא היה בה מטה עז שבט למשול - 19:14

In summing up the salient elements of the vine's destruction, the conclusion once more reinforces its direct political connotations. The consumption of the vine's branches and fruit in fire means specifically that it is no longer in possession of a strong branch that might serve as a ruler's sceptre. While that branch was the reason for its having been destroyed, it was also the reason for its having existed in the first place, and a vine bereft of this one feature is as useless as one transplanted to a land in which it cannot take root.

248. On the use of fire imagery in Ezekiel, see Schöpflin, *op.cit.*

249. Cf. GBHS §4.2.14b.

250. Note in this regard the following verse's resemblance to a jussive curse formulation.

The analogue, whether specific kings are intended by this text or not, is made clear at several junctures within this text, and abundantly clear in the text's conclusion. Where the vine might represent either the city of Judah, the institution of the monarchy or the Davidic dynasty in particular, its only function is to produce a king. Typified as the strongest branch within the vine, this metaphor enables the text to convey a number of different features about him.

The semantic domains from which these images are taken are those of strength and splendour - two features that we also noted in relation to the leonine imagery of the former text. What is more, while the splendour is something possessed by the vine as a whole, the nuance of strength is primarily contrastive. The king, who grows from out the "vine", is stronger *than* his brethren, and reaches higher than all others. While it is his great power, conveyed through the metaphor of height, that causes the entire institution to be terminated, it was also that great power that inspired the pride that others had in him, and without which the institution serves no purpose.

It is noteworthy that in recapitulating the fate of the vine, reference is made to the fire that issued forth from it, but no reference is made to either the wind in verse 12b, or to the inferred antagonist of verse 12a. The means by which the destruction detailed in those earlier clauses can be subsumed within the fire imagery raises again the question as to whether the fire serves as a metaphor for those passages, or whether those passages served as a metaphorical allusion to fire.

This feature, by which metaphors in juxtaposition inform one another in a mutual fashion, is a staple of the metaphorical complex. Just as we must assume that the various images employed within this text contribute towards its narrativisation of this one trope (THE KING IS A BRANCH), so too must that trope's narrativisation interact with the one in the former passage as well.

§3.3.2.3 - Conclusion:

In juxtaposing these two passages (a juxtaposition that may have been a feature of the original text), the author invites us to contrast their respective narratives. Features that differentiate these allegories from one another are at times evident on a superficial reading, and at times are the outcome of analysis only. In detailing the various elements that differentiate these two texts, and in noting those features that they both have in common, we hope to properly delineate the means by which they function in tandem and to gain a clearer insight into the interaction of their respective metaphors.

In the first passage, the addressee's mother served a purely functional purpose within the text. Her role was to raise lion cubs and to prepare them for adulthood, and the strictly functional aspect of this task was reflected in the dearth of sentiment that she conveyed over the first lion's capture, and her absence from the narrative altogether after the capture of the second.

In the subsequent passage, the addressee's mother served a central function within the text. Her role was to produce branches and fruit, but in their constituting an actual part of her their destruction marked her destruction as well, and resulted in her entering a figurative exile of her own. As such, while the vine displayed as little textualised emotion as did the lioness, she was personally invested in the fate of the branches to an extent unparalleled with the leonine imagery.

In the first passage, a clear motivation for capturing the lions is imputed to the enemy nations. While the lions are characterised by the attribute of strength, it is specifically in relation to their aggression that this trope functions, and corresponding to the threat that they posed so too was their punishment.

In the second passage, motivation for destroying the vine must be inferred. While such inferences might no doubt have been made on the basis of information common to those who received this text originally, we might also make inferences on the basis of other passages within the book of Ezekiel. Here, while strength is certainly a feature of the vine's growth, and the feature disliked by those who destroyed it, the only references to aggression within this text qualify the behaviour of the vine's enemies, and not the vine's stems.

In both passages, the destruction was prefigured by the allegory's subject becoming noticed. The nations hear of the lion, whose exploits have sparked fear into the hearts of all around him, while the unnamed and unexplicated antagonist of the vine becomes aware of its presence by virtue of its lofty stem. As the lion's behaviour might be seen as the result of hubris, so too might this characterisation suit the growth of the stem, and as the stem's strength was ironic, so too might be the prowess of the lion.

In both passages, the nature of the destruction conveyed information pertinent to a construal of their respective analogues. The capture of the lions and their being brought into captivity suited a description of the respective exiles of Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin. The burning of the vine and its figurative transport to a land without water suited a description of the sacking of Jerusalem and the cessation of its monarchy.

In order to convey these ideas, both passages invoked the qualities of splendour and of strength, and in both passages were these qualities implicitly related. It is a feature of the lion's growth that it learn to kill and a function of its nature that its reputation must be a fearful one. So too, it is a feature of the vine's splendour that it must possess tendrils and grapes, and that its stems be long and thick. In both of these cases, since these two features of lions and of vines are related, so too must be their counterparts: the diminution of "strength" in both of these cases must also correlate to a similar diminution in splendour.

The extent to which the tropes within these passages relate to other metaphorical complexes within the book of Ezekiel must necessarily lie beyond the scope of this study, but the application of arboreal imagery within this passage sheds light upon the functions of this particular metaphor. By comparing a king to the stem of a vine, the text is able to assert features that concern his relationship with his brethren, his function as a representative of the dynasty to which he belongs and the various expectations had of him by his contemporaries: that he be powerful, that he be glorious, and that he be renowned.

