Faculty of Theology
University of Helsinki

LIONS IN IMAGES AND NARRATIVES

JUDGES 14, 1 KINGS 13:11–32 AND DANIEL 6 IN THE LIGHT OF NEAR EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY

Sanna Saari

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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To my children

Abstract

This thesis examines the lion imagery in three Hebrew Bible narratives (Judges 14, 1 Kings 13:11–32 and Daniel 6) in light of the visual source material of the ancient Near East. The aim is to resolve how the Biblical authors used and applied cultural conventions of lion imagery, and thereby to distinguish the unique features of Biblical lion narratives compared to the visual imagery of lions in ancient Near Eastern art. The selected narratives are treated as literary constellations instead of restricting the analysis of lion motifs by isolating verses. The analysis is conducted by using iconographic exegesis and narrative criticism without disregarding the historical-critical point of view.

The present study contributes to the recent methodological discussion in the field of iconographic exegesis by addressing the question of image-text relationship between the Hebrew Bible narratives and ancient Near Eastern visual images. This thesis strives for transparency and for an explicit description of the methodological steps. Attention is paid to exploring the congruence between visual and verbal imagery. The process of categorizing the visual comparative material is also addressed and evaluated since categorizing may have a significant impact on how the congruence between images and texts is perceived. The present study introduces 'action unit approach' as a tool for categorizing the visual source material. This approach strives for a descriptive grouping of the material by evaluating the level of action in the images. The aim is to minimize interpretation in the process of categorizing the visual data.

Previous iconographic research has mainly focused on poetic and prophetic texts of the Hebrew Bible. The present study concentrates on Biblical prose and thus extends the prospects of iconographic exegesis by applying a narrative critical methodology together with iconographic analysis. The main contribution of this thesis is that it provides a model for analyzing prose narratives with an iconographical approach. The model is based on the concept of 'iconic structure,' which was first used by William P. Brown in his monograph *Seeing the Psalms* (2002), and later modified by Joel LeMon in his study *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms*, (2010). This thesis follows in the footsteps of LeMon by expanding the use of iconic structure into Biblical prose.

Judges 14, 1 Kings 13:11–32, and Daniel 6 contain rich, versatile uses of lion imagery. For a large part, these narratives apply commonly known lion motifs in a similar manner as the visual sources of the ancient Near East. Lions are depicted as threats or as enemies, they are associated with monarchy and God, and in all three narratives they are portrayed as liminal characters on the border between life and death, the sacred and the profane, and north and south. Despite the high level of congruent imagery with ancient Near Eastern art, the selected narratives also contain several unique features that are not represented in the pictorial remains of the ancient Near East. For example, these narratives pair lions with animals that are unconventional in the visual lion imagery. In addition, the motif of a lion and a deity differs in the Hebrew Bible narratives from ancient Near Eastern art.

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations of scientific journals, series, and dictionaries are given according to *The SBL Handbook of Style* (2nd edition).

Textual witnesses

4QDan^{b} (4Q113)	Qumran fragments of Daniel 6
A	Codex Alexandrinus
B	Codex Vaticanus
La^{115}	*Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* (Old Latin manuscript)
LXX	Septuagint
Ms 88	Codex Chisianus
MT	Masoretic Text
OG	Old Greek
OL	Old Latin
OL^{L}	Codex Lugdonensis
P967	Papyrus 967
S	Syriac
Syh	Syrohexapla
Th	Theodotion
Vg	Vulgate

Museums, catalogs and databases

IDD	Iconography of Deities and Demons, http://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/idd/
IPIAO	Schroer, Silvia. *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern.* 4 vols. 2005–2018.
Corpus	Keel, Othmar. *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis Zur Perserzeit. 5 vols. OBO.SA 10, 13, 29, 31, 33, 35.* Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995–2017.
BM	The British Museum
AO	The Louvre

1. Introduction

וְהִנֵּה כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת שֹׁאֵג לִקְרָאתוֹ

"And look; a young, male lion came roaring towards him."

(Judges 14:5)

The image above is carved on the flat side of a Persian Period scarab from Ashkelon.[1] It portrays an anthropomorphic male figure and a male lion that is standing on its hind legs. The figures are likely portrayed in close combat. The text below the image is an excerpt from the story of Samson confronting a roaring, male lion on his way to his wedding in Timnah (Judges 14). At first sight, it looks like the image and the text tell the same story. Both depict a one-on-one heroic confrontation with a lion. However, the relationship between ancient Near Eastern images and Biblical texts is more complex and deserves to be scrutinized more profoundly. When we pay closer attention to the surrounding context of each medium, we are able to form a more nuanced view of the relationship between the visual and textual image.

According to art historian W. J. T. Mitchell, "words can 'cite,' but they can never 'sight' their objects."[2] By this statement, Mitchell points out the profound difference between verbal and visual representations. Nevertheless, the human mind produces images that are put in material form, either as verbal representations in texts or as visual representations in pictorial artefacts. Despite their differences as communication devices, images and texts are both used for cultural expression. When we study the ancient world, we are not spoiled with source material. Therefore, we should not overlook the fact that ancient images are a valuable source for the study of ancient texts and vice versa. However, this leads to significant

[1] This object is discussed in chapters 3 (**fig. 3.43**) and 4 (**fig. 4.1**), where further references are given.
[2] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays On Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 152.

methodological questions: What kind of images and texts can be related to each other and how?

1.1. The Aim of This Study

The aim of this thesis is to critically assess the relationship between the Hebrew Bible narratives and the pictorial sources of the ancient Near East. The study contributes to the field of iconographic exegesis as 1) it aims to evaluate the methodology and the relationship of textual and visual images, 2) it provides a descriptive way to categorize ancient pictorial material, and 3) it focuses the iconographic analysis on narrative texts, which has not been done to this extent previously.

This thesis examines the use of lion imagery in three Hebrew Bible narratives: Judges 14, 1 Kings 13:11–32 and Daniel 6. These texts are selected because all of these include a confrontation between a lion and an individual.[3] Judges 14 presents a violent encounter between Samson and a roaring male lion, in 1 Kings 13:11–32 a man of God is killed by a lion on the road, and in Daniel 6 Daniel and his opponents confront lions in a pit.[4] These narratives display lions as active characters that have a significant impact on the storyline and on the representation of other characters. This is essential for the narratological analysis of the texts, which precedes the iconographic analysis, that is, the comparison between the literary images and visual ones. The image of a lion has been selected as the theme because of its wide and versatile use in the Hebrew Bible texts and in the archaeological materials of ancient Near East. Therefore, it provides a rich data set for this study. I use such comparative visual material that is dated approximately in 1000–150 BCE. Most of the Hebrew Bible texts were put into literal form in the latter half of this timespan. It is nevertheless necessary to include visual material that is earlier than the texts, because several iconographic motifs were used even for hundreds of years. I will include visual material that was known and used in the Israel/Palestine region, including the Jordan valley, but occasionally it will be necessary to discuss parallels from other ancient Near Eastern areas, mainly Mesopotamia and Egypt.

[3] This selection excludes e.g. 2 Kings 17:25–26, in which lions are mentioned, but their description is not essential to the portrayal of other characters.
[4] It should be noted though that in Daniel 6 the narrator omits the confrontation of Daniel and the lions in the pit. The confrontation between individuals and lions is only properly explicated in the end of the narrative, when Daniel's opponents are thrown into the pit.

The research questions and tasks of this study evolve around three topics:
1) How should the image-text relationship of the Hebrew Bible texts and the ancient Near Eastern pictorial sources be perceived?
2) How can iconographic exegesis be applied to narrative texts of the Hebrew Bible?
3) How is the image of a lion used in the selected narratives?

1) When using the ancient Near Eastern visual material in the interpretation of Biblical texts, the relationship of the sources is a profound question. On what basis can ancient texts and ancient images be compared to each other? How can each source be treated in its own right? Should the starting point of the analysis be in texts or in images? How should the comparative material be selected and delineated? These are the questions that drive the research of scholars who take visual data into account in Biblical studies, but often the process is left implicit.

Another important issue related to image-text relationship is how the visual, comparative material is presented in research. Categorizing ancient pictorial material inevitably implies an element of interpretation. This may lead to a situation in which pictorial images and textual images are seen as more congruent than they actually are if the categorization of the visual material is based on too much interpretation. Therefore, the process of categorization should be as descriptive as possible.

2) Previous iconographic research has mainly focused on poetic and prophetic texts of the Hebrew Bible. In this thesis, I analyze Biblical narratives by taking the vast visual data set of ancient Near Eastern art into consideration. In addition, I will pay close attention to the literary genre of the texts without disregarding the historical-critical point of view. Based on previous iconographic exegesis, particularly the work of Joel M. LeMon,[5] and on the methodology of narrative criticism, I will provide one possible model for applying iconographic exegesis to the Hebrew Bible narratives. The aim of my study is not to create a new method and thereby fragment the methodology of iconographic exegesis even more. Quite the opposite; the aim is to make the whole process of analysis as explicit as possible in order to provide a repeatable model for later scholarship to apply, evaluate, and adapt.

[5] Joel M. LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms. Exploring Congruent Iconography and Texts* (OBO, 242. Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

3) Even though my study is driven by methodological concerns, the final set of research questions focus on the images of lions in Judges 14, 1 Kings 13, and Daniel 6. The model of analysis that is created in this study examines how and why the image of a lion is used in these texts. Which motifs are used, and what is the impact of the lion on the storyline and on other characters? How do the characteristics of the narrative genre impact the expression of these motifs? My study draws much from the extensive research on lion imagery in the Hebrew Bible and in the ancient Near Eastern art by Brent A. Strawn.[6]

In chapter 1.2., I explore the relevant research history from the point of view of the three research questions. The chapter will address the perception of image-text relationship in iconographic exegesis as well as the use of the Hebrew Bible narratives in iconographic analysis. It also introduces previous research on lion imagery in the ancient Near East and in the Hebrew Bible and determines the baseline of iconographic analysis for this thesis. Chapter 2 will further address the theoretical and methodological issues that need to be taken into consideration when analyzing the Hebrew Bible narratives in light of ancient Near Eastern visual data. At the end of chapter 2 (2.3.), I provide a model of analysis that will be applied and tested in this study. In chapter 3, I survey lion imagery in ancient Near Eastern art and aim at a descriptive categorization of the visual material. In chapters 4–6 I apply the model of analysis (ch 2.3.) and the knowledge of lion imagery in ancient Near Eastern art (ch 3) to the selected Hebrew Bible narratives (Judg 14, 1 Kgs 13, and Dan 6). Finally, in chapter 7, I discuss the results of the analysis and evaluate the applicability of the model of analysis.

1.2. History of Research

1.2.1. Iconographic Exegesis and Image-Text Relationship

Iconographic exegesis is an approach that examines Biblical texts in light of ancient Near Eastern visual sources.[7] Interest towards the visual material of the ancient Near East first gained ground in Biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies in the mid 19th century due to the

[6] Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (OBO, 212. Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).
[7] For more definitions, see Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 64; de Hulster, "Illuminating Images," 140; LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form,*7–22.

significant archaeological discoveries in the area.[8] The first attempts to compare ancient Near Eastern visual sources to Biblical texts found similarities on a very broad basis, and the visual images were often seen as illustrations of the Biblical characters and events.[9] In the 20th century, Hugo Gressmann's *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament* (1909) and James B. Pritchard's *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (1954) were substantial collections of ancient visual data in the text-orientated sphere of Biblical scholarship of that time.[10]

In the 1970's, the pioneering work of Othmar Keel laid the foundation for the approach that is presently called 'iconographic exegesis' or 'biblical iconography.'[11] The starting point of iconographic exegesis is the assumption that ancient visual material and Biblical texts are comparable with each other, and that the ancient visual data can be used for interpreting the Bible.[12] Therefore, evaluating the nature of image-text relationship is at the core of iconographic exegesis.[13] Keel and a network of his students and colleagues, the so-called "Fribourg School"[14] (including Jürg Eggler, Christian Herrmann, Silvia Schroer, Thomas Staubli, Christoph Uehlinger, and Urs Winter), have provided indispensable contributions to Biblical studies by increasing the awareness of the value of visual sources. The research of

[8] Especially Paul-Émile Botta's excavations in Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad) in 1842–44 and Austen Henry Layard's excavations in Nimrud and Nineveh (1845–1851).
[9] For instance, the assyriologists George Smith, Friedrich Delitzsch and J. N. Fradenburg interpreted a banquet scene on a Mesopotamian cylinder seal according to the Biblical story of the Fall of Man. See George Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* (London: Sampson Low, Martson, Searle & Rivington, 1876); Friedrich Delitzsch, *Babel and Bibel: Two Lectures on the Significance of Assyriological Research for Religion, Embodying the Most Important Criticisms and the Author's Replies* (trans. Thomas J. McGormack and W. H. Carruth; Chicago: Open Court, 1903); J. N. Fradenburg, *Witnesses from the Dust, or the Bible: Illustrated from the Monuments* (Cincinnati: Craston & Stowe, 1886). See also the discussion by Dominique Collon, *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East* (London: British Museum Press, 1993); Joel LeMon, "Iconographic Approaches: The Iconic Structure of Psalm 17," in *Method Matters* (ed. Joel LeMon and Kent Harold Richards; SBLRBS 56; Boston: Brill, 2010), 143–145; Ryan Bonfiglio, Reading Images, Seeing Texts, 76–80.
[10] See Hugo Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament* (2. Aufl; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927 [1909]) and James B. Pritchard: *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Second edition with supplement; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969 [1954]). Cf. Ryan P. Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts. Towards a Visual Hermeneutics for Biblical Studies* (Fribourg: Academic Press; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen, 2016), 72.
[11] Keel's groundbreaking work was *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy J. Hallett; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997 [German orig. 1972, 1996]).
[12] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 9; de Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah* (FAT 2/36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 18; Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 65.
[13] As Ryan Bonfiglio points out, "in its most basic definition, iconographic exegesis seeks to analyze the nature of the relationship between specific ancient images and corresponding biblical texts" (Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 64).
[14] For a definition, see Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 3; de Hulster, *Illuminating Images: An Iconographic Method of Old Testament Exegesis with Three Case Studies from Third Isaiah* (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2007) 21–25; 125–131.

Keel and the Fribourg School has utilized the visual remains of the ancient Near East for interpreting Hebrew Bible texts, but also for investigating ancient Israelite religion.[15]

Over the last two decades, the Fribourg School has been joined by the so-called "second wave"[16] of iconographic exegesis, which includes research by scholars such as Brent A. Strawn, Martin Klingbeil, Joel M. LeMon, Izaak J. de Hulster and Ryan Bonfiglio. To quote Ryan Bonfiglio, "one of the hallmarks of this 'second wave' […] is its increased attention to and revision of interpretative methods, especially when it comes to relating texts and images."[17] In his research, Izaak de Hulster has thoroughly evaluated the relationship between ancient images and Biblical texts from a theoretical point of view.[18] Bonfiglio, on the other hand draws attention to the nature and impact of images by adapting theories of visual culture studies to Biblical studies.[19]

The volume titled *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice*, edited by Izaak de Hulster, Brent Strawn and Ryan Bonfiglio, is the first book that is intended for teaching iconographic exegesis to students.[20] It is an important contribution to scholarship because it intends to explicate the methodological steps of using ancient images in Biblical research. While the introduction of the book succeeds in demonstrating this goal, the articles reveal the current state of the art in reality. There are several different ways in which scholars perceive the image-text relationship between the Hebrew Bible texts and ancient Near Eastern visual materials, and the methodological steps are often still left implicit. In the articles, the comparative visual material is selected in different manners, and the literary context of Biblical texts are also treated in variable ways.

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[15] E.g. Othmar Keel & Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); Silvia Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern*, 4 vols. (2005–2018), *In Israel gab es Bilder: Nachrichten von darstellender Kunst im Alten Testament* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1987); Thomas Staubli, *Das Image der Nomaden im alten Israel un in der Ikonographie seiner sesshaften Nachbarn* (OBO 107; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1991); Urs Winter, *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt* (OBO 53; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).
[16] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 3.
[17] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 3.
[18] See de Hulster, "Illuminating Images," *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah.*
[19] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*.
[20] de Hulster, Strawn & Bonfiglio, *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice.*

The use of ancient Near Eastern visual sources in Biblical studies has come a long way from the 19th century to the present. Since the 1970's, the Fribourg School has expanded into a network of scholars who engage ancient Near Eastern iconography from various perspectives.[21] These days the visual sources are treated within their own artistic and cultural contexts and not only taken as illustrations of Biblical characters and events.[22] During the 21st century, scholars have become increasingly interested in several aspects of images, not only their contents. For instance, the materiality of images is increasingly considered, and the impact of images in communication is taken into account.[23] Yet, the methodology of iconographic exegesis still needs to be developed further.[24] My aim is not to take on the overwhelming task of establishing an entirely new method for iconographic exegesis, but to acknowledge the current state of the art and to attempt a properly explicated working procedure. This study provides one model that can be used for analyzing the Hebrew Bible narratives in light of ancient Near Eastern visual sources.

1.2.2. Iconographic Exegesis and the Hebrew Bible Narratives

Iconographic exegesis has largely focused on exploring congruence between ancient Near Eastern pictorial material and literary images of poetic and prophetic texts of the Hebrew Bible. During the 1970–80's, Othmar Keel conducted iconographic-biblical research on the Psalms, the Song of Songs, and on several prophetic books.[25] From the 1990's onwards, Keel's interest shifted from Hebrew Bible imagery to ancient Near Eastern objects and religio-historical questions.[26] This latter field of interest has been prevalent also in the

[21] It should also be pointed out that there is much more beyond the Fribourg School. See e.g. the publications of Martin Metzger, Eleanore Ferris Beach, Arne Wiig, Philippe Guillaume, Theodore Lewis, Rüdiger Schmitt, Tallay Ornan and Izak Cornelius.

[22] Although the latter approach still lives on in publications such as *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*.

[23] See e.g. Christoph Uehlinger, ed., *Images as Media: Sources for the cultural history of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st millennium BCE)* (OBO 175; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

[24] E.g. Izak Cornelius, "Iconography, Iconology. II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament," *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* 12 (2016): 783–785 [784].

[25] See e.g. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*; *Deine Blicke sind Tauben: Zur Metaphorik des Hohen Liedes* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984) and *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine Neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977). Even though the emphasis of Keel's iconographic-biblical research is on poetic and prophetic literature, he has explored the imagery in other literary genres as well. See e.g. *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen im Alten Testament: ikonographische Studien zu Jos 8, 18–26; Ex 17, 8–13; 2 Kön 13, 14–19 und 1 Kön 22,11* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1974).

[26] See Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*; Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*, 6 vols. (OBO.SA 10, 13, 29, 31, 33 & 35; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995–2017).

research of the "Fribourg School."[27] The "second wave" scholars have been more extensively interested in the image-text relationship between ancient Near Eastern visual materials and the Biblical texts. Joel LeMon[28] and Martin Klingbeil[29] have explored the relationship of ancient Near Eastern iconography and selected Psalms. Izaak de Hulster has researched Third Isaiah, but also the historical books, the Song of Songs and the Gospel of John.[30] In a way, the "second wave" has returned to the early work of Keel by re-evaluating and refining the methodological steps of iconographic exegesis. In addition, several studies have taken a theme as the starting point of research without focusing on a specific book or text. They observe the theme or phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible in general.[31]

Even though narrative texts of the Bible are addressed to some extent in iconographic research, the focus has not been in the literary genre itself. However, expressing figurative speech and literary images is different in poetic and narrative texts of the Hebrew Bible. The extended Biblical narratives are written in the form of prose, which is quite untypical in ancient Near Eastern literature in which especially long narratives are verse poetry. In the Mesopotamian *Enuma Elish*, the Ugaritic *Baal cycle*, and the Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, poetic verses provide regularity and rhythm to the narration.[32] According to Tod Linafelt,

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[27] See e.g. Schroer, *IPIAO* 1–4; Christoph Uehlinger, "'Powerful Persianisms' in Glyptic Iconography of Persian Period Palestine," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformations of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-exilic Times*, ed. Bob Becking and Marjo Christina Annette Korpel (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Jürg Eggler, and Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien: Vom Neolithikum bis zur Perserzeit* (Fribourg: Göttingen: Academic Press; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); and Christian Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*, 4 vols. (OBO 138, 184, OBO.SA 24, 38; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994–2016).

[28] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*.

[29] Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God As Warrior and As God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (Fribourg: University Press, 1999).

[30] De Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*; "Nacht im Psalter," in *Ein pralles Leben: Alttestamentliche Studien. für Jutta Hausmann zum 65. Geburtstag und zur Emeritierung*, ed. Miklós Kőszeghy, Nikolett Móricz, and Petra Verebics (Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 56; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2017) 71–86; "Iconography, Love Poetry, and Bible Translation: A Test Case with Song of Songs 7:2–6," in *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice*, ed. Izaak J. de Hulster, Brent A. Strawn and Ryan P. Bonfiglio (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 313–328; "Picturing Ancient Israel's Cosmic Geography: An Iconographic Perspective on Genesis 1:1-2:4a," in *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament,* 45–61; "The Two Angels in John 20:12: The Old Testament Background," *BN* 162 (2014): 97–120; "A God of the Mountains? An Iconographic Perspective on the Aramaean Argument in 1 Kings 20:23MT," in *Image, Text, Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Izaak J. de Hulster and Joel M. LeMon (LHBOTS 588; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 226–250; "The two angels in John 20:12: An Egyptian Icon of Resurrection," *NTS* 59/1 (2013): 20–49; and "God en de kosmos in Genesis 1," *ACEBT* 27 (2012): 35–49.

[31] Examples of such themes include the image of gender (e.g. Silvia Schroer, *Images and Gender: Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art* [OBO 220; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006]) and of a lion (Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*).

[32] Tod Linafelt, "Poetry and Biblical Narrative," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 84–92.

verse is "reserved for nonnarrative genres, such as praise or lament (in the book of Psalms), love poetry (in the Song of Songs), social criticism (the prophets), or didactic rhetoric (Proverbs)."[33] When analyzing literary images, the genre does indeed make a difference. The typical style of narration in Hebrew Bible prose is straightforward: the narrator reports the events with very little description about the inner lives (e.g. thoughts and feelings) of the characters. The poetic verse narration on the other hand applies metaphors, similes and mythical language extensively.[34] The prose narration does occasionally use poetic verse narration as markers of structure for expanding expression.[35] Because of the genre differences, treating a literary image in a Biblical narrative demands different tools than the research of poetic texts, the treatment of which often applies metaphor theories.[36] In the present study, the iconographic analysis will be accompanied by narrative criticism in order to perceive how the literary images of lions are structured in Judges 14, 1 Kings 13, and Daniel 6.

In agreement with the basic principles of narrative criticism, I observe the selected narratives as literary entities.[37] This endeavor is also linked to the field of iconographic exegesis. Most scholars in iconographic exegesis attempt to avoid the fragmentary use of ancient Near Eastern images. In practice, this means that the historical context of the object is taken into account and the object is observed as a constellation instead of isolating certain details from the whole.[38] However, as Joel LeMon points out, even though most scholars these days succeed in taking the iconographic context into account, there still is a tendency to treat the literary context in a fragmentary way.[39] For instance, in his monograph *What is Stronger than a Lion?*, Brent Strawn treats the lion metaphors of the Hebrew Bible thematically by grouping several texts under a certain title (e.g. "lion as a trope of threat or power"). Because of the vast amount of research material, one can see why Strawn made such a decision.

[33] Linafelt, "Poetry and Biblical Narrative," 84.
[34] Cf. Linafelt, "Poetry and Biblical Narrative," 88–89.
[35] Linafelt, "Poetry and Biblical Narrative," 84–92.
[36] Even though metaphor theories are applicable to narrative texts as well.
[37] Without overlooking their textual history, as it may have impact of the use of lion imagery in the selected narratives. For more about the research history and the current state of narrative criticism and narratology, see chapter 2.2.1.
[38] This was already an aim of Keel, who criticized his predecessors (Pritchard, Gressmann) for fragmentary use of images. (Keel, ABD). However, as Joel LeMon has noticed, in his early work, Othmar Keel himself does treat several images by isolating them from their artistic context (LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 15.).
[39] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 14–16.

However, this approach prevents Strawn from paying closer attention to the literary context of each metaphor.[40]

Joel LeMon makes a case against literary fragmentation in the introduction of his monograph *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms* (2010) and calls on scholars in iconographic exegesis to explore even larger literary contexts.[41] LeMon himself succeeds in avoiding literary fragmentation. In his interpretive procedure, he evaluates a level of congruency between ancient Near Eastern art and the imagery in selected Psalms. LeMon borrows William P. Brown's terminology as he attempts to "interpret the image of the wings of Yahweh within the 'iconic structure' of each individual psalm."[42] The aim of the present thesis is to answer the call of bringing "ever-larger constellations of literary imagery into conversation with congruent constellations of iconographic motifs."[43] My research will continue the work of Joel LeMon by extending his iconic structure to a different literary genre. While LeMon applies his iconic structure to poetic texts (Psalms), in this study the analyzed texts are prose narratives.

1.2.3. Lion Imagery

The image of a lion was – and is – a powerful symbol. It attracted the people in the ancient Near East to such extent that they utilized the image on various objects that range from seals to massive monumental statues. It was often linked to royal contexts, but it was also used in less official environments. Due to the popularity of lion imagery, there are plenty of archaeological remains that preserve lion imagery in several geographical regions and time periods. Lion imagery in various forms has also attracted researchers in both Biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies. The so-called royal lion hunt has been thoroughly discussed, especially when it comes to Neo-Assyrian palace art.[44]

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[40] LeMon has given similar criticism of Strawn's approach to Psalms that is presented in Strawn's study *What is Stronger than a Lion*. (LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 16.).
[41] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 16.
[42] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 16. William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms. A Theology of Metaphor* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).
[43] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 16.
[44] See e.g. Pauline Albenda, "Ashurnasirpal II Lion Hunt Relief BM124534," *JNES* 31 (1972): 167–178; Michael B. Dick, "The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt and Yahweh's Answer to Job," *JBL* 125/2 (2006): 243–270; and Elnathan Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph in a Prism Fragment of Ashurbanipal (82–5–22,2)," in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyria Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995*, eds. S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 339–58. The concept of the lion hunt was also known and widely applied in the Egyptian art. See e.g. Walter, Wreszinski, *Löwenjagd im alten Aegypten* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1932).

Regarding research of lion imagery, I would like to highlight two scholars whose work is particularly influential for this thesis: Izak Cornelius and Brent Strawn. In his article "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East: A Study of Selected Motifs," Cornelius introduces seven categories of motifs, namely lion as the aggressor, the hunting of lions, the king as a lion, deities and lions, and lions as protectors of palaces, temples and tombs.[45] With his categorization, Cornelius gives an overview of the use of lion imagery by combining information from several time periods and geographical regions.

In Biblical studies, the most extensive work on lion imagery so far has been done by Brent A. Strawn. In his monograph *What is Stronger than a Lion?*, Strawn explores the metaphorical connection between God (in the Hebrew Bible) and the lion. He maps all the different appearances of lions in the Hebrew Bible and presents a chronological survey of lion imagery in the archaeological data of ancient Israel/Palestine from the Late Bronze Age to the Persian Period. He addresses the usage of lion imagery in ancient Near Eastern art and interprets the lion imagery in the Hebrew Bible in light of the ancient Near Eastern visual materials of lions. The undisputed value of Strawn's research is that he has gathered the information of archaeological reports and individual studies. He thus provides a usable reference book for scholars who are interested in the appearance of lions in Hebrew Bible texts or in ancient Near Eastern art.

My thesis owes greatly to the work of previous scholarship, especially to the work of Brent Strawn. In this study, I utilize the materials that Strawn has put together. His interpretations of the ancient Near Eastern images and Biblical texts are taken into account and discussed as well. However, the visual data of the ancient Near East is categorized differently from Strawn, whose classification of visual materials is not only based on the contents of the images but also on previous research and ancient Near Eastern literary sources. Strawn combines all his information and categorizes his material accordingly. As a result, the categories are more or less based on interpretation.[46] When describing visual images with verbal signs, that is, with words, interpretation is inevitably part of the process. Nevertheless, my aim is to decrease the amount of interpretation involved in categorizing the visual data.

[45] Izak Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East: A Study of Selected Motifs," *JNSL* 15 (1989): 53–85.
[46] For instance: "Lion as enemy," "Lion attacking humans," and "The god fighting/encountering the lion."

In practice, this is conducted by first recognizing the different components of a given image and describing these components as neutrally as possible. I call this process an *action unit approach* as the categories are based on the level of action seen in the image.

2. Methodology

Since prose has not been adequately addressed in previous research in the field of iconographic exegesis, I will attempt to provide one possible approach to this literary genre. The form of the current chapter is cumulative. 1) I first ponder the advantages and challenges of using visual data. In other words, I discuss how to define and interpret an image. I will also outline common ground for texts and images and evaluate the applicability of Joel LeMon's iconic structure to this thesis. 2) Since the source texts in my analysis are narratives instead of Psalms, as in LeMon's research, the next step is naturally to consider the methodology of narrative studies, in other words, the exegetical method of narrative criticism and narratology in general. Here, I describe the literary devices that will be observed in the analyses of this study. 3) Finally, I explicate how I intend to adapt the iconic structure and apply it to narrative texts of the Hebrew Bible. I will also report the steps of the iconographic analysis of narratives. The aim is to create a model of analysis that could also be applied to other narrative texts of the Hebrew Bible.

2.1. Iconographic Exegesis

2.1.1. What is an Image?

In research that utilizes visual data of the ancient Near East, it is necessary to define what is meant by an image. According to de Hulster, an image is "a mediated representation."[47] Bonfiglio accepts de Hulster's definition as wide enough to cover several types of images, but he points out that representation does not thoroughly describe all the aspects of an image.[48] De Hulster has later refined his definition by moving from representation to realization, especially when dealing with ancient Near Eastern images.[49] This definition takes a variety of media into account and also the aspect of human agency that is attached to images. Indeed, it seems that images in the ancient Near East were not merely representations of their subjects. Therefore, mimesis does not properly describe the wide range of meaning that an image held for its ancient users. Zainab Bahrani has studied the Mesopotamian *ṣalmu*, an Akkadian word that is used in Assyrian and Babylonian texts for

[47] de Hulster, "Illuminating Images" (2007).
[48] However, Bonfiglio does not seem to offer an alternative to de Hulster's definition.
[49] de Hulster, private communication and "God represented in images: picture theory, ancient Near Eastern iconography and biblical studies," in *The Names of the Gods! Exploring the Potentials of the Name: in Images, in Narratives*, ed. Corinne Bonnet and Fabio Porzia (OBO-series; Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming).

various kinds of images, typically of kings and deities.[50] According to Bahrani, *ṣalmu* should be understood as a conventionally coded, culturally mediated, idealized representation instead of a mimetic portrait.[51] Bahrani states that *ṣalmu* had "the potential of becoming an entity in its own right, a being rather than a copy of a being."[52]

De Hulster makes a distinction between material, mental, and verbal images (**fig. 2.1**).[53] When we discuss iconographic sources, we are dealing with artificial, material images. Images that are represented in the Hebrew Bible narratives, on the other hand, fall under the category of verbal, figurative images that are represented as metaphors, metonyms or symbols. Both material and verbal images are formulated and realized on the basis of a mental image. A mental image can be either a subjective or a collective view. Personal dreams, memories, and ideas etc. can inspire an individual to produce a material or verbal artefact. Also, social groups of people can share collective (intersubjective) mental images. For instance, archetypes (evil person, hero, god, etc.) and symbols (traffic signs, religious symbols, even colors) are commonly shared knowledge within a group of people who belong to the same cultural sphere or subculture.[54]

[50] See Zainab Bahrani, *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), for a definition of *ṣalmu*, see pages 123–128.
[51] Bahrani, *The Graven Image,* 123.
[52] Bahrani, *The Graven Image,* 125. Cf. Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 197.
[53] In his chart, he also includes perceptual images without material image. Perceptual image refers for example to a mirage: a person *thinks* s/he is seeing an image, even though there really is not any. Therefore we shall leave this kind of imagery aside, and focus more on the trinity of material, mental and verbal image.
[54] de Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, 48–53.

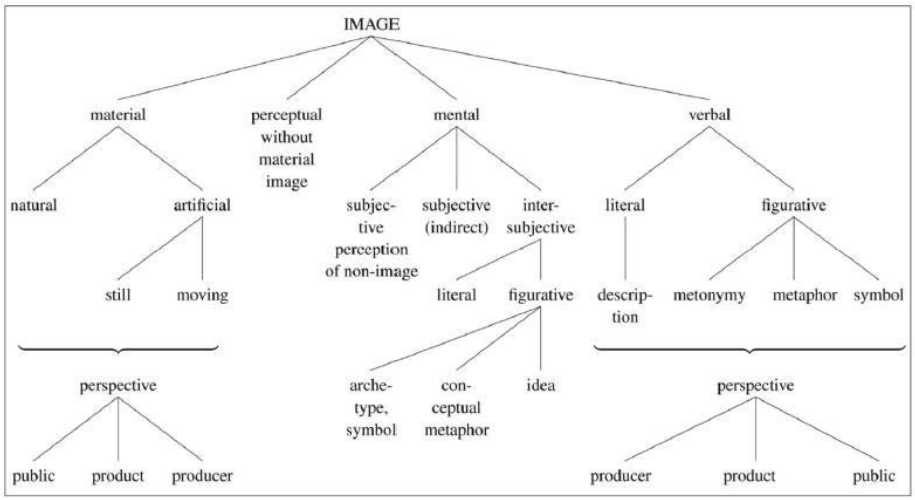

Fig. 2.1. Meanings of 'image.' De Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, 53 (fig. 3.2).

A material, artificial image consists of (at least) two parts. What is usually meant by 'an image' is in several cases only the contents. The object on which the image is made may be labelled 'the image carrier.'[55] For example, in the case of scarabs, the contents were carved on the flat side, but the carrier of the image is a three-dimensional object that typically represents a dung beetle. A hole was often carved through the object for a string so that it could be worn on the wrist, neck, or finger.[56]

2.1.2. Interpreting Images

Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968) was an art historian who developed an iconographical method for interpreting images in his classic research *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1939).[57] Even though there is no single, specific way to analyze images in Biblical studies, Panofsky's method still remains the most prominent one. Ryan Bonfiglio acknowledges that "Panofsky's method has been widely appropriated in and

[55] Izaak J. de Hulster, Brent A. Strawn and Ryan P. Bonfiglio, *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament,* 32.
[56] Adelheid Otto, "Glyptic," in *A Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Art*, ed. Ann C. Gunter (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 413.
[57] Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1972 [1939].

beyond the Fribourg School."[58] De Hulster contends that Panofsky's method "remains the most important starting point for the methodological reflections" of iconographic exegesis, even though he stresses that there are several ways to study images.[59] Brent A. Strawn also gives credit to Panofsky by stating that he "has proven foundational for subsequent thinking" in the study of ancient Near Easter art.[60]

Panofsky's three-level analytical method (**fig. 2.2**) aims at identifying the meaning of an image. On the *pre-iconographical* level, the interpreter aims to recognize the forms and motifs of the subject matter based on his or her practical experience. On the second level, *iconographical analysis*, the interpretation is focused and, if needed, corrected based on knowledge of the literary sources. The third level aims for *iconographical interpretation* by exploring the symbolic meaning(s) expressed in the image. This requires an understanding of meaning through culturally conditional principles.

[58] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 121. It is illustrative that the name of the approach, iconographic exegesis, reflects Panofsky's scheme of interpretation.
[59] de Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, 70.
[60] Strawn "Imagery," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writing*, Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 309. See also Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 121.

Object of Interpretation	Act of Interpretation	Equipment for Interpretation	Controlling Principle of Interpretation
I – *Primary* or *natural* subject matter – (A) factual, (B) expressional-, constituting the world of artistic motifs.	*Pre-iconographical description* (and pseudo-formal analysis).	*Practical experience* (familiarity with *objects* and *events*).	History of *style* (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, objects and events were expressed by forms).
II – *Secondary* or *conventional* subject matter, constituting the world of images, stories, and allegories.	*Iconographical analysis* in the narrower sense of the word.	*Knowledge of literary sources* (familiarity with specific *themes* and *concepts*).	History of *types* (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, specific themes or concepts were expressed by objects and events).
III – *Intrinsic meaning* or *content*, constituting the world of '*symbolical*' values.	*Iconographical interpretation* in a deeper sense (*Iconographical synthesis*).	Synthetic *intuition* (familiarity with the *essential tendencies of the human mind*), conditioned by personal psychology and '*Weltanschauung*.'	History of *cultural symptoms* or '*symbols*' in general (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, *essential tendencies of the human mind* were expressed by specific *themes* and *concepts*.)

Fig. 2.2. Panofky's scheme for interpreting images. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology,* 14–15. Emphasis his.

Othmar Keel criticizes Panofsky's second level for relying too heavily on texts. According to Keel, texts should not guide the interpretation of images, but images should be interpreted in light of other images.[61] In *Das Recht*, Keel's own iconographic approach begins by identifying motifs in the images. His second step is to ponder how individual motifs link with each other, in other words, how they form a scene. The final step is to pay attention to

[61] Othmar Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden: Drei Fallstudien zur Methode der Interpretation altorientalischer Bilder* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1992), 269. Cf. also Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 122.

the decorative elements of the scenes. How and why are decorations added, and what is their meaning in the image?[62] The value of Keel's approach is that he builds the interpretation by using other images and not texts as comparative material. However, as Bonfiglio notes, Keel does not get very far from Panofsky.[63] Even though Keel does not utilize other texts in his interpretive procedure, his and Panofsky's way of analyzing images is dependent on the semiotic principles of texts. Bonfiglio calls Panofsky's method a "philological approach to meaning in the visual arts" and concludes that its principal is to "read a painting as a text."[64] Keel and Panofsky both aim to identify the content and symbolic meaning of an image. Bonfiglio argues that images should not be read as texts and that attention should be paid to the semiotic principles of images. Images are dense sign systems that do not produce meaning in a similar manner as texts. Therefore, he adds a level to Panofsky's scheme that observes how non-linguistic elements create meanings and signify.[65]

Bonfiglio is right in pointing out that images are more than their contents. In addition, the materiality of images is an important aspect that should be observed during the interpretation process.[66] Gillian Rose also draws attention to other aspects of images than their mere contents, such as the site of production and the audience of the images (**fig. 2.3**). This widens the horizon of interpretation and raises important questions, such as how/for who/when/why was the image (carrier) made, how was it transmitted, displayed, and interpreted, and who was its target audience in the first place? [67]

[62] Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden*, 273. Cf. also Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 122–123.
[63] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts,* 122.
[64] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 120–121.
[65] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 167.
[66] Florian Lippke, among others, develops this material aspect. Cf. Florian Lippke, "Stratifizierte Bildsprache: Beobachtungen zu den Zylindersiegeln aus offiziellen und wissenschaftlich kontrollierten Grabungen in Palästina/Israel," in *Sprachbilder und Bildsprache Studien zur Kontextualisierung biblischer Texte. Festschrifft für Max Küchler zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Markus Lau, Karl Matthias Schmidt and Thomas Schumacher (Hg.) (NTOA 121; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecth, 2019), 37–124.
[67] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: SAGE, 2001), 30. Cf. also de Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, 85; "Illuminating Images" (2007), 230.

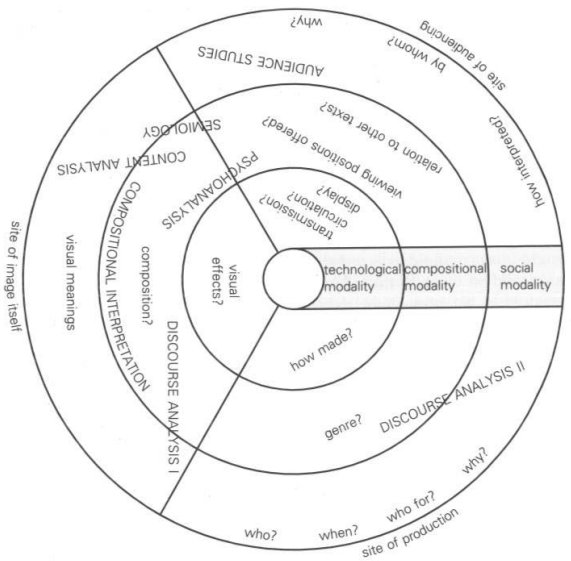

Fig. 2.3. Spectrum of visual methodologies. Rose, *Visual Methodologies,* 30.

In my study, the categorization of images is based on the motifs that appear within their contents (chapter 3), but I will also pay attention to the materiality of images when I interpret them in the analyses below (chapters 4–6).

2.1.3. A Common Ground of Texts and Images

The starting point of iconographic exegesis is the presumption that ancient Near Eastern art is able to provide information that contributes to the interpretation of Biblical texts. This is presumption is based on a premise that visual images and verbal texts have something in common. However, it is not altogether clear how plausible connections between texts and images can be made. Ryan P. Bonfiglio stresses that Biblical researchers who deal with ancient images should be more explicit about how they conceptualize the image-text relationship.[68] This sub-chapter is based, for the most part, on Ryan Bonfiglio's "three c's," which are congruence, correlation, and contiguity. Bonfiglio uses these criteria to identify and categorize the differing approaches that scholars have used in evaluating the image-text relationship. He also acknowledges that the "three c's" can describe the different stages of evaluating the relationship. However, in my opinion, "correlation" and "contiguity" are overlapping concepts, and dividing them in such a manner complicates the understanding of

[68] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 89.

the image-text relationship. Therefore, I only discuss "correlation" and "congruence" in what follows. I also argue that, before determining the level of congruence between an image and a text, it is work-economical to determine the level of correlation first. In other words, if one takes a text as the starting point of iconographic analysis, the first step should be to delimitate, date, and locate the text after which one can select the comparative visual material within the same cultural and temporal frame. This procedure reflects de Hulster's approach for iconographic exegesis.[69]

Even though a culture may produce both visual and verbal images (pictures and texts), it is difficult to determine if and how these are related to each other. In other words, how to determine the level of correlation that a given image and text share? Prior to the Fribourg School, the image-text relationship was hardly scrutinized at all by Biblical scholars.[70] Instead, the visual culture of the ancient Near East was often seen as subsidiary to Biblical texts. However, ancient art does not illustrate the Bible. In addition, even though Biblical texts occasionally allude to or describe ancient Near Eastern art in its material form,[71] the verbal images in the Bible are much more versatile than mere descriptions of material art. Therefore, the relationship between ancient images and Biblical texts should be seen on a conceptual level. Visual images of ancient Near Eastern art and the literary imagery of the Bible may derive from similar mental concepts and ideas of the same cultural area. In other words, both images and texts can be mediated realizations of the same underlying mental concepts. According to de Hulster, the world exists in matter and thought (i. e. tangible reality) and in materialized expressions (**fig. 2.4**).[72] The connecting link between these two is the human mind and agency that translates the thought, the mental concept, into materialized expression. For instance, the mental concept of an attacking lion derives from the real world and it is based on observations of the animal in reality. The mental concept (the thought of an attacking lion) is mediated and materialized in objects produced by a human agent. An attacking lion may be represented in verbal form in a text, but it may just as well be represented in a material image.[73]

[69] See de Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, 261.
[70] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts,* 65.
[71] Cf. Ezek 1, 23:13; Jer 10:8–9; Isa 44:9–17. See also Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder* and Keel's *Jahwe-Visionen* and Isaiah's reaction on his contemporaries' scarabs depicting four-winged *uraei* (Isa 6).
[72] de Hulster, "Illuminating Images" (2009), 142–143.
[73] Cf. Dan Sperber's division between mental and public representation. Dan Sperber, *Explaining Culture: A Naturalistic Approach* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 32–33.

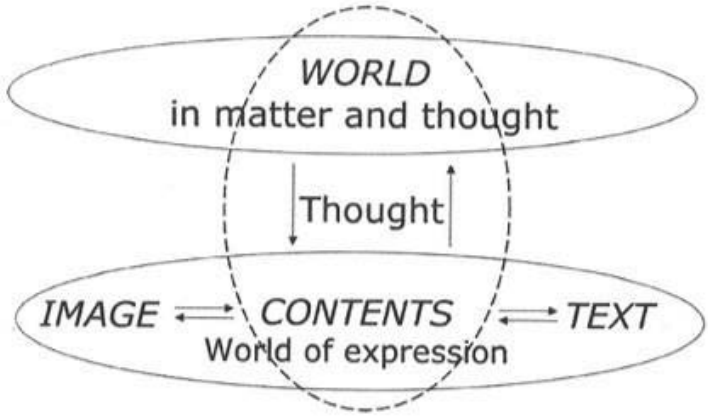

Fig. 2.4. de Hulster, "Illuminating Images" (2009), 143.