As we have seen in other applications of this metaphor, plants are also capable of expressing weakness and immobility. Unlike those features exploited by various of the zoological metaphors that we have seen, neither vines nor trees are in possession of any natural defences. In this passage, these negative features of the vine are subjugated by the text in

favour of nuances from the semantic domains of strength and grandeur. Nonetheless, that they operate within the background and inform the trope's development shows the manner in which applications of a metaphor bring to bear a fuller range of its potentialities than may be expressed.

It is in relation to this point especially that the merits of metaphorical interactivity are made most apparent. While Durlleser remarks upon the diversity of metaphor within this oracle²⁵¹, his maintaining a strict separation between the two tropes results in a failure to consider the import of their interaction. As a result, while he is correct in noting that the oracle in Ezekiel 19 differs from its counterpart in Ezekiel 17 by virtue of its not containing the prophet's explicit interpretation, he is incorrect in supposing that the prophet has in no way "reshaped the expected metaphorical associations between the symbol and the subject". Just because the text does not explicitly inform its audience of what it means, it is incorrect to suggest that it therefore lacks "authorial comment or... hermeneutical guidance"²⁵².

On the contrary, by employing the two motifs of lions and of a vine, the prophet is able to emphasise different aspects of strength and of grandeur, while at the same time remark upon the nuanced relationship that the state has with its king. In the first instance, where the identity of the lioness was strictly functional, the loss of a lion marked a set-back but a circumstance from which recovery was possible. In the second instance, where the identity of the vine is bound up intimately with its various parts, the destruction of her tendril prefigured her own eradication.

While the differences between these two passages suits well the difference between their presumed historical tenors, of greater import for our purposes is the manner in which they inform one another in the production of a metaphorical complex. By re-reading the import of Ezekiel's vine metaphor into the metaphor concerning lions, one appreciates that even where the role of the king appears purely a functional matter, there too is he the representative *par excellence* of the state as a whole, and there too is the fate of his people intimately bound up with his own.

251. Durlleser, *Metaphorical Narratives*, 47-48.

252. Durlleser, *op.cit.* 54.

The prophet's perspective, that the demise of the Judean state began prior to the exile of its final king, that it resulted from the hubris of previous kings before him and from the extent to which people took their monarchy for granted, is conveyed subtly by the interplay of metaphors within this oracle, and explains why the entirety of the text (and not merely the final five verses) is conveyed in the form of a lament.

§3.4 - The Metaphorical Complex in Numbers

וזרעו במים רבים. ומתוך כך שיזול מהענפים על השרשים יהיה תדיר במים רבים ולא ידאג ולא ימיש מעשות פרי.
זהו המשל, והמליצה וירום מאגג מלכו וגו'

Hezekiah ben Manoah, *Hazzekuni*, Numbers 24:7 (s.v. זרעו במים רבים)

Numbers 24:5-9 is an example of a text that requires a metaphorical analysis just to identify this metaphorical trope within it. Together with its superscription (verses 3b-4), this passage comprises Balaam's third oracle concerning the Israelites encamped in the plains of Moab. It is a text laden with metaphorical language - indeed, it moves from one metaphor to another in its presentation of a subject in an analogous manner to which the previous oracles moved from one subject to another while maintaining a general consistency of metaphor²⁵³.

The text features metaphors taken chiefly from the arboreal and zoological domains. For the former, there is the long-celebrated analogy between the Israelite dwellings and trees; for the latter, there is the taurine depiction of God and the leonine depiction of either God or Israel. In all of these instances, a word or a phrase that relates to the domain of trees, of oxen or of lions is employed in reference to tents, to God or to Israel. This is a classic metaphorical technique, boiling down to the *x is y* variety of metaphor.

And yet, as we have seen repeatedly, the manner in which a metaphor can inform a passage often runs far deeper than simplistic equations of this nature. A failure to treat this passage as a metaphorical complex brings with it a lack of awareness as to how the different tropes within it both inform the others and are informed by them, to the extent that the underlying themes that bind them are subsequently overlooked.

In order to analyse the arboreal monarchic metaphor within this passage, we first require its positive identification. Unlike other passages that we have seen, in which a term from the

253. Tania Notarius, "Poetic Discourse and the Problem of Verbal Tenses in the Oracles of Balaam", *Hebrew Studies* 49 (2008), 55-86 (71).

conceptual domain of trees is applied to a king, every term used of kings within this oracle belongs to the conceptual domain of kingship. Where there is some semantic crossover, it is not to the point of incongruity. As such, we have to ask ourselves: *is* there such a metaphor within this text? An appreciation of the complex as a whole reveals that there is.

§3.4.1 - Numbers 24:5-9

24:3 וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר נֹאֵם בְּלִעַם בְּנוֹ בְּעוֹר וַיִּנָּאֵם הַגִּבֹּר שְׁתֵּם הָעֵינַיִן:
 4 נֹאֵם שָׁמַע אֲמַר־אֵל אֲשֶׁר מִתְּזֶה שְׂדֵי יַחֲזֶה נָפֶל וּגְלוּי עֵינָיו:
 5 מִה־טָבוֹ אֵהְלִיךְ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֵיהֶּ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 6 כַּנְּחָלִים נְטִיּוֹ כַּגִּנַּת עָלַי נִהְרָ כַּאֲהָלִים נָטַע יְהוָה כְּאֲרָזִים עַל־יַמִּים:
 7 יְזַל־מַיִם מִדִּלְיוֹ וַיִּרְעוּ בְּמַיִם רַבִּים וַיִּרְם מֵאַגַּג מֶלֶכּוֹ וַתִּנְשָׂא מַלְכָּתּוֹ:
 8 אֵל מוֹצִיאֹ מִמַּצְרַיִם כְּתוֹעַפֹת רָאֵם לּוֹ יֵאָכֵל גּוֹיִם צְרִיּוֹ וְעַצְמֹתֵיהֶם יִגְרֵם וַחֲצִיּוֹ יִמְחָץ:
 9 כִּרְע שָׁקֵב כְּאֵרִי וּכְלָבִיא מִי יִקְיָמְנוּ מִכְּבָרְכִידָה כְּרוּדָה וְאֲרָרִידָה אָרוּר:

24:3 And he uttered his oracle, saying: The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is clear,
 4 the oracle of one who hears the words of El, who sees the vision of Shadday²⁵⁴, who falls down, but with eyes uncovered:
 5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel!
 6 Like palm groves²⁵⁵ that stretch far away, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters.
 7 Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall have abundant water, his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

254.I have transliterated the divine names in this verse, since the NRSV's use of "God" and "Almighty" suffers in making the character of whom Balaam speaks seem overly-familiar to the reader. On the contrary, the effect of encountering these names is one of otherness - the sense that we are in the presence of a vision narrative, and one that is somehow out of the ordinary.

255.Interpretation of this lexeme is problematic, as I shall discuss in the commentary.

8 God, who brings him out of Egypt, is like the horns of a wild ox for him; he shall devour the nations that are his foes and break their bones. He shall strike with his arrows.

9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed is everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone who curses you.

Balaam's third oracle (Numbers 24:3b-9) continues the themes that have been developed by the preceding two, albeit with some notable differences. Rather than enquire of God and be told what he should say, the prophet deduces from his previous experiences that the only words to escape his mouth should be words of blessing. As such, the third oracle neither requires nor receives any narrative introduction that might serve to situate it within the cycle, save the acknowledgement that it is God's will that Balaam bless this people.

The opening clauses of the oracle (verses 3b-5) also mark a departure from the foregoing. Where the first oracle commenced with an assertion to the effect that the prophet had been hired in order to curse the Israelites, and while the second began with a call on Balak to heed the prophet's words, the third oracle commences with a lengthy description of the prophet himself. This preamble, which uses language that at times lacks attestation elsewhere within the corpus, is introduced by the nominal exclamation נִאֲמַר.

This term appears almost 400 times within the Hebrew Bible, and is almost exclusively used in construct with יהוה²⁵⁶. The only exceptions to this trend are in Proverbs 30:1 (where it refers to an archetypal individual), 2 Samuel 23:1 (where it appears twice, in reference to David) and Psalm 36:2 (where it appears in reference to a personified spirit of iniquity). Its attestation here thus indicates, as it does in those other four instances, a marked dissimilarity with what appears to be a phraseological norm, and - in this instance in particular - a very pronounced dissimilarity with other forms of oracular literature²⁵⁷.

256. IBHS §40.2.3a.

257. George Buchanan Gray, *Numbers* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 361.

This dissimilarity with other examples of the genre is further highlighted by the series of terms with which Balaam refers to himself. With the exception of the patronymic (בנו בער), the text employs no fewer than four different ways to refer to its author, the final two being nested within successive subsidiary clauses. As such, Balaam is "the man whose eye is clear²⁵⁸" and the one who "hears the words of El" - further qualified as being he who "sees the vision of Shadday²⁵⁹", and who does so fallen, "but with eyes uncovered". The impression given here is an esoteric one: an indication that Balaam belongs to a particular caste, that he has been initiated in particular rites or that he is in some sense 'not of this world'²⁶⁰.

The actual oracle, which commences in verse 5, is of two parts, and is bound together with a framework that marks its contours and determines it to be a blessing. These two pronouncements, found in verses 5 and 9b, concern both the intrinsic goodness of the Israelite dwellings and the generic wish that those who bless Israel should be blessed in return, while those who curse Israel should be cursed. This phrase is reminiscent of the blessing given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, as well as that which was given to Jacob in Genesis 27:29²⁶¹.

Unlike the previous oracles, which moved from one subject to another, Tania Notarius notes that the third oracle focuses on two specific subjects but moves from one metaphor to another instead²⁶². Within this framework, the first collection of metaphors is of an arboreal nature and the second collection is zoological. The first subject under discussion is the Israelite encampment, which functions as a metonym for the Israelite people, and the second subject is God.

Having introduced this first section of the oracle by means of a general pronouncement on the intrinsic goodness of the Israelite encampment (a pronouncement that might reflect on either

258. For a discussion of this expression and its meaning, see Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21-36* (Anchor Bible; Yale University Press, 2000), 191-192.