How should one evaluate which images and texts share a same mental concept? The first step in making connections between texts and images is to evaluate the level of congruence between them. This basically means identifying similar motifs, themes and subjects. If the imagery in a text shares a lot of similarities with the way the visual image is depicted, one can argue for congruence between them. However, congruence should not be based on apparent similarities alone. One has to be cautious and explicit about the way motifs, themes, and subjects are identified in the sources. For example, if images and texts are removed from their artistic constellations, and therefore treated as fragments, the congruence between them is distorted. Also, very general similarities do not necessarily indicate any true connection between an image and a text.[74] In the works of Gressmann and Pritchard, for example, images and texts with very narrow congruence are linked together, and the reasoning for making such connections is left implicit. In a similar manner, the works of Othmar Keel often lack a contextualization and clarification of the relationship that is perceived between images and texts.[75]

In *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms*, Joel LeMon evaluates the image-text relationship in a more profound way. He claims that comparing isolated motifs does not suffice for

[74] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 71–75.
[75] Ibid. See also Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World, Song of Songs: a Continental Commentary.* When determining the level of congruence, one should not only seek similarities but differences as well. Bonfiglio points out that, "while recent contributions to iconographic exegesis have been able to talk about and analyze similarities between ANE images and biblical texts with increasing precision and contextualization, they have seldom given the same careful attention to points of difference" (Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 114).

defining the level of congruence. He points out that "no single iconographic trope provides the key to interpreting the image of Yahweh's wings."[76] LeMon notes that ANE artistic concepts often overlap each other and raise more questions than answers when compared to Biblical imagery. He discusses the Megiddo ivory as an example of this interpretative challenge.

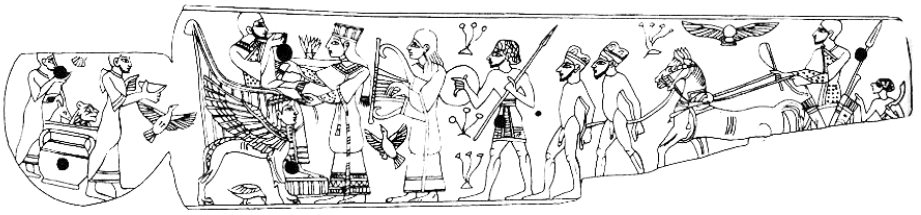

Fig. 2.5. Ivory Plaque, Megiddo, LB. LeMon *Yahweh's Winged Form*, fig. 1.2.

> "Three (winged) birds appear in this scene around the throne of the royal figure: one under the seat and two in flight (before and behind the throne). Does the image of Yahweh's wings come from such "naturalistic" depictions of birds? Wings also appear as an aspect of a divine image, namely, the sun disk suspended above the triumphant one in his chariot. Does Yahweh's winged form reflect this image? Finally, wings appear on a cherub adorning the throne of the royal figure. Might Yahweh's wings refer to a similar representation of Yahweh's cherubim throne in the temple? To which of these iconographic motifs, if any, does the verbal image of Yahweh's wings *most closely* relate?"[77]

As a solution to this exegetical problem, LeMon, building on the work of William P. Brown, offers an analytical tool that he calls the iconic structure.[78] Because the aim of my thesis is to apply and adapt LeMon's concept to narrative texts, I discuss the iconic structure separately in the following section.

2.1.4. The Iconic Structure

By utilizing iconic structure, LeMon is able to perceive the image-text relationship in a more nuanced way.[79] This analytical tool also enables him to avoid the fragmentary use of images and texts. He does not only evaluate individual motifs or isolated images but analyzes the arrangement of literary imagery and compares it with specific constellations of iconographic

[76] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 190.
[77] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 6, emphasis his.
[78] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 16–17; Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 14.
[79] Cf. Bonfiglio on LeMon's approach (Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 5–6; 113).

motifs as well. The term 'constellation' is adapted from Jan Assmann.[80] Assmann has studied Egyptian solar hymns, and according to him a complete hymn consists of a constellation of images and language (as combined in a papyrus).[81] LeMon points out that the issue is more complicated when it comes to Biblical texts which are combined with images only in the context of culture, not directly. In addition, the long editorial process of the texts has distanced them from the historical context, where they were first narrated in.[82] For LeMon, a constellation refers to an ensemble of different motifs in visual representations and in texts.

LeMon's analysis follows a twofold structure: a literary analysis and an evaluation of congruencies between the literary constellations and the iconographic depictions in ancient Near Eastern art. His literary analysis is also twofold: he first provides a translation with text critical notions and continues with an overview of the structural outline, rhetorical movement, and form and setting of the text. The first part provides context for the second part in which he analyzes the images of the psalmist, of the enemy/enemies, and of YHWH.

As LeMon's source texts are Psalms, he – quite naturally – defines their structure, rhetorical movement, and form and setting according to form critical principles. He surveys the imagery of the Psalms through characterization as he observes the images of the psalmist, of the enemy/enemies, and of YHWH. At the end of the literary analysis, he summarizes the iconic structure of each psalm. This operates as a bridge to evaluating congruencies between verbal and visual material. With his approach, LeMon is able to demonstrate that the relationship between visual and verbal images does not rely on distinct motifs but on patterns of congruency. LeMon argues that each of the six psalms in his analysis contain a certain multistability as YHWH's winged portrayal seems to relate to several similar but distinct iconographic motifs.[83]

[80] Cf. e.g. Jan Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott: Untersuchungen zur altägyptischen Hymnik, I* (MÄSt 19; Berlin: Bruno Hessling, 1969), 339–352; *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete*, (Zürich: Artemis, 1975), 43–46; "Die Zeugung des Sohnes," in *Funktionen und Leistungen des Mythos: drei altorientalische Beispiele*, eds. J. Assmann, W. Burket and F. Stolz (OBO 48; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1982), 38.
[81] Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism* (Studies in Egyptology; trans. Anthony Alcock. London: Kegan Paul, 1995.London: Kegan Paul, 1995).
[82] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 20–21.
[83] LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 187–194.

A form critical analysis is not adequate for the source texts of the present research. Instead, it is more reasonable to analyze the structure and plot development according to principles that pertain to the prose texts of the Hebrew Bible. Also, characterization is only one part of the literary analysis when it comes to prose texts. Since the iconic structure is applied in this research, more literary devices must be observed in order to perceive the whole literary constellation. These include observations on the narration technique, the narrator, focalization, time (tempo, duration, and especially frequency of events), and milieu, to name a few. In the following section, I discuss the research history and methodological value of narrative criticism and narratology in general and define the most central literary devices that are used in the narration of Judges 14, 1 Kings 13 and Daniel 6.

2.2. Narrative Criticism and Narratology

2.2.1. History of Research

Narrative criticism is an exegetical approach that reads the Biblical narratives as coherent entities, paying particular attention to elements that are identifiable for prose, such as plot, characterization, and narration, to name a few.[84] The roots of narrative criticism are in narratology, which Jan Christoph Meister defines as "a humanities discipline dedicated to the study of the logic, principles, and practices of narrative representation."[85] Tzvetan Todorov was the first to use the term narratology (*narratologie*) in 1969.[86] 'High structuralism,'[87] an approach developed in literary studies in the 1950–60s, attempted to search for meaning in textual narratives through sign systems, observing the use of letters, words and sentences. Todorov called for widening the perspective to include the more general logical and structural properties of narratives and therefore proposed a new generalizing theory, a science of narrative, that he labelled narratology.[88] During the 1970–80s, the popularity of 'high structuralism' was decreasing in literary studies while so-called 'low structuralism' or 'classical narratology' gained ground. Todorov's *Introduction to*

[84] Stephen D. Moore, "Biblical Narrative Analysis from the New Criticism to the New Narratology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative,* ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 27–50.
[85] Jan Christoph Meister, "Narratology," in *Handbook of Narratology*, eds. Peter Hühn, John Pier, Wolf Schmid and Jörg Schönert (New York: Walter de Gruyter Berlin, 2009), 329.
[86] Tzvetan Todorov, *Grammaire du Décaméron* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969).
[87] See the works of Roman Jakobson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and the early production of Roland Barthes (1957–1970).
[88] Meister, "Narratology," 331.

Poetics (1981),[89] Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980),[90] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction* (1983),[91] and Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse* (1978)[92] represent research that relies strongly on narratological models of interpretation, but instead of focusing on mere signs and the formation of sign systems (as is typical to 'high structuralism'), they reach out further to the more general logical and structural properties that Todorov called for.[93]

The first narratological studies of Biblical texts emerged during the era of 'classical narratology.' The most influential of these first works were Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981)[94] and Shimon Bar-Efrat's *Narrative Art in the Bible* (1989).[95] During the early years of narrative criticism (late 1970s – early 1980s), the method carried echoes from New Criticism, which had been prevalent in Anglo-American literary studies in the 1920–1960s.[96] Stephen D. Moore sums the basic premises of New Criticism: "it reimagined the literary work as an autonomous, internally unified organism with an intrinsic meaning indissociable from the formal features of the work, while it reinvented the scholarly task as a method of 'close reading' designed to elucidate the intricacies of the work's formal structure."[97] This perspective inspired narrative critics to see Biblical texts as coherent entities that should be perceived in their own right instead of through their textual and redactional history.

Narratology, along with narrative criticism, has moved from seeking coherence to seeing complexity.[98] Elliot summarizes the situation by stating that "narrative theorists have

[89] Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*, trans. Richard Howard (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981).
[90] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980 [1972]).
[91] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. Repr. (London: Routledge, 1997 [1983]).
[92] Seymour Benjamin Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978).
[93] See also Gerald Prince's *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin: Mouton, 1982), Franz K. Stanzel's *A Theory of Narrative*, trans. Charlotte Goedsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).
[94] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981).
[95] Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989). The Hebrew version was published already in 1979, two years before Alter's work.
[96] For a definition of New Criticism, cf. Leroy F. Searle, "New Criticism" in *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory,* ed. Michael Groden, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005 [2nd edition]), 691–698.
[97] Moore, "Biblical Narrative Analysis from the New Criticism to the New Narratology," 29–30.
[98] Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998), 2. Cf. also Paul Cobley, *Narrative* (London: Routledge, 2001), 171–200; and Scott S. Elliott, "Time and Focalization in the Gospel

become increasingly concerned with the fundamentally unstable, intertextual, and unbounded characteristics of narrative discourse."[99] Towards the end of the 1990s and since the beginning of 21st century, the focus in the field of narratology and narrative criticism has broadened from narrative context to include cultural, historical, thematic, and ideological contexts, cognitive processes, oral narration, and narration in various media and genres (poetry, drama, videogames).[100] The analytical tools of narratology have been reconsidered, and an approach called historical narratology has derived from this discussion. Monica Fludernik's article "The Diachronization of Narratology" (2003) is considered to be the manifesto of historical narratology.[101] Fludernik urges scholars not to rely on structural models of classical narratology but to evaluate literary devices in their historical contexts. In other words, one should not use an analytical tool to study a narrative that originated in a historical setting that did not recognize, know, or use the tool in question, such as the concept of the unreliable narrator. Therefore, scholars should always pay proper attention to the historical context in which a given narrative is composed instead of searching for something that the author could not have known to incorporate into the text. In the field of Classical studies, Irene de Jong has applied historical narratology to the analysis of Greek narratives.[102]

Fludernik and others do not advocate for ignoring narratological devices altogether but rather for familiarizing oneself with the historical context of the narrative and to evaluate the devices within this context. For a large part, this research relies on structural models of classical narratology (plot, structure, storyline, characters, characterization, narration, narrator, focalization, and tempo). The aim of the present study is to observe the literary images of Hebrew Bible narratives. In order to perceive the whole constellation, I first differentiate the components, which create the constellation, all the while keeping the concerns of historical narratology in mind. It is worth considering whether it is reasonable to

According to Mark," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 59–73.

[99] Elliott, "Time and Focalization in the Gospel According to Mark," 300.

[100] Cf. Meister, "Narratology," 340–341.

[101] Monika Fludernik, "The Diachronization of Narratology," *Narrative* 11/3 (2003): 331–348. Cf. also Vera Nünning, "Unreliable Narration and the Historical Variability of Values and Norms: The Vicar of Wakefield as a Test Case of a Cultural-Historical Narratology," *Style* 38/2 (2004): 236–252.

[102] Cf. de Jong, Irene J. F., *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.); *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2014); de Jong, Irene J. F. and René Nünlist, eds., *Time in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007); de Jong, Irene J. F., ed., *Space in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

search for literary devices in the Biblical narrative if such devices were not intentionally used within the historical context(s) of the texts.

2.2.2. Characteristics of Biblical Prose

2.2.2.1. Structure and Storyline

A common structure that Biblical authors apply is a framing device called the ring composition. The use of ring composition can cover several passages or even chapters and books. The minimum requirement for a ring is that the ending is linked to the beginning. The events described at the beginning should have a counterpart at the end, and the composition is portrayed by sequences such as ABCB'A' or ABB'A'. *Inclusio* refers to a ring that differentiates a certain text unit from others. *Chiasm* is a ring that is formed by reverse ordering.[103] Parallel composition is another structure that is often applied to Biblical narratives. In parallel composition, events or characters are portrayed by repetition as in ring composition, but repetition does not meet in the middle. Rather, events follow each other: ABC//A'B'C'.[104] In Biblical narratives, entrances and exits are typical markers of structural units.[105]

2.2.2.2. Narration and narrator

Biblical narration tends to avoid description and typically reveals a minimal amount of information about the characters. The narrators scarcely access the inner lives of the characters and depict their actions rather than their feelings or the personal motivators of their actions. Linafelt sees the style of Biblical narration as "nascent realism" in which an objective third-person narrator observes the events and characters as they would appear in the real world. Human beings can never access the inner lives of other people and are therefore bystanders in a similar way as the Biblical narrators.[106] That being said, the Biblical narrators do not always stay on the level of the narrative. Editorial notes break the

[103] Cf. Mary Douglas, *"Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition*," (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007) 1–2.
[104] See J. P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 97.
[105] Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative* 97. Cf. Florian Lippke's sequence analysis of cylinder seals. According to Lippke, sequence analysis "is comparable to (a) structure analysis of texts defining the 'beginning' and 'end' of a certain pericope and also tracing the interior structure of a given text" (Lippke, "Rolling Stones and Biblical Literature: Theory and Method of Ancient Media in the Southern Levant," paper presented at the SBL International Meeting / EABS Annual Meeting, Helsinki, Jul/Aug 2018; see also Lippke, "Stratifizierte Bildsprache," 41).
[106] Linafelt, "Poetry and Biblical Narrative," 88.

image of a bystander. The narrators interrupt the narration by revealing details of their own inner lives, for instance, theological or ideological perspectives. This is an interesting feature of a literary product that has been composed by several different authors (scribes) in a writing process that covers centuries.[107]

2.2.2.3. Focalization

Focalization is a term introduced by Genette to replace the terms 'perspective' and 'point of view.'[108] The problem with the latter terms is that they do not properly describe the literary device. Perspective and point of view are part of focalization, but focalization also covers the way the milieu and events are experienced. Focalization distinguishes the narrator from the one who sees, observes, feels, and experiences in the narration.[109] Therefore, focalization is "a chosen *point* […] from which the narrative is perceived as being presented at any given moment."[110] Genette distinguished three levels of focalization: 1) zero, 2) internal, and 3) external. On the zero level, focalization is not set on any character. Instead, the omniscient narrator narrates the events from outside. In internal focalization, the narrator and focalizer are on the same level. The narrator only says what the given character, the focalizer, knows. In external focalization, the narrator says less than the focalizer knows.[111] The third level of focalization is typical of Biblical narration, where the narrator seldom enters the inner lives of the characters.

2.2.2.4. Characters and Characterization

There are several narrative techniques to construct and present a character. These include the speech, actions, gestures, postures, and outward appearance (e.g. clothing, body shape) of the character, the environment in which the character is situated, and the names, titles, and epithets that are used to describe a character. In addition, the speech of other characters and a description by the narrator may be used to present a

[107] Cf. also 'narration' (esp. 'description' and 'evaluation') in David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 52–62.
[108] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980 [1972]). See also Burkhard Niederhoff, "Focalization," in *Handbook of Narratology*, eds., Peter Hühn, John Pier, Wolf Schmid and Jörg Schönert (New York: Walter de Gruyter Berlin, 2009), 115.
[109] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. (2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 142–143. Elliot, "Time and Focalization in the Gospel According to Mark," 301. Cf. Gary Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012).
[110] O'Neill, *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 86.
[111] Genette 1980, 188–189. Cf. also Niederhoff, "Focalization," 115; and Elliot, "Time and Focalization in the Gospel According to Mark," 301–302.

character.[112] The contradiction of characters is a typical narrative technique in Biblical narration. For instance, the protagonist and antagonist of the story are often portrayed as mirror images of each other.[113] The protagonist is typically portrayed as pious, virtuous, mighty, or clever, and the portrayal of the antagonist is antonymous to this. Thus, contradiction provides information on both characters. Contradiction is not only used in a clear protagonist-antagonist setting but, for instance, in narratives that describe siblings (e.g. Esau and Jacob in Gen. 25:27; Leah and Rachel in Gen 29:16) as well.[114]

Characters are presented as dynamic or static. Dynamic characters develop or change during the narrative, whereas static characters stay more or less the same throughout the story. The development of a character is bound to the development of the plot. Therefore, a change in the character (e.g. an important decision) often affects the direction of the plot and may provide information about the meaning and theme of the plot.[115]

In literary studies of the Bible, God should be observed as a character among others.[116] Alter acknowledges that the description of God is a construct of the narrator, who is able to report God's intentions and thoughts.[117] Nevertheless, Alter is careful to analyze God as a character because "the repeated point of the biblical writers is that we cannot make sense of God in human terms."[118] Mieke Bal, however, argues for treating God as a character among others and points out that narratological analysis enables a critical approach to describing divinity.[119] Gunn and Fewell also include God among the other characters, as does Guest. Their studies indicate that the portrayal of YHWH is often multifaceted and ambivalent.[120]

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[112] James L. Resseguie, "A Narrative-Critical Approach to the Fourth Gospel," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner (London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 11–12. Cf. esp. footnote 31 for a list of literature.
[113] Cf. Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 40.
[114] Cf. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 40.
[115] Resseguie, "A Narrative-Critical Approach to the Fourth Gospel," 11.
[116] Deryn Guest, "Judging Yhwh in the Book of Judges" in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 184.
[117] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), 157.
[118] Robert Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (London: SPCK, 1992), 22–23.
[119] Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 34.
[120] Cf. Guest, "Judging Yhwh in the Book of Judges," and Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 81–89. Cf. also Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (New York: Vintage, 1996) and Amelia Devin Freedman, *God as an Absent Character in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Literary-Theoretical Study* (Studies in Biblical Literature 82; New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

Two of the most typical characterization techniques in Biblical narration are showing (*indirect presentation*) and telling (*direct presentation*). In the first, the character is presented as talking and acting, and the narrator does not explicate the emotions or motifs of the character.[121] In the latter, the narrator intervenes by commenting on the action or behavior of the character and thus presents the character in a certain light (positively or negatively).[122]

2.2.2.5 Frequency

The term frequency was first applied to literary studies by Genette in his *Narrative Discourse* (1980). Frequency always contains the element of repetition. There are several levels of frequency, all of which provide information about the importance of a certain event in the storyline: (1) an event occurs once and is reported once in the narrative; (2) an event occurs once, but it is described twice or more often; (3) an event occurs several times and is reported several times; or (4) an event occurs several times, but it is reported only once. The second type of frequency is the type that is the most used in Biblical narratives.[123] It can be called more generally 'repetition.'

2.3. The Template of the Analysis

In this chapter I describe the procedure that I follow later on in the analyses of Judges 14, 1 Kings 13, and Daniel 6. The main points are summarized in **fig. 2.6.**

[121] Cf. 2.2.2.2. above.
[122] Resseguie, "A Narrative-Critical Approach to the Fourth Gospel," 11–12.
[123] Cf. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 95; Meir Sternbeck, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 432. Also Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (Repr. London: Routledge, 1997 [1983]), 56; and Louis C. Jonker, *Exclusivity and Variety: Perspectives On Multidimensional Exegesis* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997), 216.

Template of Analysis

1) Preliminary stage

a) Choice of theme (lion).

b) Selection of related Hebrew Bible narratives that are comparable with each other (Judg. 14, 1 Kings 13:11-32, and Dan. 6).

c) Survey on the iconography of the selected theme (lion imagery in ANE art).

2) Analysis

a) Introduction

b) Literary Analysis

c) Literary motifs and the iconic structure

d) Iconographic congruencies

e) Conclusions: the *X* (lion) imagery in *Y* (Judg. 14 / 1 Kings 13:11-32 / Dan. 6)

Fig. 2.6. Template of analysis.

1) Preliminary stage

(1a) My technique of analysis takes a theme as its starting point.[124] For this study, I have selected the theme of the lion as the subject of analysis because it is extensively represented both in the Hebrew Bible and in ancient Near Eastern iconography.

(1b) Having selected a theme, I surveyed the representations of lions in the Hebrew Bible in order to select suitable texts for the analysis. Since my focus is on narratives, I have left out other literary genres in which lions also appear. The selected narratives for this study are Judges 14 (Samson's encounter with a lion), 1 Kings 13 (the man of God killed by a lion) and Daniel 6 (Daniel in the lions' den). Instead of just focusing on one narrative, I have chosen three narratives for a reason. One of the aims of this study is to evaluate the methodological issues of the analysis. Therefore, analyzing three narratives provides a broader perspective of the effective and unproductive aspects of this analysis technique. In all the selected narratives, lions are portrayed as active characters that significantly impact the storyline. My hypothesis is that the use of lions as characters also influences the portrayal

[124] Cf. de Hulster, "Illuminating Images" (2009), 146–148.

of other characters. These three narratives provide enough material for analyzing narration, structure, characterization, and other literary devices.

(1c) Before the analysis can begin, the iconography of the selected theme is surveyed to increase the reliability of the research. In this study, I perform an overall survey of lion imagery and lion motifs in ancient Near Eastern art. If this step were excluded, the possibility of identifying congruencies between texts and images based on apparently similar features alone would be greater. The rough dating of the Biblical texts guides the delimitation of the visual material, but no strict temporal outline is made because the visual motifs were in use for centuries in different geographical regions.

Categorizing ancient images is often a challenging task. The possibility of creating misleading interpretations in our modern context is always present. Categories also overlap because the mental images behind the visual representations form a network of ideas rather than clear cut categories. One crucial challenge concerns the image-text relationship. As pointed out above, images and texts operate according to different semiotic principles.[125] How can one categorize visual material with verbal signs?

In this study, I present a tool of categorization that I call the *action unit approach*. This approach takes Panofsky's descriptive pre-iconographic level as a starting point. The categorization is based on the level of action, starting from the lowest level of action (e.g. 'a reclining lion') and moving on to images that contain more action and interaction (e.g. 'a lion attacking a human'). The attempt is to use descriptive words (e.g. an anthropomorphic figure confronting a lion with a weapon) and to avoid interpretation in the process of categorization (e.g. a deity fights a lion). Only after grouping the motifs do I discuss their interpretation in research literature. Finally, the impact of materiality is addressed as well.

[125] Bonfiglio, *Reading Images, Seeing Texts*, 125–139.

2) Analysis

(2a) The analysis begins with an introduction that includes a translation, relevant text-critical observations,[126] and an overview of the literary history, which provides the historical context to the narratives by addressing the questions of locating and dating the texts.[127]

(2b) The literary analysis is charted through narrative criticism. First, the structure and storyline are described, and then the analysis focuses on characters and characterization. Other literary devices, such as focalization, milieu, narration, narrator, and repetitions (frequency) will be discussed under these two main titles. Biblical narration focuses strongly on the actions of the characters. Therefore, the literary analysis revolves strongly around this as well. The lions are treated as their own characters on par with the others, and so is God.

(2c) Only after observing the entire literary composition is it possible to describe which motifs related to the selected theme appear in the narrative. If we isolate the image of the lion from its constellation, the narrative, the number of motifs that can be observed becomes very limited. But if the analysis begins from observing the whole literary constellation, it becomes possible to recognize a wider range of motifs that are used in the narrative. The purpose of recognizing and describing the motifs is to map the iconic structure of the narrative in order to make plausible connections with representations in the iconographic material. In other words, this phase of the analysis forms a bridge between the literary and visual images. In this study – following LeMon – I use the term constellation to describe the ensemble of different components in images and texts.[128]

(2d) Once the relevant literary motifs have been listed, the analysis turns to iconographic comparison. How are the motifs represented in the visual material of the ancient Near East? What seems to be their function and meaning(s)? Have the motifs evolved over time, and were they used differently in different contexts? This analytical step draws from the typology of lion imagery in ancient Near Eastern art (ch 3), but it also discusses other objects if the iconic structure of the texts reveals motifs that demand a wider view point.

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[126] The text-critical observations will focus on details that are relevant for the portrayal of the lion and that will be taken into consideration in the critical analysis of the narrative.
[127] Cf. de Hulster's proposition for an iconographic method in *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, 261.
[128] Assmann's concept includes an assumption that a constellation of images and language implies about narrative development. (See 2.1.4. and footnote 80.) In a next step, it would be beneficial to study Assmann's take on the implied narrative development to sharpen the pictorial approach to narrative. For now, however, this is beyond the scope of the present study.

(2e) In the final phase of the analysis, the comparative materials, texts, and images are discussed side by side. The aim of this exegetical study is to interpret the lion imagery in the selected Hebrew Bible narratives.

3. Lion Imagery in Israel/Palestine and in the Ancient Near East

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to overview the lion imagery in ancient Near Eastern art in order map out the different motifs that are attested. In this chapter, I survey the images that include both solitary lions and lions as part of larger pictorial constellations and in interaction with other animals, humans, and possibly deities. Hybrid creatures will not be discussed in the scope of this survey. The identification of a lion is not always self-evident when it comes to ancient Near Eastern art. Sometimes the context needs to corroborate or even suggest that a lion is depicted. To identify a lion without further context demands controls that are based on the most often appearing iconographic details. These are, for instance, 1) an upcurved tail, 2) round ears, 3) a mane, 4) a wide head and jaws, 5) predator paws, and 6) no spots on the fur.[129] However, even with knowledge of the use of lion iconography, it is still possible to misinterpret the material. I will discuss this in the following excursus by presenting an example of an animal figurine that may have been incorrectly interpreted as a lion in previous research.

The categorization of motifs in this survey is delineated approximately to 1000–150 BCE, starting from materials from the Israel/Palestine region, including the Jordan Valley. In order to trace the history of motifs and to properly understand them, it is necessary to discuss parallels from the wider cultural context of the ancient Near East, namely Mesopotamia and Egypt and the older Bronze Age materials from Israel/Palestine.[130]

When categorizing images, I attempt to be as objective and descriptive as possible.[131] The categorization technique that I use is called *action unit approach*. This approach is loosely

[129] These iconographic details distinguish lions from other felines, such as leopards.
[130] There is archeological evidence that lions inhabited the region of Israel/Palestine. Lion bones have been discovered from several Iron Age sites, namely Jaffa (12th century), Tel Miqne/Ekron (IA I&II), and Tel Dan (IA I and mid-9th century), and fossil records show that lions first appeared in the area ca. 25 000–10 000 BCE. It is difficult to determine when lions ceased to exist in Israel/Palestine. The estimations vary between the 13th and 19th centuries CE. See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 29.
[131] Categorization is problematic because defining a motif is a task that involves interpretation, motifs overlap, and some images contain several different components that form a motif. Also, we do not have knowledge of how the ancient users of the images would have categorized them. However, the data has to be introduced in some way, and with such a vast number of material, categorization is a helpful tool. See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?*; and Izak Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East: A Study of Selected Motifs," *JNSL* 15 (1989): 53–85 for alternative categorizations.

based on the "pre-iconographic level" of Panofsky's scheme. The categorization of motifs is based on evaluating the action and interaction of the characters in the image, starting from least (inter)action. First, I introduce the different postures of the lions (3.2.1.). At this point, I focus solely on lions, without taking other characters into the discussion. Then I discuss images in which lions are depicted with "non-agents," in other words, such components of nature that do not act, for instance vegetation and celestial bodies (3.2.2.). I then move on to images in which lions are depicted with other agents (humans and animals) but in which the interaction between these characters is uncertain (3.2.3.). In the next category, I discuss images in which lions are portrayed as subjects of action in violent confrontations (3.2.4.). After this, I turn to images in which a lion and another figure are presented equally as subjects and objects (3.2.5.). In the last category, I discuss images in which lions are presented as the objects of action, or even as attributes of other figures in the given constellations (3.2.6.). In the first three categories (3.2.1–3.), the nature of the relationship between the different components in the images is perceived either as intransitive, unidentifiable, or vague. In the last three categories, the nature of the relationship is perceived as transitive since the subject/object layout is clearer than in the previous categories. With this categorization, I strive to be as descriptive as possible in order to avoid misleading interpretations of the images.

The typology of lion imagery takes place in the first part of this chapter (3.2.). After categorizing the images according to the action unit approach, I overview the history and symbolism of the categorized motifs (3.3.). Sections 3.2. and 3.3. focus on discussing the contents of images. However, an image is more than its contents. Therefore, in the latter part of this chapter (3.4.), I discuss the necessity of perceiving an image as a material object. The image carrier plays a significant role in interpreting an image because it is able to reveal information about the use and the function of the image. In-depth interpretations of the visual images that correspond to the textual images in the selected narratives are made in the analysis chapters of this research (4–6).

Excursus: The Lions Are Not What They Seem

As pointed out above, the identification of an animal motif as a lion is not always straightforward. To demonstrate this, I take an animal figurine (H171) from the Hecht Museum in Haifa as an example. This terracotta figurine depicts an animal standing on four

legs (**fig. 3.1**). The figure has an upcurved tail, pointed ears, projecting eyes, visible nostrils, and an open jaw with teeth. In *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, Keel and Uehlinger identify the figurine as a lion because of its upcurving tail that is similar to the famous "Jeroboam seal": "Its posture reminds one very much of the animal shown in illus. 205a"[132] (**fig. 3.2**).

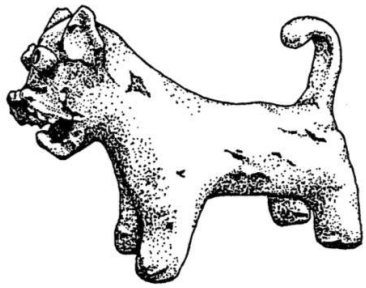

Fig. 3.1. Terracotta figurine, Image: Keel & Uehlinger, GGG, illus. 206a; Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.101, "possibly Hebron, IA II (8th or 7th c.)"; Schroer, *IPIAO* 4, fig. 1654, "Wahrseinlich aus Bēt Ūlā, 10km nnw Hebron, E IIB–E IIC".

Fig. 3.2. "Seal of Shema, the servant of Jeroboam", Megiddo, IA II (8th c.; but date debated: some scholars suggest IA I[133]). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.96.

Strawn, following Keel and Uehlinger, interprets the object to be a lion but does not discuss his principles of identification.[134] Schroer also calls the object a lion but does not take the tail of the animal as an identifying feature. Instead, according to her, the object is identifiable as (propably) a female lion only due to its open mouth: "der einfach gearbeitete, stehende Löwe, wohl ein Löwenweibchen ohne Mähne, ist nur aufgrund des geöffneten Mauls identifizierbar."[135] She does not compare the tail to "the Jeroboam lion," but only says that "der mittellange Schwanz ist hochgestellt."[136]

[132] Keel & Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 191.
[133] Scholars generally agree that the seal should be dated to the reign of Jeroboam II (784–748) instead of Jeroboam I (928–907). On discussion of dating, see David Ussishkin, "Gate 1567 at Megiddo and the Seal of Shema, Servant of Jeroboam" in *Scriptures and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Honor of Philip J. King,* ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum and Lawrence E. Stager (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 420–421.
[134] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 104–105.
[135] Schroer, *IPIAO* 4, 620.
[136] Ibid.

In contrast to the views of Keel, Uehlinger, Strawn, and Schroer, Rüdiger Schmitt identifies the animal as a standing dog.[137] The identification of the figurine as a lion is also challenged by de Hulster. After studying this object in the Hecht museum, de Hulster discovered that the inventory card of the object (**fig. 3.3**) shows that the tail of the figurine was missing when it came to the Hecht museum.[138] The upcurving tail was apparently made and added at the museum because it was identified as a lion. However, without the tail, the identification of the figurine as a lion is not that certain. The ears of the animal are not round, which would be typical to lion imagery. All in all, for a lion, the figurine is somewhat chubby, and it lacks the majestic look that is often captured in the images of lions. It is quite possible that the Hecht "lion" is not a lion at all, but perhaps a dog, as Rüdiger Schmitt suggests. Moreover, when publishing his identification, Schmitt was not aware of the fact that the tail of the figurine was secondary. He even uses a line drawing with the tail in his publication just like Keel and Uehlinger do in *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God* and like Silvia Schroer in *IPIAO*.

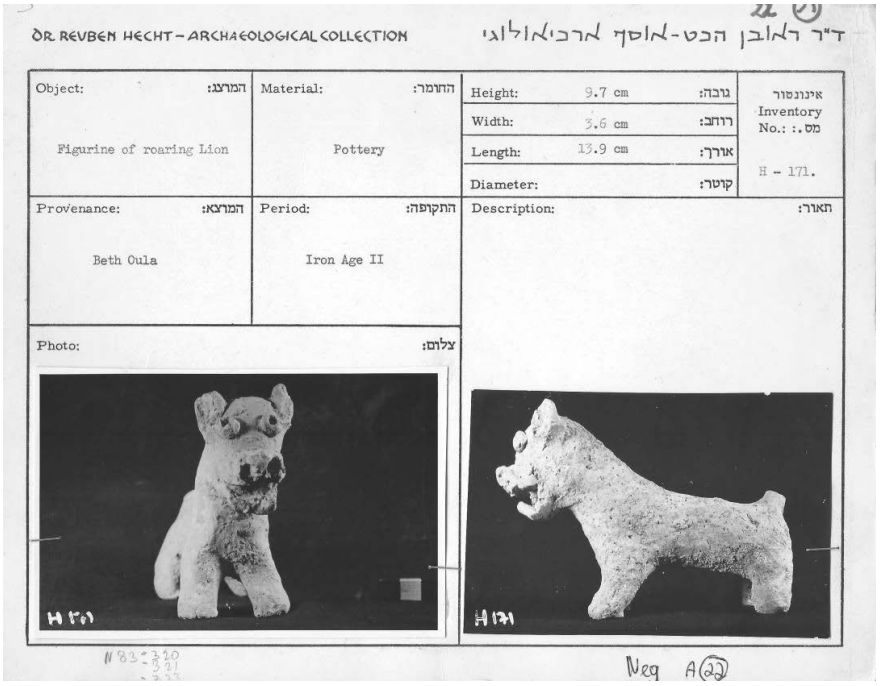

Fig. 3.3. The inventory card of the figurine H171. By courtesy of the Hecht Museum, Haifa; with thanks to Ofra Rimon and Shunit Marmelstein.

[137] Rüdiger Schmitt, *Magie im Alten Testament* (AOAT 313; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2004), 190.
[138] I.e. when Reuben Hecht bought the piece from Moshe Dayan.

Research on figurine H171 demonstrates that, when the identification of the contents of an image is based only on published iconographic details, there is a greater risk of misreading the material. Even though I strive to analyze the visual material as accurately as possible, this thesis is nevertheless highly dependent on line drawings and the work of previous scholarship. Therefore, the possibility should be acknowledged that the following survey includes images that might have originally portrayed something other than lions.

3.2. Motifs (Image Contents)

3.2.1. The Basic Postures of a Lion

3.2.1.1. Reclining

When a lion is depicted in a reclining position, it usually faces forward, with its hind legs underneath its body and fore legs straight. A Persian Period amulet from ʿAtlit demonstrates this posture (**fig. 3.4**).[139] Some of the famous orthostats from Late Bronze age Hazor also convey the reclining posture (**fig. 3.5**).

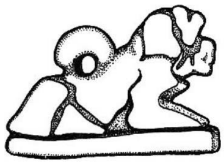

Fig. 3.4. Amulet, ʿAtlit, IA III / Persian Period (600–333). Image: Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*, Kat.Nr. 786.

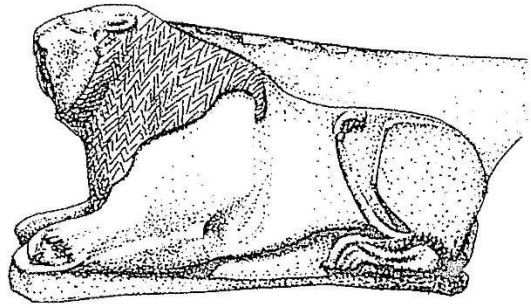

Fig. 3.5. Basalt orthostat, Hazor, LB. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.18.

[139] Cf. Christian Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Mit einem Ausblick auf ihre Rezeption durch das Alte Testament* (OBO 138; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 154.

3.2.1.2. Sitting

The sitting posture is very close to reclining, and occasionally is it difficult to distinguish between the two. Another orthostat from Hazor depicts a male lion sitting (**fig. 3.6**).[140] When compared to **fig. 3.5** above, one can see that the chest of the animal is not touching the ground. In addition, its forelegs are not resting on the ground, but the animal is standing with them.

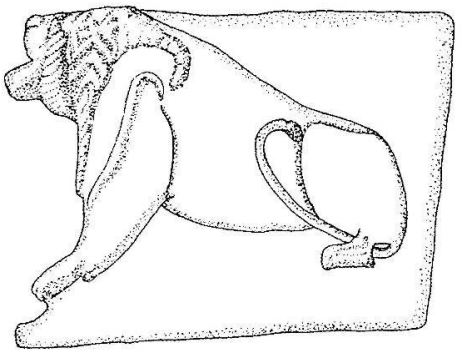

Fig. 3.6. Orthostat, Hazor (Area C), LBA. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.20.

3.2.1.3. Standing

When a lion is depicted on four legs, with both its forelegs and hind legs side by side, it denotes a standing alion. A scarab from Beth Shean, from the turn of IA I and II, depicts a lion in this position (**fig. 3.7**).[141] The lion's forelegs are indicative in this posture. If they are pictured side by side and the hind legs one after another, it is most probable that the artist wanted to depict the lion in a standing position instead of striding.

[140] Yadin et al. *Hazor I* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1958), 89; cf. Pls. XXIX–XXXI for *in situ* picture; Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?,* 87–88.

[141] The constellation also includes an Egyptian Ma'at feather or a reed, and a branch above the lion. See Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band II: Von Bahan bis Tell Eton* (OBO.SA 29; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 130. Strawn includes this scarab among objects that venerate male gods. See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?,* 90.

Fig. 3.7. Scarab, Beth Shean, IA IB / IA IIA (1070–840). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Bet-Schean Nr. 71.

3.2.1.4. Striding

In contrast to standing, the striding posture indicates movement. Both the front and hind legs are not portrayed side by side but behind one another. Another scarab from IA I/II Beth Shean demonstrates this posture (**fig. 3.8**).[142]

Fig. 3.8. Scarab, Beth Shean, IA IB / IA IIA (1075–900). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Bet-Schean Nr. 10.

3.2.1.5. Roaring

Roaring is indicated when a lion is pictured with an open jaw. This portrayal is used, for instance, in the famous seal of Shema (**fig. 3.2**). In this seal, the male lion is roaring and standing, which is a common combination, but certainly not the only possible one. Lions are depicted roaring in every possible position from reclining to rampant.

3.2.1.6. Rampant

A rampant lion is a posture in which the lion is standing on its hind legs, or striding with them. Its front legs reach away from one another; one paw is reaching forward, and the other paw is bent backwards. This position indicates that the lion is ready to strike down his/her enemy with the paw that is bent backwards. In this posture, the lion is often depicted almost as a human, walking and standing on its two legs, using its front paws like hands.[143] This motif appears seldom in the art of Israel/Palestine, but seals from Gibeon (**fig. 3.9**) and

[142] Keel identifies the animal as feline, possibly a lion. Keel, *Corpus* II, 100.
[143] Cf. Akko Nr. 213, which Keel interprets as a lion. Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band I: Von Tell Abu Farağ bis ʻAtlit (*OBO.SA 13; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1997), 604.

Ramat Raḥel (**fig. 3.10**) show that the motif was known and used during the IA III/Persian Period (6th–5th c.).[144]

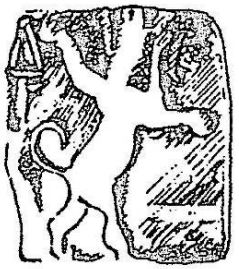

Fig. 3.9. Seal, Gibeon, IA III / Persian Period (6th–5th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.127.

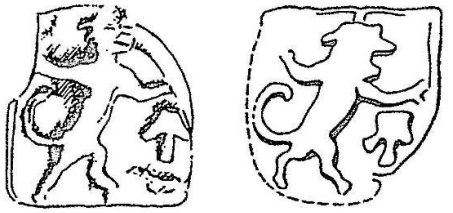

Fig. 3.10. Seals, Ramat Raḥel, IA III / Persian Period (6th–5th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.128.

3.2.2. Lions with Non-Agents of Nature

3.2.2.1. Vegetation

In the glyptic art of Israel/Palestine, lions – especially striding lions – are occasionally depicted with branches.[145] Sometimes these scenes also include a Ma'at feather (cf. **fig. 3.7** above).[146] Lions in association with vegetation seem to have been particularly common in Bronze Age art in Israel/Palestine, although remnants of it carry on for later centuries as well.[147] A MB scarab from Megiddo depicts a striding male lion with branches **(fig. 3.11)**. Two LB objects, also from Megiddo, show lions with branches. A sitting or reclining male lion in front of three large branches is pictured on an ivory comb (**fig. 3.12**), and an ivory game board depicts two striding lions similarly with branches.[148] There are two caprids with branches on the other side of the game board, so the connection between these three components (lions, caprids and vegetation) is repeated here (**fig 3.13**).

[144] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?*, 111. Cf. also Ephraim Stern, "Seal-Impressions in the Achaemenid Style in the Province of Judah," BASOR 202 (1971): 6–16.
[145] Cf. Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis Zur Perserzeit: Einleitung* (OBO.SA 10; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 196.
[146] The Ma'at feather is a motif that belongs to the sphere of Egyptian iconography. Cf. Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, § 462, 173; Stefan Münger, "Egyptian Stamp-Seal Amulets and Their Implications for the Chronology of the Early Iron Age," *TA* 30 (2003): 66–82.
[147] Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 196.
[148] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?,* 89.

Fig. 3.11. Scarab, Tell el-Faraʿh (S), MB IIB (1650–1500 or 1700–1550). Image: Keel, *Corpus* III, Tell el-Farʿa-Süd Nr. 25.

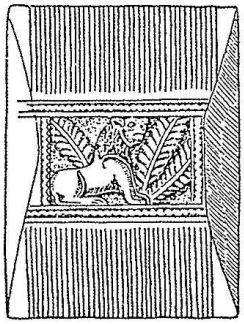

Fig. 3.12. Ivory comb, Megiddo, LB. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.26.

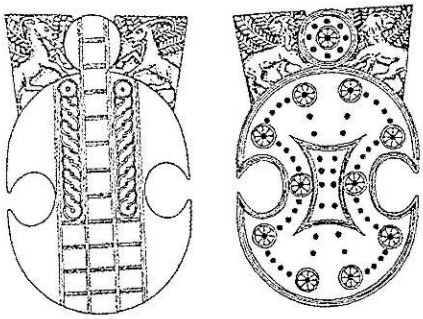

Fig. 3.13. Ivory game board, Megiddo, LB. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.27.

Lions are also portrayed in the sphere of an anthropomorphic female figure and vegetation in an IA I (10th c. BCE) cult stand from Taanach. In the 3rd row (from the bottom) of the stand, lions appear with caprids and a stylized tree (of life) (**fig. 3.14**). In the composition, the tree is placed in the middle and the two caprids, which eat from the tree, are flanking it. Two standing, possibly roaring lions flank the caprids and the tree. The lions are most likely female since they do not have a mane. A similar composition of a tree, caprids, and lions is displayed on the bottom row of another cult stand from Taanach (**fig. 3.15**).[149] In an IA IIA–B (980–700 BCE) scarab from Tell el-Faraʿh (S), a variation of this scene appears (**fig. 3.16**). There is a palm tree without any fruit in the center. On the left side of the tree, there is a striding lion, and a striding bull on the right side. Both of the animals face the tree. A pithos from Kuntillet Ajrud (IA II, early 8th c. BCE) also attests the connection between

[149] For more discussion on the Taanach cult stands, cf. Schroer, *IPIAO* 4, 276; Strawn, What is Stronger than a Lion, 95–96; and on **fig. 3.14**, cf. Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff and Yelena Rakic, *Assyria to Iberia: At the Dawn of the Classical Age* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014), 180.

caprids, lions, and trees (**fig. 3.17**). In the pithos, a stylized tree is placed above the back of a striding male lion while two caprids flank the tree and eat from it.[150]

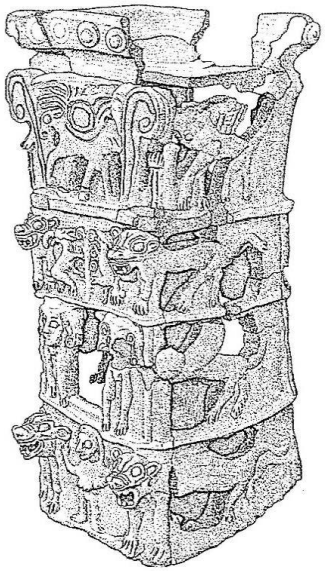

Fig. 3.14. Cult stand (A), Taanach, IA I. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.77.