259. On the divine names employed by the text, cf: Levine, *op.cit.* 194-196 and 217ff.

260. So, Levine, *op.cit.* 193.

261. On its being an inversion of the latter, see Levine, *op.cit.* 198.

262. Notarius, *ibid.*

ethical or aesthetic considerations), the prophet proceeds to compare their settlement to various natural phenomena. With one exception, the terms employed are all unambiguously botanical: the prophet likens their dwellings to gardens (גנות), to aloes (אֶהְלִים) and to cedars (אַרְזִים), and he stresses their figurative proximity to life-giving water. He also, however, likens their dwellings to *nehelim* (נְהָלִים) - the precise construal of which has long proven problematic.

Interpretation of this lexeme as "wadis" or "rivers" - an interpretation that aligns with the references to water elsewhere within this and the following verse - can be found in the Peshitta²⁶³ and the Targum²⁶⁴. Interpretations of this lexeme as referring to a type of tree - interpretations that align with the other arboreal references in this and the following verse - can be found in the Septuagint²⁶⁵, and might testify to a use of this term cognate with the Arabic *nahl*, "date palm"²⁶⁶. It is important to note, however, that the adjective (נְטִי) functions differently with both of these construals.

As Baruch Levine has observed, if this term is to be construed as "date palms", the implication is that the line formed by these palms, planted in a row, is "long"²⁶⁷. In the event, however, that the term is to be construed as "wadis", it makes no sense to suppose that the adjective denotes a collection of wadis in succession, but must imply that they are "elongated" instead. These are long wadis; rivers that stretch out of sight. As such, these two construals of the phrase reflect a difference in referent. In the former instance, Balaam is referring to the Israelite dwellings individually: they are each of them like a palm tree, spread out from one another and in a row. In the latter instance, he is remarking upon them as a group, suggesting that they are in some sense like an elongated wadi, stretching off into the distance.

263. Peshitta: נְהָלִים גְּזֵרִים

264. Onkelos: נְהָלִין דְּמִדְּבָרִין

265. LXX: Ὡσει ναπαί σκιαζουσαι ("as shady groves").

266. So BDB; HALOT; Gray, *op.cit.* 363; Levine, *op.cit.* 196.

267. Levine, *op.cit.* 197.

From a strictly literary perspective, we might consider the former reading the more likely, since it more neatly preserves a parallelism of referent: the Israelite dwellings are like *individual* date palms, arranged in a long line, and like *individual* gardens, alongside a river. It stands to reason that the lexeme chosen to refer to date palms (a *hapax legomenon*) was chosen also for its *allusion* to the river, just as the choice of אֶהְלִים (aloes) was no doubt chosen for its resemblance to אֹהֶלִים (tents).

Having commented upon their dwellings, the oracle now shifts and treats of a masculine singular entity in place of the plural subject that we saw in the previous two verses. Furthermore, the shift to jussive also marks a movement away from description and into the realm of *directive* blessings²⁶⁸. This corresponds to a shift away from what the prophet sees arrayed before him to what the prophet envisages in a future time, and represents a shift in the Balaam cycle as a whole: where the first two oracles uttered by Balaam concerned the Israelites in the wilderness, the third shifts in this seventh verse from describing the Israelites *now* to describing them in a time yet to come, and the fourth oracle comprises a vision of the Israelite future exclusively.

The blessings uttered here are four in number. In the first blessing, Balaam expresses a wish that "water should fall from his buckets" (יִזַּל מִיָּם מִדְּלִיָּו), and in the second that "his seed" (זֶרְעוֹ) be in much water. The third blessing is that his king should rise "above Agag" (מֵאֲגָג)²⁶⁹, and the fourth is that his kingdom should be elevated. In each of these instances, logic dictates that the individual to whom the pronoun is referring be the personification of Israel²⁷⁰, although at no stage is this identification made lexically explicit.

In the first blessing, reference to the personified Israel's buckets invokes agricultural imagery consonant with the previous botanical tropes. If we are to conceive of this lexeme (דְּלִיָּו) as grammatically dual²⁷¹ ("his two buckets"), the impression²⁷¹ given by the text is of a person

268. For the differentiation between descriptive and directive blessings in this text, see Notarius, *op.cit.* 68-69.

269. Based on the LXX's rendering, some scholars emend the name to Gog, or omit the verse altogether. Gray, for example, omits it, although it need not be a problematic reading; Gray, *op.cit.* 366.

270. Levine, *op.cit.* 197.

271. GKC §93z.

walking with a water-bearing apparatus draped over his shoulders²⁷², which further insinuates that the purpose of the water being carried is one of irrigation. While this trope serves to convey the imagery of prosperity, it suffers in causing the text to transform its depiction of Israel from the trees themselves to the one who cultivates them.

The botanical references are continued in the second blessing, which in many respects is a development from, or a rephrasing of the first. In addition to these buckets being overfull, "his seed" should find itself inundated with water. On a superficial level, this would suggest that Israel's agricultural endeavours should all prove successful; in the same manner in which he should have an abundance of water, so too should he successfully irrigate his field and yield bountiful crops.

The superficiality of this reading is such that emendations for it are frequently sought, and the testimony of various ancient witnesses in this regard has lent a solid basis to these conjectures. Thus, we find in various translations of this clause (7α) the assertion that a man should come forth, or should prosper, from amongst Israel's descendants²⁷³. While this might represent an interpretation of a difficult verse, rather than a straight translation, the Septuagint's construal of the subsequent clause (7αβ) might suggest a *vorlage* different from the MT. There, the text renders וזרעו במים רבים, "and he shall rule over many nations"²⁷⁴.