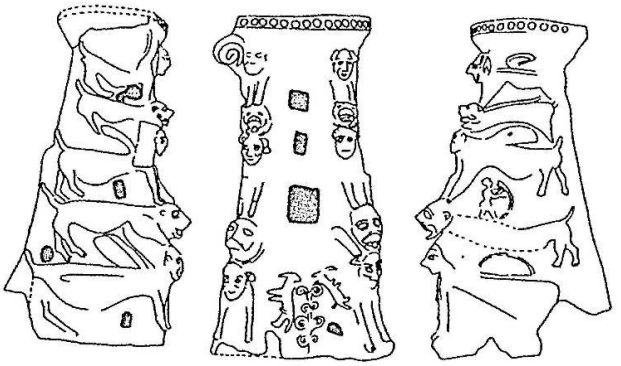

Fig. 3.15. Cult stand (B), Taanach, IA I. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.78.

Fig. 3.16. Scarab/scaraboid, IA IIA/IIB (980–700), Tell el-Faraʿh (S), current location unknown.
Image: Keel, *Corpus* III, Tell el-Farʿa-Süd Nr. 309.

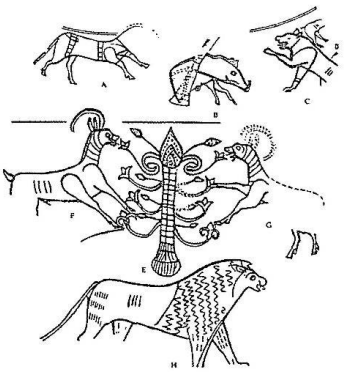

Fig. 3.17. Pithos (A), Kuntilled Ajrud, IA II (early 8th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.82.

[150] For more discussion on the pithos from Kuntilled Ajrud, cf. Ze'ev Meshel et al., *Kuntillet Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border*, ed. Liora Freud (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012); Schroer, *IPIAO* 4, 562; and Strawn, What is Stronger than a Lion, 97–99.

3.2.2.2. Celestial Bodies

Celestial bodies often appear in lion imagery as accompanying motifs. Especially sun-disks are often portrayed with lions. By accompanying motifs, I mean constellations in which there are several different components, the lion and sun-disk being only two of them. For instance, in IA seals,[151] an anthropomorphic figure is often portrayed shooting a lion with an arrow, and a sun disk is present above the figures (cf. e.g. **fig. 3.18).** However, there are occasions when a lion and a sun-disk are the only components in the constellation. A ring from IA IIB–IIC (900–600) Ekron depicts the forepart of a reclining lion that is facing a sun-disk (**fig. 3.19**).

Fig. 3.18. Scarab, Ashkelon, IA I (ca. 1250–1075). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.71.

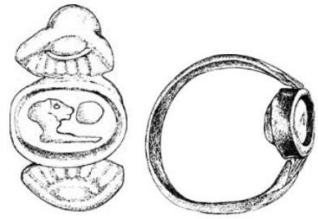

Fig. 3.19. Ring, Ekron, IA IIB/IIC, (900–600). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Ekron Nr. 45a.

An interesting example of a crescent moon is found on an IA IIB seal from Khirbat al-Haǧǧar (Jordan, surface find, **fig. 3.20**). In this seal, the two crescents and two lions are not the only motifs. A caprid is located in the center, and above it are two roaring lions on their hind legs attacking each other. There is a dot between the lions and a crescent moon above each lion's head. Stars appear in lion iconography either in the form of actual stars in the sky (**fig. 3.21**) or as rosettes (**fig. 3.22**[152]).

[151] There are also Persian Period examples, cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, figs 3.110 and 3.119.
[152] Cf. the rosette on the lion's shoulder.

Fig. 3.20. Scarab, Khirbat al- Haǧǧar, IA IIB (900–700). Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, Chirbat al-Hadschdschar Nr. 1.

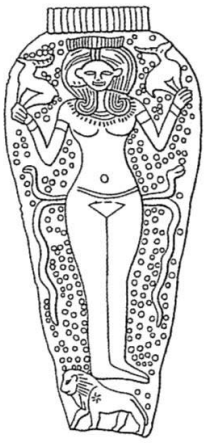

Fig. 3.21. Seal, ʿAtlit (Southeast cemetery, grave 24), IA III / Persian period (end of 6th – 4th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.109.

Fig. 3.22. Gold pendant, Minet el-Beida, ca. 1350. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.251.

3.2.3. Lions and Other Agents, Interaction Uncertain

On some occasions, it is hard to define the relationship between the lion and the other figures. For instance, in **fig. 3.23**, a caprid(?) is portrayed above a striding lion. The tails of the animals meet, and they both face right. There seems to be no interaction between these two figures, and it is therefore hard to determine what the function of this constellation is. On the other hand, in images such as **fig. 3.24**, it would seem that the eye contact between the figures is an indicator of the lion's attack (the caprid sees the predator and runs; it is also a few steps ahead of the lion). **Fig. 3.25** may also be interpreted at least in two different ways: the anthropomorphic figure on the caprid may be seen as escaping the lion, or s/he represents a deity that holds these animals in his/her sphere.

Fig. 3.23. Scarab, Akko (surface find), 1050–850. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Akko Nr. 141.

Fig. 3.24. Scarab, Bet Shemesh (unprovenanced), 1075–900. Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Bet-Schemesch Nr. 184.

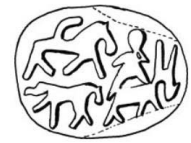

Fig. 3.25. Scarab, Tell el-Faraʿh (S), 1050–900. Image: Keel, *Corpus* III, Tell el-Farʿa-Süd Nr. 314.

3.2.3.1. Lions Striding Over, Away from, or Standing by a Human

A lion striding over and away from an anthropomorphic figure is a very common motif in the glyptic art of the Israel/Palestine region in the shift from IA I to II (1100–900).[153] In this motif, the human figure is lying on the ground, and the lion is depicted as either striding over the human figure or next to the human figure (**fig. 3.26**). The interaction between the characters is unclear since an attack is not explicitly displayed in either setting.

Fig. 3.26. Scarab, unprovenanced (purchased in Madaba 1981). Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, Madaba Nr. 8.

Typically in these seals, the head of the lion is above the head of the human. There are exceptions to this as well. In a seal from Pella (**fig. 3.27**), the orientation is different, and the human head is below the lion's rear legs.[154] Occasionally, there are more components to the constellation in addition to the lion and the human. In a seal from Beersheva, the lion faces a sun disk (**fig. 3.28**), and in a seal from Deir el-Balah, the lion is striding over a human, who is lying on the ground, and approaching another human, who is walking away from the lion

[153] Keel & Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 120; and Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?*, 92. According to Keel, the lion here represents a king (Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 196–97). Cf. also Schroer: "das Motiv des einen Menschen angreifenden oder über ihn hinwegschreitenden Löwen (Eggler 1998: 219-223) war besonders in der MB IIB (Keel/Uehlinger 1992: 24-26) und in der frühen Eisenzeit populär (Keel 1990a: 344-346; vgl. auch Eggler/Keel 2006: Madaba Nr. 8)." (Silvia Schroer, *IPIAO* 4 [Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2018], 126).

[154] Cf. the discussion about this style in Keel, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina / Israel: Bd 4, mit Registern zu den Bänden I-IV* (OBO 135; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 42.

(**fig. 3.29**). A Ma'at feather is sometimes included in the composition as well (**fig. 3.30**). A significantly later illustration of this motif is displayed on a seal from IA IIC (730–539) Balu'a (**fig. 3.31**). In this seal, the interaction between the characters is more explicit since the lion seems to be grasping the hair of the human being, whose body language indicates that the beast is hurting him/her.

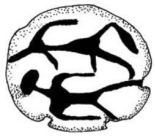

Fig. 3.27. Scarab, Pella (Area II), 1075–900. Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, Pella Nr. 69.

Fig. 3.28. Scarab, Beersheva (Area A-1), IA IB / IA IIA (1070–900). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Beërscheba Nr. 4.

Fig. 3.29. Scarab, Deir el-Balah (find context unknown), 1100–900. Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Der el-Balah Nr. 62a.

Fig. 3.30. Scarab, Tell Rekeš, surface find, probably IA I. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig.3.63.

Fig. 3.31. Seal impression, Balu'a (Area CI), IA IIC (730–539). Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, Balu‹a Nr. 1.

3.2.3.2. Lion Striding Over, Away from, or Standing by an Animal

A lion striding over another animal is not as common a motif as a lion striding over a human. A seal from IA I (late 13th c. – early 11th c.) Megiddo employs this motif by placing a

crocodile underneath the lion (**fig. 3.32**).[155] Similarly, a seal from Azekah, which is roughly dated between the Late Bronze age and mid Iron Age II (ca. 1292–716), depicts a lion in a reclining position above a crocodile (**fig. 3.33**).[156] In the same constellation, there is also a sun disk and possibly a crescent. A variation of this motif is seen in a LB/IA I seal from Ekron. In this piece there are two lions sitting on a crocodile on the ground. There are also two sun disks above each lion's head.[157]

Fig. 3.32. Scarab, Megiddo, IA I (late 13th – early 11th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.65.

Fig. 3.33. Scarab, Azekah, 1292–716/713. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Aseka Nr. 26.

An IA I (late 13th – early 11th c.) scarab from Megiddo shows a striding lion and a striding caprid (**fig. 3.34**). The lion is behind the caprid, which has turned its head towards the lion. Depictions such as this imply the element of attack, and it is very likely that, in many cases, these two categories (a lion striding over an animal and a lion attacking another animal) overlap each other. Crocodiles and lions appear together already in MB art in the Israel/Palestine region, and the origins of crocodile iconography lie in Egypt.[158] There are also several MB scarabs in which there seems to be no connection between these two animals.[159]

[155] Keel is uncertain about the symbolic meaning of the crocodile here, but sums up that it has to do with the act of domination. (Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 198). Cf. also Strawn (*What is Stronger than a Lion?*, 92–93) for more interpretations.
[156] Cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig.3.64; Keel, *Corpus* I, Aseka Nr. 26; For an older parallel, see Keel, *Corpus* IV, Tel Haror Nr. 1. The crocodile as an animal symbol is of Egyptian origin (Schroer, *IPIAO* 2 [Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2008] 38–39).
[157] Cf. Othmar Keel, "Crocodile," *Iconography of Deities and Demons* (IDD; Electronic Pre-Publication; Apr 2009, http://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/idd/) for interpretation; cf. also Keel, *Corpus* II, Ekron Nr. 5 and Keel, *Corpus I*, Aschdod Nr. 9.
[158] The crocodile was not indigenous to Mesopotamia, but it was part of the fauna in both Egypt and Israe/Palestine. (Keel "Crocodile").
[159] Cf. Keel, *Corpus* I, Tell el-ʿAǧul Nr. 656; Corpus IV, Tel Gamma Nr. 4, Geser Nr. 433.

Fig. 3.34. Scarab, Megiddo, IA I (late 13th – early 11th c.) Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.58.

3.2.3.3. Lions Striding Over Body Parts

Perhaps similar to the previous categories, a striding lion is depicted on a much later (720–620) seal impression from Dan (**fig. 3.35**). A severed human head is pictured Underneath the lion's open jaw. The seal impression is on a jar handle, and it is likely that the particular seal used here was a royal Assyrian state seal.[160]

Fig. 3.35. Seal impression on a jar handle, Dan (Area T), IA IIC (720–620). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II*,* Dan Nr. 33.

3.2.4. Lions as the Subjects of Action

3.2.4.1. Lions Attacking Animals

A lion attacking other animals is a motif that appears in both Iron Age II and Persian Period materials from the Israel/Palestine region. In this motif, attacking is indicated by depicting the lion in physical contact with another animal. For instance, the lion has sunk its teeth into the neck or other body part of the other animal, or its front paws lean against the body of the other animal. Movement is also one way to indicate attack. The lions' prey comprises both domesticated animals (bovines) and wild animals, such as caprids, bulls (**fig. 3.36**), and deer

[160] For further discussion of this seal impression, cf. section 5.4.1.

(**fig. 3.37**).[161] There are also images in which two lions attack their prey from two sides (**fig. 3.38**).[162]

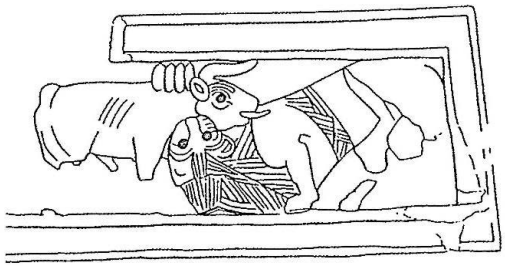

Fig. 3.36. Samarian ivory, IA II (9th/8th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig.3.103.

Fig. 3.37. Scaraboid, Ashkelon, 650–500. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Aschkelon Nr. 67.

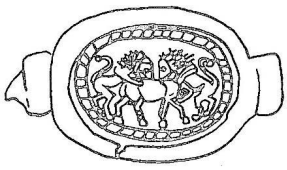

Fig. 3.38. Scarab, Tell Abu Hawam, IAIII/Persian Period (6th–5th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.136.

3.2.4.2. Lions Attacking Humans

In this category, similarly to the previous one, the attack is indicated by depicting physical contact between the characters, and the interaction is clearer than in images in which the lions stride over humans and animals. However, some of the objects that I have placed in the category 'Lions striding over, away from, or standing by a human' could be included under the current category as well. But since the interaction between characters is usually more obscure in images that show a lion 'striding over' humans, it is clearer to distinguish between these two categories in order to avoid misinterpretation. The seal from Balu'a (**fig. 3.31**), which was discussed above, functions as a bridge between these categories. It does indeed represent a lion that is striding over a human, who is lying on the ground, but it also clearly indicates that the lion is attacking the human figure.

[161] In the Bronze Age and very early Iron Age material, lions are sometimes depicted as attacking crocodiles, which was common in Egyptian iconography. According to Keel & Uehlinger, the motif of a lion attacking a crocodile is "completely without a parallel in Old Syrian depictions" (Keel & Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 23).

[162] From Iron Age Judah (8th-6th c.), there is a unique animal figurine that Kletter, Saarelainen & Weksler-Bdolah interpret to be a lion, whcih is "either carrying off or devouring its prey or carrying its cub." Kletter, Saarelainen & Weksler-Bdolah, "Recently Discovered Iron Age Lion Figurines from Jerusalem," *Antiguo Oriente* 12 (2014): 46.

Lions attacking humans seems to have been a popular motif in ancient Israel/Palestine during the Bronze Age and at the beginning of the Iron Age, but it becomes less attested towards the Persian Period. Some images show a single lion attacking only one human (**fig. 3.39**), but the number of attackers and victims can be larger. An IA IB/IIA (1070–900) seal from Tel Hadid depicts two lions approaching a man (**fig. 3.40**), and a MB scarab from Lachish depicts a lion sitting on one man, or striding over him, and approaching another man who seems to be fleeing (**fig. 3.41**).

Fig. 3.39. Seal, Tell el-Faraʿh (S), LB. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.12.

Fig. 3.40. Scarab, Tel Hadid, IA IB / IIA (1070–900). Image: Keel, *Corpus* IV, Tel Hadid Nr. 2.

Fig. 3.41. Scarab, Lachish, MB IIB (1700–1550). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* 2, fig. 343.

3.2.5. Lions and Other Agents as Equal Subjects of Action

3.2.5.1. Anthropomorphic Figures Confront Lions on Foot without a Weapon

In combat scenes between a man and a lion, weapons are usually included. There are two examples from Persian Period Israel/Palestine in which a weapon is not used or is not visible. A bulla from Wadi Daliyeh presents a naked male figure with a club, but the club is behind or on the side of the male figure, who is wrestling with a male lion (**fig. 3.42**). A seal from Ashkelon depicts a different type of hero in close combat with a male lion that is in an upright position. The male character has a beard and long hair and wears a dress (**fig. 3.43**). It is unclear whether the male figure is carrying a weapon or not; perhaps he has sunk a dagger in the chest of the lion.

Fig. 3.42. Seal impression, Wadi Daliyeh (unprovenanced), Late Persian Period (375–335). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Wadi ed-Dalije Nr. 20.

Fig. 3.43. Scarab, Ashkelon (Grid 50), Persian Period (6th–4th c.). Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Akko Nr. 59.

3.2.5.2. Anthropomorphic Figures Confront Lions on Foot with a Weapon

In the glyptic art of the Israel/Palestine region, during the shift from IA I to II, one recurring constellation comprises an archer, a lion, a caprid, and occasionally another anthropomorphic figure.[163] In the most common of these portrayals, the archer is on the left, the lion is in the middle, the caprid is above the lion, and the other anthropomorphic figure is on the right (**fig. 3.44**). The archer and the animals face the other anthropomorphic figure, and sometimes the lion is depicted as roaring (**fig. 3.45**). It is not always clear who the archer has in his sight. The archer could be hunting the animals, which are devouring the other human figure. In other words, the archer is protecting the human from the attack of the wild animals. Another possibility is that the lion and the caprid belong to the sphere of the archer, and the other anthropomorphic figure is an enemy of the archer. This interpretation might be valid at least in a seal from Ekron, which depicts the archer as a pharaoh sitting on a throne (**fig. 3.46**). However, in some cases it is clearer that lion is the target of the archer. On a seal from Tel Gamma, the archer is shooting the lion from behind while the lion is attacking the other animal from behind (**fig. 3.47**). On another seal from Akko, the archer is also shooting the lion from behind, but a sun disk is in front of the lion (**fig. 3.48**). The target of the archer is also clear on a seal from Tell el-Ajjul, which depicts the archer facing two animals, of which the animal on top is probably a lion (**fig. 3.49**).[164]

[163] See e.g. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 93.

[164] According to Keel, the animals are "wahrseinlich zwei Löwen" (Keel, *Corpus* I, 218.) The position of the tails is different, and the lower one seems to have horns that point backwards.

Fig. 3.44. Scarab, Tel Gamma (unprovenanced), IA IB/IIA (1050–900). Image: Keel. *Corpus* IV, Tel Gamma Nr. 44.

Fig. 3.45. Scarab, Tell el-Faraʿh (S), IA IB/IIA (1050–900). Image: Keel, *Corpus* III, Tell el-Farʿa-Süd Nr. 250.

Fig. 3.46. Scarab, Ekron, 1075–900. Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Ekron Nr. 49.

Fig. 3.47. Scarab, Tel Gamma, 21st Dyn. (1075–900) / IA IB/IIA (1100–900). Image: Keel, *Corpus* IV, Tel Gamma Nr. 78.

Fig. 3.48. Scarab, Akko (surface find), 1075–900. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Akko Nr. 88.

Fig. 3.49. Scarab, Tell el-Ajjul (find context unknown), 1075–900. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Tell el-ʿAğul Nr. 345.

This motif was known and applied already during the LB in Israel/Palestine. A scarab from Lachish depicts an archer who has stretched his bow towards a lion (**fig. 3.50**). The archer is to be identified as a pharaoh because he carries an Egyptian crown in his head.[165] All in all, the number of parallel images indicates that this motif has come to Israel/Palestine from Egypt.[166] **Fig. 3.51** is a Ramesside scarab, and the constellation on it is almost identical to the Lachish scarab.

Fig. 3.50. Scarab, Lachish, (Area C, Locus 3617, Str. VI), 1292–1186/85a. Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* 3, fig. 595.

Fig. 3.51. Seal, LB or early IA I (Ramesside). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 4.136.

In the course of time, another type of 'lion combat' motif became known in the Israel/Palestine region. In an IA II (probably 8th c.) bulla from Samaria, an anthropomorphic figure is depicted encountering a rampant male lion (**fig. 3.52**). The anthropomorphic

[165] See Schroer, *IPIAO* 3, 104.
[166] Cf. Schroer, *IPIAO* 3, 36.

character has grabbed the lion by its ear with his left hand, and he stabs a knife into the lion's chest with his right hand. The seal impression was made with an official Assyrian seal, which infers that the anthropomorphic character represents the Assyrian king.[167]

Fig. 3.52. Bulla, Samaria, IA II (8th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 3.93.

Strawn notices that "later, in the Persian Period, the motif of the king stabbing a lion becomes quite popular […] so that the Samaria piece (or others like it) may have become a model for subsequent, local exemplars."[168] Indeed, the motif is widely attested in the glyptic art of Persian Period Israel/Palestine, and the stabbing of a lion is not the only portrayal of this violent encounter. In a seal from Akko, a male figure wearing high headgear is in close combat with a lion, which is portrayed in an upright position (**fig. 3.53**). The male figure is holding a long sword or spear and is ready to strike it into the lions' belly. In seals from ʿAtlit, a naked male figure has grasped a lion by its hind leg, and he holds a club in his other, outstretched arm, ready to strike the animal with it (**fig. 3.54**).[169] Combat between a male figure and a lion seems to be represented in a poorly preserved scaraboid from Amman (**fig. 3.55**) as well. The male figure is holding the lion by its throat and carrying a weapon on his other hand. A sphinx seems to be lying underneath the male figure and the lion. Without the sphinx, this same constellation is used on a coin from Samaria (**fig. 3.56**).

[167] Cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.109, which is a 7th c. clay bulla from Nineveh. For more examples, cf. Davide Nadali, "Neo-Assyrian State Seals: An Allegory of Power," *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* XVIII (2011): 215–243.
[168] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?,* 101.
[169] Cf. Keel, *Corpus* I, Atlit Nr. 15 and 16.

Fig. 3.53. Scarab, Akko, (surface find), IA IIC (600–539) / Persian Period (539–333). Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Akko Nr. 122.

Fig. 3.54. Scarab, 'Atlit, 539–400. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Atlit Nr. 4.

Fig. 3.55. Scaraboid, Amman, 500–450. Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, ʿAmman Nr. 11.

Fig. 3.56. Coin, Samaria, IA III / Persian Period. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.143.

3.2.5.3. Anthropomorphic Figures Confront Lions on a Chariot or on Horseback

While the Egyptian style scenes of an archer, lion, caprid, and another anthropomorphic figure were popular in the Israel/Palestine region during the Bronze and Iron Age I, the popularity of these portrayals decreased during the Iron Age and were replaced by different types of lion hunt scenes. These constellations share similarities with both Egyptian and Mesopotamian art, but they are mainly associated with royal Persian imagery. On a stone scaraboid from Jaffa, a rider stabs a lion with his spear (**fig. 3.57**).[170] According to Keel, the rider is wearing a typical Persian outfit.[171] An interesting variation of this motif is displayed on a carnelian scaraboid from 5th or 4th century Tel Gamma (**fig. 3.58**). On this object, an anthropomorphic figure is riding a camel. He has stretched his bow to shoot a roaring lion (or some other predator) in front of him.

Fig. 3.57. Scaraboid, Jaffa (find context unknown), Persian Period (530–330. Image: Keel, *Corpus* V, Jafo Nr. 1.

Fig. 3.58. Scaraboid, Tel Gamma (find context unknown), Persian Period (5th–4th c.). Image: Keel, *Corpus* IV, Tel Gamma Nr. 12.

[170] See Uehlinger, "Powerful Persianisms," 167; Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band V: Von Tel El-Idham bis Tel Kitan* (OBO.SA 35; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), Jafo Nr. 1.
[171] Ibid.

3.2.6. Lions as Objects or Attributes

3.2.6.1. Anthropomorphic Figures Flanked by Lions

There is a wide range of ways in which the constellation of an anthropomorphic figure flanked by lions is portrayed. The depictions can be peaceful, as in a rectangular seal from Dor (400–300) in which a winged female figure is depicted with two lions by her side (**fig. 3.59**). The lions are reaching out to her, and the female figure has laid her hands on the animals. She is looking at one of the lions, which is also looking back at her. The front paws of the lions are in the hands of the female figure, and the hind legs of the animals touch the legs of the female figure as if they are trying to climb into her lap like children. All in all, the portrayal is very sympathetic, the relationship between the figures seems to be gentle, and the female figure is portrayed like a mother who looks after her children. The lowest row of the Taanach cult stand (IA I, see **fig. 3.14**) also attests a peaceful constellation. The anthropomorphic nude female figure is placed in the middle of two roaring lions stand on both of her sides. The central figure is holding the lions by their ears.

Fig. 3.59. Rectangular seal, Dor (surface find), Persian Period (400–300). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Dor Nr. 10.

Even though these examples depict peaceful encounters between the characters, they nevertheless portray a power structure: the anthropomorphic figure is in control. The element of control is even more clearly emphasized in depictions in which the anthropomorphic figure has grasped the lions by one of their body parts. For instance, in the scarab from Persian Period ʿAtlit (**fig. 3.21**) that was discussed above, an anthropomorphic male figure is flanked by two lions and grasps them by their throats, or he has his arm around their necks. In a scarab from Amman (665–525, 26th Dyn.), a male anthropomorphic figure is once again flanked by lions on each side, and he is holding them by their tails (**fig. 3.60)**. The anthropomorphic figure in both figures (**3.21** and **3.60**) most likely represents the Egyptian

god Bes.[172] The lions are male, and they are portrayed as sitting and roaring. Their backs are towards the central figure, but they have turned their faces toward him. In several seals from Persian Period Wadi Daliyeh, the anthropomorphic figure (possibly a king) is depicted holding two lions by their hind legs (cf. e.g. **fig. 3.61**).[173]

Fig. 3.60. Scarab, Amman, 665–525. Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, ʿAmman Nr. 62.

Fig. 3.61. Seal impression, Wadi Daliyeh (unprovenanced), Persian Period (522–335). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Wadi ed-Dalije Nr. 53.

The element of control can be portrayed even without physical contact between the characters. In a conoid from Persian Period Tell Nimrin, an anthropomorphic male figure is flanked by two lions (at least one of which is male, **fig. 3.62**). The lions are standing on their hind legs but leaning toward the male figure with their front paws. The animals have turned their faces away from the male figure in the center, who has stretched his arms straight over the beasts. In an older example from IA IIA (980–830), an anthropomorphic figure has raised his hands towards the sky and there are two animals upside down next to him (**fig. 3.63**).[174]

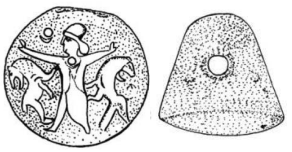

Fig. 3.62. Conoid, Tell Nimrin, Persian Period (4th c.). Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, Tall Qafqafa Nr. 1.

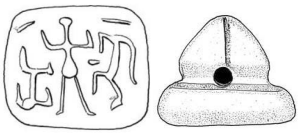

Fig. 3.63. Rectangular plate with a handle, Tell el-Hamma (Area A), IA IIA (980–830). Image: Keel, *Corpus* IV, Tell el-Hamma Nr. 4.

[172] Keel, *Corpus* I, 766; Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, 44.
[173] A seal with a naked hero holding two lions by their hind legs has been found from the same region (Late Persian Period: 374-335, unprovenanced; see Keel, *Corpus* II, Wadi ed-Dalije Nr. 37). Cf. also a scaraboid from Persian Period (or later) Amman with an inscription and a detailed outfit on the central figure (Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, ʿAmman Nr. 52). Bes is also depicted in this posture, cf. Keel, *Corpus* I, Aschkelon Nr. 8.
[174] This piece is very stylized, so it is hard to determine with certainty whether or not the animals are lions, but at least the head and the upcurved tail of the animal on the right suggest that it is a lion.

3.2.6.2. Anthropomorphic Figure Standing on a Lion

From the turn of IA I and II, there are many representations of constellations in which a winged, anthropomorphic figure is standing on a striding lion. In one example, another anthropomorphic figure (without wings) stands next to this pair on a striding horned animal, possibly a gazelle (**fig. 3.64**). An interesting conoid from Beth Shean pictures two anthropomorphic figures on a roaring, striding lion (**fig. 3.65**). The figure on the left seems to be a bit smaller than the one that is positioned directly on the back of the lion. The larger of these figures has raised his/her right hand up and bent it backwards. There is an object (a drum?) or a sun disk under his/her left hand.[175] The motif was known and used also later during the Iron Age. In an electron pendant from Tel Miqne-Ekron (IA II), an anthropomorphic female figure is standing on the back of a striding, roaring male lion (**fig. 3.66**). The depiction of the anthropomorphic figure indicates that it is Ištar.[176] The deity is facing another anthropomorphic figure who has raised his arms toward the goddess, most likely as a sign of devotion and worship.

Fig. 3.64. Scarab, Tell el-Faraʿh (S), IA IB/IIA (1100/1075–900). Image: Keel, *Corpus* III, Tell el-Farʿa-Süd Nr. 374.

Fig. 3.65. Conoid, Beth Shean, 1250–900. Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Bet-Schean Nr. 53.

Fig. 3.66. Electron pendant, Tel Miqne-Ekron (Stratum 1B), IA II. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.84.

The motif of 'anthropomorphic figures standing on a lion' already appears in Bronze Age art of the Israel/Palestine region. A bronze pendant from Akko and a terracotta tablet from Tel Harashim both portray nude female figures with a similar type of hairdo. Both of the figures are standing on a reclining lion and they are holding long flowers in their hands (**figs. 3.67**

[175] According to Keel, depictions of Ba'al and Reshef are parallel to this constellation. Keel, *Corpus* II, 120.
[176] Seymor Gitin and Amir Golani, "The Tel Miqne-Ekron Silver Hoards: the Assyrian and Phoenician Connections" in *From Hacksilber to Coinage: New Insights into the Monetary History of the Near East and Greece*, ed. M.S. Balmuth (Numismatic Studies no. 24; New York: American Numismatic Society, 2001), 40; and Strawn *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 99.

and **3.68**).[177] It is noteworthy that, in the Bronze Age, this motif usually depicts only female figures with lions, although male figures are not unknown.[178]

Fig. 3.67. Bronze pendant, Akko, LB. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.3.

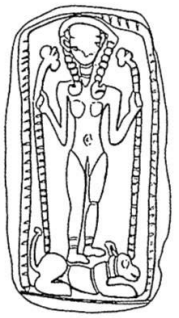

Fig. 3.68. Terracotta tablet, Tel Harashim, LB. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.4.

3.2.6.3. Anthropomorphic Figures Accompanied by Lions

A seal from Akko (surface find, dated to IA IIC, between 728–525) depicts an anthropomorphic figure (most likely a king) facing his enemy (**fig. 3.69**). The figure has stretched one of his arms back and is ready to strike, and his other arm holds his enemy by the hair. The enemy figure is on his knees and his/her hands are raised up.[179] A small lion that is striding towards the enemy character is pictured underneath the victorious figure. There is an object depicted above the head of the anthropomorphic figure that is not altogether clear, but it seems to represent a crown. The Akko seal is quite rare in the art of Israel/Palestine, but lions were associated with royalty as official companions on other objects as well, such as an ivory fragment from Megiddo. This piece shows a chariot and horse, and underneath the horse is a striding feline, possibly a lioness (**fig. 3.70**).

[177] For more discussion on this motif, cf. Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 66; and Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 82.
[178] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 80–82; and Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 63.
[179] Cf. further discussion on this motif in section 3.3.3.

Fig. 3.69. Scarab, Akko (surface find), probably 728–525. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Akko Nr. 226.

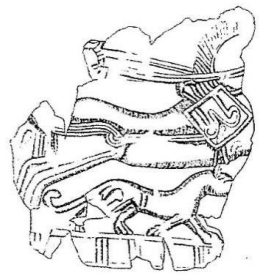

Fig. 3.70. Ivory fragment, Megiddo, LB (ca. 1350-1150). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.13.

3.3. Background and Symbolism of Motifs

Egyptian style iconography dominated the portrayals of lion imagery in the Bronze and Iron Age I iconographic record of the Israel/Palestine region.[180] For instance, Ma'at feathers and names of Egyptian deities often appear on scarabs alongside lions. Other iconographic themes, such as crocodiles, are also portrayed in same constellations as lions.[181] However, during the Iron Age II, some of the motifs more or less lost their connection to Egyptian iconography.[182] This is the case with the motif of a lion striding over, away from, or standing by another figure. According to Keel & Uehlinger, this motif depicted Egyptian pharaohs as lions in the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age iconography of Israel/Palestine.[183] The background of the motif most likely lies within the Egyptian imagery of a pharaoh trampling over his enemies.[184] While the motif remained popular in glyptic art during the Iron Age I, the iconographic details are vaguer and provide more possibilities for interpretation. The image of a trampling pharaoh becomes a representation of triumph in general.[185] In Bronze Age iconography, lions are occasionally portrayed with anthropomorphic female figures. These depictions often include vegetation and other animals. However, the connection between a lion and a female figure diminish over time, and by the time of the Persian Period, such depictions are completely absent.[186] All in all, during the Iron Age II and Persian periods, pictures of violent or dominant encounters between lions and anthropomorphic male

[180] For several examples of Egyptian motifs during the Middle and Late Bronze age, cf. Schroer, *IPIAO* 2 and *IPIAO* 3.
[181] Cf. earlier footnote on crocodiles (Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 23).
[182] Schroer, *IPIAO* 4, 60–61.
[183] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 120; and Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 196–197. Cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 92.
[184] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 81.
[185] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 93; and Keel & Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 120.
[186] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 125.

figures become more prominent. In these periods, there are less portrayals of lions attacking other animals. In addition, solitary lions often appear on amulets during the Persian Period.[187]

3.3.1. Lions, Vegetation and Mountains

It is noteworthy that constellations that include lions and vegetation are most often relatively peaceful. As already mentioned, these depictions often included other animals and anthropomorphic female figures. Within this combination, lions have mostly been interpreted to exemplify the aggressiveness of the related anthropomorphic figure, but also life forces, regenerative power, or even healing and fertility.[188] In Israel/Palestinian art, lions are seldom associated with mountains, even though in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian art this connection is quite common. In a typical constellation of Egyptian art, especially from the period of the New Kingdom (LB), two sitting lions[189] are pictured facing opposite directions (**fig. 3.71**). The lions hold mountains and a sun-disk on their backs.[190] There is an Israel/Palestinian seal that depicts the same constellation, but it is unprovenanced (**fig. 3.72**). In Mesopotamian glyptic art, lions and mountains are occasionally depicted in a larger constellation (**fig. 3.73**)

Fig. 3.72. Scarab, unprovenanced, 19th dynasty (1292–1185). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* 3, fig. 804.

[187] Cf. e.g. Akko, Ashkelon and ʿAtlit in Keel, *Corpus* I.
[188] See e.g. Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 23; Hornung, Erik and Staehelin, Elisabeth, *Skarabäen und andere Siegelamulette aus Basler Sammlungen* (Ägyptische Denkmäler in der Schweiz 1; Mainz: Verlag Phillip von Zabern, 1976), 126ff; Izak Cornelius, *The Many Faces of the Goddess. The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddess Anat, Astartem Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE* (OBO 204; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 98.
[189] Occasionally leopards appear in the constellation instead of lions. Cf. e.g. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* fig. 4.81.
[190] This is once again an interesting association between lions and sun-disks. For interpretations, cf. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 25: "edge of the earth"; and Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?,* 149.

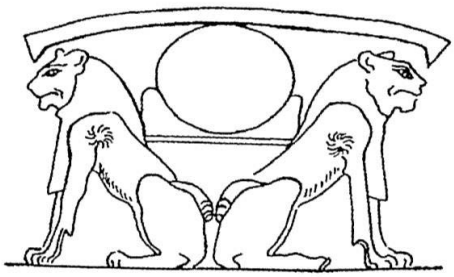

Fig. 3.71. Illustration on papyrus (Book of the Dead), New Kingdom. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.82.

Fig. 3.73. Cylinder seal, Akkadian Period. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 4.80 and Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 9.

3.3.2. Anthropomorphic Figures vs. Lions

In ancient Near Eastern art in general, the motif of a monarch or mighty person standing against a ferocious lion is very early according to Brent Strawn.[191] Strawn, as well as Dominic Collon, trace this motif back to the late fourth millennium BCE to representations of a Mesopotamian "priest-king" killing lions.[192] Collon speculates that "a painted bowl from Arpachiayah in northern Iraq may take the motif back to around 5000 BC," but he points out that the identification of the figure and the feline is uncertain.[193] The motif of 'an anthropomorphic figure fighting a lion' was wide spread, commonly known, and often used throughout the ancient Near East. In addition to Mesopotamia, Egypt, and ancient Israel/Palestine, it appears in the Ugaritic, Cypriot, and Hittite art, for instance.[194]

The motif of a violent encounter between an anthropomorphic figure and a lion can be divided into representations of 'heroic combat'[195] and 'lion hunt.'[196] 'Heroic combat' covers

[191] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 152.
[192] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 152. Dominique Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 219. Cf. also Sarah Kielt Costello, "The Mesopotamian 'Nude Hero': Context and Interpretations." in *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography*, eds. Derek B. Counts and Bettina Arnold (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2010), 25–35.
[193] Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 219.
[194] For examples, cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, figs 4.113–4.114, 4.116 (Egypt); 4.117–4.121, 4.124, 4.128 (Mesopotamia); 4.132 (Ugarit); 4.131 (Alaya Hüyük); 4.134 (Tell Halaf; 4.135 (Enkomi), 4.145 (Ziwiye); 4.147 (Malatya).
[195] Christoph Uehlinger uses the term 'heroic combat' when he describes Persian Period seals that portray a hero encountering an opponent in a violent fashion. Cf. Christoph Uehlinger, "'Powerful Persianisms' in Glyptic Iconography of Persian Period Palestine," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*, eds. Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel (OTS 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 153 ff.

images in which there are two figures in a constellation: a lion and an anthropomorphic figure. 'Lion hunt' refers to wider constellations that portray one or more anthropomorphic figures confronting and slaying one or more lions. These categories overlap, and there are several examples of 'lion hunt' scenes that include 'heroic combat.' The lion hunt was a theme that was closely connected to the royal propaganda of several kingdoms, but it was mostly used by the Neo-Assyrian court. The purpose of both concepts is to underline the power and strength of the lion's opponent.

3.3.3. Various Images of Lions under Control

An anthropomorphic figure flanked by two lions is a motif that was used in IA art, but it became extremely popular especially in Persian Period art in the Israel/Palestine region. In previous iconographic studies, this motif is often labelled 'Lord or Lady of Lions,' which is a sub category of a 'Master of Animals.'[197] Even though the 'Lord or Lady of Lions' was not as common during the IA I, the concept must have been known because there are several depictions of the Lord of Crocodiles.[198] In the IA IIA, the Lord of Ostriches was also very typical.[199] With its different variations, the 'Lord or Lady of Lions' is an ancient motif. It already appears in the late fourth millennium on an ivory knife handle from Gebel el-Arak (**fig. 3.74**). This image does not only depict the anthropomorphic figure as the Lord of Lions but as the Master of Animals in general because below the triad of these three figures are several other animals as well. The motif is also attested on a limestone vase from Tell Agrab (ca. 3000; **fig. 3.75**). An anthropomorphic figure has laid his hands on the bottoms of two lions. On the second row of the object, there are two more lions, and their tails are curled up in the armpits of the central figure. All the lions are facing the opposite direction from the central figure. A detail of a 9th century (ca. 883–859) relief from Nimrud attests an interesting variation of this motif (**fig. 3.76**). In this piece, a winged anthropomorphic figure is in the center standing on one knee. The figure is holding two lions (male and female) by their hind legs, and both of the lions have attacked two bovines. The composition can

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[196] On the concept of 'lion hunt', cf. Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph in a Prism Fragment of Ashurbanipal (82-5-22,2)," 339–358; Albenda, "Ashurnasirpal II Lion Hunt Relief BM124534," 167–178; Dick, "The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt and Yahweh's Answer to Job," 243–270; and Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 161–174.

[197] See Derek B. Counts and Bettina Arnold, eds. *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography* (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2010).

[198] Cf. e.g. Keel & Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of Gods*, illus. 140a–b.

[199] Cf. e.g. Keel & Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of Gods*, illus. 162a–d.

indicate either that the central figure is inciting the lions to attack the bovines or that he is holding them back. In both scenarios, the central figure is clearly in control of the animals.

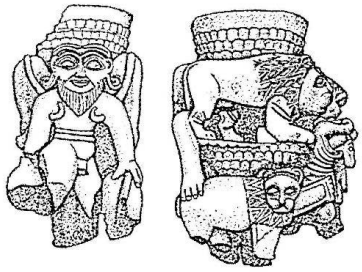

Fig. 3.75. Limestone vase, Tell Agrab (Diyala region), ca. 3000. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.87.

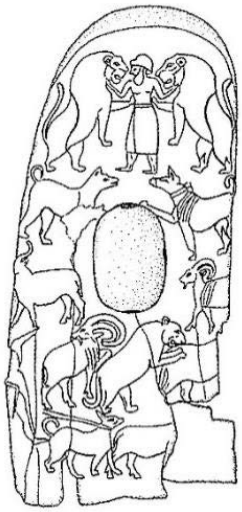

Fig. 3.74. Ivory knife handle, Gebel el-Arak, late Predynastic Period. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.85.

Fig. 3.76. Detail of a relief, Nimrud, 9th c. (ca. 883–859). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.215.

Parallels to the Akko scarab (**fig. 3.69**) can be found in Egyptian art, where lions are often depicted as the companions of kings. A sandstone relief from Medinet Habu depicts a victorious pharaoh (**fig. 3.77**).[200] In his outstretched, right arm, he holds a weapon and is ready to strike down his enemies. With his left hand, he has grasped the hair of his enemies, who are kneeling on the ground. A male lion is at the feet of the pharaoh, and it is attacking

[200] Lions are depicted alongside the pharaohs in battle also in Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, figs. 4.105-4.106.

pharaoh's enemies alongside him. The lion is biting the elbow of one of the enemies. The constellation is very similar to the seal from Akko. The Medinet Habu relief also shows a crown above the pharaoh's head, which would support the interpretation of the object in the Akko seal as a crown as well. Bronze bowls from 7th century Palestrina (Italy) (**fig. 3.78**) and Nimrud (**fig. 3.79**) demonstrate that this motif was also know and used outside Egypt, albeit the constellation of the Nimrud image is somewhat different from the Akko seal and the Medinet Habu relief.[201]

Fig. 3.77. Sandstone relief, Medinet Habu (Eastern high gate of North wall), Ramesses III (1184–1153). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.103.

Fig. 3.78. Bronze bowl, Palestrina, Italy (Bernardini tomb), later 7th c. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.107.

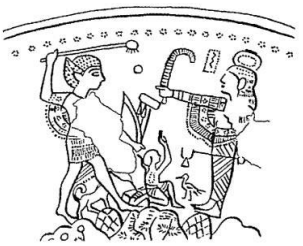

Fig. 3.79. Bronze bowl, Nimrud, 7th c. (?) Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.108.

The constellations of lions accompanying anthropomorphic figures on any level (flanking them, next to them, or as their pedestals) all use the image of a lion in order to enforce the power and might of the anthropomorphic figure. The Lord of Lions constellations show the

[201] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 160.

anthropomorphic figures fearlessly holding lions by their different body parts or laying their hands on the backs of the animals as if they were pets. These portrayals indicate that the lions are subdued by the anthropomorphic figure, who is able to control them and influence their behavior.[202] In images of a lion as a pedestal, the anthropomorphic figure is most often a deity. Several deities in the Ancient Near East were associated with lions.[203] When a lion is depicted alongside a king in battle, it indicates that the lion is on the king's side and shares the same enemies as the king. This implies the justification of the monarchy.

3.4. Materiality (Image Carriers)

3.4.1. Why Materiality Matters?

An image is more than its contents. When interpreting ancient imagery, it is crucial to pay attention to the material aspect of images alongside their contents. However, the weak point of Panofsky's scheme of interpretation – on which several scholars of iconographic exegesis rely, including this research – is its scant interest on materiality. Biblical scholars are aware of the shortcomings of Panofsky's scheme, and several have indeed added the material aspect into their observations of ancient images. Strawn explicates his method of interpreting his data by observing the "contents (particularly the naturalistic, cultic/religious, or official/royal), contexts (oftentimes in official or cultic assemblages), and connections (especially to the South and the North)" of images.[204] He therefore takes the use of the image into account in the process of interpretation.

The material of the object may reveal information about the area in which the object was made or the social status of the owner or producer who produced the object. For instance, limestone is very soft and easy to work with, and because of its wide appearance, it was easy and therefore cheap to access. Objects made out of limestone were likely accessible to a wide range of people, unlike the expensive and exquisite lapis lazuli that the ancient Near Eastern elite favored. It is noteworthy that, in the archaeological record of the Israel/Palestine region, there are a lot more findings in miniature art (e.g. seals, amulets, coins) than in monumental art and architecture.[205] Most of the categories of lion imagery

[202] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 189.
[203] Cf. Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East", 59–60 for a list of deities.
[204] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 80.
[205] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 79. For glyptics as the mass-media of the ancient Near East, cf. Otto, "Glyptic," 417–418.

introduced above appear in the glyptic art of the Israel/Palestine region. However, the user context and the intended audience of the object also influence its interpretation. For instance, the IA II bulla from Samaria (**fig. 3.52**) depicts an Assyrian king stabbing a lion. According to Stern, ”The bulla from Samaria must be an impression either from a ’royal’ stamp that was used to seal documents sent to the governor of the province or a stamp that belonged solely to the Samarian governor himself.”[206] Either way, this object is an impression of an imperial seal, and and its function was to deliver a message to the vassals and all subordinates of the ruling monarch.[207] Therefore, it functions as a warning and deterrent to all possible rebels, but it may also symbolize the king as the protector of his realm. In comparison, the purpose of a lion on the objects that were owned by individuals might have been to protect the owner of the object, or to represent the owner as mighty and powerful as a lion.[208]

When the image of a lion is applied to utensils, the function of the object plays a significant role in the interpretation of the image. If the image of a lion is used on weapons (e.g. maces, knives, shields, dagger hilts, or axe heads), it is highly plausible that it has been selected as a theme because of the lion’s natural abilities as an aggressive predator. If the given weapon was used in warfare, it is also possible that its purpose was to enhance the royal propaganda of a mighty ruler. The latter option may be valid also for other public or official objects, such as weights. Portraying a lion with vegetation on a game board or a comb (see **figs. 3.12-13**) may indicate a more peaceful interpretation.[209]

As already noted, large, architectural components (e.g. statues, stelas, and wall reliefs) are not well attested in the archaeological record of Israel/Palestine, but it is nevertheless necessary to discuss what these image carriers indicate about their contents. Such objects were either public (e.g. statues on gateways) or they had a restricted audience (e.g. palace reliefs). Since they were often used in official architecture, their purpose was most certainly to enhance the image of the official rule.

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[206] Ephraim Stern, “Notes on the Development of Stamp-Glyptic Art in Palestine during the Assyrian and Persian Periods,” in *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardson*, ed. Lewis M. Hopfe (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 143.
[207] Cf. Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 284.
[208] Cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 127.
[209] Cf. the so-called Qudshu images. Regarding these, Cornelius states that when associated with leaves, flowers and serpents, a lion symbolizes re-generating forces and virility. (Cornelius, *The Many Faces of the Goddess,* 98.)

3.4.2. The Effect of Positioning

The positioning of the objects in the images holds significant value for their interpretation. For instance, an image of a reclining, sitting or standing lion appears in several different types of objects in the archaeological record of the Israel/Palestine region. Several of these objects are interpreted as apotropaic in their function, but the target or orientation of protection can vary greatly. The Hazor orthostats (**figs. 3.5-6**) were most likely positioned at the entrance of a palace or a temple.[210] As the orthostats are not complete, they were probably part of a larger structure (a wall or a portico). They would have been placed so that the finished sides of the objects would have flanked the entrance way.[211] Strawn points out that "The practice of placing leonine figures in key architectural contexts is quite early and can be traced with relative consistency thereafter."[212] Massive lion statues were typically placed by city gates or entrance ways of significant buildings, such as palaces and temples. As there is lot of evidence in ancient Near Eastern art of lion pairs flanking entrance ways, it is probable that the Hazor lions were made in pairs as well.

Tomb carvings in Tel Eitun (18km southwest of Hebron) depict lions in a very different style, although the motif *per se* is similar to the Hazor orthostats (**figs. 3.80a–b**).[213] The tomb is a rock-carved cave, and the images in it are crafted in the structures. There are steps at the entrance of the tomb and five benches for the deceased, two on both sides and one at the back of the tomb. The tomb has a front and back chamber, which are separated by pillars in the middle. There are, in total, 8 animals or animal heads carved in the corners and pillars of the tomb. Two of them are identified as lions, but considering the poor preservation of the objects and their crude appearance, it is possible that all of the images depict lions, other animals or even hybrid creatures.[214]

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[210] Rochman suggests that these orthostats "may have originally flanked the entrance to a Canaanite temple in Hazor's lower city." She adds that an alternative possibility is that **fig. 3.5** "was part of a second set of lions that once guarded Canaanite Hazor's royal palace, the ruins which lie beneath the Israelite building." See Bonnie Rochman, "The Pride of Hazor: Lion Statue Regains Its Long-Lost Mate," *BAR* 23/6 (1997), 25.
[211] If this was the case, these two orthostats have been placed incorrectly in the Israel Museum as their un-worked sides face each other.
[212] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 218.
[213] See David Ussishkin, "Tombs from the Israelite Period at Tel 'Eton," *TA* 1/3 (1974): 109–127.
[214] Ussishkin suggests that at least one of the carvings might represent a bull: "Above the upper head is a place for a lamp, with a well-carved border which curves upwards on both sides of the head, giving the impression of a pair of horns. Such may have been the intention of the craftsman, who wished to depict a bull's head." (Ussishkin, "Tombs at Tel 'Eton," 114).

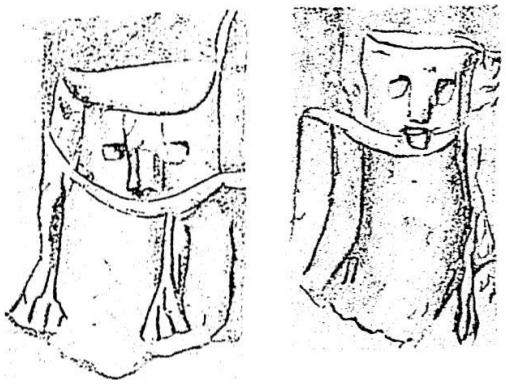

Fig. 3.80a-b. Carving of rock, IA II (9th c.), Tel Eitun. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* fig. 3.87. See Ussishkin, "Tombs at Tel 'Eton," 1974 Pl. 21–23 for photographs.

Most of the main indicators of a lion, i.e. the mane and tail, are not present in any of the objects. However, the ones that are identified as lions have noses and front paws that would support their interpretation. They are located at the entrance of the tomb, on both sides of descending steps. The tops of their heads are flat, and the space above the heads was probably meant for placing pottery lamps.[215] The lions are portrayed in the front. Below their heads there seems to be roughly carved front paws that give the impression that the lions are sitting or standing in an upright position on the lowest step of the entrance. The left paw of the carving on the right-side (seen from the entrance of the tomb, **fig.3.80a**) is not quite in its place. Perhaps the carvings were made in insufficient lighting.

[215] Other carvings that are located in the corners of the tomb also have a level of space above them. These would be natural placements for light sources.

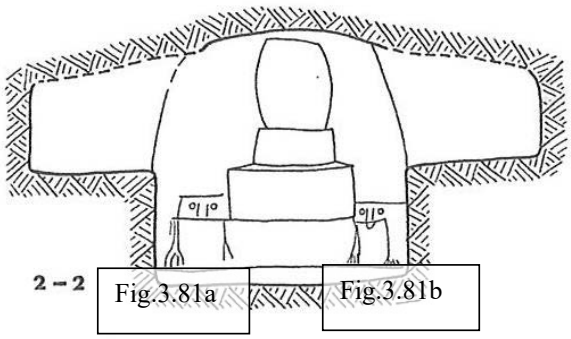

Fig. 3.81. The entrance and steps, seen from within the tomb. Ussishkin, "Tombs at Tel 'Eton", Fig. 3, 112. Text boxes mine.

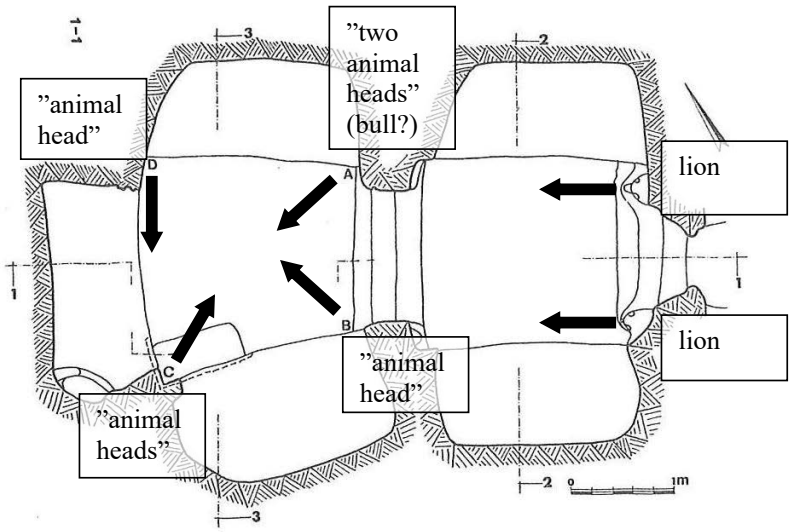

Fig. 3.82. Plan of the tomb. Ussishkin, "Tombs at Tel 'Eton", Fig. 2, 111. Text boxes and arrows mine.

A notable difference between the tomb carvings of Tel Eitun and guardian lion statues at the entrances of cities, temples, and palaces is their orientation. Whereas the latter commonly faced outwards from the area they protected, the tomb carvings of Tel Eitun face inwards. This leads to the assumption that the public guardian lion statues were protecting the people of the city, palace, or temple, and that the Tel Eitun lions were there to keep the spirits of the

dead inside the tomb.[216] Comparable guardian lion images are also found on several minor art objects, such as the Persian Period amulets from ʿAtlit (see **fig. 3.4**). When portrayed on seals or amulets of individuals, the protective, aggressive power of the lion was perceived to target those who would threaten the owner of the seal.[217] In other words, the lion on an amulet would protect its owner and lend its aggressive force to him/her.

3.4.3. The Effect of Delineation

The materiality of image carriers impacts the delineation of a motif, which further leads to different emphases. For instance, the bulla from Samaria (**fig. 3.52**) that is discussed above represents an Assyrian king stabbing a lion. The same motif is found in the Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs, which depict a royal lion hunt. In **fig. 3.83**, the king is not only depicted stabbing a lion, but shooting several lions with his bow and arrow, beating them with his mace, and striking them with his spear. The hunt is depicted in three rows as a pictorial narrative that begins with the release of the lions from their cages, and ends in a depiction of the king offering the dead lions as a libation to Ištar of Arbela. As a medium, palace reliefs are able to tell a full story, provide a more detailed milieu, and they allow the use of epigraphs.[218] In a seal, the delimitation of the subject is stricter because of the selected medium. However, reliefs were placed in Imperial palaces, which means that they had a restricted audience. Seals, on the other hand, were small objects that were relatively easy and cheap to manufacture and to distribute throughout the Empire. Therefore, it was crucial to determine what the most significant message of the royal lion hunt was and to describe it in a clear way that could be understood throughout the whole Empire, from Nineveh all the way to the edges of the empire.

[216] See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 100.
[217] On royal and official seals, the use of the image of a lion was intended as royal propaganda as the king or the kingdom was compared to a mighty, dangerous lion.
[218] Cf. Irene Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," in *On Art in the Ancient Near East: Volume I, Of the First Millennium B.C.E*, ed. Irene Winter (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 3–70.

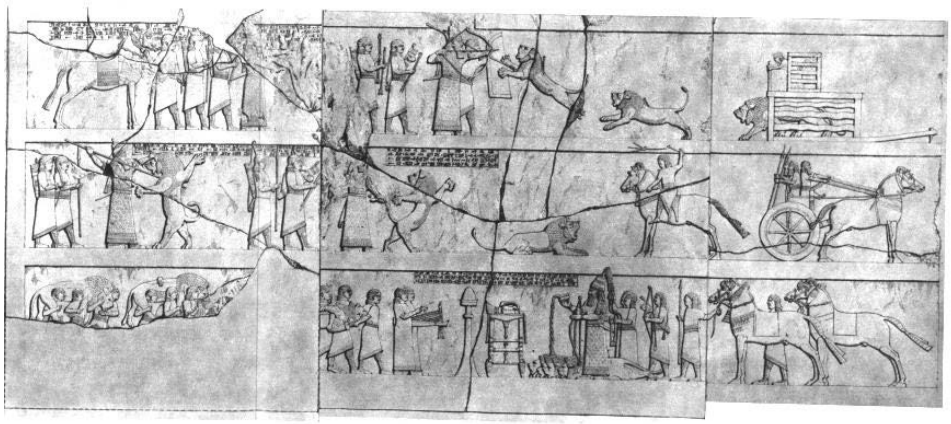

Fig. 3.83. Wall panel, Nineveh (North Palace of Assurbanipal, Room S[1], Slabs C-E), 668–627. Slab C: The Louvre (AO19903), Slabs D&E: The British Museum (BM124886-7). Image: Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh (668–627 B.C.)*, Pl. LVI.

3.5. Conclusions

Lions are considered among the most dangerous land predators. Their predatory aggression is key to their use in an artistic constellations. Even though a certain constellation would not seem aggressive to a modern viewer, it is likely that the image of a lion was chosen because of a desire to transmit the aggressive power of the beast. There is a vast number of lion motifs in ancient Near Eastern art, and most of them reflect at least some level of aggression. The target of the aggression varies greatly in these depictions. In constellations in which the aggression is portrayed as negative, lions generally stand for chaos, the enemy, and a threat to civil order. In such constellations, the anthropomorphic figures represent the defeaters of the negative forces. The Lord of Lions controls the wild, and a king that hunts lions symbolically protects civilization and peace inside his realm by overcoming the wild. When the opponent of a lion is depicted as a victim, the opponent represents an ordinary person or an animal. Deities and monarchs are never portrayed as victims of a lion.

Constellations that apply aggression positively depict lions as monarchs, deities, guardians, as companions of a king or a deity, or as their attributes. The image of the lion reinforces the power of the monarch or the deity. For this purpose, lions are often used as attributes of monarchs or deities, for instance, in images in which the lion is portrayed as a pedestal. Occasionally, monarchs and deities are portrayed as lions, and without a proper amount of iconographic details or inscriptions, it may be difficult to determine whether a lion represents

a wild animal or a monarch or deity in disguise.[219] Lions may also be depicted as companions of a king or a deity. In such cases, the aggression of the beast is targeted towards a third party, a common enemy of the monarch or deity and the lion. When depicted as a guardian, the lion's aggression is targeted towards those, who pass it by with bad intentions. As noted before, the orientation of the figures in the image reveals the object that the lion is guarding.

The image of a lion in the archaeological record of Israel/Palestine, and in the Ancient Near East in general, was very multifaceted and versatile. The users of the objects most likely linked several mental images to the objects, and the symbolic value of the objects overlap several different interpretation options.

[219] Examples of these include images of hybrids, especially in Egypt.

4. Judges 14

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. Translation

1. And Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, a daughter of the Philistines.
2. And he came up and announced to his father and mother, and said: “I saw a woman in Timnah, a daughter of the Philistines. Now, get her for me as my wife!”
3. His father and mother said to him: “Is there not a woman among your brothers’ daughters, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” But Samson said: “Get her for me, because she is right in my eyes.”
4. But his father and mother did not know that this came from YHWH, who was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines were ruling Israel.
5. And Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother. And they came[221] to the vineyards of Timnah. And look; a young, male lion[222] came roaring towards him.
6. And the spirit of YHWH rushed on him, and he tore it apart as a kid is torn apart, with nothing in his hands. And he did not tell his father and mother what he had done.
7. And he went down and spoke to the woman and she was right in the eyes of Samson.
8. After a while, he returned to take her. He turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And look; there was a swarm of bees inside the body/mouth[223] of the lion and honey.
9. And he scraped it into his hands and went on eating. And he went to his father and mother and gave them, and they ate. And he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.
10. And his father went down to the woman, and Samson arranged a feast there, as young men were accustomed to do.
11. And when they saw him, they took thirty companions to be with him.
12. Samson said to them: “Let me now put a riddle to you! If you can explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments.”
13. “But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments.” And they said to him: “Speak out your riddle, we want to hear it!”
14. And he said to them: “From an eater came out (something to) eat, and from strong came out (something) sweet.” And they could not solve the riddle for three days.

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[221] Both the A and B texts of LXX use a singular form when translating the verb ‘they came.’ However, in the A text, ויבאו ‘to come’ is rendered with ἐξέκλινεν ‘to deviate, to turn away,’ while the B text is in line with MT by rendering the Hebrew word with ἦλθεν, ’to come.’ It seems that the B text has made a hebraizing correction towards the MT reading, but for some reason it left the word in singular form instead of plural. The plural form ἦλθον that is attested in some manuscripts should be considered a kaige correction. The reading ἐξέκλινεν could be considered a later attempt to gloss over the contradiction in the MT reading. BHS and BHK both suggest that ואביו ואמו should be deleted from the text. Indeed, the sentence would be a lot less complicated without this phrase. However, according to BHQ, the suggestion of BHS and BHK does not rely on textual evidence but on literary critical interpretation.

[222] In the Septuagint, the word כפיר is translated σκυμνοζ, which means a cub or a whelp.

[223] In both the A and B versions of LXX, Samson sees the swarm of bees inside the mouth (ἐν τῷ στόματι) of the lion. There are no variants in the Greek manuscripts, hence ‘the mouth’ is not only OG but also the only attested reading in this passage.

15. And the seventh day came, and they said to Samson's wife: "Entice your husband to explain us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Or have you summoned us here to take us over?"
16. And Samson's wife cried to him and said: "You only hate me, and do not love me. You have put a riddle to the sons of my people but you do not explain it to me." He said to her: "Look, I have not explained it to my father and mother, but to you I should?"
17. And she cried to him for all the seven days that their feast lasted. And when the seventh day came, he explained it to her, because she pressed him. And she explained the riddle to her people.
18. The men of the town said to him on the seventh day, before the sun went down: "What is sweeter than honey, what is stronger than a lion?" And he said to them: "If you would not have ploughed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle."
19. And the spirit of YHWH rushed on him and he went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty men of them and took their spoil and gave festal garments to those who solved the riddle. And his anger blazed up, and he went up to his father's house.
20. And Samson's wife was given to the companion who had been the closest to him.

4.1.2. Overview of the Literary History

Judges 14 is one of the narratives in the Samson cycle (Judges 13–16). The cycle begins with Samson's birth story, goes on to his marriage with the Timnahite woman, which leads to a series of confrontations with the Philistines, and describes his escapades with women. The cycle ends with Samson's death in which he is able to pull more enemies with him than in his whole lifetime.[224] All in all, the Samson narratives report the events of the hero's life, although Niditch points out that each of the chapters might as well have circulated as independent stories of a known legendary hero.[225] There are, however, recurring themes in the cycle that bind the individual narratives together. The performances of Samson's superhuman strength, his weakness for foreign women, vengeance, and Samson's withdrawal (to his parents, to a cleft, and to his death) are themes that are repeated inside the

[224] There are several ways to perceive the structure of the cycle. Amit, for instance, divides the cycle into three sections: a) the birth (13:1–24a) and the concluding report summarizing the period of Samson's childhood and youth (24b–25), b) the marriage (14:1–15:19) and a summary of twenty years of Samson's judging (15:20), c) the final period of his life (16:1–31a) with a repetition of the summary of the years of Samson's judging (31b) (Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 267–268). For different views, see e.g. Trent C. Butler, *Judges* (WBC 8; Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 320–322.
[225] Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 154.

cycle.[226] It is also noteworthy how the theme of knowing and not-knowing appears in several stories of the cycle.[227] The verb נגד (to know) appears 12 times in chapter 14 alone.[228]

Some scholars see the Samson cycle as a portrayal of failed leadership after which the nation falls into anarchy as described in the latter part of Judges (17–21). According to Yairah Amit, Samson waists his powers given by God, and he is depicted as a prime example of what a Nazirite should not be.[229] Grenshaw argues that the narrative shows the danger of foreign women and therefore conveys a negative message.[230] According to Gerhard von Rad and J. Blenkinsopp, the purpose of the extensive report of Samson's birth in chapter 13 is to show the expectations of him, which ultimately make his failure in chapters 14–16 even more massive.[231] On the contrary, Assis and Exum point out that Samson only fails when he reveals his Nazirite status to Delilah, but he succeeds in destroying his opponents and thus fulfills the prediction "it is he who shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5, NRSV).[232] Niditch adds to this by suggesting that Samson's flaws make him an epic hero.[233]

On the one hand, the Samson cycle follows a similar pattern as the other stories of judges in the book. Webb sees Judg 3:7–16:31 as a redactional framework in which the narratives of Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson are portrayed in a similar structure.[234] It is particularly noteworthy how many similarities and juxtapositions there are in the stories of Gideon and Samson.[235] On the other hand, the Samson cycle differs significantly from the other stories of judges. Samson does not fight the Philistines for Israel's sake, as the other

[226] Niditch, *Judges,* 153; and Eliel Assis, "The Structure and Meaning of the Samson Narratives (Jud. 13–16)," in *Samson: Hero or Fool? The Many Faces of Samson*, eds. Erik M. Eynikel and Tobias Nicklas (Boston: Brill, 2014), 1.
[227] Barry G. Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 173–174; and Robert D. Branson, *Judges: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2009), 127; 133.
[228] Branson, *Judges*, 127; 133.
[229] Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 266–267.
[230] James L. Crenshaw, *Samson: A Secret Betrayed, a Vow Ignored* (London: SPCK, 1979), 129–148; and "Samson," ABD 5:954.
[231] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology Vol. 1: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1962); and J. Blenkinsopp, "Structure and Style in Judges 13–16," *JBL* 82 (1963): 65–76. See also Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988); and Branson, *Judges*, 126 for similar views with the fore mentioned scholars.
[232] Assis, "The Structure and Meaning of the Samson Narratives (Jud. 13–16)," 2; and J. Cheryl Exum, "The Theological dimension of the Samson Saga" *VT* 33 (1983): 30–45.
[233] Niditch, *Judges,* 154.
[234] Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, 175.
[235] Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, 164.

judges do, but for his personal reasons.[236] Also, in the Samson cycle, Israel does not seek deliverance, and therefore the narrative does not follow the typical pattern of crying for YHWH, who the oppressor in the end subdues.[237]

Several scholars agree that the Samson cycle was likely added to the composition of the Judges in a late stage of the editorial process.[238] Some scholars argue that, within this added cycle, chapter 14 is probably the earliest portion. According to Kratz, for instance, ”the core of the tradition is contained in Judg. 14:1–15:8,” excluding verses 14:4, 15:3 and the formula “the spirit of YHWH.”[239]

The book of Judges has traditionally been seen as part of the Deuteronomistic History, but this has been increasingly challenged by scholars, and there is no consensus on this matter at the moment.[240] Niditch takes no stand on the question of the Deuteronomistic edition. Instead of an editor, she identifies three voices in the book: “epic-bardic,” “theologian,” and “humanist”.[241] Niditch proposes that the epic-bardic voice is an ancient oral tradition that cannot be dated to a specific historical period. She anchors the voice of the theologian to the seventh or sixth century BCE and the voice of the humanist to the Persian – early Hellenistic period.[242] Satterthwaite states that LXX Judges was composed no earlier than 160 BCE, which implies that the composition of the *Vorlage* was completed before then.[243]

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[236] Cf. Assis, ”The Structure and Meaning of the Samson Narratives (Jud. 13–16),”1; and John L. McKenzie, *The World of the Judges* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966).
[237] Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, 163, 175. Although Samson does call for YHWH at the end of the cycle. See Butler, *Judges*.
[238] Butler, *Judges*.
[239] Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 205; 214. See Butler, *Judges*, for contrary views.
[240] Weinfeld has recognized Deuteronomistic language in Judges. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992 [1972]), 320–365; Miller on the contrary argues that the theology of Judges is in no means ”Deuteronomistic” and challenges the whole concept of Deuteronomistic theology. See Robert D. Miller, “Deuteronomistic Theology in the Book of Judges?,” *OTE* 15/2 (2002): 411–416. Butler comes to a conclusion that there is all in all “confusing evindence” of the existence of Deuteronomistic edition. (Butler, *Judges*, li) This matter is complex and out of the scope of this research.
[241] Niditch, *Judges,* 10–13.
[242] Ibid. Cf. also Butler, *Judges*, l.
[243] Philip E. Satterthwaite, “Judges,” in *The T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, ed. James K. Aitken (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 105. However, it should be noted that the manuscripts of the Septuagint were harmonized towards MT even as late as the second century BCE.

4.2. Literary Analysis

4.2.1. Structure and Storyline

After the birth story of Samson, one would expect a battle account to follow, but instead, chapter 14 begins with wedding plans. According to verse 4, the wedding is a frame for the true purpose of the narrative: YHWH's vengeance on the Philistines, who have subdued Israel under their rule. I regard the narrative as a parallel composition.[244]

A (vv. 1–4) Samson goes down to Timnah. The physical attraction of Samson to a Timnahite woman, and his refusal to listen to his parents' objection to his marriage to her.

B (vv. 5–9) Samson overcomes a lion.

C (vv. 10–14) At his engagement party, Samson challenges the Philistines with a riddle.

A' (vv. 15–18) The Timnahite woman entices Samson to reveal his riddle, and she discloses the solution to the Philistines.

B' (vv. 19–20) Samson kills thirty Philistines and takes their garments to give to the Philistines who solved the riddle. Samson goes up to his father's house.

Eliel Assis has pointed out that the structure of the narrative plays with Samson's weakness and strength. His physical strength is superhuman, and there is no man that can resist him. However, his physical affection to women makes him weak, and he can be overpowered if this weakness is exploited.[245] In the beginning (A: vv. 1–4), Samson is physically attracted by the Timnahite woman and refuses to change his mind about marrying her even though his parents try to convince him otherwise. In the parallel verses (A': vv. 15–18), Samson is frustrated by his wife's nagging and eventually gives in to her demands. Therefore, he is weak when it comes to the woman in Timnah, but keeps his head when it comes to his parents.

In the B-sections of the parallel composition, Samson is depicted to be physically strong as he kills the lion (B: vv. 5–9) and slays thirty men in Ashkelon (B', vv. 19–20). The parallelism of these sections is also presented in repetitions. In verse 6, the "spirit of YHWH" rushes on Samson for the first time when he encounters the lion on the road to

[244] I base the presentation of the structure presented by Assis, "The Structure and Meaning of the Samson Narratives (Jud. 13–16)," 1–12.
[245] In the Samson cycle, this theme re-appears in the Delilah narrative (Judges 16).

Timnah (וַתִּצְלַח עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה). This exact phrase is used again in verse 19, right before Samson slays the thirty men in Ashkelon. The depiction of Samson is identical in these verses, and only his opponents are different. Thematic repetition is also used in these two violent confrontations. After defeating his opponents, Samson takes something from the dead. He scrapes the honey from the carcass of the lion and takes the garments from the dead men in Ashkelon. What he took, he also passes on to someone in both cases: honey to his parents and the festal garments to those who solved his riddle. Lastly, those who receive these gifts do not know their origin, although it is stated explicitly only in verse 9 and not in 19.

Section C (vv. 10–14) remains in the middle of the narrative without a parallel counterpart. These verses include Samson's riddle.[246] As Niditch has noted, the riddle tears apart the two groups, Samson and the Timnahites.[247] Therefore, it is fitting that the riddle is placed in between the parallel sections.

The theme of knowing and not-knowing is utilized extensively in the narrative. Samson is at first in control of the distribution of knowledge, but the tables turn in verse 15 when Samson's companions begin to pressure his wife to entice Samson into revealing the answer to the riddle. Verse 4 is crucial for the distribution of knowledge. In this editorial note, the narrator reveals significant information to the audience but notes that the characters are unaware of the true purpose of the events.[248]

Even though I treat the chapter as a parallel composition, a certain ring composition is evident in the events as well. The narrative begins when Samson goes down to Timnah, and it ends when he goes back to his father's house.[249] From the viewpoint of Samson, the narrative is a personal tragedy. In the beginning, things look promising for him, but it all ends in massive disappointment and bitterness.

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[246] According to Boling, the riddle is "a precisely balanced bi-colon (3+3). See Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 231. For more discussion about the riddle, cf. Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 269; Branson, *Judges*, 134; Butler, *Judges*, 336–337; and Azzan Yadin, "Samson's ḥîdâ," *VT* 52 (2002): 407–426.

[247] Susan Niditch, "Samson As Culture Hero, Trickster, and Bandit: The Empowerment of the Weak," *CBQ* 52/4 (1990): 618. See also Butler, *Judges*, 336.

[248] See Butler, *Judges*, 333.

[249] Going down and coming up also provide structure and rhythm to the narrative. See Gregory Mobley, *The Empty Men: The Heroic Tradition of Ancient Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 184–185; and Butler, *Judges*, 331–332.

4.2.3. Characters and Characterization

The characters in Judges 14 are Samson, his father and mother, a woman in Timnah who becomes Samson's wife, YHWH, a young male lion, apparently the household of Samson's bride, and the thirty companions of Samson at his wedding. In addition, thirty men in Ashkelon are mentioned as victims of Samson's rage at the end of the narrative. Since the lion is treated here as a character, the portrayal of the bees will be analyzed as well. Verses 1–9 divide the human characters into two groups. The foreign status of Samson's wife is constantly underlined as she is called "a daughter of the Philistines," and the Philistines are called "uncircumcised"[250] as a clear cultural separation from Samson and his family.[251]

4.2.3.1. Samson

Samson is portrayed as an impulsive character. When he sees the woman in Timnah, he immediately insists that his parents get her as his wife. When his parents try to change his mind, he replies by saying: "she is right in my eyes" (הִיא יָשְׁרָה בְעֵינָי). In the book of Judges, this phrase is later used to describe the social anarchy in Israel when "everyone did what was right in his eyes" (17:6, 21:25).[252] In Samson's case, the use of the phrase describes his character well: he is a man who is driven by his senses.[253] When he sees the woman, he wants her. The spirit of YHWH makes him act impulsively but also with extreme violence (vv. 6, 19). He kills an attacking lion with his bare hands, and he kills 30 grown men in Ashkelon in his anger. There is a contradiction in his character: on the one hand, he is physically strong, but on the other hand, he is weak and easily manipulated by his wife.[254]

Samson is also pictured as a character who is not concerned with traditions. Even though his parents try to convince him into a more traditional marriage within his own people, he is drawn to a foreign, Philistine woman. This portrayal does not only appear in chapter 14 but throughout the Samson cycle. He also shows a lack of interest in his Nazirite status, although it must be pointed out that nowhere in chapter 14 is Samson called a Nazirite. His Nazirite status is extensively stressed in his birth story in chapter 13, but it seems strange that Samson

[250] OL does not use this word.
[251] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith has argued that circumcision was a central element of self-identification in ancient Israel Elizabeth Block-Smith, "Israelite Ethnicity in Iron I: Archaeology Preserves What Is Remembered and What Is Forgotten in Israel's History," *JBL* 122/3 (2003): 401–425. Cf. also Niditch, *Judges*, 155.
[252] Boling takes the repetition of this phrase as editorial notes (Boling, *Judges,* 229). Cf. also Branson, *Judges*, 134; Butler, *Judges*, 333.
[253] Cf. K. L. Younger Jr., *Judges, Ruth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 300.
[254] This theme re-occurs in the Delilah narrative in ch 16. For more elaboration on Samson's weakness and strength, cf. Assis, "The Structure and Meaning of the Samson Narratives (Jud. 13–16)," 1–12.

constantly acts against the restrictions that are set for him there.[255] The Nazirite law in Numbers 6 includes a prohibition to drink wine and other strong drinks (6:3–4) and instructions for cleansing rituals in case that a Nazirite is defiled by contact with a dead body (6:9–12).[256] When Samson arranges a wedding feast, it is likely that it included drinking. When he grasps and eats the honey from the corpse of a lion, he does not only overlook his cleansing rituals, but he defiles his parents as well by passing the honey to them as well.[257] Branson argues that this is the reason why Samson cannot tell his parents about the origin of the honey.[258]

Samson is the main (external) focalizer in the narrative. For the most part, the theme of knowing and not-knowing is linked to Samson's actions. He does not tell his parents about the lion and the origin of the honey, and only at the end does he reveal the answer to the riddle to his wife. For the sake of the storyline, it is important that no one else could know the answer. Only in verse 15 does the focalization point move away from Samson. As a consequence, Samson does not know that his groomsmen have threatened his wife behind his back. Without knowing this, he reveals the answer of the riddle to his wife. By presenting an unsolvable riddle, Samson is portrayed as a trickster, but in the end *he* is the one who gets tricked, when he loses the control of knowledge to the Philistines.[259]

4.2.3.2. Samson's Father and Mother

The narrator of Judges 14 does not name Samson's parents[260] but calls them "his father and mother" (אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ) throughout the narrative. In the beginning of the narrative, their role is to oppose Samson in his wedding plans. However, the main reason they are included in the narrative is to depict the distribution of knowledge.[261] In verse 4, the parents are unaware

[255] See Assis, "The Structure and Meaning of the Samson Narratives (Jud. 13–16)," 10.
[256] Lev 11:24–25 also gives general instructions on cleansing in the case of touching an animal corpse: (24) "By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until the evening, (25) and whoever carries any part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening." (NRSV) Note also Lev 11:39–40, which prohibits eating a carcass: (39) "If an animal of which you may eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening. (40) Those who eat of its carcass shall wash their clothes and be unclean until the evening; and those who carry the carcass shall wash their clothes and be unclean until the evening." (NRSV)
[257] Butler, *Judges*, 335; and Branson, *Judges*, 134. Stipp has argued, though, that dead animals were not included in the vow. See Hermann-Josef Stipp, "Simson, der Nasiräer," *VT* 45/3 (1995): 337–369.
[258] Branson, *Judges*, 134.
[259] Cf. Branson, *Judges*, 127.
[260] Cf. chapter 13, where Samson's father is called Manoah.
[261] See Butler, *Judges*, 335; and J. A. Wharton, "The Secret of Yahweh: Story and Affirmation in Judges 13–16," *Int* 27 (1973): 55.

that Samson's marriage plans truly derive from YHWH. The narrator shares this information with his audience but not with the characters in the scene. In verse 6, after tearing the lion apart, Samson does not tell about the event to his parents. Here the narrator points out that Samson is the only one who knows about the lion and further underlines this in verse 16 where Samson refuses to tell the answer of his riddle to his wife. For the sake of the outcome of the narrative, it is crucial to convey that Samson himself is the only one who has enough knowledge to solve the riddle. When the companions of Samson have the correct answer, Samson instantly knows that his companions and his wife have deceived him as Samson and his own wife were the only ones who knew the answer.[262]

4.2.3.3. Woman in Timnah

As pointed out above, the foreign status of the Timnahite woman is underlined in the narrative. Her role is to motivate Samson's actions. The wedding of Samson and the Timnahite woman creates the setting for the narrative in which the retribution against the Philistines takes place. Also, Samson's wife is an important link between Samson and his thirty companions. Samson would not reveal the answer of the riddle to the groomsmen, but his wife is able to persuade him.

4.2.3.4. The Philistines

Verse 11 introduces a mysterious "they" who see Samson and give him thirty companions for his wedding. The pronoun "they" presumably refers to the family Samson's wife. It is not altogether clear why the 30 companions are given to Samson. According to LXX^{A}, Syh, and OL^{L}, they are given because "they were afraid of him" (LXX^{A}: ἐν τῷ φοβεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς).[263] Nevertheless, the purpose of appointing these 30 men might be to place them as guards to protect the Philistine family from Samson, or from other Philistines, in case they opposed the marriage. It is also possible, yet less likely, that the purpose of the companions is to protect Samson from outsiders.[264] The 30 companions turn out to be the antagonists of the story.

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[262] See ibid.

[263] Boling, *Judges*, 231. The reading in LXX^{A} may have been caused by a misreading of כראותם "when they saw" as ביראתם "they were afraid" (Butler, *Judges*, 313; Crenshaw, *Samson: A Secret Betrayed, a Vow Ignored,* 85). Another option is that LXX^{A} provides an interpretation that explains why the 30 men were appointed. (Mark W. Bartusch, *Understanding Dan: An Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor* [JSOTSS 379; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003], 145).

[264] See Butler, *Judges*, 336. Boling points out that the word בַּחוּרִים translates as 'young men,' but it may imply military aspects as well (Boling, *Judges*, 231).

They are deceitful as they learn the answer of the riddle by oppressing Samson's wife. In addition, they are portrayed as potentially dangerous by threatening her (v 15).

At the end of the narrative, after realizing the deception, Samson goes to Ashkelon and slays 30 men there in order to pay his debt. According to the narrator's editorial note in verse 4, the true reason for the wedding is YHWH's will to act revenge on the Philistines. Therefore, the bloodbath in Ashkelon fulfills this purpose. It makes the people of Ashkelon the enemies of Israel and of Samson, even though Samson's rampage seems to be driven by his personal will to pay back. As noted before, the repetitions in Judges 14 place the lion on the same level with the men in Ashkelon. Both confrontations begin with the spirit of YHWH rushing onto Samson, and both times Samson takes something from the dead and passes it on to someone else. Using a lion as a metaphor for the enemy is common in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Psalms.[265]

4.2.3.5. YHWH

At first glance, Samson seems to be the main character in this narrative. However, the agency of YHWH is cleverly filtered through Samson's actions. Verse 4 introduces YHWH as a character with his own motives in the storyline. YHWH is truly embodied in the verse as it is stated that he "was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines" (מֵיְהוָה הִיא מְפַלֶּשֶׁת֙ כִּי־תֹאֲנָ֔ה הוּא־מְבַקֵּ֖שׁ). Verse 4 indicates that YHWH is indeed actively taking part in the narrative. Verses 4, 6 and 19 indicate that YHWH uses Samson as a mediator of his agency.[266] He makes Samson want the Philistine woman, kill a lion, and slaughter thirty Philistine men in Ashkelon. However, it should be noted here that, in verses 6 and 19, it is rather the spirit of YHWH that is portrayed as a character. If verse 4 was added later to the composition, then the earlier form of the narrative portrayed the agency of YHWH's character in a more subtle way.

4.2.3.6. The Lion, Samson, and YHWH

The lion in Judges 14 enters the scene in verse 5. Samson is on his way to his wedding when a roaring young lion (כְּפִ֣יר אֲרָיוֹת֮ שֹׁאֵג) meets him at the vineyards of Timnah. It is noteworthy

[265] See e.g. Pss 7:3; 10:8–9; 17:12; 22:14, [17], 22; 34:11; 35:17; 57:5; 58:7; 74:4; and 124:6. For further discussion on the lion–enemy connection in the Hebrew Bible, see Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 273.
[266] According to Block, Samson would not have promoted Israel's cause by himself, and therefore YHWH takes control through his spirit (Butler, *Judges*, 333).

that Samson is on his way to Timnah together with his parents, but he faces the lion alone. Since it is later stated clearly that Samson is the only witness of the bees and the beehive in the carcass of the lion, it is presumed that he is also alone when the beast attacks.[267] The use of the construct כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת is peculiar here since both of the words refer to a lion by themselves.[268] The Hebrew Bible has several different words for lions, and it is not clear what the precise meaning of each was.[269] Indisputably, גור refers to a cub and ארי to a full grown lion. Strawn has argued that the purpose for using the construct כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת in Judg 14 is to point out that this is a subadult male lion (כפיר) that lives as a nomad, away from a pride (אריות).[270] Strawn bases his argument on zoological information and other passages of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ezek. 19:9–19). In the Septuagint, the word כפיר is translated σκυμνος, which refers to a cub or a whelp. The same word is also used to translate גור. It could be that the translator wanted to follow the original text literally, and therefore used the word σκυμνος, which covered both כפיר and גור. Apparently, the semantic field of the Greek word was wider, or Greek simply does not have as many acceptable terms for lions as are used in Old Testament Hebrew.

The lion is also described as roaring (שאג) when it meets Samson. Again, comparable passages and zoological information indicate that a lion roars when it is hungry (Ps. 104:21), when it is preparing to hunt (but not during the hunt!), when it has caught food (Amos 3:4), or when it is in the middle of an attack.[271] Roaring supports the assumption that כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת is a subadult lion. In his field study of African lions, George B. Schaller states that "the full roar is not displayed until subadulthood."[272] In other words, כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת שֹׁאֵג is the most dangerous kind of land predator to cross paths with.[273]

Even though one would expect a human character to meet his end when encountered by such a lion, quite the opposite happens: the spirit of YHWH rushes on Samson (וַתִּצְלַח עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה)

[267] Both the A and B texts of LXX use a singular form when translating the verb 'they came.' However, in the A text, ויבאו 'to come' is rendered with ἐξέκλινεν 'to deviate, to turn away,' while the B text is in line with MT by rendering the Hebrew word with ἦλθεν 'to come.'
[268] See Strawn, "Kĕpîr ' ărāyôt in Judges 14:5," *VT* 59/1 (2009): 150–158.
[269] Strawn, "Kĕpîr ' ărāyôt in Judges 14:5," 153.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Strawn, "Kĕpîr ' ărāyôt in Judges 14:5," 152; *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 35; and George B. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion: A Study of Predator-Prey Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 103–115. Schaller points out several different situations of roaring in addition to these, but the above mentioned are significant for the context of Judges 14.
[272] Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 103.
[273] Strawn, "Kĕpîr ' ărāyôt in Judges 14:5," 158.

who tears the lion apart like a kid, bare handed (וַיְשַׁסְּעֵהוּ כְּשַׁסַּע הַגְּדִי). The theme of the spirit of YHWH coming upon someone appears also in the narratives of Othniel (3:10), Gideon (6:34) and Jephthah (11:29). In these cases the spirit of YHWH provides the characters authority as they are called to lead the Israelites into battle. The phrase also appears in 1 Sam 10:6 and 10:10 where it depicts Saul in a state of prophetic ecstasy. In 1 Sam 11:6, it is again used in the context of going to battle.[274] The use of the phrase in Judges 14:6 is different. Samson does not prophesy nor lead Israel to war. Instead, the spirit of YHWH rushing on him indicates a physical possession that grants Samson superhuman strength to carry out personal exploits.[275]

The verb שׁסע (pi. 'tear in two') also occurs in verse 6. George F. Moore notes that the verb occurs also in Lev 1:17 in a description of a ritual tearing of the wings of a dove. Moore carefully suggests that the tearing of a kid might be a ceremonial act as well. However, he points out that the ceremonial aspect is not the most important here nor is the ease of the act. The comparison is made to visualize the way that the tearing is done.[276] Whether a ceremonial act is at the background of this description or not, it is most interesting what the lion is compared to here. While the threat of the predator is drawn on the highest possible level in the previous verse, it is now minimized by creating a metaphorical connection between a lion and a kid.[277] The most dangerous type of predator is diminished to the same level as a domesticated animal that hardly strikes fear. In LXX^{A}, the comparison is stressed even more. The translator has used two words to translate גדי: ἔριφον αἰγῶν 'a kid of goats.' The form of this rendering comes close to that of the description of the lion in verse 5 כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת, which is translated σκύμνος λεόντων in the Septuagint.

The sentence "he tore it apart as a kid is torn apart" (וַיְשַׁסְּעֵהוּ כְּשַׁסַּע הַגְּדִי) would be enough to point out to a reader that Samson is unarmed. However, this is even further stressed by adding that Samson acts with nothing in his hands (וּמְאוּמָה אֵין בְּיָדוֹ).[278] Killing without an adequate weapon appears also in 1 Sam 17:50, where David kills Goliath without a sword in

[274] Victor Harold Matthews, *Judges and Ruth* (NCBC; Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 145.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Moore, 331. See also Boling, *Judges*, 349. Cf. 1 Sam. 17:34–36; 2 Sam. 23:20.
[277] Cf. e.g. Branson, *Judges*, 134.
[278] Cf. the accounts of Ehud (Judg 3:16), Shamgar (Judg 3:31) and Jael (Judg 4:21), who kill with improvised weapons. See Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 2012), 368.

his hand (וְחֶרֶב אֵין בְּיַד־דָּוִד). It should be noted though that David does not kill Goliath with his bare hands but with a sling and a stone. According to Strawn, these two passages indicate that "only the truly heroic […] are able to accomplish such feats without adequate weaponry."[279] It should be stressed once again that Samson does not act on his own here. He receives his strength from YHWH, and it is the spirit of YHWH that takes possession of him. Therefore, as Webb points out, Samson does not need a weapon in his hand because *he* is a weapon of YHWH.[280]

4.2.3.7. Bees, Honey, and the Carcass of the Lion

When Samson returns to the vineyards, he faces a very differently portrayed lion than the first time he encountered it. The corpse of the lion is left abandoned on the road, and it is likely dried up already as there is no mention of a rotting body with vermin.[281] However, the carcass has become the host of a beehive. The MT and LXX paint a slightly different picture of the lion carcass with a beehive in it. In the MT version, Samson sees a swarm of bees inside the body (בגוית) of the lion. In both the A and B versions of LXX, Samson sees the swarm of bees inside *the mouth* (ἐν τῷ στόματι) of the lion. There are no variants in the Greek manuscripts, hence 'the mouth' is not only OG but also the only reading attested in this passage. MT uses עֲדַת דְּבוֹרִים to describe the beehive, which precisely translates as a congregation or a gathering of bees. In the Hebrew Bible, עֵדָה usually refers to Israel as a community of God. Butler, following Block, suggests that, in Judg 14:8, the purpose for using עֲדַת is to indicate that the bees have been able to form a community when neither Israel nor Samson are able to do so.[282] Some scholars take the appearance of bees as a link to Deborah because of the similar words. Be that as it may, the image of a beehive in a carcass of a lion does not have direct counterparts within the Hebrew Bible or outside of it.[283]

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[279] Strawn, "Kĕpîr ' ărāyôt in Judges 14:5," 151. The role of Samson's parents have to be taken into account here as well. They disappear from the scene when the three of them reach the vineyards of Timnah. Boling suggests that the reason for this shift of person is that there are two separate traditions compiled together here: the slaying of the lion and the betrothal of Samson (Boling, *Judges*, 348). Also, for the sake of the storyline, it is important that Samson faces the lion alone. verse 6 ends by reporting that Samson did not tell his mother and father what he had done. The event will later be the basis of Samson's unsolvable riddle, and it is therefore important that he is the only one who knows the answer.