Emending the text in line with these considerations²⁷⁵ is certainly tempting. In doing so, we would not only divest ourselves of a superficial reading of the MT (and one that required of us that we modify the relationship between tenor and vehicle), but would provide a more adequate introduction to the monarchic reference in verse 7b. There, the assertion that his king should rise and that his kingdom should be elevated constitutes, thus far, the only reference to the Israelite monarchy within the Balaam cycle - a reference that is certainly

272. Gray, *op.cit.* 364.

273. Peshitta: יסגי מלכא דיתרבא ("a man will come forth from his descendants"); Onkelos: מבנוהי ("may the king thrive, who grows from his descendants"); Septuagint: Ἐξελευσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπερματος αὐτοῦ ("There shall come a man out of his seed").

274. LXX: καὶ κυριευσεὶ ἐθνῶν πολλῶν. Note also Onkelos: וישלוט בעממין סגיאין.

275. Perhaps, יזלו לאומים מחילו; BHS.

anachronistic to the text's wilderness setting, but one which suits the future-time reference of these verses.

While text-critical considerations of this nature are important, and while they certainly have ramifications that extend beyond merely ascertaining the nature of hypothetical *ur*-texts, they can also prove distracting in their shifting of attention away from the actual text under consideration. The reading preserved in the MT is not impossible; it is merely difficult. If an interpretation of these clauses seems too simplistic, it behoves us to adopt a more subtle one.

Certainly, on a subtler level, these clauses do refer to Israel's progeny - a possibility left open by the bivalency of "seed" (זרע), but also one towards which the text explicitly lends itself by virtue of the ambiguity of referent. Since Israel was addressed in the second-person within the first part of this blessing, and since the rest of the blessing alternates between Israel and God in its third-person descriptions, we must be open to the possibility that reference to "his buckets" overflowing with water is a request for divine bounty, and that it is God who serves as the nominal referent.

Construing the text in this fashion carries with it the advantage of preserving the metaphorical depiction of Israel in verse 6. Rather than transforming Israel from a cluster of trees to the tender of trees, verse 7a maintains the arboreal metaphor by introducing the divine gardener. As such, the nominal referent of "his seed" in verse 7a β can be construed both as Israel, who has produced the seed, and as God, who owns it. Its being inundated with water allows for the continued growth and expansion of the Israelite nation.

In light of this construal, the references to the king in verse 7b are no longer lacking introduction. The assertion that his king will "rise" (ירום) is morphologically conveyed as an action precipitated by the previous clause²⁷⁶, which we can here read as the watering of the Israelite garden. As such, it stands to reason that while the Israelites are metonymically depicted as a grove of trees (THE NATION IS A FOREST), the reference to a king growing in their midst is predicated on the implicit metaphor, THE KING IS A TREE. The assertion that this king

276. In addition to the generally recognised function of the *wayyiqtol*, see also Williams §180 for the suggestion that as an imperfective it always indicates purpose or result.

should specifically outgrow another reflects on the general metaphorical assumption that arboreal language is well-suited to kings in general - that it is not only the Israelite king who deserves this depiction, just as it is not only the Israelite nation that can be depicted as a garden or a forest.

Thus far, the confluence of tropes within this metaphorical complex encourages us to perceive three general metaphors at play here. In the first, we have a variation of A NATION IS A FOREST, in the second we have the correlative GOD IS A GARDENER, and in the third: the implicit, THE KING IS A TREE. In all three of these tropes, the nuances being exploited are those that concern the beautiful arrangement of trees and the possibility of continued growth, which correspond to nuances of aesthetic goodness and fertility in their non-divine tenors (as well as nuances of watchfulness and care in the divine tenor), and with the added elements of physical and military might in the monarchic.

In the second section of the oracle, the text's attention is shifted away from the Israelites and to God, who brought them out of Egypt. The phrase employed to describe the manner in which he did so (כתועפות ראם לו) is a key one, since it forms a crucial component of the previous oracle as well²⁷⁷. From both a lexical and a syntactic perspective, however, this expression is ambiguous.

The term תועפות (of root יעפ) denotes height or eminence. It appears also in reference to mountains in Psalm 95:4, and perhaps in reference to towering heaps in Job 22:25. The term ראם, on the other hand, denotes the wild ox. Its orthographic resemblance (and etymological connection) to רום - no doubt together with the difficulty of configuring what might constitute the "eminences of the ox" - has generated a construal of this noun as another epithet for "grandeur". As such, various of the targums have rendered the phrase תועפות ראם as "power and grandeur"²⁷⁸ - a reading also found within the Peshitta²⁷⁹.

277.Num 23:22.

278.So, Onkelos: תוקפא ורומא; Pseudo-Jonathan: תוקפא ורוממותא; Targum Yerushalmi: תוקפא ותושבתהא ורוממותא.

279.Peshitta: כחשמו סבושמו, "with his strength and his grandeur".