[280] Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 374.

[281] Cf. Butler, *Judges*, 335.

[282] Butler, *Judges*, 335; and Block, 429.

[283] There might be a possible connection to the Greek myth of Aristaeus in which there are beehives inside of corpses. See Othniel Margalith, "Samson's Riddle and Samson's Magic Locks," *VT* 36/2 (1986): 227–229; Pnina Galpaz-Feller, *Samson: the Hero and the Man. The Story of Samson (Judges 13–16)*, (Peter Lang AG: Bern), 112–113; and Niditch, *Judges*, 156.

However, I find it more pertinent for this context that, in several passages in the Hebrew Bible, bees are representations of enemies.[284] As already noted, the repetitions in the narrative assimilate the lion with Samson's enemies. Therefore, it is interesting that, when Samson returns to the carcass of the lion, he once again faces creatures that are assimilated with enemies in Biblical literature. It takes courage to confront a roaring lion, but it also takes courage to approach a swarm of bees.[285]

Even though the carcass of a lion is likely not a place where bees would make a beehive, honey and beehives are found in the wild in the Israel/Palestine region. The excavations in Tel Rehov also show evidence of bee-keeping.[286] Niditch takes honey in Judges 14 as a symbol of fertility and appropriate food to be eaten before weddings.[287] The passages in the Hebrew Bible indicate that honey was perceived to contain a special, reviving capacity. For instance, in 1 Sam 14:29, honey provides courage.[288] All in all, the use of bees and honey in Judg 14 paints a multifaceted picture that includes the element of fear and danger in the form of bees and the aspects of fertility, competence, and courage in the form of honey.

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

Judges 14 has two central themes. The first is the interplay between Samson's weakness and strength, a theme that overarches from chapter 14 to 16. On the one hand, he has superhuman physical strength, but he is weak when it comes to women. The second theme is YHWH's revenge against the Philistines, who hold Israel under their rule. This makes possible the interpretation of Samson's *tour de force* with the lion and his enemies as a pious act, executed with the help of the deity. Even though the lion only makes a brief appearance in the narrative, its role as a character is significant. First of all, the violent confrontation and the death of the lion demonstrate the power of Samson and, more importantly, of YHWH, who gives strength to Samson. Second of all, the image of the corpse of the lion with a beehive and honey in it becomes the basis of Samson's riddle. The thirty men in Ashkelon

[284] Deut 1:44, Isa 7:18, Ps 118:12. For the fear of bees, see Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 269.
[285] Cf. Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 269.
[286] Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen, "It is the Land of Honey: Beekeeping at Tel Rehov," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 70 (2007): 202–219.
[287] Niditch, *Judges*, 155; cf. also David Bynum, *The Daemon in the Wood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 42–51, 58–62.
[288] Cf. also 1 Kings 14. Cf. Boling, *Judges*, 230.

are not represented as characters who act in the storyline. They are merely mentioned as the targets of Samson and YHWH's wrath. The men in Ashkelon are depicted as vehicles in a similar way that the lion is.

There are several lion motifs in the narrative. There is an encounter of a man and a roaring male lion. The man tears the lion apart with his hands. In other words, there are no weapons included in this literary image. When Samson kills the lion, the spirit of YHWH rushes on him and gives him his extraordinary strength. Therefore, there is also the image of a deity lending strength to a man who kills a lion, or, to be more precise, the deity uses the man as a vehicle, a weapon, to kill the lion. Therefore, YHWH could even be seen as a lion slayer himself since he makes Samson act this way. Another type of lion image in this constellation is a dead lion with bees and a beehive in its body or mouth. The man scrapes the honey from lion's corpse, eats it, and passes it on. The literary analysis revealed parallelism in the depiction of the lion and the 30 men in Ashkelon. At the beginning of the narrative, YHWH initiates the chain of events because he is seeking a pretext to act against the Philistines. Samson's violent raid in Ashkelon fulfills this purpose. The men in Ashkelon can be viewed as the enemies of Samson, Israel, or YHWH, and hence the narrative pictures the lion and the enemies as parallel. Comparison to other Hebrew Bible texts has revealed that both lions and bees are associated with enemies. In the following section, I discuss the iconographic motifs of heroic combat between an anthropomorphic figure and a lion, lions as enemies, and dead lions in association with bees and beehives.

4.4. Iconographic Congruencies

4.4.1. Heroic Combat

In ancient Near Eastern art, there is a vast number of images that would be congruent with the image in Judges 14 except for one major issue. Most of the portrayals of combat between an anthropomorphic figure and a lion include weapons. Depictions of an unarmed hero are rare. In the art of the Israel/Palestine region, there are only a few known examples of unarmed anthropomorphic figures encountering a lion. One of these is a scarab from Ashkelon (**fig. 4.1**), and another is a seal impression from Wadi Daliyeh (**fig. 4.2**). The scarab from Ashkelon portrays combat between an anthropomorphic male character and a male lion. The lion is standing on its hind legs with its front paws on the shoulders of the anthropomorphic character. The faces of the characters are on the same level. The

anthropomorphic character is portrayed with long hair and a beard, and he is wearing a waist cloth. According to Othmar Keel, the Egyptian god Bes is often portrayed in this composition on scarabs. However, in this case, the anthropomorphic figure is a Near Eastern hero character, who is typically portrayed fighting a wild animal or a composite creature.[289] Even though there is no weapon seen on this scarab, the possibility of a weapon should not be excluded. The left hand of the anthropomorphic character is clinched in a fist against the chest of the lion. It could be that the artist has meant that the character is holding, for instance, a knife that he has sunk into the chest of the animal.

Fig. 4.1. Scarab, Ashkelon (Grid 50), Persian Period (c. 6th – 4th). Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Akko Nr. 59.

Another Persian Period example of an unarmed hero and a lion is from Wadi Daliyeh. This seal depicts an anthropomorphic male character wrestling with a male lion. The nude anthropomorphic character has grasped the mane of the lion and has raised it slightly above the ground. Even though the anthropomorphic figure is battling the lion with his bare hands, a club is depicted behind him. The role of the club is interesting here. Is it there to be used, or is it there to demonstrate that the male character does not need it? Together with the accompanying *bullae*, it becomes evident that the Wadi Daliyeh seals represent Heraclean iconography. The distinctive elements are the lion-skin cape and hood on the hero, his club, and his bow and arrows.[290] The imagery of the Greek hero/god Heracles was certainly around in Persian Period Israel/Palestine, but as Brent Strawn and Mary Joan Leith point out, it is hard to say how the owners of the seals interpreted it.[291]

[289] Keel, *Corpus* I, 712.
[290] Albert Schachter, "Heracles," *OCD* (2003): 685. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 108. In the Greek myth of twelve labors, Heracles is sent to slay a monstrous lion that lived in a cave near Nemea. Heracles learns that the lion's hide is impenetrable to arrows and sword, and therefore he uses his club to stun the beast and his bare hands to strangle it. In ancient Greek art, the iconography of Heracles was firmly established during the Archaic Period (7/600–480 BCE) (Albert Schachter, "Heracles," The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization [2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2014]).
[291] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 108; and Mary Joan Winn Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I: The Wadi Daliyeh Seal Impressions* (DJD 24; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 85–86.

Fig. 4.2. Seal impression, Wadi Daliyeh (unprovenanced), Late Persian Period (375–335). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Wadi ed-Dalije Nr. 20.

In search for a closer counterpart to the unarmed lion slayer in Judges 14, one has to take a further leap back in time and distance. An Akkadian cylinder seal (2220–2159 BCE) portrays a double image of a nude hero wrestling with a male lion (**fig. 4.3**). The hero is shown in profile and he has long hair and a beard. He is muscular and depicted nude except for a belt. He is kneeling on one knee, he has one arm around the lion's neck, and the other arm is around the lion's body to grasp its tail. In this position, the neck of the lion is bent back and the belly is faced upwards. The beast is standing on its hind legs, and the forelegs beat the air. The inscription identifies the seal's owner as Shakullum, a servant of Puzur-Shullat, priest of the city of Duram.[292]

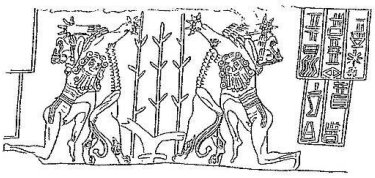

Fig. 4.3. Cylinder seal, Akkadian, 2400–2200. Image: Strawn 4.207 (see also 4.206); Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 3.

Sarah Kielt Costello discusses a type of hero that consistently appears on Mesopotamian seals. According to Costello, "from the fourth to the third millennium BC, […] a figure

[292] Joan Aruz and Ronald Wallenfels, *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. From the Mediterranean to the Indus* (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 218.

representing heroic power appears as a common motif on cylinder seals. Known as the 'nude hero,' he emerges out of existing Master of Animals iconography and remains a common character in Mesopotamian art for several millennia." Costello defines the character as "a man with six distinctive curls of hair, three on each side of his head, his bearded face shown frontally, his body nude except for a belt. He has a counterpart, the 'bull man,' with whom he is sometimes shown; their relationship varies from friendly to combative."[293]

There are variable ways in which the nude hero, the bull man, and the animals are portrayed on the seals, but the overall theme seems to be "civilization versus the wild." The nude hero represents the human control of civilization.[294] Sometimes in the scenes of combat between the nude hero and a lion, there is a domesticated animal present as well. This indicates that the nude hero is protecting a heard and human livelihood.

In addition to the nude hero, a figure called "the royal hero" also appears on Akkadian Period seals.[295] Occasionally, these two characters even appear in the same image, and sometimes either one of them is accompanied by the bull-man. In contrast to the nude hero, the royal hero fights lions with a weapon. Costello argues that the nude hero "represented godlike heroism and superhuman strength, while the armed hero more overtly reflected the accoutrements of kingship."[296] Connecting weaponry to kingship could provide an explanation for the predominance of armed lion slayers in ancient Near Eastern iconography also in later periods.

During the following centuries, weapons do indeed increasingly gain ground in the combat scenes between a man and a lion, and the scenes are often connected to kingship, although deities seem to appear in this motif as well. Perhaps the most prominent illustration of combat between a man and a lion is the motif of the Royal Lion Hunt, which covers several geographic areas, cultures and time periods. The Neo-Assyrian court exploited this motif most systematically, connecting the lion hunt closely to royal propaganda, and its use

[293] Costello, "The Mesopotamian 'Nude Hero': Context and Interpretations," 25.
[294] Ibid., 29.
[295] Cf. BM121547; Dominique Collon, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Cylinder Seals II: Akkadian, Post Akkadian, Ur III Periods* (London: Britishm Museum Publications, 1982).
[296] Costello, "The Mesopotamian 'Nude Hero': Context and Interpretations," 33. See also Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 59a.

culminated at the time of Assurbanipal.[297] According to literary and iconographic sources, lion hunts really took place in the Neo-Assyrian empire. For instance, the enormous palace reliefs (see **fig. 4.4**), discovered in Assurbanipal's North Palace in Nineveh (Room S^1, 668–627 BCE), depict a hunt stage by stage and portray the king as an armed lion slayer. Several different weapons are displayed as instruments that the king uses to kill lions. A dagger, a sword, a mace, a spear, and a bow and arrows are depicted in the images and their epigraphs. It seems like the purpose of this picture has been to demonstrate that the king can master all of these. Certainly, the Assyrian emperor does not have to kill a lion bare handed; he has a vast arsenal of weapons to accomplish the deed. Indeed, several kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire were represented as lion hunters, but they were always portrayed as striking down the lions with spear, bow and arrow or sword whether they hunted them on horseback, or in a chariot or on foot.[298]

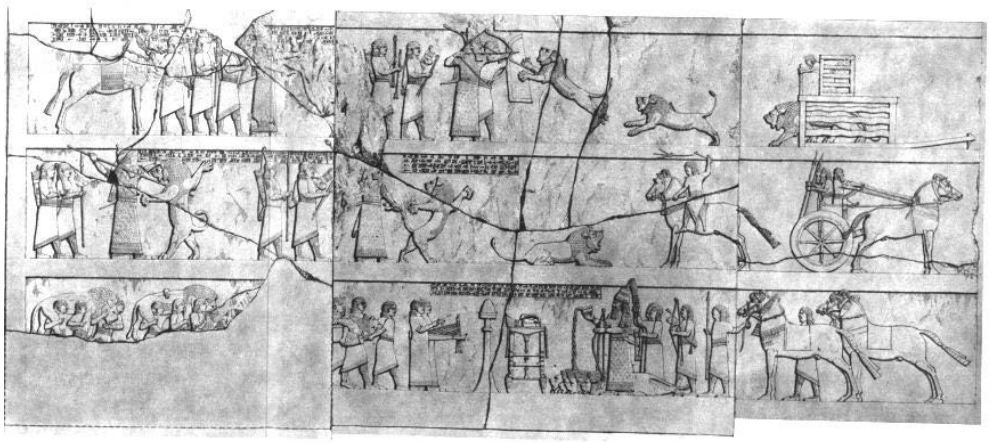

Fig. 4.4. Wall panel, Nineveh (North Palace of Assurbanipal, Room S^1, Slabs C-E), 668-627. Slab C: The Louvre (AO 19903), Slabs D&E: The British Museum (BM 124886–7). Image: Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, Pl. LVI.

4.4.2. Lions as a Symbol of the Enemy

The repetitions in Judges 14 indicate a connection between the lion and the 30 men in Ashkelon, that is, the enemies of YHWH and Samson. Such a connection between enemies and lions is often seen in the iconographic record of the ancient Near East. Lions were used

[297] Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," 339; and Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 163.
[298] Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East", 55–58.

in the visual constellations to represent a general threat, forces of chaos, or a threat to civilization and order. In such iconographic portrayals, the enemy is the lions *per se* and the forces that they represent. **Fig. 4.5** is a late Babylonian or early Persian period scarab (600–450) from Beth Shean, and it depicts a lion that is attacking a cow. The lion approaches the cow from behind while the cow is nursing a calf. This motif has a very old counterpart in Mesopotamian art. An Early Dynastic period cylinder seal depicts a lion that is attacking a cow in labor (**fig 4.6**). A nude male figure is jumping towards the lion, ready to strike it with his spear. The lion's natural behavior as a predator seems to have steered its associations to negative forces and threats to order.

Fig. 4.5. Scarab, Beth Shean (surface find), probably Late Babylonian – Early Persian Period (600–450). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Bet-Schean Nr. 194.

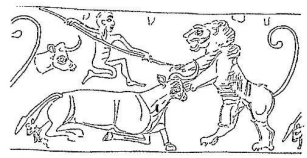

Fig. 4.6. Seal, early 3rd millennium. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.21.

However, in visual representations, lions were also associated with human enemies. The concept of the royal lion hunt is closely connected to the association between lions and enemies. As pointed out above, the Neo-Assyrian court exploited the concept most extensively, but there were several other cultural areas that were familiar with it and that used it in their royal and official art. For instance, in Egyptian art, pharaoh is often depicted as a royal lion slayer. It is noteworthy how similar the depictions of 'pharaoh as the lion slayer' and 'pharaoh as the conqueror of enemies' are. A relief from Medinet Habu depicts a pharaoh shooting lions with arrows and trampling them under his chariot (**fig. 4.7**). A scarab from Deir el-Balah does not only demonstrate that the motif of a king as a conqueror was known in the Israel/Palestine region during Late Bronze Age, but it also indicates that, in such a constellation, human enemies and lions were replaceable with each other (**fig. 4.8**). An ostracon from the Valley of the Kings confirms the symbolic connection between lions and enemies (**Fig. 4.9**). In this piece, Ramses III smites a lion with a spear, and the

inscription says: ”The slaughterer of every foreign country, the pharaoh – may he live, prosper, and be well!”[299]

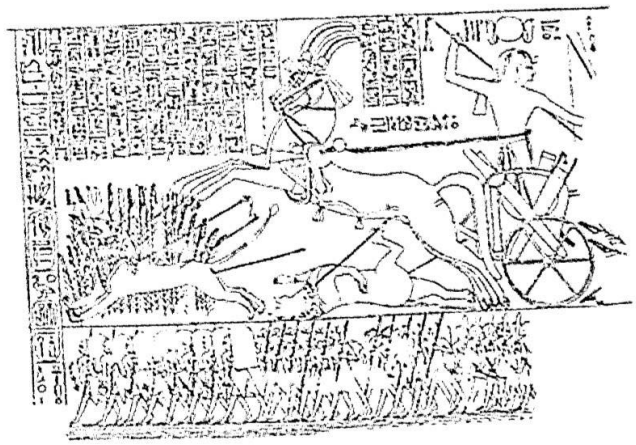

Fig. 4.7. Relief, Medinet Habu, Ramesses III (1184–1153). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.116.

Fig. 4.8. Scarab, Deir el-Balah, 19th Dyn. (1292–1190). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Der el-Balah Nr. 137.

Fig. 4.9. Limestone ostracon, Valley of the Kings, Ramesside. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.115.

Neo-Assyrian depictions of the royal lion hunt provide interesting counterparts for Judges 14.[300] Several reliefs from Assurbanipal’s North Palace in Nineveh portray lions and lion hunts. One of these is the above discussed **fig. 4.4** that depicts all the stages of the hunt. First, the lions are released from their cages into a hunting arena, and during the hunt, the

[299] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 162. Cf. also William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vol. 2.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 390.

[300] In the Israel/Palestine region, the Mesopotamian version of the lion hunt was known through the imperial seals of the Neo-Assyrian and Persian empires (See **fig 3.53**).

king kills the lions with several different weapons. The epigraphs of these wall panels reveal that killing a lion was not that easy, and the king received divine encouragement from gods.

> ”I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my great sport, an angry lion of the plain from a cage they brought out. On foot, **three times** I pierced him with an **arrow** (but) **he did not die**. At **the command of Nergal**, king of the plain, **who granted me strength and manliness**, afterward, with the iron dagger from my belt, I **stabbed him (and) he died**.”[301]

> ”I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my pleasure, on foot, a fierce lion of the plain, I seized it by its ears. **With the encouragement of Assur and Ishtar**, lady of battle, with my spear I pierced its body.”[302]

> “I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my princely sport, a lion of the plain I seized by the tail. **At the command of Ninurta and Nergal**, the gods, my trust, with my mace I smashed its skull.”[303]

At the end of the hunt, the dead lions are carried to the king and they become part of a libation ceremony (**fig. 4.10**). The king stands in front of an altar and a tall stand. Four dead lions lay at his feet. The arrangement of the image makes the focus center on the altar and the king. The king holds a bow in his left hand and pours a libation over the lions with his right hand. The epigraph reveals that, by holding a bow, the king dedicates his victory to Ištar of Arbela.

> ”I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, whom Assur and Mulissu have granted exalted strength. The lions that I killed: I held the fierce bow of Ishtar, lady of battle, over them, I set up an offering over them, (and) made a libation over them.”[304]

[301] Epigraph on a relief, North Palace of Assurbanipal, Nineveh, room S[1], slab C, top row (AO19903), 7th c. (668–627). Translation John Mallcom Russell (*The Writing On the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* [MC 9; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 201–202), bolding mine.
[302] Epigraph on a relief, North Palace of Assurbanipal, Nineveh, room S[1], slab C, middle row. Translation John Mallcom Russell (*The Writing On the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* [MC 9; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 201–202), bolding mine.
[303] Epigraph on a relief, North Palace of Assurbanipal, Nineveh, room S[1], slab D, middle row (BM124886). Translation John Mallcom Russell (*The Writing On the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* [MC 9; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 201–202), bolding mine.
[304] Epigraph on a relief, North Palace of Assurbanipal, Nineveh, room S[1], slab D, bottom row. Translation John Mallcom Russell (*The Writing On the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* [MC 9; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 201–202).

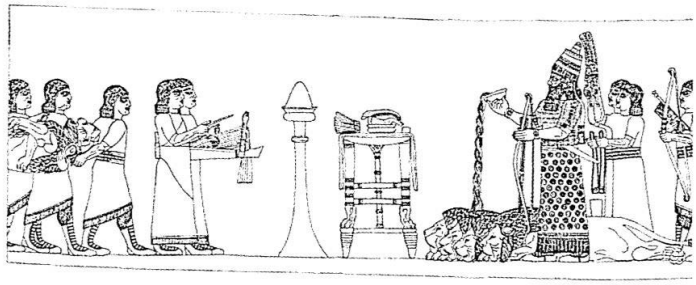

Fig. 4.10. Alabastrine limestone relief, Nineveh (North Palace of Assurbanipal, room S[1], slab D), 7th c. (668–627). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.129.

This libation scene has a counterpart in another relief from the palace. The slab of this fragmentary artefact depicts a city by a river, possibly Arbela, and four circuits of walls (**fig. 4.12**). At the top left corner, king Assurbanipal is depicted standing on the walls in front of a city gate.[305] The layout is precisely the same as the libation detail in **fig. 4.11**. The two are mirror images of each other. Due to the poor condition of this piece, important details are barely visible, but luckily epigraphs can provide converging information. Several textual sources reveal that the relief depicts the aftermath of Assurbanipal's victory in battle. After defeating his enemies, the king makes an offering over the severed head of Teumman, the king of Elam, and of Dunanu, his Gambulean ally. The procedure is precisely the same as with lions: the king is standing in front of a table with offerings, sets his bow over the defeated opponent, dedicates him to Ištar of Arbela, and then pours wine. The juxtaposition of lions and enemies is very clear in these two reliefs and the epigraphs.[306]

[305] Richard D. Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, 668–627 B.C.* (London: British Museum Publications, 1976), 43; Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," 350.

[306] Epigraphs on Tablets, **No. 21, K 2674+: II 26-28** *[ultu parṣī bīt akī]t ušallimu Dunanu mār Bēl-iqiša [Gambulāyya b]uppāniš ashupšuma [(…) tilpānu az]qupa ṣēruššu* [After] I had performed to the full [the rites of the akītu temp]le (=in Milqiya), I threw Dunanu, son of Bel-iqisha [the Gambulean], flat on his [f]ace, and [(…) I s]et up [a bow] over him. **K 2642: 44-45** *ina ūmēšu qaštu šuātu ina qātīya atmu[h …] eli nikis qaqqad Teumman šar māt Ela[mti azqup …]* At that time I grab[b]ed in my hands that bow (=to be dedicated to Ishtar of Arbela) […], [I set it up] over the severed head of Teumman, king of Elam […]. **Prism B: VI 66-67** *nikis qaqqad Teumman ina irat abul qabal āli ša Ninua umahhira mahhuriš* (Regarding) the severed head of Teumman, I made an offering over it in front of the gate leading into the acropolis of Niniveh. **Epigraphs on Tablets, No. 14, K 2674+: II 3** *qaqqadī [nakir]īya akkis karānu aqq[â elīšun]* I cut off the heads of my [enemie]s (=Teumman and his allies), I poured wine over them. (Transliterations and translations: Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," Fig. 2).

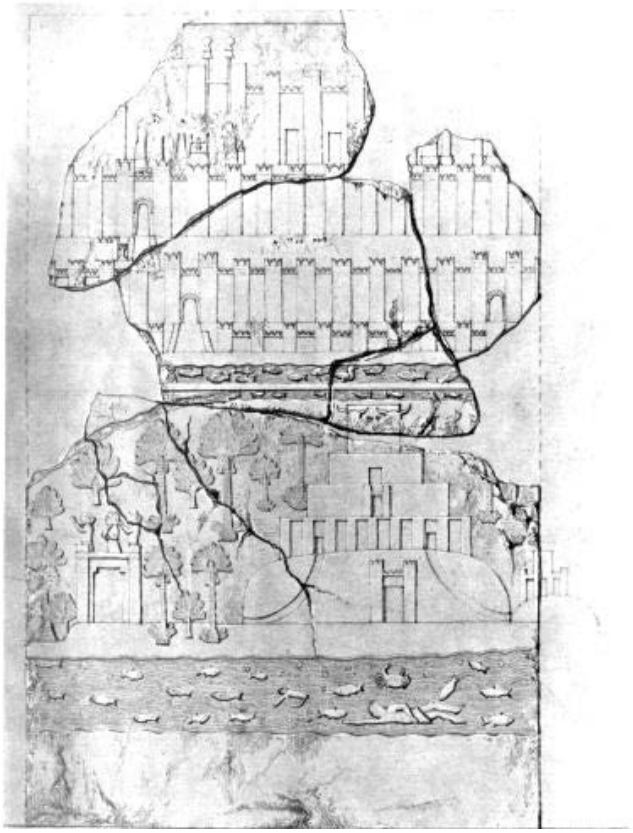

Fig. 4.11. Relief fragments, Nineveh (North Palace of Assurbanipal, Room I, Slab 9). Louvre Museum (AO19914). Image: Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, Pl. XXVI.

4.4.3. Dead Lions, Beehives and Bees

One significant part of the lion imagery in Judges 14 is the scene in which Samson returns to see the dead lion on the road. He sees that, inside the corpse (either in its stomach or in its mouth), there is a beehive, bees and honey, which he grasps to eat. Among the visual sources of the ancient Near East, there are no iconographic congruencies for this peculiar literary image. Dead lions are not depicted in the art of the Israel/Palestine region. However, the picture of a dying or dead lion was often utilized in the lion hunt compositions of the ancient Near East. There is yet one significant difference between the ancient Near Eastern visual portrayals of dead and dying lions compared to Judges 14. The Egyptian and Assyrian reliefs discussed above depict how lions are killed in several violent ways. They are shot, stabbed, and pierced, and some Neo-Assyrian reliefs even depict lions vomiting blood in their death struggle (**fig. 4.12**). As violent as these depictions are, they do not represent lions being torn apart, as in Judges 14. In fact, the bodies of the lions are treated with more respect than the bodies of dead human enemies. The Neo-Assyrian reliefs depict human enemies being

impaled, flayed alive (**fig. 4.13**), or even beheaded as Teumman was. The lions, on the other hand, are brought to the king after the hunt, and their corpses are not desecrated. According to Michael B. Dick, by killing lions, the himself king becomes a lion. Therefore "[…] the defeated lion is never mutilated but is treated with respect, unlike the fate of the king's human foes."[307]

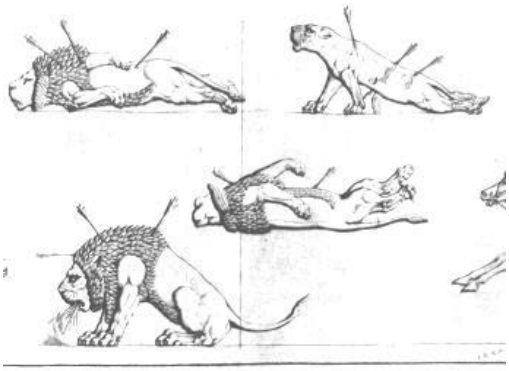

Fig. 4.12. Detail of a relief, Nineveh (North Palace of Assurbanipal, Room C, Slab 25–26). The British Museum (BM124855–6). Image: Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh (668–627 B.C.)*, Pl. X.

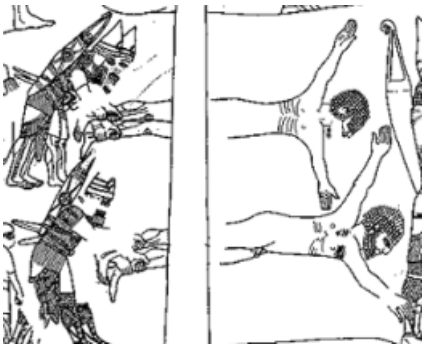

Fig. 4.13. Detail of a relief (The Lachish relief), Nineveh (Palace of Sennacherib, Room XXXVI, Slabs 9–10). Image adapted from: David Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Institute of Archeology, 1982), fig. 65.

The addition of bees and beehives delimits the iconographic congruencies of the composition in Judges 14 even more. So far, there is no known visual depiction from the ancient Near East that includes bees, a beehive, and a lion. Bees do occasionally appear in the iconographic record of the Israel/Palestine region as part of other compositions. In Middle and Late Bronze Age art and in some Early Iron Age art, bees are depicted in originally Egyptian or Egyptian style scarabs (e.g. **fig. 4.14**). In Egypt, bees were associated with Pharaoh.[308] Two scarabs from Tell el-Ajjul indicate this. They depict a bee together with a

[307] Dick, "The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt," 244–245.
[308] Silvia Schroer, *Die Tiere in der Bibel: Eine kulturgeschichtliche Reise* (Fribourg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 2010), 138. Also, in Greek iconography, bees were associated with Artemis. Cf. e.g. Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer, *Eva - Mutter Alles Lebendigen: Frauen- Und Göttinnenidole Aus Dem Alten Orient* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004), 226ff, No. 209.

bulrush in a hieroglyph inscription (*nswt bjtj*) that reads: "which belongs to the bulrush and the bee," in other words, the "King of Upper and Lower Egypt" (**figs. 4.15-4.16**).[309] A bee as the main motif is unusual in Egyptian style glyptic art of the Israel/Palestine region.[310] There are no beehives in the iconographic record of Israel/Palestine region.[311] However, the archaeological findings in Tel Reḥov show that beekeeping was practiced in the Israel/Palestine region during the Iron Age.[312]

Fig. 4.14. Scarab, Jerusalem, Late MB IIB (1650–1500). Image: Keel, *Corpus* V, Jerusalem Nr. 49.

Fig. 4.15. Scarab, Tell el-Ajjul, LB (1530–1400). Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Tell el-'Aǧul Nr. 424.

Fig. 4.16. Scarab, Tell el-Ajjul (find context unknown), LB (1514–1479. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Tell el-'Aǧul Nr. 1071.

4.5. The Lion Imagery in Judges 14

Even though lions were considered to be mortal beasts, they were still respected and feared.[313] The lion constellation of Judges 14 seems to have similarities with Mesopotamian lion hunt traditions and with the 'nude hero' imagery. According to the iconographic record, the motif of the lion hunt was known in the Israel/Palestine region as well, at least to some extent.[314] However, the literary constellation in Judges 14 carries unique features compared to the iconographic sources. First of all, there are no weapons included in the encounter between Samson and the lion, which is exceptional in ancient Near Eastern art. Second, the lion is torn apart. In ancient Near Eastern art, the bodies of dead lions were treated with more respect. Third, the constellation of a torn body of a lion with bees, a beehive, and honey does not appear anywhere in the iconographic record of the ancient Near East.

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[309] Othmar Keel, *Corpus Der Stempelsiegel-Amulette Aus Palästina/Israel: Von Den Anfängen Bis Zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band III: Von Tell El-Far'a Bis Tell El-Fir* (OBO.SA 31; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 336. Also Keel, *Corpus* I, 246; 470.
[310] Keel, *Corpus* III, 336.
[311] However, Schroer (*IPIAO* 2, fig. 471) notes that a bronze (silver overlay) bull figure that was found in a clay pot is similar to a beehive. See Schroer, *IPIAO* 2, 236–237.
[312] See Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen, "It is the Land of Honey: Beekeeping at Tel Reḥov," *NEA* 70:4 (2007): 202–219; Amihai Mazar et al., "Iron Age Beehives at Tel Reḥov in the Jordan Valley," *Antiquity* 82 (2008): 629–639; and Amihai Mazar, "Rehob," *OEBA* 1:221–230.
[313] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 145: "[…] the lion is used in various ways to construct an almost – oftentimes an exactly – *supernatural* creature, one that threatens both the divine and human realms."
[314] Cf. **fig. 3.53**.

The purpose of using a lion in the narrative is to enhance Samson's physical strength. The lion lends its aggressive power as Samson becomes the defeater of כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת, the most dangerous kind of lion. The character of Samson is depicted in a similar way as the Greek Heracles, and he also resembles the Akkadian nude hero with his long hair, crude physical strength, and physical contact with the lion. The similarities do not necessarily require a borrowing from one culture to another, but only an overlapping of concepts. According to Susan Niditch, we should acknowledge "that more than one epic tradition enlivened the ancient Mediterranean world, and that cross-fertilization between various traditions is to be expected."[315]

The narrator clearly emphasizes that Samson has no weapons when he kills the lion. This is in contradiction with the depiction of monarchs who are portrayed as lion slayers in ancient Near Eastern art. Whereas Samson is portrayed killing a lion with nothing in his hands, the ancient Near Eastern monarchs are portrayed with a wide range of weapons. Both of these descriptions aim to underscore the courage and strength of the human hero. On the other hand, it might also reflect the savage or archaic nature of the character. Samson is not a character who would be portrayed as a shepherd of people or a guardian of civilization and human order. Rather, he is a hero who overcomes a beast, quite like the Greek Heracles. Against this background, the monarchs in the iconographic sources are no inferior to Samson. It is *not* that they *could not* kill a lion with their bare hands, but as civilized rulers, they had a vast number of modern, man-made weapons to choose from. They do not need to slay a beast with only their bare hands.

However, here the role of YHWH becomes extremely pivotal. Samson may have been depicted as unarmed because he is a weapon of the Lord.[316] The spirit of YHWH rushes on to Samson and takes control of him. Therefore, Samson is not the true lion slayer, but a vehicle, a weapon that the deity uses to conduct this deed. In this sense there is a difference in the portrayal of the deity when we compare YHWH in Judges 14 to the Assyrian deities in palace relief inscriptions. Assur, Ištar, and Nergal provide strength and divine support to the Assyrian king and thereby legitimize him as a lion slayer and protector of the realm. In

[315] Niditch, *Judges,* 9.
[316] As Webb has suggested (Webb, *The Book of Judges,* 267).

Judges 14, the motivation to act becomes from YHWH (v. 4). However, YHWH is portrayed as a transcendent deity,[317] who acts on the background and uses a mediator to achieve his goal.

In ancient Near Eastern culture, the 'lion' carried multidimensional symbolic value; it was representative of several different deities and monarchs, but it could be conceived to represent enemies and forces of chaos as well.[318] In Judges 14, the lion also seems to correlate with enemies as the repetitions in the narrative indicate. Also, the use of bees in the same image with the lion supports this correlation because both of these animals were associated with enemies in the Hebrew Bible. However, the strange portrait of a beehive, bees, and honey inside the corpse of the lion is a unique feature of the Biblical narrative. It could be that Judges 14 intentionally portrays something that is not conventional in art or literature. In the end, the image became the basis for Samson's riddle, a riddle that was impossible to solve because Samson was the only one who had seen the image. Perhaps the purpose was to mix two different images in order to confuse – not only Samson's wedding party – but the audience of the narrative as well.

[317] Mark Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 93, 176. Cf. Amy C. Merrill Willis, "Heavenly Bodies: God and the Body in Visions of Daniel," in *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, eds. S. Tamar Kamionkowski and Wonil Kim (LHBOTS 465; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 20 and Howard Schwartz, "Does God have a Body? The Problem of Metaphor and Literal Language in Biblical Interpretation," in *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible,* 209–210.
[318] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*; Cornelius; Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," 349.

5. 1 Kings 13:11–32

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. Translation

11. A certain old prophet lived in Bethel. And his son came and told him all the deeds that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. And they told their father the words that he had spoken to the king.
12. And their father said to them: ”Which way did he go?” And his sons showed the way that the man of God, who had come from Judah, had gone.
13. And he said to his sons: “Saddle a donkey for me!” And they saddled a donkey for him and he mounted it.
14. And he went after the man of God and found him sitting under a terebinth. And he said to him: “Are you the man of God, who came from Judah?” And he said: “I am.”
15. And he said to him: “Come with me to my house and eat bread.”
16. But he said: “I cannot return with you and come with you, and I cannot eat bread and drink water with you in this place.”
17. “For it was said to me by the word of YHWH: ‘Do not eat bread, and do not drink water there, do not return the same way you came.’”
18. But he said to him: “I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of YHWH, saying: ‘Bring him back with you to your house, so that he may eat bread and drink water’”; he lied to him.[319]
19. So he came back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water.
20. As they were sitting at the table, the word of YHWH came to the prophet, who had brought him back.
21. And he proclaimed to the man of God, who had come from Judah, saying: “Thus says YHWH: ‘Since you rebelled against YHWH and did not follow the commandment that YHWH, your God, gave to you
22. But you came back and ate bread and drank water in a place that he said to you: “Do not eat bread and do not drink water”. Your body[320] shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.’”
23. So after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, he saddled a donkey for him, for the prophet,[321] whom he had brought back.
24. So he left and a lion found[322] him on the road and killed him. And his body was abandoned on the road, and the donkey stood beside it and the lion stood beside the corpse.

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[319] In the MT, the last sentence does not include a conjunction. This may indicate that it is a later gloss, although, as Gray points out, the conjunction may have been omitted due to a haplographic error as well. See John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 301.

[320] I have rendered the word נבלה either as ‘body’ or ‘corpse,’ depending on the context. When the word is used in direct connection to the man of God, I render it with ‘body’ (e.g. ‘your body,’ ‘the body of the man of God’) but when the word is used on its own, I render it with ‘corpse.’ Cogan points out that נבלה is often used in a “disparaging sense” (e.g. 2 Kings 9:37; Josh 8:29; Jer. 26:23; 36:30.) See Mordechai Cogan, *The Anchor Bible: Vol. 10, 1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 371–372.

[321] MT reads “prophet,” which is not common in this narrative. The clause might be a later addition, the purpose of which is to clarify who is in question here. See Gwilym H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings: Volume 1, 1 Kings 1–16:34* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman, 1984), 267.

[322] The Hebrew verb מצא indicates an unexpected encounter (cf. Gen. 37:15; 1 Kings 20:36, 37; 2 Kings 4:29; 10:13, 15). See Cogan, *1 Kings*, 371; James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986 [1951]), 265.

25. And look; people passed by and saw the corpse abandoned on the road and the lion standing beside the corpse.[323] And they came and told it in the town, where the old prophet lived.
26. And the prophet who had brought him back from the road, heard this and said: "It is the man of God who rebelled against YHWH.[324] YHWH has given him to the lion, and it has torn[325] him and killed him according to the word of YHWH that he spoke to him."
27. And he spoke to his sons saying: "Saddle a donkey for me!" So they saddled.
28. So he went and found his body abandoned on the road and the donkey and the lion standing beside the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey.

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[323] The first half of verse 25 is missing in the Proto-Lucianic and Old Latin manuscripts, which represent the OG reading. It is possible that 25a was missing in the early Greek manuscripts due to homoioteleuton/parablepsis. In the Hebrew text, the homoioteleuton could have taken place between the end of 24 and 25a because the word נבלה appears in both verses. According to Kauhanen, "If the Vorlage of the LXX did not originally contain the half-verse, or the translator overlooked it, it could have been supplied later." See Tuukka Kauhanen, *Lucifer of Cagliari and the Text of 1–2 Kings* (SCS 68; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018.) 104. Kauhanen presents certain lexical features that support the view that 25a has dropped out of the text at some point and that it was later added to Greek manuscripts as a Hebraizing *kaige*-like correction. In verse 25a, the Hebrew word נבלה is rendered with θνησιμαῖον, whereas elsewhere in the chapter the word σῶμα is constantly used for translating the Hebrew word. Also, the Hebrew preposition אצל is here rendered by ἐχόμενα, while in the near context the rendering is παρα. Ἐχόμενα is found only once elsewhere in Kings, and there it is located in the *kaige* section (1 Kings 1:9) (Kauhanen, *Lucifer of Cagliari and the Text of 1–2 Kings*, 104–105). 1 Kings 13 is outside the *kaige* section, but it nevertheless contains typical *kaige* corrections. Such Hebraizing corrections were at times made also outside the traditional bounds of the *kaige* revision; see Anneli Aejmelaeus, "*Kaige* Readings in a Non-Kaige Section in 1 Samuel," in *The Legacy of Barthélemy: 50 Years after Les Devanciers d'Aquila,* ed. A. Aejmelaeus, & T. Kauhanen (De Septuaginta Investigationes 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 169–184. On the contrary, Trebolle argues that 25a was inserted in the MT text by Wiederaufnahme/resumptive repetition, particularly of the word נבלה. Hence, the OG reading would be earlier than MT. See Julio C. Trebolle, "The Text-critical Use of the Septuagint in the Books of Kings," in *VII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Leuven 1989*, ed. Claude E. Cox. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 285–289.

[324] Originally in the LXX, the text proceeded from 26a to 28. The explanation that is given in 26b together with the whole verse 27 are missing in the early LXX, but they appear in the MT text and in some late Greek manuscripts. See Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 167;
Bernhard Stade, *The Books of Kings: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1904), 134. Kauhanen takes it as an addition and provides an explanation for his argument: "that the addition is not found in B, the proto-Lucianic text (witnessed by $L^{-19'}$), La^{115}, and Lucifer, confirms the good quality of these witnesses" (Kauhanen, *Lucifer of Cagliari and the Text of 1–2 Kings*, 106). In the Syrohexapla, the addition of these verses is anchored to Aquila and Theodotion, which also indicates that it is secondary. (See Alan England Brooke, Norman McLean, and Henry St. John Thackeray, *The Old Testament in Greek: According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus, Supplemented From Other Uncial Manuscripts, With a Critical Apparatus Containing the Variants of the Chief Ancient Authorities for the Text of the Septuagint, Vol. 2* [Cambridge: University Press, 1927], 262). The BHS apparatus also suggests that 26b–27 is probably added later. On the contrary, Montgomery takes the Greek version to be an abbreviation. See James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On the Book of Kings* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960 [1951]), 265. If this would be the case, this should have been visible in the Vorlage as well – a translator would hardly make such an alteration. In the light of recent knowledge, the abbreviation does not seem likely, quite the opposite. Since 26b gives such a clear, theological explanation for the events (everything has happened according to the word of YHWH), I find it most likely that it has been added to (proto-)MT after the LXX has already been produced. Similar, often theologizing, late additions can be found quite regularly also elsewhere in the proto-MT tradition of Kings; see Timo Tekoniemi, "A Game of Thrones: Textual History of 2 Kings 17 in Light of the Old Latin" (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2019) 253–257; Adrian Schenker, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher: Die hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher* (OBO 199; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

[325] The verb שׁבר means "to break." Rendering it by "tear" gives quite a good impression of what it means to be broken by a wild beast. Cogan points out several passages in which the word is used to describe animals that have been severely injured (e.g. Exod 22:9; Lev 22:22; Ezek 34:4, 16; Zech 11:16) (Cogan, *1 Kings*, 372).

29. And the prophet lifted up the body of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back. And he came to the town of the old prophet to wail and to bury him.
30. And he laid his body in his tomb and they wailed over him: "Alas, my brother!"
31. After they had buried him, he spoke to his sons saying: "When I die, you bury me in the tomb in which the man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his bones."[326]
32. "For the speech that he proclaimed by the word of YHWH to the altar of Bethel and to all the sanctuaries of the high places that are in the towns of Samaria shall come to pass."

5.1.2. Overview of the Literary History

5.1.2.1. Chapter 13 in the Composition of 1–2 Kings

Within 1 Kings, many scholars take chapter 13 as a late expansion.[327] Prophecy is not the main topic or focus of the Books of Kings, and the perception of prophetic action indicates that chapter 13 is indeed a late addition to the book.[328] Pakkala and Würthwein notice repetition in verses 12:31 and 13:33b, and therefore argue that 12:31b–13:33a are added to the text via *Wiederaufnahme*.[329] Würthwein points out that verse 12:33 serves the editor, because it enables the addition of the prophetic narrative in 13:1–31 to the text.[330] Kratz perceives that the book was composed first by an editor who compiled annals and narrative materials together and that a second, later editor made supplements to it. He sees 1 Kings 13:1–14:18 as one of these supplements.[331] Gray takes the intertextual connection of 1 Kings

[326] In LXX, the verse continues: "[…] so that my bones would be saved with his bones" (με, ἵνα σωθῶσι τὰ ὀστᾶ μου μετὰ τῶν ὀστῶν αὐτοῦ).
[327] Juha Pakkala, "Jeroboam Without Bulls," *ZAW* 120/4 (2008): 508. See also R. Kittel, *Bücher der Könige* (HAT 1/5; Göttingen, 1900), 112–116; Alfred Jepsen, *Die Quellen des Königsbuches* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1953), 5; J. Debus, *Die Sünde Jeroboams* (FRLANT 93; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 35–36; Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 114–120; G. Hentschel, *1. Könige* (NEB 10; Würzburg, 1984), 86–87; Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments: Grundwissen der Bibelkritik.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 168, 192; Jürgen Werlitz, *Die Bücher der Könige* (NSK.AT 8; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002), 134.
[328] Gray, *1 & II Kings*, 294.
[329] Pakkala, "Jeroboam without Bulls," 508; Ernst Würthwein, *Das Alte Testament Deutsch: Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk. 11, 1, Die Bücher der Könige: Das Erste Buch der Könige, Kapitel 1-16* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 168.
[330] Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige,* 168.
[331] Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments*, 192. Gray, on the other hand, defines verses 13:1–32 as the "original stratum" of the narrative and verses 13:33–34 as "Deuteronomic comment." Under the heavily edited surface, he takes verses 12:32–13:6 as "a genuine historical narrative." Verses 13:7–32 evolve around the man of God from Judah, which, according to Gray, is not based on actual historical events on the same level as the previous passage.

13 (esp. verses 2 and 31–32) and the reform of Josiah in 2 Kings 23 (esp. verses 16–18) as another indicator of the addition of chapter 13 to the composition at a late stage of editing.[332]

The literary history of the Books of Kings is very complex, and the question of dating is challenging.[333] Problematizing the Bethel altar in 1 Kings 13 seems more likely after the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in 587/6 BCE when the right kind of worship of YHWH became a prevalent topic for Judeans.[334] Chapter 13 is also attested in the Septuagint, which indicates that the chapter was added to the composition of Kings at the latest by the time that the Greek translation was made (possibly in the second century BCE).[335] After this, shorter passages that were missing from the OG were added to the Greek text by the *kaige* reviser.[336] For instance, verse 13:25 is likely one such addition.[337]

5.1.2.2. Delimitation of the Narrative in the Current Study

1 Kings 13 is a prophetic tale that is situated during the history of king Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11:26–40; 12:1–15; 12:20–14:20). The first half of 1 Kings 13 describes the proclamation against the altar at Bethel (vv. 1–10), and the latter half narrates the account of the two prophets who end up resting in the same tomb. Whether or not chapter 13 should be perceived as one or two narrative units has been debated among scholars. Würthwein argues

[332] Gray, *1 & II Kings*, 293–294. The mention of Samaria also gives some indication about the time frame. Samaria was not a province before the year 734 when it was the only area that remained part of Israel after Tiglath-Pileser III had made the areas of Gilead, Galilea and Sharon Assyrian provinces. (Ibid.)

[333] Deuteronomistic style and language was imitated for a long time, which causes substantial difficulties for dating the texts. See Juha Pakkala, "Deuteronomy and 1–2 King in the Redaction of the Pentateuch and Former Prophets," in *Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History,* ed. R. F. Person, Jr., & K. Schmidt (FAT 56; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 133–135. The scholarly discussion on Deuteronomistic history is very debated, versatile and complex as well. See Thomas C. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical, and Literary Introduction* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 13–44. Campbell and O'Brien divide 1 Kings into 8 redactional layers, which demonstrates the complexity of the issue. (Anthony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origins, Upgrades, Present Text* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000]). See also Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble With Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) as one possibility of redaction.

[334] See e.g. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige,* 172; Alfred Jepsen, "Gottesmann und Prophet," in *Probleme Biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans Walter Wolff (München: Kaiser, 1971), 182; Gray, *1 & II Kings*, 293; Werner E. Lemke, "The Way of Obedience," in *Magnalia Dei - the Mighty Acts of God; Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, eds. Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller Jr (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 317.

[335] Timothy Michael Law, "3–4 Kingdoms (1–2 Kings)," in *The T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, ed. James Aitken (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 149. See also Philippe Hugo, "Text History as a Research Tool on Literary Development in the Books of Kings: The Case of 1 Kgs 19 MT and LXX" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, San Diego, 2007).

[336] Law, "3–4 Kingdoms (1–2 Kings)," 148–149.

[337] See text-critical notes in the translation.

that 1 Kings 13 should be taken as two originally independent legends that evolved around the man of God and that were united during the editorial process.[338] Cogan, on the other hand, perceives chapter 13 as one narrative unit in which the man of God is the main actor and his declination carries the events forwards. He also argues that the repetition of the expression "word of YHWH" seven times is also an indicator of unity. Even though Cogan rejects Würthwein's theory, he nevertheless acknowledges chapter 13 as "a two-act prophetic tale […] set into the history of Jeroboam."[339] Somewhat similarly, Gray conceives of chapter 13 as a narrative unit about the man of God from Judah but still calls verses 11–32 a sequel.[340] DeVries takes a strong stand for unity. He admits that verse 10 marks a substantial break in the narrative, but goes on to argue that verses 1–10 would be useless without the follow-up in verses 11–32a, which extend the narrative about the man of God and his journey in Bethel.[341] I do not find DeVries' argument valid here. Quite the opposite; without verses 11–32a, the first part of the chapter would be a victorious tale about the man of God from Judah who comes to teach a lesson to king Jeroboam. Adding verses 11–32a spoils the glorious tale presented in the first part of the chapter.

In the present study, the main interest lies in the confrontation with the lion. Even though it is essential to be aware of the literary connections of this passage, for this study, the starting point of outlining the narrative lies within the account of the lion. Since I use a narratological approach in the analysis, I base the delineation of verses on the narration time and on the perspective of the old prophet. Even though several scholars conceive chapter 13 as one narrative, they admit that verse 10 marks a substantial break in narration. A new episode begins in narration in verse 11, and verses 11–32 move forward in the same narration time. Verse 32 ends in a prophetic declaration about future events (prolepsis). This passage is placed in the mouth of one of the characters, and the time of narration does not change. Therefore, in this study, it is necessary to include verse 32 in the analysis. The situation is different in verses 33–34 where the narration shifts back to king Jeroboam due to the end of the *Wiederaufnahme*.

[338] One of Würthwein's argument against the unity of the narrative is that the king is absent from verse 11 onwards and reappears only in verse 33 in an editorial remark. During the compilation, references to previous verses were inserted in order to serve as introductions to the following legend. (Würthwein, *Die Bücher Der Könige,* 168.)
[339] Cogan, *I Kings*, 373–374.
[340] Gray, *I & II Kings*, 293–294.
[341] DeVries, *1 Kings,* 168.

5.2. Literary Analysis

5.2.1. Structure and Storyline

5.2.1.1. Theme(s) of the Narrative

In its current form, there are two central themes in 1 Kings 13:11–32. First, the narrative stresses the severe consequences of disobeying YHWH, and second, it describes how two prophets from two different regions end up resting in the same tomb. Würthwein has suggested that these themes should be seen as redactional layers of the narrative. According to him, the narrative consists of two originally independent legends: the former stage of the narrative served as an aetiology for the tomb of the two prophets, which was later expanded with a theological explanation. The addition would cover verses 16–18 in which the man of God declines the invitation of the old prophet and explains why, verses 20–22 in which the old prophet proclaims judgment to the man of God, and verse 26b in whcih the old prophet gives an interpretation of the events. The lion in the narrative therefore transforms from an ordinary predator into an executor of divine punishment.[342] Würthwein's theory is problematic because it is based on the assumption of an actual tomb in Bethel.[343] Also, he does not take the Greek text into account at all, which weakens his arguments on the redactional levels of the chapter.[344] According to the manuscript evidence of the Septuagint, verse 26b is partly missing from the early Greek text, but the account of disobedience to YHWH is attested already in 26a: "And the prophet, who had brought him back from the road, heard this and said: 'It is the man of God, who rebelled against YHWH.'"[345] In this study, I will view 1 Kings 13:11–32 as one literary unit and treat these two themes as integral parts of the narrative. However, I will pay attention to manuscript evidence whenever there are differences that have an impact on the storyline.

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[342] Hence, Würthwein perceives the narrative in the opposite way compared to DeVries above. According to DeVries, chapter 13 is older than 2 Kings 23, but Würthwein's argumentation leads to an assumption that the latter phase of chapter 13, the theological explanation, was added by the editors, who were already familiar with 2 Kings 23.

[343] Würthwein supposes that such a grave has actually been in Bethel. Also, Gray makes a comparison to Arabic *weli/mazar*, which means a grave of a local saint. (Gray, *I & II Kings*, 294; cf. also DeVries, *I Kings*, 172).

[344] Cogan, for instance, does not support Würthwein's theory about two originally separate legends. According to Cogan, Würthwein's argument is based on the assumption that a Deuteronomistic editor (Dtr2) combined two separate legends and made massive modifications to the text. What is left (according to Cogan), is "a general threat against an anonymous king of Israel and an almost meaningless 'grave tradition' of a few lines" (Cogan, *I Kings*, 374).

[345] See the text-critical notes above. Gray argues somewhat similarly to Würthwein that verses 21–25 might be a later added didactic view according to which disobeying the Lord is followed by immediate divine punishment. (Gray, *I & II Kings*, 294.)

5.2.1.2. Structural Patterns and Repetitions

Several actions are repeated in 1 Kings 13:11–32: hearing news (vv. 11, 26), saddling a donkey (vv. 13, 23, 27), finding the man of God (vv. 14, 24, 28), bringing the man of God back (vv. 19, 29), and being in Bethel – for a dinner and for a burial (vv. 19–20, 29–30).[346] The events take place either in Bethel or on the road between Bethel and Judah. I will observe the structure of the narrative through these two milieus.[347]

1. In Bethel (vv. 11–13): The old prophet hears about the deeds of the man of God.
2. On the road (vv. 14–18): The old prophet finds the man of God on the road to Judah; the prohibition
3. In Bethel (vv. 19–23): The old prophet brings the man of God back to Bethel to eat and drink; the prohibition.
4. On the road (vv. 24–25a): lion finds the man of God; the lion and the donkey stay next to the corpse; people pass by.
5. In Bethel (vv. 25b–27): The old prophet hears about the death of the man of God.
6. On the road (vv. 28–29a): The old prophet finds the man of God on the road to Judah.
7. In Bethel (vv. 29b–31): The old prophet brings the man of God back to Bethel and arranges a burial for him; the old prophet wishes to be buried in the same tomb with the man of God.

The events begin and end in Bethel. I perceive of the structure as a parallel composition rather than a ring composition, even though the repetition of the prohibition to eat and drink complicates the view of a parallel composition. There certainly is parallelism in the narrative. Two times the old prophet hears news about the man of God, which makes him ride after him and bring him back to Bethel. Each time after hearing the news, the old prophet commands his sons to saddle a donkey for him (v. 13 חִבְּשׁוּ־לִי הַחֲמוֹר; v. 27 חִבְּשׁוּ־לִי אֶת־הַחֲמוֹר). In verse 23, the old prophet also saddles a donkey for the man of God (וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ־לוֹ

[346] Cf. Richard Nelson, who divides the whole chapter 13 into three episodes (vv. 1–10, 15–24 and 29–32) that are separated by two transition sequences (vv. 11–14 and 25–28). According to him, three events are repeated in the transition sequences: 1) bringing news, 2) saddling the donkey, and 3) finding the man of God (Richard D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, [IBC; Lousville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987], 85).

[347] For other options, see e.g. Barbara Schmitz, who divides the whole chapter into chiastic units. The narrative begins and ends with the proclamation against the altar of Bethel (vv. 1a–10c and 13:31a–32d). Next to the initial and last sections, the two prophets are portrayed on the road (vv. 11a–19c and 23a–30c). In the middle of the story, the man of God and the old prophet are depicted in Bethel (vv. 20a–22g). See Barbara Schmitz, *Prophetie und Königtum: Eine narratologisch-historische Methodologie entwickelt an den Königsbüchern* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 151.

הַחֲמוֹר). However, it should be noted that verses 26b–27 are originally missing from the early Greek text.[348] It is probable that the purpose for adding a theological explanation and the saddling motif to the proto-Masoretic text and later to the Greek text was to clarify the meaning of the lion scene and strengthen (or even create) the parallel composition in the narrative.

The man of God is found three times in the narrative. The same expression is used each time: "he went and found him" (v. 14 וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרֵי אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ, v. 24 וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ, v. 28 וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּמְצָא אֶת־נִבְלָתוֹ). The first time, the old prophet finds him sitting under a tree. The second time, a male lion finds him and kills him. The third time, the old prophet finds his body. On each of these occasions, the man of God is on the road on his way back to Judah.

The prohibition to eat or drink in Bethel appears repeatedly in the narrative.[349] According to Nelson, it has a chiastic pattern: A–A' conveys the prohibition of returning to Bethel, B–B' the prohibition of eating and drinking, and the central part C describes that the prohibition is based on the word of YHWH.[350] All in all, the word of YHWH (דבר יהוה) is an integral element in the narrative as it is repeated five times in 1 Kings 13:11–32 (vv. 17, 18, 20, 26, 32) and 9 times in total in the whole chapter.

The image of a lion and a donkey standing next to (עֹמֵד אֵצֶל) the body of the man of God is repeated three times in the narrative (vv. 24, 25, 28). However, in verse 25, only the lion is portrayed next to the corpse. This might indicate that the presence of a lion next to a body is more significant than the presence of a donkey. As the people come to the city of the old prophet, it is more likely that they would report a lion that was on the road than a donkey. The first time the old prophet brings the man of God back to Bethel, it is to dine with him, and the second time he is brought back to his funeral.

5.2.2. Characters

The characters that appear in 1 Kings 13:11–32 are the old prophet, the man of God, the sons of the old prophet, donkeys, a lion, YHWH, or at least the word of YHWH, and the people

[348] See text-critical notes on the translation.
[349] This motif occurs already in the first part of chapter 13, in verses 8–9.
[350] Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 85.

on the road. The two prophets are the central human characters, and the donkey and the lion also play important roles as animal characters. The narration of 1 Kings 13:11–32 makes pairs of the human and animal characters, which indicates that contrast is used as a literary device for characterization. Therefore, I first analyze the characterization of the two prophets and then of the two animal characters. Since YHWH, or the word of YHWH, has such a significant impact on the storyline, it will be discussed on its own. The sons of the old prophet and the people on the road are minor characters who will be addressed in this chapter as well.

5.2.2.1. The Old Prophet and the Man of God

Both of the prophets remain anonymous throughout the narrative, but they are terminologically differentiated as the "old prophet" (נביא) and the "man of God" (איש־האלהים).[351] In verse 18, the man of God is also labelled as a prophet, which indicates that the differentiation of the terms is done only for the sake of clarity, not of meaning. For instance, in the Elijah and Elisha traditions the terms are interchangeable.[352] However, as Gray points out, the terms might originally have indicated the authority of the characters, depending on whether the distinction was first made in the Southern or Northern tradition.[353] In the Hebrew Bible, נביא is often used for prophets who give oral declarations.[354] 1 Kings 13:11–32 does not clarify the status of the old prophet and whether or not he was affiliated with king Jeroboam's court.[355] It is also uncertain why the old prophet is defined as "old" (זקן).[356] Generally in the Hebrew Bible, old age reflects the high status of a character but also the weakness that comes with age.[357] The old prophet is likely the head of his household since he gives orders to his sons and arranges dinners in his house. He also owns a family

[351] King Jeroboam is the only character that is called by his name in chapter 13.
[352] "Man of God": 1 Kgs 17:18; 20:28; 2 Kgs 5:8, 14, 20; "prophet": 1 Kgs 18:22; 20:13, 22; 2 Kgs 5:3, 13. See Cogan, *1 Kings,* 369–370.
[353] Gray, *I & II Kings*, 299–300.
[354] See David L. Petersen, "Prophet, Prophecy," *NIDB* 4:624, also on prophets and priests. A prophet as a religious specialist, see ibid.; NBL, 172; Martti Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 27–32.
[355] On prophets and kingship in Joshua–Kings, see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 165.
[356] Gray, *I & II Kings*, 299.; According to DeVries, defining the prophet 'old' serves as an explanation for why the prophet was home during the events at the altar. (DeVries, *I Kings*, 172; see also Martti Nissinen, *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* [BZAW 494; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019], 539–562). DeVries does not take into account that, despite his oldness, the prophet travels twice to find the man of God and lifts the body on a donkey by himself at the end of the narrative!
[357] See J. Gordon Harris, "Old Age," *ABD* 5:10–12.

tomb. Perhaps the most meaningful information about the two characters is where they come from. The old prophet is from Bethel and the man of God is from Judah.

The old prophet from Bethel is the focalizer in the narrative. This becomes evident already in the opening line of the narrative: "A certain old prophet lived in Bethel" (וְנָבִיא אֶחָד זָקֵן יֹשֵׁב בְּבֵית־אֵל). Focalization is external throughout the narrative. The events are narrated from the viewpoint of the old prophet, but the narrator does not enter the inner life of the focalizer. The narrator records the events as if he were standing next to the characters.[358] Most of the time, the narrator does not verify his views, which leaves it to the reader to consider whether the portrayal of the old prophet holds true or not. Only in verse 18 does the narrator interfere by pointing out that the old prophet is lying. The old prophet is trying to convince the man of God to turn aside from his route by stating that an angel had transmitted YHWH's orders to bring the man of God back to the old prophet's house. Throughout 1 Kings 13, the man of God seems willing to act according to the word of YHWH, but he fails because he trusts the old prophet.

5.2.2.2. The Donkey and the Lion

In total, references to donkeys (חמור) appear in 6 verses (13, 23, 24, 27, 28 and 29), and each time the donkey is used for transportation. In verses 13 and 27, the old prophet commands his sons to saddle (חבשׁ) a donkey for him, and in verse 23, the old prophet saddles a donkey for the man of God. In verse 29, the old prophet lays (נוח) the body of the man of God on the back of a donkey and takes it back to Bethel. In this narrative, there are at least two donkeys, both of which are owned by the old prophet. He gives one donkey to the man of God for his journey back to Judah and rides the other one himself when he goes after the man of God to find his body on the road. Several passages in the Hebrew Bible depict donkeys in a similar manner. There are examples of donkeys being used for riding (e.g. Ex. 4:20; Num. 22:21ff; Judg. 10:4; 1 Sam. 25:20), as beasts of burden (Gen. 42:26; 1 Sam. 25:18; Neh. 13:15; Is. 30:6), and also in field work (Deut. 22:10; Is. 30:24).[359] The donkeys in 1 Kings 13:11–32 are depicted as obedient to their owner and act as natural animals in contrast to the fable in

[358] Cf. Linafelt's description on "nascent realism" in the Biblical narration (Linafelt, "Poetry and Biblical Narrative," 88).
[359] K. Woschitz, "Esel," *NBL* 1:597–598. For more background on donkeys, see also Kenneth C. Way, *Donkeys in the Biblical World: Ceremony and Symbol* (HACL 2; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

Num. 22:21–30 in which Balaam's donkey is able to see an angel and speak to her owner.[360] All in all, the donkeys in 1 Kings 13:11–32 are portrayed as obedient, domesticated animals that are used as servants of men.

In 1 Kings 13:11–32, a lion appears in verses 24, 25, 26 and 28. The word ארי refers to an adult male lion.[361] It enters the scene in verse 24. The man of God has left the house of the old prophet after the latter prophesied that divine punishment will come to him because he disobeyed the word of YHWH. The prophecy is soon fulfilled because a lion finds the man of God on the road and kills him (וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ אַרְיֵה בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַיְמִיתֵהוּ, v. 24). The word מצא indicates an unexpected encounter[362] that describes the sudden appearance of the beast very well. Attacking lions appear frequently in Hebrew Bible texts (e.g. Judg. 14:5, 1 Sam 17:37, Job 10:16).[363]

The death of the man of God in verse 24 marks a shift in the behavior of the two animals in the narrative. The body of the man of God remains on the road, and the lion and the donkey both remain standing beside it. Before this, the narrative has portrayed both animals in a realistic sense: the donkey as a domesticated beast of burden and the lion as a wild predator that may attack humans in the wilderness. Therefore, one would expect that, when facing an attacking lion, the donkey would flee. Also, after attacking a human being, one would expect the lion to attack his donkey as well. But on the contrary, it is stressed that the lion does not hurt the donkey nor eat the body of the man of God (v. 28). It is also noteworthy that these animals stay in this stagnated pose while people pass them by on the road (vv. 25, 28). As noted before, this scene is repeated three times in the narrative, which implies its significance.

Verse 26 makes the image of the lion more multifaceted. After hearing about the death of the man of God, the old prophet interprets it as the fulfillment of his prophecy: "YHWH has

[360] Cf. Heather R. McMurray, "Donkey," *NIDB* 2:158–159.
[361] Strawn, "kĕpîr 'ărāyôt in Judges 14:5," 150–158.
[362] Cogan *1 Kings,* 371. James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On the Book of Kings*. (Latest impr.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 265. Cf. Gen. 37:15; 1 Kings 20:36, 37; 2 Kings 4:29; 10:13 and 15.
[363] For more examples, see Strawn, *What Is Stronger Than a Lion*, 35–36.

given him to the lion, and it has torn[364] him and killed him according to the word of YHWH that he spoke to him" (וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ יְהוָה לָאַרְיֵה וַיִּשְׁבְּרֵהוּ וַיְמִתֵהוּ כִּדְבַר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לוֹ). This interpretation turns the lion from a natural, attacking predator into a divine instrument of the deity.[365] The statement "YHWH has given him to the lion" portrays an image of a deity that is able to use wild animals for punishing those who do not act according to his word. The deity is also able to control the behavior of both wild and domesticated animals as they both remain by the corpse. However, the explanation that is given in verses 26b and 27 was originally missing in the early Septuagint, but it appears in the MT text and in some later Greek manuscripts. This indicates that this theologizing interpretation was added at some stage of the compilation process.[366] Even if the depiction of a lion as a divine instrument was a later addition, it does have counterparts in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. 2 Kgs 17:25–26).

5.2.2.3. YHWH

YHWH has a strong presence in the narrative, even though he is not portrayed as one of the characters. The narrative portrays YHWH as a deity who commands people and demands unconditional obedience from them.[367] On several occasions, the phrase 'the word of YHWH' has such an important role that it could almost be considered a character of its own (vv. 17, 18, 20, 26, 32).[368] As a character, YHWH is hard to reach. He is present but not visible. YHWH uses mediators three times in the narrative to perform actions. In verse 18, the old prophet tells the man of God that an angel delivered the word of YHWH to him. In verse 20, the old prophet himself acts as a mediator of the word of YHWH as he declares the divine punishment on the man of God. And finally, in verse 26, the old prophet assumes that YHWH has given the man of God to a lion.

[364] The verb שׁבר means "to break." Rendering it with "tear" gives quite a good impression of what it means to be broken by a wild beast. Cogan points out several passages in which the word is used to describe animals that have been severely injured (e.g. Exod 22:9; Lev 22:22; Ezek 34:4, 16; Zech 11:16) (Cogan, *1 Kings*, 372).
[365] Gross identifies Yahweh as the sender of the punishment, the man of God as the receiver of the punishment, and the lion as the helper of the sender, or the "instrument of punishment." See Walter Gross, "Lying Prophet and Disobedient Man of God in 1 Kings 13: Role Analysis as an Instrument of Theological Interpretation of an OT Narrative Text," trans. Robert Robertson (*Semeia* 15; 1979): 97–135.
[366] DeVries, *1 Kings*, 167; See also the text-critical notes to the translation.
[367] Cf. DeVries, *1 Kings*, 173.
[368] Cf. Cogan, *1 Kings*, 367; 374.

5.2.2.4. Minor Characters

There are two groups of minor characters in this narrative: the sons of the old prophet and the people on the road. The only function of these two groups is to pass on information to the old prophet, the focalizer of the narrative. In addition to this, they are the observers of the events. The people on the road are part of the constellation in which the dead body of the man of God is left on the side of the road and the lion and the donkey are flanking it. The people *see* this while they pass by.

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

The narration of 1 Kings 13:11–32 uses characters that are in pairs: the old prophet and the man of God, and the lion and the donkey. The pairings could indicate that there is an interplay between the characters. At least it seems significant that one of the prophets is from Judah in the South and the other from Bethel in the North. The difference between the animal characters is that the donkey is a domesticated animal and the lion a wild one. The animals are literally placed on the same level as they both remain by the corpse of the man of God. Similarly, the prophets will finally be placed side by side since they are be buried in a same tomb. It is also possible that the use of the selected animal characters further characterizes the human ones. The donkey was apparently considered to be a symbol of Shechem, the capital of Jeroboam's kingdom,[369] and in the Hebrew Bible, Judah is often symbolically associated with lions.[370] However, if there is a symbolical connection between the human and animal characters, it does not hold throughout the narrative as the man of God, the representation of Judah, is killed by the lion, the symbol of Judah. It is evident that the lion is more connected to YHWH than to the region of Judah here.

The lion acts as a mediator of YHWH when it kills the man of God. As is stated several times, both animals stay by the corpse after this. The scene underlines the exceptional

[369] As Sweeney points out, the word 'donkey,' חמור is also used as a proper name in Gen 34: *Ḥămôr* is the father of Shechem, who raped Dinah, Jacob's daughter. (See Marvin A. Sweeney, *1 & II Kings. A Commentary* [OTL; Lousville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007], 181. See also L. Toombs, "Schechem," *ABD* 1174–86, esp. 1182). According to Staubli, Shechem was also known as "the city of sumpters," and its inhabitants were called *bĕnê Ḥămôr.* (Thomas Staubli, "Donkey [Iconography of Deities and Demons, IDD]," Electronic Pre-Publication, Last revised in May 2010, http://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/idd/index.php.)

[370] Sweeneys brings forth examples of Genesis 49:9, where Jacob's son Judah is described as a lion's cub (גּוּר אַרְיֵה יְהוּדָה), the depiction of David as a shepherd who protects the flock from lions (1 Sam 16:31–37) and Isaiah 29:1, 2 and 7, where a lion is associated with the city of Jerusalem. (Sweeney, *I & II Kings,* 181.) *In contra* to Sweeney, DeVries argues that "The identification of the lion as an elect 'lion of Judah' is completely arbitrary." Neither does DeVriest see that there would be "constant interchange of roles." (DeVries, *I Kings*, 173.)

behavior of the donkey, which would naturally attempt to flee from a wild predator. Similarly, the lion, as a predator, would likely attack the donkey in such a situation. In the Hebrew Bible, donkeys are considered to be unclean animals whose flesh is forbidden to be eated or sacrificed to YHWH (Deut. 14:6 Ex. 13:13, 34:20).[371] The narrative's implicit association between the lion and YHWH might further implicate why the lion does not eat the donkey. The lion, the donkey, and the dead man of God are not the only characters in the constellation of verses 24–28. The people who pass by become an integral part of it as well as the witnesses and messengers.

As a final comment, the narration seems to employ irony as a literary device. There are several indicators of this. First of all, the old prophet insisted that the man of God return with him, and then the old prophet himself becomes the deliverer of YHWH's judgment of this. Second, the formula that expresses the finding of the man of God is repeated several times, but the image in each case is different. The old prophet finds the man of God twice: first alive and then dead. In verse 24, one would expect the man of God as a human character to be the subject, but ironically he is not. Instead, the lion is the one who finds *him*. Third, the main human characters are portrayed as deceitful and disobedient, but in contrast to them, the animal characters are obedient to their owners (donkey) and to YHWH (donkey and lion).

In sum, on the basis of the literary analysis of 1 Kings 13:11–32, the story depicts a lion in the following situations: 1) a lion that confronts a man and kills him, 2) a lion standing next to a human corpse and a donkey on the other side of the corpse, with people passing by, 3) a lion that does not eat the body or hurt the donkey, and 4) a god who gives someone to a lion, i.e. *controls* a lion. In the following section, I will discuss iconographic material that seems to be congruent with the literary imagery of 1 Kings 13:11–32.

[371] Woschitz, "Esel," *NBL* 1:597–598; Cf. Staubli, "Donkey," 1.

5.4. Iconographic Congruencies

5.4.1. Lions Attacking Humans

The initial reason for using the image of a lion in 1 Kings 13 is most likely the widely known predatory features of the animal.[372] Depicting the man of God as a victim of the lion has several counterparts in ancient Near Eastern art. In the region of Israel/Palestine, the motif of a lion attacking humans is most attested during the Bronze and the Iron Ages (**fig. 5.1.**), but it appears to a lesser extent during the Persian and the Hellenistic periods as well. It is possible that images of lions attacking humans and other animals simply demonstrate the natural behavior of lions. In addition to the vast number of iconographic examples, there is also textual evidence verifying that lions did attack humans and livestock. For instance, Mesopotamian sources often mention people, especially slaves, being attacked or devoured by lions.[373]

Fig. 5.1. Scarab, Lachish, MB IIB (1700–1550). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* 2, fig. 343.

However, it is likely that, in several cases, lions do not simply represent predators in the wild. According to Strawn and Keel & Uehlinger, a lion that attacks or devours humans may represent a king in disguise. For example, in a Late Bronze Age seal from Tell el-Farʿah (S), an attacking lion is shown grasping a human victim from the shoulders, ready to devour the victim. (**Fig. 5.2.**) According to Strawn, here "the lion's awesome, threating power is positively appropriated by the king."[374] Keel & Uehlinger also discuss this object and state that the king's "irresistible power is … depicted as … a lion that overpowers a human … or as a lion that tears a man apart."[375]

[372] Cf. Strawn, *What Is Stronger Than a Lion,* 93.
[373] See *CAD* N/2:193–194; *AHw* 2:783; also Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 143.
[374] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 85.
[375] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God,* 82.

Fig. 5.2. Seal, Tell el-Farʿah (S), LBA. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.12.

Similar images of lions striding over anthropomorphic figures on the ground may carry the same or similar meaning. This motif seems to have been inherited from Egyptian royal iconography, where the pharaoh is often portrayed trampling over people as a lion or as a sphinx (**fig. 5.3**). During the Late Bronze Age, when Egyptian influence was still prominent, such images were also used in the Israel/Palestine region (**fig. 5.4-5.5**). Later, during the shift from IA I to II (ca. 1000–900), the motif was still very popular in the area (see e.g. **fig. 5.6**), but as Strawn notes, "iconographic details are missing that would permit a clear and exclusive identification of the lion as the pharaoh."[376] It is likely that, during the course of time, the relationship to Egyptian iconography vanished, and a lion striding over an anthropomorphic figure became a representation of a "triumph in general," as Keel & Uehlinger suggest.[377]

Fig. 5.3. "Linke Innenwand eines Wagenkastens," Valley of the Kings (Thutmosis IV), 18th Dyn. (1397–1388). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* 3, fig. 571.

[376] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 92–93.
[377] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 120.

Fig. 5.4. Oval Plate (Amenophis II), Tell el-Ajjul, 18th Dyn. (1426–1400). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* 3, fig. 572.

Fig. 5.5. Scarab, Tell el-Farʿah (S) (probably Ramesses II), 19th Dyn. (1279–1213). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* 3, fig. 573.

Fig. 5.6. Scarab, Beersheva (Area A-1), IA IB / IA IIA (1070-900). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Beërscheba Nr. 4.

The motif of a lion striding over human body parts might also have carried royal association, and this motif seems to have come to the Israel/Palestine region from Mesopotamia. Stamp seals from Nineveh (**figs. 5.7-5.8**) depict lions striding over human body parts. Similarly, a seal impression on a jar handle from Dan depicts a striding, roaring lion with a severed human head underneath its jaws (**fig. 5.9**). Strawn notes that, "when one excludes the contest scenes and those instances where the lion either accompanies or represents the king in battle, the main Mesopotamian examples of the lion attacking humans are Neo-Assyrian in provenance."[378] According to Strawn, this indicates that the motif of a lion attacking a human was a characteristic of Neo-Assyrian royal rhetoric and propaganda, which extensively utilized aggressive lion imagery. The context of **fig. 5.9** confirms the view. Since the seal is on a jar handle, it is likely that the jar or its contents belonged to the Neo-Assyrian empire. Therefore, the seal represents an Assyrian state seal.[379] The lion, on the other hand, might represent either the Assyrian ruler, or more generally Assyrian sovereignty.

[378] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 142.
[379] Keel, *Corpus* II, 394. Nineteen similar seals on jar handles have been found in Nineveh. See Suzanne Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.-7. Jh. v. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siegelungen auf Tafeln und Tonverschlüssen* (SAAS 1; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project; Finnish Oriental Society, 1992), 142 and Taf. 19, 1–6.

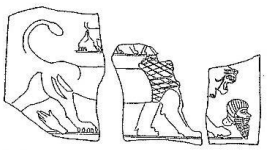

Fig. 5.7. Stamp seal, probably Nineveh, probably 7th c. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.57.

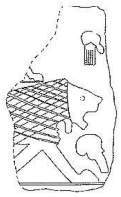

Fig. 5.8. Stamp seal, probably Nineveh, probably 7th c. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.58.

Fig. 5.9. Seal impression on a jar handle, Dan (Area T), IA IIC (720–620). Image: Keel, *Corpus* II, Dan Nr. 33.

All in all, the iconographic motif of attacking lions is based on the predatory power of lions. Monarchies utilized this powerful symbol to express and strengthen their rule, and individuals who saw and used these objects could sense the power. The aggression of the beast is assumed by the carrier or the user of the object.

5.4.2. Lions and Donkeys?

Shortly after its domestication in the 4th millennium BCE, the donkey becomes a part of the visual representations of the ancient Near East. In Early and Middle Bronze Age iconography of the Israel/Palestine region, donkeys are ridden and used as draught animals (**fig. 5.10**). However, from the Late Bronze age to the Persian Period, donkeys are missing from iconographic data of the Southern Levant, which is incoherent with their frequent appearance in Hebrew Bible texts.[380] A rare example from IA II is a terracotta figurine that depicts a donkey as a beast of burden (**fig. 5.11**). In the art of the Syrian region, riding a donkey is a status symbol, and the riders are noble men.[381] **Fig. 5.12** depicts a highborn nomad riding a relatively small donkey. This piece is a bronze figure that originates in Syria, possibly from the early MB IIA.[382] Conversely, in Egyptian iconography donkeys were

[380] Staubli, "Donkey."
[381] Silvia Schroer, *IPIAO* 2, 74.
[382] Ibid.

mostly portrayed as draught animals (**fig. 5.13**).[383] In the Egyptian culture, donkeys were associated with the god Seth, and therefore they carried negative connotations. The Egyptian influence on the culture of the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age might provide one explanation for the decrease of donkey imagery in the visual data of the Israel/Palestine region.[384]

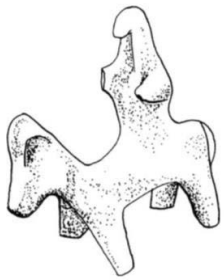

Fig. 5.10. Terracotta figurine, Khirbet az-Zaraqon (8km north from Irbid, Jordan), EB II (2600–2300 BCE). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* I, fig. 98.

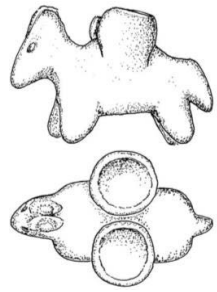

Fig. 5.11. Clay figurine, Jericho (unstratified), IA IIB (800–700). Image: Staubli, "Donkey," Nr. 1.

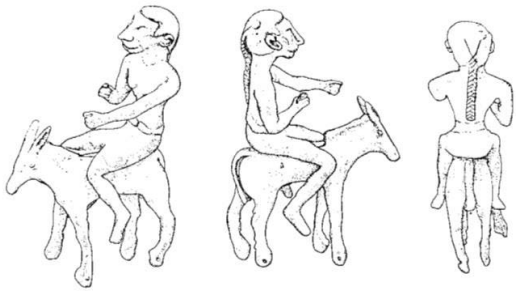

Fig. 5.12. Bronze statue; Syria, unprovenanced; MB IIA (ca. 1900). Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* II, 74.

Fig. 5.13. Two-sided engraved plate; Tell eḍ-Ḍab'a, Egypt, unprovenanced; late MB IIB. Image: Schroer, *IPIAO* II, 74.

Unfortunately, there are not too many depictions of lions and donkeys together.[385] One rare example is a seal from 15th Dynasty Egypt (MBII) (**fig. 5.14a–b**), but even in this piece, the

[383] Schroer, *IPIAO* 2, 38. In Egyptian art, portrayals of riders on donkeys depicted Cananites or other foreign ethnic groups (See Staubli, "Donkey").
[384] Staubli, "Donkey."
[385] However, a fable in Ahiqar represents a lion and a donkey together. See James M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic proverbs of Ahiqar* (The Johns Hopkins Near Eastern studies; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 96–97 (saying 28).

lion and the donkey are not portrayed side by side: the striding lion is the motif on one side and the donkey with a burden on the other side. According to Regine Schulz, the lion in this piece represents royal features, since lions were often associated with pharaohs in Egyptian iconography. The donkey on the other side depicts elements of trade and well-being.[386]

Fig. 5.14a–b. Scarab/amulet; East Delta, Egypt, unprovenanced; 15th Dyn. / MB II. Image: Schulz, "Löwe und Esel", Abb 1b&3b.

1 Kings 13:11–32 clearly depicts the donkey and the lion standing next to the body of the man of God. It is also noteworthy that the scene is situated on the road, on a place where people would pass by and see the three figures next to each other. This setting might be congruent with a so-called 'guardian lion' motif that is widely attested throughout the ancient Near East.[387] The guardian lion motif was mostly utilized in architectural entranceways.[388] One relatively early occurrence in Mesopotamia, though not the earliest, is from the end of the third millennium, and it portrays two massive lions flanking the entrance of Enki's temple in Eridu (**fig. 5.15**).[389]

[386] Regine Schulz, "Löwe und Esel. Eine Ungewöhnliche Bildkombiation" in *Skarabäen ausserhalb Ägyptens: lokale Produktion oder Import? Workshop an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, November 1999*, eds. A. Nunn & R. Schulz (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), 55–60.
[387] See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 217; Eva A. Braun-Holzinger, "Apotropaic Figures at Mesopotamian Temples in the Third and Second Millenia," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives*, eds. Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn (Ancient Magic and Divination I; Groningen: STYX Publications), 154–158.
[388] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 217.
[389] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 218.

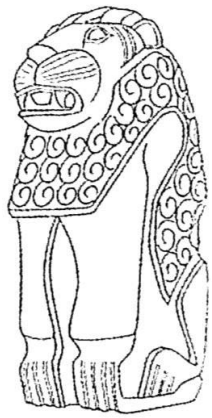

Fig. 5.15. Stone statue, Eridu (Temple of Enki), end of 3rd millenium. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.291.

This motif was also known in the Israel/Palestine region. Perhaps the most well-known guardian lions in this area are the basalt orthostats from Late Bronze Age Hazor (**figs. 5.16–19**). Several orthostats have been discovered from Hazor, and it is likely that there were originally more. One of the orthostats was discovered thrown into a pit and is understood to have been ceremoniously buried. This would indicate that a gate lion was more than a decorative statue; it had cultic significance and was considered to strengthen the gate with its "godly, demonical or punitive powers."[390] In addition to their popularity in monumental art, guardian lions appeared in miniature art as well as a small lion amulet from Tell el-Far'ah (S) illustrates (**fig. 5.20**).

Fig. 5.16. Basalt orthostat, Hazor (Area H, Stratum IB), Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.17.

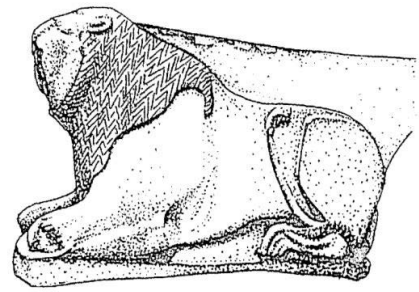

Fig. 5.17. Basalt orthostat, Hazor, LBA. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.18.

[390] David Ussishkin, "The Syro-Hittite Ritual Burial of Monuments," *JNES* 29 [1970]: 127. See also Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 86.

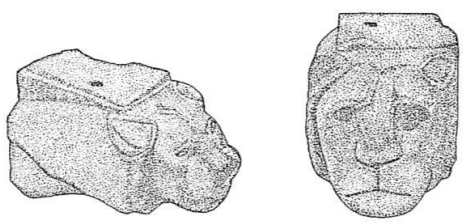

Fig. 5.18. Basalt orthostat, Hazor (Area A), LBA. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.19.

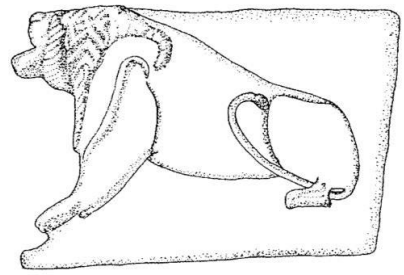

Fig. 5.19. Orthostat, Hazor (Area C), LBA. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.20.

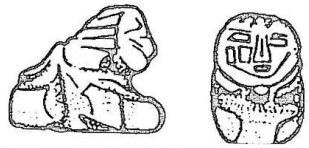

Fig. 5.20. Cornelian amulet, Tell el- Far'ah (S), LBA. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.24.

In the Israel/Palestine region, the guardian lion motif was particularly popular during IA IIB. Keel & Uehlinger state that the "increase in importance [of] the northern Syrian guard-lion symbolism" is one of the "hallmarks of Iron Age IIB."[391] According to Strawn, "the practice of placing leonine figures in key architectural contexts is quite early and can be traced with relative consistency thereafter."[392] The motif most certainly held an apotropaic function: the role of the lions was to protect the people inside a city, a temple, or a palace and to ward off evil from them.[393] In Til-Barsip, two lion statues were installed at the palace gate by an Assyrian governor (ca. 770–60). According to accompanying inscriptions, the governor gave the lions names that demonstrate their function very clearly. One was named "The impetuous storm, irresistible in attack, crushing rebels, procuring that which satisfies the heart," and the

[391] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 278. See also Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 100.
[392] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 218.
[393] Braun-Holzinger, "Apotropaic Figures at Mesopotamian Temples in the Third and Second Millenia," 157; Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 222; Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 63–64.

other one "He who pounces on rebellion, scours the enemy, drives out the evil and lets enter the good."[394]

A crucial point in the lion scene of 1 Kings 13 is that the lion remains standing by the corpse, which is reported several times. In ancient Near Eastern art, there are some examples of guardian lion monuments that depict a standing lion with a ripped victim in its feet. An orthostat from Alaja Hüyük (ca. 1450–1200 BCE) depicts a subdued bull-calf underneath a lion's pawn (**fig. 5.21**). The lion is standing, faced forward. The lower part of the statue is not very well preserved, but it still clearly shows the calf's submission to the lion.[395] A detail in a portico from ninth century Kappara palace (Tell Halaf) depicts a deer under a standing lion (**fig. 5.22a–b**).[396] The image indicates that the lion has ripped out the guts of the deer. Finally, there is an unfinished statue from Neo-Babylonia[397] that depicts an anthropomorphic figure lying at the feet of a standing lion (**fig. 5.23**). The purpose of portraying a guardian lion with a victim might have been to stress the apotropaic function. The artefacts are meant to be warnings to those who enter with bad intentions: intruders will become lion's prey.[398]

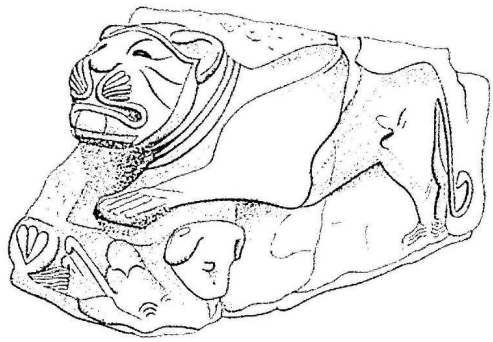

Fig. 5.21. Orthostat; Alaja Hüyük; ca. 1450–1200. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.310.

[394] Translations by Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 222. Cf. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 126; Braun-Holzinger, "Apotropaic Figures at Mesopotamian Temples in the Third and Second Millenia," 157; Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 63–64; Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Near East*, 181. For a transliteration, see Burkhard J. Engel, Darstellungen von Dämonen und Tieren in assyrischen Palästen und Tempeln nach den schriftlichen Quellen (Mönchengladbach: Hackbarth, 1987), 57–58, and Braun-Holzinger, "Apotropaic Figures at Mesopotamian Temples in the Third and Second Millenia," 157.
[395] See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 223.
[396] See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 221.
[397] The origin and dating is debated, but it is probably from Babylon, the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE). See Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 223–224.
[398] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 221; 224.

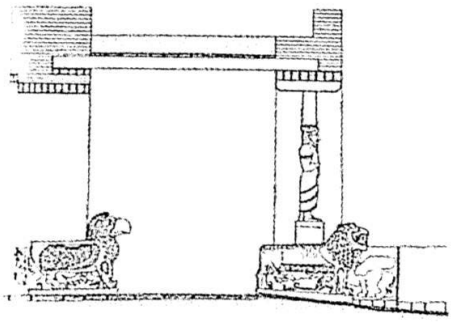

Fig. 5.22a. Reconstruction of portico; Tell Halaf (Palace of Kapara), 9th c. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.303.