Interpretation of תועפות as a symbolic reference to horns is attested in the Septuagint²⁸⁰ and the Vulgate²⁸¹, both of which construe the animal not as an ox but as a unicorn, or a rhinoceros. The imagery of an ox's horns is adopted, *inter alia*, by various of the mediaeval exegetes and is reflected also in the Arabic translation of Saadiah²⁸². A feature of these texts appears also to be the desire to harmonise this expression with the references to קרני ראם in Deuteronomy 33:17 and Psalm 95:4²⁸³.

Whichever of these readings we adopt, the phrase also possesses an additional syntactic ambiguity, and one which centres on the particle לו in its dual capacity as both a dative and a genitive. In other words, this expression could either convey that God was like the horns of a wild ox for *Israel* or that God, himself, *possessed* the horns of an ox. The former parsing (albeit with an alternative construal of the nouns) is attested in the Targum²⁸⁴, while the latter is demonstrated by the Septuagint²⁸⁵. The Peshitta, in rendering the phrase obliquely²⁸⁶ succeeds in preserving the ambiguity: "with his strength and his grandeur" might imply that God demonstrated these qualities for Israel, or might simply testify to his having possessed these attributes himself.

The nature of these attributes, in whatever form they manifested, is made clear in the following three clauses, which demonstrate that the nuances being conveyed are those which concern brute strength and ferocity. As such, the subject is described as having consumed his enemies, of having crushed their bones and of "striking [with] his arrows" (והציו ימהץ). But who is the subject?

280.LXX: ὡς δοξα μονοκερωτος αυτου.

281.Vulgate: *cuius fortitudo similis est rinocerotis*.

282.(= קרני ראם) בארק אלרים; *Oeuvres Complètes de R. Saadia ben Iosef al-Fayyôûmi: Version Arabe du Pentateuque* (ed. J. Derenbourg; Paris, 1893).

283.See, for example, the commentary of Ibn Ezra and of Saadiah, *ad loc*.

284.Onkelos: תוקפא ורומא דילה. This syntactic construal is adopted by most translations (NRSV, NJPS, etc).

285.This syntactic construal is adopted by Notarius, *op.cit.* 69ff, and by Levine, *op.cit.* 197. This is a construal somewhat bolstered by the similar locution, תועפות הרים לו (Psalm 95:4), in which the pronominal suffix is likewise genitival.

286.Peshitta: כחציו סבוטת

As with the ambiguity of referent in verse 7a, so here we find an ambiguity of subject. The first two of these clauses relate also to the semantic domain of oxen, and thus suggest God as their actor, with the text persisting in its taurine characterisation of his behaviour. The third clause, however, is where the chief ambiguity resides. Mark Brettler refers to a possible LIGHTNING IS GOD'S ARROW metaphor²⁸⁷, and this may be a manifestation of the same. Alternatively, it may also suggest a general allusion to human warfare, and might thus have as its subject the personified Israel²⁸⁸. Since the three clauses in verse 9a persist with the same subjectival ambiguity, we must conclude that it is here left unresolved by the text itself.

Those subsequent clauses denote the subject's lying down and crouching like a lion, together with the rhetorical question: "who will rouse him up?"²⁸⁹ This same clause appears almost verbatim in Jacob's blessing of Judah in Genesis 49:9b, where it has as its metaphorical tenor the restrained power of the king, and it bears certain similarities to the leonine depiction of Israel in the previous oracle (23:24). Its capacity for representing God is attested in the references to his roaring²⁹⁰, or to his tearing people apart in the manner of a lion²⁹¹. As a trope, the lion is therefore capable of representing the people as a whole, the king in their midst, and God. The ambiguity of subject thus takes us through to the oracle's conclusion.

At this point, we are in a position to comment in more detail upon the structure of this oracle. As we have noted, the general blessing formulation at both its commencement and at its conclusion frames the text, while the shift of subject from Israel to Israel/God in verse 8 marks a division between its two sections. In the first section, the object of the author's praise is the Israelite encampment, which functions as a metonym for the Israelite people, while in the second section he praises the behaviour of both the Israelites and God. These divisions are

287. Mark Brettler, "Images of YHWH the Warrior in Psalms" in Claudia V. Camp and Carole R. Fontaine (eds.), *Women, War, and Metaphor: Language and Society in the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Semeia 61; Society of Biblical Literature, 1993), 135-165 (155). Most references to God firing (metaphorical) arrows appear in the book of Psalms (Ps 7:14, 18:15, 38:3, 64:8, 77:18, 144:6), but see also Zech 9:14 and Lam 3:12.

288. Note Levine's supposition that the MT features an addition: the Peshitta, which reads (ܡܫܬܝܢܐ = 𐤍𐤏𐤋𐤃𐤓), is similar enough to the Hebrew spelling for "his arrows" as to allow for an error of this nature; Levine, *op.cit.* 197-198.

289. Note that in the previous oracle within the cycle, Num 23:24, leonine imagery is applied to Israel, despite taurine imagery having previously functioned within the same oracle (v22) in reference to God. On the relationship between these two oracles on the basis of those similarities, see Levine, *op.cit.* 210ff.

290. For example: Hos 11:10; Jer 25:30; Amos 1:2.

291. Deut 33:20.

also conveyed syntactically, whereby the frame is in the second-person and the text embodied by them is in the third.