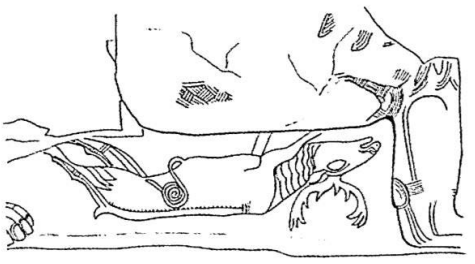

Fig. 5.22b. Detail of Fig. 16a. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.304.

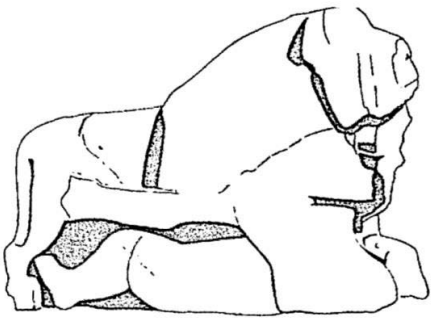

Fig. 5.23. Basalt statue (unfinished); Babylon (Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II), 6th c., origin and date debated. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.311.

5.4.3. Deities or Monarchs Control Lions

After killing the man of God in 1 Kings 13:11-32, the lion refrains from eating its prey and does not attack again. Even though it is not stated explicitly, it is implied that the lion acts under the command of YHWH. In this case, the portrayal resembles the so-called Lord of Lions motif that often appears in the iconographic record of the ancient Near East.[399] However, there is no direct correspondence between the depiction of YHWH and the depictions of Lords of Lions in Ancient Near Eastern art. The Lord of Lions is often depicted in the center of two lions, holding them by their tails, throats or ears, or the superiority of the

[399] I use Lord of Lions as a sub motif for the Master of Animals motif. On the latter, see Counts and Arnold, *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography*. See also Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 58.

anthropomorphic figure is pointed out in some other physical way (**fig. 5.24**). Even though YHWH is not explicitly depicted in this manner in the narrative, the feature that unifies the visual and literary images is a deity controlling a lion.

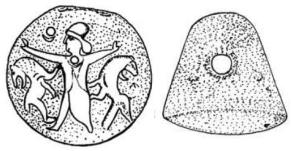

Fig. 5.24. Conoid, Tall Nimrin, Persian Period (4th c.). Image: Eggler & Keel, *Corpus der Siegel-Amulette aus Jordanien*, Tall Qafqafa Nr. 1.

The element of control may be further demonstrated by another iconographic example. **Fig. 5.25** depicts a four-winged male deity (genius) who is holding a male and a female lion by their hind legs. Both lions have attacked a bull. The central position of the deity clearly indicates that he is in control of the attacking beast, although it is difficult to determine whether the deity is sending the lions towards the bulls or restricting their attack. This specific image is a detail in a 9th century relief from Nimrud, but the motif is at least 2000 years older.[400]

Fig. 5.25. Detail of an embroided tunic on a relief, Nimrud, 9th c. (ca. 883–859.) Image: Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 224.

[400] Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954), 104. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* fig. 4.215. Cf. Ibid. e.g. figs. 4.88 and 4.222.

Similar to the previous example, a Late Bronze age cylinder seal from Tell el-ʿAjjul also depicts a deity controlling a lion (**fig. 5.26**), although the overall meaning of the constellation is uncertain. According to Keel & Uehlinger, the deity "holds, by tail, the lion that, together with a winged daemon is threatening a human who is lying on the ground."[401] Strawn suggests that, alternatively, the lion could be the deity's familiar, as well as the horned animal on his left hand.[402] Both of the animals are sent by the deity towards the winged demon who is threatening the human character. In any case, the constellation indicates divine control over the lion. The deity either restrains the lion from attacking the human being or he commands it to attack the demon.

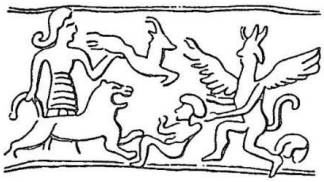

Fig. 5.26. Cylinder seal, Tell el- ʿAjjul, LBA. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.10.

In ancient Near Eastern art, there are also portrayals of lions in battle scenes attacking alongside a king. As the lion in 1 Kings 13:11–32 acts on the command of YHWH, these images might be comparable to the text. This iconographic motif is particularly typical to Egyptian art (**fig. 5.27**),[403] but there are objects that indicate that it was also known and used in the Southern Levant (**figs 5.28–29**).

[401] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 78.
[402] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 84.
[403] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 158.

Fig. 5.27. Sandstone relief, Medinet Habu (Eastern high gate of North wall), Ramesses III (1184–1153). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.103.

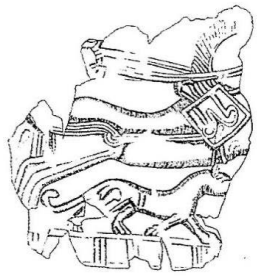

Fig. 5.28. Ivory fragment, Megiddo, LB (ca. 1350–1150). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 3.13.

Fig. 5.29. Scarab, Akko (surface find), probably 728–525. Image: Keel, *Corpus* I, Akko Nr. 226.

A lion was (and still is) considered to be one of the most dangerous land predators.[404] Therefore, depicting a deity or a monarch in control of such an animal emphasizes his/her insurmountable power. Also, when a lion is portrayed as the familiar or companion of the deity, the lion "lends" the anthropomorphic character its power and aggressiveness, traits that are depicted in images of lions attacking humans.[405]

5.5. The Lion Imagery in 1 Kings 13:11–32

The lion in 1 Kings 13:11–32 is represented as an obedient minion of YHWH, and therefore the role of the lion is to highlight the power of YHWH. When described as god's familiar, the lion expresses the aggressive power of the deity in the same way as in the iconographic material. The lack of images indicates that pairing a lion and a donkey together is a unique feature in the narrative. The function of the donkey (and the viewers) could be to demonstrate how the lion only attacks the one who has violated the word of YHWH.

[404] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 158.
[405] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 84–85. Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 82.

Numerous images and texts in the ancient Near East depict lions attacking domesticated and wild animals. Therefore, a non-attacking, or selectively attacking lion is certainly an artistic device that pinpoints the message of the narrative.

I argue that the main emphasis of the lion constellation in 1 Kings 13:11–32 is on guarding as the repetitions in the narrative indicate. The image of the dead man flanked by a standing lion and a donkey is highly congruent with the iconographic examples of guardian lions. The lion in the narrative is placed in a visible site, on the road, where people pass by and see it. This is similar to where the guardian lion statues were placed at the city gates or at the entrances of palaces and temples in the ancient Near East. The victim is shown next to the lion in order to warn others; this is the outcome of ignoring the word of YHWH. After hearing about the peculiar triad on the road, the old prophet realizes that the unfortunate victim is the man of God who disobeyed YHWH. In the end, the story is connected to the larger narrative of 1 Kings 13. After seeing the constellation of the lion, the donkey and the corpse on the road, the old prophet realizes that, since YHWH's word came true in the faith of the man of God, the proclamation against the altar of Bethel was also genuine prophecy and will be reality one day.

In the visual representations, divine control over lions is depicted by physical contact between the (usually) anthropomorphic deity and the beast. Gods, goddesses and monarchs stand on lions, they lay their hands on the backs of lions, and they hold lions by their hind legs, tails and throats. Some images even portray how the goddess Ištar holds a lion on a leash (**fig. 5.30**)! In Biblical narration YHWH is depicted with anthropomorphic features to certain extent, but as Howard Schwartz points out, "the biblical God does not engage with many humanlike activities like eating, sleeping and sex."[406] Therefore, the divine control over the lion in 1 Kings 13 is implied, rather than expressed as a physical contact between YHWH and the lion. Nevertheless, the element of divine control is certainly visible in the narrative, but it takes place on a more abstract level than in the iconographic material. The action of the lion implies this as does the statement of the old prophet: "YHWH has *given him* to the lion and it has mauled him and killed him according to the word of YHWH that he

[406] Schwartz, "Does God have a Body?," 209.

spoke to him" (v. 26).[407] It is also worth considering whether the lion in the narrative is acting at the command of YHWH or whether it represents the deity itself. In any case, the lion symbolizes the power and aggression of YHWH, but this is represented very differently in 1 Kings 13:11–32 in comparison to the iconographic constellations.

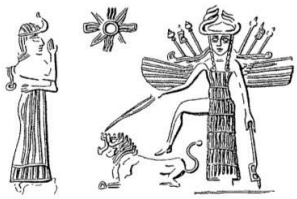

Fig. 5.30. Cylinder seal, Akkadian Period. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.242.

[407] In contrast to one possible interpretation of **fig. 5.26**, Yahweh does not restrain the lion from attacking the donkey or the people on the road to protect them.

6. Daniel 6

6.1. Introduction

Excursus: Two Textual Traditions of Daniel 6

Notable about the textual witnesses of Daniel 6 is that the Masoretic text (MT) and the Old Greek version (OG) differ from each other to such an extent that the difference has to be taken into account in the analysis. Therefore, both versions of Daniel 6 will be treated equally in this study.

Daniel 6 is also attested in the fragments of Qumran. 4QDan^{b} (4Q113) includes verses 8–22 and 27–29 of chapter 6 in addition to sections from chapters 5, 7 and 8. These fragments are dated to the first half of the 1st century CE.[408] Excluding a few minor differences in grammar and wording, 4QDan^{b} is congruent with the Masoretic text.[409] This indicates that the MT version has not changed tremendously between the first century CE and the beginning of the second millennium CE.

The situation with Greek manuscripts is far more obscure. There are two major trails of tradition, which are known as Theodotion (Th) and the already mentioned OG. To a large extent, the two traditions do not drastically vary from each other, and most scholars consider Th to be a revision of OG to correspond better with MT.[410] Despite its title, Th cannot be the work of the historical Theodotion, who translated many Hebrew Bible texts into Greek. Montgomery, for instance, dates the historical Theodotion to the early second century CE, but Th is already cited in the New Testament.[411]

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[408] Eugene Ulrich, "The Text of Daniel in the Qumran Scrolls," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume II*. Edited by John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers Inc, 2002), 574.
[409] Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary (OTL;* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 3–4.
[410] Newsom, *Daniel*, 4; Sharon Pace, *Daniel* (SHBC; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), 26. Hartmann & DiLella suggest an alternative: "It is best to consider Theodotion-Daniel a fresh translation of the Hebrew and Aramaic form of the book with an eye on LXX-Daniel rather than a recension in the usual sense of word."(Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel: A New Translation With Notes and Commentary On Chapters 1–9* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1978], 82).
[411] James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On the Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), 39; Alexander A. DiLella, "The Textual History of Septuagint-Daniel and Theodotion-Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume II*, eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers Inc, 2002), 593.

However, the case of Daniel 4–6 is more complex because of the significant divergence between Th and OG. Most of the discrepancies are to be found in chapter 4. Differences are also numerous and significant in chapter 5 but to a lesser extent than in the previous chapter. When it comes to chapter 6, the differences are not major but still crucial.[412] The structure and plot of the narrative is essentially the same, but there are remarkable differences, e.g. in theological emphasis and character description. It is possible that chapters 4–6 were actually translated into Greek before the rest of the book of Daniel and circulated as an independent text.[413] That existing translation would then have been incorporated into the OG translation rather than using a Hebrew *Vorlage* as its base text, as Theodotion seems to have done.[414]

Even so, this is not enough to explain all the differences between OG and Th. The nature of the variants indicates that the translations are based on two distinct literary editions.[415] The question of priority of either version does not seem meaningful, although several scholars have argued for each of the two.[416] Collins argues that both traditions "preserve variant formulations of a common story. Neither one can be regarded as the *Vorlage* of the other."[417]

The early Christian church favored Th over OG because Th had a closer correspondence to the Masoretic text.[418] The vast number of differences in MT and OG were understood as errors in the OG. As a result, there are plenty of manuscripts that follow Th, and only a few manuscripts that attest OG.[419] For a long time, the hexaplaric Codex Chisianus (Ms 88, 9th c.

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[412] Michael Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," in *Die Septuaginta: Orte und Intentionen*, eds. Siegfried Kreuzer, Martin Meiser and Marcus Sigismund (WUNT 361; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 405.

[413] John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1993), 7; Newsom, *Daniel*, 5. Cf. also Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On the Book of Daniel*, 36. However, Segal points out that, even though perceiving chapters 4–6 as a unit may be valid, "each of these three chapters reflects an independent story, and they did not all necessarily follow the same textual and translational trajectories." (Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," 406).

[414] Newsom, *Daniel*, 5.

[415] Ibid.

[416] Rainer Albertz (*Der Gott des Daniel: Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4–6 in der Septuagintafassung sowie zu Komposition und Theologie des aramäischen Danielbuches* [SBS 131; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988], 76) and Lawrence M. Wills (*The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends* [HDR 26; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990], 87–121) have argued for the priority of the OG; David Satran ("Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Fourth Chapter of the Book of Daniel," Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1985, 62–68) and Pierre Grelot ("La Septante de Daniel IV et son substrat semitique," *RB* 81 [1974]:22) for the priority of the MT/Th (cf. Newsom, *Daniel,* 5).

[417] Collins, *Daniel*, 221. Also Segal becomes to the same conclusion. (Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," 428.)

[418] John J. Collins, "Current Issues in the Study of Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume I*, eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers Inc, 2002), 3.

[419] Newsom, *Daniel*, 4; Gertz et al. 2012, 649.

CE) was the only known instance of a Greek manuscript that followed the OG tradition. In addition to this, the Syrohexapla (615–617 CE), the highly literal Syrian translation of the fifth column of Origen's Hexapla by Paul of Tella, is also based on the OG version.[420] In 1931, this small group of manuscripts grew as Papyrus 967 (P967) was found in Aphroditopolis, Egypt. The document contains portions of Ezekiel, Esther, and Daniel. It was discovered to be a pre-hexaplaric attestation of OG, dating back to the second or early third century CE, having therefore major importance for research on Daniel.[421]

6.1.1. Translation

MT
1. So Darius the Mede received the kingdom in the age of 62.
2. It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps, who were to be placed throughout the kingdom,
3. and above them three overseers, of whom Daniel was one. To these the satraps gave account so that the king would suffer no loss.
4. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the other overseers and satraps because an extraordinary spirit was on him, and the king was going to set him above the whole kingdom.
5. Then the overseers and satraps began trying to find grounds for complaint against Daniel concerning the kingdom. But no grounds for complaint or any corruption was found because he was trustworthy.[422]
6. Then these men said: "We cannot find any grounds for complaint about this Daniel, unless we find it in his faith[423] to his God."
7. After this, these overseers and satraps rushed[424] to the king and spoke to him like this: "O king Darius, live forever!"
8. "All the overseers of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and ratify an interdict[425] that, for 30 days, whoever prays to any god or man other than you, O king, shall be cast into the pit of lions."
9. "Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document[426] so that it cannot be changed according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked."

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[420] Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 586–587.
[421] Newsom, *Daniel*, 4.
[422] MT adds "So no negligence or corruption was found in him" (וכל־שלו ושחיתה לא השתכחת עלוהי). The repetition is not found in Th.
[423] דת is a Persian loanword that translates to "law," but in this context it refers more to religious practices. Cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 265; and Newsom, *Daniel*, 188–189.
[424] The Aramean verb רגשׁ appears in verses 7, 12 and 16. It has varying translations in different versions. Th and S: "approached" (παρέστησαν; *qrbw*); Vg: "went secretly" (*surripuerunt/subripuerunt*). See Hartman and DiLella, *The Book of Daniel*, 194. Newsom points out that the nuance of this verb is difficult to capture. In other contexts, the Aramean verb and its Hebrew cognate refer to haste, hostile agitation, or coordinated activity (Newsom, Daniel, 189).
[425] The Aramean phrase corresponds to Akkadian expression *riksa dunnunu*, "to make legally binding". (Shalom M. Paul,"The Mesopotamian Background of Daniel 1–6" in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume I*, eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint. Boston; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers Inc, 2002., 58.)
[426] Newsom translates this: "put it in writing" (Newsom, *Daniel*, 187).

10. Therefore, king Darius signed the document and the interdict.
11. When Daniel learned that (such) a document had been signed, he (went) to his house, which had windows in its upper room open towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he went down on his knees to pray and praise his God, just as he had done previously.
12. Then those men rushed[427] to Daniel and found him praying and beseeching before his God.
13. Then they approached the king and said:[428] "O king! Did you not sign an interdict that, for 30 days, any person who prays to any god or man other than you, O king, shall be cast into the pit of lions?" The king responded and said: "The statement is true, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked."
14. Then they responded and said to the king: "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, does not care for you, O king, nor (for) the interdict you signed, but gives his prayer three times a day.
15. When the king heard the charge, he was deeply distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him.
16. Then these men rushed to the king and said to him: "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or statute that the king establishes can be changed."
17. Then the king commanded to bring Daniel and throw him into the pit of lions. The king started to speak to Daniel: "May your God, whom you constantly serve, deliver you!"
18. A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the pit, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his nobles so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.
19. After this, the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment[429] was brought to him, and sleep fled from him.
20. The king got up at the break of day, when the sun was rising, and he hurried to the pit of lions.
21. When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried with a sad voice: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you constantly serve been able to deliver you from the lions?"[430]
22. Then Daniel said to the king: "O King, live forever!"
23. "My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong."
24. Then the king was exceedingly glad[431] and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no harm was found on him because he had trusted in his God.
25. The king commanded to bring forth the men who had accused Daniel, and they were thrown into the pit of lions with their sons and wives. Before they reached the bottom of the pit, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones into pieces.
26. Then king Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language who were living in all the land: "May your prosperity be abundant!"

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[427] Cf. v7 (MT). Th has here: "kept under observation; observed" παρετήρησαν; S *ntrw*; Vg: *curious inquirentes*.
[428] MT reads: "and spoke about the king's interdict." This is an explicating plus, found also in 4QDan^{b} (על אמרא; MT: על אמר) but not in Th or S.
[429] The root meaning of the Aramaic noun דחון is ambiguous. Th, Vg and S interpret it as food, OG ignores it. Because of the feminine ending, the word has also been interpreted to mean concubines or dancing girls. Cf., e.g. John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC 30; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1989), 121; Collins, *Daniel*, 258; Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On the Book of Daniel*, 277; and Franz Rosenthal, *An Aramaic Handbook* (PLO [Neue Serie] 10; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967), 21.
[430] Th: "from the mouth of the lions" (ἐκ στόματος τῶν λεόντων), anticipating v23.
[431] The same verb is used in vv 15 and 24 (שׁניא): "deeply stressed" – "exceedingly glad".

27. “I make a decree that in all the people of my royal dominion should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel:

For he is the living God, enduring forever.
His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end.”
28. “He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth;
He, who saved Daniel from the paws of the lions.”

29. So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

OG[432]

5:31. […] and Xerxes, who was the king of the Medes, received the kingdom.
1. And when Darius was full of days and esteemed in old age, he appointed one hundred twenty-seven satraps over his whole kingdom
2. and over them three men their leaders, and Daniel was one of the three men,
3. since they had authority over everyone in the kingdom. And Daniel was clothed in purple and was great and honored before king Darius, because he was skilled and intelligent and a holy spirit was in him, and he prospered in the affairs of the king that he conducted. [Then the king decided to appoint Daniel over all his kingdom, and the two men whom he had appointed with him and the hundred and twenty-seven satraps.]
4. When the king decided to appoint Daniel over all his kingdom, the two young men, speaking to each other, agreed to a plan and resolve among themselves, since they found neither sin nor ignorance against Daniel for which they could accuse him to the king.
5. And they said, “Come, let us establish an interdict on ourselves that no one will request a request nor pray a prayer to any god for thirty days, except king Darius, otherwise he will die,” so that they might defeat Daniel before the king and he might be cast into the pit of lions. For they knew that Daniel prayed and beseeched to the Lord, his God, three times a day.
6. Then those men went and said before the king,
7. “We have established an interdict and statute that any man who prays a prayer or requests some request to any god, for thirty days, except to king Darius, will be cast into the pit of lions.”
8. And they requested the king that he would establish an interdict and not change it, as they knew that Daniel prayed and beseeched three times a day so that he might be defeated at the hands of the king and be cast into the pit of lions.[433]
9. Thus king Darius established and confirmed it.
10. When Daniel learned about the interdict, which they had established against him, he opened windows in his upper room opposite Ierousalem and would fall on his face thrice a day, just as he had been doing previously, and beseeched.
11. And they watched Daniel and caught him praying three times a day each day.
12.Then these men went pleading to the king and said, “O king Darius, did you not enact an interdict that no person will pray a prayer nor request a request from any god for thirty days, otherwise the person will be cast into the pit of lions?” Then, the king answered and said to them, “The word is accurate, and the interdict will remain.” [And they said to him, We demand you swear by the decrees of the Medes and Persians that you will not change the matter, or have regard to person, and you will not diminish anything of what has been said

[432] The English translation of the OG is based on R. Timothy McClay’s translation of Daniel in the NETS Electronic Edition. I have made occasional alterations to McClay’s translation.
[433] Ms 88 omits this verse (*homoioteleuton*).

and you punish the person who did not abide by the this interdict.“ And he said, “Thus I will do as you say. This has been established for me.”]
13. And they said, “Look, we found Daniel, your friend, praying and beseeching before the face of his God thrice a day.”
14. Grieving, the king said that Daniel be casted into the pit of lions according to the interdict, which he established against him. Then the king grieved exceedingly for Daniel, and he kept assisting[434] to deliver him until sunset from the hands of the satraps.
15. And he was unable to deliver him from them.
16. King Darius cried out and said to Daniel, “Your God, whom you constantly serve thrice a day, he will deliver you from the power[435] of lions! Have courage until morning.”
17. Then Daniel was thrown into the pit of lions, and a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the pit, and the king sealed it with his signet and with the signets of his nobles so that Daniel might not be removed by them or the king pull him up from the pit.
18. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and was grieving for Daniel. But the God of Daniel took providential care for him and shut the mouths of the lions, and they did not trouble Daniel.
19. King Darius rose early in the morning and took the satraps with him. He went and stood at the opening of the lions’ pit.
20. Then the king called Daniel in a loud voice with wailing, saying, “O Daniel, are you alive, and has your God whom you constantly serve saved you from the lions, and have they not demolished you?”
21. Then Daniel heard the loud voice and said,
22. “O king, I am still alive, and God has saved me from the lions, because righteousness was found in me in before him, and also before you, O king, neither ignorance nor sin was found in me. But you listened to men who mislead kings, and you cast me into the pit of lions for destruction.”
23. Then all the authorities gathered and saw Daniel, how the lions had not troubled him.
24. Then these two men who testified against Daniel – they and their wives and their children were thrown to the lions. And the lions killed them and shattered their bones. And Daniel was appointed over the whole kingdom of Darius.
25. Then Darius wrote to all the nations, countries and languages who lived in all his land, saying:
26. “All people in my kingdom, worship (imp.) and serve the God of Daniel,
for he is a living and enduring God
for generations and generations, forever!”
27. I, Darius, will worship and serve him all my days, for the handmade idols are not able to save as the God of Daniel, who redeemed Daniel.”
28. And king Darius was gathered to his fathers, and Cyrus the Persian received his kingdom.

6.1.2. Overview of the Literary History

The book of Daniel contains texts that belong to two different literary genres. Chapters 1–6 are so called diaspora legends that are composed as a third person account. They belong to

[434] P967, Ms 88, Syh: ἐβοηθει. Joseph Ziegler suggests ἐφοβήθη, ”he was afraid” (Ziegler, ed. *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum vol. 16/ 2, Susanna; Daniel; Bel et Draco* [2nd edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 326.
[435] Lit. “hand” (χειρὸς).

the genre of court and ascent narratives, whereas chapters 7–12 are vision reports, composed in a first person account. In addition, the book is bi-lingual, and the shift between Hebrew and Aramaic does not correspond to the shift of genres.[436] The beginning of the book is in Hebrew (1–2:4a), and the language changes to Aramaic in 2:4b. The Aramaic section then covers chapters 2:4b–7:28. The rest of the book, chapters 8–12, is again in Hebrew. Daniel 6 belongs to the Aramaic section of the book.

The story of a virtuous Jewish protagonist in a court setting is also found in the narratives of Joseph (Gen. 37–50) and Esther. It is also noteworthy that Dan 6 (especially the MT) shares a lot of similarities with Dan 3.[437] Both of these narratives begin with a royal decree that is harmful to the protagonist(s) and that causes a temporary decrease of status for them. In both narratives, the protagonist(s) is denounced by other members of the court, and they are sentenced to death. In Dan 3, the three Jewish men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are thrown into a fiery furnace, and in Dan 6, Daniel is thrown into the pit of lions. In both narratives, the protagonist(s) remains unharmed because of a divine intervention, and certain other men of the court lose their lives instead. Both narratives end with a king praising the God of the protagonist(s). In addition to these thematic similarities, these two narratives share similar language in the formulation of the punishment,[438] the accusation against the protagonist(s),[439] and in the king's appeal to the protagonist's God.[440]

Several scholars have also noticed that the court tales in chapters 1–6 share features with Mesopotamian literature. Shalom Paul points out that Dan 1–6 "bears noticeable linguistic, philological and typological Mesopotamian imprints."[441] Karel van der Toorn has made a strong case that the narrative in Daniel 6 corresponds to the classic Akkadian poem *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and to a letter of Urad Gula.[442] The Daniel stories also have similarities with the

[436] See e.g. Newsom, *Daniel*, 8.
[437] Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," 419–422.
[438] 3:6 "(he) shall be thrown into a burning fiery furnace" (יתרמא לגוא אתון נורא יקדתא) – 6:8 "(he) shall be thrown into a lion's den" (יתרמא לגב אריותא)
[439] 3:12 "(these men) pay no heed to you, O king" (לא שׂמו עליך מלכא טעם [גֲ בריא אלך]) – 6:14 "Daniel [...] pays no heed to you, O king" (דניאל […] לא שׂם עליך מלכא טעם)
[440] 3:15 "and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?" (ומן־הוא אלה די יׁשיזבנכון מן־ידי) – 6:17 "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!" (אלהך די אנתה אנת פלח־לה בתדירא הוא יׁשיזבנך). All the examples and translations follow Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," 420.
[441] Paul, "The Mesopotamian Background of Daniel 1–6," 55–68.
[442] Cf. Karel van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den: The Babylonian Background of a Biblical Motif," *CBQ* 60/4 (1998): 626–640. For transliteration and translation, cf. Amar Annus and Alan Lenzi, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* (SAACT vol. VII; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text

legend of Ahiqar.[443] Based on the use of Akkadian and Persian loanwords and the parallel narratives, several scholars argue that chapters 1–6 originated in the Babylonian exile during the late Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.[444] Newsom takes chapters 4–6 as the "core of the developing collection."[445] The visions in chapters 7–12 are most certainly later tradition.[446] As they are so clearly bound with the Antiochene crisis of 167–164 BCE, these chapters were likely composed in Jerusalem or its surroundings.[447] Dan. 11:40–42 and 45 lack knowledge of the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 164 BCE. Therefore, the latest phase of redaction, before the canonization of the book, must have taken place between 167–165 BCE, which makes it the youngest book in the Hebrew Bible.[448]

6.2. Literary Analysis

6.2.1. Structure and Storyline

Daniel 6 is a tale of a virtuous courtier who is sentenced to death because of a scheme by his jealous rivals. Through divine intervention, the protagonist survives and receives his high status back, while his opponents suffer a fatal punishment for their transgression. The narrative is composed in a chiastic ring composition as it begins with Daniel's success and ends with it as well.[449]

Corpus Project, 2010) and Simo Parpola, ed., *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (SAA vol. X; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1993), 231–234 (no. 294; K4267).

[443] Cf. Newsom: "Although a copy of Ahiqar was discovered in a Jewish military colony serving the Persian Empire in Elephantine, Egypt, it is not a Jewish composition but probably originated in Mesopotamia (yet see Holm 78–88, 477, for discussion of a possible origin in Egypt)." (Newsom, *Daniel*, 12).

[444] Cf. e.g. Philip R. Davies, "Daniel in the Lions' Den," in *Images of Empire*, ed. Loveday Alexander (JSOTSS 122; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 161; Newsom, *Daniel*, 21; Paul, "The Mesopotamian Background of Daniel 1–6"; van der Toorn, "Scholars at the Oriental Court: The Figure of Daniel Against Its Mesopotamian Background," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume I*, eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers Inc, 2002), 38; and Collins, *Daniel*, 33.

[445] Newsom, *Daniel*, 10.

[446] Views of the redaction history of chapter 7 vary. See Newsom, *Daniel,* 21.

[447] Newsom, *Daniel,* 21.

[448] Markus Witte, "The Book of Daniel," in *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Literature, Religion and History of the Old Testament*, eds. Jan Christian Gertz, Angelika Berlejung, Konrad Schmid and Markus Witte (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 654. Possibly due to its late origin, the book was placed among the Writings instead of the Prophets in the Hebrew canon.

[449] I follow the structuring of Goldingay here (Goldingay, *Daniel,* 124). Collins divides the narrative thematically into six sections: introduction (vv. 2-4), the conspiracy (vv. 5-10), the condemnation (vv. 11-18), the deliverance (vv. 19-25), the royal proclamation (vv. 26-28) and conclusion (v. 29) (Collins, *Daniel*, 262). Newsom follows Collins's view of the structure, but divides the conspiracy, the condemnation, and the deliverance further under subtitles. She also uses slightly different names for the sections. For example, she labels the condemnation as "Daniel and the king trapped" (Newsom, *Daniel*, 191).

A (vv. 2–4) Introduction: Daniel's success

B (vv. 5–11) Darius signs an injunction but Daniel takes his stand.

C (vv. 12–16) Daniel's colleagues plan his death.

D (vv. 17–19) Darius hopes for Daniel's deliverance.

D' (vv. 20–24) Darius witnesses Daniel's deliverance.

C' (v. 25) Daniel's colleagues meet their death.

B' (vv. 26–28) Darius signs a decree and takes his stand.

A' (v. 29) Conclusion: Daniel's success

Sunset and sunrise mark the center of the ring composition. In the first part of the narrative, the further the day advances, the deeper the distress of Daniel (and king Darius) gets. Correspondingly, his situation begins to improve when the new day arrives. It is also noteworthy how action and inaction is mirrored in the first and final sections of the ring. Even though Daniel is seemingly the protagonist of the narrative, he is in fact very passive and does not influence the course of events. The most important juxtaposition in action and inaction is between the enemies of Daniel and king Darius. In verses 5–19 (5–18a), Daniel's colleagues are in charge and king Darius is unable to change the course of events. But when the new day arrives, king Darius becomes the subject of action and the colleagues are placed in the same helpless position in which king Darius was at the beginning.

An interesting feature in the narrative is that, at the center of the ring, there seems to be no action. After Daniel has been cast into the pit, the king does nothing (he does not even sleep), the actions of the colleagues are not reported, and neither are those of Daniel. As it turns out, even the lions do not act. The only character that is active during the night in the pit is God. In the OG version, he shuts the mouths of the lions, and in the MT version, he sends his angel to do so.

6.2.2. Characters and Characterization

The characters or groups of characters in Daniel 6 are King Darius, the overseers and satraps (MT) / two young men (OG), Daniel, God, the lions, and the wives and children of Daniel's opponents. The central characters are Daniel, his opponents, and king Darius, whereas the character of God acts in the background, and the lions at the end of the narrative. The wives

and children of Daniel's opponents are merely mentioned at the end, and therefore I will not discuss them under a separate title.

6.2.2.1. Daniel

Unlike the other characters of the narrative, Daniel[450] is explicitly characterized by the narrator. In both textual traditions, Daniel is portrayed as a type of loyal, righteous servant of God.[451] In MT, Daniel is described as better than his colleagues because he has "an extraordinary spirit on him"
(רוּחַ יַתִּירָא בֵּהּ). OG (v.3), underlines the superiority of Daniel even more by reporting that he was "dressed in purple" (ἐνδεδυμένος πορφύραν), he was "great" (μέγας), "honored" (ἔνδοξος), "skilled" (ἐπιστήμων), "intelligent" (συνετός), and "prospered in the affairs of the king" (εὐοδούμενος ἐν ταῖς πραγματείαις τοῦ βασιλέως). The narrator points out the virtues of Daniel in many verses (vv. 4 [3], 5 [4], 23 [22], 24 [23]). In the MT, Daniel is defined as "one of the exiles from Judah" (מִן־בְּנֵי גָלוּתָא דִּי יְהוּד), which seems inappropriate given Daniel's high status in the court.[452] In the corresponding verse (13) in OG, Daniel is defined as " a friend" (φίλος) of the king, which is convergent with the Hellenistic court tradition in which even non-Greeks could achieve the status of a courtier by an established friendship with a king.[453] Even though Daniel is the main character of the narrative, his actions and speech describe him scantly. He only acts once (11 [10]) and speaks once (vv. 22–23 [21–22]). Knowing the consequences, Daniel continues his daily prayers. The only time he speaks is when king Darius wants to know if he has survived the night in the lions' pit.

6.2.2.2. The Overseers and Satraps (MT) / Two Young Men (OG)

If Daniel is portrayed as a type of virtuous courtier and righteous servant of God, in both textual traditions Daniel's colleagues are represented as one-dimensional types of treacherous opponents. The narrator does not reveal their names, backgrounds, or emotions, and they are only motivated by their will to defeat Daniel. They are dishonest and arrogant –

[450] The name Daniel means "God is judge." The name shares similarities with Dan'ilu in the Ugaritic Aqhat, and the portrayal of a righteous courtier is resembled in the wise man Ahiqar.
[451] Cf. the stories of Esther and Joseph, cf. 6.1.2.
[452] Collins, *Daniel*, 263; and Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," 416–417. The description in the MT resembles the way Daniel is introduced in 2:25 and 5:31.
[453] See Rolf Strootman, *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires: The Near East after the Achaemenids, c. 330 to 30 BCE*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 111–135. It is possible that the underlying Semitic term here is הדכר, "counselor," which appears also in OG Dan. 3:91 and is translated there as "friend" (pl. Greek).

everything that Daniel is not. Even their death is depicted in contradiction to Daniel. When they are thrown into the same pit of lions in which Daniel spent the night unharmed, the colleagues are immediately killed. Other than that, the opponents of Daniel are portrayed differently in the MT and OG tradition. The narrative begins by naming the characters and explaining the hierarchy: king Darius is the head of the kingdom, and he appoints 120 satraps[454] and three overseers above the satraps to look after the affairs in his realm. Daniel is appointed as one of these overseers. According to the MT tradition, all the overseers and satraps are envious of Daniel's success in court, whereas in the OG, it is specified that Daniel's closest colleagues, the two other overseers, plot against him. Furthermore, in the OG, the opponents are called "the two young men" (οἱ δύο νεανίσκοι), which could be an indicator of their incompetence compared to Daniel.

6.2.2.3. King Darius

Compared to Daniel and his colleagues, it is interesting how much more depth the narration gives to the character of Darius.[455] Of all the characters in the narrative, the king is depicted as the most human and with human frailties. King's emotions are described several times. In verse 15, he is "deeply distressed" (שַׂגִּיא בְּאֵשׁ עֲלוֹהִי) when he hears the charges against Daniel. In verse 19 (18), his actions indicate that he is greatly anxious as he spends the night fasting, and he is unable to sleep. The OG tradition even states explicitly that he was "grieving for Daniel" (ἦν λυπούμενος περὶ τοῦ Δανιηλ). In verse 21, he calls Daniel at the mouth of the pit with a "sad voice" (בָּקָל עֲצִיב), although here, Th uses the adjective ἰσχυρᾷ, which translates as 'loud, powerful.' In verse 20, OG stands somewhere in the middle by reporting that the king called Daniel "in a loud voice with wailing" (φωνῇ μεγάλῃ μετὰ κλαυθμοῦ). Finally, in verse 24, the king is "exceedingly glad" (שַׂגִּיא טָאֵב עֲלוֹהִי) when he finds out that Daniel is alive and well.[456] The purpose of showing the king as an overly emphatic character that is lead by his subjects is most likely to highlight the weakness of the Persian king in contrast to the God of Daniel.

[454] The MT and OG tradition report a different number for satraps. The MT recounts 120, when in OG the number is 127. The latter appears also in Esth. 1:1, 1 Esd. 3:2; and Josephus X.11.4:360. Historically, the number of Persian satraps varied from 20 to 30. Cf. Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 88; and Hartman and DiLella, *The Book of Daniel*, 197.
[455] Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," 408–409.
[456] It is noteworthy that MT uses the same structure in verses 15 and 24.

6.2.2.4. God and His Angel

Throughout the narrative, the character of God is called אֱלָהּ, and the same word is used when Daniel's colleagues plan the interdict for "whoever serves any God" (כָּל־דִּי־יִבְעֵה בָעוּ מִן־כָּל־אֱלָהּ MT v. 8). God is described as "enduring and living" (μένων καὶ ζῶν), and in the OG version, he is juxtaposed with "handmade idols" (εἴδωλα τὰ χειροποίητα, v. 27). In both textual traditions, God influences the behavior of the lions and thus saves Daniel's life in the pit. However, the description of God differs significantly in MT and OG. In the MT version, God operates more discreetly in the background. His actions are not described or explained in the narration, but nevertheless the turning points of the plot are caused by him. When Daniel is in the pit, God sends his angel (מַלְאָךְ, v. 23) to shut the mouths of the lions. God is thus a transcendent character who acts mightily without participating in the storyline on the same level as the other characters. Therefore, the angel is a mediator that is needed to keep the level of transcendence. In the OG version, God acts more straightforwardly. Instead of using an angel, He himself shuts the mouths of the lions when Daniel is captured in the pit (v. 18). This is also anticipated more clearly than in the MT. In the OG, king Darius encourages Daniel by assuring him that his God will deliver him from the lions (v. 16). In the MT, Darius only hopes that this would happen (v. 17).

The miraculous redemption in MT Dan 6 resembles Dan 3 and the redemption of the three men in the fiery furnace. In chapter 3, there is also an angel who is sent by God to rescue his servants (3:28). Segal suggests two possible explanations for the appearance of the angel. Either the purpose has been to harmonize MT Dan 6 with Dan 3, or at some point the interference of God was found problematic. Therefore, the action of God was faded out to the background. The use of the angel as an additional character creates the sense of a transcendent God.[457] Even though, in verse 23, the angel shuts the mouths of the lions in the MT version, God is credited elsewhere in the narrative for this. In verse 17, king Darius wishes for Daniel's deliverance by saying: "May your God, whom you constantly serve, deliver you!" In verse 21, the same sentence is used as a question: "[…] has your God whom you constantly serve been able to deliver you […]?" Once again, at the end of the narrative in verse 28, God is described as the one "who saved Daniel from the paws of the lions" (דִּי שֵׁיזִיב לְדָנִיֵּאל מִן־יַד אַרְיָוָתָא). The OG version is more consistent in its characterization as God is

[457] Segal, "The Old Greek and Masoretic Text of Daniel 6," 421–422.

the one who is described saving Daniel all the way through (vv. 16, 18, 20, 22 and 27).[458] In sum, the angel acts as an extension of God's will.

Even with their differences, both textual traditions describe God as a character who is somehow able to influence the behavior of the lions. He restrains the lions from attacking a righteous man but does not hold them back when the true villains are thrown to the beasts.

As pointed out before, Daniel and his opponents are portrayed throughout the narrative as contradicting characters. Portraying the colleagues' deceitfulness and malevolence highlights Daniel as the virtuous one. The character of king Darius has a relationship to all other characters in the narrative. Each of these relationships stresses the weakness of Darius. When Daniel's colleagues set the trap, Darius blindly trusts his counselors and silently signs the interdict that seals the fate of Daniel.[459] When Darius seeks ways to help Daniel, the colleagues arrogantly remind the king about the permanence of the interdict: "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or statute that the king establishes can be changed" (MT v. 16). The sentence is highly ironic as the king himself *would* be the only one who could make a change here. In the OG version, even Daniel addresses the king arrogantly as he explicitly points out that the king made a mistake: "But you listened to men who mislead kings, and you cast me into the pit of lions for destruction" (v. 22). King Darius is also depicted as a sympathetic character towards Daniel and his God.[460] Even the portrayal of the lions indicates the weakness of Darius and the might of Daniel's God. The lions are represented as belonging to the king and as the vehicles of his royal punishment. However, he does not have power over the lions as he does over his subjects.

6.2.2.5. The Lions

In both textual traditions, the lions are represented as a group. The MT uses the word אַרְיֵה for a lion, and the Greek translations render it with λέων. From early on, it is evident that the pit of lions
(גֹּוב אַרְיָוָתָא, λάκκος τῶν λεόντων) is a form of royal punishment. The lions are kept by the court, and they are used for executing death sentences. Before Daniel ends up in the pit, both

[458] Ibid.
[459] On the trap motif, cf. Newsom, *Daniel*, 191 and 194.
[460] Unlike king Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3.

textual traditions mention it repeatedly.[461] The repetitive mentioning of the pit creates a sense of threat in the narrative. Both textual traditions describe the pit of lions as a place that is below the ground as people are thrown into it and lifted up. The entrance seems to be narrower than the pit itself since it can be closed by placing a stone on the mouth of the pit.

There is a number of literary sources that report the trapping of lions in pits. For instance, an Old Babylonian letter from Mari describes the trapping of a lion in the following way: "A lion was devouring a sheep of Ḫabdu-Ammi in the pen, so he opened a pit in his pen, in Bīt-Akkaka, and the lion, as it was making its attack on the pen, fell into the pit. The lion tried to get out, but the shepherds gathered wood, filled the pit, and set fire to the pit."[462] In the Hebrew Bible, there are also passages in which a pit is used for trapping a lion (Ez 19:4, 8) or as a hunting method in general (e.g. Ps 7:16, 9:16, 35:7–8, 57:7). In 2 Sam 23:20 and 1 Chr 11:22, a lion has ended up in a cistern. Pits were used to capture lions for short periods of time. Eventually, lions that ended up in pits died of starvation or they were killed by humans as the Mari letter above demonstrates.[463]

The themes of a pit and being saved from lions also appear in the Akkadian poem *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*[464] ("I want to praise the lord of wisdom") and in an Assyrian scholar's letter to king Ashurbanipal.[465] The first is a well-known[466] Babylonian court tale that shares a lot of similarities with Daniel 6. The protagonist Ŝubši-mêšre-Šakkan loses his high status at court because of malicious plotting by other courtiers, and he falls ill. He is finally restored by Marduk who rescues him "from the pit."[467] A few lines later, Ŝubši-mêšre-Šakkan's redemption is compared to rescuing someone from devouring lions, or to be more precise, the enemy of the protagonist is likened to a lion. Marduk disarms the enemy and puts a

[461] MT: vv. 8, 13; and OG: 5, 7, 8 and 12.
[462] ARM 14.20-22 (no. 2.5-17), translation: van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 637.
[463] Van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 637. Also Newsom, *Daniel*, 195.
[464] For the Akkadian text, transliteration and translation, cf. Annus and Lenzi, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi.* Excerpts of the text will be given here with reference to the tablet and the lines.
[465] Cf. van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den."
[466] The poem is preserved on over 50 cuneiform tablets and fragments from the first half of the first century (ca. 1000–500) BCE. These tablets and fragments have been discovered from the libraries of monarchs and scholars, and some of them were most likely written as scribal exercises. The find contexts indicate that the poem belonged to the general education of the cultural and political elite (Annus and Lenzi, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, ix).
[467] "My [lo]rd [soo]thed me, My [lo]rd bandaged me. My [lo]rd removed affliction from me, My [lo]rd revived me, [From the pi]t he rescued me, … [he g]athered me up." (*Ludlul* IV, 1–6)

muzzle on the lion. In both depictions, Marduk prevents the opponent from hurting the protagonist.[468]

The story of *Ludlul* is skillfully utilized in the letter of Urad Gula, an Assyrian scholar who fell from grace and became an outcast in the eyes of Assyrian the court.[469] In the letter that is dated approximately to 664, Urad Gula begs king Ashurbanipal to restore his status. He sees himself as the living protagonist of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi,* a righteous sufferer, who deserves the mercy of the king. Urad Gula reminisces that, in the days of his glory, he and his exorcist colleagues were allowed to eat the leftovers of sacrificial meal. These leftovers are compared to "lions' morsels" in the letter. The morsels are mentioned again, together with a pit, in a poorly preserved passage: "[……] Day and night I pray to the king in front of the lions' pit […… which …] are not … with morsels [……] my heart amidst my colleagues [……]."[470] The protagonist of Ludlul is rescued from a pit, and Urad Gula states that he is praying in front of the lions' pit. Karel van der Toorn has argued that the pit in these literary texts is a metaphor for the lost status and the state of exclusion.[471]

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

Daniel 6 is a tale of a virtuous courtier who falls from grace and whose honor is later revived. The chiastic structure of the narrative emphasizes the interplay between the action and inaction of the characters and indicates that the central part of the narrative is the pit of lions. The narrative pictures a group of lions that are permanently kept in a pit by the official rule. The pit is portrayed as a subterranean space that can be closed off with a stone. The purpose of keeping the lions is to use them for royal punishment. The pit of lions is mentioned several times in the narrative, but the lions are depicted as acting only at the end when Daniel's colleagues are thrown into the pit. The repeated mention of the pit builds up

[468] "Marduk restored me. He struck the hand of my striker, Marduk made him throw down his weapon. On the mouth of the lion e[a]ting me, Marduk put a muzzle" (*Ludlul* IV, 11–15).
[469] Urad Gula was the son of a royal exorcist named Adad-šumu-uṣur. Urad Gula started his career as an assistant chief exorcist in the court of Sennacherib (704–681), continued as an exorcist in the court of Assarhaddon (680–669), and also served the crown prince Ashurbanipal. After being crowned king in 668, Ashurbanipal expelled Urad Gula from his court. Van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 629–633; and Martti Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in the Neo-Assyrian Sources* (SAAS 7; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998), 84–88.
[470] SAA 10 294:39.
[471] Van der Toorn "In the Lions' Den," 633; 636.

tension and a sense of threat. Overall, the lions belong to the king and are clearly part of a royal sphere in the narrative.

Even though the lions belong to the king, it is God who controls their behavior. God, or his angel, shuts the mouths of the lions when Daniel is in the pit, and thereby restrains the lions from attacking. The lions as such are depicted as natural lions as they attack and kill Daniel's opponents in the pit.

The chiastic structure of the narrative also incorporates the time of day. Towards the night, the predicament of the protagonist gets deeper, but when the new day breaks, he is redeemed. The events in the pit of lions take place between sunset and sunrise. Therefore, the lions in this narrative are portrayed on the borderline between day and night. Since they are also used as executors of death sentences, they are on the borderline between life and death as well.

In the following section, I discuss the motifs of 1) lions in captivity, 2) lions as vehicles of royal punishment, 3) lions as a threat, 4) lions and kingship, 5) an angel or God shutting the mouths of lions, 6) God controlling lions and 7) lions on the borderlines in the visual representations of the ancient Near East.

6.4. Iconographic Congruencies

6.4.1. Lions in Captivity and as Vehicles of Royal Punishment

Daniel 6 depicts lions that are being held in a subterranean pit with a narrow entrance that can be closed with a rock. In the iconographic sources of the ancient Near East, lions are occasionally portrayed as captured, although there are no such representations known from the Israel/Palestine region. A relief in the tomb of Ptahhotep in Saqqara (5th Dyn., ca. 25th – 24th c.) depicts two lions in cages (**fig. 6.1**). The cages are on top of each other, and four men pull them with ropes that are attached to the cages. There is also a depiction of captured lions in Mesopotamian iconography. **Fig. 6.2** is a detail of a lion hunt relief from Assurbanipal's North Palace in Nineveh. It shows a staged hunt scene. A servant stands on a cage and opens its door from above to a roaring, striding male lion. Two lions before him are already attacking the king. The king has stretched his bow and is ready to shoot the lions on the spot.

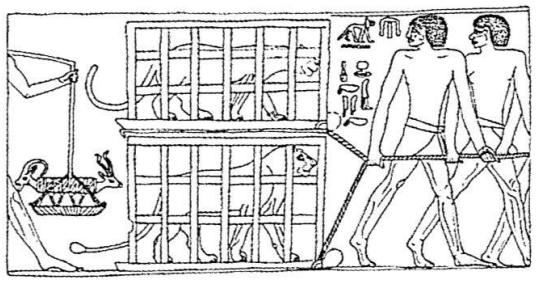

Fig. 6.1. Detail of a relief, Saqqara (Tomb of Ptahhotep), 5th Dyn. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 4.127

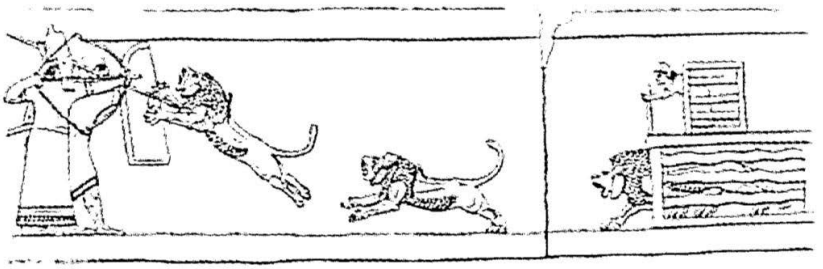

Fig. 6.2. Detail of a relief, Nineveh (North Palace of Assurbanipal, Room S[1], Slabs D–E), 7th c. (ca. 668–627). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 4.125.

Particularly during the reign of Assurbanipal, the royal lion hunt was an extensively utilized motif in royal propaganda and in its visual representations.[472] According to Assyrian source materials, lion hunts were actual events that took place in a special garden (*ambassu*).[473] In the North Palace of Nineveh, king Assurbanipal is represented as a lion hunter on several reliefs. **Fig. 6.3** depicts one part of the wall panels in Room C. The hunting arena is depicted on the right. On the left are spectators, apparently citizens of Nineveh, who have climbed on a forest hill to watch the hunt.[474] In the middle, there is a wall that is secured by spears, and inside the arena are men with spears and dogs.

[472] Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," 339.
[473] Dick, "The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt," 255.
[474] Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal,* pl. VI; Dick, "The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt," 255; and Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia,* 78.

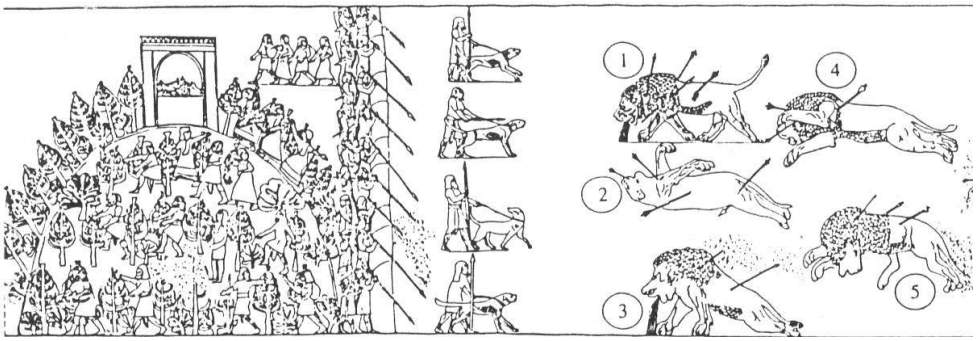

Fig. 6.3. Detail of a relief, Nineveh (North Palace, Room C, Slabs 8–10), 7th c. (ca. 668–627). The British Museum (BM 124862). Image: Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," fig. 3.

In addition to caged lions, there are also some indications that lions were kept in royal gardens, at least according to the iconographic materials of the North Palace in Nineveh.[475] **Fig. 6.4** depicts two lions in a garden. The female lion is lying on the ground and the male lion is depicted standing. The animals are surrounded by luxuriant vegetation. The interpretation of the lions in this image is debated. Julian Reade and E. Douglas Van Buren suggest that the lions are tamed, whereas Dominique Collon presumes that the lions were drugged and docile.[476]

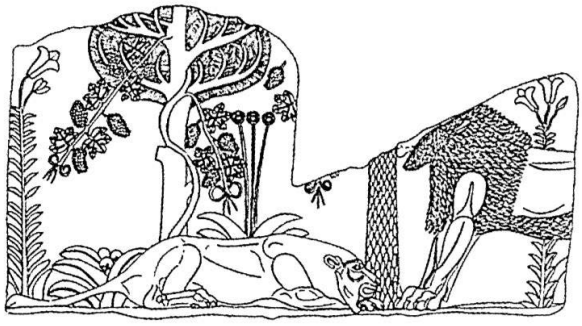

Fig. 6.4. Wall panel, Nineveh (North Palace, Room E, Slabs 7–8), 7th c. (ca. 668–627). The British Museum (BM 118914). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.110.

[475] Cf. Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia,* 78. Cf. also L. Trümpelmann, "Jagd, B.: Archäologisch," *RlA* 5:236–238, esp. 237 §5.
[476] Cf. Julian Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 72; E. Douglas Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia as Represented in Art* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1939), 8; and Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 152. Frankfort is uncertain in his view but speculates with the possibility that lions were there for royal sport (Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 186). Strawn does not take a stand on the matter but presents the views of previous scholarship (Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 161).

Even though the examples above indicate that at least some Neo-Assyrian kings kept lions in the surroundings of their court, they do not correspond to a description of a pit as in Dan 6.[477] In Dan 6, the king does not keep lions for the purpose of hunting them or because their association with the royal sphere. The pit of lions is used primarily for executing official punishments. There is no evidence that such a form of death penalty would have been used anywhere in the ancient Near East.[478] All in all, the pit of lions in Daniel 6 has no direct counterparts in ancient Near Eastern art.

6.4.2. Lions as a Threat

In Daniel 6, the image of a lion as a threat is built up through several repeated mentions of the lions' pit. The pit is referred to several times, but the lions are not mentioned, not even when Daniel is cast into the pit. Only after Daniel's redemption do the lions enter the picture as they strike out the deceitful colleagues of the protagonist. As the notion of a threat is abstract, there are a variety of ways to transmit it through texts and images. In ancient Near Eastern iconography, the sense of threat is inevitably part of the lion's depiction, but it is bound to several different motifs. Threat may be expressed through images in which a lion is attacking, or about to attack, but also through images in which a solitaire lion is roaring or rampaging. This sense of threat applies also to guardian lion statues, which depict a reclining or standing lion on a gate as a visible but silent warning to those who enter.[479]

From early on, lions were depicted attacking humans and animals, most likely due to their natural status as dangerous predators.[480] The fear of a lion is sensible given the fact that lions are deadly beasts. Strawn points out that lions were considerably common in images that depict a contest between two animals.[481] This indicates that lions were considered to be a typical threat or adversaries in the cultural and natural environment of the ancient Near East.[482] However, in ancient Near Easter art, the threat of lions covers more than just the fear

[477] Van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 637; and Karl Marti, *Das Buch Daniel* (Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament 18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1901), 44.
[478] Newsom, *Daniel*, 195.
[479] Cf. also the discussion on guardian lions in ch 5.
[480] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 135.
[481] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 134.
[482] Several ancient Near Eastern images depict an attacking lion so realistically that it is likely that their producers based their portrait on observations of real flesh and blood lions in the wild (Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 135).

of them as natural predators. Several images imply that a lion is threat to the civilized order, livelihood, and survival as a community. **Fig. 6.5** is demonstrates this clearly.

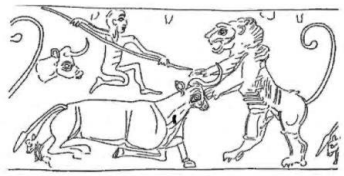

Fig. 6.5. Cylinder seal, Early Dynastic Period. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 4.21.

In this Early Dynastic cylinder seal, a large male lion is attacking a bovine that is giving birth. The animal is in its most vulnerable state and unable to flee or protect its offspring. Luckily for the bovine, there is yet another figure in the picture. A nude anthropomorphic figure approaches the lion with a spear, ready to strike the beast. If the anthropomorphic figure fails, he will not only lose his livelihood with the death of his cattle, but he will lose his life as well. Similar symbolism lies behind the widely attested images of kings, heroes, and deities who are hunting lions. They are protecting their people from ferocious lions that represent enemies, forces of chaos, or the uncontrollable wild. This topic will be further elaborated in the following section.

6.4.3. Lions and Kingship

The lions in Daniel 6 are portrayed in the possession of the king. Even though they are used in the narrative for royal punishment rather than hunting game, they are nevertheless part of king Darius' court and symbolize his royal status. In ancient Near Eastern art, lions were closely associated with monarchy in several different regions and time periods.[483] In royal symbolism, kings were portrayed as fighting and defeating lions (e.g. the motifs of the lion hunt and heroic combat) or as controlling them (e.g. lord of Lions), but a lion and a king are often portrayed in cooperation as well, for instance, in constellations in which lions fight alongside a king in the battlefield. In addition, lion imagery was widely utilized in royal architecture, for instance, on lion thrones and guardian lion statues.

[483] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 182–184.

The motif of heroic combat is especially ancient,[484] although it is not always certain whether the anthropomorphic figure in the images is meant to represent a deity, a monarch or a hero in general.[485] As already pointed out, the role of a monarch/deity/hero was to fight against a lion and thereby to protect his people and the order of the civilized world against the chaos that a lion represents.[486] This is attested in the iconographic record throughout the ancient Near East, but also, for instance, in the performance of the Neo-Assyrian lion hunt. Reliefs that represent the hunt always emphasize the king's courage and his superiority. In such depictions, the king is never portrayed as loosing.[487] Instead, the message is that the king is the conqueror of both nature and men, and he is in control of his realm. Several Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs of the lion hunt are accompanied with inscriptions that state that the Assyrian king has defeated the lions with the providence of the gods: "I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my pleasure, on foot, a fierce lion of the plain, I seized it by its ears. With the encouragement of Assur and Ishtar, lady of battle, with my spear I pierced its body."[488] The Neo-Assyrian iconographic tradition of the lion hunt was adapted by the Persian Empire and applied to their royal propaganda.[489] This is also seen in the iconography of the Israel/Palestine region during the Persian period. Some of the coinage of this region represents a king in heroic combat with a lion (**fig. 6.6**).[490]

Fig. 6.6. Coin, Samaria, IAIII/Persian Period. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 3.143.

The use of lions on coins and seals indicates that the royal connotations of lions were not limited to palace art. Seals and sealings had multiple purposes in the ancient Near East. They

[484] Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art,* 219.
[485] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 152.
[486] Cf. discussion on the Warka stele: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 134.
[487] Cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 165; and Pauline Albenda, "Ashurnasirpal II Lion Hunt Relief BM124534," *JNES* 31 (1972):175–178.
[488] Cf. 4.2.2 for references.
[489] Uehlinger, "Powerful Persianisms," 175. Cf. also Yaʿakov Meshorer and Shraga Qedar, *Coinage of Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE* (New York: Numismatics Fine Arts International, 1991), nos. 16, 44–45, 48–51 and 59–60.
[490] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 110.

were used as personal signatures but also for official purposes, for instance, to seal storage jars or rooms or to verify official status in correspondence.[491] As a communication media, seals and coins could reach the masses, and therefore the motifs of official seals must have been well thought. A king stabbing a lion (**fig. 6.7**) delivers a message of a powerful monarch who is able to control a wild beast. On the other hand, the power of a monarch is also transmitted in the bulla of a jar handle from Tel Dan (**fig. 6.8**). In this case, the lion itself may symbolize the monarch, or at least official rule, which is so powerful that it tramples enemies under its paws. All in all, the use of lions in official, royal contexts would distribute the propaganda of an invincible monarchy.

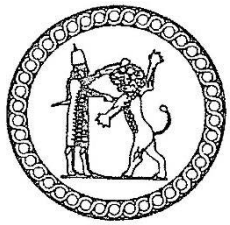

Fig. 6.7. Bulla, Samaria, IA II (8th c.). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 3.93.

Fig. 6.8. Seal impression on a jar handle, Dan (Area T), IA IIC (720–620). Image: BODO 16961.

6.4.4. God/ an Angel Shuts the Mouths of the Lions, and the Deity Controls the Lions

There are no direct iconographic counterparts for the literary image of a god or an angel who shuts the mouths of lions. However, the action in Dan 6 indicates that God is in control of the animals as he is able to influence their natural behavior by restraining them from attacking. The literary image depicts divine control over animals, and this motif does have a counterpart in ancient Near Eastern art. The depiction of God in Dan 6 resembles visual images in which an anthropomorphic figure holds lions by their hind legs, tails, ears or throats. In Dan 6, God or his angel shuts the mouths of lions. This infers physical contact over the animals as God is able to impact the bodily actions of the beasts. One motif on an embroidered tunic of Assurbanipal depicts a winged anthropomorphic figure that is flanked

[491] Otto, "Glyptic," 417.

by two lions (**fig. 6.9**). The figure is holding the animals by their hind legs while both lions are attacking a bovine.[492]

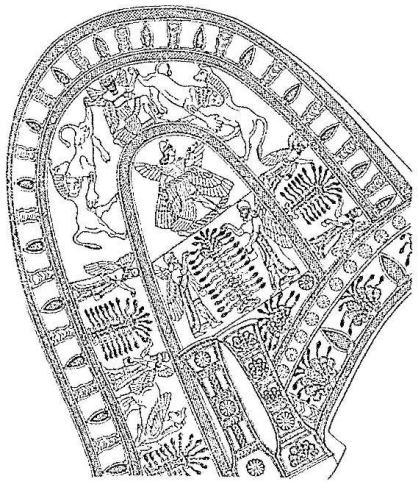

Fig. 6.9. Detail of a relief, Nimrud, 9th c. (ca. 883–859). Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.215.

6.4.5. Lions in Border Zones

Daniel spends the night in the pit of lions, and as the sun rises, king Darius learns that Daniel has been redeemed by his God. The lions are the executors of royal punishment, but in the end, they turn out to be the executors of *divine* punishment. Virtuous Daniel is found to be innocent in the eyes God, but his opponents are not as fortunate. The lions are depicted on the borderline between life and death. Similarly, in the iconographic record of the ancient Near East, lions occasionally appear on various types of borderlines. A constellation of two lions with mountains and a sun disk in between them was popular in Egyptian art, especially during the New Kingdom (**fig. 6.10**). In such constellations, lions likely represent the edges of the earth. Strawn assumes (by interpreting Othmar Keel) that it was the "broad, general kind of danger that led the artists to delineate the edge of the earth by lions."[493] In Mesopotamian cylinder seals, lions often appear in a similar context sitting on top of doors (**fig. 6.11**).

[492] Cf. Joan Oates, *Babylon* (rev. ed.; London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), figs. 87–88 for Neo-Babylonian seals with similar representations.
[493] Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion,* 149; and Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 25.

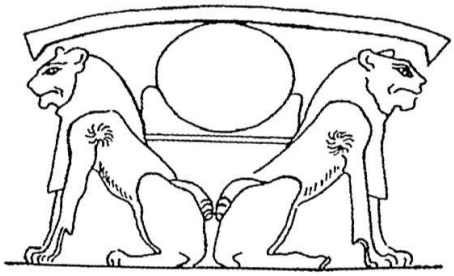

Fig. 6.10. Illustration on papyrus (Book of the Dead), New Kingdom. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.82.

Fig. 6.11. Cylinder seal, Akkadian Period. Image: Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, fig. 4.80.

In addition, architectural guardian lions are also positioned on borderlines. Lions in gateways and entrances are on the edge of moving in and out. When positioned at entrances of temples, lions are on the border that separated the sacred from the profane. As noted before, the orientation of guardian lions imply their role and function. The lions in the tomb in Tel Eitun (**fig. 6.12**) are oriented towards the tomb in contrast to guardian lions in general. The purpose of the Tel Eitun lions is to keep the spirits of the dead inside the tomb, and in this sense to protect the living outside. These lions are on the border between the worlds of the living and the dead.

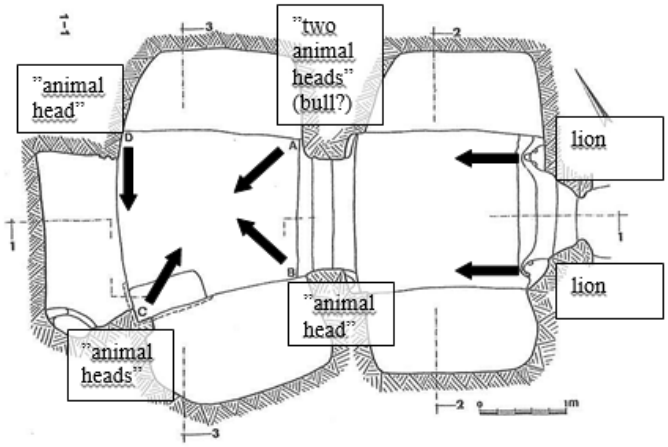

Fig. 6.12. Plan of the tomb. Ussishkin, "Tombs at Tel 'Eton," Fig. 2, 111. Text boxes and arrows mine.

6.5. The Lion Imagery in Dan 6

In Daniel 6, the purpose and role of the lions is to increase the sense of threat and to emphasize the power of God. The lions are portrayed as a vehicle of punishment in a royal sphere. If indeed the roots of this narrative are to be sought from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian heartland, it seems reasonable that the narration of Daniel 6 portrays king Darius as a king who has lions in his possession, given that the historical kings of at least the Neo-Assyrian Empire kept lions in captivity for lion hunts. However, there is irony in the portrayal of king Darius. He is depicted as an emperor who has lions in his possession, but he does not have full power over them. All depictions of kings that hunt lions in Ancient Near Eastern art show the king subduing the lions under his power. Darius, on the other hand, cannot influence the behavior of the lions, and he cannot influence the faith or fate of Daniel. His part is to be a by-stander who focalizes events but is unable to change the course of them. This puts him in clear contradiction with the character of God who *is* able to make a change. The lions, who should strengthen the might of the king, instead enforce the power of God.

Even though there are some points of contact between the narrative and visual sources, the lion imagery in Daniel 6 deviates significantly from portrayals of lions in Ancient Near Eastern art. There is no visual evidence of keeping lions in pits or using lions as vehicles of royal punishment. In addition, there are no visual depictions of angels shutting the mouths of lions. The lack of congruent iconography strengthens Karel van der Toorn's theory that the pit of lions has its origin in Babylonian literature and should be perceived as a metaphor for a state of rejection and exclusion. According to van der Toorn, the Biblical authors misunderstood the metaphor and used it in a literal sense in Daniel 6.[494] However, as Newsom and Strawn point out, the use of the pit in a literal sense does not necessarily mean that the Biblical authors misinterpreted the Babylonian metaphor. It could as well be an intentional artistic choice.[495]

In the analyzed material, the iconographic motif of the Lord of Lions shares the most congruence with the lion motifs of Daniel 6. However, the connection should be seen as

[494] See Van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 638.
[495] Cf. Newsom, *Daniel*, 195; and Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 39.

thematic because the portrayal of a God controlling lions is represented very differently in the text and in the visual data. In Ancient Near Eastern art, the Lord of Lions is typically depicted grasping lions by their throats, tails, or ears, or the Lord of lions is at least in a dominant position otherwise (in the center, flanked by lions, who are portrayed below the anthropomorphic figure). The key connecting feature is the ability to affect the behavior of lions. In visual representations, the Lord of Lions either holds lions back or entices them to attack by holding them by their tails. In Daniel 6, God is depicted as the Lord of Lions in a highly transcendent way. He restrains the lions from attacking Daniel by shutting the mouths of the beasts, or by sending his angel to do this, but he does not interfere in the events as a physical character.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

The research tasks of this thesis have been 1) to discuss the image-text relationship between the Hebrew Bible texts and the ancient Near Eastern pictorial sources, 2) to apply iconographic exegesis to the Hebrew Bible narratives by paying proper attention specifically to their literary genre, and 3) to explore the use of lion imagery in Judges 14, 1 Kings 13:11–32 and in Daniel 6. In this final chapter, I will approach these research tasks by first summarizing and drawing conclusions about the results of the analysis (7.1.). I will then evaluate the analytical procedure of this study and discuss how to apply visual data in the analysis of Biblical narratives and how to evaluate the image-text relationship between Hebrew Bible texts and ancient Near Eastern pictorial sources (7.2.)

7.1. The Lion Imagery in the Hebrew Bible Narratives in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Iconography

7.1.1. Summary of Motifs

Judges 14, 1 Kings 13:11–32, and Daniel 6 contain a rich, versatile use of lion imagery. In Judges 14, the image of the lion is used to amplify the characters of Samson and YHWH, but also to reflect the enemies of Samson. An attacking, roaring male lion is the equivalent of visual representations that cover several different time periods and regions. These representations, together with term
כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת in Judges 14, portray the lion as a threat to humans, to other animals, and to the civilized order. Samson's encounter with the lion also evokes the iconography of the heroic combat, but the narrator implies that the true lion slayer is YHWH whose spirit rushes into Samson. The analysis indicates that the portrayal of unarmed combat with a lion appears to a lesser extent in the visual sources of the Ancient Near East. Therefore, as Webb has argued, it is likely that the narrator in Judges 14 strives to portray Samson himself as a weapon of YHWH.[496] The portrayal and treatment of the body of the lion in Judges 14 is very different from any known visual representation in ancient Near Eastern art. The purpose of such unique images is most likely to form the basis for the unsolvable riddle.

[496] Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 374.

In 1 Kings 13:11–32, lion imagery is used to depict divine punishment and to provide a purpose for the shared grave of the two prophets. The lion is portrayed as attacking a man, which is a typical motif in ancient Near Eastern art. This narrator also implies that the lion is acting under the command of YHWH. In visual representations, divine control over animals is often portrayed through the Lord of the Animals motif. Unlike in 1 Kings 13, this motif usually depicts the deity in physical contact with the animal(s). Similarly to Judges 14, the aniconic tradition of YHWH's portrayal may be the reason for the alteration of this motif in 1 Kings 13:11–32. The constellation of a lion, a dead man, and a donkey on the road is congruent with visual representations of guardian lions, who are depicted with their victims. However, the pairing of a lion and a donkey does not have a visual counterpart. It might function as a contradiction between wild and domesticated as an allegory of Bethel and Judah or of the two prophets.

In Daniel 6, the lions are used to create a sense of threat and to perform as executors of both divine and royal punishment. Lions are closely associated with the royal sphere, which is also evident in the visual representations of the ancient Near East. Lion imagery is also used to display the power structure between the characters. The weak king is portrayed as being in possession of the lions, but he is unable to control them. In the end, it is God who is in charge of them. The lion imagery also separates the protagonist from the antagonists as Daniel survives the pit unharmed while his colleagues are immediately killed. The pit of lions is a literary device that is also employed in Mesopotamian literature, but it does not appear in the iconographic record of the ancient Near East. Neither were lions used as the executors of royal punishment in the art or actual laws of the ancient Near East. The two textual traditions of Daniel 6 portray the relationship between God and the lions differently: in the MT tradition, which corresponds to the Mesopotamian *Ludlul bēl Nēmeqi* and *the Letter of Urad-Gula*, God uses an angel as a mediator to shut the mouths of the lions, while in the OG tradition God himself takes a more active role.

There are several motifs that are repeated in two or all three narratives. I will now list these motifs and assess their relationship to ancient Near Eastern iconography. These are 1) lions as a threat, 2) attacking lions, 3) a man fighting a lion, 4) a killed lion / the carcass of a lion, 5) lions in border zones, 6) a lion as the symbol of an enemy, 7) lions controlled by a deity, 8) lions as a vehicle of punishment, 9) lions and monarchy, and 10) lions with other animals.

The listed categories partially overlap one another because some of the motifs are closely linked with each other and are therefore difficult to distinguish from one another.

1) LIONS AS A THREAT. A common feature in all three analyzed narratives is that, in each of them, the lions are represented as a threat to the human characters. In Judges 14 and 1 Kings 13, the threat of a lion is triggered by an unexpected encounter. In Judges 14, "a young, male lion"
(כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת) approaches the protagonist roaring (שׁאג). The use of כְּפִיר אֲרָיוֹת likely indicates a sub-adult male lion that is in the prime of life and that is very capable of hunting. Roaring increases the sense of threat, and the use of והנה underlines the sudden appearance of the beast. 1 Kings 13 also creates the sense of threat by the sudden appearance of the lion. However, the threat of the lion continues to the very end of the narrative. After killing the man of God, the lion remains by the corpse together with the donkey. A lion standing by its victim is a sign of threat as well, which is marked by the people who pass by. In Daniel 6, the sense of threat is created by the repeated references to the pit of lions and to the lethal punishment that will follow from breaking the laws of the Persians and Medes. In Daniel 6, the narrator does not reveal the lions until the end. Therefore, the sense of threat is increased as the protagonist Daniel is thrown into the dark pit of beasts that have not been disclosed by the narrator. The threat of lions is also expressed in ancient Near Eastern art. Images of roaring and rampaging lions imply the threat as does the sheer presence of a lion.

2) ATTACKING LIONS. All three narratives portray a lion or lions attacking humans. In Judges 14 and 1 Kings 13:11–32, the lions appear and attack suddenly. In Daniel 6, the lions are expected to attack – which is the reason why they are kept by the court of Darius. However, contrary to expectations, the lions leave Daniel alone, and only attack at the end of the narrative as a grand finale when the antagonists of the story are thrown to them. In all of these encounters, the lions are presented as subjects. In 1 Kings 13:11–32 and Daniel 6, the attack of a lion is portrayed as brutally violent. In 1 Kings 13:11–32, the lion is described as "breaking" (שָׁבַר) the man of God. Similarly, in Daniel 6, the lions "overpower" and "shatter/break the bones" of the antagonists. Such violent representations of lions are also common in the visual data of the ancient Near East. There are, for instance, images of lions' victims with their guts hanging out, and victims that are trampled at the feet of lions. The motif of an attacking lion draws from the natural behavior of a lion as a predator, but in the visual representations, it was used for several symbolic purposes. These include the portrayal

of a king as an attacking lion, a lion attacking alongside with a king, lion as an enemy and lion as a symbol of chaos.

3) A MAN FIGHTING A LION. Judges 14 employs the commonly known iconographic motif of a heroic encounter. Samson is depicted in hand-to-hand combat with a roaring, male lion. In the visual data of the ancient Near East, this motif was used, for instance, in the royal propaganda of the Neo-Assyrian and Persian courts in order to depict a powerful, fearless ruler. As already noted, the striking difference in the use of the motif in Judges 14 is that Samson is portrayed as unarmed, whereas most of the ancient Near Eastern images included weapons in the depictions.

4) A KILLED LION / THE CARCASS OF A LION. In 1 Kings 13:11–32 and Daniel 6, the encounters with lions result in the death of human characters. In Judges 14, however, it is the lion that is killed. While the encounters between men and lions end with the death of the men in the two other narratives, Samson tears the lion apart as "a kid (of goats)" in Judges 14. Judges 14 also portrays the dead lion in a unique manner. The carcass of the lion is left torn on the road, and when Samson returns to have another look of it, he finds a swarm of bees and honey inside of it. The killing a lion is often portrayed in ancient Near Eastern art, and even dead lions are depicted in visual representations (e.g. in the Neo-Assyrian lion hunt reliefs). However, there are two significant differences between Judges 14 and the visual data of the ancient Near East. First of all, some exceptions notwithstanding, lions are most commonly killed with weapons in the visual representations. Second, and the bodies of the lions are treated with more respect in the iconographic data. There are no known images of lions being torn apart.

5) LIONS IN BORDER ZONES. In all three narratives, the lions are depicted in various kinds of border zones. In Judges 14, the lion enters the scene at the vineyards of Timnah while Samson is on his way to his fiancée. He is between his father's house and the house of his future bride. As was noted in the analysis, going down to Timnah and up to Dan structures the narrative. Also, the riddle about the lion divides the characters of the narrative into two groups. In 1 Kings 13:11–32, the lion scene takes place on the road as well. The man of God is on his way home to Judah when the lion confronts him on the road and kills him. The event is situated between Bethel and Judah, which likely serves a theological function. In ancient Near Eastern art, the so-called guardian lion motif was used to separate

spaces as well. When placed at architectural entrances, the lions were on the border of the inside and the outside. At temple entrances, the lions were on the border of the sacred and the profane, and in the tomb of Tel Eitun, their purpose was to separate the dead from the living (**fig. 3.81a–b**). In Daniel 6, lions also function on the border of life and death – Daniel is able to stay on the side of the living whereas his colleagues are not.

6) A LION AS THE SYMBOL OF AN ENEMY. In Judges 14, the thematic and formulaic repetitions associate the lion with enemies. In the visual data of the ancient Near East, such apposition was also typical. Pictorial materials reveal that lions and enemies were replaceable with each other. It is also noteworthy how Judges 14 uses a lion with bees in the same constellation – both of them were associated with enemies in the Hebrew Bible.

7) LIONS CONTROLLED BY A DEITY. In 1 Kings 13:11–32 and Daniel 6, God is able to impact the behavior of the lions. In 1 Kings 13:11–32, the old prophet supposes that YHWH has given the man of God to the lion. In addition, the lion does not attack the donkey nor the people who pass by, which implies that YHWH also restrains the lion from acting according to its instinct. In a similar way in Daniel 6, God restrains the lions from attacking Daniel while he is in the pit. In the OG version, it is God himself who shuts the mouths of the lions whereas God sends his angel to do so in the MT. In the visual representations of ancient Near Eastern art, the element of control is typically indicated by showing physical contact between the deity and the lion. The deity may be depicted, for instance, as standing on a lion or holding a lion by its ears, throat, tail or hind legs.

8) LIONS AS A VEHICLE OF PUNISHMENT. In 1 Kings 13:11–32, the old prophet interprets the death of the man of God to be caused by his disobedience towards YHWH. Therefore “YHWH has given him to the lion.” In the narrative, this speech complicates the image of the lion: it is not only an attacking lion, but it is a lion that attacks because of a divine commandment. This picture is closely related to the motif of divine control over lions. In Daniel 6, lions are explicitly used as vehicles of royal punishment. The narrative implies that such a procedure of execution was common in the empire. However, it seems that this punishment is only used as a literary motif since it does not appear in the iconographic records of Israel/Palestine nor in textual documents that would indicate its use in official rule. The analysis indicates that the motif of the pit of lions is a literary construct that is used in Daniel 6 and in the Mesopotamian literary works of *Ludlul bēl Nēmeqi* and *the Letter of*

Urad-Gula. The iconographic sources of the ancient Near East suggest that lions were captured in cages and perhaps kept in royal gardens, but there is no visual data of keeping lions in a subterranean pit.

9) LIONS AND MONARCHY. Within the selected narratives, only in Daniel 6 are lions associated with monarchy. As has been noted several times in this study, lions were closely associated with monarchy and kingship in the ancient Near East. Several rulers and states employed leonine iconography in Egypt, Israel/Palestine, Assyria, and Babylonia among others. It is therefore fitting to place lions in the court of king Darius in Daniel 6. However, the narrator employs this connection ironically. In the ancient Near East, the monarchs were associated with lions because of the might and strength of the animal. Daniel 6 uses this imagery to point out that king Darius is not a powerful king. He possesses lions, but he cannot control their behavior, and similarly he is unable to impact the actions of his courtiers.

10) LIONS WITH OTHER ANIMALS. Two of the selected narratives portray a lion with another animal. In Judges 14, the lion is presented together with bees, and in 1 Kings 13:11–32 with a donkey. As noted before, in the Hebrew Bible, bees were often associated with enemies just as were lions. The purpose of using a donkey with a lion in 1 Kings 13:11–32 might have been to stress the division between wild and domesticated animals and/or the theological division between Bethel and Judah. However, neither bees nor donkeys belong to the iconographic sphere of the lion in ancient Near Eastern art. Depending on the period, lions are portrayed with crocodiles, snakes, scorpions, bulls, cows, caprids, deer and various types of birds in constellations that depict an attacking lion, a lion being attacked, the Lord of the Animals, or a lion with other animals in undefinable constellations.

7.1.2. Conclusions: The Use of Lion Motifs in Hebrew Bible Narratives and in Ancient Near Eastern Art

For a large part, lion imagery is employed in the selected Biblical narratives by using the same conventions as in the comparative pictorial sources of the ancient Near East. The widely known iconographic motif of heroic combat is evident in Judges 14. Both source materials also portray lions as a threat and as attackers. The threat is indicated by roaring, by the violent behavior of the beast (which includes movement in both images and texts), or by its silent presence (cf. the iconographic motif of a lion striding over an anthropomorphic

figure). The interchangeability of lions and enemies is also applied to both texts and images. In Judges 14, the formulaic repetition of the spirit of YHWH rushing into Samson and the thematic repetition of taking things from the dead indicate that lions and enemies (i.e. the men in Ashkelon) are placed in the same role in the narrative. Similarly in the iconographic evidence, the constellations of kings hunting lions and fighting enemies were often structured in a similar pattern (e.g. in Neo-Assyrian palace art). The guardian lion motif is applied in a corresponding manner in both 1 Kings 13 and in ancient Near Eastern statues that depict the victim of a lion. Common denominators are 1) a standing lion, 2) the victim under or next to the lion, and 3) a visible location that people pass by (in between two spaces). The purpose of the portrait of the lion with the victim is to function as a warning to those who pass by. A lion without its victim already has a similar effect, but the presence of the victim enhances the scene. Moreover, in 1 Kings 13, the scene attains theological significance through the fact that the victim is present but only killed and not devoured.

Throughout the ancient Near East, lions were closely associated with monarchy. As noted above, this association is ironically applied in Daniel 6. Divine control over lions is another theme that is utilized in all of the selected lion narratives and used widely in ancient Near Eastern art. However, the theme is explicated differently. In ancient Near Eastern art, divine control over lions is shown by employing the motif of heroic combat, by portraying the lion as a companion of the deity or monarch (e.g. on a pedestal, alongside him in a battle), or by the motif of the Lord of Lions. Thematically, the latter seems to be applied in all of the selected narratives, as all three clearly indicate the superiority of God over the lions (and humans). Instead of portraying God in the iconographic posture of the Lord of Lions, the meaning is implied through the power structure between the characters. In the pictorial material, the power structure is shown by the physical contact and positioning of the deity above the lions, whereas in the Hebrew Bible narratives, God's agency is less visible and implied, most likely due to the aniconic tradition of YHWH. The use of a mediating character is not typical in representations of the Lord of Lions in ancient Near Eastern art, but it is used in MT Daniel 6.

Certain motifs that are used in the Hebrew Bible lion narratives are unknown in the pictorial sources. There are no known images of lions being torn apart (Judges 14), and the literary image of a beehive, bees and honey inside the carcass of a lion (Judges 14) is also unknown in ancient Near Eastern art. The image of a pit of lions that is used in Daniel 6 also turned

out to be merely a literary device that is paralleled in *the Letter of Urad-Gula*, which seems to be dependent on the Mesopotamian literary classic *Ludlul bēl Nēmeqi*.

The particular use of lion motifs in the Hebrew Bible narratives indicates that the Biblical authors utilized the cultural mindset but altered the commonly known motifs for the sake of the narrative. This mixing of motifs makes the lion scene and the riddle of Samson unexpected and surprising in Judges 14. The portrayal of the lion contains elements that are not typically associated with each other, which makes the riddle impossible to solve, which, in turn, is crucial for the storyline. The pit of lions in Daniel 6 may be a misunderstood metaphor based on the Mesopotamian literary tradition,[497] but the literary use of the motif may also be a conscious choice of the Biblical authors.[498] However, it has to be noted that the alteration and incorporation of motifs in the Hebrew Bible narratives may also derive from the editorial work on the texts. For instance, the LXX 1 Kings 13 does not include the old prophet's interpretation that the lion acted under the commandment of YHWH. Therefore, in this version, the image of the lion consists of the motif of an attacking lion and a guardian lion, but the divine control is left implicit.

7.2. Evaluation of the Analysis Process

The focus of this study has been to observe how lion imagery is used in the Hebrew Bible narratives. The texts were chosen as the starting point, and pictorial, archaeological sources of the ancient Near East were used and analyzed as comparative material. The textual history of the Hebrew Bible sets challenges for both a narratological analysis and comparison with the visual sources. Due to the long editorial process, there are several voices to be heard in the Hebrew Bible texts. Therefore, the narratological analysis of the text differs from the analysis of e.g. modern novels, which typically only have one known author. In this study, I have attempted to acknowledge the complex textual history of the narratives by providing text and redaction critical points of view in addition to a literary analysis of the texts.

The difficulty in locating the texts of the Hebrew Bible in different regions and time periods in the Israel/Palestine region leads to an inevitable issue with regard to iconographic exegesis: how to select the comparative visual material when there is no certainty of when

[497] As van der Toorn argues. See van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den."
[498] Newsom, *Daniel*, 195; Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 39.

and where the Biblical text originated and what they looked like in different regions and periods of time? In this study, I have strived to indicate awareness of this issue, but solving it completely is beyond of the scope of this study. For each narrative, I have provided information about the generally accepted dating of the text. The starting point of the visual data is in materials discovered in the Israel/Palestine region from eras that precede or cover the dating of the texts. Whenever I have seen a continuity of motifs from earlier periods or from more remote geographical regions, I have taken these into account as well.

When it comes to the pictorial material of lions, there are several issues to consider as well. The image of a lion is very diverse and even ambivalent. The popularity of the image has provided plenty of visual data for comparison with Biblical narratives. The lion as a visual motif reaches far back in history, taking several forms in different geographical regions and periods of time.[499] The problem is how to delimit the material and how to classify it. In this thesis, the visual data is categorized according to the *action unit approach*, which is based on evaluating the level of action in the contents of the images. As pointed out in chapter 2, the *action unit approach* is loosely structured on the first level of Panofsky's scheme, the descriptive pre-iconographic level. This has worked well for categorizing the material, even though the categories overlap to some extent. For instance, the roaring lion might simultaneously be a rampant or a striding lion, and the cult stands of Taanach (**figs. 3.14–15**) can be discussed in the categories of "vegetation" (3.2.2.1) and "anthropomorphic figures flanked by lions" (3.2.6.1).

The categorization of leonine motifs is based on visual data derived from the Israel/Palestine region from approximately 1000–150 BCE. Visual material outside this geographical region has been taken into account as well, especially when discussing the history and background of the motifs. However, in the analysis, the ancient Near Eastern material from beyond the Israel/Palestine region turned out to be a functional counterpart for comparison with the lion imagery of the Biblical narratives.

[499] There are over 200 verses in the Hebrew Bible that "explicitly use or implicitly evoke leonine imagery" (Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 26). When it comes to visual representations, lions are represented already in the cave of Lascaux (29 lions) that dates to ca. 12 000 BCE and in the oldest historical periods of the ancient Near East (e.g. the Lion or Battlefield Palette from Predynastic Egypt and the Warka/Uruk Stela from Protoliterate Mesopotamia) (Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion*, 132).

Future prospects of the *action unit approach*, which go beyond the scope of the present thesis, could be to include a discussion of the materiality of the objects as part of the process of categorization (3.2). In addition, an analysis of the performativity of the images and the way of experiencing them should perhaps be added into a discussion of the background and symbolism of the motifs (3.3).

Observing each text as a literary constellation was worthwhile. In previous research, the lion imagery of Judges 14, 1 Kings 13 and Daniel 6 has been observed by isolating the "leonine" verses instead of treating the lion narratives as literary constellations. Observing the literary features, such as repetitions, characterization, focalization and structure, enriches the interpretation, and the image of the lion becomes much more versatile.

The analysis technique in this study is based on the work of Joel M. LeMon, who adapted William P. Brown's concept of *iconic structure* and developed it into a tool for analyzing the image-text relationship between the Psalms and the pictorial sources of the ancient Near East. LeMon begins his analysis with a translation in which he takes the main textual variants into account.[500] He then proceeds to perform a literary analysis, which he begins with a structural outline of the Psalm, its rhetorical movement, and a discussion on the form and setting of the psalm. After this step, LeMon maps the imagery in the literary constellation by observing three main actors in the Psalms: the Psalmist, the enemy/enemies, and YHWH. He then draws these three components together and formulates his view on the iconic structure of the Psalm. After this, he turns to the iconographic congruencies of the Psalm and uses its iconic structure as a bridge between the textual and visual images. In his conclusions, he elaborates on the points of contact between ancient Near Eastern art and the given Psalm and provides an interpretation of the image of the winged YHWH.

In this thesis, the analysis began with a translation and a text historical overview, which provided the historical context to the narrative. The narratological analysis was conducted under the title "literary constellation." This part varied significantly from the procedure of LeMon, who studied Psalms. I observed the literary constellation of the narratives through two main literary categories: 1) structure and storyline, and 2) characters and

[500] On Psalm 17, LeMon also provides an excursus on the text critical issues (LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form*, 62–67).

characterization. In my analysis, there was a strong emphasis on characters and characterization, but observations on frequency (repetitions), milieu, narration, the narrator, and focalization were discussed under both main literary categories. LeMon addresses characterization in his analysis, but due to the different genre of the base text, he did not treat it with the same narratological touch as I have done in the present study. The most valuable part of LeMon's analysis for the current study is the *iconic structure* itself. This analytical step provided a functional tool to map the literary motifs in the narratives and to bridge them with the congruent iconography in ancient Near Eastern art.

Overall, my thesis provides fresh insights into Biblical studies by applying iconographic exegesis to Hebrew Bible narratives while paying proper attention to the prose genre of the texts. I have introduced an interdisciplinary model for analyzing congruent iconography in Biblical narratives and in the pictorial sources of the ancient Near East. The literary analysis has revealed that the image of the lion in Hebrew Bible narratives is constructed from several different motifs that are creatively used and altered in the text. The comparison with the visual data of the ancient Near East has served well as a survey for the cultural background of the texts. The comparison also made it possible to see the established conventions of lion imagery in ancient Near Eastern cultures – and how the Biblical narrators adapted these conventions for theological reasons and for the sake of the storyline.

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