From a metaphorical perspective, the two sections of this oracle focus on different characteristics, which their respective vehicles draw out in different ways. Where the former section utilised arboreal imagery in order to invoke the features of beauty and stateliness, the latter section employed both taurine and leonine imagery in order to invoke the qualities of strength, ferocity and military prowess. Since it is with the shift from a plural to a singular subject in verse 7 that we begin to witness an ambiguity of referent, the text's vagueness as regards whether its stipulations serve as a reference to Israel, to God or to the Israelite king signal a deliberate conflation of imagery, and one that enables us to treat all three of these potential subjects as being qualified by the various characteristics that the text invokes.

It is in respect of these metaphorical considerations in particular that we can now appreciate the central position adopted by verse 7b, which in referring to the manner in which the Israelite king outgrows Agag employs imagery that relates to the semantic domains exploited by both the first and the second half of this oracle. The verb employed in reference to his growth (ירום) denotes height and majesty, while the qualification of his kingdom (תנשא) invokes the qualities of splendour. These are both characteristics that relate to the descriptions accorded to the Israelite dwellings and, by extension, to the Israelite people.

At the same time, the reference to Agag - perhaps the quintessential Amalekite king²⁹², invokes the qualities of ferocity and violence that serve as his name's etymology²⁹³. The verb used to denote the Israelite king's growth, when used in the *hiphil*, can also serve as a reference to military power²⁹⁴, and its etymological proximity to the wild ox (ראם) might therefore constitute an allusion to the same. What is more, and on a purely functional level,

292. For a clever suggestion to this effect, see Rashbam, *ibid.*: מלכי מצרים קרוים פרעה, כל מלכי עמלק נקראין אגג כמו כל מלכי מצרים קרוים פרעה, ושל ירושלים מלכי צדק, אדוני צדק מלכי פלשתים אבימלך, ושל ירושלים מלכי צדק, אדוני צדק.

293. From an Assyrian word for "ferocious"; cf: BDB, s.v. אגג; René Labrat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne: Signes, Syllabaire, Idéogrammes* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1988) 207 and 347 (*agāgu*); Jeremy Black, Andrew George & Nicholas Postgate (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (2nd printing; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), s.v. *agāgu(m)*.

294. So, for example, Ps 89:43 (in reference to supporting a warrior in battle).

the quality of surpassing another named king reflects less on the Israelite monarch's physical splendour than it does on his strength and his military might²⁹⁵.

As such, the monarchic metaphor employed here (THE KING IS A TREE) can be seen on analysis to function as a trope within the first half of this oracle, in which it serves as a development for the arboreal metaphor applied to the people (A NATION IS A FOREST) and as a direct link to the oracle's second half, in which the metaphorical vehicles all draw upon the qualities of strength, ferocity and military prowess.

We might add to this that, just as the tree is granted its height (and, by extension, those other qualities that typify strength and vigour) through an abundance of water, so a consideration of this trope in other contexts²⁹⁶ might suggest that a king is granted the correlative qualities of strength and power through good deeds and through acts of faith. The oracle's opening, in which the generic quality of goodness is imputed to the Israelites, thus serves also a moralistic function in the person of the king. His ability to typify such a diverse range of physical, functional and ethical qualities is a feature of the incredible versatility of this arboreal metaphor.

295. Levine, *op.cit.* 197.

296. Such as its appearance in Ps 1 (§2.1.2), and in Jer 17:5-8 (§2.1.1).

§4 - General Conclusions

וכל דבר שהדעת לא תכהישנו כפשוטו ומשפט נפרשנו

Abraham Ibn Ezra (introduction to the Pentateuch, third approach)

A sensitivity to metaphor requires of us that we take seriously its capacity for interanimation. In conducting this study, my intention was to demonstrate that fact - that it is only by allowing the semantic domains of different metaphors to influence one another in a mutually informative manner that we can demonstrate the import of metaphorical complexes and can show how they differ from narrativised metaphors. What is more, by focusing on arboreal metaphors specifically, I have intended to showcase the breadth and flexibility of this one particular trope (THE KING IS A TREE).

Without wishing to restate the conclusions of my individual analyses (for which the interested reader can consult the appropriate sections), the studies undertaken in this thesis were designed to showcase how seemingly-similar passages can yield drastically different interpretations, based entirely on the metaphors with which the primary tropes are interacting. As such, by comparing Jeremiah 17:5-8 with Psalm 1, and Psalm 52 with Psalm 92, I have sought to show that the overall import of a passage has as much to do with those tropes that are in the background as it has with those that are in focus.

A chief problem with other image-based analyses of metaphor is that they have tended to focus on a single trope to the exclusion of others. While the observations made on the import of individual metaphors have been informative, their complete disregard for the *interaction* of metaphors has resulted in a superficial understanding of metaphorical complexes in particular. If the true import of the interaction theory of metaphor is to be internalised, then it is necessary for biblical scholars to consider new methodologies for assessing metaphorical interaction.

The method advocated in this thesis involved an application of Conceptual Blending Theory. Here, instead of applying the theory to individual metaphorical tropes (within which the

source spaces and the target space combine to produce a new blended space with emergent concepts), I have applied the theory to a broader metaphorical interaction, whereby the individual metaphorical tropes *themselves* function as source spaces, the tenor of the allegory as a whole is its target space, and in which the emergent concepts produced in the blended space are peculiar to the particular arrangement of metaphors that the complex employs.

In my investigation of eight separate biblical texts, this method of analysis has proven most informative, and has even resulted (in Numbers 24:5-9) with the identification of a metaphorical trope that is not noticeable on a first reading, but which is of great importance to the passage's overall interpretation.

In conducting this study, I have set out to answer two key questions. First and foremost, how exactly do metaphors operate in the presence of *other* metaphors? Relatedly, and given my focus on arboreal metaphors in particular, I have also sought to determine how the presence of a particular trope (THE KING IS A TREE) might affect and be affected by the other metaphors around it. It was in respect of this primary question that the dissertation comprises a theoretical analysis of metaphoricity.

Secondly, I have also set out to determine exactly how theoretical considerations of that nature might assist us in our primary aim (as biblical exegetes) of *interpreting* those passages in which we find a metaphorical complex. What exactly might we learn about THE KING IS A TREE, and what might we learn about those texts that testify to it, that we did not know before? How might that knowledge be of service to us in our interpretation of the Hebrew Bible? It is in respect of this secondary question that the dissertation comprises an image-based metaphorical analysis.

The following chart indicates some of the ways in which arboreal metaphors are attested in the literature, together with various of the features that such passages exploit:

Formation	Literary:	tropic/schematic
	Types:	growing/felled; specific/generic; young/old
Specification	Parts:	branch, twig, leaves, stump, fruit
	Location:	garden/wild; watered/arid
	Physical:	height, girth, solidity, foliage
Evocation	Qualitative:	fecundity, value, immobility, helplessness
	Functional:	combustion, commerce, consumption, shelter, aesthetic
	Perspectival:	wonder/disgust; awe/mundaneity

In assessing a particular passage, the first thing necessary is to determine its literary *form*. Is it that which we have labelled in the thesis an isolated trope ("tropic"), or is its attestation embedded within an allegorical schema ("schematic")? In the former instance, interpretation of the metaphor is subject to all of the usual considerations that an interaction theory mandates of us: an awareness of its context, its cotext and its genre, together with a recognition of the interplay between its constituent parts (vehicle and tenor; source space, target space and generic space).

In the event that we are looking at an allegorical schema, it next behoves us to consider the number of metaphorical tropes at play within the passage. In the event that there is only one, the passage constitutes a narrativised metaphor and the interpretation of every individual trope within it can proceed as though they are isolated from one another, taking also into consideration their narrativ development. In the event, however, that there is more than one metaphor, our interpretation of the passage requires a sensitivity towards their interaction with one another.

Having considered the form of the passage, we find three different *specifications* of arboreal metaphors: the type of tree, the part of tree and the location of tree. The examples given in the chart above, any combination of which can yield a number of different possibilities, are not intended to be at all exhaustive. In assessing their import, we need to consider not only the metaphorical nuances of trees in general, but the import of these various arboreal

specifications, the precise nuances of which may be linguistic, but which are always cotextually dependent.

To give but one example, we considered the fruit of an aging tree in the house of God (Psalm 92:14-15), and in so doing needed to consider the import not only of trees as metaphors for the righteous, but of these specifications in particular: the type (old), the part (fruit) and the location (temple). In doing so, we noted that the type and the location contrasted with the situation of sinners (eradicated, and scattered across the world), while the part (fruit) carried etymological connotations of healthy progeny. In all three of these instances, the treatment of the wicked in verse 8 in particular was critical to our interpretation of this metaphor for the righteous.

Finally, in considering the nuances conveyed by the arboreal specifications, we find that there are four different *evocations*: the physical, the qualitative, the functional and the perspectival. Again, the examples given within each of these categories are in no way meant to be exhaustive, but are considered to be symptomatic of this particular trope. What is more, these evocations are conveyed not only by the particular specifications of this metaphor, but also by their interactions with other metaphorical tropes (and their respective specifications) within the same passage.

In every text under consideration, I have found that this particular metaphor has demonstrated a capacity for remarkable diversity, and can be employed with both positive and negative connotations with equal facility. Pending a more comprehensive study, which might consider how well these conclusions hold up across other instantiations of the arboreal metaphor, we can conclude that TREE is particularly well-suited to metaphorisation, and that as a vehicle for KING it permits of great variation and versatility. This particular trope, THE KING IS A TREE, appears to have been a favourite of biblical authors for good reason.

The better to see how easily the results of this thesis can be duplicated with other tropes (arboreal and otherwise), it will be informative to apply the Conceptual Blending Theory to metaphorical complexes comprised of different vehicles to the ones here considered. In

addition, a careful investigation of narrativised metaphors in particular will also serve to clearly differentiate their function from that of the metaphorical complex.

Ultimately, as biblical scholars, it is to texts that we are subject and not to theory. While metatextual considerations might be interesting, such as the historical background to individual compositions, it is fundamentally as *literature* that this material needs to be appraised, and it is our obligation to treat it as such.

While an increased awareness of the interactivity of metaphors is a necessity, the primary result of such awareness must be a correspondingly increased *sensitivity* towards the literature, and a desire to let the texts speak for themselves. While we may never uncover the original meaning of any given passage (nor answer the eternal question: does a passage have "original meaning"?), it is my hope that through more sophisticated analyses we might get ever closer to the true *range* of meaning that these texts possess, so stubborn in their refusal to say just what they mean, and yet so permitting of such inexhaustible interpretation.

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